

# Intersections

*Franconia Mennonite Conference • May 2007*

*Equipping leaders to empower others to embrace God's mission*

A reflection on the journey:

## Called and calling into ministry

James Lapp

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It's hard to say when I first experienced a call to pastoral ministry. Was it as a child playing church on the stairs or imitating my parents going to "ministerial meetings?" Was it in frequently over-hearing, right from birth, conversations about church and leadership, including the stresses and joys of Franconia Conference? Might it have been the model of my father and many guest ministers in our home? Maybe it began when I went to college and majored in Bible and gingerly spoke of preparing for "Christian service," a kind of euphemism for pastoral ministry. Certainly the invitation from Richard Detweiler to serve as a summer intern with him at Perkasio Mennonite Church in 1960 contributed to a growing clarity and sense of call.

The reality is I was part of an era that did not announce plans to someday become a minister. Whatever sense of call I had needed to await the recognition of others and the processes of the church. To be sure, going to seminary signaled a readiness for pastoral leadership. This openness to ministry was first affirmed and confirmed in the fall of 1961 when I was called to pastor Belmont Mennonite Church in Elkhart, IN, and licensed by Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference. Ordination on July 7, 1963, followed graduation from seminary and acceptance of the call to serve as pastor at Perkasio. At the time I was the only minister active in Franconia Conference with a full seminary education.

Much has changed during these past 44 years in Franconia Conference. Education is now an expectation, with core courses a conference requirement for credentialing. While we have long had a history of plural ministry ("the bench" as it was called), the whole concept of team ministry pushes this model to new levels often not



*Jim Lapp and Mim Book*

experienced in the older forms of plural ministry. We also seem to call fewer younger people to ministry. It is almost unthinkable now to have a 19 year old, or even 24 year old pastor like I was when first licensed. The phenomenon of adolescence and young adult years has modified the processes of calling leaders in the church. Or has the church become less willing to risk with inexperienced leaders?

Certainly the thought of women becoming credentialed leaders seemed remote in these early years of my ministry. To have been married to an ordained minister (my first wife Nancy), and now married to an active pastor, Mim Book, as well as to have a daughter, Cindy, ordained to pastoral leadership, creates a new reality for the church and for me personally. I am gathering feelings, insights and ideas about being a pastor's spouse that I someday may decide to publish.

I reflect with much joy and satisfaction on my years as a minister. After 20 years as a congregational pastor, Nancy and I served as campus

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David Landis

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Noah Kolb

This issue of *Intersections* features the call to ministry stories of newly credentialed Franconia Conference leaders.

**Franconia  
Mennonite  
Conference**

Stories of  
invitation to  
walk in the  
path of Jesus.



# God's transforming calling

Noah Kolb

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What constitutes a “calling” and how it is recognized and nurtured has been of interest in the Church from the beginning. Why did Jesus call only 12? How was James chosen as lead apostle at Jerusalem? What criteria did Paul use to appoint leaders? These were just the beginning of the elaborate processes of choosing church leadership throughout church history.

Young educated Anabaptists appointed each other launching the radical wing of the reformation with evangelists, pastors, and lay persons moving across the countryside sharing the Good News as a gospel of peace and transformation. The focus on leadership by persecutors caused the Anabaptists to constantly refocus pastoral leadership so each flock had a shepherd. The deep concern that each congregation has quality leadership still shapes the Anabaptist tradition. We devise systems to make sure persons who hear the *call* are indeed called, prepared, supported, and publicly affirmed with credentials. Shifting cultural and global dynamics demand that we keep asking questions, observing how God calls ministerial leaders and how persons respond.

When I read the stories of how persons continue to respond to God's *call* to ministry in this issue of *Intersections*, reflecting on my own journey and those many persons I have walked with, several themes focused my attention.

- The *call* to ministry in the church persists. As James Lapp noted, in the past, the *call* was not something you talked about. What mattered most was the call of the church. Almost all who in recent years heard the *call* focused mostly on the personal inner call from God, which was then confirmed by an outer call. What matters most today is that both the inner and outward sense of *call* comes together in public affirmation for fruitful ministry.
- It is exciting to see diverse groups of people; young and old, women and men, laborers and professionals, and persons of different faith backgrounds, cultures, and colors; responding to the *call* to pastoral ministry. There's an array of gifts, experience, and wisdom. How can such a splendid diversity of *called* persons transform a historically Germanic people of faith? Can we become God's new creation?
- The cultural differences are impacting how we hear, respond, and affirm the *call* of God. Women face certain obstacles and expecta-

tions that men do not. Economic demands may keep persons from responding in early years. Faith traditions use different language to express the *call*. Precise language and terms can no longer define who we are. We need to relate deeper to find the connections.

- The *call* is increasingly focused around unique gifts and ministries that reach beyond traditional clergy roles. There is less demand for the general pastor. The *call* is often a response to a specific kind of ministry. Congregations call for pastors who lead and can carry the vision, minister effectively to youth and young adults, or are experts in pastoral care, worship, or administration. Even as we ask which ministries of the church we should grant credentials for, the stories of *call* increasingly blur the lines between credentialed and non-credentialed ministries.
- The *called* are sustained by the grace and presence of God. Almost all of the persons who shared noted their journeys have not always been easy. The *call* does not lead to “happy ever after” endings. It is often attached to a deep passion that, when lived out, gives a sense of fulfillment. Frequently, the passion is hindered in some fashion. Most accept that as part of the training, growth, and shaping of ministry. Occasionally persons may step out of the *call* when it becomes overwhelming or unfulfilling. Can we who call the *called* be as gracious as God who loves and sustains those who struggle in it?
- The *call* is seen more as a segment of one's whole life, rather than a lifetime commitment. In the present reality few persons commit themselves to a life-long career. This seems to be true in the *call* to pastoral ministry. Many persons expect a life of two or more careers and increasing numbers of persons answer the *call* in their 40's, 50's and even 60's. Some who began ministry in their early years later move to other careers in or out of the church. What happens to the *call* or the passion? Does God give a new *call* or is the passion shifted into another channel? How much of this is a reflection of the shifting dynamics of the culture in which one is *called*?

God continues to call persons to pastoral ministry and the church continues to figure out how to affirm those *called*. As one deeply committed to calling and affirming those God is *calling* the task feels more like putting a 500-piece puzzle together rather than a 100-piece. But the joy of doing it and seeing the picture is worth it all.

*Called, continued from page 1*

ministers at Goshen College for a number of years. Perhaps the title “church bureaucratic” best characterizes my denominational leadership from 1987-95. Having left Franconia Conference in 1972, I returned in 1996 to serve as Conference Pastor. It is hard to imagine a better context for my last long-term ministry function. Joining the conference staff team, working closely with overseers and pastors, and eventually leading the conference ministry team resulted in much joy and fulfillment.

To be sure, these past 11 years were also not without their challenges. Three years after we moved to Southeastern Pennsylvania, Nancy died of multiple myeloma. During the same era the conference struggled with relationships with Germantown Mennonite Church. There are times when I wonder which was more painful as both resulted in significant grief and loss.

As I near the decade of three score and ten, I sense the call to a new transition. Thus far I have resisted speaking of retirement. Rather I imagine a life with less demands, more flexibility, and opportunities for ministry that are life-giving and make good use of my gifts. For starters, after 25 years I am returning to a half-time pastoral leadership role for five months at Blooming Glen church (April through August). Frankly this new challenge stimulates me. At this stage of life, freedom in preaching and limiting ministry to the things I most enjoy, seems appealing. There need to be some perks that go with aging!

My resignation from the conference staff coincides with the dawn of a new season. Seasons of change are usually accompanied by some stress and uncertainties. The changes at Franconia Conference will be no different, however it is clear that the 21st century necessitates fresh strategies for ministry. The models we have used, including the conference ministry team I led, were largely borrowed from mainline churches, and have likely reached their maximum potential. How to retain the important values of older systems while adapting to new forms of leadership is the challenge. New leaders with familiar faces will best discern and discover creative ways to make this happen.

Meanwhile, to use Biblical language, I “watch and pray” for the dawning of the Kingdom of God in greater fullness. We have only begun to develop a “culture of call” in the conference and most of our congregations. I am impressed with younger women and men who exhibit high commitment to Christ and the church and hold strong promise that will surely result in a posi-

tive future. It is exciting to anticipate a record ten Ministry Inquiry Program participants (college students) connected to our conference this coming summer. The 2007 winter issue of *Growing Leaders* with the four articles by younger leaders bodes well for the future of the church.

I confess to impatience with the obstacles that women experience in fulfilling their call and excising the gifts of the Holy Spirit in their lives. I sense the old assumptions around leadership and authority in the church are being called into question and our quest for greater leadership effectiveness necessitates discernment for a new consensus around the values and patterns that will best serve us as God’s people. I applaud the greater professionalization of leadership while caution against emphasizing style over substance in our leadership practices.

Being at this stage of life invites self-critique about how and where I have invested my energy and gifts. Mostly I feel a deep sense of reward for the opportunities I have been accorded. I never imagined the path God’s call in my life would take as I view it in retrospect. While I have regrets about some specific actions on my part, I mostly reflect on these years with gratitude and joy. And to realize, like Paul, that I have not “reached the goal,” I continue to press on toward the “prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:14) To now leave the work of Franconia Conference in the hands of others brings personal freedom seasoned with confidence in new generations of leadership that will follow. Thanks for the privilege of being a co-worker with so many of you during this past decade of ministry. I will always treasure these relationships and the trust I have been shown.

*James M. Lapp officially ended his term as Senior Ministry Consultant with Franconia Conference on March 30.*



## Intersections

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Photos from a recent  
fishing trip.

photos provided  
by Brandon Bergey

Growth and transformation:

# Investing in people in Vermont's Upper Valley

Brandon Bergey  
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Stephen Covey writes about the Knowledge-Worker age in his book titled *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness*. He believes Western culture needs to adjust its perspective on human resources. For example, if you're familiar with any accounting software package like QuickBooks or Peachtree, you'll notice that buildings and equipment are considered capital. Payroll, however, is considered expense.

In an age of relationships, in which Google, a company whose only notable capital—besides the buildings they own—are servers, we must begin to recognize the significance of the employee, at all levels. Employees freed to use their minds and creativity, working in organizations and jobs that they care about and are good at can change the world. When we free people to frame their work in a way that makes sense to them, we allow them to become integrated. This integration of being or personhood results in the development of voice—someone's ability to know what they want and say what they mean. In a Christ-following organization these employees who are released to find their voice can build the Kingdom and do more than change the world. They will change paradigms, hearts gaining clarity of vision that brings focus and fulfillment.

Bethany Birches has been investing more intentionally in its facilities, staff, program, board and campers. Last year we experienced a 16.4% growth in attendance over the prior summer. As a statement of faith and hope for the years to come, we have made a decision to hire a year-round program director. This decision will require a total additional investment of \$50,000 over the next three years. For years, different board members and parents have talked about the need to connect with our campers on a more



Friendship campers and staff show off their goofy side.

regular basis, not only during summer. Young Life has set a good example in this area. Many traditional religious camps rely on the churches they are connected to for the relationships with campers to continue. Many of our campers, however, do not attend church and we are not Young Life. How then, can we continue to plant seeds in these kids' lives after they leave summer camp? We have been running snow camps for almost 20 years as a way to reconnect with kids who are here during the summer. Recently, we've started envisioning ways to keep in touch with the teens of the area throughout the year through semi-monthly gatherings.

Why keep in touch with campers during the year? There are only about 600,000 people in the state of Vermont. This amounts to roughly 65 people per square mile. Simply put, there are not a lot of people around. Teens often talk about their desire to connect with other teens like them. I've heard many teens here at camp talk about the need to find good role models and positive influences. These desires motivate their return to camp year after year. If we have the capacity to help youth build relationships with each other and continue to build on the experience and spiritual growth they have here during the summer, why not explore these opportunities?

Soon after I came to Vermont, a Young Life guru in the area told me "Bethany Birches Camp has made a bigger impact on the lives of the youth in the Upper Valley (a region in Vermont and New Hampshire) than any other one organization." I believe we can continue to make a difference in the lives of the children and teens of Vermont and the surrounding region. Our board believes that hiring a program director will give us the staff capacity to follow more faithfully wherever God is leading. What is your situation calling you toward (Matthew 16:1-4)?

## Intersecting with CROs

### Bethany Birches Camp

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[vtchildrenscamp.com](http://vtchildrenscamp.com)

Fireside worship in  
the pavilion.



Struggling with suicide:

# Picking up the pieces, looking for the gift

Jennifer Smith

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*Charismatic. Selfless. Fearless. Great sense of humor. Deeply spiritual. Larger-than-life.* These adjectives describe a man whose gifts and calling touched more lives than he ever realized. They tell the story of a devoted husband, father, grandfather, clinician, and colleague who had an eccentric affinity for chasing storms during his leisure time and an even stronger passion for serving others while “at work.” These words don’t reveal the deeply troubled part of a genuinely compassionate man who spent his life helping others but who, in the end, could not help himself.

On February 16, 2007, Bill Blumenthal, Associate Director of Penn Foundation’s Recovery Center, chose to take his own life. He left behind a shocked, angry, and grieving network of family, friends, and colleagues struggling to understand Bill’s decision and to overcome their own feelings of helplessness and guilt at not being able to save him. As one man put it at Bill’s memorial service, “Bill lost his way. That means I also lost my way.”

## About Bill

During his 15-year tenure at Penn Foundation as an addictions counselor and administrator, Bill positively impacted countless persons struggling with debilitating addictions and their families.

He brought a unique perspective to his role; like many of his clients, Bill had struggled with addiction and depression. Through his experience of recovery, Bill heard his calling to become an addictions counselor.

## Where Were the Warning Signs?

“How could this happen, especially in an environment like Penn Foundation where there are countless professionals trained to detect signs of suicidal risk?” The answer lies deep in the despair of a man suffering from a recurrence of depression that led him, unknown to those around him, back into relapse.

People, both at work and at home, had noticed Bill struggling with an increased level of stress but nothing that signaled the depth of the problem. He had gone back to his psychiatrist and was being treated for depression. What no one suspected was that, at some point, Bill had also started self-medicating with prescription medicines his doctor did not prescribe and that he was, in fact, in active relapse. Until the night before he took his life, Bill kept this fact hidden

from everyone around him. When it came to light, Bill could not face the implications this had for his family, his work, and his life. And his depression had narrowed his ability to conceive that there might be a way out of his despair.

As hard as it is to understand and accept, what happened to Bill happens to a lot of people with the difficult and complicated illnesses of addiction and depression. They often believe that there is no resolution to their pain.

## Picking Up the Pieces

After learning of Bill’s tragic death and acknowledging the range of emotions that would inevitably follow, John Goshow, Penn Foundation CEO, immediately sought outside professional help for Bill’s colleagues. “I did not try to control anyone’s feelings,” explains John. “The important thing was to give staff time to heal and the opportunity to grieve in their own way.”

In addition to offering individual and group counseling to employees, staff were invited to 15 minutes of daily prayer every morning for two weeks. Although he was struggling with his own unanswered questions and emotions, Chaplain Carl Yusavitz found comfort in talking with staff. “We were all having the same emotions and in that, learned to take care of each other,” says Carl.

## Moving On

“The important thing for any church or organization forced to endure a tragedy like this is to be open and honest about it,” advises John. “It’s acknowledging that emotions are going to be raw; it’s embracing those emotions; and it’s providing several different avenues to navigate the overwhelming grief.”

Adds Carl, “Scripture can offer tremendous comfort in the midst of a difficult time such as this. It can come alive in a way that it never did before. God uses life situations to speak to us, and the Bible provides the text.”

“When I was fighting cancer, Bill once asked me ‘Where’s the gift?’” says Cyndy, Bill’s wife of 21 years. “At the time, that was the last thing I wanted to hear. But it stuck with me. I think about that question now as I deal with Bill’s death. There are gifts even in the hardest times. If we can learn something from Bill’s experience that can be used to help others facing these issues, then that is truly a gift.”

Bill Blumenthal



## Intersecting with CROs

Penn Foundation

Provides continuum of behavioral health care services for all ages. Penn Foundation’s Dayspring Counseling Center offers individuals, couples, and families counseling services from a Christian perspective.

[pennfoundation.org](http://pennfoundation.org)

photo provided by  
Franconia Conference Staff

# Choosing a path toward pastoral ministry and joy

Mark Derstine

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Mark Derstine

## Intersecting with CROs

Souderton Mennonite Homes

Promotes dignity of life and wellness supported by knowledgeable, caring staff and surrounded by a comfortable, well-maintained environment.

[soudertonhomes.org](http://soudertonhomes.org)

I turned 60 years of age last month. It is an important marker indicating how far I have journeyed in the path of life. For those of you who are younger, it may seem that my journey is already a long one. Many of the older adults I serve with as chaplain at Souderton Mennonite Homes, in their 70s, 80s, and 90s, remind me that God may yet grant many years of life and service.

In Robert Frost's poem, "The Road Not Taken," he speaks about two roads diverging in a yellow wood. One could not travel both, one needed to make a choice. I have experienced many such choices. Sometimes these choices have been difficult because both pathways may appear to be within God's will and are encouraged by others. Sometimes these choices are even more difficult when there are more than two pathways to choose from. Sometimes one has to choose when no pathway is visible, plunging into the brush with fear and trembling.

I have not had to choose the paths of my life blindly. The years of my youth were nurtured in a farming family on the outskirts of Souderton. I was one of 12 children born to Abram and Ruth Derstine. My parents were devoted and active members of the Souderton Mennonite Church. They were also strong supporters of Christian education and supported all of us in attending what is now PennView Christian School and Christopher Dock Mennonite High School. At the age of 14, I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior. This decision was the beginning of a growing sense of call to prepare for ministry and service to Christ and the church.

But the paths I have experienced have been far from straight or easy. There have been many turns and detours and new directions. An unexpected fork in the road that had profound impact occurred during my first year at Eastern Mennonite College. I received my military draft notice. I was not granted student deferment and needed to leave college after my first semester. I was clear about my conviction to serve in the way of peace and non-violence and chose two years of alternate service as a psychiatric aide.

Following these two years, marriage to Carolyn Mininger, daughter of Harold and Myrtle Mininger of Souderton, PA, joined our paths together

for the journey since that time. It has included finishing my college studies at Eastern Mennonite College, then moving to Washington, DC where I served as "congregational coordinator" at Hyattsville Mennonite Church for two years, then working in a "youth counseling" program for two years at a Family Service Agency on the outskirts of Washington DC, and then a move to Elkhart, IN where I completed my seminary degree at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

My first clear call and service in pastoral ministry began in 1978, when I responded to the call to serve as Associate Pastor at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church. I was blessed in many ways to be able to share in ministry at Blooming Glen because I felt the encouragement and support of many members. During these years I also became aware that the calling and responsibilities of pastoral ministry increasingly became a personal struggle and stress. I came to the conviction that I needed to leave the pastoral ministry for my own healing and wholeness.

I joined an insurance agency in Souderton. It became a very different kind of ministry. I had the opportunity to serve and relate to many different kinds of persons. It became a place of healing and renewal for me that would be the focus of my vocational life for the next 18 years, much longer than I would have imagined.

Several years ago I felt the restlessness of God calling again. At first I didn't know what this new path would be. The more I searched and received the counsel of others; I was drawn to reclaim the calling to pastoral ministry. This time, I was led on toward ministry with older adults.

It has been a joy to be part of the ministry at Souderton Mennonite Homes. It is to learn spiritual wisdom from older adults and learn what joys and hardships are part of the last stages of life. It is to be given the special privilege of representing the presence of Christ in those holy moments when one's journey in this life comes to an end and one's spirit is surrendered to God.

There are many roads that diverge in our lives. I could have chosen other roads too. But I have learned it is not necessary to ask if all the roads were the best. What I have learned to be of the most importance is the faith that God's guidance, love, and grace will be with me whatever the path. And that has made all the difference.

# “I love learning more every week.”

Mike Ford

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My journey to become the Senior High Youth Pastor at Franconia Mennonite Church started with an innocent conversation over a year ago with Marlene Frankenfield, Franconia Conference Youth Minister (if conversations with Marlene are ever innocuous). I was working with Marlene and another conference youth minister on the details of a future event and felt that it would be appropriate to drop the hint that, while I would assist in the planning, it was likely that I would not be there in person to host the event because I was sensing a job change was in the wind. Marlene’s response was, “You know, Franconia Mennonite is looking for a youth minister.”

I recall that I tried to politely respond, saying something like, “Thanks, but no thanks,” thinking at the time that becoming a youth pastor wasn’t likely what the Lord had in mind. Yet, God’s nudge to Franconia persisted, and a year later, here I am, writing on the eve of my installation service as a pastor. Indeed, a journey that was initially unexpected and challenging at times is now exciting and fulfilling as I learn my way.

Over the last two years, my wife and I had been feeling God’s nudge to consider a vocational change. Frankly, I had thought at the time that, after 13 years in Christian camping, I’d be heading into some field other than vocational ministry. We had heard California pastor and author Erwin McManus speak and were deeply impacted by his challenge to not get too comfortable in your service to the Lord, not to stop taking risks, to be willing to serve the Lord no matter what change in life might come of it. We began a season of putting ourselves sincerely before the Lord, asking if God was leading us to a new place where we could serve, considering options and opportunities as they opened up.

I believe that all Christians are in full-time ministry, called to be salt and light to the world through our daily service, whether we lay bricks or deliver mail or wait tables or manage people or parent children or otherwise. Some of us get the privilege of doing our full-time ministry through a position at the church. I’m excited to serve at Franconia, hoping that my love for Jesus and desire for others to grow in service and passion might well serve the needs of our youth.

To be sure, there have been times on the journey when I’ve wondered if I have what it takes

to be a good pastor, if my take on culture was well suited, if not growing up in the Mennonite church was going to be a handicap. In the end, as we talked, prayed, and discerned, God gave all involved a sense that this could and would work for his glory, that we’d both learn and be stretched in healthy ways, if we were willing to walk forward in faith.

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Here I am, still getting used to the title of “pastor,” wondering if one ever gets used to that title. I mean, simply put, I’m just a guy who loves and is excited about life in Jesus.

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Here I am, still getting used to the title of “pastor,” wondering if one ever gets used to that title. I mean, simply put, I’m just a guy who loves and is excited about life in Jesus and wants others to know and follow him. Now I get the incredible opportunity to do that each day as my vocation, focusing on Senior High youth. I’m excited, I’m fortunate, and I love learning every week more about the youth I work with, the church I serve, and the area I now call home.

**Mike Ford**  
Youth Pastor

**Franconia**  
Mennonite Church  
Telford, PA

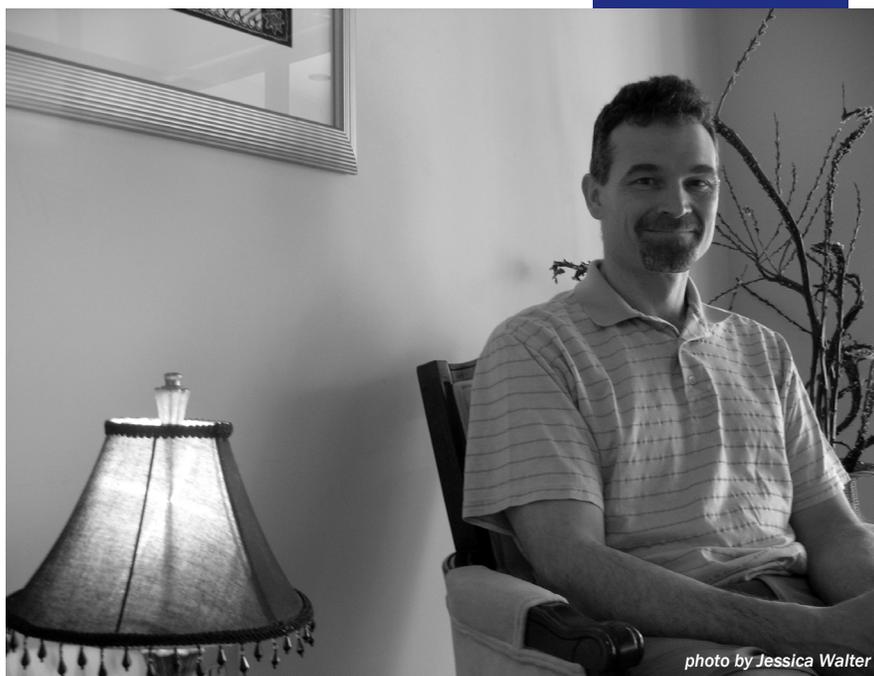


photo by Jessica Walter

photo by Jessica Walter

Following a call:

# From Vietnam to Phnom Penh to Allentown

Jessica Walter

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**Hien Truong**  
Pastor

Vietnamese  
Gospel Mennonite  
Church  
Allentown, PA

“Any place where one is working for the Lord, one will face challenges and joys,” states Pastor Hien Truong of Vietnamese Gospel Mennonite Church, Allentown, PA. Hien would know. Since his commitment to Christ as a law student in Vietnam, his journey has been marked by the struggle of persecution and the joy of following God’s call.

Hien was born into a struggling Buddhist family who hoped that one day he would become a Buddhist monk and bring success to the family. When he returned home to share the Good News with his family he was asked to choose between them or his newfound faith in Christ. Hien could not deny the call of Christ in his life. However, a year later he came home to take care of his mother who was ill and through the devotion he displayed to his mother, his family relationships were restored.

After graduation from law school, Hien began to reach out to the poor in his community. He offered legal assistance, taught the Bible to illiterate children, and began to work with the Vietnamese Mennonite Church. In 2004 the pastor, Nguyen Hong Quang, Hien was working with was arrested and Hien fled to Cambodia in the face of his own arrest. From Cambodia he continued his ministries with the Vietnamese church until coming to the United States in 2005.

These experiences of faith and persecution shape Pastor Hien’s ministry at Vietnamese

Gospel. He continues to be concerned with and provide support for the Vietnamese Christians in Cambodia. “The Vietnamese and other Christians in Cambodia are disadvantaged economically, ethnically, educationally, and are persecuted and harassed by authorities.” Hien is disturbed that human rights organizations give more to these brothers and sisters in Christ than do churches from the United States. He hopes that he can help motivate others in Franconia Conference to expand their ministry not only to the Vietnamese community in Allentown but also to those in Cambodia and Vietnam. He notes that the Mennonite church he recently visited to help plant in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, is young and needs not only financial support but also prayer, training, and guidance.

Some of the members of Vietnamese Gospel are concerned that Hien’s heart is still in Vietnam. However, Hien reassures them that while the support he provides to the under-privileged Vietnamese in Cambodia is a significant part of his calling he also is called to pastoral ministry in Allentown. He is deeply committed to Vietnamese Gospel and is thankful for their support, respect, and patience as he learns English and ministry in a new context. He hopes that Vietnamese Gospel can grow and reach out to their surrounding community. He works to challenge them while also seeking to meet their needs where they are.

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## The Lord knows me and has shown me mercy.

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Hien feels grateful for the way God has worked in his life and knows that God’s hand is guiding him along his path. He is thankful to have been spared the trials of his peers, acknowledging that while he has suffered some persecution others have experienced worse. “The Lord knows me and has shown me mercy. I feel satisfied with His blessings and where He has led me.”

*Editors Note: According to Mennonite World Conference there are 12,882 Mennonite and Brethern in Christ members in Vietnam. Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang was eventually released from prison and continues to lead a house church. However, his church, located in Ho Chi Minh City, continues to be harassed by local officials. Recently several members were arrested and detained for hours while local authorities tore down renovations made on the building in the summer of 2006. For more information visit [www.mwc-cmm.org](http://www.mwc-cmm.org).*

# An intersection with God

Angela Moyer

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I have described my calling experience or path of intersection with God like a cell phone ring tone. You don't hear it at first, but then it gets louder and louder until you cannot ignore it. My calling began long before I realized what was going on. Once I realized I was being called to ministry, I looked back on events and conversations and realized that they all contributed to sensing and accepting God's call to ministry in my life.

I first realized that I might be receiving a call to ministry at the Franconia Conference Assembly in 2004. I was there as a delegate for my church and there was a time of prayer and affirmation of the newly credentialed pastors. I began to weep for no reason. I had no idea why, but I had this sense that God was telling me that I would be up there some day. Unfortunately, I had an initial reaction of, "No way! I'll tell you, God, the many reasons why I will never be a pastor. Ministry is not in my plan, I am an occupational therapist, I love my job, I didn't go to seminary, and pastors are much closer to and know God much more than I do."

But after that weekend, I began to reflect on why I had been so stirred by that prayer and the things that had been going on in my life, and I realized that maybe God did have some things in the working for me to pursue ministry. I knew I needed to at least be open to the idea and see where God would take me.

Many things had come together that year. My demanding job schedule had changed, I moved back to Souderton, PA, in order to work with the youth at my church, and realized that I really enjoyed it. Though I appreciated my job, I was more fulfilled with my time spent with the youth. I had been affirmed by the church regarding my work with the youth, and the church was completing a period of transition where we began to look at areas in the church to grow, one being the youth. I remembered Franconia Conference Minister Walter Sawatzky and Interim Pastor Bob Petersheim both telling me earlier that year that they had sensed I had some ministry gifts that I should think about. I hadn't at the time, but soon I realized that those conversations were a confirmation of the call I'd been experiencing.

Once I recognized all of these things there was too much coming together to ignore and I began to see things differently. God's plan of salvation

and his love for his people really began to convict and fascinate me. I realized that I had been given a gift of loving, encouraging, and listening to youth. I was able to develop these gifts while working in a city hospital with people in a variety of crisis moments. I saw the experiences, opportunities, and gifts that I had been given were all coordinated in order to prepare for this calling to youth ministry. These encounters helped me to begin to feel more comfortable with using the word 'calling' and further confirmed that what I was experiencing was truly a calling from God. Finally, I shared this with my church, Rockhill Mennonite, and they too affirmed the call to pursue youth ministry.

I realize that many people including my parents, family, friends, teachers at Penn View Christian School and Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, and members of my church family all created the foundation for me to be able to hear and be open to receiving God's call.

I have learned how important a calling is in ministry, because you need it to get through the struggles, questions, and tough times. I would have never embarked on this journey of ministry if I hadn't been called by God to do this, and I will never survive the struggles in ministry without it. I have no formal pastoral training and so I have many doubts and times of second guessing. But I have learned that I am not called to be perfect, no matter the training, but to point others to God. It would be much easier to remain in a place of comfort where I have the qualifications and experience to know what I am doing. But I know that God has called me to be at this place and there is no other place I would rather be.

**Angela Moyer**  
Youth Pastor

**Rockhill**  
**Mennonite Church**  
Telford, PA

*Angela Moyer and Kelly Spence at Phil- lies Spring Training in Florida.*



*photo provided by Angela Moyer*

photo provided  
by Brent Camilleri

# Seeking and finding God's unfailing love

Brent Camilleri,  
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**Brent Camilleri**  
Associate Pastor

**Deep Run East**  
Mennonite Church  
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I was blessed to grow up in a Christian home with parents who loved the Lord and tried to honor Christ in all that they did. As I grew up they continually encouraged my faith, answered questions I had about being a Christian, and made it clear that I was a child who was loved and cared for by God. My father especially encouraged me to not only say that I was a Christian but also live out my faith through words and actions.

In high school I had a teacher who worked part time with a local youth ministry. He was enthusiastic about his faith and a great mentor to my friends and I. He was the first person to speak to me about my leadership gifts and the possibility of going into ministry. Later in high school my youth pastor, Chris, invited me to do an internship with him because he also saw me as a leader. With Chris's help I truly started to live out my faith. He encouraged and challenged me to seek after God.

Through that relationship I learned a great deal about youth ministry and, for the first time, felt God calling me to pursue it as a career. My youth pastor affirmed that call and I decided to study youth ministry at Eastern University. There I was able to explore the call to ministry through both study and an internship. I developed strong relationships with my professors and fellow students and was further affirmed in my call to ministry.

After college I served as the youth pastor intern at Deep Run East congregation. Through this time I was able to learn more about myself as a ministering person. I have learned that I am a relational person, I am at my best when I can develop relationships with others and minister out of those relationships.

I have also found that I enjoy teaching and discovering ways to relate scriptural truth through relevant or contemporary illustrations. There is no greater feeling than working with a group of

students and seeing them begin to "get" what this whole faith thing is about. Visioning for ministry is also something that excites me and I enjoy finding new and interesting ways to help others live out their faith.

There are certainly many things that I have had to learn as I seek to live out the call that God has placed on my life. Delegation is not a skill that comes naturally to me. I feel it is easier for me to take care of everything myself. However, I've quickly discovered shouldering every responsibility is an impossible task and that good administration also means good delegation.

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**There is no greater feeling than working with students and seeing them begin to "get" what this whole faith thing is about.**

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As I continue to grow in my leadership abilities and explore my call, I have found that having a strong group of trusted friends and mentors is a key to my ministry. There is so much to be learned from the experiences of others and I feel my ministry is cultivated through these relationships. I have a group of friends from college that holds me accountable and helps me to remember how fun it is to serve the Lord!

I also meet regularly with a pastoral mentor who has already been through all the things I am now experiencing in my ministry. It is helpful to have someone who can point out where I might be able to improve and who can also keep me from making the mistakes they made in their own ministry.

As I continue to learn what it means to be in ministry I am constantly amazed by the unfailing love of God. No matter what stresses I have faced and hiccups I have encountered along the way, God has been faithful to lift me up and keep me going. I look forward to the many new ways I will meet God in the coming years as I follow His calling on my life.

# DIRECTORY OF CONFERENCE RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

**\*Bethany Birches Camp**, 2610 Lynds Hill Road, Plymouth, VT 05056; TEL: 802-672-5220; [www.vtchildrenscamp.com](http://www.vtchildrenscamp.com). *Inviting youth to growth, joy, hope, healing, and excitement in everyday life, through Jesus Christ.*

**Camp Men-O-Lan**, 1415 Doerr Road, Quakertown, PA 18951; TEL: 215-679-5144; [www.menolan.org](http://www.menolan.org). *As a Christian camp, our mission is to use the unique qualities of an outdoor setting for developing Christian commitment, character, leadership, and service, and to provide a place for retreat, worship, study, fellowship, recreation, and personal development for individuals, families, and groups.*

**Care & Share Thrift Shoppes, Inc.**, 783 Route 113, Souderton, PA 18964; TEL: 215-723-0315; FAX: 215-723-5907; [careshareshoppes@verizon.net](mailto:careshareshoppes@verizon.net). *To improve the quality of life for people suffering from poverty, oppression, and natural disaster by creating a market for reusable items and expanding the market for creations by third world crafts persons. We do this because of our faith in Jesus Christ and our belief that God's love is for all people.*

**\*Christopher Dock Mennonite High School**, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446; TEL: 215-362-2675; FAX: 215-362-2943; [www.dockhs.org](http://www.dockhs.org). *In partnership with the family and the church, developing the God-given abilities of students in preparation for responsible stewardship of life as members of God's people in a global society.*

**\*Community Home Services**, Souderton Center, 781 Route 113, Souderton, PA 18964; TEL: 215-723-1906; FAX: 215-723-1590; [www.community-homeservices.org](http://www.community-homeservices.org). *A ministry of support and services to enable the elderly to remain in their own homes.*

**Crossroads Gift and Thrift**, 206 DeKalb Street, Norristown, PA 19401; TEL: 610-275-3772; [crossroadgift-thrift@juno.com](http://crossroadgift-thrift@juno.com).

**\*Delaware Valley MEDA**, PO Box 64653, Souderton, PA 18964; TEL: 215-721-3030; FAX: 215-723-1211; [delvalmeda@yahoo.com](mailto:delvalmeda@yahoo.com). *Brings faith and values issues to the marketplace and professions.*

**\*Dock Woods Community**, 275 Dock Drive, Lansdale, PA 19446; TEL: 215-368-4438; FAX: 215-362-2682; [www.dockwoods.com](http://www.dockwoods.com); *A living dedication to the enhancement of life for older adults and families rooted in the Mennonite heritage of Christian values.*

**\*Germantown Mennonite Historic Trust**, 6133 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19144; TEL: 215-843-0943; FAX: 215-843-6263; [www.meeting-house.info](http://www.meeting-house.info). *Preserving and sharing the 1770 Mennonite Meetinghouse and the stories related to America's first Mennonite settlement and the "Gateway of North American Mennonites" through its four witnesses of history, service, education, and evangelism.*

**\*Indian Creek Foundation**, 420 Cowpath Road, Souderton, PA 18964; TEL: 215-256-1500; FAX: 215-256-3018; [www.indiancreekfoundation.org](http://www.indiancreekfoundation.org). *Improving community through services for persons with developmental disabilities.*

**\*Liberty Ministries**, PO Box 87, Schwenksville, PA 19473; TEL: 610-287-5481; FAX: 610-287-5286; [www.libertyministries.us](http://www.libertyministries.us). *Offering the message of Grace, Hope & Regeneration to those in prison and recently released.*

**\*Life With God Broadcasts**, PO Box 64092, Souderton, PA 18964; TEL: 610-730-8008; David Kochsmeier, Radio Pastor. *Proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

**Mennonite Central Committee Material Resource Center Harleysville**, 461C Indian Creek Road, Harleysville, PA 19438. TEL: 215-513-9561. *The MCC Material Resource Center of Harleysville serves as a liaison between the MCC Material Resource Center of Ephrata and peace churches of Eastern Pennsylvania. Through this outreach, we share God's love, hope, and joy in the name of Jesus Christ.*

**\*Mennonite Disaster Service**, PO Box 65794, Souderton, PA 18964. [www.mds.mennonite.net](http://www.mds.mennonite.net). *Helping God's healing and hope flow to those whose lives were affected by disaster.*

**\*Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania (Mennonite Heritage Center)**, PO Box 82, Harleysville, PA 19438; TEL: 215-256-3020; FAX: 215-256-3023; [www.mhep.org](http://www.mhep.org); *Preserving the local and broader Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage, encouraging a greater appreciation for its principles and promoting a contemporary Christian witness.*

**\*Peaceful Living**, 850 Old Skippack Road, PO Box 130, Lederach, PA 19450; TEL: 610-287-1200; FAX: 610-287-7121; [www.peacefulliving.org](http://www.peacefulliving.org). *Creating belonging for persons with developmental disabilities within a faith community.*

**\*Penn Foundation, Inc.**, 807 Lawn Avenue, Sellersville, PA 18960; TEL: 215-257-6551; FAX: 215-257-9347; [www.pennfoundation.org](http://www.pennfoundation.org). *Provides continuum of behavioral health care services for all ages. Penn Foundation's Dayspring Counseling Center offers individuals, couples, and families counseling services from a Christian perspective.*

**\*Penn View Christian School**, 420 Godshall Road, Souderton, PA 18964; TEL: 215-723-1196; FAX: 215-723-0148; [www.pennview.org](http://www.pennview.org). *Penn View Christian School offers academically excellent education from a biblical perspective. The faculty and staff, in partnership with families and churches, seek to nurture the God-given potential of each student in a Christ-centered community.*

**\*Philadelphia Mennonite High School**, 860 North 24th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130; TEL: 215-769-5363; FAX: 215-769-4063; [www.pmhsonline.org](http://www.pmhsonline.org). *PMHS exists to provide a Christ-centered, quality education in a multicultural, urban context that equips students to become servant-leaders and peacemakers.*

**\*Quakertown Christian School**, 50 East Paletown Road, Quakertown, PA 18951; TEL: 215-536-6970; FAX: 215-536-2115; [www.quakertownchristian.org](http://www.quakertownchristian.org). *QCS, a Mennonite school, is in partnership with home and church in the process of developing physical, spiritual and social life skills for each child using Biblical values and a challenging academic environment to instill a sense of Christian community and service.*

**\*Rockhill Mennonite Community**, 3250 State Road, Sellersville, PA 18960; TEL: 215-257-2751; FAX: 215-257-7390; [www.rockhillmennonite.org](http://www.rockhillmennonite.org). *Providing a wide range of services to meet specific needs and encompass the whole person.*

**\*Spruce Lake Retreat**, RR 1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325-9749; TEL: 800-822-7505; FAX: 570-595-0328; [www.sprucelake.org](http://www.sprucelake.org). *To enable and encourage "Christ-centered discoveries in an outdoor setting" by providing opportunities for Christian nurture, meditation, fellowship and recreation in an informal, natural setting for children, youth, adults and families.*

**\*Souderton Mennonite Homes**, 207 West Summit Street, Souderton, PA 18964; TEL: 215-723-9881; FAX: 215-723-9876; [www.soudertonhomes.org](http://www.soudertonhomes.org). *Promotes dignity of life and wellness supported by knowledgeable, caring staff and surrounded by a comfortable, well-maintained environment.*

**\*denotes charter member**

## An opportunity to contribute:

Pueblo en Transformación is purchasing land for a new gathering space and community center. With two installments toward the final purchase complete, \$3000 will finish purchasing land in the church's hillside neighborhood.

For more details see [franconiaconference.org](http://franconiaconference.org)

For more information about the Mennonite Churches in Mexico City see [anabautistasdemexico.org](http://anabautistasdemexico.org)

*Ofelia García Hernandez*

Ofelia García Hernandez:

# Leading as a compañera and a partner

David Landis

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“Our theology and identity is fundamentally Anabaptist, and justice is the model of Jesus,” states Ofelia García Hernandez, moderator of the Conferencia Iglesias Evangélicas Anabautistas Menonitas de México (CIEAMM), the Mennonite conference in the Mexico City region. She also serves as the pastor of Pueblo en Transformación, which vibrantly expresses itself as an Anabaptist agent to promote social justice in the surrounding neighborhood.

Living up to its name as a people of transformation, this church of around 60 persons on the southwest side of Mexico City has started initiatives to meet the needs of the local community. They have invested much by countering drug trafficking with youth, offering summer Bible Schools with a peace education component, and providing support programs for single women who suffer from family violence, sexual assault, and poor economic status.

Ofelia is one of three women pastors in CIEAMM. She admits that being a woman in church leadership has at times been challenging in relating to church leaders in both North American and Mexican contexts. With around 90% of the church being made up of women and children, having a woman in leadership has provided an atmosphere of hospitality and approachability within the community as they address women's needs in the neighborhood.



photo by Steve Kriss

Vicenta Camacho is currently one of the deaconesses of the church, coming to the Anabaptist faith from a Baptist background. She's passionate about serving the needs of the community of God, something she had difficulty doing in previous church experiences as a woman. At Pueblo en Transformación, Vicenta sees her ability to use her abilities and skills as a deaconess, as an expression of the Anabaptist value of justice, promoting gender equality in leadership roles. She says, “If someone works in this church, it is because of the gifts they have.”

Since 2004, a relationship with Deep Run East Mennonite church has been budding with Pueblo en Transformación. Both groups have had opportunities to visit each other's congregations over the past few years, supporting each other by helping with service projects, exchanging prayer lists, and providing financial resources.

With the difficulty for Mexican youth to travel together to the United States due to stringent visa policies, the partnership has been embodied through service with the MAMA Project in Honduras, where members from both Deep Run East and Pueblo en Transformación can travel freely.

Ofelia's dream for the developing relationships between Deep Run East and her congregation in Mexico values everyone at the same level, utilizing gifts with mutual respect, and sharing resources. While Pueblo en Transformación may not be able to contribute material resources in the same way that is possible for Deep Run East, they are able to offer an opportunity to volunteer, serve, and learn in the Mexican context, deepening the understanding of what it means to be a global Anabaptist community.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Franconia Mennonite Conference**  
771 Route 113  
Souderton, PA 18964