

Mennonite Weekly Review

Putting the Mennonite world together

Baptists catch the Anabaptist vision

Seminary promotes Anabaptist theology as inspiration for 'rooted' faith today

By **SHELDON C. GOOD**
Mennonite Weekly Review

Renowned evangelical pastor and author Rick Warren recently said Anabaptism has shaped him, his books and his 20,000-member church in Southern California.

"For 32 years, we have been building Saddleback Church on the lessons I've learned from the Anabaptists," he said at a conference on "Anabaptism and Contemporary Baptists" Jan. 30-31 at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

The seminary is affiliated with the 16-million-member Southern Baptist Convention, the world's largest Baptist denomination and the largest U.S. Protestant body.



Adam Covington/SWBTS

Rick Warren, a leading evangelical pastor, speaks on the impact his study of Anabaptists has had on his approach to discipleship at Saddleback, his Southern California megachurch.

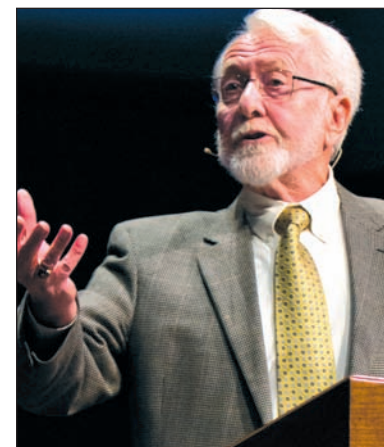
The conference featured recent scholarship on the Radical Reformation by the seminary's graduate students and reflections on the relevance of the Anabaptist movement for Baptists today.

Five hundred people participated, including about 25 German Mennonite and Baptist pastors — many of them recent immigrants from Russia — associated with

We need radical reformers who are rooted in Christ, rooted in the Word, rooted in the church and rooted in church history. — Rick Warren

Bibel Seminar Bonn in Bornheim, Germany, a Mennonite seminary that has had a formal partnership

with Southwestern seminary for nearly a decade. Abraham Friesen, a professor



Ben Peacock/SWBTS

Abraham Friesen, a Mennonite Brethren historian, shares his insights into the influence of Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus on the 16th-century Anabaptists.

and historian who attends College Community Church Mennonite Brethren in Clovis, Calif., was one of five plenary speakers.

Among those participating was John Roth, professor of history at Goshen (Ind.) College, who said Anabaptists should respond graciously to Warren's statements and Baptists' interest in Anabaptist history and theology.

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Photo by Copper Hills Church

Gavin Linderman baptizes a new member of Copper Hills Church, a late 1990s Mission USA church plant in Peoria, Ariz., near Phoenix. Copper Hills and the U.S. Conference of MB Churches Pacific District are partnering to "daughter" another church led by Linderman and his wife, Kendall.

MB church planters dream big

Goal of 60 new churches in 10 years builds momentum

By **TIM HUBER**
Mennonite Weekly Review

Mission USA, the domestic mission agency of the U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, hopes to plant six congregations this year — the biggest one-year expansion since the days of MB immigration from Russia in the late 1800s.

It's hoping to do that 10 years in a row.

Mission USA director Don Morris says God nudged him to think big.

It's a passion about being a difference-maker in communities. — Don Morris

Morris was on sabbatical last summer, spending hours in prayer walking on a beach, when he felt confronted by God. The message: I can accomplish more than you are asking.

"I struggled with that, mainly

because I'm not used to asking God for huge things," he said.

Last fall he shared a desire with the MB leadership board to plant six churches by the end of 2012, an initiative that later expanded by a factor of 10.

If the goal of planting 60 churches in a decade is met, it would increase the number of U.S. MB congregations by about 30 percent.

Several locations show growth potential.

In the Salt Lake City area,

■ See **MB goal**, page 7

Health service strength can come in numbers

By **TIM HUBER**
Mennonite Weekly Review

Amid economic and legislative uncertainties, some Anabaptist health service organizations are finding strength in numbers.

For example:

■ Over the last few years, a series of affiliations began that grew Greencroft Communities, based in Goshen, Ind., into a multi-state corporation operating in Indiana and Ohio.

■ In 2008, Souderton Mennonite Homes, Dock Meadows and Dock Woods retirement communities merged to operate as Pennsylvania-based Living Branches.

■ Mennonite Services Northwest began operations in Oregon in early 2010, combining resources of organizations stretching from Corvallis to Canby.

■ In January, Kidron Bethel Village in North Newton, Kan., and Schowalter Villa in Hesston merged governance and operations.

"Within the last 10 years, we've seen a crescendo in the interest and openness around the theme of how we can stand together stronger than standing alone," said Rick Stiffney, president and CEO of Mennonite Health Services Alliance.

■ See **Health**, page 7

Quoting Scripture

Bible read aloud in 75 hours at AMBS

By **MARY E. KLASSEN**
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

ELKHART, Ind. — Through late nights and early mornings, and with caffeine on hand, the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary community read the entire Bible aloud in under four days.

The seminary's chapel service Feb. 3 kicked off the reading marathon, called "75 Hours with the Book." With breaks of three

and a half hours each night and for worship Feb. 5, reading continued until Feb. 7, when the chapel service included the end of Revelation and reflections on the experience.

The idea came out of brainstorming by the Spiritual Life Committee as they looked for ways to strengthen spiritual life and community life.

Nearly 100 people participated,

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■ Confession review

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■ Moving forward

At a seminar in Kansas, congregational leaders seek the keys to moving from maintenance to mission / 8

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