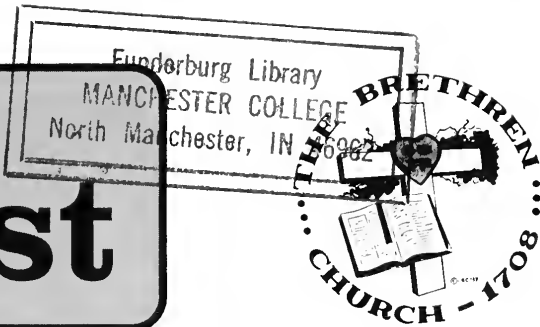




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General Conference Moderator Richard E. Allison explores:

Lessons on leadership in the Book of Nehemiah

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH in the Old Testament begins with a sob (1:4) and ends with a shout of joy (12:43). In between is a very interesting study in leadership.

The popular view of Nehemiah is that he was the restorer of the walls of the city of Jerusalem. But this is only half the story. A more balanced view sees Nehemiah as both a builder of walls and a builder of people.

Background

The situation was this. The Babylonians had overrun Jerusalem, destroying the walls and carting off the people. Babylon, in turn, had been conquered by the Persians. Under the domination of the latter, Jerusalem's walls remained in rubble and the practice of worship in the Temple at Jerusalem was non-existent.

Nehemiah used two resources to turn this situation around. First and foremost was the divine call

(2:12)—the Lord God put it into his heart to rectify this situation. Second, he used the political and economic assistance of the great Persian king Artaxerxes. Nehemiah went to Jerusalem with the call to (1) restore the wall of the city and (2) restore the religious practices of the people. In doing so, he demonstrates four important principles of leadership.

Principles of leadership

First, Nehemiah actively modeled his dream. He began doing so by taking the risk of stating his case directly before the king (2:2-5). For this he was rewarded with the king's support. Having thus gained political support, he planned carefully. He secured the necessary construction materials (2:7-8). Then he scouted the construction site, sizing up the needs (2:11-16). He proceeded by developing an orderly plan for rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. He built in a counter-clockwise fashion (3:3-32). At the same time, he provided for the defense of the city (4:13-23). Next, he renewed the worship practices (13:4-29). All the while he refused to fellowship with the enemies of Jerusalem (6:1-3).

Second, Nehemiah was a great encourager. The walls were rebuilt in 52 days! This testifies to his ability to inspire people to keep at a seemingly impossible task. He maintained morale and developed a healthy group climate (ch. 3; 4:15-23).

Third, he delegated effectively. Thus many shared not only his bur-

den but also his calling. This is important for developing future leaders. He used both men and women; skilled and unskilled workers; city dwellers and country people; builders and defenders.

Fourth, he gave positive reinforcement. He led the people in the celebration of their accomplishment, at the same time guiding them to remember their dependence upon God (12:43). Nehemiah knew both the significance of celebra-



Dr. Richard Allison

tion and the means to accomplish it. Nehemiah gives us that great insight when he says, "... the joy of the LORD is your strength" (8:10).

As we seek to develop strong leaders in The Brethren Church, the example of Nehemiah provides us a biblical model of some basic principles of leadership. [†]

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A Prayer for the New Year

Our Father,
 Help us in the year to come so to live that at the end of it we shall not only be one year older, but that we shall also be one year nearer Thee.

— William Barclay

What kind of impact are we making on our world?

At the General Conference Executive Council (GCEC) meeting on December 1, 1995, members of the council discussed the following questions:

1. How is the world different as a result of the existence of The Brethren Church at the national level (including the National Office, the Missionary Board, and General Conference)?

2. How is The Brethren Church at-large different as a result of The Brethren Church at the national level?

3. In one sentence, what would you say is the purpose of The Brethren Church at the national level?

Results from this discussion will be shared in a later issue of the EVANGELIST. But first, GCEC wants to give you an opportunity to provide your input. How would you answer these questions? GCEC would welcome your personal insights.

In addition, GCEC encourages Sunday school classes, Bible study groups, youth groups, Men of Mission and WMS organizations, and other groups in the church to spend all or part of a meeting discussing these questions.

Please send your answers to these questions (either your personal observations or those from your group) to: Questions, The National Office, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.

Editor's note: It might also be a worthwhile activity for the main administrative board (the official board, board of administration, or deacon board) and other groups in your local church to discuss similar kinds of questions concerning your congregation. (For example, How is your community different as a result of the existence of your congregation? How are the lives of the members of your congregation different? In one sentence, what would you say is the purpose of your local congregation?).

Ideas that are working:

Enhancing the Communion service at Linwood Brethren Church

THIS PAST AUGUST, when General Conference delegates from our church reviewed the denominational statistical report, they were surprised to discover that our congregation—the Linwood, Md., Brethren Church—ranked ninth highest in percentage of members attending Communion. Following Conference, our deacon board began to analyze why this was so, and they came up with a couple of reasons.

First, before each Communion service, the members of the deacon board call all members of the congregation to remind them of the service and to see if they will have a problem getting there.

Second, we have begun making our fall Communion, held on Worldwide Communion Sunday, a part of our Sunday morning worship service. This is a full, Three-Fold Communion service. This gives our older people

who don't go out at night and the regular visitors we have on Sunday mornings an opportunity to be a part of this wonderful service. The service runs just a little longer than our usual Sunday worship service, but people understand this and plan for it. As a result, our attendance has grown.

Several years ago we began forming a circle in the sanctuary at the close of our Communion service. When we began doing so, we didn't have enough people to go all the way around the sanctuary, but now we have to crowd together to get everyone into the circle.

This past fall we added a third feature that may contribute to greater Communion attendance—and that is hand-washing. Now those who are no longer able to get down on their knees and wash feet and those who for medical reasons cannot participate in feetwashing do not have to sit back in the pews. They are able to participate in a meaningful way with others.

Three very simple things—calling members before Communion; holding a Communion service on Sunday morning; and a hand-washing service for those unable to wash feet—but they have brought deeper meaning to those who participate in the Lord's Supper. We observe Communion only twice a year, so we make every effort to get a large percentage of our members to participate to the fullest. Our spring Communion is always held on Maundy Thursday, which corresponds most closely to the time when Jesus washed the disciples' feet, ate a supper with them, and gave them the broken bread and the cup (which is perhaps more meaningful to us than it was to them).

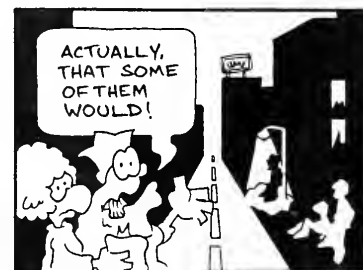
Let us continue to experiment with new ways to enhance something old, which must be kept forever new and significant in our hearts and minds until Jesus comes again.

—Pastor Robert Keplinger

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Pontius' Puddle

OUR CHURCH SHOULD GO OUT INTO THE STREETS AND INVITE IN THE POOR, THE SICK, THE MALFORMED, THE DRUG-ADDICTS, THE DESTITUTE—BUT FRANKLY, WE'RE AFRAID



Growing toward spiritual maturity

By Ronald W. Waters

WHERE IS GOD leading in The Brethren Church? If we can identify that, it may be easier for us to approach a changing future with more openness and anticipation of how God may use us in the process.

During the past couple of months we've been exploring The Brethren Church "Priorities for the Nineties." In November we examined where God is leading us in starting new churches. Last month we looked at the changing concept of ministry in the church. This month we'll discuss spiritual growth and maturity.

The priority—Becoming Like Christ (Spiritual Formation). *To foster inner spiritual development that leads to outward action, by a deepening relationship with the Lord, through a lifelong maturing process, toward a life of obedience to Christ, lived among persons of need.*

You may be a relatively new follower of Jesus Christ or perhaps you have been a Christian for many years. Though many believers can identify a specific time when they made a profession of faith, becoming a Christian is more than an event or an end in itself. It is also a process of becoming like Christ in all that we are and do.

Both inward and outward

Some of the phrases in this priority focus on our inner spiritual development. "Foster[ing] inner spiritual development" emphasizes personal spiritual growth that results in "a deepening relationship with the Lord." The Christian faith is not so much about our relationships with others, even though these relationships are important and can help us in our spiritual development. Progressing in our spiritual development "toward a life of obedience to Christ" is our ultimate goal if we are to be fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

But the result of this spiritual growth and development is not inward focused. Spiritual formation

has an important outer dimension as well. Becoming like Christ "leads to outward action . . . lived among persons of need." We live in a context, not in a vacuum that isolates us from life or from people all around us. If our inner spiritual development fails to result in an outflowing toward others, we may become like the Dead Sea—always taking in rich minerals but becoming stagnant and putrid.

Where is God leading us?

So where is God leading us in regard to spiritual formation?

First, God is leading us to foster a *revitalized ministry among men and women in the church*. Women's Missionary Societies and Brethren Men of Mission (Laymen) groups have existed for years in many of our churches. For the most part, these organizations have had a tremendous impact on the women and men who have been part of these groups. We can be thankful for their past and continuing ministries.

But our world today emphasizes choices and options. Many of our congregations are offering additional ways to help women and men become more like Christ. Some expressions of that leading are found in the growing Promise Keepers movement among men and Precept Bible Studies for women. In our own denomination, the Brethren Way of Christ offers opportunities for both men and women to develop

Spiritual Maturity

Spiritual maturity is the process of transforming the entire character of the believer into the image of Christ. He is the source, the focus, and the goal of this process. Christians mature as they practice a vital devotional life, use their gifts, share their faith, and demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit. The result is a character marked by wisdom, balance, and, above all, love.

— From *The Centennial Statement* of The Brethren Church.

spiritual disciplines for use in everyday life. Other approaches have included combined Bible study/craft groups, sewing circles, mothers' clubs, and woodworking clubs.

Second, the *multiplication of small groups* will help us grow strong in our relationships with others as we are accountable to one another. The cell church—where the small group functions as the church—is one approach to applying this accountability to the whole church. The new Greenwood Brethren Fellowship and the Carmel Brethren Church are examples of growing cell churches in the Indianapolis, Indiana, area. These are churches where the small groups have an inward focus and a clear outward dimension as well.

Third, God is leading us in becoming like Christ in *personal devotional life*. I'm hopeful you are one of many who are devoted to a daily or regular time alone with God and the Scriptures. Growing deep in the truth of God's word and in communion with Him will lead us to become more and more like Him. A multitude of study helps are available, but nothing is more effective than simply spending time meditating on a passage of scripture and listening for what God has to say.

How is God leading you?

How is God leading *you* in becoming more like Christ? What are you doing to nurture your own spiritual growth and the spiritual growth of others in your church? How are you letting your own spiritual growth overflow and touch other lives with the good news of saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ?

Drop me a note and let me know what has been helpful to you. You can write me at The Brethren Church National Office, 524 College Avenue, Ashland, OH 44805, or you can send me an e-mail message at Brethrench@aol.com. [†]

Rev. Waters was, until January 1, 1996, Director of Brethren Church Ministries, and he continues to serve the denomination as a consultant in evangelism. This is the fourth in a series of five articles developed from an address he presented during a business session at the 1995 General Conference.

How to get the most out of a sermon

By Thomas E. Schiefer

THE QUESTION caught me off guard? In the midst of a social gathering, when my mind was far from the subject, one of our senior high young people asked, "How long do you spend preparing a sermon?"

There are instances when the Lord, through many means, enables me to put the message together quickly. Other times it is a long, laborious process. In either case, I never sense that I have spent enough time in preparation.

Many times I feel I have short-changed the word-study or the historical context or the devotional reading. I am the most frustrated when I start work on the text late in the week. Then the pressures of deadlines seem the greatest. But what is worse, when I get a late start I tend to miss some of the things the Lord wants to reveal to me in the text. I have found that when I begin to survey the text for the message early in the week, I see more illustrations of the truth that the scripture is communicating. Hence, I try to get into the passage as early in the week as possible.

The Lord deserves the best of my devotion to the proclamation of His word. But even in those times when I feel I have not done my best for the Lord, He has still spoken to me in the preparation process. There is the crux. It is not my effort that is important, but my being open to the Lord's voice.

What about you?

I encourage you to ask your pastor this same question. But when you do, be ready to respond when you are asked, "How long do you spend preparing for the sermon?" For you see, as part of the congregation, you also have a responsibility to prepare yourself to hear God's word as you attend worship.

Those involved in athletic pursuits know that they are not able to do their best when they do not prepare by knowing the rules, focusing on the purpose of the contest, and warming up before participating.



In the same way, worshipers will not get the most out of a service if they do not prepare for the event.

So how long do you spend preparing for worship and for hearing a sermon? Some writers suggest such things as laying out your clothes the night before and getting enough rest. But I urge you to consider preparing all during the week.

Ways you can prepare

Pray, meditate, and prepare your soul to remove all the preconceptions that form a barrier to the Lord speaking to your heart. Ask your pastor for a list of upcoming message texts and read the appropriate passage before the service. Write down things that the Lord reveals to you about the passage and any questions that come to you about the text. Be in prayer that the Lord will communicate His message to you and that He will use the pastor or speaker. (The prayers of God's people are of great benefit to the one preaching.) Then come to worship and allow the Lord to speak to you.

When the congregation gathers for worship and both pastor and people have prepared, then the participation begins. Worship is the partici-

Two more suggestions for listening to a sermon

- Look at your pastor as he speaks. Making eye contact is important to you as a listener and to the pastor as he shares his message.
- As you listen, smile, nod your head in agreement, or even say a hearty "Amen" when appropriate. This will encourage your pastor and enliven his preaching.

pation of the entire body focusing its attention on the object of worship—Jesus Christ. Each of us is responsible to help the rest of the body focus on our Lord and Savior, and that includes during the sermon. The pastor is called to proclaim the word of God boldly. The assembled congregation is called to be active recipients of that proclaimed word. The active engagement of the body is extremely important for the worship of the church.

We need to tune our ears to the word, following God's own pattern as set forth in Psalm 116:2 (NIV).

*Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.*

Listening is not to be passive, but intentional and focused. Start by opening your Bible and following along in the text. Then work to discover the manner best suited to your learning style. If you are an "underliner," then underline. If you listen best by taking notes, then take notes. If you hear something you do not understand, make a note of it and ask the pastor about it following the service or later in the week. If you are convicted by the message, do not hesitate to pray.

Beware of these situations

If you hear something you disagree with, the tendency is to tune out. This is a critical time when you need to go before God and ask Him to search your heart and reveal if He is challenging your ideas or preconceptions.

If the text is not communicating something to you on a particular morning, do not assume that it is not communicating to anyone. Pray for the one who needs to hear that particular message from God. And never stop praying for the pastor as the message is being presented. The enemy would like nothing better than to prevent God's word from being proclaimed and received.

Preaching is a two-way obligation. It is enhanced when both pastor and people prepare adequately for the proclamation of God's word. So how long do you spend preparing for the sermon? [†]

Rev. Schiefer is senior pastor of the Smoky Row Brethren Church in Worthington, Ohio.

Why do we need theology?

By Dale R. Stoffer

HAVE YOU EVER found yourself wondering why we can't use just the simple words of Scripture and avoid all the complicated issues raised by theologians and scholars? As appealing as this may seem, none of us ever works at this level. This is true for several reasons.

First, whenever we begin to string together various Scriptures based on a given theme, we have moved into the realm of doctrine and theology.

Second, many of the terms and even beliefs that are accepted by evangelicals and Brethren are derived not from the plain words of Scripture but from reasoned theological reflection on Scripture. Examples include the doctrines of the Trinity, the incarnation, original sin, and the substitutionary atonement. Scripture does affirm these truths, but to fully formulate them, we must engage in theology.

Third, if we are to respond to the controversial issues of our day—like abortion, homosexuality, and secularism—we must be sufficiently knowledgeable about the whole of Scripture that we can draw principles from various passages to develop a reasoned response that is true to God's word. Such a process requires theological reflection.

We all have a "theology"

It is thus simplistic to believe that we can have a non-theological approach to Scripture. We all have a "theology" by which we order our thoughts about Scripture. The only real choice we have is between being theologically naive and thereby having little impact on the world around us, or being theologically self-conscious and thereby seeking to bring God's word to bear on all aspects of our life in the world.

The derivation of the words doctrine and theology is instructive. Doctrine comes from a Latin word whose Greek equivalent is *didaskalia*. This latter word means teaching, and it refers both to the act of teaching and to what is taught.

Theology comes from a Greek word which means the study of or about God. Theology should have as its primary focus, therefore, the desire to know God and His will for us. It is essentially, as one medieval theologian expressed it, faith seeking understanding. In this sense, all Christians are theologians.

Theology has gotten a bad name because of the impression, rightly deserved at times, that it is abstract, philosophical, and removed from the concerns of everyday life. Theology properly understood, however, should always have as its primary goal the practicing of truth. The ultimate test for any theology is whether it affects how we live before God and in the world. Thus the end of theology should be worship, obedience, and service, never idle speculation.

Cautions for theologizing

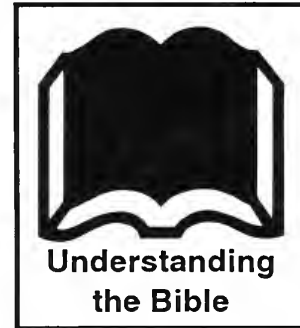
As we engage in the study of God and His word, we must observe certain cautions.

First, we must realize that the Bible does not teach doctrines systematically. No chapter in Scripture, for example, gives a complete discussion of the doctrine of end times. What we do find in Scripture is God's truth being revealed in response to various historical situations and life issues. The Apostle Paul has thus been called a "task theologian," because the specifics of his theology were worked out as he was forced to deal with issues that arose in the various churches he served.

Second, our doctrinal truth is only partial. No one except God has complete knowledge of divine truth. As Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 13:12, "Now we see but a poor reflection; then [when perfection comes] we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known." Only when God brings all things to His perfect conclusion will we have a complete understanding of God's "big picture."

Third, we should avoid speculation in order to fill in gaps in revealed truth. Where Scripture is silent, we should either be silent or avoid dogmatism.

Fourth, when developing a doctrinal position, we must not simply overlook what does not fit. For example, any discussion of the doctrine of assurance must not over-emphasize either God's sovereignty or human responsibility. A doctrine



of assurance that stresses God's sovereignty may end up with a view of "eternal security" that conveniently

downplays passages in Scripture warning against unfaithfulness and disobedience; a doctrine of assurance that stresses human responsibility may develop a doctrine of falling from grace in which God's preserving power is all but overshadowed by the constant fear of committing an unpardonable sin.

Fifth, we should beware of proof-texting (citing Scripture passages to support one's view) that does not take into consideration the context of passages. When reading a doctrinal work, look up references. A book is not necessarily true to Scripture just because it cites Scripture.

Sixth, we must not develop a dogmatic, contentious attitude toward those who disagree with us. Humility is a prerequisite for doing theology, especially because of the second point above.

Only God's word is inspired

Above all we should remember that no theology is inspired, even our own. God's word alone is inspired. Theology is human words seeking to understand and apply God's word to our lives. Until the day of perfection comes, however, we all continue to be theologians, because our faith inevitably seeks understanding. [¶]

Dr. Stoffer is assistant professor of historical theology at Ashland Theological Seminary.

What you should know before you go

By James R. Black

A NUMBER of years ago, while attending Ashland Theological Seminary, I was privileged to have as one of my professors a gentleman still remembered by a number of Brethren—Dr. Edwin Boardman. Professor Boardman had served as a Brethren missionary in Argentina and as a pastor and was now teaching at the seminary. He was a man of genuine conviction, completely dedicated to Christ and the church. He was not, however, a man I could ever picture being out on the street or going door-to-door handing out gospel tracts.

An evangelistic tract

Imagine my surprise, therefore, when I saw on the desk in his office what I thought to be an evangelistic tract. I wasn't snooping. I was taking a make-up test in his office and the "tract" was just there on his desk and I saw it. It was a colorful, attractive piece with the title, "What You Should Know Before You Go."

I finished the test and, while waiting for my professor to return, picked up and opened the tract with considerable anticipation. But when I did so, I discovered that it was not an evangelistic tract at all, but rather an information piece put out by some airline informing travelers of what they should know before they go—baggage limitations, time schedules, passport information, and other such details.

Our divine appointment

Not to be so easily discouraged, I prepared and delivered a message soon thereafter entitled "What You Should Know Before You Go." I used as my text the Apostle Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad" (NIV). I emphasized the certainty of our divine appointment with the Lord of the universe.

Recently that title has taken on yet another meaning for me. In preparing a workshop on Stewardship and Planned Giving, I was again reminded that there is something we need to know before we go. It should be our desire that when we die, we leave behind something besides an empty pew. I understand it was Aristotle who said, "To give away money is an easy matter and in any man's [person's] power. But to decide to whom to give it, and how large and when, and for what purpose and how, is neither in any man's power nor an easy matter."

What is stewardship?

Understanding the meaning of stewardship is likewise not an easy matter. A good place to begin is with this definition: "Christian stewardship is the practice of systematic and proportionate giving of time, abilities, and material possessions, based on the conviction that these are trusts from God to be used in His service for the benefit of all mankind in grateful acknowledgement of Christ's redeeming love." But where do we go from here?

Since according to this definition, stewardship encompasses all of life, it of necessity includes proper use and disposition of material possessions (wealth). Therefore any discussion of stewardship must include talking about finances. And such a discussion cannot be divorced from the teachings of Scripture. Stewardship encompasses all those many and varied aspects of how we live as Christians, and the Bible is our guidebook.

Sources of money

One important consideration, therefore, is the sources of money—how we get our money. Two of the main sources of money are the person at work (earning wages or sal-

ary) and the person's money at work (earning interest or dividends). Stewardship involves an understanding of both of these.

Ways of giving

Just as there are various kinds of income, there are also different ways of giving. Giving may be "revolutionary," "evolutionary," or "traditional."

"Revolutionary" refers to "one-shot" giving, when a person chooses to give in response to a special appeal.

"Traditional" giving refers to giving through tithes and offerings. Many Christians could use some solid biblical teaching about the tithe, "The Sin That Nobody Wants to Talk About" (see Malachi 3:8-10).

"Evolutionary" or planned giving includes such considerations as living memorials, living trusts, charitable remainder trusts, and gift annuities, just to name a few.

Basic to a discussion of evolutionary giving is an emphasis on the preparation of a will. A will is your instructions in writing about how your property shall be distributed when you die. It is the most economical means of controlling the disposition of your wealth. John G. Watts speaks of the folly of dying without a will (intestacy) in his book, *Leave Your House in Order*. He writes, "The most expensive route to go home to be with the Lord is by way of intestacy."

For more information

In an article of this length, it is possible only to scratch the surface of these important subjects. But I would be happy to explore them further in a workshop or seminar in your church, or by talking with you personally. To schedule a workshop or seminar, set up a personal appointment, or receive additional information, contact me at the Office of Stewardship and Planned Giving at The Brethren Church National Offices, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805 (phone 419-289-1708). [†]

Rev. Black is Director of Stewardship and Planned Giving for The Brethren Church.

The Women's Outlook Newsletter



A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society

January-February 1996

Volume 9, Number 3

The President's Pen



Dear Ladies,

A New Year — 1996! I'm sure 1995 went as fast for you as it did for me. As we begin a new year, it is a good time to talk about ABC #2, "Personally invite at least one non-member, including high school girls, to your regular meetings."

We all know at least one woman in our church who does not attend W.M.S. And how about our young girls? Could we include them in one of our meetings? I've heard some of our older women talk of going to W.M.S. meetings with their mothers and today they are active women in our societies.

In my society, our president brings her second grade daughter and she sits quietly and colors or reads a book. Mollie is a joy to have in our meeting, and afterward, when we have refreshments, she will talk and visit with us. I am sure she listens as we have our program and our business meeting. Are we nurturing a future W.M.S. member?

In the book *The Friendships of Women* (which is one of our reading books), the author gives this definition of a mentor: "One Christmas Eve, a deep San Francisco-style fog kept our car crawling blindly along the road. Suddenly another car pulled onto the road ahead of us. Because we were now following a set of beautiful twin tail lights, we could safely increase our speed from 15 to 25 miles an

(continued on page 4)

THE STATE OF THE SOCIETY

In January the President of the United States gives his State of the Union message, as do governors, mayors, and other elected officials. The WMS Board is ahead of their schedule. On October 21, 14 members met to evaluate the 1995 Conference and to plan the 1996 Conference.

Because you are the Women's Missionary Society, I want to report that we are alive and well! It was an enjoyable day of reporting and brainstorming.

Highlights of the meeting are these:

A. Conference dates are August 5-9, 1996, at Ashland University.

B. The WMS sessions will have a more relaxed atmosphere. All ladies are invited to attend.

C. The luncheon will be at the AU Convocation Center.

D. Delegates will have the opportunity to vote on the use of the funds held in trust from the National Sisterhood of Mary and Martha (NSMM). At present, the fund of \$8,000 is invested in the Brethren Home Mission Revolving Loan Fund (HMRLF), helping to build new churches and earning 4% annual interest. This interest of \$320 is given annually to the Summer Crusader program.

To you who attended the 1995 Conference, you will remember that this fund was discussed. Opinions ranged from keeping the fund in-

vested as it is to withdrawing the total amount of \$8,000 from the HMRLF and giving it all away. Suggestions included: (1) Summer Youth program, (2) Maria Miranda's radio program, (3) when National SMM is re-born, take \$8,000 from the WMS budget to reinstate this fund, or the Lord will provide.

A decision is in abeyance, giving time for you ladies to discuss this in your local societies and report to your district president, who, in turn, will report to the Executive Board. Some responses were received following the Conference discussion.

The Executive Board did some background work and learned this information regarding these suggestions: (1) The budget for the Summer Crusaders is less than \$8,000; this amount would replace, not supplement, their funds; (2) Annual costs for Maria's radio program are approximately \$100,000 or average \$8,333 per month. The \$8,000 would not cover the cost of one month. (3) If you read the WMS budget, you will note what comes in one year is budgeted out the next year. We do not have any pocket of hidden funds. Once the \$8,000 is withdrawn from the HMRLF and given away, it is gone.

It was noted that, since 1988 when the \$8,000 was entrusted to the WMS, \$2,560 has been given to the youth program, while the principal of \$8,000 continued to work in the HMRLF on loan for new churches.

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W.M.S. DIRECTORY — 1996

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 Sarasota Evening — Eileen Higgins, 3176 Aspinwall St., Sarasota, FL 34237

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 Cumberland — Vergie E. Greenawalt, 917 Maryland Ave., Cumberland, MD 21502. Phone: 301-724-1105
 Hagerstown — Mary "Jackie" Rogers, 122 S. Locust St., Hagerstown, MD 21740. Phone: 301-797-4334
 Linwood — Virginia M. Hook, 3046 Old Washington Rd., Westminster, MD 21157. Phone: 410-848-5587
 Maurertown — Elsie Mogle, 636 Moose Rd., Woodstock, VA 22664. Phone: 540-459-3204
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 Oak Hill — Amy Crouch, 140 Virginia St., Oak Hill, WV 25901. Phone: 304-465-8380
 Southeast Christian Fellowship — Helen B. Cooksey, 1111 Clark Ave., Waldorf, MD 20602. Phone: 301-843-8994
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 Brush Valley — Judy Kickendall, Rt. 1, Adrian, PA 16210. Phone: 412-545-7157
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 Johnstown II —
 Johnstown III — Dolores Golby, 402 Nor-

wood Gardens, Johnstown, PA 15906. Phone: 814-255-5477

Masontown — Mary Davis, 400 Locust Ave., Masontown, PA 15461. Phone: 412-583-7818

Meyersdale — Helen Courtney, 236 North St., Meyersdale, PA 15552. Phone: 814-634-5721

Mt. Olivet — Madlyn Davis, Rt. 1, Box 249, Georgetown, DE 19947. Phone: 302-0934-7032

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Raystown — Bonita Chamberlain, Rt. 1, Box 46 B, Saxton, PA 16678. Phone: 814-928-5149

Sarver — Marsha Nulph, 361 Stoney Hollow Rd., Cabot, PA 16023

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Vinco — Barbara Hagerich, 121 Teal St., Mineral Point, PA 15942. Phone: 814-322-1638

White Dale — Rita Varner, P. O. Box 414, Kingwood, WV 26537. Phone: 304-329-2533

Ohio District

Brethren Bible —
 Fremont — Co-presidents: Maria Miller, 216 S. Park Ave., Fremont, OH 43420. Phone: 419-332-0531; and Judy McLaughlin, 1815 James St., Fremont, OH 43420. Phone: 419-334-4887
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 Gretna Lamplighters — Phyllis Jerviss, 4632 SR 274 W, Huntsville, OH 43324. Phone: 513-686-5322
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 North Georgetown Afternoon — Evelyn Romigh, 26009 N. Georgetown Rd., Homeworth, OH 44634
 North Georgetown Evening — Diane Hill, 440 Royal Oaks Circle, Sebring, OH 44672. Phone: 216-938-0039
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 Park St. Joy — Janet Rufener, 128 Lilac Lane, Ashland, OH 44805. Phone: 419-289-0465
 Smithville —
 Trinity Sr. — Thelma Watkins, 1706 Washington Blvd., Louisville, OH 44641. Phone: 216-875-2288
 Trinity Jr. — Sharon L. Dixon, 633 Buckwalter Dr., SW, Massillon, OH 44646. Phone: 216-832-2074
 West Alexandria — Marilyn Ward, 2356 New Market Banta Rd., West Alexandria, OH 45381
 Williamstown — Barbara Main, 67681 SR 12 W, Findlay, OH 45840. Phone: 419-422-3069

Indiana District

Ardmore — Kathy Galbreath, 13674 State Rd. 2, South Bend, IN 46619. Phone: 219-232-6169

Missionary

Miscellany

Allen Baer in Buenos Aires is the January Missionary-of-the-Month. As a tentmaker, he teaches, and serves the church in many roles.

The February missionaries are Arch and Connie Nevins, church planters in northern California.

Their address is:
360 Covey Lane
Tracy, CA 95376

March is World Missions month and focuses on two couples: Miguel and Sonia Antunez in Peru, SA, and Juan Carlos and María Miranda in Columbia, SC.

National Project

The national project is the purchase of a church site and building for the mission in Peru, where Miguel and Sonia and their son, Carlos, minister. The goal for two years is \$25,000.

THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

Published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Women's Missionary Society of The Brethren Church.

Mrs. Dorman Ronk, Editor
1325 Coachman Court
Ashland, Ohio 44805

Subscription price, \$7.50 per year in advance.

Send all subscriptions to Mrs. Robert Kroft, 608 Twp. Road 1151, RD 5, Ashland, OH 44805.

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Tucson Evening — Iris McKinney, 6717 Calle Mercurio, Tucson, AZ 85710. Phone: 520-747-2253

Northern California District

Stockton — Audrey Steyer, 3634 Monitor Circle S., Stockton, CA 95219. Phone: 209-477-2357

State of the Society

(continued)

Consensus of the Executive Committee is:

(1) to provide feedback concerning this fund to the local societies via the *Newsletter*,

(2) to request additional responses from you members, and

(3) at the May or August Board meeting, prepare a recommendation to the WMS delegates and give them the ballot for a vote.

E. Many ideas were shared concerning reshaping local societies and programs. This information was like pop corn—spontaneous and good! Ideas included:

- announcements throughout the church and personal invitations on purple paper, which is “the” WMS color
- keep prayer and missions emphases
- have only brief quarterly business meetings for the entire society; monthly items are cared for by the officers in a separate meeting
- include a craft project with simple supplies available or kits prepared
- include music; i.e., group songs and special music
- simplify or omit refreshments
- use four empty frosting cans for special offerings (each member has these at home marked “district project, national project, thank offering, ATS”). Bring the appropriate can on the designated month for that offering.
- don't be afraid to try something new. If it fails, at least you tried!

The Board will meet again in May; we would like to hear your new ideas.

Brighton Chapel — Leona Long, 5455 N. 610 E, Howe, IN 46746. Phone: 219-562-3074

Bryan Susannah — Ann Cummins, 17420 County Road 17F, Bryan, OH 43506. Phone: 419-636-4054

Bryan I — Anna M. Moore, 620 S. Walnut St., Bryan, OH 43506. Phone: 419-636-2856

Burlington — Mary Stout, Rt. 1, Box 350, Flora, IN 46929. Phone: 219-967-3208

College Corner — Tamie White, 2817 W. 850 S., Wabash, IN 46992. Phone: 317-981-4557

Corinth — Lois Thomson, 5751 N. Cy. Rd. 800 E, Logansport, IN 46947. Phone: 219-664-2729

Dutchtown — Sandra Sharp, 6881 E. May St., Leesburg, IN 46538. Phone: 219-834-4601

Flora — Co-Presidents: Mildred Mullendore, 8709 S. Willow, Flora, IN 46919. Phone: 219-967-3806; and Kathleen Brummert, Rt. 4, Box 39, Delphi, IN 46923. Phone: 317-564-4172

Goshen — Co-Presidents: Betty Gray, 516 S. 7th St., Goshen, IN 46526. Phone: 219-533-1691; and Joann Troeger, 1105 W. Wilkinson, Goshen, IN 46526. Phone: 219-533-2752

Huntington — Carol Tucker, 1054½ First St., Huntington, IN 46750. Phone: 219-358-9742

Loree I — Doris Deisch, Rt. 1, Box 89, Peru, IN 46970. Phone: 317-473-6052

Loree Charity — Cindy Lorenz, Rt. 1, Box 169, Peru, IN 46970. Phone: 317-395-7801

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Milford — Clariece Stump, P.O. Box 566, Milford, IN 46542. Phone: 219-658-4644

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North Manchester Hadassah — Helen Conrad, 504 Hawthorn Trail, North Manchester, IN 46962. Phone: 219-982-4855

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Peru — Rosie Roller, 470 W. 14th St., Peru, IN 46970. Phone: 317-473-7096

Roann — Rosella Layton, 430 Adams St., Roann, IN 46974. Phone: 317-833-2626

Roanoke — Sharon Williams, Box 33, Roanoke, IN 46783. Phone: 219-672-3252

South Bend — Beverly Baker, 1127 Byron Dr., South Bend, IN 46614. Phone: 219-291-1212

Warsaw — Lee Bair, 619 Nancy St., Warsaw, IN 46580. Phone: 219-267-2649

Wabash — Nancy Snyder, 518 Glen Ave., Wabash, IN 46992

Central District

Cerro Gordo — Elaine Dresbach, Box 254, LaPlace, IL 61936. Phone: 217-677-2171

Hammond Ave. — Ruby Williams, 1930 Howard, Waterloo, IA 50702

Lanark — Carolyn Miller, 27088 U.S. Highway 52, Lanark, IL 61046. Phone: 815-493-6232

Milledgeville Beacons — Dorothy Ruth Glenn, 201 Meyers Ave., P.O. Box 385, Milledgeville, IL 61051. Phone: 815-225-7417

Milledgeville Priscilla — Wendy Wiersema, Rt. 2, Box 216, Chadwick, IL 61014

Midwest District

Falls City — Linda Berkley, Morrill, KS 66515. Phone: 913-459-2539

Mulvane — Dorothy Mills, 504 Emery, Mulvane, KS 67110. Phone: 316-777-1510

President's Pen (continued)

hour. A mentor is someone further on down the road from you, who is going where you want to go and who is willing to give you some light to help you get there."

Are you mentoring anyone in your church, your neighborhood, or at work? It's possible you are mentoring someone and don't realize it. I think with some women it is natural to be a mentor; with others of us, it is something we need to work at a long time. Try to invite a friend to one of your meetings and truly be a friend to her.

Here is a poem that I kept from a copy of *Our Daily Bread* of 1983.

*The Master's will, for this I pray,
Whatever it may be!
I do not want to miss Your best;
Reveal it, Lord, to me.
My own desires may lead me
wrong,
I must consult my God;
His counsel will be justified
When all the way I've trod.*

*O soul of mine, delight in Him!
If I am in God's will,
The lives of others will be helped
His purpose to fulfill!
My all, O Lord, I give to You,
My body, mind, and soul;
May all the days that lie ahead
Be under Your control.*

— Frances Hess

May the words of this poem be a guideline for the New Year for you! I wish for you a New Year full of many rich blessings and good health to each of you.

God Bless You All,



Shirley Black

The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

In the directory, you will notice some blanks. Incomplete information was received on the statistical reports last summer. As new information is received, I will inform you, so you can fill in the blanks.

Your Thank Offering

For many years, WMS and Sisterhood members used the mite box—the little white cardboard box which served as the "bank" for thank offerings. And boxes were used for project offerings, too.

I remember those bulging boxes! Sometimes we had to reinforce the seams with tape to keep the coins inside. The box represented the blessings of that year—a good harvest, a promotion, a passing grade, a new baby, your pastor, teacher, the first or the last snowfall, and the beauty that surrounded us.

The "mite box" name was named for the widow, who gave all she had.

I think the use of mite-boxes was discontinued when we realized the box couldn't hold enough to represent God's blessings. However, it is easy to write a check or put a few bills in the offering without realizing *all* that we want to be thankful for. With a box, it was a conscious effort to put in coins expressing our thankfulness. Are we now lax?

The use of the thank offering remains about the same as when it originated—to share with various ministries of the denomination. The present benevolent uses are: Riverside Christian School in Lost Creek, KY; Campus Ministry and the scholarship at Ashland University; World and Home Missions.

Some have replaced the mite box with a large band-aid box or another container. The receptacle isn't what counts. It is the gift and the prayerful attitude in which the gift is given.

The thank offerings received at General Conference were \$9,860.47. Isn't it wonderful where our gifts help?

We are wonderfully made

I am always interested in the parts of the body which are described in the Bible—this is a very selective list: "how beautiful on the mountains are the feet" (Isa.52:7); "the tongue is a smart part of the body" (James 3:5); "your right hand upholds me" (Psa. 63:8); and "he who has an ear to hear" (John 11:15). We need to be attuned to God for His message.

In contrast, think of "itching ears" (II Tim. 4:3). Some are so anxious for juicy gossip that it is a sin. This passage is used in the ordination service for pastors, and it is written about us! Paul emphasizes to Timothy that "they will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths" (v. 4). In that context, Paul spoke about sound doctrine vs. myths. Frequently in modern days, it is truth vs. malicious gossip. And to this, I'll add "avoid every kind of evil" (I Thes. 5:22), which is seen as well as felt, heard, and experienced.

Passing along gossip to those with "itching ears" may come under the guise of "I think you should know this" or "so you can pray about this." Sound familiar? Please don't misinterpret me—some prayerful women are very sincere when they share a concern. But the one whom we remember is the gossipier. I liken this to all the correct notes I play, but the one which is long remembered is the wrong one!

Have your spiritual hearing tested. Stay attuned to God's voice; turn off the volume when morsels for itching ears are circulated, and then practice *doing* as well as *hearing* God's message. Don't misuse these parts of our body, because "we are fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psa. 139:14).

Your friend,



Joan

The secret to living with gusto

By Ken Davis

THERE IS a well-kept secret that can put men and women on the track to gusto living. Actually, it's no secret at all—but it's a concept so foreign to our society that few people even consider it an option. This is the secret: *Life's greatest fulfillment comes from serving.*

Ironic, isn't it? The meaning and purpose we seek in life come from *giving* what we are and what we have rather than living to *get* everything we can. Just as we derive meaning and value from being loved by our Creator, we in turn were designed to love those around us and, by doing so, to draw them to Him. That love is more than just a warm, gooey feeling. It is expressed in action, and that action is called service.

The way we operate best

Service, believe it or not, is the way we operate best—the way we were *designed* to operate. In our relationship with God and with other people, a spirit of sacrifice and compassion leads to abundant life. Jesus Himself spoke of this truth many times throughout Scripture. When the disciples were arguing about who among them was the greatest, "Jesus called the Twelve and said, 'If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all'" (Mark 9:35, *NIV*).

If the focus of life is to accumulate wealth, power, and prestige, then life is truly in vain, because in the end, we gain nothing. After the death of John D. Rockefeller, a man asked his accountant, "How much did he leave?" The accountant replied, "He left everything."

It makes little sense to waste life accumulating what you cannot keep. If you were told today that you had only a few days to live, it's not likely that you would frantically try to accumulate more *stuff* in the short time available. Relatively speaking, we *do* have only a few days to live.

Yet far too many of us waste those precious moments in pursuit of things that can never satisfy.

It's tempting to respond to that dilemma, as many throughout history have, by saying, "So what? If I

*There are two kinds
of people in the
world:
Givers and takers.
The takers eat
better.
The givers sleep
better.*

can't take it with me, then I might as well enjoy as much of it as I can while I'm here. I'll eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow I'll die anyway." That philosophy leads to a foolish waste of your life in seeking empty pleasures. If you're searching for gusto living—maximum living—you won't find it there. True fulfillment in life comes not from taking everything you can get, but from giving whatever you have.

Why don't we change?

It's obvious that in our culture many of us have made the foolish choice to seek pleasure rather than meaning in life. Why, if the life of the self-centered pleasure-seeker is so empty, don't we change our lifestyles and begin living to serve others?

First, it's because our thinking has been short-circuited by the mistaken ideas of servanthood that are so prevalent in our society. We believe that only the weak serve. The thought of living to serve anyone

but ourselves is almost repulsive. In our culture, servants are perceived as lower-class, less-capable people. Serving others is considered undignified.

Second, we've been disconnected from the power source that would enable us to live the difficult life of a servant. Like an unplugged refrigerator, we take up space but can't keep things fresh. Sin has had a devastating impact on the environment and on the moral tenor of the world, but some of its greatest damage has been to our ability to love God and to serve each other.

Only those who are free to live with nothing to prove, nothing to hide, and nothing to lose can even come close to tasting the sweetness that a life of service brings. But this truth, even though it's relatively easy to talk about (or even to write about), is so very difficult to act upon.

The real test of faith

Breaking free from the hold of this world's values and actually living a life of service is the real test of faith. Progress can be agonizingly slow, but each tiny step brings us closer to what God wants us to be. Only in the last few years have I been able to even consider making such an effort. I still cling to so many of the superficial things in life.

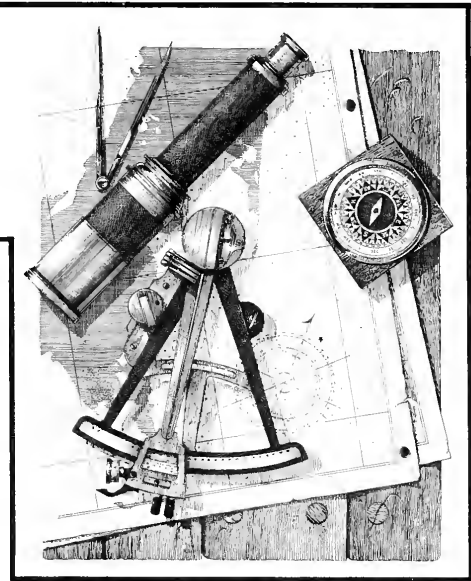
If we can find the courage to trust God to enable us to live lives of service, not only will we begin to move closer to our fullest potential, but our families, friends, and business associates will look at us in a different light. They may not understand our behavior—they may, in fact, wonder whether we have lost touch with reality—but somewhere deep in their souls, they will know who is behind this inexplicable behavior. Somehow they will know that we follow Him.

Jesus, the one who claimed the greatest victory of all time, did so by becoming a servant. He wants to share that victory with you. [†]

*Mr. Davis is an award-winning author and popular speaker. This article is excerpted from his book, **Fire Up Your Life** (Zondervan Publishing House, 1995). The article was provided by the publisher.*

Charting an Unknown Course

By Dr. Frederick J. Finks



SOMEONE approached me nearly last year and asked how the seminary was doing. My response was extremely enthusiastic. God had blessed us beyond measure, and it was indeed a joy to serve Him through the expanded ministry offered by Ashland Theological Seminary.

Indeed, everything was going well. Our student population was continuing to grow; the faculty was unified in purpose and vision; our community of faith was strong and vibrant; the academic integrity of the seminary was at a high point; and general support from our friends and the church had been affirming. I could not have asked for a better place in which to work and serve.

Signs that all was not well

Then came the first signs that caused me to question. Two of our senior level faculty members, both in biblical studies and both members of the United Methodist Church, were asked to consider

teaching at another seminary. While my personal philosophy had always been that no one is indispensable or irreplaceable, suddenly I found myself beginning to ask God why He was allowing this to happen. I spent a great deal of time in prayer, wrestling with the possibility of losing two fine professors and what their leaving would do to the seminary.

God was working His will

God answered me: "My hand is upon this place and I can do what



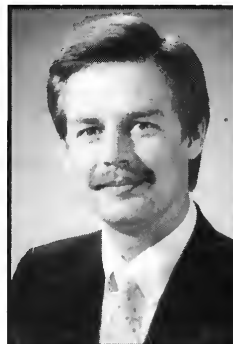
Dr. David A. deSilva

I desire and it will still be upon this place." I rose from my prayer time refreshed and enlivened. I had been made aware by God that the future did not depend

one iota on me. It was God who was working His will.

Later both men chose to accept positions at this other seminary.

But we were able to move with deliberate progress to find two equally outstanding professors, Dr. David A. deSilva and Dr. L. Daniel Hawk, who have already



Dr. L. Daniel Hawk

endeared themselves to both students and other faculty members. They have also brought fresh ideas and new perspectives to the

seminary that have enabled us to move forward.

Then in early August of last year Dr. Mary Ellen Drushal, who had taught at the seminary since 1984 and who had served as academic dean for the past four years, was given an opportunity to serve Ashland University as acting provost. Mary Ellen had desired such an opportunity for some time, and this seemed like an open door for her.

A message from God

I again found myself questioning what God was doing. A friend later stopped by with a "message from God." She informed me that during her prayer time God had impressed upon her that she should share with me a passage of scripture—Psalm 127:1-2.

I read and contemplated these words: "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain." God was again communicating to me that He is in charge and that anything that is done apart from Him would not succeed.

Many other such occurrences have come into my life this year, impressing upon me the significance of God as He charts the course for our future. At times I must confess that I am merely hanging on for the ride. [†]



Dr. Frederick J. Finks, President Ashland Theological Seminary

ATS News and Updates

Twenty Brethren students enrolled at the seminary

GRADUATION last May saw one of the largest groups of Brethren students ever to graduate from Ashland Theological Seminary. Fortunately, nine new Brethren students enrolled for classes in the 1995-96 academic year to make up for some of those who graduated. We now have a total of 20 Brethren students at the school. Here are several noteworthy items about these students: four are from one congregation—the Pleasant View Brethren Church of Vandergrift, Pennsylvania, pastored by Rev. Keith Hensley; three are from the Southwest District (Arizona); and one (Eduardo Rodriguez) is from Argentina. Eight of the current Brethren students will graduate in May.

Search under way for new academic dean

A SEARCH COMMITTEE has been working diligently, reviewing applications for the position of academic dean recently vacated by Dr. Mary Ellen Drushal. A national advertisement has resulted in applications from a number of candidates. Several candidates are under consideration and an announcement of a new dean should come after the first of the year.

Several trips planned through the seminary

INDIVIDUALS with a taste for travel can join students and friends of Ashland Theological Seminary on one of several exciting trips planned for 1996. The Seminary Foundation is sponsoring a trip March 10-17 to Eng-

Brethren Students

Janet Aguiar	Park Street
John Allison	Derby
Eric Bargerhuff	Mexico/University
Don Belsterling	Park Street
Doug Cunningham	Milledgeville
Tim DeLaughter	N. Manchester
Corky Fisher	Park Street
Annalee Hoover	N. Georgetown
T.J. McLaughlin	Pleasant View/ Fremont
Ed Miller	Pleasant View/ Fremont
Ron Miller	Linwood
Chris Moellering	Winding Waters
Arnold Owens	Pleasant View
Joyce Owens	Pleasant View
James Pflugfelder	Northwest Chapel
Karen Robins	Tucson First
Eduardo Rodriguez	Colon, Argentina
Eric Schave	Milledgeville
Paul Sluss	Roanoke/ Louisville Brethren Bible
Louise Waller	Northwest Chapel

land and Scotland. A trip to the Holy Lands is planned for May. It will be led by Drs. Fred and Grace Holland. During the month of June, a study tour of England, Scotland, and Ireland will be led by Dr. Luke Keefer. Anyone interested in one or more of these trips should contact the seminary for more information.

I. Howard Marshall to speak during spring lecture series

DR. I. HOWARD MARSHALL from Aberdeen, Scotland, is scheduled to speak at the ATS 1996 spring lecture series, to be held March 11-12. His topic will be "The Christian Life in the Pastoral Epistles."

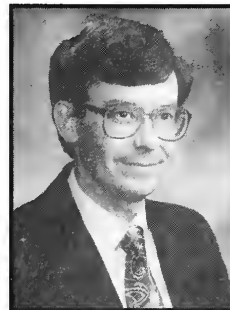
Dr. Marshall has been professor of New Testament exegesis at the University of Aberdeen since 1979. He is well-known as a New Testament scholar and is the author of numerous books in New Testament studies. He has lectured ex-

tensively in many countries, including Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Singapore, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Australia, Canada, and the United States.

Attendance at the lectures is free. Persons may also receive continuing education credits or seminary graduate credit hours by participating in the conference. In such cases, a fee is required. Contact the seminary at 419-289-5161 for more information.

Ron Waters to join seminary faculty

REV. RONALD W. WATERS, who has served the Brethren Church National Office as Director of Brethren Church Ministries



Ronald W. Waters

since July 1989, will join the ATS faculty this summer. Ron, who is completing a Doctor of Missiology degree from Asbury Theological Seminary,

will hold the new chair in evangelism recently established at the seminary. He will bring to his new position at the seminary many years of strong leadership experience. The seminary will also make Ron available to continue to provide leadership to the denomination in the area of evangelism.

Churches encouraged to provide Fair Share support

THE SEMINARY depends on each Brethren church to provide annual support through the Fair Share approved by General Conference. The Fair Share for each congregation is \$12.00 per Church Growth Index point. A congregation's Church Growth Index is determined by adding its membership, average morning worship attendance, and average Sunday school attendance, then dividing this total by three. [¶]



Group in Tracy, Calif., to become a class

Ashland, Ohio — The General Conference Executive Council voted at its December 1, 1995, meeting to recognize the West Valley Brethren Life Church of Tracy, California, as a Brethren class. Becoming a class is the first step in becoming a Brethren church.

Last August a group of people began meeting in Tracy under the leadership of church planter Rev. Archie Nevins. In addition to holding weekly meetings for training and fellowship, the class began sponsoring a number of community activities, including a flag football ministry to the City of Tracy (with a presentation of the gospel during half-time) and a men's basketball program. In October, three cell groups were formed. Activities for youth are also conducted.

West Valley Brethren Life Church is the first phase of a vision to start a number of churches in Northern California—three congregations by the year 2000. Brethren from the Northgate Community and Stockton Brethren Churches are working with the Nevins family in this outreach project.

NAE Convention

"Reaching America for Christ" will be the theme of the 54th Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals to be held March 3-5 at the Hyatt Regency in Minneapolis. Speakers will include Leith Anderson, Jill Briscoe, Bill McCartney, and Luis Palau. Program and registration information is available by calling NAE at 708-665-0500 (e-mail: nae@xc.org).



Exterior of the church building of the Corinth Brethren Church, with the addition built in 1991-92 in the foreground.

Corinth Church burns mortgage on addition constructed in 1991-1992

Twelve Mile, Ind. — Members of the Corinth Brethren Church celebrated paying off the indebtedness on an addition to their church building with a mortgage-burning service on Sunday, October 22.

Moderator Dennis Moss and eleven committee members were in charge of the afternoon mortgage-burning program. Rev. Bill Brady of Tucson, Ariz., who was pastor of the Corinth Church when the addition was built, was the speaker for the event. Rev. Brady's wife, Lynne, also participated, playing several piano selections and leading the congregation in a sing-along of favorite hymns.

Piano selections were also played by Corinth young people Sarah Moss and India Staller. In addition, the Caston School Swing Choir sang

several songs during the program.

The Corinth Brethren stepped out in faith and broke ground for this addition on June 6, 1991. Wolf Construction of Logansport, Ind., built the shell of the building, and carpenters in the congregation did much of the interior work. The women of the church helped with painting, putting up wallpaper, and finishing woodwork. The building was dedicated on April 26, 1992.

The addition contains a pastor's office, five classrooms, a foyer, an extension of the fellowship hall, and two bathrooms. Cost to construct the building was approximately \$100,000, plus a lot of donated materials and labor. The final payment on the loan was made on September 1, 1995.

— reported by Viola Peter, *cor. secretary*

Briefly Noted



Dr. Charles Munson recently began serving as interim pastor of the Flora, Ind., First Brethren Church. Dr. Munson taught for many years at Ashland University and Ashland Theological Seminary, and he served for a time as dean of the seminary. Now retired from the seminary, he continues to serve The Brethren Church as an interim pastor. He served the Winding Waters Breth-

ren Church of Elkhart, Ind., and The Brethren Church in New Lebanon, Ohio, before going to Flora First Brethren.

Dates have been set and the place selected for the second **Great Western Brethren Roundup**, a gathering of Brethren from the California, Southwest, and Midwest Districts of The Brethren Church. Roundup II is scheduled for July 10-13, 1997, at the Glorieta Conference Center near Santa Fe, New Mexico.



Commission discusses key areas of church development

Ashland, Ohio — The New Church Development Commission discussed several key areas of church development when it met November 8, 1995, in Ashland.

The commission was of consensus that the Missionary Board should begin a search for a new director of Home Missions in 1996. Commission members believe this person should play an active role as a catalyst for new church starts.

The commission also agreed that prospective church planters should go through an assessment program to evaluate their gifts and that they should attend a church-planting "boot camp" to help prepare them to begin a new church.

Several ideas were presented with regard to construction of facilities for new churches. They included continuing a partnership with Brethren Men of Mission in the construction of affordable facilities; the need for each new church to work with an architect to develop a comprehensive site plan; the exploration of less costly construction options; and the construction of facilities that reflect Brethren beliefs.

The commission recognized the significant level of cooperation that now exists between the mission boards of various districts in The Brethren Church because of the work of Rev. Russell Gordon, former director of Home Missions. In order to continue this cooperation, a Church Planting Summit was set for March 14, 1996, at Park Street Brethren Church.

Recognizing the importance of having a comprehensive strategy for church planting in The Brethren Church, the commission set this topic as the main focus of discussion for its next meeting.

— reported by Dale Stoffer
Commission Chair

Economic factors force closing of Brethren Printing Company

Ashland, Ohio — The General Conference Executive Council, during its regular meeting on December 1, took action to close the Brethren Printing Company and to liquidate the assets of the corporation. The decision was made because of the indebtedness of the company and the difficulty in operating it profitably.

The Brethren print shop was operated for many years as part of the Brethren Publishing Company, a not-for-profit entity which published THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST and other Brethren publications. On November 1, 1989, the print shop was spun off as Brethren Printing Company, a for-profit corporation that was wholly owned by The Brethren Church, Inc.

The company operated profitably for a few years, serving both the church and the community. But changes in the community and in printing clientele, rising paper costs, and differing needs of printing customers threatened increasingly the profitability of the company. Efforts were made to broaden the client base of the company, to meet the needs of the community, and to update equipment and services, without sacrificing quality.

Manager Tim Mills worked diligently, doubling as pressman, to meet the demands of the printing community. When a major client

started its own in-house printing department, the Printing Company was hurt significantly. This was compounded by the opening of another printing company in Ashland, creating an even more competitive printing market.

Manager Mills and his staff worked many long hours to overcome these obstacles in an effort to turn the corner toward profitability. Their labor of love, dedication, and commitment continually met with disappointment as economic realities set in. The board of directors of the company also struggled diligently with the situation, looking for a solution.

After considerable discussion, weighing of options, and prayer, the General Conference Executive Council decided that it would ultimately be in the best interest of all involved to close the company. The final day of operation will be December 31, 1995.

The Board of Directors acknowledges with great appreciation the hard work and dedicated efforts of Manager Tim Mills and his staff. The board also expresses its thanks to The Brethren Church and the Ashland community for their many years of support for the Brethren Printing Company.

— Ralph Gibson, President, Brethren Printing Company Board of Directors

Who'll do the printing?

Question: With the closing of Brethren Printing Company, how will the EVANGELIST and other Brethren publications be printed?

Answer: In addition to the overriding concern for the employees, another factor that made it difficult to decide to close Brethren Printing Company was the convenience of having in-house printing. It will now be necessary to find a commercial printer to print the EVANGELIST, *Morning Star*, *Insight into Brethren Missions*, and other Brethren publications. There are a number of printers in the Ashland area (some with Brethren people in the ownership and/or management), so we will seek one of these to do our printing.

The changeover to outside printing will not be as difficult as it once was—for two reasons. First, typesetting and page make-up, which were once done by the print shop, are now done on computers in our offices. So instead of depending on someone else to do much of the preparatory work, we can now take publications to a printer that are almost ready for the press. Second, a lot of our smaller printing jobs that were once done on a small press are now done on a high-speed, high-quality copier. We still have this copier available even with the closing of the Printing Company.

So while it certainly will not be as convenient with the Printing Company gone, the situation should still be workable.

— Dick Winfield, Editor



In Memory

Marion M. "Mickey" Mellinger, 72, a member of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church, died December 14, 1955, at her home in Ashland. She served for more than 15 years as Administrative Assistant for the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church, retiring February 28, 1979. In this position she was known for her congeniality, remarkable abilities, knowledge of missions, and general helpfulness. Preceded in death by her husband, Delbert (July 24, 1987), she is survived by their two children, Claudia (Columbus, Ohio) and Herman (Fort Wayne, Ind., where he is moderator of the Meadow Crest Brethren Church). Services were conducted by Dr. Arden Gilmer, pastor of Park Street Brethren Church.



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Racial Reconciliation Sunday

The National Association of Evangelicals, the National Black Evangelical Association, and Zondervan Publishing House have established the Sunday before Martin Luther King, Jr., Day as an annual Racial Reconciliation Sunday. This year that day is January 14. The goal of this observance is to build a grass-roots campaign among evangelical churches for national racial reconciliation.

Information about Racial Reconciliation Sunday and suggestions for observing it were sent to pastors and moderators in *Leadership Letter*. Whether or not your church observes this occasion, two of the suggestions for doing so are things that each of us can do individually and throughout

J. Michael Drushal to oversee operation of the National Office

Ashland, Ohio — J. Michael Drushal has been called to serve as interim Director of Brethren Church Ministries, effective January 1, 1996.

Drushal is assuming on a part-time basis the position formerly held by Rev. Ronald W. Waters. Waters resigned at the end of 1995 in order to complete work on a Doctor of Missiology degree in preparation for becoming assistant professor of evangelism at Ashland Theological Seminary later this year. He will be available for several months to work with Drushal a few hours per week on a consultant basis.

In addition to this new position,

Drushal is assistant professor of business administration and chair of the business administration department at Ashland University. He is not new to the



J. Michael Drushal

Brethren National Office, for he served as office overseer and General Conference coordinator from 1987 to 1989.

Because of the current process of reorganization of the Brethren denominational ministries, a decision was made not to hire a full-time replacement for Waters until a new organizational structure has been approved by General Conference. In the meantime, Drushal will oversee operation of the National Office and care for basic responsibilities of the Director of Brethren Church Ministries.

Congratulations!

To: Dr. Harold Walton, pastor of the Wayne Heights Brethren Church of Waynesboro, Pa., who received a Doctor of Ministry degree in 1995 from Trinity International University, Deerfield, Ill. His major project for the degree was "Principles of Revival."

To: Vivian Barkdoll and Dolores Kline, members of the Wayne Heights Brethren Church, who were ordained as deaconesses for the Wayne Heights congregation in September.

the year to promote racial understanding. They are (1) develop a friendship with an individual of another race, and (2) commit to persistent prayer regarding racial reconciliation. As we begin this New Year, these would be worthy commitments for each of us.

* * * * *

The true body of Christ has no color distinctions, only a commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The suffering of the African-American male part of the body is to the detriment of the whole body; accordingly the entire body has a vested interest in the salvation and restoration of African-American males.

— John M. Wallace, Jr., in *Men to Men: Perspectives of Fifteen African-American Christian Men*; Lee N. June, editor (Zondervan, 1996).

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The Brethren

Evangelist

Vol. 118, No. 2

A newsletter for Brethren people

February 1996

Brian H. Moore, chair of the Spiritual Formation Commission, looks at:

How to provide pastoral care in the local church

UNTIL RECENTLY, when the subject of pastoral care was mentioned, people thought of the nurturing and shepherding care that pastors give to the members of the church. Pastoral care was one important segment of the pastor's ministry. It included such things as counsel, encouragement, admonition, advice, and prayer.

A new definition

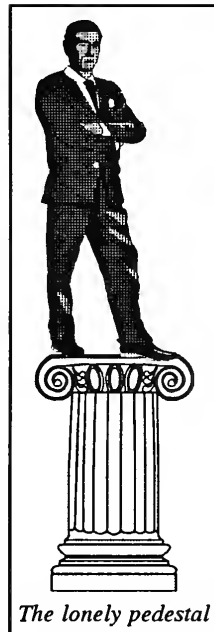
Today, because of fortuitous circumstances, pastoral care is beginning to have another meaning: *taking care of the pastor*. The former is done by the pastor; the latter is done for the pastor.

A few years ago most church people would have given little consideration to the validity of this kind of pastoral care. (Those in a perpetual state of denial still don't!) Until recently, it was almost unthinkable to assert that pastors need care just like everyone else. After all, pastors aren't like everyone else. They live in the rarefied atmosphere of holy things and are untouched by the commonalities of others.



Dr. Brian H. Moore

Pastors are "set apart," and that has come to mean "set apart from ordinary existence." If any chink appears in a pastor's ministerial armor, it is a sure sign of spiritual



deficiency or at least of inadequate seminary training. (It's strange how seminary training gets blamed for so many problems!) This kind of thinking lives on and is, in fact, at the root of much of the denial. It is also responsible for the pastoral pretense and the subsequent loneliness. Pastors must maintain the image of being "together," otherwise how can they help anyone else? But the only way to successfully maintain that image is to remain aloof. The problem is one developed and shared by pastors and laity alike. It is sometimes referred to as "the pedestal." Perched securely on their pedestals, pastors are spared the problems of ordinary life. But it's lonely on that pedestal, high and lifted up.

Termites of the spirit

So while pastors try to avoid giving any impression of humanness, and while congregations keep insisting on the superhuman uniqueness of pastors, the foundations are being eaten away by termites of the spirit. When signs of erosion or decay begin to appear, some rush in and wonder "Why?" while others stand afar off and beat their self-

righteous breasts saying, "I'm glad that I am not like other men, like this pastor over there."

Is anyone going to come out into the open and admit that pastors need to be cared for, protected, encouraged, helped, blessed, affirmed, and otherwise loved—just as much as any other human being (and perhaps even more so)? For this to happen, pastors must lay down the phony, invulnerable image, and congregations must reconsider their superhuman expectations of pastors and begin to be real, honest, and caring.

The Spiritual Formation Commission of The Brethren Church sponsored a goal for Brethren churches for 1996:

By October 1, 1996, create a viable pastoral care committee. . . .

This goal was adopted by General Conference last August. Its aim is to help provide care for pastors and their families. The concept goes beyond what is usually called the "Pastoral Relations Committee," whose task it has been not only to encourage the pastor but also to hear grievances from the congregation and the pastor and to attempt to resolve those grievances. In practice,

(continued on page 3)

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Do you know what you're singing?

THE HYMNS we sing in worship often contain biblical allusions. If we don't know the biblical background of these allusions, we miss a lot of the rich meaning of these hymns.

Here are a few such biblical allusions chosen from several familiar hymns. Do you know their biblical contexts? Test yourself. If you don't know the answers, look up the biblical references. In fact, you might want to look up all the references anyway, for they all are meaningful passages.

1. One of the most well-known worship hymns is "Holy, Holy, Holy." The second verse has these words: "All the saints adore Thee, casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea." This is an allusion to:

- Isaiah's vision of the LORD (Isaiah 6).
- The anointing of David as king of Israel (2 Samuel 5).
- John's vision of God's throne (Revelation 4).

2. A favorite prayer hymn is "Sweet Hour of Prayer." One verse of this hymn has these words: "Till, from Mount Pisgah's lofty height, I view my home, and take my flight." This reference to seeing our heavenly home at the time of death has as its background:

- Elijah's journey to heaven in 2 Kings 2.
- Moses' view of the Promised Land in Deuteronomy 34.
- The death of Stephen in Acts 7:54-60.

3. Another popular worship hymn is "Crown Him with Many Crowns." It begins, "Crown Him

with many crowns, the Lamb upon His throne." This reference to Jesus Christ as the Lamb upon the throne is an allusion to:

- John's vision in Revelation 5.
- The Shepherd Psalm (Ps. 23).
- Instructions concerning the Passover Lamb (Exodus 12).

4. The hymn "I Know Whom I Have Believed" is unusual in that the words of the chorus are taken directly from the Bible. The words "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day" are the testimony of:

- John the Baptist in John 1:29.
- Peter in Matthew 16:16.
- Paul in 2 Timothy 1:12.

5. The hymn "Praise Him! Praise Him!" says that "Like a shepherd Jesus will guard His children." Jesus called Himself "the good shepherd" in:

- John 6:35.
- John 10:11.
- John 11:25.

6. One verse of the Christmas hymn "Joy to the World" has these words: "No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found." The background for these words is:

- The parable of the four kinds of soil in Matthew 13:1-9.
- God's words to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:16-19.
- God's curse on Cain in Genesis 4:10-12.

7. The hymn "Come, Thou Fount

of Every Blessing" has a number of biblical allusions (including the title!). In the second verse of this hymn we find the words, "Here I raise mine Ebenezer; hither by Thy help I'm come." "Ebenezer" means "stone of help" and refers to a memorial set up as a testimony to God's helpfulness. It is an allusion to:

- The stone Jacob set up after he dreamed about a ladder reaching from earth to heaven (Genesis 28:10-19).
- The stones the Israelites set up after they crossed the Jordan River and entered the Promised Land (Joshua 4:1-9).
- The stone Samuel set up after the Israelites routed the Philistines in battle (1 Samuel 7:10-13).

8. In the hymn "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!" the last verse says, "O that with yonder sacred throng we at His feet may fall!" This reference to a sacred throng is to:

- The Israelites who worshiped God when the Temple was dedicated (1 Kings 8).
- The people who worshiped Jesus on "Palm Sunday" (Luke 19:28-38).
- The great multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language seen by John (Revelation 7:9-17).

Our worship through singing is enriched when we understand the biblical allusions in hymns. I hope this quiz makes these hymns more meaningful to you.

— Dick Winfield, editor

Answers: 1.c.; 2.b.; 3.a.; 4.c.; 5.b.; 6.b.; 7.c.; 8.c.

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Pontius' Puddle

WE CHRISTIANS HAVE TO LEARN TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT WITHOUT HURTING EACH OTHER.

THE KEY IS TO ACHIEVE UNITY ON CRUCIAL MATTERS, BUT ALLOW DIVERSITY ON THOSE THAT AREN'T.

AGREED, BUT HOW DO WE KNOW WHICH MATTERS ARE CRUCIAL?

EASY. THEY'RE THE ONES THAT MATTER TO ME!



(continued from page 1)

this committee was often reduced to recommending the pastor's salary for the annual budget or to conducting "gripe sessions" based on anonymous criticisms.

Not a financial issue

The concept being introduced in this goal is not focused on financial needs or problem situations. Pastoral care means giving attention to and encouraging the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, and social well-being of the pastor and the pastor's family.

The need for this emphasis is the result of complex dynamics which are beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that being a pastor is more difficult now than in former times because society is under greater stress. The widespread breakdown of authority and of structures that once gave stability to our society deeply affects pastoral work in all its dimensions. New needs keep appearing. The toll in stress and conflict and the strains on family life are great. "All we have to do is look around and see that preachers and rabbis and priests are dropping like flies, leaving their ministries or letting the stress erupt into headlines."^{*}

Pastors can seldom escape by leaving the ministry (worst case scenario), because there is no place to go. The best scenario is for pastors and congregations to address pastoral care so that ministry will be enjoyable and the pastor will keep growing, have family time, be well-rounded, and be generally at peace. Pastors who serve under these conditions will be a blessing to their congregations.

I have a few suggestions to get us thinking about ways to begin providing care for our pastors. In making these suggestions, I exaggerate somewhat to make my point. I hope we can get the point and adjust it to fit our individual situations.

1. Move the parsonage!

If the parsonage is adjacent to the church building, the pastor will inevitably tend to become the caretaker and night watchman. In addition, being so close to one's place of

^{*}Bill Self in "Ministers Under Stress" by Hank Whittemore, *Parade*, April 14, 1991, p. 4.

work makes it easy to keep working. I live 30 paces from the church building. I have allowed myself to be the above (caretaker and night watchman) and do the above (keep on working). I have little sense of going home for the day because home is so close to where I do so much of my work. This has been true for all 29 years of my full-time pastoral service in four congregations. There are two sides to the convenience of living on the church property. Pastoral care may require discussing "the other side."

2. Give more vacation time

Some of us pastors are terrible abusers of our vacation. We don't go away long enough! One reason for this may be that we don't feel that we have enough vacation left if we take two weeks at one time. We want to save some time off for Thanksgiving and some for Christmas, so we fragment our vacation time and find that it provides little personal benefit. Having an additional week of vacation (which could be divided up around Thanksgiving and Christmas) might help.

Along with that, consider a way to establish a vacation fund for the pastor, to be distributed only when that extended vacation is taken. For most of us pastors, it requires all we make (and maybe more, hence working wives) just to keep up with everyday living expenses. The result: not enough ready money to take two weeks of vacation at one time (unless we go to our parents' home and live off them). What a difference a thousand-dollar gift would make come vacation time!⁹ But attach a string to it; it can only be used for a get-away vacation with family. "If you don't use it, you lose it!"

3. Give a sabbatical

Many professions offer a sabbatical leave. A modified version could be offered to pastors. Perhaps for every five years of service the pastor could be given a two-month, fully-paid leave-of-absence for study, travel, rest, and personal development. This is not a vacation but a time for growth and personal

⁹Check with an accountant to determine if this can be done without additional tax on the pastor's salary.

refreshment. The details for arranging such a venture are many. I recommend *Sabbatical Planning for Clergy and Congregations* by A. Richard Bullock (The Alban Institute: Washington, D.C., 1987) to help plan a sabbatical.

4. Emphasize self-care

No committee can provide all the care for the pastor and the pastor's family. The pastor must practice self-care. He^s must be the one to give himself permission to "back off" from the stresses of pastoral life. But perhaps the committee can encourage him to do so and even build in some accountability for it. Encourage good eating habits and rest patterns; the development of friendships; an occasional mini-retreat or a day away for solitude and prayer.

At each meeting of the Pastoral Care Committee, ask what the pastor has been reading and what he plans to read. Encourage him to attend local seminars in order to keep abreast of issues and to develop ministry skills. Work together to develop a plan of self-care and then make a joint effort to work the plan.

5. Begin with this article

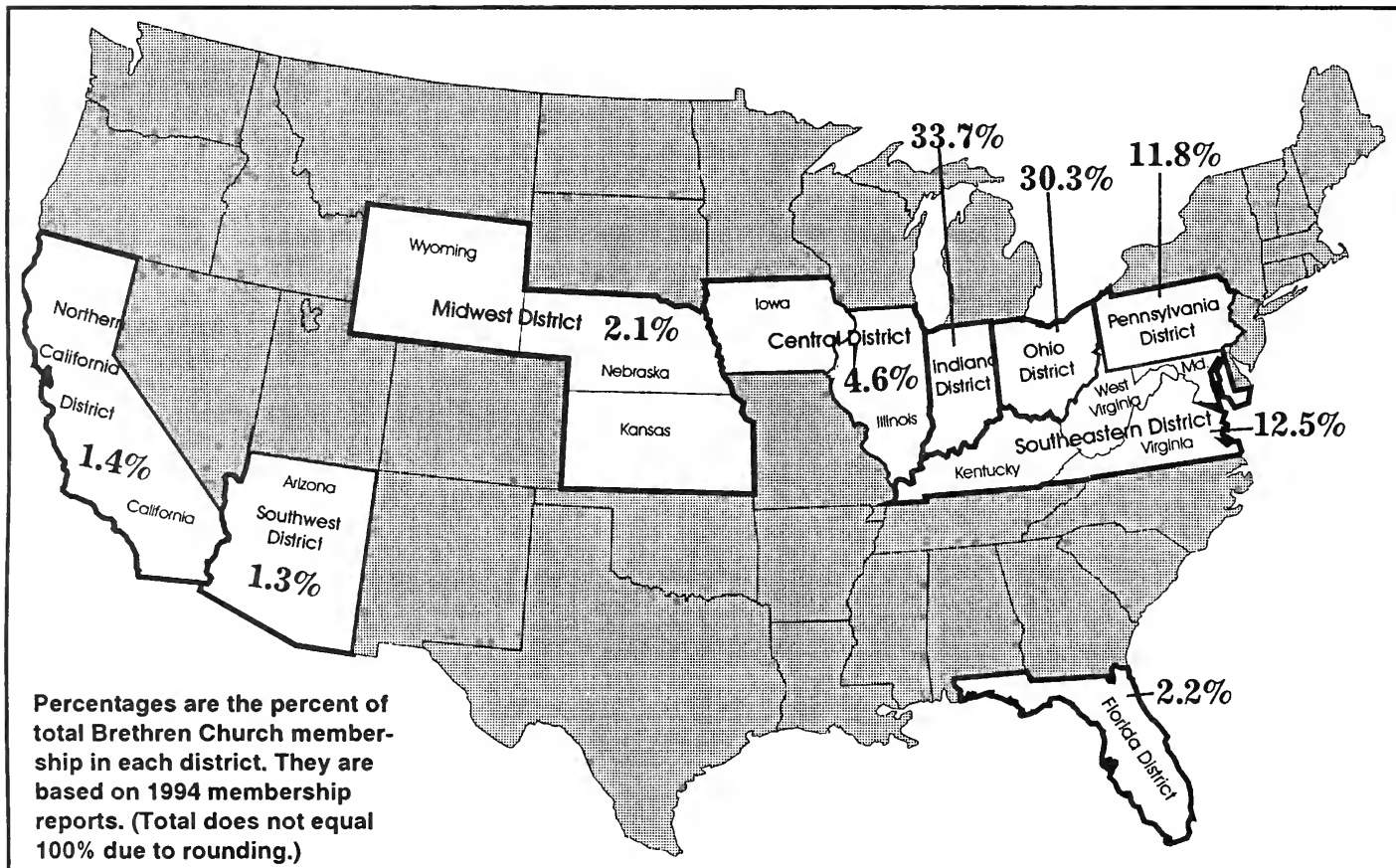
If your committee has not yet been formed, take steps to get it formed. Then take this article and interact with its premises and its suggestions. Undoubtedly an active committee will be able to do "greater things than these."

I believe that showing this kind of practical interest in our pastoral families will help us have healthier, happier pastors as well as better pastoral relations in local congregations. I believe that with better pastoral care, pastoral tenures will lengthen and churches will reflect the well-being that is developing in the pastoral leadership. More could be said—and done—but I hope that this much will help our pastors and their wives and children begin to get the attention they need. [†]

Dr. Moore is pastor of the St. James, Maryland, Brethren Church. Pastoral health and care were the focus of his major project for his recently received Doctor of Ministries degree.

^sMasculine pronouns are being used since The Brethren Church currently has no women serving as pastors of local churches.

Where Brethren Are Located



Brethren congregations in each district

Northern California District

Hope Fellowship (Stockton)
Northgate Community (Manteca)
Stockton*
West Valley Life (Tracy)

Southwest District

(currently only in Arizona)
Northwest Chapel (Tucson)
Tucson

Midwest District

(currently Wyoming, Nebraska, and Kansas)
Cheyenne (Wyo.)
Derby (Kans.)
Falls City (Nebr.)
Fort Scott (Kans.)
Mulvane (Kans.)

Central District

(currently Iowa and Illinois)
Cerro Gordo (Ill.)
Hammond Ave. (Waterloo, Iowa)
Lanark (Ill.)
Milledgeville (Ill.)

Indiana District

(Includes one church in northwestern Ohio[§] and one in Michigan[◇])

Ardmore (South Bend)
Brighton Chapel (Howe)
[§]Bryan (Ohio)
Burlington
Carmel
Center Chapel (near Peru)
College Corner (near Wabash)
Corinth (near Twelve Mile)
Cornerstone (near Muncie)
County Line (near Lakeville)
Dutchtown (near Warsaw)
Elkhart
Flora
Goshen
Greenwood
Huntington
Jefferson (Goshen)
Loree (near Bunker Hill)
[◇]Matteson (near Bronson, Mich.)
Meadow Crest (Ft. Wayne)
Mexico
Milford
Mishawaka

Muncie
Nappanee
New Paris
North Manchester
Oakville
Peru
Roann
Roanoke
South Bend
Teegarden (near Lapaz)
Tiosa
Wabash
Warsaw
Winding Waters (Elkhart)

Ohio District

Columbus
Fremont
Garber (Ashland)
Gratis
Gretna (near Bellefontaine)
Hillcrest (Dayton)
Louisville Bible
Louisville First
Medina
Mt. Zion (near Cleveland)

*Identifying name and location (town or city) are the same, except where noted otherwise.

Newark
 New Lebanon
 North Georgetown
 Northview Life (near Franklin)
 Park Street (Ashland)
 Pleasant Hill
 Smithville
 Smoky Row (Columbus)
 Trinity (North Canton)
 University (Ashland)
 Walcrest (Mansfield)
 West Alexandria
 Williamstown

Pennsylvania District

*(Includes two churches in New Jersey, ♦ two in West Virginia, * and one in Delaware. §)*

Berlin
 Brush Valley (near Adrian)
 ♦ Calvary (near Quakertown, New Jersey)
 *Cameron, West Virginia
 Fairless Hills-Levittown
 Highland (near Marianna)
 Johnstown Second
 Johnstown Third
 Main Street (Meyersdale)
 Masontown

§Mt. Olivet (near Georgetown, Delaware)
 Mt. Pleasant
 Pittsburgh
 Pleasant View (Vandergrift)
 Quiet Dell (Green City)
 Raystown (near Saxton)
 Sarver
 ♦Sergeantsville, New Jersey
 Valley (Jones Mills)
 Vinco (near Mineral Point)
 Wayne Heights (Waynesboro)
 *White Dale (near Terra Alta, West Virginia)

Southeastern District

(currently includes churches in Kentucky, West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.)

Bethlehem (near Harrisonburg, Va.)
 Covenant Community (Fredericksburg, Va.)
 Cumberland, Md.
 Drushal Memorial (Lost Creek, Ky.)
 Gateway Fellowship (Hagerstown, Md.)
 Gatewood (near Oak Hill, W. Va.)
 Haddix (near Jackson, Ky.)

Hagerstown, Md.
 Kimsey Run (near Lost River, W. Va.)
 Krypton, Ky.
 Liberty (Quicksburg, Va.)
 Linwood, Md.
 Mathias, W. Va.
 Maurertown, Va.
 Monta Vosta (near McGaheysville, Va.)
 Mount Olive (Pineville, Va., near McGaheysville)
 Mountain View (Frederick, Md.)
 Oak Hill, W. Va.
 Rowdy (near Lost Creek, Ky.)
 Saint James, Md.
 Saint Luke (near Woodstock, Va.)
 Southeast Christian Fellowship (Washington, D.C.)
 Waterbrook (Edinburg, Va.)

Florida District

Bradenton
 Bloomingdale (Valrico)
 St. Petersburg
 Sarasota
 Iglesia Hispaña (Sarasota)
 STAKE (Saturation of the Target Area for Kingdom Extension, Orlando area)

The real Valentine's Day message:

No Greater Love!

By David Olgee

IN HIS NOVEL *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens tells of a young Englishman who was caught trying to flee France with his family during the French Revolution. Because of the hatred of the French for the English, the young man was sentenced to death on the guillotine.

An hour before the man was to be executed, he was visited by a French friend. The guard remained with the two for a few moments and then left. "Quick," said the friend, "you must change clothes with me."

"But I cannot," the Englishman protested.

"Please," begged the Frenchman, "you must. Your wife and child are waiting in a carriage at the door."

Moments later the guard returned and, unknowingly, escorted the Englishman safely outside the prison to his waiting family. An hour later, the Frenchman died in the place of his friend.

"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:12-13; Bible quotations are from the New King James Version). What a glaring reminder of the greatest news to ever pulsate across this planet: "For God so loved the world that He gave . . ." (John 3:16)! ". . . God was in Christ reconciling the world to

Himself . . ." (2 Cor. 5:19). "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). "[God] made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends!"

That's an awful lot of love. Or perhaps it's just a different kind of love. Far beyond the ordinary, the expected, the routine, the everyday kind—you know, family and close friends (even very, very close friends!). We are talking life and death—laying down one's life.

Of course, it has happened innumerable times in history. Dicken's *Tale* is in reality no mere tale. But it's an awful lot to ask. It really is. Just ask Jesus. He's the One who said, "I lay down My life for the sheep" (John 10:15). It was He who said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34). His death was far different from that of any other. It was for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6). It was for me; it was for you.

That, my beloved, is the heart of the message we have been directed to share. Whatever you may do; wherever you may go; whomever you may see or be with; don't forget—He came to die in your place. [†]

Rev. Olgee is pastor of the First Brethren Church of West Alexandria, Ohio. This article first appeared in the newsletter of the West Alexandria Church and is used here with Pastor Olgee's permission.

Lessons we shouldn't learn from our Brethren forebears

By Brenda B. Colijn and Dale R. Stoffer

IN THIS SERIES on "Understanding the Bible," we have often used the early Brethren as examples of faithfulness to Scripture. They have much to teach us. But they weren't infallible, and we don't want to follow their example in everything. Some of their ways of interpreting and applying the Bible were mistakes from which we can learn.

Insufficient regard for context

Like other Christians of the time, the Brethren used Scripture, especially the Old Testament, without enough regard for its historical context. They read the Bible practically and devotionally, as most believers do today, and most of them were not well-grounded in biblical history and languages. One result of this was that Alexander Mack and other early Brethren used Old Testament Apocryphal books such as Ecclesiasticus, the Wisdom of Solomon, and Tobit, apparently giving them the same authority as the canonical books of Scripture. Mack even made use of a New Testament Apocryphal book, the Gospel of Nicodemus, although he cited it as a historical source rather than as a scriptural one.

In his use of both Old and New Testament Apocrypha, Mack was following the lead of Mennonites who had done so. He accepted these books in a straightforward, uncritical way that has both positive and negative features. When applied to Scripture, such an uncritical approach is willing to take the Bible at face value and obey it without question. But it can also lead to an acceptance of dubious authorities. Christians today make the same mistake when they give their favorite Bible translation or the study notes in their Bibles the same authority as the text of the Bible itself.

Because of their lack of historical knowledge, the early Brethren (like other groups of their day) overused typology—the interpretation of Old Testament people and events as pat-

terns that point forward to Christ and to the Christian life. For example, Mack argued that circumcision on the eighth day showed that baptism need not be administered to children (the eighth day being a prefigurement of the age of accountability). Peter Nead believed that the Passover lamb of Exodus 12 was a type of the doctrine of Christ. Just as the Israelites were commanded to eat the entire lamb, including the head and legs, Christians are called to obey all the doctrines of Christ, not just those we like.

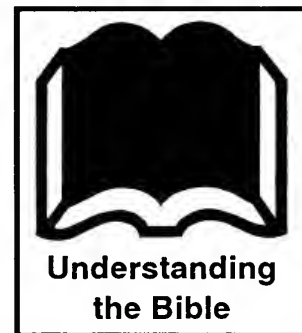
Some Christians today are very attracted to typology, writing books that interpret the spiritual significance of the tabernacle, for example. God does sometimes work within history in such a way that earlier people or events point forward to later ones. (See the book of Hebrews for examples.) But we should be cautious about finding types in Scripture. We want to be sure that we're discovering a connection that God intends, not inventing something out of our imaginations.

In our practical and devotional use of the Bible (which is an essential part of Christian life and growth), we should commit ourselves to studying passages in their biblical and historical contexts, so that we don't miss any of the truth God has for us by neglecting the setting in which He communicated that truth.

Legalism and formalism

More than other Christian groups of their time, the early Brethren were drawn to legalism and formalism in their application of Scripture to the Christian life. This is always a danger for believers who emphasize the importance of obedience to the Christian life. Alexander Mack regarded the New Testament as the book of rules and laws given by God the Householder through His Son to the household of faith. Peter Nead called Scripture the "one law book" of the church.

In the early days of the movement, the congregation in Krefeld, Germany, put the biblical principle of separation into practice by excommunicating a member for marrying outside the faith—that is, for marrying a Mennonite. This decision split the congregation. By the middle of the 19th century, in their desire to obey the biblical principle of nonconformity (Rom. 12:2), the Brethren had decided that all Brethren



must nonconform to society in exactly the same manner. They prescribed the details of dress to be worn,

practices to be allowed, and appliances to be used. In their zeal to follow the Bible, they shifted the focus of obedience from the heart attitude of love toward God and neighbor to a list of external "do's and don'ts."

This idea of nonconformity through uniformity was challenged by the Progressive movement. Henry Holsinger and others argued that uniformity was not required on matters not clearly taught in Scripture. We modern-day Progressives probably need to be reminded of nonconformity and obedience more than we need to be warned against legalism. But we can still fall into legalism whenever we focus primarily on the externals rather than on the heart attitudes that lead to our actions. Jesus reminded His disciples that what comes from the heart makes us clean or unclean, not the details of our conformity to the law (Matt. 15:18–20).

As we attempt to be faithful Brethren at the end of the 20th century, let us learn from the faithfulness of those who came before us. Let us also learn from their mistakes, as (by God's grace) our children will learn from ours. [†]

Dr. Colijn and Dr. Stoffer, professors at Ashland Theological Seminary, are members of the Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication, which is preparing this series of articles.

Making faith-sharing a way of life

By Ronald W. Waters

WHERE is God leading The Brethren Church in evangelism? One of The Brethren Church "Priorities for the Nineties" relates to this very subject.

The priority—Sharing Our Faith (*Passing On the Promise*). *To burden, stimulate, and equip persons to share the good news of Jesus Christ through both words and actions through local church implementation of the Passing On the Promise outreach process, leading to Brethren people sharing their faith in a lifestyle of friendship evangelism.*

Words and actions

This priority says that we "share the good news of Jesus Christ through words and actions." We Brethren and other evangelicals have been critical of the so-called "social gospel," so we've been cautious about embarking on ministries to meet social needs. At the same time, we've talked a good line about evangelism. But in reality, we have not done that very well either.

Some of us are learning, and we're doing better in reaching out to others through words or by deeds of kindness. But to be effective at sharing our faith we need both dimensions.

The goal of this priority is clearly stated: "Brethren people sharing their faith in a lifestyle of friendship evangelism." The goal is not button-holing our friends nor confronting total strangers. Rather, it is to find natural ways of sharing our faith with those whom we encounter daily—our family, friends, work or school associates, and neighbors.

How will we accomplish this priority? By burdening, stimulating, and equipping one another. We will not become more active or effective in sharing words of faith or in doing acts of lovingkindness merely by chance. Rather, we need to nudge one another along in reaching out to others. And we need to learn ways of sharing our faith through both words and deeds from one another.

Where is God leading us in sharing our faith?

First, churches participating in *Passing On the Promise* (POtP) have completed or will soon be completing the process. For those of us who have been part of this process, we need to fully implement the ideas and the learnings we have developed. Some may be relieved that "Passing On the Promise is finally over. Now we can go on to other things." In reality, the process should never end. Its goal is for sharing our faith to become a way of life for all of us as individuals and as congregations.

Second, God is leading us to *know ourselves and know our communities*. POtP churches conducted an extensive self-study in the first year of the process. It is now time to update that self-study of ourselves as congregations and of our communities. Churches that have not conducted a self-study recently should do so. It offers an opportunity to listen to our own members to discover their needs and desires. It also helps us to listen to the unchurched all around us in our communities. Lee Strobel's book, *Inside the Mind of Unchurched Harry and Mary*, is another way to gain a clearer understanding of the longings of those living without Christ.

Third, God is leading us to *increase entry points* into our congregations. A church has many "doors." "Front doors" are the major services of the church, such as Sunday morning worship and Sunday school. For

Evangelism

God has reached out in love through the person and work of Jesus to redeem a lost world. He demonstrated the heart of evangelism by sharing the good news with all whom He met. Christ promised abundant life to those who respond in obedient faith. Following His example, each believer, grateful to God and burdened for fallen humanity, shares with others the new life in Christ.

— From *The Centennial Statement of The Brethren Church*

many people—especially those who like anonymity—this is the major entry point into a church. "Side doors" are other services and ministries of the church, such as small home Bible studies, twelve-step groups, work projects, sports teams, or similar activities. Many churches focus only on the major events of their church as entry points. But "side door" entry points draw upon the natural relationships that church members have with their unchurched friends and relatives.

Fourth, in addition to opening entry points, we need to find ways to close the "back door." "Back doors" are where people sometimes "slip out" while no one is watching. We must be carefully attuned to church members and regular attenders who exhibit a change in their attendance patterns. Sometimes the best way to close the "back door" is to take preventative steps. We decrease the likelihood that people will silently slip away by helping new attenders and members develop a growing number of relationships with others in the church and find meaningful ways to become involved in ministry.

Finally, we must be continually *equipping our people to share their faith* and to discover their individual styles of evangelism. Evangelism training programs such as "Living Proof," "Love Your Neighbor to Life," and many others provide the tools for helping members learn to share their faith in non-threatening ways.

Whether you or your church have been involved in the Passing On the Promise process is immaterial at this point. What is important is that each of us make sharing our faith one of our priorities in life. God wants His lost sheep found and brought into the fold of faith and of a local church. When faith-sharing becomes a way of life, it will continue to be a priority long after the end of the 1990s. [v]

Rev. Waters was, until January 1 of this year, Director of Brethren Church Ministries, and he continues to serve the denomination as a consultant in evangelism. This is the final article in a series of five which he developed from an address he delivered during a business session at the 1995 General Conference.

A Conspiracy of Kindness

Evangelism for the ninety percent of people who do not have the gift of evangelism.

By Ronald W. Waters

YOU SAY you can't be a witness for Jesus Christ. That you become tongue-tied just trying to say your name. That you can't remember long outlines of evangelistic presentations. That your testimony isn't dynamic enough. That talking to strangers is difficult for you. That you certainly don't have the gift of evangelism. So you think that excuses you from being a witness to your faith in Jesus Christ.

NOT!

Most of us find sharing our faith to be difficult. Many of us (especially us guys) have trouble sharing deep feelings or beliefs. And many methods of evangelism do seem to be overly complicated for the average person. After all, most people find it awkward to talk about issues that are as personal as their faith.

Many leaders in the study of spiritual gifts have said that perhaps only ten percent of all Christians have the gift of evangelism. People having that gift find it easy and natural to share the good news of the gospel. In fact, at the end of the day they are disappointed if they have not shared the gospel with at least one non-believer. Also, when they do share their faith, an unusually large percentage of people pray to accept Christ as their saving Lord. I don't know about you, but that does not describe my life experience!

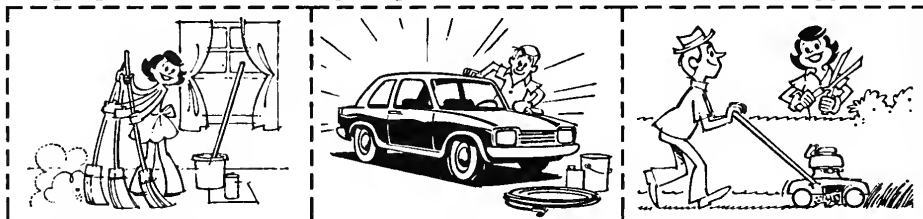
So what are the other 90 percent of us to do? Are we to abdicate any responsibility for sharing our faith?

A new approach

Steve Sjogren (pronounced show'-grin) has found a new approach to sharing the love of Christ that he says is "no guilt, no stress, low risk, and high grace." He calls it a "Conspiracy of Kindness" and describes it in a book by the same title (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Servant Publications, 1993). Sjogren is senior pastor of the

Vineyard Christian Fellowship in Cincinnati, a church that some have included among the 25 fastest-growing churches in the United States.

Sjogren says that "God is looking for people who are willing to par-



ticipate in acts of love and kindness to those outside their present circle. He is looking for people who believe that a humble demonstration of love plants a seed of eternity in the hearts of others that will blossom into faith in Christ" (p. 11).

Servant evangelism

The way to demonstrate that love is through "servant evangelism," which Sjogren defines as "demonstrating the kindness of God by offering to do some act of humble service with no strings attached" (pp. 17-18). Doing intentional acts of kindness in the name of Christ is especially effective with people who "have heard too much 'God-talk' and not seen enough 'God-activity'" (p. 22).

The formula for the conspiracy of kindness is this (p. 22):

Servant evangelism = deeds of love + words of love + adequate time

Words of love must follow acts of kindness for the person to hear them. Deeds of kindness often elicit questions about "what kind of Christians are you?" Words without deeds are often empty. But deeds without words are equally hollow. And adequate time to truly consider the claims of Christ is vital if the commitment made is to be long-lasting.

In his book, Sjogren offers a rationale for servant evangelism and

many practical tips on how to begin such a ministry. He includes one chapter on how to use this outreach concept with children and youth. In another chapter, he shows how small groups may use this approach to break or prevent an inward focus.

So what are the "deeds of love" that are part of the servant evangelism formula? They can be almost any act of kindness that meets a deep human need or that simply offers a "cup of cold water in Jesus' name." Sjogren lists more than 100 ideas in an appendix to his book, with detailed suggestions

for 58 of these. Servant evangelism projects that he suggests include:

- Washing cars
- Washing windshields in parking lots
- Cleaning toilets for businesses
- Washing windows
- Raking leaves
- Offering Gatorade™ on jogging or biking trails

(cont. on next page)

Learn more about the "Conspiracy of Kindness"

The Brethren Church and The Andrew Center are joining the Ohio Mennonite Conference in sponsoring a one-day workshop on servant evangelism. Speaker will be Steve Sjogren, author of *Conspiracy of Kindness*.

The workshop will be held Saturday, April 20, 1996, at Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Cost of the workshop is \$15 per person, including registration, materials, and lunch.

Bring a large group from your church to learn more about this exciting, low-cost, low-risk, and high-grace approach to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

Sjogren also "publishes" a quarterly FAX newsletter that is entitled "se-mail" (for "servant evangelism mail"). To receive this free resource, send your FAX number in a facsimile to 513-671-2041. Mention that you heard about "se-mail" in THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST.

- Shoveling snow
- Wrapping Christmas gifts
- Giving away Mother's Day carnations
- Feeding parking meters
- Providing a lawn mower tune-up clinic
- Giving umbrella escorts at grocery stores

All these acts of kindness are done for free—no donations are ever accepted. Frequently, little cards are given with the church name and a map, plus a statement that the service is provided as a practical way to show God's love. Persons being served are told, "We're doing a free community service project to show God's love in a practical way."

You may be saying, "Sure, I can see how these acts of kindness can be used to give people a lift. But is it biblical?"

Jesus had something to say about that in His parable of the sheep and goats in Matthew 25: "As you have done it unto one of the least of these, you have done it unto me." And when Jesus wanted to express "the full extent of His love" to His disciples, He washed their feet (John 13:1). What would He do today? Maybe He'd wash their cars as a symbol of His love!

Sjogren affirms that individuals can become regularly involved in such ministries on their own, but they have more impact when they are entered into by a group or by a church as a whole.

He admits that servant evangelism is not the only approach a church should undertake, but it does sow seeds of the gospel in a hurting world. In fact, it reaches out to people in the softness of their hearts rather than taking a frontal

approach through the intellect. Once a person's heart is softened, that person will be more receptive to the message of the gospel.

Sjogren concludes his book this way:

There is only one more thing you need to do to join God's conspiracy of kindness. Put this book down, pick up a squeegee, and start washing windshields. I would enjoy sharing more with you about bringing God's love to your community, but I've run out of time. In five minutes I'm meeting some friends to go and wash windshields at a grocery store parking lot. If you were here I'd offer you a squeegee and have you come along. We'd have great fun!

I highly recommend that you read *Conspiracy of Kindness* by Steve Sjogren. Or better yet, pick up a squeegee! [†]



February is

"Have a Heart for the Lost"

Month

FEBRUARY is the month in which we annually emphasize evangelism in The Brethren Church. We encourage you to sponsor a "Have a Heart for the Lost" Sunday in your church to celebrate the lives who have come to faith in Jesus Christ during the past year. It can also be an opportunity for us to "urge one another on to love and good works" in the ministry of sharing our faith.

"Have a Heart" month also offers you an opportunity to support the ministry of evangelism in your local church and in The Brethren Church at large. Congregations are encouraged to take a "Have a Heart" offering during February. Local churches may keep up to one-half of this offering for local outreach ministries. The other half is sent to The Brethren Church for denominational evangelism ministries. Brethren people are urged to give \$5.00 per person or \$10.00 per family for this offering.

What denominational ministries are supported by this offering?

1. Passing On the Promise. The Brethren Church has sponsored this three-year process and covered many of the "behind the scenes" costs, including training of field staff, subsidizing the annual Evangelism Leaders Academies, writing and producing study materials, and general oversight of the process. Ronald W. Waters, former Director of Brethren Church Ministries, continues to serve as the national coordinator for Passing On the Promise. The process formally concludes in June 1996, with final expenditures this year.

2. The Andrew Center. The Brethren Church is a partner in this multi-denominational resource and training center for evangelism and congregational growth. As part of the denominational budget, The Brethren Church has provided a grant to The Andrew Center that allows all Brethren congregations to join the center for free! (If your church is not already a member of The

Andrew Center, call 1-800-774-3360 and ask about your complimentary Brethren Church membership.)

3. Joint Project with Ashland Theological Seminary. The Brethren Church has entered into a joint project with the seminary. Beginning this fall, Ronald W. Waters will join the seminary faculty as assistant professor of evangelism, carrying a three-quarter teaching load. Ron will devote his remaining one-quarter time as Brethren Church consultant for evangelism and church growth. For the first year, The Brethren Church will cover one-quarter of the salary and benefits for this position plus related expenses. Thereafter, the seminary will provide all salary and benefits, with the church covering only the related expenses for consulting services.

Your gift to the "Have a Heart" offering will assist with the expenses of these ministries. If your church takes an offering this month, we urge you to give generously. If your church does not take an offering, you can still have a part by sending your gift to *The Brethren Church, 524 College Avenue, Ashland, OH 44805*, designated for "Have a Heart." [†]



Ministry of Helen Shively continues after her death

Ashland, Ohio — Helen Shively, known to many Brethren from her presence at 76 General Conferences and her 33 years as literature secretary for the National Women's Missionary Society, worked her entire career at Ashland University as a librarian.

Now, more than a year after her death in April 1994, Helen has made yet another contribution to the university. Recently a check for \$84,000 from her estate was presented to AU in



order to further endow a scholarship she had begun in the name of her parents. Her father, U.J. Shively, served for many years on the AU Board of Trustees. And her mother, Nora Shively, served from 1926-52 as president of the Women's Missionary Society and successfully led the planning, funding, and construction of Memorial Chapel.

In addition to the endowed scholarship, Helen donated a Hummel collection with an estimated value in excess of \$17,000 to the university.

Helen was also an active member of Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland and served the Lord through that congregation in various ways. As with the university, her service to her church did not end with her passing. The church received a gift of \$79,346 from her estate. In life and in death, Helen gave generously of herself and her means to both the university and her church. [†]

New Brethren church holds first services; plans to break ground on Easter Sunday

Muncie, Ind. — A new Brethren congregation, Cornerstone Brethren Church and Ministries, held its first services on Sunday, October 1, 1995, with 110 people in attendance.

Cornerstone is one of two congregations formed from the First Brethren Church of Oakville, Ind. The congregation currently meets Sunday mornings at Cowan Elementary School for worship and a Discipleship Hour.

Rev. Bob Massie, a Baptist minister from Greenwood, Ind., is pastoring the congregation. A graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., Rev. Massie served a Baptist congregation for several years, but now has a telemarketing business in Indianapolis and also conducts Christian seminars.

Pastor Massie is leading the congregation in a study of the Gospel of John, with an emphasis on how to use this Gospel as an evangelistic tool. According to church reporter Roberta Covington, he is a wonderful Bible teacher.

In addition to Sunday morning services, a number of cell groups and youth groups are meeting in the homes of various members. The congregation also uses a meeting room at the Cowan Fire Station for Communion services, business meetings, and other special occasions. Although meeting in temporary facilities has been a challenge, Mrs. Covington reports that these meeting areas have served them well. "With practice, we are now able to set up and tear down with minimal hassle," she said.

But the congregation looks forward to having its own building next year. The group has pur-

chased 22 acres of ground near Cowan, just three miles south of Muncie. Ground-breaking for a new building is scheduled for Easter, with the building to be completed by Easter of 1997. The first phase of the building will include a large all-purpose room which will be used for worship, fellowship, and



Standing by the sign on the site of the future building of the Cornerstone Brethren Church and Ministries are (l. to r.) Jerry and Roberta Covington, Pastor Bob Massie, Sandra and Haldon Ashton, and Nancy and Steve Ruster.

recreation. Around this all-purpose room will be classrooms, toddler and nursery areas, administrative offices, and a kitchen. The building will also include a large foyer and rest rooms. A prayer room designed to be accessible 24 hours a day is also planned.

The master plan for the building includes a worship center in phase 2, an educational annex and school in phase 3, and a full-size gymnasium in phase 4.

In addition to its plans for building a physical structure, the congregation is attempting to build its ministry structure. Programs are being established for shepherding, hospital visitation, visitor response, and outreach to the community. The emphasis is on equipping and training the people to do the ministry of the church rather than expecting the pastor to do all the work.

Mrs. Covington writes: "We are very excited and are looking forward to serving the Lord in our new congregation, Cornerstone Brethren Church and Ministries." [†]



Briefly Noted



The Brethren Retreat Center at Shpshewana, Ind., recently purchased 12 acres of property adjacent to the recreation field on the retreat grounds. The land was purchased in order to expand and improve this Christian camping facility of the Indiana District of The Brethren Church. The purchase price was \$120,000, and efforts are now being made to raise funds to pay off the indebtedness on this land.

The Oak Hill, W. Va., First Brethren Church held an ordination service on December 31 for two deacons and two deaconesses. Consecrated for this special ministry in the church on that day were David and Jennifer Bowling, Jeanette Nuckels, and Mike Pomeroy.

The STAKE church-planting team in the Orlando, Fla., area began a Kids Club at the end of last year. Three children came to the first meeting and 20 to the second. Later, 13 children and 13 adults went Christmas caroling together.

Recycle your extra Bibles

Do you have extra Bibles you never use? Why not recycle them? No, I don't mean that you should put them at the curb for the recycling truck to take! I mean send them to someone who is longing to read God's word.

"But who would I send them to?" you ask. The Bible League can answer that question. In fact, The Bible League has a *Recycle Your Bible* project and would be happy to send you a *Recycle Your Bible* kit. Then you can send your extra Bibles to them and they will send each one to someone in need.

For more information call 1-800-7727-2900, or write The Bible League at 16801 Van Dam Rd., South Holland, IL 60473.

— Dick Winfield, editor

Bonnie Munson concludes ministry at Brethren House in St. Petersburg

St. Petersburg, Fla. — Bonnie Munson concludes her ministry at Brethren House in St. Petersburg this month (February) and will leave the Florida District on February 9, just four months short of 25 years from her arrival at Brethren House.

She will be moving to Greencroft, a Mennonite retirement community in Goshen, Ind., close to her friends Dr. Jim and Judy Hollinger. When her father, Dr. Charles Munson, completes his interim pastorate in Flora, Ind., he too will move to Goshen, and eventually into Greencroft.

While in St. Petersburg, Ms. Munson served in many capacities through Brethren House. Her chief ministries were teaching in the neighborhood Bible teaching programs and helping to plan and conduct teacher-training workshops throughout the United States. Her gifts of teaching and listening, as well as her organizational expertise, made her a vital member of the Brethren House team.

It was her vision that initiated the idea of sharing teaching ideas via a newsletter and workshop. It was her ability to keep track of things that made this sharing possible. She developed a scheme of packing and unpacking the dozens of boxes taken on tour so that the team could roll into church parking lots, set up the 20 or more banquet-sized tables in church fellowship halls of various sizes and shapes, conduct workshops, and be ready to move on to the next destination in less than 24 hours. She also presented information and enthusiasm for teaching that equipped and inspired both new and experienced church educators to do a better job.

She was also the computer expert on the Brethren House team. As such, she was in charge of the mailing operation, including a list of people that reached as high as 11,000.



Bonnie Munson, holding a plaque she received in February 1995 in recognition of her community service. Bonnie has been confined to a wheelchair for much of her life as a result of having polio as a child.

Ms. Munson also served in other capacities while in Florida. She was a valued member of the District Ministry of Administration, serving for a time as secretary. In addition, she served on various committees at Bayfront Medical Center in St. Petersburg, where she was loved and valued by staff, volunteers, and patients. For several years she helped train volunteers in the pastoral care program at the medical center. She gave significant input when the chapel there was reconstructed, particularly in making it handicapped-accessible. In 1995 she received an award from the National Council of Tampa Bay for her volunteer service to the community.

Brethren House fellow team member Jean Lersch writes, "We're sad to see Bonnie go. But we're glad that there are other friends and other opportunities for service waiting for her in Goshen. She will have miles of sidewalk to roll [her wheelchair] around on and many new friends there. We grieve her leaving, but cherish the wonderful memories of our team work these past nearly 25 years."

— reported by Jean Lersch



Dolls rehabilitated by Meadow Crest women

Fort Wayne, Ind. — The women of the Meadow Crest Brethren Church in Ft. Wayne sent more than 100 rehabilitated dolls to Lost Creek, Ky., last fall to be distributed to area children for Christmas.

The project was initiated by Diane Elwood, a member of the church, who learned late last summer of a woman in New Haven who had 200 forlorn dolls in need of loving tender care. Diane's dream was that these dolls might be fixed up and taken to Riverside School so that any girl around the school or in the Lost Creek area who wanted a doll for Christmas would have one.

Diane and other women of the church spent many hours washing and repairing more than 100 of the dolls, fixing their hair, and giving them new dresses. Then on November 24, Diane and her family—along with Roger Bracht and Rev. Richard Austin, pastor of the Meadow Crest Church—took the dolls, as well as clothing and various other items, to Riverside to be distributed at the school and in the community. [†]

Speaker/musicians to head program at Brethren pastors' and wives' retreat

Johnstown, Pa. — The 1996 retreat for Brethren pastors and wives will be held April 16–18 at the Best Western Inn of State College, Pennsylvania, in the heart of the Keystone State.

The program will feature speaker/musicians Dennis Letts and Mark Barnett and include "everything from bluegrass to Beethoven and Bach." Letts has served as a pastor, missionary to Mexico, college professor, and musical evangelist. Barnett has been a headliner at Opryland USA for 21 years and is a member of the Grand Old Opre. They have served the Lord as a team for 28 years and have preached and played throughout the U.S.A. and Mexico and have even twice gone to Russia.

In addition to being Spirit-filled speakers, Letts and Barnett play 14 musical instruments. They will put some of these into service on Wednesday afternoon of the retreat in a "front-porch-sitting, music-playing, glory-shouting, Jesus-praising hootenanny."

The program will include a special speaker for women (details incomplete at press time). Activities are also planned for young children, including trips, games, and a time for Bible study. BYIC members Jeremy Tarr and Renee Higinbotham will be in charge.

Check-in time will begin around 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 16, and the retreat will open with the evening meal at 6:00 p.m. The gathering will conclude with a soup and salad lunch at noon on Thursday.

The cost is \$110 per person or \$200 per couple, which includes the program, lodging (double occupancy), and meals. Lodging for children is free; cost for meals is \$33.50 per child for children ten or older and \$16.50 per child for those under ten. Suites with refrigerators and small stoves are available at no extra charge for families with infants.

Reservations are due by March 1 to Jim Saunders, 186 Spring St., Johnstown, PA 15906 (make checks payable to Pennsylvania District Pastors of The Brethren Church). For more information call Pastor Saunders at 814-539-8246 or Pastor Curt Nies at 412-583-0279.

Editor's note: The lead article in this issue is about "pastoral care." Another way of caring for your pastor (in addition to those suggested in that article) is to provide time off and finances for him and his wife to attend the annual Brethren pastors' and wives' retreat.



Muncie, Ind. — The First Brethren Church of Muncie is a little more visible now, thanks to a new church sign recently installed on the church property. The new sign is larger, brighter, and more easily read from the road than the former one. It was purchased with money donated by Mrs. Ruth Lamb in memory of her husband, Ralph. — reported by Allyson Runkel; photo by Wayne Smith

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Vol. 118, No. 3

A newsletter for Brethren people

March 1996

Two former pastors of small-town churches ask:

What's so special about the small church?

By Ron Klassen and John Koessler

HAVE YOU ever thought about why pictures of little country churches often grace Christmas cards, but megachurch facilities never do? Or why it is such a compliment for a visitor to a big suburban church to say, "This feels like a small church"? Yes, there is something special about the small church.

Why then do so many small churches feel inferior to larger churches? That's easy to answer. It's because big churches can do so much more. After all, what small church can put together a mass choir? How many small churches can hire a youth pastor, a children's director, a director of senior adult ministries, or a full-time minister of music?

Both of us, as pastors of small-town churches, have at times tried to imitate larger suburban churches. The result: our churches didn't feel like big churches, and in the process of imitating something else, we lost some of what makes the small-town church so special. We discovered that big churches can do some things better and small churches can do other things better. For any church to be all it can be, it has to make the most of its strengths.

Big tractor, little tractor

Many farmers have at least two tractors, one large, one small. The big tractor is better for some jobs, the little tractor for other jobs. Trying to mow a ditch with a big tractor is an exercise in frustration, but doing it with a small tractor is easy. Plowing a large field with a small tractor would take forever, but doing it with a large tractor makes

quick work. The smart farmer uses each tractor for the jobs it does best.

Just as it is foolish to use a small tractor to do a big tractor's job, it is counterproductive for small churches to imitate large-church programs. The small church that tries to become a scaled-down version of a big church will become a pale imitation of a big church.

The small church is at its best when it makes the most of those qualities that make the small church special—intimacy and involvement.

The first /—intimacy

While the large church scrambles to find ways to encourage warmth and personal relationships, the small church, if it is healthy, naturally has a family atmosphere. Large churches work to create small-group ministries; in the small church, many small-group dynamics occur spontaneously. In the large church, many faces are unfamiliar; in the small church, everyone knows everyone else.

In a large church an usher passes a note to the pastor, who then announces: "A brown Ford, license TM-3527, has its lights on." The pastor of a small church looks out



the window and says, "Jim, you left your lights on."

Anyone who has belonged to a healthy small church has many memories of warmth and intimacy. One of our favorites is of the holiday we (Ron and Roxy) awoke to find ourselves snowed in with no electricity or phones. Church friends had invited us to spend the day at their home, but with the road buried under knee-deep snow, we resigned ourselves to spending a lonely day at home.

We were feeling depressed and disappointed, when—about noon—we heard a knock at our back door. There stood the 21-year-old son of our friends. He and his dad had spent the last four hours on two tractors clearing the way from their

Small churches in The Brethren Church

Of the 121 congregations in The Brethren Church:*

- 45 (37%) have less than 50 members
- 72 (59½%) have less than 100 members
- 97 (80%) have less than 150 members
- 24 (20%) have more than 150 members

*Based on the 1994 statistical report. Complete statistics for 1995 are not yet available.

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The Women's Outlook Newsletter
is in the center of this issue.

ranch to the main road so that they could get to our house. This warm friendliness is a big part of what large churches are hoping to recreate when they try to cultivate a small-church atmosphere.

The second I—*involvement*

As an organization gets larger, the level of participation usually goes down. Eighty percent or more of the members of a small church often have specific ministry responsibilities, while most larger congregations feel fortunate if 30 to 40 percent of their members accept assignments.

Before Scott and Lyn began worshipping at Valley Chapel, where I (John) was pastoring, they attended a larger congregation of about 300 members. Though they had grown up in that church, neither had been very involved in its ministries. When I asked why, they said that they hadn't felt needed.

They both quickly got involved in Valley Chapel. Lyn worked with several of our children's ministries and later volunteered to type the church bulletin. Scott became a leader in our mid-week children's program and used his mechanical skills to keep the church's lawnmower in shape.

To some extent, intimacy and involvement happen spontaneously in the small church, but a church can also intentionally build on these qualities.

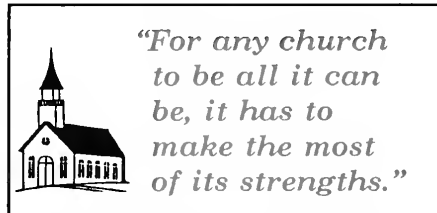
Using your two I's

We have often heard pastors of small churches complain about what their churches cannot do in their worship services because of their size. But the small church makes a mistake if it tries to copy a large-church worship style. Rather, the small church needs to shape its

worship to capitalize on what the small church does best.

In no other area is the small church tempted to feel inferior to the large church than in the area of music. We look at the megachurches' big choirs, keyboard artists, and great talent, and we think, "If only we had just a little bit of that in our church."

True worship, though, is not a performance. A friend of ours who has served as the minister of music



"For any church to be all it can be, it has to make the most of its strengths."

in several large churches points out that some large churches fall into a trap of approaching their music with a performance mentality that hinders worship.

Good worship is not a fancy sound system or talented soloists or professional instrumentalists. The best worship takes place when all the people participate in ascribing worth to God. How can a small church encourage everyone to participate in worship?

• **Special vocal music.** The big church only lets people on the platform if they can sing well. The small church that follows that policy will seldom have special music. Plus this flies in the face of maximizing involvement. Warren Wiersbe describes the attitude called for in the small church:

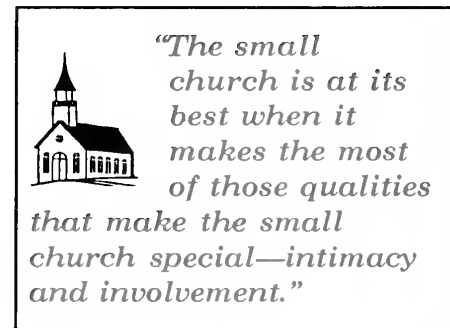
If the players and singers are doing their best, and seeking to do better, then God accepts their "sacrifices of praise" and so should we. . . . Whenever I am listening to a below-average presentation, I imagine my Lord receiving it and pre-

senting it to the Father; and that changes my attitude completely.*

• **Special music by children.** The small church should invite children to play instruments or sing, even though their music is less than perfect. Everyone forgives children when they make mistakes. Plus, parents will think, "If our family were in a large church, they would not let my daughter play a piano solo."

• **Special music by families.** Both of us have heard family music presentations that, though full of imperfections, connected powerfully with the congregation. To the small church's credit, the congregation is more interested in giving people opportunities to participate than it is in judging those who participate.

• **Congregational singing.** The small church cannot have a mass choir, but neither can the large church sing around the piano. The informality of the small church can make congregational singing something special. Instead of always announcing a hymn, then asking everyone to stand to sing it, sing several songs or choruses in a row. Choose the most singable songs—



"The small church is at its best when it makes the most of those qualities that make the small church special—intimacy and involvement."

whatever your congregation sings best. Slides or an overhead projector get people to look up to sing rather than burying their heads in hymn books. (continued on next page)

*Warren Wiersbe, *Real Worship* (Nashville: Oliver Nelson, 1986), p. 172.

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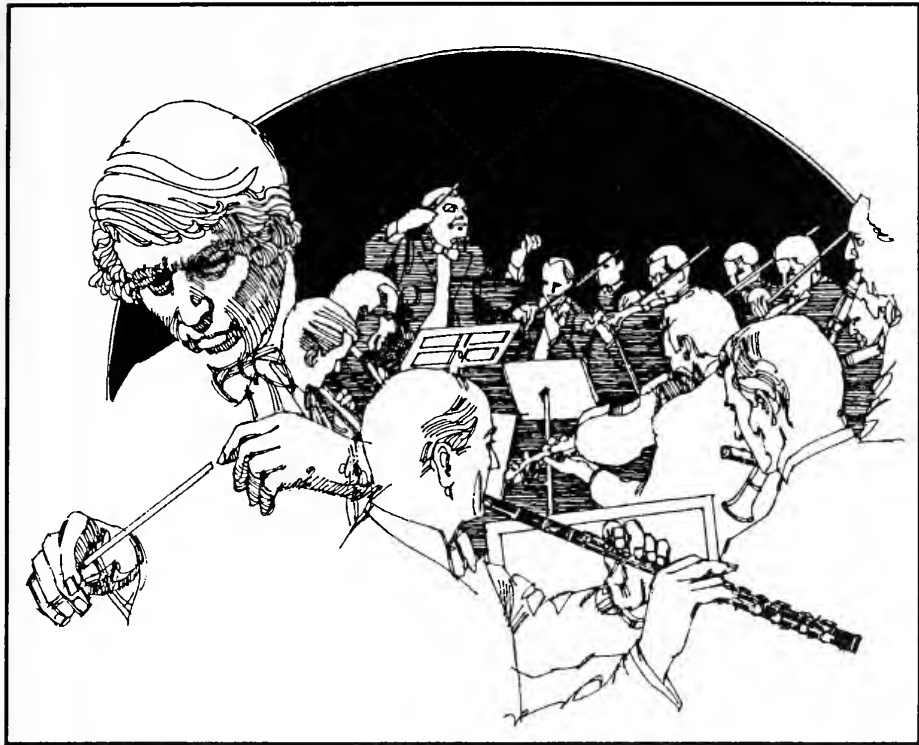
Pontius' Puddle

THE PASTOR'S SERMONS ARE LOUSY. THE SONGLEADER IS SLUGGISH. OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS ARE DULL AS POND SLUDGE. AND, THE YOUTH MINISTER IS TOO OFF-THE-WALL!



ALL MEMBERS ARE GIVEN A GIFT. MINE HAPPENS TO BE POINTING-OUT WHAT'S WRONG WITH EVERYBODY ELSE'S!





Symphony of Triumph

By Jeff Kahl

WE ARE ALL part of a great symphony, which the Composer skillfully conceived at the beginning of time. Some of us are the melody, with our loud and confident voices ringing out the message of the music. Some are counter-melody, adding movement and variety and enhancing the melody with our bold originality. Some of us are the bass line, not outspoken or original, but steadfast and supportive, without which the melody would have no stability. All of us,

playing our respective parts, make the symphony a triumph.

The symphony is full of tension and struggle, but in the Composer's wisdom and design, the tension always resolves in a climax of joy. Furthermore, the parts of the symphony that are the most difficult to play are also those that challenge our abilities and make us better musicians.

As we play the symphony, we must always keep in mind three things. First, we must strive to glo-

rify the Composer by sticking to the musical score, and not seek to glorify ourselves by improvising or adding ornamentation. For the closer we keep to the score, the more the audience will be convicted by its meaning.

Second, with the guidance of the Sound Man, we should always strive to blend our parts harmoniously in order that our performance may be a true reflection of the Composer's art.

Finally, and most importantly, we must always keep our eyes on the Conductor, who—with His nail-pierced hands—directs all of us to follow Him.

As we each play our individual parts, we must be confident in this: When the concert is over, every member of the audience, whether he or she wants to or not, will give the Composer a kneeling ovation. The Conductor will embrace us each warmly and congratulate us on a great performance. And the Composer, sitting in the balcony, will wipe the tears of joy from His eyes as He recognizes once again that His creation is very good. [†]

Mr. Kahl, a student at Ashland Theological Seminary, attends The Brethren Church of Medina, where he serves as the keyboard player. He wrote this article prior to a morning worship service and later read it during the service.

Thomas Sprouls, pastor of the Medina congregation, submitted the article to the editor, saying: "I felt profoundly moved by what he wrote and blessed that God had given this shy gentleman such a great gift of writing. I thought I would share this with you and that you might find it useful in THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST."

The small church

(continued from page 2)

- **Leading worship.** Consider forming a worship team to share in leading worship. Encourage broad participation in all parts of the worship service, such as reading scripture, praying, and taking the offering. Young people especially should be encouraged to take part. This is excellent training for future ministry.

- **Times for sharing.** Small churches can easily include times in their services for sharing and testimonies. In our impersonal

world, people feel a deep need to have a place to share their experiences, yet such sharing is almost impossible in a large-church worship service. In the small church, personal sharing in the service can lead to powerful ministry.

What's special about the small church is its two *I*'s—intimacy and involvement. In a world where most people feel like faces in a crowd, many are longing for intimacy more than polished performance; for involvement more than spectator status; for small rather

than big. By focusing on what it does best, the small church can be there for people who are hungering for a personal touch in an impersonal age. [†]

This article is adapted with permission from NO LITTLE PLACES: The Untapped Potential of the Small-Town Church by Ron Klassen and John Koessler (Baker, 1996). After many years of pastoring small-town churches, Rev. Klassen is now General Director of the Rural Home Missionary Association in Morton, Ill., and Rev. Koessler is assistant professor of Pastoral Studies at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.

How to practice church discipline

By William Kerner

DISCIPLINE means soundness of mind, self-control, orderly conduct. The Apostle Paul told young Timothy, "God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline" (2 Tim. 1:7;* see also Rom. 12:3; Tit. 2:6; and 1 Pet. 4:7).

The church as portrayed in the New Testament is a community of redeemed people gathered round the living Christ as committed disciples—a people whose identity is different from that of the rest of the world and whose life-style is different from that of non-Christians. The church is made up of people who love the Lord Jesus Christ and are eager to follow His teachings. (See Tit. 2:11-14.)

Growing in God's grace and love requires discipline. Holiness of life comes through personal discipline. The teachings of Christ as set forth in the Sermon on the Mount are certainly binding upon all Christians, and the church is obligated to uphold the standards of our Lord. We must strive to be nothing less than His redeemed people so that we may be salt and light to a darkened world.

Purpose of church discipline

The purpose of church discipline is to assist people to live a life that glorifies Christ and witnesses to the power of the gospel. It deals with the contradiction between New Testament teaching and the way believers may actually live.

The need for church discipline is made clear by the Apostle Paul:

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sancti-

*Quotations from the Bible are from the New International Version.

fied, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Cor. 6:9-10

A study of this passage makes us realize that the church is called to make decisions when confronted with unrighteousness. Where there is no discipline, the church loses its distinct witness as the people of God. The result is that those in the church are little different from those outside the church.

Church discipline grows out of a love and concern for the spiritual well-being of the church community. An excellent example of the need for discipline within the church is found in the congregation at Corinth. A member was living in an incestuous relationship and refused to repent. The Apostle Paul instructed the church of its responsibility (see 1 Cor. 5:1-5, 11-13). Later he gave equally clear instructions on how to respond to the person after he had repented (2 Cor. 2:6-11).

Church discipline is a process that should include:

- compassion (Hebrews 12:6)
- confidence (Titus 3:10, 11)
- clarity (Matthew 18:15-17)
- conviction (1 Corinthians 5:11)
- consistency (2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14)
- love (Galatians 6:1, 2).

Method of church discipline

The method of church discipline is outlined by Christ in Matthew 18:15-17). This outline can be used for both personal conflicts between people and for moral failures among members.

Step one: If someone has offended or troubled you, go talk to that person. It may be a misunderstanding. Talk it out. (Matt. 18:15; Eph. 4:2, 32)

Step two: If the situation cannot be resolved between you and that person, take one or two other people with you and go and talk to the person again. (Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1)

Step three: If the problem is still not resolved, bring it before the group

within the church that is responsible for caring for discipline. (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 1:10; Heb. 12:14)

Step four: If differences still cannot be resolved, then one or perhaps both of those involved in the disagreement will be considered to be in disharmony with the church and with the teachings of Christ. (Matt. 18:17)

Moral failures can be described as intentional acts or choices that



Understanding
the Bible

are against God's standards for Christian living. Scripture describes moral failures in 1

Corinthians 6:9, 10 and in Galatians 5:19-21. Reports of moral failures among members should be handled by the deacons or elders of the church. If a report is found to be true, the deacons or elders should proceed to follow the steps outlined in Matthew 18:15-18. If the report is found to be false, they should make every effort to set the record straight.

Discipline is a matter of an individual's response to the word of God. It is also the church's responsibility in bringing individuals to repentance by pleading for a decision of faith. Discipline is the privilege of restoring in love a believer to faith.

In church discipline, as in evangelism, the good news of the gospel is presented as a means by which to be liberated from the power of Satan by coming under the rule of Christ and walking with Him. Therefore, it makes no sense to declare the good news of liberation from sin to those outside the church if we do not declare the same good news of liberation from sin to those inside the church. The gospel is not just good news by which the sinner can be converted. It is also the good news by which Christians can live. Therefore, church discipline is an act of love to fellow believers. [†]

Rev. Kerner, a retired Brethren elder, is a member of the Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication, which is preparing this series of articles.

A daring journey to freedom

By Kurt Stout and Han Kok Ping

TWO YOUNG MEN. Two journeys. Two hearts changed. The first journey was mine. I traveled across oceans by plane. The second was his. He traveled over mountains by foot. I knew where my journey would end. He did not even know if his journey would end. But both travelers returned home changed, certain that their lives were better for having dared to journey.

For three months my wife Heidi and I participated in a short-term mission project. We taught village children in the Philippines, played with orphans and built a training center in India, performed in Singapore, and started a youth ministry in Malaysia. A year has now passed since this mission trip, but my mind often floods with such memories that my heart longs to embrace those experiences again.

In the final days of our mission, Heidi and I met a young man we will never forget. His name was Han Kok Ping, and he was the other young man who dared to journey. His experiences were different from mine, but their impact was equally dramatic. From conversations I had with Han Kok Ping and a translated copy of a letter from his hand, I have reconstructed his journey to freedom. This is his story.

— Kurt Stout

IN EARLY 1990 I started my wandering life and began a journey in search of happiness and peace. I was certain that there was more to life than what I was experiencing in my small town in China, but I had no idea that my discovery would be so profound. For years I lived under Communist rule and for years I was denied Truth. My heart longed for freedom—not just physical freedom, but freedom to think, to feel . . . to live. As a result, I began my lonely journey to freedom.

The truth is, I love my country—China—and I love even more my own people and family. But I despise the political system under Communist control. I found it too difficult to accept, and I faced an unbearable anguish because of this political group. I felt as though I were living in a large jail, wasting my valuable life and energy.

A difficult decision

Therefore, after much consideration and much wrestling with extreme feelings of sorrow, I decided to leave my family, friends, classmates, and girlfriend in order to see the outside world and, hopefully, relieve my tension.

A classmate joined me on this journey, and together we broke out

of bondage. Had we known in advance what we would endure to be free, neither one of us would have dared to begin the journey. But in our innocence and courage, we faced an unknown challenge and survived. We estimated that our journey over the mountains would take us about three days by foot. Plans were sketched; provisions collected; courage examined.

When the day finally came for us to make our move, no one suspected. There were no goodbyes. No warnings. Without a trace we left behind our educational training program and a life that seemed full of bitter pain and hopelessness. We dared to be free.

When we reached the border between China and Burma, we successfully avoided the security check by the soldiers. But the real challenge lay before us, for several mountains still separated us from freedom. With great risk we began our adventure. The journey took much

longer than we had anticipated, and our supplies dwindled. The challenge became merely to survive. We were forced to hunt for food in the forest and to sleep hugging each other in order to keep from freezing to death. Half a month later we arrived in Burma, hungry and weary.


Our dreams began to shatter immediately. We were caught by local police and thrown into jail. But we were so exhausted from our journey that we didn't even care. At least we finally had food and shelter. During the next 17 days in jail we wondered what our end would be. This was not the freedom we had envisioned.

A glimpse of freedom

Yet through our misfortune we did catch a glimpse of freedom, for while in that Burmese jail we were visited by several Catholics from Thailand who began to tell us about the freedom found in the Bible through Jesus Christ. This was completely foreign to me, yet my heart and spirit began to stir with this good news. Could freedom really be found in a person and not in a place? Miraculously these new friends arranged for us to be released into their care, and they took us to Thailand with them.

The months and even years that followed were filled with much wondering and searching. I had gone my own way, but in the back of my mind I still remembered those words about a Savior and Redeemer



不讀的“神學院”，讓我可以
 和造抗；前我願^的意願^{未詳}作
 成爲一個全時間的事奉者。
 們在去裡面彼此代持，
 互勵！ 願主的恩惠與
 安寧與你們同在。
 Han KOK PING

A small section of Han Kok Ping's letter, showing his signature and his seal.

of all. I traveled throughout Burma, Laos, and Malaysia in search of peace and freedom, but to no avail. I concluded that these countries did not suit me. Consequently, I resolved to return somehow to my own country.

Then, finally at the end of my rope, I discovered what I had been looking for all along. While in Malaysia I was introduced to Rev. David Chew, pastor of the Brethren church in Penang. We talked extensively about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and the freedom found in His love and forgiveness.

I was so deeply impacted by the Holy Spirit and God's word that I

immediately desired baptism and as much theological training as possible. So on February 12, 1995, Pastor Chew baptized me at the beach, and I became the first member of The Brethren Church to come from China. But most importantly, I joined brothers and sisters from around the world as part of God's heavenly family.

True freedom gained

During the five years since I left China I have had many unforgettable, scary, romantic, and valuable experiences, which I will always remember. A few pages of paper are not enough on which to fully describe all that I experienced during this time of my life. Yet I do not regret what I have endured to bring me to this point.

If I were to evaluate my life from a worldly perspective, it would seem that I have lost much. But I have converted to the Father and to Jesus Christ. I am no longer controlled by this world. I truly recog-



Kurt and Heidi Stout (2nd & 3rd from l.) with Brethren missionary Rev. David Loi (l.), Rev. David and Lily Chew (r.), and two young women who were baptized while the Stouts were in Malaysia.



Han Kok Ping (l.) with David Chew, pastor of the Brethren church in Penang, on the beach where Han Kok Ping was baptized.

nize what I have gained. What I have gained is true freedom and deliverance. By the blood of Jesus Christ, I now have an abundant life. I have obtained an imperishable heavenly heritage and received a priceless promise through Christ Jesus. What I have is the most valuable!

— Han Kok Ping

In the January "Prayer and Praise" list sent out by the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church, Rev. David Loi indicated that Han Kok Ping had safely returned to China, and he requested prayer for this young man's growing faith. For a long time I wondered if Kok Ping had successfully evaded officials at China's border. I knew that if captured, he would be forced to endure much persecution and hardship.

But the fact that he crossed the border safely does not insure his safety. I am certain that daily Kok Ping faces the threat of personal setbacks and abuse. Yet in the midst of his large "jail" he has freedom, and he is seeking to share the truth about that freedom with his own people, who are caught in the chains that once bound him.

Kok Ping returned to China with the dream of starting a church. And I am certain that with his determination and the strength of the Lord, he will effectively bring hope to the darkest regions of China. My prayer is that The Brethren Church in America will be as bold and daring as this one man in China.

— Kurt Stout

The Women's Outlook Newsletter



A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society

March-April 1996

Volume 9, Number 4

The President's Pen



Dear Ladies,

Well, here we are in the month of March—three months into the new year. Did you make a “resolution” to lose a few pounds this year? I think many of us did just that!

It's difficult to eat in moderation, isn't it? I read of a magazine article that tells of an advertisement for an MTV special, “The Seven Deadly Sins.” The article said, “Lust: where would we be without it?” An MTV commentator said that “a little lust, pride, sloth, and gluttony—in moderation—are fun and that's what keeps your heart beating.” Now that's really double talk!! Gluttony in moderation!

How can we practice excess in moderation? We eat goodies marked “lite,” “low-calorie,” and “cholesterol free.” But there is no such thing as “light lust” or “low-calorie greed.” Sin is wrong in any amount. Matthew 5:29 tells us, “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out.”

“There is no such thing as ‘light lust’ or ‘low-calorie greed.’ Sin is wrong in any amount.”

We need to be careful of the “little sins” that can creep into our lives
(continued on page 3)

District Doings

This is the listing of the SOUTH-EASTERN DISTRICT Officers. Please fill in your copy of the WMS Directory in the January-February issue of the WMS Newsletter.

President — (Susan's information is correct)

Vice President — Mary Garver, 407 Main St., New Windsor, MD 21776

Secretary-Treasurer — Virginia Hook, 3046 Old Washington Rd., Westminster, MD 21157

Ass't. Secretary-Treasurer — Sandy Miller, 22918 Berry Circle, Smithburg, MD 21783

The new president of the HAGERSTOWN society (Southeast District) is:

Julia Humelsine, 324 Avon Road, Hagerstown, MD 21740. Phone: 301-773-8680.

Thanks, Susan, for sending the updated information. Additional information is still needed from other societies.

CENTRAL DISTRICT

I received a copy of the LANARK cookbook, *Circle of Friends*, at Christmas and it is a beautiful collection of kitchen- and family-tested recipes. Send your check for \$12.50 (not \$12.95, as I previously stated) plus \$4 for shipping and handling to Friendship Circle, c/o Joyce Michael, 31456 U.S. Highway 52, Lanark, IL 61046.

During August the MILLEDGEVILLE Priscilla Circle instigated the church project of helping Dave and Diane Kerner get established in the United States, after serving many years as missionaries in Colombia.

In response to the church's “Thank You, Kerners,” Diane wrote: “We have certainly been overwhelmed by your generous giving. We were able to begin living in our new home without even making a trip to the grocery store because of food, cleaning supplies, and other

Thanks!

household goods given by your congregation. . . . The checks have arrived in times of urgent need. Thank you so much for caring. The gift certificates for JCPenney will be used for mini blinds, warm clothing, and other needs as they arise. . . . We thank you for your love, support, and prayers.”

It's evident that this is a loving, generous, and caring congregation.

OHIO DISTRICT

October 13-14 marked the dates for another wonderful women's retreat at Camp Bethany. Betty Deardurff shared that this was very likely the 25th anniversary of Ohio Brethren women meeting for just such a time together.

This reporter (DeAnn Oburn, district secretary) didn't arrive until 8:00 p.m. Friday. Supper was over and all were getting ready for the evening session together. As I entered Cedar Lodge, I heard (from a dear friend, looking right at me),

(continued on page 2)

District Doings (continued)

"Supper was absolutely wuuuun-derful!" Well, rub it in for being late! But that told me that the Hoffmans were doing their food magic again, and I would get in on at least two meals-worth on Saturday. We had an enjoyable evening sharing skits, songs, and time together in small groups for prayer.

Saturday was a rainy, rainy day, but spirits and atmosphere were not dampened as we gathered to hear our speaker, Carolyn Brandon of the North Georgetown Brethren Church. Our theme was "Count It All Joy," and Carolyn shared that principle of scripture with us.

In giving her testimony, Carolyn pointed out that we *will* have trials, but we *can* have joy on the journey through them. We may not know the end of our trial or why, but we need to maintain our confidence in God, for that is where the joy lies. Carolyn cited *many* scriptural examples of joy in times of trial—the road *has* been trod before us and we are not alone if we belong to Christ.

After lunch, our District President, Wanda Powell, presented some business. The five recipients of the Marge Fund were announced: Christy Bechtel and Michelle Deaton of Ashland Park St., Rachel Walk of Fremont, Kelly Hurley of Gretna, and Lori Robinson of New Lebanon.

Carolyn introduced Kim Newhart, also of North Georgetown. Kim shared her heart-rending testimony of her family's journey of faith as they face an uncertain future with two sons who are hemophiliac. They have learned that truly only the Lord is their strength in it all.

Our retreat came to a close beautifully as April Lowmaster shared her very special gift of music and we prayed together.

Thirty-eight women came together for this spiritually uplifting weekend. We had a great time and

all of us want to encourage all Ohio Brethren women to join us. Never mind if you are not a member of a WMS group, the Retreat is for you, too! Mark your calendars for October 11-12, next fall's retreat dates. We'd love to see you at Camp Bethany!

The ASHLAND GARBER KOINONIA FELLOWSHIP presented Jan Eagle at their January meeting. Jan and Tim, her husband, served two years as missionaries in Mexico City, and at this time Jan shared her life on the mission field. The ladies sponsored the Sweetheart Supper in February, which was open to the church.

INDIANA DISTRICT

The HUNTINGTON society chose two teams at their November meeting for a fundraising contest. The purpose is to raise money for the two-year WMS national project: the purchase of a site and building for the mission in Peru, South America. The ladies reported that 122 benevolent calls were made during the month.

Their annual Christmas meeting began with a salad bar. Following their devotional study, they presented a monetary thank offering in celebration of the Lord's birth.

Three rallies were held in October. According to Emma Lee Staller, the CORINTH society hosted 77 members, 7 guests, and 6 children. "Footprints of Jesus" was the



theme for the day; the guests followed the footsteps up the stairs and into the foyer for registration and the hospitality treats.

Musicians for the day were Shirley Easter, Emma Lee Staller, Delores Hattery, Susie Stout, and

Kathy Carter, presenting piano, organ, and flute selections.

Lois Thomson welcomed the ladies, and Vera Graft from Loree gave the devotions, based on the theme. She asked each one to consider "whom did you follow as a child, as an adolescent, as a young adult, and as an older person."

Humor before the morning offering portrayed Jane Hattery as the harried treasurer, frantically working at her calculator to find the needed dollars to meet the incoming bills.

Adelle Campbell, the speaker, was introduced by Frances Beckley of Corinth. Mrs. Campbell, a widow and mother of two teenagers, shared her life's experiences and how, through each situation—accident, surgeries, frequent hospitalizations, change of wage-earner roles, and death—her family's faith was strengthened and sustained them. At the afternoon session, Mrs. Campbell entitled her speech, "Walking in Freedom." She read Hebrews 12:14-15 and stated that forgiveness is the key to walking in freedom.

Joy Zook and Norita Kuhn of the Tiosa society presented the memorial service, remembering three ladies. The district project of receiving an offering for the seminary students totaled \$467.

(continued on page 3)

THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

Published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Women's Missionary Society of The Brethren Church.

Mrs. Dorman Ronk, Editor
1325 Coachman Court
Ashland, Ohio 44805

Subscription price, \$7.50 per year in advance.

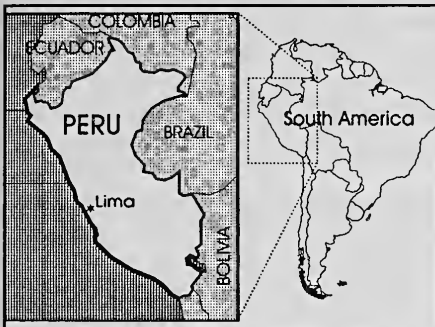
Send all subscriptions to Mrs. Robert Kroft, 608 Twp. Road 1151, RD 5, Ashland, OH 44805.

Women's Outlook Newsletter

Missionary

Miscellany

March is World Missions Month and the missionaries-of-March are two families: (1) Juan Carlos and María Miranda. Juan is the consultant for the Missionary Board to South America and María continues her very popular Spanish-speaking radio program. (2) Miguel and Sonia Antunez and their son, Carlos. They are leading the Brethren mission in Lima, Peru. This is the focus of our national project.



The Greenwood Brethren Fellowship near Indianapolis is the April missionary-of-the-month emphasis. Tom and Tiona Conrad provide the pastoral leadership, assisted by Gene and Georgia Bell and Keith and Marjorie Bennett.

Prasanth and Nirmala Kumar and their son, Sudhir, in India are the May missionaries. It is their hope that Sudhir will attend Ashland Theological Seminary and then return to help more capably in the India mission. To date, permission for him to enter the U.S. has been denied.

Like the late night neighbor (Luke 11:5-8), who was persistent with his knocking and was finally rewarded, be persistent with your prayers for our missionary friends. God receives our needs anytime. Pray, too, for the Missionary Board staff and more missionary candidates.



District Doings (continued)

Mary Hauptert reported that 60 members, 4 guests, and 2 children attended the ROANN rally.

LuAnn Layman and Eunice Brower registered the guests, Norma Trump presented the piano prelude, and Rosella Layton welcomed each one. Mary Ellen Miller gave the devotions, based on II Corinthians 5:17-18, and prayer.

Norma Trump was the program speaker. Her theme was "Jesus, the Master Recycler"; she related her talk to the scripture which Mrs. Miller used: "When anyone is joined to Christ, he is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come." So, in turn, we should recycle anything possible, in order to preserve the earth which was created for us.

She described the Master Recycler's changing the caterpillar into a beautiful butterfly similar to a person changing after receiving Christ as Savior and Lord. From a large garbage can, Norma showed



many items that can be recycled in our lives for good. She sang solos, "God Recycles Zeros," "Jesus Name" medley, and "Jesus, Jesus" to the tune of a "Bicycle Built for Two." She concluded with a Bible portrayal of Peter's mother-in-law.

The rally offering was \$577.84.

Alice Horn, secretary in ARDMORE, reported their rally. 54 members and 11 guests attended. Their offering totaled \$682.85.

President's Pen (continued)

so quickly. As Christians, we need to continually examine our inner thoughts and motives. We can enjoy a few "lite" desserts, but do not think that a little sinning is all right, if done in moderation. Sin is sin, and those who are watching us will look for just that kind of thing. Good luck on those diets!

In the last several letters, I have been talking with you about the ABC's of WMS. This time we are ready for No. 4, which reads, "Sponsor a special ministry, service, or activity in which:

- A. The purpose of WMS is promoted and
- B. An offering is received for the Seminary.

We do not use the term "Public Service" any more. Societies can do whatever they choose as long as WMS is promoted and an offering is taken for the Seminary. If you live close to Ashland, I encourage you to contact the Seminary and ask for someone to come and speak or do a program. I feel if the offering is going to the Seminary, we should use Seminary staff, if at all possible. You may have a seminary student in your congregation who might be very happy to bring a

"If the offering is going to the Seminary, we should use Seminary staff if at all possible."

program to your church. At my church last year, our three circles had a musical program and served refreshments afterward. We had musicians from the Seminary. We had a great time in the Lord (and a good attendance). Be creative and come up with a unique program.

Be sure to write to Joan Ronk and let her know what your group is doing.

God Bless You,

Shirley Black

Good News!

Joanne Kroft, the national WMS financial secretary, reported that WHITE DALE, PA, was the first society to send their dues and subscription list!



She stated that the COLUMBUS First society has increased their membership by 500%, from 1 to 6! Good for Pat Morris!

Twenty-three other societies have increased their memberships by the number in the parenthesis:

- Brighton Chapel (2)
- Bryan Susanna (2)
- Canton Sr. (1)
- Cerro Gordo (1)
- Columbus First (5)
- Derby (1)
- Falls City (1)
- Fremont (2)
- Gretna Gleaners (1)
- Highland (1)
- Meadow Crest (2)
- Meyersdale (2)
- Milledgeville Priscilla (3)
- Mulvane (2)
- Newark (1)
- North Georgetown Mercer (1)
- Park Street Faith (1)
- Smithville (1)
- St. Luke (3)
- Stockton (4)
- Tucson Evening (1)
- Valley (1)
- Vinco (2)
- Warsaw (2)

**Welcome to all the
new members!**

The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

A few snowy evenings were good times to read Jill Briscoe's book of poetry, *Heartbeat*. We were fortunate to hear Mrs. Briscoe at the WMS luncheon last summer and equally fortunate to use her book as a reading circle book.

Since I haven't any copyright permissions, I can't copy her poems, but I suggest to you who are the leaders in March or April to include one or some of her Easter poems (pp. 106-129) in your devotional meeting. I liked especially "Easter Prayer" on page 112.

Several phrases throughout the book appealed to me. In "Over-taken with Joy," she wrote, "I've been running away from God for years, but I discovered He has longer legs than I have." In "Evergreen," Mrs. Briscoe wrote of friends of the evergreen, "Myrtle, Rose, and Holly," who were "so busy having fellowship, that they had no time to grow." And on page 62, "Love Listens," she wrote, "Love is watertight—never leaking the confidences"

If you haven't spent time with this book, I encourage you to do so.

NEIGHBOR HELPING NEIGHBOR

Probably you have heard the commercial, "Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there." The reasoning behind this is obvious; you can rely upon the dependability and responsibility of this insurance company. I know, too, how many neighbors are; they have all the above characteristics in addition to love, generosity, kindness, and thoughtfulness.

This is the thinking behind the basic commitment No. 10: Re-emphasize the importance of being a model of Christ's love. Show Christian love and service to your neighbors and their families.

Who is your neighbor? Reflect on

Luke 10:25-37, what we commonly call the account of the Good Samaritan. Right away, that is a misnomer! Samaritans were not considered good. However, the obvious "good" people—the priest and his assistant (both of whom *always* took care of people's needs) looked at the victim and passed by.

Then came the Samaritan, who also looked but did the good deed. He administered first aid, transported him to the inn, paid for his care, and assured the innkeeper that additional expenses would be paid. The answer to the ruler's question, "Who is my neighbor?" was obvious to him and to us—the one who sees a need and fills it.

LOOK!

President Bush called this program "Points of Light" and he recognized 1,000 Points. In Jesus' words, "Go thou and do likewise." Hence, using Commitment 10, "Like a good neighbor, [insert your name] is there!"

Consider this, too: Do you minister to "felt" needs or to "true" need? A felt need is helped by AA and similar social agencies. True need is sharing God's gift of salvation, which is for all of us.

Your friend,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joan". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

Joan

The foundation for Brethren missions

By Reilly R. Smith

THE GREAT COMMISSION of our Lord Jesus Christ provides the foundation for Brethren missions.

*Go into all the world and preach the good news
 . . . make disciples of all nations
 As the Father has sent me,
 I am sending you.
 . . . you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth*

Mark 16:15, Matthew 28:19,
 John 20:21, Acts 1:8 (NIV)

Missions is the business of the church. The essence of missions is disciple-making. That includes evangelizing people, establishing them in the faith, equipping them for service, and encouraging them in ministry.

Missions people evangelize others one by one in personal relationships, in small and large groups by distributing literature, sharing their faith publicly, conducting evangelistic campaigns, or finding any way possible to tell people about our Lord Jesus. They organize Bible studies, fellowships, small groups, and congregations. They

provide training in Christian living, church ministry, community service, and communicating the good news about Jesus Christ to others. Finally, they encourage new Christians to grow in Christ and to serve him in the world—locally, regional-



Rev. Reilly Smith is Executive Director of the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church.

ly, cross culturally, and globally.

Missions people love our Lord Jesus Christ. They love people, too. They love enough to act out their faith in the Lord. They seek the lost for Jesus Christ to save. They seek the sick and brokenhearted for Jesus Christ to heal. They serve the saints, sinners, and the poor as their Lord did before them. Their

passion comes from His love flowing through them by the work of the Spirit in their hearts.

The following articles tell what mission people are doing on three Brethren mission fields. Brethren people are making disciples in other countries as well—in Colombia, Djibouti, Mexico, Paraguay, and Peru. Our churches face many challenges, but they continue to grow because of the vision and zeal of our mission people.

The Missionary Board is working to develop more training opportunities for mission people. We are working with the seminary to expand the missions program. We hope to attract missions-minded students to The Brethren Church and missions-minded Brethren to the seminary. We want to train people from other countries (like Eduardo Rodriguez, Jr.) to become trainers of missions people in their own countries.

We want to develop people who will evangelize the lost, establish new believers in the faith, equip them for service in the church and the world, and encourage them in ministry. This is why we exist.

Are you one of those mission people? Can you help us with gifts of time, talent and/or resources? Please contact the Missionary Board by mail, phone, or fax. [†]



Project 2001:

Preparing for the challenge of a new millennium

By Allen Baer

Brethren missionary to Argentina

AS WE ARE frequently reminded, the present millennium ends in four years. Project 2001 is a plan to prepare a strong, mature church in Argentina to face the challenge of the new millennium. The immediate goal of this Project is to double the number of Brethren churches in Argentina by the year 2001.

This will demand a lot of hard work,

but the Project has the advantage of low cost because it will be an extension of the local churches themselves. The Argentinean leaders have perceived that the majority of local congregations want to multiply, but they are unable to do so because they are small and frequently isolated. The plan is to unite efforts and talents.

The existing congregations have been grouped into four zones. The Missionary Committee and the seminary students, working closely with all the other national committees, will direct and give logistical support to each of these zones through a Project director.

Basically, the Project has five stages: (1) training courses for workers; (2) preparation of the targeted field; (3) evangelism; (4) discipleship; and (5) consolidation. The Project will be carried out simultaneously in all four



Allen Baer

zones, although in different stages. A mechanism of reporting and accountability between the zones and the national leaders will make it possible to analyze results and make necessary changes.

The final objective of the Project is 25 new, self-supporting congregations, each with more than 15 baptized members. It should be noted, however, that this does not necessarily include the support of a pastor.

In addition to Project 2001, The Brethren Church in Argentina has taken another bold step—employing a full-time national supervisor. This is separate from Project 2001,

but closely related to the work of extension.

The various national committees



José Rivero with his daughter Marcela during their visit to General Conference in Ashland in 1992.

enthusiastically named José Rivero to that new position. Brother Rivero has faithfully and devotedly served as national church president for several years. His position will not be a desk job. It will mean frequent visits to local churches to encourage, advise, and make decisions as the need arises.

The Brethren Church in Argentina feels accompanied and encouraged in these endeavors by the Missionary Board in Ashland and by the U.S. Brethren in general because of the long-term cordial partnership enjoyed in the extension of God's kingdom. [†]



Malaysia: highlights of 1995

By David Loi Lee-Hoot

Brethren missionary in Malaysia

GREETINGS to you all in the blessed name of our wonderful Savior and Lord Christ Jesus. On behalf of our family and The Brethren Church in Malaysia, we thank you for all the love you have shown us and especially that this love is possible because we share one Lord. Thanks to all who have sent cards and letters.

As we write, we are thinking that it won't be long before we see you in the U.S. during the summer. In the meantime, it is our pleasure to write about the mission work here and how our Lord is using us for His glory. The following are some of the highlights of 1995.

April 29

On this date, Miss Magdelene Khoo and Mr. Terence Ee were married in the church hall of the Penang Baptist Church. Pastor David Chew officiated at the ceremony, and I was invited to deliver the message. Both Miss Khoo and Mr. Ee are members of the Penang Brethren Church, but their family members, relatives, and friends are non-Christians. I thank God that I had this opportunity to share with them that our God is the creator and matchmaker of marriages. About 600 people attended the wedding dinner that evening. During the dinner the young couple shared

their testimony and sang a Christian song for all the guests.

Because of this wedding, we became acquainted with Terence's family members. For several years his mother has had difficulty sleeping. The most she can sleep is two hours. We have been praying for her, and her condition is improving.

Pastor Chew and some of the church members also went to her home to pray for her. As a result, she has begun to have faith in the Lord and to experience joy in her heart. We hope that she will leave the idol she has worshiped in the past and put her faith fully in the Lord. Since she is the head of the family (Terence's father passed away), if she receives the Lord other family members (15 to 20 of them) will also commit themselves

to the Lord. We pray for God's mercy on this family.

August 20

On this day (the day before our son Stephen left Malaysia to study in the U.S.), we had a very special thanksgiving service. The service was in celebration of the baptism of our daughter, Rebecca, which took place one week earlier (on August 13).

This service also marked the 21st year of our missionary service for our Lord and for The Brethren Church. We rejoiced in Him who has given us strength during these past years.

We also took this opportunity to celebrate my mother's 72nd birthday. She did not want to have a birthday party, since there was no birth date on her identity card. (In olden times many people did not report their births. Her card only recorded that she was born in 1923.) But on this occasion she accepted this date as her birthday, so we could celebrate this happy occasion.

(continued on next page)



The April 29, 1995, wedding of Magdelene Khoo and Terence Ee provided opportunities to witness and minister to their families and friends.

September 29

On this date a special service was held at the home of Mr. Ng Ke-Lai to celebrate his mother's 85th birthday. Mr. and Mrs. Ng and their family are members of the Johor Baru Brethren Church. Mr. Ng invited all his brothers and sisters and their families and relatives to this party, hoping that during the party his non-Christian relatives would have an opportunity to hear the gospel.

These are a few highlights of our year. Again we thank you so much for your love and support. We look forward to seeing you all during the coming summer. [†]

We are so grateful that our son Stephen was able to go overseas to study. [Stephen is a freshman at Ashland University.] We know that it was all because of God's guidance. With the Lord's help, Stephen got good grades on the school examination and also on the upper secondary level (high school) examination given by the Ministry of Education of Malaysia. He also passed the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), which is an admission requirement for those who intend to study in the U.S., and he was granted a visa on his second interview. We are so thankful for this.



Evangelistic Efforts in India

By K. Prasanth Kumar

Director, Brethren Mission in India

THE EVANGELISTIC EFFORTS of Nirmala and me along with that of the pastors and lady evangelists in the cities of Rajahmundry, Hyderabad, and Vizag (Vishakhapatnam) and in the villages have drawn many idol-worshipping people into Christ's fold. From April 1, 1995, to January 31, 1996, 198 people were baptized, bringing the total number of baptized members of the Brethren Mission in India to 4,438.

Following are some of the ways in which this evangelism is being carried out.

Women's evangelism

The women's fasting prayer fellowship on every Friday of the week forms the foundation on which the women's ministry is built. In addition Women's Revival Meetings were held in connection with the Anniversary Day of the Sewing School. Revival meetings were held in Rajahmundry on April 30, 1995; in Vizag on May 1; and in Hyderabad on June 2. Many Hindu women attended these meetings and heard about the Savior. Most of the women who attend the Sewing Schools are Hindus, and some are Muslims. They receive daily enlightenment in the gospel as well as learning how to sew.

Youth evangelism

Living as an open Christian is very difficult for young people in India. We conduct Youth Fellowship meetings for the young people

at Rajahmundry and Vizag on alternate Sundays. Nirmala and I, along with other speakers, regularly share with them what the Bible teaches. In addition to these regular meetings, we conducted the Brethren Youth Retreat on October 7, 1995, at Rajahmundry.

We are highly pleased to see the young people grow in the grace and wisdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. And they are also sharing their faith. Last May and again in August some of the young people went on Youth Gospel Team trips to the city of Vajayawada and to some of the villages.

Village evangelism

We had a rewarding ministry in many of the villages during the past year. With money provided by Brethren churches and individuals and by a Methodist congregation in Korea, church buildings were completed in the villages of Kedarlanka and Samistragudem. Church buildings are in progress in Narkedimilli and Sankili, and prayer huts were built in Timmapuram and Pujaripalem.

Literature evangelism

The monthly magazine *Suvarthikudu* (Evangelist) is reaching 1,000 homes with special messages for youth, women, and everyone. We receive heaps of letters of appreciation from the readers. Gospel tracts and other literature are given to patients at the Brethren Mission

Hospital, to people in their homes, on the streets, and at every possible place. The Brethren Reading Room at Bommuru, near Rajahmundry, is also of great help to people.

Radio and TV evangelism

A television broadcasting station invited me to give messages. The Asia Network as well as the State Network broadcast my Christmas messages on December 25, 1995. This is a great opportunity that the Lord has provided.

Orphanages

The 30 boys in the Brethren Boys Orphanage and the 20 girls in the Brethren Girls Orphanage enjoy their new buildings. They serve the Lord with their singing, by distributing gospel tracts, and by playing musical instruments.

Bible institute

In 1994-95, 20 students were trained in the Brethren Bible Institute. Thus far a total of 260 students have been trained at the institute, and 20 more began their training on June 1, 1995.

Mass evangelism

The Brethren Convention was held in the village of Samistragudem on January 26-28, 1996. The convention included early morning devotions, morning gospel meetings, and evening revival meetings, with Spirit-filled messages by the speakers. A special meeting for youth was conducted on Saturday afternoon and a women's revival meeting was held on Sunday, at which Nirmala spoke. The three-day convention yielded a very good harvest for the Lord, and I baptized 18 people on the closing day of the event. Praise to God's holy name! [†]



James R. Black resigns as Director of Stewardship

Ashland, Ohio — The National Leadership Council recently announced that Rev. James R. Black has submitted his resignation as Director of Stewardship and Planned Giving for The Brethren Church, effective March 31.



Rev. Black has served in this position on a part-time basis since his retirement as Executive Director of the Missionary Board last May.

Along with this announcement comes one from Trinity Brethren Church of North Canton, Ohio, that Rev. Black has accepted a call to serve as pastor of that congregation. He had served the church on an interim basis since last October, but in early February the congregation called him to become its regular pastor, effective immediately.

The National Leadership Council expresses its appreciation to Rev. Black for his pioneering efforts in the role of Director of Stewardship and Planned Giving and wishes him well as his pastor's heart leads him back to the pastoral ministry. The council will meet in the near future to determine its recommendation with regard to a successor.



Florida District conference attendees

Sarasota Hispanic congregation hosts 19th annual Florida District conference

Sarasota, Fla. — It was a historic occasion on Sunday, February 11, when Iglesia de los Hermanos, the Spanish-speaking Brethren congregation in Sarasota, hosted the 19th annual conference of the Florida District. It was the congregation's first time to host the conference.

More than 50 adults attended the afternoon business sessions, with more people coming for the evening worship service. Moderator Paul Yoder dispatched the necessary business (reports from district and denominational ministries, elections, and other items) quickly and efficiently. The rest of the day was spent in worship and fellowship.

Praise in music was led by host pastor Daniel Rosales and family, Carolyn Solomon, and Mary Louise Robbins. Robert Christin, a guest from Ohio, provided special music.

More than a dozen youth participated in a special program directed by Rev. Bill and Theresa Cruz, which included an address by Dr. William Benz, president of Ashland University.

A delicious Spanish-style meal was prepared by the members of the host church.

Speaker for the worship service was Rev. Reilly Smith, Executive Director of the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church. Speaking on the conference theme, "Stand Firm Then" (from Eph. 6:14), he examined three meanings of "stand": (1) Stand up for Christ and be counted; (2) Stand firm against the real enemy, Satan; and (3) Be prepared to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. The message was translated by Rev. Ray Aspinall for Spanish-speaking members of the audience.

Rev. David Stone, pastor of the Bloomingdale Brethren Church, was installed as the new moderator. Elected by the conference were Leo Elliott, moderator-elect; Martha Stone, secretary; Sarah Garrett, treasurer; and Robert Geddes, Lynne Shrock, and Buck Garrett—representatives to the Ministry of Administration.

— reported by Martha Stone, District Secretary, and Ronald W. Waters

David Hartzfeld named dean of Ashland Theological Seminary

Ashland, Ohio — Dr. Frederick J. Finks, president of Ashland Theological Seminary, has announced the appointment of David F. Hartzfeld as academic dean of the seminary.

Dr. Hartzfeld served as dean of faculty and professor of Old Testament at Alliance Theological Seminary from 1989 to 1993 and as adjunct professor of ethics at Nyack College from 1993 to 1996. He has also had other teaching experience, pastoral experience, and served as a mis-

sionary in Vietnam (1969-73).

Dr. Hartzfeld has degrees from Nyack College, Bethel and Pittsburgh Theological Seminaries, and a Ph.D. from the University of Sheffield in England.

He and his wife Linda have three daughters, one married, one in graduate school, and a senior in high school.

They will relocate to Ashland in July.





Sun Printing shines on THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST

Ashland, Ohio — With the closing of The Brethren Printing Company at the end of December, Sun Printing of Mansfield, Ohio, has begun printing THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST.

Sun Printing printed the February issue of the EVANGELIST (the January issue was done by Brethren Printing) and also did the February issue of *Morning Star*, the Brethren Youth in Christ newsletter.

Diane Brown, a member of the Walcrest Brethren Church in Mansfield, Ohio, is one of the owners of Sun Printing and takes an active part in running the business. Her partner, Keith Greene, lives in Ashland and picks up and delivers our printing (convenient for us!).

The change to an outside printer has been smooth and—to our surprise—more cost-effective.

Park Street Church expresses appreciation to its pastors, staff, and many volunteers

Ashland, Ohio — Sunday, February 11, was “Pastors, Staff, and Volunteers Appreciation Day” at Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland.

During the two morning worship services, the pastoral staff, Christian education director, and worship team were given the morning off so that they could sit with their families. Dr. John Shultz, a Park Street member and professor at Ashland Theological Seminary, delivered the sermons. His message, “Who Needs a Body?” based on 1 Corinthians 12:12–17, stressed the importance of being part of the body of Christ (the church) and of serving together in this body.

A special feature during each of the worship services was the viewing of a video showing Park Street staff and volunteers serving in various capacities in the church. The sound track for the video was the Christian song, “Thank You.” The video was filmed and edited by Tim Rowsey. Tim and his wife Sandi served as co-chairs of the

Appreciation Day and spent many hours preparing for the event.

Following the services, an Appreciation Dinner was enjoyed by approximately 280 church members and friends. The meal was catered by Park Street members Frank and Janet Hoffman of Royal Catering. Cakes baked by Park Street member Bev Summy and decorated with the words “Thank you” in various languages were the dessert.

At the conclusion of the meal, Tim Rowsey presented gifts from the congregation to Dr. Arden Gilmer, senior pastor; Rev. Bob Buford, associate pastor; Don Belsterling, Pastor of Youth Discipleship; and Sherry Van Duyne, Director of Christian Education and Music. Appreciation was also expressed to Erica Weidenhamer (director) and other members of the staff of the Park Street School. And special recognition was given to the numerous volunteers in the congregation in appreciation for their many hours of dedicated service.

—reported by Margaret Hess

Cynthia Stout traces spiritual journey of Burlington First Brethren Church

Burlington, Ind. — After seven years of meticulous research, Cynthia Stout has produced an in-depth account of the spiritual journey of the Burlington, Ind., First Brethren Church.

Mrs. Stout's 222-page book, *Our Spiritual Family Tree: A History of the Burlington Brethren Church*, began as an attempt to identify and write about the charter members of the Burlington congregation. But it ended up to be much more than that.

The book begins with a sketch of the history of Christianity from the time of Christ to the Reformation and a glimpse at the Anabaptists and Pietists. It then tells how the Brethren came out of this background, followed by a brief overview of Brethren history in Europe and colonial Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Stout then traces one vein of the western movement of Brethren into Ohio

and Indiana and looks at developments among the “Tunkers” (Brethren) that resulted in the birth of the Burlington Church. Chapters follow on charter members, very early members, and the first meetinghouse. Included among the remaining chapters are ones on the Sunday school, pastors, deacons and deaconesses, and auxiliaries of the Burlington Church.

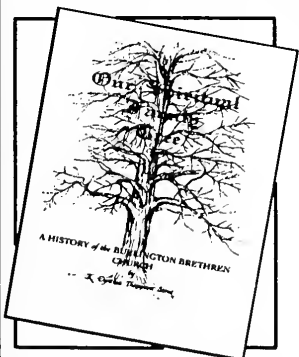
The book is full of pictures. An effort was made to identify every person in the photos, even in the many group pictures, including one taken of the congregation around 1920.



Cynthia Stout

Mrs. Stout is an active member of the Burlington Church and she and her husband Allen serve as deacon and deaconess for the congregation. Their son, Kurt, is associate pastor of the North Manchester, Ind., First Brethren Church (see pp. 5 and 6).

Many Brethren who have no direct connection to the Burlington Church would find the book interesting. For information about getting a copy, call Mrs. Stout at 317-566-3217, or the Burlington Church at 317-566-3265.





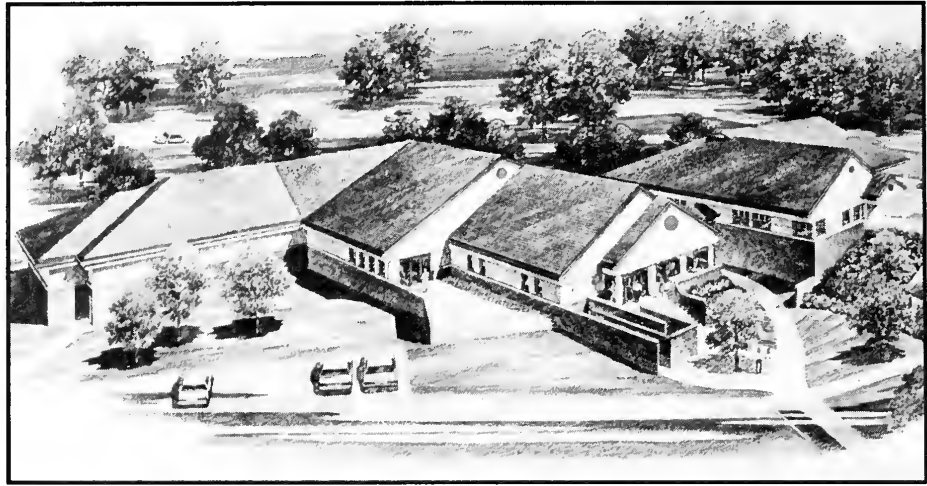
Briefly Noted



Correction: In the list of Brethren churches in last month's *EVANGELIST* (pp. 4&5) Quiet Dell Brethren Church in the Pennsylvania District was placed in Green City, Pennsylvania. It is actually in Green County, Pa. The church is located three miles east and two miles south of Cameron, West Virginia, in the southwest corner of Pennsylvania.

Addition: It was reported last month that Ashland University received \$84,000 from the estate of the late Helen Shively and that Park Street Brethren Church received \$79,346 from her estate. In addition, the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church also received a bequest from the estate of \$79,346.

Average worship attendance at **Park Street Brethren Church** in Ashland, Ohio, was 420 in 1995, and average Sunday school attendance was 330—both of which were the highest in the history of the church. In fact, this was the first time that worship attendance aver-



Ashland Theological Seminary to build new academic center

Ashland, Ohio — The Ashland University Board of Trustees has given unanimous approval for the construction of a new academic center for Ashland Theological Seminary.

The 9,500-square foot facility will include classrooms, a computer lab, a student center, a 156-seat auditorium, and office space. The projected cost is \$875,000, and fundraising efforts are now underway.

According to Dr. Frederick Finks, president of the seminary, "The continued growth of the seminary

has necessitated this project. The additional facility will greatly enhance the learning environment and help us in preparing men and women for Christian ministry."

The new academic center will be located on High Street next to the Shultz Academic Center and will be connected to the Shultz Center by a glassed-in walkway.

Ground will be broken for the new building this spring, and it is expected that construction will be completed by December.

aged above 400. In addition, 45 people were baptized in 1995, and 53 new members were added to the congregation during the year.



Last month's *EVANGELIST* (p. 12) carried an article about dolls that Diane Elwood and women at Meadow Crest Brethren Church in Ft. Wayne, Ind., rehabilitated and sent to Lost Creek, Ky. Pictured above with some of the dolls are (l. to r.) Doran Hostetler, principal of Riverside Christian School at Lost Creek, and the Elwood family—Larry, Diane, Keith, Katie, and Curtis.

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Charles W. Colson draws some interesting contrasts between:

Watergate and the Resurrection

OLIVER STONE'S much ballyhooed film about Richard Nixon opened the week before Christmas. It may sound strange, but this rendition of the Watergate cover-up reminds us that it would have been impossible for the *greatest story ever told* not to be true.

There have always been people who denied that Jesus even lived. But archaeologists and historians have uncovered enough documentation in recent decades that Jesus' existence is no longer in question.

But Christians believe not only that Jesus lived and died, but that he was also raised from the dead.

Here is where Oliver Stone comes in. His film on the Nixon years reminds us once again that there was a political scandal called Watergate, in which I played a major part.

A group of rogue political operatives orchestrated a break-in at Democratic National Headquarters in 1972. On March 21, 1973, White House Counsel John Dean walked into the president's office and for the first time told Nixon all that was involved in Watergate. At that moment Nixon knew all—and the White House cover-up began in earnest.

The cover-up is doomed

By April 8 Dean fled to the prosecutor's office, and the rest, as they say, is history. Why did Dean bargain for immunity? In his memoir, *Blind Ambition*, Dean acknowledged with refreshing candor that he did so not to save the Constitution, but to save his own skin. When that happened, other aides scrambled to make deals. Nixon and the cover-up were doomed.

So, 12 of the most powerful men in the world couldn't contain a lie for three weeks.

Compare this with the acts of the 11 apostles who professed to have seen the resurrected Jesus. While the Nixon circle enjoyed the protection of the most powerful man in the world, these apostles were ordinary men; they had no protection whatsoever.

They had seen the risen Christ

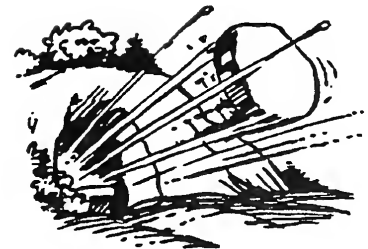
And so, for possibly as long as 60 years, members of this group were hounded and tortured for their faith. All but one died a martyr's death. Yet not one of them ever renounced his belief that he had seen the risen Christ.

How could this happen? After all, as Stone shows us, it takes no time at all for powerful men to crack under pressure to save their skins. But the powerless apostles didn't change their tune. The reason? They had seen God in the flesh and could not deny it.

Had they not, the Apostle Peter would have been just like John Dean. After all, he had already turned on Jesus three times.

Non-believers may dismiss the apostles as just religious fanatics, but that misses the point: Men will die for what they believe to be true. But they will not die for something they know to be false.

There is also the evidence of how Christ changes lives today. In my many trips into the world's prisons—some of which are so horrid that Americans would be arrested if they left their dogs in similar circumstances—I have seen astonish-



ing transformations. Scoffers tell us that these prisoners, trapped in hell-holes, have every incentive to comfort themselves with illusions. They tell us that religion blinds us to the true nature of life.

But they are wrong. It is Christianity that leads thousands of volunteers into the prisons—week after week, year after year—to confront the horror of our fallen world. Prisons are not the only destination. Christianity has led countless people far from the comfortable studies where scoffers reign, to serve those who are the least of us, always at the cost of comfort, sometimes at the cost of life. [†]

Mr. Colson, former special counsel to Richard Nixon, served a prison term for his role in the Watergate scandal. He now heads Prison Fellowship International, an evangelical Christian ministry to the imprisoned and their families.

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Frogs in a kettle of lukewarm water

By Timothy Eagle

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:13-16, NIV

A FRIEND gave me a magazine article to read. The title of the article was, "Are we frogs in lukewarm water?" The article discusses how we are becoming immersed in the "trash talk" of television and radio and how this is affecting us morally and spiritually.

The author used the illustration of a frog. When a frog is placed in a kettle of boiling water, it will jump out to save itself from boiling to death. But if the frog is placed in a kettle of water at room temperature and the water is heated two degrees at a time, the frog can eventually be boiled to death without its trying to save itself.

Heated up by the media

I began to think about how the media (television, radio, magazines, newspapers, etc.) have a great influence upon our culture. We rely on the ideas, images, and sounds they bring us and we are affected by them.

I wonder if we as Christians are sometimes being so "heated up"

that we do not realize that we could be in great moral and spiritual danger. Has this culture influenced us to such a great extent that we follow its guidelines rather than the biblical guidelines we as Christians should follow? The Bible does give us specific moral rules which Christians should follow. (See Romans 1; Galatians 5:13-26; Ephesians 4:17-32; Colossians 3-17; 1 Peter 4:1-11; Revelation 22:12-15).

Bringing flavor and light

In the passage of Scripture printed at the beginning of this article, Jesus calls us to be salt and light to our world. Salt flavors food. So we are to be flavoring our society with biblical moral values. We are to be "light" in the darkness. Our lives are to be a testimony, like a big city on a hill at night so that even non-believers will be grateful and praise and thank God for us.

Are Christians doing that in American culture today? Are we truly being salt and light to our society? Whatever we believe about the affects of Christianity on this nation, we always need to remember our responsibility as Christians to influence our society and culture, just as salt flavors food and light overcomes darkness.

How do we do that? In a representative democracy we have much greater re-

sponsibilities than our Christian brothers and sisters had in the past. We can vote, write letters, make phone calls, and even send faxes or e-mail to leaders. We can volunteer for agencies or charities to help those who are less fortunate than we are. We can give time or money to organizations that support Christian causes. The possibilities are great.

Can one person do it all? No, but many persons working together through God's power can help to "flavor" and "enlighten" society to biblical principles and values. What can you do? Ask the Lord and let him show you. Each of us is gifted in different ways, and I am sure that He can show you how to be salt and light to our community and culture. And once He shows you, go and do that. Don't be that "frog in a kettle." [†]

Rev. Eagle is pastor of the Garber Brethren Church in Ashland, Ohio. This article originally appeared in the Garber Church newsletter and is reprinted with permission.

Five Dimensions of Church Growth

- Churches grow *warmer* through fellowship.
- Churches grow *deeper* through discipleship.
- Churches grow *stronger* through worship.
- Churches grow *broader* through ministry.
- Churches grow *larger* through evangelism.

— *The Purpose-Driven Church*
by Rick Warren (Zondervan, 1995)

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Why do we need revival?

By Harold Walton

ACCORDING to David Bryant, more people are living today than have died in all of human history. Billions of people need to be reached with the gospel. But the church seems unable to respond to this need. We need revival in order to further the fulfillment of the Great Commission. A revival empowers the witness of the church. We need a revival that more of the lost will be won.

Another indication of our need for revival is the lack of impact that the evangelical church is having on our society. In 1983 Dr. Kenneth Kantzer wrote in *Christianity Today* magazine:

Evangelicalism is weaker now than it was fifteen years ago, or fifty years ago. The influence of evangelical faith and evangelical ethics is less. As a culture, our nation and, indeed western Europe, are moving away from biblical Christianity. Most people don't realize that

one hundred years ago the mainline denominations were all evangelical.

Abortion, pornography, divorce, the homosexual lifestyle, drug abuse, and crime all abound. Rather than exerting a preserving influence upon our culture, the church seems largely to be ignored. We need the supernatural power of God, says Martyn Lloyd-Jones, to break through the resistance to the gospel and impact our generation. Revival moves us in that direction.

The judgment of God

That our country faces the judgment of God because of our sins is certainly reason for us to seek God's renewal of the church. The Bible says that nations that forget God will be turned into hell (Ps 9:17). John Dawson declares that "We are living in a time of certain, but postponed, judgment." Yet there is still time to turn to the Lord. Perhaps as with Nineveh,

God will turn from the judgment he has purposed (Jonah 3:10).

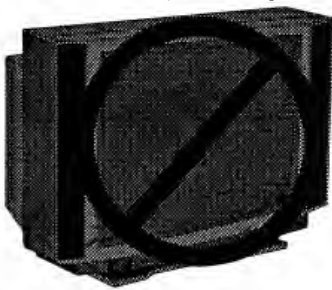
Finally, we need revival that God's name would receive the honor it deserves. When the church fails to have a Christ-exalting testimony to the world, God's name is not properly recognized and respected. He "loses face." A revival supernaturally "authenticates" the gospel of Christ before a skeptical world. Francis Schaeffer once wrote, "If the Church does not show forth the supernatural in our generation, what will? . . . There must be something the world cannot explain away."

Martyn Lloyd-Jones preached that "The Christian Church would have been dead and finished centuries ago and many times over were it not for revivals." Many are calling out to God in this dark hour in North America for God to send a mighty awakening to the church and bring God the glory and praise that He deserves. It is our only hope. [†]

Dr. Walton is pastor of the Wayne Heights Brethren Church of Waynesboro, Pa. His major project for his Doctor of Ministry degree, which he received last year, was "A Study in the Principles of Revival."

National TV-Turnoff Week!

COULD YOU GO a week without watching television? "Sure!" you reply. Then maybe you'd like to take that challenge the last week of this month (April 24-30) during *National TV-Turnoff Week*.



(Quick, grab the *TV-Guide* and see what special programs are on that week! I'm sure glad the NCAA basketball tournament is over!)

More than one million people participated in the first *TV-Turnoff* last April, and that figure is expected to double this year. Many of those who participated in last year's *Turnoff* say that they and their families are watching much less television now than before, and some report that their TVs are still off.

"*National TV-Turnoff Week* moves far beyond the old debate about content and the current noise surrounding the v-chip," says Henry Labalme, executive director of TV-Free America, sponsor of the event.

"The more important issue is not what we watch, but how much we watch."

According to 1996 A.C. Nielsen Co. surveys, the average American watches four hours of TV per day (the equivalent of two months of non-stop watching per year!). By the time he or she graduates from high school, the average American child has spent more time watching TV than in school classes. And at the rate of 4 hours per day, by age 65 a person will have spent (wasted?) ten years of his or her life watching television.

But merely turning off the television isn't enough. TV-Free America suggests using that extra time for more family interaction, reading, volunteering, exercising, enjoying nature, playing sports, taking part in community affairs, thinking, creating, and doing. And perhaps we could add such activities as reading God's word, praying, memorizing Scripture, and sharing our faith.

National TV-Turnoff Week is endorsed by the American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, National Association of Elementary School Principals, Congress of National Black Churches, Family Research Council, and Literacy Volunteers of America, to name just a few. And for what it's worth, it's also endorsed by the editor of the *EVANGELIST*. What about you. Are you up to the challenge of spending a week without TV? [†]

— Richard C. Winfield, Editor

Baptism: The Watery Grave

By Brian H. Moore

ONE SUBJECT that has been both dear to and controversial for the Brethren over the years is *baptism*. Probably no other single subject has so commanded the attention of the Brethren throughout the 288 years of our existence! In fact, German *Baptist* Brethren was our early name!

Granted, the Brethren have not been alone in the struggles regarding baptism. To this very day, denominations and church unions are dealing with difficulties regarding baptism, especially on three fronts: (1) Who are proper subjects for baptism? (2) How is baptism to be administered and by whom? (3) What are the effects of baptism on the one being baptized?

For the purposes of this article, I am not particularly interested in any of these questions. I am sure, however, that I will be unable to escape them completely, since my position on these issues will become evident as my writing unfolds. In fact, for most Brethren the answers to these questions are "givens." In this article, however, I will be limiting myself primarily to a discussion of Romans 6:1-14, which I will be approaching from historical, biblical, and practical considerations.

Historical

In addressing questions pertaining to baptism, the Brethren have rushed to Romans 6 (as well as to Matthew 28:19-20) as one definitive source for our understanding. Before the Brethren became a distinct movement, its leaders studied the writings of the Pietist author Gottfried Arnold (1666-1714), including his views on baptism. Arnold, based on his understanding of Romans 6, believed baptism was a pledge "to die to the world and sin and live for righteousness."¹ Baptism was a sign that the work of conver-

sion had already begun, thus it effected nothing of itself. But it was definitely a sign of the new birth.

Alexander Mack (1679-1735), the acknowledged founding leader of the Brethren movement, drew heavily from Arnold's teaching about baptism. Baptism, among other things, "symbolizes the burial of a person's sins and, according to Romans 6:2-4, his burial into death and his arising to newness of life in Christ Jesus."² The preoccupation of Brethren with baptism is evident from the outset in that in Mack's *Rights and Ordinances*, of the 59 questions proposed, 29 of them deal with questions about baptism.³ The historical situation largely contributed to this apparent imbalance.

In America, one very influential person among the Brethren in the nineteenth century was Peter Nead (1796-1877). Nead was emphatic in addressing the issue of believer's baptism by threefold immersion, a subject which dominated his writings. Nead relied upon Romans 6:3-5 to establish his teaching that baptism was by immersion, since Paul is speaking about burial and resurrection in that text.⁴

Most Brethren writings about baptism have been arguments defending our *mode* of baptism. This emphasis has often put us in peril of teaching baptismal regeneration (that baptism *itself* brings new life). The Brethren did not want to say this, but their insistence that trine immersion was *the only proper form* of baptism, the only method that God approves, led them very close to this inescapable conclusion. As a result of their preoccupation with mode, they often missed the point of what Paul was teaching in Romans 6.

Biblical

Understanding the context is the most important principle of biblical

²*Ibid.*, p. 78.

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 127.

interpretation. Ignoring the context is probable the most frequent violation of proper biblical interpretation.

The context of Romans 6 is Paul's discussion about how to sail through the narrow passage between justification by law (legalism) on the one side and lawlessness on the other. Paul's critics were apparently accusing him of advocating lawlessness in Christian ethics. Since



Understanding
the Bible

grace is "greater than all our sin," some criticized Paul for encouraging sin in order to amplify grace (6:1).

To Paul the idea was preposterous! Shame on anyone for such presumption! But it is a serious accusation. Paul answers his critics by providing three illustrations to demonstrate why the accusation is unfounded.

The first illustration is baptism (6:1-14). The second is taken from the practice of slavery (6:15-23). And the third is drawn from the marriage relationship (7:1-6).

Looking at the passage from this perspective, we realize that Romans 6:1-14 is not primarily about baptism; it is about Christian living. It is about what we sometimes call *sanctification*, the development of a holy life. Understood in this way, baptism is "a serious call to a devout and holy life."

Baptism is a profound illustration of what happens when a person comes to faith in Christ, especially with reference to how that person lives out the implications of that response. Baptism is a watery grave! It is the place where the old self is buried. But baptism is also about an empty grave, because the believer is resurrected into a new life.

Baptism, however, is more than an illustration; it also represents identification with Christ. The burial is *burial with Christ*, and the rising to new life is *resurrection with Christ*. In God's eyes, we are

¹Dale Stoffer, *Background and Development of Brethren Doctrines, 1650-1987* (Philadelphia: Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., 1989), p. 33.

“united with (Christ) in his death” and “in his resurrection” (6:5). In a kind of timelessness, the baptized believer is identified with Christ and His resurrection.

Paul’s point, then, is this: how can anyone who has died to the old self continue to honor its will and practice its morals? Baptism is a dividing point—a boundary marker—separating the old life from the new. The believer has crossed over into a new life; how can there morally be a going back? Karl Barth, who at this point would have made “a good Brethren,” summarizes the idea this way:

What baptism portrays . . . is a supremely critical happening—a real event whose light and shade fall upon the candidate in the course of His baptism. . . . With [Christ] this particular individual died eternally. . . . But with Him also this particular individual rose from the dead for evermore. . . . He is now dead to sin, but has become alive unto God for an existence in His service.⁵

⁵Karl Barth (translated by Ernest Payne), *The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism* (London: SCM Press, 1948), p 11.

Practical

If baptism is an illustration of making the break with the dominion of the sinful self, does it not follow that the moral life is incumbent upon the believer? In baptism, the believer “signs on for the cross.”⁶ Baptism, then, is the beginning of the road of discipleship, of faithfully following Jesus Christ. If this is not a reality in the life of the baptized person, that baptism is misunderstood and becomes a meaningless ritual.

Granted, baptism signifies only the beginning of the new life; the new believer has much growing to do. There will be multiple signs of weakness and struggle. “In baptism, our ‘old Adam’ is drowned. But as Luther says, old Adam is a mighty good swimmer.”⁷ Nevertheless, the basic direction of one’s life has been changed.

As the church on the brink of the 21st century continues to struggle with nominalism and the integrity

⁶William H. Willimon, *The Service of God: How Worship and Ethics are Related* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983), p. 102.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 108.

The Choice

by Charles R. Swindoll

YOU AND I have been called to operate in the sphere of spiritual progress. God has called us to be in a spiritual growth pattern. Sometimes we’re up . . . sometimes down. Sometimes we’re more victorious than other times. But the progress is a movement forward and higher. God certainly has *not* called us for the purpose of impurity, even though we continue to live in a world socked in by a moral fog.

Two options

Actually, you have two options. First, you can choose to live your life in a horizontal fog. If that is your choice, the results are predictable. You will continue to drift in a fog of moral uncertainties. Your disobedience will result in a series of rationalizations that will leave you empty. Guilt and grief will be your companions. You can choose to live like that. If you do, you open up a door of mis-

ery for yourself. You’ll play at church. You’ll toss around a few religious words. But before very long, your lifestyle will match the atmosphere around you. Your eyes will no longer tear up. Your conscience will no longer sting. Your heart won’t beat faster. You may even stop blushing. A jaded, horizontal lifestyle is an option. But it has those consequences . . . those terrible consequences.

Why? The Avenger. God doesn’t let His children play in the traffic without getting hurt. Your disobedience will result in increasing personal misery.

Second, you can choose to live your life vertically on target. The benefits? You will honor the God of moral absolutes. And your obedience will result in greater personal confidence and habits of holiness. It will begin to come supernaturally. You’ll find yourself stronger, more secure, possessing a healthy self-image. [†]

From the booklet Moral Purity: Affirming the Value of Godliness by Charles R. Swindoll (Zondervan Publishing House, 1995). Provided by the publisher.

of church membership, baptism serves notice to all who participate in it (as well as to all who administer it) that this matter of following Christ is serious business. It is a life-and-death issue!

In order to accommodate the modern American mind, we sometimes tend to downplay the radical

Correspondence Welcomed

Questions or comments about this series of articles or suggestions for future topics may be sent to the Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication in care of THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.

nature of discipleship. We tend to remove the cross and to replace it with something more palatable. But the cross is not an option for the Christian; it never was! Dying to self and rising to new life are basic to the very essence of what it means to be a Christian.

In my opinion, this aspect of the meaning of baptism far outweighs in importance any discussion of *how* a person is to be baptized. The historic Brethren mode of baptism may best illustrate its meaning, but unless our practice is accompanied by genuine, heartfelt, vigorous discipleship, it matters little what form our baptism takes. [†]

Dr. Moore, pastor of the St. James, Md., Brethren Church, chairs the Brethren Church’s Spiritual Formation Commission and also serves on the Committee on Doctrine, Research and Publication, which is preparing this series of articles.

The great Easter truth is not that we are to live newly after death



—that is not the great thing—but that we are to be new here and now by the power of the resurrection; not so much that we are to live forever as that we are to, and may, live nobly now because we are to live forever.

—Phillips Brooks

From The Compete Speakers Sourcebook by Eleanor Doan (Zondervan, 1996)



TABLE TALK 1996

By Tina Ross

THE COMMISSION for Evangelism & Church Growth is excited about hosting the first *Table Talk* during this year's General Conference.* We have created a list of topics we would like to see discussed and are looking for Brethren volunteers who would be willing to lead the discussions.

Please look over the following list of topics to see if you or someone you know may have any experience in these areas. If so, determine if you or that person would be willing to lead an 18-minute discussion on that topic during General Conference or would sit at a booth where you could share your ideas on this topic with others. Remember that

*See page 9 of the December *EVANGELIST* for a more detailed explanation of what *Table Talk* is all about.

the central focus for each topic is to be on Evangelism & Church Growth. Feel free to add any topics to the list that we may have missed.

Topics

1. Creative Marketing for the Church: Using the Media
2. Beginning a Community Outreach to Children
3. Making Your Church Facilities Accessible to the Handicapped
4. Using Sports Activities as Outreach
5. Getting First-Time Visitors in the Front Door
6. What Makes a Good Church Brochure
7. Tapping into Multi-Housing Communities
8. Effective Use of Name Tags

9. How Musical Styles Impact Evangelism
10. Using Worship as Outreach
11. How to do Visitor Follow-up
12. Characteristics of Working Greeter Programs
13. Targeting Ministry to the Busy Family of the 90s
14. Ushering as a Ministry
15. Making the Nursery an Outreach Program
16. Turning Youth into Evangelists
17. Using Summer Camp for Outreach
18. Ministry to the Physically-Challenged Person
19. Ministry to the Emotionally Handicapped
20. The Working Role of an Evangelism Board or Ministry
21. The Pastor of the 21st Century: Changing Roles in Evangelism
22. Using a Church Newsletter for Outreach
23. Turning Visitors into Members
24. Small Groups: Ends or Means?
25. Discovering the Evangelistic Styles of Church Members
26. Reaching People Not Like Me
27. Outreach to the Retired Person
28. Blending Worship Styles to Meet Needs
29. Working Welcome Classes
30. Block Parties as Community Outreach
31. The Role of Deacons in Evangelistic Responsibility [†]

Mrs. Ross is a member of the Bloomingtondale Brethren Church of Valrico, Fla., and serves on the Evangelism & Church Growth Commission.

Evangelism Explosion International recently became the first Christian organization in history to establish its ministry in all 211 nations of the world (including one African country that is 99.8 percent Muslim).

Founded in 1962 by Presbyterian minister Dr. D. James Kennedy, Evangelism Explosion seeks to "equip the Body of Christ worldwide for friendship, evangelism, discipleship and healthy growth." It does this by equipping pastors and local believers who, in turn, train others and multiply the number of witnesses within their own communities and countries.

I would like to (circle one): volunteer/suggest the name of a person to do the following (circle one): lead a discussion/be responsible for a booth on the following topic:

Select a topic from the above list or suggest another topic related to Evangelism & Church Growth

Name _____
Your name or the name of the person you are suggesting

Street Address _____
Your address or the address of the person you are suggesting

City/State/Zip _____ Phone # _____

If you are suggesting someone else above, please complete the following:

Your name _____ Phone # _____

Please complete and mail by May 1 to:

Cindy Smith
The Brethren Church National Office
524 College Ave., Ashland, Ohio 44805.

Writing God's word on our hearts

By Susan Lingo

GOD has carefully and firmly set forth mighty commands concerning Scripture memorization. God said, "Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deut. 11:18-19, *NIV*).

Our heavenly Father did not suggest that we *try* to recall His words, nor did He intimate that we should read them once and forget them. Instead, God commanded us to impress His holy words upon our hearts, souls, hands, and minds—and upon those of our *children*.

Four key things

In these two important verses of Scripture, we're commanded to do four key things with God's word:

- **Fix God's word in our hearts and minds.** "Fix" in this verse comes from the Hebrew word *sin*, meaning "to place or put." God desires us to place His word in our hearts and minds, to fix and lock it deep in our innermost parts, and cradle it close to the very essence of our lives. There can be no mistaking God's intention of the word *fix*—God wants us to *memorize* His word!
- **Tie God's word to our hands.** God has commanded us to put His holy word into action. Only when we have fixed Scripture in our hearts and minds can we apply God's word in our lives. Even Jesus used Scripture to actively rebuke Satan's temptations.
- **Bind God's word to our foreheads.** God commands us to keep Scripture foremost in our

Bill Bright wins 1996 Templeton prize

Dr. William R. "Bill" Bright, founder and president of Campus Crusade for Christ International, was recently awarded the 1996 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion.*

Dr. Bright (74) and his wife Vonnette sold a budding food-specialties business in 1951 to begin Campus Crusade for Christ at the University of California at Los Angeles. Today Campus Crusade serves on more than 650 university campuses in the United States and approximately 470 campuses overseas. The organization has as its ultimate goal to help evangelize every single person on earth.

In 1956 Bright wrote *Four Spir-*

*The Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion is the world's largest financial annual award, this year totaling more than \$1 million. It is awarded each year to a person who has shown extraordinary originality in advancing humankind's understanding of God and/or spirituality. Past winners have included Billy Graham, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Charles Colson, and Mother Teresa, to name a few.

tual Laws—a booklet giving a four-point outline on how to establish a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The booklet has been printed in nearly 200 languages and is likely the most widely-disseminated religious booklet in history.

Among the most ambitious of Campus Crusade's efforts has been *JESUS*, a feature-length film documenting the life of Christ. Since its debut in 1979, it has been translated into 355 languages and viewed by an estimated 750 million people in 217 countries.

Bright's latest projects emphasize mobilizing millions of Christians to fast and pray for worldwide spiritual revival. He believes that fasting with biblical prayer is the most enriching and energizing of all Christian disciplines and can accomplish more for God's glory than anything else Christians can do. He plans to use the money from the Templeton prize to educate church leaders worldwide to the spiritual benefits of fasting and prayer. [†]

minds, for when we know what God's word says, we're able to make godly choices in our daily walk and readily proclaim God's truth, wisdom, and love to others.

- **Teach God's word to our children.** Who can add more? God *commands us* to teach Scripture to our children in all we do and wherever we go! And this teaching is threefold: memorizing, comprehending, and applying God's word in our lives every day.

Fix. Tie. Bind. Teach. Commanding words of commitment and action. The challenging act of memorizing Scripture is obedience. It's our responsibility. And Scripture memorization can be an immense portion of our Christian joy.

Jesus gave us an example

Jesus acknowledged that Scripture is lifeblood that flows through our veins when he said, "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4, *NIV*). If Jesus memorized and quoted Scripture, shouldn't we?

Sadly there are some who disagree. Their arguments range from "It's too difficult!" to "Words are just words—it's action and understanding that count!" Yes, comprehension and application *are* vital and God-commanded, yet how can comprehension and application occur without knowing God's word and *exactly* what it says? Remember "fix, tie, bind, teach"?

Fix, tie, and bind are words of commitment and memory; they precede teaching, which is where application begins! We don't have to choose between comprehension, memorization, and application. There simply isn't a hierarchy of importance between these aspects of Scripture. They're meant to be inseparable and integral parts of one another. [†]

Ms. Lingo, an associate senior editor for Group Publishing in Loveland, Colo., was an elementary teacher for more than 14 years and has written more than 20 children's books. This article was taken from her new book, Written on Our Hearts (Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), and was provided by the publisher.

Our Love Reaches Around the World

Thanks in part to the Brethren, World Relief brought help and hope to people in 29 countries in 1995.



AFRICA

Burkina Faso: Life Loans for poor families; agricultural training for improved food production; health education.

Liberia: Reconciliation conferences and workshops; Life Loans for poor women; health education; emergency relief for flood victims.

Malawi: Training church leaders to carry out development projects and AIDS ministries.

Mozambique: Provided 78 wells for drought-prone communities; seeds and tools for 25,000 farming families; Life Loans for 900 poor families.

Rwanda: Reconciliation ministries; food and supplies for displaced people; reconstruction of medical clinics; roofing for widows' homes.

Sierra Leone: Food and medicine for displaced victims of war.

Zaire: Food, medicine, and supplies for Rwandan refugees; care for orphans and children separated from parents; reconstruction of school building; reconciliation ministries.

ASIA

Bangladesh: Blankets and warm clothes for poor families during cold weather; health education for mothers; immunizations and vitamin A for children; small

loans for poor families; support for infants' and women's health center.

Cambodia: Life Loans for 2,138 poor women; health education for mothers of young children; immunizations for young children; health education and evangelism/Christian education for 1,500 older children.

India: Emergency food and supplies for flood victims; **support for Brethren Mission's ministry of food distribution, mobile medical clinics, and construction of wells.**

Indonesia: Support for indigenous church ministry providing goats and ducks for poor families.

Japan: Emergency food, clothing, shelter for earthquake victims; financial support for pastors.

Pakistan: English-language training for Afghan refugees.

Thailand: Agricultural cooperative for farmers in northern Thailand.

Vietnam: Clean water project; vocational training for blind and handicapped adults; equipment for medical clinic; loans for poor women.

LATIN AMERICA/CARIBBEAN

Antigua and Virgin Islands: Shipping costs for delivery of food and emergency aid to vic-

tims of Hurricanes Luis and Marilyn.

Cuba: At U.S. Naval base on Guantanamo Bay, provided vocational education, adult education, health and social services for more than 25,000 Cuban and Haitian refugees.

El Salvador: Children's health program; support for indigenous church ministry to poor families.

Guatemala: Support for local churches' community development ministry.

Haiti: AIDS education for church leaders; assistance for refugees returning to Haiti.

Honduras: Life Loans for 9,400 poor women; support for local churches' mother-child health ministry.

Nicaragua: Agricultural assistance and training for 2,000 poor farmers; reforestation project; health education and training for 24,000 women; immunizations, nutrition assistance, and vitamin A for 20,000 young children.

Peru: Life Loans for 450 poor Quechua Indian families; support for Luke Society child health ministry.

UNITED STATES

Family Ministries: Parenting education for single mothers; literacy training; ministry to homeless families.

Oklahoma City: Trauma counseling for victims of April 19 bombing.

Refugee Ministries: In 31 cities provided English-language training, employment services, and other resettlement ministries to 10,799 refugees.

EUROPE/OTHER

Bosnia: Emergency food, medicine, shelter for refugee families.

Croatia: Emergency food, clothing, counseling for war refugees; reconciliation ministries; support for evangelical church ministries.

Iraq: Assistance for churches in northern Iraq to provide shelter, food, and medicine for Kurdish refugees.

Serbia: Refugee assistance in Belgrade and surrounding areas.

World Relief giving lowest in 8 years!

WORLD RELIEF GIVING in The Brethren Church in 1995 totaled \$64,532. On the positive side, this is a considerable sum of money and actually more than the minimum Fair Share for the denomination as a whole (approximately \$61,175). On the negative side, it was the lowest total since 1987, and nearly 20 percent less than the total for 1994 (\$80,358).

In his financial report to the General Conference Executive Council, Ronald W. Waters suggested that part of the reason for this drop in support for World Relief may have been

the lack of any publicized disasters during 1995. A look back to 1994 lends support to this, for giving that year was only average until August, when Brethren were informed of the crisis in Rwanda. Then Brethren responded with an outpouring of gifts that resulted in the total for the year of \$80,358.

But the sad truth is that just because no major disaster was in the

news in 1995 did not mean that great needs did not continue to exist! In fact, the need always exceeds the resources. And when giving falls off, this only makes the situation worse.

World Relief Corporation of the National Association of Evangelicals was able to meet many needs

and to help thousands of people in 1995. (See the information on the preceding page). But it could have helped many more people if it had only had the resources to do so.

It certainly must be very difficult to go to an area where thousands of people are in desperate need and only be able to help a

few hundred of them. Or to receive an appeal for help from another area of the world and to be unable to respond because of lack of funds.

So this year, let's not wait for some major disaster to strike before we dig into our pocketbooks. Let us respond generously, out of love and compassion, to the many around our world who are already in need. [†]

World Relief Contributions* 1987 through 1995

1987	.....	\$60,665
1988	.....	\$66,541
1989	.....	\$98,892*
1990	.....	\$79,357
1991	.....	\$86,114
1992	.....	\$88,477
1993	.....	\$71,828
1994	.....	\$80,358
1995	.....	\$64,532

*Excluding contributions sent directly to World Relief of NAE.

#Included a \$22,216 bequest.

Causes of Hunger

Cause 1: Violence

Hunger and poverty breed violence. Violence, militarism, and warfare almost inevitably lead to hunger.

Cause 2: Powerlessness

Hunger is fundamentally a political question. People are hungry because their voices are not heard in the halls of power.

Cause 3: Poverty

Hungry people are almost always poor. Very poor people are chronically hungry.

Cause 4: Environmental overload

Overconsumption by affluent people and rapid population growth add great strain on the environment and contribute to hunger and poverty, especially in poor countries.

Cause 5: Discrimination

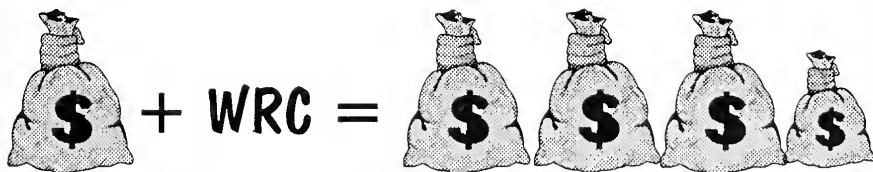
Racism and ethnocentrism underlie many situations of unequal access to resources, and often lead to violent conflict and hunger. Women, children, and elderly people are often denied access to decisions and opportunities which affect their well-being and development, fostering the cycle of hunger.

Response: Values and voting

Hunger in a world of plenty is an indictment of the moral condition of modern society. Humanitarian values need to be expressed not only in the family, but in the community—nationally and internationally as well. Affluent people need to join with low-income people in voting for those values which lead to the elimination of hunger.

Source: *Bread for the World Institute*, 1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1000, Silver Spring, MD 20910

World Relief multiplies our gifts



WHILE it doesn't begin to compare with the way Jesus took a few loaves and fishes and multiplied them to feed the 5,000, World Relief of the National Association of Evangelicals is, nevertheless, able to multiply the money it receives several times in order to help many more people. By seeking matching funds from government, business, and pri-

vate sources, World Relief is able to increase each dollar's impact.

In 1995, for example, each dollar donated to World Relief provided \$3.84 in lifesaving help. So if you donated \$5.00 to World Relief, you were helping to provide \$19.20 in assistance. Just think how much assistance you can provide this year if you donate 10, 20, or 50 dollars! [†]



Solomons put faith into action in visit to Dominican Republic

Beavercreek, Ohio — Former Brethren missionary Jan Solomon and her 11-year-old daughter Lisa spent 12 days in the Dominican Republic in January putting their faith into action.

The two were part of a group of 27 from Dayton Christian Schools who traveled to the Caribbean nation to work, play, and pray with the Dominicans. The primary purpose of the trip was to work on a clinic in the village of Juan Tomas. The group painted, spread mortar, mixed cement, and helped dig a ditch. The students also presented skits, mimes, and puppet shows dramatizing the love of Jesus Christ.

Mrs. Solomon, who served as translator for the group, teaches Spanish and is a guidance counselor at Xenia Christian High School. Lisa is a sixth grader at the Xenia elementary campus of Dayton Christian Schools. A bonus of the trip for the Solomons was the opportunity to meet two children their family sponsors through World Vision.

GCEC approves working document for denominational reorganization

Ashland, Ohio — Consideration of a working document for denominational reorganization was the major item of business at the General Conference Executive Council (GCEC) meeting held Friday, March 15, at Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland. Following a lengthy discussion, the document was unanimously approved.

The proposal is the culmination of joint efforts by the Missionary Board* and GCEC over the last two years to discover an organizational arrangement that would (1) provide a clear, unified vision and leadership for denominational ministries; (2) assure that our missionary focus remains strong and highly visible; and (3) provide flexibility to address God-directed priorities and ministry opportunities.

A copy of the proposal has been mailed to each Brethren pastor and the proposal was also included with the April 5 issue of *Leadership Letter*, which was mailed to all Brethren elders and pastors, district moderators, local church moderators, and other denominational and district leaders. Regional forums are being held to give interested Brethren an opportunity to discuss the proposal, ask questions, and provide feedback.[#] GCEC is hoping for a broad response from Brethren people regarding the proposal.

*The Missionary Board also discussed the document earlier in the week and voted its approval.

[#]At press time regional forums to discuss the reorganization proposal were scheduled

In other business GCEC approved a working budget for 1996, adopted a policy statement for endowment funds, accepted a policy statement for planned gifts, and also received other routine reports.

The working budget projected total support (Fair Share and other contributions) in 1996 of \$358,500 and total revenue (fees, investment income, miscellaneous income) of \$213,500, for total income of \$572,000. Expenses were projected at \$648,200, plus a one-time estimated cost of closing the Brethren Printing Company of \$15,000, to put total expenses at \$663,200.

Both the total support/revenue figures and the total expense figure (without the cost to close the Printing Company) are lower than the corresponding figures in the 1995 working budget. (The actual operation figures for 1995, which were also reported at the meeting, were total support and revenue of \$589,814 and total expenses of \$629,564, for a shortfall of \$39,750.)

A new Brethren congregation was also recognized as a "class" during the meeting. The group is Hope Brethren Church of Stockton, Calif. The new class is a Filipino congregation that meets in the facilities of the Stockton Brethren Church.

— reported by Editor Dick Winfield

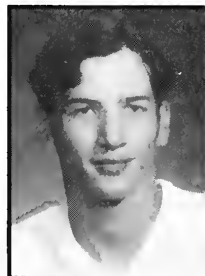
for Nappanee, Ind., at 3:00 p.m. on April 21; at the Valley Brethren Church, Jones Mills, Pa., at noon on April 27; at the Smoky Row Brethren Church, Columbus, Ohio, at 1:00 p.m. on April 27; and in Peru, Ind., at 3:00 p.m. on April 28.

Moore twins lead team to state championship game

St. James, Md. — Brad and Alan Moore, identical twin sons of Pastor Brian and Amanda Moore of the St. James Brethren Church, led the Williamsport (Md.) High School basketball team to the Maryland State Class 1A championship game in March.

Unfortunately, the team lost the game, but even so it had one of the

most successful seasons (22-6) in Williamsport's history. The team had made it to the state semi-finals



Alan Moore



Brad Moore

the previous two years, but lost on both occasions. The twins played the guard spots on the team those two years as well.

Both twins were selected to the all-league team this year. Alan, who played point guard and averaged 11.8 points per game during the season, made first team all-league; Brad, who averaged 10.2 points, made second team.

According to their father, the twins are also very good soccer players.



Briefly Noted



Kerry and Dana Stogsdill were installed as deacon and deaconess at the Warsaw, Ind., First Brethren Church on Sunday, March 10, 1996. Kerry is the son of Rev. Claude and Jane Stogsdill. Rev. Stogsdill presented the message for the service and assisted Warsaw pastor Rev. Mitch Funkhouser with the ordination.

Grace Hause, a member of the Meadow Crest Brethren Church of Ft. Wayne, Ind., was featured in a full-page article in the magazine section of the *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*. Calling Mrs. Hause (81) "everybody's grandma," the article focused on her volunteer work at East Wayne Street Center's Head Start program and as a Foster Grandparent at the YWCA's summer camp. "I love children, and they like me," the article quotes Mrs. Hause as saying. According to Rev. Richard Austin, pastor at Meadow Crest, Mrs. Hause was a member for many years of the Brighton Chapel (Howe, Ind.) Brethren and "Her love [for] the Brighton congregation and [former] Pastor John [Long] goes beyond measure!" He went on to say, "During the past seven years she has organized two different weekly Bible studies that I have led. Grace Hause is indeed an 'angel of light'!"

Jim McGraw, a member of the Pleasant View Brethren Church of Vandergrift, Pa., was recently recognized for his volunteerism by the Mutual Benefits Association, an insurance group started by the former Pennsylvania Railroad. In addition to spending much time working at Pleasant View Church, Mr. McGraw cooks one day a week for the Vandergrift Meals-on-Wheels and has donated nearly 15 gallons of blood.

Ohio Brethren focus on unity in Christ, care for business at district gathering

Franklin, Ohio — "Unity in Christ, That the World May Believe" was the theme of the Ohio Conference meeting held Saturday, March 9, at the Northview Brethren Life Church near Franklin.

The conference opened with a time of worship led by host pastor Mike Sove and his worship team. J. Michael Drushal, moderator-elect, gave the keynote address and spoke on the theme. He chronicled his own spiritual pilgrimage, noting how his understanding of unity had moved from legalism to unity within diversity. He said that in his earlier years he saw the Christian life as living from a performance orientation, of trying to get out in front of the race. "But that does not lead to unity," he said.

Instead, he has moved to an understanding of unity whereby our goal individually and corporately is to strive toward Christlikeness. "With this view, the race takes on a different appearance," he said. Noting the definitions of infinity and eternal, he said, "Based on infinity, I'm no nearer the finish line than I was when I started the race. . . . no matter how hard we've worked or how many rules we've obeyed." This has an impact on a performance-based approach that results in us seeing ourselves running as part of the "pack," spurring one

another on in love and good deeds.

Drushal proposed three recommendations, two of which are continuations of Moderator Lynn Mercer's recommendations from last year: (1) to seek ways to cooperate with other churches of other denominations in our communities to foster unity; (2) continuing the District Day Apart started last year; and (3) continuing the Ohio Prayer Letter.

Moderator Lynn Mercer led the business session, which consisted of district and national reports, adoption of the 1996 budget, and election of officers. Drushal became the new moderator with his installation at the end of the day. Other officers for the current year are: L. Eugene Oburn, moderator-elect; Shirley Bowers, secretary; DeAnn Oburn, assistant secretary; Stanley Gentle, treasurer; William Walk, assistant treasurer; and Dorman Ronk, statistician.

During the afternoon, two seminars were held: "Prayer: The Language of Friendship with God," led by Dr. Jerry Flora; and "Peacemaking in the Church," led by Rev. David Cooksey. Auxiliaries also held sessions during the afternoon.

The 1997 conference will move to April—Saturday, April 26—at the Louisville First Brethren Church.

— reported by Ronald W. Waters

Spiritual Formation Commission plans Conference presentation

Ashland, Ohio — At its March 14 meeting in Ashland, the Spiritual Formation Commission continued making plans for its presentation at General Conference and dealt with other matters related to personal spiritual growth. Topics to be addressed in the Conference presentation, which will be made on Wednesday morning, will include Promise Keepers, Brethren Way of Christ, women's ministries, pastoral sabbaticals, and retreat opportunities—topics which are the major emphases of the commission at this time. The commission will

also be sponsoring several EVANGELIST articles and book reviews.

Members of the commission are Brian Moore (ch.), Fred Brandon, Carolyn Cooksey, Jerry Flora, and Marlin McCann.

— reported by Brian Moore

I've always loved Jesus' analogy of evangelism as "fishing," but I've had one hesitation about it: Fishing is just a hobby for most people, something they do in their spare time. No one sees fishing as a responsibility. Yet fishing for men is serious business. It's not a hobby for Christians; it is to be our lifestyle!

— *The Purpose-Driven Church*
by Rick Warren (Zondervan, 1995)



What's happening in your church?

Some people have gotten the impression that since the EVANGELIST has become a newsletter, we no longer accept local church news. That's incorrect. We just want to be more selective.

So if you have an exciting event, an interesting ministry, or some good news to share from your congregation, please send a report to the editor.

In Memory

Rev. Bobby R. Van Hoose, 54, a former Brethren pastor, died February 27 after a battle with cancer. Rev. Van Hoose served the Williamstown, Ohio, First Brethren Church from 1977 to 1984. At the time of his death he was pastoring Liberty Christian Center in Piqua, Ohio. He is survived by his wife Janet and their three grown children.

Central District's Davenport Conference considers where the church is headed

Bettendorf, Iowa — "The Brethren Church Today: Where Is it Going?" was the theme of the Central District's annual Davenport Conference, held February 23-24 at the Jumer Castle Hotel in Bettendorf.

Roy Andrews, associate pastor of the First Brethren Church of Napanee, Ind., was the guest speaker for the conference. He used passages from the Book of Acts to reveal the pitfalls and promises that are in store for the future of The Brethren Church.

The event began Friday evening with a buffet meal provided by the capable hotel staff, followed by a praise-song session led by Elizabeth Garrett, wife of Pastor Jim Garrett of the Lanark, Ill., First Brethren Church. Then Pastor Andrews spoke on the power of prayer over adversity, as illustrated in the choice of Judas' replacement in Acts 1:24-26. He stressed the importance of prayer whenever decisions are made or conflicts arise.

The session on Saturday morning

began with a huge buffet breakfast, followed by songs of praise led by Rev. Bob Schubert, associate pastor of the Lanark First Brethren Church. Then Pastor Andrews again brought a message from the Book of Acts. He spoke about the importance of both numerical and spiritual growth in the church; about the limited amount of time we have to do the work of the Lord, which means that we must separate essentials from non-essentials when committing our time; and about the necessity of working for unity of Christians in Christ Jesus. Following his message, the conference concluded with prayer and the singing of "He Is Lord."

The annual Davenport Conference of the Central District, attended this year by 40 people, is designed to be a time of fellowship, sharing the word of God, and charging of spiritual batteries. The initial conferences were held in Davenport, Iowa (thus explaining the name), but are now held in various locations.

— reported by Ellis Boughton
Central District moderator-elect



Mulvane, Kans. — Several Christian education workers at the Mulvane Brethren Church recently participated in a Red Cross training program called "Till Help Arrives." Topics covered in the course included rescue breathing, temperature extremes, choking, burns, and animal and insect bites. The Board of Christian Education selected this course to help prepare teachers, nursery helpers, and youth leaders to handle emergencies. Shown in the photograph are (l. to r.) Janie Heird, Carolyn Tucker, Shirley Parker (standing), Shirley McCoy, Pastor Bob McCoy, Dean Mills, Dorothy Mills, Lacey Schlereth, and Red Cross presenter Gary Scheiffelbein. Also taking the course but not in the picture was Tamara Schlereth.

— reported by Tamara Schlereth

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Vol. 118, No. 5

A newsletter for Brethren people

May 1996

Reilly R. Smith, Executive Director of the Missionary Board, asks:

Why plant new Brethren churches?

THE BRETHREN CHURCH is a close-knit fellowship of about 125 local congregations. We have difficulty filling our pulpits and supporting our pastors. We struggle to identify and recruit leaders for local, district, and national committees, commissions, task forces, etc. We scratch to meet our local, district, and national budgets. We must strengthen existing congregations. So why plant new churches? I propose several reasons.

Past examples

The early Christians planted churches. The book of Acts is full of examples. Philip started a church in Samaria. Paul discovered that a church had been planted in Damascus. Peter began a church in the household of Cornelius at Caesarea. Jews planted a church in Antioch that reached out to the Gentiles so successfully that Barnabas went to help them. He even asked Paul to come and assist him.

Later Paul and Barnabas planted churches on Cypress and throughout Asia Minor. Paul and Silas planted more churches in Asia Minor and new congregations in Macedonia and Greece. Believers planted a thriving church in Rome before the apostles even got there.

The early Brethren, seeking to emulate the early church, were among the most aggressive church planters of the 18th Century, both in Europe and America. Their zeal in church planting caused the Brethren movement to grow from eight people in 1708 to tens of thousands by 1800 and to more than 200,000 by 1900.



Brethren churches planted since 1939 have been responsible for most of the growth in The Brethren Church during the past 57 years. Our older congregations have generally declined in membership and attendance.

Church planting is the most effective way to evangelize unchurched people today. The talent and energy expended to start a new congregation attracts unchurched people when established churches do not. People enjoy and appreciate new, exciting adventures. Sometimes they even get saved and discipled.

New opportunities

New churches enjoy opportunities to adapt their ministries to the community in ways that established churches can only do with great difficulty. For example, at the next business meeting of your church, suggest that home Bible fellowships might be a more effective way than Sunday school to make disciples in your community.

Church planting energizes established churches that participate in starting new congregations, causing Christians to focus their attention on outreach. They begin to pray and give more, to work harder, and to discover joy in ministry. These things can revitalize an established church.

Church planting also may be the solution to some of the challenges stated in the first paragraph of this article. New churches mean new people who will bring new resources to The Brethren Church: gifts, talent, workers, pastoral and missionary candidates, and financial blessing. If we can plant churches and concentrate on God's kingdom and righteousness, then He will add everything we need to continue his work.

Sowing and reaping

In 2 Corinthians 9:6-11, Paul describes the principle of sowing and reaping. Church planting is sowing with the expectation of harvest. If we sow generously, we will reap a bountiful harvest. Some of the "seed" may fall along the pathway.

(continued on next page)

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The Women's Outlook Newsletter
is in the center of this issue.

Some may fall on rocky soil. Some may fall among thorns. But some *will* fall into good soil, producing a bountiful harvest. We can afford neither to hoard our seed, nor to sow sparingly. We must broadcast

our seed generously in church planting, if we want to reap a bountiful harvest. Those Brethren who participate will reap blessing. Those who refuse will not. I believe it's really that simple. [†]

World Relief director evacuated from Liberia

World Relief's Liberia Director Brian Johnson and his family were evacuated from Monrovia on April 12 when violence broke out anew in this West African country. The renewed violence in Monrovia in early April ended eight months of relative peace in Liberia after a six-year-long civil war.

Johnson chose to evacuate his family after numerous confrontations in their home with armed rebels, during which his teenage daughters and other women who had taken refuge in the Johnson home were threatened. The helicopter carrying the Johnson family was fired on several times as it lifted off. A number of SIM missionaries were also evacuated.

Most of World Relief's 15 Liberian staff were able to remain in the country and were unharmed. Johnson planned to proceed to Liberia's border areas and to continue directing World Relief's work from there. "Through our Liberian staff and the churches, World Relief's distribution system is still in place, so we intend to continue emergency relief work as soon as security allows," said David van Vuuren, World Relief's Africa Director.

World Relief has carried out relief, development, and reconciliation work in Liberia since 1990, working with a network of Liberian churches. Brethren have supported this work through their giving to the World Relief program of The Brethren Church. Special donations for Liberia relief may be made through your local church or sent directly to The Brethren Church National Office, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805. [†]

What's happening NOW in church planting?

WHAT A DIFFERENCE a year makes! In March of 1995 the New Church Development Commission of the Missionary Board sponsored the first Church Planting Summit. Each of the nine Brethren districts shared what at that time were mostly dreams about church planting. That summit was such a source of inspiration and challenge that we agreed we must meet again.

The second Church Planting Summit was held March 14, 1996, at Park Street Brethren Church. All nine districts of the denomination were again represented. The summit began with devotions from Isaiah 54:1-8 and a time of prayer, led by Rev. Reilly Smith, Executive Director of the Missionary Board.

Dr. Dale Stoffer, chair of the New Church Development Commission, spoke on the concept of the church in the Anabaptist/Brethren tradition and gave practical suggestions for planting churches that reflect this heritage. He also looked at why the typical Brethren congregation, based upon a fellowship model of the church, finds it difficult to grow beyond 125 to 150 people.

Church planter Rev. Tom Conrad talked about the expanding ministry taking place in Indianapolis through "Winning the Race Ministries." He presented the concept of building new churches using a cell-group approach. We shared his ex-

citement and praise to God as he told about the powerful way God is working through the cell ministry.

The time we all eagerly looked forward to was when the district mission board representatives gave their reports. What had been a dream for the California district last year has now become reality with the start of West Valley Brethren Life in Tracy. In addition, a Brethren Filipino congregation has begun meeting at Stockton. The Central and Pennsylvania Districts, which had no definite plans for church planting last year, are now in the midst of laying plans for church starts in the near future. The Midwest District is committed to moving ahead with the work in the Denver area yet this year.

The Ohio and Southeastern Districts continue to support their existing works while planning for additional church starts in the next few years. Indiana is still concentrating on Indianapolis; the Southwest District is considering a Hispanic work in Tucson; and Florida is working with the STAKE volunteers. What a difference a year makes!

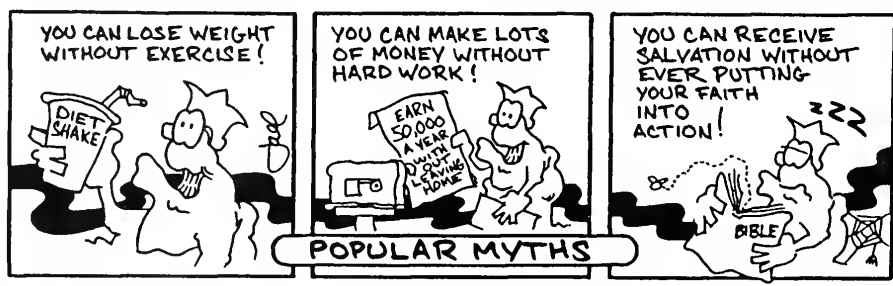
Several times during the day we were reminded of the need for focused prayer for our home mission congregations. They are on the front lines of spiritual warfare and need the prayer support of the entire Brethren family.

We look forward to what the Lord will do in the coming year. Be in prayer for the church-planting efforts going on in your district and in the denomination.

— reported by Dale Stoffer

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Pontius' Puddle



Nonconformity: conformed to Christ

By Brenda B. Colijn

ROMANS 12:1-2 is an important passage for the Brethren. It is the basis of the historic Brethren doctrine of nonconformity. It's worth a closer look in our series on biblical interpretation.

Context

Paul wrote his letter to the Romans to introduce himself and his gospel to the Roman church. As the apostle to the Gentiles, he hoped to visit the Christians at Rome and to have a fruitful ministry among them, as he had among other Gentiles (1:11-13). He also hoped that they would support him in his planned missionary trip to Spain (15:23-24). As the Jewish apostle to the Gentiles, he writes to the Romans about the place of Jews and Gentiles in God's plan of salvation. The climax of this discussion occurs in chapters 9-11, where Paul shows that God has made both Jews and Gentiles without excuse in order to show mercy to them all (11:32).

A Living Sacrifice

In Romans 12:1, Paul draws a conclusion from his previous arguments: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship" (NIV). Because of God's mercy offered to them in Christ (as Paul has discussed in chapters 4-11), they should offer themselves to God in return. Given the grand sweep of God's acts on their behalf, how can they respond?

Unlike both Jewish and pagan worshipers, they cannot offer animal sacrifices in worship. But they can offer the one sacrifice that God desires—themselves. (In this case, the body stands in for the whole person.) It is not their death God wants, because they have already died with Christ (6:3-4), but their ongoing everyday life. As they offer themselves to God, they are made "holy," set apart for God's use. This

is the kind of worship that is truly "spiritual" or "rational" or "reasonable"—that is, the worship that is appropriate to them as recipients of God's mercy.

Nonconformity

Paul expands on the meaning of the living sacrifice in verse 2: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." Because the Romans have experienced God's mercy, their lives should begin to take a different shape. Paul's command ("Do not conform any longer") suggests both that they have conformed in the past and that they have the power to stop conforming now. This is the challenge for believers who have to live as redeemed people in an unredeemed world.

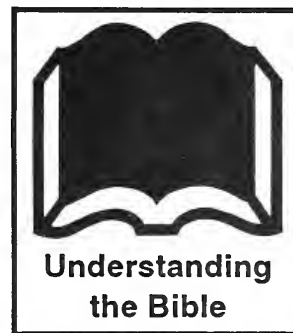
J. B. Phillips' translation of this verse is justly famous: "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within . . ." Rather than letting the standards of the fallen world shape their character and conduct, they are to be shaped by their renewed minds—the opposite of the depraved minds Paul described in 1:28. Paul doesn't state the source of this renewal of the mind, but his discussion in chapter 8 would suggest that it comes from the Holy Spirit. This agrees with Titus 3:5, the only other place in the New Testament where the word for "renewal" occurs. He also doesn't say here what shape we *should* be conformed to, but in 8:29 he identifies this as Christ.

Paul is contrasting two kinds of change: one that occurs because of pressure from without and one that occurs because of transformation within. Don't let the world change you from the outside in, Paul says; let God change you from the inside out. As they are re-formed, the Ro-

man believers will be able to see for themselves the validity of God's will by testing it out in their lives.

The context of the following verses suggests that Paul has something particular in mind when he mentions God's will. He gives an illustration in verse 3: "For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment . . ." The renewed minds of the Roman Christians will give them an appropriate evaluation of themselves.

Paul had already warned the



Gentile believers not to be arrogant toward those Jews who had not accepted Christ, because they

themselves are dependent upon the Jewish "root" of the people of God (11:17-21). Now he narrows the focus from the sweeping plan of God to the need to get along with one another in day-to-day life. He proposes the image of the body of Christ as a model for the diversity-in-unity of believers in Christ, whether they be Jewish or Gentile (12:4-6). This model serves as a foundation for the ethical instructions that Paul presents in the rest of this letter.

Application

So how does Romans 12:1-2 apply to us? The nineteenth-century Brethren struggled with how to apply Paul's instructions about nonconformity, partly because of their desire to be biblical and partly because of their reluctance to abandon their familiar German culture and embrace an alien English one. Our look at Paul's focus on character and conduct in Romans 12 suggests that our Brethren forbears' plain dress was a less important expression of nonconformity than their reputation for integrity, discipline, hospitality, and mutual support.

The Progressive Brethren were
(continued on page 5)

What is this organization called Promise Keepers?

By Gary Diehl

SOMETHING'S HAPPENING to men around our country who are seeking deeper meaning in their lives and in their relationships with God, family, and community. It's called *Promise Keepers*.

Perhaps you've heard of the organization, or maybe you've talked to someone who returned all excited from a "PK" conference. Possibly you've attended one of these conferences yourself and caught a glimpse of this powerful movement of God that's challenging today's Christian male population.

On the other hand, maybe you are one of many sincere believers who have doubts—or even fears—about this so-called "men's club" of the Christian world. Wherever you are in your knowledge about this phenomenon called Promise Keepers, you will probably find yourself confronted with the ideals and desires of the group as it continues its explosive growth and outreach.

Some basic questions

What is Promise Keepers? Where did it come from? Where is it going? These are the kinds of questions being asked as this "movement" gains powerful momentum and even national exposure in such magazines as *The National Inquirer*. Is it for real? Or is it just another parachurch group out to undermine the true worship of God? Perhaps a few facts and a personal observation will help shed some light on these questions.

The organizational engine behind Promise Keepers was founded in March of 1990 by Bill McCartney, former head football coach at the University of Colorado. Coach Mac shared his burden for today's men with a longtime friend, Dave Wardell, on a drive from Denver to Pueblo, Colorado. He sensed a deep need in his own life to connect with other men of God—men who would challenge one another to live up to the promises they've made to their Lord

and their families. They discussed the difficulty men have in establishing vital relationships that go beyond the surface of everyday life. From those initial discussions, the Promise Keepers concept was born.

The first Promise Keepers conference was held in June of 1991. Forty-two hundred men were a part of that conference, which was held in Boulder, Colorado. By June 1993, the Boulder stadium was packed with 50,000 men who were hungry for the teaching and inspiration offered by men of God like James Dobson, Charles Swindoll, E.V. Hill, and others.

Dramatic growth

Since then the conference schedule has grown dramatically. Thirteen major Promise Keepers events were held throughout the country in 1995, with attendance approaching three-quarters of a million men from all racial, ethnic, and denominational backgrounds. They came together with one common denominator—the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

The basic tenants of the organization are designed to promote active spiritual growth in the lives of men through building vital relationships, mentoring, Bible study, and accountability. When someone becomes a "Promise Keeper," he is asked to agree to the following seven commitments:

Seven commitments of a PK

1. A Promise Keeper is committed to honoring Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and obedience to His word, in the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. A Promise Keeper is committed to pursuing vital relationships with a few other men, understanding that he needs brothers to help him keep his promises.
3. A Promise Keeper is com-

mitted to practicing spiritual, moral, ethical, and sexual purity.

4. A Promise Keeper is committed to building strong marriages and families through love, protection, and biblical values.
5. A Promise Keeper is committed to supporting the mission of the church by honoring and praying for his pastor and by actively giving his time and resources.
6. A Promise Keeper is committed to reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity.
7. A Promise Keeper is committed to influencing his world, being obedient to the Great Commandment (see Mark 12:30-31) and the Great Commission (see Matthew 28:19-20).*

These simple statements tell much about the "what" and "why" of the PK movement. Their simplicity and their call for integrity in all areas of life in no way contradict what sincere students of the Bible would espouse. The fact that PK advocates the building of strong mentoring relationships among men of faith demonstrates the desire to go beyond the "spiritual mountaintop" of a conference. It provides a structure that draws men into ongoing fellowship and that encourages them to become accountable to one another.

A personal glimpse

Perhaps a personal glimpse into one of the major events can shed some light on the remaining questions. A group of nine men from our congregation attended the Promise Keepers conference in Detroit, Mich., in April 1995. Having been to pep rallies, business rallies, and religious concerts before, I felt I knew what was about to confront me.

The Pontiac Silverdome was jammed to the ceiling with more than 72,000 men and boys. Before the program started, the atmosphere was similar to that at a foot-

*From *Raise the Standard*, a booklet distributed at the 1995 conferences.

ball game, minus the alcohol, profanity, and smoke. There were paper airplanes, Frisbees, and beach balls being sailed and bounced from all corners of the arena. But when the Maranatha Praise Band began the introductory music, all eyes, ears, and hearts turned to worship. That I did *not* expect!

Evangelist Luis Palau was the opening speaker. His message on the theme "Jesus Christ is the Standard" was powerfully delivered and produced astonishing results. More than 7,000 men and boys—some of them fathers and sons who had been struggling to understand each other for years—went forward at the invitation. Many admitted they were making their first-time decision for Christ. Others made rededication commitments. Everyone, whether he stepped out of his seat or not, was challenged to renew his efforts to make Jesus the ultimate standard for life.

The teaching sessions and praise music continued from 6:30 p.m. on Friday evening until 9:00 p.m. Saturday. Speaker after speaker put forth the challenge to live the life Christian men are called to live. Man after man allowed the Spirit of God to break down the walls that separated him from God, from family, and from others.

One of the most inspiring moments came when Dr. Joseph Stowell,

president of Moody Bible Institute, closed his message on a man's relationship with his children. He began singing the Lord's Prayer without musical accompaniment. As he motioned for everyone to join in, all 72,000 men rose to their feet, clasped the hands of those on either side, and held them high in the air. The Silverdome echoed to the rafters—not with shouts for a football team but with the united voices of men pouring forth praises to their Father in Heaven.

Criticisms of Promise Keepers

Some who are concerned about the Promise Keepers movement criticize its emphasis on "breaking down the walls" of denominational, racial, and ethnic differences. They fear that "we who are right" might be led astray by those in the more liberal (non-evangelical) denominations. The reply of Promise Keepers has been to emphasize the fundamental thing we have in common—the Lordship of Jesus Christ in our lives. Possibly the words of a slogan made popular more than a hundred years ago by the Progressive Movement of the Brethren apply to what PK seeks to promote: "In essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty, in all things charity."

I don't pretend to have all the answers for the criticisms leveled at Promise Keepers or their doc-

trine. Is the organization flawless? No. What earthly group is? Is God using it despite its flaws? You'd better believe it! He's using it to draw men to Himself and to challenge them to change the way they relate to one another, to their families, and to the world in which they live.

In response to questions about the impact of Promise Keepers, I would echo the sentiment of the blind man whom Jesus healed on the Sabbath by putting mud on his eyes and telling him to go wash in the pool of Siloam (John 9). When the Pharisees questioned this man about Jesus, he replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" (John 9:25, *NIV*). For growing multitudes of men around the country who long to have their spiritual eyesight restored, this same Jesus is making a new batch of mud from an unlikely group called *Promise Keepers*. [†]

Mr. Diehl is an active member and deacon in the First Brethren Church of North Georgetown, Ohio. He is employed as coated products manager at A.J. Oster Foils, Inc., in Alliance Ohio. He and his wife Nancy have four adopted children. Since attending the Promise Keepers convention in Detroit last year, he has organized a group that meets every other Saturday at a local restaurant for breakfast, fellowship, Bible study, and accountability.

Understanding the Bible

(continued from page 3)

right in their insistence that non-conformity is first of all an inward matter. It begins with the renewal of the mind. This suggests that monitoring what we put into our minds is a good place to start. One important way to do that is by monitoring our television viewing, since television is one of the most powerful forces of social conformity ever invented.

Too often, however, we Progressives have allowed the idea of non-conformity to degenerate into an individual, private freedom of conscience that doesn't require outward expression and doesn't permit mutual accountability. The non-conformity Paul is talking about expresses itself in concrete social

ways, in how we treat one another and in how we behave toward those outside the church. It is also something Paul expects us to do together—to present our bodies (plural) as a living sacrifice (singular in Greek).

Living by a biblical standard

Most of our churches today aren't faced with the problem of how to unite Jews and Gentiles in Christ. But we have other barriers of race, language, gender, culture, politics, and economic status for our renewed minds to work on. Too often we think that we have avoided conforming to the world because we listen to different radio stations and shop in Christian-owned stores. Have we simply traded one set of human cultural standards for another—or perhaps just run worldly standards through a more

familiar and comfortable filter?

We shouldn't be satisfied with conforming to any set of cultural norms or with being different simply for the sake of being different. In either case, we're letting ourselves be molded by the world. Instead, we should live by a different standard entirely—a biblical standard. We should be willing to let the Holy Spirit make us utterly Christlike, however socially awkward that might be. Only then can we live the kind of lives that will be *different from* the world and that will really make *a difference in* the world. [†]

Dr. Colijn, a member of the Smoky Row Brethren Church of Columbus, Ohio, is assistant professor of theology at Ashland Theological Seminary. She chairs the Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication, which is preparing this series of articles.

You will never be the same!

By Jerry Flora

WHAT do a Quaker professor, a Catholic monk, an Episcopalian editor, and an Alliance pastor have in common? Well, if their names are Foster, Lawrence, Kidd, and Tozer, they have written in a way that feeds and fuels our spirits.

Last year the Leadership Development Commission asked for the titles of books that would help Brethren workers in their devotional life. Four were suggested. This article will give a brief overview of two of them, and a follow-up article next month will look at the other two.

Richard J. Foster

Richard J. Foster burst on the scene in 1978 with his first book, *Celebration of Discipline*. The Christian world soon discovered that this young Quaker was a rich gift to us. With that one book Foster rekindled in many hearts the fire of obedience to God through ordinary means of space, time, and matter.

He produced several other fine works, and then for nearly a decade we heard nothing. At last, in 1992, came *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*. It was worth the wait. Here in about 250 pages Foster gives us what may be this generation's best all-around book on prayer.

"For a long time I have wanted to write on the subject of prayer," he begins.

To do so, however, would have been to commit the sin of presumption. I was not ready. I had more—much more—to learn, to experience. . . . Prayer ushers us into the Holy of Holies, where we bow before the deepest mysteries of the faith, and one fears to touch the Ark. The years have come and gone, and while I am still a novice in the ways of prayer (who can ever master something in which the main object is to be mastered?), I somehow sense the divine nod of approval. Now is the time. And so I am writing, and in my writing I am speaking for all the prayerless persons I have been and all the prayerful persons I hope to become. (p. xi)



In twenty-one graceful chapters Foster describes (1) moving inward (seeking transformation), which focuses on God the Son as our savior and teacher; (2) moving upward (seeking intimacy), focusing on God the Father, our high king and holy lover; and (3) moving outward (seeking ministry) with God the Spirit, who empowers and evangelizes.

Here is a book to read, mark, savor, reread, pray through, and live out. You will never be the same again!

Brother Lawrence

In Foster's chapter on "Unceasing Prayer," he refers more than once to the western church's classic book on that subject, *The Practice of the Presence of God*. The book's author, Nicolas Herman (better known as Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection), was a lay monk in a Parisian monastery from about 1650 until his death in 1691. Like many people in our day, he went through a series of career changes until he found his true calling at about age forty. Then for more than ten years he tried to advance in the life of

We will never have pure enough motives, or be good enough, or know enough in order to pray rightly. We simply must set all these things aside and begin praying. In fact, it is in the very act of prayer itself—the intimate, ongoing interaction with God—that these matters are cared for in due time.

—Richard J. Foster, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*, p. 8.

prayer. Sometime in his fifties he came to experience the loving peace of God in a way that never left him. He called it the practice of the presence of God.

The book by that title is really a report of four interviews that one of his superiors had with Brother Lawrence. Most editions also include sixteen letters by him collected after his death. The entire book is so small that some versions can slip into purse or pocket without creating a bulge. The Image Books edition (Doubleday, 1977) includes an excellent introduction by the outstanding contemporary writer Henri Nouwen. The Paraclete Press edition (1985) contains all available material and is beautifully illustrated.

"It is not necessary to be always in church to be with God," he wrote in his Fourth Letter.

We can make a private chapel of our heart where we can retire from time to time to commune with Him, peacefully, humbly, lovingly; everyone is capable of these intimate conversations with God, some more, others less; He knows what we can do. Let us begin. . . . You are almost 65 and I am approaching 80; let us live and let us die with God. . . .

Three weeks before his death he wrote, "If we wish to enjoy the peace of paradise in this life, we must accustom ourselves to an intimate, humble and loving conversation with [God]; we must prevent our minds from wandering away from Him on any occasion. . ." (15th Letter).

And how in this process can we keep our thoughts from drifting while we pray? "One way of easily recalling the mind during prayer and keeping it at rest is not to let it wander during the day" (8th Letter). How very wise!

I have seen pastors and laypeople alike become excited at the message of this "saint of the common people," which is: keep it simple! Try what he says. You will never be the same! [†]

Dr. Flora is professor of New Testament Theology and Spiritual Formation at Ashland Theological Seminary and is a member of The Brethren Church's Spiritual Formation Commission.

The Women's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society

May-June 1996

Volume 9, Number 5

The President's Pen



Dear Ladies,

The months seem to fly by so quickly and it is soon time for another letter. This month I want to mention No. 6 of our ABC's. ABC 5 concerns our offerings and dues and is pretty much self-explanatory. We've had articles recently in the *Newsletter* explaining our offerings.

ABC 6 says, "Promote World Relief and follow suggestions in the *WMS Service Guide* for other benevolence." The *Service Guide* was revised by Joan Merrill last August, and all WMS groups should have a copy. If not, you could get one from Joan at Conference. There are many suggestions in the *Service Guide*.

I have heard of many groups regularly sending packages to India. My group at Park Street has sent sewing and school kits to India as well as personal items for the Kumars. We have also sent packages to Colombia. Lost Creek, Kentucky, has a "needs" list and many groups regularly send boxes to them.

Check out the *Service Guide* for more ideas. There are many local organizations that are being helped by WMS groups. If your group has done something special for benevolence, please drop a note to Joan Ronk, and she will share your ideas through the *Newsletter*.

I read an article in the magazine *Women Alive* about prayer. The
(continued on page 4)

WHAT IS FAITH?

Devotions given by Ruth Focht, Ohio District WMS
Conference in Franklin, March 9, 1996

And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

Matthew 8:5-8 (KJV)

WHAT FAITH! This man believed that Jesus could heal his servant without even going near him. Some people need aids to their faith. They would find it much easier to expect healing if Jesus would lay hands on the man, anoint him with oil, or at least stand over him and pray. "Just say the word and my servant will be healed" expresses sublime faith indeed.

Jesus praised the faith of the officer, saying, *I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such faith* (Matt. 8:10, NIV).

In everyday life we use faith in many ways. When we flip the light switch, we have faith the light will come on. The same when we turn on the water faucet. How about a car? We have faith that the engine will start. The other evening after a ball game, my husband turned on the switch in the car. Nothing happened. What an odd feeling that was. These examples and many others are faith in material things.

Our faith with the Lord works differently. He has said that He will never leave nor forsake us, but do we say the same thing to Him?

FAITH BRINGS LIFE. We all know John 3:16 — *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Note that "everlasting life" is for "whosoever believeth." In John 6:28, some people asked Jesus, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" Jesus answered, *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him, whom he hath sent.*

Faith not only brings life, but it also brings the personal fulfillment that makes the Christian life the *more abundant* experience of which Jesus spoke in John 10:10.

Over and over again in the Scriptures we read about the faith of the people whom Jesus helped: (1) the man so sick he had to be carried and couldn't get in the house through the crowded door, so they let him down through the roof. When Jesus saw their faith, he said, *Friend, your sins are forgiven.* (2) The woman who was sick for 12 years who just touched His garment. (3) Jesus once healed ten lepers, of whom one returned and thanked Him. To that one, Jesus said, *Arise and go, your faith has made you well.*

On the basis of the evidence, we can trust in Christ. We can live by faith daily and receive the blessings God delights to give to those who trust Him. We can have within us a river of living water not only to satisfy our own needs, but to flow out to others.

Recipes from the District Presidents

CHICKEN CASSEROLE

- 1 chicken, skinned, cooked, and boned
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 small can Eagle Brand condensed milk
- 1 pkg. Stove Top dressing

After chicken is cooked and boned, cut into bite-size pieces. Add soup, condensed milk, and dressing. Mix together and bake covered at 350° for 1 hour; uncover and continue baking 20-30 minutes.

CHERRY CREAM SALAD

- 1 small can Eagle Brand condensed milk
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1 can cherry pie filling
- 1 small can crushed pineapple
- 3 bananas
- 1 can mandarin oranges
- small bunch of grapes
- 1 1/4 tsp. vanilla
- 3/4 cup nuts
- 1 8-oz. Cool Whip

Combine all ingredients except Cool Whip. Fold in Cool Whip carefully and chill.

Wanda Powell, Ohio

TURKEY SALAD

- 1 large turkey breast, diced (5 cups)
 - 1/4 cup green pepper, sliced and chopped
 - 1/2 cup celery, chopped
 - 1 cup onion, chopped
 - 2 cups pineapple chunks, drained
 - 1 1/2 cup slivered almonds
- Brown almonds with 1/4 cup sugar, cool.

DRESSING

- 2 1/2 cups Hellmanns mayonnaise
- 1 can (16 oz.) crushed pineapple with juice
- 1/4 cup sweet 'n' sour sauce
- 2 Tblsp. celery seed
- 2 tsp. dry mustard
- 1 tsp. white ginger
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. white pepper
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp. celery salt
- 1/4 tsp. red pepper

Combine dressing ingredients, pour over salad ingredients. Chill before serving.

Melva Staples, Central

CHICKEN PALATSCHINKEN

For chicken: Cover with water 4 medium chicken breasts or one whole chicken, 1 whole carrot, 1 large celery stock, 1 bay leaf. Cook until tender, skin and de-bone chicken, cube. Discard vegetables, strain broth, and set aside.

For white sauce:

- 10 Tblsp. butter or margarine (3/4 cup)
- 10 Tblsp. flour
- 1 1/4 tsp. salt or to taste
- 5 cups milk or a combination of milk and chicken broth
- 1 large can Parmesan cheese

Melt butter/margarine over low heat. Blend in flour, salt, dash of pepper. Add milk all at once. Cook quickly, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens and bubbles. Remove sauce from heat when it bubbles. (If sauce cooks too long, it becomes too thick and the butter separates.) Add Parmesan cheese and stir until well blended. Set aside.

For Palatschinken (German Pancakes):

- 1 cup milk (cream, if desired)
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup flour

Beat egg. Add milk and beat. Add flour (a small amount at a time), beat after each addition. When all the flour is thoroughly mixed into the egg/milk mixture, the consistency should be of heavy cream. Heat a small skillet (8 or 10") until moderately hot, add small amount of oil. Rotate the oil around in the skillet, coating the bottom and sides thoroughly. Pour approximately 1/4 cup of the batter into the middle of the skillet and rotate the skillet until the batter coats the bottom and halfway up the sides of the skillet. Reduce heat (you don't want to scorch the mixture) and cook until dry with a few bubbles on top. Gently loosen the pancake from the sides and bottom and turn it over. Cook until set and slightly brown. Put on plate, stacking until all are cooked. Cover and set aside.

In a 9" x 13" baking pan, ladle several ladles of the white sauce over the bottom of the pan. Take a

pancake, lay flat on a separate plate, spoon a small amount of chicken in the center, spoon a small amount of white sauce over the chicken, roll it up and tuck in the ends. Place in the pan; continue until all pancakes are used or until pan is full. Ladle the remainder of the sauce over the filled pancakes.

Bake at 350° approximately 30 minutes. Serve with a tossed salad, french or garlic bread, broccoli, carrots, or any strong-flavored vegetable, and fruit or ice cream for dessert.

Carolyn Tucker, Midwest

YUM YUM CASSEROLE

- 1 whole bunch celery, cleaned and chopped
- 1 lb. ground beef, browned and drained
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 cans cream soup (chicken, celery, or mushroom)
- 1/2 cup can water
- 1 tsp. soy sauce
- 1 can Chinese noodles (reserve some)

In a greased casserole, combine celery, beef, onion; add soup, water, soy sauce, and noodles. Mix well. Sprinkle remaining noodles on top. Bake 30-45 minutes at 350°.

Adele Ritchey, Pennsylvania

Dates for General Conference
are August 5-9 in Ashland.

THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

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Ashland, Ohio 44805

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Women's Outlook Newsletter

PANCIT MOLO OR WON-TON SOUP (SIMPLIFIED)

Wrapper:

1 cup flour
¼ tsp. salt
2 egg yolks
enough water to make a paste

Place flour and salt in bowl; make a well in the center and add eggs and water. Mix into a paste and knead until smooth. Roll paper-thin with cornstarch and cut into triangles 3 inches on two sides and shorter on the third side.

Filling:

¾ lb. ground pork
3 Tbsp. shrimp, chopped
½ cup water chestnuts, canned, finely chopped
2 Tbsp. soy sauce
1 tsp. vet-sin (monosodium glutamate)
1 egg
2 dashes sesame oil
salt and pepper

Combine all ingredients of the filling; wrap into the won-ton wrappers: place 1 tsp. of filling mixture at one angle of the triangle-shaped wrapper and fold down one corner of wrapper, fold it another time, and a third time. Take up the two free ends and press them firmly together with a little water, bringing them up to a point.

Broth:

3 garlic cloves, crushed
1 medium-sized onion, chopped
3 Tbsp. cooking oil
1 lb. shrimp, shelled and deveined (optional)
4 Tbsp. patis (flour, optional)
salt and pepper to taste
1 tsp. vet-sin
12 cups chicken broth
1 chicken breast, boiled and flaked
3 Tbsp. chopped spring onions

Sauté the garlic and onion in cooking oil. Add salt, pepper, and vet-sin. Add chicken broth and bring to boiling. Drop in the stuffed wrappers and boil for 15 minutes. Serve in soup bowls and sprinkle with freshly chopped spring onions.

Karen Best, Stockton, CA

UNUSUAL SHRIMP SALAD

½ can cream of mushroom soup
½ cup mayonnaise
1 8-oz. cream cheese
1 envelope Knox gelatin
½ cup chopped celery
¼ cup minced onion
1 small can shrimp, chopped
¼ cup green olives, chopped
2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

In microwavable bowl, heat cream cheese, mayonnaise, soup, and gelatin on Hi-Med for 30 seconds. Stir and repeat twice again, or until smooth.

Fold in other ingredients. Put in oiled fish mold (3-cup size) and chill 4 hours. Unmold on plate and add slice of green olive with red pimento for eye. Serves 8-10.

Clara H. Stigers, Southwest

BRAN MUFFINS

Mix together in bowl
1 cup oil
4 eggs, beaten
1 qt. buttermilk
In a larger bowl, combine
2½ cups wheat germ
1 cup quick oatmeal
1 cup Quaker natural cereal
1¾ cup sugar
6 cups (rounded) Post Raisin Bran
5 tsp. soda
2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
¾ tsp. each ginger, cloves, nutmeg (according to your taste)
1 cup raisins
⅔ cup pecans, chopped (optional)

Add wet mixture to the dry ingredients. Fold in raisins and nuts. Chill in refrigerator at least 48 hours. Bake at 400° for 15 minutes. Mixture will keep in refrigerator 2 weeks and can be baked at different times.

Marie Fanning,
Southwest Vice President

FAYE'S CAKE

Cream until light:
3 cups sugar
1 cup margarine
⅓ cup shortening
Add 5 eggs (one at a time), beat well after each one.
Add the following and mix until smooth:
1 cup milk
3 cups flour
pinch salt

Add ½ tsp. baking powder and mix only until blended. Pour into a

tube pan and bake at 350° for 30 minutes. Reduce the heat to 325° and bake one additional hour or until done. Cool 30 minutes before removing from the pan. Freezes well.

Susan Kidd, Southeast

District Doings

Adelle Ritchey wrote that in spite of the deep snows and floods, she helped to start a new WMS group in Wayne Heights. God bless you!

Ladies in the Midwest District, according to Carolyn Tucker, are doing well, active and busy with work for missions. The Cheyenne church has two ladies fellowship groups.

Grace Tolentino, California district president, and Karen Best, the pastor's wife in Stockton, reported on the district conference, which the Stockton church hosted in February. The WMS ladies served the meals, "but we didn't have to be 'Marthas' the whole time. The women from the other churches helped with food preparation, which gave us time to be 'Marys' and take part in the seminars offered by Carolyn Cooksey entitled 'Women's Ministries in the Brethren Church' and by Holly Finks on 'Stress Management.'"

Every month their mission offering is designated for a different mission area. In March they have an annual soup luncheon for World Relief. The Pancit Molo or Won-Ton Soup recipe, which they sent, is a favorite.

The soup lunch fund-raising event for World Relief started in the early 1970s, when the late Jennie Lietsch was WMS president. She had the idea of a sacrificial soup luncheon. The ladies announce the soup luncheon to the congregation and friends, and those who come pay what they would normally pay for a hearty meal at a restaurant. This menu consists of a bowl of soup, a roll, and a beverage (hence the term sacrificial). The money is designated for World Relief.

Missionary

Miscellany

Allen Baer of Argentina and David and Jenny Loi of Malaysia will be in the United States on furlough this summer. They will all be here for General Conference in August. Begin praying now for their safe travel and good health, as well as for the national workers who will continue ministries during their absences.

West Valley Brethren Life Church in Tracy, CA, pastored by Archie Nevins, had its first Sunday morning seeker service March 24. Approximately 100 people attended! Praise the Lord and continue to pray for the Nevins family and other workers.

The Kumars are the May Missionary-of-the-Month family. The India missions have been established for more than 25 years, under the ministry of Prasanth and Nirmala. In addition to evangelism, church planting, and vocational training, the Kumars have medical clinics and two orphanages for the boys and the girls. Their son, Sudhir, provides leadership in music and youth ministry. Continue to pray that God will open doors for him to attend the Ashland Theological Seminary. Until then, he attends an Indian seminary.

The June Missionary-of-the-Month family is Daniel and Kathy Rosales and their four children of the Sarasota Hispanic congregation in Florida. Between April 17-28, Daniel and Kathy conducted an evangelistic campaign in Chile, South America. In addition to evening evangelistic meetings, they spoke daily over the radio and held a youth rally.

David and Jenny Loi of Malaysia are the July missionary family. Their daughter, Rebecca, is almost a teenager. Stephen, their son, is concluding his freshman year at Ashland University. Think of their happy reunion this summer!

The President's Pen *(continued)*

author said that sometimes when we pray, we may not feel like praying. We pray simply because we want to be faithful. Then there are times we find it easy to pray. We might sense a great need or we are aware of how much God loves us. Those are the times it's easy to pour our heart out to the Lord. For whatever reason, we feel in touch with God.

"In our busy lives, we sometimes find it difficult to just be quiet and listen."

Ephesians 6:18 tells us "always pray in the Spirit." The Holy Spirit within us is a "spirit of grace and supplication." If we pray with the help of the Spirit, our attitudes of prayer will be those of the Holy Spirit. We need to be quiet and listen to the Holy Spirit. Psalm 46:10 says, "Be still and know . . ." In our busy lives, we sometimes find it difficult to just be quiet and listen. We seem to be on the go and it is hurry most of the time. But if we will take the time to just quiet ourselves, it is so good to feel the presence of the Lord and allow Him to speak to us.

It won't be long until our General Conference. My next letter will have some information about the WMS Conference. Until then, God Bless You.



Shirley Black

Sewing Update

Joan Merrill plans to have a quilt top ready for quilting at conference. Her idea is to use the Hearts of Praise picture and words from the devotional book on the center square and surround that with quilt squares. If someone desires to buy a tote bag or apron at the auction, let Joan know. Donated auction items are always appreciated; she knows of one making a beautiful eagle cross-stitch picture. That's a good idea!

The Editor's Ending

Dear Friends,

When members of the WMS Board meet, we pray and discuss many concerns of the missionary organizations and try to view these concerns from your viewpoints. It is good when your district president or representative can meet with us. Usually she conveys your thoughts very adequately.

However, our meetings are not all work. We also laugh and eat. Usually the Ashland ladies provide the lunch, but we know everyone there is a good cook, and some of you have asked for recipes to be included in the *Newsletter*. Hence, this issue. The response was 100%. Some came via mail, others by telephone, FAX, and Fed Ex. Thanks to all of you.

The Bible has frequent references to food. None of these recipes related to locusts, but more closely resemble manna, fish, bread, and honey. Angel food comes with other recipes next time.

You know I am a typical woman—I change my mind. When the new printing company reported that they could print our *Newsletter* on yellow paper at *no additional cost*, I was delighted. I hope you like it, too.

The WMS Board will meet May 11 in Ashland to complete General Conference plans (and to eat again). The listing of recommended reading circle books will be sent to your president for your selection before your delegates come for conference.

Please remember to return the statistical report to Nancy Hunn, 555 W. Market St., Nappanee, IN 46550 before June 30, so your report can be counted in the total.

Include the name and address of each officer, even if they are elected for two years.

Your friend,



Joan

Announcing:

The 1996 Brethren Church Summer Ministries Participants

An exciting summer of ministry is ahead as forty-five young people and adults will participate in service opportunities across the United States and into Mexico in this year's Summer Ministries program, sponsored by The Brethren Church.

Four mission teams will be sent out, one to serve in our nation's capital and another in Mexico's capital. A third team will minister in Juarez, Mexico, and the fourth in Appalachia, U.S.A.

Five District Crusader teams will minister in camps and local churches in three of our denomination's districts. Two teams will serve in Pennsylvania, two teams in the Southeastern District, and a one-person "team" in Ohio.

Eight persons will also serve as Young Adult Ministry Interns as part of the 1996 Summer Ministries program. Two of these will intern in local-church settings and six in district camps.

Mission Teams

Juarez, Mexico, Team

For the third summer in a row, a team will travel to Juarez, Mexico. This year the team will work with Paschall ministries and will participate in street evangelism, children's ministries (including working with a local orphanage and doing puppet shows), drama/mime, and worship services.



Jennifer Thomas John Howenstine

Jennifer Thomas from the Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland, Ohio, will serve as team leader, assisted by John Howenstine, youth pastor at the Elkhart,



Andrew Leasure Bethany McMillan

Ind., Brethren Church. Nine young people complete the team: Andrew Leasure, Bethany McMillan, and Ben Leasure, all from the St.



Ben Leasure Karen Corbitt

James, Md., Brethren Church; Karen Corbitt from the Waterbrook Brethren Church in Edinburg, Va.; Meredith Graber from the Goshen, Ind., First Brethren Church; Trisha Stevens, Jamie Weaver, and



Meredith Graber Trisha Stevens

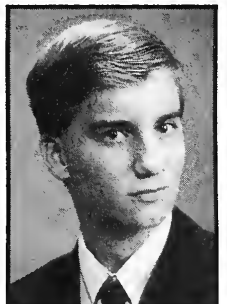
Jeff Estep from the Elkhart, Ind., First Brethren Church; and Jackie Shipman from the Hammond Avenue Brethren Church in Waterloo, Iowa. All team members are first-year participants except Jennifer,



Jamie Weaver

who served as team leader the previous two summers, and Jackie, who served with last year's team.

Following two days (June 20, 21) in Ashland for training, the team will fly to Juarez, where they will serve from June 22 to 29.



Jeff Estep



Jackie Shipman

Mexico City Team

Four young women will work with Todd and Tracy Ruggles in Mexico City this summer. They are Amber Corbitt from the Waterbrook Brethren Church, Edinburg, Va.; Stephanie Dreyer from the Tucson, Ariz., First Brethren Church; Christina Godefrin from the Sarasota, Fla., First Brethren Church; and Stefanie Grindle from the Wabash, Ind., First Brethren Church. The team is (top of next page)



Amber Corbitt Stephanie Dreyer
scheduled to serve from June 19 to 29. Tentatively scheduled activities include mime/drama presenta-



Christina Godefrin Stefanie Grindler
tions, sports outreach, ministry to street kids, and working with children who live in a garbage dump.

tute teacher in area school systems. The three youth on the team are Missy Allen and Jenna Bowen from the Oak Hill, W. Va., First Brethren Church; and Faith Schumacher from the Fremont, Ohio, Brethren Church. The other adult on this intergenerational team is Jeff Lewis from the Meadow Crest Brethren Church in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Appalachian Team

A team of five will work with a group work camp in Brownsville, Tennessee, from June 30 to July 6. The team will be led by Tony and Geneva Price from The Brethren

Washington, D.C., Team

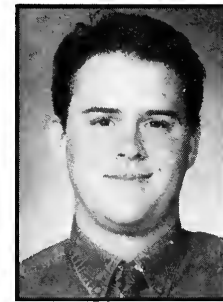
Three youth and three adults will make up an intergenerational team that will serve in Washington, D.C., from July 20 to 28. Rev. Tim and Jan Eagle will serve as the team leaders. Tim pastors the Gar-



Rev. Tim and Jan Eagle



Missy Allen Jenna Bowen
ber Brethren Church in Ashland, Ohio, and Jan serves as a substi-



Tony Price Geneva Price

Church in New Lebanon, Ohio. Tony serves as youth pastor at the church and both he and Geneva teach in the Dayton Christian Schools system.



Three young people complete the team. They are Kristopher Mellinger from the Meadow Crest Brethren Church in Fort Wayne, Ind.; Betty Jo Gordon, who is also from The Brethren Church in New Lebanon; and Christina Godefrin from the Sarasota, Fla., First Brethren Church.



Faith Schumacher Jeff Lewis

District Crusaders

Ohio District

Angela Cummins, a member of the Gretna Brethren Church near Bellefontaine, Ohio, will serve as the lone District Crusader in the Ohio District. Following counselor training, she will serve from June 14 to 29 as a counselor at Camp Bethany.



Angela Cummins

Pennsylvania District

Two teams will serve this summer in the Pennsylvania District.

Team One

Team One will help with vacation Bible schools at the Cameron, W. Va., and Sarver, Pa., Brethren Churches and also serve as counselors at the Pennsylvania Junior Camp. Monica Hoffman, a second-year District Crusader from the Berlin, Pa., Brethren Church, will captain the team. Serving

continued on next page



Betty Jo Gordon Christina Godefrin

Summer Ministries Program

District Crusaders

Pennsylvania District Team One cont.

with her on the team will be first-year crusaders Melissa Shaffer from the Valley Brethren Church, Jones Mills, Pa.; and Michelle Davis, also from the Berlin Brethren Church.



Monica Hoffman



Melissa Shaffer



Michelle Davis

Team Two

Pennsylvania District Team Two will be captained by Kimberly Custer from the Berlin Brethren Church. Shannon Logan from the Mason-town, Pa., Brethren Church and Jill Philip, also from Berlin, will serve with Kimberly. All three are first-year Crusaders. This team will serve at the Pennsylvania Junior Camp and help with vacation Bible Schools at the Wayne Heights, Pa., and Berlin Brethren Churches. Both Pennsylvania teams will also assist at the District Youth Conference.



Kimberly Custer



Shannon Logan



Jill Philip

Southeastern District

Two crusader teams will also serve in the Southeastern District.

Team One

Jenna Bowen, a third-year District Crusader, will serve as captain of this team. Jenna is from the Oak Hill, W. Va., First Brethren Church. Second-year Crusader Missy Allen, also from the Oak Hill Church; first-year Crusader Alex Wiedel from

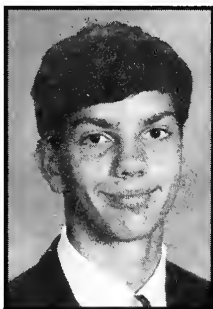


Missy Allen



Jenna Bowen

the St. James, Md., Brethren Church; and first-year Crusader Kimberly Fox also from Oak Hill comprise the rest of the team. They will serve at the Southeastern Middel Camp and help with vacation Bible schools at the Hagerstown, Md., and St. James, Md., Brethren Churches.



Alex Wiedel



Kimberly Fox

Team Two

Team Two in the Southeastern District will be captained by Rachel Pennington, a second-year District Crusader who is also from the Oak Hill First Brethren Church. Other



Rachel Pennington



Jason Crouch

members of the team are second-year Crusader Jason Crouch, Oak Hill First Brethren; Erin Swisher, a first-year Crusader from the St. James Brethren Church; and Kelly Fox, a first-year crusader who is



Erin Swisher



Kelly Fox

also from Oak Hill First Brethren. This team will serve at the Southeastern Junior Camp and assist with vacation Bible schools at Gateway Brethren Fellowship (a new Brethren class in Hagerstown, Md.) and at the St. James Brethren Church.

Young Adult Ministry Interns

Andrew Crum



Andrew Crum

Andrew, a third-year participant in the Young Adult Ministry internship program, will serve from May 13 to July 28 at Greenwood Brethren Fellowship under the supervision

of church-planter Rev. Tom Conrad. His responsibilities will include many of the tasks that are involved in planting a church. Andrew is a member of the Burlington, Ind., First Brethren Church.

Stephanie Dreyer

Stephanie, a first-year participant in the internship program, will serve from June 10 to August 3 at the Northgate Community Brethren

continued on next page

Ministry Interns *continued*



Stephanie Dreyer Church in Manteca, Calif. She will work under the guidance of Rev. Roger Stogsdill, pastor of the congregation. She will help with camp and vacation Bible school preparation and work with the youth program. Stephanie is a member of the Tucson, Ariz., First Brethren Church.

Jaime Gillespie



Jaime Gillespie Jaime, a member of the Vinco, Pennsylvania, Brethren Church and a student at Ashland University, will serve from June 12 to July 13 as an intern at Camp Bethany in the Ohio District. She will work under the supervision of Tracy Whiteside.

Amber Dolby, Christy Van Duyne, Toni Huff, Aaron Hollewell, Chad Geaslen

These five young people will serve as Ministry Interns at the Brethren Retreat Center in Shipshewana, Indiana, this summer. They will serve under the direction of Rick Miller, director of the Center.

Amber Dolby is from the North Manchester, Ind., First Brethren Church. She is a sophomore at Manchester College.



Amber Dolby **Christy Van Duyne** is a member of Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland, Ohio. This fall she will be a sophomore at Grace College, Winona Lake, Ind.

Toni Huff is from the Nappanee, Ind., First Brethren Church. She will be a freshman at Ashland University in the fall.

Aaron Hollewell is a member of the Lanark, Ill., First Brethren Church. He also plans to enter Ashland University in the fall.

Chad Geaslen attends the University Church in Ashland, Ohio. He is a May 1996 graduate of Ashland University.



Christy Van Duyne



Toni Huff



Aaron Hollewell



Chad Geaslen

You and the Summer Ministries program

THE SUMMER MINISTRIES program is important to The Brethren Church. Many past and present Brethren pastors, missionaries, and other full-time Christian workers in The Brethren Church got their first real taste of Christian ministry in the Summer Ministries program—as Summer Crusaders, Interns, on Missions Teams, or in some other kind of special summer ministry. This is a training ground for Christian service.

You may not be able to serve as a crusader or intern or go on a mission trip, but you can still be a significant part of the Summer Ministries program. How is this possible?

Be a prayer warrior

One way you can be a part of this program is by your prayers. Prayer plays a vital role in this ministry. You may have already signed up to be a Summer Ministries prayer war-

rior. If so, you will receive information soon about the person or team you are to pray for. Be diligent in your prayers for that person or team.

If you did not get a chance to sign up to be a prayer warrior, you can still join this army of intercessors by calling (419-289-1708) or by writing The Brethren Church National Office (address below). Or you can simply choose one of the people on these four pages (perhaps one from your church or district); or you can pray for all of them! Pray for their safety and well-being as they travel and serve, that they will minister effectively, and that they will both bless and be blessed by this summer experience.

Be an encourager

Another way you can be a part of this ministry is by speaking a word of encouragement to those who are serving. If one of the participants is

from your church or serves in your church, tell the person that you appreciate this ministry and that you are praying for him or her.

Be a supporter

It takes finances to carry on the Summer Ministries program. Basic support for this program, like all ministries of The Brethren Church National Office, comes from Brethren Fair Share giving. So as your church gives it Fair Share, it is supporting the Summer Ministries program.

But during the month of May, Brethren are also provided an opportunity to give an offering directly for the Summer Ministries program. Thus you have the privilege of knowing that you are sharing directly in this important ministry. You may give your gift for Summer Ministries through your local church; or you may send it directly to Summer Ministries, The Brethren Church, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805. [†]



Positive things happening at Fairless Hills-Levittown

Levittown, Pa. — Rev. C. William Cole, pastor of the Fairless Hills-Levittown Brethren Church, reports that this congregation is “very much alive and well.”

Noting that the congregation had some deep wounds in the past and was once termed “impossible,” Pastor Cole states, “Yet I owe the church praise after 14 years [of ministry here].” He adds, “We are very active, meaning that the active part is red hot.”

Some positives he notes include:

- a good Sunday Bible class with three men teachers taking turns;
 - a good attendance of 34 (about 60% of the congregation) at the Palm Sunday Communion;
 - giving is better in 1995-96, “a church-wide response,” after nearly going bankrupt in 1994;
 - an active, well-funded Women’s Missionary Society that decorates the fellowship hall every month according to a monthly theme, with most of the W.M.S. attending the mid-week service;
 - five persons received as members last December, nearly a 10 percent increase in membership;
 - the men keep up the repair work on the building and grounds;
 - harmony in the body;
 - two choirs of small children on Easter “whose almost uninhibited singing stirred our hearts”;
- “Our prayers are for all of the Brethren churches and our missionary work in other nations,” Pastor Cole declares. Let us uphold our Christian brothers and sisters at the Fairless Hills-Levittown Brethren Church as well.

1996 Pastors’ and Wives’ Retreat proves to be a musical occasion

State College, Pa. — An assortment of stringed musical instruments greeted retreat participants when they walked into the opening (Tuesday evening) session of the 1996 Brethren Pastors’ and Wives’ Retreat, giving promise that this was going to be a musical event. The promise was fulfilled.

During this opening session, musicians Dennis Letts and Mark Barnett demonstrated their skill as

church in Columbia, S.C.

Mr. Barnett is a musician *par excellence* with a testimony for Christ. He has played stringed instruments all of his life and has been called the greatest five-string banjo player in the world. He played at Opryland, USA., for 21 years and still appears on the Grand Ole Opry. The two men have served the Lord as a team for 28 years and have preached and played through-

out the U.S.A. and Mexico and have traveled twice to Russia.

In addition to the four scheduled sessions with the two musicians, some of the Brethren joined them for a hootenanny on Wednesday afternoon. Other retreat attendees spent the



Mark Barnett (l.) and Dennis Letts—pickin’ and strummin’.

they played a variety of music—Christian and secular, classical and country—all to the glory of God. They also sang and gave opportunities for the audience to sing. And they shared some “corn” as well as their testimonies. Rev. Letts then concluded the session with a message from God’s words on looking to the rainbows of God and the covenant promises they guarantee.

A similar format was followed during the Wednesday morning, Wednesday evening, and Thursday morning sessions of the retreat. Rev. Letts’ messages for these gatherings were on overcoming discouragement (Wed. a.m.); guarding against physical, emotional, and spiritual stress (Wed. p.m.); and relying on the faithfulness of God (Thur. a.m.).

Both Dennis Letts and Mark Barnett are trained Bible students as well as professional musicians. Rev. Letts has pastored, taught in Bible colleges, served ten years as a missionary in Mexico, and traveled extensively as a musical evangelist. He is presently starting a new

afternoon sightseeing or shopping, and a number of dedicated golfers hit the links in the less than ideal weather.

The retreat was held April 16-18 at the Best Western State College Inn and was hosted by the pastors of the Pennsylvania District. Forty seven men (pastors, other elders, and seminary students), 30 wives, and 9 children attended the gathering. The wives met in a separate session on Wednesday morning led by Gloria M. Robine of Johnstown, Pa. Ms. Robine, president of Parents Involved Network (PIN), spoke about developing support groups for parents of the mentally challenged.

Immediately prior to the Thursday lunch that concluded the retreat, a discussion period was held on the proposed plan for denominational reorganization.

Next year’s retreat will be held April 15-17 at Sandy Cove, a Christian resort area near North East, Md. It will be hosted by the pastors of the Southeastern District.

— reported by Dick Winfield



Alice Kensinger honored by N. Georgetown Church

North Georgetown, Ohio — Alice Hieronimus Kensinger was honored by the North Georgetown First Brethren Church on Sunday, March 17, for her many years of service to the congregation.

Mrs. Kensinger has served the church faithfully in several capacities. March 18 was the 40th anniversary of her ordination as a deaconess, and on that date she retired from active service as a deaconess.

During the March 17th morning worship service, Mrs. Kensinger gave her personal testimony, and several members of the congregation gave testimony to how she had touched their lives. Several of her favorite hymns were sung, and Marty Dye dedicated a special number, "Shepherd Boy," to her. The Deacon Board presented her a picture of the Good Shepherd and the sheep. Twenty members of her family attended the service.

At a carry-in meal that followed the service, Pastor Fred Brandon presented Mrs. Kensinger with a corsage. She was also honored with a cake with the inscription, "Thanks for 40 years of faithfulness," which was enjoyed by all.

Before moving to the North George-



Alice Kensinger with cake thanking her for 40 years of faithfulness.

town area, Mrs. Kensinger was a member of the Quiet Dell Brethren Church in Pennsylvania.

— reported by Pastor Fred Brandon

Mary Ellen Drushal named Ashland University provost

Ashland, Ohio — Dr. Mary Ellen Drushal, former academic dean at Ashland Theological Seminary, who was named *acting* provost at Ashland University last August, has now become the university's new provost.

Ashland University President Dr. G. William Benz announced the selection of Drushal, following the recommendation of AU's Provost Search Committee. He said that Dr. Drushal was selected from among four finalists.

"Since assuming the position of

acting provost last fall, Dr. Drushal has brought great leadership skills to the academic area and has demonstrated her ability to get things done," Dr. Benz said. Convinced that Dr. Drushal has the strong support of a high percentage of the faculty, administrators, staff, and students at AU, Dr. Benz added, "I am also convinced that she and I will be able to work well together and that we have very similar goals and aspirations for the future of Ashland University."

Dr. Drushal grew up in The Brethren Church and is currently a member of the University (Brethren) Church. She served as General Conference moderator in 1990.



Dr. Mary Ellen Drushal

She joined the seminary faculty in 1984 and held various positions before becoming academic dean in 1991.

Her husband, J. Michael Drushal, currently serves The Brethren Church as interim Director of Brethren Church Ministries. He is also an assistant professor at Ashland University and chairs AU's Department of Business Administration.

Jones Mills, Pa. — Vera Schroyer (l.) and Penny and John Zylka were ordained to the diaconate of the Valley Brethren Church in a service held Sunday, March 24. Conducting the ordination service were (back row, l. to r.) Rev. Bill Yoder, pastor of the Valley Church; Rev. Glenn Grumbling; and Rev Robert Hoffman.



— reported by LaVerne Keslar

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Brad Whitehead and Dave Kline talk about:

Three-way calling and the call of God

DID YOU HEAR the phone ring just now? . . . "There was some static on the line; could you make out what she was saying?" . . . "You were on the extension. What do you think he meant by that?"

We all receive calls every day. In spite of all the advances in communication technology, we often need a little help receiving and interpreting these daily messages. The more significant the call, the more crucial it is that we get the message right.

A new service offered by the phone company may help us. The service is *Three-Way Calling*. According to the latest phone directory, "Three-Way Calling lets you hold a three way conversation with friends, relatives, or business associates. You can decide who, where, and when all in one smart call." Getting a third person on the line can help clarify the message for all involved.

"Three-way calling" is not new to God. For thousands of years He has been using this method in the lives of His people to clarify His call to ministry (see Acts 9:1-18).

"Is God 'calling' me? Are these just my own crazy ideas, or does God really want me to serve in some special way? If I could just ask someone else for confirmation. . . ."

God often calls a third party alongside an individual He has chosen for service in order to



reaffirm His direction in that person's life. That's exactly what took

place with

Brad Whitehead and Dave Kline from the Goshen, Indiana, First Brethren Church.

Brad:

While God was busy changing the seasons in the spring of 1995, He made it clear to me that He is also busy changing lives. Just as the birds have their focus and direction adjusted by their sovereign Creator when it's time to fly north, in much the same way I was being redirected by the Lord to whom I had surrendered my life just a year earlier.

After the first year of my Christian life, God went to work on my heart once again. He realigned my priorities, altered my desires, and challenged the way I looked at the new life He had given me. By planting in me a new sense of urgency for spreading the gospel, He enabled me to see that He had a lot more in store for me.

Suddenly, the thought of serving God thrilled me. Visions of ministry and a life of service began consuming my thought life. But I had a hard time believing that He would use somebody like me: a 31-year-old man with a wife, three children, a house, two cars, and a job that I've

been at since 1988. These thoughts caused me a great deal of confusion. I can recall wishing many times that I would hear a loud and distinct voice from God that would spell out everything for me. I simply wanted to know, "How do I really know?" I prayed and sought God for answers.

Up to this point, I had kept all of this to myself. As a result, I was nearly ready to explode. Finally, after a Wednesday night Bible study, I was compelled to consult with our associate pastor, David Kline. I had to speak to someone about all of the issues that were on my heart.

Dave:

Following the Bible study that Wednesday night, I went to my office to wrap up a few things



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Note: A special supplement in the center of this issue presents the denominational reorganization proposal that will be considered at General Conference and answers to commonly-asked questions about this proposal.

before heading home. I heard a gentle rap at my door and looked up to see Brad standing there.

"Do you have a few minutes?" he asked.

Showing him a chair, I puzzled over what he wanted to discuss, my curiosity aroused by his serious expression and quiet intensity.

"How do you know when you're being called into ministry?" he blurted out.

I related my own spiritual journey, telling him how God had placed an unmistakable call on my life at a memorial concert for Christian singer Keith Green. Brad then shared with me all that God had laid on his heart over the last year. We prayed together and agreed to keep praying for God's direction and guidance in the weeks ahead. In parting that evening, I gave him the best counsel I had ever heard concerning a call to ministry: If you can do anything else in life and have God's peace, then do it. If it truly is God's call on your life, "the Hound of Heaven" will not let you rest until you submit.

Brad:

I knew that I had to trust it all to God, so I earnestly sought Him in prayer. All of the negatives—the what if's—kept crowding into my mind. "Will I have to quit my job? Sell my house? Move? Go back to school?" But something inside was pushing me forward. As hard as I tried, I could not picture myself going anywhere but forward. I found myself more willing to submit to the leading of the Spirit than to submit to my own doubts and fears.

Approximately two weeks following my meeting with Dave, and after many prayers, Pastor Don Rowser preached a ministry recruitment sermon. At the conclu-

sion of the sermon, he called for men and women of the congregation to commit their lives to Christian service. God made that call crystal clear to me, and I responded to the invitation. The Holy Spirit moved me to go forward, and He enabled me to formally commit myself to a life of ministry, serving the Lord Jesus Christ all the days of my life or until the day of His return. A life that revolved around preaching the truth, reaching out to the lost, and equipping God's people became my passion. I am currently serving as a lay pastor and outreach minister for the local church.

One thing I've learned is that a call to ministry does not necessarily mean God wants you to become a professional pastor (though for some, that's exactly what He wants). Rather, God calls every believer to a

dedicated life of service, no matter what your education, location, or experience. If you feel God tugging at your shirt tail, don't shake Him off; pursue the call.

Dave:

Remember, God also has "call-forwarding." Just ask Jonah! [†]

Mr. Whitehead is a member of the Goshen, Ind., First Brethren Church and a Life Work Recruit. Mr. Kline, youth pastor at Goshen First Brethren, serves as Brad's "Authentic Disciple" (mentor).

Note: June is Ministry Emphasis Month in The Brethren Church. Each year the first Sunday of June (June 2 this year) is designated as Ministry Recruitment Sunday. It is also the month for promoting the Ministerial Student Aid Fund, a fund used to provide financial help to students preparing for full-time Christian ministry in The Brethren Church.

God of the Little Things

By Joni Eareckson Tada

Verse: Psalm 103:13

IS GOD CONCERNED about the details of your life? Does He care about the "little things"? Piles of dishes need to be done. The washer leaks a big soapy puddle on the floor—and you've got people coming in an hour. Little things.

Nobody else seems to notice or pay that much mind . . . so why should God? After all, isn't He the God of the BIG things? Isn't He the one who spoke swirling galaxies into the vast frontiers of space, who measured the waters in the hollow of His hand and calculated the dust of the earth (Isaiah 40:12)?

Why should this great, awesome God notice the tears that came to

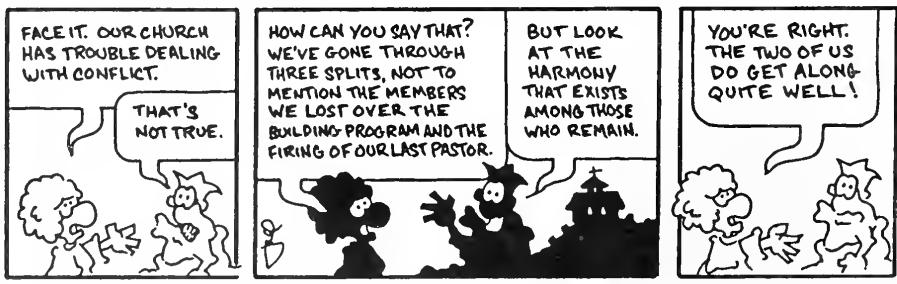
my eyes this morning at breakfast—when no one else noticed? Why should the Creator of the universe care about the worries that kept me awake until two in the morning? Why should the mighty Sovereign of eternity be concerned about the fact that I'm late for an appointment and can't find a parking place?

Sure, the Bible says He has compassion for His people. But isn't that sort of a "general" compassion for human-kind? Isn't that an arms-length kind of compassion? Just how intimately is God involved in our small, petty problems? David says He has the compassion of a father.

I remember my father having a
(continued on next page)

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Pontius' Puddle



You will never be the same!

Part two

By Jerry Flora

LAST YEAR the Leadership Development Commission asked for titles of books to help Brethren workers in their devotional life. Four books were suggested. Two of those were reviewed in an article in last month's *EVANGELIST*, and this article will look at the other two.

Sue Monk Kidd

Sue Monk Kidd is a professional writer and editor who works for *Guideposts* magazine. She is the author of five books and has written many articles that have appeared in such publications as *Reader's Digest*, *Living Prayer*, and *Weavings*. Her 1990 book, *When the Heart Waits: Spiritual Direction for Life's Sacred Questions*, received the Book of the Year award from *Virtue* magazine. It deserves that label from Brethren as well. She writes:

I've tried to open up a path before you, one grounded in the Bible, in centuries of Christian spiritual writing, and in contemporary spiritual direction and developmental psychology. I've tried to offer down-to-earth truths from my own life, as well as profound truths from the great tradition of Christian spirituality. It has been my task to weave them together to make a tapestry of storytelling and teaching that might open your eyes to the transforming Christ-journey we're all called to make. (p. x)

Kidd's book lives up to its goals. It is about cocoons and waiting and new life. It is about separation and transformation and emergence. It is about mid-life and children's stories and the good news of the gospel. Almost every page contains deep wisdom gracefully expressed. After you have read it, life's dry times, empty times, in-between times will be different for you.

Pastor Lynn Mercer believed so strongly in the value of this book's message that, as moderator of the Ohio District, he recommended



that all Brethren read it. I can't state its value any better than that.

A. W. Tozer

Aiden Wilson Tozer was one of the last generation's most powerful Christian writers in North America. As a pastor and as editor of *The Alliance Witness*, he poured out a stream of sermons and books until he died in 1963. Writing with a pen dipped first in fire, then in ice, he seemed to be a prophet to the evangelical churches. Nearly a generation after his death, 40 of his books are still available, most of them from Christian Publications (Camp Hill, Pa.).

It was Harper & Brothers, however, who first published *The Knowledge of the Holy* when it came out in 1961. The fruit of a lifetime of study, musing, and prayer, it discusses "the attributes of God: their meaning in the Christian life."

God of the Little Things

(continued from page 2)

kind of intimate, heartfelt compassion with me. Often when my dad would be busy at his easel, I'd sit on the floor at his side with my crayons and coloring book. Sometimes he'd set his brushes aside, reach down and lift me into his lap. Then he'd fix my hand on one of his brushes and enfold his larger, stronger hand around mine. Ever so gently, he would guide my hand and the brush, and I would watch in amazement as, together, we made something beautiful.

Much of what we say, pray, and do as believers is thin because we think and believe so poorly about God. Tozer challenges us to "think rightly about God," and in 23 short chapters he gives us one of the best theological books I have ever seen.

By "theological" I don't mean ponderous, boring, or dull. I mean this is a book about God—the Lord God Almighty who created the heavens and earth, entered human history for our healing, and will eventually make all things right. This is the Infinite Sovereign Mystery whom we hope to worship for all eternity.

What does that mean? Tozer answers:

"From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God," said Moses in the Spirit. "From the vanishing point to the vanishing point" would be another way to say it quite in keeping with the words as Moses used them. The mind looks backward in time till the dim past vanishes, then turns and looks into the future till thought and imagination collapse from exhaustion; and God is at both points, unaffected by either. (p. 45)

Here is a book to expand (explode?) our small ideas about God, and thus about worship, about ministry, and about life. But be warned: reading this book can be hazardous to your health. If it blows up how you think about God, you will never be the same! [†]

Dr. Flora, professor of New Testament Theology and Spiritual Formation at Ashland Theological Seminary, is a member of The Brethren Church's Spiritual Formation Commission.

This is the kind of love our God has for us. Fatherlove. The kind, gentle compassion of a dad who deeply cares for his sons and daughters. Maybe you never had a dad like that . . . but you do have such a Father.

Let God's big hand close gently over yours. With His help, even the discouraging scribbles of your life can become a masterpiece. Nothing would delight a father's heart more. [†]

— *From Women's Devotional Bible 2* (Zondervan Publishing House).
Article provided by the publisher.

An invitation to spiritual renewal

By Marlin L. McCann

SHORTLY AFTER moving to North Manchester, Indiana, I was approached by several men of the church who asked if I would be interested in attending a *Cursillo* weekend sponsored by the Lutheran church. I asked some questions about the weekend and after receiving some vague answers decided I wasn't interested. Fortunately for me, the men persisted. So I decided, "What have I got to lose?" and I went.

What a significant weekend I had! While I wasn't totally aware of all that was going on, I experienced the *grace* of God and the *love* of a special community.

Out of that *Cursillo*, now called the Lutheran *Via De Christo*, has come a movement called the Brethren Way of Christ, which is a cooperative venture between The Brethren Church and the Church of the Brethren in Indiana.

Background of the movement

To explain the basic premise of this movement, let me share some of its history. The movement began in 1940 in Majorca, Spain. It was initiated by some men who wanted to bring the light of Christ to their world.

... the *Cursillo* ... (little courses in Christianity) was not just a well worked out human product. It grew in the climate of spiritual renewal. It was developed by men of prayer who were seeking to serve the Lord. It was formed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit working in men who had dedicated themselves to bringing others to a knowledge of Christ.

The Brethren Way of Christ is a three-day school that takes a New Testament look at Christianity as a lifestyle. It is a highly structured weekend designed to strengthen and renew the faith of Christian people, and, through them, to renew their families, churches, and the environment in which they live and work. It is a united effort of laity and clergy to aid congrega-

*LEADER'S MANUAL, *The Cursillo Movement* (Dallas, Tex., 1988), p.2.

tions in developing Christian leaders who will renew the church.

A Brethren Way weekend

Let me give you a *brief* glimpse of what happens on a Brethren Way of Christ weekend. The retreat begins on Thursday evening and concludes Sunday night. During the weekend, candidates attend morning chapel services and celebrate Communion. They pray, sing, enjoy fellowship, eat delicious food, make new friendships, and discuss talks given by lay persons and pastors. The talks center on the grace of God, the reality of grace in one's life, how to live the life of grace, and how to impart grace to others.

Each participant experiences the weekend a little differently, but all come into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ. Each person ends the weekend feeling loved and blessed.

Following the three-day weekend, those who have taken part are encouraged to enter into the Fourth Day, which is the rest of their lives. They are to expand their inner spiritual lives through study and church participation and to live out their faith by becoming more active Christians in their daily lives. One means that helps them to achieve this is a Reunion Group of two to five friends who meet together weekly for spiritual growth and encouragement. A second means is the *Ultreya*, a reunion of many groups. Meetings of the *Ultreya* are held quarterly at various churches throughout the district.

My Reunion Group meets every Sunday morning at 7:00 a.m. at a dentist's office. Six men are in the group; two of us are Brethren, two are Lutherans, one is a Methodist, and one is from Brethren Charity Fellowship. We endeavor to hold one another accountable in our Christian walk as we share what has happened in our lives during the week. Time is spent in prayer for the joys, sorrows, and concerns of our families and friends. My wife, Lila, has been meeting with

three other women every week in a Reunion Group.

The North Manchester First Brethren Church has more than 50 members who have experienced this kind of weekend. A number of Reunion Groups meet weekly in our church and in other locations, which are attended by those who have gone through a weekend. I have seen how it has impacted the lives of these people as well as the ministry of this church!

Let me tell about one couple who came through the Brethren Way of Christ. This young couple had been struggling in their marriage. He was a control freak; he had been before their marriage and he continued to be so. They had tried counseling but without success.

He went on a men's weekend. When he got home Sunday night, he took his wife into the kitchen, placed her on a chair, got out a basin, filled it with water, and began washing her feet. As he did so, he confessed his controlling nature and asked for her forgiveness. She was so puzzled and confused about what had happened to him that she was afraid to go the women's retreat the next weekend. But she went anyway.

From caterpillar to butterfly

I remember her apprehension, because I was serving on the team that weekend as a spiritual director. During the weekend I saw how she was transformed from a caterpillar into a butterfly. This couple has since shared their testimony with other candidates for the Brethren Way of Christ. They are but one example of the changes that can take place in the lives of people.

One of the priorities of The Brethren Church for the nineties is **spiritual formation**. The Brethren Way of Christ is one avenue whereby Christians can deepen their commitment to Christ and begin to share that commitment with those around them. I would especially urge Brethren in Indiana to get involved in this unique method of going deeper in the Lord. [†]

Rev. McCann, pastor of the North Manchester, Ind., First Brethren Church, is a member of The Brethren Church's *Spiritual Formation Commission*.

How do Brethren view the Eucharist?

By Dale R. Stoffer

I AM SURE that I was not alone in believing that the distinctive part of the Brethren practice of threefold Communion was our observance of footwashing and the love feast. I had assumed that our understanding of the Eucharist—the bread and the cup—was similar to the view of many other Believers' churches. With many of these churches we share the conviction that the Eucharist is a memorial of Christ's atoning death for us. Likewise, we hold the common belief that Christ is in some sense present with us in the Communion service.

Two years ago I volunteered to write a study paper on the Brethren view of the Eucharist for a Believers' Church Conference hosted by Ashland Theological Seminary. During my research, I discovered, much to my surprise, that the Brethren view of the Eucharist has several features that make it no less distinct than our practice of footwashing and the love feast.

Two surprising discoveries

Two things struck me as I was doing my research. First, until recently Brethren have given little discussion to an issue that has been the major point of debate among Christian groups since the Reformation; namely, in what sense is Jesus Christ present in the "elements" of the bread and cup. Views range from the Catholic position that the bread and wine are actually transformed into the body and blood of Christ; to the Lutheran position that Christ is present bodily "in, with, and under" the elements; to the Reformed position that Christ is spiritually present as we commune with Him. Brethren writers, for the most part, seem uninterested in this debate.

Second, the words of institution that we use (the Scripture passage we recite) as we take the bread and cup are not derived from the passages that nearly every other body of Christians recite—either the Gospel tradition found in Matthew, Mark,

and Luke or Paul's account of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Rather, we have generally recited Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 10:16, rephrasing it as an affirmation: "The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ; the cup which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ." Significantly, Paul's main point in this passage is not even about Communion; rather he uses his view of the bread and cup to illustrate an entirely different point.

In studying the context of this verse, I became convinced that the Brethren originally selected it because it reinforces some of the same truths that footwashing and the love feast reinforce and because it reflects our commitment to community. This passage shows that the Eucharist, like footwashing and the love feast, has both a vertical and a horizontal significance. It speaks of the relationship both between God and the believer and between the believer and the community of faith. In verse 17 the community theme that is so important to Brethren is powerfully portrayed: "Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf." (Should we use a common loaf at times to symbolize our oneness as Christ's body?)

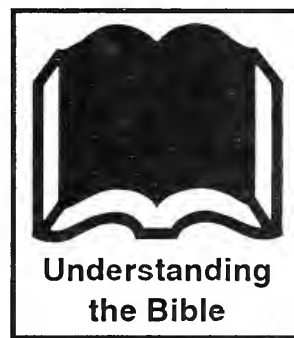
In the ensuing verses (18-22), Paul warns against eating sacrificial meals at pagan temples. He does so not because the sacrifice and the idol themselves are anything, but because in a real sense one participates in or fellowships with the demons to whom the sacrifices are offered. In fact, Paul reinforces his argument by citing his view of communion—there is real fellowship with Jesus Christ when we partake of the bread and cup.

Important implications

The fact that our conception of Eucharist is drawn from 1 Corinthians 10:16 has some important implications. (1) It means that the

Eucharist is never just a personal or individual encounter with Christ, but involves a community encounter with Him as well. This communal aspect reminds the church, as Christ's body, that He is the source of its life and that the body, in all its members, needs to live in unity with Christ and with one another.

(2) This concern for the unity of the body is the rationale behind the call by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:



17-34 for self-examination prior to sharing in Communion. The Brethren historically insisted that self-examina-

tion, reconciliation of interpersonal conflicts, and corporate discipline, if necessary, must occur before the body can come together in Communion. Brethren congregations would sometimes postpone the observance of the Lord's Supper if there were unreconciled issues in the body.

(3) For Brethren, the concept of Christ's presence in the Eucharist is clearly governed by these perspectives. The issue for us is not the presence of Christ in the elements but the presence of Christ in His body, the church. How fully do the gathered people of God reflect their Lord in holiness, purity, integrity, love? Communion is the time when the community of faith unites with her living Lord both to remember and thank Him for His sacrificial love and to receive anew His gracious blessings and love.

The next time you take the bread and cup in Communion, remember the significance of the words you recite: "The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ; the cup which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ." [†]

Dr. Stoffer is associate professor of historical theology at Ashland Theological Seminary and serves on The Brethren Church's Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication, which is preparing this series of articles.

1996 General Conference Schedule

Theme: "Partners in the Gospel" (Philippians 1:3-11)

August 5-9 at Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio

Monday, August 5

- 8:30 am—Leadership Seminar (reservation required)
- 4:00 pm—New Delegate Briefing
- 6:30 pm—Opening Celebration including BYIC greetings and featuring address by Moderator Richard E. Allison
- 8:30 pm—Reception

Tuesday, August 6

- 8:00 am—Devotional/Prayer Time
- 8:20 am—Business Session
- 10:30 am—Evangelism Workshop, led by Evangelism Commission and Rev. Paul Munday
- 1:30 pm—Auxiliary Sessions (WMS, BMOM, NABCE)
- 4:30 pm—Lawn games and Pic-

nic, celebrating the 50th birthday of Brethren Youth (reservation required)

- 7:00 pm—Worship Service, led by Evangelism Commission and featuring a message by Rev. Paul Munday

Wednesday, August 7

- 7:00 am—Pastors' Wives Fellowship and Breakfast (reservation required)
- 8:00 am—Devotional/Prayer Time
- 8:20 am—Business Session
- 10:30 am—Workshop, led by Spiritual Formation Commission
- 12:30 pm—Women's Luncheon (reservation required) featuring message by Barbara Hess

- 12:30 pm—Men's Picnic (reservation required)
- 7:00 pm—Worship Service, led by Ashland Theological Seminary

Thursday, August 8

- 8:00 am—Devotional/Prayer Time
- 8:20 am—Business Session
- 10:30 am—Conflict Resolution Workshop, led by Doug Little
- 12:30 pm—World Relief Soup Lunch (reservation required)
- 2:00 pm—Auxiliary Sessions
- 5:00 pm—Missionary Board Banquet (reservation required)
- 7:00 pm—Worship Service, led by Missionary Board, followed by a quilt auction

Friday, August 9

- 8:00 am—Devotional/Prayer Time
- 8:20 am—Business Session
- 10:30 am—Closing Session featuring Youth Convention report and challenge by new Moderator John Shultz

Paul Munday, Director of The Andrew Center, to speak at General Conference

PAUL E. R. MUNDEY, Director of The Andrew Center, will speak twice at the 1996 General Conference. We are especially honored to have him participate in this General Conference, as we celebrate God's blessing through Passing On the Promise.

He will present a seminar Tuesday morning during the evangelism/church growth special emphasis. The theme of the seminar, "Unlocking Church Doors," will address strategies for bringing about change in established congregations.

His second message, "Does the Future Have a Church?" will address current trends, challenges, and opportunities for the church. It will be presented during the Tuesday evening worship service. The service will include a celebration of evangelism in The Brethren Church and of Passing On the Promise.

Munday has been director of evangelism and congregational growth for the Church of the Brethren since 1983 and concurrently

director of The Andrew Center since its founding in 1994. He was the architect behind the design of Pass-

ing On the Promise and The Andrew Center. Passing On the Promise is a 36-month process focusing on evangelism and congregational growth. One-third of Brethren congregations have participated in this process. The Andrew Center

is a multi-denominational resource center whose mission is "to multiply the number of persons turning to Jesus Christ by multiplying the number of leaders and congregations spiritually alive and evangelistically effective." The Brethren



Rev. Paul E.R. Munday

Church is a partner denomination of the center.

Prior to his national staff position, Munday pastored the Friendship Church of the Brethren in Baltimore, Md. During his ministry the congregation more than doubled its worship attendance in six years.

A native of Hagerstown, Md., he completed his bachelor's degree in history at Towson State College, Baltimore, Md., and his Master of Divinity degree at Fuller Theological Seminary.

Munday is the author of several books: *Unlocking Church Doors: Ten Keys to Positive Change* (to be released by Abingdon Press in January 1997); *Change and the Established Congregation* (The Andrew Center); and *Riding the River: Congregational Outreach and the Currents of the 21st Century*. He is also

the co-author of two books: *New Life for All* (with Timothy K. Jones and Terry Hatfield) and *Including and Involving New People* (with Robert Dell).

He lives in Elgin, Ill., with his wife, Robin, and their two children. [†]

Denominational Reorganization Proposal for The Brethren Church

Formal Proposal — May 17, 1996

Introduction

WHAT FOLLOWS is a proposal for denominational reorganization. It is the result of joint efforts over the last two years by the General Conference Executive Council (GCEC) and the Missionary Board of The Brethren Church.

Organizational issues have been the focus of discussion since 1993, when General Conference acted to commission an outside study of our denominational organization and finances. Since receiving that report in early 1994, GCEC and the Missionary Board have been discussing and praying over the best way to implement the facilitator's recommendations for unified vision, responsible stewardship, and mission-focused organization. The delegates to General Conference provided input in 1994 and 1995.

Based on the facilitator's recommendations, board discussions, and input from Conference, a working document of this proposal was prepared. In March, both the Missionary Board and GCEC voted unanimously to approve that working document. A preliminary draft of the proposal that follows was sent to all Brethren pastors, elders, local church moderators, and district officers. They were encouraged to duplicate the preliminary draft and distribute it to members of their congregations. Regional forums were held in many districts. Feedback received from the regional forums, from congregations, and from individuals was reviewed. A number of the suggestions were incorporated, and the preliminary draft has been revised by GCEC. A section addressing commonly asked questions has been incorporated to clarify a number of issues raised.

The following proposal is now being sent to local Brethren church leaders and is being published in *THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST*. This proposal will be presented as a formal

recommendation to General Conference in August 1996. It is the hope of both the General Conference Executive Council and the Missionary Board that action on this proposal will be taken at this General Conference.

Please read this revised document carefully. Discuss it together as a congregation. Attend one of the regional forums held in your area. If you have further questions, we would

be happy to provide answers for them. Questions may be addressed to your regional forum presenter or to Mike Drushal, Interim Director of Brethren Church Ministries, The Brethren Church, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805; 419-289-1708; e-mail Brethrench@aol.com; FAX 419-281-0450. Questions submitted by July 15 will receive a response in writing, by telephone (please provide your telephone number), or by e-mail.

Denominational reorganization will impact the future of The Brethren Church. Thank you for giving it your careful and prayerful consideration. And please be in prayer that God will guide General Conference delegates in August as we make decisions regarding this proposal.

Functional Responsibilities

The reason we have a denomination is to facilitate the work of the local churches, to accomplish together what local churches cannot do separately, and to foster unity on the essentials of doctrine and on the practice of the ordinances.

The purpose of our national organization is to promote a unified vision for ministry and to provide motivation and resources to achieve that vision at the local, district, national, and international levels.

We understand the following functions of the national organization in light of this purpose.

Congregational Ministries

Equipping for Outreach

- Evangelizing one-to-one
- Evangelizing our communities
- Serving people in need

Discipling Brethren People

- Educating children, youth, and adults
- Strengthening personal piety
- Enhancing worship
- Fostering Brethren identity
- Growing in stewardship
- Peace-making

Training Growth Leaders

- Equipping God's people for ministry in the church, the community, and the world

Enhancing Pastoral Leadership

- Continuing education
- Caring for pastors
- Beginning, continuing, and concluding pastoral-congregational relationships

Revitalizing Local Churches

- Assessing
- Advising
- Assisting

Missionary Ministries

Forming New Churches

- Assessing
- Training
- Evangelizing
- Developing strategies
- Planning
- Implementing
- Supervising
- Partnering with districts and local churches

Advancing World Missions

- Assessing
- Training
- Evangelizing
- Starting churches
- Supervising
- Partnering

Supporting World Relief

- Partnering
- Promoting

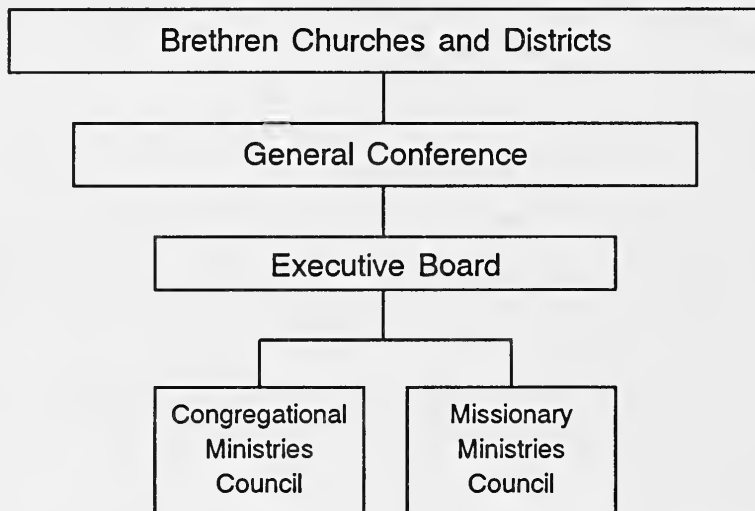
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Functional Responsibilities (cont.)

Administrative Services

Financial Management	Statistics
Planned Giving	Computer Management
Order Processing/Filling	Communications/Publications
Sunday School	Addressing/Mailing
Brethren Publications	General Conference
Bulletins	Personnel Management

Proposed Model for Denominational Organization



Executive Board

Major Goal—with the leadership of the Executive Director, casts a unified vision for The Brethren Church and its ministries

Composition—the board would consist of eleven members, eight voting and three non-voting:

- the Moderator of General Conference (elected by the Conference), who chairs the board (voting)
- the Executive Director (voting, except on issues related to this position) and the two directors of ministries (non-voting)
- six persons (all voting), three elected by each of the ministries councils from among its members (one from each council elected each year for a three-year term to coincide with the person's term on the ministries council)
- the President of Ashland Theological Seminary or the President's representative, who represents both Ashland University and Ashland Theological Seminary (non-voting)

Tasks

- serves as the corporate board of The Brethren Church, Inc.
- serves as the corporate board of the Missionary Board of The Brethren Church
- acts on behalf of General Conference when the conference is not in session
- selects, employs, and evaluates the performance of the Executive Director of The Brethren Church and has authority to terminate employment for just cause
- selects and employs the directors of ministries, upon the recommendation of the Executive Director and the appropriate ministries council
- elects a secretary from among its own members, who will also serve as secretary of General Conference and will oversee the recording of the minutes
- appoints a temporary chair if needed to serve in place of the Moderator
- adopts major policy, including budgets proposed by the ministries councils

- proposes denominational priorities to General Conference
- nominates trustees of the Retirement Fund, Inc., for approval by General Conference
- conducts an annual meeting with the boards of directors of wholly owned subsidiaries (e.g., The Carpenter's Shop) and elects those boards of directors
- plans General Conference

Ministries Councils (Congregational and Missionary)

Major Goal—implements the vision of The Brethren Church by carrying out the priorities and functions assigned by the Executive Board.

Composition—each council would consist of thirteen members, all with voting privileges:

- its director
- three persons elected at-large by General Conference to serve staggered three-year terms; these persons may serve two consecutive terms plus any unexpired term; thereafter, they become eligible for re-election after one full term has passed
- nine persons elected by General Conference, one to represent each of the nine districts, with staggered three-year terms; these persons may serve two consecutive terms plus any unexpired term; thereafter, they become eligible for re-election after one full term has passed; districts will nominate two persons; General Conference will elect from among district nominees with no nominations from the floor of General Conference

Tasks

- elects one person annually to serve a three-year term on the Executive Board, that term to coincide with the person's term on the ministries council
- with the Executive Director, recommends to the Executive Board a person to serve as director of its ministries
- proposes annual budget for that council for approval by the Executive Board
- advises its director on implementation of priorities and ministries
- forms commissions and task forces as deemed necessary from among its own membership or from the church at large

- assists in the raising of annual funds for its ministries and in identifying persons for planned giving
- elects a chair and a secretary from among its own members
- nominates its own at-large members for election by General Conference, with nominations accepted from the floor of General Conference

Moderator

Major Goal—chairs the business sessions of General Conference and the Executive Board. (The Executive Board acts for General Conference when the conference is not in session.)

Relationships—is elected to a three-year term by General Conference and is a member of the Executive Board; may serve two consecutive terms; thereafter, becomes eligible for re-election after one full term has passed.

Responsibilities and Authority—is responsible to chair the business sessions of General Conference and the Executive Board; serves as any other member of the Executive Board concerning committees, task forces, etc.; is *not* responsible to represent the denomination at district conferences, address General Conference, develop conference themes, set agendas, etc.

Nominating Committee

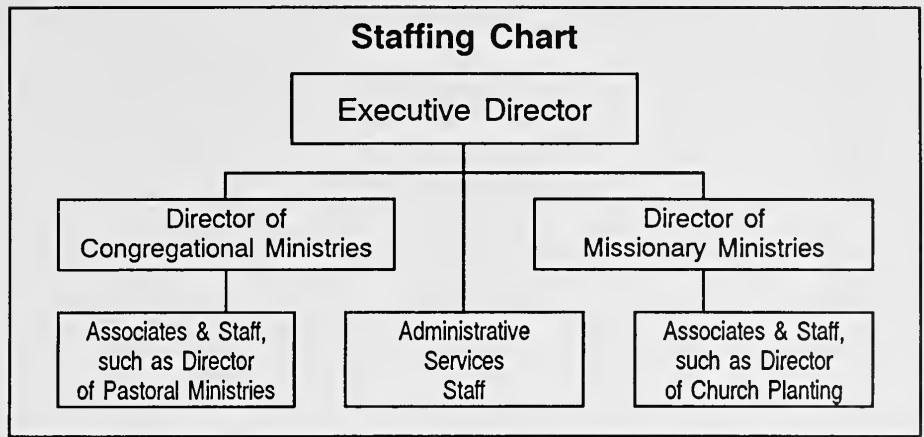
The General Conference Nominating Committee will have two tasks: 1) nominating a Moderator once every three years or sooner in the case of a vacancy in the position; and 2) nominating persons for General Conference committees annually (thus assuming the responsibilities of the present Committee on Committees).

Executive Director

Major Goal—gives visionary leadership to The Brethren Church and guides and coordinates staff in fulfilling the priorities and ministries of The Brethren Church.

Relationships—is employed by and is responsible to the Executive Board; functions as the chief executive officer of the corporation; leads, manages, and evaluates all other employees of the denominational offices.

Appointment and Term—is selected by the Executive Board,



subject to a vote of affirmation by General Conference. The role of the Executive Board is to: 1) screen applicants for the position, selecting the one person it believes will best lead The Brethren Church; 2) annually evaluate the director's performance in fulfilling the major goal; and 3) based on that evaluation, decide whether or not to retain the Executive Director in that position. The role of General Conference in affirming the person selected as Executive Director is to express confidence or lack of confidence in the person chosen for this position by the Executive Board. No person shall be employed by the Executive Board as Executive Director who does not first have a positive vote of affirmation by General Conference. In case of a vacancy in the position of Executive Director, the Executive Board may appoint an interim until Conference shall have opportunity to give a vote of affirmation to a new Executive Director. Conference will have the opportunity to give a vote of reaffirmation every six years.

Responsibilities and Authority—is responsible for the key result areas set forth below and has the authority to fulfill them within the limits of the Articles of Incorporation of The Brethren Church and of the Missionary Board of The Brethren Church, the Manual of Procedure, and the policies established by General Conference and the Executive Board; may delegate portions of those responsibilities and the proportionate authority to fulfill them, consistent with established policies and procedures, but may not delegate or relinquish any portion of accountability or responsibility for results.

Key Result Areas

1. Vision—leads the Executive Board in casting a Spirit-led vision for the advancement of the kingdom of God through The Brethren Church and communicates that vision throughout the church.
2. The Executive Board—guides the board in long- and short-range planning for The Brethren Church as a whole, and for denominational ministries specifically; informs the board fully on the status and progress of denominational ministries; prepares the agenda for Executive Board meetings and General Conference in consultation with the Moderator; advises the board in decision-making; and implements the board's decisions and policies.
3. Ministries—coordinates Congregational and Missionary Ministries and oversees their directors.
4. Communication—creates and maintains channels of communication between local, district, and denominational levels; favorably represents the General Conference, Executive Board, and the ministries of The Brethren Church to employees, other denominational leaders, The Brethren Church as a whole, and the larger Christian community; and presents an annual message to General Conference on the present state and the future direction of The Brethren Church.
5. Administrative Services and Personnel—provides for administrative and management services for the denominational office.
6. General Conference—guides the Executive Board in planning General Conference; promotes and implements actions taken by Con-

The Reorganization Proposal at a Glance

Reason for proposed reorganization:

To address three issues recommended by the facilitator:

1. Unified vision
2. Mission-focused organization
3. Responsible stewardship

Proposed changes:

1. Executive Director—one senior-level executive with the tasks of
 - giving visionary leadership to the church
 - guiding and coordinating all denominational staff
2. Executive Board—one board that will, with the leadership of the Executive Director, cast a unified vision for The Brethren Church and its ministries
3. Congregational Ministries and Missionary Ministries—two ministries councils to implement the vision and maintain our mission focus
4. Moderator—role changes from that of leader of the denomination to that of chairing business sessions of General Conference and the Executive Board
5. Administrative functions—combining duplicated services so as to operate more efficiently and effectively

Advantages of proposed changes:

1. Giving greater district ownership and accountability through direct nomination of ministries council members
2. Combining two national boards—the General Conference Executive Council and the Missionary Board—into one functioning unit
3. Devoting one ministries council to home and world missions to insure that this focus is not lost
4. Employing an Executive Director who will be able to be out among Brethren people, in churches and district conferences, to hear grassroots needs and concerns and to communicate a common direction for the church
5. Creating greater flexibility in the denominational organization to better respond to financial challenges and changing ministry needs

What will not change:

1. Strong commitment to world missions and to starting new churches in the United States
2. No authority or “control” of national offices over local churches

based on recommendations of the Executive Director, the ministries director, and the ministries council. Ministry priorities would be the major guiding factor in identifying associate positions. All associates and staff would be directly accountable to the directors of their respective ministries and, through that director, to the Executive Director.

Associates (such as director of pastoral ministries and director of church planting) and staff (such as administrative assistants and secretaries) would be selected by the Executive Director and each director of ministries based on current and projected needs.

Administrative services staff would be determined by the Executive Director in consultation with the Executive Board and the directors of ministries. This may include such positions as a treasurer/controller, director of stewardship and planned giving, director of communications, office manager, and receptionist, with decisions based on current and projected needs.

Funding and Cost Projections

Funding of the denominational organization is an important issue. However, we are not prepared to recommend a change from the present system of Fair Share Support. We do recommend that a task force be formed to study this issue. Regardless of the financial support system, any designated contributions will be used solely for the purpose designated by the donor.

It is nearly impossible to project actual costs involved with the proposed changes without specifying in advance all positions to be created or eliminated and without setting salary levels. Implementation of this proposal is based on funding the new organization without increasing the current Fair Share Support figures. Any increase in costs can initially be covered from other assets. The new Executive Board (with the recommendation of the two ministries councils) would have responsibility for determining what positions should be created or eliminated (if any), setting salary levels, and looking into long-range funding options.

General Conference will annually approve a projected budget and Fair Share Support figures. [†]

- ference; monitors and assists Conference committees in the completion of their responsibilities.
7. Liaison—consults regularly with the executive staff of Ashland University and Ashland Theological Seminary to maintain common purpose and goals as they relate to The Brethren Church; represents The Brethren Church on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Evangelicals and among other groups and denominations.
8. Self-improvement—maintains and improves professional and interpersonal skills; develops a growing awareness and understanding of all ministries of the church.

Directors of Ministries

Major Goal—guides and coordinates staff in implementing the priorities of the ministries as directed by the Executive Director

Relationships—is employed by the Executive Board upon recommendation of the Executive Director and ministries council; is responsible directly to the Executive

Director and through him/her to the Executive Board; works cooperatively with the director of the other ministries.

Responsibilities and Authority—is responsible for key result areas mutually agreed upon with the Executive Director; may delegate portions of these responsibilities and the proportionate authority to fulfill them, consistent with established policies and procedures, but may not delegate or relinquish any portion of accountability or responsibility for results.

Key Result Areas—[Key result areas will be developed mutually by the Executive Director and each ministry director.]

Associates and Staff

Additional staff positions have not been identified in an effort to allow the greatest amount of flexibility to the Executive Director, the Executive Board, and the ministries councils.

Associate positions for each ministry would ultimately be determined by the Executive Board

Answers to Commonly Asked Questions

1. How does the proposal address the facilitator's recommendations for unified vision, responsible stewardship, and mission-focused organization?

Unified vision: It brings together the General Conference Executive Council (GCEC) and the Missionary Board in a single organization with a single Executive Board and a single Executive Director. This will make it much easier to establish and implement a unified vision for denominational ministries. The two ministries councils can meet together if necessary to facilitate cooperation. The Executive Board can set priorities for denominational ministries according to the unified vision. The Executive Director will be in the districts and in the churches to receive input and communicate the vision.

Mission-focused organization: The unified vision and single organization will help keep the denomination on task in carrying out the mission of the church. Functional responsibilities of the national organization have been identified (see page 2 of the proposal). One of the ministries councils is specifically devoted to the tasks of home and world missions to ensure that this emphasis is not in any way diminished. The greater flexibility provided by this model will enable the national organization to be more responsive to changing ministry needs.

Responsible stewardship: The unified structure should help ensure that resources are used as effectively as possible. Combining administrative services will create greater efficiency in this area. The first step taken at the national level to address the issue of stewardship was the establishment of an office of stewardship and planned giving. Encouraging growth in stewardship will continue to be one of the functional responsibilities of the national organization. Both ministries councils will be involved in the raising of funds for denominational ministries. The Executive Director and other staff persons will be in the districts and churches to enhance communication about denominational activities. Dis-

trict representation on the ministries councils should increase local ownership of national programs.

Ultimately, there is only so much an organizational structure can do to address these three issues. The proposed model will make it easier to address them in two ways: 1) by taking positive steps toward unity, mission priority, and flexibility; and 2) by eliminating the structural obstacles we currently have because of separate organizations, conflicting perspectives, and duplication of effort.

2. What do you mean by vision? Who will develop it?

George Barna has defined vision as follows: "Vision for ministry is a clear mental image of a preferable future imparted by God to His chosen servants and is based on an accurate understanding of God, self, and circumstances" (*The Power of Vision: How You Can Capture and Apply God's Vision for Your Ministry*, Ventura: Regal Books, 1992, page 28). Vision is "a picture . . . of the way things could or should be in the days ahead. . . . Vision entails change. Vision is never about maintaining the status quo. . . . Vision concentrates on the future. It focuses on thinking ahead rather than on dwelling upon or seeking to replicate the past. . . . Vision for ministry is a reflection of what God wants to accomplish through you to build His kingdom. . . . God has gifted certain individuals to serve as leaders. It is to those people that He can trust one of His most precious and treasured gifts: vision. . . . God chooses those leaders carefully and provides each of them with a vision tailored to their circumstances" (pages 29-30).

Based on this proposal, the Executive Director will have the primary role in a collaborative process of discerning, developing, and communicating a vision for The Brethren Church.

3. What are the elements of a vision?

Joel Arthur Barker says vision has four key ingredients. First, it is developed by leaders. Certainly leaders begin by consulting the leading of the

Lord, as Barna notes above. But Barker says that, in addition, "good leaders talk to their people. By the way, they listen and explore the world as well. But, it is the role of leadership to take all that input and focus it and bring it into a coherent, powerful vision" (*Facilitator's Guide to The Power of Vision*, Burnsville, Minnesota: ChartHouse International Learning Corporation, 1993, page 168).

Second, vision is shared by the members of the organization. A vision must have the support of the members or it will have little impact. The leader must direct the process of developing consensus among the members about the vision God is imparting. Members join together with their leader to fulfill that God-given vision.

Third, vision "must be comprehensive and detailed. Generalities just won't do. . . . To have a vision, we must know how and when and why and what with enough precision so that each member in the vision community can find his or her significant and important place in the vision" (*ibid.*).

Fourth, "vision must be positive and inspiring. A vision should have reach. It should challenge each and every one of us to grow substantially, to stretch their skills, to reach beyond their ordinary reach. A vision must be worth the effort" (*ibid.*).

Vision is more than a dream. Barker says, "Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world" (*ibid.*, p. 171).

4. But aren't we a grass-roots church? Shouldn't the vision arise from the local churches?

Certainly vision must be shared at the grass-roots level. And certainly all members of the body of Christ make an important contribution to the development of vision. But a clearly defined statement of vision rarely emerges out of a group without the clarifying work of a leader.

5. Is this idea of visionary leadership biblical?

Take, for example, the children of Israel in bondage in Egypt. They had been in slavery for over 400 years before God gave Moses the vision of freeing the people of Israel. They all certainly wanted to be free. But they

might have languished in slavery for another 400 years if God had not given his vision to a leader.

Take, for example, Nehemiah. God burdened him with the vision to see the walls of Jerusalem rebuilt. All the Israelites wanted to see the city rebuilt and restored to its former glory. But God gave the vision—a dream and accompanying action—to one person: Nehemiah. Because of his God-given vision and leadership, the walls were rebuilt in just 52 days.

Or take the Apostle Paul. Our Lord Jesus gave his vision for the spreading of the gospel to the apostles. It was a vision shared by many people. But that vision was achieved when God also gave that vision to a leader who inspired others to join the task.

6. Why do we need an Executive Director to develop a unified vision? Why can't the Executive Board do this?

The Executive Board will be significantly involved in the process of developing vision. But it is difficult for a group of volunteers which meets

three or four times a year to have the primary responsibility to lead in the development and communication of vision. This process needs to be directed by a dedicated full-time person.

The Missionary Board and all the former cooperating boards have operated with an Executive Director model. The Executive Director would lead a collaborative process of vision setting and would be accountable to both the Executive Board (through annual reviews) and to General Conference (through periodic reaffirmation). Delegates to General Conference in 1995 indicated a broad consensus in favor of an Executive Director.

7. It sounds like it puts a lot of authority in the hands of one person.

It does. Yet this proposal does not propose a leader who is a maverick or a "loose cannon." The writer of Proverbs said, "Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (11:14). A visionary leader will always verify

the vision to be certain it is God-given and that it inspires the support of the rest of the body. The Executive Director will develop a vision for the church in consultation with the Executive Board, the ministries councils, the directors of ministries, and other staff. The director will also travel to district conferences and among the churches, gaining valuable insights that will inspire the development of the vision and its refinement.

This proposal does not change the polity of The Brethren Church to a hierarchical system. The Executive Director will be able to lead the church only to the extent that districts or individual congregations freely and willingly follow because they recognize God-given leadership.

8. Shouldn't each local church have its own vision? Why do we need a denominational vision?

Most definitely, every congregation should discern its own vision, tailor-made by God to its own circumstances and opportunities, discerned by its pastor as leader of the church, and based on the gifts of the people. No one is suggesting that the denominational vision will supersede the need for each congregation to discern and implement God's vision for it. The same is true for districts, for auxiliaries, and for other ministries.

But by our commitment as congregations and districts to being a part of The Brethren Church, we are acknowledging that we share a broader ministry than simply that accomplished in our local communities. If we believed that as separate congregations we could fulfill all God's ministry in the world, we would sever our denominational ties and exist simply as individual congregations. The Great Commission convinces us that we cannot do it all as single congregations.

By the way, it is because we recognize that The Brethren Church at the national level is still not able to fulfill God's complete mission for the church that we are co-laborers with other parts of the body of Christ, such as the National Association of Evangelicals, World Relief Corporation, The Andrew Center, and national churches around the globe.

9. How will the Executive Director and the administrative services staff positions be funded?

Transition Process

In anticipation that General Conference will approve this proposal in August 1996:

1. The General Conference Executive Council and the executive committee of the Missionary Board will select a person to direct the transition process. This person will also serve as the interim Director of Congregational Ministries during the transition process. The current Executive Director of the Missionary Board would assume the role of Director of Missionary Ministries until at least January 1998.

2. The executive committee of the Missionary Board and the General Conference Executive Council will present nominees for the two ministries councils for election by General Conference this year, with nominations permitted from the floor of General Conference. Nominees in future years will be presented according to the proposal.

3. There will be no election for Moderator-Elect this year. Current Moderator-Elect John Shultz will become Moderator for a one-year term as usual.

4. Conference will elect a Nominating Committee. A Committee on Committees will not be elected, since that committee's responsibilities will

be assumed by the new Nominating Committee.

5. As soon as possible after their election, the two ministries councils will organize themselves and appoint their representatives to the new Executive Board.

6. The two ministries councils will assume their full responsibilities upon their election. The Executive Board will assume its full responsibilities as soon as it has been constituted.

7. The new Executive Board will immediately initiate a search process for the first Executive Director. Their selection will be presented to the 1997 General Conference for affirmation or rejection. If affirmed, the new Executive Director would assume office no later than January 1, 1998.

Should General Conference reject this organizational proposal:

1. Nominations for all positions (GCEC, Missionary Board, the Retirement Board, commissions, and Conference committees) will be presented for election as normal.

2. Based on the nature of the response by Conference to this proposal, GCEC will determine how to proceed with selecting a new Director of Brethren Church Ministries.

All staff will work as one unit. Staff whose primary responsibilities relate to Congregational Ministries will be paid out of the Congregational Ministries budget. Staff whose primary responsibilities relate to missions will be paid out of the Missionary Ministries budget. For salaries and expenses associated with the Executive Director, administrative services staff, and any other employee who is not primarily working in one of the two ministries, a formula will be devised so that proportional amounts will come from Congregational and Missionary Ministries.

10. Why does the Executive Director have a vote on the Executive Board? Why do the directors of ministries have a vote on the ministries councils? Doesn't this create a conflict of interest?

As the leader of The Brethren Church and as an officer of the corporation, the Executive Director should be a full participating member of the Executive Board. This follows the pattern typical in most churches where the pastor is a voting member of the official/administrative board. However, the Executive Director will not vote on personnel issues that directly relate to that position (such as setting salary, determining employment, and so forth). The two directors of ministries will function as full participating members of their ministries councils as the leaders of those councils. Again, they will not have authority to vote on personnel matters relating to themselves. Because none of these staff members will vote on any business related to their own employment, there is no conflict of interest.

It may be helpful to know that denominational boards generally make decisions after reaching a consensus of opinion. Rarely are important matters decided by such narrow margins that one vote would sway the result one way or another. And, on matters of top importance, denominational boards at times extend voting privilege to non-voting members as a means of demonstrating the active support of executive leaders for decisions that are made.

11. Will the Executive Director be Brethren?

The intention of this proposal is that the Executive Director will be chosen from among members in good standing of a local congregation of The Brethren Church. No person shall be

employed as Executive Director who does not first have a positive vote of affirmation by General Conference.

12. This proposal leaves a lot of unanswered questions about staffing. Why don't you clearly specify all the staff positions?

For an organization to be able to respond to its God-given vision and fulfill his priorities for the church, it needs to have flexibility to staff to meet those needs. We have tried to strike a balance between specifying no staff positions—leaving the greatest level of latitude to the Executive Board—and writing into the proposal every possible staff position—leaving limited or no latitude.

For example, we all recognize the importance of assisting congregations and pastors to develop effective ministry relationships. This organizational proposal allows for the continuation of that function. If, however, God directs us to fulfill that function in some other way in the future, it allows the flexibility to change staffing to better meet the need.

13. Is this reorganization proposal really that different from what we have now? Haven't you just "rearranged the furniture"?

Some aspects of this proposal are similar to the existing organization simply because many areas of ministry will continue. However, the proposed organization differs from the present organizational structure in four fundamental ways: 1) The Brethren Church will have one recognized and accountable leader who works with one board that is directly accountable to General Conference, thus bringing a unified leadership and focus to what we do as a denomination; 2) there will be organizational unity between Congregational Ministries and Missionary Ministries rather than two separate organizations (GCEC and the Missionary Board); 3) the new structure will have enough flexibility to adjust staffing needs as denominational priorities and financial resources may change without requiring the kind of multi-year reorganization process that we are presently enduring; and

Time Table

May 1996—GCEC makes final modifications in proposal; sends final proposal to pastors and moderators; selects nominees for the Congregational Ministries Council (in anticipation of General Conference approval); selects nominees for Brethren Church Ministries commissions (in the event that General Conference rejects or defers action on the proposal)

May 1996—The executive committee of the Missionary Board selects nominees for the Missionary Ministries Council (in anticipation of General Conference approval); selects nominees for expiring terms on the Missionary Board (in the event that General Conference rejects or defers action on the proposal)

May–August 1996—A director of transition process is selected by National Leadership Council composed of the General Conference Moderator, Moderator Elect, Past Moderator, Interim Director of Brethren Church Ministries, and the Executive Director and President of the Missionary Board; GCEC publishes proposal in THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST and conducts regional forums to clarify any questions about the proposal and to help delegates prepare to vote

August 1996—Denominational Reorganization Proposal and Manual

of Procedure changes presented to General Conference for action

If approved by General Conference:

August 1996—Ministries councils elected; Executive Board formed

November 1996—First formal meeting of Executive Board and ministries councils held; Executive Board forms search committee for Executive Director; requests nominations and applications

February–April 1997—Search committee screens applicants and prepares recommendation

May 1997—Executive Board approves candidate for Executive Director

August 1997—General Conference votes to affirm Executive Director; ministries councils form search committees for directors of ministries

November–December 1997—Ministries councils and Executive Director screen candidates and recommend candidates for directors of ministries

January 1, 1998 (or sooner if possible)—Executive Director begins service

February 1998—Executive Board approves candidates for directors of ministries

June 1, 1998 (or sooner if possible)—Directors of ministries begin service

4) districts will have greater ownership of national ministries through direct nomination of members of ministries councils.

14. This proposal looks pretty top-heavy with regard to executive staff. How does it compare to the present situation?

That is a fair question. It is difficult to make comparisons because some executive staff positions are now vacant (Director of Brethren Church Ministries and Director of Home Missions). But based on full-time staff as of the 1995 General Conference, we had three senior-level executives (Director of Pastoral Ministries, Director of Brethren Church Ministries, and Executive Director of the Missionary Board) and three middle-level executives (Editor of Publications, Assistant to the Executive Director of the Missionary Board, and Director of Home Missions).

This proposal specifies only three executive staff positions: one senior-level executive (Executive Director) and two middle-level executives (Director of Congregational Ministries and Director of Missionary Ministries). It allows for the addition of other executive staff members as necessary. It does not require a larger number of executive staff than we presently have.

Interestingly, the high-water mark in denominational employment was in 1976 when we had five senior-level executives, three middle-level executives, and at least six full- and part-time support staff. Today we have a total of eight full-time denominational employees (two senior-level executives, two middle-level executives, and four support staff) and three part-time employees. Even if all existing positions were presently filled, we would have fewer employees today than we had 25 years ago.

The facilitator's report (page 10) found that we are not overstaffed at the national level. We have about the same number of staff as other denominations of similar size.

15. It seems like you are just organizing like a business rather than a church.

At the national level, The Brethren Church is quite different from a local church. For example, we do not have a pool of volunteers to do most of the ministry, as a local church does. Much of the ministry we do is accom-

plished by paid staff. And because of the breadth of the ministry of The Brethren Church at the national level, it is essential that we organize to carefully manage the resources entrusted to us by God and by congregations and individuals. In 1995, the combined budgets of The Brethren Church National Office and the Missionary Board totaled nearly \$1.7 million. An operation that large requires that we operate much like a business, even though our "business" is doing ministry.

16. Why are you rushing this proposal through so fast? We need time to fully digest it. Would another year really make that much difference?

Actually, we have been working on proposals for reorganization for over three years. Work on this topic has consumed a great deal of time and has, no doubt, diverted some attention from ministry. Elements of this proposal have been discussed at the last two General Conferences (1994 and 1995). While reorganization has not been a "front-burner" issue for most Brethren people, it has been a significant issue for some time.

There is no attempt to "push through" a reorganization proposal. However, we all recognize that we must get on with life and ministry.

Additionally, this is a significant opportunity for change in denominational organization. Because we have key positions open at the present time, it is less painful in terms of the lives of employees to make changes now. However, we cannot delay filling some of these positions indefinitely. For example, starting new churches is one of our priorities. This priority is being impacted by the fact that we do not now have a Director of Church Planting. It would be unfair to hire executive staff with the possibility that within a couple of years, the position might be eliminated.

So while we do not want to rush a decision, we also cannot afford to debate reorganizational matters indefinitely.

17. Why are we taking so long to deal with these organizational issues? We should make a decision and get on with the work of ministry.

It's true that we have been discussing reorganization for several years now. But we have the opportunity to

make significant changes that will have a positive impact on our ability to minister. We want to do the best we can with this opportunity. It takes time to build consensus for change. It took time for the Missionary Board and GCEC to come to consensus on a proposal. The discussions at the 1994 and 1995 General Conferences suggested a developing consensus in some areas and raised further issues to discuss. We have tried to solicit input from the Brethren at various stages of the process, in the hope that any proposal brought to Conference would have broad support.

We would all like to bring organizational discussions to a resolution and get on with the work of ministry. But we hope that if we do the job carefully now, any changes we need to make in the future will not require such a lengthy process.

18. What are the real advantages of this proposal?

The advantages include the following: 1) there will be greater district ownership and accountability through the direct nomination of ministries council members; 2) it will bring together the two national boards, the General Conference Executive Council and the Missionary Board—organizations that have been perceived at times to be working on different agendas—into one functioning unit, a unit that will be directly accountable to General Conference; 3) the Executive Director will be free to be out among Brethren people and in Brethren churches and district conferences to hear grass-roots needs and concerns and to communicate a common direction for the church; and 4) a flexible national organization that can better respond to financial challenges and changing ministry needs.

19. This proposal calls for several significant changes. What will not change?

At least two things will not change: 1) our strong commitment to world missions and to starting new churches in the United States will continue; and 2) the national offices will have no authority or "control" over local churches—in fact, local churches (through their General Conference delegates) will have greater control over the national organization by having the ability to affirm (or reject) the Executive Director. [†]

The 1996 BYIC CONVENTION

Theme: "Attitude Check" (Philippians 2:5)

August 5-9 at Ashland University

HIGHLIGHTS of this year's BYIC Convention will include the 50th birthday celebration of Brethren Youth; a concert by the Christian singer, Ian; Youth Communion; a missions banquet; and participation in service projects.

The missions banquet will be held on Wednesday evening and will feature the Loi family, Brethren missionaries who serve in their native land of Malaysia.

Other events on the BYIC Convention schedule include an opening get-acquainted session; canoe-

ing down the Mohican River; an informational session; seminars; age-appropriate activities; a Coffeehouse; as well as the daily Morning Praise sessions and Share and Prayer groups.

The youth will also join the adults for worship on Monday evening; at the all-conference picnic on Tuesday afternoon, during which a 50th birthday celebration for Brethren Youth will be held; and for the closing worship service on Friday morning. Except for these sessions, the BYIC Convention will

be independent of the adult Conference.

All youth attending the BYIC Convention must pre-register (no walk-ins will be accepted at the Convention). Registration information was mailed to advisors and pastors in May. The last date to register is July 15, and a discount is available to those whose registrations are postmarked before July 1. Additional discounts are available if youth are National BYIC members or have memorized Philippians 2.

All youth at the Convention must stay on campus, and attendance is mandatory at all Convention events. The registration fee includes four nights of housing (Monday through Thursday); therefore, any youth or adult sponsors who will arrive on Sunday must register with adult housing for Sunday night. [†]

Conference Registration Information

Every person planning to attend Conference must complete a registration form (next page)—even if you live in Ashland or are not planning to stay on campus.

General instructions:

1. Room rates **do not** include sheets and towels (this is a change from past years). Bring your own, or order a linen packet on the registration form. You will need to bring your own pillow.

2. We must pay for every bed used, but children accompanying parents may sleep on the floor in their parents' room at no charge. No linen will be provided. Bring a pad or sleeping bag. Single rooms have floor space for only one child, doubles for two, triples for three. Register early to assure getting your desired accommodations. A limited number of triple rooms are available.

3. Tickets for meals served in the university cafeteria Tuesday through Friday are usable any day. Since no **refunds are given**, order only as many tickets as you will need for the week. Meal tickets may also be purchased at the door. The price is the same.

4. The Women's Luncheon, World Relief Soup Lunch, and Missionary Board Banquet will be held at the University.

5. In addition to the children's program listed on the registration form, baby-sitting for infants through pre-

schoolers will be available in the Kem Hall preschool rooms during morning and evening sessions. Activities are also planned for children 4 years old through 6th grade on Thursday during the Missionary Board Banquet (approximately 4:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.). Children must eat before going to the Thursday evening activities.

Other information

Housing — The housing desk will be open Sunday evening from 6:00 until 9:00 p.m.; Monday from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. and after the evening program; and at other times listed in the program book. The housing desk will be located in the Convocation Center lobby.

Camping — Available at Ashland County Fairgrounds, 2042 Claremont Ave., Ashland; \$10.00 per night; pay on arrival. No advance reservation is required.

Credentials — General Conference delegate credentials should be submitted in person at the earliest possible time. Credentials will be received in the Convocation Center lobby Monday 2:00-6:00 p.m. and following the evening program; Tuesday through Friday, 8:00-8:20 a.m.; and Tuesday through Thursday, 6:30-7:00 p.m.

Non-Delegate Guests — Non-delegates are welcome to attend Conference. Please complete a reservation form. Non-delegates are asked to check in at the

credential table and pay a fee of \$10.00. Each guest is then entitled to a guest name badge and a Conference packet.

New Attenders — A briefing for new attenders will held at 4:00 p.m. Monday in the main auditorium. Even though this briefing is specifically for those attending General Conference for the first time, anyone is welcome to attend. The briefing will include a general orientation to Conference plus specific information about business sessions and procedures.

Travel Subsidy — Delegates who travel more than 1,500 miles to attend Conference are eligible for travel subsidy. Travel subsidy forms should be picked up at the credential table when registering. [†]

Leadership Development Seminar

A valuable experience awaits those who come to Conference early. On Conference Monday, Sherry Van Duyne, director of Christian education at Park Street Brethren Church, will lead a personal leadership development seminar, sponsored by the Leadership Development Commission. Participants will discover the biblical qualities of an effective leader and learn how to maximize their potential as Christian leaders.

Registration is \$20, which covers a booklet and lunch. The seminar will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Park Street Church. Registration forms were sent out in *Leadership Letter*. See your pastor or church moderator for a copy.

Theme:
"Partners in the Gospel"

1996 General Conference

Registration Form

Monday, August 5, through
Friday, August 9

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____

Please reserve only one room per form. YOUTH are to register through the National BYIC if staying in YOUTH DORM. If staying with adults, use this form. **NOTE:** Registration with prepayment by July 21 results in guaranteed reservation.

Housing:	Rates**	Prepaid by July 21	Upon arrival	Housing costs calculation
Ashland University Dormitory	Single	\$18.00	\$22.00	No. nights x rate/night
Floor: Women's restroom _____ Men's _____	Double	26.00	33.00	_____ x _____ = \$ _____
Room type: Single _____ Double _____ Triple _____		36.00	43.00	Linen packet (2 sheets, 2 towels, 1 wash cloth)
Triple _____	**no charge for children not sleeping in a bed			No. of packets x rate
Nights staying: S _____ M _____ T _____ W _____ Th _____				_____ x \$2.50 = \$ _____
Other preferences: _____				Total Housing = \$ _____

Note: Rates above do not include linen this year; see linen rates at right.

Meal Tickets

Meals served in University cafeteria; tickets usable any day; order as many as you need for the week.

	No. tickets	
Breakfast	Adults _____ x	\$3.90 = \$ _____
	Children under 12 _____ x	\$1.95 = _____
Lunch	Adults _____ x	\$5.15 = \$ _____
	Children under 12 _____ x	\$2.58 = _____
Dinner	Adults _____ x	\$6.45 = \$ _____
	Children under 12 _____ x	\$3.23 = _____

Banquet Reservations

Reservations for following events are a must due to early deadlines. Tickets ordered after July 21 subject to availability. No meal refunds after August 1.

Tues. 5:00 p.m. — Picnic (celebrating the 50th birthday of Brethren Youth)	Adults _____ x	\$7.00 = _____
	Children under 12 _____ x	\$3.50 = _____
Wed. 7:00 a.m. — Pastors' Wives Continental Breakfast/Fellowship	_____ x	\$4.25 = _____
Wed. 12:30 p.m. — Women's Luncheon	Adults _____ x	\$6.50 = _____
	Children under 6 _____ x	\$3.25 = _____
	Children under 3 _____ x	free
Wed. 12:30 — Men's Picnic	_____ x	\$6.00 = _____
Thur. 12:30 p.m. — World Relief Soup Luncheon	_____	(offering will be taken)
Thurs. 5:00 p.m. — Missionary Board Banquet	_____ x	\$9.50 = _____
Total Meals and Banquets Enclosed = \$ _____		

Summary Totals

Total Housing	= \$ _____
Total Meals and Banquets	= \$ _____
Total Children's Program	= \$ _____
Total Enclosed	= \$ _____

Make checks payable to

General Conference Housing

Send to:
General Conference Housing
524 College Avenue
Ashland, OH 44805

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Reg. # _____
Date rec. _____
Amount rec. _____
Check # _____

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM (ages 4 years through completed 6th grade):

Tuesday through Thursday, 8:15 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.; Fri., 8:15 a.m. to noon.
Lunch provided Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Family Rates	Week	Day		Week	Day
1 child	\$46.00	\$15.00;	2 or more children	\$70.00	\$24.00
Child's Name				Age/Grade Completed	Days (circle)
_____				_____	T W Th F \$ _____
_____				_____	T W Th F \$ _____
_____				_____	T W Th F \$ _____
Total for Children's Program					\$ _____

Mail this form as soon as possible with payment in full (but no later than July 21).

Send to: General Conference Housing, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805



N. Manchester First Brethren co-sponsoring Habitat house

North Manchester, Ind. — The First Brethren Church of North Manchester has entered into a covenant agreement with Habitat for Humanity of Wabash County to co-sponsor, in partnership with the Zion Lutheran Church of North Manchester, the building of a house for a family in need.

Each church will contribute half of the \$30,000 needed to purchase building materials for the house, and volunteers from the two churches will help with construction of the dwelling. Ray DeLancey, a member of First Brethren, will serve as construction foreman.

The ground-breaking ceremony for the house was held Sunday, May 5 (in a heavy rain!), with approximately 30 people in attendance. Officiating at the ceremony were Pastor Marlin McCann of North Manchester First Brethren and Pastor Jeff Hawkins of Zion Lutheran. They were assisted by the co-directors of the project, Leonard Pyle of First Brethren and Darell Yankey of Zion Lutheran. By the date of the ground-breaking, each church had met its first-half goal of \$7,500. The remaining \$7,500 per church is to be raised by September, as construction of the house nears completion.

When finished, the house will be occupied by Hilda Garza and her two children. Ms. Garza will assume a no-interest mortgage to cover the cost of materials used to build the house. This money will go into the treasury of Habitat for Humanity of Wabash County and will be recycled in the building of other houses.

— reported by Arlene Clark DeLancey

Indiana Conference focuses on ways to do "M.O.R.E." together

Shipshewana, Ind. — "Together We Can Do M.O.R.E. (Managing Our Resources Effectively, Efficiently)" was the theme of the Indiana District Conference, held May 2-4 at the Brethren Retreat Center in Shipshewana.

The conference opened Thursday evening with a Concert of Prayer and Praise, in observance of the National Day of Prayer. Michelle Rhude of the Jefferson Brethren Church led the concert, which had as its theme "TOGETHER We can Reach Up and do M.O.R.E."

A Pastors' and Lay Leaders' Retreat was held Friday morning and afternoon, led by Steve Clapp, an author (more than 30 books) and church consultant who is affiliated with the Andrew Center. In the three sessions of this retreat, he

Facts about the Indiana District*

Number of congregations	36
Total membership	4,418
Average worship attendance	3,740
Worship attendance as a percentage of membership	84.7%
Average S.S. attendance	2,111
S.S. attendance as a percentage of membership	47.8%
Members gained in 1995	215
Members lost in 1995	193
Net membership gain	22
Average giving per member	\$685
Average giving per family	\$1,220

*Source: the 1995 statistical report for the Indiana District. All figures are for the 1995 calendar year.

dealt with "Change and Conflict in the Church" (two sessions) and took "A New Look at Stewardship."

A worship service Friday evening focused on missions, with the theme "We can Reach Out and do M.O.R.E." The service included presentations and special music by Winning the Race Ministries (the ministry of which Greenwood Brethren Fellowship is a part); a spotlight on Brethren missions by Rev. Reilly Smith, executive director of the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church; and the conference keynote address by Steve Clapp, who spoke on "Becoming Welcoming Congregations."

Saturday morning began with auxiliary sessions, followed by worship, which focused on district and denominational Unity ("TOGETHER We can Reach In M.O.R.E."). The service included a denominational spotlight by Rev. Dave Cooksey, Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church; special music by a quarter from the Peru First Brethren Church; worship led by the Nappanee worship team; and the moderator's address by Rev. Tim Garner, pastor of the Elkhart First Brethren Church. In his address, "Extending Our Reach," Moderator Garner challenged the Indiana Brethren to be active in winning people to Christ.

A business session rounded out the morning and another began the afternoon. Business included reports from district officers and ministries, action on the moderator's recommendations, elections, and other conference matters. In elections, Rev. Richard Austin, pastor of the Meadow Crest Brethren Church in Ft. Wayne, was chosen moderator-elect; and Billy Hesketh, pastor of the Milford First Brethren Church, was elected as the districts new treasurer.

Following the afternoon business session, a time of worship focused on developing disciples ("We can Reach Within M.O.R.E."). The service included special music by Chad Gorrel of Roanoke, a spotlight on Ashland University and Ashland Theological Seminary by Rev. Dave Cooksey, and an address ("Closing the Church's Back Door") by Steve Clapp.

Rev. Reilly Smith presided over the installation of officers. Then the new moderator, Rev. Gene Ecklerley gave a challenge in which he introduced the new conference theme: "In Christ We Can! We Must! We Will!" The conference concluded with a banquet.

Next year's conference is scheduled for June 6-7, with the option of using the evening of June 5 for prayer.

— reported by Ron Burns, District Sec.



Lee and Wilma Bungard with the gift he received from the Cameron Church.

Lee Bungard honored for 40+ years as S.S. teacher

Cameron, W. Va. — Lee Bungard was honored February 4 by the Cameron First Brethren Church for his more than 40 years of service as a Sunday school teacher.

The Cameron congregation surprised Mr. Bungard with a special gift during the morning worship service. He was also the guest of honor at a fellowship dinner following the service.

Mr. Bungard and his wife, Wilma, have actively served the Cameron First Brethren Church for more than 50 years. Mr. Bungard has been a deacon during those 50-plus years, and he also served as Sunday school superintendent, trustee, encourager, and mentor. He helped build the church building and has helped maintain it through the years as roofer, painter, and carpenter.

Mrs. Bungard has served the congregation as Sunday school teacher, church secretary, and treasurer. She has also held every office in the local Women's Missionary Society.

The Bungards have been married for 60 years—years of dedicated service to the church. The members of the Cameron congregation are very grateful to the Bungards for this service, as demonstrated by the special recognition for Mr. Bungard.



A few Stockton Brethren Church members join some of the members of Hope Brethren Fellowship for a photo. Pastor Bernie Tuazon of Hope Fellowship is in the center of the front row, and Stockton Pastor Randy Best is behind him.

Hope Brethren Fellowship receives its class charter on Easter Sunday

Stockton, Calif. — Hope Brethren Fellowship of Stockton received its charter as a class in The Brethren Church on Easter Sunday morning during a combined worship service with the Stockton Brethren Church.

Presenting the charter were Stockton Moderator Wes Steyer, deacon board members Harlin and Avis Lawrence and Pat Urbano, and Stockton pastor Rev. Randy Best and his wife, Karen.

Mr. Bernie Tuazon pastors the new Filipino-American congrega-

tion, which meets Sunday evenings in the facilities of the Stockton Brethren Church. He is assisted by Rev. Best, and he in turn assists Rev. Best with the Sunday morning services of the Stockton Church. Pastor Tuazon is a licensed Brethren pastor preparing for ordination under the guidance of the Northern California District Ministerial Examining Board.

In recent months five people have accepted Christ as Savior and several people have joined the Hope Brethren Fellowship congregation.

Invite a Friend Day a success at Hammond Avenue Church

Waterloo, Iowa — More than 50 visitors attended the Hammond Avenue Brethren Church in Waterloo April 14 on Invite a Friend Day.

This was the first attempt at a Friend Day by the Hammond Avenue Church, and the initial response of church members was, "I don't know anyone who does not go to church that I can invite." So Pastor Ronald L. Waters decided that this first Friend Day would be a time to drive home to the congregation the fact that Christians need to make a concerted effort to reach out into the community and make contact with the unchurched.

Despite their initial response, the Hammond Avenue Brethren did dis-

cover some unchurched friends, and approximately 40 of the visitors on Friend Day were unchurched. In addition to the worship service, the visitors were invited to a catered meal following the service. And the next day members of the congregation made a brief visit to the homes of all who visited, taking them a plate of cookies.

Total attendance for Invite a Friend Day was 181 (compared to the church's average worship attendance in 1995 of 65). Approximately 95 people stayed for the meal. According to Pastor Waters, "It was a glorious day!"

Kind words are jewels that live in the heart and soul and remain as blessed memories year after year, long after they have been spoken.

— Marvea Johnson



Seven Brethren students receive degrees from AU

Ashland, Ohio — The following seven Brethren students received degrees May 11 during Ashland University's annual commencement ceremonies.

Carrie Cooksey, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. David Cooksey of Ashland, received the Bachelor of Arts degree and majored in philosophy/sociology. She attends the University Church in Ashland.

Robert Lynn Fox, a member of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church, received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree.

Chad Geaslen, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gene Geaslen of Englewood, Ohio, received the Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in religion. He attends the University Church.

Carrie R. Lucas, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucas of Ashland, received the Bachelor of Science in Education degree with an elementary education major. She graduated *summa cum laude* and Gamma Alpha Kappa. She is a member of Park Street Brethren Church.

Jason Roblin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Roblin of Nova, Ohio, received the Bachelor of Arts degree with a business administration major. He is a member of Park Street Brethren Church.

Evan Weidenhamer, son of Rev. and Mrs. Bradley Weidenhamer of Ashland, graduated *cum laude* with a Bachelor of Science degree in criminal justice. He is a member of Park Street Brethren Church.

Lori Holzworth-Brohm, a member of Park Street Brethren Church, received a Master of Business Administration degree with a major in Executive Management.

A total of 661 undergraduate students and 832 graduate students received degrees from Ashland University on May 11.

— reported by Joan Ronk



Breaking ground for the new academic center at Ashland Theological Seminary are (r. to l.) Dr. Thomas Gibson, representing the Ashland Ministerial Association; Mayor Doug Cellar, representing the Ashland community; Dr. Jerry Flora, representing the seminary faculty; Hsin-Chang (Daniel) Su, representing the seminary's international students; Nadine Rosser, representing the seminary student body; and Christina Watson, representing the future.

Ashland Seminary breaks ground May 10th for new academic center

Ashland, Ohio — Ground was broken May 10 for the new academic center at Ashland Theological Seminary.

An initial service in the seminary chapel included an invocation and welcome by seminary president Dr. Frederick Finks; brief remarks by Ashland University President Dr. G. William Benz and Board of Trustees chairman Harvey Young; congregational singing; and a choir anthem. Then the choir led the congregation in a procession to the groundbreaking site.

The ceremony at the site included a responsive reading led by Dr. John Shultz; a prayer of blessing

offered by Dr. O. Kenneth Walther; scripture read by Dr. David Baker; brief comments by the six persons chosen to break ground; and the groundbreaking itself. The ceremony concluded with the singing of "Holy Ground," followed by the benediction, given by Thomas Stoffer, vice chairman of the Board of Trustees.

The new 9,500-square foot academic center will include classrooms, a computer lab, student center, 156-seat auditorium, and offices — at a projected cost of \$875,000. Construction is scheduled to begin in July and is expected to be completed by December.

Cheyenne, Wyo. — *Who is this person in the picture at the right? Is it Elijah? or Jeremiah? or one of the other prophets? No, it's Rev. G. Emery Hurd, pastor of the Cheyenne Brethren Church, doing his annual impersonation of one of the Bible characters. This year he did indeed choose one of the prophets. He stepped back in time to put on the costume and character of the Prophet Isaiah. And in that likeness he reflected on the meaning of Christ's life, death, and resurrection during the Easter sunrise service at the Cheyenne Church.*

— reported by Alice M. Tharp;
photograph by Sue Hurd





Briefly Noted



Rev. Bill and Mrs. Gene Skeldon of Oak Hill, W. Va., traveled to Minneapolis, Minn., in early May to attend a Billy Graham School of Evangelism. They were among 1,000 people from 43 states and 14 countries representing 57 denominations who attended the school. Twenty-five speakers spoke during the 3½ day school, with classes beginning at 7:30 a.m. and running until 9:30 p.m. Cliff Barrows led singing and George Beverly Shea sang during the event. The Skeldons said that they very much enjoyed the school and that they gained a lot from it. Rev. Skeldon is pastor of the Oak Hill First and Gatewood Brethren Churches.

Even if you are too deaf to hear the preacher, the church is still a good place for listening to God.
— John A. Holmes

Rosaleses spend 12 days in Chile conducting evangelistic services

Sarasota, Fla. — Rev. Daniel Rosales, pastor of Iglesia de los Hermanos, the Brethren Hispanic church in Sarasota, and his wife, Kathy, spent 12 days in April in an evangelistic mission to Chile, South America.

From April 17 to 21 they held services in the city of Iquique, where they saw people come forward every night to give their lives to Jesus or to recommit themselves to Him. On Saturday, April 20, Mrs. Rosales spoke to the youth about sexual purity, and that night Rev. Rosales spoke on the same theme at the local sports arena,

where about 1,300 people heard God's word.

They then traveled (on April 23) to Arica, the northernmost city in Chile, where Rev. Rosales preached two nights at a church to about 120 people each night. This was followed by four nights of evangelistic services at a movie theater that the church rents for its weekend meetings. Average attendance at these services was 550, and a total of 170 people came forward to make personal decisions, with about a third of them making first-time decisions for Christ.

These services were also aired live over a local radio station that reaches much of northern Chile and even into neighboring Peru. The response to these broadcasts was also gratifying, with many people calling the radio station to share prayer concerns or to say that they had prayed to receive Jesus as their Savior.

The Rosales returned to the United States praising God that He had enabled them to minister to the spiritual needs of so many people in Chile.

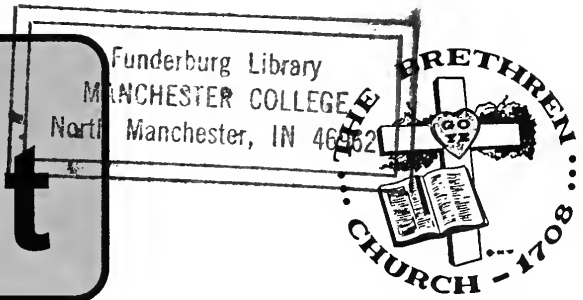
Art Gay resigns as president of World Relief
Wheaton, Ill. — Dr. Art Gay has announced his resignation as president of World Relief of the National Association of Evangelicals, effective July 19, in order to return to local church ministry.
Dr. Gay has served as president of World Relief since 1991. He was the speaker at the Brethren World Relief soup luncheon at the 1994 General Conference.



Cheyenne, Wyo. — Two young men, Scott Soden and David Cuthbert, responded to the call to pastoral ministry during the Palm Sunday worship service at the Cheyenne Brethren Church. Shown here are Scott (l.), with his wife, Barbara, and their son David; and David, with his wife, Shannon, and their two daughters, Kimberly (standing) and Sarina. The two men will undergo a three- to five-year period of training under Cheyenne pastor Rev. G. Emery Hurd to prepare for pastoral ministry.
— reported by Alice M. Tharp

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The Brethren Evangelist



Vol. 118, No. 7

A newsletter for Brethren people

July/August 1996

Indiana District Moderator Timothy Garner talks about:

Extending our reach into the world

AS I TRAVELED to churches in our district this past year, I took a rope with me. The rope, first used at the Indiana District Conference last year, illustrated that throughout human history God has woven a cord of truth. Previous handlers of that truth have faithfully given that rope to us. Our call continues. We must pass on the rope of truth, love, and grace.

Together we can do M.O.R.E. I believe that we *are* doing M.O.R.E. together as Indiana Brethren, as we continue to Manage Our Resources Effectively/Efficiently for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

At this conference, as I sit in this rowboat with life preserver, oars, and fishing poles, I have exchanged the rope for a "new line." There's a bumper sticker that summarizes my new line. It's the one that says, "I'd rather be fishing." The Lord Jesus has called us to be "fishers of men." He would desire nothing more than for the church to rediscover a passionate desire to "fish."

A rowboat is an effective way to fish. But when fishing from a rowboat, it's important that you know how to use the oars.

The oar of prayer

I'd like one of the oars to represent *prayer*. In his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul says that he kneels before the Father on behalf of the Ephesians (3:14-21). He does this for at least two reasons:

Prayer unites

1. Prayer unites believers under the name of the Father. We have a meaningful existence because we

have a name. We are "somebodies." We are members of God's family. Prayer allows the Spirit who resides within the heart of every believer to meet the spirit within other believers. Bound by the name from whom "the whole family on heaven and earth derives its essence" (v. 14), prayer improves our spirit-to-spirit communication and causes our love for one another to deepen.

I believe the Spirit can bring unity not only to local bodies of believers, but also to districts, denominations, and across denominations. How often do we pray for unity in the body of Christ? Do it *MORE* and we will extend our reach into the world.

Prayer awakens

2. Prayer awakens the dormant "glorious riches" (v. 16) into action. Paul prays that believers would be strengthened and grow spiritually. How often do we pray that individuals or groups of people will grow deeper in their faith and in their faithfulness? Let's do it *MORE!* The strength to live the Christian life comes from within the believer (v. 16). Prayer gives the Spirit freedom to operate. It unleashes the glorious riches. It widens, lengthens, heightens, and deepens our love. Prayer is to the believer what water is to a fish. Get out of it for very long and you're dead.

I recommend that every church create *ever increasing opportunities for corporate prayer* via concerts of prayer, prayer retreats, and prayer vigils. I challenge each congregation to host at least one more of these events by next year's confer-



This is an abridged and edited version of the moderator's message given at this year's Indiana District Conference. Moderator Tim Garner presented the message from a rowboat.

ence than they hosted in the past year. During these prayer times, I recommend that churches specifically ask the Lord to raise up *laborers*—those called to full-time Christian service—and to raise up *those who would cheerfully provide the finances* through large and small

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The Women's Outlook Newsletter
is in the center of this issue.

donations, estate planning, and regular and consistent tithing, so as to advance the kingdom of God through The Brethren Church. We have not because we ask not!

I further recommend that *pastors and key lay leaders meet quarterly for prayer and support*. I believe that part of our lack of cohesiveness comes because we lack face-to-face interaction. Seminars and workshops have their place, but "the family that prays together stays together." Pastors, we need to model the greater community of Brethren. We need to make prayer time together a priority. We need to be M.O.R.E. supportive of each other.

The issue in our denomination and our district is *trust*. The mistrust of authority and of those in power that is common in all levels of society is also present in the church. How my gut churns when I hear the integrity of the leadership in Ashland questioned. How sad I become when the spiritually stunted gripe about Ashland and yet will not get involved in the processes that may improve the situation.

How I long for someone to step up to the plate with the fire and the passion of Henry Holsinger and lead, unabashedly yet intelligently. How I long for someone to cast a vision for the next 25 years and then pursue that vision with enthusiastic abandonment. How I long for Brethren to be awakened by a tug on the line that indicates the fish are biting, so that we get busy being "fishers of men." How I long for pastors who build each other up and who are triumphant over the competitive spirit and jealousies that limit our effectiveness.

How I long for Christians who cheer as vigorously for the Lord as they do for sports heroes and superstars. How I long for church members

who invest in the kingdom as readily as they do in the lottery, cable television, or the latest technology. How I long for the Lord to grab hold of our passions, our priorities, and our pocketbooks so that in our daily lives we sing, "I've surrendered all; all to Him I've freely given."

Do you long for this? Will you pray that we will spend M.O.R.E. time coming together so that we spend less time coming apart?

The oar of love

Now before you accuse me of not having both oars in the water, let me move on to the second oar, which represents *love*. Paul prays that the Ephesians will be rooted and established in love (Eph. 3:17). We are to spend our lives praying that we might learn to live the depth of love Christ has shown to us.

The oar of love is balanced by the oar of prayer. Pull only one oar and we just spin in circles. All love without the divine empowerment that prayer provides causes us to spin in circles. Prayer propels (provides direction), while love compels (provides passion). Prayer without the passion of love degenerates into ritual. Love without the direction provided by prayer results in purposeless activity producing burnout. Pulling with equal force on both oars gets us where God wants us to go.

Paul raises four questions by his statement in verse 18. Do I grasp how wide, how long, how high, and how deep is the love of Christ?

1. *How wide?* How wide is your vision? How wide is your love? There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea. You're in a boat with Jesus as your Life Preserver because of that mercy. Does your love have breadth? Can you allow others room to navigate? Will

you allow them the freedom to get in your way? Will you seek to bring others on board, or will you narrow your focus and leave them alone?

2. *How long?* To what lengths will you love others? Will you talk to those whose boat looks as though it's rotting and in disrepair? To those who drink beer while on the lake of life? To those who have a new boat and motor, the best of the best? Some of us need to allow our comfort zones to be pushed. To what lengths will you go so that others may hear about the love and grace of Jesus Christ?

3. *How high?* To what height have you raised your fishing abilities? People study all kinds of topics to improve their abilities. Some people study fishing magazines and go to fishing seminars to get the latest tips. We in the church do this also, but often we just sit on the information. We've become more knowledgeable fishers of men but haven't spent more time on the water! Learning more without doing more results in guilt and frustration. But when we use our abilities to fish, we cast farther and win more.

4. *How deep?* How deep are you fishing? Last summer I took my son fishing. We rented a rowboat, went out on the lake, and began fishing. We caught nothing in several feet of water. When we moved closer to shore, however, we caught a number of small bluegills while fishing in about a foot of water.

Likewise, when fishing for the Lord, you've got to be ready to receive what the Lord brings. Are you ready to cast where the fish are? Sometimes this means going deeper. Other times it means going into shallower water or even into the

(continued on next page)

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Forgiveness even for a murderer?

By Corky Fisher

FORGIVENESS—a familiar word to Christians. We have received the gift of forgiveness through the death of Jesus, and we readily accept that gift. We express our words of praise and thanksgiving to God for His gift of forgiveness; we sing about that forgiveness in hymns and choruses; we even wear jewelry that proclaims it. But how readily do we *give* that same gift to someone whom we feel has wronged us?

As children we learned to pray, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Matthew's Gospel continues, "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins" (Matt. 6:14, 15; *NIV*).

It sounds easy. But is it? How often do we hear comments like, "He'll get his." Or, "Someday I'll get my chance to get even." Moreover, how often do we let these feelings consume us to the point that forgiveness becomes almost impossible?

We are admonished throughout Scripture to practice forgiveness. Jesus tells Peter to forgive "seventy times seven." He concludes the parable of the unmerciful servant by saying we must forgive from the heart, or as Peterson translates it in *The Message*, "unconditionally." Our motives must be pure; we must truly forgive, not so God will forgive us, but *because* He forgives us. In Ephesians 4:32, Paul says, "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (*NIV*).

A lesson in forgiveness

I recently experienced a lesson in forgiveness. A young woman came into the Christian bookstore where I work to buy a Bible. Her voice quivered as she asked me to show her a Bible "easy to read, and not too expensive." She explained to me that her sister had been murdered and that she wanted to buy a Bible to give to her sister's murderer.

This woman and another sister were to be present at the man's sentencing. At that time they would be given the opportunity to say anything they wanted to say to the murderer. She told me that she had written the man a three-page letter telling him that she had forgiven him and that she wanted him to know about God's forgiveness. She bought the Bible and had his name imprinted on it so that it would be "special for him."

The woman and I prayed together before she left the store. I asked her if I could request others to pray for her as well. Many of us prayed for this young woman and the mission which God had entrusted to her.

Months passed before I saw her again. When she returned to the store, she shared with me that blessings have abounded. The man

cried when she gave him the Bible. He told her that he had begun going to a Bible study in prison and that he did not have a Bible of his own. He was given the lightest possible sentence the law allowed.

As the woman and her family left the courtroom, they were surrounded by members of the media who asked them why they were not bitter about the outcome of the sentencing. They were able to share Jesus with the media.

What this woman did took courage. But she felt that she was simply doing what the Lord wanted her to do. She looked beyond her own loss and grief to reach out with forgiveness to someone whom most people would only look at with hate, someone upon whom most people would only wish evil. Perhaps she understands better than most of us what Jesus meant when He said from the cross, "Father, forgive them . . ." [†]

Ms. Fisher, a member of Park Street Brethren Church, is an employee of The Carpenter's Shop, the Brethren bookstore in Ashland, Ohio.

Extending our reach

(continued from page 2)

weeds. What are you willing to do to extend your reach?

There's a story about a man named Billy Joe who had his own fishing method. He would go out on the lake in his motorboat, light the fuse on a stick of dynamite, and toss the dynamite into the water. After the explosion, he would putt-putt around the lake netting all the stunned fish.

One morning a park ranger happened to be at the lake when Billy Joe was fishing. Hearing an explosion, he motored out to Billy Joe and asked him what he was doing. Billy Joe said he was fishing and invited the ranger to come aboard and join him. Before the ranger could even object that what he was doing was illegal, Billy Joe picked up a stick of dynamite and lit the fuse. He held it a moment then handed it to the ranger, saying, "So, you gonna fish or just think about it?"

How about us? Are we gonna fish or just think about it? In Romans 1:16 Paul declares that he is not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God to bring salvation

of everyone who believes. The Greek word for power reminds us of the English word dynamite. We've got God's dynamite. Are we going to fish or just talk about it?

Before I rock the boat or make too many waves, let me conclude with some new words to an old song.

*Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream,
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life's more than a dream.*

*Row, row, row your boat
Gently towards the lost,
To be faithful we must try
To win them at all cost.*

*Row, row, row your boat,
Before you fish please pray,
Otherwise you will find
Your love just ebbs away.*

*Row, row, row your boat,
Pull the oars together,
Otherwise you will find
You're off God's course forever!*

*Row, row, row your boat,
I'm running out of rhyme
Get my point, land the fish
Before our Lord calls, "TIME!" [†]*

Rev. Garner is pastor of the First Brethren Church in Elkhart, Indiana.

Feetwashing and radical obedience

By Kenneth Sullivan

“THEY DO WHAT? They wash feet at Communion!” That was my mother’s response when I told her about Brethren feetwashing.

I had been raised a faithful Presbyterian. Now, in my late teen years, I discovered that the Christian faith is more than doctrine, religious tradition, and church attendance.

In my search for spiritual growth, God brought two very important people into my life. The first was the woman who became my wife, who was a member of the Akron Firestone Park Brethren Church. As our relationship grew, she introduced me to the second person, her pastor, Rev. James Black. He, in turn, introduced me to Brethren teachings.

First impressions

I will never forget the first Brethren Communion I attended. Since I was not a member of the church, I was not permitted to participate. I remember two very distinct impressions. First, Brethren Communion was incredibly beautiful in the biblical truth and symbolism it portrayed. Secondly, Jim forgot to take me with him to the room to observe the feetwashing. This oversight aroused my curiosity. I wanted to know what those Brethren did behind closed doors.

As I grew spiritually, I experienced an inner transformation and a reckoning with scriptural truth that pushed me into the Brethren camp. During my first year in college I was rebaptized and brought into the membership of the Firestone Park Brethren Church. A few weeks later I was a first-time participant in a Brethren Communion, including feetwashing.

Correspondence Welcomed

Questions or comments about this series of articles or suggestions for future topics may be sent to the Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication in care of THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.

As I attempted to alleviate my mother’s concerns about these “quirky Brethren” and their strange practices, I searched for a defense of my new-found beliefs. I did not understand the principles of a distinctively Brethren hermeneutic (the way we interpret Scripture), nor did I fully understand the reasons for feetwashing.

What appeared to my mother as a silly and outdated practice was for me an issue of faithfulness and obedience. I knew that Jesus modeled it for His disciples and commanded them to continue the practice (Jn. 13:14, 15). I would obey even if I didn’t understand. Jesus was central to my life and thinking. He became the filter through which every biblical truth would be interpreted.

For Brethren, Jesus is always the starting point in our attempts to understand the Bible. Our approach springs from a heart devoted to God and faithful to Christ. Every truth of Scripture is meant to be an engagement with the living God. We read Scripture with the intention of obeying our Lord in all things and of adjusting our lives to each new encounter, even if it means washing feet.

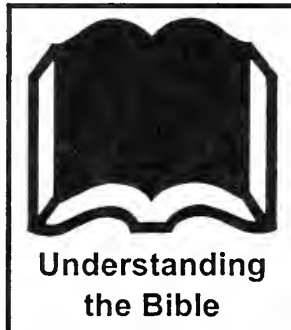
Earlier Brethren called it *radical obedience*. Our interpretation of Scripture flows from the requirement to obey our Lord in all things and to conform to the living Word, Jesus Christ. In other words, we obey the commands of Scripture and follow the example of Christ. The Bible can be fully understood only by someone willing to submit and conform to its teachings.

What did Jesus intend?

Some Christians argue that there is little evidence that Jesus intended to make feetwashing a religious observance. Many believe He was only offering a lesson in humility

and that He was not mandating its actual practice.

Jesus said, “. . . you also *should* wash one another’s feet” (Jn. 13:14, *NIV*, *italics* added) The word *should* carries greater weight than mere suggestion. It implies an indebtedness toward the expected outcome. A similar passage in 1 John 4:11 tells us that “. . . we also *ought* to love one another” (*italics* added). The indebtedness in this passage is our love for others, just as washing feet is our indebtedness in John 13:14.



Jesus also said, “I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you” (Jn. 13:15, *NIV*). In this verse Jesus compounds His command by His example. Basically He was saying, “I washed your feet; now practice

the same thing with each other.”

If we follow the principle of radical obedience, we make every effort to obey Christ’s teachings and commands. When He draws attention to His example as a clarifying standard, we follow in like manner. In so doing we remain true to the simplicity and clarity of the Bible while not spiritualizing biblical passages without clear scriptural precedent. Understanding God’s truth becomes the by-product of our obedience.

Blessings from feetwashing

There are blessings that flow from the feetwashing service (Jn. 13:17). We are reminded of God’s forgiveness, of the need for introspection and confession, and of the promise of cleansing from sin.

But even more incredible is this truth. When we are on our knees washing the feet of others, all human pretense is stripped away. In those moments we stand on common ground as fellow sinners redeemed through Christ. On that level we are all servants with only one Lord. In that act all differences disappear; we are all the same. We are Brethren! [†]

Rev. Sullivan is pastor of the Mill-edgeville, Ill., Brethren Church and serves on the Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication.

Whistling while we worship

By Dale Hanson Bourke

WHEN MY HUSBAND went to pick up our youngest son after church recently, he found him interrogating his Sunday school teacher. The second graders are learning the church creeds, and Tyler is a little confused. "How come I can say 'hell' in church, but not on the playground?" he was asking.

Tyler, my always-pushing-the-limits child, likes to know exactly where the lines are so he can wave as he skips past them. He's not a bad child; he's just not one to accept rules without questioning their necessity.

When he was four years old, he accompanied us to the church's majestic Easter service, where he showed off his new skill by whistling to the hymns with great emphasis. I knew we had found the right church when the associate pastor, a grandmotherly figure, identified him as the source of the sounds, then gave him a broad, approving smile.

A place to be ourselves

I'm glad Tyler feels comfortable questioning and whistling in church. And I hope that, as he grows older, the church will be a place where he can come to express joy and sorrow, frustration and outrage.

Too often the places where we worship are places where we feel a need to be polite and reserved. We spend six days a week expressing ourselves honestly—shouting, crying, giggling, swearing—and one day acting as if we hope God doesn't remember what we are really like.

We sit quietly and primly, talk in hushed tones, and wear plastic smiles. And then we wonder why we get so little out of the experience.

If we want our houses of worship truly to be places where we connect with God, we have to be willing to be honest about who we are and where we struggle.

A friend of mine, a recovering alcoholic, once observed that AA meetings should be the model for church services. We should all walk in admitting our problems, acknowl-

edging our struggles, and asking for the support of other fellow journeyers.

Sadly we often feel—or are made to feel—as though we have to have our act together before we walk in the door of a sanctuary. And even more perplexing is the notion that if we are on our best behavior, God will pat us on the head like a dotting, hard-of-hearing grandfather and dismiss our transgressions as cute or playful.

A place to bring our concerns

Life is tough. It is hard to raise children, deal with work stresses, and find enough money to pay the bills, let alone cope with unexpected illnesses or other traumas. It is difficult to act with integrity, to care about others, to be patient in a fast-paced world.

Where we go to meet God should be a place to bring all of these concerns. It should be a place to deal with the messiness of life; a place to ask all of our questions and praise God with whatever talents He has given us.

For those of us who have a place to worship God honestly and openly, it is a great opportunity to renew ourselves and our faith. For those

who don't have such a sanctuary, it is worth seeking out.

Going to weekly services is not something to do out of guilt or a sense of goodness. Church is a place to go for help and hope.

During Jesus' ministry, well-meaning disciples tried to protect Him from the children who flocked to Him. I imagine they suspected that the children had dirty hands, would ask embarrassing questions, and might do such immature things as whistle.

When Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me," He surprised the adults, who thought He would have no time for such encounters. And when He explained that they would have to "become like little children" if they wanted to enter the kingdom of God, He must have confused them even more.

A place to know God honestly

As I watch my son Tyler worship God in his own way and experience acceptance in our church, I am grateful. He is growing up in an atmosphere that will allow him to know God honestly. And for the adults among us who are less than perfect, it is comforting to know that there is a place to which we can come as we are and become more than we ever hoped to be. [†]

Dale Hanson Bourke is the publisher of Religion News Service and author of Turn Toward the Wind.

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The value of self-discipline

*Go to the ant, you sluggard;
consider its ways and be wise!*
Proverbs 6:6, NIV

HERE THE ANT is offered as an example of unsupervised, uncoerced self-discipline. Without any outside pressure, this tiny creature both stores and gathers provisions to see it through future days when food will be scarce.

The writer suggests there is wisdom in hard work motivated by a spirit of foresight and diligence. By avoiding procrastination and doing what we ought to when we ought to, we'll discover a great deal of freedom from a fear

of the future. We'll worry much less about scarcity and needs.

The *sluggard*, however, is lazy, short-sighted and destined for poverty and want. Such a person avoids taking responsibility for the future, shuns hard work and even lacks motivation to get out of bed.

Though these verses focus on the human side of success, other verses in Proverbs underscore the importance of a commitment to the Lord. Following God is the primary quality of one who is successful in God's eyes. [†]

— From *The Quest Study Bible* (Zondervan Publishing House); used by permission.

A rundown of what's in store during Conference week

August 5-9 at Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio

Theme: "Partners in the Gospel" (Philippians 1:3-11)

Monday Evening

The opening celebration of General Conference on Monday evening will begin with a Youth March, followed by a slide presentation depicting 50 years of the national Brethren Youth organization. This will be the kickoff to a week-long celebration of the 50th anniversary of Brethren Youth.

The evening will also feature a message by Dr. Richard Allison, moderator of the Conference, who will speak on the Conference theme, "Partners in the Gospel."



Moderator Richard Allison

Since 1974 Dr. Allison has taught at Ashland Theological Seminary, where he is a leader in the field of Christian education. From 1980 to 1994 he also served as director of the seminary's Doctor of Ministry program.

A 1961 graduate of the seminary, Dr. Allison served as a Brethren pastor before joining the ATS faculty. He pastored successively the Wayne Heights (Waynesboro, Pa.), Goshen (Ind.) First, and Jefferson (Goshen, Ind.) Brethren Churches. He has been an active leader in The Brethren Church and also served as Conference moderator in 1969. He and his wife, Emily, have four grown sons.

Tuesday

Tuesday will be *Evangelism Day* at Conference. From 10:30 a.m. to noon, the Evangelism & Church Growth Commission will conduct "Opening DOORS to the World" (Dynamic Outreach Opportunities

Related to Service), a multi-faceted workshop. Paul Munday, director of The Andrew Center, will speak on



Rev. Paul Munday

"Unlocking Church Doors." (More information about Rev. Munday appeared in last month's *EVANGELIST*.) Table-talk presentations and discussions on evangelism, church growth, and church-planting topics will also be offered during this session.

Celebration of the 50th anniversary of Brethren Youth will continue on Tuesday afternoon at an all-Conference picnic scheduled to begin at 4:30. Lawn games, other activities, and a birthday cake are planned for the picnic.

Evangelism will again be the focus during the Tuesday evening worship service. This service will be a celebration of what God is doing through evangelism in Brethren churches, especially through Passing On the Promise. Rev. Munday will deal with the question, "Does the Future Have a Church?"

Wednesday

The Wednesday morning program will feature a workshop sponsored by the Spiritual Formation Commission. Members of this commission will look at spiritual formation opportunities available through Promise Keepers, the Brethren Way of Christ, Life Spring, and Ashland Theological Seminary. The workshop will also include segments on Spiritual Formation for Women and on Pastoral Care in The Brethren Church.

At 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, one

of the highlights of the week for women will take place, the annual Women's Luncheon sponsored by the national W.M.S. Speaker for the luncheon will be Barbara Hess, a retreat and Bible study leader from Akron, Ohio. While the women are having their luncheon, the men will be enjoying their annual Men's Picnic, sponsored by the Brethren Men of Mission.

Wednesday evening will be seminary night, with Ashland Theological Seminary in charge of the worship service. The theme for the evening will be servant leadership, and the service will feature a message by



Dr. Fred Finks

seminary president Dr. Fred Finks entitled "Leading from a Servant's Heart." The service will also include a prelude by Grace Su, a seminary student from Taiwan; music by Dr. Ron and Linda Sprunger, and selections by a choir of ATS students and alumni.

Thursday

Thursday morning will again feature a workshop. Dr. Doug Little, professor of psychology at Ashland Theological Seminary, will lead this workshop, which will deal with the subject of conflict resolution.

The annual World Relief Soup Lunch will follow at 12:30 p.m. During the lunch, Martin Hartog, Midwest Area and Senior Representative for

World Relief of the National Association of Evangelicals, will speak.

Born in Amsterdam shortly before World War II, Hartog experienced as a



Martin Hartog

(continued following the *Outlook* pages)

The Women's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society



July-August 1996

Volume 9, Number 6

The President's Pen



Dear Ladies,

Well, here we are in the middle of summer. This past year has gone by so quickly.

We have been talking about the W.M.S. ABCs. No. 7 is to "correspond regularly with Home and World missionaries." Our missionaries truly enjoy hearing from each of us and enjoy meeting those who write, when they come to the States for a visit. You will really be blessed by writing to them.

ABC 8 is to "support the growth of the children and/or youth ministries of your church with prayer, finances, and leadership." This is an easy commitment, as there are so many ways to meet this ABC. Many of you are Sunday school teachers, nursery workers, youth leaders—the list is endless. I'm sure each church has ways of financially helping with the many youth ministries.

As you are reading this, your W.M.S. group should already have sent your report to the District President (ABC 9). And No. 10 is one we really need to work on all the time—to be a "model of Christ's love; to show Christian love and service to our neighbors and their families." Do you have a neighbor who is difficult to get along with? Show Christ's love to her/him by doing something nice. Keep a smile on your face and do things in love. You will be surprised how this will
(continued on page 4)

WE CAN DO M.O.R.E.

Excerpts from the President's Address by Susie Stout,
Indiana District Conference, May 4, 1996

I can do all things through Christ,
Who strengthens me.

Philippians 4:13

Ladies, our theme this weekend is "We Can Do M.O.R.E." This was meant by the district board to mean: M-manage O-our R-resources E-Effectively. The W.M.S. chose for our theme, We Can Do MORE . . . "through Christ Who strengthens me."

Let's take a look at our resources. They may include our Time, our Money, and our Talents or Abilities.

Our Time

It is much easier for me personally to budget my money than it is my time! Do you take time to witness to others? Remember when you pass an unsaved person that you may be to blame for his condition. In Ecclesiastes 3, the writer tells us about a time for everything, some of which we have no control. Remember as we do works in the name of Jesus that we are to bear fruit. Colossians 1:10 says, "Bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." Blessed is the person who is too busy to worry during the day and too sleepy to worry at night.

Our Money

Have you ever said or even thought, "Well, God, if I had more money, I'd be able to do so much more for others"? Many references in the Old and New Testaments refer to money: in Deuteronomy 16:17, we read, "Every man shall give . . . according to the blessing of the Lord . . ."; Acts 20:35, "It is more blessed

to give than to receive"; and we all know II Corinthians 9:7: "God loveth a cheerful giver." I have heard it said that plenty of people are willing to give God credit; yet few are willing to give Him cash!

Our Talents or Abilities

We must be willing to share our talents and abilities with others. Jesus said in Matthew 25:40, "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." And Jesus continued, "Then shall he answer them saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

For all of this to work, we need to be "plugged" in to our source, our source is Jesus Himself. I read about a youth minister who was an excellent ventriloquist. It really seemed as though his dummy was real when a conversation was carried on with it. Suddenly the minister placed the dummy on a stool and walked to the other side of the stage and continued to try to joke with the dummy. Of course, it didn't answer. We are like that dummy when we aren't being used by God. Nothing comes out right if we aren't living within His will.

Surely there isn't one person you can think of whom you would like to see go to hell. Ladies, this is *serious business!*

In John 14 Jesus promised that
(continued on page 4)

READING CIRCLE BOOKS



When the Executive Board of the W.M.S. met May 11, one of the items of business was to choose books for you to read next year. From a suggested list of 12, these are recommended for you to choose. The goal is for each member to read two books; however, you and I know that if we read more than the minimum, we will be benefited more.

The resume of each book is given by Kathleen Mack, literature secretary.

Books will be available at General Conference.

THE QUILT by T. Davis Bunn; \$11.50

This is the story of an elderly grandmother, whose gnarled arthritic hands have a beauty all their own. Mary felt a gentle yearning in her heart, the whisper of melody she strained to hear. There was something left undone.

GLADYS AYLWARD (mission book) by Catherine Swift; \$4.50

The China Inland Mission considered her to be too old to learn the Chinese language. She scraped and saved every penny she could earn and booked an overland passage to China. She spent more than 20 years of service with the Chinese people.

LEAH by James R. Shott; \$8.50

Leah is the "other" sister, the homely one. Her name means "wild cow." She is awkward, introverted, and almost blind, and she is in love with Jacob.

GOD'S VITAMIN 'C' FOR THE SPIRIT by Kathy Collard and D. Larry Miller; \$12.50

100% Pure, All-Natural God's Vitamin 'C' with "tug-at-the-heart" stories to fortify and enrich your life.

JACOB THE BAKER by Noah Ben Shea; \$10.00

Few books touch both heaven and earth. These tiny stories are not

only to be read, but also carried in a circle around your heart . . . feeding you hope and humanity whenever loss of God threatens.

SOPHIE'S HEART by Lori Wick; \$10.50

A warm contemporary story of God's tender mercies and loving intervention in the life of one family.

ANGELS AROUND US by Douglas Connelly; \$9.50

Douglas Connelly has studied what the Bible says about angels, and you may be surprised at what is there.

ONE BRIGHT SHINING PATH by W. Terry Whalin and Chris Woher; \$9.50

High up on a steep mountainside in the Peruvian Andes, an Indian shepherd boy watched his flock. Though he could never have imagined it, God had chosen him for a remarkable task. God's plan would take a nearly illiterate boy, handicapped by a learning disability, and eventually place him at the head of a team of scholars translating the Bible into the Quechua language.

Missionary Miscellany

David and Jenny Loi are the July missionaries of the month. They will attend the Conference and we will hear first-hand reports about their work in Malaysia. They will do some deputation, too; perhaps they will be in your area. Pray for Rebecca, who will not be with them, and for Stephen, who will be a sophomore at Ashland University.

Tom and Debbie Sprowls are the home missionaries for August. They are the pastoral team in Medina, Ohio. Their young son was born in February.

The September missionaries are Todd and Tracy Ruggles in Mexico City. They received their work visas in Mexico, which eliminates their need to return to the U.S. every six months. Now they can work legally as missionaries in Mexico. This is answered prayer.

Thanks!

Dear Women of the Missionary Society,

It is a pleasure to write to you with thanks for your generous scholarship gift last fall. At the time I was considering taking a semester off, due to financial reasons. Then your letter came. What a blessing! It reaffirmed that I needed to return for the fall semester. Because I did, I was placed at a local elementary school with a wonderful Christian staff. The teacher I was placed with, also a Christian, provided me an excellent example, not only of how I want to teach, but also of how I want to live my life. I look to her, not only as a teaching mentor, but as a life-style mentor.

My fall semester truly reaffirmed that God has given me a special gift to be in the classroom. It also reminded me how fortunate I am to have a family of believers that have helped support my emotional and physical needs throughout. It truly is a great testimony of the plan God has for each of His children's lives and the special people He places in our lives to help achieve the ends.

I graduated in December and am now substitute teaching several days each week at the local schools. I feel I am doing what I love the most and am very happy. Thank you for making this all possible!

In His love,
Carrie R. Lucas

THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

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Women's Outlook Newsletter

Recipes from the Executive Board

BRAN MUFFINS

Corrected recipe

An error was printed in Marie Fanning's recipe. Please replace the previous recipe with this:

Mix in large bowl:

- 4 beaten eggs
- 1 c. oil
- 1 qt. buttermilk
- In a larger bowl, combine:
 - 2 1/2 c. less 2 tbsp. whole wheat flour
 - 1/2 c. wheat germ
 - 1 3/4 c. sugar
 - 5 tsp. soda
 - 2 tsp. salt
 - 1 tsp. cinnamon
 - 3/4 tsp. each of ginger, cloves, nutmeg
 - 1 c. quick oatmeal
 - 1 c. Quaker natural cereal
 - 6 c. (rounded) Post raisin bran cereal

- 1 c. raisins (or less)
- 2/3 c. chopped pecans (optional)

Add wet ingredients to dry. Let stand in refrigerator at least 2 days. Bake at 400° for 15 minutes. Mixture will keep in refrigerator 2 weeks and can be baked at different times.

JELL-O SALAD

- 2 3-oz. boxes orange Jell-O
- 1 large can crushed pineapple
- 1 pint orange sherbet

Mix Jell-O with 2 cups boiling water. Add pineapple with juice. Stir.

Add about 1 pint orange sherbet. Mix until sherbet is melted. Refrigerate until set.

This may be served on a lettuce leaf, if used as a salad. For a dessert, add a dollop of whipped cream on each serving.

Shirley Black, president

GRAPE NUTS

- 6 c. graham flour
- 2 c. buttermilk
- 1 c. light Karo
- 1 c. mild molasses
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 2 tsp. salt

Combine ingredients and put in pie pans. Bake 1 hour in moderate oven. When cold, break into pieces, grind, and dry or roast.

Marilyn Aspinall, vice president

OVERNIGHT COOKIES

Cream together:

- 3 c. brown sugar
- 1 c. white sugar
- 1/2 c. oleo

1/2 c. shortening

Add and mix:

- 4 eggs
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla
- Sift, then add:
 - 1 1/2 tsp. salt

6 c. flour

1 Tbsp. soda

1 Tbsp. cream of tartar

After 4 cups of flour mixture is added, you'll have to work the rest in by hand. Form into 2 long loaves and let stand in refrigerator overnight. Slice and bake 12 min. at 350°. Yield: approximately 5 dozen.

Susie Stout, Indiana

NO-BAKE CHEESECAKE

- 1 c. hot water
- 1 3-oz. lemon Jell-O
- 1 8-oz. cream cheese
- 1 c. sugar
- 1 can Milnot

For the graham cracker crust: Roll graham crackers into crumbs. Add 1/4 c. sugar and 1/2 c. melted oleo, mix well, press into 9" x 13" pan or dish.

Dissolve Jell-O into hot water. Whip Milnot into whipped cream and add sugar. Without cleaning beaters, combine cream cheese and dissolved Jell-O. Pour cream cheese/Jell-O and whipped Milnot together. Mix well and pour into graham cracker crust. Chill. Makes about 15 servings. Extremely light and delicious.

You may use any flavor of Jell-O. With lemon, you may top with a fruit pie filling, such as cherry or blueberry.

Susie Stout, Indiana

ANGEL CAKE

Mix:

- 1 3-oz. box instant vanilla pudding
- 1 can crushed pineapple, drained
- Fold in 9-oz. Cool Whip.

Slice 1 angel food cake into 3 layers. (Use a store-bought cake, those baked at home are usually too large.) Spoon some whipped cream mixture between layers, frost outside of cake. Refrigerate.

Joanne Kroft, Financial Secretary

STUFFED PASTA SHELLS

- 1 lb. lean ground beef or mild, bulk pork sausage
- 1 jar (28 oz.) spaghetti sauce
- 15 oz. ricotta cheese
- 3 c. shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. parsley flakes
- large pasta shells (approximately 1/2 box cooked, rinsed, drained)
- grated Parmesan cheese

In large saucepan, brown meat. Remove half of meat and set aside. Stir spaghetti sauce into remaining meat. Simmer 15 minutes.

In medium-sized bowl, combine the remaining meat, ricotta cheese, 2 c. mozzarella cheese, egg, and parsley. Pour 1/3 of the spaghetti sauce mixture into a 9" x 13" baking pan. Stuff shells with ricotta mixture and place on top of sauce. Top with remaining sauce, mozzarella cheese, and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake uncovered at 350° for 20 minutes.

Nancy Hunn, general secretary

CHERRY CHEWBIBLEES

Crust:

- 1 1/4 cups flour
- 1/2 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1/2 cup butter-flavored shortening
- 1 cup nuts, chopped, divided

Filling:

- 2 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese, softened
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 2 cans (21 oz. each) cherry pie filling

Combine flour and brown sugar; cut in shortening until fine crumbs form. Stir in 1/2 c chopped nuts. Reserve 1/2 cup crumb mixture for topping. Press remaining mixture into a greased 9" x 13" pan. Bake at 350° 12-15 minutes.

For filling, beat cream cheese, sugar, eggs, and vanilla until smooth. Spread over hot crust. Bake 15 minutes at 350°. Spread cherry pie filling on top. Combine remaining crumbs and nuts, sprinkle over cherry filling. Bake 15 minutes at 350°. Cool. Refrigerate until serving time. Yield: 20 servings

Joan Merrill, Sewing and World Relief Coordinator

District Doings

Nancy Lentz reported how the NAPPANEE W.M.S. has met ABC 10. They honor a different older woman each month. "At each meeting, we choose the person to honor and decide what would be special to her. We started with W.M.S. shut-in members and continued with other women of the church.

"One woman had a garden that needed weeding, so several women met to do that on a hot summer evening. We have taken a meal to some in their homes or the nursing home and a few members join them for lunch. We have taken some of the honorees out to lunch at a restaurant, and we gave a gift of a silk flower arrangement to one. We held a surprise Saturday brunch for the one in charge of the sewing group. She is still a very active member of the W.M.S."

The LINWOOD society hosted a Spring into Goals rally for the SOUTHEAST District May 18. Susan Kidd reported that four societies were represented by 23 members. The day was full of special music, group singing, and a discussion about the societies and how they are meeting their goals. The St. Luke ladies used the Program Guide for their devotions and read the Mission Statement from the W.M.S. Constitution. That helped set the mood for the day. Their district project is for Maria Miranda's radio ministry, *Para ti Mujer*.

The officers were reelected for a two-year term and were installed by Pastor Bob Keplinger. He complimented the ladies for being CEO's: Cute, Energetic, Organized!

We Can Do M.O.R.E.

(continued)

the faithful have a special place prepared for them. Sometimes we get so tired, but please be encouraged by the thought of what is in store for us. Oh, that God can say of us, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: Thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The President's Pen (continued)

change an attitude. My family has tried it and it works!! How about sharing your garden "goodies" with them, or pick them a bouquet of flowers, offer to take them to the grocery store, or to baby-sit. I know that many of you are doing all of these things and so you are meeting ABC 10.

One evening when my granddaughter, Randi, was at our house, she asked Grandpa if he had to go to his office to work. He said, "No," and Randi said, "Good, because I haven't been spending enough time with you." So that evening, Grandpa spent some time with Randi on the porch swing, telling her a story.

That made me think of the times spent with the Lord. Do we go days without reading our Bibles or taking time to talk with Him? Do we feel Him saying, "You haven't been spending enough time with me lately?" I think we can tell when that happens, and we realize things are not working well in our lives. So we need to stop and take time to talk to and with the Lord. Fellowship with God is the most blessed experience known to man. It brings peace and refreshment to the most weary soul. I John 1:3 speaks of this: "... our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

Conference is August 5-9. We have a very good speaker scheduled for the W.M.S. luncheon on Wednesday. Her name is Barbara Hess from Akron, Ohio. She is busy all year doing women's retreats and teaching Bible studies in the area. This luncheon is for all ladies (not just W.M.S. members), and the cost is \$6.50. If you have a women's group at your church, encourage them to attend Conference and the luncheon. I know several churches that have a group of women who are meeting under a different name than W.M.S. This is a good time to get them acquainted with other women of the denomination.

I look forward to seeing you at Conference. God Bless You.

Shirley Black

Recipes (continued)

NEIMAN MARCUS CAKE

1 yellow cake mix with pudding
Prepare as on package. Bake specified time (this works well as a sheet cake). Cool 15 minutes. Punch holes in cake with fork.

Combine:

1½ c. milk

½ c. sugar

½ c. coconut

Boil 1 minute. Spoon over cake. Cool.

Fold ½ c. coconut into 8 oz. container Cool Whip and spread over cake. Sprinkle 1 c. coconut on top.

Doris Shultz, assistant
literature secretary

The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

With this issue a few more recipes from the Executive Board are included.

I hope you have tried some of the recipes from the previous *Newsletter* and will use these also. Please disregard the bran muffin recipe from the last issue and use the one in this issue. This will be much better!

With Marilyn Aspinall's recipe for Grape Nuts, she wrote, "It occurred to me that an old family recipe for homemade Grape Nuts cereal would be different. At the price of cereal these days, it might come in handy to other cereal lovers. I can still smell my mother's kitchen when I remember these. They're quite easy to mix up and *better* than the real thing!"

I can only emphasize the Conference information which Shirley gave in her column. Missionary reports, music, devotions, important business decisions, and those informal gatherings in the hall or following a Conference session—these are General Conference. We want you to be a part of the week.

Your friend,

Joan

child the heavy price paid by victims of war and hardship. From that experience he gained an appreciation for freedom and food and the ability to identify with victims of famine.

His family emigrated to Canada in 1952 and Martin became a Christian in 1957. In 1980, when World Relief opened a European office in Amsterdam, Hartog, with his wife and two daughters, returned to the Netherlands to take charge of that office. In 1988 he was relocated to World Relief headquarters in Wheaton, Ill., where he has been involved in a variety of ministries. During his years with World Relief, he has traveled to more than 45 countries, enabling him to gain valuable insights about the worldwide activities of World Relief.

Brethren Missions will be the focus on Thursday evening, with a Missionary Board banquet at 5:00 and the Missionary Board service

at 7:00. World Missions will be the emphasis of the banquet, and the special guests will be Brethren missionaries Allen Baer (home on furlough from Argentina) and David and Jenny Loi (visiting from Malaysia). The program will include greetings and brief times of sharing by the special guests and a short address on the future of Brethren Missions by Rev. Reilly Smith, executive Director of the Missionary Board.

Brethren Home Missions will be in the spotlight in the worship service that follows the banquet, and special guests for this service will include the following Home Mission pastors and workers: Thomas (T. J.) and Judy McLaughlin (Pennsylvania, District), Tom and Debbie Sprowls (Medina, Ohio), Mike and Pam Sove (Franklin, Ohio), Tom and Tiona Conrad (Greenwood, Ind.), Gene and Georgia Bell (Indianapolis, Ind.), and Keith and Marjorie Bennett (Greenwood, Ind.).

The worship service will be led by the worship team from the Living HOPE Brethren Church in Medina, Ohio (formerly called the Brethren Church of Medina).



The service will include a special report from the new Home Mission outreach in Tracy, Calif. The message for the service will be presented by Dr. Arden E. Gilmer, pastor of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church and president of the Missionary Board.

Friday

The closing session of the Conference, which begins at 10:30 on Friday morning, will feature a report

from the Brethren Youth In Christ of their Convention. It will conclude with a challenge by the new Conference moderator, Dr. John Shultz, who will introduce the 1997 Conference theme. Dr. Shultz is professor of pastoral counseling at Ashland Theological Seminary and operates a private counseling practice in Ashland.



Dr. John Shultz

Dr. Shultz is professor of pastoral counseling at Ashland Theological Seminary and operates a private counseling practice in Ashland. [†]

Conference business sessions

Conference business sessions will be held each morning, Tuesday through Friday, beginning at 8:20 a.m. and lasting about two hours.

Discussion of and action on the Denominational Reorganization Proposal for The Brethren Church will be the major business item of the Conference. This proposal was included in last month's EVANGELIST, and copies were also sent to pastors and church moderators.

Delegates, please read and study this proposal before coming to Conference. Answers to 19 commonly asked questions were printed at the end of the proposal to help clarify as many issues as possible.

A formal presentation of the proposal will be made during the Tuesday morning business session. At noon on Tuesday, facilitators will be available in the Convocation Center cafeteria to help organize those in favor of and those opposed to the proposal into groups that can prepare statements supporting their respective positions. These groups will also choose representatives from their groups to present their position statements

during the Wednesday business session. Please note that this is not an attempt to stifle discussion of the proposal. Rather it is an effort to provide for an orderly discussion while eliminating the repetition (a number of people coming to the microphone and saying essentially the same thing) that often occurs during Conference discussions of this nature. A vote on the proposal is scheduled for the Wednesday business session.

Elections: Two different slates of nominees are being prepared for this Conference. One slate will be used if the reorganization proposal is approved and will contain nominees for those positions that will need to be filled in the new organization (Congregational and Missionary Ministries Council members). The other slate will be used if the reorganization proposal is voted down, and it will contain nominees for those positions that need to be filled in the present organization (moderator-elect, some GCEC members, and commission members).

Whichever slate is used, delegates will have an opportunity to make nominations from the floor. Persons so nominated must have given their consent to serve if elected.

Auxiliary sessions

Meeting times for the national Women's Missionary Society, the Brethren Men of Mission, and the National Association of Brethren Church Elders have been set for 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday and for 2:00 p.m. on Thursday. Auxiliaries will also have an opportunity to meet after the Women's Luncheon and Men's Picnic, scheduled for 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday.



Evangelical groups call for response to church burnings

Carol Stream, Ill. — The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), the National Black Evangelical Association (NBEA), and World Relief of NAE have issued a joint "Call for Action" condemning the bigotry and violence that lies at the root of many of the 33 fires at African-American churches in the south during the past 18 months.

The statement calls on churches to stand united, in word and deed, with the victims of these atrocities. It also announces that a fund has been set up to assist the rebuilding efforts of the victimized churches.

"We cannot stand silently on the sidelines and allow our brothers and sisters in the faith to endure this trial alone," the joint statement reads. "To this end, the National Black Evangelical Association and the National Association of Evangelicals have asked World Relief, the assistance arm of the National Association of Evangelicals, to establish a fund to assist the churches that have been destroyed in their rebuilding efforts. We urge our member denominations and churches to join us in sharing the resources God has provided to us with these brothers and sisters who have suffered great loss."

Brethren wishing to contribute to the NBEA/NAE World Relief Partnership Fund to Rebuild the Churches may send their donations to The Brethren Church National Office at 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805. Checks should be made out to The Brethren Church, Inc., with "World Relief—Rebuild the Churches" on the notation line.

College Corner Church concludes POTP with "Celebration Sunday"

Wabash, Ind. — "To God Be the Glory" was the theme of "Celebration Sunday," held May 19 at the College Corner Brethren Church to mark the end of the church's third year in the Passing On the Promise Process (POTP).

During the service, Mike Shoemaker and Linda Faust gave testimonies of God's faithfulness. Pastor James F. Black brought a message on "Overcoming Low Energy Syndrome," in which he emphasized the need to develop and maintain an attitude and atmosphere of hope as the church moves forward.

Special recognition was given to Ruby McClain during the worship hour for her service as the POTP co-coordinator during the entire three-year process. Nancy Grumbling, wife of former pastor Rev. Glenn Grumbling, served as the other co-coordinator at the beginning of the process. When the Lord's call took the Grumbings to the Second Brethren Church in Johnstown, Pa., and brought the Blacks to College Corner, Susie Black, wife of the present pastor, became co-coordinator.

A "full-basket" dinner followed the worship service. After the meal, a mime group, under the direction of Susie Black, presented a pantomime on the need to welcome newcomers into the fellowship of the church. This was followed by a time of discussion, reflection, celebration, and "dreaming." Key developments of the discussion included hosting a "Community Festival," with various types of music groups presenting the gospel; a bike tour of the local Mississinewa Reservoir; athletic activities for community youth; and developing a clown ministry.

A major celebration occurred when it was announced that the two-year growth goal established in June



Ruby McClain, with Pastor Jim and Susie Black, holds a plaque honoring her for three years of service as co-coordinator of the Passing On the Promise process at the College Corner Church.

1994—adding 17 new people—was reached and exceeded by 9.

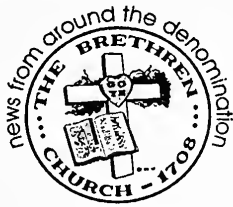
The good news since "Celebration Sunday" is that many people have stepped forward to take leadership roles in the efforts needed to bring to fruition the activity and ministry ideas that were generated. A spirit of unity and community is also motivating people to reach out and invite unsaved neighbors and friends to "Come, give us a try."

According to Pastor Black, the Lord has really been blessing the College Corner congregation. "I look forward to being a part of the church's ministry in the coming year as we continue to 'Pass On the Promise,'" he said.

— reported by Pastor James F. Black



Getting at the heart of Passing On the Promise.



Briefly Noted



The Bradenton, Fla., Brethren Church marked the 20th anniversary of the dedication of its building on Sunday, April 14, with a special celebration. Dr. J.D. Hamel, Pastor Emeritus of the Sarasota, Fla., First Brethren Church, was the guest speaker for the morning celebration service. Rev. Russell Gordon, former pastor of the Bradenton congregation, was the guest speaker at an afternoon service, which followed a noon fellowship meal. An added feature of the afternoon service was a mortgage-burning ceremony for the mortgage on the building.

After eight months without a full-time pastor, the First Brethren Church of Huntington, Ind., has called Chris Moellering to serve the congregation. Pastor Moellering, originally from the Winding Waters Brethren Church in Elkhart, Ind., is a 1996 graduate (M.Div.) of Ashland Theological Seminary. He began his ministry at Huntington on May 1. He and his wife, Leslie, are both graduates of Ball State University. They have two children, Katie (3) and Abbie (1). Chris pastored the Brethren Bible Church in Louisville, Ohio, for a time while in seminary.

Midwest Brethren challenged to further God's kingdom in district

Cheyenne, Wyo. — More than 35 Brethren from Wyoming, Kansas, and Nebraska gathered in the facilities of the Cheyenne Brethren Church June 21 to 23 for the Midwest District Conference in order to envision the future. More than 20 youth gathered at the same time for a District Youth Conference.

During the opening session on Friday evening, Moderator G. Emery Hurd challenged the Brethren to forget what is behind and to press on toward the prize of furthering the kingdom of God in the Midwest. He looked at several barriers to forgetting, including the "I remember when's," the "If only's," and the "I've arrived's," and suggested ways to overcome these barriers.

Following the moderator's address, Doug Wathen, vice president of the Rocky Mountain chapter of Christian Illusionists, gave a demonstration of Christian illusion. Then the drama team Omega from the Cheyenne Brethren Church, presented a drama entitled "The Champion."

During the business session on Saturday, delegates adopted a new set of by-laws to more clearly define and streamline the administration of district business. Plans for planting a new church in the Denver, Colo., area were also further developed. Candidates are currently being interviewed and moneys are being released for start-up expenses.

Rev. Reilly Smith, Executive Di-

rector of the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church, gave the inspirational message of the morning. Then during the afternoon session, he shared the denominational reorganization proposal, which was met with hearty discussion.

Elections resulted in the following officers: David Cuthbert—moderator-elect; Carolyn Tucker—secretary; Steve Medved—treasurer; and Marilyn Minor—assistant secretary/treasurer. This year's moderator-elect, Floyd Minor, pastor of the Fort Scott, Kans., Brethren Church, is the new moderator.

The Saturday program concluded with a full-meal Communion service, with the pastoral couples serving as deacons and deaconesses. This was followed by a refreshing time at the community college swimming pool.

The conference continued with services on Sunday morning, during which Rev. David Cooksey, Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church, gave a message and installed the district officers. The conference concluded with a luncheon, after which out-of-state delegates and youth began their journeys home, each with a bottle of Cheyenne sarsaparilla received as a parting gift.

Next year's conference is set for June 20-22 at the Fort Scott, Kans., Brethren Church.

— reported by Rev. G. Emery Hurd



Rajahmundry, India — Selections by the Brethren Choir of India were included in television broadcasts aired on Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The ten-minute programs, which were broadcast all over Asia by Gemini TV, also included brief messages by Brethren missionary Rev. K. Prasanth Kumar.

Billy and Ruth Graham receive Congressional gold medal

Washington, D.C. — Evangelist Billy Graham and his wife, Ruth, were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal—the highest honor Congress can bestow on a citizen—at a special ceremony held May 2 in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol.

The Grahams were recognized for "outstanding and lasting contributions to morality, racial equality, family, philanthropy and religion." Mr. Graham is only the second clergyman to receive this award for ministry, and the Grahams are only the third couple to be so honored.



Dr. J. D. Hamel honored for service to community

Sarasota, Fla. — Dr. J. D. Hamel, Pastor Emeritus of the Sarasota First Brethren Church (which he pastored from 1961 to 1989), was honored recently by Sarasota law enforcement agencies for his outstanding service to the community.

Dr. Hamel has been the official chaplain for the Sarasota police

and fire departments and the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office for more than 30 years. He is also chaplain for the



Chaplain J. D. Hamel

Florida State firefighters' association.

Special tribute was paid to Chaplain Hamel during the annual Law Enforcement Memorial Service in Sarasota, held May 15 in conjunction with National Law Enforcement Memorial Week. He was presented a distinguished service medal and several plaques of commemoration during the tribute.

In addition, he was given scores of letters written for the ceremony by family members and friends who shared memories of his ministry. Some recalled how Dr. Hamel had led their children or friends to Christ. Others remembered special moments they'd shared with him, like accompanying him to police emergencies or getting escorted around town in his car.

Hamel's special skills have been invaluable to Sarasota County's law enforcement agencies, according to Sheriff Geoff Monge. While officers and deputies are trained to



Brethren students who received degrees from Ashland Theological Seminary in May were (l. to r.) Chris Moellering, Darrell (Ed) Miller, Thomas (T. J.) McLaughlin, Eric Bargerhuff, James Pflugfelder, Paul Sluss, and Eric Schave.

Seven Brethren students receive degrees from Ashland Theological Seminary in May

Ashland, Ohio — Seven Brethren were among the 141 students who received degrees from Ashland Theological Seminary on May 26.

Eric Bargerhuff, from the Mexico, Ind., First Brethren Church (and the University Church, where he served as associate pastor while in seminary), received the Master of Divinity degree. Eric has accepted a resident housing position with Greenville Bible College in Greenville, Ind. He also plans to pursue doctoral studies.

Thomas (T. J.) McLaughlin, from the Pleasant View Brethren Church in Vandergrift, Pa. (and the Fremont, Ohio, Brethren Church, where he co-pastored while in seminary), received the Master of Divinity degree. T. J. has accepted a

J. D. Hamel honored (cont.)

rescue and protect people, not all of them know how to deal with people's spiritual and emotional needs. "He provides a whole added dimension that we don't have," Sheriff Monge said.

Following the service in which he was honored, Chaplain Hamel accompanied police on calls for a domestic dispute and a disturbance at a nursing home caused by a frenzied man posing a threat to residents. He prayed for everyone involved, and he even endured a small shot of pepper spray on the second call.

call to serve as a church planter in the Pennsylvania District.

Darrell (Ed) Miller, also from the Pleasant View Brethren Church (and the Fremont Brethren Church, where he co-pastored while in seminary), received the Master of Divinity degree. Ed will continue to pastor the Fremont congregation.

Chris Moellering, from the Winding Waters Brethren Church in Elkhart, Ind., received the Master of Divinity degree. Chris has accepted a call to pastor the Huntington, Ind., First Brethren Church.

James Pflugfelder, a member of the Garber Brethren Church in Ashland, Ohio, and former member of Northwest Brethren Chapel in Tucson, Ariz., received a Master of Arts degree in Christian education. James is computer network manager for Ashland University. He also works with youth at the Garber Brethren Church.

Eric Schave, from the Milledgeville, Ill., Brethren Church, received the Master of Divinity degree. He has accepted a position as pastoral intern at the Milledgeville Brethren Church.

Paul Sluss, from the Roanoke, Ind., Brethren Church, received the Master of Divinity degree. Paul began serving the Louisville, Ohio, Brethren Bible Church while in seminary and continues to pastor that congregation.

Raystown Church finds blessing in the midst of devastating flood

Saxton, Pa. — A devastating flood struck Bedford County, Pa., and surrounding counties on January 19 and 20 of this year. Heavy rains and melting snow (about two feet of the white stuff) caused rivers and streams to overflow their banks and flood roads and highways as well as homes and other buildings.

One of the buildings so flooded was the meeting place of the Raystown Brethren Church, located between Saxton and Riddlesburg, Pa., along State Route 26. The building, which is situated across the road from the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River and beside a creek that flows into the river, was deluged with water. The water filled the basement and reached a depth of three inches in the sanctuary. Practically everything in the finished basement, including the kitchen, was destroyed. In the sanctuary, the carpet, installed just a year earlier, was wet, mud-covered, and smelly. The congregation was heartsick.

A call to the insurance company revealed that nothing in the basement was covered but the furnace and structural damage. And no telling when the insurance adjuster might be able to come and assess the damages. The congregation decided they couldn't wait. They began to work and to pray. And as is so often the case when adversity strikes, they experienced God's special blessing in many ways.

Pastor Alfred Chamberlain and his family opened their home for services on January 21 and 28 and February 4 and 18. Two local Churches of the Brethren offered their buildings for the congregation's use as well.

Many individuals and churches

of various denominations, both from within and outside the community, sent donations of money.



Cleaning out the basement.

Some of the donations came from complete strangers. Many other people came to help with the cleanup and remodeling, giving many hours of their time and energy. Some donated kitchen appliances, utensils, and lighting fixtures. The local Women's Missionary Society provided folding tables and many other kitchen items.

"We are so thankful to each one and to God for His great provision and encouragement," says Raystown member Susan Weimert. "It is



such a great feeling to know that people truly care! The Lord answered prayer and blessed us abundantly. The basement looks better than it ever did. The good Lord saw that we had enough money and donations to make all the repairs and improvements to the interior. We still have some outside repairs and a few interior finishing touches to be done. Just a matter of doing them."

By Easter the congregation had the basement ready for the annual sunrise service breakfast. Ironically, the flood insurance check arrived the day before Easter. (The insurance adjuster visited the church on February 25, more than a month after the flood.) The congregation plans to put the insurance money toward a new roof for the building.

The congregation held an open house on Saturday, June 29, to commemorate the completion of the restoration of the building.

"God has turned this trial into a blessing in many ways," said Ms. Weimert. "We know He wants us here and that He has a work for us to do within this community."

— reported by Susan Weimert



The remodeled kitchen: better than before.



In Memory

Dr. J. Ray Klingensmith

Dr. J. Ray Klingensmith, 88, pastor for 69 years and professor of religion at Ashland College and Seminary for 40 years, died at his home on June 24 following a short illness.

He was born in Hundred, W. Va., October 8, 1907, the son of Barney F. and Harriett Klingensmith, and grew



Dr. J. Ray Klingensmith

up in northern California, graduating from Long Beach Polytechnic High School. He was a 1931 graduate of Ashland College and a 1934 graduate of Ashland Theological Seminary. While a college student he established a mission in the northern part of the city of Ashland that grew into two successful churches.

He pastored the Oakville, Ind., First Brethren Church (1934-36), the Elkhart, Ind., First Brethren Church (36-40), and the Washington, D.C., Brethren Church (53-56). From 1940 to 1945 he served as General Secretary of the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church.

Rev. Klingensmith joined the Ashland College faculty as professor of religion in 1956. He served as religion department chair for 18 years and was a member of the Ashland Theological Seminary faculty for 35 years. Following his retirement in 1977, he continued to teach Bible classes at the college on a volunteer basis, doing so until just weeks before his death. During his years in Ashland he also pastored several area churches.

He was named Ashland College's

teacher of the year in 1963, given an honorary degree by the college in 1977, named outstanding alumnus in 1980, and presented the Distinguished Service award by the college (university) in 1995.

On June 21, 1934, he married Christine C. Witter, who survives him. He is also survived by his daughter, Janet (Rinehart), and son-in-law, Dr. Donald R. Rinehart, and by three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held June 26 in the Ashland University Memorial Chapel with Dr. Klingensmith's son-in-law, Dr. Donald Rinehart, officiating, assisted by Dr. Arden Gilmer, pastor of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church.

Memorials may be made to the J. Ray and Christine Klingensmith Scholarship Fund at Ashland University, or to Hospice of North Central Ohio, Inc., 1605 County Road 1095, Ashland, OH 44805.

In Memory

Rev. Ralph E. Mills

Rev. Ralph E. Mills, 71, died May 17 at the Brethren Home at Cross Keys, Pa., from complications of Progressive Supranuclear Palsy. Rev. Mills served as a Brethren pastor for 41 years, 34 of those (1956-1990) as pastor of the Berlin, Pa., Brethren Church.

Ralph Mills was born September 6, 1924, at Hagerstown, Md., the son of John and Mary Turner Mills. He became a member of the St. James, Md., Brethren Church. He was a graduate of Ashland College and also attended the University of West Virginia, Frostburg University in Maryland, the University of Pittsburgh, and Zenia Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh.

He began his pastoral ministry at the Uniontown, Pa., and Highland



Rev. Ralph E. Mills

(Marianna, Pa.) Brethren churches in 1949, serving both congregations from 1949 to 1952. He pastored the Pittsburgh First Brethren Church from 1952 to 1956, and the Berlin Brethren Church from 1956 until his retirement on December 31, 1990. He was greatly loved not only by members of the Berlin Brethren Church but also by many other people of the community.

In 1946 Mills married Miriam Rohrer, also of Hagerstown, who survives him. Also surviving is a daughter, Beverly S. Kreeger, and her husband, Austin, of Kirkwood, Pa.; a son, Gary, and his wife, Edith, of Columbia, Md.; and one grandson. He is also survived by three brothers, one of whom—John—is a Brethren pastor, currently serving the Hagerstown First Brethren Church.

The funeral service for Rev. Mills was held at Bast Funeral Home in Boonsboro, Md., with Rev. Robert Stahl, pastor of the Main Street Brethren Church (Meyersdale, Pa.) officiating. A memorial service was held Sunday afternoon, June 2, at the Berlin Brethren Church, with several area pastors participating and special music provided by the Senior Choir and Adult Handbell Choir of the Berlin Brethren Church.

Memorial donations may be made to Progressive Supranuclear Palsy, Inc., 601 N. Caroline St., Baltimore, MD 21287.

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A newsletter for Brethren people

September 1996

General Conference Moderator Richard E. Allison explores:

Possibilities Through Partnership*

OUR SCRIPTURE TEXT is Philippians 1:1-11. Philippians is a progress-oriented and not a problem-solving letter. It is the most joyous of Paul's letters. It also overflows with affection.

The purpose of the letter is to encourage a spirit of unity. Evidently the Philippian Christians were experiencing some disunity, some power-seeking, and a lack of humility. Notice how many times Paul mentions "all of you" in verses 1-11 (in verses 1, 4, 7, 8). Then in chapter two he presents that exalted picture of Jesus Christ, who is one with the Father. Third, there is the phrase in verse 5 reminding them that they are "Partners in the Gospel."

Partnership

This is the phrase I want to focus on, "Partners in the Gospel." Let us consider the "Possibilities Through Partnership."

This word "partner" is actually *koinonia*, our word for fellowship. We usually interpreted it as coffee, donuts, and casual conversation. But Luke 5:10 says that James and John were Peter's partners in the fishing business. In 2 Corinthians 8:23 Paul calls Titus his partner.

Marriage is a partnership. My wife, Emily, and I have a partnership that has lasted over 45 years. It has been more than coffee, donuts, and casual conversation.

*This is an abridged and edited version of the General Conference moderator's address. The complete address is available on audio cassette for \$4.00 (plus \$2.00 for shipping and handling) from the National Office, 524 College Ave., Ashland, Ohio. It will also be included in the General Conference Annual, which will be printed later this year.



Dr. Richard Allison emphasizes a point during his moderator's address, which he presented during the "Opening Worship and Celebration" on Monday evening of General Conference.

This word *koinonia* occurs five times in Philippians. In verse 5 it's translated "partnership." In verse seven it's translated "share." In 2:1 it's "fellowship." In 3:10 it's "partaking" in the sufferings of Christ. In 4:15 it's "sharing" in giving and receiving.

A partnership is not coffee, donuts, and casual conversation. Biblically it requires an intimate relationship, such as marriage. It implies wholehearted, active participation in every way. *Koinonia* means being as committed to one another as you are to Christ. It is a relational word. It involves persons in relationship and in having or sharing something in common.

This partnership is in the *gospel*. The word "gospel," of course, means "good news." The good news as Paul

understood it was that God has acted to save His people from their sins and has reconciled them to Himself through Jesus Christ. It is God's power by which people are changed (Romans 1:16).

Now what are the areas in which we need to discover the "Possibilities through Partnership."

Prayer

The first area is prayer. We see this in verse 4 (twice) and in verse 9. Two different words are translated prayer in these verses. The word used for prayer in verse 4 refers to specific prayer for specific situations. This is intercessory prayer, someone pleading before God to supply something that is lacking. Paul prays for specific items, such as recalling them with joy, encouraging them to unity, requesting a heightened humility and mutual concern.

In verse nine the usual word for prayer is used. It is also important to note that the passage begins and

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The Women's Outlook Newsletter is in the center of this issue.

concludes with prayer. Everything we do needs to be undergirded and supported by prayer.

We often look upon prayer as a means of getting things for ourselves. The biblical idea of prayer, however, is that we may get to know God Himself. When I was a child I thought prayer was asking for things. As an adolescent I learned it was conversation. As an adult I have discovered prayer as enjoying the presence of God.

According to Jesus, the most important thing about prayer is to keep at it. He spoke of prayer in terms of a host whose visitors arrive at midnight and who has to go and awaken his neighbor to plead for provisions (Luke 11:5-8). Or He says prayer is like a widow who keeps yammering at a judge until he gives her justice (Luke 18:1-8).

Evangelism

The second area in which we need to discover the "Possibilities Through Partnership" is in evangelism. Brothers and sisters, the Great Commission is not a divine suggestion. It is an assumption that as you go through life, you will make disciples of all ethnic groups (nations).

If you have good news, it is self-evident what you do with it. You share it. You don't sit on it. You share it or it isn't good news. The nature of good news is that it is to be shared. The world's greatest gift dare not become the world's greatest secret.

In the U.S. there are 262 million people. George Barna says 187 million have not accepted Christ. That means that 588 persons could be added to every church in the U.S.

Brothers and sisters, we haven't been good at evangelism. There are several reasons for this.

First, we expect 19th century re-

vival services to work in the 21st century. They don't! And a church that uses methods that don't work is not faithful to Christ.

Second, we're better at fellowship and at building community. This creates a "come" structure, and what we need is a "go" structure.

Third, we believe any person is ripe for the gospel. We need to realize that unbelievers are at various stages in their development. We need to communicate on the unbeliever's wave length and not broadcast on a different channel.

Unbelievers think that church is boring; that it's the place where bread is turned to stones. The problem is that boring services lead people to think that God is boring. Unbelievers also believe that the church is unfriendly to visitors. The terminology is strange; the music is from the dark ages and another continent; and the rituals are ridiculous. In addition, they see the chief interest of the church as being in their money. The church asks for it every time the door opens.

Fourth, we don't discern our target. Imagine what would happen if a radio station tried to play every body's music. A radio station selects a target audience.

Jesus had a target. He went first (and sent His disciples first) to the lost sheep of Israel. Paul went first to the synagogue, and only when expelled there did he go to the marketplace. A church without a target is like a photographer shooting pictures out of focus.

Discipling

Discipling is not the same as evangelism. Evangelism leads persons to accept Christ as their savior and lord. Discipling takes converts and leads them into Christian matur-

ity. Evangelism deals with believing; discipling with belonging.

After persons become committed to Christ, they need to grow up in Christlikeness. The New Testament continually calls us to be growing up in our Christian life (Gal. 4:19—"until Christ be formed in you"; Rom. 8:29—"conformed to the likeness of his Son"; Eph. 4:13—"attaining the fullness of Christ"; Col. 1:28—"perfect in Christ."

We need to have in place a process whereby Christians can mature. The ultimate goal of that process is Christlikeness. This means that we are:

1. committed to Christ
2. belong to a body
3. identify our spiritual gifts
4. involved in a ministry

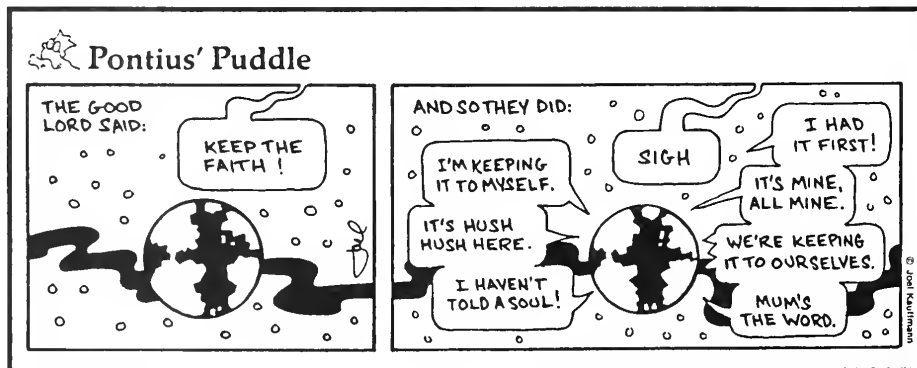
The only thing we'll take with us into eternity is our Christian character. Our character is of greater concern to God than our comfort. Therefore, we shouldn't focus on growing a church with programs but rather focus on growing people with a process. This means:

1. bringing them in as members of His family
2. building them up to maturity to model His character
3. training them for ministry of His grace
4. sending them out in mission with a message of love

Leadership development

Verse 1 of the first chapter of Philippians identifies church functionaries as bishops and deacons. These are interesting terms. Note first that they were distinguished from the congregation, therefore they had some official status. Second, since the terms are plural, there was no chief executive officer. Third, Paul didn't address them over the head

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Monday night video presentation kicks off 50th anniversary celebration of Brethren Youth

A 15-MINUTE VIDEO presentation providing an overview of 50 years of the national Brethren Youth organization was one of the highlights of the Monday evening worship service at General Conference, along with the moderator's address by Dr. Richard E. Allison. The video presentation was part of the 50th anniversary celebration of Brethren Youth that took place during Conference week.

The script for the video was written and narrated by Ashland University student Jaime Gillespie, a member of the Vinco, Pa., Brethren Church. Jaime serves on the Brethren Youth In Christ (BYIC) steering committee and edits the youth magazine *Morning Star*. She was assisted in preparing the video by Jennifer Thomas, the BYIC Convention coordinator; and by Ed Strickling, a member of the Ashland Garber Brethren Church, who edited the video and added special effects.

The video traced the source of the Brethren Youth organization back to three young men, Gilbert Dodds, Woodrow Brant, and Archie

Martin, who, in 1940, had a dream of an organization to unite Brethren Youth around the world. In 1941 an organization was formed, but it was five years later, in 1946, that the first Brethren Youth conference was held.

It was at that conference that the Brethren Youth organization was formally recognized by the church and a youth board formed. "This conference, 50 years ago this month, became the start of what would be a half a century of joy, tears, fun, and fellowship—50 years full of memories . . ." The remainder of the video used pictures from old issues of the *EVANGELIST*, past youth magazines, and other photographs, along with the narration by Jaime, to depict some of these memories.

One of the historical nuggets in the video was a reminder that Charles Munson served as the first national director of Brethren Youth. In recognition of the key role he played in the



Dr. Charles Munson receives a plaque and a hug from Jaime Gillespie in recognition of his service as the first national director of Brethren Youth (1948-53).

history of Brethren Youth, Dr. Munson was given a plaque by Jaime and a standing ovation by Conference attendees at the conclusion of the video. [†]

of the congregation, but in fact addressed them only secondarily.

Fourth, these are individuals identified for the function they perform, not for the ordained office they fill. The function of a bishop is to oversee or supervise. A deacon was responsible for beneficent activities such as taking care of the needs of the poor, the sick, and the incarcerated. Fifth, some scholars translate the phrase "bishops and deacons" as "bishops who serve." This emphasizes the function and not the office. Somewhere we've gotten off the track.

The New Testament presents a unique view of leadership. The New Testament model is that of servant leadership (Mark 10:41-45). Seven times it says in the Gospels that if persons really want to be great, they must become servants (Matt. 20:26-28; 23:11; Mark 9:35; 10:43-44; Luke 9:48; 22:26-27; John 13:14).

Jesus is the primary example. Following His baptism, which many

scholars believe was His ordination to ministry, He was led by the Spirit into the temptation experience. What kind of leader would He be. Would He adopt the "pleasure principle," and be satisfied to spend His life meeting obvious personal needs, turning stones into bread? Would He adopt the "power principle," and rule all the kingdoms of the world by military force and political intrigue? Would He adopt the "parade principle" of leadership, and create a magic show to arouse public curiosity, as He leaped from high buildings into angels' arms. Or would He choose the "service principle"?

He defined His leadership principle before His hometown crowd, when He read from Isaiah:

*God's Spirit is on me;
he's chosen me to preach the
message of good news to
the poor,*

*Sent me to announce pardon to
prisoners and
recovery of sight to the blind,*

*To set the burdened and battered
free,
to announce, "This is God's year
to act."*

And when He then announced:

*This scripture has just now come
true in this place.*

The servanthood approach of Jesus surfaces when two of His followers ask to be the secretary of state and the secretary of defense in the messianic regime. The other disciples, feeling outflanked, become angry. Jesus responds with three principles for servant leadership.

First, the common, cultural view of leadership is not His. Leaders are not *over* but *among*. Second, service is the measure of Christian leadership ("whoever would be great must be your servant"). Third, Jesus modeled servant leadership, "for he came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many."

Philippians 1:1 is the only place in his letters where Paul includes



mer National Brethren Youth Directors Charles Munson (r.), Phil Lersch (2nd from l.), and Marlin McCann (l.), to blow them out. Helping them was Ron Waters (2nd from r.), who oversaw the youth program during his years as Director of Brethren Church Ministries.

Celebration of the 50th anniversary of Brethren Youth, which began on Monday evening of Conference (see previous page), continued Tuesday afternoon with an all-conference picnic/birthday party. Keeping the candles on the birthday cake lit was somewhat of a challenge in the open air, but a few of them stayed lit long enough for for-



another person (Timothy) as a slave or bondservant with him. He allows Timothy to share the same platform. I find this interesting. Evidently the Christians at Philippi needed to learn that relationships of co-laborers were not those of authority, superiority, or inferiority, but of humble equality. Slave language implies abasement, subservience, total submissiveness. A slave's will is totally subjected to that of another. A slave has no right to personal choice. A slave had no rights, no freedom. A slave's service was not voluntary but forced. The opposite of slave is master or lord.

Paul is attacking their selfishness and disunity. He is saying that seniority and high calling do not place one Christian above another. He is saying that church leaders by virtue of their office are called to serve.

Church planting

Philippi was a new church start. Paul had many memories of that experience:

- the girl who had a demon problem
- the jailer who beat him and later

- received Christ
- the slimy wall of a cell to which he was chained
- the earth that quaked beneath him
- the skilled business woman, Lydia
- the group of faithful women who met for prayer

Paul had chosen this place carefully. He had bypassed the port city of Neapolis and gone nine miles inland to Philippi. The city was located on the superhighway that led from Rome to Asia. It was a Roman city, which meant that Roman law prevailed, Roman officials ruled, and Roman citizens received special privileges. This meant that a Roman citizen couldn't be beaten without a trial nor be expelled from the city. That's why Acts 16:39 says, "They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city." Philippi was Rome in microcosm, populated mainly by Romans.

Brothers and sisters, the churches that will lead us through the 21st century haven't even been started yet. Look around the denomination; the leading Brethren congregations,

with a couple of exceptions, have been started within the last generation and a half.

Why should we start new congregations? **First**, because a new church releases new leaders to use their skills. **Second**, because a new church has fewer psychological barriers to overcome in reaching a new generation. **Third**, because numerical growth is attained with less expenditure of effort and resources in a new church. **Fourth**, because new churches offer the unchurched a wider variety of alternatives from which to choose.

The church is the continuation of the ministry which Jesus began and which is carried out in the power of the Spirit. The church is not so much like a train on a track riding the rails that lead over a predetermined route to a very predictable destination as it is like a rocket that is on a trajectory that requires faith that takes into account the invisible, the unexpected, and the untried.

Repentance is required of the church that has exchanged its birthright for the fast food of cultural relevance. Repentance is required of the church that is found opposing the mission of God by clinging to its own institutional and traditional forms.

I'm sure that if you were going to the Cleveland Clinic for brain surgery, you'd want everyone working on you to be in partnership. The diagnosticians need to be accurate in their findings and reporting. The admissions people need correct information to pass along. The anesthesiologist, the neurosurgeon, the endocrinologist, the recovery room people, the intensive care unit, the nurses, dietitians, housekeeping department, and the therapists have to work in concert. I'm sure you would not want any factions, but total unity. And if the Lord above smiled down on all of this, you could walk out a new person, just in time to hear from the accounting department.

Brothers and sisters, as we strive together to do the work of the Lord in The Brethren Church, let us remember that in this "operation," we are "Partners in the Gospel." [†]

Conference Business Sessions

CULMINATING a process that began approximately 3 1/2 years ago, General Conference delegates voted decisively (234 in favor, 47 against) to implement the denominational reorganization proposal (which required a 2/3 majority to pass). The vote was taken only after delegates were given ample opportunity to consider the proposal at the Conference.

The process

During the Tuesday business session, Dr. Brenda Colijn, a member of the General Conference Executive Council (GCEC), reviewed some of the main features of the proposal (which had been printed in the June EVANGELIST and also distributed directly to pastors and other elders, local church moderators, district officers, and other leaders). Then a panel of people who have worked closely with the proposal (Ronald W. Waters, Reilly Smith, Arden Gilmer, Ray Aspinall, and Brenda Colijn) answered questions about the proposal.

In this question-and-answer period, some opposition to the proposal emerged. A major point of opposition was the feared cost of the new organization—that it would cost more to implement than the present organization, which is already running deficits. Another concern was that this organization has a pyramid type of authority structure, which is being rejected by the secular world and which reportedly has been ineffective in other Christian denominations.

During lunch on Tuesday, those in favor of and those opposed to the reorganization proposal had an opportunity to meet separately and to prepare statements supporting their respective positions. A representative from each of these two groups then presented the group's position during the Wednesday morning business session. Following these presentations, the floor was opened for anyone to speak to the issue.

At this time, one amendment was made to the proposal, namely, that

district representatives to the two ministries councils (Missionary and Congregational) be *elected directly by the districts* (rather than *nominated by the districts* and elected by General Conference). This amendment was passed, and shortly thereafter the proposal as amended was approved, as reported above.

Elections

In order to *implement* the new organization, all members of the two ministries councils (both at-large and district members) were elected by this General Conference (some for one-year terms, others for two-years, still others for full three-year terms. In future years, all representatives will be elected for three-year terms, and district representatives will be elected by their districts (as noted above). (See the two boxes on this page for the results of these elections.)

Moderator: There was no election for moderator at this Conference. John Shultz, who served as moderator-elect during the past year, was installed as the new moderator and will serve for a one-year term. At the 1997 General Conference, a moderator will be elected for a three-year term.

Executive Board

On Friday morning of Conference, the two ministries councils met and appointed their representatives to the Executive Board.

Congregational Ministries Council

Term ending in 1997

- Bill Yoder, Pennsylvania
- Tina Henderson, Southeastern
- Karen Best, California
- Brian Moore, At-large

Term ending in 1998

- Brenda Colijn, Ohio
- David West, Southwest
- Tina Ross, Florida
- Marlin McCann, At-large

Term ending in 1999

- Ken Hunn, Indiana
- Jeanette Sullivan, Central
- G. Emery Hurd, Midwest
- Warren Garner, At-large

The members are:
From the Congregational Ministries Council:
Tina Henderson, 1997
Brenda Colijn, 1998
Ken Hunn, 1999

From the Missionary Ministries Council:
Arden Gilmer, 1997
Cathy Britton, 1998
Fred Miller, 1999

Other members of this board include Moderator John Shultz; the Executive Director (yet to be selected); Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries; J. Michael Drushal, Interim Director of Congregational Ministries; and Dr. Fred Finks, president of Ashland Theological Seminary. This board is scheduled to have its first meeting on November 8. The two ministries councils will also meet on that date.

Missionary Ministries Council

Term ending in 1997

- Arden Gilmer, Ohio
- Bill Curtis, Southwest
- Dave Stone, Florida
- Dale Stoffer, At-large

Term ending in 1998

- Jim Hollinger, Indiana
- Richard Hutchison, Central
- Cathy Britton, Midwest
- James F. Black, At-large

Term ending in 1999

- Jim Kirkendall, Pennsylvania
- Fred Miller, Southeastern
- Randy Best, California
- Kitty Winfield, At-large

One of the first tasks of the new organization is to select a person to direct the transition process, who will also serve as Interim Director of Congregational Ministries during the transition. Be in prayer for this selection process.

In addition, the Executive Board will initiate a search process for an Executive Director. This is a major prayer concern, for this person will play a key role in the new organization. The person needs to be a visionary leader who is able to guide and coordinate staff members in fulfilling the priorities and ministries of The Brethren Church. The timetable calls for this person to be presented for affirmation at the 1997 General Conference, and if affirmed, to begin serving by January 1998.

(continued on next page)

Business Sessions *cont.*

New congregations

Three groups of Brethren were given official recognition by this General Conference. **Cornerstone Brethren Church and Ministries** of Muncie, Ind., a new congregation that came out of the First Brethren Church of Oakville, Ind., was given official recognition in the denomination as a *church*.

The Brethren Church of Medina, formerly a *class*, was given official recognition as a *mission congregation*, with the name **Living HOPE Brethren Church**.

Likewise, Greenwood Brethren Fellowship, formerly a *class*, was official recognized as a *mission congregation*, with the name **"Winning the Race" Ministries**.

On the other hand, Pastor Mark Britton reported to the Conference that as of June 15, 1996, the Derby, Kans., Brethren Church closed its doors to the community temporarily to allow for a time of evaluation and "retooling." The church has changed its name to New Heights Christian Fellowship and anticipates reopening on December 1, 1996. Pastor Mark Britton asked Brethren to keep the church in their prayers as the congregation seeks God's direction and strives to become more sensitive to ministering in the Derby area.

Fair Share recognition

Special recognition was given to the 51 churches that contributed 100 percent or more of their Fair Share support for Brethren Church Ministries in 1995. The churches were: Bloomingdale, St. Petersburg, Bethlehem, Hagerstown First, Liberty, Linwood, St. James, St. Luke, Calvary, Cameron First, Fairless Hills-Levittown, Johnstown Second, Mt. Olivet, Pittsburgh First, Raystown, Sarver, Wayne Heights, Garber, Gretna, Louisville First, Newark, New Lebanon, Park Street, Smithville, Smoky Row, Williamstown, Brighton Chapel, College Corner, Dutchtown, Elkhart First, Goshen First, Huntington First, Jefferson, Loree First, Meadow Crest, Mexico First, Nappanee First, New Paris First, North Manchester First, Oakville First, Roanoke First, Tiosa,



Ron Waters honored

Ronald W. Waters received a standing ovation from the Conference during the Wednesday morning business session as an expression of appreciation for his dedicated service and leadership during the past seven years as Director of Brethren Church Ministries.

Ron resigned from this position at the end of 1995 in preparation for joining the faculty of Ashland Theological Seminary as assistant professor of evangelism, where he begins teaching this month (September). Though teaching at the seminary, he will not be lost entirely to denominational work. He will carry a three-quarter time load at the seminary and serve the denomination one-quarter time as consultant in evangelism/church growth.

In addition to this expression of appreciation from the conference, Ron was the guest of honor at a dinner hosted by the General Conference Executive Council in May. At this dinner he was presented a plaque and a gift certificate by the Executive Council on behalf of the denomination.

Wabash First, Warsaw First, Lanark First, Milledgeville, Hammond Avenue (Waterloo), Cheyenne, Mulvane, Northgate Community, and Stockton. Three additional churches—Bryan First, Peru First, and Northwest Chapel—were commended for giving 90 percent or more of their Fair Share; and Greenwood Brethren Fellowship (now "Winning the Race" Ministries) was honored for giving \$130 for Brethren Church Ministries, when, as a *class*, it was not required to give anything.

Budget

Because of the many changes involved in the denominational reorganization, it was not feasible to prepare a 1997 budget to present to this Conference. Therefore, Conference authorized the Executive Board to use the 1996 budgets of the Missionary Board and of The Brethren Church, Inc., as guidelines for developing a 1997 budget.

Looking to Estes Park

Brethren are looking ahead to Conference 2000, to be held in Estes Park, Colorado. Expressing a desire that this be a significant gathering, Conference instructed the new Missionary Ministries Council to plan for a tangible mission outreach at that Conference.

To help finance travel to that Conference, the Monday and Tuesday evening offerings at this year's gathering were designated for the Conference 2000 travel fund. A total of \$1,287.10 was received.

Delegate totals

A total of 396 delegates registered for Conference (213 lay, 159 elders, 23 district, and 1 cooperating board). This was up slightly from last year's total of 389 (208 lay, 153 elders, 23 district, and 5 cooperating board).

Next year, Conference will make one of its rare moves, with the gathering to be held August 4-8 at St. Mary's College in South Bend, Ind. The following two years Conference will be held in Ashland as usual (Aug. 3-7 in 1998 and Aug. 2-6 in 1999), before the big move to Este Park, Colo., in the year 2000 (Aug. 7-11).

New working relationship

Rev. Reilly Smith, Executive Director of the Missionary Board (now the Missionary Ministries Council), announced during the Tuesday business session that the Missionary Board has entered into an agreement with Dynamic Church Planting International (DCPI) whereby Dr. Paul Becker, director of DCPI, will assist The Brethren Church in developing and implementing a comprehensive church-planting strategy. [†]

Tuesday: "Evangelism Day"

TUESDAY was "evangelism day" at General Conference, and what an exciting occasion it was! The excitement began at mid-morning with a learning fair sponsored by the Evangelism & Church Growth Commission in cooperation with the New Church Development Commission.

Entitled "Opening DOORS to the World" (DOORS = Dynamic Outreach Opportunities Related to Service), the learning fair offered Conference attendees a smorgasbord of learning opportunities in evangelism, outreach, church growth, and church planting. They could attend a 40-minute seminar by Rev. Paul Munday, director of The Andrew Center, plus two of the 31 "Table Talk" discussion groups. Or they could choose to attend four of the 18-minute Table Talk discussions.

Rev. Paul Munday

In his seminar, "Unlocking Church Doors," Rev. Munday, himself a bundle of excitement, presented strategies for bringing about change in established churches. Such change is needed, he said, because we live in a changing world. Not only is change taking place, but the rate of

change is increasing—speeding up all the time.

Among his many suggestions for effecting change were:

Start small. Small change can be very significant. "Most of us overestimate what we can accomplish in a year and underestimate what we can accomplish in five years."

When possible, add rather than change. For example, add a new Sunday school class rather than trying to change an existing one.

Recognize the relationship between tenure and change. Leaders need to "waste time" with people in order to develop trust.

Work toward creating a "learning congregation." "Most congregations are not changing because the persons within those congregations are not changing."

Suggest a trial period for something new. "It's amazing what people will adopt if it's only for 30 days!"

Table Talks

The 31 Table Talks discussed topics from A almost to Z (Art as Outreach to Working Welcome Classes). All but one were led by Brethren people. Evangelism, of course, entails outreach, and Table Talks dealt with

outreach through sports, worship, nursery, block parties, art, and visitation. Other topics included Reaching People Not Like Me, Tapping into Multi-Housing Communities, Support and Recovery Groups, Evangelistic Small Groups in the Workplace, Reaching Out to the Illiterate, and many more—so many, in fact, that most people found it difficult to choose which ones to attend.

Evening service

The excitement continued during the evening worship service, which began with dynamic singing led by guitar-playing Rev. Brad Hardesty, backed by eight guitar-playing Brethren pastors* and four backup singers. Interspersed throughout the singing were testimonies of exciting things happening in three Brethren congregations. The service also included another exciting message by Rev. Munday. (See next page.)

The first testimony was given by Jim Garrett, pastor of the Lanark, Ill., First Brethren Church, who told about that church's experiences with Passing On the Promise. He praised the process for being both a tremendous learning experience and its flexibility—so flexible, in fact, that after the first year his congregation dropped both the name and the timeline, while continuing the process. He spotlighted two high points in the process in the Lanark Church, the completion of handicapped-accessible restrooms during the first year; and evangelistic services led by Rev. Rickey Bolden at the beginning of the third year (quite a shock to that rural, white community). He concluded by saying that Passing On the Promise opened their eyes, showed them their heart, and revealed their need for a love for God.

Roger Stogsdill, pastor of the Northgate Community Brethren Church in Manteca, Calif., said that God used Passing On the Promise as a mirror to show that congregation what they really were. They thought they were a nice little church, but God revealed their shortcomings. Then God replaced the mirror with

(continued at bottom of next page)



A buzz of excitement filled the room as Brethren discussed various means of promoting evangelism, outreach, church growth, and church planting at the 31 "Table Talks" held Tuesday morning of Conference.

*Pastors Pat Velanzon, Roger Stogsdill, Bryan Karchner, Tom Schiefer, Jim Miller, Dave Stone, T.J. McLaughlin, and Keith Hensley

Paul Munday asks, "Will the Future Have a Church?"



Rev. Paul E. R. Munday

WE ARE LIVING in transitional, questionable times, Rev. Paul Munday told Brethren in his Tuesday evening message. It is a time when the future of the church as an established institution in this country is uncertain, as our culture shifts from a church culture to an unchurched, secular, pagan culture.

"The question is *not* whether the church will have a future, but whether the future will have a church? Will those caught in a secular value system have an opportunity to discover the grace and the freedom and the justice of Jesus Christ?"

"It is my opinion that the future will have a church," Munday continued, "if we alter our mindset, if we alter our way of thinking and make three movements . . ." In the message that followed, he stated and elaborated on those movements.

The movement from atrophy to adventure

"I think that the central reason why churches are not changing is because the people in the churches are not changing," Munday said. The church exists for one primary purpose, life-change in and through Jesus Christ—to change toward the likeness and stature of Jesus Christ. This opens us to a wonderful realm of new possibilities. A sense of new possibilities empowers people. Life isn't about limitations, it's about options.

The role of the church is to infiltrate the world and give people options through Jesus Christ. "I can guarantee you that if we start preaching the gospel of options and empowerment, the world will be turned upside down and the church

"I stand before you tonight with an unshakable conviction that the church is the last great hope for the world."

— Paul Munday

will be renewed. Yes, the future will have a church if we move from atrophy to that kind of adventure and that kind of proclamation."

The movement from rigidity to relevance

Most Americans no longer feel strong bonds to the religious tradition in which they were raised. People don't go to a church because they were born into it but because they like it. Congregations only

have a future if they remake themselves. Family and ethnic ties will not hold people.

Renewal is possible. Churches need to appeal to more than one generation. This is particularly true of music.

The movement from hostility to hospitality

We will never reach the mission field which is now at our doorstep unless we learn a new spirit of openness and genuine welcome to the stranger who is not yet within our midst. Most of us in American culture have been taught to fear the stranger. If we can't get beyond this fear, we will be unable to reach those whom we need to reach. We are called to show hospitality to strangers.

Munday concluded his message by turning again to the question, "Will the future have a church?" "Will the future have an alternative to the violence and the confusion and the inequity that marks our culture?" he asked. Will the future have an opportunity to know something other than the lust and the greed of the dominant value system around us?

"It will, brothers and sisters, if we adopt the outlook of outreach; if we adopt the mindset of mission; if we adopt, like never before, the spirit and the conviction of an adventurous, relevant, hospitable people, unapologetically rooted in Jesus Christ, who is our Lord, who is our Savior, but also the Savior of the whole world." [†]

glasses, and they saw the people around them and their needs.

The third testimony was given by Bob Keplinger, pastor of the Linwood, Md., Brethren Church. This congregation, located in a village of 40 people (41 with a recent addition!), has a membership of 140 and an average attendance of 100. Over the past few years, God has called three men into ministry from this congregation—Ron Miller, who served as assistant to the pastor for two years before entering Ashland Theological Seminary last fall; Scott

Robertson, who currently serves as assistant to the pastor; and Jim Frado, who will enter the seminary in January. (Jim's wife, Karen, will also take courses at the seminary, beginning this fall).

Following the message by Rev. Munday, the service ended with the spirited singing of "Shine, Jesus, Shine." This song, which asks the Holy Spirit to "set our hearts on fire" and expresses the desire, "Mirrored here may our lives tell Your story," was an appropriate finish to a day that focused on evangelism. [†]

Audio Cassettes Available

The two messages by Rev. Paul Munday (his morning seminar and his evening address) are available on audio cassettes, as are the other messages and workshops presented at Conference—moderator's address, Spiritual Formation Workshop, W.M.S. luncheon speaker (Barbara Hess), Dr. Fred Finks, the Conflict Resolution Workshop (led by David Cooksey), the World Relief Luncheon, the Missionary Board Banquet, Dr. Arden Gilmer, and the new moderator's challenge. Send \$4.00 per cassette (or \$30 for all 11 cassettes) plus \$2.00 per order (not per tape) for shipping to The Brethren Church, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.

The Women's Outlook Newsletter



A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society

September-October 1996

Volume 10, Number 1

The
President's
Pen



Dear Ladies,

A story is told by author Leo Buscaglia about a 4-year-old child. The child's neighbor was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife. When the child saw the old man sitting in his yard crying, the boy went over and climbed onto his lap and just sat there. When his mother asked her son what he had said to the old man, the little boy said, "Nothing, I just helped him cry." That's love!!

You ladies have all shown so much love to me recently. As most of you know, I have been diagnosed with breast cancer. After several days of tests and a biopsy, no cancer was discovered anyplace else in my body. How thankful we were! I have had so many people praying for me that I have felt no fear. I had such a peace through the weeks of tests and waiting for results.

The doctors at Cleveland Clinic have decided to give me chemotherapy (4-6 treatments) to shrink the tumors; then they will do surgery. My treatments are three weeks apart. By the second week after chemo, the white cells have been destroyed and make me very vulnerable to infection.

I was not able to attend the Thursday W.M.S. session, but Marilyn Aspinall, Vice President, did a great job of conducting the meeting, so I am told. At about the time for the meeting to start, my
(continued on page 4)

PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL

Devotions presented by Carolyn Brandon, August 6, 1996

And now, Lord, . . . grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word.

Acts 4:29

Our partner as we share the Gospel has to be the Holy Spirit; we can do nothing apart from the work and person of the Holy Spirit. Peter was not effective until after Pentecost and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. As believers, we know the Holy Spirit comes to take up residence in our heart, but for many believers we only let the Holy Spirit work through us in a small way.

I have been a believer since 1948, but it wasn't until 1975 that I surrendered my entire life to the Holy Spirit to be used by Him as He desired. Since 1975, I have been on a continual journey, learning more and more about the Third Person of the Trinity. He gives me the strength I need to do what God calls me to do; He gives peace in the midst of storms.

In April I had a mammogram and then a recall for another mammogram, followed by a surgeon telling me I needed to undergo surgery to remove a lump from my left breast.

On June 3 I arrived at Aultman Hospital for my scheduled surgery, only the Holy Spirit had prepared a smooth road. Not only did I have a truly supernatural peace, I had at least three Christian nurses, a Christian anesthetist assistant, and a Christian surgeon. The whole procedure was less painful than removing a sliver from my finger!

By early afternoon I was home and the following Friday I received the news: *No Cancer!* I praised God all night and I still praise God for

the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Does He have all of you? Is He your partner in the spreading of the Gospel? Do you know how to give Him free reign in your life? Let's look at a few scriptures that will help us understand how to do this.

"After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were ALL filled with the Holy Spirit and *spoke* the Word of God boldly." This is interesting. They were all filled after they prayed and the Holy Spirit gave all of them the ability to *speak* the Word of God boldly. Verse 33 says "With GREAT POWER the apostles continued to testify to the *resurrection of the Lord Jesus*, and much grace was upon them ALL."

In Acts 1:7-8 Jesus' last words as He left them to return to the Father were, "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority. BUT you will receive POWER when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Who is our partner as we share the Gospel? It is the Holy Spirit of God. He is real; He brings God's power to work in our lives; we can do nothing apart from Him. The booklet *My Heart Christ's Home* explains how we give *all* of our hearts to Jesus.

After Peter and John were released from prison (Acts 4:23),
(continued on page 4)

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE W.M.S. CONFERENCE

We thank God for blessing us during every facet of the General Conference. Every action was in place, which was necessary to help the Conference run smoothly. From the business sessions and worship services to the beauty of the grounds, one could see God at work.

When I realize that Barbara Hess was scheduled in May to be the speaker for the luncheon Wednesday noon, I am amazed. Barbara's answer was delayed a few weeks because she was just starting chemo treatments for breast cancer. Before committing to speaking in August, she wanted to be sure of her schedule. No one but God knew what an inspiration she would be to several ladies at the luncheon, including our president, Shirley.

Barbara recounted "My Incredible Journey on a Flat Tire." She likened her cancer to a flat tire, the timing of which is always inconsiderate and inconvenient.

She read from Jeremiah 29:11, *For I know the plans I have for you, . . . plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.* She did not have the spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.

Tears and laughter were mingled when she described daily experiences which could have been problems, had it not been for God. She reminded us that He walks with us *through* the valley. God allows such times for testing. How do we react? Resist or rest? Dread or anticipate? For Barbara, rest and peace canceled out her fear.

Following her talk, I was surprised at the number of ladies who spoke with Barbara and Shirley, reassuring or seeking reassurance. This was a blessing.

Here is another indication of God's arranging details: Barbara was a member of the Masontown Brethren Church. Later she and her husband were members of the Akron Firestone Brethren Church when Jim Black pastored there.

She and Shirley have been friends for many years. Isn't God great?

The Milledgeville ladies made the beautiful bird feeders for the table decorations. They used inverted flower pots, which were painted shiny white and decorated with flowers. The saucer of the flower pot was glued on top and was filled with bird seed and a tiny bird. The whole thing sat on a small wreath. It was lovely and much nicer than my description!

The attractive programs were made by Nancy Hunn.

Musicians

DeAnn Oburn (Williamstown) and Marsha Nies (Masontown) were the song leader and pianist respectively. The theme song, "Will you let me be your servant?" had meaningful words. Even if you don't know the tune, study the title. Marsha provided quiet music at other times, which was always appropriate.

Special musicians for the week presented beautiful music for God's glory. Tuesday afternoon "Well-spring" from the Gretna W.M.S. sang a medley "I'd Rather Have Jesus" and "Make Us One." They spoke of our talents and finances as a grain of mustard, and sang "Little is much when God is in it." Phyllis Jervis, Dianna Hauck, and Mary Hess were members of the trio.

Music at the Wednesday luncheon was presented by the ladies' ensemble from the Louisville Brethren Bible Church: Elaine Kerstetter, Shirley Clapper, Penny Knopf, Audrey McAllister, Lou Ring, Karen Moran, and Dee Benschhoff (an alumna). They sang "Shut da Door" and "A Perfect Heart." Later Elaine taught us the "My Peace" chorus.

Thursday afternoon Charlene Rowser from Goshen sang "How Lovely are Thy Dwellings," based on Psalm 84. She was accompanied by Dee Keplinger. You may remember that Charlene wrote the devotional study in August and referred to this solo.

Special services

The Goshen society received the *project offerings*. Esther Mishler gave the geographical and historical background of Peru, and Diane Kerner gave the prayer. Charlene Rowser called for the offerings. We were reminded that, as we give, our circle includes Lima, Peru.

Members of the Joy Circle in North Manchester presented the *memorial service* Tuesday afternoon. As Helen Garner read the names of the deceased ladies and Joyce McBride played music quietly, Linda Immel and Lila McCann lighted a candle for each lady. Linda read the poem "What Heaven Means to Me" and Helen closed with prayer.

Thursday afternoon the Smithville ladies (Wanda Glasgo and Edna Fleming) received the *thank offerings*. They reminded us that God uses us—our commitments and fulfillments. All of life is a stewardship of giving. As we give gratitude for the past and present, we are excited for the future. After the offerings were received, the ladies closed with prayer.

(continued on page 3)

THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

Published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Women's Missionary Society of The Brethren Church.

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Women's Outlook Newsletter

HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

Missionaries

Greeting missionaries is one joy we anticipate at Conference. It was a pleasure to hear Nancy Hostetler from Lost Creek, Kentucky, and Jenny Loi from Malaysia speak of God's goodness in their work.

Nancy said that God continues to strengthen in spite of their difficulties. This was the week before school and the enrollment was lower and they lacked a few teachers. However, she received phone calls during the previous week from two former students who attributed the wonderful change in their lives to God at work and their education at the Riverside School. This was God's blessing and strength! The Hostetlers are very thankful for your support: the Mile of Pennies, soup labels, personal items for the staff, work groups, and prayers.

Jenny and David Loi are on furlough and may speak in a church near you. Make every effort to hear them. They are laboring under very difficult circumstances, even though they serve in their native country. The government restrictions are very severe.

Jenny thanked the ladies for their financial support for seminary training of two students to help in their ministry. Until coming to the States in July, Jenny was the head nurse in a maternity hospital. With that rigorous schedule and helping David in the church ministry, she needed Christ's reassurance found in Matthew 11:28: *Come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.* Her favorite hymn became "I Need Thee Every Hour." (Think of Jenny when you read this verse and sing.) Jenny said although growth is slow, they see spiritual growth in the people. She asked for prayers for God's protection with the youth and children, as well as for their daughter, Rebecca, and David's mother.

BUSINESS

The following committees served during the week:

Nominating: Trudy Kerner and

Janice Rowsey (Ashland Garber) and Bonnie Gibson (Ashland Park St.)

Auditing: Helen Dickson (County Line) and Bonny Summy (Ashland Park St.) This committee examined the books of the financial secretary and the literature secretary. All records were in good order. The treasurer's books were examined by a certified CPA and approved.

Credentia: Betty Deardurff (Gretna) and Janet Rufener (Ashland Park St.) A total of 102 credentials were received and delegates seated.

Election of Officers: With the Constitution changes approved last year, the four elected officers serve two-year terms. The vice president and treasurer are elected in the even-numbered years.

Therefore, Marilyn Aspinall and JoAnn Seaman were reelected for two years.

The Conference approved reappointing the following officers:

General Secretary, Nancy Hunn
Assistant, Trudy Kerner
Sewing and World Relief Coordinator, Joan Merrill
Editor, *Newsletter*, Joan Ronk
Editor, *Devotional Guide*, Jeanette Sullivan
Subscription Secretary, Ginny Hoyt
Literature Secretary, Kathleen Mack

Assistant, Doris Shultz

Moderator Richard Allison led the installation service, basing his remarks on 1 Corinthians 12-13.

Finances:

With JoAnn Seaman's treasurer's report, she presented the National Sisterhood fund of \$8,000 and asked the ladies to vote if the fund should continue to be invested with the Brethren Home Mission Revolving Loan Fund (BHMRLF) or if the funds should be spent. By a wide majority, the vote was to continue investing the money with the BHMRLF. This is a win-win situation! Not only does this benefit the BHMRLF, but also earns \$320 interest annually, which we give to an area of need.

Thursday the Board recommended two areas which were the consensus of several suggestions made

since the 1995 Conference. The two suggestions were summer ministries for youth and the girls' orphanage in India. The vote was to give the interest of \$320 to the girls' orphanage.

JoAnn presented the budget for 1996-97, based on funds received during the past year.

Benevolences	\$16,015
ATS	\$3,660
World/Home	
Missions	8,355
Campus Ministry	1,500
Riverside Christian	
School	1,500
Scholarship, AU	1,000
Publications	\$6,900
<i>Newsletter</i>	
<i>Devotional Guide</i>	
Other Expenses	\$2,185
Administrative	
Social Security	
Gifts and Conference	
Total	<u>\$25,100</u>

The Conference adopted the budget.

Offerings:

Joanne Kroft reported the preliminary total for the *project* offering was \$11,743.78. This is the first of a two-year project to purchase a church site in Lima, Peru. The two-year goal is \$25,000. An early total for the *thank* offering was \$9,029.16. Next year this will be allocated for benevolences.

Scholarship: Kelly Hurley was awarded the \$1,000 scholarship for her senior year at Ashland University. Kelly is a member of the Gretna Brethren Church and has been active in youth activities.

General Secretary:

Nancy Hunn updated the statistical report. She noted the paid membership in 1995 was 1,262 and in 1996 it was 1,290! One new society at the Cornerstone Church in Muncie was organized; three were disbanded, which gave a net loss of two societies.

Commitments:

These are the same as last year. Since "There's nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9), we need to try a new means of achieving the goal. Don't be stuck in the proverbial rut.

The President's Pen (continued)

doorbell rang. There at the door was a delivery man with a beautiful bouquet of flowers from the National W.M.S. I shed some tears and thanked the Lord for loving, caring people.

It was hard for me to stay home, but I knew I must listen to the doctors. I had to miss church on Sunday as well. I'm not as tired as I thought I would be, but I am thankful I can stop and rest as soon as I feel tired. My boss at the University has been just super. She insists I stay home if I am tired. We have moved into our new Student Center and today I have been busy unpacking boxes. All of my things were moved during the days that I had to stay at home.

I have another treatment on August 22 and subsequent treatments every three weeks. I will appreciate your prayers that all treatments will go as smoothly as the first one.

A scripture my son, Jim, sent me is 1 Peter 4:7: *Cast all your cares upon Jesus, for He cares for you.* I know the Lord can completely heal me, if He chooses. But if He chooses not, then I am prepared to take the journey He will take me on. Thanks to so many of you that have sent scriptures that have meant a lot to you. I treasure them.

Well, another Conference year is over, and I trust that you who were there will share with those who could not attend. The W.M.S. luncheon was great! The speaker, Barbara Hess, has been a friend of mine for many years. Neither of us knew at the time she was contacted that our lives would be so close—health-wise. Isn't God just great? He knew we needed Barbara as our speaker. There is a tape available if you would like to hear Barbara. Write to the Brethren Church National Office.

We have talked about prayer and how important it is for each of us. Luke 18:1 says, *Men always ought to pray and not lose heart.* Prayer is everyone's privilege. The gift of prayer is offered to all and we can all call on the power of our almighty God. The disciples asked Jesus to "teach us to pray." Sometimes we casually mention to someone, "I'll pray for you." When we

say this, we had better be serious and remember that person in prayer. What an opportunity we have to pray for someone, to make definite, individual, personalized requests! If we pinpoint our prayers, we will have reason to praise God for particular answers.

Let's pray for our W.M.S. too. We need to find a way to reach the younger women of our churches. Try something different at your next meeting. Each invite a guest. Pray and ask the Lord to give you a name of someone to invite. Let me know what happens.

God bless you each as we begin a new year together in W.M.S.

Shirley

Shirley Black

Partners in the Gospel

(continued)

they went to their own people and reported everything to the believers. Verse 24: "When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God."

Let us pray together. Please repeat after me as I pray for each of us to receive the Power God has for us:

"Hello, God,

"We are here in your presence and we are emptying ourselves of all our hangups. We come to you, Father, in Jesus' Name. We are a hungry people. We ask for you to fill us with the same power the early apostles received. We want to receive from you, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, so each one of us can speak the Word of God boldly. We stretch out our hands for you to fill them. We give you our hearts that every hidden room may be revealed and opened to the infilling work of the Holy Spirit. We thank you. We praise you. We have received. In Jesus Name, Amen."

Now, tell someone, "I am a partner with the Holy Spirit to speak the Word of God boldly."

Missionary

Miscellany

The Missionaries-of-the-Month for September are Todd and Tracy Ruggles, serving Christ and the church in Mexico City. That city's population is equal to all of the state of Ohio! In October the Mike and Pam Sove family are the missionary family. Mike and Pam have five sons. They pastor the Northview Brethren Life congregation in Franklin, Ohio. This is a new and young congregation. All of them need your prayers and encouragement.

November is Home Missions month and features Doran and Nancy Hostetler at Riverside Christian School in Lost Creek, Kentucky, and Phil and Jean Lersch at Brethren House in St. Petersburg, Florida. The third part of this team, Bonnie Munson, retired to Goshen, Indiana, last winter. Include her in your prayers, too.

The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

Conference is likened to a family reunion—great! The preliminary work is worthwhile and needed so that the event proceeds smoothly. Throughout the W.M.S. meetings, it was evident that people *and* God were at work.

Next year's Conference will be at St. Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana, August 4-8. In a different location, all will be new. Vice president Marilyn invited volunteers for the Conference—pianist, special musicians, devotions, committee appointments, or using *your* special gift. To volunteer, send her a note: Route 4, 13-108 RD C, Bryan, OH 43506.

Your friend,

Joan

Joan

Wednesday: "Spiritual Formation"

OPPORTUNITIES for "spiritual formation"—growing in the mind and spirit of Christ and in outward action and service—were shared in a workshop sponsored by the Spiritual Formation Commission on Wednesday morning of Conference.

Commission member Rev. Fred Brandon introduced Tim Rowsey, a lay member of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church, who spoke about Promise Keepers. Tim serves as an "Ambassador" for Promise Keepers in Ohio.

He spoke about the two focuses of Promise Keepers: (1) stadium meetings, where thousands of men meet together to praise and worship Christ; and (2) small-group meetings back home, where men pray together, encourage one another, and hold one another accountable.

While the stadium meetings are the most visible part of Promise Keepers, the small groups are where men get the challenge and encouragement needed to keep going in their Christian walk. It is these small groups that can make the difference between being a promise maker and a promise keeper. Tim stressed the importance of both men *and women* becoming involved in small accountability groups that provide spiritual support.

Brethren Way of Christ

In the next segment, commission member Marlin McCann, pastor of the North Manchester First Brethren Church, spoke about the Brethren Way of Christ as a means of individual transformation. The Brethren Way of Christ is a three-day weekend experience in which 30 men or 30 women draw apart for mutual support and to experience the love and grace of Jesus Christ. Like Promise Keepers, the experience does not end with the three-day weekend, but continues with a "fourth day"—regular participation in an accountability group. In the

North Manchester Church, where more than 50 people have attended the Brethren Way of Christ, "It is making a difference," Rev. McCann said. Thus far the Brethren Way of Christ has been held mainly in northern Indiana, but the members of the Spiritual Formation Commission hope that it will spread throughout the denomination.

Seminary service focuses on servant leadership

THE Wednesday evening worship service at General Conference was led by Ashland Theological Seminary, with special music by the seminary choir under the direction of Dr. Ron Sprunger. A unique feature of the service was interpretive dance during several of the congregational songs and selections by the choir. The dance was performed by Kim Beveridge and Rosie LeHew of the River of Life Community Church in Butler, Ohio.

The service included greetings from Dr. David Hartzfeld, the seminary's new academic dean, who was introduced to the Brethren by Dr. Fred Finks. Dr. Hartzfeld expressed his appreciation that Ashland Theological Seminary has not only an academic side (which he called "Back to the Future"), but also a strong emphasis on the spiritual side ("spiritual formation"), which is missing in many seminaries.

"Leading from a Servant's Heart" was the message given by Dr. Fred Finks, president of the seminary. Philippians 2:5-11 was his text. Dr. Finks challenged today's church to get back to the New Testament in order to rediscover principles that can energize and empower the church to be the instrument that God wants it to be to change the world. The church must discover those characteristics of the early church that have remained relevant throughout the ages regardless of time or culture.

First and foremost, he said, the church is a gathering of those who identify with Jesus and His servant ministry. Servanthood was at

ATS and Life Spring

Spiritual Formation opportunities through Ashland Theological Seminary (ATS) and through Life Spring were presented next by commission member Jerry Flora, professor of New Testament Theology and Spiritual Formation at the seminary. We are fortunate in having a seminary where the administration believes that the devotional side is just as important as the academic side and where spiritual formation is not only a part of

the very core of the early church. Leadership was not an office, but an opportunity to serve. Service was understood to be every Christian's obligation. Jesus was the role model for servanthood. He told His followers, "I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22:27).

Dr. Finks described Jesus' kingdom as a kingdom turned upside down. In the world, rulers lord it over their subjects. In Christ's kingdom, those who would be rulers must be slaves and serve their subjects. Dr. Finks used the account of Jesus' washing the disciples' feet from John 13 to show how Jesus set the example of servanthood. In this act, Jesus revealed His true identity to His disciples. He was a slave, a slave of God.

Dr. Finks challenged the church of today to recapture and apply the principles of servant leadership. He encouraged pastors to set the pace by seeking to become servant pastors. And if pastors set the pace, the church must be quick to become servant people.

He closed with a challenge to rediscover the role of servant by refusing to use power, wealth, position, or strength to control people, pastor, or the church. Instead, with bowed head and humbled heart, let us serve one another in the name of Christ. Then and only then can we lead with a servant's heart. [¶]

— reported by Corky Fisher

Ms. Fisher, a member of Park Street Brethren Church, is a student at Ashland Theological Seminary and an employee of The Carpenter's Shop (Brethren bookstore) in Ashland.

what happens but is the heart of what happens, he said. ATS not only has regular chapels and small groups meetings, but also an academic major in spiritual formation, with courses on prayer, spiritual disciplines, the spiritual classics, devotional reading of the Bible, and others. A two-week course on spiritual guidance will be offered next summer, making it accessible to Brethren who might want to attend.

Life Spring is a school of spiritual formation jointly sponsored by Mennonites and The Brethren Church. Once a month over a two-year period, a group of 20 men and women meet for a 6½-hour mini retreat of quiet time, worship, and talking together in small groups.

Care of the pastor

Dr. Brian Moore, chair of the Spiritual Formation Commission, prepared a presentation stressing the need for churches to care for the well-being of their pastors.* To accomplish this, every congregation should have a working pastoral care committee that takes responsibility for assuring the spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, and social well-being of the pastor.

He noted several ways a congregation can show its love for its pastor (notes of appreciation, pastor appreciation day, improving his working environment, giving the pastor and his wife funds for a trip), but he focused on one in particular—the sabbatical. This is a period of six weeks or longer for the pastor to be away from the daily demands of the congregation. It is not a vacation, but a planned study leave, a time for professional rejuvenation, a time to grow and experience renewal of hope and vision.

Women in ministry

Carolyn Cooksey, the lone woman on the Spiritual Formation Commission, led the next section of the workshop—on women in ministry. She began by giving a brief overview of what women have done and are doing in The Brethren Church. She then invited seven Brethren women involved in special ministries to share their stories.

*Dr. Moore was unable to attend Conference, so Dr. Flora gave the presentation.

Cindy Smith, who has chaired the Evangelism & Church Growth Commission for the past two years, said that the reason she was in that position is because she didn't say "No." She has learned that by saying "Yes" to opportunities for service, she has allowed God to open and close doors as He sees fit, even though she has had to move beyond her comfort zone. She challenged others to likewise say "Yes" to the opportunities God puts before them.

Cathy Britton from New Heights Christian Fellowship in Derby, Kans., sells Mary Kay products. She began her segment with a sales presentation similar to ones she gives for Mary Kay products, but "selling" Jesus. She emphasized that our ministry as Christians crosses all areas of our lives. She is a member of the New Church Development Commission and also chairs the Midwest District Mission Board. While she did not believe that her heart and her gifts were in missions, she nevertheless found she is able to use other gifts that God has given her in these positions.

Ann Miller, from the Carmel, Ind., Brethren Church, told about an evangelistic Bible study she and her husband, Jim, have been conducting in their home for the past 10 months with some of Jim's coworkers. Jim does most of the leading, while Ann cares for logistics, prays for the group, and provides "comic relief" during the meetings. Some from the group have accepted Christ, and Ann has experienced the joy of bringing people to Jesus. She asked others to consider whether God was calling them to this kind of ministry.

Julie Schiefer from the Smoky Row Brethren Church in Columbus, Ohio, told about several groups she is part of that spend at least half their meeting time praying. By this experience, she has learned that God not only answers prayers, but He also changes the pray-ers. She has also begun keeping a notebook of prayer requests and their answers—a history book of God's faithfulness. She challenged others to make prayer a more significant part of their lives. She also invited serious pray-ers to consider joining a network of peo-

ple in the denomination known as "Pray-ers Anonymous." (Contact Julie or Carolyn Cooksey for more information.)

Vicky Taylor from Northwest Brethren Chapel in Tucson, Ariz., spoke about the need to put Christ first in our lives. Too often we put Christ first, "except for . . ." She said that at her church they have been seeking to focus on God, and as a result they are learning to listen to God and to go where He leads, without first making excuses. They are seeking to build their relationship with Christ and then to share that relationship with non-believers.

Joyce Owens from the Pleasant View Brethren Church in Vandergrift, Pa., and her husband, Arnie, are students at Ashland Theological Seminary. She also serves with her husband in a team ministry in Florence, Ohio. Before this she served seven years in the military as a chaplain assistant alongside her husband. As she continues her studies, she looks forward to being able to combine her skills with those of her husband to serve The Brethren Church. She sees many possibilities for women through team ministry.

Sherry Bowling is originally from the Oak Hill, W. Va., First Brethren Church but now lives in Ashland. She shared what doors for ministry have opened for her in The Brethren Church and some of the struggles she has faced. Called to full-time youth ministry seven years ago, she attended Ashland Theological Seminary and received a Master of Divinity degree. She has filled pulpits, directed camps, and now serves as Coordinator of Student Advising at Ashland University. God has call her to other tasks, but the doors have been closed. She does not believe it was God who closed those doors. She believes there are other ministries women can perform and she challenges The Brethren Church to open its heart and doors to all ministries provided for women—single women as well as those who can serve with husbands. She also reminded women that there is a cost for service and that they need to count the cost. [†]

Thursday: Missionary Ministries

MISSIONARY MINISTRIES were in the spotlight on Thursday of General Conference. The day included the World Relief Soup Lunch at midday, the Missionary Board Banquet in the evening, and a worship service with a missions emphasis to conclude the day.

Approximately 175 people attended the World Relief Soup Lunch, where the emphasis was not on eating but on hearing about the hurts and needs of others in our world. Those in attendance also heard special music by Stephen Loi, son of Brethren missionaries David and Jenny Loi, who played two Chinese Christian songs on violin. Stephen is a sophomore at Ashland University.

The announced speaker—Martin Hartog, Midwest Area Senior Representative for World Relief of the National Association of Evangelicals—yielded most of his time to Brian Johnson, director of World Relief's work in Liberia, West Africa. John-

son and his family just recently returned to the U.S. after being evacuated from Liberia because of the violent civil war in that country.

Johnson told of the desperate plight of the people in Liberia, where 175,000 have been killed in the seven-year civil war and where 2.3 million of the country's total population of 3 million are displaced. Disease and malnutrition are prevalent, and no educational institutions are operating.

In addition to providing food and other needs, World Relief has been working with churches in Liberia to bring about reconciliation. Thankfully, the churches have begun putting aside tribal and denominational differences and are working as reconciling agents in the country.

Johnson said that he would be returning to Liberia the week after Conference to help with food and shelter projects and to continue the community banking program. He

asked for prayer that the reconciliation process would continue and expressed his thanks for Brethren support of World Relief, which has helped make the relief efforts and the community banking program in Liberia possible.

In his comments, Martin Hartog emphasized the close relationship between World Relief and The Brethren Church. Wherever World Relief is at work, The Brethren Church is there. He also set forth a challenge that at least ten Brethren churches would adopt a "Fifty Fifty" community banking project in Liberia by contributing the \$2,500 necessary to provide 50 women LifeLoans of \$50 each for their small businesses. This has proved to be an effective method of rebuilding not only individual lives and families, but also local communities.

The offering at the World Relief Lunch was designated for the community banking program. The total of \$2,489 was almost enough to fund one of the "Fifty Fifty" projects.

Missionary Board Banquet

World Missions was the emphasis at the Missionary Board Banquet, attended by approximately 300 Brethren. The brief program included greetings from Malaysian missionaries Rev. David and Jenny Loi; and from Allen Baer, missionary to Argentina.

Also bringing greetings were Mariela and Eduardo Rodriguez, who had just returned to Ashland following a visit to their homeland of Argentina. In Ashland they will continue their studies at Ashland Theological Seminary, where they are preparing for greater service in the Argentine Brethren Church. Rev. Reilly Smith, director of Brethren Missions, announced that the worship team from the Colon Brethren Church, where Eduardo's father is pastor, has been invited to come to the U.S. and to lead the missionary service at the General Conference in Estes Park in the year 2000.

Rev. Smith also made a few remarks about the future of Brethren missions. That future, he said, is very bright. He sees exciting prospects both in the United States and around the world. There are the beginnings of new stirrings of revival



During the World Relief Soup Lunch, Stephen Loi played the violin; Brian Johnson, director of World Relief's work in Liberia, West Africa, told about that country's desperate plight; and Martin Hartog, Midwest Area Senior Representative for World Relief, presented an "Open Hands Award" to The Brethren Church (accepted on the church's behalf by Dick Winfield (l.)). The award, was given to Brethren "In recognition of your compassion towards the world's hungry and homeless."



in Malaysia, where for the first time we have a church building (a building was never allowed before).

The gospel is exploding in Latin America. The population of Mexico City alone is greater than that of the entire State of Ohio, offering our mission work in that city unlimited potential. The Hispanic population in the U.S. also affords us a great opportunity for ministry among Spanish-speaking people. And we are going to take advantage of that, he said.

He is also excited about the possibilities for other ministry in the United States. He said that our new relationship with Dynamic Church Planting International will help us gain the expertise that we need to do an effective job of planting churches into the next century.

He concluded his remarks with a reminder that the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. And he requested that Brethren pray with him that the Lord would raise up workers for the harvest.

Worship service

The emphasis of the evening worship service was on Brethren Home Missions. The praise and worship time for the service was led by the band from the Living HOPE Brethren Church of Medina, Ohio, the newest Home Mission Church in the Ohio District.

During a sharing time, Tom Sprowls, pastor of the Living HOPE Brethren Church, and Mike Sove, pastor of the Northview Brethren Life Church of Franklin, Ohio, told how the Lord is working in their churches. In addition, Rev. Roger Stogsdill, speaking on behalf of



Gracing General Conference this year were Brethren missionaries Rev. David and Jenny Loi, visiting from Malaysia; and Allen Baer, on furlough from Argentina. All three brought greetings during the Missions Banquet.

Is your church a "mission" congregation?

IS YOUR CHURCH a "mission" congregation? That's the question Dr. Arden Gilmer, president of the Missionary Board, asked the Conference Thursday evening. He told of a church in suburban Chicago that hired a student from a nearby seminary to begin a youth ministry. In four months he brought in 200 youth—and the church fired him! Dr. Gilmer asked, "What would your church have done?"

For churches to be "mission" churches, they must have "mission" leaders, Dr. Gilmer said. He challenged his hearers to return home from Conference and be mission leaders in their congregations. Then, basing his remarks on the Apostle Paul's words in Romans 1:13-17, he defined four characteristics of a mission leader.

Paul said that he desired to "have a harvest among you" (v. 13). That

was his *vision*. Mission leaders need a vision of the harvest; not just any vision, but a *great* vision.

Second, Paul said, "I am obligated . . ." (v. 14). He had a *duty* to give the gospel to all. We, likewise, are obligated to reach the lost. It's our duty. Jesus says, "Report for duty."

Third, Paul was "eager" to preach the gospel (v. 15). He was ardent, avid, vigorous, and positive. He had a proper *attitude*. A mission leader in a mission congregation will not be a complainer. He will have instead a joy-filled, servant attitude.

Finally, Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel" (v. 16). Paul had *conviction*. He knew that the gospel has the power to transform lives. He had experienced that power. Mission leaders must share that conviction. [†]

— reported by Doug Cunningham, a student at Ashland Theological Seminary.

Pastor Archie Nevins (who was unable to attend Conference), told

about the progress of the work in West Valley Brethren Life Church in Tracy, Calif. And Pastor T.J. McLaughlin gave a progress report on preparations for the start of a new Home Mission outreach in Cranberry Township, Pa.

A commissioning service was also held for Mike and Pam Sove and T.J. and Judy McLaughlin, setting them apart for and praying the blessing of the Holy Spirit upon their missionary ministries at Northview Brethren Life Church (Soves) and in Cranberry Township, Pa. (McLaughlins). This was followed by the evening message, presented by Dr. Arden Gilmer (see above). [†]



Dr. Arden Gilmer and Rev. Reilly Smith offer prayers for Home Missionaries T.J. and Judy McLaughlin (l.) and Pam and Mike Sove (r.) during the commissioning service held as part of the Thursday evening worship service.

Friday: Concluding Session

GENERAL CONFERENCE finished with a blast, when the youth who had attended the Brethren Youth In Christ (BYIC) Convention the same week joined the adults for the concluding session. While most of the adults showed signs of fatigue (and a number of them had already left for home!), the youth were present in full strength and at a peak of enthusiasm. And because enthusiasm is contagious, it was soon caught by the adults as well.

The youth marched into the session to the strains of the theme song of the Olympics. When they were in place, a spokesperson announced, "The Olympics may be over, but the Olympics for Christ have just begun." To prove the point, a few of the youth sponsors gave an entertaining demonstration of their Olympic prowess(?).

In the minutes that followed, the young people reported the highlights of their Convention, presented a skit, and gave awards to youth groups that had outstanding achievements during the past year. From time to time during these activities, a spokesperson would cry out, "Attitude Check" (the theme for the week, based on Philippians 2:5), and the youth would enthusiastically respond, "Praise the Lord!" The youth portion of the session concluded with the installation of the newly elected BYIC Steering Committee (see below).

Next Rev. David Cooksey installed

the newly-elected General Conference leaders, after which Dr. Richard Allison passed the moderator's gavel to the newly-installed moderator, Dr. John Shultz. In doing so, Dr. Allison expressed his pleasure with Conference this year, noting that he had "seen some unity and harmony that I have never experienced before in a General Conference." The new moderator then concluded the session with a message in which he introduced the 1997 Conference theme.

New moderator's challenge

Dr. Shultz began his message with a story about people trapped in a deep pit and the efforts of rescuers to pull them from that pit. He said that as time went on, the rescuers became less interested in pulling people from the pit and more concerned with equipment, life-saving techniques, and themselves. Moderator Shultz concluded the illustration with the statement, "I would challenge The Brethren Church to remember that it exists to pull people from the pit."

Noting that we have not been very successful at this, he continued, "I'm convinced that one of the greatest problems we have is a lack of vision." We've become so accustomed to doing the same things the same way that there is no space for anything new. Or anyone new. We're growing older as a denomination,

and with old age often comes difficulty seeing. And if you can't see, it's difficult to have much vision. Because we need this vision, the theme for next year's Conference, Dr. Shultz said, will be "Grasp the Vision," based on Philippians 3:12-16.

Paul was a man of vision. He was converted by a blinding vision of Jesus and led by a vision to one who would disciple him. In addition, he



New moderator Dr. John Shultz (r.) receives the moderator's gavel and a handshake from outgoing moderator Dr. Richard Allison.

had a personal vision of becoming all Christ wanted him to be; a vision of the church growing and maturing in Christ; and a vision of people everywhere being pulled from the pit.

Paul did not feel that he had attained his vision. He wrote that he was "straining toward what is ahead." This prompted Dr. Shultz to ask, "I wonder where most of the straining in The Brethren Church occurs?"

Paul was "press[ing] on toward the goal." He had no spiritual cataracts, no lost contacts that would keep him from having a clear picture of his direction. Furthermore, Paul said, "All of us who are mature should take such a view of things." To which Dr. Shultz added, "Certainly we are old enough to be mature. The question is whether or not we are wise enough."

We have a God who is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine, according to his power at work within us. Therefore, "go find your glasses, get your ropes [lifelines] out of their packages, and come to South Bend next year with some people who are fresh out of the pit," Dr. Shultz concluded. [†]



Rev. David Cooksey installs the 1997 BYIC Steering Committee members, (l. to r.) Aaron Hollewell, Jenna Bowen, Jeremy Tarr, Jaime Gillespie, Jerrod Furlong, Christy Van Duyne, and Nichole Caughell.

Invite a Friend on Andrew Sunday



©DG 1991

By Ronald W. Waters

HAVE YOU been waiting for an opportunity to invite a friend, a relative, a work associate, a classmate, or a neighbor to attend church with you? You will have a special opportunity to do so this fall on Andrew Sunday.

Andrew Sunday is another name for an "invite a friend Sunday." The suggested date for this special emphasis is Sunday, October 27, in conjunction with National Friend Day. Churches are free, however, to select another date that will be more convenient for them.

Andrew Sunday gets its name from Jesus' disciple, Andrew. Whenever Andrew is named in the Gospel of John, he is always introducing someone to Jesus. He serves as our model for inviting others to Jesus and to the church.

What is involved?

What is involved in inviting someone to church on Andrew Sunday?

1. **Discover when Andrew Sunday will be held in your church.** Ask your pastor or watch your bulletin for an announcement.

2. **Decide whom you should invite.** You may have someone in mind already. If so, great. If not, make a list of the persons in your "circle of contact"—people you already know and with whom you have a relationship who are not actively involved in a church or do not know Jesus as their saving Lord. In making your list, use the following categories as thought-starters.

- neighbors
- newcomers to the community
- relatives
- newlyweds
- families with a new baby
- hobby, hunting, or fishing buddies

- people you work with
- close friends
- people you know in clubs or community organizations

3. **Give the invitation.** It is best to offer your invitation in person. A phone call or a letter is less personal but can be effective. Give them a card or flier from your church, if one is available, listing the date and time. Say something as simple as, "We're having a special Sunday at our church when we are inviting our friends to attend with us. There will be a lot of guests present that Sunday. Because you are my friend, would you [and your family] attend with me as my special guest?"

4. **Secure a commitment, if possible.** You don't need to be pushy, but people are more likely to attend if they make a commitment to join you. If they say they'd like to think about it or need to talk it over with a spouse, grant them that opportunity.

How Can Our Church Get Involved?

Call The Andrew Center and request an Andrew Sunday Resource Kit. The kit provides you practical ideas, resources, and a strategy for your congregation, no matter the size.

The resource kit includes: a video and discussion guide on faith sharing and inviting others to church; a poster and bulletin inserts for promoting the day; a booklet containing a time line and step-by-step approach to planning the day; a sheet of additional ideas; and worship resources and two sermon outlines.

Cost of the resource kit is \$19.95, but Andrew Center member congregations receive the kit for \$15.00. (This is a great time to sign up for your free Brethren Church membership if you've not already done so!)

To order call 1-800-774-3360 today.

nity. But ask them when it would be good for you to check back with them. Then be sure to do so!

5. **Be prepared to answer questions your friend may have.** Questions like: "What should I wear?" (Be honest so the person won't be embarrassed by being dressed too casual or too formal. Tell your friend what you normally wear to church.) "What should I bring?" (You might offer to bring a Bible for your guest, if that seems appropriate.) And "What will it cost me?" (You might indicate that an offering will be taken but that guests are not required to give.)

6. **Offer to pick up your friend or to meet at the church.** Taking friends with you makes it less intimidating for them when they arrive at the church. Also, by taking them, you can help them find their way around and introduce them to other friends. Even if your vehicle is not large enough to hold everyone, offer to meet your friends at their home, and they can follow you to the church in their car. If neither approach is possible, arrange to meet them at a prominent place at the church, and be sure you arrive before they do.

7. **Invite your friend to join you for a meal after the service.** This will be a valuable opportunity to talk about the experience and to answer questions your friend may have.

8. **Don't forget to invite your friend to join you again the next Sunday.** Church attendance habits are developed one Sunday at a time. As many as 75 percent of persons who attend a second, third, or fourth time become members of the church.

What if your church is not holding an Andrew Sunday this fall? You can still invite a friend to be your guest any Sunday. But everyone is more comfortable—both inviters and guests—when they know that many other new people will be present.

So tell your pastor that you would be willing to serve on a planning team for Andrew Sunday. The Andrew Center has developed a step-by-step procedure for planning such a day. You might be surprised how many people will meet your special Friend Jesus through the simple plan of inviting them to be your guest for Andrew Sunday this fall! [†]

Baptism: Pledge of a Good Conscience

By Brenda B. Colijn

FIRST PETER 3:21 has always been an important text for the Brethren understanding of baptism. Like the Anabaptists before them, the early Brethren understood baptism to involve the believer's commitment to a life of discipleship. Like Romans 6:3-11 (discussed by Brian Moore in an earlier article in this series), 1 Peter 3:21 suggests that baptism marks a turning point in a person's life. After this public commitment to Christ, the believer has the obligation (and the ability) to live a new life in the power of Christ.

Context

Let's look first at the context of this verse. This section of 1 Peter deals with the ethical behavior God expects of His people in light of the coming judgment. Because they are "aliens and strangers in the world," believers should "[live] such good lives among the pagans that, although they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us" (1:11-12; *NIV*).

To this end, Peter advises believers to submit themselves responsibly to social institutions (2:13-3:9), live in harmony with one another (3:8), and be eager to do good, even in response to evil (3:9-13). Even if they suffer as a result of doing what is right, they should not fear, because they are blessed (v. 14). In their hearts, they should "set apart Christ as Lord" and be prepared to give a defense of their faith whenever necessary (v. 15-16). Their example in suffering for the benefit of others is Christ, the Righteous One, who died for the unrighteous in order to bring them to God (v. 18).

Verses 19-22 appear to be an aside in Peter's argument, but they do continue the theme of redemption in the midst of judgment. In chapter 4, Peter again exhorts his readers to follow the example of Christ (v. 1a). Bodily suffering has the benefit of strengthening the believer

against sin (v. 1b-6). Judgment is near, and believers should live accordingly (v. 7-11). In a time of judgment, God's people should expect to suffer, but they should entrust themselves to their faithful God and continue to do good (v. 12-19).

Text

In this context of the suffering of believers, Peter directs his readers' attention to the hope they have in Christ. He has died for their sins and risen from the dead (v. 18). He is exalted in heaven, at God's right hand, having triumphed over all angels and spiritual powers (v. 22). This resurrection power is available to His people (v. 21).

As an illustration of Christ's triumph, Peter mentions His preaching "to the spirits in prison" (v. 19-20). This statement has been much debated. Some interpreters think it refers to the announcement of Christ's triumph either to the fallen angels or to the people of Old Testament times. Other interpreters think it refers to Christ preaching the gospel to those who lived before His coming. In any event, Peter uses the reference to Noah's day to show God's redemption of His people in a time of judgment.

Peter draws a parallel between God's rescue of Noah's family and His spiritual redemption of believers: "In [the ark] only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also" (v. 20-21). This way of using the Old Testament is called typology. Peter sees a pattern in the way God cares for His people: just as He saved His faithful people through water in the ark, He also saves His people through water in baptism.

Peter goes on to explain how this salvation comes about: "not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward

God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (v. 21). Water may cleanse the body, but it doesn't save. The work of Christ ("the resurrection of Jesus Christ") is what saves. We respond to that completed work with faith and faithfulness (our "pledge of a good conscience toward God"). In fact, it's the work of Christ (for us and in us) that makes our faithfulness possible.

Without the work of Christ and the response of faith, baptism is only a bath. As an act of obedient faith, however, baptism allows believers to participate in Christ's triumph. Through Him, they can be victorious over the forces of sin and

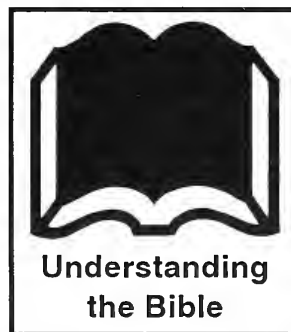
evil in their own lives, even in the midst of their own suffering and the judgment of the world. Baptism, like the ark in Noah's day, is a sign to believers that God has not left them alone, but has acted to redeem them.

Verse 21 has two particular problems we should look at. First, the word translated "pledge" by the *NIV* can be translated in other ways—for example, as "appeal" (*NRSV*). Evidence from ancient sources suggests that this word was used in contracts to refer to someone's promise to keep the obligations of the contract. The early Brethren, following Luther and the Anabaptists, understood this word to mean "covenant" and viewed baptism in those terms.

Second, the phrase "of a good conscience" could mean two different things—either a pledge that comes from a good conscience or a pledge to maintain a good conscience in the future. The immediate context doesn't help us choose between these. The broader context, in which Peter urges believers to continue to do good even when they're suffering, suggests that the second interpretation is more likely. Peter refers to their baptism to remind his readers

(continued on next page)

Dr. Colijn, assistant professor of theology at Ashland Theological Seminary, chairs the Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication, which is preparing this series of articles.





Understanding the Bible *cont.*

of the pledge they had made to God to live lives that were pleasing to Him. The idea of a pledge to keep a good conscience also fits the way baptisms were conducted in the early church. As part of the service, converts promised to give up the ways of paganism and live a Christian life.

Application

This understanding of baptism as a pledge is the reason why Brethren don't baptize infants but only those old enough to understand the commitment they are making. To be faithful to this verse, we should be careful not to let baptism become a mere formality, even for those who grow up in the church and come to Christ as children.

Like other evangelical Protestants, we Brethren often think of baptism as an outward symbol of what has already occurred inwardly—that is, a person's being born again and being cleansed from sin. We must remember that baptism is not just a symbol of what has already happened, but also our promise of what is to come—our pledge of a lifetime of following and obeying Christ. This passage shows that baptism represents not only our receiving Christ as Savior, but also our commitment to Christ as Lord. [†]



Stockton Church honors Hope O. Rigunan

Stockton, Calif. — The Stockton Brethren Church paid tribute during the worship service on July 21 to Hope O. Rigunan for his outstanding service to the Lord and the congregation. Mr. Rigunan serves the church as financial chairman and secretary and also as a Sunday school teacher.

Mr. Rigunan was given a plaque during the service by Carolyn Bennett; Audrey Styer read a poem she had written in his honor; and Moderator Wes Styer presented him a silver top



Hope Rigunan with silver top hat and cake.

hat and a cake. Special music was shared by Tony Ubaldo, a concert pianist; Dr. Jose Galvez, the "singing doctor"; and Frances A. Galvez, an international artist.

After the service a luncheon was held in Mr. Rigunan's honor, with members of the Filmaps Chorale as guests. This group, of which Mr. Rigunan is a member, often sings for special programs at the church.

Rev. Randy Best is pastor of the Stockton Church.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Rev. C. William and Joanne Cole on their 50th wedding anniversary on September 20. A celebration will be held Sunday, September 22, from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Fairless Hills-Levittown Brethren Church, where they serve. During their years together they also served the Ardmore, Vinco, and Wabash Brethren Churches. Their current address is 29 Jadewood Rd., Levittown, PA 19056.

Living HOPE Brethren Church holds first baptismal service

Medina, Ohio — The Living HOPE Brethren Church of Medina, a Home Mission congregation begun in November 1994, held its first baptismal service on Sunday, August 11.

Eight people were baptized by Pastor Tom Sprowls in the swimming pool of Tom and Cheryl Vunderink —Barbara White, Cheryl and Tom Vunderink, Randy Roeper, Corryn Wright-Stasko, and Jeff, Diana, and Corrie Combs. They will be received into church membership upon completion of the church's Spiritual Formation Seminar. *(Photo below.)*

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Vol. 118, No. 9

A newsletter for Brethren people

October 1998

1997 General Conference Moderator John Shultz challenges Brethren to:

“Grasp the Vision” (Philippians 3:12–16)*

A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO a group of people was walking down the road. As they walked along, the people came upon a huge sink-hole at the side of the road. It was a deep pit, and as the people peered over the edge, they were horrified to see a group of people trapped at the bottom.

They immediately began to discuss this situation and soon discovered two things: First, they had all been rescued from a pit themselves at one time or another; and second, the pit is not a good place in which to be. Even though there is food and water at the bottom of the pit and even though it is quite tasty, it is not very satisfying and the people there quickly become hungry and thirsty again.

Life in the pit

The pit is also not a good place in which to be because the longer people are there, the meaner they become. In fact, even as they were looking in, the people saw a bomb go off in a crowded place and another one explode in the cargo hold of an airplane, causing more than 200 people to be killed when the plane crashed into the ocean.

Life in the pit is also not very fulfilling. The group saw lots of people in the pit using various drinks and pills to help them feel better. That the pit is a terrible place in

**This is an edited version of the message Dr. Shultz gave at the conclusion of the 1996 General Conference, following his installation as the 1997 Conference moderator. Dr. Shultz is professor of pastoral counseling at Ashland Theological Seminary.*

which to be is shown by the fact that almost half of the women there will have an abortion by the time they are 45. Many children are neglected and abused. There are drive-by shootings. And you wouldn't believe the number of families falling apart down in the pit!

Rescue operations

Well, the group immediately began lowering ropes over the edge and pulling people to safety. Of course it wasn't long until the folks who had been rescued began to join in the efforts, and the group above began to grow and thrive.

But a strange thing happened. As the years went by and the group grew larger and larger, the group's members became less interested in the people of the pit. They spent more and more of their time discussing merits of various kinds of knots. They tried to determine whether hemp, nylon, or polypropylene rope would be best for rescue operations.

They built nice buildings in which to store the ropes and rescue slings and in which to discuss the rescue Manual. Furthermore, while they met regularly to thank the Rope Maker and the Author of the Manual, as they should have done, they forgot the purpose of the rope and the reason for the Manual.

Meanwhile, out by the edge of the pit, a few of the group continued rescue operations. But they had trouble keeping up, and more and more people died without being rescued.

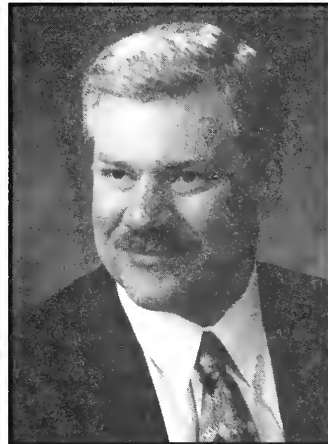
I would challenge The Brethren Church to remember that it exists to pull people from the pit. The reason the Rope Maker called us together was to be part of the search and rescue team.

Last year 67 Brethren churches had zero adult conversions. Why do these congregations even exist? More importantly, how did they get that way and what can we do about it?

I'm convinced that one of the greatest prob-

lems we have is a lack of vision. We have become so accustomed to going to the same church at the same time on the same day saying the same things to the same people in the same ways and going home doing the same things we've always done that there is no space for anything new. Or anyone new.

Have you ever dreamed about the day when Ashland University would not be the Conference site



Dr. John C. Shultz

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because it is too small? In your mind's eye, have you ever seen the sanctuary of your local church full? Have you ever thought about whether you would go to the first, second, or Saturday night service if there wasn't enough room for everyone in one service on Sunday morning?

Have you ever longed for the day when we had a couple churches in every major metropolitan area? And one or two Directors of Pastoral Ministry in every district? Why is 524 College Avenue still big enough to house our national offices—with room left over to rent?

Do we have eye problems?

We're getting older as a denomination, and with old age often come difficulties with the eyes. We spend more time than ever in our homes searching for misplaced glasses. The aging process makes it difficult for us to see well enough without glasses to read or watch television. I wonder if we as a denomination aren't having trouble finding our glasses as well. Sometimes we appear to be very nearsighted, and at other times we appear to have cataract problems.

The reason for denominational reorganization is to put a structure and people in place that can help us find our glasses—people who will challenge us to dream and to put those dreams into action. I am feeling a heavy burden as I think about the reorganization of the National Office. The decisions regarding personnel and programs in the next two-to-three years will no doubt determine the destiny of this denomination for a long time to come. We need to be in prayer about the selection of these people.

As we consider vision, it would be appropriate to ask the question, "What is vision?" I like the defini-

tion given by Bob Logan:

*Vision is the capacity to create a compelling picture of the desired state of affairs that inspires people to respond; that which is desirable, which could be, should be; that which is attainable. A godly vision is right for the times, right for the church, and right for the people. A godly vision promotes faith rather than fear. A godly vision motivates people to action. A godly vision requires risk-taking. A godly vision glorifies God, not people.**

Aubrey Malphurs in *Developing a Vision for Ministry in the 21st Century* says that a vision is a clear, challenging, mental picture that is future oriented. It can be; it must be.

1997 Conference theme

Allow me, then, to introduce next year's General Conference theme. It is "Grasp the Vision" and is based on Philippians 3:12-16.

It should be no surprise that the text for next year would be taken from Paul's writing. Paul was certainly a man of vision. He was:

- Converted by a blinding vision of Jesus
 - Led to the one who would disciple him by a vision
- Furthermore, Paul had:
- A personal vision of becoming all that Christ wanted him to be
 - A vision that the church would grow and mature in Christ
 - A vision of people everywhere being pulled from the pit

His vision certainly fits our definition. This vision:

- promotes faith rather than fear;
- motivates people to action;
- requires risk-taking;
- glorifies God, not people.

We come now to the text: In Phi-

*Quoted by George Barna in his book, *How to Find Your Church*, p. 104.

lippians 3:7-11, Paul has been describing his personal vision of acquiring righteousness in Christ. He has said, "I want to know Christ, the power of his resurrection, and share in his sufferings."

In verse 12 Paul writes, "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me."

He apparently has in mind the Olympic runner who is clearly focused on—has a vision of—the finish line. He understands that there is no such thing as status quo in the Christian faith. If we are not moving forward, we are inevitably moving backward. His motivation in this race is that Christ has pulled him from the pit and handed him the rope.

What will *we* say when Christ asks us what we've done with the rope He used to rescue us?

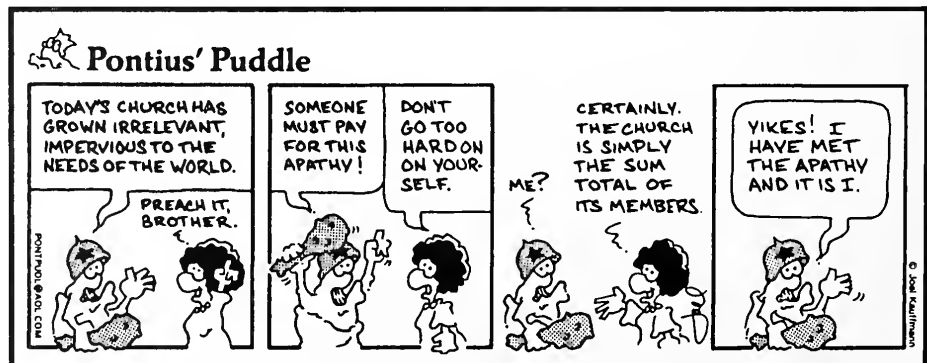
On my boat is a 3/8-inch by 50-foot rope that is in a nice plastic package. It is there for emergency use only. In technical boating terms, it is called a rope as long as it is in the package or is coiled. As soon as it is put to use—connected to an anchor or tied to the dock—it is called a line. Paul challenges us to turn our ropes into lifelines. We are to put them into use rescuing others from the pit.

Straining toward to goal

Paul's picture of the runner continues in verse 13, where he writes, "I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

The picture that may best illus-

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trate this verse is that of three women straining for the finish line in the 100-meter dash at the Olympics in Atlanta. The effort Paul is describing might be similar to that of Gail Devers, who managed to lean forward at the last instant of the race to win the gold medal.

I wonder where most of the straining in The Brethren Church occurs? Do we strain harder:

- to get up and down in the pew or up and down the street spreading the gospel?
- over the church budget or over coffee with an unbelieving neighbor?
- to clean the building or to clean people stained by sin?
- to pay utility bills for the building or to bring light into a dark world?

In verse 14 Paul states, "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." There are no cataracts here, no lost contact lenses

that would keep Paul from a clear picture of his direction.

Verse 15 says that those who are mature should take this same view of things. Certainly we are old enough to be mature. The question is, Are we wise enough?

About 350 years ago a shipload of travelers landed on the northeast coast of America. The first year they established a town site. The next year they elected a town government. The third year the town government planned to build a road five miles westward into the wilderness. In the fourth year the people tried to impeach their town government because the people thought it was a waste of public funds to build a road five miles westward into a wilderness. Who needed to go there anyway?

Here were people who had the vision to see three thousand miles across an ocean and overcome great hardships to get there. But in just a

few short years they were not able to see even five miles out of town. They had lost their pioneering vision. With a clear vision of what we can become in Christ, no ocean of difficulty is too great. Without it, we rarely move beyond the edge of town—or even the edge of our pew.

Paul encourages the vision of the church at Ephesus with these words in Ephesians 3:20-21:

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Now go find your glasses, get your ropes out of their packages, and come to South Bend* next year with some people who are fresh out of the pit. [†]

*This is in reference to the 1997 General Conference, which is to be held at Saint Mary's College in South Bend, Ind.

See your World Relief dollars at work through a "Fifty-Fifty" project

By Editor Richard Winfield

HAVE YOU EVER WISHED that you could know who was helped by your offering for World Relief and what kind of help they received? This is now possible through "Fifty-Fifty" projects administered by World Relief of the National Association of Evangelicals.

How do the projects work?

A "Fifty-Fifty" project is a partnership between your church, World Relief, and 50 women in Liberia, West Africa.* Your church provides a one-time gift of \$2,500. World Relief uses that \$2,500 to set up a Community Bank in Liberia.

Fifty women are chosen to be-

*Notes: (1) "Your church" could be the church itself or some group within the church such as the W.M.S., Men of Mission, or a Sunday school class. (2) Some LifeLoans have been given to men, but since most Community Banks are made up of women, "women" and "woman" have been used throughout this article. (3) World Relief sets up Community Banks in various countries, but at General Conference Martin Hartog of World Relief challenged Brethren to provide support for "Fifty-Fifty" projects in Liberia.

come members of that Community Bank. Each woman is given a LifeLoan of \$50 to provide funds to start or expand a small business (food stand, vegetable shop, sewing business, etc.). As she earns money, each woman makes regular payments on her loan, with a portion of each payment deposited into that woman's savings account.

Once the Community Bank, as a unit, has met its collective obligations, the members are eligible for a second loan. After several cycles, a typical member has enough savings that she no longer needs a loan.

How is the bank administered?

Several members of each bank are elected by the other members to administer the bank. World Relief, in turn, monitors the national management staff by means of periodic project visits. Presently, the repayment rate in this program runs an impressive 90 percent.

What are the benefits?

One of the obvious benefits for the women is more income, which they can use to meet their families' needs

for food, medicine, and education. (Many of the women who receive LifeLoans are widows with children). LifeLoans enable families to move from dependency to self-sufficiency, resulting in an increased sense of dignity. Many recipients have learned to read and write, and some have become Christians and are now attending a church.

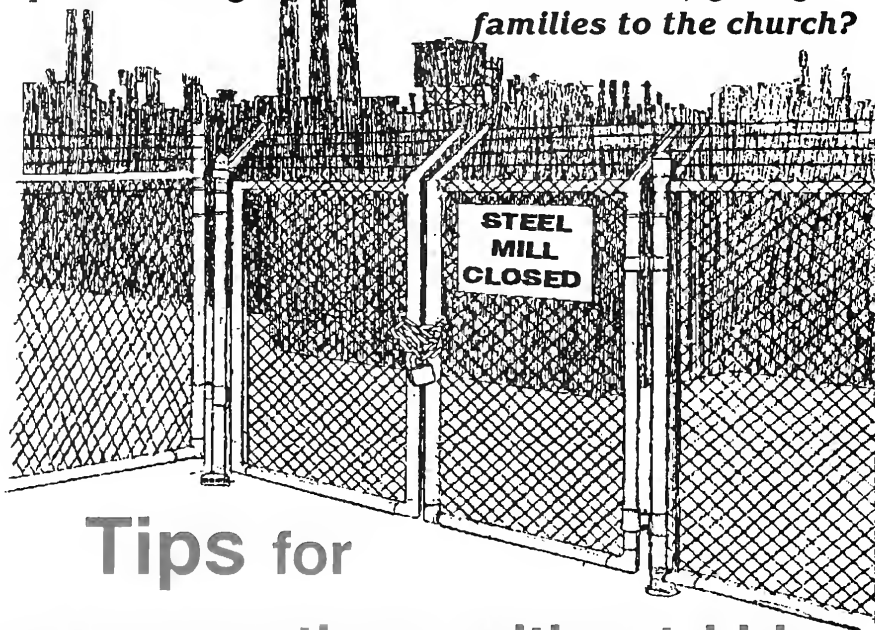
What will we receive?

World Relief will send you group-photographs of the women participating in your "Fifty-Fifty" project. You will also receive information about the progress of the Community Bank. Thus you will have a sense that you are personally involved in the lives of these women.

How do we get started?

To initiate your "Fifty-Fifty" project, or to get more information about doing so, contact Martin Hartog, Midwest Area Senior Representative for World Relief, by phone (630-483-7731), fax (630-483-7739), e-mail (102336.3500@compuserve.com), or letter (2109 Glasgow Court, Hanover Park, IL 60103). It is not necessary to have the \$2,500 up front to begin the project. Once a commitment is made, the money can be raised throughout the year. [†]

What's a congregation to do when plant closings result in the loss of young families to the church?



Tips for congregations without kids

By Pastor Jim Saunders

TODAY MANY CONGREGATIONS find themselves in the same situation in which Johnstown Third Brethren Church found itself a few years ago: a shrinking congregation with at least two generations missing from the pews, located in a neighborhood that no longer resembles the one that nurtured the original congregation.

Due to the closing of the Bethlehem steel mills and a general economic downturn in the Johnstown, Pennsylvania, area, many people of working age had to go elsewhere to find employment. As a result of this exodus, as well as some unwise decisions concerning the transfer of leadership to people of the younger generations, the Johnstown Third congregation soon found itself with a membership whose average age was over 60 and with only four children in the church (a teen, a pre-teen, a five-year-old, and a toddler). Attrition by death alone made this a declining congregation.

The one thing these beloved Christians did not do was throw up their hands and say this must be God's will. They decided to do something about the situation. But what?

First, they did their homework. With help from The Brethren Church National Office in Ashland, they held a series of discovery meetings to find out what their strengths and weaknesses were. What did they have to offer the neighborhood, the community, and God's Kingdom? They also took into consideration what they could do about their shortcomings.

With a clearer picture of what they had to do and the resources they had to do it with came a sense of direction, if not a plan. They knew they needed to make their building and the congregation itself more attractive. They also knew they had to be more active in evangelism.

Becoming more attractive

So they did some repair work on the building, as well as some painting and redecorating. They also made the building wheelchair accessible. Furthermore, they began to put more emphasis on greeting visitors and on making them feel welcome and at home. And special efforts were made to invite people to worship services and to Sunday school.

This is about the time I arrived on the scene—after all the groundwork had been done and a good foundation had been laid. The con-

gregation was now ready for an outreach program. But as is the case with most Brethren, evangelism is an art they had never had to practice. Membership increase had always come from Brethren children having children. But now their children were no longer here, having moved out of the area in order to find employment.

Learning how to evangelize

So the congregation had to learn how to evangelize, especially how to evangelize a neighborhood that was not pro-Brethren or even pro-church. To be sure, there were plenty of kids running around the neighborhood, but as was stated repeatedly, "I think they're all Catholic or something." Members of the congregation were quite willing to invite people to Sunday school and worship services, but actually witnessing to a person with the goal of leading that person to make a commitment to Jesus Christ was a skill they still needed to learn.

So the second step was to learn how to evangelize and to unlearn practices that didn't work. Classes on evangelism were held. During these sessions we came to the realization that as long as we were only trying to fill our pews and to increase the money in the offering plate, we would not succeed. Through Bible study and prayer we realized that if we would put the Kingdom of God first and work to bring the saving grace of Jesus Christ to every individual we meet, then God would see to our increase. As Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

This is so important that I must repeat it. When we stopped trying to win people to the Third Brethren Church and started witnessing in order to win them to our Lord Jesus Christ, then we began to gain. It is only when you sacrifice your congregation to God and begin to work for the salvation of God's lost children, no matter what congregation they end up in, that you begin to see God's increase in your own congregation. We have worked with people who ended up as Methodists, Southern Baptists, Presbyterians,

and even Catholics. But they are all Christians, and that's what counts.

Another thing we had to learn is to change. As Ron Waters has said, "Change is not a four-letter word." That old excuse, "We've never done it that way before," has to be buried and forgotten. If the smaller congregation is to survive in this day, it has to change. I don't mean that we should sacrifice our biblical principles, but we do have to adapt our methods to fit those whom we are trying to evangelize.

By the way, did I tell you that we now have more than 40 kids in our youth program? They range in age from toddlers to young people just out of high school, and none are related to other members of our congregation. We were able to send 17 to church camp, and nine made professions of faith while they were there. Five others had previously accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior and joined our congregation. We also have five new families in the congregation, which make up for three families that left.

How did we do it?

There is an old practice in the South for catching wild pigs. First, select a spot in the forest where there are pigs and put corn or other feed at that spot every day. It won't be long before the pigs find it and begin gathering there to eat. Then build a fence along one side of the area and continue to put out the corn. Next, extend the fence along a second side. After a few more days of feeding, install the fence on the third side. When the pigs get accustomed to that, build the fence across the fourth side, with a large, open gate through which the pigs can enter in order to continue to eat. Wait a couple of more days until the pigs are feasting, and quietly close the gate. Instant pig farm!

Third Brethren Church did something like that. The first year I was at the church, I insisted that we sponsor the federal Summer Feeding Program. This brought kids to our building every day, five days a week. They soon got to know our building. We also held our own vacation Bible school. (Previously the congregation had joined with other churches.) We made it a point to get

acquainted with as many children as we could. We handed out 1,200 invitations to our vacation Bible school and passed out VBS literature to those who came to eat.

That first year we had 48 children in our vacation Bible school,



which was held just a couple of weeks before regular school started. This gave us a mailing and visitation list, which we used in the fall to invite parents and children to other church functions. The second year we again did our own VBS, and we had 62 students ranging in age from preschoolers to high-schoolers.

Next, the congregation began a Bible Club for the kids that operated just like vacation Bible school, except that it was held only one night a month. At the Bible Club the children met together to sing, play games, and do crafts. Then we divided them by age groups for Bible stories for the little ones and Bible study for the older ones. The amazing thing was that the children kept coming back for more.

After nearly two years of this "feeding and fence-building" (inclusive, not exclusive fences, of course), the older youth began getting restless with the once-a-month meetings. So we had to decide what to do next and who would do it.

Prayer: our foremost activity

Did I mention that prayer was the foremost activity in everything we did? Many a prayer was offered before God's throne concerning whom we would get to lead the youth. I am happy to say that prayer produces miracles. One day a young man came into my office and asked, "Preacher, would you have any objections if I started a BYIC here?" At the first meeting there were

twelve young people! And it's been getting bigger every week since.

In order to get parents involved, we have had special programs nearly every month to which everyone in the family was invited. These have been from moderately to very successful. As a result, we now have four of these families that are attending occasionally and one that has moved its membership to our church. Our worship attendance is now around 55, up from 45, and we have had as many as 15 children in worship at one time.

Some of the children have been drawn into our Sunday school, but this is proving to be slow (though encouraging). Teachers are ready every Sunday to teach every age group from kindergarten to high school, whether a child of that age attends or not. That way whoever comes has a Sunday school class.

A mentoring program

We are now in the process of trying to start a mentoring program for these children, because so few of them are from church families. We are asking the adults in the congregation to attend two or three BYIC meetings in order to get acquainted with the children and to let the children know that they are loved and welcome. We hope that eventually every child can be paired with an adult mentor.

Will this work everywhere? I doubt it. It's worked for us, however, and we submit our experience with the hope and prayer that it will start you thinking about what you can do in your situation.

Warning: Forget about numbers! Remember that our primary mission is to bring boys and girls, men and women to a saving knowledge of Christ Jesus. When we work for the increase of our own attendance, we fail. Our only goal must be to win people to Christ Jesus. That much we have learned for certain.

Remember the words in James 4:3: "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures." It is only when we pray for and work for the increase of God's Kingdom that God sees to it that we increase and have everything we need to do His work. [V]

Conflict resolution in the church

From a workshop by David Cooksey

On Thursday morning of General Conference, Rev. David Cooksey, Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church, led a workshop for the Conference on "Conflict Resolution." The following article was gleaned from that workshop.

An audio tape of the workshop session is available for \$4 (plus \$2 for postage) from The Brethren Church National Office (524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805). Also available (free) is a 9-page handout that was distributed at the workshop. The material for the handout was taken from the book *The Peacemaker* by Ken Sande (Baker, 1991), which Rev. Cooksey highly recommended.

— Editor R.C. Winfield

CONFLICT, according to Ken Sande, is an opportunity to glorify God. That is primary. But conflict is also an opportunity, according to Sande, to serve others and to grow in Christlikeness. These three truths are basic to our understanding of how we should deal with conflict and how we should deal with one another in conflict.

In spite of these truths, one of the primary responses of the church to conflict is to overlook it. This is unfortunate, for unresolved conflict destroys the witness of the church and occupies the minds of its members, keeping them from doing the things the church should be about.

The church has been guilty of overlooking a lot of things in the lives of its members which should be dealt with. Unacceptable behavior and false statements are glossed over with the excuse, "That's just the way that person is." If it's really the way the person is, *then the person needs to change!*

It is very important that we learn how to deal with conflict in the church and that we use conflict as an opportunity to glorify God, serve others, and become more Christlike.

What the Bible says

The following scripture passages give us some principles for dealing with conflict.

Romans 12:18 says, "If it is pos-

sible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." This passage makes conflict-resolution the responsibility of every Christian. One of the main reasons we have abandoned discipline in the church is because of our own guilt. But this is not an excuse.

1 Corinthians 6:1-8 chastises Christians for taking their disputes before civil authorities. Paul asks, "Do you not know that the saints [Christians] will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels?" This passage assures us, as Christians, that we are capable of dealing with conflict, even though we aren't lawyers or judges. As godly people, we are qualified. When we turn to the word of God for direction in dealing with these matters, we can usually handle the situation well.

Matthew 18:15-17, an important passage in Brethren tradition, gives a three-step process for dealing with personal conflict. First, go to the person and attempt to resolve your differences. If that doesn't work, then, second, take along one or two others to help you work out the problem. If the situation is still not resolved, then, third, take the matter before the church. What usually happens is that we don't start with the first step. We begin with step two or three, by involving other people or the church.

Romans 14:19 enjoins us to "make every effort to do what leads to peace and mutual edification." One of our problems when we are offended is that we find it hard to let go of the hurt. We want the person punished.

In **Luke 6:27-36** Jesus tells us to "love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. . . . Do to others as you would have them do to you. . . . Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." We all do that, don't we? That's a description of The Breth-

ren Church across the country, isn't it? If so, why do we have so many problems?

God forgives us of everything, every time, unconditionally. Is this what we do? Is it our goal? Unfortunately, it's often not what happens in the church, and problems continue because of our failure to forgive and forget.

Expectations of the pastor

Pastors don't have a lot of authority in The Brethren Church, making it difficult for them to really lead. They are put on a short leash—allowed to do some things but yanked back when they reach beyond certain limits. People often tell the pastor, "You take care of spiritual matters but keep your hands off the building and the budget." But these are spiritual matters too!

People have different expectations of the pastor depending on their age compared to that of the pastor (older or younger) and when they became members of the church (before or after the pastor came). People older than the pastor who were members of the church before he came are often the least receptive to the pastor's leadership, while people younger than the pastor who joined the church during his pastorate are his strongest supporters. When conflict comes that involves the pastor, members often choose "sides" according to these categories.

The people at the center of conflict in the church (particularly when it involves the pastor) are frequently the members of the deacon board (who are usually older than the pastor and were members before he arrived). In our denomination, we have put responsibilities on deacons and deaconesses that they do not need to have and should not have. Deacon boards in our churches have become centers of power. In fairness to them, one reason for this is that they have been left with the responsibility of keeping the church going through difficult times.

Levels of conflict

Conflict in the church, if it is not resolved, passes through several levels. It begins with (1) *natural differences*. People are challenged but not competitive; differing viewpoints

are respected; resolution is possible. Sometimes, however, (2) *polarization begins*. An uneasiness develops; people begin to choose sides on the issue, although the good of the order is still paramount.

At the next level, (3) *competition begins*. Persons have become identified with positions. The main goal is to win rather than to resolve the conflict. Meaningful communication between the sides has come to a halt. If the conflict continues, it (4) *goes system-wide*, spreading to other members of the congregation besides those originally involved. Feelings are viewed as facts; specific issues melt into vague principles and ideology. The situation may get so bad that the parties to the conflict (5) *can't stop fighting*. At this level violence sometimes occurs and legal force is necessary. An outside party may be required to officiate over the dismantling of the organization.

Causes of conflict

James 4:1-3 gets at the root of serious conflict in the church. "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your de-

sires that battle within you?" Unresolved conflict is the result of sin—pride, selfishness, wanting to be right, wanting to have one's own way, unwillingness to change.

This sin manifests itself in various attitudes: "Look out for number one." "I'll forgive you, but I won't forget." "This is my church." "I'll be here long after you're gone."

We need to remember that the church doesn't belong to an individual. It belongs to the congregation and to God. We try to take ownership of something that isn't ours to own. We make issues out of things that aren't issues. We make rules and draw lines that are of our own design and not of the Bible.

Centers of conflict

Because of his position of leadership, the pastor is often at the center of conflict. This will depend in part on whether he has the attitude of a servant leader or of a dictator. The pastor's personality or the personality of his wife can also be a source of difficulty.

Deacons are also a significant source of conflict in The Brethren Church. Sometimes they are thrust

into conflict because others in the church expect them to act. Deacons, however, are not to be the authority in the church. They are to be servants.

Moderators, trustees, organists, choir directors, Sunday school superintendents, in fact, anyone in a position of leadership can be a source of conflict in the church. This usually happens when leaders try to exercise some kind of control rather than serving the church by performing the function to which they were called.

Managing conflict

Every church needs to establish policies on how to deal with conflict and discipline problems when they arise. These policies should spell out what is expected of members of the congregation, what happens to members if they do not meet these expectations, and who will deal with discipline problems and conflict when they arise. There also needs to be a consistency about discipline.

Thankfully, our churches and pastors are dealing much better with conflict now than they did in the past. [†]

General Conference Commentary

By Kenneth Sullivan

THE BRETHREN CHURCH is venturing forth where no Brethren have gone before. The structure of our denomination, at the national level, has undergone a radical change.* We have created a single-board system with the intent of providing singleness of vision and ministry, greater accountability, and better stewardship of resources and ministry opportunities.

It needs to be emphasized that while these changes greatly impact the national level in its work and missions, our district and local structures remain the same and function as they always have.

Our national structure will have

*These comments are in reference to the denominational reorganization proposal implemented by General Conference in August. See page 5 of the September EVANGELIST for an article about the action of Conference and the middle of the June issue for a copy of the proposal itself.

a single Executive Board creating a unified vision for The Brethren Church. There will be two Ministries Councils—a Missionary Ministries Council and a Congregational Ministries Council—charged with implementing this vision in these two areas of concern.

An Executive Director will be employed by the National Office to implement and guide the National Office in the fulfillment of these goals. All other National Office executives and staff and all national ministries will be accountable back through the Executive Board.

It is important to note that the restructuring has been done in such a way as to preserve and protect both past and future giving to the mission work of The Brethren Church. Money invested in the Revolving Fund, designated gifts and giving, as well as all mission fair share ap-

portionments will always go directly to the funding of mission works.

The one change that Conference delegates made to the proposal was the requirement that all district representatives be elected at their respective district conferences.

What is significant about this change is that for the first time every area of national concern has the potential to work in harmony and singleness of direction.

This new structure is more than just business and form. It is about people—having the right people in place, obedient to God, with servants' hearts. Pray that those hired for national positions are godly in character and divinely called to those positions. Pray for those who will be assigned to the search committee to hire the new Executive Director. Pray that they will be open to God's direction and God's choice. [†]

Rev. Sullivan pastors the Milledgeville, Ill., Brethren Church. This article appeared in the September issue of the Milledgeville Church's newsletter and is reprinted here with permission.

Awaiting an explosion of God's power

By Dr. Mike Gleason, Director of Religious Life

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

— Ephesians 3:20-21, NIV

IT WAS SPRINGTIME in the beautiful Kiski Valley of western Pennsylvania. Several volunteers from the Pleasant View Brethren Church had gathered early one Saturday morning for some significant "male bonding."

The task: take out a large tree behind center field of our church baseball diamond. The tools: coffee, donuts, chain saws, axes, chains, and several four-wheel-drive trucks.

The tree was easy; the stump was not. After about two hours of effort the stump would still not budge,

"I believe that the Christian organizations here at AU have helped me to mature in my Christian walk, develop leadership skills, and grow closer to God." — *Cindy, a senior*

even when the best that Ford and Chevy could produce were chained to its base and pulled together. At this point the male bonding was not quite as meaningful as we thought it would be.

Then came Jamie, about three hours late, a cup of coffee in hand, driving a truck full of explosives that were bouncing around in the cargo area behind him. "Don't worry," he would often reassure his passengers, "they can't go off without a blasting cap." Most of us were not greatly comforted by this information.

Several very tired men greeted Jamie, who requested a try at the stump. He buried a wad of plastic explosives, with, of course, a blasting cap, under the tree's base, stretched a wire just about to home plate, and hit the plunger. A very stubborn stump immediately took its first flight into space. What the combined efforts of man and Detroit's finest machines had been unable to

accomplish in a couple of hours had been achieved by the dynamite in a moment. Male bonding was at its best as the stump discovered the law of gravity and found its way back to earth, leaving only a large hole.

"The Christian programs at AU have helped me grow spiritually, apply my faith, and share it around campus. All of these things have helped to strengthen my walk."

— *Derek, a junior*

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us . . ." In the Greek original of this verse, the word for "power" is *dunamis*, from which we get our English word dynamite.

All of our best human efforts in Campus Ministry are sadly inadequate to accomplish that for which we yearn. Only God's vast power is able to move in such an explosive way that the very roots of evil are torn out and students by the score are brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. This is indeed the heart of our prayer, that the power of God would explode on the Ashland University campus bringing a revival that is "immeasurable more than all we ask or imagine."

In just a bit I will relate how God worked at a college in the past, so that both your faith and your prayers on our behalf might be strengthened. But first I want to tell about some of the labor that is

"The programs here help me to have a devotional time. They keep me on track and challenge me every week."

— *Bryan, a junior*

being expended in this field of ministry by devoted men and women who are serving in prayerful expectation of the *dunamis* of God.

Joe Maggelet serves as Assistant Director of Religious Life. He raises the majority of his salary as a full-time Navigator staff person

and works in cooperation with our department. He and his volunteer staff have more than 60 students involved in upper level discipleship groups, the greatest number ever committed to this rigorous study. Janie Niswonger, secretary to the Religious Life Department and a part-time seminary student, assists with these discipleship groups.

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes, which Joe advises, has likewise seen strong evidence of the winds of the Spirit in its first four meetings this fall. Joe also coordinates the Critical Concern Series, which brings to the dormitory lobbies discussions and presentations of such issues as sexuality and racism from a distinctively Christian perspective.

In the spring, Nathan Harrison will join our efforts as another self-supporting Navigator staff person. Nathan was strongly disciplined while a student here at Ashland.

Phil Foss, our volunteer Adventure Club advisor, has done an exceptional job of providing rugged

"I think one of the greatest ways that the Christian programs here at Ashland have helped me is that they have challenged my faith and made me think about what I really believe. And not only do they challenge me, but they constantly make me evaluate where I am with the Lord."

— *Heather, a junior*

outdoor experiences for students. Student chaplains provide devotional meditations at the various events, with corresponding Bible studies offered to interested participants. Numerous students without any faith background are attracted to this club.

Dr. Don Rinehart, in his second year as advisor to the Religion Club, has filled a unique niche by providing a group primarily aimed at the Christian student who desires a deeper level of dialogue on issues related to the Christian faith. Interest has been growing!

The first "Meal and More" chapel service this fall was attended by numerous guests and regular attendees, who gathered to worship and hear a devotional meditation by Dr. Lee Solomon. Although not

all speakers are Brethren, Shirley Black and Joan Ronk will be among those bringing messages this year.

The **University Church** has likewise seen advancement in various areas under the leadership of **Dr. Lee Solomon**, assisted by seminary student interns **Karen Robins**, **Kerrie Lehman**, and **Eric Biscoh**, plus a host of student, faculty, and staff volunteers. Services this fall have nearly filled the lower chapel to capacity. Thanks be to God!

A strong movement of God's Spirit was sensed at the initial meetings of **HOPE Fellowship** this fall. Students have also shown a wide interest in HOPE's various ministries (share groups, missions, drama, outreach, intercession, fellowship, worship, and special events). **Jack Miller** is serving a second year as a HOPE graduate intern, and **Jaime Gillespie** is bringing renewed leadership to the Gospel Teams ministry.

At the recent **Fall Convocation** a near-capacity crowd in Memorial Chapel heard an inspirational challenge by President G. William Benz, greetings from Provost Mary Ellen

"The Christian programs at AU have given me a sense of stability, provided the opportunity to learn from role models, and have encouraged me in the struggles of my faith. I am the co-leader of the Missions Team, so when we participate in projects in the community, it really stretches my faith and challenges me to reach out to other people. The overall programs, the leadership, and the members of the Christian groups are extremely supportive." — *Shawn, a junior*

Drushal, and a beautiful selection of sacred music by the university choir. Convocations are also planned for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter.

As one can see, these ministries are well-staffed by devoted men and women who are sacrificially at work in God's field here on the Ashland University campus. I give great thanks to God for each of them and for the numerous hours they willingly share in service. Campus Ministry at Ashland University is strong and is moving forward.

Yet in spite of all this good news,

as I mentioned in my report at General Conference this past August, we deeply desire to see the immeasurable power of God do more than we even ask or imagine on our campus. We desire, with the yearnings

"The way that the programs here at AU have helped me in my Christian walk is to challenge me. The programs are very Christ-centered and biblically-based. I can come to our meetings each week and know that I will be challenged to get to know Christ better in my life. I think that the advisors and leaders in all the programs have really encouraged people to get involved. I am glad I got involved." — *Jodie, a junior*

of our hearts, for an outpouring of His Spirit that will accomplish in a semester what we could not hope to accomplish with a lifetime of labor—conversions numbering a thousand and backsliders soundly restored.

History tells us that the great works of God we desire on our campus are well within His range of power. Consider what happened, for example, nearly 200 years ago when God walked on the campus of Yale College, and you'll see what I mean. Yale had the same problems we have in our culture. Here is an excerpt from a student diary written around 1802:

The college church was almost extinct. Most of the students were skeptical, and rowdies were plenty.

Thank You!

My heartfelt thanks for your support of the Ashland University Campus Ministry accompanies this article, along with my earnest request for your ongoing prayers. To assist in enabling this second request, the Department of Religious Life will be providing a monthly prayer flier in *Leadership Letter* entitled *The Trumpet Call*, which will provide a current listing of prayer requests as well as God's answers to prayer requests previously shared. It is my hope that hundreds within our denomination will join in intercessory prayer that God might do "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine" at Ashland University, so that next year at General Conference my report might be an interlude of praise and adoration!

— *Mike Gleason*

Wine and liquors were kept in many rooms; intemperance, profanity, gambling, and licentiousness were common. I hardly know how I escaped. . . .

Now hear what happened when the Holy Spirit of God was poured out in great power that same year in an excerpt from another student letter describing the event:

Yale college is a little temple: prayer and praise seem to be the delight of the greater part of the students while those who are still unfeeling are awed into respectful silence.

Can you picture that? Of note is the fact that of the 230 students then at Yale, about one-third were powerfully converted, with nearly half the new believers embracing a call to ministry. All of this occurred in a period of less than six months!

Twenty years later Yale experienced another revival of equal proportions, during which an additional 900 persons in the surrounding community of New Haven were also

"I have met people in the Christian groups at AU who have challenged my Christian walk. They are smarter in the scriptures than I am and have taught me what they know. They have shown me what God is about and all that He has to offer us. Through weekly HOPE Fellowship meetings, the speakers, the fellowship, and the praise and worship, I am finding out how others have gotten to be so strong in the Lord and am discovering what God wants to do in me." — *Rachel, a junior*

soundly converted. What a wonderful 1997 Conference statistical report that would be if 900 were added to various Brethren churches, soundly converted through a genuine movement of God's Spirit!

These are only two accounts out of hundreds that illustrate what the *dunamis* of God can accomplish, not only within the context of a university campus, but also within a community such as yours!

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. [†]



Former Mormon to preach in The Brethren Church

West Alexandria, Ohio — Elbert Sorrell, a member of the West Alexandria First Brethren Church, was set apart as a licensed minister on Sunday, June 9, during the worship service. Pastor David Olige conducted the licensing service.

Before becoming a Christian in 1985, Elbert had been a member for six years of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, had spent 1½ years as a Mormon missionary, and was an ordained Mormon elder. He received Christ as his Lord and Savior at special services held at the Sandusky, Ohio, Baptist Temple on September 8, 1985. The following year he surrendered his life to preach God's word.

Since coming to the West Alexandria First Brethren Church in July 1993, Elbert has worked in the church's youth ministry and nursing home ministry, preached on occasion, taught Sunday school classes, and currently serves as a deacon. Last year he reorganized and trained visitation teams for personal evangelism, and he continues to be involved in this work. His wife, Marnita, serves as church secretary and also works in the children's church ministry.

Elbert believes that God is leading him into full-time Christian service, and he is open to a call to the pastorate.

— reported by Audrey Gilbert

North Georgetown Church celebrates completion of sanctuary renovation

North Georgetown, Ohio — Members of the North Georgetown First Brethren Church celebrated the completion of their sanctuary renovation project on Sunday, May 19, with a service dedicating the remodeled sanctuary to the Lord.

The purposes of the project were to increase seating capacity and to beautify the sanctuary. A wall at the back of the sanctuary was removed to enlarge the room, and the platform at the front of the sanctuary was shortened to make space for more seating. In this way the seating capacity was increased by 60. In addition to this work on the inside of the sanctuary, a ramp was

constructed on the east side of the building to make the sanctuary more accessible to the handicapped.

Once the remodeling was done, the redecorating began. New carpet was installed, the pews were padded and upholstered, the walls were painted, and the windows were adorned with new blinds, lace curtains, and swags. A lighted cross was hung at the front of the sanctuary, and new pulpit furniture placed on the platform. Forty padded, stackable chairs were purchased to provide part of the new seating.

Most of the work was donated by members of the congregation, with Wilfred Mercer overseeing the work



A view at the back of the remodeled sanctuary, where the wall was removed, showing upholstered pews and new chairs.

crews. Sandy Marsh lined up workers and also coordinated the selection and purchase of carpet, chairs, and the upholstery for the pews. The project was begun February 7, 1995, and completed March 18, 1996, at a cost of about \$28,000.

Pastor Fred Brandon led the dedication service, and Pete Hill, Deacon Chairman,

offered the dedication prayer. Others participating in the service included Ken and Sandy Marsh, Wanda Powell, Randy Greenawalt, Chris Latham, Sam and Diane Hill, and Dave and Sharon Heestand.

In addition to completing this project, the North Georgetown congregation recently purchased property to the east of the church for extra parking and for possible future expansion. Since 1990 average Sunday morning worship attendance at the church has risen from 65 to approximately 115.

— reported by Diane Hill

In Memory

Jasper "Jap" Price, 76, died September 5 at his home in Tucson, Ariz. Price and his wife, Betty, served from 1979 to 1987 at Riverside Christian School in Lost Creek, Ky., where Jasper did maintenance work for the school. He had been a member successively of the North Liberty (Ind.) First, Papago Park (Tempe, Ariz.) (where he was also a deacon), and Tucson First Brethren Churches. A memorial service was held at the Tucson Church of the Brethren, where he had been a member the past several years, with Rev. William Curtis, pastor of the Tucson First Brethren Church, giving the message. He is survived by his wife and their five children. Memorial contributions may be made to Riverside School.



Briefly Noted



Joan Ronk was recognized for 25 years of service to Ashland University during an all-institutional meeting at the beginning of the school year. She was presented an Ashland University wristwatch and a certificate of recognition and appreciation for her "conscientious, loyal, and faithful service" to the university. Mrs. Ronk began working at Ashland College as secretary to the dean. In the years that followed, she served as secretary (later administrative assistant) to various vice-presidents, and she currently serves as researcher/writer for the university. Mrs. Ronk is also editor of the *Women's Outlook Newsletter*, which is included every other month in the EVANGELIST.

An "exciting and uplifting" Homecoming was held August 24-25 at the **Vinco Brethren Church** in Mineral Point, Pa., according to corresponding secretary Ethel Cobaugh. The observance began with lunch on Saturday, followed by a hymn-sing—with messages by former pastor Rev. Jim Tomb and former member Rev. Bill Walk—and continued with a campfire in the evening for "youth" of all ages. Events on Sunday included the worship service, with a message by former pastor Rev. C. William Cole and remarks by former pastor Rev. Woody Brant; a carry-in dinner with 175 in attendance; and an evening service at which Rev. Brant spoke. Large crowds, including former members and friends from several states, attended the various events. Rev. Jerry Fike pastors the Vinco congregation.

Linwood Brethren celebrate 100 years of Sunday school in the Linwood community

Linwood, Md. — A celebration marking the 100th anniversary of Sunday school in the Linwood community was held Sunday, July 21, by the Linwood Brethren Church.

The centennial celebration began at 4:00 p.m. with an old-fashioned baptism in Little Pipe Creek, where Rachael Schuster, Bruce Wilkinson, and Jack Linott were baptized by Scott Robertson, assistant pastor of the Linwood Church. Following the baptism, a parade—featuring an antique car and led by trumpeter Paul Albaugh III followed by a rhythm band of Sunday school children—wound its way through the village of Linwood. A wagon pulled by a team of mules carried those unable to hike the parade route.

The parade made two stops, first at the Linwood Trading Company,



Linwood Assistant Pastor Scott Robertson baptizes Rachael Schuster in Little Pipe Creek.



Linwood Pastor Bob Keplinger leads a wagonload of people to Little Pipe Creek for an old-fashioned baptism.

which was formerly a lumberyard where the Sunday school was founded and met for its first two years. The second stop was at an old schoolhouse next to the Linwood Church building, where the Sunday school met prior to becoming a part of the Linwood Church. At each stop, Linwood Pastor Bob Keplinger gave a little of the history of the Sunday school.

The parade concluded at the Linwood Church, where the celebration culminated in the annual Sunday school picnic of the Linwood congregation.

The Linwood Union Sunday School was founded on November 19, 1896. It was an ecumenical school, where Quakers, Methodists, Lutherans, Roman Catholics, and Episcopalians all came together in a spirit of brotherhood. The Union Sunday School continued until 1918, when it merged with the Linwood Brethren Church, which was founded in 1905.

Coming Events

October 26 — National Concert of Prayer.

Thousands of Christians across America will join together to pray for spiritual awakening in America, and especially for the youth of our nation. Concerts of prayer will be held in many cities and churches. If a concert is held in your area, plan to attend. If no concert is planned in your locale, spend time that Saturday evening praying with a group of friends or alone, knowing that thousands of others are praying as well.

October 27 — Andrew Sunday. This is a day to invite a friend to church. See page 14 of the September EVANGELIST for more information about this special outreach opportunity.



In Memory

Former Brethren pastor **Rev. Bruce Carl Shanholtz**, 83, died August 21 at his home in Hagerstown, Maryland.

Born March 15, 1913, in Levels, W. Va., he was ordained in 1943 at Wiley Ford Church of the Brethren. He pastored three Brethren congregations, the Johnstown, Pa., Second Brethren Church (c. 1953-54), the Linwood, Md., Brethren Church (c. 1955-60), and the Cumberland, Md., First Brethren Church (c. 1969-74). He held various offices in the Southeastern District and served two terms on the General Conference Executive Committee.

He is survived by his wife, Thelma Cowgill Shanholtz, whom he married on December 24, 1935; by a daughter, N. Lois Curry of Melbourne, Fla.; a son, Kenneth L. Shanholtz, Sr., of Maugansville, Md.; five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Services were held August 24, at the Hagerstown, Md., First Brethren Church, where Rev. Shanholtz had been a longtime member, with Pastor John Mills officiating.

Central District seeks God's direction with Concert of Prayer and Worship

Waterloo, Iowa — A Concert of Prayer and Worship on the opening evening of the Central District Conference—held July 12-13 at the Hammond Avenue Brethren Church in Waterloo—set the spiritual tone not only for the conference but also for the district in the year ahead.

The time of concerted prayer was held at the request of the Central District Mission Board, which is seeking the Lord's direction regarding church planting in the district. It is the desire of the board that the district move forward with a unified expectation in the Spirit, and the Concert of Prayer was a time of submission before the Lord so that He might show the steps He has prepared for the district to take.

The conference had opened earlier that evening with a banquet. Following the meal, Rev. G. Emery Hurd, pastor of the Cheyenne, Wyo., Brethren Church, spoke about the General Conference to be held in the year 2000 in Estes Park, Colorado, and gave a beautiful slide presentation showing the area and the facilities where the Conference will be held. Then, prior to the Concert of Prayer, Eric Schave, who has been gathering logistical information on several communities in northern Illinois as possible church-planting

locations, presented his results and answered questions.

On Saturday morning, Moderator Gary Turner opened the business portion of the Conference and conducted the morning business session. Business included recommendations from Moderator-Elect Ellis Boughton, election of officers, accepting of reports, and an update on the Hammond Avenue Brethren Church by Pastor Ron Waters.

Following lunch, prepared by the ladies of the host church, the business session continued. Business included passing the district budget and resolutions; reports from The Brethren Church National Office, the national Missionary Board, and Ashland University and Theological Seminary; and installation of officers.

Next year's conference will be held July 11-12 at the Cerro Gordo, Ill., Brethren Church. Officers for the year ahead are Ellis Boughton—moderator; Kim Millhouse—moderator-elect; Doris Geisz—secretary; Virginia Hutchison—assistant secretary; Sue Michael—treasurer; and Marti Deets—assistant treasurer.

— reported by Moderator Ellis Boughton



Shipshewana, Ind. — Senior Brethren in the Indiana District enjoyed a blessed time of worship, Bible study, fellowship, fun, and games (especially Skip-Bo!) at the annual Golden Age Retreat held August 26-29 at the Brethren Retreat Center. Special guests were Rev. David and Jenny Loi, Brethren missionaries from Malaysia. Also attending was Rev. Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church, who led a missions seminar. Golden Agers are invited to attend next year's retreat (August 25-28, 1997) for four days of inspiration and fun, and other districts are encouraged to plan their own Golden Age retreats.

— reported by Dolly Zerbe, secretary

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Vol. 118, No. 10

A newsletter for Brethren people

November 1996

Jaime Gillespie presents an overview of:

Fifty years of Brethren Youth*

IN 1940 three young men—Gilbert Dodds, Woodrow Brant, and Archie Martin—had a dream. They dreamed of starting an organization to unite Brethren youth around the world, with the focus of the organization being Christ Jesus. They dreamed of a conference specifically designed for the youth of The Brethren Church. Little could they have known at that time how their dream would blossom over the next 56 years.

In 1941 the Brethren Youth organization was formed. At first it struggled, having to replace the interdenominational youth organization Christian Endeavor, which had been in place in The Brethren Church for 40 years.

Official recognition

During the next five years, through prayer, hard work, and determination, the Brethren Youth program picked up speed. The first Brethren Youth Conference was held in 1946 at Ashland College, with Gil Dodds

... serving as Conference director. At this Conference, the Brethren Youth organization finally gained formal recognition by the church, and a Youth Board was created. This Conference, held 50 years ago this past August, was the beginning of what would become a half century of joy, tears, fun, and fellowship—50 years of memories that will forever fill the hearts and minds of all those whose lives were touched by Brethren Youth.

The first year after the 1946 Youth Conference proved difficult and frustrating. The newly formed Youth Board had been given few guidelines, little power, and no financial support. But even though the youth program struggled that year, the youth never lost faith.



Charles Munson Called
to be
First National Director
of
Brethren Youth

An announcement that appeared in the March 6, 1948, issue of the *THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST*.

about our present situation. Brother Munson's speech, "You Can't See the Sun When You're Crying," is as relevant today as it was 49 years ago.

We have been crying, a lot of us, but don't you see it's not in what we do not have, but in the way we use what we have. . . . Weeping will never help us to see the sun.

next page

*This is the script of a video that was shown at General Conference as part of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Brethren Youth. Jaime Gillespie, who produced the video, is a member of the Vinco Brethren Church (Mineral Point, Pa.), a sophomore at Ashland University, and a member of the Brethren Youth In Christ (BYIC) Steering Committee.

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The Women's Outlook Newsletter is in the center of this issue.

Brethren Youth Conference

Ashland College, Ashland, Ohio, Aug. 19-25

... a wonderful week, with wonderful young people

- ☆ RECREATION ☆ SPECIAL MUSIC
- ☆ CAMPFIRE MEETINGS
- ☆ SPEAKERS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
- ☆ BIBLE STUDY

Room and Board for Conference Period \$11.00

Send Registration with \$1.00 to:

A. Glenn Carpenter, Ashland College, Ashland, Ohio



GIL DODDS
Youth Conference Director



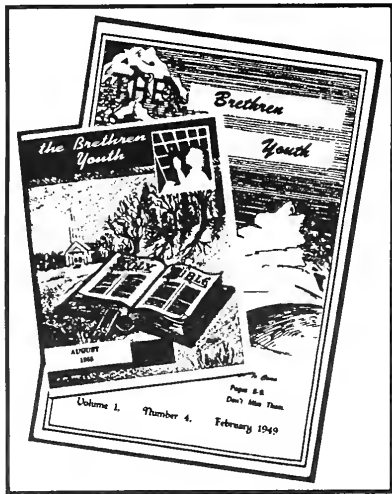
GILVIN EVANS
Faith Evangelist Foundation



RUTH CLAPPER
Brethren Youth Sister

An announcement of the first Brethren Youth Conference, held August 19-25, 1946.

In a speech to the Ohio District Conference in June of 1947, Charles Munson summed up the attitude of the youth—that we will never have any progress as long as we cry



February 1949 (behind) and August 1955 issues of The Brethren Youth magazine. The publication, which has undergone many changes in format over the past 48 years, is now called The Morning Star.

At the next General Conference, the youth did make use of their talents by providing special music for the adult Conference. This exposure, plus the successful youth Conference held that year, helped Brethren Youth forge out a name for themselves within The Brethren Church. After this, the youth gained financial and spiritual support from the adults. Also at this Conference, the fourth Sunday in May was established as Youth Day.

First national director

The youth movement began to grow. It sparked so much enthusiasm and excitement among the youth that the Youth Board could no longer provide the leadership needed to run the organization successfully. So in March 1948 the National Board of Brethren Youth announced the calling of Charles Munson to be the first National Director of Brethren Youth.

Under Brother Munson's leader-

ship, the Youth program flourished. In November 1948 *The Brethren Youth* magazine was begun. This magazine, though it has undergone many changes since then, continues today as *The Morning Star*.

Local youth groups began to grow. Youth teams were formed and sent out during the summer to work at various churches and camps. This program has likewise survived the years, adapting to fit the needs of the times. It became known as the Summer Crusader program and presently is called the Summer Ministries program. National Youth Conference became an annual event, which young people throughout the denomination looked forward to. The Brethren Youth organization was well on its way.

In 1951 the Brethren Youth organization became known as Brethren Youth Crusaders (BYC), a name that stuck until 1990. By 1953, when



Clarence Stogsdill

Clarence Stogsdill replaced Charles Munson as National Youth Director, Brethren Youth had become an integral and uplifting part of the struggling Brethren Church. EVANGELIST Editor St. Clair Benschhoff wrote in 1953:

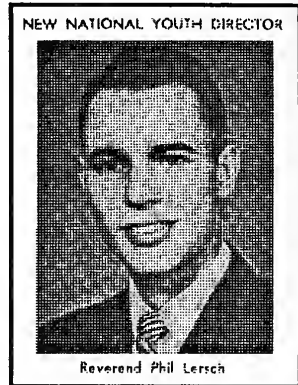
No one can doubt, in the least, the worthiness and the value of Brethren Youth. . . . The record of amazing projects, of increased youth attendances at our Conferences, and the dedication of youth to Christian service, speaks for itself.

We see, in 1953, in Brethren Youth, an organization that has proved it-

self in the Brethren Church. From a humble beginning 8 years ago, it has come today to a status of achievement which speaks well for the faith, vision and purpose of its founders and workers.

Brethren Youth in 1953, in service, encouragements and accomplishments, is giving more to the Brethren Church than it is getting from it.

In 1956 Phil Lersch took over the reins of the Brethren Youth program, and for the next four years he continued the tradition of excellence started by the founders. By 1960 the Brethren Youth

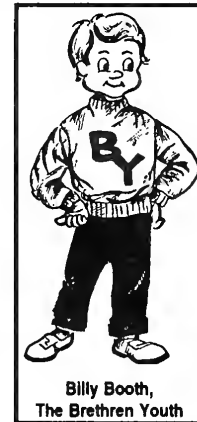


Reverend Phil Lersch

program had expanded to include youth rallies, retreats, the Brethren Youth magazine, district and national youth conferences, Life Work Recruits, Summer Crusaders, and the Ambassador Quartet.

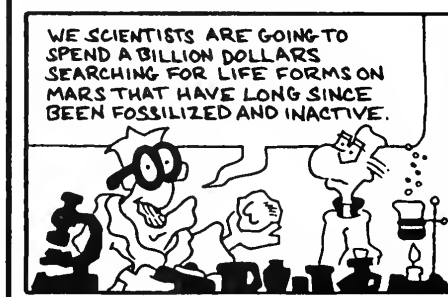
In 1960 a new name, "Billy Booth of Brethren Youth" — otherwise known as National Brethren Youth Director Marlin McCann—became associated with the organization.* Under

*Editor's note: The character "Billy Booth, The Brethren Youth" was actually introduced in 1956. Marlin McCann became National Youth Director in 1960.



Billy Booth, The Brethren Youth

Pontius' Puddle



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Martin McCann
New Brethren Youth Director

Brother McCann's leadership, with the help of secretary Beverly Summy, who later became director, the youth program continued its

rapid growth and progress. Summer Crusader teams were sent to Lost Creek, Ky., and the Brethren's Home in Flora, Ind., as well as to churches and camps across the country. The first all-girls' music team was sent out and the Ambassador Quartet continued.

In 1966 the Brethren Youth Board and the Sunday School Board merged to form the Board of Christian Education. Then in 1967, Fred Burkey began eleven years of service as the Director of Christian Education. In the following years, a new constitution and by-laws were written and accepted. An extensive Summer Crusader program was developed, which included music, camp, vacation Bible school, missions, and Bible ministries teams. A musical—*Discovery*—was produced and performed at the Youth Conference. In 1970 a National BYC Council was formed to increase organizational strength and communication. Council today continues to link the districts and make decisions for the Brethren Youth.

In 1976 a new Brethren Youth logo (see next column) was created, which symbolized the new thrust for the young people and their national organization. This logo characterized the boldness, growth, and unity generated by the Brethren Youth at that time.

Throughout the remainder of the 70s and the 80s, under the leadership of Charlie Beekley, the Brethren

Youth program continued to thrive. Summer Crusaders were sent all over the country. The Brethren Youth Convention became an annual highlight for youth. With memories of "The Big Red Ball," Bible quizzes, and "Anything Goes," youth who attended would not soon forget these conventions.

In 1990 the Brethren Youth program once again underwent major changes. With the merger of the various boards into one denominational organization, responsibility for the youth ministry came under the leadership of Ron Waters, the Director of Brethren Church Ministries. The name of the youth program was changed from Brethren



Past and present Brethren Youth logos.

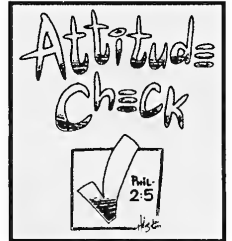
Youth Crusaders (BYC) to Brethren Youth In Christ (BYIC). And instead of electing national officers, as in the past, the youth began choosing seven BYIC members to form a national BYIC Steering Committee. This committee took on more responsibility for the planning and programming of youth activities. A new Covenant was written, and the old Constitution was discarded in favor of a Statement of Structure.

The new design of the youth program allowed for more fellowship time at Convention, as Steering Committee and Council took over most of the business matters. Conventions now included concerts by well-known Christian artist, exciting praise and worship serves, and more time to spend sharing with friends or one-on-one with God.

As The Brethren Church experienced more change in the early 90s, the youth program once again shone through the confusion. Registration numbers increased every year, ingathering skyrocketed to the point that the youth could give money back to the adults, and those who had been leaders in the youth began to prove themselves as leaders in the church as a whole. These people became important figures on the mission fields and as pastors, youth leaders, and Christian business men and women.

The Summer Crusader program had to be adapted to fit the needs of young people and the churches. Becoming the Summer Ministries program, it now includes District Crusaders, Missions Teams, and Young Adult Ministry Interns. The Brethren Youth program, as it always has, continues today to train young people to do the Lord's work.

The past 50 years of Brethren Youth have proved that in order to have a strong church tomorrow, there must be a strong youth program today. The years have shown us how much the youth can accomplish—with the right attitude. As Brother Munson said in his speech 50 years ago:



There is a bright future for our church, but it depends on our attitude now. . . . Brethren Youth challenges us to manifest a hope and a courage and a faith in our own church. [†]

Copies of the Brethren Youth video that was shown at Conference will soon be available for purchase. Price and order information will be announced later.



Throughout the 50-year history of Brethren Youth, the Summer Crusader/Summer Ministries program has been an important part of both Brethren Youth and The Brethren Church. Some of the hundreds of Crusader alumni are shown in this picture, taken at the 1979 General Conference.

More Than Gold in Tracy, Calif.

By Reilly R. Smith

MORE THAN GOLD is an outreach program that was developed by Sports Outreach America for use at the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta. It was designed to be a powerful, easy-to-use program that Christians could use in their evangelism efforts at the Olympics and that local churches across the United States could use to reach out to their communities.

Several pieces of literature were used to assist in the process. One of these, *An Interactive Pocket Guide* (Dime Publishers), described each of the Olympic events and the leading competitors in that event, and provided a place to record the actual medalists. The *Guide* also included a presentation of the gospel in the middle of the booklet.

The International Bible Society developed a tract, *More Than Gold*, that included the testimonies of the best Christian athletes in the world. The Society also developed a special *More Than Gold* edition of the *New International Version* of the New Testament. Olympic evangelists used *Sports Spectrum* Christian magazine, too.

Outreach through sports

When Rev. Archie Nevins, pastor of the West Valley Brethren Life Church in Tracy, California,* saw the material for *More Than Gold*, he knew it would be useful in his work. As part of the outreach strategy for planting the West Valley Church, Pastor Nevins works with the City of Tracy recreation commission. He and leaders from his congregation directed flag football, basketball, and other athletic programs for children, youth, and adults during the 1995-96 school year. Pastor Nevins planned to use a summer Olympics as part of the summer program. *More Than Gold* dovetailed beautifully into that plan.

Pastor Nevins preached a special series of sermons that started about

*Tracy is located about 60 miles directly east of San Francisco. It is the third fastest-growing area in the State of California.

six weeks before the **T r a c y** Olympics and that continued for about six weeks after the event. The series tied principles of sportsmanship to the fruit of the Spirit. His messages spoke of winning, building teamwork, playing with passion, etc. Pastor Nevins worked towards helping people to see, desire, and acquire the necessary skills to begin living victoriously and to win the final race.



Pastor Archie Nevins

West Valley members distributed over 25,000 pieces of *More Than*

Gold literature in Tracy. They sent them by direct mail to their prospect list from last year's mass media outreach event, and they passed out brochures and fliers at the Tracy Bean Festival. They also handed out a *More Than Gold* tract and *Sports Spectrum* magazine to every athlete who participated in the Tracy Olympics, and to many of the spectators as well. They even went door-to-door in their neighborhoods handing out literature.

Creating interest

In addition, Pastor Nevins sent news releases to newspapers and to radio and television stations. He was also interviewed by a television newscaster. The West Valley Church purchased newspaper ads, too. Olympic news created enormous interest in the church. As a result, West Valley Brethren Life Church received new visitors every week from the beginning of the outreach.

Seven local sponsors paid for the entire event, so that the West Valley Church would not be burdened

A New Era of Church Planting

IN SEPTEMBER, Brethren Missions entered a new era of church planting (starting new churches). With the assistance of Dynamic Church Planting International of San Diego, Calif., we are creating a new paradigm for planting churches. Rev Paul Becker, president of the organization, will serve as our chief consultant.

Over the next five years, Dynamic Church Planting (DCPI) will help us create an atmosphere for church planting through conferences, consultations, and regional forums. DCPI will also help us:

- recruit, assess, train, and mentor church planters;
- develop a network of trained mentors;
- recruit, train, and encourage churches to *mother* new congregations;
- identify and train a director of church planting for Brethren Missions;
- plant ten new, reproducing, Brethren churches.

Dynamic Church Planting Inter-

national is a team of experienced church planters, mentors, and specialists. The team has had *hands on* experience in church planting and church ministry. Each team member has a heart for church-planting leaders and reflects our values of Christ-centered Bible teaching, compassion, reproductive training, cooperation, evangelism and discipleship, multiplication, and loyalty.



Rev. Paul Becker

Paul Becker has planted four churches. He also directed a regional association in planting 16 additional new churches—in four years. He joined the staff of Church Dynamics (part of Campus Crusade) and founded the church planting division. This division later became the separate entity: Dynamic Church Planting International. Paul also wrote the manual, *Dynamic Church Planting: A Complete Handbook*, which we will use for planting churches.

[†]

with this expense. The Brethren churches in Manteca and Stockton were two of the sponsors. Four other Christian-run businesses, three with Brethren connections, also contributed. The seventh sponsor was Ritz Camera, part of a national chain. Thank God for the sponsors and their commitment to the people of Tracy.

The Tracy Olympics included children's track and field events, volleyball, and flag football. In addition to the competition, each event featured a Christian testimony. Most events also included devotional times, which were conducted at half-time, between games, or at some other convenient stopping point.

Awards were presented and closing ceremonies were conducted at a wrap-up brunch, which was held during worship time on a Sunday morning. When the special speaker failed to attend, Pastor Nevins pinch hit for him. The West Valley Church gave special Bibles from the American Bible Society to ten of the athletes who attended this event.

A second wrap-up was also held, with Darin Jordan of the San Francisco 49ers as the speaker. Jordan brought an autographed team ball to this wrap-up, which was given to one of the lucky visitors.

Seeing results

Pastor Nevins reports that more than 400 athletes and spectators participated in the Tracy Olympics. The congregation was a little disappointed that this number was not greater, but they are rejoicing in the number of visitors who have attended the church (at least one family every week since July). The visitors have all said that it was the Olympic materials that drew them to West Valley Brethren Life Church.

Two families have joined the church because of the Olympics, and three more families are considering joining. In addition, one man received Christ at the end of the Olympics!

Both the City of Tracy and West Valley Brethren Life Church want to hold an Olympics again next summer. Praise God! [†]

Rev. Smith serves as director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church.



I AM Pastor Thomas John (T.J.) McLaughlin. This is my wife, Judy, and our two daughters, Traci (r.) and Tricia. We are new church planters in the Pennsylvania District. I say *we* because the entire family is involved in this ministry.

Following three years at Ashland Theological Seminary, I graduated this past May with a Master of Divinity degree. After much soul-searching and intense prayer, I resigned as co-pastor of the Fremont, Ohio, Brethren Church. It was not an easy decision, but a necessary one. It meant leaving behind a church family that we loved dearly and also our partners in ministry, Ed and Marcia Miller. Then we moved back to Pennsylvania to accept a new call—starting a new Brethren church in Cranberry Township (located in western Pennsylvania, about 15 miles north of Pittsburgh).

Let me take a moment to tell you about our ministry for the next year. The first part of our journey will be to share our vision with as many Brethren churches as possible. We are focusing primarily on churches in the Pennsylvania District. We are assembling a team of prayer and financial supporters to join with us in the ministry at Cranberry. The response thus far has been encouraging.

We will spend the next year building the core of this new church. We intend for the core group to be made up mostly of new believers. We hope to have many opportunities to lead people to Christ. We are also aware of several Brethren people in the area. Two families are currently

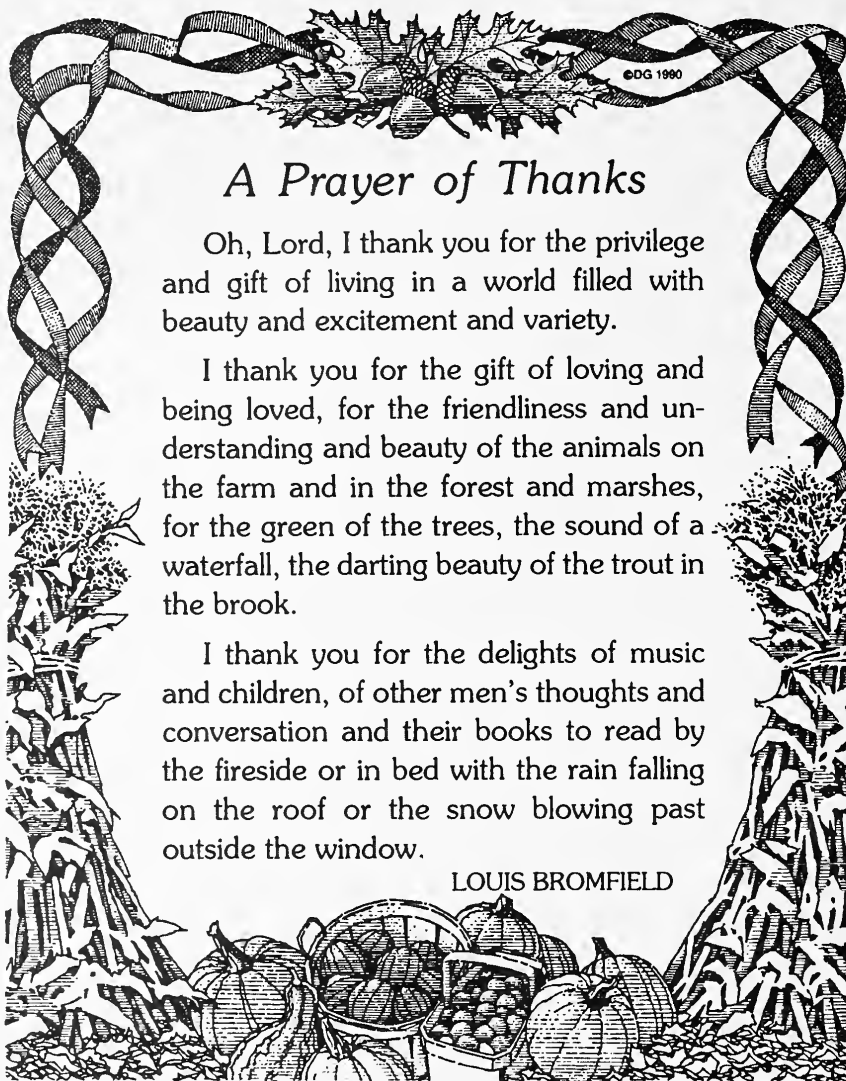
praying about coming on board with the ministry. *Praise God!*

We will launch the new church with our first public worship service after the core is developed—sometime after September 1997. In the meantime, our greatest need is to find workers who will be involved in starting this new church. The next great need will be to identify and train leaders for the new church.

After a very busy summer, Judy, the girls, and I are finally getting settled in Cranberry. I spent the month of September studying the socio-economic groups living in this area. I am trying to identify their wants and needs.

The main thrust of our ministry in the Cranberry area will be in *reaching the lost*. Our demographic studies indicated that 35 to 40 percent of the population of this area do not have any faith involvement. But after living in the area for the past three months, I believe that the percentage is even higher. I estimate that there are 15,000 people living within a five-mile radius of where we live who are not involved in a church. God has given us a tremendous opportunity to share His love by starting a new Brethren church.

I know no greater joy than sharing Jesus Christ with nonbelievers. Brethren Missions is committed to making disciples of Jesus Christ in the United States and around the world. Starting new churches is one very effective way to do it. You can become part of the team by supporting or becoming involved in this ministry. Why not ask God what you should do? [†]



A Prayer of Thanks

Oh, Lord, I thank you for the privilege and gift of living in a world filled with beauty and excitement and variety.

I thank you for the gift of loving and being loved, for the friendliness and understanding and beauty of the animals on the farm and in the forest and marshes, for the green of the trees, the sound of a waterfall, the darting beauty of the trout in the brook.

I thank you for the delights of music and children, of other men's thoughts and conversation and their books to read by the fireside or in bed with the rain falling on the roof or the snow blowing past outside the window.

LOUIS BROMFIELD

An unusual opportunity for Christian service

Opportunities for full-time Christian service come in many forms, not just the traditional ones—pastor, missionary, Christian teacher, or denominational worker.

One such opportunity is now available at the Brethren Retreat Center in Shipshewana, Ind. It's for a food service director.

The Brethren Retreat Center is a year-round ministry that serves nearly 2,500 guests a year, including six summer camps, Indiana District Conference, the Golden Age Retreat, and many other retreats and gatherings. Providing meals for these groups is an indispensable part of the ministry of the Center.

The position of food service director requires a people-oriented person with culinary arts training and experience, administrative experience, and supervisory skills. Responsibilities include menu-planning, food-preparation, purchasing, maintaining sanitation routines, and presenting ways of improving the food service.

A full-time, year-round person is preferred, but the Center would be willing to consider an individual who would assist on a short-term basis (January-March). If you believe that God might be calling you to this kind of ministry, call the Retreat Center Director, Rick Miller, at 219-768-4519 for more information about this full-time Christian service opportunity.

New
video
tells
story



of Brethren beginnings

By Water and the Word (The Birth of the Brethren) is a new video produced by the Church of the Brethren that should find wide use in The Brethren Church.

The 25-minute video recounts the birth of the Brethren movement in Europe in the early 1700s. It portrays how early members sought a vibrant spirituality and a visible community of Christ's followers.

Views of historic Brethren sites in Europe, colored drawings, re-enactments, comments by Brethren historians (including Dr. Dale Stoffer from our denomination), quotations from Alexander Mack and Alexander Mack, Jr., and a running narration tell the story of the early Brethren. The video is very well done.

Topics covered include Anabaptist and Pietist influences on the Brethren, the religious situation at the time, Alexander Mack and his family, early Brethren baptisms, growth of the Brethren, counting the cost, persecution, the place of women, seeking refuge in the Netherlands, and migrations to America in 1719 and 1729.

The video would be useful in Sunday school classes (junior high through adult), membership and welcome classes, an evening worship service, or for individual viewing. A study guide amplifies some of the points in the video and asks questions to help viewers relate the truths of the video to the church today and to their individual Christian lives.

The video can be purchased for \$19.95 plus postage and handling from the customer service department of the Church of the Brethren offices (1-800-441-3712). Or it can be borrowed from the Brethren Church National Office in Ashland (419-289-1708).

The Women's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society



November-December 1996

Volume 10, Number 2

The President's Pen



Dear Ladies,

The beautiful fall season is going so quickly. It's Thanksgiving and Christmas time and it seems as though I just put away all the decorations! I trust you had a good summer, with some time to rest and relax.

Have you ever felt as though your burdens were more than you could carry? While cleaning out my desk the other day, I found a story I kept from one of the *Daily Bread* booklets. "The story is told of a man shopping in a grocery store. He was followed closely by his small son. The boy was carrying a large basket, and the father was loading it with one item after another. He put in canned goods, sugar, flour, meat, and a variety of vegetables. A customer who was watching began to feel sorry for the struggling youngster. Walking up behind him, she said quietly, "That's a heavy load for a little chap like you to carry, isn't it?" The boy turned to her as if surprised that anyone needed to be told. Then he smiled patiently and said, "Oh, don't worry. My dad knows how much I can carry!"

God is concerned about our frailties. He made us, so He knows our weaknesses. The Lord cares for us when we are overwhelmed by our burdens. When we prayerfully look to Him in our troubles, He will never allow our burdens to become

(continued on page 4)

PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL

Devotions presented by Carolyn Brandon, August 8, 1996

*Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are;
help us to spend them as we should.*

Psalm 90:12, TLB

Dear Father,

Help us not to become discouraged, but to keep on persevering.
Amen.

Our conference theme is "Partners in the Gospel." In our previous devotions, we prayed for the Holy Spirit to fill us with the POWER to fulfill the Great Commission. Without the Holy Spirit in our lives, we will be ineffective witnesses.

Please turn to Deuteronomy 33:25b-27. We read in the blessing Moses gave the people of Israel before his death, ". . . may your strength match the length of your days! There is none like the God of Jerusalem— He descends from the heavens in majestic splendor to help you. The eternal God is your Refuge, And underneath are the everlasting arms."

In verse 12 of the only Psalm that Moses authored (Psalm 90), we read, "Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are; help us to spend them as we should."

We want to be doing God's work as long as we have the strength to do it. God says He will match our strength with the length of our



days. His promises never fail, so let's get busy. We all have neighbors, friends, and family members who are unsaved. Whom do you know who are unsaved, and are you praying for them? What can you and I do about it?

First, we must be women of prayer. We only accomplish as much for God as we spend time in intercessory prayer for that person's soul. We need to be bold, not afraid to give our personal testimony to the lost. What Jesus has done for us and in us has a great impact on a nonbeliever. Write your testimony on paper, read it over and over, get very familiar with it, then share it when the Holy Spirit gives you an opportunity. Leading a soul to Jesus Christ is so rewarding! With the Holy Spirit as our partner, we can make a difference. People need the Lord.

Do we understand our mortal condition? Again in Psalm 90, in verses 3-11, Moses describes living wisely. We need to come to grips with our own mortality and the mortality of others. We must be keenly aware of both sinfulness and God's displeasure over sin. As wise Christians, we know our Creator (Psalm 90:1-2). God is infinite, eternal, and holy. He is a compassionate Creator who does good things for His frail creatures. He wants everyone to hear and respond to His call, as we are partners in the Gospel. Let's not take for granted the time we have left here on this earth. Only when we

(continued on page 3)

NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK

November 24-30, 1996



Thanksgiving Week is also National Bible Week, a designation since 1969. No matter which presidential nominee was elected, he, his Cabinet, and we as citizens need to hearken to the words in 2 Chronicles 7:14: "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

God in heaven is willing to help our nation, but notice what we must do: become humble, pray, seek Him, and turn from evil. The repetition of "and" in the verse adds emphasis. The way to turn from evil is to turn to God, and we do this through daily commitment to Him. Jesus said that we should take up our cross *daily* and follow Him (Luke 9:23).

Encourage your family members and friends to begin a regular conversation with and daily commitment to God. National Bible Week is a good time to begin.

God encourages us to talk with Him, and, for many, Bible reading (God talking to us) and prayer (our talking to God) are companions—they belong together. The following anonymous story was in a spring issue of the newsletter from the Garber Brethren Church.

"Have you ever discovered that you're neglecting someone for whom you should be praying? A Christian woman worked out her solution to this problem. Holding up her left hand, the woman explained: 'When I'm ready to pray, I look at my hand. I notice that my thumb is the finger closest to me. This reminds me to pray for those near me—my family, my friends, my neighbors.' Pointing to her index finger, she added: 'My teachers used to point at us in school. Sometimes the preacher points at us, so

as I come to this finger, I pray for my teachers, the preachers, and others who have been my guides. My middle finger is my largest one. It stands above the others. This brings to mind the rulers of our country, the officials of our city. So I pray for them. The next finger is called the weak finger. When I come to it, I think of the weak, the sick, those who are poor and need help. I ask God to help them.' Coming to her little finger, she concluded: 'Last is my little finger. This stands for me. I finish praying for myself and the things I need.'"

There are many patterns for prayer, and I like this one.

Thanks!

This year's quilt auction at General Conference raised \$1,000 for the new church building in Penang, Malaysia. Special thanks go to the ladies who so diligently quilted during Conference week to get the quilt done. And very special thanks to Tom McConahay, the auctioneer. He makes it fun!

Thanks also to everyone who donated items for the auction—Precious Moments squares from Milledgeville and quilted by the Linwood ladies, and personal items contributed—I really appreciate all of you.

As is usual after Conference, I am very low on quilt squares. Again, here are the guidelines for the squares.

(1) Use all cotton fabric. Please be sure that the *finished* size is at least 8½" with the design less than 8".

(2) Make your designs needlework (embroidery, cross-stitch, applique, pieced, etc.). Do not use fabric paints, etc. The needlework adds to the beauty of the finished projects.

(3) Squares can be sent anytime to me at 9300 S. St. Rt. 3, Muncie, IN 43702.

God bless all of you.

Joan Merrill
Sewing and
World Relief Coordinator

In Memoriam

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. Psalm 116:15

The lives of these sisters in Christ were remembered during the Memorial Service on Tuesday at General Conference:

INDIANA

Corinth	Blanch Easter
Flora	Helen Henry
Huntington	Jenna Mae Paul
South Bend	Mary Porte
	Sylvia Powers
	Edna Taylor
Warsaw	Mabel Schaaf
Mexico	Irene Martin

OHIO

Newark	Eileen Hughes
Williamstown	Eulala Tombaugh

CENTRAL

Cerro Gordo	Georgianna Martin
Hammond Ave.	Wilma Bunn

PENNSYLVANIA

Brush Valley	Edna Hooks
Johnstown III	Mary Blaugh
Masontown	Mae Chepes
Main Street	Anna Walker
	Mary Catherine Witt
	Dorothy Hornig
Vinco	Ora Smith

SOUTHEASTERN

Hagerstown	Edith Cushen
Maurertown	Turzah Kohne
	Margaret Lantz

MIDWEST

Mulvane	Mona Rattley
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At the conclusion of the reading of these names, Linda Immel read the poem "What Heaven Means to Me" by Helen Steiner Rice.

THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

Published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Women's Missionary Society of The Brethren Church.

Mrs. Dorman Ronk, Editor
1325 Coachman Court
Ashland, Ohio 44805

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Women's Outlook Newsletter

District Doings

The No. 9 commitment reads "Evaluate your society's accomplishments and send your report to your district president." These reports are forwarded to me and, in turn, back to you. Here is a selected list of your accomplishments:

Many, many serve meals for service organizations, funerals, election boards, and wedding receptions. Profits are used for diverse purposes.

INDIANA

Church-wide collection of new clothing for redistribution; adopt an older lady in the church; birthday parties for nursing homes; make and sell blankets in school colors; earthly treasures/trash and treasure sales; baby showers for Right to Life and Birthright; donate toiletries to community outreach center; secret sisters from another society; honor an older lady in the church each month; give Christmas and Valentine plates to shut-ins; sponsor sewing days for community centers, nursing homes, and overseas missions; secret prayer sisters within the society.

SOUTHWEST

Use profits from a rummage sale for missions and church needs; sponsor Christmas tea for all ladies of the church.

MIDWEST

Sent 50 Spanish Bibles for Miguel and Sonia Antunez in Lima, Peru, and two cases of vitamins to the Kumars in India; clothing and scholarship money to Riverside Christian School in Kentucky.

SOUTHEAST

Monthly letters to shut-ins, absent members, and anyone who needs encouragement; maintain the prayer chain; make palm crosses; joint picnic with another society; supplied Blessing Closet for Shepherd's Staff; gave a comical fashion show for Mother-Daughter program, "Festival of Fashion," following with devotions based upon God, the first creator of design and fashion; profits from candy-making to Malaysia.

PENNSYLVANIA

Made and sold 100 quarts of mincemeat; quilted several quilts; gave funds for a replacement window in the church; started a Ministry Student Fund for five prospective ministerial students for their books, materials, and other needs; supported Release Time in the public school with money and volunteers; supported pastor with a card shower; provided camp payments for newly-formed youth group; regularly visit nursing homes with refreshments and booties; sponsor an annual Christmas party for women and girls; provided two sewing machines and thread for the girls' orphanage in India; supplies to Allen Baer; clothing to Kentucky.

CENTRAL

Organized, printed, and sold cookbooks; made and sold cherry pies; pack CARE boxes for college students' Valentines; sewed bags for nursing home walkers and wheelchairs; took Sunday school children to nursing homes for singing and visits with the residents; sewed "ugly quilts" for the homeless shelter; revamped monthly meeting with business only quarterly; monthly emphasis is devotional, missions, and an activity to meet either the needs of the women or the needs of the community; placed children's Christian books in town library; sewed lap robes and rolled bandages; distributed Christmas and Easter gifts to shut-ins.

OHIO

Used a sunshine calendar in April; actively participated in Passing on the Promise program; mentored girls; held a bakeless bake sale—distributed an empty envelope and a tea bag, instructed each member to fix herself a cup of tea, rest, pray, then give! made fresh/pressed flower-framed pictures and sent some to home missionaries; sponsored a toy party with toys sent to Lost Creek.

CALIFORNIA

Sponsored World Relief soup lunch and PHILMAPS choir (Philippino Medical Society).

Partners in the Gospel

(continued)

are convinced of the brevity of life will our minds and hearts be turned toward eternal issues. Because life is short, we should value each minute and reach out to win the lost.

This week, restructure your schedule so you can spend more time in prayer with your family. Take time to listen, to play together, to hug, and to say, "I love you." Take time to visit an unsaved neighbor.

"Because life is short, we should value each minute and reach out to win the lost."

Encourage your family to come to grips with these issues as well. Life is short; live it for Jesus; live wisely.

Let us pray:

Dear Heavenly Father,

In Jesus' name I come. I have no power to change anyone. I ask for the Holy Spirit to give me boldness to share my testimony with the unsaved people I meet every day. Keep me humble, keep me honest, and help me to have a deep concern for eternal issues.

If we don't have a testimony, give us one; whatever it takes, let us take up our cross and follow Jesus.

When we meet next year, may we have many conversion reports to share. Oh, God, you are an awesome God; I worship you; I praise you; I honor you. Fill me this day and all of my sisters in Christ, both here and at home, so we can witness to the lost.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Missionary

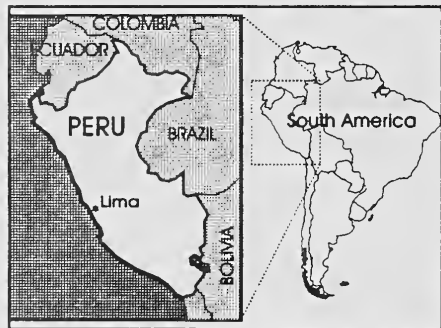
Miscellany

November is Home Missions Month and emphasis is on Doran and Nancy Hostetler at the Riverside Christian School in Lost Creek, Kentucky, and Phil and Jean Lersch in St. Petersburg, Florida. Bonnie Munson was the third member of the Brethren House team and now resides in Goshen, Indiana. Continue your prayers and greeting cards to all of them. They appreciate your encouragement and support.

The December missionary couple is Mark and Chantal Logan, serving in Djibouti. Their birthdays are in December. When you send notes, use your home address, not any church affiliation. They are teaching in a non-Christian country.

National Project

The national project is the purchase of a church site and building for the mission in Lima, Peru, where Miguel and Sonia Antunez and their son, Carlos, minister. The goal for this two-year project is \$25,000.



The President's Pen (continued)

greater than we can carry. He understands how much each of us can take. So, if you have heavy "burdens to bear," take them to the Lord. Psalm 103 tells us that He cares for us.

How is your W.M.S. year going so far? Have you done anything different in your meetings? We talked about doing exciting meetings and making some changes. It would be great to share those things

with other groups. Please write and let me know.

We enjoyed having David and Jenny Loi in the states for their three-month furlough. We saw them often when they were in Ashland, and I hope you had an opportunity to hear them. The work in Malaysia is beginning to grow, and they need our prayers, as well as our financial support.

*My heavenly Father
knows how much I
can carry.*

Our W.M.S. project for last year and again this year is to purchase property in Peru, which will greatly help in the work there. India missions continues to grow with the expansion of the boys' orphanage as well as in other areas. Word from the Ruggleses in Mexico shows that growth is happening there also. You as a W.M.S. member had a part in all of these projects. We need to continue to raise funds for our various projects and continue to pray for the missionaries who labor in the different countries.

I trust you enjoyed Tracy Ruggles's article in the *Devotional Guide* for the August meeting. It was very heart-warming. Pray for our missionaries and write to them. They love to hear from us.

Here's an update on my health problems. I am writing this in September and so far have had three chemo treatments. I had anticipated six, but was told three would be sufficient. Surgery is scheduled for October 15, so when you read this, surgery will be all over. I am trusting in the Lord to keep me strong and have faith that everything will work out as He plans. I am looking forward to having all of our family home for the Christmas holidays.

My sincere thanks to all of you for the beautiful encouragement cards and for all of your prayers. They mean so very much to me.

God Bless You,

Shirley
Shirley

The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

Thanks to all of you who have shared your ideas with all of us this year. We appreciate hearing from you, and your suggestions will be helpful to another.

Use some of these ideas to change an ordinary year into an extraordinary year.

One day when I was driving back to the office, I struggled with the thought of sending a thank-you note to one who had ministered with extra time and TLC to a mutual friend, or should I wait until I see her and personally thank her. During that five-minute ride, the voice on the Moody radio station gave the Bible verse of the week, Proverbs 3:27: "Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act." To me, that was God's affirmation that I should not hesitate any longer. I sent the card, and it arrived on her down day!

I was reminded of the free translation of the proverb, "Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today. You might like it and can do it again!" This applies to our Commitment 10. In many cases, the only thing people need is encouragement.



Thanks for writing
to me. I am
always glad
to receive your notes.

I hope you have a joyous Christmas season. God's Gift to us is why it is joyous! And, of course, if we didn't have His Gift, we wouldn't have Christmas. Keep it holy.

Your friend,

Joan

Joan

P.S. This is 8 days after Shirley's modified mastectomy. She sends a sincere thank you for all your prayers, cards, thoughts, calls, and visits. Every gesture has helped her recovery. Thanks to God for another miracle of healing.

Women's Outlook Newsletter

Standing together in the ashes

By Samuel K. Atchison

IN DECEMBER 1955, Robert Graetz was an idealistic 27-year-old minister, five months into his first pastorate. Like most young pastors, he, his wife, and their two children were adjusting to a new church, a new town, and a new environment.

An unpopular role

But for the Graetz family, there was an additional complication: They were white, their congregation was black, and the town in which they had settled was Montgomery, Ala. Thus was the stage set for Graetz's role as the only white pastor involved in the Montgomery bus boycott.

Considered the dawn of the modern civil rights movement, the year-long boycott by local blacks of the city's segregated public transit system made household names of people like Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph Abernathy, and Rosa Parks. It also served to alienate Graetz and his family from Montgomery's white community.

"I got used to being called a 'nigger lover,'" he said during a recent telephone interview. Little wonder. Arriving in Montgomery in June 1955 as the pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, he enraged many whites by choosing to live in the church's parsonage in the black section of town.

Yet the response of the white citizenry to his choice of residence was nothing compared to their reaction in December of that year when he endorsed the bus boycott—from the pulpit—and began chauffeuring members of his congregation to and from work. His home was bombed twice, as were the homes of King, Abernathy, and others. Several black churches were bombed as well.

Forty years later, in the wake of a series of black church arsons, Graetz says that we still have not solved the basic social issue that paralyzes our nation. What he sees in the bombings is "an expression of racism, not by an organized group, but by a

series of individuals." The fact that most of the fires appear unrelated to each other makes addressing the problem "much harder to deal with, because you're dealing with the underlying layer of racism that really exists within everybody."

In Graetz's opinion, the copycat nature of the arsons means that firebombing is currently in vogue with racists. "It's the thing to do," he says.

Still, Graetz believes that today's arsonists constitute only a small fraction of the white community. The same was true, he says, of Montgomery 40 years ago. Most whites, he says, are not actively involved in racism; they're just not doing anything about it. As a result, the nation is "facing the same kind of inertia among whites now, as we did then."

Such inertia underscores the importance of actions taken recently by the Christian Coalition, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the American Jewish Committee, and the National Council of Churches.* By publicly denouncing the arsons and raising funds to rebuild the burned sanctuaries, these disparate faith communities are presenting a much-needed united front to the secular world.

Building local bridges

Yet, as Graetz suggests, public declarations and fund-raising efforts are important, but constitute only the first step toward racial reconciliation. Ultimately, bridges between the races must be built at the local level.

An article in the June 1996 issue of the *Covenant Companion*, the monthly journal of the Evangelical Covenant Church, provides a case in point. In "Meeting at the Waters," Steve Duin, a member of a Covenant church in Portland, Ore.,

*Also by the National Association of Evangelicals, the National Black Evangelical Association, and World Relief. See the box at the right.

describes a worship service in which two racially disparate congregations in his community come together to celebrate their common faith through the sacrament of baptism.

The baptismal service was the culmination of a relationship that had been established by the pastors of the two churches eight years earlier. In coming together, one of the pastors tells those gathered, "We have a bond that transcends time and transcends distance. . . . We are joining our voices with Christians across the centuries. We are connecting with those who went through John in the river Jordan."

A good place to start

In other words, though their races are different, their faith is the same. Such was the message of Jesus to his disciples. "Love each other," he says in the Gospel of John, "as I have loved you."

As we stand together in the ashes of ruined sanctuaries searching for an answer to the race problem, this kind of love between God's people might be a good place to start. [†]

Mr. Atchison is an ordained minister and has worked as a policy analyst and social worker to the homeless. He currently is a prison chaplain in Trenton, N.J.

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Helping Burned Churches

World Relief of the National Association of Evangelicals is helping two African-American congregations—Gay's Hill Baptist Church near Millen, Ga., and New Outreach Christian Center in Charlotte, N.C.—whose buildings were burned in arson attacks within the past two years.

In cooperation with the National Association of Evangelicals and the National Black Evangelical Association, World Relief is helping these churches rebuild or relocate and is working with them to strengthen their ministries to their communities.

"By walking alongside these two churches as they go through the process of rebuilding their [buildings] and ministry, we demonstrate Christ's love for the body of believers and the unity he desires of us," says Arne Bergstrom, World Relief's Disaster Response Director.

Additional churches may also be helped as funds permit.



Emanuel "Buzz" Sandberg to direct transition process

Ashland, Ohio — In early October Dr. Emanuel "Buzz" Sandberg accepted a call to serve as Director of Transition and Interim Director of Congregational Ministries for The Brethren Church.

In this position he will help implement the organizational structure that was approved at General Conference in August.



Emanuel "Buzz" Sandberg

He brings to this position a wealth of administrative vision and background as well as a love for the Lord. He is a member of the Linwood, Md., Brethren Church, and has attended the University Church since moving to Ashland last year. He is also an Ashland University trustee.

Prior to his retirement in 1987, Sandberg served in various executive level positions in the private and governmental sectors, with specific experience in strategic planning, research and development, and organizational management. From 1984-87 he was president of Heritage Health Systems, Inc., a national health maintenance organization. From 1975-76 he was consultant to the Office of Health Maintenance Organizations of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. He holds a Ph.D. degree from the University of Colorado.

He and his wife, Elizabeth Ann, have 8 children and 11 grandchildren.

Indiana District Missions Fair provides a missions experience

Shipshewana, Ind. — Brethren from the Indiana District trekked to the Brethren Retreat Center on a beautiful August day (Aug. 24) to see, hear, and taste missions at the district's annual Missions Fair.

They got to see missions at the various mission displays. They also had the opportunity to see Brethren missionaries David and Jenny Loi and Allen Baer as well as former missionaries Bob and Bea Bischof and Ray and Marilyn Aspinall, all of whom were special guests at the event.

They got to hear missions in a report from John Howenstine and Jeff Estep of their trip to Juarz, Mexico, this past summer; by listening to David and Jenny Loi, as they told of their work in Malaysia; any by receiving the greetings that Allen Baer brought from the Brethren in Argentina.

They got to taste missions by sampling the ethnic foods provided by several of the district churches,

foods that represented the countries where past and present Brethren missionaries have served. The countries represented included Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Malaysia, Nigeria, and the United States (Home Missions).

Having seen, heard, and tasted missions, the Brethren were challenged, in an inspiring message by Rev. Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church, to keep missions in their hearts and minds. The Brethren even raised some money for missions—more than a \$1,000 in fact—at an auction at the fair. Half of this money was designated for the new church building in Malaysia, and the other half was designated for World Relief.

The Indiana District challenges Brethren in other districts to see, hear, and taste missions at a missions fair of their own.

— reported by Cindy Hanson and Judy Eckerley

Jefferson Church tries something new at recent Communion service

Goshen, Ind. — Several months ago, some of the men from the Jefferson Brethren Church went to a Promise Keepers rally in Indianapolis. While they were there, they saw one of the speakers bring his wife onto the stage and wash her feet. They were so moved by this that they later asked if they could wash their wives' feet at Jefferson's Communion service.

So at the fall Communion service, in addition to providing a footwashing area for men and an area for women, several Sunday school rooms were equipped with basins and water where a married couple could go and wash one another's feet.

Of the 110 people in attendance at the Communion service, approximately half elected to

wash the feet of their spouse. Some parents first took their children to the men's or women's area, then returned and went with their spouse to one of the rooms for couples.

During the testimony time that followed the footwashing service, some very moving testimonies were given. This simple act of washing one another's feet drew husbands and wives closer together and enabled them to take their marriages to a deeper spiritual level. Many of the couples took extra time in the rooms to pray together.

According to Dr. Dan Lawson, pastor of the Jefferson Church, "The Holy Spirit was felt in a powerful way [during the Communion service], and church members are still talking about it."



Missionaries help with redecorating at Newark

Newark, Ohio — When Brethren missionaries Rev. David and Jenny Loi visited the Newark Brethren Church in August, they did more than report on the progress of their mission work in Malaysia. They also helped with the redecorating of the Newark Church building. They were handed paint brushes and spent a long day painting clothes racks and trim in the hall of the building.

With the help of the Loys, the Newark Brethren have nearly completed a major renovation of their church building. The project has included removing the platform in the sanctuary and leveling the floor; taking out the pews and replacing them with new chairs; putting down new carpet throughout the building; installing an air-conditioning unit donated by the Second Brethren Church of Johnstown, Pa.; painting most of the interior of the building; installing a new sound system that includes a wireless microphone and all new speakers; and painting the baptistery, including a mural at the back of the pool



David and Jenny Loi demonstrate their painting skills and their servant hearts.

Thomas E. Sprowls ordained an elder September 29 at service in Medina

Medina, Ohio — Thomas E. Sprowls, Jr., was ordained a Brethren elder and his wife, Deborah, was consecrated as the wife of an elder at a service held Sunday morning, September 29, at the Living HOPE Brethren Church in Medina, where Rev. Sprowls is the pastor.

Approximately 50 people from the Berlin Pa., Brethren Church — Tom and Debbie's home congregation — attended the service, most of them coming on a chartered bus.

Among this number was the Berlin Church Bell Choir, which presented special music at the beginning of the service. A number of visitors also attended from Ashland.

Rev. Bryan Karchner, pastor of the Berlin Church, presented the message for the service and led the ordination ceremony. Rev. David Cooksey, Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church, and

Rev. Dale Stoffer, associate professor of historical theology at Ashland Theological Seminary, assisted with the ceremony. Brethren elders Ronald W. Waters, Robert Holsinger, and Richard Winfield joined them

done by a Christian artist in memory of Eileen Hughes, a faithful member of the church who died this past spring. According to Pastor Stephen Cole, the renovation of the building is designed to serve the church into the 21st century. The congregation plans to celebrate the completion of the project at its Homecoming on November 10.

— reported by Pastor Stephen Cole

for the laying-on-of-hands and prayers for the couple.

Tom's dad, Thomas, Sr., who is moderator of the Berlin congregation, traced some of the events that led to his son's call and ordination. Other participants in the worship service included Diana Combs of Medina, who gave a welcome and announcements; the HOPE Band, which led the times of praise and worship; Martie Sprowls, sister-in-law of Tom and Debbie, who sang; and Jeff Combs, who also sang.



Rev. and Mrs. Thomas Sprowls, Jr., and Luke.

A dinner was served for all in attendance following the service.

Tom was born in Washington, Pa., and grew up in Berlin, where he became a member of the Berlin Brethren Church at an early age. He is a 1983 graduate of Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and from 1983 to 1991 he served as an officer in the U.S. Army. While in the military, he committed himself to the Lord's service, and in 1992 he entered Ashland Theological Seminary, from which he received a Master of Divinity degree in May 1995. In 1994 he was called to serve as the church-planting pastor of a new church in Medina, Ohio, which held its first service in November of that year. This Home Mission congregation currently averages around 40 in attendance.

Like her husband, Debbie grew up in Berlin and in the Berlin Brethren Church. She is a graduate of Penn State University. Tom and Debbie were married December 19, 1992, and they have one child, Luke Thomas, born February 16, 1996.



Centennial celebration planned

The New Paris, Ind., First Brethren Church will celebrate its 100th year of ministry in the New Paris community on Sunday, November 24. Dr. Charles Munson will be the guest speaker for the 10:00 a.m. worship service. A carry-in dinner will follow, with the celebration continuing after the dinner with a musical program by Tab Beachler. All former pastors, members, and friends are invited to come and celebrate with the New Paris congregation.



Do you recognize this man?

If not, let me give you a couple of hints.

He is a Brethren missionary.

He serves in Mexico.

His wife's name is Tracy.

By now you probably know that this is Todd Ruggles.

If you are surprised that you didn't recognize Todd, it's probably because you have never seen him without a mustache and beard (and perhaps not even without glasses). Until recently, even Tracy, had only seen him beardless once, and never without a mustache.

So why the clean-shaven look? Is it because of the heat in Mexico City? No, it's "for the sake of the gospel," to quote the Apostle Paul.

David, a Mexican teenager, kept

Thomas A. Smith ordained June 16 at Muncie First Brethren Church

Muncie, Ind. — Thomas A. Smith was ordained an elder in The Brethren Church and his wife, Paige, was consecrated as the wife of an elder in a service held June 16 at the First Brethren Church of Muncie, where Rev. Smith serves as pastor.

Rev. Gene Eckerley, Indiana District Elder, gave the message for the service. Other Brethren elders participating in the service were David Cooksey, Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church, and pastors Rev. Jim Miller and Rev. Jim Thomas.

Deacon Wayne Smith read the action of the Muncie Church calling

Pastor Smith to ministry. Eugene Bell presented special music, and Darlene Moorehead played the prelude and postlude.

Born July 30, 1950, in Knox, Ind.,

Rev. Smith is a graduate of LaPorte, Ind., High School, attended Ball State University and Bethel Bible College, and is a 1995 graduate of Ashland Theological Seminary (with a Master of Divinity degree).

He was licensed for ministry in the United Brethren Church in 1985. In 1989 he became pastor of the Denver, Ind., First Brethren Church, where he served for two years. While in seminary, he pastored the Albion St. John's Community Bible Church in Albion, Ohio. Following his graduation from seminary, he became pastor of the Muncie First Brethren Church in July 1995.

Mrs. Smith, the former Paige C. Binns, was born in Lansing, Mich. She attended Taylor University in



Elder Tom Smith

asking Todd when he was going to shave off his beard. Todd finally told him, "The day that you finally break down and accept Jesus, I'll shave my beard!" Todd made it clear to David that his conversion had to be sincere—that he couldn't accept Christ just to get Todd to shave his beard or because of the Christian girl he was dating.

Praise the Lord, around the first of July David made a profession of faith in Christ! So off came Todd's beard (and the mustache as well). Aside from this picture, we may never actually see Todd without facial hair, however, for he immediately left his beard grow back.

Perhaps next to be shaved off will be Todd's hair (although he says he's loosing it fast enough as is). Todd told the Mexican young people that if they could succeed in raising attendance at their youth group to 25 before December 31, 1996, he would shave his head.

He's not too worried that they will achieve this goal, for the rules are that the young people have to accept Jesus Christ and attend studies regularly. Even so, Todd says, "They may still achieve that goal. God has a great sense of humor, and He may just do it to make me walk around baldheaded." To which he adds, "I hope so!" We, likewise, hope that after the first of the year, we will have a picture of a baldheaded missionary to print in the EVANGELIST!



Rev. David Cooksey (l.) gives the declaration of authority as an elder to Rev. Tom Smith, as Paige Smith looks on.

Upland, Ind. The Smiths have four children, Jennifer (23), Thomas II (16), Joseph (14), and Elizabeth (8).

A reception in honor of the Smiths was held following the service.

— reported by Moderator Jerry Garrett



In Memory

Former Brethren missionary **Jane King Byler**, 73, died October 16 at the Westminster Asbury Manor in Bradenton, Fla. Jane and her husband, Robert (Rob), who survives her, served as Brethren missionaries in Argentina.

Jane was born December 2, 1922, in St. James, Md., the daughter of Brethren pastoral couple Rev. L.V. and Bessie King. She attended elementary school in New Lebanon, Ohio, and Mexico, Ind., and high school at Cowan High School near Oakville, Ind. She also attended Ashland College, receiving an A.B. degree in 1945.

Married in August 1945, Jane and Rob spent the first two years of their life together in the pastorate of the West Alexandria, Ohio, First Brethren Church. Feeling called to missionary service, they spent a year in preparation, then sailed for Argentina on October 8, 1948. In Argentina, Jane's college majors, Bible and Spanish, as well as her musical abilities on the piano, organ, and accordion proved extremely helpful. The Bylers served in Argentina until 1966.

In addition to her husband, Mrs. Byler is survived by four of their five children: Susan Batle of Madrid, Spain; Stephen of Floyd, Va.; Betsy Blanchard of Canberra, Australia; and Rebecca Abuid of Bradenton, Fla. Another son, David, died in 1973 in a motorcycle accident in Guatemala while en route to South America. Also surviving are four sisters—Mary Pensel of Lake George, N.Y.; Janet Fox of Galena, Ohio (Jane's twin sister, who served as a missionary in Nigeria); Beatrice Bischof of New Paris, Ind. (who also served as a missionary in Nigeria); and Bernice Dersch of Sequim, Wash.—and 10 grandchildren.

Memorial services were held at Westminster Asbury Manor and at

Robert Kettering to head Andrew Center

Elgin, Ill. — Robert D. Kettering has been appointed interim director of The Andrew Center, replacing Paul E. R. Munday, who resigned as director of The Center in September to return to the pastorate.

The Brethren Church is a partner denomination in The Andrew Center and provides free memberships for all Brethren churches that choose to join The Center.

Kettering's appointment is for a 16-month period, through December 1997. His position will combine his prior roles in networking and training for The Center, as well as his responsibilities in New Church Development for the General Board of the Church of the Brethren.

A native of Hershey Pa., Kettering is a graduate of Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, Pa., and of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind. He has served in various church leadership roles in the Church of the Brethren.

Paul Munday, who initiated The Andrew Center and served as its director from its inception in 1994, resigned this position in order to become senior pastor of the Frederick Church of the Brethren in Frederick, Md. This is the largest congregation in the Church of the Brethren, with more than 1,000 members. Many Brethren will remember

Munday as a featured speaker at General Conference in August.

The Andrew Center is a resource center for church vitality. Its purpose is "to multiply the number of persons turning to Jesus Christ by multiplying the number of leaders and congregations spiritually alive and evangelistically effective." The Center offers four types of assistance to local churches:

- **Resourcing** — a smorgasbord of programs and resources for the local church, including people, books, study guides, banners;
- **Consulting** — nationally- and regionally-known authorities for on-sight consultations with member congregations;
- **Training** — high-quality training events at regional locations and affordable prices;
- **Networking** — interaction between churches in similar situations for mutual support and idea-sharing.



Flora, Ind. — Rev. Kenneth Madison was installed as pastor of the Flora First Brethren Church on August 25 during the morning worship service. Rev. Gene Eckerley, Indiana District Elder, officiated at the service. Rev. Madison accepted a call to serve the Flora Church in May of this year, after serving more than six years as a chaplain in the United States Army. Rev. Madison (l.) is shown here with his wife, Donna, and Rev. Eckerley.

In Memory continued

Missionary Village in Bradenton. Memorial donations may be made to Brethren Missionary Ministries, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.

Coming Event

July 12-25, 1997 — Brethren Heritage Tour. A tour of sites of Brethren, Anabaptist, and Pietist significance in Switzerland, France, Germany, and the Netherlands, sponsored by the Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc. Contact Don Durnbaugh, P.O. Box 484, James Creek, PA 16657 (phone/fax 814-658-3222) for brochure and more information.



Briefly Noted



The Mission Board of the Central District believes in the important of putting prayer first as the district prepares to begin efforts in church planting. The Mission Board is sponsoring three prayer events this fall. The first, a day of prayer and fasting, was held October 17. Also planned are a concert of prayer on Sunday, November 17; and a week of prayer, with a printed prayer guide, December 1-7.

Members of the Pleasant Hill, Ohio, First Brethren Church voted September 24 to adopt a proposal from the church's Building Committee for a 2,400 square foot addition to the church building. The addition will include a new entrance and hallway, pastor's study, secretary's office, a multipurpose classroom, restrooms for both men and women, a utility room, and a lift and stairway into the existing foyer of the sanctuary. The congregation decided to have 30 percent of the cost of the project in hand before construction begins. The Building Committee is seeking bids on the project.

The St. James, Md., Brethren Church recently paid off the mortgage on a major building program that was carried out in 1989. The ten-year loan was paid off in 7½ years. The congregation celebrated this accomplishment September 8 (Rally Day) with a mortgage-burning ceremony and a catered dinner for the church family. Not content to rest on their laurels, the St. James Brethren are looking to the future. At a recent business meeting, approval was given for the development of a comprehensive site plan that will enable the church to make the most efficient use of its property in the years ahead.



Ashland University dedicates student center

Ashland, Ohio — "One of the most exciting things that has happened on the Ashland University campus over the course of the last several years," says AU President Dr. G. William Benz, "is the planning and construction of the new Hawkins-Conard Student Center. It is a spectacular addition to the campus, and I am convinced it will serve the needs of our students well for many years to come."

The formal dedication ceremony for this building was held Saturday, October 12, during homecoming weekend at the university. AU President Emeritus Dr. Glenn L. Clayton, who initiated the vision for this building during his administration, offered the prayer of dedication during the ceremony.

The brick and glass building sits in the "point" formed by the convergence of Claremont Avenue and King Road and ties together the various parts of the university campus—the main campus which lies east of King Road; the two athletic buildings to the southwest of the new student center; and the four buildings on the northwest side of Claremont Avenue. A pedestrian bridge across Claremont Avenue provides direct access into the building from that area of the campus.

The 55,000-square-foot, two-story building houses offices for various student services and student organizations, a large bookstore, a computer lab, meeting rooms, an auditorium, several lounges, a mail room, a food bar and dining area, an exercise room, and a recreation center/game room. Many of the inside walls are covered with photographs and mementos from AU's past.

Total cost of the building was \$6.7 million, which includes \$5.5 million for construction, \$830,000 to furnish the interior, and \$372,000 for the new pedestrian bridge.

A little over \$5.2 million has already been raised, from 1,250 donors. Lead donations came from Earl and Betty Hawkins, owners of several area supermarkets, who contributed \$1 million; and from the John and Pearl Conard Foundation, which gave \$500,000. The Kresge Foundation also awarded a challenge grant of \$600,000, which required that the university raise \$1.2 million in matching funds. AU faculty and staff pledged \$240,000 toward the building. AU officials expect the building to be paid off in three years.

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Vol. 118, No. 11

A newsletter for Brethren people

December 1996

Roy Andrews and Ken Hunn turn the spotlight on:

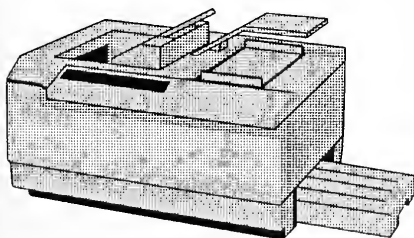
Integrity in the ministry of the church

INTEGRITY is a key issue in today's world. Trust has been eroded by numerous errors in leadership at every level of our society. The church needs to lead the way in the area of integrity. Jesus taught that our "yes" and our "no" should count for something, that we need to be deserving of people's trust. In this regard the local church staff, officers, and all who represent the church should make commitments to integrity in the following areas: copyright laws, financial matters, and moral purity.

Copyright laws

Church offices must be careful not to abuse the copy machine. Most authors are quite willing to allow churches to copy their magazine or newspaper articles or portions of books for limited distribution within a local congregation. But the church should obtain the author's permission before making multiple copies of a particular work.

With the advancement of technology, however, copyright laws no longer cover just the printed word. Copyrights must now be seen as the "owner's" right to be compensated



Because the copy machine makes it so easy to make copies of sheet music, articles, and other publications, it's easy to forget that we may be doing something illegal and unethical.

for any original idea in areas such as music, audio and video cassettes, and computer software.

Many churches now make use of songs and choruses that are not in their hymnals. These are often shared with the congregation by means of an overhead projector, video projector, or printed bulletin insert. In order that song writers, composers, and publishers might be compensated for the use of these songs and choruses, Christian Copyright Licensing, Inc., (CCLI)* was formed. This agency collects fees from local

*Christian Copyright Licensing, Inc., 17201 N.E. Sacramento St., Portland, OR 97230 (phone, 800-234-2446; fax, 503-257-2244).

Why not copy?

1. It's illegal. Copyright laws protect the rights of writers, composers, publishers, recording artists, recording companies, computer software producers, etc.

2. It's unethical. People who make illegal copies may never get caught and prosecuted, but they nevertheless have done something wrong. They have acted unethically.

3. It is unchristian. It violates at least two biblical principles:

a. *Workers deserve their wages* (Luke 10:7). When someone makes an illegal copy of a piece of music, an audio cassette, a video, or a computer program rather than buying a copy, the people (composers, artists, programmers) who produced these things are deprived of their "wages."

b. *Love your neighbor as yourself* (Matt. 22:39). Reproducing the printed or recorded material of others without their permission and without giving them appropriate compensation is not acting in Christian love.

churches based on their size and the number of songs they use, then pays royalties to the various artists, composers, and music publishers whose works have been used.

A similar agency, but one not so well known, is Motion Picture Licensing Corporation (MPLC).^o This agency arranges for the legal showing and lending of videotapes through church libraries. MPLC is also a reasonably-priced service that likewise bases its fees upon church size.

A third area of copyright integrity pertains to computer software. Although many churches lag behind the business world in their use of computer technology, we can be on the cutting edge of computer software ethics. Software is copied and shared with others at an alarming rate, and the church must be informed of such abuses in order to avoid them.

In most cases, software is sold with the understanding that it will be used on only one computer. If this is the case, and a church makes a copy to use on a second computer or to share with someone else, it has

^oMotion Picture Licensing Corporation, 5455 Centinela Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90066 (phone, 800-462-8855; fax, 310-822-4440).

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acted unethically (and illegally). It should be noted that there are myriad software companies in the market, each with its own licensing agreements, so consult your particular software company about its guidelines and conform to them voluntarily and joyfully.

Financial matters

In the area of financial integrity, many safeguards can be built into a system to help reduce the possibility of errors in the handling of the Lord's money.

First, more than one person should be involved in the collection, counting, and disbursement of funds. This insures accountability and minimizes the possibility of one person abusing the trust of the church.

Second, record-keeping and reporting should be regular and thorough. Some reports should be made weekly or monthly, while others need only be done on a quarterly or annual basis. Often times a Finance Committee can help with the above-mentioned areas. The Finance Committee can serve as a pool of volunteers that gives guidance in decision-making as well as providing the human resources for the mechanics of church finance.

A less used church committee that has important accountability and legal value is the Auditing Committee. The role of this committee is to assure legal financial credibility. This committee should be distinct from, but work in conjunction with, the Finance Committee to help develop proper financial systems for the church. After helping with the development of these systems, the Auditing Committee conducts a quarterly audit to attest that the church has maintained financial integrity.

A final thought about financial

integrity: when working with a volume of funds from varying sources over long periods of time, it is inevitable that errors will occur. If the guidelines suggested above are followed, it will be evident that much care and effort is being given to being good stewards of the moneys received, and credibility will be enhanced. When credibility has been established, errors can be handled in a healthy atmosphere without eroding the integrity of the church.

Moral purity

Finally, the most sensitive area of integrity is that of moral purity. While it is a very sensitive and potentially devastating aspect of church ministry, it must not be avoided or pursued as a private issue. Here, as in other areas where integrity is either gained or lost, the key is accountability. Two major areas seem to require the most accountability.

The first is counseling. The relationship between counselor and counselee is especially problematic if certain guidelines are not followed. Those counseling can maintain integrity by following a few time-tested guidelines. (1) Counseling should never be done with a member of the opposite sex unless someone else is on the premises. (2) The number of counseling appointments with a member of the opposite sex and the duration of those appointments should be limited.

Church boards can often help those doing counseling by setting reasonable limits and by holding counselors accountable to those limits. Also, a small but practical step that can be taken is to install windows in all church office and classroom doors. This allows for both confidentiality (the door can

be closed) and accountability (those in the room can still be seen).

A second area of moral integrity is the growing concern over the qualifications of those who work with children and youth in the church. All staff and volunteers should complete an application that inquires about past involvement with sexual molestation and physical abuse. Workers who have had a problem in these areas should be screened from working with children and youth to avoid negligence on the part of the church. These few individuals can serve in other capacities within the total ministry of the church.

"May the Brethren Church be a light of integrity in the darkness of our world so that others might see Christ in us and thus commit their lives to Him!"

Another safeguard is to require that at least two adult workers are always present when working with children or youth. This provides an extra measure of accountability.

Some people may think that these procedures are extreme and that we in the church do not need to be overly concerned about such matters. But the Scriptures remind us that such pride precedes a fall. We all need the grace, love, and accountability of both God and His people in our quest for integrity in ministry. May The Brethren Church be a light of integrity in the darkness of our world so that others might see Christ in us and thus commit their lives to Him! [?]

Mr. Andrews is associate pastor of the Nappanee, Ind., First Brethren Church, and Rev. Hunn is senior pastor of that congregation.

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Pontius' Puddle

ALL I WANT THIS HOLIDAY SEASON IS SOME TIME AWAY FROM THE HASSLE OF WORK RELATIONSHIPS, TO HOLD DOWN THE BICKERING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS, AND TO STAY OUT OF RHUBARBS WHEN THE RELATIVES ARRIVE !!!



SIGH. WE START EACH YEAR HOPING FOR PEACE ON EARTH AND END IT BY SETTLING FOR A CEASE FIRE IN OUR SECTOR.



Love Came Down at Christmas

By Brian H. Moore

The Bible says, "God is love." We also read in the Scriptures that Jesus is Emmanuel, "God with us." If we combine these two truths, we conclude that "Love Came Down at Christmas" (as the title of a Christian musical states it).

Christmas is not the beginning of the greatest love story ever told, but it is one of the greatest chapters in that story. It is not the beginning of the story of God's love for a lost human race, but it is a major turning point in that unfolding drama.

We have heard the Christmas story again and again. Yet the wonder of that story never seems to wear off. Even though we may sigh a bit when we think of all the added activities that go with the Christmas season, we still get excited all over again when we remember that in an utterly unique way, God came to earth to live among us!

The world is hurting. Some say that it is terminally ill. According to some, the people in the world can be clas-

sified into three categories: the oppressed, the oppressors, and the callused who don't care. No matter what our station in life is, *every one of us* needs to hear once (or again) how divine love took human form in order that we could get close to God and begin to pay attention to one another with respect, dignity, and worth.

Since love came down to us at Christmas, I have a Christmas challenge for each of us: let us each make a special effort this Christmas season to reflect God's love to at least one person whom we have ignored, or perhaps even hurt, during the past year.

Christmas is no time for barriers. God broke through to us. Will we make an effort to tear down the barriers that seem to keep getting in the way of our relationships with others? If we meet this challenge, I can guarantee that both you and that other person will have a happier New Year.

Dr. Moore is pastor of the St. James, Md., Brethren Church.



The essential point, as I see it, about Christ's birth is that it was so poor and humble. The Son of God was born into the world, not as a prince, but as a pauper. So, to deck out the legendary scene of this nativity with precious hangings, pictures, glittering lamps, and other ornamentation, is to destroy whatever valid symbolism it might otherwise have. Truly, we human beings have a wonderful faculty for thus snatching fantasy from the jaws of truth.

— Malcom Muggeridge
Jesus Rediscovered

Let us at all costs avoid the temptation to make our Christmas worship a withdrawal from the stress and sorrow of life into a realm of unreal beauty. It was into the real world that Christ came, into the city where there was no room for him, and into a country where Herod, the murderer of innocents, was king.

He comes to us, not to shield us from the harshness of the world but to give us the courage and strength to bear it; not to snatch us away by some miracle from the conflict of life, but to give us peace—his peace—in our hearts, by which we may be calmly steadfast while the conflict rages, and be able to bring to the torn world the healing that is peace.

— William Temple

We need to see afresh the stark humility of God's irreversible decision to become man. We need to see with clear fresh eyes that we live on a visited planet and that by God's choice God and man are irrevocably joined together. Only the Christian faith dares to state that God really became man, that from the time of that event, now nearly two thousand years old, God has identified himself with man. Our values, our treatment of our fellows, our quality of living, indeed our whole attitude towards life and death derive ultimately from what happened in the stable of an inn. That is why with reverent imagination and with humble minds we must year by year look backwards to the first Christmas.

— J.B. Phillips
Backwards to Christmas

Owners—and readers—of the Word

A RECENT SURVEY by Barna Research Group confirmed what many of us already knew: most Americans own a Bible, but a lot of them never read it. The nationwide phone survey of 1,000 adults was commissioned by Tynedale House Publishers in conjunction with its introduction of the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*. The survey found that nine out of ten Americans own a Bible, but nearly half (45 percent) seldom or never actually read it. (I wonder what a survey of 1,000 Brethren across the nation would have revealed?)

Americans clearly value the Bible. Survey respondents named it as the “most influential” book in the course of human history by an overwhelming margin (80 percent). Dr. Spock’s *Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* and Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* were a distant second and third, with five and four percent of the votes respectively. But despite the Bible’s perceived value, only one in five adults turn to it at least once a week, and only one in six adults (17 percent) read it daily.

Why it’s not read

The top three most common reasons for *not* reading the Bible are:

1. Not enough time—59 percent. One wonders if they have time to

watch television and/or read the newspaper. Perhaps it’s a matter of priorities. Besides, it only takes five to ten minutes to read a chapter; most people could find that much time each day.

2. It’s too difficult to understand—40 percent. Nobody said it was going to be easy, but things of value often aren’t. Nevertheless, a contemporary translation can help—which is one of the reasons Tyndale has published the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*. Some other versions that make the Bible more understandable are *Today’s English Version*, *The Living Bible*, and *The Message*. And lots of Bible helps are also available.

3. It’s irrelevant to my life—36 percent. It’s obvious that those who said this have not read and understood the Bible. God’s word deals with the *ultimate issues* of life, both for time and eternity.

What would it take?

When readers and non-readers were asked what would make them *more likely* to turn to the Bible, “personal crisis” topped the list at 62 percent. (And we wonder why God allows misfortune to enter our lives!) Sixty-one percent said “practical ideas for living a better life” might cause them to turn to the Bible. (The

Some suggestions for getting started with daily Bible reading

1. *Decide* to do it. Daily Bible reading begins with an act of the will. Say to yourself (and to God), “This is something I’m going to do.”

2. Set a time to do it (allow at least 10 to 15 minutes). If you don’t put it into your daily schedule, you won’t get around to it. Some people prefer morning, but any time of day is okay. The best time is a time when you are at your best (not when you’re groggy or sleepy).

3. Use a version you can understand. See the main article for some suggestions.

4. Start in the New Testament.

In fact, the Gospel of Luke is a good place to begin, followed by the Book of Acts. Then continue with another Gospel (perhaps John), followed by some of the shorter letters of Paul. Then dip into the Old Testament (one or more of the following—the Psalms, Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Ruth, Proverbs), followed by more of the New Testament.

4. Work your way through a book; don’t jump around. This is the best way to understand the message.

5. Read slowly, thoughtfully, in order to understand what God’s word says, not in order to read so many chapters a day. But try to read *at least* one chapter daily.

6. Ask God to help you understand and live by His word.

How do you read the Bible?

Are you a regular reader of God’s word? If so, you are invited to share your method of doing so with others. Perhaps they can learn from you.

In a few paragraphs, tell about such things as how you got started, when during the day you read, how much time you spend, how many chapters you read a day, your reading method, what version you use, and any Bible-study helps you use. Also share some of the blessings you have received.

Send to Editor, THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805 for possible publication.

Bible is full of such ideas!) Nearly half—48 percent—would read it if they “had more free time.” (Maybe they need to *pay the price* to make that *free time*.) And 46 percent would be more likely if it were written “in a language which was easier to understand.” (Have they checked out any of the new versions?)

What about you?

What about you? If you had been contacted for this survey, how would you have answered these questions? Are you part of the 17 percent who read the Bible daily? If so, praise the Lord! Keep it up.

Are you in the 20 percent who read it at least once a week but not every day? If so, you’ve made a good start, but we “urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more,” as the Apostle Paul said in a somewhat different context (1 Thess. 4:1, *NIV*). Work at finding the time—and the will—to read it every day.

Or are you in the 80 percent who read it less than once a week or even among the 45 percent who read it rarely or never? If so, why? Which of the common reasons for *not* reading the Bible given above would you claim? Or do you have some other answer?

Whatever your *reason*, is it valid? Or is it just an excuse? Maybe you ought to reconsider (*see suggestions at left*). After all, the Bible itself talks about the joy and happiness of those who delight in God’s law (His word), who meditate on it day and night (*see Psalm 1 in some easy-to-read version*). You just might be missing out on a good thing. [†]

— Richard C. Winfield, editor

Walking in the valley of Dr. Death

By Charles W. Colson

Editor's note: Most of us know of Dr. Jack Kevorkian, who has become famous (infamous) for helping people end their lives. But few of us have heard of Cardinal Adam Maida, who is seeking to counteract Kevorkian's deadly work. Cardinal Maida's example reminds us of the good going on around us and challenges us to do more about the evil in our world than just wring our hands.

THERE IS NO PLEASURE walking in the shadow of Dr. Death, whose proficiency with carbon monoxide and lethal chemical compounds has made him the stuff of legend in the news pages. Yet such is the fate of Cardinal Adam Maida, archbishop of Detroit. While Jack Kevorkian has been busy dispatching the despairing, Maida is taking enormous risks to snatch Kevorkian's potential clientele from his fatal ministrations.

Maida's story is unfamiliar to most Americans, save those in the Detroit area, where he is going head-to-head with Kevorkian. This is largely explained by the fact that the nation's premier exterminator has slowly but surely become something of a folk hero, even to the point of being held up as a courageous pioneer—a Meriwether Lewis for the culture of death. One almost forgets the gruesome nature of Kevorkian's one-man mission, which is doing much to bring about the day when "assisted suicide" gives way to full-blown euthanasia.

A story of real courage

All this, by comparison, makes Cardinal Maida's story compelling. His is a story of real courage—the courage to face life's unavoidable pain and tragedy without giving in.

On the very day Kevorkian assisted in the suicide—a.k.a. execution by lethal injection—of his 33rd patient, Maida publicly invited anyone in the Detroit area who was depressed enough to seek the services of either Kevorkian or an abortion clinic to call the archdiocese first. Those who did would not re-

ceive a scolding or a lecture. Instead, the cardinal had promised to do "whatever it takes" to help callers choose life over death.

It is at this point that the cynics will say "Gotcha!" What does the cardinal plan to do, for example, when a terminally ill pregnant woman rings up? Quite simply, he will pay her medical bills and make arrangements for the child to be cared for after the mother's death. What if the archdiocese is flooded with calls from pregnant teenagers who can't afford a child? The cardinal is ready, he says, to lose it all.

"If the public takes me seriously," he says, "we'll go broke."

The public is taking him seriously. Over about a two-month period, more than 500 people in various stages of desperation have sought help. One assumes that among those experiencing sleepless nights in Detroit is the archdiocese's asset manager.

A terrible slander

A favorite canard of the abortion conglomerate is that pro-lifers are only interested in children before they're born and that they are quite content to abandon them to a hostile and uncaring world after they come to term. As one who almost daily works with people whose lives are dedicated to helping others, even to the point of physical and

"Maida and his allies are not only fighting for individuals. They're fighting for the soul of our nation . . ."

financial exhaustion, I have a particular antipathy toward this terrible slander.

Yet I'm afraid that by ignoring good works like those of the cardinal, the media often do nothing to remind us of how much good goes on around us. Make no mistake: This is not merely the story of one man's supreme effort against the forces of despair. The cardinal has

had little trouble finding allies in the war against Kevorkian.

Maida has mobilized a number of church social agencies, including three health care providers, to coordinate a united effort called Project Life. When people in crisis call the project's hotline, they are directed to the appropriate agencies for medical, emotional, and financial assistance.

So fifteen Detroit women have chosen to give up their babies for adoption rather than terminate their pregnancies. At this rate, Maida and his volunteers will soon have saved more people than Dr. Death has dispatched. Perhaps Zero Population Growth will lodge a complaint. Stranger things have happened.

We should remember that Maida stands in a long tradition of Catholic public service, and that his plea has recent precedents. Two years ago at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C., Mother Teresa pleaded with women considering abortion. "Please don't kill the child. I want the child. Please give me the child." Skeptics would say that this was mere grandstanding, yet Mother Teresa's life story of attending to the poorest of the poor makes clear that it was not.

A special urgency

We will need many more Teresas and Maidas in the years to come. For there is now, to my mind, a special urgency in pleading the pro-life case. We live in an age in which there already exist some categories of human life that can be legally exterminated: life in the womb, for starters, and Kevorkian's willing clientele, many of whom seem to be suffering from depression.

It is my fear, in times of future crisis, that there will be attempts to expand these categories—first to the elderly, then perhaps to the handicapped, and from there to history's traditional scapegoats. Maida and his allies are not only fighting for individuals. They're fighting for the soul of our nation, whose darkest nights may lie just ahead. [†]

Charles W. Colson heads Prison Fellowship International, an evangelical Christian ministry to the imprisoned and their families.

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ESCAPE FROM LIBERIA

By Bonne Steffen



Ruth and Brian Johnson at General Conference this past August.

Editor's note: Brian Johnson, the subject of the following article, spoke at the World Relief Soup Lunch at General Conference this past August. Liberia, where he serves, is the focus of a special World Relief emphasis in The Brethren Church. At Conference, Brethren were challenged to sponsor "Fifty-Fifty" projects through which \$50 is loaned to each of 50 Liberian women to enable them to operate small businesses. (See page 3 of the October issue for more details.)

The article below first appeared in the November/December 1996 issue of Christian Reader and is reprinted here by permission of that magazine. Bonne Steffen is an editor for that publication.

THE 8 x 10 family photograph for sale in the Monrovia marketplace in May 1996 looked familiar to the family friend of World Relief's Liberian Director Brian Johnson. On a second glance, the truth hit: *It is the Johnsons with their four children!* The Johnsons' friend knew it was one possession that the family treasured—taken at gunpoint from their home during six days of terror. But with no money to buy it, the photograph soon disappeared into someone else's hands. The memories of what had happened weeks before as war ripped through Monrovia would take much longer to fade away.

More than two-and-a-half years ago, Brian Johnson, 47, returned to Liberia with Christian agency World Relief. He and his family had been forced to leave in 1989 when civil war erupted after the unsuccessful attempt of rebel Charles Taylor to overthrow Liberian President Samuel Doe. Eventually Doe would be murdered by another disgruntled tribesman.

Johnson had first come to the country as a missionary in 1973. He met and fell in love with Ruth, a Liberian, when she volunteered to help him wash his clothes by hand. They married and raised four children in Liberia and enjoyed the peaceful times. But with political instability, they braced themselves for what could happen at a moment's notice.

After the 1989-90 civil war, the Johnsons returned to Liberia. Hope for a unified country was strong. Ruth was busy assisting Brian and home-schooling their two daughters, Keyshia, 14, and Kristina, 15. Two older children, Tangie and Nyutu, were in college in the United States.

A dangerous role

But Brian's new role with World Relief was dangerous. His assignment was to get the country's tribal and factional leaders to work together peacefully as well as challenging the churches to do the same. At a December 1994 reconciliation conference, nearly 700 church leaders from 16 tribal groups and 23 denominations assembled. This conference successfully launched the Association of Evangelicals of Liberia (AEL) into relief and development work, an institute for missions, and programs geared to church renewal.

Politically, in 1990 ECOMOG, a West African peacekeeping group, stepped in to quell the hostilities. But violence continued randomly throughout the country. In May 1995, Ruth Johnson's father, aunt, and two cousins were murdered in a village raid two hundred miles from Monrovia—three weeks before another reconciliation conference.

The West African peacekeepers proposed a new strategy in March 1995: ask three factional leaders and three civilians to move to Monrovia and work together as the country's

collective leadership for a year. At the end of that year, a national election would determine who would run the country. Johnson admits the proposed political change seemed strange: putting warlords into leadership roles didn't seem to be a step in the right direction. His hunch was right.

As each warlord arrived in the capital, each gradually brought heavily-armed fighters. Monrovia swelled with young thugs—some only eight or ten years old. They were made to feel grown-up with a steady supply of drugs and weapons. It was only a matter of time before trouble ignited.

The struggle intensifies

Less than a year after the six-member State Council was established, men were killed near the house of one factional leader. The others in power tried to arrest him on a murder charge, but he wouldn't surrender. His claim was that all warlords were guilty of murder. If he were arrested, every warlord should be arrested. When they attacked his house, he escaped. The struggle for control intensified.

The stakes were high. Liberia is a country rich in resources. The areas teeming with diamonds, gold, timber, and rubber were all held by different factions. Selling resources—most traffic coming into Liberia from the Ivory Coast—fed the power-hungry warlords, who bought weapons.

Though Johnson rejoiced at the changed lives witnessed at the reconciliation conferences, he knew his work was facing a formidable foe—the business of war.

The tension builds

At first the fears were mentioned only in discreet conversations, as atrocities in the country's interior were reported on the radio. But in March, a warlord's son (a longtime family friend) visited the Johnsons at their home, seven miles from Monrovia. When daughter Tangie (visiting from the States) came out with water for him, a teenage boy ran over from a nearby basketball court, knocked the pitcher out of her hand, and said angrily, "You didn't give me a drink. Why are you giving water to a murderer's son?" Trying to remain calm but shaking inside from the vicious verbal exchange, Tangie explained that he was a friend. Nothing more happened.

Tension was rapidly building. The Johnsons' shortwave radio tuned to

the embassy station continually repeated, "All Americans stay home today. Don't go into the streets."

But there was work to be done. The first week of April, Brian was helping unload 12 World Relief food containers waiting in port, supplies which would be looted by rebels in the next few days. With the tribal leaders in Monrovia, he hoped the city would avoid violence. Then, as hundreds of rebels poured into Monrovia's streets, shooting erupted, and anarchy ruled.

A terrifying game

Brian managed to get safely back to his house. Young rebels with familiar faces—children and teenagers whom the Johnsons had fed and clothed—now began to harass the neighborhood. First, they came for vehicles. Carrying AK-47s, huge knives, and anti-aircraft weapons, they called each other by Hollywood names like "Rambo." To the Johnsons' horror, the rebels seemed to be playing a game, boasting of how many people they had killed. Most of them were high on drugs.

Over the next three days, different warring bands came to the house ten times to demand possessions. Day or night, the Johnsons never knew when the next band of rebels would appear. Meanwhile, missionaries and people from different tribes sought shelter in the Johnsons' home, including some from the tribe that had murdered Ruth's family.

When a gang of rebels came to the house, Brian would step out in front of the house to hear their demands, knowing that if they discovered who was inside, everyone would be killed. Befriending people from other tribes and factions was now deadly.

Over the radio, the Johnsons could hear people throughout the city pleading for help. Their cries mingled with the prayers of the Johnsons and their friends, scattered in every room, in the hallway, away from any windows.

Without weapons, everyone in the house knew they couldn't resist the rebels' demands. After everything had been looted, one gang made a more frightening threat: "We'll be back for your women."

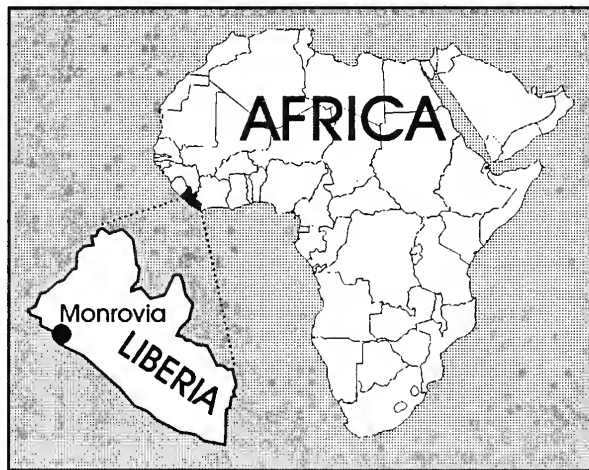
That night, Wednesday, April 10, three rebels, each about 18 years old, came to the Johnsons' porch. Brian, as he had done previously, came out and sat down. He didn't want the gun-

men to simply walk into the house.

For 45 minutes no one said anything. One rebel was smoking marijuana; a second stood with head down, exhausted; the third was sitting near Johnson. All cradled AK-47s on their laps. Johnson closed his eyes and silently prayed.

After an hour, he couldn't stand the strain any more. He slowly stood up and went into the house. No one moved.

At first, Johnson stood behind the door, thinking the gunmen would try to break it down. Then he lay down on the floor, praying for four hours. At daybreak, to Brian's surprise, the gunmen simply walked away.



Brian knew he had to get everyone to move, and move quickly. On the mission compound was an old bus. Groups of looters had noticed it, but though each group had talked about stealing it, none had. The tires were flat, and Brian knew it took a half hour to warm up. But it was their only hope.

Thirty people jammed into the bus. Amazingly, when the driver turned the ignition key, the motor started right up. He drove across the street to the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) and radio station ELWA compound.

A ten-minute warning

Brian told the driver to go around to the mission's air pump and fill the tires. Just when everyone got inside, the American embassy radioed a message to SIM: "You have ten minutes to prepare for evacuation. An armed convoy will arrive at the mission to get any foreigners out. If you're not ready in ten minutes, you'll be left behind."

Brian couldn't believe God's timing and provision—the prompting to

leave early that morning with bags packed and the "miracle bus." And they were able to take other missionaries, too. Without the bus, the missionaries would have been stranded.

Within ten minutes, the embassy convoy arrived.

Keep up or else

"We're going to drive very fast and you must keep up with us," the leader said. "If you don't keep up, we can't wait for you."

Now behind the wheel, Brian placed himself in the middle of the 20-vehicle convoy. They careened through the back streets of Monrovia amid heavy shooting and the smoke from burning buildings. The seven-mile ride to the military base seemed to last forever. Arriving unharmed, they waited until the next day before a helicopter arrived to make the final evacuation to Sierra Leone.

The Johnsons were among the last Americans to be airlifted out of Liberia. They had lost all their belongings and left Ruth's family and friends behind. More than six months later, Ruth Johnson still thinks every day about the people left behind, homeless and starving. She misses little items—the drawings her children made, the family photos. Important documents that were stolen will be difficult to replace.

There are moments when Keyshia and Kristina can laugh over the absurdity of what they went through, but they also miss their Liberian friends. In June, a suitcase full of home-schooling books that had to be left behind during the evacuation found its way back to the Johnsons. The two teenagers were able to complete their studies this summer.

Brian has returned to Liberia twice since April to help with relief projects. Faced with the enormity of the country's losses, he just wants to do what he can to relieve the suffering. Each time he returns to the U.S., it's a culture shock from the painful reality of what he sees in Liberia. Trying to get back to a "normal American life" isn't important.

Liberia's current interim government vows to disarm the country by the end of this year and prepare for free elections in May 1997. Johnson and the countless relief workers who are in and out of the country pray for healing on this land. [†]

Brethren Ministries in Transition

By Emanuel Sandberg

IN AUGUST 1996, General Conference approved a proposal to change the organizational structure of The Brethren Church at the denominational level. Instead of having a General Conference Executive Council and a Missionary Board of the Brethren Church, both answerable to General Conference, the new organization consists of one Executive Board that oversees the work of two ministries councils, the Congregational Ministries Council and the Missionary Ministries Council. The Executive Board, under the leadership of the Executive Director, is responsible to cast a unified vision for The Brethren Church and its ministries.

Implementing the organizational changes approved by General Conference will be a relatively straightforward administrative process. For example, the accounting, personnel, and budgeting systems will be integrated. Some staff assignments will be modified.

Communication and accountability

When the organizational changes are complete, I believe it will be easier for Brethren to understand all operations at the National Office. Our communication with Brethren churches and members should be improved, and program efficiency should also be enhanced. As changes are made, budget review and program accountability should also be

improved. However, we all know that organizations do not solve problems, people do.

Our common purpose

The purpose of Brethren Church Ministries has been to do those things together that we are unable

Dr. "Buzz" Sandberg is Director of Transition and Interim Director of Congregational Ministries for The Brethren Church.



to do as separate congregations—to expand the ministry of Christ in the world, to disciple Brethren people toward spiritual maturity, and to equip them for ministry to their communities and the world. In the new organization, that purpose will be fulfilled through Congregational Ministries programs under the following functions:

- Equipping for Outreach
- Discipling Brethren People
- Training Growth Leaders
- Enhancing Pastoral Leadership
- Revitalizing Local Churches

It is my plan, as the Director of Transition, that the National Office will operate as a "service center" to the local churches, and it is my

hope that the National Office programs and staff will be utilized by the local congregations to help local churches do God's work. The National Office does not supervise or direct the ministry of the local churches, their pastors or members. It is

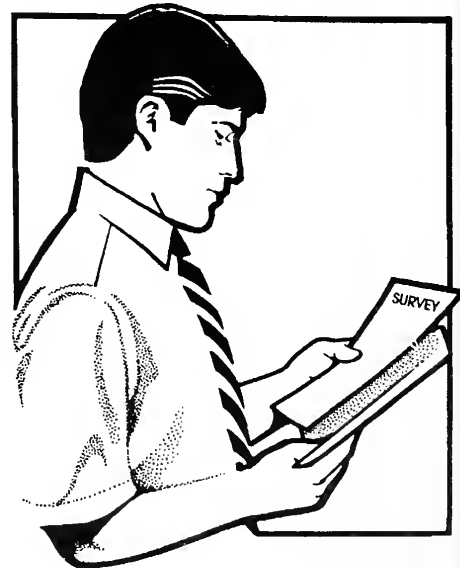
my vision that the National Office will function as a servant leader to the denomination, and that with the individual congregations we will see ourselves as a community committed to one another, using our joint spiritual gifts to build up the body of Christ.

We are accountable to you. If we are busy but do not serve congregations that **need** and **want** help, we are wasting God's gifts; if we offer programs that do not serve the whole congregation, we are ignoring the **needs** of the congregation; and if we balance our budget but do not serve the needs of our congregations, we have not been good stewards with God's resources.

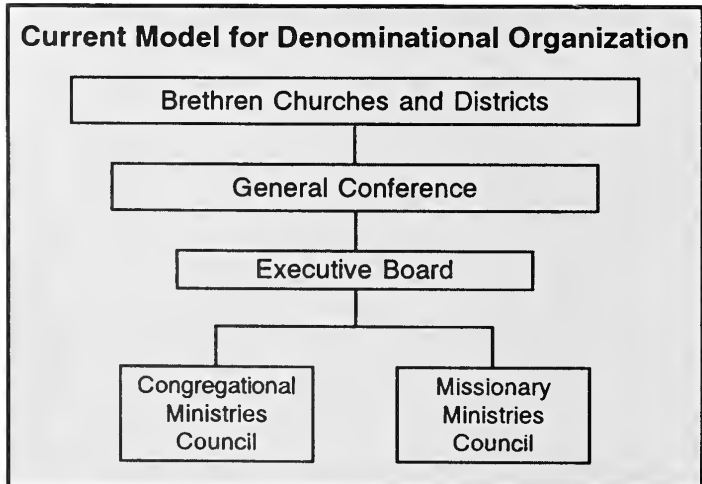
I believe that being busy, offering programs, or balancing our budget is not how you should measure our effectiveness. The questions you should ask us are, "How many congregations did we serve? Was our service active or reactive? Do the congregations feel they are individually served?" Of these questions, the last one is the most important.

A survey of needs

In our focus on the individual congregation, it is critical in consid-



ering new program initiatives that we know what the needs of each congregation are, as seen by the pastor, lay leaders, and individual members of the congregation. Therefore, in the near future, you will be asked to identify the needs of your congregation and the com-



munity in which you worship and serve. Your candid participation is necessary to our developing a positive, active service program. This survey of needs will be conducted in January.

Brethren and the Great Commission

As a people who love God, Brethren have voiced their support for the Great Commission that Jesus gave to His disciples: "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20, *TEV*). But it appears that our action in support of this mandate has been weak. Consider these results in the ten years from 1985-1995:

- Membership in the denomination showed a net loss of almost 1,000 (about 7 percent)
- More than 60 percent of our churches lost members
- When defined as a ten percent membership gain over the ten-year period, less than one third of all Brethren churches were growing.

We do not expect individual members and local congregations to be concerned primarily about overall church growth in the denomination. But we do expect them to be concerned about whether their own congregations are growing or declining. We need to address our performance in carrying out the Great Commission and ask ourselves, "Where have I represented Christ? Whom have I told about Jesus? How have I helped someone to grow? How have we supported the evangelism and church-planting programs of our denomination and of our district?"

We expect that when local congregational needs become more clearly defined, there will be new program developments that will be offered to Brethren pastors, lay members, and congregations. Already we are taking the first steps to initiate the following:

- A schedule of "in service" or "continuing education" programs, developed in cooperation with our seminary, designed to help pas-

tors and lay members become more effective servant leaders in their congregations.

- The development of staff and curriculum at our seminary to support the planting of Brethren churches and to offer programs in evangelism designed to help individual congregations and clusters of local churches to reach the unchurched in their community. (In the process we will serve God—and amass the resources we need.)
- A new Brethren student fellowship for all Brethren students currently in Ashland attending either **our** university or **our** seminary. The idea is to encourage

Manager of Stewardship and Planned Giving

James M. Frado, Jr., joined the National Office staff on December 1 as Manager of Stewardship and Planned Giving Services. The focus



James M. Frado, Jr.

of this part-time position will be on providing assistance programs and consultation services to individual Brethren congregations, as well as coordinating denomination-wide stewardship programs.

Jim has a 17-year history of accomplishment in the financial services industry. In assignments with banking and insurance companies, he successfully developed and managed a variety of investment/insurance programs. He holds licenses in professional investment as well as in life and health insurance. He was educated at the University of Maryland at Baltimore County and at the American College in Bryn Mawr, Pa.

Jim, his wife, Karen, and their three children moved to Ashland in September from Linwood, Md., where they were members of the Linwood Brethren Church. Both Jim and Karen are enrolled in the Master of Divinity program at Ashland Theological Seminary. The family attends the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church, where Jim plays keyboard with the praise band.

friendship with other students with a Brethren background, but also to help our students become servant leaders.

- Appointment of a professional staff person to assist the local churches and the National Office in the areas of stewardship and planned giving. This part-time position was authorized by the Executive Board at its November meeting. (See box below at left.)

Sources of financial support

The Brethren Church National Office and ministries are supported financially through several sources:

- \$ Fair share support from Brethren churches
- \$ Individual gifts
- \$ Special offerings
- \$ Sale of publications and Sunday school materials
- \$ Income from the Home Missions Endowment Fund and Brethren Church Foundation Endowment Fund
- \$ Dividends from The Carpenter's Shop, our subsidiary
- \$ Wills, bequests, and other special gifts

December is one of the months throughout the year when we focus on the denominational-wide ministries of The Brethren Church. Your gift this month in support of Congregational or Missionary Ministries will be sincerely appreciated.

As we near the end of this century, I see wonderful opportunities for Brethren to serve each other, their communities, and most importantly, to serve God. It is time for us, individually and as a denomination, to re-evaluate and adjust our goals to fit the possibilities before us.

Our denominational theme for the coming year is "Grasp the Vision." It is time for us to experience a profound renewal of our vision as a denomination. We have so many reasons why we can't do things—we think small, we act small, and we dream small. But God is calling The Brethren Church to be a leader in the evangelical movement and to be a Great Commission Church, advancing God's Kingdom. I pray that we will quit playing church, and—with faith in the future—start serving God!

††



Search beginning for Executive Director

The Executive Board of The Brethren Church has begun the search for an Executive Director, a new position created by the denominational reorganization plan approved at General Conference in August.

The Executive Director will be expected to give visionary leadership to The Brethren Church and to guide and coordinate National Office staff in fulfilling the priorities and ministries of the denomination.

Both nominations and applications for this position are invited. Qualifications include: member in good standing of The Brethren Church; a love for the church; exemplary Christian character; advanced academic degree; past success in demonstrating visionary leadership; appropriate management and leadership style; positive references.

Applications and nominations will be received until January 10, 1997. They should be addressed to: Search Committee, The Brethren Church, 524 College Ave., Ashland OH 44805. All persons nominated will be contacted and given an opportunity to apply for the position. For more information, write to the above address or call the national office at 419-289-1708 and ask for Berniece Miller.

The Search Committee will review the applications and select candidates whose applications will be presented to the Executive Board. The candidate selected by the board will be presented to the 1997 General Conference for approval.

Executive Board, Ministries Councils Meet November 8 and 9 in Ashland

Ashland, Ohio — Every district of The Brethren Church was represented at the November 8 and 9 meetings of the Executive Board, Congregational Ministries Council, and Missionary Ministries Council. These were the first full meetings of these newly formed groups, which met only briefly at General Conference to organize. Following are highlights of the meetings:

Executive Board

Dr. Emanuel ("Buzz") Sandberg was introduced as the Director of Transition. (See page 8 of the November *EVANGELIST* for information about Dr. Sandberg). He reviewed plans for the transition to the denominational organization approved by General Conference in August and outlined basic changes being made to create an administrative services unit in the National Office to care for financial, publication, and stewardship services.

A committee of five members (Fred Finks, Arden Gilmer, Doug Little, John Shultz, and Lee Solomon) was appointed to implement a survey of congregational needs. (See page 8 for more about this survey.)

A search committee (Brenda Colijn, Arden Gilmer, Buzz Sandberg, John Shultz, and Reilly Smith) was appointed to begin the selection process for an Executive Director of The Brethren Church. (See box at left.)

The board approved the sale of the three Brethren House properties in St. Petersburg, Fla., owned by the Missionary Board.

The Director of Transition was authorized to recruit and employ a person part time to fill the position of Director of Stewardship and Planned Giving. (See page 9.)

Missionary Ministries Council:

This council reviewed the budget prepared by its budget committee and recommended it to the Executive Board for approval.

Director Reilly Smith reported that Brethren House Ministries is closed. The council forwarded two resolutions and a recommendation to the

Executive Board in order to facilitate the sale of the properties.

Director Smith also reported that he and Dr. Juan Carlos Miranda will go to Colombia, South America, in December to evaluate the field and to begin preparations for the arrival of Marcelo and Adriana Ferreri, missionaries from The Brethren Church in Argentina.

The council's working relationship with Dynamic Church Planting International (DCPI) was reviewed. The council will work with DCPI to: develop a national strategy for starting new churches; create a climate for starting churches; recruit, assess, and train church-planting pastors and mentors; recruit a director of new church development; and develop an ongoing assessment and training program for The Brethren Church. The council will also work with Ashland Theological Seminary to establish an academic chair in church planting.

The Kumars and Todd and Tracy Ruggles will be in the United States in 1997. Sudhir Kumar is studying in India and may go to Australia for a year before attempting to come to the United States to study at Ashland Theological Seminary. The Living HOPE Brethren Church in Medina, Ohio, will be the Growth Partners project for 1997. Five Brethren congregations from the Peru, Ind., area plan to start a new Brethren church in the Eagles Pointe community at Grissom Air Force Base in Indiana.

Congregational Ministries Council:

Dr. Sandberg was introduced as the Interim Director of Congregational Ministries, in addition to his responsibilities as Director of Transition. He reported to the council about the survey commissioned by the Executive Board. The council will use the results of this survey to help determine its programming initiatives for 1997.

The council approved the continued existence of the Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication. The

(continued on back page)



Bloomington Brethren to help build church in the gates of Haiti

Valrico, Fla. — The Bloomington Brethren Church wants to do something to help the suffering people of Haiti and to further the spread of the gospel of Christ in that country. Therefore the men of the church plan to assist with construction of a worship and education facility for a non-denominational church in a suburb just outside the capital city, Port-au-Prince.

The building is being fabricated by volunteers from a local Baptist church and will be shipped to Haiti by Agape flights, a non-profit courier that helps missionaries in the Caribbean. In late January or early February, 20 people from the United States will be needed to go to Haiti and spend a week constructing the church building and working on other projects for churches there.

Haiti is an economically depressed country with the lowest per-capita income of any nation in the Western Hemisphere. It has been politically oppressed since colonial days, going from a succession of oppressive dictatorships to near anarchy. It is also a spiritually oppressed, country, with voodoo prevalent.

The cost of the trip will be approximately \$600 per person. Firm costs and dates will be determined



Bloomington pastor David Stone (r.) with Jean Petit Frere, pastor of the church in Haiti the Bloomington men will assist.

when the building parts are shipped and an arrival date is known.

If you have been looking for a way to get personally involved in missions, this may be your opportunity. The Bloomington Brethren are looking for people who would be able to spend a week in Haiti. They are also looking for those who cannot go but would like to sponsor someone who is going. If you sense the Lord calling you to either of these options, contact Pastor David Stone at 1310 East Bloomington Ave., Valrico, FL 33594 (phone 813-653-1320).

—reported by Rev. David Stone

Sarasota, Fla., names park in honor of Dr. J.D. Hamel

Sarasota, Fla. — The City of Sarasota showed its appreciation to Dr. J.D. "Bud" Hamel, former pastor and now Pastor Emeritus of the Sarasota First Brethren Church, for his 37 years of volunteer service to the Sarasota community by naming a park in his honor. On Veterans Day (November 11) the area around the Veterans Memorial in Sarasota was named Chaplain J.D. Hamel Park.

The ceremony to name the park, which followed the Veterans Day parade, included speeches by the mayor, the chief of the Fire Department, the vice-president of the Vietnam Veterans of Sarasota-Manatee Counties, and Janet Solomon, Hamel's daughter. A male quartet including Hamel's son, John, sang "A Few Good Men," and the Sailor Marching Band from Sarasota High School performed.

Hamel was honored for his volunteer service as chaplain of the City Fire Department, the State Fire Department, and the Sarasota Police Department, as well as his other ministry to the people of Sarasota. Hamel, 73, who is suffering from terminal cancer, was able to attend the ceremony in his chaplain's uniform. He even surprised the mayor by standing and saying a few words.

The ceremony was more than a personal honor for Dr. Hamel. Through his words, the speech of his daughter Janet, and the music of the quartet, the gospel of Jesus Christ was presented to the crowd of hundreds in attendance. God was glorified because His servant was faithful.

— reported by Rev. David Stone

Following the ceremony, Dr. Hamel was interviewed by a reporter from TV channel 40 in Sarasota. Surrounding him (l. to r.) are his son John, grandson Mark (who marched in the parade before the ceremony), and his daughter Janet Solomon. Behind them is the Veterans Monument, which is in the center of the Chaplain J.D. Hamel Park.





Fred and Alice Horn honored by Ardmore Brethren Church

South Bend, Ind. — The Ardmore Brethren Church held a special celebration on Sunday, September 15, to honor and say "Thank you" to members Fred and Alice Horn for their service to Jesus Christ and the Ardmore congregation.

Mr. Horn has served Christ and the Ardmore church as deacon, moderator, Sunday school teacher, and member of various boards and committees. He currently chairs the Ministry of Stewardship. He also served the Brethren denomination from 1974 to 1984 as secretary of General Conference.

Mrs. Horn has served Jesus and the church as Sunday school and VBS teacher, choir member, and in various hospitality ministries. She currently chairs the Ministry of Women.

Married in 1939, the Horns have four children, eight grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.

The celebration honoring the Horns began during the morning worship service, attended by many members and friends of the Horn family and featuring a variety of special music. The celebration continued after the service with a fellowship meal.

Congregational Ministries Council

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major task before this committee is the completion of a video course on The Brethren Church. The council also voted to continue support for The Andrew Center in 1997. Thus Brethren congregations who want to join the center will be able to do so free of charge. Finally, the council agreed that the Life Work Recruit program should be continued and strengthened. This program seeks to identify and encourage those who sense God calling them to full-time Christian service.

Two devastating cyclones strike Indian state in which Brethren work is located

Rajahmundry, India — Two devastating cyclones, one in mid October and the second on November 6 and 7, struck Andhra Pradesh, the state in which Brethren mission work in India is located.

Approximately 350 people were killed by the first cyclone, and more than 1,000 by the second. Many villages were totally destroyed. It is also

estimated that one third of the unharvested agricultural produce was destroyed in Andhra Pradesh, a state heavily dependent on farming.

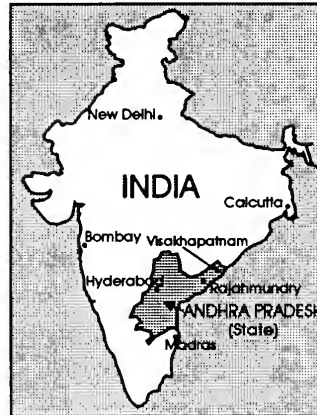
According to Brethren missionary Dr. K. Prasanth Kumar, around 50 Brethren congregations in East and West Godavari Districts were affected by the second cyclone. Some of the church buildings were badly damaged, and prayer huts were either completely demolished or partially destroyed.

Nevertheless, he found reason to be thankful. "We praise the Lord for protecting the orphan children, pastors, and the congregation at Rajahmundry and in the villages, and keeping us alive," he said.

The Brethren Mission to India received \$10,000—\$5,000 after each of the two cyclones—from World Relief of the National Association of Evangelicals to use in relief work. The money is being used to provide food, clothing, water containers, and cooking utensils to families who lost everything.

Dr. Kumar asked Brethren to pray for those who are suffering because of these cyclones and to provide finances to help Brethren affected by the disaster with food, clothing, medicine, and the funds to repair the church buildings and to reconstruct the prayer huts of the Brethren Mission in India.

Contributions may be sent to the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church, designated for India Cyclone Relief.



Ministry opportunity available at Pennsylvania District Camp

The Pennsylvania District Camp Board is seeking a committed Christian individual to serve as manager for Brethren Camp Peniel from April 1 to September 1, 1997.

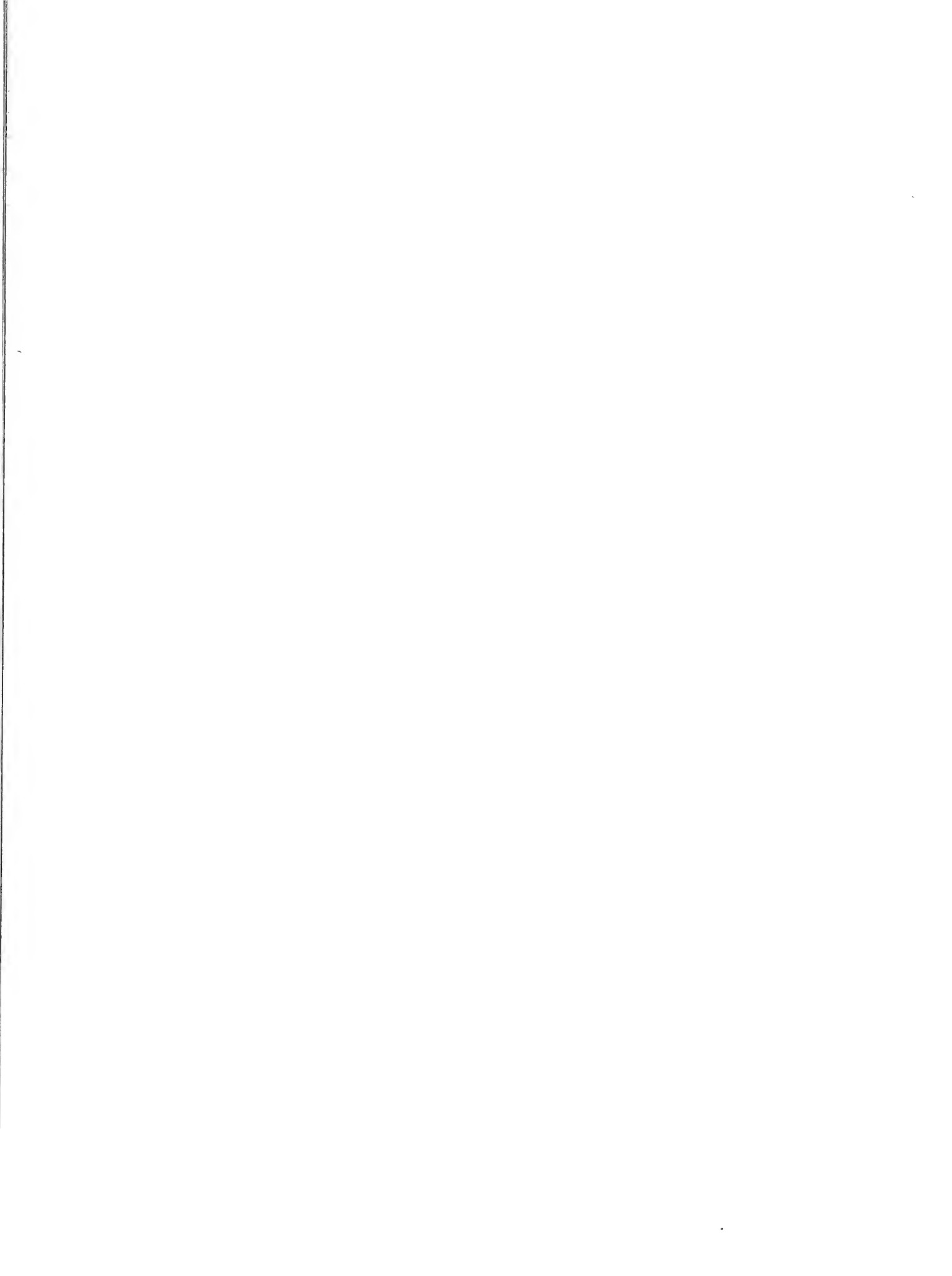
The board is seeking someone with church camping and education leadership experience and skills, who is able to relate well to people, especially children and youth. The person will be required to reside on the camp premises during the four weeks of camp in July and during the BYIC conference. Room and board will be provided plus a stipend.

For more information or to apply, write to Nancy Wilson, Camp Board Secretary, at 204 N. Washington St., Masontown, PA 15461. Applications are due by January 15, 1997, with the selection to be made on January 18.

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