

CANADIAN MENNONITE

October 11, 2021 Volume 25 Number 21



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PM-40063104 R09613

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EDITORIAL

On the road toward wisdom

BY VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER
Executive Editor



I've been pondering the learning experiences of Jesus' disciples as told in the Gospels. Jesus'

vision of God's reign was so different from the reality they were used to, and they were curious. There was something about this Teacher that invited them to walk alongside him, to learn more.

As Jesus' companions on the road, his followers listened and watched his way of being. They asked questions and expressed doubts. Attempting to imitate the Master, they tried out new practices, sometimes successfully and sometimes not. Although Jesus occasionally got exasperated with his followers' lack of understanding, he stuck with them, expecting that they would learn, change and grow.

Also consider the members in the early Christian community, as portrayed in Acts and the Epistles. You can delve into the books of the New Testament and see how learning happened there: through dreams and visions, through questions and experimentation, through challenges, conflict and mistakes.

Jump ahead to the twenty-first century.

Twice a year, this magazine carries a Focus on Education, reporting mainly on the educational efforts of Mennonite schools connected to Mennonite Church Canada. In today's issue, you'll find stories of individuals and institutions engaged in formal education. It's easy to recognize the many ways in which everyone has had to adapt and re-imagine education in these pandemic times.

For the past 18 months, Mennonite congregations have also been seeking new ways to form faith for the young, the older and the oldest in our midst. With limitations for in-person gathering, churches can't do the traditional Sunday school and vacation Bible school activities inside their buildings. Faith formation becomes difficult when it needs to happen through screens and physically distanced events.

In this new reality, it's good to remember other ways in which learning happens—in more informal settings. For example, this issue's feature, "The great Mwenezi cook-off," (p. 4), tells the story of how men in one community acquired new skills and, in the process, discovered new ways of relating to the women in their lives. A whole community saw the positive effects of the men's learning.

We might be tempted to think of Christian education as something adults simply impart to children and youth. But, like the early followers of Jesus, all of us—adults, youth and children of today—also acquire knowledge "on the road," outside of classrooms. In our own unique circumstances, we observe and we experiment; we ask questions, and we try new ways of doing things. Our growth and new knowledge can influence our neighbourhoods and beyond.

Today's disciples are seeking wisdom for living faithfully in new times. We have new problems to solve—challenges that require curiosity and creativity. We're learning how to cultivate

resilience and how to practice generosity. Sometimes this learning process has been painful; change can be hard. Sometimes we get impatient with each other. On the learning path, we are invited to practice patience with others, and with ourselves.

In many issues of this magazine, you can find stories of people on the learning path. These individuals are taking steps to educate themselves about the problems around them, as well as grappling with their personal struggles. Their faith is being formed amidst uncertainty. Sharing their stories is a gift to all.

The challenge for today's disciples is to be clear-eyed and honest about the past and at the same time to watch for how new insights lead us to new actions. It takes courage to admit: "I used to think x, but now I think y. I used to do w, but I'm learning to do z." But when we do that, whole communities can benefit from our learning.

On our journey toward wisdom, there may be no diplomas or degrees in sight. But we can heed the promise that Jesus made to the first disciples, and which still applies today: "*The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you*" (John 14:26-27).

A lesson to remember: the Master is walking alongside today's disciples, offering encouragement and love on this path of learning and growth. ✎



Funded by the
Government
of Canada

Canada

ISSN 1480-042X

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Please send all material to be considered for publication to

General submission address: submit@canadianmennonite.org

Readers Write: letters@canadianmennonite.org

Milestones announcements: milestones@canadianmennonite.org

Calendar announcements: calendar@canadianmennonite.org

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO: Canadian Mennonite,
490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, ON, N2L 6H7

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

Published by Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service. Regional churches and MC Canada appoint directors to the board and support 38 percent of *Canadian Mennonite's* budget.

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One-Year Subscription Rates

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

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

Subscriptions/address changes

(e-mail) office@canadianmennonite.org

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

FEATURE

The great Mwenezi cook-off

Men Can Cook competition transforming a community in Zimbabwe

By Jason Dueck
Mennonite Central Committee



SCORE AGAINST POVERTY PHOTO/OBERT PAYENDA

After entering the Men Can Cook competition, Jawanda Clemence discovered a love of cooking. Now he helps train new competitors and has developed a number of his own recipes. Here he's teaching a recipe for mashed lablab to a group of women. At the time this photo was taken, COVID-19 measures in Zimbabwe only included a recommendation for mask use.

All of Joseph Gudo's hard work was summed up in one small plate of food. He'd laboured for months in the field and uncountable hours in the kitchen all in service to this dish—a neat pile of mashed cowpeas (black-eyed peas), buoyed by a bold pinch of cayenne pepper and dressed up with pops of colourful diced tomatoes and green peppers. This was everything he'd been working for, his heart and soul on a plate.

That simple meal was the dish that won Gudo and his teammates the top prize in the very first Men Can Cook competition. It also cemented what he'd been learning all year—that cooking wasn't solely a job for women.

Sexism in and beyond the kitchen

The belief that cooking is exclusively a woman's role is not unique to Gudo's home, the Mwenezi district of southern Zimbabwe. Many cultures have placed the burden of all domestic skills on women for thousands of years. But when staff at Score Against Poverty, a partner of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in the region, began a project to teach farming skills, they saw how this pervasive belief played out beyond the kitchen.

"We realized that there were gender power imbalances which were central to the food security situation within our communities," says Caroline Pugeni, program coordinator for Score Against Poverty.

Since 2016, the organization's work has included securing plots of farmable land and teaching sustainable farming techniques, to give families better access to food. But the rigid gender hierarchy caused disparities to surface.

"Crops were culturally defined between 'female crops' and the 'male crops,'" says Pugeni. The larger cereal and grain crops were grown by men while smaller crops including legumes, garden vegetables or cowpeas were managed by women. This also led to "male" crops taking up far more space than the other crops.

"But, when it comes to how those plots were managed, the women would be participating in the weeding process, in the harvesting process, in the processing of everything for the men's crops," says Pugeni. "But when it comes to the legume plot, it was only the women who were supposed to manage all of that."

Pugeni and the other staff saw these imbalances clearly, but they knew that changing them, or even trying to address them, would be a challenge to generations of male-dominated culture.

Through the funding support of MCC donors, Score Against Poverty held community meetings on gender equality—open discussions for neighbours to discuss these issues together. They saw some progress, though within a limited scope. Most men who participated struggled to identify any problem with a household where the husband had total authority over his wife. That was just the way things worked, they said.

"According to our culture, there were very set roles," says Gudo. "The wife was the one who was supposed to do the household chores and look after the children. And the husband was the one who was supposed to do those masculine jobs like farming, building and yardwork."

But over a few sessions, there were glimpses of success. "It began with thoughts like 'Maybe there is need for me to assist my wife whenever my wife is not feeling well. It's not right for me to make you cook if you're sick,'" says Pugeni.

Seeing these ideas gain a foothold, Pugeni believed they could find success in framing the idea as a positive. Instead of centring the idea that it was bad to not help their wives, they focused on the idea that, yes, women have most often been the cooks of the family but men can cook too.

Men can cook too

The rules of the competition were simple. Contestants were grouped into teams of five and would be required to grow, prepare and cook every single

part of each meal they presented. The teams would be judged according to taste and presentation, and the winners would be awarded prizes. Suddenly, some of the men were more interested in growing tomatoes and legumes despite them being "female" crops. But even that eagerness was quickly tempered by pride for some.

"It was easy for me to approach my wife for help with cooking, but what was difficult was for my wife to teach me during the day when everyone can see," says Jawanda Clemence, a participant in the first competition. "So I opted to learn at night. My wife would teach me when kids had gone to bed. I was afraid of being shamed by other men in the village."

Clemence says most of the crowd that gathered to watch that first year came because the idea of men competing to cook was too bizarre to pass up seeing in person. He thought very little of the idea when he agreed to try it.

"I wanted to laugh at my friends that were really showing an eagerness to participate," says Clemence. "In my family, no man cooks. You marry for your wife to cook for you. What SCORE was talking about was just beyond my imagination."

And Clemence wasn't the only one suspicious of the idea. Encouraging men to be more involved at home seemed like a good plan, but many women worried that the kitchen could just become a new place for men to wield their total authority.

Instead of a new arena for oppression, the women of Mwenezi started to see changes they wouldn't have thought possible, says Gaudencia Pugeni, a participant in the agriculture program (no relation to Caroline Pugeni).

"Men started to share financial matters with their wives and many husbands no longer beat their wives," she says. "There is a love now that wasn't there before." And these changes weren't just showing up at home. Out on the fields, male farmers shared the land more equitably, included the women more in planning and the men began planting legumes and other

previously dismissed crops themselves.

“It has given farmers an opportunity to know and address underlying issues that affect food security here,” says Caroline Pugeni. “It has improved food and nutrition security at a household level.”

Winner, winner cowpea dinner

The first competition took place in 2018, with eight men’s teams and six women’s teams comprised mostly of competitors’ wives. Men’s teams took the top three spots that year. Gudo’s team emerged victoriously his mashed cowpeas named the supreme dish. And their prize? Aprons and a variety of pots, pans and cooking utensils to call their own. For placing third, Clemence was awarded a teapot that he now displays proudly at home.

Both Gudo and Clemence say connecting with their wives through the whole process changed their perspectives drastically. They see themselves more as equal partners and not as a master over their spouse.

Clemence changed his tune on cooking entirely. He now teaches men practicing for the competition and has developed his own signature recipe for a nutritious porridge that he shares with anyone who’s interested. And Gudo started offering to cook, to help in the garden and to walk his daughter to school, insisting his wife take time to rest. He says he wants to show his kids what he only learned as an adult.

“It shows our kids to learn to love one another. Because there was a great gulf existing between boys and girls when the boys saw themselves to be superior as the culture says. But now, it gives all both boys and girls they know that we are all human beings. We are all the same.”

Score Against Poverty has recently published a collection of recipes (mcccanada.ca/media/resources/12004) featured in the Men Can Cook competition. ❧



SCORE AGAINST POVERTY PHOTO/ALICE CHAUKE (2018)

The final dishes from Jawanda Clemence’s team in the first Men Can Cook competition in 2018 in the village of Chinyause, Zimbabwe. The dishes include a variety of cowpeas, pigeon peas and lablab, prepared several different ways.

❧ For discussion

1. If you were judging a cooking competition, what would you be looking for? What are the qualifications for being an excellent cook? When it comes to producing good food, how important are practice, creativity and an artistic touch? What role does gender play? How important is a written recipe?
2. Caroline Pugeni says the tradition in southern Zimbabwe has been to have “male crops” and “female crops.” How rigid is the idea that women tend the garden and men work in the fields in your community? Has this division of labour changed over time?
3. Pugeni’s organization wanted to improve the gender role balance by introducing a cooking competition. Why would a cooking competition be a positive approach? Do you think this would work in other communities?
4. One of the contestants thought “the idea of men competing to cook was too bizarre to pass up seeing in person.” Would this have been true in Canada in earlier generations? What attitude do you have toward male cooks? Does our society view male and female cooks differently?
5. What are the benefits of not having specific roles for men and women? Are there places where separate roles are beneficial?

—By Barb Draper



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/// Readers write

✉ Idea of defunding the police based on false premises

Re: “Defund the Police?”, Sept. 27, page 4.

This response is not addressed to the generalizations made in this article (police “don’t prevent crime,” “officers spend most of their time...,” and “police are very effective at turning people into our enemies”), but to several premises in support of defunding police and re-directing those resources.

The first premise is that local governments have the independent authority to withhold funding from their police force. In fact, they have a legislated duty to fund police departments appropriately. Any council decision on budget allocation can be appealed and, if a budgetary decrease is deemed to have been unjustifiable, the provincial body can order the municipal council to restore the funding as deemed appropriate.

The second premise is that local governments are mandated to provide housing and health care for residents. Local governments are mandated to provide services such as water, sewer, roads, fire safety, parks and recreation. Housing and health fall under the provincial and federal mandates.

Of every tax dollar collected in Canada, local governments take about nine cents—the remainder is divided between provincial and federal governments. Of all the infrastructure in Canada, local governments own about 60 percent. All those services and local infrastructure are financed through property taxes (the nine cents referred to), and to some extent, government grants. If the senior levels of government decreased the size of our police forces, any funds saved would indirectly flow back to property taxpayers.

I agree with the sentiment that addictions, homelessness and crime cannot be solved through policing. We must do better as a society. But expecting local governments to solve this problem is pointless. Local governments can be advocates, but any desire to defund the police or to have more funds directed to housing or health care should be directed to one’s provincial MLA and federal MP.
DAVE LOEWEN, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

The writer is part of Level Ground Mennonite Church and a city councillor.

✉ Sexual mores are changing

Re: “Differences of cohabitation by the young and the old,” Aug. 16, page 7.

I welcome the grace in the comments by David Shantz regarding a covenant of commitment by a cohabiting couple. For generations the church has been relatively silent on sexual matters, although norms played a significant role. There are social reasons for such changes in culture and lifestyle.

In my lifetime, I have seen three specific generational changes regarding sexual mores. In the decades before the 1960s, the church endorsed human sexuality in marriage between male and female. A union where one member was a divorcee was problematic. Many mothers did not enter the work force and cared for several children.

For the next three decades, young people, including church youth, possibly engaged in sex before marriage, but the definite expectation was eventual marriage for the specific partners. This practice has changed. Now, sex often begins with the slightest degree of romanticism. Both are, or wish to be, employed.

Youth are exposed to conversations of sexuality at school. It is expanded in the media and internet. Travel by air and automobile goes far beyond one’s home region. After years of training and education, many young people move to new locations for employment.

Purchasing a house may happen 10 years after the initial romantic bond. Whereas procreation may have been discussed by a couple before marriage, most in the present generation have no intention of forming a family soon after the union. All this is a challenge to youth, parents, the church and society.
JOHN PETERS, WATERLOO, ONT.

✉ We need to encourage those empowered with gift of evangelism

Re: “Why don’t we talk about evangelism?” Aug. 16, page 10.

Doug Klassen has asked a very interesting question. His answers reflect the experience, understanding and practice of many in the Mennonite Church.

The topic of evangelism is often confused with church growth, filling pews and meeting budgets. We need to encourage those empowered with the gift of evangelism, giving them time and space in our worship services. May we learn from them.

Unfortunately, many of the programs/methods for evangelism taught in our churches follow a plan that

is rather adversarial and argumentative. Students are required to memorize several Bible verses and are given instructions to convince people that these verses prove that Christianity is right and another person's beliefs are wrong. Indeed, Christ must be central in our conversation, but the question remains: How do I dialogue with people/strangers about spiritual issues?

I have learned that until I understand who I am talking with and what they believe, I am wasting my time. Rushing in with pointed questions usually offends the other person severely and cuts off all further conversation.

We need to learn to listen and ask good questions that invite dialogue relating to spiritual issues. We need to learn how to share our own personal testimony of why Christ (not the Mennonite church) is central in our lives. We need to discern the other person's sincerity in our conversation.

Evangelism is a skill, a good habit to develop and a very rewarding experience that honours Christ. He, in turn, honours us.

Do we have a meaningful Christian experience to share? Do we believe it is worth learning a few important steps to improve our ability to fulfill the last instruction that Christ gave his disciples ("Go and make disciples...")?

DAVID SHANTZ, MONTREAL, QUE.
(ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ Response from Doug Klassen

David...God bless you. These are exactly the questions and perspectives that I hope we can talk about in the regions and on the MC Canada nationwide scene.

DOUG KLASSEN
(ONLINE COMMENT)

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

/// Milestones

Baptisms

Linda Coolbear—Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Sept. 19, 2021.

Adam Roth—Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Sept. 19, 2021, at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp.

Weddings

Driedger/Dueck—Evan Driedger (Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon) and Maria Dueck (Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg), Aug. 13, 2021 in Winnipeg.

Deaths

Beacom—Barbara Joy, 83 (b. Sept. 8, 1938; d. Sept. 9, 2021), Elmira Mennonite, Ont.

Brubacher—Aden, 82 (b. July 13, 1939; d. Aug. 31, 2021), Elmira Mennonite, Ont.

Dick—Christina (nee Berg), 95 (b. Oct. 17, 1925; d. Sept. 9, 2021), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

Dyck—Henry, 81 (b. March 8, 1940; d. Sept. 15, 2021), Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Epp—Art, 77 (b. June 8, 1944; d. Sept. 2, 2021), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

Friesen—Menno, 83 (b. April 21, 1938; d. Sept. 1, 2021), Carman Mennonite, Man.

Funk—Agatha (nee Zacharias), 97 (b. Jan. 8, 1924; d. Sept. 15, 2021), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Heinrichs—Olga, 84 (b. Oct. 8, 1936; d. Sept. 5, 2021), Grace Mennonite, Regina, Sask., formerly of Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask.

Kopp—Henry, 93 (b. June 15, 1928; d. July 19, 2021), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Krahn—Irene Rosalie, 83 (b. Dec. 24, 1937; d. Sept. 18, 2021) Carman Mennonite, Man.

Lehn—Kornelius, 87 (b. April 25, 1934; d. Sept. 18, 2021) First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Nash—Murray William, 70 (b. Jan. 28, 1951; d. Aug. 15, 2021), Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont.

Tarnick—Michael, 90 (b. May 3, 1931; d. Aug. 25, 2021), Altona Mennonite, Man.

Toews—Gertrud (nee Hamm), 100 (b. July 14, 1921; d. Sept. 19, 2021), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Zacharias—Peter Dennis, 72 (b. May 1, 1949; Sept. 13, 2021), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event. Please send Milestones announcements by e-mail to milestones@canadianmennonite.org, including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please also include birth date and last name at birth if available.

FROM OUR LEADERS

The banality of saying ‘Intercultural’

Joon Park

No one would dispute that our world has become intercultural. Culture meets culture and languages are exchanged randomly on streets, in restaurants, in classrooms and even during Sunday church worship. “Intercultural” is being used at a massive rate. But this is being done without the faintest idea of what it means to be truly intercultural. Saying the word many times and experiencing different cultures such as Vietnamese pho, Korean K-pop or the Indian festival Diwali in our neighborhood does not mean that we are intercultural.

The Australian missiologist Michael Frost writes, “When everything becomes missional, then nothing becomes missional.” He sees this phenomenon, in which the term “missional” becomes banal, a danger.

What if we replace “missional” with “intercultural?” To me, as an interculturalist, it makes sense. I can hardly see any true meaning of interculturality in our lives, even in the church where we confess we are brothers and sisters. Are we really in kinship with the same father (and mother) God and with others?

Unfortunately, the people I have met in and outside the church, regardless of whether laity or pastors, seem quite

relaxed about adopting and defining the church as intercultural. The current intercultural phenomenon in church seems more than enough. “Yes, we have a Korean family. Yes, we have a Congolese family. Yes, we have....”

When I hear this “we have” medley, I become impatient and rebuttals against this asset mindset are on the tip of my tongue: “So what? Is that what you mean by intercultural? By participating in the Mennonite World Conference, sitting at different tables and meeting new people from different cultural backgrounds for only several days in a foreign land? Or by singing the songs of 22 languages in the new Mennonite hymnal *Voices Together*?”

People tend to think of being intercultural as adopting an attitude of “easy come, easy go,” or a taken-for-granted gift from local communities and churches, or from God. If it is a gift from God that other ethnic groups come to church with their own two feet, what is your response to them? Do you say hello with your open arms and invite them to your place to share Mennonite *perogies*? Do they invite you to their celebratory events such as weddings or funerals? Do you have a chance to learn their languages? How much effort do you put

into actually getting to know them?

Being intercultural requires a cost: nothing comes for free. If it is so, it is cheap grace. In some cases, even the Mennonite tradition or heritage of yielding (*Gelassenheit*) is required for an expanded unity and inclusion of the other. Without showing intentionality, interaction and intimacy with an unfamiliar person or group, saying that we are an intercultural church is nothing but complacency and self-deception.

Richard Foster says, “Superficiality is the curse of our age.” We cannot satisfy ourselves by saying that we are intercultural because there are 11 different language groups in Mennonite Church B.C., and several more within Mennonite Church Canada. Are you pleased with these numbers as a visibility of interculturality? Then why not go deep into sincere interactions with them, sharing potlucks, pocketbooks, positions and your life as a whole? ❧



Joon Park is the Mennonite Church B.C. representative for MC Canada’s Intercultural Church Steering Committee.

A moment from yesterday



Women at Grace Lao Mennonite Church sing at a “ladies’ revival” in 1999. This was an important year for the congregation of about 90 people, as they also dedicated their own independent church building in Kitchener, Ont. Previously, they worshipped nearby at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church. The church grew from the efforts of refugee families sponsored by St. Jacobs Mennonite in 1980 and was nurtured by other Lao and Hmong Mennonite congregations in southern Ontario.

Text: Lauren Harder-Gissing
Photo: Mennonite Archives of Ontario



archives.mhsc.ca

IN THE IMAGE

The benefits of a hamlet

Ed Olfert

Someone suggested I apply for a pastoral position in a church in a large Canadian city. My ego liked that quite a lot. Then I gave it some thought.

The whimsical welding project that has mostly held me in thrall this summer is created with metal salvaged from oilfield leftovers. In my zeal to recycle rods that have been slowly sinking into tall grass, deeply pitted from rust, I chain the 25-foot sections behind my ATV and take them for a brisk two-mile run down a gravel road. Neighbours grin, wave, and count me as clever, I'm pretty sure. Do large Canadian cities have gravel roads? Would I still be measured as clever?

There's a thing going through its second year here in Laird, Sask., where young boys recycle old lawn mower tractors and use them to "terrorize" our hamlet, in bunches or singly. A dad from down the street came by. He had a small engine from a snow blower, with handlebar and wheels. Could I design and build a hitch so it could tow a wagon? Shortly thereafter, Holly reported sighting this contraption, loaded with boys, racing down main street at its top speed of about .8 km/h, while cars patiently steered around it.

I have not yet had my turn, which I

assume I am owed given my investment. Could I cruise in the midst of equally patient traffic in a large Canadian city?

A few years ago, as I was on my driveway building something, a grade 5 class walked up my street. It was June, when no one wants to be in school. They were on a nature hike. I heard a voice say, "Mr. Harris, can I go say hi to my *Opa*?" Mr. Harris replied, "Let's all go say hi to *Opa*!" My table was quickly surrounded by students, commenting on my work, offering suggestions, asking questions, needing demonstrations. A girl observed, "You have a lot of holes in your shirt!" Another shushed her, "That's rude!" A large Canadian city would need to offer those kinds of days.

The local general store is also the post office. On getting the mail one day, we found a small bag in our box, with a few coins and a note. "You bought bananas and right after that we lowered the price. Here's the difference." The change counted out to \$1.63. Would large Canadian city box stores show that kind of scrupulous concern for its customers?

An extended family member who lives in our town has spent a number of months in hospital. As we check out their residence, do summer chores and some repairs, a neighbour from across

the street appears. "How can I help?" I offer a suggestion, and although he is a professional person with an agenda to attend to, he is there immediately, tools in hand. His children show up on the weekend to cut the grass. How would this story be told in a large Canadian city?

There are, I assume, both plus and minus points to living in a hamlet, where everyone knows everyone's business. Small pre-tractor-aged boys and girls pedal or run down the street, wave and shout greetings. Adults stop by to see what's on my welding table, to anxiously discuss the drought, to talk proudly about a son who will play junior football a few provinces over. They worry about whether he will be okay, this being his first time away from home. Other neighbours offer garden produce or cinnamon buns. The woman at the insurance agency is excited that I have a 57-year-old truck under repair.

The ebb and flow of Laird becomes a place to experience wholesome community. As I delight in the many upsides, as I feel the sense of healthy spirituality, as I sense the simple determination to live well together, it is something about God.

Think I'll stay. ☺



Ed Olfert (p2peho@gmail.com) gives thanks for Laird.

Et cetera

Global Church Sharing Fund supports vaccinations in Indonesia

A megachurch in Semarang, Indonesia, the site of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Assembly in 2022, is hosting community vaccines clinics. JKI Injil Kerajaan (Holy Stadium) is part of Jemaat Kristen Indonesia, one of Indonesia's three MWC denominations. The vaccines are provided by the government, but Holy Stadium received support from MWC's Global Church Sharing Fund to cover other costs. Each day volunteers, recruited by the church, manage the flow of people and assist the medical staff who administer COVID-19 vaccinations. In early September, 8,000 people a day were receiving vaccines. See more: canadianmennonite.org/semarang



PHOTO: JKI HOLY STADIUM

Source: Mennonite World Conference

MIND AND SOUL

What is learning?

Randolph Haluza-DeLay

Learning happens because learners do something, not because teachers teach. Education is not about teaching—it is about learning.

Of course, we should value teachers! The best ones teach people how to learn. Still, learning is an ongoing process, happening inside, as the learner adapts existing understandings of the world to new experiences or information. Good teachers help learners in that process, but it does not change where learning takes place.

Seeing ourselves as lifelong learners is a path of humility—we do not fully know “the truth” and can always come to new, hopefully better, understandings. The point is to improve our earlier understanding. But what is the purpose of that improved understanding? As Christians we have a specific purpose: to learn to become more like Jesus. Our minds are gifts to help that process.

We live in a society that constantly teaches things, some of which are not consistent with Christian discipleship. One winter the grade 1 teacher held Entrepreneurship Day. My six-year-old made paper sweaters, mittens and toques and was supposed to “sell” them to family. There are good skills in that exercise, but it also normalizes a hidden

curriculum of economics and profit-making, which I found profoundly troubling. Where were the lessons on nonviolence, caring for creation and classroom democracy that I would support?

Learning involves unlearning. We are not blank slates. Learning also involves self-analysis about the biases and interests that do not improve understanding. For example, several studies have shown that Canadians working in the oil and gas sector have a higher level of suspicion about climate science than do their peers in other sectors. This holds true even for engineers and geologists. When personal interest or strongly-held past understandings are at stake, it is more likely that people will discount new information.

Similar barriers exist on topics as diverse as same-sex relations, Israel-Palestine or Indigenous reconciliation in Canada, especially when learning requires changing our minds from what we thought was a good understanding.

The learning process should cause us to change our minds at times. In Romans 12, Paul asked us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. It was not his expectation that the mind remain the same. When he asked the Philippians to think on what is noble, true, honourable,

worthy of praise, pure or good, he expected them to learn what is noble, true, good and so on. And, of course, to be changed (transformed) by such learning.

Consider another contentious issue. Some years ago, I co-chaired the Mennonite Church Canada working group on climate change and fossil fuel divestment. We did not recommend divestment at the time although all agreed that the changing climate was serious, would affect the poor and marginalized the most, and was driven by fossil fuel use. I agreed with the recommendation because the livelihoods of so many brothers and sisters in the churches were entwined with the oil and gas industry. That was a pastoral recommendation, to give time to learn, be transformed, and eventually act on new understanding. Yet, in the meantime, climate change has become a climate crisis.

Learning is not just about acquiring new information. What is truly learned results in changed perceptions of the world and leads toward action. Abstract or head knowledge, such as faith without works, is rightly criticized as inauthentic. ❧



Randolph Haluza-DeLay has worked in outdoor education and higher education and is learning to like his new home in Toronto.

Et cetera

Canada has many Christian post-secondary schools

Maclean's reported in March 2021 that Canada has more than 40 Christian post-secondary institutions. Including part-time students, total enrolment is more than 17,000. Found across Canada, the schools vary in size from thousands of students to only a few dozen. Some are universities and offer graduate degrees. The following schools have more than 500 students: Trinity Western University in Langley, B.C.; Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg; Tyndale University College in Toronto; The King's University in Edmonton; Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ont.; Ambrose University in Calgary; and Crandall University in Moncton, N.B.

Source: *Maclean's*



PHOTO: COLUMBIA BIBLE COLLEGE

Students at Columbia Bible College had an in-person graduation in September.

TALES FROM THE UNENDING STORY

An enemy of hope

Joshua Penfold

Three years after graduating from Bible college on the prairies, I returned for a one-week complimentary alumni seminary course. I was excited to be back in the classroom again, but if I'm completely honest, I was just as, if not more, excited to return to a place that held so many good memories.

We spent the week with friends in the very same basement apartment we had once lived in. Over the week I did the required classes and homework, but we also made time to visit people and places.

I'm glad we went; it was really good to see people again. But it was good for another reason too. In such a transient place as a little Bible college community, three years is a lifetime. Although the profs were mostly the same and the buildings hadn't changed much, most of our friends and the community we had established while there had moved on, just like we had. Although the trip had quenched my nostalgia, I still needed to grieve a loss.

It wasn't the same anymore.

I recently watched the movie, *The Age of Adeline*, about a woman whose body is stuck at age 29 though she's lived over 100 years. She experiences the world age around her while she remains the same.

Because of this, she distances herself relationally from everyone and relocates with a new identity every ten years to avoid suspicion. At one point she runs into an old lover whom she had deserted. He is now a senior and she is still 29.

The situation pummeled my emotions. We often wish we didn't have to age and change, but how devastating it would be if we didn't while everyone around us did. There is immense beauty in growing old. She still looked exactly the same, but her old lover had grown and aged.

He wasn't the same anymore.

In Ezra 3, the people of Israel had returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the altar and the Temple of the Lord. When they laid the foundation of the Temple, all the people celebrated and praised God. But amidst the cries of joy there were some who were wailing and weeping when they saw the foundation laid. Most people had never been there to see Jerusalem before, for they had been 70 years in exile, but the oldest among them remembered. They had been there before, they remembered what that place once was, the glory it held. All those years they had held a memory of the Temple and now, seeing the new foundation, they were struck with emotion, with grief and lament and a sad nostalgia, and they wept.

The Temple wasn't the same anymore.

What do we do when something isn't the same anymore? Returning to find that, while we were off somewhere else, the thing we loved has changed can be incredibly painful and difficult. And even more difficult can be when the new thing we see as a painful reminder of an old thing is celebrated as good by those who have no memory of the old thing. It can be a lonely place and lament is needed. But we also can't stay there.

Nostalgia is an enemy of hope. We need to grieve what we have lost, but we also need to somehow continue to step into hope, move into what is and beyond what was. We hold our dear memories, cherish them, grieve their loss, but we can't let them hold us from entering into what is now, who and what we are surrounded by now.

May things that are not the same be grieved but not become shackles keeping us from entering into the now and the new memories and blessings that the present might have to offer us.



Joshua Penfold
(penfoldjoshua@gmail.com) is a member of
Tavistock Mennonite
Church.

Et cetera



NEW YORK LATINO FILM FESTIVAL PHOTO

Story of sanctuary now a documentary

Edith Espinal spent more than three years in sanctuary in the Columbus Mennonite Church in Ohio. Her story has been made into a 24-minute documentary, *A Shelter for Edith*, by Matthew Leahy and Elisa Stone Leahy. Born in Mexico, Espinal came to the United States as a teenager, was married and has three adult children. Faced with deportation in 2017, she sought sanctuary in the church, living there for 40 months. Due to changes in the deportation policy, she was able to join her family in 2021. The documentary portrays Espinal's years in confinement and was part of the New York Latino Film Festival in September.

Source: Anabaptist World

VIEWPOINT

‘Whatever happened to simple living?’

Part II

By Will Braun
Senior Writer

For 45 years, the *More-with-Less Cookbook* has been a beacon of the Mennonite legacy of simple living. The popular, and much more recent, cookbook, *Mennonite Girls Can Cook*, is rooted in a decidedly more First-World spirituality. The divergent books illustrate something of the tension faced by Mennonites living in a land of plenty.

Kenton Lobe says of Doris Longacre Janzen, the late author of both the *More-with-Less Cookbook* as well as the later book, *Living More with Less*, “I think she’s one of our best theologians, still.” Lobe teaches a course called “The Study of Simple Living” at Canadian Mennonite University. In terms of interest in the class, he says it is fairly typical for classes at the university.

In addition to historical and theological components, the course has a strong practical dimension. Lobe discloses his own household income and how money is spent. Students have to do some simplicity related practice. Some give up their phones. One group put on a feast for a hundred people using only food reclaimed from dumpsters.

Lobe says the students are “terribly interested in the big questions being asked about consumption.” Then he sees them grappling with decisions—such as whether to buy a car—as they move on in life. And they take him to task on the decisions they see him make.

“My life is a mess of cumulative contradictions,” he tells me after disclosing that he was answering my call about simple living from a nice hotel in Kananaskis, Alta.

In terms of the trajectory of interest in simple living, he notes that in a recent conversation, a relative asked him, “Whatever happened to simple living?”

But Lobe says he hears students and colleagues talking about it.

“I draw more hope from the generation below, than my own, or the generation above,” he says, adding that there are of course noteworthy examples from all age groups.

Everyday, real-life simplicity

One such example would be the five Mennonite women from Steinbach, Man., who met regularly for several months in 2018 to explore simple living. According to Enid Letkeman, one of the participants, their meetings involved prayer, check-ins about action commitments and discussion of resource materials, which included *Living More with Less*. Meetings ended with each person committing to a specific action to incorporate in her life.

Letkeman valued the deepening of relationships that took place. “It’s been more than two years [since we met formally] and yet, when I speak to these friends, the conversation quickly and easily dives below the surface topics to deeper sharing,” she says. “We often ask each other how we’re doing with our ‘action commitments’ which is its own form of encouragement.”

Brenda Penner, another participant, says that decades earlier she had been challenged by a friend to apply the ideas in *Living More with Less*. “I found it overwhelming,” she admits. “It just seemed to put more pressure on me than I could handle at that point in my life.” Now that she is retired and downsizing, she finds herself more receptive.

She particularly appreciated the willingness within the group to be honest with one another about struggles around accumulation and spending. The most challenging part she says was “putting

the principles and increasing awareness into practise.”

Another participant, who preferred not to be named, talked about the value of “deliberate self-inspection” that took place and the behaviour changes, all within a context of trust, encouragement and “listening hearts.” The group helped her “embrace the joy of buying nothing and giving the gift of caring, intentional time spent with others.”

Among the three group participants I heard from, the practical life changes that resulted from the group included: buying local as much as possible even when it costs more; reduced purchase of plastics; fewer clothes; walking more often; planting more trees; letting go of the habit of buying a new piece of clothing on every trip to Costco and generally just buying less.

The practical elements were intertwined with spiritual quest. “It felt that we were sharing our hopes and desires on a very relevant and spiritual level,” Letkeman says. “It was not simply about cleaning out our closets for less clutter or shopping with reusable shopping bags to save the earth. Our shared desire was wrapped around wanting to live faithfully as we follow the example of Jesus’ life and living. There was a deep sense of purpose, even urgency, to our gatherings. . . . The space and time we carved out each couple weeks was sacred.”

The practical and spiritual tensions of living in a society captivated by the spirit of affluence are considerable. And while there may be more Mennonites eating stuffed pork loin than Caribbean rice and beans these days in Canada, simplicity still has something of a foothold in our collective soul. ☿

NEWS

MCC releases research findings on historical entanglements with National Socialism

By Laura Kalmar

Mennonite Central Committee

Mennonite Central Committee has released the findings of its research on the organization's historical entanglements with German National Socialism (or Nazism) and its legacy before, during and after the Second World War. Articles examining this history are available in the fall 2021 issue of *Intersections: MCC Theory and Practice Quarterly*.

Over the past few years, several pieces have been published about Mennonite complicity with National Socialism and the Holocaust as well as Mennonite antisemitism. To improve MCC's understanding of its part in this history, the organization invited 12 historians from Canada, the United States, France, Germany and the Netherlands to conduct archival research during early 2021.

"Truth-seeking and truth-telling are essential parts of MCC's commitment to peacebuilding," says Ann Graber Hershberger, executive director of MCC U.S. "We want to approach these tasks honestly and non-defensively. At the same time, we recommit ourselves to standing against all forms of oppression, including racism, colonialism and sexual violence."

The research highlights complicated and painful parts of MCC's institutional history.

Following the Second World War, MCC's efforts to resettle Mennonites from the Soviet Union were challenging and deeply ambiguous. MCC recognized that Mennonites were facing an uncertain and hostile future. Now living in Germany and having accepted German citizenship, Mennonites feared deportation back to the Soviet Union. This added extreme urgency to MCC's work. Through a variety of narratives, MCC successfully persuaded Allied

governments and other governing bodies to allow Mennonites to migrate to Canada and South America.

Through this effort to resettle more than 12,000 refugees, MCC downplayed and covered over Mennonite participation in Nazi military bodies. MCC assisted a number of Mennonites who had collaborated with and benefited from Nazism, including some who committed war crimes and participated in the Holocaust.



MENNONITE HERITAGE ARCHIVES PHOTO

Benjamin Unruh (front row, third from left) stands with refugee representatives in Moelln, Germany, circa 1930. Unruh, a displaced Mennonite from the Soviet Union living in Germany and a committed Nazi, negotiated with the Nazi government on behalf of MCC regarding a debt the relief organization owed.

As well, MCC's financial debt to the German government for the transportation of Soviet Mennonites to Paraguay in the early 1930s meant that MCC became a debtor to the Nazi regime when it came to power in 1933. MCC turned to Benjamin Unruh, a displaced Mennonite from the Soviet Union living in Germany and a committed Nazi, to negotiate with the Nazi government regarding this debt.

Other parts of the historical research

outline how MCC worked in wartime France to rescue Jewish children from death camps. It also details how MCC sought to cultivate a commitment to peace and nonresistance in a Paraguayan Mennonite colony where pro-Nazi sentiments were on the rise.

In response to these research findings, MCC will take several actions. Over the coming months, MCC will develop internal staff training on antisemitism. MCC will also undertake a process of consultation to determine how to further respond to the research findings. MCC welcomes counsel from Anabaptists and others until March 2022. Recommendations and comments can be sent to intersections@mcc.org.

"We recognize that MCC is a human institution, which means we are far from perfect. By examining the places where MCC has fallen short, we continue to learn, grow and become more Christlike," says Rick Cober Bauman, executive director of MCC Canada.

"We know that for some MCC supporters, these findings may be difficult to absorb," he continues. "Many individual family histories are caught up in this narrative. We offer this research with open hands and hearts, knowing that it captures just a fraction of the Mennonite story."

Further discussion about this—and other aspects of the research—occurred at the "MCC at 100" conference, Sept. 30-Oct. 2. A roundtable event, "MCC, Refugees and the Legacies of National Socialism," will take place on Nov. 4. This event is open to the public with pre-registration. Both events are hosted by the University of Winnipeg and sponsored by MCC. ❧

Saskatoon churches hold communion service on election day

Story and photo by Donna Schulz
Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON, SASK.



When Christians partake in communion they are asserting the Lordship of Christ. This takes on added significance on election day.

Attending a communion service on election day is not at the top of most voters' priority lists, but for those who gathered at Mount Royal Mennonite Church on Sept. 20, it proved to be the right way to start the day.

Garth Ewert Fisher, who is co-pastor at Mount Royal Mennonite, became intrigued with the idea of holding communion on election day in 2019, just after the previous federal election had been called. It was then that he came across an article about election day communion services in the United States. What began as a single service grew into an ecumenical movement encompassing over 900 churches.

Ewert Fisher decided to plan a communion service for his own church in 2019, but he extended the invitation to other Mennonite Church Saskatchewan congregations as well. That year worshipers came from as far away as Osler and Rosthern to attend.

When this year's federal election was called, Ewert Fisher invited Saskatoon's other MC Saskatchewan congregations to help with the planning. Phyllis Goertz, of Wildwood Mennonite, and Patrick Preheim, of Nutana Park Mennonite,

joined Ewert Fisher in organizing the service.

About 20 people attended the 7:00 a.m. service, which included an instrumental prelude and postlude, Scripture readings, prayers and communion. Each participant received a pre-packaged container with a communion wafer on top and a small cup of grape juice beneath, in keeping with pandemic safety protocols.

Len Rempel says he wasn't quite sure what to expect of the experience. Having recently moved to Saskatchewan to serve as pastor of both Warman and Pleasant Point Mennonite Churches, Rempel at first thought that attending the service would be a good opportunity to make connections with people.

"A communion service is a good way to connect with people as well as with God," he says, "but in terms of the election, it kind of felt appropriate to begin that day with communion. It kind of centred things for me."

Rempel says that a service of this kind can bring together people who hold different political views, offering them "an opportunity to make a profound statement that as followers of Jesus Christ we have that allegiance first and that supersedes any other allegiance."

Ewert Fisher agrees. "One of the key tasks of the church is to keep reminding ourselves what citizenship and what the Lordship of Christ really means," he says.

The election-day communion service was a first for Goertz, but she says it was a positive experience.

"I think it helped centre me on the important things in life and reduced my concern about how the election might turn out," she says.

Preheim echoes her thoughts. "When we gather as the people of God for a worship service on an election day, I am reminded of my citizenship in God's house," he says.

"This reality, and being given space to reflect on it, strengthens me to hold the results of an election more gently."

Preheim led worshipers in the prayers of the people, asking God:

- **for patience** and kindness for poll workers,
- **that voters** would be mindful of the common good,
- **for humility** and gentleness for politicians,
- **that God's** people might live their identity with integrity and joy,
- **that refugees** might have courage and strength, as Canadian policies impact so many others, and
- **for resilience** for creation.

"Whoever the 'other' is in this election," says Preheim, "I am invited to treat all people with respect and live into Christlike integrity." He adds, "Coming together to remember these pieces of our spiritual identity is good for us, particularly on election day."

Ewert Fisher says the communion service was an opportunity to "remind ourselves of our unity and how that transcends politics." He valued being able to host the service jointly with colleagues from other churches and says he will definitely plan another such service when the next election rolls around.

Rempel also appreciated the opportunity and plans to participate again next time.

"So much of what we hear in a political campaign is criticism of other sides," he says. "Campaign ads are meant to divide people. We may be different and we may disagree on things, but [the] Lordship of Christ takes precedence over everything else." Rempel adds, "We call Jesus Lord. That's a much higher calling than prime minister or member of parliament." ❧

Outdoor MCC festival fundraiser a success

Story and photos by Amy Rinner Waddell

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

The parking lot of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Centre on Gladys Avenue was filled with 400 volunteers and thousands of attendees on Sept. 18 for the annual MCC B.C. Festival for World Relief.

This year's in-person celebration was a welcome contrast to last year's in the midst of the pandemic, where festival-goers could only drive through the parking lot to pick up pre-ordered food. Originally planned this year for its usual indoor location of Tradex convention centre, the festival had to be moved to the MCC parking lot when Tradex became unavailable.

Sunny weather prevailed despite heavy rains in the days leading up to the event and the forecast of rain all day. The outdoor location in downtown Abbotsford also proved to be advantageous for other reasons.

"We had a lot more attendees that were unfamiliar with the festival, and some stopped by just because they noticed the

big tents in the parking lot, which was great for engagement and spreading the word on MCC's work," says Katie Kowalchuk, MCC B.C. communications coordinator.

Although some things such as craft vendors, quilt sales, and a stage for auction and entertainment were missing, attendees could still enjoy a bake sale, plant sale, Ten Thousand Villages sales and a variety of food booths. Children's games and a bouncy castle provided entertainment for the youngsters.

"We raised over \$950,000 and counting towards our work supporting the uprooted and vulnerable around the world and here at home," reports Kowalchuk. We are so thrilled, and grateful to the many supporters who continue to support MCC's work. We really are changing lives together!"

A cycle-a-thon also was a great success on Saturday morning, with 61 riders leaving from Mt. Lehman Winery for the 20-kilometre and 50-kilometre rides. Over \$247,000 has been given and pledged to support MCC's emergency food project



Plates of vareniki with sausage and gravy were a popular choice for attendees at the MCC B.C. Festival for World Relief on Sept. 18. Thousands attended the event on the MCC Centre parking lot.



Volunteers dish out watermelon with rollkuchen at the MCC B.C. Festival for World Relief.

in South Sudan.

"A generous MCC supporter led a drive that raised \$500,000 as a matching fund for this year's festival cycle-a-thon," reports Jet Takaoka, MCC B.C. advancement director. "While they wish to remain anonymous, we are very grateful for their generosity and grateful that they invited other generous people to participate as well."

Wayne Bremner, MCC B.C. executive director adds, "Personally, I was delighted to see so many people come out to the festival and was also very much encouraged by the cyclists and those who raised funds and donated to support MCC's efforts to address severe hunger in South Sudan. The staff and volunteers did a great job and managed to host thousands of people in our parking lot. It was good day." ❧

Worldwide church communities impacted by environmental crises

Mennonite World Conference

“We are living in a permanent state of frustration and fear...given the fact that we can be swept away at any moment by natural catastrophes and as a result of the food insecurity caused by climate change,” said Jacques Pilipili Mungwaere, pastor of a Mennonite church in the Democratic Republic of Congo. For the Creation Care task force of Mennonite World Conference (MWC), this is a reminder of the many crises in our world that call us to heal our relationship with creation.

The task force prepared a global Mennonite survey on creation care, asking about the impacts of environmental degradation and/or climate change experiences and how they have impacted personal or congregations. MWC’s five regions are represented on the task force, as well as the Mennonite Creation Network and Mennonite Central Committee.

Responses to the survey identified that there are environmental impacts on daily life, the least affluent areas are most affected and environmental problems intersect with other social challenges. Almost all respondents (98 percent) experience at least one of the 17 environmental impacts asked about. The most common were: economic impacts such as high food prices; changes in climatic events such as more heat waves and flooding; and widespread pollution. Interestingly, respondents focused more on impacts affecting their daily reality and less on dramatic events such as wildfires or hurricanes/typhoons or slow changes such as sea level rise.

While a third or more of respondents from the U.S./Canada and Europe said they were not affected yet by climate

change, almost nobody in Asia, Africa and Latin America reported this. Africa stood out as the region reporting the highest percentage of impacts. For instance, while 80 percent of African respondents reported higher prices for food and other goods due to climate impacts, only 9 percent of European respondents reported this. Not surprisingly, those in Africa also report being impacted by higher levels of

Environmental degradation has an emotional impact as well. About 10 percent of people in the U.S./Canada, Europe and Latin America said they are saddened or otherwise feel emotionally impacted by the degradation of the created world, even if it doesn’t have a direct impact on their livelihood. And, after this summer’s heat waves in North America and floods in Germany, patterns

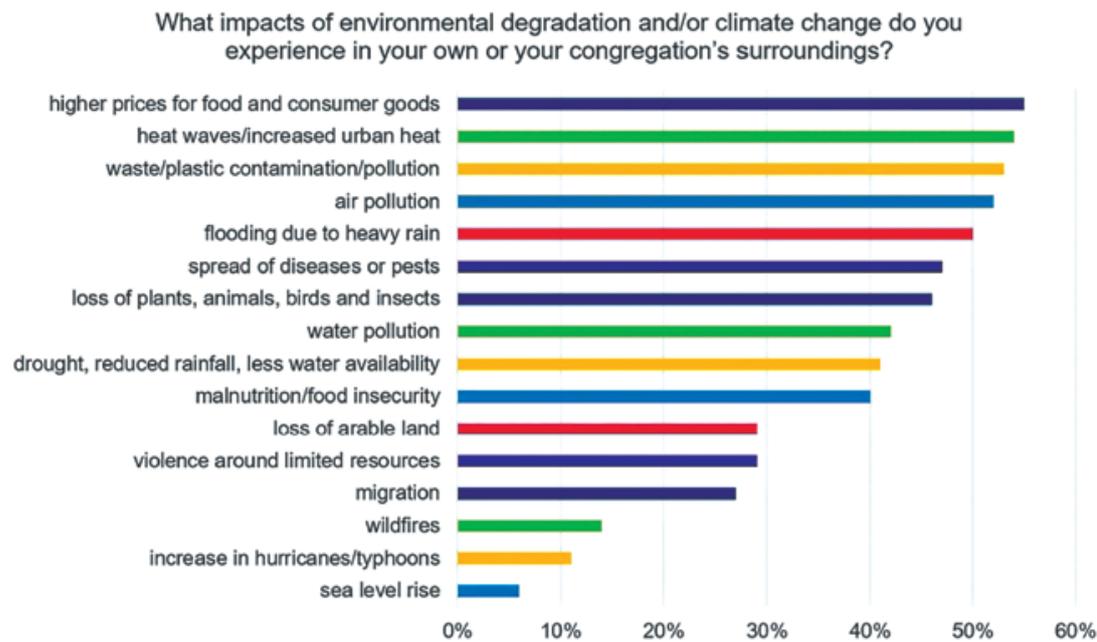


CHART BY MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE

food insecurity and malnutrition. These responses accentuate what we already know: those least responsible for climate change are bearing the brunt of the effects.

There was a surprisingly diverse range of responses to open-ended questions. For instance, about 10 percent of respondents from Africa, Asia and Latin America said that high temperatures or rainfall was negatively impacting their ability to get together as a church.

of response may shift.

Other respondents linked environmental problems directly to social issues such as increased violence, decreased school attendance by children, mental health and migration. All of these responses indicate that environmental problems can impact all facets of our lives, and that we cannot think of these problems as separate from other important social challenges. ☘

Small church offerings

Erie View United Mennonite Church

Story by Maria H. Klassen
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

In 1926 a small group of immigrant Russian Mennonite families settled near Port Rowan, a small town in rural southern Ontario, half an hour's drive from the bigger towns of Simcoe and Tillsonburg. Worship services were started, with families initially meeting in their homes, then renting space, and finally owning their own building in 1940. The church received official recognition by the government in 1947 as Erie View United Mennonite Church. Until then it had functioned under the charter of the Vineland United Mennonite Church.

The church has always been small, about 40 members in 1950 and 29 members in 2020. Their numbers do not detract congregants from being involved in the greater Mennonite community. They support Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada (MC Eastern Canada), Mennonite Church Canada (MC Canada) and Conrad Grebel University College (CGUC).

John Wiebe, a long-time active member of Erie View says, "Missions has always

been, and continues to be, a strong focus." About five years ago the membership wanted to support a specific family in the mission field. Through wider church channels, they were connected with International Witness workers Tom and Christine Poovong and their two children, working in Thailand. The congregation met the couple in 2017 when the Poovongs were in Canada and they have continued the sponsorship. Every few months the church communicates with the family via a Zoom meeting organized and chaired by Jeanette Hanson, director of MC Canada International Witness.

About seven years ago, the congregation decided to sponsor a refugee family. This was important to many members as most of the church families had a history of Mennonite migration from the Ukraine to Canada. They supported a Syrian family, parents and five children, for the customary sponsorship of one year. The family has done well and are still in touch with some church members.

Over the decades, members have



PHOTO COURTESY OF BETTY WIEBE

Erie View United Mennonite Church has always been a small congregation.

participated in mission trips. These have included cleaning up in Honduras in 2001 after Hurricane Mitch, working with MCC in Colombia in 2005, building an orphanage in Mozambique in 2007, and building a school in Guatemala in 2010.

Doug Amstutz is the part-time pastor at Erie View; his wife Wanda pastors Cassel Mennonite Church near Tavistock. At the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, Doug and Wanda talked to their congregations about recording worship services together for both congregations. And that is what they did—until the congregations could meet in person in their own churches in the fall of 2020. During pandemic lockdowns, worship services were recorded for both churches; when restrictions eased, congregants met in their own buildings, following COVID-19 protocols.

Some church activities such as biweekly in-home Bible studies and prayer times stopped when the pandemic started. Other activities such as the annual September kayak/canoe paddle down Big Creek and a wiener roast, took place again in September. This year 12 people rode canoes, and another 12 people joined the wiener roast, enjoying beautiful weather and great fellowship. ☸



Erie View United Mennonite Church, not far from the shores of Lake Erie, held its annual canoe paddle in September.

Singing under the stars

By Maria H. Klassen
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

On the last Saturday of August, Niagara United Mennonite Church near Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., hosted an outdoor evening of worship songs and prayers. It had been a hard season. The purpose of the event was to provide space for participants to reflect on the positives and the hardships, and also to look forward, acknowledging that there is so much that is unknown. There was an invitation to intentionally choose to place their trust in God.

The evening program was divided into four sections entitled Looking Back with Gratitude, Looking Back with Lament, Looking Forward with Uncertainty, and Looking Forward in Trust and Hope. Each section included a prayer written by pastor Renate Dau Klaassen and read by congregants. Each prayer had a participatory element to it—placing a hand on

the heart, times of silence, responding verbally during a call with “Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.”

Musical groups from the church led sets of songs that matched the themes of the evening.

Upon arrival, everyone received a lantern. After the final prayer, looking forward in hope and trust, participants sang, “Longing for Light.” At this point each person was invited to light their lantern as a way of expressing their confidence and

assurance in God’s faithful presence.

Rachael Peters commented, “It was just getting dark as the song began. The lanterns were a beautiful visual reminder of trust and hope as they flickered in the evening light.”

The event was kept logistically simple and COVID-safe, so the participants could focus their hearts on worship. ✎



PHOTO BY RACHAEL PETERS

Participants sing under the stars with their lanterns lit at Niagara United Mennonite Church.

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Beirut explosion: one year later

Meet people whose homes and businesses were restored with the help of an MCC partner

By Etienne Chlala and Linda Espenshade
Mennonite Central Committee

Samir Menassa remembers when his convenience store used to attract many customers. Located among pubs and restaurants in Beirut, Lebanon, the store was a convenient place for people to purchase a few things they needed as they strolled through the area.

That memory blew up along with a massive explosion of ammonium nitrate at the city's major port on Aug. 4, 2020. The explosion killed about 200 people and destroyed and damaged buildings throughout the city.

"I was blasted away and ended up on the floor but luckily had no major injuries," says Menassa, who is in his late 60s. His wife, who was not at the store, also was safe.

But the store was severely damaged. Liquid from jars splattered everywhere. Cans were crushed. Most of the products were unsellable.

"The doors were blasted in," he says. "The glass was obliterated, and glass dust covered the entire floor."

Menassa salvaged the usable food,

keeping some for himself and his wife, and giving the rest to the church for others who were in need. With only \$400 in his bank account, he looked for help to fix his store and his house, which also was damaged. Through his church, he was connected to the Forum for Development, Culture and Dialogue (FDCD), a Lebanese non-profit organization.

The Forum gave him money toward the repair of his house and helped him to replace glass windows on his shop and the rolling metal shutters. A large supermarket provided supplies so he could restock.

But he has only a few customers. Many people left the area after the explosion because their houses were damaged. Tourists stopped coming, and neighbourhood violence increased, so he now closes his store every day at 4 p.m. He sells just enough to buy food and medicine for himself and his wife.

"I am grateful that my store has been restored, but I would like to see clients walk in like they used to before," he says.

The explosion is not the only reason



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE FORUM

In addition to repairing the gate at Samir Menassa's shop, FDCD also repaired the gate at Sako's shop. In this August 2020 photo, Sako works on the ladder while his friend holds the gate as they try to make a temporary fix. (Sako's last name is not used for security reasons.)



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE FORUM

Samir Menassa's shop after the explosion.

Menassa's customer base has decreased. Lebanon is in a financial crisis, causing the Lebanese pound to lose 80 percent of its value against the U.S. dollar in 2020, and COVID-19 continues to limit people's movement within the city and the country.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and the Forum have worked together to help repair 55 homes and 14 businesses with stipends of about \$1,250 each. Other non-profits also support recovery in different ways, allowing people to combine



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE FORUM

With the reconstruction nearly complete, Hafez Sammour stands in his home that the explosion had damaged severely.

varied resources with their own to restart.

The Forum gave him \$1,250 to help him make repairs on his house. He combined the funds with other non-profit support, his own sweat equity, his now-empty retirement account and loans to make repairs. In April, the house was almost ready for the family to move back in.

Hafez Sammour says he would have been even more in debt without the Forum's assistance. He appreciates that the Forum staff continue to check in with him to see how the repairs are going.

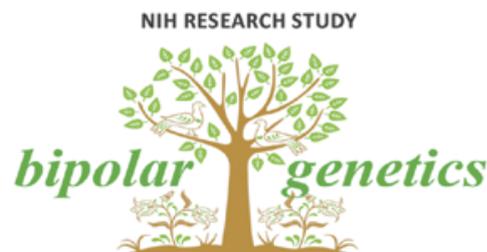
"I am grateful for everyone who was there to help me," he says. "I am grateful to everyone who pitched in to raise this house from the dead."

The crisis in Lebanon is complex and multi-faceted, says Salam Houch, the Forum's program coordinator. "The reality is that even middle-class families in Lebanon are struggling just to buy basic necessities like food and medicine. They cannot afford the burden of rebuilding from an explosion.

"Helping families get back into their homes as soon as possible was an essential part of supporting their efforts to begin earning livelihoods again," he says. "In the same way, we wanted to focus on rebuilding small businesses because, for many families, their small businesses are their primary—or even only—source of income."

"The task of truly rebuilding Beirut—not just fixing businesses but rebuilding the hearts and souls of Beirut—is immense and can feel daunting at times," says Houch. "But we have seen the passion and

dedication of Lebanese people to help one another, as well as the continued support of international partners like MCC. This gives us hope that rebuilding is possible." ❧



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PEOPLE

Memories of migration

Cross-Canada train tour to commemorate Russlaender centenary

Story and photos by Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe
Manitoba Correspondent

It's been almost 100 years since 1923, when thousands of Mennonites from the Soviet Union began migrating to Canada. A train tour commemorating their journey will wind across Canada in the summer of 2023 to mark the anniversary.

Ingrid Moehlmann, the event's initiator, remembers her father's final wish that started it all. "On his deathbed, the last thing he said to me before he slipped from consciousness was, would I please do something for this centenary," she says.

His grandfather, David Toews, helped bring thousands of Russian Mennonites, or Russlaender, to Canada after the 1917 Russian Revolution ravaged the country with famine, epidemic and violence.

When dissent arose amongst the Canadian Mennonites on how much to support these immigrants, Toews arranged for the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) to pay the travel costs, putting the debt for 21,000 people in his own name. He also persuaded Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King to allow the Mennonites into the country.

Toews dedicated most of his life to the project—he finished fundraising and paying off the debt six months before his death. "That was a huge, huge thing in our family," says Moehlmann, who attends First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

The idea of a train tour came to Moehlmann in a dream in 2015, a year after her father passed away, and she's been planning Memories of Migration: The Russlaender 100 Tour ever since. Going almost coast to coast, the three-week journey, organized by TourMagination, an Anabaptist-heritage travel company, will start in Quebec City on July 6, 2023 and end in Abbotsford on July 25. The trip is divided into three segments, each roughly a week long; participants can join just one or two sections or all three.

Moehlmann will lead the tour with



Ingrid Moehlmann is the instigator of the Memories of Migration: The Russlaender 100 Tour, a weeks-long train trip across Canada, coming in 2023.

Henry Paetkau. They are heading up the Russlaender Centenary Committee (RCC), a subcommittee of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada. The tour will make stops in places of key historical significance to the Russian Mennonite migration, from the first landing site and quarantine station on Grosse Isle, an island near Quebec City, to the three earliest Mennonite settlements in the Fraser Valley of B.C.

Along the way, participants can join music events, visit museums, tour cities and attend a gala dinner sponsored by the CPR, among many other highlights. In Winnipeg, the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies will host an academic conference exploring themes of war, revolution and migration in the Mennonite experience, led by Aileen Friesen, associate professor of history at the University of Winnipeg and co-director of the Centre for Transnational

Mennonite Studies.

Moehlmann is looking forward to the arrival in Rosthern, Sask., to reenact the moment when the Russlaender got off the train and broke spontaneously into song, singing, "Now thank we all our God" in German. "I've heard about that my whole life," she says.

The tour will celebrate the faith of the immigrants, remember the loss of their former communities, memorialize the challenges of resettlement and acknowledge Indigenous displacement in Mennonite and Canadian history.

"We can tell our story about what took place in Ukraine and there is a lot of heartbreak and tears associated with that, but . . . we need to understand that we came to this land as settlers and therefore we are incorporated into this fabric of settler colonialism that is part of Canadian history. And we cannot get away from that. That is also part of our story and we need



The tour will commemorate the work of David Toews, Moehlmann's great-grandfather, who organized the migration of Mennonites from the Soviet Union to Canada beginning in 1923.



to acknowledge it," says Friesen.

Travellers will explore truth and reconciliation during the tour, as they learn about the displacement of Indigenous peoples that made way for many Mennonite settlements. "We know and understand the damage that has been done through settler colonialism and it needs to be acknowledged," Friesen says.

Recently, 450 people attended a history webinar Friesen presented in connection with the tour and people have already begun registering. Moehlmann hopes some of those will be young people. "I'm a teacher, I'm always interested in what can bring history to younger generations." Travelling by train is expensive, so she's exploring possible ways to include young people, like inviting individuals to sponsor them to serve as train stewards.

It's important to commemorate the Russlaender centenary because the history is fading from many people's memories, Moehlmann says. "I see the Mennonite world I grew up in sort of crumbling very quickly. People just don't understand anymore, I think, because they're many generations removed."

For many who do remember, this story is deeply personal. Moehlmann's grandmother and her family could not afford to make the journey to Canada after all the men in their family except one were killed, and their livelihood was lost. It was David Toews who provided the funds. "My mother's entire family, both sides, was directly saved by this travel. It was my dad's family who did that. . . . So for me, both sides of the story are really significant because there's no way I would be here if one or the other hadn't happened."

"I'm hoping [the tour] makes people reflect on how it is we came to be here and some of the lessons learned along the way," she adds.

Friesen says although Mennonite identity has changed significantly over the years, "that sense of community still prevails and it'll be nice to experience that again, to experience all these different

David Riesen, Moehlmann's father, requested on his deathbed that the Russlaender migration be remembered.

Mennonites encouraged to 'pay it forward' as they look back

BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE

As participants on the Memories of Migration: The Russlaender 100 Tour reflect on how they came to be in Canada, and the many people that helped their ancestors on their journeys, they will be encouraged to "pay it forward" throughout the tour. "We're recognizing that lots of people gave us a helping hand . . . we wanted to look at doing something good with that," says Ingrid Moehlmann, co-chair of the Russlaender Centenary Committee and initiator of the train tour. As part of the commemoration, the committee established the Russlaender Remembrance Fund through Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada. Donors can choose from three areas of work that connect with the migration: MCC's Indigenous Neighbours program to acknowledge Mennonites' displacement of Indigenous peoples; MCC's Ukraine program to remember the loss of their former communities; and MCC's International Refugee Settlement program to recognize the challenges of resettlement today. MCC is a meaningful partner for this project because it was first formed in 1920 to help the Russlaender Mennonites. ❧

elements as a community." ❧

To learn more, visit russlaender100.com. Get a taste of the tour by joining a webinar on Oct. 28, called *A New Home in Canada*. Register at <https://bit.ly/3D7pvWW>



/// News brief

Anabaptist Mennonite Scholars Network relaunched



The Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre is part of the downtown University of Toronto campus.

The Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre, in cooperation with the Institute for Mennonite Studies, has relaunched the Anabaptist Mennonite Scholars Network (<https://bit.ly/3irdtPF>). The network seeks to respond to the need for increasing communication around conference planning, special journal issues and related items, with a view not only to facilitating greater awareness and cooperation but also to expanding the conversation. Email newsletters that feature a round-up of new calls for papers, conferences, lectures, employment opportunities, fellowships, scholarships, online resources and more will be circulated three to four times annually. The theological centre is also in conversation with the emerging Global Anabaptist Education Networks (<https://bit.ly/3BIPU3x>) about working towards an event or workshop to coincide with the upcoming Mennonite World Conference assembly in Indonesia in 2022.

—TORONTO MENNONITE THEOLOGICAL CENTRE

/// News brief

MCC Ontario staff plant centennial tree



PHOTO COURTESY OF MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE ONTARIO

John Head (left), MCC Ontario executive director, and Lynn Rempel, board chair, plant an oak sapling to celebrate MCC's centennial.

On Sept. 21, staff and board members of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario planted an oak sapling in the gardens at its Kitchener office to celebrate 100 years of relief, development and peace in the name of Christ. The sapling, donated by Abe Epp, a 91-year-old from the Niagara region, is an offspring of the legendary Khortitsa oak in Ukraine that is nearly 1,000 years old. Mennonites in Ukraine, suffering through famine in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, pleaded for help from Mennonites in North America. That prompted the formation of MCC, which set up relief kitchens in Ukraine in the 1920s. Abe figures his father Henry, who was a young boy when famine threatened Ukraine, was fed at an MCC relief kitchen under that Khortitsa oak. Abe visited the area where his father Henry grew up during a trip to Ukraine with his late wife Eleanor in 1984. Eleanor brought home a handful of acorns from the Khortitsa oak; they have flourished and parented hundreds of saplings across Canada. Abe is honoured to provide the sapling for MCC's centennial tree. "I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for MCC," says Abe.

—BY JANET BAUMAN

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Qualities of an effective leader

Organization and commitment, kindness and empathy

By Jace Jaeden Ellis
Conrad Grebel University College
WATERLOO, ONT.

“I’ve learned a lot about what it takes to be an effective leader,” says Katrina Steckle. “It takes incredible organization, commitment and energy, but it also takes kindness and empathy.”

Steckle, a resident and later an associate at Conrad Grebel University College, graduated with a psychology and English literature and rhetoric double major with a history minor from the University of Waterloo. To her, Grebel was a place to nurture faith, grow into an effective leader, create a home away from home and make long-lasting memories.

Her interest in Grebel started with her older sister, Sam, who lived at Grebel during her undergrad year, and whenever she came home to visit family, she always explained her experiences with great fondness.

Whenever the opportunity arose, Steckle leapt at the chance to visit her sister at Grebel and took the opportunity to explore the college as well. “I really liked the people and the atmosphere,” she says.

And when the time came to decide which university option best suited her, she attended a Grebel open house. “I got a tour from a really friendly upper-year and had a delicious lunch in the Grebel dining room,” she says. “My tour convinced me that I wanted to attend Waterloo and live at Grebel.”

After moving in, she got involved in as many activities as she could, all with a smile. She participated on the Larger Leadership Team as an environment rep, special projects rep and Grebelspeaks editor. She was a don; a member of the chapel committee member and chapel choir; and took part in three reading-week service trips, two to Toronto with Toronto Ontario Opportunities for Learning and Service, and one to Florida with Mennonite Disaster Service. She also



PHOTO COURTESY OF KATRINA STECKLE

Katrina Steckle, a resident and later an associate at Conrad Grebel University College, has just graduated with a psychology and English literature and rhetoric double major with a history minor from the University of Waterloo.

participated in three Grebel musicals.

Her favourite initiative was in her second year, in the co-creation of a weekly hymn sing that continues to run every Sunday.

Steckle found great satisfaction from these experiences, growing as a person, learning new skills, forming friendships and most importantly, giving back to the community. “I’ve really enjoyed the opportunity to invest in a community and create a home away from home throughout my undergrad,” she says. “Being able to give back to the Grebel community has been really important because the community has given so much to me.”

Faith is very important to her. For the past year, she has attended Waterloo North Mennonite Church virtually, and she grew up attending Zurich Mennonite Church.

Nearly every term at Grebel, she was involved in the chapel program, where she learned to connect music and worship. “I learned a lot about what it takes to

provide faith-nurturing experiences for a community while also nurturing my own faith,” she says.

Working with members of the chapel committee enlightened her in many ways. It taught her much about living out her faith and working with students of different beliefs. “It is always worth listening to people who have different opinions than you do, because you never know what you may learn from them,” she says.

In September, Steckle began a master of arts degree in theological studies at Regent College in Vancouver, with the hope of becoming a high-school English teacher. ❧

❧ Staff change

Pastoral transition in Saskatchewan



Andrea Enns-Gooding began serving as pastor of Rosthern Mennonite Church on July 1. She served as pastor of Zoar Mennonite Church in Waldheim, Sask. for three years until that church closed in April. Enns-Gooding holds a Bachelor of Arts degree, with a major in music and a minor in theology, from Canadian Mennonite University.

—BY DONNA SCHULZ

Doris Weber blazed a trail for women in ministry

By Marilyn Rudy-Froese

Church leadership minister for MC Eastern Canada

“There is a song that sings deep within me,” Doris Weber wrote in Mary A. Schiedel’s book, *Pioneers in Ministry*. It is that song which guided Doris throughout her life, and accompanied her as she died on Sept. 9, 2021.



Doris Weber (1930-2021)

Doris was born on April 20, 1930, to Allan and Veronica Jantzi and lived her life on the family farm in Wilmot Township, Ont., with time in Virginia, Ohio, and Indiana for study and pastoral work.

Music was a significant part of her childhood, as she attended many musical events in a variety of churches. One such event was in a church with a female pastor, and the next morning, Doris asked her mother if she thought Doris would be able to be a pastor someday. Her mother replied that she did not think so, but that moment was the beginning of a call that burned within Doris throughout her life.

On May 29, 1954, Doris married Rod Weber. Rod describes Doris as “a woman of faith, vision and commitment.” Drawn together by a shared desire to work in the church, they pursued a life that balanced work, study, raising a family and ministry. The spark which began in childhood continued to call Doris to pursue higher

education.

Daughters Kay Weber and Julie Weber noted how hard their mother worked, both to care for home and children, and to pursue study and ministry. In the midst of raising six children born within nine years, sewing their clothes, providing quality meals and baking, maintaining a large vegetable and flower garden, she completed her BA and MDiv.

Kay and another daughter, Dawn Cullar, noted that it was important to their mother that each of her children pursue higher education. Her gracious spirit and the ability to meet all people with love and respect are qualities of their mother they carry with them.

Doris began to co-pastor with Rod at Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford, Ont., while she was studying. They were pastors at Avon from 1974-1984. During this time, Doris was commissioned (later recognized as equivalent to ordination) as the first woman pastor in the Western Ontario Mennonite Conference (WOMC), on Feb. 25, 1979. Reta Baechler, member at Avon, remembers Doris as a good teacher and a good pastor, teaching the congregation many songs and being available for care and fellowship.

Doris served in a variety of pastoral roles in Ontario: Youth Minister for WOMC; a pastor and church planter in Brantford; chaplain at St. Mary’s Hospital in Kitchener; interim pastor at Listowel Mennonite Church, Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Valleyview Mennonite Church in London, and Danforth Mennonite Church in Toronto.

Ken Drudge, a member at Valleyview, remembers Doris’s “forthrightness in confronting uncomfortable matters, either from the pulpit or in person. This forthrightness was not forceful; it was deeper than that. She had the ability to speak an honest truth in a kindly, loving way that hit home.”

With one foot in the world of traditional women’s work and one foot in the world of ministry, Doris truly blazed the trail for the following generations of women in ministry. In her quietly persistent way, Doris addressed obstacles behind the scenes while maintaining warmth and care toward those with whom she was ministering. She believed that “above all else, God is love,” a belief that guided and held her through the joys and challenges of life and ministry.

A living memorial service was held at Mannheim Mennonite Church, where she was a member, on Sept. 4, 2021. Doris continues to be loved and remembered by her husband Rod, six children and spouses, 16 grandchildren, and 7 great-grandchildren. ❧

❧ Staff change

New position in MC Alberta



Mennonite Church Alberta is pleased to announce the hiring of **Steven Giugovaz** as church engagement minister. This half-time position has been created to

build relationships between MC Alberta’s congregations, assist congregations in connecting to the ministries they share as a nationwide community of faith, and engage individuals in support of these ministries. Steven brings a passion for church unity and faith from an Anabaptist perspective to this ministry. He is excited about serving in a role designed to connect people in service through Jesus Christ. Steven will begin serving on Sept. 13 and looks forward to getting to know the congregations and individuals of MC Alberta. Steven recently graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Ministry and lives in Olds, Alta., with his wife Emily and three children. Steven and Emily are members of Bergthol Mennonite Church in Didsbury.

—MENNONITE CHURCH ALBERTA

GATHERING AROUND THE TABLE

Sharing food with hungry guests

By Elfrieda Schroeder

Between the years 1969 and 1984, my husband Hardy Schroeder and I lived in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where Hardy was working on translating the Bible into Kikongo ya Leta (a trade language).

One day we invited a number of men, who were working for our church garage, for lunch. Simon, my house helper, and I had made a big pot of rice and a pot of stew. When the serving bowls were passed around the table, the first few men helped themselves generously. It wasn't every day they got such a substantial and plentiful meal, and they were hungry. Simon and I were dumbfounded when the bowls were returned to the kitchen empty because over half of the men had not yet eaten.

Simon didn't bat an eye. There was a bit of meat left at the bottom of the pot on the stove. "Just add more zucchini and eggplant and lots of pidipidi (hot peppers)," was his advice.

No one went away hungry that day, and to this day my husband and I will look at each other and chuckle when we see that all the food is finished on our table. "Just add more zucchini," we say to each other.

One morning, before going to teach a class of pastors' wives at the nearby theology school, I asked Simon to make a batch of doughnuts and have them ready as a treat for our children when they got home from school.



Elfrieda Schroeder lives in Winnipeg and attends Jubilee Mennonite Church.

When I got to my classroom, I noticed the women were not settling into their desks. They just kept crowding around me. Finally, in exasperation, I threw up my hands and said, "What is going on here? Why aren't you settling down?"

One of the women said, "We just want

to be around you and stay close to you." When I asked them why they wanted to do this, they said, "Because you smell so good."

I didn't remember putting on a special scent that day and wondered what they were smelling. One of the women closed her eyes, inhaled deeply and said, "Mama, you smell like bread!" That was when I realized it was the doughnuts.

Obviously, these women had not yet had anything to eat that day and they were hungry. Their church communities had neglected to send them the money they had promised them for groceries.

I knew what I had to do. I told them to wait just a few minutes; I had forgotten something at home. Then I went home, filled my basket with the freshly made doughnuts, and my students and I had a feast! ☺

For a traditional meat stew recipe from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, visit candianmennonite.org/chicken-peanut-sauce



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No religious exemptions from COVID-19 vaccines: Mennonite Church Canada

MC Canada's executive ministers have responded to inquiries from constituents regarding exemption from COVID-19 vaccines.

canadianmennonite.org/noexemptions



A 'profound legacy of harm'

MC Canada is reminding the nationwide church about Mennonite involvement in Indian Residential Schools and asking people to take steps toward reconciliation.

canadianmennonite.org/ndtr



'This is something only God can do'

The 2022 Mennonite World Conference Assembly host venue in Indonesia is holding a vaccine clinic, dosing up to 8,000 people per day.

canadianmennonite.org/semarang



Busy bees

"People are struggling," Ryan Dueck writes, "and struggling people need a hope beyond themselves, not yet further exhortations toward behaviour modification."

canadianmennonite.org/blog/busybees

News brief

Garry Janzen to retire as MC B.C. executive minister



Garry Janzen, executive minister for Mennonite Church B.C., has submitted his notice of retirement. He has served in the position

for 14 years. "MC B.C. Leadership wants to acknowledge Garry's many contributions, his commitment and his years of dedicated service," says Gerry Grunau, moderator for MC B.C. "His retirement will happen around the time of his 65th birthday in July 2022, and the specific date will be determined considering the MC B.C. search process timeline for a new executive minister." In a letter to the leadership board announcing his intentions on Sept. 22, Janzen wrote, "It has been an amazing journey that began on October 1, 2007. I am so thankful for the partnership that we have shared together in helping our family of congregations known as MC B.C. to find their way and to be strong. I have certainly found strength and joy in the Moderators and Leadership Board members that I have been gifted to work with throughout these years. I have often said, 'When challenging matters have come up, I can sleep at night, because I know that we carry this work together.'" According to Grunau, the current plan is to form a search task group with two representatives from the leadership board and three representatives from the MC B.C. constituency. Once confirmed, the search task group will generate a hiring process, including input from congregations on the qualities and priorities of a prospective executive minister.

— BY AMY RINNER WADDELL,

Call for Art

The Christmas Story

Canadian Mennonite invites elementary and high school students from Mennonite schools and churches to submit artwork for the Christmas 2021 issue by **November 9, 2021**. The theme this year is **The Christmas Story**.

Digital versions (*at least 300 dpi*) can be submitted to submit@canadianmennonite.org. Paper artwork (*minimum 4" by 6"*) can be sent to: 490 Dutton Dr., Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7.

Submissions should be high resolution and should include creator's full name, grade and the name of the student's school or congregation.

Selected works will appear in the **December 6, 2021** print issue and online.

CANADIAN MENNONITE

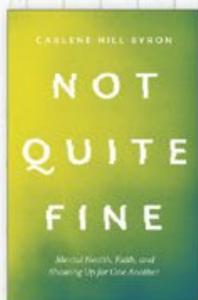
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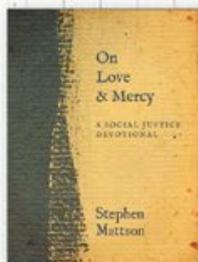
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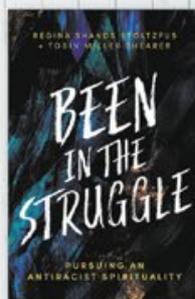
Not Quite Fine
Mental Health, Faith, and Showing Up for One Another
 by Carlene Hill Byron
 978-1-5138-0821-5. \$16.99 USD
 A practical guide for people who care, Byron offers words of hope for those who struggle with mental health problems as well as practical insights to equip congregations to better support those who are suffering in their midst.



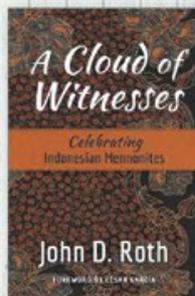
On Love and Mercy
A Social Justice Devotional
 by Stephen Mattson
 978-1-5138-0937-3. \$21.99 USD
 A 60-day devotional for Christians who long to see justice and equity within society, *On Love and Mercy* validates social justice practices by centering the example of Jesus as the ultimate standard.



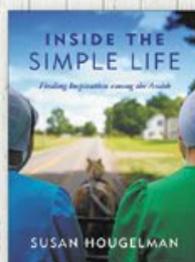
A Gentle Boldness
Sharing the Peace of Jesus in a Multi-Faith World
 by David W. Shenk with Grace Shenk
 978-1-5138-0135-3. \$16.99 USD
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 by Regina Shands Stoltzfus and Tobin Miller Shearer
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A Cloud of Witnesses
Celebrating Indonesian Mennonites
 by John D. Roth
 978-1-5138-0939-7. \$19.99 USD
 Learn the history and identity of Mennonites in Indonesian as well as practical travel tips, recipes, reference notes on culture and language and tourist sites in this perfect accompaniment for those travelling to Indonesia for Mennonite World Conference in the summer of 2022.



Inside the Simple Life
Finding Inspiration among the Amish
 by Susan Hougelman
 978-1-5138-0948-9. \$18.99 USD
 A simpler way of life is possible. Be inspired by real stories paired with stunning photographs of Amish life as told by an "Englischer" who has been welcomed into the private and fascinating world of the Old Order Amish.



1 & 2 Kings
Believers Church Bible Commentary
 by Lynn Jost
 978-1-5138-0263-3. \$34.99 USD
 Lynn Jost invites pastors, scholars, and lay readers to read 1 & 2 Kings as books of promise—ones that gesture toward a faithful God who rescues, judges, commands, and provides.

FOCUS ON

Education

Students relieved and excited to be back at school

By Janet Bauman
Eastern Canada Correspondent

Faculty, staff and students are excited to be back in person at Mennonite schools in Ontario. To allow for a safe return to campus, they are committed to following local and provincial health guidelines while they prioritize finding ways to create a sense of community and connection.

Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.

There was relief and excitement as students moved into the Grebel residence for the start of the fall semester and took part in orientation week events. While the college residence cannot operate at full capacity yet, there are 122 students in residence, 32 in the apartments and at least 67 off-campus associates.

Ninety-one percent of students come from Ontario. Twelve new students enrolled in the master of theological studies program, bringing the total to thirty-seven. Twenty more began the master of peace and conflict studies program, for a total of fifty.

Many classes blend remote and in-person elements, while most others are taught remotely. Music ensembles are mostly in-person, and professors are using outdoor spaces for some classes.

At the first community supper in Grebel's newly renovated dining room, Marcus Shantz, Grebel president honoured donors who made the renovation possible by reminding current students that "These people all believe in you, and they believe that you coming here makes some kind of difference for the better."

Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont.

Students from grades 7-12 began the 2021-22 year with a healthy enrolment of 277, meeting in person every day. There are 36 international students this year, down somewhat from pre-pandemic years.

Rockway is introducing activities in stages, based on health and safety guidelines, according to principal Ann Schultz, who cites safety, academic integrity and community building as their priorities. She calls it a good news story that the school is alive and vibrant having, come through the pandemic really well so far.

Students will begin the year in class cohorts using a "quadmester" system. Half-way through the year they will switch to the regular semester system. Chapels will remain online at the start, and "cohort connections" will continue once a week to foster community building.

Classroom air quality has been enhanced by the purchase of hepa filters, initiated and financed by Rockway parents, another good news story, says Schultz. The music program has been re-launched as extra-curricular opportunities for now, in large indoor spaces, or outdoors, but music classes will be back in the regular timetable

in the second half of the year.

Inter-school athletic teams are able to start practicing. Schultz says students are eager to play and sees the return of athletics as a boost for mental wellness. Extracurricular clubs can also begin to meet again, after running virtually last year. Teachers use some outdoor spaces for teaching, even though some enhancements to the property were delayed because construction materials were hard to procure during the pandemic.

UMEI Christian High School, Leamington, Ont.

Thirty-five students from grades 9 to 12 came to campus excited to see friends and staff and to be in the classroom again. Principal Sonya Bedal says, "Virtual learning went well, but there is nothing like in-person learning to engage and excite students."

Expanding on the success of its existing



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROCKWAY MENNONITE COLLEGIATE

A grade 11 chemistry class meets in Rockway's courtyard, as students return to in-person learning.

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

robotics course, UMEI has created a new, innovative four-year program that will appeal to students who excel in areas of math, science and technology. This

enriched, hands-on program for “enthusiastic learners,” will speak to students who are “motivated beyond traditional learning styles and would like to do more adaptive, creative, critical and divergent thinking,” writes Bedal. Students can study robotics in all four years, as well as compete regionally, nationally and beyond with UMEI’s first Robotics Team.

The music program at UMEI was on hiatus for the past year, so it is exciting for the school to have a new music director, Erin Armstrong. Students from grades 9 to 12 sing in the choir and look forward to serving in local congregations and performing for an audience in the future.

Bedal says, “The pandemic has certainly changed many things that we have taken for granted over the years—music, sports, travel, clubs. The staff and faculty continue to work diligently to create an atmosphere of community where our students can come together, learn and have fun daily.” ❧



PHOTO COURTESY OF UMEI CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

UMEI students take part in community-building activities at the beginning of the new school year.

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FOCUS ON EDUCATION

RJC students return to overnight class retreats

By Alex Tiessen
RJC High School
ROSTHERN, SASK.

There is much to be grateful for as a new year begins at RJC High School. With faithful constituent support, two consecutive years of increased enrolment, and the return of inter-collegiate athletics and choral programs, the energy among students and staff is high.

Class retreats are a tradition at the start of the school year at RJC. These retreats are a time for students to leave campus and bond with classmates. After the need to plan a shortened and reimagined retreat last year, the prospect of returning to overnight retreats was exciting.

This year the Grade 10 Imagine class visited The Quest at Christopher Lake,

Sask. They spent two days considering the story of Esther and the theme “chosen for a time like this.” Students were asked to consider their own gifts, as well as those of their classmates, and recognize and value these gifts. Through activities at the camp, students had the chance to practice affirming and supporting each other during wall-climbing, tubing behind the boat, and beach volleyball.

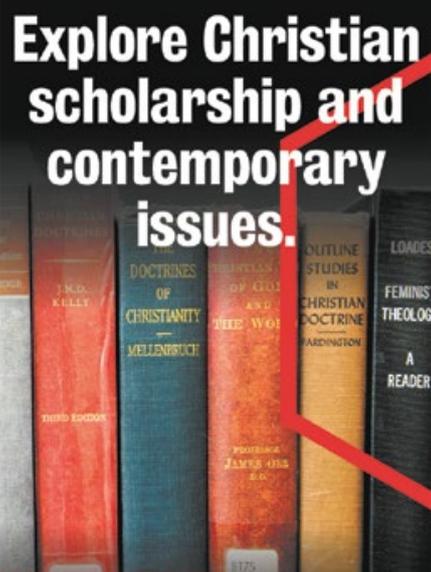
The Grade 11 Thrive class spent time at Shekinah Retreat Centre near Waldheim, Sask. Kirsten Hamm-Epp, regional church minister for Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, served as the guest speaker. Her sessions focused on how to build a foundation of values that can help students thrive in their relationships and future. This involved taking the Myers-Briggs personality test to understand the different communication styles of their peers. Students also had fun exploring the hiking trails of Shekinah and spending

time canoeing and kayaking.

The Grade 12 Explore class found themselves at Big River Bible Camp at Big River, Sask. The retreat is significant for this group, as it launches the start of their leadership program. The class welcomed Rachel Wallace, pastor at Eigenheim Mennonite Church, as their guest speaker, who led sessions on different models of servant leadership. As an exercise of these lessons, students played an active role in planning the retreat, which included group games and a coffee house, with the goal of including every student.

RJC uses a holistic approach to teaching, evident in the way the staff and students seek to bring the stories and experiences from their retreats back to the school. The lessons of love, compassion and empathy remain foundational for the school in helping to create a healthy and vibrant school community. ☘

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PHOTO BY HUGO MALAN

Lucas Epp, Braden Martens-Funk and Tyreese Hildebrandt, Grade 10 students at RJC High School, enjoy their retreat activities.

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

The journey back to Menno Simons Christian School

By Ann Pan
Menno Simons Christian School
CALGARY, ALTA.

For Dayle Vienneau, who has been appointed principal for Menno Simons Christian School in Calgary, the road back to the school has not been a straight path, but definitely a God-led one. She began her journey to Menno Simons in June 2005, to fill a French and language arts maternity leave, and she stayed for 10 years. During that time, she recognized that she could use her voice for the betterment of students and went on to pursue a master's degree at the University of Lethbridge.

The position of vice-principal opened up at Menno Simons at that point, but she felt God was calling her to a similar position at Calgary Christian Secondary

School (CCS) instead. She found it a difficult decision but wanted to follow God's plans.

As her family grew with the adoption of her daughter, Kenley, Vienneau thought about the kind of community Kenley would grow up in and Menno Simons Christian School tugged at her heart. When the posting for principal at Menno Simons came up, she felt the nudge from the Holy Spirit to apply and so returned home to the school.

When asked what she is most looking forward to, Vienneau responded: "The community. I look forward to knowing each and every child in the school and building relationships with each of



MENNO SIMONS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL PHOTO

Dayle Vienneau, a former teacher at Menno Simons Christian School in Calgary, has returned to take the position of principal.

them and with all of their families. I am looking forward to the intimacy of a small community both the blessings and the challenges."

"My hope is that the students at Menno will know who they are in God's story. That students will be able to own their faith or be able to articulate the questions that might be holding them back," she said. ✎

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Micah Neufeld – Rockway Class of 2021
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FOCUS ON EDUCATION

CBC holds fall ceremony for 2021 grads

By Amy Rinner Waddell
B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Graduates filed into the Columbia Bible College chapel to receive their diplomas Sept. 18, five months after completing the 2020-2021 academic year. Commencement had been delayed from the spring due to the pandemic. All 2021 graduates had been invited to return to campus for the event, with one-third attending in person. The ceremony was also livestreamed.

“Of those that attended, the majority were our degree graduates, although there were a number of certificate and diploma grads as well,” says academic dean Gil Dueck. “Of note, given the ongoing pandemic, we graduated our first class of health-care assistants who are trained to work in long-term care homes.”

Bryan Born, president of CBC, gave



COLUMBIA BIBLE COLLEGE PHOTO

Columbia Bible College students were finally able to celebrate their 2021 graduation in September. Graduates included the first class of health-care assistants.

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the commencement address, while the valedictory address was by Justin Spencer. Due to B.C. Public Health COVID-19 protocols, attendance was restricted to graduates plus two guests each. Masks were required in public spaces, but graduates were permitted to remove their masks as they walked across the stage for pictures. A dessert reception was held following the ceremony.

“Overall, we have heard a lot of positive feedback from students who were grateful to be able to mark their completion during this unusual season, says Dueck. “While it looked different than a typical graduation ceremony, there was a noticeable sense of joy that permeated the day. Students were glad to be reunited with classmates and to celebrate how God has sustained them as they completed their programs. As a college, we were grateful to celebrate the achievement and resilience of our students.” ❧

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

AMBS reports upward trends

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind., is reporting upward trends in several enrolment statistics this fall. The number of degree- or certificate-seeking graduate students rose from 92 to 116—an increase of 26 percent from 2020 and the highest number since 2010. AMBS’s incoming graduate student class of 45 in 2021 is up from 2020 (28). Nine Canadian students are taking courses at AMBS this semester, the same number as in 2020, when it was the highest in 10 years. Graduate-level course enrolments rose to the highest in seven years. Participation in AMBS’s distance education programs continues to grow, with 62 percent of students enrolled in distance-friendly degree or certificate programs. The number of international graduate students (from outside the U.S. or Canada) has continued upward—from 37 in 2020 to a record high

of 54 in 2021. For the first time, the majority of the student body identifies as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color). The seminary’s total enrolment for 2021–22 is 145 students (152 in 2020). Of these, 127 are graduate students (128 in 2020) and 18 are participants in the non-degree Journey Missional Leadership Development Program (24 in 2020). These figures are from the close of registration on Sept. 13, 2021. The seminary’s student body continues to represent a range of Christian traditions, with nearly 86 percent affiliated with Anabaptist groups and around 14 percent affiliated with other Christian traditions. ❧



AMBS PHOTO BY JASON BRYANT

New students participate in AMBS’s orientation course, Leadership Education in Anabaptist Perspective (LEAP), in August 2021.

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UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Students joyfully return to campus

by Jennifer Konkle
Conrad Grebel University College
WATERLOO, ONT.

As families arrived for Conrad Grebel University College's move-in day over the Labour Day weekend, joy was visible in student eyes, even as masks hid their smiles. With waves of move-in times during the day, there was space to safely welcome students, assure parents, and get everyone settled in dorm rooms.

Students have modelled care for their community by diligently wearing masks inside all public places of Grebel and outside when distancing isn't possible. A full gamut of orientation week activities helped to build relationships and cement friendships forged virtually last year, as some students met their friends in person for the first time.

year, each person planted a clove of garlic at the front of the campus. "Like students at Grebel, garlic does not exist on its own—it is part of a bulb or community, and it is tough, resilient and sparks growth," explained Mary Brubaker-Zehr, director of student services. "As students settle into school routines and with the future still uncertain on many fronts, this garlic is a sign of hope."

While full normalcy hasn't returned yet, professors were delighted to begin teaching some classes in person. Students have expressed gratitude to be able to take at least some of their courses in a physical classroom and to connect with peers face-to-face. Graduate students enjoyed



PHOTO BY JEN KONKLE

Students at Conrad Grebel University College plant cloves of garlic to symbolize the importance of community.

For students who spent their first year of university isolated at home, moving into Grebel brought relief and excitement as they navigate living with a roommate and finding classrooms on the larger University of Waterloo campus.

Each year, students, staff and faculty participate in an act of community. This

meeting their colleagues and instructors in person. Last year's cohort had only met each other on computer screens.

President Marcus Shantz greeted students with an inspiring speech at this year's first community supper, shared in Grebel's newly renovated dining room. "This big renovation that you are enjoying

was mostly paid for by donations—from alumni and other friends of the college," he said. "These people all believe in you, and they believe that your coming here makes a difference for the better. They believe that it's good for computer scientists to have breakfast with history students and that engineers should have the chance to sing in a choir. They want you to learn values like community and social responsibility, peace and justice. We all hope you will change the world for the better." ❧

News brief

CMU announces fall 2021 enrolment

Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) began the 2021-22 academic year with fall enrolment holding strong and steady. Preliminary results for all CMU programs indicate a student complement of 875 (full-time equivalent). This includes 615 FTE at the Shaftesbury main campus and 260 FTE at the Menno Simons College campus. At the main campus CMU has seen a one percent dip in overall student numbers, even as incoming international registration has begun to rebound from last year's pandemic impacts. Seventy-three percent of CMU students are from across Manitoba, 13 percent from other regions of Canada, and 14 percent from five continents. Final enrolment figures will be confirmed in the upcoming weeks as registrations continue to be processed. Ninety percent of CMU academic programming is currently offered in-person, with 10 percent of courses offered virtually. Students are excited for the return to an in-person learning environment and the opportunity to safely meet peers, both in and out of class. "I'm heartened to see the joy and energy of students as they come together to start the year. The pandemic has been a difficult season for many and I'm encouraged by how ready students are to return to community," says Cheryl Pauls, CMU president.

—CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Love does no harm

By Lynn Bergsma Friesen
Rockway Mennonite Collegiate
KITCHENER, ONT.



Rockway’s chapel theme for the 2021-2022 school year is “Love does no harm.” This scripture passage from Romans brings us to the core of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. What does it mean to love our neighbour as ourselves? To do no harm to a neighbour?

Chapel at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate is a central part of our life together as a community. While COVID-19 places limits on our ability to gather together physically in one location, pre-recorded chapels help build our shared experience. We are all watching the same chapel reflection, and thinking about the same ideas, even if we are not all in the same room. In doing so, we strengthen and deepen our connection to one another, and to God.

Wendy Janzen, pastor of Burning Bush Forest Church, launched our year as faculty

and staff with a meditation on the story of the Good Samaritan. Wendy’s insight was that none of the three people who find the injured man on the road inflict the harm. They could easily consider themselves to be innocent onlookers, free of guilt.

The two religious leaders have their justifications for why they need not do anything. But when the Samaritan comes across the injured traveller, he sees him as a person in need. He does first aid, he picks him up and takes him to safety.

In our opening chapel, Rockway’s principal Ann L. Schultz drew inspiration from Martin Luther King Jr. and challenged us to “roll up our sleeves,” to make change and help to repair the harm that has been caused to so many. Doing so will require all of us to listen, to ask questions, to speak up, to mobilize, and, above all, learn what

it means to love.

Rockway has a history of actively working to show love of God and neighbour in our community, including the annual food drive in support of the House of Friendship and Envirathon/Servathon day. With these and other commitments, including our new Indigenous learning group, Rockway is well positioned to put love into “radical action.”

What does it mean to love our neighbour as ourselves? To do no harm to a neighbour? Asking these questions and exploring these issues in our chapels and our classrooms will be challenging, but doing so also holds the possibility of living joyfully, of discovering what it means to be “not far from the kingdom of God.”

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GOSHEN COLLEGE PHOTO

On Sept. 22, first-year students at Goshen College, Goshen, Ind., took the day off from classes to volunteer in the community. Here Emma Dippon trims branches at Pathways Retreat in Goshen while Makiah McCain looks on.



EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY PHOTO

Twelve students from Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., spent three weeks this summer exploring Navajo and Apache culture. Among the places they visited was Canyon de Chelly in Chinle, Ariz., which contains important Navajo historical sites and cliff dwellings of the Anasazi people. The main focus of the trip was to learn about the Indigenous history, culture, religion, language and social realities.

/// Calendar

Nationwide

July 29-Aug. 1, 2022: MC Canada Gathering 2022, in Edmonton. Theme: "We declare what we have seen and heard." Information about Gathering 2022 will be regularly updated at mennonitechurch.ca/gathering2022.

July 31-Aug. 4, 2022: MC Canada National Youth Gathering at Camp Valaqua. Theme: "Amplify! Giving voice to what we have seen and heard." Information will be regularly updated at mennonitechurch.ca/amplify.

British Columbia

Nov. 5-7: MC B.C. Pastor/Spouse Retreat at Harrison Lake Hotel, Harrison Hot Springs.

Manitoba

Oct. 26-28: Pastors and spiritual leaders retreat at Camp Assiniboia. Theme: Resting in Belovedness. To register, go to www.mennochurch.mb.ca/events.

Ontario

Until March 7, 2022: Not Traumatic Enough for a Shock Blanket exhibit at the Grebel Gallery, Conrad Grebel University College. For more information, visit <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-peace-advancedment/grebel-gallery>.

Oct. 15-17: Hidden Acres' Rally for Recreation. Run/hike/walk/bike to support Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg, Ont. For information visit www.hiddenacres.ca.

Oct. 19: MCEC Pastoral conversations with Fanosie Legesse 2-3 p.m. Intercultural Church Competency: Learning to Value Each Other. Register at <https://mceec.ca/events>.

Oct. 21: Benjamin Eby Lecture virtual event, "Composing Louis Riel's Dream: Exploring the history of the Red River Settlement through family stories" by Karen Sunabacka. Hosted by Conrad Grebel University College. To register go to <http://grebel.ca/eby>.

Nov. 18-19: MCC Ontario virtual peace conference, Reconciliation in Action.

May 13-15, 2022: "Indigenous-Mennonite encounters in time and place" academic conference and community education event, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. The event will include academic presentations, community storytelling, artistic offerings, and both Indigenous and Mennonite ceremonies.

International

July 1-4, 2022: Mennonite World Conference's Global Youth Summit, in Salatiga, Indonesia. Theme: "Life in the Spirit: Learn. Serve. Worship." To learn more, visit mwc-cmm.org/gys.

July 5-10, 2022: Mennonite World Conference's global assembly, in Semarang, Indonesia. Theme: "Following Jesus together across barriers." For more information, visit mwc-cmm.org/assembly/indonesia-2022.

Online

Oct. 19: Common Read online conversation with Sara Wenger Shenk at 7 p.m. ET. Find more information at www.commonword.ca.

Nov. 4: A Virtual Roundtable: MCC, Refugees, and the Legacies of National Socialism. Exploring themes of identity politics, refugee policies, and Holocaust collaboration, the event will discuss MCC's work to resettle displaced Mennonites after the Second World War. Sponsored by Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies, MCC Canada, and MCC U.S. To register: <https://bit.ly/3D0s0iT>

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 Employment Opportunities

Employment Opportunity CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER/Administrator

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PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK DILLER HARDER

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) sponsored the second intercultural pastor canoe trip from July 12 to 15 at Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park near Peterborough, Ont. Guided by pastor Mark Diller Harder, the group explored the wilderness together, sleeping in tents and portaging their canoes. They read scripture and shared stories of life and pastoring on the theme "Come to the Water." From left: Mark Diller Harder (St. Jacobs Mennonite), Yoel Masyawong (Grace Lao Mennonite), Fanosie Legesse (MCEC), Norm Dyck (MCEC) and Joseph Raltong (Chin Christian Church).

Photo finish



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHINATOWN PEACE CHURCH / TEXT BY AMY RINNER WADDELL

Code Club, pictured, and a children's day camp were two programs run this summer at Chinatown Peace Church in Vancouver by revitalization interns Raymond Tsan and Chan Yang with the involvement of congregational members. The young adults planned a camping trip to Mt. Seymour in early September, as well as a young adult and community choir.