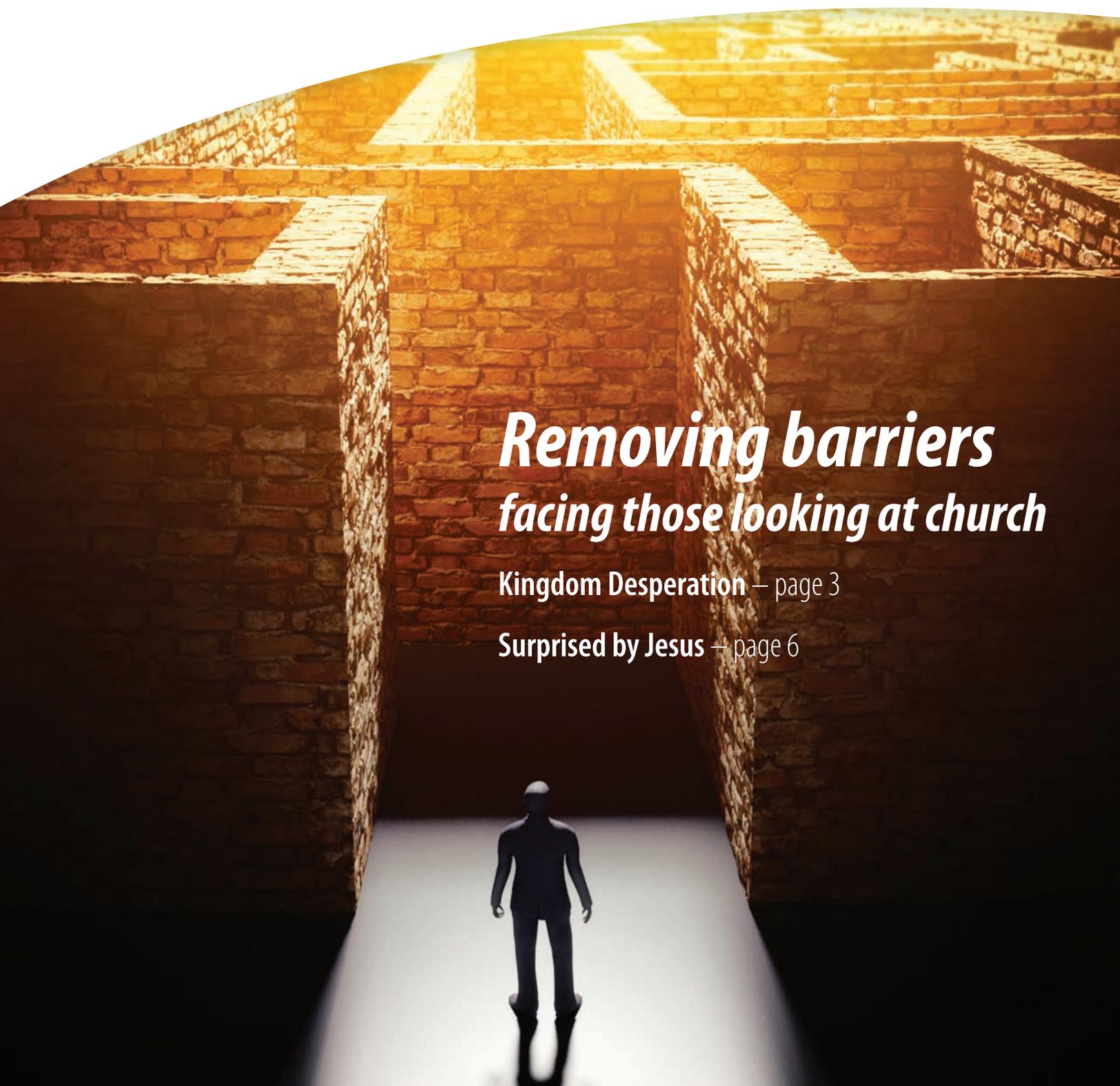




LANCASTER MENNONITE CONFERENCE
Shalom NEWS

JANUARY – MARCH 2018



***Removing barriers
facing those looking at church***

Kingdom Desperation – page 3

Surprised by Jesus – page 6

SAVE THE DATE

Rebuild, Repair, Revive

Isaiah 61:4 – They will Rebuild the ancient ruins, Repairing cities destroyed long ago. They will Revive them, through they have been deserted for many generations.



Celebration of Church Life

Friday, March 23, 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 24, 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Join with the LMC family as we gather for the 2018 Celebration of Church Life at Weaverland, in East Earl, Pa. This is an opportunity for all ages to gather, grow and hear how the Holy Spirit is at work among our LMC congregations.

To assist with logistical planning, please register for the meal, childcare and your seminars, beginning in January. Visit our website www.lancasterconference.org to find the registration link.



January – March 2018

Issue 1 / Volume 38

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ON THE COVER: illustration by iStock.

Kingdom Desperation

Following Jesus' example of removing barriers

BY PASTOR JOE SHERER

Desperation. It can be a good thing.

Desperation can cause people to finally get the help they need. It can cause people faced with health threats to finally stop smoking or to start exercising. It can motivate people to invent solutions to common problems or find cures for diseases.

Desperate times call for desperate measures, they say.

Desperation can cause congregations to become willing to change in order to thrive or even survive. If we congregations are indifferent to our own health, or if we lack a passionate desire to follow Jesus's Great Commission, we usually become indifferent. We can become indifferent to what might keep people away or from visiting or joining us or cause young people to leave. Indifference can blind us to the artificial barriers we've erected which make it less likely that people will encounter Jesus.

FROM THE GOSPELS

When Jesus met a woman by a well in John 4, he was far from indifferent. Jesus sensed her need and was filled with a strong desire to see her become whole. He deliberately tore through the barriers that easily could have kept her from the Kingdom. A Jew, Jesus ignored the competing religious franchises as well as the racial barriers of his day and talked with a Samaritan. That was unthinkable! In speaking to a woman in public, Jesus also dismantled the gender barrier of the day. That would have been viewed by many as preposterous! Jesus ignored barriers of perceived respectability by openly talking with a woman whose varied relationships with men had unleashed the gossiping tongues of the self-righteous. Jesus even removed barriers in the woman's own

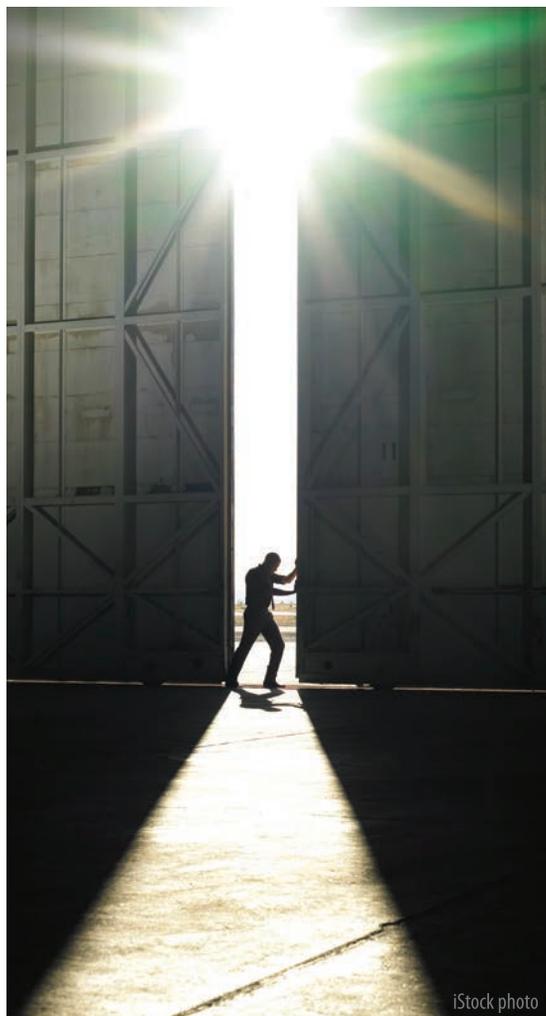
mind by asking her for a drink of water. That effectively put him in her debt and elevated her position in the dialogue.

No doubt this woman had often felt rejected, ignored, shamed, and used by men in particular. Because Jesus dismantled barriers, however, she felt noticed, valued, and safe. Jesus treated her with love and respect, even while gently but unapologetically naming her sin. Jesus implicitly called for a change in her life, but did it in a way that gave her hope that she could break out of her painful and shattered past. She was changed.

Among the closest disciples Jesus had called were both Matthew, who had worked for the Romans as a tax-collector, and Simon, who was part of the Zealots, a group which bitterly opposed Roman taxation. Jesus' invitation signaled to them as well as to the religious establishment who despised them both that God's Kingdom is open to all. Political perspectives are no barrier. Jesus would eat with anyone, even notorious sinners, touch anyone, including lepers, and give attention to anyone, even children. By doing so, Jesus made salvation accessible, greatly rattling the chains of the self-righteous obstructionists.

WHAT ABOUT TODAY?

Even in the Body of Christ, we still have competing religious franchises, racial barriers, barriers of perceived respectability, and gender discrimination, all of which keep the unchurched and under-churched at bay. If all the cars in our parking lots are newer and pricey, how many people drive on by because it seems clear to them that their world is quite unlike ours? Using language that is foreign to the unredeemed, dressing for worship in ways they



iStock photo

wouldn't or couldn't, operating from unwritten rules because we expect people to know these things – these can all be barriers which make others feel rejected, ignored, and shamed. They may view our churches as irrelevant to their lives. Too often they are right.

We know God wants the church to grow; God is not willing that any should perish. The church is the best hope for our world, and hope for the world is Kingdom business.

BARRIER BUSTING

In Acts 6, the church removed a barrier to the Grecian Jews by appointing Grecian elders to look out for the welfare of their widows. In Acts 11, Peter told his Cornelius story and convinced the church leaders that God was deliberately welcoming new believers who had never been Jewish: another barrier gone.

Fast forward to 1889 when one of my predecessors at Willow Street Mennonite Church became the very first pastor in Lancaster Conference to preach in English rather than German. With some reluctance and the passage of many years, the whole conference came to agree that German was not the only “spiritually correct” language and, in fact, was quickly becoming irrelevant in this country: more barrier-busting. Decades later our conference agreed that believers in Africa didn't need to adopt our cultural attire in order to follow Jesus. If we're open to God's Spirit, every generation discovers ways in which we've added things to the gospel that make it unnecessarily distasteful. What are those things for us, today?

We all have our own cultural baggage; it's part of being human. Can we celebrate the good parts of our own particular culture without cloaking the gospel in it?

We all have our own cultural baggage; it's part of being human. Can we celebrate the good parts of our own particular culture without cloaking the gospel in it? Jesus condemned the teachers of the law for loading people down with burdens they could hardly carry. The gospel demands

enough of people – dying to self, surrendering to Jesus, turning from sin – without adding additional hurdles or prohibitions.

Congregational “desperation” can be rooted in things other than the fear of closing a church. Reaching our communities and even our own young people for Jesus requires that we think like effective missionaries. We must be desperate enough to see people follow Christ that we are willing to lay down preferences, biases, pretenses, and opinions that aren't supported by Scripture. Authenticity tops nearly everything else for younger people, including those who grew up among us. A passionate urgency to help others live for Jesus should motivate us to look and listen to ourselves closely.

On several occasions I have had the opportunity to visit a mosque. The discomfort I felt with the unfamiliar helps me identify with others who know nothing of Jesus and little about those who follow Jesus. Perhaps we could ask an unchurched friend to visit our church and then give feedback on their experience.

I have been connecting with a man who visited our church recently, the first visit to a church in his life. We need to constantly look at ourselves, our worship, language, unwritten rules, assumptions, interactions with people, and even our church facilities, through the eyes and ears of someone like him. Each of us also needs to deliberately befriend people who do not know Jesus, not just so we can love them to Jesus but also to better understand those we are trying to reach.

The stretching sounds we hear as we read of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 are from Christians who were trying to dismantle their own artificial barriers to faith. It was hard, but they succeeded because they desperately wanted people to find new life in Christ. Let's beg the Holy Spirit to give us this desperation as well and show us what artificial barriers to Jesus we have erected. ■



Pastor Joe Sherer is the lead pastor at Willow Street Mennonite Church.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Through an outreach in Lancaster city, members of our congregation met a young couple and began interacting with them. This couple started to attend our worship services, and we formed a small group to walk with them in addressing some of their needs. They came to relate to one of those couples like they are adopted “parents” and call the others their adopted “uncles and aunts.” In time this couple surrendered their lives to Jesus. Although unmarried, they lived together along with their infant son. They desired to get married but felt they couldn't afford a wedding. I suggested we could make a wedding possible for them. Following pre-marital counseling, we planned one of our Sunday morning services around their wedding, which included a Parent-Baby Dedication. Their attendants were their adopted “parents” and “uncles and aunts,” and a Fellowship Meal afterward was their reception. The congregation has eagerly loved on this couple, and they are an important part of the Body. Conventional? Not at all...but Jesus is exalted!

Desesperación en el Reino – *Imitando a Jesús al quitar barreras*

POR PASTOR JOE SHERER (traducido por Lic. Andrés Prins)

La desesperación. Puede ser una cosa buena.

La desesperación puede hacer que alguien finalmente busque la ayuda que necesita. Puede lograr que personas que corren serios riesgos de salud por fin dejen de fumar o empiecen a hacer ejercicio. Puede motivar a gente a inventar soluciones a problemas comunes o a encontrar curas para enfermedades.

Se dice que situaciones desesperantes demandan medidas desesperadas.

La desesperación puede hacer que congregaciones se dispongan a cambiar para así poder crecer o quizás simplemente sobrevivir. Si como congregaciones somos indiferentes a nuestra propia salud, o si carecemos de un deseo apasionado de seguir la Gran Comisión de Jesucristo, solemos volvernos indiferentes. Podemos llegar a ser indiferentes a lo que hace que las personas se mantengan alejadas de nuestras iglesias o no quieran visitarnos o unirse a nosotros o lo que causa que los jóvenes se vayan. La indiferencia puede cegarnos a las barreras artificiales que hemos levantado y que dificultan que las personas se encuentren con Jesucristo.

DE LOS EVANGELIOS

Cuando Jesús se encontró con una mujer junto al pozo en Juan 4, ¡él fue todo lo contrario a indiferente! Percibió la necesidad de ella y se llenó de un fuerte anhelo de verla sanada. Jesús deliberadamente franqueó las barreras que fácilmente podrían haberla excluida del Reino. Aunque judío, Jesús hizo caso omiso tanto de los contrapuestos reclamos religiosos como de los prejuicios raciales de su día y se puso a conversar con una samaritana. ¡Eso era impensable! Al hablar con una mujer en público, Jesús también dismantló barreras de esa época de separación entre los sexos. ¡Muchos habrán considerado su proceder escandalosamente inadmisibles! Él hizo a un lado las nociones de respetabilidad al hablar abiertamente con una mujer cuyas diversas relaciones con hombres habían desatado las lenguas chismosas de los santurrones. Hasta de la propia mente de la mujer Jesús llegó a eliminar barreras al pedirle un sorbo de agua.

Sin duda esta mujer a menudo se había sentido rechazada, ignorada, avergonzada, y abusada, particularmente por hombres. Sin embargo, debido a que Jesús dismantló las barreras, ella se sintió notada, valorada y segura. Él la trató con amor y respeto, incluso cuando, con sensibilidad pero sin disimular, sacó a colación su pecado. Implícitamente la llamó a un cambio de vida, pero lo hizo de una manera que inspiraba en ella la esperanza de que podía liberarse de su pasado doloroso y destrozado. ¡Y ella fue cambiada!

Entre los discípulos más cercanos que Jesús había llamado figuraban Mateo, que había colaborado con los romanos como recolector de impuestos, y Simón, partidario de los zelotes, un grupo que a muerte se oponía a pagar los impuestos romanos. La invitación del Mesías a los dos era indicio claro, tanto para ellos como para el establecimiento religioso que detestaba a ambos, de que el reino de Dios es accesible para todos. Las persuasiones políticas no son un obstáculo. Jesús comía con cualquiera, aun con los pecadores de peor fama, tocaba a cualquiera, incluso a leprosos, y atendía a cualquiera, hasta a los niños. Procediendo así, él hacía alcanzable la salvación, molestando mucho a los santurrones obstruccionistas.

¿Y QUÉ DE HOY?

Aun dentro del Cuerpo de Cristo, todavía tenemos partidismos encontrados, barreras raciales, prejuicios en cuanto a lo respetable, y discriminación de sexo, todo lo cual mantiene alejada a la gente que no se crió en la iglesia. Si todos los automóviles en el estacionamiento de nuestra iglesia son nuevos y caros, ¿cuántas personas pasarán de largo con la convicción de que su mundo es muy diferente al nuestro? Usar lenguaje que resulta extraño para los inconversos, ir al culto vistiendo ropa que ellos no usarían, regirse por reglas no escritas que esperamos que todos

conozcan —ésta pueden fácilmente ser barreras que hacen que otros se sientan rechazados, ignorados y avergonzados, haciéndolos considerar a nuestras iglesias como irrelevantes para sus vidas. Con demasiada frecuencia tienen razón.

Sabemos que Dios desea que la iglesia crezca; Dios no quiere que ninguno perezca. La iglesia es la mejor esperanza para nuestro mundo, y esperanza para el mundo es un asunto del Reino.

DESTROZANDO BARRERAS

En Hechos 6, la iglesia quitó una barrera para los judíos helenistas al nombrar a líderes helenistas para velar por el bienestar de sus viudas. En Hechos 11, Pedro cuenta la historia de su experiencia con Cornelio y convence a los líderes de la iglesia que Dios está dándole la bienvenida a nuevos creyentes que nunca han sido judíos: otra barrera deshecha.

Adelantémonos a 1889 cuando uno de mis predecesores en la Iglesia Menonita de Willow Street se vuelve el primer pastor de la Conferencia de Lancaster en predicar en inglés en vez de alemán. Con cierta reticencia y el paso de muchos años, toda la Conferencia llegó a estar de acuerdo que el alemán no era el único idioma “espiritualmente correcto” y que rápidamente se estaba volviendo irrelevante en este país: más barreras que caían. Décadas más tarde nuestra Conferencia aprobó que los creyentes africanos no necesitaban adoptar la vestimenta de nuestra cultura occidental para poder seguir a Jesús. Si nos abrimos al Espíritu de Dios, en cada generación descubrimos maneras en que hemos añadido cosas al evangelio que lo vuelven innecesariamente desagradable. ¿Cuáles son esas cosas para nosotros hoy?

Todos tenemos nuestro bagaje cultural; es inherente al ser humano. ¿Podemos celebrar las partes buenas de nuestra cultura particular sin tapar el evangelio con ellas? Jesús condenó a los maestros de la ley por echar sobre las personas cargas pesadas que apenas podían alzar. El evangelio ya exige mucho de las personas —el morir a sí mismas, rendir todo a Jesucristo, darle la espalda al pecado— sin necesidad de añadir más impedimentos o prohibiciones.

La “desesperación” congregacional puede estar basada en otras cosas que no sean el temor de tener que cerrar una iglesia. Alcanzar a nuestras comunidades e incluso a nuestros propios jóvenes requiere que pensemos como buenos misioneros. Tenemos que estar suficientemente desesperados queriendo ver a personas siguiendo a Cristo que nos dispongamos a renunciar a cualquier preferencia, prejuicio, pretexto u opinión que no tenga sólidas bases bíblicas. La autenticidad es casi lo más preciado para la juventud, incluyendo aquellos que se criaron en la iglesia. Una urgencia apasionada para ayudar a otros a vivir para Jesús debería motivarnos a un minucioso autoexamen.

En varias oportunidades he tenido ocasión de visitar una mezquita. La incomodidad que sentí con lo desconocido me ayuda a poder identificarme con aquellos que no saben nada de Jesús y muy poco de quienes lo seguimos. Quizás podríamos pedirle a un amigo no cristiano que visite nuestra iglesia y luego nos describa su experiencia.

Me he estado relacionando con un hombre que visitó nuestra congregación hace poco —la primera vez en su vida que pisaba una iglesia. Tenemos que constantemente reexaminar nuestros cultos, nuestro lenguaje, nuestras reglas no escritas, nuestras suposiciones, interacciones, y hasta instalaciones a través de los ojos y oídos de alguien como él. Todos nosotros también necesitamos deliberadamente hacernos de amigos que no conocen a Jesús, no solo para poder compartirles el amor de Cristo, sino también para llegar a comprender mejor a las personas a quienes estamos tratando de alcanzar.

Los “crujidos” que escuchamos al leer del Concilio de Jerusalén en Hechos 15 vienen de cristianos tratando de dismantelar sus propias barreras artificiales a la fe. No fue fácil, pero lo lograron gracias a que desesperadamente querían que otras personas encontraran nueva vida en Cristo. ¡Rogemos al Espíritu Santo que nos conceda también a nosotros esa misma desesperación y nos muestre cuáles son las barreras artificiales que hemos alzado y que obstaculizan el acceso a Jesús! ■

El Pastor Joe Sherer es el pastor principal de la Iglesia Menonita de Willow Street.



Surprised *by* Jesus

The perspective of someone willing to give church 'another shot'

BY LILLIAN FAITH RUARK

God must have given my parents a nudge when they named me. “Faith” has played a key role in my life as both my greatest struggle and my saving grace. Early on, I became aware of a powerful but peaceful energy I could connect with through nature: walking through the woods, watching a sunrise, listening to waves, or hearing a bird’s song. The stillness of those moments provided a sense of comfort, safety, and peace I could only describe as being embraced by a powerful, loving, invisible force. Creating art or listening to music could also stir this feeling. What was this? My mother said that I was experiencing the love of God, of Jesus. My young brain couldn’t help but wonder, “If this is what it feels like to connect with Jesus and feel his love, why don’t I feel this way at church?” Thirty years later, I find myself still asking that question.

My early childhood years included a fear-based commitment to Christianity that stemmed from the teachings I received in Sunday school at an evangelical church my family attended. Who wouldn’t want to avoid persecution and torture and even death at the hands of the antichrist? I was just five years old and already terrified by the idea of burning in hell for all eternity. Of course I wanted to be “saved!”

Later on, my family joined another church where I made some friends and was hopeful for a better experience. Difficulties at home escalated and eventually led to my parents’ divorce when I was twelve. I watched in painful bewilderment as mem-



All artwork is by the author. This watercolor and ink piece titled “Warrior’s Surrender” represents a moment of letting go in acknowledgement that the battle cannot be fought alone.

Top: This acrylic painting titled, “Transformation” represents change and the beautiful process of being reborn.

bers of the church took sides, gossiped, and passed judgment on my family. Going to church became increasingly uncomfortable, and I dreaded Sunday mornings. I was also starting to question what it really meant to be a Christian. Who were these people who spoke of compassion and discouraged sin, but didn't seem to live according to their own rules?

I found my way out of going to church when one of my parents was essentially banished, but I still attended a Mennonite high school. Looking back, I feel deep gratitude for the quality of education and care I received there. Mennonites were my favorite brand of Christian, but lacking a Mennonite last name and coming from a broken home seemed to count against me. Unable to relate to the heritage and history that so many of my fellow students shared, I sometimes felt left out or overlooked. There were even times when my presence and background seemed to be an inconvenience to the image of what the school was supposed to portray.

By the time I graduated from high school, my feelings of resentment and distrust toward the church and Christians were firmly established. I distanced myself from the people and religion that had so often disappointed me. I didn't realize the crucial mistake I made when believing that resisting the church and Christians meant I must also resist Jesus. His message of unconditional love, compassion, and forgiveness had always resonated with me, but doubt overcame my faith after seeing few of Jesus' proclaimed followers living and acting according to the message of Jesus.

Church pain and family stress, combined with other trauma, sent me looking for ways to numb my pain, and I fell into an addictive orbit with alcohol that wound up lasting over a decade. On New Year's Eve of 2015, with very little hope for my future, I found myself in desperate prayer. Despite the efforts I'd made to disconnect so many years ago, I was surprised to find that Jesus was still the one I instinctively cried out to in moments of great pain. I believe my prayer that evening changed and saved my life. There's no other explanation for why the very next day my craving and desire to drink completely vanished, and other aspects of my life began to fall into place with ease. Two years have now passed since my last drink which truly is a miracle, and now I recognize miracles happening in everyday life on a regular basis.

Convinced that Jesus is real and active in the world, I'm ready to give church another shot. I've visited several, but have yet to find one that feels right. Being a part of a supportive community appeals to me. I'd like to find a church where people

Convinced that Jesus is real and active in the world, I'm ready to give church another shot. I've visited several, but have yet to find one that feels right.

aren't afraid to ask and discuss tough questions. A church that doesn't judge persons based on what they wear, how often they attend, or how much money they give. I want to join with people who serve and give freely to each other and the greater community. I hope to finally establish relationships with

Christians that enable and build mutual trust. I'd like to find a place where people gather because they want to, not because they feel obligated. I'm looking for a church that does not exclude or discriminate against people because of whom they



This acrylic painting is titled "Bird of New Hope" and is a cheerful symbol of growth, opportunity, and the magic of new beginnings.

love and embraces people with complicated stories like mine. I want to find a place where I feel accepted for all I am, including my past which, unfortunately, sometimes seems to count against me. Why is that? Why does making myself vulnerable and honestly telling my story cause some Christians to feel uncomfortable? Isn't the main duty of a Christian to practice love, forgiveness, and acceptance? Love, forgiveness, and acceptance shouldn't feel uncomfortable.

Am I asking for too much? ■

Lillian Faith Ruark is an artist and Medical Massage Therapist in Lancaster, PA. She was referred to LMC through a pastoral connection to write an essay giving the perspective of someone from outside the church looking in.



FROM AROUND THE CONFERENCE



OAK GROVE HOSTS EMM BOARD

On Friday, August 18, 2017, Oak Grove Mennonite Church hosted the Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) Board meeting and then provided a picnic for the board members and other guests in the church pavilion. Oak Grove Mennonite Church is part of the Western Maryland District of Lancaster Mennonite Conference (LMC). Earl Yoder is the bishop for the district. Pastor Mert Maust opened the event with a welcome and prayer. Everyone had a great time of food and fellowship.



SUNNYSIDE INSTALLATION

Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Lancaster, is pleased to welcome Lead Pastor Joshua Jefferson and his wife, Monica, and their four children. They come to Lancaster from Schwenksville, Pa. Pastor Joshua began serving the Sunnyside church family on August 1 with visits to most of the regular Sunday morning attenders and many other homes in the community. He was licensed toward ordination on Sunday, August 27, by Interim Bishop Richard Buckwalter.

PRAY AND PLAN

Omar Guzman and Josef Berthold, leaders for Church on the Other Side, organized and facilitated a gathering of church multipliers on July 29 for a time of prayer and planning. The group of 12 leaders met at a prayer cottage to work at vision and direction. The discussion was at times brisk and pointed. Church on the Other Side leaders then wrestled with the specific planning for the next year at a gathering on December 15. Watch for announcements for training events in 2018.



PINTO INSTALLATION

Pinto Mennonite Church, Western Maryland District of LMC, held an installation service on September 10, 2017. Pastor Duane Frederick received his LMC credentials as he was installed as Pinto's full-time pastor for a three-year term. Pastor Duane's wife, Bonnie, and daughter, Laura, also participated in the service, which was conducted by Dale Stoltzfus, LMC Conference Minister. Bishop Earl Yoder delivered the message, "Bound for the Promised Land," using Philippians 3:12-15 as his text. A fellowship meal was held following the service.

THREE CONGREGATIONS CELEBRATE 300 YEARS

New Danville, Groffdale, and Mellinger Mennonite churches each celebrated

300 years this fall. The two-day Mellinger celebration included tours, singing, and releasing a congregational history, Mellinger Mennonite Church, 300 Years of Faithfulness and Mission, written by Steven Nolt. The Groffdale event included a homecoming, hymn sing, and a luncheon. At New Danville, the two-day event included an outdoor social event on Saturday, October 14, filling a 50-year time capsule, and a Sunday worship service followed by a catered lunch.

MULTIPLICATION PRAYER TEAM

The multiplication prayer team gathers in the Harvest Room of the Harvest View facility at Landis Homes. This group of saints has committed to praying for church multiplication within and through the congregations of LMC. They pray for conference churches to multiply by congregational growth as well as multiply externally by starting new communities of faith. The group, which met monthly, will change their schedule in 2018 to meet quarterly. The next scheduled prayer meeting will be January 18. All are welcome to attend.



NEW YORK CITY CHURCHES MEET AT DEERPARK

The credentialed leaders, spouses and children of the ten congregations from New York City and the one in New Haven, Ct. met for a retreat at Camp Deerpark on October 13-14. The purpose was to

reimagine the oversight ministry team and build relationships among the group with the oversight team. The group used several case studies to help the group understand the role of the oversight ministry team. Moises Angustia and Hyacinth Stevens facilitated the meeting. Keith Weaver, conference moderator, and Dale Stoltzfus, conference minister, also participated in the meeting.

EDUCATIONAL SUMMIT

On December 1, a group gathered at the LMC office to consider possible futures for educational opportunities. LMC requires all credentialed leaders to earn one Continuing Education unit per year to encourage life-long learning. The STEP program offers a three-year undergraduate certificate for leaders. Regular training occurs at the annual Celebration of Church Life, the leadership assemblies, and various seminars and workshops during each calendar year. A representative from Rosedale Bible College joined the event. Conrad Kanagy and Brinton Rutherford led the team through a series of exercises during the half day meeting. The responses from the group will aid in decisionmaking over the next several years with respect to training pastors and church leaders.

GARIFUNA CHURCHES AND HURRICANES

The recent hurricanes in Texas and Florida moved through locations where two of the Garifuna Mennonite Churches are located: Miami and Houston. Neither church facility was damaged. There was some limited impact for several congregational members in Houston. In Miami, no one in the congregation was directly impacted.

PUERTO RICAN MENNONITES AND HURRICANES

A number of pastors and church members have relatives and relationships in Puerto Rico, recently devastated by hurricanes Maria and Irma. Family members are traveling back and forth, and some families are leaving Puerto Rico and moving to the mainland to stay with family. Mennonite Disaster Service is working directly with many of these families. To donate or volunteer, use the following links: mds.mennonite.net/donate/hurricane-donate-form/ and mds.mennonite.net/volunteer-registration/?void=2600.

WOMEN'S EVENT AT MARTINDALE

Over 500 women attended Women of God's Design at Martindale Mennonite Church on the evenings of October 3 and 5. Fourteen workshops were offered on a variety of topics including time management, child rearing, sexual abuse, and spiritual formation. Youth and young adults had two seminars on marriage preparation. These meetings began in 2003 and have continued annually for the past 14 years. The gatherings include worship and workshops for women and youth. And of course there are refreshments! Invitations are given to other congregations in the area as well. A large number of women attended including Amish and other Mennonite groups, especially from churches which do not have a Sunday school program.

CELEBRATION SERVICE AT STEELTON MENNONITE CHURCH



At Steelton Mennonite Church on October 1, we had a wonderful celebratory service honoring Richard Cline, almost 99, whose essay on the integration of a black and a white congregation in 1963 was featured in the fall *Shalom News*. The newly published issue was presented to Richard with great thanks for his vision and quiet leadership. The Cline family with all the children and spouses and some grandchildren, as well as other past members and leaders, including retired bishops, joined in this time of celebration. In a moving testimony Norfaye Cloud shared some of her memories of her aunt, Annie Brown, a remarkable early African American member of the congregation. (Annie's daughter and two of Annie's niece's with their families are currently part of the congregation.) After the service we joined in a lovely fellowship meal featuring amazing foods from several traditions. Thanks be to God!

Share what is happening in your congregation. Send info and photos to: jsantiago@lancasterconference.org

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Joint worship service at Kready's pond with Kauffman Mennonite Church.



CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE:

Manheim Mennonite Church

DISTRICT: Manheim

LOCATION: 201 West High Street, Manheim, Pa. 17545

DATE OF FOUNDING: 1896

AVERAGE SUNDAY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE: 40

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE:

Sunday School – 9:30 a.m.
Worship Service – 10:30 a.m.

PASTORS:



Joseph A. Stahl – Lead Pastor, pictured with his wife Eileen



D. David Martin – Associate pastor, pictured with his wife Robin

Manheim Mennonite Church began in 1896 for retirees moving from farm to town. As a small church, we have wondered about our viability for the future, but we always come back to the calling God has for us. Our vision is three-fold. First, we proclaim Jesus Christ by teaching and nurturing those within our fellowship. Second, we seek opportunities to call our community to the saving grace of Jesus. Lastly, we endeavor to be a vibrant fellowship of Christian believers, empowered by the Holy Spirit as we minister to those whom God brings to us. We desire these things ourselves and for those around us.

Many of our youth grew up with a vision to serve in global mission around the world, often through Eastern Mennonite Missions. We have invested in foreign mission with people and finances for decades.

A major community outreach occurs each year at Halloween. We are asked on occasion, why we support this holiday in the community. We see it as taking Jesus outside the walls of the church building to people who are not likely to come inside. We believe our participation provides an opportunity to shine the light of Christ on a



Halloween outreach

dark night. We set up a large light to literally and figuratively dispel the darkness of the night. Members serve hot chocolate and give children bags of treats (over 500 bags this year). Outdoor seating allows space to eat, fellowship, listen and share with any who gather. We provide a drawing for free Christian children's books that are then delivered to the home after the event. There is a prayer request box and we will pray with anyone who asks.

We care about each other and use our gifts to serve in different ways. For example, this year we put on a porch roof of a man from Manheim, who attends our congregation. Two women from our congregation provide teatime with Bible study and prayer. Several women supply meals for an elderly woman in the community. The men have a prayer meeting at Corner House Grill, a local Manheim restaurant, for fellowship and prayer. ■

NEWS NOTES

MINISTERIAL ACTIVITIES

The following men and women were licensed, ordained or installed in recent months:

Mario Martin Alvarez (*Jennie*), ordained as lead pastor at Evangelical Garifuna Church of Brooklyn.

Sheldon Brubaker (*Sheila*), licensed for specific ministry as financial deacon at Bowmansville Mennonite Church.

John Drouillard (*Cheryl*), licensed toward ordination as church planter at REACH Church.

Glenn Esh (*Jen*), installed as associate pastor (previously lead pastor) at Cambridge Mennonite Church.

Joy Fasick (*Michael*), ordained as associate pastor at Slate Hill Mennonite Church.

Duane Frederick (*Bonnie*), installed as lead pastor at Pinto Mennonite Church.

David Gingrich (*Phyllis*), licensed toward ordination as lead pastor at Delaware Mennonite Church.

Philip Groff (*Sharon*), installed as lead pastor (previously associate pastor) at Cambridge Mennonite Church.

David Harnish (*Brenda*), ordained as lead pastor at Marietta Community Chapel.

Joshua Jefferson (*Monica*), licensed toward ordination as lead pastor at Sunnyside Mennonite Church.

David Martino (*Susan*), installed as lead pastor at Aurora Mennonite Church on July 1, 2017.

Robert Nolt (*Anna*), installed as interim pastor at Goods Mennonite Church.

Mark Perri (*Annabelle*), ordained as lead pastor at Immanuel Community Church.

Luc T. Pham (*Thu*), licensed toward ordination as lead pastor at Upper Darby Mennonite Fellowship.

Deepak Rai (*Sita*), licensed toward ordination as lead elder at Bhutanese Nepali Church of Lancaster.

Jonathan Sauder, licensed for specific ministry as associate/youth pastor at Erisman Mennonite Church.

Donald Sharp (*Loretta*), installed as interim lead pastor at Community Mennonite Fellowship.

Daniel Q. Tran (*Thao*), licensed toward ordination as associate pastor at Vietnamese Mennonite Church.

Eugene Z. Weaver (*Elaine*), installed as lead pastor (previously associate pastor) at Martindale Mennonite Church.

R. Bruce Yoder (*Nancy*), licensed for specific ministry as mission worker for Mennonite Mission Network at Martinsburg Mennonite Church.

Leon Zimmerman (*Naomi*), ordination credential restored and installed as interim pastor at Millport Mennonite Church.

FRANKLIN CONFERENCE UPDATE

Franklin Conference leaders passed a decision to join Lancaster Mennonite Conference on September 27 by a 92% vote. The congregations will be incorporated into LMC as Franklin District. The district has 14 congregations in Pa. and Md.

MAPLE GROVE

Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville, Pa., recently affirmed by 97% the recommendation to join Lancaster Mennonite Conference. The pastor at Maple Grove is Alan Kauffman. The Board of Bishops took action in October to receive the congregation. They will be publically recognized at the March Celebration of Church Life.

CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE VOTE

On September 21 at the Fall Leadership Assembly, credentialed leaders approved with a 100% vote a series of changes to the LMC constitution. The changes included stylistic, editorial, and substantive changes. The changes included the replacement of the prior Executive Committee with the new Conference Executive Council, which now serves as the governing body of the Conference between sessions of the Leadership Assembly.



LMC Year-End Appeal

2017–2018 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Year plan:	\$646,296
Income as of 10/31:	\$440,032
Total Income Needed by January 31, 2018:	\$206,263

Thank you for your ongoing support as we continue our mission of supporting leaders and cultivating healthy congregations.

For ways to give, visit www.lancasterconference.org/donate

UPCOMING EVENTS

Complete calendar and more details available at lancasterconference.org.

Monday Night Prayer Gathering

Every first Monday of each month
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Conference office, Lancaster, Pa.
717-293-5246

Thursday Night Quarterly Prayer Meeting

January 18, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Harvest Room, Landis Homes, Lititz, Pa.
717-293-5246

LMC Youth Workers Monthly Breakfast

Every fourth Tuesday of each month
8:00 – 9:30 a.m.

Lyndon City Diner, Lancaster, Pa.
facebook.com/groups/LMCYouthWorkers

LMC Youth Leaders Resource Event

Feb. 16, 6:00 p.m. – Feb. 17, 6:00 p.m.

MCC Welcoming Place, Akron, Pa.
eventbrite.com/e/lmc-youth-leaders-resource-event-tickets-39481861310

Conference Related Ministries Seminar

February 23, 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Garden Spot Village, New Holland, Pa.
717-293-5246

Celebration of Church Life “Rebuild, Repair, Revive”

March 23 – 24

Weaverland Mennonite Church,
East Earl, Pa.
lancasterconference.org/celebration-church-life/

Orientation for Newly Credentialed Leaders

April 18, 7:00 p.m.

Conference office, Lancaster, Pa.
jsantiago@lancasterconference.org

Spring Leadership Assembly “Multi-ethnic Church”

May 4, 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Slate Hill Mennonite Church,
Camp Hill, Pa.
lancasterconference.org/leadership-assembly-resourcing/



Camp Deerpark

Benefit Banquet
Friday, April 6, 2018
Shady Maple Restaurant
For reservations email: guests@campdeerpark.org

Family Fun Celebrating 46 Years of Ministry to the Community
FEST & AUCTION—May 11 & 12
1149 East Oregon Rd, Lititz (along route 722)
Chicken BBQ • Concert • 5K Run/Walk • Pancake & Sausage Breakfast • Kids' Activities • All Day Auction
Plants & Shrubs • Specialty Foods • Baked Goods
Event proceeds support adults with intellectual disability & autism served at Friendship Community, Friendship Heart Gallery & Meaningful Day Academy!
More info: FriendshipCommunity.net
Held rain or shine under large tents!

Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society
ANNUAL MUSIC NIGHT
TICKETS & INFORMATION AT LMHS.ORG

Saturday, January 27, 7 PM
Neffsville Mennonite Church, 2371 Lititz Pike, Lancaster, PA

New Person Ministries Annual Banquet
Mark your calendars now!
March 15th, 2018 at
Shady Maple Smorgasbord.
More details coming soon.

www.newpersonministries.org