



Lowell Brown photo



Pastor Chuwang Pam of L.A. Faith Chapel speaks at the Mennonite Church USA assembly in San Jose on 'Called to One Hope as One Body.' See inside for reflections on that event and PSMC's part in it.

One in Christ: PSMC reconsidering its three-region model

Three states; a dozen languages; 44 congregations; rich, poor and in-between; rural and urban; native-born and immigrant – how exactly does a wonderfully diverse church body like Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference forge a common identity?

In our faith in Christ, of course.

But also, it's hoped, in a structure that works to bring us together and encourage deeper connections so we can be the mutually giving, growing, accountable and "missional" church we want to be. Having come to the realization that what we've been doing since 1994 isn't working as well as it could, PSMC is looking at revising its structure.

Following strong discussion at July's abbreviated

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A song to sing: Concert will highlight Feb. 1-2 assembly in Los Angeles

After the worship, sharing of stories and business – including important discussions this year on how to restructure Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference more effectively – the

Concert for the Nations
Feb. 2, 4-6:30 p.m.
Family Mennonite Church
6520 S. Normandie Ave.
Los Angeles
(323) 750-1744

annual Concert for the Nations is a joyful cap to the Winter Assembly. It's a chance for member congregations to give glory to God through the gift of music in united fellowship, and all are invited. The theme this year derives from Lesslie Newbigin's comment, "Mission begins with an explosion of joy." Together we enact the word of God found in Isaiah 12:

"With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. In that day you will say: "Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world."

Here is how churches can participate:

Perform: If you have any type of musical group (praise team, choir, jazz band, solo singer, Christian rock band, hip hop ensemble etc.) and want to perform, register by sending an e-mail (with name, email address and name of church) to Brother Makinto at: amahoro.international@gmail.com, or call 310-377-0654. A form will be sent.

Volunteer: To volunteer Feb. 2 to help with stage prep, sound, coordination, etc., register as a volunteer at the same address or number (ask for Brother Makinto).

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PANORAMA

is a publication of Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference, which unites and serves congregations across Arizona, California and Nevada.

Please help us share what's going on in your congregation and community! Contributions of news, faith stories and photos are heartily encouraged.

Write to the editor, Doreen Martens, at: panorama@pacificsouthwest.org

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Conference pursues a more unifying structure

from page 1

PSMC assembly, held in conjunction with the Mennonite Church USA convention in San Jose, consultations across the conference with pastors, leaders, and particularly immigrant and ethnic churches have shown there's a desire out there for a more unified structure and identity.

Too many churches feel little connection with each other, or with the conference as a whole. They want more access to training and other conference resources. The three-region system we've had since 1994, with part-time conference ministers each serving in Arizona, Northern California or Southern California/Nevada, has left us feeling divided along regional lines.

Some churches are thriving and self-sufficient, others too preoccupied with survival to pay much attention to the bigger picture. A few have had minimal involvement with the conference in recent years.

A handful provide the bulk of the conference's funding; others give none at all, sometimes because they simply can't. Resources are stretched.

Our economic, cultural and regional diversity is both a challenge and a gift, but we need to strengthen our ties to make the most of it.

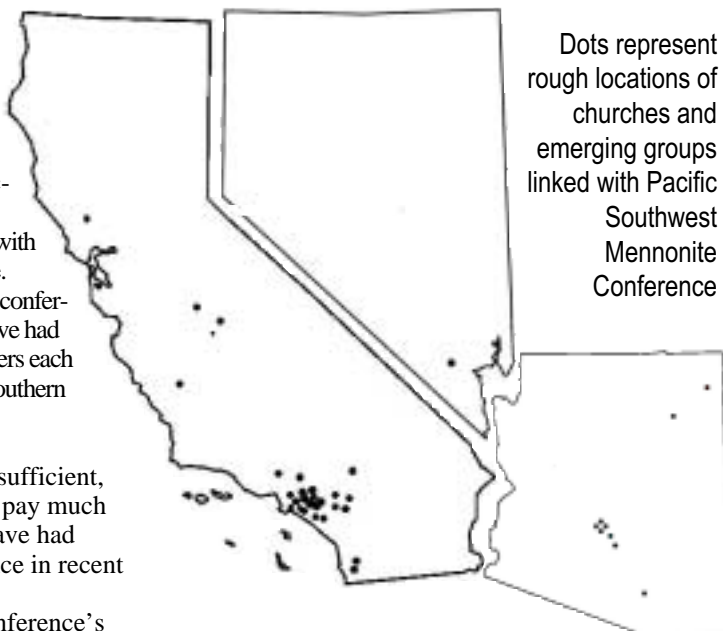
In July, there was much discussion of these issues, with an emerging consensus that having a single conference minister serving the whole Pacific Southwest might help to build a sense of identity and connectedness that seems lacking now. This would be coupled with a system of "district elders" who would provide ongoing wisdom and support to local clusters of congregations, as is already being done in Southern California. Delegates discussed how many district elders would be needed, whether they should receive a stipend, and how to handle costs such as travel reimbursement and an annual training conference.

Work on reorganization has continued since then. The board of directors, the Organizational Assessment Task Force and the conference ministers met Aug. 17-19 for a working weekend in Pasadena, strengthening relationships, studying results of the congregational survey and prayerfully weighing various scenarios for a new structure and vision.

In a recent letter to member congregations, moderator Tyler Zabriskie explained the proposed changes and the three-part goal of PSMC as it enters its 14th year:

"We believe the conference should focus on:

1. Providing training for and developing leaders, both pastors and lay;
2. Working to facilitate good relationships among churches, the conference, and the denomination; and,
3. Partnering with congregations in develop-



Dots represent rough locations of churches and emerging groups linked with Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference

PSMC Winter Assembly

Where: Sister churches Family Mennonite and Royal Dominion Family Chapel, South Los Angeles

When: Feb. 1-2 (Friday evening-Saturday)

Details: Delegate information will be sent to congregations shortly, but you need not be a delegate to attend. All are welcome to enjoy lively worship, teaching, discussion and sharing of stories from our churches, followed by the Concert for the Nations on Saturday night.

ing and implementing missional church strategies."

To help achieve those aims, the board will recommend the one-minister, multiple-elders system to delegates attending the Winter Assembly in Los Angeles.

A new job description will be provided for the conference minister, and the district elder role will be strengthened with increased training and accountability. Some funding will also be available to contract with skilled consultants who can assist congregations with specific needs.

Al Whaley of Arizona will be retiring as conference minister with the expiration of the current contracts on Dec. 31. Jeff Wright will continue to serve as PSMC conference minister on an interim basis until June 2008, as the process of decision-making is completed.

Continued work on restructuring will be the main focus for the business part of the Winter Assembly. Make sure your congregation is represented!

By Beverly Wilson

It's a Friday night and 26-year-old Phicksaway Vongsaly is helping set up the weekly skate park at Sunnyslope Mennonite Church. Later he'll walk around talking to skaters, getting to know them and even praying for them in Lao, his native tongue.

Phicksaway came to Arizona through the International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP). IVEP is a Mennonite Central Committee vocational and cultural exchange program that focuses on peace-building. Each August, about 50 to 60 young adults come from many different countries to Canada and the United States to serve for one year. Participants are placed in service assignments, but they are also encouraged to become involved with their local host families and host churches and to live out their faith both on and off the job.

From August 2006 to July 2007, Phicksaway served as assistant manager at Goldensun Thrift, a thrift shop that supports Goldensun Peace Ministries, a residential housing and day program network for persons with mental disabilities in the Phoenix area.

Friday nights, he helped with the church's weekly skate park, an endeavor the church started after skateboarders and roller bladers began coming to the steps and courtyard area of the church.

When youth inadvertently scraped paint and caused other damage to church property, Sunnyslope responded – not by asking them to leave but by building a place for them to skate. “God spoke to our church family, we listened and the decision was made to embrace our young ‘guests’ and to encourage their visits by providing a special place and time for the neighborhood youth to skate,” the church’s website explains.

Church volunteers built ramps and rails, and a weekly skate club was born. Phicksaway became an active part of that club. The 26-year-old also led worship with his guitar for the men’s ministry and helped out with Sunday school and church conferences.

One of the most notable things though, according to Sunnyslope Pastor Steve Good, was how he engaged the congregation through his vibrant spiritual life.

“His praying out loud was always fresh,” and always began with thanks to God for his mercy, forgiveness and love, said Good. He recalls how Phicksaway’s example made him stop and say, “Man, so many of us have been ‘doing church’ too long; we’ve forgotten the core.”

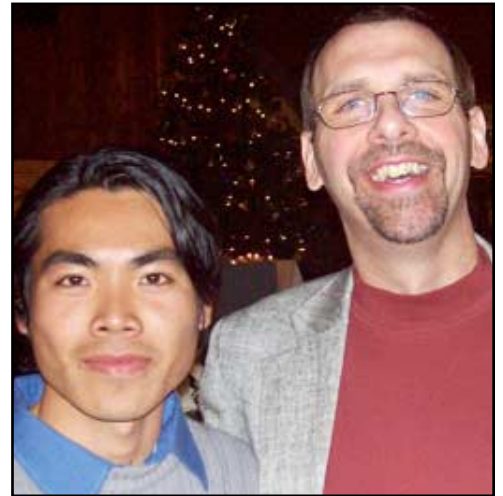
This was the first time Sunnyslope Mennonite Church has hosted an IVEP participant, and Good said Phicksaway touched people’s hearts and expanded their worlds. Reflecting on his time with the congregation, Phicksaway says, “I am so grateful and honor them as my family because their love and open hearts overwhelmed my life.”

He said his year in IVEP “has opened wide my world to understand other people more and also myself. ... It was a year of peace and friendship, a year of love, unity, and sharing, a year of knowledge, a year of growing, and a year of reaching out.”

During Phicksaway’s last Sunday morning at Sunnyslope, 11 members shared their memories of thankfulness and love. “I am so grateful that [God] directed your path to Phoenix, Ariz.,” member Eugene Zehr told him. “When I hear the country Laos, now it has a connection to you.”

Since he left in July, several families at Sunnyslope have approached Good with offers to host future IVEP participants. As he shares this, pastor Good adds, “[we] are just so appreciative of [Phicksaway] ... He allowed a lot of us to see God freshly.”

Beverly Wilson is an administrative assistant for MCC’s Global Service Learning department.



Phicksaway Vongsaly with Sunnyslope Mennonite Church pastor Steve Good.

Kanagy on Road Signs: Why so few new Christians?

Conrad L. Kanagy of Elizabethtown, Pa., is traveling to area conferences reporting on findings in the recent Mennonite Church USA Member Profile and his book *Road Signs for the Journey*. He describes a church that is drawing more people from other denominations (in 2006, 30% were from “other than Mennonite Church,” up from 14% in 1972), but only 2 per cent of those surveyed are “new believers” – meaning they were not raised Mennonite but became Christians in a Mennonite congregation. (Because racial/ethnic churches received only an abbreviated questionnaire, it’s not clear if that ratio is markedly different in such congregations, which make up a large proportion of PSMC.)

The statistics have led many to wonder: How did we become a church of the “churched” rather than a church of the “unchurched”? Interviewed by Levi Miller of Herald Press after a presentation in November, Kanagy said he is frequently asked what the church can do to address the challenges he describes.

His response: “That it is time for the people of God to discern together what the Spirit is saying. This is not a time for experts to suggest ‘fix it and forget it’ solutions, but rather for the people of God to seek God’s face in repentance, prayer, fasting, and discernment around the Scripture. This is both a missional and an Anabaptist response.”

Many Mennonite churches across the United States are using the member profile study in adult classes and other teaching and preaching settings. To learn more about the book, as well as an accompanying CD and DVD suitable for use with small groups, see Page 10.



Conrad L. Kanagy

Reflections on San Jose:



From left: Junior high youth bless offerings they raised through an exercise in ‘multiplying talents’; PSMC moderator Leah Ann Alcazar

This summer’s Mennonite Church USA assembly in San Jose marked the first time in decades the national gathering had ventured to the west, and the first opportunity for many in PSMC congregations to attend. For five days, 2,000-plus adults, 3,800 high school youth, and more than 300 junior high youth and children joined in worship, enjoyed myriad seminars, sweated on service projects, sang, ate and talked together, debated issues and pondered how to “Live the Call!” – more often than not, inspired by speakers with strong ties to the Pacific Southwest. Here’s a selection of news and reflections from that great week.

Why go? San Jose showed us the best reason is the worship

By **Jeff Wright**, conference minister (from *Shalom Champions*)

Just what is the value of a denominational assembly? Is it the work of the congregational and conference delegates? Well, while the delegates of Mennonite Church USA who met in San Jose July 2-7 made some decisions about joining Christian Churches Together, and studying the need for pastors to have health insurance, delegates really don’t do that much at MCUSA gatherings.

Is the value of the denominational assembly in the seminars and meetings that take place? Again, these are good, but likely not the central purpose of a denominational gathering.

Perhaps the important thing about a denominational assembly is the networking and relationship building that takes place. To be sure, this networking is important and provides continuity for the denomination over the next two years, but it too is not the central purpose.

The best reason to attend a Mennonite Church USA assembly is to worship God with several thousand friends who are on the same faith journey. As Jesus-centered people, committed to following Christ daily in life, creating communities of grace, joy, and peace, and inviting the world to consider God’s mission of transforming all creation, it is vital that we come together regularly to praise the God who calls us to mis-

sion, and together submit ourselves afresh to God’s reign.

The worship at San Jose was amazing. The fresh breath of God’s grace blew across the audiences gathered in youth and adult conventions. We sang, and prayed, and heard the scriptures proclaimed, and wept with confession and joy. In order to “live the call” (the San Jose theme), we must know the One who calls us. We best discover the One who calls us in the midst of worship.

This summer, Mennonite Church USA was invited to meet the One who calls us to life. And for many of us, we heard great good news again that revived our flagging spirits and warmed our cold hearts.

So, to those from the Mennonite Churches of the Pacific Southwest who made a difference at San Jose: from Makinto at the piano and flute, to Joel Shenk in committees and ushering on the floor; to Dr. Juan Martinez, and Pastors Chuwang Pam, Jennifer Davis Sensenig, Jason Evans, and Shane Hipps; to the Los Angeles Faith Chapel worship team, and musicians from JKI Maranatha and Riverside Brethren in Christ Church, plus literally dozens of others who served in the worship life of Mennonite Church USA gathered that week: Thank you. Thank you for drawing me and thousands of others into a deeper, richer, more fulfilling walk with Jesus Christ our Lord. The way to live the call is discovered in heart of worship, and I rediscovered that in San Jose.



Silas Crews, left photo

welcomes delegates to California; worship in San Jose's Civic Auditorium, Trinity pastor Shane Hipps preaches with an Arizona analogy.

In the Spirit, we are one

By **Brother Makinto**,
Los Angeles Faith Chapel, coordinator Amahoro International

Is it possible to worship God in Spirit and in Truth? The Makinto family drove to San Jose in their new minivan to attend a pre-convention worship retreat. We were joined by Tom Harder and his family from Wichita, Kan.; the singers from Reba Praise (Illinois) with Helen Hudgens; Johan Sendjaja (piano) and Harry Manuhutu (bass), from the Indonesian Christian Fellowship-Maranatha Harvest, Reseda; Brian Bothwell (drums) from Riverside Brethren in Christ congregation. We gathered as a worship team under the leadership of Kevin Clark.

For a day and a half, we prayed for harmony and peace to fulfill our complicated task of leading diverse and meaningful worship during the convention. Scriptures invite us to worship God in Spirit and in Truth.

The first worship session began with a drum procession. A handful of percussionists walked through the expectant crowd of freshly arrived Mennonites in San Jose. The familiar hymn "I Love to Tell the Story" was sung with a thriving African beat. This symbolized a uniting of two styles often thought irreconcilable. It is important to recognize that we are a diverse church – a church of Africans, Indonesians, Latinos, African Americans, Native Americans and ethnic Mennonites from the American continent.

Yes, we praised God in gospel, hymns, contemporary worship, Spanish, with drums and a cappella, and worshipped God in Spirit and in Truth. As a worship team we intended to be a team, not one person leading music throughout the whole week.

Helen, Tom and I spent more than a year rubbing heads, praying together and submitting ourselves to one another. Each of us fulfilled the exact role God gave us for this convention. Helen led the choir, the vocal group, and wrote specific arrangements. Tom led the congregation in the hymns, providing a balance to the different worship expressions. I offered general leadership, coordinated the band, wrote specific songs for the convention and also led in song.

The harmony that emanated from our team effort translated into intense worship. We offer it as an example for collaboration as the wider church seeks to embrace diversity and oneness.

Ken Medema's amazing gift of prophesying in song straight from the message touched me. I found a match in a musical sense, someone who artistically inspired me. His prophetic voice called and continues to call me to seek God in a deeper and more uncompromising way: Life is short! Live the call!

On our drive back to Los Angeles, we sang "Te alabare," "Live the Call" and "Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow." We recognized God's presence with us. We were in awe of God's love, mercy and grace. At the convention we glimpsed Eph. 4: 4-5 ... one body, one Spirit, one faith, one Lord, one baptism, one God. We acknowledge that Spirit-filled worship at a Mennonite Church USA convention is possible.

— Reprinted from *Shalom Champions*



Brian Schlabach photo

Makinto, wife Mukarabe and others drum during the stirring opening ceremony that blended African rhythms with an old gospel hymn.

Seeking God's way ahead



Tucson pastor Bryce Miller in the San Jose Convention Center.

Hearing the call

By Bryce L. Miller, pastor, Shalom Mennonite, Tucson

I have attended all but two assemblies over my 30 short years as a youth, adult, volunteer, and worker. Each meeting has its own voice, its own reality, its own call. The voices of call that I heard in San Jose are many and diverse, but yet clear, hopeful, and promising.

Spending time with our youth, I heard the call of hope and faith in excited voices calling to each other in joy, hope and spirit. I heard (and palpably felt) the energy of the Spirit moving through the Body of Christ as our young leaders combined their voices and bodies in praise of God. I heard their call that their time of faith in action is not a future-tense wish, but a present fact. I also heard a strong desire for a continued living of authentic, active and activating faith as they live into the future that God has for them.

Moving within the adult realm, I heard the call to take up yet again the faithful struggle of listening for God's will for the church. The honest disagreements of those seeking God's way in the complex areas of health care, polity, and other business sounds the call to seek God's will for this church, even through widely divergent experiences, voices and vision for what that future is, trusting God's spirit to lead us.

But most of all, the call that resounds most clearly to me is one that calls the church to be the church, to seek the Spirit that God has given us to share, and to continue to in that Spirit to be the Church of Christ. We have been given the opportunity to be God's people in this time and this place. We are given the imperative to bring our gifts to our brothers and sisters around the world, sharing them with all people. We do this by being who we are authentically are, God's people, all the time recognizing our brokenness honestly and truthfully. By God's grace, we need to continue the work of healing our brokenness our divisions, deconstructing that which binds us. But we also need to work within our brokenness toward God's future, working past division toward a hopeful and fruitful future.

These calls and more like them leave me with a particular wish: that these words be more than just a pithy conference saying. Conference is a high point, an isolated piece which prepares us for life hereafter. But it is not real life, not real living. The call of conference is a sending call that takes out to our congregations and our world. May we each encounter the grace, peace, and love that we each need in all of life as we go about the messy work of actually living the call.



Jennifer Davis Sensenig of Pasadena Mennonite speaks – on July 4 – on what it means to be the Mennonite church within a superpower nation, in a time of war, in light of Joseph's Egypt story and Paul's exhortation to “put on the whole armor of God.”

Silas Crews photo

Indonesian Mennonites form U.S. fellowship

San Jose marked two significant milestones for the growing Indonesian community in the U.S. Mennonite church. From being sparsely represented in the past, the 18 churches of predominantly Indonesian heritage came to San Jose more than 50 strong. And at a meeting on July 4, they founded the Indonesian Mennonite Association, a body to encourage fellowship and give Indonesian Mennonites a voice in the larger church. The congregations are primarily in Southern California, with a sister church in Philadelphia. For more information, contact Virgo Handojo at vhandojo@yahoo.com.



Part of the Indonesian contingent at San Jose: from left, Utomo Lukman, Virgo Handojo, Ruben Agas, Aldo Siahaan, Rebeka Moeljono, Sunoko Lin.

‘Giveaways’ that keep on giving

Mennonite colleges arrive at each biennial Mennonite Youth Convention eager to advertise their programs and offer a flavor of their campuses to high schoolers milling around the exhibit area. Modest but fun giveaway items are typically part of the draw.

Bethel College did something different with its display this year. Staff from the Kansas school’s admissions, alumni and church relations offices figured out what they would spend on giveaways – around \$4,000 – and decided instead to divide that up among three service organizations within the Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference region, plus one other. The amounts depended on youth visiting the display each day and dropping marked tickets into a special ticket tumbler. When they came by to leave their tickets, youth would sign a big canvas to be presented to each of the service organizations.

The first group received its check Aug. 12, when Bethel’s director of church relations, Dale Schrag, visited Trinity Mennonite in Glendale, Ariz., the sponsoring congregation for Goldensun Peace Ministries, a community-building program for developmentally disabled adults.

Then, on Sept. 5, Hopi Mission School – which has its roots in a Mennonite mission that began on the Hopi Reservation in the 1880s – gratefully received a gift of \$1,179. On hand to present the check at a school assembly was admissions counsellor Lowell Wyse, who spent nine months at the school as a Mennonite Voluntary Service worker, 2001-02. The kids were amazed at all the names on the banner, Wyse recalled. “One of them said, ‘There are a million names on that!’ They loved it. . . . I explained the connection between the two schools [and] told them that all the names on the canvas were a reminder that a lot of people know about Hopi Mission School and support it.”

The remaining sum was dedicated to a new voluntary service program in Southern California.

And that wasn’t the only way Kingdom work in our region benefited from the generosity of the larger church. A special offering was received one day in support of the Mennonite Voluntary Service Unit in San Francisco, where sponsoring church First Mennonite is fundraising to buy the unit house. The offering brought in more than \$6,300.

Photos, at right from top: Youth at San Jose 2007 sign the giveaway banner at the Hesston College booth in the exhibit area. Dale Schrag (right) presents one of the banners and a check for \$1,000 to Goldensun executive director Leroy Willems following a Sunday worship service at Trinity. And children at the Hopi Mission School celebrate receiving their share of the Hesston gift with Lowell Wyse, left, and new principal David Brand.



Margo Schrag photo

Jim Yoder photo



From California to Louisiana, with love

Kansas youth work on the first level of a house built on the San Jose convention center parking lot in just three days – a demonstration project by Mennonite Disaster Service for “panel homes” that can be prebuilt where volunteers live, taken apart, shipped to a disaster area and quickly reassembled. More than 250 volunteers made the project a success, and on Aug. 3, Mac and Lydia Lodrigue of Point aux Chenes, La., who had lived in a FEMA trailer with five children since Hurricane Katrina, became happy owners of a home built in San Jose. That wasn’t all: nearly 3,000 attendees gave time and energy to local service projects, from weeding community gardens to helping out at kids’ clubs and food banks.

What's the scoop?

People and events



First Mennonite Paso Robles

First Mennonite Church of Paso Robles marked a wonderful milestone Nov. 11, when it celebrated its 110th birthday. The congregation has changed a lot in those years, from its origins as a traditional German-speaking congregation to one now led by minister **Pastor Romero**, whose origins are in Belize. Yet the church still includes many people descended from the original families who settled in the area.

In 1896, Jacob Hege, a Mennonite immigrant from Bavaria, wrote a letter to a German Mennonite newspaper commenting that coastal California would be an excellent place for Mennonite families to settle due its mild weather and lush land. Among those to answer was Jacob Claassen, originally from West Prussia. The Hege and Claassen families settled in the area, soon to be followed by other Mennonite families from Beatrice, Neb., including minister A.J. Wiebe. Together, they would form a congregation that over the years would split geographically, only to reunite in the 1950s. Paso Robles now has the distinction of being California's oldest organized Mennonite church, according to longtime member **Robert Toevs**, Claassen's great-grandson.

According to Toevs, the original Mennonite settlers to the area were true pioneers who struggled through the hardships and challenges of settling in a remote frontier land. It could be a dangerous business; over the years, Claassen crushed his ankle under a horse and accidentally shot his hand off with a shotgun while attending to farm work, Toevs told the *Paso Robles Press*.

Toevs said the congregation has made a concerted effort to involve itself in the community that grew around

the church. "In the old days, the Mennonites were always very quiet," he said. "When the Anabaptist movement first started in Europe, they were persecuted so that they just kept to themselves. And, you know what? That is a hard habit to break."

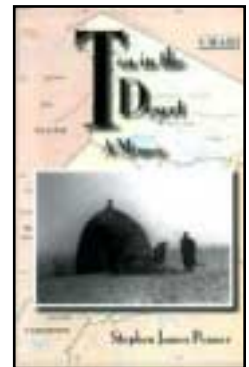
According to Toevs, the congregation has worked hard to make an impact on the community through a preschool that they run and through disaster relief work.

"We are reaching out to community, and we do things for the community, and we would like to get new people coming [to our services]," he said.

November's service of thanksgiving included a historical slide show and a performance by the Singing Hands Choir, and was followed by a celebratory barbecue.

— *Thanks to the Paso Robles Press for parts of this report*

Steve Penner, pastor at First Mennonite Church Reedley, has published a memoir of his experiences in the early 1970s as the first permanent Mennonite Central Committee worker in Chad, a time when severe drought gripped the Sahel of Africa. In *Tea in the Desert: A Memoir*, he writes of his encounters with poverty, death, faith and love. "This book is both a coming of age story and a window into one chapter of the North American Mennonite experience in Africa," says the publisher. It's available through Masthof Press (www.masthof.com) for \$14.99.



Family Mennonite Church of Los Angeles held its annual Harvest Service on Oct. 28, with the theme of "The soil determines the Harvest," based on Matthew 13: 3-9. The annual event, in which members of other local Mennonite churches were invited to participate, celebrates God's provision and blessings. It features a choir and a procession of children carrying baskets of fruit and vegetables, while youth and adults bring forward monetary offerings, with sisters dressed in white and brothers in black and white.

It's not often that a congregation has the joy of commissioning two families at once for Christian service in a foreign country. So **Pasadena Mennonite** made the most of it on Pentecost Sunday as members blessed **Dale and Marika Christy** and **Peter and Cheryl Smith** for service with Mennonite Central Committee in Africa.

Highlights included prayers by the congregation's children for the Smiths' two young boys, Brendan and Jason, and food and decorations with an African theme.

The Christys will be doing assessment work in refugee camps in Uganda, based in Boroboro. Peter Smith is co-facilitating classes in conflict resolution and peacemaking for lay leaders from all over Africa who come to the Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation in Kitwe, Zambia, while Cheryl is also involved in teaching and leading seminars, most recently a class on trauma heading and counselling.

They are grateful for our prayers and encouragement as they find their footing in a new culture and way of life.

Members of Pasadena Mennonite Church and interim minister Katherine Pitts gather around Dale and Marika Christy, left, and Cheryl and Peter Smith to bless their ministry with Mennonite Central Committee in Africa.



A number of PSMC member churches and their communities benefited this summer from the **Mennonite Central Committee Summer Service Program**, which enables people of diverse backgrounds, such as African-American, Asian, Hispanic and Native American, to work with a church or service agency in their home community for 10 weeks. MCC U.S. and local congregations support the participants. Of this year's 70 participants across the country, many were in the Southwest, including:

In Reedley, Calif., **Rebecca Bueno** worked with Love Inc.; **Angelina Valdovinos** with First Mennonite Church, and **Mari (Julie) Villasenor** with Community Youth Ministries. **Claudia Jimenez**, of Fowler, Calif., lent a hand at the West Coast Mennonite Central Committee office in Reedley.

In Phoenix, **Rudy Estrada** worked with Goldensun Peace Ministries. **Jeremy James**, of Phoenix, served with Upper Room Mennonite Church of Chinle, Ariz.

Yohanna Jonathan, of Alhambra, and **Melissa Lie**, of Hacienda Heights, served at Indonesian Worship Church in San Gabriel, Calif.

Joyce Kusuma, of Walnut, Calif., worked with Gereja Kristis Injili in Pomona.

In Los Angeles, **Nana Opong** served at All Souls Christian Church, and **Dorcas Orija** at Royal Dominion Family Chapel.

Kaneng Jennifer Pam, of Corona, worked with Los Angeles Faith Chapel in Inglewood.

Lily Wong of Monterey Park served with Jemaat Kristen Indonesia Anugerah in Sierra Madre, Calif.

As Mennonites in Southern California continue to work toward the vision of developing Anabaptist-minded leaders who are committed to make new disciples, build authentic community, and work toward reconciliation, **Shalom Ministries**, the parent body of the Center for Anabaptist Leadership, is beginning a new initiative to connect youth and young adults within the region's Mennonite churches. The focus will be on building relationships and creating leadership opportunities so young adults feel invested in the church's future and can begin to have an impact on what that future looks like.

Ultimately, the goal is to organize and empower the next generation of leaders in the Mennonite Church in Southern California. CAL staff member **Joel Shenk** is leading this project, and has begun the process of contacting churches to meet with pastors and youth pastors. If you are interested in learning more and would like to meet with Joel, contact the CAL office or email Joel at joelshenk@gmail.com.

Mennonite Disaster Service has grown considerably since the devastating 2005 hurricanes. In the past two years, this important ministry has had more bi-national project sites open at the same time than ever before in its 50 years. More and more volunteers are connecting with disaster survivors and communities through MDS – some 8,000 in the Gulf Coast area and 3,000 in tornado-stricken Greensburg, Kan., since September 2005.

This increase has led to the creation of a single-number call center to make it easier for MDS volunteers to participate with disaster recovery. Short-term and all U.S. volunteers can now call (800) 241-8111 to schedule time at a project. "We are hoping that by streamlining this

process, volunteers will find it easier and more efficient," said Kevin King, executive director at MDS.

Two courses offered by the School for Urban Mission will take place in the near year:

CAL -110, The Anabaptist Witness, taught by Jeff Wright, is an investigation and assessment of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition from historical, theological, pastoral and missiological points of view in light of an urban, post-modern context. Students who complete this course will develop a better appreciation for the history of the Christian movement from a non-Constantinian point of view, and the Anabaptist-Mennonite story in particular, as well as explore pastoral leadership from an Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective. Students who register by March 28, 2007, will receive the complete course outline and reading list before the first session. (May 3, 10, 17 and June 7 and 14)

CAL 130, The Kingdom of God in the City, seeks to engage urban practitioners in their role as God's agent for missional transformation in the city by exploring human relationships from multifaceted experiences. Special consideration will be given to the ethics of the Kingdom of God, exploring Christian responses to urban problems and tools for confronting the powers of the city. The instructor is Valentina Satvedi. (Jan. 26; Feb. 9; March 1, 29; April 12)

Course sessions will take place 9 a.m.-5 p.m. on the campus of William Carey International University, 1539 East Howard St., Pasadena CA 91104. Qualifying students can take these courses for credit through an arrangement with Hesston College and its Pastoral Ministries Program. Courses are taught using lectures, classroom discussion, and writing projects.

For information, contact Shalom Ministries at (626) 720-8100 or urban_anabaptist@yahoo.com

Heather Linscheid of Mennonite Community Church in Fresno began serving a one-year term with Mennonite Voluntary Service in Seattle in September. A 2007 graduate of Bethel College, she's the daughter of Rebecca and Donald Linscheid. MVS is a program of Mennonite Mission Network that invites adults 20 and older to do practical Christian ministry in more than 20 locations in the United States.

Mirawati Kurnia Moeljono, who graduated from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary this spring with a master of arts degree in theological studies, has begun a mission service assignment through Mennonite Central Committee as a church community worker at **Gereja Kristis Injili** in Pomona, Calif. Her work focuses on immigration issues. Moeljono previously earned a theological studies degree from an Indonesian seminary and a associate of applied art and science degree from Hesston College. She was one of 39 students graduating from the Mennonite seminary in Elkhart, Ind., this year.

"Relationships with teachers, students and all of the AMBS staff have been a blessing in my life and ministry," she said of her time at AMBS. "International student fellowship has been meaningful and enriched my Christian worldview. The subjects that I studied have helped me to be a witness by word and action."

—from an AMBS report by Eric Saner

Jan. 20
Stewardship
Sunday

Jan. 27
Mennonite World
Fellowship Sunday

Feb. 1-2
PSMC Winter
Assembly, Los
Angeles

March 23
Easter

May 4
Many Peoples
Sunday

June 20-21
PSMC Summer
Assembly,
Tucson



Heather Linscheid



Mirawati Kurnia Moeljono

News you can use: Resources for congregations

PSMC contacts

Moderator

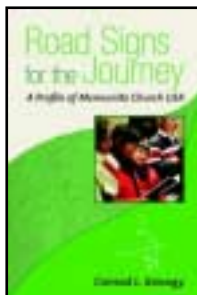
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Road Signs for the Journey: A Profile of Mennonite Church USA (Herald Press, \$12.99) and Resources for the Journey, a DVD and CD (\$19.99) offer a great snapshot of the Mennonite Church based on data from a 2006 survey of members. Conrad L. Kanagy's analysis provides spiritual and sociological markers of the church today. He notes changes since the surveys of Mennonites done in 1972 and 1989, and compares the denomination with other U.S. faith traditions. His pastoral and missional perspective points to signs of hope and renewal. "Weaving together strands of compiled data, biblical prophecy, and contextual insights, Kanagy reveals the fabric of Mennonite Church USA today. This book is a gift – and a wake-up call – for the church today," observes Janet Plenert. The DVD features seven modules that can be used in worship, small groups, or Sunday school classes: *God's People – Then and Now*; *God's Call*; *Homeland Security*; *God's Words*; *The Fall*; *Exiled in Babylon*; and *Journeying Toward God's Reign*. The CD contains printable resources including daily devotionals, worship resources, small group and Sunday school curriculum, leader's guides, survey questions from the 2006 Mennonite Member Profile; and reflection questions. Modules can be used individually or over 7 weeks.



Take Our Moments and Our Days: An Anabaptist Prayer Book (Herald Press, \$22.99 in leatherette cover) is a four-week cycle of morning and evening prayer services for Ordinary Time (the part of the year not devoted to special seasons). The services are designed for use by families or small groups and can also be used by individuals. While emphasizing Anabaptist themes, the book also draws on other Christian traditions. Virtually all the prayers are directly from the Bible.



In May 2007, a Mennonite Church USA delegation traveled to Palestine/Israel to talk with Christians, Jews and Muslims and have a common conversation around issues related to divestment and Christian Zionism. Their letter, "An Open Letter to Mennonite Church USA Congregations: Becoming Peacemakers in Israel/Palestine," and related resources can be found at <http://peace.mennolink.org/resources/palestineletter>

Pacific Southwest
Mennonite Conference

Looking for resources on "Creation care"? Check out MCC's site at www.mcc.org/careforcreation/. You can also sign up to receive action alerts about environmental issues at www.mcc.org/us/washington/advocate/hotlines/signup.html.

Under Vine and Fig Tree: Biblical Theologies of Land and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict connects the stories of suffering and struggle of families and villages in the Holy Land of today with ancient and modern historic conflicts. The book, co-published with Herald Press, is edited by Alain Epp Weaver. For more information, see www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com/uft/uft.htm



Relationships need the same care and maintenance we give any valued possession, like a car, says Harvey Yoder, author of *Lasting Marriage: The Owner's Manual* (Herald Press, \$11.99). While we assume our cars will require more care as they age, we often don't apply that reasoning to marriage. This manual looks at premarital preparation, relationship maintenance, and sustaining a healthy marriage during the child-rearing years. Yoder emphasizes areas often ignored, including the importance of a solid support network of friends, family, and congregational family; and the need to take seriously Jesus' teaching about a joyful and simple lifestyle.



If you're just getting to know the new "purple book," check out the *Sing the Story* CD by Kenneth Nafziger and the Story Musicians (\$15.99). The music featured here is based on the hymnal supplement *Sing the Story* published this year, which focuses on seasons of the church year from Advent to Pentecost, telling the story of Jesus. Featuring the Story Musicians; Shekinah, a female singing group; and Sons of the Day, young men who explore a cappella traditions.



Support for PSMC

Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference gathers California, Arizona and Nevada churches in partnership for leadership, mission and congregational renewal. Giving by congregations and individuals ensures that conference ministers are funded, mission activities flourish, and resources are available for church nurture. Donations may be sent to:
Treasurer, Box CAL, 1539 E. Howard St.,

