

# Philadelphia Stories: Kingdom Building in the City



**April 3-5, 2003**

- A Conference Sponsored by the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee, and Philadelphia Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Churches
- Hosted by the Vietnamese Mennonite Church 63rd and Woodland Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Conference information also available on the Web at [www.goshen.edu/mcarchives/](http://www.goshen.edu/mcarchives/)

## Objectives

- To highlight and value racial/ethnic diversity within Mennonite Church USA
- To interpret past experience and present reality of racial/ethnic diversity in Mennonite congregations
- To experience and model conversation, reflection, and worship across language and racial divides
- To invite Mennonite scholars of diverse backgrounds and heritage to study the experiences of their people in Mennonite congregations and agencies
- To assist Mennonite scholars of diverse backgrounds to network with each other

## Major presenters

● *Jeff Gingerich* is assistant professor of sociology at Bluffton College, and a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Pennsylvania. His dissertation involves historical and contemporary analysis of the Philadelphia Mennonite congregations. Jeff grew up as part of West Union Mennonite Church in southeast Iowa. His interests in both the issues of religion and race were nurtured through various Mennonite educational institutions and a six-year term with Mennonite Central Committee in New Orleans, LA.



● *Tuyen Nguyen* is a research scientist at Hercules Incorporated, with a Ph.D. in organic chemistry from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. He was born in South Vietnam and migrated to the United States in 1973. Tuyen and his wife, Aileen, were appointed by Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) to be tent-makers in Cambridge, England in 1992-1993. He is serving the Lord at the Vietnamese Mennonite Church in Philadelphia and the Vietnamese American Mennonite church in Delaware. Tuyen also serves as a member of Philadelphia District Council, EMM advisory board and Mennonite Central Committee East Coast board.



● *Leonard Dow* is senior pastor of Oxford Circle Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, Pa., and MCC Service program administrator, East Coast Urban and Rural Areas. He was born in Philadelphia and received his early Christian training in an African American Baptist church in North Philadelphia. He graduated from Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, Lansdale, Pa., and from Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. At both schools Leonard was a star athlete. Since graduating he has served as assistant vice president and director of Retail Banking, United Bank of Philadelphia, and as business development officer, Univest Corporation, Souderton, Pa.



● *Lily Lee* teaches mathematics at the Community College of Philadelphia, and team-teaches a cross-cultural course



at Messiah College, Philadelphia campus. Lily was born in Canton, China, and raised in Hong Kong. She has earned an M.S. in mathematics, and is a doctoral candidate in mathematics, both at the University of Houston. She has also earned an M.A.R. in urban mission from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a Th.M. in apologetics from Westminster Theological Seminary. She serves on the pastoral team at Abundant Life Chinese Mennonite Church, South Philadelphia, and is chairperson of the executive board and general board of Chinese Christian Herald Crusade, headquartered in New York. Lily co-authored the book, *A Passion for Fullness: Examining the Woman's Identity and Roles from Biblical, Historical and Sociological Perspectives*.

● *Lawrence F. Chiles* is responsible for Global Ministries program and staff in the United States for Eastern Mennonite Missions. He has founded Christian centers in Cleveland, Ohio, Harrisburg, Pa., and Lancaster, Pa. He has also worked as a guidance counselor at Locust Grove Mennonite School, Smoketown, Pa. His pastoral experience includes a churches in Harlem, NY; Philadelphia, Pa; and Harrisburg, Pa. Lawrence also served as the Senior Pastor at South Christian Street Mennonite Church in inner city Lancaster for 15 years.



● *Freeman Miller* serves as bishop for fifteen Lancaster Mennonite Conference congregations in Philadelphia, and teaches half-time at the Philadelphia campus of Messiah College. He was born to Old Order Amish parents in Plain City, Ohio, where he attended the Amish school until age 16. Later Freeman left the Amish church pursued a college education at Ohio State University in preparation for mission work. He earned an M.Div. from Eastern Mennonite Seminary. He and his wife, Naomi Peachey Miller, taught secondary English for three years in Nigeria under Mennonite Central Committee's Teachers Abroad Program. Freeman served over eleven years as pastor of Diamond Street Mennonite Church, a multi-racial congregation in the heart of North Philadelphia. He was also director of the Home Ministries Division of Eastern Mennonite Missions.



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