



Anabaptist World

Mennonite news, inspiring stories

PRAYING WITH MENNONITES

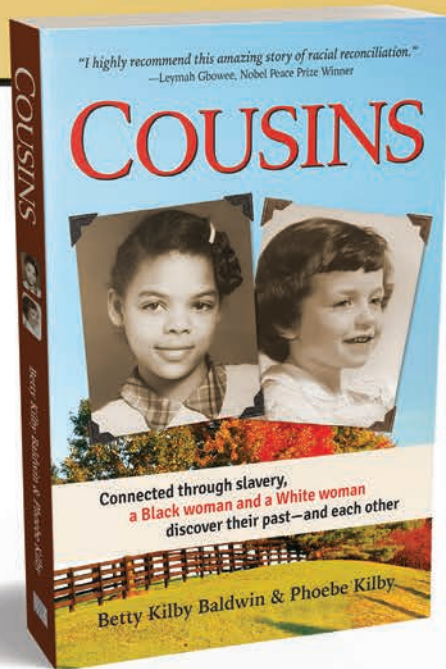
Confessions of a
spiritual refugee

BY PATTON DODD

PLUS

FROM DESPAIR TO BLESSING
IN CONGO DURING COVID-19

BY BERCY MUNEDI



“I highly recommend this amazing story of racial reconciliation.”

— *Leymah Gbowee, Nobel Peace Prize Winner*

Cousins

**Connected through slavery,
a Black woman and a White woman
discover their past — and each other!**

by Betty Kilby Baldwin & Phoebe Kilby



MEET BETTY

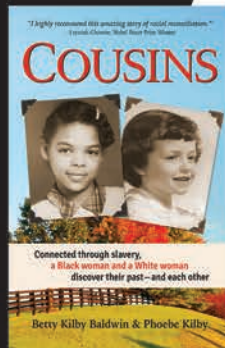


MEET PHOEBE

“I’m very excited about this remarkable book. I hope the experiences of Betty and Phoebe will inspire others to sit down at the table of sisterhood and brotherhood to promote racial healing.”

— *U.S. Senator Tim Kaine of Virginia*

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ON THE COVER: A woman prays in the sanctuary of San Antonio Mennonite Church. Photo by Dianne Garcia.

BY DANIELLE KLOTZ

Your award, your voice, your knowledge

LAST MONTH *Anabaptist World* virtually participated in the Associated Church Press annual convention. For me, as a first-time participant, it was an exciting time to learn from other communicators working in religious reporting and storytelling.

AW was highlighted as editor Paul Schrag and I participated in a panel on shifting models in journalism and then honored by receiving six awards for our predecessors, *Mennonite World Review* and *The Mennonite*, as well for *AW* in our first four months of publishing (see page 24).

One of these honors was the second-place Award of Merit for “Letters to the Editor” in the March 9 issue of *MWR*. I want to highlight this one because this award really belongs to you, the readers. Without you taking the time to write to us, that award would have gone to another publication.

Thank you for your participation, your support and your passion for *Anabaptist World*. Your engagement makes the magazine and website better.

Another way you can find your words published on *AW* pages is to answer one of our calls for submissions. Currently, for our next issue, we have a submission call out that addresses themes of stewardship. While I expect

we will highlight stories involving creative financial stewardship, I hope we also receive submissions that present testimonies of stewardship as environmental care, faith development, justice work or movements, and more.

Please don’t hesitate to reach out to us with your letters, article submissions and story ideas. People sometimes begin an email to us with “you’ve probably heard about this, but . . .” Often we haven’t! We need you to tell us what’s happening.

We do this work together, and we really do appreciate when you take the time to join in the conversation.

IN THIS ISSUE we’re sharing a number of stories from Anabaptist communities outside the United States, including two leading features written by Africans (thanks to Mennonite Mission Network for those!). I’m always pleased when it works out to have an issue in which we are able to share a variety of global voices.

I hope this issue brings insight and inspiration to you. Thank you again for your support, participation and kindness. ●



Anabaptist World Inc. is an independent journalistic ministry serving the global Anabaptist movement. We seek to inform, inspire and provide a forum for Mennonites and anyone interested in Anabaptism to explore faith and culture.

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STAFF

Executive director: Danielle Klotz
daniellek@anabaptistworld.org

Editor: Paul Schrag
editor@anabaptistworld.org

Associate editor: Tim Huber
timh@anabaptistworld.org

Business manager: Dana Neff
danan@anabaptistworld.org

Digital strategist: Juan Moya
juanm@anabaptistworld.org

Design: Hannah Gerig Meyer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dawn Araujo-Hawkins	Marathana Prothro
Larry Guengerich	Duane Stoltzfus
Hans Houshower	Marty Troyer
Melody Pannell	Sheri Wenger

EDITORIAL OFFICE

129 W. Sixth St., Newton, Kan.
PO Box 568, Newton, KS 67114

Phone: 316-283-3670
Email: editor@anabaptistworld.org

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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Email: danan@anabaptistworld.org
PO Box 568, Newton, KS 67114

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Casting call for 'Amish types'

Another movie about the Amish is likely in the works. *The Evening Tribune* of Hornell, N.Y., reported in early April that Paramount Pictures was shooting a feature-length film on an Amish farm near the town of Allen in Allegany County. Details are sparse, and main actors are unknown, but the film is set in a fictional Amish community. The Buffalo Niagara Film Office in New York issued a casting notice in March for "Amish-type folk" — men with full beards, no visible tattoos or piercings, children who can sing and people who have experience with horses and buggies.



Sweet family tradition

Milton S. Hershey wasn't the first Pennsylvania candy maker with the famous Hershey name. Levi H. Hershey (1860-1937), a member of Landisville Mennonite Church, owned Champion Creamery and Landisville Caramel Factory. Levi helped Milton (1857-1945), who was a relative, by sharing his favorite caramel recipe. Levi also lent money to Milton, and Milton invited Levi into his new chocolate candy venture. But Levi declined because Milton hadn't repaid the loan. Levi's family was not related closely enough to Milton to inherit any of Milton's fortune. Milton's parents' families were Mennonite, but formal religion was never a part of his life, and he never joined a Mennonite church. The current issue of *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage*, published by the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, tells the story of Levi Hershey.

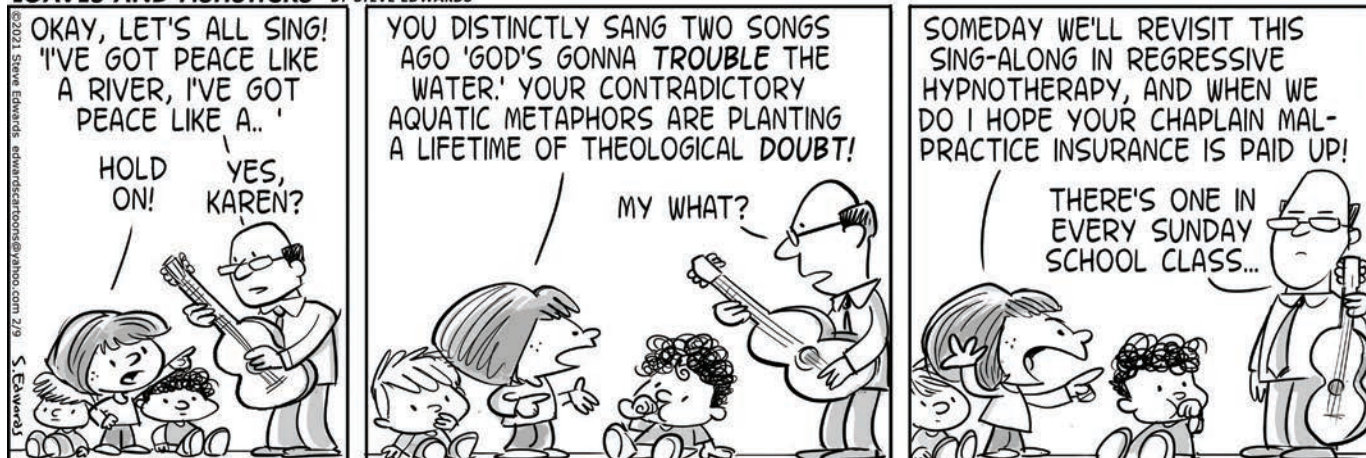


PHOTO: JIM LICHTI

Public art for justice

First Mennonite Church of San Francisco sponsored one of 10 circles that made up a street mural protest on April 9 outside the doors of Wells Fargo's international headquarters. The eight-point star quilt design was painted by church members ranging in age from 2 to 67 and was inspired by Micah 6:8, featuring the words "do justice, walk humbly." The action criticized Wells Fargo's financing for Line 3, a 1,000-mile pipeline being built by Canadian company Enbridge to connect tar sands in Alberta with shipping ports in Wisconsin. Tribal groups say the pipeline's construction violates their treaty rights to hunt, fish and gather medicinal plants, as well as preserve sacred sites.

LOAVES AND FISHSTICKS BY STEVE EDWARDS



Letters & Comments

Write to: editor@anabaptistworld.org

Why didn't they resist?

The opening paragraph of "Holocaust complicity documented" (March 26), on the launch of *European Mennonites and the Holocaust*, indicates why some of the book's assumptions need to be questioned: "If committing genocide is a community activity, then uncovering and dealing with it is the responsibility of a community too." That might be helpful when looking at Mennonite responses in the Netherlands, Germany and Prussia/Poland, but much less so in Soviet Russia. Community as we know it did not exist there at that time.

The book names people of Mennonite background who collaborated with the Nazis in Ukraine, and some of those stories don't need to be disputed. But the writers are on much less certain ground when they claim most Mennonites there "tilted" toward support for what the Nazis did to the Jews.

When the Germans invaded Russia in 1941, organized church life had already been shut down for a decade. Thousands of Mennonites had been sent into exile. Thousands more had been executed. In a society ruled by fear and distrust, few dared to speak openly. When the Germans invaded Russia, those who might have welcomed them did not know they were exchanging one tyranny for another. That some collaborated should not surprise us. That few dared to resist should not surprise us either; they had already been forced to keep their heads down for more than a decade.

One does not need to minimize what happened to the Jews while asking for understanding for people who welcomed those they saw as liberators. What needs to be questioned are suggestions that they had the ability to resist what was happening to the Jews or that majorities might have implicitly or explicitly supported Nazi atrocities.

Harold Jantz, Winnipeg, Man.

Blessed by megachurches

Since no church is perfect, I say "amen" to "Don't knock megachurches" (Letters, April 16). More Americans are becoming skeptical or disaffected with Christianity or religion in general. This includes millenni-

als and Generation Z. In 1 Corinthians 9:22-23, the Apostle Paul says, "I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings."

I have been personally and professionally involved with America's megachurches for nearly 50 years and have witnessed their effective outreach and growing diversity. Which is why I encourage more traditional churches to closely examine and consider trying the best of these methods of contemporary outreach. Spiritual and numerical growth are both joyful and rewarding aspects of our church life.

Lee Suderman, North Newton, Kan.

Christianity as persecution

In "Surrender the banner of persecution" (Editorials, April 16), Tim Huber addresses the persecution of Asian American Pacific Islanders arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic. He suggests it is too soon for Mennonites to commiserate with the AAPI community under the "banner of persecution." He indicates Mennonites have a long history of being persecuted and persecuting others.

Here in Canada, the board of Mennonite Central Committee issued a letter in 2017 in response to the 2014 Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which examined the horrors of the Residential Boarding School experience of Indigenous folks, a system that Mennonite churches were a part of from 1960 to about 1985. MCC's letter included a disclaimer basically indicating that "we know how you feel" because "we were persecuted too" and we (Mennonites) were not directly involved in the persecution of Indigenous folks.

It is time that Anabaptist Mennonite Christians examine how our "Christianity" becomes an action of persecution, as opposed to amelioration and healing. The focus needs to be on the deep problems of how our Christianity imposes itself on others and creates the concept of the other in our midst, like the otherness experienced by AAPI people at this time.

Peter Reimer, Gretna, Man.

Prayer for Yemeni children

The United Nations has warned that 400,000 Yemeni children will starve this year if Saudi Arabia's military intervention in Yemen doesn't end. For six years, vicious bombing campaigns — combined with air, land and sea blockades — have contributed to mass starvation of Yemeni civilians. President Joe Biden should do all in his power to have these blockades lifted.

May peace come to that country and guns fall silent. May invading entities withdraw. May the Christians in the U.S. and around the world unite their voices in prayer to God that peace, justice and prosperity may come to Yemen. Let the United Nations and other relief agencies go in and relieve the suffering and hunger of these precious children. Lord, hear our prayer!

Evan Riehl, Lititz, Pa.

The hurt goes on

As a marital and family therapist for 40 years, I am saddened that issues about LGBTQ people are divisive and even need to be discussed, voted on. Yet that is where we are. I have heard scriptural arguments to support or condemn such individuals, and I will not attempt such. I suggest looking at LGBTQ people from a humanitarian viewpoint. Every individual has the fundamental need for love and acceptance. Without those needs being met, children grow up with emotional scars.

Yet, as adults, we create circumstances in which alienation, isolation, exclusion and, at worst, shunning occur. Those behaviors cause hurt, rejection, loss, aloneness. Wouldn't it be great if we could view one another as individuals who hurt at times, who need love, acceptance, belonging? To view people as people, unconditionally, not "I'll love you when . . ." or "I'll accept you if . . ." or "You're OK, but . . ."

I remember a time in the Mennonite church I attended when short hair for women, wedding rings, musical instruments in church, organized sports and television were forbidden. Some offenses required public shaming and confession if you wanted to remain a member. Are we doing the same to LGBTQ people? Yes, we are. How sad.

Lowell Nofziger, Wadsworth, Ohio

Acceptable communion?

Thank you for your informative website. I sometimes consider becoming a member of a Mennonite church. My daughter and I often read a Bible chapter at home and then have an elaborate time of communion. Is this allowed with Mennonites, or are they typically asked to only receive communion as part of their united church gatherings (twice a year)?

Clay Boyd III, Johnson City, Tenn.

Join the conversation by writing to editor@anabaptistworld.org or Anabaptist World, Box 568, Newton, KS 67114. Letters are edited; 250 words or fewer are preferred. Include your name and hometown.

Counting the cost of revenge

Many bear the scars of two decades of war in Afghanistan

TWENTY YEARS is long enough. Too long, in fact. Finally, this year, the United States' longest war will end.

President Biden's announcement that the remaining 3,500 U.S. troops will leave Afghanistan by Sept. 11 fulfills a campaign promise to "end forever wars . . . which have cost us untold blood and treasure."

Untold in the sense that a war's human toll defies reduction to statistics. Yet some of the price is known: more than 2,300 U.S. military personnel dead and \$2 trillion spent, and an Afghan death toll of more than 100,000.

Recognition of futility was evident in the Biden administration's statement that the withdrawal was not contingent upon any further conditions because that would be "a recipe for staying in Afghanistan forever."

In other words, after two decades, investing more time, spending more money and losing more lives in Afghanistan couldn't be expected to produce a better result than getting out now.

The instinct to avenge rallied a nation. Nonviolent followers of Jesus felt this emotion too.

The official withdrawal date will mark the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attacks that provoked the war. As the years dragged on, it was a war widely recognized as unwinnable, with success impossible to achieve, or even to define.

But in the beginning, the cathartic purpose was clear: striking back.

In the rush of adrenaline after the tragedy of 9/11, taking an eye for an eye felt righteous. The instinct to avenge rallied a nation.

Nonviolent followers of Jesus felt this emotion too. But we also remembered the words of Jesus, who said that if his kingdom were of this world, then his servants would fight (John 18:36).

Seeking to follow his example, we said this was not our war. Rather, we mourned the choices made by the leaders of the kingdoms of this world. Some of us made our voices heard in protest and lament, opposing the war in Afghanistan and then the war in Iraq and other flash points of the global war on terrorism.

AS AMERICANS REFLECT on two decades of war, Anabaptists remember two of our own who went to Afghanistan on missions of peace and humanitarian service and paid with their lives.

On Aug. 5, 2010, Glen D. Lapp, 40, of Lancaster, Pa., a volunteer with Mennonite Central Committee, was shot and killed along with nine other aid workers while on an eye-care mission in a remote part of northeastern Afghanistan. The Taliban claimed responsibility.

On July 23, 2012, Al Geiser, 65, of Kidron, Ohio, who had served with Mennonite Mission Network in Afghanistan for nine years and was continuing to work independently there, was shot and killed. A builder of water turbines that brought electricity to rural villages, Geiser had returned to Afghanistan after surviving a 2008 kidnapping in which he was held by militants for 56 days. He was buried in a Christian cemetery in Afghanistan.

Their examples of courage, compassion, hope and faith live on to inspire others.

For most Americans, the war cost nothing in blood, although our tax dollars contributed to the treasure spent.

For many others — the families of



Glen D. Lapp, left, and Al Geiser: peacemakers in Afghanistan.

Glen Lapp and Al Geiser and the U.S. military war dead and the many thousands of Afghan fighters and civilians lost — the cost cannot be measured.

VETERANS BEAR DISTINCT scars and may feel a profound breach between those who have gone to war and those who have not.

Timothy Kudo, a former Marine captain who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, voiced a veteran's conflicting emotions on April 14 in *The New York Times*. He wrote of observing carefree passersby on the sidewalks of Brooklyn: "Part of me envied their innocence; another part was ashamed of them, and of me for wanting to be like them, and of the distance between us."

Closure may be as elusive for military strategists as for veterans. The war on terrorism will continue, with drones and bombers poised to strike. U.S. officials expect to deploy troops in neighboring countries. A potent force will carry on, even without U.S. troops within Afghanistan's borders. With the ability to fight from afar, the "forever war" and its consequences will remain with us.

Afghanistan's reputation as a graveyard of empires (British and Soviet, previously) has claimed another casualty. Do warring nations ever learn from their mistakes? We pray for lessons learned, for an end to shedding blood for national pride, for healing and God's mercy. ●

BY **BERCY MUNDEDI**

FROM DESPAIR TO BLESSING DURING COVID-19



God reached out to Bercy Mundedi in her valley of tears. In turn, she reached out to others, risking long journeys by motorcycle to ease people's isolation and fear.

ALLOW ME TO share with you my journey from despair to a place where I could take new risks to share God's love.

I was abused and betrayed by my relatives when I was young. Several illnesses left me frail and vulnerable throughout much of my life. My involvement with the Congo Leadership Coaching Network set me on a new path of experiencing God's love.

In 2017, I became the director of Kalonda Bible Institute, the leadership-training school of the Mennonite Church of Congo.

Soon after I was named to this position, our region came under siege in the Kamuina Nsapu rebellion. I was targeted as a person belonging to the wrong tribe.

Then, more recently, the Bible insti-



Everywhere I went, people were astounded by my bravery and encouraged that someone came to visit them amid their distress.

tute was hit with a crisis. It involved a significant reduction to faculty and staff salaries and student scholarships.

If that wasn't enough stress, my husband is without employment, and the pandemic has crippled the Congolese economy.

I found myself in a dark place, a valley of tears. But, even there, God reached out to me.

Even when their paths wind through the dark valley of tears, they dig deep to find a pleasant pool where others find only pain. [God] gives to them a brook of blessing filled from the rain of an outpouring. — Psalm 84:6 (The Passion Translation)

By God's grace, I did not lose my faith. I still had a little strength, and this strength helped me to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd: "Even though you walk through the dark

valley of death, you needn't be afraid. I am close beside you, guarding, guiding all the way" (adapted from Psalm 23:4).

Scripture teaches us to share God's Word "whether the time is favorable or unfavorable" (2 Timothy 4:2). I could see that others around me were experiencing distress and poverty, like I was. But how could I reach them, given that the churches and all institutions were closed due to COVID-19 restrictions?

THE IDEA CAME TO ME to travel among the towns and villages and share how to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Central Committee offered financial assistance.

I started with the communities

Bercy Mundedi and her son, Serge, traveled by motorbike to encourage people isolated by COVID-19 restrictions.

PHOTO: MENNONITE MISSION NETWORK

closest to me, in the Tshikapa region. Eventually, with the help of my son, Serge, we rented motorbikes and ventured further out. Sometimes we were away from home for more than a week at a time.

These journeys across hundreds of kilometers were difficult. One of our biggest concerns was the insecurity caused by the risk of a roadside ambush by people desperate to feed their families.

As I completed awareness-building assignments in villages and towns, I gained courage. The little strength I had increased. A sense of peace replaced my concern about my own future. I found myself growing in love for the people I taught.

Everywhere I went, people were astounded by my bravery and encouraged that someone had come to visit them amid their distress. They said things like, "We can't believe you cared so much about our safety and well-being that you traveled so far." Or, "No church leaders have come to visit us in years. You have restored our faith that the church is still alive."

Though COVID-19 had not arrived in all the places we visited, our presence brought relief from another pandemic familiar to many people — isolation and fear. I discovered offering friendship in Jesus' name is a powerful force that contributes to everyone's growth and health. In my experience, being a channel of blessing to others is a form of evangelism. ●



Bercy Mundedi, director of Kalonda Bible Institute in the Democratic Republic of Congo, was one of the first three women ordained by the Mennonite Church of Congo. She and her husband, Calotin Ngungu, have seven children. This article was distributed by Mennonite Mission Network.



BY SIAKA TRAORÉ

In Burkina Faso, where Muslim-Christian relationships are often violent, neighbors make plans to share a community hearse.

Mennonites, Muslims come together to bury their dead

ON A SUNDAY in November after worship, Alice Tou, a member of one of our Mennonite churches in Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, asked to have a word with me. I could see she was worried. Large groups of Muslim neighbors kept arriving at her house, asking her to arrange a meeting with her pastor. They wouldn't say why they wanted to see me.

At this time in our West African

country, tensions are high between Christians and Muslims. More than 5% of our people have been displaced due to violence, and more than 2,000 were killed last year. However, trusting in God's protection, I agreed to a meeting.

Three community representatives arrived at the scheduled time. They were all Muslims. They told me they came with a request for collaboration that could unite our divided community. They said our community needed a hearse.

The request surprised me. Many Muslims believe their dead would be defiled by contact with non-Muslims.

Seeing my puzzlement, my guests filled me in on the history behind their request. They had been trying to acquire a hearse for 30 years. Every time someone died, they had to ask other communities for a hearse.

I bade them goodbye with no promises except to consider their request. I turned to church members for counsel. Together, we discerned that we wouldn't be compromising our



Left: A women's choir sings in the Orodara congregation of the Evangelical Mennonite Church of Burkina Faso. PHOTO: LYNDIA HOLLINGER-JANZEN/MMN

Right: The vehicle pictured here is similar to the hearse that Mennonites and Muslims in Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, intend to purchase for community use. PHOTO: MENNONITE MISSION NETWORK



We discerned that we wouldn't be compromising our faith in Jesus. Rather, it was an opportunity to show that Christians are people of compassion and peace.

faith in Jesus by collaborating with our Muslim neighbors in this way. Rather, it was an opportunity to show that Christians are people of compassion and peace.

The request for the hearse coincided with meetings of Peace Africa (a Mennonite-initiated, informal, international network of individuals and organizations, including Mennonite

Mission Network, working for harmonious Muslim-Christian relationships). Peace Africa members saw the request for a hearse as a way to move from online conversations to a tangible act of peacebuilding across an often-violent religious divide.

At the Burkina Faso Mennonite Church general assembly in January, the national committee agreed to pursue the request for a community hearse. Abdias Coulibaly, the denomination's national president, said that when his older brother died, Muslim neighbors helped to facilitate the burial. He affirmed cultivating these kinds of relationships. When we acquire a hearse, a local community will oversee its use.

I was tasked with the research of importing a used vehicle from Germany. The cost will be around \$8,000 U.S. Our Muslim-Christian community has committed to contributing a 10th

of the cost. We invite global partners to join us in building bridges among Christians and Muslims through our partner agency, Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission. You can donate on AIMM's website at aimmint.org, typing "Muslim-Christian Hearse Project" in PayPal's space for "special instructions to the seller," or by sending a check to AIMM, PO Box 744, Goshen, IN 46527, writing "Muslim-Christian Hearse Project" on the memo line. ●



Siaka Traoré is a Mennonite pastor in Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, and chair of the Mennonite World Conference Deacons Commission. This article was distributed by Mennonite Mission Network.



BY PATTON DODD

PRAYING WITH MENNONITES

Mennonites might welcome literal refugees, but what about a pathetic spiritual refugee like me?

PHOTO: DIANNE GARCIA/SAN ANTONIO MENNONITE CHURCH

TERRIBLE THINGS HAVE happened in the news lately, but these things happened too: A loving single father was reunited with his children after months of court-mandated separation. A family whose finances were ravaged by COVID-19-related bills was given more than enough money to get by. Three refugee parents, separated from their children and languishing in detention centers, were suddenly set free.

While I can't say for certain why these good things happened, or why it took so long for some of them to come to pass, what I do know is this: A dozen or so Mennonites in San Antonio, meeting for prayer at 6:30 a.m. on Zoom, prayed for each of these things, and they happened.

I know because I attend this prayer group most mornings. Often I'm half awake and struggling to focus. But fortunately, my fellow Mennonites are not — they're here to do business, with

each other and with God.

I'm not saying all their prayers are answered in the affirmative. I'm not even saying I know for sure that prayer works. I'm just giving you facts.

As one of the Mennonites recently put it in our group text-message thread: "What miracle should we pray for next?"

I keep making a point of saying "Mennonite" here because the word is strange and novel to me, especially when applied to me. I don't know if

I like to take it all in, a church nerd observing the crazy mixed-up family that is American Christianity. Of course, being super-interested in churches is also a neat way of not letting any particular church make claims on me.

I am a Mennonite yet or ever will be. But for the first time in many years, I am an intentional member of a church community, and it goes by the name of San Antonio Mennonite Church.

I'd been lingering on the perimeter of this community since the end of 2018, when I visited one Sunday morning out of a curiosity piqued by the local newspaper's occasional accounts of the church's work.

A community of just a few dozen, San Antonio Mennonite Church makes the news occasionally for its work with asylum-seeking refugees who filter through San Antonio. The church runs a hospitality house called *La Casa de Maria y Marta*, offering rest, help with medical care and legal aid, and whatever else families need after a horrendous journey through Central America and Mexico.

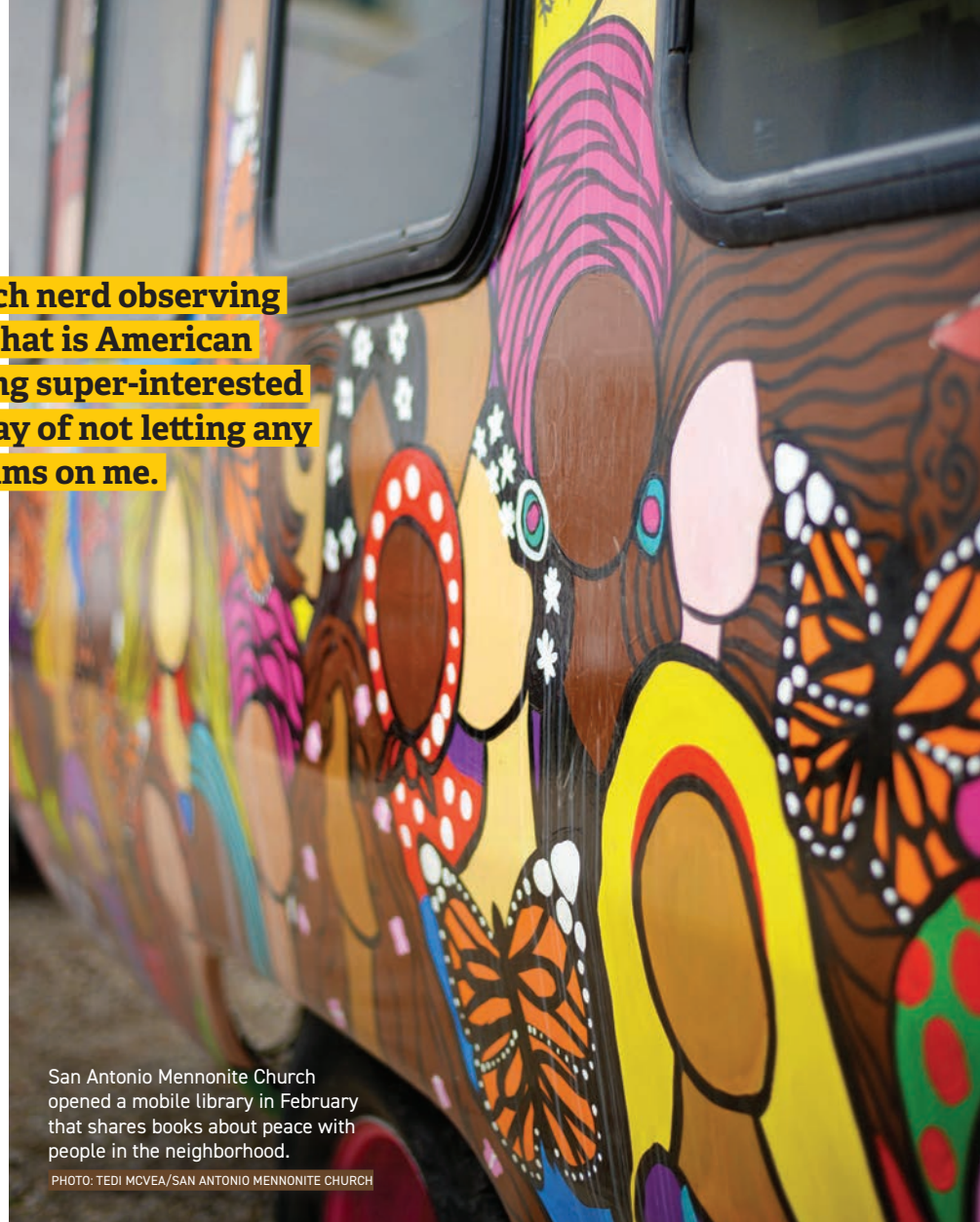
When I approached the church that first Sunday, I wasn't sure they'd let me stay for the service. Mennonites might welcome literal refugees, but what about pathetic spiritual refugees like me?

LONG FASCINATED BY churches, I'm an inveterate visitor. I've haunted the back row of most every type of congregation in this town, from John Hagee's televangelized churchopolis to hipster evangelical startups to Spanish-only *barrio* Bible churches to every main-line hanger-on in between.

I like to take it all in, a church nerd on a lifelong project of observing the crazy mixed-up family that is American Christianity.

Of course, being super-interested in churches, plural, is also a neat way of not letting any particular church make claims on me.

On that first Sunday at the Mennonite church, as I listened to the pastor and members talk about what



San Antonio Mennonite Church opened a mobile library in February that shares books about peace with people in the neighborhood.

PHOTO: TEDI MOVEA/SAN ANTONIO MENNONITE CHURCH

had transpired that week, and as I sang along awkwardly to their justice-forward hymnody ("Who do we see among the poor? The children of God"), I felt, in a still, small way, the imposition of a claim.

I came back the next week and the week after. I made a coffee date with the pastor and told him I wasn't a churchgoer so much as a church visitor. I said I lived 20 miles away in the suburbs and couldn't ever really commit to anything. He shrugged and asked about my family.

Over the next year-plus, I sidled along San Antonio Mennonite Church — contributing time and money where I could and talking up the congregation's asylum work to friends and colleagues.

If you were a disaffected, confused or unchurched Christian in San Antonio, and I got into a conversation with you,

I'd encourage you to consider San Antonio Mennonite Church as a destination — if not for you, then at least for your money or volunteer time.

No matter how bitter a taste your last church had left in your mouth, I knew you were probably aligned, at least in spirit and in principle, with who and what San Antonio Mennonite Church was trying to be. I enjoy helping my fellow wayfarers find alignment.

FOR SOME OF THE congregants, the Mennonite tradition was a lifelong identification, one stretching back through ancestors. For others, the Mennonite tradition, at least as expressed in this church, was a clarification and reframing of the faith — genuinely and literally welcoming of all, attendant to the way of Jesus and comfortably messy, always trying to



The prayer labyrinth in the courtyard of San Antonio Mennonite Church, installed by a group of volunteers in 2019, provides a space for quiet contemplation in the midst of the bustling city.

PHOTO: DIANNE GARCIA

catch up with its own eager pursuit of peace and justice.

Starting last spring, the coronavirus pandemic made the church more available to a geographic outsider like me. Church services went to Facebook Live, and small groups went to Zoom. All of this virtual gathering may be less than ideal, and I'll welcome its conclusion, but it has made the borders of churches like this one more permeable.

Still, until recently, I was mostly reluctant to call myself a part of the Mennonite community. If asked "Where do you go to church?" I'd continue to answer as I long had: "Mostly nowhere, but kind of everywhere."

In fact, the more I participated in San Antonio Mennonite Church, the more I volunteered and worshiped and learned, the more I esteemed the ministry — and the less I wanted to taint it with my membership.

I still don't, really, but at some point last year I decided to take a leap of faith: I signed the church's membership covenant.

"What does that mean?" a friend asked.

"I think it means I have to say 'yes' when they ask me to do things," I said.

IT ALSO MEANS whenever I can, I join the morning prayer group. Often, my 17-year-old daughter, Bel, joins with me. When we click on the Zoom link, we see the shared screen of Pastor John Garland. He's showing us the Psalm we'll pray that morning.

I've heard Christians say they turn to Psalms most among all books of the Bible. But I've turned to them least. As prayers, they ask me to feel things about God I don't tend to feel and to proclaim things against enemies I don't have. Even when I do have enemies, I'm not prone to smite them (Psalm 3), much less crush their infants' heads (Psalm 137).

But in the company of these Mennonites, I'm no longer struggling to understand the Psalms through the prism of my own life. I hear and pray them through the stories of the prayer requests we're making each morning.

Parents and children journeying in hope of justice as they cross our southern border.

Teachers and students struggling against a faulty administrative state.

People in neighborhoods designed to perpetuate racial disparity.

Those beset with broken brain chemistry, or broken bodies, or broken families.

Those of us who just need reliable cars, help with medical bills, hope for the pressures of the day.

We pray these requests in Psalms and then in our own words.

Sometimes we pray for the same things for weeks on end, and it feels like our prayers are a never-ending circle. Other times, it turns out the circle was an upward spiral, and our prayers are answered with a "yes." ●



Patton Dodd is executive director of storytelling and communications at the H.E. Butt Foundation. This article was distributed by Religion News Service.



**MENNONITE
WOMEN USA**

she/her/they US - Each one of us is a unique individual with their own identities, dreams, and gifts. Together we're US - a space for healing, a place to be challenged, a force for change. Join US and be part of our Sisterhood.

Mennonite Women USA entered 2021 a transformed organization with a vision for the future. We have created a new Leadership Circle, consisting of our staff - including our new Regional Representatives - and three Trustees. Praise God for all the wonderful women who have decided to join our team. Thanks to JustPax for providing resources for training and our formation.

US
she/her/they

Meet our Regional Representatives:

Clockwise from top right: Cyneatha Millsaps, Executive Director & Midwest Representative; Erica Lea-Simka, Southwest Representative; Suzanne Lay, East Coast Representative; Nelly Ascencio, Northwest Representative



We asked our Regional Representatives what drew them to join the team at MW USA. Here is what they had to say:

Cyneatha was drawn to MW USA because of its history and the power it exemplified of women making a way out of no way.

Erica is excited to serve MW USA because she believes a community of empowered women is unstoppable in our collective quest for peacebuilding and equity. Lord, send a revival and let it begin with women!

We want to connect with you!

Are you coming to **#MennoCon21**? We're hosting a reception and we'd love to see you there! We've graduated from sewing circles to dancing circles, so be sure to bring your dancing shoes! Check the schedule in the convention program book for more information.

Follow us on Social Media:



@mennowomenusa



facebook.com/mwusa

Suzanne is here for the chance to work with the women who have brought MW USA to this point; to help vision and cross boundaries of geography, denominations and otherwise for bringing more women together; and to improve all of her communities by growing herself. She feels it's an incredible opportunity to walk with women, learn from them, and facilitate their learning from each other.

'Maybe I could sit in the back row'

Stories of fear, rejection underlie MB letter calling for conversation on LGBTQ inclusion

At the request of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, John Unger, a former MB pastor from Winnipeg, Man., met with conference leaders and members of the National Faith and Life Team on April 1 to discuss an open letter — released on March 27 by Unger on behalf of a group of Canadian MB pastors and others — calling for conversation about LGBTQ inclusion (AW, April 16).

Unger provided a copy of his remarks, presented here in condensed and slightly edited form.

In response, CCMBC officials said: "We do not at this time have an official comment, time frame or description for family meeting(s) on this topic. However, the NFLT is working on this, and when we have more information, we will follow up with churches."

EVER SINCE THE 2013 and 2015 CCMBC conversations on sexuality, including gay marriage, pastors and others in the MB conference have been coming to me to talk. I finally wrote several of them an email. Do you want to talk together? They all said yes.

Out of that first call has come a fluid conversation group. We have no regular schedule. I am not always part of it. There is no designated leader. It is not a lobby group. It is a conversation. We make space, and people can join as they wish.

Ever since then, people have come to us — my wife, Merrill, and me — with their stories. Individuals, couples, parents, grandparents, pastors, all asking the same question: "What should we do?" about an LGBTQ child, sibling or relative.

Many came to us in secret for fear of what will happen if people in their church discover their child is gay — because they know they will lose all their church friends if they do.

This includes grandmothers who do not feel safe going to their pastors to talk about their gay grandchildren.

A gay woman came to me and asked

if, based on what she knows about MBs, if she would be allowed to attend her father's funeral in an MB church. Maybe she could be allowed to sit in the back row?

Another woman is careful to come late to her MB church and slip into the balcony, quickly leaving before the service ends. She is not ashamed of being gay. But she is afraid of the rejection she has experienced from her church family.

Two men had coffee with an MB pastor after visiting his church for several weeks. "We'd like to come to your church," they said, noting they were gay and living together. "We are

A woman who comes to church late, slips into the balcony and leaves early is not ashamed of being gay. But she is afraid of the rejection she has experienced from her church family.

not crusaders. We don't want to cause problems. We just want to worship with the music and listen to the sermon. Is your church safe for us?"

Another MB pastor told me about spending some time with a women's group at an MB church. "I've come prepared with a speech," he said, "but is there anything else you would rather talk about?"

One elderly woman raised her hand. "I want to talk about my gay grandson," she said. She had never spoken about it to anyone in the church before. Before long, four other women in the group of 25 said they, too, had a gay child or grandchild but were too afraid to mention it in church.

The stories go on and on. These are your churches. These are our churches.

WHEN I HEAR THESE stories, I ask: Why are people afraid to come to us and tell us what they are struggling with?

The members of the small group I am part of have wrestled with stories like these. That's why they have come together to talk. It's a safe space where they can ask questions and find support. There is no other place in our conference to go.

And that's why we created the "Open Letter to MB Leaders," asking for a church family conversation, a safe place to have this discussion.

My prayer was: If this is chaff, let it be scattered to the wind. If this is seed, let it find root.

Over 450 people (now 500) from over 40 churches have said, "Yes, we need to talk, and we would like our conference leaders to guide us."

We are asking you to help us create safe spaces to listen to the experiences of people in our churches.

Help us think about how we can live out the good news of Jesus to our LGBTQ brothers and sisters and to those who do not yet follow Christ.

WHAT ARE WE HOPING for? We don't believe the current isolated conversations across Canada are healthy for our church family. But they are happening, and they will continue to grow. We think leaders can get ahead of this conversation by creating spaces for people to talk.

Our question is not "what would you have us believe?" but "what would you have us do?" In light of all the hurt that has been caused, how can we do better?

Will you lead us in a family conversation in which grandmothers, parents, sons and daughters, friends and neighbors can share their stories and listen to one another? Will you help us imagine how we can do better?

There is a hunger for such a conversation. It will take time, maybe years. But we need to start. ●

To sing, or not to sing?

TO SING, OR NOT TO SING, could be the question. To hum, or not to hum, could be another.

Last May, we at MennoMedia shared guidance from the Center for Congregational Song encouraging people to refrain from singing in person altogether due to the high risk for transmitting COVID-19 from singing.

With vaccination increasing, is it time to change our tune and encourage singing again? Or to stay the course?

Doctors and public health professionals have learned a lot about how the coronavirus is transmitted, what kinds of protections help stop the spread and how to reduce the risks

“Some of our worst anecdotal outbreaks have been related to choirs or church gatherings, so we know that this is a really high-risk situation for congregations and individuals attending those congregations,” said Dan Nafziger, an infectious disease specialist in Goshen, Ind.

Practical considerations

Consider the following mitigation factors when making your congregational plan. Mark Shelly, an infectious disease specialist in Danville, Pa., encourages congregations to build these layers upon one another to help reduce the spread of the disease.

TIME: How long is the group together? How long are they singing? Shorter is better than longer. If getting together inside is important, what parts of church life should be done inside, and for how long?

Shelly and Nafziger want congregations to think strategically about the value of something happening in person or indoors. Then move other parts of church life to Zoom or outdoors. This will minimize the amount of time spent together.

SPACE: Once you are a solid 6 feet apart outdoors, you can do just about anything you want, Shelly said. But any time you are less than 6 feet apart, and certainly within 3 feet, it's less clear that being outdoors matters.

“If you're going to sing, you probably should be masked,” Nafziger said.



Russell Adrian directs Hesston College's Bel Canto Singers on April 21 at Hesston Mennonite Church, singing for the Hesston Chamber of Commerce. PHOTO: LARRY BARTEL/HESSTON COLLEGE

“If we're willing to be 10 to 12 feet apart, then you might not need masks outdoors. If you are talking about 3 feet, people should have their masks on, even outside. It also depends on the disease activity locally.”

VENTILATION: If your group can be outdoors, that's better. Data on transmission show it's about 20 times safer to be outside. When inside, keep sanctuary windows open, if possible.

VOLUME: Volume matters. “If you have a vigorous singer behind a mask, that's the same level [of transmission] as someone speaking normally without a mask,” Shelly noted. Singing quietly is safer, so humming is safer too.

EACH CHURCH IS UNIQUE and needs to make decisions based on all these factors. Look too at the level of community spread and your local health department guidance, says Paul Shetler Fast, global health coordinator with Mennonite Central Committee. Local risks vary and can change quickly, so local public health guidance should be a minimum standard as you decide what is best.

If a congregation is seated indoors in “family groups” 6 feet apart, is it OK to sing? Nafziger does not advise doing so

right now — even with masks — based on current disease spread and low vaccination rates.

What about singing a couple of songs at the end of the service, with congregants wearing masks, so that people who would prefer not to be present for singing can leave without missing out on anything else? “This is better than singing throughout, but after the two songs everyone should get up and leave,” Nafziger said.

Fast added: “An even safer alternative would be to save congregational singing for outdoor hymn sings. For those doing indoor services, consider instrumental music (or mic'd performers) instead of congregational singing while risk in the community remains elevated.”

Ethical considerations

Don't go to church if you aren't feeling well or if anyone in your household isn't feeling well.

“We need to help people not feel guilty about missing church,” Shelly said. “This is a good time for you to be electronically connected.”

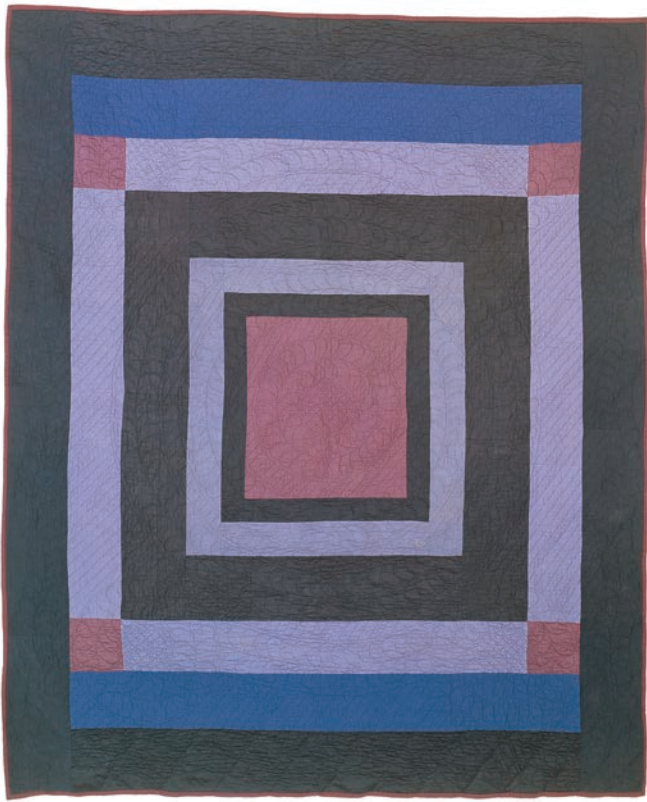
With millions of people now having received a COVID vaccine, some churches are wondering if it's OK to gather vaccinated groups together in the building. None of the experts was keen on separating the vaccinated from the unvaccinated. This could create pain and bitterness.

However, if a pastor knows 50% of the congregation is vaccinated, that can help a church set guidelines for what can be done together in person.

So, should you sing or hum or something in between? There are no one-size-fits-all answers. Politely bow out if you aren't comfortable with the guidelines in your church. Respect your church's restrictions even if you wish there weren't any.

These are hard decisions, so show kindness and compassion to those making decisions for your church. ●

Amy Gingerich is publisher and executive director of MennoMedia.



1



2

American masterworks

Smithsonian Art Museum acquires finest Amish quilt collection, a ‘national treasure’

THE SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN Art Museum in Washington, D.C., has received a gift of masterpiece Amish quilts, the largest and most significant collection of its kind to enter a major art museum’s permanent collection.

Made between the 1880s and 1940s, the quilts embody the design innovation and stitching skills of Amish women from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Ohio, Pennsylvania and other states.

Collectors Faith and Stephen Brown of Tiburon, Calif., in the San Francisco Bay area, have donated about 40 quilts and will eventually give their entire collection of 130.

The first 40 will be part of an exhibition, scheduled for 2024, highlighting ways Amish quilters across the United States negotiated tradition and innovation.

“The Browns’ Amish quilt collection is a national treasure, a collection of rare and exceptional textiles carefully compiled over 40 years,” said Kevin Gover, under secretary for museums and culture at the Smithsonian.

The Browns were inspired to collect Amish quilts after seeing an exhibition in 1973 at the Smithsonian American Art Museum’s Renwick Gallery. Since then, the couple has amassed one of the nation’s premier collections of Amish quilts.

“The Smithsonian American Art Museum has long championed an expansive view of what constitutes art worthy of being collected and preserved as part of our national collections,” said Stephanie Stebich, the Margaret and Terry Stent director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

“We found similar visionaries in collectors Faith and Stephen Brown, who recognized the exceptional contributions to American visual culture that Amish quilters have made.”

The Browns said: “We were fascinated that Amish women, with no artistic training or exposure, composed masterpieces, which improbably anticipated modern abstract art. We hope that others will find the same joy of discovery we felt when we first viewed these beautiful and moving creations.”

BEFORE THE LATE 1960s, Amish quilts were little known beyond their communities. The “Sunday-best” quilts, such as the examples the Browns collected, were usually made as wedding gifts rather than as items for daily use. They covered beds on days when the



3

1. Center Square, 1930, 70 x 57 inches, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Faith and Stephen Brown.

2. Sunshine and Shadow, 1930, 89 x 86 inches, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Faith and Stephen Brown.

3. Tumbling Blocks, 1930, 88 ½ x 74 ½ inches, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Faith and Stephen Brown.

4. Ocean Waves-Holmes, 1920, 69 x 61 inches, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Faith and Stephen Brown.

IMAGES COURTESY OF FAITH AND STEPHEN BROWN



4

American Art Museum. “The Browns’ collection stands apart from other compilations of Amish quilts, with multiple examples from individual Amish communities across the U.S., rather than having focused on a single region or group.

lish an endowment for the care of the collection.

Quilts are regularly on view in the museum’s permanent collection galleries in Washington. Temporary special exhibitions have included “Quilts of the Indiana Amish” (1987), “Calico

“Amish women, with no artistic training or exposure, composed masterpieces, which improbably anticipated modern abstract art.” — Faith and Stephen Brown

family hosted worship meetings in their home.

Once discovered by art collectors, the quilts — featuring bold colors and abstract patterns — were lauded for their visual power and striking congruence with the visual culture of modern art.

“Faith and Stephen Brown brought a keen eye to their collecting efforts, selecting examples that are among the finest hand-quilted works ever made,” said Leslie Umberger, curator of folk and self-taught art at the Smithsonian

“This remarkable array of quilts illuminates the work of women who never sought attention for their creativity but were driven to embody traditional and spiritual values in handmade objects and to unite beauty and utility within the domestic realm.

“The women in each community pushed the limits of tradition, with pattern and color variations that came to be seen as signature styles for their settlements — united but distinct.”

In addition to the artworks, the Browns’ gift includes funds to estab-

and Chintz: Early American Quilts from the Smithsonian American Art Museum” (1996 and on tour 2003-04), “Spirits of the Cloth: Contemporary Quilts by African American Artists” (2000) and an exhibition of quilts from frontier states made in the early 20th century, “Going West: Quilts and Community” (2008). “Amish Quilts from the Collection of Faith and Stephen Brown,” organized by the University of Michigan Museum of Art, was presented at the museum’s Renwick Gallery in 2000. ●

Scholar's article on WWII Korean 'comfort women' prompts backlash

Mennonite Church South Korea asks Harvard professor and church to enter dialogue



Members of Voluntary Agency Network of Korea, an online organization of young people who share about their nation with people in other countries, hold a demonstration criticizing Harvard University professor J. Mark Ramseyer on March 15 at the Statue of Peace in Seoul, South Korea. Similar statues of "comfort women" exist around the world. PHOTO: VOLUNTARY AGENCY NETWORK OF KOREA

MENNONITE CHURCH SOUTH KOREA has joined a chorus of criticism and has requested dialogue after a Mennonite scholar at Harvard University suggested Korean "comfort women" forced into sex slavery for the Japanese military during World War II did so willingly.

In "Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War," published in December in the *International Review of Law and Economics*, J. Mark Ramseyer argues political disputes between South Korea and Japan have obscured the consensual "contractual dynamics" involved in wartime brothels.

Ramseyer also wrote in a Jan. 12 ed-

itorial in the conservative-nationalist *Japan Forward* that Korean "comfort women" chose prostitution and that claims of coercion are "pure fiction."

Mennonite Church South Korea, or MCSK, responded with a statement citing a letter of concern signed by more than 3,600 researchers and activists around the world.

Amnesty International's research with "comfort women" survivors has reported up to 200,000 women and girls were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military before and during World War II. They came not only from Korea, a colony of Imperial Japan at the time, but also from China,

Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Netherlands, East Timor, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand and Myanmar.

Writing on behalf of MCSK in an April 6 statement, general secretary Yongha Bae said Korean Mennonites disregarded Ramseyer initially but "became deeply troubled when we learned that the author of this ill-informed and ill-intentioned paper is a fellow member of the Mennonite church, and the son of prominent Mennonite witnesses."

The statement said Korean Mennonites "are experiencing feelings of serious pain, outrage and confusion

over what an American Mennonite brother has done.”

Ramseyer is Mitsubishi professor of Japanese legal studies at Harvard. He is the son of Robert and Alice Ruth Ramseyer, who worked as missionaries from 1954 to 1972 in Japan with the General Conference Mennonite Church and returned in 1978 and 1987. Robert Ramseyer later worked for a decade at what was then Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., and founded the Overseas Mission Training Center there.

South Korean Mennonite peace work includes connections with Japan and China. Since the Ramseys helped to lay the foundation for the Mennonite church in Japan, their son’s article has elicited a strong response in South Korea, where coverage of the article was featured on television and made front-page news.

MENNONITE CHURCH SOUTH KOREA distributed its statement to the Mennonite Congregation of Boston, which Ramseyer has attended; Mennonite World Conference; Mennonite Church USA; Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada. It invites Ramseyer, the congregation and related parties to a dialogue “about his understanding” of the history of the Japanese Empire and its colonialism.

“We have learned that his understanding of Japanese colonial history seems to be very different from the views shared by the rest of Asia,” stated MCSK. “. . . We conjecture that his experience growing up in Japan helped shape his views on history, and the fact that he grew up in a Mennonite home makes us question the possible role Mennonites may have played in that experience.”

Ramseyer responded on April 7 to *Anabaptist World’s* request for comment about the statement.

“My article has obviously generated controversy, and an enormous number of attacks — most of which seem to be politically motivated,” he wrote by email. “The many attacks are false, and I will be posting a long discussion explaining how and why they are false in due course.

“My article is a historical article, in a

specialty journal, about what happened on the Korean peninsula in the 1930s. My article is controversial. I understand that some members of the church do not like the conclusion that I reach.

“For the Mennonite Church at large, the question is this: Does it want to start trying to influence the conclusions professors reach in their scholarship? For those of us who teach at universities, the question is this: Do we really want to have anything to do with a church that claimed the right to try to influence the conclusions we can reach in our scholarship?”

The council of Mennonite Congregation of Boston informed MCSK on April 13 it had only recently become aware of Ramseyer’s article and was gathering information.

“We have learned that his understanding of Japanese colonial history seems to be very different from the views shared by the rest of Asia.”

**— Yongha Bae,
Mennonite Church South Korea**

MWC GENERAL SECRETARY César García affirmed MCSK’s call for discussion regarding the painful legacy of Japanese-Korean relations.

“We unequivocally oppose all publications or speech that is intended to create enmity and division,” García wrote April 9. “We also call on all individuals and churches who are part of the MWC family to repentance for the sins of nationalism, tribalism and racism deeply embedded in our attitudes and actions.

“I profoundly regret the pain this has caused the people of Korea and the negative perceptions that Prof. Ramseyer’s publications might foster about Mennonites. His work does not represent Mennonite World Conference’s views or the theological convictions of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition.”

Mennonite Church USA has no

plans for a public statement, other than expressing support for both MCSK and the Boston congregation.

The Korean Association of Harvard Law School criticized Ramseyer for a lack of sufficient evidence showing the women were willing and able to negotiate wages. The association pointed to an almost total absence of Korean perspectives or scholarship in his research and claimed he also overlooked scholarship by the United Nations and Amnesty International. His article goes into great detail about Japanese prostitutes’ contracts, but Harvard Law School professor Jeannie Suk Gersen wrote in *The New Yorker* that he cited no hard copies of similar Korean contracts and told her, “I don’t have any Korean contracts.”

“He also makes multiple assertions that the comfort women story is ‘pure fiction,’ a revisionist claim that is recycled time and time again by neo-nationalist figures,” stated the Korean Association of Harvard Law School. “. . . Decades’ worth of Korean scholarship, primary sources and third-party reports challenge this characterization. None are mentioned, cited or considered in his arguments.”

Another critic of Ramseyer is Seong-Han Kim, a peace educator for Mennonite Central Committee Northeast Asia based in Chuncheon, South Korea, who attends Jesus Heart Mennonite Church. In an open letter to Ramseyer, Kim said he felt hurt to read Ramseyer’s claim that comfort women volunteered and that stories about sex slaves are fiction. He cited the experience of his aunt, who was forced to marry at age 16 to avoid national mobilization for labor and suffered for it.

“The article is hurting people committed to making peace and reconciliation in Northeast Asia,” Kim wrote. “I want to invite Ramseyer to join a pilgrimage with other Christian sisters and brothers in Northeast Asia. We may learn from each other. When we walk together into the most difficult place, we will see differently and hear differently.” ●

Links to J. Mark Ramseyer’s article and Mennonite Church South Korea’s statement are at anabaptistworld.org.

Board proposes guidelines' repeal, announces special delegate session

A SPECIAL SESSION for Mennonite Church USA delegates on May 27-30, 2022, in Kansas City, Mo., will feature a long-awaited proposal to repeal the denomination's disputed Membership Guidelines.

The Executive Board set the dates and location of the special session during an April 16-17 videoconference.

Board members voted unanimously to send their own resolution, which would "retire" the Membership Guidelines, to the special session.

Another resolution on the guidelines, written by Inclusive Pastors, a group practicing full inclusion of LGBTQ people in their congregations, remains under consideration. Titled "A Resolution for Repentance and Transformation," it calls for "rescinding" the

guidelines and proposes other actions such as creating an LGBTQ constituency group with representation on the Constituency Leaders Council.

The Resolutions Committee will determine whether the "repentance and transformation" resolution will go to the delegates. It will consider input from the CLC, whose members expressed varying opinions when they met in March.

Written 20 years ago, the Membership Guidelines prohibit pastors from performing same-sex covenant ceremonies. But area conferences do not consistently enforce the rule, and the Executive Board does not have the authority to enforce it.

A decision on the guidelines had been planned for the July 6-10 con-

vention in Cincinnati. But the board postponed it after reducing the delegate assembly to a partial-day virtual meeting on July 10 due to COVID-19.

In a closed session, the Executive Board gave feedback to the Resolutions Committee on the "repentance and transformation" resolution and two others — one that asks congregations to increase accessibility for people with disabilities and another on "Justice in the U.S. Criminal Legal System."

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Glen Guyton said he anticipated a significant financial loss on MennoCon 21 in Cincinnati but that the denomination would be able to draw from its reserves.

Scott Hartman, director of event planning, said Ohio had lifted its capacity limits for gatherings but was still observing CDC guidelines on social distancing and mask wearing. Recognizing that some people may not feel comfortable attending in person, Hartman said he was able to minimize the denomination's financial exposure by negotiating reduced attrition rates at the convention center and both hotels from 70% to 50% and by lowering contracted food and beverage minimum requirements by 50%.

Guyton said MC USA is in "a better cash position than we have been in a number of years." He attributed this, in part, to savings of \$150,000 from reduced travel during the pandemic and Everence providing its annual contribution at the beginning of the fiscal year.

The board approved a \$1.4 million budget, with a projected deficit of \$194,125, for the 2021-22 fiscal year.

A task group of the board reported on its review of Everence, the financial stewardship agency. Kenneth Hochstetler, president and CEO of Everence, highlighted the agency's strides in diversity and inclusion and its charitable focus, noting that it provides \$50 million to \$60 million in annual support to churches and nonprofits. ●

"We can't say enough thanks to everyone who has helped, who have taken the time to come here to help us. Our family lives far away, but through MDS we got a new family—God's family."

— SUE CARLSON

Whose house was rebuilt by MDS after a wildfire destroyed it near Williams Lake, B.C.

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MC USA leader given second term

THE MENNONITE CHURCH USA

Executive Board unanimously voted to reappoint Glen Guyton to another three-year term as executive director, effective April 1.

A denominational news release on April 21 said the reappointment “affirms Guyton’s successful leadership during a particularly challenging time for the church, as it addresses heightened cultural changes, social unrest and financial uncertainty in the United States.



Guyton

Challenges have been further complicated by the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic.”

Guyton’s first term began May 1, 2018. The Executive Board noted his optimism, nonanxious presence and communication skills, said moderator Joy Sutter.

Along with an improved financial outlook — a 57% revenue increase since 2019, translating to about \$61,000 in additional funds — the denomination cited the following highlights under Guyton’s leadership:

- A successful #BringThePeace campaign, inspiring congregations to engage their communities and practice mutual aid;
- Launch of a Justice Fund initiative to financially support congregations directly involved in social action;
- Significant progress toward consensus on moving beyond the Membership Guidelines and living into the Renewed Commitments;
- Expansion of MC USA’s leadership misconduct file-sharing policy; and
- Increased collaboration among MC USA and its five agencies.

During his first term, Guyton also authored a book titled, *Reawakened: How Your Congregation Can Spark Lasting Change*, recently published by MennoMedia.

Guyton’s top goals for his next term are:

- **Resource deployment:** Update nontraditional educational delivery

systems to equip leaders, as a complement to formal theological education. Part of this vision is to reach out beyond the Mennonite community to offer the value of Anabaptism more broadly.

- **Leadership development:** Provide a clearer roadmap of educational offerings, so people will be able to clearly see their options and map their leadership journey in MC USA.
- **Value proposition:** Clearly articulate the value of MC USA membership.

With the support of a Schowalter Foundation grant, MC USA will launch a study across the denomination to assess the value that conferences and congregations receive from being part of MC USA.

“I am excited about what can happen when the people of MC USA live out our Anabaptist witness,” Guyton said. “We have so much to offer the

world. I am thankful for my time with the denomination and I hope that during this next term our church can fully embrace our calling as an Anabaptist peace church. It is time for us to be transformed into the beautiful community of grace, joy and peace.”

Guyton’s first staff role with a Mennonite organization began in 1998, as an insurance counselor for Mennonite Mutual Aid (now Everence). He joined the MC USA staff in 2009 as director of intercultural relations. He held various roles, including chief operating officer and director of convention planning. He served on MC USA’s Executive Board from 2007 to 2009 and on the board of Eastern Mennonite University from 2003 to 2007. He holds a master’s degree in education from Regent University. He is a member of San Antonio Mennonite Church in Texas. ●



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Publications receive ACP awards

ANABAPTIST WORLD and its two predecessors won six awards at the Associated Church Press annual convention, held online April 7-9. The awards recognized work done in 2020.

AW received the first-place Award of Excellence for "Print Publication Redesign." Although *AW* is a new publication, it qualified for this category as a reimagined version of its predecessors, *The Mennonite* and *Mennonite World Review*. Hannah Gerig Meyer is *AW*'s designer.

AW also received an honorable mention in "Theme Issue, Section or Series: Magazine/Journal" for its Nov. 6 issue, "Political Faith, Faithful Politics."

MWR received the Award of Excellence in the overall Best-in-Class competition for national or international newspapers. The judge noted the historical research that was done



for the Aug. 24 issue, which concluded the publication's 98-year run.

MWR also was recognized with the second-place Award of Merit for "Letters to the Editor" in its March 9 issue and the Award of Merit in "Newspaper Front-Page Design" for its July



27 issue.

The Mennonite received an honorable mention in "Photo Spread: Magazine/Journal" for "Vernal Pools of Appalachia," with photography by Steven David Johnson and design by Hannah Gerig Meyer, in its May issue. ●



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A 'sacred opportunity' to ask, give

Culture of generosity impresses volunteer fundraisers for MCC's \$100 million campaign

DELIGHTED, A PRIVILEGE, a blessing, sacred. These aren't words typically associated with asking people for money. But this is how Dale and Kay Kempf describe their experience of encouraging donors to support Mennonite Central Committee's New Hope in the Name of Christ centennial campaign.

The Kempfs, of Libertyville, Ill., were part of a national network of 32 people who volunteered to help MCC raise funds toward its goal of \$100 million in cash, pledges, estate commitments and planned gifts in celebration of 100 years of ministry. They were co-chairs for the Great Lakes region.

"I didn't view it as us asking for money," Dale Kempf said. "Our role was much more sitting beside someone and sharing our enthusiasm for MCC."

Results of the campaign will be announced in July. "The preliminary results are looking very positive," said Phil Rush, director of MCC U.S. donor relations.

The Kempfs' invitation to join the campaign came as Dale was preparing to retire as a chemist who focused on treatments for diseases in developing countries, like river blindness.

"The opportunity seemed like a privilege," Kay Kempf said. "It was just the right thing that we knew we wanted to do."

The Kempfs' connection with MCC extends back to when Dale's parents met while serving with MCC in Akron, Pa., after World War II. Several other family members have served with MCC internationally.

While the Kempfs' life trajectories didn't take them on an MCC service term, they have supported MCC financially. They wanted to give generously at the end of their careers in recognition of what they would have sacrificed financially had they served with MCC.

Although they didn't have previous fundraising experience, they settled into the role comfortably. "It was all about making connections," Dale said.



Kay and Dale Kempf co-chaired MCC's New Hope campaign in the Great Lakes region. PHOTO: MCC

"It was a very delightful experience."

Typically, an MCC staff person would accompany the Kempfs to visit donors in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Wisconsin. Between February 2019

and February 2020, they met face-to-face with supporters.

As donors to the campaign themselves, the Kempfs invited people to join them in making large gifts.

"You start to imagine how your gift is going to be transformative in the lives of those affected. And it also starts to transform you," Kay said. "I found it very moving, the fact that giving, like God asks us to do . . . is really a sacred opportunity."

The Kempfs were impressed by the culture of generosity in the individuals and families they met. "Part of the joy of giving is being able to find organizations that you can really feel part of," Dale said. Kay added: "People have recognized that this is a time that MCC really needs us." ●

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Fast-growing South Texas church fills pastor's house

Congregation is reuniting after pandemic limited activities to texts, individual visits

NOT LONG AFTER NENA BENNETT began a prayer group on the lawn of her Brownsville, Texas, home in 2018, the prayer group became a church.

Not long after the church began meeting in her home, she moved almost all her possessions into storage to make room for the crowd of more than 70 adults and children who packed the house every Sunday.

Iglesia Menonita Nuevo Amanecer (New Dawn Mennonite Church) suspended worship and Bible study activities during the pandemic because of physical proximity's dangers and an inability to livestream worship online. But Bennett never stopped pastoring. Members never lost touch. And *Nuevo Amanecer* is experiencing its own new dawn as fellowship and worship activities begin returning.

Bennett, who grew up in the Brownsville Mennonite community, said adults and children began coming to gatherings in August 2018 in her yard, and the group moved indoors to



Nuevo Amanecer Pastor Nena Bennett, in doorway, leads a prayer April 19 in her home in Brownsville, Texas. The gathering was one of the church's first in more than a year. PHOTO: NENA BENNETT

sit on couches when winter arrived.

"More people were coming. I prayed about it, and I took all my furniture out except for my bed, fridge and stove," she said. "So we have three classrooms for children in the bedrooms, and then we have the living room. That's our chapel. . . . Because of the faith of the church, it's in a house, but I really feel like you're in a beautiful temple when we're all praising."

The congregation has a council, weekly prayer group, women's committee and both Wednesday night and Sunday morning services. With windows and doors open, the sound would carry, and neighbors would sit outside to listen.

"We use most of the parking spaces in the neighborhood, and my neighbors have been so nice about it," Bennett said. "The only thing that we feel right now is we are a little too crowded."

NUEVO AMANECEER is a part of Mennonite Church USA's South Central Mennonite Conference and also of the conference's South Texas cluster, *Unidad Cristiana de Iglesias Menonitas* (Christian Union of Mennonite Churches).

UCIM moderator Rod Schmucker said *Nuevo Amanecer* was likely the group's fastest growing congregation before the pandemic.

"There are folding chairs in her living room, her sanctuary. The dining room is the stage," he said. "People actually sit in her kitchen, which means they can't physically see the speaker. Then COVID came and they decided not to meet in person, but they also



Nuevo Amanecer began in Pastor Nena Bennett's yard and quickly moved into her home, where her bedrooms became children's Sunday school classrooms and attendees squeezed in on a weekly basis. PHOTO: NENA BENNETT

haven't met online.

"What she's doing we don't see very often, certainly not farther north, and she's doing it through sheer willpower."

TO KEEP THE BODY CONNECTED,

Bennett sent Scripture by text message to members' phones daily. She called people on a weekly basis. If a family was facing difficulties, she would send a message to the entire congregation.

"I'm not saying I kept it going. We were all in communication," she said. "I was born in Mexico. I only went to sixth grade. I have a hard head to learn with technology, and I did not have a computer.

"My children gave me one on Valentine's Day, and it was so hard to learn. I felt so bad I couldn't do my preaching through computer, but God showed me how to send pictures and Scripture and do that daily. If I don't do it one day, they will contact me and ask what's wrong."

The congregation has surprised Bennett with regular tithing throughout the pandemic.

"They come and bring their tithe even though we aren't having services.

"What she's doing we don't see very often, certainly not farther north, and she's doing it through sheer willpower." — Rod Schmucker

I'm amazed by that. God is working in us," she said. "Brothers and sisters bring me clothes, they bring me shoes, they give me food to give out. I've seen how the church kept on caring and sharing with each other."

As *Nuevo Amanecer* has responded to needs throughout the pandemic, friends and neighbors beyond the church have noticed, asking if they can join when the church is ready to resume in-person activities. Those opportunities are now returning.

Nuevo Amanecer gathers for worship in April 2019 in Brownsville, Texas. PHOTO: NENA BENNETT



Nuevo Amanecer holds a baptism service in 2019 in the Gulf of Mexico. PHOTO: NENA BENNETT

The prayer group reunited outdoors in Bennett's yard on April 5. She hopes Sunday worship can return in May, because she wants the neighbors to see the church is alive again and that its members are alive in Jesus.

"I'm starting to meet with the ladies in the morning once a week," Bennett said. "I'm trying to make sure and encourage everybody to get the [vaccination] shot. I think we're ready."

When the people come back, they

will also return to a conversation that was just getting started when the pandemic arrived. The house had already become too small, even before social distancing became a concern. Now those joyful discussions will resume.

"I'm excited and looking like never before for God's guidance," Bennett said. "Because this is an opportunity after what we lived through in the last year. This is a new opportunity for working through God's kingdom." ●



Ethiopia's rapidly growing church nurtures leaders with discipleship

Spiritual-formation methods, grassroots simplicity emerged during era of persecution

OVER ZOOM, Norm Dyck shared a photo of a church-planting chart from the Nazareth-Adama region of Ethiopia. At the top was the mother church established in 1948 with the help of Mennonite mission workers.

In the style of a genealogical tree, the chart showed 46 churches birthed from the mother church. What started as a small, missionary movement has grown exponentially.

"Each regional church has a map like this," said Dyck, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada mission minister, who also serves part-time for Mennonite Church Canada International Witness. "Even individual congregations have maps like this."

Today, Ethiopia's Meserete Kristos Church — the world's largest Anabaptist conference — has more than 647,000 members, 1,135 local churches and 1,112 church-planting centers, which are growing congregations supported by a mother church. Twenty-seven thousand people were baptized in 2019 alone.

For believers in North America, this growth is staggering. For the MKC, it is intimately tied to a history of persecution and the methods it took to survive.

Out of these practices developed a robust process for nurturing leaders, who were encouraged to plant churches in their neighborhoods and whose gifts were discerned by communities of believers.

Persecution happens to this day in some regions. But the darkest time was during the Derg government from 1974 to 1987, when the military overthrew the government and established communist rule.

"That's when discipleship really kicked into high gear," Dyck said.

MKC went underground, meeting



Fanosie Legesse, intercultural mission minister for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, points to "genealogical" information about the Nazret Regional Church, a part of Meserete Kristos Church, the Ethiopian Anabaptist conference. PHOTO: MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA

"There's a high level of accountability early on your faith journey. It becomes part of the fabric of everything you do."

— Norm Dyck

in secret in houses and fields. Women carried Bibles in the folds of their clothing because they were less likely to be searched. Once a group gathered more than 12 households it split up to avoid attention. During this time, the membership increased tenfold.

FANOSIE LEGESSE, intercultural mission minister for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, grew up in Ethiopia during the communist rule. Groomed

to be a communist leader as a teenager, he joined MKC when he was 17.

"As soon as I became a follower of Jesus Christ, it made sense to give everything up and follow him to wherever he led me," he said.

The rural Ethiopia of his youth was a place without electricity, roads or telephones. For Legesse, the gospel was "literally a light." He made a commitment to take that light to the surrounding villages. His story is a sample of what many women and men chose to do during the darkest time of persecution.

Legesse became a leader in his local church in Sire in the early 1990s and went on to study at Meserete Kristos College (MKC's seminary) in Debre Zeit-Bishoftu. He came to Canada in 2003 and returned to Ethiopia with his family as an MC Canada Witness

worker from 2007 to 2010. He pastored Zion Mennonite Fellowship in Elmira, Ont., from 2015 to 2019.

Dyck, who visited Ethiopia for the first time in 2015, was struck by the expectations MKC has for new believers. They are assigned a mentor and attend prayer meetings and Bible studies every week for at least two years. The connection with their church family is constant until they mature. It reminded him of the process of catechism in the early church.

"There's a high level of accountability early on in your faith journey," Dyck said. "It becomes part of the fabric of everything that you do."

Legesse highlighted the key components of MKC's leadership development: communal discernment of individuals' gifts, mentorship by mature believers, regular prayer meetings. But even the term "leadership development" seems like a Western complication of something that in Ethiopia was necessary for survival.

"It was simple, not complicated," he said. "It was a literal interpretation of the Bible until you hit the wall. Then you would say, 'I may have made a mistake,' or you pray or fast about it. You ask forgiveness and correct and continue."

For Jeanette Hanson, director of international witness for MC Canada, the simplicity of MKC leadership development is inspiring.

"It really comes from a very grassroots level of discipleship," she said.

MC CANADA has a sister-church relationship with MKC. Both churches commit to pray for each other, encourage and learn from each other and share resources in mission: prayer, personnel, teaching and finances.

Financial support from North America provides scholarships for students and short-term teachers at Meserete Kristos College. MKC leaders come to the seminary after they receive training from their local and regional churches, some of which have their own colleges. The local church pays for leaders to study at these colleges and supports the family of the leader while he or she is away studying.

What can North Americans learn

from MKC? For Dyck, it's a realization that the gospel is life-altering and transformative.

"That's the challenge I keep coming back to in my personal journey," he said. "I don't experience that power of transformation within my own faith journey."

He attributes that to the fact that in Canada there are systems in place that

attempt to alleviate the problems Ethiopians still face: poverty, inadequate health care, religious persecution. In Ethiopia, the church does these things.

Prison and peacebuilding ministries are examples, Dyck said, of MKC discipleship in the name of Christ. He believes people witness transformation when they encounter the global church. ●



Ninety-nine Meserete Kristos Church women leaders gathered March 27 for a conference on MKC's strategic direction. PHOTO: MESERETE KRISTOS CHURCH

Women leaders hold gospel conference

THE MESERETE KRISTOS CHURCH

Women Ministry Coordination Office organized a conference on the role of women in the gospel movement on March 27.

Ninety-nine women from the Addis Ababa region attended the meeting, held at the MKC head office.

MKC President Desalegn Abebe shared the strategic direction of MKC in the coming five years. He said serving Jesus Christ is not a matter of gender but a call from God. God gave gifts to women and men, as parts of the body of Christ, to equip them to

fulfill the Great Commission.

He reminded the participants of the role women played when the MKC went underground due to persecution. When the men were unable to move from place to place to serve God's people, the women continued the ministry courageously. Some who were active in the ministry prayed for the men to have courage to serve without fear.

Participants asked the church to organize similar conferences on issues that matter to women.

— MKC News

Locally led event a first for Thai groups

LIVING WATER CHURCH in Borabu, Thailand, hosted the first Anabaptist gathering planned and led by Thai leaders in November. The first national gathering was held in 2011. That meeting and three subsequent gatherings were organized by mission workers.

Five Anabaptist mission organizations were represented: Eastern Mennonite Missions, Mennonite Brethren, Brethren in Christ, Rosedale Mennonite Missions and the Houmphans' organization, Dayspring Christian Ministries International/The Great Commission Foundation. More than 70 people attended.

Participants held a footwashing ceremony and celebrated the Lord's Supper with sticky rice and kaliap juice. A candlelight service symbolized the passing of the light of Jesus from missionaries to Thai leaders who, in turn, carry the light to their own people. ●



Sawang Phumewatthana, left, a lay leader of Sripuppa Living Water Church in Roi Et province, Thailand, prepares to wash the feet of Sa-nga Inchai, sitting on the bench. PHOTO: PAT AND RAD HOUMPHAN



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MWC appoints new COO, European regional rep

Jeanette Bissoon of Kitchener, Ont., is Mennonite World Conference's new chief operations officer. She succeeds Len Rempel, who is moving into a pastorate after 10 years serving MWC.

A member of First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Bissoon was director of finance for the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. She has also worked in international development with Save the Children and

Mennonite Economic Development Associates, supported new Canadians through English tutoring and served as treasurer on the board of Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support.

The duties of MWC's regional representative for Europe have been taken on by José Arrais. He was president of the Association of the Mennonite Brethren of Portugal until 2020. He is known to the MWC family through his service as network co-ordinator for the Global Anabaptist Service Net-



Bissoon



Arrais

work and Global Mission Fellowship and involvement with the Global Anabaptist Health Network steering committee.

Arrais has been serving since November, making connections with regional national member churches virtually and through a weekly prayer email. He and his wife, Paula, live in Portugal and have three young adult children.

Due to a variety of reasons, including staff moves and the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bogotá, Colombia, MWC office closed in March. Staff who served from that space will work from home. — MWC

Brethren event featuring Asian-American voices

A virtual conversation, "Listening and Learning from Brethren Leaders of Asian-American Heritage," is being held online at 7:30 p.m. EDT May 5.

The Church of the Brethren Office of Ministry event is focusing on concern for the safety, needs and valuing of Asian-American and Pacific Islander members of U.S. society in light of recent instances of violence directed toward them.

Three Brethren leaders of Asian-Amer-

ican heritage are offering insights and experiences: Wendy McFadden, publisher of Brethren Press and Church of the Brethren communications; Madalyn Metzger, vice president of marketing at Everence Financial; and Lin Reish, associate research analyst at Healthline Media.

Registration is at brethren.org.

— Church of the Brethren Newsline

Church in Myanmar requests prayer after military takeover

Anabaptists in Myanmar requested prayer from the broader church community after the military seized power there in February.

Waves of protest have been violently suppressed, with reports of more than 400 citizens killed. Even before the pandemic, poverty affected many households. The political situation has led to even greater economic turmoil, and many households have no income. Most church members are in a food crisis.

"Greetings from the crying land of Myanmar," wrote an Anabaptist church leader in Myanmar in a March 30 Mennonite World Conference prayer request. "This is a special request for you to pray for our country, particularly for the vulnerable 400 families of our church people in Yangon and [the] delta region. We believe that prayer can make a difference. God bless you all."

MWC President J. Nelson Kraybill responded that the global Anabaptist-Mennonite church is praying for them.

"We hear your accounts of military forces torturing and killing peaceful protesters, raiding houses and destroying property," he replied in a pastoral letter. "We see that a democratically elected government has been displaced. We know that COVID-19 has caused suffering and death, that you now face increased food and fuel costs at a time of high unemployment."

"*Kyrie eleison*, Lord have mercy!"

Kraybill wrote that Anabaptist churches around the world join them in protesting against violence suffered by Christians, Rohingya Muslims and other groups targeted by the military. "We call on our governments to use all diplomatic means to end this injustice." — MWC

Church near Colo. mass shooting hosts Good Friday community response event

Boulder Mennonite Church in Colorado invited the community to outdoor activities of lament and hope on Good Friday, April 2, following the mass shooting that took

the lives of 10 people March 22 at a King Soopers grocery store about 1,000 feet from the church.

Mike Martin of RAWTools dismantled a handgun donated by a local resident and turned it into a garden tool, giving a long line of participants opportunities to strike the gun's barrel with a hammer in frustration, grief, rage, anger or solidarity with so many who have lost their lives to gun violence.

Pastor Randy Spaulding offered a reflection on Scripture and the peacemaking traditions of Mennonites as community members participated in a variety of stations around the congregation's parking lot. Seeds to be planted for hope and renewal were distributed. Flash paper was available to write names upon and then burn with a candle. Brenda Fox of Prayerstream brought Beulah, one of her Airstream trailers, to serve as a contemplative meditation space.

— Ivanna Johnson-McMurry

EMMC conference to include distant churches in new ways

The Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference's biennial conference, The Gathering, will take place both in person and online for the first time June 4-6. Since the event will not be restricted by travel, venue size or cost, it will be the first conference equally accessible to all members: "For the first time ever, the EMMC Gathering can be the Gathering of the [entire] EMMC."

Most of EMMC's congregations are in Canada, but a handful are in Belize and Mexico. Worship and main session speakers will share in live video sessions, along with workshops and video chats with missionaries around the world.

"Rooted: Rising to His Call" will feature main session speakers Jesse Doell, pastor of Hepburn Gospel Church in Saskatchewan, and Henry Redekopp, pastor of Mennonite Gospel Church in Vauxhall, Alberta.

Sessions will also be available for young adults, youth and children.

In addition to events taking place in person at Sutherland Evangelical Church in Saskatoon, Sask., online-only registration is \$10 at emmc.ca/the-gathering-2021.

— The Recorder

Corrections

In "In a word: remember them" (April 16), the name of Rafael Barahona's mother, Pilar, was incorrect, and the name of one of the bands Barahona played in, Raices, was misspelled.

Goshen graduates celebrate: ‘In the struggle is our growth’

MEMBERS OF THE GOSHEN COLLEGE

Class of 2021 received undergraduate and graduate degrees during a hybrid ceremony April 25 at the college's 123rd commencement.

Graduates processed across campus into Roman Gingerich Recreation-Fitness Center's Gunden Gymnasium, where they met current and retired faculty and staff. No other friends and family were present in-person, instead joining virtually.

The Class of 2021 consists of 223 graduates who were awarded 161 bachelor of arts, 34 bachelor of science in nursing, 18 master of science in nursing as family nurse practitioners, four master of arts in environmental education, two master of business administration and three doctors of nurse practice degrees.

In her commencement address, “Marked and Blessed,” President Rebecca Stoltzfus noted that for most graduates, 2017 was not just their first year but also her first year as president at Goshen.

“Yours is the first class of baccalaureate students that I learned to know as first-years,” she said. “Truly, I will miss you.”

Drawing on the story of Jacob and Esau, she talked about systems of domination that thread through society and noted there is another way.



Goshen College graduate Nathan Pauls of Kinzers, Pa., claps April 25 during the college's 123rd commencement ceremony. PHOTO: BRIAN YODER SCHLABACH/GOSHEN COLLEGE

“A way characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control,” she said. “Alongside all of the knowledge and skills that you have gained in your years at Goshen College, our mission has been to educate you in a community that is rooted in the way of Jesus. This is what we strive toward. We do it imperfectly, but these gifts of the Spirit and this way of Jesus are also present, here and now, in the midst of systemic injustices.”

Stoltzfus highlighted struggles graduates have overcome in their college journey, including the pandemic, po-

litical unrest, economic and environmental crises, systemic racism and all of the individual challenges students have faced this year.

“I honor all of this, because in the struggle is our growth,” she said. “We are learning, and not only in the classroom. We have all learned way more than we thought we could or wanted to this year.”

After the benediction by Gilberto Perez Jr., vice president for student life and father of Ariana Perez Diener, a 2021 graduate, the faculty lined up physically distanced in the main corridor of the Recreation-Fitness Center and applauded the departing seniors.

At the baccalaureate worship service the morning of commencement, La-Kendra Hardware, director of diversity, equity and inclusion, delivered a message, “God’s Got You,” based on 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, Romans 8:37-39, Isaiah 61 and Psalm 121 and the morning’s theme, “Resiliency Through Adversity, in Faith, by Living Boldly.” ●



Family and friends watch Goshen College graduates make their way into Roman Gingerich Recreation Fitness Center.

PHOTO: BRIAN YODER SCHLABACH/GOSHEN COLLEGE

FPU music professor composed a career reaching far beyond campus

PROLIFIC COMPOSER and Fresno Pacific University emeritus music faculty Larry Warkentin, 80, died April 5. A composer, pianist, choral conductor, church musician and educator, he served Fresno Pacific from 1962 to 2002 as music professor, also chairing the department, the humanities division and the faculty session.



Warkentin

Warkentin's hymn tunes are included in *Worship Hymnal*, *Sing Alleluia*, *Hymnal: A Worship Book* and *Covenant Hymnal*. His most frequently performed work is the "Fresno

Pacific University Song," which has been sung at graduation for more than 30 years.

Warkentin was a graduate of Tabor College and held a doctorate from the University of Southern California.

His first composition for large ensemble, "The Word," an oratorio for orchestra, soloists and choir, was presented by the Fresno Oratorio Society in 1973. In 1978, Warkentin was commissioned by Mennonite World Conference to write an orchestral work for its international assembly.

In 1984 his "Academic Variations" for piano won first place in the California Teacher's Association state competition, and his hymn "God of the Eagle" won first place in the 1988 Winnipeg College hymn contest.

WARKENTIN'S FOLK OPERA *Crazy Quilt* was staged in 1987 at FPU, as was his one-act opera *Practice Makes Perfect* in 1996. "This is a Holy Day," for organ, trumpets and choir, was presented on a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation satellite television broadcast.

In 1998, Warkentin paid tribute to his hometown of Reedley, Calif., with the four-movement "Sonata No. 2 for



Larry Warkentin teaches a music class in the early 1970s at Fresno Pacific University.

PHOTO: FRESNO PACIFIC UNIVERSITY

Piano."

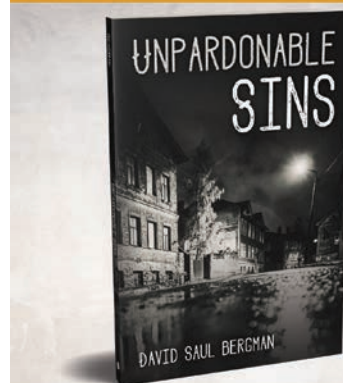
He wrote articles in the *Journal of the American Choral Directors Association*, *Latin American Music Review*, *Christian Leader* and *Direction*. For seven years he was the classical music critic for *The Fresno Bee*. He has also written several books of poetry.

The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers honored him with an award each year for more than a decade. He received the FPU President's Distinguished Faculty Award and has been recognized by Tabor College as an outstanding alumnus.

Warkentin and his wife, Paula, a retired elementary school teacher and resource specialist, were married in 1962, the same year he joined the faculty. They established charitable trusts to benefit the Culture and Arts Center and the FPU Foundation.

The family held a virtual commemoration April 19 and is planning an in-person ceremony this summer. ●

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Praise for Unpardonable Sins

"A rousing murder mystery that's also an absorbing inquiry into sin, guilt, sexuality, violence, and responsibility, *Unpardonable Sins* features a host of memorable characters, most notably John Reimer, the earnestly, vulnerably inquisitive Mennonite preacher-turned-sleuth. This entertaining, provocative novel immerses us in the streets and politics of Chicago, and the mysteries of family, faith, and action in this lovely, brutal world."

—JEFF GUNDY, author of *Without a Plea*

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Bethel College senior Trae Gehring leads the Bethel College Concert Choir in "The Lord Bless You and Keep You." Inset: A screenshot of the owls. PHOTO: MELANIE ZUERCHER/BETHEL COLLEGE

Bethel choir adds avian lullabies to agricultural venue repertoire

UNUSUAL TIMES call for unusual venues.

Which is why the Bethel College Concert Choir found itself recently singing to a pair of young great horned owls.

They were at the Klingenberg farm on April 13 in rural Marion County, Kan., at the invitation of Derek Klingenberg.

While raising cattle and crops with his father and two brothers, Klingenberg also finds time to put mostly humorous videos on his "Farmer Derek" YouTube channel.

Earlier this spring, when a pair of bald eagles built a nest in a large tree on the farm, Klingenberg installed a 24-hour "eagle cam" — which picked up the drama of the owls driving the eagles from their new roost.

The owls, whom Klingenberg

dubbed Bonnie and Clyde, subsequently hatched two owlets, Tiger and Lily.

In September 2018, Klingenberg invited William Eash, Bethel's director of choral activities, to bring the Concert Choir out to the farm to sing in a newly erected grain bin.

The resulting video became one of Farmer Derek's most popular, garnering more than 2 million views.

Klingenberg has been working to find another reason to get the choir back, and he came up with one: lullabies for the owls.

He stacked hay bales to form an amphitheater, set up a second camera and recording equipment on the back of a truck and invited Eash to bring the choir.

A small human audience — mostly Klingenbergs and extended family —

gathered to listen to Susan LaBarr's "The Wisdom of the Moon" and two traditional lullabies, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" and Brahms' "Lullaby."

The latter two had new words, written by choir member Jessie Thomas, a senior from Sedgwick.

"Sleeping, sleeping, tiny owls, rest in fluffy springtime down," began the erstwhile "Twinkle, Twinkle."

The second song started with "Lullaby, and goodnight, in the night you'll be screeching."

The concert closed as every Bethel Concert Choir performance does, with "The Lord Bless You and Keep You," for which choir alumni Carol Klingenberg (Derek's mom) and Brett Klingenberg (brother) joined the group.

The videos are available on Bethel's Facebook page or by finding Farmer Derek on YouTube. ●



Lucia Keim Martinez, a senior Goshen College nursing major from Goshen, Ind., administers a vaccine shot to Khampha Stempel, a senior from Broadway, Va. PHOTO: GOSHEN COLLEGE

Goshen nursing students get hands-on in vaccine clinic

Goshen College students gained experience and helped slow the spread of COVID-19 by administering vaccines to students and employees during a vaccination clinic on campus April 1-2.

About 15 undergraduate nursing students administered vaccines, while about a dozen public health students organized, registered and scheduled follow-up appointments.

Nursing faculty members drew up the vaccines and oversaw the process along with an emergency observer from Goshen Health as the future nurses administered the Pfizer vaccine to about 300 people during the two-day clinic.

"Our purpose is to promote the health of people and our community," said Jewel Yoder, associate professor and chair of the department of nursing. "This was an experience where nursing students could practice some clinical skills and feel that they were contributing to the greater good of our community."

Goshen was one of the first colleges in Indiana to roll out a vaccine clinic on campus with vaccines provided by the Indiana State Department of Health. This included out-of-state and international students, and those with no insurance requirement.

The college planned to administer second vaccine doses to campus members on April 22-23, before students went home for the summer. — *Goshen College*

EMU to offer community organizing minor this fall

Starting this fall, students at Eastern Mennonite University will be able to study community organizing and community development through a new minor.

The minor may be useful to those pursuing majors in business and leadership; Bible, religion and theology; peacebuilding and development; political science; psychology; recreation and sports management; social work and sociology.

"Community organizing has been part of significant reforms and a variety of social movements in the U.S. going back more than 100 years. Organizers may work with faith-based groups or with other types of organizations, such as schools or labor associations," said professor Jenni Holsinger, director of the sociology program, in which the minor is housed. "For many students, it's exciting to learn about new ways to help their own communities and to find hope, and possible career paths, in the work that has been done before and is being done now."

The minor consists of 18 credit hours, completed through three classes and an internship, plus two elective courses. One introductory course covering the history, theories, and tactics of organizing in the United States since the early 20th century is offered on the Harrisonburg campus. The two other required courses and internship are fulfilled during participation in the Washington Community Scholars' Center

program. WCSC is an EMU program open to students from other schools, including Bethel College and Bluffton University, which regularly send students. — *EMU*

FPU introducing three-year bachelor's degree option

Fresno Pacific University is adding three-year degree options for some bachelor's degrees.

Bachelor's degrees in several areas of business, along with English, biology, mathematics and chemistry are now available in three years, in addition to the traditional four-year program.

The new graduation pathways include all classes within three academic years, with summer sessions. Students in the three-year option will save one year of tuition and have the opportunity to enter careers a year early.

"These are not new degrees," said Krista Brooks, director of undergraduate admission. "They cover all the same material in all the same classes as four-year programs, just with a set schedule that helps students accomplish their degree in less time." — *FPU*

Bethel commencement to hear from recent graduate

Bethel College commencement, at 4 p.m. May 16 in Thresher Stadium, will look different from tradition but more like normal than last year, when the event was all virtual.



Powers

Each student will be limited to five guests for outdoors and two for indoors, in case of inclement weather. The baccalaureate worship service at 10 a.m. May 16 will also be outdoors with limited attendance. Both events will be available by livestream.

By vote of the Class of 2021, the speaker is Brooke Powers, one of the youngest speakers in recent history. She is a 2015 Bethel graduate who has served as assistant athletic trainer and clinical education coordinator at Bethel since 2018.

Powers has a master's degree in exercise science from Concordia University in St. Paul, Minn., and was a graduate assistant in athletic training and assistant athletic trainer from 2015 to 2018 at William Jewell College in Liberty, Mo.

— *Bethel College*

Memory shapes identity

2025 WILL MARK THE 500TH anniversary of the first believers baptism by the founders of Anabaptism. Currently we are in Year 2 of the international commemoration of Anabaptist history and celebration of our present reality. The theme is “Daring!” It is time to reflect on what we are commemorating.

Startled shrugs have been felt in the Mennonite press when looking toward 2025. Will there be a call to return to a supposedly normative Anabaptist narrative that began in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1525? Will there be too much focus on our beginnings? Will memories of Anabaptist heroes and martyrs be resurrected? Will people look only to Europe and neglect the fact that descendants of the white Anabaptist founders are a minority on the worldwide Anabaptist scene today?

No, says the Mennonite public, especially those well-versed in Anabaptism’s polygenesis — that is, its multiple origins. The early Anabaptists were far too diverse to make it possible for us to go back to an idealized, unified beginning.

Today not all Anabaptists see the events of 1525 as the cornerstone of their identity. Thus, from a Dutch perspective, the later work of the Dutch Anabaptist leader Menno Simons could be more foundational. The Hutterites attach much more importance to the introduction of community of goods in 1528. If one asks among the Germans who sojourned in Russia, the

events of 1525 pale in comparison to the developments of the later years in Russia and the Soviet Union.

If one widens the circle to the Mennonites of Colombia or Indonesia or Ethiopia, the answers will again be different. Diversity is the state of the art, the norm and the model.

Our beginnings are not to be excessively glorified. And yet, 500 years of Anabaptism is something to celebrate. But an exclusive concentration on the beginnings would ignore the later development of Anabaptist churches. History, with all of its ups and downs, must be floodlighted in its entirety. Therefore it is more appropriate to speak of an Anabaptist commemoration, not an Anabaptist jubilee.

Focusing on a beginning date also obscures the fact that the Anabaptists did not suddenly emerge in 1525. Like all the other Christian reformers in that time of great upheaval in Europe, they picked up on spiritual movements and reform ideas that had already begun to reshape society in the previous century.

THE PURPOSE OF A commemoration is to make history visible, to bring it to the congregations and communicate it to others beyond our churches.

What is the message of early Anabaptism for the 21st century? Why am I a Mennonite today? Why do I look back on the past not only with interest but with gratitude?

Is it because I admire the determination of the first Anabaptists to swim against the flow of the world?

Is it the extraordinary confidence they showed in defying the established church and state by rebaptizing each other on Jan. 25, 1525, in Zurich?

Is it their courage to hold on to their faith even to the point of death?

Is it their total defenselessness, which was more than “just pacifism” but a refusal to strike back aggressively with words or deeds?

Is it their freedom of thought, their

diversity of opinion, their example of mature Christianity?

It is all of these things.

ANABAPTIST HISTORY is manifold. Its 500 years reveal diverse interpretations of discipleship, each arising from the unique context of its time, but

What is the message of early Anabaptism for the 21st century? Why do I look back on the past with gratitude?

each deserving the label “Anabaptist Christian.”

Sometimes our forebears’ faith was more rational, sometimes more spiritual, sometimes more pragmatic. In some situations, authoritative leaders were necessary to mobilize people and resources to form a movement or to plant churches. Then again, there were times when it was appropriate to make decisions communally. Sometimes it was necessary to keep a distance from politics. Other times called for speaking out and getting involved in secular matters.

There have been times when two Anabaptists in the same situation made completely different decisions, because each was committed to his or her conscience.

Memory always shapes identity. The only question is how to go about it. Each generation has its own way of dealing with contemporary problems and challenges. Each has its own answers to find. We cannot declare one experience the norm. There must be no dictatorship of memory.

The 500th anniversary of the events of January 1525 are an occasion to look anew at 500 years of Anabaptist history and to consider how we too might be daring. ●



Astrid von Schlachta is a historian at the Mennonite Research Center in Weierhof, Germany, and the University of Regensburg.

After the empty tomb: grace with purpose

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF US post-Resurrection? That is the burning question in my heart during this season of Eastertide (which lasts 49 days, until Pentecost).

After Easter, we are like the disciples after the Resurrection — their faith restored after witnessing their leader crucified, followed by two days of hopelessness and fear.

We can imagine how terrifying Friday was to them. Throughout Saturday, their hope was shattered.

But — to God be the glory! — there was a Sunday morning.

And there is a Sunday morning for us.

For Jesus' disciples, and for us, Sunday morning brings renewed hope and resolve to walk with the Lord.

What is required of us as 21st-century disciples?

Post-Resurrection, is it time to fold our hands and be at ease? To boast in the victory of the empty tomb?

It is time to act.

After the excitement of the Resurrection, Jesus gave instructions: Go and make disciples of all nations, sharing the great things he has done and the message of hope he has brought. The apostles obeyed this command, even though it cost them their lives.

What is required of us? The prophet Micah attempted to answer that ques-

tion. *The Message* puts his words this way: "He's already made it plain how to live, what to do, what God is looking for in men and women. It's quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbor, be compassionate and loyal

For me, Chuwang Pam's work in Nigeria is one way the grace of God is not received in vain.

in your love, and don't take yourself too seriously — take God seriously" (Micah 6:8).

Simple? Yes. Easy? Maybe not — and even more difficult in some parts of the world.

Missionaries and local Christians are living out Jesus' command and Micah's vision with special courage in nations where Christians are persecuted, such as Nigeria and China and certain Middle Eastern countries. Like the apostles, they are sustained by the presence of Jesus at their side.

AS WE CONSIDER OUR post-Resurrection calling, I think of Paul's words to the Corinthians: "As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain" (2 Corinthians 6:1).

What did Paul mean by his warning against accepting the grace of God in vain?

I think we receive grace in vain when we don't use it to stand with the minority: the abused, hungry, homeless, victims of racism and inequality.

We receive grace in vain when we fail to stand up against the resurgence of racism and xenophobia.

The opposite of accepting God's grace in vain is receiving God's grace with purpose.

We receive grace with purpose when we accept Jesus' assignment to spread the Good News far and wide: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

I HAVE BEEN PRIVILEGED to witness a missionary pastor here in California who heard his people's cry in Nigeria and, like Nehemiah, ran to their aid. For almost three years, Anabaptist Pastor Chuwang Pam left the church he served for nearly two decades to minister in Nigeria because he heard the blood of the innocent crying.

You may have heard about the acts of terrorism Nigerians are experiencing, especially in the northern part of the country where Chuwang had dual citizenship. Boko Haram militants and *Fulani* herdsmen besiege the cities, massacring Christians. Churches have been burned and families displaced from their homes, forced to renounce Christ or die.

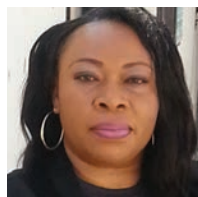
Chuwang is rebuilding churches and houses, returning families to their homes and congregants to their churches, running a daily food and hygiene program in the cities' camps.

When I spoke to him a couple of weeks ago, he and others were trying to set up security drones to warn of intrusions by *Fulani* herdsmen.

For me, Chuwang's work in Nigeria is one way the grace of God is not received in vain.

Yes, post-Resurrection, the work has not ended. It has just begun.

You can partner with missionaries today. Your kind and generous contribution can help these fearless workers. Please help Chuwang Pam do justice and show mercy to the voiceless and powerless in Nigeria. Ask me how at anthoniaonye@gmail.com. ●



Anthonia Onye is regional minister for Southern California for Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference of Mennonite Church USA.

Separated from my father's people

FIRST JOHN CHAPTER 1 says if we confess our sin, Jesus is faithful to forgive and purify us.

What kinds of sins might we confess?

During the early years of my spiritual formation, discussion about sin focused on individual behavior. As a child, I was taught to avoid lying and behaving unkindly. As a youth, conversation about sin focused on sexual behavior.

But what if 1 John 1 is referring to something more? What if sin is not only personal but structural? What if sin includes participation in sinful laws and policies like those the Old Testament prophets decried?

That would be another kind of confession.

My family has felt the devastating impact of structural sin.

In 1978, to remedy a longstanding injustice, the Indian Child Welfare Act became U.S. law. This legislation was passed to prevent the removal of Indigenous children from their families. The ICWA empowers tribal governments'

jurisdiction in child-protection cases. It articulates preferred placement of Indigenous children with extended family, tribal members or other Native American tribes.

For my family, the damage had already been done.

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS BEFORE the ICWA became law, my father was removed from his family at birth. He was raised 300 miles away from his family, tribe and homeland.

This was the case for many Indigenous children swept up by boarding schools and the foster-care system. By 1978, at least 1 in 4 Indigenous children in the United States was separated from family and placed in an institution, foster home or family of the dominant culture.

As participation in boarding schools slowed, the Indian Adoption Project continued to remove Indigenous children from their homes. This federal program sought to place Indigenous children with white families. High rates of poverty were viewed as justification for the removal of Native children.

Within one generation, adoptees lost their tribal affiliation. Their own children assimilated, separated from their extended families, language and land — as I was.

My father was taught the values of the mainstream: individualism, reverence for private property, the American dream, a personal sense of God.

These dominant-culture values would replace those of his people: collectivism, mutual dependence within the community and the life-web — a sense of the Creator being present in creation and an obligation to the Creator to live in balance with creation.

My father struggled with mental

illness and did not enjoy the prosperity promised by the American dream.

I too was separated from my father's people and from my language, culture, land and birthright. Assimilation was the only path to survival.

SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION, segregation and ethnocide have resulted in social problems that continue today. The ICWA was created to remedy this.

But the ICWA is under attack. In a

My father was removed from his family at birth and taught the values of the mainstream, replacing those of his people.

case filed in federal court by Texas, Indiana and Louisiana in 2018, a federal district court struck down the ICWA as unconstitutional. In 2019, a panel of three judges on the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed this decision and upheld the ICWA. However, in April 2021, the full 5th Circuit Court determined portions of the ICWA are unconstitutional.

Some Christian organizations that seek to "save" Indigenous children oppose the ICWA.

Structural sin — unjust laws, policies and practices — is often invisible to those who benefit from it. Systems that separate Indigenous people from their land are like the sins condemned by the biblical prophets, who denounced the wealthy and powerful for exploiting the vulnerable to enrich themselves.

Collectively, we can turn from this structural sin. We can join with Indigenous peoples by calling on decision-makers to turn away from injustice and seek repair. ●



Sarah Augustine, a Pueblo (Tewa) descendant, is the author of *The Land Is Not Empty: Following Jesus in Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery*, to be published by Herald Press in June. She is executive director of the Dispute Resolution Center of Yakima and Kittitas Counties in Washington state. She lives with her family on the homeland of the Confederated Bands and Tribes of the Yakama Nation.

Meeting the hard things with grace

“THEY USED TO SAY getting old isn’t fun,” my 84-year-old father-in-law told me. “And boy, now I sure know what they mean.”

I call my father-in-law “Grandpa,” as his children often do. He and “Grandma” got married in their sixties, both of them already grandparents, and “Grandpa and Grandma” slipped easily into the family vocabulary.

Grandpa sits in his chair all morning and looks out the window at the sunshine and the birds and the cars moving past on the road, dozing now and then. By afternoon he is restless and tries to lift himself from his chair, a task that has become more difficult as his body weakens.

“I should go out and do my chores,” he’ll say.

“Ivan will do the chores,” we tell him. “You stay inside.”

He settles — for a little while. After 50-plus years of chores, he holds the responsibility and habit of them deep

in his mind and cannot let them go.

Grandpa’s mind isn’t what it used to be. He doesn’t carry a conversation much. His comments about the weather and chores and Homer (or whoever it happened to be) driving in the lane have grown fewer since a recent light stroke. He still smiles at me when I come in the door, though, and still keeps a close eye on the comings and goings of Grandma and of his son and my husband, Ivan.

If one day I am 84 and have nothing much left in life but a window and the weather, I hope I keep my sweetness and my smile.

In spite of his weakness, in spite of the fact that he has to sit in his chair all day every day with nothing to do but look out the window, he is one of the sweetest old men I know.

“What do you want me to do?” he asks when I coach him through standing and turning and sitting. “Whatever you want.”

If one day I am 84 and have nothing much left in life but a window and the weather, I hope I keep my sweetness and my smile.

YOU CAN NEVER TELL, really, how you will meet the extremities of life until you get there. Sometimes you have more control of your responses than others. None of us can blame a cantankerous, stubborn old person with Alzheimer’s for the way they act. They have no reasoning ability left, nothing but primal responses to stimuli they don’t understand.

Still, I think it helps all of us to watch those in the middle of crisis or illness, to watch and learn and pre-

pare.

Our neighbor, a dear friend and Ivan’s childhood mentor, was diagnosed with stage-four pancreatic cancer soon after Christmas. He died not long before Easter. Only several months before his diagnosis, his daughter — a married woman with young children — died in a freak car accident.

No parent expects a child to die before they do. Our neighbor stayed positive.

“I’m praying God will use this to bring people to the Lord,” he said. And “If our faith isn’t made for a time like this, then what good is it?”

His wife recently came through her own battle with major illness. Two of their sons were ordained to the ministry just last summer.

Our neighbor and his wife and their daughter with Down syndrome downsized to a smaller house just before he died.

Momentous events, every one of them. Some good, many difficult — the type of events that take a lifetime, not several months, to adjust to.

Now that he is gone, she still has their daughter with Down syndrome to care for.

“How are you doing?” I asked her soon before he died. “Are you feeling overwhelmed?”

Her eyes filled with tears, but she told me how supported they felt by having a daughter and son-in-law live close and by the warmth and caring of the Oakland community.

“We are so blessed,” she said.

This made me want to cry. I only hope, when I meet the most difficult extremities of my life, that my relationship with my Savior and with the people around me will be such that I can say from my heart, “Lord, what do you want me to do?” and “I am so blessed.” ●



Lucinda J. Kinsinger writes from Oakland, Md., where she lives with her farmer husband, Ivan. She is the author of *Anything But Simple: My Life as a Mennonite* and blogs at lucindajkinsinger.com.

What do you *really* think God is like?

I'VE HEARD IT SAID THAT the most important thing about you is the image you have of God.

I know what image I'm supposed to have of God. I was lucky to grow up in a family who taught me the essentials. God is love. There is nothing I can do to make God love me more or less. God is slow to anger and quick to forgive. God cares about my needs.

I know all these things. But the truth is, this is not the image I actually have of God.

I know God loves me. But I'm also pretty sure God would like me better if I could pull my act together more.

I know God hears me when I pray. But I also think if we haven't spoken much lately, it might take me longer to snag God's attention.

I know God cares about my needs. But I suspect if the cause was worthy enough, God might be willing to break me for it.

What about you? What is your image of God? Not the one you would give to pass the exam but the answer

you live out of, pray out of, dream out of at night.

Even when we're not conscious of it, we spend a lot of time acting in response to our gut-level image of God.

If we believe God has better things to do than worry about us, we tend to worry about ourselves.

If we believe God is disapproving, we chase approval from others.

If we think God is stingy, we gorge ourselves on whatever fleeting goodness we can snatch.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus offers us a vision of what God's kingdom looks like. It is a challenging way of life where we love those who hate us, where we give up our stockpiles, where we forgive those who harm us, where we always speak the truth.

Most Anabaptists I know are passionately committed to this vision of the kingdom. But many, at their most honest, also confess they have doubts about God's character or personal engagement.

BEFORE JESUS SENDS his disciples out to live the radical kingdom life, he talks to them about their image of God:

Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

— Matthew 7:7-11

To Jesus, God is a parent who loves giving gifts.

God didn't make you because God needed a servant. Seriously, God's got a

host of angels and infinite powers. God can take care of God's self. God made you because God wanted kids, because God desired heirs, because God loves giving presents.

You weren't created first and foremost to be a servant or minion or a follower of rules. You were created to be a recipient of gifts. The reason you exist is that God wanted someone to be gracious to.

God didn't make you because God needed a servant. God made you because God wanted kids, because God desired heirs, because God loves giving presents.

Jesus is clear this generosity of God isn't directed toward the special few who've done enough to earn God's favors. It's for everyone. No tricks. No hidden agenda. No extending a hand and then snatching it back.

THE ENTIRE SERMON on the Mount, the whole challenging vision of what kingdom life is meant to be, extends from this fundamental assumption of God's love and care.

We don't *have* to worry or chase or cling to treasures.

We don't *have* to defend ourselves against enemies.

We don't *have* to pray lengthy prayers of perfect words.

We are free to love and give and pray and sacrifice with the full expectation that God's gifts will keep on coming.

Jesus only asks such radical things of his disciples because he believes to the depths of his divine soul that God is radically good and generous. We are because God is. ●



Meghan Larissa Good is teaching pastor at Trinity Mennonite Church in Glendale, Ariz., and author of *The Bible Unwrapped: Making Sense of Scripture Today* (Herald Press).

Ghosts of white settlers' sins

IN THE INTRODUCTION of *Healing Haunted Histories*, Elaine Enns shares a horrible and unforgettable story. She describes walking home with a friend from her eighth-grade graduation in 1980 and seeing an Indigenous girl in the bushes. She knew the girl had been adopted by a white family. The girl was “on the ground on hands and knees,” and the adoptive brother was raping her. “I remember the vacant look in her eyes as she stared straight ahead,” Enns writes.

She remembers that she and her friend walked away in the opposite direction, not fully understanding what they saw, but also silenced by their ignorance of their racist culture.

“Witnessing this violation added to my sense of haunting,” she writes in the book, which she co-authored with Ched Myers. Haunting is a compelling concept threading throughout the book—one that will stay with me.

The United States is permanently haunted by slavery, genocide, violence, colonization. These ghosts rear up when they’re walked away from, pushed down or avoided.

The book includes contributions from Indigenous artists, writers and academics. The intended audience is white settlers — the descendants of European immigrants — in North America.

Past and present Indigenous dispossession is the “primal sin of settler colonialism, haunting us and demanding a reckoning,” Enns and Myers say.

MYERS AND ENNS center the narrative on Enns’ family story. She discusses the parallels of Indigenous people’s trauma to the trauma her ancestors faced. She draws these comparisons in a way that does not minimize the destructive role of white settlers, the ongoing impact of white privilege and the genocide inflicted on Indigenous people.

The specificity of her stories invokes a curiosity to learn more about our

own histories and hauntings. One example: Enns describes the experience of her great-grandmother, whose home in Ukraine was taken over by anarchist soldiers in 1917. Some Mennonites believe that they endured the Russian Civil War because they were “tough.”

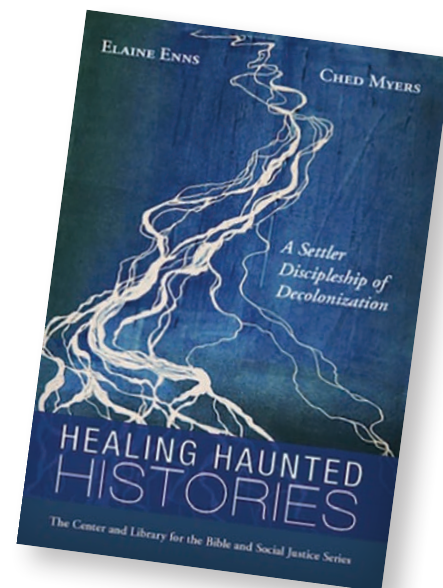
Enns isn’t fooled by this assertion. She has uncovered serious trauma, including sexual trauma, in her family histories. She goes on to wonder if men were praised for sacrificing their lives or fleeing as pacifists while women survived sexual assault silently and shamefully.

Pushing down this pain — especially women’s pain and perspectives — or even eliminating it from family stories diminishes white settlers’ capacity to empathize with others and promotes victim-blaming, paternalism and superiority toward Indigenous people.

She moves on to describe other hauntings, for example, how Mennonites benefited from lands and protections in North America. She describes the cultural genocide of adoption of Native children and the abuse at Indian Residential Schools.

ENNS WALKS US THROUGH her own bloodlines as a community of German-speaking, Russian Mennonites on the Canadian prairies. Her narrative covers three bioregions (Ukraine, Saskatchewan, California), three centuries (19th to 21st), three communities (Mennonite settlers, non-Mennonite settlers and Indigenous people) and two countries (Canada and the United States). She names the contradictions as she inherited “both the racial privileges and brokenness of whiteness, the strengths of my Anabaptist faith tradition and the wounds of intergenerational trauma.”

The book is organized by three concepts: Landlines, Bloodlines and Songlines. Landlines are places of personal, communal and ancestral inhabitation, now and in the past. They hold deep stories of human placement and dis-



Healing Haunted Histories: A Settler Discipleship of Decolonization by Elaine Enns and Ched Myers (Wipf and Stock, 2021)

placement. Bloodlines are social and kinship identities, not technical “blood relatives.” Songlines are traditions that inspire practices of justice and compassion and sustain resilience.

Enns acknowledges that her Mennonite community’s peace and justice work responds more quickly in Africa or Latin American than among Indigenous people in our North American communities. She reminds us that settlers’ primary responsibility is to decolonize where we are, not somewhere far away. This reminded me of Mennonites’ tendency to attend to violence in distant countries instead of talking about the sexualized violence in our own homes.

This book is personal, challenging and complex. It reminded me that my white-settler work to repair haunted histories starts within myself, my family and my community. ●

Anna Groff is director of Dove’s Nest: Faith Communities Keeping Children and Youth Safe. She lives in Tucson, Ariz., on Tohono O’odham land and is a member of Shalom Mennonite Fellowship.

Is 'biblical womanhood' biblical?

Barr: We've interpreted the Bible through the lens of patriarchy rather than Jesus

BETH ALLISON BARR never intended to write a book like *The Making of Biblical Womanhood: How the Subjugation of Women Became Gospel Truth*.

As associate professor of history and associate dean of the Graduate School at Baylor University, Barr said she was a "very happy academic."

But then came 2016.

That was the year her husband was fired from his job in ministry after he and Barr challenged the church's teachings on women in ministry. It also was the year former President Donald Trump — someone who has bragged in the past about his mistreatment of women — was elected with the overwhelming support of evangelical Christians.

"Those two things together made me realize something had to be done. People had to know where complementarian teachings came from — and they didn't come from the Bible," she said.

The Making of Biblical Womanhood lands as popular Bible teacher Beth Moore's departure from the Southern Baptist Convention has shaken evangelicalism. With the move, Moore has apologized for her part in elevating complementarianism — the belief traditional gender roles are divinely ordained — to, as she put it, "the importance of a first-tier doctrine."

Before Barr's book was released April 20, it had already been featured on NPR's *Morning Edition*. The Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood had already published a post contesting Barr's argument that complementarianism is something added to the Bible, not found in its text.

"I think the evidence has become hard to ignore, and when that is combined with women's personal experiences, it is causing more of them to question than perhaps would have done 10 years ago," Barr said.

The author and historian talked to Religion News Service about where the idea of biblical womanhood comes



Beth Allison Barr: "It's surprising how much resistance to patriarchy we find in the Bible."

PHOTO: KATELYN CASPER

from, what she believes the Bible actually has to say about the role of women and what it will take for things to change.

"The roots of sexual abuse and misogyny are from teaching that women are less."

— Beth Allison Barr

Can we start by defining "biblical womanhood," "Christian patriarchy" and "complementarianism"?

Complementarianism is a made-up word, and it is made up to make patriarchy sound better — to make Christian patriarchy sound better.

What complementarianism argues is women and men have divinely ordained roles that are not interchangeable. Women are divinely ordained to follow male headship and to be primarily focused on domestic tasks:

family and home. Men are divinely ordained to lead, and not just in the church and the family but also in the cultural world, the economic world. "Biblical womanhood" is this divinely ordained role for women by complementarianism, which is Christian patriarchy dressed up.

Where does this idea come from?

It's no surprise we find patriarchy in the Bible, because that's the world the people of the Bible lived in. What is surprising is how much resistance to patriarchy we find in the Bible. The Old Testament raises women up — women like Rahab. She's a prostitute, and she gets named in the line of Jesus. In the historical, patriarchal world, there is no reason to even mention her name. We see this continuous thread where women are lifted up, and women are given authority like Deborah. And then in the New Testament we see women holding surprising positions of authority.

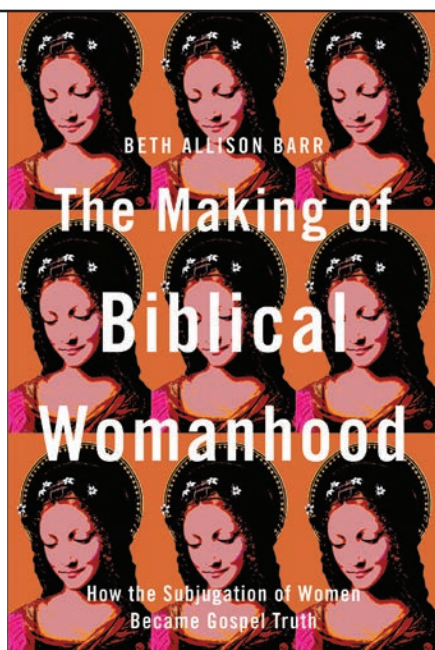
We have interpreted the Bible through the lens of patriarchy instead of through Jesus. We have read the Bible through five or six verses that say women should be silent, women should submit to their husbands.

It's problematic to interpret the entire Bible through the lens of just a handful of scriptures. If we look at it from the historical context, what we find is, first of all, they don't mean for women to be silent and to submit in the way we interpret it today. And the second thing is, they cannot mean women are to submit to men for all time, because we see women leading in the New Testament church.

The world offers patriarchy, and Jesus offers something better.

What changed your mind?

I began to see the impact of what happens when we teach boys there's something about them that makes them able to teach and lead, and



there's something about women that makes them unable to do that. At the same time, it became hard to ignore the historical evidence that we were not interpreting the Bible correctly.

What is the role of women you do see reflected in the biblical text?

You find an amazing number of women mentioned by name in a world that doesn't mention women by name, that mostly mentions them in context of their husbands and fathers.

It is remarkable to find that. We miss that because of the lens of complementarianism we carry to the text. We miss that in Romans 16. We've got 10 women who are listed there. Seven of those women are listed by ministry. We know women are teachers, deacons, apostles and house church leaders.

One of the taglines for your book is, "It's time for Christian patriarchy to end." What do you think it would take for that to happen?

What if we stopped putting up with it? What if women, instead of being silent like I was, stopped allowing the leaders to get away with it?

Not only does "biblical manhood and womanhood" hinder women to use their gifts, but it's also damaging in what it teaches. It teaches men that women are less. The roots of sexual abuse and misogyny are from teaching that women are less. It's not only harmful to the gospel, it's harmful to people. ●

Anti-nuclear weapons activist is sentenced

THE SEVENTH AND FINAL Catholic peace activist, who three years ago broke into the Kings Bay Naval Base in Georgia to symbolically disarm its stockpile of nuclear weapons, was sentenced on April 9 to 21 months in prison.

Mark Colville, who runs Amistad Catholic Worker in New Haven, Conn., was part of the Kings Bay Plowshares 7 who cut a padlock, and later a security fence, at the naval base on April 4, 2018. The group prayed, spilled blood on a Navy wall insignia, spray-painted antiwar slogans on a walkway and banged on a monument to nuclear warfare — all in protest of nuclear weapons, which the group says are illegal by international law.

The seven — including a Jesuit priest and the granddaughter of Catholic Worker Movement founder Dorothy Day — were caught more than an hour after their break-in, jailed and convicted the following year. All were found guilty of destruction of property on a naval installation, depredation of government property, trespass and conspiracy. The coronavirus pandemic delayed their sentencing well beyond normal ranges.

U.S. Circuit Court Judge Lisa Godbey Wood overruled an objection Colville raised to paying part of the total damage of \$30,503 the Navy determined the group had caused.

In his statement prior to his sentencing Colville, 59, referred to the United Nations' Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was ratified this year by 50 countries, not including the United States.

"My neighborhood, my family and I have a right to live without a nuclear gun on hair-trigger alert held perpetually to our heads," Colville told the judge. "It is this court's absurd logic, which in effect maintains that the only proper time to subject these homicidal weapons to any kind



Five of the Kings Bay Plowshares 7, from left: Elizabeth McAlister, Stephen Kelly, Carmen Trotta, Mark Colville and Martha Hennessy.

PHOTO: KING'S BAY PLOWSHARES 7

of legal scrutiny is after they've been launched."

Colville also read aloud a prayer from Pope Francis, in which the pontiff said, "Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction."

IN MARCH, DEPAUL University in Chicago announced that it would recognize the Kings Bay Plowshares 7 with the first Berrigan-McAlister Award for Christian nonviolent action. (The award is named for three longtime peace activists, among them Elizabeth McAlister, one of the seven Kings Bay Plowshares.)

Referring to the Kings Bay Plowshares, Michael Budde, professor of Catholic studies and political science at DePaul, said: "They are exemplars today of people who have made comparable sacrifices over the years to answer questions of peace and justice."

Five of the seven are now serving prison sentences. Colville has already served 15 months in jail because he declined the conditions of his bail. ●

End of the collection plate?

PASSING THE OFFERING plate, once a staple of worship, has largely halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. And given the rise of a cashless society — and the popularity of electronic giving — the days of passing the plate may soon be over.

At City Church in Tallahassee, Fla., stopping the offering during services worried Pastor Dean Inserra at first, as did the disruption of weekly, in-person worship. He wondered if people would stop giving if they could not go to church.

“I was terrified, just to be honest, when the pandemic first happened about what would happen to the church financially,” he said. “Those fears have not been met.”

Instead, the church’s giving went up during the pandemic. He credits the automated nature of online giving for making it easier for people to support the church.



RELIGION NEWS SERVICE

“They don’t forget, or they have a set amount so it is not an impulse kind of giving,” he said.

Online giving has become nearly universal among churches in recent years. In 2006, only about 1 in 4 congregations (27%) in the U.S. accepted donations by credit card or electronic funds transfers, according to the National Congregations Study.

By 2018, 60% of congregations told the NCS they accepted donations on their website. Of the 40% of congregations that did not accept website donations, many said they would accept donations via an app, credit card or other electronic donations.

The 2020 COVID-19 Congregational Study from the Lake Institute on Faith & Giving found similar acceptance of online and electronic giving. Before the pandemic, 73% of churches could already accept donations online, “and among those that did not, 39% scrambled to add online giving options shortly after they ceased in-person services.”

Almost all (94%) churches of more than 100 people could take online donations, the Lake Institute study found. By contrast, more than half (54%) of churches with fewer than 50 people in attendance said they had no online giving options. ●

LGBTQ policy roils Methodist school

THE FACULTY OF Seattle Pacific University, a school associated with the Free Methodist Church, has taken a vote of no confidence in its board of trustees after the board declined to change its policy prohibiting the hiring of LGBTQ people.

The no-confidence vote, approved by 72% of the faculty, was the latest in a series of escalating clashes between faculty, students and the school’s governing board. Faculty and students also want the school to drop its statement on sexuality, which declares marriage between a man and a woman as the only permitted expression of human sexuality.

The board of trustees issued a statement saying it would not change its employment hiring policy, which excludes LGBTQ people from full-time positions.

“The board recognizes that fellow Christians and other community members disagree in good faith on

issues relating to human sexuality, and that these convictions are deeply and sincerely held,” the board chair, Cedric Davis, said in an April 12 statement. “We pray that as we live within the tension of this issue, we can be in dialogue with the SPU community.”

The board also indicated it was taking its stand because it wanted to continue to maintain its ties to the Free Methodist Church, a small denomination of about 70,000 in the United States and 1 million around the world. The Free Methodist Church has eight affiliated educational institutions, including Azusa Pacific, Spring Arbor and Greenville universities.

“Right now the board is the last remaining group that has not yet come to recognize that LGBTQ individuals can be faithful Christians, and as faculty and staff they would play positive roles on our campus, if we can hire them,” said Kevin Neuhouser, a professor of sociology at Seattle Pacific.

THE STATUS OF LGBTQ faculty and students at Christian colleges and universities has been roiling many campuses.

In March, 33 LGBTQ students or former students at federally funded Christian colleges and universities filed a class-action lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Education alleging widespread discrimination at 25 Christian colleges and universities.

One of the 33 students named in the suit is a trans man who attended Seattle Pacific, where he said he was harassed, humiliated and forced to sign a statement saying he knew he was “breaking lifestyle expectations.”

In 2015, two Mennonite schools, Eastern Mennonite University and Goshen College, announced they were updating their nondiscrimination policies to allow the hiring of married gay and lesbian faculty. They withdrew from the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities. — RNS

Verdict might be an exodus for America

THE FIRST THING MY daughter Claire asked when she came home from school on April 20 was, “Dad, what does a guilty verdict mean?”

I thought of the passage in the Book of Joshua: “When your children ask their parents in time to come, ‘What do these stones mean?’ then you shall let your children know, ‘Israel crossed over the Jordan here on dry ground’ ” (4:21-22).

The 12 stones, set to block the flow of the Jordan, allowed the Israelites to cross the river, the final step of their journey from Egypt to freedom.

The God of the Bible does not seem to trust history to human memory alone. Somehow, we quickly forget the deliverance of God.

Years after their exodus from Egypt, after they had forgotten the taste of manna from heaven, a new generation of Israelite children would sit in the Promised Land and openly wonder at the progress they had made.

It is no secret that the Exodus narrative is significant to the American Black church tradition. It is the story the slave-holding preacher purposefully overlooked. It was the reason so-called slaves were not taught to read.

Still, Black preachers proclaimed the power of God to deliver God’s people. They understood the God of Exodus to be both a deliverer then and an emancipator now. That chronicle became the hope of liberation.

THE GUILTY VERDICT of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin in the murder of George Floyd might be an exodus for America. April 20 may be the day that the ancient account of God’s deliverance becomes as important to America as it has been to



Demonstrators gather on April 20 in Minneapolis to celebrate the murder conviction of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin in the killing of George Floyd. PHOTO: JOHN MINCHILLO/AP

the Black church.

The verdict is an opportunity for the liberation of not just Black, brown and Asian Americans, but for white Americans, too. Chauvin, like many anti-Black authoritarians before him, was imprisoned by his sense of supremacy long before he was assigned a prison cell.

The verdict is not the singular correction of centuries of injustice. It may be the hinge, however, on which turns the steel page of history.

Anyone familiar with the history of unprosecuted lynchings on American soil or the long night of racialized kangaroo courts can sense that something important happened in Minnesota on April 20. Anyone who remembers that a murdered child still is not guaranteed to have her executioners put on trial comes to appreciate the promise that the verdict represents.

My house is down the street and around the corner from the childhood home of a famously murdered Chicago kid, Emmett Till, whose killers never saw the light of justice. There are other children still, such as Rekia Boyd and Tamir Rice, whose blood yet cries out for justice. Children need the governing hand of justice to rightfully interpret God’s righteousness. George Floyd

died crying out for his mother as both his breath and justice were snatched away. In his dying moment, he spoke as a child being lynched under a policeman’s knee.

So, what is a child’s reading of this verdict? One day we will tell them that we were in bondage, but the Lord brought us over.

IT WAS HER OLDER brother who answered Claire’s question. Charlie II replied, “It’s when the judge pounds his wooden stick on the desk and shouts, ‘Guilty!’ Then the people cry, and the judge says, ‘You will spend so-and-so number of years in jail.’”

I smiled because that’s a child’s reading of the verdict. The day will come when this verdict will mean something more. It will mean that the moral arc of the universe is long, but it really does bend toward justice.

The verdict will signal that though truth is forever on the scaffold and wrong forever on the throne, yet behind the dim unknown standeth God keeping watch above his own. It will mean that though justice be delayed, it cannot forever be denied. ●

Charlie Dates is the senior pastor at Chicago’s Progressive Baptist Church.

Classifieds

classifieds@anabaptistworld.org

EMPLOYMENT — SCHOOL

Fresno Pacific University invites applications for a Faculty in Biology. Complete job description and requirements at fresno.edu/visitors/careers. (6)

Lezha Academic Center, Albania, a vibrant, mission-minded grades 1-12 school, seeks a Principal to begin August 2021. Full position announcement, job documents and school information can be found at albanianchristianschool.org. (5-7)

Lezha Academic Center, Albania, a vibrant, mission-minded grades 1-12 school, seeks teachers for high school English, Science and Social Studies to begin August 2021. Full position announcement, job documents and school information can be found at albanianchristianschool.org. (5-7)

EMPLOYMENT — CHURCH

Willow Avenue Mennonite Church in Clovis, Calif., announces that a search for an associate pastoral position has begun. The search committee will begin the search immediately and present the candidate to the church council for approval. The church council will introduce the candidate to the congregation before final confirmation of the appointment. Visit willowmennonite.org/employment to apply. (6)

First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis, Ind., is seeking a full-time pastor (half-time or more will also be considered) with strong preaching skills and experience and ability to serve as part of a pastoral team. Full job description is found at mennoniteusa.org/pastor-openings or at indymenno.org. We follow MC USA salary and benefit guidelines and are located in a large, thriving city. Contact Robin Helmuth, search committee chair, at drhpath@gmail.com. (5-7)

Beth-El Mennonite Church in Colorado Springs, Colo., is seeking a part-time (1/3 FTE) Associate Pastor for Children. If you care deeply about children and their families, cultivating relationships across generations and helping people seek to follow Jesus' way of nonviolent peacemaking, then you are encouraged to apply. Job description at bethelmennonite.org/apc/. Contact Jordan Farrell (jordan@bmccs.org) with questions or to express interest in applying. (5-6)

Swamp Mennonite Church, an Anabaptist congregation affiliated with Mosaic Mennonite

Conference, is looking for a .75 FTE Pastor who is passionate about developing disciples of Jesus who take their faith into their everyday lives. The position would include preaching responsibilities within a team-preaching model as well as leadership opportunities. There is flexibility around what other responsibilities will be included based on the strengths and interests of the candidate. If interested, please contact Will Sadler, the Search Committee Chair, sadlers1@verizon.net. (5-6)

EMPLOYMENT — GENERAL

Roots of Justice seeks an Executive Director to fulfill the mission to provide anti-oppression training, resources, and organizing to organizations nationwide. This is a remote position involving administration, coordination, marketing and development work paid at \$30 hourly for 20 hours weekly. For more information go to RootsOfJusticeTraining.org. (6)

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Phoenix Menno Guest House, Arizona, seeks volunteer Hosts/Directors for winter 2022 Phoenix SOOP season. Responsible for overall Guest House and SOOP program management. Room and board provided. Hosts/Directors serve under Hospitality Services Center (HSC) board. Contact: Cheryl Paulovich at cjpaulovich@gmail.com or call 602-448-8754. (6-7)

TRAVEL

See the world-famous Oberammergau Passion Play in Bavaria, Germany, in 2022! Join tour host Pastor Weldon Martens of Grace Hill Mennonite Church of Whitewater, Kan., on a 10-day tour to Germany, France and Switzerland, Aug. 10-21, 2022. We will see the Swiss Alps, the Black Forest, Neuschwanstein Castle, and enjoy a Rhine River Cruise. Registration Status: 2/3 Full. See the tour brochure and register at pilgrimtours.com/ghmc.html or contact Pastor Weldon for a brochure or information at weldon.martens@gmail.com or 402-202-9276. (6-8)

LODGING

North Newton, Kan., guest housing. 316-283-5231; vadasnider@cox.net. (2-13)

\$1.30 a word. Send ads to classifieds@anabaptistworld.org. For information about display ads or online advertising, see anabaptistworld.org/ads. To inquire about display ads or online advertising, email advertising@anabaptistworld.org or call 316-283-3670.

Obituaries

obituaries@anabaptistworld.org

Donald R. Penner

Donald Ray Penner, 95, of North Newton, Kan., died April 3, 2021, at Kidron Bethel Village. He was born Jan. 17, 1926, to Dan and Marie (Boese) Penner.



Penner

He married Kathryn Bachman on Dec. 9, 1949.

He was a farmer, worked in manufacturing, and spent most of his career in data processing, retiring from Hay and Forage in 1991. He was very involved in activities at First Mennonite Church of Newton. His love of music and airplanes

brought him great enjoyment. Having family and friends around him brought him great joy and comfort.

He enjoyed a long and productive life. Even as age bore down on him, his body became frail and his eyesight failed, he felt blessed to be alive. His graceful acceptance of his frailties in his declining years gave those who loved him comfort.

Survivors include his wife, Kathryn; a son, Gary (Lisa) Penner; two daughters, Jeanne (Ralph) Schmidt and Cathy (Greg Bartel) Penner; a sister, Carol (Olin) Claassen; a brother-in-law, Irvin Goertzen; six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his brother, Joe, and sister-in-law, Florene Riesen Penner.

Graveside services were held at Greenwood Cemetery in Newton. Memorial services were held at First Mennonite Church, Newton.

Memorials have been designated for Mennonite Central Committee and First Mennonite Church of Newton.

Gerald L. Hughes

Gerald L. Hughes, 90, of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, died March 21, 2021. He was born Nov. 22, 1930, in Philadelphia.

He spent his teen years in Christiana, Pa., in rural Lancaster County. He attended Andrews Bridge Mennonite Church, was baptized and provided with music opportunities that led to his love for singing and leading congregational hymns. Throughout his high school years he was trained in agriculture and considered farming as a career choice due to being very poor. A member of the Andrews Bridge congregation encouraged him to attend Goshen College in Indiana, where he earned a degree in music education. Later he obtained

a master of education degree in supervision and administration from the University of Pittsburgh.

He met Annabelle Conrad Hughes, who was in Mennonite Voluntary Service in Cleveland, where he spent several summer service



Hughes

assignments during college. After graduating from Goshen College in 1954, they were married and settled in Cleveland.

In Cleveland, he was employed by the Cleveland public schools as a teacher and elementary school principal for 33 years. He was very active with

Lee Heights Community Church, which he and Annabelle helped start with founders Vern and Helen Miller. There he served as music minister, choir director and adult Sunday school teacher for 40 years. He also served on many church committees, with Ohio Mennonite Conference, Mennonite Central Committee, High Aim and as president of the Goshen College Alumni Board. He received the Culture for Service Award from Goshen College.

He was a proud member of the world-renowned Cleveland Orchestra Chorus for 53 years, performing and traveling in many countries. He blessed many people with his baritone voice by singing at churches, weddings, funerals, Mennonite conventions and conferences. Through his kind and humble manner, he was always a wonderful example of genuine Christian love and life.

Survivors include his wife of 66 years, Annabelle; four daughters, Jeri Ann (James) Waltrip, Eleanor (Steve) Armen, Carla (Crandall) Miller and Sharon (Gordon Faith) Hughes; a brother, Ted Hughes; a sister, Estelle Hayes; and eight grandchildren.

Erma Yoder Lehman

Erma Yoder Lehman, 91, of Newport News, Va., died in her home April 1, 2021. She was born July 28, 1929, to Harvey and Alta (Kennel) Yoder in Newport News.



Lehman

She married Paul Lehman of Harrisonburg on June 25, 1949. Together they were involved in raising their young family, in their growing church on Huntington Avenue and as owners of a Christian bookstore in downtown Newport News. From 1964 to 1973, she and

Paul served as dorm parents at Good Shepherd School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. They returned to Africa in 1980 as host couple at the Mennonite Guest House in Nairobi, Kenya, and stayed until 1991. Fulfilling a longtime dream, she and Paul

bought a house overlooking the Warwick River and lived there in active retirement for almost 30 years.

She had a gift for connecting with people and is remembered as a caring and supportive listener. She was a person of prayer and devotion to God. Her dorm boys were precious to her, and to this day many consider "Mrs. Lehman" a special mom. Her gift of hospitality was well known, and more than anything she loved a table full of people in her home sharing a meal together.

Survivors include two children, Wayne (Sheryl) Lehman and Lewi/Lois (Clayton) Blosser; two sisters, Sarah Marie Weaver and Twila Brunk; six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 71 years, Paul, in December 2020; and by two brothers, John David and Chris Yoder.

Fae A. Miller

Fae A. Miller, 97, of Orrville, Ohio, died April 5, 2021, at the home of her niece, Rebecca and Arlin Geiser, following a period of declining health. She was born July 8, 1923, to Solomon and Ida E. (Miller) Miller.

She received her RN degree at Lancaster General Hospital in Pennsylvania, her bachelor of science degree at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and her master's degree in African studies at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh.

She was a woman of faith in God and spent her life serving others. She served for some 35 years as a medical missionary in Somalia and South Sudan under Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Mennonite Central Committee. She loved telling the stories of her time on the mission field and of her love for the people there. After retiring from mission work, she worked in several Ohio hospitals, taught African studies at Wayne College in Orrville and volunteered with Meals on Wheels.

She was an active member of Orrville Mennonite Church, was involved with her large family and had many friends in many places. She was an avid world traveler as long as she was able.

Survivors include three sisters, Kathryn (the late Glenn) Hollopeter of Medina, Lena (Robert) Wenger of Wisconsin, and Ida G. Byer of Wooster; and a brother-in-law, Paul E. Thomas of Kidron.

She was preceded in death by five brothers, Monroe, Roy, Melvin, Clarence and infant Solomon IV; and a sister, Irene Thomas.

A family graveside service was held at the East Union Mennonite Church cemetery.

John Richard Martin

John Richard Martin, 92, of Harrisonburg, Va., died March 23, 2021, at Virginia Mennonite

Retirement Community. He was born Sept. 2, 1928, to Perry S. and Annie Wenger Martin in Harrisonburg.

On March 31, 1956, he married Marian Stover Landis of Blooming Glen, Pa. She preceded him in death in 2016. In 2018, he married Evelyn Jost Martin.

He earned degrees from Eastern Mennonite College, Goshen Biblical Seminary, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and Lancaster Theological Seminary.

In 1957, he was ordained to the ministry at Woodridge Mennonite Church, Washington, D.C. He pastored there three years along with serving as associate executive secretary of the National Service Board for Religious Objectors. He later pastored Neffsville Mennonite Church in Pennsylvania for 10 years. Then he served on the faculty of Eastern Mennonite College and Seminary. He taught college Bible for seven



Martin

years and then served as seminary registrar and professor of church ministries for 18 years. During his years of ministry, he served on a number of denominational boards and programs, including director of 1-W Services, moderator of Virginia Mennonite

Conference, president of Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries and president of Mennonite Broadcasts.

He authored four books as well as articles for various periodicals.

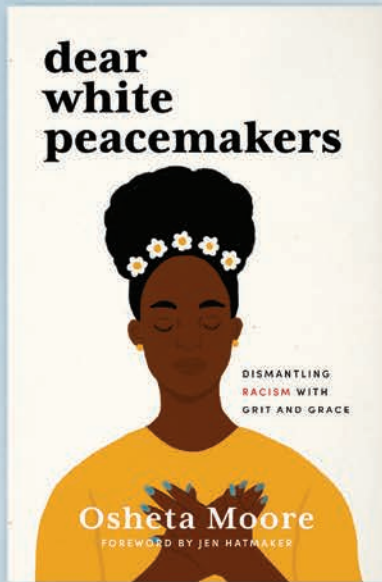
Survivors include his wife, Evelyn Jost Martin; three children, Don R. (Barbara) Martin of Harrisonburg, Lee (Peg) Martin of Kimball, W.Va., and Ann (Jim Stutzman) Martin of Lancaster, Pa.; and seven grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his eight siblings, Robert, J. Weldon, Mary King, Virginia Derstine, Ruth Harnish, Margaret Weaver, Perry Sanford, and Ralph.

Memorial services were livestreamed from Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg. The burial was private. Memorial contributions may be made to the John R. and Marian S. Martin Seminary Scholarship at Eastern Mennonite Seminary or the Compassion Fund at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community.

Send obituaries to obituaries@anabaptistworld.org or Anabaptist World, PO Box 568, Newton, KS 67114. From your text, we will prepare an obituary, up to 350 words, compliant with our style. The fee is \$50. Send check or pay online at anabaptistworld.org/obituaries.

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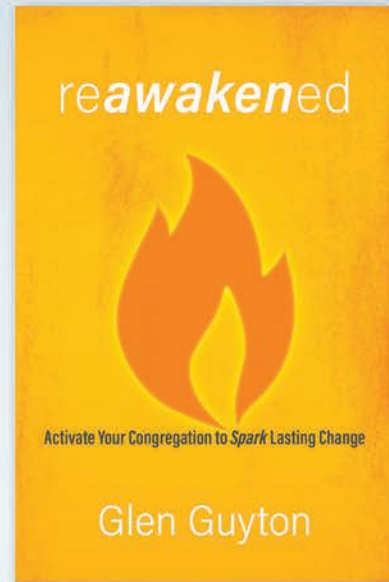


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Dismantling Racism with Grit and Grace

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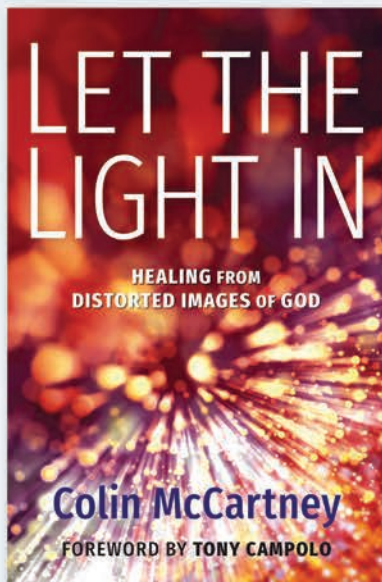


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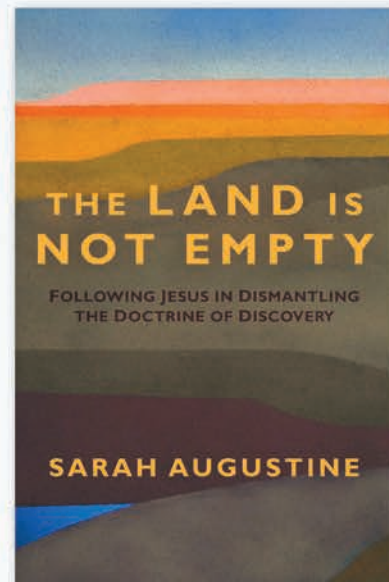


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For 500 years, the church has disenfranchised indigenous peoples. The Doctrine of Discovery continues its devastation, but the good news of Jesus means there is still hope for the righting of wrongs.