

Evangel

"Living Into God's Future" at Albany-Corvallis 2007

By Susan McCarthy Palmer

What does the future have in store for the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference? More importantly, what does God have in store for us?

Discerning, planning and preparing for that future has been the task at hand for the Structure and Vision Task Force (SVTF) since it was first formed two years ago, and will be the focus of the PNMC's annual meeting, Albany-Corvallis 2007, being held June 22-24, 2007 at Albany Mennonite Church, Albany, OR.

In keeping with 2007's theme, "Living into God's Future," the SVTF will present its latest recommendations for stepping into the Lord's plans for our conference and seek affirmation and acceptance from delegates of all PNMC congregations.

After spending the past year considering recommendations made by the assembly at Mt. View 2006 and meeting with more than 125 people at 12 different locations throughout the conference

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Musician Tony Brown

Pre-Gathering Concert to Benefit PNMC Pastor Health Care Program

According to a recent MCUSA survey, the median size of Mennonite congregations in the U.S. is about 60 members. This same survey indicated that small churches cannot afford the health insurance to cover their pastors and families and more than 5% of MCUSA pastors do not have any health insurance.

Currently in the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference (PNMC), there are four pastors that do not have insurance coverage. We anticipate that the number next year will be higher as some of our Hispanic congregations fill their pastoral positions and pastor's spouses retire and lose the family insurance coverage.

As part of the PNMC Vision, the PNMC Board of Directors has established a Pastoral Health Insurance Task Force to develop a plan and budget to see that all PNMC pastors have basic insurance coverage. Vision Funds would be raised to

help pay monthly health insurance premiums as well as establish a fund to provide help with catastrophic health expenses.

Last year, PNMC set aside funds (\$10,000) and asked PNMC members to make contributions to the Sharing Fund which would be used to help with catastrophic health expenses. Funds are now needed to provide insurance premium support. What does this mean in dollars? Depending on the insurance company and a \$2,500 deductible, the premium for a 40-44 year old pastor and his spouse could run \$356/month and for the pastor and family, \$461/month.

The kick-off event for this Vision Funding drive will be *Tony Brown in Concert*. The benefit performance will be held at the Venetian Theater in downtown Albany at 7:30pm, June 21, prior to the PNMC conference on Friday, June 22 at Albany Mennonite Church. Tickets for the concert are \$25 for adults and \$15 for children ages 12 and under and may be purchased when registering for conference or by calling the Albany Mennonite Church (541) 926-1443. There will be no reserved seating so buy your tickets early.

A Word from Our Moderator

ANTICIPATION

As a member of the family of God, it seems we are always somewhat in a state of anticipation. As you read this, we will all have looked forward to and experienced the sorrow of Good Friday and the marvelous joy of Easter and our Risen Lord. Now we are in expectation of Pentecost and of celebrating God's wonderful gift to us of the Holy Spirit!

As members of the family of Mennonites, we are anticipating our annual coming together as the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference. This year we will be gathering in Albany June 22-24th. Our hosts at Albany and Corvallis have been working on the planning for the meetings since late last year. The Youth Pastors at the local area Oregon churches are organizing activities for our conference youth. Todd Lehman's Program Committee has been creating our times of worship together. The members of the Structure and Vision Task Force are eagerly anticipating the reporting and affirmation of their work over the past two years. Don Bacher is excitingly organizing our first ever benefit concert with the extremely talented Tony Brown. And I can probably safely assume that James Krabill, our speaker, has been thinking seriously about what it is that God is asking him to impart to us.

And then, shortly after we return from Albany, as members of Mennonite Church USA, we'll be showing that we indeed "know the way to San Jose!" All across our country, plans are being made for fellowship, sharing stories, worship, music, education – and even delegate sessions – July 2-7 in California. In the Pacific Northwest and Southwest Conferences, congregations are preparing banners for display in San Jose'. What is the banner from your church going to share about what God is doing in your congregation? Mennonite Women of the West are busily planning and making decorations for the evening banquet gathering of Mennonite Women USA. Rod Stafford of Portland Mennonite has been helping to plan the worship for San Jose; Terry Rediger of Menno Mennonite is on the Planning Committee; and Judy and Don Bacher are organizing the Children's activities. We will have PNMC representatives telling about the work being done in our conference to ensure that all of our pastors and their families have health insurance coverage. Many of you will be delegates from your congregations and others of you will be the wonderful chaperones of some of the 5000+ Youth who be in attendance!

As we anticipate all of the opportunities we have for fellowship and worship, we are also in prayer. We pray for those who are doing the active planning and work, for those who furnish the facilities and food, for those who plan the seminars and business session, for the safety for those who will be traveling, but most of all we pray for God's blessing upon our plans and work. We pray that the Holy Spirit will join us – in our local congregations, at our PNMC meetings and in San Jose. I invite each of you to add your prayers!



Charlotte L. Hardt

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Post Easter Thoughts

“In theory, this should be the most tumultuous week in the Christian year...” responded a person to me during Easter Week. This comment jarred me and reminded me that indeed this is true. It was a week that revolutionized Jerusalem of the day and would change the world. The week that begins with promise (Jesus enters Jerusalem with praise) takes a turn downward, but ends with the hope of the resurrection.



In the last few months I have been reading some young authors who are trying to capture the radical and revolutionary call of Jesus upon our lives as Christians in this world. I read Irresistible Revolution by Shane Claiborne late last year. I am currently reading a book by a young Portland author Donald Miller, Blue Like Jazz. The other on my shelf is by the pastor of Imago Dei, a young church in Portland, Jesus in the Margins.

The words of these books are fresh—*not new*, but fresh—in their call for this generation. I don’t like it when people make big pronouncements, so that is not what I am doing. I will make an observation. It seems that this generation is experiencing a “renewal” that will have an impact on the church of the future. What is encouraging to me is that this “renewal” is one that does not separate the experience of new life in Christ from discipleship, such as taking the Sermon on the Mount seriously as a way to live.

Heather Zydek a former editor of the Christian magazine *Relevant* gives this description of this new “movement”: “We want to get back to the roots of Christianity, to the essence of Christianity, which is about service to those in need, sacrifice, denial of self for others—it’s about (Jesus saying) pick up your cross and follow me.”

At a recent presentation of the Oregon Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society, well known Mennonite “Historian” John Ruth gave a short talk and slide presentation on the beginnings of Anabaptism, the spiritual roots of the Mennonite Church. Though I knew the history it was inspiring as John shared stories and history more as testimony of those early faithful Anabaptists, rather than just information.

During his talk John Ruth referred to how the faith of the Anabaptists was viewed as “radical” even by others who were a part of the Reformation period. I don’t remember if John Ruth used the word “revolutionary” along with “radical”, but it was implied. “Revolutionary” was used in the sense that what is being taught and proposed would change (revolutionize) the church, and return it back to its roots (radical). The early Anabaptists were basically seeking to be faithful, and not to compromise their faith. This was a faith rooted in new life in Christ, and following Jesus in radical discipleship that in that day could cost a person their life.

I am not trying to make a direct comparison across almost five hundred years. But, I do sense in these voices of today a desire to keep focused on the truly radical nature of what it means to believe in and follow Jesus Christ.

That’s what it is about isn’t it?

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Donald Miller". The script is cursive and fluid.

to address questions and concerns, the SVTF has arrived at four main recommendations for the future, which will be presented for consideration this year. They include:

Shifting the character of shared gatherings. Currently delegate sessions at the annual meeting have focused on processing budgets, nominations and decision-making. Under the new system, gatherings would focus more on celebration of what God is doing among, and discernment of that toward which God is calling us. The new system would establish a *conference-wide communication council* that would give opportunities for any person within the Conference to share their views and contribute to conference-wide discernment, agenda, communication quality and shared ministry.

Establishing Passion-Based Ministries. Under the new system, PNMC would move away from the current centralized committee structure to one that connects and enables congregations and leaders to fulfill their unique roles and callings. Those with shared passions and visions would be enabled by Conference to connect with one another and develop resources, to be known as Passion-Based Ministries. There would also be permanent teams of individuals charged with overseeing Conference-wide services such as licensing and ordination, financial management, personnel discernment, theological education and pastoral development, and Conference vision and planning.

Clarifying and focusing the role of the PNMC Board. Given shifting realities in organizations, the proposed structure has a leadership model which develops empowered and accountable board of fewer people with specific board gifts for vision and leadership to give attention to governance and vision development. The Board will keep the conference attentive to the implementation of its mission and vision as it interprets the constituency needs and requests and facilitate communication from the Board, through the staff to Passion-Based Ministries, congregational leaders, and persons in the pew.

Creation of a Conference Executive. The Conference Executive would lead and collaborate with the conference ministers in their pastoral responsibilities, and be the hub of the PNMC operational wheel. He or she would also be responsible to oversee PNMC office operations and to interface with PNMC conference ministries, as well as MC USA and other Mennonite service agencies.

Clarifying the roles of Conference staff and empowering them to carry out the various ministries and services of the Conference. This move would clarify the role of officers, staff and chairpersons and, through appropriate accountability, release them to carry out the mission and vision of PNMC as expressed by the Board through Conference policy.

This Year's Keynote Speaker

The keynote speaker for this year's gathering will be James Krabill. A popular writer and dynamic missions speaker, Krabill captures audiences with stories from his years living in West Africa and his passion for the global mission of the church. He offers his insights on how the North American church can learn from the church around the world and, through the message of the gospel, shares the interwoven callings of the church to evangelism and peace.

Registration materials and other detailed information for this year's gathering are available from your church leadership.

Bring Your Banners to Albany-Corvallis 2007

As you read this, we hope that many of you across Conference have been hard at work with needle, thread and other creative materials, fashioning banners for San Jose 2007. As co-host conference with Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference of the national gathering, Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference congregations have been invited to make banners that show how they "Live the Call."

So that more people can enjoy the handiwork of our churches, we're asking that everyone bring their banners to Albany-Corvallis 2007 for display there also. Please contact Judy Bacher (bacher@proaxis.com or 541-926-2789), if you can, before coming, so she can plan the appropriate space needed to attractively display your work.

The banners should be 3' x 4' and designed to hang vertically. They will be hung from a wire, so should be constructed to make that possible. The wire is already in place, so banners should either have strips that can loop over the wire, or the banners will be hung by hooks. For more information on these San Jose 2007 requirements, contact Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower at clareann@peacemaking.com or 559-281-5664.

WWJD? No Easy Answers on Mexican/ U.S. Border

By Matt Friesen

Is it legal to be Christian? What do Christians on the US/Mexican border do when they encounter someone struggling to survive knowing that to stop and give them aid might be a felony? What do Christians do when “acting as a Christian” has been outlawed? How would Jesus respond, and what does it mean to follow Him in this specific type of wilderness?

These are just some of the questions that people who live along the border between Mexico and Arizona were discussing when a team of people from MC USA's Peace & Justice Support Network visited them from Feb. 15-18.

Jack Knox, pastor of Salem Mennonite Church, and PNMC Peace and Justice Committee chair Matt Friesen (Matt also pastors Albany Mennonite Church) traveled with the Network's leadership team for their semi-annual meeting and learning tour, during which they visited many ministries trying to fulfill Jesus' call to peace and justice in a land living dead center in the midst of one of the most hotly debated immigrant issues of our day.

The team visited *Frontera de Christo*, a Presbyterian Church ministry among eight church pairs that reach across the border from California to Texas, and Mennonite Central Committee staff at the Zuni Ave. Peace Center in Tucson. Located next door to Shalom Mennonite Church, the Peace Center offers such community programs as the *Zuni Ave. Bike Club* where neighborhood kids can learn bike repair and build their own bikes and the *Girls with Tools* program that teaches young girls basic home repair and use of hand tools.

The group also ate with migrants at a soup kitchen and heard their stories as they considered crossing illegally into the US and visited with the director of a drug and alcohol recovery program. He said he was forced to enter the program by his family four years ago and afterwards decided to stay and raise his family at this in-patient facility.

The team also visited and prayed for healing at the wall being built along the border, talked with a ranch-family who regularly encounters exhausted immigrants crossing their lands and, on Sunday morning, each visited a different congregation in the Phoenix area to share greetings and tell stories about our experiences.

Reflecting on his experiences there, Matt wonders, "Are there some simple things we can do as congregations to become more aware of the real experiences of immigrants and move beyond the bumper-sticker arguments about immigration? Could we become more sensitive to the people beyond the politics? Could we develop more intentional relationships with our CIHAN sisters and brothers? These questions have (no) easy answers, but in returning from this trip I bring with me a much deeper appreciation for those who have the courage to be Christian in a place where that is not always an easy thing to do."

Walking the Path of Peace: A Journey's Steps Outlined

By Susan McCarthy Palmer

What does it mean to really "walk the talk" when we speak of peace? How can we realistically apply it to our lives and allow it to motivate what we do, say, not only think, in this world?

Such were the questions that led to "Walking the Path of Peace", a conference co-sponsored by PNMC's Peace and Justice Committee and MC USA's Peace & Justice Support Network from October 26 - 28 at Albany Mennonite Church, Albany, OR.

Some 130 individuals from a wide cross-section of states, including Oregon, Washington, Montana, Utah, New Mexico and even Pennsylvania attended the gathering, which offered workshops on topics geared not only to get people thinking but acting on the issues of peace in our day.

Ched Myers, co-founder and board member of the Word and World School for Faith-Based Activities,



was the keynote speaker for the event. Myers spoke out of his wealth of experience working for over two decades working with peace and justice organizations and movements such as American Friends Service Committee, the Pacific Concerns Resource Center, and the Pacific Life Communities.

Perry Yoder, an Old Testament professor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, IN, served as the conference bible study leader.

The gathering provided "a great opportunity for networking, joyful connecting and reconnecting on the topics presented," Cathy Brenneman, spokesperson for the PNMC Peace & Justice Committee, said. "People were encouraged to identify ways that they walk this path of peace, as well as how we can help others, support those who struggle along the path and how to make the path accessible to all." Both Myers and Yoder "gave us much to chew on and mull over", she noted, while workshop speakers "gave us opportunity to see peace in action all around us, as well as ways to be involved in new ways in the peacemaking process."

Local individuals who also spoke at the event included Jon Yoder, pastor of Pacific Covenant Mennonite Church, Canby, OR; Joe Blowers, 2005 Gard Hanks Peace & Justice Award winner, of Portland, OR; Sharon Gisler, Director, Albany Peaceseekers, Albany, OR; Sharlee Johnson, Executive Director, Linn-Benton Mediation Services, Albany, OR; and Cathleen Hockman-Wert, co-author of *Simply in Season: A World Community Cookbook*. A study guide for *Simply in Season* which deals with peace and justice topics as they relate to the food we eat was recently published by Herald Press.

Workshops covered such diverse topics as restorative justice, preparing youth to choose peace, military veterans choosing peace, immigration, strategies for peacemaking, peace and mission: siblings or rivals; learning peace principles through drumming, rhythm and story; justice issues related to global warming and other environmental concerns; what if Christians stopped killing; creation care ethics; organizing a local community peace organization; dispute resolution; eating choices and the work of peace and justice; and front lines peacemaking in the Middle East.

Mission Banks Help Children Be More Aware of Their World

By Ryan Miller

Plastic globe-shaped mission banks, barely five inches in diameter, have helped congregations reach around the world, Evergreen Mennonite Church included. The Bellevue, Washington, congregation helped children in the church remember a family who recently left for service in Africa, wrote Darcie Cooper, an Evergreen member, in an e-mail. "The globe bank is a tangible lesson of the greatness of the globe," Cooper said. "The children can see where their friends are and are aware of the use of the funds collected.

Included with the banks are worship resources and teaching tools for potential projects. The suggested Spring 2007 project is the Paris Mennonite Centre's mission of education and hospitality in Burkina Faso. The project supports bible translation and audio recording of stories about Jesus, as well as the purchase and distribution of the recordings and solar-powered tape recorders in the country. To participate in the program and order banks for your congregation, contact MMN at www.mennonitemission.net, mission-bank@mennonitemission.net, or 1-866-866-2872.

Since Mennonite Mission Network reintroduced the globe-shaped banks in Spring 2006, more than 8400 children in 328 congregations have raised nearly \$53,000 for Mennonite Mission Network and other ministries across the church.

Aberdeen Marks 100 Years

The First Mennonite Church of Aberdeen, Idaho will celebrate its 100th anniversary on Saturday and Sunday, June 23 and 24, 2007. It was the first church organized in Aberdeen. The theme will be "Faith and Community -- Through the Years". The Centennial Celebration will be held during Aberdeen Days along with other community events. Sunday, services of praise and thanksgiving, along with a fellowship meal will be held. Info: 208-397-4239

Project Coordinator Needed

Western Mennonite School, Salem, OR, is looking for a volunteer Project Coordinator to oversee construction of an 8,000 square-foot Academic Center. Duties include overseeing construction to ensure Western's needs and requirements are being met, and working with architects, general contractor, and subcontractors to help in decisions and scheduling. Position requires administrative and management skills, field supervisory experience, and an understanding of construction costs and schedules. For more information please contact Darrel White at 866-343-9378.

Many Hands Make Light Work: PNMC Congregants and Students Help MTC Build Mexican Parsonage

By Susan McCarthy Palmer

With Heidi Brubaker, Julianne Johnson, Phyllis Dorsing and Richard Micklewright

The weather was good, the cooperation even better, and fellowship the best when a team of nine people from the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference (PNMC), under the leadership of PNMC's Mexico Transitional Committee (MTC), joined hands with pastors and congregants from two Mexican Mennonite churches to erect a parsonage for a growing congregation at Campo 77, a small community of 2, 200 located just 30 minutes outside the city of Obregon in northwestern Mexico.

The work project was the first to the Sonora region in approximately 10 years according to Phyllis Dorsing, one of nine people who traveled to Mexico to help the Mexican churches from February 4-17. The team also included members of the Obregon and Campo 77 congregations; Gary Eichelberger from Filer, ID; Richard and Nathan Micklewright of Sweet Home, OR; Curt and Phyllis Dorsing from Warden, WA; Warren and Jody Haury from Salem, OR; and Kala Talbot and Aubree Davis, students at Western Mennonite School.

Housed in the homes of Obregon church members, who fed their visiting workers amply and well on traditional Mexican fare, the team from the Pacific Northwest joined hands with their Mexican brothers and sisters, pouring concrete, laying a foundation, and building brick walls for the three-bedroom parsonage. After their 15-day visit, Mexican congregants laid the concrete floor, finished the walls and, literally, raised the roof. At press time, the house was in "move in" condition! It was a job well done by all concerned, both south and north of the border!

In addition to their work on the parsonage, the visiting team also participated in church services at both congregations, some sharing their testimonies, children's stories and messages from the Bible with the aid of interpreters. They also brought gifts for both children and adults.

"It was really fun to see how excited the kids were" to receive Spanish-language story books, coloring books, activity books, pencils and stickers, said Phyllis Dorsing. "Gary (Eichelberger) had a big grin on his face as he let the kids choose something to take home. I think he enjoyed it as much as they did!"

Adults received used reading glasses, sets of kitchen towels and potholders, while pastors each received a Bible study book of some kind (Study bible, concordance or bible dictionary) as well as a Spanish-language hymn book. "One pastor told us that Spanish hymnbooks are getting very hard to find," Phyllis noted. "The song leader is often the only person with a hymnbook, and sometimes even *they* don't have one."

The 12-hour bus ride to Obregon and Campo 77 was well worth it, according to all who participated in the outreach. "I was so excited to have this opportunity to serve and to represent our school in Mexico," said Kala Talbot, who along with classmate Aubree Davis, has a serious interest in mission work. Aubree, who had done mission and service work in Mexico before, felt "honored" to be able to go on this trip, as well, and anticipated her time there with great joy.

Having the students join the team was important both to team leader Curt Dorsing, as well as Western Mennonite executive director Darrel White.

"So often the younger generation doesn't get a chance to go to the mission field,"



Nehemiah's wall builders have nothing on this smiling group of laborers (both US and Mexican) who spent 15 days building a parsonage and encouraging lives in northwestern Mexico.

said Dorsing. "And sometimes older people who have the time to give can't go to more distant locations. Mexico is close enough to get the kids and older folks together for a mission experience."

"Western has a significant focus on missions through our mini-terms and chapel focus," noted White. "These Mexico work trips are one way for us to partner with PNMC to further our joint mission." Western Mennonite School has a strong tradition of encouraging students to participate in mission work, said its communications director Heidi Brubaker. "In the past three years more than 11% of Western's graduating seniors have gone on to serve in Africa, South and Central America, China, and various states in the United States before attending college. To help students participate in the Mexico work trip, WMS teachers work with the students and their schedules and the school pays their trip expenses."

The parsonage will house Pastor Juan Ruiz, his wife, and two children. Pastor Ruiz is the minister of Bethel

Material Resource Center Opens in OR

The Pacific Northwest now has its own Mennonite Central Committee Material Resource Center. This Center will receive, pack and ship material resources gathered from the churches of the PNMC, and is located in a barn on the campus of Zion Mennonite Church, 6124 S. Whiskey Hill Road, Hubbard, OR 97032. 503-651-2274.

The new center hopes to give PNMC congregations easier access to a central delivery point for their "gifts in kind", greater efficiency of transportation of materials, as well as hopefully, a greater sense of ownership in MCC, its coordinator Bob Buxman said.

Delivery Guidelines are as follows:

Prior to delivery, call the Zion Church office, inform the receptionist of *date* and *time* of delivery, indicating if help is needed.

Delivery days: Tuesday through Friday, in the morning.

Delivery Procedure: Go to the church office, pick up key, unload material resources at the Center, fill out form (located in the Center), lock the door, return key to office.

Bike Tour to Assist Disabled

Summer is fast approaching and, with it, the urge to get out on your bicycle and enjoy the Oregon countryside. Why not help others in the process? Join Bike Oregon's Willamette Valley for its 2007 fundraiser to benefit Oregon Mennonite Residential Services from August 12-17, 2007.

Participants will travel along rivers, lakes, through covered bridges, and even take a ferry ride across the Willamette, all to help the developmentally disabled people assisted in group homes operated by OMRS and West Coast MCC throughout the state.

Cost of the tour is \$350 per person. For further information, contact Brent Kauffman (kauffmanjb@netzero.com or 541-409-3336) or Dave Miller (darami@bendbroadband.com or 541-974-1012).

Help Us Help Ethiopia

Mountain View Mennonite Church in Kalispell, MT, has begun financially supporting indigenous Ethiopian missionaries who are traveling to the Ethiopian/Sudanese border to plant churches. "This is a great opportunity for us to give directly to missionaries who already understand the language and the culture," says Jeryl Hollinger, pastor of Mountain View. Also, financial support for a local missionary is costs just \$600 to \$1000 per year.

Money received will be transferred directly to the Meserite Kristos Mennonite Church missions committee in Ethiopia, who will distribute it to missionaries.

Other individuals or congregations are invited to participate. Contact Jeryl at 406-755-8772 or jhollinger@centurytel.net.

Conference Calendar

May 31-June 1, 2007 - WMS Spring Concerts. Info: 503-363-2000.

June 15, 2007 - WMS Alumni BBQ. Info: 503-363-2000.

June 16, 2007 - WMS Commencement. Info: 503-363-2000.

June 22-24, 2007 - Albany-Corvallis 2007, PNMC's annual meeting, this year at Albany Mennonite Church, Albany, OR.

June 23-24, 2007 - Aberdeen Mennonite 100th Anniversary Celebration, Aberdeen, ID

July 2-7, 2007 - San Jose 2007- Biennial Churchwide Convention of MC USA, San Jose, CA. Info: www.sanjose2007.org.

August 12-17, 2007 - Bike Oregon's Willamette Valley Ride to benefit Oregon Mennonite Residential Services. Registration/Information: Brent Kauffman, kauffmanjb@netzero.com, 541-409-3336 OR Dave Miller, darami@bendbroadband.com, 541-974-1012.

October 5-7, 2007 - Lebanon Mennonite 50th Anniversary Celebration, Lebanon, OR.

October 13, 2007 - Oregon Mennonite Festival for World Relief, Albany, OR

Have an event to list in our coming events calendar? Send info to [Sue Palmer at office@pnmc.org](mailto:office@pnmc.org) Submission deadlines on Page 2.