

Frank Young Installed at Carpenter Park Mennonite Church

After careful and prayerful review and revision of the Carpenter Park mission and vision statements, the dedicated and determined pastoral search team worked assertively for several months to find a pastor to minister to us and the needs of the community. The team was led to Frank Young, a well-known man of God in the Johnstown area.

On Sunday, May 6, Frank was installed as pastor of the Carpenter Park Mennonite Church. Frank, a licensed Church of the Brethren pastor, most recently served as associate pastor at the Tire Hill Church of the Brethren. He has also served as the Director of Discipleship and Youth Minister at New Day, a local ministry. He will be classified as an interim pastor in the Mennonite Church.

The service was blessed with music from the Praise & Worship Team from the Tire Hill Church. David Garber, Regional Minister of the Johnstown District for Allegheny Conference, conducted the installation service.

Frank's sermon, "Jesus is Enough," was based upon John 21:15-19 and reminded us that Jesus, our Good Shepherd, is the only way! Frank has implemented changes to make our worship services more meaningful by holding a prayer time before each Sunday service, special music, and concluding each service with an altar call. We are encouraged by Frank's commitment to the Lord and our mission and vision and look to the future with optimism.

The congregation enjoyed a fellowship meal in the social hall following the service.

—*Michele Barkley, Carpenter Park*



David Garber, overseer for Johnstown District Mennonite Churches, presides as Frank Young is installed at Carpenter Park.

Allegheny Conference Connects to Spain



Mennonite Church of Malaga, Spain. Bill Brubaker is third from the right in the back.

Two and a half years have past and now there's a Mennonite church in Málaga, Spain where there wasn't one before.

In early 2005 I was sent by the Johnstown churches to do a term with Mennonite Mission Network in this city of half a million people on the southern tip of Spain. There were several Paraguayan immigrants and a Spanish family who had a desire to start a Mennonite church there before I was there. They had been introduced through pastors who made connections at Mennonite World Conference in Zimbabwe in 2004. They started meeting together but it turned out to be a difficult task and a few months before I came they had stopped meeting indefinitely.

When I showed up, they gathered together a few people from the previous group who still felt that God wanted to do something with their gifts. We began by meeting in homes to pray, sing, study the Bible and figure out what it would mean to meet together as a new Mennonite community.

Within a month we saw God do some amazing things, both big and small. While our idea was to gather for worship in houses, God provided a more public meeting place. A center for peace education allowed us to use their small facility without charging rent. This center happened to be in the same neighborhood where some people from our church already lived. Also, I found an apartment that was only two blocks away from the church. The amazing thing was that when I was searching for a place to live, I had no idea that we even had the possibility of that worship space nearby. I moved into my apartment on the same day that we discovered the location of our meeting place was so close. God provided in many other ways too. One example was the keyboard that was donated by the co-worker of a member of our church. That person, who knew nothing about our church, asked someone from our group if he needed a keyboard a week or so after we began praying for one. God definitely gave us all we needed and more.

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As time went on, we began to develop a basic structure. The church has a time of singing. After that, there is a time to pray about our needs and praise God for the way he guides us. The worship service also has a message time. We began studying from a book about church planting. Each week we would read part of it and discuss it when we met. Later, we studied different themes or books of the Bible, which is what continues to happen now.

We had some struggles as we established this new group as well. Since there were so few of us, it was sometimes a challenge to have the energy to do everything that needed to be done. People were busy and found it difficult to commit to the needs of a new church every Sunday. When one or two of us could not come to the service, it was often suspended. We also had some issues of not being able to depend on one another. As time went on, we got into the habit of meeting regularly so it didn't require as much energy. People become more accountable to one another and gained each other's trust.

We noticed a few things that brought us closer together too. We began eating lunch after the worship service twice a month which gave us a chance to get to know each other outside of the worship service. Also, people took chances by sharing their personal concerns. Finally, we began spending more time together during the week doing activities or visiting one another.

Over time it became more obvious that this church was here to stay. Some of the immigrants received legal working papers and started down the path to Spanish citizenship, which provided stability. Family members from Paraguay came to Spain to work and began attending and strengthening our church with their gifts. A few friends as well as people from our jobs visited us. We started praying about and experimenting with ministries in the neighborhood. We began a mid-week Bible study. These were healthy signs of a good foundation.

God worked through my position of teaching English, which I did during the week. It surprised me how often the discussions in my classes led to spiritual things. I had a student ask me when I would invite him to my church, he came the following week. I had another student tell me I needed to bring my Bible to the next class because she wanted to see what a certain part said. I had a student who only took classes with me two or three times but he in-

ited me to do things with his friends later. It opened up new friendships for me as well as opportunities to tell people about our church.

The church has a strong base because the people are seeking God's will for the group. Each person plays a part in the group and each task is important. There are a few people who like to use gifts of teaching. Another woman disciples a group of women who have a desire to grow in their faith. One person loves to make food so our group can fellowship together. Time is taken to teach the children and provide activities for them. Finally, the youth enjoy leading songs for worship.

Mennonite churches in Spain are good at maintaining connections with one another. They are few in number so they see the value in visiting each other whenever they can. They share news in the monthly publication, *El Mensajero*. They get together for retreats and conferences on a regular basis. Connections are maintained with people who feel drawn to the Anabaptist perspective even though they may be many miles away from a Mennonite church, or *Mennonite Community* as they are referred to in Spain.

Missions in Spain are a challenge because a faith that promotes a relationship with Jesus Christ is the opposite of what the Spanish culture tells people to do. People grow up learning religion in school but they have no idea what it means to be a disciple of Christ. The church in Spain works to make connections with people and to get the word out that followers of Christ are there and they care. Preparations are being made for the harvest of people in Spain by putting churches in place and telling the Good News in a caring way. Anabaptists in this country are getting ready for the day when people start returning to the church.

As I am in the process of transitioning to life in the U. S., I feel confident that the Mennonite church in Málaga will continue to grow. There are people who have established themselves in the church and the members are growing together as they seek God. They have consistent encouragement from other Anabaptist churches in the country and the churches in western Pennsylvania have taken time to learn about and pray for their brothers and sisters in Spain. The church needs our prayers because it isn't always easy to be such a small church trying to get established. Continue to pray for them as they reach out to share Christ's love in southern Spain.

—Bill Brubaker, Carpenter Park

Allegheny Conference Shepherds Study Biblical Shepherds

Dan Hertzler, pictured below, and Kurt Horst, both experienced teachers, encouraged the class to look more deeply into the texts in a variety of ways.

What do Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34, Zachariah 10, and John 10 have in common? If you guessed that each has a shepherding emphasis, you are right! You are also right if you knew these were the four texts studied inductively and preached by pastors and overseers of Allegheny Mennonite Conference at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, April 23-26, 2007.

A total of 17 pastors/overseers took part in all or a portion of the journey through these familiar and, at points, unfamiliar scriptures. Competently leading us through the textual terrain were shepherds, Dan Hertzler and Kurt Horst. On Monday, Dan and Kurt divided the group into four smaller groups, which were utilized each day in the tasks of studying and sermonizing.

We began each morning with a time of worship, with three of the mornings includ-

ing one or two “ten-minute sermons,” based on the text from the previous day. Preaching these sermons were: David Garber, Tim Fetterly, MaryAnn Yoder, and Conrad Mast. They fed us and moved us with words and questions that both challenged and comforted.

Following worship, we engaged in an historical and contextual lecture/discussion of each text, which quickly consumed our time prior to lunch. Our afternoons were spent in inductive study of the specific shepherding text; followed by brainstorming sermon possibilities that we saw emerging as a result of our day-long study. In the evenings, we gathered to read aloud the text and initially discuss the given text for the following day. Also punctuating every day was a vast genre of music based on shepherding and our study texts.

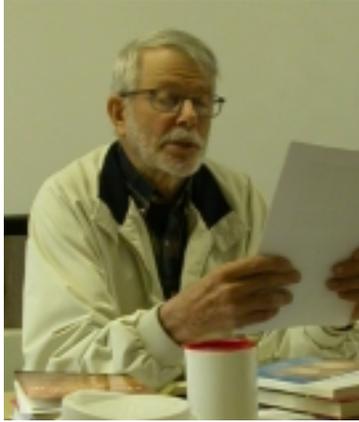
I think I am speaking for all when I say that we discovered some new things in the familiar texts that we had visited many times before. And we found that the less familiar shepherding scriptures also contain truths “that will preach.” All scriptures are God-breathed and have life and the capability to be life-giving.

Adding to the richness of the study experience was the spring setting at Laurelville; the wonderful meals we enjoyed at Laurelville (and one prepared for us by Anna Mast when Laurelville staff was away on retreat); and the conversations and stories that allowed us to learn more about one another and to laugh together. The four days were ones of refreshment and blessing for me.

My only regret was that there were not more from Allegheny Mennonite Conference who were able to enjoy what I was enjoying. Given this, I would encourage congregations to make every effort to insure that their pastor(s) are in attendance at Laurelville next year, April 7-10, to take advantage of this profitable and very affordable study of the book of Acts, with Alberto Flores.

Again, I think I speak for all involved when I say, thank you, Leadership Commission, for the work you invest in making these kinds of study opportunities available to leaders of Allegheny Mennonite Conference.

—Alan Kauffman, Maple Grove



Above left: Don Hamsher, Conrad Mast, and Wayne Lasure study the text.

Left: Steve Sauder, John Bender, and Tim Fetterly discuss the text.

TriState Relief Sale July 20-21, 2007

Dr. Dwight Kauffman, family physician who currently lives in Pandora, Ohio and whose hobby is woodworking has created a candle holder for each Mennonite Central Committee relief sale to raise funds for the MCC Peace Program. Here's his story:

"I call them the 'All the children of the World' Peace candle holder. When we were attending Landisville Mennonite Church, it was being proposed to Church Council that we have a candle, a peace candle, to burn each Sunday to remind us to pray for peace. I was asked if I would make a candle holder for it. During a sermon my mind wandered as I looked at the candle. My sequence of thoughts were: pray for peace, especially for the children, all the children of the world, 'red, brown, yellow, black and white'—thus the design.

"The red is padouk from Africa, the brown is black walnut from the U. S., the yellow is yellowheart from South America, the black is paint (stewardship does not allow the use of ebony), and the white is hard maple from North America."

One of the projects MCC supports is the Youth for Peace project in Cambodia. More than 60 percent of the population in Cambodia is under the age of 25, but youth have traditionally had little voice in Cambodian society.

Nearly 20 years ago, 1.7 million Cambodians were killed during the brutal four-year reign of the Khmer Rouge government. My son-in-law, Ravy Meng of Lebanon, Pa., was one of the children left orphaned as a result and who eventually came to the United States after a long ordeal of terror and starvation. When asked what he would like to have for dinner, he still answers 'Food, any food would be good' and wrestles with the nightmares.

For those remaining in Cambodia, young people face the dangers of drugs and violence resulting from gang activity. MCC works with Youth for Peace via education and workshops where young people learn skills for personal advancement, aiming to bring about a society of peace and social justice through the development of good role models and active citizenship of youth who understand and strive for a culture of peace.

You will have the chance to donate to this project at the TriState auction or you may send your donation to the treasurer direct. The "All the Children of the World" Peace Candle Holder will also be available to purchase and donate to your church as a reminder to pray for peace around the world.

This is one of the many items that will be available over the two-day event. Friday evening is always a relaxing time shopping at the Market Place, visiting with friends as you bid on that one-of-a-

kind item at the Silent Auction and enjoy music performances. Carriage rides will be available both days this year.

New will be the opportunity to discover what you always wanted to know about your quilt but didn't ask. Bring your quilt or items that you would like to learn more about. A quilt historian for 3 states, coming from Williamsburg, will be on hand to help date, identify and provide textile information Friday evening and Saturday for a \$10 donation per quilt evaluation. We will also be selling vintage quilts on the auction, including a quilt dated 1845 and feed sack quilts.

A handcrafted Clysdale rocking horse, oak wash stands, B & B stays, signed NFL footballs, lovely quilts, double hickory glider—all will be available to solve your 2007 gift-giving needs. What better way to spend your money to help others at the same time as the churches unite! Remember to save your small change and turn in to your church's Penny Power campaign or bring to the sale.

Children's activities and an auto cruise-in round out the days activities on Saturday. Be sure to invite your friends and neighbors and come join us as we celebrate God's love.

The benefit will be held at the Garrett County Fairgrounds on Rt. 219S in McHenry, Md., (Deep Creek Lake) 13 miles south I-68 exit 14A, 28 miles west of Cumberland, Md. For further information or to obtain a schedule of the Saturday auction, call (814) 445-6945 or go to www.tristatesale.org for a preview of sale items which will be continually updated. Days of event call (301) 387-5400.

—*Harriet Berg, Springs*



This "All the Children of the World" Peace Candle Holder is being offered for sale at the TriState Relief Sale.

Schedule of Events

Free Parking & Admission

Friday Evening July 20, 2007

4:30 Food Booths Open
Market Place
Preview Quilts & Auction Items
Musical Performances throughout the evening
4:30-7:30 Quilt Evaluations
5:30-8:30 Silent Auction

Saturday July 21, 2007

7:30 Gates open with Pancake & Sausage Breakfast
8:30 Market Place Opens
9:00 Classic Car Cruise-In
Children's Activities Begin
9:00-2:00 Quilt Evaluations
10:00-3:30 Auction: Quilts, Art, Furniture, Vacations
11:00-12:00 Children's Auction
11:30 Chicken Barbecue
1:30 Vintage & Feed Sack Quilts on Auction

MCC Names Directors

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) East Coast has named Ruth Clemens as executive director. She began the job June 1.

“She has a passion for the mission of MCC and a wealth of experience both within MCC and other faith-based organizations,” said Rolando Santiago, executive director of MCC U.S. “She brings a vision for increasing the presence of congregations of color in both MCC and the broader church. She also brings experience in team-building among staff and in building community programs.”

Clemens, who worked with MCC in Human Resources in the 1980s and as an MCC representative in Cambodia from 1988 to 1993, most recently served as international program operations manager for World Relief, a Baltimore-based organization. In that position, she supported and monitored international programs in 15 countries, and improved information-sharing systems within the organization.

From 2003 to 2005, she also served as founder and administrative coordinator of Asy-

lum Seekers Housing Network to assist refugees in finding housing in Baltimore. She developed the program as a ministry of North Baltimore Church.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has named Lynette Meck as its new associate executive director. She will oversee the day-to-day operations of the Akron, Pa., office of the relief, development and peacemaking agency.

Meck, who holds a master’s degree in management from Penn State University, served as executive director of MCC U.S. from 1989 to 1998 and as a program director for the U.S. service programs for MCC U.S. from 1983 to 1989. Since 1998 she has been director of human resources for Philhaven, a behavioral health care services provider.

The associate executive director serves as the chief operations officer for the office in Akron, which has more than 100 staff. Meck, who is scheduled to begin work in the position in July, replaces Bruce McCrae, who has been associate executive director for nearly nine years.

Mennonite Responses to Disaster

To help lessen confusion and speed response during times of disaster, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) have compiled the following information. Please keep this information for use during these situations. If you have questions, please contact the persons mentioned below.

Mennonite Central Committee: MCC’s development work around the world is in areas such as education, health, agriculture, peace and justice issues, disaster relief and job creation. In the United States and Canada, MCC is involved with immigration, refugee assistance, job creation, people with disabilities, offenders and victims of crime and more. Additional information about MCC can be found at www.mcc.org

Mennonite Disaster Service: Mennonite Disaster Service is a channel through which various constituencies of the Anabaptist church can respond to those affected by disasters in Canada

and the United States. MDS specializes in managing volunteer labor to clean up, repair and rebuild areas devastated by disasters. MDS does not provide direct material or financial donations to disaster survivors, but works closely with other responding agencies to make sure the needs of our clients are met. More about MDS can be found at www.mds.mennonite.net

Who do I contact? If the disaster happens in the United States (or its territories) or Canada, please contact Mennonite Disaster Service. The contact person is Scott Sundberg, director of communications for MDS (717) 917-8827 or ssundberg@mds-mennonite.net.

If disaster happens internationally, with the exception of Canada, contact Larry Guengerich, media and education coordinator for MCC. lrg@mcc.org or (717) 333-2826.

—*Joint Release of Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Disaster Service*

Conference Calendar ▼

July 2-7

National Youth Convention, Biennial Convention and Delegate Assembly, San Jose, California

July 16

Registrations due for AMC Annual Meeting

July 20-21

TriState Relief Sale, McHenry, Md.

July 31

Deadline Sept./Oct. issue *ACNews*

August 3-5

Summer Conference at Laurelville

September 7-9

Camporee at Pine Springs Camp

October 2

Deadline Nov./Dec. issue *ACNews*

October 12-14

Pastor-Spouse Retreat at Laurelville

November 16-18

Leadership Retreat at Camp Mantowagan

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An Open Letter to Mennonite Church USA Congregations

June 2007

For more than 60 years, Mennonites have witnessed to the good news of Jesus Christ in Israel and Palestine. In recent decades the human rights situation for Palestinians has deteriorated dramatically. Today, a power imbalance of Israelis over Palestinians distorts the lives of everyone living in the region and fails to provide the longed for security. A system of forced segregation and oppression imposed by the Israeli government, and the resulting spiral of violence calls for urgent collaborative action, including Mennonite agencies in the region.

In response to a call for a common conversation among various parts of Mennonite Church USA from the Peace and Justice Partnership Council of Mennonite Church USA, a delegation of ten persons (see below) traveled in Palestine/Israel, May 11-24, 2007. We visited many important centers in the region and engaged in dialogue with Christians, Jews and Muslims. During the visit we listened to our partners, talked with leaders of other agencies and heard from ordinary people as well as co-workers of Mennonite-related agencies.

The situation in Israel/Palestine today confronts us with profound theological issues that challenge the roots of our faith.

Our experiences confront us with new questions about our understanding of God and what it means to be peacemakers in this context. Throughout the Bible, God calls the people of Israel to express care for "the other." The prophetic tradition repeatedly emphasizes that the people of God are accountable for exercising justice and compassion. The current situation in Israel/Palestine calls us to reject the temptation to reduce God to a tribal god who cares only for the well-being of one people.

The biblical witness testifies that God chose a particular people for the purpose of bringing blessing to "all the families of the nations." We did not find blessing between peoples in Israel/Palestine. Rather, the situation we encountered impressed upon us the urgency for rediscovering God, as revealed in both the Old Testament and in Jesus, as the One whose compassion and care extends to all people.

Christians have inflicted horrific suffering upon Jewish people through the millennia, including the Holocaust. Tragically, Christian anti-Semitism continues. It is reprehensible,

cannot be reconciled with the biblical message, and is inconsistent with anti-racism.

We renew our commitment to God who disavows human vengeance, calls us to love our enemies and requires us to pursue reconciliation and peacemaking with all people. We understand this to be the essence of God's nature and healing purpose in the world. Questions about the connection between financial investments and God's call for justice challenge us to reexamine our understanding of Christian stewardship in light of the realities of life in Palestine and Israel.

We became keenly aware of our need as God's people to recognize that true security can be found only in God. Both in this region and in North America, people have tried to find security through military power, resulting in needless destruction of human lives like we have seen in Iraq and Palestine. In both places the senseless response of suicide bombers adds to the death and suffering. We observe that:

(1) The continuing Israeli military occupation and the dispossession of Palestinians is sinful, responsible for unjust suffering and the major cause of the ongoing conflict. (2) The Israeli government has consistently violated international law; the United States government has supported violations of human rights and international law by Israel. (3) The Wall of Separation being constructed through the West Bank segregates Israelis from Palestinians and separates Palestinians from each other, causing undue hardship. This wall, 30 feet high and 436 miles long, will not satisfy Israeli security needs. (4) The Israeli economic strangulation of Palestinians by Israeli military restrictions on the free movement of goods and people and the international sanctions imposed on Palestine are causing great suffering and deprivation. (5) Christian Zionism has undergirded the occupation, reinforcing sentiments that have resulted in grave injustices for Palestinians. (6) The Christian community in Israel/Palestine is being eroded by the hardships created by the occupation. (7) Suicide bombings by Palestinian extremists cause fear, insecurity and death for Israelis and work against possibilities for peace. (8) In spite of the challenges, we heard the hearts of many Israelis and Palestinians still longing for peace.

In light of these disconcerting realities, in congregational education we encourage: (1) Mennonite Church USA pastors and leaders to visit both Israel and Palestine and to deepen their understanding of the current situation in this region. (2) Congregational groups and Sunday school classes to use study courses like *Under Vine and Fig Tree* (Cascadia) to counter the distortions of land and promise in Christian Zionism. (3) Intentional and continued initiatives to meet with and listen to a range of Israeli and Palestinian voices. (4) Use of resources on Mennonite understandings and responses to the Middle East and Israel/Palestine for further study and reflection (see www.MennoniteUSA/peace).

In economic engagement, we encourage: (5) Groups visiting Palestine/Israel to consider staying in Palestinian communities including Bethlehem and Nazareth for at least a part of their time in the region to encourage economic development in Palestinian communities. (6) Church institutions to gain greater understanding of their investments in this region and to avoid investments which violate international law and promote violence. We encourage exploring ways our investments and our role as investors can be used to provide hope and promote peace in this region.

In peace building (political advocacy, public witness and accompaniment) we encourage (7) Mennonite-related agencies working in Israel/Palestine to coordinate their work in the region. (8) Congregations and agencies to challenge U.S. military and economic support for the Israeli occupation of Palestine and to advocate for justice and protection of human rights for all people in the region. (9) All parts of the church to strengthen our commitment to bridge-building between the alienated factions in this region.

—*Delegation participants*—Daryl Byler (MCC Washington Office), Ron Byler (Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership), Ed Epp (MEDA), Kim Vu Friesen (MC USA Executive Board), Stanley Green (Mennonite Mission Network), Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach (MCC Washington Office), Rich Meyer (Christian Peacemaker Teams), Mark Regier (MMA), Carol Rose (Christian Peacemaker Teams) and Lee Schmucker (Mennonite Mission Network)