

WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE E-MEMO June 7, 2011

*A weekly communication for:
WDC Churches and Pastors*

WDC Executive Board, Commission, Committee and Task Force members

Any content may be used in bulletins and newsletters and forwarded to congregational leaders and members.

WDC E-Memo is also available at: www.mennowdc.org (Conference Life - Publications)

(This replaces the monthly WDC Memo.)

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Clarence's Clarion Call

How Has God Shaped my Heart for Church Planting? Part II

God's redemptive mission is not only the replication of believers, but also the replication of churches. God's redemptive mission is deeply personal and profoundly sociological – new churches for new believers. This is God's heart for the redemption of the world, and it is shaping my heart for church planting.

I am beginning to imagine new possibilities for Western District Conference.

- Rather than the conference planting churches, churches plant churches utilizing the networking capabilities of the conference.
- I imagine of wide variety of church types from incarnational urban neighborhood models to suburban regional sanctuary models.
- I imagine a new movement of house fellowship churches initiated by mobile young adults and connected through apostolic support of the Western District Conference. These might be "more-with-less" churches of a half dozen people meeting for weekly prayer and Bible reading with a simple, singular, shared redemptive mission in their city.
- I imagine planting more racial/ethnic congregations with God opening a door for new Asian and African immigrants in addition to new Latino immigrant church plants.
- I imagine new Anglo churches with a "Naked Anabaptist" character.

I shared these thoughts at the consultation on church planting in Oklahoma City on May 27-28. Forty people from across the Western District Conference met to think deeply about possibilities for God's mission in our geography from Texas to Nebraska. We were a curious mix of new Mennonites, long time congregational members, church planters, pastors, conference staff and academics. In our hearts was the strengthening conviction that "the church exists for the sake of the world" as Gilberto Flores, Associate Conference Minister, stated it.

Wilbert Shenk, Professor of Mission, warned us that "the vast majority of local churches have understood their primary purpose as providing for the spiritual welfare of their members. It is not surprising that this has resulted in congregations that have lost the vision to evangelize. This is bound to lead to decline and, eventually the death of the church." "The church exists by mission as fire by burning."

Conrad Kanagy, sociologist and pastor, urged us to begin praying for the lost near us by name. Kanagy asserted that new church development is less about strategy and more about praying, being empowered by the Spirit, and being obedient to Jesus.

At the end of the Consultation, participants indicated their next steps of involvement. Several named their readiness to lead in or participate in planting a new church. Four indicated their willingness to serve on a new Western District Conference Church Planting Task Force. What are the next steps God has for Western District Conference?

Check It Out

"Come to the Banquet" is the special 2011 summer edition of **Check It Out** from the Western District Conference Resource Library. These resources reflect the theme of our summer WDC Assembly: Make No Excuses - Simply Come to the Banquet. But these resources include way more than recipes - they feature ideas on hospitality, "just" eating, nourishing our spiritual hunger and grace for mealtime. Some featured titles include: *Soul Banquets: how meals become mission in the local congregation*; *Whatever Happened to Dinner?* and *Mennonite Girls Can Cook*. Check out this listing at www.mennowdc.org (Conference Life – Publications); print it out and share this banquet of fine books!

WDC Announcements

Something New! Persons attending the WDC annual assembly July 29-30 at Bethel College and Bethel College Mennonite Church, will register for one of ten "Learning Tracks" of three hours in length, designed to be resourcing events for pastors and lay leaders. A variety of topics will include Immigration issues, Tur-around church, Anabaptism, Church planting, Spirituality, Adventure course, Holistic service, Welcoming children, and Potluck. Here's the kicker – Anyone (non-assembly-goers) can attend a Learning Track – for only \$20 – it's a great opportunity to get some quality resourcing. www.mennowdc.org

Diamond Celebration gem: The Resource Library of Western District Conference started with 600 donated books and now has over 12,000 items including books, DVDs, CDs, curriculums, reference books and an outstanding children's literature collection. All are available for check-out or study at www.mennowdc.org (click on Resource Library). Join the 75th birthday party on July 29 at Bethel College when the Western District Conference summer assembly meets at Bethel College.

What a Grand Time! We had a blast this past Sunday, celebrating Torrey's time as our maintenance coordinator and dedicating the new pool at Camp Mennoscah. Thank you so much to everyone who came, helped organize, and participated in this event. It was a great start to our summer.

Last minute? You betcha. Camp Mennoscah will accept registrations for summer youth camps until they are full. All of our camps have at least a few more spaces. Our theme for the summer is "Got Spirit? Finding God in the Everyday"--and we are definitely full of Spirit! Contact us at [620-297-3290](tel:620-297-3290) or campmno@mennowdc.org for more information. We can't wait to see you splashing in our new pool!

Announcements – Mennonite Church USA

***Shadow Voices* airing on NBC-TV stations:** *Shadow Voices: Finding Hope in Mental Illness*, a documentary showing how individuals live successfully with a mental illness, is being re-broadcast on NBC-TV stations from June 12- December 12 at the discretion of local NBC affiliates. The program features former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher, Dr. Joyce Burland of National Alliance on Mental Illness, and Dr. William Anthony of Boston University. Along with these experts, five people tell personal stories of living long term with depression, schizophrenia, obsessive compulsive disorder, cutting and burning, and multiple addictions. The program also looks at the history of treatment of mental illness in the U.S. and how faith community can help. In 2006 *Shadow Voices* was broadcast on ABC-TV stations and later on Odyssey Network; it received a VOICE media award from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, an honorable mention in the Columbus (Ohio) International Film festival. Public service radio spots produced from of the documentary are currently airing on dozens of radio stations and received Gracie and Gabriel Awards. The hour-long program was produced by Third Way Media on behalf of Mennonite churches. For more information go to www.ShadowVoices.com; see [news releases](#) or a [list of stations](#) airing the program at the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission website under whose arrangement the program will appear on NBC-TV. To see this program air on your local affiliate, please call a local NBC station and ask for the program manager.

South Central Conference "God's Family Festival" is this weekend, June 10-12 at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston, KS. Ervin Stutzman, Executive Director of Mennonite Church USA, will speak at the Friday and Saturday evening worship services, which are open to all without pre-registration. Ervin is a gifted preacher with an important message of hope for our times. Come at 7:30 pm Friday, and 7 pm

Saturday, for a time of worship and inspiration. There will be a coffeehouse in the Fellowship Hall following the Friday evening program, with a variety of performers. A Talent Show will follow the Saturday evening service.

Everence (formerly MMA) is seeking a core market manager to provide leadership of all Everence activities within Newton, Kansas, area market. Responsible for developing the market so individuals and organizations have the opportunity to integrate their faith with their financial decisions. Qualified candidates will have an undergraduate degree or equivalent experience (MBA preferred); proven management experience, preferably in delivery of financial services; proven negotiation skills; and significant sales and distribution experience. Everence helps individuals, organizations, and congregations integrate finances with faith through a national team of advisors and representatives. We are an equal opportunity employer offering a competitive salary and excellent benefits. For more information about this position, visit our website, www.everence.com. Send cover letter and resume to: Everence Human Resources, P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527, email: hr@everence.com, Fax: (574) 537-6635.

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