

CANADIAN MENNONITE

July 25, 2022 Volume 26 Number 15

Returning to a radical faith

Global Youth Summit participants sing,
dance and explore life in the Spirit

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EDITORIAL

Notes from afar

BY VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER
Executive editor



In early July, I was in Indonesia—virtually. Like approximately 800 other Anabaptists around the world, I registered as an online participant of Indonesia 2022, the 17th assembly of Mennonite World Conference (MWC).

You'll find coverage of that significant event on pages 4 to 7 and 13 to 23 of this issue, including reporting on the Global Youth Summit, which was also held in Indonesia.

Traditionally these events happen every six years and gather Mennonite-Anabaptists from around the world for times of worship, learning, inspiration and friendship-building. This assembly was originally scheduled for 2021, but the COVID-19 pandemic delayed it by one year and forced organizers to create options for digital attendance, for those who would join from afar.

This was my fourth MWC assembly but the first one accessed via the computer screen. Every day I logged into the "hub," where a variety of options presented themselves including pre-recorded videos and links to upcoming events.

The theme of the assembly, "Following Jesus together across barriers," seemed especially relevant. There were the usual challenges for international events, such as language and cultural differences. For those "on the ground," there were mandatory masks and other pandemic restrictions. As a virtual attendee, I dealt the 11-hour time difference. I did "attend" some live events, but it was hard to give full attention to sessions that happened

during the late hours of Ontario evenings.

Seven years ago, as we were gathering in Pennsylvania for Assembly 16, few of us could have imagined that technology could carry off a hybrid event of this scope. Sitting in front of my laptop in 2022, I found that many times the technology worked; sometimes it didn't. I cheer the planners and technical team for their complex work in coordinating people, visuals, sound and interpretation, both for the in-person attendees and for those of us taking part from a distance. Thank you!

Following are some initial observations from this virtual participant.

We love to sing together. The portions of each major session that were devoted to music showed a dedication to worshipping God through each other's music. The songbook (which I received as a PDF document) includes 39 songs from the various continents, with lyrics in original languages and in translation. The international music ensemble led the assembly with passion and respect for the diversity of languages and musical styles. One word to unite us: Halleluia, Hallelujah, Haleluja, Alléluia!

We seek to live out the gospel of peace. Song no. 36 echoes the words of Menno Simons: "True Evangelical Faith." Written by Larry Nickel of the United States, the song paraphrases a famous quotation of our denomination's ancestor, spelling out the practical ways our faith "cannot lie sleeping" but must give assistance to those in need and "overcome evil with good / return someone's hatred with love."

The theme of active peacebuilding

emerged frequently in the keynote addresses by speakers from several dozen countries. They told of challenges in living out Jesus' message in their own contexts, along with their commitment to help make peace happen. Peace was a dominant theme also in the workshops offered, both in person and online, along with stories about social justice and the ministry of caring for others. There were testimonies of interfaith and intercultural dialogue, with a goal to learn from and respect those who are different from us.

As a participant from afar, I missed out on the hospitality of the Indonesian hosts, the beautiful scenery and delectable-looking food (thanks, Facebook friends!), and the making of new friends. But I am glad I "went" to Indonesia 2022.

Looking ahead

Canadian Mennonite continues with the summer practice of offering monthly digital-only issues of the magazine. In early August, subscribers can watch for the August 8 issue to arrive in their email inboxes. There will be no corresponding print version, but we will be working behind the scenes preparing reports on the Mennonite Church Canada Gathering scheduled for July 30 to August 1. Watch for reports on that event in the next print issue, dated August 22. Your subscription includes both print and digital delivery for the same cost. If you don't want to miss the digital-only content, you can update your delivery preferences at canadianmennonite.org/subscribe/digital, or send your request to office@canadianmennonite.org.

Correction

David Swann is a former Calgary Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. Incorrect information appeared in the June 27 "Calgary church learns about its neighbourhood" article on page 21. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error. ❧

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FEATURE

World assembly small but full of joy

Anabaptists from 44 nations gather in Indonesia, confident that no barriers can stop them from following Jesus together

By Paul Schrag
For Meetinghouse

With its national motto of “unity in diversity,” Indonesia proved a fitting host for the 17th assembly of Mennonite World Conference (MWC)—downsized by COVID-19 restrictions but full of joy, beauty and fellowship.

In an outdoor venue at a Mennonite seminary on a mountaintop in the city of Salatiga, on the island of Java, Anabaptists from 44 countries gathered from July 5 to 10 for the global church reunion that’s held every six years—or seven, in this case, after a postponement due to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

A Christian celebration in a nation that is 87 percent Muslim, the event concluded with Sunday morning worship at the 12,000-seat Holy Stadium—home of JKI Injil Kerajaan, a Mennonite congregation that is one of Indonesia’s largest churches—in nearby Semarang.

The pandemic long ago dashed hopes to fill the Anabaptist megachurch. MWC capped attendance at 1,000 because “we didn’t see how we could follow all the government’s rules that came with over 1,000,” said Liesa Unger, MWC’s chief international events officer. “Our biggest fear was not COVID itself but being shut down by the government.”

On-site registration was 1,144—594 for the entire week and 550 for a day. Sixty-four came from the United States and 31 from Canada. At least 789 registered to watch the livestream individually or in groups around the world.

The lack of MWC’s usual throng—the average daily attendance of 700 was about 10 percent of a typical assembly—did not diminish the significance of getting a taste of what God is doing through about 107,000 Anabaptist Christians (from three synods: GKMI, GITJ and JKI) in a Muslim-dominant and diversity-affirming nation.

Didik Hartono, pastor of the GKMI (Muria Christian Church of Indonesia) congregation in Winong Village, told how his church and a neighbouring mosque live out Indonesia’s vision of religious harmony.

The meeting places of the two faiths “seem to be as one,” he said, because a canopy extends across the street, connecting them.

A video featured church and mosque members describing their friendship and cooperation as an example of “the ideals of Indonesia.”

“May we all keep on building the brotherhood values and live in peace with everyone, and also with ones who are not the same religion as us,” Hartono said.

Whirling dervishes

In one evening service, Sufi Muslim whirling dervishes, or *semazens*, demonstrated a form of Islamic spirituality. Wearing floor-length white frocks, long-sleeved white jackets and black felt hats, five men from Jepara’s Sufi Islamic community spun in circles, with arms raised, while women sang and a band played. Sufism is a mystical form of Islam. Whirling is a meditative practice to draw closer to God.

The Sufis’ religious dance was livestreamed from the Jepara GITJ (Evangelical Javanese Church) congregation. Because the congregation works closely with the local Sufi community, the pastor wanted to invite Sufi participation, and MWC officials agreed, Unger said.

The fact that the Sufi dancers were not present in Salatiga reflected the hybrid character of the assembly. Even onsite, conferencegoers became livestream watchers. To involve four congregations in Central Java that had expected to host visitors, MWC arranged for them to host parts of four evening services. Projected on a screen behind the stage,



MEETINGHOUSE PHOTO BY KRESNA KURNIAWAN

Mennonite World Conference assembly participants attend the final worship service July 10 at the 12,000-seat sanctuary of JKI Injil Kerajaan, a Mennonite church known as the “Holy Stadium,” in Semarang, Indonesia.

speakers and musicians at the remote sites reached local audiences and the main conference crowd.

Sidelined by COVID-19

Some conferencegoers got COVID-19 and had to miss part of the assembly. Everyone took a rapid test upon arrival. About 5 percent tested positive, but no one got seriously ill, Unger said. Everyone was asked to wear a mask at all times.

César García, MWC’s general secretary, tested positive and had to quarantine for part of the week. Substitutes read the messages of two keynote speakers, Salomé Haldemann of France and Willi Hugo of Guatemala.

After more than two years of uncertainty and changing plans, organizers were relieved to pull the event off.

At times, the assembly itself seemed in doubt, said Paulus Widjaja, who chairs MWC’s national advisory committee in Indonesia. He’s grateful it wasn’t cancelled, but downsizing was a disappointment.

“We were planning to have about 10,000 people,” he said. “We had hoped the president of Indonesia might come to the opening ceremony. We believed that if we invited him, he would come. Then corona

came, and everything—poof!”

Unger said: “I’m happy that we moved it by a year, because last year was the worst COVID time. India was in the media, but Indonesia was suffering even more.”

Turning up the volume

On the assembly’s four full days, conferencegoers worshipped both morning and evening, with workshops and tours in the afternoon. An international ensemble led 45 minutes of singing to start the morning service and half an hour to open the evening meeting.

Singers from around the world contributed diverse styles. On opening night, the worship team from the 18,000-member Jakarta Praise Community Church—one of several JKI (Indonesian Christian Congregation) congregations that are among the largest churches in all of Indonesia—brought high energy and rock-concert volume.

Worshippers heard two featured speakers each morning and two each evening, plus other stories and testimonies, building on the assembly theme, “Following Jesus together across barriers.”

Each of the four full days focused on a different continent, and speakers addressed

different aspects of what Anabaptists can do together: Europe, learning; Asia, living; Latin America, caring; Africa, celebrating. North America was featured in the opening service.

Many speakers offered personal views of events and situations in their countries and described how Anabaptists are seeking to bring peace and ease suffering.

How can I celebrate

Jeremiah Choi, a pastor in Hong Kong, told of demonstrations and violence in recent years in response to the Chinese government’s crackdown on Hong Kong’s freedom.

“The Hong Kong I am now living in is not the Hong Kong I used to know,” he said. “Our challenge is this: How to be a peacemaker when others are violent.”

Many people are leaving Hong Kong for the United Kingdom, including 10 percent of his congregation, Agape Mennonite Church, “to seek a place of freedom and hope,” Choi said. But he has vowed to stay, to build the church and work for peace.

“If you are facing an unpredictable tomorrow,” Choi said, “look up to God, and look to your calling.”

Tigist Tesfaye Gelagle, a young woman

from Ethiopia, addressed the African theme of celebration by asking how it was possible to celebrate amid the sins of war, hunger, racism, oppression of women, and “when I am treated like a criminal at immigration in most countries. When I am treated as a terrorist. When I am at the mercy of my superiors. How can I enjoy and dance and worship?”

Celebration is possible, she said, when people treat each other as significant.

“Unless we are significant to each other, there is no celebration of togetherness,” she said. “Seeing significance in others crosses barriers, I can forget my pain if I am significant to you.”

Collapsing convictions?

Salomé Haldemann of France suggested Europeans needed to be trained in peacemaking by those in the global church with experience resisting war. She said Russia’s invasion of Ukraine had shaken western European Mennonites’ commitment to nonviolence.

“We affirmed nonviolence when our context was peaceful, but in the face of war we see nonviolent resistance as naive and unrealistic,” said Haldemann, a graduate of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Anne Hansen of Germany read her address.

“Today we are afraid that war may overtake Europe,” she said. “Suddenly our theology and beliefs feel obsolete. A storm took over Europe, and our convictions collapsed.”

Citing the tradition of calls to action at MWC assemblies, she noted that, in 1967 in Amsterdam, American civil rights leader Vincent Harding called on Mennonites to “come alongside Black sisters and brothers in the freedom struggle.”

In 1984 in Strasbourg, American writer and professor Ron Sider encouraged starting a nonviolent peace force, which sparked the creation of Christian Peacemaker Teams, now known as Community Peacemaker Teams.

“But most of us have stayed on the sidelines where things are comfortable,” Haldemann said. “What does it look like to practise love of the enemy on a collective level in our time and place?”

“Maybe Mennonites could prepare for war resistance with an anti-military service, like a nonviolent resistance boot camp. It might be time for us to create a widespread training for church people to learn and practise the basics of civil resistance.”

Miracle makers

Ebenezer Mondez of the Philippines cited persecution in India and political violence in Myanmar as places where Christians are suffering but getting less attention than Ukraine.

After praising Mennonites in Ukraine, who are helping their neighbours through the hardships caused by Russia’s invasion—and commending those who have sent aid to Ukraine—he said: “I challenge us to do the same for our brothers and sisters in India and Myanmar. Let us learn more about their situation and how we can be the hands and feet of Christ in times of need.”

“In times of trouble, we are the extension of God’s hand,” he said. “The miracles of God come through us. This is what living together in times of crisis looks like. We forget about our differences and disagreements, and we find our common goal for peace. Truly, crisis and hardship bring out

the best in us.”

Desalegn Abebe, president of Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia—whose 370,000 members make it the largest MWC denomination—invited everyone to the next assembly, in Ethiopia in 2028.

Stories of Dirk and Ruth

At the closing worship service on the morning of July 10 at Holy Stadium, more than 1,000 attended, sitting in every other seat for social distancing. H. Ganjar Pranowo, governor of Central Java, a region of 36 million people, greeted the crowd with references to peacemaking and Anabaptist history.

He said Indonesia’s president, Joko Widodo, was seeking to mediate between Russia and Ukraine to stop the war.

“When there is bloodshed between countries, it is our duty to seek peace between them,” he said. “Whatever the reason for war, it can never be justified.”

Pranowo cited a story that many Anabaptists would recognize as the Martyrs Mirror account of 16th-century martyr Dirk Willems. He spoke in Indonesian, with the English translation projected on a screen.

He said he would not need to tell others to “imitate the Mennonites in practising and spreading peacefulness,”—as Willems did—“when he saw a person who harmed him fall into a puddle of ice [and did] not run away, but instead reached out to help, even if in the end he sacrificed his life”—because the principles of peace and truth are “embedded in every human soul.”

In the week’s final message, Nindyo Sasongko, an Indonesian GKMI pastor who teaches at Fordham University and lives in New York City, wrapped up the theme of crossing barriers by linking it to the biblical story of Ruth, a Moabite woman who vowed to follow her Israelite mother-in-law wherever she went.

In her loyalty to Naomi, Ruth showed profound courage, breaking boundaries of nationality and religion, Sasonko said. When we follow



MEETINGHOUSE PHOTO BY KRESNA KURNIAWAN

A music ensemble with members from nine countries led conference goers in songs from the MWC International Songbook, singing in a variety of languages used in worship by Anabaptists around the world.

Jesus across barriers, he said, we also follow the example of Ruth.

“Reconciliation cannot be achieved when there is no commitment to cross boundaries,” he said.

Past and future

The presidency of MWC passed from J. Nelson Kraybill of the United States to Henk Stenvers of the Netherlands. A medical doctor, Stenvers has served on the MWC Deacons Commission for 10 years. Kraybill presented him with a shepherd’s staff, symbolic of leading the Anabaptist flock.

The transfer of the presidency to a Dutch man called to mind the historic connection between Indonesia and the Netherlands. The Dutch ruled the East Indies for more than 300 years, until Indonesia declared independence in 1945.

Remnants of Dutch culture remain. At the d’Emmerick Hotel, which features a nearly seven-metre-tall replica windmill, Dutch pastor Henk Leegte reflected on the contrast between colonial oppression and the global Christian fellowship that MWC makes possible.

“Indonesia is an important part of Dutch consciousness,” said Leegte, a pastor of the Singelkerk congregation in Amsterdam. “It’s a part of our being—in literature, art, food. But Indonesians are not thinking about the past.

“We have a shared history, as the Indonesia Mennonite church started with Dutch missionaries. For me, it is wonderful to finally visit this country, which I’ve heard so much about, and to fellowship with the people here in our shared Mennonite faith.”

At the closing ceremony, Henk Stenvers, the new MWC president, looked toward the future.

“Now at the end of this great gathering, we look ahead with energy and hope,” he said. “In 2025, we hope to commemorate the birth of Anabaptism in Zurich and, God willing, in six years another assembly in Ethiopia. We all will work hard to make Mennonite World Conference an even stronger communion of faithful followers of Christ.” ❧

Paul Schrag is editor of Anabaptist World. This article was written for



MWC PHOTO BY KARLA BRAUN

Indonesian volunteers carefully folded banana leaves to enclose the bread for a safe and environmentally friendly Lord’s Supper at Assembly 17.

Meetinghouse, a group of Mennonite publications.

For more about Indonesia 2022 and the Global Youth Summit, see pages

13-23 and visit the profiles of Mennonite World Conference (MWCMM) and Young AnaBaptists (YABs) on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Flickr.



❧ For discussion

1. At the final worship service of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) assembly, Holy Stadium was not even 10 percent full. Was low attendance a sign of discouragement? In what ways was the assembly a sign of hope for the church? What do you think attendance will be like in 2028, when MWC plans to meet in Ethiopia?
2. Sufi Muslims were invited to demonstrate their meditative practice of whirling at an evening service. Why did the planning committee of MWC extend this invitation? Why is it important to have “friendship and cooperation” with other faith groups?
3. Salomé Haldemann of France sees nonviolent convictions eroding in the face of war in Ukraine. “Suddenly our theology and beliefs feel obsolete,” she wrote. Do you agree? What does it mean to love enemies and work for peace in today’s world?
4. Ebenezer Mondez challenged the church to respond to all situations of suffering, not only those that get lots of attention. Why does Ukraine get more attention than persecution in India or Myanmar? How can we be more informed about what is happening in other parts of the church?
5. If you were responsible for making plans, how would MWC celebrate the 500th anniversary of Anabaptism in 2025?

—By Barb Draper

OPINION
/// Readers write
✉ A 'sad day' for Indigenous-Settler Relations

Re: "Indigenous relations work revamped, reduced," May 30, page 14.

The governing body of Mennonite Church Canada has abruptly let Steve Heinrichs go after more than 10 years of service in the Indigenous-Settler Relations position, but they are stingy with information about why they did so.

The article also states: "Heinrichs is similarly limited in what he can say." This implies a gag order, similar to what occurs when employees are forced out in the corporate or political world.

That is no way to treat a longtime worker, or any worker, for that matter. In the circles that I inhabit, Heinrichs is highly respected for his work.

I must ask what motivated his employers to terminate him so promptly, and I am not convinced by bureaucratic explanations about "shifting priorities."

Are we shifting away from the work of reconciliation with our Indigenous neighbours? It appears from the article that many of them do not buy the governing body's response either.

This is a sad day.

DENNIS GRUENDING, OTTAWA

✉ On stoking 'the fires of misinformation and division'

Re: "God loves the person but hates the virus" letter, June 13, page 9.

My response to Mark Morton's letter is concern that this may stoke the fires of misinformation and division.

It has become very clear to us—and was confirmed last August by Rochelle Walensky, a director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—that the COVID-19 vaccines do not stop infection or transmission.* The vaccinated can become infected and spread the virus, and are no different in that regard to those who choose not to have an experimental drug injected.

So Morton's statement, "It's the danger she embodies by being unvaccinated . . . that is not welcome," is inviting unwarranted discrimination.

Our prime minister (vaccinated and boosted), and Dr. Anthony Fauci, chief medical advisor to the president of the United States (four doses), are good examples of the inefficacy of this drug, both having been infected at least once.

The best way for all of us to protect ourselves from the "danger," in my opinion, would be to maintain a healthy weight, increase vitamin D and C, and spend time with people to boost mental health. And unvaccinated friends should be part of that picture, and not be scapegoated.

Demanding that a person take this drug as a requisite to participating in church is a recipe for division, hatred and misunderstanding. Therein lies the danger.

BARBARA HANKINS, KITCHENER, ONT.

** Editor's note: The Reuters.com news agency debunks this letter writer's statement about comments made by the CDC director on the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccinations (<https://reut.rs/3bnoguu>).*

✉ Youths need to learn about peace and anti-war efforts

Re: "Is violence the best response to Putin?" June 13, page 20.

The mindset that conflict and warfare are endemic to the very nature of humanity is as old—even older than—written history. A country in which relations with neighbours have long been so thoroughly cultivated that defensive weaponry and a defence structure no longer makes sense, well, good luck finding that.

Canadians are growing up with a consciousness that says violence on every level is to be expected, and that its defence requires military/policing structures that escalate at a rate commensurate with perceived conflict.

My observations tell me that, in most of our classrooms, homes, churches, political organizations and on the street generally, valour wears a uniform and carries the willingness and wherewithal to demand an eye for an eye, and thereby deter the "evil ones."

In this environment, the withholding of a war tax and even the conscientious objection to military participation have proven to be futile gestures. We must, of course, continue as effectively as we can to hold up the candles of reconciliation and diplomacy while encouraging, with whatever influence we can muster, a peace and anti-war education of our youth.

As long as our admirations coalesce around sleek fighter jets, crisp uniforms, precise marching and "obedience over judgment," while downplaying the cruel, wasteful sinfulness of weaponized "solutions," there is little to hope for.

GEORGE EPP (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ The West is partly to blame for war in Ukraine

Re: “What is a Christlike response to overwhelming military might?” and “Is violence the best response to Putin?” June 13, pages 4 and 20, respectively.

I have just read these articles about the war in Ukraine and am deeply disappointed. While the discussion of Christian, nonviolent responses is fine, it is also standard. Both seem to blithely accept that this war is entirely the doing of Russian president Vladimir Putin and completely ignore the way the West has treated Russia over the past three decades.

Three Russian presidents made overtures to join NATO and were always rebuffed. The last was Putin, and he was told, “You’re too big.”

In the early 1990s, the American economist Jeffrey Sachs had a proposal for stabilizing Russia for an amount of money that he felt the United States could easily afford (<https://bit.ly/3HPSd2k>). He was

disappointed to find the American government was not interested.

NATO was supposed to be a deterrent to the Warsaw Pact. It should have been allowed to collapse when the Warsaw Pact did.

Russia did invade Ukraine and fired the first shot, but the West should take almost half of the responsibility for the war. If western politicians could admit this and cared more for the lives of the combatants than their own power and prestige, this war could likely be resolved readily.

E.J. WIEBE, EDMONTON

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

Births/Adoptions

Buhler Edwards—Alexander Grayson (b. June 18, 2022), to Chris Buhler and Kaytee Edwards, Osler Mennonite, Sask.

Ediger Martin—Calia Faine (b. June 20, 2022), to Cedric and Alyse Ediger Martin, Toronto United Mennonite, Ont.

McKeown—Henry Dean (b. June 14, 2022), to Andrew and Jennifer McKeown, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Rojas-Chan—Aeletheria (Aellie) Anya Wai See (b. Nov. 18, 2021), to Alrika Rojas and Alfred Chan, Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Baptisms

Fiona Katherine Smulan Janzen—Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg, May 15, 2022.

Jonah Huebner—Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 5, 2022.

Reese Bruneau—Pleasant Point Mennonite, Sask., June 5, 2022.

Deaths

Driedger—Jacob, 96 (b. April 29, 1926; d. June 2, 2022), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Dueck—Anne (Rempel), 81 (b. Oct. 17, 1940; d. June 22, 2022), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Friesen—Anna (Anne), 93 (b. Jan. 1, 1929; d. March 30, 2022), Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont.

Hetherington—Jessie, 80 (b. Jan. 13, 1942; d. June 16, 2022), Hamilton Mennonite, Ont.

Hiebert—Andrew Jacob (Jake), 59 (b. March 1, 1963; d. June 16, 2022), Hamilton Mennonite, Ont.

Hiebert—Mary (Neudorf), 95 (b. Aug. 27, 1926; d. May 14, 2022), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Janzen—Clara, 89 (b. Oct. 21, 1932; d. June 9, 2022), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

Klassen—Paula Eva (nee Thierauf), 97 (b. March 4, 1925; d. June 11, 2022), Toronto United Mennonite, Ont.

Kuhl—John, 94 (b. March 28, 1928; d. May 27, 2022), Covenant Mennonite, Winkler, Man.

Martens—Mary, 93 (b. May 4, 1929; d. June 22, 2022), Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Martens—Walter, 84 (d. Jan. 22, 2022), Hamilton Mennonite, Ont.

Martin—Elvina, 85 (d. April 21, 2022), Floradale Mennonite, Ont.

Matz—Waldemar (Wally), 81 (b. Oct. 10, 1940; d. May 23, 2022), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Neufeld—Elsie Louise (Unger), 86 (b. April 3, 1936; d. May 31, 2022), North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Neufeld—Helen, 95 (b. Jan. 28, 1927; d. June 12, 2022), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Price—Doreen, 92 (b. Nov. 24, 1929; d. June 8, 2022), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Tiessen—Robert (Bob), 71 (b. Oct. 16, 1950; d. May 23, 2022), Toronto United Mennonite, Ont.

Wiebe—Katherine (Dyck), 82 (b. Sept. 24, 1939; d. June 2, 2022), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Willms—Albert, 95 (b. Aug. 2, 1926; d. Feb. 28, 2022), Hamilton Mennonite, Ont.

IN THE IMAGE

An undefended spirit

Ed Olfert

Bought tires for my pickup and determined to install them myself. I no longer have the specific equipment, so tire work involves scrabbling on a concrete floor with hammer and pry bars.

The first wheel went well. In short order, the old tire was stripped off, the new one levered on and inflated. The only semi-sophisticated piece of tire machinery that I own is an ancient bubble balancer. It suggested that a small weight in one spot would set everything close enough to perfect. Back on the truck it went.

The second wheel went equally smoothly, so smoothly that I threw it onto the balancer with just a smidgeon of smugness. Who says that things are harder as a greybeard? But wait, something was askance. The tire hung awkwardly. The bubble was nowhere near the centre.

I began piling weights on the tire, but it would not true up. In my impatience, I decided that I would bolt it to the truck anyway, that the old balancer must somehow be faulty. If it was truly amiss, I could stop at a tire shop and get it trued up.

I picked the wheel off the balance machine, and bounced it on the floor.

The tire responded with a curious thumping noise. Picked it up again, dropped it, that noise again. I again removed the tire from the rim, and inside I discovered my meaty 40-centimetre pry bar.

A boneheaded mistake. A mistake undoubtedly connected to my grey-beard status.

Immediately, it seemed important to share this story with those who would most enjoy jeering at me. The story went to a brother, a son, a son-in-law, and a couple friends. They responded as required, with giggles and mockery.

Later in the day, it struck me that my determination to immediately share that story was perhaps different than I might have done years earlier.

Author and mystic Richard Rohr points to the value of seeking out an “undefended spirit.” It seems worth some consideration.

We (including me) seem to spend much of our lives protecting our ego. We micro-manage every story that we tell about ourselves. If it’s a hard story, that often means we paint ourselves as the aggrieved person or the heroic one. How many of our tales paint us in self-righteous colours? How many of our stories fall into the inevitable good/

bad, white/black framework? We emerge wearing the white hats. That includes our stories of faith.

Think of stories in the Bible. The Exodus from Egypt, by a clan referred to repeatedly as the “people of God,” the “chosen ones.” We might assign them spirits that had no need of defending. They were, after all, chosen. They would wear white hats. And yet the litany of whining, rebelling, denying and obstinacy is unending throughout most of those years in the wilderness. That included both the masses and their imperfect leadership. Yet this became the story of God’s people, the Old Testament story of salvation, a metaphor for our own escape from the wilderness that traps us.

Along with decreasing handyman skills, perhaps the years of the grey beard come with growing into that undefended space. A recent sermon focusing on reconciliation with Indigenous folks reminded us with some passion to tell all our stories, and that definitely includes the hard stories. We all have those hard chapters in our lives, and far too often we’ve held them close until they could be adjusted to have someone else as the villain. When we are honest, we know how well that has worked.

Find that “undefended” space in your spirit. Push back the boundaries. ☘



Ed Olfert (p2peho@gmail.com) delights in opportunities to laugh at himself.

Et cetera

CPT joins weapons protest

Murray Lumley, front centre, a member of Community Peacemaker Teams (CPT), cried out, “I am 81 years old, and you are hurting me,” as the police used force to move him from the EY Centre in Ottawa on June 1. Members of CPT joined hundreds of protesters blocking the entrance to CANSEC, a large two-day convention that showcases the weapons and defence industry. The annual gathering, organized by the Canadian Association of Defense and Security Industries, represents more than 900 Canadian defence and security companies.

Source: Community Peacemaker Teams



MIND AND SOUL

Cycling the Black history of Ontario

Randolph Haluza-DeLay

When I moved from Alberta last year, my explorations of Ontario began by bike. My cycling companions showed me things I had not heard of. Once, we biked past the towering statue of some military guy on the heights above the town of Queenston. Just a day earlier, we had cycled around another part of the Niagara Region and found a historical marker about a “negro burial ground.” Such wording!

We discovered other relatively out-of-the-way historical plaques for important moments of Black history in Canada. Our guide was Jacqueline Scott, who blogs at “Black Outdoors.” Have you heard of Solomon Moseby, Chloe Cooley (the subject of a new Heritage Minute), Josiah Henson, Mathieu da Costa (depicted on a Canadian postage stamp), and Amber Valley (another stamp)?

But just as Mennonite heritage has multiple roots and branches, there is no single “Black” history. The record shows that, even in 1840s Ontario, many were “a far cry from the stereotype of the panting fugitive recently arrived from the bowels of slavery,” in the words of historian Adrienne Shadd. Black Loyalists rooted in Nova Scotia, the Black pioneers of Alberta, African immigrants and Indo-Caribbean settlers make up parts of the contemporary Canadian mosaic.

“Did we have slavery here in Canada as well?” asked someone. Yes! And it was as brutal as slavery south of the border. Human beings were property. Property has no rights. At the same time, some Black people were free. How some could be property while others were persons is inscrutable to me.

However, this racial logic was consistent across all the European powers with imperial ambition. Colonialism is a logic of control and domination. Colonialism uses force to maintain



PHOTO BY RANDOLPH HALUZA-DELAY

The Voices of Freedom Park in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

control, legitimized by laws and bureaucratic procedures. Indirect control comes through education, media and religion.

Sadly, Christianity has been part of the colonizing project. At its worst, religion cloaks exploitation. This is what Marx rejected in declaring religion a narcotic—the famous phrase about “religion as the opium of the masses.”

Some exclusions of the church are social, such as lack of access for people with disabilities. Other exclusions are given theological justification. For some 600 years, Black people were described as the “Children of Ham,” Noah’s discredited son, which made their supposed inferiority “divinely ordained.” Oppressive theologies have operated against women, Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ+ people and others.

There will never be true equality if the power dynamics and other consequences of oppressive theologies still linger. That is the work of “decolonization.” Changing language—“freedom seekers” instead of “runaway slaves”—is one step. Maybe the government proclaims Aug. 1 as Emancipation Day to remind all

Canadians that the British Empire sort of ended slavery on that date in 1834.

In July, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau apologized for government discrimination in the armed forces during the First World War. But the deeper work is to uncover taken-for-granted attitudes and to allow power to flow in different directions.

The papal visit to Canada at the end of July will be incomplete if it does not repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery that set out non-Europeans as inferior and allowed their lands to be taken by European powers. As people following a God whose deep desire is for all peoples to flourish, we seek to uncover truth, turn from sin, act for reconciliation and make right the wrongs that have been done. It is not an easy task. History remains a fallible record of the past in need of revision. ☸



Randolph Haluza-DeLay lives in Toronto and thanks his cycling companions for reading earlier versions of this column.

TALES FROM THE UNENDING STORY

A trickle of trust

Joshua Penfold

The camping trip had a rough start. While packing to go we got a phone call with a heart-stopping estimate for our car repairs, the first of two vehicles needing work. We were definitely feeling the financial crunch. My wife received her last paycheque before the summer break, we had other bills due, and we were preparing to go on a more-expensive-than-normal vacation we had committed to months ago.

We were overwhelmed and seriously questioning if some of our decisions were foolishly hopeful. Throw into the mix a grumpy, overtired, emotional, hormonal preteen, and her spicy, stubborn, sassy sister, along with the all-too-familiar first-day-of-camping grumpies.

It was not a fun first evening. We didn't have a campfire; we just went to bed.

In all this, I try to remind myself of the importance of trusting. What I struggle with is not who I trust, but what exactly I trust, or maybe how I trust. Do I trust that God will swoop in like a divine superhero and ensure that, just like the widow's oil, our bank account will miraculously always have just enough for the next day? Or do I

believe that, by trusting enough and believing in God's providence, I'll be shown special favour as God's child, a prosperity promise kind of trust?

But doesn't the rain fall on the wicked and the good alike? Or do I trust that God helps those who help themselves, an unofficial scripture verse in many people's books? Or is trusting in the Lord different than all of these?

Proverbs 3, a text I've heard often preached on, and yet comically forget when I need it most, says: *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight."*

So I'm instructed to acknowledge him in all my ways if I wish God to make my paths straight. Not easy, not struggle-free, not miraculously prosperous, not even without hardship or serious negative consequences. But acknowledging God will keep my path straight, my direction, my purpose, my trust, my steadfastness of faith, and my realization that, as Kate Bowler says, "Struggle is everyone's normal."

Trusting is not a promise that everything will work out peachy, but a promise that everything is within God's vision, care, control and allowance, and

that God will remain faithful in love, comfort and presence.

Does this even sound right to me? Am I letting God off the hook here, deluding myself, so that I'm not expecting any actual intervention or action from God? It might look like that to some, even myself at times, but the kind of presence and action that I'm beginning to anticipate and expect from God most often is subtle and steadfast rather than flashy and fantastical.

It's something that is difficult to perceive from the outside, but it is held closely and sacredly deep within myself. I can't explain this kind of deep trust, maybe partially because I only know it in part. I believe and know and have tasted that it's present, it's true, but I'm not very good at staying aligned with it or living within it. But I keep trying to wander aimfully toward it, struggling to hope for trust, knowing that I love the one who offers the straight path, desperate for another taste of that trust.

Our camping improved, our cars were repaired, and my bank account didn't miraculously replenish. Things are still concerning, but my anxiety is dissolving as trust trickles in. ❧



Joshua Penfold
(penfoldjoshua@gmail.com) acknowledges the unending grace God bestows upon a trust-wrestler like him.

Et cetera

WCC blesses Mennonite peace comforter

When leaders of the World Council of Churches (WCC) met in the spring, they took time to bless this peace comforter. During the Global Mennonite Peace Festival, held in the Netherlands in June 2019, participants were invited to put a message of peace on a square of fabric. After the festival, the squares were sewn together, made into a comforter, and presented to the WCC as a symbol of the commitment to comfort each other on a common pilgrimage of justice and peace. The prayer of blessing also advocated for an end to gender-based violence.

Source: World Council of Churches / Photo by Marcelo Schneider



MWC assembly crosses barriers to gather in Indonesia

By Aaron Epp
For Meetinghouse

A colourful display of Javanese music, dance and shadow puppetry kicked off the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) assembly in Salatiga, Indonesia, on July 5.

Singing, prayer, a sermon about the mystery of the Incarnation and welcoming remarks from local Anabaptist church leaders were included in the opening ceremony and worship service, held at STT Seminary and streamed online.

“Welcome to Indonesia, my dear siblings. I am very happy to see you all in this place,” said Paulus Widjaja, chair of the assembly’s National Advisory Committee, adding that the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the assembly for a year.

“I have to confess that there was a time when I did not believe the MWC general assembly would happen at all,” he said. “And yet this evening we gather together in central Java to begin our journey together. We rejoice that we can be together despite the precautions that are still needed.”

Widjaja’s remarks were preceded by a performance of the gamelan, the traditional ensemble music of the Javanese people. The music accompanied women dancers dressed in traditional Javanese costumes performing a combination of dances from different parts of Indonesia.

Behind the musicians, a man performed *wayang kulit*, a traditional form of Javanese puppet-shadow plays.

Representatives from each of the three Indonesian synods that are member churches of MWC extended their welcome to international visitors.

“It is a great grace of our God that



MEETINGHOUSE PHOTO BY KRESNA KURNIAWAN

A group of Javanese dancers perform on July 5 during the Mennonite World Conference assembly’s opening worship service at STT Seminary in Salatiga, Indonesia.

today we can celebrate Mennonite World Conference in Indonesia,” said David Meijanto, pastor of JKI Maranatha Church. “Enjoy this Mennonite World Conference and may the Lord enrich each one of us with his wisdom.”

The opening ceremony concluded with a performance by JPCC Worship, a worship band that is popular throughout Indonesia. It is the worship band at Jakarta Praise Community Church, which is part of one of the synods that belongs to MWC.

As the evening’s focus turned to worship, members of the MWC General Council walked in front of the stage holding banners representing their home countries. More than 15 countries were displayed.

Following singing led by an ensemble of musicians from around the world, Lisa Carr-Pries, an MWC executive committee member from Canada, read a call to worship. “God has been preparing a place for us to gather here—a house

of prayer, love and grace for all,” she said. “In the glory of God’s presence, barriers are dismantled. With joyful hearts let us worship.”

Tim Geddert, a New Testament professor at Fresno Pacific University in California, delivered a message about the mystery of the Incarnation—Jesus Christ’s full humanity and full divinity. He called the Incarnation a barrier-crossing event and challenged listeners to learn what it takes to cross barriers and reach out with courageous faith to connect with the heart of Jesus.

“In these next five days together—listening and praying, singing, worshipping, celebrating the diversity of God’s family—may all of these give us glimpses of what Jesus is doing amongst us and what Jesus is doing all around the world that he came to save,” he said.

MWC typically holds an assembly once every six years, but Assembly 17 was pushed back a year because of the pandemic. Assembly 17 ran until July 10 and featured twice-daily worship, workshops, learning tours, and opportunities for discussion and fellowship. For the first time, people had the option of joining virtually.

In addition to Anabaptists from Indonesia, more than 500 people from around the world registered to attend in person. ❧

Aaron Epp is Canadian Mennonite’s online media manager. This article was written for Meetinghouse, a group of Mennonite publications.

Ukraine war shakes peace convictions, MWC assembly told

Islamic dancers participate in Mennonite worship service in Indonesia

By Paul Schrag
For Meetinghouse

Saying the war in Ukraine has shaken western European Mennonites' commitment to nonviolence, a French pastor urged Mennonites from around the world to get off the sidelines and work for peace.

Hundreds of worshippers heard her message on July 6, the second day of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) assembly in Salatiga, Indonesia.

"We affirmed nonviolence when our context was peaceful, but in the face of war we see nonviolent resistance as naive and unrealistic," said Salomé Haldemann of France, a graduate of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

Haldemann's address was read by Anne Hansen of Germany because Haldemann was unable to attend.

After Russia invaded Ukraine in February, she said, the nearness and reality of war shocked Mennonites in western Europe. "Today we are afraid that war may overtake Europe," she said. "Suddenly our theology and beliefs feel obsolete. A storm took over Europe, and the churches' convictions collapsed."

The way to survive the storm, she said, is to build convictions on the solid rock of Jesus and act on them.

Citing the tradition of calls to action at MWC assemblies, she urged the church to get off the sidelines and work for peace.

She noted that, at the 1967 assembly in Amsterdam, U.S. civil rights leader Vincent Harding called on Mennonites to "come alongside Black sisters and brothers in the freedom struggle."

At the 1984 assembly in Strasbourg, France, American writer and professor Ron Sider encouraged starting a nonvi-

to create a widespread training for church people to learn and practise the basics of civil resistance."

Europeans, who have more experience with discussion and debate than with activism, "need the help of the global church if we want to find our footing in the field of practise," she said. "We have

brothers and sisters who have experience in nonviolent resistance. Please train us. Practise with us, so we can learn together."

Reflecting the culture of a majority Muslim country, Sufi Islamic dancers participated in the service. Worshipers at the main meeting site at STT Seminary viewed their presentation by livestream from a Mennonite church, Congdut GITJ Jepara, in the region of Central Java.

Wearing long white robes and black hats, five

men from Jepara's Sufi Islamic community spun in circles, with arms raised, while women sang and a band played.

The Congdut GITJ Jepara congregation works closely with the local Sufi community, said Liesa Unger, MWC's chief international events officer. The congregation asked if it could invite Sufi participation, and MWC officials agreed, Unger said. ❧

Paul Schrag is editor of Anabaptist World. This article was written for Meetinghouse, a group of Mennonite publications.



Sufi Islamic dancers participate in a July 6 Mennonite World Conference assembly worship service at Congdut GITJ Jepara, a Mennonite church in Central Java. (Mennonite World Conference photo)

olent peace force, which sparked the creation of Community Peacemaker Teams (formerly Christian Peacemaker Teams).

"But most of us have stayed on the sidelines where things are comfortable," Haldemann said. "What does it look like to practise love of the enemy on a collective level in our time and place? It may very well look like nonviolent resistance.

"Maybe Mennonites could prepare for war resistance with an anti-military service, like a nonviolent resistance boot camp. . . . Nations prepare for war with military training. It might be time for us

Indonesian doctors use medical expertise to follow Jesus

Story and Photo By Aaron Epp
For Meetinghouse

Two Indonesian doctors are using their medical degrees to follow Jesus Christ's instruction to make disciples.

In an afternoon workshop at the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) assembly in Salatiga, Indonesia, Elice Nurani and Fennisia Wibisono talked about the health ministry they operate an hour away at JKI Injil Kerajaan (Holy Stadium) in Semarang.

The church, which is part of one of Indonesia's three MWC member synods, actively participates in preventative and curative fields through education, training and providing health services to congregants and the surrounding community.

"The health ministry that we are doing in the church is part of the Great Commission that God asks us to do," Wibisono said via a translator.

The doctors treat people at the church and go door to door in the neighbourhood offering medical checkups and providing basic necessities like rice. They also visit slums and prisons to assist people there.

The three most common illnesses that Nurani, Wibisono and their colleagues encounter are respiratory infections, hypertension and diabetes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has kept

the ministry busy, as volunteers have tested people for the virus and assisted with contact tracing. The ministry has supported people who are self-isolating by giving them food, medication and vitamins, and by providing oxygen for those who need it.

The ministry has been a boon to the community at times in the pandemic when COVID-19 has overwhelmed local hospitals. More than once, the local government has approached the ministry for assistance in keeping the community healthy.

"Of course," Nurani said, when asked if she ever gets frustrated that the government isn't doing more to help the citizens of Semarang, "but all we can do is pray."

Both doctors faced significant obstacles in medical school. Indonesia is the largest Muslim-majority country in the world, and Indonesians with Chinese ancestry face bigotry. Nurani and Wibisono encountered discrimination from their professors and bullying from their peers as a result of their Christian beliefs and their Chinese ancestry.

They are grateful that they overcame those obstacles and that they now get to serve their community. Occasionally



Doctors Fennisia Wibisono and Elice Nurani lead a health ministry at their church, JKI Injil Kerajaan (Holy Stadium) in Semarang, Indonesia.

a patient will tell their life story and the opportunity arises for Nurani and Wibisono to share about their faith.

"Some of them have accepted Jesus," Nurani said, adding that it is fulfilling to help underprivileged people. "They're poor, they don't have the resources to get healthy and live a better life, and we can contribute something that we're good at." ✎

Aaron Epp is Canadian Mennonite's online media manager. This article was written for Meetinghouse, a group of Mennonite publications.



MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE LIVESTREAM SCREENSHOT

Yanni Rusmanto, a Hizbullah paramilitary Muslim group commander, and Paulus Hartono, a Mennonite Diakonia Service special duty pastor of the GKMI Synod, speak on July 7 in a workshop about how they developed a friendship by working together in relief work in their community following a 2004 tsunami. 'We worked together for 15 days living under the same roof,' Hartono said. 'We started to know each other, respect each other, even though we are very different. But even though we are from extremes, that doesn't mean we don't work together.' Rusmanto shared how he tells his Muslim friends there are two kinds of Christians. 'Paulus is the good kind; we can work with him,' he said. 'Not every Christian is a bad person.'

‘What we’re doing with MWC is incredibly radical’

MC Canada’s executive minister reflects on his first MWC assembly

By Aaron Epp
For Meetinghouse

Incredibly radical, remarkably beautiful and significantly complicated—that’s how Doug Klassen summarized his experience at the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) assembly earlier this month.

Klassen, Mennonite Church Canada’s executive minister, was in Salatiga, Indonesia, to represent the nationwide church at MWC General Council meetings from July 1 to 4, and the assembly from July 5 to 10. It was his first time attending an assembly and it was a positive experience.

“What we’re doing with MWC is incredibly radical,” Klassen said, noting that, in western culture, it is becoming increasingly acceptable for people to publicly voice their intolerance of others. “[At assembly] we’re moving together as people who have so many differences and finding our common life in Jesus.”

The beauty of the visual art, special music and congregational singing struck Klassen hard. “People coming together to sing and dance and tell stories and share their lives—it’s remarkably beautiful.”

An event where hundreds of people from around the world gather together is significantly complicated, he added. Ensuring the technology works and that translation in multiple languages is available, staying on schedule, and managing people’s feelings when things don’t go according to plan, are just a few of the things organizers have to contend with.

“And it’s worth every bit of effort,” Klassen said, adding that he wishes everyone could experience an assembly. Getting together with Anabaptist siblings from around the world can perhaps help address the malaise and tiredness some North American congregations are experiencing as a result of the influence of secularism, he said.

He pointed to something historian John D. Roth said in 2018, when Roth was asked why he works with MWC: “In part because I’m convinced renewal and new life in the church I love and grew up in will only happen to the extent that we are attentive to what is happening in the global church.”

“That’s a dynamite comment because I think he’s absolutely right,” Klassen said.

Reunion

Klassen’s trip to Indonesia allowed him to reunite with an old friend. He met with Paulus Wijaya, a Salatiga resident who lived with his family 19 years ago. At the time, Wijaya was serving with Mennonite Central Committee’s International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP), a year-long vocational and cultural exchange program that connected international young adults with host families and volunteer placements in Canada and the United States.

Klassen was a pastor of Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary at the time, and his three children were young. Wijaya was the first of two young adults the Klassens hosted through IVEP, and it was a great experience for the family.

“Our kids grew up with a real intercultural, global understanding of the world,” Klassen said. “It was very formative at the time.”

On the day of their reunion, Wijaya



PHOTO COURTESY OF DOUG KLASSEN

Doug Klassen and Paulus Wijaya stand in a prayer garden in Wijaya’s hometown of Salatiga, Indonesia. The sign above them reads, ‘A house of prayer for all nations. Isaiah 56:7.’

gave Klassen a tour of his hometown that included stops at his church, the bicycle repair shop he owns and a Christian prayer garden.

It was a rich afternoon, Klassen said, and he was pleased to discover that Wijaya still keeps in touch with the friends he made through IVEP.

Klassen lamented that the IVEP program was discontinued in Canada in 2020 as a result of MCC budget cuts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. He stressed how important programs like IVEP, the Young Anabaptist Mennonite Exchange Network, and the Global Youth Summit are to the church.

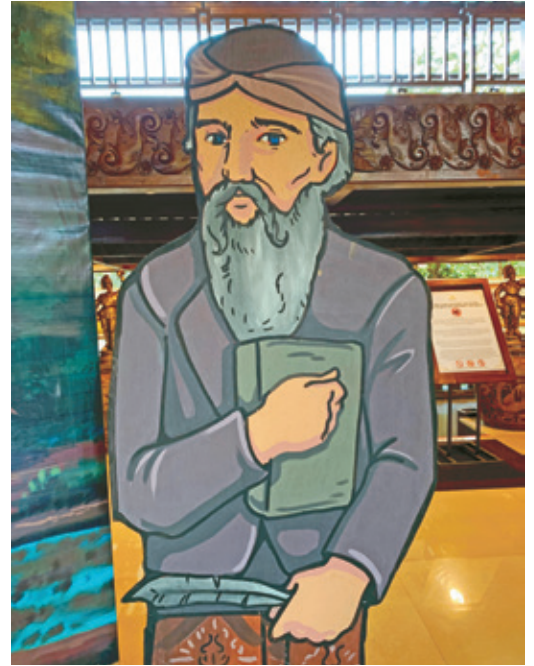
“These are the main conduits for leadership in Mennonite World Conference,” he said. “YAMEN, GYS—these things are huge.”

Aaron Epp is Canadian Mennonite’s online media manager. This article was written for Meetinghouse, a group of Mennonite publications.



PHOTOS BY AARON EPP

A photo booth at one of the assembly locations featured depictions of Tunggul Wulung, left, and Menno Simons (who was painted wearing traditional Javanese clothing). Wulung, who lived from 1800 to 1885, was a Christian mystic and evangelist who influenced the development of the Mennonite church in Indonesia. The depictions were created by artist Yuli Ahiransi, who is part of GITJ Jepara, a Mennonite congregation in Central Java.



MEETINGHOUSE PHOTO BY KRESNA KURNIAWAN

Participants in the children's program took centre stage during Assembly 17's closing worship service when they performed actions to two songs. Prior to the music, three children shared what they enjoyed about their time at assembly. 'I liked the crafts,' said one. 'Making new friends,' added another. 'Getting to learn new stuff from the Bible,' said the third. Children spent each morning singing and hearing Bible stories, and each afternoon playing games and eating snacks. Jennifer McWilliams, lead pastor at the Meeting House-East Toronto, led the program and was grateful for her time with the children. 'It was cool to learn their stories,' she said, noting how two 10-year-old girls—one from Thailand and the other from the United States—became fast friends. 'That meeting wouldn't have happened if it weren't for Assembly.'

Returning to a radical faith

Global Youth Summit participants sing, dance and explore life in the Spirit

By Aaron Epp
For Meetinghouse

Singing, prayer, deep discussions and dancing characterized the fourth-ever Mennonite World Conference Global Youth Summit (GYS), held in Salatiga, Indonesia, in early July.

More than 30 delegates and more than 70 participants from MWC member churches in 26 countries gathered from July 1 to 4 to explore the theme, “Life in the Spirit: Learn, Serve, Worship.” Drawing from Ephesians, the theme allowed young people aged 18 to 30 to connect as one body of Anabaptists aiming to follow the example of Jesus Christ.

“You think you came here, but God brought you here,” Brian Siawarta, co-lead pastor of EMPWR Indonesia, the country’s first digital church, told participants at the opening worship service. “You think you’re going to have an event, but you’re going to have your life transformed.”

Praising God

The majority of the Summit’s activities, including lodging, took place at the d’Emmerick

Hotel—a conference centre surrounded by mountains—but evening worship was held at the nearby STT Seminary.

Located in an airplane hangar-like structure, the stage included lighting rigs, a smoke machine and a sound system that went to 11. Contemporary praise and worship music played with drums and electric guitars characterized the evening

worship sessions, with appearances by local groups Kingdom Gospel Praise and Unlimited Fire.

Participants from North America led worship on July 2, singing an a capella rendition of “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow.”

adults from Latin America led participants in a stirring rendition of “Here I Am to Worship” on July 2, a group representing Africa had participants dancing around the room on July 3, and a handful of Europeans led hymns and a candlelit prayer on July 4.

The closing worship service, held in the evening of July 4, featured JPCC Worship, a group with more than 235,000 monthly listeners on Spotify. It is the worship band at Jakarta Praise Community Church, which is part of one of the synods that belongs to MWC. More than a thousand people from the local community joined GYS participants for the service.

Inspiring messages

At twice-daily worship sessions, speakers delivered sermons aimed at inspiring and encouraging participants to follow Jesus more closely.

Andrés Pacheco-Lozano, a theologian from Colombia currently living in the Netherlands, invited participants to pay close attention to

their spiritual lives as they seek to live in communion with God, with each other and with nature. “We need to let go of our egos and the ways we have created systems of violence and injustice that go against shalom—God’s peace,” he said. “We need to turn our attention to seek, listen and learn from the marginalized, and pay attention to how the Holy Spirit



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTEN KONG

Young adults from Mennonite Church Canada pose for a photo after the Global Youth Summit ended. Pictured from left to right, back row: Nora Pederberg, Natasha Neustaedter Barg, Emily Enns, Claudia Dueck, Ashley Rempel, Jim Cheng, Valerie Alipova and Rebecca Janzen; and front row: Amelia Warkentin, Christen Kong and Andrew Klassen Brown.

On July 3, Asian participants gave the Summit a taste of worship from their home countries with a display that included dancing, worship flags and a heartfelt presentation of “How Great Is Our God” sung in multiple languages.

Morning worship sessions couldn’t match the volume in the evening but were no less energetic and meaningful. Young



MWC PHOTO BY ALEXANDRO MARTHIN

Global Youth Summit participants pose for a photo at the d'Emmerick Hotel on July 4.

talks through them.”

Andrew Suderman, a Canadian who has lived overseas and is now based in the United States, cautioned listeners to be aware of the things they give their attention to: “There’s a lot that influences us, but how often do we stop and pay attention to who or what influences us, and how? Is it God and God’s spirit that influences us, or is it some other kind of influence?”

The logic of mainstream culture is often one of supremacy, fear and violence, he added, while the church demonstrates a different embodied logic: one based on peace, justice and reconciliation. “We can live in hope, knowing that God ultimately will bring everything together. This hope is essential, for without it, without dreaming about what can possibly be, we can too easily be co-opted by what is, or what supposedly needs to be.”

The next day, Makadunyiswe Doublejoy Ngulube from Zimbabwe challenged participants to serve others with love, grace, humility, gentleness and patience, with an eye towards unity. “God has placed you in your spheres of influence . . . for a specific reason,” Ngulube said. “It’s for a divine purpose.”

That evening, Rizalee Pilare from the Philippines told participants that saved people serve people. “I encourage you, whatever you’re going through, may we not lose our compassion for the lost,” she said, ending her message with a question: “How are you serving where you are planted at the moment?”

On the final morning of the conference,

Timo Doetsch from Germany challenged participants to walk with Christ, stand against evil and worship God. “At the end, Christianity isn’t a religion; it’s a relationship, and it comes by grace and faith in Christ,” Doetsch said, concluding later: “Dare to dive deep.”

Gea Denanda from Indonesia built on the theme of worship during the closing service. “Worship is about our posture, [the] attitude of [our] hearts,” Denanda said via a translator. “Sin cuts us off from God and one another and creation, but in Christ we are restored. . . . The Holy Spirit [wants] us to have a relationship with him.”

Thoughtful workshops

Each morning and afternoon, participants had the opportunity to listen, discuss and pray at a variety of workshops.

In a presentation entitled, “Let me tell you what you are not!,” Sarah Pillay used group discussions, movie clips and activities to help participants understand



MWC PHOTO BY ALEXANDRO MARTHIN

Pastor and comedian Daniel Talenta leads a workshop.

that it is not their failures, shortcomings, looks or achievements that ought to define them, but rather their identity as children of God.

“Your father is walking with you, his DNA is in you,” said Pillay, a teacher and broadcaster from Indonesia. “The God Almighty who rules heaven and earth is in you. Christ, the hope of glory, is in you and that is the mystery God wants us to know.”

In Daniel Talenta’s workshop, the pastor at GKMI Anugerah Jakarta shared how he uses his side-career as a stand-up comedian to act as a bridge for reconciliation in the church. Talenta spoke about a self-funded comedy tour of churches in Indonesia he embarked on that saw him connect with church leaders about the problems facing their young people. Then he performed a stand-up set to those young people, touching on the problems he had learned about.

“As an Anabaptist Mennonite, I believe that Jesus is the centre of my faith and the community is the centre of my life,” he said. “God’s reconciliation is [our] calling. . . the call to bring peace. Comedy can tell serious things in a funny way and comedy can turn sorrow into laughter.”

Delegate sessions

While participants were in workshops, the 34 delegates met to explore Ephesians and discuss the results of an assignment each had completed prior to arriving in Salatiga. Delegates were tasked with surveying young adults in their churches about how they understand the role of the Holy Spirit in their lives, and the issues and challenges they face.



PHOTO BY AARON EPP

Mlobane Ntandoyenkosi from South Africa, left and Christen Kong from Canada, centre, listen as Akansha Milap from India speaks during delegate sessions.



MEETINGHOUSE PHOTO BY KRESNA KURNIAWAN

Popular Indonesian band JPCC Worship, pictured at the MWC assembly opening ceremony, led worship on the final night of GYS.

On the final day of the Summit, representatives from Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America and Africa spent an hour reporting back to participants. Each talked about the challenges young people face in their regions, what they had learned during three days of discussion and they shared prayer requests.

Common themes that emerged included young adults not feeling recognized by the leadership in their congregations; a desire to learn and grow in their faith, but not having the space in which that can happen; feeling like they don't belong in the church and finding that belonging elsewhere; and a desire for multigenerational unity and

events and activities have to compete with a lot of different events and activities in society. . . . Everyone does their own thing, and it's not popular to commit to one community."

Juan Manuel Guevara, a delegate from Colombia, said that there is a dearth of good Christian models for youth in Latin America—people willing to live the faith they profess. "We have a great challenge in our continent because [there is] a lack of hope," he said. "It's a great challenge for our church to bring hope to our youth [who] are without hope."

The biggest challenge delegates from North America identified is that young

surrendering to the ways of the world. They are struggling through contemporary issues."

Reflecting on what delegates from Europe had learned, Sophia Mons from the Netherlands shared that she and her peers became aware during the Summit of their privilege and the wealth they have in their countries. "We have learned from many people that we should be grateful for what we have," she said.

"This also leads us to a point that life in the Spirit is not material, it's not based in the material world," she added. "We live in a society that is based on the individual. We hope for our communities, for



MWC PHOTO BY RATNA WINDHI ARSARI

Mlobane Ntandoyenkosi from South Africa and Ngire Jonah from Uganda share the concerns of African delegates on July 4.

reconciliation in the church.

"There are some questions about the place of youth in the church," said Lukas Sägesser, a delegate from Switzerland. "It's difficult because, for a lot of churches, their



MWC PHOTO BY RATNA WINDHI ARSARI

Sophia Mons from the Netherlands talks about what European delegates learned at GYS as Lukas Sägesser from Switzerland looks on.

people don't feel like they belong in their churches. "They are feeling isolated and alone," said Christen Kong, a delegate from Canada. "The second [challenge] is that churches are not reflecting what is written in Scripture about the church. They are

our youth and for our young people, to be able to combine our secular context with finding community and finding new ways of redefining church—walking together while worshipping and realizing we belong to a structure that's greater than our own



MWC PHOTO BY RATNA WINDHI ARSARI

Christen Kong from Canada, left, and Malin Voth from the United States speak to GYS participants.



PHOTO BY TIZ BROTOSUDARMO

GYS participants spend time in prayer on a large world map.

individual life.”

Deepson Masih from India said that GYS had helped Asian delegates understand how they can grow in their spiritual lives, and that they have fellow Christians

around the world that they can rely on. “Even though we are from different countries [and speak] different languages . . . we can serve Christ together,” Masih said.

After the presentations, delegates and

participants entered a time of prayer that involved a large world map covering more than half of the conference room floor. They stood and sat on the map, praying over different parts of the world.

Radical faith

During periods of free time and after evening worship, participants took part in a variety of activities, including swimming, archery, card games and singing around a bonfire. On one of the first evenings, an impromptu party erupted, leaving participants dancing and laughing late into the night.

Larissa Swartz, chair of the Young Anabaptists committee and the committee’s North American representative for the past seven years, expressed gratitude for the way everything at the Summit came together. “Six months ago, we were not even sure we were going to have it,” she said. “I’m so thankful . . . to have people here in person, to have delegates from [nearly] every continent.”

The goal of the Summit is to see participants transformed by the time they spend with each other and in the presence of God, she added. “The main thing they’re going back [home] with is relationships, and [we hope] that those relationships would continue to grow even after GYS. . . They now have friends in [other] areas, people they know they can reach out to and collaborate with or get perspective from.”

Reflecting on GYS during a presentation at the MWC assembly, Kong said that she sensed a longing for spiritual renewal among participants at the Summit. “We are going to places that others don’t,” she said. “We are saying things that aren’t being said and we are doing daring things for Jesus. Young adults are really mobilizing with the transforming landscape of church. We are . . . [returning] once again to a radical faith.”

Born out of a desire for young people in MWC member churches to be heard, the first GYS was held in Zimbabwe in 2003. The next GYS is scheduled to take place in Ethiopia in 2028. ☸

Aaron Epp is Canadian Mennonite’s online media manager. This article was written for Meetinghouse, a group of Mennonite publications.

‘It’s going to impact how I exist as a Christian’

Mennonite Church Canada’s Global Youth Summit representatives reflect on their experience in Indonesia

By Aaron Epp
For Meetinghouse

Andrew Klassen Brown wasn’t connecting with the worship at the Global Youth Summit until a quieter service on the final day moved him to tears.

A group of participants from Europe were leading worship at the Summit, held from July 1 to 4 in Salatiga, Indonesia. They included Taizé singing in the service and a time of prayer that was preceded by

It was a highlight of the summit for Klassen Brown, who was one of five young adults—one from each of Mennonite Church Canada’s regional churches—chosen to represent the nationwide church at GYS. Held every six years in the same year as the MWC Assembly, GYS offers Anabaptists between the ages of 18 and 30 from all over the world an opportunity

Canada, who also served as the MC Canada delegate at the event.

For Rempel, 25, the opportunity to connect with people from other countries was one of the biggest highlights. “I think the one part that’s the most crazy for me is sitting at a table at lunch or breakfast and realizing the people sitting with me are from Zimbabwe and France,” she said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTEN KONG

Christen Kong, left, Nora Pederberg, Ashley Rempel, Rebecca Janzen and Andrew Klassen Brown represented Mennonite Church Canada at the Mennonite World Conference Global Youth Summit.

everyone at the gathering lighting candles, and Klassen Brown started weeping.

“I was bawling pretty hard,” the 29-year-old said. “I’m not typically like that, but I just felt really connected in a way that I haven’t felt in a church-type setting in years.”

to gather in one place to worship together and learn from each other.

Klassen Brown represented MC Manitoba. He was joined by Ashley Rempel, MC B.C.; Rebecca Janzen, MC Alberta; Nora Pederberg, MC Saskatchewan; and Christen Kong, MC Eastern

Being with Anabaptists from around the world was an incredible experience, said Janzen, 26. “Something I really reflected on a lot before coming here is that . . . the white Mennonite church is the minority when it comes to Mennonites in the world,” she said. (More than 50 percent of



PHOTO BY AARON EPP

A quiet moment at the d'Emmerick Hotel, one of the venues for the Mennonite World Conference Global Youth Summit and Assembly.

MWC's member churches are in Africa.) "So my church experience in Canada is the minority."

In the delegate sessions she attended, Kong met with 33 other delegates from around the world to discuss how young adult Anabaptists understand the role of the Holy Spirit, as well as the issues and challenges they face in their communities.

"[It was] lots of gathering of information of other cultures and people, which partially I was expecting, but also partially I was not," the 28-year-old said, adding that she wasn't expecting to hear delegates critique where they come from. "Often when we go to meet people for the very first time, they want to show the best of themselves, their culture and their country. People here want to be critical, they want to . . . go straight to the meaningful conversations."

Prior to arriving at GYS, each delegate was tasked with conducting a survey in their church conference/regional church meant to investigate issues and challenges that young Anabaptists experience. Kong collaborated with Rempel, Janzen, Klassen Brown and Madison Harms of Saskatchewan (who was not able to make it to Indonesia and was replaced on the trip by

Pederberg), with the goal of surveying at least 50 young adults from MC Canada. In the end, they received 18 responses, which they collated and reflected on before Kong turned it into a report that she presented to her fellow GYS delegates.

The MC Canada representatives were disappointed by the low number of responses, but they were pleased with the level of insight provided by those who filled out the survey. Four themes emerged:

- **Young adults** do not feel belonging at church and are looking externally for faith answers and community.
- **Young adults** express not feeling heard.
- **Mennonite churches** are experiencing an identity crisis.
- **The Mennonite church** is confronted with contemporary social, political, economic and environmental issues.

The report includes numerous quotations from survey respondents that illustrate each theme. "Those quotations highlighted the diversity of responses we were given," Klassen Brown said. "There's no one young adult perspective or experience, so to have that diversity represented was good."

Each representative had positive things to say about their experiences at GYS. Kong's favourite memory was gathering around a massive bonfire on July 3. "It was vibrant, it was warm, and we danced all around it," she said. "And the most meaningful part was that we experienced it together."

Having conversations with young adults from different parts of the world was a highlight for Janzen, who recalled a deep discussion with a participant from India, and another who was born in India but has spent significant time living in the United States and now resides in Mexico. The three spoke late into the night about their life experiences and thoughts on church.

"I just love having conversations about things I've been thinking about in North America [and] being able to talk about them in a very open and safe environment among friends," Janzen said. "It made me think a lot, and I think it's going to impact how I exist as a Christian moving forward."

✎

Aaron Epp is Canadian Mennonite's online media manager. This article was written for Meetinghouse, a group of Mennonite publications.

NEWS

Camp Squeah featured on CBC National news

TV interview with director highlights summer-camp staffing shortages across Canada

By Amy Rinner Waddell
B.C. Correspondent

Rob Tiessen, executive director of Camp Squeah in Hope, B.C., was interviewed on CBC television's *The National* broadcast on June 20 in a story about summer-camp staffing shortages across the country.

"We don't have the adequate supervision to run this number of kids and we might have to turn people away, which is a heartbreak, and we hate that!" said Tiessen in the interview. He attributed the shortage in part to the pandemic, which curbed on-site training on which camps rely, and to the "demographic of young adults who found out there were other opportunities [for summer employment]."

Although Tiessen was speaking on behalf of the B.C. Camping Association, the Zoom interview turned out to be an unexpected promotion for Squeah itself.

"Originally, Stephen Jackson, president of the B.C. Camping Association, was scheduled for the interview, but at the last minute he reached out to me to ask me to represent on his behalf," says Tiessen. "I was intending to represent B.C. Camping in my responses, and communicated thusly in my Zoom conversation with him, but when the edited version eventually aired, it came across more like I was speaking only for Squeah. Interestingly, without our knowledge or consent, they captured footage from our website and used it as background footage. This further served to focus my truncated comments on Squeah specifically."

Although Camp Squeah is back to running regular summer programs for children and youth this year, there are some limitations.

"We've had to cap registration numbers due to insufficient staff numbers for various weeks," Tiessen says. "There are still holes we're praying to fill later this



SCREENSHOT OF CBC NEWS CLIP ON YOUTUBE

Rob Tiessen of B.C.'s Camp Squeah is interviewed on a CBC news broadcast, telling how camp attendance has been affected by fewer staff this summer.

month and in August."

A vigorous recruiting campaign, including social media channels, magazine advertisements, and church bulletins helped secure the staff who have come on board."

Tiessen says prayer and encouragement for summer camp staff are always welcome: "Pray that we don't get discouraged when tired, that we don't get sick if/when COVID-19 is in the air . . . that grace would abound and that our energy levels would match the needs of the campers, and that ultimately God's Holy Spirit would be touching the lives of both campers and staff this summer." ❧

To watch the CBC news clip, visit bit.ly/3PoWMD8



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALICIA PROUDFOOT

'Breath Bouquet,' a three-metre-high sculpture that lights up and plays audio of breathing on a good day, was designed and created by Alicia Proudfoot, a member of Edmonton First Mennonite Church, pictured, to be part of the Heavy Metal Show in Casa. This community exhibition by 28 Alberta artists reflects on themes of excavation, history and the passage of time using heavy pieces of trolley track excavated from 3rd Avenue in Lethbridge, Alta., during the recent redevelopment. The tracks were discovered buried below the asphalt and were once used by a streetcar that ran the length of 3rd Avenue from 1912 to 1947. The track was buried in road construction around 1949 and resigned to history. The exhibition is located at the Gallery at Casa in Lethbridge, and runs until Aug. 20.

Lao translation of *Anabaptist Essentials* completed

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada hosted a book launch for the Lao translation of Palmer Becker's book *Anabaptist Essentials* on June 18. In partnership with the Lao Mennonite Fellowship of Canada and MC Canada, 300 books were printed for use in MC Eastern Canada congregations and other groups in North America, as well as in Laos and Thailand.

"We are very excited for this," said Som Phanpha, the lead translator, at the launch. "This book will help Lao congregations and people understand what it means to be an Anabaptist, and how important it is to follow Jesus in daily life."

Phanpha spoke of the many meetings with Becker over the last few years. "Sometimes there wasn't a word in Lao for the English word," he recalled. "I met many times with Palmer to find the full meaning of the text for interpretation."

The translation team, comprised of Som Phanpha, Sangoune Ounbounheuang and Sririssack Saythavy, worked with Pandora Press and translated, reviewed and proofed many versions of the book.

"I was asked if I was exhausted by this project," Phanpha recalled. "I wasn't. Each time I learned things I didn't see before."

"I'm not sure we printed enough books," said Saythavy. "I dream to see it brought to Laos. I believe we will need to print more."



MC EASTERN CANADA PHOTO

Sririssack Saythavy, left, author Palmer Becker, Som Phanpha and Sangoune Ounbounheuang are very pleased to see the completed Lao translation of Anabaptist Essentials.

This thought was confirmed by Norm Dyck, mission minister of MC Eastern Canada, who said that, since news of the book release, he has received multiple requests from around the world for copies.

"I've watched your dedication. You have given your life to this for a couple of years," said Becker, who was also at the book launch. "I'm excited to see it finished. Congratulations to the team for their time and energy, and for the vision to share what it means to be a Christian: 'Jesus is

the centre of our faith; community is the centre of our life; and reconciliation is the centre of our work.' God bless you as you send these books around the world."

Jeanette Hanson, director of MC Canada International Witness, added her blessing, praying that the book would be like the loaves and fishes that Jesus multiplied. "May the impact of the book multiply and be a blessing for many," she said.

"This has been a labour of love!" said Dyck. ☺



PHOTO BY EMILY SUMMACH

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan pastors spent the day at Shekinah Retreat Centre near Waldheim, Sask., on June 29. The group of 15 pastors from across the province joined together for prayer, encouragement and the opportunity to spend time together in the scenic North Saskatchewan River Valley. Missing from photo: Emily Summach and Kevin Koop.

'Heeding Christ's call to break down barriers'

Congregation makes church building more accessible

By Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe
Manitoba Correspondent
ALTONA, MAN.

In June, Altona Mennonite Church completed the construction of a new ramp, to help make its worship space more accessible. But, whereas many churches might have built the ramp and just left it at that, the Altona congregation held a dedication for it during a Sunday morning worship service.

The idea for the ramp didn't come with a vision or big rush of inspiration; it was simply the practical next step when the building's crumbling front steps needed replacing. Robert Martens, an Altona Mennonite member who was instrumental in driving the project forward and doing much of the hands-on work, suggested tackling both projects at once, so the ramp

wouldn't get sidelined or forgotten.

Accessibility features are becoming increasingly needed for the aging congregation—but it's also just the right thing to do, according to Martens. "We say you're welcome here, but if you can't get to our building, it kind of gives you a different meaning. . . . It's like saying, 'We'll keep the church doors locked, and only whoever has a key can get in,'" he says.

Martens, along with another church member, raised the necessary funds, acquired the supplies, built the railing and landscaped the area. Martens asked fellow church member and metal sculptor Ken Loewen to create art to incorporate into the railing. Loewen designed three images of worshippers gathered around the cross—one empty, one with the crucified Christ and one with a dove.

All of this took place during COVID-19, when few events were happening in-person.

As life returns to a busier calendar, Martens hopes the ramp will be helpful to the community. Even if it's not used that



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERT MARTENS

Members of Altona Mennonite Church built a ramp to make their worship space more accessible.

much, it's still an important symbol, he says: "Your impression should be, 'These people are accessible,' and [the ramp] is a symbol of being welcoming, I think."

Marlene Wiebe, another Altona Mennonite member, was compelled to write a reflective litany for the congregation to speak together when the ramp was dedicated. It began: "We are in the presence of God in this sacred place to dedicate our accessibility ramp. This beautiful structure is an outward sign of our faith in Christ who came to break down barriers."

"Initially, I chuckled at the whole dedicating the ramp thing," Wiebe says. "Upon further reflection and research, however, the significance of the ramp and what it represents kind of crept up on me and it just kept going. The implications about making our church accessible to everyone and heeding Christ's call to break down barriers had a ripple effect." ❧



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALTONA MENNONITE CHURCH

Ken Loewen, a metal artist and sculptor, created three images of worshippers at the cross to incorporate into the railing.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LOREN BRAUL

The congregation of Altona Mennonite Church dedicated its new accessibility ramp during a Sunday morning worship service in June.

Bursary helps recipients develop and explore

By Jessica Evans
Alberta Correspondent

In 2021, there were three recipients of Mennonite Church Alberta tuition bursaries, which offer an incentive for young people who attend an MC Alberta congregation and have enrolled in a Mennonite/Anabaptist post-secondary institution. Brandt Neufeldt of Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary and Danika Warkentin of Springridge Mennonite Church in Pincher Creek were asked what they are up to now, what their dreams are for the future, and how the bursary has impacted their education. The third recipient was Elijah Koop of Foothills Mennonite Church.

Brandt Neufeldt

“Over the past year, I have continued along with my post-secondary education at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU).



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRANDT NEUFELDT

Alongside his degree work, Brandt Neufeldt has been working at CMU’s Folio café. It has been a great way for him to engage with friends, fellow students and faculty, and to find a joy and love for making coffee and non-caffeinated beverages.

This year, I am going into my fourth year as a social sciences major with a focus on counselling. Alongside my degree work, I have been working at CMU’s local café, Folio. It has been a great way for me to engage with friends, fellow students and faculty, and to find a joy and love

for making coffee and non-caffeinated beverages.

“As I approach the final years of my degree, hopefully a year-and-a-half left, my hopes and dreams are to pursue a career in physiotherapy. This has always been a long-term goal for me, as I am fascinated with how the body moves and helping individuals heal. The more I dive into exploring the field, the more interested and motivated I become to pursue it.

“CMU has granted me the opportunity to explore the world of physiotherapy through its practicum program. For my practicum, I had the chance to shadow physiotherapists in different environments and with a variety of clients. My experience in practicum is not one I will soon forget, as it has been a primary motivator for me to pursue physiotherapy now that I have had a chance to be physically present in that type of environment.

“My education at CMU has given me opportunities beyond just writing tests and essays. I engaged a lot with what CMU has to offer in its student leadership roles which has helped me touch on my leadership side that I don’t often get a chance to display. For the past two years, I have been a residence assistant for the dorms and for the apartments in the CMU resident buildings. This has given me a chance to develop and explore leadership roles in planning events, leading various students in activities, and creating a safe and fun learning and living environment.

“The MC Alberta bursary has helped me not just financially, but has also allowed me to experience all that I have highlighted above that is inside and outside of the educational landscape of CMU.”

Danika Warkentin

“This past year I have been completing my second year at CMU, with a major



in peace and conflict transformation. I have loved directing the sports and rec committee on campus, as well as talking to people living in residence or in my different classes and activities.

“I have big dreams of travelling and living in places around the world in order to broaden my horizons and challenge my perception of what is ‘normal.’ I would love to find people-centred work that helps to improve the spiritual, emotional and physical quality of life of those around me.

“My education in an Anabaptist institution has propelled me to realize that education can be more than just a way to begin a well-paying career. The interdisciplinary nature of CMU’s classes and programs means that I get a more well-rounded perspective of the world, and can make intriguing connections between different topics that affect my life in deep, personal ways. This helps to shape the type of person I am, the type of work I pursue, and the quality of my relationships with others. It contributes to my overall well-being, instead of only aiming to fill my head with regurgitable knowledge.

“The bursary allows me to have easier access to the wonderful benefits that CMU offers. For me, postsecondary education is a wonderful and exciting journey that I have the privilege of taking on. Because of the bursary, I have the freedom to truly think about where my passions lie, instead of being overwhelmed by the stress of picking the right career path the first time. I am afforded the flexibility to try new things, challenge my assumptions and dig deeply into what it means to identify as an Anabaptist at this time.”

As of 2021, CMU also offers a church matching grant program that allows undergraduate and graduate students attending CMU, who receive financial support from their church, to have that support matched by CMU up to \$250 per semester, to a maximum of \$500 per year. International undergraduate students can receive up to \$500 per semester, to a maximum of \$1,000 per year. Students from MC Alberta congregations can apply for the bursary at www.mcab.ca. ❧

A gift to share

Saskatchewan man practices unique wood carving art form

By Emily Summach
Saskatchewan Correspondent
CLAVET, SASK.

“Well, I am a strong believer that all people have been given a gift,” says Reuben Unger of Clavet. “Whatever it is, everyone has a gift. If you have a gift, you use the gift, and don’t be afraid to tell people that you think it is a gift.”

The member of Pleasant Point Mennonite Church has a particularly unique gift—wildfowl carving—turning a piece of wood into a realistic bird sculpture. His sculptures are both artistic and incredibly detailed, right down to the hundreds of feather quills that he burnishes on every piece.

As a child, Unger taught himself taxidermy and continued doing that work into adulthood. While he found taxidermy interesting and excelled at it, it wasn’t the creative outlet he desired.

In the 1990s, while at an art show in Saskatoon, he met renowned wildfowl

carver Leroy Royer. Unger mentioned his desire to learn the craft and told him that he would love to take a class, if Royer ever taught one.

Unger says: “Lo and behold, a few years later, I got a call from him out of the blue saying, ‘I’m doing a class for some friends, and if you want to join us, you’d be welcome.’ And I said, ‘Absolutely!’”

“Wildfowl carving was something that I couldn’t figure out on my own,” he admits, “but the instant we started [the class], I thought, ‘I was meant to do this!’”

That first class was in 1998, and Unger has had a sculpture going on his work bench ever since. He is ranked amongst the top wildfowl carvers in western Canada.

The process of creating a carving begins with a lot of research. Unger will spend a week researching a bird.

“I usually take a trip to the Royal Saskatchewan Museum in Regina,” he says. “They have steady skins of every bird in Saskatchewan. Often, I can borrow those steady skins to study in my studio. I also look at a lot of photographs and videos to get a sense of how the bird moves.”

After his research, Unger sketches a two-dimensional drawing of the piece on paper and then transfers that into a three-dimensional sketch on wood. He

uses tupelo wood for carving, grown in the southern United States. The sketch on the wood includes all the feathering and anatomy of the bird, true to its actual size, right down to the millimetre.

He then carves, paints and adds all the details to the piece. “Everything is handmade,” he says. “The bird itself, but also the legs, feet and anything else on



PHOTOS COURTESY OF REUBEN UNGER

Reuben Unger poses next to one of his wildfowl carvings at the World Carving Championship in Ocean City, Maryland.



Unger's most recent sculpture depicts a roadrunner chasing down a Texas horned lizard.



Unger created this winter sculpture with two puffy chickadees for a woman's 85th birthday. Chickadees were her lifelong favourite.

the piece.”

The realistic precision of a sculpture is not the only feature of Unger’s art,

“I try to tell a story with the piece,” he says. “I did a carving of a kestrel holding a sparrow wing because I was trying to portray the kestrel making an effort to survive, and to tell that story,”

Recently, Unger created a commissioned piece for a person in Texas. “He wanted a sculpture of a roadrunner chasing a Texas horned lizard,” Unger says. “So specific! I’ve never seen either of those creatures in real life before, so it was a real challenge.”

He entered the finished piece in the Prairie Canada Competition held



A meadowlark created by Unger.

in Winnipeg in May and, to his great surprise, he was awarded second-best in his category, the Carver's Choice Award and the People's Choice Award.

"I was just speechless," he says. "It's purely a gift that I've been given. It can't possibly be coming from me."

Unger's humility speaks to a deeper intersection between his art and his faith: "Carving became a passion, and it's a lot of fun. It's relaxing and having time to sit and think. Honestly, I think it's a gift from God. To this day, when I do a carving, I'm working on it, and when it's finished, I don't know how I got there! The hands are just led to do that." ❧



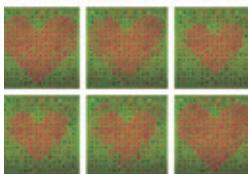
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at canadianmennonite.org



Indonesia 2022 roundup

More stories and photos from Mennonite World Conference Assembly 17, plus links for sharing the articles in this issue. canadianmennonite.org/Indonesiaroundup



Watch: Rockway Mennonite Collegiate sparks community with new music video

What can you do with 350 red umbrellas? Watch and listen to the new video created by students, staff and teachers of this Ontario school.

canadianmennonite.org/rmcumbrellas



Interpretive path tells story of reconciliation efforts in rural Saskatchewan

An area of disputed land is sparking reconciliation with the launch of a path that makes the story of that journey come alive for visitors.

canadianmennonite.org/interpretativepath



What's new at Westview Centre4Women?

One of the biggest concerns the mothers in the St. Catharines neighbourhood is the lack of a licensed daycare closeby. Here's how the centre is supporting women and their families.

canadianmennonite.org/Westviewnew

News brief

Michael Pahl ordained

Michael Pahl, kneeling centre, was ordained for ministry on June 19 in the sanctuary of Home Street Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, where he is a member. He is executive minister of MC Manitoba and previously pastored at Morden Mennonite Church, and Lendrum



Mennonite Church in Edmonton, where he was licensed for ministry within the Mennonite Brethren conference, but not yet ordained. Members from both his Manitoba church communities surrounded him and participated in the laying on of hands during the service. Kathy Giesbrecht, director of congregational ministries for MC Manitoba, front left, was the ordaining minister and Doug Klassen, executive minister for MC Canada, back right, spoke at the service. Pahl holds a doctorate in theology (biblical studies) from Birmingham University in the U.K.

— BY NICOLIE KLASSEN-WIEBE

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- **Exploring Anabaptist History and Theology** with Jamie Pitts, PhD | Oct. 26 – Dec. 13, 2022
- **Understanding Anabaptist Approaches to Scripture: What's Different and Why?** with David Cramer, PhD, and Susannah Larry, PhD | Feb. 1 – March 14, 2023
- **Transforming Congregational Conflict and Communication** with Betty Pries, PhD | April 12 – May 23, 2023

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NEW FOUR-WEEK SHORT COURSE!
Resisting Christian Nationalism with the Gospel of Peace
with Drew Strait, PhD | April 12 – May 9, 2023

 **Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary**
ams.ca/short-courses



AMBS window

Summer 2022 | Volume 32, Issue 2

García points grads to Moses' story for leadership lessons

For wisdom and insight to face today's leadership challenges, **César García**, MA, invited participants at AMBS's April 30 Commencement Service to look to the story of Moses and his call to serve in Exodus 4:1-17.

Around 140 people attended the service in person in the seminary's Chapel of the Sermon on the Mount. Nearly 80 people watched the event via livestream, with around a third of them viewing from outside of the United States.

In his commencement address, García noted that of the five times that Moses questions God's call to

“A leader takes responsibility and acts. If you see a need, probably God is calling you to be part of the solution.”

said García, of Bogotá, Colombia, who is General Secretary of Mennonite World Conference, an organization that serves around 1.5 million members representing 10,000 congregations from 58 countries.

In the biblical narratives, he continued, God invites people to act.

serve, only one of them upsets God: Moses' refusal to act.

“A leader takes responsibility and acts. If you see a need, probably God is calling you to be part of the

“God does not do it for us; God acts *through* us!” he said. “True leaders do not just manage. They create the conditions through which God's purposes can be fulfilled.”

García pointed out that in Exodus, *how* a leader commits is crucial, and he invited his listeners to reflect on three leadership lessons from Moses' story:

1. Commit by looking back at the past: García noted that God is revealed as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob four times in Exodus 3-4, and that God invites Moses to define his ministry and vision by looking back at the past.

“When we ignore our past, we ignore what God has been doing before,” he cautioned. “So let's build on what God has been doing through our forebears, through the people in our positions of leadership before us.”

2. Commit by seeing the best in others: In the second sign that God gave Moses to use in case the people didn't believe in his mission — Moses' hand being affected by leprosy — García saw a connection to God warning Moses to choose his words carefully in speaking about the people of Israel. In biblical
(continued on p. 2)



Top: Graduates celebrate in the AMBS Library following the service. Above: Commencement speaker César García, MA. (Commencement photos: Jason Bryant)

(continued from p. 1)

times, leprosy was considered to be related to punishment for derogatory speech.

"Remember that evil speech is one of the worst sins in the Scriptures," he said. "Develop the ability to see the best — the great — in other people, your colleagues and those you are leading."

3. Commit with vulnerability: García noted that when Moses tells God that he is not eloquent enough to carry out what God is asking of him, God does not deny his incapacity or punish him for

his thoughts about himself: "On the contrary, it seems that God agrees with him! I am more and more convinced that God chooses people to lead not because of their capacity and talents but because of their weaknesses."

García encouraged his listeners not to be afraid to recognize their weaknesses. He pointed out that

in Greek mythology, heroes face battles against their enemies, but in biblical narratives, "the major conflicts we have to face are against ourselves: our fears, hesitations and sense of unworthiness."

"That may be because in the Scriptures, it is not people's victories that make them leaders; it is how they cope with their defeats," he said. "You know you are called to lead because of your weaknesses because, thanks to them, your need for dependence on God is clear and evident."

After the 21 graduates received their degrees and certificates, **Leah Thomas**, PhD, Assistant

Professor of Pastoral Care and Director of Contextual Education, spoke of the nature and power of stories as they represent people's identity, relationships, history, culture and faith. She charged the graduates "to know, to live and to be a new story" — where the last becomes the first; where those on the margins are welcomed into the center; where hierarchies and systems of exclusion, oppression and injustice are upended; and where justice and shalom are present.

While living a life-giving story may seem daunting, she told them, the story of God-among-us reminds them that they are not alone: "This story of faith that you've been studying, experiencing and living at AMBS is one that invites you, again and again, to root yourself in the One who is with you always — the Spirit, the teller of new stories — who exists within you, around you and among all of us."

Drew Strait, PhD, Assistant Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins, carried forward Thomas' theme of stories as he offered a prayer of blessing for the graduates, citing key stories from the Scriptures and reminding the graduates that they are "active participants in the ongoing drama and journey of salvation history."

"As you leave this place, I want to be clear about one thing: in your very being, in simply being YOU: you're enough," he said.

A video of the service is available at ambs.ca/graduation. • — *Annette Brill Bergstresser*

"I am more and more convinced that God chooses people to lead not because of their capacity and talents but because of their weaknesses."

"In your very being, in simply being YOU: you're enough."

AMBS Window Summer 2022

Volume 32, Issue 2

Distributed two times a year as a supplement to *Anabaptist World* and *Canadian Mennonite*.

Editors: Annette Brill Bergstresser,
Melissa Troyer
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Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

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A seminary of
Mennonite Church USA and
Mennonite Church Canada

The Class of 2022

Graduates by degree

- 8 Master of Divinity (for the first time, all MDiv grads were women)
- 5 Master of Arts: Theology and Peace Studies
- 3 Master of Arts in Christian Formation
- 1 Master of Arts: Theology and Global Anabaptism (first graduate from this program, which began in 2019)
- 4 Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies

Graduates by ministry

- 5 discerning future options for mission, service, advocacy and/or volunteer work
- 5 serving in a church organization or institution
- 4 serving in pastoral ministry roles or seeking pastoral assignments
- 4 plan to pursue further graduate studies
- 2 serving in psychiatry or social work
- 2 plan to continue to volunteer in ministry and advocacy

Graduates by demographic

- 14 women
- 7 men
- 7 countries represented — Canada, Ethiopia, Honduras, Indonesia, Nigeria, Tanzania, U.S.
- 10 graduates who completed part or all of their seminary studies at a distance
- 10 graduates who lived on campus for at least part of their studies
- 10 graduates who previously earned graduate degrees from other schools
- 11 members of Mennonite Church USA
- 1 member of Mennonite Church Canada
- 3 members of Mennonite denominations around the world
- 6 members of other Christian traditions, including the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches Fellowship in Canada, Evangelical Church Winning All Gospel 4 Jenta, United Methodist Church, Vision Ministries Canada and non-denominational churches

Meet our new graduates!

Each graduate received one of the following degrees and certificates at AMBS's April 30 Commencement Service.

- MDiv* Master of Divinity
- MACF* Master of Arts in Christian Formation
- MATGA* Master of Arts: Theology and Global Anabaptism
- MATPS* Master of Arts: Theology and Peace Studies
- Certificate* Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies

- * Candidates who have six or fewer credits left to complete toward their degree
- Candidates who completed part or all of their degree or certificate at a distance



The Class of 2022 with Beverly Lapp, Vice President and Academic Dean (back row, left), and David Boshart, President (back row, right).



Janet Williams Abai (Jos, Plateau, Nigeria). *MATPS*. Janet is pursuing a PhD in Systematic Theology and Ethics at Villanova (Pennsylvania) University. Her home congregation is Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) in Jos, a congregation of ECWA Gospel 4 Jenta. She attends Grace Point, a nondenominational congregation in Philadelphia.



Evan J. Beck (Goshen, Indiana). *Certificate*. Evan plans to attend medical school at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. His home congregations are Waterford Mennonite Church in Goshen and Belmont Mennonite Church in Elkhart.



Beka Biratu (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia). *MACF*. Beka is waiting for an open door to serve God. His home congregation is Semen Meserete Kristos Church in Addis Ababa.



Rodney J.S. Deaton (Granger, Indiana). *Certificate*. Rod plans to pursue a Master of Divinity with a major in Theological Studies: Biblical Studies through AMBS while continuing work as an inpatient

psychiatrist for the Franciscan Health System of Northwest Indiana. His home congregation is Belmont Mennonite Church in Elkhart.



▸ **Taryn Ferrede** (Waterloo, Ontario, Canada). *MDiv: Theological Studies: Biblical Studies*. Taryn plans to pursue a Master of Theological Studies at Wycliffe College at the University of Toronto starting

in September. Her home congregation is Lincoln Road Chapel in Waterloo. She is the first student to complete her MDiv through AMBS after earning a Master of Theological Studies from Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo through a collaborative agreement between Grebel and AMBS.

My time at AMBS has prepared me to develop language to contribute to the discourse on theology, peacebuilding, conflict transformation and trauma intervention on both ministerial and academic levels. — Janet Williams Abai



* **Sara Marie Gurulé** (Fresno, California). *MATPS: Environmental Sustainability Leadership*. Sara would like to pursue work related to advocacy, particularly climate action as it intersects with

social justice. She also hopes to work more closely with groups such as the Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery Coalition. Her home congregation is Willow Avenue Mennonite Church in Clovis, California.



Kajsa Herrstrom (Champaign, Illinois). *MDiv: Christian Faith Formation.* Kajsa is considering returning to public library work while she discerns how to put her seminary education to use. Her home congregation is First Mennonite Church of Champaign-Urbana.



Joyce Peachey Lind (Harrisonburg, Virginia). *MDiv: Christian Faith Formation.* Joyce plans to continue serving as Associate Pastor of Community Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg.



***Esther Amos Muhagachi** (Dodoma, Tanzania, and Tarime, Mara Region, Tanzania). *MDiv: Christian Faith Formation.* In Esther's current role with the Christian Council of Tanzania, she is empowering women and girls in gender justice; offering capacity-building training for women who are leaders and pastors; and advocating for women in leadership. One of her dreams is to start an organization to help women realize their potential. Esther's home congregation is Shirati Congregation Tanzania, and she attends Iringa Road Mennonite Church in Dodoma.



Yeshiwas Amsalu Muleta (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada). *MACF.* Yeshiwas looks forward to engaging multicultural churches in North America as God opens opportunities. For the long term, he is equipping himself to be a bivocational minister in underserved communities of Ethiopia. Yeshiwas is a medical doctor certified by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates. His home congregation is the Ethiopian Evangelical Church in Ottawa.

“It was amazing to learn more about the Bible and different interpretations of it, a knowledge I did not have before.
— Karen J. Martinez



***Karen J. Martinez** (Garifuna; Honduras and Goshen, Indiana). *MDiv: Chaplaincy.* Karen will complete her Clinical Pastoral Education training in August. She would like to bridge her psychological

experience with a pastoral ministry assignment. She attends College Mennonite Church in Goshen.



Sarah Joan Miller (Middlebury, Indiana). *MDiv: Pastoral Ministry for United Methodists.* Sarah will be commissioned as a Provisional Elder in the United Methodist Church (UMC) and begin the process of ordination.

She also has been appointed to serve a new local church, New Hope UMC in Elkhart, starting in August. Her home congregation is Ford Street UMC in Lapel, Indiana; locally, she has been attending Faith UMC in Goshen, Indiana.

“The courses I took deepened my insights and my understanding of Christian faith, gave me the opportunity to understand other perspectives and helped me to be more intentional in my doing.
— Yeshiwas Amsalu Muleta



***Mariah Mohammed Omer** (Addis Ababa, Kolfe Keranio, Ethiopia). *MATPS.* Mariah plans to continue working at Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Washington, DC, as a Program Administrative

Manager in the Developmental Disabilities Department. Her home congregation is Madan Gospel and Song Ministry in Bole Bulbula, Addis Ababa; currently, she attends Goshen Mennonite Church in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

“Through classes, relationships, research and worship, I was challenged to explore my embedded theologies, to ask difficult questions and to explore fresh interpretations of Scripture and theological perspectives.
— Sarah Joan Miller



Andi (Andios) Oktavian Santoso (Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia). *MATPS*. In May, Andios began as Regional Administrator for Asia and Middle East for Mennonite Mission Network in Elkhart.

His home congregation is GKMI (Muria Christian Church of Indonesia) Anugerah, Jakarta, DKI Jakarta. Locally, he attends Pleasant View Church in Goshen, Indiana.



*>**Angie Smith** (Wichita, Kansas). *MDiv: Theological Studies: Biblical Studies*. Angie plans to continue to work as an insurance underwriter while also volunteering on behalf of climate justice issues. Her

home congregation is Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church in Wichita.

“The MDiv Connect program allowed me to work full time while attending seminary part time. I will forever look back on this time in seminary as one of the most fruitful times in my life. — Angie Smith



***Marisa Smucker** (Goshen, Indiana). *MACF*. Marisa plans to continue serving as Senior Executive for Ventures for Mennonite Mission Network in Elkhart. She attends Belmont Mennonite Church in Elkhart.



*>**Benjamin Earl Parker Sutter** (Kansas City, Kansas). *MATGA*. Ben is the first student to graduate from AMBS's fully online MATGA program, which launched in the fall of 2019. He plans to continue working for

AMBS as Digital Marketing Manager. His home congregation is Rainbow Mennonite Church in Kansas City, Kansas.



Kristen Swartley (Cedar Falls, Iowa). *MDiv: Theological Studies: Peace Studies*. Kristen is seeking a pastoral ministry assignment within Mennonite Church USA. Her home congregation is Cedar Falls

Mennonite Church; prior to coming to AMBS, she was part of Joy Mennonite Church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. She attends Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana.

I am especially excited about the combination of peace studies, theology and pastoral ministry that my program offered, and I look forward to using all the tools I have gained in new settings. — Kristen Swartley



>**Adela Friesen Wedler** (Edmonton, Alberta, Canada). *Certificate*. Adela plans to continue volunteering in her congregation and in area churches, seeking to apply her seminary learnings there. Her

home congregation is First Mennonite Church of Edmonton.



>**Jennie Wintermote** (North Newton, Kansas). *Certificate*. Jennie plans to continue in her part-time role as Director of the Resource Library of Western District Conference of Mennonite Church USA. She

is actively involved at First Mennonite Church in Newton and also was nurtured and shaped by Hope Mennonite Church in Wichita, Kansas.



Hailu Begashaw Wondafrash (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia). *MATPS*. Hailu plans to live with his wife in the U.S.; he dreams of going to Ethiopia to establish a faith-based organization working in peace and

justice. His home congregation is West Addis Ababa Hiwot Berhan Church.

The faculty not only pushed me to think deeply about what it means to be Christian, but also wholeheartedly supported me as a person with real-life emotions, challenges and needs. — Benjamin Earl Parker Sutter

Graduates receive awards



Teaching and Administrative Faculty members presented awards to selected candidates for graduation at the Dean's Luncheon on April 29. This year's recipients (above, left to right) are:

- **Kristen Swartley:** Award for Excellence in Theological Studies
- **Taryn Ferrede:** Award for Excellence in Biblical Interpretation

- **Andi (Andios) Oktavian Santoso:** Heart of the Community Award
- **Esther Amos Muhagachi:** Award for Excellence in Missional Leadership
- **Sarah Joan Miller:** Award for Excellence in Pastoral Ministry
- **Yeshiwas Amsalu Muleta:** Award for Excellence in Christian Formation
- **Janet Williams Abai:** Commendation in Peace Studies

In support of their continued connection with AMBS, graduates also received two issues of *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology* from the Institute of Mennonite Studies; access to the Atlas for Alum database from the AMBS Library; and a complimentary registration to a Leadership Clinic in 2023 from the Church Leadership Center. The Admissions Team presented each graduate with a "golden ticket" — good for one waived \$50 Admissions Application fee — to share with a prospective student. •

AMBS and Meserete Kristos Seminary celebrate milestone in MA partnership



Credit: David Boshart

Ethiopian MATGA students taking the Christian Leadership in the 21st Century course introduce their group presentation for the final project with a song: (l. to r.) Yodahe Wake, Tariku Wondimu, Melaku Kewe, Eden Wale, Tadesse Wami and Abenazer Tadesse.

After a delay of two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ethiopian students in AMBS's Master of Arts: Theology and Global Anabaptism (MATGA) program have finally been able to gather for the in-person portion of their curriculum in Ethiopia.

The students are enrolled in a customized version of the program that AMBS is providing

in Ethiopia through a partnership with Meserete Kristos Seminary (MKS) in Debre Zeit/Bishoftu, with an emphasis on peace studies. They take both in-person courses that engage the content within the Ethiopian context and regular online courses in which they interact with AMBS students from across the world. Until now, they've only been able to do the latter.

Between May 16 and July 1, three AMBS faculty taught intensive courses in person at MKS: **James R. Krabill**, PhD, Core Adjunct Faculty, taught *God's Shalom and the Church's Witness*; **David Boshart**, PhD, President, taught *Christian Leadership in the 21st Century*; and **Drew Strait**, PhD, Assistant Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins, taught *Biblical Foundations for Peace and Justice*.

The MKS-AMBS partnership launched in 2019 after MKS leaders invited AMBS to help them develop a graduate-level program to educate leaders for the Meserete Kristos Church (the Ethiopian Mennonite Church). In 2021–22, 27 of AMBS's 42 Ethiopian students were enrolled in MATGA cohorts. • —Annette Brill Bergstresser

The AMBS learning community is experiencing several employee transitions this summer:

Daniel B. Grimes, MPA, Vice President for Advancement and Enrollment, retired June 30. Grimes joined AMBS in January 2015 as Director of Enrollment and Financial Aid. In 2019, he was promoted to his current role, adding oversight of the Advancement Department.

"It was a daunting challenge to oversee the span of these two departments, and Daniel has ably risen to it," said **David Boshart**, PhD, President. "I've been deeply impressed by his drive to meet his goals, overseeing the strongest fundraising season AMBS has perhaps ever seen, as well as a 26-percent increase in student enrollment in 2021–22."

Under Grimes' leadership, enrollment in AMBS graduate programs is at the highest level since 2010. The number of international graduate students has increased as well, constituting almost 43 percent of the student body in 2021–22. In 2020, Grimes also led AMBS to expand its scholarships and need-based financial aid to increase the affordability and accessibility of its graduate programs.

The Development and Admissions teams will be overseen by **Bob Yoder**, DMin, CFRM, Director of Development, and **Mary Ann Weber**, MA, Director of Enrollment.

Jeff Marshall, MDiv, Director of Maintenance and Campus Safety, is retiring July 31 after more than 11 years of service.

Vice President for Administration and Chief Financial Officer **Deanna Risser**, MBA, praised Marshall's prompt follow-through, creativity in solving problems, strong communication skills and attention to details.

"Jeff's deep care for AMBS students, employees, facilities and grounds is evident in his careful work, often done behind the scenes," she reflected. "His efficiency and proactive approach have helped AMBS keep on top of safety and compliance issues, as well as building upkeep and renovation. He is always finding ways to improve things."

Major projects that Marshall led and worked on included installing steel roofing on Waltner Hall and other campus buildings; remodeling the seminary's lecture hall into three flexible multipurpose rooms; transforming the former bookstore space into the Admissions Office; and renovating a house that was donated to the seminary.

Assistant Director of Maintenance **Norm Cender** will take on the director role in August.

Brandon Board, MLIS, ended his role as Information Services and Online Learning Librarian in May after having served since 2014.



Daniel Grimes



Jeff Marshall



Brandon Board



Henok Mekonin

"Brandon's ease at learning new skills, his communication abilities and his creativity in problem-solving have been tremendous assets," said **Karl Stutzman**, MLS, Director of Library Services.

Henok T. Mekonin (MA 2021) began May 1 as full-time Global Leadership Collaborative (GLC) Specialist, with funding for half of his role coming from Mennonite Mission Network. He has been assisting AMBS leaders with intercultural consulting for and communication with Ethiopian MA: Theology and Global Anabaptism students (see p. 6). In his new role, he will also support the planning, implementation and evaluation of AMBS's GLC initiatives more broadly. •

Read the full articles: amsb.ca/news-and-updates

AMBS approved to offer Doctor of Ministry

In June 2022, AMBS received full accreditation approval from the Association of Theological Schools to offer a competency-based **Doctor of Ministry in Leadership** (DMin) beginning in January 2023. As the only DMin available in the U.S. developed from an Anabaptist perspective, it is designed for mid-career pastors and leaders from diverse Christian faith traditions.

Students can complete the 32-credit-hour program in three years, taking nine to 12 credits per academic year while based in their professional ministry or leadership context. The curriculum consists of core leadership courses, a customized competency-development plan of study, a doctoral research project and a leadership portfolio. Much of the coursework can be done online, with weeklong visits to AMBS in January for in-person coursework. Students will be part of a cohort of peer learners; a faculty mentor and an advisory ministry group will guide their studies.

Beverly Lapp, EdD, Vice President and Academic Dean, noted that the program's design and focus emerged from consultations with pastors and leaders who identified resonance between Anabaptist values and current leadership needs in the church.

"At each step of the extensive accreditation approval process, enthusiasm has grown among the faculty for how a professional doctorate in a competency-based design aligns with AMBS's educational mission to strengthen and build capacity for leadership of thriving communities of faith and action," she said.

Learn more: amsb.ca/dmin •

Learn about Anabaptism in your own context

What does it mean to read the Bible like an Anabaptist? Why does Anabaptist history matter today?

AMBS's noncredit short courses wrestle with these questions and many more.



- **Exploring Peace and Justice in the Bible** with Drew Strait, PhD, and Jackie Wyse-Rhodes, PhD | Sept. 14 – Oct. 25, 2022
- **Exploring Anabaptist History and Theology** with Jamie Pitts, PhD | Oct. 26 – Dec. 13, 2022
- **Understanding Anabaptist Approaches to Scripture: What's Different and Why?** with David Cramer, PhD, and Susannah Larry, PhD | Feb. 1 – March 14, 2023
- **Transforming Congregational Conflict and Communication** with Betty Pries, PhD | April 12 – May 23, 2023

Anabaptist Short Course Bundle: Sign up for all four short courses above to get the bundle discount – only \$995 total. (Regular cost: \$350 per course)

Learn more: ambs.ca/short-courses

NEW FOUR-WEEK SHORT COURSE!

Resisting Christian Nationalism with the Gospel of Peace with Drew Strait, PhD | April 12 – May 9, 2023

UPCOMING OFFERINGS

Political Idolatry: Countering Christian Nationalism

Assistant Professor **Drew Strait**, PhD, provides an overview of the destructive force of White Christian nationalism and offers practical tools to help with tough conversations to bear witness to the gospel of peace.

- **Free webinar recording (60 min.)**
- **Free group study video (30 min.)** with discussion questions
- **Online short course: Resisting Christian Nationalism with the Gospel of Peace:** April 12 – May 9
ambs.ca/political-idolatry

Journey: A Missional Leadership Development Program

This distance-friendly nondegree program offers mentor-mentee partnerships and community support.
ambs.ca/journey

Pastors & Leaders 2023

Feb. 13–16: Save the date!
ambs.ca/pastors-and-leaders

Semester One courses

(Aug. 30 – Dec. 9) Distance-friendly options include Anabaptist Approaches to Scripture; Christianity in Latin America; Isaiah; Spiritual Practices: Prayer and Scripture; Thinking Ethically; Understanding Trauma in Ministry and Peacebuilding; and more! In-person courses are also available. Nonadmitted students get 50% off their first three credit hours. Some courses may be audited.

ambs.ca/upcoming-courses

You *can* afford seminary!

Learn about AMBS's generous need-based financial aid, scholarships and church matching grants that can help you study either on campus or at a distance, full time or part time.

ambs.ca/tuition

Invite AMBS

Faculty members are available to speak on trauma-informed caregiving, undoing racism, intercultural competence, improvisational leadership and more.

Ask about virtual visits!

ambs.ca/invite

Ministry Integrity Circles

Pastors, need help with ministry transitions or significant challenges? This program provides the support of consultants within a community of peers. It is free to participants who begin in fall 2022. The Fall 2022 cohort starts Oct. 24; apply by Sept. 24.

ambs.ca/integrity-circles

Transition to Leadership

This program guides new pastors during the crucial first years of ministry. It is free to participants who begin in fall 2022. The Fall 2022 cohort starts Nov. 10; apply by Oct. 10. ambs.ca/transition-to-leadership

Free journals online

- *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology* 23.1 (Spring 2022): "Music and the arts"
ambs.ca/vision
- *Anabaptist Witness* 9.1 (April 2022): "Mission and Formation"
anabaptistwitness.org

PROMOTIONAL SUPPLEMENT

Calendar

Nationwide

Until Sept. 4: MC Canada is again offering virtual worship services this summer, led by congregations from across the country. They can be watched at MC Canada's website at mennonitechurch.ca/worshipservices. For more information, contact Darryl Neustaedter Barg, MC Manitoba's director of communications, at dnbarg@mennochurch.mb.ca.

Saskatchewan

Sept. 17: Shekinah Move-A-Thon, a day of fundraising and fun to support the work and mission of Shekinah Retreat Centre. Updates coming soon.

Manitoba

To Sept. 10: "Views from Manitoba, 1890-1940" photo exhibit at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery at CMU, in Winnipeg,

featuring photos by four Manitoba Mennonite photographers.

Ontario

Aug. 14 to 26: Ontario Mennonite Music Camp, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. Open to students who have finished grades 6 to 12, with a leadership-training program for students who have finished grades 11 or 12. For more information, or to register, visit bit.ly/34Hb3ch.

Aug. 22-26: MCC Ontario is hosting a True North Learning Tour with the

Indigenous Neighbours program in Timmins. Contact info @mcco.ca for more information.

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



Classifieds

Announcement

New to Montreal & looking for a church community?

Join us at **Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal** located in the heart of the city.

To learn more, email pastor@mfmtl.org or visit our website at www.mfmtl.org.

Employment Opportunities



Employment Opportunity Executive Minister (MC B.C.)

Mennonite Church British Columbia (MC B.C.) is looking for an **Executive Minister (EM)** to work with the MC B.C. Leadership Board to shape and implement the mission and vision of MC B.C.

The EM will help foster and sustain spiritually vibrant congregations and develop and mentor leaders. The chosen candidate will be someone who assists in shaping, defining, and cultivating MC B.C.'s Anabaptist vision of faith for today. The EM will build healthy connections, grow community, and meaningfully engage with our culture and God's world in transformative ways.

Ideal start date is Fall 2022, for handover with current EM.

Find the job description here:
mcbc.ca/resources/employment

The application deadline is **August 30, 2022**.

Please send cover letter and resume to emstg@mcbc.ca.

All interested are encouraged to apply, and only the applicants that meet the expectations of the role will be contacted.



Employment Opportunities Elementary Teachers

Tween Valley Christian School is a private accredited school near Taber, Alberta. We are seeking 2 individuals to teach elementary starting in the fall of 2022. Individual Teachers should possess a strong desire and devotion to the teaching position. The successful candidate should have a strong Christian Education philosophy who loves children and accepts this position as a ministry. An appreciation and understanding of the Low German Language and the Mennonite Culture would be a definite asset.

Qualifications:

Must have a Bachelor of Education degree and must hold or be eligible for an Alberta teaching certificate.

How to Apply:

Application package must include the following: a cover letter indicating the position applied for, résumé, contact information for two references (from your most recent teaching experiences), and a brief philosophy of Christian Education.

This position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found. Interested, qualified applicants are asked to submit by email a complete application package as described above to: agathaklassen@tvcs2016.com.

For more information regarding this position, contact the principal of the school at Tween Valley Christian School through email to agathaklassen@tvcs2016.com or visit the website at tweenvalleychristianschool.weebly.com



Watch parties



SCREEN SHOT BY FELIPE GONZALIA

About 70 people attended the opening Mennonite World Conference Assembly 17 local watch party at First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont. Technical difficulties—caused by a lack of bandwidth at the source in Indonesia—meant the video and audio feed was ‘terrible’ according to Ray Brubacher, one of the organizers of the watch parties that happened every day from July 5 though July 10. While the technical issues were rectified on the following days, attendance was lower at subsequent events.



PHOTO BY RAY BRUBACHER

Meheret Evangelical Church in Kitchener, Ont., hosted the final ‘glocal’ watch party of Indonesia 2022. This congregation was chosen because the next Mennonite World Conference assembly will be in Ethiopia. The service was opened with a solo in Amharic by one of its members, and then the 40 or so participants were welcomed by Pastor Yared. ‘It’s been quite a week,’ says Ray Brubacher, one of the organizers of the watch parties. ‘I would not call it a success; nor would I call it a failure. It was a good experiment that hopefully will inform Mennonite World Conference on how to improve global virtual sharing of future assemblies and perhaps other events. I think this type of “hybrid connectedness” has great potential for strengthening the communion of Mennonite-related churches around the world.’