



Vol.3  
Tuesday, June 21  
2016 Assembly

*God~Faith-People  
begins  
July 6*

[home.mennonitechurch.ca/  
saskatoon2016/](http://home.mennonitechurch.ca/saskatoon2016/)



Photo provided

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### BY THE NUMBERS

502 registrants

299 Adult Delegates

36 Area Church Delegates

1 Youth Delegate

AT CLOSE OF ONLINE REGISTRATION

t @mennochurch  
#menno2016

f search  
"Assembly 2016"

## Covenant and the Old Testament:

### *Engaging the realities and messiness of life*

Safwat Marzouk grew up in a village in Upper Egypt where every day he attended the Presbyterian church, Synod of the Nile, with his friends. He grew to love God's word and pursued theological studies.

But during his later years of study at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo, attitudes toward the Old Testament (OT) and Egypt began to bother him.

"The negative portrayal of Egypt and the abuse of the Bible in politics and the marginalization of the OT as a result of its abuse in politics made me think more about our ways of engaging with the OT as Middle Eastern Christians," he said in an email interview.

Marzouk is sharing his passion for the OT as keynote speaker at Mennonite Church Canada's Assembly 2016. The Assembly theme, *God~Faith-People*, is paraphrased from the OT text Jeremiah 31:33: "This is the covenant . . . I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

"The idea of covenant is central in the Old Testament," Marzouk writes. "God calls God's people to a covenantal relationship with God, where God is their deliverer and liberator, and the people are called to become covenant partners through their obedience to the instructions or the teachings."

Now Assistant Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Marzouk strives

to help students see the transcendence and immensity of God as a friend and as an "other." He hopes to invite future leaders and the church to wrestle with OT text and its context rather than simply dismissing it or "cherry picking" from it.

"I teach the Old Testament because it creates an essential space for us to engage with the realities and the messiness of life. The Old Testament opens a space for us to think about who we are as a community of faith in relation to other communities of faith who hold these stories as sacred to them; thus I am interested in reading Scriptures with the religious 'other' in mind."

Marzouk points out that in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 36-37, the people of Israel struggle to make sense of a catastrophic exile that the prophets view as divine judgement. It's a time of scrutiny and self-criticism. It's also a time of despair. Yet the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel speak of a transformative covenantal initiative on God's part. God wants to restore the relationship.

"The covenant is a covenant of grace, even in the Old Testament," Marzouk says. "The covenant is between God and a community of faith. Thus we need to take seriously how we relate to one another as members of the covenant community."

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Marzouk notes we experience nostalgia towards the Pentecost and long for the vision of Revelation and he asks, "What about now?" Why can't the church here and now draw from the past to learn how to deal with differences in the present? What kind of a community does God of the covenant envision for us now and in the future?

**Safwat Marzouk** lives in Goshen IN with his wife Carolyn, their daughter Calista and son Julian, and his in-laws, Eve and Karam. The Marzouks try to visit Safwat's parents and siblings in Egypt every other year, and spend a lot of time watching and playing soccer.



Join today

# #CovenantCrew2.0

in creating the church of tomorrow

## Grab your paddles!

Canoe trip, anyone? Mennonite Church Canada Youth Assembly 2016 may have been cancelled due to low registration, but that hasn't dampened the desire of the host Area Church, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan (MC Sask), to create a fun-filled, faith-forming get-together. As a result, they are inviting youth from across the country to sign up for #CovenantCrew 2.0—an event that includes a 2-day canoe trip.

The event will coincide with Assembly 2016 dates, July 6-10, and the canoe-trip portion is facilitated by Churchill River Outfitters in Missinipe, Sask., about 500 kilometers northeast of Saskatoon. Guest speakers include Chris Lenshyn, an associate pastor at Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford who was originally scheduled to speak at the cancelled event, and Ric Driedger, owner of Churchill River Outfitters. Driedger is a member of Rosthern MC and served as interim pastor at Zoar MC in Waldheim, Sask. earlier this year.

"I would rather be canoeing while thinking about faith than thinking about canoeing while sitting in Church," Driedger says.

When anticipated Youth Assembly registration numbers did not materialize before June 1, the date when commitments had to be signed for venue rentals, meals, lodging, and certain programming plans, the event was cancelled.

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*"Spending time unplugged in community, learning about God's Covenants with us and working together to dream of a new church are all possible..."*

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The new event doesn't require a minimum number of participants. "An overnight canoe trip is something that is great with a smaller size," says Krista Loewen, who leads the planning for #CovenantCrew 2.0. "It allows us to build community, a sense of spiritual

and physical adventure, and worship in nature. Youth are so over programmed these days—the church needs to offer alternatives to the ethos of productivity, individualism and consumerism. Spending time unplugged in community, learning about God's Covenants with us and working together to dream of a new church are all possible while visiting Churchill River Canoe Outfitters."

But #CovenantCrew2.0 is more than a canoe trip. When the canoes are docked on Friday evening, the youth will return to Saskatoon and stay at the Holiday Inn Express so they can take part in service opportunities in the city. "We will also be integrating with the MC Canada Assembly and representing the countless youth across Canada for whom the Church is important," Loewen says.

"We want to honor and celebrate the youth of our church by inviting them to join in this adventure!"

Loewen hopes that youth from Area Churches across the country will participate in the event.

Learn more and register at [www.covenantcrew2.com](http://www.covenantcrew2.com).

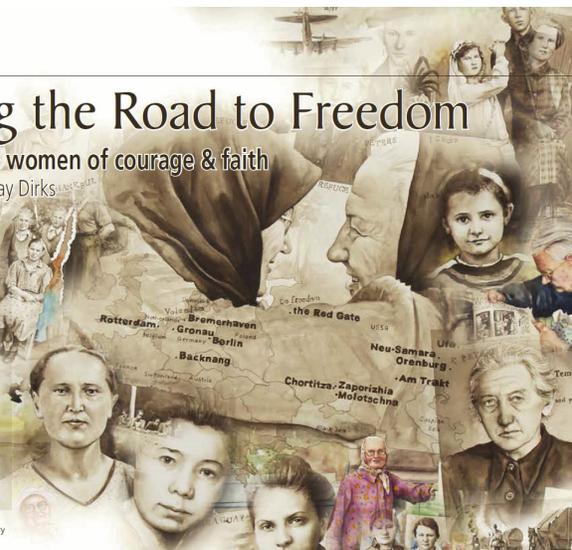
## Along the Road to Freedom

Mennonite women of courage & faith  
paintings by Ray Dirks

art  
stories  
tragedy  
human rights  
dignity  
strength  
vulnerability  
loss  
honour  
love  
family  
faith  
even forgiveness

26 paintings  
7 didactic panels

a project of the MHC Gallery



## Assembly 2016 to feature *Along the Road to Freedom* exhibit

Originally scheduled to end before Assembly 2016, *Along the Road to Freedom*, an exhibit by Ray Dirks, Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery curator and artist, is being held over at the Diefenbaker Canada Centre in Saskatoon throughout Assembly week.

*Along the Road to Freedom* is a series of paintings that tell the stories of mothers, daughters, grandmothers and sisters who led their families out of persecution and suffering to lives of freedom and peace. The exhibit is touring North America and appeared last year at Mennonite World Conference in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

**Diefenbaker Canada Centre** is located on the University of Saskatoon campus. It is open from 9:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Friday, and from noon to 4:30 p.m. on weekends.



Still images from Reconciliation Needs Us All

# Reconciliation Needs Us All

This June, Mennonite Church Canada is honouring the first anniversary of the final Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) event with the release of a new three part video series exploring the TRC's 94 Calls to Action.

Viewers will learn about those calls through key historical aspects of residential schools, story excerpts of survivors, and responses from a selection of settler Mennonites in attendance at the Ottawa 2015 event. Assembly 2016 is bringing attention to the TRC's

Call to Action #49 to repudiate "concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, such as the Doctrine of Discovery." (DOD)

The video provides helpful background information to an Assembly seminar, the Doctrine of Discovery and the Church, and a motion to repudiate the DOD on the road to implementing TRC recommendations to uphold Indigenous rights.

*Reconciliation Needs Us All* is available free via [www.commonword.ca/go/604](http://www.commonword.ca/go/604).

Additional recommended resources for those who want to explore the topic in depth are available at [www.commonword.ca/go/601](http://www.commonword.ca/go/601).



## Meet EVI: video renews call to conversation

The Emerging Voices Initiative has sparked a fresh stream of conversations on the future of Mennonite Church Canada, and a new video released by the group provides a condensed explanation of its formation, the conversations it seeks to facilitate, and the invitation it extends.

To watch the new video, visit: [emergingvoiceonline.wordpress.com/](http://emergingvoiceonline.wordpress.com/)



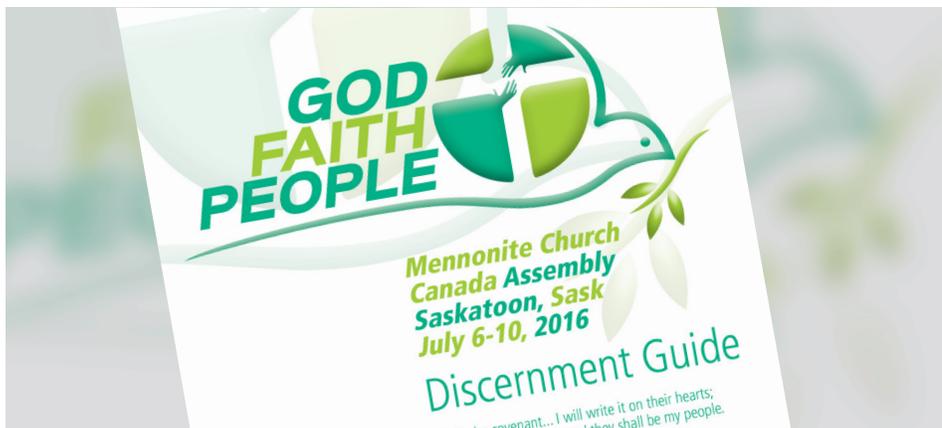
**Conrad Grebel**  
University College

## Grebel Party with Walter Klaassen

**Thursday, July 7, 5-7pm**  
Little Bird Patisserie & Cafe at 258 Ave B South in Saskatoon

Grebel alumni and friends are invited to join President Susan Schultz Huxman, Grebel Board Chair Geraldine Balzer and others from the College to celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of Walter Klaassen.

RSVP to [aenns@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:aenns@uwaterloo.ca). [grebel.ca/events](http://grebel.ca/events)



# Prepare to engage: 2016 *Discernment Guide* now available

The Assembly 2016 *Discernment Guide* is available for [download](#).

## DISCERNMENT GUIDE AT A GLANCE

- Being a Faithful Church (BFC)
- Future Directions Task force Report
- The Church and the Doctrine of Discovery (DOD)
- The Resolution on Palestine & Israel
- National church budget 2016-2017
- Nominations

This year's guide presents background information on issues that will be discussed at the national faith family gathering. It includes anticipated motions regarding the Being a Faithful Church (BFC) Task Force and the Future Directions Task Force (FDTF), including an amendment to the latter motion that arose in response to Area Church concerns; the 2016-2017 national church budget; and the election slate for the General Board.

The following two resolutions are being brought to the Assembly by delegates:

**The Church and the Doctrine of Discovery** (DOD) was created in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and still serves as a legal document that supports a worldview of

oppression. In Call to Action #49, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) calls upon "all religious denominations and faith groups who have not already done so to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius." The motions relating to this document ask the national church to repudiate the DOD and work towards implementing other aspects of the TRC's final report that uphold Indigenous rights.

**The Resolution on Palestine and Israel** was brought forth by Byron Rempel-Burkholder after he and his wife Melita spent a few months in short term ministry at Bethlehem Bible College in Palestine. This resolution approaches another historic justice issue and comes "in response to the plea of Palestinian Christians that the global church come alongside the Palestinian people as they suffer under Israel's 49-year military occupation of their lands: the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza." On a [blog](#) following their experience, the Rempel-Burkholders state: "We lament that many Mennonites still support a traditional stance of unqualified support for the state of Israel (influenced largely by Christian Zionism and a particular eschatology), even while contributing generously to charitable and development work in Palestine for almost 70 years." Explore their insights at <https://byronandmelitainpalestine.wordpress.com/>

Guidelines for presenting additional resolutions from the floor are presented on **page 2** of the *Discernment Guide*.

## Meet Witness Workers

Learn more about Mennonite Church Canada's global work and service opportunities by meeting international ministry workers who are attending *God~Faith~People*.

### Long-term workers (2 years plus)

**Greg Rabus and Jennifer Otto**  
(Germany)

**Mike and Cheryl Nimz**  
(United Kingdom)

**Tom and Christine Poovong**  
(Thailand)

**Bock Ki Kim and Sook Kyoung Park**  
(South Korea)

**Dann Pantoja**  
(Philippines)

**George & Tobia Veith**  
(China)

**Jeanette Hanson**  
(China, serving from Canada)

### Short-term workers (3 months to 1 year)

**Erna and Henry Funk**

**Norm Dyck**

**Jack and Irene Suderman**

**Jerry Buhler**

**Palmer Becker**



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the **Assembled** News

Receive daily updates on events and happenings during Assembly 2016.

[commonword.ca/go/542](http://commonword.ca/go/542)