

rsion=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&md5=c852a640e0cb2a832439b63e2f35d3cc&searchtype=a

⁴ <http://www.learning-theories.com/situated-learning-theory-lave.html>

⁵ The Barna Research Group, Ltd. is an independent marketing research company located in southern California. Since 1984, it has been studying cultural trends related to values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. Barna Research web site (www.barna.org).

<http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=153>; April, 2008.

<http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=Topic&TopicID=44>; April, 2008. This information was taken from the supporting documents for *Passing on the Faith: A Community Work*. (developed by the Connections Goal Team)

⁶ Hughes, Fergus P. *Child Development* (St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Co., 1988). p. 207

⁷ http://www.thomasarmstrong.com/multiple_intelligences.htm

⁸ <http://www.funderstanding.com/content/brain-based-learning>

⁹ Caine & Caine, Renate and Geoffrey, *Making Connections: Teaching and the Human Brain* (Palo Alto, CA: Dale Seymour Publications. 1994)

ANABAPTIST EDUCATION AND SERVICE:

Radically Following Jesus Christ in Word and Deed



Christopher Dock Mennonite High School
Quakertown Christian School
Penn View Christian School

Globally Positioned Students 2012
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Early childhood students from Penn View Christian School collected scarves, hats, gloves and mittens for the Keystone Opportunity Center in Souderton.

servants” who build “God’s Kingdom locally and globally,” we also knew that doing service is integral to our mission in ways that go beyond simply a means for effective teaching and learning. Although far from being exhaustive, this document is intended to foster an ongoing discussion within our church, home, and school communities as to why, and for what

purpose we do service. As committee members we hope and pray that this document may spur us all on towards greater faithfulness and effective witness for Jesus Christ in our world.

(Endnotes)

¹ Examples of reasons for doing voluntary service in public educational contexts can be found on the popular website CollegeBoard.com. (<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/high-school/7813.html#content#content>), and the Learn and Serve website. Learn and Serve America is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, an independent federal agency created to connect Americans of all ages and backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation. (<http://www.learnandserve.gov/about/Isa/index.asp>). See also President Obama’s “United We Serve” initiative at (http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/President-Obama-Unveils-United-We-Serve-Calls-on-All-Americans-to-Commit-to-Meaningful-Volunteer-Service-in-Their-Daily-Lives/), and at www.serve.gov.

² <http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/dissonance.htm>

³ http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6VD8-4NVSWW2-T&_user=10&_coverDate=01%2F31%2F2008&_alid=1568186617&_rdoc=4&_fmt=high&_orig=search&_origin=search&_zone=rslf_list_item&_cdi=5976&_sort=r&_st=13&_docanchor=&view=c&_ct=39&_acct=C000050221&_ve

the provisional character of all that it is and does. It points toward the reign of God that God will certainly bring about, but knows that its own response is incomplete, and that its own conversion is a continuing necessity.

- **The Mennonite (January 22, 2002) And a Child Shall Lead Them, by J. Daniel Hess, pages 8-11.**

Hess records a quote from a speech by Jim Schrag, then the executive director of Mennonite Church U.S.A, to a group of Mennonite educators:

“A missional church aligns all its activities around God’s mission in the world.”

Hess makes this commentary on Schrag’s statement:

“The old thought came back: If Mennonite educators were committed to Jim Schrag’s understanding that **‘God’s mission is to set things right in a broken world, to redeem it and to restore it to what God has always intended for the world,’** [do] these educators incorporate into their curricular and extracurricular activities a **deliberate training of children and youth in God’s mission?**”

Hess’ answer in the article is Yes, and he cites many examples of service work occurring in Mennonite primary and secondary schools.

View this issue of *The Mennonite* at http://www.themennonite.org/pdf/magazine_pdf_22.pdf

Conclusion

At the beginning of our work as a committee we began by asking why our schools place such a high value on service. Along with so many educational institutions across our country, we understood that doing service is an exceptionally effective method of teaching and learning. But, as Anabaptist institutions charged with impacting our students to become “pilgrim

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• We are servants of word and deed.	
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Introduction

GPS 2012 (Globally Positioned Students) is the result of a collaborative strategic planning process undertaken by Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, Penn View Christian School, and Quakertown Christian School that began in February, 2006. After much research and assessment, a shared vision emerged at a symposium held at Penn View Christian School on September 16, 2006. This vision, *Boldly Opening Doors to Christ-Centered Mennonite Education*, identified four major goals, along with strategies and initiatives to bring them to fruition. Implementation of the plan began in May of 2007 when four Goal Teams were created under the titles of Connections, Accessibility, Educational Excellence, and Impact.

Working ahead of the other three goal teams, the Connections Goal Team prepared an advance document/diagram in April of 2008 entitled, *Passing on the Faith: A Community Work – A Spiritual Formation Framework*. Using a Venn diagram, the team laid out a foundation for “*interactive conversation that will create reflection on and action towards how we help our children become radical followers of Jesus Christ.*” The completed diagram outlines the interaction between home, church and school for faith development showing overlap in responsibilities and circles of influence. The diagram also delineates the unique roles each of these settings provides for the faith development of our children and youth.

In the overview of the document, *Passing on the Faith: A Community Work*, the Connections Goal Team articulated, “*The overlay over the school circle is an Anabaptist-Mennonite theology and lens through which faith formation is shared, taught, and experienced. This lens includes an understanding of a God of love who sent Jesus to be an example for us to follow in daily living, with a focus on peacemaking, social justice, servant-hood, community, and grace.*” This direction of the Connections Goal Team has set the tone for the work of the other three goal teams that have followed.

On December 3, 2008, the Impact Goal Team gathered together for the first time. Charged with facilitating this goal, “*Tri-school community members are recognizable by their Christ-centered impact as pilgrim servants building God’s Kingdom locally*

The church is also to give **witness** by proclaiming the reign of God in **word and deed**...

Commentary #2: The mission of the church involves **both word and deed, evangelism and service**, proclaiming Christ’s message and demonstrating, by the life of the church, the nature of the new creation in Christ. Neither word alone nor deed alone is sufficient for mission. **Word explains deed, and deed authenticates word.**

- **Roth, John D. *Beliefs: Mennonite Faith and Practice* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 2005) p. 90-91.**

Following Jesus is a commitment to **participate in God’s transforming, redemptive work in the world**, bearing **witness** to a “new creation” made possible by Christ, so that God’s will is made evident “on earth as it is in heaven.”

So discipleship begins with a commitment to accept Jesus’ call to follow him. It offers a **visible witness** to a new order of creation that God is bringing about within a fallen world. **And it finds expression in tangible acts of love and service.**

- **Barrett, Lois Y. ed. *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.) p. x, xiv.**

A missional church is a church that is shaped by participating in God’s mission, which is to set things right in a broken, sinful world, to redeem it, and to restore it to what God has always intended for the world. Missional churches see themselves not so much sending as being sent.

The missional church understands its calling as witness to the gospel and of the in-breaking reign of God, and strives to be an instrument, agent, and sign of that reign. As it makes its witness through its identity, activity, and communication, it is keenly aware of

Page 39: The ethic of discipleship is not guided by the goals it seeks to reach, but by **the Lord it seeks to reflect**.

Page 41: The deeds of the church are a **witness...** Our deeds must be measured not only by whether or not they fit certain rules, nor by the results they hope to achieve, but by what they **“say”** [to the world].

Page 52: We do not, ultimately, love our neighbor because Jesus told us to. We love our neighbor because **God is like that**. It is not because Jesus told us to that we love even beyond the limits of reason and justice, even to the point of refusing to kill and being willing to suffer – but because God is like that too.

Summary: Yoder’s emphasis on the necessity of being like God is for the purpose of witness and testimony. Yoder writes of an “ethic of testimony.”



Penn View Christian School students donated snacks to Manna on Main Street and the North Penn Boys and Girls Clubs as part of an All School Service Project.

• **Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, Article 10: The Church in Mission.**

We believe that the church is called to **proclaim** and to be a **sign** of the kingdom of God. Christ has commissioned the church to be his **witnesses...** (Acts 1:8).

The church is **called to witness** to the reign of Christ by embodying Jesus’ way in its own life and patterning itself after the reign of God. Thus it shows the world a sample of life under the lordship of Christ. By its life, the church is to be a city on a hill, **a light** to the nations, testifying to the power of the resurrection by a way of life different from the societies around it.

and globally,” an early focus of the team was to develop a clear understanding and articulation of *why* our schools place such a high value on service. Asking this question of why Anabaptists schools engage students in service was additionally important because two initiatives that were identified as priorities by the CIT read as follows: *Increase the frequency of authentic **service learning** opportunities that build empathy for others with a focus on action,* and *Enhance connections for **service** with Mennonite organizations locally and globally.*

Further, we recognized that engaging in service is an integral part of the Mission Statement, Graduate Profile, Core Values and Educational Philosophy of all three schools. (In November, 2007, the school boards of all three institutions approved the adoption of a joint document that articulates these goals and commitments.) In defining discipleship as one of the core values, this joint statement reads, “Following Jesus, peacemaking, and service, are expressions of our Anabaptist/Mennonite faith...” The statement of educational philosophy articulates that, “Jesus rejected temporal power and chose instead a life of servant leadership... In his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus demonstrated the redemptive, transforming power of love.” In response to what Christ has done, the statement concludes, “We seek to be faithful followers of Jesus in all aspects of life.” Clearly, developing a foundational document addressing this question of, “why service?” was an important place to start.



Eighth grade Penn View Christian School student Emma Lewis applies face-paint to a child’s face at Penn View’s 2nd annual Golf Outing.

As educators we knew that a focus upon engaging students in service opportunities was also an emerging trend in public school curriculums. However, we were keenly aware that although our purposes and goals for engaging our students in service were in many ways similar to those of public schools, as Anabaptists our reasons were also significantly different.¹

The following document lays out an educational and spiritual grounding for engaging students in service in and through our Mennonite schools. It is structured in three parts: A.) General educational benefits of doing service, B.) Pedagogical theories supporting the value of doing service, and C.) Anabaptist theological reasons for engaging students in service. It is intended to foster understanding and cooperation within, and between our schools, homes, and churches.

Quakertown Christian School students Elizabeth, Heidi & Jackson (left) and Griffin & Nathan (right) bring in Christmas Gift Packs for needy children of 3rd world countries.



G. In Genesis God created the world, placed Adam and Eve in the garden, and told them to tend it. God charged humanity to serve him by serving his creation.

We are invited by God, as co-creators, to make something good of the world.

H. The following points offer places of reference from a variety of Anabaptist sources to undergird the theological significance of service.

- **Impact Goal Team Strategy A reads:**

*Cultivate a heightened understanding of individual and shared responsibility **to be Christ's light** in the world.*

This strategy includes the mandate to be a people of **witness** and **testimony** to God's work of restoring the world.

- **Impact Goal Team Strategy D reads:**

*Increase Christ-centered Mennonite education's **impact in God's kingdom** locally and globally.*

This strategy includes the mandate to proclaim the arrival and advancement of the kingdom of God by impacting the world as pilgrim servants.

- **Yoder, John Howard, *The Original Revolution*, 1971.**

Our service is done to incarnate a visible expression of God's love and care, God's intent for the reconciliation of the entire created community. In our deeds, and with our words of grace and hope, and in our worship we proclaim Jesus Christ. This has been our history and legacy and it's also our future.

D. Service goes beyond simply doing the right thing, it's about joining with God in bringing healing, hope, and restoration to the world.

Service is intended to be a praxis, to take the feeling of the heart, the knowledge of the mind, the belief (and at times unbelief) of the soul and to offer an incarnational practice that is fulfilled with hands and feet. It is in serving that our faith, knowledge, and wisdom become sight. It is through our service that we continue to be transformed into God's image and bear witness to the moments of God's continuing redemption of the world. This is our testimony. This is our prayer.

E. Anabaptist theology is built on the premise that the *Kingdom of God*, which Jesus inaugurated, is a visible social reality of God's restoration.

We are "signposts" to this restoring work of God's Kingdom. We are a people of testimony who proclaim Christ to the world. Although we celebrate service work as part of our heritage, and though we encourage youth to do service because of its intrinsic rewards, the primary reason we learn to be servants is because in so doing we bear witness to Christ and proclaim the good news of God's restoration.

F. Acts of service help students form identities as Christian disciples.

Acts of service aid students in finding their way into the Biblical story. Service helps students find their place and their identity within the Biblical story and within the unfolding of God's reconciliation today.

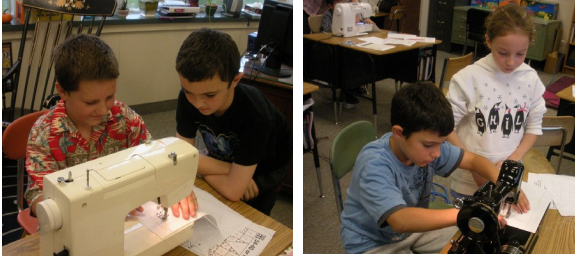
General educational benefits of doing service

The primary reason for doing service is to help and serve others regardless of the benefit to ourselves. In so doing we make a positive impact in our world locally and globally. Service is important because it is universally understood to be morally good and virtuous; every human being shares the responsibility of advancing the wellbeing of our common humanity.

Acknowledging this truth, as educational institutions charged with "developing the uniqueness of each student and his/her own role within the community where their gifts, talents, and learning can be applied," service is an important and integral element of our curriculum.

Service is important because:

- Service can provide the context for developing critical thinking skills and problem solving.
- Service can bridge the gap between the abstract concepts of the written text and specific real-life situations.
- Service can provide students with exposure to new vocational ideas and opportunities, as well as enabling them to gain new skills.
- Service can expose students to a wide variety of service organizations, including governmental, church-based, and non-governmental organizations.
- Service can provide exposure to a wide variety of social issues.
- Service can afford opportunities for building and strengthening relationships between individuals and among groups. Service can provide opportunities for students to meet new people.
- Service can provide exposure to racial and ethnic diversity, creating empathy towards others who are different from ourselves.



3rd Grade students at Quakertown Christian School, Parker & Damian, (left) and 4th grade students, (right) Louis and Zoe, use sewing machines to make 4th grade quilt.

- Service can offer opportunities for secondary students to obtain extra-curricular experiences needed for college entrance.

- Service can provide opportunities for

leadership gifts to emerge. Sometimes service activities provide less structured learning environments where students can develop self-management skills.

- Service can promote growth in self esteem and feelings of accomplishment. The experience of voluntary service can provide internal rewards – positive reinforcement that produces intrinsic motivation to repeat the behavior.
- Service can encourage hope and may foster visions of societal progress and positive change in a world that too often appears hopeless and lost. It can create a sense of empowerment for students who often feel they are too young and insignificant to do anything about the world's problems.

Anabaptist theological reasons for engaging students in service

Mennonite schools are purposed to pass on Christian faith to the next generation, to extend the Anabaptist Vision of following Jesus, living together in community and cultivating peace. While service is a common part of educational practice in our time, intended to create and inspire stewardship, civility and citizenship, the uniqueness of Mennonite education is our faith in Jesus Christ, and our desire to bear witness to the inbreaking of God's reign.

Former Mennonite Church USA director Jim Schrag wrote,

“Faith comes first. Without faith, service is just service. We are to offer faithful (full-of-faith) service. Faithful service is more than high-octane service. It is based on a reason greater than being a good human being — being a humanitarian. It is a way of following Jesus, of being like Jesus . . . we serve others, we serve because Christ served us first.”

A. We are servants of word and deed.

We are those who bend down to share the basin and the towel as Jesus washed the feet of the disciples and we are those who speak boldly as Jesus did toward the redemption of the woman at the well. “We believe that God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace and peace so that God’s healing flows through us to the world.”

B. Service is intended to be a giving and receiving.

Service is transforming and being transformed. Followers of Jesus are to be a visible expression of the humble and reconciling way of the cross, proclaiming Christian hope in God’s promise of resurrection and restoration of all things.

C. In our service, as we reach into our communities, students and instructors both contribute and learn.

emerging. Brain Based Research has revealed that many factors impact *when*, under what conditions, learning is best achieved. Social conditions, stress, physical activity, fear, and emotion all play a significant role in facilitating or inhibiting memory and learning. Further, research has led to greater understanding of *how* the brain learns and remembers. The brain actually delights in organizing (“patterning”) random information and chaotic experiences; the brain processes both specific details and the “big picture” simultaneously. It organizes information through focused attention and peripheral perception, from conscious and unconscious observations. One of the substantial discoveries is that learning is “enhanced by challenge, and inhibited by threat.”⁸

Based on these significant discoveries, new instructional techniques are developing. Among these are: a.) students learn best when they are fully immersed in an active learning environment, and, b.) students’ learning is inhibited by fear of failure (performance anxiety) and enhanced in the presence of challenges requiring



*In Honduras, Christopher Dock
Mennonite High School Seniors mix cement to pour for the floor of a poor family’s home.*

social cooperation and creative problem-solving.⁹ Experiences that result in “relaxed-alertness” enhance learning significantly. In addition, Brain Based Research has revealed that the emotion and the affect play a considerable role in memory, and subsequently, learning. Emotional experiences (both positive and negative) are more accessible to memory recall. In addition, because emotion is tied to memory, positive emotional experiences will be recalled later in life in a way that prompts individuals to repeat the behavior. Often these memories are “non-declarative,” meaning they are present in the subconscious mind. Providing service opportunities in which students are engaged socially and challenged to problem-solve creatively, and in which they are removed from the classroom and the stress of assessment associated with it, students may experience learning that is transformative and enduring.

Pedagogical theories supporting the value of doing service:

The following list of educational theories and findings are intended to be a primer for teachers as they include service elements into their curricula. This is not intended to be an exhaustive listing, but rather it is intended to be a starting point for an ongoing discussion among our tri-school administrations and faculty.

A. Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Introduced by Leon Festinger, Cognitive Dissonance occurs when an individual experiences some degree of discomfort resulting from an incompatibility between two cognitions.² An example of cognitive dissonance is when a belief and a behavior are incongruent with each other. Service experiences can bring disparities between values and realities into clear relief.

B. Key Experiences and Motivation

Professor Gad Yair of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem has researched the impact of Key Experiences, especially relating to educational events. Key Experiences are short and intense instructional episodes that students remember to have had decisive effects on their lives. The results suggest that Key Experiences involve a process of self-discovery where students find features about themselves they knew nothing of previously.³ Service can provide the venue for such Key Experiences to occur.

C. Situated Learning Theory

Jean Lave posits that some kinds of learning can only happen through group activity and social interaction. Opportunities must be provided for such learning to occur. Empathy and social sensitivity are learned through authentic activity and context.⁴ Some lessons learned while doing service cannot be learned in the classroom.

D. The research of the Barna Group regarding the lasting impact of childhood faith and experiences

George Barna's research discovered that a person's life-long behaviors and views are generally developed when they are young - particularly before they reach the teenage years. First, a person's moral foundations are generally in place by the time they reach age nine. Second, a person's response to the meaning and personal value of Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection is usually determined before a person reaches eighteen. In fact, a majority of Americans make a lasting determination about the personal significance of Christ's death and resurrection by age 12. Third, Barna's research has revealed data indicating that in most cases people's spiritual beliefs are irrevocably formed when they are pre-teens. "In essence," the researcher noted, "what you believe by the time you are 13 is what you will die believing."⁵ Providing service opportunities for primary school children may result in the development of lifelong values, beliefs, and practices.



Christopher Dock Mennonite High School Seniors help paint MAMA Project's Nutritional Rehabilitation Center in Honduras.

E. Social Learning Theory (Observational Learning)

Alfred Bandura's Social Learning Theory posits that people learn from one another via observation, imitation, and modeling. Children often imitate another's behavior even when no positive reinforcement is evident. They may not imitate the model immediately, but later they're often found doing so because the model has shown the observer that such behaviors are possible.⁶ Students will learn from observing their adult leaders and also from each other in the context of doing service activities. This learning may be enhanced when student groups of mixed ages work together.

F. Theory of Multiple Intelligences

The Theory of Multiple Intelligences was developed in 1983 by Dr. Howard Gardner, professor of education at Harvard University. Dr. Gardner theorized that the traditional notion of intelligence, based on I.Q. testing, is far too limited. Instead, he proposed eight different intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential in children and adults. His research suggests that teachers should be trained to present their lessons utilizing a wide variety of methods including using music, cooperative learning, art activities, role play, multimedia, field trips, inner reflection, and much more.⁷ By providing service opportunities outside of the classroom, some students who generally do not achieve highly in the classroom may find opportunities to achieve in new ways. Because grades are not awarded in many contexts where students engage in service, some students who experience performance anxiety or fear of failure in the classroom may discover new freedom to attempt and achieve. In these ways, service opportunities can provide avenues of success for students who may not realize such success in the classroom.



First grade students from Penn View Christian School collected food to pack Thanksgiving meals for Keystone Opportunity Center in Souderton, that will be shared with "neighbors".

G. Brain-Based Education

The relatively recent field of Brain Based Research has developed in tandem with the discoveries neuroscientists have made about how the brain works. Although there have been some controversies as to whether or not practitioners have over-reached the actual scientific discoveries in the development of new educational methods, there are nevertheless a great deal of new and promising theories/practices