



**Mennonite  
Mission  
Network**

The mission agency of  
Mennonite Church USA

FEBRUARY 2010

# Beyond OURSELVES



**Can I  
trust  
you?**

**Breaking down  
walls of racism  
in South Africa**

## Understanding the living Christ

Xola Skosana (p. 6) challenges me. How do I read Christ and stories of Christ's life? Do I, a member of a dominant culture, assume that I can understand Jesus through that cultural lens?

Lent is an appropriate time for this question. As Jesus spent 40 days away from the world as he understood it, so all of us might take this time to remove ourselves enough from our own experiences to reexamine how we receive the living Christ.

Many North Americans try to distance themselves from **the broken Jesus** through distractions and theologizing. Is it essential that North American Mennonites—especially those born into privilege due to skin color, gender, social status or wealth—experience Jesus' brokenness? I believe so. Without this understanding, we are in danger of reducing Christ's radical teachings to bumper sticker slogans on speeding cars. Recognizing Christ's brokenness may help us notice places where injustices are codified into systems and hidden from obvious sight. And it might allow us to reframe mission to missional—from something sent faraway to a process of seeing God's work where we are.

What kind of partnership ministries, then, can develop when **the universal Jesus** takes us through the dividing wall between oppressors and the oppressed? What walls does Jesus call us to demolish? What partnerships beckon us to greater faithfulness and joy?

And can we truly know **the personal Jesus** without recognizing the filters that alter our assumptions of what we might hear, see or feel?

Let us, this season, commit to spending time listening to one another and to God, that we might identify this Jesus who holds all things together in his reconciling love (Colossians 1:17-20) and how we are called to join God's work in the world.

Ryan Miller

**Correction:** Due to an editor's error, Corrine Jager's name was misspelled in the October 2009 *Beyond Ourselves*.

### Feedback

▶ Let us know what you think of this issue. What inspires you? Engages you? Infuriates you? [BeyondOurselves@MennoniteMission.net](mailto:BeyondOurselves@MennoniteMission.net)

## These kids sold fruit—how might you give?

At *Iglesia Cristiana Ebenezer*, three young children challenged their congregation to give abundantly.

Last winter, Jose David Espinoza, his sister, Denise, and their cousin, Emilinne Aguilar, of Apopka, Fla., saw a television program featuring children in need around the world. They begged their parents to help them get involved in helping others around the world.

For several years now, Ebenezer has been focused on giving through Mennonite

Mission Network's mission bank program. Children, and older members of the church, too, have committed to filling their blue plastic globe banks with change and dollar bills in order to support ministries around the world in places like Benin, Ecuador and Spain.

These three kids were re-inspired to fill their banks. They began to sell fresh fruit cups outside the church each Sunday, each week, setting aside seed money for the next week's fruit and donating the rest to ministries in Burkina Faso. Since they began selling fruit, the children have raised more than \$350.

These children illustrated to their church what it means to shun a preoccupation with scarcity, and live with a spirit of abundance.

Your congregation can join the 375 congregations from Mennonite Church USA using mission banks. **Watch your church mailboxes for the latest mission bank project on ministries in Miami.**



▶ The globe-shaped banks will be **offered free** through March 31 for children in grades K-6. To order banks and teaching tool packets, call 1-866-866-2872 or visit [www.MennoniteMission.net/MissionBank](http://www.MennoniteMission.net/MissionBank).



Emilinne Aguilar, Jose David Espinoza and Denise Espinoza sell fruit to fill their mission banks.

Photo by Laurie Oswald Robinson

## New Web site

▶ Looking for a service assignment? Do you want to order mission banks or find out more about mission work in South Africa?

Visit our new Web site:

[www.MennoniteMission.net](http://www.MennoniteMission.net)



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Cover: South African pastors Xola Skosana (left) and Leon Oosthuizen have worked to break down racism. Cover photos by Ryan Miller; illustration by David Fast.



# THE THIRD RACE: One in God's kingdom

Jesus' mission was guided by a single, all-encompassing theme: the kingdom of God. At the heart of this new kingdom, Jesus proclaimed, was the creation of a new humanity.

David Bosch referred to this new humanity as a "third race."

This third race was described by Paul the apostle as a new peoplehood. They are a people whose primary identity was defined neither by Jewish ethnicity nor Gentile roots, but by becoming members of God's new family through the salvation of and adoption by Jesus Christ.

This new community would be characterized by its acceptance, embrace and generosity toward the other. The boundaries of national origin or ethnic differences used to exclude and alienate would be superseded by a new kinship as siblings in God's new family.

However, racism persists in our society and, sadly, also in the Christian movement in North America. The gap between our preaching and our practice clouds the credibility of our witness. We announce the good news, but then seem to perpetuate the bad news of separation, discrimination and intolerance.

Mennonites, more importantly, also are burdened with a fidelity gap. If we are, indeed, called to follow Jesus in life, then racism is a failure to be faithful to Jesus.

When we allow ourselves to participate in the racism that infects our society, or to accommodate ourselves to its pernicious effects, then we signal that we have not fully understood the plan of God and the message of Jesus for a new humanity.

**The third race are a people whose primary identity was defined neither by Jewish ethnicity nor Gentile roots, but by becoming members of God's new family through Jesus Christ.**

When we acquiesce in the barriers of race or ethnicity that separate us, and tolerate the sinful separation from siblings in the body of faith, we diminish and distort the gospel.

In South Africa, courageous Christians named as heretical the theological legitimacy that the Dutch Reformed Church gave to the state's policies of apartheid. In time, this faithful witness helped dismantle segregation.

A decade and a half on, the church in South Africa is learning that eradicating policies of segregation does not by itself construct communities of compassion, care and inclusion. Earlier, U.S. churches discovered that the success of the civil rights movement did not make for a civil society.

Changes in laws alone do not realize God's purposes—a new humanity unfettered by intolerance and discrimination.

In South Africa, our partners are working to overcome apartheid's legacy of separation, inequality and diminishment. In the United States, we embrace anti-racism as one of the four priorities

of our Mennonite Church USA. Together with sisters and brothers around the world, we are on a journey of healing the wounds of our past failures in fidelity.

We have much to learn and to teach each other; mostly, we have a common need to be guided by God's Spirit as we seek to follow Jesus truly. May we encourage and support each other on this journey, and may we be open to the transforming work of God's Spirit.

Stanley W. Green  
Executive Director/CEO  
Mennonite Mission Network



## Continued presence

Join the mission work in Argentina

“I once sat with the late Marcos Esteban, a Toba elder in the Argentine Chaco, and talked through the leaving of another fraternal worker. ‘We have been tied together with a ribbon of friendship, of fraternal bonds,’ Marcos said. ‘We are brothers. Our lives are intertwined. One cannot simply cut the ribbon and throw the shorter end away.’”

—Willis Horst

In 2009, Byrdalene and Willis Horst left the Chaco after 38 years of walking alongside believers with an international Mennonite team. Though they will not always be physically present, the Horsts will not cut their ribbon.

But who will intertwine a new ribbon?

Mennonite Mission Network is looking for pastoral accompaniment workers to join the Mennonite team working with indigenous Toba, Pilagá



Gabino Diarte leads worship in Mala' Lapel, Argentina.

and Mocoví churches in the Chaco. This is a relational ministry with a preference for workers with a strong personal commitment to sharing Christ, and who are open to considering long-term, intercultural mission work.

Contact Ruth Guengerich at [RuthG@MennoniteMission.net](mailto:RuthG@MennoniteMission.net) for more information.

▶ Read more of Horst's reflections online at [BeyondOurselves.MennoniteMission.net](http://BeyondOurselves.MennoniteMission.net).

## Listen: *Shaping Families* offers on-air inspiration

Third Way Media radio program shares transformative story of Mennonite with schizo-affective disorder

Wanda Lindsay was 24 when her illness first developed. That was the year her grandmother and mother both died. Soon after, the voices began. She moved from hospital to hospital seeking help for her schizo-affective disorder, relief from the voices on the television and radio that spoke directly to her, telling her she would soon die.

Eventually, new treatments started her road back to health, but gave her little hope of returning to her former life. She remembers asking God if this was her lot in life—to sit in a rocking chair watching TV, with no way to be a part of the wider world?

God had more in store for her, and the discovery was dramatic.

Lindsay's story of illness, recovery, and diligent work to educate others about mental illness is one of many



featured in *Shaping Families*, a new radio program from Third Way Media that will be broadcast on radio stations across the country. Today, she has a speaking ministry and hopes to open a small bookshop with resources on mental illness. Lindsay, a member of Perkasio (Pa.) Mennonite Church, also was featured in *Shadow Voices: Finding Hope in Mental Illness*, a Third Way Media documentary.

▶ For the rest of Lindsay's story, including audio and video links, and a full list of where to hear *Shaping Families*, visit [www.ThirdWayMedia.org](http://www.ThirdWayMedia.org).

## Protestant props

### French magazine honors Mennonite

Neal Blough, a long-term worker with Mennonite Mission Network, was recently named one of the 100 most influential Protestants in France by *La Vie*, a Catholic weekly magazine.

Blough and his wife, Janie, have been working in France for 34 years. He is a 1972 graduate of the former Bluffton (Ohio) College (now Bluffton University) and holds a masters of divinity degree from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and a doctorate in theology



Photo by Ryan Miller

Neal Blough

from the University of Strasbourg in France. Blough teaches at Vaux-Sur-Seine Evangelical Seminary; the Mennonite theology school in Bienenberg, Switzerland; and the Catholic University of Paris. Neal and Janie also serve on staff at Paris Mennonite Center.

The October 22 issue of *La Vie* commemorated the 500th anniversary of John Calvin's birth and the influence of Protestantism in France. Part of that influence includes Anabaptists.

"Mennonites [in France] have a history as long as that of the Reformed and Lutherans, which is not the case for other Free Church Protestant traditions," said Blough. "In the words of the magazine article, they represent a 'small but essential minority.'"

"Naming Neal to this list underlines the importance of his ecumenical relationships," said Linda Oyer, another long-term Mission Network worker and colleague of Blough's. "[He teaches] a joint course on Reformation history with a Catholic professor and a Reformed professor at the Catholic Institute, and also taught a course on the Catholic-Mennonite dialogue at a Jesuit seminary."

Added Oyer, "It underscores the importance of the Mennonite nonviolent position in the view of the magazine, [and] highlights the place of Mennonites in a larger Protestant France."

"Neal and Janie have embodied a long-term Anabaptist witness in France that has earned them respect and increased their impact as missionaries," said Tim Foley, MMN's director for Europe. "They are convinced, quite rightly, that the Anabaptist vision is a crucial part of the missionary response in post-Christendom Europe."

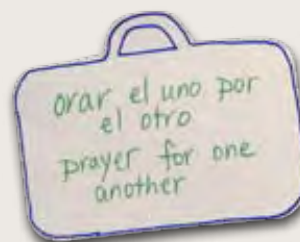
## The arrows go both ways

### Meeting between partners illustrates mutual zeal

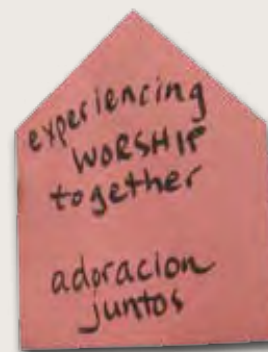
When representatives from VEMZO (*Visión Evangelística y Misionera de la Zona Oeste*—Evangelistic Missionary Vision for the Western Zone) in Argentina and Atlantic Coast Conference in the United States met in October, their goals were clear: a partnership where information, ministries, prayer, and church planting resources benefit everyone involved.



The groups unpacked what has been valued, including,

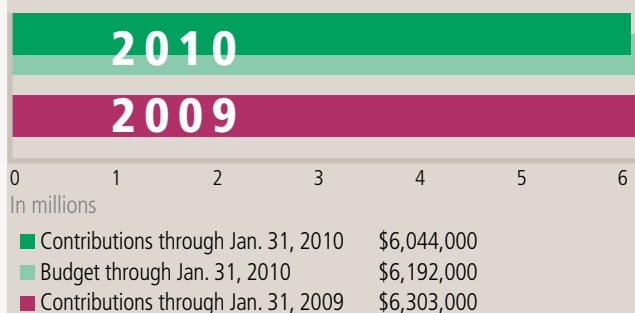


and the myriad ways their churches have been blessed.



Since 2005, VEMZO and ACC have shared practices and spiritual bonds, visions, prayer, gatherings, and grants for ministries, hoping to stir up each other's zeal for outreach and to talk about shared Anabaptist understandings of Jesus.

## Contribution report





Xola Skosana

Photo by Ryan Miller

# Black Easter

Going beyond liberation theology to find a three-dimensional relationship with Jesus

**I**s it not possible that the story of black people is contained in the story of the cross? At Way of Life, we believe the cross of Jesus is big enough to include the story of black people, so we ask the question, “Who is Jesus to black people?” Unless black people ask themselves this question, theology may have a disabling influence in their lives. Too often, we ask the right questions of the wrong audience. We depend on white people for our theology. If you want to address racism, you are going to have to ask black people, “What are you experiencing?”

As a congregation, we have started redefining our theology, and “Black Easter” is part of the process. For the past seven years, beginning with Good Friday, we set aside the whole weekend. We parallel the gruesomeness of Jesus’ death to the horrors of black history. Black Easter attempts to mirror the horrors of being black in a world fascinated with whiteness. We examine anything that black people in South Africa are struggling with, and see if the cross speaks at all to it. We look at the relationship between black culture and Christianity.

In this process, we’ve found that black people must have a three-dimensional relationship with Jesus. We need to move beyond a single dimension and fully explore our relationship with God, enter into it, and probe its depths.

## The broken Jesus

Our relationship with Jesus is, first and foremost, one of identification. It’s a relationship that identifies with the story of blackness, the story of brokenness, the story of exploitation, the story of homelessness, the story of all those things that black people have experienced. Jesus understands and relates to that. Jesus lives comfortably in a black skin. That’s the first relationship, but it’s not the **only** one, because that just makes it liberation theology. It has to go further than that.

**Jesus lives comfortably in a black skin. That’s the first relationship, but it’s not the only one, because that just makes it liberation theology. It has to go further than that.**

**Xola Skosana**

## The universal Jesus

Jesus is also a universal Jesus. He is the one to whom all knees must bow and all tongues confess. That’s why it’s possible for me, as a black person, to step out of Way of Life, having experienced Jesus as one who identifies with my brokenness, and walk into Leon Oosthuizen’s church with white people and worship the same Jesus. There, I tap into the universal Jesus who loves everybody, who welcomes everybody, who died for everybody.

I’m comfortable in that environment. I don’t ask the question, “Why do these white people lift their hands to Jesus, then turn around and exploit others?” I understand that they need the same Jesus that we need. It’s been a process, for sure, but I have learned that an oppressor who looks for Jesus will find him.

## The personal Jesus

Then, there is the personal Jesus, who relates to me as a person. When everything else falls apart, I can go to Jesus. This relationship sustains me.

Jesus talks about salt and light. These are expressions of grace. Jesus doesn’t mean to cover the earth with salt. We need just enough salt to season the food, just enough light to lead a person out of darkness when they are ready. Christians aren’t here to create a utopia, but to do

the little that makes God visible.

This is not a theology of absolutes. It’s a theology of tension that allows the sovereignty of God to reign, even in a broken world. When we call for justice and human rights, we are not expecting the world to suddenly turn around and become perfect. We enter into the tension. We embrace it.

It’s a beautiful thing to know that we are going to experience wholeness in the midst of brokenness. We will be touched by wholeness.

Xola Skosana wrote *Disband the White Church* after developing the idea during the congregation’s 2004 Easter conference. Leon Oosthuizen, lead pastor of Vredelust Dutch Reformed Church, was one of the few white people open to Skosana’s prophetic words and to taking up their challenge. Since 2007, Way of Life, a black congregation, and Vredelust, a white congregation, have been building a partnership. For a conversation between Skosana and Oosthuizen, see “Can I trust you?” (pp. 8–10). A book that Skosana and Oosthuizen coauthored, *A Journey of Hope*, will be published this year. It describes their experience in crossing the racial divides that have fragmented South Africa.

Mennonite Mission Network’s Christine and Phil Lindell Detweiler relate to church partners in Khayelitsha, Philipstown and Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Some of their stories are told on these pages.

▶ **Watch Skosana** speak about the importance of Black Easter. Video clips online at [BeyondOurselves.net](https://BeyondOurselves.net). [MennoniteMission.net](https://MennoniteMission.net).



# Can I trust you?

Black and white Christians break down walls to rebuild God's kingdom

By Lynda Hollinger-Janzen, Mennonite Mission Network

Over the past four years, two men have learned not to flinch when they speak hard truth to each other. Though they grew up on opposite sides of South Africa's racial divide, they now sit together in Xola Skosana's office sharing tea, biscuits, and a commitment to Jesus' prayer for unity.

"I sometimes look Leon in the eyes and ask, 'Can I trust you?'" said Skosana, founder and senior pastor of the Way of Life congregation in Khayelitsha, a sprawling black township on the edge of Cape Town, South Africa.

Leon Oosthuizen, senior pastor of a white middle-class congregation in the nearby suburb of Belville, was one of the few Christians who heard Jesus' voice in Skosana's controversial slogan, "Disband the white church." Many church leaders responded in angry denunciations, even branding Skosana a raving lunatic.

Oosthuizen initiated a partnership between the 1,500-member Vredelust Dutch Reformed Church and Way of Life's 200 members. He said he knew that it was important to meet Skosana on his own turf.

"Leon is prepared to start where it hurts the most," Skosana said.

And Oosthuizen did pay a price. A handful of Vredelust members left the congregation when their congregation and Way of Life began to worship together.

"Unity in God is hard," Oosthuizen said. "But Ephesians speaks about empowering the believers to do the work of ministry, and partnering across racial divides, so we can't stay in our own little world. True humanity begins when we go beyond ourselves."

Oosthuizen and Skosana realize that leading their congregations in breaking down the centuries-old fortresses that secured white privilege through oppression of people of color is a long process, one that begins with their own relationship.

They work toward ending economic apartheid that continues to divide the black and white people of South Africa 16 years after apartheid officially ended as



Xola Skosana and Leon Oosthuizen





Worship at the Way of Life congregation in Khayelitsha, South Africa.

Photo by Wayne Gehman



Anele Mampofu leads students at Luhlaza Inda school. The Way of Life and Vredelust congregations are working together to offer Saturday morning classes in math, accounting, business and English.

Photo by Wayne Gehman



**We are all confronted by Christ, and we need each other. It is not white serving black, but black and white serving together.**

*Leon Oosthuizen*



government policy. They believe that restitution is necessary for racial reconciliation.

“We are called to redistribute power. Salvation of the poor is in the hands of the middle class whose hearts are pierced by the cross of Jesus Christ,” Skosana said. “When I look at history, I see God calling people from the middle class, the Nelson Mandelas\* of the world, to speak for the poor.”

Skosana said that as leaders he and Oosthuizen must allow Way of Life members the time to work through their moral rage against the injustices they have experienced at the hands of white people. They also need to

create an atmosphere where it is safe to be vulnerable so that the members of the two congregations can meet the “person behind the pain.”

“We must walk into relationships that get beyond stereotypes and statistics to see the humanity of black people,” Skosana said.

The two congregations work side-by-side in reaching out to the Khayelitsha community, home to two million people.

“We are all confronted by Christ and we need each other,” Oosthuizen said. “Without Way of Life, Vredelust couldn’t build the kingdom in Khayelitsha. We help

\*Nelson Mandela, a leader in the anti-apartheid movement and South Africa’s first black president.

empower Way of Life, so they can empower others. It is not white serving black, but black and white serving together.”

According to Skosana, Way of Life members don't feel indebted to their white counterparts, even though the Vredelust congregation has redirected two-thirds of the resources it intended to use to enhance their Belville facility to a church-community center in Khayelitsha.

“We are giving each other opportunities to experience the kingdom of God,” Skosana said.

Since 2007, the partnership has expanded to include:

- Annual joint worship services.
- A pulpit exchange four times each year.
- Combined worship bands.
- “Partnering Across the Racial Divide” days.
- Pastoral interns training together.
- Shared community development projects.

Beginning in January 2009, Salamntu Lunga— then, a Way of Life pastor—and Jaco Vollgraapf, a Vredelust intern, crafted one of the strongest links between the two congregations. Now, Vollgraapf has been seconded to the Way of Life leadership team.

One of Lunga's and Vollgraapf's achievements has been to organize Saturday morning classes at Luhlaza Inda, a school in Khayelitsha, for tutoring in math, accounting, business and English. They also laid the groundwork for the new church-community center complex that will be co-owned by the two congregations.

Oosthuizen marvels at how many of his parishioners have changed.

“People who would have refused to enter a black township two years ago, are now coming to Khayelitsha to help with electrical wiring and tutoring,” he said.

The Vredelust congregation has engaged in another radically counter-cultural venture—buying two homes in Khayelitsha for white staff members and interns. Since the official end of apartheid in 1994, people of color have been slowly moving into previously all-white neighborhoods. However, white people are reticent to move into the black townships.

“We are transforming our world, slowly but surely,” Skosana said, “because we are prepared to open ourselves to the painful becoming and start where it hurts most.” ■

# From nowhere to somewhere

By Aubrey Badula, a lay leader at Grace Community Church in Philipstown, South Africa. He also works at alleviating poverty through job creation and community gardening.

 **The Lord** took me from nowhere to somewhere.

I was a farm worker picking peaches and grapes, but I've been promoted to coordinator at Philipstown Advise and Development Centre where I will supervise eight people for two years. This is what the Lord can do.

My mother was a domestic worker and lived where she was employed, so I grew up with grandparents. In our Xhosa culture, when your parents aren't married, you aren't important. When you are born disabled [Aubrey walks with a limp—ed.], children will call you names. You begin isolating yourself. So the devil comes in and you start using drugs and drinking a lot.

In 1998, I was locked up in jail at the police station for two days. Then the Lord began to work in me step-by-step. When I was released, I became a regular and eager church-goer. I heard preaching and teaching. By a miracle, I stopped drinking and started to use what God entrusted me—a great mind and a great voice.

In 2000, I decided to stop using marijuana. It was a huge challenge because when someone hurt me, I smoked instead of dealing with the problem. I kept praying and I heard the Lord say, “I want to make a better person of you.”

The Lord sent people to help me.

I was down to the ground when Brother Phil [Lindell Detweiler, with Mennonite Mission Network] came to Philipstown. The Lord led us together. We met in church where I was translating for Phil. Phil saw what kind of shy person I was. He woke up what was asleep in me. From there, we built a friendship. The Lord used Phil to change my life.

I received spiritually positive things from Phil. He helped me to get training in community development and he helped me to see the importance of marriage. I



From left: Phil Lindell Detweiler; Mama Nelle Makalani, wife of the founder of Grace Community Church; and Aubrey Badula in Philipstown, South Africa

married Annie in April 2008. I married her because the apostle Paul says marriage is right and I loved her. I also didn't want the cycle to repeat itself, causing my children to repeat my hard life.

Today, I am a recognized person in this town. I rebuilt my character after I lost it. The Lord has made something out of nothing. He was crucified for people who are down-hearted and lost to lead us to victory. ■

Aubrey Badula works with the Philipstown Advise and Development Centre, a not-for-profit organization that aims to alleviate poverty through job creation, advocacy and gardening.

"We provide the poorest of the poor with seed because not many people can afford expensive vegetables that provide vitamins to combat tuberculosis in HIV/AIDS patients," Badula says. "Also, the Advise Centre gives voice to people who cannot speak for themselves, like the farm workers. [White] farmers dismiss people for no reason. Farm workers lodge complaints with us. We try to reconcile the farmer and the workers. If that doesn't work, we take it to the Department of Labour."

Perhaps Badula's most significant ministry, however, is the prophetic act of Christian marriage in a social milieu where such a lifelong commitment is considered foolishness. Since Aubrey and Annie's wedding, several other Grace Community Church couples have followed their example.

Aubrey and Annie have two children, Elzerone, 4, and Aubrenicha, 1.



Photo by Ryan Miller

■ **Then the Lord began to work in me step-by-step.** ■  
■ **I started to use what God entrusted me—a great** ■  
■ **mind and a great voice.** ■  
*Aubrey Badula* ■



Aubrey Badula visits one of the gardens planted with seeds from his project with the Philipstown Advise and Development Centre in Philipstown, South Africa.

Photo by Ryan Miller





Velapi Nokomethi, Anna Liechty Sawatzky and Masakhele Matikane celebrate during a Bethany Bible School session in Mthatha, South Africa, with song and dance.

# A higher education

## Bethany Bible School trains church leaders

Photos by Ryan Miller, MMN

Interviews by Linda Hollinger Janzen, MMN

**T**raveling from a 60-mile radius around Mthatha, Bethany Bible School students from 45 African-initiated denominations will come together six times this year to study God's word. Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Mennonite Church Canada Witness, and Mennonite Mission Network collaborate through the Southern African Partnership Council in walking alongside this ministry that began in 1982.

“These courses cover a range of biblical, theological, ethical and leadership topics. We are also adding three hands-on workshops.”

Anna Liechty Sawatzky, with her husband, Joe, currently represent North American Mennonites at Bethany. They are working with the Bethany executive committee to continue to provide courses that meet the needs of African-Initiated Churches.

## South Africa

A HISTORY

**40,000–25,000 BCE:** Hunter-gatherer San and the pastoral Khoekhoe peoples (collectively—the Khoisan) are the earliest known people to live in southern Africa.

**1100 CE:** Bantu-speaking people arrive from the north bringing iron-age culture, trade, and sophisticated socio-political systems.

**1652:** Dutch colonists invade the Cape area, many fleeing religious persecution; they import slaves from Asia.

**1820:** Massive influx of British colonists into eastern Cape area.

**1912:** African National Congress founded.

**1948:** Apartheid (separateness) becomes official government policy, creating increasingly repressive, segregationist laws that lead to nonviolent resistance during the 1950s.

“ My favorite story is in Matthew 5 where Jesus preaches on the hill. The people are filled with joy when he preaches. Those who are sad are going to be happy in the end. I want to preach like this in my church so everyone can have peace. This will make God happy. ”

Velapi Nokomethi, from The Church of God in Zion.



Velapi Nokomethi, Sweetness Faniso and E.S. Simanga at Bethany Bible School in Mthatha, South Africa.

“ When the Mennonites came to the Zionist churches, they didn't influence us to join their church, but they informed us. There has been a big change in Zionist churches in our preaching. My wife is a pastor. She attended BBS. I encouraged her to get full knowledge. With Mennonite teaching, we learned that there is no problem with women preaching. ”

Thompson Adonis, an AIC bishop who was instrumental in the creation of BBS and served the institution for 27 years. He retired in December.



Sweetness Faniso and Thompson Adonis



From right: Mirriam Nompumelelo Dokolwana, BBS leader, and M. Steve Ntapo, founder of the Harvest Time Ministries denomination.

“ I love to come to Bethany because I want to learn about the Bible, preaching and translating. I come to learn, then go and teach others in my church. I am the reverend of my church. I learn new things here. Women can preach and pray—even children can. We train children to talk about God. ”

Mirriam Nompumelelo Dokolwana, a member of Bethany's executive leadership committee, traveled three hours by public transport from Lusikisiki to attend the May 2009 seminar in Mthatha. She has been a student at Bethany Bible School since 2007.

1955: Freedom Charter, based on the principles of human rights and non-racialism, signed in Soweto.

1961: A turning point: Police kill 63 unarmed demonstrators in Sharpeville; ANC begins violent resistance.

1961: United Nations calls for sanctions against South Africa.

1964: Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and other ANC colleagues receive life sentences on Robben Island.

1960-early 1970s: Mennonites (AIMM/EMM/MCC) sponsor fact-finding and study visits in South Africa.

1972: Steve Biko becomes leader of Black Consciousness movement.

1976: Students rebel in Soweto when classes in the Afrikaans language become obligatory.

*Continued on next page.*





Thandi Gumbi, coordinator of Breakthru Community Action—the community development association of Breakthru Church International, and Christine Lindell Detweiler, a member of BCA and Mennonite Mission Network worker.

# Great exchange rate

Mennonites give and receive in South Africa

## Let the Spirit of God really move

By Christine Lindell Detweiler, mission worker in South Africa

The Pentecostal/Charismatic churches that we work with in South Africa show us what it means to let go and let the spirit of God really move. They teach us that God wants to have intimacy with us, not just in the quiet of our devotional time, but in the faith community and beyond. Mennonites need to learn how to get out and really evangelize—to verbally share about the love of God. Singing “And they’ll know we are Christians by our love” is often a cop-out. Sometimes, we must just get the words out and explain what it means to be a follower of Jesus, and actually ask people if they want to become one, too!

We can learn how to birth sons and daughters out of our church communities, to grow them and mentor them into becoming leaders in our churches. In this way, becoming a pastor is a community process, not individuals choosing a profession on their own.

Mennonites in South Africa have carved out a niche in working for peace, reconciliation and social justice to make the world a better place for people of all races. The peace we talk about begins here and now. It is not something we passively wait

▼  
**1976:** Police murder Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko in prison.

▼  
**1976:** South Africa names Transkei an “independent” homeland.

▼  
**1976:** Transkei Council of Churches request assistance from MCC.

▼  
**1978-1987:** MCC sends five couples to work from nominally independent homeland areas adjacent to South Africa after the South African government, recognizing Mennonites as opponents of apartheid, refuses visas.

▼  
**1982:** AIMM sends three Bible teachers to teach seminars that later become Bethany Bible School.

▼  
**1984:** Apostles Hilton and Rhoda Toohey found New Zion Christian Fellowship, a ministry that grows to include Breakthru Church International.

▼  
**1986:** Dorcas and Graham Cyster establish the multiracial Broken Wall Community of Reconciliation in Cape Town in alliance with EMM.

South Africa



# Mennonites need to learn how to get out and really evangelize—to verbally share about the love of God.

*Christine Lindell Detweiler*

for in eternal life. We offer the perspective that Jesus, who preached and lived the Sermon on the Mount, came to serve, and modeled a different form of leadership.

## Bringing a counter-cultural church

By Phil Lindell Detweiler, mission worker in South Africa

Our greatest gift to our partners in South Africa is that we bring another perspective. We bring the idea of the church as counter-cultural rather than working toward a “Christian nation” model of the church, and we promote a leadership that is more accountable to church members in the pews. We also work toward peace, not as an addendum to the gospel, but rather an integral part of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The black churches in South Africa can teach us what it means to have an evangelistic passion, even in a pluralistic society. With their emphasis on experiencing Jesus, they offer a counter-balance to what often seems to be a dour-faced and calculated discipleship in North American Mennonite churches. They challenge us to give more than one to two hours weekly to the Lord’s work. In these three ways, black South African Christians actually move us back to the two-kingdom theology of our Anabaptist forebears.

## Waiting expectantly for God

By Joe Sawatzky, mission worker in South Africa

We can learn from Christians in South Africa about what our Anabaptist forebears called *gelassenheit*, or yielding oneself to the will of God. In daily life, this takes the form of waiting expectantly for God to give them their good things in the face of overwhelming insecurity, violence and disease. In worship, placing oneself into the hands of God means a willingness to go where the preached word might lead.

Concerning that life and worship according to the spirit, Mennonites are positioned to aid South Africans

in their work of “testing the spirits” (1 John 4:1). Our historic commitment of “following after Christ” means that, for us, the spirit of God is never without content, form or order; the Holy Spirit comes in the name of a particular life, Jesus, whose love and justice are the way for all Christians.

## Real peace and reconciliation

By Anna Liechty Sawatzky, mission worker in South Africa

Black South African Christians—having recently experienced outright persecution and being close to poverty, abuse, and traditional witchcraft—approach justice issues with an intensity that challenges our Mennonite peace theology. Their need to rebuke evil can lead to real peace and reconciliation, but can be uncomfortable for those of us who want to get there quickly and nicely.

We, as Mennonites, have a long history as a persecuted people that is valuable in South Africa. Our theology, which precipitated some of this persecution and was also formed by it, makes sense here. Our collective memory includes centuries of observations on church/state relationships, so we know something of potential pitfalls. ■

FW. Somacala speaks with Joe Sawatzky (right) at Bethany Bible School in Mthatha, South Africa.



Photo by Ryan Miller

**1989:** Grace Community Church formally established in Philipstown.

**1989:** President Fred-erik Willem de Klerk promises to dismantle apartheid.

**1990:** Mandela released.

**1993:** South African Stanley W. Green becomes president of Mennonite Board of Missions, a predecessor agency of MMN.

**1994:** South Africa elects Mandela as country’s first black president.

**2005:** Christine and Phil Lindell Detweiler (MMN) begin work with three partners in South Africa—Breakthru Church International, Grace Community Church, and Way of Life.

**2006:** Anna and Joe Sawatzky (MMN) begin work with Bethany Bible School.

Photo by Ryan Miller

# New workers begin service

August 1–December 1, 2009

## International workers

**Martine Audéoud and Gary Wittig** began a three-year term in Ivory Coast as teachers. Martine teaches at several seminaries and colleges, consults, and is developing a master's program in community care and HIV issues. Gary teaches at the International Community School in Abidjan. They previously served in Niger.

**Barbara and Richard Gehring** began a year of service with the Mennonite Church of Trinidad and Tobago, preaching, teaching, and providing pastoral care and support.

**Samuel Moyer** began a two-year term in England as a trainer and mediator for Bridge Builders, the London Mennonite Centre's conflict transformation program.

**Jesse Johnson** began a one-year internship teaching English at the Korea Anabaptist Center.

**Dana and Jeff Selzer** began a three-year term teaching at Mountainview International Christian School in Indonesia.

## Radical Journey

**Kyle Berg**, Winkler, Manitoba, serving in South Africa.

**Naomi Blosser**, Goshen, Ind., serving in Paraguay.

**Jonathan Cullar**, North Lima, Ohio, serving in Paraguay.

**Rebecca Epp**, North Newton, Kan., serving in Australia.

**Rebecca Friesen**, Aurora, Neb., serving in England.

**Stephanie Friesen**, Denver, serving in Australia.

**Rose Jantzi**, Harrisonburg, Va., serving in Paraguay.

**Constance McKinney**, Baltimore, serving in South Africa.

**Ashley Milburn**, New Holland, Pa., serving in Australia.

**Shae Miller**, Amboy, Ind., serving in Australia.

**Rachel Myers**, Fountainville, Pa., serving in England.

**Daniel Penner**, Harper, Kan., serving in Paraguay.

**Devon Spitler**, Wooster, Ohio, serving in England.

**Ruth Weber**, Listowel, Ontario, serving in Paraguay.

**Timothy Wenger**, Kitchener, Ontario, serving in South Africa.

**Gabriella Wiebe**, Abbotsford, British Columbia, serving in South Africa.

**Tiana Williams**, Kalona, Iowa, serving in England.

**Anna Yoder**, Asheville, N.C., serving in South Africa.

## Mennonite Voluntary Service

**Richard Aguirre**, Goshen, Ind., is an assistant Web developer with Fuller Center in Americus, Ga.

**Elizabeth Azarow**, Omaha, Neb., is a special policy development assistant with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service in Baltimore.

**Nicole Bauman**, Shakespeare, Ontario, is a neighborhood food coordinator with Good Earth Farm of Michiana and Elkhart Local Food Alliance in Elkhart, Ind.

**Rebekah Bird**, Vicksburg, Mich., is a community support coordinator with St. Martin's on Westlake in Seattle.

**Lindsay Cattell**, Honey Brook, Pa., is an intake/outreach coordinator with Urban Justice Center in New York City.

**Audra Christophel**, Moundridge, Kan., is serving with the Tucson (Ariz.) Community Food Bank.

**Heather Cotignola**, Kennett Square, Pa., is a protection counselor with Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Washington, D.C.

**Emily Derstine**, Souderton, Pa., is a human rights legal assistant with Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition in Washington, D.C.



**Andrew Dutcher**, Harrisonburg, Va., is a food security specialist with Community Action Coalition in Madison, Wis.

**Annie Dutcher**, Harrisonburg, Va., is a general support coordinator with *Centro Hispano* in Madison, Wis.

**Tyler Falk**, Champaign, Ill., is a marketing assistant with *Grist* in Seattle.

**Andrew Findley**, Coffeyville, Kan., is an assistant with Individuals and Families in Transition, and a youth worker with Oaklawn Center in Elkhart, Ind.

**Chet Franklin**, Antwerp, Ohio, is an advocacy coordinator

with Lifelong AIDS Alliance in Seattle.

**Samuel Goering**, Silver Spring, Md., is a special projects coordinator with Eco-Cycle in Boulder, Colo.

**Philip Jordan Good**, Harleysville, Pa., is a program assistant with Boys and Girls Clubs of Fresno County in Fresno, Calif.

**David Aaron Greiser**, Hesston, Kan., is a youth worker with *Adelante Familiar/Acts 4 Youth* in Baltimore.

**Leslie Hammer**, Livermore, Calif., is serving with Catholic Community Services Inc. in Kansas City, Kan.

**Christina Histand**, Goshen, Ind., is a project volunteer with Migrant

Farmworkers Project in Kansas City, Kan.

**Mark Histand**, Corvallis, Ore., is a construction assistant with Habitat for Humanity Saint Louis.

**Alyssa Hostetler**, West Liberty, Ohio, is a renovation crew member with Habitat for Humanity International in Americus, Ga.

**Benjamin Jacobs**, Goshen, Ind., is an administrative assistant with Central California Mennonite Residential Services in Fresno, Calif.

**Monica Jeffery**, Tigard, Ore., is serving with Associated Youth Services in Kansas City, Kan.

**John Samuel Jerome**, Terre Haute, Ind., is a Webmaster/resource

developer with Habitat for Humanity, Elkhart County Chapter, in Elkhart, Ind.

**Kristin Knudson**, Vadnais Heights, Minn., is a paralegal with *Casa de Proyecto Libertad* in Harlingen, Texas.

**Claire Lagerwey**, Seattle, is an elementary school community assistant with Mission Graduates in San Francisco.

**Hope Langeland**, Grand Rapids, Mich., is serving with Erie Neighborhood House in Chicago.

**Kathleen Lichti**, Shickley, Neb., is a compassionate companion with Joseph's House in Washington, D.C.

**Melissa MacGregor**, Glen Ellyn, Ill., is a para-



South Africa Radical Journey team, from left, is Tim Wenger, Anna Yoder, Gabriella Wiebe, Kyle Berg and Constance McKinney.

legal with ProBAR in Harlingen, Texas.

**Benjamin Martin**, Wakarusa, Ind., is a community builder with Options Madison in Madison, Wis.

**Sara Melgarejo**, Bogota, Colombia, is a homelessness services/advocacy intern with Primavera Foundation in Tucson, Ariz.

**Daniel Merkt Blatz**, San Antonio, is a home repair worker with Community Home Repair Program of Arizona in Tucson, Ariz.

**Courtney Miller**, Harrisonburg, Va., is serving with Frederick Ozanam House in Seattle.

**Melissa Neiderhiser**, McComb, Ohio, is an advocacy counselor with Project PLASE Inc. in Baltimore.

**Rachel Nyles**, Fleetwood, Pa., works at Guadalupe Street Coffee in San Antonio.

**Jessica Penner**, Harper, Kan., is an assistant manager with Plowsharing Crafts in St. Louis.

**Jordan Penner**, Reedley, Calif., is a community builder with Rosedale Development Association in Kansas City, Kan.

**Jenna Preheim**, Monument, Colo., is a restorative justice coordinator with Community Works in San Francisco.

**Jennifer Regier**, Newton, Kan., is a paralegal with ProBAR in Harlingen, Texas.

**Lindsey Reinford**, Wooster, Ohio, is a recreation and leisure coordinator's assistant with Out & About in Boulder, Colo.

**Allison Rich**, Upper Darby, Pa., is an art teacher with Myers-Ganoung Elementary School in Tucson, Ariz.

**Elisabeth Risch**, Cincinnati, is a tenant advocate with Equal Housing Opportunity Council in St. Louis.

**Alyssa Michelle Rodriguez**, Iowa City, Iowa, is an afterschool youth assistant with Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of San Antonio, Inc.

**Mark Rupp**, Lyons, Ohio, is an assistant director of teen services with Boys and Girls Club of Hutchinson, Kan.

**Benjamin Ruth**, Harleysville, Pa., is a medical clinic coordinator with Bread for the City in Washington, D.C.

**Ryan Schmidt**, Berne, Ind., is an accountant with *Centro Hispano* in Madison, Wis.

**Catrina Schrock**, Wellman, Iowa, is serving with Church Community Services in Elkhart, Ind.

**Katie Schulze Selting**, Rielasingen, Germany, is a refugee childcare coordinator with Lutheran Social Services Refugee & Immigration Programs in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Maisha Seebeck**, Grand Rapids, Mich., is a women's advocate with Individuals and Families in Transition in Elkhart, Ind.

**Benjamin Shenk**, Goshen, Ind., is a program assistant with Habitat for Humanity in La Jara, Colo.

**Rebekah Shenk**, Goshen, Ind., is a fitness assistant with Young Men's Christian Association of Elkhart, Ind.

**Amy Showalter**, Harrisonburg, Va., is a home repair worker with Community Home Repair Program of Arizona in Tucson.

**Allen Slabaugh**, Dalton, Ohio, is a renovation crew mem-

ber with Habitat for Humanity International in Americus, Ga.

**Amy Spaulding**, Colorado Springs, Colo., is a community resource developer with Lutheran Social Services Refugee & Immigration Programs in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Laura Stoesz**, Indianapolis, is an office support worker with Environment Wisconsin in Madison, Wis.

**John Mark Stratford**, Pandora, Ohio, is a youth counselor intern with Larkin Street Youth Services in San Francisco.

**Rachel Sylvain**, Saint-Jerome, Quebec, is a teacher with Hopi Mission School in Kykotsmovi, Ariz.

**Elizabeth Syre**, Lynchburg, Va., is a volunteer coordinator with Patchwork Central Inc. in Evansville, Ind.

**Lisa Van Dyk**, Wilmington, Del., is a publication/volunteer coordinator with Heart of America Northwest in Seattle.

**Mary Micaella Verro**, Vancouver, Wash., is serving with Erie Neighborhood House in Chicago.

**Joanna Visser**, Big Rapids, Mich., is a victim advocate/court liaison with *Tu Casa* Inc. in La Jara, Colo.

**Aaron Voht**, Hesston, Kan., is serving with Boulder Shelter for the Homeless in Boulder, Colo.

**Hillary Watson**, Seattle, is an education success program coordinator with Treehouse in Seattle.

**Madeline Williams**, Fresno, Calif., is a community organizer with *La Casa* in Elkhart, Ind.

**Eric Witmer**, Akron, Ohio, is a program assistant with Computers for Youth in New York City.

**Emily Yelencich**, Mountain View, Calif., is a case manager aide with Catholic Community Services Inc. in Kansas City, Kan.

**Kristin Yoder**, Shipshewana, Ind., is an advocacy counselor with

Project PLASE Inc. in Baltimore.

**Matthew Yoder**, Lancaster, Pa., is a project associate with ONE/ Northwest in Seattle.

**Nathan Yoder**, Salem, Ore., is a middle school librarian with San Miguel School in Chicago.

## Service Adventure

The following began one-year terms:

**Joseph Arbaugh**, Staunton, Va., in Albuquerque, N.M.

**Isaac Blosser**, Goshen, Ind., in Anchorage, Alaska.

**Jared Christophel**, Goshen, Ind., in Philippi, W.Va.

**Mary Cornelsen**, Norman, Okla., in Albuquerque, N.M.

**Sam Jacobs**, Goshen, Ind., in Albuquerque, N.M.

**Juliane Janzen**, Paderborn/Neuenbeken, Germany, in Johnstown, Pa.

**Darlene Klassen**, Bielefeld, Germany, in Philippi, W.Va.

**Rosetta Lind**, Three Rivers, Mich., in Johnstown, Pa.

**Maria Martin**, Harrisonburg, Va., in Albany, Ore.

**Kara Meyer**, Orrville, Ohio, in Raleigh, N.C.

**Joseph Miller**, Goshen, Ind., in Johnstown, Pa.

**Joshua Musser**, Newport News, Va., in Raleigh, N.C.

**Margaret Neuman**, Souderton, Pa., in Philippi, W.Va.

**Margo Regier**, Newton, Kan., in Anchorage, Alaska.

**Kyle Reimer**, Boisevain, Manitoba, in Albany, Ore.

**Stefanie Ruhs**, Bielefeld, Germany, in Raleigh, N.C.

**Nicole Smith**, Elkhart, Ind., in Anchorage, Alaska.

## SOOP\*

**Lois Shank Gerber and Lowell Gerber**, Lititz, Pa., served one

month in Washington, D.C.

**Gerlof and Roelie Homan**, Normal, Ill., served more than one month in Elkhart, Ind.

**Eric Litwiller**, Oswego, Ill., served more than one week in Lincoln City, Ore.

**David and Joyce McCreary**, Emery, S.D., served one month in San Antonio.

**Lawrence and Lucinda Miller**, Damar, Kan., are serving for six months in La Junta, Colo.

**Carol and Leland Schweitzer**, Salem, Ore., served two months in Peticodiac, New Brunswick.

**Lauren and Suzanne Yoder**, Black Mountain, N.C., served two months in Washington, D.C.

\*A partnership with Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Association of Retired Persons



Serving with MVS in Seattle, clockwise from left, is Courtney Miller, Matt Yoder, Chet Franklin, Lisa Van Dyk, Rebekah Bird and Tyler Falk.



## God is building this house

God is preparing to do a new thing through the church

By Ron Byler



“Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain,” declares the psalmist in Psalm 127. Mennonite Church USA office workers in Elkhart, Ind., who were displaced from their offices several years ago, understand this psalm.

With little notice, Mission Network and Executive Leadership staff had to leave downtown office facilities when water leak-ages repeatedly disrupted work and threatened some workers’ health. An out-of-the-way former credit union building in a west side industrial section is now home. The downturn in the economy has meant a one-year delay of groundbreaking for new office space adjacent to Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary—a new home for the vital denominational programs that staff members help administer.

My wife and I have increased our gift for the *Joining together, Investing in hope* campaign several times. We think the campaign is a good deal for the whole church. The offices will symbolize what we can accomplish together when we join in what God is doing in the world.

The new building will free up annual rent money for other ministries. Shared spaces for staff members for Executive Leadership, Mission Network, Mennonite Education Agency and other church organizations will bring increased collaboration and more effective use of contributions.

Adjacent to AMBS, denomi-national staff members can better connect with future pastors and church leaders—both domestic and international. AMBS has an effective track record of being a good neighbor, and that can help other Mennonite Church USA representa-tives increase their understanding of living and working in an urban context.

I believe that the Lord is building this new house for Mennonite offices. But the house is not the most important thing. God is preparing to do a new thing in and through us as a church.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the many ministries of Menno-nite Church USA. Your additional gift for this campaign will help ensure that we are not laboring in vain.

**God is preparing to do  
a new thing in and  
through us as a church.**

Ron Byler finished as acting executive director of Mennonite Church USA on January 31.

## Open spaces

Making room for indigenous faith

By Alina Itucama



The word of God, the Bible, goes beyond cultures. We have to be wise to preserve cultures, traditions and customs that edify our faith and our lives, and to understand the message of the word through them. Our call is to be an indigenous church in the light of the word because we are created in God's image as Wounaan people.

Our non-indigenous brothers and sisters need to know and understand our customs, traditions and beliefs about God the creator because we are a very different culture with a worldview different from that of the western world. There will always be differences between indigenous and non-

indigenous people, no matter how Christian we all are.

Many times when non-indigenous Christians come to share the word of God, they want the indigenous to adapt to their ways, their culture. I want to share a clear example from my family.

My husband's mother is not Mennonite. The church she is a part of required that she dress as a Latina with long skirts and long-sleeved blouses. Her husband wasn't a Christian, and so they were told they had to sleep separately until they decided to get married by a judge, which he did because he loved his wife. In our culture, it is not by a judge's order that a man and woman become a true husband and wife. For us, when we get together as a man and a woman, we do not separate until death.

We have Christ as a model. He divested himself of his divine prerogatives to be incarnated among people,

eating, living and walking together with them, learning and teaching. This teaches us that we need to adapt to the communities where we arrive to share or visit, in order that there can be a good understanding of the word of God.

Mennonite World Conference, the mission agencies and other organizations of service in Christian fellowship, help open spaces for indigenous brothers and sisters to express ourselves as a people and as followers of Christ. In this way we can extend ourselves further in our relationships as people of God.

Alina Itucama is part of the Wounaan indigenous group in Panama. She took part in an indigenous learning tour, supported by Mennonite Mission Network, among people groups from Argentina, Paraguay, Colombia, Panama and the United States following Mennonite World Conference Assembly Gathered in summer 2009.

▶ Read Itucama's full reflections in **English and Spanish online at** [BeyondOurselves.MennoniteMission.net](http://BeyondOurselves.MennoniteMission.net).

## Sacred ground

Searching for God in the city

By Hugo Saucedo



Every spring and summer, we see idealistic youth and their adult sponsors make the journey to the big city. Their ambitions are modest. They simply want to solve all the problems that a big city faces.

They want to end hunger and homelessness, stop teen pregnancy, and build everyone a new house.

They want to bring God to the big city.

The truth is, God is already there. God is present in the soup line and in the homeless shelters. God is caring for the young and the weak. God is encouraging the young parents and providing shelter for those without a roof.

We think that we are doing the most good by feeding the hungry and

clothing the naked. We are dead wrong.

We should treat our journeys into the cities as worship, not as vacation. We are pilgrims who must realize that we are standing on sacred ground. To truly find God's purpose, we must yield our control and allow the experience to enlighten us. The good comes when we drop our veiled holiness and allow those who are the downtrodden to teach us just how real God is. We are served by them as they share their lives with us. It is in the

**We need to stop rescuing people and start encountering people. We must stop bringing hope and start seeking it.**

*Hugo Saucedo*

moment of letting go that we truly feel God's presence and realize God has always been here.

Summer servants must understand that it is in our weakest moments that we are closest to God. It is then when we realize just how much we are like the poor, which makes us rich in ways we never imagined.

We need to stop rescuing people and start encountering people. We must stop bringing hope and start seeking it. We must let go of our security and truly be secure in God's embrace.

We must simply be and not do.

Hugo Saucedo is director of Mennonite Voluntary Service and former national program director for DOOR (Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection). He currently is examining denominational urban ministry directions for Mennonite Church USA.

▶ Discover more about service opportunities at [www.MennoniteMission.net](http://www.MennoniteMission.net).



# What makes a church?

## People gathered together with God.

The *Joining together, Investing in hope* campaign began as a desire to strengthen the church and bring agencies together. Part of that effort includes a new building (adjacent to Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary), since Mennonite Church USA and its agencies have been renting space in Elkhart, Ind., that is both inadequate and costly, and a new sustainable facility is needed.

As part of the campaign, we're celebrating "joining together" as the church and asking the question: "What does it mean to be a part of Mennonite Church USA, and why do you support the work of the broader church?"

## "I am Mennonite Church USA.

I have found that **the Anabaptist expression of faith makes sense.** Particularly the elements of living in accountability, in community, and interest in living peaceably as good citizens—all of this coming under the element of following Christ and what Jesus taught.

Since my time in the former Mennonite Church, I have followed closely the work of Executive Board and its work with agencies, and see that having a proper work environment for staff in those offices is important. I know how much more productive I feel when the environment is conducive to work and is adequately equipped. I've always wished for employees of any kind to be well-cared-for. The current facility is crowded, and eliminating the cost of maintaining it makes stewardship sense."

### Tim Burkholder

Goshen, Ind.

Church involvement: Active member of Waterford Mennonite Church, currently associate director of church relations and development at Mennonite Education Agency.



## "I am Mennonite Church USA.

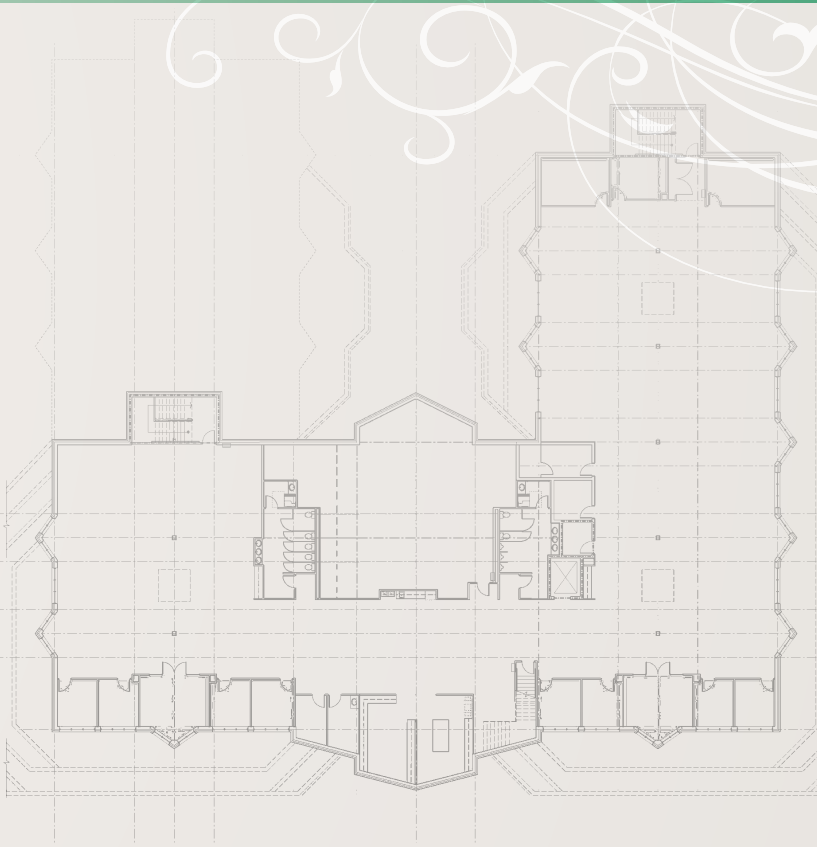
It fits who I strive to be. It makes sense to me. **Loving our neighbors, serving others,** and sharing all our resources in a manner consistent with the word of God. We continue to reach out to people, in effort to demonstrate God's love, mercy and grace—that's exciting to me! We continue this work of ministry and kingdom building despite the challenges that come.

These resources for the campaign are needed. We've got people around the world trying to spread the word of God. Mission Network and Mennonite Church USA support these folks and need money, among other things, to do that. The money is only going to come from us, so the little bit I can do, I do. We all have to do our little part."

### Sherilee Williams

Tampa, Fla.

Church involvement: Active member of College Hill Mennonite Church, former director of Service Adventure, serves on the Mission Network board of directors and various other committees and boards.



**“I am Mennonite Church USA.  
I see God at work in the church**

through all of our church agencies and through the many different kinds of people involved in them.

The *Joining together* campaign is one way we can support Mennonite Mission Network. Missions are an important part of the Mennonite Church, and I understand that the agencies remained in the old building until it ran out of usefulness. Rent is expensive, money could be invested in the new facility, and I think our church agencies should have a decent place to work.”

**Lauralee Kauffman**

Iowa City, Iowa

Church involvement: Elder at East Union Mennonite Church, treasurer for Central Plains Conference Mennonite Women.



**“We are Mennonite Church USA.**

We’re very much committed to the theology, the concept of discipleship, and the peace message of the church. Since we believe strongly in those things, it’s important to us to stay involved.

When we go to large gatherings, we feel energized. **We like to see people being encouraged to live out their faith on a day-to-day basis,** and we like to see the diversity in the church.

In the long run, this campaign saves money, and bringing organizations together under one roof is always a good setup. Bringing people together helps them to be creative and find solutions.”

**Daniel and Elizabeth Dunmore**

Queen, Pa.

Church involvement: Active members of Martinsburg Mennonite Church. Daniel is part of the ministry team; both are Sunday School teachers, choir members, and youth leaders.





## “I am Mennonite Church USA.

I came to faith through the missional activity of the Mennonite Church, and that is why this project is so important to me. **It’s an expression of gratitude**, and it’s an expression of hope that others might hear this story.”

### **Jose Ortiz**

Goshen, Ind.

Church involvement: Pastor at *Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor*, seminary professor, Mennonite Mission Network board member.

## “I am Mennonite Church USA.

I believe in the church and I believe in mission. I like to be creative and brainstorm ways to make the church more relevant. I believe in the congregational model of leadership. How can lay people make the church exciting and missional? I’m excited about seeing what local laity can do. And **I believe that the Holy Spirit is working.**

To be honest, it took me a few years to decide to support the campaign. I wanted to support the mission part, but not the building part. I finally recognized that the building is a resource for the future—the same way that sharing the gospel in other countries is important for the future. And I liked that it was at the seminary—mission and teaching will be connected. I know that we can’t stay where we are. We have to invest in a home, in a place.”

### **Goldie Heyerly**

Woodburn, Ore.

Church involvement: Elder, president of Mennonite Women at Zion Mennonite Church.



## “I am Mennonite Church USA.

I am gratified to see the generous support for **our common vision** represented by the gifts to this campaign. I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in the culmination of the campaign with my own financial commitment, and the construction of an important facility that will serve to advance God’s mission in the world.”

### **Ervin Stutzman**

Harrisonburg, Va.

Church involvement: Active member at Park View Mennonite Church, Executive Director of Mennonite Church USA.



## “I am Mennonite Church USA.

Our theology is different than much of mainstream Christianity: We believe in justice and peace-building, the kingdom of God being here now, and we desire to live differently because of how Christ lived. The Mennonites have something to offer that people are looking for—an alternative to war, revenge, defense. **We have a perspective that can give life and hope.** Mennonite Church USA has a lot to offer and there can be great growth if we are open to being changed by the spirit and the new people that are coming to us.

It makes sense logistically to own a building rather than rent. The money, the time and resources that staff spend to manage rental properties aren't building equity. Being in Newton, Kan., now and having lived in Harrisonburg, Va. [where agencies own space], I see the value of owning a building.”

### **Kendra Neufeld**

Newton, Kan.

Church involvement: Active member at Shalom Mennonite Church, development assistant in Mission Network's Newton, Kan., office.

## “I am Mennonite Church USA.

I grew up in the Mennonite community and had parents who were committed to Mennonite beliefs, like pacifism. **My experiences in 1-W strengthened my own commitment to Christ and the Mennonite Church.** I'm excited about the mission program. Lois and I were in Ecuador [which has a partnership with Central Plains Mennonite Conference] and saw the work being done there and thought it was great. I like the way Mission Network continues reaching out to include every race and ethnicity.

I believe building a new facility is a good move financially. Investing a little extra now will mean less expenses and make more funds available for the mission program in the future.”

### **Larry Kaufman**

Parker, S.D.

Church involvement: Active member of Salem-Zion Mennonite Church. Currently the mission treasurer, but has also served in other positions.

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