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## Using Our Strengths

By Jerry Truex

Wichita, KS—On June 15, our church participated in a SWOT analysis. SWOT stands for strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats. It is a method for evaluating an organization and, in our case, our own church.

The discussion was led by Doug Von. Along the way, we were encouraged to see how we could use our strengths to address opportunities and threats our church faces. We found that we cannot over-generalize; that is, it would be a mistake to think we can characterize our church with a single word or a single statement.

Our strengths include: high commitment, small church, good music and preaching, servant groups (page 4), social activism, members live their faith, taking theology seriously, “prayers of the people,” and non-dogmatic teaching with open discussions.

Our weaknesses include: our small size with a skeleton crew, lack of building ownership, minimal programs for children and youth, and an inability to articulate who to attract to our church.

Our opportunities include: freedom from owning a building, appeal to people alienated from traditional or mainstream churches, peace witness in a time of war, and our website.

We perceive the following threats: lack of substantial numerical growth, building uncertainties, burnout, low income area with high crime, and uncertainties about maintaining paid leadership.

The question remains how we will use our strengths to meet opportunities and threats. Further discussion is needed.

For more details, see our Church Life Minutes, at [www.mcswichita.net/](http://www.mcswichita.net/)

## Welcoming People with Disabilities

By Sally Huber

Wichita, KS—On June 26, our church hosted Paul Liechty, the co-founder of ADNet (Anabaptist Disabilities Network) based in Goshen Indiana.

Paul spoke about making churches more welcoming to people with disabilities. About 25 people listened to Paul, which led to many comments and questions.

Paul challenged us to consider three areas of welcome.

The first is mobility. This includes the physical characteristics of the building and grounds, which can hinder or support access.

The second is sensory. This includes issues regarding hearing, language (including sign language), and vision.

The third is support. This includes attitudes and choices of the congregation that affect how well we include families and individuals living with physical, emotional, and cognitive challenges. I wish he had spent more time on the third area, but we ran out of time.

I'm thankful for the way many of our members pitched in to make this meeting successful.

## The New Look

The Newsletter has a new look this month. Doug Von, the editor of the Newsletter, is on leave.

Jerry Truex has stepped in. This means shifting from Mac software to PC software and thus a changed look.

Doug has single-handedly edited and produced the Newsletter for over 15 years without missing a single month until now.

## Western District Conference Delegate Report

By Pat Cameron

It was my privilege to represent MCS as a delegate to the 117<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the Western District Conference held at the Hesston Mennonite Church last month. The following are some highlights:

**"MCS HAS MUCH TO GAIN FROM OUR CONNECTION WITH THE WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE."  
- PAT CAMERON**

Dorothy Nickel Friesen, Conference Minister, gave a "State of the Church"

address (mostly sunny but partly cloudy). The financial report reflected concerns about several years of deficit spending (sound familiar?). Two new Spanish-speaking churches were welcomed into the WDC.

The most poignant moment in the delegate session was when I went into the session of the South Central Conference to represent MCS in a blessing ceremony for churches that had ended their affiliation with the Conference. I was taken back by the litany of churches that had left—there must have been at

least 20.

I attended three workshops, but the most outstanding was entitled "Next Steps in Transformational Kingdom Ministry—Saying YES," led by Heidi Unruh. It was about helping the church identify and use its gifts for community ministry.

Attending the conference reminded me that the Mennonite Church is much larger and more diverse than any of its local churches. MCS has much to gain from our connection with the Western District Conference.

## Deny Your Self

By Jerry Truex

The verse of the month is Luke 9:23.

Then he said to them all, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." (NRSV)

This is considered to be one of the "hard" sayings of Jesus.

Some people believe Jesus is asking the impossible. Jesus wants us to negate our own selves, or to put other people's interests always ahead of our own, or to deny our own needs.

True, sometimes we are to put other people's needs ahead of ours (think a mother and child), but I do not think Jesus wanted us to deny our total be-

ing. That would lead to physical death. I do not think Jesus wanted dead disciples. Jesus must have meant something else.

I think the key is found in the next verse: "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it" (Lk 9:24).

It's a riddle. To solve the riddle, it is helpful to introduce the notions of "false self" and "true self". Let's read it again in that light: "Whoever wants to save his life (false self), will lose it (true self), but whoever loses his life (false self) for me will save it (true self)."

The false self is the sense of self we con-

struct or think we are based on what we do (profession), what we have (possessions), and what image we project for the public (persona).

The true self is the Self that remains after we recognize we are not what we do, what we have, or what others think of us. If we lost our job, if we lost our possessions, or if we lost our reputation, we would still have a Self.

What is that Self? I believe that Self is "the image of God" or "Christ in you" (Col 1:27). When we follow Christ, we must transcend (deny) our false selves and, in turn, we that discover (affirm) our true Self in God.

## Keeping a Promise

By Jeanette Stucky

In 2003 I attended the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Gathering in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. The request I heard most was, "Pray for us; we are suffering."

MWC promised our hosts we would not forget them. It's a promise I'm trying to keep.

Here are some excerpts from a June 30 press release:

"It is God's grace that sustains us," said Bishop Danisa Ndlovu.

People live with anxiety. Church leaders especially are targets... "We know we are being watched, but when we preach, we can't overlook corruption and suffering," said Ndlovu.

"We are overwhelmed by the moral support of the international church and the prayers of God's people everywhere. It is a great encouragement," said

Ndlovu. "This is no longer a Zimbabwean issue but an African issue and an international issue."



## The Inside Story

By George Anderson

*Let me introduce George Anderson. He has worshipped with us for about two months. I asked him to write about himself so we can get to know him better. Here is his response.*

Hi, my name is George Anderson. I am approximately 30 years old, and was born and lived most of my life in Kansas. I also lived in Denver, Colorado, and California for some time.

I have a number of pets including a Greater Sulfur Crested Cockatoo (like on the "Beretta" TV series) named Yudhishsthera, or Yudhi bird (you di bird) for short. Of course, I Di man. Yudhi bird is 22 years old, and we have lived together both here and in California for the last 20 years. Yudhi does not talk, or at least no one can understand what he is saying except me. He imitates the alarm clock, but not the phone, since I just ignore the

phone but always get up when the alarm goes off. He wants me to pay attention to him when he imitates the alarm, as well.

I also have a prairie dog named Monkey Pox. She is very shy, but loves to cuddle and be scratched once she gets to know you. Prairie dogs are very social.

I also have a Bull Snake (half albino), a leucistic (that means pure white with blue eyes) Texas Rat Snake and a couple of legless lizards. They look like snakes with alligator heads, ears and eyelids. All my pets are relatively friendly and easy to get along with.

I love music, in particular classical and

jazz. You can hear some of my favorite musicians on youtube, including: yw1935, jungkim2020, alicelizard, unclePTM, rladmscjf8439, blueyoyi, and others.

Swimming is my way of keeping in shape. I try to swim at least five miles a week.

Things I hate include anything that involves work: mowing the lawn, cleaning house, etc.; although I do not mind cooking if it does not take too long.

I instruct part time in Philosophy, Comparative Religion, Ethics, and Astronomy at Butler Community College, but have to clean a building to make ends meet and get benefits.

Lastly, I am a big fan of Barack Obama and hope he becomes our next president.



## Do You have Credit or Debt Trouble?

"Money is powerful. Control it, or it will control you," writes MMA (Mennonite Mutual Aid).

As part of MMA's mission to integrate faith and values into financial decisions, MMA offers budget and debt counseling from certified counselors (up to four sessions) at no cost to you.

To use this free, faith-based service, call (877-809-0039) or go to their web-

site at [www.mma-online.org](http://www.mma-online.org).

Services for budget and debt counseling are: debt repayment plans, advice about identity theft issues, student and vehicle loan questions (borrowing, repayment, default, and repossession).

In addition to budget and debt counseling, MMA offers other options to help you integrate faith and finances, including a Good Sense Budgeting Course

**"MONEY IS POWERFUL. CONTROL IT, OR IT WILL CONTROL YOU."  
- MENNONITE MUTUAL AID**

and Stewardship University. Go to [www.mma-online.org](http://www.mma-online.org)

## Mothers-4-Mothers Receives \$500 from Lions Club

By Sally Huber



\$500.00 grant at their annual picnic.

Rachel H. gave the "thank you" speech. She talked about being young

Wichita, KS—On June 17th, the West Wichita Lions Club gave Mothers-4-Mothers a

and single and then, all of a sudden, a baby comes along and changes your whole life. She was thankful that Mothers-4-Mothers had welcomed her with open arms. This made us very proud.

This week, Mothers-4-Mothers met at Riverside Park, halfway between the playground and the fountain, so we could play everywhere. Eleven families

attended. We blew bubbles, decorated the sidewalks with chalk, and raced model airplanes. It was topped off with ice cream.

On July 19, Mothers-4-Mothers will have our annual family cook out at Riverside Park.

## Servant Groups



A servant group is an intentional face-to-face group (3-12 people) who meet at a regular time (often twice a month) to grow in Christ and actualize God's reign. We have five groups.

**Shalom Servant Group** focuses on developing inner and outer peace, personal and social harmony with oneself, society, and God. Currently, we are studying *Choosing Against War* by John Roth. We usually meet twice a month. Contact Pat (262-2644).

**Faith Issues Group** is a women's reading and discussion group on faith issues. Currently, we are studying *Spiritual Friendship* by Mindy Caliguire. We meet every two weeks on Saturday afternoons for about 90 minutes. Contact Vangie (263-0204).

**Transformation Group** focuses on spiritual discernment. We are currently learning about discernment through the book, *In Tune with God*, by Sally Weaver Glick, and through Bible study. Each meeting includes worship and prayer, personal sharing, and discerning issues we face in life. This group meets about twice a month. Contact Lois (264-3686).

**Hospitality Group**, although not technically a servant group, serves people by making people feel at home at the Mennonite Church of the Servant. We are responsible for greeting people on Sunday mornings, organizing "coffee time," inviting newcomers to fellowship meals, providing meals on special occasions, and organizing potlucks. Contact Geneva (262-2644) or Vangie (263-0204).

**Crafty Ladies** is a group for those who need time away from kids and want to "craft together". Each person picks their own craft, such as crocheting, knitting, embroidering, scrap booking. We meet one Saturday per month at 10:00 am. Contact Dori at (264-3826).

## Song of the Month

"We Will Shine Like the Sun"

1. We will shine like the sun in the kingdom of heaven, (3x)  
And no one will ever be the same.

Refrain: And it's all in Jesus' name.  
Yes, it's all in Jesus' name.  
And it's all in Jesus' name  
That no one will ever be the same.

2. We will stand with the poor in the kingdom of heaven, (3x)  
And no one will ever be the same.
3. We will walk with the weak in the kingdom of heaven, (3x)  
And no one will ever be the same.
4. We will drink new wine in the kingdom of heaven, (3x)  
And no one will ever be the same.
5. And it all starts now in the kingdom of heaven, (3x)  
And no one will ever be the same.

— John Bell, Iona Community

## BBQ Potluck July 6th



On Sunday July 6th, we will have a special Potluck BBQ on the back lawn or the fellowship hall, depending on the weather.

Invite your friends and neighbors.

Please bring side-dishes. The hamburgers and buns will be supplied. We'll try to have the food ready by 12:15 noon.

## Recent Offerings

May 4	\$ 214.35
May 11	\$ 620.00
May 18	\$ 261.46
May 25	\$ 1,708.00
Jun 1	\$ 185.18
Jun 8	\$ 484.91

## Worship for July



In July and August, we will continue our teaching series on genres of the Bible. So far, we have looked at wisdom literature, myth, apocalyptic, a creation hymn, and psalms.

**July 6**—Worship leader, Vangie Truex; teaching by Jerry Truex; Communion

**July 13**—Worship leader, Doug Von; teaching by Jerry Truex

**July 20**—Worship leader, Doug Von; teaching by Pat Cameron

**July 27**—Worship leader, Doug Von; teaching by Lois Barrett; Healing Prayer

**Aug 3**—Worship leader, Vangie Truex; teaching by Jerry Truex; Communion; International Theme Pot luck

*August 3  
International Theme Potluck  
Invite Friends*

# MCS July 2008

### Verse of the Month

Luke 9:23. Then he said to them all, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." (NRSV)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Happy Birthday Jerry T.	2	3	4 Independence Day	5
6 10:00 AM WORSHIP  12:00 noon BBQ Potluck	7	8 7:30 pm Shalom Servant Group	9 Happy Birthday Vangie T.	10	11 12:00 noon Shepherds' Meeting	12 4:00 pm Faith Issues Servant Group
13 10:00 AM WORSHIP	14 7:30 pm Worship Committee	15	16	17	18	19 10:00 am Crafty Ladies  2:00 pm M-4-M family cook out at Riverside Park
20 10:00 AM WORSHIP	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 10:00 AM WORSHIP	28	29	30 Happy Birthday Warren C.	31		



## Mennonite Church Of the Servant

Our mission is to welcome all people into a community covenanted to follow the way of Jesus Christ through

- Practicing peace and reconciliation,
- Sharing our lives in love and accountability, and
- Bringing the good news of the reign of God to the world.

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