

The Mennonite

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September 1, 2009

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Signs of God's healing and hope

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.

In the Delegate Assembly in July, delegates talked frankly about what it means to be followers of Jesus Christ and communities of grace, joy and peace. We often find it difficult in our particular cultural context to know how to give our first allegiance to Christ and how to extend the church's witness in the world.

In the delegate discussion, Dave Hockman-Wert from Corvallis (Ore.) Mennonite Fellowship said less than half the members in his congregation grew up in a Mennonite congregation. The congregation wondered if we are too focused on our own survival? Too ready to go along to get along?

Pastor Ron Adams of East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa., said his congregation studied Colossians to see how Paul's instructions to Christians living in the Roman Empire can speak to Christians living in the United States. He said the study produced more questions about faithful living than answers.

"Questions keep us moving, thinking, dreaming and growing," he said. "They keep us humble. Instead of resting on our answers, with God's help, we make it up and are made up as we go."

Ron is saying it isn't our task to solve the world's problems. We don't know how God will solve them, but we do know God wants to. Our job is to stand with all that is broken in the world and be a sign of God's healing and hope in the world.

At Open Door Mennonite Church in Jackson, Miss., being a sign of healing and hope means hosting 70 children each year for Bible school, half of whom are from the neighborhood and don't nor-

mally go to church. Jody Miller says it's exciting to see church members work together.

At North Side Mennonite Church in Hagerstown, Md., Teresa and Gary Zook are involved with the local high school band because they say it gives them an opportunity to talk to the youth and their parents. People have hurts and need to know someone cares about them. "God can use us wherever we are," says Teresa.

At Lee Heights Community Church in Cleveland, a group from the congregation found that participating in a national rally in Washington to fight against poverty gave them new energy. The experience linked them with other Christians who care about the same things they do. "We believe in the power of the Holy Spirit and that we can make an impact by working together across many classes and communities locally and nationally," says member Al Anthony.

At Living Water Community Church in Chicago, Samrach Nuth became the first Cambodian licensed for ministry in a Mennonite church in this country. A product of the killing fields, he now leads a Cambodian group that meets with Living Water. He will travel to Cambodia this fall to help minister to 700 young churches there.

Nuth learned from Mennonites that forgiving enemies is an important part of following Jesus. He has forgiven the Khmer Rouge for what they did to him and urges others to do the same.

At the Columbus convention, speaker Shane Claiborne from Philadelphia told us to stop complaining about the church we've experienced and start becoming the church Christ imagined.

Mennonite Church USA congregations are learning what it means to be signs of God's healing and hope in the world. We are learning together to be faithful followers of Jesus. 



Ron Byler is interim executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters 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. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—Editors

Can't eliminate pain with more pain

As a counselor who for the last 25 years has been working with childless couples, pregnant couples and those who have placed for adoption and/or aborted, I was pleased to receive the June 2 issue about abortion. I was also glad that the editorial repeated the Mennonite Church USA statement, "Protests against abortion have greater integrity when they are combined with concern for all human life."

I am a Christian who believes in the sacredness of life, all life. I enter into the grief and mourning of couples desperately trying to become parents for years without success. When they lose a pregnancy they have lost a baby, not a bunch of tissue. Also I journey with birth mothers who have not been able to resolve pain from abortions occurring years ago, which are still sapping their strength.

I want to respond to Debra Sapp-Yarwood's paragraph justifying abortion in the case of rape. A number of birth mothers, whose pregnancies were the products of rape, placed their babies for adoption with my assistance. Each of them felt that being able to create a family—where there could be no family—somehow made their pain and sorrow worthwhile and helped them work through it. Also, being able to see their child grow up, through pictures and letters, gave them joy and hope (and no guilt). One cannot eliminate pain with more pain.—*Ruth Mark, Goshen, Ind.*

Women at AMBS

Anna Groff's editorial ("Opening up to Millennial Women," June 16) states that there are fewer women in leadership at Associated Mennonite

Biblical Seminary today than a decade ago. A more accurate statement would be that AMBS currently has fewer women as teaching faculty than we did a decade ago. We are blessed with a number of women in administrative leadership: Women serve as academic dean (for degree programs), director of Church Leadership Center (for non-degree and nontraditional learning), campus pastor, director of AMBS Great Plains extension, librarian, director of communication and registrar. Women comprise almost half the governing board.

We at AMBS do not consider the number of women currently serving on the teaching faculty to be adequate. We anticipate increasing the presence of women on the faculty as openings occur over the next several years.

We are grateful for Anabaptist women who are now engaged in doctoral studies in various theological disciplines, and we urge more Millennial women to consider such preparation. AMBS and the church will need you as scholars, teachers and leaders in years ahead.—*Rebecca Slough, AMBS academic dean, Elkhart, Ind.*

Let's keep reading Menno

I was pleased by the two articles in *The Mennonite* during the past year encouraging us to read Menno Simon again: "I Finally Read Menno" by Lawrence Ressler (Jan. 6) and "True Evangelical Faith" by Ted Lewis (July 7). Ressler and Lewis provide a helpful overview of important themes in Menno's writings and highlight some of their favorite texts while suggesting that reading again can help Mennonites recover a broader and deeper understanding of Anabaptist faith.

Neither of them mention "Reply to False Accusations," which is my favorite text from Menno. This publication was a response to the persecution and marginalization of Dutch Anabaptists by civil authorities and thus offers insight into how Mennonites might engage the public sphere by holding governments to account while at the same time witnessing to the peaceable reign of God that is being made visible in the faithful church. In it, Menno argues that the obligation of the magistrate is "to do justice to the widows and orphans, to the poor, despised stranger and pilgrim ... to rule cities and countries justly by a good policy and administration not contrary to God's Word, in peace and quiet, unto the benefit and profit of the common people, to rule well." In the same tract he lays out a vision for a peace church where "everything that is seen, heard and done is peace." Let's keep reading and studying Menno.—*Gerald J. Mast, professor of communication, Bluffton (Ohio) University*

IN THIS ISSUE

Just in time for the new Sunday school year, our cover story comes from the venerable leader Robert Kreider (page 8). Kreider describes the delights of his long-time class and says, "As we grow older and our energies diminish, a Sunday school class can remind us there is continuing delight and nutrient in biblical study." There are several major news stories in this issue, as well. Ervin Stutzman has been hired by the Executive Board to replace Jim Schrag as the next executive director for Mennonite Church USA (page 19). In a follow-up to the news we first broke through *TMail* on Aug. 18, Gordon Houser provides a full news story on the presidential transition at Bethel College in North Newton, Kan (page 20). Tim Stoltzfus Jost explains why the proposed health-care legislation should be supported (page 18); the editorial reveals the challenges that very legislation may have for several Mennonite institutions (page 32). The issue generated a record number of responses for our Web site poll (page 5).—*ejt*

Ignore health insurance lobby

I recently attended Mennonite Church USA Convention 2009 in Columbus, Ohio, and was dismayed by the amount of time and energy that delegates spent discussing health-care access and the funding required for pastors' health insurance. I am struck by the vitriolic tone of the debate about health care in the United States.

As a Canadian, I am thankful I live in a country that provides adequate and timely health care for all our citizens. I pray that Mennonites in the United States support the provision of health care for all and don't fall victim to fear and misinformation. As a Canadian, let me assure you there is nothing to fear, in spite of what the health insurance lobby in Washington and right-wing factions lead you to believe about Canadian health care.

—Fred W. Martin, Waterloo, Ontario

Immigration problem must be addressed

People keep telling us that other developed countries have health care for all of their citizens. But no other country has the immigration problem we have. I don't hear anyone addressing that problem. It is huge; we need to address that situation before we adopt an all-inclusive health plan. If only 10 million enroll in the public option plan, where do the other 40 million go?

The philosophy of insurance has always been that many pay a premium to create a pool out of which the fewer sick people's claims are paid. Since insurance for the most part is run by private business, no one would expect them to insure a burning house or a person with a terminal illness. That forces us to consider a government health plan, or for the government to help private insurance with claims for preexisting illnesses. The problem has not been with the insurance pool but with the medical and drug costs. If the federal government steps in and controls the doctors, hospitals and drug company costs, the doctors will flee the profession, and hospitals cannot operate.

We need to solve the immigration problem first, then the health issue will be a different picture. The problem is enormous, and the solutions seem mixed.—Sanford Oyer, Wooster, Ohio

Hatred and lies

I have been reading and watching as pastors and members of the church spew hatred, judgment and lies. I am sickened by the name calling, the labeling and so forth with regard to sexual offenders, pedophiles and all the other manufactured labels and names we have for our brothers and sisters in Christ around the globe. Try loving those you dislike or have concerns about and watch it change the world once and for all. I am struggling to be a Christian and to build faith and live with the Holy Spirit as my guide. The role modeling from the brothers and sisters of our faith is disturbing and is causing many to leave, maybe even me.—Mark D. Brull, Larned, Kan.

MCC planned to spend down budget

Regarding the News Digest article "MCC Had \$8 Million Deficit in 2008-09 Year" (Aug. 17): Entering the 2008-2009 fiscal year, Mennonite Central Committee intended to spend down \$5.4 million of reserves. This included \$3 million of previously received restricted income for the 2004 tsunami and the 2005 Gulf hurricanes and \$2.4 million of other reserved funding. With income less than budgeted, we spent \$3 million more from reserves, manageable for that year. Government grants mentioned in the article came almost entirely from Canada. With continued revenue declines this year, program budgets are reduced approximately 10 percent. We're hopeful that, now more than ever, constituency support will help us meet our commitments to the relief, development and peace efforts of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches around the world.—Arli Klassen, MCC executive director and Rolando Santiago, executive director, MCC U.S.

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Regarding the proposed national health-care plan (261 responses)

- ☐ I support it (74%)
- ☐ I do not support it (23%)
- ☐ I don't understand it (3%)
- ☐ Not sure (1%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann



IN BRIEF

Cluster bomb update

A new documentary, *From Harm to Hope: Standing with Cluster Bomb Survivors*, and a study guide are the latest tools in the advocacy work of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. in banning cluster bombs. The documentary tells the story of the movement through the experiences of survivors such as Raed Modaleo of Lebanon, Phounsy Phasavaeng of Laos and others.—MCC

Landline death

Some analysts now estimate that 25 percent of U.S. households rely entirely on cell phones—a share that could double within the next three years. If the decline of the landline continues at its current rate, the last cord will be cut sometime in 2025.—*The Economist*

New chauvinism?

New brides should do more than vow to love their husbands for a lifetime, say the majority of Americans. Some 70 percent of the respondents in a new study feel they should also take their spouse's surname—and 50 percent say that it should be a legal requirement for a woman to take her spouse's last name. The study was done by the Center for Survey Research at Indiana University, as reported by *USA Today*. —*NYDailyNews.com*

Former editor of *The Mennonite* dies at 84

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Maynard Shelly, who confronted contentious issues with firm conviction as editor of *The Mennonite* during the 1960s, died Aug. 7 at age 84. Shelly edited the General Conference Mennonite Church's (GC) weekly denominational magazine from 1961 to 1971.



Maynard Shelly

Two key issues for Shelly while editor were the Vietnam War and racial injustice, says Robert Regier, who did layout and artwork for *The Mennonite* from 1959 to 1963. The magazine's content had been more devotional for a readership with a broad range of theological perspectives, he says.

After leaving *The Mennonite* in 1971, Shelly and his wife, Griselda Gehman Shelly—to whom he had been married since Sept. 7, 1945—served with Mennonite Central Committee in Bangladesh until 1974. After that, Shelly wrote scripts for MCC films, Sunday school curricula and magazine articles. He served as pastor at Boynton Mennonite Church, Hopedale, Ill., from 1946 to 1949 and First Mennonite Church, Allentown, Pa., from 1949 to 1955. From 1955 to 1961 he served as assistant executive secretary of the GC Mennonite Board of Education and Publication and as associate editor of *The Mennonite*.—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

CPTer arrested for praying on Air Force base

TUCSON, Ariz.—On Aug. 6, Hiroshima Day, Franciscan friar Jerry Zawada and Christian

Peacemaker Teams member John Heid held a vigil that began at the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, outside Tucson. Zawada and Heid declined to move their vigil off the property or accept a citation, and security personnel transported them to Pima County Jail, where authorities processed and released them a few hours later. They were scheduled for arraignment on Aug. 17 in a Tucson court.—CPT

MMA resolutions earn shareholder support

GOSHEN, Ind.—Stewardship investing managers for Mennonite Mutual Aid Praxis Mutual Funds are encouraged by the response in their effort to stop predatory credit card practices by the nation's largest banks. MMA believes universal default practices, bait-and-switch marketing, hidden fees, intentionally complicated contracts and similar tactics harm consumers and in turn hurt economic recovery efforts. Three ballot resolutions that MMA Praxis Mutual Funds filed to encourage a change in practices earned relatively strong support from shareholders at corporate annual meetings. They included the following companies in favor: Bank of America, 33.4 percent shareholder votes; Citigroup, 28.4 percent shareholder votes; and JP Morgan Chase, 8.5 percent shareholder votes. "These percentages are high compared with the 3-5 percent shareholder resolutions normally receive, says Mark Regier, MMA's stewardship investing services manager.—MMA

200 Amish hear religious freedom history

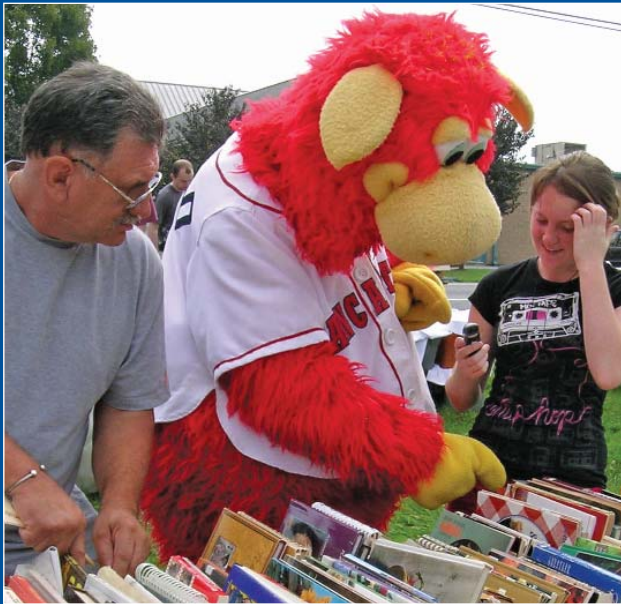
AKRON, Pa.—At the May 13 meeting of the Old Order Amish Steering Committee outside Fremont, Mich., nearly 200 representatives of Amish communities from 14 states heard retired Lutheran pastor William Lindholm describe the work of the National Committee for Amish Religious Freedom, which he has led since its founding in 1967. Lindholm told the story of how his conscience was stirred in 1966 and 1967 by the treatment of Amish children and their families when they refused to comply with mandatory school attendance laws in Kansas, Iowa and Wisconsin.

The Amish Steering Committee formed in 1966 also attends to numerous public issues involving Old Order groups. Its work has appropriately diminished the advocacy role of the National Committee. Lindholm chairs the committee. Herman Bontrager from Akron, Pa., serving as secretary/treasurer, and Joe Wittmer, retired education professor at the University of Florida at Gainesville, serving as vice chair, also attended the meeting.—*John A. Lapp*

Ramiro Rodriguez

**Hispanic artist's work featured in Goshen exhibit**

The painting "Pnuema" is one piece in Ramiro Rodriguez's art exhibit that depicts his evolving roles as an artist, husband, father, son and brother. The exhibit, "Forma: Paintings and Prints," is featured at Goshen (Ind.) College Aug. 29-Sept. 25, during Hispanic Heritage Month.—*Goshen College*



Paul Brubaker

Team mascot makes friends at Lancaster book sale

Cylo, the mascot for the Lancaster (Pa.) Barnstormers, visited the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society's annual used book sale Aug. 12-15. The Barnstormers, an AAA baseball team, sponsors a "Read with the Barnstormers" program.—LMHS

Mennonite family safe after Spain bombing

BURGOS, Spain—María José (Chus) García of Burgos Mennonite Church and her baby daughter escaped injury after a car bomb exploded at the police barracks outside their apartment on July 29. Sixty people were injured in the bombing, which a Spanish official said was probably orchestrated by the ETA, a fringe movement of Basque separatists.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

60 for Hope raises \$60K for homeless mothers

LANCASTER, Pa.—"60 for Hope," raised over \$60,000 to end homelessness for single mothers and their children in Lancaster and Chester counties in Pennsylvania. Sponsored by Bridge of Hope Lancaster & Chester Counties, this July 25 event was the dream of Kate Kooker of East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, who turns 60 this year. Kooker's goal was to cycle 60 miles with 60 friends to raise \$60,000 for the organization she helped start 21 years ago, inspired by growing up as a child of a single mother. Kooker's 87-year-old mother, Kathryn Hess of Mount Joy (Pa.) Mennonite Church, rode five miles on a tricycle to honor single mothers like herself. Fifty-one years ago, when her husband died, Hess suddenly became a widow and a single mother of five children, ages 3 to 13.—*Bridge of Hope Lancaster & Chester Counties*

Penner to represent on Peace Tax Fund board

NEWTON, Kan.—Mennonite Church USA Executive Board has appointed Harold A. Penner of Akron, Pa., to represent the denomination on the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund board. Replacing Steve Ratzlaff, Penner will begin the three-year appointment next year.

New leadership on this board complements the Executive Board's June 30 reaffirmation of the church's long-held endorsement of the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill (H.R. 2085) in the U.S. Congress.—*Mennonite Church USA*

MEA welcomes proposals for education grant

GOSHEN, Ind.—Mennonite Education Agency of Mennonite Church USA invites proposals for grants from its Fund for Peoplehood Education, a donor-restricted term endowment. The fund supports initiatives that promote the distinctive features of church-sponsored education and encourage strong ties between Mennonite Church USA and its schools.

Priority is given to projects that strengthen church-school ties and interpret the distinctive features of Mennonite-Anabaptist education and that cultivate educational leadership among younger members of Mennonite Church USA. The deadline is Sept. 30. For fund policies and an application form, email MEA at info@MennoniteEducation.org or call 866-866-2872.—*Mennonite Church USA*

Bethel opens first campus ministries house

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—The small brown structure known as Richert House, near the Fine Arts Center, is set to become Bethel College's first campus ministries house.

Dale Schrag, director of church relations and campus pastor for Bethel College, North Newton, got the idea from *The Chaplain's Handbook*, whose author suggests, "If you can have a house for campus ministries, it is incredibly helpful," Schrag says.

Another driving factor in the project was student requests for a place to hold Bible studies and discussion groups. Schrag approached Ruth Harder, associate pastor of Bethel College Mennonite Church, and the church promised about \$5,000 in memorial money as well as manual labor to help make the dream a reality. The house will also offer office space for any pastors from churches in the community who would like to hold office hours there. Plans were to have the campus ministries house open by the time students arrive on campus Aug. 28.—*Bethel College*

—compiled by Anna Groff



Swartzendruber Miller to lead conventions

Rachel Swartzendruber Miller was appointed director of Convention Planning for Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership in mid-July. Miller, Phoenix, Ariz., was named to the post after Jorge Vallejos, director, announced his resignation. Miller has helped plan conventions in her associate role since 2006. She is pursuing a doctorate in leadership theory in the School of Education from Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Mich.—*Mennonite Church USA*

Sustainable ideas?

What are you doing to live more simply and sustainably? Mark Beach and Mary Beth Lind, authors of the new Mennonite Publishing Network book *Simply Sustainable*, want to know. *Simply Sustainable* is scheduled for release in the fall of 2010. To offer a submission, go to www.simply-sustainable.org/.—MPN

Our Sunday

by Robert Kreider

Lessons from a Sunday school class of seniors

**Sunday school discussion
can stretch
our spiritual
imagination.**



school class

One of the joys of my aging years is the Sunday school class I teach at Faith Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan. We sit around a long table in a classroom that doubles as the health and wellness room. As one who has difficulty hearing, I like it that at the table we lean in toward each other as we speak, our quarterlies and Bibles on the table before us. We are the senior class—most of us in our 80s, all of us retired. We study our Mennonite Church Adult Bible quarterly, several using the large-print edition.

We bring to our class varied experiences: two school teachers, a school librarian, a former pastor, three merchants, a builder, a college professor, a factory worker, a farmer, several office workers. Six have graduated from college. All but four grew up on farms. Most attended one-room schools. Among us are five widows and two widowers. In the past we have been involved in various leadership positions in the congregation. Now we are learning to decrease as others increase. During the past several years we have helped one another bear the sorrow of death in the family. Around the table is a lot of accumulated living.

We are a kind of extended family. We enjoy being together. At the beginning of the hour we take time to share experiences of the week past and plans for the week to come. We talk of health, trips to the hospital, cancer in remission, broken bones. We share the joys and heartaches of children and grandchildren, trips and family gatherings, church and community events. Absent is talk about the recession and little about political events. We are an upbeat group, ready to encourage and bless each other. When the closing buzzer sounds, we often linger for more sharing, more to talk about. A class member reports that her son calls her from Chicago every Sunday afternoon. Invariably she shares with him what happened in Sunday school class that morning.

We may wish our class were more intergenera-

tional, with some younger voices at the table. In discussing the lesson and in the sharing, some of us talk more than others, but most times, everyone shares something. We offer differing views but never a sharp argument or any intimation of anger. We are comfortable with each other. Although some of us have been activists in our day, we now are more subdued in our passions. We prefer now to encourage and bless those who are busy in kingdom work.

Each Sunday we review again Scripture we have studied many times before. That doesn't mean class sessions are dull. Invariably members bring fresh insights to the old and familiar. Often this is triggered by a class member puzzled with a biblical passage. Our class members, firmly rooted in their Christian faith, cannot be faulted for lack of

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from page 9*

soundness of doctrine. That permits them to be relaxed in asking questions, even voicing an occasional doubt. Some may cheerfully acknowledge that sometimes they skip over difficult biblical passages and move on to what they do understand.

I am intrigued how a group of older people can identify with biblical people. For example, Elizabeth and Mary, one older and the other younger, each anticipating the birth of a first child. Mothers in the class engage in reflecting on what two expectant mothers might be discussing. They puzzle over how the two, separated by a two- or three-day walking journey—no postal service, telephones or email—might have kept in touch with each other. How would these two mothers parent their precocious sons, John and Jesus?

Then there are the husbands—Zechariah and Joseph—both good men but understandably perplexed by mystifying events. Class members speculate on how those two men might have sought to cope with the bewildering events unfolding. Add to this other intriguing topics on which the Bible is silent: How might Joseph have tutored his son in the trade of carpentry? And did Jesus, the Son of God, ever make mistakes requiring fatherly correction? Class members can bring a practical immediacy to biblical study.

In a study of Exodus, the class considers the story of the two Hebrew midwives—Shiphrah and Puah—who sidestep giving a clear answer to a direct question. Class members have had experience with truth telling and truth evasion. Amusing stories are shared. The biblical record sparkles

with added energy as a class brings a heap of living to an understanding of familiar biblical events.

We were studying the story in Joshua of the Israelites forming a procession to follow the ark across the Jordan River. A class member, drawing on her experience in Africa, reflected on the spiritual significance of processions in worship and liturgical events. This led to identifying the role of processions in weddings and funeral services, commencements and inaugurations, the entrance and exit of a choir, the filing into the worship area of pastors and worship leaders. Thoughts connected to other processions in the Bible: the Palm Sunday procession, Jesus bearing the cross on the way to Golgotha. Then someone wondered whether the Anabaptists incorporated processions in their patterns of worship. Sunday school discussion can stretch our spiritual imagination.

Our peace-minded class has wrestled with vexing issues associated with the Israelite invasion of the land occupied by the Philistines. We squirm uncomfortably when Joshua's forces (our team) use spies, mass killing and ethnic cleansing to achieve victory. We listen for the voice of Jehovah above the clash of swords and chariots. As followers of Christ we seek to discern how we should walk in the footsteps of Jesus as we wend through violent biblical history.

One of the joys of our class is that it provides occasions for us to tell our stories—usually relevant to the text, sometimes a bit distant. But they are our stories, and we want to share them: a grandmother reporting the bits of wisdom of a grandchild, after Katrina a couple visiting house to house among old friends in Gulf Port, Miss., the art and grace of greeting customers in a shoe store, stories from volunteering in the Mennonite Central Committee Et Cetera Shop, befriending Old Colony immigrants from Mexico.

As we grow older and our energies diminish, a Sunday school class can remind us there is continuing delight and nutrient in biblical study. Weaving imagination and experience into the fabric of God's story, we continue to grow as a blessed community in Christ. Thus blessed, we are called to share these blessings with others.

Robert Kreider is a member of Faith Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan.



Dee Birkey photo collage

Sight singing

by Hannah Faith Notess

New to the hymnal,
I fumbled forward, note by note, unsure
which stone in the river

to step on next. The water rumbled with centuries
of voices, and under
the book, our fingers touched, sparking

a descant that flowed out
into next year. When the priest called "Lift up
your hearts," she sounded

like hers was held already in God's hand.
And when I heard
the gravel rasp in your throat, a little flat,

even though one bass
note swelled behind me, and a tenor to the right
shifted his weight,

it was your scrape of rocks on riverbed
that ferried me
downstream, that carried me into the land.

*Hannah Faith Notess attends Seattle
Mennonite Church.*

Tim Manickam | TM photo contest entry





A mentor makes

by Wilma Gundy

My dream of being a teacher started in seventh grade, when I had a teacher I idolized. I attended a country one-room school where Miss Morton taught grades one through eight. Consequently, she sometimes needed help with reading for the first and second graders. I was a willing aide and in the process of teaching them an R, I received my own three Rs—Responsibility, Respect and the Right to talk with Miss Morton. I shared with her my impossible dream, and she urged me to try for it.

My parents said, ‘There’s no money for that nonsense.’ After all, as a girl, I’d just get married anyway, and no one needed an education to raise kids.

However, when I was ready to start high school in 1942, my dream crashed on the rocks of reality. My parents, struggling to make a living for nine children on a farm on the arid plains of eastern Colorado, were love-rich and cash-poor. Providing food and clothing for us was top priority, and getting an education was a luxury for people with far more money than we had.

Public high schools are free, but we lived southwest of Limon, Colo., just inside the Elbert County

line. Thus, I was supposed to go to high school in Kiowa, 10 miles away. However, there was no way to get there, as our one truck was tied up with necessary farm chores. The bus from Limon schools came within a half mile of our farm, but we would have to pay tuition to go there since we were not in Lincoln County. My parents said, “There’s no money for that nonsense.” After all, as a girl, I’d just get married anyway, and no one needed an education to raise kids. Keenly disappointed, I felt crushed. What was I to do?

For several years, my brothers and sisters and I had attended a small Mennonite church located a half mile from our farm. Our minister, George Holdeman, also taught at our local elementary school. He proposed a possible solution: He would provide the books for me, and I could come to the school and study independently. He would be available during lunch or after school to answer any questions I might have. Under the circumstances, the folks agreed that I could try. After all, I’d still be available for chores and to babysit my younger siblings.

I missed the first two months of school that year picking corn and doing farm chores. Starting in November, I walked the mile and a half to school. With Rev. Holdeman’s encouragement, I studied English, world history, algebra, typing, shorthand and science, giving me six of the credits required at that time for graduation.

Everyone can be a mentor to someone.

To continue high school the next year, Rev. Holdeman encouraged me to attend Hesston (Kan.) College and Academy. To go there would take even more money. And I'd no longer be available to help on the farm. I pleaded with them to allow me to go, since I so much wanted an education so I could be a doctor. "We can't afford it," they said. I'm sure my mentor persuaded my parents to let me try, again by offering a means for me to earn some money.

The finances for that year of school came from three sources: My mentor arranged for me to babysit his brother's children in La Junta, Colo., during the summer. Another source of money was a small donation from the members of the local Mennonite church. The third source of income was a pig. The pigs on our farm lived in foul-smelling pens and ate the slop cast off from our

tered in Elbert County. What do you think we can do?" I had to admit I had no idea. I confessed that I did not know how I could afford one more year of high school, let alone two.

He called a meeting of the faculty. They, too, were my mentors, as they came up with a plan to grant me credits: Since I had passed the next level of courses in English, world history and algebra with all A's, they offered to grant me credit on that basis. They required that I pass a proficiency test in typing and shorthand, and somehow I managed to pass them. That left only science. The science teacher thought his course would be compromised unless I took every test the other students had taken in the course all year. During commencement week, while everyone else was celebrating, I studied the entire text, took 20 tests and passed. I could be a senior the next year.

s a difference

kitchen scraps. In the summertime, they wallowed in mud holes to cool off. But when a sow had a litter of piglets and one of them had a twisted snout and could not nurse, Dad told me that if I would bottle-feed it until it could eat, I could have the money when it was sold. I gladly accepted the foul-smelling piglet and bottle-fed it for weeks. The Walrus in Alice in Wonderland wonders "whether pigs have wings." I know the \$30 I got from my pig "bank" and the help from Rev. Holdeman gave me the wings to continue my education.

Three summers before I left for Hesston College, Rev. Holdeman loaned me what he said was an old tennis racket (I realize now he must have especially purchased it for me) and taught me to play tennis. Tennis has been a keen interest of mine ever since. I played in tournaments in high school and college and continued to play for years until I was put on oxygen because of damage to my lungs from Guillain-Barre Syndrome, which I developed after taking the swine-flu vaccination. Today I can't play except mentally. I eagerly await the start of each Grand Slam and cheer on my favorite players on TV.

After I finished my first year at Hesston, I had earned five credits and thought I'd need only five more to be a senior the following year. However, the dean of the school called me in and said: "Wilma, we have a problem. None of the six credits that you did in independent study was regis-

During the summer between my junior and senior years, Rev. Holdeman not only taught me to drive his car (on the farm the boys were taught to drive the truck and tractor, but we girls were needed to do housework and other mundane chores), he also loaned me his car to drive the 7.5 miles into Limon to assist him in his radio repair shop. He wisely did not trust me to repair the radios, but I could answer the phone, assist customers in writing up repair orders or order parts from the catalog. I realize now I really didn't earn the money he

During commencement week, while everyone else was celebrating, I studied the entire text, took 20 tests and passed.

paid me, but it was another way he could help without making me feel I was a beggar.

Throughout the years of my high school and college education, I went to the business office to pay my bill and learned that some anonymous donor had made a small payment on it. I knew it had to be Rev. Holdeman. He was unmarried, and I believe he felt the few dollars he could afford were well spent in helping with my education.

I also credit him with teaching me the basis of my Christian ethics. In his sermons at our local church, he emphasized the significant role women

*Continued
on page 14*

have, influencing their families and forming the nucleus of local churches. It is their leadership, he said, that gives society its moral compass.

Another tenet of my personal ethics is integrity. Based on, "Thou shalt not steal," Rev. Holdeman emphasized a far stricter standard than is usually associated with that teaching. He stressed that if one took even a postage stamp, at that time worth three cents, then one was just as guilty of stealing as if he had stolen several thousand dollars. I assure you I have stolen neither.

Rev. Holdeman had Type 1 diabetes. As a bachelor he was not consistent in his food intake or in his administration of the insulin on which he was dependent. Thus, he frequently had low sugar, during which he was incoherent, acting as if he were drunk. On more than one occasion, he was stopped by the police because of his erratic behavior and was once taken to jail, since he was incapable of explaining his problem. It is difficult for society to understand afflictions when they are not likewise afflicted. Hence, he became a kind of pariah in the community. In time he had to resign the church and move to La Junta, Colo., where he had relatives. Many years later I heard of his untimely death.

I regret that after I graduated from college and married, I lost all contact and never adequately thanked him for the tremendous assistance and encouragement he gave me and how immeasurably he enriched my life. Without him, I would never have had a high school education, let alone college and postgraduate work.

I calculate that over my professional lifetime I have taught or counseled over 20,000 students. After retirement from teaching, I obtained my Colorado license as a therapist and did volunteer counseling at my church. Thus, my mentor's kindness and generosity kept giving throughout my lifetime and beyond. Mentorship is not a talent and does not require riches. Everyone can be a mentor to someone.

Malcom Gladwell, in his newest book, *Outliers*, writes, "No one—not rock stars, not professional athletes, not software billionaires and not even geniuses—ever makes it alone." And certainly not naïve farm girls.

George, this is my belated, heartfelt thanks to you, my mentor.

Wilma Gundy lives in Arvada, Colo.

A different view through introspection

Perfection or

by Oris Schrag

Many times I have wondered what my role is here on Earth. Why was I put here? What is my purpose? What am I doing to make this world a better place? I have also wondered about the odd collection of talents and weaknesses I see in myself. The cards in the game of life given to me that I have tried to make sense of over the past 50 years.

I have a good sense of humor but a lousy mem-

ory. My left index finger had to be amputated because of an accident. I had my knees replaced last summer.

Why did God put such a weird mixture of talents, physical weaknesses and ineptness in one person? What is his purpose? Often I have thought how much stronger I would be if I did not have a bad memory or if I had a better sense of direction, a stronger body or better public speaking skills.

The map in your head: As time passes, though, I have pretty much given up improving my memory. I still get embarrassed when I can't remember someone's name I should know, and I'm not too proud to have my wife navigate for me when we are traveling. When my oldest daughter was 7 years old, she said, "Daddy, the map in your head does not work as good as the map in Mommy's head, does it?"

How can these parts of me, the things I have wished I could change, actually be positives?

By profession I am a school social worker. Throughout the course of my career I have listened to much pain, suffering, hurt and grief from

Why did God put such a weird mixture of talents, physical weaknesses and ineptness in one person?

ory. I have good people skills but can't remember names. I am a relational person but an introvert. I have good communication skills but hate talking in front of large groups. I like to spend time by myself but frequently start conversations with people I don't know. I love to travel but have a lousy sense of direction. My memory does not allow me to learn a second language. My body is beginning



al skills. Frequently I will take a wrong turn. When providing transportation for a parent or a student, a wrong turn has been the icebreaker in forming a relationship. I couldn't build a trusting relationship with a person I saw as perfect. There is something about the human element, the lack of perfection, that allows conversation to get past surface topics.

Fingerman: One of my former students could never remember my name. Because of my missing finger, he called me Fingerman. For the two years he was at our school he never called me by my name, only Fingerman. One summer I saw him at a Quiktrip but did not recognize him. Since I was meeting someone to carpool with, I was concerned about leaving my pickup parked there, especially with a kid that seemed to have nothing to do. "Hey, Fingerman, what's up?" he greeted me as I stepped out of my pickup. Immediately I knew who he was, and I knew my truck was safe parked there.

During enrollment I met a mother who was using a walker. I found out she had her knee replaced about a month later than I had both of mine replaced. I do not remember her name, although she introduced herself to me, but I know who she is. I see her in the hall from time to time, and we compare notes on how we are doing. It's amazing what creates bonds between people.

Correction: In the box on page 15 in the Aug. 18 issue, Jakob (not Jacob) Lepp was indigenous languages coordinator and trained volunteers who had never interpreted simultaneously before.

imperfection

many of my students and their families as they struggle with life issues. Because of my poor memory, I have come to realize I will not have to carry their pain and suffering long. I may remember general things about what they are going through, but without writing notes, the details quickly fade. Their names are gone not long after. My humor, though, seems always to return. Somehow, timely and appropriate humor seems to have a way of helping people cope.

I see many Hispanic students at the high school where I work. I use a translator to communicate with parents when needed. My inability to learn Spanish has probably helped some of the families accept me sooner; especially the ones who struggle to speak English. They see me as human. I, like them, struggle in another language. Together, with the aid of an interpreter, we laugh about our language struggles.

Sometimes I am asked to do home visits and provide transportation for students and parents. I carry a map in my car and use it. However, this does not cover completely for my poor navigation-

Over a period of time I have come to see that my deficits are actually strengths. Although it has taken me a while to realize it, I now know that who I am as a person, all of me, serves in my career as a school social worker. I guess God did create me

There is something about the human element, the lack of perfection, that allows conversation to get past surface topics.

in his own image, perfect in my imperfections.

How many times do we sell ourselves short because we spend time focusing on our imperfections instead of accepting ourselves for who we are? Maybe we should trust that there is a purpose for our flaws. After all, there are worse things in life than being called Fingerman.

Oris Schrag is a member of Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

What do you do when God asks you to do some

by Richard Spillman

I sat in my favorite chair in the prayer room at home and asked God, “What do you want me to do to help Billy and his family?” I was surprised when God told me to pay Billy’s bill. It wasn’t in words; I just suddenly knew that was what I was to do.

I didn’t know Billy; in fact I had never met him. He was a friend of a friend. My friend, Connie, had just called to ask if I could help Billy and his family, who were being evicted from their apartment because they used drugs. If that wasn’t enough, the landlady was threatening to take them to court because their young son had badly damaged the bathroom.

The landlady was not an evil person wanting to throw this innocent family onto the streets. Billy had brought this on himself. Nothing I could do would stop the eviction, and why should I pay for the destruction in the bathroom? It was a lot of money, and I could think of many ways to put it to better use. Yet God was telling me to use that money to help Billy. It didn’t make sense. In spite of my misgivings, I called Madison, the landlady, and told her I would pay the bill on the condition she not tell Billy who provided the funds. I explained that God wanted this bill paid anonymously. She told me that as a Christian she understood what I was doing and thanked me for being obedient to

God. More than a year passed before I understood why God asked me to do this.

Sometimes things happen in our lives that defy explanation. No matter how hard we try we can’t make any sense out of the things God puts in our path. Yet if we remain faithful and patient, God often puts all the pieces together and reveals his purpose. He truly works in mysterious ways.

Consider the case of Joshua and the battle for Jericho. There are established ways to storm a heavily fortified city. For example, build siege towers and breach the walls. So imagine Joshua’s surprise when God told him to send the priests, not the soldiers, to march around the city and blow horns. I can picture the taunts from the people of Jericho standing on the walls watching this absurd display. It just didn’t make sense—until the seventh day, when the walls fell down.

Consider David, a man after God’s own heart.

After years of running from the man who wanted him dead, he discovered Saul alone and vulnerable in a cave. David could have brought his private war to an end with a single blow from his sword. Yet God did not allow him to kill Saul that day. It didn’t make sense, but it taught David a valuable lesson. He learned to respect the will of God.

Consider poor Ananias of Damascus. God called him to go and minister to Saul, the man who had come to Damascus to arrest, torment and even kill Christians like Ananias. It didn’t make sense yet it turned out to be the first step in unleashing the most powerful ministry the world has ever seen.

God is full of surprises. He often asks us to do things that run counter to all common sense.

So what would you do if God asked you to do something that didn’t make sense?

What if it was something so foolish that all your friends advised against it?

Before you answer, let me tell you how my story ended.

After giving Madison the funds, I was called in several

Sometimes things happen in our lives that defy explanation.



When God doesn't

thing that just doesn't seem to make any sense?

times to mediate between Billy and Madison. Eventually the family moved out, and we never heard from Billy again. Occasionally I thought about the money, especially when other needs came up. At those times I wondered what God was doing. A year later, God sent me to see Madison again, and that is when I discovered exactly what God had been up to.

My wife, Bonnie, and I have had an ongoing ministry with the homeless in Tacoma, Wash. We help lead a church service as part of a Sunday morning breakfast. We do our best to help find housing, occasionally give out bus passes and continually pray for our friends on the streets. One Sunday we met Dianne and her adult son Joshua. They had only been on the streets for a few weeks and were having a difficult time adjusting to life there. They were desperate to find a new home.

We helped them as best we could. Eventually we found an apartment in their limited price range and helped them fill out an application. But three days later we learned they were rejected because of something on their background check. The apartment manager would not tell us what the problem was, but after talking with Dianne we ruled out anything drug related and assumed it was because of her outstanding debt.

We went on the search again. This time we found an affordable apartment where the manager would overlook any debt less than \$5,000. Dianne assured us her debts were far below that limit, so we submitted another application. The next day it was rejected. This time they told us the reason. The background check revealed that Dianne and Joshua had been evicted from their last apartment.

We now knew we had a battle on our hands. It is difficult to find an apartment for anyone with an eviction history. I didn't know what to do. I had no idea how to proceed. Every door was closed, or so I thought. One day God reminded me of Madison, the apartment manager I had worked with a year ago. He told me to take Dianne and Joshua to see Madison because she would provide a home for them.

I picked up Dianne and Joshua and drove them to Madison's apartments. I had not called ahead to make an appointment, but as I drove up to the parking lot, Madison was standing outside, as if

she was waiting for us. I jumped out of the car and asked if she remembered me. She told me she did. Then I told her about Dianne. I was honest about the eviction and asked if she had any apartments open. One was available immediately. They still needed to fill out the application and pass a background check. Madison told me that because she trusted me she would overlook the past eviction. If everything I had told her was true and there were no criminal activities in their background (there weren't), they could have the apartment.

The rest of the timeline of this miracle is like a blur. By Tuesday they were approved to move in. On Saturday I picked them up and helped them move in their bed and other items that had been in storage. It was their last day living on the streets.

Doing what God asks, even when it doesn't make sense, is an exercise in faith.

Paying Billy's bill made no sense to me at the time, but now it is totally clear why God asked me to do it. The lesson I learned is that sometimes God asks strange things of us. Yet he always has a purpose and sometimes will let us know that purpose. Whether the purpose is revealed or not, we can always find comfort in Isaiah 55:8-9: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

When God doesn't make sense, there are two things I know for certain. First, the problem is not with God but with me. It is the result of my limited ability to see the whole picture. Second, those times when God doesn't make sense are the times when his power shines. Doing what God asks, even when it doesn't make sense, is an exercise in faith. Ultimately your faith is strengthened, life becomes an adventure and you have the opportunity to participate in a miracle. So when God does not make sense, I am drawn to Proverbs 3:5: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight."

Richard Spillman lives in Fircrest, Wash.

Correction: Joinone, the Ayoreo chief with the spear mentioned on pages 10 and 17 in the Aug. 18 issue, was not the son of the man who killed Kornelius Isaak in 1958 but the man who killed Isaak.

make sense

Healing, hope and health-care reform



Tim Stoltzfus Jost is a professor at the Washington and Lee University School of Law and a member of Community Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va.

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org



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

In Luke 4, Jesus began his ministry on earth by claiming Isaiah's message of healing and hope for the oppressed. Throughout his ministry, Jesus healed the sick and preached good news to the poor. After his death and resurrection, the church has carried on this ministry.

Today our country wants to make the healing power of modern health care available to all. While all other wealthy nations insure all their citizens, the United States has 50 million uninsured people. Each month, tens of thousands more people lose insurance. The United States has the most costly health-care system in the world. Although we lead the world in medical innovation, we rank 19th in avoidable mortality from disease.

One Senate and three House committees have now passed health-reform bills. All are complicated bills addressing a complicated subject.

The provisions of the bills are similar. All expand Medicaid, the current program for poor Americans, so that all Americans earning less than 133 percent of the poverty level (which is \$10,830 for an individual or \$22,050 for a family of four) would be eligible. The bills also provide "affordability credits" to help uninsured lower- and middle-income families earning up to 400 percent of poverty purchase health insurance. These subsidies diminish on a sliding scale as income rises. Because the average employment-related family insurance policy costs \$12,680, subsidies are necessary to make health insurance affordable even to middle-income Americans.

The proposed legislation bans pre-existing conditions insurance clauses and discrimination based on health status. It assures that insurance is available to those who need it most. The legislation also establishes "exchanges" so purchasers can find and purchase the insurance that best meets their needs. It may include a public plan. In many markets, private insurance is not competitive. In Harrisonburg, Va., one insurer controls 86 percent of the market. A public plan would bring down prices by offering an alternative. Although some fear the public plan would drive private insurance

companies out of business, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that only nine to 10 million Americans would enroll in the public plan.

The proposed legislation requires larger employers to offer insurance to their employees or pay a penalty. Most Americans are already insured through their jobs. Many would see improved coverage. Individuals would have the security of knowing that if they lose their job, they will not lose their insurance. Small businesses would be given special assistance.

Finally, the legislation includes many improvements in the Medicare program, initiatives to increase the availability of primary care and to encourage healthier lifestyles and new ideas for improving the quality and reducing the cost of health care.

The legislation does not encourage euthanasia, as some suggest. It may offer Medicare funding to allow doctors to discuss with their patients responsible end-of-life care, a basic stewardship issue for Christians. Under recent House amendments, the law prohibits public funding for abortions other than for cases of rape, incest or life endangerment. It does not require rationing of care, although it promotes research to help distinguish effective from wasteful care.

The legislation may cost \$600 billion to \$1 trillion over the next 10 years, a high cost but just 3 percent of the total estimated cost of our health-care system over the next 10 years if we change nothing. Much of the cost would be covered by cost-savings within the health-care system, savings that may grow over time.

There are differences of opinion about how best to reform our health-care system, but two things are clear. Our current system is not viable—health care and insurance costs continue to grow, and Americans are losing health insurance at unsustainable rates. Second, the private sector won't solve these problems on its own; public intervention is necessary at least to provide health care for the poorest among us.

Mennonite Church USA adopted a national health-care resolution in the 2009 delegate assembly. It asks members to urge their legislators to support legislation extending access to all Americans, especially the poor and disadvantaged. It did not endorse particular proposals. As we speak to our legislators, may we, like Christ, hold healing and hope for the poor and oppressed as our highest priority. 

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Lessons from living in a retirement community**—Evan Oswald
- **Spiritual needs of the elderly**—Beth Landis

Stutzman named executive director

Former Mennonite Church USA moderator moves into top staff position.

Mennonite Church USA Executive Board named Ervin R. Stutzman of Harrisonburg, Va., the denomination's next executive director at a special meeting held Aug. 25.

"Ervin is the right person for this time in our denominational history," says Mennonite Church USA moderator and Executive Board member Ed Diller, Fort Thomas, Ky. "His experiences in the church and his commitment to the healing and hope vision of Mennonite Church USA will serve him well in this role."

Stutzman is vice president and seminary dean and professor of church ministries at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg. He served on the Executive Board for Mennonite Church USA from 1999 to 2005 and as denominational moderator from 2001 to 2003. He expects to begin as executive director in early 2010. No decision has yet been made about where he and his family will live.

A search committee of 10 members from across the denomination unanimously recommended Stutzman during meetings held earlier this month.

"Ervin is an energetic, strong pastoral leader with exceptional organizational and administrative gifts. He is a good listener and focused collaborator," says search committee chair David L. Sutter, South Bend, Ind. "I believe Ervin will lead with Christ at the center as together we consider and live into new directions in line with the dreams God has for Mennonite Church USA."

Born in Iowa, Stutzman grew up in Kansas. He served on pastoral teams at Mennonite Christian Assembly in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Mount Joy Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa. He worked as associate director of home ministries at Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities. An ordained minister and bishop, he was moderator of Lancaster Mennonite Conference before beginning at EMU in 1998.

"I love Mennonite Church USA," says Stutzman. "It's an affirmation and a privilege to be asked to serve in this role. It's also a sober responsibility. The Spirit-led search process gives me confidence that God is calling me to this role. By God's grace, we as a Mennonite church can face the future with hope. We have a significant place in

God's mission in the world. As we collectively walk in the Spirit, we will experience God's amazing power happening at all levels."

Appointed in January, the search committee talked with and listened to the church, contacted and interviewed leaders and listened for the Holy Spirit's guidance.

"We were very fortunate to have many gifted leaders to choose from," says search committee member Patricia Shelly, Newton, Kan. "Ervin's proven record of serving people and the church in a variety of capacities and his experience in key denominational roles set him apart."

The search committee also sees the new executive director as an excellent communicator and trusted leader, according to member Juanita Nuñez, Ocoee, Fla. "Ervin will articulate the vision, mission and priorities of Mennonite Church USA well. He is committed to God and the church."

Stutzman received his bachelor's degree in Bible and Christian ministries at Cincinnati Christian University. He graduated with a master's degree in communication arts from the University of Cincinnati, a master of arts in religion degree from Eastern Mennonite Seminary and a doctorate in rhetoric and communication from Temple University, Philadelphia.

Stutzman has authored several books. Among his recent Herald Press publications are *Emma: A Widow Among the Amish*, *Tobias of the Amish* and *Being God's People: Embracing Christian Faith from a Mennonite Perspective*. His historical study on Mennonite peace rhetoric is expected to be published next year.

Stutzman will continue his work at EMU through December.

"Ervin has provided wise and innovative leadership to the seminary," Fred Kniss, Eastern Mennonite University provost, says. "While we at EMU certainly regret losing him as a colleague and administrator, we know that Mennonite Church USA will benefit from his skills and experience."

Stutzman and his wife, Bonita Lee Stutzman, attend Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg. They have three adult children—Emma, Daniel and Benjamin.—*June Krehbiel*



I love Mennonite Church USA. It's an affirmation and a privilege to be asked to serve in this role. It's also a sober responsibility. —Ervin Stutzman

Bethel board ousts Bartel as president

Bartel leaves after three years; John K. Sheriff named interim president.



Barry Bartel with student Blake Johnson from Topeka, Kan. (left), at Bethel College's 2009 commencement.

As of Aug. 16, Barry Bartel is no longer president of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. The Bethel College Board of Directors met Aug. 15 and informed Bartel the next day of the change.

Board chair Mel Goering, Santa Fe, N.M., said in a statement posted to the college's Web site, "The Board acknowledges and expresses appreciation for the tireless dedication of Barry Bartel and his family during the last three years."

Goering also announced that John K. Sheriff, Ernest L. Leisy professor of English and current executive vice president for institutional development, will become interim president, effective immediately.

The issue at stake was leadership confidence ... there was no scandal.—Mel Goering

Sheriff filled this role for a year, 2005-06, between the presidential tenures of E. Laverne Epp and Bartel.

The Bethel board has begun a presidential search process and "will proceed as rapidly as possible to secure a person with the requisite experience and talent to foster the mission of the college," Goering said, and they will look for someone "with energy ... and able to make bold decisions."

In an Aug. 17 email to Bethel faculty and staff, Bartel wrote, "While I disagree [with the board's decision] and while this is very painful, I will do everything I can to help ensure that the transition is smooth and that it helps to strengthen Bethel College."

In an Aug. 19 interview, Goering said, "The issue at stake was leadership confidence."

He said Bartel did not have adequate confidence from the employees and organizational structure to face the significant challenges Bethel faces.

He made it clear that "there was no scandal," that Bartel had done nothing wrong ethically.

Goering said the board carried out "a significant, exhaustive process, ... a comprehensive review."

He said that Bartel "has done incredible things in building links between the college and the church," but the board is obligated to make decisions that are in the best interest of the college.

In an interview the same day, Bartel reiterated that he disagrees with the decision but wants to do all he can to support Bethel's mission.

He said he first heard on July 29 about the board's concern about confidence in his ability to lead Bethel through this difficult time.

Then on Aug. 13 he met with Bethel's executive committee, which said it planned to recommend to the board that he be let go.

Bartel had a five-year contract with Bethel, and this was the first review he had received, he said.

While his family will move out of their house this month, they plan to stay in the area.

Brenda, his wife, teaches school in nearby Peabody and leads a community children's choir.

Bethel is one of five Mennonite colleges in Mennonite Church USA. Two of its board members, Goering said, are appointed by the denomination's Mennonite Education Agency. Otherwise, MEA has not been involved.

In an Aug. 18 email, MEA Executive Director Carlos Romero confirmed that MEA has not been involved in this process.

"We stand ready to provide our assistance," Romero said, "to the Bethel College Board of Directors and John Sheriff as acting president as they lead the institution during challenging times."—Gordon Houser



John K. Sheriff

FAQs regarding The Corinthian Plan

Keith Harder answers frequently asked questions at Convention 2009.

The Corinthian Plan, a mutual aid program designed to provide health-care access for Mennonite Church USA ministers, emerged out of a resolution passed by the Delegate Assembly in San José, Calif, in 2007. The resolution called on the Executive Board to implement a plan to provide basic health insurance for all eligible pastors. At Mennonite Church USA Convention 2009, many delegates and participants had questions about the plan. Keith Harder, Executive Leadership staff person spearheading the campaign, reported these new questions and provided the following answers.

What is The Corinthian Plan?

It is a new health-cost-sharing program for pastors and employees of Mennonite Church USA congregations and churchwide agencies. It will provide health coverage, long-term disability coverage, life coverage and other optional benefits such as vision and dental coverage. It is a program that allows all MC USA congregations to practice mutual aid by sharing in the cost of health care for all pastors and church workers.

What if our pastor is covered by his or her spouse's health insurance plan?

A pastor or employee who is currently covered by a creditable health plan other than individual insurance can retain that coverage, and the congregation can still participate in The Corinthian Plan. In such a case the pastor or employee will be considered validly "waived" from participating.

For each full-time credentialed pastor who is validly waived, the congregation will be asked to contribute \$2,300 annually to the mutual aid component of The Corinthian Plan.

This will guarantee that in the future the congregation's pastor will be able to enroll without any restrictions based on pre-existing health conditions.

How will you determine who is eligible for a subsidy to help pay for health coverage and how much subsidy will be available?

Congregations will apply for a Corinthian Plan fair balance subsidy. Subsidy guidelines have been developed that will be used in determining how much each congregation can pay and how much subsidy is needed.

Every congregation receiving a subsidy will pay something toward the cost of providing health coverage for their pastor.

What is the deadline to enroll our pastor and other church employees in The Corinthian Plan?

The deadline is Oct. 1 in order to determine if there is sufficient participation for the plan to go into effect as scheduled on Jan. 1, 2010.

How will pastors with limited income cope with a \$6,000 family deductible?

Plan participants with family coverage will be responsible for the first \$6,000 per year of health-care expenses, except for certain preventive services. Beyond \$6,000 the plan will pay 100 percent of eligible in-network claims so that in any given year medical cost liability should not exceed \$6,000 (including prescription costs).

Why is the church doing this? Why don't we contract with another insurance broker to develop and administer a plan for pastors and church employees?

Preliminary research indicated that few commercial carriers would be willing or able to manage a plan involving many small, separate and independent employers (congregations), each with only one or a few employees. Also, since the plan is a self-funded church plan, Mennonite Church USA has the latitude to set rates and make eligibility decisions.

May our congregation put money that will be assessed for the Fair Equity Fund into our mission budget?

Some congregations are finding it helpful to see their contribution to the Fair Equity Fund as a contribution to mission and are putting it into that part of their budget. This money will be used to support other pastors and congregations that are engaged in ministry in areas that are often economically depressed.

What impact will possible national health-care reform have on The Corinthian Plan?

It's hard to know what will happen on the national scene. Knowledgeable people are carefully monitoring what is happening in Washington to help us assess the impact of possible policy changes on The Corinthian Plan. We are committed to making future adjustments to the plan, if needed, as things become clear at the federal level.

For more information, contact your Corinthian Plan ambassador, www.corinthianplan.com, or email Keith Harder at keithh@mennoniteusa.org or 866-866-2872 or 620-382-7135.—*Mennonite Church USA*

See all questions and answers on www.themennonite.org.

Service trumps convenience in Alaska

Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers will take cold showers, sleep in tents.

Photo provided



Mennonite Disaster Service leaders Wilbur Litwiller (left), Jerry Klassen and Mary Litwiller assess the damage in Eagle, Alaska.

Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) projects are known by volunteers for their hospitality, good food and great accommodations. However, this time is different.

Long working hours, unpredictable weather, sleeping with a group of 20 under a tent, cold showers, washing clothes by hand, no cell phone service, limited electricity, no email or Internet service and a willingness to eat anything placed before you are what a group of skilled MDS volunteers agreed to in order to help members of a Native American community in Eagle, Alaska, return to their homes.

"It is exciting to see how flexible and service-minded people are when we ask for assistance on such a unique project," says Cathie Kearsley, MDS director of human resources.

During April and May, Alaska experienced a series of natural disasters in which a large ice jam gave way on Alaska's Yukon River, sending massive ice chunks into many of the Native American settlements of Eagle Village.

Bill McCoy, MDS region IV director, who recently visited Eagle from Portland, Ore., described what he saw: "Homes had been pushed as far as a half mile from their original positions, bunching them together up against trees."

McCoy, who was one of the first MDS leaders to arrive in Eagle, developed a productive and cooperative relationship with the tribal chief, Joyce Roberts. He said that Roberts' goal is to build "updated homes and not to settle for anything less."

MDS has committed experienced volunteers from Canada and the United States who are willing to serve at least two weeks. Groups of 15, rotating every two weeks, will be flying to Eagle until Sept.

12, the date of completion. The goal is to build 10 log homes within a nine-week period.

The phones have been exceptionally busy at MDS. "In five business days, nearly 75 volunteers have been recruited, and more than 200 phone calls came into the office expressing interest," said Kevin King, MDS executive director.

Time is important for Eagle residents and MDS volunteers. There are only three months of summer, during which all their supplies for the winter must be gathered.

Winter typically begins in September. If homeowners spend the three summer months building their homes, they will have no food for winter. The time to build is between July and September, and if not completed then, they will need to wait another year to rebuild.

MDS volunteers typically work eight-hour days, five days a week. However, this time they are committed to working 10- to 12-hour days, six days a week in order to meet demanding time constraints.

MDS is not alone in this project, however. Volunteers are working with Samaritans Purse and various agencies. FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) has also agreed to pay the travel costs for volunteers in the recovery effort, since it can be expensive flying so many volunteers to Eagle, six people to a plane.

Volunteers learned an interesting fact about the Native American community. Andy Bassich, member of the Eagle Rebuilding and Construction Team (ERCT), explained to volunteers that most people living in Eagle choose a subsistence lifestyle by choice.

"They choose to hunt, fish, pick berries, cut wood, dry fish, can and freeze meat and train their dogs to be their transportation in the winter."

Rev. Michael Oleska says, "Without subsistence [living], Alaska native people will die spiritually, emotionally and will eventually die physically."

Scott Sundberg, MDS director of communications, says, "Perhaps what is most surprising is that we have far more people wanting to volunteer than we could ever place, even though this project is expected to be one where volunteers will rough it, maybe in tents without running water. Volunteers committed to being the hands and feet of Jesus understand that service is more important than convenience."

In addition to the Eagle project, MDS continues to work this summer on other projects in California and the Gulf area.—*Brian Pipkin of Mennonite Disaster Service*

Forgiveness essential ingredient for peace

Mission worker Linda Oyer speaks to charismatic Catholic order in France.

Why are Mennonites a people of peace? A group of curious Catholics and others got an answer to that question from Linda Oyer, a long-term worker with Mennonite Mission Network in France.

And Oyer also heard a response—that her message of forgiveness needs to spread.

Oyer, a professor and staff member at the Paris Mennonite Center, spoke about Mennonites' history of peace and nonviolence at a gathering June 13 of Chemin Neuf (New Way), a charismatic Catholic order in France. The theme of the conference was "Evangelical Nonviolence and Conflicts in the Workplace."

Oyer was invited to speak because of her past work, including an article she wrote on forgiveness, and because she is a member of a historic peace church.

"They wanted a Mennonite to come because of our history," Oyer said. "Being Catholic, Reformed or Lutheran, it was intriguing to them that there was a group of Christians that came into being at the same time as they did yet chose a way of nonviolence. They said, 'We need to hear your voice.'"



Linda Oyer, with Mennonite Mission Network in Paris, speaks at a women's leadership conference.

Chemin Neuf grew out of the Catholic renewal movement that swept Europe in the 1970s. The group consists of a majority of Catholics, along with Lutherans and members of the Reformed church.

While some live together in community, others are simply members of the order and participate in conferences like the one at which Oyer spoke.

The group includes men, women and couples and has a history of working for peace among various groups.

Rather than trying to explain the entire history of nonviolence within the Mennonite church, Oyer focused on forgiveness as one of the essential ingredients of a nonviolent ethic.

To do this, she highlighted three reasons Mennonites have chosen to focus on forgiveness: God's love for us, Christ's example and the nature of the church as a sign of the kingdom of God.

Oyer explained that forgiveness is a way we can reveal Christ's coming kingdom right here and now.

"Forgiveness is an eschatological act," said Oyer. "It's a sign that the kingdom that is not yet is already present. It's a way to live now what will one day be."

Oyer also cited Scripture and told the story of Dirk Willems, a story she said touched the group.

"I explained that martyr stories [within the Mennonite tradition] aren't told to provoke violence," Oyer said. Instead, she said, the stories teach about what acts of forgiveness and nonviolence look like.

As she returned to her seat after speaking, one of the women in the crowd leaned over and told her, "You Mennonites have a prophetic voice in the world today."—*Melanie Hess of Mennonite Mission Network*

**Forgiveness
a sign that
the kingdom
that is not
yet is already
present.**

—Linda Oyer

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timely tip:

Lock up when leaving the house!

MPN sells 34,000 pamphlets in its series

Donors also give \$10,000 to give away Jesus Matters: Good News book.



The pamphlets are coming from a theological perspective that feels right to us.
—Donita Wiebe-Neufeld

With almost 34,000 copies sold to 360 churches in Canada and the United States, the Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) “Close to Home” pamphlets about dealing with personal issues and problems are proving their usefulness.

“It’s gratifying to see the response,” says editor Byron Rempel-Burkholder. The series deals with personal problems that often remain hidden and undealt with—things like pornography, bullying, gambling, child abuse, debt, depression, drug abuse, eating disorders and other issues.

“It shows there is a need for information about issues that are hard to talk about,” he adds.

Pastors who are using the materials agree.

“We found them to be sensitively written, balanced and a good starting place for seeking further help,” says Tim Reimer, pastor of Danforth Mennonite Church in Toronto. “Two or three of the titles seemed to vanish rather quickly.”

Terry Shue, pastor of Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church, says that in addition to using the pamphlets at the church, they are also given away at a booth operated by local pastors at the Ohio Mennonite Relief Sale.

“We found that they really touched what people were looking for,” Shue says. “Most all of them were taken by people who were in conversations with pastors at the booth.”

For Shue, the popularity of the pamphlets shows that people are more interested in a faith that connects with issues they are dealing with in their real lives.

“The ‘Close to Home’ series does a good job of bringing our theological perspective into the issues of modern life with a pastoral touch,” Shue says.

At First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, Alberta, the pamphlets are used both as a ministry to members and “as a form of outreach,” says pastor Donita Wiebe-Neufeld.

The pamphlets are “one way we try to acknowledge our brokenness and encourage healing,” she says, noting that the church plans to install racks in washrooms “so people can pick up pamphlets on sensitive topics without worry of being noticed.”

“The pamphlets are coming from a theological perspective that feels right to us,” she says. “This ministry is compassionate and encouraging and hopeful, and it’s good to see the Mennonite name on it.”

“Close to Home” can be ordered at www.mpn.net/closetohome.

Also, thanks to contributions from generous donors, more than 1,000 copies of *Jesus Matters: Good News for the 21st Century*, a new book from MPN, have been given to pastors of Mennonite Church USA congregations.

About \$10,000 was donated by a group of individuals to give away the book, which explores why Jesus still matters for young adults today.

The money was raised by the books co-editors, David Shenk and James Krabill. “We just mentioned the idea to a few people, and the funds came in,” says Shenk. “It was a touching and humbling experience.”

About \$1,000 of that amount was personally donated by Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference bishops.

“They dug into their own pockets to make it available to their pastors,” says Shenk.

The donated funds were also used to give copies to all members of the Mennonite World Conference Global Missions Council, as well as the Mennonite World Conference Executive Council. In addition to the donations, Mennonite Mission Network bought copies for 450 youth leaders at the Mennonite Church USA convention in Columbus, Ohio, and Eastern Mennonite Missions bought 100 copies for missionaries and church planters.

The mailing to pastors was accompanied by a letter from Ron Byler, acting executive director of Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership.

Jesus Matters “is filled with important stuff for people who take Jesus seriously,” says Byler, adding that it “can be a valuable resource for small groups, Sunday school classes, youth and young adult groups, new believers’ classes, leadership training and more.”

Jesus Matters consists of 16 chapters on topics such as Jesus and creation, Jesus and the cross, Jesus and salvation, Jesus and mission, and Jesus and the future. Each chapter is a collaborative effort between authors such as Shenk, Krabill, Stanley Green, Michele Hersherberger, Mark Thiessen Nation, Willard Swartley, Jack Suderman, April Yamasaki and others, along with young adults in Canada and the United States.

“There are gale force winds blowing in our culture that challenge our commitment to Christ,” says Shenk. “The goal of this book is to show that Jesus continues to be relevant and surprising good news today.”

Jesus Matters is available from www.mpn.net/jesusmatters.—John Longhurst of Mennonite Publishing Network

EMU offers research in Cambodia, Hawaii

Eastern Mennonite University students work with professors on campus as well.

Several students of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., worked closely with professors in research on campus and overseas.

Jakob zumFelde, Christine (Chrissy) Kreider and Gene Fifer teamed up with three students from Buffalo (N.Y.) State College to work on projects related to water sanitation in Cambodia.

Doug S. Graber Neufeld, professor of biology at EMU, gave oversight to the group. The students worked with Thai and Cambodian colleagues on projects related to water sanitation.

ZumFelde and one Buffalo student worked at the Asian Institute of Technology on what happens to sewage in a local community when the sewage and accompanying rain water runs into open canals and then into a local lake.

Kreider worked at a nongovernmental organization outside Phnom Penh, Research Development International, doing survey work and testing drinking water in rural villages of Cambodia. She looked at the impact of drinking water education, following up on work that 2009 graduate Laura Cattell did there last year.

Fifer did village survey work with RDI on the feasibility of implementing composting toilets to deal with human waste.

EMU students Elisa J. Troyer, Nathan Derstine and David N. Showalter worked with Matthew Siderhurst, associate professor of chemistry, on the Big Island of Hawaii. The project, funded by a grant from the Hawaii Invasive Species Council, focused on ways to control the little fire ant in Hawaii through identification and applications of their alarm pheromone(s).



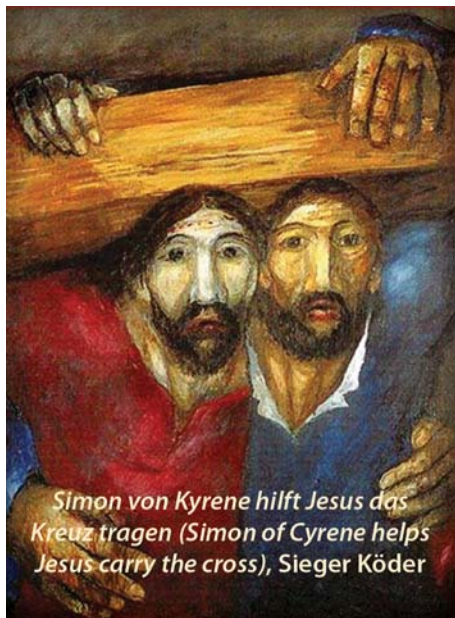
Photo provided

Back on campus, Stephen Cessna, associate professor of chemistry, worked with two students on a project with the Shenandoah Valley partnership for research experiences of undergraduates in molecular biology.

Andrew (Drew) Kirk measured antioxidants in tomatoes grown in different conditions. Jie Ren, a student at J. Sargent Reynolds Community College who is considering transferring to EMU, measured free fatty acids in the same tomato plants.

This research is being supported by the National Science Foundation through a partnership with James Madison University and Bridgewater College and by the U.S. Department of Agriculture through a grant that Cessna received for his sabbatical work.—*Jim Bishop of Eastern Mennonite University*

Chrissy Kreider prepares to test drinking water in a Cambodian village.



Simon von Kyrene hilft Jesus das Kreuz tragen (Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross), Sieger Köder

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CALENDAR

The Mennonite Children's Choir of Lancaster (MCCL), Lancaster Mennonite High School's Campus Chorale, and Lancaster Mennonite's middle school choir will join with a quartet of local chamber musicians called "Beyond Ourselves" to present **their third annual benefit concert Sunday, March 15, 2010**, at Lancaster Mennonite's Fine Arts Center. The concert will benefit Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) relief work in Colombia. Last year the concert raised \$6,000 for Sudan relief, and this year's planners are hoping to increase that to \$10,000. For more information about the concert call 717-291-0514.

WORKERS

Headrick, Betsy McCrae, was ordained by Mountain States Mennonite Conference as a pastor at Glenon Heights Mennonite Church, Lakewood, Colo., on July 19.

Ivanitsky, Eric, was ordained as youth pastor at Western Mennonite Church, Salem, Ore., on July 26.

Martin, Eric, was licensed at Salem Mennonite Church, Salem, Ore., as chaplain for Mennonite Village on July 26.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Boldt, Joshua Salvador, Aug. 4, to Daniel and Dolores Perez Boldt, Fresno, Calif.

Boyd, Zachary Curtis, May 22, to Bill and Katie Friesen Boyd, Omaha, Neb.

Cooke, Vivienne Annali, May 7, to Teman and Susan Gascho Cooke, Atlanta, Ga.

Friedli, Braden Daniel, July 9, to D.J. and Sarene Friedli, Beaver Crossing, Neb.

Hickman, Laineigh Alyssa, born July 9, 2007, received for adoption on May 4 by Matthew and Debra Miller Hickman, Normal, Ill.

Maury, Kyle Douglas, Aug. 3, to Doug and Elizabeth Heatwole Maury, Newton, Kan.

Meyer, Adalyn M., June 9, to Ryan and Heather Pietz Meyer, Wayland, Iowa.

Miller, Ava Elizabeth, July 23, to Tom and Rebecca Beachy Miller, Kalona, Iowa.

Miller, Ruby Jade, July 24, to Clint and Nicole Slaubaugh Miller, Parnell, Iowa.

Ngouen, Mayli Victoria, June 29, to Sylvain Ngouen and Lauren Pletcher, Middlebury, Ind.

Paul, Malachi Elric, June 29, to Keith and Megan Pletcher Paul, Middlebury, Ind.

Reeser, Chloe Elizabeth Wyse, Aug. 16, to Scott and Angie Wyse Reeser, Madison, Wisc.

Tice, Ezra Daniel, July 9, to Adam and Maria Longoria Tice, Hyattsville, Md.

Wenger, Ava Lëanna and Sahsia Noel (twins), July 14, to Dustin and Emelene Reist Wenger, Lititz, Pa.

MARRIAGES

Brown/Troyer: Andrew Brown, Wooster, Ohio, and Abby Troyer, Kidron, Ohio, May 16, at Kidron Mennonite Church.

DeNisco/Mackey: Claire DeNisco, Ada, Ohio, and John Mackey, Bluffton, Ohio, Aug. 8, at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Gehman/Hershberger: Danielle Gehman, Bechtelsville, Pa., and Benjamin Hershberger, Boyertown, Pa., Aug. 1, at Boyertown Mennonite Church.

Immel/Yoder: Elizabeth Immel, Green Bay, Wis., and Devin Yoder, Kalona, Iowa, Aug. 1, in Green Bay.

Kauffman/Hendrey: Bryan Kauffman, Goshen, Ind., and Ingrid Vendrey, New Paris, Ind., July 25, at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Kohlhaas/Rissler: Abigail Kohlhaas, South Bend, Ind., and Matthew Rissler, Dubuque, Iowa, June 27, at Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend.

Loucks/Roth: Micah Loucks, Hesston, Kan., and Lucy Roth, Bloomington, Ill., July 18, at Mennonite Church of Normal, Normal, Ill.

Martin/Sauder: Geneva Martin, Lancaster, Pa., and Kent Sauder, Reading, Pa., Aug. 1, in Kinzers, Pa.

Miller/Smucker: Linda Miller, Apple Creek, Ohio, and Matthew Smucker, Massillon, Ohio, May 23, at Kidron Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Schlabach/Steiner: Ashley Schlabach, Hartsville, Ohio, and Chris Steiner, Dalton, Ohio, Aug. 8, at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Hartsville.

Stuckey/Weber: Emily Stuckey, Denver, Colo., and James Weber, Denver, Aug. 8, Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

DEATHS

Amstutz, Verda Gerber, 98, Dalton, Ohio, died July 18. Spouse: Noah D. Amstutz (deceased). Parents: Peter and Anna Hofstetter Gerber. Children: Wanda Hostetter, Laurie Kratzer, Robert, Brian; nine grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 22 at Kidron Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Bartel, Henry, 84, Archbold, Ohio, died Aug. 11. Spouse: Violet Friend Bartel. Parents: David and Wanda Kuehn Bartel. Child: Rosemary Fetterman; three grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 15 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

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SPECTACULAR SCANDINAVIA
and ITS FJORDS (June 13-28)
PENNSYLVANIA to EUROPE (June 19 - July 2)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE (June 24 - July 5)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE II
with JOHN SHARP (June 29 - July 12)
ITALY, AUSTRIA and GERMANY (July 7-17)
ENGLAND and SCOTLAND (July 23 - August 4)
SWISS GLACIER EXPRESS (July 29 - August 11)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE III
with PAUL ZEHR (September 5-18)
THE ROAD to JERUSALEM (September 11-22)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE IV (September 16-29)

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Cashwiler, Anna M. Martin Sweigart, 95, Lititz, Pa., died Aug. 2. Spouse: Thomas L. Cashwiler (deceased). Spouse: Amos O. Sweigart (deceased). Parents: Phares and Lizzie A. Martin. Step-children: Thomas L. Cashwiler, Jr., Edith Zook. Funeral: Aug. 6 at Groff-High Funeral Home, New Holland, Pa.

Copsey, Joan Carole Gyllstrom, 77, Goshen, Ind., died July 8. Spouse: James Copsey. Parents: Eric and Helga Gyllstrom. Child: Lori Copsey; one granddaughter. Funeral: July 15 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Diener, Clayton H., 90, Hesston, Kan., died June 4. Spouse: Inez Snyder Diener. Parents: Harry and Amanda Diener. Children: Don, Dwight, Dennis. Funeral: June 8 at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston.

Franz, Phyllis Tucker, 79, Moses Lake, Wash., died July 28 of cancer. Spouse: Victor Franz. Parents: Gilbert and Martine Pels Tucker. Children: Randy, Curt, Pam Bowman; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 8 at Menno Mennonite Church, Ritzville, Wash.

Gingerich, Rollin J., 94, Kalona, Iowa, died July 13. Spouse: Kathryn Kauffman Gingerich (deceased). Parents: Charles and Nettie Miller Gingerich. Children: Faye Brenneman, Warren, Lois Beck, Orval, Karen Gingerich; 11 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 8 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

Groff, Anna Detweiler Moyer, 84, Souderton, Pa., died Aug. 7. Spouse: Claude Godshall Groff (deceased). Parents: Jacob M. Ida Detweiler Moyer. Parents: Rod, Gwen, Sandi Hurt, Lisa Weaver, Bill; 12 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 12 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Hirschy, J. Duwaine, 80, Wayland, Iowa, died June 7 of cancer. Spouse: Bonnie Elder Hirschy. Parents: Joseph and Lydia Wagler Hirschy. Children: Dr. Larry D., Faye Schultz, Kaye Johnson, Rev. Loren; 10 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 9 at Wayland Mennonite Church.

Kaufman, Geneva Stucky, 88, McPherson, Kan., died Aug. 3. Spouse: A.K. Kaufman (deceased). Parents: Chris L. and Martha Graber Stucky. Children: Joleen Pauls, Randall, Mary Ellwood; seven grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 6 at First Mennonite Church, McPherson.

Leatherman, Alma Moyer, 91, Hatfield, Pa., died Aug. 4 of dementia. Spouse: Willard "Bill" D. Leatherman. Parents: Willard L. and Esther Clemens Moyer. Children: Janet Yoder, W. Ray, Darlene Brandis; five grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 7 at Plains Mennonite Church, Hatfield.

Martin, Ira Eber, 91, Columbiana, Ohio, died July 28. Spouse: Martha Weaver Martin. Parents: William and Anna Lehman Martin. Children: Naomi "Molly" Hostetler, Lucille Clark, Charlotte Beck, Kathy Schroedel, Carol Moser, Lowell, Ronald, Lawrence; 16 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 2 at Midway Mennonite Church, Columbiana.

Meyer, Janie Konecki, 64, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, died July 3. Spouse: LeRoy Meyer (deceased). Parents: Joseph Konecki and Wanda Smiddy Konecki Brackey. Children: Steve, Beth Vander Molen, Tim; four grandchildren; three step-grandchildren. Funeral: July 8 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa.

Nafziger, E. Lloyd, 78, Hopedale, Ill., died Aug. 6. Spouse: Eunice Yoder Nafziger. Parents: Orrin and Beatrice Slabaugh Nafziger. Children: Rodney, Kent, John, Marla Walker, Gail King; six grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 11 at Hopedale Mennonite Church.

Roes, Anna Mae, 73, Beaver Falls, N.Y., died Aug. 9. Spouse: Raymond D. Roes. Parents: John S. and Elizabeth Roggie Widrick. Children: Kevin, Sandra Oblick, Merle, Donald, Sharon Lehman; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 12 at Lowville Mennonite Church, Lowville, N.Y.

Roth, Delmer Darrell, 88, Milford, Neb., died Aug. 7. Spouse: Violet Stutzman Roth (deceased). Parents: Ed and Emma Yeackley Roth. Children: Yvonne Bontrager, Lenore Meyer, Russell, Cecil; 10 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 9 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Yoder, Esther Mable Baer, 78, Newport News, Va., died June 27. Spouse: John David Yoder. Parents: Jacob and Esther Mable Hahn Baer. Children: Christine S. Yoder, John Alan, Mark Edward; two grandchildren. Funeral: June 30 at Huntington Mennonite Church, Newport News.

Zook, Mary Ruth Branz, 81, Goshen, Ind., died July 14. Spouse: John "Wes" Wesley Zook. Parents: Ben and Orpha Erwin Branz. Children: Linda Zook, Brenda Zook, Becci Velasco, John, Robert; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: July 19 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Zuercher, Clayton A., 74, Orrville, Ohio, died July 28 from injuries sustained in a lawn mower accident. Spouse: Doris M. Gray Lehman Zuercher. Spouse: Alice Miller Zuercher (deceased). Parents: Isaac and Emma Lehman Zuercher. Children: Darrel Zuercher, Rita Richard, Stan Gray, Robin McCullough; 10 grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; two step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 2 at Kidron Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our online forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

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Part-time medical director

Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) has an opportunity for a part-time medical director responsible to provide medical expertise in development/administration of insurance products, participate in underwriting decisions, determine medical necessity, and serve as spokesperson for MMA on medical matters. Qualified applicants will have a current, unrestricted state medical license to practice medicine, broad medical experience, and board certified in a clinical area. Experience with review of medical cases for necessity and quality of care is desirable.

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Eastern Mennonite University, located in Virginia's scenic Shenandoah Valley, seeks qualified candidates for the position of **vice president for finance**. The vice president for finance serves as chief financial officer of the university. The vice president for finance is responsible for the development and final preparation of the annual operating and capital budgets, assures financial compliance, establishes internal control policies and procedures, provides strategic information concerning finances, represents the institution in external business transactions. The vice president for finance oversees and is responsible for the business, human resources, physical plant, financial assistance and auxiliary services departments. Qualifications include master's degree and/or CPA strongly preferred; minimum of six years of experience in financial administration; skills/experience related to financial management, budget development, personnel management and planning desired; knowledge of the Mennonite church with a commitment to the mission of Mennonite/Anabaptist higher education. Position begins on or around Jan. 1, 2010. To apply send a letter of application and resumé to Fred L. Kniss, Provost, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; email fred.kniss@emu.edu. For more information, visit our Web site: www.emu.edu/humanresources.

Spruce Lake Wilderness Camp, a dynamic, innovative youth camp ministry (under the umbrella of Spruce Lake Retreat) is seeking a **full-time Wilderness Camp director**, effective immediately. The director is responsible for developing and implementing annual youth camps, supervising full-time, part-time and seasonal summer staff within a team environment, reviewing all summer camp schedules and activities for a balanced blend of spiritual enrichment, social interaction, environmental awareness and recreational stimulation. This role also involves some travel to promote Wilderness Camp. The director is a Leadership Team member on the Retreat Center staff and reports to the executive director. The preferred person will have a bachelor's degree or equivalent life experience, 3-5 years of youth camp experience and demonstrated visionary leadership skills, is energized by interacting with people and relates well with teens, children and parents, and has lived within and owns the Anabaptist faith tradition. This person will also have basic computer skills with knowledge of MS Word, Excel, Powerpoint and Outlook. Outstanding oral skills (including public speaking), strong written communication skills, a high level of self-motivation and organizational skills are a must. Salary and liberal benefits package provided. On-site housing may be available. Full job description posted online at www.sprucelake.org. Applications accepted through Sept. 15, 2009. Send resumé to Mark Swartley, Executive Director, Spruce Lake Retreat, RR 1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; phone: 800-822-7505 x118; fax: 570-595-0328; email: jobs915@sprucelake.org

Hesston College seeks a **director of the pastoral ministries program**. The ideal candidate will excel in spiritual formation, administration, teaching and recruitment. The candidate will have an understanding of and commitment to the Mennonite Confession of Faith, the larger Mennonite church, and Anabaptist theology and practice. Pastoral ministry experience and master's degree required; seminary or doctorate in theological studies preferred. Application materials: Send an employment application, Curriculum Vitae, Ministerial Leadership Information form, official transcript(s), list of references and application essays to: Sandra Zerger, Vice President for Academics, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062, or send to sandraz@hesston.edu. Start date: spring term 2010. Review of applications begins Sept. 1 and continues until the position is filled. Additional information available at www.hesston.edu/employment. EOE

EMU seeks qualified applicants for a **full-time director of seminary admissions**. The position is responsible for seminary admission and recruitment activities. Master's degree preferred. Must have good communication skills, be a creative thinker and facilitate student service functions. The position calls for office time as well as regular times of travel. Must be a committed Christian in accordance with the EMU Statement of Commitment as well as the EMU philosophy and purpose. Prior experience in administration, public relations, admissions and recruitment, and/or ministry-related experience is required. Position begins no later than July 2010. Submit application, resumé and three references to: hr@emu.edu. For more information visit our Web site at www.emu.edu/humanresources. People who bring diversity are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Durham Mennonite Church, Durham, N.C., celebrates its **40th anniversary** on Saturday, Oct. 24, 1:30-5:30 p.m., and Sunday, Oct. 25, at the 10:30 a.m. worship service. For more information contact pastor@dur-hammennonite.org or Marcia Nice at 919-596-9459. For updates see www.durhammennonite.org.

Shalom Christian Academy is currently seeking applicants for **administrator**, an executive position at a 500-pupil PreK-Grade 12 day school in South Central Pennsylvania. A Doctorate of Education is preferred. A master's degree with administrative experience is required. A history of lifelong learning and Christian service is valued. This visionary person will lead an administrative team as they continue to move our school in fulfilling our stated mission to "prepare and release each student for a life of consequence for the kingdom of God." Shalom is a parent-owned and board-governed multid denominational Anabaptist school. Qualified individuals may submit confidential resumé to the search committee secretary at www.shalomca.info.

Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks **80 percent-time discipleship ministries outreach director** to oversee all short-term outreaches. Required: relational, administrative and leadership skills and experience; bachelor's degree; multiple short-term missions experiences; international travel. Apply by Sept. 11; begins Oct. 5, 2009. Contact Jeanette Hunt, jeanetteh@emm.org or 717-898-2251.

Coming to Montreal for school or vacation? Enjoy Montreal's trendy "Plateau" district by staying at **Maison de l'amitié Summer Guestrooms and Student residence**. Student housing available for September. 514-843-4356, www.residencema.ca; reservations@maisondelamitie.ca.

JustHelp, Inc., seeks **Spanish-proficient public interest attorney** for new nonprofit. Experience in bankruptcy, landlord tenant or immigration ideal. Inquire at info.justhelp@gmail.com.

JustHelp, Inc., seeks **executive director** for new nonprofit. Spanish a plus. All interested candidates encouraged to inquire at info.justhelp@gmail.com.

RESOURCES

The Historical Christ and the Theological Jesus by Dale C. Allison Jr. (Eerdmans, 2009, \$16) addresses ongoing historical-theological questions concerning Jesus Christ. What should one think of the modern quest for the historical Jesus when there is such enduring discord among the experts and when personal agendas play such a large role in the reconstructions?

Rooted in Jesus Christ: Toward a Radical Ecclesiology by Daniel Izuzquiza (Eerdmans, 2009, \$35) analyzes the language of theology, the role of social sciences, the transformation of culture and the church's approach to politics.

Called to Be Human: Letters to My Children on Living a Christian Life by Michael Jinkins (Eerdmans, 2009, \$15) explores the so-called Big Questions that challenge people of all ages: What is it to be human? Why am I here? What can I believe in? How should I invest my life?

Out of My Bone: The Letters of Joy Davidman, edited by Don W. King (Eerdmans, 2009, \$28), tells the life story of Davidman, best known as the wife of C.S. Lewis but an accomplished writer in her own right, through her numerous letters and her

autobiographical essay "The Longest Way Round."

Performing the Sacred: Theology and Theatre in Dialogue by Todd E. Johnson and Dale Savidge (Baker Academic, 2009, \$17.99) is the first book-length exploration of the intersection of theatre and theology, illuminating the importance of preserving live performance in a virtual world.

Encounters With God: In Quest of the Ancient Icons of Mary by Sister Wendy Beckett (Orbis, 2009, \$22) traces Beckett's travels from England to Rome, Ukraine and a remote monastery in Sinai to view and reflect on the earliest icons of Mary, among the few that survived the wholesale destruction of icons in the early eighth century.

Nightwatch: An Inquiry Into Solitude by Robert Rhodes (Good Books, 2009, \$9.95) recounts the forces that took the author, his wife and young daughter to live among the Hutterian Brethren from 1995 to 2002. Rhodes explores what drew him and his family to the community and held him there—and why they eventually decided to leave.

Downstairs the Queen Is Knitting by Dorcas Smucker (Good Books, 2009, \$9.95)

offers in her third book more anecdotes from her rollicking family life with six kids on a grass-seed farm in Oregon's Willamette Valley.

Christian America and the Kingdom of God by Richard T. Hughes (University of Illinois Press, 2009, \$29.95) investigates why so many Americans think of the United States as a Christian nation despite the Constitution's outright prohibition against establishing any national religion by law or coercion. He points to a systemic biblical and theological illiteracy running rampant in the United States.

What Is Iran? A Primer on Culture, Politics and Religion by Laurie Blanton Pierce (Herald Press, 2009, \$12.99) offers an overview of the historical, religious and political landscape of modern Iran. It is written from a peacebuilding perspective and informed by almost 20 years of Mennonite experience in Iran.

For the Beauty of the Earth: Women, Faith and Creation Care by Patty Friesen (Herald Press, 2009, \$8.99) examines our relationship with God's creation and suggests practical ways to care for it, nurturing our faith and nurturing others.



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At my mother's knee

At this back-to-school time of year I'm reminded of how the most important lessons I learn in life are from my mother. Though I'm 56, and my mother is 86, she is still my best and far and away most likable teacher.

As we've watched mother age, she's said over and over, "Life just keeps getting better." We children and grandchildren look at each other in disbelief, thinking, She can't be serious.

But she is serious. It's abundantly manifest that Mother has learned the secret to a happy life. And for her, happiness isn't merely the product of the good gifts that have come her way. She has actively cultivated practices that sustain her through enormous challenges.

A year ago, Mother suffered a stroke. While contending with debilitating weakness, Mother's feisty spirit kicked in. As I reflect on the lessons I've learned from my mother, the practices that sustained her in earlier years have become even more marked during her year long fight to regain mobility.

Caring for bodies. After years of bathing, clothing and feeding her eight children, canning shelves of peaches, pears, grape and tomato juice, and freezing carloads of corn, beans, applesauce and cider, Mother stays active. In her 70s and 80s, she worked out regularly at Curves, a women's fitness club. After the stroke has left her unable to sit up on her own, Mother now does hours of daily exercise, managing to regain enough mobility to get around with a walker. And by leaning on the counter with one arm, she prepares entire meals with the other, continuing to feed family and friends with delicious, homegrown produce.

Bible immersion. Mother loves to read the Bible. For many years, she has used a study version of the New International Version, reading the New Testament so often that her favorite Bible is falling apart. She refers to the study helps when she is perplexed by a passage. She frequently quotes texts or tells a Bible story when making an observation about life in her conversation with others. She says she reads the Bible not so much for information as a heart-to-heart encounter with God; it feeds her soul. She quotes Jesus saying, "You are made clean by the word I have spoken to you."

Simplicity—more with less. There are no collector's items or expensive furniture in evidence in Mother's home. The walls are filled with memorabilia that tell the story of a life well lived rather than wealth displayed. The irony is that while

there is no evidence of a lavish lifestyle, Mother has lavished love on countless people coming through her doors. Her home is constantly bustling, rich with stories, beautiful flowers, shared meals and splendid conversations. And she and Dad give away most of what they earn.

Storytelling. I can sit enthralled for hours, hearing Mother recount memories from the past or fascinating glimpses into people's lives in the present. Mother is an amazingly attentive listener, asking good questions and drawing out the stories of people's lives in ways that we love to respond to, and then weeks and months later, she will still recall the detail as she continues to inquire after our well-being.

Daily prayer. From little up, I heard Mother and Dad's voices praying aloud in their bed as they prepared for sleep. During tough times, or in the midst of difficult transitions, Mother talks about drawing strength from prayer. She tells us all that she and Dad pray for us daily, continually bringing their children and grandchildren to God.

Reading good books. For many years, Mother has belonged to a women's book club. I've been impressed with their choices of what to read together: not sentimentalized piety but books with starch and cultural verve, cutting-edge books that aren't afraid to ask hard questions or crack open tidy assumptions.

Generosity of spirit. Warmth radiates from every pore of Mother's being. Her laughter and sparkle are contagious. Whether at market, at church or in her home, Mother makes connections. People love to be near her because she is so genuine. She manages to make it safe for people to be honest with their questions and in so doing draws people closer to Christ.

Gathering with God's people. Mother loves to go to church and has gone every week as long as I can remember, with a rare exception when the whole family is home for Christmas or she is ill. The relationships she has cultivated over the years have become for her a wonderful community of friends. She thrives in the company of people devoted to the work of God's kingdom.

Mother isn't perfect. In fact, I can hear her voice in my head as she reads this, declaring loudly that it's overdone. She's keenly aware of her failures. Her transparency about her own struggles only makes her more disarming. We know she's real. And that's what makes her so lovable and such an exemplary teacher. 



Sara Wenger Shenk is an author and serves as associate dean and associate professor of Christian practices at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

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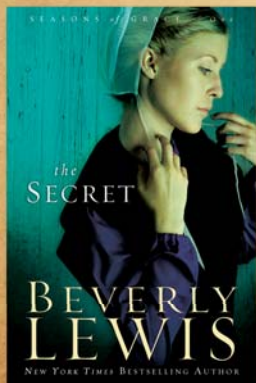
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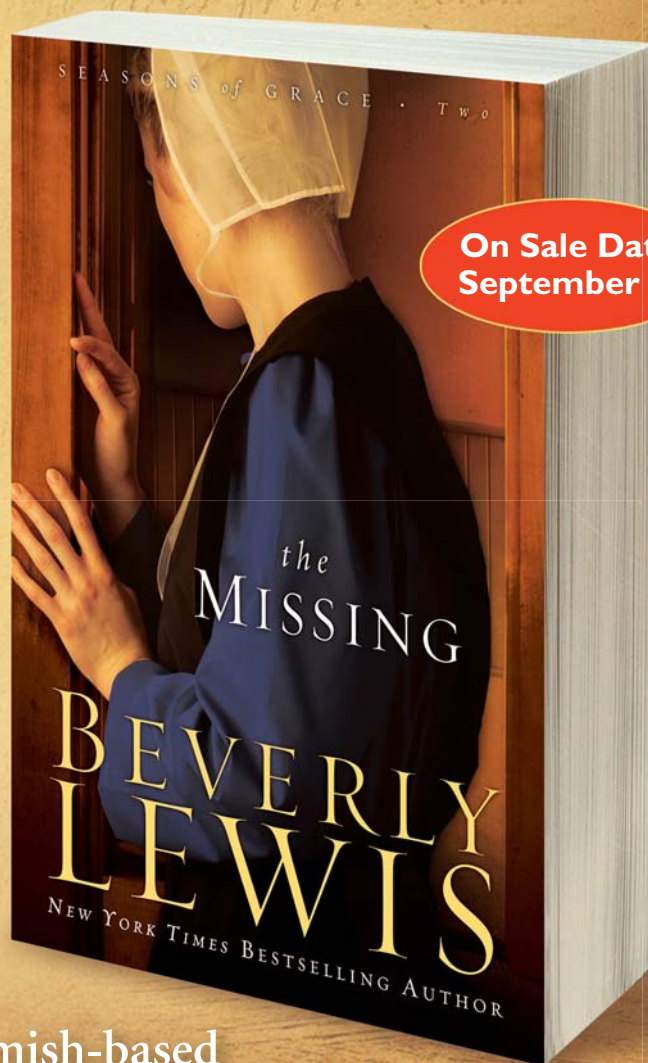
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There are some delicate cross currents to Mennonite Church USA's involvement in the national health-care access debate.

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org



What are we to say about health care?

The U.S. Congress returns to session next week and will take up health-care legislation. National attention to this legislation included an action by Mennonite Church USA delegates at Convention 2009. The delegates adopted a resolution calling us to ask our representatives “to support legislation that would extend access to health care to all Americans.”

“Until we have specific legislation,” says David Gautsche, MMA’s senior vice president for products and services, “we won’t know how it aligns with the delegate action.”

On the other hand, Tim Jost (see page 18), who authored the resolution adopted by the delegates, insists now is the time for us to contact our representatives.

“Now is the time for people to get involved to help shape the legislation,” Jost says. “We know what the basic legislation will look like.”

Jost says that Mennonite Church USA members should support the legislation currently in the House of Representatives because it would do what Mennonite Church USA statements on health-care access reform have requested. According to Jost, who has read the statute, the legislation would do five things:

- reform the insurance market,
- expand Medicaid so that all poor people are covered,
- subsidize premiums on a sliding scale for people whose income is less than 400 percent of the poverty level,
- require individuals to purchase health insurance, even if they are healthy,
- require large companies to provide health insurance.

It is uncomfortable and nearly unprecedented for Mennonites to get so involved in such a national policy discussion. In this case, there are also some delicate cross currents to our involvement. MMA’s future is one of them.

“MMA is clearly aligning with the [delegate] resolution,” Gautsche says, “and working with Mennonite Central Committee and the Mennonite Church USA peace and justice office. We don’t know what the implications are for MMA, but ...

I’m convinced that there is some role to help our members navigate the health-care system.”

Another voice in the Mennonite Church USA system is MHS Alliance, a denominational entity that provides leadership for 73 retirement communities and health-care providers.

“We do support the migration of health care in the direction of [it being a] ‘right’ rather than a ‘retail commodity,’ ” says MHS Alliance president Rick Stiffney.

But Stiffney also notes that most of the nonprofit providers within MHS Alliance depend on state and federal reimbursement in the form of Medicaid and Medicare. This means that, like MMA, these institutions will be affected by changes to the health-care access system.

“We support health-care reform that expands access through a system in which risks, costs and responsibility are shared by all,” says Stiffney. He notes that certain elements in the proposed legislation are especially important to MHS Alliance:

- provisions that cover dialogue about end-of-life care,
- expanded public assistance programs, such as Medicaid,
- initiatives that would ease pressure on providing health insurance for employees, so that employers are not forced to decrease benefits.

The proposed legislation seeks to reform the insurance industry; that will have significant ramifications for MMA, our church’s health insurance provider. It also will require large companies to provide health insurance; this will affect many of the large entities served by MHS Alliance.

The delegates at Columbus 2009 passed their resolution overwhelmingly. That was the easy part. More difficult is understanding the potential effect on some of our important church institutions. Fortunately, representatives from these agencies have been talking to each other.

So that Mennonite Church USA members can be unified in our advocacy, we need these entities to find a consensus. Doing so will not only help people in the pew understand what is at stake, it will also strengthen our voice when we talk with our elected representatives.—*ejt*

