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from the editor



Members of the global Mennonite-Anabaptist family parade into the arena during the opening worship service at PA 2015.

PA 2015 was my first Mennonite World Conference (MWC) assembly, and after listening to other editors talk with such enthusiasm about their experiences attending and reporting on these global gatherings held once every six years, I was excited to experience one for myself. And in many ways it was what I expected: an amazing week of joyful worship and warm fellowship with brothers and sisters from around the world. You can read all about it online at www.usmb.org/christian-leader; an overview article is printed on pages 17-18 of this issue.

I also began to understand why some U.S. Mennonite Brethren are hesitant to embrace this global fellowship. MWC member conferences are diverse in theology and culture. What is the best way to respond to the sometimes-significant differences in faith and life that we find among this group? To rephrase the PA 2015 theme: How do we faithfully walk with God and each other in diversity and unity?

The MWC website describes its assemblies as “reunions” of the worldwide Mennonite-Anabaptist family, but given its diversity, is MWC our family? Do U.S. Mennonite Brethren really belong to this “communion” of conferences and denominations?

In her article on the birth of Anabaptism (pages 14-16), MB historian Valerie Rempel reminds us that the answer is yes. Our roots as Mennonite Brethren are in this 16th-century movement—as are the origins of the many varieties of Mennonites, Brethren in Christ, Amish and Hutterites around the world. So from an historical perspective the people I spent five days with at PA 2015 are my spiritual relatives.

As I pondered how comfortable and sometimes uncomfortable I was at this MWC family reunion, I thought about my experiences with personal family gatherings. I have attended enough family reunions to know that I don't always feel like I have much in common with extended family members other than a shared great or even great-great grandparent. We don't look much alike. We come from various parts of the country and have been shaped by differing life experiences. Our beliefs and values don't always match up. But go back six or even seven generations, and we realize that, although we are a diverse group of people, we are all nurtured by the same family tree.

So thinking about our spiritual heritage in the same way, I concluded that being somewhat uneasy with all the diversity found in the global Anabaptist-Mennonite family is OK. It's only natural that this type of diversity has emerged over the past 500 years as the Anabaptist family has grown to 2.12 million baptized Anabaptists living in 87 countries.

Given its age, the Anabaptist family tree should be a big tree with lots of branches. And as we do in our personal families, it seems natural to gather as an extended spiritual family on occasion to celebrate our shared heritage. And that's what we did this past summer. It's also important to develop and nurture close ties with our immediate family, and that is what we'll do next summer when USMB holds its national convention July 29-30, 2016, in Denver, Colo. So plan now to come to the USMB gathering and celebrate what God is doing in our 200-some churches. Come worship and fellowship with your family.

“

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”



Connie Faber
Editor

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Partnering as one family to serve one Lord on one mission, for the transformation of individuals, families and communities.

www.usmb.org



Tim Sandy

John 10:9 records one of Jesus' great "I am" statements: "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture." If asked to describe a gate one might picture in their minds an iron gate or a wood picket gate or maybe a wire gate. If asked to explain the function of a gate the answer would probably have something to do with access, either to grant or deny. Jesus' use of the image of a gate clearly points to the idea of gaining access. We find in John 10:9 that access to what Jesus offers is to "whoever enters through" him.

What is it Jesus offers us through himself? We see at least three things in this verse: his presence, his purpose and his provisions. One of the key ideas of being saved is that we have a personal relationship with God. We can experience his presence not only in eternity but at this very moment. The phrase "come in and go out" brings to mind the blessing of entering those quiet moments of worship, praise, fellowship and rest with Jesus. The going out is entering the world around us as a witness by living this great relationship with Jesus before the world. This gives us purpose in life. As one of his sheep, through him we can be assured that Jesus will provide all we need in this life and the life to come. We live through him in his pasture of provisions.

The most moving truth of all in this verse is not what Jesus' access provides for us. It is the reality he illustrates through this imagery that only through him can we experience these great blessings. The "gate" is the primary truth of this verse and Jesus says, "I am the gate." In Jesus' day the shepherd would sometimes act as the gate himself by placing his body in the opening of the sheep pen for the night. Doing this insured the shepherd that all his sheep were safely in, that they rested undisturbed for the night and in the morning found their way out into the pastures to eat. The gate is the key to all this, and the shepherd acting as the gate shows his personal care for the sheep.

We can strive to find fulfilment through different avenues of life. There are many "gates" out there that promise satisfaction, enjoyment, meaning and safety. Yet all these earthly "gates" have limitations and are susceptible to many variables. Only through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ can we experience that which we most need in life: his presence, his purpose and his provisions. Thank you, Jesus, for being the gate!

Tim Sandy is senior pastor at Corn (Okla.) MB Church.

"I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture." John 10:9

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Mennonite World Conference

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David Wiebe

Good, better and best

What is the best context for mission effectiveness?

As executive director of the International Community of Mennonite Brethren (ICOMB), I have visited each of our national conferences representing the global family at least once in the past three years, including several visits to USMB congregations.

So what is our family like? What might we learn? More specifically, what is the best context for mission effectiveness?

One approach is to divide the global family into four broad contexts. Our churches exist in poverty, plenty, under persecution and under political challenge. So which setting is the most fertile for mission and the growth of God's kingdom?

In the past we might have answered that the most fertile setting is the "plenty" context, because most missionaries came from the wealthy countries of Europe and North America. But that's not the case anymore. Recently we've seen more than 50 percent of the global missionary force coming from Asia, Africa and Latin America. Besides, while churches in the Global North are the source of much funding, these churches can be spiritually bound by materialism and/or a sense of imperialism that compromises the gospel message.

Is it persecution? Our Anabaptist history—and church history itself—tells us martyrdom releases incredible spiritual power. But it carries the danger of losing too many good leaders to really develop well. And the trauma carried by members can undermine their development.

Is it poverty? We Mennonite Brethren can look to our own movement to make a positive case. The three largest national conferences—India (200,000 members), Congo (100,000) and Khmu Mission (almost 50,000)—are found in countries with some of the lowest per capita income indexes in the world. They say that need mobilizes other people's gifts. The problem is these "other people" may not hear the call of that need and thereby miss the chance to

participate in freeing up gifts already residing in the poor, leaving the poor where they are.

Is it political challenge? This factor usually presents itself in war or conflict, or possibly more benignly, government neglect. C.S. Lewis in *Screwtape Letters* thought that war was the devil's tool to distract the church through debilitating fear or super-patriotism. The Mennonite Brethren story from the 20th century is filled with witness and mission even during the conflict and terror in Russia. But the toll on leaders and members was severe.

Today the Panama church, comprised of indigenous people, suffers from government neglect. Their land rights are often overlooked, leaving them scrambling at times for justice, displacing focus on mission. The North American "War on Drugs" has cost \$1 trillion and billions have gone into Colombia to stem the flow of drugs. But much has gone into officials' pockets, and our church suffers because of ill-conceived programs to halt drug growth.

This leads to a final observation. The U.S. Mennonite Brethren family faces a challenge unique to our global family. Like Christians living in Rome in the first century, you have to figure out how to put the kingdom of God first in the "most powerful nation on earth." How do you live out your peace conviction? When you share the gospel, how do you address hidden assumptions from the position of power you occupy? Are you able to take an authentic learning posture in order to hear what the rest of the global family has to say about mission and church life?

In the end it's impossible to say which of the four contexts has a particular advantage. We all have major challenges to overcome to be faithful in mission and in building God's kingdom. My prayer for USMB is that you discern the times and ability to pick the kingdom of God as your priority.

David Wiebe is the executive director of the International Community of Mennonite Brethren.

Like Christians living in Rome in the first century, (U.S. Mennonite Brethren) have to figure out how to put the kingdom of God first in the "most powerful nation on earth."



Stephen Stout

The story of the old green house

Empty house transformed, ready for new life

There once was an old green house that stood on 27th Street near downtown Omaha, Neb. Many families have lived in this 100-plus year-old house. I never knew most of them, but I did know Barbara and her family.

Barbara was a Christian lady who loved to buy and restore old furniture. She filled the house with this old furniture. And when members of her family who needed a place to stay moved in, the house was really full. One day Barbara passed away, and a year later her family moved out. The old green house sat empty again.

There once was a small congregation that loved the Lord and loved the neighborhood around their church. Faith Bible Church sat just two lots away from the old green house. After Barbara's family moved out, this small USMB congregation bought the old green house; it was really cheap. But there was no plan for how they might use it.

So the old green house sat empty. One sad day thieves broke in the back door and cut out all the copper pipes. The door was simply boarded up, and the old green house continued to sit vacant. The dust in the house got thicker and thicker as two years went by.

Then one day, newlyweds moved in across the street from the old green house. Paul and Cassie Campfield "were full of life, energy and talent." After a while, this young couple approached the little congregation and said, "What are you going to do with the old green house?"

"We are not sure yet," said the people of Faith Bible Church. "Why?"

The young couple said, "We see value in the old green house, and we would like to help you fix it up."

The congregation was amazed at the offer. They prayed and began putting a plan together with the help of Good Neighbor Ministries, a local nonprofit birthed out of the church. The old green house was reborn, with the young couple across the street leading the charge.

Out came the kitchen and in came a brand new kitchen. Out came the bathroom and in came a brand new bathroom. Out came the windows and in came brand new windows. Add to the list refinished wood floors, a new furnace, a new air conditioning unit, new plumbing, electrical upgrades, new doors, new paint throughout the house and many loving touch-ups. Gone was the green paint, covered by new gray siding, complete with window wraps. And the big front porch with lots of old windows was opened up, giving a warm invitation to all.



Paul and Cassie Campfield and Jane and Stephen Stout in front of the "old green house" that has been transformed into a place for ministry.

Today we call this bright cheery place full of much potential The Neighborhood Lighthouse. More than 70 volunteers donating 600 hours are responsible for the transformation. Congregations in the Central District Conference and others gave generous donations. At a cost of \$30,000, which included very little labor and mostly supplies, The Neighborhood Lighthouse is ready for a new life. Already this summer a Christian couple lived at The Neighborhood Lighthouse while they looked for a home to buy.

What will The Neighborhood Lighthouse's new life look like? Does the future include a pastor? Outreach worker? Youth leader? Neighborhood connector? We know God has something special.

Stephen Stout is the director of Good Neighbor Ministries, a nonprofit ministry in Omaha, Neb., that works to meet the practical needs of people while sharing the gospel. Stout is currently serving as interim pastor at Faith Bible Church.

(God at work in the mennonite brethren world)

SDC welcomes two NEW CONGREGATIONS

When 187 delegates and guests gathered July 31-Aug. 2 in Norman, Okla., for the 95th biennial convention of the Southern District Conference (SDC), they received two congregations into the district, celebrated an emerging church plant and heard from speaker James Bryan Smith.

First Mennonite Church, Clinton, Okla., and The Rock of Southwest, Littleton, Colo., were officially received as district churches during the first business session Friday evening. Lynn Quiring, far left, representing the Clinton congregation, said the church already feels an affinity with nearby Mennonite Brethren congregations in Oklahoma. The Rock of Southwest merged with Belleview Community Church, Littleton, Colo., in April and will be dually-affiliated with the Mennonite Brethren and Converge Worldwide.

A third new congregation, Lighthouse Church, Golden, Colo., was celebrated during Saturday evening's Church Extension and Evangelism Commission (CEEC) dessert. Lighthouse is being planted through a partnership of CEEC, Mission USA, the USMB's church planting arm, and Mountain View Community Church, Fresno, Calif. The church plant is working toward a public launch in October.

The keynote speaker for the convention was James Bryan Smith, a theology professor from Friends University, Wichita, Kan., and author of a number of books on Christian spiritual formation. Smith's three keynote messages focused on community and the church. While the church is far from perfect, he told attendees, it is "God's best for his people."

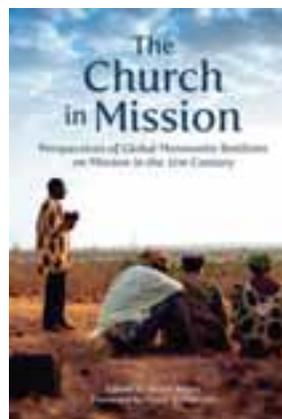
Smith was also the speaker for the Pastors' Get-Together, attended by 76 pastors and spouses July 29-31.
—Myra Holmes



Historical Commission awards grant

Rachel Twigg Boyce is the 2015 recipient of the MB Historical Commission's Katie Funk Wiebe research grant. The commission awarded the grant to Twigg Boyce, currently pastor of House Blend Ministries, an intentional Christian community in Winnipeg, Man., at their annual general meeting held June 12-13 in Fresno, Calif. Twigg Boyce's project focuses on the story of how House Blend Ministries came to be, pulling together their experiences of forming, maintaining and promoting Christian intentional communities in urban centers. The commission also heard reflections from this summer's archival intern, Liz Wittrig, considered future manuscripts for publication and agreed to launch a fourth funded initiative. The commission works with a network of four archival centers, offering research and archiving services to MB congregations in North America. —MBHC

Manual for missions released



MB Mission and the International Community of Mennonite Brethren (ICOMB) have partnered in a new 700-page mission manual to provide a foundation for new workers in the global MB family. *The Church in Mission* was released July 10 by Kindred Productions.

Whereas the 1967 anthology by the same name (ed. A.J. Klassen) was directed toward a

North American audience, the 2015 text is "truly a global text using global resources," says editor Victor Wiens. Of the 47 contributors, many are from the Global South. ICOMB and MB Mission plan to translate the text into Portuguese, Spanish, French and Telugu.—KP

Resources for observing Peace Sunday

The Peace Commission of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) has provided resources for Peace Sunday and encourages all MWC-related congregations to use the resources on or near the designated Peace Sunday, Sept. 20. Peace Sunday is the Sunday nearest the International Day of Peace, which was established by the United Nations and falls this year on Sept. 21. This year's material was prepared by Mennonites in Europe. Resources include a responsive reading, sermon notes, stories and pictures. For more, visit www.mwc-cmm.org. —MWC

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byTheNumbers

72%

Americans who believe the Bible is available in all languages.

531 languages have the complete Bible.

2,883 languages have some translated Scripture.

1,860 languages (31%) still need Bible translation to begin, and those languages are spoken by 180 million people.

Source: Christianity Today, MB Herald

5 minutes with...

CLYDE FERGUSON

Clyde Ferguson and his bass guitar, both regulars in worship at Laytown (North Carolina) MB Church, were part of the International Ensemble at the Mennonite World Conference in July. A blues musician who studies, performs and lectures about African-American music, Ferguson joined the international group of 11 vocalists and eight instrumentalists leading worship with music from a different continent each day of the conference.



1 What kind of people did they bring together for this group?

Each musician was truly awesome. Their gift from God was music, and they weren't afraid to take on whatever music they were given.

2 Is there someone who really stood out?

One young man reminded me of Lionel Richie. He had won Gospel Singer of the Year in Ethiopia. But there was also an Angolan singer who spoke five languages, a dairy farmer who fiddles, the drummer with a master's degree in percussion and many others.

3 How did it work to blend this powerful group of musicians from nine countries?

It wasn't like the usual when you get a group of musicians together and everybody has to show their wares. We were family after the first hour. Everyone was committed to doing whatever it takes to make the music work. When it was time for one group to practice everyone would sit patiently and wait. Someone said this is what heaven is like.

4 You were an instrumentalist, but ended up singing a solo.

At church they don't let me sing. But the director didn't know *Down by the Riverside*. In rehearsal she would always say, "Clyde, start this out for us." I ended up actually singing the first verse in front of 8,000 people.

5 What inspired you about the overall experience?

It was wonderful to hear the stories of peacemaking from all over the world and to see that the gospel is alive and well. The conference was a piece of utopia we need to take out into the streets and throughout the world.

Interview by Kathy Heinrichs Wiest



MB Herald gets reprieve

The shutdown of *Mennonite Brethren Herald*, the denominational publication for the Canadian Conference of MB Churches (CCMBC), has been put on hold while CCMBC leaders invite further dialogue, according to a July 10 letter from conference leaders. A survey has been commissioned, and communications strategy has been added to the agenda for the CCMBC's Annual General Meeting, to be held Oct. 21 in Winnipeg, Man. CCMBC leaders had announced in May that the December 2015 *Herald* would be the final issue and that a new print initiative would be introduced. "We apologize for taking action without more dialogue," says the July 10 letter. "We will continue to publish the *Herald* until we do more process work." Meanwhile, *Herald* editor Laura Kalmar has resigned from her 10-year ministry with CCMBC, effective Aug. 21, and now serves as associate director of communications for Mennonite Central Committee Canada.—CCMBC

FPU receives academic accreditation, Division II approval

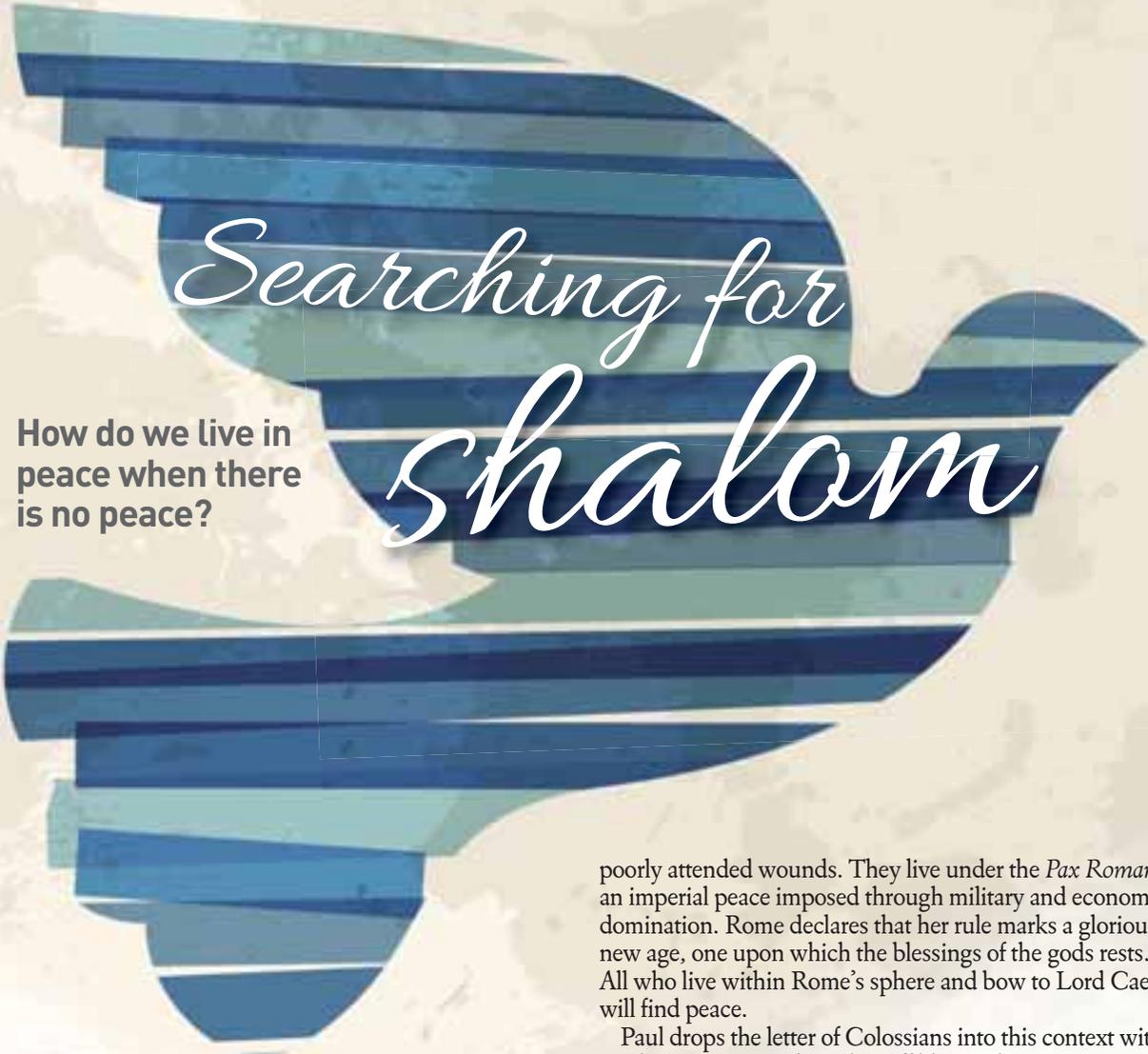
The WASC Senior College and University Commission has reaffirmed Fresno Pacific University's academic accreditation for an additional seven years, according to a statement by the commission, one of the nation's six regional higher education accrediting bodies. The university has been accredited since 1965. FPU, the MB-owned school on the West Coast, has also been recommended by the Division II Membership Committee for active NCAA membership, successfully putting the finishing touches on a four-year transition process. The Sunbirds expect to be eligible to compete in NCAA Division II postseason play and enjoy full NCAA membership privileges effective September 1.—FPU

HISTORICAL COMMISSION offers digital resources

Some 17 volumes on Mennonite history, primarily from the series *Perspectives on Mennonite Life and Thought*, are now available in digital form. The MB Historical Commission publishes the series in conjunction with Kindred Productions and the Centers for Mennonite Brethren Studies. The volumes are available on the MB Historical Commission website: www.mbhistorical.org/pub.en.html. —MBHC

Galatians joins commentary series

Galatians, the 28th volume in the *Believers Church Bible Commentary* series, was published by Herald Press in late March 2015. Author and biblical scholar George R. Brunk III focuses on the transformative elements of Paul's letter to the Galatians, looking at Paul's role in Christianity's shift from a small sect within Judaism to a new religious movement accepting Gentiles. Galatians is available from MennoMedia at 800-245-7894 or www.MennoMedia.org.—MennoMedia



Searching for shalom

How do we live in peace when there is no peace?

At the climax of his message to the Colossians, you can almost feel Paul lift out of his seat to deliver his central charge: “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace” (Col. 3:15).

We still crave these words today: to be a people of peace; to experience peace for ourselves; for Christ to rule.

But what does it mean to be at peace? Can we have peace in our hearts if there is not peace in our world and in our relationships? We must be careful here. Jeremiah once called his people to task for claiming such things carelessly. “*Shalom, Shalom, ayin shalom,*” he wept. “They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. ‘Peace, Peace,’ they say, but there is no peace” (Jer. 6:14).

Whose peace reigns in Colossae?

The Colossians aren’t foreigners to false claims and

poorly attended wounds. They live under the *Pax Romana*, an imperial peace imposed through military and economic domination. Rome declares that her rule marks a glorious new age, one upon which the blessings of the gods rests. All who live within Rome’s sphere and bow to Lord Caesar will find peace.

Paul drops the letter of Colossians into this context with an alternative story that takes off like a subversive virus. With Jeremiah, he rejects the empire’s claims to peace when there is no peace. The story Rome is telling is false! All have not found peace here. The wealth of a few is built on the backs of many. Some are privileged while others suffer as slaves.

In a world where the image of Caesar is printed on everything from money to city gates to cutlery as a reminder of who is king and god, Paul declares a different lord: “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col. 1:15-17).

Jesus—the one Rome tried to kill on a cross—is the resurrected King, the true image of God, the creator of all the world Caesar claims as his own. In place of a false peace, Jesus redefines the means of salvation. Instead of military conquest, he makes peace through radical self-sacrifice. “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,



While Rome's peace is based on social hierarchies and systems of oppression, shalom emerges where systems are just and relationships are reconciled.



and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:19-20).

Be reconciled...justly

For Paul, the truth of Jesus has implications across every dimension of creation: individual, family, church, communal, societal, even ecological. All things are being made new, and we get to have a role in it! But once again, Paul doesn't dumb down the difficulties of entering this new world.

This draws us back to a central question: What exactly is the anatomy of peace? Steeped as he was in Scripture, Paul's thought clearly reflects that most freighted word of the Hebrew language: *shalom*.

When Paul talks about the "peace of Christ," he is talking about *shalom*.

While Rome's peace is based on allegiance to the emperor, *shalom* begins with first commandment faithfulness: to have no other gods beside Yahweh (Exod. 20:1-3). This is the main reason Paul instructs the Colossians to turn from sexual immorality. These acts are associated with pagan worship practices, which, as Paul succinctly reminds his readers, "is idolatry" (Col. 3:5). There is no peace without the worship of God.

While Rome's peace only benefited a few, *shalom* is a fundamentally communal experience. If anyone in the community is excluded, *shalom* is broken for all. "*Shalom* is always tested on the margins of a society and revealed by how the poor, oppressed, disempowered and needy are treated," writes Randy Woodley in *Shalom in the Community of Creation: An Indigenous Vision*. In the words of Walter Brueggemann, "*Shalom* is never the private property of the few."

While Rome's peace is based on social hierarchies and systems of oppression, *shalom* emerges where systems are just and relationships are reconciled.

Colossae sat on a key trade route through the Lycus Valley in Asia Minor. Diverse peoples from all over the empire called it home. Cultural differences and power differentials made for a relationally fragmented society. Paul cannot simply encourage them to cozy up to one another and work things out.

Rather, God's *shalom* lifts them out of injustice and reconciles them into Jesus where they discover a new way of life with one another. Their former selves and social mores cannot facilitate true community. "For you

have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). Instead, they will learn to be one church through their shared identity in Jesus. "Put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all" (Col. 3:10-11).

A daily vocation

The truest thing about our world is that Jesus Christ is Lord, firstborn from the dead, creator of all things, making ALL things new. Therefore, writes Paul, live like it!

Colossians 3:12-17 walks a well-worn Old Testament tradition. The most common Hebrew word pairing is *mishpat* and *sadiqah* (e.g., Jer. 22:3-5; Isa. 28:17-18). The first word relates to justice in society and the second to personal righteousness. The two are continually held together in the biblical imagination. Paul follows this vein in his instructions for Christian living. The Jesus-ethic he describes forges an intimate marriage between personal holiness and social justice. It is, therefore, a powerful weapon against the divisions and oppression that continually encroach on the people of God.

What does it look like to have died to self and come alive to Christ in normal life?

Paul says it is to have compassion, literally to "suffer with" one another. It is to commit to the Christ-like, self-sacrificing, listening postures of kindness, humility, meekness and patience (Col. 3:12). When differences and difficulties flare up, Paul urges to "bear with one another" and live not in perfection but in forgiveness (v. 13). And finally, that glorious thing which cinches everything together: "put on love" (v. 14).

"Clothe yourself" in all of this, we are told (v. 12). The power of the empire will keep trying to creep in. Each day you must re-dress yourself in these virtues, remembering that you are God's beloved people.

In the following of Jesus there is indeed true peace. Peace that lets us sing with the great Southern preacher William J Barber II: "to pain and problems and suffering and racism and injustice, 'You may be real, but you are not the final reality. There is another hope! There is a resurrection!'"

Nathan Hunt is completing his final year at Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary and will graduate in the spring of 2016 with a master's in Urban Mission. He blogs at leadingtoshalom.blogspot.com

Nurturing the servant's

heart

Inspiring a new generation to sincerely serve others

A lifestyle of service. Is it genetic or a gift we are bestowed at birth? Or is it a mindset we can cultivate? Although some individuals are naturally compassionate, I think we can encourage and nurture servants' hearts especially in our next generation.

Genuine service encompasses a meaningful endeavor that benefits others and/or is a project that enhances their situations. It might be mowing an elderly widow's lawn, running a chain saw for the initial response following a tornado, helping build a chapel at a camp in the Alaskan bush or cooking a meal for a grieving family. In this context, it is doing something for someone who will never be able to repay you. Expecting nothing in return, service is a lifestyle to live out regularly.

Is this next generation self-absorbed and entitled or caring and thoughtful? It is probably not either/or but a combination of both. Today's young adults have lived their entire lives plugged in with smart phones, iPods, iPads and laptops. They experience instant access to limitless information, whether beneficial or detrimental, and maintain constant contact with anyone from casual acquaintances to close friends and family. I find it a battle to expect a college student to suspend social media connection for a 50-minute class period.

The big question is how to inspire young people to unplug and come to grips with the fact that the world does not totally revolve around them—how many Facebook friends they have racked up and how well their fantasy football team is performing. Rather than focusing on their self-metrics, how can we encourage them to contribute personally to others' lives and improve the situation of someone else?

Encouraging an attitude of service does not happen automatically. It is up to us to come alongside and engage young people in developing their faith and connecting with the needs of others. We can stir them to respond. We can provide opportunities to live meaningful service.

We can also provide examples; young adults should witness us in action.

What is the perspective of our next generation? What do they say about inspiring their peers to serve? According to recent Tabor College graduate Michael Klaassen, "Being connected with someone older who has a heart for service can be influential in the life of a young person." He adds, "To get the younger generation excited about serving, it all starts with the heart. Get them excited about their faith and putting God first, and service to others will come as a byproduct."

Tabor College junior Tena Loewen agrees, "In order to get our younger generation involved in service, I think it is a matter of the heart. True transformation must take place by the Spirit on the inside so that the fruit of the heart wants to serve," she says.

"To get my generation involved in service we must feel as though what we are doing matters," says David Loewen, who, along with his sister, Tena, has gone with me on service trips. "We need to know that it is making a difference to the people we are serving. However to get to this point, my generation must become compassionate, able to place themselves in another person's situation and feel for that person."

How do we follow through with these suggestions? I propose a few strategies to engage young people in service.

Establish the purpose of the service experience. Am I sincere in giving to someone in need or am I just doing it to show off my spirituality? Am I contributing without expectation? Am I willing to set aside my own agenda on a work project? At times we can be totally focused on a rebuild project, wanting to see major progress. However, it is important to take time to listen to the homeowner's heart-breaking story when she stops by. Rain keeps us off the roof. Snow totally shuts down the day's work. In God's



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timing, the work will still be accomplished along with the ministry opportunities.

Realize that each of us has something we can give. God can use a vast variety of abilities to meet the needs of others. I often share with my service groups the example of the little boy giving up his five loaves and two fish. In Matthew 14 Jesus had retreated to a remote place for a reprieve following a heavy ministry schedule, but what he found was a large crowd clamoring for his attention. Unselfishly, he showed compassion, teaching and healing. As evening approached the disciples wanted to disperse the crowd so they could go find their own suppers. But Jesus turned the challenge back to the disciples and charged, “You give them something to eat.”

The only food available was what was in one little boy’s brown lunch bag—five loaves and two fish. Not much, but he sacrificed all he had and Jesus multiplied his contribution exponentially.

When a tragic natural disaster hits, we often pray and ask God to fix it all, but he turns it back to us: What are we going to do about it? He desires our time and skills.

Using a backhoe, pulling nails, caulking baseboard, painting a door, roofing a house or sweeping up sawdust are all needed in disaster relief work. Large or small, give what is in your brown bag so Jesus can multiply your efforts exponentially.

Start small and close to home. It’s more glamorous to travel several states away or fly to a country that requires a passport, but many opportunities are nearby.

I wanted to have an impact in the life of a grandnephew who lives close by. I decided that my gift for his fifth birthday would be assembling an Operation Christmas Child box for a little boy in a third world country who possessed very little. It was a challenge to impress on my grandnephew’s young mind that we were selecting basic necessities, toys, games, school supplies and clothes for someone who does not have all the material goods that he enjoys. Success, at least in my mind, was limited that day as we ended with a major meltdown in the sock aisle at a discount store. The six-year-old experience went a little better with only a minor meltdown amid the socks.

We had a major shift by the time his seventh birthday rolled around. He chose to contribute some of his own

birthday money and understanding replaced the meltdowns. Incidentally, we started with the socks this time. I realize that this great aunt-grandnephew Halloween afternoon tradition will not be long term, but I am praying that the planted seeds will grow into an adult service lifestyle.

Create opportunities and come alongside others. I schedule two disaster relief experiences a year, one in January and one early in the summer. During interterm I teach a disaster relief class which allows Tabor College students to earn their intercultural awareness credit. We spend a week in class followed by two weeks of service. Sometimes students will choose to enroll in the class while other times I will nudge a student to consider enrolling. Tyler was one person I encouraged to consider the class. The trip fee was a hindrance, but we were able to resolve his financial concerns. Those two weeks in Moore, Okla., were life changing for Tyler as he greatly matured in his faith.

In early summer I plan a trip for a group of cross-generational friends. It affords us time away from our normal responsibilities to be together and to serve those who have lost everything. As Klaassen says, “Service of any type is always fun when done with friends and families.” In addition, Tena Loewen confirms one of my goals for the trip, “It is important to teach and show our generation what it looks like to live a life like Jesus—being a servant leader. It comes from putting yourself in another’s shoes and living with compassion from an eternal perspective.”

Expect participants to earn part of the finances. It is common for service trip participants to ask family, friends and church members to contribute financially toward trip expenses. I am not opposed to fundraising (I have assisted others this way), but I think it is meaningful to work for the opportunity. Mow lawns, rake leaves, provide childcare. Save birthday and Christmas money. The memories of the experience and the eternal reward will outlast any material possession purchased with those gifts.

Opportunities for service abound. Whatever generation we identify with, I encourage us to surrender the skills in our brown bags for a service project and let God multiply our efforts exponentially.

Karol Hunt is professor of health and physical education and associate athletic director at Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kan., where she is a member of Parkview MB Church. She has engaged in disaster relief work with Mennonite Disaster Service and Samaritan’s Purse in Oklahoma, Alabama, Alaska, Tennessee, Louisiana, Colorado and Kansas.



Birth of

Celebrating a common spiritual heritage

Pastor John Neufeld of The Meeting Place baptizes Chuck Ducharme on Easter Sunday 2014. The Meeting Place is a Mennonite Brethren church in Winnipeg, Man. Photo by Kristin Pauls

Sometimes, a single act can have enormous consequences. In the religious ferment of 16th-century Europe, a small group of Christians in the Swiss canton of Zurich gathered in a home on a wintry January day, 1525. One of them, George Blaurock, asked another, Conrad Grebel, to baptize him. Around the circle they went, baptizing each other in what they understood to be their first true baptism. It was a baptism performed upon their confession of faith in Jesus as Lord. It was a radical act that earned many of them a martyr's death.

The 16th century was a time of great change in the religious life and practices of many in Western Europe. A variety of voices within the church were advocating for change. They were frequently critical of practices and theology that had developed over centuries of church life.

In an earlier time, the criticisms of a few reform-minded individuals might have had little impact. Technology, however, had a hand in changing that. The printing press had been developed in Europe. Its advent was almost as revolutionary as today's Internet. In short order the ideas of a few people could be shared among many. Reformation fever quickly took hold.

For centuries the Roman Catholic Church had been only one church in Europe. It exercised complete spiritual authority over all its members and had little tolerance for those whose thought or practice was different than the official stance of the church.

A primary symbol of that authority was the administration of the sacraments. Rites such as baptism, the Eucharist, hearing confession and assigning penance, even the last rites given at the time of death were understood to be the means by which God's grace was given to the people. In essence, church leaders believed they held the means of salvation firmly within their grip.

The problem with adult baptism

The practice of infant baptism was especially powerful. The physical act of baptism was understood to actually cleanse people of their sin. In Roman Catholic practice,

the authority of the institutional church. The practice of believer's baptism went to the core of the early Anabaptists' understanding of what it meant to be Christian. Christian faith was not something that one was born into. Christian identity came about by faith in Jesus.

In declaring that salvation came through faith alone, early Anabaptists joined a host of other believers who were reexamining Scripture and coming to new conclusions about Christian faith and practice. Martin Luther, the former monk whose efforts to reform the Roman Catholic Church resulted in a new "Lutheran" church, argued against anything that appeared to be "works." He echoed the apostle Paul who wrote that one was justified by faith alone and not by works lest anyone should boast. Others, such as John Calvin in Geneva and Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich, also attempted to reform the practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Reformers insisted that Scripture was the sole spiritual authority, not the traditions of the Catholic Church.

Still, to be called an Anabaptist in 16th-century Europe was to be named a heretic. The term referred to being "rebaptized," and it was a punishable offense. Even reform-minded leaders found it difficult to imagine a legitimate church refusing to baptize infants. None were willing to challenge the practice of infant baptism in quite the same way. Anabaptists stood alone.

Separating church and state

Unfortunately for Anabaptists, the church's spiritual authority was connected to civil authority. Through baptism, one became a part of the church and a citizen of the state. One's baptismal record functioned as a kind of birth certificate. To be unbaptized was to be undocumented. Neither the church nor the state considered that to be a good thing.

This relationship of mutual support between the institutional church and civil authorities formed a kind of "Christian" kingdom. Christendom provided a way of understanding the world that seemed to bring it into a

the water of baptism was not just a symbol. Baptismal water actually did what it proclaimed. It made sense then to baptize infants in order to cleanse them of sin and secure their salvation.

Adult, or believer's, baptism called into question the church's practice of conferring salvation upon infants who lacked the ability or even the will to choose faith in Christ. This was more than just an attempt to challenge

harmonious whole. The state handled civil life but the church offered something even more important—eternal life. Each ruled their respective sphere and supported the other.

By baptizing each other, these so-called Anabaptists denied the church's claim of spiritual authority and challenged its relationship to civil authority. Anabaptists were among the first to see a need to separate the church and

Anabaptism



The practice of believer's baptism went to the core of the early Anabaptists' understanding of what it meant to be Christian. Christian faith was not something that one was born into. Christian identity came about by faith in Jesus.



the state. They declared their true citizenship to be in the kingdom of heaven rather than to any kingdom or ruler of the world. Anabaptists argued that their primary allegiance was always owed to Christ alone.

Civil and religious authorities throughout Europe moved quickly to quell what they viewed as a dangerous movement. Wherever groups of Anabaptist believers emerged, in the Swiss and German regions of Europe and as far north as the Netherlands, they met with great opposition. Thousands were imprisoned and put to death by burning at the stake or by being drowned in a local river. Drowning was considered a particularly appropriate death for Anabaptists. According to the authorities, they had sinned through the use of baptismal water so by the water they would lose their lives.

Radical readers of the Bible

In spite of severe persecution, groups of Anabaptist believers continued to meet, often in secret. Men and women met together to read Scripture and to encourage each other in the faith. They shared the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper, viewing them as symbols of Christ's body that had been offered for their salvation. Here again they challenged a Catholic understanding of the Eucharist as a sacrifice in which the bread and the wine became the actual body and blood of Christ. For Anabaptists, the Lord's Supper was simply a memorial meal shared among believers who were committed to following Jesus in life and death.

Anabaptists believed that the core of Christian faith was expressed in a life of discipleship. Following Jesus as a disciple meant living as Jesus did during his time on earth. The Gospel accounts of Jesus were especially influential for sorting out what that meant. As a result, early Anabaptists became radical Bible readers who tried to put into practice what they read in Scripture.

For example, when Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Love your enemies" and "Do good to those that hate you," Anabaptists read this as the way that Christians should truly live. Many refused to arm themselves against those who threatened their lives or their property.

That refusal to fight against so-called enemies was viewed as another threat to civil authority. How could Anabaptists be trusted if they refused to bear arms? Anabaptists repeatedly witnessed that they respected the authority

of the state but that their primary allegiance was to Christ and to the kingdom of heaven. To kill in the name of Jesus, the one who came to bring peace, was simply unthinkable.

By refusing to align themselves with any particular civil authority, Anabaptists left themselves vulnerable to ongoing persecution. They also began to establish a pattern of migration in response to persecution that helped spread Anabaptist practices to places far beyond Western Europe. Through migration and missionary work Anabaptist congregations can now be found around the globe.

What we hold in common

What do Anabaptists have in common? Like all Christians who are rooted in the story of Jesus, Anabaptists look to what God has done in Jesus as the basis for salvation. They share with many other Christians a Trinitarian understanding of God who is revealed to humankind as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Anabaptists place special emphasis on voluntary church membership and believer's baptism. They continue to call each other to a life of discipleship and seek to resist the temptation to find security in political allegiances. As much as possible, they seek to live at peace with their neighbors and to practice love of enemies. In the spirit of the 16th-century Reformation, they look to the Bible as the sole authority for faith and life.

Anabaptism was born as a movement of religious renewal. The varieties of Mennonites, Brethren in Christ, Amish and Hutterites all find their roots in this movement. They are not alone. Contemporary Christians from other church traditions are also being drawn to Anabaptist theology and church practices. These "neo-Anabaptists" are discovering the witness and the message of early Anabaptist leaders, many of whom were martyred for their faith. They are establishing new Anabaptist communities and networks of congregations that are exploring what it means to be Anabaptist in the 21st century.

Almost 500 years after Conrad Grebel baptized George Blaurock, the call to radically follow Jesus is still being answered.

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Walking with God and each other

7,500 Anabaptists share joys, burdens at global assembly



PA 2015 attendees lived out the assembly theme of "Walking with God" as they traveled the many hallways at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex. Among the approximately 380 Mennonite Brethren that attended were (forefront, left to right) Emerson Cardoso, Rodrigo Justino and Paul Duck of Brazil and E.D. Solomon of India.

In his friendship group at the Mennonite World Conference assembly, Francis Ojwang found that getting to know fellow believers from distant places brought an unexpected blessing.

The Kenyan pastor had hoped that his wife, Everline Achieng, could travel with him to the 16th global assembly of Anabaptists. The once-every-six-years event drew more than 7,500 people from 65 countries to the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg, Pa., July 21-26. The theme was "Walking with God." It was the first time since 1978 that U.S. churches hosted the global assembly.

But, like about 300 others from various countries, Ojwang's wife's visa was denied. The couple had spent more than \$1,000 on expenses such as visa interviews and passports—and half of it had been for nothing.

"I was disappointed, but not to the breaking point, because I believe all things work to good for those who love the Lord," Ojwang said July 25.

He shared his story with friendship group No. 348—one of more than 250 circles of about 10 people each that met for 45 minutes after each morning worship service. The rest of Ojwang's group, all from the United States, took up a collection. At their last meeting, they gave the father of six an envelope containing enough cash to cover a significant part of his loss.

"This is a great surprise and blessing," he said. "Now I will be able to buy a couple of books and a T-shirt for my wife."

He could do more than that. Not knowing how much was in the envelope, he promised some of the funds would

help the orphans who make up about half of the 120 children in his congregation's Sunday school.

Before the gift, he had \$5 in his pocket.

Appropriately, the day's theme was "Walking in Giving and Receiving."

Friendship group No. 348's experience of cross-cultural sharing was one of countless moments—worshiping with the multitude, listening to music in the Global Church Village, competing for the Anabaptist World Cup or visiting in the hallways—that drew Anabaptists from around the world into closer fellowship.

"The church will test our faith. After all, you and I are in it," Tom Yoder Neufeld of Canada said in a July 22 sermon. "But the church is also God's gift of us walking together."

With colorful MWC banners hanging on each side of the stage and a huge video screen behind the podium, worshipers gathered in a 1930s-vintage arena that hosts events such as rodeos, tractor pulls, motorcycle races and farm shows.

The assembly rented 30 large tents to create more space for smaller meetings, such as afternoon workshops, within the complex. Volunteers sped to their errands on big-wheeled Amish-made scooters that resemble bicycles.

Spirit-filled music

Each evening worship service featured songs from various countries and cultures. On July 22 the crowd sang consecutive songs from Korea and India, the latter with Hindi words, but both with one word in common: "Hallelujah!"

On the day that featured Europe, a string ensemble played while the crowd sang *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*.

American folk songs like *Down by the Riverside* and *I'll Fly Away* enlivened the closing service, which became a clap-along hoedown.

"The spirit touches our hearts as we sing together, as our brothers and sisters sing in different parts of the world," said worship leader Don McNiven of Canada.

The joy—and shared sorrow—that comes with being a global fellowship was evident Thursday evening when several African choirs energized the worship service. The choir from Kenya arrived with only a fraction of its members. After years of planning and saving money, only five of their 30 visa requests were approved.

"They are not the only group that experienced this kind of heartbreak," McNiven said before the five Kenyans sang. He invited the crowd to stand for 30 seconds in prayer and solidarity with those who didn't get their visas and to show that "we care for them and miss them here."

Critique and praise

At twice-daily worship services, sermons brought encouragement and challenge. Each morning service included a "young Anabaptist" response from a different continent.

Kevin Ressler, the young North American speaker, said "many of us have become Pharisees" eager to condemn the sins of others while ignoring our own. With a Tanzanian mother and an American father, Ressler called himself a "Suba-Luo-Swiss-German-Tanzanian-American-Anabaptist-Mennonite."

As one who considers Anabaptism his core identity, he said, "I am unicultural...We are all ethnically Anabaptist, for we carry that version of Christ with us wherever we go."

Rebecca Osiro of Kenya emphasized MWC's unifying power. "Through MWC, we have a forum to fellowship," she said. "It is not a time for us to be critical of or distance ourselves from one another."

Canadian Brethren in Christ pastor Bruxy Cavey praised Anabaptists for carrying the simple, clear message of Jesus through the centuries: that love for others is an essential reflection of love for God. "We are a peace church because we are first and foremost a Jesus church," he said.

Diverse contexts

Workshops included testimonies about living out the Anabaptist principles of peace and community in diverse contexts.

In Indonesia, with the world's largest Muslim population, Mennonites face the challenge to build a positive image of Christianity among people who distrust it as a "foreign faith."

"We live among 150 million Muslims, and they don't want to read the gospel, so we must help them read the gospel in our lives," said Paulus

Hartono, an Indonesian pastor. He told of befriending a military commander of Hezbollah, a radical Islamist group.

Mennonites in the Netherlands, by contrast, navigate a post-Christian society mostly populated by people content to avoid church. Henk Leege, a pastor from Amsterdam, said many Dutch view the church as a place for hypocrites. But he is happy to be a listening ear for spiritual seekers.

"Sometimes the people who come in are very different from us, but we open up still," he said. "When people knock on the door and think maybe this is a place to ask spiritual questions, I always say, 'Yes, come in.'"

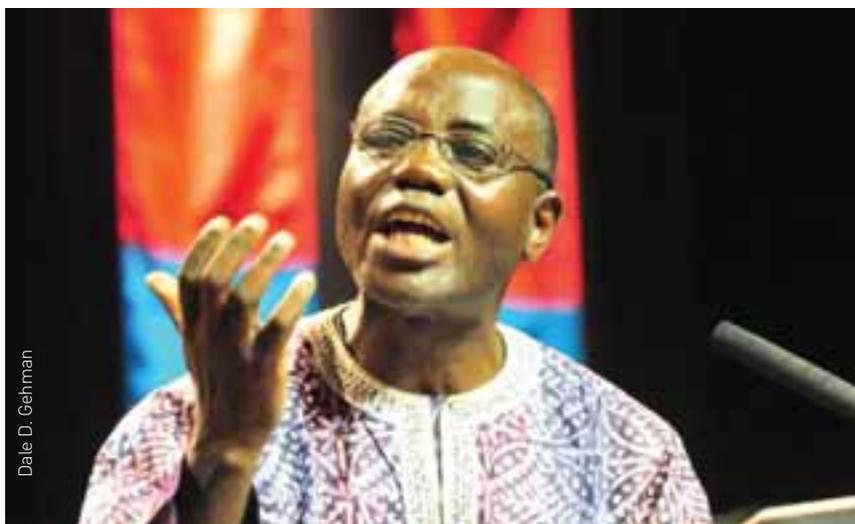
New leadership

The final worship service included the symbolic passing of a shepherd's staff from outgoing President Danisa Ndlovu of Zimbabwe to new President Nelson Kraybill of the United States. Rebecca Osiro of Kenya succeeded Janet Plenert of Canada as vice president.

Sunday morning, July 26, at least 34 local congregations hosted international guests, concluding the assembly activities. Many Mennonite Brethren attended a worship service hosted by the International Community of Mennonite Brethren at nearby Messiah College.

The United States had the largest number of registrants, 3,931, followed by Canada with 1,162. Other leading countries included Zimbabwe with 265, India with 250, Congo with 215, the Netherlands with 125, Germany with 112, Mexico with 106 and Switzerland with 97.

The 17th world assembly is scheduled for 2021 in Indonesia.—Paul Schrag, editor of Mennonite World Review. This article was written for Meetinghouse, a group of Mennonite publications. Full coverage of PA 2015 is online at www.usmb.org/Christian-Leader



Date D. Gehman

"Only one name has been given by which we can be saved," said Nzuzi Mukawa, the Congolese MB pastor who preached Thursday night. "And that is Jesus. Are you in agreement with me?" The crowd's enthusiastic applause indicated they were.

MB leaders meet after assembly

ICOMB delegates reappoint Wiebe, discuss “global elders”

Representatives from 21 national Mennonite Brethren conferences from around the globe met for the International Community of Mennonite Brethren (ICOMB) Annual Summit held July 26-29 at Messiah College in Mechanicsburg, Pa.

The 2015 summit highlighted ways in which the 25-year-old organization has grown and is shifting beyond fellowship to providing guidance and accountability to its member conferences. However, the country reports that punctuated each session remained a highpoint.

The mutual support these leaders derived from each other was evident as they huddled to pray for one another after sharing the pain of ministering to war-torn Ukraine or the excitement of turning a brothel into an outreach center for former prostitutes in Brazil. The sharing culminated in the closing foot washing, prayer and communion service, a highlight for many delegates.

ICOMB representatives voted unanimously to appoint David Wiebe of Canada—ICOMB’s first full-time executive director—to a second three-year term. Representatives strongly affirmed Wiebe’s leadership, only cautioning against over-work. “When Dave visits us, he is so tall but so humble,” said Yoshifuma Tanaka of the Japan MB Conference.

Delegates discussed establishing “global elders” to provide spiritual, theological and practical leadership among member conferences, a conversation begun in 2013. Delegates raised concerns about the importance of building trust and acknowledged that conferences do not “do church” in the same way. They suggested ICOMB serve as a mediator rather than an authority figure in times of conflict and pursue a biblical model for sharing authority and resolving conflict.

“We should not be discouraged when we don’t find easy answers,” said Victor Wall of Paraguay.

ICOMB conferences in Angola, India and Mexico are currently navigating internal conflicts. Wiebe said ICOMB is testing ways it can support and guide the national conferences as they seek to resolve differences.

“Mission can’t entirely hold us together,” said Wiebe. “Community and identity are also very

important, and sometimes ICOMB is asked to have a stronger voice.”

ICOMB exercised that voice during the 2015 summit. The executive committee determined that, in spite of reconciliation efforts, the current leaders of Igreja Evangelica dos Irmaos Menonitas en Angola (the Mennonite Brethren church in Angola) were no longer in good standing with ICOMB. Wiebe emphasized that the problem is with specific leaders and not the Angola conference; he asked delegates to pray for the conference and their leaders.

The 2015 ICOMB summit followed the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) assembly held July 21-26 in nearby Harrisburg, Pa. Most ICOMB delegates attended Assembly 16 and the general council, mission or education meetings held prior to the assembly.

Building on its experience holding education consultations in DR Congo in 2009 and internationally in 2007 and 2011, ICOMB helped to organize a global education conference for primary and secondary educators prior to the MWC assembly.

MWC general secretary César García, a Mennonite Brethren from Bogotá, Colombia, joined ICOMB for dinner Monday and answered questions posed by ICOMB representatives during the evening session.

The ICOMB summit began with a worship service attended by international Mennonite Brethren participants from the MWC assembly, some of whom remained as guests for the meetings. Ed Boschman, retired executive director, represented USMB.—*Karla Braun and Connie Faber*



Dustin Wiebe

ICOMB delegates spend time sharing and praying for one another at their annual summit. Here delegates pray for Yoshifumi Tanaka of Japan, the aging MB congregations in his country and for Japan. “Please pray that Japan will have hope,” requested Tanaka.

Travel that transforms

Students visiting Thailand see entrepreneurial leadership up close

Online learning went offline in June when students in Tabor College's Entrepreneurial Ministry Leadership (EML) master's degree program spent 10 days in Thailand.

The trip is one component of the 21-month EML program offered online by Tabor College's School of Adult and Graduate Studies in Wichita, Kan. The goal of the EML program is to help students think entrepreneurially. The trip offers students the opportunity to see entrepreneurial leadership in a different cultural context, to gain a global perspective and to evaluate their own culture.

"Normal isn't the same everywhere," Bartlett says. "What's normal there is completely different than here, but that's OK. It's not wrong; it's just different."

In Thailand, students rubbed shoulders with members of MB Mission's Team 2000, met with pastors and church leaders, learned from entrepreneurs and ministered alongside Thai believers.

Three components provide framework for trip

During the first portion of the trip, the six graduate students met Khmu and Lao pastors at the Changed Life Center north of Chiang Rai.

"I wanted our students to hear stories of persecution," Bartlett says. "Listening to some of the Laotian pastors talk about being imprisoned for their faith, and at the same time hearing about healings and crazy New Testament God-at-work kind of stuff in those contexts, was powerful."

Students also met entrepreneurs. In Chiang Mai, they visited Create International, a communication ministry of Youth With A Mission that creates indigenous media resources with the intent of strengthening church planting and evangelistic efforts. Students also met the founder of Expat Homes, which provides home rental and relocation services for foreign renters because only Thai people are allowed to own property.

"(Expat Homes is) a ministry, and they operate it under biblical principles, ethical principles," Bartlett says. "It was amazing to listen to him talk about the 'coffee shop for Jesus' idea in the sense of how his entrepreneurial spirit came through."

A third component allowed Bartlett and students to worship with Thai believers. They worshiped in one of the early Mennonite Brethren church plants in the fish-

ing village of Ang Sila. They also attended a Sunday morning service in a slum area in Chachoengsao. Sunday night, some students shared their testimonies in a Burmese church. Five people came to know Christ and were later baptized.

The group also visited the Abundant Life Home orphanage and accompanied Ang Sila believers to Thailand's largest cancer hospital in Chonburi to do crafts, share testimonies and pray with patients.

Students, teacher transformed

Traveling to Thailand provided opportunities for personal transformation for Bartlett and students alike.

For Jessica Garcia, the trip reignited a passion for reconciliation within Hispanic families.

"Just to see how these Thai people, these Khmu people, or the people from Laos, have such a deep desire for their own people, for their nation, to come to know Jesus, it sparked that again in me," she says. "It made me feel like it is a gift that I am Mexican-American."

"Thailand was really something special, just to see their love for their own people," says Garcia. "I thought, 'I have that. It's just been hiding because I'm scared of what that love can push you to.'"

““

I have grown in my trust of the Lord and also in my connections with the larger spiritual community.

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Garcia's decision to put the EML program on hold in order to lead a TREK team to the Philippines was affirmed in Thailand. Missionary Louise Sinclair-Peters said Garcia's passion for reconciliation reminded her of Sam Arcano, the same pastor Garcia will serve alongside in the Philippines.

"It was the first time that I saw a legit connection between this program, my dreams, my passions and TREK," Garcia says. "I think all of us in that moment were like, 'There's a bigger work behind this trip, behind our projects.'"



Tabor College

Tabor College EML students at the White Palace in Thailand. In addition to visiting unusual sites in Thailand, such as the White Palace, EML students learned from entrepreneurs, met with pastors and church leaders and ministered alongside them.

For Edith Buller-Breer, the trip grew her trust in God’s provision, both financially in providing necessary funds, and physically.

“I have grown in my trust of the Lord and also in my connections with the larger spiritual community,” she says. “I’m an older person and I have some age-related issues. I knew if this was going to be a positive experience for me, I would need the prayers of people supporting me. When I was in Thailand, I knew, several different times, I said, ‘I am being carried along by people’s prayers.’”

Buller-Breer says she appreciated the enthusiasm for the Word she witnessed in the Burmese church. She was also surprised by the way Thai believers prayed and hopes to introduce the idea to her small group.

“Everybody prays at the same time,” she says. “It’s a really cool experience because it revolutionizes those habit patterns that you have formed about prayer. God can hear everybody at the same time. He doesn’t need us to speak one at a time to make our prayers known to him. It places value on everybody present.”

Lee Waldron was impacted by the radical faith of pastors at the Changed Life Center. Despite having few material possessions, they were dedicated to the Lord’s work.

“I think my takeaway was, it’s not about how much I have or what title I gain; it’s about how I’m pursuing Jesus,” Wal-

dron says. “How much of myself can I give to Jesus, and how much am I willing to lay on the line to run after Him in a culture that doesn’t necessarily promote that?”

For Waldron, that will involve being disciplined to make time for Jesus, listening to His voice and walking in obedience to the Spirit.

“I want to be a person that is committed and completely lives a life that is all sold out for Jesus,” he says. “I want my life to be a worship story, not just moments where I sing a song here or there to God. Thailand brought up much that was already on my heart, but really brought it to the surface, and it has been hard to ignore things since I’ve been back.”

Bartlett, too, was impacted. He says he was challenged by the commitment of Team 2000 and sensed God calling him to be more open to the Spirit.

“It’s so easy when you’re on those kind of experiences to see God at work all the time in many places and to be willing to pray for people,” he says. “I was sitting there thinking, ‘Why don’t I do that at home?’”

Bartlett says the experience exceeded his expectations.

“As an educator, it’s so awesome to put people into that kind of context and watch them grow and learn,” he says. “I think there’s so much that can happen when you’re out of your comfort zone and in a language you can’t speak. I’m excited to do it again.”—*Janae Rempel*

USMB students pray for schools

See You At The Pole offers opportunities to lead, demonstrate faith

Near the beginning of every new school year, students across the nation and the globe gather at their schools' flagpoles to pray publicly for their schools, their peers and their communities. Students from USMB congregations that participate in See You At The Pole (SYATP) say being involved in the global day of student prayer helps them grow as leaders and encourages them to express their faith.

SYATP is a student-led initiative that began in 1990 with a small group of teens in Texas and has grown to involve an estimated 2 million students from all 50 states and 20 countries.

"SYATP has impacted my faith greatly," says Gisselle Ramirez, a senior from Bethesda Church in Huron, SD "Not only does it push you to get out of your comfort zone, but it also gives you an opportunity to take leadership."

Ramirez has participated in SYATP for four years and expects to participate again this year.

There would certainly be no SYATP at her school, Huron High School, says Ramirez, if God didn't prompt her to lead. One year, she was the only person who showed up. She prayed and worshiped alone for about 10 to 15 minutes before other students arrived and joined her in prayer.

"I have learned not to be afraid to stand up for what I believe, even if it means I stand alone," Ramirez says. "I'm thankful and humbled to be part of it."

Megan Kroeker, a junior from Bethany Church, Fresno, Calif., has been participating in SYATP since she was in kindergarten. She enjoys worshipping and praying together.

"You don't see that kind of stuff happen normally, especially in a

public school setting," she says. She notes that cliques and other dividing lines disappear at SYATP. "We all gather together in unity. We are like a family."

SYATP reminds Kroeker that she is not alone, even in her public school. "It shows me who the other believers are and who I can talk to if I have a problem. It really works as an encouragement to stay strong in your faith because you know that there are people to hold you accountable."

Praying in front of peers is never easy, says Matt Heinrichs, a junior from Fairview (Okla.) MB Church. But Heinrichs, who will be participating in SYATP for the third time, believes it's important to take the opportunity to stand up for his faith. "It is an opportunity to minister to others that don't know Jesus," he says.

Because SYATP is intended to be a student-led movement, youth pastors take a back seat for the event. Travis Schmidt and Russ Friesen, youth pastors at Fairview (Okla.) MB Church and Community Bible Church, Olathe, Kan., respectively, say they make sure students know about SYATP, then let the students organize and lead. "That's when you start to see what our future looks like," Schmidt says.

Friesen visits various schools on the day of SYATP and provides time for students to share after the event. "It's neat to hear students share about their experiences," he says.

This year's SYATP event is slated for Sept. 23. For more information on SYATP, visit <http://www.seeyouatthepole.org/>. —Myra Holmes

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Don Morris
Mission USA director

Dying of thirst?

Drinking Christ's living water quenches eternally

What is it about water that is so enjoyable on a hot day? When the sun is beating down and the temperature nears 100 degrees, just thinking about dipping my feet in a cool pool or stream brings a sigh of contentment. When I was a kid, my friends and I went fishing at a small lake near our town. We'd often forget about the fishing and just jump in the water! I can remember it feeling so good, and all of us impromptu swimmers had huge smiles on our faces.

Recently I was watering our flowers on a super hot day, and I let the water run over my hands and shoeless feet. Instantly I felt the refreshing sensation of cool water on hot skin. I watched the water run over my hands and onto the flowers and I felt my body cooling down—ah!

And who hasn't downed a large glass of ice water to quench an intense thirst—the kind when you can barely even swallow. Like hunger, thirst is one of those God-given things that triggers the need to ingest what we require in order to survive. I believe God also gives us these powerful urges so that when we fulfill them, we experience a deep satisfaction and relief.

Life-giving *water*. Isn't it interesting how Jesus uses this common, essential substance to bring clarity to what happens when people trust in him? In John 7 Jesus says, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from

within them." John clarifies that Jesus is comparing living water to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit for those who believe.

"Rivers of living water will flow from within them." These are incredible words, yet very simple words that immediately draw us to reflect on what we know about water. Like the relief it brings on a hot day, or the fulfillment it brings when we're "dying of thirst." Yes, millions of people in America are "dying of thirst." Millions are looking for life-giving *water* that can't be found anywhere else but through Jesus. Oh, they are searching—for anything and everything that might quench their parched souls. But they will never find it until they meet Jesus.

If people who are lost and searching really knew what that living water meant for them, wouldn't they run and jump into it? Wouldn't they bask in the feeling it brings as it washes over their heated soul? Wouldn't they drink and drink and drink to quench the thirst in their spirit? I believe they would if they could just find it and then experience the wonder of immense satisfaction and relief through Jesus.

Which is why we must do everything we can to bring that living water to as many thirsty people as possible. We plant churches in new places. We vociferously proclaim the gospel of living water. We pray, give and work together to make this a reality, so that more...come to know him!

We must do even more.

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Church emerging among Ethiopians

NC partnering in first USMB congregation in Virginia

A new USMB church plant is emerging in Alexandria, Va. Assemblies of Trinity International (ATI), led by church planter Solomon Telahun, is meeting for initial Sunday worship gatherings and weekday small groups. This will be the first USMB congregation in Virginia.

Mission USA and the North Carolina District Conference (NCDC), a cluster of small, mostly-African American churches in western North Carolina, is supporting this Ethiopian-immigrant church plant. Terry Hunt, district minister for NCDC, says the district has been praying for opportunities for churches to be planted east of the Mississippi.

“We have been seeking God for opportunities among people of color in particular, because there seems to be very little outreach among our people,” says Hunt. “Any time lives are being changed for the kingdom of God, we are excited. We are also excited about the fact that our USMB family continues to grow with people from all walks of life who have come to call the USA home.”

In 2013, the NCDC expanded with the addition of Iglesia de Dios Bethel, a Hispanic congregation in Lenoir, NC. The district hopes to officially welcome ATI at the NCDC convention in September.

Hunt says the district plans to come alongside ATI with both funding and strong and healthy relationships. While the church plant is over a five-hour drive from most of the NCDC churches, Hunt doesn't see that as a barrier.

“The distance is worth the blessing of having the opportunity to work alongside our brothers and sisters,” he says.

Hunt and Clyde Ferguson, NCDC leader and USMB Leadership Board member, will be a part of the church plant project team, along with church plant pastor Telahun, Mission USA director Don

Morris and four leaders from the church plant.

Hunt and Ferguson, along with their wives, and Morris visited ATI July 26 to worship with the congregation and to participate in the first project team meeting.

“We are beginning to understand more and more about the Ethiopian culture and how they praise and worship,” Hunt says.

He notes that the congregation worships in the native language of Ethiopia, but most of the adults and all of the youth speak English.

The church plant is meeting in the basement of a former church parsonage for the time being, but Hunt says a new building will be needed soon to accommodate growth.

Nearly 350,000 Ethiopians live within the Alexandria/Washington D.C. area, and Telahun and his team have a vision of starting many churches in the region over the next few years. Hunt says the hope is that ATI will reproduce a daughter church in two or three years and will be one of many new USMB churches up and down the east coast in the next 10 years.

“We are very thankful to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for giving us the opportunity to be part of expanding his kingdom here on earth,” Hunt says. “This has been a hope and dream for the NCDC for many years.” —*Mission USA*

Members of the Assemblies of Trinity International church plant hope to impact the immigrant community in the nation's capital.



Mission USA



Lois Neace

Back to school tips for parents

Helping your children find their school year rhythm

Follow these suggestions for helping your children be successful in school:

Develop a healthy sleep routine. A good rule of thumb is 10 hours of sleep a night for ages six through nine, nine hours for preteens and eight to nine hours for teenagers. Insufficient sleep can result in decreased ability to pay attention, increased irritability and more behavioral problems.

Convey confidence and offer encouragement.

Focus on the child's efforts and right behaviors. Communicate with your child daily by asking open-ended questions: Who did you eat lunch with? Did you work with a partner or in a group today? What did you enjoy most today? What was your least favorite thing today? When children have a positive social relationship with their parents, they are better able to handle stress.

Prepare for structure. Summertime has a different rhythm and pace than school time. School requires a child to participate in highly structured routines, follow rules on school property and the bus, interact with many people and absorb lots of information throughout the day. Even if your child is looking forward to going to school, new routines require making biological, psychological, social and emotional adjustments that increase stress.

To help children adjust to a new schedule, help them recognize their emotions with comments such as, "It sounds like you were confused." Do not offer simple platitudes like, "It will get better," which may not be true. Acknowledge it was not a simple day, and the child made it through.

Plan for the next day: lay clothes out the night before, make sure homework assignments are completed and in the backpack, have lunch money ready and sign permission slips. Establish a place for the backpack so it is in the same spot every day.



Offer healthy food. Your child is burning up energy, building neural pathways and physically growing. Provide nutritious meals and snacks. Nobody runs on empty, and your child needs healthy fuels like fruits and vegetables.

Limit extra activities. Extracurricular activities promote growth

and learning, but parents must limit their number. Too many commitments increase stress in children and parents. A rule of thumb is a limit of two activities per child. Of course, this depends on your child's capabilities and other family responsibilities.

Establish a daily routine for your child. Children need time to unwind after school with some unstructured time. However, "me time" should not last all evening. If the child needs to complete homework, it is important to avoid last minute cramming and panic. Set up a place to study that has good lighting, needed supplies and few distractions. If the subject matter is difficult for the child, plan breaks. No one is productive when stressed out. A daily routine helps the child to get into a biological, psychological, social and emotional rhythm, which is calming.

Overall, it helps when parents are upbeat about the child's school, when parents convey confidence in the child being successful, when parents and child plan for the next day and for big projects and when parents and child communicate daily.

Lois Neace is a Child, Adolescent and Family Therapist, Licensed Specialist Clinical Social Worker (LSCSW) and Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor (RPT-S) at Prairie View, a faith-based behavioral and mental health services provider with a main campus in Newton, Kan.



Taryn Jost

Smartphone 101

God redeemed my iPhone even though it didn't need saving

I am technologically challenged, and I'm only 39 for Pete's sake. I got email and a cell phone nine years ago. Think back to 2006 and you will realize that I was not only late to the game, but the game was over and a whole new one had started! But I didn't care. I had my flip-phone and email. What more did a girl need? And once I got my phone, I didn't really want to upgrade. I knew my phone, and my phone knew me.

So it was no surprise two years ago when I gave my upgrade to our oldest daughter so that she could get an iPhone and I could stay in my happy place. But over time, my happy place became less happy. Randomly my phone would be unable to download text messages, and emojis read like hieroglyphics. Not being able to read my texts was unacceptable! It was time to upgrade.

Questions churned inside of me. Was I honestly going to dive into the world of smartphones? What would that say about me? It's as if these phones are taking over the world. Did I really want to be a part of that? Wasn't it nobler to live "simply" and keep my outdated phone with zero capabilities to help me figure out where I was when I got lost while driving?

As I processed why I was experiencing such turmoil, I realized that these questions were merely a cover-up for what I was really feeling—fear. Fear that my brain just might explode while trying to figure out how to navigate this piece of technology. I dreaded the time and effort it would take to figure it all out, and I feared how stupid and insecure it might make me feel.

But I am here to say that getting an iPhone was a blessed experience. This crazy phone has provided numerous opportunities to connect with my two teenage daughters, and I don't mean via texts or

calls. For the last 15 years I have been the "teacher" and the "expert" for my two teenage daughters. But now they are learning on their own, and they need me less. This new season feels very foreign. I need to find new ways to connect, but what does that look like?

Sometimes it looks like being the student instead of the teacher. And my new phone has allowed me to do just that. Being as severely challenged as I am in the area of technology and social media, I needed my girls more times than not when I first got my iPhone. My daughters were teaching me, and I was looking at them with wide eyes of confusion. They were the ones saying, "I've shown you this already, remember?" and I was the one saying, "Oh yeah, I forgot."

I can't tell you how much fun I had sitting on the couch with my oldest daughter as she and her friend walked me through what all the emojis mean. How do people know these things? Or how hard we laughed as we sent Snapchats across the living room. My daughters even gave me a lesson on taking a good selfie. Did you know that you are supposed to cut off part of your face sometimes? I had no idea!

I by no means feel equipped to walk my girls through their teenage years, but I don't have to. I serve a God who promises to help me in all things. And what a creative God he is. Who would've thought that he would use an iPhone to answer a few of my prayers!

Taryn Jost lives in Littleton, Colo., where she and her husband are planting The Micah Project, a USMB church plant. She speaks at women's events and retreats and blogs at Surrendered Momma (tarynjost.blogspot.com). This essay is adapted from a blog post.

Want the children in your life to do more reading? Follow zoos, state parks, attractions and organizations that work hard to document daily happenings for everyone to enjoy on Instagram. Or follow a photo journalist who documents or explains fun and interesting things happening around the globe. Kids read the picture post and don't even realize they're reading. Suggested Instagram accounts to follow: @nasa, @niagrafallsusa, @yellowstonenps, @natgeo, @seaworldorlando and @australia. Source: www.helloliteracy.com

re: Reading with kids

milestones

BAPTISM/MEMBERSHIP

Viktor and Maria Reimer were received as members this summer at **Bethany Church, Fresno, Calif.** The church's Chinese Fellowship also had a baptism.

Monty and McKenzie Benally were baptized and received as members of **Bethel MB Church, Yale, SD**, Aug. 2. Jeremy, Trina, Elijah, Abby Kate and Natalie Hamilton and Dave and Colleen Jensen were also received as members. Jody Berg was baptized and received as a member July 12.

Lydia Quiring and Taylor Quiring were baptized June 21 and received as members of **Henderson (Neb.) MB Church**.

Stacie Bell and Marilyn Fesler were baptized May 24 and received as members of **Buhler (Kan.) MB Church**. Darren and Jocelyn Busick and Jerry and Judy Hidde were also received as members.

Mark and Zerrin Oelze, Mike and Victoria Whitworth and Brad and Rhonda Heerey were received as members of **First MB Church, Wichita, Kan.**, May 31.

Katelynn White was baptized July 19 at **Valleyview Bible Church, Cimarron, Kan.**

Ron and Jo-Anne Dettmann, Tomomi Stevenson, David Kirichkov, Noah Freeland and Kavika Hee were received as members of **Birch Bay Bible Community Church, Blaine, Wash.**, July 5.

CELEBRATIONS

Garden Park Church, Denver, Colo., will celebrate 60 years of ministry Sept. 20.

Memorial Road MB Church, Edmond, Okla., will celebrate their 50th anniversary Sept. 12 with fellowship, dinner and a program.

Stony Brook Church, Millard, Neb., celebrated their fifth anniversary Aug. 30 with a concert, petting zoo, human foosball, food and other activities.

WORKERS

Bethany Church, Fresno, Calif., called Steven Redekop as associate pastor July 5; he begins Sept. 1. Roy Moore has resigned as director of student ministries; Janice Line is now serving in that role.

Tim Sandy, pastor of **Corn (Okla.) MB Church**, will be on sabbatical beginning in September. Tim Clever resigned as youth pastor, effective Dec. 31, 2014.

Tim Mace has resigned as pastor of **Koerner Heights MB Church, Newton, Kan.** Dave Froese is serving as interim.

Tracy Bryan is serving as interim children's director at **Dinuba (Calif.) MB Church**.

Callie Gerbrandt served as a children's ministry intern at **Community Bible Church, Olathe, Kan.**

Matt Duffy served as a pastoral ministries intern this summer at **Kingsburg (Calif.) MB Church**. Byron Neufeld has resigned as care pastor.

Sam Estes, pastor at **Grace Community Church, Sanger, Calif.**, has resigned and accepted a position with Communities, INC.

Jerred Unruh was installed July 26 as pastor at **Ebenfeld MB Church, Hillsboro, Kan.** Interim associate pastor Ryan Loewen resigned in August to attend seminary in Denver, Colo.

Dan Strutz was installed Aug. 23 as pastor at **Community Bible Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.**

Amy Stone has resigned her pastoral position at **College Community Church MB, Clovis, Calif.**

Drew Pankratz is serving as a youth ministry intern at **Hillsboro (Kan.) MB Church**.

Dennis Fast has resigned as pastor of **Reedley (Calif.) MB Church**, effective June 2016.

DEATHS

Bartel, Vernon, Hillsboro, Kan., member of Hillsboro MB Church, Aug. 13, 1932—June 21, 2015. Parents: Albert F. and Anna (Penner) Bartel. Spouse: Vida Neufeld. Children: Ronnda.

Dowden, Tony, Reedley, Calif., member of Reedley MB Church, Jan. 10, 1946—July 18, 2015. Spouse: Patty.

Ediger, Leroy, Fresno, Calif., member of Bethany Church, Fresno, Jan. 31, 1940—June 25, 2015. Spouse: Jeannie Fadenrecht. Children: Douglas, Kari; two grandchildren.

Fast, Vernon Lee, Fairview, Okla., of Fairview MB Church, Nov. 26, 1927—June 11, 2015. Parents: Dan and Helen (Suderman) Fast. Spouse: Gracie Ann Sawatzky, deceased. Children: Cindy Haney, Cherri Calvert; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren.

Gerbrandt, Richard Gene, Bakersfield, Calif., of Reedley (Calif.) MB Church, Oct. 18, 1929—June 18, 2015. Parents: Abraham and Anna (Wiens) Gerbrandt. Spouse: Erma Bartel, deceased. Children: Shelley, Connie, Douglas; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren.

Hagen, LaVada Ruth, Hillsboro, Kan., of Hillsboro MB Church, March 7, 1931—June 29, 2015. Parents: Otto and Miriam (Reuscher) David. Spouse: Lewis Hagen. Children: Coleen Koop, Tammy Ollenburger, John; seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild.

Heinrichs, Lillian, Corn, Okla., member of Corn MB Church, Nov. 2, 1919—July 16, 2015. Parents: John and Katie (Peters) Janzen. Spouse: Abe Warkentin, deceased; Abe Reimer, deceased; Menno Heinrichs, deceased. Children: Walden, Don, Harold, Leland. Stepchildren: Bobbie Provost, Dale Heinrichs, Janice Friesen; eight grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren.

Heinrichs, Marjorie, Corn, Okla., of Corn MB Church, March 5, 1936—July 11, 2015. Parents: John and Katie (Peters) Janzen. Spouse: Wallace Heinrichs. Children: Cassandra Moses, Randy, Steven, Robert; 10 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren.

Klassen, Don, Reedley, Calif., of Reedley MB Church, June 21, 1943—April 10, 2015.

Kornelsen, Kenneth Wayne, Reedley, Calif., Sept. 12, 1930—July 22, 2015. Parents: Henry and Florene Kor-

Youth witness through art

Youth from Hesston (Kan.) MB Church are among those who share their faith through art at "Art in the Park," held for the second time this year on Aug. 22. Youth lead interactive, art-related activities that reinforce Bible verses, such as jewelry making, clay station, face painting, various crafts and "out of control coloring." About 20 booths are run by two to three youth per booth. Guests for the event include various music groups and an artist who paints a large canvas to a worship song. The day concludes with a paint fight for those who qualify by collecting Bible verse stickers at the booths. Organizer Brittni Rhodes, an art teacher and Hesston MB attendee, wanted to empower youth to disciple—"to show them how easy it can be to share the Word of God through their art"—and reach out to those who attend. The event is largely youth-led. "The youth are in charge of almost everything so it builds their confidence and encourages them," says Rhodes. Adults from Hesston MB help behind the scenes with set up and clean up. "It was amazing to see such an awesome line of support from my church family," Rhodes says.



Utah, Nebraska churches partner

A team of eight adults and four kids from Henderson (Neb.) MB Church joined a team from The Greenhouse, Saratoga Springs, Utah, to host the church plant's first-ever vacation Bible school. Greenhouse's vacation Bible school—which they called “Summer Bible Adventure”—was a free, three-day event for children ages four through 12 held in a community park July 29-31. The team used Group Publishing's “Everest” curriculum—the same curriculum used at Henderson MB earlier in the summer. In addition to leading the VBS, the Henderson team engaged in activities designed to help them build relationships, catch the vision of The Greenhouse and better understand the Utah County culture, which is heavily influenced by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. This most recent team effort is an outgrowth of a longstanding partnership between Henderson MB and The Greenhouse. Henderson MB is one of the supporting churches for the church plant; others include Fairview (Okla.) MB Church and New Hopedale Mennonite Church, Meno, Okla. “Partnerships create the longevity we need in a culture such as this one,” says church planter Nicole Quiring. “We are very thankful for our partnership with Henderson MB Church and look forward to the years ahead.”

nelsen. Spouse: Mary Ann Jost, deceased. Children: Lynne Bredemeier, Marcia Boyer, Brad; nine grandchildren; three great-grandchildren.

Wall, John F., Reedley, Calif., July 9, 1922–May 2015. Spouse: Agnes Penner, deceased; Elsie Reimer, deceased. Children: Keith, Dennis, Glen; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren.

Warkentine, Matilda Fadenrecht, Kirk, Colo., of the former Joes (Colo.) MB Church, Aug. 3 1919–July 5, 2015. Parents: Ben and Susie (Koop) Fadenrecht. Spouse: Albert Warkentine, deceased. Children: Al, Ruth Seibel, Lee; eight grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren.

reaching in

DISCIPLESHIP

Ebenfeld MB Church, Hillsboro, Kan., hosted a training seminar Aug. 30 for all teachers who work with preschool and elementary-aged children.

Henderson (Neb.) MB Church hosted a Faith and Finances Sunday May 31. Representatives from MB Foundation spoke on “Top 10 Ways to Ruin Your Financial Life,” “10 Issues to Solve Sooner Rather Than Later,” “Consumer or Steward: Which Name Do You Choose,” and “Transferring Stewardship.”

FELLOWSHIP

Junior high students from **Koerner Heights MB Church, Newton, Kan.**, held a pool party in late summer to welcome new students and to bid farewell to those moving on to high school.

Women from **First MB Church, Wichita, Kan.**, played laser tag July 15.

Grace Bible Church, Gettysburg, SD, planned a “Mom’s Morning Out” once a week this summer.

July 5 was “Motorcycle to Church” Sunday at **Hillsboro (Kan.) MB Church**. Participants rode their motorcycles to a lunch location after worship.

Bethany Church, Fresno, Calif., honored fathers June 21 with a pancake breakfast.

A June 13 women’s event at **Memorial Road MB Church, Edmond, Okla.**, had a “Uganda” theme, with African food, sharing about a trip to Uganda, a discussion of a book about ministry in Africa and an offering benefitting Ugandan mission organizations.

A June 1 end-of-the-school-year celebration for middle school students at **South Mountain Community Church, Draper, Utah**, included a “homework” bonfire. Students brought their least-favorite piece of homework or test to burn.

The seniors’, women’s and children’s ministries at **North Fresno (Calif.) Church** hosted a family event March 13 that featured entertainment by the Fresno Magic Club.

Women from **Pine Acres Church, Weatherford, Okla.**, held a mother/daughter brunch and wedding dress fashion show May 2.

Dinuba (Calif.) MB Church hosted a volleyball tournament with prizes May 3.

Corn (Okla.) MB Church honored graduating high school seniors April 26 with a breakfast with guest speaker Russ Claassen, district youth minister, and a time of recognition in the morning service.

WORSHIP

The Bridge Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif., launched a Sunday evening service Aug. 16.

Bellevue Community Church, Littleton, Colo., has merged with The Rock of Southwest, another Littleton congregation. They began worshipping together April 12, with a fellowship dinner following this first joint service.

Fairview (Okla.) MB Church invited parents to submit their children’s artwork for bulletin covers in summer.

Bible Fellowship Church, Minot, ND, took part in a community Palm Sunday worship service March 29.

Insurance has declared the building of **Gospel Fellowship Church, Wolf Point, Mont.**, a total loss following a November 2014 fire. The church has received the insurance settlement and is forming a building committee to determine next steps. “We will definitely rebuild,” says Pastor Bruce Bogar.

reaching out

LOCALLY

Bethesda Church, Huron, SD, partnered with New Hope Bible Church, a nondenominational church in Chicago, Ill., to host vacation Bible school in multiple locations throughout Huron this summer. The outreach was known as “Super Summer Jam.”

Stony Brook Church, Omaha, Neb., collected classroom supplies in August and donated them to their local elementary school.

Shafter (Calif.) MB Church hosted their annual wrestling camp for first through sixth graders July 20-24.

Mountain View Community Church, Fresno, Calif., helped host 23 block parties this summer in various neighborhoods.

Attendees of **Iglesia Agua Viva, Omaha, Neb.**, are encouraged to invite neighbors and friends to special events for a meal and fellowship with the goal of reaching them with the gospel. This is a change of venue as in past years they have held outdoor festivals with this goal in mind.

GLOBALLY

Youth from **Pine Acres Church, Weatherford, Okla.**, served those in lower-income housing in Denver, Colo., July 26-Aug. 1.

North Fresno (Calif.) Church sent a team to Portugal July 14-28 to serve alongside MB Mission workers there.

CLEARINGHOUSE

Local Church Job Openings

Youth Pastor: Corn (Okla.) MB Church is looking for an evangelical, scripturally grounded youth pastor for 30-plus high school and 10-plus junior high youth. Unique, rural community; housing provided. New youth building and experienced youth sponsors. For a complete job description or to send an application, contact Corn MB Church at 580-343-2274, cornmbchurch@itlnet.net or Mark at 580-450-2999, mvgraf@gmail.com

Lead Pastor: Bible Fellowship Church in Rapid City, SD, is seeking a full-time lead pastor for our congregation of approximately 180. Inquiries or resumes should be emailed to: PastorSearch@BFCRC.com

Business Administrator: Reedley Mennonite Brethren Church in Reedley, Calif., is seeking a full-time Business Administrator. The person called to this ministry would oversee the financial, facility, information systems, personnel management and general administrative functions of RMBC. Contact sheila@reedleymbc.org for a job description or to submit your resume.

Associate Pastor: Kingsburg (Calif.) MB Church is seeking a full-time associate pastor for worship and youth for a congregation of approximately 150. Inquiries or resumes should be sent to Kingsburg MB Church, 1301 Stroud Ave, Kingsburg, CA 93631 or emailed to kmbcsearch@gmail.com

Travel

Visit Europe the Mennonite way! Multiple hotel tours focusing on Mennonite-Anabaptist history in Holland, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Poland and Ukraine. Organized by Mennonite Heritage Tours, www.mennoniteheritagetours.eu

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WE ARE GROWING

TO SERVE YOU BETTER.

14
STAFF
MEMBERS

LARRY HODGES RECENTLY
JOINED OUR TEAM
IN FRESNO

ASSETS:
\$175
MILLION

AS OF 5/31/2015
(UP FROM \$164M
AT YEAR END)

DEVOTIONAL
SUBSCRIPTIONS
INCREASED
BY **25%**
IN 2014

OUR TEAM
ENGAGED IN **45**
STEWARDSHIP
TEACHINGS

IN 2014

WE DISTRIBUTED TO
254
CHARITIES
IN 2014

COME
GROW
WITH US.



CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS

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HILLSBORO, KS 67053

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