

## Lewis Beachy Ordained at Gortner Union Church



**Lewis and Linda Beachy, surrounded by pastors from Allegheny Mennonite Conference and the West Marva District Church of the Brethren.**

On July 11, 2004, the congregation at Gortner Union Church gathered for the licensing service for Lewis Beachy. Since that time, Lewis has worked toward successfully completing his course work while serving as Assistant Pastor at Gortner. He has also willingly filled pulpits in other congregations as he was called. On October 21, 2007, the Gortner congregation, along with Lewis and Linda's family and friends and many members of the Mt. Dale congregation, came together to celebrate his ordination.

Special music for the service was provided by Lewis' children, Kay Piper, Carolyn Orendorf, Stephen and Matthew Beachy, as they sang, "You Have Been Called to the Kingdom." Pastor Steve Sauder read from Isaiah 6:1-8 and related that as God touched Isaiah, He also touched Lewis and his response has been, "Here am I. Send me!" He challenged us to remember that we each have a calling to which we need to be faithful.

Lewis then shared some of his experiences since God called him to the ministry. He related that in the beginning he had many struggles with fears and doubts. However, as he stepped out in faith God opened doors, often in miraculous ways. He encouraged the congregation by reminding us, "When God calls you, God will give you the strength you need."

Kurt Horst, our Allegheny Conference minister, and Steve Abe, West Marva District Executive Minister for the Church of the Brethren, conducted the ordination service. This was followed by laying on of hands by all ordained ministers in attendance and prayer with the congregation. The service was followed by a fellowship meal.

Lewis and Linda will be serving the Mt. Dale Church of the Brethren congregation in Hazelton, W, Va, as an Interim Pastor for the next year.

—*Faye Hetrick, Gortner Union Church*

# Adam Tice Licensed and Installed at Hyattsville

**Right: Overseer John Stahl-Wert conducts Adam Tice's licensing and installation.**

Adam M.L. Tice was licensed and installed as associate pastor at Hyattsville Mennonite Church on Sunday, Nov. 11, 2007.

Adam is the son of Ezra Tice, interim pastor at Pinto Mennonite in Maryland, and nephew of Enos Tice, former chair of Allegheny Conference's Faith, Life and Procedures Commission.

Ezra delivered the message during the service that several relatives also attended. John Stahl-Wert, the church's overseer, conducted the licensing service. After questioning Adam about his commitment and call, John invited the congregation to stand with Adam and lay their hands on him during the blessing litany.

The congregation also sang "The world at day's dawn," which Adam wrote specially for his licensing.

Adam was born in Somerset County, Pa., and grew up in Auburn, Ala., and Corvallis, Ore.. The family moved to Elkhart, Ind., when Adam was 15 so Ezra could begin course work at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, where Adam would later study.

This is Adam's first ministerial position. He earned his bachelor's in music composition with a minor in Bible and religion from



Goshen College. During his junior year, he worked with the Ministry Inquiry Program at College Mennonite Church for six months, then worked for a year as interim music coordinator at Waterford Mennonite.

After college, he took a course at AMBS titled "Congregational Song: Practices Past and Present," taught by *Hymnal: A Worship Book* editor Rebecca Slough, and he was launched into the world of hymn text writing.

Since that time, several of his texts have been published and honored in competitions. Many have been sung across the United States, Canada and even in England. One was sung as part of delegate sessions at the Mennonite USA's churchwide conference in San Jose. His first collection of texts will be published by GIA Publications.

Four years after that first seminary course, he completed his master's degree at AMBS. Several semesters were part-time, and he spent a year away as a professional marionette puppeteer. He completed a thesis on the life of Jesus as presented in 20th century Mennonite hymnals.

Adam and his wife, Maria (Longoria), recently relocated to Hyattsville.

Adam replaces Co-pastor Joe Roos, who left last fall to move to India where his wife is chaplain at a religious school and he teaches religious studies.

—Mark Heckathorn, Hyattsville

**Below: Members of the congregation lay hands on Adam Tice during the blessing litany.**



Photo Credits: p. 1, 2, 3, & 7, supplied by authors; p. 4, & 5, Donna Mast; p. 6, Merrill Miller.

Jan./Feb. 2008 Volume 65 Number 1

Allegheny Conference News (ISSN 0746-7362) is published six times a year. Periodical postage paid at Scottsdale, PA 15683 and at additional mailing offices. Postal Service Registration #0013-800; **Postmaster:** Send change of address 3579 to *Allegheny Conference News*, 531 Scottsdale Ave., Scottsdale, PA 15683-1243.

Known office of publication: Donna Mast, editor, *Allegheny Conference News*, 531 Scottsdale Ave., Scottsdale, PA 15683-1243; home phone: (724) 887-5563; e-mail: sendamcnews@gmail.com. Printed in USA.

# Lester Hershey Dies at Age 94

As a mission worker in Puerto Rico in 1947, Lester T. Hershey thought a secular medium–radio–could be used to spread light and truth across Puerto Rico.

From that idea, a Spanish-language radio program emerged within the Puerto Rican Mennonite Church, first called *La Hora de Calvario* (*Hour of Calvary*) and later known as *Luz y Verdad* (*Light and Truth*). What was meant to communicate across Puerto Rico eventually appeared on 88 stations worldwide. Some leaders of the Puerto Rican Mennonite Church credit that radio ministry, which for a time was a part of a predecessor agency of Mennonite Media, with helping grow a Puerto Rican Mennonite presence that has since spread across North America.

Hershey, 94, died Saturday, Nov. 3, 2007, at his home in Fort Ashby, W.Va.

More than 250 gathered in July to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Puerto Rican radio program started by Hershey, working through Mennonite Board of Missions, a predecessor agency of Mennonite Mission Network, and fellow Mennonite pastor Paul Lauver. Though his cardiologist told him to stay home, Hershey traveled more than 400 miles to take part in the festivities. His determination was no surprise to Angel Luis Miranda, a retired Puerto Rican pastor and chaplain now living in Goshen, Ind., who worked with Hershey at Academia Menonita (Summit Hills) in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

“We have a saying in Spanish—*va a morir con las botas puestas*—he’s going to die with his boots on,” Miranda said. “(Hershey) was busy all of the time.”

Miranda knows of several members of his various churches who came to faith at least in part because of the *Luz y Verdad* program. At least once a year, he said, members of a youth organization would plan a program. Miranda said the opportunity to speak on the air about faith helped in the Christian development of many young Puerto Ricans.

*Luz y Verdad* also offered preaching, teaching, singing and Bible stories along with opportunities for correspondence courses that helped students learn more about God, Miranda said.

At the anniversary celebration, José Ortiz, a retired pastor living in Goshen, Ind., said Puerto Ricans welcomed more than 800 Men-

nonite volunteers and missionary personnel into their country. Ortiz said the volunteers and the broadcast all helped in the birthing process of the Mennonite church on the island, which now greatly influences Mennonite Church USA through mission activity in large metropolitan urban centers.

“It was really missions with the boomerang effect,” said Ortiz.

Miranda said Hershey himself was a boomerang. After his family moved away from Puerto Rico, he returned every year for the Puerto Rican Mennonite assembly until he was in his 90s.

Hershey was born Nov. 28, 1912, in Youngstown, Ohio, to Tobias K. Hershey and Mae (Hertzler) Hershey. He grew up in Argentina, where his parents were mission workers with Mennonite Board of Missions. He was married to Alta Good for 46 years. She is deceased.

Surviving is a son, Lester Eugene (Jill) Hershey of Richmond, Va.; two daughters, Janice Jo (Paul) Livengood of Short Gap, W.Va., and Sherilyn (Cliff) Layne of Mechanicsville, Va.; nine grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren. A sister, Beatrice Hallman, is deceased.

An ordained Mennonite minister for 68 years, Hershey served as an overseas mission worker in Puerto Rico, Mexico and Spain and as a pastor in Chicago, Pinto, Md., Washington, D.C., and Martinsburg, Pa. He also served as an evangelist in several Latin American countries.

Hershey was an early pioneer in radio broadcasting in Latin America, serving as director and the voice of the *Luz y Verdad* Spanish broadcast for more than 30 years.

Funeral services were held at the Pinto Mennonite Church at 11 a.m. November 10. Pastor Ezra Tice officiated. Interment followed in the Church Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Aaron Livengood, Ryan Livengood, Kevin Livengood, Nathanael Waite, Keith Hoover and Rodney Grieser. Honorary pallbearers were Alyssa Livengood, Jenelle Hoover and Julie Hershey.

Memorials may be given to the Pinto Mennonite Church, P.O. Box 44, Pinto, MD 21556, earmarked for “Betania Mennonite School” in Puerto Rico.

—*Mennonite Mission Network staff*



**Lester Hershey in his younger days enjoying the radio ministry.**

## Delegates Gather at Springs



**Byron Miller, Greta Beitzel, Willis Beitzel and Lois Hepler lead in worship.**

Saturday, Nov. 3, 2007, found 28 of 31 Allegheny Mennonite Conference (AMC) congregations represented by 99 total delegates devoting their day to worshipping God, conducting Conference business and being challenged by Conrad Knagey. Additionally, there were 10 non-delegates present representing 8 of our congregations, 4 delegates-at-large, and 3 visitors to AMC that were present bringing the total attendance for the day to 116! Reflecting on the good attendance, Alan Kaufman, Chair of Faith Life and Procedures Commission (FLP), stated, "There is only one time in recent years that we had as many as 28 congregations represented."

As is tradition, the day began with informal gathering for fellowship and food. This was followed by Byron Miller, Greta Beitzel, Willis Beitzel and Lois Hepler, members of Springs' Praise Team, leading singing. Pastor, Casey Roher shared a message inspired by James 1:5-6 that emphasized the importance of building and nurturing our personal relationship with God. This was reinforced by showing the music video, *Faith*. Casey reminded attendees that everyone needs to start at the same place—on their knees, spending time alone with God. Through that, God will provide the wisdom needed to go where God directs. Congregants were encouraged to go forward in faith, knowing that God is always ready to help us when we fall.

Carl Geissinger, Moderator, opened the commission reporting session.

FLP Report: Otelia Mennonite Church is considering transferring their affiliation to Conservative Mennonite Conference. Beaver Run, provisional member of AMC, is in the process of seeking voting membership. FLP plans to bring a recommendation in this regard to the delegate body at the Spring Delegate Session. Mark Moyer, AMC Historical Committee, has been experiencing health problems that have interfered with his ability to keep up with all the necessary archiving. Coordinating Council has agreed to earmark \$1,000 from the Directed Trust Fund to seek an individual through the Ministry Inquiry Program to serve as a ministry intern with the Historical Committee. Anyone who has interest and/or would like to assist with the archiving tasks should contact Alan Kaufman or Conrad Mast. Nominating Committee requested that nomination forms be completed prior to coming to Summer Conference. FLP has

observed that there is a direct correlation between a lack of a congregation's attendance at Conference events and the eventual withdrawal from AMC. In an effort to maintain more healthy relationships, FLP proposed to directly contact any congregation that has not participated in Conference for at least two years. Delegate response to this announcement was that two years was too long to wait. Alan then stated that FLP would re-visit the topic at an upcoming FLP meeting.

Finance and Stewardship Commission: Brenda Benner has heard other conference treasurers share stories and challenges that were very similar to AMC. A treasurers' handbook is in the developmental process and will eventually be available on line. Copies of the Oct. 31, 2007, financial statement were distributed and explained. The AMC office building has some ongoing maintenance issues that need attention and will require some funds. The balance, after forwarding designated giving to church-wide agencies, is represented by a negative \$1,007.74. That was explained as being the result of a "paper" transfer/loan of monies from the Missions and Service Directed Trust Fund to meet current expenses. September and October tend to be rather difficult months financially for AMC. The borrowed funds will need to be repaid. The actual current balance is \$8,500 in the red.

Nurture and Education Commission: Cathy Spory reported that in response to a current need, an ad-hoc Sexual Abuse Committee has been established with Cathy Chapman serving as chair. This committee has been charged with the task of helping congregations become aware of potential abusive situations and ways to prevent abuse from happening. John & Marilyn Bender's conference on "Sex and Spirituality in the Congregation" was beneficial. Cathy Spory is available to receive any feedback regarding *Gather 'Round* Sunday school material. She serves as our Conference Resource Advocate, charged with helping congregations or individuals access Mennonite Church USA (MC USA) resources.

Missions and Service Commission (M & S): Ron Spory requested prayer for filling the Ministry Intern role. International Guest House continues to seek volunteers to staff their mission. World's Attic covenant expired in 2003, so a review of their program is being planned to update the agreement.

Leadership Commission: Steve Sauder reported that pastors will be discussing *Is It Insensitive to Share Your Faith?* Adam Tice will be

licensed at Hyattsville. Matt Deputy will be licensed for evangelism at Tressler. Lewis Beachy has been ordained for the Church of the Brethren. Sandeep Thomas has been licensed for the Asian-Indian Church in Pittsburgh.

Bruce Yoder and Sunday were visiting from Nigeria to learn how we in AMC “do” conference. They invited AMC to come to Nigeria to learn how West African’s “do” conference. Greetings were brought from Sunday’s family and his bishop, who had visited in Hesston, Kan., in 1998. Sunday, Conference secretary, shared some characteristics of the only West African Mennonite Conference. There are 30,000 members (mostly children) in 40 congregations. He expressed need for AMC to come and share with the Nigerian church, pleading for us to come and “breathe life” into their churches. Their churches have Spirit, but have lost the Mennonite characteristics. We were challenged to, “Partner together and raise the status of the church.” The church of Nigeria needs our prayers, our presence and our financial resources. They are in great poverty. He assured the audience that visitors to his part of Africa would be safe. Sunday prayed for AMC and Carl Geissinger prayed for the Conference in Nigeria.

CLC (Constituency Leadership Council) is a national group with representatives from each of the 21 conferences in MC USA. It gathers twice a year. It is not a decision-making body. Rather, it is a policy-shaping body that helps to give guidance to policies created by other bodies. Kurt Horst, Carl Geissinger and Lynette Plank represent our conference.

David Miller introduced a process of praying for each congregation within the conference.

Levi Miller, Mennonite Publishing Network, brought a selection of books for sale.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Akron office needs to relocate.

Phillipi Service Adventure Unit needs financial assistance to secure a working mini van.

Following a delectable potato bar lunch served by Springs MYF, Conrad Knagey conducted the afternoon session. Author of *Roadsides for the Journey*, Conrad was introduced as having done “the work of a sociologist; but with the heart of a pastor.” To get a more complete picture of who we are as a Mennonite denomination, one should read the book. However, some of the more significant insights the data revealed that were shared are listed below:

—We are a church in crisis. We have not

been listening carefully or discerning what God was calling us to do in our local community.

—Mennonites want to tell their story and they have a story to tell. It needs to be connected to God’s story.

—Growth and spiritual vitality of racial/ethnic groups is significant and we need to pay more attention to them. Compared to Anglos, the racial/ethnic group is both more charismatic and more evangelical. They hold together a concern for social justice, peacemaking and evangelism better than any of the Anglos.

—We are aging as a denomination, with the average age now 54. Young adults are most likely to say they feel marginalized; but they are also the most willing group to relocate in order to plant a church.

—Politics is shaping our theology these days! “John Roth has a long way to go in convincing us to take a political sabbatical,” although we really should heed his admonition.

—Our education and professionalism have both doubled since the 1970s.

—More than 90% of us have TV; so we are now hearing lots of voices rather than one unified voice.

—Our affluence has enabled us to be more mobile. We now go to the church we prefer, often passing other churches along the way. Thus, we don’t connect to our community. If each of us is not equipped for ministry, our congregations will not connect with our communities, or “be missional”.

—Mission Failure. Nothing will change if we don’t engage with this data. What does this data mean for us? It won’t come from experts or technical advisors. Instead, meaning will come from each of us as together we pray, fast and seek God in community. “God has plans and purposes for me to connect to the world.”

Subsequent to the data presentation, participants divided into small groups and addressed four questions: Which MMP2006 findings must the church (local, area conference, and national) address in order to faithfully fulfill God’s mission to the world? How might these findings shape the mission of Allegheny Mennonite Conference? How is your congregation addressing any one or more of the challenges presented by MMP 2006? What do you sense the Spirit is saying to the church today?

Refreshed, revitalized and challenged, we dispersed to our respective communities—until the next time. —Carolyn Tice, Springs



**Top: Bruce Yoder and Sunday bring greetings from the West African Mennonite Conference.**

**Middle: Conrad Mast and Kathy Holsopple prepare to enjoy the Springs’ Mennonite Youth Fellowship Potato Bar.**

**Above: Conrad Kanagy conducts that afternoon session.**



# TriState Relief Sale

(814) 445-6945 www.tristatesale.org

Reminder: quilts should be submitted by May 30.

The following is paraphrased from the first-hand report of Larry Fisher, MCC representative in Bangladesh, as he surveys recent cyclone damage:

On Nov.15, 2007 a ferocious cyclone hit Bangladesh from the south, coming off of the Bay of Bengal and making landfall. The center of this cyclone hit just to the east of the largest mangrove forest in the world. The more highly populated areas took a direct hit. The storm was deadly and storms of this intensity (160 mph winds) have killed tens of thousands in the past, but fortunately a combination early warning and shelters prevented the death toll from reaching 10,000.

The bridges are out. We load the 185 XL Honda trail bikes onto a small boat along with about 30 people, and head across the river.

The next two hours are surreal. I am witnessing a human tragedy, a national disaster, an act of nature that mocks our feeble attempts at taming our environment. Houses on their sides, houses upside down, houses blown apart, houses crushed by trees, houses crying out for help. Roads washed out, rutted, potholes gaping in the sun. Then there are the trees. Trees snapped off with jagged limbs pointing toward the sky but no longer majestic.

There are people in this picture, people walking along the roads, people sitting on a foundation of what once was a house, people trying to get on

with their lives. How do you measure damage to the human spirit?

We hear of a small village to the west along the river that took a direct hit, no mangrove forest to take some force out of the wind. One hundred forty dead, 100% of the houses destroyed. We ride to the scene and my mood changes. Now we are witnessing the grief, hearing the wailing, walking among the ruined houses instead of just seeing a destroyed house as we ride by. Nothing is left standing. The village Leanto is made of crumpled tin and blankets serve as shelter. An old man sits in stunned silence while his daughter wails for a lost child. Other grandchildren, ages one, two and three, stand about.

Responding to these needs through Mennonite Central Committee is what TriState Relief Sale is all about. In October volunteers from eight different churches gathered at the Kaufman Mennonite Church in Davidsville to create items for the 10th TriState Relief Sale to be held July 18 & 19, 2008. Young volunteers packed school kits to be sent where children would not be able to go to school if they had no supplies.

Perhaps this winter as we sit warm and dry in our homes, we will take time to plan our gift of either material items or of our time and talents in order to provide shelter and food for others.

—*Harriet Berg, Springs*



**Kelsey (left in back) & Mackenzie Thomas (front), Blough MC, packing school kits at Kaufman Workday for TriState Relief Sale.**

## Prayers and Rituals for Women with Cancer

Breast cancer. The diagnosis pounded in Diann Neu's ears as she listened to her long-time associate and friend. She had come to Neu yearning for something to help her cope: holistic, feminist prayers and rituals.

"I had nothing," said Neu, the co-founder and co-director of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual, who, despite a wide knowledge of and access to resources, found herself without access to materials that addressed the journey of women with cancer.

In collaboration with women with cancer, Neu created *Seasons of Survival: Prayers and Rituals for Women with Cancer* – a set of prayer cards containing rituals and liturgies that could easily be carried along to chemotherapy sessions or doctor's appointments.

Neu said before she created *Seasons of Survival*, she asked a group of women with breast cancer what they needed.

"They told me they wanted prayers and rituals," Neu said.

The *Seasons of Survival* packet contains prayers, rituals and litanies that are specific to the experiences of women with cancer and those accompanying them. The cards offer women prayers for chemotherapy, practices for when they begin losing their hair, and laments for the inability to conceive, among others.

Cynthia Lapp, pastor of Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church, has shared these prayers and spiritual practices with several women in her congregation who are dealing with cancer. She has also used the prayers and rituals during a women's Bible study group. Lapp appreciates the inclusive and comfortable language of the materials in *Seasons of Survival*, as well as their embodied and holistic focus.

*Seasons of Survival: Prayers and Rituals for Women with Cancer* can be ordered by e-mailing [waterstaff@hers.com](mailto:waterstaff@hers.com) or by visiting the resources section of the WATER website.

—*Hannah Heinzekehr, Mennonite Mission Network*

## Conference Calendar ▼

### January 25-27

SnoKamp, Grades 9-12, at Laurelville

### January 29

Deadline March/April issue *ACNews*

### March 1

Spring Delegates Meeting at University

### March 14-16

Jr. High Retreat, Grades 6-8, at Laurelville

### April 1

Deadline May/June issue *ACNews*

### April 7-10

Spring Bible Study at Laurelville

### June 3

Deadline July-August issue *ACNews*

### July 18-19

TriState Relief Sale, McHenry, Md.

