April 15, 2019

Mennonite World Review

The Mennonite Inc. released for possible merger with MWR

By John Longhurst
Mennonite Disaster Service

Hat do you get when you put Mennonites from all over the United States and Canada, and from all sorts of different Mennonite conferences and churches, in the same place? A Mennonite Disaster Service unit, that’s what. Together, they are an amalgam and expression of Mennonites’ witness to the world.

In February, I visited three communities in Texas — La Grange, Bloomington and Wharton — hit by Hurricane Harvey in 2017. While there, I met MDS volunteers from Mennonite Church Canada and USA; Mennonite Brethren; Old Order Mennonites; Markham-Waterloo, Groffdale and Bergthaler Mennonites. There was also one Catholic and a few from nondenominational churches. They were Canadians, Americans and even a couple of Germans. Some came from big cities, many from small towns.

By Tim Huber
Mennonite World Review

Connections brought a wooden cross to Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference, and further connections are taking it on a pilgrimage to each congregation.

Made of interlocking pieces of wood in contrasting colors, the “reconciliation cross” began its journey earlier this year when it arrived at Wholicare Community Missionary Church in Pasadena, Calif. But its story, and symbolism, are a bit older.

Years ago, Pacific Southwest conference minister Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower read Fire in Coventry, about a congregation in England that lost its cathedral to German bombing in World War II. Before consecrating a new cathedral, a cross made of nails from the old building’s ruins journeyed from one parish to another, with the understanding that God desired not only a reconsecrated building but a reconsecrated people.

The Executive Board wants to communicate its strong support for your vision. We wish you success.

— David Boshart

By Sheldon C. Good
The Mennonite

See TMI, page 3

At a meeting in Kansas City, Mo., the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board unanimously accepted terms to release The Mennonite Inc. as a churchwide program entity.

The release would enable TMI to merge with Mennonite World Review Inc. to form a new, independent media organization.

It was good to have that cross reminding us that God used Christ to reconcile us to him.

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Former Presbyterian pastor Sung Hwan Kim holds a cross he made using wood from mountain forests at opposite ends of the Korean Peninsula.

Sung Hwan Kim

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BARRIERS BROKEN
Pennsylvania church plant overcomes a variety of challenges to follow Christ / 2

PEACE IN POLITICAL CHAOS
Venezuelan Mennonites request prayer as they respond to economic crisis / 11

This issue was mailed April 11.
Lancaster church planters faced unexpected challenges, now see the fruit of ministry

By Laurie Oswald Robinson

For Mennonite World Review

Lancaster, Pa. — When Rhoda and Art Yost sold their 39-year-old hardware business in 2013 and bought the building where RiversEdge Fellowship gathers today, they did not bargain for the hidden costs involved in their interracial church-planting adventure.

A few months after the Yosts, in their early 60s, followed Jesus into this new venture, life as they knew it — and planned it — unraveled.

Art Yost was diagnosed with a non-Alzheimer’s dementia. He slowly declined, leaving him unable to support the call to mission as he had hoped.

Rhoda Yost, a retired music teacher, was serving at West End Mennonite Fellowship when she received the church-planting call. Accepting the call, she had a new vision, a new building and a new challenge.

“Art had gifts of serving and giving,” she said. “He saw what needed to be done and went about doing it. The building was going to be a project for him after retirement. He would have cared for it and would have been the one welcoming people at the door and making sure they had a good place to sit.

“The rest of the year [after the building purchase] was the most difficult of my life. I was trying to figure out what was wrong with Art, and now I had this building to take care of and no clue how to do it. I felt abandoned, isolated and overwhelmed. What was I supposed to do now?”

As a Mennonite who grew up at the Stumptown Mennonite Church in Lancaster County, she has learned God is faithful and has a plan, even when she doesn’t. That plan included nurturing a vibrant group of predominantly Nepalese and Caucasian believers.

“This part of our journey was a wild and crazy God story,” she said.

Memika Tamang, who has come out of Buddhism, helped to lead a group of about 50 first-generation Nepalese believers, some of whom had been Hindu.

“Our first year of meeting together was wonderful and chaotic,” she said. “We were baptizing people from the area for different reasons. That only left a few families in our group, and most of those were in life-changing situations. Some were restless, and some wanted to return to more traditional churches.”

Refusing to give up

Despite the dwindling, Yost felt unsettled about dropping everything, though the LMC (formerly Lancaster Mennonite Conference) Bishop Board had released her to consider that a season of God’s work there might be ending.

“In 2014, because I wanted to continue to pursue a vision for building interracial community in that neighborhood, when everyone scattered, we kept having Bible studies,” she said.

Michael Booth, also on staff at Water Street Mission for the homeless, came to assist Yost and brought some folks from the mission to the Bible study.

“When Michael brought people from the mission, we would have a big group,” she said. “But because we were a community Bible study and not a typical church, many of them didn’t consider this their home church and went to Sunday morning church elsewhere, and we didn’t establish a committed core.”

Even so, the community Bible study continued on Sunday afternoons until mid-2018. Once again, Yost stood at a crossroads.

“I kept telling God that I needed some Joshua-types to help hold things up and to help infuse new vision,” she said.

An answer to prayer

God answered her prayer by bringing new people to RiversEdge — a congregation of LMC — and it boomed. Today, they form the core of the leadership team.

Exemplifying Yost’s passion for a “church for the nations,” they include African-Americans, Kenyans and Caucasians. Team members include co-pastors Yost and Booth (wife, Eliza); Rayvon and Misty Jordan; Gordon Reason; and Joel Ngarama.

“The team began envisioning what it would mean to restart as an actual church,” she said. “It would not forget the founding principles regarding missional community but would evolve into a regular church service.”

RiversEdge held its first new church service last Thanksgiving weekend.

The church, with about 30 members, is again on the move. In addition to Sunday afternoon services, it has English classes Mondays through Wednesdays.

It has always been my passion to not just serve one ethnic group but to break down barriers and be part of the heart of this community,” Yost said.

“I was up to no good”

Team member Rayvon Jordan is in the center of that heartbeat. Booth, his spiritual father, brought Jordan as his guest to RiversEdge, and he is in the center of Jor- dan’s home. As a result, Jordan, incarcerated multiple times and formerly involved in drugs, has found a new address in his old neighborhood.

“We all have dreams, and one of mine is to help bring change on this block, which is very poor and full of drugs,” Jordan said.

In the early 2000s, on this exact same block where the church is now, I was up to no good. It is such a God thing for me to walk up and down the street praying for people and on the same corner where I once was causing a lot of issues... “God is showing us there is a difference between having a church building and being church in the community... I really believe that God is growing us up at RiversEdge, not to be just a lamp but a lighthouse.”
Renewed commitment

TMI and MC USA representatives, Boshart affirmed the leaders of TMI and the vision for a new, independent media organization. “The EB wants to communicate its strong support for your vision,” Boshart said. “We wish you success.”

The approximately 140 MWR Inc. corporation members will need to decide whether to support the merger of MWR Inc. and TMI. A decision is anticipated later this year, with a goal of completing the merger and reissuing new print and digital products by September 2020.

Communications plan

Guyton presented a new direction for denominational communications that will include closer collaboration among agencies. “MC USA must be able to communicate our mission and ministry in the context of who we are as a denomination,” Guyton said. “Closer collaboration between agencies allows for conferences and local congregations will help bring clarity to the system.”

The board affirmed the strategy, which includes hiring a chief communications officer for MC USA, who will work closely with communications officers from each church agency, coordination of resource and look for ways to improve interagency communications and marketing collaboration.

Membership guidelines

Guyton and Joy Sutter, moderator-elect, summarized outcomes of the Constituency Leaders Council meetings Feb. 28-March 2 in Hesston. CLC leaders are considered the elders of MC USA and, while they do not have decision-making authority, they are tasked with advising the Executive Board.

Guyton presented feedback from the CLC on a process for reviewing MC USA’s Membership Guidelines. The current system — which defines membership as between one man and one woman and says pastors may not perform same-sex marriages — is of particular interest, he said, given that the practices of a growing number of pastors, congregations and conferences do not align.

Delegates at the 2015 assembly reaffirmed the guidelines, with the stipulation that no changes would be made for four years. There are no plans to bring a resolution to this summer’s delegate assembly regarding the guidelines.

With delegates, the Executive Board will describe the process of getting CEC input and explain a process for engaging the MC USA constituency during the planning and execution of teaching and study resources.

Executive Board member Leslie Francisco III noted the guidelines are “a statement of faith, not a statement of fact.”

“Being a part of this church all my life, but because of my culture and how dynamics worked in our congregation growing up, when you put something on paper, that meant ‘this is the way it is,’ ” he said. “It took me years to understand that these documents aren’t legislative.”

The Executive Board took action on proposed bylaw changes to be presented at this summer’s convention. One would allow all congregations to send one additional delegate, a youth aged 16-21, while racial-ethnic groups could send two additional youth delegates. These youth would be permitted to vote, unlike in past conventions in which they have only participated.

MCUSA, LMC leaders meet to keep good relations

MC USA, LMC leaders meet to keep good relations

MC USA and LMC leaders met to discuss their relationship and leadership roles and for each organization’s conferences, congregations and constituencies.

“We made a mutual commitment to one another to be supportive of each other’s mission as we work within each of our respective polity,” Sutter said. Weaver and Glen Guyton, MC USA executive director, reflected on the positive engagement they have had, including at a meeting of the Mission to World Conference General Council in Kenya last year, when MC USA welcomed LMC as a partner on the global stage.

Representatives of MC USA and LMC had met in June 2018, to offer comment on the separation and discern an ongoing relationship after LMC decided in November 2015 to withdraw from MC USA by the end of 2017. The recent meeting continued discussions of their relationship.

“The leaders reflected on Scripture and prayed for people in leadership roles and for each organization’s conferences, congregations and constituencies. “I am grateful for the opportunity to meet with MC USA leaders from time to time for fellowship, prayer, and catching up ways we see the Lord at work in our midst,” LMC moderator Keith Weaver said. “It’s new for us to maintain positive relationships and identify ways LMC and MC USA can collaborate in the mission of God.”

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No philosophy of despair can match the power of the resurrection.

B y the time Paul embedded this “Easter egg” (as people today call a hidden message or secret feature in a movie or video game) in his letter to the Corinthians, a second generation of Christians was emerging. Twenty-five years or so had passed since Jesus’ death and resurrection. Within a couple of decades, the writing of Gospels would begin, making the need for “ordained accounts,” as Luke said. But for the first Christians, a few simple words were enough to describe the miracle and what it meant. Within a couple of centuries, the Good News of the risen Savior would spread throughout the Roman Empire. Twenty centuries later, all who worship Jesus Christ as Lord join with the saints who went before us to celebrate that “in Christ all is made alive.”

Joyful amazement at the resurrection of Jesus Christ animated the first generation of Christians. It was the spirit of their age, and it has lost none of its power.

Randy Regier’s “The Celestial Mechanic” is part of Wichita State University’s sculpture garden. It owes a debt to Mennonite friends who occasionally think, “Randy might be able to use that.”

It’s time to change Mennonite name

W hat comes to your mind when you hear the word “Mennonite”? I think of relief sales, quilts, prayer coverings, farmers, borscht and shoofly pie. I also think of non-violent pacifists. If I ask non-Mennonites what comes to their mind, they are likely to say the Mormons or an Old Testament tribe. “Mennonite” has more cultural connotations than theological and accurate ones. I think it is well past time for Mennonite Church USA to change its name.

I love Mennonite theology, and I love being Mennonite. But as an urban pastor and former church planter, I have found the name to be an all-but-horizontal around my neck. It has little appeal for even recognition for outsiders. If it is our mission to bring the Good News to our neighbors, we need to face the fact that our name is getting in the way. “Mennonite” is also thematically offensive. Our opponents came up with the label, referring to an early Anabaptist leader. The name does not associate us with Jesus Christ or the Good News but with a relatively unknown person. It suggests a personality cult.

Many congregations and church plants have responded to these deficiencies by not using the name. But this also has problems. When we do not use the name of the denomination, we more easily become distanced from it and tend to lose its distinctive theology. Congregations that cease to use “Mennonite” all too often cease to be Mennonite. They become more influenced by Americanized conser- vative evangelical values.

Mennonite denominations that wish to retain the cultural connotations that come with the name should continue to use it. But a denomination committed to being theologically centered and ethnically and racially di- verse should change its name.

T hroughout the years, Mennonite businesses, organizations, churches and individuals have continued to acquire the name of a now defunct Mennonite who was buried in a Kansas pasture for years. By the time it was dug up and transported to its final resting place just south of Alhberg Hall in the collection of Wichita State University’s sculpt- ure garden, corrosion had set in and the midcentury alu- minum bust had dulled considerably. She was finally fin- ished.

In his article talk after the April 2 un- veiling, Regier referred to his Men- nonite roots. Standing next to a slightly manipulated photo of Anabaptist martyr Dirk Willems’ ghost reaching down out of heaven toward God and MWR’s Newton off- fice, he said that while “The Celestial Mechanic” represents different things to different people, its creation owes itself to Mennonite friends who occasionally think, “Randy might be able to use that.”

His faith finds a more direct expression at the center of the suit’s orange belly. Nestled be- tween a couple of important- looking buttons and a scorched rubber tube, a dove is riveted in the duct-glue. Quietly bold, it’s his Mennonite mark.

Like most pieces of art, the ac- companying placard carries the title, artist and identifies materials used — aluminum, stain- less steel, steel, tempered glass. In the name of Anabaptist faith and love, WSU can be forgiven if there won’t room to list Mennonite friendship.

— Tim Huber
When faith gets stale Shall we tell the truth?

Every so often, a television show will surprise me and touch on church life in a thought-provoking way—like a recent episode of Last Man Standing that portrayed some typical church settings and situations that get at some contemporary issues facing Christians. The half-hour sitcom centers on Mike Baxter (Tim Allen), his relationships with his wife and three adult daughters and his work-life as senior executive and market rector at Outdoor Man, an outdoor sporting goods store.

In “The Passion of Paul,” Reverend Paul (Bill Engvall) asks Mike to fill in as a Sunday school teacher. Mike quickly paws the job off to his son-in-law Kyle (Chrisopht Sanders), a good-natured young man who also works at Outdoor Man.

Nervous about teaching adults, Kyle initially goes along with brother-in-law Ryan’s suggestion to employ the class into a children’s program. When it predictably goes awry, Kyle tells Ryan to cool the effects.

“Maybe the story of Noah’s Ark doesn’t need to have anything to make it bigger,” he tells the class, going on to pull out of the story the idea that our mistakes and bad choices can be washed away and we can make a fresh start.

But when Reverend Paul overhears Kyle’s teaching, he takes it as a sort of sign to leave the ministry. In conversations with Mike and Kyle afterward, the pastor reveals that he’s burned out by days filled with business meetings, budget reports and staff reviews.

There’s a lot written about ministry burnout these days, and some of those voices suggest that business and corporate church models and the professionalization of ministry

...not to mention the pressure on worship services to be entertaining) are root causes of that. And those concerns are definitely worth contemplating.

But what resonates most with me is the conversation between Kyle and Reverend Paul at the end of the episode. Sitting in Mike’s restaurant fishing, Kyle tells Reverend Paul that the pastor has missed the whole point of the sermon, which is the opportunity for renewal.

With his pastor hedges and tries to explain how his ministry has turned into a job that feels stale, Kyle gets to the point.

“My job at the store is to talk about how great it is to do stuff out in nature. And if I don’t do that stuff myself, then what kind of minister are we?! It’s kind of a conundrum that can happen to all of us, whether we are in a megachurch or a house church, whether we are in professional ministry or not.

God invites us into a relationship and to experience a life we would never know without Jesus Christ. For whatever reason—be it making bad choices, getting distracted by day-to-day life, compartmentalizing church to Sundays, getting caught in religious trappings, or intellectualizing faith by reducing it to doctrines or ideas—be it just not choosing to stop living that life. And that leaves a stale taste.

If that’s where we are, we can start again. In the words of another Paul, we can transform by the renewing of our mind, which is the first step from the inside out,” as The Message says (Rom. 12:2).

God invites me to crow new, recenter and rebuild our lives around that love-fueled relationship.

Carmen Andres

Kyle tells Reverend Paul that the pastor has missed the whole point of the lesson, which is the opportunity for renewal.

When faith gets stale Shall we tell the truth?

Douglas writes: “The leaders of South Korea and the United States should stop living that life. And that leaves a stale taste. If that’s where we are, we can start again. In the words of another Paul, we can transform by the renewing of our mind, which is the first step from the inside out.”

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Carmen Andres, a former editor of the Mennonite Brethren magazine, the leader, lives in Alexandria, Va.

For many people who follow the political developments between the United States and North Korea, the disappointment after the Hanoi summit was palpable.

Hummels had been circulating of a potential agreement that would bring an end to the Korean War and potentially open liaison offices, generally a pre-cursor to future embassies. As news leaked of an abrupt end to the summit on Feb. 28, there were differing accounts of what happened and what exactly was on the negotiating table between the two countries.

The United States took a more hard-line position than some negotiators indicated during the summit. For its part, North Korea may have asked for more than what the U.S. delegation was anticipating.

Amid the cacophony of speculation over who “tricked” whom, there are a few takeaways for the road ahead:

- Diplomacy is difficult and will not always follow a linear path. Despite disappointment with the summit outcome, the fact that the two countries’ leaders met face-to-face without threats or fiery tweets is a welcome step. We should not expect that reaching a denuclearization agreement will be quick and simple when the countries have lived in enmity for so long.
- A formal end to the Korean War is foundational to move the process forward. The United States and North Korea are at an impasse over trading concessions like denuclearization for sanctions relief. Neither one is willing to make the first move without a guarantee from the other. A peace agreement provides the necessary framework for further discussions.
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Ending one of the world’s longest ongoing conflicts is not a concessions. It is good for all parties involved.

The United States should take its cues from South Korea. The leaders of South Korea and North Korea have agreed “there will be no more war and a new era of peace has begun on the Korean Peninsula.” The Koreans are shaping their own future and have a right to do so. The Korean people are longing for peace, and the United States should not stand in the way.

Congress must demonstrate support for diplomacy and for the president’s stated intention to transform the relationship between the United States and North Korea. Declaring a formal end to the Korean War is essential for moving forward on other issues of concern that many in Congress raise repeatedly, such as the nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Adding further sanctions or trying to close off diplomatic channels will not only harden North Korea’s position but remove any incentive for them to stay at the negotiating table.

Mennonite Central Committee suggests representatives ask their representatives in Congress to co-sponsor a resolution, introduced by Rep. Ko Khanna, Democrat of California, that calls for a peace agreement to formally conclude the Korean War. Suggested text is available on the MCC Washington Office blog at www.mennonitecentralcommittee.org.

Diplomatic engagement is the only way to resolve the conflict between the United States and North Korea and move toward reconciliation with all people on the Korean Peninsula. Peace is the only way forward and is the best “deal” to be made.

Charissa Zehr is legislative associate for international affairs in the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office.
Abortion alarms
Recent developments regarding abortion in the United States should cause great alarm, including the pro-abortion Reproductive Health Act signed by the governor of New York and the new pro-abortion U.S. House of Representatives’ attempt to repeal the Hyde Amendment that prohibits U.S. taxpayer funding for abortions overseas.

A abortion is a horrific, sinful act — a replication of the sin that the children of Israel committed in the wilderness that they sacrificed children as an act of worship to their gods. I know there are some who see this issue as a women’s rights issue. While I believe women have rights, I do not believe they have rights to murder the children God has given them.

The sign at First Missionary Church in Newton, Kan.

From Mennonite to Missionary
By Rich Preheim

North American Mennonite history is peppered with disagreements prompted by disagreements over issues such as prayer meetings, revival meetings, mission experiences and Sunday schools. Seven groups that split away in the mid- and late 19th century would wind up in a series of mergers, culminating in the creation of the Missionary Church, which is observing its 50th anniversary this year.

The first of these groups was the New Mennonite Church of Western Canada, created in 1849 when Daniel Hoch was silenced by the Old Mennonite Canadian Conference (Ontario). A minister at Vineland, Ont., he preached the importance of a conversion experience and introduced prayer meetings and other renewal practices, which were alien to the traditional movement that left Franconia Conference in 1846.

Another group that split away in the mid-19th century was the United Brethren in Christ, or simply “U.B.” The United Brethren were a denomination with ties to the Swiss Reformed and Separationist churches. The group formed in 1845 and was founded in 1853. The United Brethren were a progressive, supporting English-language preaching, prayer meetings, four-part singing and more. By the 1850s, the group had a large membership, with churches in the United States and Canada.

The sign at First Missionary Church in Newton, Kan.

Brenneman was a progressive, supporting English-language preaching, prayer meetings and four-part singing.

T he Evangelical United Brethren became the Mennonite Brethren in Christ in 1883, following the ad diction of a group that left the Brethren in Christ splinter group over baptismal practices and rev itual meetings. The MBC re mained Mennonite in identity well into the 20th century. But it changed its name to the United Missionary Church in 1947, evi
dence of its decreasing Anabap tist identity and increasing affini ty for evangelicalism.

In 1969, the United Missionary Church merged with the Missionary Church Association, which originated among the Germans in the 1800s. Henry Egly, an Amish bishop near Berne, Ind., began preaching the importance of a conversion experience and regeneration. In 1866 he began to teach this idea in his own church. Initially called simply the Egly Amish, it changed its name to the Defenseless Mennonite Church in 1908 and then to the Evangelical Mennonite Church in 1948. Its evangelicalism, however, led it to drop the Mennonite name in 2003 and become the Evangelical Missionary Church Association.

In 1987, the Missionary Church became the United Missionary Church in 1947, as it changed its name, its Pennsylvania congregation and its more liberal stance on policy and doctrine. The new group maintained the Mennonite Brethren in Christ name until 1959, when it rechristened itself the Bible Fellowship Church.

Today the United Missionary Church has about 40,000 members in more than 400 congregations, mostly in the Midwest. Its headquarters are in Fort Wayne, Ind. The denomination’s college is Bethel College in Mishawaka, Ind. — not to be confused with MC USA’s Bethel in North New ton, Kan.

Yes, it’s complicated. As an ar ticle on the denomination’s website, mccusa.org, says: “Making sense of the name change has never been an easy task for outsiders.”

The Missionary Church’s his tory is an account of a twisting, turning journey of faith — one that, unfortunately, led the church away from Anabaptism.

Rich Preheim is a writer and historian from Elkhart, Ind.
Want proof of the resurrection?

**SUNDAY SCHOOL SCRIPTURES**

April 21 — Matthew 28:1-15
April 28 — Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:6-8

Brad Roth

Whenever we see the church tacking against the ferocious rip tide of history, we catch the travails of the resurrection.

**BOOK REVIEW**

Life is a gift; hold it dearly

**DADDY HOLD**

By David R. Landis
Self-published, 2019

Reviewed by Delmar Yoder

It became clearer over the years that Darla was a gift — a special treasure — a ‘thorn in the flesh’ lovingly allowed by God.

**BOOKSHELF**

Crash Landing: The Long Road Home by Liz Jansen (Trillium Word works, 2018). In a memoir, Jansen describes her quest, at age 60, to understand how the experience of her Mennonite ancestral ship shaped her. She writes: “The stowart faith and community that had sustained my ancestors through perilous times had terrorized and almost suffocated me.” Seeking answers, I got on my motorcycle and set off across the country on what I dubbed the Ancest or Trail — the places they lived as they established themselves in a new land. A catastrophic crash in Alberta threatened to sideline her quest. Instead, the ensuing time of uncertainty led me deeper into my journey.

There is a Balm in Huntsville by T. Carlos Anderson (Walnut Street Books). 2013. "T told a true story of tragedy and restoration from the heart of the Texas prison system," this book comes from Mennonite publishers Merlo and Jylla. Two teenagers were killed in a tragic vehicular homicide in Texas. Should the 19-year-old drunk driver plead guilty? The narrative follows his painful journey as well as those of his victims families. Eventually the young person for David to start a graphic design business in Atmore and for Debbie to join him as the enterprise expands.

Daddy Hold is self-published and contains several of the less-than-optimal aspects of such ventures. A pittance 144 pages, it is available through Amazon.

Darla never spoke more than a few words, and even those disappear as her seizure disorder worsened. In a personal email, David wrote, “Daddy hold” was a term we used, and Darla knew exactly what it meant. I would often ask, “Daddy hold?” and most of the time she would lift her arms as much as she was able — "asking as plainly as if she could happily form the words, to be scooped up in his arms and held close to his heart. This book captures the heart, and faith, of that father.

Delmar Yoder lives in Decatur, Ga.
CAIRO — Long before the ascendance of the World Wide Web, Cairo’s Al-Azhar University served as the hub of global Islamic learning, its grand imam considered an authority on religious and public life for Sunni Muslims far beyond the borders of Egypt. But over the years, the university’s hold over the interpretation of key Islamic concepts, including jihad, competed with extremist groups such as Al Qaeda and ISIS. Countering the emergence of extremist affiliations, Al-Azhar University decided to up its game.

“Our work began in 2015 with the electronic tracking of all publications issued by Islamic State and other armed organizations, and then we launched a systematic reframing of their flawed fatwahs and religious arguments on the internet,” Imam Ahmed al-Tayeb said, regarding the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, commonly known as ISIS or Daesh.

In Iraq alone, 1,802 civilians were killed in ISIS-linked violence. The group downed a Russian airliner carrying tourists from Egypt and staged a one-day spree of attacks in Paris that killed 130 people.

Meanwhile, ISIS supporters operated at least 46,000 Twitter accounts. A study commissioned by Google Ideas and published by the Brookings Institution found much of the content was graphic: The organization posted images and video of public floggings and executions while its followers praised the violence as mandated by Quranic verses.

Islam under scrutiny

With Islam itself under global scrutiny in new and uncomfortable—way, Al-Azhar’s Grand Imam Ahmed al-Tayeb said, it’s important to counter these messages.

“Al-Azhar, which has for hundreds of years managed to preserve and promote Islam’s real values of tolerance, moderation and knowledge, will have again to step up to shoulder its responsibility in the face of extremist currents that distort our image and refuse their false claim to be acting in our tradition’s name and interests,” said al-Tayeb.

Funded by the Egyptian government and the United Arab Emirates, the observatory’s staff has grown to nearly 30 people who monitor jihadi websites and debate sheikhs who issue fatwas.

The observatory has also taken on the seminary’s task of spreading the message of tolerance in multiple languages, including Arabic, English, Urdu, Swahili and Farsi.

“Our main goal is to reach Muslims all around the world and to be Al-Azhar’s eye on the world and the world’s eye on Al-Azhar,” said Riham Abdullah, an Islamic studies professor at the university and supervisor of the observatory’s Urdu department.

“We begin with English, Urdu and Swahili. People forget that most Muslims are not Arabs and do not speak Arabic. Our fastest language portal is in Hebrew.”

Videos, multimedia slide-shows, frequently asked questions feeds condemning both jihadi attacks and incidents of Islamic discipline, tutorials and the observatory’s multilingual web page, which extends its reach via social media outlets, including Facebook and Twitter.

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Theologian sees Christ in ‘whatever evokes the flow of love’

Richard Rohr’s black lab, Venus, was a companion for 15 years. The Universal Christ is dedicated to the dog.

Or Rohr’s beloved black lab, Venus, a constant companion for 15 years who died two years ago — to whom he dedicated The Universal Christ.

“Without any apology, light-weight theology or fear of heresy, I can emphatically say that Venus was also Christ for me,” he wrote.

Back in his office at the Center for Action and Contemplation, while holding a framed photograph of Venus, he explained, “Whatever evokes from you the flow of love is operating as Christ for you.”

Everyone and everything.

Starlight’s inspiration

A native of Topkea, Kan., Rohr entered the Franciscans in 1961 when he was just 18, beginning his theological studies in earnest at the Catholic University of America. He was sentenced to 20 years and six months in prison for the “swearing of a false oath” when he was 30 years old. He was freed in 1981 after serving 12 years.

Rohr was the first Catholic priest in the world to be ordained and consecrated as a bishop. He has been the bishop of the Community of Christ for 15 years.

Rohr is the author of 50 books and has a doctoral degree from the University of Notre Dame. He is the founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation, a think tank that focuses on spirituality and social action.

Rohr is known for his teachings on the importance of empathy and compassion, and his work has been influential in the field of social justice.
We'll pay for peace

**By H.A. Penner and John Stoner**

**Might it be possible that many people will become...**

- **Novelists criticise ‘culture of control’**
  - A March 25 article in The New Yorker describes the life and literary impact of Canadian writer Miriam Toews, whose novel, *A Complicated Kindness*, was named, gets away with his dig-
  - toews particularly for girls and women, recognizes she is “talking about personally attacked” would rec-
  - Toews wishes those who felt “per-
  - nesses of control.” Toews
  - that culture of control.” Toews
  - ual faith or of Mennonite peo-
  - lities intact, and many Men-
  - nondo Church USA calls affiliated con-

- **Zulaw home’s endangered species**
  - Ornate, arcade
ded species
  - land’s Żuławy region may be 
  - endangered species

- **An Amish tale of...**
  - LDS church to the belief that partici-
  - pate in, train for, pay for or di-

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  - LDS church to the belief that partici-
  - pate in, train for, pay for or di-

- **A Church of the Brethren...**
  - A Church...in tune with so-called security opera-

- **Bearing witness to the good...**
  - We fail in our Christian call-
  - s, not violence, for our se-

- **A legacy of witness...**
  - U.S. Mennonites have sup-
  - t of their Spirit-led con scienc-

- **What we’ve said...**
  - Mennonite...not to pay for war.

- **A Church Peace Tax Fund...**
  - Also taken its...in tune with so-called security opera-

- **At home’s endangered species...**
  - Ornate, arcade wooden
  - houses built by Dutch and
  - German Mennonites in Po-

- **By creating a Church Peace...**
  - The Church Peace Tax Fund would be funded by designated contributions from individuals and participating congregations. For record-keeping purposes, donors would sign a form with their congregation whether their donation is a portion of the federal income tax refund or a free

- **Getting their attention...**
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- **Time to change Mennonite name...**
  - I have made “Churches” plu-
  - Mennonite name...to downplay national af-

- **And it would abbreviate differ-
  - that the denomination func-
  - fication while acknowledging

- **No one word better encapsu-
  - On...and in the church, creating rec-

- **We fail in our Christian call-
  - s, not violence, for our se-

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In crisis, Venezuelans request prayer

**By Holly Blosser Yoder**
Mennonite Mission Network

With economic and political conditions in Venezuela deteriorating, Mennonite leaders are asking for prayers for peace for their nation as their churches sow seeds of peace in their communities.

“The news confuses us,” said Erwin Mirabal, president of the Venezuelan Mennonite Network of Missions. “The image of people among who represent the country lead to a loss of respect for the institutions. The politicians want to divide the people in our country [the DRC], which is why we pray for reconciliation,” she said. “We need it all over the world, even in the United States, so it was good to have that cross reminding us that God used Christ to reconcile us to him, in our family, in our churches, in the body of Christ and in the world.”

Rob Muthiah of Pasadena Mennonite Church receives the reconciliation cross from Wholicare Community Missionary Church Pastor Helen Mfwilawikanda on March 24.

Participants worship during the Peacemakers Confessing Christ International gathering in February at Meserete Kristos College in Bishoftu, Ethiopia.

**Ethiopians host Peacemakers Confessing Christ gathering**

Eastern Mennonite Missionaries

Anabaptist leaders of the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia hosted the third and largest gathering of Peacemakers Confessing Christian International in February.

PCCCI’s mission is “to equip brothers around the world for life-giving relationships with Muslims through dialogue, witness, peace-making and hospitality.” The consultation was coordinated by a steering committee.

Correction

Lois Kreider died Jan. 31, 2019. The date was incorrect in “My Oma and Me: Building Bridges with Art” (April 1).

Composed of Kenya Mennonite Church leader Patrick Obonde and two members of Eastern Mennonite Missions’ Christian-Muslim Relations Team, Jonathan Borman and Andreas Prins.

Attendees came from Burki-na Faso, Canada, Ghana, Indonesia, Israel, Kenya, the Netherlands, Tanzania and the United States. About 30 Ethiopians, most of whom are involved in relating and witnessing to Muslim neighbors, also participated.

Considering the national emphasis of regional, political and social tensions within society are severe, especially in regions prone to violence, the church leaders in the country are working to establish a way to solve the Venezuelan crisis. Mirabal said.

“Our prayer in Caracas is to remain faithful to our commitment to follow the Lord in this situation, which presents violence as a way to solve the Venezuelan crisis.”

Inspired by Mennonite World Conference, people of the Mennonite church in the El Paraíso neighborhood of Caracas celebrate World Fellowship Sunday.

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Dick Schock enjoys spending his retirement helping others through volunteering with MDS.

"I like helping others," said Dick Schock, a resident of Boyd, Wis. "I shoe horses."

For the Wiebes of Austin, Man., service with Mennonite Disaster Service is a yearlong family affair. In January the family of five — dad Daniel, 41, mother Pamela, 39, and children Brianna, 17, Brenn, 14, Caleb, 12, and Corey, 9 — left their home for 12 months on the road helping others.

"I like helping others," he said of his fourth time with MDS. "It's a change to 'get some exercise,' instead of just working at a desk. At the end of a day he's aware of 'a few muscles I don't ordinarily use.'"

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A family adventure, and an education

Madi Klimer, Sara Dyck and Karen Harder are getting to see new people and learn skills with MDS.

Madi Klimer of Goshen, Ind., is looking forward to studying social work at Eastern Mennonite University in fall. Right now, she's taking a gap year to work and earn money — and do service with Mennonite Disaster Service.

"I like hands-on work," said the 19-year-old of this, her second stint with MDS. She also appreciates the fact that she doesn't have to pay to do MDS — "like some other mission trips."

For Karen Harder of Morris, Manitoba, MDS is pushing her out of her comfort zone. "I've been blessed abundantly by God," she said. 

When she came from Ontario to Manitoba to help with recovery efforts after the “flood of the century” in that province. "I think I've cried more this year than any year before, saying goodbye every week when volunteers finish their week-long service." 

A member of Bonniveille Mennonite Church in Bristol, Ind., Dyck is getting to know others and also put her faith into action. "I was raised to always be kind, to help others," she said. 

"Building a house is a new thing for me," said Harder, noting that others who have done MDS before. Dyck has wanted to do MDS "for a long time. I love that I get to go somewhere new and help people."
It’s a family affair for us,” he said. In February the couple, who attended Blumenheim Bergthaler Mennonite Church, were in Bloomington, with their son and daughter-in-law in law building homes for people impacted by Hurricane Harvey in 2017. When their children were younger, they liked how doing MDS gave them a chance to work and interact with adults, learn from people who “believe all the same ways we do” and “not just think about themselves.”

“We wanted to be good example for kids of what Jesus wants us to do,” said Dave of why they do MDS. “We like how everyone leaves all their differences at the door, how they can come here for a common goal,” Jeanne said. “We’ll do more MDS.”

The love of God, in wood and walls

“A home is a powerful symbol of security and trust, shelter and protection from the elements, and rest. Let us pause and give thanks for this home, for the support and strength of this community and all who helped this home to rise after the disaster of Hurricane Harvey.”

So began the Feb. 27 dedication service of the new home built by Mennonite Disaster Service for Francisco and Lorena Flores Sanchez and their family in La Grange. The bungalow replaces the mobile home the family lost when the Colorado River overflowed during the hurricane. Matthew Kinney, their parish priest, provided some background to their situation. “Many in my parish were affected,” he said, especially those who lived in the same mobile home park as the couple. “Everything MDS is doing is fantastic.”

Like Kinney, Marsha Pyle was unfamiliar with Mennonites and had never heard of MDS before Harvey. “It’s the most amazing thing I ever heard of, the way volunteers come from across North America to help,” said Pyle, a member of the Fayette County Disaster Recovery Team. Addressing the MDS volunteers, Lorena Flores Sanchez said “I thank you for all the work you did for us, and I thank God for putting you in our way.”

After they spoke, the family was given a Bible and a wall hanging. Then MDS La Grange project director Carl Dube handed over the keys. “It’s in your home, not just a house,” he said. Kinney concluded the dedication service in prayer: “This is the love of God at work,” he said, “in wood and walls.”

Kevin and Teresa Bueckert sometimes bring their children to service assignments and sometimes volunteer on their own.

Learning new skills

For Kevin and Teresa Bueckert of Neuanlage, Sask., service with MDS is a way to explore new things, see new places, learn new skills and escape winter. The couple left their three children at home but last year took them to an MDS family camp.

“We’ve had help,” said Tere sa, 36, a school bus driver and vehicle details. At the same time, she’s learned how to use an air nailer, do sub floors and put hangers on floor joists.

Kevin, 40, works for a property management company. For him, MDS is a way “to give back and get to know other people.”

“A self-described nonpeople person, MDS is also a way “to get out of my comfort zone,” he said. “It’s great to be with people who all share the same faith, even though there are differences.”

“I have hands”

The first time Kevin Shantz signed up for MDS, the organization was trying to get to Hawaii. “I thought it was a joke,” said the roofing contractor from near Kitchener, Ont., who takes several months off each winter. It was 2015, and he repaired roofs damaged by a tropical storm. He’s been “hooked on MDS” ever since.

Since then, the married father of two daughters has to California, Saipan and now Texas, usually going for three weeks at a time. Escaping winter for a bit is one reason for the member of Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton, Ont., but there’s more.

“I have hands,” he said, stretching out his arms. “I can work. I can help my neighbors. I don’t want to sit on a beach when people are in bad shape and need help.”

Wes Reimer loves MDS. He thinks he’s spent about two years doing service since 2000, including a yearlong stint with his wife, Ashley. It’s “to use my God-given gifts,” he said. “I enjoy serving with my hands.”

In February and March, the couple were in Texas for a month with their boys — Hudson, 7; Parker, 5; and Nash, 4 — helping people impacted by Hurricane Harvey. “I want my kids to see it’s not just about us, not just me, me, me,” he said. It’s the second year in a row they’ve come as a family. They took their older kids out of school so they could volunteer.

“The teachers were very accommodating,” said Ashley, 33. She said it was hard last year, when Nash was just 2. So when Wes suggested doing it again, she wasn’t enthusiastic.

“My first reaction was no,” she said. But she prayed about it, asking God to “change my heart if you want us to go.”

The days are very hard with three active boys, but she likes how they make friends with so many adults.

On Valentine’s Day, they made Valentines for volunteers, the people MDS is building houses for and neighbors. “We gave away about 70 Valentine’s cards, with a chocolate and a note saying ‘God loves you,’” she said. Together with other MDSers, she started a Bible study to which neighbors are invited. “It’s a big commitment doing MDS as a family, but they say it’s worth it — especially when you hear their 7-year-old say, ‘When I’m big, I want to be a crew leader like dad.’”

MDS is awesome

“When I opened the door of the house, I knew things were bad.”

That’s what Isaiah Coleman told MDS volunteers in Wharton about what it was like to come back to his home after the flood caused by Hurricane Harvey. Although his house was a couple of feet off the ground, more than 2 feet of water had poured in. “Everything was totally destroyed,” he said. “I was dumbfounded. I didn’t know what to do. I had no game plan for that. I felt hopeless.”

What made things better, he said, was he had no flood insurance. He couldn’t afford it.

They were relocated to a government trailer, but Coleman had no idea what to do next. Hope came when the local disaster recovery team selected them to get a new house built by MDS.

“You’ve been a blessing,” he said to volunteers. “You gave me hope. I can’t say enough about MDS. It’s hard to recover [from a disaster], but because of MDS I am going to get there. There are better times ahead. God is in this.”

He told the MDers he drives by the construction site every day and says a prayer of thanks.

Chad Weaver has served with MDS more than a dozen times and will continue as long as the health he’s blessed with allows.

Each day is a gift

For Chad Weaver, each day is a gift he wants to give back to help others. The 36-year-old from Mifflintown, Pa., received a kidney transplant 15 years ago. “Transplanted organs don’t last forever,” he said, pausing from work framing a house. “I feel good, but I take a pharmacy worth of drugs. They take a toll on the body.”

Weaver, a member of Lost Creek Mennonite Church, lives and works on a family farm, gets help for his medical expenses from his government through Medicare. “I get help from my country, so I need to give back to my country,” he said.

This is the 16th time he has served with MDS. “As long as I have health I will serve,” he said. “I’ll do it as long as I can.”

Dave and Jeanne Wolff

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BY LINDA MOFFETT
Eastern Mennonite Missions

SALUNGA, Pa. — Rhoda M. Sauder, a pioneer missionary who was instrumental in planting the Mennonite church in Honduras, died March 21 in Ephrata. She was 83.

Rhoda died in her home with her husband, James, served with Eastern Mennonite Missions from 1961 to 1993. Originally assigned to Vietnam, they were reassigned to Honduras when their visas were not granted. After attending language school in Costa Rica, the young family arrived in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, in 1962. After 19 years of service in Honduras, the Sauders were involved in Caribbean ministry and based in Miami from 1980 to 1984. From 1985 through 1991, they were stationed in the Dominican Republic.

“Rhoda and James were evangelists who were always looking for God’s call and answer,” said Steve Shank, EMC executive director. “They were instrumental in the planting of the Mennonite church in Honduras, which has flourished to more than 135 churches and over 12,000 believers today.”

“Rhoda was well-loved by the Hondurans, a woman who wanted to be certain everyone was taken care of and included. She never hesitated to share her faith. Rhoda was a caring, loving mother not only to her own family but of the church family as well,” said Gerry Keener, EMC president, described Sauder as “a woman of deep faith” who “didn’t shy away from hardship and difficulties.” One of Rhoda’s last ministry projects was co-authoring and editing Surviving, Thriving and Multiplying, a book detailing the pioneer and foundational work of the Holy Spirit through the mission work in Honduras. “Her commitment to share the gospel through a combination of foundational work and book testifying of God’s transformation in Honduras,” Shank said, “is a testimony to the power of God’s remarkable work.”

When Landis Homes, a re-
tirement community envi-
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mittee this season, which concluded in March,

“Winning the award has
turned 100.

“One of Rhoda’s last ministry

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IN MEMORIAM

STAN BARTEL

Stanley Roy Bartel, 76, of Man- hattan, Kan., died Feb. 29, 2019, af- ter a short, heroic battle with pan- creatic cancer. He was born June 2, 1942, to Paul and Elva (Schmidt) Bartel. He graduated from Goshen High School in 1960. He played baseball and basketball for the school teams, and his interest in sports lasted for the rest of his life.

From 1964 to 1966, he served on a Peace Corps team in Central America. In 1967, he moved to Manhattan. He earned a bachelor’s degree in agricultural education and later a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction from Kansas State University.

He taught high school vocational agriculture and science classes. He worked in many capacities beyond the halls of the classroom, acting as bus driver, football videographer, ath- letics concessions coordinator and school handyman. He served as the Future Farmers of America adviser, a role he treasured. He received an Honorary Membership Award from FFA in 1976. In 1995, he was honored as a Scholastic Teacher of the Year by the Kansas State Teachers Association. He spent 29 years as an educa- tor Mennonite High School, and taught briefly at Jewell High School after his first retirement. He was married to the former Thelma O’Driscoll, Nation, located in south central Kansas. In 1995, he was awarded three years to 2002 on workforce train- ing and preparing tribe members for farming.

He was raised in Tabor Mennon- ite Church, where he also served as a member of the congregation. He was the husband of Mennonite Relief Sale. After the Wednesday meal on March 31, we observed Mis- sion’s annual “Lenten Facebook” event to encourage hospitality among us.

Transfiguration Sunday worship March 3 prepared us for Lent with the theme “Blessed Hungry, Holy Poor.” Lenten banquets enhance our worship space.

Our 20th-anniversary meals be- gan March 6, followed by an Ash Wednesday service. We observed the Shalom meal with the Bethel Choir home concert was March 24 after their tour to the West Coast.

Deaths: Norma Voran Preheim, 82, of Alexander, Neb., died March 1, 2019. Survivors: two sons, Bruce (Martha) Preheim and Douglas (Wendy) Regier; six grandchildren; one great- grandson; and a sister, Mary Moses.

NORTH WESTON

Bethel College Mennonite Church

Junior high youth and sponsors attended the retreat Know Jesus organized by the Western District Conference in conjunction with the South Central Conference Youth Ministry Commission, sponsored by the Bethel College.

Pastor Susan and Jim Jantzen, who returned from their journey to Chad, where they formerly served in the Refugee Martyrs’ Office.

Brad Kolbman brought the mes- sage Feb. 17, calling us to be bold in the hospitality com- mission hosted our annual “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner” event to encourage hospitality among us.

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HILSBORO

Mlinikos Mennonite Brethren Church

Early morning on the first Sun- day of every month, we hold a time of prayer at the church, praying for our church, our community and our influence as Christ’s disciples. Recently two full-time staff members resigned: lead pastor Brian Allin, June 1, and youth pastor and worship leader Sara Drotto, effective July 1. Ken Wasine, delicately, is now lead pastor.

In February we collected tuna, peanut butter, and rice. Our MCC relief sale meal was held Feb. 10. We had a Mexican meal catered by Maira Gutierrez and raised $2,000. Six of the 27 pastors attended Pastors’ Week at Anabaptist Men- nonite Biblical Seminary in late March. In their absence, Kara Klingenher shared thoughts and pictures of her meditations in the French Republic in January. Mary Rutman hosted the Bethel College Concert Choir, and campus pastor Peter Goosen was able to give presentations and canceled those plans.

As the Wednesday service was held March 6.

On March 17, the children start- ed their own coins for the MCC. My Coins Count Project at the Mattison camp in the Midwest is being used for well-drilling proj- ects. — Margaret Beery

IN KANSAS

NEWTON

Shalom Mennonite Church

The senior high youth held a silent auction fundraiser of Super Bowl snacks on Feb. 3. Nearly $700 was raised to attend the Mennon- ite Church USA convention.

The worship team with Mennonite Con- cerns attended the Know Jesus event at Hesston College, Feb. 9-10.

Birth, Audrey Elizabath, Feb. 18, to Ben and Laurel Woodward-Breck- hill.

The sermon series, “Jesus Re- vealed” focused on the early minis- try of Jesus and how his teachings speak to our present-day challenges.

During Pastor Zook Barber’s ab- sence, Bruce (Martha) Preheim and Donna Zergler presented the message on ‘Ministry of Service/Social Action.’

The women of our church host- ed our annual Women’s Missions Mission spring supper March 21. Three women were awarded a KIPCOR in North, present- ed “What Is Well Being Your Mission?”

Death: Janice Friesen, 76, died March 31. —

KEVIN McPHERSON

First Mennonite Church

A “Spirit of Love” party was held on Feb. 14, hosted by the hospitality com- mission.

Jon Gerring, Bethel College pres- ident, shared information about the college during Sunday school and also gave the “Moment in Mis- sion” announcement.

On Wednesdays during Lent, vol- unteers prepare and provide sack meals. Pastor Rose Marie Zook Barber is leading us in a Bible stu- dy on the second half of Matthew.

NORTHWEST MISSOURI

Southland Mennonite Community

March 24 was the last Sunday of the year when a local pastor or student from Barcelona, Spain; Montse Adan, former exchange student from Catalonia, Spain, and six grandchildren.

MCC PROSPERITY

ST. LOUIS

LifeWay Mennonite Fellowship

Our spring fellowship meals be- came a focus for monthly prayer, and role model for younger wo- men. For her work as chair of the Alternative to the Military Com- mittee, Virginia Mennonite Con- ference acknowledged her annual peace march and public reading was documented. She enjoyed travel with family, national parks and overseas to the British Isles, India and China.

Survivors include her husband of 60 years, Joseph Longacher Jr., her children, Deidre (Sicher) Smelser of Harrisonburg, Steven Longacher of Corvallis, Ore., Mark (Kim) Longacher of Manches- ter, Colo., and Karen Minatelli of Alex- andria; a “Spanish daughter,” Alondra; a “Spanish daughter,” Montse Adan, former exchange student from Catalonia, Spain, and six grandchildren.

Obituaries are published for a $20 fee and may be faxed. Send to editor@menonworld.org or MWB, Box 568, Newton, KS 67114.
HESSINGTON COLLEGE seeks applications for a Preschool Director. Position serves as the preschool lead teacher, providing mentorship and supervision to college students involved in the preschool, maintaining family contacts, marketing the program and being an early education advocate in the community, maintaining state licensure requirements, managing preschool financial responsibilities and working with other pertinent department at Hessington College. Minimum requirements include a bachelor’s degree or higher in education, early childhood teaching license or elementary teaching license with classroom endorsement and a commitment to Christian higher education and the mission and values of Hessington College. This is a benefits-eligible, 34-hour position during the academic year beginning August 2019. Review of applications begins April 15 and continues until filled. To apply, send a letter of interest and resume to:

Katie Mika, President
Hessington College
11001 W 100th St. N
Lawrence, KS 66049

DEPARTMENT — GENERAL
HR PROFESSIONAL to develop and implement work policy and procedures, conduct and analyze employee relations investigations, advise supervisors on various HR issues, recommend policies and practice improvements, and serve as an HR resource for employees. Must have experience in employee relations, development of HR policies and procedures and conducting investigations. This is a full-time position. Send resume to: Joni Frye, Human Resources Director, Menno Health, Inc., 1705 Menno Way, Suite 500, Berrien Springs, MI 49103, or email info@mennohealth.org, or call 269-789-4530.

CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE News

Congratulations to Lisa and Jesse Miller; and Luke Titus and Deb Dutcher were married on March 3. Central Christian Church in Berrien Springs, Pa., an active, well-organized, supportive congregation, is praying for a new pastor and is being an early education advocate as the preschool lead teacher, providing mentorship and supervision to college students involved in the preschool, maintaining family contacts, marketing the program and being an early education advocate in the community, maintaining state licensure requirements, managing preschool financial responsibilities and working with other pertinent department at Hessington College. Minimum requirements include a bachelor’s degree or higher in education, early childhood teaching license or elementary teaching license with classroom endorsement and a commitment to Christian higher education and the mission and values of Hessington College. This is a benefits-eligible, 34-hour position during the academic year beginning August 2019. Review of applications begins April 15 and continues until filled. To apply, send a letter of interest and resume to: Katie Mika, President, Hessington College, 11001 W 100th St. N, Lawrence, KS 66049.

FRANCONIA MEMNONITE Church, a small BMC congregation in Lebanon, Pa., seeks full time or part-time professional leadership for the congregation’s various music and corporate worship ministries. The second role is Director of Children’s Ministry which provides overall leadership for all ministries involving children (infant-grade 5). Qualified applicants will be passionate about Jesus Christ, have a heart for ministry as well as administrative capabilities, and affirm the Confession of Faith and ABC’s of a Mennonite Perspective. A full job description for each position can be found at fracmemno.org. To express interest in either/both roles or to request further information please contact FranconiaSearchTeam@gmail.com. (8-9)

FRACTION MEMNONITE Church, a small BMC congregation in Lebanon, Pa., seeks full time or part-time professional leadership for the congregation’s various music and corporate worship ministries. The second role is Director of Children’s Ministry which provides overall leadership for all ministries involving children (infant-grade 5). Qualified applicants will be passionate about Jesus Christ, have a heart for ministry as well as administrative capabilities, and affirm the Confession of Faith and ABC’s of a Mennonite Perspective. A full job description for each position can be found at fracmemno.org. To express interest in either/both roles or to request further information please contact FranconiaSearchTeam@gmail.com. (8-9)

BELLFOINTE
Julie and other local Memnonite congregations hosted Ted & Co. for a spirited Mennonite Disaster Service fundraiser March 13th. Local MDS field managers, Karen Boyk and Ann Norstrom, from the MDS Tool Truck to each congregation.

Oralee Pittman joined Brethren Disaster Ministries in Puerto Rico which helps us partner with the MDS Tool Truck to each congregation.

The last Sunday of January and February we partner with other churches in Bremer sharing the setup, service and cleanup at the Bremer Community Meal. Now each Sunday until the end of November we partner with other churches in Bremer sharing the setup, service and cleanup at the Bremer Community Meal. Now each Sunday until the end of November we partner with other churches in Bremer sharing the setup, service and cleanup at the Bremer Community Meal.

Things change, but one thing remains the same: Our children love to visit the Coiny Wars for Mennonite Central Committee Care Coins. Write them a letter and have your child make sure they know that they will always be cared for.

NORTH NEWTON
Guest Housing—Seventy S, Barrows Cottage, Wood pasture, 1526 S. Madison, Retro Retreat. Email: dawson785@kansas.edu. (7-20)

GOESSEL, Kan. guest housing—Menn Menno Haus. Email or call for brochures.

PASTOR: GINGRICHS Mennonite Church, 1501 Summit Pl., Olathe, Kansas; RR P.O. Box 138, Olathe, Kansas 66061. We are a small, but growing congregation of about 30 members. We desire someone as Pastor to disciple our members, help us in outreach, and mentor our youth group. The ideal candidate is a Collegiate Pastor, or someone who has an interest and gift in teaching youth. We are a non-staff congregation and are interested in a part-time position. Please send your resume and cover letter to Pastor Weldon for a brochure or information at weldonjgchurch@gmail.com. (7-8)


WELLINGTON—NORTH NEWTON, Kansas, seeks full-time (or .5 to .75 FTE) pastor living in Washington, D.C., and serving in cross-cultural mission/areas of interest in either/both roles or to request further information please contact FranconiaSearchTeam@gmail.com. (8-9)

CHRISTINE Leininger, 76, died of cancer Feb. 22 of 2019. Services will be held at 10 a.m. April 27 at the Church of the Brethren in Valley City. Pastor Rich Beyer will conduct the service. Interment in Hillside Memorial Park. Arrangements by Monk-Kramer Funeral Home, Fostoria, OH. Memorial contributions may be made to the Cancer Research Trust Fund, P.O. Box 23365, Cleveland, OH 44117-0365 or to the Church of the Brethren Office of Witness, 330 S. Third St., Elgin, IL 60120.

Engineering assistant: Eastern Mennonite University invites applications for a full-time Technical Director. Position requires a master’s degree in engineering or applied science or a combination of education and experience in engineering management and a commitment to a Christian higher education mission and values of Eastern Mennonite University. This is a benefit-eligible, 34-hour position during the academic year beginning August 2019. Review of applications begins April 15 and continues until filled. To apply, send a letter of interest and resume to: Richard L. Gingerich, President, Eastern Mennonite University, PO Box 170, Harrisonburg, VA 22803.

Ohio, Mennonite menow.org

Berlin Mennonite Church

Red baby dedications were held Feb. 7 for Cora June, daughter of Jahwe and Zachary; and Elyse L., daughter of Lindsey and Michael Stuttsman.

Wednesday family nights were held at the church on the 2nd and 4th weeks of each month for classes for all ages and meals provided. Jr. High Eye Witness class on Wednesday evening at the school class.

Christian Leadership School’s choir and orchestra provided the worship service. That evening the church’s Christmas program, “Songs of Christmas Past and Present,” was presented. Millersburg Mennonite Church joined BMC’s for a joint worship service March 10. Titus and Deb Dutcher were married March 24 with a ceremony made by the ladies sewing group. They are moving to Madison, Wis., to be closer to family.

Smithville

Oak Grove Mennonite Church

This Sunday school quarter, four options were offered for adults: a Bible study, “Discipleship and Mission,” and books The Upside-Down Kingdom by Donald Kraybill, Falling in Line: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life by Richard Rohr and I’m Still Here: Black Dignity in a White World by Whiteness by Justin Chim. Pastor Doug Zehar began a sermon series based on the Jesus Storybook Bible. This series provides a journey through the Bible. Mennonite Church USA held a day playing together at a swim and game night at the local YSCA. The gathered group prepared about 600 meals for the children and adults alike. Entertainment included live music from a local group.

On March 1, 31 prayer and praise service, time playing together at a swim and game night at the local YSCA. The gathered group prepared about 600 meals for the children and adults alike. Entertainment included live music from a local group.

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**MCC U.S. board chair takes on new leadership role**

**Graber Hershberger becoming MCC U.S. interim associate executive director**

Mennonite Central Committee

AKRON, Pa. — The board of directors of Mennonite Central Committee named Gwen White as its chair during its March 15 meeting. She succeeds Ann Graber Hershberger, who will become interim associate executive director of MCC U.S., a new staff role.

White has served on the MCC U.S. board since 2008. She is professor emerita at Eastern University in St. Davids, where she created the doctoral programs in marriage and family therapy in 2011. Earlier, she was chair of the counseling psychology department. She was on the faculty of Eastern University for 22 years. She has been director of Circle Counseling in Philadelphia since 1997.

White and her husband, Rod, live in Philadelphia, where they attend Circle of Hope, a Brethren in Christ congregation, where she serves as pastor and Rod is development pastor. Graber Hershberger served as board chair from 2009-2019. She has served on MCC boards since 1996, including as chair of the MCC East Coast board. In 1983 she was an MCC worker-in-El Salvador. She and her husband, Jim Hershberger, were MCC representatives in Nicaragua from 1985 to 1995 and 1999-2000.

Graber Hershberger has taught at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., for more than 10 years. She is director of EMU’s Cross-Cultural program and teaches in the EMU and Goshen (Ind.) College collaborative online doctor of nursing practice program.

**Film at Bethel to tell of woman’s LGBTQ struggle with MCC**

**By Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach**

Mennonite Central Committee

Rachel Leiningar, a senior at Bethany Christian High School in Goshen, Ind., won the $750 top prize in the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office annual essay contest. Leiningar’s essay, “Communications in Place of Isolation,” calls for the U.S. government to engage with the government of North Korea. In addition, in the essay, “Cultural, academic and artistic exchanges could bring about greater understanding,” citing the examples of Cuba, China, Vietnam, Myanmar, and more.

With so many decades of hatred and enmity between the U.S. and North Korea, the concept of mutually beneficial relations seems nearly impossible to reach,” Leiningar says. “However, openness and eagerness for negotiation presents the first step towards descalating the threat of war. With every progression of trust between governments and citizens, these nations can continue ... reconciliation across borders.”

Topics in this year’s contest included immigration and diaspora; the impact of the U.S. relationship with North Korea. The second-place prize of $500 went to Isabelle Moore, also a senior at Bethany. Moore wrote about gun violence: “In a time when our nation is plagued by violence and death, we must take action together as brothers and sisters in Christ; we must stand together and stand together for a safer, more secure nation.”

The third-place winner was Brianne Moore, a senior at Mount Anthony Union High School in Manchester, Vt., who wrote an essay “From Congress to Correction: Addressing the Issue of Gun Violence.”

MCC essay contest winner calls for North Korea thaw

**EVENTS & PEOPLE**

**Film at Bethel to tell of woman’s LGBTQ struggle with MCC**

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MCC essay contest winner calls for North Korea thaw

**Walking Roots Band tour**

The Harrisonburg, Va.-based Walking Roots Band is seeking to bridge faith-inspired communities in the Philippines, Kalinga First Nation and a nonite missionary community.

Born and raised in New Orleans, pedal steel guitarist and vocalist Ada McMahon, McKee Street Music, said Seth Crissman, band member, songwriter and music director for Western District Conference of Mennonite Church USA, “The Walking Roots Band is hosting a portion of T-shirt sales to the Everence Sharing Fund.

“Everence is sponsoring the Walking Roots Band’s June tour of Ohio, Indiana, Iowa and Kansas with pay-what-you-can ticketing or free tickets, depending on the venue. Everence is sponsoring The Walking Roots Band’s June tour of Ohio, Indiana, Iowa and Kansas with pay-what-you-can ticketing or free tickets, depending on the venue. The Walking Roots Band tour is hosted by the Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution at Bethel College in north-central Kansas.

“Everence is committed to bringing people together to enrich the communities and lives we serve. We know we can naturally do so for many of us,” said Madelyn Metzger, Everence vice president of sustainability.

The sponsorship will enable the Walking Roots Band to offer pay-what-you-can ticketing or free tickets, depending on the venue. The band will contribute a portion of T-shirt sales to the Everence Sharing Fund.
Goshen College

GOSHEN, Ind. — Twenty-one Goshen College students collected the Indiana Collegiate Press Association’s annual convention March 30. The Record was named “Newspaper of the Year” for the second consecutive year in the college division.

This is the third time in four years that The Record, which publishes a weekly print edition and competes against schools across the state with enrollment under 10,000, received the top billing. The awards recognized Record staff from the spring of 2018, when Emily Kaufman, a 2018 interdisciplinary studies graduate, served as editor in chief, and the fall of 2017, when Kristin Troyer, a senior public relations major, was editor.

“We were especially pleased to see our contributions in print recognized during a year in which we redoubled our investment on digital platforms,” said Duane Stoltzfus, professor of communication and adviser to The Record. “The staff members are committed to excellence in storytelling, whether in print or online, in text or image.” For the fifth time in program history Goshen was named “Radio School of the Year” by the Indiana Association of School Broadcasters on March 30 in Carmel.

Students from 91.1 The Globe, the student-run radio station, earned first honors, including three first-place honors. Globe TV student staff picked up seven awards for their efforts. In a separate multimedia website competition, the FiveCore Media video production company was honored with a second-place award, while The Globe earned third place in the same category.


EMU

Conservativist to speak at wide-ranging festival

HARRISBORG, Va. — Drew Lanham — author and poet, wildlife ecologist, professor, conservativist, birder — will be the keynote speaker during the second annual Academic and Creative Excellence Festival at Eastern Mennonite University.

The ACRE Festival will include gallery openings, special events and presentations of works by faculty, staff and students.

“We’re thrilled to have Dr. Drew Lanham join our campus conversation about vocation and to hear about his journeys as artist, academic and conservativist,” said professor Kirsten Beachy, chair of the intellectual life committee.

Lanham’s presentation opens the festival at 7:30 p.m. April 17 in Lehman Auditorium. A native of South Carolina, Lanham holds a doctorate in geography. His book, *Memoirs of a Colored Settler of the Trail of Death*, was named “News-

Seminary again offering Potawatomi settler Trail of Death pilgrimage course

BY AMMIE BRILL BENSIGRASSER
Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

ELKHART, Ind. — A nine-day seminary course that traces the route of the U.S. military’s 1838 forced removal of about 850 Potawatomi people from their ancestral homeland in north-central Indiana to eastern Kansas offers students an opportunity to learn about an often-overlooked part of history.

The Trail of Death: A Pilgrim of Remembrance, Lament and Transformation will be offered June 3-13 by Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary and co-sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes.

Participants will remember the expulsion by prayerfully walking several miles of the route each day, camping each night and reading journals and letters from the time of the removal. Potawatomi descendants of those who survived the Trail of Death will join the group to share their stories during meal times and ceremony.

“This course takes students and community members out of the classroom and into the liminal, sacred space of pilgrimage where we remember that the past has never truly passed, especially for those who have been historically oppressed,” said Kateria Friesen, sessional instructor for the course. She noted that the expulsion of the Potawatomi residents cleared the way for white settlers to purchase the land in the early 1840s.

The pilgrimage begins with two days of orientation at the AMBS campus, including an introduction to the Doctrine of Discovery, which has been used to support decisions invalidating or ignoring aboriginal possession.

Friesen lives in Fresno, Calif., where her work centers on healing from the violence of structural sin. While a student at AMBS, she created a curriculum for Anabaptist congregations about the Doctrine of Discovery, which accompanies a documentary web series at dolfmenno.org.

Participants can take the course for three credit hours of graduate study ($2,160), audit ($1,020) or no credit ($600). Meal costs are included in the fee. Registration is open until May 1, but space is limited to 15 participants. More information is at ambs.edu/trailofdeath.

LANHAM

Lanham holds a doctorate in geography. His book, *Memoirs of a Colored Settler of the Trail of Death*, was named “News-

ABMS

Intercultural competence training to be hosted

ELKHART, Ind. — Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary has received a $8,000 grant from the Community Fund of Elk-

History staff and students

...
Bethel College in Elkhart, Ind., has selected Gerber Koontz as its new athletic director, effective July 1. Koontz, a nationally recognized leader in event management, will replace Martin Ziesemer as its new athletic director.

Koontz worked for or was closely connected with Mennonite Church USA, including as a participant in theological dialogues with the Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and as a member of the committee that developed the 1995 Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.

Koontz is married to Mindy (Pfannenstein) Urrao. He has five patents pending. Development engineer for the Cabot Corporation and senior research and development engineer for NanoVapor Inc., which manufactures energy-efficient, water-based coatings for the construction industry, reported during the college’s three-year initiative to expand its campus.

He has also been a part-time faculty member in the college’s three-year initiative to expand its campus.

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Greg Zielke directs the Omaha Symphonic Chorus in St. Cecilia Cathedral in Omaha, Neb.

Greg Zielke

Tabor College

HILLSBORO, Kan. — Greg Zielke hasn’t lost his drive for planning and directing choral music programs. You could say he has more drive than ever.

This summer, Zielke returned to Tabor College, his alma mater, as arts director and professor of music. For most of his week, Zielke coordinates and promotes events in the Shari Flaming Center for the Arts. Every Tuesday, he hops into his vehicle and drives 285 miles to Omaha, Neb., to rehearse with the Omaha Symphonic Chorus, which he serves as artistic director and conductor. He then makes the return trip to resume his work at Tabor.

Zielke became aware of the chorus when he joined the Grace University faculty in 1991 and served as chair of the music department from that time until last year.

Founded in 1946 as the Apollo Club by the dean of the College of Music at the University of Omaha, the chorus sings music of all genres and periods, from classical to a cappella, to masterpieces or international folk traditions.

Zielke was hired for the 2001-02 season. The 100-plus singers come from all walks of life and are selected by audition.

“We generally have four concerts each season. Sometimes it’s been as many as six,” Zielke said. “The biggest event each year is ‘Christmas at the Cathedral.’ It’s a big deal because it’s inside the St. Cecilia cathedral, one of the most important spaces in Omaha.

“At the time I was hired, it had recently been renovated, so the place is really stunning and beautiful, and it had recently received a new organ that has very interesting features. We try to highlight it in some way at all of our concerts.”

Another lure that keeps Zielke on the road is the opportunity to combine the chorus with the Omaha Symphony.

“Having that collaboration with them has been one of the significant aspects of my life, really — to conduct them and do a concert with them,” he said. “We are not in any way an official chorus with the symphony, but we have done many, many concerts with them.

“One might presume that performance night is the adrenaline high point for Zielke. Not so.

“Conducting a rehearsal is something that always energizes me and something I look forward to,” he said. “Not every rehearsal goes well, but that doesn’t seem to matter. I think rehearsals are often more fulfilling than the performances because typically we spend more time with the choir in a rehearsal setting.”

Zielke doesn’t know how long he will continue his weekly trips between Hillsboro and Omaha, but he hopes the connection with OSC can continue. He enjoys the friendships and opportunities to work with people who are passionate about choral music and opportunities to find creative and interesting programming ideas.

Zielke is already planning the upcoming season.

“Next season, if things fall into place, the Christmas concert theme is going to be ‘Christmas around the world,’ where we explore different types of Christmas traditions through music,” he said. “In the spring, we’re going to do a collaborative concert with a bluegrass band. We’ve done it with a mariachi band, we’ve done it with a k attempt band, as well as more traditional groups, like a brass ensemble — and of course, with the orchestra many, many times.”

I think rehearsals are often more fulfilling than the performances.

— Greg Zielke

Tabor announces performing arts leadership changes

Tabor College

HILLSBORO, Kan. — The performing arts programs at Tabor College are undergoing changes in leadership. Two faculty have been hired to lead the theater program.

Changes take effect July 1.

Greg Zielke will continue as performing arts director and assume leadership of the concert choir and choral ensembles.

Zielke earned his bachelor’s degree from Tabor, a master’s degree from Wichita State University and a doctorate from the University of Missouri in Kansas City, all in music education.

Zielke led the Concert Choir at Grace University in Omaha, Neb., from 1991 to 2018. He has been artistic director and conductor for the Omaha Symphonic Chorus since 2001.

Current professor of music and director of keyboard studies Sheila Litke will be associate professor and director of the choral program.

Litke achieved her doctorate in piano performance from the University of Kansas. Prior to that, she studied at Guildhall Conservatory of Music & Drama in London, and the Goethe Institute in Germany.

“With a signature facility, we believe we can expand by growing student enrollment, increasing opportunity for students and adding a political studies major and revised minor and a global studies major and minor this fall. The political science major will train students to apply research and analytical skills to current political affairs and offer real-world learning through internships, in preparation for further studies and careers in fields such as law and public policy.

While many universities offer political studies, our program will be distinctive in its embodiment of our university’s values,” said professor Mark Metzler Swin.

The interdisciplinary approach includes course topics such as human rights and dignity, political reconciliation, international relations, terrorist organizations, and peace and security in East Asia.

The major also requires a term at the Washington Community Scholars’ Center in Washington, D.C., where internships offer vocational experience in policy, politics, advocacy and law.

In the global studies major, students will identify a regional and language focus to prepare them for cross-cultural engagement in addition to further study and careers in fields such as international development, human resources, intelligence and research analysis, and education in public and private sectors.

With three areas of concentration — sustainability, justice and peacebuilding, and societies and cultures — the major will focus on intercultural communication and the role of faith in global studies.

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By Christopher Ceymer Kurtz

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