

CANADIAN MENNONITE

June 6, 2016

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EDITORIAL

Assembly: Pray for grace

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Prospects for an intense conversation on several issues appear to be gaining traction for our upcoming assembly in Saskatoon in July.

The agenda features the conclusion of the Being a Faithful Church (BFC) process after seven years of discernment. And many delegates will come with serious questions about the Future Directions Task Force recommendations. The conversation at the area church level has already been rigorous around these recommendations, sent out to the congregations with only a six-month window for discernment.

One example is the feature-length open letter on page 4 from 10 young pastors across the country, who observe “expressions of mistrust, or even woundedness” in this process, saying that the unfolding of the Future Directions process has significantly eroded the trust between congregations and area/national church leaders.

On the more positive side, there is the proposal for Mennonite Church Canada to enter into a five-year dialogue with the Anglican Church of Canada, an initiative coming from the Anglicans to partner with a “church on the margins” that might help change their own identity as a “church of empire.” They want to participate in our long-held belief in peace and justice in exchange for liturgical gifts they offer to enrich our worship.

That might be a wonderful distraction from the angst sure to be a part of the BFC discussions, especially around the

issue of sexuality, and to give us some confidence in our future as a church amid the differences around restructuring.

There is a lot of concern about what will happen to our international Witness program, with a basic question as to what will become of our Witness workers around the globe and their relationship to local partners. There is serious doubt that persons doing short-term mission assignments in these places will understand the local culture in enough depth to be as effective as our MC Canada workers.

These and other issues portend a heavy agenda for the five-day gathering. It could be a daunting experience unless we prepare our hearts and minds to process these issues with a liberal dose of joy, grace and courage. We could be overwhelmed unless we are determined ahead of time to pull together despite our differences.

Let us suggest some rules of engagement:

- **LET US** pray for an attitude that not all is doom and gloom. Palmer Becker suggested to us that we should try harder at making this biennial event more of a celebration, a telling of good news and success stories from congregations as to how God is working to produce the good fruits of the Spirit among us.
- **LET OUR** disagreements be authentic—open and honest, stated clearly without malice or judgment of the “other.” Can we resolve to disagree without being

disagreeable? Critique should not be discouraged or diminished by those leading discussions. Rigorous debate from many different viewpoints is necessary to come to sound decisions.

But can we talk with each other without being contentious? Speaking for yourself or your congregation should be everyone’s disclaimer, not exaggerated claims of widely shared viewpoints.

Our denominational leaders should be as forthcoming and honest as possible, avoiding “spin,” which can present too rosy a picture, thus feeding mistrust and cynicism among delegates.

For instance, our national leaders have wanted to downplay the fact that a downward trend in giving to the national church, ending in a \$300,000 shortfall in a \$3 million budget this past year, is not a major factor in driving a restructuring of the church body. But their claim is also that MC Canada is not “financially sustainable” over the long term and thus should be phased out over the next two years.

In the Future Directions discussions at the local level, national leaders seem to deny that finances are the urgent dynamic behind the restructuring proposal. Further, according to a denominational leader speaking to a Sunday school class, the shortfall is not primarily due to congregations giving less to MC Canada, but gifts from major donors who are not happy with what they perceive as the “left turn” of our theology and practice—such as being pro-Palestinian, the emphasis on creation care and the tendency towards inclusion in the sexuality issue—and are withdrawing their support.

That’s an important detail that should be known to the delegates, especially for the congregations who might be feeling guilty about not giving enough to the denomination.



ABOUT THE COVER:

In this issue, we look to the past and the ‘rose garden’ from which our denomination sprung, on page 13, and at the life of Ted Friesen, who began the first Canada-wide English paper for Mennonites, on page 21. We also look to the future with ‘An open letter on Future Directions,’ on page 4, and ‘In a 21st-century storm of change,’ on page 14.

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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund for our publishing activities.

ISSN 1480-042X

Canada

CANADIAN MENNONITE

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO CANADIAN MENNONITE,

490 DUTTON DRIVE, UNIT C5,
WATERLOO, ON, N2L 6H7

Phone: 519-884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 Fax: 519-884-3331

Web site: canadianmennonite.org

Facebook.com/CanadianMennonite @CanMenno

Please send all material to be considered for publication to:

General submission address: submit@canadianmennonite.org

Readers Write: letters@canadianmennonite.org

Milestones announcements: milestones@canadianmennonite.org

Paid obituaries: obituaries@canadianmennonite.org

Calendar announcements: calendar@canadianmennonite.org

Material can also be sent "Attn: Submissions/Readers Write/Milestones/
Obituaries/Calendar" by postal mail or fax to our head office.

Reprint requests: reprints@canadianmennonite.org

Mission statement: To educate, inspire, inform, and foster dialogue on issues facing Mennonites in Canada as it shares the good news of Jesus Christ from an Anabaptist perspective. We do this through an independent publication and other media, working with our church partners.

Guiding values:

Hebrews 10:23-25 • Accuracy, fairness, balance • Editorial freedom •

Seeking and speaking the truth in love • Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will

• Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

Area churches and MC Canada financially support 38 percent of *Canadian Mennonite's* annual budget.

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One-Year Subscription Rates

Canada: \$46 + tax (depends on province where subscriber lives)

U.S.: \$68 **International (outside U.S.):** \$91.10

Subscriptions/address changes: (e-mail) office@canadianmennonite.org

(web) canadianmennonite.org

(phone) 1-800-378-2524 ext. 221

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Award-winning
member of the
Canadian Church Press



GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH FEATURE

An open letter on Future Directions

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Our concern is that the Future Directions process has exposed fractures or even initiated them.

However it has happened, the unfolding of the Future Directions process cannot be characterized by trust and mutuality within the body. In some circles, in fact, trust has been significantly eroded.

We are a group of pastors from each of the five area churches who have gathered around the current Future Directions Task Force conversations in an effort to understand and respond together. We write as younger pastoral leaders with hopes for many years yet in service to the Mennonite church in Canada, and so with a significant stake in this ongoing process. We would like to offer the following reflections, encouragements and prayers for our shared family of faith.

At the heart of our shared concern is the recognition that we have all observed expressions of mistrust, or even woundedness, in this process. We have each been part of conversations in our various local settings that circle around themes of trust, transparency and confidence. These conversations seem to reflect a fracture between congregations and area/national church leaders. Our concern is that the Future Directions process has exposed fractures or even initiated them. However it has happened, the unfolding of the Future Directions process cannot be characterized by trust and mutuality within the body. In some circles, in fact, trust has been significantly eroded.

As pastors, we recognize that we have not always contributed well to good communication. We have struggled to bring the activities and realities of our denominational bodies into our local settings. We have not always shared a compelling vision for our life together as a broader faith community. And we recognize that much responsibility lies with the individuals in our congregations as well. Many of our congregants simply are not invested beyond our own congregations or are perhaps over-invested in a model that is no longer viable.

And yet we also lament a lack of pastoral sensitivity in the way that the Future Directions process was developed and led. Many groups felt unheard—even when they were asked for feedback—in the feedback they offered, while others felt manipulated and pressured in the decision-making process. Some have experienced a sense of “spin” from leaders who have tried to put everything in the most positive light possible. While we do understand the challenges and constraints of the process, we also long to hear some sense of lament from our leaders for places where there have been oversights or missteps, or to simply help us understand some of the inevitable conflicts. We sense a growing divide between the local congregation and our national church, and thus call for more pastoral sensitivity from our church leaders when addressing these realities.

While we acknowledge that this process should not be shrouded in lament, we do name lament and confession as an important posture in this time of change. We encourage some avenue for corporate lament, including from our leaders at Assembly 2016 in Saskatoon, as a step in the direction of healing and reconciliation.

On questions of transparency and accountability, we also have some practical suggestions. We understand that there

has been conversation regarding the development of a listening group in the transition process. We strongly affirm this direction as a healthy mechanism for transparency and accountability. We also see this listening group as integral to keeping present to us the questions and concerns of those often absent in the formal paid and unpaid leadership structures of the church. We identify the need for this group to reflect the voices of our Witness workers (indigenous and international), new Canadian/non-white congregations, youth/young adults, and lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer (LGBTQ) members and adherents. We also call for this group to reflect the theological diversity in our congregations and to aim for good gender balance. It is our hope that such a group would aid in addressing questions of accountability and transparency while hopefully nurturing trust in leaders and the process.

Further, we understand that key leadership in the transition process will be taken up by area church moderators in some form of interim council. Given the

lack of diversity in this group, we recommend the addition of a few “at large” members who can provide additional perspective.

Finally, we recognize that questions of triumphalism, homophobia, racism, sexism and other abuses are not named at any point in this process. However, given that any organization is an organization of power, we insist that present and possible abuses of power be identified and addressed in the transition process. Institutions are, by nature, conservative, and so we confess that the church, as an institution, has often responded with hostility to groups and individuals that do not fit its beliefs or practices. We see our calling to address these systemic abuses as part of the peacebuilding work of the church, much like the “Undoing sexism” and “Undoing racism” initiatives within Mennonite Church U.S.A. We can see in retrospect how such attention would have benefited the Being a Faithful Church (BFC) process regarding who was included in the formal levels of discernment and decision-making.

We affirm that the future of the church

needs to be accountable to, and informed by, those inheriting the church structure. In light of the BFC recommendations, we also ask that space be made in any transitional structures for LGBTQ members, as well as representation from those groups noted above. We see this kind of major change to our church structures as an opportunity to ensure that they reflect our attentiveness to the marginal and vulnerable believers in our midst.

Lingering questions remain about how we will continue to express ourselves as a national body. The current proposal will see more work done by area and national church staff. We understand that these individuals will still be accountable to area and national boards. We also acknowledge that there have been various conversations around the development of national gatherings focussed on study and worship. We affirm the need for such gatherings but we also name that this remains an area of ambiguity. How will our larger vision and shared documents be developed and approved responsibly within an ecclesiology that encourages

(Continued on page 6)

Prayer of preparation for Assembly 2016

God of our past, you are merciful, slow to anger, rich in love, forgiving. Although we are created in your image, we come to you to confess, lament, speak aloud that we, the body of Mennonite Church Canada, have not always lived as a reflection of you.

Together we confess that some of us hold power over others—implicitly or explicitly—due to race, gender, orientation or economic means. We lament the stories left unheard and absent in our gatherings. We forget that we are all part of your collective body that knows no borders or division.

Together we confess the times we have tried to lead your church but have made others feel unheard, manipulated, pressured, belittled. We lament this wounding, for it is not how you desire us to treat our family.

Together we confess that we have divested our interest in the church and invested in other gods and idols that surround us. We are occupied by our own agendas, by the noise of our strange structures that

have both served you and held us slaves to our own too-narrow visions of your kingdom.

Together we voice our fear and anxiety because we treasure what is ending in our church and fear what you are leading us to.

Yet we are your fickle people covenanted and bound to you despite our nature. Have mercy on us.

Yet it is you, God, who continues to draw us together as reconciled community, Jesus followers, Anabaptists, Mennonite Church Canada. Have mercy on us.

Because of your goodness, we strive to trust, listen, communicate and humble ourselves as we respond to our hopeful and hurting church body. We cannot do this alone. Open us to the excitement of the Spirit's moving in our midst. Reflect in us your image.

Help us to remember that in our future, in our children's future, we will proclaim you in our church as merciful, slow to anger, rich in love, forgiving.

Amen.

(Continued from page 5)

strong congregational and individual engagement? In the midst of these questions we acknowledge that we will need to let go of some expectations and opportunities once afforded to us by a larger structure.

We confess some uneasiness and an inability to clearly see the vision and processes of our national body. We call for greater care, attention and clarity to be given to these questions.

We acknowledge that the Future Directions Task Force has worked under considerable constraints of time and resources. Additional constraints have been imposed by the constituency through expectations that are either contradictory or impossible to fulfill.

We commit to refrain from placing unrealistic or unhelpful expectations on the Task Force and on the transitional structures of the coming years, in whatever form they take.

Despite some difficult and disconcerting experiences in this process, we do also celebrate and give thanks for the various conversations and connections that this process has inspired. We give thanks for the Emerging Voices Initiative (EVI) that reflects the vitality of our younger members, even as conventional wisdom insists that youth are less interested in the work of the church. EVI models a helpful and hopeful approach to theological reflection and spiritual practice. We have also been grateful for the connections with each other that have taken place in developing this statement. In the course of the Future Directions process, important questions of faith, church and theology have been brought to the surface.

We give thanks for the life and work of the church, and commit to publicly celebrating and sustaining the conversations that are emerging at this time.

Each one of us carries pastoral concern for the broader Mennonite church alongside that of our own congregations. So, in a spirit of pastoral response, we offer the prayer on page 5 to help gather God's people around both the Future Directions and BFC processes as they come to fruition in Saskatoon this summer. We

encourage the use of the prayer both personally and congregationally as we

prepare to gather as one body of believers in July.

CHRIS LENSCHYN

EMMANUEL MENNONITE CHURCH, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

RYAN DUECK

LETHBRIDGE MENNONITE CHURCH, ALTA.

KRISTA LOEWEN

WILDWOOD MENNONITE CHURCH, SASKATOON

JEFF FRIESEN

CHARLESWOOD MENNONITE CHURCH, WINNIPEG

SUSIE GUENTHER LOEWEN

CHARLESWOOD MENNONITE CHURCH, WINNIPEG

DAVID DRIEDGER

FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH, WINNIPEG

VIRGINIA GERBRANDT RICHERT

ALTONA BERGTHALER MENNONITE CHURCH, MAN.

KYLE PENNER

GRACE MENNONITE CHURCH, STEINBACH, MAN.

CARRIE MARTENS

STIRLING AVE. MENNONITE CHURCH, KITCHENER, ONT.

KEVIN DERKSEN

ST. JACOBS MENNONITE CHURCH, ST. JACOBS, ONT.



The pastors listed from top to bottom are pictured from left to right.

/// For discussion

1. What do you envision for the future of Mennonite Church Canada? Where do you see signs of hope?
2. It has been said that today's individualistic world has less respect for authority than earlier generations. How does that impact the church? The young pastors who put together this letter write, "We sense a growing divide between the local congregation and our national church." Do you agree? Is mistrust inevitable if congregations don't feel engaged at the national level?
3. Are you aware of people or organizations who feel they have not been heard in this discussion about restructuring the national church? How important is it to listen to all voices? How can we work at building trust at all levels of the church? Would a listening group with broad representation provide more accountability to the process?
4. Does the "Prayer of preparation for Assembly 2016" speak to you? How could this prayer help with the restructuring discussion? What else could be included? Can you think of examples of how God's Spirit is "moving in our midst"?

—BY BARB DRAPER

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters from subscribers. Letters, to be kept to 300 words or less, are the opinion of the writer only and are not to be taken as endorsed by this magazine or the church. Please address issues rather than individuals; personal attacks will not appear in print or online. In light of the many recent letters on the topic of sexuality, we will edit any letter on this topic to a paragraph and post the rest online at www.canadianmennonite.org. All letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines. Send them to letters@canadianmennonite.org and include the author's contact information and mailing address. Preference is given to letters from MC Canada congregants.

✉ Recommendation of same-sex inclusion will lead to exodus

RE: "IT COULD soon be 'time to run'" letter, April 25, 2016, page 10.

This letter refers to the upcoming Assembly 2016 in Saskatoon assembly and the recommendation that "we create space/leave room within our body to test alternative understandings [of same-sex issues] . . ."

I concur wholeheartedly that, should the assembly vote to retain this clause, we will see a mass exodus of members and also some churches leaving Mennonite Church Canada. We have already experienced the severance of several churches who have left MC Canada for this reason. Should an affirmative vote come to pass, I would reiterate the previous writer's comment that it is "time to run."

RUDY KASDORF, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

FROM OUR LEADERS

'Who' before 'how'

TIM FROESE

Mennonites are blessed with traditions and aspirations that many admire: nonviolent peacemaking, mutual aid, voluntarism, relief efforts, generosity and so on. But these values alone do not inherently communicate the one whose name we bear as Christians.

Focussing on our ethical practices comes with the risk of becoming preoccupied with "how." How will we be most effective? How can we use our resources most efficiently? How can we transform conflict and make peace? How can we sustain—or grow—vital services?

While Scripture shares many examples of "how" we can live our lives, the central theme of the Bible is "who." God is the main character. Father, Son and Spirit engage humanity made in their image. And we've read many stories of those who met and experienced the living God. Who is God? Who is the Messiah? Who are the people of God? Who has the Spirit of God?



The preferred way of getting to know who God is happens through direct encounters. I'm not sure if God is concerned about being researched academically, inventoried for historic activity or examined existentially. But I'm pretty sure God is concerned about our relationship with our Creator: "I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be my people" (Leviticus 26:12).

Questions of faithfulness, obedience and identity are repeated themes. The "who" is an incredibly personal question. And knowing the "who"—who we are and who God is—happens primarily when we meet God.

At a glance, meeting someone else suggests that simple logistics need to be planned. But the Bible reveals that encounters with God are not always simple, straightforward, comfortable or planned.

What happens when we meet with the triune God is routinely unpredictable. Water can become wine, lepers can be cured, fishermen can become preachers,

and people of diverse cultures can be filled with God's Spirit. Meeting God is aided when we use our eyes and ears to seek what God desires.

God infrequently tells us what we want to hear. We may learn that our riches are problematic, the gate is narrower than we thought, or that our priorities are misplaced. We can also be told not to worry and not to be afraid when worrying and being afraid come naturally. And we can be reminded to watch and pray when we'd rather carry on in our own way.

Meeting God is good for us. God provides truth, cleansing, liberation and power that speak directly to the priority issues in our lives, whatever they may be. We may experience a call for confession, a decision to follow Jesus, words of forgiveness to give or receive, liberty from oppression, or the power and authority to continue sharing God's reconciling gospel of peace with others.

The "how" of what we do is deeply rooted in "who" we know.

May God grant us the hearts to continually seek God, the humility to meet God and the grace to share our encounters with those around us.

Tim Froese is the executive minister of Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

✉ Thanks for Peter Harder story

RE: I AM proud of my roots," April 25, page 19.

We so enjoy reading *Canadian Mennonite* and want to thank you for it, especially the article about Peter Harder. I was moved to greater thankfulness that we, as Mennonites, have a man like Peter Harder.

We know many of his family here in Niagara; in fact,

we have gone to school with some of them. He has such a very positive testimony and influence in high places. His 30 years of work with the government and his position in the Senate—which has rightfully been under severe scrutiny—is so commendable. He ought to know that many of us are very concerned with where Canada is headed and are so thankful that a man like him has our full confidence and support; we

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Lessons from spilled milk

PHIL WAGLER

“D on’t cry over spilled milk.” This little English phrase must have been coined by a parent watching her child pour milk into a cup. When our emerging independence turns to “needing” to pour our own milk, a parent can only watch with horror. The cup is off-centre, the pitcher trembles, and the liquid is like a tsunami bursting onto a beach. Nothing in this scenario is ever “all in.” Inevitably the deed is done, and the child’s disappointment is not helped by a justifiable “I told you so.”

I’ve often felt like that child. My attempts to do something “grown up” in front of my Heavenly Father can be messy. These attempts to please can be noble, but I’m learning the joy of letting him centre things so that “all in” can happen. He never cries over spilled milk but he definitely beckons me to trust his ability to pour in life.

This is a necessary lesson as we grow as healthy disciples and missional leaders, and one often forgotten in the rush to prove ourselves.

The contrasting invitation of God is to surrender and centre, to let the Father do the pouring, and the overflow of the kingdom be sourced in him. When Romans

5:1 says: “*God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit,*” we are reminded to position ourselves as the vessel receiving the outpouring.

But—and this is crucial—the real point is what is being poured. Paul is clear that what the Holy Spirit fills us with is not, first of all, gifts or dreams, but the wonder of love. We are the beloved. Awakening to this is the first manifestation of the Spirit. We are his cherished kids.

In *Life of the Beloved* Henri Nouwen asks a penetrating question: “If all those who shower me with so much attention could see me and know me in my innermost self, would they still love me?” It’s human to cover this soul storm



Paul is clear that what the Holy Spirit fills us with is not, first of all, gifts or dreams, but the wonder of love.

with bold attempts to prove myself.

This usually ends up messy, as we strive towards the unfortunate cemeteries that Martyn Lloyd-Jones saw filled with sad tombstones reading “Born a man, died a doctor.”

In other words, we “grow up” and sacrifice our first identity as beloved children of God. The good news invitation is

not to try harder, but to be filled with the Spirit, to realize that:

- **OUR INNERMOST** self is known by the Father;
- **OUR INNERMOST** mess has nonetheless been dealt with through Christ, who gave himself for us; and
- **THE SPIRIT** now pours in the awesome awareness of the love of God, leading to new life, creation, desire and mission.

This is why Jesus’ “theology of leadership,” as Gunter Krallmann in *Mentoring for Mission* calls it, “is essentially centred around ‘the truth of God’s Fatherhood.’” Over and over again, Jesus invited his disciples into the loving relationship he had with the Father. He modelled being “poured into,” and the overflow transformed the lives of those who carried forward the movement of the kingdom after his ascension and the outpouring at Pentecost. This outpouring of love continues still.

Are we living transformed lives, and overflowing from this place?

Phil Wagler (phil_wagler@yahoo.ca) lives in Surrey, B.C., with his bride and the six kids God has blessed them with. He’s learning that there is plenty in this world worth crying about, but spilled milk isn’t one of them.

trust him implicitly to do what is required. May God bless him in his responsibilities.

We know the Abram Harder story so well, as our parents and forefathers were forced out of Russia and were privileged to come to Canada, where they started all over again. We have enjoyed our life here so much.

My wife Erna and I were privileged to go to Siberia with Mennonite Central Committee and spend 12 years with the Mennonites who were exiled there. We lived in the village of Neudachino, whose residents speak Low German. The people there shared many stories of the difficult trek from Ukraine to Siberia. We found 23 Mennonite villages in the area between Omsk and Novosibirsk, full of Mennonites who were unknown in the Mennonite world. Today, there is a fairly strong conference there.

BEN FALK, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, ONT.

✉ How can Mennonites find their place in the world?

RE: “**HOLDING OUT** hope for the post-Christendom church,” and “**Coffin maker overcomes evil with good**,” May 9, pages 14 and 23, respectively.

In the first, Stuart Murray says, “Christians need to ask themselves, ‘Do we really think we have good news to share?’” He is referring to evangelism in a postmodern world.

In the second, the story is told of early Mennonite converts in Colombia in 1949: Tulio and Sofia Pedraza. The article asks us to reflect on Tulio’s “costly” discipleship in which he loses his business, respect in the community and friendships in order to wave the Mennonite banner and “overcome evil with good,” as the headline indicates. I would assume the evildoers were the Roman Catholic Church and his friends and neighbours who ultimately brought about his and his family’s misery and demise. I wonder how the Pedraza family’s lives would have been if he had continued attending mass and building and selling coffins?

CHARLIE SMITH, ALLAN, SASK.

✉ Puzzled by the word ‘missional’

RE: “**WHAT’S UP** with Mennos and mission?” April 25, page 4.

I have been puzzled by the word “missional” ever since it was introduced to the Mennonite vocabulary. This timely, articulate article by Deborah Froese tells me that I am not alone.

I like words and have wondered about who was that smart Menno who invented “missional” and decided that “mission” was not enough or was too much. Or was it borrowed from the Lutherans or Anglicans? I will admit that I’m still stuck on “mission(s)”. Growing up, our church had a “general” budget and a “missions” budget. We supported wonderful, dedicated and heroic missionaries in foreign countries whose job it was to convert the many heathen to Christianity. Once a year our missionaries would come home on “furlough” for a rest, and seek a new mandate and funding for the next year. Being a missionary was the highest calling, next to being a preacher.

Things have changed. We no longer commission missionaries, we no longer have separate “missions” budgets, and we question evangelism, especially when it borders on “cultural genocide.” However, some of us still want to “save souls,” but we are unsure of ourselves with political correctness and all.

We are relieved that the church has invented/adopted the “missional” concept. As I understand it, this is the concept that has all Christians thinking and acting like little missionaries, but doing it with gentleness and less aggression.

Many have learned to appreciate the new approach to evangelism and have learned to follow the nuance. Others of us find it awkward and invasive, and wonder what’s wrong with just being neighbourly, kind, generous and forgiving, and letting the Spirit do the rest.

PETER A DUECK, VANCOUVER

Peter A. Dueck is a member of First United Mennonite Church, Vancouver.

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✉ Tearing down must give way to building up

RE: “LIVING WITH paradoxes” editorial, March 14, page 2.

Dick Benner writes, “If you don’t agree, leave or form a new organization . . . leaving a trail of schisms that have marred our witness as peacemakers in a troubled world.”

I was involved in a different fellowship for almost 35 years, including 20-plus years pastoring and rebuilding split, broken, wounded congregations and people. My observations from those years are that splits have little to do with God, godliness or scriptural integrity. It always puzzled me how we espouse a concept of God’s truth being progressive until we disagree with a particular truth, then we set off to be self-appointed arbiters of truth—defending God’s truth—and set up yet another bastion of real truth.

In my faith journey, I’ve found truth isn’t always sanitized, easy to see, follow, or, in all honesty, what I really want—no matter how much I need it. Sometimes I wonder how proud God is with the actions of his children? We seem to be more proficient at tearing down than at building up, something Jesus did at great cost to himself.

Love doesn’t need agreement, acceptance or obedience to be exercised, expressed or given. Love is not earned, it is extended, just as Jesus gives, usually when we are least deserving. Imagine the impact of living that kind of love within the family of God! Perhaps the world would be more receptive to our message if they saw it in action—in us.

PETER LIPPMANN, DUNDURN, SASK.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Baldwin—Georgia (b. Feb. 5, 2016), to Christa (Enns) and Nick Baldwin, Rosthern Mennonite, Sask., in Okotoks, Alta.

Bell—Jaxon Antony (b. May 11, 2016), to Antony and Janelle Bell, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Burgess—Henry Erich (b. April 28, 2016), to Nathan and Lisa Burgess, First Mennonite, Calgary.

Friesen—Elora Lynn (b. May 2, 2016), to Sarah and Jonny Friesen, Pembina Mennonite, Morden, Man.

Hansplant—Aurelia Robyn Elizabeth (b. May 9, 2016), to Christine and Eric Hansplant, First Mennonite, Calgary.

Hiebert—Luke Gingerich (b. May 10, 2016), to Tara and Kyle Gingerich Hiebert, Breslau Mennonite, Ont.

Wideman—Russell Lucas (b. May 23, 2016), to Peter and Andrea (Jenney) Wideman, Waters Mennonite, Lively, Ont.

Baptisms

Desiree Patkau, Ruthanna Friesen—Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, May 15, 2016.

Marissa DiLaudo, Shauna Driedger, Camryn Enns, Abby Gualtieri, Lauren Tiessen—North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., May 1, 2016.

Sara Bartel, Luke Derksen—Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, April 24, 2016.

Kenna Forrester, Eric Epp—Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, May 8, 2016.

David Steckly, Cody Kuepfer, Bryce Kuepfer—Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont., May 15, 2016.

Claire Flanders, Abigail Klassen, Luke Klassen—Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., May 8, 2016.

Aaron Neufeld—Toronto United Mennonite, May 8, 2016.

Marriages

Bechtel/Shantz—Gini Bechtel and Tamara Shantz, Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., May 21, 2016.

Gingerich/Tzigeris—Mark Gingerich and Samantha Tzigeris, both of Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., at Ancaster Mill, Ancaster, Ont., May 20, 2016.

Jantzi/Valles—Edgar Jantzi and Ginalyn Valles, at Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., April 30, 2016.



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Deaths

Arlt—Ken, 64 (b. May 18, 1951; d. March 2, 2016), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Arnott—Glenda, 56 (b. March 23, 1959; d. March 7, 2016), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Baerg—Margarete, 91 (b. Oct. 15, 1924; d. Feb. 13, 2016), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Bartel—Lorena Mildred (nee Gerbrandt), 95 (b. March 6, 1921; d. May 12, 2016), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Braun—John Klassen, 86 (b. Sept. 8, 1929; d. May 8, 2016), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

DeGurse—Thomas, 21 (b. April 16, 1994; d. April 14, 2016), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Derksen—Peter, 77 (b. Aug. 24, 1938; d. Feb. 21, 2016), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Driedger—Tina, 101 (b. Sept. 20, 1914; d. May 6, 2016), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Erb—Velma (nee Zehr), 76 (b. March 25, 1940; d. April 28, 2016), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Franz—Anny, 79 (b. Dec. 24, 1939; d. May 22, 2016), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Froese—Elsie, 90 (b. Sept. 21, 1925; d. April 19, 2016), Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Hamm—Rose Anna, 66 (b. March 17, 1950; d. May 16, 2016) Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Giesbrecht—Anne, 94 (b. Oct. 16, 1921; d. May 3, 2016), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Gutzeit—Lorenz, 89 (b. June 23, 1926; d. April 13, 2016), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Kehler—Anne, 99 (b. Aug. 19, 1916; d. May 17, 2016), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Klassen—Elsie, 82 (b. Aug. 4, 1933; d. May 8, 2016), Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask.

Klein—Heinrich (Henry), 89 (b. July 19, 1926; d. Jan. 17,

2016), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Lambert—David, 55 (b. March 23, 1961; d. April 18, 2016), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Lammert—Susanna (Hildebrandt), 99 (b. April 23, 1916; d. April 10, 2016), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Landriault—Reginald, 73 (b. Feb. 5, 1943; d. May 23, 2016), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Neudorf—William (Bill), 84 (b. Feb. 4, 1932; d. May 7, 2016), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Peters—Pete, 72 (b. April 13, 1943; d. March 18, 2016), Emmaus Mennonite, Wymark, Sask.

Richert—George, 80 (b. Jan. 27, 1936; d. April 6, 2016), Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask.

Rogalski—Herbert Albert, 81 (b. June 25, 1934; d. May 10, 2016), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

Sawatzky—Frieda, 90 (b. April 11, 1925; d. March 1, 2016), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event. Please send Milestones announcements by e-mail to milestones@canadianmennonite.org, including the congregation name and location.

Corrections

- **MZI NKUTHA**, who has been studying at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, is pictured in a page 18 photo in the May 9 issue of *Canadian Mennonite* with his wife Lydia and daughter Uluthando. Incorrect information appeared in the photo caption.
- **ADRIEL BRANDT**'s name was misspelled in the photo caption and credit on page 36 of the May 23 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the errors.

A moment from yesterday



In 1963, the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches held its annual convention in Herbert, Sask. Here, dishes were washed by hand and, of course, re-used as other delegates waited in line. Mennonite World Conference Assembly 2015 took a different approach to reduce the event's environmental footprint by using compostable cups, dishes and cutlery. Compostables, together with food waste, were sent to a composting site north of Lancaster, Pa. After three months, the composting process was completed and the material was added to potting and top soils.

Text: Conrad Stoesz / Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies
Photo: Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies



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VIEWPOINT

Bold action to end poverty in Canada

PAUL BORN

I was a young child when my family and I came to Canada as Mennonite refugees from Ukraine. We were displaced people seeking to create a new life for ourselves.

My personal experience of poverty has shaped my life's work. It's why I founded Tamarack, a non-profit organization that helps people collaborate to tackle the toughest social problems, including poverty. It's why my long-held, deep hope is to end poverty in Canada.

That sounds audacious. But this is a unique moment in our country.

For the first time, every provincial and territorial government has, or is considering, a poverty-reduction strategy. Cities are also stepping up to the challenge with enthusiasm and commitment.

I was thrilled to feel the passion and energy at an event Tamarack hosted in April in Edmonton. We called it "Cities reducing poverty: When mayors lead," and we gathered 350 people, including mayors from 20 cities across Canada. We heard about bold action at the municipal level:

- **NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C.**, was the first municipality in Canada to introduce a local living wage that gives dignity to the "working poor." Other cities have followed.
- **MEDICINE HAT, Alta.**, is the first city in Canada to eliminate homelessness, and now benefits from the lower cost of housing people versus providing emergency social services and healthcare for people living on the street.
- **EDMONTON AND Toronto** have prepared ambitious anti-poverty strategies that emphasize reducing racism and discrimination, two big barriers that block people from rising out of poverty.
- **CALGARY HAS** introduced a program allowing low-income residents to buy a monthly transit pass for \$44, less than



TAMARACK INSTITUTE PHOTO

Paul Born, left, moderates a panel discussion with Edmonton businesswoman Ruth Kelly; Naheed Nenshi, mayor of Calgary; and Senator Art Eggleton, at the 'Cities reducing poverty: When mayors lead' conference.

half the \$99 cost of a standard monthly pass. This lets people access jobs and services so they can create a better life.

• **WINNIPEG, WHICH** has the country's largest urban indigenous population, has set a goal to improve outcomes for young children in an especially vulnerable community in the North End.

These are exciting, concrete, "do-able" steps. Collectively, they make a big difference for our most vulnerable citizens. This can only happen when a cross-section of citizens—business, government, social services, faith communities and people who have personal experience of poverty—come together to tackle a challenge.

As Mennonites, we are signatories to an inter-faith joint statement issued last September that calls for action on climate change, poverty and indigenous rights. I'm pleased that Tamarack is part of this effort for justice, human well-being and a liveable planet.

As the anti-poverty movement grows, people begin to see poverty differently. There is an emerging understanding that our communities are most vibrant when every member has the chance to

participate. Reducing poverty is good for all of us. It helps our communities reach their potential, because "my neighbour's strength is my strength."

As our mindset shifts, we begin to appreciate that poverty is a human-rights issue, a question of basic justice for every person. We have a sense that poverty isn't inevitable, it's created. And if humans created it, we can eliminate it, too.

Tamarack's goal is to increase the number of cities with poverty-reduction strategies from about 55 right now, to 100, and to help cities share ideas and best practices. We know that when cities work together they engage the entire population in poverty reduction. And we know that broad community engagement is the only way we can make a lasting difference for our 4.8 million fellow Canadians who struggle to pay rent, buy groceries and invest in their children's future.

Our vision is that, by 2020, we and our partners will impact the lives of a million Canadians living in poverty and we will reduce by 10 percent the number of people living in poverty in our country.

Take a moment to imagine a poverty-free Canada. What would it look like?

At our Edmonton event, participants created newspaper cover pages to express this vision. They wrote headlines that talk about living wages for every worker and education for every child. They described a growing trust between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians, and a Charter of Rights guarantee of housing and food security. They envisioned a coalition of citizens, business and government pursuing shared targets for social well-being. They saw food banks closing and people thriving.

Our collective commitment to end poverty in Canada is gaining ground. Yes, this task may seem unlikely, even impossible on some days. But as Nelson Mandela reminds us, "It always seems impossible, until it's done." ❧

Paul Born is president and coach at Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement, Waterloo, Ont. To learn more, visit paulborn.ca, and follow @paulborn, @VC_Canada and @LivingWageCDA.

VIEWPOINT

Looking back at the 'rose garden'

GEORGE EPP

By now, most Mennonites in Canada are aware that the future of our union under Mennonite Church Canada is being reconsidered. Given that, it seems appropriate to step back into the past to consider the foundations that underlie the forming and maintaining of provincial and national “cooperatives,” even while the leading edge of the church’s mission in the world arguably resides in the organic, dynamic life of local congregations.

So let’s go back to *Rosenort*—“place of roses,” “rose garden,” if you will. From Prussia, this place name made its way to the Saskatchewan Valley through Peter Regier, a Mennonite pastor from the Vistula Delta of what is now Poland.



Peter Regier

Responding to the deterioration of guarantees of freedom from military service, Regier uprooted his family and brought them to Canada, a place where religious freedoms were guaranteed.

The Saskatchewan Valley—roughly between Saskatoon and Rosthern, bounded by two branches of the Saskatchewan River—was rapidly being settled by European immigration, a substantial portion of which were Mennonites from particularly the Chortitz Colony on the Dnieper River in Russia (now Ukraine) and a handful from the Danzig (Gdansk) area of present-day Poland.

The result of the mixed resettlement in the Hague-Rosthern-Laird-Waldheim area was that a Mennonite “ghetto” was forming, not around faith so much as around land, economics and the exemption from military service. Having strong pastoral and organizational skills, and a passion for the gospel, Regier responded

to a request to establish a “church.” Beginning with the organization of house gatherings and the appointing of leaders to nurture these, the *Rosenorter Mennonitengemeinde* (Rosenort Mennonite Church) was born.

This was arguably the first “Conference of Mennonites” in Western Canada. The participants didn’t necessarily share the same sensitivities regarding worship, mission or membership, since they were bringing with them faith traditions from European Mennonite communities that were themselves experiencing turmoil over issues like evangelism, worship music and separation from the world, among others.

In 1896, the first dedicated structure—a small log church—was constructed on the present-day site of Eigenheim Mennonite Church, west of Rosthern. Meanwhile, worship continued in homes and in newly erected one-room schools popping up everywhere. Those who could, made their way to services in Eigenheim, but ministers were appointed to travel out to serve more distant members.

Rosenort became the focal point of Mennonite presence in the province, although numerous small communities of Mennonites were beginning to be established elsewhere. The leadership of Regier, Gerhard Epp and others was strengthened by the arrival in 1898 of David Toews.

Beginning as a teacher in the Tiefengrund (Sask.) School, Toews’s vision extended well beyond the one-room school. He had roots that went back through schooling in Gretna, Man., some growing-up in Kansas and a tumultuous early life—actually with family in the disastrous trek to the Orient led by Klaas Epp. It was probably through his Manitoba connections that the Bergthaler Mennonite community

there and the Rosenort group would get together to dream bigger dreams in 1902 and ’03. The result of consultations was the formation of the Conference of Mennonites of Central Canada.

This pioneering venture into cooperating over distances was supported by Mennonites in the United States for whom Canada was a “mission field.” Indeed, the goal of doing “home mission” was central in the early days of this broader union. Mission conferences were robust events, featuring sermons, Bible teaching, worship and reporting around the theme of outreach. And outreach meant—more or less—the nurturing of the faith of Mennonite families settling in the sprawling West.

Total agreement on all things theological or practical was not to be expected, and the early conference made it clear that it was a union of purpose, not of doctrine or tradition.

The growth of the Conference of Mennonites of Central Canada was remarkable. In a short time, churches in Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba were joining, and eventually the entrance of British Columbia and Ontario led to the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

We seem to have been strongest when emerging needs persuaded us to band together. Another important lesson might be that what serves in one era won’t necessarily fit in the next. “*Alles ist vergänglich*,” we say in German. “Everything is temporary.”

For MC Canada and the five area churches in the 21st century, the story of our beginnings can teach us that in dangerous times it’s probably only the rallying around a common purpose that can unite us. ❧

In 1999, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada became MC Canada as part of a major realignment of Mennonite churches in North America.

George Epp is a former moderator of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

In a 21st-century storm of change

Eastern Canada pastors consider their roles as a lighthouse, compass or as ones cast out to sea

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

A seminar for pastors may have begun with marine imagery, but it was the cascade of effects that happened in Yellowstone National Park in the United States that caught the imagination of 30 pastors gathered at Conrad Grebel University College on May 11.

Betty Pries of Associates Resourcing the Church showed the YouTube video “How wolves change rivers” (bit.ly/wolves-change-rivers), which describes the theory that the reintroduction of wolves led to all kinds of changes, even of landforms, in the park.

“What,” asked Pries, “is your wolf? The church’s wolf? The wolf for which our world is longing?” “Wolf” in this context would be something which, if re-introduced, would shake up individuals, the church or the world for the better.

Looking at the use of social media as a core influence in the lives of most in society and the church, with both its gifts and challenges, Pries suggested that what the world and church need now are true solitude, unhindered by the presence of technology, and real connections that go deeper than Twitter, e-mail, Facebook, Pinterest or texting.

This needs to be re-introduced to Christians, and through them to the world, she said, quoting Ted Hunter, a former leader of the charismatic Vineyard movement, now an Episcopalian church planter and priest: “If, after the Second World War, the role of the church was to speak into the world’s silence, the role of the church in our society today is to embody God’s presence in a manner that brings stillness to the world’s noise.”

Pries believes it is the task of pastors to find real solitude and real connection, and model those to their congregations through lives of spiritual discipline; teach their congregants such practices, and encourage them to model them to each other; talk to each other about their experiences; and be open to talk to others about these practices and experiences.

During the day Pries used *Lectio Divina*, and invited pastors to contemplate a gospel story and reflect on the church’s current time of change and anxiety. “How does this story [and Jesus’ role within it] challenge

and guide you during this time?” she asked. Pastors then shared their reflections on such stories as the Good Samaritan, with the challenge to simply respond to need; and the Syrophenecian woman who taught Jesus that God’s grace went beyond the Jews.

Henry Paetkau, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada’s area church minister, noted that biblical literacy was high among these pastors, as no story was repeated.

Pries believes that at this time leaders need to be both open in their thinking and centred on Christian truths. Closed thinking leads to narrowness, she said, while centre-less thinking leads to unstructured confusion. According to her, the sense of being God’s beloved gives a centre from which Christians can meet the many different philosophies and religions around them, adding that this also helps Christians to meet the place where the church is—no longer the majority or favoured in society, with shrinking resources and overburdened institutions. Knowing God’s love means knowing that God has a future for God’s people, although they may not be able to see what that is yet, she concluded. ❧



Clockwise from front left, Stephen Cox, Oderay Peters, Marvin Shank and Sririsack Saythavy discuss the role of pastors in the 21st century on May 11 at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.



Craig Neufeld of Rosthern Mennonite Church, Sask., describes his group's interpretation of Jonah 3, while Josh Wallace of Warman Mennonite holds up the illustration.

Saskatchewan pastors wrestle with Scripture

Seminar participants learn to lead Bible study by studying the Bible

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON

“People assume that reading the Bible should be easy,” said Derek Suderman, adding, though, “That’s not the way the Bible works.” If they are to truly understand Scripture, they must be prepared to wrestle with it.

Suderman, who is professor of Old Testament at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., sees the story of Jacob wrestling with God at the Jabok River (Genesis 32:22-32) as a metaphor for studying the Bible. He presented his ideas in a seminar entitled “Wrestling with Scripture: The art of facilitating dynamic Bible study,” that was hosted by Mennonite Church Saskatchewan. The seminar took place at Mount Royal Mennonite Church in Saskatoon from May 17 to 19, with most of the 20 or so participants being pastors.

Suderman said people often tell him that their church has a problem with biblical

literacy. “I don’t think we have a biblical literacy problem,” he countered. “I think we have a biblical engagement problem.” People don’t habitually read their Bibles, and when they do, they find the exercise is not life-giving, he said, adding, “We need to start with the idea of engagement. If you engage the Bible consistently, over time people will know their Bible better.”

In Genesis 32, Jacob appears at first to be wrestling with a man. As the struggle continues, the reader realizes he is wrestling with God. The purpose of the struggle is to win a blessing from God. This, said Suderman, should be the purpose of Bible study. And, he added, readers should begin with the conviction that every passage—even difficult ones—might contain a blessing. Suderman pointed out that Jacob wrestled all night.

Likewise, Bible study takes effort and

persistence. Jacob comes away from the struggle limping. With every step he will be reminded of this transforming moment. Similarly, as the church engages the Bible, it, too, is transformed. “Wrestling with Scripture is the goal of the church,” said Suderman.

“People have different ways of avoiding wrestling with the Bible,” he told participants. “Conservatives will say, ‘I’m just reading, you’re interpreting.’” But, he pointed out, “There is no reading without interpretation; every translation is an interpretation.” Liberals, he added, won’t show up at all, because they think the Bible is irrelevant.

Suderman also likened Bible study to going on a hike on which each participant might notice something different and draw others’ attention to it. “Often when we have Bible study, we want everyone to believe what we believe,” he said. “We don’t want to allow the group to actually have different experiences with the Bible.” He cautioned, “Just because you’re the one leading the hike doesn’t mean that you’re going to notice everything. There is a place for expertise, but the goal is to allow people to experience the hike. The purpose of the expert is to inspire others to gain expertise.”

Practising what he preached, Suderman led participants through a number of Bible studies, including an exploration of Jonah 3. In small groups, they identified and described the story’s characters, then illustrated, cartoon-style, the sequence of events. At the end of the exercise, he asked, “Did you notice how much laughter there was? Often we take the Bible way too seriously. We need to be invitational and embody how much we enjoy studying Scripture together.”

One way to help people engage is to ask questions. Closed questions—those with a predetermined answer—are good icebreakers, said Suderman. People gain confidence when they are able to answer questions like, “Who are the characters in the story?” or, “What does your translation say?”

Then the leader can start asking open questions—those without predetermined answers. Questions like, “How would you describe the characters?” fall into this category.

These questions, both closed and open, are directed toward the passage being studied. Finally, said Suderman, leaders should guide discussion with open questions directed away from the passage. These would be application questions such as, "How should this impact the way we live?"

In an hour-long study, Suderman said that he would spend about 45 minutes talking toward the text, then finish with a 15-minute discussion away from it. "The more time spent with the text," he said, "the more enriching the application will be."

Listening is another important component of engaging Bible study. An effective leader validates participants by allowing

them to ask questions and writing their comments on the board. If a participant asks a question that's not on topic, the leader might direct attention back to the Bible by responding, "What in the passage gives you that idea?"

Suderman lamented the church's lack of scriptural engagement. "How is it that we've come to maybe 20 minutes on a Sunday and that's the only time we read the Bible together?" he asked, saying, "I don't think it's enough."

"I teach Bible for a living because I think it's important," Suderman added. "I don't just think it's important because I do it for a living." ❧

At "With gratitude," a CMU graduation weekend event at which graduates share their experiences through spoken word or musical performance, Beth Downey Sawatzky, *Canadian Mennonite's* new Manitoba correspondent, reflected on how CMU's faculty, staff and students have cultivated "an institutional culture of kindness, rather than one of prestige or competition."

"If I have learned anything at CMU that will stay with me no matter what the future holds, it's that if we, as Christians, truly believe what we claim to believe, we can always afford to be kind," she said. "I hope whatever I become, that I will be rebelliously kind, that I will be as rebelliously courageous as my mentors of the last five years have been."

Speaking at the same event, Nonsi Sibanda shared how she was fortunate to move from Zimbabwe to study at CMU. "I got an opportunity to grow in a place where my career options are not limited [and] where there is hope for a bright future," Sibanda said. She added that, prior to coming to CMU, she understood business and Christianity as two separate domains with no connections. Studying at CMU's Redekop School of Business showed her otherwise.

"Business for me is not about the love of numbers anymore," Sibanda said. "It is about the joy I have in my heart to serve others in an honest and in a diligent way." ❧

Canadian Mennonite University celebrates Class of 2016

Eighty-nine graduates honoured at CMU commencement exercises

Story and Photo by Canadian Mennonite University
WINNIPEG

In his valedictory address at the Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) graduation service at Immanuel Pentecostal Church on April 24, Jonas Cornelsen tackled head on the question, "What are you going to do with your degree?"

"Education is a great gift, and we can all respond in gratitude by humbly sharing the knowledge and insight we have gained and [received] from others by showing love to all of those we meet, living by the Creator's grace, Christ's example and the Spirit's hope in a broken world," Cornelsen concluded. "That is what you can really do with a degree."

It was an eloquent, hope-filled message, delivered toward the end of the graduation weekend that also included a gala dinner on April 22, the spring concert on April 23, and a baccalaureate service the morning of April 24.

The graduation service culminated with CMU president Cheryl Pauls conferring 84 undergraduate degrees, four master of arts degrees, and one graduate certificate in

biblical and theological studies. She awarded President's Medals to Cornelsen, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in political studies, communications and media, and Kathleen Bergen, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in biblical and theological studies, in recognition of their qualities of scholarship, leadership and service.



Kathleen Bergen, left, and Jonas Cornelsen, winners of the 2016 President's Medals, flank CMU president Cheryl Pauls.

Credit union explains the importance of 'growth'

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

The question of growth came up over and over in discussions about the name change for the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (MSCU). At the credit union's 52nd annual general meeting, held April 12, chief financial officer John Klassen noted that currently profitability is at 33 basis points and needs to grow to 55 basis points in order to maintain strong capital levels for the credit union. In conversations that evening and via e-mail he gave the following explanation:

"The reference to 33 and 55 basis points at the annual meeting is related to the calculation of 'return on average assets' [ROAA] and is a measure of the credit union's profitability. ROAA is calculated by dividing the credit union's year-end operational earnings—prior to the dividend payment on investment shares—by the credit union's average asset size during the year.

"What this measure tells us is the level of profitability the credit union achieved as a percentage of its size. Or rather, the extent to which the credit union was able to employ its assets to generate earnings. This measure is related to growth, in the sense that earnings are required in order to build capital [equity] in the credit union. The credit union desires to hold an amount of capital that equals at least 8 percent of its assets; at the 2015 year end, the credit union's capital was 8.24 percent of its assets. If we pursue an annual growth rate of 7 percent [roughly the average growth rate over the last 10 years or so], we would need to achieve an ROAA of 8 percent—or 56 basis points—in order to maintain capital at 8 percent of assets.

"These are the calculations behind the comment I made at the annual meeting



**John Klassen, MSCU
chief financial officer**

when I stated that we achieved an ROAA of 33 basis points in 2015, which was an improvement over 2014 [27 basis points], but not yet at the level of 55 basis points that we need to achieve for long-term sustainability from a capital building perspective."

Chief executive officer Brent Zоргdrager noted that if MSCU does not keep profitability levels at the 55 basis-points level to build sufficient

capital, the regulator could step in to see what changes need to be made in order to get into the desired capital range. Things not deemed profitable, including many of the mutual aid practices at the heart of MSCU's vision and purpose, could be the first to go, he said.

Klassen added, "Regulators—Deposit Insurance Corporation of Ontario, in our case—are mostly concerned with capital levels, and at the moment we are well capitalized, with a risk-rated capital ratio of 12.88 percent versus a regulatory minimum of 8 percent. The risk is, that unless we can achieve the 55 basis-points profitability level in an ongoing way, that capital ratio will continue to head in a downward direction, eventually resulting in the regulator possibly mandating actions to preserve capital. This is why it's critical that we take action now when we have healthy capital, to plan for sustainable levels of profitability and capital building so that we can preserve those elements of the way that we do business that have become so important to who we are."

Zоргdrager noted that the name change, like the change in the charter to include those who accept the Mennonite World Conference's Seven Shared Values, is intended to increase membership, thus increasing the profit of MSCU, which, in turn, will boost the ROAA, so the credit union's values and vision can be preserved. ❧

/// Briefly noted

How business played a critical role in a church start-up

Jim Loepp Thiessen, former pastor of the Gathering Church in Kitchener, Ont., shared at the Waterloo Region Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) breakfast on May 19, how business played a critical role in the planting of the church start-up 11 years ago. He said that Mike Strathdee of the Mennonite Foundation of Canada advised him at the beginning that "money will be the least of your problems." As he presented his vision and a budget, Loepp Thiessen found that businesses and individuals were ready to open their pockets and share money. He followed four principles:



**Jim Loepp
Thiessen**

- **BE VERY** clear about motives in church planting and outreach; the Gathering does community events to be a blessing to the community, not to grow.
- **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** takes time, money and repeated effort; there is no quick way to connect with the community.
- **BE PREPARED** to answer the question "If people from the community actually show up at church, what will you do with them?" Many people count the Gathering as their church but never come until needs arise.
- **THE BEST** events are those that build relationships and friendships.

—BY DAVE ROGALSKY

'Learning how to listen is a journey'

Bethel Mennonite Church hosts Sister Care seminar for Manitoba women

BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY
Manitoba Correspondent

Bethel Mennonite Church hosted Winnipeg's first-ever Sister Care seminar in mid-May, drawing women of all ages from multiple congregations.

Sister Care was developed and is now presented worldwide by Carolyn Heggen, a psychotherapist specializing in trauma recovery, and Rhoda Keener, Sister Care's director.

The program was born out of a simple, bold dream: to see women in the church empowered as women, to care for themselves and others in the ways that they are uniquely equipped to care for. Having both travelled extensively, Heggen and Keener readily credit the inspiration of powerful women around the world for what Sister Care is today.

The thrill of this idea—that women can be Christ in the flesh to those around them exactly as they are, that each woman's unique personality and skill set carries transformative power—resonated clearly around the tables. Words like "should," "supposed to" and "required" recurred frequently. Discussions reflected participants' drive to "get it right" when it comes to caring and discipleship, but also a common craving for a more fluid, soulful way of caring that overflows from the heart, rather than the drudgery of dry, conditioned effort.

The energy in the room was palpable, changing throughout the day. As common fears and stresses were named, tension built like electricity in the air. Through story and poetry, Heggen and Keener voiced the shared longings of participants for a different way of being, and the electricity was galvanized into warmth.

Around the room experiences of pain, loss, violation and anger were shared,

condensing that warmth into heaviness; but when prayer was offered through word, song, body posture or movement laden with metaphor, the heaviness was released in the Spirit, and balance returned.

The small-group discussions fed into larger sessions on themes such as "Self-care and boundaries," "Positive identity," "Rich self-awareness and knowing where your power comes from," "The listening that heals," "Helping others through hard times," and "Transforming grief and loss. Participants learned to spot the difference between ordinary stress and traumatic stress, how to recognize both and how to salve them in themselves and others.

Heggen shared strategies on how to transform the "toxic stories" people often use to narrate their lives into "power stories," naming God "the great

composter." She talked of the power that accompanies people who "step into a moment of story together." For her part, Keener demonstrated the difference between fraudulent listening and deep listening. Both leaders illustrated the power that women carry when they turn their loving attention outward as companions and mentors.

"People are looking for authentic relationships where they can make themselves vulnerable," commented participant Tina Kehler of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Winkler, Man. "It's one thing to have friends, and another to be able to be open and honest with someone who'll respect you and remain confidential, intentionally. Realizing that listening well is a skill one can develop is the first step, then learning how to listen is a journey." ❧

PHOTO BY LYNN LAVALEE



Sister Care organizers, pictured left to right: Carolyn Heggen and Rhoda Keener.

/// Briefly noted

Vancouver pastor ordained

• **LYDIA CRUTTWELL**, pastor of First United Mennonite Church in Vancouver, was ordained to the ministry on Pentecost Sunday, May 15, in a joint worship service with First United Spanish Mennonite Church. Mennonite Church B.C. executive minister Garry Janzen conducted the ordination. Also present were former First United Mennonite pastors Helmut Isaak and Ingrid Schultz, and retired MC B.C.

pastors Erwin Cornelsen, Sven Eriksson and Tim Kuepfer. Cruttwell, originally from Newmarket, Ont., received a master of divinity degree from Regent College in Vancouver and has pastored at First United Mennonite since 2012.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN



Lydia Cruttwell

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

PHOTO BY GAGE SKIDMORE / COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG (CC BY-SA 3.0)



Donald Trump speaks at a rally in Fountain Hills, Ariz.

VIEWPOINT

Disparaging 'the Donald' plays into his hand

BY WILL BRAUN

SENIOR WRITER

“America is again ablaze with partisan divisiveness.” That’s how I started an article during the presidential campaign of 2012. But the days of Barack Obama battling Mitt Romney seem pedestrian compared to the current convergence of reality TV and reality.

For my 2012 article I interviewed Gus Booth, pastor of Warroad Community Church in Minnesota, not so far across the border from where I live. He is a Republican who, in 2008, became the first minister in U.S. history to pick a fight with the Internal Revenue Service over the law that says tax-exempt entities cannot participate or intervene in a political campaign. I was interested in his thoughts on the current situation.

Booth was a strong backer of Ted

Cruz, the fiercely conservative Texas senator who came closest to denying Donald Trump the Republican presidential nomination. As for Trump, the best thing Booth can say is that he is “better than Hillary,” the former first lady who is almost certain to be his Democratic opponent in the November election.

Booth laments the Trump phenomenon and what it reveals about America. “Our heart is in leisure and entertainment,” he says. Booth sees Trump as the product of a nation that is “the entertainment capital of the world.”

And he’s talking about the church as much as the rest of society. Booth says the message from too many pulpits is not to “deny yourself for the sake of Christ, but that Christ is going to bless you for the sake of you.” That sort of

self-indulgence creates space for someone like Trump, who Booth calls the “personification of selfishness.” He describes Clinton that way as well. “Hillary’s been wanting to be president for decades,” Booth says.

Several states over in Virginia, Ted Grimsrud, a professor of peace theology at Eastern Mennonite University, inhabits the opposite end of the spectrum. He is a “big supporter” of Clinton’s Democratic challenger, Bernie Sanders. In his work and church circles, Grimsrud sees a lot of anxiety about Trump. But there’s something bigger than one person at play.

Grimsrud notes that the left-right divide is giving way to a new split between the haves and the have-nots. The Washington-Wall Street establishment, he says, is “seen as not very equitable, not very fair.” Visceral anti-establishment views are central to both Republican and Democratic contests.

I asked what he thinks the current race will do to the complexion of America. If Clinton becomes president, Grimsrud expects not much would change and four more years of the status quo would just make the next round that much more volatile.

And if Trump gets in? “I can’t even imagine,” he says.

Former Bethel College history professor and one-time political candidate Jim Juhnke shares Grimsrud’s dim outlook. Juhnke, who lives in Kansas, finds the current situation “very dispiriting.”

“I remember a time when we had different standards of how we talked to each other,” the 78-year-old says of the current political discourse.

Juhnke points to editorials in *Mennonite World Review*—a 93-year-old newspaper based in Newton, Kan.—as some indication of where Mennonites may stand politically. It seems Trump has prompted the paper to depart somewhat from its more politically cautious past. In editorials last September and this March, the paper has accused Trump of being a “demagogue who appeals to base emotions and prejudices;” of being devoid of civility and grace; of being “boastful and vulgar, bullying and dishonest, insulting and bigoted, misogynistic, a purveyor

of crass racial stereotypes, an inciter of violence.” And that’s just in the first two paragraphs of one editorial.

But does it help to out-insult someone who is to trying to “insult [his] way to the presidency,” as Jeb Bush put it?

I took the opposite approach in an article for the *Winnipeg Free Press* and *Huffington Post’s* Canadian section. I said that by insulting Trump for being so insulting, we don’t counteract the Trump phenomenon, we play along with it,

fuelling the polarization that fuels him.

I suggested we should genuinely try to understand why people are drawn to Trump. I see no other way to address polarization. Such articles draw very few comments.

Grimsrud and Juhnke admit they circulate largely in non-Republican realms. I, too, inhabit one end of the political spectrum. But I’m increasingly dissatisfied with my enclave of like-mindedness. I am more interested in what Pastor

Booth feels liberals don’t understand about conservatives—that they don’t hate everyone they disagree with—and what political issues are most important to him—religious liberty—than listening to “progressives” disparage a phenomenon that clearly needs to be understood, not dismissed. ☞

☞ Briefly noted

Canada provides additional \$2.5 million for Syrian relief

A grant of \$2.5 million from the Canadian government will enable the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to continue to assist people affected by the conflict in Syria. The grant will be used to provide emergency food rations for 11,316 families displaced from their homes by the conflict and those hosting these families (about 57,000 people). The announcement was made by Marie-Claude Bibeau, minister of international development and la francophonie. Jim Cornelius, executive director of the Foodgrains Bank, recently met with a group of Syrians who are living inside Syria and managing some of the food distributions. He reports that “they expressed deep appreciation for the food assistance being provided by the people and government of Canada. Not only is the food desperately needed, it is also a sign that someone has noticed and cares about their plight. It provides hope in a context where it is often difficult to hope.” With this new \$2.5 million grant, the Foodgrains Bank has now received \$11.75 million in special funding from the Government of Canada for the Syrian crisis response. More than seven million people within Syria have been displaced from their homes, and another four million people have fled the country to live as refugees in surrounding countries. —Canadian Foodgrains Bank

GOD AT WORK IN US

OBITUARY

Friesen began first Canada-wide English paper for Mennonites

Theodore (Ted) Friesen

July 3, 1920 – Feb. 15, 2016

BY MARGARET LOEWEN REIMER

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

Theodore (Ted) Friesen of Altona, Man., who died at the age of 95, left behind a rich legacy of service to Mennonites in Canada. A partner with his two brothers in D.W. Friesen and Sons (Friesens Corporation since 1976), a printing and stationery business founded by his father, Ted was also deeply committed to the church and its institutions.

He was at the heart of many historic developments in Canadian Mennonite life. In the early 1960s, he was appointed to the Board of Christian Service, a new board of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. He also served on the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee, as “a very junior member,” he recalled in his memoirs. The Relief Committee was one of seven agencies that united to form Mennonite Central Committee Canada in 1963, and Ted was appointed to its first Executive Committee, a position he held until 1977.

He was also at the meeting that brought the Manitoba and Ontario Mennonite historical societies together in 1968 to launch a major publishing project. According to the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, “Friesen, together with J. Winfield Fretz and Frank H. Epp, conceived the *Mennonites in Canada* history project” that resulted in a three-volume work. That project led to the formation of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada; Ted served on the executive of this national organization from 1968-96, the last decade as president.

Perhaps less well known is the fact that Ted, along with his two brothers, initiated the first English-language periodical for



Ted Friesen

Mennonites in Canada. In 1953, Friesens launched the first issue of *The Canadian Mennonite*, “an English language weekly devoted to the affairs of Mennonites across Canada.” A message from the publisher in the first issue admitted that “such a periodical will not be

a financially profitable enterprise, but we pray that it will be a worthwhile service to our Mennonite brethren everywhere.”

Friesens found an editor in the 1953 graduating class of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, a founding college of Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg. Frank Epp was just 24 years old when he took on the job. Friesens published *The Canadian Mennonite* until October 1962, when it transferred ownership to the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Company. But printing continued at the Altona firm until the periodical ceased publication in 1970. *The Canadian Mennonite* was succeeded by the *Mennonite Reporter* in 1971, also an inter-Mennonite periodical. In 1997, the *Mennonite Reporter* was replaced by *Canadian Mennonite*, which serves primarily the members of Mennonite Church Canada.

It was not easy to build enthusiasm for the new periodical, recalled Ted in a 1999 reflection on those times, as every year saw a substantial deficit: “We became aware of the immensity of the task before us. The church was changing. It was a period of flux, with the old trying to maintain the status quo and the new looking for change to meet the needs of the times. . . . To speak to the young people, to speak prophetically

to the issues of the day, was urgent. Most conferences were somewhat defensive, seeing the paper as a threat to their control. It is not surprising that many of the older generation were less than enthusiastic. But there were also many of that generation who saw the need and supported the paper.”

He recalled the 1950s and '60s as “exciting years, with the old being challenged and the new structured. The demise of the paper may have looked like a failure . . . but the fact that another paper was started in the 1970s confirms that it was too good an idea to let die.”

Ted’s vision and openness were also evident closer to home. Seeing a need for English-language worship in Altona, he and his wife Linie helped to found Altona Mennonite Church in 1962. He served as church moderator for 17 years, and also as a deacon.

He loved his town and the people in it. He was “a walking oral history” of Altona and the surrounding villages, said son Eric at his father’s funeral.

Ted’s other passions included classical music, Low German literature, baseball and his family.

A conscientious objector during the Second World War, Ted never judged those who signed up, including two of his brothers. Eric recalled his father visiting injured veterans in the Altona Hospital. “Trust my Dad to be both a committed pacifist and a man who opened his heart to those who weren’t.” Ted and his brother John, who enlisted, are featured in a 2002 National Film Board documentary, *The Pacifist Who Went to War*.

“Dad was a thorough-going Mennonite, but he looked outward,” noted Eric. “His faith was one of openness . . . alive and changing to the very end of his days.”

Ted Friesen is survived by his wife Linie; sons Eric, Paul and Tim, and their spouses; six grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandson.

Margaret Loewen Reimer is a niece of the late Ted Friesen and was an editor of the Mennonite Reporter and Canadian Mennonite for many years. She retired in 2005.

MEDA and big labour

STORY AND PHOTO
BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent

Kaylie Tiessen grew up in Essex County in southwestern Ontario, expecting to eventually run the family business. But as the business developed into just selling tires, she couldn't see herself in it anymore.

Her family attends Faith Mennonite Church in Leamington and that Mennonite heritage has shaped her values and identity, leading her to volunteer with Mennonite Central Committee for three years in Laos and another 18 months in Ontario. Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) also runs deep in her blood; Roy Snyder was a MEDA founder as well as her grandfather, and her uncle Allan Sauder is its current president.

With a degree in economics, Tiessen now works as a researcher for Unifor, one of Canada's largest private-sector unions. Having started out in business, she moved over to this field, thinking about how economic systems affect people like the women in extreme poverty due to disabilities that she worked with in Laos, whom she taught to run small businesses effectively.

MEDA's "20 under 35" selection criteria includes "faith, entrepreneurial spirit and service." Working for a labour union means she doesn't fit the traditional definition of entrepreneur, she says, noting, though, that "every organization, business or government needs entrepreneurs in the system," people who are willing to take risks to make things better. "Make the world a better place" for all people is a kind of mantra for her as she works to change systems for everyone.

On April 21, Tiessen spoke to MEDA's Waterloo Region branch; her theme was "Inequality in changing times."

Humorously pointing to the stereotyping of her millennial generation as



Kaylie Tiessen

self-serving, lazy and living with feelings of entitlement, she noted how society has changed from the time of the millennials' parents, the boomers. Entry-level jobs and high-knowledge jobs have grown, but the middle range of jobs necessary to move up from the entry level has shrunk in the last 15 years, making it dif-

ficult for her generation to move out of their parents' basements.

Her list of solutions for this situation includes instituting a "living wage," raising minimum wages so that people earning this amount are above the poverty line, paid sick days, fair scheduling so that people can plan their lives, on-the-job training and mentoring, and governments being more generous with social

assistance. All are aimed at increasing dignity and respect for those with the lowest incomes in society.

She insisted that these things are good for businesses, as their employees' productivity rises, sales increase, there is a lower turnover in employees, and the workers become more focussed on their jobs, instead of worrying about how to make ends meet or to make the schedule work.

Tiessen now lives in Toronto and has not connected with a congregation there. Her personal meditation practice, and the group of friends with whom she discusses and shares those experiences, support her in the difficult work of dealing with poverty and wanting society to lift those people up while not just giving them charity. This is her passion. ❧

With a degree in economics, [Kaylie] Tiessen now works as a researcher for Unifor, one of Canada's largest private-sector unions.

/// Obituary

Former MCC Canada board chair passes

• **GEORGE RICHERT**, former board chair of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada, died on April 6. Born in Waldheim, Sask., in 1936, he leaves a rich legacy as an educator and advocate for peace, justice and service. Richert first began his service with MCC Canada as a member of the delegate body in 1988; he served as board chair in 1993 and on the joint MCC Canada and U.S. board from 1993–99. Richert also served with MCC in various roles internationally, along with his wife Pearl. He worked as interim country representative for Iraq, Jordan, Palestine and Israel from 2004–07; interim regional representative in the Former Soviet Union from 2008–09; and interim country representative for Ukraine-Russia-Kazakhstan in 2011. Richert also had a long career in education and administration with Mennonite institutions. He taught in a one-room classroom in rural Saskatchewan, as a professor at the University of Regina, and internationally in Nigeria. He was president of Menno Simons College from 1992–2001 and was one of the three founding presidents of Canadian Mennonite University. Richert was vice-chair of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, the predecessor of Mennonite Church Canada.

—Mennonite Central Committee



George Richert

ARTBEAT

BOOK REVIEW

Pennsylvania Dutch a language with merit

Pennsylvania Dutch: The Story of an American Language.
Mark L. Loudon. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016, 475 pages.

REVIEWED BY BARB DRAPER
BOOKS & RESOURCES EDITOR

Pennsylvania Dutch has often been ridiculed and viewed as a corrupted German dialect with a mishmash of English words, but author Mark Loudon argues that it is actually a distinct language with a proud heritage. The fact that it continues to be spoken, living for hundreds of years within an English-language society, makes it quite remarkable.

Loudon is unequivocal in declaring that Pennsylvania Dutch originated in the German Palatinate, along the Rhine River. The Mennonites and other German immigrants brought their German dialect



to Pennsylvania in the 1700s and it was widely used in eastern Pennsylvania not only by the Mennonites and Amish, but also by Lutherans and those in the Reformed tradition. Today, it has all but died out, except in traditionalist Mennonite and Amish communities, where it is thriving.

Two of the reasons Loudon considers Pennsylvania Dutch a separate language are that it is quite different from European German and its vocabulary has changed over the centuries. Although the Mennonites and Amish have borrowed a number of English words, he argues

that they are mostly ideas for which there was no word in 18th-century Palatine German.

“Pennsylvania Dutch is not ‘watered down’ by the borrowing of such words, but enhanced both in terms of the overall size of its vocabulary and the range of meanings its words can express,” he writes. Since the grammatical structure has not been changed, he argues that the language is not affected by the selective adoption of English words. Of course, these words are pronounced in a German way.

Loudon differentiates between two groups that have used the Pennsylvania Dutch language. The Mennonites and Amish, whom he refers to as sectarians, generally have used it only as a spoken language. The non-sectarians, the non-Mennonite Pennsylvania Dutch speakers, had much more written material, some of which appeared in local eastern Pennsylvania newspapers. They also developed folklore societies in which they enjoyed poetry readings, songs and skits in Pennsylvania Dutch. A number of these poems and writings are included.

With the rise of tourism in Pennsylvania Amish country came the stereotype that speakers of Pennsylvania Dutch could not speak proper English and they used phrases such as “Throw the cow over the fence some hay.” Loudon explains how this false stereotype emerged in the early 20th century and points out that the Mennonites and Amish have borrowed English words, but never confused the sentence structures of the two languages.

Since Pennsylvania Dutch was my first language, I found the book fascinating. Reading a scholarly account of its origins and development made me very sorry that I have lost fluency. I found the poems and writings very difficult to read and tended to skip to the English translation, confirming Loudon’s comment that Mennonites are not accustomed to reading this language.

Although this is an academic book, and the casual reader may want to skim through parts of it, it is written in a very accessible style and provides good information about the Pennsylvania Dutch language. ☞

☞ Briefly noted

Sara Fretz receives Abner Martin Music Scholarship

• **SARA FRETZ** is the recipient of the \$5,000 Abner Martin Music Scholarship for 2015/16. She is in the master of music therapy program at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ont., with a special interest in music-centred psychotherapy. While living in Winnipeg, she volunteered with counselling services at Canadian Mennonite University as a music therapist during 2013-14 and offered Christian and traditional music circles at the Women’s Correctional Centre in Headingly, Man. Currently, Fretz is involved in the music program at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., and she sings high soprano in the Da Capo Chamber Choir. Each week she drums with Mino Ode Kwewak N’gamowak (the Good Hearted Women’s Drum Group and Singers) at St. Paul’s University College, Waterloo. This group of indigenous and non-indigenous women, which is dedicated to building bridges in the community, has performed at many area churches and other locales in the community.

—Menno Singers



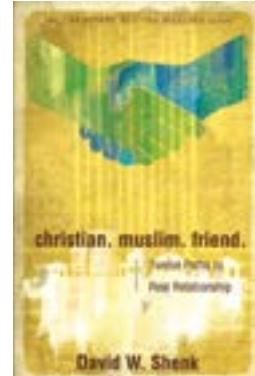
Sara Fretz

BOOK REVIEW

Shenk adds to Christian-Muslim dialogue

Christian. Muslim. Friend.: Twelve Paths to Real Relationship.
Herald Press, 2015.

REVIEWED BY DAVE ROGALSKY
EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT



David W. Shenk's latest book, *Christian. Muslim. Friend.: Twelve Paths to Real Relationship*, comes at an opportune time for Canadian Christians, since the country has received more than 25,000 refugees from Syria since last fall. While Syria is a multi-faith society, the majority of these refugees are Muslim.

Statistics Canada's 2011 National Household Survey listed slightly more than a million Canadians as Muslim in a population of just over 34 million. That means Islam is the fastest growing religion in Canada, largely fuelled by continuing immigration. Most Canadians will be in some kind of relationship with Muslims, whether they know it or not. Christians, long the vast majority of religious practitioners in Canada, are now rubbing shoulders with many from other religions. Change is often difficult when people are used to assuming something

like their exclusive place in society. Many in both the religious and secular worlds are asking how to move with acceptance and grace into this new reality.

In *Christian. Muslim. Friend.*, the fourth in the Christians Meeting Muslims series from Herald Press, Shenk explores the foundation he believes necessary for Christians to be in good relationship with Muslims, even as friends. A global consultant for Eastern Mennonite Missions, he worked in missions in both Somalia and Kenya, and continues to lecture in both Christian and Muslim forums around the world yearly. His previous books have described his ongoing relationships and discussions with Muslims, including with his friend Badru D. Kateregga of Kenya.

In this book he lays out "twelve paths to real relationship": integrity, identity, respect, trust, dialogue about differences, hospitality, answer questions, confront

distortions, compare *hijrah* (the migration or journey of Mohammed and his followers from Mecca to Medina, in AD 622) and the cross, seek peace and pursue it, partner with the person of peace, and commend Christ. Each chapter is full of stories from Shenk's own experience and ends with helpful questions for discussion.

I am planning to use this book at Wilmot Mennonite Church, New Hamburg, where I am the pastor, and think it would have been helpful to have chapters seven through nine at the beginning, as these deal with some beliefs of both Muslims and Christians, and the differences between them. Such groundwork would be helpful for readers in knowing with whom Christians are relating in integrity, respect and trust, as many will not have read the previous books in the series or have other grounding in what Muslims believe.

The book will be useful whether Christians believe that they need to work toward the conversion of Muslims to Christianity, or whether they believe Christians need to see Muslims as fellow followers of the God of Abraham.

While Shenk leans toward the evangelical side of that discussion, the suggestions on building relationships are not some kind of shadowy "friendship evangelism" that is more about changing someone than about being real friends. His suggestions will stand both evangelicals and universalists in good stead.

In some contexts the questions included will create enough discussion for a group, while in others it might be good to stretch the material by beginning with larger discussions about the nature of integrity, trust, dialogue and so on. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Groundbreaking book on Mennonite labour history released

On May 18, Janis Thiessen, associate professor of history at the University of Winnipeg, released her new book, *Not Talking Union: An Oral History of North American Mennonites and Labour*. Using more than a hundred source interviews, Thiessen closely examines Mennonites' historical conscientious objection to labour unions. The publisher, Queens-McGill University Press, has heralded her work as groundbreaking: "*Not Talking Union* breaks new methodological ground in its close analysis of the oral narratives of North American Mennonites. Reflecting on both oral and archival sources, Thiessen shows why Mennonite labour history matters, and reveals the role of power and inequality in that history."



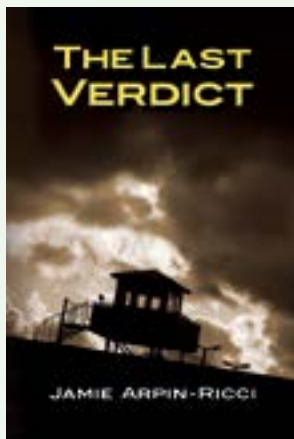
—BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY

/// Briefly noted

Winnipeg author-pastor tackles death penalty

In late March, Jamie Arpin-Ricci, co-founder of Mennonite Church Manitoba's Little Flowers Community in downtown Winnipeg, released his second novel, *The Last Verdict*. The story follows two mothers whose lives have been shattered by murder: one has lost a daughter, the other may soon lose her son—convicted of the crime—to the death penalty. Both seek justice for their children, but “neither are prepared for what it will cost them.” Since its release, the book has been lavishly endorsed by prominent clergy, authors, activists like Shane Claiborne, vocal death-row survivors, and family members of executed prisoners. Arpin-Ricci says that a recent period of correspondence with condemned American men inspired his book, particularly his conversations with a Mississippi man his own age named Matt. “We became quick friends, sharing a deep faith [and] a passion for justice,” said Arpin-Ricci. “I also became very close to his family, especially his mother Mary. . . . Before he was killed, he made me promise that I would work for justice. ‘Make people care, Jamie!’ This novel is the first step in keeping that promise.”

—BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY



ONLINE NOW!

at canadianmennonite.org

Youth preparing to join conversation

As they prepare to attend Youth Assembly 2016, Mennonite youth can use resource materials to help them discuss the Being a Faithful Church and Future Directions recommendations.

www.canadianmennonite.org/youth-join-conversation



Profiles of Youth Assembly 2016 keynote speakers

Chris Lenshyn and Reece Friesen bring insight, vision and a passion for dialogue, as they look forward to meeting with Mennonite youth in Saskatoon.

www.canadianmennonite.org/passion-generations

www.canadianmennonite.org/room-dialogue



From refugee to sponsor: A journey of 40 years

Remembering her experience as a refugee fleeing Vietnam, a physician is helping two Syrian refugee families settle in Canada.

www.canadianmennonite.org/tran-davies



Hmong churches make Anabaptist bond official

A group of Hmong churches in Thailand and Mennonite Church U.S.A. have made official a relationship they have been nurturing over the past 10 years.

www.canadianmennonite.org/hmong-anabaptists



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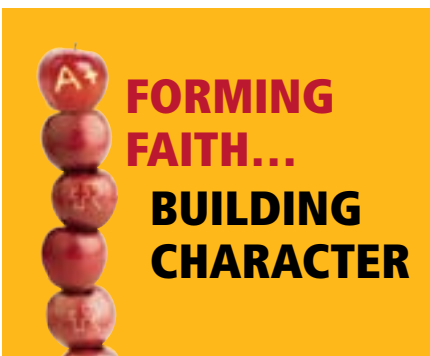
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Students get in tune with God

Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg

Vic Pankratz and Ross Brownlee, the choral and band directors, steer the music department at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, and they share their passion of music with their students.

Students learn to express themselves through the art of music, and one of the highlights in their high school career is the music tour offered every two years since the 1970s. It offers the students an opportunity to showcase their musical gifts; even more so, it's a time of worship. The music tour is not only a gift to the students, but to all those whom they encounter along the way.

The most recent tour had the students perform up to nine times in a span of 10 days. Their audiences consisted of our

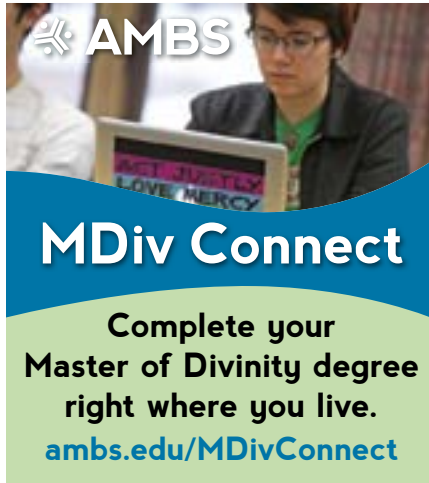


Band director Ross Brownlee, left, and choral director Vic Pankratz

Mennonite sister schools: UMEI, Rockway and Eden Christian School, as well as Leamington United, St. Jacobs and Vineland United Mennonite churches and Montreal

(Continued on page 30)

Post-Secondary



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Raising awareness, raising funds

Waterloo, Ont., man cycling across Canada in support of mental health

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

A young man from southern Ontario is cycling across Canada this summer to raise awareness of mental health issues, while also raising funds for the Defeat Depression campaign.

Martin Bauman of Waterloo, Ont., embarks on the 7,500-kilometre trip on June 7. The ride will start in Vancouver and end in St. John's, N.L., at the end of August. Riding under the banner, "Keep pushing: Martin's ride for mental health," Bauman hopes to raise \$10,000, the majority of which will be allocated to the Waterloo-Wellington-Dufferin branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association.

The 23-year-old, who attends

By that evening, Bauman was plotting his ride across Canada in spite of the fact that he had never cycled more than 20 kilometres in one go.

Bauman chose the cause because of the various ways people in his own life have struggled with mental health. When he was 10 years old, his cousin committed suicide. Three years later, Bauman's father went to the hospital seeking treatment for a bout of depression. When Bauman was in high school, one of his friends revealed that he had been self-harming. And Bauman himself has struggled with seasonal affective disorder and anxiety.

"All those pieces together made mental

In addition to raising awareness and funds for mental health, the ride is an opportunity for Bauman to see Canada from coast to coast.

Hawkesville Mennonite Church and works as a reporter for a local radio station, was inspired to do the trip last October after interviewing a family friend who was spending a cold Saturday cycling 50 kilometres for Ride for Refuge, an event that raises funds for the displaced, vulnerable and exploited.

When Bauman asked his friend why he was participating, he was struck by the response. "You look at the news today and you see so many people struggling . . . and sometimes it feels like there's really nothing you can do, but this is really, in one small way, something that I can do to help," he told Bauman.

health something that was important to me," he says.

Bauman has been training since October, working his way up from 20-kilometre rides to be able to comfortably ride 100 kilometres at a time. He will follow a route he found on CanadaByBicycle.com that will necessitate riding between 100 and 120 kilometres each day, with occasional off days thrown in for rest and sightseeing.

In addition to raising awareness and funds for mental health, the ride is an opportunity for Bauman to see Canada from coast to coast.

"My sense of wanderlust was stoked last
(Continued on page 28)

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARTIN BAUMAN



Martin Bauman was inspired to cycle across Canada after talking with a family friend.



Martin Bauman has been training for his 7,500-kilometre journey since last October.



Martin Bauman is looking forward to seeing Canada from coast to coast and to meeting new people along the way.

(Continued from page 27)

year when I went to Europe and did two months of backpacking,” he says. He would often tell people he met along the way about Canada’s beauty, which he experienced growing up during family trips to B.C., Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec and the Maritimes. “Telling people about it made me want to go back and see that beauty again.”

Bauman resigned from his job and is putting his career on hold in order to do the trip.

“I thought it was more important to me at the time to do this than to continue a career,” he says. “I figure I can pick up a career when I’m done, but . . . this is important to me. I didn’t want to push it off to someday,” and then not end up doing it at all.

Bauman will be camping along the way, as well as staying with friends, people who are friends of friends, and people he has connected with over the Internet. “The part that I’m most excited about with that is meeting people along the way,” he says. “I’m really looking forward to the chance to meet families and hear their stories.”

Bauman’s ride has already attracted media attention in his city, as well as an endorsement from Waterloo Mayor Dave Jaworsky. Less than two weeks before starting the ride, Bauman had already raised \$5,800.

“[Ten thousand dollars is] something far beyond what I’ve ever raised before or aimed to raise,” Bauman says, adding that the response so far has “been phenomenal”

He is looking forward to the journey and to furthering the conversation about mental health. While society has come a long way in terms of breaking down the stigma surrounding things like depression, there is still more to do, he says.

“It is common, it is an illness just like any other illness, and people should not be ashamed or embarrassed to talk about what they’re going through,” Bauman says. “It can only get better by talking about it.” ☞

For more information about the ride, or to contribute, visit mdsc.akaraisin.com/MartinsRide.



‘It’s fun being on this ride together . . .’

Conrad Grebel grads excited about their anti-counterfeiting nanotechnology startup

BY AARON EPP

Young Voices Editor

PHOTOS BY MARGARET GISSING



Living at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., impacted Perry Everett’s idea of what it means to be successful.

Three recent graduates of the University of Waterloo (UW), Ont., who resided at Conrad Grebel University College, are pouring their energies full-time into their own startup company.

Perry Everett, Graham Thomas and Benjamin Rasera graduated in April and are the founders of Arylla Inc., which aims to bring an end to the counterfeiting industry.

The trade of counterfeit goods costs the global economy around \$2 trillion each year, and counterfeit products pose a risk to consumers, Everett says. Arylla offers

unique anti-counterfeiting ink that the trio invented. This ink can be applied to products, giving them each their own unique “fingerprint.” The fingerprint can be tracked, traced and authenticated throughout the supply chain using a smartphone.

“It’s a very special feeling to be able to dedicate your time to an idea that you have helped to create,” says Everett, 22. “It’s unlike anything else I’ve ever experienced in the workforce.”

Thomas, also 22, agrees. He says that what he most enjoys about Arylla is “working on a startup company where the goals

are clear and the motivation is there because it's your pet project and it's something you can put all your weight into."

The trio met while living in residence at Grebel, and studied nanotechnology engineering together at UW.

The idea for the company started with a material that the trio created by chance while testing different possibilities in the lab. They created a material that was difficult to detect and, after working with it for a few months, thought it would be interesting to apply it as a security feature since the material is virtually impossible to reverse engineer.

The trio won \$25,000 last July at a competition for science start-ups and entrepreneurs, allowing them to further their work. They are focussing their efforts on

of the real world and be an active member of the community as well," Everett says.

He adds that being able to sit with his fellow Grebel residents and discuss issues ranging from nanotechnology to humanitarian concerns and spirituality was also formative. Everett, who grew up Catholic, says he learned a lot about Anabaptism along the way.

"I would say my concept of sort of the Mennonite way of life was not accurate, but the more I learned about it during my time at Grebel, the more it resonated with me," he says, adding that concepts like community and living a life of service have impacted his overall goals as he begins his career.

"[It basically changed] my definition of success away from a high-paying engineering job to something that makes a meaning-

'It's a very special feeling to be able to dedicate your time to an idea that you have helped to create.'
(Perry Everett)

the pharmaceutical industry but, given the versatility of their product, it could also be used on everything from electronics to fertilizer in the future.

According to Thomas, living together at Grebel helped make his partnership with Everett and Rasera possible. The three got to know each other during their first year at school and were soon spending "an unreasonable amount of time together," doing homework, studying and socializing.

Everett describes his experience living at Grebel as "incredible" and "invigorating." "It was very refreshing to be among a group of very bright and open-minded students," he says. "You're surrounded by students who are critical thinkers, and they like to challenge the status quo. . . . That's not something you always find at most residences."

Grebel provides a number of leadership opportunities that Everett says he was fortunate to take part in. He served on Grebel's student council and also worked as a don, caring for the well-being of residents as well as taking care of the building after business hours. Those experiences helped him mature.

"It was my first time living away from home for an extended period of time, so it was a nice segue to what it's like to be part

ful impact in people's lives," Everett says.

Everett, Thomas and Rasera believe Arylla's technology can have such an impact and are excited to see what the future holds. They are currently working to improve the company's line of inks as well as its scanning technology. They plan to launch a pilot program in early 2017, with a full product launch to follow in 2018.

Thomas says that when the three were forming Arylla he wanted to join not only because he believed in the technology, but because he knew he could work with Everett and Rasera. "We're a great team," he says. "It's fun being on this ride together with them." ❧



Arylla Inc. co-founders Benjamin Rasera, left, Perry Everett and Graham Thomas met at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.



Graham Thomas fondly recalls spending 'an unreasonable amount of time together' with his Arylla co-founders while living together at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.



The technology that Benjamin Rasera and his Arylla Inc. partners created has a variety of applications.

PROMOTIONAL SUPPLEMENT

(Continued from page 26)
Mennonite Fellowship.

The tour also brings the students into many homes, where they are fed and cared for by people they have never met. The "Mennonite Game" is frequently played around several host family dinner tables at every stop.

"Our society tells us not

to talk to strangers, yet it is the stranger that opens their homes to our students," reflects Pankratz.

Is it possible that God is along for the music tour bus ride? The music of fellowship is definitely in tune on such tours, creating melodies that only God could compose.

social. The Fairview vocal and hand bell choirs perform at 2 and 7 p.m. For advance tickets, call 519-653-5719.

July 1-3: Family camping weekend at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg. Pitch a tent, park a trailer or camp in a cabin. For more information, or to reserve a cabin, call 519-625-8602.

July 17: Riverdale Mennonite Church, Millbank, is celebrating its 70th anniversary with David Brubacher speaking on God's faithfulness at 10 a.m. Everyone welcome.

July 23-24: Wideman Mennonite Church 200th-anniversary main event, Markham, Ont. (23) barbecue at 5 p.m. (RVSP to widemanchurch@gmail.com), followed by hymn sing at 7 p.m. (24) worship service at 10 a.m., followed by a noon potluck lunch, and stories and music at 2 p.m.

July 31: Vineland United Mennonite Church 80th anniversary celebration. Worship service at 10:30 a.m. with lunch and program to follow. Please RSVP at 905-562-4422.

Aug. 4-7: The Sherk/Shirk/Schürch reunion, in Waterloo. Activities include bus tours, seminars, a children's program, auction and banquet. For more information, e-mail schurch.gathering@gmail.com.

To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements eight weeks in advance of the event date by e-mail to calendar@canadianmennonite.org. For more Calendar listings online, visit canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar.



Calendar

Alberta

June 18: Camp Valaqua hike-a-thon fundraiser. For more information, call, 403-637-2510.

June 18: MC Alberta general council meeting, at Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury.

Saskatchewan

June 24-25: RJC year-end musical performances, at 7:30 p.m.

June 25: RJC alumni decade reunions and banquets.

July 6-10: MC Canada delegate assembly at Saskatoon's Arts and Convention Centre.

Aug. 6: Seventh annual Spruce River Folk Festival, at Spruce Home, 20 kilometres north of Prince Albert on Highway 2.

Manitoba

July 11-15: Pioneer Day Camp at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, for children aged 5 to 8.

July 29-Aug. 1: Pioneer Days at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach. Activities include steam-powered threshing, music and food.

Aug. 8-12: Pioneer Day Camp at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, for children aged 9 to 12.

Aug. 10: Heritage Classic Golf Tournament fundraiser for Mennonite Heritage Village, at Quarry Oaks Golf Course. Spaces are limited.

Sept. 18: "Supper from the field," at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, at 5:30 p.m. Held in conjunction with

Open Farm Day.

Ontario

Until Aug. 13: "Stories in Art from Iraqi Kurdistan" at Grebel Gallery.

June 11: Annual bazaar at United Mennonite Home, Leamington.

June 11, 12: Yellow Bellies historical drama by Theatre of the Beat telling stories of conscientious objectors during the Second World War, at 7:30 p.m. (11) and 2:30 p.m. (12).

Tickets available at Conrad Grebel or uwaterloo.ca/grebel/events.

June 12: Wideman Mennonite Church 200th-anniversary hymn sing led by church youth, Markham, Ont., at 7 p.m.

June 12: MennoHomes' "Out-Spoken for Affordable Housing" bike-a-thon, at Elmira Mennonite Church. Options for hikers, cyclists and motorcycle enthusiasts. For more information, call Dan Driedger at 226-476-2535.

June 14: Chicken barbecue and pie auction fundraiser at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, 5 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Tickets available at 519-625-8602.

June 16: MCC Ontario annual general meeting, at Evangelical Mennonite Church, Leamington. For more information, call 519-745-8458.

June 18: Mennonite Historical Society meets at the Conrad Grebel University College library, 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m. to view a new documentary, "The Last Objectors: The Story of Canada's Conscientious Objectors of the Second World War." Everyone welcome.

June 18: Strawberry Social at Nithview Community, New Hamburg, 2-4 p.m. and 6:30-8 p.m.

June 22: Fairview Mennonite Home, Cambridge, hosts its annual strawberry

Classifieds

Announcement

Sherk/Shirk/Schürch Reunion, August 4-7, 2016, Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo

Activities include golf, bus tours, seminars, children's program, auction, banquet, and Sunday worship service.

Evening of storytelling by "7th Cousins" and cello music by Lydia Munchinsky, Fri., Aug. 5 at 7 p.m. in the Great Hall at Conrad Grebel. Free and open to the public.

Last summer, theatre artists Erin Brubacher and Christine Brubaker walked 700 km from Pennsylvania to Ontario, retracing the Mennonite migration route. Through images and storytelling, the pair will share two versions of their journey.

Admittance is free to this evening of music and drama, but donations towards costs will be appreciated. Registration for the reunion is not necessary for this evening program. All are welcome.

www.schurchfamilyassociation.net

Contact Elaine: 519-696-2526, email: schurch.gathering@gmail.com

Volunteer(s) Wanted

Foothills Mennonite Church Guest House is seeking a host(s) beginning in late August. The Guest House serves people from outside the city of Calgary visiting and/or supporting loved ones in the hospital. We are seeking an individual or couple able to make a 2-3 month (or longer) commitment to this volunteer position. Lodging and a food allowance are provided. For information contact Darrel Heidebrecht at dgheidebrecht@gmail.com. For information about the Guest House visit www.foothillsmennoniteguesthouse.ca.

Advertising Information

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Employment Opportunities



Vineland
United Mennonite Church

Employment Opportunity

Vineland United Mennonite Church invites applications for the half-time position of Associate Pastor of Family Ministries. We are located in a semi-rural community in the heart of Ontario's Niagara Peninsula.

We are seeking a person who is willing to develop effective programming and excels in building and maintaining relationships among the young adults, senior youth and junior youth within a multi-generational setting. The candidate will work alongside other leaders in the congregation as part of the ministries within the church. Start time is negotiable. More information is available at mcec.ca/jobs/associate-pastor-family-ministries.

Applications to be submitted by June 30, 2016 to:

Henry Paetkau
MCEC Area Church Minister
50 Kent Ave.
Kitchener, ON
N2G 3R1



Or by email to pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca



Conrad Grebel
University College

Student Life and Recruitment Coordinator

Conrad Grebel University College is seeking a Student Life and Recruitment Coordinator who will participate in the work of Student Services to engage students in building and celebrating a living and learning community and coordinate the recruitment activities for the College's academic and residence programs. This role involves significant work with current and future students and involves some travel. This role is full-time (35 hours per week) on a two-year contract with the possibility for renewal.

Communications Assistant

Conrad Grebel University College is seeking a Communications Assistant who will design and create visual content that clearly and effectively communicates the mission and programs of the College to its students, parents, and friends of the College. The work includes the design, layout, and coordination of print materials and web pages as well as photography and photo editing. This role is .7 fte (25 hours per week) on a one-year contract with the possibility for renewal.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled but will be reviewed starting June 16, 2016.

Read complete job descriptions at grebel.ca/positions

Travel

Visit Europe the Mennonite Way! Faith-based Hotel Tours to Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Poland and Ukraine,

focussing on the Mennonite-Anabaptist heritage. More information online: mennoniteheritagetours.eu

Stewardship Consultant British Columbia

Mennonite Foundation of Canada, a donor-advised charitable foundation committed to helping others live generously with the financial resources God has entrusted to them, is seeking a Stewardship Consultant for our British Columbia office in Abbotsford.

As the ideal candidate you will:

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519-745-7821 | gfangrad@MennoFoundation.ca



Help Wanted

Seeking a full time, seasonal **Dump Truck Driver**. Must have a clean driving record and dump truck experience. Please email resume to jeljoehaulage@gmail.com. Only those selected for an interview will be contacted, and references will be required upon a successful interview.

For Rent

Three-bedroom cottage at Red Bay on the Bruce Peninsula, nestled among maple trees. Short walk to sandy beach and small park and includes a rear deck. Available June 25 through September 3. Call Diane at 519-746-4920.



David Shenk and Jonathan Bornman, members of the Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) Christian/Muslim Relations Team, travelled to Kenya at the invitation of the Kenya Mennonite Church from April 27 to May 8. Shenk is pictured at right speaking to a group of Christians and Muslims at Eastleigh Fellowship Centre in Eastleigh, Kenya, on the topic 'The cross from a perspective of reconciliation.'

God at work in the World Snapshots

For more photos and a review of David Shenk's recent book, *Christian. Muslim. Friend.*, visit canadianmennonite.org/christian-muslim-relations.



At a Christian-Muslim relations seminar at Eastleigh Fellowship Centre in Eastleigh, Kenya, Christian participants, including Nairobi Mennonite Church pastor Rebecca Osiro, right, work in small groups to study and discuss how to improve relations with Muslims.



A Christian participant at a Christian-Muslim relations seminar in Malindi, Kenya, writes implementation steps for hospitality in interactions with Muslims. Steps include: 'Our kids oftenly [sic] play with Muslim kids, invite them to our homes and share their belongings with them,' and, 'We interact and help each other during the times of problems: sickness, death . . .'