

Living the Word The power of a question

by Pastor Ken Miller Rieman

There's a kind of power that comes to students who understand their stake in the questions they ask. I remember well the day at Manchester College when I ran into some students from a school out East. They were traveling around the country to share their experiences with student-led classes.

"Student led?" I asked. Was I hearing them right? Why would a school let students lead a class? Weren't we here to learn from our professors?

They shared the story of their own student-led class experience. I was fascinated by the process they used to get together and decide what they wanted to study. The whole thing was making me laugh—not the way one laughs at something ridiculous, but more the way one laughs at a clever friend's description of an event that you were at, but hadn't found funny at the time, but now can see was actually hilarious.

I don't think I'd ever spent time thinking about

what I might want to study, if I actually got to choose entirely on my own. That realization started me down the rabbit hole. Endless possibilities!

But the conversation didn't stop for my side-trip.

The students from out East were still telling their story. They couldn't just study anything. They had to find something they could all agree to study together. Then they had to write their syllabus. That meant they needed to identify their learning goals, and the resources which would assist them, and which students would take responsibility

for which parts of the class.

Now, what had seemed like endless possibility was coming back to earth. This could be tricky, I thought.

Seeing my face cloud, one of the students said, "You know, every process imposes boundaries and constraints upon what you can study." He held his arms up on both sides of his body, forming make-believe parallel fences. "Those boundaries are what shape your learning, but

(Continued on page 2)



Not that all of this year's conference was this exciting, but our members attending did enjoy themselves. Our own pastor and 2010 Moderator Shawn Repogle (black vest) made the jump.

The New Olympian

Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren
425 NE 95th Street
Seattle, WA 98115

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Seattle, WA
Permit # 01259

(Continued from page 1)

they don't need to hold you back. They are used to direct you. There's no limit to how far you go within them."

That was an 'Aha' moment I'll never forget. He'd just helped me to see the power in a question.

As students of life, we are sometimes encouraged to see questions as problems that need solved, or hurdles that need overcome. As such, they remind us that we haven't reached our goal. They define our existence by the knowledge we lack.

But questions can also be understood as the road by which we journey toward our goal, and thus the means of that goal's attainment. In fact, the question itself, like any road, will play a very important role in determining which destinations we will reach, and those with whom we will travel along the way.

What questions have guided your journey in life thus far? What are your burning questions right now? With whom do you pursue their answers? What questions do you think we as a congregation share?

Power comes to those who know their quest. I hope you'll post your questions or comments on our blog or send them to the office.

May our learning never end.

Meet Your New Secretary

Many of you will see a familiar face in the office, though one you may not have seen for a while. Dan Smith-Derksen is the new Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren Secretary.

The Smith-Derksens recently returned from mission work in Chad through Mennonite Central Committee where they participated in peace-building activities, bringing members of disparate tribes, religions and denominations together through music programs, theatre, and worship. Last summer, the Smith-Derksens returned from Chad to visit family in Seattle and made a presentation of their Chadian experiences during Sunday worship.

Dan brings extensive Brethren and Mennonite roots to Olympic View. Some of Dan's earliest memories come from the

White Branch CoB where his father was pastor from the time Dan was five until age seven. Then, Dan was raised in Mennonite churches in both Illinois and Iowa until he went off to college, where he changed his membership back to CoB. Dan is a third generation alumnus of Manchester College, where he and Pastor Ken Miller Rieman both pursued their degrees in Peace Studies.

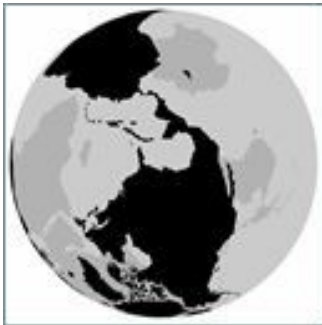


Dan, Jacob, John-Clair and Kathryn Smith-Derksen in Chad



Family time is important to Dan, particularly spending time engaging his sons, John-Clair and Jacob, in physical activities. Dan himself loves to play soccer and other competitive team sports, so long as it's not too competitive. Along with wife, Kathryn (former OV choir director, Dan enjoys gatherings with groups of friends around a shared meal. Making music is also a shared passion. Kathryn herself is an accomplished instrumentalist and looks forward to getting back into the performance seen in Seattle along with her sister, Elizabeth Brown, a well-known local guitar and lute performer and teacher.

The Smith-Derksens are currently living with Kathryn's sister, until they can move back into their home in Shoreline after their renters move out. Thanks to Dan being able to work at OV, they are able to focus their energy this summer on the needs of their boys. They express deep gratitude for the many prayers and letters on their behalf which have come from this congregation, and are pleased to be welcomed back so warmly into the community.



... turning the world upside down...Acts 17:6

From space there is no up or down to Planet Earth. The New Community Project believes it is time to begin looking at our world and its people in a new way — not from above, but from beside or even below, after the example and teachings of Jesus.

The early church was accused of “turning the world upside down” (Acts 17:6) for its radical way of doing things. It's about time for people to begin saying that about us!

August Outreach Focus

This month, we're inviting our members and friends to support an organization which extends our witness and service in the world.

We used to plan how much we would give to outreach each year when we made our budget. Now, we designate 10% of our annual revenue to District and Denominational ministries, and invite our members to support an additional outreach ministry each month.

Gifts designated for outreach in August Sunday offerings will support the work of :

New Community Project

*...promoting peace through justice,
care for creation, and experiential learning*

Living more sustainably with the earth and more fairly with its people — that's the mission of the New Community Project. We provide experiences that change us, resources that challenge us, and a community that gives us hope.

Our work includes:

- sponsoring Learning Tours to places where God's people and/or God's creation are struggling
- providing speakers and workshop leaders for colleges, congregations, youth events, and other gatherings
- placing Solidarity Workers in other countries and cultures
- offering a variety of engaging print and web-based resources
- creating a support network for like-minded souls, with a special interest in empowering youth and young adults

New Community Project

*Following Christ toward a new community of
justice, peace and respect for God's earth*

718 Wilder Street, Elgin, IL 60123

Toll free: 888.800.2985

E-mail: ncp@newcommunityproject.org

newcommunityproject.org

Loving Our Enemies Luke 6: 32-36

By Charles Boyer from *Fresh from the Word*

But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return (Luke 6: 35a).

Meditation: The tiny part of the Christian movement that we Brethren began at a time when war was fresh in the minds of the residents of what is now Germany. Likewise, war and terrorism are fresh in our minds as we face the fourth century of our denomination's existence. The passage for today from Luke's Gospel calls us again to seek to love those who are labeled as our enemies.

When was the last time you heard anyone outside of the Christian movement call for us to love our enemies? Oh, yes, we occasionally hear someone call for a re-examination of our policies toward our enemies because those policies are creating more enemies. But this line of thinking has little to do with loving the enemy.

As Christians we are called to do the difficult work of seeing God in all people, even those who do not seem to be very Godlike. We need to heed and discuss this call as much today as did our forebears in 1708. God, grant us the courage to struggle to understand this call for unimaginable love.

For the day: One way to imitate the Creator is to be merciful and forgiving to both enemy and friend.

Prayer: God of all people who on earth do dwell, help us to sow seeds of love where hatred lurks and reigns. Grant wisdom and courage for the living of these days. Amen.



Love your enemies and bless those that curse you.

Mennonite martyr, Dirk Willems, after crossing a frozen lake while fleeing from prison, comes back to rescue his prison guard who falls through the ice while pursuing him. Dirk is then re-arrested and put to death for his Anabaptist faith.

Young Adults & the Simply Young

Young adults gathered in March to celebrate Ahnna Bisterfeldt's 3rd birthday.



Ahnna's brother Joshua, 4 months

Sharing Together in Prayer In Our Community:

- For **Jean Ulery**, undergoing chemotherapy
- For the Shoemaker family mourning **Richard Shoemaker**, **Bill Shoemaker's** brother, who died Sunday July 5.
- For the family of **Diane Peters**, **Tim Bisterfeldt's** aunt, who died in July.
- For **Adam Ford** who is having difficulty with his kidney treatment.
- Thanks for the birth of healthy great-granddaughter for **Bob & Carol Landis**.
- For **Sharon Haley's** sister-in-law, seeking treatment for a brain lesion.
- For **Goldie Barnes' sister Cheryl** who is seriously ill.
- For **Edmarks' granddaughter, Amber**, for continued improvements of health and college decisions being made.
- Thanks for **Kathy Edmark's** successful surgery and hope for her continued recovery.
- For **Dan Fredrickson**, recovering from a hip replacement.
- Thanks for the new grandson, **Katrey**, of **Sharon Miller** born to daughter **Melissa** on July 12. About a month premature, prayers that Katrey continues to improve and will come home as planned in August.

Ongoing Prayer Requests:

**Lowell Geiver; Jimmy Barnes; Jean Ulery
Geraldine Campbell; Chris Pride;
Peggy Cochran; Eunice Jarboe;
Bill Case** and his daughter, **Carol Kamada;**
Lew Fortin's nephew, **Michael Rogers;**
Sharon Haley's siblings: **Mark, Paul Andrews,
and Ruth; Gene & Donna Harnden;**
Pauline Danzer's son-in-law, **Eric Emmer;**
**Eunice Jarboe; Ed Enzi; Patti Berg;
Evelyn Merritt; Elsie Clayton;**
Eileen Birky's mother, **Vera Gastfield Wolfe**

Our Nation, State, and World:

- For those suffering the physical, psychological, and spiritual wounds of war.
- For all who have been affected by rising unemployment and economic challenges, including all of our locally situated family and friends impacted by layoffs.
- For the victims and their families impacted by the DC subway collision.
- For peace in Iraq and all countries.
- For a de-escalation of international tension with Iran and North Korea.



Olympic View youth at a recent canoe outing.



Annual Conference San Diego 2009

In addition to carrying out the business of the church, the 2009 Annual Conference offered daily worship services and Bible studies, as well as opportunities for spiritual growth, fellowship, and service—including the annual quilting bee and quilt auction which raised \$6,275 for hunger relief.

Junior and senior high youth went to the US-Mexico border for a peace and justice event on immigration issues.

Delegates, including **Patti Berg** from Olympic View, met to discuss motions and reports submitted to the conference. A church-wide conversation on sexuality was set in motion by the delegate body, while they also adopted a revision paper entitled, "A Structural Framework for Dealing with Strongly Controversial Issues," which provides a good process for dialogue around issues that test the church as a body.

Others from Olympic View, **Stephanie Herkelrath**, **Rachel Wolfe** and **Pastor Ken**, also attended the conference.



Acknowledgements:

July 14, 2009

Dear Seattle, Olympic View Community Church:

It's my pleasure and responsibility to thank you for your latest gift to the ministries of the Church of the Brethren. And, I do so now, with sincerity and awe. Sincerity—because it is only through the grace of God and the tremendous generosity of our congregations that we have the resources to affect real change in the world. And, awe—because it is God's abundance shared through your giving that daily gives me inspiration and a powerful witness to the love and life of Jesus. May the Lord bless you and keep you today and every day.

Many thanks my friends,

Ken Neher

Director of Funding and Donor Development
Church of the Brethren



Stephanie Herkelrath (center) and **Pastor Ken** participated in a Peace Witness to the city of San Diego during Annual Conference

Reminders:

Please remember to complete the two forms currently in the church office:

- 1) 2009 Time and Talent Interest Finder
- 2) I.C.E. (in case of emergency)

Each form is available on the counter in the church office and may be left in the secretary's in-box after you have filled it out.

Also: There is a need for more people to participate in the rota of ushers. Please talk with **Geraldine Campbell** or **Bob Oberg** if you might be interested in helping out. Thanks!

The New Olympian is published monthly by the Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren

425 NE 95th Street, Seattle, WA 98115
Phone: 206.525.8900
olympicchurch.org
e-mail: info@olympicchurch.org