

Fellowship Informer

Stephens City Mennonite Church

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts:
and though all its parts are many, they form one body.
So it is with Christ. I Corinthians 12:1



Worshiping in the New Year

Where is your heart?

STEWARDSHIP SERIES @ SCMC

Key verse: Luke 12:34. Jesus Christ's words:

"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

January 9: Ekklesia: Storytelling: Listening to our lives

January 16: CO-CREATING: Colossians 1:15-23

Introducing the theme—*Getting the soil ready*: Everything belongs to God! Through Jesus, God has reconciled all things to himself and is restoring and re-creating creation through his stewardship. Jesus continues his creative work today through us who participate in that re-creation and restoration by means of our work on this earth. In what ways are you partnering with God when you are creating? What skills has God given you to steward?

February 6: CONTENTMENT: Proverbs 30:7-9

February 13: Glenn Kauffman from Everence (formerly Mennonite Mutual Aid) will speak about debt reduction.

February 20: Healing addictions

February 27: Ekklesia

Upcoming Activities

- January 15 Fondue/game night at SCMC starting at 6PM
- January 22 Book study: 7PM at Snodgrass home
The Naked Anabaptist
- January 23 Communion
- January 29 Mission meal: 6PM
Skip and Carol Tobin
- January 30 Mission emphasis:
Skip and Carol Tobin

FRIENDS AND VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME.





Title: *The Fugitive* **Author:** Myron S. Augsburger **Reviewer:** Mike Spory

How you decided to read the book: While vacationing this past August on the Olympic Peninsula, Pat and I were checking out a nice coffee shop and bookstore in Sequim, Washington. A book in the sales rack caught my attention (most things on sales racks catch my attention). It was *The Fugitive* by Myron Augsburger. As a first generation Mennonite, I confess that I don't know much about the man our denomination is named for. Over the Christmas holidays I could at last read it.

Menno's first struggle was whether to be a priest or not, as strongly encouraged by his parents. After becoming a priest, he struggled with much of the new thinking that was challenging the Catholic Church's long-held beliefs. Luther's writings were only 15 or so years old, and Menno read all he could about Luther's concerns with the Church. As a civilian and then as a priest, Menno had never read the Bible. Because of Luther's use of scripture to support his ideas, Menno decided to read it. This led Menno to even more questions. He was already struggling with the Catholic belief that communion involves the actual eating of Christ's flesh and blood, and now wondered about other sacraments such as infant baptism. As a priest, Menno became very evangelical, focusing on the individual's need to live out what he or she believed. Merely attending church and following the sacraments were not enough. Menno also read other dissenting views, attracted to writings by Anabaptist leaders.

The book chronicles Menno leaving the priesthood, associating with an existing Anabaptist group, and rising to a leadership position. The terrible persecution of the Anabaptists, first by the Catholic Church and later by the Protestants, with full support of various state governments, is very sobering. Menno and his family moved often and were always under the threat of capture and execution.

I learned about Menno's strong reliance on scripture, his emphasis on personal faith, his belief in the free church as separate from government, and his desire for peace, non-violence, and reconciliation.

It made me question our respect (or lack of) of the scriptures for our daily lives. I wonder what it was like to live when such thinking was so new and current. Menno lived during Luther's Reformation. As we continue to decide what our focus needs to be at SCMC, do we need to consider new thinking that may be challenging centuries of old thought? Could I have stayed true when con-fronted with execution by the Catholic or Protestant Churches for Anabaptist biblical beliefs without wanting to compromise to save my family or myself? I found this an easy read, but full of serious things for me to think about.

Please consider sharing a book review on a book that you recently read. Send your suggestions or reviews to thegonzols@gmail.com



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Missions Weekend: January 29-30

Skip and Carol Tobin have spent the 31 years of their marriage living into opportunities to share Jesus—with Hispanic migrant workers on the streets of Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, in local prisons, for over 16 years among rice farmers in Northeast Thailand, and now, as staff persons with Virginia Mennonite Missions, encouraging missional engagement here in Virginia Conference. Their example of simple availability to God and faithfulness in prioritizing God’s mission as they raised their family of six daughters can inspire us as a congregation to take the opportunities that God is giving us, to engage with Him in mission!

Our focus will be to help you as a congregation gain clarity on what God is calling you as a congregation to be doing, both locally and in places where as we often say, “the church is . . . not yet.”



Phnom Penh Mennonite Church

Our EMM regional representatives, Skip and Carol Tobin (L) pray with the elders as we commission a new elder team for the church.



WATTS *Christmas Meal*

SCMC helped with the WATTS (Winchester Area Temporary Thermal Shelter) program during the week of Christmas. Vicki Hoffman shared this photo of the small group helping to prepare Christmas dinner.

Thanks to Doug for helping to coordinate this and to all the others who provided services

January: Dwelling in the Word

Colossians 1:15-17

Romans 1:18-23

Proverbs 30:7-9

Micah 6:6-8



The Wisdom of Everyday Items



A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. The young woman did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up, tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed that after one problem was solved, a new one rose.

Her mother took her to the kitchen. The mother filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon they came to boil. In the first she put carrots, in the second eggs, and in the last ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil, without saying a word. After about twenty minutes she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she poured the coffee out and placed it in a bowl.

She asked her daughter, “Tell me, what do you see?” “Carrots, eggs, and coffee,” the daughter replied. Her mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and felt that they were soft. The mother asked the daughter to take an egg and break it open. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, the mother asked the daughter to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its rich flavor. The daughter then asked, “What does it mean, Mother?”

Her mother explained that each of these objects has faced the same adversity—boiling water. Each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior, but after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened. The ground coffee beans were unique, however; after they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water.

“Which are you?” she asked her daughter. “When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?”

Think of this: Which am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity do I wilt and become soft, and lose my strength? Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit but after a death, a breakup, a financial hardship or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and hardened heart?

Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changed the hot water, the very circumstance that brought the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavor. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you. When the hour is the darkest and trials are at their greatest, do you elevate yourself to another level?

How do you handle adversity? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?

Attributed to Mary Sullivan (before 2002); contributed by Joan Rosenberger, Parish Nurse



Start date: November, 2008

Total earned to date: \$3,335.00 (about \$128.27/month)

Cards available: Martin's and Food Lion
(Martin's cards can also be used at the gas pump).

How to purchase: Eunice Myers has cards available every Sunday. It is helpful for people to e-mail ahead of time so that all the information can be recorded.

djemmyers@verizon.net

Cards are still available even if you forget to e-mail.

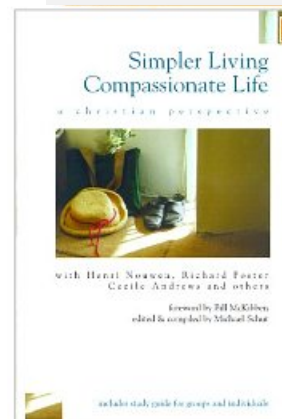
Report from VA Relief Sale

We received the final report from the Relief Sale. Here are a few highlights:

2010 Donation to MCC Through 10,000 Villages	10,950.46
2010 Donation to Va Conf. from Penny Power for VMBM	12,104.20
2010 Donation to Roberta Webb	4,207.76
2010 Donation to Generations at Risk	4,207.76
2010 Donation to Gift & Thrift Harrisonburg, Applebutter	13,244.00
2010 Donation to MCC	215,000.00
2010 Donation total	259,714.18

- We ate our way through \$117,971.93 of food, including \$9,046.40 in donuts.
- The main auction had a profit of \$105,863.53.
- Penny Power raised \$24,208.40.
- The 5K Run raised \$1,720 after expenses.
- 18 quilts brought over \$1000 each.

Using Our Resources Wisely



One of the primary resource books for the Stewardship series will be *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life*. This book is a

collection of essays on money, time, environment, community, and related topics. There is a study guide included which provides a compelling alternative vision of a healthy, whole, and balanced life.

Here is a link to the book in Amazon. It is available for about \$13, new.

[Simpler-Living-Compassionate-Life-Perspective](#)