



# Memo

## May 2009

### A Word from Dorothy Surviving a stress test

We hear much in the news about a "stress" test for banks. The way I understand it, the process suggests a scenario where many things go wrong and yet the bank (or institution) can survive. So, I've been wondering about a stress test for a congregation and for a conference. Here are some ideas:

1. Imagine that your congregation's largest donor dies, the furnace/air conditioner quits, the church moderator does not prepare agendas for council meetings, all the Sunday School teachers have the flu on the same Sunday, and the custodian retires. Will your congregation survive? How about your building burning? Your pastor resigning?

2. Imagine that no one volunteers to serve on WDC commissions for the next term leaving each commission short-handed, our computer network crashes, Nancy Funk decides to donate her summer to a New Orleans congregation, and every congregation delays their donations for six months. Will WDC survive? For how long?

Clearly, the functions of daily life for both congregation and conference would be severely compromised if these "stress" tests actually happened. It's helpful, however, to create scenarios to prepare for twists and turns--many that we cannot imagine and many that are beyond our control. Just as our bodies yield information to medical diagnosticians when we take a stress test, so a church "stress" test tells us something about our ability to survive.

I would like congregations and WDC to think about thriving, not just surviving. We must plan well. We should have cash reserves and personnel policies. We must plan sustainable programs and have ideas about emergency replacements. However, where are we going in God's mission? How are we reaching out to others in our neighborhood and world? What if we disappeared? Would anybody notice?

May God grant us wisdom to survive our "stress" tests and thrive in our faith!

--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.*

### Black velvet of the faith

When I was a little girl, my mom and I went to a jewelry store. It called my attention how all the diamonds and most expensive jewelry were displayed on a black piece of cloth. I asked my mother, 'Why?' She patiently explained to me that the dark velvet makes the precious stone look shiny and attractive to the eye.

In our life, God gives us natural gifts and skills that we polish during everyday learning experiences, as well as the education we may have. Things are very valuable if we use them for the purpose of God. As leaders, we teach others about faith in God and let him have the control of our lives, but it is only when difficulty or obstacles come to our lives that we let our gifts shine to glorify God acting as Jesus and let his message be attractive to the world around us.

--Sandra Montes Martinez, 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

**May 3** - Pray for the WDC Stewardship Commission as it discerns a WDC budget proposal for 2010.

**May 10** - Pray for the WDC Executive Committee and Board as they meet this week. Give thanks for wise leaders; pray for wisdom as they discuss priorities, financial challenges, staffing and a vision for ministry in all parts of our area conference.

**May 17** - Give thanks for Iglesia Menonita Casa Betania, Newton, KS, a WDC church plant, as it celebrates its one-year anniversary.

**May 24** - Pray for our seminary and college graduates-- here in WDC and elsewhere--as they complete their education and move to service, work and ministry.

**May 31** - Pray for Christina Litwiller as she is installed as pastor of Salina (KS) Mennonite Church today.

### **Pastoral openings**

(Congregational Information Forms completed & available):

**Eden Mennonite Church, Inola, OK** - pastor (full-time, immediate)

**Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, KS** - pastor (full-time, summer 2009)

**Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS** - interim pastor (full-time, August 1, 2009)

**Peace Mennonite Church, Dallas, TX** - pastor (half-time, immediate)

**Turpin (OK) Mennonite Church** - pastor (full-time, summer 2009)

**Zion Mennonite Church, Elbing, KS** - youth pastor (1/2 time)

### **Transitions**

**Beverly Baumgartner**, chaplain at Schowalter Villa, Hesston, KS, and husband Joel Ewy, welcomed Anna Kate on Feb. 28. Congratulations!

**Willmar Harder**, pastor of Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, KS, will be taking the final part of his sabbatical with a trip to Bolivia and Paraguay during July.

**Rachel Hostetler** will become Community Services Coordinator (1/2 time) at Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, KS in mid-June.

**Eric Massanari**, pastor at Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, KS, will be on sabbatical May 20-August 24.

**Corey Miller**, pastor at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, KS, will be on sabbatical from May 24-August 24.

**Ruth Penner** will be the interim pastor at Manhattan (KS) Mennonite Church from August 2009 to August 2010.

**Roger and Cynthia Neufeld Smith**, co-pastors at Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka, KS, grieve the death of Cynthia's father, Elmer Neufeld, on March 30. He was the president of Bluffton College 1978-96, among other major church leadership positions.

**June Thomsen** will begin as Intentional Interim Pastor at First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson, KS on July 1.

**Jennie Warkentine**, Mennonite Voluntary Service worker at Camp Mennoscah (as of May 26), won the C. Henry Smith Peace Speech Contest at Hesston College, with her reflections on camping experiences and how to apply them to everyday life.

**Nita Wilson**, former WDC Interim Conference Youth Minister for Texas, and Steve Nikkel will be married at a civil ceremony on May 1, and are planning a church wedding/reception at Luz del Evangelio in Dallas, TX in January.

**Joe Wuest**, will be the youth pastor (1/2 time) at Goessel (KS) Mennonite Church beginning mid-August.

### **Welcome Clarence Rempel!**

WDC welcomes Clarence as Associate Conference Minister for Kansas/Nebraska beginning **May 1** on a half-time basis. He will assist with pastoral searches, pastoral reviews, congregational visioning and pastor-peer groups. Normally, he will be in Tuesday a.m., Wednesday all day, Thursday a.m. and then Sundays. Please contact him at 316-283-6300, ext. 204; email: [clarencer@mennowdc.org](mailto:clarencer@mennowdc.org).

### **The Parish Paper**

Visit [www.mennowdc.org/Publications.html](http://www.mennowdc.org/Publications.html) to view the May issue of **The Parish Paper**, entitled "*Permanent Endowment Fund: Blessing and Temptation.*"

**Just published** - two new volumes (33 and 34) of the *Herb Miller's Nuggets Series*: Vol. 33 - "Full Disclosure: Everything the Bible Says about Financial Giving"; Vol. 34 - "Changing a Church's Culture Changes Its Future". Go to [www.TheParishPaper.com](http://www.TheParishPaper.com) for a contents description of each of the 34 volumes plus an order form.

### **Check It Out**

#### **Resource Potluck - Dish up Some Good Stuff!**

In the May, 2009 edition of "Check It Out" you will find new titles of resources that are brand new! Here is one that will surely raise some interest: ***Reaching Out in a Networked World*** by Lynne Baab: a thoughtful guide to blogs, websites, on-line communities. Another new book that may not be as much fun to read is: ***Make Poverty Personal: taking the Poor as Seriously as the Bible*** by Ash Barker. See the complete list at: [www.mennowdc.org/Library.html](http://www.mennowdc.org/Library.html) and then make a request by emailing us: [crlib@mennowdc.org](mailto:crlib@mennowdc.org).

#### **Have you tried the Browse and Buy?**

WDC churches who are interested in providing wonderful Anabaptist / Mennonite resources to their congregation, building up their church library, purchasing quality gifts for family, friends, or graduates, can set up a Mennonite Publishing Network **Browse and Buy** at your congregation. All the info you need is at this web site - [www.heraldpress.com/browseandbuy](http://www.heraldpress.com/browseandbuy). I encourage you to try this awesome opportunity! Plus - MPN pays all shipping! --Marlene Bogard

### Notes from your Conference Resource Library

**We Share the Wealth!** In these tough times, the Conference Resource Library is an unbelievable friend to you! In fact, we just had our busiest first quarter ever! Why spend precious money when you can borrow books and DVD's and sheet music from the library that your churches support? Remember, our on-line catalog is ready for you 24/7. Search by title, subject or author. [www.mennowdc.org/Library.html](http://www.mennowdc.org/Library.html)

**Weeding out your Personal Library?** The Conference Resource Library has been selling **used books** on Amazon for a couple years and reaping some nice profits that go directly into our New Resources fund. We MAY be interested in some of your books. PLEASE DO NOT bring them to us, but email a list first and then we can let you know if they would be worthy of a re-sell: [crlib@mennowdc.org](mailto:crlib@mennowdc.org)

**Music Lending Library ready for action!** A great way to stretch your budget is to borrow multiple copies of **sheet music** from the Music Lending Library. We have multiple copies of over 450 anthems. To see a complete list, go to: [www.mennowdc.org/MusicLibrary.html](http://www.mennowdc.org/MusicLibrary.html)

**Prairie Tales and summer reading fun.** Preschoolers and school-age children will be invited to regular story times where Prairie Tales will be shared. Watch your church bulletins for more info.

### Camp Mennoscah

Don't miss your chance to join us this summer at Camp Mennoscah! Whether camper, staff, or volunteer, **we'd love to have you join us.** We have plenty of room for you and your friends to be campers at our summer youth camps. Or maybe you're a parent or friend who'd like to volunteer to help in the kitchen—with parent discounts up to full fees! And maybe you're a nurse who'd like to partake of the excitement for the week of May 31-June 6—call us! We also have the week of June 21-27 left for a head cook. We can be reached at 620-297-3290 or [campmno@mennowdc.org](mailto:campmno@mennowdc.org). Our schedule can be found at [www.mennowdc.org/Camp.html](http://www.mennowdc.org/Camp.html) or call if you'd like a hard copy sent to you.

**Thank you,** all you folks who have supported Camp Mennoscah with your prayers, your work, and your registrations! These first few months of this year have been great and now we're moving into our busy time. We're all ready for visits from you and your family and friends. Check out our **wish list** on our website (see above) for some of our "if only we had..." items.

Our two **Mennonite Voluntary Service workers** will join the Camp Mennoscah staff on May 26. Do you know of someone who would also like to be a Camp Mennoscah MVS hero? Have them contact us about opportunities in the future.

### WDC annual conference

The WDC annual conference is coming **August 7-8** at Bethel College and Bethel College Mennonite Church in North Newton, KS.

#### Friday, August 7

- Morning - Commissions meet
- Noon - Executive Board meets
- 1:00-4:00 p.m. - Reference Council meets (*for all members of WDC Executive Board, commissions, task forces, pastors, and persons serving on MC USA committees, boards and agencies*)
- 4:00 - Registration begins
- Special appreciation dinner for Pastors/Spouses (only)
- Evening - Opening Worship

#### Saturday, August 8

- Worship
  - "Learning Communities" - more info later
  - Delegate session
  - Evening - Music festival
- Congregations should **begin appointing delegates** for this annual gathering; 1 per every 30 members or fraction thereof, at least one youth/young adult. Brochures and registration forms will be available in June.

### Upside Down King musical

Don't miss the opportunity to see *The Upside Down King*, an upbeat, fun, and powerful re-telling of the life and ministry of Jesus. It will be presented (by WDC and Bethel College) at the MC USA convention in Columbus, Ohio in July. There will also be three "dress rehearsal" performances at Bethel College, North Newton, KS, on Friday evening, (**June 26**), and Sunday matinee and evening (**June 28**). Offerings will be received.

This original musical, with script by Carol Duerksen and music by Doug & Jude Krehbiel (Road Less Travelled), features a young adult cast, and a live classic rock and roots band. Geared for youth and all ages, the Upside Down King focuses on the flipped-over aspects of Christ's life and teachings, including loving enemies, being servants, and going the second mile.

### AMBS—GPE summer class

May 12 is the deadline for registering for "**Teaching the Bible in the Congregation.**" The Great Plains Extension of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary will be offering the course on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and two Saturday mornings June 2-25, in North Newton, KS. Doug Miller, Hillsboro, KS, is the professor. Credit students and auditors can:—assess congregational attitudes about the Bible—learn to bridge the gap between scholarship and the church

—construct effective teaching models  
—address biblical illiteracy  
—discuss the roles of pastors and other congregational educators.

To register, contact Lois Barrett, director, AMBS—Great Plains, (316) 283-7098; [lbarrett@ambs.edu](mailto:lbarrett@ambs.edu). Or go to [www.ambs.edu/admissions/register-online](http://www.ambs.edu/admissions/register-online)

### Retreats for women

You are invited to...an Inward Journey. Come join us for a day of reflection and rejuvenation! 2009 Retreats are offered on: **June 26, September 19, and October 9.**

Your senses will be touched, allowing your spirit to be transformed. Your spirit will be nurtured through nature, music, silence, reflection, gentle movement, and sculpture and storytelling. The retreat begins at 10 a.m. and ends at 3 p. m, including a light lunch, for a cost of \$20. The setting is LaVerle Schrag's backyard at 222 W 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Hutchinson, KS (indoor setting available, if the weather requires it). (Another option: If you want a group retreat for another date, contact LaVerle. Five or more participants are required.)

These retreats are presented by: Ann Dunn (musician), Virginia Rexroad (meditation), Laverle Schrag (sculptor). For more information, contact LaVerle: (620) 663-4958 or [rschrag2@cox.net](mailto:rschrag2@cox.net)

### Corrections to WDC Fall 2008 Directory

p. 9 - new email for Tina Block Ediger (Low German task force): [tinaediger@att.net](mailto:tinaediger@att.net)

p. 10 - new email for Julie Gaeddert (Stewardship Commission): [juliegaeddert@embarqmail.com](mailto:juliegaeddert@embarqmail.com)

p. 20 - Bethel Mennonite Church - remove LeNora Duerksen

p. 22 - First Mennonite Church, Ransom, KS - change email address to: [menno@gbta.net](mailto:menno@gbta.net)

p. 26 - Zion Mennonite Church, Elbing, KS - change email address to: [zionelbing@dishmail.net](mailto:zionelbing@dishmail.net)

### Western District Conference coming events

May 17 - Iglesia Menonita Casa Betania, Newton, KS, 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary celebration at Shalom Mennonite Church

May 24-25 - JOY Retreat, Camp Mennoscah

June 7 - Calvary Mennonite Church, Liberal, KS, 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary

June 12-14 - South Central Conference Annual Family Festival, Hesston College and Hesston Mennonite Church

June 26 and 28 - *Upside Down King* musical, Bethel College, North Newton, KS

June 30-July 5 - MC USA Convention 2009, Columbus, OH

### Aug. 7-8 - WDC Annual Conference, Bethel College and Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, KS

Aug. 9 - First Mennonite Church, Pretty Prairie, KS, 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Aug. 15 - Day on the Farm, rural Goessel, KS

Aug. 23 - Deer Creek (OK) Mennonite Church, 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Sept. 11-13 - Mennonite Women & Girls Retreat, Camp Mennoscah

Sept. 18-20 - "And You Welcomed Me: a Consultation of the People of God on Immigration", Dallas, TX (sponsored by MMN, hosted by WDC)

October 9-11 - Menfolk Family Camp, Camp Mennoscah

October 30-November 1 - Anabaptist Vision and Discipleship Series, Hesston College, KS

### Conference Ministers' schedules

May 1-3 - Bluffton, OH (vacation) (DNF)

May 2-4 - Mission Leaders meeting, Denver, CO (GF)

May 5 - Stewardship Commission (DNF)

May 7 - Leadership Commission; PCRC of Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, KS (DNF)

May 8-10 - AMBS/Seminario classes (GF)

May 9 - Resource Commission (MB)

May 10-11 - Eden Mennonite Church (Inola, OK) pastoral search meeting, Tulsa (DG)

May 11 - Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, KS search committee (DNF)

May 14 - Retired Pastors' luncheon, Bethel College; Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka, KS (DNF); Youth Pastor meeting (MB)

May 15 - WDC Executive Committee (DNF)

May 16 - WDC Executive Board (DNF, GF)

May 17 - Deer Creek (OK) Mennonite Church, a.m. (DNF); Casa Betania Mennonite Church, Newton, KS p.m. (DNF, GF)

May 19 - Vision 2012 steering committee (DNF)

May 20-21 - Casa del Alfarero and Nueva Jerusalem, Houston, TX (GF)

May 21 - I-70 pastor-peer, Topeka, KS (DNF)

May 23 - Texas Convention annual family retreat (GF)

May 22-24 - AMBS commencement speaker, Elkhart, IN (DNF)

May 28 - WDC Program Committee (DNF)

May 31 - Install Christina Litwiller, Salina (KS) Mennonite Church (DNF); Austin (TX) Mennonite Church (GF)

*(Marlene Bogard-MB; Gilberto Flores-GF; Dorothy Nickel Friesen-DNF; Dave Gerbrandt-DG; Doug Krehbiel-DK)*

*The MEMO is published monthly for WDC pastors and committee members. Submit articles and correspondence to: Dorothy Nickel Friesen, [dorothyvf@mennowdc.org](mailto:dorothyvf@mennowdc.org) Western District Conference MEMO, PO Box 306, North Newton, KS 67117; 316-283-6300, FAX 316-283-0620; E-mail: [wdc@mennowdc.org](mailto:wdc@mennowdc.org); Website: [www.mennowdc.org](http://www.mennowdc.org)*