

### A Word from Dorothy “I love words”

The visit of Jonathan Larson, pastor/missionary/storyteller/musician from Atlanta, GA by way of Botswana, this past weekend was good for me. I love words. I relish books, devour magazines and have stacks of books surrounding me in my study, my office, my “reading recliner” chair. However, Jonathan’s presence revived the absolute delight of hearing language used well and even provocatively. Here are a few things I gleaned:

1. The church (organized, traditional) is drifting to isolationism. It is withdrawing from the world family. *(My comment: How true. Most WDC congregations are barely literate about the African church, let alone could name one leader or recite one story of Christian witness in Africa. For that matter, do we know each other even here in this country? Have we ever heard our neighboring pastor preach? When was the last time we combined our worship efforts between two congregations?)*
2. “Any footnote—that is, marks of the church—in the margins of history are places that we can draw strength from as we tell about when we suffered but held onto the Gospel.” *(I was challenged to think of acts of resistance and deeds of mercy that mark WDC congregations.)*
3. “Go farther than you think you can!” Larson urged WDC congregations to not “sell away our civic nobility for the whimsy of security.” *(We cannot be silent while the world cries out for healing.)*
4. “Let it never be said that the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century robbed them (congregations) of their verve.” *(Larson perceived us an “exhausted” church.)*

5. The literate reduce the mystery of the divine text (i.e. Bible) when they read it. The oral cultures “read” the faces of the listeners in the context of the Holy Spirit and prayer. *(We must read the “human geography” in our settings.)*

May the words burn within our hearts and launch us to provide influence for the sake of God’s world.

--Dorothy Nickel Friesen, conference minister

### ***Western District Conference empowers its Anabaptist/Mennonite congregations to:***

- ***Witness and invite others to faith in Jesus Christ,***
- ***Dwell in just and loving relationships,***
- ***Connect to God's mission in the world.***

### **Come!**

In the early readers of my childhood, “come” was a frequently used word: “Come, Sally, Come, Come.” I remember the words but not the exact illustrations. Was Sally losing her focus, getting side tracked in her own little world? Jesus understands our “Sally” inclinations and welcomes us to focus. Prayer allows us to be in Christ’s presence, to experience Him. Vision 2012 invites all to come, to join in, and to experience Christ working among us.

--Debbie Thimm, Beatrice Mennonite Church,  
Vision 2012 Prayer Partner

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***Please include announcements from this Memo  
in your bulletins and newsletters.***

***You are encouraged to copy and distribute  
the entire Memo in your churches.***

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### WDC Prayer Reminders

**Nov. 2** - Pray for Greensburg (KS) Mennonite Church who is dedicating their new church building today after losing their building to the tornado in May 2007.  
**Nov. 9** - Pray for Jaime Cazares, Iglesia Menonita Casa Betania, Newton, KS, who is being credentialed today as a church planter.  
**Nov. 16** - Pray for the Seminario in Dallas--a program of the Great Plains Seminary as it trains pastors in Spanish.  
**Nov. 23** - Pray for Beatrice (NE) Mennonite Church as its leaders participate in a Visioning Retreat.  
**Nov. 30** - - Pray for Dorothy Nickel Friesen as she attends the annual MC USA and MC Canada conference ministers' meeting in Kansas City, MO. Also pray for the WDC staff transition in Texas.

### Pastoral openings

*(Congregational Information Forms completed & available):*

**Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS** - lead pastor (full-time, summer 2009)  
**Eden Mennonite Church, Inola, OK** - pastor (full-time, immediate)  
**First Mennonite, Ransom, KS** - (in process) - pastor (2/3 time, January 2009)  
**Goessel (KS) Mennonite Church** - youth pastor (1/2 time, immediate)  
**Peace Mennonite Church, Dallas, TX** - pastor (full-time, immediate)  
**Salina (KS) Mennonite Church** - pastor (1/2 - 3/4 time, open January 1, 2009)  
**Turpin (OK) Mennonite Church** - pastor (full-time, January 2009)

### Transitions

**Eric Bruce**, member of WDC Retreat Commission and Trustee Task Force, mourns the loss of his father on October 21.

**Felix Marquez** resigned as the church planter for the church plant Rey de Gloria in Garland, Texas, that closed on September 30.

### Gilberto Flores to join WDC staff!

Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership and Western District Conference together announce a ministry transition for Gilberto Flores, director of Denominational Ministry and Missional Church for Executive Leadership. Beginning in **February 2009**, Flores will leave his post with Executive Leadership to pick up ministry as **WDC Associate Conference Minister for Texas**, replacing Marco Guete.

"Gilberto will help us enter the next phase of church development and growth in Western District Conference and specifically in the Texas area," said Dorothy Nickel Friesen, conference minister for WDC. "Gilberto has incredible skills, and his missional perspective will push us to become the church we should be."

As associate conference minister for Texas, Flores will work alongside Nickel Friesen to provide services to pastors and congregations in the Mid-Texas Region and give overall leadership and direction to the church planting programs and nurturing of new congregations, all on behalf of the conference. The full-time position, among other things, includes the following responsibilities: supervision of church-planting pastors throughout the district; consultation with congregational search committees; advocacy for pastors and congregations to elected or appointed conference leadership; development of communication links to missional church initiatives.

### Hot Topics and New Worship Resources

In the November edition of *Check It Out*, you will find some "hot" new resources that are timely. **Creation Care** is a new study by MMA that features 12 sessions on the environment. **7 Steps to End the War and Save the Planet** by Mennonite pastor Steve Ratzlaff is sure to spark discussion. For worship planners, there are over 14 new titles featured on various aspects of congregational worship. To view this issue or dozens of back issues of resource lists, visit [www.mennowdc.org/Library.html](http://www.mennowdc.org/Library.html). To reserve an item, email the library: [crlib@mennowdc.org](mailto:crlib@mennowdc.org) or give us a call: 316-283-6300.

### Oklahoma Pastor/Spouse meeting

The Oklahoma Pastor / Spouse quarterly meeting will be on **December 1**, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the Grace Mennonite Church in Enid. Pastor Raymond Unruh, of Bethel Mennonite Church in Hydro, chairs this group.



### **WDC Executive Board Meets**

Highlights from the October 24 meeting of the Executive Board include:

1. The reading of the Christian pledge of allegiance by moderator Brenda Glanzer Lilliston;
2. A financial report through September 30 showing a \$30,000 INCREASE in income over last year—even though WDC is still nearly \$80,000 behind in spending plan (with four months to go);
3. Numerous reports of the ministries of commissions, committees, and task forces;
4. A decision to appoint two young adults, Mark Smith (North Newton, KS) and Stephanie Nance (Dallas, TX) as WDC delegates to a National Peace Congress in Philadelphia, January 13-17, 2009;
5. A report on a meeting with South Central Conference leadership which affirms continuing relational agenda but not further structural work;
6. Dwelling in the Word - Matthew 22:34-40;
7. Reviewing a draft of a 5-year overall plan for WDC, developed by the Conference Minister;
8. Celebrating the appointment of Gilberto Flores as Associate Conference Minister for Texas beginning February 1, 2009;
9. Next meeting: December 13, 2008.

### **Camp Mennoscah**

The Camp Mennoscah staff and the Retreat Commission are very grateful! **Thank you** to all our wonderful volunteers and visitors who have been at Camp Mennoscah this past year. We have had an exciting year—burning the prairie grasses, summer camps, the new residence dedication, putting in and taking out the dam, and numerous fun-loving families and groups. So many projects have been finished and dreamed of, and we look forward to doing so much more this coming year. Thank you so much!

**Camp Mennoscah has space for a few more family gatherings and groups this winter.**

Contemplate the Advent season with a retreat at Camp Mennoscah either December 6-7 or 13-14; or celebrate Epiphany and Jesus' teachings on January 10-11! Come experience the prairielands in winter! Contact Camp Mennoscah at 620-297-3290 or [campmno@mennowdc.org](mailto:campmno@mennowdc.org)

### **TV worth viewing**

A NEW Mennonite Media documentary, **PAX Service: Alternative to War** will air on the Hallmark Channel **November 23** at 7 a.m. ET/PT (6 a.m. CT/MT). It will feature young Mennonite and Brethren volunteers in this historical alternative service program that ran from 1950-75. (A DVD of this will be available by January 30, 2009.)

More Mennonite Media documentaries on Hallmark every Sunday in November (same times as above): Nov. 2 - Embracing Aging: Families Facing Change; Nov. 9 - Finding Hope in Recovery: Families Living with Addiction; Nov. 16 - Shadow Voices: Finding Hope in Mental Illness; Nov. 23 - PAX (see above); Nov. 30 - Hunger No More: Faces Behind the Facts. ([www.mennonitemedia.org](http://www.mennonitemedia.org))

### **Table-Talk Luncheon**

Pastors are invited to a lunch-hour conversation on **December 4 at 12:00-1:00 p.m.** at New Creation Fellowship, (221 Muse, Newton, KS) with Elsie Rempel, Director of Christian Education and Nurture, Mennonite Church Canada, on Children and Communion. Elsie recently completed a D.Min with a thesis on Children and Communion in Mennonite Congregations. (Bring your own lunch, drinks will be provided.)

Here are some words from Elsie: “Mennonites have long agreed that children have a special status with Jesus and the church. We have sought appropriate ways of blessing them, nurturing their faith, and helping them form an identity as part of the family of God. In addition, Mennonites have long agreed that Communion includes a renewal of our baptismal covenant, and have shifted to celebrating it mainly in the presence of unbaptized children, youth and adults. Communion is a formative ritual that shapes our identity as part of the family of God. This creates a special dilemma for us. How can the Mennonite church extend Jesus' hospitality and blessing to unbaptized children, youth and adults during Communion without watering down focus on renewing our baptismal covenants? Come and help us discern the way forward.”

Questions? Contact Marlene Bogard, 316-283-6300; [mbogard@mennowdc.org](mailto:mbogard@mennowdc.org).

### **Grapevine Features Praying in Many Ways - All Are Welcome**

Grapevine, an informal network of anyone interested in Christian Nurture and Education will have their next meeting on Thursday night, **December 4, 7:00 p.m.** at the Bethel College Mennonite Church Fellowship Hall (2600 College Ave., North Newton).

Special guests will be Elsie Rempel, Director of Christian Education and Nurture for Mennonite Church Canada and Arlyn Friesen Epp, Manager of Mennonite Church Canada Resource Center. (Both of these fun and creative folks live and work out of Winnipeg, Manitoba and are good friends of Marlene Bogard.). Elsie and Arlyn will provide input on Praying in Many Ways and we will explore various ways of using different learning preferences (music, drumming, walking, art) as we pray.

If you are a teacher, leader, pastor or parent, this would be an awesome opportunity to fellowship, learn and grab some ideas to use with your children, youth or adults. Questions? Contact Marlene Bogard, at 316-283-6300; [mbogard@mennowdc.org](mailto:mbogard@mennowdc.org).

### **The Parish Paper**

Visit [www.mennowdc.org/Publications.html](http://www.mennowdc.org/Publications.html) to view the November issue of **The Parish Paper**, entitled *The Fun Factor Asset in Congregational Climate*.

### **The Pastor and Local Peacemaking**

Looking for opportunities to encourage, support and dialogue with others about how to teach, preach and witness to Jesus' way of peace? Consider hosting a training for pastors in local peacemaking with **Gene Stoltzfus**, former director of Christian Peacemaker Teams. To make arrangements, contact André Gingerich Stoner, MC USA Director of Interchurch Relations: [andresgs@MennoniteUSA.org](mailto:andresgs@MennoniteUSA.org) or 574-523-3060.

### **Corrections to WDC Fall 2008 Directory**

- p. 1 & 28 - Dave Gerbrandt - new email: [davegerbrandt@att.net](mailto:davegerbrandt@att.net)
- p. 1 - Sandra Martinez - new email: [sandramartinezmontes@yahoo.com](mailto:sandramartinezmontes@yahoo.com)
- p. 1 - Nita Wilson - new email: [nitawilsn@gmail.com](mailto:nitawilsn@gmail.com)
- p. 2 - Larry Thimm - new email: [kthimm@diodecom.net](mailto:kthimm@diodecom.net)
- p. 10 - Jack Hardy - new email: [pcreek40@gmail.com](mailto:pcreek40@gmail.com)
- p. 21 - First Mennonite Church, McPherson - new email: [firstmennonite@ks-usa.net](mailto:firstmennonite@ks-usa.net)
- p. 24 - Mennonite Church of the Servant - new phone: 316-260-9095
- p. 27 - Eden Mennonite Church - new email: [edenchurch.office@gmail.com](mailto:edenchurch.office@gmail.com)
- p. 29 - Houston Mennonite Church - Add Martin Troyer (Pastor)
- p. 30 - Peace Mennonite Church - do not use PO Box address, use 11001 Midway Rd.
- p. 30 - Iglesia Menonita Monte Orbe - spelling correction: Horeb
- p. 31 - Iglesia Menonita Rey de Gloria - Closed

### **Western District Conference coming events**

Nov. 27-28 - WDC offices closed  
Dec. 1 - Oklahoma Pastor/Spouse quarterly meeting - Grace Mennonite Church, Enid, OK  
Dec. 24-Jan. 1, 2009 - WDC offices closed  
Jan. 17-18, 2009 - Know Jesus, Hesston College, KS

Jan. 25, 2009 (4-6 p.m.) - Farewell open house for Marco Guete, WDC Office  
June 30-July 5, 2009 - MC USA Convention 2009, Columbus, OH  
Aug. 7-8, 2009 - WDC Annual Conference, Bethel College and Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, KS  
Sept. 18-20, 2009 - "And You Welcomed Me: a Consultation of the People of God on Immigration", Dallas, TX (sponsored by MMN, hosted by WDC)

### **Conference Ministers' schedules**

Nov. 1 - Health insurance meeting, Dallas, TX (MG, NW); Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church search committee meeting (DNF)  
Nov. 2 - Mission Festival, Turpin (OK) Mennonite Church (MB); Deer Creek, OK (DNF)  
Nov. 3 - Pastor meeting, Dallas, TX (MG)  
Nov. 4 - Women's group, WDC Library (MB)  
Nov. 8-9 - Casa Betania, Newton, KS (MG, DNF)  
Nov. 8-9 - Youth event, MCC Sale, Houston, TX (NW)  
Nov. 10 - AMBS/Seminario assessment, Newton, KS (MG, DNF)  
Nov. 11 - Stewardship Commission (DNF, PR)  
Nov. 13 - Meeting with Melissa Roth, Dallas, TX (MG); Western Kansas Pastor Peer Group, Low German Task Force (DNF)  
Nov. 14-15 - Marriage Improvement Retreat, Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS (MB)  
Nov. 14-17 - Vacation (DNF)  
Nov. 15 - Dallas area churches combined service, TX (NW)  
Nov. 16 - Preach at Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS (MB)  
Nov. 18 - First Immigrant churches planning meeting (MG); Vision 2012 Steering Committee (DNF)  
Nov. 19 - Career Fair, Bethel College (DNF)  
Nov. 20 - Texas Coordinating Committee (MG)  
Nov. 21 - Women Pastors' breakfast (DNF)  
Nov. 21-22 - Mennonite Mission Network Immigration Gathering in 2009 planning committee, Dallas, TX (MG, MB)  
Nov. 21-23 - Beatrice, NE (DNF)  
Nov. 25 - Retreat Day (DNF)  
Nov. 22 - Area Youth, Dallas, TX (NW)  
Nov. 26-29 - Thanksgiving break (DNF)  
*(Marlene Bogard-MB; Dorothy Nickel Friesen-DNF; Dave Gerbrandt-DG; Marco Güete-MG; Doug Krehbiel-DK; NW-Nita Wilson )*

*The MEMO is published monthly for WDC pastors and committee members. Submit articles and correspondence to: Dorothy Nickel Friesen, [dorothyinf@mennowdc.org](mailto:dorothyinf@mennowdc.org).*

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