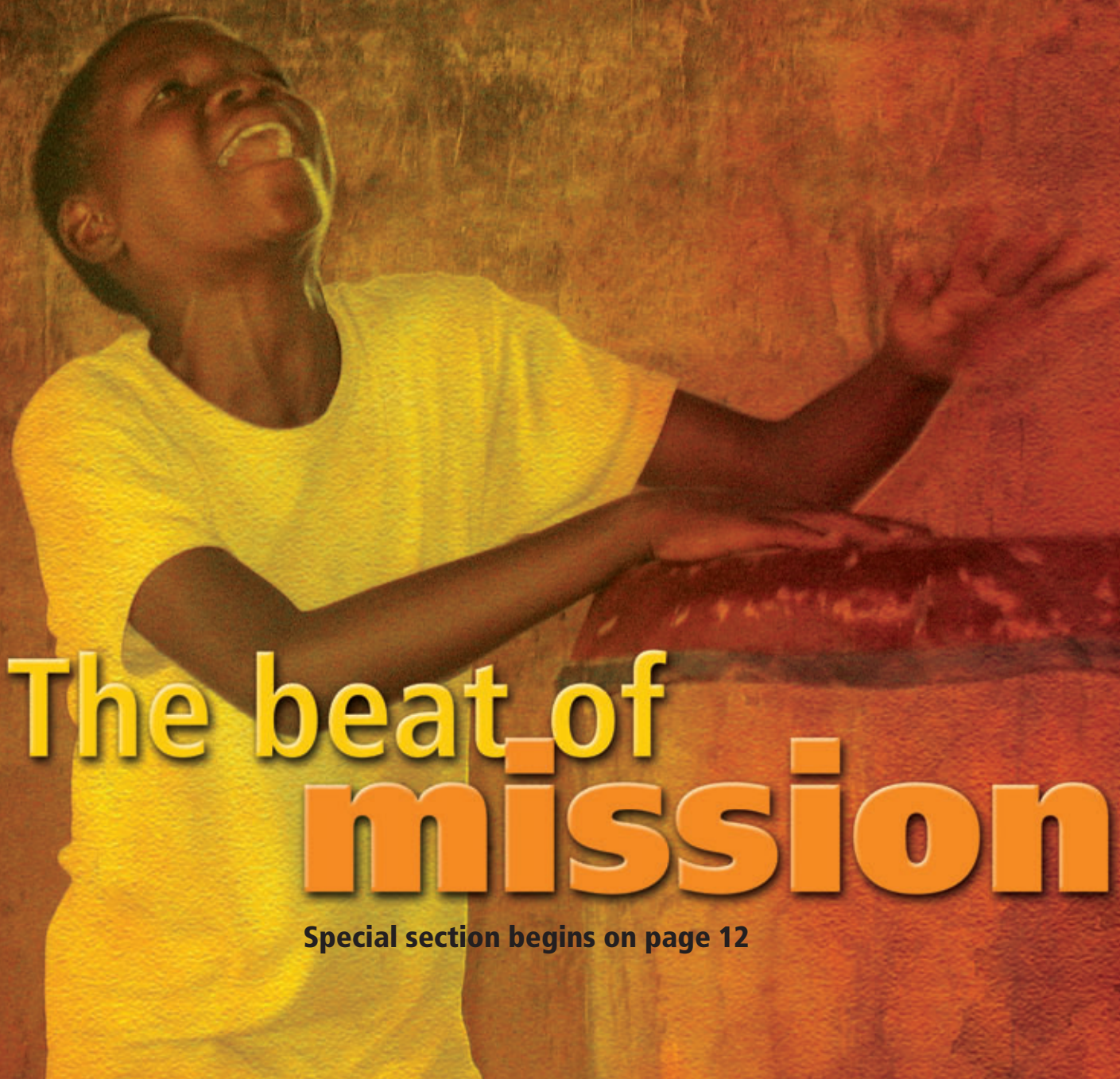


The Mennonite



The beat of mission

Special section begins on page 12

NOVEMBER 2010

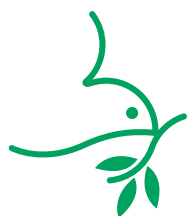
INSIDE:

- Mission as a form of exoticism
- Helping those in the hell of PTSD

- The law of liberty
- At peace with war? Nope. Just numb.

- The Christian Harry Potter
- Editorial: Our turn to ask forgiveness

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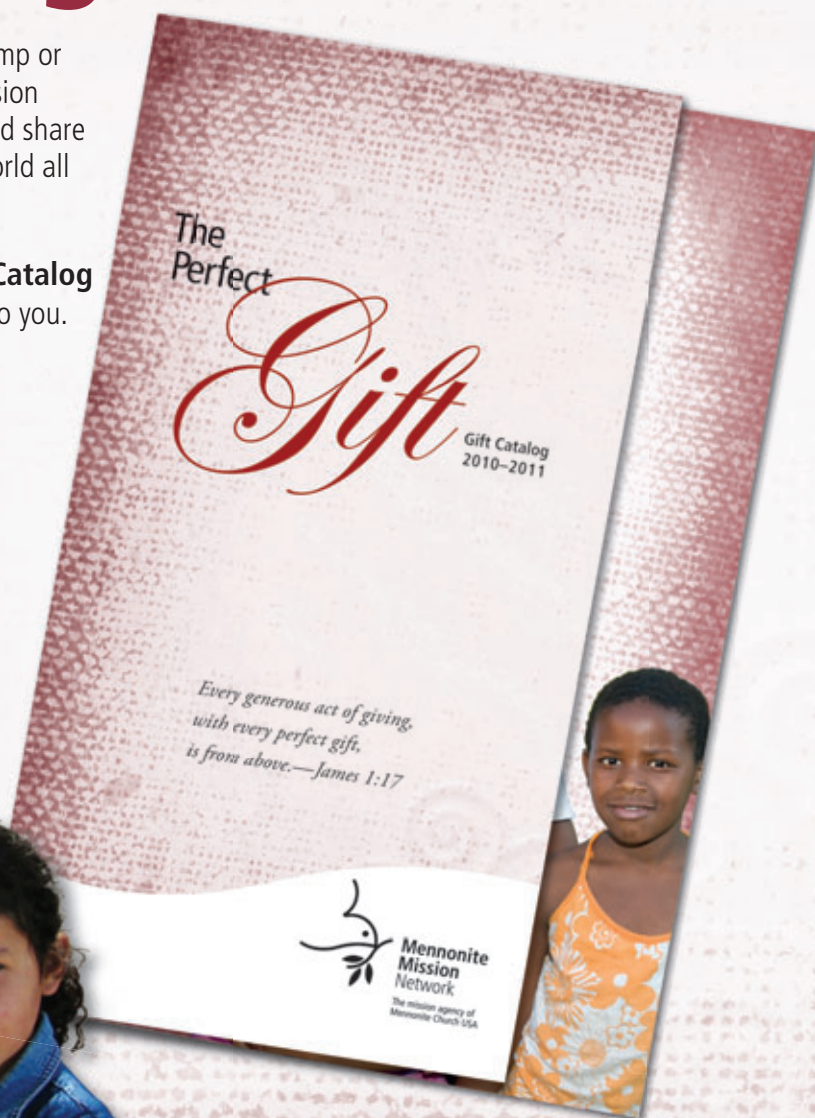
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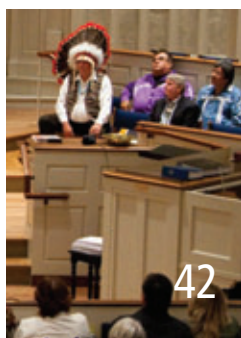
Christmas gift catalog

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ON THE COVER: Roger Lukusa Mkanda praises God with the Dipumba Plaine congregation of Communauté Évangélique Mennonite au Congo (Evangelical Mennonite Church of Congo) in Mbuji Mayi, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Photo by James Krabill



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The Mennonite is the publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: \$43.95 to U.S. addresses and \$51.45 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

POSTMASTER send form 3579 to:
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LETTERS

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. E-mail to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *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

Holy or Unholy Land?

I read Myron Schrag's "Holy or Unholy Land" (Opinion, September). What a great article, indeed! So well written and to the point. I took several trips to Israel, the first in 1950, right after the "invasion and occupation" by the Jews of the Holy Land. I was a "cowboy" on a ship with a load of mules for the Jews. We were given a tour of Palestine and a big dose of propaganda. I was 100 percent for them at that time.

In 1969, my wife and I took a tour of the Middle East, including Israel. After I saw what they were doing to the Palestinians, I turned 180 degrees in the opposite direction.

What galls me is that we (our tax money) give Israel \$3 billion for military supplies each year. And it is our Catapillar bulldozers that demolish the Palestinian houses and destroy their olive orchards. I try not to be anti-Semitic, but it's difficult to not be that way. I have no problem with the Jewish people—it's the Israeli government that I have adverse feelings about.
—Jack Stauffer, Newton, Kan.

In "Holy or Unholy Land?" Myron Schrag gave us his view of the political events in Israel/Palestine. However, his view is biased and does not explore the Israeli rationale for their actions and simply paints the Palestinians as innocent victims in the entire conflict. For example, Schrag denounces the

wall and is critical of the Israelis for building it. But he fails to explain why the Israelis would want to build it. The wall was built to reduce incursions by suicide terrorists into Israel. Schrag is negligent when he does not tell us about the untold, horrifying murders, carnage, mayhem and destruction inflicted on Israelis over the years by suicide terrorists.

The reader is left to ponder whether Schrag's obtuse observations and obfuscations of the political and economic realities merely hide his true anti-Semitic feelings. Maybe he has never read Genesis 12:3.—*Galen Dise, Paradise, Pa.*

Please accept my thanks and compliments for the great statement from Myron Schrag ("Holy or Unholy Land?") in your September issue. It was not only well written but also said things that desperately need to be said and dealt with by the church as well as the nation.—*Mel Schmidt, Hyattsville, Md.*

Do we need a new hymnal?

"Do We Need a New Hymnal?" Everett Thomas asked (September), saying: "Our hymnal is our prayer book. It is the way we, together, speak most passionately to God."

No. Our prayer book is written in our hearts, not something we leave in the pews on Sunday. Singing can be prayerful but can't substitute for prayer. When people pray, the Spirit moves.

Our directions must come from God, not Internet opinion polls. Our priorities are prayer and education, not profitability and entertainment.

Also in that issue, John Longhurst sent up a flare on the growing crisis of biblical illiteracy caused partly by using Scriptures out of context based on "felt needs" rather than using a curricular approach ("Why Do So Many Not Know the Bible?"). A curricular approach can also enhance church signs, bulletins, *The Mennonite*—we can become better storytellers.

Ron Rempel asked, “Does Church Publishing Matter?” (September). Yes. But our biggest publishing opportunity isn’t getting “cues we need on what to publish” (“felt needs”). It’s collectively creating Spirit-led materials that transcend denominational boundaries, sending them—sometimes free—at the touch of a button to ignite spiritual flames worldwide, while rekindling our own hearths and hearts.

We can’t afford being distracted by a hymnal for six years. Prayer and revival, teaching and reversing biblical illiteracy can be our better hymn to God. As Longhurst’s article noted, the biblical story is our story, our identity. If we fail to tell it, we fail. It’s time we learn how to teach. And that requires prayer. —*Brenda Miller, Orrville, Ohio*

I voted “not sure” in the website poll you were taking concerning a new hymnal by 2016. The reason: We are not using *Hymnal, A Worship Book* to the fullest extent now and as a church seem to be moving more and more away from our heritage of good hymn singing.

I guess I would be in favor of a new hymnal if I knew we would use the new book. But at this point, I’m not sure. It is my hope that at some point we will

wake up and realize the heritage we have in our congregational singing. May it be so.—*Paul Metzler, Lititz, Pa.*

Missionary women were significant

Thank you for highlighting the lives of four missionary women whose contributions were significant (“Four Women Leave Legacies,” October). It was refreshing.—*Sara Wengerd, Goshen, Ind.*

Racial healing stories

I enjoyed the articles on racial healing in the church (September). I thought it would be helpful for all of us to hear the stories that were shared by the Racial Healing Task Group at the Leaders Forum Sept. 24-25 in Pittsburgh. Human stories are the best way to educate people on needs that must be addressed. I hope the people who shared their stories would be open to making these stories more public.—*Wilma Loganbill, Hesston, Kan.*

Editor’s note: *We have sent this request to the task force. See page 39 for a report on the Leaders Forum.*

First things first

Ervin Stutzman, new executive director of Mennonite Church USA, shares a vision for the church that is vital

enough to renew the church. This vision is as old as the Christian church. The “First Things First” column (page 63), share two basic tenets.

In July, he spelled out the crucial need to share the gospel message of Jesus Christ. That may sound like, Yes, of course. But the gospel has often been in second or third place. We have many times stressed a lot of important things, but are they the gospel that saves from sin and gives us new life? When analyzed, are they not many times the fruit or result of the gospel? But are they the gospel?

Jesus Christ is the engine that pulls the train. He is the Redeemer of the world. Love is fine, and peace is fine, but salvation comes only in knowing and following the Source of love and peace.

In the August issue, Stutzman said many believe the day for apostles is over. But he disagrees, and I agree with him. The apostle is a “sent one” to go out and invite others to come in. Evangelism is a good word for today and is more needed now than ever. Do we believe in a Savior who turns lives around? As Stutzman concluded, to move from “maintenance to mission” we need apostles who can lead the way. *(Continued on page 62)*

IN THIS ISSUE

November is Missions Month in Mennonite Church USA. The features offered by Mennonite Mission Network this year begin with a compelling story: the courageous evangelist Mutangidiki in a Bashilele village in the Congo (page 12).

We expect that many of our readers will receive this issue before Halloween. Gerald Shenk’s column (page 35) provides a compelling new perspective on this silly season.

This issue also includes some important news and photos. On page 37, Mennonite Mission Network announces its intent to merge with Third Way Media.

But it is a decision the Executive Board needs to make in January that is providing leaders with the greatest challenge: whether to hold the 2013 convention in Phoenix. Paul Schrag recounts the Executive Board’s wrestling with the matter (page 38). Sheldon Good describes the Leaders Forum’s struggles with the same issue (page 39). Both writers are editors with *Mennonite Weekly Review*.

Some readers may wonder why we are not providing our own reporting from these events. The reason: I and our board of directors were full participants in these meetings. It would be inappropriate for me to function as

both participant and reporter. We are grateful that Schrag agreed to let us reprint their reports.

This participation is part of several new agreements with the Executive Board (see the August editorial). Another is a request that the Executive Board occasionally be allowed to publish something with no editing by *The Mennonite*. To that end, we publish moderator Ed Diller’s piece entitled, “‘Conversation Room’ at Pittsburgh 2011” (page 46). This occasional column will be called Communiqué and include the subtitle, “Official Communication from Mennonite Church USA.”—*Editor*

Speak the good news of Jesus



Ron Adams
is a pastor at
East Chestnut
Street Mennonite
Church in
Lancaster, Pa.

In 1981, my wife, Marilou, and I went to Calcutta, where we spent three and a half months volunteering with Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity. It was an experience that changed our lives.

We both grew up in the Assemblies of God. We have many happy memories of those days and remain grateful for what we learned about Jesus, things that continue to influence our faith. What was missing, though, was an appreciation for the scope of Christian mission.

What we learned growing up was that it was our obligation to tell people about Jesus and to encourage them to accept him as their Savior. Jesus was the answer, we were told. All we were called to do was to tell others about Jesus so they could be saved.

While we were taught to be personally generous and loving to those in need, I don't recall any discussion of larger systemic or societal needs, such as racism, poverty or violence. Such evils, we believed, were simply the result of sin, for which personal salvation was the remedy. Talk of service in other parts of the world was focused solely on taking Jesus to "the uttermost parts."

To be fair, these are memories of my youth and may not represent the full picture. What I can say, though, is that what we learned in our home congregation in no way prepared us for our time in Calcutta.

Our tradition understands that how we live and how we love is as important as what we believe and what we say.

That summer we encountered poverty on a scale we'd never imagined: People begging on every street corner. Children hanging out by the YWCA, hoping for someone to buy them a meal. The size and energy of a massive city, noisy, loud, strange to our Lancaster-raised minds.

Neither were we prepared for the beauty of the people we met. For the communion we experienced with Christians, Hindus and Muslims. The generosity of those street children who took whatever food we'd bought them home to be

shared with their families. The fierce commitment of the Missionaries of Charity. The passion of the city and finding that Christ was there long before us.

We came home changed, confused. We had no language—theological or otherwise—for what we'd experienced.

The individualistic religion we'd carried with us was too small to make sense of what we'd seen and learned. How can we say that Jesus loves the little children and not care how they live? How can we say that Jesus is the answer when the questions being asked were beyond our experience?

So it was that we discovered Anabaptism, a tradition that certainly calls us to speak the good news of Jesus wherever we go. A tradition that encourages us to invite others to "taste and see that the Lord is good." But a tradition that calls us to do more than speak the good news. A tradition that calls us to incarnate that good news through the works of our minds and our hands and our feet. A tradition that understands mission to be more than getting people saved but is also about offering ourselves to the world around us and in every way. A tradition that understands that how we live and how we love is as important as what we believe and what we say; that incarnation is not something once and done but is instead our highest and constant calling. A tradition that helped us make sense of our time in Calcutta and has shaped us ever since.

We discovered we could love and be loved by our Hindu and Muslim friends without insisting that they accept Christ first. We could not only tell the good news but hear it spoken by new friends in accents quite different from our own. We could make the connection between our faith in Jesus and systemic issues and work in Christ's name toward a more just and peaceful world. We could see ourselves as part of a much larger work of God than we'd ever imagined, one not bound by human prejudice.

When people ask how we became Mennonites, Marilou and I say it was God's will. And we mean it. God used our time in Calcutta to make us Mennonites. And we are grateful. 



Thanksgiving

by Everett J. Thomas

"You have to take your hat off in school," scolded 3-year-old Lowell when Dad paused to play.

Old desks from Mother's brief reign as one-room school teacher. I wanted the back seat, but it was taken by big brother Warren. I went for the front row. But sister Nadine, budding feminist, got there first. Nothing to do but mug for the camera.

It was 1957. The men in the butcher shop washed their hands for lunch but did not bother about blood on forearms.

Fifty years have made their claims: Lowell's left hand lost in a meat grinder eight years later. Nadine, curious journalist, gone at 36. Our genial and gentle Father, gone at 66. Warren, compassionate trucker, gone at 61.

We played school that one day. Afterward, the desks were buried in the basement to rust and mold.

From dust to dust, says Ecclesiastes.

I give thanks for the wisp of life in-between.

Thomas wrote this prose poem after his brother's unexpected death on Aug. 4. The photo was taken at their home in Willow Street, Pa.

Gift allows child abuse book to be given free

WINNIPEG, Manitoba—Mennonite Church USA congregations will receive a free copy of *Let the Children Come: Preparing Faith Communities to End Child Abuse and Neglect*, thanks to a generous gift from an anonymous donor. The donor provided the funds because of an experience of abuse that happened in a church a number of years ago.

Let the Children Come was written by Jeanette Harder, a member of First Mennonite Church in Lincoln, Neb., and a professor at the Grace Abbott School of Social Work at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The book aims to help congregations learn about their role in ending child abuse and neglect in churches, homes, extended families, neighborhoods and schools.

—Mennonite Publishing Network

First woman moderator for Virginia Conference

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Shirley Yoder Brubaker, a 2010 Eastern Mennonite Seminary graduate, was named the



first female moderator of Virginia Mennonite Conference, beginning Sept. 1. Yoder Brubaker has been involved in ministry in various settings

for at least 20 years. After retiring as associate pastor at Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg in 2001, she went on to interim pastoral assignments in Mississippi, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Harrisonburg. It took her 26 years to complete her master of divinity degree. “Life kept interrupting my studies,” she says, “but I was committed to finishing that degree. It was a wonderful way to keep myself immersed in the Word and to maintain awareness of what was going on in the broader church.”

Yoder Brubaker’s vision for the conference centers around her commitment to the unity of the church.

—Virginia Mennonite Conference

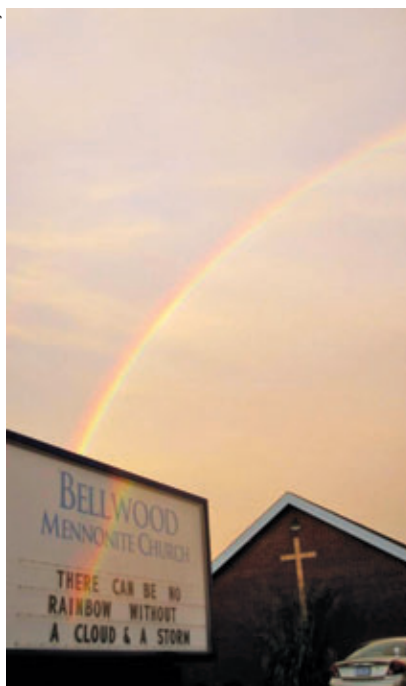
Former MWC executive dies in auto crash

STRASBOURG, France—Matiku Thomas Nyitambe, a prominent leader in the Kanisa la Mennonite Tanzania, was killed in an automobile accident Oct. 3 while driving from his native home of Kirongwe, Tanzania, near the Kenyan border.

His wife, Penina, sustained relatively minor injuries. Nyitambe served as general secretary of the KMT from 2001 to 2007 and was serving on the KMT Executive Council at the time of his death.

He served on the Mennonite World Conference general council from 2003 to 2009 and on the MWC Executive Committee from 2006 to 2009. He also worked professionally in various government capacities in Tanzania.—MWC

Allison Politsky



Read the sign

“There is no way I could have planned this. It was definitely a God-thing,” writes Dave Miller, pastor at Bellwood Mennonite Church in Milford, Neb. Miller put these letters on the sign early on Sept. 23; a neighbor took the photo that afternoon.

Truman Brunk, EMU campus pastor, dies Oct. 8

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Truman H. Brunk, 79, a former campus pastor at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, died Oct. 8 in Harrisonburg.

Brunk joined the EMU faculty in 1965 following his ordination and served as campus pastor 12 years. He was chair of the renovation committee for major renovations to Lehman Auditorium in the mid-1970s. Brunk then served briefly as director of college relations, overseeing the areas of church, alumni and media relations, and annual and special giving.

Brunk will be remembered by many for his leadership in the “miracle library drive” of early December 1969, working with EMU students who raised \$111,000 in four days of fundraising to rescue the threatened building project. The Sadie Hartzler library was completed and dedicated in the fall of 1971.—EMU

Metzger is new general secretary for MC Canada

WINNIPEG, Manitoba—Why would Willard Metzger leave a position with World Vision to move into the role of General Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada? His response to that question was immediate and simple—obedience to God’s call.

Accepting the new role, which began on Nov. 1, involved an intense discernment process.

The prospect of relocating to Winnipeg from Drayton, Ontario, was a serious discussion point for Metzger and Lois, his wife, who have worked diligently to integrate their son Matthew, born with Downs Syndrome, into the mainstream school system and community. The idea of uprooting Matthew, now 21, from the community that has embraced him, was unfathomable. So with Metzger’s acceptance of the General Secretary role, arrangements were made to





Conestoga Mennonite celebrates 250 years

Janie Hunsberger, left, views the 21 wedding dresses of women who were married at the Conestoga Mennonite Church in Morgantown, Pa., since the beginning of the 1900s. Conestoga celebrated its 250th anniversary Sept. 24-26. Freda Petersheim, right, is a member at Conestoga. It is the oldest Mennonite congregation of Amish-Mennonite origin in the United States today.—*Conestoga Mennonite Church*

ensure that the Metzger family was able to remain in Drayton. “It will take creativity and commitment to make this arrangement work, but with the strong, committed staff at Mennonite Church Canada, I am confident that we can make it work,” Metzger said.

—*Mennonite Church Canada*

Historical Committee names contest winners

GOSHEN, Ind.—Examinations of two 20th-century frontiers of Mennonite faithfulness were the winning entries in this year’s John Horsch Mennonite History Essay Contest, sponsored by the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee.

“Incarnation, Not Intervention: Mennonite Service and Just Peacemaking in Somalia” by Peter Sensenig was judged the best paper in the graduate school/seminary category.

“The Mennonite Young People’s Conference Movement, 1919-1923: Beyond the Tragedy of Its Failure to the Legacy of Its Vision” by Anna

Showalter took first in the college/university category.

Sensenig, a student at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif., explored the ethical underpinnings of Mennonite responses to the humanitarian disaster in Somalia in the 1990s.

Showalter, from Goshen (Ind.) College, focused on the Mennonite Young People’s Conference, a short-lived but influential reform movement that challenged the “Old” Mennonite Church and its understandings of peace, service and discipleship.—*Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee*

176 bikers raise \$7,000 for MCC’s water project

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—A record 176 riders pedaled through the local countryside on Sept. 18 during the 2010 MCC Flatlander Bike Ride.

Bikers traveled from eight to 67 miles in Kansas, including North Newton, Newton, Sedgwick, Bentley, Burrton and Halstead. One set of grandparents pulled their two grand-

sons, aged 2 and 4, the entire 67 miles. The 2010 MCC Flatlander Bike Ride raised more than \$7,000 for a water project, “Bore Holes for Better Health,” sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee in Nigeria. In a remote part of Nigeria, nine boreholes (wells) will be drilled to provide safe water sources close to where people live, so that women will not have to carry water for long distances. Donations from this ride will cover the cost of one of these boreholes.—*MCC Central States*

The Naked Anabaptist a best-seller for MPN

WATERLOO, Ont., and SCOTTDAL, Pa.—With more than 4,700 sold, *The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith* by Stuart Murray is a runaway best-seller for Herald Press, the book imprint of Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN).

“We knew the book would resonate with many people, but we didn’t expect it to sell out so quickly,” says Ron Rempel, executive director of MPN.

Especially satisfying for Rempel is seeing the book going out in bunches of 10 to 20 copies or more to churches for use by Christian education classes and study groups.

“We hoped it would be used by congregations as a way to discuss what it means to be an Anabaptist today,” he says. “It’s great to see so many churches using it.”

Five thousand copies of *The Naked Anabaptist* were published in April. A second-run of 5,000 copies has been ordered.

The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith is available from Mennonite Publishing Network at www.mpn.net/nakedanabaptist for \$13.99. Churches that order five copies or more get 25 percent off through the MPN Study Shelf. Go to www.faithandliferesources.org/Study-shelf/ for more information.—*Mennonite Publishing Network*

Behavioral economics does not always address our irrational choices

Perhaps, like me, you wonder why people (other people, not myself) make decisions about what to buy that are clearly bad for them. Behavioral economics is a field that tries to address such questions and, in many cases, to offer solutions.

In an article in the July 14 edition of the *New York Times*, George Loewenstein, a professor of economics and psychology at Carnegie Mellon University, and Peter Ubel, a professor of business and public policy at Duke, look at the increasingly popular field of behavioral economics and question its effectiveness.

Behavioral economics “incorporates elements from psychology to explain why people make seemingly irrational decisions, at least according to traditional economic theory and its emphasis on rational choice,” write Loewenstein and Ubel. For example, it addresses why people under-save for retirement, why they eat too much and exercise too little and why they buy energy-inefficient light bulbs and appliances.

But, they write, the field has its limits. “Take, for example, our nation’s obesity epidemic. The fashionable response, based on the belief that better information can lead to better behavior, is to influence consumers through things like calorie labeling—for instance, there’s a mandate in the health-care reform act requiring restaurant chains to post the number of calories in their dishes.”

However, studies have shown that calorie posting has had little impact on dieters’ choices. “Obesity isn’t a result of a lack of information; instead, economists argue that rising levels of obesity can be traced to falling food prices, especially for unhealthy processed foods,” they write.

Instead of posting calories, then, we need to change the relative price of healthful and unhealthful food, they write. “For example, we need to stop subsidizing corn, thereby raising the price of high fructose corn syrup used in sodas, and we also need to consider taxes on unhealthful foods. But because we lack the political will to change the price of junk food, we focus on consumer behavior.”

Another example of reliance on behavioral economics is a “gal-

lons-per-mile” bill passed by the New York State Senate that is supposed to help drivers think more clearly about the fuel consumption of the vehicles they purchase. This was in response to research that shows that gallons-per-mile is a more effective means of getting drivers to appreciate the realities of fuel consumption than the traditional miles-per-gallon.

However, write Loewenstein and Ubel, “more and better information fails to get at the core of the problem: People drive large, energy-inefficient cars because gas is still relatively cheap. An increase in the gas tax that made the price of gas reflect its true costs would be a far more effective—though much more politically painful—way to reduce fuel consumption.”

Great Britain, hoping to reduce electricity use, touted a study that reduced household electricity use by informing consumers of how their use compared to that of their neighbors. But tests of the program found that better information reduced energy use by only 1 to 2.5 percent.

“Compare that with the likely results of a solution rooted in traditional economics,” write Loewenstein and Ubel: “A carbon tax would instantly bring the price of energy into line with its true cost and would unleash the creative power of the marketplace to generate cleaner energy sources.”

Loewenstein and Ubel conclude: “For all of its insights, behavioral economics alone is not a viable alternative to the kinds of far-reaching policies we need to tackle our nation’s challenges.”—Gordon Houser

Pontius’ Puddle



Joel Kauffmann



“Too many Christians apprehend Jesus in a highly spiritualized way, ignoring the fact that he lived and died in times that were as contentious and conflicted as our own.”

—Ched Myers and Elaine Enns in *Ambassadors of Reconciliation: New Testament Reflections on Restorative Justice and Peacemaking* (review, page 59)

Heat waves, drought, floods, a hotter Earth

The summer's heat waves baked the eastern United States, parts of Africa and eastern Asia and Russia, which lost millions of acres of wheat and thousands of lives in a drought worse than any other in the historical record.

Is global warming causing more weather extremes? The collective answer of the scientific community can be boiled down to a single word: probably.

Thermometer measurements show that the earth has warmed by about 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit since the Industrial Revolution, when humans began pumping enormous amounts of carbon dioxide, a heat-trapping greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere.

Theory suggests that a world warming up because of those gases will feature heavier rainstorms in summer, bigger snowstorms in winter, more intense droughts in at least some

Clean slate

Four simple steps to eliminate the tax man and save the country from suffocating debt:

1. Cut income- and payroll-tax rates by half, except for people earning more than \$2 million a year, who will enjoy smaller cuts.
2. Eliminate all individual deductions and exemptions.
3. Impose a 12 to 15 percent value-added tax on consumption.
4. Individuals will no longer have to file tax returns with the IRS. All earned and investment income will be collected by withholding.—*Newsweek*

places and more record-breaking heat waves. Scientists and government reports say the statistical evidence shows that much of this is starting to happen.—*New York Times*

Why can't people stop smoking?

According to a study published in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, Dr. Reuven Dar of Tel Aviv University's Department of Psychology, chemical addiction is not the problem with cigarettes. He concluded that the craving effect is produced by psychological cues rather than by the physiological effects of nicotine deprivation. Dr. Dar's studies say that nicotine does have a physiological role in increasing cognitive abilities, such as attention and memory, but it's not an addictive substance like heroin. He believes people who smoke do so for short-term benefits, such as oral gratification, sensory pleasure and social camaraderie.—*Spirituality & Health*

Religious knowledge

The average number of questions about religion in America answered correctly by different groups (out of 32 total):

Atheist/agnostic: 20.9

Jewish: 20.5

Mormon: 20.3

White evangelical Protestant: 17.6

White Catholic: 16.0

White mainline Protestant: 15.8

"Nothing in particular": 15.2

Black Protestant: 13.4

Hispanic Catholic: 11.6

—*Religion News Service*

Israelites were beer drinkers

Ancient Israelites drank not only wine but also beer, according to a biblical scholar at Xavier University in Louisiana. "Ancient Israelites, with the possible exception of a few teetotaling Nazirites and their moms, proudly drank beer—and lots of it," says Michael Homan, in the September/October issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*.—*Religion News Service*

10 ways to solve jobs problem

1. More farms, less agribusiness.
2. More repair, fewer products.
3. More recycling, less mining.
4. More renovations, less construction.
5. More restoration, less destruction.
6. More bike paths, fewer highways.
7. More local businesses, fewer megastores.
8. More dishwashing, fewer throwaways.
9. More education, less advertising.
10. More clean energy, less fossil fuel.

—*Fran Korten in Yes! Magazine*



SPECIAL SECTION

Mennonite
Mission
Network

The power of story

Oral history project
celebrates Congolese
evangelists' faith,
courage.

By Lynda Hollinger-Janzen



Children gather for worship at Communauté Évangélique Mennonite au Congo (Evangelical Mennonite Church of Congo) in Mbuji Mayi, Democratic Republic of Congo. Photo by James Krabill

“Have you felt his breath on the back of your neck yet?” jeered a chief of the Bashilele people, lounging in the relative coolness of palm trees with the village elders.

Mutangidiki’s persecutors were struggling with the unfamiliar story of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. The Bashilele people resisted conversation about Jesus, at first, and treated Mutangidiki with hostility, said David Lupera, the first ordained Mennonite of this ethnic group. Lupera recounted this historic event to Jim Bertsche, who served with Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) in Congo for nearly three decades and as administrator in the United States from 1974-86.

In Africa, we practice oral tradition, but those who know our story are in the process of leaving us. If this history is not written down now, we will lose the story.—Adolphe Komuesa Kalunga

Mennonite Mission Network actively collaborates with AIMM and Mennonite Church Canada Witness in Congo through the Partnership Council that includes three Congolese Mennonite denominations and representatives of the network of French-speaking Anabaptists. Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite World Conference have observer status in the Partnership Council.

In preparation of the centennial of Communauté Mennonite au Congo (Congo Mennonite Community) in 2012, AIMM has launched an oral history project that aspires to record the witness of early Mennonites in a Congolese version of *Martyrs’ Mirror*. The timing of this endeavor is crucial, as important information has already been lost to the passage of the years, including the name of the evangelist who was tied to the dead man. (Muyishi Mutangidiki is a pseudonym composed of Congolese-language words for “teacher” and “evangelist,” respectively.)

Adolphe Komuesa Kalunga, Congo Mennonite Community’s president, spoke to the significance of the Congo history book project.

“We cannot stick the story of people living on earth in a drawer somewhere. In Africa, we practice oral tradition, but those who know our story are in the process of leaving us. If this history is not written down now, we will lose the story,” Komuesa said.

Muyishi Mutangidiki, a Congolese Mennonite evangelist, struggled to turn his head from the direct fury of the sun. Bound hand and foot to a corpse, a torrent of taunts further paralyzed him.

Choir members from the Mennonite church in Kikwit, Democratic Republic of Congo, sing their welcome to Stanley Green during his visit to their congregation.

Photo by Stanley Green



The active phase of the story-gathering was launched with a workshop in Kinshasa, Congo's capital, in November 2009. Fohle Lygunda trained seven Congolese researchers in techniques for collecting and transcribing oral histories. Lygunda has a doctorate in mission and leadership from Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky and is the director for French-speaking Africa with the Dictionary of African Christian Biography.

The villagers tied Mutangidiki, face up toward the sky, to the lifeless body, then retreated to the shade of the palm trees to await the resurrection.

For the past year, the oral history researchers, armed with digital recorders and notebooks, have been navigating their motorcycles along forest paths to remote villages to collect the histories that illustrate how Congolese Mennonite believers lived their faith over the last century. These stories bear witness to the dedication of women and men, laypeople and pastors, who through their actions and words lived their commitment to Christ in specific, often difficult circumstances.

AIMM plans to convert the oral histories into

two published volumes of Congolese history, one in French and one in English, with the release date scheduled to coincide with the centennial celebration at Congo Mennonite Community's headquarters in Tshikapa in June 2012.

"We are going to make a lot of noise to celebrate these 100 years of Mennonite presence in Congo," Komuesa said. "This history doesn't only involve Congolese Mennonites; it also includes those Mennonites who brought the gospel to Congo."

AIMM, which is simultaneously marking its 100th anniversary as a mission agency, hopes that an additional benefit of stories like Mutangidiki's will be to encourage North American Mennonites to greater courage and faithfulness in living out their faith.

Mutangidiki learned to read and write in the Djoko Punda school established by Lawrence and Rose Haigh, the first workers with Congo Inland Mission, a predecessor agency of AIMM. Mutangidiki became a follower of Jesus and was trained as an evangelist, as were many of his classmates. By the late 1920s, Congolese evangelists had moved into villages around Djoko Punda to begin schools and clinics and plant churches.

According to Jim Bertsche—author of the history of the Mennonites in Congo from a North American perspective, *CIM/AIMM: A Story of Vi-*

sion, *Commitment and Grace*—after a decade of enlarging Christian presence around the mission center, there was a growing sense of urgency to reach out further to the Bashilele people, who were skilled in forging iron and hunting but had resisted all missionary overtures.

Mutangidiki and his wife said yes to God's call to live as evangelists among the Bashilele people. After sessions that met with stony indifference from the chief and elders, the Mutangidikis received grudging permission to build their house at the very edge of a Bashilele village.

"Will knowing about Jesus help us be able to smelt iron better than our ancestors?" the chief derisively asked Mutangidiki.

Uncharacteristically of African hospitality, the villagers did not help the Mutangidiki couple build their thatch-and-stick home, and they did not help the Mutangidikis plant their fields. Fortified by faith and undeterred by hostility, Muyishi Mutangidiki tied a piece of scrap metal to a tree branch and beat it with a rock every morning calling children to come and learn at the school, but no one appeared.

Every Sunday, the Mutangidikis went to the center of the village to sing praises to God and to talk about Yesu Musungidi wetu, Jesus, our Savior, but no one was interested.

One day, the chief summoned Muyishi Mutangidiki and said, "You keep telling us about someone named Jesus."

"That's true," Mutangidiki said.

"You tell us that he raised people from the dead while he was on earth."

"He did."

"You say that he himself died and rose from his grave three days later."

"He did."

"Well, we want to try this Jesus business here in our village today. Do you see that corpse over there? That man died last night."

The chief continued to explain that the village elders had decided that if Mutangidiki's Jesus could bring the corpse back to life, the whole village would become Christians with rejoicing. However, if the dead man didn't start breathing before sundown, when tradition dictated burial, Mutangidiki would be buried alive in the grave with the corpse.

The villagers tied Mutangidiki, face up toward the sky, to the lifeless body, then retreated to the shade of the palm trees to await the resurrection. Occasionally they called out to Mutangidiki, asking if there were any stirrings of life, any whisper

of breath on the back of his neck.

The sun was low in the sky when a messenger boy burst into the assemblage, announcing the imminent arrival of a Belgian government official, an emissary of the colonizing power that held Congo in its grip.

The following morning, the villagers were astonished to hear the scrap-metal bell calling the children to school as usual.

The chief quickly ordered Mutangidiki to be cut free. In the commotion surrounding the Belgian's arrival, Mutangidiki slipped away to rejoin his praying wife. In the course of trading news with the chief, the Belgian asked the chief about Mutangidiki's school.

"Muyishi Mutangidiki is well," the chief replied. "In fact, he was here with us just a short while ago."

When the Belgian finished his business and left, the villagers joked about whether the Mutangidikis would leave that night or wait until daybreak to make their escape.

The following morning, the villagers were astonished to hear the scrap-metal bell calling the children to school as usual.

At the sound of the bell, the young boy, Lupera, turned to his group of friends and said, "If those evangelists are still here in the village after the way our fathers tortured them yesterday, they must have something important to tell us. I'm going to find out what it is."

And with those steps toward Mutangidiki's classroom, Lupera began the journey that took him into leadership positions in the Congolese Mennonite churches that today have 125,000 members and manage eight hospitals, a Bible institute, several hundred elementary and secondary schools, a sawmill and a variety of development projects. The Congolese Mennonites also participate with other denominations in the administration of the Université Chrétienne de Kinshasa (Kinshasa Christian University).



Lynda Hollinger-Janzen writes for Mennonite Mission Network.



Learning another's song

Châtenay Malabry Mennonite Church grows into a diverse group that worships and works together.

By DeVonna R. Allison

Members of Châtenay Malabry Mennonite Church during a baptism service (from left) Samuel Peterschmitt (from India), Viliene Luma (from Haiti), Karene Boukono (of France) and Julie Girard (of France)
Photo by Frédéric Girard

When Isabelle Deler, then a recent immigrant to France from the Caribbean island of St. Martin, first walked into the Châtenay Malabry Mennonite Church, she finally felt at home.

Having recently moved to Paris for university, she felt distant from the people, food and traditions of her home. But Châtenay Malabry, with congregants from Haiti, Congo, Madagascar, Ukraine, Vietnam and many other countries, re-

minded her of the diversity of St. Martin. When she finally moved out of the neighborhood, she says, she didn't want to change churches.

"I was afraid of not finding another community like Châtenay," she says.

The church, located in the Paris suburb of Châtenay Malabry, was once comprised mostly of white, middle-class, native-born French people. But congregants have worked hard to adapt to their neighborhood's changing demographics in a

country that has made headlines for the clashes that have erupted between the country's 6.8 million immigrants and the native French population.

In the fall of 2005, youth from immigrant communities in France, frustrated by a lack of economic opportunities, rioted for 20 nights, leading to almost 3,000 arrests. This summer the French legislature banned the wearing of facial veils in public, a law that affected mostly immigrant women from Islamic traditions. And even as the public debated the legitimacy of the clothing ban, French authorities were rounding up thousands of undocumented Roma [Gypsy] immigrants and forcibly returning them to their home countries.

These reports do not tell the whole story, however. There are places in France where communities of faith work toward embracing their immigrant neighbors and traditions through inclusive worship. These communities of faith are what Neal Blough describes as "true peace churches."

Blough and his wife, Janie Blough, are Mennonite Mission Network workers who have lived in France for 35 years and attend Châtenay Malabry Mennonite Church.

"Mennonite peace theology is fulfilled when people who would not ordinarily interact choose to come together and form a community. It is the fulfillment of the gospel," says Blough. "A fully integrated church fulfills the scriptural teaching that we are all one in Christ Jesus."

Making a home

When immigrants arrive in a new country, they often settle collectively, creating satellite neighborhoods in the suburbs of large cities. These immigrant communities become places where the faces, languages and foods remind residents of their homelands while providing them with a safe place to interact with and support one another. And for many of the newcomers, an important part of communal connection is finding a place to worship.

Châtenay Malabry Mennonite Church is located in one of these satellite immigrant neighborhoods. According to Neal, as more and more immigrants began calling the neighborhood home, Châtenay Malabry Mennonite's membership began to reflect these demographic changes.

"The reaction at first [to the influx of immigrants] was one of caution," says Neal. Since most of the immigrants came from former French colonies and had lived in France for a number of years, language was not the issue. The different styles of worship, prayer and faith traditions, however, took time to adjust to.

"Many of the church's immigrant members

were used to a more physical, charismatic style of worship," Neal says. "People had to learn to accept different forms of spirituality and expression that were not familiar to them."

Breakthrough moment

One of the first ways members of the church connected was through sharing prayer concerns during worship. Prayers for housing and jobs or for sick or absent family members were simple concerns all church members could relate to.

"As [members] heard the needs and concerns, of their fellow church members," Neal says, "they began to sympathize with them, and their eyes were opened to the larger issues immigrants face."

The church wasn't merely moved to sympathy; it was moved to action. People came forward with offers to help find housing or jobs or to offer assistance with official paperwork. Sharing prayer concerns opened doors to conversation. Understanding one another's needs was a first step toward building relationships.

Worship

Janie is pursuing a doctorate degree in worship studies and teaches worship in various settings while also serving as one of Châtenay Malabry's worship leaders. As changes began taking place within the congregation, she made an all-inclusive worship experience her personal goal. She also strives to educate worship leaders to the importance



Members of a youth catechism class at Châtenay Malabry Mennonite Church

Photo by Alexandre Nussbaumer



Members of a choir representing three French Mennonite congregations
Photo by Julio Rakotonindriana

of this goal in the classes she teaches. “Worship is the ‘work’ of the congregation,” Janie says. “This means that members from different origins need to be present and up front, through Scripture reading, sharing prayer concerns, participating in moments of spontaneous prayer, distributing the bread and wine. Worship should represent the different cultures and spiritualities within the congregation.”

Congregants have worked hard to adapt to their neighborhood’s changing demographics in a country where clashes erupted between the country’s 6.8 million immigrants and the native French population.

Leadership

“One mistake some churches make in [integration] is that the changes don’t extend to the decision-making process, and leadership remains the same,” Neal says.

A year ago, three longtime members of Châtenay Malabry’s church council stepped down from leadership in order to make way for new leaders. As a result, the church council now includes Isabelle Deler, Geneviève Boukono from Congo, and Julio Rakotonindriana from Madagascar. A variety of voices, representing the many different peoples and views of the congregation, now participate in congregational discussions and decisions.

Working together

The results of the church’s efforts to work toward integration were evident in their response to the devastating earthquake in Haiti in January. News of the tragedy echoed across the airwaves and reverberated through the community’s immigrant neighborhoods. And in the Châtenay neighborhood, the shock of the event led to action.

“During the period following the earthquake in

Haiti, the events became more real for our congregation because our Haitian members gave specific prayer requests for their friends and family in Haiti,” says Neal.

A special prayer service was organized at Châtenay Malabry Mennonite to lend support to the nearby Haitian immigrant community and to lift up the people of Haiti. Alexandre Nussbaumer, pastor of Châtenay Malabry Mennonite Church, initiated an interdenominational benefit concert that raised over \$4,000 U.S. The funds were shared between two church-related organizations in Haiti for use in relief efforts. In the months that followed, Haitians in the congregation continued requesting prayer and provided updates on friends and family members living in Haiti.

Extending a hand

Christian immigrants in some neighborhoods, seeing the frustrations evidenced by the riots of 2005, have made it a priority to provide assistance to other immigrants. Mirroring the help they received from their own churches, they now extend offers of help to all, including their Muslim neighbors.

These neighborhoods, Neal says, “are some of the few places where you will see Christians and Muslims living and working together in a real spirit of cooperation.”

Looking forward

Immigrant Christians have brought vitality and growth to what was once a small group of believers at Châtenay Malabry Mennonite. The church now hosts monthly multicultural potlucks and annual church retreats to help build relationships within the church and encourage self-understanding. The church invites immigrant preachers to address the congregation, hosts women’s groups and house groups, holds multicultural prayer meetings and ecumenical activities in addition to joint worship services with other Parisian Mennonites.

For Isabelle Deler, Châtenay Malabry Mennonite Church is a testament to the gospel’s transformative power.

“Being part of a [culturally] mixed church,” Deler says, “is a good way for me to show to the whole world that we can live together on this planet without fighting each other.”



DeVonna R. Allison writes for Mennonite Mission Network.

Dwell draws young adults to Atlanta, where they learn to work and live together.

By Melanie Hess

When Joel and Leslie Gerber said they were thinking about a service term, they got some funny looks. They weren't typical service workers; they were a young married couple with a child and full-time jobs in rural Kansas—not young adults fresh out of college or retirees with time on their hands.

But the strange looks were few and far between compared with the outpouring of community sup-

port for their plan. When the Gerbers decided to serve with Dwell, a partnership program of Mennonite Mission Network and Presbyterian Church USA, their congregation, Pleasant View Mennonite Church, was full of encouragement.

"Some fellow church members have been instrumental in encouraging me in this direction and I would not [have applied] if it wasn't for them," says Joel.

YOUNG ADULTS

dwell together

Members of the Dwell houses in Atlanta: back row: Joel Gerber, Cassie Ford, Steve Andrews, Kari Pellegrino, Tommy Flynn, Alan Jenkins; middle row: Cora Gerber, Leslie Gerber, Megan Warley, Myra Miller, Sonya Chelliah; front: Sarah Bellacicco, Ed Amos

Mennonite Mission Network photo

Dwell is a part of DOOR (Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection), a program that began in Denver and came out of a desire to “see the face of God in the city” by helping people see how God is at work in urban areas around the country.

There are two ways to enter the Dwell program; one is to come to the city for a year or two of service and life in community. But Dwell also encourages local young adults, who often have more traditional jobs, to come live with the service workers in intentional Christian community as “tentmakers” in their own backyards. Residents of Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Hollywood, Miami and San Antonio have the opportunity to live in community through Dwell.

Dwell came out of a desire to “see the face of God in the city” by helping people see how God is at work in urban areas around the country.

Coming to the city

Joel and Leslie and their 11-month-old daughter, Cora, moved into Dwell’s Capitol View house and began their term of service in early September.

Joel and Leslie were both teachers in Harper, Kan., but the desire for a change prompted Joel to think seriously about service, something he’d been considering for years. He convinced Leslie to apply to international and U.S. service programs, even as they looked for other job opportunities. In the end, the fact that they had a small daughter and a second child on the way narrowed their possibilities considerably. But the Capitol View house in Atlanta had room for a family.

“It was a good time for us—we had already missed our opportunity to do service straight out of college, but it was something that Joel had always wanted to do,” says Leslie. “We said, ‘Cora’s not in school yet, so let’s take this opportunity to go now before we need to stay in one place.’”

The community made a difference for the Gerbers—it was their church family who helped make service seem like a real possibility.

“A lot of people from our church have done service for many, many years, most of Joel’s family has done service, and there are three others

my age who are doing international or U.S. service for multiple years. It’s just something they do,” says Leslie. “When we mentioned making a job change, people came to us and said, ‘Why don’t you think about doing service.’ I think that’s maybe what put the bug in our ear to apply. There are so many people that have done it and have had great experiences.”

The Gerbers continue to get support from the members of Pleasant View—in the form of encouraging e-mails and financial gifts, since Dwell program members raise part of their own support.

As for their service placements, Leslie works for Neighbors’ Abbey, a church in their neighborhood where she does administrative work and works with a mentoring program at a local middle school. She helps with a life skills class for middle-school girls and also helps match them with mentors from their own community.

Joel works at a homeless men’s shelter and as a “gardener in residence” at a charter school. His farming background allows him to share his knowledge about growing food and composting with children who haven’t had experience with agriculture. Recently he spent an afternoon pulling weeds with kindergarten-age boys.

Their new community living situation is a change for the Gerbers, who’ve spent the past three years living in a farmhouse in “the middle of nowhere.” But the practical aspects of their community living—not having to cook every night, not having an entire house to clean and readily available babysitters—are a benefit, says Leslie.

They’re also taking advantage of life in the city, an adjustment that hasn’t been as difficult as they expected. “Living right in the middle of the neighborhood is a great way to meet people,” says Leslie. And being within walking distance of some of Atlanta’s many parks helps them find inexpensive and fun things to do with their daughter.

Finding life in community

Tommy Flynn represents the other way to serve through Dwell. He is a long-term resident of Atlanta and a nurse who has lived in the Grant Park house for the past two years.

“The local young adults are the anchors,” says Jannan Thomas, DOOR Atlanta’s city director. “They’re here for multiple years and they’re able to really build relationships and provide consistency.”

After a few years in more formal church ministry, Flynn was looking for a way to live his faith

in a different way. He was interested in the community and connection that Dwell could provide.

When we mentioned making a job change, people came to us and said, 'Why don't you think about doing service.'—Leslie Gerber

"I really felt a lack of fulfillment in the strict Christian 'systems' we have offered to us from the church," says Flynn. "There are small groups, Sunday school and service opportunities, but barring certain extremes like long-term mission, you don't really get many opportunities to live your faith day in and day out and struggle through some of the really hard questions that come along with it."

For Dwell house members in Atlanta, living together intentionally is an important part of their spiritual and intellectual growth.

"We meet every week for dinner and discussion, whatever falls on that night," Flynn says. "We also have nights for celebrating things like Advent, exploring different Christian practices and learning about social issues like gentrification, racism, the sex trade, poverty, hunger and our response to them."

When Flynn first joined the house in 2008, community questions revolved around chores and logistics—the basics of setting up a household. As time went on, Flynn says, they had to deal with more intense conflicts and questions.

"Conflict is one of the key elements of living in community—it's easy to avoid unless you're actually living together," says Flynn. "You either stop talking to each other or deal with it somehow. It's pushed everyone in the community to work with others in love and understand others better."

Every year there are new Dwell participants. "Turnover every year changes the feel of the house, because everyone brings their own contribution, personality and vision," says Flynn. "Every year we take a different direction and get new energy."

The community also serves as support as members go out to their jobs or service placements, giving encouragement and strengthening each other.

"The communities serve as families, even though they're not biologically related," says Thomas. "It's amazing to see just how supportive they are of one another and how they can be brothers and sisters in Christ to one another."

In Atlanta, those who come for a service term are placed through connections with the Presbyterian Church, but there's also a strong connection with Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship, which owns the Dwell house in Grant Park. Dwell members were living in the Grant Park house with others when the house was known simply as AMF's hospitality house. When AMF revisited the mission of the house, they saw that the Dwell vision fit their hopes for what the house would be, says Thomas, and Dwell and AMF decided to work together.

"We're part of the ministry that AMF has in the city, through their house," Thomas says. "So we like for the church to be involved in things that happen in the house—game nights and music nights—informal connections that we try to keep open." In addition to inviting AMF members to be a part of their hospitality nights, some of the Dwellers go work on the farm connected with the church.

Conflict is one of the key elements of living in community—it's easy to avoid unless you're actually living together.—Tommy Flynn

Flynn says the lessons he's learned from living in community are going to remain with him for the rest of his life: communication skills, leadership and care for others.

"I'm going to take with me a more profound ability to love more people, perhaps all people, because we're put in this house together—we don't pick each other," he says. "God picks us and we just end up together. We have to learn how to love people we don't normally have to relate to."



Melanie Hess writes for Mennonite Mission Network.

MISSION AS A FORM OF

exoticism



By Leo Hartshorn

After 29 years in various pastoral roles in the U.S. context, I found myself working as a minister of peace and justice for a mission agency located in the global mission division. In this new role I felt I needed to upgrade my knowledge of mission and did some cursory reading. And although my primary area of responsibility was in peace and justice, I also needed to look at my work and the church through a missional lens. By missional I refer to the church as being sent by God in all aspects of its life and to all dimensions of the world.

The church was entranced by images, artifacts and stories brought back by the missionaries they had sent to exotic lands.

Among the many things I learned about becoming missional was that this new vision of mission went beyond the old mission paradigm of sending missionaries to convert pagans in the non-Western world. A clear understanding of the increasing secularization of our North American context made where we live as much a mission field as any other place in the global village. I noticed in my reading an emphasis being placed upon mission within one's own cultural context. Also, in the missional vision the local setting of the congregation received a renewed focus for mission.

I looked at our denomination, congregations, mission agency, and peace and justice work through a missional lens. I noticed certain tendencies within the church toward what I call exoticism. In the 19th century, exoticism, particularly in art and music, was expressed as the "charm of the unfamiliar," a fascination with anything foreign

and "other." The expanding Western missionary movement during this same period was not immune from the virus of exoticism. The wider culture caught the exoticism bug, and the church sneezed. The church was entranced by images, artifacts and stories brought back by the missionaries they had sent to exotic lands. Mission had to do with being sent to other places than our own.

There is an almost natural fascination with the unfamiliar and exotic, which is understandable. Who doesn't like to travel to other countries and explore their histories, customs and cultures? But I observed in our church some tendencies that express and reinforce an exoticism that seems to hinder mission understood and practiced more fully in its national and local contexts.

A prevailing understanding of mission among individuals and congregations tends to place financially supporting global mission work over practicing local mission work. If we think about mission in our congregations primarily in terms of the visiting missionary with slides from a foreign land who shows artifacts and shares insights from another language, or the offering we took to support our favorite mission agency, as wonderful as that is, or point to the postcard from the couple from our congregation more than how our congregation is practicing mission in our local context, we are probably engaging in mission as a form of exoticism.

Sometimes exoticism expresses itself in the high level of admiration for and preference given to people, specifically white people, with experience in another country compared with those who have ministered in the U.S. context. Racial/ethnic people share stories around the church water cooler about the church's tendency to give re-

Do we give more attention and support to more exotic mission work overseas and neglect our U.S. and local context?

spect and preference for white people and their work in other countries compared with the respect they would like to see for their leaders and work in urban contexts in the United States that should be considered models of being missional.

Has the church significantly involved racial/ethnic leaders and congregations, who are engaged in missional practice in North America, in telling their stories and sharing their knowledge and expertise with the wider church as much as we have utilized white “professional” missionaries we have sent to other countries? If not, doesn’t this reinforce engagement in mission as a form of exoticism?

Certain mission practices give clear evidence of this tendency. For example, the church has a longstanding practice of sending white missionaries to other countries while rarely sending people of color in the United States who are from those countries and cultures. How many of our missionaries are people indigenous to the countries they are sent to? And even though there have been efforts to place mission work in the hands of the indigenous people, the U.S. church has no comprehensive, long-term process for a full transference of power, decision making, leadership and resources to indigenous people in the countries where we send predominantly white, North American missionaries.

If the missional agenda with its renewed emphasis on the contextual and local is a priority, it would seem the mission of the church in regional, congregational, rural and urban settings would also be a priority of the church. In rural contexts the missional agenda calls for an understanding and practice that fits with the ethnic and racial diversity that now exists in the rural setting. Exoticism seems to be reinforced by our denomination’s and mission agencies’ inability to maintain a strong, wide-ranging urban agenda, while there is strong support for international mission work. I’m not speaking about the work of conferences, which support local congregations in mission and ministry in local and regional contexts. In spite of the fact that the church is becoming more and more urban, the urban agenda has struggled to have vital, comprehensive and adequately financed support in the denominational structure.

Our church’s strongest and best-supported urban work has been providing short-term opportunities for predominantly white children of our

congregations. A more comprehensive urban agenda would involve urban theological education, church development, church planting, urban networking, social ministry support, training of urban leaders and congregations, creating and supporting multicultural congregations. In the 1970s, Latinos started a theological education project in San Antonio, Texas, that was not fully supported by white Mennonite leadership. More recent efforts have also struggled to find support.

Mennonites have had a long practice of peacemaking dominated by an agenda of addressing wars in foreign places over U.S. justice issues.

Even my work in peace and justice was not immune to a form of exoticism. Mennonites have had a long practice of peacemaking dominated by an agenda of addressing wars in foreign places over U.S. justice issues. Is not peacemaking that directs its primary energies and resources toward wars on foreign soil a form of exoticism? Again, peacemaking focused on wars in other countries and contexts has not always drawn in racial/ethnic people in that it has not been relevant to the U.S. urban context of gang, school and inner-city violence, handgun proliferation, racism, discrimination, economic injustice and issues related to racial/ethnic veterans. Peacemaking that neglects a more comprehensive understanding of shalom that includes personal, familial, interpersonal and local contexts and that works for justice within the United States is probably being seduced by some kind of exoticism.

I recognize that within a global context the United States has greater wealth and resources to share in mission than do many other countries. So why wouldn’t the global mission work need greater support and resources than our own national and local missional work? This economic reality may answer some questions about what may be an imbalance between our global and domestic mission agendas, but it does not address other issues: for example, where the power and decision making is located for mission work.

These observations are not meant to simply denigrate traditional global missions or say the missional agenda in national and local contexts



has been absent from the church and its mission agencies. There is much good work being done. They rather point to the continuing need to reform the church's mission and correct the imbalances that tend to downplay or neglect our own context as a mission field.

In conclusion, let me offer some signposts along the missional journey that indicate when mission is moving away from exoticism toward a renewed emphasis on the domestic and local:

1. When white North American congregations see their own local context as much a mission field as mission work in another country.
2. When members of white North American congregations see themselves as missionaries.
3. When support for and the practice of mission work has to do as much with mission in local contexts as it does with work in global contexts.
4. When whites engaging in mission in the U.S. context become as well informed about issues of culture, abuse of power, the messiness, contradic-

tions and blessings of working with U.S. racial/ethnic groups as they are in doing their work as global missionaries.

5. When racial/ethnic people already doing missional work in domestic contexts are given the voice, respect, support and venues for sharing their stories and learnings with the wider church as those who have traveled to do mission work in global contexts.

6. When peacemaking is wed to justice, the global is local and the local is essential.

7. When our larger and longer vision of global mission moves us toward fully relinquishing power and control of global mission work into the hands of indigenous leaders and people where we send missionaries.



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When peacemaking is wed to justice, the global is local and the local is essential.



THE PAST AND FUTURE OF Mennonite youth ministry

A look at 120 years of Mennonite youth ministry and what's ahead

By Bob Yoder

A common response I heard when researching the history of Mennonite youth ministry was, “I didn’t know Mennonites had one.” I learned that the Mennonite church has paid considerable attention to youth. But what can we learn from our history as we seek to faithfully follow Jesus?

Three common threads stand out. First, the tension between what youth want and what adult church leaders think is best for them persists. Second, I struggle to identify a “Mennonite model” of youth ministry since we have borrowed much. Third, though our denominational efforts have been abundant, we are only as effective as what the congregation enables to nurture faith.

1885-1940

Congregational-based initiatives by young people were met with adult church leaders who hindered or controlled these efforts. Young People’s Bible Meetings (YPBMs) gained momentum in the Mennonite Church (MC) from 1890 to 1910. Outside Sunday school, this was perhaps the most readily accepted activity for young people who desired to gather in homes for Bible study and fellowship. These meetings, however, evolved to incorporate the entire congregation supported by denominational resources. In the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), Christian Endeavor Sunday evening meetings were similar.

The next influential youth activity was the Literary Society. At first there was disapproval among church leaders, since these were not started by the church and were more social in na-

ture. But by 1940, most conferences accepted them as legitimate youth activities. With the increasing intergenerational and institutional nature of YPBM, the Literaries became the place where young people could experience life with each other without the presence of controlling adults.

2010 Goshen College
Camping Inquiry Program
(CIP) participant Emily
Bowman, Camp Squeah,
Hope, British Columbia

Photo provided

Though our denominational efforts have been abundant, we are only as effective as what the congregation enables to nurture faith.

These grassroots efforts influenced denominational approaches to youth ministry. In 1921, the Young People’s Problems Committee (YPPC) of the MC was formed to examine the problems and religious life of Mennonite young people ages 15 to 27. The YPPC sponsored a four-day Young People’s Institute (YPIs) in 1927 on the campus of Goshen (Ind.) College. Though youth were not directly involved in its planning, they had positively influenced certain decisions. Eventually, the YPPC discontinued direct sponsorship of the YPIs but empowered regional conferences to plan their own events before phasing out due to the growth of Mennonite camping. Similarly, the GCs organized the first nine-day Young People’s Retreat (YPR) at Bluffton (Ohio) College in 1925, along with subsequent regional events springing up including the first churchwide YPR held in conjunction with the GC session in 1935. The YPRs and

YPIs served as important socializing efforts in Mennonite faith and identity and enabled young people to experience God through time away from home, fellowship with other youth and engaging dynamic speakers, worship and discussion topics.

At the congregational level, voices called for churches to holistically integrate youth ministry into the life of the church.

1940-1968

Denominational efforts to influence the faith of young people epitomized this era during a time of war and the emerging “teenage culture.” Young People’s Union (YPU) began in 1941 to support local youth ministry efforts in GC churches by giving guidance to the plethora of congregational activities already offered. All young people between the ages of 12 and 30 were considered members. YPU included executive officers, cabinet, annual council of district and institutional representatives, and conference-wide retreats and workshops.

Mennonite Youth Fellowship (MYF) officially started in 1948, though it was an action by the MC General Conference in 1947 that authorized its formation and appointed the first interim coun-

cil. Since Literaries received criticism as one-dimensional social gatherings, the MYF touted a holistic program around the areas of Faith and Practice, Fellowship and Service. Though MYF was not embraced by every conference, it was organized at the national, regional and local levels with annual delegate conventions for executive officers of each branch to gather for instruction and exhortation. The national MYF Cabinet dissolved in 1968 due to denominational restructuring and realignment of youth ministry oversight.

Two other youth ministry movements deserve mentioning: Mennonite camps and high schools. Stemming from the recent success of YPRs and YPIs, Camp Men-O-Lan (GC) and Laurelville Mennonite Camp (MC) began in 1941 and 1943, respectively, as their denominations’ first camps. Over the next 40 years, 41 MC-affiliated camps and 18 GC-affiliated camps developed. Some started with the intent of nurturing the children and youth of the church, but others had a more evangelistic focus. Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School began in 1942. Though there had been a few Mennonite academies established prior to this date, this was the first of a dozen Mennonite high schools to open in the next 15 years. These schools promoted a particular set of values, beliefs, attitudes and lifestyle expectations uniquely Mennonite.

2010 Goshen College
Ministry Inquiry
Program participant
Maggie Gilman (third
from right) with youth
from Drift Creek
Camp’s Surf Week.
Photo provided



1968-present

This third era is characterized by both a continuation of denominational efforts and by congregational self-direction. Conference youth ministers and denominational staff comprised the newly formed Youth Ministry Council (YMC), whose primary focus was to resource paid conference staff. However, not all conferences were able to afford such staff. The churchwide youth conventions grew, but unlike the MYF delegate conventions of the 1950s and 1960s, these gatherings were intended for high school youth and the entire youth group. The five-day mass sessions provided opportunities for young people to experience God during worship, seminars, service assignments and fellowship.

At the congregational level, voices called for churches to holistically integrate youth ministry into the life of the church. A denominational staff person wrote that youth ministry had been under fire in many congregations from parents who hurt when their children lost interest in church activities and from youth sponsors unwilling to serve more than one term. Other sources of entertainment competed with the youth group, the youth program became a parallel congregation separate from the adult congregation, and fewer and fewer adults were interested in serving as youth group sponsors. To respond to these challenges, *Blueprint for Congregational Youth Ministry*, a project of the Church of the Brethren, General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church, was published in 1988 and encouraged an integrated organizational structure.

Another reality has been the professionalization of youth ministry. A trend to hire paid youth pastors had increased among churches who could afford multistaffing, and by the early 2000s all our Mennonite colleges and seminaries offered courses in youth ministry. An increase in credentialing such pastors raised the pastoral and theological expectations of these leaders. However, numerous conferences had cut funding for youth ministry staff throughout the 1990s, and perhaps the low point of this trend occurred in 2003, when the denominational youth ministry position of Mennonite Church USA was eliminated.

Even though significant denominational resources have been exerted, local leaders were responsible for congregational efforts. Sometimes leaders gravitated toward experiential activities that interested them, excited the youth or were convenient to attend rather than always theologically consider the nature of faith championed by

these activities. The 1970s saw the rise of entrepreneurial, nondenominational publishing efforts from Youth Specialties and Group Publishing.

These energies touted a more “generic, bottom-line” form of Christianity and offered “cut-and-paste” activities to help busy youth leaders. As these businesses grew, so did their influence on youth ministry.

Future considerations

As I consider the future of Mennonite youth ministry, I believe we need to be theologically intentional and reflectively informed in all that we do, no matter the programmatic effort we employ. Life is busy and full of choices, and we dare not be theologically lazy. Will we as leaders and parents have the guts to discern what activities should comprise our youth’s time as we also examine our own lives?

We need to listen to the cries of all our youth, not just the ones who engage our denominational efforts.

Our denomination is positioned well to support the faith-nurturing efforts of our youth, but this must be done in a collaborative posture. Our church is multifaceted, so we dare not put all our eggs into one basket. Will the various faith-shaping institutions work together to wrestle with today’s challenges, or will we compete for the attention of our youth and youth leaders?

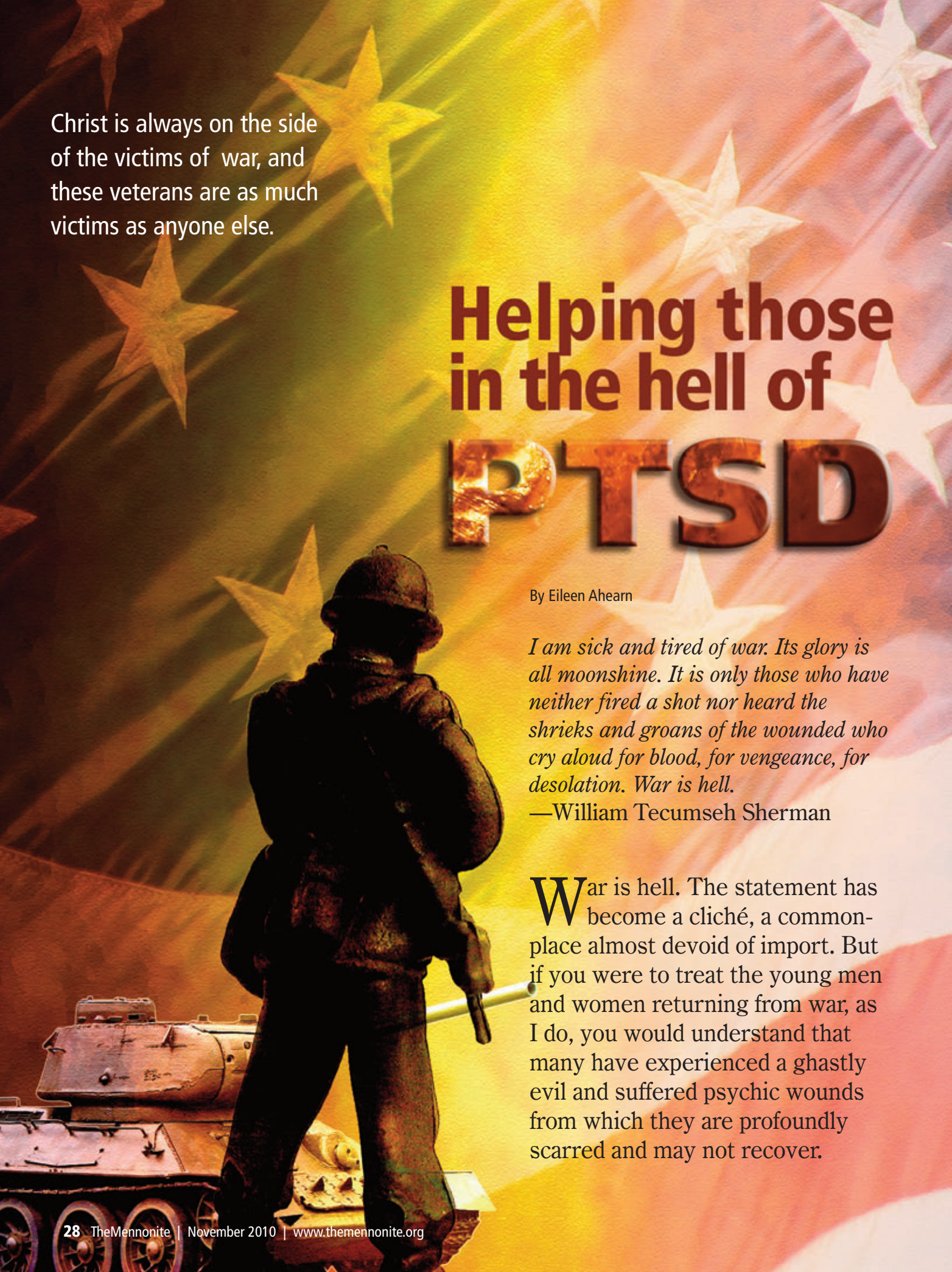
We need to listen to the cries of all our youth, not just the ones who engage our denominational efforts. The North American Mennonite church is changing, and we need to be attuned to all its voices, not just the ones who have paid adult leaders guiding the way. Will we listen to the under-represented and actively pay attention to the diverse places the Holy Spirit is at work?

The challenges faced in youth ministry are no different from what the broader church confronts. If we as a church are properly attuned to the changing world around us and faithfully respond as Jesus would—and involve our youth in that process—then I am confident their faith will positively grow. Will we have the courage to put aside

some of the generational bickering and get on with the mission of God?



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Christ is always on the side
of the victims of war, and
these veterans are as much
victims as anyone else.

Helping those in the hell of PTSD

By Eileen Ahearn

*I am sick and tired of war. Its glory is
all moonshine. It is only those who have
neither fired a shot nor heard the
shrieks and groans of the wounded who
cry aloud for blood, for vengeance, for
desolation. War is hell.*

—William Tecumseh Sherman

War is hell. The statement has become a cliché, a commonplace almost devoid of import. But if you were to treat the young men and women returning from war, as I do, you would understand that many have experienced a ghastly evil and suffered psychic wounds from which they are profoundly scarred and may not recover.

Mennonites should become involved with and assist veterans.

I am a psychiatrist working in a VA (Veterans Administration) hospital. I am also a Mennonite committed to nonviolence. I see no contradiction in this and find the convergence of these two identities satisfying, even necessary. Christ is always on the side of the victims of war, and these veterans are as much victims as anyone else.

The rates of mental health issues in our returning veterans as well as the need for ongoing care are staggering. More than 1.6 million U.S. troops have been deployed to either Iraq or Afghanistan since 2001. Approximately 25 percent of returning veterans meet criteria for a mental health disorder. The RAND Study (see box, page 30, #1) found that 14 percent of returning veterans screen positive for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and 14 percent screen positive for major depression. Due to its high rate of occurrence, PTSD has been named a “signature injury” of the war in Iraq.

The violence of war can cripple the human psyche. PTSD, first used as a term to describe the psychological difficulties of returning Vietnam soldiers, often has disabling and enduring symptoms. People with PTSD must have had exposure to a life-threatening event and re-experience that event through distressing daytime memories, flashbacks and haunting nightmares. They are agitated and extremely watchful in public. High irritability and outbursts of anger are common, particularly in combat-induced PTSD. Avoidance of thoughts and feelings associated with the trauma is significant. These individuals feel emotionally disconnected from loved ones and often have a pervasive mistrust of people in general. If this is not bad enough, nearly three-quarters of people with PTSD have at least one other psychiatric diagnosis, and a significant number have at least three other comorbid diagnoses (see box, #2). The personal costs of war-related injury to veterans and their families can be lifelong. Divorce, joblessness, economic hardship, substance abuse and increased suicide risk are all troubling byproducts of PTSD. The cost of providing medical care and long-term disability benefits to returning veterans is equally shocking, with recent total health-care estimates of \$424 billion (see box, #3).

Why should Mennonites involve themselves in the effort to help returning veterans? After all, the United States has an all-volunteer military. People enlist knowing they may be in risky or dangerous situations. They also know they may be called upon to injure or perhaps kill another

human being. Have these people not embraced violence and brought all this upon themselves?

Consider why young people enlist. Studies have shown that the propensity to serve has been declining among youth in the United States over the last two decades. In one study, only 30 percent of first-term soldiers knew during their high school years that they wanted to join the military. This group is identified in the literature as having a “high propensity” for military service and tends to join the military out of a sense of patriotism, a desire to serve and a desire for adventure and challenge. The majority of current first-term soldiers seem to fall into the “low propensity” group and cite occupational and monetary reasons for joining. In one study (see box, #4), the majority of soldiers endorsed reasons such as “best option available,” “repay college loans” or “lack of better options” as their explanation for joining. Therefore, the majority of today’s volunteer military enlists for financial and occupational reasons, not a predilection toward violence.

We are creating a new generation of young men and women who have killed people and can barely live with themselves as a result.

But how, a Mennonite may ask, can soldiers bring themselves to kill another human being, even an enemy? S.L.A. Marshall, in his book *Men Against Fire* (see box, #5), wrote: “It is ... reasonable to believe that the average and healthy individual—the man who can endure the mental and physical stresses of combat—still has such an inner and usually unrealized resistance toward killing a fellow man that he will not of his own volition take life if it is possible to turn away from that responsibility. ... At the vital point he becomes a conscientious objector.”

People have a high resistance to killing. It is not a natural response to threat and is anathema to most people. Historically, soldiers in battle have not fired their weapons. In World War II, for example, Marshall’s study showed a firing rate of only 25 percent. This “lack of enthusiasm” for killing the enemy is a well-known phenomenon and represents a powerful force, perhaps with moral, psychological and even spiritual roots. Unfortunately, the military eagerly adopted Mar-

shall's suggestions for changing infantry training to remedy the low firing rate, resulting in increased firing rates in the Korean War (55 percent) and in the Vietnam War (up to 90 percent). At their core, most soldiers do not want to kill anyone. It is their military training or indoctrination that modulates their natural inclinations and lowers this resistance.

As witnesses for peace, we must recognize the devastating effects of war and reach out to those who suffer during war, including veterans.

Although the military may be more effective at training soldiers to fire at the enemy, they have been unable to eliminate the moral and psychological consequences of killing. In my practice, I have treated hundreds of veterans with PTSD caused by killing another human being or witnessing the death of a fellow soldier, "enemy combatant" or civilian. I am still treating World War II and Vietnam veterans who weep uncontrollably when they recount taking a life. We are creating a new generation of young men and women who have killed people and can barely live with themselves as a result.

In her recent essay, Nancy Sherman (see box, #6) interviewed dozens of soldiers who talked about wanting to process the loss of what they had done or experienced in war. She writes,

"They wanted to register the complex inner moral landscape of war by finding some measure of empathy with their own emotions."

These soldiers are deeply troubled by what they have seen and done in combat.

Civilian deaths are particularly haunting. One soldier recounted firing shots at a car that accelerated toward a security checkpoint in Iraq. Soldiers at these checkpoints must make instantaneous decisions as to whether to fire on vehicles that fail to yield, because of the constant threat of suicide bombers who will blow themselves up as they drive through a checkpoint. One can only imagine that soldier's horror when he opened the car door to discover the torn bodies of a young child and his father.

Witnessing the death of another soldier is also harrowing. I have heard countless stories of soldiers watching while fellow soldiers get killed or maimed in an IED explosion. In another grisly episode, a veteran noted his anguish to me after having to clean up the body parts of a soldier that had committed suicide by shooting himself while on guard duty.

While therapy and medication can help, there often is a larger struggle with the moral and spiritual dimensions of killing. The amount of suffering and anguish that occur as a result of PTSD is more significant than I have witnessed with any other psychiatric disorder. I believe that this has everything to do with the atrocity that one has witnessed or participated in. And I have yet to meet one soldier with PTSD who enlisted in the military because he or she felt compelled to go to Iraq or Afghanistan to kill people.

So what does this have to do with us? Mennonites are a people of service who rise to help those in need after disasters. What disaster is more cruel or devastating than war? It is fitting that Mennonites should become involved with and assist veterans. As witnesses for peace, we must recognize the devastating effects of war and reach out to those who suffer during war, including veterans. This is not the time to be afraid or conflicted in our efforts; our brothers and sisters are suffering. In Jesus' parable, the Samaritan did not judge the injured man before he moved to rescue him. Neither should we.

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As a young adult I participated in a Mennonite Church Assembly. The theme was “Free to Be Bound to Be Free.” Those words challenged me then, and I’ve thought of them many times since. Now as I reflect on the second chapter of James I’m wondering if what we really want to be saying is that as followers of Jesus we are “free to be bound to make free.” That is how I am coming to understand the law of liberty. ►

Reflections on James 2:1-17 and Mark 7:24-37

THE LAW OF **liberty**

By Betsy Headrick McCrae

The royal law is the law of the poor, the law that protects those who have little and includes those who are on the margins of society.

In this chapter James gives us three ways of looking at the law. In verse 8 he speaks of the royal law. Which kingdom is he referring to? Rome? Jerusalem? There's a clue in verse 5: "Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him?" Aha. The kingdom is the one the poor will inherit. The royal law is the law of the poor, the law that protects those who have little and includes those who are on the margins of society.

He meets her where she is and gives her what she needs. He sets her free.

What is the substance of this law? "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The royal law is the law of love. Love as the standard. Love as the measuring stick for what's the right thing to do.

"So speak and act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty," James continues in verse 12. How does the law of liberty connect with the royal law, the law of love? Remember how Jesus introduces his ministry in the Gospel of Luke: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," he says, "because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free." There's the link: The royal law is all about bringing good news to the poor. And the law of liberty is about setting folks free.

When we encounter the law of liberty, whatever has held us captive, holds us no more. We are set free. But this is not a free-for-all; we are set free for a purpose. We are free but we are held to the law of love, which compels us to set others free. We are free to be bound to make free. What builds up, recognizes, gives honor to, breaks bonds, embraces, lifts up and welcomes in is what is lawful and right in God's eyes. We are not called to judge but to love and be merciful. We are called to do whatever it takes to set folks free.

How does it work? How is this put into practice? There are a couple of interesting examples

in Mark 7:24-37.

Jesus is tired. He wants to get away. He leaves the Jewish area of Galilee and goes into the land of the Gentiles. Perhaps here he can rest. "Yet he could not escape notice," the text says, "but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet." Even here in this foreign place a needy woman seeks him out. She comes into the house where he has sequestered himself and speaks to him. Jesus reacts harshly.

This woman is a Gentile of Syrophenician origin. She is a Canaanite, a descendent of this region of Tyre. These things—woman, Gentile, Canaanite—are all strikes against her from the Jewish male perspective. And they may well have made Jesus, a Jewish male, uncomfortable. But Jesus is seldom derailed by such things. Perhaps there's more to it.

The tension in this story may stem from a situation of economic injustice. Landlocked Galilee, a Jewish homeland, exported agricultural produce through the Gentile coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon. These cities, in turn, depended on Galilee for food. In periods of crisis or food shortage, when the farmers of Galilee were struggling economically, they may have resented producing goods for the wealthy cities. Like many small farmers in poorer areas in our world today, the Galilean farmers may have had little control over the food they worked hard to produce, leaving them feeling frustrated, underfed and exploited by those who benefited from their labor.

And here is the Syrophenician woman, a member of this privileged group. She is a person who, relatively speaking, should be able to take care of her own needs. Yet this privileged woman has the gall to break into Jesus' time of rest and ask him for help.

Jesus' first reaction is one of judgment: He says to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." Whoa. This is harsh. And this is Jesus speaking. What's happening here? I imagine Jesus thinking of how the Galilean people have been exploited. I imagine him wanting to be on their side in this situation of economic injustice. I imagine him remembering the words of the Old Testament

prophets condemning the rich and lifting up the oppressed. What you represent, he says to this woman, is not what is just and right. You don't deserve my help.

Well. Even Jesus has to learn what it means to follow the law of liberty, it seems. Even for Jesus this is not easy or obvious. Even faithful Jesus needs reminding that the law to which God is committed above all else is the law that sets people free. And this is true, even in an uncomfortable situation of injustice like this.

The woman sticks with Jesus. She knows she has a deep need that only he can meet. She responds, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." And as she says this, Jesus' eyes are opened. He no longer sees her as a representative of injustice to be shunned. He sees her as a person held captive. He puts his judgment aside and opts for mercy. He meets her where she is and gives her what she needs. He sets her free.

You get the feeling that this was hard on Jesus. In the story he moves on through Gentile territory. And again he is confronted with a situation of need. They bring to him a deaf man who has an impediment in his speech. But he doesn't respond immediately. They have to beg. Jesus finally relents. He takes the man aside and puts his fingers into his ears. Jesus spits and touches the man's tongue. Then, looking up to heaven, he sighs. This whole thing seems to be asking much of him. He seems to be doing it almost against his will. But Jesus says to the man, "Be opened." And immediately the man's ears are opened, his tongue is released and he speaks plainly. He is set free.

I don't really know why we have these two stories of healing in which Jesus seems so resistant. But there they are in all their difficulty. Perhaps they are there to let us know that it is not easy to live by the law of liberty. Even Jesus had problems with it occasionally. Perhaps these stories are there for us to ponder when we feel that surely God can't really mean for us to respond to the cries we hear, these voices begging for our attention. Perhaps in these stories we see that God really is serious about mercy and that healing must happen. Whether we agree with it or not, those

who are in bondage must be set free.

"What good is it, my brothers and sisters," writes James, "if you say you have faith but do not have works? Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."

But living according to the law of liberty brings life. When the eyes of the blind are opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped, says the prophet

Perhaps these stories are there for us to ponder when we feel that surely God can't really mean for us to respond to the cries we hear, these voices begging for our attention.

Isaiah, then the lame shall leap like a deer and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. Waters shall break forth in the wilderness. Springs of water will feed the thirsty ground.

Of course, we are not Jesus. We cannot miraculously heal. But we can act out our faith in ways that respond to the needs around us. We can love our neighbors with an integrity that speaks from the deepest part of us to the deepest part of them and invites them wholeheartedly, freely, into the circle. We can trust that God will work through us to free and heal, even if we are uncomfortable and don't fully understand. We can choose mercy over judgment. Jesus meets us on these terms. We, too, receive mercy. We, too, are set free. And we respond by passing on the freedom. Our faith is not dead. Instead, springs of water break forth in the wilderness around us. Life-giving streams flow through the desert. And we and all those around us drink and live.



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Marginality, displacement and mission



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Walls and borders do not define us. Our primary identity is that of a people of the Way.

I was struck by a recent blog post by Jeremy Yoder. He wrote, “While there will always be rural and small town Mennonite churches, I also believe that Mennonite Church USA’s future also lies with the non-Anglo and urban congregations that may better reflect the theologically diverse and multicultural world many of our young people grow up in.” His post confirmed for me that the pressing issues surrounding immigration may have profound missional implications.

The two World Wars were a time of heightened marginality for many Anabaptist immigrants who had come earlier to North America seeking a place to pursue their faith in freedom. The climate in many places across the United States today, and particularly in Arizona, stirs up feelings of marginality among more recent immigrants. We see images of people dying in the desert or being arrested in the streets.

In contrast to these images, which evoke pain, suffering, conflict and struggle, John Driver offers compelling depictions of the believing community in his book *Images of the Church in Mission*. The images John draws out of the biblical text are potent metaphors that cause us to see relationships that did not exist before the use of the image; for example, the images of the Bride of Christ and the Body of Christ created new understandings of the nature of the church.

Because images in the Bible often overlap, it may be more productive to think in terms of a “field of imagery.” Against the backdrop of our current context, we may need to consider images of the church in mission that show displacement. Displacement alludes to the tension the church experiences from being “in the world but not of it.” The essence of mission, being sent (to advance God’s purposes in the world), suggests displacement. Every Christian (and the church as a whole) is displaced in the world by virtue of our calling. The tension is exacerbated when we take seriously our identity as “citizens of heaven” who are at the same time set apart as “ambassadors” to the world in which we live.

Just as often, marginality is reflected in biblical images of the people of God. The term describes the experience of people who live between two cultures without fully belonging to either one. The reality of marginality is reflected in the journeys of Jesus among the cultures (and subcul-

tures) of his time. It is also exhibited in Jesus’ ministry in the marginality of the Galilee and his witness to the center at Jerusalem. In Jesus, the church finds itself on the way to both the margin and the center, on the way from both and in between both. The missional church is called to walk with Jesus in the way of embracing its marginality as a peculiar people redeemed by God and as the community of those sent by God to engage the world with the good news of God’s reconciling love in Jesus. As the church embraces that dual identity, it becomes an agent of reconciliation and transformation in the world. It is in this journey that the church discovers its true identity and gives witness to its essence.

I confess that my personal, social-historical reality as someone who grew up in South Africa predisposes me toward this image of displacement/marginality. I share that with those on the growing edge of Mennonite Church USA, many of whom are recent immigrants. More importantly, however, my spiritual heritage/location as an Anabaptist also joins me to many others whose history and convictions compelled them to embrace a pilgrim identity. The pilgrim imagery carries with it a suggestion that identity is found on the journey of differentiation from the dominant culture as a contrast/alternative community and of witness within that culture as an apostolic community. The apostolic dimension of our identity reminds us that we are sent into a profound and intentional engagement with our culture for the sake of God’s good news of healing and hope that comes to us in Jesus Christ.

As Anabaptists, our identity is not circumscribed by particular boundaries, whether of national identity, blood or cultural heritage. Walls and borders do not define us. Our primary identity is that of a people of the Way. We are a people on the Way, called to cross frontiers of culture, language, ethnicity and religious affiliation. Our humanity is defined by God’s reign of love and forgiveness, of justice and peace, of hospitality and generosity. As we embrace this distinctiveness, we will be fashioned as a people of witness in a world that is increasingly fearful, exclusive, xenophobic and intolerant. We will be created as an apostolic peoplehood. Is this not what it means to be a missional people? Is this not the vision we have set before ourselves? **TM**

Of silliness and saints

My birthday falls at the end of October, a season of great silliness in our culture. The TV industry tries to entertain us with its worst horror films. Candy merchants place great hopes on selling sugar to a populace of growing obesity. And people pretending to be conservatives are spending hundreds of millions on ads to warn us against excessive spending.

It is important to step back from the fake fears of Halloween and reclaim a wider perspective. We might not be so easily manipulated by alarmists if we were more determined to make a sober reckoning of our actual situation. The deeper tradition tries to tell us that one good way of doing this is by paying attention to the wisdom and legacy of those who traveled these paths before us.

All Saints Day, coming after the “hallowed evening,” invites us into reflection and remembrance. We remember how our fathers and mothers in faith dealt with challenges and adversity. We draw strength from their skills in adapting and surviving, their courage in facing the new and unknown. Hardship made them tough; stories today make them real to us again.

From the years our family spent in Croatia, I treasure the ways we came to understand ourselves and our own culture through the contrasts we experienced there. If we were in Zagreb again this season, we would be joining thousands of the city’s residents in flocking by bus or tram to the stately Mirogoj Cemetery on the upper slopes of the town, rolling toward nearby Mount Sljeme. Families stream into the cemetery carrying flowers and candles to mark the resting place of their own relatives but also the national poets and cultural heroes whose work is celebrated afresh each season. Young parents tell their children the tales of their heritage; heroes and goats of yesteryear can be revisited to encourage or warn the living to take heed, consider their ways and seek wisdom.

We loved to join the folks making this annual pilgrimage of sorts. The street vendors peddling hot roasted chestnuts along the way added an alluring attraction. We walked with friends among the monuments, learning chapters of the culture’s history in vivid glimpses through the smoky dusk. What makes a people who they are? Where does their resilience come from? How do they handle tough times? Stories give answers and suggest trajectories for dealing with future crises.

But stories need time, they need occasions, they ask us to pay deliberate attention. A poet should not be packaged between commercial breaks. The songs of martyrs do not fit with the froth of soap and sandwich ads. We need to hold hands with the long, unbroken chain of faithful witnesses from previous generations as we hunker down for another long winter.

As our family gathers for upcoming holiday times together, I look forward to holding our new grandson and gathering with our children to tell a few stories of times of testing in the past, of challenges met and accomplishments to celebrate. I hope we also tell tales of loss and failure, since we often have more to learn from them than what may seem simple in the wake of success.

As I learn what it means to become a new grandparent, I am drawn to review the stories from my own grandparents. I realize that if anything worthwhile is to convey from that span of generations into the new ones, I need to carry some freight over the bridge. This little boy I hold in my arms has roots and connections that span four continents already; the family stories I want him to know cover three centuries thus far, and he may well carry them into a fourth. Our faith stories cover four millennia. We definitely have some things we need to talk about.

A few years ago I had the privilege of turning 50 in Jerusalem. We walked the walls that day; I posed with a 50-year-old cactus. Some friends on hand, lots of e-mails and cards from afar, and a fun song adapted by our daughter and her friend marked the occasion. That semester season of sabbath reflection stays with me, impacting the way I read my Bible and the way I envision the stories of our faith. There were tough stories at hand, from the past and the present, challenging and disturbing our concepts of shalom and security and ecumenics and interfaith encounters.

When our stories properly place a contested faith heritage at the center of who we are and hope to be, we will have some protection from the fake fears and manufactured silliness that passes for popular culture in this season. We will counter silliness with the sparkling joy of the saints of God. **TM**



Gerald Shenk is an adjunct professor at Goshen (Ind.) College.

Stories give answers and suggest trajectories for dealing with future crises.

At peace with war? Nope. Just numb.



Roger Martin is a member of Peace Mennonite Church in Lawrence, Kan.

Mennonites who don't stand up for peace may be absenting themselves from the debate because they feel their words and deeds won't matter.

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

I came to the Mennonite church late. I was 51. I loved the church's emphasis on simplicity and service.

Pacifism was harder. It wasn't a matter of fealty to my father, an army sergeant in World War II. He was no glorifier of war. He was wrecked by it. "When he left for Europe, he was a sweet boy," my mother says. "When he came back, he was a hard man."

Rather, pacifism was hard because, reason told me, one well-placed bullet in Hitler's head around 1935 might have made a difference to 6 million Jews—plus many warriors and civilian bystanders. (Think Hiroshima and Nagasaki.)

But I've changed. Already 64, I've spent a lifetime—except for a brief spell between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the first (failed) attack on the World Trade Center—as a citizen of a nation at war, sometimes cold, sometimes hot, never just right, a nation menaced by enemies, real or imagined. I'm sick and tired of it. Sick and tired of all violence.

I'll forgo the moral problems invoked by war. You all know those.

Let me be businesslike instead: The cost-benefit ratio of killing people, to be brutally frank and frankly brutal, has declined sharply. One well-placed bullet in one sociopathic skull in 1935 might have saved millions of lives. Today we spend mountains of dough stalking phantoms in mountain caves.

What do we get for the bucks? Little bang. At best, the result is a nonresult. Goshen or Newton don't get nuked.

In the April issue, the editor asked why Mennonites aren't resisting the current war and posited five reasons.

The reasons I don't see on his list are these.

1. The young don't have a personal stake in war. War is executed by professional soldiers recruited from neighborhoods unfrequented by most people reading this. Protest against Vietnam came about because the young, even the sons of city council members, had some skin in the game. Most of today's young people don't.

2. People don't think they can do a thing about war. I have been alive for wars or military actions in Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Iraq (twice), not to mention the more psychologically corrosive Cold War and dread of Al Qaeda demons. But what can I do? Or you? Or you?

I want to suggest an event. Pure whimsy, this. It's inspired by the Tea Party stuff. Whatever else you think about the partiers, they're leveraging their message through media.

We need an alternative tea party, one that says taxation and big government aren't the problems.

A sense of powerlessness is the problem, the chasm between our leaders and us.

My fantasy for this group is a made-for-TV, YouTube-worthy event called "Walk for a Change." Somebody young starts walking toward Washington, D.C. Then somebody else joins that person. Then more somebodies. Old gaffers, even. The unemployed. Even some tea partiers. We're all walking for a change that empowers more of us to feel connected to leaders. Even if we have to rewrite the Constitution and change the electoral system to achieve that.

Can't you just see it? The flyovers by helicopters of the ever-enlarging crowds trudging east, permitting broadcast on the nightly news?

The systemic change we seek will allow us to dislodge leaders who think they own their elected positions because, well, they just about do, thanks to a toxic blend of well-heeled special interests and an enervated electorate.

The walkers all talk to each other, left wing and right, and find out what understandings they share about the problem, even if they disagree on solutions. In Washington, they sit outside the White House and keep talking until they arrive, by a consensus decision-making process, in good old Mennonite fashion, at a set of measures designed to up the impact of nonpoliticians on government decision-making and dilute the impact of money.

Even if this involves rewriting the Constitution. Even if it peels 10,000 points off the Dow. Even, that is, if it turns my Golden Years to Leaden Ones.

Mennonites who don't stand up for peace may be absenting themselves from the debate because they feel their words and deeds won't matter.

But a sense of power is like an unused muscle. It atrophies if it's not exercised. Exercise demands engagement, a willingness to strain after a result. That straining after results demands vision. So Mennonite resistance to war must begin with vision.

If you don't like "Walk for a Change," then convene a group to cook up a vision you do like. Turn off the TV. Do it today. **TM**

MPN may merge with Third Way Media

Plan was approved by publishing, mission boards; awaits MC Canada's OK

Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN), the publishing ministry of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, and Third Way Media, a department of Mennonite Mission Network, plan to integrate and form a new organization.

The integration was approved on Sept. 23 by the boards of MPN and Mission Network, meeting in Pittsburgh. The approval is subject to the affirmation of Mennonite Church Canada, part owner of MPN, and the ratification of Mennonite Church USA Executive Board.

Mennonite Church Canada's General Board and Formation Council will discuss the integration proposal later this fall. The Mennonite Church USA Executive Board affirmed the general direction of the proposed integration plan at its meetings in Pittsburgh.

The MPN and Mission Network boards also approved the creation of a reference group, made up of members of the MPN and Mission Network boards, to help shepherd the integration process.

In approving the integration, the two boards noted that the integration of MPN, which is based in Scottsdale, Pa., and Waterloo, Ont., and Third Way Media, based in Harrisonburg, Va., will be beneficial for the church.

The integration plan, coauthored by business consultant Allon Lefever and Duane Stoltzfus, who teaches media and communications at Goshen (Ind.) College, calls for a new name for the organization and for the consolidation of as many operations as possible into one primary location to help improve efficiency and sustainability. The plan recommends that this location be in Harrisonburg, Va., with an on-site CEO.

Dreams for the new organization include becoming a clearing house and center of Anabaptist content, working with communication and creative writing departments at Mennonite colleges and universities, partnering with other denominations looking to use media, and fostering new creative talent.

"The possibilities are many," says Stoltzfus. "The key is bringing together a highly talented group of creative persons who can stay abreast of these opportunities—people who can create products and services to meet a future in the world of media that is, in many ways, still yet undefined."

While excited by the possibilities presented by the integration of the two organizations, MPN executive director Ron Rempel says "these changes will not be without some pain due to relocation and consolidation ... we believe it is essential for the long-term sustainability and to enable us to better serve the church."

Interim Third Way co-director Sheri Hartzler says "work-

ing together will bring financial stability and at the same time reach a wider audience with the good news of the gospel."

On the financial side, the integration will help both organizations work toward sustainability through cost savings, new products and services, and new marketing initiatives.

In the current fiscal year, MPN expects revenues of about \$3.2 million from the sale of books, curriculum and other items, while Third Way Media expects just over \$532,000 from grants, donations and sales.

Since Third Way Media has been a department of Mission Network for more than 50 years, Mission Network has pledged financial support and services for the new organization to facilitate the integration, especially during the first five years. The new organization will relate to both Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada and will retain a presence in Canada. It will also continue to offer products and services through existing brands, such as Herald Press, Faith & Life Resources and Third Way.—*John Longhurst of Mennonite Publishing Network*

Publishing Network director to retire

Ron Rempel, 65, executive director of Mennonite Publishing Network, announced his retirement Sept. 23 during the MPN board meeting in Pittsburgh. He will leave the organization next summer. During his seven years as executive director, MPN



eliminated a legacy debt of almost \$5 million, created a major new Sunday school curriculum called *Gather 'Round*, brought costs under control through consolidation and downsizing and began a process leading to integration with Third Way Media. All these things will be part of Rempel's legacy, says MPN board chair Phil Bontrager, noting that he "provided consistent and gentle leadership" during times of "significant change and disruption."

Rempel says it's been good to be "part of MPN's turnaround." But what was especially gratifying, he says, was "to see the church re-embrace publishing and to see MPN draw closer to the church." At the same time, he says, "there are still challenges ahead for the new organization and a lot of work yet to be done. ... I'm looking forward to how we will find new ways to be of service to the church and a witness to the world."—*John Longhurst for Mennonite Publishing Network*

Executive Board gets conflicting advice

Moderator-elect says conversations were 'candid, direct and open.'

After a Leaders Forum marked by disagreement over whether to hold the denomination's 2013 convention in Phoenix (see page 39), Mennonite Church USA Executive Board members sought a positive way forward. The EB met in Pittsburgh Sept. 23 and 25.

They expressed disappointment over unresolved conflict but saw hope that the church could learn and grow from the experience.

"We were able to practice and live out how we love each other when we disagree," board member Elizabeth Soto Albrecht said Sept. 25. "It was painful, but we were functioning as one body. There were many parts hurting, and we were all hurting together. God was with us."

Moderator-elect Dick Thomas praised the leaders' willingness to speak freely, even to express pain and anger.

"I would celebrate the fact that our conversation was candid, direct and open in a way we don't often do," he said.

"We need to be able to have these kinds of conversations around difficult questions. It shows a desire to grow in our ability to discern what the Spirit is saying to the church."

The Executive Board met before and after the Leaders Forum, a gathering of more than 200 members of denominational agency boards, constituency groups and the Constituency Leaders Council, an advisory group.

Leaders Forum participants struggled with conflicting advice about whether to withdraw the denomination's 2013 convention from Phoenix.

The Intercultural Relations Reference Committee, composed of representatives from racial/ethnic groups, presented a recommendation to go to Phoenix. But leaders of Iglesia Menonita Hispana (Hispanic Mennonite Church) said

visive in ways that make us stronger and not weaker," Soto Albrecht said.

On Sept. 23, before the Leaders Forum meeting, board member Juanita Nuñez said she had talked to people of other denominations who were glad to hear that Mennonites were talking about immigration issues.

"A lot of people are looking up to us and asking what is going to happen in the Mennonite church?" she said.

Glen Guyton, associate executive director for constituent resources, said the Phoenix question was symbolic of much larger issues.

"We don't want the focus to be on Phoenix," he said. "How do we as a church walk in solidarity with all people? That is the core. We cannot focus on the location."

The board met Sept. 25 with representatives of Mennonite World Conference and expressed strong interest in inviting MWC to hold its 2015 assembly in the United States.

MWC's Executive Committee has stated a preference for the United States. The last assembly in the United States was in Wichita, Kan., in 1978. The last one in North America was in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1990.

The likely U.S. location would be eastern Pennsylvania. A U.S. group did a feasibility study for hosting in that area in 2004, before MWC officials chose Paraguay for the 2009 gathering.

MWC representatives Larry Miller, Iris de Leon-Hartshorn and Bert Lobe met with the board. They hope to receive invitations from MWC's three U.S. member churches—Mennonite Church USA, the U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches and the Brethren in Christ Church—and an associate member, Conservative Mennonite Conference.

Board members also discussed whether to try what Diller called the "Pittsburgh experiment"—to suspend most resolutions in favor of a more consensus-based method of decision-making at next summer's denominational convention in Pittsburgh.

"There is no intent to shut down discussion of important issues in the assembly," said Ervin Stutzman, executive director. "We want to have more time to discuss concerns but a less emotionally charged meeting."

Diller said the board would use written comments from Leaders Forum table groups to help decide whether to de-emphasize resolutions at Pittsburgh.

Board members also met with the boards of Mennonite Education Agency and Mennonite Health Services Alliance to build relationships with them. The board's next meeting is to be in Tampa, Fla., Jan. 7-9, 2011.—*Paul Schrag of Mennonite Weekly Review, reprinted with permission*

It was painful, but we were functioning as one body.—Elizabeth Soto Albrecht

they had not changed their stance against holding the convention there.

At issue is Arizona's Senate Bill 1070, an immigration law that critics say will lead to racial profiling and create a hostile environment for Hispanics.

Thomas and moderator Ed Diller said the board would need to decide within six months whether to withdraw from Phoenix. They said input from the Leaders Forum, presented in written summaries of conversations at table groups, would provide important new counsel.

"We are committed to working at these issues that are di-

Leaders Forum struggles with convention decision

Iglesia Menonita Hispana's position remains to 'rethink' convention location.

Whether or not Mennonite Church USA has a convention in Phoenix in 2013, church leaders are committed to solidarity with immigrants. More than 200 leaders representing Mennonite Church USA, churchwide organizations and area conferences gathered for the first time outside a convention. They discussed topics such as whether to move the 2013 convention from Phoenix due to Arizona's immigration law.

Though various opinions were shared Sept. 23-25 in Pittsburgh during a Leaders' Forum—including differing statements from two church groups—leaders said they will discern God's will together.

"The full burden of this decision has been placed on the shoulders of our Hispanic constituency," said Glen Guyton, Mennonite Church USA associate executive director for constituent resources, the staff person who relates with racial/ethnic groups. "The Phoenix decision is only a symbol of much bigger challenges we face as Mennonite Church USA—that racial/ethnic congregations are missions and not valuable contributors."

Guyton is part of Mennonite Church USA's Intercultural Relations Reference Committee, a group that works on common racial/ethnic issues. Guyton presented an IRRC statement that recommends holding the 2013 convention in Phoenix, "although we understand that some in our racial/ethnic constituency may not agree."

The IRRC includes representatives from all three official Mennonite Church USA racial/ethnic groups—Iglesia Menonita Hispana (Hispanic Mennonite Church), African-American Mennonite Association and Native Mennonite Ministries.

The statement calls the church to 12 steps of racial inclusion and equality. These include making the churchwide priority of antiracism a more prominent part of conventions and offering support to "recent immigrants in our communities without making judgment."

The IRRC includes two representatives of Iglesia Menonita Hispana, who wrote a letter in April asking denominational leaders to "rethink" the Phoenix convention. Yvonne Diaz, executive director of Iglesia Menonita Hispana and an IRRC member, said the Hispanic church's position has not changed.

"There's a hostile environment there," Diaz said. "It's very detrimental to our Latino brothers and sisters."

Representatives from Iglesia Menonita Hispana and IRRC were not alone in their differing views. Malinda Berry, Mennonite Education Agency board member, said the Phoenix decision is morally ambiguous. "There is no clear right or wrong answer," Berry said.

Chuck Neufeld, a member of the Constituency Leaders Council, said pastors in Illinois Conference came to a strong consensus: "Unless IMH is asking us to meet in Phoenix, we can't," he said.

Kenneth Thompson, Executive Board member, said there's a difference between uniformity and unity. "In the Scriptures, presence, not absence, makes the difference," he said. "For those who choose to go, go fully dressed in the armor of God. If you go, go with a purpose."—*Sheldon Good of Mennonite Weekly Review, reprinted with permission*



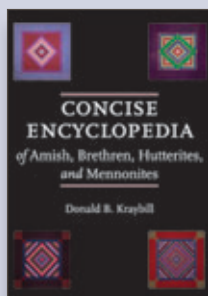
Yvonne Diaz

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Pittsburgh 2011: a multicultural family reunion

'We are the Church' Day is now a central theme in planning for convention.

Laurie Oswald Robinson



Marisa Alemán-Cantú, who is part of the youth worship committee and worship band, at a planning meeting for Pittsburgh 2011.

The more Grace Pam of Los Angeles Faith Chapel, a Mennonite pastor of Nigerian descent, helps plan multicultural activities for Pittsburgh 2011, the better she feels about being part of the “family reunion” that Mennonite Church USA conventions can symbolize.

“When you come to convention from an ethnic congregation in an outlying area conference, it’s easy to feel like an outsider,” says Pam, who is a member of the Mennonite Church USA’s Intercultural Relations Reference Committee (IRRC) and the Pittsburgh 2011 youth worship planning committee.

An increased sense of belonging and ownership for racial/ethnic constituents is what convention planners such as Pam hope to foster during the churchwide convention set for July 4-9, 2011.

Throughout the week, convention participants will have opportunities to experience the diverse ethnic and cultural traditions of Mennonite Church USA, as underrepresented racial/ethnic constituents serve as speakers and leaders of worship, music and seminars for both youth and adults.

On “We Are the Church” Day (July 6), the day’s events and activities will have a multicultural focus. That evening, the main events will be the racial/ethnic constituency group gatherings and the People of Color Dinner.

The vision for dedicating a day of the convention to celebrating the gifts, talents, languages and worship styles of underrepresented racial/ethnic Mennonites came into being when the Intercultural Relations Reference Committee (IRRC) met in October 2009. The committee recommended

cancelling plans for a separate churchwide gathering of underrepresented racial/ethnic people set for August and redirecting those resources and energies toward creating more integration at Pittsburgh 2011.

While the initial vision was to have multicultural programming on one day of the convention, “this ‘day’ has become a central theme in the planning for the entire convention,” says Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, director of convention planning for Mennonite Church USA. “We are choosing to better incorporate racial/ethnic gifts and talents throughout the week.”

Miller says that during the slot when youth and adults share seminar options, racial/ethnic people will lead half the seminars. Throughout the week, Scriptures will be presented in multiple languages, and Spanish speakers will help lead worship music.

Marisa Alemán-Cantú of Rock Island, Ill., member of the youth worship committee and youth worship band, says the committee selected musicians who would be able to lead worship in different styles and different languages.

“The amazing thing about being able to come to a Mennonite convention is that you get to experience many styles of music that our congregations use in worship—a hymn, a gospel song, hip hop or a Latino rhythm—but the great thing is that we’re all worshiping the same God,” she says.

Femi Fatunmbi, pastor of Royal Dominion Family Chapel in Los Angeles and a member of the IRRC and the adult worship planning committee, says: “Creating this day for Pittsburgh 2011 feels like a big, big step for us. It feels like the first time the church is fully saying, ‘We accept you as persons, not just as projects.’”

Fatunmbi hopes these new efforts will push Anglo-Europeans—many of whose ancestors were immigrants to America from Germany and Russia—to reflect more deeply on what it means to be people who are adopted into the same family of God, no matter what their origin.—*Laurie Oswald Robinson and Annette Brill Bergstresser for Mennonite Church USA*

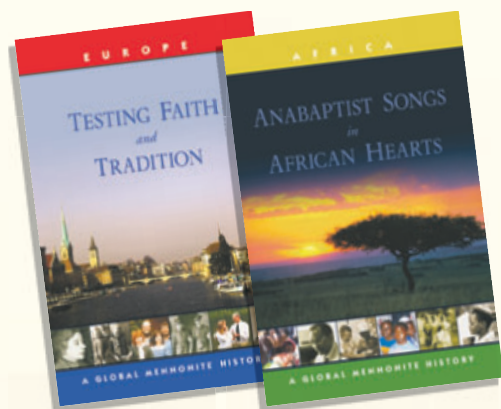
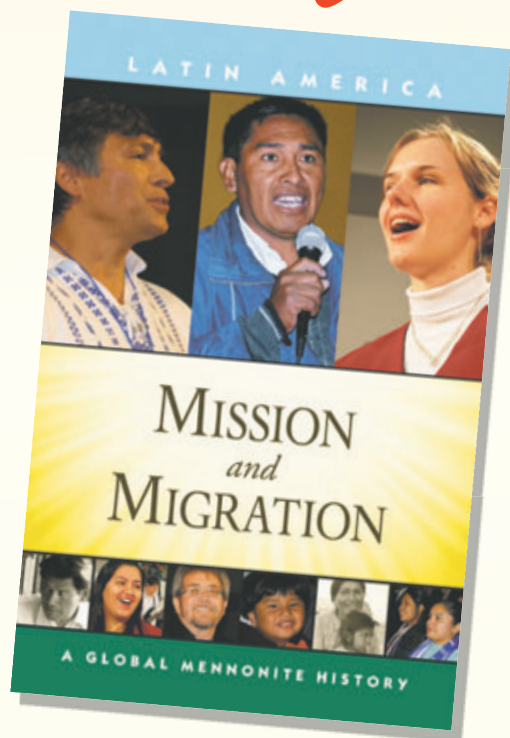
BRIDGES TO CROSS

The Pittsburgh 2011 convention will be held July 4-9, 2011, in downtown Pittsburgh. The theme, “Bridges to (the) Cross,” is inspired by 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 and by the many bridges that span the City of Three Rivers.

A Story for All of Us!

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The Global Mennonite History Series was initiated by Mennonite World Conference at its thirteenth Assembly held in Calcutta, India, January 1997. In order to "tell the story of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches" and to promote "mutual understanding, and stimulate the renewal and extension of Anabaptist Christianity worldwide," the Global Mennonite History organizers received a mandate to produce a five-volume history series, with the aim of telling the stories of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches from around the world. The volumes, one for each continent, were to be written by persons from their respective continents, and would reflect the experiences, perspectives and interpretations of the local churches.

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Mennonites apologize to Native Americans

Leaders in Lancaster, Pa., ask forgiveness for over 300 years of abuse.

Mennonite, Presbyterian and Quaker leaders, along with state and local government officials, apologized and asked forgiveness for 300 years of misunderstanding, neglect and abuse of Native Americans in Lancaster County, Pa., in a public ceremony at First Presbyterian Church, Lancaster, on Oct. 9.

Their statements were received by Native Americans representing the Iroquois, Lenape, Shawnee, Susquehanna and other tribes who once lived in the area, as well as Native people from other regions who now live in Lancaster.

The service was part of Lancaster Roots 300, a year-long series of events organized by Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society and the 1719 Hans Herr House to commemorate the first European settlement here in 1710.

Lloyd Hoover, Lancaster Mennonite Conference bishop; Steve Lapp, Amish minister; J. Richard Thomas, moderator-elect of Mennonite Church USA; and Keith Wilson, Atlantic Coast Conference coordinator, read together a Mennonite Resolution of Apology to Native Peoples signed by a score of local Mennonite leaders.

The statement says, “As Mennonites and the first European settlers of the land known as Lancaster County ... we recognize that we have failed in living out our convictions to live peacefully and express love for all people as modeled and taught by Jesus Christ.”

In 1717, Pennsylvania’s Quaker founder, William Penn, set aside 16,000 acres for the local Conestoga tribe as agreed by treaty. But beginning in 1730, a rapidly growing population of Mennonites and other immigrants hunted, fished and occupied portions of the Conestoga Manor.

By 1763, the situation was so dire that the tribe formally complained to the state that they were starving and naked—unable to provide for their community with the land and wildlife that remained. That same year, a militia of Presbyterians from Paxton Township, frustrated by violence on the Pennsylvania frontier, rode into Lancaster and brutally murdered the remaining Conestogas while they were under protective custody in the town jail.

No one from the militia was prosecuted, and Mennonites failed to call for justice, despite the fact that they held positions in local government during this time period, the Mennonite resolution says.

“In my opinion, they were hypocrites,” said Mary Ann Robins, an Onondaga Indian who lives in Lancaster County. “We had the same problems—religious persecution and being denied the freedom to live in peace. These religious groups had no sympathy or regard for us; they ignored what was happening to our people.”



Curtis Zunigha of the Lenape tribe speaks at the Oct. 9 ceremony.

Uhma Ruth Py, a Lenape elder whose ancestors married Pennsylvania Germans, said, “From the 1700s, 1800s and early 1900s, we had to hide our identities, and as a result, we have lost a lot of our culture.”

On Oct. 9, there were signs of progress.

“I believe this is a sincere apology,” said Curtis Zunigha, a representative of the Delaware tribe. “I will go back and share your sentiments and your words and ask if they want to offer forgiveness.”

J.R. Boyd, a chief of the Lakota/Dakota Sioux, went a step further. “I forgive you,” he said. “I forgive you for murdering my people. I forgive you for raping my people. I forgive you for the pain and suffering I still deal with, for breaking the spirit of our children.”

Several people in the room sobbed audibly. Native American and church leaders agreed that these words will seem hollow without tangible signs of contrition and forgiveness. Among other efforts, Mennonites will support construction of a replica Native American longhouse at the 1719 Hans Herr House, said Brinton Rutherford, a resource staff person for Lancaster Mennonite Conference. The 1719 Herr House is seeking \$100,000 for its construction and an additional \$250,000 as an endowment for maintenance and interpretative costs.

On Oct. 16, Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society introduced a new tour book, *Pequea Settlement 1710: Self-Guided Tour*, with a tour of six sites that are part of Lancaster County’s first European settlement.—*Lowell Brown for The Mennonite*

MEDA gets crash course on safety

Consultant says driving a car is the most dangerous threat for workers.

Buckle up. Stay healthy. Keep a low profile. Those are the safest things you can do when working in a conflict zone, according to a security consultant for Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA).

MEDA has not suffered external threats in its 57 years of development work but decided to review security protocols in light of its projects in high-tension areas like Afghanistan and Pakistan. It brought international staff together last March to hear from Charlie Watt, a New Zealand-based security expert who has worked with development organizations and understands their cultural and spiritual outlook.

Watt emphasized that danger was not confined to regions of conflict and that staff safety reached into seemingly mundane issues such as personal health and accidents. "It's not just bombs and bullets," he said.

The most dangerous thing most development workers do is drive a vehicle, said Watt. Far more expatriates fell victim to routine traffic accidents than to security incidents, especially in regions where roads were in poor shape and traffic laws nonexistent or unenforced.

Simple fatigue was another danger zone, so proper sleep

and nutrition and a realistic work schedule were crucial.

While MEDA has never experienced a terrorist threat, other development agencies have not been so fortunate, Watt cautioned. Any agency working in failed states needed guidelines in place, including the unlikely contingency of requiring staff extraction from danger zones, he said.

Other tips:

- "Keep a low profile. While some agencies use armored vehicles and armed guards, my advice is, don't go there," said Watt. "Once you've stepped up to that level, you can't come back." He said barbed wire, big walls and armed guards make people in the neighborhood wonder, "What is going on there that they need this extra security?"

- "Your life is more important than material possessions, MEDA's property or your project. Is someone breaking in? Let them. Your life is worth more than a photocopier or a laptop."

- "Don't bribe officials. One bribe leads to another and advertises that money is available."

- "Treat police and military with respect; their orders may seem stupid, but that doesn't mean they are."

- "Never take sides or express solidarity with any faction or political view."

- "Reduce the likelihood of theft by being aware of the substantially increased value of money and materials in impoverished societies or communities impacted by war and drought."

- "Observe what's known as the Bosnia rule—if any person in the vehicle is unhappy about a journey on security grounds, then abort the trip."

He also offered counsel on detecting surveillance and how to behave if abducted but added, "Most development workers, even in conflict zones, are most vulnerable to the same safety threats they'd face at home."—*Wally Kroeker for Mennonite Economic Development Agency*

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No tax exemption for multicultural church

Buildings were tax-exempt when owned by a white congregation, pastor says.

Before purchasing a church and adjoining parsonage on Sunset Street in Trainer, Pa., in December 2004, Pastor Keith Collins went door-to-door to see whether anyone would have a problem seeing a new and decidedly different ministry in town. He said he was warmly received.

Collins is senior pastor and founder of the Church of the Overcomer of Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference. When he purchased the foreclosed-on church and parsonage together for \$180,000, he did not expect to find himself swimming in debt thanks to taxes levied on his properties by the borough, county and Chichester School District.

“For the better part of 100 years, both of these buildings were owned by a Wesleyan Church with a predominantly white congregation, and both of the buildings were tax-exempt,” he says. “Now that there is an African-American pastor with a multicultural, multiethnic congregation, things have changed. Initially, we were receiving tax bills on both the church and the parsonage.”

“They relented on the church, but we have been paying taxes on the parsonage property for the last five years, even though it is used exclusively for charitable activities that benefit the community.”

Collins describes the double standard as “premeditated and biased at best and racially motivated at worst,” adding that other churches within the school district with similar holdings have not been held to the same standard.

Denied exempt status for the parsonage by the county’s Board of Assessment and Appeals in 2008, Collins appealed to Common Pleas Court, which ruled in the church’s favor in February. In his opinion, Judge James F. Proud said Collins needed to establish that the church meets the benchmarks of a purely public charity to receive tax-exempt status for the parsonage building.

Collins has filed complaints against the county and school district with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commis-

sion, claiming racial and religious discrimination. He has also filed for tax exemptions for two other properties he owns at 1001 and 1004 Sunset St.

Collins says the properties are both listed for sheriff’s sale, but he plans to pay the roughly \$7,000 in back taxes and hopefully start fresh with his tax exemptions in place. He seeks the immediate withdrawal of the school board’s Commonwealth Court appeal, the granting of full tax exemption for all his properties and restitution of all taxes paid and legal fees encountered by the church.

“We met with the Delaware County Real Estate Appeals Board [on Oct. 6] and we will be notified by mail in November concerning our tax-exemption status,” wrote Collins in an Oct. 6 e-mail. “We have an En Banc argument in front of the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court on Oct. 13 in Philadelphia. We appreciate the prayers of the Mennonite community and its leaders on our behalf.”

Collins said they spent over \$5,000 in legal fees. “We would greatly appreciate any financial assistance,” he wrote on Oct. 11.—*Timothy Logue of Delaware County Daily Times with reporting by Anna Groff, reprinted with permission*



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Conrado & Esther Hinojosa, Brownsville, Texas, who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in October.

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'Conversation Room' at Pittsburgh 2011

Planning is well underway for Convention 2011 in Pittsburgh. A new feature of the convention floor plan is a so-called "Conversation Room." That room will be located near the large space used for delegate sessions and adult worship and has been created in response to suggestions from delegates at previous conventions. The specific request was for more opportunities to talk with other adults about important issues outside of the actual delegate meetings. Our expectation is that as we talk together in this room, we will do so in ways reflective of our desire for loving dialogue and that the things we learn in that setting will inform our conversations in other meetings such as the delegate sessions.

As Pittsburgh 2011 approaches, we hope that you will seize the opportunity to memorize our beautiful Vision: Healing and Hope (see box). As you do, you will notice the community emphasis in that vision, specifically the words "grow[ing] as communities of grace, joy and peace."

In order for us to grow as communities, we need to engage in meaningful communication with one another. Unfortunately, we frequently do not take the time or do not have the opportunity to do that. Lack of communication can lead to misunderstandings, mistrust and separation from one another—clearly not the model we are seeking. As a church we are committed to ongoing dialogue and discernment and "agreeing and disagreeing in love" even when we have differing understandings around questions of faith and life.

Conventions are a wonderful time for our Mennonite Church USA family. They provide us with opportunities for connecting with old friends and for talking with new friends who are committed Anabaptist Christians about their understandings of, and experiences in living out their Christian callings. When that happens, we expand our own spiritual knowledge and our own insights into the world beyond ourselves.

The Conversation Room will be a special place for listening and conversation. We invite individuals or groups in that

room to engage in specific conversations about the resolutions and statements that Mennonite Church USA has adopted over the years, such as those dealing with health care, immigration, sexuality and human trafficking.

Some of these conversations might be difficult or involve topics with which we are not comfortable. Our hope is that the Conversation Room will be a place where convention-goers can be in dialogue with and learn from each other, where people can develop understanding and relationship and where we can agree and disagree in love. That depth of conversation is something for which people have been asking at our conventions.

So that we utilize this Conversation Room for its highest purpose, there will be trained people available to sit and talk with us about our conversations and ways that we can communicate with our Christian brothers and sisters.

Many with whom we have discussed this experiment are excited about the possibilities for the conversations that may occur in this Conversation Room, but others have concerns. We trust that the adults using this room will remember and understand that those with whom they are speaking are beloved chil-

dren of God, people made in God's own image, and that the people there are seeking to strengthen their own relationships with God.

We feel confident that the Conversation Room will add meaningfully to our Convention experience. Please pray that we use this room to help us grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, and pray further that as we grow in those ways, that God's healing and hope will flow through us to the world.—*Ed Diller, moderator of Mennonite Church USA*

Vision: 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.



San Francisco pastor disciplined

Conference and congregation state they want to work together.

Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference (PSMC) sanctioned Sheri Hostetler, pastor of First Mennonite Church of San Francisco, for officiating at a same-sex marriage between two gay men in her congregation. The conference and church emphasize that they want to work together.



A joint statement dated Sept. 29 from Hostetler and conference moderator Brian Fry said, "Seeking to maintain unity and to learn from each other, PSMC and [First Mennonite] have committed to remain in dialogue and to walk together through this process."

Hostetler "understands this action as an integral part of her pastoral call

to serve her congregation by being a pastor to all of the members of her congregation, without exception," said the statement. In mid-September, the congregation invited a delegation of conference leaders to meet in San Francisco for a time of sharing. The delegation included Fry, Stan Friesen, interim conference minister, and Femi Fatunmbi, chair of the Pastoral Leadership Committee (PLC). They met with Men-

nonite Voluntary Service workers in the city, shared a fellowship meal with the congregation's leadership team and spoke with congregational members after the service.

The conference responded to Hostetler's action by requesting that she "step down" from her role as a member of the conference PLC, according to the statement. The conference also placed her ministerial credentials on probation. The probationary period, which began Feb. 5, will probably end two years from then, Fry said on Sept. 30.

Mennonite Church USA has membership guidelines that require a review of ministerial credentials when a minister performs a same-sex covenanting ceremony.

First Mennonite's steering co-chair, Sharon Heath, wrote in an e-mail on Oct. 1: "We are trying very hard to practice 'Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love' [a policy statement of Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference] and to learn how to do that. It's why we issued a joint statement. We think it's different from other things that have happened when a church has been 'disciplined.' It's often been a top-down event; there is an element of 'top-downness' here, but we've talked back and they're listening," Heath said.—*Anna Groff*

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One to go, one good to go

MC USA offices in Elkhart, Ind., take shape; Everence gets new addition.

Everett Thomas



Above: Most first-floor walls for Mennonite Church USA's new office building were poured by Oct. 12. The building is adjacent to the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary campus in Elkhart, Ind. Completion date is currently projected for November 2011.

Below: A new addition for the Everence (formerly Mennonite Mutual Aid) headquarters in Goshen, Ind., was completed by Oct. 11. The addition (in color) will also house a branch office for the Everence credit union (formerly Mennonite Financial Federal Credit Union).

Everett Thomas



RESOURCES

The Catholic Prayer Bible: Lectio Divina Edition (Paulist Press, 2010, \$39.95 hardcover, \$29.95 paperback) is designed for those who want to reflect on individual stories or chapters of the biblical books while being led to prayer through meditation on those passages. "Lectio divina," the reflective reading of Scripture, has been a popular devotional practice in the church from the earliest centuries.

Between Truth and Fiction: A Narrative Reader in Literature and Theology, edited by David Jasper and Allen Smith (Baylor University Press, 2010, \$29.95), provides readers with a variety of texts spanning from the Bible into the present and guides readers through exercises in interpretation and reflection. The book asks how we read and how that affects theological thinking and practice. It includes excerpts from the works of Augustine of Hippo, Anselm of Canterbury, Karl Barth, Dostoevsky, Ian McEwan, Julian of Norwich, C.S. Lewis, T.S. Eliot, Shakespeare, Graham Greene, Margaret Atwood, Martin Luther King Jr., Salman Rushdie, Virginia Woolf, David Eggers and others.

Sacred Space: The Quest for Transcendence in Science Fiction, Film and Television by Douglas E. Cowan (Baylor University Press, 2010, \$24.95) argues that science fiction is the genre of

possibility and hope, a principal canvas on which writers, artists and filmmakers have sketched their visions of this transcendent potential for generations.

The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation by Richard Bauckham (Baylor University Press, 2010, \$24.95) is a biblical investigation into the relationship between human beings and the rest of creation. Bauckham discovers a tradition of a "community of creation" in which human beings are fellow members with God's other creatures, and true reconciliation with God involves the entire creation.

The Melody of Faith: Theology in an Orthodox Key by Vigen Guroian (Eerdmans, 2010, \$14) presents the fundamental beliefs of Orthodox Christianity through the metaphor of music. Guroian weaves together themes of creation and new creation, beginning and end, sin and holiness, Incarnation and deification, sacrifice and salvation.

The Least Among You (Lionsgate) is a 97-minute DVD inspired by the true story of Rev. Dr. Charles Marks. "Richard Kelly" is arrested in the 1965 Watts riots and must serve probation at an all-white seminary. Despite encouragement from its president, he faces acts of racial prejudice. His meeting Samuel Benton, the seminary's gardener, helps him change his life and others.

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Church planters in the wine cellar

Instead of new and old wineskins, new and old churches coexist together.

Life on the edges of the church is a challenge that church planters are called to every day. So how can they get the support they need from each other and from people at the “center” of the church?

On Oct. 8-9, the Northeast conferences of Mennonite Church USA sponsored a church-planting event in Baltimore, Md., to answer that question. Hosted by the Ethiopian Evangelical Church at its building in Baltimore, the event brought church planters and conference and denominational leaders together for listening, networking and worship. Mennonite Mission Network contributed a grant to help offset the cost of the event.

Jeff Wright, southern California church planter, pastor and former Pacific Southwest conference minister, spoke from the Gospel of John about transcending the culture of fear and living the incarnation in church planting. He also pointed to how church planters on the edges of the church model Jesus’ work on the margins of his culture.

“The margin sees the incarnation, but the center can’t see it,” Wright said. “It’s not that we ignore the center, but

we challenge them: ‘You must be born again.’ Jesus was helping Nicodemus think about what real transformation is. It’s not about helping good, middle-class people become better middle-class people. You have to start over.”

Josef Berthold, pastor at West End Mennonite Fellowship in Lancaster, Pa., asked about the relationship between established churches and new church plants and the ways they can work together, changing the metaphor of old and new wineskins into one of a wine cellar, where all can coexist.

Wright carried the wine cellar metaphor further.

“Area conferences create a climate so that churches can become what they are called to become,” Wright said. The denomination should not try to get churches on board with what it’s doing, Wright explained, but should instead align itself with what congregations are already doing.

“The job of denominations and conferences,” he said, “is to create environments where every ‘bottle of wine’ can thrive.”

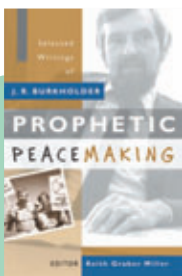
And money isn’t the answer—at least not in terms of subsidizing the church plant. But conferences should spend



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money on resources, gatherings and special projects, said Wright.

Church planters in attendance seemed to agree.

“Gatherings like this are what’s needed,” said T.J. Tennefoss of Grace Fellowship in Greenwood, Del. “To be able to sit in places like this and realize that your ideas aren’t so different from anyone else’s and that the Holy Spirit’s prompting is happening in other places.”

Church planters called for relationships with conference and denominational leaders, too.

“Just as we’re supposed to be incarnational with the people we meet, that’s what I want as support from leadership—to know me and walk with me,” said LaVonne Yoder, who is part of a community fellowship of small groups, called Circle of Grace, in Milton, Pa.

The event ended with time for questions and discussion about future joint events, including church planter training clusters and a possible Spanish-language gathering. André Gingerich Stoner, director of holistic witness and interchurch relations for Mennonite Church USA, closed with a commissioning and sending time.

“Church planting revitalizes congregations,” said Wright. “Institution and improvisation are the right and left feet of the church. If we’re going to move with the Spirit of God, we’re going to need both.”—*Melanie Hess for The Mennonite*

Answers to the page 61 puzzle

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MCC U.S. forms antiracism advisory council

Ten people to advise Mennonite Central Committee anti-racism coordinator

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. fulfilled a long-term goal in May when it established an advisory council for its antiracism coordinator. The Community Reference Council (CRC) will advise the coordinator in the development and implementation of an antiracist vision and plan for MCC U.S. and its regional offices.

Members also will encourage and empower the coordinator, while holding that person accountable to ensure that people of color are heard in organizational decisions.

Rick Derksen of Lancaster, Pa., and a member of East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, is the antiracism coordinator for MCC U.S. and for the binational MCC.

"CRC can provide important perspectives on MCC's internal decision-making," said Wanda González-Coleman of New Holland, Pa., the chair of CRC, which is composed primarily of people of color.

The council can also influence MCC U.S. supporters in their thinking about racism, said González-Coleman, a member of Iglesia Menonita Jesucristo es el Señor, New Holland, Pa.

In addition to González-Coleman, members of the council include the following:

- Michelle Armster, vice chair, co-director of conflict transformation for MCC U.S.;
 - Keshia Littlebear, recording secretary, MCC Central States antiracism team member;
 - J. Ron Byler, MCC U.S. executive director;
 - Ricardo Esquivia, Mennonite Church, Colombia;
 - Valentina Satvedi, director of MCC U.S. antiracism program;
 - John Stoesz, MCC Central States executive director.
- Three positions remain open.

As part of staff, the antiracism coordinator works with MCC U.S. to become a more fully antiracist and multicultural organization. The coordinator's role is distinguished from the MCC U.S. antiracism program, which provides antiracism education and resources from an Anabaptist perspective.

More information about the MCC U.S. antiracism program can be found at <http://antiracism.mcc.org/>.—MCC



Position Announcement Chief MEDA Engagement Officer

Due to our success and growth, Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) invites applications for a full-time Chief MEDA Engagement Officer. MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates) is an association of compassionate business women and men who invest in people living in poverty around the world so they can unleash their potential to earn a livelihood to provide for their families and enrich their communities. (www.meda.org) We invite you to join our team of innovative, entrepreneurial professionals dedicated to finding business solutions to poverty.

Position Summary

The Chief MEDA Engagement Officer (CMEO) provides executive-level strategic leadership to engage MEDA's association of private supporters with our mission; secure financial contributions that leverage other sources of funding; protect and enhance MEDA's image; and expand awareness of MEDA in diverse market segments. A member of MEDA's Executive Leadership Team, the CMEO will lead a staff of senior professionals to develop and implement the MEDA Engagement strategic plan and annual budget.

The ideal candidate will have a proven track record of implementing successful marketing strategies and an understanding of fundraising, particularly within the Anabaptist community. With a keen interest in MEDA's approach to finding business solutions to poverty, and desire to engage others in this vision, the CMEO will participate in speaking engagements, media appearances, and visits to key members of the constituency.

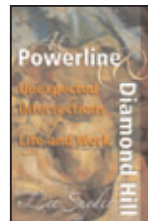
A full time opportunity, with a strong preference to be based in the Waterloo, Ontario MEDA office, this position will involve regular domestic and international travel. This unique position is a chance to use your significant leadership and technical expertise to make a difference.

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- In-depth knowledge and understanding of MEDA's constituency (Mennonite, Anabaptist and Christian business and professionals).
- Background and understanding of fundraising, especially in the development of major gift proposals. Familiarity with the Moves Management system is preferable.
- Highly motivated, self-starter, and results-oriented.
- Excellent and proven interpersonal skills in team leadership, relationship building, active listening, communicating, and negotiation.
- Understanding and appreciation of international development and MEDA's approach of finding business solutions to poverty.
- Appreciation and support of MEDA's faith, values and goals.

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CALENDAR

Men's Retreat at Camp Friedenswald is Nov. 12-14. All men ages 12+ are invited to come and participate in fellowship, worship, great food, sports and men's chorus. www.friedenswald.org

The fourth **Sarasota Mennonite Male Voice Music Festival**, with Lloyd Kauffman as director, is being planned for 2011 with **Bahia Vista Mennonite Church** again serving as host. Practices will be held on Jan. 27, Feb. 3, Feb. 10, 7-9 p.m.; Feb. 12, 8:45 a.m.-5 p.m.; Feb. 13, 2-4 p.m. The program will be presented Feb. 13, 6 p.m. All men who enjoy singing to God's glory are invited to participate. E-mail pwenger4@com-cast.net or call 941-870-3737.

WORKERS

Blank, William, began a term as intentional interim at Erisman Mennonite Church, Manheim, Pa., on Sept. 1.

Carlson, Jon, was licensed toward ordination and installed as pastor at Oley Valley Mennonite Church, Oley, Pa., on May 7.

Carrión, Sonni, was licensed for specific ministry and installed as oversight minister for the New York City Council of Mennonite Churches, New York, N.Y., on April 23.

Claassen, Amy, was licensed at White-stone Mennonite Church, Hesston, Kan., on July 18, for specialized ministry for chaplaincy work.

Gashco-Cooke, Susan, was installed as lead pastor at Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster, Lancaster, Pa., on May 31.

Henson, Jon, was licensed toward ordination and installed as associate pastor at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa., on June 6.

Hoover, Jacqueline, was licensed as consultant on inter-religious relations at Ridgeview Mennonite Church, Gordonville, Pa., on Aug. 15.

Horst, Tom, ended a term as lead pastor at Landis Valley Christian Fellowship, Lancaster, Pa., on Sept. 1.

Kanagy, Curtiss, ended a term as lead pastor at New Danville Mennonite Church, New Danville, Pa., on Aug. 1.

Kopper, Ryan, was licensed at Hesston Mennonite Church, Hesston, Kan., on Aug. 15, as associate pastor of youth and young adult ministries.

Landis, Steve, began a term as pastoral team leader at Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford, Pa., on Aug. 1.

Linares, Confesor, was installed as pastor at Iglesia Menonita Primera, Brooklyn, N.Y., on June 12.

Miller, Joseph L., was licensed as chaplain at Tel Hai Retirement Community, Honey Brook, Pa., on May 7.

Miller, Mark L., was licensed as associate pastor at Emmanuel's House of Prayer, Healing and Hope, Reinholds, Pa., on Aug. 22.

Patterson, Jeremy, was ordained on Oct. 3 at Journey @ Yoder, Yoder, Kan., as associate pastor of South Hutchinson Mennonite Church. Journey @ Yoder is a satellite campus.

Perez, Sandra, was licensed for specific ministry and installed as oversight minister for the New York City Council of Mennonite Churches, New York, N.Y., on April 23.

Ralph, James, was installed as pastor at Ark Bible Chapel, Boyertown, Pa., on June 27.

Rauschenberger, Elizabeth, was ordained as pastor of congregational care at Zion Mennonite Church, Souderton, Pa., on Oct. 3.

Roth, Scott, was ordained as pastor at New Eden Fellowship, Schwenksville, Pa., on Oct. 3.

Shertz, Will, ended a term as intentional interim at Mount Joy Mennonite Church, Mount Joy, Pa., on Aug. 15.

Wanjau, Samuel, was ordained as pastor at the African Community Church of Lancaster, Lancaster, Pa., on Aug. 31.

Weidner, Mark, began a term as bridge pastor at Ridgeview Mennonite Church, Gordonville, Pa., on Oct. 1.

Yoder, Ray, ended a term as intentional interim pastor at Ridgeview Mennonite Church, Gordonville, Pa., on Sept. 30.

Yutzy, Luann, was licensed as co-pastor at East Petersburg Mennonite Church, East Petersburg, Pa.

OBITUARIES

Andriotis, Carol Maxine Rinkenberger, 82, Tiskilwa, Ill., died July 31. Spouse: Constance John Andriotis (deceased). Parents: Clarence and Minnie Householder Ronkenberger. Children: John, James, Susan Rush, Sandy Momoki, Peter; 10 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 7 at Willow Springs Mennonite Church, Tiskilwa.

Bare, Olive M., 90, Newton, Kan., died Aug. 7. Parents: Joseph H. and Ida Bauer Bare. Funeral: Aug. 12 at First Mennonite Church, Newton.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by e-mail, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Beck, Anna Ruth Weaver, 85, Hesston, Kan., died Sept. 6. Spouse: Howard H. Beck (deceased). Parents: Reuben M. and Lucinda Ella Neuhauser Weaver. Children: Duane, Marlene Yoder; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 11 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Bender, Lloyd I., 85, Kalona, Iowa, died Aug. 25. Spouse: Barbara Stutzman Bender (deceased). Parents: Ira and Lena Miller Bender. Children: Derald, Dwight, Delwyn, Darlene Gingerich; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 27 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

Closson, Harold, 72, Bluffton, Ohio, died July 4. Spouse: Margie Gerber Closson. Parents: George Sr., and Mary Catherine Meeks Closson. Children: Kaye Phillips, Timothy Closson; six grandchildren. Funeral: July 6 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Conrad, Nancy Rebekah Hernley, Goshen, Ind., 91, died Aug. 29. Spouse: Paul L. Conrad (deceased). Parents: Henry and Daisy Cutrell Hernley. Children: Glenn, Mary Lo, Paul; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 4 at Greencroft Meetinghouse, Goshen.

Detweiler, Betty King, 82, Harrisonburg, Va., died Sept. 17. Spouse: Aaron King. Parents: Elmer and Lillian Detweiler. Children: Michael, Jewel King, Robert, Steven Weibe-King, Marty, Noel King, Starla King; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 25 at Lindale Mennonite Church, Linville, Va.

Harder, Aganetha S., 99, Mountain Lake, Minn., died Sept. 3. Spouse: Henry Milton Harder (deceased). Children: Edna Andres, Marjorie Baerg, Leroy Harder. Deceased children: Sylvia Chaika, Henry Alan Harder; 10 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 7 at First Mennoniite Church, Mountain Lake.

Hiebner, George G., 94 Henderson, Neb., died Aug. 17. Spouse: Matilda Hiebner (deceased). Parents: Gerhard and Aganetha Hiebner. Children: LaRoy Hiebner and Roberta Bergen; five grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 21 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Hottinger, Noah, 79, Linville, Va., died Sept. 4. Parents: Jesse L. and Bertha Southerly Hottinger. Funeral: Sept. 8 at Lindale Mennonite Church, Linville, Va.

Kauffman, Roy I., 98, Tiskilwa, Ill., died Sept. 12. Spouse: Helen Nafziger Kauffman. Spouse: Eunice Albrecht Kauffman (deceased). Parents: Noah Daniel and Katherine Egli Kauffman. Children: George, Susan Kauffman Cater; eight grandchildren; 26 step-grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; 11 step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Willow Springs Mennonite Church, Tiskilwa.

King, Mary Mae Zook, 98, Belleville, Pa., died Sept. 12. Spouse: Samuel H. King (deceased). Parents: Jacob S. and Fannie R. Yoder Zook. Children: Jesse W., Ivan R., David T., Leah Harbst, Gary L., Lee G., Freddie R.; nine grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; 12 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 15 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Kroeker, Shirley Fehr, 72, Gnadenfeld, Altona, Manitoba, died Sept. 18. Spouse: John Kroeker. Parents: Henry and Justine Falk Fehr. Children: Cindy Heinrichs, Valerie Friesen, Sandra Bergen; five grandchildren; three-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 21 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Martin, E. Naomi, 89, Akron, Pa., died Sept. 11. Parents: Aaron G. Maggie Sauder Martin. Funeral: Sept. 20 at Ephrata Mennonite Church, Ephrata, Pa.



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Martin, Martha Mae Weaver, 90, Columbiana, Ohio, died Sept. 6. Spouse: Ira E. Martin (deceased). Parents: Noah and Fannie Martin Weaver. Children: Lowell, Ronald, Lawrence, Naomi "Molly" Hostetler, Lucille Clark, Charlotte Beck, Kathy Schroedel, Carol Moser; 16 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 11 at Midway Mennonite Church, Columbiana.

Martin, Onias B., 89, Woolwich Township, Ontario, died Sept. 9. Spouse: Minerva Bauman Scheifele Hoffman Martin (deceased). Parents: Amos B. and Elvina Bauman Martin. Step-children: Gordon Scheifele, Willard Scheifele, Nelson Scheifele, Pearl Jutzi; 11 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 12 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, St. Jacobs, Ontario.

Miller, Mary Etta Yoder, 89, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 25. Spouse: Leander Miller (deceased). Spouse: Daniel Frye (deceased). Parents: Eli S. and Savilla Schmucker Yoder. Children: Rosa Mary Newton, Treva Yoder, Danette Miller; eight grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 28 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Patterson, Katheryne Lugibill, 99, Bluffton, Ohio, died May 18. Spouse: Don Patterson (deceased). Parents: Albert and Anna Leichty Lugibill. Children: Connie Kear, Nancy Fruchey, Don; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Memorial service: May 30 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Raber, Mary Milster Mitchell, 88, Sugar creek, Ohio, died Sept. 6 following a prolonged illness. Spouse: Ernest Raber. Parents: Mason Edward and Dora Otis Mitchell. Children: Chris, Eric, Mark, Philip; 15 grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 11 at First Mennonite Church, Sugar creek.

Redcay, Grace E. Brooks, 90, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 15. Spouse: Elmer Redcay (deceased). Parents: Elmer and Mary Miller Brooks. Children: Robert, Jacqueline Evers, Brenda Dalziel; four grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 21 Forester Hills Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Savanick, Ferne E. Hernley, 89, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 22. Spouse: Paul Savanick (deceased). Parents: Henry and Daisy Cutrell Hernley. Children: Rosetta Brown, Elsa Works, Eli Michael; 12 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 27 at Scottsdale Mennonite Church, Scottsdale, Pa.

Showalter, Truman Francis, 90, Waynesboro, Va., died Sept. 11. Spouse: Mildred Showalter. Parents: Amos and Lillie Showalter. Children: Esther Showalter, Irene Wade, Erla Showalter, Dennis Showalter, Sharon Showalter, Ernest Showalter, Kenneth Showalter, Carolyn Bontrager; 13 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro.

Steiner, Lester, 80, Kidron, Ohio, died Sept. 8 following complications from heart problems. Spouse: Esther Amstutz Steiner. Parents: Albert and Minnie Steiner. Funeral: Sept. 13 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Summer, Marjorie Stalter, 91, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 21. Spouse: Milton G. Summer (deceased). Parents: Daniel D. and Alice Miller Stalter. Children: Shelby Morrisey, Ardis King, Sharon Axline; seven grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; nine great-step-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 27 at North Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Waltner, Esther Elva Wedel, 87, Freeman, S.D., died Sept. 25. Spouse: Carol J. Waltner (deceased). Parents: Peter P. and Emma Kaufman Wedel. Child: Jorigiann Waltner Glubka. Funeral: Sept. 23 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Wenger, Eric R., 41, Columbiana, Ohio, died Sept. 10 of a stroke. Parents: Glen and Ethel Wenger. Funeral: Sept. 18 at Midway Mennonite Church, Columbiana.

Living Branches is a not-for-profit system of retirement living communities dedicated to providing life-enriching services at its Dock Meadows, Souderton Mennonite Homes and Dock Woods locations. Located on beautiful grounds in suburban Philadelphia, they provide residential/independent living, personal care and nursing-care services, guided by the Mennonite heritage of Christian values. We are currently looking for a **director of fund development** who will be responsible for planning, organizing and managing fund development for Living Branches. The qualified candidate must have thorough knowledge of the local communities surrounding the campuses and have significant experience in fund-raising and donor cultivation within a not-for-profit organization. Qualified candidates should send a cover letter, including salary requirements, along with their resumé to Sarah.Reilley@LivingBranches.org for consideration.

The **Gather 'Round** curriculum, a project of Mennonite Publishing Network and Brethren Press, is accepting applications to write for the 2012–13 year. **Writers** are hired for one or two quarters for a particular age unit: Preschool, Primary, Middler, Multiage, Junior Youth or Youth. Writers produce well-written, age-appropriate and engaging material for teacher's guides, student books and resource packs. All writers will attend an orientation conference March 6–10, 2011, in Chicago. For more information, visit the Job Opportunities page at www.gatherround.org. Deadline for applications: Jan. 1, 2011.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking applicants for a full-time **instructional services librarian** position. This position provides leadership for EMU's instructional program and development of teaching tools, reference functions and collection development. MLS degree required. Graduate degree in another discipline highly desirable, with a preference for studies in composition and rhetoric. Experience in a college or university library desired. Teaching skills, technical expertise in database searching and web tools, and strong collaborative and interpersonal skills essential. Supportive of the mission and policies of Eastern Mennonite University. Position begins immediately. Twelve-month, full-time position. Submit application, curriculum vitae, transcripts and three references to: hr@emu.edu. For more information visit our website at www.emu.edu/humanresources. People who bring diversity are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Lovely house for sale in beautiful Shenandoah Valley, Va. Part of a farm partnership with registered herd of grass-fed Black Angus, 10 miles from EMU. For more information and pictures go to www.foresalebyowner.com listing ID 22775592 or zip code 22832. Call 540-269-4106 or e-mail brennet98@gmail.com.

MDC Goldenrod, a developmental disabilities provider, seeks an **executive director** in Goshen, Ind. Requirements include BS/BA, five years experience in a health/human services field, administrative skills and board experience. Contact Kirk Stiffney at kirk@stiffneygroup.com or 574-537-8736.

Bluffton University invites applications for a full-time, tenure-track faculty position in **social work** beginning fall 2011. MSW degree from accredited social work program and minimum of two years of practice experience is required. Ph.D. or ABD preferred. Should demonstrate effective teaching skills and have experience. Teach a range of courses, including human behavior in the social environment, micro practice and social welfare. Ability to teach courses in sociology and/or criminal justice a plus. Responsibilities of all faculty include student advising and teaching courses in the general education curriculum, which emphasizes an integrated, interdisciplinary approach to the liberal arts and sciences. Scholarship is supported and service activities with community/church are encouraged. Review of applications begins Dec. 1 and continues until an appointment is made. Compensation is commensurate with education and experience within the university pay scale. Send letter of interest, curriculum vita or resumé, three letters of reference (submitted directly from referee or if necessary from placement office) and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Academic Affairs, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817-2104. See www.bluffton.edu for additional details. Bluffton University welcomes applications from all academically qualified people who respect the Anabaptist/Mennonite peace church tradition and endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Director of financial services for MCC U.S. MCC shares God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ. The director of financial services is the chief financial officer of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S., including its four regional offices. The position will build the capacity of MCC U.S., financial services to provide accounting expertise and financial management and create financial systems, in collaboration with the MCC (bina-tional) director of financial services during the New Wine/New Wineskins restructuring period. The position directs financial operation for multiple offices, keeps staff and board members informed of the financial status of MCC U.S. and furnishes financial data to offices and departments. Qualifications: Bachelor's degree or related experience; CPA or equivalent related experience; 5-7 years accounting/financial services experience with complex organizational structures; experience with nonprofit finances. All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to personal Christian faith and discipleship, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. Position based in Akron, Pa., or a regional office. MCC is committed to employment equity and values diversity and invites all qualified candidates to apply. See complete job description at <http://mcc.org/serve/positions/director-financial-services-mcc-us>. Submit letter of intent, resumé and formal application online or to Director of Human Resources, MCC U.S., 1013 Division Street, Goshen, IN 46528, by Nov. 7, 2010.

Ski Timberline, W.Va.; \$99 complete 2-day ski package now extended through Dec. 26-27. 2 nights: bunkhouse lodging, lift ticket, regular ski rental, beginner ski lesson, 5 meals; 800-392-0152.



Everence



Photo: Claybottom Farms, Goshen, Ind. by John Tirota

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Confessions of a mellowed preacher



Sharon Kniss
attends Early
Church, a Menno-
nite congregation
in Harrisonburg, Va.

I used to preach. Not in front of churches from a pulpit, although I did that on occasion, too, but in speeches, articles and conversations. I would loudly assert my intelligence through big words and convincing facts I cherry-picked and covered it all with an emotional pull, declaring our moral obligation. I would preach against war, destruction of the environment, economic injustice, exploitation, oil-dependence and waste, to name a few. I would speak for peace, environmental conservation, living wages and affordable housing, human rights, alternative energy, reusing and recycling. Honestly, I would speak loudly on most subjects if the opportunity presented itself—I had abundant opinions on the church and theology and how we should best be the church, about higher education and organizational systems, about the U.S. political system and large businesses that monopolized trade at the expense of workers and the environment. I was passionate for what was good in the world and passionately against what I felt was wrong in the world.

My outspoken nature likely led the editors of *The Mennonite* to ask me to contribute to this column. This being my third and final piece in 2010, I am deciding whether to continue next year. My first column spoke of living in the present moment, and my second spoke about being human, neither very “preachy.” I considered whether it was time to preach, perhaps about what’s right and wrong with the church and how it should be changed. I know many people are eager to hear a young adult’s perspective. I wrote a draft of that article, but I couldn’t submit it—that’s not me right now.

Over the last year, as I’ve transitioned from living in London to Harrisonburg, Va., I’ve experienced what I call the “downward spiral of grace.” I’ve suffered discomfort, depression, loneliness and aching confusion and chaos. I have felt wounded and weak emotionally, mentally and spiritually. The transition from London wasn’t the only cause for this, but it did serve as a catalyst for my journey through darkness. I’ve discovered that the downward spiral I experienced and am still experiencing was and is in some ways a spiral of grace. The spiral crushed my overinflated opinion of myself and my accomplishments and

crushed any weak supports I had constructed for myself that weren’t built on solid rock. The downward spiral, despite its unwelcome intrusion and accompanying pain, provided me with opportunities to purge what is not healthy, what is not from God, what does not promote life.

This “downward spiral of grace” is probably one of many reasons why I don’t preach much these days. As I’ve settled in Virginia, I’m also now surrounded by the very people for whom I advocated when I preached. With a new job and new neighborhood, I now work and live alongside those struggling daily with poverty and violence. My community includes those who experienced trauma from which they may never fully heal. I eat lunch with friends who struggle with loneliness, pain and chaos on a daily basis. I try to walk with people drowned in alcoholism or lost in a cycle of any number of addictive behaviors. I’ve found my brothers and sisters that I didn’t have time for before and am learning I need them, just

as much as I need my more stable friends. Through my community I have been blessed to see and experience a fuller demonstration of the kingdom of God.

Through these experiences and likely many others I haven’t yet considered,

I have mellowed significantly and am often now listening more than preaching. I certainly haven’t lost my passion, but my actions and responses have changed. Maybe one day I’ll preach again. Preachers are needed. But in the meantime, I’m sure others will take my place and provide the needed passionate voice of advocacy for justice and peace.

I agreed to contribute to this column in part because I appreciated the ego boost and the platform to preach. It’s easy for me to preach, and my ego loves receiving the praise and strong reactions to a good “sermon” I preach. That’s why it’s hard for me to write this unglamorous article. But I’d like to be done with my ego now. I’m not preaching anymore because I’m too busy putting one foot in front of the other, trying to live with integrity in my own actions—converting my big words into small actions I take every day.

Holy God, grant me your wisdom and strength as I journey this downward spiral of grace. **TM**

**I’m not preaching anymore
because I’m too busy putting
one foot in front of the other,
trying to live with integrity.**

FILM REVIEWS

Restrepo (R) is a gripping documentary covering an army unit's year under intense fighting in Afghanistan. The title derives from a remote, 15-man outpost named for medic Juan "Doc" Restrepo, who was shot and bled to death on the way to medical treatment. The film betrays no political slant and shows both the courage and camaraderie of the men and the savagery of war and the painful isolation of post-traumatic stress disorder.—*Gordon Houser*

The Social Network (PG-13) depicts the Harvard student who created Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, now a billionaire. It shows the spirals of greed and the complicated nature of intellectual property theft. It paints the young entrepreneurs competing for recognition as morally ambiguous but washes over ethical questions.—*Anna Groff*

BOOK REVIEWS

Ambassadors of Reconciliation: Volume 1: New Testament Reflections on Restorative Justice and Peacemaking



by Ched Myers and Elaine Enns (Orbis Books, 2009, \$16) and **Ambassadors of Reconciliation: Volume 2: Diverse Christian Practices of Restorative Justice and Peacemaking** by Elaine Enns and Ched Myers (Orbis Books, 2009, \$20) are excellent resources on their own but particularly

recommended for all delegates to the Mennonite Church USA assembly in Pittsburgh next July. Vol. I is filled with biblical insights and insists that we read both Paul's writings and the Gospels in their sociohistorical context. It also relates this biblical teaching to the work of Martin Luther King Jr. Vol. II considers models for integral restorative justice and peacemaking in North America and looks at contemporary pioneers of such work.—*gh*

The Christian Harry Potter

Remember Harry Potter? It's been three years since the last book in J.K. Rowling's seven-volume opus of 4,100-plus pages was published.

Now books are coming out evaluating the series as Christian literature. Two of the newest ones are *One Fine Potion: The Literary Magic of Harry Potter* by Greg Garrett (Baylor University Press) and *Baptizing Harry Potter: A Christian Reading of J.K. Rowling* by Luke Bell (Paulist Press).

Both books laud Rowling as a writer who employs Christian themes throughout the series though without much overt Christian language. As each of them points out, only two Bible verses are referred to in the books, Matthew 6:21 and 1 Corinthians 15:26, though these are significant and point to major themes in the novels.

Garrett notes how popular the Harry Potter series is, that it "is one of the three most popular literary works in history, outsold to date only by the Bible and Mao's *Little Red Book*." It has also been controversial, as many Christians have denounced the books as "promoting witchcraft, Satanism and antisocial behavior." They have also been attacked by conservative Muslims and others and banned from many libraries and schools.

These two books counter such criticism, though Garrett gives it more attention. He tells of an interview he did with an evangelical British radio station in 2008. At one point the radio host said he didn't understand why Garrett had written positively about the Harry Potter films when "everyone knows that Harry Potter is Satanic." Garrett referred him to an interview Rowling gave to *Time* magazine, after the final book came out, in which "she talked about how her Christian faith had informed the entire Harry Potter story." He told the host that Rowling is an active member of the Church of Scotland and that when you look at the Potter

story, "you can see how it has the same shape as the gospel story: sacrifice, death, resurrection, redemption."

Rowling herself, in response to such criticism, has said: "I'm not a witch. I'm a writer of children's fantasy. ... I don't believe in magic. It's a device in my stories, nothing more."

Garrett sums it up thus: "A responsible reading of the element of magic in Harry Potter shows that ultimately it is about power—how it is employed and how it should not be employed."

These two books go to great lengths to show the many Christian themes present in the Potter saga. Garrett, a professor of English at Baylor University, concentrates on four major themes (with these labels): (1) magic, power and the fantastic; (2) community, diversity and formation; (3) heroism, good and evil; (4) faith, hope and the world to come.

Bell, a Benedictine monk at Quarr Abbey on the Isle of Wight, in his 10 chapters, looks at the structure of the series, going beyond the normal, good against evil, life and death, power and weakness, love and sacrifice, freedom and determination, the hidden and the ostentatious, the struggle for truth, and purity of heart and purity of blood.

While the insights in these books are helpful, they sometimes overreach, for example, when Garrett tries to relate certain characters to the Holy Trinity or when both authors relate Dumbledore to God. And the lengthy discussion of the Christian themes in the books can detract from the enjoyment of a tale well told, which is really what the Harry Potter books are.

The Harry Potter series is primarily a story, not a lesson. But its themes clearly resonate with the gospel. **TM**



Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

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ACROSS

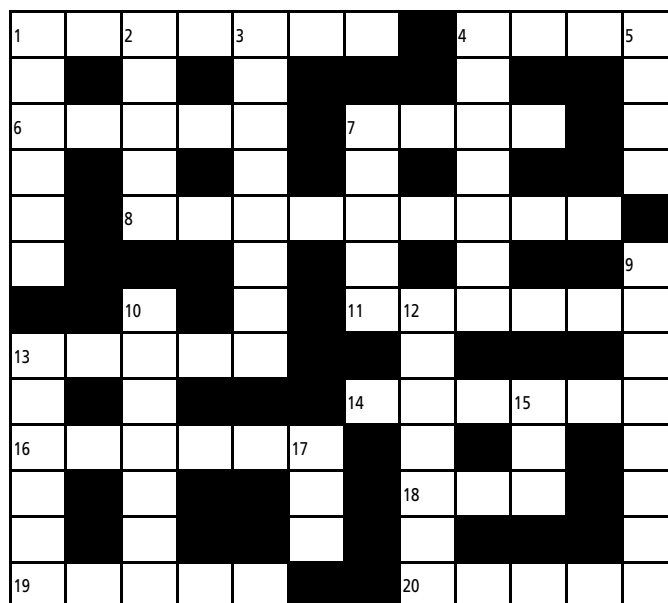
1. Tyre and Sidon are located in this modern day country, though few cedars remain.
4. Site of Jesus' first miracle.
6. Region in which Saul/Paul experienced his conversion (Acts 9).
7. When Paul was a prisoner, he was transferred at this port city to an Alexandrian ship to take him to Rome (Acts 27:5).
8. Paul and Silas passed through this Greek city on their way to Thessalonica on Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 17:1).
11. The Roman name for Greece; Paul went before the proconsul Gallio of this country, but Gallio refused to hear the case (Acts 18:12).
13. City where Paul saw a vision of a man of Macedonia and later healed Eutychus when he fell out of a window (Acts 16:8 and 20:9).
14. Forum of ____ (Acts 28:15).
16. Island and city on a major shipping route; Paul stopped here during his third journey (Acts 21:1).
18. The name Decapolis (Mt. 4:25; Mk. 7:31) means this many cities.
19. Jesus refers to the queen of this region in the South coming to Solomon, "and now one greater than Solomon is here." (Mt. 12:42; 1Kings 10:1).
20. Paul stopped at two cities in this region: Patara and Myra (Acts 27:5).

DOWN

1. Home of Timothy (Acts 16).
2. Paul said the people of this Macedonian city were of more noble character than the Thessalonians because they studied the Scriptures every day (Acts 17).
3. From Troas, Paul sailed to Samothrace and then on to _____, a Macedonian seaport (Acts 16:11).
4. A very wealthy, important trade city for Greece; Paul met Aquila and Priscilla here.
5. ____ Minor.
7. Paul was shipwrecked on this island.
9. _____ Philippi, the northernmost point of Jesus' ministry (Mt. 16:13).
10. Paul wrote a letter to the church in this Asia Minor city near Laodicea.
12. Athens was the ____ city of Attica, ancient Greece. Paul visited here on his second journey (Acts 17).
13. Birthplace of Paul.
15. There was no room here for Mary and Joseph.
17. The ____ of Galilee.

New Testament places

By Jeanette Baer Showalter



RECOGNITION

To be recognized in our January 2011 issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526. Deadline: Dec. 1, 2010

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ANSWERS TO THIS PUZZLE
MAY BE FOUND ON PAGE 51

(Continued from page 5)

He claims God founded the church on the office of the apostolic ministry. Becoming “missional” is pointing us in the right direction, providing Jesus is at the center.

The September column picked up on the Philippian’s generous response to the needy in Jerusalem. The secret: “They first gave themselves to the Lord.” What an essential ingredient for the church today, whose goal is to be more missional. Generosity helps churches grow physically and spiritually.—*Eugene K. Souder, Grottoes, Va.*

A great Father’s Day

The Royce and Betty Engle article in the June issue (page 24) was the beginning of something wonderful for me. I apologize that it took me this long to write to you to share my story.

During World War II, my father, Paul Bender, was in a Civilian Public Service camp with Royce in Terry, Mont. I knew Royce had retired in the early

1980s, and my father passed away in 2009. After reading the article about Royce, I wrote him a letter and included a copy of a training certificate he had signed for me in 1975, as well as a current business card.

On Father’s Day I received a phone call from a number I was unfamiliar with. It was Royce calling, and we had a wonderful 30-minute conversation about things past and present. It was like God had reached out to me through Royce to bring good memories of a great father, and the really special part was that it happened on Father’s Day.

Thanks for your part in making Father’s Day 2010 special for me.—*John Bender, Greensboro, N.C.*

Wine vs beer

One of the scientifically interesting stories in the Bible is Jesus’ first miracle: turning water into wine, as reported in John 2. One gallon of water was required to make one gallon of wine.

This represents a substantial improve-

ment over the amount reported in the September note in Miscellany that indicated 17 gallons of water are required to make a gallon of wine and only seven gallons of water to brew a gallon of beer.

Wine is carefully fermented grape juice (i.e. one gallon of grape juice makes about one gallon of wine). Under ideal conditions, very little water would be needed. Beer, in contrast, during the brewing process requires that each gallon of beer must contain nearly one gallon of water, as there is no such thing as “beer juice.” So it would seem that brewing beer would require more water than making wine.

However, when sanitation, bottle washing and other process steps are included, the total swells to at best 3.45 gallons of water per gallon of beer. Average breweries consume six to eight gallons of water per gallon of beer.

—*Lew Naylor, Goshen, Ind.*



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First things first First go and be reconciled

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to that person; then come and offer your gift.—Matthew 5:23-24 (TNIV)

When I read the Gospels, it's easy to see that Jesus' followers didn't always agree and disagree in love. As Jesus walked the dusty roads with his disciples, he heard them talk about who was the greatest and saw occasional flashes of anger. Perhaps on occasion, the "sons of thunder" blasted a companion on the journey with a lightning-quick retort that stung to the heart.

Because the disciples didn't always get along, Jesus spoke of the need for forgiveness, turning the other cheek and reconciliation. In an appeal to keep first things first, Jesus instructed them to first seek reconciliation with others, then offer their oblations to God.

As I reflect on Jesus' instruction, I wonder why Jesus assigned such urgency to the task of reconciliation. Didn't he realize that relationships are often messy? Didn't he recognize that reconciliation can be a long drawn-out process? If everyone would take Jesus seriously, temple gifts could soon accumulate in piles around the altar, awaiting the day when estranged parties came to agreement.

Jesus surely knew that reconciliation is messy. It takes concerted effort and always awaits someone who is willing to take the first step. Jesus knew that if his disciples blamed others for their relational problems, or waited for someone else to make all the changes one desired, reconciliation would remain a distant or impossible goal. He knew that we can't change other people, but we can change the way we relate to them. We can make sure we treat others as we would want to be treated.

Jesus knew that true worship has a way of bringing broken relationships to mind. Like sunbeams on the forest floor, God's Spirit can shed light on the anger and resentments hidden in the shadows of our lives.

In his instructions to his disciples about faith that could move mountains, Jesus spoke of forgiveness. "And when you stand praying," Jesus said, "if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive your sins" (Mark 11:25). Surely the flow of the Spirit is blocked by unforgiveness. Withholding forgiveness can block the flow of our prayers.

Jesus made it clear that forgiveness need not be mutual to be effective. Forgiveness can be a unilateral move, offered to the offender without needing to agree on the nature of the wrong. It could help move at least one party toward reconciliation, a gift of grace that requires an agreement from both estranged parties.

As Christians who long for peace, we do well to take Jesus' teaching to heart. When we worship God with honesty and openness, the Spirit may nudge us about a relationship that needs to be

Jesus surely knew that reconciliation is messy.

reconciled. At times like these, we can begin with a prayer of forgiveness, releasing our brother or sister from our judgment. This act of release frees the Holy Spirit to pave the way for reconciliation through the grace of God.

At the convention in Pittsburgh next July, we will study 2 Corinthians 5:16-20. In this theme passage, the Apostle Paul speaks eloquently of the ministry of reconciliation. We have been reconciled to God, Paul declares, and he has given us the ministry of reconciliation. A church that is full of resentments and anger blocks the path of reconciliation to God.

That's why Jesus taught the importance of keeping first things first. When an offense has separated a brother or sister from you, first go and be reconciled to that person; then come and offer your gift. 



Ervin Stutzman
is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.





Our turn to ask forgiveness



Everett J.
Thomas

We as Europeans basically annihilated the Susquehannocks, who were here, and to the rest of the tribes we committed acts that scattered them across the nation. Any way I can connect to the past as a European and a Mennonite and a Christian, I ask for forgiveness.—Lloyd Hoover

If our forefathers heard what we are talking about here, they'd be dancing for joy.—Gray Wolf

On July 22, the Lutheran World Federation asked Mennonites for forgiveness for the Lutherans' treatment of Anabaptists in Europe beginning in the 16th century. Now it is time for some Mennonites with roots in North America to ask for forgiveness from the people who lived on this land before our forebears arrived.

Lloyd Hoover did just that. He represented the Mennonite church on a committee planning the Oct. 9 "Public Acknowledgement and Commemoration of the Native American Legacy" in Lancaster, Pa. (see page 42). Hoover's statement and the response from Gray Wolf, an Apache man,

Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. In July at the Native Assembly in Montana, a Cree leader called on the church to listen to indigenous voices. The group also traveled to the Little Bighorn Battlefield, where George Custer and his U.S. cavalry were prevented from attacking a peaceful encampment of Cheyenne and Lakota Sioux men, women and children. The Native American account of the battle differs significantly from what is usually recorded in U.S. textbooks.

Mennonite Church Canada has been even more intentional about examining its history than has Mennonite Church USA. At their July assembly, delegates learned how Canadian Mennonites may have been complicit in the Indian Residential School system, which sought to eradicate First Nations cultures. Although neither Mennonite Church Canada nor its predecessor, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, operated any residential schools, some members of their congregations supported the schools and volunteered in them. The delegates acknowledged this complicity and "destructive individual attitudes, such as paternalism, racism and superiority, are still present among us."

For me, the Lancaster event hits closest to home—literally. My ancestors arrived in Penns Woods in 1747 and established the Adam Thomas farm in southern Lancaster County. At my home, eight miles away, we found arrow and hatchet heads. Although that land was originally granted to William Penn by indigenous tribes that shared his vision for a peaceful coexistence, it is clear that my part of the Mennonite church did too little to resist later abuses and attacks.

One small way for all of us to observe Native American Awareness Month is to learn something about the people who lived on the land before our houses and roads and towns existed. Then at our Thanksgiving meal we can offer a prayer of confession for any complicity we and our ancestors may have had in annihilating them.—*ejt*

Learn something about the people who lived on the land before our houses and roads existed.

came in a Sept. 23 release from the committee.

November has been designated Native American Awareness Month, and at least one Mennonite high school has planned activities to raise awareness. But we cannot find an explanation why this month was chosen. Perhaps it is because of the legends that focus on the first Thanksgiving—when people who lived here first provided food for the Pilgrims.

Coincidentally this year, Native voices have been increasingly prominent in both Mennonite

Website poll results

I personally know a Native American Mennonite:
(113 votes)
Yes - 58%
No - 39%
Not sure - 4%