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Covenant and law: a matter of relationship

Deborah Froese

During the Thursday morning worship service at Mennonite Church Canada's Assembly 2016, *God~Faith~People*, keynote speaker Safwat Marzouk addressed the topic of covenant that is central to the theme text, Jeremiah 31:33.

A covenant, he said, is an agreement of mutual obligation where each party has the *ability* and *responsibility* to uphold his or her side of the covenant.

The Assistant Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary said the idea of covenants and law may make us feel uncomfortable and uncertain about our ability to uphold them. He suggested we might have an easier time of it if we looked at the intertwining threads of God's law and the story of God's people together.

“Narrative keeps the personal character of the law front and centre. It’s about God’s story with the people. They’re not just laws that do not relate to where the people are. God is relational and the laws are relational.”

Marzouk continued to say we can see God's faithfulness and love through the diversity of God's laws and how these laws were formulated and reformulated over a long period of time. They moved from conditional

laws—where people were required to comply or suffer the consequences—to unconditional laws, where instead of being inscribed on a tablet of stone, God chose to write the laws on the hearts of God's people.

“What does it mean for us as a discerning church to think of God and the laws as being framed in a relational way rather than demanding way? God is engaging and responding to human needs,” he says.

Watch Safwat's entire address and other videos from Assembly 2016 at <http://home.mennonitechurch.ca/saskatoon2016/video>, where live streams of worship and plenary sessions are preserved for later viewing.

Photo by Matt Veith

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FDTF: it's all about revitalization

Deborah Froese

The Future Directions Task Force (FDTF) mandate may have been initiated to get ahead of anticipated challenges like declining membership and finances, but really, the Task Force says, it's about revitalization at the congregational level.

About 80 people gathered for the FDTF seminar on Thursday, July 7 to discuss the task force's final report and addendum.

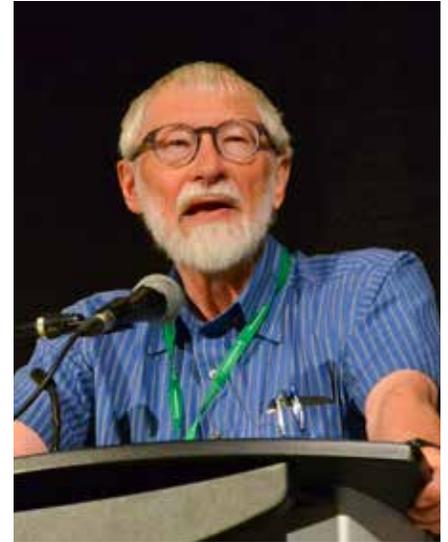
"We suggested financial challenges were like a canary in a mine," said Gerald Gerbrandt, Task Force member. "They weren't the issues themselves, but drew our attention to a significant challenge in the church. We tried to imagine a simpler, more integrated church that would invigorate people."

"We talked a lot about how to revitalize congregations," said task force member April Yamasaki. One way to do that

is by sharing good news stories about what is happening in our congregations. "What kind of communication do we need among congregations? Is that one way of sharing that spark so we can inspire each other?"

She noted that she was interviewed by Ambrose University (Calgary) for their Flourishing Congregations project. Through interviews with leaders across the country, the project is attempting to identify the elements that allow some congregations to continue to flourish. One outcome the project has noted already is that churches who participate in the study tend to flourish because they are learning and sharing.

That element of cooperation is imperative to the future success of the church. "When the [Mennonite] conference began, it was to help each other become strong leaders of vibrant congregations," Gerbrandt said. He posed a question for today and the future: "How can we be more effective kingdom cells in our community?"



Gerald Gerbrandt, a member of the Future Directions Task Force, addresses questions from delegates to Assembly 2016 at a discussion seminar about the task force's concluding report and an amendment. Photo by Irma Sulistyorini.

Councils' cups overflow



From Church Engagement, left to right: Coreena Stewart, Director, Church Engagement-Administration and Chief Administrative Officer; Vince Friesen, Chair; Dan Dyck, Director, Church Engagement- Communications. Photo by Irma Sulistyorini.

During reporting sessions for Engagement, Formation and Witness Councils on the evening of July 7 at Assembly 2016, delegates were repeatedly referred to more comprehensive activity reports in the Report book (www.commonword.ca/go/625). The tight schedule introduced delegates to leadership and staff who highlighted stories of inspiration and impact. During reports, Twitter user Karla Fehr wrote, "Love, love hearing about God at work around the world."

Correction

Correction to the July 6th edition of *The Assembled News*

On page 3, the article Witness Worker 5Ws incorrectly stated that Todd Hanson was not in attendance with his wife, Jeanette, but we are happy to report that he is indeed here.

Document Quick links:

Discernment Guide:
commonword.ca/go/654

Full Schedule:
commonword.ca/go/656

Report Book:
commonword.ca/go/655

Assembly Homepage:
home.mennonitechurch.ca/saskatoon2016

See the latest issues of the

the **Assembled** News



online at:

home.mennonitechurch.ca/saskatoon2016

Minister's Conference: Leading in a Season of Change

Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, *Canadian Mennonite* correspondent

“Wade in the water. Wade in the water, children. Wade in the water . . .”

At Mennonite Church Canada's Ministers' Conference in Saskatoon on July 6, Rev. Susan Beaumont invited Pastors to sing the well-known spiritual. She had them stop at the phrase “God's gonna trouble the water.”

“God is troubling the water during these times. We are going around trying to calm the waters, while it is the troubled waters that will bring about the adaptations we need,” Beaumont said of leaders.

The theme for the 2016 conference was “Leading in a Season of Change.” Beaumont is uniquely equipped to engage and encourage pastors who deal with uncertain times at both the congregational and denominational levels. She taught graduate level courses in leadership, management, and organizational behavior at two business schools and has 9 years of experience as a senior consultant at the Alban Institute

Beaumont acknowledged that currently the church, both congregationally and denominationally, is experiencing a season of change. “Church life is ill-defined and institutions are feeling increasingly irrelevant.”

She called it a “liminal season,” defining liminality as “a quality of ambiguity or disorientation that occurs in transitory situations and spaces, when a person or group of people is betwixt and between something that has ended, and a new situation has not fully begun.”

Biblical examples of those in liminal seasons include Moses wandering in the desert, Jonah ruminating in the whale, and Joseph waiting in a pit and prison cell.

“Betwixt and between” is uncomfortable, yet it creates both threat and opportunity. While fear and anxiety may spark poor behaviours, weary leaders and denial that can block healthy change, the discomfort can also lead to creatively examining and reinventing patterns of thought and behavior that ultimately strengthen communities.

To serve congregations well during uncertain times, Beaumont encouraged pastors to “dance just beyond the edge of your authority,” while understanding the differences between technical and adaptive leadership.

Technical leadership focuses on structure and programming, and it is appropriate when problems and solutions are clear. It is often helpful in restoring order and maintaining a status quo. Adaptive leadership is required when problems are not easily defined, and a change in systems and behaviours are the desired outcomes.

The pastoral leadership “dance” requires an appropriate balance between technical leadership, to provide the assurance and competence that will lower anxiety levels, and adaptive leadership that is hot enough to provoke change, but not so hot that the system boils over.

Beaumont commented that Mennonite pastors face a particular difficulty. “The Anabaptist tradition is naturally suspicious. When we give authority we think it will be abused, so we don't give anyone authority. Plus, add in the deep valuing of peace, and you add a layer of difficulty.”



Photo by Irma Sulistyorini.

That statement resonated with Mennonite Church Alberta conference minister, Dan Graber. “The biggest sin in the Mennonite Church is to disturb the peace. People are resentful that you have disturbed the peace.”

Pastors have a difficult job. Effective, adaptive leaders will always face resistance from a segment of their church. One principle of adaptive leadership is that it is “not primarily about managing change; it is about regulating the pace of loss. Leadership is about frustrating expectations at a rate that people can stand.” (From *Ten Principles of Adaptive Leadership* distilled from Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky.)

Acknowledging the difficult job of leadership did not seem to discourage the group attending the conference. Gordon Driedger, pastor of Petitcodiac MC in New Brunswick, was encouraged by the presentation. “I am very hopeful . . . instead of lamenting, we are looking for the opportunities that lie ahead and the best ways of unlocking them in a more imaginative way.”

An engaging and highly competent presenter, Beaumont kept participants focused and thinking hard about their own context and the topics that the assembly will grapple with in the week ahead.

Participant Elsie Rempel said, “Her analysis of living with change and having strategies for change worked on so many levels.” The resistance people exhibit as they try to cope with perceived losses in the face of changing ideas resonated with Rempel, who has lobbied for change in communion practices in Mennonite churches.

Valleyview Mennonite Church pastor, Charleen Jongejan Harder said, “The topic was timely, trying to help equip us for changing times. The question is, how to take the tools home and apply them?”

The conference concluded with denominational minister, Karen Martens Zimmerly and area conference ministers offering anointing and prayer for pastors as they seek to faithfully lead during this season of change.

“I am very hopeful . . . instead of lamenting, we are looking for the opportunities that lie ahead and the best ways of unlocking them in a more imaginative way.”

Delegates express lament and hope at seminar led by the Emerging Voices Initiative

Aaron Epp
Canadian Mennonite, Young Voices Editor

Delegates expressed their laments and hopes for Mennonite Church Canada during a seminar led by the Emerging Voices Initiative (EVI) yesterday afternoon at Assembly.

The EVI, a group consisting mostly of Canadian Mennonite University students between the ages of 19 and 35 from various regions of Canada, formed in response to MC Canada's Future Directions Task Force. They asked the more than 70 seminar participants to write something they were lamenting on a yellow piece of construction paper shaped like a leaf.

They were then asked to share their lament with the entire group if they felt comfortable doing so.

"I love the fact that we are trying to be local in many ways," said Dori Zerbe Cornelsen of Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, Man. "At the same time I lament a sense of loss of broad national identity."

Another delegate echoed Cornelsen's sentiment.

"We as individuals gain so much when we have the opportunity to work together on national concerns," he said.

After the public sharing, the EVI asked each person to partner with someone else in the room to share their laments one-on-one and then say to one another, "I lament with you."

The yellow leaves were then pinned to a painting of a tree.

Afterward, the EVI asked seminar participants to write their hopes on leaf-shaped pieces of green paper. Participants shared their hopes, and the paper was again pinned to the tree.

Many expressed that the EVI gave them hope for the future.



EVI members Laura Carr-Pries and Peter Epp speak to delegates at yesterday's seminar. Photo by Aaron Epp.

"I'm very encouraged by, and have hope in, the Emerging Voices and young lives that remind us that the church is a gift that wants to enrich us," said Kathy Koop, a delegate from First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

The EVI has been hard at work since it formed this past January, meeting to pray and talk about their ideas for the future of the church. The group has also met with Mennonite Church Canada leaders to express its concerns and hopes.

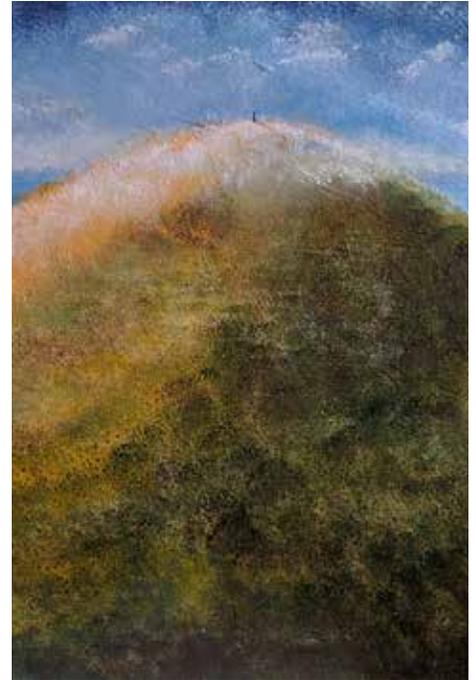
Additionally, the EVI has released a number of summary documents on its website, and invited church leaders both young and old from across MC Canada to join the conversation on the group's blog and podcast.

Peter Epp, an EVI member from Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, said that the group is often asked: "What do you think we should all do?" The group doesn't have an answer for that question, but has been encouraged by the work the Future Directions Task Force has done.

"We would encourage everybody to keep speaking into the process, to keep asking for those opportunities to share about the future of the church," Epp told seminar participants. "Keep putting your ideas into this planning that will happen over the next few years, and don't expect [Mennonite Church Canada leadership] to read our minds . . . I think we find hope in where we see things going, and we find hope in knowing there's a way to grow this future together."

Anneli Loepp Thiessen, an EVI member from the Gathering Church in Kitchener, Ont., ended the seminar by saying that for EVI, an important phrase throughout the group's time together has been, "I'm glad to be the church with you."

"In the middle of all this diversity of our opinions . . . there's just this sense that I'm so grateful that we're so diverse," Thiessen said. "We get to be church together, and that's such a gift."



When Someone Deeply Listens To You

John Fox

When someone deeply listens to you
it is like holding out a dented cup
you've had since childhood
and watching it fill up with
cold, fresh water.
When it balances on top of the brim,
you are understood.
When it overflows and touches your skin,
you are loved.
When someone deeply listens to you
the room where you stay
starts a new life
and the place where you wrote
your first poem
begins to glow in your mind's eye.
It is as if gold has been discovered!
When someone deeply listens to you
your barefeet are on the earth
and a beloved land that seemed distant
is now at home within you.

The Institute for Poetic Medicine
<http://poeticmedicine.org/poetry.html>
Used with permission.

Image: *On the Mountain*, acrylic on birch panel
by Val Wiebe

Telling scripture by heart

Donna Schulz
Canadian Mennonite correspondent

Ken Quiring is convinced that the future of Biblical literacy lies in video. “We are reading print less and less, but we are doing more and more video,” he says.

This may be one reason why he and others like him have joined a growing movement known as Biblical storytelling.

In a seminar titled, “Back to the future: telling scripture by heart,” Quiring said he wanted to “demonstrate why scripture has become, for me: an oral, physical and multi-sensory experience.”

Quiring, who is pastor of Grace Mennonite Church in Brandon, Man., presented the seminar on July 7, at Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in Saskatoon. He is a member of the Network of Biblical Storytellers, International (<http://www.nbsint.org/>), and has attended a number of Festival Gatherings which the network sponsors every August in the United States.

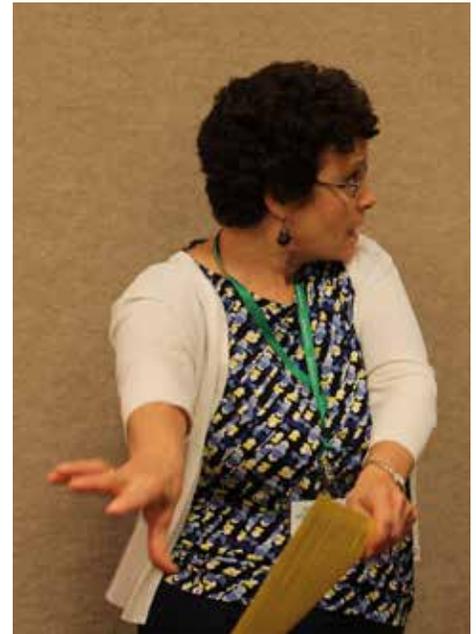
“Scripture stories are physical poetry,” said Quiring. “In addition to tone of voice, one must use body language to share Scripture effectively, but how the teller does that depends on the text. When preparing to tell a Scripture story, Quiring looks for clues in the text. If it includes a number of different places, he may point to locations on an imaginary map or physically walk from one place to another. Some physical actions may be mimicked with hand gestures.

Quiring reminded his audience that Bible stories were told orally long before they came to be printed text. Audiences would have participated in the telling, and maybe even in correcting the teller when a well-known story was told in a different way. Repetitions in Bible stories provide opportunity for audience participation, as in “And there was evening, and there was morning” in the Genesis story of creation.

Every Scripture telling is an interpretation. “You cannot tell scripture and *not* interpret it,” said Quiring. While some Biblical storytellers don’t appreciate having their craft described as memorization, Quiring doesn’t have a problem with this. He does point out that the memorization process is not a purely cognitive one. He described what he does as a “full body experience” of committing both text and movement to memory. “This is about muscle memory,” he said.

Quiring emphasized that even though Biblical storytelling takes a little effort to learn, it is something anyone can do. To prove his point, he invited participants to try their hand at it. Working in pairs, they were given Scripture texts to tell to one another.

People often think Biblical storytelling is just for children, not for serious academics, said Quiring. This is definitely not the case. “Biblical storytelling is not divorced from academics, it partners with academics.”



Brenda Grimes puts Ken Quiring’s advice to work during a seminar on Biblical storytelling at Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in Saskatoon: “Scripture stories are physical poetry.” Photo by Donna Schulz.

Volunteer focus

Joanne Nickel



Assembly 2016 is a volunteering first for Joanne. A middle years special education teacher, she says, “I have the time and made the commitment. I’m not a delegate, so this is how I can contribute. If I wasn’t here, I’d be at home relaxing, but I’m still in school mode and have the energy.” Photo by Dan Dyck.

From the Archives

Holding Together Marriage and Home

Weddings are full of symbols that carry deep meaning. Each culture produces its own traditions and systems of meaning. The late 1950s and early 1960s bring rapid societal and cultural change that coincide with the serious disintegration of marriage and home. In light of these impacts the church humbly seeks to intensify its protest against contemporary social evils. (MC)

A traditional view of marriage pictured through the wedding photograph of Oscar Burkholder and Laura May Shantz in Berlin (Kitchener), Ontario, 1913.



Photo courtesy of Mennonite Archives of Ontario.

Balance and beauty in *The Harmony Tree*

Deborah Froese

Yearning for *elohéb* (ae-luh-hay) is clearly evident in Randy Woodley's new children's picture book, *The Harmony Tree* (Mennonite Church Canada, 2016). Richly illustrated by Ramone Romero with an afterword by theologian Walter Bruggemann, the story speaks about healing and community through a deeply-rooted, God-centred, Indigenous view of creation.

Woodley who describes himself as a teacher, poet, activist, former pastor and farmer, says *elohéb* is the Cherokee concept of harmony, balance, well-being and abundance synonymous with *sbalom*. His Indigenous heritage (Keetoowah Cherokee) intricately connects all of those qualities with the beauty and wisdom of God's creation.

In *The Harmony Tree*, Grandmother Oak is spared by loggers who clear-cut her forest, leaving her alone until new houses—and newly planted trees—appear. Her new companions are shallow and self-centred until they are faced with their innate frailty in the midst of wind and storm. They turn to Grandmother Oak for advice.

Grandmother Oak shares her history and wisdom about the land and how she came to have such deep roots, and through her stories, the other trees gradually learn to grow stronger too.

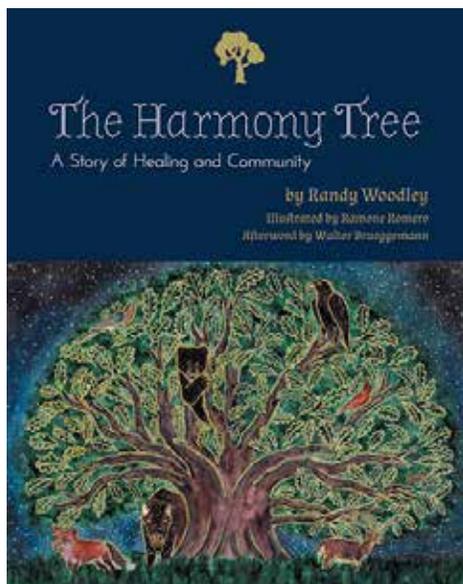
The Harmony Tree unfolds in persuasive, poetic language that is gentle on the ear and compelling even as it issues a warning. Between these tensions, the story evokes a sense of ancient wisdom and hope for the current generation and those to come. The dedication reads, "To my grandchildren, and to yours, and to theirs."

As Distinguished Professor of Faith and Culture and Director of Intercultural and Indigenous Studies at George Fox Evangelical Seminary in Portland,

Oregon, Woodley might seem busy enough. But he is also co-founder of Eagle's Wings Ministry and Eloheh Farm with his wife, Edith. They live on the farm, a sustainable, regenerative agricultural operation that uses no chemicals or GMO seeds and practices Traditional Indigenous Knowledge.

"It's a model farm so people can learn and repeat what they see and be inspired to get started on that path," Woodley says. "Maybe it's just growing one tomato and sharing and saving seeds. They have the opportunity to see the cycle of creation repeat itself over and over again."

The farm feeds its own small community and donates food to homeless groups. "Some people might call it [the community] a church, but we don't," Woodley says.



Woodley is convinced that the surest way to *elohéb* or *sbalom* is through the Indigenous worldview, which holds all aspects of creation in relationship. Although he has spent most of his career sharing these perspectives with adults, he knew he needed to do more. "I realized I needed to start with children and get them thinking about these kinds of things—harmony, the need for people to get along. The trees are a metaphor for peoples of all nations."

He has three clear objectives for the book. First, he wants to introduce children to the idea that there is more life in nature than Western society tends to ascribe to it. Second, he hopes to illustrate the destabilizing ecological impact of clear-cutting trees. And third, he hopes that *The Harmony Tree* will

set the stage for settler people to hear the wisdom host people have to share about the land and creation.

"I wrote it for kids, but it's also for adults."

Woodley's multi-faceted career began to take shape after her spent two years as a Baptist minister in Alaska. He calls them his "missionary oppressor years."

"I came out of there thinking there must be a better way to share [faith] with my people than what I was taught," he says.

Since then, he has actively pursued inclusive expressions of faith amidst ethnic and racial diversity. He is a founding board member of the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies (NAIITS) and an avid writer. Woodley, who was invited to write this book by Steve Heinrichs, Mennonite Church Canada Director, Indigenous Relations, has collaborated with Heinrichs on a number of projects including the book *Buffalo Shout*, *Salmon Cry*, and *Intotemak*. These and other resources by Woodley, including *The Harmony Tree*, are available at www.commonword.ca/go/663.

"I realized I needed to start with children and get them thinking about these kinds of things—harmony, the need for people to get along. The trees are a metaphor for peoples of all nations."

BFC Task Force begins with thanks

Dan Dyck

Jack Suderman, member of the Being a Faithful Church Task Force, began the first BFC plenary session on Thursday by expressing deep gratitude to congregations for their engagement in the ongoing same sex relationship discernment process over the years.

He also expressed the desire of the task force and the General Board to hold the four parts of the BFC recommendation together, and resist separating them into individual parts. Like the four chambers of a heart must beat together as one, Suderman reflected, the four main themes identified by feedback to the BFC process must also hold together.

Respondents expressed a strong desire to be a faithful church – including being prophetic and sensing the nudging of the Spirit; to be faithful in their contexts, acknowledging that God is at work beyond the church politics, social science, and history; a deep concern for the unity of church – we want to do this together and walk together; and finally, a hope that this conversation does not end on Saturday, that instead it might become a longer dialogue like our continuing discussions about pacifism and what we do with our money.



Jack Suderman (right) and Andrew Reesor-Mcdowell, members of the Being a Faithful Church Task Force, led a plenary session discussing the process and findings at Mennonite Church Canada Assembly 2016 on July 7. Photo by Irma Sulistiyorini.

Table groups were asked to respond to two questions: Can you support the BFC recommendation? What additional wisdom do you have for the task force?

Responses from table groups were consistent only in the sense that they expressed similar diversity as the range of beliefs and opinions held by individuals within congregations.

Garry Janzen, executive director of MCBC, requested some amendments to the recommendation, including the exclusion of the recommendation's fourth "heart chamber" which called for continued discernment, and a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the recommendation. "Some congregations in BC still could not say 'yes' to this recommendation, but the amendments may help them," said Janzen.

Paul Bergen suggested the recommendation is not asking delegates to vote about a stance on same sex marriage or on the Confession of Faith or its Article 19. "This recommendation is about voting on how we will be Christ's body together," he said.

Passionate and vulnerable individual responses continued after table group reporting concluded. The live stream of this session was recorded and preserved at <http://home.mennonitechurch.ca/saskatoon2016/video> (see the Thursday afternoon BFC sessions). Delegates will vote on the recommendation on Saturday.

Dystopian heroines as prophets

Donna Schulz
Canadian Mennonite correspondent

Readers of *Canadian Mennonite* know Vic Thiessen as a writer of thoughtful film reviews – an interpreter, as it were, of pop culture for Mennonites in Canada. At Mennonite Church Canada Assembly, Thiessen presented a seminar titled "The Divergent Mockingjay: female prophets, dystopian films and life on earth in 2016."

Dystopian films, so popular today, have been around for a while, said Thiessen. The 1927 Fritz Lang movie, *The Metropolis*, was the first of its kind. It depicted a futuristic world where a small, wealthy minority of citizens lived in luxury, while the majority lived underground as slaves, working to keep the machinery going that would allow the minority to continue their life of ease. "Lang was not just warning us about a possible future," said Thiessen, "he was commenting on life in post-World War I Germany under the Weimar Republic."

Another notable film was George Orwell's *1984*. Created in 1956, it was considered science fiction, but was also a criticism of the class system in Britain and of Stalin's totalitarian regime. "It's truly frightening

that so many things Orwell was warning against have become reality," said Thiessen.

Other notable dystopian films include Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, Disney's *Wall-E*, and the 1999 film, *The Matrix*.

Today two new film series have eclipsed these older films in popularity. Both are based on young adult novels and both feature female heroes. In *The Hunger Games*, Katniss is a competitor on a reality TV show in post-apocalyptic North America. She is willing to sacrifice her own life rather than take the life of another competitor, but eventually resorts to violence in order to overthrow the movie's villain. Triss is the heroine of the *Divergent* movie series. In a futuristic world where humans are divided into groups based on character traits, Triss is divergent because she possesses the traits of each group.

Each of these films contains positive messages, said Thiessen. Their heroines care about the poor and marginalized in their respective societies. "That the heroes are women should be cause for celebration," said Thiessen. "Female heroes reveal traits that distinguish them from male heroes. Both Katniss and Triss wrestle with their inner demons. A new force is

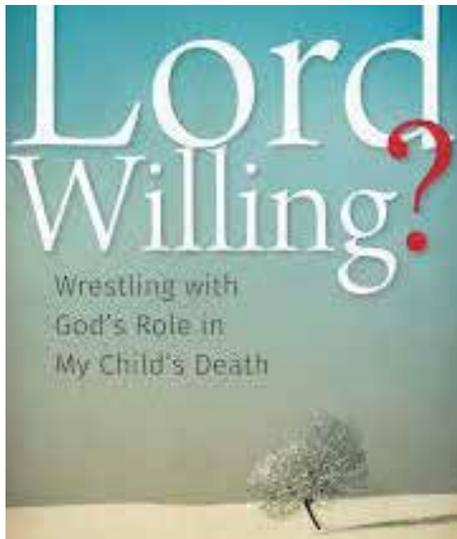


Photo by Dave Rogalsky

brought into being when women become prophets."

Thiessen adds, "Making young women the prophets has potential to be life-changing, but is that's what happening? Are young people responding? Or are the recent films fueling the emotions behind Brexit and Donald Trump?" He says that dystopian films have the potential to be great discussion starters. They can be a way "to share with the world that there is a purpose to living, and to challenge the world, as Jesus did, to care for the poor and for creation."

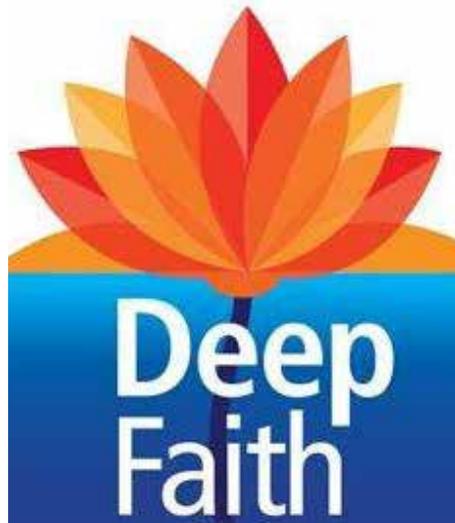
Vic Thiessen presented a seminar exploring the prophetic nature of popular



Why did God take my child?

When her young son was diagnosed with brain cancer, Jessica Kelley couldn't stomach Christian cliches. Gods will? Divine design? The Lords perfect plan? Kelley boldly tackles one of the most difficult questions of the Christian life: if God is all-powerful and all-loving, why do we suffer?

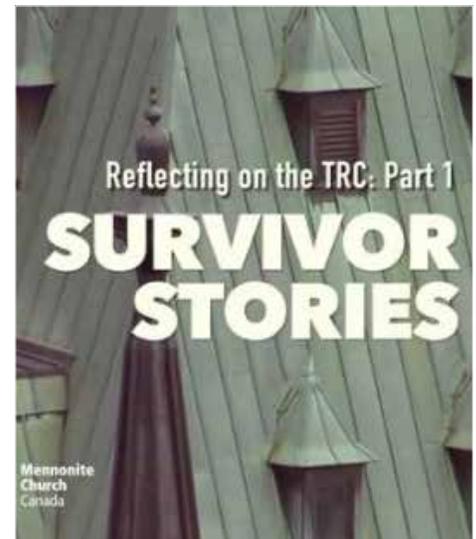
Available at the CommonWord resource table onsite and at www.commonword.ca/go/603



Re-Imagineering Faith for the 21st Century

Deep Faith is a formation conference for and by Anabaptist formation leaders! The event will gather Anabaptist pastors, teachers and lay leaders to re-imagine what faith formation ministry looks like in this century through theology, relationship and practice.

October 6-8, 2016 at AMBS:
www.commonword.ca/go/611



Reconciliation Needs Us All

Reconciliation Needs Us All is a three-part video series sharing excerpts of Indigenous stories alongside Mennonite settler responses. Freely available online at www.commonword.ca/go/604.

Buy, Borrow, and Download a wide variety of resources during Assembly 2016 at **CommonWord**
Bookstore and Resource Centre



Photo by Matt Veith

Generosity Wall Update

Great news! Several anonymous donors have together pledged to match the total amount raised at the Generosity Wall just outside the doors of the main meeting hall. Each gift in the amount identified on the envelope helps to reveal an entire image of Witness workers and ministries we do together.

If each envelope disappears from the wall, you will have raised \$5050 which will be matched for a total of \$10,100 for ministry!

Please visit Daniel Horne and Jason Martin who are able to take your credit cards, cheques, and cash.