

Together for the ride!



-Deborah Froese

Brian Quan grew up in a Mennonite congregation but says he's just getting his feet wet on his Anabaptist journey. "I'm trying to adjust to a new culture, learning a new lingo – and the names!"

Quan, pastor of English Ministries at Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church, says the congregation is largely comprised of church planters' children, a generation caught between Canadian and Chinese cultures and creating a unique culture of their own.

"I'm trying to raise my Mennoniteness by reading *The Canadian Mennonite*," he says.

He draws an analogy from the Assembly 2014 theme, *Wild Hope: Faith for an unknown season* and the corresponding scripture text (Mark 4:35-41) where Jesus and his disciples are tossed about on a stormy sea. Like disciples following Jesus' lead, Mennonite Church Canada leaders are wrestling with a wild storm and trying to navigate our boat – the national church – through wild times.

"As people of God," Quan says, "we're in this boat together."



Wild Hope, Divine Hope

-Deborah Froese

Despite a heavy heart at the death of a beloved niece earlier in the day, Norman Meade, a respected Winnipeg Métis elder, addressed the opening session of Assembly 2014 on July. He welcomed delegates and other attendees into the land near the Assiniboine forest and river, the territory of First Nations Treaty One, and the land where Métis travelled by horse and cart. He gave thanks to the Creator for the spirit that belongs to all of us.

About the Assembly theme Meade said, "Wild Hope – I like to call it Divine Hope. We need Divine hope to give us strength to go forward. . . it's only through the Divine strength of God that we can look forward to a better future for all of us."

Meade and his wife Thelma live in Winnipeg where they have been part of the Manitoba Partnership Circle, a Mennonite Church Manitoba group of Native and non-Native congregations, since it began in 2004. He is co-pastor of the Manigotagan Chapel.



Listowel Mennonite Church's Rev. Norm Dyck and Mennonite Foundation of Canada's Sherri Grosz, veteran assembly goers, invite the 40-50 newcomers to Assembly 2014 to share their selfies on Twitter @mennochurch #mennopeg or Mennonite Church Canada's Facebook page.

Church Business Snapshot

-Staff

On a stage framed on one side by a hanging canoe and on the other by a draped boat sail, worship leader Irma Fast Dueck introduced moderator Hilda Hildebrand as the captain of Mennonite Church Canada. She then gave Hildebrand a bright yellow lifejacket as a show of support for her role.

The gesture vividly depicted the heart of Assembly 2014 scripture theme text, Mark 4:35-41, concerning uncertainty on a stormy sea and the “wild hope” present in faith, and launched the business session.

Following more formal aspects of the meeting – like adopting minutes from Assembly 2012 and approving actions of the General Board taken since that time, Dan Dyck, Director, Communications, offered a twist on typical Council reporting. He pulled together a panel of Executives and presented them with lively, engaging questions. Some were playful, like “You’re at communion. Wine or grape juice?” or “loaves or fishes?” but others dug to the heart of ministry.

When Lisa Carr Pries, chair of Christian Formation Council was asked about the biggest decision she had ever been involved with, she pointed to her involvement with a task force created to determine how to support and encourage pastoral leadership.

Randy Wiebe, Chief Financial Officer for Mennonite Church presented the financial report. Delegates received and approved the financial statements of the fiscal year ended Jan. 31, 2014, and approved a budget for the fiscal year ending Jan. 31, 2015 – a flat budget based on the same income as received the year prior, as per policy.

John Goossen, Treasurer, presented a motion to defer an earlier decision to alter Mennonite Church Canada’s fiscal year-end from January to October, citing new information on the impact of this change. Delegates were asked to “postpone implementation or reversal of the decision until the completion of the Future Directions Task Force process which has the potential to alter organizational structure and direction, and in any case, to bring the issue back to the Assembly by 2016.” The motion was carried.

Mark Bigland-Pritchard, Osler Mennonite Church, representing a group called Fossil Free Menno, presented a resolution calling the national church family



To augment their written reports, a panel of Mennonite Church Canada Council Executives respond to questions from Dan Dyck, Director, Communications. From left to right: Karen Martens Zimmerly (Denominational Minister); Dave Bergen, Executive Minister, Formation; Lisa Carr Pries, Chair, Christian Formation Council; Vince Friesen, Chair, Church Engagement Council; Vic Thiessen, Chief Administrative Officer; Tim Froese, Executive Minister, Witness; Norm Dyck, Chair, Witness Council. Photo by Dan Dyck.

to take immediate action on climate change. The two page resolution can be found at <http://home.mennonitechurch.ca/events/Winnipeg2014>, under the heading, “Assembly Documents.” Resolutions Committee Chair Chris Lenshyn told delegates that the resolution arrived too late to integrate its discussion at this assembly. It has been referred to the General Board at its fall meeting.

Moderator Hilda Hildebrand introduced the nominations slate. Nominations will close on Friday afternoon. On Saturday afternoon delegates will affirm the nomination slate, and hear any additional resolutions.

Guests also heard ministry reports from Christian Peacemaker Teams, Mennonite Creation Care Network, and Canadian Mennonite University – the host facility for Assembly 2014.

Willard Metzger, Executive Director, called the evening to a close with prayer requests for the wife and family of former moderator Ron Sawatzky, who passed away unexpectedly on Friday, June 28, and for the many farmers, families and First Nations affected by recent floods in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

From the Archives

Future Directions Task Force, 1970s style

A 1976 report entitled *Congregations - Go and Tell!*, by the late Henry Gerbrandt, lays out the groundwork for changes and challenges Mennonites had encountered since arriving in Canada, as well as those they would face in the future. Gerbrandt wrote that everything Mennonites have built up is collapsing. Here are a few excerpts from his report:

- “Our oases and neat enclaves are falling apart. We are now being assimilated into the Canadian societies just as our forefathers were in Holland, Germany, and Switzerland.”
- “So much of North America’s new religious movement is a strange fundamentalist-political mixture.”

- “Though people grasp for supernatural phenomena, the Canadian people are still turning away from the institutional church in large numbers... Millions believe the Church is no longer relevant, and for them it has not been.”

In this photo, Henry Gerbrandt addresses the 1983 annual sessions of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. Gerbrandt was a missionary in Mexico and Germany, a teacher, pastor, and Executive Secretary of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. He passed away on Dec. 23, 2010.

-compiled by Dan Dyck, research by Conrad Stoesz



In the Holy Land

-Deborah Froese

For Kara and Jerry Buhler, embarking on a short term ministry assignment with Mennonite Church Canada fulfilled a long-time dream. When a position of interest to Kara became available in the library at Bethlehem Bible College (BBC) in Palestine, the time seemed right. Jerry took a sabbatical from his role as Area Church Minister in Mennonite Church Saskatchewan and they headed east.

From Sept. 1, 2013 to Feb. 27, 2014, Kara drew from her experience in the Alta. and Sask. public library systems, and Jerry found a change of pace with general maintenance around the college and transportation duties.

Their daughter Laura joined them for three of the six months. She provided secretarial assistance to Alex Awad, BBC Dean of Students and Director of the Shepherd's Society, a ministry of the college.

As they offered practical assistance to BBC, the Buhler's perspective of the Holy Land broadened. They immersed themselves in Arabic language lessons, Palestinian society and culture, and made new friends. Most striking were their encounters with Palestinians and the daily challenges they face as



In Bethlehem, Kara and Jerry Buhler discovered a distinct aversion to throwing bread away. Instead of dumping it in the trash, leftover bread was carefully placed on ledges, walls and fences for birds and other animals to eat. Perhaps the careful regard for bread is connected with its biblical perception as a sacred symbol, they mused in their blog. Photo by Jerry Buhler.

an oppressed people whose every move is governed. Foriegners like the Buhlers have an easier time crossing the checkpoint into Jerusalem, for example.

"The Bethlehem economy is heavily dependent on tourism, which must be a conflicted kind of reality," Jerry reflected. To accommodate tourists who can move about more freely than local Palestinians, shop owners commonly speak multiple languages – and one whom the Buhlers met indicated that he knew 14. "To survive and make a living in an occupied and oppressed area requires an industrious spirit."

"I observed similarities between the occupation there and the way that our aboriginal neighbors have been and are being treated here," Jerry Buhler stated in an email interview. "The occupation makes it increasingly difficult to make education and career plans, which often results in Palestinians leaving their home country."

The Buhlers encourage Westerners to get to know Palestinians beyond the perspectives offered through popular media.

They belong to Mount Royal Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, Sask.

Spiritual wrestling in an unknown season

-Deborah Froese

David Driedger remains passionate about the church, but it's not an easy passion. He continually wrestles with theology, his understanding of who God is, and how to live in the name of God.

Driedger is a member of the national church's Formation Council and an Associate Minister at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. He grew up on a farm in southern Manitoba where he attended a Sommerfeld Mennonite congregation with his parents and two sisters. In his junior high school years, his attendance declined.

"I bounced around quite a bit, connecting with different youth groups," he says.

By late high school, wrestling with larger questions about life brought him to church – but his quest was not over. "I moved around quite a bit denominationally before coming back to the Mennonite church," he says.

About 5 years ago, he was drawn into a variety of conversations about religion and theology. As he tried to explain his beliefs, his conversation partners pushed back. They told him that he was protecting his perspectives from change because he framed them as "Christian."

"I was offended at first and often responded defensively," David says. "But in the course of these conversations I came to realize that I was protecting my own way

of thinking, that no matter what someone said about particular aspects of my religion, I would not accept, I would not even be able to hear them, because I disqualified their view ahead of time."

That realization forced him to consider what it would mean to think and listen more openly. "I had to put aside some long held convictions, but at the same time, some of my other perspectives became stronger and clearer. This experience continues to shape me and how I live and work in the church."

Driedger says he hopes that the experience of *Wild Hope: Faith for an unknown season* will help people understand what it is to open themselves to others in the world, and to wrestle together with what it means to live in the name of God. "If there is a sense of wild hope, it's in the ability to trust that if God is a living God, God will be present as we attend to others beyond boundaries of fear and preconceptions."

Hear some of David Driedger's perspectives on faith and theology during worship this morning at 8:45, where he will serve as keynote speaker.



The Assembled News is the daily news sheet for the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly 2014 in Wpg. Man. Full colour editions of Assembled News will be available in PDF format at home.mennonitechurch.ca/events/Winnipeg2014. We will print an ecologically friendly quantity of hard copies for distribution on site – please share. Comments, questions, and affirmations can be sent to ddyck@mennonitechurch.ca.

Editors: Dan Dyck, Deb Froese; Design by Ryan Roth Bartel

Homes from dirt to be typhoon safe

-Deborah Froese

In the Philippines, safe, sustainable, low-cost homes for Typhoon Haiyan survivors are rising from the soil. Literally. And Mennonite Church Canada worker Darnell Barkman is helping to lead the way.

The *Balay Kubliban* project – or “safe house” – erects home from earthbags. Similar to the sandbags commonly found in flood risk areas of Canada, earthbags are filled with local soils, creating relatively inexpensive building materials with minimal or non-existent shipping costs. Empty rice bags are often recycled for this purpose. Once packed with damp soil, the bags are stacked with barbed wire between the layers, acting like “Velcro” to hold them in place. When the soil dries, they harden into solid bricks which may be plastered over. No special tools or skills are required for construction, and the resulting buildings are resistant to severe weather and natural calamities.

Balay Kubliban was the initiative of Peace Church Philippines, the church plant of Barkman and his wife Christina Bartel Barkman; the Stargrass Coalition, an Asia-wide house church movement; and the Asian School of Development and Cross-Cultural Studies (ASDECS). Together, they are responding to the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan as Operation Hope. (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/467549430032516/>)

In May a farmer in the rural area of Babatngon on the island of Leyte allowed Operation Hope to use his land for the construction of a test project. With years of construction experience in Canada and consultations with Dr. Owen Geiger, an Earthbag Technology pioneer, Barkman was able to teach locals how to do the construction.

The earthbag model could form a permanent housing solution for the Philippines because of the low cost, Barkman says. “Our model house was around \$2,000 Canadian dollars to build and has more stability in earthquake situations than the average concrete house, which costs closer to \$5,000.”

Traditional homes are constructed to flex with the wind, but the connecting points are often not strong enough to resist breaking under severe conditions. Roofs fly off and buildings collapse. Earthbag homes are sturdy enough to resist high winds and earthquakes. Excess water flows through them



In May, Darnell Barkman (back row, R) taught others how to construct a safe, sustainable, low-cost earthbag home.



By mid-June, the earthbag home in Babatngon on the island of Leyte has a completely different appearance.

without washing away. And they can be more easily reconstructed or even added to should something unexpected happen.

Now that the first home is nearing completion, plans are underway for more. The new building model is providing partnership opportunities with many other relief organizations, Barkman says.

“Once everything is ironed out, I think we can complete a full 42 square metre building in 1 to 2 weeks with 10 people working 8 hour days.”

Earthbag building is slowly growing globally. The Barkmans say they envision earthbag construction

flourishing once a critical mass of people get on board.

“We’re in the early adopter phase so things are moving slowly,” Darnell says. “But, I hope and pray that during the next few years of typhoons we can avoid the use of tents and other expensive and temporary shelters, and instead build quick and stable earthbag houses which can be added to and turned into safe permanent housing.”

You can support the Barkman’s ministry at <https://donate.mennonitechurch.ca/project/philippine-peace-church>.

Children and the future of the church

-Elsie Rempel

Part 1: A changing landscape

As a child, I had a clear sense that being Mennonite made me different from my non-Mennonite urban neighbours. By age 16, baptism brought me and most of my peers into the folds of the congregation. We were glad to be part of God's unique Mennonite family.

But my children, and now grandchildren, experience a weaker sense of Mennonite distinctiveness and belonging. How many of your family stories are similar?

Many aspects of this change are both positive and irreversible. Our faith community is learning to be outward focused and less ethnic. As a result, rich and varied relationships with God's wider family bless our lives, even as God blesses others through us.

However, many young people are less rooted in faith communities than we were. They live with greater devotion to their hand held devices than we ever had to the pocket sized Gideon Bibles we received in grade 5! As a result, their identity and sense of community

may be shaped more directly by a virtual community than by church life or Bible reading.

This raises questions. "Will our children have faith?" and "Will our faith have children?" are concerns addressed by John Westerhoff in his classic, *Will Our Children Have Faith?* (See the third revised edition of this book at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/2370). How can the church contribute to shaping their lives when it is often on the periphery? Will our children be part of the future Mennonite church?

As Anabaptists we often stress the importance of learning facts about faith. Constructing a solid foundation of understanding inspires active discipleship and believers baptism. But that approach may not be adequate for nourishing and nurturing faith among the young in today's church families. We need to support belief and lives of following Jesus with ritualized, contemplative practise of faith in our homes as well as in our congregations.

Watch for Part 2: Nurturing Faith in a New World, in the next issue of The Assembled News.



Elsie Rempel is the Formation Consultant for Mennonite Church Canada and a strong advocate for young people in the church. She is the author of Please Pass the Faith (Herald Press, 2012, www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1798) and she writes Faith Bytes: Elsie spins a blog at elsiebannabruith.wordpress.com/.



Kids at the Children's Assembly unleashed their creative powers while exercising their muscles creating leather wrist bands. A variety of Wild Hope themes from waves of water to nature scenes came alive as hammers pounded stamp impressions into the bracelets. —photos by Ryan Roth Bartel



Energy for mission

-Deborah Froese

At 78 years of age, Palmer Becker is still going strong. An inspiring teacher and a missional ambassador, Becker has made 9 trips over the past 7 years to several Asian countries, Palestine and Ethiopia on short term assignments with Mennonite Church Canada.

Typically, those assignments involve teaching or leadership training, but Becker's passion for people sends him far beyond the classroom setting.

Earlier this year, he returned from an assignment to teach pastoral care and counselling at Bethlehem Bible College (BBC) in Palestine. While he was there, he consulted with a BBC Findings Committee about establishing an International MA program in Peace and Conflict studies at BBC, and ventured out into the wider community.

"Twice a week in the local mosque, I pray to God as I know him through Jesus Christ," he wrote in an update from Bethlehem to supporters. "Most Muslim worshipers have accepted me and recognize that I pray differently, but genuinely. Last week at least six people shook my hand after prayers and on two occasions I was invited to homes for Arabic coffee and sharing."

Becker and 11 others also spent 5 days in Mafrq Jordon, offering trauma



Palmer Becker connects with kids during a visit with Syria refugees in Mafrq Jordon. Photo provided.

counseling and food assistance to refugees from Syria's civil war. Teams of two from BBC and a local interpreter brought groceries and asked families to share why they left their homes.

The stories they heard were heart-wrenching.

For fifteen days the fighting was so intense that I couldn't look out of the window. The terrorists came to my aunt's house, lined up eleven of our friends and family and shot them all with a machine gun. Only a small girl survived to tell the story. . . .

My cousin started walking with a bundle of clothes in one hand and food in the other. His two boys were at his side. It began to rain and it became too difficult for the boys to walk in the mud. In despair, he dropped the bundles and carried his two sons to the border.

Over 120 rockets came to our area. My sister's husband was martyred and my brother has disappeared. A rocket destroyed the front rooms of our house. Our six-year-old son was hit with shrapnel and was bleeding badly and almost died before we could get help.

"They were all of Muslim faith," Becker wrote about the refugees in a report, "but were very open to our ministry when we offered to pray with and for them."

Becker attributes his energy to God's blessing on his life. "I feel very fortunate to have studied with some of the finest professors," he says during a Skype interview. "And I guess I just feel a joy in sharing that. Or maybe an obligation. The stewardship of sharing what others had shared with me."

While he doesn't want to sound pious, he says, "I think of the Holy Spirit as my senior partner. He's got the ideas, he's got the spirit, the empowerment. I've got the tools or the hands and feet and mouth to fulfil it. Otherwise I could never do it by myself but I do feel that energy coming from my faith."

He also points to his wife Ardys, to whom he has been married for 56 years. Ardys served with him on two of his teaching trips to Bethlehem. "Even though she doesn't always come with me on these trips, I feel strong support and care from her. The local church here [Waterloo North MC] contributes to my travel and expenses."

How long will he keep up his ministry? "I'll do it year by year for as long as physical and mental strength allow," Palmer says. "I taught college until age 70. Hopefully I can do this until age 80."

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“Love your Own, Respect Others” German Mennonites Assemble in Krefeld

- Jennifer Otto

How can Mennonites contribute positively to an increasingly pluralistic and multi-cultural German society? What are the possibilities, and the limits, of interreligious dialogue? Who do we think of as “us” and who as “them”?

These are some of the questions that were discussed by the more than 500 participants at the *Gemeindetag* (Assembly) of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mennonitischer Gemeinden in Deutschland* (AMG, Task force of the German Mennonite Churches), held in Krefeld from May 29–June 1.

The AMG is itself a diverse entity, uniting three regional conferences of Mennonite congregations from across the country. The AMG’s members encompass a broad spectrum of worship styles and theological convictions while sharing a commitment to each other as brothers and sisters in a common Anabaptist faith tradition.

Worship, Bible Study, and workshops provided diverse opportunities to reflect on the *Gemeindetag*’s theme. Pastor Christian Wiebe illuminated the Krefeld congregation’s own long history of tolerance – and being tolerated as a minority group – with a walking tour of city’s core.

The *Gemeindetag* provided an opportunity for dialogue and exchange not only amongst “us” Mennonites, but also to engage with leaders from other traditions. Speakers included Margot Käußmann, former head of the Council of the Protestant (Lutheran) Church in Germany, and Edna Brocke, a prominent German rabbi. Participants were also invited to tour Krefeld’s newly-construction Synagogue and one of the city’s Mosques.

The closing worship service drew on the teaching of 1 John 4:19, “let us love, because God first loved us,” challenging us to pass on the love that we know in God, even when that proves to be difficult.

As Europe continues to grapple with an influx of migrants from Africa and the Middle East, and with the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation fast approaching, tolerance, boundaries, and the treatment of the other will continue to be the subject of debate both within the Church and in the broader society. The *Gemeindetag* was a welcome forum for thinking about these issues while providing an opportunity to forge new relationships while strengthening old ones.



Rainer Burkart poses a question during a Bible study. Photos by Jennifer Otto.



Matthias Dyck and Thaddäus Tiger break the ice with the offer of free hugs.



A musical interlude provides a meditative break during a Bible study.

Jennifer Otto and her husband Gregory Rabus are Mennonite Church Canada church planters in Mannheim, Germany. They are parents to a newborn son, Alex. They invite your support at <https://donate.mennonitechurch.ca/project/RabusOtto>.

Hope Lines

“The passion and drive of many of my peers gives me hope that we are working to be the change we want to see in the world. They inspire me and pull me out of the hopelessness I sometimes fall into.”

Rachel Bergen, *Canadian Mennonite*, Co-editor, *Young Voices*



Construction managers Herb Schaan (left) and Gerry Harms (right) stand in the renovated sanctuary of Douglas MC. Improvements to the sanctuary, including opening up the pulpit area and adding new stonework, were part of a large renovation project. Ten percent of the money raised for the project was donated to Mennonite Church Canada toward a global building project. Photo by Deborah Froese.

Church building

- Deborah Froese

When Douglas Mennonite Church decided to undertake an extensive renovation of their Winnipeg facility two years ago, they took tithing to a whole new level. They promised to donate 10% of the total construction funds raised to Mennonite Church Canada for a global building initiative.

Daniel Horne, Mennonite Church Canada Director, Partnership Development, says he's excited about the idea. "I'm always looking for congregations with creative ways to support ministries," he says.

The budget established for improvements to the sanctuary and basement amounted to roughly \$300,000 – plus a \$30,000 donation to Mennonite Church Canada. The project itself inspired generosity in time and money from the congregation.

With a mandate from Church Council to raise half of \$330,000 total in cash or pledges – or \$165,000 – before construction began, the Finance Committee planned several fundraisers and a pledge drive. A music evening, perogy lunch, and a prime rib

barbecue lunch combined brought Douglas within \$24,000 of their goal

With construction scheduled to start May 3, 2014, the pressure was on. A hog roast planned for April 27th had to raise \$24,000.

"Acting on faith that God would provide, we organized a huge volunteer group to start the work on May 3rd," says Herb Schaan, Church Council Chair,

"I'm always looking for congregations with creative ways to support ministries," -Daniel Horne

and a co-construction manager with Gerry Harms. "Not only did we have a representation from every age demographic willing to work on the construction, we had one member who volunteered to take the week off work and co-ordinate meals and snacks for the workers for the week starting on May 3rd."

For Schaan, the most rewarding part of the whole process was building deeper connections with the congregation. "When you spend time working side by side with someone, you really get to know them."

He says he believes some of the volunteers came out for the sense of community as much as the work that needed to be done.

From Harms perspective, the project drew larger numbers of volunteers than he could ever have imagined, making the workload light. "It was awesome!"

A large number of volunteers cooked and served hogs to a crowd that raised \$10,000 more than the budget.

"Praise God," Schaan says, reflecting.

Don Rempel Boschman, lead pastor at Douglas, was impressed with a community effort that involved young and old. "Even people who are not even members of the congregation have been sacrificial in their giving of time and talent. One non-member who started attending less than two years ago even took several days off of work to work on the project. Two other people who are not members met each other at the project and their connection resulted in the opening up of a job opportunity."

Attending Witness Workers



Nhien Pham (Vancouver Vietnamese MC, B.C.) is the Resource Worker for Vietnam Ministry and pastor of Vancouver Vietnamese Mennonite Church in B.C.



Palmer Becker (Waterloo North MC) is a sessional teacher and missional ambassador to Asia, Ethiopia and Palestine.



Christina and Darnell Barkman (Emmanuel MC, Abbotsford, BC) are church planters in Metro Manila, Philippines.



Jack and Irene Suderman (First MC, Kitchener, Ont.) served on a short term leadership training assignments in Asia.



George and Tobia Veith (Cornerstone MC, Saskatoon, Sask.) have completed 18 years of ministry in Macau and have returned to Canada with their daughter Marika.



Henry and Erna Funk (Zoar MC, Waldheim, Sask.) served in Nazareth on a short term ministry assignment.



Jerry and Kara Buhler (Mount Royal MC, Saskatoon, Sask.), with their daughter Laura, served in Palestine on a short term ministry assignment in Palestine.



Dan Nighswander and Yvonne Snider-Nighswander (Jubilee MC, Winnipeg, Man.) served on a short term ministry assignment in India. Yvonne will be at Assembly on Friday during lunch and on Saturday only.

Radical Journey prompts career choice

-Deborah Froese

When Tim Wenger graduated from Grade 12 at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, he felt he needed an escape from school, so he decided to take a year off.

“I wanted my gap year to be meaningful and focused on service...it was important that any travelling I did not just be a vacation,” he says.

Wenger served in South Africa at Breakthrough Church International through Radical Journey from 2009-2010. It’s a program offered by Mennonite Church Canada in collaboration with Mennonite Mission Network to provide young adults with a formational experience in cross-cultural learning and service.

Wenger helped out with the youth program, a Friday afternoon drop in program for kids, some administrative work and general cleaning. He also helped clear land and install a concrete foundation for the church, which was creating a semi-permanent structure to host a large convention and house a burgeoning membership until some of them were sent out for church planting in the wider community.

Although Wenger suffered a period of burnout from intense service, it helped him establish boundaries and shaped future directions.

“I decided that I wanted to serve God by serving the church,” he says. After studying for one year at Tyndale University college in Toronto, he transferred to Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg where he studied Bible and Theology and minored in Counselling and Philosophy. He graduated this year and begins Masters studies this fall, with plans to enter pastoral ministry. He’s also getting married this fall to Stephanie Jorritsma.

Tim is speaking about his experience at the Short Term Ministry seminar on Saturday afternoon from 4:15-5:00.



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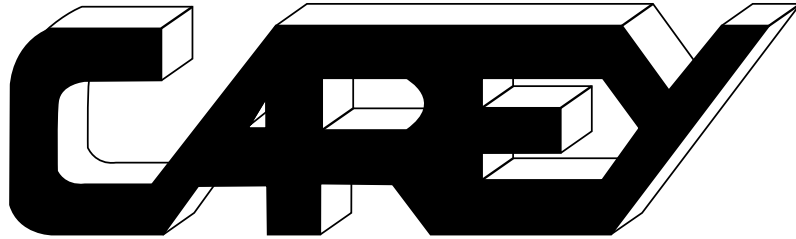
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-Donita Wiebe-Neufeld

Who gets the help when a pastor marries a psychiatrist? At the 2014 Mennonite Church Canada Ministers' Conference, the question was no joke, yet everyone left feeling better.

Psychiatrist Dr. Karl Lehman and his wife, Pastor Charlotte Lehman, teamed up to teach Mennonite pastors how to help each other heal through prayer. While the concept of healing prayer is nothing new, the Lehman's approach offers an accessible and effective method for both pastors and laity. Offering anecdotes from their own lives and considerable teaching experience, the Lehmans encouraged pastors to pay attention to their own healing needs so they can be available to others. Charlotte referred to pastoral work as "a crucible to squeeze out any unresolved issue you have in there!"

Called the "Immanuel Approach", the method recognizes where God can be found in good memories, and uses this felt presence to heal painful memories that block

Pastoral work: "A crucible to squeeze out any unresolved issue you have in there!"

emotional health. While Dr. Lehman emphasized that he usually teaches this approach over a few days, the basic concept was surprisingly simple and practical enough to be immediately helpful as pastors interacted with each other.

In groups of 3-5, pastors practiced the initial step in the Immanuel Approach. Participants each shared a happy memory and reflected on where Jesus could be found in it. Verbalizing the memory – the felt presence of God – in community engages the relational part of the brain that needs to be working for a person to move into healing. After listening to whatever surfaced in sharing, participants explicitly invited God to be present in the moment, and to then bring forward memories where healing is needed. Anyone who felt uncomfortable with what surfaced was encouraged to recall the happy memory they had described earlier.

While there wasn't time to continue on and deal with painful memories, it was clear that participants had already been given a helpful tool. Dr. Lehman summarized the "Immanuel Approach" succinctly when he said; "focus on Jesus, ask him for help, see what happens. That's basically what you do."



Monica Bock and Ken Bechtel with their "medication" as prescribed by Dr. KMZ de Stress. (aka Denominational Minister, Karen Martens Zimmerly). The pills, assorted M&Ms, are for "the relief of common ailments associated with Leadership." Pastors appreciated the thought! Photo by Donita Wiebe-Neufeld.

For more information about the Immanuel Approach, visit www.immanuelapproach.com

Announcements

Please give lunch line priority to all those who are attending the lunch with Mennonite Church Canada Witness Workers. Attendees: Please make your way Room C167 as quickly as possible. Proceedings will begin at 12:15, with stories about the exciting things God is doing around the world!

The Saturday morning Refreshment Break is brought to you by the Christian Formation Council --nurturing the soul and forming the body of Christ. While you nourish your body this morning, you'll have the opportunity to nourish souls with a donation to the Christian Formation ministry of Mennonite Church Canada. Generous individuals and congregations help fund the song books we sing from, the Sunday School curriculum that teaches our children, the books and DVDs loaned from the Resource Centre, pastoral and leadership development, and more. As you gratefully receive what you need, please remember to give so that the whole body of Christ can receive what it needs! Christian Formation staff will be on hand to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

First Aid

If you or someone else needs First Aid assistance, please approach one of our ushers or the registration/information desk.