

**WATERLOO
NORTH
MENNONITE
CHURCH**

Reflections

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Life as Mission

Transforming Mission

What is the meaning and practice of mission at Waterloo North Mennonite Church? For seven weeks in April and May of this year one of the Christian Education groups considered this question. Using two texts and several visiting presenters, we discussed mission as it is practiced at home and around the world. Our objectives were to broaden our understanding of mission, to encourage each member's participation inside and outside the church, and to explore the cohesion and connections in the individual-congregation-denomination-agency continuum.

The word "mission" is used in many contexts. South African David Bosch¹ and other sources provided the following definitions of mission: alerting the world to God's reign; a love affair between God and the world, and consequently between the church and the world; standing for salvation, justice, liberation, healing, and standing against unbelief, injustice, oppression and violence. Evangelism is at the core of mission.

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Ontario pastor Phil Wagler's book² offered four principles of a missional church:

- no one is left behind
- leaders are allowed to lead
- all members of the congregation recognize themselves as disciples of Jesus and want to contribute
- the church exists for the world God loves.

Our three pastors reminded us that worship and the entire budget are part of mission—worship forms our identity as resident aliens in the world. We were challenged to change from “tourists to pilgrims”, recognizing that we are “part of a meta-narrative, from creation to revelation, which calls us to inner conversion/transformation and outward action.”

Our denominational mission leaders, Brian Bauman (Mennonite Church of Eastern Canada) and Rebecca Yoder Neufeld (Mennonite Church Canada) described local and global efforts in mission. They called for us to give more time in building relationships, indicating that many people are interested in Anabaptist perspectives.

Harold Albrecht outlined his faith pilgrimage that has brought him to his current position as a member of parliament and spoke about a number of social justice issues he is working on. In the very brief time for dialogue, members raised questions concerning compromise and partisanship within the political party system, Canada's role in Afghanistan, and government legislation on youth crime.

Three representatives of inter-Mennonite agencies, Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support (Eunice Valenzuela), Parkwood Seniors' Home (Bev Suderman-Gladwell) and Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (Brent Zordreger), explained their mission and provided many examples of potential involvement.

Ron Mathies

Transforming Mission
an ongoing opportunity and imperative.

¹ Bosch, David. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991.

² Wagler, Phil. *Kingdom Culture: Growing the Missional Church*. Winnipeg, MB: Word Alive Press, 2009.

Life as Mission

In this issue of Reflections we are continuing the discussion of the April-May adult Christian Education class on *Transforming Mission*. (See Ron Mathies' summary.) We asked a number of members to reflect on their mission as it relates to their work world. The contacts range from working with the disadvantaged in our community to serving persons who are going through emotional or personal life stresses. We broaden the exploration as we read about mission for those working at Ten Thousand Villages or at the Generations Thrift Shop. The focus shifts as we explore how mission involves ecological concerns, whether solar energy, or water purification. We hear from a person working at the Mennonite Credit Union on how he sees his mission taking shape. Many of these themes resonate with those covered in the Christian Education class some time back when we heard various persons talking about their ministries.

There have been times in our history when we have narrowed our definition of mission to “missions and missionaries.” We must reclaim the historic mandate of Jesus that every Christian disciple has a mission, regardless of how it is carried out.

Our mission is rooted in and grows out of our commitment to Jesus Christ. As followers of Jesus, we are living as committed disciples in every aspect of our lives. It is this orientation that has its origins in Jesus' final commission to his first disciples,

“Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember I am with you always to the end of the age.” *Matthew 28:19-19 (NRSV)*

Our authority, as Christians, comes from Christ. Our mandate is to make disciples, inviting persons to identify with faith communities through baptism. This is followed by a responsibility to instruct persons in the teachings of Jesus. A final promise gives us courage and hope, namely “I will be with you always.” This promise is relevant for our congregation as we proceed with the visioning process in the coming year.

Our church is engaged in mission projects. You can read about our Congo partnership as well as our refugee family, the teaching ministry of the VBS program this past summer and the MCC summer project for children. A recent baptismal candidate interviews his peers. Can you detect how they demonstrate that they are Christians and define their mission?

Yes, as Christians we have a mission. How are you being faithful in carrying out Jesus' mandate?

Ralph Lebold

A Lifelong Journey of Conversion

My son recently went to Kenya with MCC SALT (Serving and Learning Together). On one of his first visits to his host family's church, he was asked, "Are you saved?" He had never encountered this question before! In my youth we were asked this question annually at evangelistic meetings, where it was accompanied by an invitation to make a public response indicating our desire to be a follower of Jesus Christ. In my memory at least, "being saved" was pressed home as a necessity for gaining heaven when we died. In later teen years I came to understand that being a follower of Jesus Christ also affected how we lived our lives on earth and was related to Christ's invitation to become his disciples.

While in southern Africa with MCC as a young adult, I was introduced to liberation theology, which pushed me to further expand my understanding of God's concern for salvation to include the whole sphere of the world and issues of political and economic justice. I had travelled some distance from my child-hood understandings of salvation as belonging to the inner, spiritual sphere and the afterlife. At times, though, a primary focus on salvation as working to bring about Christ's kingdom on earth felt like a largely human endeavour, with the more personal aspects of inner conversion either ignored or assumed.

In more recent years, I have come to a more nuanced understanding of conversion as a lifelong journey of growing into the likeness of Christ, where the pathway is illuminated by the Spirit. As we become more attuned to the rhythms of how we move with or against the Spirit in our interior lives, our eyes also become more attuned to the ways in which God is going about redeeming the world, and inviting our participation in this project. This is the basis for understanding daily life as mission in whatever context we find ourselves.

I hope that sharing my journey in discovering some of the multi-faceted aspects of conversion has prompted some memories of your own experiences. I look forward to reading other stories of how conversion contributes to our understanding of life as mission.

Ardith Frey



(above) Mautji Pataki and Chris in South Africa during a visit in 2003.

Mautji had lived with the Freys in Winnipeg for a year in 1990, through IVEP. Mautji and Chris were great friends and now were meeting again 13 years later.

(bottom left) Scenic photos from Len Friesen's trip to Lesotho



Community

Gathering, talking, noise and celebration
Eating together and sharing,
Coffee and conversation.

Discussion, dissent and agreement
Reflecting and waiting.
Making choices and decisions.

Quiet in prayer, listening in worship.
Singing in harmony
Through sadness and joy.

The journey together
Through thick and thin
In sickness and health.

Welcoming others
To journey with us
Following the ways of Jesus.

Learning and laughing
Choosing commitment and baptism
Communion and community.

Mary Schiedel

Our Congolese Partners

Our partnership with the Congolese Mennonite Women Theologians (ATMCO)

As I write this update, Ray and Margie Brubacher are on their way to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to visit their son, Matthew, who is working with the UN's (MONUC) disarmament and demobilization program in eastern Congo. Their trip will also include a few days to visit our partners, the Congolese Mennonite Women Theologians in Kinshasa. We are very excited about this meeting and hope that this will provide an opportunity to further develop our partnership. We also hope to learn who is currently involved with the ATMCO, how their ministry is unfolding and how our communication can best be carried on.



This past spring, ATMCO in Kikwit asked Waterloo North to sponsor another of their workshops regarding violence against women. They anticipated this to take place in August or September. We agreed to support the workshop, and we forwarded the money for four seminars (\$2600). We were encouraged to learn that the road to Kikwit from Kinshasa has been repaired by a Chinese crew. Now travel by bus takes only six to eight hours instead of several days. However, we were disappointed when informed that the workshops did not occur. The difficulties surrounding this are not yet clear, but our partners are requesting the office of the Mennonite World Conference hold the money in trust, anticipating that the barriers preventing the workshops from occurring will soon be resolved. We hope to get a better understanding of this soon, and possibly advocate on the behalf of ATMCO.

Our partnership with the Theologians is based on WN's decision several years ago to look beyond our ourselves, and to connect with another community. We ask that you consider how you see your role in this partnership, whether by joining the prayer group that meets at Lorraine and John Peters, sending letter to the women and their churches, advocating for justice for the people of the DRC or joining the Congo Focus Group.

Kathy Lawrence

Refugee Sponsorship as Mission

As I reflect on how Waterloo North's sponsorship of one Palestinian family over the past seven months relates to the broader mission of the church, I note that our church leaders in mission have called for us to give more time to building relationships. I see this past year of my own and the church's involvement with the refugee sponsorship program, and with the Al-Saman'eh family, as just this. That is, our relationship with this family is part of a broader, worldwide movement to reach out and build bridges between faith communities—including Christian, Jewish and Muslim.



Relationships between Muslims and Mennonites have been developing for several years in the K-W area. It is precisely in these relationships with others outside of our faith community that the possibility exists for healing broken relationships that have existed for centuries. This healing can occur in different ways. On one level, in assisting Palestinian families who were targeted in Iraq and who fled to refugee camps at the Syrian border, we are communicating a positive and hopeful message to the Palestinian community as a whole about the role of the church in the world. These people had no prospect of citizenship anywhere. Christians have chosen to get involved, not to try to convert our Muslim brothers and sisters, but to simply do what needs to be done—to provide a safe place for them to live and raise their children.

I have also experienced this bridge-building on another level, in my work with Muslims on the K-W Refugee Task Force. In working together at this common cause, we have come to develop mutual respect and care for one another. This in turn, builds more bridges as we all speak about our experiences with others. That has been the most surprising gift for me. When I made the decision to become involved in refugee sponsorship, I did so out of a feeling of compassion and ethical necessity (as I suspect did many in our church). It was simply the right thing to do. I did not know then how much I would also come to care for the many people that I have worked with on this task force, both Mennonite and Muslim. This has truly been a blessing which will benefit us all.

Amanda Witmer

Teaching as Mission

Bethlehem Bible College, via Mennonite Church Canada, has called me to teach a three-semester-hour course in Pastoral Care and Counseling from January through March. Seventeen pastors and church workers will be in the class. In what way will my teaching be part of the mission of Waterloo North Mennonite Church?

The challenges and needs of the Palestinian people are rather overwhelming. For sixty-two years they have suffered intense injustice. Many are without jobs, without permanent homes, and without hope. Pastors have had almost no training in pastoral care and counseling. What can we do to alleviate the needs and share the peace of Christ?

As a body of Christ, our church is to continue what Jesus began by preaching Good News “to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and to let the oppressed go free” (Luke 4:18). Part of my task as a representative of Christ and Waterloo North Mennonite Church is to empower Christian leaders in Palestine to “do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8).

How do we approach this large and overwhelming task? We might say that the **church has a mission**. But if that mission is to set the world straight, it places too much emphasis upon our wisdom, skills and strength. We might rather say that **God has a church!** The church is God’s vehicle for bringing light to the world and healing to those who will enter it. While they are very different from the kingdoms of this world, I am going to Palestine with the view that churches are political entities. Churches where God’s will is being done in the spirit of Jesus are still the best hope for bringing healing to people and setting the world straight.

God is already at work in and through the churches of Palestine and Israel to empower people to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with our God. Through teaching, I hope to be an instrument of God’s peace helping leaders to see more clearly that Jesus is the norm for both personal and social ethics and the center for bringing Good News to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind and freedom for the oppressed.

Palmer Becker

How do you Demonstrate that you are a Christian?

This is a question that countless people all around the world struggle with on a daily basis. Over the past month, I have been posing this question to several members of the Waterloo North Youth, in order to see what kinds of responses the question would generate. Below is a sampling of responses from the youth:

“The Bible is a book that has a lot advice and many rules for you to follow, so it is easy to get overwhelmed by it all. However, I just try and do simple things, like being nice to everyone, and just working to make the world a better place.”

“I look to help those less fortunate than I, and I try to be a kind and caring person.”

“I know it’s an overused phrase, but I just think that if you ask yourself “What Would Jesus Do?” before making a decision, you will live a much more healthy and positive manner. I think a lot of times people do this subconsciously, but it’s still important to ask yourself this question often.”

“I try and just demonstrate peace, love, and understanding every day.”

“I think that the most important lesson of the Bible is that you should love thy neighbour as thyself. That’s how I try to show my Christian faith”



As you can see from the above responses, all of the youth have different yet similar methods for demonstrating their Christian faith. However, the overarching theme from all the responses I received was that demonstrating you are a Christian does not have to be an intentional or deliberate thing. Rather, if you follow some more simple ideas and principles, you will be living a life that Christ would want you to.

Interviews by Nick Penner

Being God's Presence in the World, Every Day

Our conversations around vision, identity and priorities prompt me to write. We are the church: a peculiar institution commissioned to be God's presence in the world.

Jesus' sayings clearly advocate a peculiar style of living for His followers: "Be salt", "Be a light", "Don't hide the light under a basket". For most of us this means being unselfish and serving others. Our written annual report and the Sept. 26 AGM Sunday meeting give witness to our service.



I am struck by the verb, "tell" in the gospels. Jesus' primary ministry was teaching, an act of speaking. Though his disciples were quite ignorant, he sent them to teach as well, 70 at one time (Luke 10:1). Jesus said, "Tell it from the housetop", "Proclaim it", "Witness", "Tell to all peoples," "Spread the word". We are to be bold in this telling. We are to speak both "in and out of season."

In the wider community I hear people speak of Mennonites and their service. I find satisfaction in this "witness." I recognize that service is a key component to Christian living. Jesus said, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works ..." (Matt. 5:16). We do serve. But do we also speak about God in our lives? Possibly we gravitate more to Jesus' words to the healed leper, "See that you say nothing to anyone ..." (Matt. 8:4).

I serve as a volunteer truck driver once a week for The Working Centre. We pick up furniture and stuff from homes and apartments to sell in a thrift store. I have a different helper each week. One lives in a very simple room—the street. He needs cash. I used to smile and listen to him, but talk very little. I enjoyed my work. People liked me.

Eventually, I asked myself, "Am I being God's presence in this service? Am I being ALL God wants me to be?" My inner response was "No." Last January I changed.

Now I carefully seek opportunities to speak of God's care and love—not to everyone, but to some. People still like me. Imagine being greeted by one of these guys with, "God bless you!" He really means it. The two of us have become dear Christian brothers to one another. In the midst of his addictions and difficulties, he finds God. I have also formed a closer relationships with two others. I value these friendships. These guys are in my prayers.

Every act of service Jesus performed had deep meaning beyond the act itself. His admonition, "Let your light shine," concludes with the words, "... to give GLORY to your Father in heaven." Let's talk about how we might do this. Let us learn together.

Am I being
ALL
God wants
me to be?



John Peters

My Life as Part of Christ's Mission in the World

"All actual life is encounter." This comment by Martin Buber in *I and Thou* has become a thread in my sense of mission at House of Friendship. In a seminary class I came to understand evangelism as bringing people to "experience the power of healing and hope in the Gospel."

During a hostel discussion about the Hebrew Exodus as a parable for life, one man commented, "Yeah, it's terrible to be lost, but it's worse to be alone." The greatest pain of homelessness, people tell me, is not poverty, hunger or disease (though all are likely) but social exclusion—being ignored by strangers and rejected by family.



I've come to see my mission as offering acceptance and care to people who don't otherwise experience an invitation into community. Authentic caring begins with providing basic needs of food, shelter and clothing, as well as giving a friendly greeting. In honest, caring relationships we find a sense of belonging that overcomes loneliness and healing that overcomes debilitating pain. This is true for each one of us, whether we are homeless or not.

In one of the residential programs there is a dining room routine that serves as a metaphor of the Kingdom of God. Nine men, who were once strangers to each other, gather in the dining room and each one knows that he has a seat at the table.

My personal mission is to invite people into a caring community. This is also part of the church's mission. House of Friendship is a para-church organization through which the faith groups of our community can reach out; it is a bridge that links people across social chasms they don't usually cross. I work on the bridge.

Ron Flaming

Reflections on Missions and Service Committee (MSC)

When Teresa asked me to be chairperson of the Mission and Service Committee (MSC), I somewhat playfully said that a church should not have a “mission” committee since mission is the task of the whole congregation. She asked, “Well, who will then manage the projects WNMC is involved in?” I responded, “So, it is just a projects committee, eh.” Learning of all the great persons on the committee, I finally agreed to accept the position, forgetting that this also included being a member of Church Ministry Council. Oh well, Council is also a group of great people!

One of our first agenda items was to clarify our purpose and tasks as a committee. We felt uncomfortable with the language of “missions and service” since this expression implies mission is something done on behalf of the congregation by specialized persons who go to the far corners of the world. Also, to differentiate mission and service is to make a weak theological dichotomy. We felt mission is something **every** member and every committee is involved in. This would mean, for example, that every member would have something to share for “Moment in Mission.” Of course, some would not feel free to do so because of “stage fright.” But in principle, every member is in mission. We therefore felt that our committee should be called Mission Committee rather than Mission and Service Committee.

As we enter into the VIP (Values, Identity, Purpose) process I am beginning to relent and not fuss so much about our committee being primarily a project committee. But with this understanding: That every committee (or working group or council) in the church is a mission committee, each with a particular mandate to carry out the congregational mission.

I do sincerely hope that the VIP process bears fruit and is not just another exercise of going around the mulberry bush one more time. As we seek common purpose, several missional-type questions remain for me:

1. Can WNMC be more of a community church, as opposed to an almost completely drive-in congregation?
2. Can WNMC be more central to the lives of its members and adherents, rather than one option among a smorgasbord of choices?
3. Can we reverse the apparent pattern of losing attenders as fast as we gain new participants?
4. Under the leading of the Spirit, are we finding our way through the shifting world views and demographic changes in ways that keep the gospel of Jesus Christ relevant?

Ray Brubacher

Prayer and Discernment

On September 18, about sixty people gathered at Crieff Hills to pray about and to discern values, identity and priorities for Waterloo North Mennonite Church. The morning was devoted to worship and prayer. Miriam Frey outlined a variety of approaches to private prayer, after which we were released to pray, using whatever approach we found most comfortable. We then came together in small groups to share what we felt God was saying to us.

Betty Pries Fieguth introduced our afternoon discussions by reading excerpts from the Apostle John’s letters to the churches in the book of Revelation. Each church is described as having an angel, which Betty interpreted as expressing the essential spirit of the church. We then divided into ten small groups, each of which were given a few sheets with pictures of various kinds of angels. There was an angel representing meditation/worship/prayer, another picking up broken shards from the ground, one active in service, another thinking about the many things that need to be done, one exhibiting confusion, another exuding a professional air, two angels obviously fighting and still another demonstrating a joyful charismatic spirit.

Each group was asked to identify and discuss which of the angels most represented the spirit of Waterloo North Mennonite Church and which the least. The rankings of all the groups were then posted on the wall. This exercise revealed a surprising level of agreement

as to the essential spirit of Waterloo North Mennonite Church. Most of us agreed that we are not characterized by the picture of two angels obviously in conflict. There was also a strong consensus that we are a church that loves to think and to wrestle with ideas. Further, many of us are professionals and most of us are very busy.

This then led to a time of individual reflection, of sharing our reflections with each other on a one-to-one basis and finally, of sharing our insights with the entire group. Here are some of the questions that emerged. While we are a church with lots of energy, is there a need for a clearer focus of all this energy? While we are accepting of each other’s differences, is there a need for more clarity and agreement about what we believe? Is the absence of conflict in the church a good thing? Might this be due to a stifling of dissenting opinion? How inclusive are we? Do some people feel intimidated by the large number of academics and professionals in the church? Would a homeless person be welcome in our church? Is there a need for more transparency and connection with each other? How committed are we to the church and to our covenant? How do we experience more joy in our Christian lives?

This retreat was a fine beginning to a process of discernment in the church. Follow-up discussions are planned for the rest of this fall.

Elmer J. Thiessen



Making an Intentional Choice

On one level, it is hard for me to identify my life as being “missional”. For much of my life I simply “went with the flow,” without a lot of intentional thought about direction or mission in life. But I have discovered that the inexorable progression of time, and the inevitable stages of life that come with it, have a peculiar way of shaping us.

Through my late 30’s and into my early 40’s, I found myself restless, questioning my career path. What real **value** was I bringing to the world? Thoughts of legacy and contribution to the world became much more prevalent for me. What will I be remembered for? How can I use my energies and talents to make the world a better place? How can I apply my Christian values more directly to my daily living?

During the last few years that I worked at Research in Motion I found myself being steadily drawn to reflect on the impact our society has on the planet. With increasing awareness of global warming, peak oil and human impact on the environment generally, I found myself drawn to consider how I might help reverse these disturbing trends. After leaving RIM five years ago, I made an intentional choice to open myself to God’s leading, to “go with **God’s** flow”, as it were. This leading has resulted in the following involvements:

- Starting my own renewable energy company, Vigor Clean Tech, with a couple of friends who have a similar interest in reducing our impact on the planet
- Investing in several start-up businesses with either “clean tech” or “high tech” focus
- Becoming a member of Mennonite Savings and Credit Union board of directors
- Accepting the role of Chair of WNMC’s Stewardship and Finance Committee
- Joining the board of Sustainable Waterloo, whose mission of reducing companies’ carbon footprint was a nice extension of my business and personal interests
- Participating in activities of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), including making investments in micro-finance in underdeveloped countries

Opportunities continue to come my way. However, as Cheryl will state and I will readily admit, I’m already over-committed and need to restrict any new involvements. My journey is ongoing and will evolve over time. I pray that by allowing God to lead, I will be able to live out my life’s mission, as God sees fit.

Dale Brubacher-Cressman

Thrift Shop as Mission

During my four years of service on the board of the Generations Thrift Shop, I have seen a remarkable change take place. It started with the hiring of new co-managers. One manager came with experience in running his own business and quickly applied sound business practices to running a second-hand thrift store. The other manager came with great social and pastoral skills and soon created a friendly, satisfying place in which to work and to volunteer. Together they became a complementary management team.



The store has just completed its best year ever with sales of over half a million dollars, \$300,000 of which was forwarded to MCC Ontario. How long would it take MCC to solicit that amount in direct donations? Ontario thrift shops account for 20% of MCCO annual income, which translates into \$2 million in the 2009/10 fiscal year.

Many people from our church see the Thrift Shop as their mission. Some of the regulars who serve there are Shirley Martin, John Peters, Ursula Harms, Elmer Thiessen, Henry Pauls, Marcella Martin, Ardys Becker, Palmer Becker, and Sara Cressman But there are many

others who participate in this mission by donating items or buying something. It is much easier to donate \$100 worth of no-longer-needed clothing, furniture, kitchenware, books, electronics, sports equipment, etc., to a thrift shop than it is to write a \$100 donation check, but it has the same effect.

The future holds some new challenges but also the prospect of even greater rewards. MCCO is working on a new headquarters, with the Thrift Shop as the anchor tenant. This would combine the Kitchener (Lancaster) and Generations (Bridgeport) stores into one location. Using the new stores in Elmira, New Hamburg, and St Catharines (all opened in the last few years) as a guide, the business plan for the new location forecasts a doubling or tripling of MCCO revenues.

Thank you to all who see the support of MCC Thrift Shops as an opportunity for mission.

Henry Pauls – Generations Board Chair

Ten Thousand Villages

Ten Thousand Villages is a non-profit organization that sells the handicrafts of artisans of developing countries. There are more than 200 stores in Canada and the U.S. The root “store” began in Edna Byler’s home in Akron, Pennsylvania after World War II when she sold handmade products made by Puerto Rican, and later Palestinian, women whom she met through MCC.

Currently, 130 artisan groups produce handmade crafts that provide work for more than 60,000 people from over 50 countries. About 70% of the artisans are women. Unemployed, underemployed and physically disabled people are also hired. Artisans receive 50% of the purchase price when the order is placed and the balance when products are shipped.

The name “Self-Help” was changed to “Ten thousand Villages” in recognition of the truth expressed by Gandhi’s philosophy that a country’s heart is found not in its cities, but in its thousands of villages.

Much of the success of the organization is due to thousands of volunteers who work in retail stores for four to eight hours a week. Volunteers from our church include Elsie Flaming, Erica Jantzen, Elaine Snider, Nancy Pauls, Mary Stewart, John Thiessen, Henry Pauls and myself. The manager of the 80 King St. S. store in Waterloo is Isabel Chocoma who with her family attends our church. (Marvin Frey, Ardith’s late husband, was the CEO of Ten Thousand Villages stores in Canada for five years from 2002-2007.)

In the store, you can spend anywhere from \$2 for a child’s toy to \$20,000 for a beautiful Oriental carpet from Pakistan. Other products include coffee, tea, olive oil, jewelry, furniture, pottery, greeting cards. You can find coffee from Ethiopia, soapstone bowls from Vietnam, silver bracelets from Niger, an Alpaca silver necklace from Peru, or tables and bookshelves made from centuries-old trees buried under Indonesian volcanoes. Several months before Christmas,

you can buy “living” gift certificates to support MCC.

My work as a volunteer includes

welcoming customers, offering them a cup of coffee or tea and assisting them in finding products to purchase. I operate the cash register, help unpack and

shelve new products, make coffee, sometimes make minor repairs and, reluctantly, help with the dusting!

You, too, can help families in developing countries by encouraging others to shop in the store, volunteering, or purchasing both large and small items. The income from the sale of a medium-sized carpet will support a family in Pakistan for two years!



Wilbur Maust

The Menno-Bubble

In many ways, I have lived, and continue to live, a “Menno-bubble” life. As a person of Mennonite descent, married to another person of Mennonite descent, my Christian identity has been formed mostly by Mennonite institutions: Rockway Mennonite Church, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Silver Lake Mennonite Camp and Conrad Grebel College. Almost all of my friends come from the “Menno-bubble,” or are connected to it in some way. This bubble is one of economic, social and geographic advantage that includes a rich history of building strong church and community institutions.

I have been uniquely blessed. And with blessing comes a feeling of responsibility. Where should my mission lie? Outside or inside the bubble?

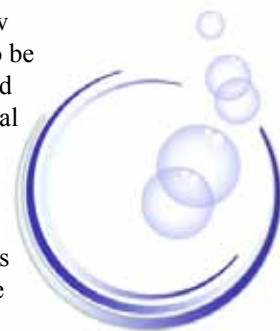
A friend recently said to me that he believes our generation’s work will be to “connect the church institutions built by previous generations,” to make them more relevant and further their missions. That statement crystallized some of my thinking about where my mission lies for the church.

Through earlier work experiences at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp and Rockway Mennonite Collegiate and through my current work at Mennonite Savings

and Credit Union, I have sensed an erosion of connection to church institutions beyond the local congregation. While church leaders may affirm the importance of an institution, members may see the affirmation as an attempt to influence their choices. Particularly members of the younger generation, who are given decision-making responsibilities at ever younger ages, can sometimes be reluctant to follow the church’s lead. Church community has begun to be measured more by time and cost than by values and connection. Even inter-church and inter-institutional thinking seems to lean this way.

To temper what appears to be turning into a rant, I admit I am not immune to this kind of thinking. However, I’ve also seen and experienced numerous positives in the “Menno-bubble”. The positives are what inspire me in my job, a mission that requires me to think about how to support the church and its institutions in meaningful and collaborative ways. My dream is to see current and successive generations strengthen and expand the connections, inside and outside of the “Menno-bubble,” through Christian service to communities both nearby and far away.

Ben Janzen



MCC Work on Wednesdays

This summer, Mennonite Central Committee Ontario invited children in Grades 2 to 6 in for a hands-on experience in the MCC Material Resources workroom.

“My favourite part of Work on Wednesdays was putting the kits together. We made health kits that had soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, towels and a nail clipper and we put it all in a useful bag. MCC helps people by giving packages of stuff to people who need things. Like people in Haiti, after the earthquake. I can help other people by packing kits at MCC and giving some of my money when there are emergencies around the world.”

Kai Janzen

“When I went to MCC, I thought it was great to see all that stuff that they spent money on just for other people. My favourite part was getting to pack the kits and get the feeling that doing such a small thing helps so many other people. I got a good feeling just thinking about how the other people overseas and in other places too are benefiting from MCC. I am just glad that I can help other people so easily but they still get the whole benefit.”

Micah Beech

“My favourite part of my visit to MCC was getting to make the health kits. We put in toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, nail clippers and then wrapped them in a towel and stuffed it in a bag. We also got to help knot a comforter. It was fun. We saw a huge machine that compressed the comforters to make them easier to send. MCC helps other people by getting and sending stuff to people who are needing more stuff because they don't have enough. I can help others by making kits to send to other countries.”

Thomas Beech



Naomi Wiebe decorates a sleeve to put around a bar of soap to be included in a health kit.

“I went to a Work on Wednesday. It was a lot of fun. We went to the MCC office which is in a large building where my neighbour works (Art Klassen). We walked to the back room where there were a lot of blankets. We made school kits like this: you take a bag someone made, put in 4 books, 4 pencils, a ruler, a package of pencil crayons and an eraser. I think that was everything. We also knotted comforters. I learned how to tie the right kind of knot for the blankets. I drew a picture of a shooting star and some decorations to wrap around a bar of soap for another kit. I hope it makes the person who opens it smile. My favourite part was eating popcorn while watching a video about MCC.”

Naomi Wiebe



This is My Mission

When I was asked to write an article about my life as mission in helping persons find transformation, I realized this meant reflecting on one of my all-time-favourite questions: How do people change? In my work, I never cease to be amazed by my clients' resilience in working through painful, tragic, sometimes horrific circumstances, in a way that allows them to engage life in new and meaningful ways.

So, exactly how does this happen? There has been a great deal of research in the field of psychology on this very question. Typically this research compares different therapies; for example, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) versus insight-oriented or psychodynamic therapy. One of the main conclusions of this research is that all such therapies have about the same rate of success in helping people to change—a conclusion that mystifies the proponents of specific types of therapy!

So how does one understand what happens in therapy? It would seem that therapy is not about the specifics of changing people's ways of thinking about things or gaining deep insights into the origins of their current distress. Instead, there is some “general” factor that is curative. I understand this general factor to be the therapeutic relationship. In this relationship, clients come to me struggling in some way or another: they are hurt, vulnerable, broken and suffering and don't know their way out of this pain. Although family members and friends may have given them lots of advice and opinions, it has not helped. In my relationship with them, I “join” them in their pain. It is an emotional connection that is hard to describe. I work to understand where they are at, how they got there and what it feels like to be there. It is at the point when a person feels truly understood that change becomes possible. If I understand your pain, if I walk with you in your pain, then perhaps we can find a way to come out of it together. This is my mission.

Julie Torrance-Perks

Summer Fun!



Scott Beech and Cindy Lebold drove east this summer with their children, Isaac, Micah, Thomas, and Laura. They spent 3 weeks visiting Quebec, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. They enjoyed listening to the “Anne of Green Gables” story as they drove and then seeing the island which was Lucy Maud Montgomery’s inspiration. Watching the tides on the Bay of Fundy at Hopewell Rocks was a highlight, as was hiking in

Fundy National Park with Corinne Snider (Boyd and Elaine’s daughter) and her family. “We loved the cultural and historical richness of Quebec City. Our trip was a wonderful shared family time seeing more of Canada.”



From Lynn Rempel - “Although we had many interesting experiences this summer (AKA Botswana winter), the highlight of our summer was the expansion of our family by one daughter-in-law. The wedding of Steven and Jessica Reesor Rempel was at the Reesor farm in Markham on August 7.”



Jen, Scott, Eben, Jared, and Raya Konkle took a trip to Florida to watch the Space Shuttle Atlantis launch for the last time. It was truly an amazing sight to see.



John, Julie, Jamie and James Torrance-Perks spent time this summer at their cottage (above) and took a trip to BC. Below, they enjoy a snowball fight on Mount Washington!



Vacation Bible School (VBS)



VBS this year was fun! In Jr. Youth every day we walked to Knox church, and did activities there. It was only a ten minute walk. My favourite activity was when we did a broken glass art project. We glued pieces of coloured glass to a big piece of clear glass, and then baked it in a kiln. It looks really cool!

On Wednesday, we biked to a campground, it was so hot, I thought I was going to die!!!!!!! When we got there, we set up tents and slept overnight. We did a nature walk and looked for bats, and we also had a campfire and roasted marshmallows. If you're in Jr. Youth, and you have a chance to have a sleepover, DO IT!

This year, we gave offering for people who didn't have homes. The money helped to build an apartment for them.

If you're looking for something to do over the summer, I suggest going to VBS! It's also a good way to get to know other people!

Jamie Torrance-Perks (participant)



Reflections Newsletter Committee

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Reflections is published two times a year. The newsletter seeks to offer reflections on topics of concern to WNMC members as well as feature articles of inspirational nature, mission endeavours, and out of town members.