

E-MANUAL



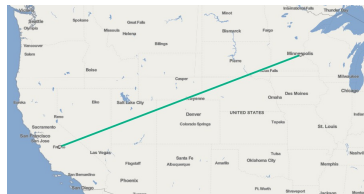
The Newsletter of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Minneapolis, MN

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MEET THE BECKERS!

The Beckers are Chris, Kim, Kanada, Teagan, Ezekiel, and Liam. They hail from Fresno, CA and have all lived there for the majority of their lives. They have moved around quite a lot within the boundaries of Fresno, living for a time in the urban downtown region, for a while near the California State University, and in other areas not marked by anything special. As a family they have attended a few churches: The Father’s House Christian Fellowship, a Foursquare-turned-independent congregation, College Community Mennonite Brethren Church, and North Fresno Mennonite Brethren Church.

Chris grew up in a Mennonite Brethren family who spent much time involved in church life. He went to Immanuel High School in Reedley, CA. Upon graduating high school, Chris began a short-lived attempt at college before allowing life to take another course. After Kim and Chris began their family together, they both went back to school.

Chris graduated with a BA in English from CSU Fresno and later achieved an MDiv from Fresno Pacific University Biblical Seminary. He has been occupied with several jobs over the years, notably Worship Pastor (which lasted nearly ten years) and most recently he worked at a bicycle shop. Chris is an avid cyclist who prefers bikes over cars any time possible. Chris is also a musician and loves to write and record music. He plays most things guitar shaped, some keyboard shaped instruments, and lots of drums. He has a small recording studio that he’s built over the years and which occupies as much of his time as he can muster (not nearly enough these days).

Kim also grew up in a Mennonite Brethren household, and while she calls Fresno her hometown, her family moved around a bit. As such, she’s lived in Fresno, Hanford, Bakersfield, and Madera Ranchos. She’s attended several schools over the years, eventually also attending Immanuel High School in Reedley, CA. Also like Chris, Kim began a short-lived attempt at college after graduating high school and then also found that life had other plans for her. Upon her return to school, Kim studied art at CSU Fresno, graduating with a BA in Fine Art with an emphasis on painting. She then went on to grad school, finishing two MAs, one in Marriage, Family, and Child Counseling and one in Christian Ministry. Kim is also a cyclist and a musician, playing bass, some piano, and singing. She loves the outdoors; whether cycling, hiking, fishing, or just sitting, Kim likes to spend time outside. Kim and Chris have spent much time in the CA backcountry hiking and backpacking and the whole family loves to go camping.

The story of how Chris and Kim met is a long

and complicated one. Their lives were intertwined for years before finally connecting at Fig Garden Bible Church, a Mennonite Brethren church they both attended for a while before they were married. The long and complicated connections between these two families are as follows: As is generally the case with those of Mennonite background, the Beckers (Chris's family) and the Kliewers (Kim's family) knew each other. Both were involved in the beginnings of College Community Mennonite Brethren Church in Clovis, California (a community connected to Fresno). Chris's dad went to Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary and during that time he and Chris's mom led the youth group at College Community Church. Kim's parents were in this youth group. Kim's grandpa (and later her dad as well) worked for an auto parts company that was frequented by Chris's dad. Chris played in a band with Kim's brother. While Chris and Kim both spent time at the same high school, and they both were acquainted with each other there, they didn't spend much time hanging out at that time. They had mutual friends and often had common activities, but the spark was yet to be ignited. It was not until years later that they finally began their relationship together at Fig Garden Bible Church.

The Becker family numbers six. Kanada is the oldest, is twenty-one years old, and is currently living in Rohnert Park, CA while she finishes her last year at Sonoma State University. She is majoring in anthropology with a minor in environmental studies. She enjoys drawing and the outdoors.

Teagan is sixteen years old, a junior in high school, and is far and away the most outgoing and social of the Beckers. She likes people. She also enjoys various sports activities including volleyball and loves to spend time with friends.

Zeke is fourteen years old and a freshman in high school. He is a musician and, like his dad, plays most things guitar shaped. Music takes up most of his free time, but he also enjoys cycling.

Liam is the youngest at eleven years old and is in the sixth grade. He loves playing games on the computer, fishing, and cycling. One of his most recent passions is riding tandem with his dad.

The Beckers are excited to see what God has in store for them in Minnesota. Accepting the call to co-pastor at Emmanuel Mennonite Church is a big step for Chris and Kim and the rest of the family. Life is certainly a journey and this leg of the journey is a new and adventurous time for this family. They are looking forward to all that the Twin Cities has to offer.

NOT EXACTLY IN STYLE

By Philip Friesen

My mother was embarrassed. Surely the teachers at school would imagine her to be a lazy and careless person. Perhaps she had been a little drunk, when she stitched the sloppy patches on the knees of my farmer bib overalls. But that was the best her arthritic hands could do.

Sometimes I went home from school to give lunch to mother when Dad was working. At other times I brought my lunch to school, and Mom kept her lunch ready next to her bed. Once the school principal saw me come in late and called me into his office. "Did your mother drop you off late today?" he said. "I had to walk," I replied. "How far is your house?" "One half mile," I said. "I see," he replied. "You can go back to class."

Those walks home in winter required warm clothing. "Long stocking kid," the other boys jeered when they saw my underwear suspended with garters in gym class. "Dress for the weather, not the style," mother drilled into my head. Ouch!

A few years later in grade 7 at a new school I never noticed that my brother and I were the only boys with farmer bib overalls. Such things were not important to us. But mother noticed and made us switch to blue jeans. That was a loss for me because the bib had a place for a pencil. Pencils were more useful than fashionable pants. Years later when at Northwestern University in grad school, I noticed that expensive jeans with knee patches had become popular. What insensitivity! Things hurt all over again! I believe having that experience now helps me understand my Native American and black friends a little better.

FROM THE BEGINNING, GOD WAS THERE

I do not remember, but I can imagine the welcome I received at the church Dad pastored for almost nine years previous to my birth. I can only imagine the aunties lining up for their turn to help take care of me. After nine years of shared hunger and cold through the drought, dust, and grasshoppers of the great depression, the pastor and his invalid wife who stuck it out on a guaranteed salary of only \$5 a month were truly brother and sister in blood, sweat, and tears. Knowing how much I was wanted is no doubt the asset that took me through the trauma of growing up.

TAKE GOOD CARE OF MOTHER

The first telephone call of my life was made at the age of three or four when mother's crutches slipped and she fell. She coached me from her place on the floor as I climbed a chair, cranked the phone handle, and put the receiver to my ear. "Number please," someone said in a professional voice. Following mother's instructions I answered, "Please send someone to help my mommy." In a few minutes a group of men came to pick mom off the floor.

Besides worrying about her reputation at school, mother was afraid that child welfare might take her children away. No, we weren't on welfare, but Dad had recently experienced a period of serious hospitalization and had only begun work again. Just how would such a crippled woman care for two preschool boys and a baby sister? As time went on, we children took care of her as much as she did of us.

HEARING FROM GOD

Probably at age 4 was the first time I heard God speak. Guests sat around our table for faspä (afternoon snack in Plaudeutsch). A plate of cookies passed from person to person, and each person took one. My brother and I were last. When my turn came, there were two cookies left on the plate, one twice the size of the other. We both knew the rules. Wait your turn and choose one. My first instinct was to grab the big one, but something told me to take the small one, and I listened. I left the large cookie for my 3 year old

brother. A murmur of surprise came from adults around the table, and I suddenly felt like crying, not from disappointment but from gratitude. It must have been the voice of God I heard.

In early elementary school, Betty was the prettiest and possibly the smartest girl in my class. Her dad was the local pharmacist. He had teased me once quite innocently, and I decided I didn't like him. One day mother told me that Betty's dad was on the county child welfare board, and it had probably been his influence that prevented our separation from mother and dad. Upon hearing this, I felt shame for all my negative feelings towards him. That was for me a lesson from God about judging other people.

According to the statistics on kids like me, I should have been arrested for something by age 15. If my story had played out today, one would expect drugs to be a problem in my life. But none of that happened. God's grace does not only rescue the fallen. God's grace keeps us from falling. That is my story.

Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Psalm 23:6



PUTTING THE STORY TOGETHER

By Philip Friesen

OLD TESTAMENT CHRISTIANS

In 1977 Anne Benjamin visited Winnie Mandela in Brandfort, Orange Free State, where Winnie was confined to the ghetto (Anne Benjamin, *Winnie Mandela*, New York: Norton and Co. 1984). Anne drove to the imaginary line separating the races in that city, and visited Winnie on the other side of the line, both staying legal.

The Afrikaners who established the independent Boer republic, called Orange Free State, in 1854 were deeply religious and strongly Biblical people. Some of the settlers even wanted to include the Ten Commandments as part of the new constitution. Today we read the Biblical text through a different lens from theirs and wonder

how they could possibly miss what we believe we see. I suggest they represent a kind of Old Testament Christian who had not yet mastered the gospel of the New. When reading the Biblical story, they identified themselves with the conquest of Canaan without fully understanding the cross of Calvary, or connecting the dots of Old Testament history with the new. Following are a few dots that I believe need connecting in order to understand what the story, as an integral whole, reveals.

Before the conquest of Canaan in Egypt, the Hebrews were ghettoized. To the Egyptians, the word, Hebrew, meant savage, barbarous scum. That is why even Joseph, as prime minister, was not permitted to eat with any Egyptian, and 400 years later, this had not changed. The Hebrew's incubation as Yahweh's people took place in the womb of adversity from enslavement. It was the Exodus that cut the umbilical cord and birthed a new nation out of slavery for whom God made a place in Canaan as promised. Once established in Canaan, Israel needed a clear separation from its neighbors in order to confirm its own identity and prevent its natural absorption into the mindset of the neighborhood. Israel's education as a holy people would have to be in a separate school with a different curriculum.

For this purpose the former occupants would need to be evicted from the property. God had given these Canaanite tenants 400 years since Abraham to change their behavior before ordering their eviction, and by now the lease for them had run out (Genesis 15:16). If we apply this understanding to a white, privileged, immigrant, Christian group that sees itself as chosen by God and given special privilege, apartheid fits perfectly into the scheme, but this myopic perspective ignores the rest of the Biblical story.

God gave no command for Israel's segregation from other groups in the area, and the books of Judges and Samuel frequently reference other groups that intermingled with Israel. Moses told the Hebrews at Sinai they were to be a nation of priests (Exodus 19:6). It was not something they wanted to do. They would rather be kings like

Pharaoh. After generations of slavery, the natural shape of society for the Hebrews would be that of rulers and slaves. Had Moses claimed kingship over them, which would have been the normal policy for one in Moses' position, Israel would have replicated by imitation exactly what they had learned in Egypt.

With Abraham, the idea that Israel could become a blessing to the nations had been planted in the national subconscious (Genesis 12:3). The idea reappeared in a new stage of gestation when Moses proclaimed a new nation of priests who would have no king but Yahweh. Then after centuries of further incubation, the captivity in Assyria and Babylon produced the clear articulation of this vision in the writings of Isaiah, the vision that Israel would be a light to all the nations. The trauma of captivity, first to Assyria and then to Babylon, resulted in a more mature understanding of Israel's identity and call in line with God's revealed purpose. This understanding continued to flower in the writings of all the prophets who followed Isaiah.

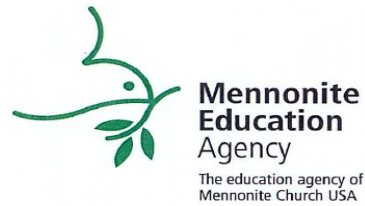
Another consequence of the exile was Israel's hope for a Messiah, but when Messiah came the Jews stumbled over the cross. The imperial, domineering, colonialist mindset of the Pharaohs was the one thing from which they still needed to be weaned. Here is the application to southern Africa and everywhere else, in fact. The church, as much as the Jew, still does not understand the cross or submit to it. I do not mean the practitioners of apartheid did not believe in the cross. The cross was the theoretical center of religious practice, but it had little application outside the privileged group. For them, Jesus was the great high priest of their religion, but not king of the world with equal citizenship among all peoples. With this mindset they would read a text like Galatians 3:28 (In Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female) as personal religion and see nothing more. In politics the imperial spirit continued to reign.

The cross had profound political impact, something seldom recognized. Jesus was declared "King of the Jews" first by the people who

escorted his donkey ride into Jerusalem, and then officially ratified by Pontius Pilate. This happened when Pilate placed a notice on the cross, “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.” While intended in jest to humiliate the Jews, Pilate’s declaration was still an official government act that Pilate assumed would have no meaning after Jesus died. The resurrection turned the tables on Pilate. Before he died the King on the cross forgave his country’s enemies (Luke 23:34), and this forgiveness was not merely an expression of personal niceness. Every word a king speaks in public is official and political, and it should not surprise us to discover that the first two recorded Gentile converts were Roman soldiers (Matthew 27:54, Mark 15:44, Acts 10), not counting the Ethiopian eunuch who was possibly Jewish. When this reality dawned upon Paul, he became the apostle to the Gentile world and wrote Galatians.

If we make the application to southern Africa, the role of Isaiah’s suffering servant who brings reconciliation has in contemporary times been played by the African church. Like their Lord, these brothers and sisters both refused to bend while at the same time refusing to hate their persecutors, absorbing in their own flesh the wrath of the devil and defeating him. Whatever degree of reconciliation has come about between races since apartheid has happened because of the cross they have carried.

Once the cross informs our vision, then we can see clearly the trajectory of revelation that travels from the vision of Genesis 12, to the ideals of Isaiah’s suffering servant, Israel, to the Messiah and the inclusive theology of Paul. It is not God who needed the sacrifice of Jesus, but rather the guilty human heart, which is the place from which evil comes, as Jesus described it (Matthew 12:34-35, 15:19, Mark 7:21). The original proclamation of Genesis, “You will surely die,” has been nullified by the cross, and when the crucified Jesus is Lord of ALL, both of religion and politics, then the reconciliation of the world can happen. He is the fulcrum over which all proper interpretation moves. In him alone we understand our origins and know our destiny as one people of God through Christ.



August 7, 2015

Dear Friends of Mennonite education:

Thank you . . . for your support of Mennonite education. Because of your gifts — and the support of many other friends of Mennonite education — 13,589 students received an opportunity to grow in faith at one of our Mennonite educational institutions last year.

Mennonite education is raising Christ followers, difference embracers, rigorous learners, peace seekers, community builders and service givers. Mennonite Church USA convention in July was a time for MEA and the Mennonite higher education institutions to connect with past, current and future students and to see their impact on the church. Alumni, current students, faculty and staff of these institutions were active in all areas of convention from the exhibit hall to seminars to worship services at leadership levels and as participants.

Each school emulated the six distinctives throughout the week in many ways. **Hesston College** challenged students that through Christ they might "be greater than," building *Christ followers*. **AMBS** alumna, Cyneatha Millsaps, spoke during youth and adult worship encouraging attendees to learn each other's stories, a way to become *difference embracers*. **Bluffton University** journalism students were *rigorous learners* as they gathered and reported the daily happenings in the convention's *Daily Newsheet*. Seminars on restorative justice and trauma healing led by **EMU** taught participants to be *peace seekers*. **Goshen College's** coffee house drew people together as *community builders*. **Bethel College's** \$500 award to a service organization showed that being a *service giver* is important.

Mennonite education was active throughout convention showing the role the institutions play in the denomination as a whole. **Your congregation's financial commitment helps Mennonite education raise leaders in Mennonite Church USA and the world.** We appreciate your help in growing the church through education.

On behalf of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Bethel College, Bluffton University, Eastern Mennonite University, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Goshen College and Hesston College, we say thank you.

Thank you for partnering with us in raising Christ followers, difference embracers, rigorous learners, peace seekers, community builders and service givers.

God's peace be with you,

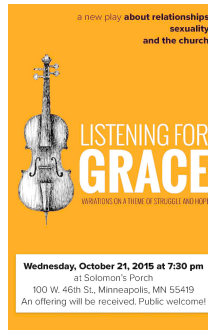

 Carlos Romero
 Executive Director

Announcements



Baked Goods Wanted!

This year's annual local Mennonite Central Committee fundraiser on November 7th will be a smaller event than in years past, and fewer attendees are expected. So the bake sale will also be smaller, but we'd still like to provide them with a good assortment of goodies to take home with them! Please consider bringing a couple plates of cookies or bars, a cake or pie or two, several jars of jam, several loaves of bread, or whatever your heart desires! Please package goods so they're ready to sell. Questions? Contact me at margaret.janzen@gmail.com or 612-801-7220.



Ted Swartz's newest show, **Listening for Grace**, is coming to Minneapolis (Solomon's Porch – 100 W. 46th St., Minneapolis, MN 55419) at 7:30 pm on Wednesday, October 21, 2015! This event is open to the public and an offering will be taken.

In *Listening for Grace*, Ted Swartz uses his distinctive humor to give voice to our fears and hopes when a faith community engages in questions around sexuality and same-sex relationships. It's about a father's journey, a church's struggle and a search for commonality.

Listening for Grace follows the story of a widowed father whose son has just come out as gay. Through his relationships with his son, an estranged cousin, people in his church and a pastor who deals with issues of sexuality in the Bible, the main character is challenged by many different viewpoints and experiences.

It's a piece about church. It's a piece about fatherhood. It's a piece about community. It's a piece about our sexuality. And it's an entertaining and enlightening piece about openness and love.

TED & CO learn more about the play and **join the conversation** at **LISTENINGFORGRACE.COM**

Office/Administrative position open at Faith Mennonite Church in south Minneapolis. 15 hours/week. Provides support for multiple forms of communication, building use arrangements, and the administrative needs of an active, urban congregation. Job description and information for submitting an application are at: www.faithmennonite.org/office-support-position-opening

