



CONNECTIONS

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2010

THE FIRST WORD

MEET ME IN SAN ANTONIO

I recently attended two conferences in one week. These came during an especially busy time when we were putting the finishing touches on Mennonite Health Assembly, finalizing the budget, and preparing for a board meeting.

So why did I go?

- I needed to talk with representatives from hotels we are considering for future Assemblies.
- The workshops and keynote speakers addressed topics I need to learn more about, such as communicating across the generations, using social media, and writing for the website.
- I wanted to connect with peers from other parts of the country who also plan conferences. We meet periodically by phone, but face-to-face meetings are better.
- Getting away from the office adds perspective, and I come up with some of my best ideas when I'm in a different setting.

My head is still spinning from all the good ideas I gained from the Anabaptist Communicators and Rejuvenate conferences. If you attend Mennonite Health Assembly March 10-13 in San Antonio, you might have a similar experience! Both you and your organization will benefit from the worship, learning, networking, fellowship, and new business ideas.

Register now at www.mhsonline.org. And invite friends and colleagues. What better place to get together than San Antonio?

Mim Shirk
Vice President



DYNAMIC CROSS-CULTURAL THEMES TO INVIGORATE HEALTH ASSEMBLY

Under the overall theme of "Many Voices, One Spirit," the titles for plenary sessions at Mennonite Health Assembly in San Antonio, Texas, March 10-13, serve as a winsome invitation to learning and worship. Keynote speakers will enable participants to see themselves in new ways and, no doubt, to take bold action steps:

- "The Whisper of the Spirit Across Cultures"
- "Spaces of Grace"
- "Facebook, Texting, and Is This the End of a Good Conversation?"
- "Mostly Amazed"
- "ONE"

During Thursday's opening session, Albert L. Reyes, president of Buckner International, will address this question: *How do we provide Spirit-led leadership in our various roles, especially amid great diversity when we hear many voices?*

Reyes' leadership at Buckner will serve as the backdrop for his address. A global Christian ministry, Buckner provides humanitarian aid around the world, manages community enrichment programs, facilitates adoptions, and sponsors seven senior living communities in Texas.

The Friday morning sessions will be led by Isaac Villegas, pastor of the Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship in North Carolina. He will speak to this question: *"Does our Christian faith, particularly from our Anabaptist perspective, have anything to say about why and how we listen to many voices?"*

Villegas believes that both Christian faith and the Anabaptist tradition of non-violence are important in providing a spirituality and way of grace that create space for

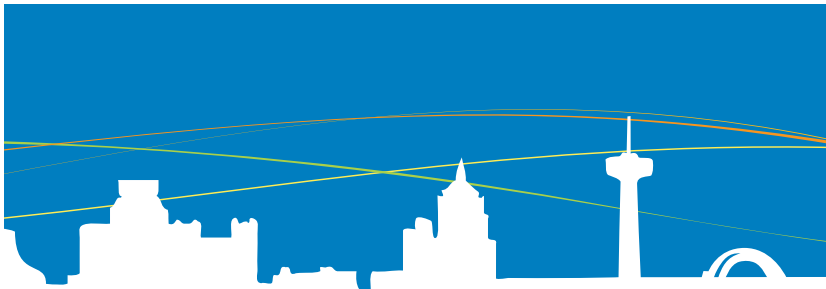
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Albert L. Reyes



Isaac Villegas



Join Hundreds of Health and
Human Services Professionals for
MENNONITE HEALTH ASSEMBLY
Many Voices, One Spirit
March 10-13, 2011
Crowne Plaza Riverwalk, San Antonio, Texas

◆ TRENDS: GENERATIVE GOVERNANCE



Alvin Loewenberg

Generative governance describes ways boards wrestle imaginatively with the ambiguous problems and opportunities that all organizations encounter.

At Mennonite Health Assembly in San Antonio on March 11, generativity advocates Alvin Loewenberg and Tom Jaco will present a workshop for board members on “Leading Generatively.”

Loewenberg is CEO and Jaco is a board member of Morningside Ministries of San Antonio, a large faith-based organization that serves older adults in three retirement communities.

Loewenberg said, “Our board of directors has, during the past decade, used generative governance to transform our organization. Board leadership and direction have been forward-looking, which has made the organization bold in expanding our vision and carrying out our mission. By thinking generatively, Morningside has been able to set ourselves apart and prepare for the future.”

Rick Stiffney, MHS Alliance president and CEO, will facilitate the workshop.



Tom Jaco

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people to be who they are – the beloved of God.

The child of Latin American immigrants, Villegas grew up in the Roman Catholic Church until his family joined the Pentecostal tradition. As a student at Duke Divinity School, he studied with Stanley Hauerwas and began worshiping at Chapel Hill. After completing his master of divinity degree, the congregation called him to be the pastor.



Ingrid DeSanctis

Saturday sessions will feature Ingrid DeSanctis – dramatist, writer, director and professor at Bloomsburg University in Pennsylvania. In her first session, she will focus on this question: *How might we use image and story to communicate faith and values across generations?*

DeSanctis contends that part of the diversity we face in our organizations reflects differences in communication between generations. She plans to use humor and stories about contemporary communication to help Assembly-goers learn to communicate more effectively.

In a Saturday evening session, DeSanctis will inspire and move participants with stories about the important work of healing and about living with amazement within our work. This question will guide her presentation: *How do we live into the many voices and stories we hear and experience in our work of health and healing?*

Sunday morning worship will be led by the San Antonio Mennonite Church and its pastor, Rachel Epp Miller. The congregation’s mission includes working for reconciliation among all people.



Glen Guyton

Glen Guyton, who attends the San Antonio Mennonite Church, will bring a final message. He will speak to this question: *How does the Spirit develop unity in the midst of all our diversity?*

Guyton is associate executive director for

constituent resources for Mennonite Church USA and a former youth pastor at Calvary Community Church, Hampton, Va.

◆ WHY SHOULD YOU ATTEND MENNONITE HEALTH ASSEMBLY?

How do Mennonite Health Assembly participants exemplify the assembly's goals? These photos from the 2010 meeting retrospectively illustrate connections to the goals.



- To increase your knowledge of best practices:

Jill Schumann, president of Lutheran Services in America, talks with a participant after speaking on "Governing in Turbulent Times."



- To understand implications of new health-care trends:

Larry Miller, president of Everence, an organization that monitors the latest health-care trends, speaks during a plenary session.



- To meet consultants and vendors who might benefit your organization:

Phil Leaman is president of Resource Partners, which offers a comprehensive array of products and services to enhance stewardship among Peace Church organizations.



- To network with other professionals who share your Christian values:

Virgil Miller, a member of the MHS Alliance board of directors, engages in conversation while he enjoys a cup of coffee between sessions.



- To reconnect with friends and make new friends:

Networking – here among Duane Oswald, Cheryl Schade, and David Heusinkveld – is a valuable benefit of Mennonite Health Assembly.



- To worship God and revitalize your soul:

Natalie Francisco, co-pastor of Calvary Community Church, leads a lively worship session.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE

Wednesday, March 9

- 9 – 5 Commission for Sponsorship
- 2 – 8 Executive Circle
- 2 – 8 Values-based Leadership Alumni Program

Thursday, March 10

- 8 – 2 Executive Circle
- 8 – 2 Values-based Leadership Alumni Program
- 8 – 3:30 Board and Committee Meetings
- 4 – 6:30 Members Meeting and Reception
- 7:30 – 10 Opening Session and Reception

Friday, March 11

- 7 – 9 Continental Breakfast with Exhibitors
- 7:45 – 8 Morning Prayers
- 9 – 12 Plenary Session and Discussion
- 12:30 – 5:30 Half-day Governance Session
- 12:30 – 2:15 Networking Luncheons
- 2:30 – 3:45 Workshops
- 4 – 5:15 Workshops
- 6 – 7 Networking in Lobby
- 7 – Dinner on your own

Saturday, March 12

- 7:30 – 10:15 Breakfast; Medical Expense Plan Meeting
- 7:45 – 8 Morning Prayers
- 8 – 10 Personal Time
- 8:30 – 9:45 Workshops
- 10:15 – 11:30 Plenary Session
- 12 – 6 Volunteer, Sightseeing or Golf
- 2:30 – 3:45 Workshops
- 6 – 7 Networking Reception
- 7 – 9:30 Banquet

Sunday, March 13

- 9 – 10 Worship
- 10:15 – 12 Assembly Planning Committee



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THE LAST WORD

The term generativity was introduced to non-profit governance with Chait, Ryan, and Taylor's book *Governance as Leadership*. While the term might seem fuzzy, the actual work of generativity is essential to effective governance. Generativity is about learning and imagining. Sound spacey? Maybe, but generativity is decidedly down-to-earth.

All faith-based non-profit organizations should frequently ask, "How do our mission and core convictions shape our practice?" This question requires generative work. I know boards and CEOs that are working with this question as it relates to the evaluation of current services, exploration of new services, and pragmatic matters such as compensation and benefits.

Generative work deals with imagination – the possibilities. In today's turbulent market place amid unrelenting change, sharp governing boards and CEOs are wondering whether they can survive by continuing the path they have followed during the last decade. They are asking, how can the mission be achieved through new methods? Some leaders are re-defining whom they serve, exploring dramatic changes in delivery of services, and deciding to terminate certain services.



At this year's Mennonite Health Assembly, board members and senior staff will have opportunity to explore in a governance workshop how generative work can inform the often hard choices that lie before them.

Rick Stiffney, President/CEO