

MESSENGER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER & PRAYER GUIDE



Gerry Keener (center) with President Pastor Huynh Dinh Nghia (left of Gerry) and members of the Vietnam Mennonite Church who completed a course.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY GERRY KEENER

TEACHING AND RESOURCING OUR GLOBAL PARTNERS

by Gerry Keener, Leon & Naomi Zimmerman, and William Higgins



GERRY KEENER:

When the Vietnam Mennonite Church (VMC) was seeking legal recognition by the government, Pastor Nguyen Quang Trung, VMC president, now deceased, made it very clear that the VMC did not have leaders with formal training. Therefore, they would need international trainers for many years to come. EMM had anticipated this need and appointed me and Donna to position ourselves in Vietnam some years in advance for language and culture acclimation and relationship building. When the time was right, I became active in lead-

ership development and theological training in Vietnam.

When our older daughter graduated from high school, we returned to the U.S. and settled in Lancaster, Pa. EMM then transitioned our appointment status to non-resident missionaries to Vietnam. Since then in 2009, I travel (sometimes with Donna) to Vietnam to continue training, at the request of the VMC.

The VMC consists of over 100 places of worship. The needs for training pastors and workers are great. They have organized a 4-year Bachelor of Theology program (20 students in the current cohort), as well as a ministry training certificate program (40 students in the current group). Their

request for training from EMM workers is for courses in theology, biblical interpretation, and ministry from an Anabaptist perspective.

A significant involvement is translating Anabaptist books and papers into Vietnamese and having them published. This is a way of multiplying our efforts for ongoing use by national teachers. Examples of books published in Vietnamese are: *What is an Anabaptist Christian?*, *Anabaptist Essentials*, John Drescher booklets on Marriage and Family, *Sister Care Manual*, *The Bible as Story* (in process), *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective 1995* (in process), and more.

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Parallel to this training work is the work of the EMM Curriculum Team consisting of Leon Zimmerman, William Higgins, and myself. This team is researching and preparing Ana-

baptist-related training materials that can be used by EMM missionaries and EMM Global Partners in their efforts to promote leadership development and theological education. The objective is to provide materials

in accessible English at a high-school or post-high-school level that can be easily translated into multiple languages and used in informal training settings by our partners.



LEON & NAOMI ZIMMERMAN:

Our work with EMM is a bit different than that of Gerry and William. About three years ago, we switched our emphasis from general teaching related to leadership training to an emphasis on strengthening marriages. Marvin Lorenzana, president of EMM, invited us to this work and refers to it as “the marriage initiative.” We are seeking strategies and methods that will strengthen marriages in places where EMM has had success planting churches.

One of the strategies we use is to introduce The Marriage Course (TMC) to leaders and their churches. TMC is a seven-session video course that includes lots of exercises that couples do together during the sessions. It is produced by the Alpha Course producers from the U.K.

In early 2022, we showed the course to a dozen couples in south central Kenya. One of those couples was Stanley and Anne, who pastor a church in the area. They felt that the course strengthened their marriage and gave them the ability to have conversations about areas of their marriage that they stayed away from before.

Stanley and Anne took a group of 10 couples through the course and felt that each couple experienced a greater sense of connection. One of those couples was so excited about the course they formed another group and showed the course to them. The course is quite easy to pick up and use without being a pastor or marriage counselor.

Stanley texted us recently, “We will forever be thankful that you introduced this course to us.”

Important to the work of the marriage initiative is the strategy to train couples in such a way that they can pass things on to other couples. We are so happy that the above example includes that dynamic — we led a group of couples through the course, Stanley and Anne led another group, and another couple led yet another group. May this dynamic continue.



Stanley and Anne, who offered The Marriage Course to other couples.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY LEON & NAOMI ZIMMERMAN



William Higgins (center) gave a seminar on loving enemies at the Lakesite Diocese of Kenya Mennonite Church in 2022.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY WILLIAM HIGGINS



WILLIAM HIGGINS:

It is a privilege to work with our global partner churches in Vietnam, Kenya, Tanzania, and Guinea-Bissau. I will also travel to other areas as there is need. In my teaching ministry I engage with congregations, church groups, and dioceses in giving seminars and other trainings related to discipleship and leadership development. Local leaders always set the agenda and guide my focus. Most of my time and effort goes toward supporting ministry training schools, especially in Kenya and Vietnam. I have taught classes on the Sermon on the Mount, loving enemies, Anabaptist history, how to interpret Scripture, our Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, and others. This is a ministry that has been requested by partner churches. Nelson Kisare, the leader of the Tanzanian Mennonite Church was asked, “What is the most pressing need of your church?” He answered, “First, theological training; second, theological training; third, theological training.”

Participants have been very receptive to this ministry. I remember when I taught about what it means to love our enemies in Kenya, both in the school and in two dioceses on the weekends — there was a warm embrace of this teaching. Stories about Christians loving their enemies were particularly impactful. My most recent class in Vietnam was on the Confession of Faith, specifically the first twelve articles. Sixty-five church leaders attended this class, and these leaders will go out to teach others what they learned in the class. I plan to teach the rest of this class in March 2025 when I return.

NOVEMBER DAILY PRAYER

1 GLOBAL | Pray for Jonathan Bornman as he serves as a global consultant for churches and leaders. Pray for him as he equips Christians to build life-giving relationships with Muslims through dialogue, peacemaking, witness, and hospitality.

2 CAMBODIA | Pray for workers to be called to the work of young adult outreach and discipleship in Cambodia.

3 LANCASTER CITY, PA. | Pray for the Advance participants, that they would bear spiritual fruit as they help with English classes for the Neighbors Community Center.

4 CAMBODIA | Pray for John and Debbie Coats as they serve in Cambodia. Pray for John as he teaches and discipled local Christian leaders. Pray for wisdom for Debbie as she is involved in public health education and frequently sees patients who have not been able to get help elsewhere.

5 U.S. | Pray that Angie Earl will faithfully represent Jesus in her relationships with those who are not believers. May she be a witness to His way of peace.

6 LANCASTER, PA. | Pray for God to call volunteers for the programs at Neighbors Community Center at Hub450, our building in Lancaster, Pa.

7 ALBANIA | Pray for wisdom and grace for Sonya Harnish and others on her team as they discern how best to structure her time and tasks in order to balance both administrative and relational arenas. Pray that she will be attentive to God's voice and leading in her ministry for His glory in Albania.

8 WEST AFRICA | Ask God to move mountains and break down strongholds that may prevent the Mandinka people from faith in Jesus.

9 CZECH REPUBLIC | Join Jan Heindel in praying for mission vision, both local and global, to be stirred in young people. Pray that God will show Jan what ministry opportunities she should be involved with for the church plant in Dobříš, Czech Republic.

**Names changed for sensitivity reasons.*

10 U.S. | Pray for EMM staff to connect well with supporters at EMM's banquets this year. May people be inspired by opportunities for training with EMM and give generously to support the Impact Fund.

11 GLOBAL | Please pray for William Higgins as he prepares to teach and teaches the Gospel of Mark via Zoom with Vietnamese leaders on Monday nights.

12 THAILAND | Pray for Jeremy and Jennifer* in their involvement with anti-human trafficking work in Chiang Mai through The Whispering Willow, which has the goal of beginning a rehab center for recovering women this fall. Pray for all those involved in the details of this project.

13 CENTRAL ASIA | Pray for Evan and Faith* as they finalize their Mission Support Team and continue to prepare for their assignment.

14 U.S. | Pray that God would speak to young people's hearts and spark interest in mission opportunities during EMM church visits this fall.

15 GERMANY | Pray for Eric and Janelle* as they continue to serve at Soli Deo and interact with many refugees and international students. Pray for the children in school and in their relationships.

16 CENTRAL ASIA | Pray for God to send workers to the field to work in business for transformation and teaching English.

17 NETHERLANDS | Pray that Bob and Miriam Phillips will be filled with God's strength and will persevere in sharing Christ with those who do not know Him.

18 U.S. | Pray for the Advance participants, that they would honor God and effectively serve those in the reading outreach CORE.

19 MOROCCO | Ask God to send dreams and visions that reveal Jesus to the Moroccan Arabs.

20 GLOBAL | Pray for young men to respond to God's call to the work of short-term missions.

21 BELIZE | Pray for wisdom for Tim and Julie Groff as they implement outcomes from the Kairos course that they recently took. Pray for them in their ministry planning. Ask God to guide them as they integrate praying, partnering, and studying God's word together.

22 THAILAND | Pray for God to call pioneer church planters into the harvest field of Thailand to join the team there.

23 SOUTHEAST ASIA | Pray for Timothy and Madison* as they lead a water filtration business. Pray for continued opportunities to share Jesus with those around them.

24 SOMALIA | Ask God to guide, protect, and strengthen the workers who bring Jesus to the Somali people.

25 CENTRAL ASIA | Pray for Elizabeth* as she settles back into her routines and ministry. Pray for God's joy and strength as she interacts with those who need to hear about Jesus.

26 LANCASTER, PA. | Join EMM in praising God for calling Barry Freed to connect with supporters as development director! Pray for him to learn his new role well and find joy in building relationships.

27 WEST AFRICA | Pray for Nate and Krystle Thorne as they move into a new house this month. Pray for meaningful ministry opportunities. Pray for them as they prepare for short-term workers who will be joining them later in the year. Pray that their serving together will be encouraging.

28 WEST AFRICA | Pray for individuals and families to be called to join the work of leadership development and church planting in West Africa.

29 GLOBAL | Thank the Lord of the Harvest for the bounty received from the land and ask Him to call and send workers to the spiritual harvest fields around the world.

30 U.S. | Pray that the information that the Advance participants gain from classes with EMM would encourage them as they are transformed in Christ.

EMM VISION & FUNDRAISING BANQUET

NOV. 14

WYNDHAM LANCASTER RESORT
& CONVENTION CENTER
6 P.M.

DEC. 3

WESTVIEW COMMUNITY ROOM
AT LANDIS HOMES
10 A.M.

RSVP NOW AT
EMM.ORG/BANQUET





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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

DURING THE EXTRAGIVE

YOU CAN SUPPORT EMM AND NEIGHBORS COMMUNITY CENTER



NOVEMBER 22 EMM.ORG/EXTRAGIVE



THE IMPACT FUND FOR 2024 NEED IS \$827,969

When you support EMM's Impact Fund, you enable us to recruit, equip, and send EMM workers around world.

\$964,486 RECEIVED AS OF OCTOBER 7

\$1,792,455 GOAL



EMM.ORG/GIVE

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