



Mennonite  
Healthcare  
Fellowship

## Mennonite Health Journal

Volume 17, No. 1  
February 2015

**This issue of *Mennonite Health Journal* focuses on the Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship (MHF) Annual Gathering 2015, July 19-21, 2015, at the Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey Hotel in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. We hope to see many of you at that event!**

MHF President, Eric Lehman, begins by sharing the **“Excitement about a Summer Meeting”** even in middle of winter! He highlights the major events of Annual Gathering, a perspective that is then amplified by the **Press Release** and **Schedule of Events** that follow.

**Special Notice!** This year’s Annual Gathering is an international event, held before the big Pennsylvania 2015 Assembly of Mennonite World Conference (MWC). During the same pre-MWC-Assembly time period as the MHF Annual Gathering, MWC is also sponsoring an event on the topic of healthcare called the **“Global Health Care Leaders Summit.”** The Summit, planned by Mennonite Health Services (MHS) is for an invited audience of administrators and board members, but it has sometimes been confused with MHF’s Annual Gathering which is open to anyone. **A special clarification statement** from the MHF Office has been included so that healthcare workers know the difference between the two events and can make an informed decision to register for the event each one wishes to attend! **Please read the statement!**

Following that statement are further descriptions of the **Worship at Annual Gathering 2015**, the **Plenary Presentations**, and the **Workshops**. **Since the MHF Annual Gathering is a family-friendly event**, an article about **“Children and Youth at Annual Gathering”** is included along with the introduction of the leaders of the program.

**“Climate Change and Global Health”** is one important topic being considered at the Annual Gathering. Lyubov Slashcheva writes another in a series of articles introducing that discussion in light of the Annual Gathering theme.

Finally, editor and MHF Executive Director, Paul Leichty, reflects on the nature of **“Healthy Communities Worldwide.”** **We hope to see you in Harrisburg in July!**

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## Excitement about a Summer Meeting

MHF President's Column

Eric Lehman, MD



As I sit down to write this February article, the temperature is moving toward zero degrees. Although right now it is hard to imagine a summer meeting in warm weather, I am getting excited about the opportunity to attend the **Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship Annual Gathering**, July 19-21, 2015, at the Harrisburg Hershey Sheraton in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

It is inspiring to think about the opportunity for worship, fellowship, and networking with brothers and sisters from around the world! I am especially excited about hearing the faith

journeys of others who work in the health care field.

Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship (MHF) has the privilege of presenting an exciting group of presenters for this year's Annual Gathering. Let me give you a quick overview and the rest of this issue of *Mennonite Health Journal* will fill in the details.

We will open the plenary sessions on Sunday evening, July 19, with Ted and Company who always bring their witty but insightful dramas. On Monday morning, we will hear Dr. Ann Thyle speak about service to the poor, and that evening listen to Shane Claiborne's presentation about recognizing God's kingdom on earth. To conclude on Tuesday morning, we will hear from David Gullman, who speaks about the broken body of Christ as an example for our lives.

Workshops this year will feature follow-up discussions from a number of the plenary speakers as well as some international guests. Bwire Chirangi will present a positive development in improving maternal mortality in Tanzania. Maurice Anyanga will speak on the Kenyan church's fight against HIV/AIDS. While other workshops are planned by North American speakers, these also will feature international implications. Linda Witmer, who has worked in both Guatemala and the United States, will discuss engaging congregations in health ministries. Catherine Thomasson will discuss climate change as a threat to global health. Curtis Book and J. Fred Kauffman will dialogue on the threat of gun violence in the United States while also recognizing its international implications.

For those with young children, childcare will be provided. Youth through age 18 can also participate in the Children and Youth Program planned by a group of persons from nearby Slate Hill Mennonite Church.

As MHF President, I want to say a big **“Thank You”** to the Harrisburg 2015 Coordinating Committee which has planned this year’s Annual Gathering. Beth Good and Stan Godshall have served as co-chairpersons; other members include Rebekah Good Charles, Phil Moyer, Joanne Speigle, Myrna Eshleman, and Paul Leichty (MHF Staff). **Thanks for a job well done!** It will be difficult to decide which workshops to attend as the list of speakers is inspiring.

I invite everyone to attend this year’s Annual Gathering which is a prelude to the Mennonite World Conference global Assembly. I cannot think of a better way to start off the week of July 19-26, 2015. God blesses us when we gather together to worship him and share the good news of the Spirit’s work in our lives.



***Eric Lehman, M.D.**, is a physician in family practice from Archbold, Ohio. He has been serving on the MHF Board since 2012 and became President in September 2014. Eric graduated from Goshen College in 1982 and Ohio State University College of Medicine in 1986. Following his residency, he has been serving the Archbold community in family practice medicine since 1989.*

## Healthcare Gathering Considers Healthy Communities Worldwide Press Release by Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship



Healthcare workers from around the world will gather immediately prior to Mennonite World Conference Assembly for inspiration, learning, fellowship, and networking in a special event sponsored by Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship (MHF).

The MHF Annual Gathering 2015 will be held July 19-21, 2015, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania using the theme "Walking Together for Healthy Communities." Plenary presentations include a performance by Ted & Company entitled "The Jesus Stories," a challenge by Christian community-builder Shane Claiborne to "Another Way of Doing Life," and a testimony from Indian physician, Ann Thyle on her calling to serve the poor.

In order to facilitate the participation of doctors, nurses, dietitians, therapists, chaplains, mental health workers, and many other healthcare workers and their families from around the world, this year's Annual Gathering will begin on Sunday evening, July 19, at the Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey Hotel. The event concludes with a communion service and noon meal on Tuesday, July 21, just in time for participants to check in for the larger global Assembly of Mennonites which begins late Tuesday afternoon.

The closing communion service will feature David Gullman, a chaplain to persons with disabilities, their families, and caregivers in Harrisonburg, Virginia. He will reflect on the theme: "Discovering Healthy Communities through the Broken Body."

Worship is an integral part of the Annual Gathering. Each of the four plenary sessions will begin with a time of worship, including plenty of singing, led by Nan S. Garber and Jane Hooper Peifer. In addition, a hymnsing will be held on Monday evening following the plenary session.

A full day of activities on Monday, July 20, will also feature multiple workshops on a variety of international themes. Many workshops will feature presenters who have lived and worked in Latin America, Africa, or Asia. Among the workshops are the following:

- Out of her background as a nurse, mission leader, community developer, educator, and spiritual director in both Guatemala and the U.S., Linda E. Witmer will share ideas and insights on "Engaging Congregations in Health Ministries."

- Bwire Chirangi, chief medical officer at Shirati DMK Hospital in Tanzania will discuss a recent study in which he participated and co-authored an article on “Reducing Maternal Mortality in Rural Tanzania.”
- Catherine Thomasson, MD, Executive Director of Physicians for Social Responsibility, will discuss climate change as it relates to global health.
- Maurice Odhiambo Anyanga will focus on the contribution of the Kenya Mennonite Church to the challenging and complex fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- J. Fred Kauffman & Curtis W. Book will look at gun violence as a public health problem in the United States that also has international dimensions.

Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship is extending an invitation to all healthcare workers, especially those already planning to attend the Mennonite World Conference Assembly to come early and take advantage of this “pre-meeting.” Persons from the medical and mental health professions as well as therapists, dieticians, chaplains, and others are warmly welcomed. Grants are available for students, volunteers, and those from outside of the U.S. and Canada.

The Annual Gathering is a family-friendly event with childcare and a Children and Youth Program available for ages 0-18. A team of persons from Slate Hill Mennonite Church led by Rachael Zimmerman will coordinate children and youth activities.

Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship (MHF) is an interdisciplinary community of Anabaptist health professionals which seeks to nurture the integration of faith and practice, to provide opportunities for dialogue on health related issues, and to address specific needs through education, advocacy, and service. MHF was formed in June 2011 when Mennonite Medical Association (MMA) and Mennonite Nurses Association (MNA) joined to form a new organization open to all Anabaptist healthcare professionals.

In addition to the Annual Gathering, MHF publishes the quarterly online *Mennonite Health Journal*, conducts regional meetings in various parts of the country, and sponsors scholarships for graduate students in healthcare fields to do a 4-8 week term of study and service in overseas mission settings. Paul D. Leichty has been Executive Director of the organization since September 2011, working from an office in Goshen, Indiana.

Since its formation in 2011, MHF has held Annual Gatherings at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center in Pennsylvania and Goshen College in Indiana. The 2014 Gathering at Laurelville featured the theme “Faith at Work: Practicing our Profession.”

For more information about MHF and Annual Gathering 2015, go to [www.mennohealth/gathering](http://www.mennohealth/gathering), email [info@mennohealth.org](mailto:info@mennohealth.org), or call toll-free to 1-888-406-3643.

## Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship Annual Gathering 2015

July 19-21, 2015 (Sunday evening, July 19 to Tuesday noon, July 21)

Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey Hotel, 4650 Lindle Rd, Harrisburg, PA 17111

Theme: "Walking Together for Healthy Communities"

### Sunday, July 19

3:00-6:00 p.m. Registration

6:00-7:00 p.m. Reception / Light Meal

**7:00-8:30 p.m. Worship / Plenary Session**  
**"The Jesus Stories...what's for lunch?" Ted & Company**

9:00-10:30 p.m. Post-session Fellowship and Networking Time

### Monday, July 20

7:00-8:00 a.m. Breakfast

**8:30-10:00 a.m. Worship / Plenary Session**  
**"Health Care Delivery to the Poor: A Personal Calling" Ann Thyle**

10:00-10:30 a.m. Morning Break

10:30-11:45 a.m. Workshop Session 1

11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00-2:15 p.m. Workshop Session 2

2:30-3:45 p.m. Workshop Session 3

4:00-6:00 p.m. Free time

**6:00-8:30 p.m. Banquet and Plenary Session**  
**"Another Way of Doing Life" Shane Claiborne**

9:00-10:00 p.m. Hymnsing

### Tuesday, July 21

7:00-8:00 a.m. Breakfast

8:45-10:00 am. Workshops / Round Table Discussions

10:00-10:30 a.m. Morning Break

**10:30-11:45 a.m. Closing Plenary Session – Worship with Communion –**  
**"Discovering Healthy Communities through the Broken Body" David Gullman**

12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m. Lunch



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Sunday evening–Tuesday noon  
before World Conference

Children & Youth Program, ages 0-18

Evening sessions feature Ted &  
Company, Shane Claiborne

Grants available for students,  
volunteers, international travelers



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To: Members and prospective members of Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship (MHF)  
From: Paul D. Leichty, MHF Executive Director  
Date: March 5, 2015  
Subject: Healthcare events related to Mennonite World Conference Assembly

Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship (MHF) has been planning its Annual Gathering 2015, July 19-21, 2015, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, immediately prior to the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Assembly, Pennsylvania 2015. It has come to the attention of MHF leaders that some people are confused about this MHF-sponsored event for two main reasons:

1. Persons who experienced past MWC Assemblies in Zimbabwe and Paraguay have been expecting activities for healthcare professionals within the MWC Assembly itself.
2. Some people have been informed of and invited to another healthcare related meeting that is being held July 20-21 in Harrisburg.

MHF planned its Annual Gathering after consulting with MWC about health-related events associated with the MWC Assembly. MHF was informed that Mennonite Health Services (MHS) was planning an event prior to Assembly and eventually learned that this "Global Health Care Leaders Summit" was an invitational conference of **administrators and board members of healthcare-related institutions**. The "Summit" is sponsored by MWC with the specific goal of formulating "a recommendation to Mennonite World Conference General Council and Mission Commission on establishing a global network of Anabaptist health care organizations."

The MHF Annual Gathering is focused on **individual healthcare practitioners** and open to any Mennonite-related person involved in any healthcare field. Based on the information received from MWC and MHS, MHF felt certain that the conflict would be minimal for only a handful of persons.

Some MHF members have indicated that they checked a box indicating interest in healthcare when they registered for the MWC Assembly and were expecting to receive information about events within MWC Assembly similar what happened in Zimbabwe and Paraguay. Instead, they received invitations to the MWC/MHS Summit.

On February 26, 2015, leaders of MWC, MHS, and MHF met to clarify the situation. MWC and MHS leadership revealed that the invitation pool for the MWC-sponsored Summit has been extended to include **individual** healthcare professionals in order to ensure participation from continents and countries in which Mennonite-related healthcare **organizations** no longer exist. This broader definition of who is invited to the MWC/MHS Summit along with the dual roles of administrator and practitioner of some MHF members means that there will be a conflict for some persons on which event to attend.

At the same time, all present at the meeting agreed that the target audience for both the MWC/MHS Summit and the MHF Annual Gathering remains as stated on the [MWC website](#). The MWC/MHS Summit is “for leaders and board members of ... organizations that are affiliated with Mennonite World Conference member churches.” The MHF Annual Gathering is “Open to all healthcare workers...”

There is still some uncertainty about whether there will be healthcare-related workshops or meetings at the MWC Assembly. This should be clearer in April when MWC publishes its list of 200 workshops included in the MWC Assembly.

MWC leaders indicated that MHF and/or another entity are welcome to try to organize an informal gathering of healthcare workers during a mealtime at MWC Assembly. Mealtimes are the only times when space is available for meetings not already planned. The MHF Harrisburg 2015 Coordinating Committee and the MHF Board are considering this idea and will share information as it becomes available.

In follow-up conversations with MHS leadership, there is the recognition there are some similar impulses toward international relationships among a number of different Mennonite entities involved in healthcare. While the details are still being worked out, the following steps are being explored:

- MHF is invited to send a small delegation to the two specific sessions of the MWC/MHS Summit at which the proposal for a global Anabaptist health care network will be discussed. The MHF Board will appoint this delegation.
- A follow-up meeting of representatives of the MWC/MHS Summit, MHF, and possibly other entities is proposed for Tuesday evening, July 21, in Harrisburg.
- A method for participants in the MWC/MHS Summit to interact with the MHF Annual Gathering participants is being proposed for Monday morning, July 20.

In summary:

- All healthcare workers are warmly welcomed to attend the MHF [Annual Gathering 2015](#), July 19-21, 2015, at the Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey Hotel in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.
- Healthcare professionals who are also (a) administrators or board members of healthcare institutions of MWC-affiliated churches or (b) are from countries that have few if any such institutions may receive an invitation to the MWC/MHS Summit and need to choose. (It is possible, however, to attend the MHF Annual Gathering on Sunday evening through Monday noon and still get in on the beginning of the MWC/MHS Summit at 1:00 p.m. Monday.)
- MHF will continue to inform healthcare professionals on further details about the MHF Annual Gathering as well as developments of interest to healthcare workers within the MWC Assembly.

Thank you for your support of Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship. We look forward to seeing many of you in Harrisburg!

## Worship at Annual Gathering 2015

Each plenary session during Annual Gathering 2015 begins with a time of worship that includes plenty of singing. Leading worship this year are Nan Garber and Jane Hooper Peiffer.



### **Nan S. Garber**

Bainbridge, Pennsylvania

Nan Garber lives near Bainbridge, Pennsylvania, twenty miles west of the city of Lancaster. She is a spiritual director, retreat leader, congregational and contemplative music leader, and part-time hospital chaplain. She is also the mother of six young adult children and grandmother to five little people. Nan is nurtured by silence and nature and is sometimes found clearing brush or creating paths to develop retreat capabilities on their property, Conoy Creek Hideaway.



### **Jane Hooper Peifer, MDiv**

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Jane retired from 24 years of pastoral ministry in September of 2013, having served most recently as pastor at Blossom Hill Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. She was first trained as an Elementary Education teacher and completed both her Bachelors and Masters of Divinity degrees at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Virginia. In May 2014, she completed Spiritual Direction training at Kairos and is building a practice of offering spiritual companionship for individuals as well as retreats for leadership groups and congregations. Jane is author of five children's books; the most recent title is "The Family Song" released in 2008. She is married to Daryl and they have two children and five grandchildren. Currently she pursues her love of music by playing upright bass in the Blossom Hill String Band.

## Closing Worship Service - Communion and Offering

The closing worship service, this year on Tuesday morning, will include communion and a special offering. All money given in that offering will be split between three international projects listed below. More information about each project will be available at the Annual Gathering.

### Offering Projects

- **Shirati Hospital** – Solar-powered generator project through Friends of Shirati
- **Kenyan HIV project** through Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)
- **Emmanuel Hospital Association** in India (Dr. Ann Thyle)

## Annual Gathering 2015 Plenary Presentations

### Sunday evening, July 19

Session Theme: “**The Jesus Stories...what’s for lunch?**”

Special Performance by **Ted and Company**, Harrisonburg, Virginia



Healthy communities walk together and eat together! So...what’s for lunch? There are many stories of Jesus that are gathered around the table. There was food to eat and food for thought, exploring who was invited to those tables and who showed up. The miracles of Jesus were sometimes ordinary stories with extraordinary results. In **The Jesus Stories**, writers and performers, Ted Swartz and Jeff Raught, offer a fresh look at the Gospel stories and discover that when uncorked, these stories pour out sparkling drops of laughter that Jesus must have found in the people he met along the way. A healthy community is one that knows the difference between solemn and serious, and Ted and Jeff are serious about the value of laughter. Healthy communities are also generous communities, and **The Jesus Stories** is gently subversive in asking, “Who gets to sit at our tables?”

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### Monday morning, July 20

Session Theme: “**Health Care Delivery to the Poor: A Personal Calling**”

Speaker: **Ann Thyle**, MD, New Delhi, India



Ann Thyle was a young postgraduate anesthesiologist on a career path towards being the next department head in a large teaching hospital. Then, she did the unthinkable in the minds of her colleagues. She chose to work in a small mission hospital at the foothills of the Himalayas. After being the only trained anesthesiologist for 16 hospitals and the only woman doctor at the hospital responsible for caring for all the women and children, she re-trained in obstetrics/gynecology to be better equipped to care for the maternal and neonatal complications she was encountering. In 2009, she received further education as a palliative medicine physician in order to pioneer hospice care in rural north India. Her presentation will focus on how the Spirit led her and her family in this journey through innumerable miracles and God-moments to fulfill God’s plan for their lives.

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## Monday evening, July 20

Session Theme: **“Another Way of Doing Life”**

Speaker: **Shane Claiborne**, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Christians are meant to be radical non-conformists, interrupting the patterns of our world with prophetic imagination – a holy counterculture. Shane will share stories of contemporary communities who are living with beautiful creativity and sometimes getting in a little trouble for it. After all, the Kingdom of God is not just something we hope for when we die, but something that we are to bring on earth as it is in heaven.

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## Tuesday Morning, July 21

**Closing Worship and Communion**

Session Theme: **“Discovering Healthy Communities through the Broken Body”**

Speaker: **David Gullman**, Broadway, Virginia



When we include the Eucharist as central to our faith practices we discover the image of Jesus as the one whose body is broken for us. Thus, healthy communities cannot be defined by only those whose bodies are whole. We are all broken individuals brought together through the broken body of Jesus and we must make room for the most vulnerable among us in order to truly experience the kind of health Jesus exemplified.

## Workshops at MHF Annual Gathering 2015

### Theme: “Walking Together for Healthy Communities”

Workshops at Annual Gathering are scheduled in four time sessions as noted in the schedule below. Each workshop will be offered twice, that is in two different sessions. Workshop Session 1 is on Monday morning following the plenary session and break. After lunch on Monday, there will be two more sessions.

On Tuesday morning, several workshops will be offered for the second time. In addition, there will be opportunity for more informal “Roundtable Discussions” on topics of interest to Annual Gathering attendees. Annual Gathering attendees are invited to submit topics of interest to the MHF Office for review by the Coordinating Committee.



#### **Health Care Delivery to the Poor: A Personal Calling - Ann Thyle**

Ann Thyle will follow up her plenary presentation by sharing further on how the Lord blessed her journey from a promising young postgraduate anesthesiologist to living out the vision of Emmanuel Hospital Association (EHA) "to serve the poor and marginalized in the name and Spirit of Jesus Christ." She will also share further about her passion for justice for the poor and her current pioneering work as a palliative care physician working to set up hospice care in villages near EHA hospitals for terminally ill persons who are often virtually invisible and neglected by the healthcare system and

society.



#### **A Little One Shall Lead Them: Reimagining Leadership on the Journey Toward Health – David Gullman**

As we embrace the journey toward God’s Shalom, we discover that it is the little ones, the powerless ones, the foolish ones, the vulnerable ones who will show us the way. Recognizing the state of our reality both nationally and internationally this workshop will focus on the implications of this vision of leadership for the church and society as we know it today.



#### **Engaging Congregations in Health Ministries – Linda E. Witmer**

Congregations can be central to a holistic health ministry which develops specific programs to meet congregational needs. Out of her background as a nurse, mission leader, community developer, educator, and spiritual director in both Guatemala and the U.S., Linda Witmer shares ideas and insights on engaging congregations in health ministries.



### **Reducing Maternal Mortality in Rural Tanzania – Bwire Chirangi**

Dr. Chirangi, chief medical officer at Shirati DMK Hospital in Tanzania will share the results of a recent study in which he participated and co-authored an article published in Health Care for Women International entitled, “Women’s Health in Women’s Hands: Pilot Study Assessing the Feasibility of Providing Women with medications to Reduce Postpartum Hemorrhage and Sepsis in Rural Tanzania.” The full article is available on [PubMed](#).



### **Climate Change: Solutions to Global Health Threats – Catherine Thomasson**

Climate change is already harming our health. The very young, old, laborers, chronically ill, low income, and other disadvantaged groups are most impacted. The good news is that solutions to climate change will reap immediate health benefits: lower air and water pollution and more livable cities. Hear how you can help make a healthy, fossil free future a reality. Catherine Thomasson, MD, is Executive Director of Physicians for Social Responsibility based in Washington, DC.



### **Responding to the Challenges of HIV/AIDS - Maurice Odhiambo Anyanga**

This workshop will focus on the contribution of the Kenya Mennonite Church to the challenging and complex fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS.



### **Gun Violence: A Public Health Problem – J. Fred Kauffman & Curtis W. Book**

Gun violence is a public health problem in the United States. The workshop will look at the roots and the magnitude of gun violence in the USA and some of its international dimensions. It will invite the audience to identify strategies to address gun violence.



### **Chasing Goosebumps -- Ted Swartz and Jeff Raught**

In the creation of art, when an idea, image, or thought gives you a shiver, this is a sign the creative spirit is at work. When it happens within a comedic deconstruction of biblical text, it results in a special kind of goosebump. Ted Swartz and Jeff Raught will lead the group through a unique journey in chasing that particular phenomenon.

## **Workshop Schedule**

### **Monday, July 20**

#### **10:30-11:45 a.m. Workshop Session 1**

- A - Health Care Delivery to the Poor: A Personal Calling- Ann Thyle
- B - A Little One Shall Lead Them: Reimagining Leadership on the Journey Toward Health - David Gullman
- C - Engaging Congregations in Health Ministries - Linda E. Witmer
- D - Reducing Maternal Mortality in Rural Tanzania – Bwire Chirangi
- H - Chasing Goosebumps – Ted & Co.

#### **1:00-2:15 p.m. Workshop Session 2**

- A - Health Care Delivery to the Poor: A Personal Calling- Ann Thyle
- B - A Little One Shall Lead Them: Reimagining Leadership on the Journey Toward Health - David Gullman
- E - Climate Change: Solutions to Global Health Threats - Catherine Thomasson
- F - Responding to the Challenges of HIV/AIDS - Maurice Odhiambo Anyanga
- H - Chasing Goosebumps – Ted & Co.

#### **2:30-3:45 p.m. Workshop Session 3**

- C - Engaging Congregations in Health Ministries - Linda Witmer
- D - Reducing Maternal Mortality in Rural Tanzania – Bwire Chirangi
- E - Climate Change: Solutions to Global Health Threats - Catherine Thomasson
- G - Gun Violence: A Public Health Problem - J. Fred Kauffman & Curtis Book

### **Tuesday, July 21**

#### **9:00-10:15 a.m. Workshops / Round Table Discussions**

- F - Responding to the Challenges of HIV/AIDS - Maurice Anyanga
- G - Gun Violence: A Public Health Problem - J. Fred Kauffman & Curtis Book
- Roundtable discussions – topics of interest

## Children and Youth at Annual Gathering

### **The Annual Gathering is a family-friendly event!**

In an ongoing tradition for Annual Gatherings, a **Children and Youth Program** is provided with care and activities for ages 0-18 during all plenary and workshop sessions. As much as possible, programming is tailored to the children registered.

This year the Annual Gathering is at a hotel, the **Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey**. The hotel is providing a large ballroom as the headquarters for the Children and Youth Program. The facilities of Slate Hill Mennonite Church, about 15 minutes away, will also be utilized for ages 3 and up on Monday during the day. Care and programming will be provided by personnel from Slate Hill Mennonite Church.

**Staffing** for the Children and Youth Program will be provided during all plenary and workshop settings. **Parents are responsible** for their children during meals (except for Monday lunch as noted below) and during the free and fellowship times (both evenings after 8:30 p.m. and late Monday afternoon). **On-site nursery care** for infants and toddlers (0-2) will be provided by Slate Hill at the Sheraton.

**Children preschool age and older** will be transported by bus to Slate Hill Mennonite Church to participate in various indoor and outdoor activities that explore the Annual Gathering theme "**Walking Together for Healthy Communities.**"

- Children will have the opportunity to make their own stethoscopes, participate in bridge building and learn to weave their own fishing nets.
- Through stories, active games, and crafts, children will explore topics like faith and family; spiritual, mental and physical health; and peacemaking.
- Younger children (3-5) will enjoy activities in the "Blue Room." This room's padded open space provides a safe place for active play. Snacks will be provided as well as bagged lunches on Monday from the Sheraton.

**Families are encouraged to register early!** As a special incentive to early registration this year, a special rate is offered to everyone who registers **before April 15**. When children are registered, the MHF Office will send out an information form. **Parents are asked** to please be sure to indicate allergies, disabilities, or any other accommodations needed for your children as you correspond with coordinators and the MHF Office. **We want to provide a welcoming atmosphere for all!**

MHF is pleased to introduce **Rachael Zimmerman** as the coordinator of this year's Children and Youth Program. Rachael will be assisted by **Elise Petersheim**, who will also recruit additional helpers as needed. See the bios below. All Children and Youth Program staff will have a Pennsylvania background check to ensure the safety of all.



### **Rachael Zimmerman**

**Coordinator, Children and Youth Program**

Rachael Zimmerman lives with her husband, Chris, and children, Jackson and Sarina, in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. They attend Slate Hill Mennonite Church where Rachael serves on the Christian Education Commission as well as leads youth clubs and teaches children's Sunday school classes. In her spare time she enjoys giving living history presentations and historical lectures.



### **Elise Petersheim**

**Assistant Coordinator, Children and Youth Program**

Elise Petersheim graduates from Cumberland Valley High School in the spring of 2015. She will be attending Lee University in the fall as an elementary education major.

## Walking “Together” for Healthy Communities by Lyubov Slashcheva

"Instinctively we know that the joy of life comes from the ways in which we live together and that the pain of life comes from the many ways we fail to do that well," observes Henri Nouwen.<sup>1</sup>

I grew up in a rural/suburban setting. A recent mid-winter trip to Boston reminded me that city life experiences drain me significantly. My lack of trust and anxious need for a sense of control may contribute to this unease. There are too many people suffering and too many others that are calloused and cruel. There is too much corruption matched with too much resignation. There is too much filth and too little care for one another and our surroundings.

The human condition is too stark for me to remain amiable and optimistic. I want to embrace adverse realities with the intention of improving them, but my ability to do so shrinks. When I attempt to rationalize, my body quickly enters a state of disgust, malaise, anxiety, stress, and shock. I am left worn out with the desire to run away or curl up in a corner. I yearn to return to the small niche of existence where I feel I am making a difference, where I can take small manageable steps to accomplish positive change, and where I am able to embrace more of my surroundings.

In the “Cherish the Natural Order” section of *Living More with Less*, Bethany Spicher Schonberg asks us to consider the question, “How many chickens can you cherish?”<sup>2</sup> For me, this correlates to questions like these: With how many homeless people do I have the energy to empathize? With how many mentally unstable obnoxious bus neighbors can I be present? For how many traveling to-go suppers am I grateful? Answers to questions like these might indicate the extent to which I yield to a Christ-like hospitality that is able to bring life and healing into a broken world rather than anxiously reaching my own self-sufficient saturation point.

Sociologists predict that civilization will continue to urbanize and diversify. Tony McMichael, environmentalist and global health scholar, suggests, “Humankind has entered an accelerated and expanded phase of globalization. The scale, intensity and connectivity of human activity, and associated demographic, social, economic and environmental ‘global changes,’ are exerting increasing influences on human population well-being, health and survival.”<sup>3</sup>

Amidst these complex developments, urban food movements now include vertical herbal gardens to serve as walls and miniature insect farms to supply protein. I think I can adopt baby greens and cricket cookies. I’m less sure about discerning my capacity and willingness to cherish more difficult neighbors.

Bethany Spicher Schonberg encourages us to contemplate, “How many tremors does your life send down the shimmering strands of earth’s web, and how many can you bear to trace?”<sup>2</sup> Part of our experience of Lent could be to consider these unpleasant and often overwhelming realities. Yet in the midst of our Lenten experience, we can allow ourselves to celebrate the Sabbath that is offered--even to this pressing topic of the dismemberment of God’s creation. We can acknowledge, in Walter Brueggemann’s perspective, that God’s people are not subjects of a command economy. Instead, we live in “an economy of neighborliness,” “opting for and aligning with the God of rest” who “is not anxious about the full functioning of creation” since it “does not depend on endless work.”<sup>4</sup>

As we consider joining conversations about climate change and human health at the MHF Annual Gathering 2015, let us remember that a Sovereign God leads us into faithful stewardship and discipleship alongside those we seek to serve and that which we seek to tend:

"...So let us be marked  
not for sorrow.  
And let us be marked  
not for shame.  
Let us be marked  
not for false humility  
or for thinking  
we are less  
than we are  
but for claiming  
what God can do  
within the dust,  
within the dirt,  
within the stuff  
of which the world  
is made,  
and the stars that blaze  
in our bones,  
and the galaxies that spiral  
inside the smudge  
we bear.

-Blessing the Dust, A Blessing for Ash Wednesday by Jan Richardson<sup>5</sup>

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# Healthy Communities Worldwide

Editorial by Paul D. Leichty

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In the last issue of *Mennonite Health Journal*, I reflected on the nature of global connections for Mennonite-related healthcare workers, both possible and actual. This is the “Walking Together” part of the Annual Gathering 2015 theme, “Walking Together for Healthy Communities.” In this issue, I want to reflect briefly on the “Healthy Communities” part of the theme.

What do healthy communities look like around the world? Does a healthy community look different in the United States than it does in Zimbabwe? How will we define the community itself? Are we talking about a church congregation? A town or city? A region? An entire country? While we can’t answer all of those questions in this short space, let me suggest several characteristics of healthy communities and invite you the readers to add more.

**Healthy communities care for the needs of the whole person across the entire life cycle.** The whole person includes body, mind, and spirit. The whole person is viewed as a person in community, not as an isolated being. At each stage of life, persons have different needs and different abilities to meet their own needs and the needs of others. Healthy communities will appreciate those differences and provide what is needed at each life stage.

**Healthy communities care for physical health when people are sick or injured.** In a fallen world, people get sick and become injured. Whether it is a neighborhood clinic or a large metropolitan hospital, healthy communities provide the resources for persons to be able to be restored to health and wholeness as much as possible. This is the work of most of us as healthcare professionals.

**Healthy communities provide for the adequate nutrition of its members.** In the past number of years, there has been more emphasis on preventative medicine, helping people to avoid getting sick or injured in the first place. Proper nutrition plays a huge role in overall health. Good nutrition means both adequate education about what to eat for optimal health as well as the purchasing power to provide the best food for oneself and one’s family.

**Healthy communities provide care for mental health.** Although the brain is a physical organ of the body, its functioning remains more mysterious. Often mental health issues are not taken seriously until the problems are very obvious. Even then, many of us assume that changes in behavior are simply a matter of will power. Healthy communities will treat mental health issues with the same seriousness as other health issues and will provide appropriate care.

**Healthy communities promote healthy relationships.** A holistic view of health views all individual persons in the context of their families, their circles of friendship, their support systems, and the larger geographic community in which they live. Healthy communities provide that sense of community in which each member of the community is valued for who they are and

can contribute to the good of the community as they are able. Healthy relationships also contribute to better physical and mental health.

**Healthy communities provide meaningful and productive work** for its members with an adequate income to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Poverty affects health. Working overtime because one's job does not provide adequate income adds stress which affects many aspects of health. Folks who are poor are less able to provide for adequate nutrition. Those who live in poor communities often have less access to health services. When they do seek treatment, they tend to be sicker and thus need more expensive treatment, which, in turn, leads to greater poverty.

**Healthy communities care for the weak and vulnerable in their midst.** In addition to the very young and the very old, there are members of the community who live with significant long-term disabilities, including physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities, autism, and mental illness. There are others who have faced other significant losses that affect their ability to maintain good health. Healthy communities will provide the resources to help all of its members to live in a healthy community setting and contribute to that community as much as they are able.

**Healthy communities promote healthy spiritual life for individuals and communities.** God is the author of health and desires that we live in communities characterized by the Hebrew concept of shalom. Living in shalom is living in a positive relationship with God and with the people of God. Although the word "shalom" is often translated as "peace," it actually draws together a wholeness of body, mind, spirit, and relationships with self, with other persons, with creation, and with God.

Creating healthy communities is an ongoing journey in whatever political and cultural context we find ourselves. We can learn from each other. That's why this year's Annual Gathering theme is so important. **Please join us in Harrisburg as we continue "Walking Together for Healthy Communities."**



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