

# Conference Minister's Report

For Delegate Assembly on September 15, 2012



God is at work in New York Mennonite Conference guiding us in this transition time toward effective ministry in a post Christendom era. "Dreams and Visions 2010-2017" guides us in our twin priorities of new and renewed churches reaching across the state of New York.

In late April I attended Exponential 2012, a gathering of over 5000 leaders with a focus on church planting. It was an amazing event with many workshops on effective ways to be the church. Much of the theology was Anabaptist. It's not sufficient for us to "do" church like we always have. Deep changes are called for, this training event helped me to wrestle with some of our underlying issues and opportunities.

On June 3<sup>rd</sup> at the RiverRock Church on the West Side of Buffalo, there was a reconciliation service with healing of relationships from events since the 90's involving the West Side Church of the Living Word and New York Mennonite Conference. The service was led by Bob Tice, pastor at RiverRock, and myself. The congregation of 200 included present and former New York Mennonite Conference leaders, present and former attendees of congregations that have met in that location, and other church leaders from the Buffalo area.

I continue to relate to the Emmanuel Chin congregation in Buffalo. It is always a blessing to me to be together.

We also continue to take steps toward a multi-ethnic Anabaptist church on the West Side of Buffalo that ministers in holistic ways. I'm in conversation with potential leaders for this work. On August 20, the former Harris Hill Mennonite church property was sold to North Gate church led by Jon Hasselbeck. Funds from this will be designated toward outreach and church planting.

Linda Wright was ordained on May 20 at the Jesus Church in Addison, NY. On October 28 at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Diane Stitt Melchert will be licensed for ministry in Oxford, England.

I continue to be engaged with 8 Mennonite conferences in the northeast (ANEC) who cooperate in offering training and resources for church planting. A fall training event is planned for September 21-22.

Two significant books I've been reading lately are "The Tangible Kingdom, Creating Incarnational Community", Halter and Smay; and "The Forgotten Ways, Reactivating the Missional Church", Hirsch.

The District Ministers (formerly overseers) meet regularly and confer on many other occasions as we support congregations in becoming healthy centers of mission. I'm grateful for Terry Zehr's assistance as Associate Conference Minister.

Grace and peace,  
Gene Miller-Conference Minister