

# The Mennonite

Marilyn Miller's  
fulfilled pastoral longing  
empowers other  
women pioneers.

## Pioneer pastor

March 2013

[www.TheMennonite.org](http://www.TheMennonite.org)

INSIDE:

- Rule book or story?
- The wounds of love
- I am a Christian
- Why is *Downton Abbey* so popular?
- In with the old

S | A | C | R | E | D

P | A | U | S | E | S

*Spiritual Practices for Personal Renewal*

\$16.99. [www.MennoMedia.org/Pause](http://www.MennoMedia.org/Pause)



*Fifty Shades of*  
**Grace**

\$12.99. [www.MennoMedia.org/50Shades](http://www.MennoMedia.org/50Shades)



Available from

**Herald Press**

*the book imprint of MennoMedia*

1251 Virginia Ave., Harrisonburg, VA 22802  
490 Dutton Dr., Unit C8, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7

1-800-245-7894 (U.S.)  
1-800-631-6535 (Canada)



28

- 12 Pioneer pastor  
—Laurie Oswald Robinson
- 17 Questions to women leaders  
—Laurie Neumann Nafziger
- 18 Rule book or story?  
—J. Denny Weaver
- 22 A Shalom Arc of biblical interpretation  
—J. Nelson Kraybill
- 26 Dreams of hope: the Lord reigns  
—Cristina Rodriguez Blough
- 28 The wounds of love  
—Isaac S. Villegas
- 32 Group charts hope for church's multicultural future—Wil LaVeist
- 34 A trip to the border—Everett J. Thomas
- 36 Convention planners hope for \$30,000 in offerings—Hilary J. Scarsella
- 38 Total enrollment in Mennonite schools drops  
—Rachel Nussbaum Eby
- 40 An interview with Erica Littlewolf—Hilary J. Scarsella and Joanna Shenk
- 42 Wealth, capitalism focus of AMBS' pastors week  
—Mary E. Klassen
- 43 EMS looks at mental illness close to home  
—Joan K. King
- 44 Drones are coming to civilian life—Jay Parrish



32



DEPARTMENTS

- |                     |                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 4 Letters           | 32 News                 |
| 6 News Briefs       | 44 News Analysis        |
| 8 Grace and Truth   | 47 For the Record       |
| 9 Global Anabaptism | 51 Classifieds          |
| 10 Miscellany       | 52 New Voices           |
| 12 Features         | 53 Mediaculture         |
| 30 Leadership       | 55 Mennonite Church USA |
| 31 Opinion          | 56 Editorial            |

ON THE COVER: Photo provided

*The Mennonite* is the publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries of Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals postage paid at Elkhart, IN 46517 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: \$46 to U.S. addresses and \$54 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

POSTMASTER send address corrections to:  
3145 Benham Ave., Suite 4  
Elkhart, IN 46517

#### STAFF

Editor: Everett J. Thomas  
[everett@themennonite.org](mailto:everett@themennonite.org)  
Associate editor: Gordon Houser  
[gordonh@themennonite.org](mailto:gordonh@themennonite.org)  
Associate editor: Anna Groff  
[annag@themennonite.org](mailto:annag@themennonite.org)  
Advertising, subscriptions: Rebecca Helmuth  
[rebecca@themennonite.org](mailto:rebecca@themennonite.org)  
Bookkeeper: Celina Romero  
Editorial assistant: Nora Miller  
Design: Dee Birkey

WEBSITE [www.themennonite.org](http://www.themennonite.org)

#### OFFICES

3145 Benham Avenue  
Suite 4  
Elkhart, IN 46517  
phone: 800-790-2498  
fax: 316-283-0454

718 N. Main St.  
Newton, KS 67114-1703  
phone: 866-866-1703  
fax: 316-283-0454

P.O. Box 1896  
504 W. Choctaw Drive  
Whiteriver, AZ 85941  
phone: 928-338-6016  
fax: 316-283-0454



## LETTERS

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Email to [letters@themennonite.org](mailto:letters@themennonite.org) or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite*, 3145 Benham Ave., Suite 4, Elkhart, IN 46517. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—Editors

### Startled by quote

While I appreciated the article by Elena Yoder, “Death and Spirituality” (February), I was startled when I came to the quotation at the end by Edgar Cayce who was a psychic, believed in reincarnation and did “readings” while in a trance state, among other strange practices. I wish Yoder had quoted another source to wrap up her otherwise excellent article.—*Ramona Hartzler, North Lawrence, Ohio*

### What more can we do?

I want to say thanks to Timothy Seidel for his excellent article, “Prayer and Action for Gaza” (February). I am grateful for what the Mennonite church has done, but what more can we do? Nothing seems to change. I’m sure I’m not the only one who writes to our officials in Washington, but how are we going to get significant action by Israel to stop its inhumane actions in Gaza? I continue to pray.—*Wilma Shank, Goshen, Ind.*

### Naughty to include letter

Sticking that letter about Mennonites and obesity in Everett Thomas’ January editorial gave it voice. I think Thomas was having a naughty bit of fun with it. I say this ever so kind-spiritedly.—*Shirley Kurtz, Keyser, W.V.*

### Wrong person

While I found the letter on page 4 of the February issue to be a valuable re-

minder that we Anabaptists, as well as our brothers and sisters who identify as Evangelicals, both need to seek better balance when it comes to being consistently pro-life and nonviolent across the whole spectrum of these issues, I am not the author of the letter that appears in this issue. I know there are some other Stan Kauffmans out there among *The Mennonite*’s constituency—perhaps one of these others is the author?—*Stan Kauffman, Pellston, Mich.*

**Editor’s note:** *We apologize for the error. To subscribers who receive the magazine through bulk mailings to churches: When sending a letter by email, please include the town and state in which you live.*

### Will we have dialogue?

I have been Mennonite all my life, but I am seriously questioning why I remain with this denomination—a denomination that has chosen again and again to side with the social liberals in this country.

I expect the liberal media and politicians to twist the truth to make it say whatever they want, censoring what they don’t want. But I do not take it lightly when my denomination chooses to promote the same “twisting of truth” through the columns and opinions they choose to put in print. A case in point is the January Opinion column, “The Confession of Faith and Marriage,” which takes great satisfaction in proving our confession of faith makes allowance for differing sexual lifestyles.

More than 12 years ago, the editor and board for *The Mennonite* chose to put a moratorium on the subject of sexuality. This ban is evidently only one sided. There are opinions and articles that put forward the “alternative” perspective, but it seems the moratorium is used to censor articles with any hint of biblical truth on the subject.

We are told we should remain in dialogue with those of different opinions. But I ask, Where is the dialogue? For now it appears we are not in dialogue about anything. It appears that once

again it is those of the liberal persuasion that attempt to shut down the voice of the opposition.

We of the Evangelical persuasion on human sexuality are not telling others how to live their lives. But we are not willing to let them redefine right and wrong. Stop telling me I must change to accept your view if you won't let me keep and express mine. Either we have a dialogue or we don't. Which is it?

—Willard Eberly, *Manheim, Pa.*

**Editor's note:** *As reported in a December 2012 news story and in the January editorial, we have revised the moratorium on letters and articles addressing Mennonite Church USA's teaching position on sexuality. For another voice on the subject, see also the February Opinion column written by Harold Miller.*

### They were great enablers

It was a great pleasure to see Robert Kreider on the January cover of *The Mennonite* and to read Laurie Oswald Robinson's sketch. Obviously Robinson could not cover every role Robert has played well, and one she omitted was how he enabled younger colleagues.

From the late 1970s to the mid-1990s, he and I worked closely together and with other historians to get

out four books in the state-of-the-art "Mennonite Experience in America" series. In effect he was chairman of the board, and I, as editor, was chief executive officer.

At the outset I did not know him well, and he flustered me by putting so many research ideas on the table that I feared we might never get to the point of publishing. Soon, however, I recognized that he was just letting his fertile mind roll and that his suggestions were a rich resource. Further, I saw that he was offering lots of practical advice and that he and Lois were dipping generously into their own funds to help the project along. So let me add this to Robinson's fine sketch: For the next generation of Mennonite scholars, Robert and Lois were great enablers.

—Theron F. Schlabach, *Goshen, Ind.*

### Mennonite or Christian?

Regarding Peter Epp's New Voices column (January): Thanks for helping us look at the issue of our religious identity from multiple perspectives. When pushed for a religious identity in similar conversations, I've generally been drawn toward identifying myself as a "follower of Jesus." But even that can have overtones of self-righteousness because when we stand alongside

Jesus, our identity is clearly "sinner—graciously received."—Kurt Horst, *Hesston, Kan.*

### Authors create straw man

Regarding "Post-Christendom or Neo-Christendom?" (February): Ron Adams and Isaac Villegas seem to have created a straw man in arguing that "to declare Christendom's demise misleads us into thinking that Christians are now marginalized victims."

I'm unaware of anyone who has suggested in print or otherwise that Christians are "a persecuted minority within the cultural and political systems of Western societies." They seem to confuse evidence of cultural survivals with signs of the continued vitality of "Christendom."

Since until recent times a great majority of Americans identified themselves as Protestant Christians, it is hardly surprising that politicians quote the Bible or refer to our Judeo-Christian heritage.

Our political and legal institutions, our language and literature, and much else reflect the British origin of a comparable majority of European settlers in what were British colonies. But I'd be surprised if even the most devoted  
(Continued on page 54)

## IN THIS ISSUE

Two themes emerged as we put together this issue: how to interpret the Bible and the changing dynamics for under-represented racial/ethnic members of Mennonite Church USA.

Delegates at the Pittsburgh 2011 convention supported something called Year of the Bible. As Gordon Houser explains in his News Brief (page 7), this is not a set plan for a certain calendar year. Rather, it is a year of study with a design and schedule set by each participating congregation. As a resource to those creating their own plan, we publish articles about biblical interpretation

written by well-known Mennonite scholars.

"We should get used to the idea," says retired professor J. Denny Weaver (page 18), "that not all writings in the Bible speak with the same voice."

We invited J. Nelson Kraybill, former seminary president and now a pastor, to respond to Weaver's article.

"The interpretive task of the church is to discern underlying themes and directions in the [Bible's] big narrative," Kraybill says (page 22), "then use what the Holy Spirit shows us to make practical application for our lives today."

Several articles focus on new dynamics for racial/ethnic members of Mennonite Church USA. Wil LaVeist (page 32) provides extensive reporting on the Jan. 25-27 Hope for the Future conference that drew 60 Mennonite Church USA leaders.

Convention planners announce plans for two offerings at Phoenix 2013, including a goal of raising \$15,000 for undocumented young adults, informally called DREAMers (page 36). A third article focuses on Erica Littlewolf (page 40) and her work with indigenous or aboriginal people in the United States and Canada.—Editor

## Richard Twiss, scheduled speaker at Phoenix, dies

ELKHART, Ind.—Richard Twiss, 58, of Vancouver, Wash., a member of the Sicangu Lakota Oyate from the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota, passed away Feb. 9 after suffering a heart attack earlier in the week in Washington, D.C. He was slated to speak in Phoenix on July 1 at the opening adult worship service of Mennonite Church USA's biennial convention.



Twiss was president of Wiconi International, an organization that works to promote community, strengthen culture and foster spiritual vitality among Native American or First Nations people. Wiconi means “life” in the Lakota/Sioux language; Twiss and his wife, Katherine, founded the organization in 1997.

According to Wiconi International's website ([www.wiconi.com](http://www.wiconi.com)), Twiss was committed to “creating opportunities for the betterment of our Native people and communities through advancing education, culture, family and spirituality—in the Spirit of Jesus.” He was a widely traveled and popular speaker, activist, educator, author and networker among innovative thinkers within the Native North American and Indigenous community internationally. He held a doctorate in intercultural studies (cultural anthropology, primal and folk religions and the history of Christian mission) from Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky. He and his wife had four sons.—*Mennonite Church USA*

## MCC on NRA's 'most threatening' list

ELKHART, Ind.—On Feb. 1, *Mother Jones* magazine reported that the National Rifle Association (NRA) put Mennonite Central Committee on a list entitled “The 12 Most Threatening People.” On Feb. 5, MCC spokesperson Cheryl Zehr Walker said she was not

Bluffton University



## Gish addresses Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship

Peggy Gish (left) speaks with Tamara Al-Sammarraie, a Bluffton (Ohio) University junior from Iraq, after presenting a workshop about Christian Peacemaker Teams' efforts in Iraq at the 2013 Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship conference, hosted by Bluffton Feb. 8-10. Gish, of Athens, Ohio, is the author of *Iraq: A Journey of Hope and Peace* and is now writing a second book in which she continues telling the stories of the Iraqi people and of her experiences. About 200 people attended various events during the weekend peace conference, whose theme was, “Spirituality and Shalom: Living at the Intersection of Faith and Justice.”—*Bluffton University*

exactly sure why MCC made the list, but “it's doing so is consistent with our gun violence prevention efforts.”

*Mother Jones* said the NRA published a list in September 2012 that included several hundred nonprofits, celebrities, companies, and news organizations that “have lent monetary, grassroots or some other type of direct support to antigun organizations.” The eclectic list also included the Southern Poverty Law Center and singer Barry Manilow.

“Gun violence is epidemic in the United States,” says MCC's website, “with approximately 30,000 gun deaths each year. These statistics include homicides, suicides, accidental death and ‘legal interventions’ (self-defense or police actions). Of these, suicides

are the most common cause of gun death, with legal interventions making up just 1 percent of the total. Our shared humanity compels us to care about God's children dying from gun violence on the streets of Philadelphia, Washington, Los Angeles and elsewhere. Churches have begun to say, ‘It doesn't have to be this way. We can do something.’”—*Everett J. Thomas*

## Anabaptists meet Down Under on multifaith world

SYDNEY, Australia—January 26 is Australia Day, the equivalent of the U.S. Fourth of July. Over the Australia Day weekend the Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand (AAANZ) held its biennial conference

in Sydney with the theme “From Pieces to Peace: More Than Just Neighbours in a Multifaith World.”

More than just a talkfest about interfaith issues, the planners hoped for a weekend where participants would experience interfaith community. Speakers represented different faiths—Muslim, Jewish and Buddhist.

The conference began with a traditional Aboriginal acknowledgement of place and country led by Ray Minniecon, an Aboriginal pastor and leader of World Vision Australia’s Indigenous program. He reminded those gathered that Aboriginals call Australia Day Invasion Day.

He said, “Think what it was like for Jewish people in Germany during the

Nazi regime.” It is a day for mourning and not celebration for the original inhabitants of Australia.

Dave Andrews gave the first presentation of the weekend, “The Anabaptist Tradition and Peaceful Christlike Interfaith Conversations.” He and his wife, Ange, and their family have lived and worked in intentional communities with marginalized groups of people in Australia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Nepal for more than 30 years. He now lives in a large joint household with his wife, children, grandchildren and others in an inner-city community called the Waiters Union in Brisbane, Australia. Interfaith conversations have kept Dave busy in recent years.

In his talk, Andrews addressed many of the questions Christians raise when thinking about relating to people of other faiths. “Isn’t our task to convert others?” “No,” he said, “Conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit. Our task is to be a witness.”—*Mark S. Hurst and Nathan Hobby*

## Congregation plans for Year of the Bible

NEWTON, Kan.—First Mennonite Church in Hutchinson, Kan., invited its members to memorize a Psalm as part of its Lenten worship services. Then in the fall the congregation plans to launch its version of the Year of the Bible.

The Year of the Bible, a project supported by Pittsburgh 2011 delegates, is not one single calendar year. Rather it is a year of study with a design and schedule set by each congregation observing it. It is also being encouraged by Western District Conference, which plans to kick off its Year of the Bible at its annual assembly Aug. 1-2 in North Newton, Kan.

The invitation to memorize Scripture for Lent, writes Tonya Ramer Wenger, pastor at First Mennonite Church, in the congregation’s newsletter, “is really more about encouraging your growing in God than it is to present Scripture flawlessly in worship.”

For more ideas, go to the website

[www.yearofthebible.network.org](http://www.yearofthebible.network.org).

—*Gordon Houser*

## Community Mennonite Church becomes a welcoming congregation

HARRISONBURG, Va.—After a three-year process of discussion and discernment, Community Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg adopted a statement in January to “invite all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, to a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ and to consider membership with CMC.”

The church is one of the largest Mennonite congregations in Harrisonburg, with an average Sunday attendance of around 275.

About 90 percent of church members voted to approve the statement, which also reads: “Most members of our congregation are open to applying Christian ethics regarding celibacy and fidelity to single persons and couples, regardless of sexual orientation.”

—*Andrew Jenner*

## Chile hosts Southern Cone Anabaptists

ANGOSTURA DE PAINE, Chile—After a two-year delay caused by the massive earthquake of 2010, the traditional biannual gathering of the Mennonites of the Southern Cone took place in Chile for the first time, where about 20 congregations stated their support of Anabaptism. The gathering was Jan. 23-27 in Angostura de Paine.

About 100 Anabaptists from Bolivia, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil arrived there, plus dozens of members of other churches from several regions of Chile. They were joined by visitors from Central and North America and by the Officers of Mennonite World Conference (MWC).

The Iglesia Evangélica Menonita de Chile, which became the 100th MWC member church in 2011, organized the event. With a dozen congregations throughout the country, the IEMCH reflects the missionary vocation of the Latin American Anabaptist churches.

—*MWC*

Goshen College



## Art exhibit displays Hershberger’s Mennonite ‘iconography’

“Boy with Milkweed” by Goshen (Ind.) College professor emeritus of art Abner Hershberger is part of his art exhibit “Heritage Works” in the college’s Good Library Gallery from Feb. 10 to March 28. The exhibit includes 33 paintings that explore symbols of Mennonite farm life and living.—*Goshen College*

## Jake King, Mennonite detective



**Ron Adams**  
is pastor of  
Madison (Wis.)  
Mennonite Church.

Some years ago, I wrote a story about a Mennonite detective named Jake King. Jake speaks in that sardonic, world-weary voice made famous by Spade and Marlowe. Like his fictional predecessors, Jake gets bowled over by every Beautiful Woman who comes to him for help. And he is reminded that women can get along fine without him.

So far, Jake has paid a long overdue visit to his mother, initiated by a dark-haired woman and a cassette recording of 606\*. He's recovered a clown's stolen voice and sung a lullaby for a little boy with big feet. And, most recently, he helped a certain rich young ruler decide to do what it takes to follow Jesus.

This is the kind of thing pastors get up to when not writing sermons: not creating stories about a pacifist detective of little brain and large heart. Rather, wishing and praying that something good will happen at the end of every story. We pastors want to make things come out right.

One of the gifts of pastoral ministry comes when members of our community invite us into their stories. The invitation usually comes during a specific chapter in those stories, a specific set of circumstances that call for pastoral care.

It is a pastor's privilege to walk alongside sisters and brothers as they negotiate a transition, mourn a loss or celebrate something unexpected and wonderful. We do premarital counseling. We try to offer support when marriages fail. We laugh with new parents. We cry with those who've lost someone dear. We stand by hospital beds and pray. We bear witness to the movement of the Holy Spirit in the lives of others.

**While it may seem that pastors** are the ones offering ourselves—that we are the givers—the truth is the other way around. When people invite us into their stories, into the deeper places of their lives, we receive a gift both precious and profound. As we get caught up in their stories, we begin to see our sisters and brothers more fully,

more honestly, even more lovingly. Such a gift!

I cannot speak for all pastors. But I have a powerful desire for happy endings. I want those who come to me with a hope or a dream or a need to find something good at the end of their story. I want broken hearts to find solace. I want broken relationships to find healing. I want sick bodies to recover. I want loving couples to live well together all their days. I want babies to grow strong and wise and beautiful and become exactly what God intends them to be. I want to solve every mystery and rescue everyone in distress. I want a happy ending.


**I know I am not God.** I know I cannot make things always turn out right. Not for myself. And certainly not for other people. If being invited into the stories of others is the gift of pastoral ministry, discovering that it is not in my power to right every wrong and fix every problem is its heartache.

If being invited into the stories of others is the gift of pastoral ministry, discovering that it is not in my power to right every wrong and fix every problem is its heartache.

Which may be why I invented Jake King, Mennonite detective. By the end of the story the mystery is solved. But our hero is not unscathed. More often than not, the real mystery being solved is in his own heart. And the solution? A deeper awareness of his inability to make all things right. Be-

cause even Jake King, Mennonite detective, must reckon with his limitations. He may sometimes make things better. But he cannot always make them right. Jake helps me explore the distance between what I wish I could do and what I can do.

It's not just pastors and fictional detectives who struggle with the distance between their desire for a happy ending, and their capacity to bring it about. Sooner or later, we all learn that we cannot make everything come out right, no matter how hard we try.

But we need not despair. Because the Author of our stories is still writing. And though we may struggle now, we do not lose heart. For God has promised a happy ending. And God can make it so. 

\*In *The Mennonite Hymnal* (1969), this is the song number for the hymn, "Praise God From Whom," also known informally as the Mennonite anthem.

## The global church in our own backyard

In his landmark book *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration and the Transformation of the West* (Orbis, 2008), Jehu Hanciles challenges standard assumptions regarding “globalization.” Although it may appear as if Western religious, economic, political and cultural forces have come to dominate the world, the reality is actually much more complicated.

Not only do local cultures frequently reframe Western influences to suit their own purposes, but the massive migrations of people from South to North during the past few decades—and the dynamic communities they have formed—are gradually reshaping the culture of Europe and North America. The recent rise to political prominence of Spanish-speaking immigrants in the United States is only one visible expression of this dynamic. In reality, vibrant immigrant communities from many cultures have taken root in cities throughout the United States, and a growing number of churches in the global South are now sending missionaries to plant new congregations in Europe and North America. Conrad Kanagy’s book *Road Signs for the Journey* (Herald Press, 2007) notes that the fastest-growing groups in Mennonite Church USA today are the so-called “Racial/Ethnic” congregations, many of them dominated by first- or second-generation immigrants. This transformation may seem unsettling to some, but it also suggests an expression of Anabaptist renewal in North America that bears the promise of new life and vitality.

In January, I received an email from a student at Fuller Theological Seminary who signed his name Pablo Kim Sun. I immediately assumed that Pablo was a Korean student who had, with good humor, adopted a local Spanish name because his own first name was too difficult for students and professors to pronounce. Several weeks later, as our friendship deepened, I realized his story was much more complicated—and much more interesting—than my initial assumption.


Hyung Jin (Paul) Kim Sun was born in Asunción, Paraguay, the son of Korean immigrants. His parents, of mixed Catholic and Presbyterian background, had immigrated to Paraguay in the late 1970s, seeking their economic fortune. Hyung Jin grew up speaking Korean at home and Spanish with his Paraguayan friends. But he also learned English at the private Christian school he attended, where he adopted the name Paul.

Paul had encountered German-speaking Mennonites in Asunción through his parent’s wholesale grocery business. But it was not until he discovered Anabaptist history and theology while studying at Fuller—an evangelical school in Pasadena, Calif.—that he realized what Mennonites believed. By then he had become a convinced Anabaptist, committed to the principles of biblical peacemaking, daily discipleship and a life in community. His journey embodies a new, culturally diverse form of Mennonite identity that is bringing the global church to our own doorstep.

**Giving expression to this** multicultural religious identity is never simple. In the United States, Paul opted to identify himself with the Spanish Pablo as a reminder of his Paraguayan identity. And even though he quickly joined the local Korean Mennonite church, he resists rigid cultural categories. “I am more than just a Korean Mennonite,” he insists. “I’m a Korean-Paraguayan Mennonite. ... I read my Bible in English, pray in Korean and tend to share the gospel in Spanish.”

Meanwhile, the impact of the Korean Mennonite witness in southern California continues to grow. In 2010, Korean Mennonite pastors in the United States and Canada formed the Korean Anabaptist Fellowship, an organization “committed to living out the Anabaptist confession in a Korean context.” More recently, Hyun Hur, a Korean Mennonite pastor, helped create ReconciliAsian, a peace center in Los Angeles that seeks to promote Anabaptist values in the Korean immigrant community (see February issue, page 38). “The goal of the center,” he writes, “is to encourage a peace culture in the immigrant churches and provide skills that can promote conversation, participation and cooperation.” In the meantime, Pablo Kim Sun is completing an M.Div. in Christian ethics and was recently licensed by the Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference to serve as the lead pastor of Church for Others, a Korean Mennonite congregation in Temple City, Calif.

The exact form of the Korean Anabaptist-Mennonite witness in North America is still emerging. But as a new generation of committed theologians, ethicists, peacemakers and church planters emerge, the identity of the broader Mennonite church in North America will inevitably be stretched and transformed.

Can we be open and attentive to the presence of the global church in our own backyard? 



**John D. Roth** is professor of history at Goshen (Ind.) College, director of the Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism and editor of *Mennonite Quarterly Review*.

Vibrant immigrant communities from many cultures have taken root in cities throughout the United States.

## How much military spending is enough?

As discussions continue about the federal budget and how to reduce spending, we hear little about the so-called defense budget. And if we do, some congressional leader often bemoans even considering cuts in the military.

Mennonites have a long history of speaking (and acting) out against military spending, both on moral grounds and on its inefficient, inflationary nature. But other voices have always been there as well.

In “The Force” (*The New Yorker*, Jan. 28), Jill Lepore asks, How much military is enough? She reports on the House Armed Services Committee, whose chair, Howard P. McKeon (R-Calif.), though he has never served in the military, “believes that it’s his job to protect the Pentagon from budget cuts.”

Lepore points out that “the United States spends more on defense than all the other nations of the world combined” and that “between 1998 and 2011, military spending doubled, reaching more than \$700 billion a year.”

She then reviews the history of U.S. military spending. “Early Americans,” she writes, “considered a standing army—a permanent army kept even in times of peace—to be a form of tyranny.” And in fact, the United States did not establish a standing army until World War II. And the Armed Services Committee was formed in 1946.

With the onset of the Cold War, military spending ballooned, and in the 1950s it “made up close to three-quarters of the federal budget.” Much of that increase was also pushed by military contractors, such as Lockheed Martin, who “argued not only for military expansion but also for federal subsidies.”

At a hearing on the future of the military on Sept. 8, 2011, John Garamendi (D-Calif.) read aloud from a speech by President Eisenhower from 1953 in which he said, “This world in arms ... is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. ... This is not a way of life at all in any true sense.”

Eisenhower, Lepore notes, was “the son of pacifist Mennonites who considered war a sin.” In his farewell address in 1961, he said “we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex.”

“If any arms manufacturer today holds what Eisenhower called ‘unwarranted influence,’ it is Lockheed Martin,” writes Lepore. Its contracts with the Pentagon amount to about “\$30 billion each year, it “spends \$15 million a year on lobbying efforts and campaign contributions.”

Lepore quotes from soldier-critics who oppose the endless warmaking and excessive military spending that has occurred in the past decade. The most persuasive of these, she writes, is Andrew J. Bacevich, a career Army officer and now a professor of history and international relations at Boston University.

Bacevich argues that Americans “have fallen prey to militarism,” which “defines the nation’s strength and well-being in terms of military preparedness, military action and the fostering of (or nostalgia for) military ideals.”

He blames much of this on intellectuals, both conservative and liberal. “The resort to force,” Lepore writes, “is a product of political failure” and a failure of political culture.

She notes that Bacevich has lost patience with “CNN loudmouths, neocon opinion-page columnists, retired generals who run for office, Hollywood action-film directors, Jerry Falwell, Wesley Clark, Tom Clancy, Bill Clinton.” Bacevich, she writes, “deplores their ego-driven mythmaking, their love of glory, their indifference to brutality.”

As Bacevich notes, militarism is like an illness that romanticizes what is barbarous. Our government needs a dose of sanity as it considers the exorbitant amount being spent to feed this illness.—*Gordon Houser*

### Pontius’ Puddle



© Pontius.com

“The ego gets what it wants with words. The soul finds what it needs in silence.”—Richard Rohr, in “Finding God in the Depths of Silence” in *Sojourners*

### Fiction without faith?

Writer Paul Elie writes in the Dec. 19, 2012, issue of the *New York Times* that if there is any portion of our culture that is truly post-Christian, it is literature. There are no fiction writers today like Flannery O’Connor, Walker Percy, Reynolds Price or John Updike, who took faith seriously and gave it explanatory power. Faith in fiction is now largely treated as an artifact of the past. Even Marilynne Robinson’s *Gilead*, which portrays “the most emphatically Christian character in contemporary American fiction”—the Rev. John Ames—is historical fiction, set in the past. “Belief as upbringing, belief as social fact, belief as a species of American weirdness: our literary fiction has all these things,” writes Elie. “All that is missing is the believer.”—*Christian Century*

### A tonic for peace

Education of women is almost like a tonic for peace, health and prosperity in developing countries, according to War Child founder Samantha Nutt in her book *Damned Nations: Greed, Guns, Armies and Aid*. One immediate educational dividend is reduced child mortality. Citing a study of demographic data from 1970 to 2009, she asserts that “for every additional year of education women of reproductive age in developing countries obtained, the death rate among children under 5 dropped by 10 percent.” Another dividend is a reduction in the cycle of violence and despair that she insists will not end “so long as women remain marginalized by illiteracy and are catastrophically poor. ... The most affordable, efficient and transformational way to prevent conflict and human suffering does not lie in swelling military aid and raising defense budgets. It lies in ensuring that women and girls have choices other than subservience and reproductive surrender.”—*The Marketplace*

**25%**

Journalists of color have lost one out of four jobs in the industry’s extensive layoffs.—*Columbia Journalism Review*

... The most affordable, efficient and transformational way to prevent conflict and human suffering does not lie in swelling military aid and raising defense budgets. It lies in ensuring that women and girls have choices other than subservience and reproductive surrender.”—*The Marketplace*

### The isolation of British Muslims

The increasing isolation of Britain’s Muslim community is leading to stepped-up attacks against Muslims and a sense that Muslims can act like “idiots” against outsiders in some parts of the city, British government and Muslim leaders say. Parts of London’s East End have turned into Muslims-only zones, they say, where gays and lesbians are harassed, men are forced to pour alcoholic drinks down the gutter and women have been ordered to cover their bare skin.—*Religion News Service*

### Poverty ignored by media

- Number of people living in poverty in the United States: **46 million**
  - Percent of campaign coverage in major news outlets that dealt substantively with poverty during the first six months of 2012: **0.2**
  - Number of substantive campaign stories on poverty aired or published in that period by ABC World News, NBC Nightly News, NPR’s All Things Considered and *Newsweek*: **0**
- Columbia Journalism Review*

### Open doors

The Occupy Wall Street movement initially got the cold shoulder from some churches, but attitudes changed in New York City after Hurricane Sandy. Members of Occupy organized a relief effort called Occupy Sandy, and churches in Brooklyn, Staten Island and Coney Island opened their doors as organizing hubs and supply centers. Occupiers won the trust of locals by helping clean up damaged churches and serving people passed over by state-sponsored efforts. And they cleared pews of supplies before worship services so that the sanctuaries could be used by their congregations. Even before Sandy, the Occupy movement was reaching out to faith groups with a program called Rolling Jubilee, an effort to buy up defaulted debts for pennies on the dollar and then liquidate the debts.—*Christian Century*

Amount spent in 2011 on cosmetic procedures in the United States:  
**\$10 billion**  
—*Yes! Magazine*

**80%**

of unmarried U.S. evangelicals between the ages of 18 and 29 have had sex.

**32%**

of all unplanned pregnancies had by evangelicals end in abortion.

**30%**

of evangelicals report getting pregnant or getting their partner pregnant. These rates are similar to those of unmarried young adults nationwide.  
—*Insight*, National Association of Evangelicals newsletter


# Pioneer pastor

**Marilyn Miller's fulfilled pastoral longing empowers other women pioneers.**

by Laurie Oswald Robinson

When Marilyn Miller—one of the first women to be ordained in the Mennonite church—heard pleas in her childhood congregation in the 1940s for men to seek the pastorate, she asked God why she hadn't been created a male so she could answer that call.

Decades later, that longing led her into seminary and the pastorate—a place once reserved for men—and her example lit the path for other female trailblazers. Because they were faithful to the call, it's unlikely girls today pray like the 10-year-old Miller, listening for God beneath a silent prairie sky.

A photograph of Marilyn Miller, a woman with short grey hair, wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt. She is standing behind a wooden podium with a microphone, smiling slightly. The background is a dark teal color.

Marilyn Miller preaches at Boulder (Colo.) Mennonite Church.  
Photo provided

“A speaker at Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church encouraged the congregation—because of a shortage of pastors in the former Mennonite Church (MC)—to pray that God would open more young men’s hearts for the ministry,” said 76-year-old Miller during a Jan. 20 interview at her home in Boulder, Colo., where she lives with Maurice, her husband.

“After that service, I went into our backyard and looked up at the sky and said, ‘God, if you needed pastors so bad, why didn’t you make me a man?’ ... I loved reading the Bible and would often preach to the chickens after my siblings got tired of me preaching to them.”

She would preach, study the Bible, counsel and pray for others—all without pay—if God would just give her the opportunity. When she dated Maurice at Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., she asked him if he was interested in being a pastor or a missionary, because that would allow her to be in ministry, too.

“He said he felt called to be neither, and if that was what I wanted, I would have to marry another man.” In the end, they got married, and it has been a good and complimentary fit, she said. “Maurice has a gentle strength and has been encouraging and supportive of my ministry.”

After they married in 1958, she finished her bachelor’s degree in elementary education and he received a bachelor’s and master’s degree in city planning. It was more than a decade later—after several elementary teaching jobs, giving birth to four children and a move from Wichita, Kan., to Colorado—that her desire fully flowered.

In 1976, after she earned a Master of Divinity degree at Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Western District Conference (WDC) ordained her as co-pastor to serve with the late Peter Ediger at Arvada (Colo.) Mennonite Church. She served there nine years part-time before she was called as WDC’s first female church planter to start Boulder (Colo.) Mennonite Church, where she pastored for five years.

She left congregational ministry for a church-wide focus in 1989. She served with the former Commission on Home Ministries, a ministry of the former General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) that included work in evangelism, church planting and peace. After 12 years in that role, Miller, who holds a Doctor of Ministry degree, served as associate conference minister for WDC congregations in Colorado. In 2004, she retired from formal ministry.

“I stayed home with our small children for nine

years,” she said. “But when our youngest was getting preschool age, I felt restless. ... I was active at Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church [in Wichita] in such things as a neighborhood after school Bible program and a women’s prayer group, but I felt there was something more.”

Marilyn said she asked Walt Friesen what she needed to do to teach religion, and he said, “Go to

**I loved reading the Bible and would often preach to the chickens after my siblings got tired of me preaching to them.—Marilyn Miller**

seminary.” The closest seminary at that time was in Denver, and she knew there was no way. “One morning,” she said, “I knelt by my bed and told God that when all the children were in school I wanted to do something else besides homemaking. ... I said I would do anything and go anywhere if God would just lead me. ... I sensed God said, Don’t worry, just keep doing what you are doing, and when I want you somewhere else, you will know it.”



▶ Marilyn Miller baptizes Steve Voran in a Boulder stream, with Gretchen Williams holding towel, in August 1989. Photo provided

That very evening, Maurice said he'd just been asked to move to Denver to open a new consulting, planning office. It was painful to uproot their lives in 1972 from Kansas, where both sets of parents lived, but they felt God moving them west.

### Seal of exclusivity loosens

Three years later, she became the first GC woman to be ordained in current memory. The ordination of Ann Jemima Allebach in 1911 predated the journeys of Miller and Emma Richards. Six decades earlier, Allebach's ordination at First Mennonite Church of Philadelphia never received the support of Eastern District Conference. And she never pastored a Mennonite congregation. Richards was the first woman in the former Mennonite Church (MC) to be ordained, in 1973 by Illinois Mennonite Conference.

After Miller and Richards pushed through once-barred entries, the door for women opened wider—though still only a “crack” in many quarters. But enough “firsts” ensued by the mid-1980s that the tight seal of exclusivity was loosened. According to the Mennonite Church Yearbook, by 1987, the GCs had licensed or ordained 66 women as pastors. By 1988, the MCs had done the same for 62 women.

**I told my mother that for someone who didn't believe in females preaching, she did a great job.  
—Marilyn Miller**



Marilyn Miller (to her mother's right) with her parents and siblings in 1954. Photo provided

“I was really surprised when I actually got a job as a pastor in a congregation,” Miller said. “I told my professors at Iliff that the only thing Mennonite women are paid to do in churches is secretarial or janitorial work and that I didn't expect to get a job ... but had come to seminary because I was so hungry to learn.”

She attributed the answer to prayers for a pastorate to the deep openness and affirmation of WDC. “WDC and congregations like Arvada—[which] employed me as their first female pastor—believed that equality and inclusiveness were important in an era when many other regions and congregations did not,” she said.

Miller suffered with pastorate-ready women who found no pastorates. She remembers how at one meeting a man described female pastors as wolves in sheep's clothing. Theological disagreement sometimes came from family, as was the case with her mother, the late Clara (Fricke) Kauffman.

“At the sharing time before my ordination, Mother stood and held up her Bible and said, ‘Marilyn has my blessing, but I still believe that a woman's role is to be a helpmate for her husband.’ I told her that for someone who didn't believe in females preaching, she did a great job.”

But Miller still felt loved by her and was grateful that they gave each other freedom to be who God called them to be. Her father [the late Milo Kauffman] was a different story. “When someone asked him if he heard that a woman was going to



Marilyn Miller as a child in 1938. Photo provided



Miller's family in Costa Rica in 1994. Photo provided

preach at a Mennonite college graduation, he said, 'Yes, I know—she's my daughter. ... Like Peter in the Bible, who am I to fight against the Spirit?'

Miller rejoices that the door of opportunity has been flung wide open in many sectors of Mennonite Church USA. Women today are not only lead pastors but seminary presidents and churchwide ministry leaders. Several of the many women who joined Miller and Richards in paving the way into this new world were Patty Shelly, Lois Barrett and Dorothy Nickel Friesen, all ordained in 1985.

"The news about Marilyn was affirming in light of my being advised not to go to seminary," says Friesen, a retired pastor, assistant dean at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary and WDC conference minister. "The message was, After all, what are you going to do with a Master of Divinity degree, since women do not get jobs as pastors?"

"In those days, at every turn, we were studying and discussing the role of women in leadership and the image of God. ... We realized we had missed part of the gospel by silencing women. ... Theologically, biblically and practically we needed a new vision.

"Yet we can't suggest all the men were the problem and all the women were the answer. ... Strong male leadership also paved the way. ... We need to strive for a collaborative and inclusive gender community."

John Esau, former GC director of ministerial

leadership from 1985 through 1999, says the inclusion of women in pastoral ministry was well under way by the time he took the job. This new reality resonated with his longtime views that women brought many gifts to ministry.

"Women have moved the church from the domination of male leadership; they have also brought valuable new perceptions of substance and style," he says. "Despite the resistance from biblical literalists and the habits of tradition, the church has responded positively. ... We have all been enriched by the perspective that women bring to ministry."

#### **Valuing models, balancing life**

Miller's joyful perseverance seems linked to the values of love of God, community and service imparted to her as the eldest daughter of 10 children born to the Kauffmans. Her father served as president of Hesston (Kan.) College for 19 years and as a pastor and conference minister in South Central Conference. Her mother felt strongly about being keeper of hearth and home and gave undivided attention to her children.

**My mother's unconditional love for all her kids taught me about the importance of loving and including all others and striving to make that happen in whatever place of the church I am called to be.—Marilyn Miller**

Miller imbibed the modeling of both parents and has sought a healthy—though often elusive—balance between her Mary and Martha, her being and doing, sides.

"My father gave his whole self to the church, and my mother gave herself totally to the family, and so I grew up knowing it was important to be wholehearted in whatever you did," she said. "I've struggled all my life with wanting to be a great homemaker and give to those close to me, like my mother, and a church worker and give to the world, like my father.

"At different seasons of my life, I've moved closer to one end of the continuum than the other, and I have some regrets about not always achieving a healthy balance. But I've learned what is most important is to be who I really am and not what others want me to be."

Though she's gained much on her pilgrimage, she's learned that it is her losses—in both her



On Sept. 28, 1975, Elbert Koontz preached at Miller's commissioning service at Arvada Mennonite Church and presented her with a "License to Preach the Gospel."

Photo provided

family of origin and her own family—that have shaped her ministry with compassion, empathy and a desire to be real about death. Her older brother died of a brain tumor his last year of medical school. Her baby brother, with Down's Syndrome, died just before he turned 2.

"When my mother wanted to bring him up for dedication, she was told she could not bring a blemished lamb to the altar," Miller said. "But as all the little 'normal' kids were blessed, my mother's tears fell on my brother's face and he looked up at her and smiled.

**I used to read so many books on how to show care, but what it comes down to in the end for me is just listening to others and accepting their life stories, including the parts I don't get.**

**—Marilyn Miller**

"My mother's unconditional love for all her kids, whether it was my physician brother or this special needs son, taught me about the importance of loving and including all others and striving to make that happen in whatever place of the church I am called to be."

Miller had a miscarriage and delivered a still-born child before she gave birth to her other three children—Michael, Michelle and Monica. On Mother's Day 1996, she lost 32-year-old Michael in a kayaking tragedy.

"About 7 p.m. on that Mother's Day, the phone

rang, and I thought Michael was calling to wish me a happy Mother's Day," she said. "Instead, it was the sheriff, telling me that our son had been in a kayaking accident on the Animas River near Durango, and his body had not been found. ... That was one of the worst moments of my life. I suddenly knew what people meant when they talked about a broken heart.

"There is anger in loss and death. ... We quell this powerful emotion by saying, 'They are in a better place, and God knows best.' Instead, we need to help each other lament as they did in the Old Testament. ... When we are open to lament, we also open ourselves to the praise that comes from an honest release."

Sharing an unvarnished and beloved self with other unvarnished and beloved creatures of God is the heartbeat of Miller today. Hers is not a "retirement" but a resting in the joy of living a less structured life that still includes much lay ministry. She has more time to enjoy and nurture her children and five grandchildren and revel in nature with Maurice, who spent 21 years working for The U.S. National Park Service. She also expresses her love of cooking and healthy food in a homeless ministry at Boulder Mennonite.

Her elusive balance has found a centered rhythm. Miller is grateful God brought her through the pioneering and pain to a homestead of the heart that still searches the sky for the next calling of love.

"The older I get, the more I realize that life is simpler than we make it," she said. "We don't need to fix others or ourselves. ... I used to read so many books on how to show care, but what it comes down to in the end for me is just listening to others and accepting their life stories, including the parts I don't get.

"When we truly love others, we can disagree and remain present to each other in grace. Real love allows you to speak your truth and me to speak mine, and we both are respected. I may be right about some things, and you may be right about others. The goal is to learn from each other and grow in love and truth."



*Laurie Oswald Robinson is a free-lance writer in Newton, Kan., and the author of Forever Family.*

# QUESTIONS TO women leaders

**Laurie Neumann Nafziger** is president and CEO for Oaklawn Psychiatric Center in Goshen, Ind., a community mental health center and psychiatric hospital that serves Indiana's Elkhart and St. Joseph counties. Oaklawn now has more than 700 employees, serves 14,500 clients and has a budget of \$50 million. Nafziger lives in Goshen. She is a member of Eighth Street Mennonite Church in Goshen and serves on the board of Mennonite Health Services Alliance, which sponsors Oaklawn.

## **Did you have a woman leader as mentor?**

I “grew up” professionally at Oaklawn, having worked there over 25 years. In that time, I received encouragement and support to stretch and take on new duties through existing male leaders—Hal Loewen and Sandy Kauffman. In both cases, they recognized my gifts and didn't seem concerned about my gender, for which I'm grateful.

## **Are you mentoring a young woman who may be a potential church leader?**

The behavioral health-care field is predominantly female, and I've been surrounded by smart, committed women—and men—who have a heart for people with mental illness and addictions. I appreciate the opportunity to recognize other women's gifts and offer them opportunities to use them in a way that benefits others and is satisfying for them.

## **How are their experiences the same or different from yours?**

As I watch my daughter and her friends enter the work force, it's wonderful to see their confidence and comfort. They've had the benefit of seeing their mothers function successfully at home and in the workplace, so this is normal for them in a way that was different from my experience.

## **What impediments have you faced in becoming a leader?**

In the beginning, I was aware of two impediments: I was young and I was female. That felt like a tough combination sometimes. However, I focused on doing my job well and stepping up to opportunities. By now, the age thing has taken care of itself, and the world is more accepting of women.

## **When you face challenges as a leader, what encourages you?**

I am encouraged by my family, my friends and the work itself. I'm a high-energy and positive person and never stay down long. I am energized by the work and the wonderful people around me. They bring support and a safe place to vent, which gives me what I need to move ahead.



I've been surrounded by smart, committed women—and men—who have a heart for people with mental illness and addictions.  
—Laurie Neumann Nafziger

## The difference it makes in how we approach the Bible

As a counterpoint to papal authority, Martin Luther appealed to “sola scriptura” or “Scripture alone” as the source of authority for reformation. This appeal worked well. Reformers of many stripes, including Anabaptists, based reform on the authority of Scripture. This approach that enabled the Protestant Reformation in the 16th-century contained the seeds of a problem that persists today, nearly six centuries later. ▶



# Rule book or story?

by J. Denny Weaver

Dee Birkey | photo collage



However, these reformers did not recognize that they were reading and using the Bible differently. Appeals to the Bible did not resolve their differences. We still encounter this problem, whether within the Mennonite family or between Mennonites and other Christians.

**The appeal to the Bible** as a direct source of authority assumes that it functions like a divine rule book. The assumption is that its words jump over 20 or even 30 centuries to give instructions in timeless fashion directly to us for today. Those who truly believe the Bible, it is claimed, will follow these examples and commandments. This approach works well when we are comfortable with the rules discovered.

But what happens when other examples and commandments are unthinkable or seem completely outmoded today. If we followed the example of the patriarchs and the kings of Israel, men would have multiple wives. God commanded the Israelites to massacre enemies. There are instructions to stone to death a rebellious son (Deuteronomy 21:18-21), to execute adulterers (Deuteronomy 22:22-24), to stone to death a wife, brother, son or daughter who tempts one to worship other gods (Deuteronomy 13:6-10). We are not to mix types of cloth or plant a second crop in a vineyard (Deuteronomy 23:9, 11), and must never eat pork or shell fish (Deuteronomy 14:3-21). Women may not wear men's clothing such as pants (Deuteronomy 22:5) or cut their hair and are required to wear a prayer veiling (1 Corinthians 11). Jewelry of any kind is forbidden (1 Peter 3:4). Men must have beards, since trimming the edges is not allowed (Leviticus 19:27). Divorce is forbidden (Mark 10:6-12). And more. Mostly we have rested uneasy with some of these commands and ignored others.

Our uneasiness stems in part from the assumption that we should read the Bible as a book of transcendent rules and belief statements, existing above history and directly applicable today. I suggest that we allow the character of the Bible itself to show us how to read it.

The unity of the Bible is provided by a narrative, the story of God's people that begins with Abraham and runs through the history of Israel to Jesus and the early church. We read this long-running saga in Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah. Close up vignettes appear in Ruth, Esther and parts of

Daniel. The books of the prophets present commentary on events all along this history. The Book of Psalms presents the worship music of God's people, Proverbs reviews some of their wisdom. Leviticus and Deuteronomy contain early law codes. In the New Testament, the story continues in the four Gospels and Acts. The Epistles provide commentary on the story for the early church. Apocalyptic writings in Daniel and Revelation present a view of events happening in the world from the perspective of the heavenly throne room. This description of the Bible's books could be greatly expanded, but the important point here is to see that it is the narrative of God's people that reveals how the various books relate to each other and thus unifies the collection of writings that we call the Bible.

**How is it helpful** to see the story of God's people as the unifying factor of the Bible? First, this understanding makes this history our history. We, the church today, are the continuation of the story of God's people. The story that began with Abraham and goes through Jesus and the early

**Jesus' story becomes the key to identifying the earlier voices in the story that most truly reflect the will of God.**

church is the beginning of our identity as God's people. This reading displays the entire Bible, not just the New Testament, as our book.

Second, recognizing this story as the unifying element of the Bible should impact the way we understand it. Seeing this story means we should expect to see developments and changes in the story as the people of God grew in their understanding of what it meant to be God's people. We should expect to see instances where people got things wrong, without thereby seeing that recognition as a rejection of the truth of the Bible. Stated boldly, we should get used to the idea that not all writings in the Bible speak with the same voice, and we can see that some ideas in it are wrong or misguided and can be abandoned. Thus the most important point of all is to see the direction of changes as the writers grew in their understanding of God. And since the important culmination of the story is in the narrative of Jesus, his story becomes the key to identifying

the earlier voices in the story that most truly reflect the will of God.

Third, seeing the unifying factor of the Bible as the story of God's people enables us to see that everything in the Bible reflects the particular context in which they lived. Obviously we live in a different context. Our task is not to try to copy and transplant directly the ideas and practices from 2,000 or 3,000 years ago. Rather than assuming the history speaks directly to us, we should read their story to understand the direction in which things were moving and changing.

Rather than assuming the history speaks directly to us, we should read their story to understand the direction in which things were moving and changing.

Then, in our context, we will discuss how to be the continuation of that story, how to keep moving the story in the same direction.

**The Bible makes changes** within this history visible. By the time of the New Testament, for example, there had been a movement away from the polygamy practiced by the patriarchs and the kings of Israel. In another shift, there is a clear move toward less violence, which culminates with Jesus' rejection of violence. Six times in the Book of Acts the writer describes the brief narrative used by the Apostles to identify Jesus in the months immediately after his death and resurrection (Acts 2:14-39; 3:13-26; 4:10-12; 5:30-32;

10:36-43; 13:17-41). Paul repeats that outline (1 Corinthians 15) but adds a point not made earlier, that the resurrection of Jesus requires belief in a general resurrection of the dead. Some decades later, as the eyewitnesses to Jesus died, the narrative outline visible in Acts was expanded by the four Gospel writers. Meanwhile, the church in Acts expanded the circle of God's people to include Gentiles, abandoned the requirement of circumcision and allowed eating of foods previously deemed unclean. New Testament interpreters took the story of Jesus into other worldviews and used the images from these diverse frames of reference to say that with his life, death and resurrection Jesus was both above and below it—the Greek Logos (John 1), principalities and powers (Colossians 1), the high priest (Hebrews), a new Adam (Philippians 2), the slain Lamb (Revelation 4 and 5).

These developments and changes all involved decisions about how to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ effectively in new contexts and to address new issues as the early church expanded beyond Jerusalem. Sometimes they extracted new insight from the story. Other times they changed their minds about acceptable conduct.

With changes occurring, it should be obvious that different viewpoints appear, and thus contemporary interpreters are not obligated to, and in fact cannot, harmonize or synthesize all biblical statements on a particular question. It is not possible, for example, to harmonize the blessing of marriage to multiple wives with a clear endorsement of monogamous marriage, or decisions for and against circumcision or slavery.

In practice, we have been applying this understanding of the Bible but without fully acknowl-

Many good books address biblical interpretation. Here are two recent ones: **Out of Context: How to Avoid Misinterpreting the Bible** by Richard L. Schultz (BakerBooks, 2012, \$13.99) is a relatively small book that uses contemporary examples of what Schultz calls "interpretive malpractice" to explain how biblical interpretation can go wrong. He then goes on to consider three central features of biblical texts: literary context, individual words and literary genres. He then discusses how to move from interpretation to application, why and how Christians misinterpret the Bible and why this needs to be corrected.

**All Roads Lead to the Text: Eight Methods of Inquiry into the Bible** by Dean B. Deppe (Eerd-

mans, 2011, \$25) is a longer, more in-depth book but one that takes a different approach. Deppe is interested less in theory than in providing a hands-on approach to Bible study. He focuses on eight methods that Bible scholars use, from analyzing literary, grammatical and structural elements to investigating historical and cultural backgrounds to exploring the history of interpretation. With each method he looks at specific biblical texts and shows how that method works with those texts. Schultz's book is more of an overview and addressed to a general audience. Deppe's book is for those who want to dig into the Bible and learn to understand it better. The two complement each other and provide good resources for Christians.—*Gordon Houser*

edging or owning it. Some changes have taken longer to develop than others. It was well into the 19th century before many Christians condemned slavery in the face of the Bible's apparent sanction of it. More recently, another example comes from the status of women in the church. Since early in the last century, in many denominations there has been significant movement toward acknowledging the equal status of women and recognizing that women can and should hold any office and perform any function within the church.

**Mennonites have experienced these changes.** The Mennonite congregation of my youth required head coverings for women, women did not wear pants, even wedding bands were forbidden, and divorce was an unpardonable sin. Ordaining women was not even thinkable. The church defended all these practices with figurative or often actual fingers placed on specific verses of Scripture. With a few exceptions and some bumps along the way, significant changes have occurred for all these issues in the last 50 to 75 years in what is now Mennonite Church USA. These developments have occurred without a sense of having abandoned the Bible as the book of the church. We should accept the fact that other long-held positions may also change as contexts and awareness shifts. For today, I believe the stance of refusing full church membership and participation to people in committed, same-sex relationships is another such long-held prohibition that needs to change.

What I am suggesting is for us to be more forthright about the way we are actually using the Bible. Even as the assumption persists that the Bible functions as a rule book, in practice we are already reading it as a history, whose context we assess as we ask how to continue the story today.

The Bible is the church's book because it contains the story of the church's origins. Without it, we would know little about the beginning of the first millennia of the story that began with Abraham. But the Bible is the church's book for another reason as well. We are called Christians. The Bible is by far the best source to the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus. We read the Bible because it contains the story of the one who defines the primary identity of Christians, Jesus Christ. The words of the Bible are important, but they are not the primary authority. The ultimate authority for Christians is the narrative of Jesus that is witnessed to by the words of the Bible.

**With the story of Jesus in view** as the key to understanding the Bible, we need to emphasize that this is not a "picking and choosing" of preferred texts or discarding a part of the Bible. We are omitting nothing from the canon. In fact, we need the complete text. The contradictions and disagreements and unsavory elements of the story that led to Jesus point to the authenticity of the ancient text. No editor sanitized it. And only with this full, unexpurgated version in view do we see that there is an unfolding understanding that comes to fruition in the nonviolent story of Jesus.

## The ultimate authority for Christians is the narrative of Jesus that is witnessed to by the words of the Bible.

In the first century, Paul was understanding and bringing Jesus into his context. We who stand in the tradition of Jesus and Paul are engaged in the same task, namely, reading the history in a way to continue today the task of bringing Jesus into our world as we continue the story of God's people. Performing this task is by no means a replacement of the biblical writings. Rather we are learning from them how changes were made in applying Jesus to their context, which then assists our efforts to bring Jesus into our world. As John Howard Yoder once wrote, we should be continually "reaching back" to the original story of Jesus to restate it anew in our current context.

Reaching back also means reaching out. Since all Christian traditions confess Jesus, reading the Bible with the story of Jesus as the norm of understanding the Bible's story establishes an ecumenical framework for conversation with all Christians.



*J. Denny Weaver is professor emeritus of religion from Bluffton (Ohio) University. He lives in Madison, Wis., and is a member of Madison Mennonite Church.*

Consistent themes and big trajectories of God's Word guide us.

# A Shalom Arc of biblical interpretation

by J. Nelson Kraybill

It is not always easy for modern readers to understand what a biblical text meant for the original writer, or what the text should mean for us today. A chasm of time and culture separates modern America from ancient settings such as Sinai or Capernaum. The word of God that once instructed Hebrews not to wear clothes made of wool and linen woven together (Deuteronomy 22:11), for example, does not seem relevant to us.

Nevertheless, the church finds meaning in such passages because they are part of a *larger story* of God's self-revelation and the human response. The interpretative task of the church is to discern underlying themes and direction in this big narrative, then use what the Holy Spirit shows us to make practical application for our lives today.

Some ethical or covenant practices shift significantly within the biblical narrative—such as the change from polygamy to monogamy or the movement from animal sacrifice to forgiveness through cross and resurrection. But the biblical stance on a host of other practices remains constant: faithfulness to covenant, for example, or worship of one God. When ethical or spiritual teaching remains consistent throughout the entire biblical narrative, or when the New Testament gives unqualified new instruction, the church today must pay attention.

### **Shalom Arc project**

Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Ind., where I serve on the pastoral team, is living into what we call a Shalom Arc project. We designed this two-year learning process in order to trace the trajectory of God's saving acts from Genesis to Revelation—and on into the streets of Elkhart.

We say that God is at work in our world to redeem, forgive and restore. Through story, conversation and the arts, Prairie Street Mennonite Church is tracing the biblical story of God's renewing activity in the world from Creation to New Creation, from Genesis to Revelation. We call the comprehensive salvation that God desires for the world 'shalom'—a biblical Hebrew word meaning peace, well-being and justice.

The purpose of the Shalom Arc Project is to increase our knowledge of and love for the Bible. Inspiration and instruction from the Big Story of Scripture inspire us to bold witness and service for God today. Along the way we are focusing on peak texts identified by members of the congregation—Bible passages that have made a particular impact on our lives. Some people are memorizing select Bible passages, others are exploring how the Bible relates to the visual arts or cinema or music. We are gaining new understanding of the biblical landscape, learning the sequence of major biblical events and observing how the Bible came into

being. We want our lives and our congregation to be part of God's Big Story. "The arc of salvation history is long, and it bends toward God's shalom."

Experiencing the Bible as an unfolding narrative energizes us. No one in our congregation who struggles with the reality of violence or other real-life issues is looking to the Bible as a set of regulations or a divine rule book. We are looking for patterns of divine self-disclosure in history, for the flow of amazing grace, for waymarks that point to a time when God will make all things new (Revelation 21:5). We want to be part of that story, in relationship with our Creator. We commit to applying what we learn from the Shalom Arc not just to issues of violence but to many questions of how we live faithfully as children of God and participate in God's mission in the world.

**No one in our congregation who struggles with the reality of violence or other real-life issues is looking to the Bible as a set of regulations or a divine rule book.**

### **The Bible in relation to other sources**

The Shalom Arc discernible in Scripture is the guiding framework for our reflection. With respect to violence, for example, the Book of Genesis explains that sin shattered the shalom of creation and promptly issued in murder (Genesis 4). Persistent violence then pervaded human experience. Prophets foresaw a time when the havoc would end (Micah 4), and Jesus announced the beginning of a kingdom whose members categorically reject violence (Matthew 5–7). In various matters of Bible interpretation we seek such a trajectory: what God *intended* from the beginning, how sin *warps* God's design, how God *redeems* and restores.

Central though the Bible is to our spiritual discernment, we do not use a "sola scriptura" model, at least if that means the Bible is the only place we look for insight. In talking about violence we

also draw on various sources of authority. These include the experience of older people who resisted the military draft and the stories of Anabaptist martyrs. We read recent studies of the influence of handguns or violent video games. We take inspiration from the witness of Martin Luther King Jr. or Dorothy Day. We find rich understandings distilled in the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*.

## Jesus made no comments about handguns or mutual funds, but he said a lot about swords and money that is relevant to violence and economic justice in America.

### The meaning of sola scriptura

When Protestant reformers spoke of sola scriptura, they did not intend to draw insight from the Bible *alone*; they meant that all other sources of authority remain subordinate to the Bible. The same Spirit who inspired the Bible still breathes through the church today. The Spirit will not contradict or countermand the trajectory of the biblical Shalom Arc that culminates in Jesus Christ.

Jesus taught that the “law and the prophets were in effect until John came, since then the good news of the kingdom of God is proclaimed.” Jesus went on to insist that the whole of Scripture be maintained: not “one stroke of a letter in the law” could be dropped (Luke 16:16–17). After the resurrection, Jesus explains to disciples on their way to Emmaus how everything written about him in the law, the prophets and the Psalms finds fulfillment in his life, death and resurrection.

This trajectory of the biblical story means that the church needs the whole library from Genesis to Revelation to understand why the world is as it is and what God intends to do about it. For Christians, Jesus is the fulfillment and pinnacle of God’s revelation. When there appears to be movement or tension within the Bible, we take our interpretive cues from Jesus.

Jesus made no comments about handguns or mutual funds, but he said a lot about swords and money that is relevant to violence and economic justice in America. Believers today must distill principles from Scripture and apply them in circumstances that biblical writers could not have imagined. Looking for underlying principles and trajectory means that Bible interpretation often is

more complex than simply finding a verse and making it into a universal rule.

### Acts 15 suggests a model for interpretation

There is an example in Acts 15 of believers making a major shift in practice when the early church began to receive Gentiles who did not observe traditional Jewish law including circumcision. The modern Western church, dealing with change in the surrounding culture in attitudes toward violence, sexuality and world religions, would do well to consider how early believers processed major change in the first century.

Here is an outline of stages of interpretation and decision-making that happened at Jerusalem according to Acts 15—with possible corresponding circumstances for the Mennonite church in North America today in italics.

1. There was disagreement about the innovation of receiving Gentiles into the church without requiring them to practice circumcision and otherwise adhere to the entire law of Moses (15:1). *There is debate in the North American Mennonite church about our historic commitment to nonviolence, to simple living and to traditional understandings of marriage.*

2. Leaders of the church at Jerusalem hosted an international and cross-cultural conference for discernment on how to proceed (15:4). *Denominational leaders organize discernment processes to receive insight and counsel from innovators and to hear from diverse ethnic groups or theological perspectives. This may include attention to how the global Mennonite church interprets a given matter.*

3. There was storytelling and cross-cultural field reports (15:4). *The church hears stories from individuals or church groups who have been open to a disputed innovation.*

4. Traditionalists cited precedent and wanted to receive Gentiles only if they practiced the entire law of Moses (15:5). *The church examines the established stance of Anabaptists through confessions of faith or other documents that reflect wide discernment.*

5. There was a lot of conversation and “much debate” (15:6). *The Mennonite church provides adequate forum for people of diverse perspectives to speak and be heard.*

6. Scripture came into play: “This agrees with the words of the prophets” (15:15). *The church considers how a proposed innovation aligns with either consistent principles or the clear trajectory of Scripture.*

7. A leader recognized by the church—James, the brother of Jesus—proposed a way forward:

“We should not trouble the Gentiles” with the entire burden of Mosaic law (15:19). *Congregational, conference and/or denomination-wide leaders articulate a way forward, in accountability to the rest of the church.*

8. Those who promoted change received endorsement but nevertheless needed to abide by underlying themes or trajectories of the law of Moses—including rejection of idols, rejection of fornication and rejection of “blood” (possibly a reference to murder; 15:20). *If the church opts for significant change, innovators will need to abide by underlying aspects of the traditional understanding that reflect the intent and direction of Scripture.*

9. The proposed way forward received approval by the whole church (15:22, 25). *Healthy change likely will not simply be top-down, bottom-up or local; it will receive wide discernment and ownership throughout the denomination. This requires yieldedness on the part of all to avoid creating a situation in which either innovators or traditionalists become so entrenched that they hold the entire church hostage.*

10. Leaders of the church at Jerusalem took care to have authorized representatives personally interpret new understandings to scattered congregations (15:25). *Significant change in practice may generate upheaval and may require relationship-tending and pastoral care as the church puts the new into practice.*

11. Despite all efforts to work through change peacefully, there may be lingering tensions (Galatians 2:11–14: after the seemingly peaceful agreement of Acts 15, Peter and Paul have a falling out over the issue of how to relate to Gentiles). *Major change on issues such as nonviolence or covenant boundaries will not be—and probably should not be—completely resolved in one generation.*

12. The whole process of biblical and ethical discernment in Acts 15 took place under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (15:28). *The church needs to discern both through discussion and through careful attention to the Holy Spirit.*

Acts 15 recounts a story of the church opting for substantial change. There are multiple cases in the New Testament when leaders did not embrace ethical or spiritual innovation—1 Corinthians 5:1–5 regarding sexual innovation, for example, or Jude 8–13 regarding greed and idolatry. In any case, it is significant that change described in Acts 15 came from circumstances of the church in mission. Similarly we should expect that today’s church in mission sometimes will redefine or reconsider traditional understandings. When that

happens, Mennonites would do well to consider the thoroughness and care with which major change happened in the early church and similarly draw from a breadth of processes and sources.

## Individualism or congregationalism can blind us to our own limited understanding.

### Ballast on the ship

In every generation it is possible for the church to veer off course because of currents from surrounding culture or to lose momentum by failing to catch the wind of the Spirit. Forces of nationalism and xenophobia, for example, shift the church in North America toward idolatrous patriotism and militarism. Sometimes subgroups—such as academics, business people, clergy or a particular age cohort—attempt to resolve contested issues by talking among themselves without wider testing by the worshipping community. Individualism or congregationalism can blind us to our own limited understanding.

When navigating through substantial change in practice or conviction, the church is like a ship in rough waters that needs the ballast of tradition and accountability. Indispensable to plotting a course on God’s Shalom Arc is deep knowledge of the Bible, interpreted communally by God’s people in mission. All who help set the course need to pray without ceasing, hear from the wider church and rely on the empowering wind of the Holy Spirit.



*J. Nelson Kraybill is lead pastor at Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Ind., and president-elect of Mennonite World Conference.*



# Dreams of hope: the Lord reigns

Dee Birkey | photo collage

by Cristina Rodriguez Blough

## A reflection on Psalm 24:1

*In elementary school, our teachers told us to “reach for the stars!” We got on our tippy toes and stretched to the sky with all our might ‘Cuz what we heard was, “Reach for your dreams, You will always have that Right.”—excerpt from “Reaching for the Stars: a Journey,” a poem by Sofia Campos*

Sofia is a spirited graduate of UCLA and a young advocate for immigration reform and the passing of the DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act in the United States. Her poem evokes vivid images of courage, struggle and solidarity as it illustrates her journey as an “undocumented immigrant.” The whispers of hope she heard from her teachers as a little girl impel her to speak up for equality for herself and for thousands of undocumented people in the United States.

Similarly, Daisy L. Machado—a dean and professor at Union Seminary in New York and the first U.S. Latina ordained in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 1981—and her sister received words of hope from their father, who arrived in the United States in 1956 with \$7 in his pocket. “After telling us his wonderful bedtime stories, he would whisper in our ears that we could do anything, we could be anything, we could climb as high as the stars,” she writes in *A Dream Unfinished: Theological Reflections on America from the Margins* (Orbis Books, 2001).

These two women’s journeys inspire me and resonate with my experience as a Latina who has attended college and seminary in the United States. The process, from obtaining a student visa to recently receiving a residency card, has been complex, expensive and at times nerve-wracking. Before each of my visa appointments and interviews, my dad recited with conviction the words of Psalm 24:1: “De Jehová es la tierra y su pleni-

tud; El mundo y los que en él habitan.” (“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”)

These words have had an immense impact on my life and remind me that God does not show partiality, that God reigns and takes care of his people. Creation and all who dwell in it belong to the Lord. This proclamation celebrates God’s sovereignty over other deities and chaotic forces. Also, if the Earth and all people are the Lord’s, this text carries profound theological insight into issues of immigration, human dignity and what it means to be a citizen of God’s kingdom.

Michael Goulder writes in “David and Yahweh in Psalms 23 and 24” that Psalm 24 has been traditionally described as a “liturgical dialogue for a procession escorting the ark to the temple” (*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, June 1, 2006). Therefore, it is better understood in the context of a procession or communal gathering celebrating God’s symbolic entrance to his holy mountain after defeating the “forces of chaos.”

Psalm 24:2 says God founded the earth on the seas and established it on the rivers. Dianne Bergant writes in “The Earth Is the Lord’s: A Biblical Reflection on Psalm 24:1” (*Mission Studies* 15:2, 1998) that people of the Near Eastern world described the turbulent waters as destructive forces, that “unruly water was an apt symbol for chaos.” Thus God’s establishment of the earth over the water showed his power over chaos.

**Many undocumented families** and individuals have faced the turbulent waters of our time, forced to make the painful decision to leave their homes and livelihoods to escape violence, poverty, hunger, political and religious persecution, displacing forces of globalization and ecologi-

Hateful attitudes against fellow humans present a moral, humanitarian and theological crisis.

cal degradation. These chaotic conditions are beyond people's ingenuity and control.

Several Hebrew words are used in Scripture to refer to people whose basic material needs are not being met. Bruce Malchow adds in *Social Justice in the Hebrew Bible: What Is New and What Is Old?* (Liturgical Press, 1996) that these words "also apply to people without the means to protect themselves from oppression. They have become poor through injustice."

Many immigrants have been pushed to leave their lands, their power lessened through external forces. And once immigrants relocate, they continue to face systems of racial and economic exclusion in the "host" land. Living in the shadows can create great anxiety and involve painful choices for these families. Many choose to keep their citizen children from taking advantage of opportunities that would improve their well-being, fearing that applying for such programs could increase their risk of deportation and rip the family apart. Immigrant children are bullied at school by other kids who tell them "to go back to where you came from." Some parents without documents are afraid even to let their children play outside. Hateful attitudes against fellow humans present a moral, humanitarian and theological crisis.

**Let us remember** that Abraham himself was an "illegal alien," forced by famine to take up alien status in Egypt, where he feared for his life and lied, presenting his wife as his sister (Genesis 12:13). God tells Abraham, "Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for 400 years," alluding to the exodus (Genesis 15:12).

But God also speaks words of hope: "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them. So shall your descendants be." This passage is talking about the people of God. The people who are to be a blessing to others are, according to Scripture, slaves and aliens.

Psalms 24:1-2 is a song of hope and trust for the sojourner, proclaiming God's kingship and final victory over chaos. God even reigns over the chaotic forces of our day that take the shape of dehumanizing systems of exclusion, predatory economic policies and misguided hateful ideologies. In *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Fortress Press, 1984), Walter Brueggemann identifies Psalm 24 as a "psalm of orientation," one that offers a "confident view that life is not troubled or threatened but is fundamentally settled because God is known to be

trustworthy and reliable." Brueggemann writes that these types of Psalms are in many ways "expressions of creation faith."

This message of hope and trust is expanded wonderfully in Psalm 146:6-10.

God is the one who delivers the oppressed, feeds the hungry, watches over the most vulnerable and heals his people. Jesus' healings restored people to their communities socially and religiously. Therefore "our communities of faith should be about discipleship, not disfranchisement; communion, not exclusion," write Ched Myers and Matthew Colwell in *Our God Is Undocumented: Biblical Faith and Immigrant Justice* (Orbis Books, 2012).

**Let us also consider** Psalm 147:4, which declares that God the Creator determines the number of stars, giving each a name. In God's eyes, the undocumented do not remain unnamed, marginalized, dehumanized and invisible. God reigns, and he knows each of them—and their dreams to touch the stars—and calls them by name. Failing to recognize the immigrant's human dignity and plight is an affront to God's absolute sovereignty over borders, peoples and all creation.

Toward the end of her poem, Sofia Campos writes, "As we celebrate the days, let us not forget we have great purpose and great power; so a challenge for us: What kind of world do we choose to imagine?" This is an invitation to work for God's dream of inclusion and to keep dreaming the dreams of Martin Luther King Jr., Rigoberta Menchú, Desmond Tutu and Sofia Campos. It is also a call to expect enthusiastically the realization of the kingdom of God, which is already here and yet to come. As citizens of God's kingdom, we can remember our theological identity as immigrants, be a blessing to others and acknowledge the lordship of God over chaotic forces that claim power.


The message of hope of Psalm 24:1 will deliver a powerful prophetic message at the Mennonite Church USA convention in Phoenix this July. Declaring, "The Lord reigns" is both an invitation to in repentance abandon ideologies that fail to affirm "the other" as God's beloved and a herald of hope that impels us to keep dreaming and acting together toward the fulfillment of God's just kingdom.



*Cristina Rodriguez Blough was born and grew up in Quito, Ecuador, and is a student at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.*

Failing to recognize the immigrant's human dignity and plight is an affront to God's absolute sovereignty over borders, peoples and all creation.

## A reflection on 1 Samuel 1-2



Perhaps you are like Hannah in the story at the beginning of 1 Samuel: someone living in despair, so sick with the troubles of life that you barely muster the strength to go on—and nobody knows it, except God, who seems to be silent despite your prayers. Nonetheless, somehow you end up at another worship service, waiting among God’s people for God to respond to your cries. Like Hannah, you return to God’s house only to experience again the pain of God’s silence. Worship has become a wandering pilgrimage into the recesses of the darkness of God. You are Hannah: in a state of tormented patience, overwhelmed with prayers of anguish, longing for God’s favor to flow like a waterfall, crashing over you, surrounding you, bathing you in a pool of love and grace. ▶

# The wounds of love

by Isaac S. Villegas

In the story, Hannah is so sick with despair that she cannot eat. From all appearances, God seems to have abandoned her a long time ago, yet she still goes up to the Temple in Jerusalem. Year after year, Hannah returns to the Temple to worship God, even though God answers her cries with silence. In the darkness of despair, the rituals of faith keep alive her life with God. Hannah goes on, with enduring patience, trusting in God's love even though she hasn't seen the evidence that would lead her to assume that God actually cares about her life. "O Lord Almighty," Hannah prays, "look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and [do] not forget me" (1 Samuel 1:11).

With each prayer, with each visit to the Temple, Hannah draws closer to God. She is drawn into the intimacy of silence where, as the Syrian monk Pseudo-Dionysius wrote in the sixth century, "the mysteries of God's Word lie simple, absolute and unchangeable in the brilliant darkness of a hidden silence."

As she returns again and again to the silence, God cannot forget her. God gives her a son—a child as a gift, not a possession. Gifts from God are meant to be shared, so Hannah gives her child to the priest, surrendering Samuel to God's work for the people: "As long as he lives," she says, "he is given to the Lord" (v. 28).

**As waves of profound gratitude** and deep heartache wash over her, Hannah prays, "I delight in your deliverance" (2:1). As our Bibles share her prayer with us, we are invited into her delight in God's work of redemption. Hannah's prayer summons us to rejoice in the God who promises to change the distribution of power in the world: "Those who were full hire themselves out for food, but those who were hungry hunger no more" (v. 4). Hannah, this one who knows God's love, describes God as the one who delivers the lowly from the forces that keep them on the underside of society. "God raises the poor from the dust," she declares, "and lifts the needy from the ash heap" (v. 8). As the Dominican preacher Herbert McCabe puts it, "We have to recognize that the only God we know is the God of the poor; the God who takes sides." That God takes sides is a great scandal of the biblical story. "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt," God says to Israel, "out of the house of slavery" (Deuteronomy 5:6). The God revealed to us in the Bible is the God of the oppressed, the God who chooses the enslaved people of Israel "out of all the people on the earth," not Egypt (14:2). When it comes to oppression, God is not neutral. God doesn't straddle the fence.

According to Hannah's prayer, when God's love flows into the world, the central focus is the poor—the hungry and the lowly. Hannah speaks from personal experience, for God has looked with favor upon her, a humiliated member of her community. Being humble is not a virtue that Hannah chooses; her pursuit of humility has nothing to do with a desire to please God. Instead, she is humble because she is humiliated by her barrenness. She learns humility not as a result of her will but because she has been humiliated through no fault of her own. Yet, as she is overwhelmed with humiliation, Hannah discovers that God is moved by a profound love for the humiliated, for her—and not just for her but for all who are lowly: "God raises the poor from the dust," she prays, "and lifts the needy from the ash heap." She speaks of what she knows, a personal knowledge of God's love for the humbled, for the poor and hungry.

## Hannah's prayer summons us to rejoice in the God who promises to change the distribution of power in the world.

Hannah bears witness to what God's love looks like in our world. God's love flows like a waterfall: the river of God's eternal life gushes over the rocks at the very top, splashing God's presence everywhere as the water finally pools at the bottom. Like a waterfall, the love of God is indiscriminate, soaking everyone on the way down. Yet the direction matters: God's love is drawn to the low places; that's where God's presence forms pools of healing and grace. Baptism is an invitation into these waters, into the river of life, the life of God in the world. The Christian life involves getting caught up in this flow of grace as God's presence rushes through and around us, as we find ourselves with people like Hannah, who face their enemies alone because their friends and communities have abandoned them.

The good news according to the story of Hannah is that God does answer, although God seems to take longer than we think we can bear. In the meantime, we pray with Hannah: O Lord Almighty, look upon our misery and remember us and do not forget us.



*Isaac S. Villegas is pastor of Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship. This reflection is an edited version of a sermon Isaac preached at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio, in 2010 for the congregation's annual spiritual renewal weekend.*

## Leading for the long haul



**Glen Alexander Guyton** is director of finance and convention planning for Mennonite Church USA and pastors a church plant with Cyndi, his wife, in San Antonio.

One of my favorite Mennonite Church USA songs is, “Come, Walk with Us, the Journey Is Long.” As leaders, we must lead for the long haul. Leadership means understanding that we are called to guide those who follow us to a future destination and to prepare them for it. No leader can change the past or the present, but a competent leader can lay a foundation that will help others overcome their past, endure their current situation and hope for a prosperous future. The wise leader assesses the present and leads not for what is but for what will be—leading as if he or she has already received the desired outcome.

**Imagine you are leading a ministry** of 50 people and the church has set a goal of doubling participation in three years. Leading for the long haul means you are prepared for this growth. You have envisioned how all 50 new congregants will fit into your building. You have updated your systems and procedures so that you can effectively minister to and track the new families who will soon grace your doors.

Imagine you are a college president and understand that the number of racial/ethnic students in the United States will increase dramatically between now and 2040. What do you do? Leading for the long haul means you shape the faculty and programs of your college to meet the predicted demand. You ignore those who say, “Give me that old time religion.” You honor the past by charting a path to a bright future, one that honors the contributions of those who came before but is not held hostage by their ghosts.

As Paul was headed to Rome, he understood that the path to his destination would be fraught with danger (Acts 27–28). He tried to warn those with him about the perils they would soon face. His ability to follow the voice of God in the midst of the tempest and lead for the long haul allowed 276 people to have the hope of a prosperous future.

While leading others, Paul was bitten by a ven-


omous viper, which he quickly shook off into the fire. Many of the native people who witnessed this expected Paul to die, since that is what history dictated. What they did not understand was that God had a purpose for Paul that gave him power that far exceeded the expectations of humankind. Paul was leading for the long haul, and nothing was going to deter him from reaching his God-ordained destination.

**Here are three actions** (which I think sound better in Spanish) for long-haul leaders to keep in mind:

- **Muévete** (move it)—Move toward your vision of the future. Don’t just stand around navel gazing but move forward in faith and with sound practices. You don’t get from point A to point B by sitting still.

- **Sacúdete** (shake it)—As you lead for the long haul, you may experience a few bumps and bruises along the way. You may feel like you are in the midst of a tempest or stranded on a desert island with unfamiliar faces. You may even get bit once or twice. You may feel like wallowing in self-pity or depression, but as a God-ordained leader, you have to shake it off.

- **Sopórtate** (support it)—Put in place policies, procedures and systems that will undergird the vision for the long haul. Long-haul plans need support. A trucker driving from Kalona, Iowa, to Reedley, Calif., will make sure his or her truck is in tip-top shape. The truck will be filled with fuel, the route clearly mapped and the tire pressure adjusted. The trucker will be well rested and understand the length of the journey ahead. Why? So that both driver and cargo arrive at the destination safely and on time.

Once we begin leading for the long haul, we can settle into our roles and work and carry out our mission with confidence, “preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things that concern the Lord Jesus Christ,” in whatever capacity the Lord has called us to. This could be in formal ministry, in our workplaces, in our neighborhoods or simply in our own homes. 

The wise leader assesses the present and leads not for what is but for what will be—leading as if he or she has already received the desired outcome.

## I am a Christian

I attend church fairly regularly. I am into biblical studies not only because it is interesting but because the Bible is the foundational text for the church and we need to understand it in all its complexities. I love singing hymns. I believe no one comes to the Father but through Jesus. Of late, however, I have a harder and harder time identifying as a Christian.

At first, I thought it was because I'm no longer in seminary, an explicitly Christian context, but that wasn't it. I began struggling with this when I worked at Prison Fellowship International, an explicitly Christian organization. I thought, Perhaps it's because I'm doing "real" work outside a faith-based context. That was getting closer, but wasn't quite it. Finally, it struck home. The far right is winning, but not in the way they think.

**I have fallen into the trap** of letting the loud far right define "Christian." These are the Christians (mostly men) who go on Sean Hannity and complain about Obama insisting that church-affiliated organizations (e.g. schools and hospitals, not the churches themselves) must provide insurance that offers complete health care for women is the same thing as Nazism, yet they are silent when a pastor advocates putting people in concentration camps, as pastor Charles L. Worley did earlier this year. Or these Christians trumpet the cause of Israel while perpetuating anti-Semitic theology. Or they claim there is no war on women but rewrite the Violence Against Women Act so that it protects only certain women and certain crimes. Or they rant and rave about freedom but are quick to deny it to others, especially Muslims.

The problem is that the far right is being allowed to define what it means to be Christian. And that definition is judgmental, bigoted, sheltered, hypocritical, insincere and uncaring. To this we can add anti-science and anti-intellectual.

Yet, in contrast to popular perception, it is precisely because of my faith that I am pro-gay rights, pro-women's rights, antiracist, anti-imperialist and committed to Jewish-Christian dialogue and reconciliation. That I proclaim Jesus as Lord means that I cannot participate in nationalism and cannot deny civil rights to my LGBTQ siblings or full health-care coverage to women. My faith is

the reason I am passionate for freedom of (and from) religion. My faith is the reason I love education and support open and free inquiry. It is because of my faith that I am pro-science and cannot deny the evidence in support of the theory of evolution. I care for the environment because I believe God created the heavens and the earth, and to violate the created order and abuse Creation is to violate the will of God. I hold to these beliefs not in spite of my faith but because of my faith.

**What frustrates me most** is the way right wing Christianity has co-opted the language of faith. They are the ones who use words such as "faithful" and "biblical" and "Jesus the Savior" and "God the Creator." They are usually portrayed as the ones who act out of "faith" or "religion" while the progressive elements act out of a desire for "tolerance," "civil rights" or "equity."

However, this is not necessarily true. I believe in biblical justice, justice that is concerned for the least of these, that teaches us to love our neighbor and love the Lord, that holds us accountable for failing in these things, that holds us especially accountable if we knowingly violate these things, a justice that places human dignity before profits or personal wealth or being practical. My faith cannot deny the findings of science or academic inquiry (e.g., the problematic nature of the Bible's historicity) because they are inconvenient for my faith. It is precisely because I believe in Jesus the Savior and God the Creator and worship a God who is paradoxically merciful and just that I am committed to justice in all its forms. And this understanding of God is rooted (though not wholly) in the God revealed in the Bible.

**I've had enough** of the far right defining what it means to be a Christian. It is time for progressive Christians to stand up and reclaim the vocabulary of faith. When speaking about social justice, we must use "biblical," we must speak of God's will for humanity. I am not advocating for "praying in the streets" (Matthew 6.5), but I advocate reclaiming the language of faith from the far right. They are not the spokesmen and women of Christianity. They are not representative of my faith, my convictions. It is time I have the courage to stand up and say, "I am a Christian." **TM**



**Justin James King** is a member of Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio.

**It is time for progressive Christians to reclaim the vocabulary of faith.**

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

## Group charts hope for church's multicultural future

**Racial/ethnic leaders look at ways for diverse church membership to thrive.**

Carol Roth



Roy Williams, a Mennonite Education Agency board member and former Mennonite Church USA moderator; and Madeline Maldonado, associate pastor at Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Arca de Savlación in Fort Myers, Fla., and a Mennonite Mission Network board member, participate in small group discussions during the Hope for the Future II Conference Jan. 25-27.

**M**ore than 60 racial/ethnic leaders in Mennonite Church USA gathered Jan. 25-27 in Leesburg, Va., to encourage unity, celebrate the denomination's multicultural progress and begin outlining specific ways to help the entire church thrive as its membership rapidly becomes more diverse.

"Hope ... for the Future II: Persevering with Jesus (Hebrews 11:1-12:3)," held at the National Conference Center near Washington, D.C., gathered leaders from Mennonite agencies, educational institutions and congregations throughout the denomination.

The event, which was open only to members of under-represented racial/ethnic groups (Africans, African Americans, Asians, Hispanics and Native Americans), was a follow-up to a Jan. 9-11, 2011, meeting in Tampa, Fla., in

which participants freely discussed their experiences in the church. As in Tampa, attendees in Leesburg rekindled and developed relationships as they discussed challenges they share in common. But they focused mainly on developing concrete ways to move forward the broader church's long-time efforts to embrace racial reconciliation and diversity.

The three-day event was sponsored by Mennonite Church USA, Mennonite Education Agency and Mennonite Mission Network.

"The purpose of this gathering is for people to be able to talk openly and freely about their experiences in the church and to talk openly and freely about how they want to help transform the church," said Carlos Romero, executive director of Mennonite Education Agency and a member of the group's planning committee.

**The group concluded the gathering** by forming smaller consensus groups that agreed that a strategic plan emphasizing leadership development, mutual care/support and policymaking should be produced.

They also called for another meeting within a year that would expand beyond racial/ethnic leaders to include other denominational leaders and those who strongly support the transformation of the church.

"This is not about leaving anybody out," Romero said. "But it is about giving this group an opportunity to get to know each other, finding ways of supporting each other within the system and responding to the church in a positive way. It is indeed about hope for the future,"

Elizabeth Soto Albrecht, Mennonite Church USA's moderator-elect, set the tone for the event by urging the group to walk by faith inspired by hope.

Soto Albrecht referenced the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., who wrote in his classic 1963 Letter from Birmingham Jail that the Christian church can't just be a thermometer reflecting the cultural norms of the times but rather a thermostat that changes the community.

**We have moved from tokenism. We have arrived at a critical mass. Can we now produce systematic changes?—Elizabeth Soto Albrecht**

She said that if the Mennonite church is to thrive, racial/ethnic leaders must commit to helping the church to proactively address its rapidly shifting demographics that reflect what is also happening in America and throughout the

world. U.S. Census reports estimate that non-Hispanic whites will become a minority of the total population after 2040. Anabaptist church membership among white North American and European churches is declining, while Asian, African and Latin American churches are growing rapidly.

The emphasis on Jesus, the Gospels, peace, justice and service is a powerful draw, particularly in places where ethnic and socioeconomic political strife has ripped apart nations and families.

After the Mennonite Church (MC) and General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) merged, a 2006 study by the Young Center of Elizabethtown (Pa.) College study found that from 2000 to 2005, 25 percent of new Mennonites were nonwhite, compared with just 6 percent from 1995 to 2000.

Meanwhile, Mennonite Church USA recently reported a 6.6 percent membership decline the past two years, from 104,687 to 97,737—a nearly 19 percent drop in the past 12 years. The report did not include new church plants.

“People of color, don’t lose your prophetic voice,” Soto Albrecht said. “We have moved from tokenism. We have arrived at a critical mass (including at leadership levels within the church). Can we now produce systematic changes? I want to believe and have faith in God that we can.”

Other speakers presented topics such as understanding what multiculturalism truly means for the church and individuals and that not just whites but people of color must become interculturally competent.

A presentation on the history of racism noted that the idea of race was socially constructed in the 17th century to justify the transatlantic African slave trade, attacks on in-

digenous cultures and the taking of their lands through colonialism.

White privilege was nonexistent during Jesus’ time on earth. However, institutional racism continues to tear at the humanity of whites and people of color alike.

John Powell, recently retired from Mennonite Mission Network after 23 years of antiracism work, led a discussion that chronicled the denomination’s efforts over the past half-century to address internal racism. Disillusioned when the Minority Ministries Council was disbanded in the 1970s as Hispanics and African-Americans divided, Powell left the Mennonite Church, then returned years later.

Powell and others in attendance who were part of those

**The purpose of this gathering is for people to be able to talk openly and freely about their experiences in the church.—Carlos Romero**

past efforts acknowledged that many of the same issues that were raised more than 40 years ago, such as racial insensitivity and lack of support for people of color in leadership, are still being raised today.

However, they agreed that one of the key lessons learned is that members of racial/ethnic groups must work together in love and in partnership with their white brothers and sisters to help the entire church live into Jesus’ mission.

The group aims to engage the broader church and will produce a report from the event to be shared with all of the institutions represented. Some of the themes that emerged are listed in the box on this page.

**The meetings ended with worship** and Communion led by Michelle Armster, an associate pastor for community life at Blossom Hill Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa., and served by Soto Albrecht and Rafael Barahona, director for Hispanic Pastoral Leadership Education for Mennonite Education Agency.

Tony Brown, a Hesston (Kan.) College sociology professor and internationally acclaimed baritone, inspired the group with his singing, and pastor Sunoko Lin of Indonesian Christian Fellowship Maranatha, Northridge, Calif., and a member of the Mennonite Mission Network board of directors, delivered a message of hope. Powell received special recognition for his contributions to the church. Attendees encircled Powell in prayer.

A Hope for the Future video can be found here: [www.mennonitemission.net/Stories/Multimedia/Pages/HopefortheFuture.aspx](http://www.mennonitemission.net/Stories/Multimedia/Pages/HopefortheFuture.aspx)—*Wil LaVeist of Mennonite Mission Network. A joint press release of Mennonite Church USA, Mennonite Mission Network, and Mennonite Education Agency*

## Hope for the Future emerging themes

- **The importance of racial/ethnic leaders speaking with unified voices**
- **Honoring those pioneers in the denomination who made it possible for many of the leaders present to be in their current roles**
- **Recognizing the rich diversity in the denomination**
- **The importance for all work being grounded in the Bible**
- **Strong commitment to Anabaptist teachings, including service, community, justice, discipleship and reconciliation—Wil LaVeist**

## A trip to the border

**Executive Board members, churchwide staff visit Mexico on Jan. 11.**



**Grupos Beta:** Waiting in Nogales, Mexico, Mexican citizens deported from the United States recount their experiences with (from left) Stanley Green (center right), Dick Thomas and Rick Stiffney.

**M**ennonite Church USA's Executive Board and staff members and staff members from other churchwide agencies focused on immigration issues during the Executive Board's Jan. 9-11 meeting in Phoenix. This focus included a Jan. 9 "prayer walk" past the Maricopa (Ariz.) County Supreme Court and several immigration detention facilities, including one of Sheriff Joe Arpaio's (see photo on page 35). More than two dozen people from the board meeting also spent Jan. 11 traveling to Tucson, Ariz., and then Nogales, Mexico.

Participants who attend the Mennonite Church USA biennial convention in Phoenix in July will be able to participate in similar activities during the week there.

The Jan. 11 trip began with a stop in Tucson and an introduction to the BorderLinks program. The program sponsors short immersion trips along the border with the trips ranging in length from one day to three weeks. The Mennonite Church USA group was one of about 70 that will make such a trip this year.

From Tucson, the group traveled to Nogales, Mexico, and spent an hour visiting with Mexican residents who had been picked up in the United States by the Border Patrol and returned to Mexico. The Border Patrol simply drops them off in Mexico and provides no further help. Some of the resi-

Residents often live great distances from Nogales, and the Mexican government maintains the Grupos Beta facility, where residents can make free phone calls and purchase discounted bus tickets.

dents are many miles from their homes and know no one in Nogales. So the Mexican government sponsors the Grupos Beta facility, where residents can make free phone calls and purchase discounted bus tickets.

When the Mennonite Church USA group visited on Jan. 11, there were 10-15 people waiting outside for bus rides. The Mennonite Church USA group split into smaller groups, and six people who speak Spanish translated the stories for the smaller groups.

A 20-something man said he was eating a meal in a restaurant when U.S. immigration agents came to him and accused him of drunk driving—even though he had no car. Ignorant of the U.S. court system, he did as he was advised and pled guilty. That, in turn, left a felony on his record and now makes it impossible for him to ever be admitted into the United States.

**One frightened 16-year-old boy** who had been picked up in the Arizona desert was alone a long way from home and knew no one. He told the group he wanted to get a job in the United States.

A 20-something mother had lived in Oxnard, Calif., for years and left behind a husband, three U.S.-born children and an employer who needed her help picking strawberries.

Employment was the overriding theme for the day, as or-

ganizers took the Mennonite Church USA group to two other locations nearby.

Prior to the 2008 recession, the economy in the Maquilador sector of northern Mexico was booming, with many factories providing employment. Boom towns grew up around the factories as workers moved in from farther south in Mexico. But when the recession hit, most factories closed, leaving workers without jobs and stranded.

**Many of the workers' children** also are not able to attend school. So a sister organization to BorderLinks, called Hogar de Esperanza y Paz (Home of Hope and Peace), now provides schooling and meals for children.

The Mennonite Church USA group visited the facility, then traveled to a shuttered factory with a boom town nearby (see photo at right).

After crossing back into Arizona, the Mennonite Church USA group visited a part of the wall near where a teenaged boy had recently been shot and killed on the Mexican side by U.S. Border Patrol agents, allegedly for throwing stones.

Before the group left the wall, Tucson resident Tina Stoltzfus Schlabach led them in a prayer. Schlabach is one of the local organizers for Phoenix convention participants who wish to participate in a BorderLinks trip in July.

Back in Tucson, the Mennonite Church USA group had dinner at a ministry serving the needs of people released from detention centers. Casa Mariposa (Butterfly House) is a hospitality center that housed several permanent staff members and four recently released men on the day the Mennonite Church USA group visited.

Each of the men and the house cook were invited to tell as much of their stories as they wished. One man was from Brazil, one was from Ecuador and one was from El Salvador.



**Casa Mariposa:** Giving only his first name, Santiago describes his nine months in a detention facility to Mennonite Church USA staff and board members on Jan. 11 in a hospitality house.



Mennonite Church USA board and staff members overlook a boom town in the industrial Maquilador sector of Nogales, Mexico. When the industrial boom went bust in 2008, many residents were stranded in the town with no or reduced employment.

The stays in detention ranged from nine months to seven years. One young man had been picked up in the Arizona desert after walking for five days and nights in an attempt to get to New Jersey.

The Mennonite Church USA group finished the day with a time of reflection before heading back to Phoenix from Tucson.—*Article and photos by Everett J. Thomas*



Mennonite Church USA board and staff members stop in front of a detention facility operated by Maricopa County (Ariz.) Sheriff Joe Arpaio during a prayer walk through Phoenix on Jan. 9.

# Convention planners hope for \$30,000 in offerings

## New Sunday school curriculum, undocumented young adults will be recipients.

At each biennial convention of Mennonite Church USA, a special offering is received to support a chosen ministry of the church. At this summer's convention in Phoenix, participants will have the opportunity to contribute toward two initiatives: Mennonite Church USA's DREAMer Fund and MennoMedia's forthcoming Sunday school curriculum for children, *Shine: Living in God's Light*.

"Convention offers us a great opportunity not only to fellowship as one body but to touch many lives through our giving," says Glen Alexander Guyton, director of finances and convention planning for Mennonite Church USA.

The goal is to raise \$15,000 for each of the designated projects, for a total of \$30,000. The *Shine* offering will be on July 3, during the joint adult/youth worship service. The DREAMer Fund offering will be on July 2, during the adult worship and morning youth worship services.

**DREAMer Fund was established** last fall to help Mennonites who qualify for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program pay the application fee of \$465. DACA is a U.S. administrative policy change that went into effect on Aug. 15, 2012. Tammy Alexander, senior legislative associate for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), explains, "While this policy change is not a path toward citizenship, it allows undocumented immigrants who are under the age of 31, came to the U.S. before the age of 16 and have resided in the U.S. for at least five years to legally obtain work permits and gain protection from deportation."

Those who qualify for the DACA program are commonly referred to as "DREAMers," after the DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act, a proposed bipartisan legislation through which qualifying undocumented youth would be eligible for a six-year-long conditional path to citizenship. It has not passed. Mennonites who qualify for DACA and are granted DREAMer Fund assistance will be given a loan of up to two-thirds of DACA's application fee, or \$310. Convention planners hope to raise \$15,000 to help 50 young Mennonites.

"DACA is intended for young adults who were raised and educated in the United States and should be seen as valuable resources to our country and our communities," says Iris de León-Hartshorn, director of transformative peacemaking for Mennonite Church USA.

She says Saulo Padilla, immigration education coordinator for MCC U.S., introduced the idea for the DREAMer Fund to Iglesia Menonita Hispana last August, and IMH raised money to initiate the fund. The Intercultural Relations Reference Committee then gave their support and decided to develop guidelines for the fund in Mennonite Church USA. The IRRC also contributed \$5,000 to the fund.

**The Shine: Living in God's Light** curriculum will be available for congregational use beginning in the fall of 2014 and available for preview in March 2014.

"The current curriculum, *Gather 'Round*, was designed to last for an eight-year period, and those eight years are about up," says Amy Gingerich, director of media at MennoMedia. "Patterns of faith formation and ways of doing Christian education have changed in the last eight years. It's important to have Sunday school curricula stay current with the times so that the examples and activities offered to children in Sunday school are relevant to their lives."

*Shine* will be copublished by MennoMedia and Brethren Press, longstanding publishing partners. It is estimated that the development of *Shine* will cost MennoMedia \$100,000 per year for a four-year development phase.

Gingerich says, "One of the reasons I feel so passionately about *Shine* and the importance of churchwide support for the project is that being the church together involves all ages. Welcoming children into the story of God's love is a big part of what it means to be Christian."—*Hilary J. Scarsella for Mennonite Church USA*



"We like the stewardship foundation that Everence has. There was never any question we would rely on Everence for health insurance when we turned 65."

— Ted and Sue Noffsinger, Creekside Church of the Brethren

(800) 348-7468

Everence.com



Banking | Insurance | Investing | Retirement | Charitable Giving

*A ministry of Mennonite Church USA and other churches | Everence offers credit union services that are federally insured by NCUA. Investments and other products are not NCUA or otherwise federally insured, may involve loss of principal and have no credit union guarantee. All products are not available in all states.*

## Singing out the good news

### Mennonite Mission Network choir bridges cultures with music



Craig Welscott

(First row, from left) Jamie Ross, Lefuarn Harvey, Kelsey Hochstetler, Ann Jacobs. (Back row, from left) Sandy Miller, Brenda Hess, John Lapp and Steve Hochstetler Shirk sing in Mennonite Mission Network's Work in Progress Choir.

**T**he Work in Progress Choir—a multiethnic, intergenerational, interdenominational, Mennonite Mission Network ensemble—aims to glorify God and broaden the music that Mennonites sing. It is led by three women with a passion for worship and music.

“Worship is what I live to do,” says Ann Jacobs, office services coordinator for Mission Network in Elkhart, Ind., who was recently given paid time to coordinate the choir.

**Jacobs, and the other two women**, Lefuarn Harvey, partnership coordinator, and Sandy Miller, director of church relations, began making music together in 2005. Other colleagues who loved to sing gravitated toward them, and Work in Progress Choir was born. The group usually consists of seven to 10 voices, “whoever is available at the time,” Jacobs says.

“It’s an opportunity for me to connect with God and to give God what he deserves,” Jacobs says. “When I’m worshipping with others, it seems like more is being given to God—and we serve a mighty God, who deserves more than my individual worship.”

Heartily agreeing with Jacobs’ emphasis on worship, Miller adds that Work in Progress is a beautiful way to begin to put into practice Mennonite Church USA’s commitment to becoming more racially diverse.

Steve Hochstetler Shirk, budget manager, says singing moves head knowledge into the heart. It also helps him connect his desk job with church life outside the office.

In addition to her work at Mennonite Mission Network,

Jacobs is enrolled in Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary’s Christian formation studies. She supports the Anabaptist faith while remaining a committed member at New Life Fellowship Ministries, an Apostolic church in South Bend, Ind.

Jacobs says that before God led her to Mission Network, she could never have imagined having any connection to the Mennonite denomination.

“But here I find myself as part of the larger body of Christ,” Jacobs says. “When I look out over a Mennonite congregation, I really do see God.”

The music that Work in Progress sings is not a performance. “It’s a ministry,” Jacobs says. “It’s all about giving to God. It’s about service—giving our offerings of worship and finances, giving of ourselves, giving God who is in us and joining that together with God who is in others.”

**Harvey, the choir director** in her Baptist congregation, said she sometimes has to laugh as Work in Progress members who have grown up with a Western classical music background struggle to let go of singing “from the book.” Harvey is more used to choir rehearsals that frequently move into worship mode when the Holy Spirit moves.

“At first, [most white Mennonites] are a little tentative,” she says. “But, having heard them sing, I know they can do it. Maybe I push them too hard, but it does come out once I convince them they can improvise. Gospel music just isn’t limited to notes on a page.”—*Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network*

# Total enrollment in Mennonite schools drops

## Mennonite students in higher education and PreK-12 also decreases.

**M**ennonite Education Agency annually produces a booklet that provides the latest and most complete picture of what has happened and is happening in Mennonite education.

“MEA Reports Fall 2012” provides valuable information and illustrates the important role of Mennonite education in supporting the mission of the church.

This is the sixth year that MEA has made the booklet available: [www.MennoniteEducation.org/ANNUAL2012](http://www.MennoniteEducation.org/ANNUAL2012).

Section one includes MEA’s annual report and summaries of the member schools of Mennonite Schools Council (MSC) and the Mennonite higher education institutions of Mennonite Church USA.

As shown in the chart below, Mennonite Church USA students include only those who reported attending a Mennonite Church USA congregation. All other Mennonites are included in the All Mennonite category.

The number of Mennonite Church USA students in higher education in fall 2012 (1,184) decreased from the 2011 total (1,264) for a combined decrease of 80 while preK-12 decreased 226 for a total net decrease of 306 in fall 2012.

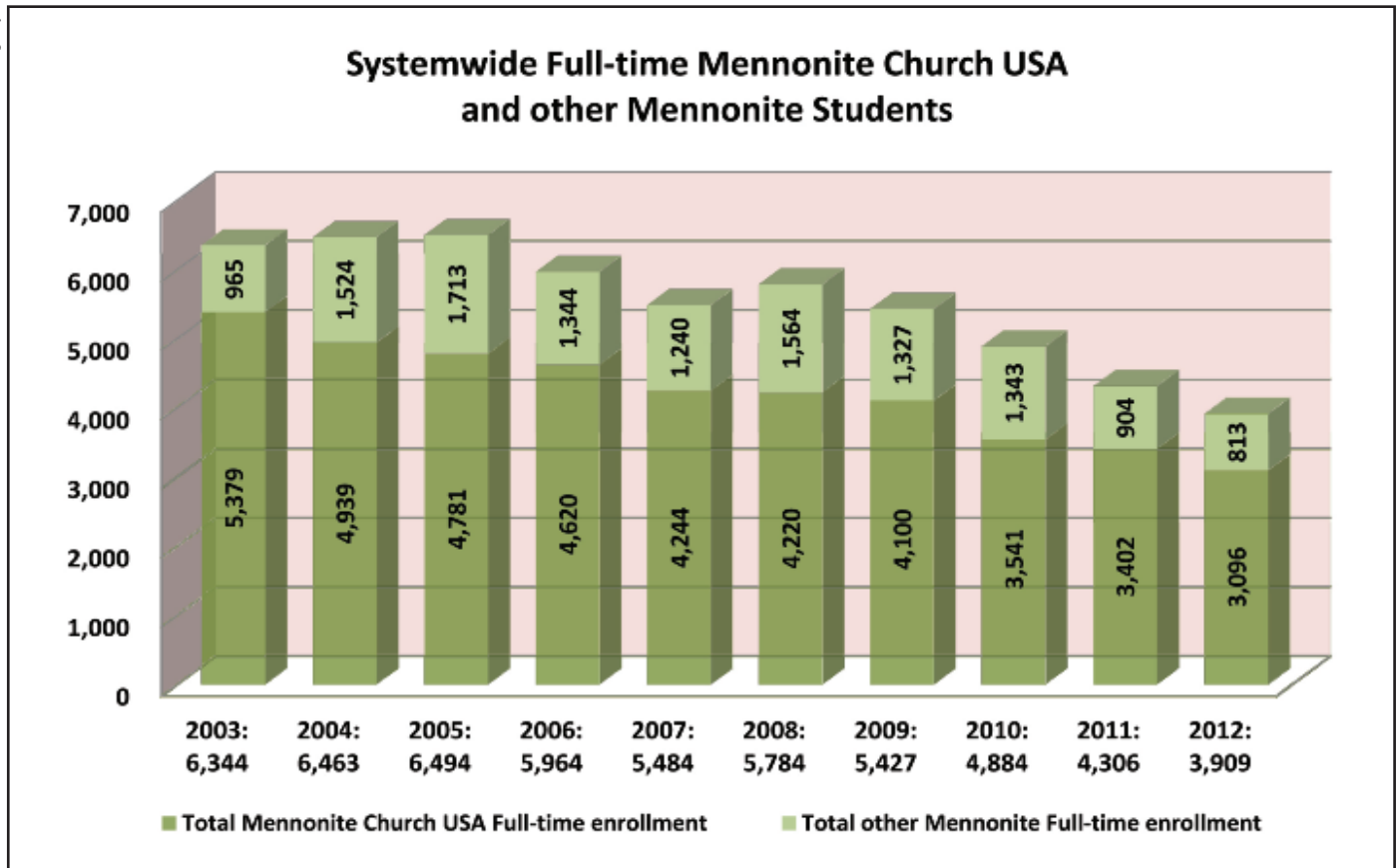
The chart on page 39 shows the total enrollment headcount by educational level.

Mennonite educational institutions touched the lives of 13,386 students (based on headcount) in fall 2012, a decrease of 643 (-4.6 percent) students from the 2011 total of 14,029. In higher education, the total headcount decreased by 129 students (undergraduate -98, graduate -48 and seminary -30, with an increase of 47 in adult degree-completion programs) while preschool, elementary and secondary education levels showed a decline of 514 (-5.5 percent).

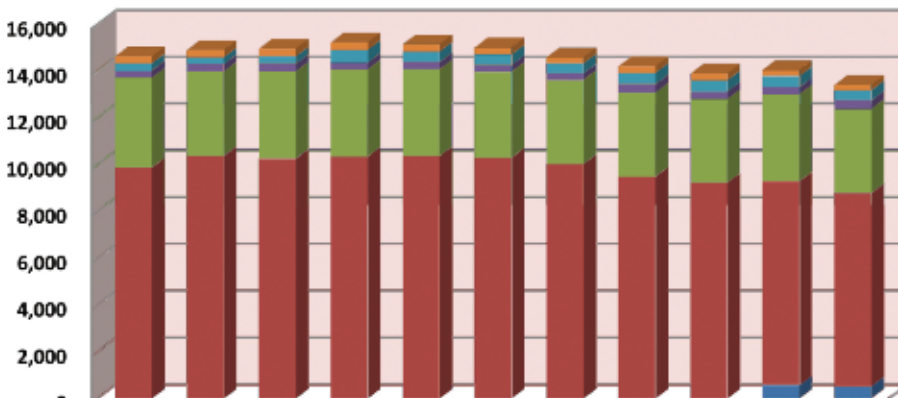
All higher education institutions reported their enrollment numbers. For the academic year 2012-2013, there are 30 MSC member schools, and MEA received data from all of them.

For the previous academic year, data was received from 32 MSC member schools. It should be noted that a decrease in the number of MSC schools affects the total number of students reported. The decline in MSC numbers is influenced by the fact that two schools that reported last year are no longer MSC members.—*Rachel Nussbaum Eby of Mennonite Education Agency*

Mennonite Education Agency



### Total Enrollment Headcount by Educational Level



	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,609</b>	<b>14,885</b>	<b>14,935</b>	<b>15,206</b>	<b>15,126</b>	<b>14,990</b>	<b>14,573</b>	<b>14,191</b>	<b>13,874</b>	<b>14,029</b>	<b>13,386</b>
<b>Seminary</b>	291	314	323	317	306	296	258	282	281	258	228
<b>Graduates</b>	316	293	324	546	459	451	430	491	480	484	436
<b>Adult Degree-Completion</b>	302	313	325	292	298	302	279	355	326	305	352
<b>Undergraduates</b>	3,841	3,614	3,725	3,726	3,714	3,664	3,601	3,588	3,573	3,710	3,612
<b>Mennonite Schools Council</b>	9,859	10,351	10,238	10,325	10,349	10,277	10,005	9,475	9,214	8,711	8,241
<b>MECN Preschools</b>										561	517

Headcount information from Mennonite Early Childhood Network pre-school/childcare centers (non-MSC schools) is included for the second year. For the academic years 2012-2013 and 2011-2012, MEA received data from seven pre-school/childcare centers. The data varies from year to year depending on which preschool centers report information.

### Faith-based travel at its best with TourMagination!

Experience God's world with other believers on our range of tours.

**CRUISES**

- ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (July 23-August 3/2013)
- CHINA & YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE (Nov 1-15/2013)
- LEGENDARY RHINE & MOSELLE (May 3-16/2014)

**ECO-ADVENTURE TOURS**

- ICELAND ECO TOUR (June 10-19/2013)
- AMAZON RAINFOREST & GALAPAGOS ISLANDS (Jan 16-26/2014)
- SPECTACULAR SCANDINAVIA & ITS FJORDS (June 13-26/2014)

**EDUCATIONAL TOURS**

- BRITISH ISLES (ENGLAND, SCOTLAND & WALES) (Sept 13-25/2013)
- JAMAICA: ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY & FRUITS (Jan 18-27/2014)
- EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS MARKETS (Dec 9-15/2013)

**CUSTOM TOURS**

- MEDA IN MOROCCO (April 2-12/2013)
- HESSTON COLLEGE TOUR TO EUROPE (May 24-June 6/2013)
- COLUMBIA BIBLE COLLEGE ANABAPTIST HERITAGE TOUR (July 2-15/2013)

**HOLY LAND TOURS**

- ISRAEL/PALESTINE WITH PASTOR PHIL WAGLER (April 16-25/2013)
- LANDS OF THE BIBLE WITH PASTORS SEBASTIAN & CAREY MEADOWS-HELMER (April 28-May 7/2013)

- EXPLORE THE WORLD OF PAUL WITH TOM YODER NEUFELD (May 1-17/2013)
- FOLLOWING THE STEPS OF MOSES WITH PASTOR NELSON KRABILL (July 22-31/2013)
- HARVEST OLIVES & EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE WITH PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (Oct 12-21/2013)
- BEHIND THE VEIL: EXPERIENCING EGYPT (Oct 17-28/2013)
- ISRAEL/PALESTINE WITH PASTOR RICH BUCHER (Nov 5-14/2013)
- ISRAEL/PALESTINE WITH PASTOR DAVID BOSHAUT (April 24-May 3/2014)
- NAZARETH TO ROME WITH PASTOR JIM BROWN (Nov 3-15/2014)

**HERITAGE TOURS**

- EUROPEAN HERITAGE WITH PAUL ZEHR (May 2-15/2013)
- GREAT TREK TOUR WITH JOHN SHARP (May 7-18/2013)
- EUROPEAN HERITAGE WITH JOHN RUTH (June 6-19/2013)
- RUSSIA & UKRAINE: THE MENNONITE STORY (Sept 4-16/2013)
- EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 16-28/2014)
- EUROPEAN HERITAGE WITH JOHN RUTH (June 24-July 7/2014)

**MYSTERY TOUR**

- MYSTERY TOUR (April 17-26/2013)



**BOOK YOUR LIFE-CHANGING JOURNEY TODAY! (800) 565-0451**

E-MAIL: [office@tourmagination.com](mailto:office@tourmagination.com)  
 WEB: [www.tourmagination.com](http://www.tourmagination.com)

Reg. # 50014322

# An interview with Erica Littlewolf

## Personal, collective transformation through the Indigenous Vision Center

**E**rica, what is your current leadership position in the Mennonite church? I work with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Central States with the Indigenous Vision Center. I connect with indigenous organizations already doing social justice work in the United States and support their work. I also connect with indigenous issues in Canada through the Aboriginal Neighbors program.

**How did you find yourself in that position?** Mennonite Central Committee runs in my family, and I started with MCC in 2000 as a summer service worker in my home community of Busby, Mont. I spent four summers working in my local community through the White River Cheyenne Mennonite Church. I then joined the MCC Central States board and also began volunteering within many MCC and Mennonite church committees. In 2007, a service worker position opened up at the Oglala Lakota Nation Unit in Pine Ridge, S. D., so I applied and began working with MCC there. The OLN Unit then transitioned into my current work with the Indigenous Vision Center.



**What is it about this work that you are passionate about?** I love it all. Connecting globally with other indigenous people is inspiring and life giving. I find that we have similar issues and problems, and I am always amazed at the *indigenius* that comes when we can come together in similar experiences, even though we live worlds apart. I especially enjoy seeing how other groups work toward healing, justice and transformation.

One central piece of my work right now is addressing the doctrine of discovery, which was the theological justification that settlers used to take land from indigenous people. Last May, at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the World Council of Churches called for the doctrine of discovery to be repudiated, and it has become a growing movement. I am working with others to discern the next steps churches can take in repudiating it.

**You are also a member of the steering committee for the Mennonite Church USA Women in Leadership Project. How does this connect to your work and interests?** I feel that colonization and the “isms” (racism, sexism, etc.) intersect. The same mentality of domination is at the root of all injustice. I feel that my work with IVC coincides with the

Women in Leadership Project and enhances my work and experience with the steering committee. I’ve always been involved with women’s issues in one way or another, but this project is a good way to work at making changes and progress in the church toward undoing patriarchy. It is exciting work and cutting edge.

**What is the transformation you hope will happen through this work?** Honestly, I don’t know what transformation is needed, but I can dream of a different world, so I know it exists. The mystery and the not knowing is the best part because it allows me to work collaboratively and collectively with others to figure out together what we need to learn personally and how to take that learning to the church. I’m excited to be a part of trying to figure it out.

**How can the church encourage healthy relating across gender lines?** In my work with IVC we use a document called “Qualities of Authentic Relationships Across Differences” to guide our work. I believe this can be applied to gendered relationships as well. If we can learn to be in authentic relationships with ourselves,

then we can be in authentic relationships with others despite our differences, and we can connect in an appropriate way to the land that sustains us. It’s amazing how much change is possible if we first change ourselves.—*This Q&A is part of the Women in Leadership Project, co-coordinated by Hilary J. Scarsella and Joanna Shenk. If you would like to get involved with the Project, email Hilary at hilarys@mennoniteusa.org.*

## BIPOLAR *genetics* RESEARCH STUDY

Researchers are looking for genes that may affect a person’s chances of developing bipolar disorder.

You can participate in this research study if you are over 18, have a bipolar diagnosis, or have a family member with bipolar disorder. This study includes a personal interview (2-4 hours) and a blood sample (bloodwork from your physician.) **Contact Diane Kazuba 301-496-8977, 1-866-644-4363, email: kazubad@mail.nih.gov TTY: 1-866-411-1010** or Write to Diane Kazuba, National Institute of Mental Health, Building 10, Room 3D41, Bethesda, Maryland 20892-1264

National Institute of Mental Health, National Institutes of Health  
Department of Health & Human Services [www.clinicaltrials.gov](http://www.clinicaltrials.gov) Protocol No: 80-M-0083  
No travel necessary. No cost to participate. Financial compensation provided.

## Syrians struggle with freezing temperatures

Current generations learn that 'the language of weapons and power prevail.'

Syrian Orthodox Church Photo/Archbishop Matta Roham



Firewood collection is destroying a forest of old trees in northeast Syria as people facing poverty and conflict struggle to cope with harsh winter conditions.

**A**s nighttime temperatures plummet to below freezing in many parts of Syria, people are struggling to stay warm and dry.

In an email message to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Archbishop Matta Roham of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch said firewood collection is now destroying the forest of old trees in the National Park in Hasaake, in northeast Syria.

"I asked those who were cutting and carrying the wood why they do this," says Roham, who visited the national park on Jan. 15. "The answer came, 'We are poor and we have nothing to live on. The weather is very cold, and we need to warm our houses and make our living.'"

This email message is among many that MCC representative Sarah Adams receives from MCC partners in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, which are trying to meet some of the basic humanitarian needs of families affected by the prolonged Syrian conflict. Adams is from Westerville, Ohio.

**MCC is responding by supporting** distribution of food, MCC kits and blankets, winter clothing and heaters. MCC also supports training in peacebuilding, trauma and humanitarian assistance.

To meet the growing needs, MCC is seeking additional funds to extend this assistance for a longer period of time and increase the number of families receiving this support.

"The severity of the situation is increasing daily," says

Adams, who is based in Lebanon. "People are being forced to take new measures to keep their families alive, including returning to conflict-riddled neighborhoods in search of wooden doors and furniture that can be burned for warmth."

According to United Nation estimates, the overall number of people in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria quadrupled between March and December 2012, from 1 million to 4 million.

**It is estimated that up to a million** Syrian refugees will need help during the first half of 2013, with most of these located in Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey and Egypt.

Even as the humanitarian needs continue to increase, Adams said MCC partners are already preparing to help people heal from the trauma and psychological damage resulting from this prolonged conflict.

MCC partner Bishop Jean Kawak of the Syrian Orthodox Church says: "The impact of the crisis will not be limited to the absence of food or shelter. Neither will it be limited to the physical damages of today.

"The bigger impact will be the psychological one. The current generations are being taught that the language of weapons and power prevail. It will take years to reduce the psychological damage this crisis has caused to our children."

To learn more about MCC's response in the Middle East and to contribute to MCC's ongoing work there, visit [mcc.org/middleeastcrisis](http://mcc.org/middleeastcrisis).—*Gladys Terichow of MCC Canada*

# Wealth, capitalism focus of AMBS' pastors week

**Keynoter Kim Tan, venture capitalist and Bible teacher, explores Jubilee.**

Saejin Lee



Kim Tan shares his understandings of Jubilee economics at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary's Pastors Week.

**T**he Pastors Week theme of Jubilee raised topics that are surprising for the annual Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary event in Elkhart, Ind.: wealth creation, business enterprise and capitalism.

Kim Tan, a venture capitalist and Bible teacher, explored biblical teachings about Jubilee, while workshops explored aspects of money and the church.

The planning committee and Everence in Goshen, Ind., which cosponsored the week, hoped to foster conversations that are not always easy to have in congregations, so they encouraged business leaders to attend along with pastors.

Tan recounted how when he was a doctoral student he became convinced that living out biblical Jubilee principles is at the heart of Christian faith. His profession now is in biochemistry, but he works with the goal of "creating environments for human flourishing."

**In an evening session**, cosponsored with the Mennonite Economic Development Associates and the Michiana chapter of MEDA, Tan emphasized the need for financial capital to solve problems of poverty. As examples, he described the work of the Transformational Business Network in Cambodia and several African countries to create jobs, restore land and introduce solar-powered tools.

Tan's mission grows out of his understanding of the Bible's teachings. Israelites were told that every three years they should give one-10th of their possessions to the poor. Then every seven years they were to cancel debts, release slaves and let the land, animals and servants rest. In the

50th year, the year of Jubilee, they were to return to original owners all property they had bought in the previous 49 years.

Tan then pointed out that Jesus reinterpreted Old Testament principles to mean, "Jubilee is every day." He emphasized, "In business there are whole loads of opportunities for us as we create wealth. If we have the Jubilee spirit in us we will think of creative and imaginative ways to share that wealth and lift people out of poverty."

**At the end the Pastors Week**, Jewel Gingerich Longenecker, AMBS associate dean for leadership education, sent the 180 participants home with a challenge: "This has sparked a very important conversation. I encourage you to engage that conversation not only with people who think like you do. If phrases like 'compassionate capitalism' make you crazy or angry, I hope you will find people to talk to for whom that is not the case. If you are just chomping at the bit to get on with creating wealth so you can distribute it, I hope you will pause to pay attention to some of the potential dangers of creating wealth. But let's talk to each other."—*Mary E. Klassen of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary*

 A photograph of a woman, a young boy, and a man washing a dog in a metal tub outdoors. The woman is holding a hose, the boy is helping, and the man is washing the dog.
 

**AFFORDABLE INSURANCE**

**Goodville Mutual**  
Find a local agent  
at [goodville.com](http://goodville.com)

**AUTO • HOME • BUSINESS • CHURCH • FARM**

# EMS looks at mental illness close to home

## Participants feel normalized, not stigmatized, at School for Leadership Training

We tend to see mental illness as something that happens out there, to stigmatized strangers on the fringe of our churches, when in fact mental illness affects our families, friends, loved ones, congregants and many of us personally.

This was the recurrent theme of the 2013 School for Leadership Training (SLT) Jan. 21-23 at Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS), Harrisonburg, Va., which was titled “Imagine Church as Healing Space.”

The event attracted more than 270 participants and resource people who sought to “hear, hold and hope” amid mental health challenges.

**Hosted and planned by EMS**, the event felt historic: Multiple participants said this was the first time in a public church context they had felt part of the group, not in spite of but because of their depression, anxiety, bipolar diagnosis, schizophrenia and more. This was the first time they had felt normalized, not stigmatized, with their journey held in love, not primarily met with silence or marginalization.

A second gift was space to tell and hear the pain mental illness causes both its sufferers and those who love them.



Lindsay Kolb

Michael A. King, Eastern Mennonite Seminary vice president and seminary dean, addresses the gathering crowd at the School for Leadership Training.

Earl and Pat Martin offered searingly moving glimpses of their journey through their son Hans Martin’s development of symptoms of schizo-affective disorder.

Earl shared journal entries he had written during the sleepless nights after Hans was first hospitalized. In these contemporary psalms of lament, Earl raged at a pitiless God who treats his creatures like vermin, snapping off their limbs, leaving them soaked in their own blood. Earl railed at this God as the sick one who should get treatment for insanity.

**He reported that after he stopped writing** of his own volition, spent, his pen kept going and offered words from God, who said that God’s own son was in fact in treatment and was the roommate in a neighboring bed whom Earl had feared would hurt Hans.

A third gift was hope. Many at SLT, from participants through resource people, told of confronting the anguish caused by suicide. To name just one example, in a laughter-yet-tear-stirring blending of drama and storytelling, Ted Swartz told of his journey through his comedy partner Lee Eshleman’s battle with depression and of how the suicide to which it drove Lee so shattered Ted’s own life and career that years have gone into rebuilding. Yet precisely in this heartrendingly open naming of the torment, Swartz offered hope—hope for himself and hope for those still grieving the loss of their own loved ones.—*Joan K. King for Eastern Mennonite Seminary*



### Refresh your ministry!

Take a seminary course this summer.

One-, two- or three-week courses based in Harrisonburg, Va., or Lancaster, Pa.

Online courses also available

Topics include: peacebuilding, spiritual formation, Mennonite polity and mission.



540-432-4257  
seminary@emu.edu

emu.edu/seminary/courses/summer

# Drones are coming to civilian life

## Dr. Jay Parrish: Flying robots so small as to look like insects

There are two temptations—one, to reject all things new as evil; and two, to blindly accept all new technologies uncritically. We now face a new technology that at first glance seems evil.

Violence can be more acceptable to an individual if the victim is removed: the dropping of a bomb versus the use of a bayonet. But with each increase in violence we find it easier to justify the next ratchet upward as only a little worse than what happened before. We progress from a landline to a bulky portable phone to a smart phone with little reflection on the implications of having unlimited data available during dinner.

This brings us to drones: UAVs, UASes, flying robots. Most people probably think of Predators flying over Pakistan and dealing sudden death from the sky, but this technology can be used for peace as well as war.

**The proper term is Unmanned Aerial System**, meaning it is a compilation of components (a system) that could even operate autonomously rather than just as an unmanned aircraft (a drone). Drones came about primarily around World War II as flying targets to hone shooting skills. They

I can imagine a country in three years with thousands of UASes coursing overhead, delivering enchiladas and hamburgers.

have since evolved into sophisticated systems that can be piloted from the other side of the world and used to target specific individuals. Since everyone uses “drones” rather than UASes, I’ll use drone for military systems and UASes for other systems.

There are several reasons that drones are so attractive. One is that they are cheap, incredibly cheap. While manned aircrafts cost tens or hundreds of millions of dollars, drones cost orders of magnitude less. The first big reconnaissance drone was a jetliner-sized plane called Global Hawk, which cost \$50 million and required dozens of support staff. Early Predators were priced at \$5 million each because that would make them expendable. Why risk a \$100 million fighter when a \$5 million system can handle the job? They started out as reconnaissance systems, but soon people saw “targets” (a dehumanizing term) and decided to add weapons.

The second reason they are so loved is that they function without endangering a pilot. You can send a UAS into a radioactive power plant or collapsed building after an earthquake. Because they don’t have to carry a pilot, drones save

weight for fuel, allowing them to loiter in the sky for days. And because there is no pilot, the boredom factor can be spread over several shifts on the ground. If a drone is shot down over another country, there is no pilot to rescue.

There are a variety of smaller drones, some hand-launched, that are used to monitor or just to see what’s over the next hill. Their costs, while still large by most measures, are relatively cheap in military terms. Generally, the smaller the drone, the shorter the time it can remain airborne, generally minutes or hours. But some can be airborne for days or longer.

**So a president finds drones** a desirable option in warfare—they are cheap, persistent and able to target specific people. Although violating another country’s airspace is clearly a legal problem, there is no other major downside if the drone is shot down or captured, since there is no pilot. It is a weapon with few negatives and many positives, compared to manned systems.

While a president may be reluctant to send Navy SEALs into other countries to kill specific terrorists or suspected terrorists, it becomes possible with drones, resulting in the infamous Obama “kill list.” The problem with using technology to carry out something at a distance is that someone can look very much like a terrorist yet not be one. Simply carrying a tool or tube can make it appear a person has a weapon, and gathering with other men of similar age can look suspicious. What has happened in recent years is that we have gone from targeting individuals to targeting people who match a profile. This opens up a greater possibility of killing the wrong person.

Then there is the time factor—the few seconds of delay between reality and what appears on a screen in Nevada. This can make decision-making difficult and even result in mistaken launching of missiles.

**A recent development has been the addition** of air-to-air missiles to the arsenal that can be deployed on a Predator. This is significant. U.S. drones are no longer alone in the air. In fact, anyone can make or purchase a drone. It’s not rocket science, and it’s very affordable.

We are all drawn to the idea of projected force, from throwing a stone, shooting an arrow, firing a gun or using a TV remote control. Drones are an extension of this concept. Many are familiar with David Grossman’s book *On Killing* and his assertion that we find it easier to kill at a distance and more difficult face-to-face. Yet the technology of drones also allows persistence, meaning the drone can loiter in the air for days. The observers on one side of the world get to know the daily regimen of the targeted person across the world. So they, in effect, know this person’s family and



Jay Parrish (right) explains drone technology to (left to right) Rick Stamm and Titus Peachey at the Manheim (Pa.) Township Public Library on Dec. 1, 2012. The event was sponsored by a Lancaster (Pa.) County-based group called 1040 For Peace.

habits. It is not as remote as one may think, making it a little less of a kill-at-a-distance weapon psychologically.

We create enemies when we mistakenly kill innocents or create a climate of constant fear where one never knows when death may strike out of nowhere. One need only imagine living in the United States and knowing that a missile may destroy you and your home without warning. It would be a terrifying world. We may expect such a life in the future, as we are not the only ones who can make drones.

**This not-too-distant future could include** self-replicating systems that collect raw materials, manufacture parts and assemble new systems. This would lead to the next level of drone warfare, which substitutes numbers for single systems. Thousands of small, cheap drones could act like a swarm of bees, communicating and acting as single entity. This is a terrifying concept if you let your imagination go.

We have lived with the consequences of landmines and cluster bombs, which accomplished a military mission but had unintended consequences of unending tenacity. They hung around long after they were wanted, continuing the job

of killing a generation after the intended targets. The same could be true of highly sophisticated systems that could well remain for years, dutifully doing what we programmed them to do.

Here lies an irony: I would love to talk about peaceful uses of UASes and encourage Mennonites to consider how they could be used and what safeguards are needed. But what draws interest is the military usage. So let's turn to the uses that may affect you in the next year or so.

The FAA has been tasked with integrating UASes into civilian airspace in the United States. It has postponed this several times. Big concerns are privacy and safety. No one wants a commercial airliner running into clouds of pizza-delivering UASes. And no one really wants to have a tiny autonomous helicopter hovering outside their second floor window, looking in. But we have all become accustomed to iPhones with video capabilities capturing every dumb slip of the tongue or fall on the ice. With nano UASes in the works, systems that look like large insects could be tied to your iPhone and provide a third eye, roaming the restaurant you're visiting and spotting items on a menu board or people you know around the corner.

I can imagine a country in three years with thousands of UASes coursing overhead, delivering enchiladas and hamburgers, so we won't even have to exert the minimal effort of driving. Or medicine for a sick child from the neighborhood pharmacy in the middle of the night.

Or illicit drug traffic.

Consider a topic dear to many Mennonites: agriculture. Imagine a farmer with the ability to get up each morning, fly every inch of his fields, obtain color infrared imagery that shows plant health, maps weed locations and eliminates them all before noon. And it never gets bored or tired.

A UAS allows you to explore more of your world than what you can see. A UAS in a small community in a rural arid region of Africa has the same imaging power as a military drone for a fraction of the cost. It can monitor vegeta-

**We create enemies when we mistakenly kill innocents or create a climate of constant fear where one never knows when death may strike out of nowhere.**

tion, land use and water and can range beyond the village to check up on rumors of wild animals attacking livestock on the outskirts or a road washed out a few miles away.

So here is a new technology. How could Mennonites make use of it in a constructive way? What constraints ought we consider so they do not turn us into 3D data zombies?

The military will use this technology. There is no turning back from an inexpensive instrument that removes danger

from the operator. This temptation is too great for a war-oriented country to resist. It is too great a temptation for a peace-loving country as well. Just as with the Predator, it can start with an unarmed observation system and evolve into an armed system as opportunities arise. The temptation is too great.

## What can we do to help our country make good decisions about drone technology?

Will we use this technology? Will we be reflective rather than uncritically accepting? The temptation for me is great. I'd love to combine the ease of ordering online with instant delivery by a system that doesn't give me the flu. The temptation is to make an idol of something that brings ease and security. Will we have faith in God's supply or view a new technology as a way to obtain security, both in delivering pizza as well as delivering death? Will we feel less responsible because there is no carpet bombing? Will this become a golden calf, offering a less obvious way to buy in to military activity as a promise of security, more acceptable in a Mennonite church that quietly brings a flag up by the pulpit?

What can we do to help our country make good decisions about drone technology? How do we do that?

We can help our country see the real cost of this technol-

ogy rather than focusing on the near-term military advantage. Will the ability to reduce casualties on one side lead to a greater willingness to go to war?

We can help our society see what limits should be available for commercial UASes so that life is not stripped of all privacy. We have gotten used to iPhones without much discussion. And we've all seen how conversations are interrupted by furtive looks at the latest email or tweet. Yet I love having answers at my fingertips. But consider: This will be in three dimensions. Not just a video of your cat doing something cute, but the ability to follow your cat as it roams the neighborhood. What other things will you learn that perhaps you wish you didn't know? Or will others know about you? If we are even more open with information, will society improve as a result?

We can't say that it won't affect us or we won't participate. We can't opt out. The days of saying email doesn't fit with the simple low tech approach of Mennonites are over. Drones will be used by the military. They will be in civilian life. And soon. Meanwhile, we as a community have to be involved in assessing this technology.

We can't ignore drones. They will find us in the end.—Jay Parrish is professor of practice in the Dutton Institute of Pennsylvania State University and a member of the East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa. As far as he knows, he's the only geophysicist in Mennonite Church USA. He says this is something that should change.

# Group subscription plan



Keep your congregation connected to MC USA with a group subscription plan to **TheMennonite**.

With a minimum of five households, your congregation qualifies for a discounted **group subscription plan**. If your congregation is already enrolled, renewal forms will be in the mail soon.

To begin a congregational group subscription plan, e-mail [rebecca@themennonite.org](mailto:rebecca@themennonite.org) or call **800-790-2498**.

**TheMennonite**  
 3145 Benham Avenue, Suite 4  
 Elkhart, IN 46517  
[www.TheMennonite.org](http://www.TheMennonite.org)

A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA

## WORKERS

**Benedict, Neal**, was licensed as bridge pastor at Erisman Mennonite Church, Manheim, Pa., on Jan. 27.

**Bornman, Jonathan**, was licensed for service with Eastern Mennonite Missions and around the world at Mount Joy Mennonite Church, Mount Joy, Pa., on Dec. 16, 2012.

## OBITUARIES

**Alderfer, Wilbur L.**, 92, Tiskilwa, Ill., died Dec. 31, 2012, of pneumonia. Spouse: Gracie L. Eichelberger Albrecht. Parents: John V. and Leah Eichelberger Albrecht. Children: Curtis, Carson; five grandchildren; one step-grandchild; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 12 at Willow Springs Mennonite Church, Tiskilwa.

**Brubaker, Raymond S.**, 82, Lancaster, Pa., died Nov. 4, 2012. Spouse: Ruth Brubaker. Parents: Levi and Anna Brubaker. Children: Ray, Cheryl Buser, Lucy Brubaker; four grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 8 at Erisman Mennonite Church, Manheim, Pa.

**Clemmer, Jean D. Delp**, 90, Souderton, Pa., died Jan. 25. Spouse: Roy C. Clemmer (deceased). Children: Jonathan, Justine Pletcher, Robert, Janice Kaufman, Lisa Yoder; 13 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 31 at Souderton Mennonite Community.

**Eby, Joyce Lavonne Rutt**, 71, Dillsburg, Pa., died Nov. 24, 2012, of cancer. Spouse: John Wilmer Eby. Parents: Clarence Henry and Elva Sensenig Sauder Rutt. Children: Carol Eby-Good, Scott Stoner-Eby; four grandsons. Funeral: Nov. 22 at Slate Hill Mennonite Church, Camp Hill, Pa.

**Ellison, Chris**, 58, Hesston, Kan., died Jan. 23. Spouse: Ruth Taylor Ellison. Parents: Cleve and Carolyn Ellison. Children: Isaac Ellison, Kaeli Ellison. Funeral: Jan. 29 at Hesston Mennonite Church.



**Gingrich, Ann Keener**, 81, Goshen, Ind., passed away on Jan. 19, at her home. She was born April 15, 1931 in Little Britain, Pa., to the late Clayton and Martha Gish Keener.

She married Paul Musser Gingrich Aug. 11, 1951, in Mechanic Grove, Pa. He survives. Also surviving are four sons, Larry P. (Sheila Kline) Gingrich, Birdsboro, Pa.; J. Robert (Joyce) Hooley-Gingrich, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Africa; Jon L. (Rita) Gingrich, Goshen and Michael L. (Bonnie) Gingrich, Elkhart; a daughter, Lynda (Brent) Troyer, South Bend; a son-in-law, Tim (Candy) Cleary, Williamsburg, Va.; a daughter-in-law, Pam Dintaman, Ariz.; three sisters, Barbara (Harold) Shenk, Lancaster, Pa.; Betty (John) Drescher, Quakertown, Pa. and Marie (E. Daniel) Riehl, Lancaster, Pa.; a sister-in-law, Floss Keener and a brother-in-law, Rohrer (Mabel) Eshleman, Lancaster, Pa. Nine grandchildren also survive her. She was preceded in death by a daughter, Bonnie Gingrich Cleary, Aug. 9, 1992; a sister, Ellen Eshelman; and a brother, Robert Keener. A 1948 graduate of Lancaster Mennonite High School, Lancaster, Pa., Ann attended Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., in 1952. She attended Hartford Seminary Foundation, Hartford, Conn., 1958-59. In 1971 she received her BA in secondary education from Goshen College and in 1987 her MA in Theology and Ethics from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) Elkhart, Ind. She attended Selly Oak College, Birmingham, UK in 1991. She taught grades 1-8 at Brick Hill Elementary school

1950-51. Along with her husband, Paul, she served as a missionary, teacher and counselor in Ethiopia and Kenya from 1954-69. She opened and operated a guesthouse in Nairobi 1964-65. From 1971-75 she worked as a substitute teacher in the Goshen and Middlebury schools and in 1976 she taught at Goshen College Laboratory Kindergarten. In 1976-77 she served as co-director of Goshen College's Study Service Trimester program in Belize, Central America, and from 1976-1982 she helped Goshen College with exit interviews and retention study. Ann worked at the Mennonite Historical Library from 1981-82, before serving as Pastoral Counselor at AMBS from 1983-90. In 1994-97 she and Paul served as Peace Evangelists for Mennonite Church USA and most recently were serving as overseers for College Mennonite Church. Ann and Paul were recognized by Eastern Mennonite University and Seminary with the 1993 "Distinguished Service Award" in recognition of their lifetime of service. In 2005, AMBS honored Ann with the "Alumni Ministry and Service Award." This was given in honor of her work with victims of abuse. An active member of Belmont Mennonite Church, Ann has facilitated worship leading, sexual abuse survivor groups and done some occasional preaching. She has also served on the Mennonite Stewardship Commission, the Personnel Committee of Mennonite Board of Missions and has led retreats on marriage and family, women's issues and human sexuality in addition to serving as a resource person for Intentional Communities and Christian growth groups. From 1974-91 she was involved with Assembly Mennonite church as a pastoral counselor, elder, worship leader, trustee and occasional preacher. Her hobbies included reading, gardening, home decorating, scrap booking, women's empowerment and her grandchildren.

**For the Record** is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at [www.themennonite.org](http://www.themennonite.org). Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to [www.themennonite.org](http://www.themennonite.org) and use the "For the Record" button for online forms. You may also submit information by email, fax or mail: [Editor@TheMennonite.org](mailto:Editor@TheMennonite.org); fax 316-283-0454; 3145 Benham Ave., Suite 4, Elkhart, IN 46517.

**Graber, Daniel J.**, 83, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 30, 2012. Spouse: Mary M. (Marge) Soldner Graber. Parents: Peter P. and Magdalena Wenger Graber. Children: Stephen, Peter, Jeanne Mielke, Julia LaFrance Graber; eight grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 13 at Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

**Hershberger, Edgar Allen**, 93, Milford, Neb., died Dec. 15, 2012. Spouse: DeElda Lucille Eicher Hershberger. Parents: John A. and Susan Rediger Hershberger. Children: Gordon, Gregory, Ray; five grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; three step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 20 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

**Horst, Ruth Ellen King**, 90, Shillington, Pa., died Jan. 13. Spouse: Luke L. Horst. Parents: Abraham and Alice Hartzler King. Children: Naomi Weaver, Esther Martin, Ellen Helmuth, Margaret Forst, Nancy Perkins, Thomas, Dorcas Cyster; 21 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 20 at Bowmansville Mennonite Church, Lancaster County, Pa.

**Janzen, Orlin C.**, 83, Goessel, Kan., died Dec. 21, 2012. Spouse: Mary Jane Schmidt Janzen. Parents: Dietrich and Lena Schmidt Janzen. Children: Matthew, James. Funeral: Dec. 28 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

**Kauffman, Janet Arlene Byler**, 90, Lititz, Pa., died July 9, 2012, of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Ammon S. Kauffman (deceased). Parents: Elsie Mae Kauffman Byler and Jesse J. Byler. Children: Mary Ellen Martin, Richard; four grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 16 at Neffsville Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

**Kaufman, Dolores May Graber**, 84, Marion S.D., died Jan. 27, of cancer. Spouse: Delbert Kaufman (deceased). Parents: Julius J. and Caroline Kaufman Graber. Children: Kathy Kleinsasser, Arden. Funeral: Jan. 31 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

**Kempf, Wayne Daniel**, 87, Shickley, Neb., died Jan. 17, of a heart attack. Spouse: Esther Lapp Kempf. Parents: Roy H. and Barbara Troyer Kempf. Children: Don, Ellen Miller, David, Dale, Margaret Swartzendruber, Anita; 13 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 21 at Salem Mennonite Church, Shickley.

**Kilheffer, John Henry**, 87, Millersville, Pa., died Dec. 27, 2012. Spouse: Mary Ellen Thomas Kilheffer. Parents: Abram and Dorothy Amand Kilheffer. Children: Dennis E., J. David, J. Edwin, Thomas L.; eight grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 31 at Willow Street Mennonite Church, Willow Street, Pa.

**Lefever, Grace Buckwalter**, 99, Harrisonburg, Va., died Oct. 4, 2012. Parents: Abram K. and Lettie Buckwalter Lefever. Funeral: Oct. 13 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

**Martin, Arthur**, 81, St. Jacobs, Ontario, died Jan. 8, of cancer. Spouse: Mary Metzger Martin. Parents: Alfred and Irene Sitler Martin. Children: Ron, Randy, Jenny Martin; five grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 13 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

**Mellinger, John Henry**, 82, Ontario, Calif., died Nov. 13, 2012. Spouse: Annetta Mellinger. Parents: John D. and Vera Denlinger Mellinger. Children: Brenda Bewley, William, David, Rosa Lee Price; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 20 at Mountain View Mennonite Church, Upland, Calif.

**Miller, Eleanor Elizabeth Warner**, 88, Leo, Ind., died Jan. 7. Spouse: Willis Andrew Miller (deceased). Parents: Albert and Audrey Day Warner. Children: Gary Lee, Danny Ray, Gloria Smith; eight grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 12 at North Leo Mennonite Church, Leo.

**Miller, Robert J.**, 88, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 4. Spouse: Ellene Long Miller. Parents: Lee and Priscilla Oswald Miller. Children: Steve, Bruce, Beth Miller Kraybill; five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Jan. 12 at Hively Avenue Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

**Moyer, Henry Alderfer**, 93, Souderton, Pa., died Dec. 27, 2012. Spouse: Elsie Yothers Moyer (deceased). Parents: Ammon and Lizzy Alderfer Moyer. Children: Laverne, Bob, Nancy Freed; six grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; 10 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 2 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

**Nafziger, Joyce Lynn Link**, 61, Wauseon, Ohio, died Jan. 18, of cancer. Spouse: George W. Nafziger (deceased). Parents: Ralph and Patricia Andrews Link. Children: Eric, Ryan, Jena, Joyclyn; six grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 22 at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon.

**Nickel, Bertha A. Ewert**, 89, Goessel, Kan., died Dec. 26, 2012. Spouse: Arnold Nickel (deceased). Parents: John A. and Bertha Wiebe Ewert. Children: Leo, Harriet DeLay, Elton, Donovan; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 8 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Goessel.

**Nyce, Carl M.**, 87, Telford, Pa., died Dec. 24, 2012. Spouse: Eva B. Bergey Nyce. Parents: Howard and Mary Moyer Nyce. Children: Steven C., Sharon Bishop, Karen Reichart, David Lee; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 30 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

**Ramseyer, Lois A. Kuhns**, 94, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 19. Spouse: J. Woodrow Ramseyer. Parents: Allen W. and Anna Inez Shupe Kuhns. Children: Elizabeth Robie, Sharon Sivanich, Robert; five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 23 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

**Shetler, Lyle D.**, 80, Pigeon, Mich., died Dec. 29, 2012, of heart failure. Spouse: Betty Burkholder Shetler. Parents: Omar and Katie Kipfer Shetler. Children: Kent, Karla Nussbaum, Ron; five grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 6 at Michigan Avenue Mennonite Church, Pigeon.

**Snyder, Arlene Brenneman**, 86, Kalona, Iowa, died Jan. 25. Spouse: John Snyder. Parents: Erlis and Martha Marnier Brenneman. Children: Steve, Daniel, Rita Wimberly; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 28 at First Mennonite Church of Iowa City.

**Stamm, Jeanne M. Foust**, 85, Archbold, Ohio, died Jan. 10. Spouse: Denver Stamm (deceased). Parents: Marion and Lodeema Gee Foust. Children: Mark, Tina Lange, Tana Sauder; eight grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 13 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

**Steckley, Anna Marie Shetler**, 95, Harrisonburg, Va., died Jan. 12. Spouse: Floyd Steckley (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Anna Guengerich Shetler. Children: Robert, Reynold, Joanna Mae; foster daughter: Betty Oberholtzer Kreider; three grandchildren; three foster-grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 16 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

**Swartley, Miriam K. Landis**, 97, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 16. Spouse: G. Merrill Swartley (deceased). Parents: Allen M. and Mattie Kulp Landis. Children: Alan, Barbara Swartley, David; eight grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 22 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

**Tamm, Rachel R. Rosenberger**, 95, Allentown, Pa., died Feb. 4. Spouse: Albert W. Tamm (deceased). Parents: Clayton and Alma Ruth Rosenberger. Children: Clayton, Marlene Royse; five grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 8 at Stephens Funeral Home, Allentown.

**Voran, Paul Stanley**, 89, Hesston, Kan., died Dec. 31, 2012. Spouse: Ellen Ruth Lohrentz Voran. Parents: Jacob J. and Christina K. Voran. Child: Roxie Voran; two grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 5 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

**Weaver, Joseph**, 90, Lancaster, Pa., died Jan. 17. Funeral: Jan. 22 at Bareville Church of the Brethren Cemetery, Bareville, Pa.

**Weldy, Dwight E.**, 95, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 12. Spouse: Marjorie Conrad Weldy (deceased). Parents: Jacob I. and Rhoda P. Landis Weldy. Children: Cheryl Martin, Dave, Mary Clasen, Ruth Fitz-Gerald; 15 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 19 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

**Wiebe, Vera Mae Yoder**, 85, Beatrice, Neb., died Jan. 13, of complications from a stroke. Spouse: Edgar Gerhard Wiebe (deceased). Parents: Henry and Velma Miller Yoder. Children: Rebecca Sue Jobman, David Wendell, Deborah Jean Wiebe Wooding, Miriam Joan Wiebe Oliva; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 17 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice.

**Yoder, Lee I.**, 86, Fort Wayne, Ind., died Jan. 3, of complications of Alzheimer's disease. Spouse: Ruth E. Glick Yoder (deceased). Parents: Levi and Lydia Peachey Yoder. Children: Judith Yoder Alger, Jerry, Jess; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 12 at Church of the Good Shepherd, Leo, Ind..

**Yoder, Samuel L.**, 92, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 23, 2012. Spouse: Lillian Zook Yoder. Parents: Levi M. and Gertrude Yoder Yoder. Child: John, Michael Lee. Funeral: Dec. 27 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.



## What makes a Bluffton education valuable?

- Mennonite Values
- Diverse faith community
- Top 10% in Financial Aid offered in Ohio

[www.bluffton.edu/valuable](http://www.bluffton.edu/valuable)



Scan to see  
Bluffton's viewbook!



1 University Drive  
Bluffton, Ohio 45817-2104  
419-358-3000 or 800-488-3257  
[www.bluffton.edu/admission](http://www.bluffton.edu/admission)

## RESOURCES

**Living Faith: Embracing God's Callings** by Keith Graber Miller (Cascadia Publishing House, 2012, \$12.95) explains why the primary Christian calling is to be a follower of Jesus Christ and what this entails for vocational life.

**The Apple Speaks: Poems** by Becca J.R. Lachman (Cascadia Publishing House, 2012, \$12.95) brings to the surface questions and emotions rarely discussed regarding international missionary work, new marriage and straddling two worlds as a young feminist Mennonite writer.

**What's in the Blood: Poems** by Cheryl Denise (Cascadia Publishing House, 2012, \$12.95) ponders what is sacred and what is spectacle and confronts desires that will not shoo. It faces fear and insecurity and acknowledges the effort it takes to stay in this world.

**A Faith Embracing All Creatures: Addressing Commonly Asked Questions About Christian Care for Animals**, edited by Tripp York and Andy Alexis-Baker (Cascade Books, 2012, \$23) includes 14 essays by authors from various denominational, ethnic and cultural backgrounds addressing questions Christians who advocate compassion toward other animals regularly face.

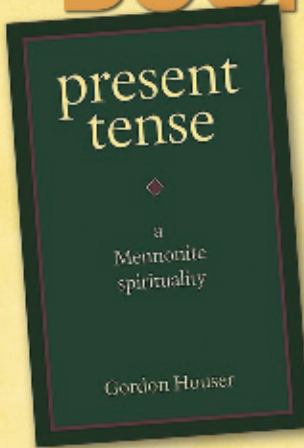
**Unfading Light: Contemplations and Speculations** by Sergius Bulgakov (Eerdmans, 2012, \$48) documents what a life in Orthodoxy came to mean for Bulgakov on the tumultuous eve of the 1917 October Revolution in Russia. It discusses myth, German idealist philosophy, negative theology and mysticism.

**Chasing the Divine in the Holy Land** by Ruth Everhart (Eerdmans, 2012, \$18) recounts Everhart's experiences traveling in the Holy Land as one of several ministers taking part in a documentary about pilgrimage.

**Liberty to the Captives: Our Call to Minister in a Captive World** by Raymond Rivera (Eerdmans, 2012, \$18) encourages Christians to respond to God's call by ministering wherever God has placed them. Based on 45 years of pastoring inner-city churches, it challenges every Christian to think again about how their faith should lead to social action and defense of society's most vulnerable people.

**Sacred Pauses: Spiritual Practices for Personal Renewal** by April Yamasaki (Herald Press, 2012, \$16.99) offers fresh ways to find everyday personal renewal. Each chapter explores a different spiritual practice—from classic disciplines of Scripture reading and prayer to less conventional approaches, such as having fun and living simply.

# Books from the editors



**Present Tense: A Mennonite Spirituality**

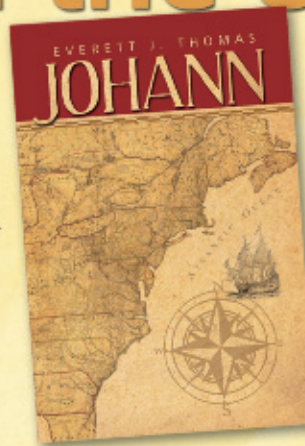
by Gordon Houser explores the heart of Mennonite spirituality and how Mennonite spiritual practices may succeed or fall short.

\$16.95

Order from [cascadiapublishinghouse.com](http://cascadiapublishinghouse.com), [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) or [bn.com](http://bn.com)

Houser's gentle, forthright, and theologically astute voice has nothing to prove. His many years as an "insider"—a church journalist—and "outsider"—one who did not grow up Mennonite—render these reflections on Mennonite spirituality into a unique alloy of intimacy and objectivity.

—Valerie Weaver-Zercher, contributing editor of *Sojourners*



Everett Thomas' novel **Johann**

is historical fiction describing the life of Mennonites in Pennsylvania in the 18th century as the French and Indian War unfolded.

\$8.95

Order from Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society ([www.lmhs.org](http://www.lmhs.org)), [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) or [betterworldbooks.com](http://betterworldbooks.com)

A very enjoyable read! *Johann* is grounded in a clear sense of place, with vividly drawn nautical motifs. It's clear that Thomas had fun writing the novel.

—John D. Roth, professor of history, *Goshen College*

*Johann* was uplifting. It made the Lancaster Mennonite story in the mid-1700's come alive from various perspectives: cultural, political, faith and personal.

—Rolando Santiago, executive director, *Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society*

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is \$1.30 per word, minimum of \$30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or email [advertising@themennonite.org](mailto:advertising@themennonite.org).

Calling all Mennonites with interest in East Africa! You're invited to attend **East Africa Connections 2013** at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, May 24-26, 2013. Speakers include recently returned MCC/EMM East Africa workers. Register by April 30. See <https://www.facebook.com/EastAfrica-Connections2013> for speaker and registration details.

**Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society** is seeking a three-quarter to full-time **director of communications**. Primary responsibilities include editing and publishing the quarterly magazine *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* and marketing the activities of LMHS and the 1719 Hans Herr House. Details at [www.lmhs.org/Home/About/Employment](http://www.lmhs.org/Home/About/Employment). Deadline: March 8.

two roads diverged in the autumn forest;  
 sorry I couldn't take both.  
 imagine what a good editor could do  
**specializing in creative nonfiction and academic editing**  
[kerryfastediting.weebly.com](http://kerryfastediting.weebly.com)

**Rockway Mennonite Collegiate**, a dynamic Christian school (300 students in grades 7-12) with a long-standing tradition of music-making (sacred and secular choral music, winds, strings and musicals) invites applicants for the position of **music department head**.

The successful candidate will:

- Be a passionate music educator who has an understanding and appreciation for Anabaptist church music, Music of the Masters and Contemporary Music.
- Be a collaborative and visionary leader who has the ability to organize and administrate musical events at the school and the broader community.
- Be proficient in the area of choral and instrumental (strings) music.

The ideal candidate will have:

- Minimum undergraduate Bachelor degree in related field and Bachelor of Education (or equivalent)
- Bachelor of Church Music
- Ontario College of Teachers Certification (or equivalent) with Intermediate or Senior Qualifications

This is a .70 FTE (includes some admin time) with the possibility of full-time with additional teaching areas. Please submit a cover letter and up-to-date resumé to [principal@rockway.ca](mailto:principal@rockway.ca) by Friday, March 8, 2013.



# Mennonite Mondays:

Start every week with updates on the latest Mennonite happenings. Sign up for **TMail**—the free, weekly ezine with Web-exclusive stories and blog updates as well as breaking news.

To sign up, visit [www.themennonite.org](http://www.themennonite.org)

Or send your request to [TMail@themennonite.org](mailto:TMail@themennonite.org) providing your email address.



## Young adults do care about the church



**Jon Heinly** is youth minister for Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference and Lancaster Mennonite School.

Young adults would much rather dream together about the future of the church than muddle around in debating divisive issues.

I hear many people bemoaning the many young adults who are leaving their churches. I want to tell a different story.

Two other young adults and I organized an event at James Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa. We called it “Open Spaces: Young Adults Talking with Young Adults about the Future of the Church.” We offered young adults good conversation, fellowship, free pizza and the chance for their voices to be heard. More than 80 young adults voluntarily spent their Saturday evening at a church talking about the church. Free pizza is great, but these young adults showed up for something more.

As planners, we hoped to have at least 30 people attend, which would have allowed for fruitful conversation. The actual turnout was so significant that I was forced to consider the meaning of what had happened. I don’t want to be too hard on naysayers who give anecdotal evidence of young people leaving church. I see it happening among some of my friends, and I’m familiar with the work of people like David Kinnaman, who documents the attitudes of young adults towards the church in his book *UnChristian*. While these concerns should be taken seriously, a few observations from our January event should temper the pessimism that too often permeates conversations about young adults and church.

**First and foremost**, the presence of over 80 young adults at a Saturday night conversation about the future of the church tells us something. By showing up, those young adults delivered a clear message: “We are here, and we care about the church.”

If the presence of those young adults at such an event was not enough, let me share a second observation about the content of the conversations. Carmen Horst, associate pastor of James Street Church, gave an effective explanation of Open Space Technology, which is a way of creating a safe and welcoming environment for specific conversations that fall under a general topic (i.e. the future of the church). The Open Space process and Carmen’s explanation opened up the opportunity for conversations about controversial topics. She even gave freedom to talk about homosexuality and immigration, acknowledging these as especially contentious issues in today’s church.

However, a fascinating thing happened. As indi-

viduals from the group suggested topics, no one brought up these highly divisive conversations. Instead, the conversations that emerged were hopeful and full of life and vision. In fact, the conversations embodied Lancaster Conference’s 2020 Vision: We see new life. The topics named were these:

- Perfection—strived for, not achieved;
- Transitioning from youth to young adult;
- Evangelism;
- Staying relevant in the midst of changing society without compromising beliefs;
- Ethnic and gender diversity within congregational, conference and denominational leadership;
- Discipleship;
- Creativity in church;
- Living peacefully with others in the church in the midst of differences;
- Relationships among urban, suburban, and rural congregations;
- Mennonite vs. church—what matters?
- Technology in the church.

**What does this mean?** It doesn’t mean the young adults who participated in the conversation don’t hold beliefs about the best way for the church to respond to challenges related to homosexuality and immigration. In fact, these young adults would probably engage rigorously around discussions of biblical interpretation or social and church policy regarding these topics. Instead, the topics suggested that evening say something much more profound—young adults imagine a church that can be relevant to a changing culture, and they would much rather dream together about the future of the church than muddle around in debating divisive issues.

My final observation from the evening is how the event has impacted the conference as a whole. I was amazed by the energetic buzz it created. People who were no longer young adults wanted to come and observe. Those who could not attend requested notes. Leadership bodies in Lancaster Conference wanted to hear reports of what had happened. Young adults even showed up early to the event, and many remained after it concluded to continue conversations.

As I hear fearful accounts of young adults leaving the church, I suggest an alternative narrative of the future. Perhaps by creating more open spaces, we will continue to see new life. **TM**

FILM REVIEW

**Side Effects** (R) is a Hitchcockian thriller that begins by probing our culture's obsession with depression drugs and their side effects. The plot takes a sudden turn when Emily, who is on a new drug prescribed by her psychiatrist, kills her husband while sleepwalking. The plot twists further as guilt is transferred more than once. Director Steven Soderbergh deftly handles these twists but does not reach the depths Hitchcock did.—*Gordon Houser*

BOOK REVIEWS

**Entering the Wild: Essays of Faith and Writing** by Jean Janzen (Good Books, 2012, \$11.95) is a memoir by the award-winning Mennonite poet. In exquisite prose she organizes her life's journey from Saskatchewan to California around images such as "Roar and Stillness" or "Pomegranate" or "The Fire, the Light." She traces the influence of her family and her faith on her vocation of writing. The book is a gem.—*gh*

**Laughter Is Sacred Space: The Not-So-Typical Journey of a Mennonite Actor** by Ted Swartz (Herald Press, 2012, \$24.99) is another memoir, this from half of the well-known duo Ted & Lee. Swartz uses his humor and disarming honesty to tell of his journey from a traditional Mennonite upbringing to his vocation as an actor. Eminent readable, the book comes alive when Swartz discusses acting.—*gh*

**The Activist Impulse: Essays on the Intersection of Evangelicalism and Anabaptism**, edited by Jared S. Burkholder and David C. Cramer (Pickwick Publications, 2012, \$49), collects 14 essays reflecting on how Anabaptism and Evangelicalism have intersected what challenges these traditions face.—*gh*

**Sacred Pauses: Spiritual Practices for Personal Renewal** by April Yamasaki (Herald Press, 2012, \$16.99) offers stories and practical advice that not only show us how but make us want to pursue spiritual practices.—*gh*

## Why is *Downton Abbey* so popular?

Why are so many U.S. viewers, including many Mennonites, so enamored with *Downton Abbey*, which ended its third season on PBS last month?

This British period drama television series, created by Julian Fellowes, is set in a fictional Yorkshire country estate of Downton Abbey and depicts the aristocratic Crawley family and their servants in the post-Edwardian era.

Like the popular series *Upstairs Downstairs*, which aired on PBS over five seasons, 1971-75, *Downton* dramatizes the lives of the aristocratic family and of their servants, as well as their interactions.

Class is entrenched in British life, set according to what family one is born into, while Americans like to deny its reality, believing anyone can climb the ladder of success. *Downton* accentuates this difference at times with the presence of Cora, Countess of Grantham, an American heiress married to Robert, Earl of Grantham, whose estate is facing financial problems in season three.

Perhaps part of the appeal of *Downton* is this strange interplay of characters from the upper and lower classes.

But no, that's true of just about every British product on TV. And besides, the show is equally popular in Great Britain. In fact, it has become one of the most widely watched television shows in the world.

Critics, while lauding the show's acting, have not been unanimous in their accolades. In "Brideshead Regurgitated" (*The Atlantic*, January/February), James Parker calls *Downton* a "ludicrously popular aristosoap" and says its motto might be: "Footmen have feelings, too."

Parker goes on to call *Downton* "a harmless, anachronistic masque of manners, in which the players keep obediently to their roles and thereby gratify the innate conservatism of the audience."

Others include Simon Schama, the British historian, who complained in *Time* that *Downton* misrepresented how awful World War I was, along with other historical inaccuracies.


But *Downton* is not a documentary; it is, as Parker says, a soap opera. Fellowes has created characters that, on the one hand, tend to be all good, like Anna (a housemaid) or Bates (a valet) or Mrs. Hughes (a housekeeper), or pretty bad, like Thomas (a footman) or O'Brien (a lady's maid). On the other hand, he introduces some changes in certain characters as they face adversity and respond in either heroic or tragic ways.

The fact is, audiences love characters they can boo and those they can cheer. And while we're being manipulated by melodrama, we often don't care.

Mondays found Facebook posts commenting on the previous night's episode. The setting and the travails of these fictional characters from another era that is also quite fictional, despite its occasional historical signposts, take us away from our mundane or less interesting lives for a moment each week.

That's what entertainment does, whether it's a PBS soap or a football game or a concert or a murder mystery. Humans throughout history have sought diversions from their day-to-day lives.

Are such diversions bad? Not as long as we don't accept them as some kind of Truth (with a capital T).

*Downton* may not present an accurate sense of what life was really like on estates in post-Edwardian England or present realistic characters. But it's fun to watch, an enjoyable diversion before heading back to work. 



*Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.*

(Continued from page 5)

American followers of “Downton Abbey” would think of themselves as British subjects.

Adams and Villegas define Christendom as “a social arrangement in which Christianity penetrates the structure of power.” I would be interested in learning which U.S. foreign or domestic policies are based on the gospel or the cry for justice of the Jewish prophets? How has Christian teaching permeated the economic and social power structures of the United States?

The besetting sin of “Christendom” has been the facile assumption that Christian faith is to be valued as the essential prop of western civilization and vice versa, so that both share an eternal destiny. The demise of that myth should be liberating for Christians.

As a historian by trade, I have noticed that every society, every empire, every ideology believes itself eternal, but the reality is that, just as you and I will eventually die, so every idea and every institution eventually fades into oblivion. There have been no exceptions, and there never will be.

—Richard K. MacMaster, Gainesville, Fla.

### No Mennonite anarchists

I take issue with “A Mennonite Anarchist” (February). Part of the problem is that we cannot define words as we see fit. An anarchist is one who believes in anarchy: *an•ar•chy, noun, 1. A state of disorder due to absence or non-recognition of authority. 2. Absence of government and absolute freedom of the individual, regarded as a political ideal. Synonyms: chaos, misrule.*

As Mennonites we may recognize the current government (despite what Romans 13:1-3 says) yet recognize the rule of another kingdom—one that places a much greater expectation on us than our current government.

To surrender to the rule of any kingdom is antithetical to what anarchists believe. We surrender everything to bow the knee to the King of Kings and

the Lord of Lords—something which no anarchist by definition would ever dream of doing.

I can agree with Mennonites being radical or revolutionary but never anarchist. Their whole cry was to do it for another kingdom.—Jeff Linthicum, Berne, Ind.

### Hubris and intolerance

I have an issue with the way Ervin Stutzman develops his thoughts in “God Sightings” (January). I see Stutzman moving from a healthy reaffirmation of faith—through confirming what we see as God at work in our world in the early paragraphs—to an unhealthy view of the place of the individual that can lead down a path of hubris and intolerance by the end. The transition comes in his reporting of Lois Barrett’s research.

The first list of quotations he reports may depict “God as the actor or initiator in a situation,” but the prominence of *me* and *I* in those quotations lacks the humility of submitting those feelings to the judgment of the larger community.

The second list of quotations are much more faithful to those wise admonitions throughout Scripture to test the sayings of the prophet and not be blown this way and that by any gust that comes. A wise and mature community will listen to those who say “the Holy Spirit gave me the words to say,” weigh them and perhaps say, “Thank you, you are right” or, “Might you want to think about that a bit differently before you make the claim of God speaking through you?”

Perhaps the second list of quotations does not do enough to acknowledge the presence of God, but I think they do better reflect the place of the community of disciples’ role in determining how we faithfully respond to God’s presence among us.

In other words, it could be said that the first list of quotations elevates the individual and the second the community.

One of the hard-won pieces of wisdom people in our tradition learned over the generations is that the elevation of the individual judgment leads to schism and strife. A vibrant community of disciples listens in humility to the individual and brings a judgment about the value and import of those contributions and acts on them with gratitude and, if necessary, repentance. The much more important task of our community is learning how to listen in humility and learning how to make valid judgments on issues that may either uphold or challenge long-held wisdom. A community that learns these lessons and acts in a loving and merciful way truly bears witness to the power of God in our world.—Douglas Horst, Evanston, Ill.

### Church is called to higher standard

Re the Opinion piece by Ted Grimsrud (January): His assessment and argument regarding the Mennonite Church USA teaching position, the Confession of Faith and “membership guidelines” may make sense to him and some others. It appears to me he is looking for a way for the church to welcome same-sex “loving,” committed couples.

Regardless of what our church documents say or do not say, God has spoken in his Word. Scripture speaks clearly on this issue. Jude says there are godless men “who change the grace of God into a license for immorality.” Jude names the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah as “sexual immorality and perversion” (NIV). God’s judgment is not exclusive to one sexual orientation.

There have been bold statements coming from current Democratic politicians (including our president) calling for equality and blessing of our “gay brothers and sisters.”

The church is called to a higher standard. If we follow the lead of the world, we will come under God’s judgment along with the world. We are called to love people, not to bless shameful behavior.—Loren Miller, Aurora, Ore

# God sightings at Christian Churches Together

*Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.—Hebrews 13:2*

In late January, I saw God at work in bringing a group of Christians to agreement on ways to better show hospitality to strangers who come to our communities. I was meeting in Austin, Texas, with other representatives of Christian Churches Together in the USA, a remarkably diverse gathering of Christians from around our country. CCT is a big tent, spreading its shade over dozens of faith communions that seldom talk to each other. We represent dozens of denominations and organizations from five large “families”—Roman Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox, Evangelicals/Pentecostals and Historic Black Churches. Our diversity makes it all the more remarkable that we came to a relatively quick consensus on a statement regarding immigration. This could not have happened without the Spirit of God breathing on our meeting.

The CCT gathering could not have been more timely. The meeting and the topic were planned more than a year ago, so we could not have known that a “gang of eight” senators would publish a proposal for immigration reform and that President Obama would make a speech on immigration on the day we convened our meeting.

From the very first service, I noticed the signs of God’s presence among us. After worshipping at St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Cathedral, we walked to the Central Presbyterian Church for a reception. The worship service and the gathering places were arranged to celebrate a historic moment—the signing of a “common agreement on mutual recognition of baptism” between the Roman Catholics and four Reformed communions.

**I felt like an onlooker**, since their agreement doesn’t encompass the churches who celebrate believer’s baptism. Nevertheless, my heart beat with theirs as they shared how God had been at work among them to bring about this remarkable moment. For them it was akin to the way Anabaptists felt in Stuttgart, Germany, when the Lutherans officially asked forgiveness for the persecution of Anabaptists. Only God can knock down the walls that have blocked the way to Christian unity


for nearly 500 years.

There were many other poignant God-moments in our gathering, but I will mention only two. During the worship one afternoon, I sensed the sweet Spirit of God sweeping over the room. Led in worship by a gifted African-American Evangelical at the keyboard, we sang, “Here I am to worship, here I am to bow down, here I am to say that you’re my God.” In those moments of adoration, it seemed that we as participants were transported beyond the earthly divisions that often keep Christians from truly worshipping together. We were one in spirit—the Orthodox bishops in formal black robes, the Salvation Army colonel in an officer’s outfit, the Evangelical woman wearing jeans, the Lutheran bishops with their clerical collars, and the retired seminary professor from the Pentecostal Church of God—all of us singing, clapping and bowing before God.

**The other poignant event** took place as the Historic Black Church led the closing worship service. An African-American participant shared the good news that she had just received a phone call from her husband, announcing that he had achieved legal status in the United States. As a Haitian immigrant, he had faced the arduous task

**Our diversity makes it all the more remarkable that we came to a relatively quick consensus on a statement regarding immigration.**

of proving that their marriage was legitimate, not simply arranged for his convenience as an immigrant. This couple’s plight demonstrates one of many barriers people face when they seek to gain legal status in this country.

I am rejoicing in the work of a missional God who once showed up in the guise of a man named Jesus of Nazareth. Although he came to earth as a stranger, I am grateful to be among those who call him Savior and Lord. 



**Ervin Stutzman** is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.





## In with the old



Everett J. Thomas

*For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.—John 1:17 (KJV)*

This is a most unfortunate translation of one of my favorite verses. Since the King James Version was used for so many generations, this translation framed the way English-speaking Christians have understood the two testaments. This translation implies something quite different from the original Greek meaning. It pits the Old Testament against the New Testament. It suggests there is no grace and truth in the Old Testament. It depreciates the law.

But here is the way my Greek-English interlinear Bible translates it: “Because the law through Moses was given, the grace and the truth through Jesus Christ became.”

This rather wooden translation reveals the organic relationship between the old and new testaments. The grace and truth that came to us through Jesus Christ is the fruit of the law given to Israel by God through Moses. Grace and truth is the law’s legacy, its posterity.

The grace and truth that came to us through Jesus Christ is the fruit of the law given by Moses.

So during this “Year of the Bible” (page 7), as Mennonite Church USA leaders have named it, I hope congregations will include the Old Testament in whatever plans are made to participate.

Why? I remember one of my seminary professors saying it’s not really possible to understand the New Testament without understanding the Old. This is because many things in the New Testament “became” because of the law. The easiest way to see the relationship between the two

testaments is to look for trajectories. Here is one example:

In Genesis 4, Lamech boasts to his wives, “I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold.”

Generations after Cain murdered Abel, wanton violence is Cain’s legacy. But the Old Testament law begins to moderate such excesses. So in Exodus 21, the law says, “eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.”

In Old Testament Hebrew, emphasis was shown by repeating a point with different words. In this case, repeating the point with seven examples demonstrates, with as much emphasis as possible, the limitations placed on vengeance.

So between Genesis and Exodus we see the beginnings of a shift. Then Jesus completes the trajectory with his commandment in Matthew 5: “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile.”

This is grace, and this is truth. Both “became” because God gave the law through Moses.

The Bible is not “flat” in the sense that every passage is equally important. The most important passages are those recounting Jesus’ life, ministry, death and resurrection. Further, the Sermon on the Mount is one of the most important of Jesus’ teachings.

But Jesus and his disciples did not have the New Testament. Scrolls full of the law, the prophets, psalms and wisdom literature (what we call the Old Testament) was their Bible. To fully understand how the disciples were faithful, we need to know the same Bible they did.—*ejt*

**Note:** The title of our page 8 column, Grace and Truth, is drawn from the John 1:17 text.