

CANADIAN MENNONITE

November 21, 2016

Volume 20 Number 23

A walk in the dark

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EDITORIAL

A new conversation about dementia

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

When the diagnosis of dementia hits you up close and personal, as it has me with the decline of my spouse Marlene due to the disease, it sends you on a grief journey that clouds your perspective on life. The questions come fast and furious.

Why did this happen to her, a person so dynamic and useful, so looking forward to fulfillment of dreams at the end of the road, to spending time with family and friends, perhaps some traveling and learning of other cultures, being a gracious grandmother and enjoying the special bond of close friends going through the aging process?

Why are we, as best friends through all of our varied experiences, now confined to limited conversation, the sharing of life on a very basic level—looking through family albums, taking short walks and hour-long drives in the country to enjoy the inspiration of nature, drawing on the deep reservoir of love and affection from family and close friends?

This was not the way it was supposed to be. This was not the anticipated destiny towards the end of life's road. How, in the providence of a creative and creating God, could this come upon the lives of blessing and peace, the crushing of two spirits that were bound as soul mates?

There are no answers—only more questions. Until one resolves to climb out of that cycle of despair and take another look, change the lenses and see what was a new burden instead as a blessing, an opportunity, a new challenge calling for new ways of looking at something that is conventionally considered a dread.

I was helped along this path during a recent experience that opened my eyes to new possibilities, a new awareness that persons with dementia have not basically changed their personalities or a desire to live normal lives, and who experience deep friendships and function as normally as possible within the larger context of society.

I listened to four panellists with early dementia tell their own stories, in their own words—the first of this kind of event in Canada. They were able to voice their frustrations, appeal for understanding of their memory loss, and ask that family and friends don't forsake them in their new state, but hold them, as before, in our affections. It was powerful and moving.

This, according to the professionals and caregivers in the field, is changing the conversation about dementia. Rather than looking to medical science to diagnose and treat, and then shunt these persons off to an institution, we are



entering an era of engaging them with support persons, making their surroundings—even in designated places of care—as much as possible like the homes they have left. Down to the finest details of arranging furniture to the quality of their food. There is a new focus on well-being, on the quality of life, rather than just the biomedical view of dementia.

Here in southern Ontario, the Ron Schlegel family have been pioneers in fostering this new discourse. They have taken a multi-disciplinary approach to aging, recognizing it as one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century. More than a half-million Canadians are living with the disease. That figure is expected to double in the next 15 years, with another 1.1 million being affected directly or indirectly.

The hunt for a cure to dementia is a long way off, say the professionals, and there are from 80 to 100 different kinds of dementia. So the resources of the Schlegel enterprises are a huge gift to families and congregations. One in every 30 Canadians is affected, estimates Jane Kuepfer, a Schlegel specialist in "spirituality and aging," meaning that this is a new service front for our congregations.

Kuepfer asks us to get over our fears for our own future, and to become familiar with how dementia works, erase shame by loving persons just the way they are, and walk alongside caregivers in their difficult journey.

"Human beings are complex and beautiful creations who evolve and change throughout our lifetimes," she observes. "None of us are who we once were or who we will be in the future. God is with us from the beginning and beyond the end. We can love as God loves, and pray to see with God's eyes, to have the compassion of God's heart for one another."

ABOUT THE COVER:

'Maybe this Advent finds you walking in the dark, taking groping, fearful, tentative steps,' writes Carol Penner in our page 4 feature, 'A walk in the dark.'

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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

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Award-winning
member of the
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ADVENT FEATURE

A walk in the dark

By Carol Penner

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

Maybe this Advent finds you walking in the dark, taking groping, fearful, tentative steps.

In the northern hemisphere, Advent comes to us in the darkest time of the year. Christmas is advertised and celebrated as the happiest time of the year, and for some it is just that. But for others, Christmas is indeed the darkest time, where loneliness seems lonelier, when separation feels more separate, and despair calls our name. For many people it is not “the most wonderful time of the year.”

I remember one particularly bleak season for us, when a member of our family was dying during Advent, whom we went to visit and then stayed for the funeral. We flew home the week before Christmas. There was not one decoration up in our house. I’d had no time for Christmas shopping or baking. I had no energy to do anything. My heart just felt cold and heavy when I listened to the cheery Christmas music playing all around me. All I could think of was the person who was gone, and the suffering that we had watched. Christmas seemed off-key, misplaced, misbegotten.

I still remember being in church on that fourth Sunday of Advent. I had no voice to sing, but I heard my community sing all around me, “O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, who mourns in lowly exile here.” These were words I could hang on to: “Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death’s dark shadows put to flight.” The people of Israel were a people in chains, under the heavy boot of a Roman occupying army. Many were looking for God, but the prophets had gone silent. Where was God in that darkness?

Dreams delayed

In the Christmas stories, Mary and Joseph both receive revelations, but that doesn’t mean they knew everything. They were still walking in darkness.

I can just imagine Mary the night after the angel has left. She’s lying in bed, thinking about everything that has just happened to her. Suddenly she sits bolt upright: “I forgot to ask the angel, who is going to tell Joseph?” Maybe she hoped Gabriel had paid Joseph a visit at the same time. I can picture Mary looking at Joseph the next day, wondering if he was going to mention the angel visitor. Day in, day out, she waited.

I wonder if Mary agonized, “Should I tell him or not?” I wonder if her prayers were, “Lord, you have to tell Joseph today. Please! Today!” She didn’t want Joseph to be in the dark, but what were



the chances of him believing her?

And then the time came when Joseph finds out about the pregnancy. Did he figure it out himself? Did Mary tell him? Did a neighbour share that juicy bit of gossip with him? Or maybe his mother told him, after hearing it at the well. We don't know how Joseph found out Mary was pregnant. We do know that he decides to divorce her. He feels that the relationship must end.

In the Orthodox tradition, with its many paintings of biblical stories, the story of the birth of Jesus sometimes has Joseph in a corner, looking glum and dejected as someone whispers something in his ear. He is hearing bad news: Mary is pregnant.

If Joseph was dismayed, Mary's situation was worse. She faced disgrace and the prospect of raising her son without a father. She was gaining a child, but losing a husband, a terrible situation in that time and place. Dark times for both Mary and Joseph.

And then Joseph is sent a dream. He's told that Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit. And that they are to parent a child who is a Saviour for their people, who will save them from their sins. Suddenly, Joseph sees the light.

I wonder if Joseph or Mary ever wondered, "Why, Lord? Why couldn't you have told us both the news at the same time? Why did we have to go through that period of darkness? It was so hard for us! Why?"

Recurring dreams about the dark

Not knowing something is often

described with that word picture, of "being in the dark." Darkness is a basic primal human fear. We fear that danger lurks in the darkness. Or if we are travelling in the darkness, we fear losing our way. Will we ever get home?

I have had recurring dreams about darkness. I've dreamed I'm driving and need to turn in a certain direction, but it's entirely dark, I can't see a thing. Or I've had dreams where I'm looking for something but I can't open my eyes to see. I'm looking and looking, but my eyes won't open, and I don't know what's there. Those

Relying on God in the dark

Even though it was stressful, we can see that Joseph and Mary both relied on God in the dark. Mary, even though she probably knew that Joseph was going to divorce her, decided to keep the baby, even though in those times there were undoubtedly ways of making pregnancies end. She decided to go through with this even if everyone deserted her; she would rely on God. And Joseph, even when he was walking in the dark and thought Mary had been unfaithful, didn't become vindictive and spiteful. He was a right-

When I worked as a chaplain, I often had to sit with people in times of darkness. Times when they were sitting in a waiting room not knowing if their loved one was going to live or to die.

dreams are always gripping and scary.

When I worked as a chaplain, I often had to sit with people in times of darkness. Times when they were sitting in a waiting room not knowing if their loved one was going to live or die. Sometimes people would be sitting there brooding, then they would just explode with the comment, "I can't take this!" Especially as hours turned to days, and days turned to weeks, and someone's life still hovered in the balance, they'd say, "I can't take this not knowing. I can deal with whatever happens, I can deal with death, I can deal with life, but I can't deal with this not knowing."

eous man, and resolved to do the right thing, which was to divorce Mary quietly.

Joseph's dream illuminated his path, but only to a certain extent. The first dream he had didn't end with the question, "And have you ever thought of moving to Egypt?" Maybe that would have been too much for poor Joseph—the last straw that would have sent him running from the scene saying, "This baby is arriving with too much baggage!"

In the same way, in that first meeting with Mary, Gabriel didn't say anything about where the baby would be born, and under what circumstances. While Mary

(Continued on page 6)

'ANXIETY OF ST. JOSEPH' BY TISSOT (1836-1902)



We don't know how Joseph found out Mary was pregnant. We do know that he decides to divorce her. He feels that the relationship must end.

(Continued from page 5)

knew he would be a Saviour, she wasn't given all the information. It was when her baby was safe in her arms that Simeon in the temple told her, "And a sword will pierce your soul also." Mary was in the dark about that statement for Jesus' whole life. God gives light, but, mercifully at times, also protects us from illumination that would overwhelm us.

Embracing the reality of darkness

Maybe this Advent finds you walking in the dark, taking groping, fearful, tentative steps. Will the medical test results come back positive or negative? Will the bank foreclose on the farm this year? Will my husband come back to me? Will I ever find a job? Is it war or peace? What country will accept our refugee claim? What will climate change look like in 20 years? Is God real? Does God love me?

We live in dark times, where we feel unsure of many things. And it's a mystery why some receive illumination, and others plod along fearfully in the dark. We don't know why Joseph's dream was delayed, or why it took so long for a

Saviour to appear.

Yet we worship a God who shows up in the darkest places, places where we think God cannot be. A God of Bethlehem. A

God of Aleppo. A God of the nuclear-bomb silo. A God of the torture chamber. A God of the coldest, greediest multinational corporate boardroom. A God of the person wearing explosives walking into a crowded mall. A God of my heart.

As congregations, as churches, we will gather on the evening of Dec. 24, and the chorus, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" will ring out into the night. We join with Jesus, who is also waiting, waiting to be born again in this pregnant darkness—born again in the hearts of all who work for peace. ❧

Carol Penner teaches and writes in the area of practical theology. After many years as a pastor in various Mennonite congregations, she joined the faculty of Conrad Grebel



University College this year. Her research interests include feminist theology and Mennonite peace theology, and abuse issues. She has a popular blog of her worship resources at leadinginworship.com.

/// **For discussion**

1. Can you think of times when you were walking in darkness, with despair calling your name? What kinds of situations cause us the most anxiety? Mary and Joseph received messages from an angel of God. In what ways did they feel reassured and in what ways more anxious?
2. Carol Penner writes, "We live in dark times, where we feel unsure of many things." Do you agree? What are the things we are most unsure about? What are the larger forces in the world that have caused society to lose its optimism about the future?
3. Penner describes her return home after a death in the family when she felt that "Christmas seemed off-key, misplaced, misbegotten." What tips do you have for coping with the festive expectations of the Christmas season if a person is struggling with loneliness or grief? Are our festive expectations too high? Where do these expectations come from?
4. Penner affirms that "we worship a God who shows up in the darkest places." When has God's light surprised you? What are some signs of hope that God is at work in your family, in your congregation or in your community?

—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.canadian-mennonite.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.

✉ Reader supports Mennonite call to 'speak up'

RE: "MENNONITES SHOULD speak up about Muslim head coverings" letter, Oct. 10, page 10.

This letter is right on. We have had a business in a non-Mennonite area for many years. Our customers came from every origin. Our employees never distinguished between the ethnic dress of anyone.

Growing up in a Mennonite area of Manitoba, we had head coverings in all shapes, types and colours. It did not matter. The issue was left to the decision of the family.

Now if everyone would join the chorus and accept who they are, and get it right once and for all that we were all created in God's image, it will take care of it on its own without everyone making crude remarks. It has for the last 200 years been accepted.

DAVID KLASSEN, EDMONTON

FROM OUR LEADERS

On being Martha

COREENA STEWART

Hospitality makes my heart sing. Preparing a comfortable space, serving up new dishes, conversing with guests and attending to their individual needs: these are among my greatest joys.

Maybe that's why the story of sisters Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42 has always troubled me. I confess that, as one who loves to host, it's easy to side with Martha, who complains to Jesus that she does all the work while Mary sits at his feet. It's just as easy to be puzzled by Jesus' response: "*Mary chose the better task.*"

Well, that's fine, Jesus. I know relationships are important, and the foundation of the church and everything, but if we all sit at your feet, who's going to get the meal ready? And how come Mary gets to enjoy your company while I'm slaving over a hot stove?

Of course, I want to choose the better

task, but, honestly, sitting around and taking part in a theological discussion just isn't where my head—or heart—is at. And I seem to listen better if my hands are busy.

Several years ago, I took part in a Bible study exploring *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World* by Joanne Weaver. It gave me a slightly different perspective on the situation. Weaver writes that she finds it interesting that "when Jesus corrected Martha, he didn't say, 'Why can't you be more like your sister, Mary?'" He knew Martha would never be Mary, and Mary would never be Martha."

While the book does explore the pitfalls of perfectionism and busyness, it also verifies some important considerations. Jesus accepts us as we are. He encourages us to use the gifts we've been given, and there is room to make choices about how we use them. Weaver's book helped me realize that the Martha/Mary story isn't necessarily an all-or-nothing proposition, and it gave me permission

to do what I love doing—as long as I'm mindful about why I'm doing it.

When I host, my sole focus is not on the tasks in front of me. It's also on my guests. As I chop vegetables or check the roast in the oven, I'm listening to the conversation of the guests around me, and even add a comment or two from time to time. As I exercise the gift of hospitality, I remain mindful of the reason for hospitality: a demonstration of Jesus' love to those around me, a way to build relationships. When I host, I'm not rejecting the "better part" that Jesus talked about. I'm just expressing it in a different way.

To me, this is just one of the beautiful aspects of the Bible. Its stories reflect the lives of so many different kinds of people, people gifted in a wide variety of ways. But no matter what our gifts or talents, or our likes and dislikes, we can navigate faithful living more easily if our actions are hosted by the love of Jesus and a desire to share his love with others.

Coreena Stewart is MC Canada's chief administrative officer and director of church engagement-administration.



✉ Postmodern Shift column does disservice to addicts

RE: "THE PURSUIT of truth (Pt. 8)" column, Aug. 29, page 11.

When considering what Jesus says about false beliefs, Troy Watson states that "addicts, for example, are imprisoned by the false belief that they need

alcohol, drugs, achievements, money or whatever they are addicted to, in order to be happy and fulfilled. This belief is a freedom-crushing lie, as our addictions and attachments are the very things destroying our happiness and fulfillment"

I was surprised and dismayed to read this, as I thought we had stopped placing moral judgments on those with addictions.

FAMILY TIES

Healthy citizens

MELISSA MILLER

My husband and I decided to live in the United States this fall. Flexible work made it possible to move temporarily to a small town near where we grew up, with a primary goal of providing support to my 85-year-old mother. Belatedly, we realized that meant we would be immersed in a presidential election, a prospect that was, by turns, intriguing or unsettling.

Writing just days out from the election, the experience has proven to be baffling, fascinating and sickening. I am baffled by the appeal of a violence-inciting rogue. I am fascinated by the convulsions of a society in enormous change; old ways are crumbling, the powerful cling to power, and an emerging new order is not yet in place. I am sickened by dehumanizing mockery of the disabled, people of colour, religious minorities and women. The political currents are tumultuous and volatile, even though I am living in a beautiful rural area that is stable and relatively prosperous.

After too many hours of reading far-ranging political commentary, I better understand the factors that have led to this point. My current neighbours speak of frustration with politicians who have not addressed their work and economic insecurities. Many white Christians are alarmed by the loss of dominant status. Many reasonable people refuse to discuss politics,

and the gap between divergent perspectives grows larger. As the weeks went by, I found myself joining the 52 percent of Americans experiencing the election as a "very significant or significant source of stress," according to an American Psychological Association poll cited in the Nov. 1 issue of *The Atlantic*.

While there is much that could be said, the focus of this column is on healthy relationships and families. How do governments impact the individuals and families of their countries? What happens when the public space is contaminated by lies, debasing language, greed and immorality? How do the most vulnerable ones find protection? How do the powerful find the moral courage to use their power to sustain justice and integrity?

When public leadership goes awry, as I am now witnessing, we all suffer some loss of moral and spiritual dignity. At a

When the public sphere is troubled, may we centre ourselves in God's great, loving heart.

minimum, it is much harder for parents and teachers to instruct the young when political leaders have abandoned values of respect, fairness and compassion. My deepest prayer is that after the election all responsible citizens will turn their hearts and minds to creating a just society where peace and righteousness kiss (Psalm 85:10).

In the midst of being tied up in fretful knots, I went to church. Thank God for the church! What a welcome respite! That particular Sunday was a hymn-sing worship service, at which congregants called out favourite numbers, and we then sang, raising voices in praise and worship. We recalled and rested in God's great faithfulness, mercy and love. We gave thanks for the beauty of the earth. We celebrated victory in Jesus. We boldly proclaimed that Jesus has risen and we shall not die. We sang of blessed assurance offering a sorely needed foretaste of heaven divine. We closed with the exquisitely tender "Children of the Heavenly Father," which brought tears to my eyes.

The time of giving ourselves over to God's ways and God's rule was a time to regroup ourselves in a vision of integrity, healing and wholeness. Since then I have spent more time in prayer—for the candidates, for the voters, for the disheartened and the hopeful, for myself—

and less time feeding my fears. When the public sphere is troubled and troubling, may we centre ourselves in God's great, compassionate, unbounded loving heart.

Melissa Miller (familyties@mymts.net) has a passion for helping people develop healthy, vibrant relationships with God, self and others.



There are three concerns with this statement:

- **FIRST, THAT** addiction is a belief. It is well understood that addiction is not a belief; rather, it is a disorder of the brain for which there is treatment.
- **SECOND, THAT** the addictive behaviour is chosen in order to seek happiness or fulfillment. While this may contribute to the early motivation to use drugs or

drink, by the time an addiction takes hold, substances are not used to attain happiness but, rather, to avoid withdrawal and the other negative consequences of not using.

- **THIRD, WHILE** it is true that addictions destroy happiness, to say that it is a result of a belief is to imply the person simply needs to change his or her belief.

(Continued on page 10)

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Thinking outside the gift box

MARLOW GINGERICH

As our family sat around the Thanksgiving dinner table discussing our plans for Christmas and the virtue of giving gifts, someone piped up and said: “We already have too much stuff. Please don’t buy us anything for Christmas this year. We don’t need anything!”

Have you heard this statement before? When people complain that individuals are hard to buy for, this surely could be one of the reasons.

Although sharing gifts with children can be one of the most joyful experiences, the stress of finding something they will like can become a burden as they get older. I think this alone has helped fuel the gift card phenomenon. Perhaps you’ve heard or said the following, “I was not sure what to buy for you, but I am sure you can pick something out that you like.”

Some families choose to do things differently by thinking outside the “gift box.” These families have come to the enlightened conclusion that everyone has enough stuff. They are still generous with their time and money, but they just express it in a different way.

If you would like to join these creative gift-giving families, here are three ideas for you to contemplate:

1. DONATE TO charities that you are passionate about.

What if you were to pool the funds that would otherwise be spent on gifts, and donate them to a worthy cause? Often during the gift-giving time of the year, people are invited to donate to the local food bank, the local social services agency and various international relief organizations. We all can see the difference these donations make in our local communities and the world. Pooling your gift-giving funds to donate to charity can provide an opportunity for a fun family event, allowing your family to work



What if you were to pool the funds that would otherwise be spent on gifts, and donate them to a worthy cause?

together in the selection and planning of all the details.

2: BUILD LONG-TERM habits of developing a charitable fund that keeps on giving.

If you are inclined to think further outside the gift-giving box, I would suggest opening a gifting account that could receive your pooled funds and set a gift-giving goal to be reached. Setting a specific monetary goal allows interest to be earned in the interim, which the family can then donate each year. This would encourage your family to continue the spirit of giving

throughout the entire year, and not just at Christmas. By taking this approach, you create a “family legacy fund” that continues for years to come. What a great way to inspire and involve grandchildren in charitable giving at a young age!

3: VOLUNTEER WITH a charity.

Another family I know volunteers at a local soup kitchen every year during the holidays. They help with food preparation, cooking, serving and cleaning up. They have found this experience to be an excellent family time, establishing a legacy of service and putting others first. It also serves as a reminder that not everyone’s Christmas includes a tree with gifts and a turkey dinner. For younger children and teenagers, this is a very effective life lesson. Practising generosity with your time and God-given resources as a family provides teaching moments for lessons in gratitude, as well as a stark reminder of income inequality and how we should respond. How would this type

of gift-giving affect your family as you volunteer together, sharing your time and resources?

Marlow Gingerich is a gift planning consultant at Abundance Canada serving generous people in Ontario and Canada’s eastern provinces. For more information on impulsive generosity, stewardship education, and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest Abundance Canada office or visit abundance.ca.

(Continued from page 9)

No one chooses to be addicted, and to suggest that recovery is simply dependent on changing beliefs further stigmatizes and demeans those who are addicted.

Let's recognize addiction as the health disorder it is, treat those with addiction with the same respect we would other diseases, and support people with addictions in their ongoing path to recovery.

BARRY ANDRES, SHERWOOD PARK, ALTA.

✉ A better way than BDS?

RE: COVERAGE OF Mennonite Church Canada's resolution on Israel-Palestine.

Palestinians assert that they are being oppressed by Israelis—specifically, Israeli Jews. Palestinians have grounds for their complaint.

On the other hand, many Jews—especially Israelis—are concerned that if they lower their guard, they will be killed. This fear is also not groundless. It arises out of the current conflict as well as almost 2,000 years of being at the mercy of Christians.

How should Mennonites respond? According to the resolution recently approved by Canadian Mennonite congregations, we should stand up for Palestinians. We should divest from businesses connected with the Jewish settlements, advocate for economic sanctions against Israel, and presumably engage in cultural boycotts against Israeli Jews, as promoted by the boycott-divestment-sanctions (BDS) movement. This is not unlike what was done in opposition to South African apartheid a few decades ago. Of course, in the case of South Africa, we were white people shunning white people. Now we are Christians shunning Jews.

Could there be a better way?

At the MC Canada meetings this summer, it was reported that local Saskatchewan rabbis had approached our leadership, asking that the congregations hold off on the divestment and sanctions components of the resolution in order to have some conversation with the Canadian Jewish community about the problem of settlements. It is regrettable that none of the delegates moved to defer the decision long enough to take up that conversation.

Perhaps it is not too late. I would call for congregations and our MC Canada leadership to try to form relationships with neighbouring synagogues and other Canadian Jewish community organizations before implementing the divestment decision and advocating for Canadian sanctions against Israel.

**RUSSEL SNYDER-PENNER,
KITCHENER, ONT.**

✉ Mennonites must inform themselves on Israel-Palestine

TO THINK ABOUT Israel-Palestine is hard. Speaking about Israel can touch deep feelings in many of us. It is far easier not to look, not to see, and not to think. Many people and many churches believe that we should not say anything that might be against Israel. We feel helpless, almost paralyzed in this.

If we here, with our freedoms and security, cannot talk about the realities and needs in Israel-Palestine, how can we expect the people and groups who live in the middle of those tensions and conflicts to get along?

A resolution about Israel-Palestine was passed at the Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Saskatoon this summer (bit.ly/bds-resolution). It is a call to study and prayer; to partnership with nonviolent Jewish and Palestinian groups working for peace and justice; and to take actions, including economic pressures to end settlements and the occupation. Many individuals and churches struggle with this because they feel it says too much against Israel.

Mennonite connections in the area include Bethlehem Bible College (bethbc.edu) and Sabeel (sabeel.org). Zochrot (zochrot.org) is a Jewish organization working within Israel on questions of justice and the return of Palestinian refugees. Christian Peacemaker Teams (cpt.org) has an ongoing presence in Hebron.

A good timeline of events in Israel-Palestine in the last 100 years is available on the British Broadcasting Corporation website (bit.ly/israel-timeline).

Light a candle. Push back the fog.

RAY HAMM, NEUBERGTHAL MAN.

/// Milestones

Baptisms

Brent Ellison, Jaclyn Ellison, Karlyn Kuepfer—Listowel Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 23, 2016.

Marriages

Alblas/Klassen—Aleta Alblas and Nathan Klassen (Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.), at Zion United Reformed Church, Sheffield, Ont., Oct. 15, 2016.

Enns/Schrag—Sonia Enns (Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg) and Nick Schrag, in Freeman, S.D., Oct. 22, 2016.

Krotz/Muir—Heather Krotz (Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.) and William Muir, at Victoria Park, Kitchener, Ont., Oct. 1, 2016.

Krotz/Poole—Paul Krotz (Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.) and Candice Poole, at

Cambridge Mill, Ont., July 2, 2016.

Rureshema/Van Doeselaar—Patrick Rureshema and Carla Van Doeselaar (Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg), in Winnipeg, Oct. 16, 2016.

Deaths

Balzer—Frieda (nee Patkau), 85 (b. Feb. 1, 1931; d. Oct. 30, 2016), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Bartel—David, 91 (b. Aug. 1, 1925; d. Aug. 3, 2016), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Bock—John, 97 (b. Sept. 24, 1918; d. Aug. 14, 2016), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Cressman—Calvin (Cal), 76 (b. May 16, 1940; d. Oct. 31, 2016), St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Esau—Tena, 92 (b. April 8, 1924; d. Aug. 2, 2016), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Friesen—Helene (nee Dyck), 94 (b. Oct. 27, 1921; d. Sept. 12, 2016), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Hamm—Heinz, 91 (b. June 9, 1925; d. Sept. 16, 2016), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Kerwin—Alvina (nee Reimer), 78 (b. Dec. 15, 1937; d. Aug. 19, 2016), First Mennonite, Winnipeg, in North Vancouver, B.C.

Klassen—Mary (nee Martens), 90 (b. Feb. 28, 1926; d. June 14, 2016), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Loewen—Anne (nee Wall), 89 (b. June 13, 1927; d. Oct. 9, 2016), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Nicklas—Carl, 90 (b. Nov. 10, 1925; d. Oct. 9, 2016), Cassel Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Peters—Rudi, 69 (b. April 13, 1947; d. Sept. 17, 2016), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Penner—Walter, 82 (b. April 21, 1934; d. June 16, 2016), First

Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Riediger—Elisabeth (nee Wiebe), 93 (b. Dec. 15, 1922; d. Sept. 29, 2016), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Schmidt—Anne (nee Doerksen), 92 (b. Nov. 30, 1923; d. July 12, 2016), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Schwartzentruber—Milton, 87 (b. Dec. 19, 1928; d. Oct. 11, 2016), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Snyder—Eugene, 63 (b. June 12, 1953; d. Oct. 25, 2016), St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Steinmann—Florence (nee Erb), 86 (b. Sept. 26, 1930; d. Oct. 8, 2016), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Sudermann—Heinrich, 86 (b. July 12, 1930; d. Aug. 19, 2016), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Thiessen—Jake, 81 (b. July 7, 1935; d. Oct. 22, 2016), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Tiessen—Nellie (nee Lehn), 84 (b. Oct. 29, 1931; d. Oct. 22, 2016), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Tiessen—Ronald James, 50 (b. April 13, 1966; d. Oct. 14, 2016), North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Unruh—Erica (nee Block), 82 (b. May 22, 1934; d. Sept. 5, 2016), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Wieler—Henry, 87 (b. Feb. 9, 1929; d. June 16, 2016), Crystal City Mennonite, Man.

Willms—Alfred, 89 (b. April 11, 1927; d. Oct. 22, 2016), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

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. When sending death notices, please also include birth date and last name at birth if available.

A moment from yesterday



Gordon Eby captured the moment when families in Berlin, Ont., said goodbye to local troops at the start of the First World War in 1914. In 1916, concerned that its Germanic name was bad for business, the city would say 'goodbye' to Berlin and 'hello' to Kitchener. The Berlin Mennonite Church faced a dilemma. Should it adopt the name of the 'warlord' war hero Lord Kitchener? They did not; that is why the Kitchener church is called 'First Mennonite' to this day. (See the 'Where is Berlin [Ont.] Mennonite Church?' article on page 20.)

Text: Laureen Harder-Gissing / Mennonite Archives of Ontario

Photo: Gordon Eby / Mennonite Archives of Ontario



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LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Wisdom, where art thou? (Pt. 2)

TROY WATSON

A school teacher asked her class of first graders, “What colour are apples?” Some children said “red!”

Others exclaimed “green!”

A few said “yellow.”

Then one little boy raised his hand and said, “Apples are white.”

The teacher patiently explained that apples could be red, yellow or green, but never white. However, the boy insisted. Finally the teacher asked him, “Where did you see a white apple?”

“Every apple is white” he explained. “Look inside!”

That’s good advice. As a rule, we don’t look inside as often as we should. Our natural tendency is to focus on externals when looking for the truth, beauty and value of things and people. I’m not talking about the “world” here, whatever that means. I’m talking about us church-going Christians. We can be the first to judge a book by its cover and an apple by the colour of its skin.

I think this judgmental attitude is a reflection of a deeper problem, namely, our resistance to look inside ourselves. We’ve been enculturated to look outward for God and the things of God. Very few of us are mentored to discern and listen to the voice of divine wisdom within.

One of the primary reasons we resist looking inside is that we know a lot of ugly and scary stuff is in there, too. We’d rather avoid it. All our pain, brokenness, disappointment, anger, sadness, shame and fear lie within us. The thought of rummaging through the cluttered storehouses of our inner beings terrifies us.



Yet we will not find what we desperately want and need in life without going inside. Inside is where we find healing, peace, liberty, joy, hope and wisdom. Inside is where we meet Christ.

In John 4, Jesus tells a Samaritan woman drawing water from a well that anyone who trusts him

will experience a spring of living water erupting from within. There are two key things about this promise:

- **FIRST, WE** need to trust Jesus.
- **SECOND, THE** healing waters we need in our lives will spring forth within us.

The sacred spring of Christ is not out there somewhere. It is within you.

Father John Eudes once shared with me that the only way to grow spiritually is through prayer. I asked him, “What is prayer?” He closed his eyes, smiled and said, “Prayer is entering into the space within your own being where the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have taken residence, and are waiting for you to come, sit and commune with them.”

Ever since he gave me that prayer advice, I frequently hear the old Al Green song, “Jesus is Waiting” whenever I sense the need to be still and go within. Jesus is waiting to commune with us, inside our own

bodies. That’s such a wonderful mystery.

I realize all this focus on the internal appears unbalanced. If we focus too much on God, truth and wisdom being within us, why do we need community? We don’t need churches, mentors, pastors or the Bible if we just need to look inside, right?

Here are my thoughts.

The Holy Spirit and divine wisdom are within us. But so is a lot of other stuff: lies, fear, wounds, greed, assumptions, anger—not to mention all the authoritarian voices from our past that we’ve internalized and routinely mistake for God. The most difficult journey in our lives is to wade through all the stuff within, and find the centre of our beings where Christ, the “wisdom of God,” is waiting to meet with us.

In order to make this long inward journey, we need Scripture, community, mentors, counsellors, spiritual directors, ministers, small groups, and saints—both dead and alive—to help us. When we genuinely desire God, we will seek out other people to help us. In fact, God will bring the right people into our lives. The struggle many pastors and churches have is that people with this desire for God are

In order to make this long inward journey, we need Scripture, community, mentors, counsellors, spiritual directors, ministers, small groups and saints—both dead and alive—to help us.

not coming to us anymore for help.

There are a number of reasons I think we’re losing this privilege of helping people navigate through the wilderness within to find God.

Many of us have not made the inward journey ourselves, and have no business coaching others. They’re not fooled by us. For too long, instead of pointing people to God’s Spirit within to find wisdom, we’ve pointed them towards our truth, traditions, experiences and answers, only to find they’re not interested. ❧

Troy Watson (troydw@gmail.com) is pastor of Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford, Ont.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

An ode to empty bottles

TARYN DIRKS

MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA

Around the Bontleng Futsal Park site you will see a number of discarded and forgotten bottles. Some are smashed and shattered on the path, like you'll find all over the city of Gaborone, Botswana—bottles left for little hands to pick up or for unsuspecting travellers to step on. Others are shipped off to a landfill and forgotten.

At times I feel like one of these bottles. Feeling abandoned and worthless is all too real, especially in the darkest and toughest times, when I wait for someone to say or do the wrong thing just so I can lash out and hurt them to ease my own worthlessness.

Deep down, I know this is not what God wants for me. I know it, I read it, and I even understand that there is a better way, but it is just too hard to put into action when I'm in a funk.

On one of these funk days, I went to the park with my husband Nathan and Malakai, our toddler. I looked around the site and realized that everything we have had on our hearts and prayed about for this place has taken shape in the world!

I saw everything from a different perspective.

Nothing stood out more than the fate of discarded bottles. The bottles have been repurposed in our recycling centre, gardens and bathrooms, and will soon be seen in our café. I was struck at just how beautiful that is. Not only for eco-friendliness or physical beauty, but for what it



PHOTO BY NATHAN DIRKS

Taryn Dirks is a Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker in Botswana with her husband Nathan. They are helping local residents create a sustainable soccer park that includes bio-toilets with walls partly constructed of discarded bottles.

symbolizes.

The bottles seem to shout that this is what God has in store for us—and so much more! It is not God's intention for us to be broken, dirty and tossed aside. God wants to make all things good. All things. We are all broken, we all need him, we can all help each other, and together we can all build each other up. We need community.

Like discarded bottles, when we remain in a broken state alone, we are of no use to anyone. We will be in the way and we could possibly hurt others. But if we band together and allow the designer to use us, we can stand strong, united and with purpose. Maybe not in the way God originally intended, but in a beautiful way

all the same. We need to find the beauty in every single day, even if it is different than what we anticipated for ourselves.

This is something I struggle with. When I am hurt, sad or feeling any extreme emotion, I tend to withdraw, and only later do I regret it, because I missed out.

So I challenge myself to think in terms of these bottles. I challenge myself and everyone else too, to find beauty and find community, because when we do, great things will happen! ☺



PHOTO ABOVE: Discarded bottles are cemented into walls between bio-toilets on the Bontleng Futsal Park site.

PHOTO BELOW: Plenty of discarded bottles are found in and around Bontleng Futsal Park—and they are being collected to use in construction as the area is revitalized.

PHOTOS ABOVE AND BELOW BY TARYN DIRKS



GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Extending the table

A multicultural vision for MC Canada

BY WILL BRAUN
Senior Writer

English is still the dominant language in Mennonite Church Canada as a whole, but worship also happens every Sunday in Cantonese, Lao, Tigrinya, Oromo and 14 other languages. Unfortunately, links between Euro-Canadian Mennonites and Mennonites of other backgrounds remain limited.

Of the 225 MC Canada congregations, 29 are not Euro-Canadian, a number that has doubled over the last 20 years. Another dozen or so diverse congregations are affiliated with MC Eastern Canada although not members of MC Canada, and other area churches have unofficial associations with a range of ethnically varied congregations.

Cultural diversity also comes in the form of non-Euro-Canadian people participating in predominantly white congregations. I also include indigenous congregations in the non-Euro category, although there are only two that are officially affiliated.

Most of the non-Euro congregations are relatively small. Some meet in buildings shared with other congregations, some meet on Sunday afternoons. Altogether, they are a richly varied bunch.

A great divide

But most of the rest of us—by which I mean Euro-Canadian Mennonites—have little contact with these diverse Christians.

Dan Graber says we make efforts to include others, but too often those efforts are geared toward getting others to come to our events and fit into our way of doing things. Graber, who serves as executive director of MC Alberta, says, “We expect them to come to us.” While there are notable and inspiring exceptions, the results of this approach speak for themselves.

The three area church directors I spoke with reported fewer connections between

Euro and other groups than they would like to see. They also report lower-than-desired participation in regional events. Participation in the Becoming a Faithful Church (BFC) process was minimal. “They don’t want to sit in meetings where nothing is decided,” says Graber.

There are other barriers as well. Newer immigrants often work multiple low-income jobs. Some pastors are unpaid, leaving only evenings and weekends for church. Lack of familiarity with our institutional ways and language are also impediments in some cases. Time and financial limitations can make attendance at assemblies a challenge.

Ironically, the push to be more ‘inclusive’ is excluding some minority groups.

My attempts to interview leaders from non-English churches met with little success. One pastor noted that his congregation is in the process of leaving the denomination. It is not alone. While it is not possible to pin down numbers, other newcomer congregations in Alberta and B.C. are also considering leaving MC Canada. The reason is same-sex relationships. Ironically, the push to be more “inclusive” is excluding some minority groups. Of course, some English congregations, especially in B.C., are also wanting to part with MC Canada over the BFC7 vote.

Building bridges

One exception is regular pastors meetings that reflect considerable diversity in some areas. There are also beautiful examples of congregations sharing buildings and occasional services, and of Euro-Mennonites attending fundraisers held by others.

Another exception to the divide is the appointment of Calvin Quan of Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church as the new national church moderator. (*See “New moderator brings ‘non-anxious’ presence,” Oct. 24, page 13.*)

Notably, Ontario is different. Brian Bauman, MC Eastern Canada’s mission minister, says that while views on same-sex relationships are a matter of concern for

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Mesfin Woldearegay, pastor of Bethel Ethiopian Evangelical Church in Kitchener, Ont., leads his congregation in worship at Central Baptist Church on Sunday afternoons. The congregation worships in Amharic, a Semitic language from East Africa.

many of the non-English churches he deals with, the conversation is not about leaving. When the issue comes up, Bauman explains the spectrum of views within area church congregations. Some congregations are very traditional and some welcome LGBTQ members.

Bauman, who has worked with newcomer churches for years, both in Eastern Canada and California, sees work across cultures as more than just one aspect of church outreach. He believes the future of the denomination will depend on our ability to become intercultural and multicultural. Noting that he lives an hour from one of the most multicultural cities on earth—Toronto—he says our denomination must adapt to that reality or we will become more and more irrelevant, particularly in urban contexts.

Bauman says that diversity can give us a bigger, clearer picture of who God is. We naturally and inadvertently tend to attach our biases to God, he says. In his

case, Swiss-German and middle-class. Intercultural worship and relationships cause him to reflect on, expand and deepen his experience of God.

Bauman sees the journey towards becoming an intercultural denomination as part of the slow and healthy transition from a past that protected ourselves in cultural enclaves.

The bedrock in building cultural bridges is, of course, relationships. Towards this end, Graber has a simple suggestion: Go to them. Find a service and attend. Worship

may be in another language, but you will find some English speakers. Based on his own experience, Graber says the warmth and welcome will be unequalled.

Bauman adds a caution, though. Relationships need to be based on more than what Euro Mennonites have to give and what others need. Our Euro-Mennonite identity is closely tied to helping, but if we do not also ask what we need and what others can give us, the resulting relationships will be lopsided. ☞

/// Languages

Languages in which MC Canada congregations worship, along with primary associated country where applicable. (People of other language groups attend Mennonite churches, although their languages may not be used in worship.)

Amharic (Ethiopia and Eritrea)
Cantonese (Hong Kong)
Chin-Falam (Burma/Myanmar)
Chin-Hakha (Burma/Myanmar)
English
French
German
Hmong (Laos)
Japanese
Karen (Burma/Myanmar)
Korean
Lao (Laos)
Mandarin (China)
Nuer (South Sudan)
Oromo (Ethiopia)
Spanish
Tamil (Sri Lanka and India)
Tigrinya (Eritrea)
Vietnamese



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From refugees to refuge

Refuge de Paix celebrates 10th anniversary

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
SHERBROOKE, QUE.

As Lucy Roca was leaving Colombia for her safety and that of her family 12 years ago, the Colombian national church commissioned her to establish Spanish-speaking congregations in Canada in coordination with Mennonite Church Canada. Landing in Sherbrooke, Que., she set to work immediately. Now there is a thriving 10-year-old congregation there, which has spawned seven other congregations from Montreal to Quebec City.

On Oct. 14, a loud and energetic celebration of the congregation's life and accomplishments took place. With about 30 regular attenders, the number was swollen to around 50 by pastors who have been mentored by Roca over the past decade; friends; Henry Paetkau, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's area church minister; and Bernard Sejour, MC Eastern Canada's mission catalyst in Ottawa and Quebec.

In many ways, the celebration was like any other anniversary celebration, with speeches, music, food, history lessons and prayers. But Refuge of Peace—aka Refuge de Paix and Refugio de Paz—is culturally Hispanic in a culturally French part of Canada.

Besides that, the celebration included the first graduation of MC Eastern Canada's Anabaptist Learning Workshop. Six people received certificates for completing the program, and an additional 42 received diplomas for taking part in courses originally formulated as "Hispanic leaders training." Roca, her husband, daughters and mother were among those honoured.

When Muriel Queval, co-director of Mennonite Central Committee Quebec with her husband Claude, prayed for the congregation during the celebration, it was translated into Spanish, as was her toast to the congregation, using sparkling apple juice. The crowd heartily raised their glasses and toasted each other around the room.

The congregation has touched many



Lucy Roca, pastor and planter of Refuge de Paix in Sherbrooke, Que., receives her diploma for completing the Anabaptist Learning Workshop from Henry Paetkau, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's area church minister, at the congregation's 10th-anniversary celebration on Oct. 14.

lives during its 10 years of ministry.

Andreas Martinez, himself a refugee from Colombia, speaks highly of the pastoral care he and his wife, a Venezuelan,

received as they settled in Quebec.

While Roca says that she will keep on serving as pastor "until the Lord calls me home," she has been busily training leaders for other congregations, and for Refuge de Paix. Her daughter, Estafania Rosero, says that she and her husband, as well as several other young couples, have been given increasing responsibility to lead, including preaching the Sunday sermon.

The congregations planted by others, who were interns with Roca, minister to Mexican immigrants and others, as Quebec receives many immigrants and refugees from other lands. Roca hopes that a vision she has had to plant 16 more congregations will be fulfilled, just as the one for the initial seven has already been.

She also hopes that new cities will be touched, along with new generations. This is also already coming true, as most of those at the celebration were of her children's generation with children of their own.

But concerns exist as well. People come when they are in the mood, rather than regularly, and she is concerned that not all who attend have a growing personal relationship with God. That and the fact that they are newcomers needing help to move into Canadian society, who get their paperwork done and then make new homes. She asks for prayer from her sisters and brothers in Christ across Canada. ❧

PHOTO BY AUREY DRAKE

Friends and colleagues of Susan Schultz Huxman pay tribute to her five years as president of Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., on Sept. 30. Huxman, second from left, is flanked by the three Board of Governors chairs from her presidency: Geraldine Balzer, Susan Toews and Fred Redekop.

Huxman's half-decade of leadership at Grebel came at a pivotal time for enhancing the school's visibility and advancing its unique mission in a time of rapid change. Highlights of her time at Grebel include celebrating the university college's 50th anniversary in 2013, growth of programs and expanded facilities, and implementation of a new all-college strategic plan, 'Extending the Grebel table: 2015-2020.' Huxman is now president of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.



New home for an old church

Museum acquires historic Rosthern church building

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
ROSTHERN, SASK.

The little church that was home to the New Church Society of Rosthern for more than a century has a new home beside the Mennonite Heritage Museum on the Rosthern Junior College (RJC) campus.

It was built around 1905 by Rosthern Mennonite Church, but the congregation quickly outgrew the building, so around 1912 it was sold to the New Church, a small Swedenborgian congregation under the leadership of Gerhard Enns.

When the New Church closed several years ago, its remaining members decided to preserve the historical building by giving it to the museum. With RJC's approval, the museum board made plans to move the church across town. The long-awaited

move finally took place on Oct. 18.

George Epp, who chairs the museum's board of directors, says the museum is committed to preserving the church's

history: "We plan to make it available for RJC to hold occasional chapels in it. It will be an audio-visual tool for teaching Mennonite history."

Epp also anticipates that church rentals, such as for small weddings, may provide the museum with a source of revenue. In addition, the New Church's new basement offers much needed storage space. ❧

To view video of the move, visit canadianmennonite.org/new-church-move.



Staff changes

Pastoral transitions in Ontario

• **DOUG JOHNSON HATLEM**, left, and **JODIE BOYER HATLEM** were both licensed toward ordination and installed as copastors of Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., on Oct 2. Jodie has a bachelor of arts degree from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., a master of divinity degree from Duke Divinity School in Durham, N.C., and a doctorate from the University of Toronto. She has worked as a teaching fellow in theology and ethics at North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago. Doug has a bachelor of arts degree from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va., and a master of theological studies degree from Duke Divinity School. Previously he has worked as the street pastor for Lazarus Rising, a Mennonite Central Committee program in Toronto.



• **JONATHAN SEILING** began as associate minister of family ministries at Vineland United Mennonite Church on Sept. 19. His education includes a bachelor of arts degree in religious studies and peace and conflict studies from the University of Waterloo, Ont., a master of theological studies degree from Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, and a doctorate from St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto. He has worked with refugee services in New York, and taught at various universities, most recently at the Institute of Peace Church Theology in Hamburg, Germany.



—BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Pastoral transition in Manitoba

• **CLARE SCHELLENBERG** was appointed as associate pastor of Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg in early October. A graduate of Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, she double-majored in biblical/theological studies as well as peace and conflict transformation studies. Previous to this appointment, she served as a youth sponsor at Hope Mennonite for two years. In the spring of 2015 she also completed a four-month pastoral internship at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, an experience that affirmed for her both personal and external callings to ministry. This will be her first official appointment to pastoral ministry, and her work will bring a strong focus on children's and youth programs. Schellenberg has accepted this post with the support of her wife Kathleen; the two were married just last year.



—BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY



The New Church building strapped on the back of a flatbed trailer moves across the town of Rosthern to its new home on the Rosthern Junior College campus.

Living the good news in many ways

Variety adds spice to MC Saskatchewan's Equipping Day

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent

SASKATOON

With titles such as “Don’t be a culture monkey” and “I saw an orange glow on the horizon,” participants at Mennonite Church Saskatchewan’s annual Equipping Day had a difficult time choosing which workshops to attend. And with 11 workshops on offer in three time slots, there was much to choose from.

“Living the good news with Jesus” was the theme of the Oct. 22 event, which kicked off with a time of singing and Bible reading with Bryan Moyer Suderman of SmallTall Music in Kitchener, Ont. By closely examining Matthew 12, Suderman showed participants how Jesus helped his audience correlate their experience with the Old Testament.

Terri Lynn Paulson-Friesen, pastor of faith and community at Osler Mennonite, and Garth Ewert Fisher, pastor of Mount Royal Mennonite in Saskatoon, led a workshop called “Church and the community,” in which they asked participants to explore what it means for a church to be present in, and minister to, its community. Ewert Fisher noted that his is “a parking lot church,” with members driving to church from neighbouring communities. He wondered what it means, in that context, to be a community church. “Community ministry does not equate with church growth,” Paulson-Friesen cautioned, adding, “We need to put friendship at the centre, at the heart of community ministry.”

With division within the church being the elephant in the room, Claire Ewert Fisher’s workshop, “The emotionally healthy church,” seemed a timely topic. Citing Peter Scazzerro’s book of the same title, she suggested that emotionally healthy churches consist of members who are willing to be honest when confronting themselves and their past, and to live with brokenness and

vulnerability. “Make incarnation your model for living well,” said the pastor of Grace Mennonite in Prince Albert. “Enter into other people’s worlds by listening.”

Harry Lafond, executive director of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, along with some women elders from the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, introduced participants to indigenous culture with a workshop called, “So you’re going to a pow wow—now what?” With humour, the women shared the meaning of the pow wow, and spoke of how dancing is a way of praying

to the Creator for healing. “We all pray to the same Creator, we just pray in different ways,” said Martha, one of the elders.

“A lot of romance happens at a pow wow, and a lot of socializing,” said Lafond. “It is a gathering time that pulls us together as people.”

Leona, another elder, urged the participants to “come to our pow wow. We’ll show you how to dance.”

Enthusiasm for the various sessions spilled over at the town hall meeting at the end of the day. One participant said there were too many good workshops to choose from, and asked whether some of them could be repeated next year.

Another asked, “Is there a way we could market this to younger folks?” In response, the event’s organizers promised a greater presence on social media leading up to next year’s Equipping Day. ❧

View video coverage of Equipping Day at canadianmennonite.org/sk-equipping-day-2016.



Claire Ewert Fisher, standing, interim pastor of Grace Mennonite in Prince Albert, Sask., and one of the MC Saskatchewan Equipping Day organizers, offers gifts of tobacco to elders of the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation during a workshop entitled ‘So you’re going to a pow wow—now what?’

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

'Without justice there is no reconciliation'

Ecumenical conference calls on churches to put TRC recommendations into practice

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON

Since Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) issued its final report in 2015, denominations and congregations across the country have wrestled with how to respond in authentic and appropriate ways. One such response was an ecumenical conference held recently at St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon.

Elaine Enns and Ched Myers of Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries in Oak View, Calif., initiated the gathering to provide opportunity for both indigenous and settler participants to learn about the TRC's 96 Calls to Action and explore ways of putting them into practice in their various contexts.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Saskatchewan, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan and MC Canada Indigenous Relations all helped to sponsor the three-day conference last month, which was dubbed "The TRC calls churches to action."

Mark MacDonald, the national Anglican indigenous bishop of Canada, spoke on decolonizing Christianity, and called people to read the Bible with indigenous people.

Sylvia McAdams, founder of the Idle No More movement, gave a presentation that "was an honest appraisal of how the federal government doesn't acknowledge the rights of indigenous people," said Steve Heinrichs, MC Canada's director of indigenous relations. He added that her words were difficult for many to hear.

Leah Gazan, a member of the Wood Mountain Lakota Nation and coordinator of special projects at the University of Winnipeg, addressed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and urged participants to press the Canadian



Leah Gazan, speaking at 'The TRC calls churches to action' conference in Saskatoon, urges participants to press the Canadian government to adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. 'Without justice, there is no reconciliation,' she says.

government to adopt and implement it. "Reconciliation can only be achieved if there is recognition of fundamental indigenous human rights," she said.

Gazan went on to say that many settler people experience a cognitive dissonance when it comes to injustice: "When you are privileged, you can choose what you want to see and what you don't want to see. It's time for us to really see our privilege and risk giving some of it up so that we don't have 'haves' and 'have-nots.'"

Adrian Jacobs is keeper of the circle at the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre in Beausejour, Man. He spoke about the need for Christians to respect indigenous nationhood. "Every Christian denomination requires the indigenous to assimilate to their way of doing things," he said. "Sharing the gospel is a gift. Because it is a gift, there's no strings attached. That means you don't impose your manual on us. We are people who can follow Jesus just like anyone else. Each nation will figure it out. It will be our decision—a nation approach—kind of like a treaty."

Eileen Klassen Hamm, MCC Saskatchewan's executive director, said the conference theme fostered a sense of urgency: "What are we going to do that demonstrates a commitment to reconciliation? We like the idea of reconciliation, but the indigenous want to talk about water, housing and resource extraction."

Heinrichs also noted the same feeling. "There was a repeated refrain: 'We're tired of good words; there needs to be some action,'" he said, quickly adding that he didn't think the refrain was directed at those new to the discussion, but rather "at people like myself who've been working with indigenous people for a long time."

"For some, the content was a shock," Heinrichs said. "That we are living in a colonial present, not just a colonial past, was difficult for some to grapple with." He said one participant confessed to him that she felt so overwhelmed that she wanted to pack her bags and go home. "We're supposed to nourish and encourage people in these paths," he said. "How [do we] care for people who are new to the conversation?"

Klassen Hamm pondered what the next steps might be. "There is a wealth of opportunity before us to create more just communities, opportunities for children and youth," she said, wondering, though, "What do we want for the next generation? I have to look at it that way. I can't just look at the pain. When we look at what we want for our children and grandchildren, we have the skills we can offer to that reality." ❧

For more on this topic, visit canadianmennonite.org/stories/facing-history-courage.



Where is Berlin (Ont.) Mennonite Church?

Berlin was renamed Kitchener a century ago

By DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT.

During the First World War (1914-18), some citizens of Berlin, Ont., grew uncomfortable with their city's name. At war with the Germans, they did not want to be identified as coming from a city with a German name. A plebiscite changed the city's name to Kitchener, after a British military leader.

According to Laureen Harder-Gissing, librarian and archivist at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., Berlin Mennonite Church wondered what to do. Its members wanted a name that reflected their location, but were not prepared to name themselves after a military leader, especially one whose reputation was already tarnished from his behaviour in the Boer War in South Africa. There, he participated in—and increased the use of—concentration camps to imprison Boer women and children, and the burning of Boer farms to take away support for the guerrilla fighters. The camps were known for lacking space, food, sanitation, medicine and medical care, leading to rampant disease and a very high death rate for those incarcerated there.

Mennonites wanted no part in this, so they renamed their congregation First Mennonite Church.

In a presentation on Oct. 17, as part of the Waterloo Region Museum's "City on edge" exhibit, Harder-Gissing noted other effects on the local Mennonite population. Men were publicly pressured to enlist. With the 118th Battalion, a unit in the Canadian Expeditionary Force barracked right in the city, some men were forcibly taken to the recruitment centre or beaten up on the street, although none faced the same fate as two Amish-Mennonite men from East Zorra, west of Waterloo, who were forcibly taken from their farm work

and only released after six weeks of lobbying the government of the day by church leaders. Soon men carried two pieces of identification—one from the church identifying them as Mennonite, and another from the government certifying that they did not need to serve in the military.

Harder-Gissing's presentation was her preparation for a new exhibit for the

MENNONITE ARCHIVAL IMAGE DATABASE PHOTO



Berlin (Ont.) Mennonite Church, pictured in 1902, continues to operate as First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont.

Grebel library that will replace the current "Conchies speak" display next April. "Conchies" were conscientious objectors during the Second World War, a time which saw Mennonites much more involved in society than during the First World War. ❧

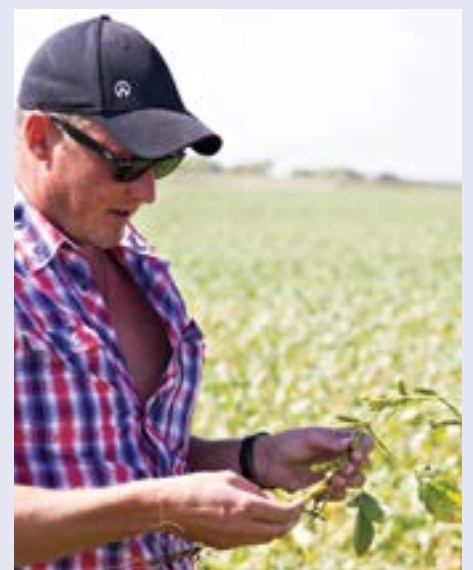
/// Briefly noted

'Grow hope for Syria' celebrates another successful season

Grant and Colleen Dyck of Niverville's Artel Farms are pleased to report that locals sponsored nearly 65 hectares of their Manitoba farmland last summer that were cultivated for overseas relief in Syria, where the humanitarian crisis continues. By poignant coincidence, this year's "Grow hope" harvest celebration took place within a week of the first anniversary of three-year-old Alan Kurdi's drowning off the Turkish coast. "We didn't plan the event or campaign around [this anniversary] at all, but I think 'Grow hope for Syria' provides the opportunity to show how people in Manitoba have been motivated to respond since that tragedy a year ago," said David Turner of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba. This is the second season the Dycks have offered up their land for sponsorship, and they volunteered their labour to make it fruitful. All direct profits from the 2016 harvest will be donated to MCC Manitoba's account with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, which will be matched four-to-one by the federal government, bringing total proceeds to at least \$450,000.

—BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY

MCC MANITOBA PHOTO BY BETHANY DAMAN



Grant Dyck of Manitoba's Artel Farms is pictured in one of his 'Grow hope for Syria' fields.

GOD AT WORK IN US

OBITUARY

Long-time missionary served around the world

Peter Kehler

June 20, 1927 – Oct. 5, 2016

BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Peter Kehler, long-time Mennonite missionary, pastor and church worker of Abbotsford, B.C., died Oct. 5, surrounded by his family. He was 89.

Kehler was born in St. Anne, Man., on June 20, 1927, to Cornelius Peter and Margareta (Epp) Kehler. His early years were spent on farms in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. In 1945, his family settled in British Columbia, where he assisted his father on the farm and completed high school.

He married Lydia Pankratz at East Chilliwack Mennonite Church—now Eden Mennonite Church—in 1952. This marriage produced five children: David, Peter, Dennis, Judy and Darlene.

After Kehler took teacher training in Vancouver, he and Lydia attended Bethel College in North Newton, Kan. They returned to B.C. in 1956 to pastor Vancouver Mennonite Mission Church, later known as Mountainview Mennonite Church. While there, they received an invitation from the General Conference Mennonite Church Board of Missions to go to Taiwan as missionaries. After a year at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries (now Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary) in Elkhart, Ind., they left for Taiwan in 1959. In Taipei they were instrumental in planting Sung-Chiang Mennonite Church.

After serving as missionaries in Taiwan for 16 years, the Kehlers settled in Abbotsford in 1975. Two years later, they moved to Newton, Kan., where he accepted the position of secretary for Asia for the General Conference Mennonite



Peter Kehler

Church Commission on Overseas Mission (COM).

His first wife preceded him in death in 1978. Two years later, he married Susan Martens, a long-time friend of the family who had also served with COM in Taiwan. After their marriage, the Kehlers worked in Newton, where they lived until 1985,

when they moved to Abbotsford, where Kehler became the conference minister for the Conference of Mennonites in B.C., now Mennonite Church B.C.

Even after retirement, the couple continued their shared passion for serving God and the church, ministering to many people and in a variety of roles in B.C., including assisting with Bible study and teaching English-as-a-second-language classes at White Rock Mennonite Christian Fellowship, a congregation of Taiwanese immigrants. They also served in Ukraine and Taiwan. Kehler also served on the board of directors of Mennonite Christian Hospital in Hualien, Taiwan. ❧

Obituary

'Mennonite biblical feminist' passes

Katie Funk Wiebe died on Oct. 23, 2016 in Wichita, Kan., at the age of 92. The long-time writer and educator was named by *The Mennonite* as among the Top 20 people who influenced the Mennonite church in the 20th century. The daughter of immigrants who fled Ukraine in 1923, she was born in Laird, Sask., on Sept. 15, 1924. While studying at Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg, she met Walter Wiebe, who became her husband. A prolific writer, especially on the subject of the role of women in the church, Wiebe wrote a column in *The Christian Leader* for 30 years. She also wrote articles and reviews for *The Canadian Mennonite* in the 1950s and '60s. Widowed at age 38, she began working at the Mennonite Brethren Publishing House to support her family, then upgraded her education and taught English at Tabor College. As well as writing many books and articles, Wiebe encouraged others to write, and served on many church boards and committees. In 2014, she received the Leslie K. Tarr Career Achievement Award from the Word Guild of Canada, which described her as "an agent of transformation" and a "Mennonite biblical feminist." She is survived by three children, seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

—BY BARB DRAPER



Katie Funk Wiebe

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ARTBEAT

Insights from film help with Bible study

New book takes unique approach to storytelling

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

What do popular films like *Star Wars* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* have to do with the Bible?

Gary Yamasaki explores this question by identifying the filmmaking principles underlying such popular films and applying them to understanding the stories of the Bible.

His findings have been published in a new book entitled *Insights from Filmmaking for Analyzing Biblical Narrative*, recently released by Fortress Press as one of the first volumes of its Reading the Bible in the 21st Century series, and celebrated with a book launch at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, where he is professor emeritus and writer-in-residence.

Yamasaki's book combines his long-time interest in film with his academic work as a biblical scholar. In it, he identifies 11 elements of filmmaking that help to illuminate the biblical text. These include point of view, which is his own area of specialty, along with the sequential nature of stories, the creation of a story world, the way readers experience stories, and much more. He logged hundreds of hours viewing films in preparation for writing the book.

At the book launch on Nov. 1, Yamasaki explained how his approach differs from others comparing Bible and film. Instead of noting biblical principles and themes in movies, his book looks to movies in order to approach how to study the Bible.

Yamasaki said the writing of this book

was “bookended by trauma.” He wrote it over the last two years after receiving an invitation from the series editor that came while he was in hospital for successful cancer surgery. Then three weeks before his deadline—and just before Christmas 2015—he was informed that his employment of 25 years would be terminated due to college financing issues.

“By the grace of God, I managed to complete the semester and the manuscript,” he said, making the book both a professional and personal achievement for him. ☸

With files from Columbia Bible College.

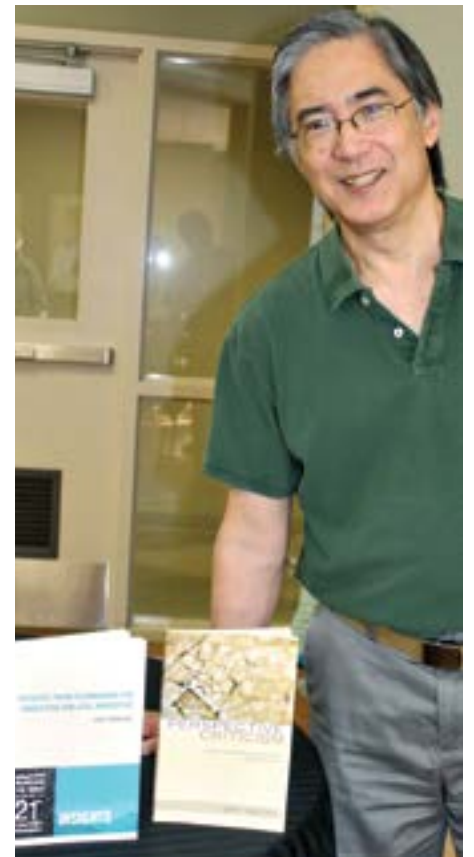


PHOTO COURTESY OF NETTIE DUECK



*Gary Yamasaki launched his new book, *Insights from Filmmaking for Analyzing Biblical Narrative*, at Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, B.C., on Nov. 1. The book explores how a film approach to storytelling can help 21st-century readers better understand the Bible.*

The ‘Along the road to freedom: Mennonite women of courage and faith’ exhibition opened at the Manitoba Legislative Building in Winnipeg on Oct. 30, with more than 500 in attendance, including Janice Filmon, the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, who spoke glowingly at the event about the art and the women in the paintings. Pictured, Canstar reporter Danielle DaSilva, second from right, interviews, from left to right, ‘Along the road to freedom’ committee members Nettie Dueck and Wanda Andres, and Ray Dirks, artist and curator of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery in Winnipeg. The exhibition continues until Jan. 29, 2017.

/// Briefly noted

Unlocking the 'Facebook' of a century past

The long-awaited Vol. 4 subject and author index to the internationally read *Mennonitische Rundschau* by Bert Friesen, with financial support from the D.F. Plett Historical Research Foundation, is now available. The 1,394-page index provides simplified access to the German-language paper for the years 1910-19. Friesen believes that providing an index was urgent because increasingly fewer people in North America have the skills to read the German language, especially in the Gothic script. This index is designed for English readers, giving students, scholars, genealogists, community historians, novelists and film producers pointers to information they want, which makes working through the archaic font manageable. The *Mennonitische Rundschau* was the Facebook of a century ago. It was a forum where average people would write about their family and community, so that relations in the next province or continent could stay connected. As the Mennonite community spread from Russia to Canada and the U.S., the *Rundschau* kept the inter-Mennonite web of family and friends connected. For inquiries about the *Mennonitische Rundschau* index Vol. 4, contact the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies. Digital copies of the other five indices can be found online at cmbms.mennonitebrethren.ca.

—BY CONRAD STOESZ

This article first appeared in the Mennonite Historian.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CONRAD STOESZ

Conrad Stoesz is pictured with an original copy of the *Mennonitische Rundschau*.



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'God is leading us into this process'

Meet Keith Regehr, the new church transition coordinator for Mennonite Church Canada. He reflects on how God works in times of transition.

canadianmennonite.org/transition-coordinator



Mennonite worship and song committee holds first meeting

Compilers of the new Mennonite song collection are taking into account the breadth of the Mennonite church, the diverse ways Mennonites sing and worship, and new digital technologies.

canadianmennonite.org/song-committee-first



Saskatchewan women celebrate transitions

Inspired by the spiritual journey of Moses, retreat participants mapped the mountains, valleys and wilderness areas of their own lives.

canadianmennonite.org/celebrate-transitions



Breathing together

The annual meeting of MCC Saskatchewan highlighted peacebuilding on the prairies and around the world and included stories of generosity and brokenness.

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Changing the discourse on dementia in everyday life

ETOBICOKE, ONT.—“I may have dementia, but I am not stupid,” Joan burst out in telling her own story to family and friends about the struggle with accepting her new state of mind. She was part of a panel of four using their own words at what was called “A Gala Event” at The Village of Humber Heights, one of the Schlegel Villages senior living communities in Etobicoke.

It was the first event of its kind in Canada, giving a first-hand, authentic view of persons in the early stages of dementia expressing deeply felt dynamics brought on with loss of memory. “I may not remember everything. There may be things that have changed in my life and I may sometimes need the care and support of others to live life at the fullest. But this does not mean that I am stupid.”

Joan went on to say that some days are better than others. Some days she just wants to hide away. “I don’t want to talk to anyone.

It’s not easy, you know. I want to feel on top of the world all the time, but then I get pulled down—down into sadness, feeling embarrassed and stupid. But please don’t treat me like I’m stupid; I’m not! I’m sure you have bad days, too!”

What Joan is doing is de-constructing the dominant discourse around dementia that is negative and wrought with misconceptions, says James Schlegel, chief executive officer of Schlegel Villages with facilities in 16 different locations in southern Ontario. “In telling their personal stories, people with dementia are the true experts and can provide context to their experiences,” he says.

“It is a real worry to tell other people—hey, guess what: I’m on the dementia road,” says Joan’s friend James in his heavy Scottish accent. “I don’t do all the things I used to do. I’ve got dementia and they don’t. I can’t remember some of the things I should remember and when we are with

friends, things have changed.”

Joan backed him up. “I always tell people, this is my memory! This is how I live. I admit I don’t retain a lot in my memory,

In telling their personal stories, people with dementia are the true experts.

so this book has become my memory,” she said, holding up her personal memory book for all to see. “Without this book, I feel lost and anxious, because everything is in this book. I think people think I’m a dope sometimes—needing to be reminded of things and having to write everything down all the time.

“I don’t care if anyone thinks I’m a dope.

If you are my friend, if you want to be caring and compassionate, take me as I am. This is how I live for today.”

James, too, has his way of coping with memory loss. “The desk in my apartment is full of papers and notes. I write everything down so that I don’t forget. If you tell me something verbally, I will just forget, and I hate forgetting and missing things. This is why I always write it down.”

Joan implored her audience to have patience: “I find it so frustrating when I am having a conversation with someone and they do not give me time to respond to



Joan was one of four residents telling their stories of dealing with dementia at a special event recently at Humber Heights Village, Etobicoke, Ont.

Promotional Supplement

what they are saying or asking. Oh boy, is that ever frustrating! Please, I need a couple of seconds to respond. Slow down. It's so hard to keep up when you are going so fast."

For those living with dementia, changing abilities are expected, says Schlegel. "Observing and adapting to these changes can be difficult for family members, but at the same time the diagnosis can create opportunities for meaning, purpose and growth. For others to learn what it's like to support someone living with dementia (spouse, parent, siblings), it is best to ask family members to share their first-hand experiences."

Upon diagnosis, it is critical for people living with dementia and family members to receive the right services to help them on their new journey with dementia, say the expert caregivers. Supportive services come in all forms: medical and psychosocial. To live well, people living with dementia need a combination of both supports. Ideally, however, the supports need to have a transformed viewpoint of dementia and a desire to support the person's overall well-being, instead of just addressing the symptoms.

These supports could be in the form of connecting with the local Alzheimer Society, family/friends, church group, social clubs or reaching out to organizations that have actively embraced a person-centred and non-medical/institutional approach to service provision. For example, at Schlegel Villages, each community has been actively working on shifting away from an institutional model of care to a social model, whereby the focus is on balancing excellent care and putting living first.

One of the leading experts in dementia care and culture change, Dr. Allen Power, in his book *Dementia Beyond Disease: Enhancing Well-Being*, says, "Traditional measures of 'quality of life' and 'quality of care' have arisen from our focus on biomedical approaches to care, and they reflect our own perspective as adults who continue to focus primarily on doing instead of being. The result is that we measure the quality of life and care for elders in general (and those living with dementia in particular)



Dr. Al Power, in his book Dementia Beyond Disease: Enhancing Well-Being, asks family and caregivers to focus on well-being, rather than medical treatments.

He is an internist, geriatrician and clinical associate professor of medicine at the University of Rochester, N.Y.

with scales that favour (1) medical outcomes, and (2) higher levels of functional and cognitive ability. . . . These are not bad outcomes to measure. But just like the biomedical view of dementia, they are limited and do not define the whole person."

Instead, Dr. Power is really encouraging people living with dementia, family members and professionals to focus on well-being. By focussing on well-being "it removes the stigma of seeing a person with dementia as incapable of achieving well-being and gives us [those who are supporting the person with dementia] a strong directive to fulfill these needs."

Everyone desires to live life to the fullest and experience well-being, and this doesn't change even with a diagnosis with dementia or any other illness/condition. The community as a whole can play a huge part in changing the way we view dementia and the way in which we can offer support to those living with dementia. By doing so, we can create a compassionate and caring community in which everyone feels included, respected and connected.

"We are moving away from the institutional approach to dementia," says Jessica Luh Kim, director of education and program development for Schlegel Villages, "focussing more on living well and not on the mental decline. We keep asking, 'What can we do differently to continue to give meaning to life?' We are paying attention to things that make the surroundings much more like home—from the arrangement of the furniture to the quality of the food, to creating more opportunities for

meaning and growth, as well as building relationships."

One out of every 30 persons in Canada are expected to experience dementia. Congregations are not exempt. So what can the spiritual community do to help address this in the coming years? "Get over your fears for your future and your expectations for how a person will be, and just be there in the moment," advises Jane Kuepfer, the Schlegel Specialist in Spirituality and Aging.

"Erase shame by loving people just the

Allow for grief which struggles to find a place when loss is ambiguous.

way they are, and walk alongside caregivers in their difficult journey," she says. "Allow for grief, which struggles to find a place when loss is ambiguous. Keep well connected with friends who are affected—accommodate their needs as they change—they need you. Take turns—schedule visits so you can share the responsibility of maintaining friendship."

"Recognize that practices of faith are deeply rooted," she says, "and remain meaningful as dementia progresses. Hymn singing, communion, familiar prayers, scripture, table graces can be shared. Visit, and if your friend doesn't remember your shared history, consider it a gift that you can bring to her/him. Talk about good times you shared, the blessing she has been in your church community, the gratitude you feel for her as a sister in Christ.

"Enjoy the simple things together—especially beauty—sounds, smells, tastes, a walk. Listen. She may have more to say than you expect when you ask what has been on her mind and heart these days. And if she can't articulate it, perhaps you can help her with some words or pictures to describe what you know she cares about."



Correction

Re: "Serving at the centre," Nov. 7, page 21: Due to editing errors, the licensing service of Pastor Mario Marchand was identified as the culmination of a two-year process

of reflection by the pastor, congregation and Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, instead of the beginning of it; and the cutline for the photo at the bottom of the

page neglected to clearly indicate that Lily-Ann Marchand is the pastor's daughter. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the errors.

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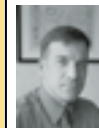
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Ain't misbehavin'

Guelph, Ont., singer-songwriter Anna Wiebe explores life transitions on *New Behaviour*

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

Old behaviour influenced the music on singer-songwriter Anna Wiebe's latest musical release, *New Behaviour*.

The 24-year-old folk-pop songstress based in Guelph, Ont., partially attributes growing up in the Mennonite church for the way the album sounds.

"The Mennonite church is known for its . . . fantastic singing, and especially my experience of that at Silver Lake [a Mennonite camp near Sauble Beach, Ont.] really influenced my music," Wiebe says. "You might be able to hear on certain tracks the chorus of vocals I was going for. . . I love those harmonies and that depth, and that's definitely from my growing up as a Mennonite."

Wiebe has written and performed with

as "a honeyed collection of off-kilter folk songs." Some of the 10 songs date back to 2010, but Wiebe wrote many of them last year.

"I had sort of a surge of songwriting happening in 2015, and that's when I decided I could fit all of these into one project and that they all would work together," Wiebe says, attributing the songwriting surge to "life and relationship transitions."

"I'm very much a when-inspiration-strikes type of songwriter," she adds. "The best songs happen when I sit down and it just flows out. Usually it's a complete package. Within a day, it's finished."

Wiebe recruited Daniel Kruger, a friend she made while studying at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener, Ont.,

'I wanted it to be something for the fall. I don't know if I realized that really right away, but it sort of developed like that. I think a lot of my songs feel like autumn.'
(Singer/songwriter Anna Wiebe, of her new album, *New Behaviours*)

a variety of different people ever since she was 17, including electronic artists Swim Good and LUM, a contemporary soul band called Only Sundays, and First Rate People, a Toronto-based indie rock collective. She has also collaborated with her friend Anna Horvath in the folk duo Kildear.

New Behaviour is Wiebe's first full-length solo effort following two EPs, *Full of the Light* from 2013, and *On Time*, which she released in May. The latest recording came out at the beginning of November. Uproxx.com describes *New Behaviour*

to record and produce the album. She also enlisted the help of a handful of friends to provide additional instrumentation and background vocals. They recorded the album during three weekend sessions at Dull Sword Studios, Kruger's home studio in Montreal.

"Dan has always been one of those musicians that I've looked up to, [but have] never actually worked with him," Wiebe says. "I knew that he had the know-how and the skills, and he understood my vision."

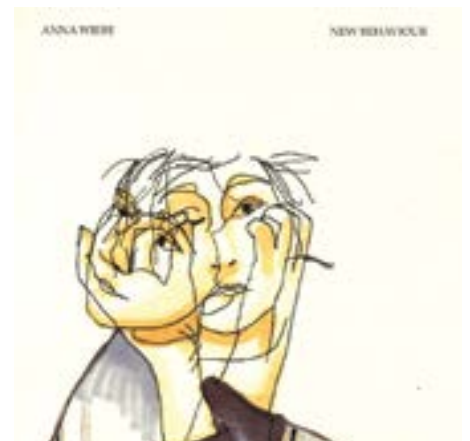
(Continued on page 28)

PHOTO BY VANESSA TIGNANELLI



Anna Wiebe began playing the guitar when she was 10. She wrote her first song five years later.

COVER ART BY MAGGIE SPRING



New Behaviour is Anna Wiebe's first full-length album. She recorded it in Montreal.

(Continued from page 27)

That vision, Wiebe says, was to create a warm-sounding album. “I wanted it to be something for the fall,” she says. “I don’t know if I realized that really right away, but it sort of developed like that. I think a lot of my songs feel like autumn.”

Wiebe counts Sufjan Stevens, Sarah Harmer, Feist and Joni Mitchell as influences, which makes sense when listening to *New Behaviour*. There’s an emphasis on Wiebe’s voice and guitar throughout.

Lyrically, the album is about growing up. That’s best exemplified in the title track, which explores taking on new behaviours after a major life change.

“The title of the new album is the main message that I want out there,” Wiebe says. “It’s [about] a time of transition, and figuring out all of these different pieces in my life and putting them together.”

Wiebe explores faith most explicitly on “Artist,” the album’s first song, when she sings, “Praying to a God that I’ve forgotten / Comfort me, Jesus, give me something

to believe in / ‘Cause I’ve climbed and climbed through this rabbit hole.”

Born and raised in New Hamburg, Ont., music has always been a big part of Wiebe’s life. Her father John is a semi-retired guitar teacher and she picked up the instrument herself when she was 10. Five years later, she began writing songs. “Ever since then, I’ve always done [music] for fun,” she says.

Wiebe graduated this past spring from the University of Guelph with a degree double majoring in studio art and psychology. She aspires to have a career in social work, but will always keep making music for fun.

“I couldn’t not play music,” she says. “It’s something that’s really important to me. My hope for the album is that there’s a few new people that hear it and enjoy it, and that’s about all. That’s all I can hope for.”

To learn more, visit facebook.com/annawiebemusic/.



PHOTO BY VANESSA TIGNANELLI



‘My hope for the album is that there’s a few new people that hear it and enjoy it,’ Anna Wiebe says.

VIEWPOINT

On plausibility structures and faith

Menno Simons Centre helps students be disciples of Christ

THOMAS BERGEN

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

From 2011 to 2013, I was a resident of the Menno Simons Centre, a not-for-profit student residence located near the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver. At Menno, I found a tight-knit community, a sense of home in a new city and inspiring Christian friendships. I also found my wife Cara.

In June 2014, Cara and I moved back “home” to be the residence coordinators of the Menno Simons Centre. Since then, we have experienced tremendous joy in

helping others find the same things that we found there.

However, the story of young adults finding meaningful Christian community while attending UBC goes back to before I was born. In 1986, a small group of Mennonites with a vision for student ministry formed the Pacific Centre for Discipleship Association (PCDA).

Despite the fact that they were unable to find church or conference support, they took out a loan with an interest rate of 14 percent, purchased the property



Thomas Bergen

in the Point Grey neighbourhood close to UBC, and repurposed the building, which was a Catholic convent at the time, into a student residence. Many of those founding PCDA members still attend Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship, which meets in the Menno Simons Centre chapel.

There are some significant differences between the students of yesteryear and the students we live with at Menno today. However, what literature on emerging adulthood makes clear is that students today are no different in their need for friendship, community, mentoring, responsibility and a place that feels like home.

But then, I didn't need to read that. I already knew that from my own life. When my own faith was floundering, it was my relationships at Menno that played a key role in helping me to find it again.

When my own faith was floundering, it was my relationships at Menno that played a key role in helping me to find it again.

The fact is that it is not easy to identify as a disciple of Christ in the world today, especially when you are trying to do so on your own, and especially at a large university like UBC. For example, earlier this month we had the atheist celebrity Richard Dawkins visit the campus and share his message on the dangers and delusions of faith.

So how can students grow in their faith when they feel alone and when there is little in their environments to support their identity? In most cases, they can't.

Peter Berger is a sociologist who writes about plausibility structures of faith: the things in our environment that make it more or less plausible for us to believe in various versions of reality and belong to various faith traditions. In his books, Berger explores the rise of secularism and highlights the challenges of not being secular.

According to Berger, that challenge is not primarily intellectual, as if convincing yourself that Dawkins' arguments are wrong is easy enough.

Rather, the challenge is sociological.

Convincing yourself that your entire Dawkins-enthralled campus community is wrong is much more difficult.

I like to think of the Menno Simons Centre as a plausibility structure. While living in Christian community at Menno, residents find it is plausible to identify as a Christian in university because they look around and see all these other students doing the same thing.

At Menno, residents find it plausible to believe they will benefit from sacrificing themselves for the common good because at every potluck they look around and see a wonderful feast created by each member of the community bringing a dish to share.

They also find it plausible to confess their sins to one another because they see how community deepens as we reach out to others to help us.

As well, when they look around they

see a building rich in memories and legacies of faithful lives lived to the glory of God. In fact, one of the building's claims to fame is that before the PCDA purchased the building, Mother Theresa stayed there while attending a conference in Vancouver.

The truth is that we can't own and grow in our identity as Christian disciples on our own. What we can do is work together with other individuals to create environments and plausibility structures that make faith believable and liveable for us. But perhaps there is a better term than plausibility structures: How about home? Menno is my plausibility structure. Menno is where my faith has found a home. What about you? ❧

Thomas Bergen, 27, is a graduate of Regent College, Vancouver. He lives in his home at the Menno Simons Centre in Vancouver. He also works as the residence coordinator of the Menno Simons Centre and the worship pastor of the Lord's Peace Chapel.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THOMAS BERGEN



Students enjoy a potluck at the Menno Simons Centre, a student residence near the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.



The Menno Simons Centre is an intentional community in which young people can grow in their faith.

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Calendar

British Columbia

Jan. 21, 2017: A second congregational gathering to continue to listen to viewpoints on the Being a Faithful Church 7 decision, at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, from 9 a.m. to noon.

Feb. 24, 2017: LEAD conference, at Langley Mennonite Fellowship.

Feb. 25, 2017: MC B.C. annual gathering, at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.

Saskatchewan

Dec. 11, 17: A Buncha Guys Christmas concerts: (11) at Mayfair United Church; (17) at Shekinah Retreat Centre, near Waldheim. Both concerts at 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 16, 18: RJC Christmas concerts: (16) at Knox United Church, Saskatoon; (18) at RJC in Rosthern, at 2:30 p.m.

Jan. 13-14, 2017: RJC alumni tournament of memories.

Manitoba

Until Jan. 29, 2017: "Along the Road to Freedom: Mennonite women of courage and faith" exhibition at the Manitoba Legislative Building, Winnipeg, featuring 26 paintings by Winnipeg artist Ray Dirks.

Dec. 18: CMU Vespers service. A Christmas-themed worship service incorporating Scripture, prayer, hymns and choral music.

Feb. 2-3, 2017: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate presents three one-act plays by its junior-high students, at the Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre, Winnipeg.

Feb. 8, 2017: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate open house, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

April 27-29, 2017: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg, presents its senior-high musical.

May 8, 2017: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate bursary banquet, at the Canad Inns Polo Park, Winnipeg.

May 17, 2017: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate work day, Winnipeg.

May 31, 2017: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate presents its Grade 7-9 spring

concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

June 1, 2017: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate presents its Grade 10-12 spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

Aug. 22, 2017: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's 13th-annual golf tournament, at Bridges Golf Course, Winnipeg.

Oct. 20-21, 2017: "Mennonite/s Writing VIII: Personal narratives of place and discernment" conference, at the University of Winnipeg, featuring Miriam Toews and Rhoda Janzen.

Presented by the Chair in Mennonite Studies and the "Journal of Mennonite Studies." For more information, email Royden Loewen at r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca.

Ontario

Until Dec. 5: "Together: When we are engaged" photo exhibit that celebrates everyday acts that deepen our sense of community, at the Conrad Grebel University College gallery, Waterloo.

Until Dec. 26: Exhibit at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo: "Conchies speak: Ontario Mennonites in Alternative Service."

Nov. 26: "I'm still here: Putting a spotlight on ALS" concert with Patricia Haldane and friends, featuring a new choral piece by Stephanie Martin; at St. Andrews's United Church, Toronto, at 7:30 p.m.

Nov. 27: "Welcoming Advent" at the Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, with No Discernible Key, at 2:30 p.m.

Dec. 4: St. Jacobs Mennonite Church presents the music of Vivaldi's "Gloria" with choir, soloists and orchestra as part of its Sunday morning worship service, at 10 a.m.

Dec. 4: Inter-Mennonite Children's Choir performs its "Christmas Favourites" concert at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m.

Dec. 10: Mennonite Mass Choir with the KW Symphony and soloists perform Handel's "Messiah," at Centre in the Square, Kitchener.

Dec. 10, 11: Pax Christi Chorale, with Shannon Mercer and the Aslan Boys Choir, presents, "Ode on the Nativity" by C.H.H. Parry, at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto; (10) 7:30 p.m.; (11) 3 p.m.

March 25, 2017: Menno Singers present Bach's "St. John Passion," with orchestra and soloists, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener.

April 29, 30, 2017: Pax Christi Chorale presents Elgar's "The Apostles," at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto; (29) 7:30 p.m.; (30) 3 p.m.

May 13, 2017: Menno Singers present Honegger's "King David," and a world premiere of a new work by Colin Labadie, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener.

U.S.A.

Sept. 15-17, 2017: The 18th

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The Village Casketmaker Funeral caskets and urns sold directly to public. Sensible and eco-friendly. Made in Winnipeg. Urns ship easily across Canada. Learn more: thevillagecasketmaker.com.

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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.

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Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
Jan. 2, 2017	Dec. 12

God at Work in the World Snapshots

PHOTO BY PETER KELLNER



This past summer, Randell Neudorf, pastor of the Commons church plant in Hamilton, Ont., wrote about giving up the family car (July 4, page 13). Since then, he has discovered what he calls ‘the generosity cycle’ as he pedals his way through the city. ‘Give to others, and God will give to you. Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping, poured into your hands—all that you can hold. The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you’ (Luke 6:38 Good News Translation). To read more about how this has played out in his life and the lives of others, visit bit.ly/commons-generosity-cycle.



PHOTO BY ANGELA BENNETT / TEXT BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



On Sept. 30, a triangle-shaped ribbon-cutting symbolized the three floors of the newly renovated Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Alberta building in Calgary that is home to MCC Alberta, Mennonite Mutual Insurance (MMI), the MCC Thrift Shop, the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta, and Material Resources. Pictured standing from left to right around the ribbon: Kris Peters, MCC Alberta board chair; Ken Ritchie, MMI general manager and CEO; April Hauck, Thrift Store manager; Kevin Neufeldt, MMI board chair; Abe Janzen (with scissors), MCC Alberta executive director; and Allen Heibert, MCC Thrift Shop board chair. In an address that resonated with the approximately 100 people in attendance, Neufeldt said: ‘My prayer is that this building may be a monument not to our lives, but to our dedication to God; to our work in following Christ’s teachings of helping the poor, spreading peace and carrying each other’s burdens. Perhaps 100 years from now, someone will drive by this building with their grandchild and say, “That is where the group used to be that brought your great-grandmother here from Syria in 2016.”’