



# Intersections

*Franconia Mennonite Conference • June 2007*

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

Inquiry emerging leaders set out into Franconia Conference ministries:

## Engaging and getting a little uncomfortable

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Upon arriving in Alexandria, Virginia, to begin my Ministry Inquiry Program internship with Nueva Esperanza/New Hope Fellowship, I didn't know what to expect. My response to family and friends, after telling them about my summer was, "I don't know what it'll be like but here we go!" Although a bit apprehensive and unsure, I was ready to begin this new experience in a new place, doing something different from anything I had done before.

## Ministry, and my work at New Hope, is about taking risks and sailing out upon unknown waters.

I visited Nueva Esperanza/New Hope Fellowship (where I would be working) once previously, and had talked a bit with Pastor Kirk Hanger, but in no way could I grasp in one visit what this internship would hold. Nueva Esperanza/New Hope Fellowship is a recent church plant in suburban Washington, D.C. The small, multi-ethnic congregation has a vibrancy and authenticity that draws people. Meeting in a school, the church relies heavily on the help and work of the congregation each Sunday, assisting in setting up and taking down chairs, sound equipment, and the ever-present coffee. Every member of the church pitches in—and is largely expected—to help, or at least to offer conversation, and they complete the tasks together, in community.

Growing up in a predominately Caucasian, middle class church in the suburbs, I wanted a different kind of church experience. I wanted to experience a diverse, urban congregation. I wanted to find out how other people did church,

and to participate in the work that they are doing. I chose Nueva Esperanza/New Hope not only to get a greater idea of what pastoral ministry is like, but also to engage and to share in the ministry of another congregation, one that is drastically different from what I'm used to, and maybe even a little bit uncomfortable at times. Ministry, and my work at New Hope, is about taking risks and sailing out upon unknown waters.

Nueva Esperanza/New Hope Fellowship has many Latino attendees, enough to make translating the service into Spanish a priority. Visiting Hispanic church members who speak very little English has urged me to use my rusty, fairly conversational Spanish immediately, despite being a bit intimidated by the rapid conversation surrounding me and directed at me. A definite hope is to improve my Spanish this summer, a seemingly attainable—although potentially uncomfortable—goal for the circumstances.

What strikes me about Nueva Esperanza/New Hope is how real everyone seems. Every person present is just who they are and does not have to pretend in order to be accepted. What goes for the building goes for those inside it, too: it doesn't have to be pretty or flawless or something it's not. That's not what church is. Church is about being real: being real to yourself, being real to others, being real with God and not needing to hide that. Everyone who is there wants to be there; they are committed to the church. The



Emily Derstine

photo provided  
by Emily Derstine



Cultivating both courageous and tentative emerging leaders:

# Following into surprising places

Stephen Kriss

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Fifteen years ago, I served with the Ministry Inquiry Program in my home congregation. That summer I realized that pastoring and leading a congregation required daunting levels of commitment and work. As part of that inquiry experience, my home church gave me space to initiate a worship exchange with my predominantly Euro-American home congregation and an African Methodist Episcopal congregation in a mostly unfamiliar neighborhood about ten miles away. The exchange involved each congregation visiting the other and leading a worship experience.

On a warm Sunday night, about 80 Euro-American Mennonites ventured to the Bethel AME Church in Johnstown's Prospect neighborhood, perched above the Conemaugh River. Having parallel parked our cars on New Street, I remember walking toward the small church as neighbors watched us. I was walking with two women, Novelda and Evelyn, who were wearing white prayer coverings. A boy who must have been about 10 asked, "What are you people doing here?" I remember one of them responding, "We're here to go to church."

That was true, we were there to worship with Bethel AME congregation. Though I know that Novelda and Evelyn were there because of the church, they were also there because of me. They went into an unfamiliar neighborhood to worship because of my initiative as a young intern. They carpooled and we went together to a place where we may have not imagined. I will always appreciate that both congregations explored God's call to worship together and in that action affirmed my emerging leadership abilities and hopes.

In the last issue of *Intersections*, Jim Lapp reflected on his own call and response to God in ministry. In reflecting on his legacy of ministry, he also offered kind and telling words for emerging young leaders within Franconia Conference. In the on-line publication of his article, Sheldon Good of the Salford congregation who is working with Franconia Conference this summer responded pointedly to something that Jim pondered. *Is the church less willing to risk with young leaders now?* Sheldon responded adamantly, "yes."

I think Sheldon might be right in his response. Taking risks with new, and young leaders is increasingly unfamiliar to established faith com-

munities who may have the very rootedness that would allow that risk to both be possible and optimal. But in that risk, we may find ourselves walking with them into unfamiliar places that force us to re-



Stephen Kriss

think our perspectives and experiences. In working with young leaders, I am learning to expect to get to new places while finding ways for the church to "show up" in surprising ways and times. It's the best of what our shared work of leadership cultivation and the incarnation of the Good News means. Creating a culture of call is more than giving space to hear God, its also creating space where emerging leaders are affirmed and challenged in the midst of hopeful, sometimes courageous and sometimes tentative, response.

In this issue, Emily Derstine experiences new places and a different pace in suburban DC and we glimpse the array of experiences that will unfold for the dozen young adults serving in inquiry and learning experiences through Franconia Conference this summer. Greg Yoder helps us to hear God speak in translated Khmer. We learn about young Indonesians who are able to gain asylum in our own country and find we're present in that struggle with religious persecution. Jessica Goshow goes to DC and finds that Mennonite roots run deep enough even to sustain in a new city. Andrew Foderaro's experience in Pittsburgh carries hope and witness for peace in the Middle East. Cory Suter writes about New Urbanism and we're invited to think about how it represents the best of Anabaptist practice. Young adults in West Philadelphia witness the rise in housing costs and initiate a new neighborhood initiative.

And we glimpse the stories of call and response that continue to emerge through all stages of life with Marlene Frankenfield and Joy Sawatzky. These are each holy and hopeful stories, finding space and opening possibilities for response. We're going to new places together in the midst of all of this. Thanks be to God.

In reading these stories, may the courage rise within us to cultivate together the call and response of our sons and daughters who as the prophet Joel writes will have the dreams and visions that will lead us into God's hopeful future.

*Engaging, continued from page 1*

church doesn't necessarily need committees; people volunteer because they want to help.

Nueva Esperanza/New Hope is outwardly focused, wanting to reach out, to assist the community, and to draw people to itself and to God. There is a certain excitement radiating from the worship and smiling faces present in the room on a Sunday morning.

Relationships are really what connect the congregation and bring it to life. The diversity present unites, instead of separating the church. The leisurely pace of gathering and time spent in conversation is refreshing. Upon entering a household, we are immediately invited to sit down, to talk and enjoy a drink, even if showing up unannounced and only intending to stay a few minutes. Amidst the whirlwind of activity around us, no project is more important than stopping to talk with a neighbor or a friend. I see God in the interactions between people and the way in which the church members relate with me and each other.

I look forward to the vast array of experiences that await me at New Hope. I hope to form meaningful relationships with people and listen to the stories of others, learning from those around me. I anticipate that the new setting will give me new ideas, new energy, and a renewed hope for what the Mennonite Church is and will become. I look forward to this opportunity as I explore further what it means to be part of the Anabaptist/Mennonite church and take part in God's exciting work in the world.

*Young adults attendees from Nueva Esperanza/New Hope: (l to r) Matt Dunton, Jacob Hanger, and Rudy Boliviano.*



## **Summer inquiry program participants begin internships**

A record number of students will participate in the Mennonite Church USA's summer inquiry program this summer through Franconia Mennonite Conference. The ministry inquiry program is an 11-week internship traditionally available to any student attending a Mennonite college. Students interested in a specific area of ministry are able to gain hands-on experience by working alongside a supervisor in their respective discipline. Two students will also complete academic internships within Franconia Conference ministries as well.

"The conference is blessed with the presence and ministry of these interns," said Franconia Conference executive minister, Noel Santiago. "This represents the value our delegates place on ensuring that young adults have the opportunity to not only connect with the church, but to help shape it as well. Along with the gifts, vision, passion, questions, and 'new eyes' they bring to our various context, inquiry program participants contribute to the ongoing unfolding of God's reign as we seek to equip leaders to empower others to embrace God's mission."

This year, through a grant from Eastern Mennonite Seminary, three Franconia Conference students attending non-Mennonite institutions have been given the opportunity to participate in the ministry inquiry program: Tim Moyer, a sophomore at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia from the Blooming Glen congregation; Felicia Moore, a member at New Beginnings Community Church, who is in her second year at Indiana University of Pennsylvania; and Andrew Liemon, a Philadelphia Praise Center attendee and first year Penn State University student. Moyer will work with Franconia Conference, while Moore and Liemon will assist with ministries at their home congregations.

Two students will intern with congregations in the Midwest: John Tyson, a sophomore at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) and a member at Souderton Mennonite Church, who will intern at Christ Community Church in Des Moines, Iowa; and EMU sophomore Jordan Good, a member of Bally Mennonite Church, will spend his 11 weeks with Walnut Hill congregation in Goshen, IN.

Two students will work with congregations on the East coast: Emily Derstine of Plains Mennonite congregation, a sophomore studying at EMU, will spend her summer in Alexandria, VA, with Nueva Esperanza/New Hope Fellowship; and Peter Koontz, a Goshen College junior from Elkhart, IN, will intern with Oxford Circle congregation in Philadelphia. Both churches are Franconia Conference Partners in Mission.

Along with the students in the ministry inquiry program, there will be one Goshen College student who will participate in each of the college's unique inquiry programs — camping inquiry and service inquiry: Mercy Oyama, a Goshen College sophomore from West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship, will work alongside various managers at Spruce Lake Retreat in Candensis, PA; Krista Ehst, a junior at Goshen College and member at Perkasio Mennonite Church, will also work at Franconia Conference.

Jessica Cassel, a sophomore at Bluffton University, is fulfilling academic internship requirements through ministry at her home congregation, Souderton Mennonite. Sheldon Good, a Goshen College sophomore, is completing an academic internship for communication in working with Franconia Conference.

The Eyes Wide Open exhibit displayed at Villanova University in April 2007.

A witness for peace through PULSE:

## Seeking world peace from Pittsburgh

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photo provided by Andrew Foderaro

Life seems to come at you faster than you can blink. I closed my eyes for one second as I was on a bicycle climbing the continental divide and when I opened my eyes I was standing among people at a vigil in Pittsburgh.

Upon throwing myself into the long awaited waters of the Atlantic Ocean ending my bicycle trip across the United States, I opened a new chapter in my life with no idea what it would bring. The next weeks were filled with great experiences; a short term job on a farm, spending time with long absent friends, and searching for what was next.

My parents turned my attention toward PULSE (Pittsburgh Urban Leadership Service Experience). Loosely affiliated with Mennonites, PULSE seeks to bring college graduates to Pittsburgh to live in community and work in local non-profit organizations. Because of this program I am currently living in Pittsburgh's East End with five others and working with the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC).

Venturing into the world of "non-profit" work was like diving into a cold pool. The initial jump is intimidating but once you get in, it's a blast. The job description I received was "we will give you a few projects and the rest is up to you, use whatever skills you have to help us out." The Pittsburgh branch of the AFSC was opened two years ago, focusing on community development and peace advocacy. I mainly help with communication work, writing, and event planning.

One of the main programs that I am working with is *Eyes Wide Open*. This exhibit spotlights the cost of the Iraq war by representing each soldier killed in Iraq with a pair of boots (our exhibit is only Pennsylvania casualties). In addition to *Eyes Wide Open*, I have been working to help organize peace vigils which speak out against the war and several other events.

One particular peace event on January 2, 2007, called for an end to the war following the 3000th

US casualty. Although I am new to the Pittsburgh area and to the peace community, I was privileged to be one of the people who read a portion of the names of the deceased soldiers and was also given the honor of writing an article on the event for the local progressive newspaper, *The NewPeople*, published by the Thomas Merton Center.

The following excerpt from my article gives a glimpse into the work that PULSE and the AFSC has allowed me to be a part of:

*"December 31 is usually marked by joy and revelry celebrating the past year and the year to come. This latest New Year's Eve however also carried with it a somber feel because on this particular day the total number of U.S. soldiers killed since the start of the war in Iraq reached 3000. This event really sunk in for many because of its proximity to the holiday season. It is a time for family and a time for community; not a time to have to remember the unnecessary deaths which have been a consequence of this war."*

*Across the country, 333 peace communities responded by holding vigils and demonstrations to remember those soldiers who died and to call for an end to the war which has claimed them.*

*On January 2 in Pittsburgh, standing on the steps of the Sixth Presbyterian Church in Squirrel Hill, four people took turns reading one page each from the list of 144 Pennsylvania soldiers who had been killed in Iraq. Listening to these individuals were over 250 people holding candles and signs calling for peace.*

*One of those listening to the names being read was Diane Santoriello whose son Neil was killed in Iraq in August 2004. She spoke about her experience as a mother of one of the soldiers and called for an end to this war. She demanded that we do everything possible to bring the soldiers home now...*

*The eight doors, covered in 188 sheets of paper, listing the 3003 U.S. soldiers' names, demonstrated the breadth of the toll this war has had. This visual personalized the experience as many people searched for an individual name and remembered a soldier. Three thousand Christmas lights lined the stairs behind the speakers to further demonstrate how large a number that really is.*

*At the end of the vigil the 250 people, led by the Raging Grannies, marched to the beat of a lone drum through the streets of Squirrel Hill. They carried large white, cardboard doves and candles. Their message was clear - this war must end."*

### What is PULSE?

The Pittsburgh Urban Leadership Service Experience, PULSE, was founded in 1994 to cultivate a community of young urban citizens, leaders, and dreamers in Pittsburgh by inviting university graduates to celebrate the city through learning, service, and work. PULSE has placed more than 70 participants in community-building organizations.

For more information visit [mennocorps.org](http://mennocorps.org)

Voluntary Service in the nation's capital:

# Connecting with Mennonite roots in DC

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I like new experiences – things that pluck me from my comfort zone and force me to learn and grow. This is one of the reasons I chose to do a term of service with Mennonite Voluntary Service. I decided to assist with policy work around workers rights and workplace justice at an organization called the Employment Justice Center in the District of Columbia. I graduated with an undergraduate degree in Psychology from Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) with no background or knowledge of policy and had never been to D.C. except for the requisite field trips in Middle School and High School. I chose to take up a new discipline and move to a new city because it was time for something new and, after being immersed in the “Mennonite bubble” my entire life, I knew I still had a lot to learn.

I have appreciated meeting people with varying backgrounds and beliefs. It seems that everyday I meet someone new who has a different belief set from mine, which challenges me to think in different ways. An example of this is in my place of work. I have two wonderful co-workers who do not come from a Christian environment. One comes from an atheist background but has found solace in the Quaker church, while the other is Jewish. I enjoy interacting with people who are different from me, and I have always been fascinated with different religions and why people choose to believe what they believe.

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These extensions of home have meant more to me now than ever before because I know that these people not only care about me but they understand me.

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This difference in world view was one of the things I enjoyed most about the two cross-cultural experiences that I participated in at EMU (Middle East '04, Southeast Asia '05). I got to learn first-hand about religious beliefs that were very different from my own. However, I never realized that there was still much that I needed to learn about my own beliefs, values, and background. It was not until I moved to Washington, and distanced myself from the community that



photo provided  
by Jessica Goshow

held me so closely for my whole life that I began to realize what it truly means to be Mennonite and how lucky I was to grow up in the community that I did.

How amazing it is to live surrounded by people who you can identify with, even in the most trivial ways. Here in D.C., I have to explain what it means to be Mennonite to just about everyone I meet. I understand that as I appreciate learning from them, they want to learn from me as well. But there are only so many times that one can explain the differences between the Amish and Mennonites before it starts to get redundant.

It has been through these experiences that I have begun to appreciate more the relationship with home -- more than I did while in college. Harrisonburg, VA felt very much like home to me, whereas D.C. is very different; having connections from home has been very comforting. For instance Franconia Conference staff Dave Landis and Steve Kriss came to Washington, D.C. in February to spend some time with me and my fellow VS'ers. In May a group from the Salford congregation visited to do some much needed work on our house. Not to forget the numerous cards, letters, and packages I have received from my home congregation, Blooming Glen.

These extensions of home have meant more to me now than ever before, because I know that these people not only care about me but they understand me. I can talk about things like funny cake and the “Mennonite game” without explaining them first, and they know where I grew up and know my family. Being in D.C. has done many things for me, but the most significant thing that I have gained from my time here has been something I never would have expected: the ability to connect with my roots.

Jessica Goshow (left) and her housemates, Kaite Souder and Krista Bergey.

## Lending Support

A crew of 16 Salford Mennonite Church members traveled to Washington, D.C., last month to help with repairs on the Mennonite Voluntary Service house. The group's projects included repainting the front porch and patio furniture and installing a tile floor in the house's sunroom. Various Salford groups have worked on the house over the last six years, showing support to the young adults from the church who have lived there including Katie Souder, a current resident of the house and MVS volunteer.

## BikeMovement Asia

BikeMovement Asia (BMA) is a project born out of the momentum and vision of BikeMovement USA that ultimately seeks to realize the potential for global Anabaptist community through open and engaging immersion in the lives of our sisters and brothers in Southeast Asia. From May 1 to July 1, 2007, six young adult participants from Anabaptist communities in the United States and Canada will ride their bicycles from Phnom Penh, Cambodia - through Vietnam, Thailand, and Laos - to Chengdu, China.

For more information visit [bikemovement.org](http://bikemovement.org)

### Reflections from Cambodia:

## “There is only one sky”

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And so the adventure comes to a close. My time left in Cambodia is short. I guess the best word to sum it up is overwhelming.

Overwhelming because I have to start thinking about what I'm going to tell people when they ask me, “So how was Cambodia?” Because I have six weeks worth of experience that nobody really knows anything about. How do I talk about six weeks of my life, six weeks that are filled with pages upon pages of memories...people, places, events, food, problems, joys, the ins and outs of everyday life in the village. It's a daunting task, one I'm beginning to pick away at with this reflection, and certainly a process that will continue for years.

Overwhelming because I come home to a family in the city that so obviously missed me and is glad to have me back and a mother who is heartbroken that I'm leaving again so soon. My language skills have really improved, which I wouldn't have realized except that I can communicate with my family here with so much more ease than when I left. It feels like I could just be settling in for the long haul instead of packing my bags and saying my goodbyes.

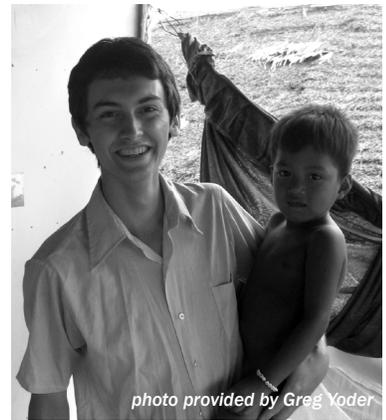
Overwhelming because I'm saying goodbye to friends, family, food...but more than that. I'm saying goodbye to a city that I've grown to love, to a country that has introduced me to the world, shown me a piece of just how little I know about things. I'm not putting the Cambodian book away by any means, though I do need to finish the chapter I'm on and put it away for a while. I hope to return, but I know it's possible that I could be saying “goodbye forever.”

I want to share briefly about my life in the village. To give a picture of Kampong Phluk and what I experienced seems such an impossible task, but if I just start somewhere perhaps the words will come and the picture will take shape.

I have a nephew. He is beautiful; brown skin, dark hair and eyes, painted finger and toenails, a beautiful smile though featuring teeth that look painfully diseased. Samadee is his name, but we all call him Dee. He runs around naked most of the time. He is five years old.

I love Samadee. He loved to play with me, especially when I was trying to read or write. He would come up to me and plop his naked bottom

right down on my book, then he'd just look at me and smile. He loved being tossed onto my shoulder and spun around. He also loved a game that involved him trying different forms of bodily harm out on me and asking, “Does this hurt?”



Greg and Samadee

I got lucky again. My host family experiences have been the most meaningful parts of all of Study Service Term. In Kampong Phluk I was once again adopted into the family, perhaps even to a greater extent than in Phnom Penh...but it's too close to call so I won't. I had two host sisters, one of whom was Samadee's mother, a mother, and three “sisters” who were teachers at the school where we taught and lived with our family when school was in session.

I felt like a son in this family, doing chores (though not as often as I would have liked), singing and dancing with the fam, asking questions about where people were and when they'd be returning I can't explain the feeling, but imagine that you've been adopted by a wonderful family and you almost forget you've been adopted.

One night my Kampong Phluk mother came out to the porch where I slept and found me looking at the stars. She asked me, “Do they have stars in America?” Yes, I replied. “Are they the same?” Yes. “Do they have a moon in America?” Yes, Ma. “The same?” Yes.

She sits for a little bit.

“Stars, the same. Moon, the same. There is only one sky.”

Yes, Ma. Only one sky; poetry in its simplest form. God speaks Khmer, I'll tell you that much.

*Greg Yoder participated in Goshen College's initial Service Study Term in Cambodia this spring, along with Krista Ehst (Perkasie congregation) and Sheldon Good (Salford congregation). The term included stays with families in both urban and rural settings. Greg wrote this journal to share his thoughts back with friends and family in the States and graciously agreed to publication in Intersections.*

Fleeing Persecution:

# Indonesian Christians seek political asylum through bicoastal Mennonite connections

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Over the past nine years, many Indonesian Christians have fled their home country due to ongoing religious persecution, seeking the comfort and security of political asylum in the United States. Thousands have settled in Southeastern Pennsylvania and southern California. Many have cultivated and developed Mennonite connections, while some remain on the verge of making a return flight across the Pacific.

Political asylum, or the right of asylum as it is often referred to, is the idea that persons who are persecuted in their native country may obtain legal protection from a foreign country. In the United States, the term “asylum seeker” refers to one who is seeking political asylum, while the term “asylee” is used for individuals who have officially been recognized.

Four Indonesians have recently been granted political asylum for one year in California, while one more is due to appear in a state appeals court. Franconia Conference and Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference have both had a representative assisting with translation and religious representation, Aldo Siahaan, member of Philadelphia Praise Center (PPC), and Rina Kusuma, co-pastor of Gereja Kristen Injili Indonesia Zion congregation in Fullerton, CA.

Even though it is unknown where the asylees will settle, it was agreed that the legal proceedings would take place in California. Siahaan said that, “California is the only state where you have a decent chance -- 80 percent -- at political asylum.”

The four persons who passed their official interviews will be eligible for green cards after one year of asylum status. They will now most likely look for work in either southern California or Philadelphia, thanks in part to their connections to both respective Mennonite conferences, along with the significant Indonesian communities that already exist in both locations.

According to Kusuma, many Indonesians settle in southern California because that is where they have their asylum interviews. “There are a significant number of [Indonesians] in California, with around 20,000 in the city of San Gabriel and around 15,000 in San Bernardino County,” Kusuma said.

All five asylum seekers are ethnically Chinese Indonesian Christians who have fled persecution from indigenous Indonesian Muslims. Many Christians fled Indonesia from 1998-2001 and again in 2003 after sustained riots and violence forced them out of their homes, businesses, and churches. “Sometimes Muslims become jealous of the Christians’ [prominence] and successfulness,” Siahaan said.

Even though the last significant wave of Chinese immigrants to Indonesia occurred towards the beginning of the 20th century, many native Indonesians still do not accept them nor their religious perspectives. Siahaan said, “They think America is a Christian country. Since they hate America, they hate Christians.” Thus, they persecute Chinese Indonesian Christians for having these ties to western influence and culture.

“The Indonesian church is growing very fast, and they are trying to stop the church from growing,” Siahaan said, adding that “government officials are mostly native Muslims.” This poses a direct dilemma between Christians and Muslims.

Siahaan and Kusuma were both present during the young asylum seekers’ official interviews. California state judicial officials interview asylum seekers on the areas of religion and immigration and also ask questions pertaining to ethnicity, political tendencies, and family orientation.

The man who was denied has asylum status has appealed the ruling and is preparing to appear in a California state appeals court. Siahaan has turned over his duties to the individual’s attorney. If he wins this case, he is granted asylum status equal to his friends. If he is denied, he must return to Indonesia or flee to another country.

According to Siahaan, being a refugee in America is preferable. “I would prefer to suffer here rather than in Indonesia,” Siahaan said, who immigrated to the United States in 1998.

Four Indonesians are now asylees and will likely settle in Philadelphia or California finding work or going to school, while one of their friends may be left behind as he continues his struggle.

photo provided  
by Aldo Siahaan



## Recent asylees

There are an estimated 6,000 Indonesian immigrants living in Philadelphia. The majority live in the Sotuh Philadelphia neighborhood near Philadelphia Praise Center. Many Indonesian Christians identify with Anabaptist belief perspectives as a faith shaped in a persecuting environment.

An enduring Mennonite value emerges:

## New urbanism in Downtown Norristown

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A new movement is emerging that I believe is at the heart of what it means to be Mennonite. Embracing the values of community and stewardship, New Urbanism is a set of ideas that builds on our heritage and provide hope for our future. It may or may not be a surprise that Mennonite Central Committee's humble Crossroad Gift & Thrift in Norristown, PA, is a model enterprise.

For decades, cheap energy, and new technologies have enabled a mass expansion of asphalt and large homes across our countryside. Fueled by a desire for increased personal space, many people have left close-knit urban/village communities to live in sprawling suburbs. Farm and woodland, once a plentiful wealth of renewable resources, is disappearing. To get from one place to another, we generally burn a rapidly depleting resource in an automobile, which is built out of numerous resources strip mined from the earth. These trends are not sustainable long-term, since we rely on our land and natural environment for life. Is there a way to be better stewards?

As Mennonites have known for centuries, quality of life is found in good relationships, not material resource consumption. Mennonites have a rich history of striving to live in community, simplicity and a caring partnership with the earth. To promote these same values, the new urbanism movement calls for walk-able communities where people can enjoy the convenience of shopping, work, school and an outdoor park within walking distance of home. In these classic neighborhoods, people are not dependent on automobiles for their mobility. The more intimate physical proximity enables richer relationships than when individuals are isolated in a car on their daily commutes.

Walkable neighborhoods typically have multi-use buildings where people live above the stores and offices where they or others work. This strategic way to use land is better stewardship than consuming acres of land to build houses with garages separated by roads from an office building with a parking lot.

Suburbs have some benefits such as, providing space for trees, gardens, and hobbies. However, if there are better ways to be stewards of the earth and create community, then Mennonites should be leaders. In some places, we already are. Located in a historic building, in the walkable

old community of Norristown, Crossroad Gift & Thrift shares a building with a second floor residence. An informal survey shows that over 80% of Crossroad Gift & Thrift's customers come to the store as pedestrians without an automobile. Nearby public bus, train, and trolley transportation have aided this trend. Nevertheless, in true urbanism fashion, more than half of regular customers live within walking distance of the store.

This intimate connection to place has enabled Crossroad Gift & Thrift to build a unique community. Many customers stop by the store multiple times a week to catch up on local news, find out the latest bargain, or to have a friendly chat. The line between customer and volunteer often blurs as people in the neighborhood are excited to help make their 'home' store a nicer place. In fact, four of our most regular volunteers are non-Mennonite Norristown community residents.

To further embrace the ideals of new urbanism, Crossroad Gift & Thrift is committed to be a good steward of our resources. Our retail space is tiny by modern standards, but that hasn't stopped us from diverting a truckload of merchandise per week from local landfills into 'new' homes. Our secret of success has been to charge low prices on quality items, which gives our customers the dignity of greater purchasing power and increases our weekly sales volume. As some successful retailers have also discovered, we believe that it helps more people and makes sound business sense to make a little profit off a lot of items rather than to make a big profit off a few sales.

A visit to one of Mennonite Central Committee's examples of new urbanism is well worth the time. Crossroad Gift & Thrift is best experienced during community hours, 9:30am to 4:30pm, Monday through Saturday. We encourage the use of public transportation and walking, but will welcome anyone with a big smile.

**Cory and regular customer, Rene, at Crossroads Gift and Thrift.**



### Intersecting with CROs

#### Crossroad Gift and Thrift

*Our mission is to live Matthew 25: 35-36: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, ...I needed clothes and you clothed me, ... I was a stranger and you made me feel welcome."*

For more information on New Urbanism visit the following websites:  
[newurbanism.org](http://newurbanism.org)  
and [cnu.org](http://cnu.org)

Journey toward ordination:

## For such a time as this

Marlene Frankenfield

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*Marlene holds her ordination gift during the ceremony.*

*Marlene Frankenfield was ordained as a minister within Franconia Mennonite Conference on May 5, 2007, at Christopher Dock Mennonite High School. She serves as campus pastor and conference youth minister. The following is an adaptation of her words shared that morning in chapel.*

I would never have imagined 18 years ago that I would be in this moment talking about my journey toward ordination. It was the invitation to be a volunteer youth leader at Salford Mennonite Church. Lori Danzenbaker is here today as the one who extended that invitation. This was the beginning of this wild ride toward ordination. I look back and I am deeply grateful for the experience that I received at Salford that prepared the ground for seeds of personal growth and ministry that are now deeply rooted in Franconia Conference and Christopher Dock ministry.

Many of you know that I love the warm wind. It is like God breathing on us! The verse in John 3:8 is powerful for me as I reflect on my journey, “The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” The experiences and people who showed up in my life helped me to feel the wind that sometimes blew as a gentle breeze and other times as a whirlwind of challenges, creating chaos and doubt. At those times people appeared in my life and modeled Jesus for me. I value the many rich experiences, holy moments and a community of faith discernment as I humbly step into ordination.

Ordination seems like a big word to be me. I have been trying to unpack this word for the last few years during my time as a licensed youth minister. A few weeks ago I talked to the chapel committee about the ordination service as we were looking at the chapel schedule. As I was explaining ordination I said “It is like being sentenced to ministry for life” And Anna Ruth said, “that sure is a negative way of looking at ordination.” You got to love it, Anna, speaking the truth in love. I realized how much this word scares me and the identity and expectation that comes with ordination. I remember as I was growing up ordained ministers (and at the time they were all men) were scary and really serious. They were suppose to have all the answers to any questions and ministers were always called on to pray at meals and in public settings. I was also scared because maybe ministry wouldn’t be fun after ordination. I guess my biggest fear is being disconnected from the people on the edge of church or those who have left organized church, because some of these people are my best friends.

Or does ordination validate my call to ministry and especially youth ministry? Does this process acknowledges my passion and gifts as I continue on this journey that God has blessed? And I am deeply grateful for women and men role models and new images of ordained ministry who are ordinary people. Many of these persons are here today. Thanks to those of you who helped me unpack the ordination word that seemed so big.

Last week I was at Princeton Seminary for their youth ministry institute. The theme for the week was community. I heard sermons, and participated in discussion about what is real community and how do we create community in youth ministry. I realized how blessed I was to be apart of this faith community. To be here with faculty and staff and to be working along side other ordained ministers in Franconia Conference. You are all in my cloud of witnesses, knowing that you have encouraged and supported me on this journey these last 8 ½ years.

As I continue in youth ministry here at Dock and my role with Franconia Conference I hope that youth feel God’s unconditional love, and experience God’ grace within a faith community. And that people in our congregations and here at Dock will surround youth with love, walk with them and point the way to Christ. This journey continues and it is all about God’s timing. It is a humble journey and I am blessed to be at this place, for such a time as this!

**Intersecting  
with CROs**

**Christopher Dock  
Mennonite  
High School**

*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.*

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

photo provided  
by Joy Sawatzky

# Taking a job that becomes a creative calling

Joy Sawatzky, Souderton  
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Joy Sawatzky  
Chaplain

Dock Woods  
Community  
Lansdale, PA

*Call &  
Response:*

*Intersections*  
features the  
stories of newly  
credentialed  
Franconia  
Conference  
leaders as they  
are available.

As I reflect on my call to minister as a chaplain at Dock Meadows I have to admit my work as a chaplain did not begin so much as a call by God, but as an opportunity – a job opportunity. I have known for quite some time that my greater call is as a sacred storyteller and I have the privilege to be able to do that work. When the position as a chaplain came open at Dock Meadows I thought it might be a good place to try using story as a vehicle for pastoral care. Also, I already knew many of the residents there, I had completed a year of residency as a chaplain while still in South Florida, I also spent many years planning and leading worship in various settings, and besides – I was

wanting to let go of some night shift work that I was working at the time. “Why not?” I asked myself and took the job.

I did not actively pursue being licensed immediately after I began the position. I had been licensed before, as a pastor of a Mennonite congregation in South Florida. I knew that licensing normally leads to ordination, and I was somewhat ambivalent about the thought of that. Again, nothing new for me, as I had been approved for ordination by the Southeast Mennonite Conference back in 1992 and had declined, not feeling ‘called’ at the time.

I take being called by God very seriously; as the compass of my life, actually. With the job at Dock Meadows I found myself facing the question of whether it was call or convenience that brought me there. Even more important to me, if I pursued being licensed and eventually ordination would that somehow work to limit the creative spirit and expressions of spirituality that I live by?

Then a funny thing happened on the way to my licensing interview. I began to become aware of what was happening in my everyday experiences at Dock Meadows. Amidst the memorial services and chapel services, the pastoral care and worship leading and planning, I was being extended a grace to be myself that was new to me. In fact, it seemed like the Dock Meadows residents not only excelled in accepting me for who I was – they expected and enjoyed it when I

was my most creative self. In return, my attention to creative detail and continual offering of God’s grace and hope to them helped them to feel cared for in a way that they had known for some time. What a wonderful combination! The amazing thing for me was that I was experiencing healing in ways that I had not even known how to ask for, and found myself realizing that God had indeed called me to this place for this time. The catch was that it was not for what I could do for the residents, but what they could do for me. The mutual benefit has been an overall sense in the community of well-being and ‘belovedness’.

There are challenges, as there are with ministering in any community setting. The various expressions of faith provide plenty of opportunity to educate, to understand each other, and to lead in different ways to worship and celebrate God’s presence. There are those stuck in their limited ways of thinking and their life limiting behaviors that no amount of pastoral care will influence.

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## The Dock Meadows residents not only excelled in accepting me for who I was – they expected and enjoyed it when I was my most creative self.

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I continually work to find ways to expand the world for those living in the facility – providing opportunities for them to collect coins for Bridge of Hope BuxMont, gathering pennies for Mennonite Central Committee’s Penny Power collection, and reminding them that the world out there needs our prayers and awareness. Their generous spirits come through each time. Our chapels three times a week are called, ‘Sharing Hope’, to welcome the widest variety of people.

Somewhere along the way to my licensing interview I decided that I was in fact called. Providing for the spiritual life in a retirement community when done with your whole heart, in a way that respects the wisdom and life experiences gathered is not ‘ministry lite’ compared to ministry in a congregation. I am filled with extreme gratitude for the opportunity to have my life and gifts intersect with the lives and wisdom of those I work with regularly. I look forward to the next step of ordination with much anticipation and delight.

# 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](mailto: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.meetinghouse.info](http://www.meetinghouse.info). *Preserving and sharing the 1770 Mennonite Meeting-house 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: 267-203-1500; FAX: 267-203-1510; [www.indcreek.org](http://www.indcreek.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

A West Philadelphia partnership emerges:

Beaumont Initiative is a board-driven organization with no paid staff. Three board members are from West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship, two are from Calvary United Methodist (where WPMF rents space for worship), and two board members grew up on Beaumont Avenue.

The Beaumont Initiative  
4740 Baltimore Ave  
Philadelphia, PA 19143

Architect Lisa Armstrong and her husband Fred Kaulbach taking measurements at 5015 Beaumont Ave.



The Beaumont Initiative:

## That God's grace may be visible

J. Fred Kauffman, *West Philadelphia*  
[jfk@mcc.org](mailto:jfk@mcc.org)

In October 2004 four members of West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship (WPMF) met in the home of 70-year-old Miss June Jackson on the 5000 block of Beaumont Ave, three blocks from where we worship. On this block of twenty-three small row homes, ten were vacant and deteriorating. Miss June had called the meeting for neighbors to meet with WPMF and talk about the possibility of working together to rehab the vacant homes for sale to low income working families. Her first question was "How can we get this going?" At the end of the meeting she led a prayer for God's guidance and blessing.

The idea for this project started "incubating" in the spring of 2004, when young adults at WPMF began discussing the rapid rise in housing prices in West Philadelphia. Middle and low income families were being priced out of the neighborhood. At the same time, on blocks nearby many homes were vacant and deteriorating. We saw these abandoned properties not just as eyesores and security problems, but as valuable assets if they could be rehabbed.

WPMF members met a Philadelphia City Council representative to learn about government subsidies for affordable housing, and we began having monthly meetings with residents. The residents turned out to be a far more complex mix than we had expected. They included: an Irish carpenter (who's claim to be part of the IRA was far too believable), a retired German engineer, and two African American neighbors who grew up as kids on that

block—one now a professional musician and the other a successful entrepreneur.

When we first met Miss June she told us that this block of Beaumont used to be one of the prettiest in the area. What caused the deterioration? "Gangs in the 1970's and crack in the 1980's and 90's." she said. Once the block had run down, property values dropped to a point where owners simply abandoned structures when they moved out rather than trying to sell.

In 2005 we found incredible partners: the University of Pennsylvania law school offered free legal counsel, the community association, Cedar Park Neighbors, gave a matching grant for \$1,800, and a project management firm gave us valuable direction in working with the City. In addition some WPMF members shared their skills in accounting, housing construction, Habitat for Humanity rehab work, and various aspects of urban real estate development. This mix birthed a new non-profit, "The Beaumont Initiative." and received its 501(c)3 status in 2006.

As of May 2007, Philadelphia has committed two vacant properties on Beaumont Ave to the initiative: 5015 and 5019; one in fair condition, and one a total "gut rehab" job. When our architect came to begin the drawings, she pushed us to acquire 5017, the vacant property in between also in need of a total rehab. The Beaumont Initiative has reached agreement with the owner to purchase it as well. The initiative will have three properties in a row which will make for more efficient and better construction.

Our prayer is that this partnership with neighbors on Beaumont Avenue will be an example of God's grace taking shape in visible ways to support and sustain a part of the neighborhood that has seen hard times.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Franconia Mennonite Conference  
771 Route 113  
Souderton, PA 18964