

Memo

October 2009

A Word from Dorothy

Immigration—a new challenge?

At the Immigration consultation (“And you welcomed me”) that was sponsored by Mennonite Mission Network and hosted by Western District Conference in Waxahachie, TX September 18-20, the biblical text and contemporary social justice issue of immigration slammed into each other. The speaker, Dr. M. Daniel Carroll R. (Denver Seminary, Denver, CO) guided registrants through the biblical narrative beginning with the creation story from Genesis 1: “So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them.” (NRSV) From that imaginative and creative moment, all of us are children of God—resident or immigrant. He then traced Old Testament texts (“...you shall love the alien as yourself...” Leviticus 19:34) and New Testament teachings, especially the “Good Samaritan” story, and ended with a strong challenge that Christians of today must enter our society with the Good News of welcome to the stranger.

What registrants learned, or were reminded of, is that the movement of people is ancient. The migration of Abraham and Sarah was the beginning of treks for faith, food, safety, and hope. The “immigration question” is, indeed old—yet new. Today, Carroll said, the globe is moving with migration across national boundaries as never before. In fact, the whole question of borders is truly at the heart of the debate.

In our Mennonite experience there is also plenty of migration—of people moving because of the call of God and the danger from human governments. Today, Western District Conference is home to thousands of refugees, immigrants and we are being called to be places of safety and hope. What is our response? Here are some options:

1. Study biblical texts; read materials that outline a Christian response to immigration. (See the resource list on the WDC website. Read “Christians at the Border” by Dr. Carroll for a foundational biblical teaching.)
2. Form a prayer and action team in your congregation devoted to immigration.

3. Support ecumenical efforts to welcome the stranger.
4. Open your doors to welcome the immigrant. Develop relationships of love and respect. Listen to the stories.
5. Advocate for just laws; be informed of legislative actions in your state and in Congress.
6. Pray for courage and wisdom.

--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.***

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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

Oct. 4 - Pray for Bethel College as it celebrates its annual Fall Festival--that relationships will be healed and new energy will be found for its future.

Oct. 11 - Pray for Elena Nussbaum as she is installed today as the Youth Pastor for Zion Mennonite Church, Elbing, KS.

Oct. 18 - Pray for the gathering of MC USA Constituency Leaders Council in Williamsburg, VA which includes WDC representatives Dorothy Nickel Friesen, Berni Kaufman and Jacob Castro.

Oct. 25 - Pray for the various WDC search committees seeking pastoral leadership (Hope/Wichita, Bethel/Hydro, Turpin/OK, First/Newton, First/Hutchinson) that God will inspire and give wisdom and tend to the call in potential pastoral candidates.

Pastoral openings

(Congregational Information Forms completed & available):

Hope Mennonite Church - pastor (full-time, March 1, 2010)

Turpin (OK) Mennonite Church - pastor (full-time, January 1, 2010)

Transitions

Ruth Harder was ordained at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, KS on September 27.

Ryan Koch will begin as pastor at Peace Mennonite Church, Dallas, TX in mid-October.

Nancy Koehn, sister-in-law of Verlin Koehn on the WDC Executive Board, died on September 26 from cancer. Nancy, of Herald Mennonite Church, Cordell, OK, was a teacher/counselor but also a writer of Mennonite curriculum materials and speaker at retreats (using her ventriloquism skills). We express our sympathies to husband Bob (who also served on WDC committees), especially, during this time of loss.

The **Oklahoma pastor/spouse quarterly meeting** was held on September 14 at the Bethel Mennonite Church of Hydro. The afternoon session included the election of Pastor Gene Thieszen (Herold Mennonite - Cordell) as the chair, replacing the retiring Raymond Unruh.

Alberto Parchmont, Iglesia Menonita Casa del Alfarero, has been appointed to a three-year term on the WDC Executive Board.

Ethel Schmidt died on September 10. She was the mother of **Steve Schmidt**, pastor at Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, KS, and mother-in-law of **Debbie Schmidt**, chaplain, Kidron Bethel Retirement Village, North Newton, KS.

Check It Out!

Hot off the press - a brand new listing of available resources on Immigration. All of the resources on this listing will address the very complex issues surrounding Immigration into the United States. Several of them are excellent materials for personal devotional use or small group study. Go to www.mennowdc.org/Library.html and click on the current issue to see this list. Call 316-283-6300 or email crlib@mennowdc.org to have materials saved or sent to you.

The Parish Paper

Visit www.mennowdc.org/Publications.html to view the October issue of **The Parish Paper**, entitled "Women Pastors: Are Our Assumptions Accurate?"

Attn: Church Treasurers and Finance Committees

Now available on the WDC website are resources to help your church treasurer and finance committee do their job -

<www.mennowdc.org/Resources.html> will take you to the resource page of the website where you will find several resources such as the *Congregational Budgeting Packet* which provides denominational information for congregations to use as they discern the best allocation of their denominational dollars. There is also a link to the MCUSA *Pastor Salary Guidelines* plus software that will help you calculate your pastor's salary and information on pastor's housing allowance.

Is your church struggling to decide what to pay your non-credentialed staff such as secretaries, janitors, bookkeepers, choir leaders and accompanists? There are some guidelines available from the WDC office that may help you. Call Phyllis Regier, WDC Business Manager at the conference office (316-283-6300), and she will gather that information for you.

Camp Mennoscah

What a party! What a celebration! Alumni and friends joined together for an afternoon (on September 20) of remembering 60 years of Camp Mennoscah and looking forward to the future. Five former directors and many years of camping were represented in the crowd.

We also celebrated the purchase of 80 acres adjoining camp property to the east. Think of all the opportunities! If you were unable to join the celebration, we'd love to hear your stories and see your pictures. Either send or email them to Camp Mennoscah at campmno@mennowdc.org or PO Box 65, Murdock, KS 67111.

Kansas Conference/WDC origins

A presentation will be made on the Kansas Conference/WDC origins **October 11** at 3 p.m. at the Goessel (KS) Museum.

Why in the world would a one-room schoolhouse be the setting for a Sunday-Afternoon-at-the-Museum event? Because South Bloomfield School, part of the Mennonite Heritage & Agricultural Museum complex, was the setting for the first meetings of the Kansas Conference, the forerunner of Western District Conference.

Presenter will be Brian Stucky, a high school art teacher and historian, who stumbled upon the South Bloomfield School-Kansas Conference connection while doing research for another project. His presentation will include the reading of the minutes of the first Mennonite teachers' meeting, held in November 1877, and the minutes of the first Kansas Conference, held in 1878.

The program will begin at 3 p.m. in the South Bloomfield School building. Cookies and coffee will be

served in the Preparatory School following the lecture.

An offering will be taken for WDC's Vision 2012.

For more information, contact Marjorie J. Shoemaker, Director, Mennonite Heritage & Agricultural Museum - 620-367-8200.

Pastors' Day Apart

Remember! **Pastors' Day Apart**, "Explore, Reflect, Listen and Learn: Forming Faithful Christians" will be **October 15** at First Mennonite, Hutchinson KS from 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Presenter/facilitator is Marlene Bogard, WDC Minister of Christian Nurture, who will be joined by some young adults. Register by October 8 - fee is \$50.

For a brochure/registration form, see:

http://www.mennowdc.org/Pastors_Day_Apart_101509.pdf or contact WDC (wdc@mennowdc.org; 316-283-6300). Please register by October 8.

Mission Supper

All are invited to attend **Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church's** (Inman, KS) annual Mission Supper on **October 17** from 5-7 p.m. Menu is sausage, mashed potatoes, creamed peas, applesauce, rolls, homemade pie. Free-will donation will benefit P.E.T. - Kansas, (Personal Energy Transportation), who provides the gift of mobility to persons who have lost the use of their legs (www.petinternational.org).

Kirby Goering will speak at Hoffnungsau on Sunday, October 4 (10:30 a.m.), describing the P.E.T. mission and sharing stories of lives that have been changed. This will lead up to the Mission Supper on the 17th. All are welcome to attend both events. For more information, contact the church: 620-585-6733 or www.viewofhope.org.

WDC Reference Council

The fall WDC Reference Council will be **October 24** (8:30 a.m.-12 p.m.) at Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS (lunch included).

The topic of the day will be "Immigration" as a follow-up from the Learning Communities at our annual conference this summer and the immigration consultation in Texas in September. Details about speakers and resources will be available soon. All elected and appointed WDC leaders and pastors are invited to this morning session. **Registration is required** - email or call Nancy: wdc@mennowdc.org, 316-283-6300.

Menno Simons Lectures

The 58th Menno Simons Lectures at Bethel College, North Newton, KS, will be held **November 1-3**. Scott Holland will speak on the topic: *Prophets, Poets & Pragmatists: The Historic Peace Churches and Public Theology*. For more information, see: www.bethelks.edu/academics/lectures/menno_simons.php

MCC Central States office change

Beginning **Friday, October 2 through Friday, March 26, 2010** the Mennonite Central Committee center in North Newton, KS will **close at 3 p.m. on Fridays**. Monday through Thursday MCC will be open from 8 a.m. - noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Material donations may be dropped off at MCC during office hours or left in the marked After Hours Donation Drop Off location at any time. The reduced hours are due to budget cuts and salary reductions. We are grateful for the strong support to MCC in the Central States region. However, our budget shares the burden of the recession that has been more challenging in other regions of MCC.

We encourage your continued support of MCC through these difficult economic times. If you have questions, call 316-283-2720.

Summer Collegium

Applications are now available for the **Summer Collegium**, a project in support of small congregations at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, VA. Clergy (and spouses/partners) from 25 small churches of all Christian denominations are invited to spend nine days at Virginia Seminary for encouragement, education, rest and renewal. All expenses, including travel, books, meals, lodging, child care at home and pulpit supply, are paid by a grant from the Lilly Endowment.

The theme is *Leadership in the Small Congregation*. The dates are **June 23-July 1, 2010**. Application forms are available at: www.vts.edu/education/collegium, or will be sent in the mail by emailing SummerCollegium@vts.edu or by calling 703-461-1750. Applications must be postmarked by December 15, 2009, to be considered

Western District Conference coming events

Oct. 9-11 - Mennofolk Family Camp, Camp Mennoscah
Oct. 15 - Pastors' Day Apart, First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson, KS
Oct. 24 - Reference Council, Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS
Oct. 30-Nov. 1 - Anabaptist Vision and Discipleship Series, Hesston College, KS
July 9-11, 2010 - WDC Annual Conference, Lakeview Conference Center, Waxahachie, TX

Conference Ministers' schedules

Oct. 1 - Interim Pastors' meeting (DNF, CR); Pastor Review Orientation, Goessel (KS) Mennonite Church (CR)
Oct 3-4 - Mt. Zion Mennonite Church, Columbia, MO (CR)
Oct. 6 - Vision 2012 steering committee (DNF)
Oct. 6-12 - Vacation (CR)
Oct. 8 - Staff Relations Committee (DNF)
Oct. 11 - Safe Sanctuaries training - Trinity Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, KS (MB); Install Elena Nussbaum, Zion, Elbing; KS Conference/WDC beginnings, Goessel (DNF)
Oct. 12 - Kansas Christian Leaders' Forum, Salina, KS (DNF)
Oct. 15 - Pastor's Day Apart - First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson, KS (DNF, CR, MB); Western KS Pastor Peer Group (CR)
Oct. 18-21 - CLC, Williamsburg, VA (DNF)
Oct. 20 - GAB Pastor Peer group (CR)
Oct. 23 - Prairie View Board, WDC Exec. Committee and Exec. Board (DNF)
Oct. 24 - Reference Council, Lorraine Mennonite Church, Wichita, KS (DNF, CR, MB); Leadership Commission (DNF, CR); Resource Commission (MB)
Oct. 25, Nov. 1 - Teach adult SS at First Mennonite Church, Newton, KS (MB)
Oct. 27 - First/Beatrice, NE Council
Oct. 29 - 1-70 Pastor Peer Group (CR)
Oct. 30 - 31 AVDS at Hesston College (MB); Retreat Day (DNF)
(Marlene Bogard-MB; Gilberto Flores-GF; Dorothy Nickel Friesen-DNF; Dave Gerbrandt--DG; Doug Krehbiel-DK; CR--Clarence Rempel)

The MEMO is published monthly for WDC pastors and committee members. Submit articles and correspondence to: Dorothy Nickel Friesen, dorothynf@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; Website: www.mennowdc.org