Church, Mosque Meet at Seminary

By Amy Stutzman
Staff Writer

EMU’s history of cross-cultural connection to the Middle East is the foundation of a forum planned for next month at the Seminary.

Called “The Church Meets the Muslim Community,” the forum will take place Oct. 23-26 in the seminary building.

According to the forum’s website, the purpose of the conference is to "explore Anabaptist learnings through the experience of serving and living among Muslims, and ... [reflect] on God's call to engage in a ministry of respectful presence, listening, and witness among Muslims. The forum will be an opportunity to listen to distinguished guest speakers, as well as a variety of experienced persons who have been engaged within Muslim communities over many years."

During the forum, the conference attendees will hear presentations from four featured speakers, including Dudley Woodbury, professor of Islamic Studies at Fuller Seminary, and Lamin Sanneh, a naturalized U.S. citizen born in The Gambia who has taught at Harvard University and Yale University and is editor-at-large of The Christian Century.

John A. Lapp, Executive Secretary Emeritus of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), and Chantal Logane, who has served as a missionary to Argentina, Colombia, Djibouti, and Somalia and is currently co-director of the joint Eastern Mennonite Missions/MCC program to Somalia, will also speak.

The forum will also include several seminars that will explore many of the issues facing relationships between the Muslim community and the church, as well as time for worship. Conference attendees will also be able to hear reports from people working in other countries concerning work that is taking place within those countries.

Linford Stutzman, associate professor of Culture and Mission at EMU and a coordinator of the forum, said that the idea for the forum came from David Shenk, a well-known Mennonite missionary and author.

He said that since Sept. 11, 2001, the tension between the Muslim community and the Western world has become an increasingly important issue. Because of this factor, Stutzman expects many people from the board of missions and service, including: MCC, Witness Canada, Mennonite Brethren Missions and Service International, Rosedale Mennonite Missions, Brethren in Christ World Missions, Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Meserete Kristos Church, Persuatan Gereja-Gereja Kristen Muria, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Overseas Missions Study Center, Mennonite Church in Eastern Canada Missions and Service Commission, Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions, and the Christian Peacemaker Teams.

For individuals interested in attending the forum, the cost is $215 per person or $255 per married couple. Students who attend EMU or EMS may go to the forum for free, but all other students must pay $50 per person.

Interested persons may also visit the forum’s website, www.emu.edu/seminary/churchandislam/index.html, or call (540) 432-4260 for more information.

The same values that served Lefever so well in the business world are now a focus in the MBA Program. In today’s very high paced business world, Lefever believes ethics are a must to deal with both failure and success. With the economy recovering from the damage of unethical corporations, Lefever believes now is the time “for those of us who try to operate within a moral framework to put forth our beliefs and to be examples of a better way.”

Compiled by Michael J. Sharp