

CANADIAN MENNONITE

August 27, 2018

Volume 22 Number 16



A cry for
'no revenge'

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EDITORIAL

Nurturing spirituality

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

The church's primary job is growing relationships with God, says Dave Rogalsky in the feature, "Experiencing the good news," on page 4. He encourages faith communities to be "actively teaching spiritual practices to strengthen the experience of God in people of all ages, in order to underpin our community, worship, evangelism, missions, and peace and justice work." The implication is that followers of Christ who are connected to their Lord will also be better sharers of God's good news.

Let's go on a scavenger hunt, seeking places where Mennonite congregations are intentionally working at spiritual formation. Where are adults, youth and children learning the stories of their historical faith and digging into the riches of the Bible? Where are young and old having conversations about beliefs, values, spiritual questions and faith practices? Where are they learning to become sensitive to the voice and work of the Holy Spirit—in their lives and in their community? Where are faith communities empowering individual members to live out the good news of Jesus Christ?

One place where congregations teach spirituality is Sunday school. But that seems like a teetering institution. Many Mennonite churches do not run a Sunday school program during the summer. When classes are offered, some youth and adults choose not to attend them. And how about finding volunteers to lead the

classes? You've probably heard the desperate pleas for teachers in your own church.

Mid-week prayer meetings are a thing of the past; often a congregation finds it challenging to get people to show up for more than Sunday worship. Plus, some of us might find it hard to imagine how we could fill a whole hour with group prayer. We might even question the validity of that kind of prayer. Many churches are not teaching congregants to offer

spontaneous spoken prayers or to pray through song, movement or visual aids.

In the past, personal testimonies demonstrated ways in which individuals had experienced the Holy Spirit personally. Nowadays we no longer tell the inspirational "I-was-a-sinner-but-God-saved-me" stories. Cynical beings that we are, we often find it hard to talk about our spiritual experiences in ways that feel authentic. We may be hesitant to use explicit religious language to share our personal story, our testimony of how we see God present in our own lives. Some of us stand ready to judge the faith stories of others, to find the inconsistencies and hypocrisies. And we fear that others will judge us, too.

The scavenger hunt continues: How often do churches provide opportunities for us to open a Bible, read from it, and join others in the church in exploring it together? Our congregations should be inviting us to sit together around that open Bible; to savour its contents; to



discuss the poetry, stories and teachings; and to relate them to our current realities. How is the church helping the Bible seep into our prayers and our daily practices? We also need to learn how to share those experienced Bible insights with someone outside of our group.

This is not a call to return to all the olden days; I do not believe there ever was a golden age of spirituality. Today, the landscape of our secular society calls for creativity and new ways of helping spiritual growth happen, both for people who still attend the church's regular activities and for those who have given up on the institutional church. In a spiritually superficial society, we need to harness our gifts and resources for this ongoing calling.

Rogalsky points out that individuals experience God in many different ways. Whatever your most comfortable "quadrant," your congregation can encourage your spiritual growth. It is also a place where you can help nurture other sisters and brothers in the faith. In what ways does your church help you grow in your relationship with God? We'd like to hear your stories.

Introducing Will Braun, Senior Writer

Will lives with his wife and two sons on a small farm near Morden, Man., not far from where he grew up. As senior writer for *Canadian Mennonite* magazine, Will's goal is to provide in-depth coverage of matters in the Mennonite world. In addition to writing and farming, he works for the Interchurch Council on Hydropower. In the past, Will worked for Mennonite Central Committee in Brazil, on Vancouver Island and in Manitoba. Will and his family attend Pembina Mennonite Fellowship.



ABOUT THE COVER:

Owen McCausland (tenor), left, tells the story of the Dog from Algiers, who saves his master's life on the battlefield, to Larissa Koniuk (soprano), Alexandra Beley (mezzo-soprano), and Keith Lam (baritone), in the new *Llandoverly Castle Opera*, whose music was composed by Stephanie Martin. See story on page 31.

PHOTO: WILL FORD, LLANDOVERLY CASTLE OPERA

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

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Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH FEATURE

Experiencing the good news

The church's primary job is growing relationships with God

BY DAVE ROGALSKY
EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT

"You . . . were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people"
(Ephesians 1:13-14, NRSV).



REMBRANDT'S 'THE MENNONITE PREACHER ANSLO AND HIS WIFE'
(PUBLIC DOMAIN)

Dawn Ruth Nelson, in A Mennonite Woman: Exploring Spiritual Life and Identity, makes the point that in her own life, having moved in two generations from a tight-knit, multi-generational focus on church at the centre of life, when she really needed knowledge and experience of God in her life, it was not there.

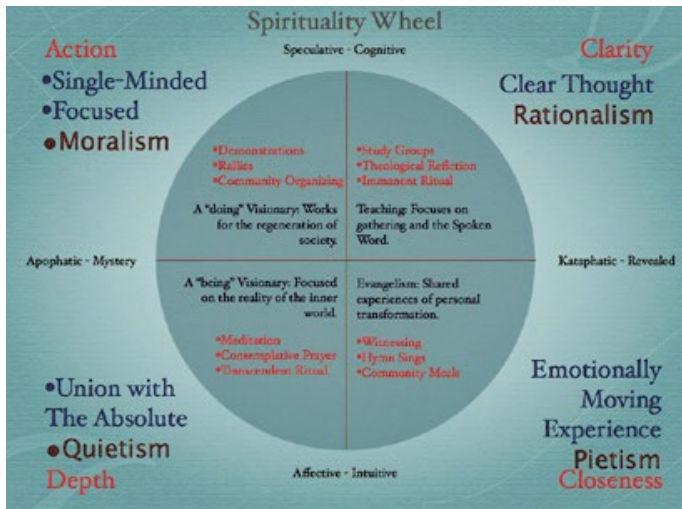
I understand spirituality to be our knowledge and experience of God active in our lives. But I hear little in our congregations about how we have that knowledge or experience of God. Most of us would not identify with the words from Ephesians that the Holy Spirit is a pledge, a proof of God in our lives, in our experience of God at work in our lives or world.

I don't doubt that many in our congregations and in our families outside the church have knowledge and experience with God. Dawn Ruth Nelson, in *A Mennonite Woman: Exploring Spiritual Life and Identity*, makes the point that in her own life, having moved in two generations from a tight-knit, multi-generational focus on church at the centre of life, when she really needed knowledge and experience of God in her life, it was not there. She had depended on her community to give it to her, but when her community ended acrimoniously when she was on a mission assignment in Northern Ireland, she had no support for her faith. She had not learned how to be in relationship with God on her own.

This sounds very individualistic, unlike traditional Mennonite spirituality, but it is the reality for many modern, urban, acculturated Mennonites, and most others in our society.

"Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news'"
(Mark 1:14-15, NRSV).

Jesus came preaching good news. We often use the word "gospel" from a combination of the Old English words *gōd* and *spel*—good story or news. This is a direct translation from the Greek *euangelion*, meaning a good or great message. Jesus' message after his 40 days of communing with God in the desert was to be good news. The message was that the time is fulfilled, God's kingdom has come near, or is at hand.



What the group discovered is that each of us had preferences around Corinne Ware's spirituality wheel. As leaders, we were tempted to believe that our preference was the right way to practise spirituality and experience God. But there were other valid practices and experiences.

God's kingdom can have many meanings, but one of the key meanings is that of the rule of God, the interest of God in human activity. The kingdom of God drawing near is God drawing near to humanity. One of the key ways this was true was that God was drawing near in Jesus himself. That is the good news—God is showing interest in humanity, in being in relationship with humanity.

Jesus then suggests a response: Repent and believe this good news. The word "repent" is the Greek word *metanoéo*, meaning to change one's mind. And to believe is *pisteúo*, which means to believe, in the sense of putting one's trust in someone or something.

Jesus came with good news, that God has drawn near to humanity. The response is to change one's mind and believe this good news. What was it that humanity was changing its mind from? The sacrificial system suggested that humanity wasn't good enough to be in relationship with God, and Jesus came to end that separation. In Jesus, alive and among the people as a person, God had drawn near. People needed to change their minds about the separation between themselves and God, and put their trust in Jesus and his message.

This relationship with God is expressed in many ways by many Christians—anywhere from "knowing Jesus" or "having Jesus in your heart," to "a sense of the divine," or even, as Bruce Cockburn sings, "In front of all this

beauty, understanding nothing."

In each case they are talking about putting their trust in Jesus' message that God has drawn near to humanity in love in order to be in relationship with human beings. People are changing their minds from the need for a blood sacrifice to be made over and over again, or perhaps they are changing their minds from the idea that either there is no God or that God isn't interested in humanity. Jesus came to help people to be in relationship with God.

A number of years ago I was part of a group of pastors and other church leaders who were led in a study of Corinne Ware's work in types of spiritual expression. She created a wheel that gives four major kinds of spirituality. Starting on the top right are people who are interested in theology and study; a good sermon, book, lecture or discussion fulfills their need for relationship with God. On the bottom right are those who are interested in emotional experiences with God, thinking about God as shepherd, friend, helper and lover; worship with deeply emotional songs, readings and practices fulfill their need for relationship with God. On the bottom left are the contemplatives; they are moved by silence, solitude, inward searching, and listening for the small, still voice of God. On the upper left are those who are activist-oriented in some way; for them, faith means doing something—anything from painting the church, sewing quilts, going door to door in the neighbourhood or walking in a

peace march; they experience God when they do something, a sense of a job well done and God's pleasure.

What our group discovered is that each of us had preferences around Ware's spirituality wheel. As leaders, we were tempted to believe that our preference was the right way to practise spirituality and experience God. But there were other valid practices and experiences. To lead well we needed to both validate others' practices and experiences, and create opportunities for a variety of practices and experiences in our congregations. We also discovered that no one is completely satisfied in one quadrant. All of us "leaked" over into other quadrants, sometimes at different points in our lives, and sometimes depending on our present life situation.

I believe that the key thing we need to be thinking about in our faith communities is how we can be actively teaching spiritual practices to strengthen the experience of God in people of all ages, in order to underpin our community, worship, evangelism, missions, and peace and justice work. I believe that we need to be doing this, first and always, along with all the other good things we do and teach.

We have good news, that there is a God, and that God is interested in us and in being in relationship with us. This God is interested in how we see ourselves, and in how we relate to each other and to the creation around us. God wants only good for each and every person, and the whole creation. God wants to be relating to us

and growing us.

As Leighton Ford of the Billy Graham organization said, “God loves us exactly as we are. And God loves us too much to leave us as we are,” in our pain, sadness and diverse difficulties. We grow as we relate to God who comes to us in love.

The prophets who wrote, compiled and edited the Deuteronomic material in the Old Testament knew this:

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, NRSV).

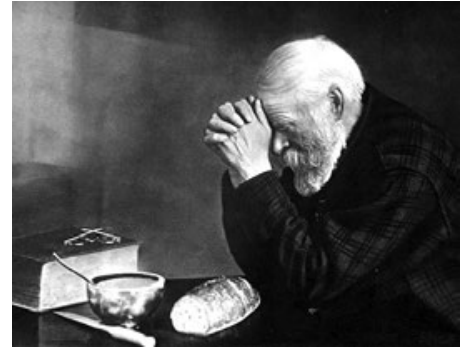
We teach about relationship with God in every part and stage of life:

- **WE TEACH** bedtime and mealtime prayers to children and practise them ourselves; we pray before we leave on a trip, long or short; we teach rote prayers and how to pray extemporaneously.
- **WE TEACH** about how God loves each and every person, creature and thing each day, both by word and by example: Go and do work that helps others and give money openly for such work.
- **WE TEACH** about the fruits of the Spirit by practising the them when we walk, drive, discuss politics and meet others who are like us and are different from us.
- **WE TEACH** simple contemplation/listening/mindfulness in church, at home, on holiday, during the work week, in Sunday school, in the seniors home, and everywhere in between.
- **WE LEAVE** room for listening in silence in worship services.
- **WE ENCOURAGE** the sharing of “God moments” in worship, at home, and at board and committee meetings.
- **WE TEACH** and practise *lectio divina* (contemplating a scripture passage) and

visio divina (contemplating a scene or photo).

We remember the prophet Elijah. His spirituality was one of action and of speaking God’s message with emotion and intellect. But there came time when God called him to inaction, silence and peaceful contemplation:

“[God] said, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.’ Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire, a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’” (1 Kings 19:11-13, NRSV).



‘GRACE’ BY ERIC ENSTROM (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

We teach bedtime and mealtime prayers to children and practise them ourselves.

May each of us focus on hearing God in our life, no matter our theological leanings, worship style or chosen form of mission. Let us listen for the God who loves us each more than we love ourselves. ☿

/// For discussion

1. Contemplate the feature article: A. Make yourself comfortable, placing your hands turned up in your lap and close your eyes. B. Take five normal breaths. C. Imagine a favourite place of yours to relax in. D. Imagine God coming and being with you there. E. Sit quietly with God, waiting for God to speak. F. Think about whatever arises in your mind and heart and share that with God, or think about the article. G. What emotions or thoughts arise in you? Share those with God. H. Sit in thanksgiving that God has drawn near.
2. What would you add in terms of spiritual practices: other places, times, forms?
3. Dave Rogalsky suggests that our focus should be “first and always” on helping people in our congregations grow in relationship with God. What do you think?
4. A copy of Corinne Ware’s spirituality wheel appears on page 5. Which of the four would be your preferred way to experience God? Where and when do you experience God? How do you respond to God?
5. Rogalsky suggests that Mennonites no longer have a tight-knit community to provide spirituality and that we need tools to build our own. Do you agree? In what ways does your congregation help you carry your spirituality?

—BY DAVE ROGALSKY AND BARB DRAPER

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VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

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✉ It's important for a pastor to be married, not just living with a partner

RE: "INTRODUCING DAVE Rogalsky, Eastern Canada correspondent," June 18, page 2.

Are we so proper now that we cannot say whether people are married or not? When I was much younger, people "were living in sin" if living with a partner and not married. Here we have a pastor, as well as his children, living with partners! I have been accused more than once of not being very sincere or committed in my religious beliefs, but I want my pastor to be married if he/she is living with a partner.

ORLY FRIESEN, WINNIPEG

FROM OUR LEADERS

Experiencing God

SHARON SCHULTZ

When my youngest son "graduated" from Grade 5 in June 2000, his class took a special year-end trip to Toronto. I was working as a school bus driver at the time—we lived in Ontario then—and I drove the bus. The highlight of the trip was attending *The Lion King* live at the Princess of Wales Theatre. The show was the most amazing performance I have ever experienced; it was an incredible experience, one I have never forgotten.

During 2018, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan churches are focussing on deepening our walk with God by increasing our awareness of God's presence in our lives: experiencing God. In his book *Experiencing the Presence of God*, A.W. Tozer writes that deep in the soul of every person is a longing for the presence of God. We not only want to know about God, but we desire to feel his presence with us, to experience him. Think of how I experienced *The Lion King*; I didn't just read a review! So how can we experience God? Here are a few



practices I've found helpful:

- **IN JANUARY**, I invited our congregation at Eyebrow Mennonite Church to join me in praying Psalm 63:1-8 every morning: "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my body longs for you . . ." These words express our deepest longing and desire to experience God. As we pray them, over and over, day by day, we open ourselves to be changed; to become more aware of God's presence, more open to see the activity of the Holy Spirit around us; to encounter the living Jesus with us and hear the Holy Spirit speak to us.

- **BEFORE JESUS** ascended to his Father, he promised he would never leave us. Then on Pentecost, the mighty wind of the Holy Spirit blew into the room where Jesus' followers were meeting. I've encouraged our congregation to let the wind remind us of the presence of the Holy Spirit with us. And here in Saskatchewan the wind blows a lot! Open your senses and arms to feel and welcome the wind of the Holy Spirit, and delight in God's presence with us and

around us.

- **I LOVE** to play the piano and sing. One thing I've been doing in 2018 is spending at least a few hours every week singing and worshipping God in song. And I experience God's presence in a powerful way.

- **ABOUT A** year ago, Ryan Siemens, MC Saskatchewan's executive minister, and Josh Wallace, pastor of Warman Mennonite Church, taught us a new song with the words, "Holy Spirit, breathe o'er us your warm breath of life; remind us who we are again." We've been singing this song at most MC Saskatchewan gatherings. And I've sensed a fresh wind of the Spirit blowing among us: in my congregation, at MC Saskatchewan council meetings and at other gatherings.

Jesus has not left us alone! The Spirit of God is present with us. May we continue to open our hearts to experience and encounter God's presence with us.

Sharon Schultz is deputy moderator of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan and pastor of Eyebrow Mennonite Church.

✉ Steve Heinrichs: A modern-day prophet?

RE: “PROTESTS AND pipelines,” July 2, page 12.

In his “Viewpoint” article, Helmut Lemke makes several good points about pipelines being the safest means of transporting oil, and that in the short run pipelines are beneficial as long as we are dependent on fossil fuels to supply our energy.

However, the problem is greater than supplying our present needs for oil. From information available, it seems that the present pipeline system is adequate for present domestic needs for energy. The main reason for expanding the pipeline is for export and perhaps future domestic requirements.

Lemke states, “Our government considers the

pipeline of national interest and useful for our economy.” But what is our national interest? Is it only the economy? Official government positions tend to consider only the short term—that which will be politically expedient for the next election campaign, not what is best for the next generation. Yes, we need a healthy economy, but not at the expense of desecrating our environment, for which we have a God-given vocation to protect and sustain.

Lemke questions whether Steve Heinrichs has to disregard the law of the land in fulfilling his work of reconciliation. Does the law of the land trump God’s purpose for creation? The prophets of old and Jesus himself broke laws of their time when these failed to bring justice to humankind and the rest of creation. Many of our laws are enacted not necessarily for the

FROM OUR LEADERS

‘What did I get myself into?’

JUNE MILLER

Swirling around with ideas of strategy, focus, and “We used to do it this way,” change is messy. Grappling with the in-between is messy. Living in the liminal space between what was and what will be is messy, yet here we are, wondering, “What did I get myself into?”

In acting, “being in the moment” is a phrase simply meaning being present, not thinking about your next line or move, but listening and seeing what is happening at any particular moment. Not unlike real life, when we naturally think about what’s next. Living in the liminal space is uncomfortable and yet full of potential.

Hired by Mennonite Church Alberta last September, I accepted a newly created position as communications coordinator. A general job description was in place but allowed room to be

“messy,” to create, to form and give shape to a new connection among MC Alberta constituents.

Because churches are spread out into three clusters—Edmonton, Calgary and Southern Alberta—that are three to six hours apart, meeting together takes intentionality. With only 13 churches in our regional church, Sunday services are held in six different languages.

Need to call the MC Alberta office? The number will vary depending on who you need to reach, as we all work from home.

Since last October, a new kind of “messy” has happened. MC Canada’s structure has been decentralized, refocussing on congregational support and delegating leadership to the regional churches. Ironically, regions create a new centrality by working together. Moderators from each region now form the Joint Council, executive ministers form the Executive Staff

Group, and communicators form MC Canada Communications. Each region brings its own perspective, priorities and personality.

As communicators, we wrestle with many questions. How do you create a nationwide brand while being regional? If staff members from both MC Manitoba and MC Canada host an event, whose logo is used? Does MC Canada need a social media presence in addition to the regional churches? What if all regional churches are not on social media? Who does the media contact for information? What role does *Canadian Mennonite* play in the overall communications strategy? The key is that we get to wrestle with these questions together, bringing all of our regional nuances to the table.

“What did I get myself into?” is perhaps common angst felt across the regions. It may be hard to see the potential when we only understand what used to be. Consider this our opportunity to sit with the Holy Spirit, “being in the moment.”

June Miller is MC Alberta’s communications coordinator.



sake of what is best for humanity and creation, but to protect the power of the people in office and political institutions.

Do we perhaps have a modern-day prophet in our midst in the person of Heinrichs, who has, and is, risking his all for the sake of fulfilling his call to promote justice?

WALTER AND ELSIE WIEBE, MORDEN, MAN.

RE: “INFORMATION ON pipeline protest available” letter, July 23, page 10.

I have been following the debate in the pages of *Canadian Mennonite* on Steve Heinrichs and his prayer witness at Burnaby Mountain from some distance, but with great interest. I have been quite surprised by the reaction that he has garnered.

(Continued on page 10)

FAMILY TIES

Can we talk?

MELISSA MILLER

Are you finding yourself divided from loved ones in your family, church or neighbourhood on any number of challenging issues? Are you finding fewer opportunities to talk with others across differences? Are the chasms leading to heightened stress and fractured relationships? Do you wonder if this is the best we can do in our families and churches?

I certainly am troubled by the increasing polarization, especially as hot topics and mean-spirited politics rend the body of Christ.

With these questions and this column, I hope to encourage us in the task of courageous listening and speaking. I recognize discomfort comes with such difficult topics and sometimes wish they would just disappear. That is not going to happen, and so we need to find firm ground on which to stand and the means to connect with each other in the midst of the complexities. Borrowing language from Mennonite Church Canada's Being a Faithful Church process, I urge us to “strengthen our discernment muscles,” and our capacity for deep listening. To do so, I polled a few people with the question, “How do we talk about our deep differences?” Some of their responses shaped what follows.

First of all, the phrase “talk about” may be miscommunication. “Can we talk

about this?” may actually mean “I want to speak at you until you acknowledge the validity of my perspective.” To couch it as talking together masks a more likely outcome, that we will talk past each other, wielding our wordy swords until the other is sliced into submission.

To talk together is to commit to listening, to be as willing to take in the other's thoughts and feelings as to speak one's own. There are obstacles to such a commitment. Deep listening requires laying aside my perspective, at least temporarily, to take in fully the words and meaning from the other person. When difficult topics are under discussion, such receptivity can be nigh impossible. Anger and fear insert static into the communication.



Deep listening requires laying aside my perspective . . . to take in fully the words and meaning from the other person.

Naming one's powerful feelings, at least to oneself, reduces the static and makes it more possible to listen.

Deep listening also takes time, which we may be reluctant to invest in, for any number of reasons. It's easier and more satisfying to talk to those with whom we agree. It's stressful to talk across the divides, especially when the other person thinks and says such infuriating things. It can elicit our undesirable characteristics—like being aggressive or

judgmental—that we prefer to avoid. It strains relationships, sometimes to the point of breaking. Maybe it's better to avoid raising the hot topics than to risk a complete rupture.

To offer deep listening, we centre ourselves in our deep values. I believe that God's Spirit resides in each human being, and that I am committed to seek and honour that God-spark. Such a commitment leads me to invest in relationships.

Of course, not all relationships benefit from, or require, the same level of engagement. But when we care passionately about an issue, we are compelled to engage with others who care, even if their views are opposite to ours. Our mutual care binds us in relationship.

Tending the relationship means that sometimes we focus on the relationship, not on the issue. Maybe we share coffee together. Maybe we talk hobbies or sports, pop culture or families. Maybe, in the body of Christ, we talk faith and offer

to pray for each other. The “better angels of our nature,” a phrase from Abraham Lincoln, may guide our intentions and actions.

In future columns, I intend to write about some of these difficult topics. I invite you to join in the conversation.

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

(Continued from page 9)

In the next 20 years, when the full effects of climate change are taking hold around the world, tipping into a crisis for God's creation, people like Heinrichs will be regarded as nothing but heroes and advocates for Christ.

The Canadian government, however, in its astonishing unilateral decision to use 35 percent of the carbon budget it has left to meet the Paris climate change agreement target of keeping global temperature rises below two degrees, with only 1 percent of global population, will not.

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Lessons from a Thai refugee camp

BRAD FRIESEN

Back in 1988, my wife and I chaperoned 17 high school students on a trip to visit refugee camps in Thailand. We thought the students would learn about missions and life outside of Canada. We had no idea the experience would change us forever.

Our first stop in Thailand was the remote Ban Vinai Refugee Camp. At the time of our visit, 40,000 people called the camp home, mostly Hmong refugees who had escaped from Laos with nothing but the clothes on their backs. The people lived very simply; they had nothing besides four walls and a roof, and just enough food to get by. Human waste ran in open ditches throughout the site, and the hillside was scattered with many piles of stones marking the graves of those who had not survived. Most of the refugees held out hope that they would be resettled in countries like Canada, where they might start a new life, but others faced the more likely scenario of returning to their own war-ravaged country.

On our second day, we attended the camp's Sunday morning worship service. Despite it being in the Hmong language, we felt a deep connection worshipping with our brothers and sisters in Christ, although the sermon was impossible for us to understand. Afterwards, our host

explained that the preacher had been speaking against materialism, using Matthew 6:19-20, where Jesus warns the people not to store up earthly treasures, but to look to the treasure of heaven. These people had no material possessions to speak of, so how could they be considered materialistic?

As newlyweds, we didn't have much, but compared to these refugees we were rich! Suddenly, the message of the sermon came through loud and clear. Beyond language barriers, we felt the conviction of the Holy Spirit. It forever changed our perspective on the importance of material things.

But to say that we have lived a selfless, non-materialistic life ever since would be untrue. We live in an affluent area of the world where abundance surrounds us. Marketing and media constantly implore

As newlyweds, we didn't have much, but compared to these refugees we were rich!

us to acquire more. They even tell us that if we don't have the money to pay now, we can always use credit!

Amidst all these pressures, I appreciate the still, small voice that often reminds me of the Hmong-language sermon and the biblical truth it revealed. Then I find it much easier to forego or delay purchasing things we'd like so that we can give

to those in need. This generosity is not rooted in feeling guilty for what we have, but in being good stewards with what God has provided.

I am grateful to live in Canada, but I believe that privilege imparts a responsibility to provide for those in need, both at home and throughout the world. Luke 12:48 says: "Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more."

A couple of years ago, we established a family foundation with Abundance Canada. We explored various options that fit our finances and gave us the flexibility to choose both when and where funds would be disbursed, and how much we wanted to give. Our family donates to the fund throughout the year, and then we get together with our children and grandchildren to decide what charities we want to support. It not only helps us to prioritize giving today, but offers a tangible way to pass on the lesson we learned at Ban Vinai.

Of course, giving generously isn't a lesson we all need to travel halfway across the world to learn. No matter where we are, we can shift our focus from what we

want to what others need. If we do, I believe our generosity can change the world.

Brad Friesen is a gift planning consultant at Abundance Canada. He and his wife Sandy have lived in many different cities where they were active in a variety of ministries. They now make their home in Abbotsford, B.C.



As the father of two small children who will have to live with the consequences of this decision made a long way away, I have to ask: Since when did anyone in the Mennonite church even think about siding with fossil fuel and financial interests ahead of Indigenous rights and the rights of our children to experience a stable climate?

RICHARD COYLE, ROCHESTER, KENT, U.K.

RE: "HEINRICH'S PROTEST mirrors Christ in overturning the moneychangers' tables" letter, July 2, page 10.

Sorry I missed the 600-kilometre Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights. You can add my name in support for Steve Heinrichs, along with the five Kitchener letter writers.

HOWARD WIDEMAN, SUDBURY, ONT.

✉ **Walk a mile in my shoes before you judge my actions**

RE: "SUICIDE MAY not be painless, but it is selfish" letter, July 2, page 7.

This response to "Suicide isn't painless," May 21, page 16, was very painful to read. As a person who struggles every day with extreme depression and suicidal ideation, I was quite offended to be judged as selfish.

Suicide is not selfish. It is a response to unending, unbearable pain. People who attempt suicide, whether they succeed or not, do not do it because they are selfish. Most are aware of the pain that may result for those left behind.

In my personal circumstances, I am aware that it might create pain for a few people, but I truly believe it will be minimal. Family or others who have no time for me while alive will not suddenly suffer when I am gone.

I hear so often that "suicide is selfish," or "you should not cause pain for others." What about my pain? Is it not valid? Why is it necessary for me to continue living with this extreme unrelenting pain because ending it might affect others?

Another question I have is in regard to the church teachings and conversations that happen at funerals or memorials. We are told that "Heaven is wonderful," and "all pain is gone," because "they are with the Lord . . . in a much better place." If this is true, why do I need to stay in pain when there is a better place?

I am not saying suicide is the right solution. But if you have never personally experienced the pain, both emotional and physical, of severe depression, you are not in a position to judge the actions of people like me.

NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST

✉ **Calling suicide 'selfish' dishonours those who struggled with mental illness**

RE: "SUICIDE MAY not be painless, but it is selfish" letter, July 2, page 7.

No one wants to die; they only wish the pain to end. To suggest that suicide is simply an act of selfishness indicates a lack of understanding of mental illness and the despair that leads to suicide. To suggest that people who take their own lives are selfish only adds to the pain of those left behind and does nothing to honour the memory of those who have struggled with despair and mental illness.

ARLA LONGHURST, LONDON, ONT.

✉ **Guilty conscience leads to 'selfish' suicide**

RE: "CALLING SUICIDE selfish is uncharitable" letter, July 23, page 7.

My father took his own life when I was 14 and my sister was 12, leaving us a note saying, "Take care of your mother. Be good to her. She will need a lot of care."

He did not have a mental illness. He was involved in an extra-marital affair. He ended his life purely out of a guilty conscience. Instead of facing the consequences of his behaviour, he chose suicide, leaving his children without a father. It was a selfish and cowardly act.

NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST

✉ **The fundamental meaning of baptism and communion rests in Jesus**

RE: "FROM BELIEF to belonging," July 2, page 4, and "Remembering my baptism," July 23, page 4.

These feature articles speak to two "core" beliefs and practices. I read them as saying that current church culture has become the gold standard, in contrast to Jesus and the Scriptures teaching us the fundamental meaning of, and purpose for, our practices—ordinances in this case.

In "Response to 'From belief to belonging,'" July 23, page 10, John Rempel rightly challenges us with a more biblically focussed perspective. His comments remind me that our carefully discerned *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* must not be ignored or discarded without carefully considering our time-honoured Scripture.

A detailed review of references directly and indirectly relating to the language used about baptism, communion and church reveals integral relatedness. Jesus and his apostles offer depth in meaning and practical implications that go well beyond commonly quoted definitions

or subjectively based congregational surveys. It is critical that we interpret the Bible and life through the lens of Jesus, the living Word of God, not through changing popular or feel-good lenses.

Why is Jesus' baptism no longer a valid guide? Jesus reminds us to first count the cost, which requires significant maturity. Think of the implications of Mark 10: "Can you drink the cup of suffering that I must drink? Can you be baptized in the way I must be baptized?"

Why does John highlight Jesus' injunction to love each other and to wash each other's feet in John 13, with no reference to the Lord's Supper? Because the Lord's Supper is much more than a memorial. Study carefully Paul's admonitions related to our most commonly used communion liturgy (I Corinthians 11). Communion, community and fellowship are not liturgies, but human relationships. Jesus invites us to a new life of discipleship, not only forgiveness. Do we really want to replace our Anabaptist perspective?

IVAN UNGER, CAMBRIDGE, ONT.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Byrd—Luiza (b. July 7, 2018), to Conrad Taves (Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.) and Rebecca Silver Slater, in Nova Scotia.

Martin—Elias Paul Burkholder (b. March 12, 2018), to Rachel Burkholder and Simon Martin, Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont.

Shantz—Brielle Rita (b. July 9, 2018), to Cal and Jenn Shantz, Floradale Mennonite, Ont.

Shantz—Chloe Nicole (b. March 17, 2018), to Colin Shantz and Gabrielle Walsh, Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Unrau Zhou—Tobias Beren (b. July 6, 2018), to Catherine Unrau and Tim Zhou, Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Wiens—Tennyson Edward Rocket (b. June 2, 2018), to Toby and Candace Wiens, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Woeschka—William Peter (Liam) (b. July 6, 2018), to Tyler and Nicole Woeschka, Floradale Mennonite, Ont.

Baptisms

Trenton Froese—Morden Mennonite, Man., Aug. 19, 2018.

Marriages

Armstrong/Fowler—Alicia Armstrong and Corey Fowler (Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.), at Niagara-on-the-Lake, June 23, 2018.

Bailey/Toews—Andrew Bailey and Elena Toews, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., June 23, 2018.

✉ Wally Unger made sure 'Columbia continues to thrive'

RE: "FORMER CBC president dies at 81," July 2, page 24.

I appreciate the excellent summary by Amy Dueckman and have one comment to add.

Wally Unger helped create a business model to keep Columbia Bible College relevant in today's society by evolving from strictly theological studies programs to career programs with a theological basis. At a time when fewer parents, youth pastors and lead pastors were encouraging their youth to attend a Bible college, and many Bible colleges were discontinuing, Columbia continues to thrive.

JOHN PIERA, CALGARY

The author is a member of Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary.

Boersma/Leis—Sonja Boersma and David Leis, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., April 14, 2018.

de Waard/Froese—Rachel de Waard and Eric Froese (Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.), at Niagara-on-the-Lake, June 16, 2018.

Dueckman/Dynowski—J.D. Dueckman and Pauline Dynowski, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., in Chilliwack, B.C., March 17, 2018.

Dueckman/Esau—David Dueckman and Liana Esau, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., July 14, 2018.

Friesen/Giesbrecht—Mackenzie Friesen and Will Giesbrecht, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., in Morden, Man., June 30, 2018.

Kuli/Schwengsbier—Tim Kuli (Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.) and Laurie Schwengsbier, at Faith Mennonite, June 2, 2018.

Milinkovic/Shantz—Lisa Milinkovic and Joel Shantz (St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.) at Langdon Hall, Cambridge, Ont., June 23, 2018.

Penner/Steckly—Daniel Penner (Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.) and Katie Steckly (Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.), at the Conrad Grebel University College Chapel, Waterloo, June 30, 2018.

Peters/Taves—Jessi Peters and Michael Taves at First Mennonite, Edmonton, May 26, 2018.

Deaths

Bechtel—Doris (nee Weber), 91 (b. Nov. 17, 1926; d. July 12, 2018), Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Bender—Brian, 70 (b. July 27, 1947; d. July 10, 2018), Cassel

Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Bergen—Elizabeth (nee Epp), 86 (b. Dec. 1, 1931; d. July 22, 2018), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Bergen—George G., 91 (b. Sept. 12, 1926; d. July 18, 2018), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Braun—Johanna (nee Giesbrecht), 90 (b. Oct. 6, 1927; d. July 25, 2018), First Mennonite, Calgary.

Dahl—Pauline, 96 (b. Nov. 15, 1921; d. July 29, 2018), Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Dick—John W., 77 (b. Sept. 8, 1940; d. June 26, 2018), North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Dyck—Anna, 96 (b. Sept. 28, 1921; d. July 2, 2018), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Friesen—Anne, 97 (b. Aug. 17, 1920; d. July 14, 2018), Altona Berghaler Mennonite, Man.

Giesbrecht—Abram, 75 (b. Aug. 27, 1942; d. July 16, 2018), Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Heinrichs—Helen, 88 (b. July 5, 1930; d. July 22, 2018), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Kasdorf—Anita (nee Janzen), 81 (b. May 18, 1937; d. June 30, 2018), Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Klassen—Ann (nee Neuman), 94 (b. March 8, 1924; d. July 1, 2018), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Klassen—Edgar, 80 (b. Aug. 5, 1937; d. July 6, 2018), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Krahn—Katherine (Kay), 91 (b. Dec. 23, 1926; d. July 21, 2018), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Perry—Paul Arthur, 39 (b. Oct. 26, 1978; d. July 2, 2018), The Commons, Hamilton, Ont.

Peters—Betty, 73 (b. May 5, 1945; d. July 6, 2018), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Peters—Ed, 87 (b. May 25, 1930; d. June 7, 2018), Altona Berghaler Mennonite, Man.

Rahn—Nettie (Aganetha) (nee Epp), 87 (b. Jan. 24, 1931; d. July 24, 2018), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Roth—David, 92 (b. July 21, 1925; d. July 15, 2018), Crosshill Mennonite, Ont.

Schmidt—Lawrence, 62 (b. Aug. 1, 1955; d. July 12, 2018), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Snider—Marie, 84 (b. March 6, 1934; d. July 3, 2018), St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Wiens—Ike, 101 (b. April 6, 1917; d. July 11, 2018), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Wilkinson—Gary, 74 (b. Nov. 18, 1943; d. July 5, 2018), St. Agatha Mennonite, Ont.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

announcements within four months of the event.

Please send Milestones announcements by email 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.

Correction

The writers in *Rhubarb* magazine's concluding trilogy have won or been finalists for a combined 16 Governor General's awards. Incorrect information appeared in the print version of "Rhubarb runs out," July 23, page 26. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.

A moment from yesterday



This is a photo of the dormitory duplex at Sexsmith Bible Institute in Alberta. The building used to function as the meeting house of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren at Bear Lake and the General Conference Mennonites at Wembley Ranch. What was the official name of the Bible institute that used this building and the church that used it?

Text: Conrad Stoesz

Photo: Der Bote Collection / Mennonite Heritage Archives



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WOMEN WALKING TOGETHER IN FAITH

A perfect spot for gratitude

BY KATE JANZEN

Growing up, I never wanted to be a farmer. It seemed like farm machinery always had precedence over a new couch, curtains or nice shoes. Then I met my husband Bob at Rosthern Mennonite Collegiate in Saskatchewan, and he wanted to be a veterinarian. Naively, I never thought this would involve farming, so I taught elementary school while he studied.

Later, we had three children and moved to a farm west of Calgary, where I've seen glimpses of God's kingdom as I embraced the farming lifestyle:

- **AS A** young parent, I discovered that 4H clubs provided our children with valuable life skills as they learned how to care for calves and present speeches, and made lifelong friends. Also, the summer daycare I ran for city children for a few years not only helped our children with university tuition, it also taught these youngsters about country living, and me to anticipate and laugh at surprises.

Like the day I asked a couple of the children to spend time with kittens who needed extra tender loving care. This was going well until our big white guard

dog bounded onto the deck. The kittens bolted into the nearest tree and the children all had ideas as to what to do next. The most obvious to them was to call a fire truck, but I told them this would be very expensive.

Lo and behold, a short time later, a fire truck came down the driveway! In a stern voice I shouted, "Who called 911?"

The children were wondering too! Then the door of the truck opened, and my older brother from Saskatchewan said he was en route home from Vancouver, where he'd picked up a new truck for his hometown. I thought I could feel God smiling.

- **A FEW** years ago, Bob and I read *One Thousand Gifts: A Dare to Live Life Fully Right Where You Are* by Ann Voskamp. With its emphasis on listing three things each day that make us grateful even when the going gets tough, it became a huge influence on our farm. For me, it resulted in a commitment to record 10,000 items of gratitude as the days went by. And just now I noted entry No. 7,853: "I'm glad I was able to serve as a substitute teacher in a Muslim school." (My rough estimate is that I'll be 73 when I record the 10,000th gratitude).

Meanwhile, Bob built a "gratitude bench" on one of the hills of our farm and wove the word *eucharisteo* (gratitude) onto the fence. He goes there almost every day to give thanks. Occasionally, I join him for a special time of enjoying the trees and flowers as we pray for our family, the church and the world.

- **AFTER 37** years on the farm, we've experienced many other blessings.

Most recently that included a visit from long-time friend Yvonne Johnson, an Indigenous woman who lives in Calgary, where she is courageously raising her teenage grandchildren after being paroled following 21 years of imprisonment for murder. On an earlier visit, she told us of her dream to build a sweat lodge to help her people. We said she could do that on our farm. And now, after a walk around the property to find the right place for this building project, she returned and told us, smiling widely, that she'd found "a perfect spot."

Those words struck home. For I too have found a perfect spot in which to experience God's kingdom in ways that only a farmer's wife can. In such a setting, who needs more couches, curtains and shoes?



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PHOTOS COURTESY OF KATE JANZEN

Bob Janzen built a 'gratitude bench' on one of the hills of the family farm and wove the word eucharisteo (gratitude) onto the fence.



Kate Janzen is Mennonite Women Canada's Alberta representative; she attends Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary.

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Solitude and
community

TROY WATSON

A peculiar thing happened to me last Sunday while I was on holidays. I felt a strong desire to attend a church service. Curious, to say the least. You see, by the time summer arrives, I'm usually churched out. As a pastor, church is not only my work life but a significant part of my personal and social life, too.



most fitting responses in such circumstances. Worshipping in spirit and truth requires us to yield to the divine flow, allowing our senses and souls to soak—be baptized—in the Great I Am without analyzing or labelling what we're experiencing. As Kenny Rogers

reminds us, "There'll be time enough for countin', when the dealin's done." Save the reflection and theologizing for later. In the moment, just be present.

The greatest temptation after such encounters is to pursue the experience

Spiritual disciplines and worship are not intended to make God moments happen or convince God to 'show up.'

rather than the God we've experienced. This insidious substitution often goes undetected in our worship. I know I often find myself trying to recreate spiritual experiences. I become a "holy moment" chaser, like a storm chaser tracking down a tornado. The truth is, we can't predict when and where the Spirit will move to reveal God-self to us and we can't make "God encounters" happen no matter how hard we pray or how passionately we worship.

The hard reality is that we're not in control. We can't pull the right strings and make God dance to the beat of our drum. Holy moments are intimate events with God, and forced intimacy is inappropriate in any relationship. Holy moments can't be forced or coerced. They come when they come.

The good news, of course, is that we don't need to chase God, because God is seeking us. Our spiritual work is to

become more available to God's presence.

Holy moments usually come when we least expect them. Like a "thief in the night." They're more likely to happen Wednesday afternoon at work or Thursday evening in the grocery store than on Sunday morning while singing your favourite praise song or hymn. Spiritual disciplines and worship are not intended to make God moments happen or convince God to "show up." The work of faith is to make ourselves alert and available to God's presence more every day, so we recognize when God comes to us in the face of a stranger in need, a lonely co-worker, our spouse or Lake Superior.

So what does this have to do with my peculiar longing to attend church during my holidays?

I've realized I tend to seek God's presence in solitude more than in community. I believe my encounter with God on Lake Superior, followed by my sudden desire

to go to church a few days later, was divine Spirit reminding me of my need for solitude and community.

Parker Palmer's definitions for solitude and community are helpful. For him, solitude isn't about being away from people, it's about "being fully present to ourselves whether or not we are with others." Community doesn't necessarily mean being with others, "it means never losing the awareness that we are connected to each other . . . it is about being fully open to the reality of relationship whether or not we are alone."

Introverts often undermine their need for community and extroverts typically undervalue their need for solitude. I'm convinced that we all need both solitude and community to grow, mature and experience the fullness of God. ❧

Troy Watson is pastor of Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford, Ont.

During summer holidays I prefer to worship in the temple of creation. The ideal cathedral for me is hiking through rocky green wilderness or kayaking along a meandering river. Solitude in nature is where I most deeply connect with Spirit.

For instance, two weeks ago while kayaking alone over the waves of Lake Superior I sensed the "Spirit of God hovering over the face of the waters." I became acutely aware of the paradoxical nature of "God encounters" as I simultaneously felt the familiar love and peace of Christ while being overwhelmed by the incomprehensible mystery of the Most High filling me with "holy fear and trembling." I opened my mouth to utter some prayer of response, but words escaped me.

Sacred moments often invite us to surrender our love of words, to lay them down on the sacrificial altar of God's presence. On holy ground, words get in the way, distracting our focus with the futile activity of naming the unnameable. Silence and "practising presence" are the

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

'Journeys of discovery'

Strong Mennonite presence at North American Interfaith Network conference

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent

Four Mennonites were key leaders of the 2018 conference of the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) in Edmonton from July 31 to Aug. 3. Pilgrimage: Journeys of Discovery led participants through workshops, speakers and activities to further the goal of building a network of communication and understanding among interfaith organizations and diverse religious groups.

Suzanne Gross of the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers convened an interfaith panel discussion on the collaboration between Muslim and Mennonite faith groups and their respective agencies in Edmonton to resettle Syrian refugees. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Alberta, Islamic Family and Social Services, the Newcomers Centre and Mennonite Church Alberta, as well as an Austrian participant involved in refugee work were represented on the panel. The panel discussed how these relationships developed in response to the crisis to make successful sponsorships possible.

An example of this collaboration was



PHOTO COURTESY OF RANDY HALUZA-DELAY
Donna Entz of Mennonite Church Alberta, left, and Orlando Vasquez of Mennonite Central Committee Alberta were part of a panel discussing interfaith relationships that successfully supported refugees during the Syrian crisis.

that MCC had good standing with the government as a sponsorship agreement holder and could depend on the Muslim community for refugee connections as well as financial commitment for the sponsorship agreements.

The importance of pre-existing relationships between Mennonites and Muslims, much of it a result of the work of MC Alberta's outreach work through Donna Entz, was highlighted as crucial in enabling trust between communities for the partnerships.

Entz co-led a workshop with Shiraz Kanjion entitled "Pilgrimage: The journey toward understanding the other." Entz presented a brief history of interfaith cooperation in Edmonton, beginning in 1938,

when Christians and Jews helped build the Al Rashid mosque, the first in the city. She noted many "stepping stones" of cooperation between faith groups that built a foundation for "Common Word, Alberta" for Christians and Muslims to understand each other and build friendships. In 2013, the first Muslim-Christian dialogue was held at First Mennonite Church. Kanjion facilitated a mini-version of the dialogue for participants to experience.

In her presentation, Entz said: "Trust is built and helps us deal with the difficult, problematic theological issues that exist between Christians and Muslims. This forges spiritual friendships. . . . We are forced to be stretched and mature in ways we wouldn't have been if we had stayed with our 'own.'"

Randy Haluza-Delay, a professor of sociology, and Bodhi Sakyadhita, a Buddhist nun and environmental scientist, co-led a workshop entitled "Climate justice as an interfaith connection point." Drawing on their faith perspectives, both made a strong case for creation care and climate justice as moral imperatives, while questions about what faith communities should do were part of the group discussion.

Sakyadhita said in his presentation that "environmental issues are not fringe Buddhist issues, but are central to the teachings. . . . from the Buddhist perspective. Our degrading environment is a reflection and result of our rising greed, selfishness and negativity."

Haluza-Delay mentioned the need to ask new questions of old wisdom in biblical, theological and cultural understandings, using the idea of "fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28) as an idea whose traditional interpretation needs to be rethought. The presentation clearly showed how diverse faith groups have a strong common goal in the care for creation and justice for all living things.

Paul Bergen, a member of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre, who chaired the NAIN program committee, summed up the importance of what NAIN is doing when he quoted a colleague's words: "People in the world today tend to blame religion for all the world's ills. We in interfaith [dialogue] know that it will take religion to solve all those problems." ❧

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Helping the stranger, and connecting with the neighbour

Sterling Mennonite Fellowship participates in inter-church projects

BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE

Manitoba Correspondent

WINNIPEG

When Sterling Mennonite Fellowship received an invitation from St. Vital Evangelical Mennonite Church (EMC) to partner in sponsoring a refugee family, it felt like an answer to prayer.

Members of the Winnipeg Mennonite congregation had felt called to support refugees for a long time, because of their history as refugees and the clear need for it in the world right now, says Moses Falco, Sterling's pastor. Five years ago, the church was in the midst of a sponsorship process and had already begun raising money when the project fell through. Although the church discussed other uses for the money every year at its annual general meeting, none of the options presented ever felt quite right and the project money lay untouched.

The EMC church's outreach committee had voted in favour of a refugee sponsorship project at the beginning of 2017. But when fundraising began, the committee quickly realized the church wouldn't be able to finance the project on its own. So a letter was sent to nearby churches in the St. Vital community in south-central Winnipeg, searching for a partner. When Sterling answered the call, both churches felt like they had found the missing piece they needed and quickly started getting excited to welcome a new family to Canada.

Using Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) resources on refugee sponsorship, the congregations formed a joint committee and sub-committees, each including members of both churches, and began fundraising. After combining their funds and hosting a few events, they reached their goal in just a few months.

"I think people really rallied to the spirit of the partnership and we very quickly closed the gap," says Cornie Thiessen, coordinator of Sterling's missions and service

committee.

At the beginning of 2018, the congregations welcomed a single mom and her three children from Rwanda to Winnipeg, right into the frigid winter. The family alternates attending both churches and have been enthusiastic and eager to connect, says Thiessen, providing a source of joy for both congregations.

Each congregation offers a slightly different demographic and programming, which is one reason why the partnership is beneficial, says Lois Braun, chair of the joint committee.

"These inter-congregational partnerships can really help us get the best of both worlds; [we] get to keep that small close-knit church but also have the desired impact that we want on the world," says Thiessen.

Both Falco and Braun agree that it was great to work together with another church.

In the process of getting to know a

family from another continent, members of Sterling and the EMC congregation created and strengthened lasting relationships with each other, too. Following one of the fundraising events, the two churches' youth and Sunday school ministry teams met to learn from each other and to share what ministry in their churches looks like. Soon after, church members had a brown bag lunch to learn about refugee issues and prepare for the family's arrival.

Sterling has already hosted a joint service for the two congregations this summer, and St. Vital EMC is hosting another in a few weeks.

"That's another thing that came out of just being more connected, I'd say, and I don't think it would've happened unless we were working on a project like this refugee sponsorship together," says Falco.

Both congregations are also involved in a Habitat for Humanity building project with 12 other churches of many denominations and a mosque. This is the second time this interfaith building project has taken place among the St. Vital faith groups.

When it feels like governments and citizens alike are pushing people to emphasize differences and pick sides, uniting with other churches and other faith groups is especially important. "I think that's been one of the rewarding parts . . . just getting out of our church walls and seeing the power of congregations when we do work together," says Thiessen. ☼



PHOTO BY CORNIE THIESSEN

Some church members and the refugee family in their new home in March 2018. Pictured from left to right: Lois Braun, Heritier Munezero, Claudine Uwimpuhwe, Siggie Holzhaeuer, Katherine Morgan, Speciose Nyiramugwaneza, Emmanuel Iranshubije, Gordon Bueckert, Eileen Scharfenberg and Dave Martens.

Keeping culture and faith

Matu-Chin congregation now a member of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada already had several Chin congregations in its midst, with all of them having roots in the Hakha-Chin community. Like many languages, though, the Chin language from Myanmar has several dialects, and, as of this spring, the regional church is now home to the Matu-Chin Christian Church in Kitchener, whose members speak Matu-Chin.

The Matu-Chin group of 30 adults and children meets at First Mennonite Church on Sunday mornings at 10:30. Some had tried the other Chin congregations in Kitchener but could not understand the Hakha dialect. During the Matu-Chin sermon by Pastor Thing Sai, the children are given a Sunday school lesson in Matu-Chin by one of the youth, although some of the children attend First's Sunday school in English. The congregation also gathers Saturday nights for Bible study and a potluck.

Sai began his ministry as a youth pastor in India under Pastor Jehu Lian, former pastor of the Chin Christian Church, an MC Eastern Canada congregation in Kitchener. Lian is now in apostolic ministry with Myanmar Missions International. Sai had fled to India as a refugee when he was 11, and later lived there for 16 years,

completing his bachelor of theology degree at an English-speaking seminary; he has since completed a master of divinity degree from the same school via the internet.

Sponsored by his wife to come to Canada, he currently pastors the church and is in charge of child care at home, as his wife has full-time employment. As in many of the Chin congregations, he does not receive remuneration for his church work. Although he does not currently have a mentor, he finds that First Mennonite pastors Nancy Brubacher and Rene Baergen are a great support.

When asked why the congregation chose to affiliate with Mennonites, Sai noted the connection with Lian and his research on what MC Eastern Canada believes. Mennonites seemed like a good fit, he said.

The Chin of Myanmar do not have family names. Thing Sai had to designate one part of his name as his last name when he came to North America, but his siblings do not have the name Sai. He hopes that his children, now 4 and 2, will learn their culture, as well as English culture, and will also retain their faith in Christ. His goal is that all his families will grow in Christian faith even as they move into Canadian culture. The last week of July the congregation

did the stereotypical Canadian thing and went camping together.

Speaking at the MC Eastern Canada event in the spring, Sai said, "Keep us in your prayers. We are a very small group. We don't really expect things from [the regional church] but we want to walk together. We want to be together as a partner, like a friend. We don't want to be alone." ❧

Staff changes

Pastoral transitions in Ontario

• **CARMEN BRUBACHER** and **KENDRA WHITFIELD ELLIS** will join Gordon Allaby, along with three appointed lay ministers, on the ministry team of Waterloo North Mennonite Church in Waterloo beginning Sept. 1. Brubacher says goodbye to a rewarding experience as a chaplain



in long-term care; she previously was a curriculum writer for MennoMedia and a supply minister. She received her master of divinity degree at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Whitfield Ellis was previously the interim associate pastor of Waterloo North, the associate pastor of Floradale Mennonite from 2008 to 2015, and assistant chaplain of Parkwood Mennonite Home from 2016 to 2017. She has a fine arts degree from the University of Waterloo and a master of theology degree from Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo.

• **ZACH CHARBONNEAU** begins as the associate pastor of Leamington United Mennonite Church on Sept. 1. He previously worked in



the fields of insurance, social work, community organizing and house parties. He earned a master of theological studies degree from Conrad Grebel University College and a bachelor of religious education degree in counselling from Emmanuel Bible College in Kitchener.

—BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Leaders of the Matu-Chin Christian Church in Kitchener, Ont., are accepted into emerging church status in Mennonite Church Eastern Canada on April 28 at the annual regional church gathering. Pictured from left to right: Pastor Thing Sai; Pastor Westerne Joseph of Assemblée de la Grâce in Montréal; Rothang, auditor; Yaling, treasurer; and Maung Aung, chair.

Tshimanga family returns from South Africa

Two-year Witness assignment ended in June

Mennonite Church Canada

Hippolyto and Miriam Tshimanga, accompanied by their sons Emmanuel, 15, and Joshua, 10, returned to Canada on June 2 after the couple completed a two-year term as Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers in South Africa.

Grace Community Church in Bloemfontein had extended an invitation to MC Canada to send a Witness worker team that could strengthen its Anabaptist identity a number of years ago.

“Hippo and Miriam were the obvious choice,” says Willard Metzger, MC Canada’s executive director, as Hippolyto had already previously served as director of African Ministries for 11 years.

Grace is a network of five Mennonite World Conference (MWC) congregations in South Africa. In conjunction with Anabaptist Network in South Africa and MWC, the Tshimangas used their gifts in Christian ministry to provide resources and nurture the leadership and congregations. In addition to leadership formation, the Tshimangas were also involved in women’s ministry, youth entrepreneurship and building Grace’s houses of worship.

MC Canada, along with the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Mission Network, helped with the purchase and delivery of a motorized brick-making machine, so Grace’s members can now make bricks for the construction of their houses



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TSHIMANGA FAMILY

Hippolyto and Miriam Tshimanga, right, and their sons Emmanuel, 15, and Joshua, 10, are back in Canada following the couple’s two-year Witness worker assignment with Grace Community Church, a community of five congregations in South Africa.

Spiritual snapshots of the U.K. and Africa

Witness workers report on their years of service in England and Burkina Faso

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent

Mike and Cheryl Nimz: United Kingdom

Mike and Cheryl Nimz do not fit into typical missionary scenarios, but neither does

their mission field conform to stereotypes. As Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers living in Birmingham, England, since 2013, their assignment is to nurture

of worship.

“We are grateful to have missionary couples to work with us in our country, as this gives us also a sense of belonging, and their workshops benefit more numbers in our communities,” says Lawrence Coetzee, Grace’s vice-chair and coordinator of international relations in South Africa.

The Tshimangas are grateful to the Lord for their time of ministry with Grace.

Since recently selling their home in Winnipeg, the Tshimangas are looking for a place to call home. They hope to start a small hobby farm in Nova Scotia and practise there what they taught in South Africa: natural farming and farming God’s way. ✘

Christian groups in a post-Christendom urban setting as part of an emerging Anabaptist Network of Communities.

Mike credits Alan and Eleanor Kreider, former directors of the London Mennonite Centre, for doing excellent groundwork that they are now able to follow up as they seek to build the church in new ways for new generations.

Speaking at Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church in Edmonton on July 15, Cheryl described young people in the U.K. as “feeling disconnected from church and each other,” yet very interested in faith and

(Continued on page 20)



Cheryl and Mike Nimz have been MC Canada Witness workers in the United Kingdom for five years. After itinerating in Canada for two-and-a-half months, they have returned to Birmingham, England, to continue their assignment.

(Continued from page 19)

what it means.

On Monday nights, the Nimzes participate in a “peace meal” that meets alternately in five different homes. Young adults gather for a potluck meal, a half-hour of worship that they take turns leading, and a time of sharing about the daily living out of faith. The group is diverse, with Methodists, Anglicans, Mennonites, Quakers and sometimes atheists/agnostics coming together for discussion. Cheryl said they are getting requests to help set up more “peace meal” groups.

On Tuesday nights, the couple are a part of a “working at theology” group. For the first hour they just talk and, as Mike puts it, “fix the world.” After this opening, participants look at the Bible and theological topics. “It is a good place for some people who were ‘done’ with the church,” Mike said.

A big question the Nimzes face in the U.K. is, “What is the purpose of the church?” The question is asked as people recognize the need for faith community at the same time as they have rejected the institutional church of the past. The couple report experiencing an excitement among those who hear about Anabaptism, and there are people wanting to be a part of the Mennonite faith.

The Nimzes will soon be working with a few people to explore starting Mennonite churches in the U.K.

During their two-and-a-half months

in Canada, the couple visited churches in Manitoba and Alberta and attended the MC Eastern Canada annual meeting. They returned to the U.K. in mid-July.

Like other MC Canada Witness workers, they now have a three-year window in which to transition into a 50-percent relational funding model, with half of their support coming from regional churches, congregations and individuals, while the other half will be funded by the central budget of MC Canada.

Lillian and Norm Nicolson: Burkina Faso

On July 22, a service celebrating the long-term Witness work of Lillian (Haas) and Norm Nicolson in Burkina Faso was held at Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton.

Lillian began literacy work in Burkina Faso in 1999; six years later, after the program was mostly operating on its own, she switched to helping with the already-running Bible translation program. After their marriage, Norm joined the work, and in 2008 he began doing audio recordings, then soon switched to teaching trades to the locals..

In her July 22 sermon at Holyrood, Lillian said an important question they discuss with local people is, “Who is God?” Their village is largely Muslim, infused with animistic traditions and beliefs that include revering ancestors and using fetishes and amulets for protection. God is viewed as distant, and there is a belief in fate rather than free will, resulting in a problematic idea that human actions do not matter. The locals are familiar with Old Testament stories and, in many ways, their culture is similar to what is found in them.

“In Africa, everyone knows that God exists,” said Lillian. She says a new thing Christian biblical interpretation brings into this culture is the idea that people are made in God’s image, and God is loving and in relationship with them. This means that their actions matter, that repentance and forgiveness heal relationships, and that grace and truth come through following Jesus. “The western world can hardly relate [to the cultural context in Burkina Faso],” she said.

The Nicolsons rely on the retelling and

interpretation of biblical stories into the local language in their teaching. “The stories never grow old. God’s character is revealed [in them],” she preached.

She worked to bring the biblical message to people in their own language and cultural context so they can understand, she said, emphasizing that good translation work is more than “word for word” interpretation. It is using appropriate words and concepts to make sure the meaning of the stories comes through in the language and culture of the recipients.

In a slide show after the service, Norm showed pictures of a mud-brick vault construction of a school that was built specifically for their children. The techniques are ancient and uniquely suited to the area. Materials are inexpensive and locally sourced. The half-metre thick walls and ceiling keep the building cool when the sun beats down, and they hold warmth when the weather is cold. Local builders were involved in order to learn the technique.

The Nicolsons had hoped for a one-year sabbatical in Canada before a planned return to Burkina Faso. The restructuring of MC Canada and a review of Witness projects, however, has ended their Witness term support. While they will still spend a year in Canada, they have added searching for a new partnering organization to their plans with the hope of facilitating a return to ministry in their Burkinabé village. ❧



Norm and Lillian Nicolson and their children Kenneth and Nadine have returned to Canada after many years in Burkina Faso. A celebration of their ministry was held at Edmonton’s Holyrood Mennonite Church on July 22. MC Alberta presented each family member with a quilt as a ‘warm welcome’ to Canada.

Gathered with our people

First Mennonite Church erects memorial wall to remember loved ones who died at a distance

BY REBECCA YODER NEUFELD

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

KITCHENER, ONT.

Death brings to the fore the cost of having left home.

For many at First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Canada is a home away from home. When death strikes, they cannot be gathered with their people in their countries of origin. Finances, dangers or immigration status can stand in the way, and many, many kilometres separate them from the places where other family can gather to visit and remember.

Along First's outdoor wall, with the historic cemetery in view, the church has created a beautiful, restful place to honour, remember and grieve deceased family members far away. To date, 55 plaques bring those loved ones closer, and bring a global story into our congregational memory.

At a dedication service on June 24, congregants read the story of the biblical patriarch Jacob. When he died, he received a

full Egyptian mourning ceremony, but his charge to his sons was to bury him in the very field that his grandfather Abraham had bought, and where his grandmother, son, parents and wife were all buried. He spoke of his death this way: *"I am about to be gathered to my people."* Death will not break the family bond and promise.

While those who have immigrated to Canada will not be gathered to their people in that way, First's garden is a symbolic and concrete opportunity to be gathered with their people.

Heavy rains on June 24 meant the service was held indoors on Dedication Day. A long line of people took turns reading the names and relationship to them of their deceased loved ones. The litany of *madre, padre, hermana, hermano* (mother, father, sister, brother) was moving, as the congregation entered into remembering loved ones buried in El Salvador, Guatemala,

Colombia, South Sudan and Honduras.

One woman said that having their names in the memorial garden makes her feel as if her parents are with her here in Canada.

Ara Gonzalía said that the wall gives her a way of introducing her family to her grandkids born in Canada, of preserving their stories as part of her grandchildren's life stories.

For others, it provides a quiet place for reflection and healing, or a spot they can photograph to let family back home know that loved ones far away are remembered in Canada by their chosen family at First, the family of faith gathered by God. ✎

Staff change

Paetkau to serve as interim executive minister

• **HENRY PAETKAU** will serve as the interim executive minister of Mennonite Church Canada beginning on Oct. 16. He replaces Willard Metzger, the current executive minister whose term ends on Oct. 31. Paetkau brings with him a diversity of experience that Joint Council believes meets the current needs of MC Canada during this time of transition. Most recently, he served as area church minister for MC Eastern Canada. Previous to that, he was president of Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., for eight years, and denominational minister of MC Canada for three years. He holds a PhD from Western University in London, Ont., a master's degree from the University of Waterloo, and a bachelor of theology degree from the former Canadian Mennonite Bible College (a founding college of Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg). A permanent replacement is currently being sought by an MC Canada search committee, with a start date to be negotiated. The committee began reviewing applications on July 31 and will continue until a suitable applicant is found.

—Mennonite Church Canada



PHOTO BY TOM YODER NEUFELD

Members and participants from First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., pose in front of the memorial wall the congregation has dedicated to the remembrance of loved ones who have died at a distance.

'We became family to each other'

Painting keeps memory of Thompson church alive

BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE
Manitoba Correspondent

What do you get when you start a Mennonite church in the middle of nowhere? A community that is still going strong more than 50 years later, even after the church itself has closed its doors.

Thompson United Mennonite Church was formed in 1962 in Thompson, Man., an isolated northern frontier town formed out of the wilderness to mine nickel. Although the congregation was small throughout its existence, its impact was anything but insignificant.

People were always coming and going in Thompson. By the 1970s, however, many of the church's members, who were young professionals beginning their careers, began to marry and have children.

"Since our families of origin lived many

miles away, we became family to each other," says Arne Schellenberg, who lived in Thompson from 1962 to '64 and then returned from '78 to '85. For the congregation of that era, the church provided more than just Sunday morning worship. "The church was a touchstone for many during our sojourn in Thompson. . . . It anchored the lives of young people in a caring nurturing way."

Those special bonds have lasted all the way to the present. Although none of the group lives in Thompson anymore, having spread across Winnipeg and southern Manitoba, they still get together many times a month. Whether it's sharing meals, travelling together, attending each other's children's weddings, or having

their annual gathering on the first Sunday of Advent, they have remained a tight-knit community.

One thing that has connected the group throughout all these years is a painting. "Congregation" is a watercolour by Tom Yoder Neufeld that depicts Jesus scattering seeds while his disciples crowd around him. Yoder Neufeld pastored the Thompson church from 1976 to '79 and painted the work for the church in 1982.

"We hung it up in the church, and those of us that were there, we all thought we could pick out which one of those people in this crowd around the picture of Jesus was us," says Ted Redekop, another member of the church, who lived in Thompson from 1968 to '87.

The picture became a staple of the church's décor and hung on its wall until its closing in 2006. When many of the former members travelled back on the church's closing weekend to say goodbye and worship within its walls one last time, they salvaged the painting and decided to share it between themselves. For more than a decade they passed it from home to home, each one keeping it for several months. A list of all the hosts' names is still visible on the back of the painting.

When it came around to their home for a second time, Schellenberg and his wife Jessie thought it was time they found the artwork a more permanent home. The group decided that Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), a Mennonite hub and gathering space for the broader Manitoba Mennonite community, would be a fitting location to keep the Thompson church's legacy alive.

About 30 people from CMU, Mennonite Church Canada and the Thompson group, including Neufeld, gathered on May 24 to hang the painting on CMU's third floor, where the Graduate School of Theology and Ministry is located.

Schellenberg says the painting is important because it's a reminder to the world that a Mennonite church once existed in Thompson: "Thompson [United] Mennonite Church has meant so much to so many people. . . . Why not use this as an artifact of this period and put it somewhere it's going to stay and have a collective memory for us and represent



The plaque accompanying this painting reads: "Congregation" by Tom [Yoder] Neufeld, pastor of TUMC, 1976-1979. Presented to CMU by members of Thompson [Man.] United Mennonite Church.'



PHOTO BY MARILYN REDEKOP

'The Thompson group,' as they sometimes call themselves, at the hanging of the painting 'Congregation' on May 24 at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. They followed the dedication with a barbecue together. Artist Tom Yoder Neufeld is fourth from the right in the front row.

that time," says Redekop.

Because it was miles away from any other Mennonite community, the Thompson church was made up of Mennonites from many different backgrounds.

"In many respects, the Thompson congregation was a unique congregation," says Redekop. "It didn't subscribe to sort of orthodox thinking. . . . We were pretty free-for-all and very accepting of whatever . . ."

Despite being scattered across the province and members of different churches, this small group of people, once brought together by a church in a tiny town, continues to do life together, a testament to the strength of Christian community and what the church can be. ❧

something to the bigger Mennonite world."

The Thompson group is grateful to CMU for making this possible.

Since the church building was sold to the Boys and Girls Club of Thompson and the assets turned over to MC Manitoba,

Schellenberg says the painting is the only artifact that really remains of the church, other than photographs; it's a lasting tribute to the special community they created there.

"The painting kind of represents that, it's like . . . a snapshot of the congregation at

'The painting kind of represents that, it's like . . . a snapshot of the congregation at that time.'
(Ted Redekop)

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GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

MC Canada staffer sentenced to seven days in jail

Steve Heinrichs convicted for his part in a pipeline protest in Burnaby, B.C., in the spring

BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent

Steve Heinrichs was found guilty of criminal and civil contempt of court in the Supreme Court of British Columbia in Vancouver on Aug. 8 and was sentenced to seven days in provincial jail. He was immediately taken into custody and transferred to the North Fraser Institute in Coquitlam to serve his sentence, which ended early, on Aug. 12.

The day before, Heinrichs, the director of Indigenous-Settler Relations for Mennonite Church Canada, pleaded not guilty to the charge that was laid as a result of his solidarity action on April 20 in Burnaby with the Tsleil-Waututh land defenders who are resisting the expansion of Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline. (That action, he wrote in his "Burnaby Mountain Prayer Witness" document, available on CommonWord.ca, "effectively blocked construction at the site for the day," which led to his arrest.)

He read a statement in court, explaining the motivations for his action, and how, in his mind, it was not in contempt of court or "the rule of law," but in defence of fundamental Indigenous human rights.

"I chose to act because at the centre of the Christian faith lies the conviction that the Creator suffers with the oppressed; that God takes sides with the victims over against the dominant powers; and that the people who see the issues of our day most clearly are those pushed to the socio-political margins," he told the judge.

After hearing the evidence presented by the Crown and listening to Heinrichs's statement, the judge concluded that to break the law is not a privilege afforded to those who appeal to a higher call in protesting matters of social injustice. There are

many other legal options available to those wishing to express their disagreement, the judge determined.

Several fellow Mennonites appeared in court to support Heinrichs, among them Willard Metzger, executive director of MC Canada; MC B.C. executive minister Garry Janzen; and Henry Krause, chair of the MC B.C. Service, Peace and Justice Committee, who also took part in the April 20 protest. Krause counselled Heinrichs to "be numbered amongst those arrested" on April 20, according to Heinrichs in his "Prayer Witness" document.

In a statement to *Canadian Mennonite*, Metzger said that while the MC Canada Joint Council was not aware of Heinrichs's plan to join the protest prior to the event, he did approve of Heinrichs's participation based on the following:

- **IT WAS** an ecumenical invitation to participate in a prayer action of protest.
- **IT WAS** a strong invitation from an Indigenous community.
- **IT WAS** an invitation to be in support of a regional church.

At the time of his arrest, Heinrichs had urged his fellow Mennonites to stand with Indigenous peoples when he said, "Take courageous steps. God's inviting us into a conversation of faithfulness."

Despite the possibility of arrest, Metzger said that neither he nor Heinrichs understood it as a probability at the time. Because Metzger, as executive director, approved Heinrichs's participation in the protest, expenses of that participation are considered MC Canada expenses, said Metzger. Heinrichs's time during the trial

and while he is in jail are considered personal time, at Heinrichs's request.

There is currently no MC Canada policy regarding staff participation in civil disobedience, but the Joint Council is currently reviewing the process of decision-making and may consider the development of a policy after further discernment.

While some churches and congregations oppose Heinrichs's actions and question whether he should continue to represent MC Canada as its Indigenous-Settler Relations director, he has also received many comments of support, including from his boss.

"This action has prompted important conversations and debates within our nationwide family of faith," said Metzger. "This was a very thoughtful and prayerful action in keeping with the mandate of the Indigenous-Settler Relations department and an expression of the resolution passed by delegates in Saskatoon [in 2016] that rejected the Doctrine of Discovery. It is also in support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples."

"Whatever our views are regarding Steve's action," Janzen said, "it has been his response to our common conviction to walk with our Indigenous neighbours and to care for the long-term well-being of this earth, God's creation. May God inspire each one of us to do our part in creation care and in walking with our Indigenous neighbours."

After his release, Heinrichs wrote on his Facebook page: "I was released from prison this afternoon [Aug. 12]. Going in, I prayed that God would use the experience to teach me more about the justice system and the lives of those who spend so much time behind bars. I learned much, and it wasn't, at times, easy. I give thanks to the many friends and allies who supported me and my family in prayer. I give thanks to fellow inmates that showed me kindness, shared stories, talked about spiritual matters and politics, lifted weights and played 21 with me." ❧

—With files from Mennonite Church Canada.

God at Work in the World Snapshots



PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVE HEINRICHS

Steve Heinrichs works on a statement to the court explaining the motivations for his action, and how, in his mind, it was not in contempt of court or 'the rule of law,' but in defence of fundamental Indigenous human rights.



PHOTO BY BRAD LEITCH

Steve Heinrichs and supporters gather outside the courthouse in Vancouver for prayer before his trial began on Aug. 7.

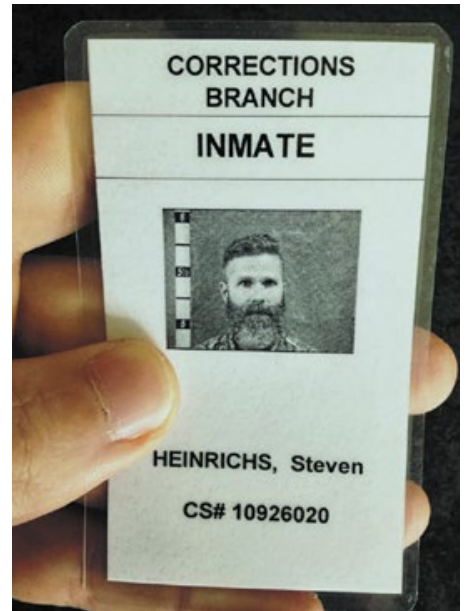


PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVE HEINRICHS

Steve Heinrichs holds a plastic card bearing his mug shot and inmate number that he posted on Facebook.

'Signs of the light'

South Korea recognizes rights of conscientious objectors

BY TIM HUBER AND MENNONITE WORLD REVIEW

The Constitutional Court of Korea brought an end to 70 years of imprisoning conscientious objectors (COs) when it ruled on June 28 that it is unconstitutional for South Korea not to offer alternative service options for COs.

It is estimated that about 20,000 males have been punished for refusing military service since the first draft laws were enacted in 1950.

An alternative does exist, but it requires four to six weeks of military training, and participants who finish it are considered reserves in the military. Men who go to jail rather than the military are barred from many professions, such as working in the education field.

Korean Mennonites celebrated the ruling. Kyong Jung Kim, Mennonite World Conference representative for Northeast Asia, said he had been longing for this moment ever since he began taking seriously the implications of the gospel of peace.

"I have paid close attention to the recent peace process between North and South Korea. I feel that things are falling into place one after another," he said. "We may have a long way to go until we achieve the ultimate goal for our nation, but I trust that

God would grant us such a moment. We have seen many signs of the light already."

Kim began working for such a societal change in 2001 at the Korea Anabaptist Center in South Korea. Today, he is earning a master of theological studies degree at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont.

The Korea Anabaptist Center provides Anabaptist resources, translates materials and organizes lectures to promote the gospel of peace from a theological perspective. Representatives visit COs in jail, sharing their stories so others can also pray for them.

The South Korean newspaper *Hankyoreh* reported that six out of nine justices agreed the Military Service Act should list alternative options of service for COs. The ruling requires that a revision to the military service law listing such options must be submitted by Dec. 31, 2019.

Kim believes that as space opens up in the public sphere for more widespread discussion of CO issues, Mennonite churches will have greater opportunities to address peace and justice issues in Korean society.

"CO suffering may be over in one sense, but there will be some other challenges,"



MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE PHOTO
Sang-Min Lee

he said. "Church life is not supposed to be comfortable, but challenging."

The typical jail sentence for refusing military conscription in South Korea is 18 months.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights estimated in 2013 that 93 percent of the world's imprisoned COs are South Koreans. About 660 are jailed each year.

Sang-Min Lee is believed to be the only Korean Mennonite to choose jail over military service. A member of Grace and Peace Mennonite Church in Seoul, he was released on July 30, 2015. "The Mennonite population in South Korea is very small," Lee said in a presentation at College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind. "They aren't as concerned with COs because, for a lot of people, the cost is too great." ✎

—Reprinted with permission of Mennonite World Review.

Good news for Korean Mennonites

Canadian Mennonite

On June 28, the Constitutional Court of Korea ruled that it is unconstitutional for South Korea not to offer alternative-service options for conscientious objectors (COs). For the past 70 years, COs have faced prison for their stand against military service.

Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker Bock Ki Kim reported from his recent trip to Seoul to visit the Constitutional Court of Korea: "Today was a very special and meaningful day for MC South Korea and many conscientious objectors who have prayed for many years to bring good news about the alternative service."

"In fact, many COs and their families [have] want[ed] to see a different result from this government," he added. "As you already know, the Korean government and president show different attitudes towards COs and alternative service."

He said that the decision was a milestone for Korean COs, although there is still work ahead to develop various alternative service options. He requests prayer for the South Korean church as members prepare for alternative service in the future.

—With files from Mennonite Church Canada.

GOD AT WORK IN US

OBITUARY

Where he leads me I will follow

Anna Dyck

Sept. 28, 1921 – July 2, 2018

By DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
DRAKE, SASK.

At a time when a woman's sphere of influence was limited to hearth and home, Anna Dyck was making a difference.

Dyck spent nearly 40 years of her life as a missionary in Japan. During those years she lived in three communities and worked as a nurse, Bible teacher, pastor and church planter. She helped to establish four congregations that are still in existence today.

Born on Sept. 28, 1921, in Schönhorst, Russia, she immigrated to Canada with her family when she was 2. Her parents, Henry and Suzanna Dyck, settled on a farm near Drake, Sask. Her father died before she left home, leaving her mother to run the farm with Dyck's younger brother.

When she was 12, Dyck heard a presentation by a missionary to India and felt God calling her to the mission field, too. Yet she didn't become a Christian until she was 18.

She completed high school by correspondence. After attending both Rosthern Bible School and Swift Current Bible Institute, she made a commitment to become a missionary.

She studied to become a nurse in Saskatoon, then worked as a nurse in Winnipeg to pay her way through Bible college.

When she applied to the General Conference Mennonite Mission Board, she thought she would be sent to India. Instead, the mission board told her they had need of a missionary nurse in Japan.

At 32, Dyck was ordained at North Star Mennonite Church in Drake. She packed her belongings into barrels in the kitchen of her mother's house. She and her

colleague, Martha Giesbrecht, also from Saskatchewan, travelled by train to Seattle, where, on Sept. 22, 1953, they set sail for Japan.

They sailed on a freighter. The ship's captain insisted these two missionaries sit at his table, saying, "There are lots of people praying for you, so our ship will be safe."

Dyck arrived in Kobe, on the main island of Honshu. She spent three years in language study, discovering along the way that, in the Japanese language, there are many different ways of saying the same thing.

One of her first tasks as a nurse was immunizing missionary children. In addition to nursing, Dyck taught English classes, using the Bible as her textbook. She also led Bible classes in the hospitals where she worked.

She kept in touch with family back home. Her niece, Grace MacDougall, recalls her Aunt Ann's much-anticipated airmail letters, and also the "gigantic box of Christmas gifts" she shipped home each year.

"While on furlough," says MacDougall, "she would make us Japanese meals." Dyck's meals might include raw eggs or seaweed. MacDougall remembers saying, "Aunt Ann, do you really expect us to eat this?"

Furloughs were not restful visits. Like her colleague and contemporary, Esther Patkau, Dyck spent her furloughs traveling across Canada, speaking in Mennonite churches about her work in Japan.

MacDougall remembers her aunt as a



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GRACE MACDOUGALL

Anna Dyck, front row centre, was ordained on Sept. 6, 1953, at North Star Mennonite Church in Drake, Sask. Seated beside Dyck are her mother Suzanna Dyck, left, and J. J. Thiessen. Standing, from left to right: H. S. Bartel; Paul Schroeder, North Star Mennonite pastor at the time; and Hans Dyck.

quiet, reserved woman. "She had taken on the personality of the respectful, kind people of Japan," she says. Once, at a family meal, Dyck was asked to say grace but demurred to her host. "You pray for the meal," she told him. "It's your home." But she had requested that after supper they have a prayer meeting in the living room, which she would lead. "She had learned how to quietly lead without being domineering," says MacDougall.

The first church Dyck planted was in Miyakonojo, on the island of Kyushu. It began as a Bible study group of six or seven people who met on rice floors in a rented building. Eventually the congregation grew to more than 100 members.

Her second church was in Takajo, a 30-minute drive north of Miyakonojo. Here she worked for 14 years, building another small group of believers into a strong, independent congregation.

In September 1979, at 58, Dyck moved to Sadowara, where she established a third congregation. In 1986, when she was 65 and due to retire, Dyck asked for, and received, permission to remain in Sadowara for another five years. She felt there was still work to be done.



Anna Dyck helped establish this church in Miyakonojo, Japan.

When the mission board called her back to Canada in 1991, she still wasn't ready to retire. The Japanese congregations she had founded urged her to connect with Japanese people living in Surrey, B.C. And so, at 70, she established a fourth congregation there, under the sponsorship of the Japanese churches.

Dyck returned to Drake in 1998 but

found retirement difficult. MacDougall recalls her lamenting, "They don't see me as a missionary here; they see me as an old lady."

In 2007, Dyck wrote her life story, entitling the 70-page volume *Where He Leads Me I Will Follow*.

Dyck died on July 2, 2018, at the age of 96. ☿

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Learning to rejoin the world

Speaker is grateful for the support of Westview Centre4Women

JENNIFER SYMONDS

On the weekend of May 11, Jennifer Symonds, a participant at the Westview Centre4Women, shared her story as part of a conference hosted by the Niagara churches of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. Held at Westview Christian Fellowship in St. Catharines, Ont., and at Vineland United Mennonite Church, "The End of Us and Them" explored stories of poverty in the community and wrestled with issues associated with poverty. The centre provides a variety of services to help women build skills and participate in a caring community.

My story starts when I was too young to remember. My parents divorced and I grew up in a bad situation. My dad spent years fighting for visitation rights for us kids, and my mother fought him every step of the way.

This constant war that my siblings and I grew up in left scars. In my preteens, I became anorexic. I was in and out of hospital for years; by the time I reached high school I'd outgrown it.

When I was 15, I asked my step-mother if I could move in with her and dad. Because I wasn't 16 yet, my mother showed up at the school and pulled me out, scaring the life out of me in the process. At 16, I was waiting at the



Jennifer Symonds

courthouse to get my custody changed when my mother marched over to me and told me that I was disowned. You have no idea how traumatizing that can be.

The next few years with my dad were relatively calm. I went to school and babysat in my free time. I even got my first job. I didn't really have any friends but I did have a couple of girls who were friendly to me. When I wanted to go to the mall or movies, I'd take my youngest brother, the product of my father's second marriage. There is a 13-year age gap between us, so I realize how pathetic it was that, when I wanted to do something, it was my kid brother I was doing it with.

In my early 20s, I was renting the attic of a stranger's house until I got kicked out and the locks were changed. I was homeless. Someone ended up calling my mom. She showed up at my job and helped me get my stuff. Unhappily, I ended up moving in with her.

This was a turning point for me. The independence that my dad and step-mother had tried to instill in me suddenly vanished. I now needed somebody to drive me to work. I was no longer cooking my own meals or doing my own shopping, and very quickly I regressed. It didn't help that I have huge anxiety about taking busses and getting lost, so I was now a prisoner of my mother's home.

Later on, my mom and stepfather separated, but because I had nowhere to go I stayed in the house with my stepfather. In fact, I still live with him, though now I co-own the house. Throughout all of this, I was beginning to show signs of depression.

One day when no one was around, I tried to slit my wrists and kill myself. It didn't work. But I found out that by cutting myself I could drown out everything else I was feeling. That was the start of cutting. It was around eight months before anyone found out. I ended up cutting in the hallway at work and someone caught me. The police were called and I was taken to the hospital. This cost me my job and I ended up on disability.

One of the outpatient programs I was in suggested that Westview Centre4Women would be a good fit. It took several tries before I lasted longer than 10 minutes at the centre. Eventually

I found someone to go with me, and that made all the difference. I could ignore the rest of the room and just focus on J.J., who was quickly becoming a friend.

Slowly I started participating in the various activities that Westview provided. But there were days and weeks that I couldn't get myself out the door. There were a lot of days when the only thing I would do was turn on my computer and read fan fiction or do some video editing. I was just going through the motions, when I could be bothered enough to try. And on the days I couldn't be bothered, I'd try to kill myself.

Two summers ago, I hit another bad case of depression. For about two months I completely shut down. I stopped eating, drinking or doing anything, really. Then one day I woke up. I slowly started to rebuild myself. But because I had lost all of my muscle mass and about 30 pounds, I had a hard time climbing up the six stairs from my room in the basement.

But I did have one thing. My father had given me a second-hand electric wheelchair earlier that year. Originally I had scoffed at the thought of driving a

wheelchair and, other than that first test-drive, I just parked it and ignored it. But now I needed it. If I wanted to get out of my house, then I needed the wheelchair.

So I started taking the wheelchair to group or the local Tim's for a tea, and to do some writing. I started showing up at group more often and talking to people. I now have more friends than I have had my whole life.

But this was just the start. I asked someone to hang out with me, and she took me up on the offer. She suggested that we take an aqua-fit class at the gym. That day was a very positive turning point. I had always loved swimming, but now I needed the pool to rebuild all that lost muscle. And as a bonus, my sleep patterns and mood were improving. I started with a three-month membership. It's now over a year, and I'm still going. In fact, I look forward to going.

While all this was going on, I was invited to church to show a video I had made. That ended up opening another door for me. I was now attending Westview every day and going to Westview Christian Fellowship on Sundays. I'm actively

starting to rejoin the world.

There are other small positive changes. I'm starting to dress better. No longer am I just wearing jeans and T-shirts. I'm actually putting makeup on every once in a while, even if it's just lipstick, as that's all I know how to apply.

The Jennifer who first started going to Westview Centre4Women wouldn't have been able to do this. That Jennifer would run and hide from everyone and everything. But the Jennifer Symonds who stands in front of you tonight is ready to rejoin the world and tell you a small part of my story.

I'm still that Jennifer who has horrible self-esteem, who isn't the best at making friends or understanding social situations. And yes, I still drive people nuts with my inability to take a compliment without picking at it. But I stand here tonight grateful for the support system that has helped me to grow so much in the last year, that keeps telling me that I'm smarter than I think I am, more competent than I believe. And stronger than I know. ❧

Putting words into actions

Festival performer invites participants to live lives of 'reconciliation'

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
SPRUCE HOME, SASK.

The Spruce River Folk Festival is held annually at Ray Funk's farm north of Prince Albert. Mennonite Church Saskatchewan and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Saskatchewan help sponsor the event, which raises awareness of, and support for, landless Indigenous bands, in particular the Young Chippewyan First Nation. Wilbur Sargunraj, a cultural intelligence facilitator from India, performed at the Aug. 11 festival. Correspondent Donna Schulz interviewed Sargunraj after the festival.

DS: *How did you come to perform at Spruce River?*

WS: A Mennonite friend suggested I watch a documentary called *Reserve 107*, through which I came to know about the festival. After watching this inspiring film, I contacted the festival and shared my work in building bridges using "cultural

intelligence." Ray Funk and Leonard Doell invited me to perform, and I'm honoured to be part of a festival that actively promotes reconciliation.

DS: *How did you end up growing up in a Mennonite community? What were the positives and negatives of that*

experience?

WS: My parents knew a few Mennonite communities in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. I came from India to a small community just north of Saskatoon for school when I was 14. I lived with Mennonite guardians and attended a Bergthaler Mennonite school and youth group. They welcomed me with open arms even though I was the only person of colour in the community.

That said, some families were closed-minded and biased against people of colour and First Nations people. Of course, it's important not to stereotype, as I know there are many Mennonite groups with different views. I am also a huge fan of the relief work MCC does around the world.

DS: *How would you describe yourself in terms of faith?*

WS: I first and foremost see myself as a child of God, a "simple superstar" who the Creator has endowed with intrinsic value
(Continued on page 30)



Wilbur Sargunraj gets the audience up and moving at the Spruce River Folk Festival.

(Continued from page 29)

and purpose. I think Christians continue to complicate the simple irreligious message of Christ by tying themselves to denominations and fighting over doctrines. They're into church but not so much into Jesus.

As my friend Bruxy Cavey (of the Be In Christ [formerly Brethren in Christ] Church) would say: "If love guides our hearts, rules become redundant. Love, embraced as a guiding orientation of other-centredness, will always lead us to do the right thing."

DS: *Tell me about CQ and what you do as a "cultural intelligence" facilitator.*

WS: CQ, or "cultural intelligence," enables us to embrace cultural similarities and differences as we learn to engage with our perceived "other." I offer interactive keynotes, workshops and concerts on cultural intelligence to schools and organizations

around the world.

One meaningful project was working with Irene, a sex worker in Kasensero, a fishing village with one of the highest HIV/AIDS rates in Uganda. It was beautiful to hear her story and show the world she is a valuable, precious "simple superstar."

This isn't just about helping people relate to someone from another culture, it's about building bridges for people who may not want to come close to someone like Irene or who may judge her for what she does for a living.

DS: *What are your thoughts on reconciliation between First Nations and settler peoples? You used the term "reconciliation." Why is "action" so important?*

WS: We can talk all we want about reconciliation, but until we take active steps to enter the world of our perceived "other" and form relationships, I'm afraid we won't

see change.

"Reconciliation" is settlers and First Nations taking active steps to connect with one another and right the wrongs of the past. For some, "reconciliation" is baby steps, like eating bannock, attending a powwow or having a conversation with an Indigenous person.

I love what my Cree friend, Kevin Joseph, shared with me after the pipe ceremony at Spruce River: "I have been beaten for being brown. I have been followed in stores by people who think I'm a thief. I have been on the receiving end of many racial abuses. For those who don't like me, I'll keep loving you. If you are stuck on the side of the road, I will help you. You may not like this, but this is where we begin."

Kevin is willing to go all the way when it comes to "reconciliation." He is a counter-cultural "simple superstar" who loves unconditionally.

DS: *Why do you say we are all "simple superstars"?*

WS: Every human being, no matter how small or weak, has something to bring to humanity. Not everyone can be a superstar, but we all can be "simple superstars" who pursue greatness. There's a big difference between fame and greatness.

We're often told the path to success is gaining power, becoming famous. The "simple superstar" is not afraid of losing power [but becomes] great by serving others.

Martin Luther King Jr. said: "Everyone has the power for greatness—not for fame, but greatness—because greatness is determined by service." ❧

To view a video of Wilbur Sargunraj at the Spruce River Folk Festival, visit canadianmennonite.org/Sargunraj-video. He can be found across social media on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter @wilburworldwide. Many of his CQ projects are found on his YouTube Channel youtube.com/wilbursargunraj.



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ARTBEAT

COVER STORY

A cry for 'no revenge'

Stephanie Martin writes music for new opera

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
TORONTO

Stephanie Martin had often led practises with the Pax Christi Chorale at Calvin Presbyterian Church in Toronto. But during one practice in 2015 she was drawn to a plaque on the north wall of the sanctuary honouring nurse Mary Agnes 'Nan' MacKenzie, "who after three years of service lost her life by the torpedoing of the hospital ship Llandoverly Castle, June 27, 1918."

As the notes to the *Llandoverly Castle Opera* tell it, "Stephanie was both fascinated and unsettled." She began to have nightmares about the story and so delved deeper.

Returning to Europe after having delivered more than 600 wounded soldiers to Canada from the front lines of the First World War, the Llandoverly Castle was clearly marked with large red crosses and was brightly lit up, instead of "running dark" to hide from German submarines. But a German submarine captain, believing the information he had received that the ship was actually ferrying pilots and war materials, sank the ship. On board were 18 Canadian nursing "sisters," so called even though they were not from a

religious order. Their lifeboat's ropes were entangled, and so by the time it was freed from the sinking ship they were too close and were pulled down by the eddy of the sinking ship. Discovering his error, the U-boat captain gave orders to shoot as many survivors as possible.

Martin knew that the idea of an opera was new ground for her, so she looked for a librettist to write the words to the story in song form. After two years she found Paul Ciufu. With an 11-month deadline to be prepared by the 100th anniversary of the sinking, they drew in the Bicycle Opera Project, and Tom Diamond, an experienced opera director. Ciufu created roles for several of the sisters and for three men, including Helmut Patzig, the German submarine commander.

"I never really imagined that I would be compelled to write music for the bad guy," says Martin in the notes. But whenever Patzig was stepping to the front of the stage, mechanistic, driving music announced his unmerciful presence to the audience.

Staged on June 26 and 27 at Calvin

Presbyterian Church in Toronto, the production deals with issues of the terror of the conflict with the nurses just behind the front lines, bombardments landing around their field hospitals. There, they must decide who will live and who will die, comforting, patching up, sometimes sending the men back into the line of fire, sometimes holding their hands as they die.

Faith plays an important part, but so does doubt, as characters wonder if they can still believe after seeing Christian nations do so much harm to each other. But they gain—or regain—faith, remembering that they have patched up German soldiers, too.

As the ship sails across the Atlantic and the various characters struggle with fear, faith, their place as women in the world, and even romance, a deck-top worship service serves up a medley of hymns, encompassing *Stand by Me*, *Amazing Grace* and an *Ave Maria* sung in French, that takes centre point of the opera.

When Patzig is deciding whether or not to fire his torpedo, he is surrounded by a chorus of the nurses begging for mercy. And at the end, pointing to the battle of Amiens, where Canadian soldiers were told to take no German soldiers, even if they surrendered, in order to revenge the Llandoverly Castle, the women, now dead, gather on stage crying for "no revenge." In the last chorus, all the voices, including that of Patzig, join in moving toward the light.

In this way, Martin, with Mennonite roots in Ontario's Waterloo Region, manages to turn a war tragedy into a cry for peace and forgiveness. ▮



The cast, director, librettist and composer (Stephanie Martin, fifth from left) of the Llandoverly Castle Opera take a bow on June 26.

Can the Bible help with reconciliation?

Book editor says it's a way to 'rediscover some good things' about a historical source of pain

BY JOHN LONGHURST

When Mary Carpenter, an Inuk from Sachs Harbour, Northwest Territories, was a little girl, she was forced to go to a church-run residential school. One of the first things the nuns who ran the school did was give her a new name.

They “took away my Native name, Tungoyuq, and replaced it with ‘Mary,’ a name from their Bible,” Carpenter writes.

In class, the students “sat in long wooden pews watching and listening to priests and nuns as they instructed us from a strange, big, black book with a gold-embossed ‘Bible’ emblazoned on the cover,” she recalls. That Bible, she adds, “was often used to justify the ill treatment of innocent children.”

Carpenter’s experience was not unique. As part of the Canadian government’s assimilationist policies, many Indigenous children were given new names to sever traditional ties and promote assimilation. Many of those names were taken from the Bible—the same book that caused them so much pain and loss.

So it’s not surprising that many Indigenous people today, and many of their Christian allies, have an ambivalent view of the Bible. How can anything good be found in a book that caused so many people so much sorrow?

That was the question facing Steve Heinrichs, Mennonite Church Canada’s Indigenous-Settler Relations director. He loves the Bible. He reads it every day as part of his devotional life. And yet he knows that many people distrust and dislike it because of how it was used against Indigenous people in Canada.

“The Bible has a bad reputation for many Indigenous people and their allies,” he says, but he wonders, “Can it be reclaimed and used to promote justice and fuel us in our efforts to promote decolonization?”

His answer is yes, and a new book, *Unsettling the Word: Biblical Experiments in Decolonization*, is the result.

In the book, which was published by MC Canada and edited by Heinrichs, 60 contributors—settlers and Indigenous people, Christians and non-Christians—engage stories and passages from the Bible to see if it can be re-imagined in a positive way for the current settler-Indigenous context.

For Heinrichs, the book is a way to “deal honestly” with some of the harder parts of the Bible, but also to “rediscover some good things in it.”

The hard passages include things from the Old Testament, where the ancient Israelites are instructed by God to invade other countries, take their land and kill the inhabitants—something that has unfortunate echoes in Canada’s colonial past.

It’s easy to dismiss the war stories of the Old Testament, Heinrichs says, noting that “some texts are quite destructive and simply bad.”

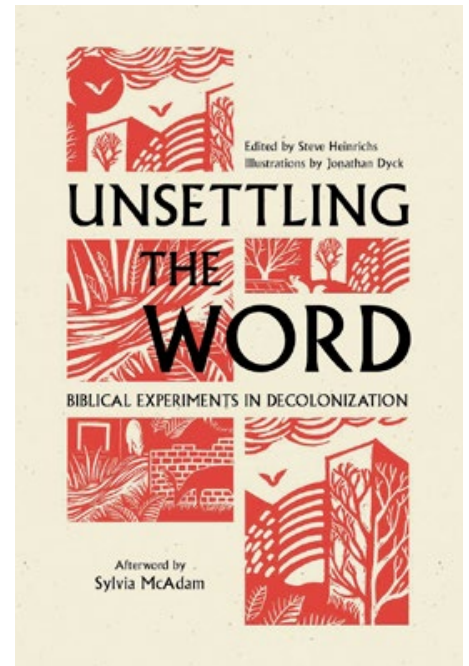
But he also wonders about things like the Great Commission in the New Testament, which has also been used to harm Indigenous people.

“What do we say about the spiritual violence inflicted on Indigenous communities as different churches compete for members in Indigenous communities and show a lack of respect for Indigenous spirituality?” he asks.

In addition to addressing those questions, the book points to positive things in the Bible that can help settlers and Indigenous people find new ways to live together in Canada.

“There are whole streams in the Bible that talk about reconciliation, peace and land reparations,” Heinrichs says. “We can use those texts to help make things right.”

As for those Christians who have written



off the Bible because of how it was used against Indigenous people, he reminds them that it’s “more politically engaged” than many realize; many of the stories were written by, and about, oppressed and marginalized people, just like how many Indigenous people feel today.

Ultimately, Heinrichs hopes the book will spark conversations, that people will see how Jesus invited everyone into conversations and community—regardless of their political or religious leanings.

“In the gospels, Jesus invites a tax collector into his group,” he notes of how Jesus reached out to someone from the despised establishment of his day. “Who would that be in our context? There are no enemies in the gospels. Everyone is challenged to change the way they view others. Can we all sit in a circle and hear each other? Can we listen with courage and care?”

He hopes that reading *Unsettling the Word* is one way many people will begin that journey. ❧

Originally posted on the winnipegfreepress.com website on May 23. *Unsettling the Word* can be purchased at commonword.ca, and a free study guide can be downloaded.



UpComing

Grebel Gallery hosting Korean art exhibit

WATERLOO, ONT.—The Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement at Conrad Grebel University College is hosting an exhibition of hope and reconciliation in the Grebel Gallery now through Oct. 5. Entitled A New Era of Peace and a Peaceful Land, the exhibition combines two maxims taken from the speeches that South Korean president Moon and North Korean chairman Kim gave after their meeting on April 27. A public event will be held at 4 p.m. on Sept. 20 to celebrate this exhibit as part of Waterloo Region’s 2018 Peace Week. Curated by Heng-Gil Han, director of the Korea Art Forum based in New York City, this exhibition brings together artwork from North and South Korea, China and the United States, focussing on people and landscapes. Seeking to support the emerging peace process on the Korean peninsula, the exhibit addresses the Korean division of land and people so the audience can better understand both the history and potential of Korea. The exhibit is made possible by the support of Mennonite Central Committee, the Department of Cultural Affairs of New York City, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and a number of individual donors.

—Conrad Grebel University College



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canadianmennonite.org/young-resilient



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*Working with people with intellectual disabilities
has impacted author's life and theology*

DANIEL REMPEL
SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES

When I was first hired as a disability support worker at en-Vision Community Living in Steinbach, Man., I had no idea what I was doing. I didn't know many people with intellectual disabilities and I certainly didn't know what it meant to support someone with intellectual disabilities.

Not only did I have no idea what I was doing, I also had no idea that my life would be so profoundly changed by people with intellectual disabilities.

Like many well-meaning individuals, I came into my role as a disability support worker expecting to be the one helping people with disabilities. I remember in my early days feeling proud of myself for engaging in such a selfless task of helping those I thought to be less fortunate.

What I didn't expect was that the people I was supposed to be helping were the ones who helped me to see who I really was.

Recently, I tried putting these experiences into words through my master of arts thesis at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg. In it I began by combatting traditional understandings of people with intellectual disabilities that work to exclude them from churches and communities. For many individuals who have been raised in modernity, whether we realize it or not, we tend to value individuals for what they can do or what they can bring to a specific setting. Naturally, those with intellectual disabilities are not valued as they often do not meet the traditional western standards of value, such

as autonomy, speed and rationality.

As a way beyond these exclusive understandings of personhood, I sought in my thesis to understand people with intellectual disabilities through the method of theological anthropology (understanding who humanity is as beings created by God). To do this, I examined the theological anthropology of Karl Barth.

What makes Barth so appealing for a Mennonite like me is his thoroughly Christocentric approach to theology. For Barth, everything, including our own humanity, must be understood through the person of Jesus Christ. That is because Jesus is the true human, the one who is the fullness of the revelation of God and who shows us how to live. Once we begin to understand who Jesus is, we then begin to understand who we are.

What does it mean for us to understand people with intellectual disabilities through the person of Jesus Christ? That is what I sought to explore in my thesis. What I discovered in Barth's work was an understanding of the human person that is not grounded primarily on what a person does. Rather, we discover our humanity insofar as we are in relationship with God and with the other. This is because the God who has become incarnate here on earth has determined to be God for us.

For Barth, the purpose of the incarnation was the fulfilment of God's eternal act of election, the act by which God

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PHOTO COURTESY OF DANIEL REMPEL

'It is my hope and my prayer that [we] continue to welcome and engage people with intellectual disabilities,' Daniel Rempel writes.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JO-ANNE DALTON

*Working with enVision Community
Living clients like Joanne, centre, pro-
foundly changed Daniel Rempel's life.*

(Continued from page 35)

determined to eternally be God for us. Because of this, the fullness of our humanity can only be achieved insofar as we live into, and participate in, the life of God. The end and purpose of our humanity is to participate in the life of God.

If this seems to be too generic to be a work of disability theology, that is both the point and the problem. It is the point in that a major aspect of my work was to show that people with intellectual disabilities have the same capacity for personhood as those who understand themselves to be able-bodied. It is the problem because people with intellectual disabilities often do have specific and unique needs and challenges that those without disabilities do not possess. We must not overlook this fact in our pursuit of justice and equality.

However, it is my contention that we cannot work for justice and equality on behalf of people with intellectual disabilities if we do not first know them, if we do not first have relationship with them, if we do not become their friends.

I began this piece by stating that when I began my work as a disability support worker, I assumed that I would be the one helping people with intellectual disabilities. Through both my work and my research, I have come to discover that it is actually people with disabilities who help me see who I am. This is because, as Barth says, we cannot truly be people without being in relationship. The individuals I have worked with and become friends with have shown me how to be in relationship and how to welcome and be welcomed.

It is my hope and prayer that members of the body of Christ would continue to welcome and engage with people with intellectual disabilities in our congregations, and that we would learn with and from the valuable place that they hold in our community. ❧

Daniel Rempel, 25, grew up in Niverville, Man. He currently lives in Winnipeg, where he is a student in CMU's Graduate School of Theology and Ministry.

VIEWPOINT

Rethinking the Safe Third Country Agreement

MADALENE ARIAS, WITH PETER HARENAPE
SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES



PHOTO COURTESY OF MADALENE ARIAS

Madalene Arias is part of a Student Christian Movement committee protesting the Safe Third Country Agreement.

Did you know that Canada is a signatory to the Safe Third Country Agreement with the United States? It is an agreement based on the idea that both countries are equally safe places to seek asylum, something clearly disproven by recent world events.

When I learned of this, I was shocked. Canada's participation in the agreement, implying that the United States is a safe country for refugees, effectively endorses the U.S. practices of family separation, indefinite internment and deportation without processing claims.

The U.S. treatment of families, and the recent declaration that gang violence or domestic violence will no longer be considered legitimate refugee claims, puts the two systems fundamentally at odds. There are now categories of refugees who would be denied asylum in the United States, but would be welcomed in Canada if they arrived here first, which for many is geographically impossible.

As refugee claimants are not entitled to legal representation, children as young as three years old have been required to defend their refugee claims in court without

a lawyer. U.S. media regularly call refugee claimants “illegal,” although there is nothing illegal about presenting oneself at an international border to make a refugee claim.

In some cases, families remain separated for several months. The United States also declared more than a thousand minors “lost” in the system, and this is what got people talking about the story.

Following public outcry, the U.S. government reversed its family separation policy, but this has not resolved the situation. The administration divided families without a system to reunite them, and newly arriving families can be detained indefinitely.

Of course, there are people in this country who would do anything to reunite children with their families, to unlock the gates where women and children have been detained, to ensure that refugees and migrants are treated with dignity and respect.

The question of “how” is what brought me together with others who carry the same convictions. I found myself recruited into a national action committee of the Student Christian Movement with Anglican, Baptist and United Church members, to learn, discern and respond.

Both Canada and the United States share histories of child apprehensions.

Canada took Indigenous children from their families and placed them in the residential school system, where 6,000 died over the course of several decades while others survived torture and abuse. Canada took Indigenous children from their parents and put them up for adoption during what is now called the Sixties Scoop.

Canada also pulled Japanese-Canadians from their daily lives and placed them into internment camps during the Second World War.

Historically, the global community opposed these practices all the way back to the 1924 Declaration on the Rights of the Child, predating the United Nations.

The more recent 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child expanded and reaffirmed these basic rights and responsibilities of states toward children.

Canada is in a unique position to

interfere with the U.S. government’s treatment of refugees and migrants, but this action requires the collaborative efforts of hundreds of thousands. It needs to happen now.

Peter and I could have signed any number of online petitions to express our outrage, but many seemed to lack connection to ongoing advocacy or efforts to fix the systems that made these human rights abuses possible.

To rescind the Safe Third Country Agreement, we are supporting Petition e-1755 at the Canadian government’s e-petitions website, petitions.ourcommons.ca, which can be signed by all Canadians and Canadian residents of any age. We ask readers of *Canadian Mennonite* to sign the petition and consider writing to, or visiting, your MP.

Jesus welcomed children as valuable people, showing us how to be members in the kingdom, and he condemned those who would cause them to stumble.

We remember that Jesus was a refugee, and that Mennonites throughout history have crossed borders and continents to find a life of peace and justice. ❧

Madalene Arias, 30, is a writer and graduate of journalism from Humber College, Toronto. She lives in Toronto, where she attends Toronto New Life Mennonite Church. Peter Haresnape, 33, is general secretary of the Student Christian Movement of Canada and a member of both Christian Peacemaker Teams and Toronto United Mennonite Church.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PETER HARESHAPE

Peter Haresnape is the general secretary of the Student Christian Movement of Canada.

PETITIONS.OURCOMMONS.CA PHOTO.

Petition e-1755 calls upon the House of Commons to suspend the Safe Third Country Agreement.

The screenshot shows the Parliament of Canada website with the E-petitions section. The petition title is "E-1755 (IMMIGRATION)". It was initiated by "Fish MacNeil from Kitchener, Ontario, on June 22, 2018, at 1:09 p.m. (EDT)". The keywords listed are "Agreements and contracts", "Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement", "Canada-United States relations", "Refugees", and "Third country". A note states: "The Petition is open for signature until October 28, 2018, at 1:09 p.m. (EDT)". There are buttons for "Sign the petition" and "Petition details".

Calendar

British Columbia

Oct. 12-14: MC B.C. Women's retreat, at Camp Squeah. Theme: "Contagious joy."

Oct. 27: Columbia Bible College fundraising dinner, at the college, Abbotsford.

Nov. 10,11: MC B.C. Symphony of Hymns 3, with Calvin Dyck: (10) at Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver, at 7 p.m.; (11) at Level Ground Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, at 3 p.m.

Alberta

Sept. 29: MCC Alberta annual general meeting at Edmonton First Mennonite, from 8:30 a.m. to noon. Coffee and lunch provided. For more information, email AnneBoehlig@mccab.ca.

Oct. 27: Sixth annual Christian-Muslim Dialogue, at the ARCA banquet hall in Edmonton, from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Tickets available online at Eventbrite.ca.

Saskatchewan

Sept. 21-23: Quilting and scrapbooking retreat, at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Oct. 12-13: Women's retreat, at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Oct. 13-14: Osler Mennonite Church celebrates its 90th anniversary.

Oct. 27: MC Saskatchewan Equipping Day.

Oct. 27: RJC corporation meeting and homecoming banquet.

Manitoba

Until Sept. 22: Two new exhibitions at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg: "My will remains: Reflections on chronic illness and disability" by Diane Driedger; and "Ubuntu: I am because we are," by Manny Martins-Karman.

Sept. 13: "Preserving food: Past to present" event, at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, from 7 to 9 p.m. Topic: "Fermentation: Sauerkraut and more." Presenter: Dawn Buchanan. To register, call 204-326-9661.

Sept. 16: Open farm day, at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sept. 22: Square dance and pie fundraiser for Camp Assiniboia, at the camp, beginning with a tour at 5:30 p.m., followed by dancing, pie auction, a campfire and singing from 6:30 to 9. For more information, visit campswithmeaning.org.

Sept. 22: 34th annual Brandon MCC Relief Sale. For more details, go to: mcccanada.ca/get-involved/events/.

Nov. 15-17: The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada's 50th anniversary conference, "A people of diversity: Mennonites in Canada since 1970," will be hosted by the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg.

Ontario

Sept. 7-9: "Building community" event, at Hidden Acres Mennonite

Camp, New Hamburg. Speaker: Sara Fretz. Theme: "The healing power of music." For more information, call 519-625-8602.

Sept. 15: Toronto Mennonite Festival, at Black Creek Pioneer Village, Toronto, beginning at 10 a.m. Includes traditional Mennonite food, crafts, games, music and quilt auction. For more information, visit torontomennonitefestival.ca.

Sept. 18-19: "Leading the church through transformation, change and renewal" workshop, with Betty Pries and Jason Dykstra, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day.

Sept. 24: MCC Ontario annual general meeting, community room, 50 Kent Ave., Kitchener, at 6 p.m.

Sept. 24 or 25: Fall seniors retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg; "Close encounters of the scriptural kind: The delight, danger and dynamism of reading the Bible with

UpComing

Ride in support of MC Canada Witness

Mennonite Church Canada congregations are invited to participate in Ride for Refuge, a fun ride/walk fundraising event in support of the nationwide church's international Witness ministry, on Sept. 29.

Last year's event raised more than \$35,000 to train young entrepreneurs in South Africa, grow peacebuilding and justice initiatives in the Philippines, create a safe space for newcomers to Canada, and to help marginalized people in Canada and around the world. This year's goal is \$75,000. Congregations already in partnership with a Witness worker couple/family are encouraged to participate in raising funds for their ministry. Churches that do not already relate directly to a Witness worker can choose from the online list at bit.ly/witness-workers. To participate, riders/walkers need to register online at rideforrefuge.org/home and follow these steps: 1. Click on "register to fundraise." 2. Click on "first timer" (to create a new account) or "old pro" (to renew an existing account). 3. Click on either "sign in" (if you already have an account) or "create new account." Then fill in the information for "location," "waiver," "your team," "contact," "details," and "register." Those with questions can email Jason Martin, director of International Witness, at jmartin@mennonitechurch.ca.

—Mennonite Church Canada



MENNONITE
CREATION
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for your congregation

WWW.MENNOCREATIONCARE.ORG/ENERGY-UPGRADE/

each other and with 'the other.'" Same program each day. Resource person: Bryan Moyer Suderman. For more information, or to register before Sept. 14, call 519-625-8602.

Oct. 11: Dean Peachey, the 2018 Conrad Grebel Distinguished Alumni Service Award winner, will speak on "Backward/forward: Reflections on peace, conflict and human rights," in the Grebel Gallery, Waterloo, at 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 12-13: "Understanding conflict: Foundations" workshop, with Betty Pries, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Oct. 13: Empty Bowls for Haiti event, at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, seatings at 5 and 7 p.m. Ontario potters donate the bowls, local restaurants and organizations donate the soup. In support of MCC Ontario and its commitment to sustainable change in Haiti. For tickets, call 519-745-8458.

Oct. 13: "Resourcing day" with members of the "Voices Together" hymnal team, at St. Jacobs Mennonite

Church, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Followed by an intercultural worship service and international meal, at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, at 5 p.m. To register online, visit mcec.ca.

Oct. 14: Hymn sing with the "Voices Together" hymnal team, at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m. Donations to the work of "Voices Together."

Oct. 18: 2018 Benjamin Eby Lecture, in the Conrad Grebel University College Chapel, Waterloo, at 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Grebel professor Alicia Batten. Topic: "Memory, identity and the Sermon on the Mount: The Case of André Trocmé."

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



Classifieds

Announcement

ABNER MARTIN MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP

This annual scholarship is awarded by Menno Singers to a student who is affiliated with a Mennonite Church Eastern Canada congregation and is, or will be, in a full-time program of music study, graduate or undergraduate, during 2018 - 19.

Applications must be mailed by Sept. 15, 2018. For application documents or further information, contact Lewis Brubacher at phone: 519-884-3072 email: lbrubacher@sympatico.ca

Employment Opportunities

LISTOWEL MENNONITE CHURCH

Employment opportunity
Lead pastor

Listowel Mennonite Church is seeking a lead pastor for a congregation which has about 120 weekly worshippers. Listowel is a small town 30 minutes away from Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario. The successful pastor will have strengths in preaching, teaching, pastoral care and worship leading. We will consider applications until the position is filled. A job description is available at <https://mcec.ca/jobs/pastor-0>

Inquiries, resumes and letters of interest may be directed to pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca.



Mennonite Central Committee

Relief, development and peace in the name of Christ

British Columbia

Director of Development and Advancement

This full-time position will provide leadership in developing and implementing strategies that generate awareness, relationships, engagement, support from the MCC BC constituency and the broader public.

Qualifications: 3 years senior management, 5 years fundraising or related experience; excellent communication and interpersonal skills; effective strategic planner & entrepreneurial attitude; servant leader, strong networking ability and familiarity with MCC constituency.

All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to personal Christian faith, active church affiliation and non-violent peacemaking.

Anticipated start date: October 15, 2018, application deadline September 15, 2018. For full job description and to apply visit: mccbc.ca/openings. For more information, contact Sophie Tiessen-Eigbik, MCC BC HR Manager at 604-850-6639, Ext 1129.

Emmanuel Mennonite Church

Anabaptist, Community, Global Outlook

Employment opportunity
Transitional lead pastor
Emmanuel Mennonite Church, British Columbia

Emmanuel Mennonite Church (EMC), Abbotsford, B.C., would like to hire a transitional lead pastor for a minimum of a 12-month period starting November, 2018.

EMC is a mid-sized, multi-cultural, urban congregation located in Abbotsford, B.C., in the heart of the beautiful Fraser Valley. This request for applications for an interim pastor comes after a 26-year relationship with its current lead pastor.

EMC's request includes:

- Full leadership responsibilities for the congregation and the church staff.
- An understanding, acceptance and appreciation for Anabaptist theology and practice.
- Skills and abilities to work with a multi-generational and multi-ethnic congregation in transition.
- Applicants may be male or female.
- Training and/or experience in transitional pastoring is preferred.
- Remuneration and support based on MC Canada and MCBC guidelines.

Resumes should be submitted electronically to office@emmanuelmennonite.com or by letter to

Peter Andres
3375 Robinson Rd.
Chilliwack, BC, V2R 5H1

by September 30, 2018. A job description is available on request.

<http://www.emmanuelmennonite.com>

A Prayer for the Danforth

BY TIM REIMER

DANFORTH MENNONITE CHURCH

O God of love,
maker of human neighbours and neighbourhoods,
hear our prayer
from the Danforth, for the Danforth.

Hear our cry of anguish and disorientation;
our sidewalk cafés are shattered and scattered;
we are suddenly lost in our own hometown.

Calm us!

Hear our cry of fear.

We run, we hide, from guns.

Protect us!

Sometimes—we confess—
we call for even bigger triggers.

Forgive us!

Hear our cry of grief.

We want to walk with the bereaved,
even just one lonely neighbourly step.

Comfort them! and us.

Hear our cry of confusion.

Why does one man's loss of head and heart
spray deathly lead through house and home?

Heal him!

Answer us!

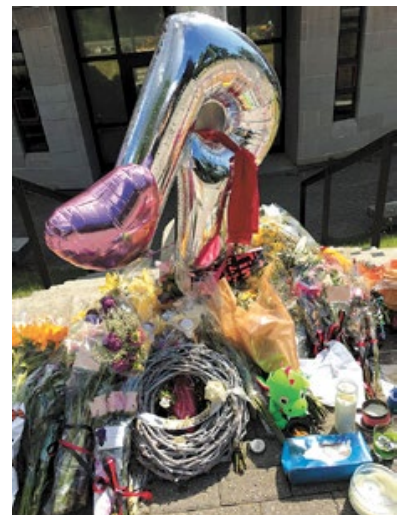
Call us!

Call us to courage, to imagine peace.

We hear your impossible call to respond in love.
We hear it within ourselves.
We hear it beyond the darkness, blood and rage:
Rebuild! Be remade!

O God of love,
Remake us on the Danforth
into a new neighbourhood of peace. Amen.

*Written in response to the Toronto shootings on July 22
that killed two and injured 13.*



PHOTOS BY LAUREN KONG