

Intersections

Franconia Mennonite Conference • September 2007

Equipping leaders to empower others to embrace God's mission

A farewell reflection:

These three things

Phil Bergey

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As I wrap up more than 14 years as conference executive for Franconia Mennonite Conference I say my farewell by reflecting on these three things: thankfulness, experiences, and hope.

Thankfulness

The only way I can begin this farewell reflection is to consider with gratitude the many reasons for which I am thankful about my time with Franconia Conference. With a God-driven zeal my wife Evon and I left a family business in which I had been a partner for a decade and moved our three young sons first to Harrisonburg, Virginia, and then to Goshen, Indiana. This five-year odyssey brought us back to Pennsylvania when Franconia Conference leaders risked by believing in a young business person whose strengths seemed to be high energy, big ideas, many relationships, and an understanding of both Wall Street and Jerusalem.

I'm thankful for the opportunity to have served in this role with considerable latitude for trying new things in this 300-year-old conference. The organizational shift from six commissions that ran broad programs to "Equipping leaders to empower others to embrace God's mission" has been well-received overall. The creation in 1997 of what would eventually become Mennonite Resources Network was an effort to address some of the realities and trends already emerging in the 90's. MRN was the beginning of Franconia Conference's broad use of web-based communication. It was also the start of moving from overseers to conference ministers and consultants. MRN was a catalyst in connecting with Mennonite World Conference, Mesach and Miriam Krisetya, and the Mennonite churches in Indonesia. MRN's assets and liabilities were purchased in 2002 by Design For Ministry, a move that allowed the conference to continue to shape and influence the new Mennonite Church USA.



photo by Conrad Erb

Phil Bergey

I'm grateful for the ways Franconia Conference leaders and constituency tolerated my inexperience in leading a staff team. When I began as team leader in 1993—right out of seminary—I was the youngest person among the 15 or so conference staff. As I leave, only the venerable Claude Good outlasted my efforts. Thanks to all who were patient with me as I learned.

Experiences

Among the experiences these stand out most:

- When I began as what was then called Conference Coordinator, I was a 34-year-old with high hopes of fulfilling what I was asked to do when I was hired: help transform our aging, historic conference and prepare it for the future. However, upon my arrival in 1993, I was greeted with huge challenges around issues related to sexuality, leadership and church membership along with the normal resistance that goes with organizational shift and change.
- Experiencing international travel on behalf of Franconia Conference—for the purpose of developing and deepening relationships—has both influenced the conference and trans-



On seasons, transitions and bearing fruit:

Cultivating heirloom seeds

Gay Brunt Miller,
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My father, both grandfathers, and one grandmother were gardeners. Dad grew a kind of cherry tomato that he really liked. He saved seeds from those tomatoes year to year to continue that particular line. When my gardening genes kicked in after I was married and I began to dig in the dirt, Dad gave me some of those seeds. Twenty years later, I still grow tomatoes from that lineage.

Over the years, though, I think these tomatoes have changed. I'm pretty sure Dad's tomatoes used to be smaller. Each year I save the seeds from one of the most perfect tomatoes I can find. I only have space to grow one plant, so one seed from one plant carries on the line. Though I collect and then plant seeds that descended from my father's heirloom tomatoes, the tomatoes that grow have changed.

“While the fruit may stay
the same, its appearance
may change.”

It's a story similar to transitions in Franconia Conference. Some of you collected and planted seeds from previous generations. God has blessed those seeds, and those seeds yielded fruit and created new seeds that were again replanted. Over the years, some of those seeds (ministries) have changed a bit, but they would not have been possible without the earlier “gardeners.” Earlier seeds were passed along to people like Richard Detweiler, David Derstine, Paul Lederach, and Jim Longacre. More recently Franconia Conference “gardeners” have include Charlotte Rosenberger, Walter Sawatzky, Jim Lapp, and Phil Bergey. Now, in turn, these God-given seeds are entrusted to Noel Santiago and newer staff like Jenifer Ericksen Morales to replant for future generations. While the fruit may generally stay the same, its appearance may change over time—but it will always have its lineage in those earlier seeds.

This issue of *Intersections* shows evidence of seeds that were planted in the past and that continue to grow, multiply and change. Phil Bergey alludes to a number of these changes in his cover article, “These three things.” One of these connections is with Indonesian Mennonites. Were it not for earlier links of people like Luke and Dot Beidler

who earlier served with Mennonite Central Committee Indonesia, and connections with Mennonite World Conference, I wonder if MRN would have hosted Mesach Krisetya in 2000. If Mesach had not lived and worked among us, I doubt that the Philadelphia Praise Center would be a Franconia Conference congregation today or that Beny Krisbianto would be a pastor licensed by Franconia Conference (page 6).



Gay Brunt Miller

Another example: Franconia Conference connections with CIEAMM congregations in Mexico have a long history, but the way that they are being worked out has changed and is changing as more Franconia Conference congregations develop direct connections. These first-hand encounters will leave a lasting impression on the youth of Rockhill Mennonite Church (page 4). If Walter Sawatzky and Jim Lapp had not had a vision for the vitality that Partners in Mission could bring to Franconia Conference congregations, and if the Conference Board and delegates had not embraced this opportunity, would the Rockhill youth have had their experiences in Mexico?

Without the Partner in Mission relationships, would Charlie Ness have risked reaching out to Pastor Alfredo Navea (whom he met at a conference in New York City)? And if that relationship had not developed, would Perkiomenville Mennonite Church, Franconia Conference, and now Tom and Carolyn Albright have connected to congregations in Chile (see page 5)?

There are connections with almost every article in this issue, connections to past decisions that have impacted the present and likely the future. Without these “heirloom seeds”, none of these *Intersections* stories could be told.

As we bid adieu to Phil, we remember him as one gardener in a long, faithful line who planted heirloom seeds of ministry. These inherited ministries may look a little different from the past and we know that God will continue to change them as they are replanted in the future. I have confidence that the “Ultimate Gardener”, will save and grow the best seeds for the next generation.

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 1 Corinthians 3:6-7

formed me. Three trips in particular were transformative. In 2000, I volunteered two weeks to serve as staff for Mennonite World Conference at its meetings in Guatemala City. The importance of committing to global relationships was embedded there. In 2003, I spent six weeks in Indonesia participating in a leadership exchange. One valuable lesson was the role of learning communities as a basis for missional transformation and growth. In 2005, I traveled with Franconia Conference moderator Merrill Moyer to The Netherlands to try to understand the decline of the church in Menno Simons' homeland. One take-away from that trip was the significant role of Mennonite schools in strengthening the church and home.

- The experience of working alongside leaders of Conference Related Ministries taught me much from those who are among our most talented and committed leaders anywhere in church or business. They navigate difficult political relationships within the church community while working long hours, creating excellent organizations that support the church's role in our neighborhoods and the world. I am grateful to these leaders who helped shape me.

Hope

Of the many things I could say about the future of Franconia Mennonite Conference, three things especially give me hope:

First, Franconia Conference has modeled willingness to risk for God's kingdom by being open to make the necessary changes to join God's redeeming activity in the world. This has been hard work and there is more to come. But the resiliency, faithfulness, and hopefulness that I've seen as we together try to transform our congregations, ministries, and conference to respond to God's grace and activity has been inspiring. Christ's Good News gives us confidence to face the quickly-changing world in which we live. God has provided the Holy Spirit to walk with us into each day's uncharted territory. Jesus said many times to the disciples, "Do not be afraid."

Second, Franconia Conference has done as well as anyone in the church in providing space for young adults. In a world in which the most influential shapers of our time tend to come from those in their 20's and 30's, the church must allow youth and young adults to help shape the church. Franconia Conference believed in me when I was a young adult, and I have attempted to do the same. As I leave, Franconia Conference has numerous young adults already shaping our present

and future. I'm grateful to congregations and Conference Related Ministries that do likewise, raising and mentoring young leaders.

Third, Franconia Conference faces an intercultural future. I say that with joy, fear, and ultimately hope. I say it with joy because God is truly doing a new thing (Isaiah 43:19). Congregations and leaders from a broad spectrum of ethnicities have opened new doors, breathing life into the structures and habits we call Franconia Conference. I say this with fear because I know how hard it is to be open to what God may want to do that will mean adjusting what many of us have held dear. I say it with hope because I see the ways in which leaders from Mexico, Indonesia, and the U.S. are adding unique and needed perspectives and faith. Our two newest congregations (Philadelphia Praise Center – already a member, and Nueva Esperanza/New Hope Fellowship in Alexandria, VA – a Partner in Mission) are already planting half of the number of churches that were lost over the past 20 years! I praise God for colleagues and Conference Board members who bring experiences and ideas from other cultures and traditions, each committed, by choice, to being Anabaptist in the 21st century.

Intercultural relationships, broadly defined, also include rural-suburban-urban and intergenerational. As Franconia Conference invests in young women and men, there is clearly a quickening of these intercultural values.

Thank you for calling me, being patient with me, teaching me, and allowing me to lead among you. I will forever be thankful for the experiences and lessons that have taught me to have hope in the midst of much change in our world. I trust that you will also walk, teach and learn similarly with our brother Noel Santiago as he begins to lead our wonderful conference. To God be the glory.

"The gifts Phil brought to our conference are a creative flare, the ability to create meaningful vision, and select wonderful and capable people. Then, with the vision clearly in mind, gave authority and encouraged those people to go and do those things that move toward achieving a desired outcome."

Merrill Moyer,
Conference Moderator

"Our Lord has a habit of choosing leaders that will serve as guides to bless His people. We bid our thanks to Phil for a job well done but notice him limping, slightly, like Jacob, a sure sign that God has blessed him too during this encounter."

Blaine Detweiler,
Conference Assistant
Moderator

Phil Bergey, Merrill Moyer, and Noel Santiago.



photo by Gay Brunt Miller

photo provided
by Angela Moyer

What is CIEAMM?

Conferencia de Iglesias Evangélicas Anabautistas Menonitas de México, CIEAMM, is one of three legally recognized associations of Mennonite congregations in Mexico. With 14 congregations, located in and around Mexico City, CIEAMM has long-term relationships with Franconia Conference. CIEAMM links churches and leaders in an effort to equip and extend the reign of God.

Connecting across cultures:

Encountering generosity of time and hospitality in Mexico City

Brandon Kiser, *Rockhill*
brandonk1017@yahoo.com

Note from Rockhill Youth Pastor, Angela Moyer: For a week in July, 22 youth and adults from Rockhill Mennonite Church headed to Mexico City, Mexico to serve with four CIEAMM (Mexico Mennonite Conference) churches. The group, split into four different teams, serving the following congregations: Seguidores de Cristo, Pueblo en Transformacion, El Buen Pastor, and Cuatro Vientos.

After months of fundraising, prayer, and preparation, departure day had finally arrived. It was in the early hours of July 14 that our group of 22 packed into vans and left for the airport at Newark, NJ. For the next few hours, we remained in our comfort zones, only anticipating what we would see and do. As soon as we landed though, the entire group walked into a different place; a place that would teach us life lessons and stretch our horizons forever. We arrived in Mexico City and God already had a test in store for us.

“The kids were such a blessing to us; their smiling faces and constant laughs always brightened the day.”

We had four groups, and a couple of the groups were informed that they would all be staying in separate host houses. This caught me off guard. All of my excitement from being in a new place turned into fear of leaving the rest of my group. However, as with most of the trials that we were faced with, this turned out to be an enjoyable and stretching challenge.

Another obvious challenge was the language barrier. Once again, God provided for our group in this area. We were gifted with leaders and youth group members who could speak enough Spanish to make communication fairly easy. My smaller group was also blessed with a young US American woman named Hannah serving with MCC who was living at the church we were working at. She was fluent in both Spanish and English, making communication with the church members much easier than anticipated.

Groups were assigned various tasks to accomplish during the week, ranging from painting to teach-



Kate Swartley and Jessica Kiser (top row center) taught a Vacation Bible School class at Cuatro Vientos with two Mexican youth, Miriam (top left) and Isaiah (top right).

ing Bible School. The kids were such a blessing to us; their smiling faces and constant laughs always brightened the day. The group that I was a part of also painted the stairway and the front of the church called Seguidores de Cristo. We were proud of the work that we accomplished during the week, but the most rewarding part of our week were the many friends we made.

Upon returning home, the group shared one Sunday morning in church. As we shared one common theme appeared: the relationships we made with the Mexican people. Their hospitality, patience, and generosity will not be forgotten. They put their schedules aside for one week in order to accommodate us and all of our needs. They never once showed frustration with us as we stumbled through their language and declined to have the extra spices put on our food.

One of the guys in our group, Evan, had his 16th birthday while we were there. His host family decided to wake him up by coming into his room with a birthday cake while singing “Happy Birthday.” This experience was special for him and left an impression on all of us.

I know that as I grow older many of my experiences in Mexico will become distant memories. The sites, sounds, and tastes will slowly fade away as my busy life continues in Pennsylvania. The one thing that I will always remember though, is the people, their kind hearts, warm smiles, and immeasurable generosity. They will always live in my heart and I pray that one day I can also welcome a traveler and bless them as my Mexican friends have blessed me.

A new initiative on the Pacific:

Open hearts, minds, and doors

Carolyn Albright, *Whitehall*
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As we packed our suitcases for a two-week stay in Chile, the three largest bags, filled with donated clothing for the people we would be visiting, tipped the scales at the maximum weight limit. Many questions filled our minds as we prepared for this trip. What are the people of Chile like? What are their needs? Will we know enough Spanish? What is it like living below the equator? Why do we still feel so unprepared? We prayed, "Open our hearts and our minds, Lord, to your work in and through us."

"The opportunities for helping and sharing Christ's love with brothers and sisters who need spiritual, physical, and emotional encouragement seem endless."

In Chile, 12-year-old Samuel needed a winter coat. His parents had no money to buy him one. Their entire family had been praying for several days that God would provide a coat, Samuel wanted a gray one. Faviola, his mother, knew that God would give Samuel just what he needed.

Upon our arrival in Viña del Mar, the clothing was delivered to Tabernacle of Christ Church and sorted by a group of women. Each item was carefully designated to each church member. When Faviola unpacked their family's bag, inside was a gray coat exactly the size that Samuel needed! She immediately knelt down, thanking God for providing a coat and a reality to shore up her son's wavering faith.

In addition to providing for its members the Tabernacle of Christ Church, along with three other churches in the Chilean Assembly of Evangelical Churches who are an emerging Franconia Conference Partner in Mission, is going beyond its doors. While leadership for these churches is provided by pastors Alfredo and Emma Navea; several youth and one pastor, Francisco, lead worship services each Wednesday night in a small, overcrowded house church called Puerta Abierta (Church of the Open Door). The church is open to all people, but especially to forgotten, marginalized, or ignored members of society who hear the simple news that Jesus loves them. At Puerta Abierta, people with disabilities are

loved, listened to, and made part of the community. Francisco's vision for this church is to begin programs for people with disabilities to obtain vocational training, as well as spiritual, physical, and emotional care.

The Naveas and these four Chilean churches are currently involved in an unprecedented church partnership with the Chilean government. In order to expand Puerta Abierta, officials have cleared the way for permits, an area of land, and promised social workers to help with determining specific needs of the people who attend Puerta Abierta. During our time in Chile we met with two of these officials, outlining plans to help people with disabilities.

The new location is near a feria (open market), a bus stop, and is just across the street from the Navea's house. This is an excellent location for community awareness and the long-term goal of changing society's attitudes toward people with disabilities. Currently, our partnership involves raising funds for a building, but this is only the beginning.

Puerta Abierta may be the only outreach of its kind in Chile. The opportunities for helping and sharing Christ's love with brothers and sisters who need spiritual, physical, and emotional encouragement seem endless. In sending us to build relationships with these Chilean churches, Franconia Conference knew few specifics of this Puerta Abierta project. They knew nothing about Samuel's gray coat. But they knew that God works wonders when we open our own hearts, minds and doors to the Spirit.

photo provided
by Carolyn Albright

Connect and Contribute

Whitehall Mennonite Church will hold a fundraising dinner for Puerta Abierta in October 2007.

Contact Steve Kriss at Franconia Conference (*skriss@franconiaconference.org*) or the Albrights at 610-767-6052 or *carolynalbright@hotmail.com*, regarding speaking to your group and/or assisting the Church of the Open Door.

Alfredo and Emma Navea, and Carolyn Albright discuss details of the Puerta Abierta project on location.



Ministering through God's grace:

From Indonesia to Iowa to South Philly

Beny Krisbianto, PPC
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I was born in Indonesia. My parents raised me in a Christian home and took me to church where I was active by the age of ten. However, I did not have a personal relationship with Jesus until high school when I accepted Christ as my savior on June 17, 1993 and then baptized on June 15, 1995. I sensed a calling on my life after I graduated high school and made the decision to surrender my life to serving the Lord and his people.

I wanted to pursue more education and training, so I enrolled at Bethany Bible College in Surabaya, Indonesia. I graduated with a Bachelors of Theology in 2000. Preceding graduation, I was called by God to be a full time pastor in Yogyakarta, which is a city of students. In the next 10 months, I was Missions Pastor and a leader in the praise and worship department. I still felt that I needed more training to learn how to lead people. By the grace of God in June of 2001 I came to the United States to study at Jubilee School of Ministry located in Fairfield, Iowa.

While at Jubilee I pastored at Nations Worship Center in Iowa City, Iowa, and eventually took the opportunity to teach at the school. When I graduated in 2006, I moved to Philadelphia and began working with Philadelphia Praise Center. It is a joy to work together with young and energetic people. We share the same passion and commitment to the work of the Lord. My desire is to serve Christ and do the best that I can do serving him wherever he calls me to go.

I praise the Lord that my family is all serving in the ministry. My sister and her husband are pastors in a church in Iowa City, Iowa. My family, as well as other Christians in Indonesia, serve the

Lord at times with persecution. The country is mostly Muslim and there is persecution for Christians who do not conform to Muslim belief. I believe with all my heart that Indonesia will someday be a place where the Gospel can be preached freely. I am so eager to

learn more about what it means to be a Mennonite. I want to inquire more perspective from the leadership within this community of believers. I am eager to minister and to be apart of a community that believes in justice. Peace and justice are the reasons why I decided to become a Mennonite. I believe that is what Jesus stood for throughout his ministry here on Earth. Jesus came to give peace and to serve all people, of all races, for the glory of his Father.

“We are saved by grace and we can only survive and minister through the grace of God.”

I strongly believe that God is good all the time and never plans to give or create bad things for us as believers. I also believe that salvation is not a one time deal and that after we receive salvation we need to protect and maintain our salvation by living in holiness. We need to live according to God's will and stay away from sin. We are saved by grace and we can only survive and minister through the grace of God.

I do recognize that I have weaknesses as a minister and there are areas I need to work on. But I also have strong passions for mission trips, church planting, and evangelism. I want to reach new believers for Christ. I enjoy leading worship. Leading God's people to the throne of grace through praise and worship is awesome. I also enjoy working in church growth. I like to learn what makes churches grow and what make them stop. I have assisted in surveys throughout different communities. My goal is to encourage the congregation every week.

I feel that being part of a congregation is not enough. I truly believe with the Mennonite perspective that we need to serve God more according to the gifts and calling that he has instilled in us. I am very grateful for Philadelphia Praise Center's support of my becoming a licensed minister. A license for me is a public recognition that I am a minister of the Gospel. A minister is an example and a representative of God on this earth. I have a public responsibility to carry my life carefully as people watch me walk the gospel of Jesus Christ. Commissioned by God to help and serve the congregation to become closer to Jesus. This is not to promote self but to promote Jesus Christ with all that we have.

Beny Krisbianto
Associate Pastor

Philadelphia
Praise Center
Philadelphia, PA

*Call &
Response:*

*Intersections
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Pastor Beny
Krisbianto



Photo by Steve Kriss

Loving on from Spain to South Philly to Souderton: Equipping to change minds and transform

photo provided
by Jim Lavery

James Lavery, *Souderton*
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There I stood trying to find a DVD to borrow from our public library when I overheard a conversation between two library workers about God and church.

“Why do people even go to church?” asked the young man.

“I don’t know,” replied the slightly older woman. By this time I was mindlessly scanning the DVD titles while my ear was engaged with their chat.

“It all seems too fake for me,” remarked the man.

“The last time I went to church,” she said “everyone seemed so dead. I can’t understand, what would make you put yourself through that?”

“I am discovering how I have to make a deliberate choice to connect with people who live their lives on the “outside” because it’s far easier for me to stick with people who view life the way I do.”

Changing people’s minds about what it means to do church is at the heartbeat of God’s mission. God delights in drawing “outsiders” in and “insiders” out (Ephesians 2:11-17). Jesus wants his people to put themselves in the shoes of those who have not grown up around God’s people. I am discovering how I have to make a deliberate choice to connect with people who live their lives on the “outside” because it’s far easier for me to stick with people who view life the way I do.

Our family was drawn to Souderton Mennonite Church three years ago because we heard how the congregation was actively demonstrating compassion for people in practical ways in our community. What excited us, after meeting Pastor Gerry Clemmer and finding a small group, was the variety of ways that our family could continue to grow in our passion for Jesus and find ways to serve both inside and outside of Souderton Mennonite. We were convinced God had led us to the congregation when we saw his

love in action especially during times when people gathered around the four of us to pray for our needs.

Doing church at Souderton Mennonite has been anything but boring. This has been true not only for our family but also for the family, friends and neighbors we have invited to church activities. Three young fathers from my cul-de-sac joined me last fall for Men’s Monday Night Football Fellowship. We talked around tables about becoming better husbands, fathers, and men through God’s transforming power. We watched football and enjoyed meals together. As a result, our relationships as neighbors were taken to another level. This fall we’re inviting other men from our neighborhood to join us.

My aim in life is to lift up the name of Jesus by “loving on” people God has put around me. Demonstrating God’s kindness through acts of service, modeling godly character, and being a faithful friend. What is incredible is that I get to live out my life’s mission through my vocation!

As Souderton Mennonite Church’s Pastor of Equipping and Discipleship, I am working with teams to build and direct a full-fledged equipping system that welcomes, disciples, equips, and offers ministry opportunities for each person who chooses to be a part of our congregation.

By fully relying on God, I hope to lead other people through a journey similar to the one I began when we visited Souderton Mennonite Church for the first time. I long to see individuals like the two library workers in the DVD room change their thinking about what it means to become one of God’s people. I can only imagine what our community will look like as we, the Church, embrace our mission to multiply Christ’s love through our lives.

Jim is also a board member with Franconia Conference. Before joining the pastoral team at Souderton, he was served as a missionary in Spain and upon returning to the United States worked at the Philadelphia Access Center.



Pastor James Lavery

James Lavery
Associate Pastor

Souderton
Mennonite Church
Souderton, PA

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The story of Eric Mackee:

When life gives you lemons

Ron Tinsley, *Oxford Circle*
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For some people, life gives them lemons, sugar, and water and they make lemonade. But for others like Eric Mackee, life just gave him lemons. As the valedictorian at Philadelphia Mennonite High School, he has demonstrated that God can help you make the best kind of lemonade. He has been doing this ever since he was a child.

Eric grew up in a single parent household in North Philadelphia. "We lived from paycheck to paycheck occasionally going on public assistance," he says. "We moved around a lot."

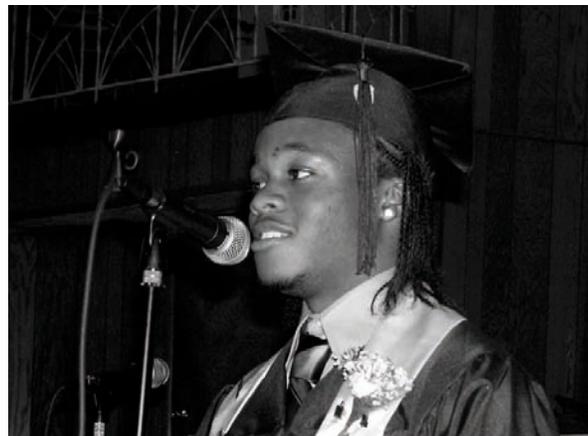
His mother struggled to provide for him considering that she gave birth to him at the age of 15. "Because of her young age, she shared things with me that forced me to grow up fast," Eric says. As he got older, he began to carry the burdens of his family. He learned to pretend he was happy when he was not. This helped him to cope with his reality.

"A successful man is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at him."

Eric's connection to Philadelphia Mennonite High School came through a local church familiar with Lancaster Mennonite High School. A minister wanted him to attend there but he did not want to live away from his mother. His aunt heard about PMHS and suggested the school. He still was not interested.

"Once I started attending PMHS, I kept trying to find reasons to leave. After a while, I began to open up and share with my teachers and other students. We were like one big family. I guess I did not realize how much I needed that. I learned how to integrate my faith into my life. God began to work in me," Eric says.

Eric has learned to embrace the idea of service and helping others. "Chapel helped provide a platform for me to hear from God and from others. They consistently challenged me to go beyond myself and give others my time." His trip to Indonesia (through the LEAP program) gave



Eric Mackee delivering his valedictorian speech.

him the opportunity of a lifetime. Over his four years, he got involved in other activities such as serving as the Director of a PMHS play and participating in a mock trial debate at Temple University. He was also president of his class in his senior year.

During his valedictorian speech at graduation, Eric quoted the respected Journalist David Brinkley: "A successful man is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at him."

Eric has had his share of bricks thrown at him that could have derailed him. Through God's grace, he is not only a survivor, he is a trailblazer. Others helped him to blaze these new trails like the Christianaires, a Sunday School class at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church that sponsored him as a student.

"We continue to have high expectations for Eric. God has a plan for him that is still unfolding. PMHS is glad to be apart of that," says Principal Dr. Barbara Moses.

Eric is attending Georgetown University in Washington D.C. He will be the first in his family to attend college. He is one of four PMHS seniors selected to receive the Longacre Scholarship Award that helps to pay for his textbooks in his first year of college.

"During my time at PMHS, I got involved in student led morning prayer. I found myself doing it at home. Prayer works and it strengthened my relationship with God. I saw God work," Eric says.

**Intersecting
with CRMs**

**Philadelphia
Mennonite
High School**

**PMHS exists to
provide a Christ-
centered, quality
education in a
multicultural,
urban context
that equips
students to
become servant-
leaders and
peacemakers.**

pmhsonline.org

Bridging a service gap:

New scholarship offers assistance to those waiting for service funding

David H. Crosson

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The Indian Creek Foundation serves individuals with developmental disabilities, specifically those individuals in our community who have mental retardation or an autism spectrum disorder. The Foundation was founded by Harley and Anna Gehman, of Salford Mennonite Church, and incorporated in 1975. Today Indian Creek serves 600 individuals and employs over 250 people.

In Pennsylvania today there are 21,412 people waiting for mental retardation services. The state places individuals into one of three categories based on their urgency of need.

The first list is called the Emergency Waiting List. This list currently consists of 4,264 individuals who need mental retardation services immediately (six months or less). These services are often residential placements such as group homes, but also included are people who need a vocational or day program. Many times a family will take care of their loved one at home, but then due to age or death of the parents, the person can no longer live at home and must go to a service provider. The second list is called the Critical Waiting List. There are 9,460 people on this list, and it represents people who will need service in the next 2 years. The final list is the Planning Waiting List. This list has 7,688 people who will need services in the next five years.

Over the years, funding to support people on the waiting list has been scarce. The state has not set aside dollars to significantly reduce the number of people on the waiting list. This translates into relatives and friends caring for individuals while they wait for a possible opening. The most recent

budget passed in Pennsylvania has finally targeted some money to reduce the waiting list.

However one concern that we continue to see at Indian Creek Foundation is a two to four year gap in service between graduating from high school and receiving a placement into a vocational program. This is tragic because the teachers in our schools do a great job preparing individuals with disabilities to live and work in the community, but when there is no program for them, they stay at home, watch TV, and lose a lot of those skills while waiting for services.

At Indian Creek Foundation we looked at this problem and decided to try and do something about it. We have been blessed by God in so many ways from our building (the former Penn View Elementary School) to our many generous benefactors that we feel the need to give back and pass our blessings forward. To this end we started a scholarship fund. This fund enables us to accept people who are on the waiting list and serve them at a greatly reduced rate until the state funds their placement. Generally we ask the families to pay for one day of services and we provide a week's worth of training. To date we are serving four individuals in this way through our vocational programs. The scholarship program enables these people to be actively engaged during the day and it helps them to maintain the skills that have learned in school.

A list of people waiting for developmental disability services will be with us for the foreseeable future. Service providers like Indian Creek Foundation will need to continue to think about non-traditional, creative solutions so that all people who need services are supported despite the shortfalls of funding. I would like to thank the Franconia Mennonite Conference as well as all our local Mennonite churches and their members for all the support that you have given and continue to give to our ministry at Indian Creek Foundation. You are a blessing to us and those we serve.



photos provided
by Indian Creek Foundation

**Intersecting
with CRMs**

**Indian Creek
Foundation**

*Improving
community
through services
for persons with
developmental
disabilities.*

indcreek.org

*A staff member and
client enjoy working
in the Indian Creek
garden, where they
grow vegetables and
flowers.*

photos provided by QCS

Intersecting with CRMs

Quakertown Christian School

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.

quakertown
christian.org

A young QCS student works on a school project.

Developing a reference point for the rest of life:

An opportunity for God to speak

John M. Drescher, *Finland*
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What led to my sense of God's call to accept the invitation to serve as Campus Pastor at Quakertown Christian School? At the forefront was the strong belief that in middle childhood we prepare children, in a special way, for the teen years and the rest of life. Never again, in so short a time, will parents and teachers make so great an impact on a child.

Middle childhood is the great imitation stage, when the child is guided primarily by the models the child sees. It is of great importance that the child has right models. And if these kind of models are not provided, the child will, during these years, find other models, often to the parent's dismay. In the years from 6 to 12 the child is an absorbing surface, sensing feelings, attitudes, and teachings, filing them away for future reference. It is a constant amazement how quickly children in this stage of life can memorize the Scriptures, which will be an influence, a reference point for the rest of life.

During these years the child needs words of encouragement and love. Studies are clear, many children choose their vocation during this time. For example a recent Lutheran study learned that one half of their pastors had decided on ministry by age 11. Many a missionary call comes during middle childhood by what children see and hear.

Here the ground work is laid for the major decisions of life to be made, such as dating standards,



Campus Pastor John M. Drescher

choices of vocations, and what contributions will be made to the church and society.

When we recognize this, we realize that every moment is a God moment and every relationship is significant.

Of course parents are the primary models. Never will parent's example guide more powerfully than during these years. Even when they are in their teen years children still want to know what parents think and do more than what anyone else thinks and does.

In the home is where love is demonstrated and felt. I recently asked a young girl, "What do you appreciate most about your family?" Her reply was immediate, "We all love each other".

Teachers, during the school year, spend more direct time with the child than the parents and have an influence far greater than they ever imagined. Teachers set the atmosphere and provide the models to imitate. After I spoke on Christian stewardship, a twelve year old boy shared that he is going to count his money and give a tithe to Jesus. Also how parents affirm, pray for, and speak about teachers has tremendous impact on their child's behavior and thinking.

I think of a retreat of seventh graders from Quakertown Christian School. It was a God moment. The speaker, dressed in clothes such as the Apostle Paul might have worn, led the students through Paul's conversion and missionary travels. These sessions were followed by a fireside worship and prayer time, during which nearly every student came forward to ask for prayer and to make a new commitment a never-to-be-forgotten spiritual experience.



DIRECTORY OF CONFERENCE RELATED MINISTRIES

*Bethany Birches Camp, 2610 Lynds Hill Road, Plymouth, VT 05056; TEL: 802-672-5220; 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. *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. *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. *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.communityhomeservices.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.

*Delaware Valley MEDA, PO Box 64653, Souderton, PA 18964; TEL: 215-721-3030; FAX: 215-723-1211; 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; *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. *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: 267-203-1500; FAX: 267-203-1510; 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. *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; www.life-with-god.org. *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. *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; *To collect, preserve, and interpret the Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage in order to educate, inspire, and witness to the church and broader community.*

*Peaceful Living, 850 Old Skippack Road, PO Box 130, Lederach, PA 19450; TEL: 610-287-1200; FAX: 610-287-7121; 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. *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. *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. *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. *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. *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. *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. *Promotes dignity of life and wellness supported by knowledgeable, caring staff and surrounded by a comfortable, well-maintained environment.*

*denotes charter member

photos by Conrad Erb

Not just for delegates anymore! Come to worship and celebrate on Friday, at the all night worship and prayer or to equipping seminars on Saturday.

Are you a delegate? If you have not yet received your docket contact Melissa Landis at 215-723-5513.

Scenes from Conference Assembly 2006.

Conference Assembly:

Centered in Christ, embracing God's mission

Melissa Landis

mlandis@franconiaconference.org

Every year the many congregations, ministries, and Partners in Mission that make up Franconia Mennonite Conference gather together for an exciting time of worship, conferring, discernment, and fellowship. This year's Conference Assembly will be held November 9 and 10 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford, PA. As we come from various corners of the conference—different churches and communities—conference assembly is a special time of connection with fellow believers. This year the theme of “Embracing God's Mission” will guide worship times, delegate sessions, and workshops.

On Friday night, 24-Hour Worship will start at 6:00 p.m. with the delegate assembly beginning at 7:00 p.m. Throughout the evening we will celebrate the many stories and sounds that make up Franconia Conference as we worship, recognize newly credentialed persons and honor the work of those who have died. Gilberto Flores from Mennonite Church USA will be the keynote

speaker during this time. Everyone is encouraged to attend the Friday evening session and to join the continuous worship as it goes all night Friday through Saturday afternoon. Come to worship and see what God is doing among us in Franconia Conference!

Saturday morning's session will include conferring of the Vision and Financial Plan Team's final recommendations. Translation will be available during delegate sessions on Friday evening and Saturday morning in Indonesian, Spanish, and Vietnamese. We look forward to celebrating the different tastes of Franconia Conference as delegates sample African American, Indonesian, Pennsylvania Dutch, Latino, and Vietnamese cuisine at noon on Saturday! In addition, many conference related ministries and churchwide organizations will be present for the weekend.

This year's Saturday workshops will continue the theme of “Embracing God's Mission” and offer a time of equipping. More details about workshops will soon follow!



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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