

# A Anabaptist World

Mennonite news, inspiring stories

## THE POTENT LIFE OF A BOLD PEACEMAKER

Michael J. Sharp in  
2013 with Ciza Bitibiza  
in a camp for displaced  
people in the Democratic  
Republic of Congo.

**PLUS**

MILLENNIALS FORGE  
NEW SPIRITUAL PATHS

BY DEBBI DIGENNARO



FRIENDS OF SHIRATI

Providing Medical, Education, and Development Assistance to Shirati Hospital Tanzania

Friends of Shirati  
P.O. Box 10903  
Lancaster, PA 17605-0903  
Phone (717) 884-9074

501 (C) (3) nonprofit

Contributions are tax deductible.

## SUPPORTED PROGRAMS



### Health:

*Cervical Cancer Screenings. Palliative Care. Maternal Health. Developmental Disabilities. Orthopedic Surgeries. Disability Skills Training. Support for HIV/AIDS Program.*

### Education:

*Staff Skills Upgrading.*



### Facility Maintenance:

*Solar Electric Expansion. Asbestos removal. New Water Facility & Filtration. New Maternity Operating room. New Emergency Entrance*



# explore

## !Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth

allows young people (grades 10 to 12) to engage their faith questions, develop their passion for ministry and test their leadership gifts.

The program includes:

- **17-day group experience** in Elkhart, Indiana, in July
- **100-hour congregational experience** with a mentoring pastor

Learn more: [ambs.edu/explore](http://ambs.edu/explore)



## Invest in the path ahead

Many of us are taking it day-by-day, step-by-step. We can also make room for financial strategies – and the Holy Spirit – to guide our feet for the longer term.

We can also invest in enduring values – like hope and sharing, love and caring.

**Talk to an Everence professional or visit [everence.com](http://everence.com) or call 800-348-7468.**



Banking | Investing | Retirement | Financial Planning | Insurance | Charitable Giving

*Securities offered through ProEquities Inc., a registered broker-dealer, member FINRA and SIPC. Investments and other products are not NCUA or otherwise federally insured, may involve loss of principal and have no credit union guarantee.*

*Products and services offered through Everence Trust Company and other Everence entities are independent of and are not guaranteed or endorsed by ProEquities, Inc., or its affiliates.*



FEATURES

08  
Martyr? Hero?

BY TIM HUBER

Book's author takes the measure of a risk-taking peacemaker's life.

10  
Book excerpt:  
Disarmed

BY MARSHALL V. KING

MJ Sharp wasn't like other white people the Congolese had known.

14  
Songs of Zion  
in a new land

BY DEBBI DIGENNARO

What we can learn from millennials' spiritual practices.

NEWS

18  
Flight to freedom

Christian Aid Ministries hostages in Haiti felt God prepared a path for escape.

20  
Alternative vision

Korea Anabaptist Center grew from a desire for a new way to be the church.

21  
Relief for Cubans

All the money in the world can't buy food from empty shelves.



COLUMNS

28  
Shirt off your back  
Does the Golden Rule apply to possessions?

29  
A prayer with grit  
The Serenity Prayer combines acceptance of circumstances with resolve to make life better.

30  
Love, the liberator  
What's the motive for seeking racial justice? Love.

31  
Shall I still dream?  
Scripture calls us to a life of adventurous expectation.

32  
Eye on the sparrow  
God loves us in our individuality.

DEPARTMENTS

- 04 From the Executive Director
- 05 Currents
- 06 Opinion: Letters
- 07 Opinion: Editorial
- 26 Higher Education
- 33 Book Review
- 34 Wider World
- 37 Classifieds
- 38 Obituaries

**ON THE COVER:** Serving with Mennonite Central Committee in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Michael J. Sharp met Ciza Bitibiza, a malnourished boy in dire need of medical care. Sharp's intervention helped save his life. The photo, by Tim Lind, was taken after Bitibiza, 14, had regained his health.

BY DANIELLE KLOTZ

# Books for the path of peace and justice

IT'S PROBABLY no surprise, given my chosen work, that I love to read. To start the year, I thought I'd share a short list of some of the books that have helped fill my cup over the last little while. All can be found on MennoMedia's list of publications.

If you'd like a chance to win a free book, you can take our *Anabaptist World* reader survey. We are giving away five books to a lucky few who do the survey and enter the drawing.

The first book I've enjoyed is the one we are going to give to the lucky drawing winners: *On Love and Mercy: A Social Justice Devotional* by Stephen Mattson. Each day's reading is easy to digest, and the suggested prayer always has a way of helping to set my intentions on loving God and my neighbor. Mattson doesn't shy away from how difficult the work of social justice is — but also does not back down from insisting it is our work as followers of Jesus.

You can take the survey at [anabaptistworld.org/readersurvey2022](http://anabaptistworld.org/readersurvey2022).

*Dear White Peacemakers: Dismantling Racism with Grit and Grace* by Osheta Moore is the next one I've loved and appreciated. Moore shares from her experiences and invites all of us — especially those of us who are white and want to be allies and peacemakers — to her table. She describes a part of her book as “a call to leave the plantation of comfort and privilege.” Whew! It's a difficult invitation to accept at times, but I believe we are called to do it. Moore helps open a path for those of us who aren't sure where to start.

Next is *Been in the Struggle: Pursuing an Antiracist Spirituality* by

Regina Shands Stoltzfus and Tobin Miller Shearer. Are we sensing a theme yet? I was so excited when my copy came. Our team at *Anabaptist World* has been on a journey of expanding our antiracist understanding. We are learning how a commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression can and should inform our work. I'm grateful

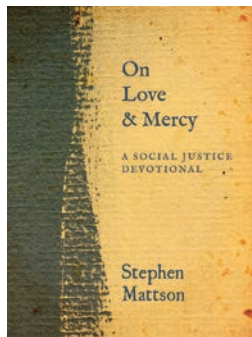
for the honest examples individuals and organizations share in this book. Again, there are no easy answers, but it is inspiration for a holy and difficult journey.

**AND LAST, IF YOU** haven't yet read Sarah Augustine's *The Land Is Not Empty*, go do it now. I've written about Sarah and her work before, and I hope you have

read her columns here in *Anabaptist World*. I admire her and her work immensely. I can't say enough how much I appreciate her willingness to write prophetically. She does not hesitate to speak truth to power. She is unashamed to say that she is working for the freedom of Indigenous people, that she will not stop and that as Christians this is our work as well.

These books aren't light reading, but all are inspiring and thought-provoking. They allow us to see ways we can pursue peacemaking here and now. These opportunities aren't new, necessarily, but they might be new for some of us.

Here's hoping we can all enter 2022 healthy and inspired to take our next steps toward the justice and peace Jesus calls us to. ●



This issue was mailed **Jan. 14**. The next issue will be mailed **Feb. 4**.



**Anabaptist World Inc. is an independent journalistic ministry serving the global Anabaptist movement. We seek to inform, inspire and provide a forum for Mennonites and anyone interested in Anabaptism to explore faith and culture.**

Established 2020, merging *The Mennonite* and *Mennonite World Review*

## STAFF

**Executive director:** Danielle Klotz  
[daniellek@anabaptistworld.org](mailto:daniellek@anabaptistworld.org)

**Editor:** Paul Schrag  
[editor@anabaptistworld.org](mailto:editor@anabaptistworld.org)

**Associate editor:** Tim Huber  
[timh@anabaptistworld.org](mailto:timh@anabaptistworld.org)

**Business manager:** Dana Neff  
[danan@anabaptistworld.org](mailto:danan@anabaptistworld.org)

**Digital strategist:** Juan Moya  
[juanm@anabaptistworld.org](mailto:juanm@anabaptistworld.org)

**Design:** Hannah Gerig Meyer

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dawn Araujo-Hawkins	Marathana Prothro
Larry Guengerich	Marty Troyer
Hans Houshower	Karen Flores Vindel
Melody Pannell	

## EDITORIAL OFFICE

129 W. Sixth St., Newton, Kan.  
PO Box 568, Newton, KS 67114  
Phone: 316-283-3670  
Email: [editor@anabaptistworld.org](mailto:editor@anabaptistworld.org)

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

One year: \$54 US, \$70 Canadian. Order online at [anabaptistworld.org](http://anabaptistworld.org) or call 316-283-3670. For information on group rates, contact the *Anabaptist World* office.

Email: [danan@anabaptistworld.org](mailto:danan@anabaptistworld.org)  
PO Box 568, Newton, KS 67114

## POSTMASTER

Send address corrections to:  
PO Box 436, Congers, NY 10920-9819

*Anabaptist World* (USPS 339-180, ISSN 0889-2156) is published 16 times per year — every three weeks, with some four-week intervals — by Anabaptist World Inc., an independent nonprofit company. Periodicals postage paid at Newton, KS 67114 and additional mailing offices.

Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

## Decoding 'Selah': a positive pause

No one knows for sure what "Selah" means, but Susan Schlabach of Ripley, Ohio, likes this definition: "Pause and calmly think of that."

Writing in the Beachy Amish Mennonite *Calvary Messenger*, Schlabach suggests using the mysterious word, which is sprinkled throughout the Psalms, as a reminder to stop and think positively. She has noticed that when something goes wrong for her, she's prone to complain of persistent bad luck: "Murphy's Law is my life!"

But if she stops to think about it, she realizes this isn't true. Disasters and annoyances are the exception, not the rule. "But guess which gets the most attention?" she says.

She invites her readers to pause before making negative statements "subtly crafted to arouse pity" and instead to think of how God "daily and abundantly provides."

## 'No one sits alone'

Before the pandemic, board-game nights at White Chapel Mennonite Church in Glendive, Mont., often drew more people who didn't regularly attend the church than those who did. Writing in Central Plains Mennonite Conference's *Scattered Seeds*, Cynthia Mullett tells of a time a newcomer came late, after others were enjoying pizza around a full table. When people started to move together to add another chair, the newcomer protested that she could sit by herself. But a non-church member, a regular at game night, told her, "At this church, no one sits alone."



After completing an MCC-supported small-business training and taking a loan from a community savings-and-loan group, Marcelo Paz García was able to increase his income by expanding his beekeeping business from 40 hives to 100 hives. PHOTOS: DERRICK CHARLES/MCC

## What's the buzz?

What's that buzzing sound you hear on the hillsides of Boaco, Nicaragua?

That would be 100 hives of bees that are helping Marcelo Paz García, his father and two brothers make an income. García's profit helps him eat healthier food and pay for university classes.

The honey-makers produce 66-gallon barrels of the golden nectar that sell for \$820 each. In a year García and his family can sell 21 barrels, bringing in more than \$17,000. After paying expenses and building more hives, they are left with a modest monthly income.

Their business has more than doubled from the 40 hives they had in 2019 when García took a business-and-finance training for young adults from *Asociación*

*Cristiana de Jovenes de Nicaragua*, a Mennonite Central Committee partner.

As part of that training, he could join a community savings-and-loan group, where he took out a low-interest loan. The money comes from people in his community, García included, who save money and then lend it to each other.

And that's not the only buzz.

Participation in the savings groups builds relationships throughout the community, says Derrick Charles, MCC representative for Honduras and Nicaragua with his wife, Rebekah Charles, from Lancaster, Pa.

"These are new ways of working together in these communities," Derrick Charles says. — Linda Espenshade, MCC

## LOAVES AND FISHSTICKS BY STEVE EDWARDS



# Letters & Comments

Write to: [editor@anabaptistworld.org](mailto:editor@anabaptistworld.org)

## An affront to Anabaptism

True Anabaptists would take issue with the Dec. 24 editorial, "Facing an inevitable question." It is heavily slanted toward pro-LGBTQ and a great disservice to the Anabaptist community. It grossly undermines the biblical position of the Mennonite Church USA Confession of Faith's Article 19, which says, "We believe that God intends marriage to be a covenant between one man and one woman for life."

We need to be on our guard lest we become a tool of the enemy of our souls. One of the reasons America is looking more like a third-world country is the failure of the church to be the true church of Jesus Christ, unspotted from the world. The most loving thing we can do is to be like John the Baptist and warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come.

Some might say, "But Jesus never said anything about LGBTQ!" Our Anabaptist forefathers, however, saw all of Scripture as the Word of God. It is a great dishonor to them if we ignore the Apostle Paul's clear words on this subject in Romans 1.

As our Maker and Creator, God gets to write the rules. Truth is non-negotiable; violating it will bring God's judgment. Much of the fault of our nation's moral decay can be laid at the feet of the churches for aiding and abetting the sins of the world. Is it any wonder the government accommodates and protects abortion and LGBTQ if the church embraces them?

**Don Martin, Mifflin, Pa.**

## Holy, profane don't mix

Yes, Paul Schrag, the LGBTQ crowd will not be ending their tirade any time soon (Editorial, Dec. 24). 2 Timothy 3 assures us of that. You ask, "Do we make room for diversity or draw lines of division?" I suggest that those who live in disobedience to the Word of God as taught in Romans 1 and 1 Corinthians 6 (there are more) are the ones who have drawn lines of division. God spoke his plan for marriage and has not deviated. The holy and the profane cannot dwell together. "In vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines" (Mark 7:7).

Do not gamble with your final destination. Eternity is a long time! It is worth any

sacrifice to gain the prize. You can be sure the judgment prophesied in 2 Peter 3 will happen to those described in Mark 7:7.

**Anita Swartzendruber, Wayland, Iowa**

## It's about idolatry

Harold N. Miller (Letters, Dec. 24), would have you believe same-sex relationships can be reduced to a place in the list of all the awful things at the end of Romans 1. A clear condemnation if you've ever heard it, right? But, tell me, why all this? What's the "therefore" starting in verse 24, which indicates a continuing thought? What is the context for this? What is before and after the passage? Let's back up a bit and see the verses before and after the above passage, seen in Romans 1:18-23. Verse 23 says, "they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles."

Then it dawns on you. This passage is not about homosexuality. It is about idolatry: worshiping images resembling a human or animal instead of God. Once you've gone that far, then Pandora's box flies open.

But wait, there's more. Nobody ever reads on to the very next verse, Romans 2:1: "Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things." And verse 3: "Do you imagine . . . you will escape the judgment of God?"

Context gives a better understanding than cherry-picking a few verses.

**Brian D. Stucky, Goessel, Kan.**

## Sprouts from a stump

As a Mennonite attempting to live out my spiritual disciplines of hope and gratitude, I was compelled by Dani Klotz's column, "What Advent sprouts await?" (Nov. 26). As a forest resource manager, I note your accompanying image is apropos in a way you might not have recognized. There are dormant living buds in the vicinity of a young tree's damaged area that begin to form shoots of new growth after it is damaged. These buds are classified as adventitious buds. In some of my presentations to religious and secular groups, I use an image similar to this. My image is from a tree cut for charcoal in Haiti.

**Bill Minter, New Paris, Ind.**

## Expressive cover art

Thanks for the art by Penny Woods on the Dec. 24 cover. Totally expressive. The hands surrounding, protecting. The facial

expression of love, concern and care. The slowly moving Magi. The soft quietness, away from the craziness of the city. The world around, above, below, beside. I feel the rhythms; I hear the sighs. I'm warmed, calmed and energized. Thank you, Penny.

**Mary Jane Hershey, Harleysville, Pa.**

## Covering the world

I eagerly await *Anabaptist World* and read it cover to cover. I am particularly interested in the international news of both church and wider societies. I have lived in Kenya, Egypt, Ethiopia and Zambia, so my interest starts in Africa and extends from there. I was curious (and a bit afraid) of how the merger of *Mennonite World Review* and *The Mennonite* would affect attention to the world beyond the United States and Canada. I have been pleasantly surprised that *AW* has lived into both components of its name. In the Dec. 24 issue I found an article on African approaches to COVID-19, three articles on Anabaptists in Haiti, an article on Anabaptists in Ethiopia, obituaries for an Italian broadcaster and a Vietnamese translator/teacher, obituaries for two mission workers in Latin America, an article on a Bible school in South Africa, an article on Manga comics in France and a feature article on finding Jesus in the slums of Indonesia. Wow! Keep up the Anabaptist + World balance.

**Ken Litwiller, Lewistown, Pa.**

## Any answer for the 'nones'?

In the late 1990s, when Virginia and I were living in London, England was widely described as a post-Christian nation, in which less than 10 percent of the population was involved in church. We were told, "Just you wait, America, it's coming to you too." Now it appears to be here, or, at least, to be rapidly developing.

A poll by the Pew Research Center asked, "What is your religion?" Those answering "none" now constitute 29% of American adults. That's up from 23% in 2016 and 19% in 2011 (see *Wider World*, page 35). Many of the "nones" call themselves spiritual but not religious, which suggests a disillusionment with religious institutions. Some of the blame must be assumed by the institutions themselves. What is the Christian church doing about this? What should we be doing?

**Abner Schlabach, South Royalton, Vt.**

Join the conversation by writing to [editor@anabaptistworld.org](mailto:editor@anabaptistworld.org) or *Anabaptist World*, Box 568, Newton, KS 67114. Letters are edited; 250 words or fewer are preferred. Include your name and hometown.

# Amazement at the gate

Stories of deliverance, and of death, lay bare the mystery of (un)answered prayer

**THE BOOK OF ACTS** records two miraculous jailbreaks.

In Acts 16, an earthquake throws open the prison doors, prompting the release of Paul and Silas.

In Acts 12, chains fall from Peter's wrists and an angel leads him out, right past two guards.

The annals of bold breaks from captivity gained another dramatic story in December.

Twelve hostages — workers in Haiti with Christian Aid Ministries, including three children — bolted as Peter did, sneaking out in the middle of the night, unseen by numerous guards, according to CAM's account.

The resemblance to Acts 12 is uncanny — including the attribution of divine intervention.

Peter escaped because an angel rescued him. The hostages in Haiti “felt like God prepared a path before them,” CAM spokesman Weston Showalter said at a press conference on Dec. 20.

In both cases, deliverance was an answer to prayer.

“While Peter was kept in prison, the church prayed fervently for him” (Acts 12:5).

During the CAM workers' two months held captive by the 400 Mawozo gang, the prayers of Anabaptist churches surely were no less fervent than those of the Jerusalem church for Peter.

“I am confident God was working through this whole thing, and the prayers of God's people all over the world played a key part,” Showalter said.

With the families and colleagues of the CAM workers, we rejoice in answered prayer. We prayed for them too.

We also observe that prayers do not guarantee deliverance.

**CONSIDER ANOTHER** pair of biblical and contemporary stories: the apostle James and the young peacemaker Michael “MJ” Sharp.



People welcomed the returning hostages at the Christian Aid Ministries headquarters in Titanyen, north of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on Dec. 16. PHOTO: ODELYN JOSEPH/AP

In Acts 12:2, a verse perhaps little noticed on the way to the story of Peter's angel-escorted flight, we read that King Herod had James “killed with the sword.”

On March 12, 2017, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, kidnapers killed Michael Sharp with a gunshot to the head.

There might not have been much time to pray for James before his execution. There wasn't for Sharp.

**The theology of how God answers prayer will always leave more questions than answers.**

But we can be sure each had a host of intercessors for his safety while doing dangerous, holy work.

And yet they paid with their lives.

**THE THEOLOGY OF** how God answers prayer will always leave more questions than answers.

For some, tragedies and dashed hopes scuttle faith altogether.

The rest of us can only say, as the father of the afflicted boy in Mark 9 pleaded to Jesus: “I believe; help my

unbelief!”

It's cognitive dissonance, to be sure. The writer F. Scott Fitzgerald said the ability to hold opposing ideas in one's mind at the same time is a mark of intelligence. Perhaps it's also a mark of faith.

For many of us, the battle of faith and doubt is an integral part of the seeker's — yes, the believer's — life.

And we are in good company. The evidence is right there as we continue reading Acts 12.

The followers of Jesus are holding a prayer meeting — presumably for Peter's release — when Peter himself knocks at the gate.

A maid named Rhoda recognizes his voice and announces that Peter is right outside.

Incredulous, the believers (skeptics!) pause their prayers to reply: “You are out of your mind!” (Acts 12:15).

Then they open the gate and are amazed.

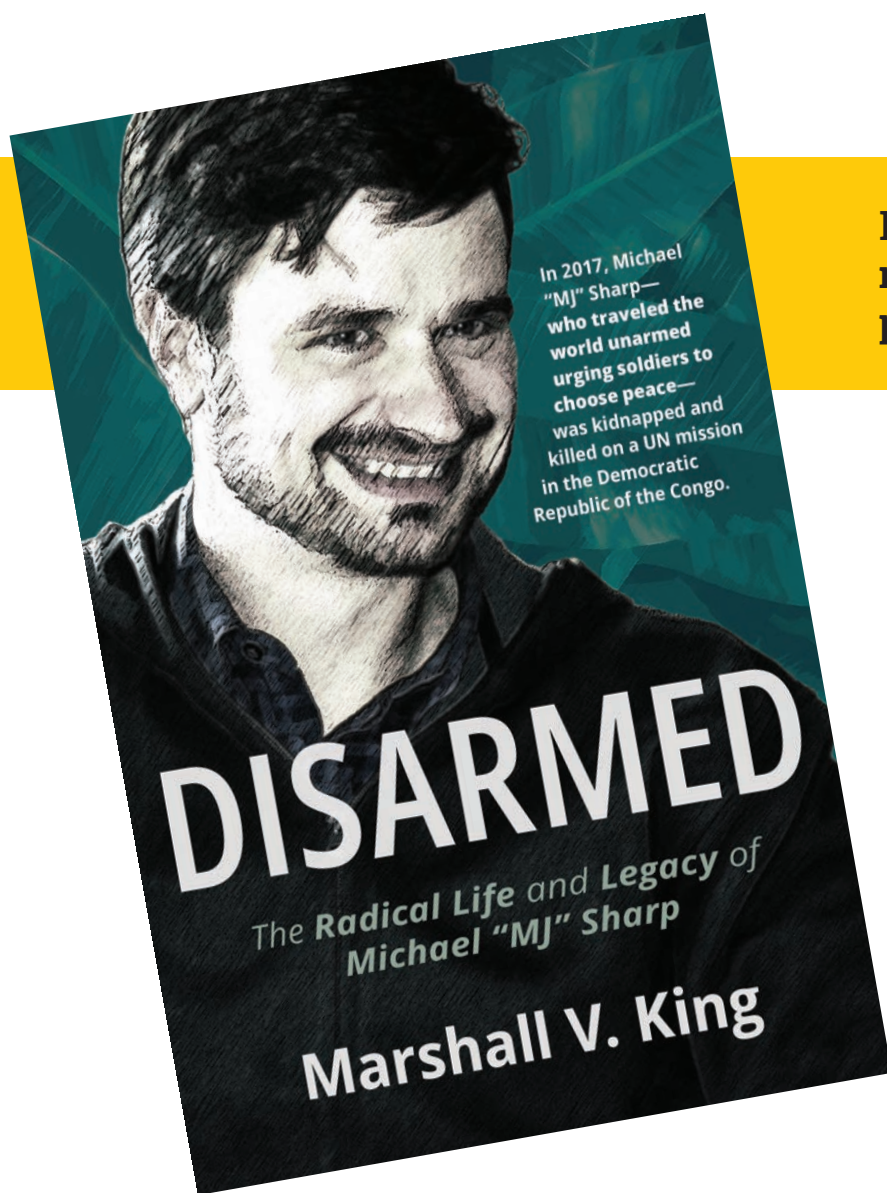
We praise God for the life of Michael Sharp, who shined the light of peace in his work with Mennonite Central Committee and the United Nations.

We praise God for the deliverance of the CAM workers, who gave a powerful witness of loving their enemies during two months of captivity.

We praise, and pray, in sorrow and in joy. ●

BY TIM HUBER

# MARTYR? HERO?



**Book's author takes the measure of a risk-taking peacemaker's life**

**D**RAMATIC STORIES OF sacrificial Anabaptist peacemaking tend to be historic, even centuries old. One of the most recent is shared in a book coming out this month from Herald Press.

*Disarmed: The Radical Life and Legacy of Michael "MJ" Sharp* by Marshall V. King tells the story of the former Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Mission Network worker who was murdered in 2017 while investigating atrocities in the Democratic Republic of Congo for the United Nations. The five-year anniversary of his death, at age 34, will be in March.

"We hear the stories of I-W service and Pax and conscientious objectors during the world wars, and here was a story of a man who was doing peacemaking work first as part of Mennonite Mission Network, then Mennonite Central Committee, and then the



Top: Michael Sharp after traveling the rough roads of the Democratic Republic of Congo by motorcycle.

PHOTO: MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Bottom: Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalán meet with interpreters and tribal leaders on March 11, 2017, the day before they were murdered.

PHOTO: PROPERTY OF THE MORESBY FAMILY, USED WITH PERMISSION OF MARIA MORESBY



this is as close as a lot of Mennonites get to the knock on the door that a lot of military families live with.”

**A FORMER NEWSPAPER** editor and distant relative of Sharp, King hit the road in 2017 to interview people close to Sharp. His travels took him from Indiana to Kansas and New Mexico, then Canada and ultimately to Europe, where he spent time with Catalán’s family in Sweden.

“I stayed in a room that was his in Bammental,” said King of Sharp’s Germany placement with the Military Counseling Network, a project of the German Mennonite Peace Committee. “I wanted to go to the [Democratic Republic of] Congo, but then there was election unrest, then Ebola, then COVID, so I never went there, and there were different opinions on if I could safely go to report this story.”

King was impressed by the number of people around the world who had stories to share about how Sharp impacted their lives.

“I’ve read the press clips, and there’s a lot in this book that has not been reported on MJ Sharp,” King said. “One of the things I worked to do in the book was putting MJ into context. Where does MJ sit with addressing the question of whether he was a martyr? Whether MJ was a hero?”

“Using what people told me about him, [I worked] to put him into the context of historic Anabaptism and Mennonites in the 21st century, as well as just the larger human tale of how we live our lives in a divided world.” ●



**Tim Huber** is associate editor of *Anabaptist World*. He worked with Michael Sharp at the Military Counseling Network and was interviewed for *Disarmed*.

United Nations,” King said in a Dec. 2 interview from his home in Goshen, Ind. “And while he was practicing this Anabaptist peacemaking theology, he was also trying to figure out what it means to be Mennonite in the modern world.

“I saw it as a really good story of someone who had answered the call to be a peacemaker and inevitably put himself at risk, who was willing to take risks on behalf of other people and inevitably lost his life because of it.”

King was drawn to telling the story of a young Mennonite who picks up his things and goes off to practice pacifism in ways many others only talk about.

Sharp helped members of the U.S. military pursue conscientious objection discharges in Germany.

He worked with Rwandan refugees as Eastern Congo coordinator with MCC.

He sat with militia commanders to discuss conflict over cups of tea, part

of a program that persuaded roughly 1,600 fighters to lay down their weapons.

Then he and his U.N. colleague Zaida Catalán of Sweden were kidnapped and fatally shot while inves-

**King was drawn to telling the story of a young Mennonite who picks up his things and goes off to practice pacifism in ways many others only talk about.**

tigating human rights abuses and sanctions violations in Kasai-Central Province.

“He ended up losing his life,” King said. “At the time — and it’s still true —

BY MARSHALL V. KING



An excerpt from *Disarmed: The Radical Life and Legacy of Michael "MJ" Sharp*, published this month by Herald Press.

# Into the heart of Africa

## MJ Sharp wasn't like other white people the Congolese had known

**L**EAVING BEHIND THE life he knew in Europe and the United States, MJ Sharp arrived in the Democratic Republic of Congo in August 2012. He didn't come to conquer, as had the white explorers of old. He came to aid and assist, to learn and listen.

He was part of a team of 11 Mennonite Central Committee workers in the Rwanda/Burundi region, but he was a thousand miles from the nearest MCCer in Congo. The massive country is nearly double the size of Western Europe and over one-fourth the size of the overall area of the United States.

Since the 1960s, the country's infrastructure has not been maintained, and no highways run from Kinshasa, the capital in the west, to the eastern side of Congo. The DRC doesn't have many paved roads, something MJ would often joke about, and something that other expatriates, or expats as they're called, often note when they're talking about travel.

He survived his first infection or parasite with a few days in bed and antibiotics. Yet, emotionally, he was healthier than he'd been in years as he faced a new challenge.

One of the first things he did after arriving in Congo was buy a motorcycle. He got a small cycle with a 125cc engine manufactured in China that he could ride for hours on almost any terrain. While some expats demanded to move about in Land Cruisers or with escorts, MJ avoided that mindset. He preferred to ride.

MJ settled in Bukavu, on the southern end of Lake Kivu. He found an

apartment that was part of a compound with four residences and hired staff members, including gardeners, night watchmen and at times a house cleaner for the residences. One of the reasons MJ picked the spot was because he hoped to raise his own food. The owner approved of his planting a garden and building hutches for animals, including chickens, guinea pigs, and rabbits. The question was whether it would go better than his attempt at worm farming in the college dorm.

Part of his job with MCC was to be a point person for agricultural training in eastern Congo, yet the larger focus was on peacemaking and working with

*Top:* Michael Sharp visits with Elizabeth Namavu and children in Mubimbi Camp, home to displaced people in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in 2013. PHOTO: JANA AŠENBRENNEROVÁ/MCC

*Bottom:* Michael Sharp gathers with Mennonite Central Committee program workers and those receiving food and farming aid in the Democratic Republic of Congo. PHOTO: MCC

internally displaced people.

In an MCC publication, he described his assignment this way: “As coordinator for MCC’s work in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, I support the Congolese Protestant Council of Churches and its agencies that work in emergency response and for peace and reconciliation in the region. Their projects respond to the needs of displaced people, support victims of violence and encourage armed groups to demobilize and reintegrate into society.”

**MJ didn’t go to the DRC to evangelize, as had so many white people before him. Rather, MCC works with and supports the Congolese Mennonites.**

**ABOUT A THIRD OF THE** time, he worked in Bukavu from his home and an office there. The rest of the time he traveled in the North Kivu and South Kivu provinces to visit partners, projects and camps for internally displaced people. He often worked with Emmanuel Billay or Moise Butimbushi, who trained him as a colleague in the Program of Peace and Reconciliation. That program with the Protestant Council of Churches sprouted from a response to the Rwandan genocide of 1994 and the two subsequent civil wars.

The three men often traveled together, walking for miles. MJ carried a walking stick and traveled with both an open mind and a willingness to engage rather than expect special treatment.

Some expats ask for special food, or sometimes those hosting them make what they think an expat would want: milk, bread, sugar and French fries with mayonnaise.

MJ would give such offerings to others and instead eat what the locals were eating: fish and fufu, a daily staple made with cassava flour or corn flour. He was also fond of sombe, made from boiled and pounded cassava leaves.

If Emmanuel and Moise had to sleep on the ground, so would MJ.

If they were hot and sweaty as they walked and they came to a river, the men would swim together, MJ assuring them that doing so wouldn’t get them in trouble with their bosses.

He would wear the same clothes for days on end if needed. As his French skills improved, he also worked at learning Swahili, which was spoken among some in eastern Congo. He was embarrassed at times that his Swahili wasn’t perfect, yet he would ask Emmanuel and Moise for words that were important to a particular village as they approached it to do their work. MJ’s small efforts at language went a long way in gaining trust and building relationships with those he encountered.

“When you go into the village and the white person greets you, it just makes you happy,” said Moise.

MJ was a white North American, so it was unexpected that he would willingly choose to forgo the comforts of home. Yet he insisted, and that humility impressed the Congolese and earned their respect. He wasn’t like the other white people the Congolese had known.

“He was very open. And totally engaged in his work. He was kind,

**If Emmanuel and Moise had to sleep on the ground, so would MJ. He would wear the same clothes for days on end if needed.**

showed affection and love. He listened very well and a lot. He wanted to know the truth,” said Emmanuel, adding that MJ wanted to feel the truth, not just know it.

**MJ DIDN’T GO TO THE DRC** to evangelize, as had so many white people before him. Rather, MCC works with and supports the Congolese Mennonites. Their churches operate programs to help internally displaced people. And some of those national churches then evangelize, sharing the gospel and trying to get people to repent and give their heart to Christ, said Mulanda “Jimmy” Juma, peacebuilding coordinator for MCC in southern Africa. But MCC itself doesn’t engage in evangelism. “MCC doesn’t allow that,” he said. “It’s not an opportunity to preach.”

MJ showed love for others and modeled the life of Christ. His actions demonstrated his faith through love, compassion and trust. Some of the Congolese Mennonite groups saw their numbers grow because of their relief work. “The evangelization was not done through preaching. It was done through action,” said Jimmy.

In an MCC publication in the fall of 2013, MJ put his work into context: “Places of intense conflict are also places where creative solutions are born and put to the test. If Jesus’ example is for everyone everywhere, what does that look like in eastern Congo, where war has been the norm for 20 years? I get to work on the front line of Congolese ingenuity and faithfulness in response to violence and hardship.” ●



**Marshall V. King**, a freelance writer based in Goshen, Ind., is the author of *Disarmed: The Radical Life and Legacy of Michael “MJ” Sharp*.





# For parents, book fills gaps in an unfinished life

**F**OR SOMEONE WHO seemed to be always on the move, Michael “MJ” Sharp was known for his ability to form relationships.

The publication in January of a book about his international efforts to make peace — on the cusp of the five-year anniversary of his death while working for the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of Congo — has served as an opportunity for his parents to reflect on the challenges of giving order to the profound diversity of those relationships.

“There’s just no way anyone could represent who he was between the covers of a book,” said his mother, Michele Miller Sharp, at her Hesston, Kan., home in December. “Even some of his closest U.S. friends said after the [2017] memorial, ‘Did I even know him?’

“[Author] Marshall King did an in-

credible job, but the book can’t tell the whole story. It does a great job telling the story it does tell.”

Her husband, John Sharp, noted that, like the memorial service, *Disarmed* includes details the family didn’t know.

“The things he would often focus on were his *faux pas* where he screwed up,” John recalled of his son’s visits. “He wouldn’t tell us about his successes. That’s what we learned later. The numbers from work with partners with militias — that 1,600 militia members and 23,000 dependents walked away from violence based on work by him and his team — we learned that from NPR.”

**CONGOLESE COLLEAGUE** Serge Lungele shared a dramatic episode with the Sharps that their son never told, despite his love of a good story.

“He and Serge found a bus parked

across the road,” John said. “They saw masked, armed people robbing passengers lying in the road. Serge was shaking in his seat, and MJ got out. He walked up and asked, ‘How can you do this to your own people who have so little?’ And they walked away.

“MJ gets back in the car, and Serge said, ‘Why did you do that?’ He said, ‘The worst that could happen is that we would be kidnapped. If that happens, my country will come looking for me. And if they kill us, then our blood can help to heal this land.’

“I asked Serge, ‘Did anything change?’ He said yes.”

*Top:* John and Michele Sharp meet with U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley, left, in New York City after Michael Sharp’s death. PHOTO: U.S. MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

*Bottom:* John Sharp spreads his son’s ashes on the top of Mount Kilimanjaro in 2019.

PHOTO: CHRISTY KAUFFMAN

“The depth, the integrity, the intentionality of relationships is still felt,” Michele added.

The impact of those relationships has stretched beyond the people who walked away from the militia life.

## Remembering the people of Congo whom MJ loved is an important reason for telling this story.

The United Nations is known for taking a hands-off approach to nations’ sovereign right to prosecute crimes. When Michael worked for the U.N., he encouraged his colleagues to build the same bridges of understanding he pursued with warlords, because it was beneficial to both sides. The Sharps said this inspired U.N. representatives to take a more intensive role regarding the murders of Sharp and his colleague Zaida Catalán.

“It’s remarkable how much the U.N. has pushed and paid for investigations with these deaths,” John said. “To our surprise, it’s still continuing, and that is remarkable.”



Photos of Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp adorn a table at the front of the church at Catalán’s memorial service in Kalmar, Sweden. PHOTO: JOHN SHARP

“THE EVIDENCE IS NOW clear. Michael and Zaida’s murders were a well-planned conspiracy. They were a threat to the corrupt government in power at that time,” Michele added. “We thought that before, but now there’s evidence that is not being ignored. . . . There are some excellent investigators, supported by the U.N., gathering evidence to give the prosecutors. The U.N. can’t prosecute, but they can assist. And they can monitor the trial, so it’s more credible than it has been for four years.”

**The murders were a well-planned conspiracy. Michael and Zaida were a threat to the corrupt government in power at that time.**

It was already challenging to follow the trial before the COVID pandemic and other destabilizing factors. This prevented King from visiting the DRC for the book. But it also leaves the door open for future possibilities of sharing the stories Michael loved so much.

Mennonite Central Committee DRC country representatives Tim and Suzanne Lind told the Sharps one could never know the full story of Michael’s work without sitting with the women living in the displacement camps.

“The deep meaning of MJ is his ability to form these relationships with people who had been viciously raped and their husbands killed in front of them,” John said. “Marshall [King] couldn’t talk to these women — or the boy left for dead whom MJ picked up and took to a hospital and demanded he be cared for [see cover]. We realize no book can say it all, so maybe we can call this a themed biography.

“It’s a good story. I understand the challenges as an author. Remembering the people of Congo whom MJ loved is an important reason for telling this story.” ●





# SONGS OF ZION

BY DEBBI DIGENNARO

**Neither avid churchgoers nor spiritual dropouts, millennials are forging their own paths. What can we learn from their spiritual practices?**





PHOTOS FROM UNSPLASH BY: (top, left to right) ANDREW SEAMAN, MARK KONIG, AUSTIN NEILL, DAVID TOMASETI (bottom) LEVI MEIR CLANCY

# IN A NEW LAND

**L**AST SPRING, as churches began to reopen after months of pandemic closure, a Mennonite pastor said to me, “If people don’t go back to church after COVID, it’s probably because their priorities weren’t right in the first place.”

*It can’t be that simple, I thought. What else is going on?*

To find out, I designed a project to explore pandemic-era changes in religious practices. I interviewed 20 millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) from a Mennonite background in the Harrisonburg, Va., area.

I had just read about a study by the Pew Research Center that found Americans were not going back to church as usual. The March 2021 study found that about 40% of people who had been regular attenders before the pandemic were showing up for in-person services again.

The numbers were moving in the right direction, but they also suggested a very different “new normal.” In-person church attendance is 30% to 50% lower than before the pandemic, according to an estimate by the Barna Group, a research firm that studies faith in the United States.

I was curious what this trend means

for millennial Mennonites. I straddle the birth-year line between millennials and Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980), so I watch the cohort from both an insider’s and outsider’s perspective. One thing millennials are known for, at least in church circles, is their large-scale disinterest in the Sunday morning service.

I suspected, if the dinner-table conversations at my house were any indication, that the question of millennials and religious practices was complicated.

**MY PROJECT USED** the framework of “lived religion” — homespun, noninstitutional, voluntary expressions of faith. Lived religion focuses on the ways we cultivate transcendence day-to-day. I asked people how their spiritual practices had changed.

## **Question 1: What spiritual practices did you start or stop during the lockdown?**

Even those who had not been regular churchgoers adjusted their spiritual rhythms to fit with pandemic-era realities. (See responses in box at right.)

Some adapted by moving spiritual activities to COVID-appropriate locations: Bible studies went online or

## **During COVID, I started...**

- being more open to spiritual conversations with friends.
- working harder at family devotional life.
- doing a morning routine that includes time to think about what I’m grateful for.
- trying to make Sunday a Sabbath in a new way (no chores, less news, classical music).
- volunteering at a food bank.
- going for hikes as a family or walking together at the arboretum.
- participating in an online Bible study.
- having “Wednesday worship” outside with neighbors.
- creating fresh songs inspired by prayers, Scripture.
- tithing more to entities other than the church.
- spending more time together as a family.
- meditating, journaling, taking more walks.
- praying more, having devotions more often.

outdoors; prayer times were facilitated by apps at home. One woman arranged for a solitary prayer retreat at a Mennonite camp.

Adaptations often included spending time in nature. One said, “I started being more present to our acreage. That helps me feel more connected to God.” Another started his day with a walk around the neighborhood while reflecting on things he is grateful for.

Some people interacted with their faith communities in new ways. One woman told of making more space for conversations; she was getting better at conversing by text messaging. Another served her community by volunteering at a food bank. Another

## Even those who identify as “nones” — religiously unaffiliated — aren’t necessarily secular, atheists or hostile toward religion.

reached out to struggling friends by inviting them to join him in playing online video games.

Each made some change to nurture the spiritual life. I had not thought of this when I read the Pew study about the trend toward decreased church attendance.

### Question 2: What is it about this practice that works for you?

Here are some responses:

- It keeps me grounded in time and space.
- I want to make Sunday a Sabbath in some way.
- I want to get our family off screens.
- I want to get out, move and be connected to the story of God’s people.
- Nature makes me feel closer to God.
- It helps me stay connected to people.

## How do millennial and Anabaptist values connect?

**MILLENNIALS’ MOVEMENT** away from church is not necessarily equivalent to spiritual apathy. Yet their spiritually meaningful practices often do not involve the organized church.

**Millennials are decoupling spirituality from the congregation.** The role of the church as the center of spiritual activity is starting to dissolve. Millennials want community and connection but may not look to the church to meet these needs. Want to organize meals for a new mom, volunteer at an event or organize a potluck? These connection tasks require no involvement from church personnel.

For Mennonites, the decoupling of spirituality from the congregation upsets our concept of belonging. Having decided that following Jesus is best done in community — by which we mean a congregation — we have built our systems around the congregation.

Mennonites do not have language or conceptual space for those who are committed to Jesus and the Anabaptist

tradition but not active in a church. Is there a way for Mennonite millennials to belong if they are not attached to a church?

**Millennials are taking a do-it-yourself approach to faith.** The pandemic probably intensified this trend, which is evident in other areas of their lives. Need to reupholster a couch? Need to build a raised garden bed? The professional solution is expensive and time-consuming, but instructions for a DIY solution are free and accessible on the internet.

Likewise, solutions and initiatives that come from the institutional church can be complex — burdened with bureaucracy, politics, historical precedents, budgets. Millennials want accessible, customizable options.

**THIS ARTISANAL APPROACH** to spirituality requires participants to be deliberate and engaged. Millennials in this study frequently mentioned ownership and intentionality. A father of young children said, “If our family’s devotional life totally depends

on us, we better take it seriously,” and reported that he and his wife were being more intentional about family devotional time.

A heightened sense of ownership has many virtues, yet it disrupts mutual accountability and denominational cohesion. It is difficult to support a person’s faith journey without a container that provides structure and promotes intimacy and influence.

I see synergy between Anabaptist values and millennials’ approaches to Christianity. Millennials value dialogue, authenticity, social justice and breaking down barriers between people. The congruence between these principles and Anabaptist values suggests fruitful possibilities for Mennonite millennials.

The chart below highlights some points where millennials and Anabaptists might find synergy. The third column shows activities reported by people in this study where these two streams converge.

— *Debbi DiGennaro*

Millennial values	Anabaptist values*	Adaptations during COVID
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• authenticity</li> <li>• relationships</li> <li>• dialogue</li> <li>• local, contextualized social action</li> <li>• global justice</li> <li>• renouncing imperialism</li> <li>• dismantling us/them thinking</li> <li>• minimizing institutions in favor of a do-it-yourself approach</li> </ul>	<p><b>Jesus is the center of our faith</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus as the standard for personal and social ethics</li> <li>• interpreting Scripture in dialogue with each other</li> <li>• allegiance to the gospel above national governments</li> </ul> <p><b>Community is the center of our life</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• giving and receiving counsel</li> <li>• accountability in personal life</li> <li>• transformation through discipleship</li> </ul> <p><b>Reconciliation is the center of our work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• peacemaking at the heart of the gospel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• service at a food pantry</li> <li>• devotional walks</li> <li>• time in nature</li> <li>• prayer retreats</li> <li>• home-based Bible studies</li> <li>• family devotions</li> <li>• meditation</li> <li>• intentionally substantive conversations with friends</li> <li>• cultivating a sense of gratitude</li> </ul>

\*Based on *Anabaptist Essentials: Ten Signs of a Unique Faith* by Palmer Becker (2017)



PHOTO BY RAVI PINISETTI ON UNSPLASH

- It is an antidote to feeling exhausted by fear and vigilance.
- It helps me let go of control and see my life through the lens of different generations.

While juggling pandemic disruptions, these millennials were practicing spiritual disciplines. They were still praying, still serving, still caring for the people around them. Their practices looked different from churchgoing, but they weren't turning into spiritual dropouts.

This matches what we are learning about millennials and their values: They may be less likely to show up in

## **This modern diaspora calls to mind an ancient one: the people of Jerusalem being forced to relocate to Babylon in 586 BCE.**

church, but they are not done with God. Even those who identify as “nones” — religiously unaffiliated — aren't necessarily secular, atheists or hostile toward religion. In fact, one poll found at least a third said religion was at least somewhat important in their lives, and 41% said they prayed daily, weekly or monthly.

It may be helpful to think of this group as a Sunday diaspora, or scattering. Millennial Mennonites are being

carried by a variety of forces — cultural, technological and theological — away from the church services of their childhoods.

The former picture of church — a community of extended family networks in which everyone gathers at a specific time and place for spiritual input from credentialed pastors and a unique chance to catch up with friends — no longer holds true. With technology, millennials are connected to everyone, all the time. They can listen to meaningful podcasts while running errands. If there has to be a sermon, it had better conclude with a discussion.

Many will never go back to church as their predecessors knew it. But millennials are not spiritual orphans or failures. They are not necessarily seed that fell on rocky ground (Mark 4), spiritually bankrupt or atheists.

**THIS MODERN DIASPORA** calls to mind an ancient one: the people of Jerusalem being forced to relocate to Babylon in 586 BCE. Those who survived feared for the faith of their children. Would they forget God? How could their faith survive without the temple and the priests? How could they sing the songs of Zion in a strange land? (Psalm 137:4).

But God's instructions were clear: “Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Multiply there, and do not decrease” (Jeremiah 29:5-6).

The people I interviewed were doing something like that. They were

## **Millennial Mennonites are being carried by a variety of forces — cultural, technological and theological — away from the church services of their childhoods.**

developing new ways to practice their faith. Practices that could withstand a pandemic and church closures. Home-based practices that didn't require professional clergy or a special building. They were trying their hand at singing the songs of Zion in a new land.

Some millennials, and older folks too, will not go back to church after COVID. But what they're not doing isn't the only thing that deserves attention. We should also notice what millennials are doing with their faith practices and listen when they tell what works for them. ●



**Debbi (Diener) DiGennaro** teaches at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. Her research interest is the intersection of faith and social behavior. She was Eastern Mennonite Missions' regional director in East Africa for 11 years. The full paper, of which this article is a summary, can be found on her website, [debbidigennaro.com/research](http://debbidigennaro.com/research).

# Haiti hostages' daring escape: 'God prepared a path before them'

## CAM workers say ransom was paid to free some

**CAPTIVE MISSION WORKERS** in Haiti found freedom Dec. 16 by making a daring overnight escape, eluding their kidnappers and walking for miles over difficult, moonlit terrain with an infant and other children in tow.

The group of 12 navigated by stars to reach safety after a two-month kidnapping ordeal.

Officials with Christian Aid Ministries, the Anabaptist mission agency the captives work for, described the escape Dec. 20.

"It felt like God prepared a path before them," CAM spokesman Weston Showalter said during a press conference at the agency's headquarters in Berlin, Ohio.

"They found a way to open the door that was closed and blocked, filed silently to the path they had chosen to follow and quickly left the place they were held, despite the fact that numerous guards were close by."

CAM is supported and staffed by conservative Anabaptists, a range of

Mennonite, Amish and related groups.

Seventeen people — 12 adults and five minors — were abducted Oct. 16 after visiting an orphanage in Ganthier, in the Croix-des-Bouquets area, where they verified it had received aid from CAM and played with the children. The group included 16 Americans and one Canadian.

**THE CAPTORS**, from the 400 Mawozo gang, demanded \$1 million per hostage. They freed two for medical reasons Nov. 21 and three more Dec. 5.

In January, CAM workers confirmed that an unidentified person paid a ransom for the three who were released Dec. 5 and that an agreement was supposed to have led to the release of all the captives. They said the person who made the payment was not affiliated with CAM, but they didn't know who paid or how much.

Barry Grant, CAM's field director in Titanyen, Haiti, said the captors reneged on the deal.



A Dec. 30 column in the *Yonkers Times* of New York cited an unnamed source with "direct and detailed knowledge" of the case as saying the gang deliberately left the door unguarded and allowed the 12 to walk to freedom in fulfillment of the ransom deal.

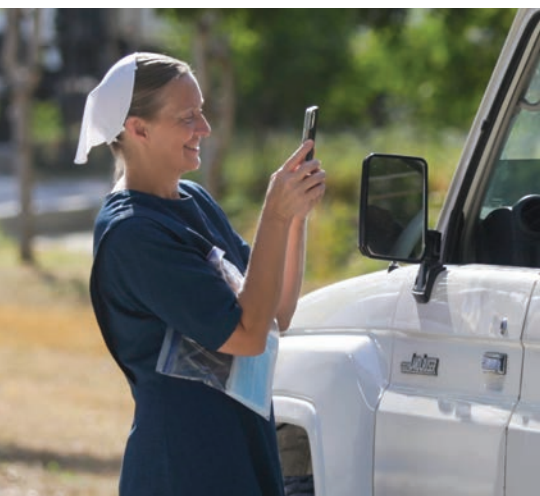
However, ex-hostages continued to say, in detailed and consistent accounts, that they escaped during a narrow window of opportunity under fear of being recaptured or shot.

**THE ORDEAL BEGAN** when a van carrying 17 people associated with CAM encountered a roadblock five or 10 minutes after leaving the orphanage. The driver turned around, but a pickup truck pursued them, and gang members surrounded the van. Showalter said early reports that the driver was a Haitian national were not accurate.

The hostages were initially crowded into a small room in a house but were moved around several times.

They were not physically harmed, Showalter said. He said the main physical challenges included the heat, mosquitoes and contaminated water for bathing, which led some to develop sores. Sometimes the children got sick.

The hostages gathered multiple times a day for prayer and devotions, sometimes singing loud enough for each other to hear when they were in



*Left:* A woman takes a photo of members of the Christian Aid Ministries group departing for the airport from the group's headquarters in Haiti on Dec. 16. PHOTO: ODELYN JOSEPH/AP

*Right:* People prepare to depart for the airport from the Christian Aid Ministries headquarters in Haiti on Dec. 16. PHOTO: ODELYN JOSEPH/AP

# Super flour saves the day for children in Nepal

**A JAR ON A SHELF** in Sumitra Chepang's kitchen has a secret identity. By all appearances, it is just a jar of mild-mannered flour. But under the lid is something spectacular — super flour!

While this super flour isn't wearing a cape, it is changing the lives of thousands of children in Nepal.

Six of them are the children of Chepang, who lives in the rural village of Syammaidada, not far from the capital city, Kathmandu.

Her family's income came from selling produce, but pandemic restrictions have eliminated their ability to bring it to market. Without that income, her family often didn't have enough to eat.

Food insecurity is a major problem in Nepal, especially in the rural areas, where nearly 40% of children under 5 have their growth stunted due to malnutrition.

Through Mennonite Central Committee's account at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and Nepali partner organization Shani Nepal, Chepang was given a supply of super flour to ensure her children were getting the nutrients they need to grow healthily.

But it's more than just a delivery service. Staff from Shanti Nepal also taught her how to make super flour herself.

"I used to make simple rice flour to feed my young children," Chepang said. "I was not aware about eating a balanced diet, but now I learned about eating three food groups in a meal. I also learned to make super flour, kitchen gardening and healthy behaviors."

**SUPER FLOUR IS A** catch-all term for a blend of flours from grains, pulses (seeds from legumes) and proteins. It's loaded with the calories, protein, calcium and iron young children need, and it's easy to make, store and prepare.



A man embraces a mission worker at the Christian Aid Ministries headquarters at Titanyen, north of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on Dec. 16. PHOTO: ODELYN JOSEPH/AP

separate rooms. They tried to encourage other hostages being held for ransom in separate kidnappings.

"Over the time of their captivity, God gave various hostages a desire to attempt an escape, but it took them a while to all agree on when or how this should take place," Showalter said.

The 12 who fled carried the infant and 3-year-old, wrapping the baby to protect her from briars and brambles.

"After a number of hours of walking, day began to dawn, and they eventually found someone who helped to make a phone call for help," he said.

The 12 were flown to Florida on a U.S. Coast Guard flight.

He said the group believed God arranged for their deliverance and that they forgave the kidnappers.

**SIX OF THE ORIGINAL 17** hostages were members of one family from Hart Dunkard Brethren Church in Michigan. A church elder, Ron Marks, read a statement from Ray Noecker, whose wife, Cheryl, and five of their children were kidnapped. Cheryl and 6-year-old Sheldon were among the five released before Dec. 16. Four others — Cheryl, 27; Brandyn, 15; Kasondra, 14; and Courtney, 18 — were among the 12 who escaped.

"My family is all together and in good health," said Ray, 49, who was in Haiti with his family but not at the orphanage when the abduction took place. "We are rejoicing together over the many ways that God answered the prayers of his people." ●



Sumitra Chepang feeds a spoonful of super porridge to her 10-month-old daughter, Promisa, in their home in the village of Syammaidada, Nepal.

PHOTO: MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The super flour Chepang makes is a combination of corn, wheat and soybeans that she roasts and grinds herself before storing.

If she adds water — or heated milk for her older kids — to the super flour, she can easily make a tasty super porridge that doesn't require any additional cooking.

She says her kids love the super porridge. Her 10-month-old, Promisa, has been eating it since she turned 6 months old.

"It tastes mild without adding other flavor," said Chepang, 35. "But I make it in different tastes, adding sugar or salt and leafy vegetables or fruits based on the season and availability. Promisa wants to change the taste often."

Super flour's adaptability and ease of storage have helped thousands of children in Nepal achieve healthy growth and a nutritional balance they might not have without it. ●

# Korea Anabaptist Center turns 20



Participants gathered for Mennonite Church South Korea's conference in 2020. PHOTO: MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA

**THE KOREA ANABAPTIST CENTER**, which grew out of a burgeoning interest in Anabaptism in South Korea in the 1990s, celebrated its 20th anniversary Dec. 11.

About 30 people came together over Zoom to mark the occasion.

"I believe that one of KAC's roles is to console Korean Christians who are so deeply disappointed by churches and pastors," said KAC director SunJu Moon. "Many Christians leave the church . . . since they can't see any hope from the churches. KAC communicates there is still hope and encourages people to follow Jesus."

Based in Chuncheon, South Korea, the center focuses on bringing peace to Korean churches and society by networking with other organizations and offering materials it has published.

"God has been faithful in providing people, places and resources and empowering KAC staff, volunteers and friends to courageously live into

communities that reflect and promote God's ministry of reconciliation," said Tim Froese, one of KAC's founding co-directors.

Froese moved to South Korea in 1998 in response to an invitation from Jesus Village Church to help introduce Koreans to Anabaptism. JVC is a community-oriented congregation founded in Chuncheon in the 1990s.

The invitation was the result of decades of relationship-building between Korean Christians and the Commission on Overseas Mission, Mennonite Board of Missions and Mennonite Central Committee. MCC had formed the Mennonite Vocational School and worked in South Korea for several decades, up to the 1970s.

Before KAC was established, Froese said, Korean Christians were looking for alternative visions of being the church. There was growing enrollment by Korean students in North American seminaries in the 1990s. In South

Korea, alumni of Intersociety Christian fellowship and Campus Crusade for Christ, inspired by William Estep's *The Anabaptist Story*, formed Jesus Village Church.

KAC recruits church members to teach Korean to international students and to show them hospitality. It supports restorative justice work with schools. It has held two conferences a year since 2016 on topics related to Anabaptism, such as discipleship, peace and community.

KAC has supported the formation of organizations, including Korean Anabaptist Fellowship, Korean Peacebuilding Institute, Northeast Asia Regional Peace Institute and Mennonite Church South Korea.

Bock Ki Kim was KAC director from 2015 to 2018, translating Anabaptist resources into Korean and editing the Korean Anabaptist Journal, a semi-annual publication connecting Korean Anabaptists around the world. ●

# MCC sends relief to Cubans in crisis

In a crippled economy, all the money in the world can't buy food from empty shelves

**THE SITUATION IN CUBA** was dire when a shipment of Mennonite Central Committee relief kits and canned food arrived.

“People have told me they haven’t had an egg or any kind of meat for six months,” said Bonnie Klassen, MCC area director for South America and Mexico. “They’re out of toothpaste, so they’re brushing their teeth with soap. And not even commercial soap, mind you, but soap they’ve made themselves.”

So when the Brethren in Christ Church of Cuba distributed some 44,000 pounds of MCC relief kits, hygiene kits and canned chicken, it was cause for celebration.

“We are grateful because today we see the answer to our prayers, what we have been praying for over a long time,” said José Gonzalez, pastor of the BICCC church in Santa Clara.

“We see that what we thought was impossible is possible. We see that we are in the hands of God. Thank you for this help.”

Cuba’s desperate position is the result of a combination of factors. The island continues to feel the effects of the U.S. embargo, which has banned most trade between the U.S. and Cuba for 60 years. In 2020, new restrictions made it harder for Cubans abroad to send money back home. And the last two years have seen pandemic travel restrictions deprive Cubans of one of their most important sources of income — tourism.

Without a steady stream of beachgoers visiting the country, Cuba’s already hampered economy is barely hanging on. The country hasn’t seen scarcity like this since the collapse of the Soviet Union, its former benefactor, in the early 1990s.

“When I asked what would be most useful to send, the answer I’d always get was: Send anything and it will be useful because almost everything is lacking,” Klassen said.



Clara Rodríguez holds MCC canned meat she received through the Brethren in Christ Church of Cuba. PHOTO: RAMON GUIISA/BICCC

## Cuba hasn’t seen scarcity like this since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

**MCC DOESN’T HAVE** a formal presence in Cuba but has sent relief there in the past. Over the last few years, MCC has sent relief funds that partners like the BICCC, an Anabaptist church, could use to buy and distribute food and supplies locally. However, all the money in the world can’t buy food from empty shelves.

Shipping anything to Cuba from North America is complicated. It’s legal to ship humanitarian relief there but difficult to find companies willing to do it because of the perceived risk of operating under the far-reaching U.S. embargo.

But through the work of MCC’s material resource coordinators, more than 17,000 cans of canned chicken, 800 hygiene kits (with toothpaste) and 840 relief kits arrived in Cuba in September.

Even knowing the grim state things are in, the response from the Cubans was almost overwhelming, Klassen said.

“In the first couple of days, one of the people in the church sent me a WhatsApp voice message, and he was literally in tears because of the feminine hygiene products,” she said. “Women had not seen feminine hygiene products for a very long time. And that was just very meaningful. I mention that because it’s just, I think, highly unusual for men to start crying about that. And later they just went on and on about all the things that they’re making with canned chicken.” ●

# Girl Named Tom's harmony is a winner

**GIRL NAMED TOM** rode Mennonite sibling harmonies to victory Dec. 14, becoming the first group to win the NBC singing competition *The Voice*.

Caleb, Joshua and Bekah Liechty of Pettisville, Ohio, members of Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, are the first non-solo act to hold *The Voice* trophy.

Caleb and Joshua are Goshen College graduates who were involved in music activities while students there. They formed the band in 2019 and toured the United States visiting Mennonite churches, camps and colleges until the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

Instead of enrolling at Goshen during the pandemic, Bekah stayed at home in Ohio, and the family focused on music. The result: international exposure, a \$100,000 prize and a recording contract.

"You have a huge fan base behind you," celebrity coach Kelly Clarkson told the group on the Dec. 14 live broadcast. "Let's capitalize on that. Let's keep it going. I'm Team GNT forever."

Host Carson Daly said the Liechtys were the first contestants to have four songs on the iTunes top 10 list simultaneously. Just after the broadcast, their rendition of Fleetwood Mac's "The Chain" was No. 1, followed by their version of Joni Mitchell's "River" at No. 2, ahead of artists such as Ed Sheeran, Jennifer Lopez, Adele and Elton John.

The evening was not a total cause for celebration. After *Girl Named Tom*'s victory, the Liechtys posted a statement on social media that their father was in pain after cancer surgery.

"The only reason we are still in Los Angeles is that our parents want us out here, doing what we love. We cannot wait to finally all be in the same room," they wrote. "Some might think that this is the worst timing — our father taking such a downward spiral at the exact moment of our success on national TV.

"In truth, we feel fortunate and blessed by this joyful distraction. The *Voice* has given our family opportuni-



**BEFORE THEY WERE FAMOUS** In February 2020, *Girl Named Tom* — Caleb, Bekah and Joshua Liechty — led music during senior high snow camp at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp in Colorado.

PHOTO: ROCKY MOUNTAIN MENNONITE CAMP

ties to connect, reflect and marvel at the love we have for each other."

Their parents Chris and Holly (Hollenberg) Liechty, are 1988 Goshen graduates.

Their next goal is to make their own music better known.

"Next year we want to release a full-length album of our own music that we've been writing the last couple of years, and we can't wait to get in the studio and make that happen," Caleb Liechty told WNWO, the NBC affiliate in Toledo, Ohio. ●

## Give us more Mennonite trios!

Mennonites across North America got caught up in *Girl Named Tom*'s success. Writing on the *Anabaptist World* website, Joel Miller, pastor of Columbus Mennonite Church in Ohio, said: "It's a feel-good story: Small-town Mennonite siblings conquer LA through the nonviolent weaponry of the vocal cord."

Miller added he would like to think the Liechtys' popularity is a commentary on culture: "Beautiful harmonies are hard to find these days. That kind of collaboration requires a different kind of energy than a strong individual

voice. It's an energy and beauty that has captured an audience hungry for it."

*The Daily Bonnet*, a website of Mennonite humor, turned its satirical eye on *Girl Named Tom* with the fictional headline, "*The Voice* to Feature Nothing but Mennonite Family Trios from Now On." *Bonnet* writer Andrew Unger imagined *Voice* host Carson Daly "looking through MCC thrift stores for LPs of old Mennonite singing groups who might be willing to perform. . . . The Goertzen family singers look promising." — *Anabaptist World*

# Military's priority questioned

**WHEN IT COMES TO** spending national treasure, the U.S. military takes priority. Mennonite Church USA is urging its members to question that.

MC USA released a “statement on the value and morality of the 2022 U.S. defense budget” in response to the National Defense Authorization Act signed into law by President Biden on Dec. 27.

“Budgets are moral documents, reflecting what we value and prioritize collectively as a nation,” says the statement.

It calls for congregations and members to weigh the financial and moral cost of the proposed \$770 billion defense budget in comparison to national and global needs for COVID-19 vaccinations, healthcare, safe drinking water and humanitarian aid.

“As Anabaptists, we follow the way of Jesus who resisted violence, even to his death on a cross,” said Sue Park-Hur, MC USA denominational minister for transformative peacemaking. “. . . Knowing how our national treasure is being spent, we cannot stay silent.”

The statement recommends ways congregations can take action against the budget decision.

MC USA provides resources for learning and opportunities for people to get involved in advocacy work and war-tax resistance.

The statement was written with the Mennonites Against Militarism reference council, which seeks to reinvigorate Mennonites’ voice against the destructive powers of militarism.

MC USA’s work with MAM includes “Cost of War,” an online resource to raise awareness about the economics of war and the impact of militarism.

Read the statement at [mennoniteusa.org/transformational-peacemaking/statement-2022-defense-budget](https://mennoniteusa.org/transformational-peacemaking/statement-2022-defense-budget).

— Mennonite Church USA

# Mennonites: not as dry as you thought

**THERE’S A NEW BREWERY** in Steinbach, the first one in that southeastern Manitoba city.

In December, The Public Brewery and Gallery opened on Main Street. This might come as surprise to some who think of that Mennonite-dominated community, along with Winkler, as being dry and dour places when it comes to alcohol.

While both places have, in fact, been dry for long periods of time, Mennonites in Manitoba have a complicated and interesting relationship with alcohol — something noted Dec. 9 at a webinar, “Mennonites and Alcohol: A Historical Perspective.”

Sponsored by the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, the webinar featured Hans Werner and Aileen Friesen of the University of Winnipeg, Roland Sawatzky of the Manitoba Museum and S.L. Klassen, author of *Mennonite-Nightcaps*.

The webinar was held in advance of the publication of a special issue on the topic in *Preservings*, a magazine about Mennonites in Manitoba published by the Plett Foundation.

“We had never explored this issue in the magazine before,” said Friesen, noting the subject of alcohol touches a number of relevant issues for Mennonites such as religion, church discipline, family life, politics and economics.

Although drinking — or prohibitions against it — were enmeshed in daily life, historians “aren’t always good at telling those types of stories,” she said.

During the webinar, speakers noted Mennonites have a reputation for being against alcohol, but that wasn’t

always the case.

Starting in the 16th century, Mennonites in the Vistula Delta of Prussia were famous as distillers.

When they went to Russia in the 18th century, among the privileges they negotiated was the right to distill liquor.

By the 18th and early 19th centuries, there were quite a number of distilleries and brewers of beer among the Mennonites of North America, as well.

The idea of Mennonites being teetotalers is a more recent phenomenon, the result of temperance and fundamentalist movements in the 19th and 20th centuries. The idea arose that Mennonites didn’t drink.

In fact, Werner said, Mennonite acceptance of alcohol was only interrupted by the temperance movement — a movement the rest of Canada dropped fairly quickly, but that hung around in some Mennonite communities for a while longer.

Proof that temperance was not as widespread in Manitoba as some might have thought has been uncovered by Sawatzky — quite literally.

During archaeological digs at Mennonite homesteads in southern Manitoba, he found many liquor bottles — gin, wine and beer — discarded by the former inhabitants.

From this evidence, he said, it is clear that “alcohol consumption was not uncommon,” even if it was preached against in churches and fought over in referendums.

The issue of *Preservings* about Mennonites and alcohol can be ordered at [plettfoundation.org/preservings](https://plettfoundation.org/preservings). The webinar can be viewed at [youtube.com/watch?v=CURvdjn0ziA](https://youtube.com/watch?v=CURvdjn0ziA). ●



# MWC opens registration for assembly

## MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE

has opened registration for online participants for its 17th global assembly — set for July 5-10 in Semarang, Indonesia, after a one-year delay due to the coronavirus pandemic — at [indonesia2022.mwc-cmm.org](http://indonesia2022.mwc-cmm.org).

MWC is “accepting online registration first, and starting from the end of February 2022, people will be able to register for on-site participation,” said MWC chief international events officer Liesa Unger.

“Once registered, online participants will get first priority to upgrade from online to on-site when travel requirements become clear.”

To ensure equitable access, registration costs vary from free to \$150 per person, based on MWC’s fair-share policy, which takes into account countries’ income levels.

MWC is encouraging churches, Bible study groups and youth groups to take part virtually.

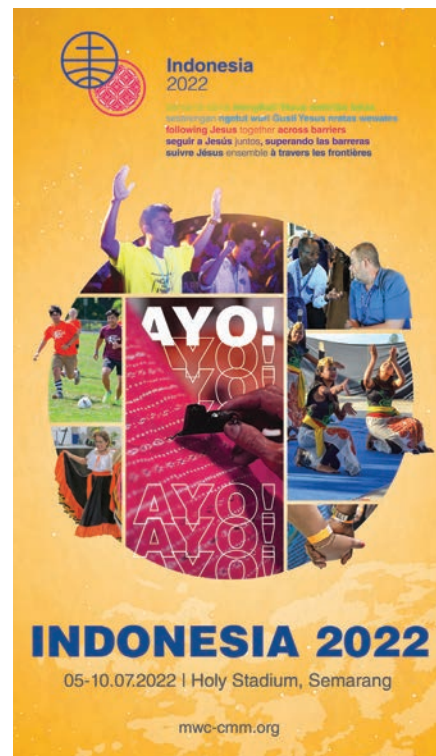
“We encourage the whole church to

register online and plan for a time to gather and get involved in worship, group activities and workshops with the on-site participants,” Unger said.

“We want to make sure that the global online experience is not limited to countries where the internet is available in every home. We thus encourage congregations to watch together through one individual’s registration, but to take an offering for Mennonite World Conference’s Assembly Fund in lieu of registering every person who attends virtually from the church.”

Janti Widjaja, church leader in the GKMI Indonesian Anabaptist conference, said: “I encourage all of us to take heart and know that God is in control. Since the pandemic began, we have learned that situations can change very quickly, and in response we learn new things to address these changes.

“On site or online, we can follow Jesus together across barriers as one global family of faith.” ●



# Witmer a ‘man of vision’ in France

**ROBERT WITMER**, 93, a mission worker for 28 years in France who helped plant a church in Paris and create opportunities for people with disabilities, died Dec. 2 in Cambridge, Ont.

“Robert was a key player in initiating and developing relationships with French Mennonites that are still producing fruit today,” said James Krabill, former senior executive at Mennonite Mission Network.

From 1956 to 1984, Witmer and his wife, Lois, served in France with Mennonite Board of Missions. Early in their ministry, they contributed to the emerging Châtenay-Malabry church in Paris, now a multicultural Mennonite congregation whose members have roots in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe and North America.

They worked alongside French Mennonites to create workshops for adults with disabilities, both on the Châte-

nay-Malabry church property and on a farm east of Paris. Today, the workshops employ 1,550 people and have grown to include 28 properties in 19 locations in France.



Bernard Huck, a longtime member of the Châtenay-Malabry congregation, described Witmer as “a man of vision, a builder, a zealous planner and a pastor.”

Janie and Neal Blough, who retired in France last year after more than four decades of ministry through MMN, said Witmer’s initiative and optimism contributed to the establishment of several institutions: *Mission Mennonite Française*, the French Mennonite mission agency; and Foyer Grebel, a welcoming center for African students

that evolved into the current Mennonite church of Villeneuve-le-Comte and the Paris Mennonite Center.

Born May 15, 1929, in Ontario, Witmer was a member of the first graduating class at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener. In 1949 he married Lois Martin, a classmate at Rockway. They studied at Eastern Mennonite University and what is now Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

After returning from France, the Witmers moved to Quebec, where they worked alongside the Evangelical Mennonite Church of Rouyn-Noranda.

Survivors include his wife, Anna Lois Martin; his children, Cathy (Jim) Bowman, Debra (James) Townsend, Phil (Mandy) Witmer, Gerald (Brenda) Witmer and Myriam (Edgard) Vandenbroucq; eight grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

— Mennonite Mission Network

## Grants support MC USA internships, pastoral misconduct investigations

The Schowalter Foundation has awarded two grants to the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board — \$15,000 for internships and \$30,000 to support investigations of pastoral misconduct and abuse.

The first grant will fund internships that “fell by the wayside” due to budget cuts, a denominational news release stated.

The Executive Board staff plans to hire two interns to work part time for a year. They are exploring where to place the interns. Peace and justice work and the archives are among the possibilities.

The second grant supports the denomination’s commitment, expressed in a 2015 delegate assembly statement, to “tell the truth about sexual abuse” and “hold abusers accountable.”

When cases of pastoral misconduct and abuse arise, the MC USA Church Vitality office provides leadership and hires investigators when needed. These cases can be expensive, and the number of cases is unpredictable. MC USA will place the grant in an account to use as needed.

“In both the church and society, we have had a huge wake-up call in the last several years to the abuse that takes place in our churches and various church settings,” said Iris de León-Hartshorn, associate executive director of operations and director of human resources for MC USA. “We have wonderful, capable people in our church

who are leading training and investigations, but all of this takes resources. This grant will help us continue to provide the best possible support and training and allow us to be comprehensive in our work in this area.”

Begun in 1954, the Schowalter Foundation supports programs connected to Mennonite denominations. — *Anabaptist World*

## MB magazine subject to review by church leaders

Theological content in the U.S. Mennonite Brethren magazine *Christian Leader* will be reviewed prior to publication by church leaders.

The USMB Leadership Board approved the review process and other steps to rebuild trust in the publication, according to a report in *Christian Leader*.

Two or three district ministers and the USMB national director will review the editorial and “other content that contains theological perspectives.”

Suggestions from a review team included a request that the magazine reflect the “theological conservatism of the majority” of its readers. The team cited an “erosion of trust and confidence” among some constituents.

The board recommended the magazine continue to be offered in print. A survey showed a large majority of readers want this — a finding that was “somewhat of a surprise” to the review team.

*Christian Leader* is printed six times a

year. Its Canadian counterpart, *MB Herald*, went out of print in 2019 and continues online.

The review team affirmed editors Connie Faber and Janae Rempel and designer Shelly Plett. — *Anabaptist World*

## Lancaster school names interim leader, moves to unify its campuses

Elaine Moyer is interim superintendent at Lancaster Mennonite School in Pennsylvania, beginning Jan. 18. She succeeds Pam Tieszen, who served since 2017.

Moyer was associate executive director of Mennonite Education Agency for 11

years and, prior to that, chief administrator at Christopher Dock High School in Lansdale, Pa., for 20 years.

LM also reported it is on schedule to unify its three campuses in the fall. Closing the Locust Grove and New Danville campuses will bring all activities to the

95-acre Lancaster campus, beginning with the 2022-23 school year. Proceeds of \$5.9 million from the sale of the Locust Grove campus will “add to the endowment and strengthen sustainability, although these funds currently allow us to proceed with renovations and preparations for unification,” LM reported. — *Anabaptist World*



Moyer

# Letter offers solidarity with Ethiopians

**DOZENS OF PEOPLE** — including U.S. and Canadian Mennonite conference leaders, seminary staff and students — signed a letter of support for Anabaptists in Ethiopia in December.

“We hear from many conflicting reports that you are going through troubled times: the COVID-19 pandemic, the war, social unrest and division, and the resulting suffering of death, destruction, displacement, famine and inflation resulting in economic upheaval and poverty,” the letter says.

“We want to assure you of our love and concern, and our prayers. You are a part with us of the universal body of Christ, and where one member suffers,

the whole body suffers together with it.”

The letter commends the Meserete Kristos Church — the Anabaptist conference in Ethiopia — for its outreach to churches in the war-torn Tigray region (*AW*, Nov. 26).

“Your extensive efforts in the cause of justice and peace have been remarkable!” the letter says.

The writers criticize “international news sources and Western governments,” which, they say, “tend to tell unbalanced and inaccurate stories and often pursue policies that help to exacerbate the conflict and that help to promote Western interests rather than concern for conflict resolution.”

The Anabaptist/Mennonite community, however, puts Christ’s kingdom ahead of loyalty to any government, the letter says.

“Where you may find our nation’s governmental actions lacking in understanding, or unsympathetic, or hostile to your nation’s problems, we are seeking the welfare of a different kingdom without national boundaries,” the letter says.

The writers say they are praying for improvement in the pandemic and political conditions so that “we can come to enjoy Ethiopian coffee, delicious Ethiopian food and, most important, worship the Prince of Peace together.” — *Anabaptist World*

# Longtime MEA financial leader retires

During Lisa Heinz's tenure, investment fund grew to more than \$211 million

**LISA HEINZ**, chief financial officer and senior director of operations of Mennonite Education Agency, retired Dec. 31 after 23 years of service.

Michael Danner, MEA's CEO and executive director, said Heinz is leaving MEA in the strongest financial position in its history.

Heinz provided administrative support for the MEA Investment Fund, which serves schools, congregations, conferences and other education-related programs within Mennonite Church USA.

During her tenure, the fund, which includes endowments, scholarships and other financial assets from many Mennonite schools, grew to more than \$211 million.

Dick Thomas, chair of the MEA Board of Directors, said the fund had exceeded expectations.

"Because of the fund's size, it enabled opportunities that would not have been available to individual schools," Thomas said. "The outstanding returns were achieved using socially responsible investing [practices]."



Janice Eigsti Miller, left, and Lisa Heinz.

PHOTO: MENNONITE EDUCATION AGENCY

Heinz also provided administrative support for the Mennonite Educators Benefit Plan, a self-funded health insurance plan. Six Mennonite institutions, including MEA, participate in the plan: Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Bluffton University, Eastern Mennonite University, Goshen College and Hesston College. The plan offers comprehensive health insurance coverage and a wellness plan for over 1,300 employees.

Heinz's belief in the value of Mennonite education is demonstrated by the three-generation legacy she and her husband, Bryan, have created. Heinz

is a graduate of Goshen College, and their two adult children, Erica and Justin, are alumni of Bethany Christian Schools. Justin is also a graduate of Goshen College and serves on the faculty. Heinz has four grandchildren, one of whom attends Bethany Christian Schools. The Heinzes live in Goshen, Ind., and attend Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship.

Janice Eigsti Miller succeeds Heinz as CFO and senior director of operations. She was interim controller at Goshen College. Prior to that, she worked in public accounting and as business manager at Bethany Christian Schools.

Eigsti Miller and her husband, Brian, both graduated from Goshen College, and their two sons attend Bethany Christian Schools. The Millers live in Goshen and are members of Walnut Hill Mennonite Church.

Taylor Caouette of Everence Financial will assume Heinz's role as MEA Investment Committee facilitator. Caouette is a graduate of Goshen College with a degree in accounting. ●

## AMBS event examines Black exclusion

**A FORTHCOMING DOCUMENTARY** and book — *What Happened at Benham West: African American Stories of Community, Displacement and Hopes in the City of Elkhart* — are the topics of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary's Martin Luther King Jr. Day program Jan. 17.

The online event follows up on AMBS's 2020 MLK Day program, "Repairing the Harm: A Community Conversation on the Systemic Exclusion of African Americans in Elkhart," which featured a panel discussion on the exclusion of African Americans in Elkhart, Ind, where the seminary

is located. Conversations during and after that event among the panelists — local African American leaders Jean Mayes and Plez Lovelady — and participants emphasized the need to name and address both current and past harms.

In response to this need and with the encouragement of elders and allies both within Elkhart and beyond, two AMBS faculty members led a team to produce the documentary and book, to be released this spring by Wolfson Press. Together, the pieces explore life in the predominantly Black Benham West neighborhood — known to many

as "the village" — including experiences of segregation in Elkhart, the city's clearing of Benham West and some of the remaining elders' hopes for the future.

The faculty members who led the project — Nekeisha Alayna Alexis, intercultural competence and undoing racism coordinator; and Jamie Pitts, associate professor of Anabaptist studies and director of the Institute of Mennonite Studies — are the presenters for the MLK Day program. Pitts is sharing about Black history in Elkhart. Alexis is providing background on the project. — *AMBS*

## Fresno Pacific commencement combines 4 semesters



Fresno Pacific University President Joseph Jones, left, presents a graduate with her diploma while provost Gayle Copeland places a ceremonial hood on a graduate. The Dec. 11 ceremony was a reunion of sorts, as not only members of the fall 2021 class but also the spring 2021, fall 2020 and spring 2020 classes shared the chance to cross the stage. The three recent classes previously had virtual graduations due to COVID-19. Participants included 491 fall 2021 graduates and 285 graduates from the previous classes. PHOTO: FRESNO PACIFIC UNIVERSITY

### Conrad Grebel appoints president to second term

Conrad Grebel University College has appointed Marcus Shantz to a second five-year term as president.



Shantz

During his first term, Shantz oversaw completion of a \$4.2 million campaign to expand and renovate Grebel's kitchen and dining space.

"The pandemic created extraordinary conditions that Shantz met with sensibility, compassion and determination," said Paul Fieguth, who chairs Grebel's Board of Governors. "Now, as the public health crisis lessens in Canada, Grebel is creating a new strategic plan that will set the tone for the future."

Shantz said: "In the next few years, I think we have a real opportunity to connect Grebel to big issues playing out at the university and in the wider world. We're part of a university [the University of Waterloo in Ontario] that is largely focused on advancing technology, and we confront big questions about the impact of technology on the human condition. Seen in this light, Grebel's offerings in peace, music, history and theology have never been more relevant." — *Conrad Grebel*

Shantz said: "In the next few years, I think we have a real opportunity to connect Grebel to big issues playing out at the university and in the wider world. We're part of a university [the University of Waterloo in Ontario] that is largely focused on advancing technology, and we confront big questions about the impact of technology on the human condition. Seen in this light, Grebel's offerings in peace, music, history and theology have never been more relevant." — *Conrad Grebel*

### Bethel football facility to have multisport use

Bethel College is beginning the public phase of a capital campaign to build a football locker room, including features to serve all 19 varsity sports.

The current locker room, in the basement of Goering Hall, is too small and has been subject to flooding and damage from groundwater seepage. In fall 2019, the football team started using the athletics storage shed as a locker room. This was supposed to be a one-year, temporary solution.

After four years of quiet fundraising — which included securing a \$1 million matching grant for a new softball building (completed in 2020) and a new football locker room — there are sufficient gifts and pledges to begin construction.

The plans call for more than 110 football lockers, laundry facilities, a team huddle area, two breakout rooms for film viewing and a second-floor game-viewing suite. The east wing of Goering Hall will be demolished.

"With \$2.13 million in hand or pledged, we are now asking the Thresher community to help us during the public phase of the campaign to raise \$400,000 by Oct. 1, 2022," President Jon C. Gering said. "This building is a much-needed addition to our Thresher Stadium complex."

— *Bethel College*

### Hesston appoints vice president of academics

Carren Moham, who has served Hesston College as academic dean and, most recently, interim vice president of academics, has been appointed vice president of academics.

"Dr. Moham has the skills and experience to help us realize our vision of moving from being a 'college for Mennonites' to becoming a 'Mennonite college for all,'" President Joseph A. Manickam said. "Her energy, vision and passion for strong academics through strong mentorship have already changed our campus."

Moham assumes the role as Hesston College continues to grow its mixed-model profile. Four bachelor's degree programs have been added to an offering of more than 50 associate degree programs — most recently a bachelor of science degree in engineering with a mechatronics track, approved by Hesston's accrediting body on Nov. 19.

A professional opera singer and seasoned performer, Moham has a doctorate in musical arts from Ohio State University.

— *Hesston College*



Moham

# Extra shirt and bicycles

*It may be more or less possible to know and do nothing, but it is not possible to do and know nothing. One does as one knows.* —Wendell Berry

**MY PLUMBER WAS** installing a water heater for us several years ago, and in the course of conversation he claimed to be sympathetic to the Tea Party movement.

“I don’t mind paying for roads and schools,” he said, “but the government takes our money and uses it for stuff that I don’t know where it’s going.”

It soon became apparent that the “stuff” was programs like subsidized housing, welfare and food stamps.

“Look,” he continued, “I want to help people. I believe that everyone should have what I have. If my kids have bikes, then other kids should have bikes, too. We help our church buy gifts at Christmas for families who can’t.”

I was struck by his comment, which sounded rather socialist for a Tea Party enthusiast. More important, what a magnanimous belief: “Others should have what I have.” This is another version of the Golden Rule, I suppose, but it sounds different when framed by possession rather than action. In

our consumer, materialist culture, this version feels more relevant — and difficult.

It is imperative to recognize that not everyone wants what my kids have. I’m sure there are plenty of kids who

**“Others should have what I have.” This is another version of the Golden Rule, I suppose, but it sounds different when framed by possession rather than action.**

would exchange the bike for AirPods or Air Jordans. It is unhelpful and patronizing to assume that my values and priorities are universally shared.

Still, I think the sentiment is a good place to start, because humans do share many of the same needs and desires. If something is important to me, it is very probable that there are others, somewhere, who value it as well.

My plumber clearly knew his Bible. When the crowds came to John the Baptist in the wilderness they asked, “What should we do then?” He replied, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none.” Put another way: Others should have what you have.

It sounds like an easy thing to do, but what do you wear when your remaining lone shirt gets dirty, or ripped, or lost? Yes, you already had two — more than enough — but the loss of the extra is still scary.

**WHAT WOULD IT MEAN** for others to have what I have? And does this extend to nonphysical possessions?

Unfortunately, unlike a \$150 bike, many of the things I value are things I can’t give.

Among many material things, I am

grateful for health insurance, a reliable car, an annual vacation, food security and extracurricular activities for my kids. I could personally fund some of these things for a person or two, but my financial resources would soon run dry.

Spreading the expense out among many people makes sense. Churches come together to provide for those who aren’t able to. But even a large church cannot insure the entire town. Or send every child to college.

Nonprofit organizations do much good through money coming from thousands of donors. Also, unlike my Tea Party plumber, I do think government could have a role in ensuring that “everyone has what I have,” whether that is passable roads, elementary schools, health insurance, a living wage and affordable college education.

**ALSO, I RECOGNIZE** that material things do, in fact, provide essential intangible blessings.

When I watch my children sleep at night, their bodies clean and tummies full, I ache for every other mother to have the same peace of mind that I have.

When I come home after an evening of teaching, for which I am fairly compensated, I wish for everyone to have the same sense of worth and accomplishment that I feel.

There are more intangibles: I am grateful for those who have invested in my life and my family’s life. I have the privilege to assume I will be respected by strangers and shown common courtesy. I can’t imagine a life without the bedrock knowledge that I am not alone. I hope I am willing to work so others have these things as well.

I have no magic wand or grand plan to make the world an equal place. My only recourse is to follow my plumber’s good advice and ask the Holy Spirit to show me the ways that I can give a child a bike or my extra shirt to someone with none. ●



Sarah Kehrberg lives in the Craggy Mountains of western North Carolina with her husband and three children.

# Serenity and grit

**MANY OF US BEGAN** the year by making plans. But for those of us who struggle — maybe emotionally, maybe financially — just to get through each day, planning for the future might feel like a privilege that's out of reach.

Scripture, however, does not talk much about planning or forecasting. Instead, it tells us to be hopeful and to wait on God's promises.

There is a philosophy in Javanese culture — part of my native Indonesia — called *Nrimo*. It means to accept all gifts or circumstances as they are, without demanding more.

I used to be not very fond of this philosophy, because it sounds like a lack of self-determination. But after years of living in the United States, I think *Nrimo* is not too bad.

When I first came to the United States, I lived in New York City. I saw hustle and bustle every day. Everyone seemed eager to go somewhere and looked busy doing something.

What were they chasing after?

Some would say they were pursuing “the American dream.”

This got me thinking about what the American dream really is.

In 1931, the writer James Truslow Adams coined the phrase “the American dream.” He said: “Life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each accord-

ing to ability or achievement.”

But who is everyone, and what are the rules?

If “everyone” means only a particular group of people, and if the rules (and rewards) only apply to that group, then I'm afraid the cost of a better life for some is a bitter life for another.

I'm not against pursuing a better life. But Scripture tells us to chase after something else: Seek first God's kingdom and righteousness.

As followers of Jesus, we have a mission to care for the least, the last and the lost.

This, too, is a dream. Let's call it “the Jesus dream.”

The Jesus dream is not only about oneself but about others. It is not about individual achievement but community improvement.

I think the Jesus dream requires a balance of *Nrimo* — contentment with what we have — and “grit”: determination to work for a better life for oneself and one's community.

How do we keep this balance? How do we navigate this calling in a broken world? How do we keep our own peace while fighting injustice? How do we minister in a world of uncertainty?

**AS THIS YEAR** began, I resolved to pray more and ask for God's direction. This is not just a new-year thing. Any time is a good time to resolve to pray.

I believe that when we pray for wisdom, God will give it to us (James 1:5). If we trust God with all our heart — if we submit and do not lean on our own understanding — God will make our path straight (Proverbs 3:5-6).

This resolution was unusual for me, because I stopped making new year's resolutions years ago. But, because I am celebrating my 40th birthday this month, I decided to make a resolution again. A resolution to pray more.

I've heard that you can't stumble when you are on your knees. I could not agree more.

Prayers do not need to be our own

words. Many of the psalms are prayers that have expressed believers' hopes and joys, anguish and pleas, for thousands of years.

Modern prayers also express the deep longings of our hearts. I love the Serenity Prayer by the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. It strikes a balance between *Nrimo* and grit — an acceptance of life as it is and a resolve to

**The Serenity Prayer strikes a balance between *Nrimo* and grit — an acceptance of life as it is and a resolve to make life better.**

make life better.

Almost everyone has heard the first part of this famous prayer: “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.”

The rest of the prayer (several versions with small differences can be found) is less well-known. But I find it meaningful too — voicing a balance of acceptance and resolve, a steadfast faith through life's ups and downs.

*Living one day at a time,  
Enjoying one moment at a time,  
Accepting hardship as the pathway to  
peace,  
Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world  
as it is,  
Not as I would have it.  
Trusting that you will make all things  
right  
If I surrender to your will,  
So that I may be reasonably happy in  
this life  
And supremely happy with you forever  
in the next. Amen.*

This is how I want to live. This is my Jesus dream and my daily prayer. ●



**Hendy Steven Matahelemual** of South Philadelphia grew up in Bandung, Indonesia. After serving as a pastor in Indonesia, he moved to the United States. He received a master's degree in Christian leadership from Eastern Mennonite Seminary in 2019. He is an ordained minister in Mosaic Mennonite Conference of Mennonite Church USA.

# Hate is easy. Love is hard.

**RECENTLY I ATTENDED** a nonviolent civil disobedience training with Osagyefo Uhuru Sekou, a musician, pastor and activist who has trained thousands of clergy and activists.

During the event here in Salem, Ore., one thing stood out for me. Sekou repeatedly asked a question we were expected to answer no matter what we were doing.

“Why do we do this work?”

Over and over, this question would come up. Each time, we were called to answer by saying, “Out of deep abiding love!”

Deep abiding love was the reason for this work. It was the reason we were at this training. It was the reason we wanted to learn how to safely engage with the principalities and powers that sustain white supremacy.

Since this training, I have been reflecting on this idea. I have realized that over the past year it has been a struggle for me to love people.

Do not get me wrong. I love a lot of people. I am a pastor who loves my church, family and friends. Loving these people is not a problem. It is also not hard for me to love those who are oppressed.

But I have a hard time loving those

I disagree with socially and politically. I find it difficult to be in community with those who seem to ignore social evils.

Maybe it is because of COVID and the constant arguing about vaccines and masks. Maybe it is the blatant racism that is prevalent in the United States.

I think it is a little bit of everything going on in our world that has caused me to feel this lack of love.

**BUT WHAT IF** I don't just fail to love some people? What if I actually hate them?

Not only is it hard to love, it is easy to hate.

It is easy for us to hate those who think differently from us or who compete against us.

Living in the midst of competing sides wrestling for power and control, we must remember that love is the reason for our actions.

Hate cannot sustain us. Only love can do that.

Our actions must come out of love for God and the people God created.

It was out of love that God created humankind.

It was out of love that God decided to become incarnate and be with the world.

And so also it should be out of love that we participate in what God is doing in this world.

It is out of love for the Black community, not hate for the white community, that we say “Black Lives Matter!”

It is out of love for the LGBTQ community that some of our churches feel led to affirm who God has created them to be.

**I LOVE THESE WORDS** of Jesus: “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends” (John

15:12-13).

Martin Luther King Jr. led with love when he laid down his life for racial justice in the United States.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu led with love as he advocated for the oppressed in South Africa during *apartheid*.

When we advocate for the op-

**To be effective creators of change, we need to make our reasons clear. The reason for social action is love.**

pressed, we do so out of love for God and others.

**THE POINT IS:** Our motives are important. So important that they may determine whether we succeed or fail.

To be effective creators of change, we need to make our reasons clear. The reason for social action is love, even when love is hard.

bell hooks, the influential Black writer who died Dec. 15, wrote in her book *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations*: “The moment we choose to love, we begin to move against domination, against oppression. The moment we choose to love, we begin to move toward freedom, to act in ways that liberate ourselves and others. That action is the testimony of love as the practice of freedom.”

Love needs to be the beginning. It needs to be the starting point of every action.

Love will guide us to freedom. Love will be the liberator of the oppressed.

“So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them” (1 John 4:16).

Let us lead with love. ●



**Jerrell Williams** is pastor of Salem Mennonite Church in Oregon. A 2015 graduate of Bethel College, he has a master of divinity degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

# Shall I still dream?

**IN MID-DECEMBER**, I perched in front of my computer for yet another Zoom call. This time around it was to gather with other contemplative women for a look back on 2021. We settled into our chairs, closed our eyes and took a few deep breaths.

“Imagine your inner world as a garden,” my friend Becky suggested, as lush green images began to scroll across my screen.

In my mind’s eye, I saw one of my inner garden beds. But it looked nothing like the abundance of green on the screen before me. No, this particular garden of mine was overgrown. Neglected. Dried up. Dead.

I knew it to be the garden bed that held my previous dreams. Hopes and dreams that, while dead, had not been removed. Instead, they stood there, stooped over in their straggly state, propped against one another lest the whole pile collapse.

It was a has-been garden. A garden of what was. It begged my attention, but I resisted its request. I feared what it wanted was to have the old removed to make room for the new, and I wasn’t having it.

I can’t do it. I just can’t. This garden bed of dried up dreams feels to me like the bedroom of a child who has died

and whose parents leave the room exactly as it was because they can’t bear to move on, to allow the space to be used for something new. All they want, all I want, understandably, is to have the old come back to life, for the old was greatly loved.

**AROUND THIS SAME** time, I began asking God for a word of the year for 2022. A word to pay close attention to. A word of invitation.

## Honestly, God, after the last two years you want me to dream again? After all that’s dried and died? After all the hopes deferred?

I can’t say I was entirely pleased with what came. It hit a raw nerve. It was one word, repeated, first as a verb and then as a noun: dream dreams.

Seriously, God?

In Scripture, these words are found first in Joel 2:28 and again in Acts 2:17: “Your old men shall dream dreams.”

After changing “men” to “women” and reckoning with the idea that God might be calling me old, I settled down, with trepidation, into the words and the invitation they held.

Dream dreams.

This is an audacious invitation, especially to an “old” person who has looked life square in the face. This is a courageous call, and vulnerable at that.

What if my dreams don’t come true? What if COVID or the economy or a gazillion other things are the death of them yet again?

Honestly, God, after the last two years, you want me to dream again? After all that’s dried and died? After all the hopes deferred?

No, thank you. I’ll just sit here beside my garden of what was. Keep company with what used to be. Anything else sounds too risky these days.

But the Spirit kept coming. Relentless, this One! God’s next approach was through the words of Eugene Peterson in *The Message*.

“This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It’s adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike ‘What’s next, Papa?’” (Romans 8:15).

This verse called me out. Named for me what I have been doing. I’ve been grave-tending — and doing so with nary a hint of adventurous expectation. I’m not interested in what’s next. I want what was.

**BACK TO MY** contemplative group. As I sat with my garden of dead dreams, I began to gently untangle them to see if anything lay beneath. Then I saw it: the greenest of shoots, coming forth with no fear. In truth, I wasn’t sure how I felt about this.

My friend Jen, who holds all the science knowledge I lack, told me dried up and dead plants arch over new growth, creating a biome, a shelter, and warmth where the baby sprouts can grow.

Imagine that! Without my permission, the old was giving birth to the new. It was offering the hospitality and the welcome I had been withholding.

This becomes holy ground. Instead of clinging to what was, these elder plants give themselves for what comes up new. The old doesn’t need to be removed, as I feared. No ripping out of the roots right now. All that’s being asked of me is to allow the new to emerge. To kneel beside these bright green bits and, like the dreams of old are already doing, welcome their presence and nurture their growth.

That, I suppose, I can do.  
Dream. ●



**Jenny Gehman** is a freelance writer and retreat speaker who publishes a weekly devotional, *Little Life Words*, at [jennygehman.com](http://jennygehman.com). She and her husband, Dan, are elders at Millersville Mennonite Church in Pennsylvania and enjoy hosting friends and strangers from around the world.

# Many sparrows, every hair

**BEFORE PERU BECAME** a country that was part of my life, it was a country my parents feared to send me to.

When I was a college student preparing for a year of study abroad, a terrorist group crashed a party at the Japanese embassy in Lima and held the VIPs hostage for four months. Peruvian commandos painstakingly planned and staged a rescue. Afterward, the media celebrated while the president crowed. Booyah! Wave the red and white flag. Footnote: None of the terrorists survived.

Only later, when I was well into my time as a student, did the grim truth begin to emerge: the captors hadn't all died in combat. At least some of them had surrendered in the raid — and been executed on the spot, their bodies spirited away afterward.

I watched the mother of one of the young men weeping on TV. She asked the government for just one thing so that she could identify her son and properly grieve him. All she wanted was a snip of her son's hair. She would know it was his.

When I saw this, I was callow and unmoved. The television storytellers had easily netted me with their tale: the dark side and the light, bad guys and good guys, guns blazing. I knew

nothing of the ache of parenthood. I was long years away from having children of my own whose heads I would cradle in the crook of my arm, whose hair I would inhale and study and comb with my fingers.

**In the flash of Jesus' gospel koan — Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? — we see ourselves, and we know our nature. Whatever else, we begin beloved.**

I couldn't empathize with the complex history that led to that moment, that ending, the ways trauma could infect nations and communities and lives, interpenetrating muscle, bone, brain fibers, gut, like some fiendish mycelium.

A mother longing for a snip of her son's hair — what of it? Now, I grieve my youthful hard-heartedness.

**"EVEN THE HAIRS** of your head are all counted," Jesus said. "Do not be afraid" (Luke 12:7). Jesus said God's eye is on the littlest sparrows. Five of them are sold for two pennies, "Yet not one of them is forgotten in God's sight" (12:6).

Jesus' teaching comes in a section about persecution: "Do not fear those who kill the body, and after that can do nothing more" (verse 4). But Jesus' message rests on something deeper, something we've no doubt heard to the point of seeming hackneyed: God loves us.

What's the shape of God's love?

There's a little clue tucked in the word Jesus uses for "sparrow." My commentaries tell me it's not the word for what we might think of as sparrows — which people didn't really eat in Judea — but rather simply: "little

birds."

The sparrows aren't just sparrows. I like that. I imagine a ragtag flock — every sort of odd little bird — all perched on a wire together.

And that's how God loves us: in our individuality.

Like hair too, of which a ride on any subway reveals that there is every kind, head-spinningly unique.

St. Augustine picked this up when he said to God: "You are good and all-powerful, caring for each one of us as though the only one in your care."

**JESUS' TEACHING ON** God's love is a word for who we are and what we're becoming. We are born of God's love. God meticulously knit together the minutiae of our bodies (Psalm 139:13). Whatever hands received us, it was God's that touched us. It was he who studied the crowns of our heads, counting each snip of hair.

In the flash of Jesus' gospel koan — Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? — we see ourselves, and we know our nature. Whatever else, we begin beloved.

And we become ourselves in God's love. "God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished" (Philippians 1:6, New Living Translation).

It's the work of a lifetime — and probably eternity. Even the brutalist lines of our most daring wrong turns get drawn in.

This is the part I find myself doubting, because I know my own life. I know my razor-wire words and missteps and alligator-eyed, half-sunk desires. I know just enough to know that I don't entirely know the moments I've resisted rather than cooperated with God's grace.

But here it is: many sparrows. Every hair. Behold God's love for us!

Nothing, Paul would go on to write, "will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39). Not even ourselves. ●



**Brad Roth** is pastor of West Zion Mennonite Church in Moundridge, Kan., and author of the forthcoming book, *The Hunger Inside: How the Meal Jesus Gave Transforms Lives* (Paraclete, April 5, 2022).

# Conflict: gateway to positive change

**IF, AS BETTY PRIES WRITES**, “the place of the deeper self is the location of oneness between self and other,” it follows that our journeys of inner growth are closely related to our journeys of relational healing. Her new book, *The Space Between Us: Conversations About Transforming Conflict*, provides fresh insights about the nexus of individual and interpersonal transformation.

As a veteran mediator and communication coach, Pries brings a wealth of experience to a timely topic. Typically, people view conflicts as barriers to personal growth or organizational thriving. This book takes the opposite view: Conflict can be the gateway to positive change.

The weaving of selfhood knowledge and conflict dynamics is enriched with spiritual practices and biblical references. Examples of how prayer and meditation can help lead people out of stuck places with past pain to places of new possibility and healing all stem from experiences of Pries and her clients.

After mapping out reasons why people end up in escalated conflicts,

**As we learn to recognize that others also have a threefold self — descriptive, defended and deeper — we stop judging them.**

the author leads the reader into what she calls “the architecture of selfhood.” A diagram shows how all people have a descriptive self: our unique self that is neither good nor bad. Surrounding that is our defended self: the protective layer made up of masks and shields. And within everyone is the deeper self: the source of all goodness and grace.

A number of things play into the

formation of our defended selves. Past trauma, unhealed pain, ego-based attachments, negative patterns of attempting to meet our unmet needs — these and more all serve to build up protective layers.

Pries includes a great story about a dragon-prince who peels off these layers one by one. Paradoxically, vulnerability gives way to new life and strengthening.

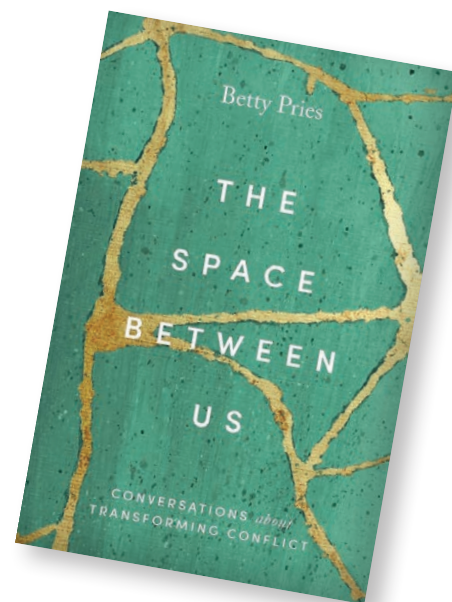
What does this model of selfhood have to do with interpersonal conflicts? Pries understands most conflicts are generated when the defended self feels threatened by others. Other people are viewed as the problem.

As we learn to recognize that others also have a threefold self — descriptive, defended and deeper — we stop feeling threatened by them and stop judging them. With compassion, we come to see how we share a common humanity, not only in our deeper selves where all people connect, but also in the commonality of having defended selves.

**ONE OF THE BRIGHTEST** stars in this book’s constellation is the concept of “both-and” thinking. This perspective allows us to grasp complex ideas beyond a black-and-white or either-or viewpoint.

At best, “both-and” thinking “opens space in our hearts for the other,” Pries says. She reminds us every person is a mixture of goodness and brokenness. This allows for a deeper solidarity around our wounded-and-wounding histories.

These issues are not only relevant in our relationships. Pries says, “Our interpersonal strife and the interior condition that supports it are a microcosm of larger systemic harms within our communities and the broader geopolitical world.” As we experience polarizing conversations on social and political matters, emotional reactions build walls. Both-and thinking provides a way forward, defusing



*The Space Between Us: Conversations About Transforming Conflict* by Betty Pries  
(Herald Press, 2021)

emotions and recognizing truth on all sides.

This is a book for people in conflict and for facilitators who help people in conflict. I think it is best suited for people in conflict, though it is also an excellent resource for mediators. If you are struggling with past hurts and relational alienation from a friend, family member or co-worker, this book will give you support for journeying to a better place.

There is a lot of wisdom in this book, ranging from how to cope with one’s own defensive patterns to how to initiate a healing conversation. There are a lot of stories as well. These stories of mediation and communication coaching ground the wisdom Pries offers in a rich soil that is bound to give life to any seeds readers are willing to release for the sake of their own growth. ●

**Ted Lewis** is a restorative justice trainer and consultant and the founder of the Restorative Church project, based in the Agapé Peace Center, Duluth, Minn.

BY PETER SMITH • Associated Press

# Ex-boarding school for Native children owning up to its past

**MIDDLE SCHOOLER** Rarity Cournoyer stood at the heart of the Red Cloud Indian School campus at Pine Ridge, S.D., and chanted a prayer song firmly and solemnly in the Lakota language — in a place where past generations of students were punished for speaking their mother tongue.

Her classmates stood around her at a prayer circle designed with archetypes of Native American spirituality, with a circular sidewalk representing a traditional medicine wheel.

Lakota language teacher Amery Brave Heart walked quietly with a small bundle of smoldering sage stems. Brave Heart — sporting a long braid on the very campus where his grandfather, Basil Brave Heart, said he had his long hair shorn and trampled on as a newly arrived pupil — offered the sage to each student as part of a brief smudging or purification ritual, in which they symbolically waved the scented smoke toward themselves.

Such scenes would have been hard to imagine here decades ago when Holy Rosary Mission — as the Catholic K-12 school was then named — formed part of a network of boarding schools across North America where generations of Indigenous children were brought to weaken their bonds to tribe and family and assimilate them into the dominant white, English-speaking, Christian culture.

But while Lakota staff, language and ritual have increasingly become central to Red Cloud, the 133-year-old school has never fully reckoned with this history, which has alienated many Lakota living on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, one of the nation's largest.

Now the school is undertaking a Truth and Healing process, seeking to hear the stories of former students, open its archives and face its past.

The ceremony at the prayer circle

was a way of acknowledging that history, one of several small gatherings held at Red Cloud on the last day of September to mark what's come to be known across North America as Orange Shirt Day.

Students and teachers wore orange in solidarity with Indigenous children of past generations who suffered cultural loss, family rupture and sometimes abuse and neglect while compelled to attend residential schools from the late 19th to the mid-20th centuries.

The event commemorates the long-ago account of an Indigenous woman in Canada whose residential school confiscated her orange shirt — a cherished gift from her grandmother — and made her wear a uniform.

**Even schools with better track records were serving in the larger project of cultural assimilation.**

**“OUR ANCESTORS** faced a lot in their time, but they remained resilient,” Red Cloud senior Mia Murdoch told fellow students during the high school's observance. “They weren't allowed to express themselves or to rejoice in who they were. We as young people now have those privileges. . . . Orange Shirt Day is not just a single day. It is a confrontation of the past and a conversation that takes place over a long period.”

The school's Truth and Healing process is following four steps described as confrontation, understanding, healing and transformation.

“We're really in the early stages of confrontation,” said Maka Black Elk,



executive director for Truth and Healing at Red Cloud.

“I think people want to rush quickly to healing because it's hopeful . . . but there's a lot more that needs to happen before we can,” he said.

That includes giving former students a chance to tell their stories, whether in public settings or confidentially.

**THE TRUTH AND HEALING** process comes amid larger-scale reckonings by governments and church groups that ran residential schools.

Last year in Canada, specialists using ground-penetrating radar discovered hundreds of unmarked graves at former school sites. A 2015 report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada said residential schools were often abusive, unsanitary and unsafe.

While school conditions varied across the U.S. and Canada, and some former students say they had positive experiences, even schools with better track records were serving in the larger project of cultural assimilation — what some call cultural genocide.

At least 367 such boarding schools once operated across the United States, about 40% of them affiliated with Catholic or Protestant churches, according to the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition. Most have closed, and most of the remaining ones, including Red Cloud, no longer board students overnight.

Holy Rosary, long staffed by Jesuit

# Cultural shift persists: U.S. grows more secular

**A NEW POLL FROM THE** Pew Research Center shows the share of U.S. adults who consider themselves Christian is falling.

Only 63% of Americans self-identify as Christian this year, a marked drop from 75% 10 years ago.

The declining number of Americans who say they are Christian is offset by a growing number of people who call themselves atheist, agnostic or people of no particular faith. These unaffiliated Americans make up 29% of the U.S. population, up from 19% in 2011.

“The secularizing shifts evident in American society so far in the 21st century show no signs of slowing,” the Pew researchers concluded. “The religiously unaffiliated share of the public is 6 percentage points higher than it was five years ago and 10 points higher than a decade ago.”

Though Christians are still a healthy majority, their decline is perhaps best reflected in two questions from the poll: how often people pray and how important religion is in their lives. Only 45% of U.S. adults said they pray daily (down from 58% in a similar 2007 survey). And the number of Americans who say religion is “very important” in their lives is also falling: 41% of Americans consider religion “very important” in their lives, down from 56% in 2007.

Protestants account for most of the decline — down 4 percentage points from five years ago and 10 percentage points since a decade ago, with both evangelical and nonevangelical Protestants declining overall to 40% of U.S. adults. Catholics held relatively steady at 21%.

**“THIS IS AT LEAST IN PART** a reaction to the political environment,” said David Campbell, a professor at the University of Notre Dame who has written about American secularization. “Many people turning away



PHOTO: NOLAN KENT/UNSPLASH/CREATIVE COMMONS

from religion do so because they think of religion as an expression of political conservatism, or as a wing of the Republican Party. That’s especially true of white Americans. The more religion is wrapped up in a political view, the more people who don’t share that political view say, “That’s not for me.”

There was no corresponding rise in the number of Americans adhering to other faiths. A total of 6% of Americans identify with non-Christian faiths.

But the number of atheists and agnostics in the survey roughly doubled in the past decade to 4% and 5% respectively, up from 2% and 3% in 2011.

Some scholars said this doubling may not be as big a shift numerically as it is culturally.

“There’s less stigma attached to being an atheist,” said Ryan Burge, the author of a book about the “nonés,” or the religiously unaffiliated. “It’s revealing of what’s been there for a long time, rather than a big shift. People may not have answered honestly 20, 30 years ago.”

But Burge said the decline of Protestant Christianity from 52% in 2007 to 40% today is significant.

“It’s more evidence that America is going to be much different,” Burge said. “For a plurality of Americans to say religion is not important, that’s a big shift in how we think about ourselves.” ●



Students at Red Cloud Indian School wait in line to receive orange T-shirts on Sept. 30 in Pine Ridge, S.D. Students and teachers wore orange in solidarity with Indigenous children of past generations. PHOTO: EMILY LESHNER/AP

brothers and Franciscan nuns, boarded students for nearly a century after its founding in 1888.

A small group of Jesuits remains, but much else has changed at what is now a day school, with a total enrollment of 600 at its main campus and a second elementary school about 30 miles away.

Still, the wounds remain for many. “This is something that people in the community who are from here have known about for a long time,” Black Elk said. “It’s their family history.”

Black Elk said the school plans to use ground-penetrating radar next summer where unmarked graves are suspected — in tandem with archival research about student deaths.

“It isn’t to do a quick and dirty measure of what your number [of graves] is,” he said. “Really what ground-penetrating radar is about is healing. You’re finding people. You’re trying to find names, and a story about why that person is there.”

The Jesuits at the school, as elsewhere, are undergoing their own soul-searching.

U.S. and Canadian Jesuit leaders issued a statement of regret in August for the suppression of Native culture. They pledged to help “shine the light of truth” on this history. ●

# Some honored Tutu in word, not deed

**AFRICAN LEADERS PAID** tribute to Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu for his fearless campaign that helped end South Africa's brutal *apartheid* regime and bring democracy to the country. But many of the same leaders remained silent about the late Nobel Peace Prize winner's support for issues they're uncomfortable with, such as LGBTQ rights, democratic freedoms and environmental issues.

Tutu, who died Dec. 26 at age 90, was a "true son and icon of Africa. His contribution to the liberation struggle and unwavering position to peace, unity and good governance will forever be cherished," said Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan, without mentioning Tutu's support for LGBTQ people who are threatened with arrest in Tanzania.

"Africa has lost a monument," said Burundi President Evariste Nday-



PHOTO: ASSOCIATED PRESS

ishimiye, accused by a U.N. commission in September of human rights violations.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who won the Nobel Peace Prize 25 years after Tutu did, praised his fellow laureate as "the embodiment of the struggle for liberation," even though Tutu's foundation early this year warned that the war in Ethiopia's Tigray region amounted to genocide.

Revered across the continent for op-

posing *apartheid* in South Africa and helping the country's peaceful transition to majority rule, Tutu went on to tackle some of Africa's most thorny issues and its leaders.

He criticized South African President Thabo Mbeki for denying HIV/AIDS and preventing the government from distributing life-saving treatments.

He compared a proposed law criminalizing homosexuality in Uganda to *apartheid*-era South Africa's laws that banned interracial sexual relations.

"Many great people have one great fight in them but then become blinkered and support the new status quo," said Nic Cheeseman, a specialist in African politics at the University of Birmingham in Britain. "Tutu continued to see injustice — economic, racial and sexual — and understood there were more battles to be won." ●



**Everence**®

Lead with your values

## SENIOR MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES AT EVERENCE

Looking to combine your values and beliefs with your professional skills in a new way? Our mission is to help clients and members integrate their faith and values into their financial decisions. If you have the determination and executive skills to help us accomplish that calling, we'd love to talk with you.

### Chief Financial Officer/Senior VP

- Lead overall finance, accounting, actuarial, data security, project management, and technology/data systems functions.
- Build, develop and retain a highly qualified team of financial and information technology professionals.
- Manage enterprise risk by analyzing business investments and liabilities.

### Vice President – Human Resources

- Provide executive-level leadership and guidance to the Human Resources function for all Everence entities.
- Oversee facilities, staffing processes, DEI initiatives, employee engagement and retention, training and development, employment policies and practices, and employment compliance.
- Serve as member of Everence Senior Leadership Team.

Everence® is an equal opportunity employer offering competitive salaries and benefits. Candidates must be committed to our mission and diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility priorities.

[Learn more at everence.com/careers.](https://www.everence.com/careers)

# Classifieds

[classifieds@anabaptistworld.org](mailto:classifieds@anabaptistworld.org)

## EMPLOYMENT — CHURCH

**East Petersburg Mennonite Church**, East Petersburg, Pa., seeks a 75% FTE Equipping Pastor. The position will focus on providing vision/leadership along with an elder team, discipleship, worship ministry collaboration, faith community care facilitation, preaching/teaching and equipping people for ministry in the church and beyond. For more information: [eastpetemc.org/equipping-pastor-search](http://eastpetemc.org/equipping-pastor-search). (1-3)

**Berkey Avenue Mennonite Church** is seeking an Associate Pastor to join our pastoral team. This position can be full time or part time. Join our pastoral team and provide leadership in faith formation, youth and young adult ministry, preaching 1-2 times per month and more. The ideal candidate has a passion for faith formation, strong communication, intercultural competency and commitment to the congregation's welcoming statement. For more information, email search committee chair Sherm Kauffman at [shermwk@maplenet.net](mailto:shermwk@maplenet.net). (1)

**First Mennonite Church**, Bluffton, Ohio, a Christ-centered, inclusive and justice-oriented congregation with close ties to Bluffton University, seeks a full-time lead pastor to help us implement our five priorities of following Jesus, nurturing faith, extending hospitality, engaging Scripture and identifying gifts. The successful candidate will demonstrate a clear commitment to Anabaptist/Mennonite theology and biblical formation, support MC USA's Vision: Healing and Hope statement, display strong leadership and relational skills and model engagement with community, denominational and ecumenical partners. Contact Rhonda Winstead, search committee chair, at [winsteadrk@gmail.com](mailto:winsteadrk@gmail.com) for more information. (1)

**Oak Grove Mennonite Church** of West Liberty, Ohio, is seeking a half- to full-time Youth Pastor. Job responsibilities include coordinating volunteers and planning programming for junior high through post-high ages, connecting and communicating with families and working as a part of a pastoral team. Oak Grove is a 150-member rural church whose focus is to share the love of Christ in our community and around the world. For more information or to submit a resume, please email us at [alex@oakgrovemennonite.org](mailto:alex@oakgrovemennonite.org). (1-4)

**Hebron Mennonite Church** of Hagerstown, Md., is a friendly, caring and service-oriented congregation. We seek a full-time pastor to join us as we support each other, reach out to our community and invite all people into a growing relationship with God and the church. All interested candidates contact Ed Poling at [eloling1@gmail.com](mailto:eloling1@gmail.com). (1)

**The Mennonite Church of Normal, Ill.**, seeks a Pastoral Team (2.5 FTE) due to retirements. We are an inclusive and welcoming church with functioning leadership teams and commissions. To apply, contact Doug Luginbill at Central District Conference: [confmin@mcusacdc.org](mailto:confmin@mcusacdc.org). (1-3)

**Community Mennonite Church** of Lancaster, Pa., a progressive, welcoming and affirming congregation, is seeking a two-thirds-time director or associate pastor of Children's Ministries. The position oversees programming and spiritual formation of children birth to eighth grade. Responsibilities include offering pastoral care and spiritual guidance to children and families, overseeing children's auxiliary programs, coordinating children's volunteers and incorporating children into congregational life. The vision of CMCL is to make known to our children in word and action that they are "known and loved by God." Please send resumes to Julie Bushong at [julandtyler@gmail.com](mailto:julandtyler@gmail.com). See [communitymennonite.org](http://communitymennonite.org) for information. (16-1)

**East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church** of Lancaster City, Pa., seeks a full-time associate pastor who will resource and guide our youth and children's ministries, provide pastoral care to families and contribute monthly to the preaching ministry of the congregation. All interested candidates, please contact

Search Committee Chair Ann Campbell-Janzen at [anncjanz@gmail.com](mailto:anncjanz@gmail.com) for a copy of the job description. (16-1)

**Sonnenberg Mennonite Church** of Kidron, Ohio, is seeking a full-time lead pastor. Information about the church can be found on the website: [sonnenbergmc.org](http://sonnenbergmc.org). Interested candidates may contact the chairperson of the search committee, Phil Raber, at [raber2020@gmail.com](mailto:raber2020@gmail.com), for a detailed outline of the requirements and responsibilities of the position. (16-2)

## EMPLOYMENT — GENERAL

**MDS is hiring!** If you want to make a difference and you thrive in an exciting, fast-paced disaster response environment, consider one of four openings at Mennonite Disaster Service: Social Media Coordinator; Volunteer Development Coordinator; Communications Administrative Assistant; Volunteer Training Specialist. Learn more about these positions and qualifications at [mds.org](http://mds.org). (1)

**Exciting opportunity!** Home Fresh Bistro is looking for a couple to manage our restaurant. Established for 12 years serving lunch and one evening dinner. Weekends off. 60k salary. Contact [Homefreshbistro@gmail.com](mailto:Homefreshbistro@gmail.com) or 706-339-9972. (1)

## NIH RESEARCH STUDY



*Help researchers identify genes that may affect the chance of getting bipolar disorder. Together we may help future generations.*

- Study participation includes an interview (2-4 hours) and a blood sample.
- Participants must be 18 or older and may be eligible if they have either a bipolar diagnosis or a family member with bipolar disorder.
- No travel necessary. No cost to participate. Financial compensation provided.

*Join A Study!*

Call 1-866-644-4363 or TTY: 1-866-411-1010  
Email [bipolargenes@mail.nih.gov](mailto:bipolargenes@mail.nih.gov), [www.nimh.nih.gov/JoinAStudy](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/JoinAStudy)

Write to National Institute of Mental Health  
10 Center Drive, MSC 1264, Bethesda, Maryland 20892-1264

Department of Health & Human Services  
National Institutes of Health



National Institute of Mental Health  
[www.clinicaltrials.gov](http://www.clinicaltrials.gov) Protocol No. 80-M-0083

**A rural Mississippi** home repair opportunity available. Jesus was a carpenter. Information: larrym45@gmail.com. (16-1)

**Diversified farm** in western Pennsylvania seeks help for the 2022 season. Looking for folks interested in faith and agriculture to work with us raising organic produce, mushrooms and several varieties of livestock. Contact info@savagemountainfarm.com. (16-2)

**Hiring** for gorgeous assisted-living nursing home work. 2.6 miles from Pinecraft in Sarasota, Fla. No experience needed. Resident Att. \$15/hour. Some experience? \$16/hour. CNA trained? \$17/hour. Bring friends or family to be hired with you! Please call 319-461-6900. Full or part-time hours available. (16-3)

#### EMPLOYMENT — SCHOOL

**Conrad Grebel University College** at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada, invites applications for a full-time tenure-track faculty position in Anabaptist and Mennonite history that involves teaching, scholarship, service and community education. The successful candidate will have general teaching and scholarship expertise in Anabaptist and Mennonite history, and the ability to offer cross-disciplinary courses in one of the college's other programs is preferred. The appointment begins July 1, 2022. The College will begin reviewing applications on Feb. 7, 2022. Grebel is committed to employment equity and welcomes applications from all qualified persons. Canadian citizens and permanent residents will be given priority. For further information about Grebel, department, position description and application procedures, see grebel.ca/positions. (1)

**Fresno Pacific University** invites applications for an Instructional Librarian in the Hiebert Library. Complete job description and requirements at fresno.edu/visitors/careers. (1)

**Fresno Pacific University** invites applications for a Faculty and Program Director for Reading and Language Development in the School of Education; Faculty in Physics and Faculty in Mathematics. Complete job description and requirements at fresno.edu/visitors/careers. (1)

**Goshen College** invites applications for a full-time appointment as an Assistant or Associate Professor of Sustainability and Environmental Education, starting July 2022. This appointment includes serving as the Program Director for the Master of Arts in Environmental Education program, based at the college's Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center, located 28 miles southeast of Goshen, Ind. For more information and to apply, go to goshen.edu/employment. (16-1)

**Goshen College** invites applications for a full-time appointment as an Assistant or Associate Professor of Sustainability and Environmental Education, starting July 2022. This appointment is based at the college's Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center, 28 miles southeast of Goshen. For more information and to apply, go to goshen.edu/employment. (16-1)

**Goshen College** invites applications for a full-time, tenure-track Assistant or Associate Professor of Biology with a specialization in cell biology, microbiology, molecular biology or related field to begin July 1, 2022. Primary teaching responsibilities would include Cell Biology & Genetics, Microbiology, Advanced Cell Biology, and Advanced Molecular Biology. Faculty members are expected to develop

research projects suitable for the department's required senior thesis program. For more information and to apply, go to goshen.edu/employment. (16-1)

**Goshen College** invites applications for a full-time, tenure-track Assistant or Associate Professor of Marine Biology to begin July 1, 2022 with a specialization in marine biology. Primary teaching responsibilities will support our major in Environmental and Marine Science. Teaching load could include Marine Biology, Marine Ecology, Invertebrate Zoology, and/or Oceanography. The majority of teaching takes place at the college's J.N. Roth Marine Biology station (located in the Florida Keys) as part of the college's Marine Biology Semester. For more information and to apply, go to goshen.edu/employment. (16-1)

#### SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

**GAHN, a Mennonite World Conference** health network, is seeking a part-time volunteer to coordinate its global program. Send resume to ronyoder@comcast.net. (1)

#### LODGING

**North Newton** guest housing — 316-283-5231; vadasnider@cox.net. (14-9)

*\$1.30 a word. Send ads to [classifieds@anabaptistworld.org](mailto:classifieds@anabaptistworld.org). For information about display ads or online advertising, see [anabaptistworld.org/ads](mailto:anabaptistworld.org/ads). To inquire about display ads or online advertising, email [advertising@anabaptistworld.org](mailto:advertising@anabaptistworld.org) or call 316-283-3670.*

## Obituaries

[obituaries@anabaptistworld.org](mailto:obituaries@anabaptistworld.org)

### Nathan Baer Hege

Nathan Baer Hege, 94, of Lititz, Pa., died Dec. 8, 2021, at Landis Homes.

He was born to Jonas Eby Hege and Elizabeth Martin (Baer) Hege in Hagerstown, Md. He was a member of Willow Street Mennonite Church in Pennsylvania.

He graduated from Eastern Mennonite College in 1949 and from Syracuse University with a master's degree in journalism in 1963.

On May 1, 1951, he married Arlene Emma Landis.

Along with his wife, he served as a missionary in Ethiopia from 1950 to 1974 as a teacher and in production of Christian literature in the Amharic language. He later worked at Eastern Mennonite Missions in Salunga in church relations until his retirement. He also served as associate pastor of Willow Street

Mennonite Church and, for eight years, as bishop of the Willow Street-Strasburg district of Lancaster Mennonite Conference. In 1998 he authored *Beyond Our Prayers*, a 50-year history of the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia.

Survivors include a daughter, Beth Ann (Matthew) Bonk of Lancaster; a son, Harold (Pat) Wharton-Hege of Delran, N.J.; a daughter-in-law, Sylvia Hege of Johns Island, S.C.; eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Arlene E. Landis Hege, on Nov. 15, 2020; and two sons, John Allen and Peter Nathan Hege.

A private graveside service was held at Willow Street Mennonite Cemetery. A memorial service will be held at a future date. Memorial contributions may be sent to Eastern Mennonite Missions.

### Donald James Nyce

Donald James "Don" Nyce, 85, of Lititz, Pa., died Nov. 30, 2021, at Hospice and Community Care in Mount Joy. He was born June 16, 1936, to Wynne James and Grace L. (Nice) Nyce in Doylestown.

He was the husband of Faye Marie



Nyce

(Hochstetler) Nyce, with whom he shared 61 years of marriage.

Raised in Doylestown, he graduated from Central Bucks High School in 1954. He graduated from Millersville University and obtained a master's degree from Trenton State College. From 1956 to

1958, he completed a voluntary service term in Phoenix, Ariz., through Mennonite Board of Missions.

He was an industrial arts teacher in Mechanicsburg schools. Also, he and Faye served with Habitat for Humanity International in Americus, Ga. They spent a number of weeks in Brazil building playground equipment for a school and volunteering in other capacities in a marginalized community.

A faithful member of Landisville Mennonite Church, he was known for kindness, gentleness and integrity and approached life with a good sense of humor. He was a devoted husband, father and grandfather. He enjoyed

woodworking, Sunday school teaching and other roles within the church, good conversation, sports and the outdoors.

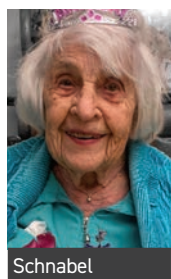
Survivors include his wife, Faye; two sons, Edward Bruce Nyce and Douglas James (Dawn) Nyce; a son-in-law, Rodney (Sheri) Yoder; two siblings, Joyce (Millard) Osborne and John (Dorothy) Nyce; five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

He was preceded in death by his daughter, Pamela Beth Nyce Yoder; and a brother and sister-in-law, Robert (Ruth) Nyce.

Memorial services took place at Landisville Mennonite Church. Donations may be made to Christian Peacemaker Teams.

### Erma Schnabel

Erma Schnabel, 100, a 20-year resident of Souderton Mennonite Homes in Pennsylvania, died June 27, 2021. She was born Erma Mae Frey in Elizabethtown.



Schnabel

After graduating from Elizabethtown High School, she received a registered nursing certification from St. Joseph School of Nursing and later worked for St. Joseph Hospital of Lancaster, Western Virginia State Hospital in Staunton, Va., Rockingham County Hospital in

Harrisonburg, Va., and the Visiting Nurses Association of Norristown. At age 51, she went to Montgomery County Community College to pursue a bachelor's degree in nursing to supplement her RN certificate.

She lived in ever-widening circles, going to Puerto Rico and Jamaica with her first husband, Warren Metzler, who died in 1975; to California with her second husband, Merle Betz, who died in 1990; and on extensive world travels that touched every continent but Antarctica with her third husband, Fred Schnabel, who died in 2006.

Whether crisscrossing the United States, sharing her boundless energy and compassion with her nursing patients in Pennsylvania, Virginia and the Caribbean, supporting Metzler's pastoral and missionary work in Pennsylvania and Jamaica, or posing for photographs with Schnabel at countless global landmarks, she remained a faithful, longtime member of Methacton Mennonite Church and a devoted and charitable Christian.

As her circles of travel widened, she developed new perspectives, thirsting for a deeper understanding of the world and developing an increasingly compassionate and tolerant worldview. She was gifted with a particular social genius, such that her friendships grew throughout every stage of her journey.

Survivors include her children, John (Adeline) Metzler of East Lansing, Mich., Sharon (Marlin) Metzler-Ruth of Harleysville and Philip Metzler of Washington, D.C.; a foster daughter, Iris (Ransford) Nicholson of Sarasota, Fla.; two

stepsons, Carl (Lynne) Schnabel of Green Lane and Richard (Cheryl) Schnabel of Lansdale; two siblings, Lois Frey of Elizabethtown and Wilbur Frey of Lancaster; seven grandchildren; two step-grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

In addition to her three husbands, she was preceded in death by a son, Warren Frederick; and 10 of her 12 siblings.

Memorial services were held at Williams-Bergey-Koffel Funeral Home. Contributions may be made to Living Branches Souderton Mennonite Homes Agape Fund.

### David Mann

David Winfield Mann, 91, died Dec. 13, 2021, at Phoenix, Ariz. He was born April 30, 1930, to Cleo Aaron and Nellie Marie (Miller) Mann in Elkhart, Ind.



Mann

He accepted Christ when he was 9 years old and was baptized at Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart. In 1947-48, between his junior and senior years of high school, he spent 14 months in Belgium under Mennonite Central Committee, where his father was director of reconstruction following World War II.

After graduating from Goshen College in 1953 and Goshen Biblical Seminary in 1954, he married Mona M. Aeschliman on Oct. 10, 1954.

Their first year of marriage was spent in Hannibal, Mo., where he served a pastoral internship. In 1955 he was called to serve Albany Mennonite Church in Oregon, where he was pastor for 15 years. During this time he served in various capacities in Pacific Coast Mennonite Conference, the Oregon Mennonite Camping Association and on the overseas committee and board of directors of Mennonite Board of Missions. At Albany he was ordained to the ministry on July 8, 1956. On June 5, 1960, he was ordained as a bishop and served in this capacity with the Albany, Logsdon, Lebanon, Eugene and Corvallis congregations.

In 1970 they moved back to Elkhart for two years while he continued his studies toward a master of divinity degree at Goshen Biblical Seminary. In 1972 he was called as pastor of Sunnyslope Mennonite Church in Phoenix, where he served for 20 years. Again he served in various leadership positions, including nine years as moderator in Southwest Mennonite Conference. He served on the Mennonite Church General Board for 14 years and as moderator of the Mennonite Church from 1991 to 1993. He was pastor at Hesston Mennonite Church in Kansas from 1992 to 1997.

On retiring to Phoenix in 1997, he and Mona became members of Trinity Mennonite Church in Glendale. They moved to Glencroft Retirement Community in June 2013.

Survivors include his wife, Mona; two sons and a daughter, David and Jeanne of San

Diego, Calif., and Timothy (Lynne) of Phoenix; a sister, Dorothy Horst of Elkhart, Ind.; three grandchildren and two step-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by twin sons, Stephen Kent and Thomas Brent, who died at birth in January 1961.

### Henry Weaver

Henry Weaver, 93, former Goshen College professor, provost and president, died Dec. 7, 2021. He was born May 5, 1928, to Henry and Sallie (Wenger) Weaver in Harrisonburg, Va.



Weaver

He attended Eastern Mennonite School and College, now Eastern Mennonite University. As a 19-year-old in the wake of World War II, he became a "seagoing cowboy" and volunteered as a hand on a livestock boat delivering donated horses to war-torn Europe.

He earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry from George Washington University in 1950 and a master's degree in organic chemistry and doctorate in physical chemistry from the University of Delaware in 1953. He married Mary Eby on June 7, 1952.

They started married life in Virginia, where he taught chemistry at Eastern Mennonite College. In 1957 they moved to Goshen, Ind.

He worked for Goshen College for 22 years, from 1957 to 1979, as a chemistry professor and provost. In 1996 he returned as interim president. In the 1960s he was instrumental in developing Goshen's Study-Service Term, one of the first programs in the nation to make international study a graduation requirement.

In 1979 he and Mary moved to Santa Barbara, Calif., where he became deputy director of the Education Abroad Program of the University of California System. He retired in 1991. He worked all his life to help others have the kinds of life-expanding experiences with other cultures that he had. He was a traveler, photographer, ham radio operator, and lover of life. He was a cancer survivor who taught his family to take joy in each new day. He and Mary returned to Goshen in retirement. They were members of College Mennonite Church in Goshen.

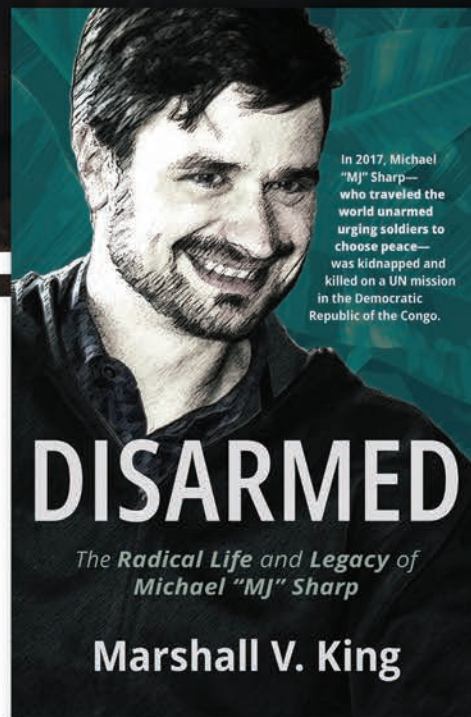
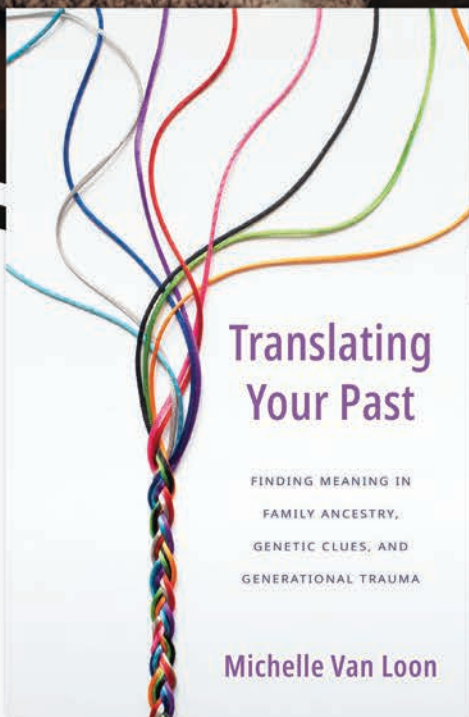
Survivors include four children, Sally (John) Weaver Glick of Goshen, Judy (Richard Aguirre) Weaver of Goshen, Debora Weaver of Fuquay-Varina, N.C., and J. Donald (Rosanna) Weaver of Hyattsville, Md.; nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Mary; and four siblings.

Send obituaries to [obituaries@anabaptistworld.org](mailto:obituaries@anabaptistworld.org) or *Anabaptist World*, PO Box 568, Newton, KS 67114. From your text, we will prepare an obituary, up to 350 words, compliant with our style. The fee is \$50. Send check or pay online at [anabaptistworld.org/obituaries](http://anabaptistworld.org/obituaries).



NEW BOOKS  
FROM HERALD PRESS



HERALD PRESS

HeraldPress.com • 1-800-245-7894