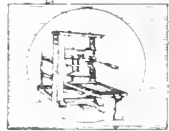


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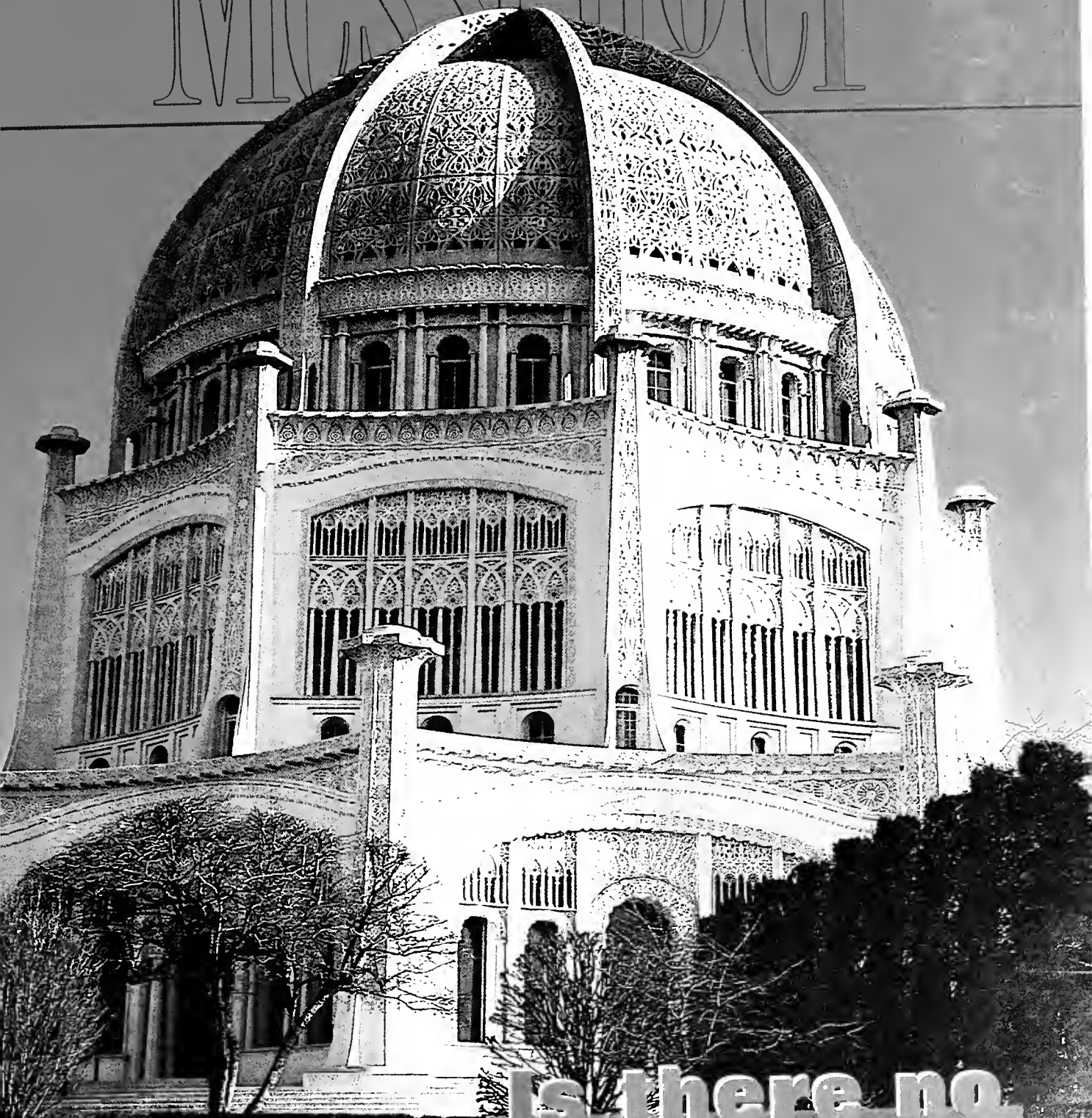
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Church of the Brethren

January 1996

Messenger



Is there no
other gospel?

From the Editor

She has been working with us for over a year, so it's high time we introduced her in a more formal way than the mention we made of her in this column for December 1994. Linda Myers Swanson was hired in late 1994 to give us some extra help with promotion. But before many months had passed, our long-time promotion consultant, Ken Gible, resigned, and Linda's job description changed. She took on Ken's work, but it was possible to add new dimensions because Linda, unlike Ken, is Elgin-based and works right here in our office. Thus she works much more closely with the subscription department and with the editors.



Linda Myers Swanson has a background that uniquely qualifies her for the work of MESSENGER promotion.

That Elgin base is an important factor in Linda's qualification. Elgin has been hometown a long time for Linda. Her father, Carl E. Myers, was a district executive here for many years, and before that he was on the General Board staff. Linda worked here at the General Offices for several years herself, in Brethren Press marketing. That gave her valuable experience for her current marketing work with MESSENGER. That work and her family background has given her a wide knowledge of the Church of the Brethren. Linda, her husband, Lee, and children, Kelsey and Parker, are active in Elgin's Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren. That gives Linda even more insight into the life of the denomination.

Linda spends a lot of her work time on the phone, listening to people, persuading congregations to stay on the MESSENGER group plan, and answering questions and solving problems for our hundreds of congregational representatives.

Feel free, yourself, to call Linda, at (800) 525-8059, whenever you have needs or questions. She will be glad to hear from you.

Kermon Thomasson

Vol 145, No 1 January 1996 Messenger

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COMING NEXT MONTH: A profile of Annual Conference moderator Fred Bernhard, written by Don Fitzkee.

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Alice Areher says that, like Peter confronted by a vision signifying needed change, we must examine our own taboos, biases, and traditions that may be keeping people away from our churches.

Being a giant isn't easy 16

It's not easy being a giant. Just ask Goliath. But, says Richard L. Landrum, we all can be giants of the faith, so long as we remember to give God the glory.

No other gospel 18

Are you an exclusivist, a pluralist, or an inclusivist? Carl E. Braaten examines the ways Christians have of understanding other faiths and Christ's claim to be the only way to salvation.

Keeping body and soul together 22

David Radcliff's contention is that faith without works is a hollow, self-centered exercise. And social concern without spiritual grounding, on the other hand, robs our witness of its power.

Christian unity: Harmony, not homogeneity, is the key 24

Gregg A. Wilhelm counsels that, rather than striving for a strict unity in the Christian world, striving for tolerance for other Christians' beliefs is a more practical course.

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Cover story: *The Bahai temple in Wilmette, Ill., stands as a symbol of the pluralistic theory of religions. Turn to page 18 for what Carl E. Braaten has to say on that subject.*

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In Touch

New Haven's heritage

At a homecoming a few years back at New Haven Church of the Brethren near Sparta, N.C., **Pauline Webb** asked people if they

that she has added other items, many of them donated by New Haven's pastor, 89-year-old Clarence Priser (November 1992, page 2). Others are gifts to New Haven from members of

Where peace is new

The health worker struck up a conversation with the Salvadoran woman she was examining: "So, how many children do you have?"

"Thirteen" was the proud answer. Then after a slight pause the woman added, "But only nine of them are alive."

"Was it because of the war?"

"For one of them, yes. The others died of fever and sickness as children. But my 11-year-old son . . . he was a good boy. He just got caught in the crossfire."

Since 1992, Doctors of the World has been bringing health care to people in the rural parts of El Salvador who are reconstructing their lives after a 12-year civil war. **Audrey Edmundson** of Manassas (Va.) Church of the Brethren has worked with the El Salvador project for the past two summers.

"I was first attracted to the organization," she says, "by its mission, which is to use medicine as a device to promote peace. Peace issues have always been important to me as a member of the Church of the Brethren. Working with Doctors of the World combines my Brethren pacifist and service values with my medical interests."

The 1992 El Salvador peace accords ended a brutal civil war notorious for its death squads and gross human rights violations. But there still is nothing noticeably different in the social structure.

Doctors of the World



When Pauline Webb realized her congregation was forgetting even its most prominent forerunner, she decided it was time to create a heritage room.

had heard of Andrew Jackson Sexton. She was taken aback that many people did not recognize the name; all 50 charter members of New Haven, founded in 1926, were Sexton's children or others of his descendants!

Pauline, herself a Sexton grandchild, decided it was high time to make her congregation aware of its history as well as the heritage of the denomination. That was the beginning of the New Haven Heritage Room.

The nucleus of the collection of Brethren heritage memorabilia came from Pauline's own family. To

the Brethren Revival Fellowship, including a traditional Dunker frock coat and bonnet.

Along with many old photos, there are old Brethren hymnals, old *Gospel Messengers*, and an Annual Conference moderator's gavel. This last item is a souvenir of the 250th anniversary of the denomination (1958), made from wood collected along the Eder River in Germany.

Pauline's heritage room bears witness to the fact that while New Haven's history is tied to one family in particular, the congregation is part of a much larger Brethren family.

In Touch photos: Brethren Revival Fellowship. Send to: *In Touch*, 1151 Dundee Ave., Elm, IL 60120



Audrey Edmundson reads a story to Salvadoran friends.

brings together the government and former guerrillas to evaluate the health problems of the rural poor. The meetings allow the former adversaries to see each other in a more human light and open communication that may prevent future conflicts.

But emotional and physical scars are still evident. Affordable and accessible health care is not available for most Salvadorans. Doctors of the World works at that problem as well.

Audrey occasionally meets Salvadorans who know of the Church of the Brethren presence and interest in Latin America. She says, "From helping with refugees to maintaining a good relationship with *Iglesia Bautista Emanuel* in San Salvador, the Brethren have become widely known and appreciated in El Salvador."

Since the United Nations pulled out of El Salvador in early 1995, the Salvadoran army increasingly has become more visible. "Hardly a day went by last

summer," Audrey says, "without my seeing an army helicopter overhead or large groups of soldiers just standing around, making their presence known."

It's a crucial time for El Salvador, and Audrey is grateful for her opportunity to work as a Brethren peacemaker among its neediest citizens.

Names in the news

David S. Young of Drexel Hill (Pa.) Church of the Brethren serves as volunteer managing editor of *Journal for the Academy of Evangelism*, a worldwide interdenominational journal for professors of evangelism in seminaries and for denominational leaders in evangelism and renewal.

• **Randy Miller** of La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren, had an exhibit, "Face to Face: Photographing the Developing World," at the University of La Verne's Carlson Gallery,

October 25–December 20. The exhibit featured photographs of men, women, and children and their communities around the world. Randy is managing editor of *Together*, a magazine of World Vision International, a position that takes him to many countries on assignments. An editorial assistant with MESSENGER 1974–1975, Randy photographed the 1978 and 1979 Annual Conferences for the magazine.

• **Lena Ott Coffman**,

librarian for La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren, received the Pat Tabler Memorial Scholarship Award at the 1995 Church and Synagogue Library Association (CSLA) conference in Buffalo, N.Y. The award is given to a

Missions in September. **Scott and Judy Haldeman**, members of Chiques Church of the Brethren, Manheim, Pa., are assigned to a women's shelter in Aflex, Ky. **Crystal Oellig** of Hanoverdale Church of the Brethren, Hummelstown,



Judy and Scott Haldeman



Crystal Oellig

Megan Heisey



Lena Coffman won an award for her church library work.

congregational librarian who has creatively and systematically established a new library or revived an old one. Lena is president of the Los Angeles County chapter of CSLA.

• Three Brethren began two-year terms of service with Eastern Mennonite

Pa., is serving with Habitat for Humanity, Americus, Ga. And **Megan Heisey** of Florin Church of the Brethren in Mount Joy, Pa., leaves in January for an eight-month stint with a Youth Evangelism Service (YES) team in Jakkmoek, Sweden.

Close to Home

Indiana youth lend a hand in Kentucky

Sixteen youth from **Middlebury** (Ind.) Church of the Brethren spent July 17–25 in a workcamp at Lend-a-Hand Center, a Christian mission in the Kentucky mountains. The group worked for four days on the subsistence farm of the mission, which is directed by its founders, Irma Gall and Peggy Kemner.

The workcamp projects included building an automobile bridge across a branch of Stinking Creek, weeding a corn-



Middlebury youth built this automobile bridge across Stinking Creek during their workcamp at Lend-a-Hand Center in Kentucky.

field by hand, cutting wood, fencing a pig pen, "putting up" garden produce, and barbed-wire fencing several acres of woods. The Hoosier helpers also conducted a carnival for the local children and youth, held on the Lend-a-Hand lawn.

The workcamp was so successful, another is being planned for 1996.—DANIEL M. PETRY

Daniel M. Petry is pastor of Middlebury (Ind.) Church of the Brethren

Campus comments

During "Make a Difference Day," October 28, the men of **Manchester College's** Schwalm Hall held a "Walk for Hunger." The walkers collected pledges from town residents, raising money for the North Manchester Food Pantry and Heifer Project International.

• **Bethany Theological Seminary** admitted 26 new Brethren students this past

fall. In a student body of 75, there are 65 Brethren. Women make up 41 percent of the student body and 40 percent of the Brethren students. Among the six Brethren undergraduate schools, only **McPherson College** is not represented in the present **Bethany** student body. "Bethany's growing student body represents the fruits of partnership," said President Gene Roop, who attributes the increase to

the work of "congregations that nurture and call, districts that license and mentor, and the colleges that counsel and prepare."

• **McPherson College** displayed four 12-foot by 12-foot sections of the AIDS Memorial Quilt November 26–December 1 (World AIDS Day). "Remembrance and Healing" was the theme of activities planned around the display. The AIDS Quilt is an international memorial to people who have died of AIDS. It is maintained by The NAMES Project Foundation of San Francisco, Calif.

• **Manchester College** helped celebrate the October 50th anniversary of the United Nations by hosting a model UN Security Council, an international business seminar, and the third annual Manchester International Fair. Highlighted was the work of Andrew W. Cordier, a Manchester graduate and professor who went on to be a United Nations leader (September, page 14).

• **Elizabethtown College's** Young Center will present a drama, "Dirk's Exodus," March 8–10, 15–17. The drama portrays the experiences of Anabaptist martyr Dirk Willems (April 1991, page 50) and explores the moral and religious issues emerging from this heroic story of nonresistant love and service.

• **Manchester College** emphasizes the hiring of Brethren alumni, reflected in a photo of four returned

"Close to Home" highlights news of congregations, districts, colleges, homes, and other local and regional life. Send story ideas and photos to "Close to Home," MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120



Manchester staff members (front) Wendy Gratz-Borman, Dave McFadden, (back) Ed Cable, and Jo Young Switzer are MC graduates who recently have returned to serve.

graduates. Wendy Gratz-Borman began this fall as associate vice president for institutional advancement and director of major gifts. David McFadden arrived in August 1995 as vice president of enrollment management. Ed Cable became vice president and treasurer in June 1994. Jo Young Switzer, who joined the staff in 1995, now is vice president and dean of academic affairs.

A Brethren peace park

Land that Naperville (Ill.) Church of the Brethren donated to the city of Naperville for the extension of its Riverwalk was dedicated October 29 as the Brethren Peace Park. The dedication was part of the Naperville congregation's celebration of its 140th anniversary.

The landscaped park has benches for Riverwalk hik-

ers to rest on, and there is a bronze plaque summarizing the history of the Naperville church. The spirit of the park's creation was jeopardized at one point when citizens heard that the city was constructing a wall ("for safety reasons") around the park. The conflict was resolved by the city altering construction to provide easy access.

Former Bethany Seminary professor Dale Brown spoke at the dedication on "Personal Reflections of a Peacemaker." The church's Gujarati Choir provided music, and a potluck dinner followed the ceremony. City officials and the public participated along with the congregation. Music for the afternoon session at the church came from the Naperville Men's Glee Club. Dale Brown spoke again, on "Contemporary Peace Issues and Visions of the Future."

Church of the Brethren in Putney, Vt., with various tasks. They painted the church, cut and hauled firewood, rebuilt a stone wall, and helped Putney community members in their homes. The Spring Run workers were Kristi Cavanaugh, Kelly Shannon, and youth adviser Tim Specht. From Pine Glen were Erin Harshbarger, Jodi Gumbert, and Rachel Carroll.

- Annual Conference will be held in Long Beach, Calif., next year, but there will be no **Long Beach** Church of the Brethren to help host it. The problem-wracked congregation closed its doors December 31 in a service of "celebration and grieving, reunion and termination."

Let's celebrate

Mill Creek Church of the Brethren, Port Republic, Va., celebrated its 155th anniversary on October 22.

- **Pleasant Plains** Church of the Brethren near McWillie, Okla., marked its centennial with a service on October 15. Pastor John Schmidt of Pampa (Texas) Church of the Brethren was guest speaker.

- **Thomas** (Okla.) Church of the Brethren celebrated its centennial on November 19. Philip Dell was guest speaker.

- **Fellowship** Church of the Brethren near Martinsburg, W.Va., celebrated its 25th anniversary on September 17, with former pastor Robert Alley as guest speaker.

Dee Netzley Schumacher and Chuck Erb, descendants of the Netzley and Erb founding families of Naperville church, unveiled the bronze plaque placed in the new Peace Park.



This and that

Briery Branch Church of the Brethren, near Dayton, Va., is building a \$45,000 addition to the church that includes an elevator and a handicap-accessible restroom. The church is voluntarily complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act calling for public buildings to be made handicap-accessible.

- Five youth from **Spring Run** Church of the Brethren and **Pine Glen** Church of the Brethren, both near McVeytown, Pa., spent August 7-15 helping **Gencsis Fellowship**

Young Adults reflect on the church's ties and struggles

Discussing divisive issues facing the Church of the Brethren was how 154 young adults spent their Thanksgiving holiday, meeting at Camp Woodland Altars in Peebles, Ohio, November 23-25, for the annual Church of the Brethren Young Adult Conference.

The theme, "The Tie that Binds," was a starting point for the weekend of

identifying some of the issues that tie the Church of the Brethren together, as well as some that divide. These were listed and briefly discussed in small groups. The groups then put their creative talents to work in performing skits to illustrate both the ties and the struggles.

Issues identified during the session included biblical interpretation, Christology, stewardship, homosexuality, and creed.

Some of those who are quite familiar with these issues, however, felt there was not enough time to thoroughly discuss them. "We were able to name, but not address the issues," said Laura Van Voorhis, a third-year Bethany Seminary student who was frustrated by the lack of depth in the discussions. "In the denomination, we're at a very critical time when we need to talk about this stuff," she said.

Others felt that the group sessions were invaluable within the conference setting. Steve Brady, attending the conference for the fourth time, said, "Judy has a real genuine love for the church."

According to Brady, she has a special concern for young adults and wants to hear their opinions. "The most important thing (during the conference) is the dialog young adults have together," he said.

Outside of group sessions, activities included insight sessions and workshops, free time, and worship services — including a Taizé service. Some of the insight session topics dealt with anger, simple living, clowning, singles issues, group conflict, contemporary music in worship, and spiritual growth. During the weekend, 122 pairs of spare glasses were collected to be sent to El Salvador for people who need them.

With a full schedule of activities, the biggest frustration of the weekend was that participants did not have time to get to know each other as well as they would have liked. "It's just hard to get to know 154 people in two days," Brady said.—JEFF LEARD



Christopher Fitz and Bobbi Arrillaga demonstrate how to dance a merengue during the Young Adult Conference's talent show.

Other activities that evening included group singing, poetry reading, guitar playing and skits.

dialog. Sessions led by former Annual Conference moderator Judy Mills Reimer focused on identifying controversial issues facing the denomination and looking at methods of resolving them.

"Where are our manners in the Church of the Brethren?" asked Reimer in the opening session, as she questioned the church's ability to peacefully resolve its differences.

According to Reimer, the church has forgotten what it means to be members of the body of Christ, becoming more and more like the current session of Congress, struggling to hash out its irreconcilable differences. Church members sometimes are like children in a sandbox bickering over little distinctions, she said.

During Reimer's session, young adults were charged with the task of

Online services connect Brethren on the internet

Church of the Brethren members in November received a new way to dialog with each other—by computer.

Two services, called list servers, were created by Church of the Brethren member Mike Willoughby of Lake Park, Fla. One list server is for adults, the other for youth and young adults.

Willoughby, a member of Marilla Church of the Brethren, near Kaleva, Mich., set up the lists because he wanted "to contribute to the Church of the Brethren community." As a resident of Lake Park, he feels geographically removed from the denomination.

"Being separated physically, yet able to be a part of the community electronically, is very gratifying," Willoughby said. "There are some very exciting things happening within the Church of the Brethren, and being able to read what others think about those issues helps me come to a better understanding of my own views and feelings."

The two lists are maintained in the computers of MGI-Qualtec, of North Palm Beach, Fla., where Willoughby works as the company's computer net-

work administrator.

To join each list server, write to COB-L-request@Qualtec.com or COB-YYA-request@Qualtec.com (adults or youth and young adults, respectively). On the subject line of the E-mail message, write "subscribe." You then will receive all of the notes posted to the list server. After one week the adult list had more than 60 readers; the youth over 20.

The lists join another electronic service aimed at keeping Brethren abreast of what is happening denominationally. *Newsline*, a weekly service by the General Board's Communication Team, is sent online each Thursday with an update on Church of the Brethren News. For those without computer access, *Newsline* can be heard by calling (410) 655-8758.

Other Communication Team publications also sent online are press releases, MESSENGER news, and *Agenda*. During Annual Conference each night's sermon and each Conference Journal also is sent.

To receive these publications, send a request to COBNews@AOL.COM via E-mail or call News Services at (800) 525-8059, ext. 257.

—NEVIN DULABALM

OEPA initiates new program of peacemaking for families

Families for Peace, a new program of On Earth Peace Assembly (OEPA), was inaugurated in November "to provide adults with a means to promote the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Church of the Brethren from one generation to the next."

For \$60 per quarter, families can join the program and receive various peacemaking resources for all ages.

"If we are not intentional about teaching what we believe from our Christian faith within our families, the likelihood of having a peace tradition based on the teachings of Jesus surviving into succeeding generations is very small," said Tom Hurst, director of OEPA.—PAULA S. WILDING

'Fill the Ark' to sail back into Brethren churches in May

Congregational response was so great to 1994's Fill the Ark campaign that churches will have the opportunity to do it again in 1996.

Over \$55,500 was raised in 1994 through the 26,476 arks that were ordered by 257 Church of the Brethren congregations.

The dates suggested by the office of Congregational Support for the 1996 campaign are May 5–June 2, but congregations are welcome to use the five-week program when they choose.

The Fill the Ark project is jointly sponsored by the Church of the Brethren and Heifer Project International (HPI), and was initiated in conjunction with HPI's 50th anniversary in 1995.

More information will follow in the March *Source* resource packet, which will be sent in early February by the office of Interpretation to all Church of the Brethren congregations. Information also is available through the office of Congregational Support at (800) 525-8059.—P.S.W.



Brethren Volunteer Service/Brethren Revival Fellowship Unit 218 received orientation in Roxbury, Pa., August 15–25. Members are (left to right) Eric Long, Linda Greiner, Melody Keller, Carl Ocker, Barbara Ocker, Michael Marlow, Ellen Arndt, Nathan Arndt, John Shenk (staff), David Cable, and Ruby Shenk (staff). (See page 51 for assignments.)

Peace serpent moves to new home in children's hospital

The serpent peace sculpture that was constructed by members of the Columbia (Md.) United Christian Church and displayed at Annual Conference in Charlotte on November 9 was delivered to its new, permanent home—the National Children's Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

The serpent sculpture, which stands six feet tall and 10 feet long, also was used in a national symposium on child victimization.

The sculpture was designed by two local artists who used violent toys turned in by over 500 area children during the Columbia church's February "Violent Toy Turn-In."

The Columbia church is jointly affiliated with the Church of the Brethren, the Disciples of Christ and the United Church of Christ.

Review of 'End-of-Life' paper to be finished by January 15

The proposed Annual Conference paper, "End-of-Life Decision-Making: A Faith Perspective for the Church of the Brethren," was distributed for congregational study and reflection in early December.

The draft, which was enclosed in the January-February *Source* congregational resource packet, was to be studied by congregations with comments returned to the Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC) for consideration in the revising of the draft by January 15.

The statement on end-of-life issues comes from the work of the General Board and ABC on a new statement on life stewardship, and includes a response to the 1995 Annual Conference query on assisted suicide.

The statement, which is in its fifth draft, has been reviewed by caregivers, professionals, the ABC Board, the General Board, and others. After feedback is considered, a final draft of the

statement will be brought for approval to the ABC Board and the General Board during their spring meetings. If approved, the statement will be presented at the 1996 Annual Conference.

Copies of the draft can be obtained through ABC by calling (800) 525-8059, ext. 410.

Phone numbers change for two General Board offices

Both the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill., and the Conference Center at the Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md., have changes to their phone numbers.

A new area code will be issued this month for an area west of Chicago that includes the General Offices. The area code is changing from 708 to 847, effective January 20. There will be a three-month grace period during which both numbers will work.

In November, the Conference

Center installed a new toll-free number for people seeking booking information—(800) 766-1553.

Calendar

General Board meetings, General Offices, March 7-12

Travel seminar to Holland, sponsored by Bethany Theological Seminary, March 21-31 [Contact Jeff Bach, Bethany Theological Seminary, (517) 985-1818]

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering Emphasis, March 24 [Contact the office of Stewardship, General Offices, (800) 525-8059]

National Youth Christian Citizenship Seminar, "Biblical Values and Media Myths," New York City and Washington, D.C., April 15-18 [Contact Youth Ministries, General Offices]

Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC) Board meetings, General Offices, April 19-21



Brethren Volunteer Service Unit 219 received orientation in Oak Brook, Ill., October 22–November 11. Members are (front row) Heather Horner, Christy Van Horn, Amber Allen, Lisa Jantzen, Tracey Elmore, Troy Reimer (BVS orientation assistant), and Brad Fox; (second row) Chanda Edwards, Melissa Magee, Dorine Nafzinger, Beka Wood, Chris Rhudy, and Todd Reish (BVS orientation director); (third row) Jeff Leard, Matt Keller, Tamiko Horner, and Andrew Taylor; (back row) Tim Messler, Andrienne Wallace, Maryanne Yerkes, and Jane Orlando. (See page 31 for assignments.)

Two trips to Guatemala will be offered next year by the Denominational Peace Witness and Latin America offices. In March, a Guatemalan accompaniment delegation will visit communities where former refugees have returned. A workcamp to Guatemala, where participants will help resettling refugees, is scheduled for October 28–November 6.

The offices also are looking for congregations to become Partners in Accompaniment to Guatemala. Congregations may develop a relationship with a Guatemalan community, or sponsor or send an accompanier. Contact either the Denominational Peace Witness or Latin America offices at (800) 323-8039.

Extending violence reduction projects was affirmed in October by the steering committee of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), meeting in Chicago. The committee approved project extensions in Haiti, Washington, D.C., and Hebron, West Bank. The committee also approved a project in Chechnya, Russia, which is contingent on the raising of \$75,000 and the recruitment of four peacemakers with Russian language skills.

CPT is looking for volunteers to serve from two weeks to six months at any of these projects. Contact CPT at (312) 455-1199.

Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) provided funds to four projects in November and December. A grant of \$24,000 was allocated to help long-term recovery and Cooperative Disaster Child Care projects in the Caribbean following Hurricane Marilyn. Projects helping people affected by tropical storms and a typhoon in the Philippines were granted \$10,000.

A grant of \$5,000 was allocated for emergency relief in Bangladesh after severe flooding. Another \$5,000 was allocated to Misión Cristiana, a partner church that is helping people in Nicaragua who were affected by an epidemic caused by flooding.

A church leadership and renewal conference, "Servants of the Living Springs: Servant-Leadership and Church Renewal," will be co-sponsored by The Andrew Center on February 13 at the Daylesford Abbey, Paoli, Pa. Envisioned and organized by David S. Young, the one-day conference also is sponsored by the Greenleaf Center of Servant Leadership in Indianapolis. For more information, contact The Andrew Center at (800) 774-3360.

The executions of nine Nigerian human rights activists prompted several reactions from around the world in December. The executed activists, including leader Ken Saro-Wiwa, belonged to the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), an activist group fighting against Nigeria's military government. Even though the Ogoni region produces 25 per cent of Nigeria's oil exports, the Ogoni people do not have any political or economic rights because of their minority status.

The Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland is calling for the British government to instate an oil embargo and freeze Nigerian assets held in foreign banks. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) also made a statement against Nigeria's military government, stating that the international community should "stand firm in its

efforts in the struggle for human rights and democracy in our nation." CAN urged that any actions taken, however, should not "add further to the pains and sufferings of our already impoverished people."

Through its special fund to combat racism, the World Council of Churches (WCC) pledged \$13,000 to MOSOP, as it continues to speak against the Nigerian military government. The funds will be used for humanitarian purposes and legal aid for Ogoni detainees. The WCC also will give \$87,000 to 11 other groups fighting racism in 1996. (*Ecumenical News International*)

The end of the world theory, a major belief of the Jehovah's Witnesses, has been abandoned by that sect. A main tenet of Jehovah's Witnesses has been that the generation aware of events in 1914 would live to see the end of the world. After re-reading the Scriptures, the leadership, which represents 4.7 million Witnesses, stated they see "'this generation' as the people of a historical era rather than the lifespan of certain individuals."

According to a spokesman, "It doesn't change our belief that we are living in the time of the end." (*Religion News Service*)

The Bible: A Novel. Lion Publishing, a British Christian publishing house, is denying allegations that its "The Book of God" is more of a sensationalized novel than a version of the Bible. After the book was compared to "bodice-ripping" novels by the British press, bookstores in Great Britain had a surge in advance orders. The book is due out in Great Britain and the United States early this year.

While the publishers deny that the book sensationalizes the Bible, they do concede that it is geared toward the unchurched and those who would not normally read the Bible.

According to a Lion spokesperson, it is written like a novel so that "someone not familiar with it could read it as a gripping story for the first time." (*ENI*)

A 'hate-free' Bible that was published in 1995 claims to have a New Testament that is free of anti-Jewish bias, unlike other versions of the New Testament. The Contemporary English Version Bible, which is published by the American Bible Society, clarifies the distinction between the Jews who followed Jesus and those who opposed his teachings.

The bible's senior translation officer stated that using the New Testament to incite anti-Jewish sentiments "is to deny the efficacy of the work of Christ and the overall message of the New Testament." (*ENI*)

And finally, evangelizing extraterrestrials is a concern of Roman Catholic priest and theologian Piero Coda. When two Geneva astronomers announced that they had discovered another solar system, Coda voiced his concern to the Vatican, "If life were to be found on the planet, then it would also have been contaminated by original sin and would require salvation," Coda said.

A professor at Pontifical Gregorian University argued back that "we know that earthmen sinned, but we know nothing about beings in other worlds." (*RNS*)

My name is Amanda. I work for Proyecto Libertad

by Amanda C. Vender

Driving along a country road in South Texas, a person can come to believe that the world really is flat. A glance out the right side of the car offers a view of neat rows of tiny cotton plants flashing by. Stripes of the young, green plants intersperse the dark, irrigated dirt. On the left is knee-high sorghum, a beautiful burnt red color, and yellow tufts at the top of the plants blow with the wind for as far as the eye can see. Straight ahead is nothing but the sizzling Texan road for miles. With the road to myself, I often clock 70 or 75 miles an hour, and the wind that beats on my face helps me forget the humidity of a summer day.

The Rio Grande Valley of Texas is a place like none other in the world. Here, a blend of Texan and Mexican flavors form a unique border culture. South Texas is where the accordion accompanies a syncopated beat and serenades as Tejano music on the most popular radio stations, where a night at the movies requires fitted jeans, cowboy boots, and a tall, white hat, and where early in the morning you can sit along the banks of the Rio Grande River and watch people anxiously wade across. Tejano music and cowboy hats grew on me as I became accustomed to life in the Valley, but it was the people who wade across the river risking their lives in search of a future in the US who brought me here in the first place.

I drive that long stretch of Texan road about four times a week as I make my way to the Port Isabel Service Processing Center, a prison for deportable "aliens." Most of the people detained there never make it very far past the river. They are picked up by the Immigration Service, "La Migra," either in Texas or in some other part of the country. My job is to

The people I meet in my tiny room are from all continents of the world. They most often are weary and without hope. Most have been persecuted in their home countries.

assist people in knowing and advocating for their rights as immigrants or asylum seekers throughout their "deportation proceedings."

Approaching the camp, I see a group of men dressed in bright orange uniforms playing soccer. A tall fence topped with curled barbed wire separates us. The men look tiny, and most of them are. At five feet seven inches, I usually tower over my Central American and Asian clients. The taller Africans, Eastern Europeans, and Middle Easterners play basketball alongside them. I have heard detainees say that the Chinese play a good game of basketball in spite of their height.

I have never watched a game at the detention center. My movement at the camp is strictly limited to a room divided into seven interview spaces. The rooms are cold and sterile. Walls covered with thick brown rug muffle the murmurs of languages, stories, and tears. "My name is Amanda. I work for Proyecto Libertad (The Freedom Project)," I explain as I introduce myself to a potential client. "Proyecto does not work with the Immigration Service or with the government. I can't represent

you in court because I'm not a lawyer, but I am a paralegal. I can help you find out whether there may be a way for you to stay in the United States, and I may be able to help you lower your bail bond, contact family members, and complete documents in English. We do not charge for our services, but we accept donations. Proyecto is funded through churches and foundations." I continue with a series of logistical questions—the person's correct name and identification number, country of origin, date of entry, and so forth.

The people I meet in my tiny room are from all continents of the world, though the majority are Central American. Some crossed the southern US border and others were moved to the prison in south Texas from other parts of the country by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. They most often are weary and without hope. Most have been persecuted in their home countries and decided to leave their families and friends, their language and culture, to travel to the United States in pursuit of a better life. Those who travel north on foot from Latin America usually work along the way to pay for their trip. The journey isn't safe. Many women who are forced to this route are raped at least once along the way. For some, such as Haitians and Cubans, the voyage is by raft, while others, as stowaways, spend days in tiny containers on a ship. Most asylum seekers who reach the United States assume that the worst is over. Very few are aware that they may be locked away in a prison cell, a fate similar to the one they hoped to leave behind in their home country.





"If I return to my country I will be killed by the opposition party," a Honduran woman tells me. She was the leader of the Liberal Party in her town and received several death threats because of her activism.

"They told me not to come back to work anymore or they would kill me," recounts the Nigerian mechanic. A drug gang is after him, but the Nigerian police will not protect him against a politically powerful drug gang. The events of the story unfold like an enthralling adventure. I jot down every detail. "So, did you ever go back to work?" I ask.

"I never left my house," says the plump woman with teeth outlined in gold. "I received death threats because of my work with a human rights organization." Most of the woman's family were killed by the Salvadoran military in 1981, when she was a young girl. And because she has never forgotten her family's fate, and intends to bring its murderers to justice, her life is in grave danger in El Salvador.

I meet with my clients several times to gain a good grasp of their stories; I want to adequately prepare their asylum applications. Many are afraid to open up to me at first. When I ask why they left their countries, people often state simply, "I am seeking freedom," or "I left because of the war." They may be uncomfortable telling a foreign stranger about the mutilation of their family, a

rape, or the death threats they received. I understand the hesitation. After all, why should they believe me? I could be associated with the sterile prison where they are held not for a crime, but for lack of certain "papers," for looking different, and for speaking another language. Why should they believe a person who may just deport

them and then report them to their home country's repressive government? Furthermore, many are torture victims who may suppress painful information they don't want to remember. They don't realize that only five percent of unrepresented asylum applicants actually win asylum at the immigration court in south Texas. They don't know how important it is to provide as many details as possible, and that the more terrible information they can recount, the better.

To hire a lawyer for the asylum process may cost somewhere between \$1,500 and \$5,000. Not many asylum seekers have that kind of money, even if they do have family or a friend in the US. There are some lawyers who will travel to south Texas to do "pro-bono" work, but the demand for lawyers is far too great to fill the need. Unless she is one of the few who receive the help of a paralegal from my office, an asylum seeker is often left to prepare her case by herself. She must state her asylum claim at length in English on her asylum application, prepare documents (letters, official documents from her home country, and news clippings, all must be translated into English), and then she must calmly answer the questions of the judge at an asylum hearing, as well as the questions of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) trial attorney. The trial

attorney represents the INS, whose purpose, according to the director of the INS Southern Service Center, is to "keep people out of the country."

Therefore, the trial attorney primarily asks questions meant to confuse the person seeking asylum and to find reason to question the person's credibility. Unless the person has between \$1,500 to \$5,000, depending on the amount of her bail bond, she will have to do all of this work from prison. Mail may not ever reach a person in detention. She may be refused use of the pay phone, although she probably does not have the money to call her home country, and her family may not even have a telephone.

For most asylum seekers, these tasks are impossible to perform; they have been set up to lose from the start. For example, Petrisor from Romania and Li from China spoke no English or Spanish when they arrived in the US. There are very few people who speak Romanian or Chinese in this remote area of south Texas, let alone someone who is willing to drive 40 minutes from the nearest town to help an asylum seeker understand immigration law and prepare for an asylum case.

A large group of Haitians was detained in south Texas in the fall of 1994, and with the help of Haitian advocacy groups, their deportation proceedings did not move forward because they had no possibility of access to representation in Haitian Creole. However, for months the INS refused to transfer the detainees to the detention center in Miami. The Haitians became disillusioned and restless because they were made to rot in prison, with no sense of when their proceedings would continue. Victoria, a Honduran woman, does not even read or write in Spanish. Far fewer women than men at the detention center know how to read or write. Most men and women from Central America have little to no education. Their chances of

having a fair shot at winning asylum are severely limited for these reasons.

The asylum process lasts three to five months, on average. If a person loses asylum and decides to appeal to the Board of Immigration Appeals, he may be detained for a much longer period, a year or more, if he is unable to pay his bond. There presently are two Chinese men who have been detained for over two years. They both recently attempted suicide by drinking bleach. The INS then put them in "isolation" from the other detainees. Isolation is supposed to be used only for people who are contagiously sick, but it often is used as punishment for people who are disobedient, stage a hunger strike, are homosexual, or try to commit suicide.

I learned a lot about detention from Alexis, a man from West Africa. "Could you please bring me a newspaper?"

There is nothing to read here but the Bible and outdated immigration law books. Sometimes we can watch the news on TV, but the guards change the channel to a movie in Spanish. I can't understand that."

The women live in separate barracks from the men. Their recreation area is much smaller than the men's, so their movement is more limited in the months they spend at the prison. The men play basketball and soccer, but I rarely see the women playing sports, or see them outside the dormitories at all. Whether this is a factor of culture or of the small space they are given and the unique difficulties of women in detention, I don't know. On a tour through the "female" dormitory, I saw women talking quietly in their rooms or watching TV. As I left the building, I noticed a box of sanitary napkins on the table near the door. Personal hygiene products must be requested of the guards, many of whom are men.

I get different reports on the food in detention. Esmeralda from Honduras thinks the food is great. Mokhtar from Egypt thinks it's awful. "You have to like beans." The guards tell me that the "females feed at 11, and the males feed at 11:50." From outside the fence I have seen them line up to "feed," an

To listen carefully to the honesty of their words, the purity of the details, and the absurdity of their tales is to sense that they are more real, more genuinely human, than most people I know.

expression that conjures up images of animals at a zoo. Every now and then, the guards have shooting practice at the detention center. I shudder to think of how that makes an asylum seeker feel to hear those shots, especially one whose family was killed by a military gun.

Daniel is a man with whom I have a particularly difficult time documenting his asylum claim. He doesn't like to talk about how he was repeatedly raped by the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and about the abuse he received because of his homosexuality. Maybe he isn't sure if I would want to help him, knowing that he is gay. In Nicaragua, it is widely acceptable to persecute homosexuals. He also is very shy. "I hope I don't smell bad," he stammers, noting his orange uniform wet with sweat. "I was playing soccer before they called me in to talk with you. I already have used my second change of clothing for the week." Even in the 105-degree south Texas heat, detainees are only offered two changes of clothing a week.

The guard walks by our room. "It's 5:50, ma'am."

"Okay, we'll be right out," I respond. The guard rolls his eyes impatiently.

"I'll come back Monday... Monday or Tuesday," I tell Daniel.

"Let's see... today is Friday, and when will you come?" I sense that he does not want me to leave.

"I will come Monday," I say.

"Will you call me out?"

"I'll be sure to call you out."

"The thing is... my father is very ill in Nicaragua. I just received a letter that he is very ill. I must send money to him. Do you think that I will be out of here soon so that I can work?"

Daniel works every day at the detention center as a cook, but detainees who work only earn one dollar a day.

"It's after 5:50," pesters the guard.

I don't like to think about the truth of Daniel's situation, but he deserves to know. "Well, you may be able to leave the detention center in a month and a half if you win asylum, but then you must wait another six to 12 months before you will receive work authorization." This is in spite of the fact that the law says that a person granted asylum is automatically entitled to work authorization. I have few soothing words to offer.

"I'll see you Monday. *Que le vaya bien.*"

I saw only three people that day. Those three appeared very foreign to me at first. They escaped an environment that I can hardly imagine. Each person's story is unique. To listen carefully to the honesty of their words, the purity of the details, and the absurdity of their tales is to sense that they are more real, more genuinely human, than most people I know.

"Have a good weekend." Daniel tells me as he shoves open the metal door to go back to the barracks. He lets some of the chilled air-conditioned air escape into the summer heat. "You should rest a little."

Daniel was granted asylum not too long ago. In the past year, he is only one of three clients of mine whom I saw win asylum. The rest may have won asylum in another part of the country, but more likely they were deported to their country of persecution. And many, if they can make it out alive, will flee again. *M.*

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stepping

by Robin
Wentworth Mayer

I'd noticed them earlier wheeling their cart through the store: angry father, anxious mother, agitated boys. But I wasn't lurking in the shadows trying to eavesdrop; I was just waiting on the clerk to get my wallpaper. Still, I heard it all:

"Jason, I told you to keep your hands off!" (Funny how you can *hear* clenched teeth).

"You didn't say anything to Brian when *he* picked it up, Bob!"

(THWACK) "You're *done*, Jason, you hear me? Done!"

"I know. No TV, no allowance, no friends, no nothing. I'm done."

Stepfamily. It was written all over them. And yes, I know that "blended family" is preferred term. But tell me, does the above scenario sound very "blended" to you?

I received a call yesterday from the director of a home for unwed mothers. A former client of mine was seeking services and had signed a release. Did I remember Candy?

I remembered her well. I remembered laboring long and hard with her parents on their marriage. I remembered the father, an alcoholic who blossomed from denial, to faith in Christ, to sobriety.

I also remembered the

insecurity and confusion of Candy, then age 10. Offspring of her mother's first marriage, she was adopted by this man at age three, just after her younger sister was born.

I remembered Dad admitting he just didn't *feel* for Candy what he *felt* for his natural daughter.

I remembered telling him: "Candy needs your physical affection and verbal affirmation. And if you don't give it to her, she eventually will find males who will."

That was nine years ago. This is Candy's *second* pregnancy. She has no idea who the father is.

Stepparents who live with their children-by-marriage are in an incredibly complex, difficult situation. The kids in the home experience a fresh wave of grief over the loss of their parents' marriage with each developmental milestone.

Stepdads whose own children live with the ex-wife often have such deep grief over *that* loss that attempts to bond with their wife's kids creates a sense of betrayal towards their own.

And stepmoms usually have a disproportionate burden of child-rearing responsibilities with stepkids who are frustrated because it's *Dad* they want to be with, not his new wife.

No wonder God hates

divorce. (See Mal. 2:16.)

There are all kinds of good information available on "how to" blend stepfamilies. Since I can offer nothing new in the way of solutions, I want to underscore the *urgency*:

Stepparents: Time is *not* on your side. There is not time to sort through your feelings, "get your head together," or peel through the layers of grief before you act.

Young lives are hanging in the balance. What you *do* (or *don't* do) in the next few years will dramatically impact the trajectory of those lives. There isn't time to wait for the "want to" to catch up with the "need to." This is one situation in which it is imperative that you make some decisions about *doing* right, then trust God to pull your emotions into harmony with those decisions.

Meanwhile, back at the store: I forgot my wallpaper, walked up to Bob, gave him my card and said: "It sounds like there's a lot of pain here. I can help if you'll let me. Give me a call."

I'm ashamed to confess to you that that is *not* what I did.

But I will next time. *M.*

Robin Wentworth Mayer is pastor of Kokomo (Ind.) Church of the Brethren.

Stepping Stones is a column offering suggestions, perspectives, and opinions—snapshots of life—that we hope are helpful to readers in their Christian journey. As the writer said in her first installment, "Remember, when it comes to managing life's difficulties, we don't need to walk on water. We just need to learn where the stepping stones are."

Who can withhold the

by Alice Areher

Acts 10:47 “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit as we have?”

Martin Van Buren, as governor of New York, wrote President Andrew Jackson in 1829 to express alarm about “a new form of transportation known as railroads.” His concern was that the railroads would put New York’s canal transportation system out of business. He concluded his letter this way:

“As you well know, Mr. President, railroad carriages are pulled at the enormous speed of 15 miles per hour by engines which, in addition to endangering life and limb of passengers, roar and snort their way through the countryside, setting fire to crops, scaring the livestock, and frightening women and children. The Almighty certainly never intended that people should travel at such breakneck speed.”

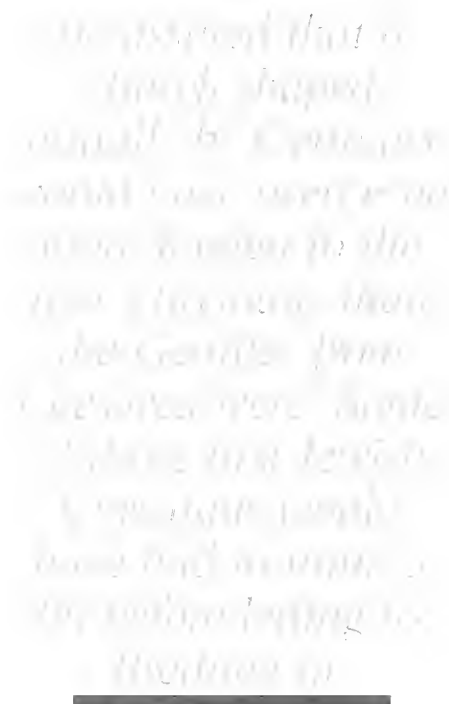
In Acts 10, Peter starts out every bit as apprehensive about change as Governor Van Buren was. Peter was a good Jew. He had been raised with all the cultural assumptions, social customs, and biases of the average Jew in Palestine.

Jewish tradition was full of rules, laws, and common understandings about what to do and how to live. There were specific laws to govern one’s behavior on the Sabbath, rules about what to cook and how to cook it, whom to socialize with and how. Peter shows every indication of taking all of this seriously, and no indication of being a cosmopolitan man. Take Peter out of his Jewish culture and we have a man who just won’t know how to function.

Then Peter has a vision. A great sheet descends from heaven containing all those creatures considered unclean by Jewish tradition. God tells Peter to get up, kill the unclean animals, and

eat them. Imagine that! God himself telling Peter to break the taboos of his culture, and to expand his boundaries.

At first Peter is too bound to all the familiar rules and taboos of his culture to respond. He argues with God. There is Peter deep in prayer, meditating so intensely he has gone into a trance. God speaks directly to him. And this



man has the nerve to argue with God.

God is not going to let that one go by. He argues back. “Peter, what God makes clean, you must not profane.” Three times God tells Peter to eat the very meats Peter has known all his life are taboo.

Just then three men arrive from Caesarea. Note that Peter did not go out to evangelize these people. They came to him. But these are foreigners, Gentiles, uncircumcised men. According to Peter’s own testimony, eating with foreigners—engaging in table fellowship with them—is prohibited. A good Jew in Bible times just simply would not do this.

But Peter understands that vision to be telling him to go. So he goes. Some

of the folks back home aren’t very happy about this. “What’s going on, Peter?” they ask when he returns.

Peter then describes his meeting with the Gentiles to the folks back home, saying, “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning” (Acts 11:15). He refers back to their own day of Pentecost. Pentecost has also come to Gentiles. “If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?” (Acts 11:17). And there was silence in the room.

Change was coming. This is a dramatic turning point for the Christian community. Change is frightening. It can catch us off guard. It can paralyze us. It can leave us speechless. We even resist it—argue with God about it—just as Peter did.

A church that included Gentiles. That took some thinking. They had to let that one settle awhile. But when it soaked in, when they began to see the potential of a church expanding further than they had dared to dream it could, they celebrated. “Then God has even given to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life” (Acts 11:18).

This was a church that was going to change. It was as dramatic a change as it is for us in the Church of the Brethren in America to picture the Annual Conference our own church has in Nigeria. The dress, the food, the languages spoken, the meeting place—all in Nigeria: It’s hard to picture that and understand it as the Church of the Brethren. To picture the love feast in Brazil ending with a *dance*—and to understand that is Brethren-style love feast someplace today: That’s hard too. Perhaps soon we will picture a Korean-style meal and understand that as Brethren.

After all, we too are Gentiles who may owe our own participation in the Church of Jesus Christ to this very event when Peter set aside the taboos of his own culture in order to respond

Baptizing water?

to those who came seeking Christ. Be assured that a church shaped initially by Germans would have been even more foreign to the first Christians than the Gentiles from Caesarea were. Some of those first Jewish Christians would have had to think a bit before letting us Brethren in.

What if Peter had refused to go to Caesarea? What if he had said, "No, this is just a message for Jews."

There are always others out there hungry for the Christian message. But that also will always mean a continually changing church. Occasionally it helps to look backward to reassure ourselves that change is alright.

Some Brethren of today were alive in 1911 when the Church of the Brethren declared that men were to continue to "wear their hair and beard in a plain and sanitary manner. That the mustache alone is forbidden. . . ." The women were to wear "plainly made garments . . . plain bonnets . . . and veil. . . ." Consider how much change has come to the church since 1911.

Peter first resisted change as we all do, as Governor Van Buren did. But how foolish our resistance to change can look later. And what a beautiful thing it is when we go to the heart of the message, and see that the same core message can survive across thousands of years, and in hundreds of different languages, and is not affected by what we eat, or what we wear, or what rhythm we listen to.

Peter's willingness to venture out, to experience new things in new places, to open himself finally to new possibilities, new expressions of faith, was just the first step in taking the message of Jesus beyond Jewish boundaries.

Even Peter may have reported with some amazement that the Holy Spirit was present in those other places too, that the Holy Spirit was not bound and limited by the customs and culture of one group of people. And you and I can be grateful that the Holy Spirit is not limited by whether we travel by

canal or by railroad. We know that we can even find God while flying through the clouds. I wonder what Martin Van Buren would say about the space age.

Those early Jewish Christians required a bit of silence and reflection to absorb the impact of a church that included Gentiles. And then they celebrated a Holy Spirit far more powerful and wonderful than they had dared to dream. Once you broke that Jewish boundary, where were you ever going to establish a boundary to try to contain the Holy Spirit again?

There are pivotal points, as Peter discovered, at which something of the old has to die to make room for the new. And there are pivotal points at which a new vision needs to arise if the church is to survive and move forward.

The early church was much like a family. Peter had been courted and proposed to. God had prepared him to say yes. But in saying yes he had to give up some of his major assumptions about life. He had to become somebody a little different if these Gentiles were going to become his in-laws.

Now Peter's family has a problem. What are they going to do with these strange new in-laws suddenly thrust upon them? New in-laws just never get it quite right. They don't cook the same way. They don't understand the inside jokes. Maybe the family never ate oyster dressing before; all of a sudden there is a new in-law, and from now on, at every Thanksgiving and Christmas meal, there is going to be oyster dressing.

Some of the family will laugh, some will shake their heads, some will even groan and say, "Oh, not again." But it is going to happen. Just as soon as you start dealing with new in-laws, life will never be the same again.

When they courted and proposed to Peter, did those in-laws-to-be really understand what they were doing?

Imagine voluntarily choosing to join this strange little family with all sorts of peculiar traits to get used to. Did any of us really understand when we married into a family that we were going to have to change?

Those Gentiles were really going to have to stretch themselves to become part of Peter's family. Peter's family was never going to get it quite right as they understood life either.

But a marvelous thing happened. They finally did become one family. And it is a good thing they did. It is a good thing that Peter understood the need for a much larger vision.

The day came when that first church in Jerusalem was suffering terribly. It was then that the Gentile church saved that church. Paul talks about that. In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul tells how the churches in Macedonia voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, to further the work of the early church. In 2 Corinthians 9, the church of Corinth takes up a collection to help the mother church in Jerusalem. The in-laws had made themselves fully part of the family, even saving that strange little family they had married into.

If Peter had not taken the risk of venturing beyond the safe, comfortable boundaries he felt so secure in, the church might have failed. The work of Jesus might even have ended with that first generation. It is not the only time the in-laws saved God's people. Ruth, in the Old Testament, an in-law, saves a remnant of the family. And we have Jesus' parable of the wedding banquet. Many of the expected guests do not show up so the master sends the servants out into the main streets to invite everyone they find to the banquet. And the banquet hall is filled.

If today's banquet halls are to be filled we must be sure our taboos, our biases, our traditions are not keeping the guests away. *M.*

Alice Archer is pastor of Mount Pleasant Church of the Brethren, Bourbon, Ind

Being a giant isn't

by Richard L. Landrum

You know the story. You've heard it since childhood. David and Goliath. Kids love it because kids are little and sometimes are victims of big bullies. Little David, a shepherd boy, faces Goliath, Goliath is the champion of the immense and well equipped army of the Philistines, lined up against Israel's ragtag troops. King Saul's small force against the Philistines doesn't stand a chance.

But David steps into the picture with only a sling and five smooth stones. It amuses Goliath that such a puny twerp would stand up to him with a sling shot. Goliath is a huge hunk — "six cubits and a span" — solid muscle rippling over bone, covered with armor, and bristling with sword, javelin, and shield. "Am I a dog," he taunts David, "that you should come to me with stick?" Whirrrrrr... smack in the forehead. Down goes the giant. And it only took one stone and one little shepherd boy (See 1 Sam. 17:1-51).

And so everybody cheers when a giant bites the dust. So what's the point? What does faith make of felling bullies?

I have never written about Goliath before, maybe because the subject is too big to tackle. But that didn't bother David. He wasn't intimidated by giants. The big braggart Goliath offered to surrender the Philistine army if any man of Israel could defeat him one on one. David heard the offer and made himself available, but King Saul feared for David's life. David replied, "The Lord, who has saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of the Philistine." Shepherds know how to even the odds, having defended sheep from predators. "Go," said the king, "and may the Lord be with you."

The point of the story is that David is not alone. God is with him. God is with Israel. So they cannot be defeated

by the forces that militate against the promise of God — neither the mighty army of the oppressor nor the threats of murderous bullies. So God's people will not be defeated by corporate monsters that devour the soul of employees and manipulate the market from greed, nor by unresponsive bureaucracies of modern government that ignore the little people, nor by pervasive demons of prejudice and bigotry, nor by cancerous monsters eating the flesh of courageous souls in the hospital, who will not give up on God in this life or the next. God's little people just don't give up. They will not be intimidated by any evil. They are giant-killers, because the Lord is with them.

The Lord is with the powerless and the poor, the little Davids who must contend with powers much larger than they. This theme runs throughout the Scriptures. Jesus' mother echoed the message of her son's life and death, even before he was born. "All generations shall call me blessed," Mary rejoiced. Why? Because God

"has scattered the proud
in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful
from their thrones and

lifted up the lowly;
He has filled the hungry with
good things, and sent the rich
away empty" (Luke 1:47-53).

As a man, Jesus preached Isaiah's prophecy of good news to the poor and release to the captives, esteeming highly for the kingdom "even the least of these," the most despised. The way we treat them is the way we treat Jesus.

Liberation theology calls this biblical theme "God's preferential option for the poor." It is a magnificent theme for the dispossessed, the powerless, the poor, all the little ones who are crushed by the giants of this world. But it's awfully hard on giants. One smooth stone to the head with the help of the Lord, and then David drew

Goliath's sword from the Giant's own sheath and slew him, severing his head from his body. And all the troops of Israel cheered for little David.

Isn't that just like us? Most of us have a soft spot for the little guy, the underdog, the one whom all the odds are against. And we don't like bullies at all; we would rather cut them down to size. So some very fine folks can become the target of our rage toward bullies, even if they themselves are not bullies. They just happen to be undefeated.

Everybody loves a winner, but everybody loves to defeat a winner, too. The Superbowl champs, the World Series victors, the NBA winners. We may have cheered them on, but next season every team is after them. They have to be better than their best for every game because even a mediocre team can be a spoiler. We like to defeat giants, especially when those who are not supposed to win do win. It's an American preferential option for the underdog.

My son, Rick, is six feet four inches tall and weighs 240 pounds. The coach wanted him for tight end on the football team at La Verne, but he refused. His first love was basketball. He was too short to play the post position in college. So he was a power forward. But in high school he was the biggest guy on the team and played post. Rick's team was at the bottom when it played Mount Union, which was in first place. Mount Union's post was six feet nine inches tall and the highest scorer in the state. He was unstoppable. On that fateful night, as the giant center was about to smash another shot through the hoop, Rick brought all of his six feet four inches above the six-foot-nine-inch center and blocked the shot, crushing the giant center all the way to the floor. And all of Huntingdon's bench came to their feet with the visiting fans who traveled to Mount Union that fateful night, and just went wild. Rick's teammates piled on him with hugs and back



easy

We like to bring down giants, but then it gets difficult because we have taken the winner's spot.

slaps. Huntingdon went home defeated again that night by the best team, but they left that gym feeling like winners. The referee called a foul on Rick, but that didn't matter. They said it couldn't be done, but Rick did it. He blocked the giant of high school basketball.

We like to bring down giants. It's part of the game. We especially like it if we are the new winner. But then it gets difficult because we have taken the winner's spot. We have to fill new shoes and walk in them. So who walks just behind us wanting our job, our TV ratings, our team standing, our political position in the next election, our popularity, our corner on the market? Or who, way down at the bottom with no chance for the top, would like to bring us down, just for the sheer joy, spoiling it for the most successful people, who may not be bad people at all? And even if they are bad people, is there no mercy for people at the top? It's tough at the top! Being a giant isn't easy.

So is there any good news for giants in this giant-killing world? Is there any room for giants in our Goliath-killing faith? Because if the next one to get to the top is there only as long as he can fight off everybody below, then is there no

good news for giants or anybody else?

The good news for giants is that God loves Goliath, too. God didn't bless David for David's sake, but also for the sake of Goliath. God didn't bless Israel for Israel's sake alone, but also for the sake of Philistines. God's blessing the poor and powerless is not simply to put them in position to become the next oppressor. God wants shalom, the peace that makes the playing field level. So everyone has a place to play, work, rest and live. So the powerful are brought down, and the powerless are brought up, and there are no giants to kill anymore nor any little ones to protect from bullies.

So competition cannot be the only value on the playing field of shalom. Cooperation and compassion must be part of the playing field of shalom. And there is no place on that playing field for greed, vengeance, and power lust. We all know that the world needs to change, but it's not a level playing field out there. So it's even tougher to play the game God's way in the real world. It takes a real giant to live as Jesus taught us. Jesus is the image of true humanity.

My heart goes out especially to men in our culture. We've been taught to be giant-killers who must go on to be giants. Real men do not cry. Real men are tough. Real men must bear the heavy load. Don't ask for help. Don't show weakness. And so little boys are taught to bear it alone. Be tough, invulnerable. And it's not human. It's dehumanizing. It's too heavy. Being a giant isn't easy.

Real men can share the load with other men. Real men can welcome the strength of women as equal partners in life. Real men can be tender as well as tough. Real men can laugh and cry. Real men can be vulnerable, caring deeply and showing it. Real men are like Jesus. And little boys will see in us the fatherhood of God. No longer will

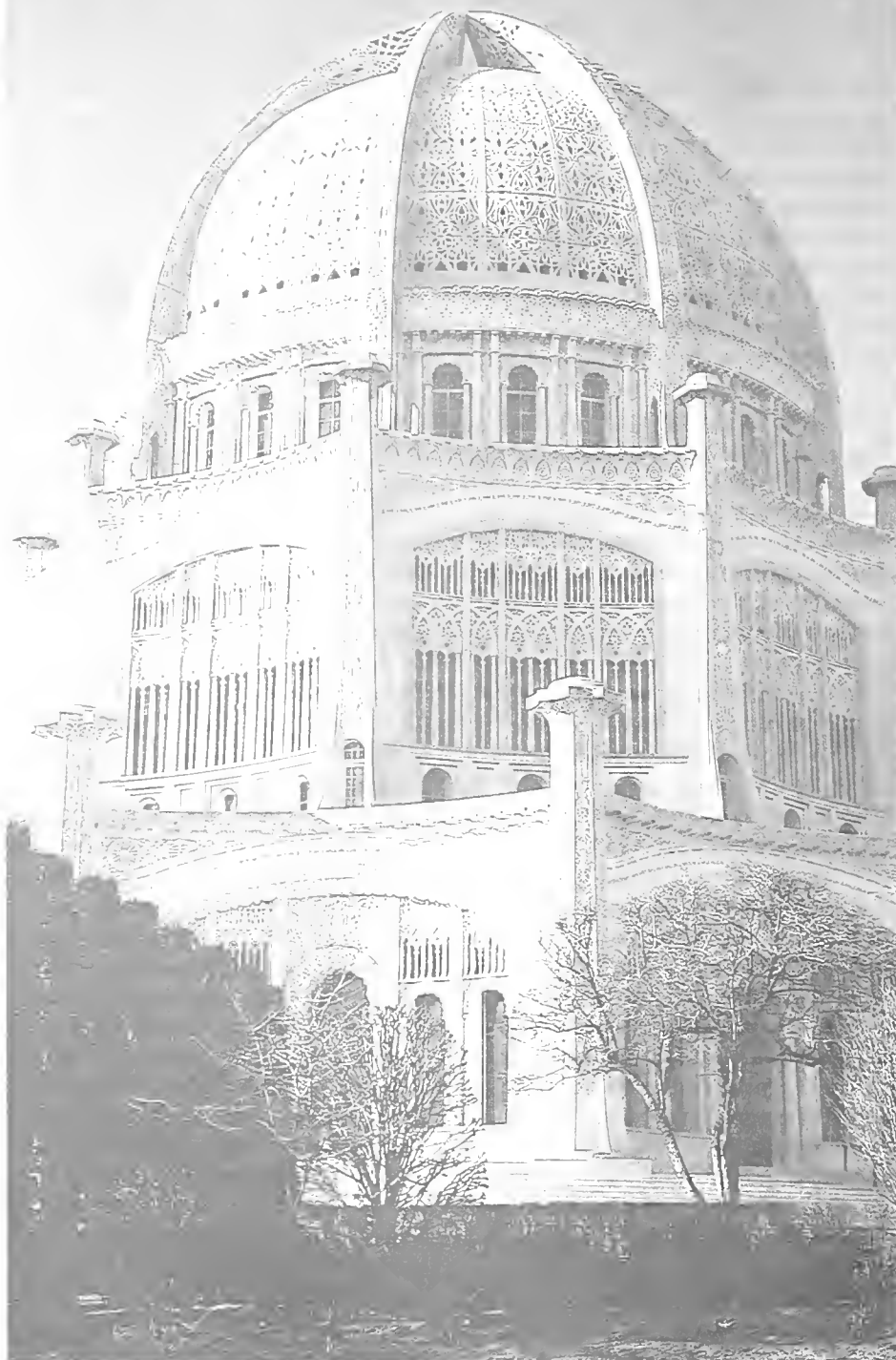
they see Goliath and want to be a lonely giant at the top fighting off all comers.

But it takes a transformation of spirit. Being a giant isn't easy. Compassion for giants means slaying the macho giant anyway, even if it's hard on the giant. Slay the giant with the good news of Jesus Christ and his tender but tough compassion. Slay the Goliath in us so that he dies with Christ and is raised to new life. Jesus died for everybody, even lonely, pressured, busy, stressed-out males who are finding no life at the top. Give your life to Jesus. By the power of God with us, that Goliath in us can fall and be raised a new man. And women will love him and desire him even more, and the children just won't be able to get enough of him. And he will know wonderful friends. God will hug him and walk with him. And the playing field will begin to get more level, more fun, a lot fairer: "Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together" (Isa. 40:4-5).

Composer Johanne Sebastian Bach, initialed his works S.D.G. The letters stand for the Latin, "*Soli Deo Gloria*": "To God be the glory." A real giant is not a lonely, preoccupied, self-centered hero who has to do it all and bear it all at the top. A real giant does wondrous things, as a composer like Bach, or an athlete, or just like an ordinary person with some burdens, joys, and gifts to share with others. And the glory is not for self to impress others. The gigantic glory belongs to God. Give God the glory, and God will always be at our side, win or lose, in life or in death, for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ, good news of love for everyone. M.

Richard L. Landrum is pastor of Wenatchee (Wash.) Brethren-Baptist Church United

No other gospel



*God reveals himself
in many places,
in order to reach
everybody.*

By Carl E. Braaten

The Bahai temple in Wilmette, Ill., expresses the belief that all religions point to the same ultimate reality. The temple has nine magnificent porticoes, each dedicated to the prophet of one of the world's major religions. Like spokes on a wheel, the porticoes lead to a single central altar via nine radial aisles.

The altar symbolizes the one God at the center of the many religions. It doesn't matter which portico you enter or which aisle you walk down. All lead to the same place.

The Bahai temple is an architectural expression of a widespread belief: Although the religions seem different, they are equally valid ways to the same truth and salvation. This is no longer simply a tenet of the Bahai or some other sect. It is comfortably at home in American culture, given our democratic sense that all are equal.

This "pluralistic theory of religions" is even making alarming headway within Christian circles, on mission boards, in seminaries, and from church pulpits.

Religious pluralism is both a fact and a theory. Christianity is, of course,

Christ alone?

Three models Christians have used to understand other faiths

Exclusivist

Other religions are invalid human attempts to find God. Christ offers the only path to salvation.

Criticism: Some say this view denies that God truly seeks the salvation of all. It has fostered intolerance and oppression of non-Christians.

Pluralist

All major religions offer equally valid alternative paths to the one God. Christ is only my way to God.

Criticism: This view denies clear, biblical statements about the uniqueness of Jesus.

Inclusivist

God is present and revealing himself in saving ways in many places, including in non-Christian religions. Christ is the definitive, authoritative revelation of God that judges the adequacy of other revelations.

Criticism: Some say this view fails to take other revelations of God seriously on their own merits.

The Authors

one among many religions. It was born in a dizzying whirlpool of religions—Jewish, Greek, Roman, and Oriental. From the very beginning, Christians struggled to proclaim the revealed truth of God to all in a missionary encounter with other religions and philosophies.

At first the Christian faith was attacked by the Jews as a heresy. The Romans persecuted it as a seditious movement. Greek philosophers ridiculed it as a contemptible myth. And popular cults and mystery religions gave it a run for its money. Christians meeting a world of religious pluralism is nothing new.

What is new is that some Christians are adopting a theory or theology of religious pluralism that considers all religions equally true and saving.

Diana Eck, for example, teaches world religions at Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. She writes beautifully about her spiritual journey from "Bozeman to Banaras." She tells how she acquired a strong faith in God from her Methodist upbringing in Montana. This beginning also gave her a sense of what the church is and a commitment to its work in the world.

Years later, however, Eck found herself in India, at a Vaishnavite temple. While praying with her Hindu friends she "beheld the beauty of the Lord" in the peaceful face of a statue of Vishnu. "Was our God the same God?" she asks. "Frankly the question did not occur to me. I simply took it for granted."

No other gospel?

Same God? Same gospel? Tell it to Paul. He warned the Corinthians about those preaching a different Jesus. And he scolded the Galatians for turning to a different gospel. Tell it to Peter who said to the scribes and elders in Jerusalem: "This Jesus is 'the stone that was rejected. . . it has become the cor-

nerstone.' There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:11-12).

There are many similar passages in scripture that proclaim "No other God!" and "No other gospel!" than the one whose saving revelation is centered in Jesus Christ. There is no getting around the gospel's exclusive claim.

But what do the pluralists do with it? They explain it away as an example of the parochial attitudes of ancient times, or they simply reject it as a belief incompatible with enlightened modern thinking.

The first Christians knew their faith embraced the final truth of God for the salvation of the world in Jesus Christ, not merely one truth among many. The New Testament and the Christian creeds present Jesus not as a son of God, but as *the only* Son of God, not as a savior, but as *the* Savior, not as a lord, but as *the* Lord. These exclusive titles for Jesus are part of the kernel of the gospel, not so much husk that can be thrown away.

The "one and only" statements about Jesus in the New Testament were—and are—countercultural, not merely a product of a primitive religious outlook. Early Christians placed their lives on the line to confess that Jesus is Lord and Savior in a unique sense.

Christian martyrs were not merely campaigning to have the blessed name of Jesus, the name above all names, included in a pantheon of the world's divinities.

Elephant theology

There is no basis in scripture and the Christian faith for the pluralistic theology of religions. Its origin is found in non-Christian philosophies and religions.

About 100 years ago, a young Hindu reformer, Swami Vivekananda, came to the West proclaiming that for 2,500 years India had accepted a philosophy of religious pluralism. Hindu pluralism is illustrated by the famous fable of the elephant and the blind men.

Six blind philosophers inquire into the nature of the elephant. One falls



Judaism

Christians and Jews share the same history of faith that began with Abraham and Sarah. Jesus was a rabbi (teacher) but not the Messiah (Christ), and God's kingdom has not dawned with him. Some Jews await another.

SALVATION: Restoration of Israel as a holy nation into which the nations, purified, will be incorporated. Belief in a personal afterlife and divine judgment based on merit developed in the 2nd century B.C.



Hinduism

Jesus may be accepted as a guru (spiritual teacher) or as an avatara, one of the many incarnations of transcendent divine Reality, but not as the world's only Lord and Savior.

SALVATION: Release from the endless cycle of births and deaths of reincarnation. The soul escapes this through meditation, an ascetic life, and devotion to deities in order to separate from the illusion that the sensory world is truly reality.

JESUS & OTHER RELIGIONS

Christianity

Jesus is the Christ, the Savior and Lord of the world. He is the ultimate, authoritative revelation of God who continues to seek all in suffering love. In him God's final kingdom has dawned in the world.

SALVATION: Forgiveness of sins and eternal life through Jesus' death and resurrection.

WHAT DO THEY SAY ABOUT JESUS?



Islam

Jesus is one of a long line of messengers of Allah that includes Moses and Muhammad. He's a suffering servant of God who didn't die on the cross but was taken up into heaven. For Muslims' God is not triune, so Jesus can't be the second person of the holy trinity.

SALVATION: Comes through submission to the will of Allah which allows one to escape the punishment pronounced on sinners at the last judgment.



Buddhism

Like Jesus, Gautama, the Buddha, the enlightened One, was a wandering preacher with a message of salvation. He called people to change their hearts, abandoning selfish desire. For the Buddha this led to tranquility, for Christ to suffering love.

SALVATION: Shares with Hinduism the belief in the cycle of reincarnation. The soul achieves nirvana—escape from the endless cycle—and tranquility through an eight-fold path of right action and meditation which extinguishes desire.

against its side and thinks the elephant is like a wall. A second feels the tusk and thinks the elephant is like a spear. For the others, the trunk is like a snake, the leg is like a tree, the ear is like a fan and the swinging tail is like a rope. The philosophers each think that their distinctive experience represents the truth.

Likewise, the fable suggests, each of the great world religions thinks its experience with the mystery of ultimate reality is the truth.

But superior wisdom, the logic continues, teaches the "real" truth: *Each of the religions teaches truth, one-sided as it is.* Their only mistake is believing that its partial perspective is the whole truth, that its relative grasp of reality is absolute.

Like the storyteller of the elephant fable, the pluralist knows that all religions are groping to be in touch with "ultimate reality," and that they use a limited metaphor to describe it.

Christians use Jesus to seek truth. Muslims use Mohammed and

Buddhists use Gautama, and so forth. That's all right, pluralists argue, so long as they don't blindly claim their particular experience represents universal truth.

A correlation exists between the rise

of early Christians who convinced that God's eternal truth and life coming to the world had arrived in the person of Jesus.

of this pluralistic teaching and the collapse of world evangelization.

Why evangelize if all peoples are equally blessed by the same God who is working to save them through the great variety of religious rituals and

experiences? The best we can expect of a church acting on a pluralist vision is a mission of dialog to discuss ideas.

Evangelization is the hard and risky work of missionaries who preach the gospel and plant new churches. Too often, interreligious dialog becomes a fashionable substitute, carried on politely by academicians at room temperature.

Of course, we need dialog among people of different religions. Religious differences often are one root of conflict and violence between warring factions. The world needs greater tolerance and respect for people of other loyalties.

But this doesn't mean that Christians should march down one of the aisles to the high altar dedicated to one other than God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

At stake, finally, is the heart of the gospel: God's act of salvation mediated through Christ alone. There is salvation in no other name. There is no other gospel for the world's salvation.

Many revelations

But we need to see another side of the story. Paul entered into a dialog with the philosophers of Athens. Standing in front of the Areopagus, he said:

"Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands. . . . indeed, he is not far from each one of us. For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said" (Acts 17: 22-24, 27b-28).

The exclusive claim of the gospel of salvation through Christ alone does not deny that God has revealed something of "his eternal power and divine nature . . . through the things he has made" (Rom. 1:20).

Other religions are not striving for nothingness or false gods. They are looking toward union with the divine mystery that the Christian gospel announces has already appeared in the person of Jesus.

God's revelation outside the Bible and the church means that there are other words that hint at and point to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

The God revealed in Jesus Christ is the same God at work in all the religions of humankind and in the secular world.

Still, we must remember: Revelation is one thing; salvation is another. Not all revelation is saving. God's law is revealed, but only the gospel saves.

The gospel is something extremely particular; it can be found only through faith in Christ. The law, however, is general. We find it everywhere in the everyday world of nature, histo-

ry, society, conscience, and religious experience.

Revelation is like a broad highway that runs through all the religions. Salvation is a narrow path. It starts

What is unique about Jesus is his universal meaning. Jesus is not only my personal Lord and Savior; he is the Lord and Savior of the whole world. Now we have grounds for hope, not only for ourselves but for all.

with God's call of Abraham and proceeds by means of a narrow column of events that includes God's election of Israel, the death and resurrection of Jesus, the outpouring of the Spirit, the creation of the church, and the mission to the nations that continues until the Lord returns in glory.

There is simply no way to generalize those particular events into a universal theory of the religions without losing what is distinctively biblical and Christian. Nor can we reduce the gospel to an abstract religious ideal that lies hidden in the symbols of other religions.

Go to all the world

We have a profound theological reason for our interest in the place of Christianity among world religions—the great commission of our risen Lord to tell the gospel to all people.

Without this commission, Christianity would have remained a dinky Palestinian sect long since forgotten.

The early Christians, though weak and few, dared to take on the world. They were convinced that God's eternal truth and his coming kingdom had arrived in the person of Jesus. Their calling was to tell the world about it. Through the centuries, millions of believers, convinced of the gospel, have obeyed that call.

Pluralists, however, feel that laying so great an emphasis on the uniqueness of Christ leaves no chance for the salvation of non-Christians. But they miss the point.

What is unique about Jesus is his universal meaning. Jesus is not only my personal Lord and Savior; he is the Lord and Savior of the whole world. Now we have grounds for hope, not only for ourselves but for all.

Even Orthodox Christians believed that somehow Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle would be saved along with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, along with Peter, James, and John. How to understand that in a coherent theological way has long been the subject of mind-boggling speculation.

We have no consensus in the Christian tradition on how things will turn out in the end. The salvation of those who do not believe in Christ in this lifetime is ultimately a mystery. We cannot unveil it by speculation.

Meanwhile, it is necessary to go to the nations with the one gospel of salvation, knowing that Jesus died and was raised for all. That's the good news.

As we go along, it is good for us to pray that God's will be done, trusting the word that it is God's will that all shall be saved and come to the knowledge of truth. *M.*

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Keeping body and soul together

by David Radcliff

With me standing at a pay phone on the corner of 72nd and York in New York City, a trio of ambulances blaring by, and Refugee Disaster Services coordinator Donna Derr on the other end of the line, the issue became quite pointed. "You have to be able to tell them why we are doing this," Donna said above the din.

The "this" was a proposal that Victor Hsu of the National Council of Churches of Christ and I shortly would make to Ham, Song Ryol, minister counselor of the North Korean Mission to the United Nations. The kernel of the proposal was a Church of the Brethren offer to send a six-person disaster response team to North Korea following a devastating series of floods in late summer 1995. Leaving 100,000 people homeless and a quarter of that country's crops in ruins, the floods had precipitated a first-ever appeal for outside assistance by the government of North Korea and the Korean Christian Federation, the principle ecumenical body.

Why *were* we doing this? We certainly have had other priorities on the Korean peninsula over the past several years. We have been working to try to establish the Church of the Brethren in South Korea. This effort had been in response to a 1990 Annual Conference decision for the Brethren to add their voice to the chorus of voices preaching the gospel in that country. This vote seemed to issue from a longing by the denomination to once again be involved in church-planting in another country.

Many would say that this is indeed the first—and for some, nearly *sole*—great work of the church. At Annual Conference and in the letters in



MISSINGER, some Brethren decry our involvement in "social ministry," calling the church to focus its attention on preaching salvation in Jesus Christ. They say our failure to do this has led to our spiritual and numerical demise. At worst, they warn, we are in danger of straying from true faith in God.

In many ways, their point is well taken. We have not been as articulate or as ready as other Christians in naming Jesus as the source of our faith and our good deeds. We also have at times neglected to correctly analyze the ills of our world. We have blamed misguided political and economic systems for the world's problems, when many of our ills are *spiritual* in nature—the result of the worship of money, or the idolization of one's nation or creed, or the deeply spiritual maladies of racism or militarism.

Indeed, what we must strive for is a profound change of heart in the lives

of our neighbors—and in ourselves. This radical reorientation toward Jesus' way can truly become a way of salvation—not only for the believer, but also for the world, as Jesus' followers exert influence on the people and social systems around them.

Even this idea, however, begins to cross the boundary between the spiritual and the social dimensions of Christian faith. Indeed, this boundary begins to be seen for what it is—and artificial line separating that which cannot be severed.

Writer after writer in the Bible warns that one cannot separate one's faith in God from one's responsibility for the spiritual and physical well-being of one's neighbors. Faith without works is a hollow self-centered exercise; social concern without spiritual grounding robs our witness of its power.

In the Old Testament, it is the prophets who remind Israel that the nation's spiritual health and political existence hinge on its care for those at the margin of society and its sense of justice for all. The prophets likewise offer a profoundly spiritual analysis of the evils that beset personal lives as well as international events.

It is in the New Testament and particularly in the life of Jesus, however, that we find these two aspects of our faith fully united. Those of us who are content to express our faith in deed alone, and who call the church to do the same, must sidestep Paul's call for a "new creation" in Christ, Jesus' invitation to be "born from above," and the Revelator's message that steadfast faith is the key to

enduring persecution and trial.

For others who challenge the church to focus its ministry on proclaiming salvation, the New Testament agrees—but only if we cast wide the circle of those things that qualify as the experience of salvation. Jesus’ “saving work” included his intensive teaching as well as his decisive healing. He was equally as active in curing the ill and touching the untouchable as in preaching repentance.

Think of the occasions his ministry revealed a genuine human touch with no obvious spiritual dimension (if we use the narrower definition of “spiritual”). Was his love for children just a refreshing diversion? When he raised the widow’s son, was he simply killing time between preaching sessions? In healing the lame and the blind, was he really looking for an opening to discuss “spiritual matters?” In choosing to go through Samaria, did he lose his way, or was he under an inner compulsion to boldly go where no man had gone before—into enemy territory to hold a forbidden conversation with a social outcast, the woman at the well.

Jesus unabashedly bound together into a life-giving whole those two vital dimensions of human life—our spiritual health, and our relational responsibilities and physical well-being. Whether one or the other received prominence in a given situation depended on the needs of the moment. Jesus surely must have surprised the paralyzed man let down through the roof by first forgiving his sins. Even in his bedridden condition, Jesus sensed the gravity of this man’s spiritual needs. Likewise, it must have felt like a bolt out of the blue when Jesus told the rich young ruler that he would need to give his possessions to the poor to enter paradise. After all, this man could claim to have kept every commandment from his youth. Jesus sensed that

a material transformation needed to accompany his spiritual credentials.

The Church of the Brethren has a legacy of having worked to hold together these two essential facets of Christian life. One sign of this has been our practice of the love feast, during which our relationships with

Writer goes back to the Bible, and one cannot separate one's hands from one's feet. It is a responsibility to care for the physical and spiritual well-being of our neighbors, both within and without the church. We must exercise our spiritual gifts in the witness of the gospel.

God and neighbor are inextricably intertwined. Contrary to those who call for an adherence to one to the exclusion of the other, it may be that our genius—and our calling—is in keeping them intact. In fact, another perspective on our recent problems as a denomination could be that we lose both members and spiritual integrity when we do not have the courage and conviction to boldly proclaim the full gospel, which is a message of salvation

for body *and* soul.

In our church-planting efforts in South Korea and other places, the one thing that without fail intrigues and attracts others is our ability to present this fuller picture of the gospel message. Other Christian groups often have chosen to focus on Jesus as a personal Savior, perhaps in an attempt to present the “essential” Christian message to new believers. This stripped-down version does not do justice, however, to God’s ringing affirmation of human life in all its fullness in sending Jesus into our world. If indeed it is in his life and teachings that we most clearly understand God’s hopes for this world, the one clear conclusion we can draw is that God cares for every aspect of human life. From our relationships with our enemies to our care for the wounded and weak to our spiritual well-being—these together provide the “core message” of the Christian faith.

Why were we attempting to send a disaster response team to North Korea? Because that is what we do. As Christians, we seek opportunities to advance the cause of Christ. Today it may be through enemies being friends or the wounded made well. Tomorrow it may be in sharing a message of hope with a troubled soul. The next day it may be in naming the deep spiritual ills that divide our nation and our world.

Whenever the day, whatever the need, let us offer not the part, but the whole. May the gospel of Christ—the redeeming, reconciling, renewing, rewarding word for our world—be fully and freely given by the people called Brethren. The world needs nothing less. Christ expects nothing more. *M.*

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Christian unity: Harmony, not homogeneity, is the key

by Gregg A. Wilhelm

In October, Pope John Paul II, spiritual and ecclesial leader of the world's 960 million Catholics, presided over Mass for 50,000 people at Baltimore's baseball stadium. My wife and I, my Brethren parents, and my Catholic in-laws were there.

I had the usual fish-out-of-water feeling that I get at Catholic Mass, a sort of "Protestant Yankee in Pope John Paul's Court."

It was a very special papal visit because no other pontiff had ever visited the city, and Baltimore is acknowledged as the Premier See, or the first American diocese, established in 1789. Catholics first found tolerance in the New World on Maryland shores in 1654. By way of comparison, the Brethren planted their North American roots in nearby Germantown, Pa., in the 1720s.

The pope's visit elicited many editorials and sermons on ecumenism. There were renewed calls for "Christian unity." And while this enlightened spirit is always a blessing, it depresses me to think that perhaps not much progress has occurred in the 555 years since the colonists—Protestant and Catholic established Mary's Land.

On the threshold of a new millennium, what kind of unity is it that some Christians are desperately seeking?

John Paul's latest encyclical, "That They May Be One," is a letter on Christian unity. The title is taken from John 17:21, where Jesus prays on the eve of his crucifixion that all those who believe in him be one, united in a living communion. This prayer is indeed a gospel mandate to be a unified church. But there seem to be as many understandings of Christian unity as there are Christians seeking it.

In the letter, the pope says great things: He asks forgiveness for the pain inflicted by the Catholic Church's checkered past, he encourages dialog and tolerance, and his language

becomes more inclusive ("brothers and sisters of other churches and ecclesial communities"), when early in the letter it is noticeably exclusive ("separated brethren"). Thirty years after the progressive declarations of Vatican II, the Catholic Church has never been more open to dialog and action with other Christian churches.



John Paul—one of the most intelligent and globally influential popes in the history of the pontificate—certainly has the right attitude: "It is necessary to pass from antagonism and conflict to a situation where each party recognizes the other as a partner. . . . each side must presuppose in the other a desire for reconciliation."

The pope loses the focus, however, on what Christian unity should be and what it *can only be*, given the legitimate development of other Christian faith traditions. He uses words such as "restoration," "re-establishment," and "return." In the encyclical, there is a strong sense that Catholicism remains the shepherd, and Protestants still are the lost sheep.

I conclude that the kind of "unity" the pope calls for is not a *progression* toward understanding, but a *regression* to a church as the world knew it prior

to the Protestant Reformation in 1517 and schism with the Eastern Churches in 1054. He shows little regard for the now deep-rooted beliefs that these two ecclesial communities possess. As one ecumenical leader and scholar said to me, "Full and visible communion seems to depend, according to the encyclical, on acceptance of basic Catholic understandings of the papacy and the eucharist."

The pope states that there is "a movement . . . for the restoration of unity among all Christians . . . which is called ecumenical." I am not sure that the ecumenical movement promotes Christian unity, at least not the kind of unity defined by the pope, as much as it fosters Christian understanding, dialog, and tolerance among denominations, and among Christians and believers of other religions.

The pope fears compromise, which is "in contradiction with God who is Truth." Ecumenists do not require anyone to compromise or concede any of their beliefs. Ecumenism is not a force for proselytization and homogenization, but a force propelling people toward better communication and cooperation in an ethnically and religiously pluralistic world.

I fear that striving to attain Christian unity is overshadowing the primary Christian call to live Christ-centered lives—to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. To me, real unity means loving one another, or at the very least, not killing one another. The end-all of Christian unity is not the literal sharing together of communion in the same ritualistic format—whether that ritual is eucharist or love feast. In a perfect world, the entire Church (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox) would feel free to share communion, as Christ instituted it at the Last Supper, and embody Christ's prayer that "they may be one."

But what's really stopping us? Pride? Arrogance? Why can't we "just do it"?

The Church, all churches, while

divinely ordained by Jesus Christ, is a human institution, chock-full of human jealousy, egotism, snobbery, and supposed locks on the truth. Also, the Church cannot go back in time: The rifts and schisms that past events created can be forgiven, but they cannot be undone either. Nor would we necessarily want those events erased—for through the pain, a diverse and culturally ornate church was forged, the gospel was preached farther and wider, and people with different opinions and different ways of worshiping are joined in dialog and less prone to wars of religious freedom and reformation.

So, if not unity-in-conformity, what? A notion that has emerged in ecumenical dialogs is "unity-in-diversity." This approach, to me, seems much more fruitful and honest,

because it starts with an acknowledgment that diversity exists. Given this diversity in the ways Christians worship Christ and operate their churches, we should pinpoint our commonalities—belief in Jesus Christ, a trinitarian perspective of God, shared soteriology, concern for social justice, care for the poor and oppressed. This way, the whole of Christ's Church is unified in mission and spirit, while individual churches retain their cherished and defining ideas about the sacraments, clergy, liturgy, ecclesiology.

My sister put it succinctly: "I cannot *not* be Brethren." While there is much that attracts me to Catholicism, I could never convert. The kind of conversion that is called for is a conversion of the heart.

In his book *Brethren Society* (see

pages 361-368), Carl Bowman explores the notion of unity-in-diversity in regard to dramatic changes that have occurred within the Church of the Brethren. In a landmark statement that the church-at-large could learn much from, Brethren declared that "diversity is God's pattern in creation . . . conformity is humanity's pattern . . . it is the love experienced when Christ is at the center of one's life, that draws us into unity" (1979 Annual Conference). Some Christians wash feet and take communion twice a year, others pray the rosary and take communion weekly. All Christians need to be living Christ-centered lives, and it is through this way of life that we are united.

There will always be stubborn Catholics and bitter Protestants. After all, we have recorded a rather intense

"To understand more clearly, what questions can I ask?"



Asking questions is typical of Robert Johansen '62. Finding answers nourishes his soul. His Brethren roots and Illinois farm background nurture his examination of global issues which affect universal human dignity, economic well-being, ecological balance, and world peace. Traveler, author, professor, and Senior Fellow, Dr. Johansen serves as director of graduate peace studies at the University of Notre Dame. Morally sensitive with a strong nurturing awareness, Dr. Johansen challenges others to think and act in ways that will better serve our world.

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From the General Secretary

The church at work in Russia

As I write, I can look out one window and see the Russian White House in Moscow and out another window and see the Kremlin. My wife and I are on a private Christmas visit to see our daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren, who live here in the Russian capital.

While in Russia, we visited one of the agricultural projects to which the Church of the Brethren is giving some support (March 1994, page 15). With the new economy in Russia, there is a great need for agricultural aid. The traditional leaders of agriculture in Russia were the monasteries, which often were models of new agricultural methods. This all changed when the monasteries were closed under communist rule.

Five sites have been chosen to help re-establish agriculture in their regions of the country. This program is being done cooperatively among the Russian Orthodox Church, The Union of Evangelical Christian-Baptists in Russia, and the Church World Service and Witness Unit of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.

I visited Anosino, some 25 miles west of Moscow. It is a monastery that was returned to the Orthodox Church four years ago. For the previous 70 years, the monastery was allowed to run down and occasionally was used as a movie theater. The director of the effort to re-establish the monastery is Father Spiridon, whose winsome, energetic spirit is contagious.

The monastery now has a community of 25 nuns caring for gardens, planting crops, and tending the animals under Father Spiridon's direction. They have six cows, and hope to expand to a herd of perhaps 60. They also have goats, sheep, chickens, and horses. Father Spiridon proudly showed us the agricultural equipment that Brethren staff member Lamar Gible had assisted them in procuring. They showed us the tons of potatoes produced last summer, the new farm pond, and the buildings now being erected. They hope eventually to have an orphanage and a retirement residence.

Much remains to be done before the monastery is fully operative, but they have a very good beginning. They are enormously thankful for the assistance of American churches, including the Church of the Brethren.

While we were not able to visit the other four projects, we were told their development is equally encouraging. They are scattered across the former Soviet Union from Smolensk to Novosibirsk in Siberia.

An Orthodox leader pointed out to me that agriculture is a part of the total outreach of the monasteries and parishes where these projects are located. They are part of the church's evangelistic program to bring people to the church and to a life of discipleship to Jesus Christ. "Tell your people that their support of these projects is helping win people back to faith in Christ."

I am impressed with the effect here of our modest assistance.—DONALD E. MILLER

Donald E. Miller, general secretary of the Church of the Brethren

and often gory past. The very name of our faith tradition—"Anabaptist" or re-baptizers or believer's baptism intentionally flies in the face of Catholicism—a constant reminder of a deeper, more divisive history. In the 16th century, many Anabaptists were,

ironically, drowned for opposing the Catholic Church. Books such as *Martyr's Mirror* are inundated with these horror stories, times that are forgivable but very difficult to forget.

Catholics, because of their strong social presence, tend to be an easy tar-

get, but they do not deserve all the heat. Many Protestants and Brethren today—with the lingering effects of a Cold War mentality—still consider themselves champions of Christianity in its rightful, democratic manifestation and believe that Catholics remain blind followers of a totalitarian regime directed by the Antichrist himself. We are just as much to blame as Catholics for the faltering steps toward realizing a peaceable kingdom. This essay, albeit critical of the pope's encyclical, is not intended to be an exercise in preaching to the converted. It is only easier for me to see the "speck" in others' eyes, and to challenge myself to remove the "log" from my own eye.

In the end, the real obstacle to unity, or unity-in-diversity, is ignorance. We simply do not know enough about each other, and what we don't know scares us. As I sat and watched the splendor of the outdoor Mass in Baltimore, I thought of the differences that separate Brethren and Catholics. Catholics are organizationally hierarchical. Brethren are theoretically democratic. Brethren worship is simple and could be called "low" church. Catholic worship is flamboyant or "high" church. Catholics are extremely sacramental and extroverted. Brethren are more devotional and introverted. Brethren are noncreedal. Catholics have several creeds. Catholics practice infant baptism (by infusion). Brethren baptize adult believers (by immersion). On the issue of war, most Brethren still promote pacifism, while Catholics have developed a "just war" theory.

Catholics will never embrace pacifism, and Brethren will never pledge loyalty to Rome. And that's okay. Let's get over it! Christians everywhere—Protestant and Catholic alike—need to embody the tolerance that Maryland's early settlers endeavored to establish. Thank God for the diversity found in creation and people, and let's move on toward Christian harmony, not homogeneity. **M.**

Gregg A. Wilhelm, a member of Woodberry Church of the Brethren, Baltimore, Md., is director of Cathedral Foundation Press and a graduate of St. Mary's Seminary Theological Institute, both in Baltimore.

Will we pay our BVSers?

I was surprised to read in the news article "BVSers to Earn Educational Grants From the Government" (November, page 10), that Brethren Volunteer Service has been seduced by federal government grants.

Since workers now will be paid, will the word Volunteer be removed from the name? Is this just another case in which the church will sell its principle if the price is right?

Well, so much for efforts to separate church and state.

*John C. Graybeal
Hampstead, Md*

Let's repeat the question

Responding to the November editorial ("Could Anything Good Come out of Wardo?"): Phil Stone came out of Wardo.

*Ralph MacPhail
Bridgewater, Va.*

(Phil Stone, a former General Board chairman and Annual Conference moderator, is president of Bridgewater College.—Ed.)

Making humbleness handier

I want to add something to the article "Adapting Faith Rituals" (October, page 14). A Shenandoah District committee studying the love feast found that men talk about the significance of getting on their knees to wash another's feet. Women talk about how its

feels to have someone wash their feet.

Feetwashing expresses two aspects of service: willingness to do humble service and willingness to accept the service of others.

Washing hands as an alternative for the disabled (which the article suggests) does not seem to be the most meaningful adaptation. So here is my suggestion: Let people who are not

able to get down and wash feet still have their feet washed. That would provide everyone the experience of *receiving* service. Then, to provide the experience of *giving* humble service, let those who are unable to kneel and wash feet read scripture, pray, bring food for the meal, or perform some other service within their ability.

Personally I would not find it mean-

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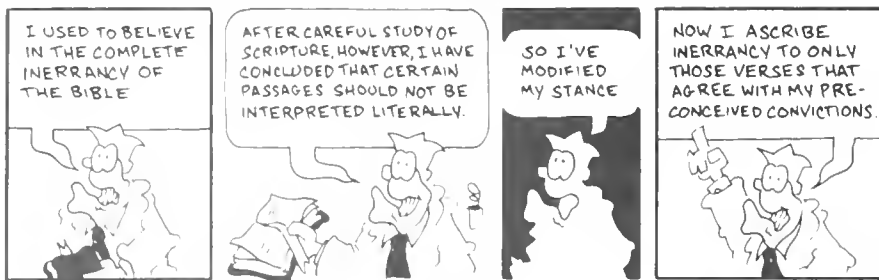
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ingful to have my hands washed by someone. On the other hand, having someone kneel and wash my feet, hug me, and allow me to wish her God's blessing rings true.

And although it would be difficult for me (if I were disabled) to accept the service of footwashing (knowing I could not return it), perhaps that is the very humility that footwashing needs to teach me.

Linda Logan
 Bridgewater, Va

What the brochure really says

In the November article "Singing to the Lord New Songs," mention is made (page 18) of a brochure I prepared that cross-references *Hymnal* and *Hymnal: Accompaniment Handbook*. One sentence reads "The brochure also lists other sources, such as the 1951 Brethren hymnal and publications from other denominations. . . ."

The brochure does not list information from the 1951 hymnal or other sources. That sentence would be more accurate if it were stated this way: "The brochure shows whether keyboard accompaniments are or are not included, whether accompaniments are different, whether key signatures are different, whether tunes are different, whether words are different, whether special information is given, and whether choral arrangements are available."

My brochure is available from Nancy Faus at Bethany Seminary.

The article covered the Sing Through the Hymnal event in a succinct, beautiful way.

Virgil F. Petry
 Richmond, Ind.

Right about the "creed"

David McFadden was right when he wrote "This year we adopted a creed" (October, page 26). It's sad. Believing that Jesus is the only divine Lord and Savior is not my problem. Some of my best friends use words such as that. Others see so much more in Jesus that

they prefer not to reduce the Lord to a formula, much less to require that others do so.

For me, the Christian life is not primarily about believing. It is rather about a relationship with God that involves us in a journey of transformation and about inviting others to join us on the journey.

Delegates at the 1995 Annual Conference in Charlotte voting to adopt a one-time creed does not spell the death of the Church of the Brethren. Creeds do not necessarily destroy the church of Christ. They just make it more difficult to get in.

*Benton Rhoades
La Verne, Calif.*

God recommends grape juice

I was disappointed by the interpretation of John 2:1-11 in Pete Haynes' article "Miracles and Smiles"

(October, page 22). I suggest Samuele Bacchiocchi's book *Wine in the Bible* and three study books *Alcohol in the Bible* by Van Loh for study. Van Loh points out five major assumptions that moderationists use for viewing as alcoholic the wine that Christ transformed from water at the wedding in Cana.

According to the foreword to *Wine in the Bible*, God teaches *total abstinence* from intoxicants. God created grapes and grape juice for man's benefit and enjoyment. God never intended, however, for man to use intoxicating wine as a beverage at all.

*Ada Turner
Richmond, Ind*

Good news passed him by?

I was profoundly disturbed by the opinions expressed in the November letter "God Is No Liberal," and saddened by its harsh tone. The writer appears to be an Old Testament Christian, who has failed to grasp the compassionate good news that Jesus offered to humanity.

Several years ago, some leaders of a political party decided that it would be

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Tuesday: General Board and staff

Wednesday: District executives, Bethany Seminary, colleges and university

Thursday: General Services

Friday: Parish Ministries

Saturday: World Ministries

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Conference: Nominating Committee meeting, January 11-14.

General Board: Staff consultation January 24-25 with Redesign Committee.

Districts and schools: Council of District Executives (CODE) meeting, January 26-28.

General Services: MESSENGER staff.

Parish Ministries: Hispanic Ministry; Heritage Curriculum Development Committee.

World Ministries: BVS Unit 220 orientation, Orlando, Fla., January 7-27; Lester and Esther Boleyn, serving in Nairobi, Kenya.

advantageous to make "liberal" a dirty word and smear their opponents with that label. I made a large lapel button that said "Jesus Christ is a liberal," and

wore it for a couple of weeks. The political use of the liberal label as a denigrating epithet continues unabated today.

Allan R. Shultz,
Blacksburg, Va.

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CLASSIFIED ADS

ALERT TO READERS—We regret that a November classified ad calling for people to earn money by mailing travel brochures turned out to be an apparent scam. (People who responded were asked to send in a cash fee—no checks.) We apologize for accepting and running the ad. We will check out our advertisers more thoroughly in the future.—Ed

FOR SALE—Furnished 3-br. mobile home in very nice m.h. park in Sebring, Fla. Carpeted, screened-in porch, a/c, gas heat & car port. Tel. (419) 643-5664.

FOR SALE—*The Descendants of Henry Gibbel* compiled by late Ira W. Gibbel. Henry Gibbel (born 1717 in Germany, died 1789 in Lancaster County) and wife Christina had five sons: Christopher, Jacob, John, Abraham, and Henry. This recently published large family history incl. compilation of years of research and encyclopedia on the Gibbel family. (598 pp., index, hard cover, 1995) \$38, plus \$4 shipping. (Pa. residents add 6% sales tax.) Checks payable to *Descendants of Henry Gibbel*. Order from Martha Gibbel Hunsicker, 109 Cottage Drive, Palmyra, PA 17078.

INVITATION—Considering a move? Continue your journey of faith on a new frontier: come to Carroll County, IL. Become part of gathering of caring people of faith with strong sense of community. Three long-established Church of the Brethren congregations, each invested in work of Christ locally & in wider church. Anabaptist community, agriculturally based, multiple manufacturing/production facilities. Fertile rolling landscape overlooking Mississippi River in N.W. Ill. Diligent supportive people give high priority to education, moral development. Considering a move? Make it a journey of faith. Contact Carroll County Brethren, 326 S. High St., Lanark, IL 61046. Tel. (815) 225-7812.

INVITATION—Shalom Church of the Brethren, new & growing fellowship in Durham, N.C. invites Brethren moving to Research Triangle area (Raleigh, Durham,

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TRAVEL—Alaskan Adventure Tour™ leaves Seattle July 28, 1996. Travel by plane, bus, train, and Sun Princess tour ship (Glacier Bay & Inside Passage Cruise), 14 days July 28-Aug. 10, 1996. Special price available until Feb. 14, 1996. For details, contact tour host, Dr. Wayne F. Geisert, Box 40, Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, VA 22812. Tel. (540) 828-5494 or (540) 433-1433.

TRAVEL—Church growth mission study venture to Turkey, Sept. 19-Oct. 5, 1996. See Pergamum, Thyatira, Philadelphia, Smyrna, Ephesus, Antioch, Troas, Toly Cappadocia, Iconium, Ankara, Istanbul, Isle of Patmos, much more. Tour hosts: Ed & Edie Bontrager. Richard & Jewel Showalter. Ed is Mennonite congregational adviser for The Andrew Center. Richard is president of Eastern Mennonite Missions, lived in Turkey 7 years. For brochure contact Bontrager, 785 Harpersville Rd., Newport News, VA 23601. Tel. (804) 595-6889 (church), or (804) 875-0552 (home). Fax (804) 595-9208.

New Members

Note: Congregations are asked to submit only the names of actual new members of the denomination. Do not include names of people who have merely transferred their membership from another Church of the Brethren congregation.

- Chiques** Atl N E Matthew & Kris Strausbaugh
- Codorus** S Pa Dale & Sandra Biller, John Burns
- East Coalco** Atl N E Ann & Karl Good, Eva Schultze, Darrel Witmer
- Johnson City First** S E Helen Keys, Kim & Kristopher Yarber
- Schring** Atl S E Gladys Cyphers, Cecil Hess, William Hoover, Dorothy Kaufman, Neal Maxon, Verne Snoko, Ralph Swingle
- Trinity** S E Troy & Wilsie Bowers, Howard & Evelyn Wine
- Troy** S Ohio Dena & Kevin Boelen, Genette Jennifer Joe & Nathan Chambers, Lisa Denlinger, Becca Manning, Arlen & Clara Reed, Helen Straight, Bryan Ward
- Turkey Creek** N Ind Aaron & Adam Fervida
- Union Bridge** Mid-Atl Dane Davis, Kathleen Domer, Dennis Dorsey, Doris Eckard, Betsy Gates, Jason Palsgrove, Jessica Replogle
- White Branch** S C Ind Brad Miller

Wedding Anniversaries

- Berg** Keith and Joan Caledonia, Mich., 50
- Brubaker** Fred and Naomi, Lutz, Pa., 55
- Diekey** Kenneth and Martha, Silver Lake, Ind., 50
- Erb** Samuel and Beulah, Ephrata, Pa., 72
- Heisey** Samuel and Dorothy, Lancaster, Pa., 55
- Herbster** Glenn and Margaret, Lakeville, Ind., 50
- Hite** Ralph and Frances, Parsons, Kan., 50
- Linde** Elmer and Virginia, Ankeny, Ida., 50
- Lung** Walter and Lucille, Garrett, Ind., 60
- Miller** Cecil and Amy, Quinter, Kan., 50
- Moyer** Melvin and Carolyn, Linticum, Md., 50
- Ramsey** Bill and Mona, Parsons, Kan., 50
- Rinne** Fred and Rose, Independence, Kan., 50
- Smith** Russ and Florence, Eugene, Ore., 50
- Ulrich** Walter and Emma, Quinter, Kan., 65
- Wages** John and Helen, Parsons, Kan., 50

218th BVS Orientation Unit

(Completed orientation in Roxbury, Pa. on Aug. 25, 1995)

- Arndt**, Nathan, Spring Grove, Pa., to Good Shepherd Food Bank, Lewiston, Maine
- Arndt**, Ellen, Spring Grove, Pa., to Good Shepherd Food Bank, Lewiston, Maine
- Coble**, David, Hershey, Pa., to Good Shepherd Food Bank, Lewiston, Maine
- Greiner**, Linda, Mannheim, Pa., to Good Shepherd Food Bank, Lewiston, Maine
- Keller**, Melody, Sabattus, Maine to Flat Creek Church of the Brethren, Big Creek, Ky
- Long**, Eric, Greencastle, Pa., to Flat Creek Church of the Brethren, Big Creek, Ky
- Marlow**, Michael, Columbia City, Ind., to Good Shepherd Food Bank, Lewiston, Maine
- Ocker**, Carl, Palmyra, Pa., to Flat Creek Church of the Brethren, Big Creek, Ky
- Ocker**, Barbara, Palmyra, Pa., to Flat Creek Church of the Brethren, Big Creek, Ky

219th BVS Orientation Unit

(Completed orientation in Oak Brook, Ill. on Nov. 11, 1995)

- Allen**, Amber, Sacramento, Calif., to Capital Area Community Food Bank, Washington, D.C.
- Edwards**, Chanda, Telford, Tenn., to The Meeting Ground, Elkton, Md.
- Elmore**, Tracey, Westover, Md., to Friendship Day Care, Hutchinson, Kan.
- Fox**, Brad, Tallmadge, Ohio, to Komona Partners, Americus, Ga.
- Horner**, Heather, Windber, Pa., to Brethren Woods, Keezletown, Va.
- Horner**, Tamiko, Okemos, Mich., to Peace Brigades Intl., Hamburg, Germany
- Jantzen**, Lisa, San Jose, Calif., to Metropolitan Tenants Org., Chicago, Ill.
- Keller**, Matthew, Emporia, Kan., to Africa Middle East Office, COB General Board, Elgin, Ill.
- Leard**, Jeffrey, Glendale, Calif., to Interpretation Office, COB General Board, Elgin, Ill.
- Magee**, Melissa, Yorkville, Ill., to NISBCO, Washington, D.C.
- Messler**, Timothy, Baltimore, Md., to Camp Eder, Fairfield, Pa.
- Nafziger**, Dorine, Archbold, Ohio, to Inspiration Cafe, Chicago, Ill.
- Orlando**, Jane, Fitchburg, Va., to Religious Coalition for Human Needs,

- Frederick, Md.
- Rhudy**, Chris, Jonesborough, Tenn., to Tri City Homeless Coalition, Fremont, Calif.
- Taylor**, Andrew, Arlington, Va., to Pesticide Action Network, San Francisco, Calif.
- VanHorn**, Christine, Millinburg, Pa., to Tri City Homeless Coalition, Fremont, Calif.
- Wallace**, Adrienne, Bozeman, Mont., to Bread & Roses, Olympia, Wash.
- Wood**, Jenne, Scottville, Mich., to Older Adult Services, Fresno, Calif.
- Yerkes**, Marianne, Havana, Fla., to Inspiration Cafe, Chicago, Ill.

Deaths

- Aldinger**, Alvin R., 65, Hershey, Pa., Nov. 16, 1995
- Alford**, Herbert, 80, Waynesboro, Va., Sept. 8, 1995
- Ausherman**, Garland O., 67, Fayetteville, Pa., Nov. 11, 1995
- Baker**, Helen, 64, Dixon, Ill., Sept. 30, 1995
- Ballard**, Virgie, 86, Huntington, Ind., Sept. 17, 1995
- Bechtel**, Arthur R., 78, Elizabethtown, Pa., Oct. 25, 1995
- Becker**, Lois M., 55, Gordonville, Pa., Oct. 5, 1995
- Bennett**, Denver O., 85, Brandwine, W.Va., Sept. 11, 1995
- Blickenstaff**, Leonard E., 81, La Verne, Calif., Oct. 28, 1995
- Bollinger**, Mary F., 85, Manheim, Pa., Nov. 2, 1995
- Bowman**, Ruth Z., 90, Harrisonburg, Va., Sept. 7, 1995
- Boyd**, Inez, 95, North Manchester, Ind., April 27, 1995
- Brandt**, Ellen, 88, Palmyra, Pa., Aug. 25, 1995
- Bross**, Eva M., 59, Myerstown, Pa., Oct. 25, 1995
- Burkholder**, Mabel H., 70, Myerstown, Pa., Nov. 14, 1995
- Cabbage**, Kenneth D., 88, Prairie City, Iowa, Oct. 16, 1995
- Caplinger**, Jeremy S., 17, Bridgewater, Va., Oct. 5, 1995
- Castellano**, Jesse, 70, La Verne, Calif., Oct. 18, 1995
- Coffman**, Harold W., 78, Maurettown, Va., Sept. 20, 1995
- Cornbower**, Raymond, 85, Hanover, Pa., Aug. 17, 1995
- Cosner**, Kate A., 79, Mount Storm, W.Va., Oct. 2, 1995
- Day**, Stanley, 80, Woodstock, Va., Sept. 29, 1995
- Duffy**, Clarence, 95, Smithsburg, Md., April 5, 1995
- Earhart**, Esther I., 101, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 19, 1995
- Ebersole**, Anna K., 87, Nellyville, Pa., Nov. 6, 1995
- Ebert**, Leo, 76, New Creek, Va., July 1, 1995

- Elder**, Jacob, 79, Lawrenceville, Ill., Nov. 17, 1995
- Ellison**, Eleanor, 74, Sinking Spring, Pa., Oct. 24, 1995
- Fetterhoff**, Bill, Rossville, Ind., May 31, 1995
- Flath**, Russell D., 77, Fort Myers, Fla., Oct. 18, 1995
- Flory**, Sadie G., 88, Manheim, Pa., Oct. 9, 1995
- Freimoeller**, Joyce, 55, Portland, Ore., July 8, 1995
- Garman**, Monroe B., 78, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 27, 1995
- George**, Mabel, 89, Wakarusa, Ind., Sept. 4, 1995
- Geyer**, Helen, 85, Nappanee, Ind., Sept. 4, 1995
- Gibble**, Rufus G., 87, Manheim, Pa., Sept. 27, 1995
- Gilbert**, Martha R., 94, La Verne, Calif., Oct. 18, 1995
- Grimm**, Maurice A., 85, Harrisonburg, Pa., Nov. 7, 1995
- Gross**, M. Ophelia, 76, New Oxford, Pa., Sept. 24, 1995
- Grubb**, Barbara, 55, Sebring, Fla., Oct. 25, 1995
- Hargrave**, Millie, 84, Dixon, Ill., Oct. 17, 1995
- Harley**, Chester, 81, Greenville, Ohio, Nov. 15, 1995
- Harman**, Chester D., 65, Petersburg, W.Va., Oct. 17, 1995
- Harris**, Lee M., 52, Brooklyn, N.Y., Sept. 9, 1995
- Helstern**, Anna, 89, Greenville, Ohio, Oct. 31, 1995
- Hempling**, Curtis, 71, Hanover, Pa., May 1, 1995
- Hoeh**, Ralph, 86, Huntington, Ind., Feb. 2, 1995
- Holley**, Raymond, 65, Huntington, Ind., May 19, 1995
- Hunter**, Nettie, 81, Manchester, Md., Feb. 19, 1995
- Hyman**, Travis C., 16, Hagerstown, Md., Oct. 12, 1995
- Keeney**, Katie M., 95, New Oxford, Pa., Nov. 14, 1995
- Kettering**, Elizabeth R., 92, Palmyra, Pa., Oct. 31, 1995
- Kloeters**, Henry S., 85, Dayton, Ohio, Oct. 9, 1995
- Knaub**, Donald S., 75, York, Pa., Nov. 15, 1995
- Kohr**, Charles A., 87, Lancaster, Pa., Oct. 6, 1995
- Kolb**, Melvin, 68, Lancaster, Pa., Oct. 19, 1995
- Lambert**, Isaac I., 96, Harrisonburg, Va., Sept. 11, 1995
- Loughry**, Margery A., 87, Nellyville, Pa., Nov. 5, 1995
- Lucabaugh**, Werta C., 92, Hanover, Pa., Nov. 18, 1995
- May**, A. Edgar, 68, Dundalk, Md., Sept. 20, 1995
- McDonaldson**, Ruth E., 75, Dayton, Va., Sept. 20, 1995
- McKeever**, Mildred, 92, Worthington, Minn., Oct. 29, 1995
- Meits**, Irene K., 87, Dayton, Va., Oct. 2, 1995
- Metzler**, Valetta H., 79, Akron, Pa., July 19, 1995
- Meyers**, Henry B., 85, Souderstown, Pa., Oct. 15, 1995
- Miller**, J.D. Oliver, 84, Huntington, Ind., April 22, 1995

- Miller**, Paul W., 69, Delphos, Ind., Sept. 24, 1995
- Miller**, S. Dale, 81, Tipp City, Ohio, April 29, 1995
- Miller**, Stephanie, 17, Harrisonburg, Va., April 27, 1995
- Molnar**, Aleck, 75, Uniontown, Pa., Oct. 4, 1995
- Mulligan**, Ruth, 94, Huntington, Ind., Aug. 7, 1995
- Mummett**, Paul, 81, Hanover, Pa., Feb. 26, 1995
- Myers**, Darryl, 75, Greencastle, Pa., Oct. 1, 1995
- Neidermyer**, David I., 18, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 25, 1995
- Null**, Mary, 55, Lawrenceville, Ill., Aug. 18, 1995
- Orstot**, Mary E., 96, Lancaster, Pa., Oct. 22, 1995
- Oyer**, Mary R., 84, Lampeter, Pa., Oct. 16, 1995
- Pitsenbarger**, Gilbert A., 75, Head Waters, Va., Sept. 5, 1995
- Prowant**, Hsie, 85, Defiance, Ohio, July 2, 1995
- Reese**, Grace, 97, Wakarusa, Ind., Oct. 22, 1995
- Roller**, Carolyn F., 104, Weaver Cave, Va., Sept. 15, 1995
- Shearer**, Sarah E., 95, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 25, 1995
- Shelly**, Clyde R., 85, Manheim, Pa., Nov. 4, 1995
- Simmers**, Vesta C., 69, Timberville, Va., Sept. 5, 1995
- Skidmore**, Martha I., 86, Harrisonburg, Va., Nov. 10, 1995
- Smith**, Elbert R., 82, Ankeny, Iowa, Oct. 9, 1995
- Smith**, Elmer R., 89, Bridgewater, Va., Sept. 18, 1995
- Smith**, Walter, 76, Manchester, Md., Sept. 15, 1994
- Smith**, William F., 92, Bridgewater, Va., Sept. 18, 1995
- Springstube**, Lucy 89, Stover, Mo., Sept. 5, 1994
- Stern**, Mabel V., 82, New Oxford, Pa., Oct. 25, 1995
- Stover**, Howard, Washington, D.C., Nov. 15, 1995
- Strine**, Leha M., 69, A-lila, I. Ohio, Aug. 17, 1995
- Stuart**, Kenneth, 78, Custer, Mich., Oct. 19, 1995
- Sunday**, Donna I., 50, Brodbeck's, Pa., Oct. 15, 1995
- Taxler**, Virginia, 71, Cerrito, Gordo, Ill., Sept. 11, 1995
- Turner**, Frank, 85, Dry Run, Pa., Sept. 25, 1995
- Waggy**, Leslie, 40, Franklin, W.Va., Aug. 24, 1995
- Warden**, Sr. Samuel H., 68, Winston Salem, N.C., Sept. 4, 1995
- Weaver**, Howard, 84, Lebanon, Pa., Oct. 50, 1995
- Weller**, Esther, 85, Defiance, Ohio, Mar. 1, 1994
- Widner**, Wilma, 81, Fegansport, Ind., May 5, 1995
- Wilhide**, David B., 84, Wadesboro, Pa., Nov. 11, 1995
- Woll**, Edna, 88, West Milton, Ohio, Jan. 15, 1995

A 'Don't ask; don't tell' issue?

The denominationwide debate sparked by those two controversial 1995 Annual Conference queries is proving itself handy for many Brethren eager to unburden themselves on a variety of issues.

That variety runs from the issue of having a creed other than the New Testament to that of Jesus as the *only* divine Lord and Savior. Also represented in the variety are the voices of those who are pluralists, as well as those who espouse universalism.

I have to keep my 1991 and 1995 Annual Conference booklets, as well as my back MISSTAGERS, in handy reach to keep the chronology of this debate straight. Let's rehearse it here:

At the 1991 Annual Conference in Portland, Ore., two queries generated impassioned speeches. One query ("The Nature of the Church") called for a definition of "the essential nature of the Church of the Brethren, that without which we would no longer be the Church of the Brethren." Conference returned that query, "apparently out of concern that the resulting statement would too closely resemble a creed" (August-September 1991, page 18). Since then, the Communicorp study and report (December 1994, page 6) have gotten somewhat at the heart of that query's concern. At least we now know we are on the right track as Brethren so long as we are continuing the work of Jesus, peacefully, simply, and together.

The other Portland query ("Religious Pluralism and Headship of Christ") asked for "a clear and concise statement concerning Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world and as head of the church according to the Scriptures." That query was accepted by Conference, affirming "that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of the world and the Head of the Church, according to the Scriptures" (August-September 1991, page 18).

Then came the two 1995 queries. Conference, in response to "Ordination Lordship of Christ," affirmed the 1991 statement given in the paragraph above. But, it added, "It is our understanding that not only all members of the church, but especially all those called to set-apart ministry, should clearly affirm the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the only divine Lord and Savior." Responding to the query "Christ the Only Savior," Conference, in an odd maneuver, added to its affirmation of the 1991 statement further affirmation of "the answer given by Annual Conference in 1995 to the query 'Ordination Lordship of Christ.'"

With that, the fat was in the fire. The Church of the Brethren now officially understands "that not only all members of the church, but especially all those called to set-apart ministry, should clearly

affirm the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the only divine Lord and Savior." For some Brethren, Conference "has done gone to meddling," and those Brethren are not happy.

Some protesters call the 1995 Conference action the establishment of a creed, and that doesn't set well with them. Whatever happened to the New Testament as our only creed? they ask. They liked that better; it had a sort of "Don't ask; don't tell" feel to it, with plenty of room to weasel. Granted, most Brethren don't agree on what it exactly means to say "The New Testament is our only creed," but it sure does sound good, and it has been handy to toss around for all these years. Heretofore, Brethren could clasp their New Testament to their bosoms and look with superiority at these creed-fettered Christians hobbling along in other denominations.

Brethren have always had a streak of universalism in them. Our most prominent forerunner, Alexander Mack, of all people, "expressed his belief in God's universal salvation, but concluded that this must be held and taught privately" (*Brethren Encyclopedia*, page 1292). "Don't ask; don't tell," he counseled, Brethren through the 18th and 19th centuries dealt with ministers who espoused universalism. Annual Meeting delegates in 1875 ordered that Brethren ministers were not to preach or debate publicly in favor of final restoration of all people. "Don't ask; don't tell," they equivocated.

Now with the 1995 Annual Conference debate and query responses, issues are out in the open. Is Jesus *really* the only, sure enough, honest to goodness divine Lord and Savior? If so, what's to happen to the zillions of people who don't profess him? If we, in all our meanness, wouldn't condemn people to hell, how can an all-loving God do such a thing? Who are we to tell non-Christians that our religion is better than theirs? Who were the writers of our New Testament creed, anyway, to report Jesus as claiming "No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6)? Was Peter merely giving way to hyperbole when he declared "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12)?

This month's article "No Other Gospel" (page 18) states the case for the 1995 Conference delegates who voted for the query responses and for many other Brethren. But we scarcely expect it to satisfy those whose feathers were ruffled by that Conference action.—K.T.

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Messenger

Church of the



**Fred
Bernhard**

**Hospitality
is the path**

From the Editor

We hope that Fran Holcomb's story on Cooperative Disaster Child Care (page 15) will give the program helpful visibility. While we were finalizing this month's *Messenger*, some statistics came from CDCC coordinator Lydia Walker's office in New Windsor, Md. They impressed us, and we think they will impress you as well. In a nutshell they give an example of



Jean Myers was project director for the St. Croix CDCC operation.

what is accomplished by dedicated Brethren workers plugging away while most of the denomination is unaware of their activity. Here are some of CDCC's 1995 highlights:

- Conducted 12 Level I Disaster Child Care Training Workshops, resulting in 160 new certified caregivers, 55 of them Brethren. The workshops, led by 17 trainers and interns, were held in Canada as well as the U.S.
- Conducted Level II training for 59 Disaster Project managers, in Tempe, Ariz.
- Trained seven new trainers in Alberta and British Columbia in cooperation with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee of Canada.
- Interned four new trainers in Alaska.
- Presented 24 educational seminars, talks, and displays at various meetings, including 12 district conferences.
- Responded to seven disasters, including a gas explosion in Maryland, flooding in various states, and hurricanes in the Caribbean and Florida.
- Provided child care for 5,566 children in those disasters. Seventy-six caregivers, 44 of them Brethren, worked 858 volunteer days.
- Total number of children cared for since 1980: 47,675 in 118 disaster situations.

Kermon Thomasson

Messenger

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COMING NEXT MONTH: A cluster of articles on mental illness and the church.

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In a situation as complicated as the one in the Middle East, it's no wonder that Brethren find it difficult to be evenhanded in their response. Mervin Keeney sorts through the complexities of the current "peace process."

Caregiving on St. Croix 15

Fran Holcomb takes readers to the Caribbean island of St. Croix, where she and other Brethren responded to the Hurricane Marilyn disaster as workers with Cooperative Disaster Child Care.

Fred Bernhard: Hospitality is the path 18

Fred Bernhard finds the Annual Conference moderatorship a bully pulpit to preach his message of offering hospitality, whether in Cincinnati or back home in the congregation. Profile by Donald R. Fitzkee.

Does the future have a church? 22

Paul Munday says we have it backward: Ask not if the church has a future; ask, rather, if the future has a church. It does, but only if

Seed-corn stewardship 26

Wilfred E. Nolen describes a Brethren couple who worked hard, lived simply, invested wisely, and used their assets to support the work of others.

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Cover story: *We have played right into his hand, electing him moderator just in time for him to huckster his book on hospitality. If it had happened in the house speakership, it would be different, but in the Church of the Brethren he may just get away with it. Read our profile on Annual Conference moderator Fred Bernhard (page 18).*

Credits:

Cover, 18, 20 upper and lower: Rebecca Maurer
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1, 21 top: Jeff Leard
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13 left: Mervin Keeney
17 top: Nancy Barr

Correction: In January, page 29, line 12, "one-time" should have read "one-line." We regret the error.

In Touch

Playwright at 91

Theora Oswald didn't want to move to the retirement home. Young at heart at age 91, she resisted living in an environment that



Theora Oswald took a new lease on life at 91 when she became inspired to write a play based on the history of the Brethren Home in Greenville, Ohio.

would give the impression she was old and dependent.

She had been an active go-getter all her life. For the past 54 years she had been a busy member of Happy Corner Church of the Brethren in Clayton, Ohio. She had taught Sunday school since she was a teenager. She had directed junior high work in Southern Ohio District through the 1950s. She returned to college at age 55 and began a 14-year public teaching career. (The May 14, 1960, *Gospel Messenger* carried a cover story about her and her achievements.) She had traveled extensively—in the US, Europe, Asia,

and Africa.

Was all the activity behind her now? Theora sat in her room at the Brethren Home in Greenville, Ohio, and wondered. As she was reading a history of the home, inspiration hit her and juices started stirring. She would write a play based on the history.

Since then she has been busy—reading, interviewing the history's author (Mary Sue Rosenberger), roughing out the scenes of the play. Acts I and II are largely completed. Plans are underway for the play's premiere and for a video.

Theora sees her setback in spirit as just a temporary thing. Now it is full steam ahead again for her.

Perhaps she reads with a smile a booklet she wrote in 1994, *The Miracle of Being Ninety*. In that booklet she wrote words of advice that could have been for herself in a short time: "You know that calamities occur that you cannot control but must endure. To worry about them before they occur *or afterward* is self-abuse." Theora was battling worry about needing to adjust her lifestyle at the time she penned those words. She wrote, "I pray that I can make the change and adjust gracefully."

With grace she did make the adjustment, and her play about the Brethren Home is evidence of it. Theora's birthday will be February 24. Perhaps her next writing project will be another booklet, a sequel titled *The Miracle of Being Ninety-two*.

Nice to meet you!

Gene Czaplinsky of Topango, Calif., was born to Russian parents and lived in a displaced persons camp in Germany at the end of World War II. His family immigrated to Kansas, sponsored by the Church of the Brethren, and Gene graduated from McPherson College (1967).

Gene's firm, American Bullion and Coin, was chosen by the Soviet Union in the 1980s as the official North American distributor for all its commemorative coins.

The firm produced a set of silver medallions on the achievements of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and US president Ronald Reagan (December 1988, page 2). Gene was invited to Moscow during last year's celebration of the end of World War II. There he finally met the leader he considers the "man of the centu-

Greg Czaplinsky is working with Mikhail Gorbachev on a special set of medallions.



In Touch profiles Brethren we would like you to meet. Send story ideas and photos to "In touch," MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120

ry," Mikhail Gorbachev.

Now he is planning a three-year project, working directly with Gorbachev to portray and honor the former Soviet leader's personal power and legacy.

About his year-old son, Sasha, Gene says, "I want (him) to know where he came from, what the history of the world was, and what it can teach him about himself and others."

Adapted from McPherson College Review, Fall 1995.

Columbia to Chiapas

Raymond Donaldson believes in the unity of the world's people as one family under God. He also believes in peace.

He believed in peace when he joined the Peace Corps in the 1960s and served in Ethiopia. And he believed in peace when he participated in a Pastors for Peace caravan to the Mexican state of Chiapas this past August.

Pastors for Peace is a national ecumenical group that has shipped humanitarian aid to Cuba, El Salvador, and Mexico. With its material supplies, it also carries a message of peace and encouragement for peaceful reconciliation among opposing political forces in the countries it travels to.

Raymond is a member of Columbia (Md.) United Christian Church, a congregation with Brethren affiliation and one that has a strong peace emphasis (see April 1995, page 12,



In Mexico, Ray Donaldson (left) met Roman Catholic Bishop Samuel Ruiz, a key figure in peace negotiations.

"New Ways to Play in Columbia"; and January, page 8). He is a retired IBM technical writer who now drives tour buses.

That job was handy qualification for his Pastors for Peace assignment: He and other volunteers drove a donated school bus from Maryland to Mexico, carrying a load of educational and medical supplies.

Along the way in Mexico, the Pastors for Peace group saw much evidence of civil unrest as well as oppression of the rural poor by the Mexican government. The villagers of Chiapas, descendants of the Maya people, are considered such a threat that 60 percent of the Mexican army is based in that state, according to Raymond.

But Raymond also saw much that was encouraging. He met Roman Catholic Bishop Samuel Ruiz, whom someone described to Raymond as "a thorn in the side" of both the Mexican government and the Vatican. Ruiz is trusted by both the government and the Zapatista National Liberation Army,

however, and is a key figure in peace negotiations.

Raymond is convinced that US foreign policy is flawed because US officials deal primarily with foreign government officials and business leaders. "There really is not an understanding of the poor people in other parts of the world," he said. "Mexico is a microcosm of the world."

Viewing that microcosm firsthand has been eye-opening to Raymond, and he recommends travel in underdeveloped areas of the world to anyone interested in peacemaking.

Names in the news

Steve Murray, a member of Cloverdale (Va.) Church of the Brethren, was presented with the 1995 Sunshine Award by the Blue Ridge Community Services Board as "an individual who has excelled in (his) dedication, unselfishness, and caring for citizens who have mental retardation."

• **Walter Blalark**, pastor of Living Gospel church in

Elgin, Ill. (with fellowship status in Illinois and Wisconsin District; see February 1995 cover story), after participating in the Million Man March in Washington, D.C., last fall, is organizing "The Thousand Man March," slated for June 15 in Elgin's Wing Park. The ecumenical event's planners hope to attract 20,000 marchers "to celebrate their role in the family and community and recommit themselves to living that role in a way that makes the northwest suburbs (of Chicago)—and their homes—better places to live."

Remembered

Lizzie L. Longenecker, 106, died December 20 in Manheim, Pa. A member of White Oak Church of the Brethren in Manheim, she was well known across the denomination for her high-quality quilts, which she produced until she was 101. Her work fetched prices up to \$7,000 at the annual Atlantic Northeast District Disaster Relief Auction in Lebanon, Pa. (December 1989, page 5).

• **Daniel L. Miller**, 96, died December 15 in New Lebanon, Ohio. He and his wife of 67 years, Eliza Coning (who survives), were the parents of Donald E. Miller, general secretary of the Church of the Brethren. A farmer, he had been a life-long member of The Brethren Church when he transferred his membership to the Church of the Brethren in 1995.

Close to Home

A gripping performance

Vise-grips are a versatile gadget found in the toolbox of almost every handyman and farmer. Among Brethren of southeastern Nebraska, Vise-grips also are associated with



For a gift of Vise-grips, Nathan Meints (left) and pastor John Wagner (center) presented a poster of thanks to American Tool director of operations Jim Essman.

Petersen Manufacturing, the company in nearby DeWitt that developed the original locking pliers.

John and Janet Tubbs, members of Holmesville (Neb.) Church of the Brethren, needed Vise-grips in their work at Mason

Technical School in Garkida, Nigeria (July 1996, page 14). They wrote back home about the need. The Holmesville children's Sunday school classes had been focusing on the work of John and Janet, so they began raising money to buy Vise-grips.

Holmesville member Lauren Riedesel worked on behalf of the children. She contacted Jim Essman, director of operations for American Tool, who was willing to help. Specialists selected 15 pairs of Vise-grips judged most suitable for automotive mechanics. The tools were donated, so the \$126.25 collected by the Holmesville children was passed on to the Africa office in Elgin, Ill., to defray shipping expenses. The gift of tools was sent out to Nigeria in January with Brethren headed there for a workcamp.

A colorful thank-you poster prepared by the Holmesville children was presented to Jim Essman at American Tool by Sunday schooler Nathan Meints and pastor John Wagner.

Will Nigerians be as tempted to sin by stubborn bolts and skinned knuckles as Americans are? That will have to be another story.

—NOEL DITMARS

Noel Ditmars is a member of Holmesville (Neb.) Church of the Brethren

Looking for liberals

Joe Murray, senior writer for Cox Newspapers, wrote in his syndicated

Churches in the USA.

Murray, calling Grand Junction "conservative country, as most of the West always has been (and probably always will be," was looking for "liberals" (or at least his stereotypes of liberals). At Koinonia church, he found what he considered inconsistencies. "Neither Brethren nor Baptists are known as liberals," he said.

The Koinonia pastor is Karen Calderón (former representative for Latin America and the Caribbean on the Church of the Brethren World Ministries staff). That's liberal, according to Murray. But he liked Pastor Calderón, he said, describing her as fitting the image of "most everybody's favorite grade-school teacher." He liked her message, her point for the morning being to ask the right questions as Christians. Ask "How do I cope?" not "Why do I suffer?"

Murray accounted for Koinonia's present state of health (a membership of some 175) by pointing to an infusion of worshippers from a variety of religious backgrounds. He especially liked this statement in the congregations worship bulletin: "We value each individual and foster respect for our diversity as we build community. . . ."

Murray may not have discovered or defined the essence of the Church of the Brethren, but for a denomination so little known nationally, even being mentioned by a syndicated columnist can be appreciated.

Close to Home: (clockwise from top left) Nathan Meints, pastor John Wagner, and child Nathan Meints. Send story ideas and photos to "Close to Home," MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120

column last fall about Koinonia Church of the Brethren in Grand Junction, Colo., affiliated with American Baptists



Germantown Church of the Brethren worker Earl Eby stands outside the newly dedicated Lafiya House.

Opening Lafiya House

Germantown Church of the Brethren in Philadelphia, Pa., has dedicated its Lafiya House. Named for the church's involvement in Lafiya: Whole-Person Health Ministry, the building houses two community-based service organizations—a counseling and education center and a youth cultural center. There also is a meeting room for youth programs and neighborhood organizations. The second floor provides short-term transitional housing for men. The building was bought and renovated by the Germantown congregation.

Campus comments

Manchester College has established an annual "Otho Winger Day," honoring the school's president who served 1911–1941. The 1996 celebration will take place June 1, as part of Alumni Weekend. The event will recognize alumni who tell the best "Otho Winger stories."

- **McPherson College** hosted an exhibit "Black Women: Achievements Against the Odds" in January. The exhibit was produced by the Smithsonian Institution.
- **Juniata College** celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. Day January 15 with a convocation featuring speaker Randall Robinson, a human rights activist. Robinson put his life on the line in a 1994 protest against President Clinton's returning refugees to Haiti without asylum hearings. The King event also included a performance by the New York Boys Choir.

Castañer dedication

About 100 people representing the Church of the Brethren, hospital staff, and the community attended the October 8 dedication of the new medical staff apartments at Castañer Hospital in Puerto Rico (May/June, page 5).

The apartments were built with assistance from Church of the Brethren members through the Association of Brethren

Caregivers (ABC).

ABC director Jay Gible, speaking at the dedication, recognized the Church of the Brethren's history with the hospital since it was established with help from Civilian Public Service

workers 50 years ago.

Many people from Atlantic Southeast District attended the dedication; the district was holding its annual meeting at the nearby Vega Baja church that weekend.

The Castañer church choir performed during the dedication of the new medical staff apartments.



Let's celebrate

Evergreen Church of the Brethren near Dyke, Va., is celebrating its centennial with events throughout 1996. The "big day," however, is April 28. Several Brethren "saints" will be highlighted during the year—Alexander Mack by Larry Glick, John Kline by Paul White, and Dan West by Carl Bowman. On November 10, Evergreen's own special saint, home missionary Nelie Wampler, will be portrayed by Nancy Morris, the writer of the May 1992 MESSENGER article on "Miss Nelie."

• **Midway Church of the Brethren** in Lebanon, Pa., observed the centennial of its first meetinghouse in a November 19 worship ser-

vice featuring as speaker Don Fitzkee, chairman of the General Board's General Services Commission and author of the 1995 book *Moving Toward the Mainstream*. Midway also dedicated a nine-classroom addition to its present building.

• **Lynchburg (Va.) Church of the Brethren** celebrated its 75th anniversary October 15.

• **Red Oak Grove Church of the Brethren**, near Floyd, Va., marked its quasiquintennial during September and October 1995, concluding with love feast, feetwashing, communion, and homecoming the weekend of October 8. Former Virlina District executive Owen Stultz was guest speaker.

Annual Conference business to include seven new items

The 210th Church of the Brethren Annual Conference in Cincinnati, July 2-7, will include several new queries and business items.

"Congregational Structure," a query sent by Atlantic Northeast District, was initiated after a task committee concluded that the current congregational structure model is not flexible enough to accommodate all congregations.

"How Christian Faith Should be Expressed in the Political Process," a query from Northern Indiana District, originated in a Sunday school class on Christianity and social concerns at Crest Manor Church of the Brethren, South Bend, Ind. According to Northern Indiana District executive Herman Kauffman, the church and district are concerned about various groups taking political stances in the name of Christianity, especially when Christians have varying views on social issues.

Middle Pennsylvania District Board will send the query "The New Testament as our Rule of Faith and Practice." The district hopes to re-examine this basic denominational tenet, said Randall Yoder, district executive.

"Denominational Polity: Property and Stewardship Issues," a query from Pacific Southwest District Board, originated after the district had a conflict with a congregation over loan payments for the congregation's property. According to Gene Hipskind, district executive, denominational polity concerning property issues includes conflicting statements and needs clarity.

A query focusing on world mission philosophy and global structure will be sent by Virginia District.

The Ethics in Ministry Relations

Statement Revision, a new business item stemming from the 1992 statement, will be sent to Conference.

A statement on child exploitation, which originated at the 1995 National Youth Christian Citizenship Seminar, will be sent to the General Board's March meeting, and if approved, on to Conference.

Unfinished business that will be sent to Conference delegates for approval is the Nonviolence and Humanitarian Intervention and End of Life Decision-Making statements.

Unfinished business also will include reports from study committees on Ministerial Leadership, Simple Life, and Congregational Ethics.

Interim reports will be sent by the Office of Deacon Statement, the Human Genetic Engineering and Fetal Tissue Use, and the Review and Evaluation committees.

Several events are scheduled for the days preceding Conference. The Ministers' Association will sponsor a conference titled "Managing Church Conflict," July 1-2. Family Ministries Association of Brethren Caregivers, Program for Women, and Ministry of Reconciliation will sponsor "Redefining the Family—Living in Paradox," on July 1. The New Church Development Seminar is scheduled for July 1-2.

The Annual Conference logo was designed by Nina Roher, a member of York Center Church of the Brethren, Lombard, Ill., and support staff for the General Board Finance Office.

Packets of information about registration, accommodations, transportation, and special events will be mailed to all churches and registered delegates in March.

To order these items or for more information, contact Annual Conference Office at (800) 525-8059.

MESSNGER's May issue will feature a comprehensive Annual Conference preview, including a look at the candidates for moderator-elect, music, worship, events, and business.

—PAULA S. WILDING



"... As Christ Welcomed You," from Romans 15:7, is the theme for this year's Annual Conference. Nina Roher, a member of York Center Church of the Brethren, Lombard, Ill., used the scripture verse as the basis for the logo.

The news pages include news of Church of the Brethren organizations and members, and of organizations and people of interest to or affiliated with the Church of the Brethren. News items are intended to inform. They do not necessarily represent the opinions of MESSNGER or the General Board, and should not be considered to be an endorsement.

Bosnian students gather at Brethren Service Center

Seventy-five students from Bosnia who are attending high schools and colleges in the United States gathered at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., for a retreat December 27–30.

Retreat sessions were conducted by Steven M. Weine, a psychiatrist from the University of Illinois in Chicago, who has been working in the area of genocide and its survivors. Another guest was Nedzib Sacirbey, Bosnian ambassador-at-large, who discussed the peace talks and the future of Bosnia.

Informal sessions were filled with laughter and music as friends from home met, and new friendships were formed.

But the horrors of war also were evident. Conversations were sprinkled with phrases not usually heard at New Windsor: "After my brother was shot by snipers, we left our village," and "My mother was sent to a concentration camp, where she later died."

Students old beyond their years were happy because they are now safe and can continue their education, but they also were sad because they have

family and friends still in danger.

The Bosnian Student Project is a program of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, an 80-year-old interfaith pacifist organization. For the past two years, high schools and colleges across the country have provided scholarships for more than 120 students.

The Bosnia Student Project selects highly qualified students in the war zone and matches them with a host family and a school offering a scholarship. The students are chosen on the basis of need, ability, and their likelihood of success in US schools. Two Church of the Brethren colleges—Manchester and McPherson—have participated in the program.

This retreat was made possible by a partnership formed by Doug Hostetter of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Miller Davis, executive director of Center Operations at the Brethren Service Center, and Donna Derr, director of Refugee Disaster Services.

The Bosnian Student Project was looking for a place to hold the retreat but had limited resources. Partial funding came from the Conference Center and Disaster Response Program. Travel expenses were paid for with donations and by host families.

The New Windsor Conference Center and Refugee/Disaster Services were able to provide a peaceful setting for the Bosnian students to continue the healing process from a trauma created by war. —KATHLEEN CAMPANELLA

General Board team to visit South Korea this month

Before the General Board considers in March the future of the Church of the Brethren mission in South Korea, a team of four will visit that country, February 23–March 1.

At its October meeting, the General Board voted to re-evaluate the Korean mission after a group from the Reformation Presbyterian Church (RPC) in South Korea decided it no longer wanted to be in covenant with the Church of the Brethren (April, page 16 and November, page 7).

David Radcliff, director of Korean Ministry, did not want the General Board to decide on the mission in South Korea "without experiencing it for themselves." Radcliff's rationale for the trip, which was presented at the October board meeting, is that the General Board should learn about the situation firsthand before deciding the mission's future.

Joining Radcliff will be General Board members Bonnie Kline Smeltzer and Steven Petcher, and World Ministries Commission executive Joan Deeter.

Accompanying the group in South Korea will be field staff Dan Kim. Kim was instrumental in introducing the RPC members to the Church of the Brethren. Because the RPC is no longer interested in becoming part of the Church of the Brethren, Kim is focusing on other avenues for the Korean mission, which would include beginning house churches. Kim also is currently talking with individuals interested in the Church of the Brethren and is exploring options for securing a central office for Brethren mission programs.

In 1990, Annual Conference directed the General Board to "begin with intention to plant the Church of the Brethren in Korea" and to begin discussions with existing denominations in South Korea for possible ecumenical ties.—P.S.W.



Two of the visiting Bosnian students took a moment to improve a message board at the Brethren Service Center.

The Andrew Center releases 1994 congregational stats

Olden D. Mitchell, a volunteer for The Andrew Center, recently released his 1994 study of statistics from Church of the Brethren congregations. In Mitchell's "1994 Statistical Information," Mitchell identifies 25 churches recording memberships of 500 or more. The top five, all over 700, are Frederick (Md.), 971; Manchester, North Manchester, Ind., 762; Eaton, (Ohio), 755; Bridgewater (Va.), 749; and Ephrata (Pa.) 746.

Leading in average attendance in worship are White Oak, Manheim, Pa., 560; Frederick (Md.), 517; Eaton (Ohio), 500; Ephrata (Pa.) 459; and New Fairview, York, Pa., 425.

Mitchell's 16-page report, drawn from 1994 data, further lists 21 churches with average worship attendance over 500 and 19 churches with average Sunday school attendance over 200.

The report lists 58 churches that received 20 or more members during the year. Leading are New Fairview, York, Pa., 88; Ephrata (Pa.), 55; Lower Cumberland, East Berlin, Pa., 42; Eaton (Ohio), 40; and Oakland,

Gettysburg, Ohio, 59.

In annual receipts, the top churches are Lancaster (Pa.), \$618,000; Frederick (Md.), \$595,000; Lititz (Pa.), \$550,000; Bridgewater (Va.), \$507,000; and Chambersburg (Pa.), \$492,000. Twenty other churches reported receipts over \$500,000.

Enumerated in other categories are churches leading in net gains and net losses in membership, and in both increases and decreases in attendance in worship and Sunday school.

Mitchell commented that not all congregations sent in their reports, some reports may be incomplete or inaccurate, and errors may have occurred in transferring the numbers.

Staff changes from New Windsor, stewardship

David Bubel, manager of clothing processing and long distance hauling for the Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md., was released in August due to financial considerations.

Bubel had worked for the center since 1962.

Richard Foster, photographer for

SERRV International, was released in November due to changes in marketing strategy brought on by financial considerations.

Foster, who had worked for SERRV since 1982, will continue to do contract photography work with SERRV.

Herbert Fisher retired from his position as stewardship office's planned giving officer for the Plains region, effective December 31. Fisher had worked for the General Board since 1989.



David Bubel



Richard Foster



Herbert Fisher

Reimer named coordinator of new volunteer program

Judy Mills Reimer was named coordinator of the Volunteer Summer Service program, effective January 1.

Reimer, 1995 Annual Conference moderator and pastor of Smith Mountain Lake Fellowship near Roanoke, Va., is coordinating the pilot project as a volunteer.

Reimer, who is working out of her home in Goodview, Va., is assisted by Dan McFadden, director of Brethren Volunteer Service, and Chris Douglas, director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. The two programs are jointly sponsoring the new program.

"The need for leadership develop-



Judy Mills Reimer has begun her work as coordinator of Volunteer Summer Service.

ment in our denomination makes this program a crucial focus for our church," Douglas said.

Following a May orientation,

young adults will be assigned to work in congregations with ministry and peace and justice issues.

According to Douglas, the three directors currently are designating volunteers and congregations for the pilot project.

During a joint meeting of World Ministries and Parish Ministries Commissions held during the General Board's October meetings, the pilot program was approved to begin as soon as funds became available. The General Board's Executive Committee subsequently allocated \$10,000 to start the project this summer.

If successful, the program will continue as a pilot project in 1997 and become a full program in 1998.

'Behold, I make all things new' program launched

A \$15 million financial commitment program directed to Brethren individuals is being launched by the General Board.

The program, titled "Behold, I make all things new," was authorized by the 1995 Annual Conference, and was fine-tuned in October by the General Board.

It will be officially launched when its National Leadership Council meets in Elgin, Ill., February 3-4, and as regional kick-off meetings are held around the denomination throughout 1996.

The program calls for the raising of \$5 million for General Board program needs during 1996-2000, \$2 million to add to working reserves to undergird the General Board's financial stability, and \$10 million in deferred gifts to assist the work of the church in future years.

The National Leadership Council is an advisory committee to the commitment program, composed of about 50

people who are substantial donors toward the church's ministries.

The group met in April 1995 in New Windsor, Md., to offer initial counsel to general secretary Donald Miller, and other Brethren leaders.

Selected individuals will be invited to regional launch events for a weekend of worship, sharing of information, discussion of the opportunities before the Church of the Brethren, and an estate-planning seminar.

According to Miller, the gatherings will not be solicitation meetings, but will begin the process of finding at least 600 Brethren who can provide the needed resources.

Regional meetings are scheduled for Carlisle, Pa., February 17-18; Hagerstown, Md., March 2-5; Fort Wayne, Ind., March 30-31; the Harrisonburg, Va., area, May 4-5; St. Charles, Ill., June 1-2; Roanoke, Va., June 15-16; Kansas City, Mo., November 2-5; and one or more additional meetings to be scheduled on the west coast.

Ernest Barr of Carmel, Ind., a former chairman of the General Board, is chairman of "Behold."

Calendar

1996 Lafiya Retreats. Camp Eder, Fairfield, Pa., February 9-11, and Camp Mack, Milford, Ind., March 1-5 [Contact Association of Brethren Caregivers, Church of the Brethren General Offices, (800) 525-8059].

Interfaith Impact Legislative Briefing. "Healing the Lands: Political Rituals and Religious Advocacy." Washington, D.C., March 5-6 [Contact the Church of the Brethren Washington Office, (202) 546-5202].

General Board meetings. General Offices, March 7-12 [Contact General Secretary's Office].

National Youth Christian Citizenship Seminar. "Biblical Values and Media Myths." New York City and Washington, D.C., April 15-18 [Contact Youth Ministries, General Offices].

Regional Youth Conferences. Bridgewater (Va.) College Roundtable, April 20-21; Manchester (Ind.) and McPherson (Kan.) colleges, April 26-28 [Contact Youth Ministries, General Offices].

In Brief

The 1996 Youth Peace Travel Team was chosen in December, making this the sixth year the team will visit Church of the Brethren camps to teach peace and Brethren heritage. This year's team is Heidi Beck, Fort Wayne, Ind.; Rebekah Helsel, Altoona, Pa.; Sarah Hendricks, Quinter, Kan.; and Jessica Joline White, Mechanicsburg, Pa. The team is sponsored by Outdoor Ministries, Youth and Young Adult Ministries, One Earth Peace Assembly, and the office of the Denominational Peace Witness.

A seminar on Sudan, titled "Partnering in Mission in a Complex Crisis," is scheduled for March 17-21, in Washington, D.C. The seminar, co-sponsored by the Church of the Brethren Washington Office, will focus on the tragedy of Sudan, including war, hunger, disease, human rights violations, and refugees. The seminar's fee is \$200; space is limited. Contact the Washington Office at (202) 546-3202.

"Between the Flood and the Rainbow," a newsletter on environmental issues, was sent to congregations in December. The newsletter is published by Shantilal Bhagat, director of the Church

of the Brethren Eco-justice Concerns. The December issue focuses on climate change, and includes articles on implications of climate change, theological and ethical imperatives, public policy, and global warming prevention. To receive a copy of the newsletter, contact Bhagat at (800) 323-8039, ext. 227.

Over \$243 billion in military spending was allocated in 1995, according to the Church of the Brethren Washington Office. Simultaneously, nearly seven million more children were identified as without basic health care coverage. Of the \$892 billion Congress plans to cut from the federal budget by the year 2002, over \$326 billion will be cut from programs that assist the poor, disabled, elderly, and others dependent on welfare.

In 1968 and 1987, Annual Conference encouraged Church of the Brethren members to support the government in funding programs that help all people. In 1987's "A Quest for Order," Annual Conference stated "We petition our government for a change of priorities in our national budgeting, away from spending for war and toward spending for human services." The Washington Office suggests contacting your representatives concerning national spending.

Beneficiaries of grace

by Lester E. Boleyn

In our Nuer Bible translation office in Nairobi, Kenya, we usually begin each week with a team member selecting a theme and then leading us in devotions. On December 4, it was translator Tut Wan's turn, and he chose scriptures from Genesis 25 and Romans 9 for the theme "Being Chosen by God." He emphasized how God had chosen Pharaoh to persecute the Israelites, then destroyed Pharaoh's armies at the Red Sea. God sometimes shows he is in charge by using those who do not profess faith in him.

After the closing prayers, I modified this theme by saying I believe God used the situation of other people (whose faith we don't know) to bring about the evacuation of Tut and me from Leer in southern Sudan just one week earlier. We were stranded there, along with a German TV news team, a German doctor, and several others, when the Sudanese government placed a ban on all flights into Sudan by the United Nations and private non-government organizations (NGOs). The ban went into effect on November 25; Tut and I were scheduled to come out two days later.

We never know how God will answer our prayers. I had prayed that God would make a way for us to leave, or sustain us while we waited.

NGOs working in areas such as southern Sudan try to be self-sustaining in order not to further tax the limited local resources. This means they depend on regular shipments of food and supplies from the outside. Thus, we had taken 175 pounds of food and supplies when we went to Leer on November 16. By November 25, however, our supplies were gone, meaning we would have to live on local staples.

We had gone to Leer to work with the manuscript review committee there. The weakest stage of the translation process is having other mother-tongue speakers read and comment on

the work that has been done.

For eight days we had sat with the five reviewers in the shade of two large neem trees from 7:50 a.m. to 4 p.m. Our work went well, and we accomplished more than we anticipated. We were quite pleased and were prepared to leave, knowing the committee would function well in the future. One day before we were to leave, we got word of the ban on flights.

We surely didn't mind staying with



Though Tut Wan and Lester Boleyn work on translating the Bible into Nuer, a Sudanese language, they are based in Nairobi, Kenya.

the Nuer people. They are gracious and warmhearted people whose culture is one of welcoming the stranger. Tut and I are known throughout Nuerland as "the Bible translation people," and we never feel like strangers. We are always welcomed warmly, as we were on this trip four times by different church groups. On the first Friday evening, about 100 singers, dancers, and drummers from the local church choir came after dark, singing and dancing for about an hour. After that, we made speeches of thanks, and they went off into the darkness after another song or two and a prayer.

On Sunday, after I had preached to a full house, a Sunday school group came to greet us, and was followed immediately by the Women's Fellowship. Each group had at least 50 people, and the whole celebration lasted two to three hours.

But the climax was on our last Thursday—Thanksgiving in the U.S. A group walked about 90 minutes from a nearby village to bring us sour milk, grain, and a live goat, which they gave to me. On Friday we had our own Thanksgiving, despite the flight ban.

We were prepared to either stay or go. Then, on Sunday at 2 p.m., we got confirmation that two small planes would arrive around 5 p.m.

The NGO operating the hospital had requested an emergency food flight for the hospital, the news team needed to leave, and the UN had two of their own people in a nearby town. All these things, together with the urging of the NGO we were traveling with, convinced the UN it was worth defying the ban. And we were the beneficiaries. About 10 people left Leer that Sunday afternoon. The first plane took about seven and the baggage; the second plane was on the ground only long enough for the three of us remaining to crawl in through the pilot's door. I didn't relax until we entered Kenya.

After our Monday devotions, Tut confessed he never felt afraid until after we were home and he realized how long we might have been there.

While in southern Sudan, faced with the prospect of being there for an indefinite period of time, my feeling was one of complete helplessness. But we made it home, and we are thankful to a God who is able to do all things, and who answers prayers in his own way. **M.**

On December 5, the Sudanese government rescinded its ban on most humanitarian flights.

Since 1989, General Board employees to Sudan, Lester E. and Esther Boleyn, have coordinated the translation of the Bible into Nuer, a language spoken by one million Sudanese

stepping STONES

by Robin
Wentworth Mayer

The line at the fast-food restaurant was long for mid-afternoon. So I left my son waiting at the counter while I navigated through the seating section, rushed down the hallway, took a sharp turn to the left, burst through the door, and there on my right saw . . . urinals.

The first thought that came to my mind was: "Huh? Now *why* are they putting urinals in the women's restroom?"

Maybe you haven't found yourself in the wrong restroom lately. But I'll bet there have been times you have taken a wrong turn, and your first reaction was to assume that someone else was at fault.

Remember the bank statement you raised Cain over, only to discover later that your spouse had made an ATM withdrawal and forgotten to record it?

What about the "responsibility lecture" you gave your teenager on the low gas tank, only to remember you were the last person to use the car?

Let's face it: We all like to be right. But there is a world of difference between *being* right and *getting* right.

Had I been determined to be right, I would have attempted to prove that I was actually in the women's restroom. *Someone* had just mistakenly installed urinals in it.

Ridiculous? Of course it

is. But some of the scenarios played out in families and organizations are equally absurd.

An athlete quits the team because "the coach doesn't know what he's doing." The team goes on to win the championship.

A woman leaves her husband because she is so miserably unhappy. Five years later, she is alone, struggling financially, and still miserably unhappy.

A congregation gets rid of a pastor because the church isn't growing. Ten years and 3.7 pastors later, the church still isn't growing.

Or . . . the church *is* growing. But growing in a way that disrupts the status quo. The pastor is out, tradition is in, attendance is down, and nobody talks about what really happened.

A church member states his position on an issue. But when the vote goes the other way, he refuses to support the decision of the body and instead boycotts services and withholds financial support.

"Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed" (Jas. 5:16). How quickly we agree with this advice. How reluctantly we practice it.

I suppose I could have gone to the manager of the restaurant and complained that the urinals were in the wrong restroom. I could

have found a crowbar and pried them off the wall. I could have switched the signs on the outside of the doors. And if *being* right was my ultimate goal, I would have done any or all of those things.

But in that situation, *getting* right was a lot more important to me that *being* right. And the only way to *get* right was to admit I was wrong. I exited the men's restroom red-faced and grateful for the vacancy that spared me further embarrassment.

If *being* right is your consuming passion, it's easy enough to achieve that illusion. All you have to do is stubbornly insist that everyone else is wrong and blindly ignore all information that challenges your presuppositions. You won't fool anyone else; to others you will be as obvious as a woman in a men's restroom. You can, however, create a nice little bubble of denial that will protect you from the truth.

If, on the other hand, you are less interested in *being* right, and more interested in *getting* right, the straight and narrow path to that end is learning to admit when you are wrong.

And start with little things. It strengthens you for big things.

M.

Stepping Stones is a column offering suggestions, perspectives, and opinions—snapshots of life—that we hope are helpful to readers in their Christian journey. As the writer said in her first installment, "Remember, when it comes to managing life's difficulties, we don't need to walk on water. We just need to learn where the stepping stones are."

Robin Wentworth Mayer is pastor of Kokomo (Ind.) Church of the Brethren.

Brethren and the 'peace

by Mervin Keeney

Muhammed, a 10-year-old Palestinian boy, was walking to school one morning with a friend when they were startled by the sight of a corpse in a ditch. Horrified, they rushed to school to tell the principal, who notified the authorities. The dead person turned out to be an Israeli soldier, murdered by unknown assailants. The story became front-page news.

Already shocked by the dead body, the boys knew that they still faced an interrogation by the military authorities. Nothing happened all day. But at nightfall a knock came at the door, and soldiers entered. Frightened, Muhammed initially said he knew nothing. The soldiers slapped him, and his mother begged him to tell what he knew, so he told the story. But the Israeli soldiers thought he might not be telling the whole truth, so he was taken in for further questioning. Muhammed was returned home by the soldiers in the morning, his legs bruised and his face swollen from beating.

Who could believe that a small boy who had done his duty to report what he had seen could be otherwise implicated? What lessons are intended by applying to a child the controversial, "moderate physical pressure in interrogation" that is official Israeli policy? The lessons learned through this treatment are diametrically opposed to encouraging either positive social development or the desire to live at peace with the Israelis. Should anyone be surprised if one day Muhammed becomes negatively, even violently, involved? (Adapted from *Letters from Palestine—I: Mail Excerpts in an Age of Uncertainty*, by John Worrell and Linda Ammons, 1995.)

As a church that values God's peace, in the fullest and richest sense of that word, and also seeks righteousness and justice from our faith perspective,



Israeli soldiers watching Palestinians from the parapet of a Jerusalem gate symbolizes Holy Land reality even as the "peace process" progresses.

we Brethren find ourselves caught in a dilemma with the current Palestinian-Israeli "peace process." Many of us celebrated the famous 1995 handshake on the White House lawn, and we felt some connection by the presence there of our general secretary, Donald Miller. The tone of our media coverage, then and since, gives the impression that peace has come to the Middle East. Brethren dearly seek peace in the land where Jesus walked.

But as we listen to Middle East Christians and look at the accord process more closely, we see a widening gap between the rhetoric and the

ground-level reality. Because of the many injustices built into this political process thus far, serious questions arise about whether it offers sufficient basis to lead to a lasting peace in the region. The editors of *Middle East Report* noted that they are "uncomfortable using the phrase 'peace process' to refer to the actual dynamic of Palestinian-Israeli relations. The phrase in fact appropriates 'peace' to refer exclusively to terms of American-Israeli imposition, and to exclude as 'enemies of peace' those who insist that these terms are a recipe for continued conflict." Perhaps this "peace process" deserves a second look.

While initially we found hope in the Declaration of Principles, we also highlighted the critical requirement of these agreements that Israel cease all settlement-building activity (General Board, March 1994). Instead of honoring this requirement, Israel during 1994 and 1995 continued settlement-building within the Occupied Territories at an *increased rate*.

Also Israel has continued to seize land generally; some estimates place this amount at 57 square miles confiscated just since signing the accords.

Thus far we find that only the services of government, the costs or obligations, have been transferred to Palestinian control. Power, in terms of income-producing industrial and economic activity, has been kept in the hands of the Israelis. Some would point to this as an intentional effort to create economic dependency, or as a means to ensure the failure of the Palestinian National Authority to establish itself as a viable government.

In the face of these realities, those who seek peace might echo the words of Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, "My opposition to the terms of the accord is a measure of my attachment to real peace."

Our impressions of both the conflict and the peace process are shaped by

process'



media, yet news coverage itself may reinforce a distortion. Media give wide exposure to the violent drama of bus bombs, but have not covered the weekly shooting of Palestinians, including women and children, by Israeli soldiers or settlers. The systemic violence of the Israeli apartheid-like economic and social repression as it administers the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza does not grab the headlines. Nor has world opinion to this point galvanized for change in the region, as was directed against South African apartheid.

Brethren have been involved in this part of the Middle East region for decades in a variety of peace, human rights, and education roles. We have a humanitarian concern for the Palestinian people who were forced from their land and have lived for decades in refugee camps. We relate to and support the local Christian community. The outflow of Christians from the Holy Land has been a con-

cern of the worldwide church in recent years. We uphold human rights and a just handling of land rights that too often have been settled by military might. Brethren have been a quiet presence laying the groundwork for peace in this conflicted environment.

It is not surprising that Christians have an interest in the Holy Land—where the church has existed since the time of the Apostles to the present day. And it is not surprising that we should have special feeling for the Palestinian people who were a part of the earliest church. Father Elias Chacour, a Melkite priest who supervised a Brethren volunteer serving at his Galilee school some years ago, reminds us that, ethnically, “the Christianity of the Holy Land is Palestinian.”

And yet our long-term interest for peace in the Middle East is “not simply from a concern for the area which is the birthplace of the Christian Church but more primarily for the people there who are being violated and because



Jerusalem is home to three monotheistic religions, and evidence abounds that in its historic sites lie one atop the other. Islam's Dome of the Rock (at right in left photo) is built on the site of Solomon's temple, all of which was long ago destroyed except for Judaism's "Wailing Wall" (above photo). Cross-topped churches and crescent-topped mosques frequently are neighbors in the holy city.

war threatens” (General Board statement, February 1975).

While we stand with the marginalized Palestinians and relate to Palestinian Christians in the region as brothers and sisters in the faith, we do not see Israelis or Jews as our enemies. Father Chacour counsels us, “your friendship with one side should not mean enmity or hostility to the other side.” We recall that our own heritage of religious persecution, as well as the common concerns Jews and Brethren have for minority rights, have often drawn us together on social and political issues.

The roots of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict are complex. As the birthplace of three faiths, the land is full of sites that are sacred or historic for one or more groups. Multiple claims on the same piece of land, whether it is a holy site or just a family olive grove, are a common occurrence. Since this property has changed hands repeatedly through the course of history, at least

part of the confusion in understanding these competing claims is the lack of clarity about which century we are speaking of when we refer to a particular spot of ground.

Historic and sacred sites are literally on top of each other in some locations. For example, the holy Muslim site the Dome of the Rock is built on the site of the Temple of Solomon. The recent expansion of construction has aggravated this problem.

On the whole, Brethren do not have undue attachment to specific historic sites. Therefore, we may not immediately grasp the centrality of land in the conflict between Muslims, Jews, and Christians in the region. We need to listen carefully as these believers articulate the meaning and importance of land in these faith traditions.

The conflict is further complicated by the external interest in this land by the millions of believers in the three monotheistic faiths birthed in the region. The Crusades to reclaim the Holy Land from Muslim rule (AD 1096-1270) were only one example of major external involvement with this piece of property. External factors created the present state of Israel, resulting in Palestinian displacement. If we recognize how these outside influences set the stage and continue to play a part in the conflict, we will gain understanding of the realities at work. Then, perhaps, we can begin to identify the role our own nation has played in this conflict and our responsibility as its citizens.

The lack of genuine support toward, or perhaps ambivalence for, the Palestinian people by the wider Arab world has been an unhelpful factor. Palestinians living in the refugee camps and in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza have too often paid the price for Arab decisions made elsewhere, in which they usually had little voice, while they faced the consequences of military occupation on a daily basis. In a similar way, Middle East Christians point out that they too often pay the price of ill-advised actions on the part of external

Christians who take positions or actions regarding the region without consultation with them.

In addition, there are several complicating dynamics. At the present time, there is a tremendous imbalance of power because the United States has supported Israel militarily and economically for several decades. This fact adds to the imbalance of power at today's negotiating table and raises concerns that agreements will be unduly biased and therefore result in a peace that fails.

Based on these historic and contemporary realities, the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is particularly hostile and deep-seated. A high degree of pain and anger exists on both sides. For a long period, both parties wished the other would just disappear; rhetoric on both sides even supported this end through military force. In light of this level of hostility, the progress being made today toward living together does indeed seem miraculous.

In assessing the transition to this point, we must acknowledge some important progress. Both the Israelis and Palestinians have recognized each other and have started taking steps toward living as neighbors again. While the Interim Agreements thus far fall far short of achieving the return of land to the Palestinians required by UN resolutions, some cities already have been handed over and more are scheduled for transfer in the months ahead. Even modest steps toward these Israelis and Palestinians living together with less violence and suffering should be celebrated.

The painful process of moving from states that have previously sought the other's elimination to become sister societies seeking to live at some level of accommodation side-by-side has exacted a toll on both Palestinians and Israelis, and is recognized as a factor in the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Riad Jarjour, general secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches, a primary Brethren partner in the region, believes that whatever else may be said of Rabin's "peace process" record, "it

must be acknowledged that he broke step with the past. He has certainly inspired a new way of thinking within a significant segment of Israeli society, moving it from a violent and vengeful survivalist mentality that has no goal but itself, to one where people can now think of a longer-term basis for life in a truly Middle Eastern future."

Perhaps the concept "justice in transition," currently being promoted by the international human rights community, could be an interim objective for this process with which Brethren can resonate. This phrase implies an unfinished process, during which justice is sought, with the intent of moving toward a more positive and just end than presently exists. Such a process seems consistent with peacemaking as the Brethren understand it.

In humility, we need to take our stand alongside the imperfect peacemakers of the region, recognizing that, as human beings, we seek not perfect peace, which exists only in God, but *movement toward* this inspired state. We need not blindly accept biased or flawed political processes because some have labeled them "peace." Nor should we withhold our support from progress that, while inadequate and incomplete, moves toward a greater level of peace in the Middle East. Such a position embraces both the pain and the hope embodied in the present transition.

Peace, as a word and concept, is a central value for all three faiths rooted in the region. Both the word and the concept, in its richest meaning, are evident in daily greetings, worship, and prayer of Middle East Muslims, Jews, and Christians. Whether we say it in Arabic or Hebrew, the phrase, "Peace be upon you," expresses a blessing, a hope, a vision for a possible future together. May our common desire for God's peace become a foundation for our joint efforts toward achieving this reality in the Middle East. *M.*

Mervin Keeney serves as representative for Africa and the Middle East, and is a former missionary to Sudan

Caregiving on St. Croix

by Fran Holcomb

My husband, Carl, and I were packing our motor home in Bassett, Va., for a trip to Indiana when the phone call came from Cooperative Disaster Child Care (CDCC). Three more caregivers were needed on the Caribbean island of St. Croix to work with the victims of Hurricane Marilyn. Could I leave for St. Croix next morning?

When I told Carl, he asked what CDCC was, and what I would be doing on St. Croix. In my tailspin upon hearing duty call in the face of a pleasure trip, I didn't give him a detailed answer at the moment. What I could have said is this: Jan Thompson, director of Brethren Disaster Services (1978–1987), was on a disaster response in 1978 when he realized that the needs of children caught up in disasters were not being addressed. Seed for a new program was sown when the decision was made that children's needs should come first when disasters hit.

Karen Doult developed a curriculum to train caregivers and training workshops were conducted. The first trained disaster child care workers were sent out in 1980.

In 1984, Cooperative Disaster Child Care was established as an ecumenical disaster response program working with the American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. CDCC utilizes volunteers, material and financial support from partner denominations, agencies, congregations, and concerned individuals.

Roma Jo Thompson served as director of CDCC 1985–1987. Lydia Walker is the current coordinator. In 1995, CDCC returned to being solely a Church of the Brethren program, although it continues to work with



other agencies.

Carl, his memory refreshed, said, "Go." I abandoned the packing of our motor home and the trip to Indiana.

I threw long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and other suggested necessities into a suitcase. But the temperature on St. Croix, I was told, would be in the 90s, so I added a couple pairs of shorts and two short-sleeved T-shirts. (The second day on St. Croix, I cut off the long sleeves and long legs.) Of course, I packed plenty of insect repellent.

My plane to St. Croix was crowded with disaster volunteers from many

Caregiver Fran Holcomb found that the best initial approach to winning the confidence of children was to sit on the floor near the registration table and be friendly and non-threatening. The approach usually worked, and the children were soon ready to sit on her knee and begin playing games.

organizations. Jean Myers, our project director, wearing her official CDCC blue-checked smock, met our flight. Our first stop was at the American Red Cross headquarters, where papers were filled out, blood pressures were

taken, and bottled water was issued. We also got a brief orientation, including a description of the conditions we were facing.

Motel accommodations, far superior to what I was braced for, were assigned. The electricity was still off, so air-conditioning and fans weren't working. We kept our doors open at night, to the delight of flying and crawling insects and even some crabs.

Next day we got instructions and were parceled out to three service centers on the island. That day and each day thereafter was begun with our center's three workers forming a prayer circle. A Red Cross worker joined us that first morning. Later, others joined the daily circle.

A good feeling came from telling others we were *Church of the Brethren* women. Almost always, the response to that was "Oh, yes, the church of love and service. We've worked with you before." All dignitaries visiting the center were brought by our area and told that we were the "blue angels" who made the work easier, and that we were from the Church of the Brethren. Most of these visitors commented that they knew of the Church of the Brethren and its reputation for service in different parts of the world.

Nancy Barr, the leader of our group, had set up our area a few days before our arrival. She staked out our claim in a hallway near all the activities, marking claim boundaries with chairs, cardboard, and a clothes line. She had provided a space for us to guide organized, therapeutic child play.

A quiet area had books and soft toys. Frustrated children could be calmed at a table with paints, colors, paper, and coloring books. Those children could express their feelings about the hurricane through painting and drawing, or relieve stress by coloring pictures in the books. An active area had toy cars, including emergency vehicles. With

these, the children could re-enact the disaster if they wished. There also was a table with Play-Doh, cutters, rolling pins, and other tools. The children could simply pound out their anger there or be creative with the clay. The most active area had a pan of dry rice that children could just have fun with or re-enact the disaster. We had no electricity, so this busy scene was lighted with Coleman lanterns.

We caregivers provided loving laps for the children who needed them, and a safe place with interesting things to play with for the others. The great boon of disaster child care for parents is the freedom it provides them to wait in the long lines and go through interviews and other processing without needing to drag their children along or to worry about them in their absence. The caseworkers were very appreciative of the CDCC workers. We enabled them to work without interruption from the children.

Lunch for CDCC workers was furnished by the Red Cross. Children who stayed for any length of time received a snack and juice, also furnished by the Red Cross. The children liked that. What they didn't like was the portable potties. Yuck!

At the end of each day, our group of CDCC workers assembled back at our motel restaurant for a buffet meal, followed by devotions and singing. People in the restaurant seemed to enjoy our singing and made favorable comments about our devotions. Evenings were given to personal chores such as laundry. I made an effort every night to take a walk along the beach, to be calmed by the rhythms of the ocean, to idly pick up shells, and to watch the fish by flashlight. After a night's sleep, I was up at 5:50 a.m., ready for my exercises and another day as a caregiver.

For me, each day's work was fun. I was interested in the children and enjoyed playing with them. (I even

learned a universal term from them: "Beep, beep!")

Most of the children were apprehensive about leaving their parents and staying in our child care center. After being assured that they could see their parents from the play area, the children would reluctantly consent to be guided into some activity. Any child that could not be calmed and involved in play activity was picked up by one of us or taken by the hand, and returned to the parents. In most cases, just seeing the parents again and knowing they could stay with them were all the assurance the children needed for returning to our area and its play activities. No children were kept against their will.

The best initial approach, I found, was to sit on the floor near the registration table and, while the parent registered the child, to offer my hand, hold out a toy, or toss a bean bag. A welcoming smile worked wonders also.

Three-year-old Pablo's grandmother registered him. He watched me as I sat on the floor playing, then shyly sat down beside me. We played for a time, then he took my hand and led me to the paint station. As he painted, he had to be able to reach over and touch me. And he made awesome roaring sounds as he painted. He would reach out and touch me, then return to painting. The picture was circles upon circles painted with much force.

Then Pablo asked for another sheet of paper. His noise stopped, and he smiled as he painted two blue blobs. One blob had a white top with yellow around it; the other had a brown top with black around it. When I asked him to tell me about the painting, he seemed disgusted at my denseness. Pointing to the two blobs, he said, "This is you (the white-topped blob), and this is me (the brown-topped blob). See, I have my head on your shoulder."



Elsie Michael, a caregiver from Pennsylvania, uses techniques taught by Cooperative Disaster Child Care to win over children in her charge. CDCC workers provide care for children while their parents work their way through redtape connected with applying for and receiving disaster aid. The workers also provide therapy to help children work through the trauma of a natural disaster. Many children on St. Croix believed that Hurricane Marilyn resulted from people not praying hard enough. Six years ago, Hurricane Hugo had hit the island with devastating effect.

I gave Pablo a big hug and asked him for the painting. He refused; he wanted to take it home.

Most of the children talked calmly about the hurricane. One boy drew a picture of a roofless house. A stick figure shedding two huge tears stood alone inside. The boy explained that when Marilyn struck, everyone except Daddy went to Grandma's. He was stubborn and stayed home. Marilyn blew the roof off, and Daddy was sad.

Many of the children were convinced that the hurricane struck because the people did not pray. They said that after Hurricane Hugo in September 1989, people really prayed, and hurricanes that followed just sneezed and turned away. So when Marilyn was sighted, people thought she would sneeze and turn away, so they didn't pray.

We had a tense day when we learned that Hurricane Pablo was headed toward St. Croix and, if it hit, it would be worse than Marilyn. The Red Cross was ready to fly all CDCC workers out, but most of us believed we were called to be there, and if Pablo struck, we would be needed more than ever.

Jean Myers bought extra supplies and our work went on as usual. Many US churches held prayer vigils for our



safety. The children told me that if we prayed, Pablo would sneeze and turn away. People prayed, and Pablo did pass St. Croix by.

Ten Christian women provided love and care for 992 children over 21 days. Those children gave us lots of love and precious memories. My most treasured memory is of a small boy sitting on my lap, taking my face in both his hands, and saying, "You're an old lady, but

you are the most fun." Then he gave me a great big hug and a sloppy kiss.

It's okay for a caregiver to receive a little care, herself, isn't it? *M.*

After a career as an educator in Indiana, Fran Holcomb retired to her native town of Bassett, Va., where she again is a member of Mount Hermon Church of the Brethren. Since retirement, she has served as a teacher at Hillcrest School in Jos, Nigeria, and this past fall had her experience with CDCC on St. Croix.

by Donald R. Fitzkee

When he was a boy growing up along the main thoroughfare between Lancaster and Harrisburg, Pa., Fred Bernhard's parents frequently entertained uninvited guests. Word was out among the "hobos," as wandering travelers were known, that the Howard and Florence Bernhard farm was a place to receive a good meal and place to stay.

Fred enjoyed talking with the many visitors who came through his home, but he wondered what motivated his parents to extend their table. "One day I asked my parents, 'Why do you do this?' The simple answer was: 'Because of our faith.'"

Those early lessons in faith and hospitality weren't lost on the 1996 Annual Conference moderator. He has since translated them into two successful pastorates in the Oakland congregation, near Gettysburg, Ohio; a doctoral dissertation; and now a Conference theme.

"Hospitality is just who Fred is," says moderator-elect David Wine.

And by this summer, Fred will have written the book on the subject. His work, co-authored with Andrew Center consultant Steve Clapp, will describe how the practice of hospitality has helped Oakland become one of the faster growing Brethren congregations.

"The hospitality concept is borne out in the way he's been successful in his work," notes Southern Ohio District executive Jim Tomlinson. "What impresses me when I go to church at Oakland is that from the time my car enters the parking lot until I'm ready to go home, there is someone there seeing to my needs. You can go to many Brethren congregations on Sunday mornings and not even be greeted. At Oakland, hospitality is lived out."



Fred Bernhard

The results have been eight solid years of sustained growth that has seen average worship attendance rise from 159 to 550, and the construction of a new sanctuary and two new education wings during the 1990s. Much of it is due to the vision of Oakland's hospitable pastor. "Fred works out of vision and practicality," says Jim. "He has the ability to keep vision out there, but he also has the ability to make the vision practical."

Surely Fred learned those early lessons about faith and hospitality down on the farm, but, at the time, his parents and others sometimes wondered whether much Christian teaching was sinking in.

Born in 1940, Fred grew up in the West Green Tree and Florin congregations between Mount Joy and Elizabethtown, Pa. When West Green Tree and Florin divided into separate congregations in 1954, Fred's father, a free minister, became the moderator of the new Florin congregation.

"The mischievous ones in our church were the preachers' kids and deacons' kids," Fred recalls. As the moderator's son, Fred often took the lead in mischief. Fortunately, the elder Bernhard was a patient man who was

"able to see the humor in boys being boys," says Fred.

Others encouraged Fred as well, including Brethren saint Anna Mow. As Fred tells it, sister Anna was speaking at an outdoor worship service at Atlantic Northeast District's Camp Swatara. Fred and three friends from Florin plotted to sneak out of the service for a smoke. They returned in time for lunch, apparently with no one the wiser for their absence.

A few years later, Fred met sister Anna again at a youth camp. She said with a cackle, "I remember you. You were one of the boys that sneaked out to smoke a cigarette." A few days later, Fred received a card in the mail: "Expecting great things from you. In his strength, Anna."

After studying agriculture in high school, Fred rented a farm northeast of Mount Joy and began farming. But God's call intervened.

"I felt this tremendous call to go into ministry," says Fred, "and spent a lot of sleepless nights over that." Before long, the Florin congregation scheduled a vote for a minister. Fred's call was confirmed, when he and another young man were chosen in an open election. Fred was 19 at the time.

'The devil has hoodwinked the Brethren into majoring on minors,' says Annual Conference moderator Fred Bernhard. 'Instead of arguing about Christ, we need to lift him up as head of the church and proclaim him as the Son of God who draws people into the kingdom.'

Hospitality is the path

After attending Elizabethtown College for two years, Fred tested his wings during a nine-month interim pastorate in the Mount Hermon congregation near Bassett, Va. Convinced of his call to pastoral ministry, Fred returned to be ordained at Florin in 1962. Along the way, he served briefly as a free minister in the congregation, and as a youth cabinet member.

From there he accepted a pastorate in the Pleasant View and Sharpsburg congregations, a yoked parish in central Maryland. Plans were to pastor while completing his college education at nearby Shepherd College. Fred didn't obtain a diploma during his three years in Maryland, but he did find a wife and family.

He married Joice Burall in November 1964. A widow, she was the mother of three children, ages 12, 9, and 8. "We both feel God brought us together," says Joice. Resigned to raising her children alone, Joice "wasn't really looking" for a husband. But district executive Arthur Scrogum determined that Joice would make a good pastor's wife, matched the two up, and eventually performed the ceremony.

When Fred—who is only 12 years older than the oldest child—attempted

to adopt, however, county officials balked. Only an interview with the children convinced a judge to permit the adoption. "After hearing the story from the children," the judge told Fred and Joice, "I have no choice; I must grant the adoption."

"They really adopted *me*," says Fred of his children, Barbara, Howard, and Tom. "I truly do have a family. I don't know any father who is loved more than I am."

Fred refers to Joice as "the quiet strength behind everything I do" and "the light of my life." District executive Jim Tomlinson observes, "I don't know of many pastor/spouse relationships as healthy as theirs." Both Bernhards stress the important role that family—including seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren—plays in their lives.

In June 1965, Fred and his family moved to Johnstown, Pa., where Fred pastored the Morrellville congregation for more than three years. While in Johnstown, he was elected to Standing Committee, and subsequently became chairman of Standing Committee's Nominating Committee. Thus began many years of involvement with Annual Conference.

In 1968, Fred took his family to Ohio's Miami Valley, where he became pastor at Oakland. During the 16-year pastorate, the congregation experienced growth and so did the pastor. "They really raised me," says Fred. At the congregation's urging, Fred earned a college equivalency degree and completed his Master of Divinity degree at nearby Earlham School of Religion in 1977. He added a Doctor of Ministry from Bethany Theological Seminary in 1982. His doctoral thesis focused on hospitality.

Along the way Fred also accepted responsibilities in the district and denomination. He served on district board and was Southern Ohio District moderator 1978–1979. In 1980, he was elected to the General Board, spending three years on the Pension Board Executive Committee and two years on the General Board Executive Committee. He also served as vice-chairman of the Board. A later stint on the Brethren Benefit Trust Board was cut short by his election as moderator-elect.

Fred says of his General Board service, "I really learned a lot from that experience. It was an eye-opener in helping me see the quality of dedica-

tion of people who work for us and the uniqueness of who we are as a denomination."

Fred also has had some other good training for the moderatorship. Since the late 1960s, he has been a fixture at Conference, serving for several years as head teller, and more recently as head messenger, facilitating the work of Conference by tracking down, on a moment's notice, whoever is needed.

Joice, who also has served as a Conference teller, says that one of Fred's qualifications for the messenger job is that "he doesn't sit well." Another is his amazing ability to recall names and faces. "He seems to know a tremendous number of people," says David Wine. "You start talking about anybody, and he says, 'Oh, he's related to so-and-so and so-and-so.'" Fred claims to have traced his own Brethren roots back 11 generations.

"He has a gift of name recall and learning to know connections with people," says Bob Mikesell, a long-time friend and Oakland member. "It's amazing how he can flow through the congregation and remember names." By the same token, says Bob, "Everybody knows Fred." Bob hates to eat out with his pastor because of the constant stream of people who interrupt them to say hello. "It's very distracting!"

Cars are one thing people talk about with Fred. "His hobby is anything with a motor," says Joice. Fred enjoys tinkering with motors on the family's six-acre farmette. And he loves selling cars. Not for profit. Just for fun.

The car-selling began back in Maryland when Joice's brother-in-law owned a Pontiac dealership and Fred began pairing church members with Pontiacs. "Now I'm in cahoots with the local dealer (in nearby Greenville)," says Fred with a grin.

"He doesn't get a commission," Joice points out. "He just thoroughly enjoys selling cars." When the time comes to buy another car, many Brethren talk to Fred first to see what



vehicle he recommends. In the process, the local dealer has become sold on the Oakland congregation and is now a member.

After 16 years at Oakland, Fred left behind congregation and car clientele to return home to eastern Pennsylvania. He accepted the pastorate at the Mechanic Grove congregation near Quarryville in 1984. But he soon learned that the Miami Valley really had become home. The absence of their family, most of whom remained at Oakland, coupled with the fact that Fred and Mechanic Grove weren't a perfect match, pulled the Bernhards back toward Ohio. But Fred and Joice never dreamed of returning to the same congregation.

Through a set of circumstances, however, that's exactly what happened. In 1988, Fred began his second pastorate at Oakland.

"There are few pastors who can return to a congregation they already have served," says Jim Tomlinson, "and pick up from there and not rehash the same old stuff. Fred's one of the rare persons who could pull that off. He came back new and fresh and ready to move."



During his four-and-a-half-year absence, both Fred and the Oakland congregation had changed—but in the same direction. Both were more committed to reaching out and growing. Fred had sharpened his thinking on visionary leadership and practical ways for congregations to practice hospitality so that new people would feel welcome.

"He has always exemplified a genuineness and caring in his meeting of people," says Bob Mikesell. Whether they be teachers, farmers, or public

Page 18: Fred demonstrates his friendly, welcoming pastoral style with Oakland members.

Left: Fred and his wife, Joice, have long been familiar to Annual Conferencegoers as tellers.

Right: The team of Anne Myers (secretary), David Wine (moderator-elect), and Fred Bernhard (moderator) will handle the business of the Cincinnati Annual Conference.

Below: Seen here baptizing a new Oakland member, Fred pastors a rapidly growing congregation.



officials, "he seems to relate well to all of them."

And the congregation has followed the pastor's lead. "The whole congregation has caught the vision," says Fred. "This congregation is an alive, enthusiastic, welcoming congregation that is doing it in the name of Jesus Christ."

During one six-week stretch last fall when Fred was away from the congregation, seven new families began attending the church. All are now enrolled in a class for potential new

members. One family attended worship for six weeks without meeting the pastor, a good indication that Oakland's growth is a team effort.

Fred insists that Oakland isn't unusual. "We are a typical country Brethren congregation with a church house sitting out in a cornfield." The difference is that it has taken seriously the biblical command to practice hospitality. "Scripture doesn't say, 'Do hospitality so you will grow,'" says Fred. "But if the church practices hospitality, I believe it will grow."

That's the message that Fred has been communicating in his moderator's travels, and the one he hopes to convey through the Annual Conference theme, "As Christ welcomed you . . ." based on Romans 15:7. That verse says, "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God" (NRSV).

"My intention in using this scripture verse is to help the church focus on how it can reach out in the name of Jesus Christ to a hurting world," says Fred. The verse advocates welcoming, accepting, and affirming one another. "If you think about it," he says, "that is the core foundation of what any of us want to experience when we enter a

house of worship—both by our God and the people we are worshipping with."

Fred related the stories of three Brethren congregations he visited in recent years. In one, he was interrogated—asked why he was there. In another, he was asked to move out of someone else's seat. And in a third, no one spoke to him the whole morning. "To have that happen in the Church of the Brethren," Fred says passionately, "is an abomination to the Christ we serve."

Reflecting on the state of the larger church, Fred observes, "I think the devil

has hoodwinked the Brethren into majoring on minors," such as sexuality and other controversial issues that have commanded the church's attention. "I feel that the primary job for the church of Jesus Christ and the Church of the Brethren is to proclaim the good news in word and deed. Instead of arguing about Christ, we need to lift him up as head of the church and proclaim him as the Son of God who draws people into the kingdom."

And once Christ draws them, it is the church's job to make them feel at home, just as Christ welcomed us. That has been the secret to Fred's and the Oakland congregation's success, which will be described in Fred's book to be released at Annual Conference. If you want details on how to practice hospitality, Fred says, "Buy the book!"

And watch the moderator in action. After all, he wrote the book on *M.* hospitality.

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Does the future have

by Paul Munday

Algebra. Just the mention of that word is like fingernails scratching across a slate blackboard. Picture the scene: Ninth grade, South Hagerstown High School. Thirty-five students bantering about in the classroom. And then there am I, huddled at my desk, seared to death. "Munday, I need to see you." Mr. Dullabaum boomed. As my teacher, he knew my algebra record well: a C the first marking period, a D the second marking period, and now an F the third marking period. "See those people over there," he barked, pointing to his junior college evening class. "You'll never make it there if you don't buckle down here. Boy, do you want a future? Then you've got to get this stuff!"

Well, I never did. Just ask my kids. They wouldn't even think of coming to me with their math homework! But Mr. Dullabaum's words did push me on, as I squeaked through algebra, bound and determined to have a tomorrow. The result? A magna cum laude college degree. No, not in math, but in history. And the discovery that there was something very jarring, but also very motivating, about an uncertain, questionable future.

As the church, we are moving into a similar reality. A scan of the nightly news tells us that we are living in transitional, questionable times. Frankly, our future as an established institution is uncertain, as we shift from a churched culture in the United States, to an unchurched, secular culture.

Consider these statistics: In 1960, 80.6 percent of American children lived with both a father and mother. In 1995 that figure is only 57.7 percent. In 1960, use of illegal drugs by high school students was largely unheard of. In 1995, *Rolling Stone* magazine reports, over 45 percent of high school seniors have utilized some form of illegal drugs.

We are no longer the only show in town. Competing, secular influences are penetrating even Brethren country.

The question is not whether the church will have a future, but will the future have a church? Will those caught in a secular value system have opportunity to discover the grace, freedom, and justice of Christ?

There was a time when growing up in Lititz, Pa., Broadway, Va., or McPherson, Kan., meant growing up Christian. That might not be the case anymore. As Paul Dieterich of the Center for Parish Development has noted: "While Western societies were nourished in their roots in Christianity, they are now disconnected from those origins. Where once culture was the church's ally, now it is not. The church has been 'disestablished' and relegated to the edges of society."

Phrasing it another way, the mission field has moved; it is no longer over there (overseas), the mission field is now over here—right on our doorstep.

Such truth is jarring, but it can also be propelling, launching us toward a new reason for being. As Dieterich goes on to say, "The transition from the former 'establishment' church to a new and different identity and role—a 'missional' church—can be a creative and energizing time, a time of rediscovering God's redemptive purposes and of participating in God's transforming activity in the midst of human life and history."

Translation: we can wake up from cozy, interior frameworks to a new

identity, a missional identity. We can begin to exist, not primarily for ourselves—for our nurture, our edification, our benefit—but for the nurture, edification and benefit of others. As Paul affirms in Ephesians 3, "Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden . . . in God . . . so that through the church the wisdom of God . . . might now be known to the rulers and authorities . . ." (Eph. 3:8-10).

It is not our future that is paramount, but the future of the Gentiles, the future of those outside our walls. The question is not will the church will have a future, but will the future have a church? Will those caught in a secular value system have opportunity to discover the grace, freedom, and justice of Christ? Will those caught in a secular "reward" system have opportunity to know the community and accountability of the Christian church?

They will, from my perspective, if we alter our mindset, moving from atrophy to adventure, from rigidity to relevance, and from hostility to hospitality.

From atrophy to adventure

First, the future will have a church, if we move from atrophy to adventure. There is a lot of truth in the phrase "Use it or lose it." This is painfully true in our household as my wife reminds me of the contrast between my physique and that of my son, Peter. As an active, athletic adolescent, Peter boasts a physique of broad shoulders and rippling muscles. I, on the other hand, as an inactive, middle-aged couch potato, reflect the physique of a bag of potatoes.

I don't think I am alone. A lot of us are out of shape, not only physically but emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. I recently advanced the theory that a central reason congregations are not changing is that the people in those congregations are not changing.

n church?

For many of us, the process of learning stopped at a high school or college graduation platform.

The law of ecological learning relates to this premise. It is commonly expressed through the formula $L \geq C$. This postulate states that in order for an organism to survive (let alone change or grow), the rate of learning must be equal to or greater than the rate of change in the environment.

Unfortunately, the rate of learning in many congregations is virtually insignificant. Not only are we not changing, we are barely maintaining the status quo. The result is atrophy at best, white-knuckle survival at worst. Many church futurists are calling for a switch, in this regard, from transactional to transformational styles of teaching and learning. The difference is summarized in the chart below, modified from material first supplied by Leadership Network.

For me, we gather as the church for one primary purpose: life-change. As Christ-followers, our central concern is not the acquisition of information, or socializing or continuing a family tradition. We sojourn as the people of God—primarily—to change toward the likeness and stature of Christ; to become different people; to expand our minds, enlarge our hearts, and extend our spirits.

An experience of growth and life-change in Christ opens life up toward a wonderful array of new possibilities. A sense of new possibilities, in turn, empowers people, which is the ultimate goal of any vital church. As aviator Brooke Knapp once affirmed,

“There are two kinds of people: those paralyzed by fear and those who are afraid, but go ahead anyway. Life isn’t about limitations, it’s about options.”

Paul Murphy, the famous chess player, was once browsing through an art museum. As he did, he encountered a painting titled “Checkmate!” The painting pictures a young man playing chess with the devil. The young man is clearly distressed as he finds himself checkmated with no apparent way out. Talking to a nearby guard, Murphy learned that chess player after chess player had studied the chess board in the painting and come to a similar conclusion: The young man was without options. Murphy decided to study the board himself, staring at the painting for over 30 minutes. Suddenly, he pointed to the young man, and blurted out: “You still have a move! You still have a move!”

Our challenge is to create an environment so compelling that life opens up for people. So much in society closes life down for people, narrowing and hoarding options. The new community in Christ—the church—on the other hand, breaks possibilities wide open, empowering people to walk toward adventure and fulfillment in ways hardly imagined.

From rigidity to relevance

The future also will have a church if we move from rigidity to relevance. It’s amazing how we become trapped in a narrow, familial world view.

In addressing a recent Consultation on Ministry Training, educator

Barbara Wheeler called attention to the Church of the Brethren’s traditional dependence on ethnic cohesion. Much of our identity, Wheeler observed, has been based on common family ties, common Germanic roots, and common generational loyalty to “be Brethren.” In a secular, post-Christian culture, however, all that has changed: “Most Americans do not feel strong bonds to the traditions in which they were raised. No longer is my identity in some permanent way Presbyterian, Nazarene, or even Catholic. I go to a local church, not because I was born into it, but because I like it and it happens to be Presbyterian, or Nazarene, or Church of the Brethren. Religion is no longer an old family recipe, handed down over the generations. Americans are free, even expected, to survey the whole religious smorgasbord and choose whatever denominational dish most appeals to them.”

Concluding, Wheeler goes on to counsel: “Congregations of the Church of the Brethren as well as other Protestant denominations, have a future only if they remake themselves. In the next decade, congregations must present those born into the church with compelling reasons to stay into adulthood, because family and ethnic ties will not hold them.”

It is important to affirm that reinvention and reconstruction *are* possible. We *can* move beyond narrow, familial understandings and explore fresh perspectives on faith, life, and godliness. New structures, new music, new events, new programs, new attitudes, and new risks can all come into view.

For example, we can begin to incorporate the music of more than one generation into congregational life. In most Brethren communities, there are two Christian radio stations. One plays more traditional, meditative Christian music, the other plays more contemporary, celebrative Christian music. A value judgment should not be placed on either. Yet in many congregations,

Transactional style

Focus on facts

Feedback: test for retention

Linear, sequential

Content/doctrine/beliefs

Goal is knowledge transfer

Transformational style

Focus on life skills/relevance

Feedback: test for application

Experiential, relationship based

Felt needs/ministry/maturity

Goal is change of behavior

a worship war of sorts is taking place between these musical expressions. Is such conflict really necessary? Can a value be attached to either musical "them"? Why do we need to be uptight toward varied artistic forms?

In the words of Thomas Troeger of the School of Theology, the issue biblically is not whether a particular music or worship form exists. The 150th of Psalms, for example, is filled with a wide variety of worship instruments and artistic expressions. The key issue scripturally is this: "Is our artistic or worship expression marked by grace? Is it done well, with class, grace and grace abounding?"

Some of us need to tighten up a bit on our a new range of quality artistic expression in the church—no artistic exercise of the field, but as an additional vehicle for God's marvelous message of love.

From hostility to hospitality

In addition, the future has a church to move from hostility to hospitality. We will never reach the mission field around us without a spirit of grace and genuine welcome toward the stranger.

Changes in society have made the need for increasingly hospitable congregations especially urgent. At one time, "welcome and friendliness" was a defining part of what we tried to do as small churches. As time has passed, however, a more individualized culture has replaced the "welcome and friendliness" that once defined our congregations.

As noted in an article in the *Journal of Presbyterian History*, a provocative title is "Sobering: A Tale of America's Declining Social Capital." The author of this article, Robert D. Putnam, documents an alarming tendency for Americans to socially disengage. For example, fraternal organizations have witnessed a substantial drop in membership in the '80s and '90s. Since 1979, membership in the Elks has declined 18 percent, membership in the Shriners has declined 27 percent, and membership in the Jaycees has declined 44 percent. Putnam's most whimsical example is the decline of

bowling leagues: "More Americans are bowling today than ever before, but bowling in organized leagues has plummeted in the last decade or so. Between 1980 and 1995, the total number of bowlers in America increased by 10 percent, while league-bowling decreased 40 percent.... The rise of solo bowling threatens the livelihood of

*We will never reach
the mission field
around us without a
spirit of openness
and genuine welcome
toward the stranger.*

bowling lane proprietors because those who bowl as members of leagues consume three times as much beer and pizza as solo bowlers.... The broader social significance, however, lies in the social interaction... that solo bowlers miss."

This trend toward solo-bowling is illustrative of growing social disengagement across society and the tendency of many to cocoon, spiraling downward into lives of quiet desperation.

How are we responding to this social trend? Are we aware of the "stranger in our midst"? Do we encourage social connectedness in congregational life? Do we personally go out of our way to engage and welcome newcomers? Do we care for newcomers, perhaps through a handshake, a card or a visit?

Fred Bernhard tells of being in one of our larger Churches of the Brethren congregations, before his tenure and inability as moderator. As he moved through the church toward an empty pew, no one acknowledged his presence. Determined to have some human contact before worship, Bernhard went up to a church member and extended his right hand. "Good morning, I'm Fred Bernhard. I'm glad to be with

you this morning." Without missing a beat, the other party replied, "What are you *doing* here?"

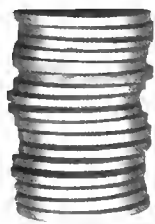
Lukewarmness has turned to cynicism—even hostility—in many of our congregations. We are called, however, as a biblical people, toward a new civility, that not only tolerates, but embraces even the stranger. As the writer of Hebrews reminds us, "Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it" (Heb. 13:1-2).

A pastor visited a Coptic monastery. It was in the middle of the desert, about a day's journey from Cairo, Egypt. The monks treated him like royalty. They served him a wonderful meal, showed him to the best of rooms, and brought him a bouquet of flowers. He was then personally greeted by the abbot of the monastery, Father Jeremiah. "Wow!" said the pastor. "You sure know how to treat visitors." Father Jeremiah replied, "We always treat guests as if they are angels—just to be safe." And so should we.

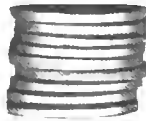
The world is changing at an alarming rate. Twenty-two percent of the population do not remember the American Bicentennial Celebration. Twenty-three percent of the population assume that people have always been on the moon. Fifty percent of the population are too young to remember the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Sixty-six percent of the population are not old enough to remember the Korean War. And 85 percent of the population are not old enough to remember the 1929 stock market crash.

On such a swirling, changing planet, will the church have a future? In light of this discussion, however, we know the question really is: Will the future have a church? As Lancaster, Rockingham, and McPherson Counties, for example, become increasingly secular in the next decade, will there be congregations that reach out rather than retreat into holy huddles?

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formational stuff. But we are largely unaware of its potential influence. Barbara Brown Taylor tells of a man who was deeply moved by one of her sermons. As a result, he was going to quit his job on Monday; he was going to sell his car; he was going to change his life. "Good grief, I thought to myself," Taylor comments, "It was only a sermon. Sleep on it. Go get a cup of coffee."

All this church stuff, Taylor goes on to say, is too familiar to us. "We are old friends with the Word by now and we have forgotten its power. We read scripture out loud as though we are reading income tax instructions to each other . . . There is nothing to get excited about . . ."

"The Word that created heaven and earth, the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us, the Word that blew through an upper room and set believers' heads on fire," Taylor concludes, "that Word is still loose in a world that cannot contain it, still seeking those who will hear it, and speak it—waking sleepers, freeing prisoners, and raising the dead . . ."

Governments can try to legislate public decency. Welfare agencies can try to alleviate social despondency. But only Christ, through the community of the church, can transform human depravity.

Perhaps that is why Paul is so ecstatic in the concluding verses of Ephesians 5: "I pray that you may have the power to comprehend . . . what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge . . . The power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations . . ." (Eph. 5:18-21).

Will the future have a church? Will the future have an alternative to the violence, confusion, and chaos permeating secular society? It will if we adopt the outlook of outreach, the mindset of mission, the attitude of an adventurous, relevant, hospitable people. 

Paul Munday is director of Evangelism on the Parish Ministries Commission staff.

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Seed-corn stewardship

by Wilfred E. Nolen

The message was written on a half sheet of wrinkled note paper: "Buy more growth equities for our (charitable remainder) unitrust." It was written by William Cable and given to me following the 1995 Brethren Benefit Trust retiree dinner at the Charlotte Annual Conference. That was the last time I saw Bill. He died unexpectedly in October but not before the Brethren Foundation purchased more stock with assets of the unitrust that Bill and his wife, Miriam, established for their personal and charitable interests.

A conserving lifestyle. I was not surprised by the medium or the message. Bill communicated forthrightly, clearly, and often. We were accustomed to receiving short notes from him on paper saved from another era, written in longhand or typed on a manual typewriter with a dry ribbon, and mailed in used envelopes. The Cables enjoyed a conserving lifestyle that, they said, "doesn't need a lot of income to support, the less we spend on ourselves, the more we can donate for worthy causes." This conviction was an important ingredient in their philanthropy. But Bill was far from conservative in financial management. On previous occasions, he had asked us to be more aggressive in our asset allocation, but in his latest note the words had greater urgency.

Aggressive investments. Normally, the trustee of a charitable remainder unitrust, the estate instrument used by the Cables, would invest conservatively in bonds, bills, and CDs with only modest amounts of stock. This approach assures steady payout to the donor and preserves the principal for designated

charities after the donor's death. A larger percentage in stock increases the possibility of both growth of principal

and international equities. History shows this strategy will generate, on average, 10–15 percent a year over a seven- to 10-year period, more than any other investment option with "reasoned risk." For Bill, this approach was the anchor of his financial management and stewardship.

Commitment to social responsibility. A further aspect of his stewardship was the blending of faith and social principles with investment choices. Bill sought to uphold the values of the Church of the Brethren in his investments. This meant not investing in companies that produce military armaments, alcohol and tobacco products, gaming equipment and activities, and, during the 1980s, companies doing business in South Africa. Bill believed the avoidance of such companies was an important witness and, even though it limited his investment universe, it would not significantly impair performance. He was right.

Bill found in the Brethren Foundation an investment program that met all of his investment and performance criteria, including the social restrictions. Interestingly, another agency that manages a second unitrust for the Cables did not have these restrictions. Bill considered withdrawing his trust assets, but decided instead to use them to leverage the changes he sought. He asked the Brethren Foundation to assist the agency to make these changes.

Giving that challenges others. Using assets to leverage change or to generate more money has been a favorite strategy of the Cables and another important facet of their stewardship. Here their background as seed-corn farmers is influential. Productive seed corn is the result of the cross-pollination of many



Miriam and Bill Cable worked hard, lived simply, invested wisely, and used their assets to support the work of others.

and payout of returns to the donor. The heavier stock emphasis, however, may result in lower returns in years of poor performance. Choosing growth equities represents a greater risk.

Bill was willing to take that risk because he knew the high-growth years would more than make up for the years of low growth and loss. But for Bill it was more than a strategy to make more money. It was an essential aspect of his understanding of stewardship: Those who have been blessed with financial resources should help them grow to significantly greater resources. That commitment to stewardship requires "reasoned risk," best achieved through a well-diversified portfolio of domestic

From the General Secretary

Behold, I make all things new

seed varieties that produces a hybrid seed superior to any of its components. So it is with giving. Many gifts combined are necessary to achieve the objectives of charitable agencies. The Cable brand of seed-corn stewardship often involved a commitment of seed money to be paid only after certain matching conditions were met. Using a gift to leverage another gift achieves at least three stewardship values: Many donors participate, thereby reducing the financial burden on each, more money is raised, and a donor base is established for future projects.

To be sure, leveraged giving, or gifts with strings attached, may initially be an irritant to a recipient agency; the conditions often require increased work and a reordering of priorities for fund-raising staff. But in the long run, it is a successful strategy, and the Cables used it effectively.

A broad witness. Diversified giving is a final characteristic of the Cables' stewardship. For them, just as diversification is an essential investment strategy for safety and return, it is equally important in giving. The Cables believe in the work of many charitable agencies, especially those associated with the Church of the Brethren and Rotary International. Spreading their giving among multiple agencies gives expression for their broad witness. Coupled with the seed-money approach, diversified giving assures that their gifts are multiplied more than if concentrated among a few. Also, giving large sums tends to create dependency on one or a few donors, not healthy for the longer range development of an agency. Agencies benefiting from the Cables' philanthropy include congregations, hospitals, foundations, districts, national boards, retirement homes, colleges and the seminary, and projects such as Polio Plus and Trees for the Future.

To those who have received financial support from the Cables, or who may receive support in the future, know that the gifts come from a devout cou-

February 3-4 will see the gathering of the National Leadership Council for "Behold, I make all things new," a General Board financial campaign that will take place across the church in 1966. The title is a reference to Revelation 21:5, in which God speaks about the new heaven and the new earth. "Behold" is one of three vigorous responses the General Board is making to the challenges that now face denominational programs.

The first response is to redesign programs according to a new vision that is more supportive of congregational life and that is more cost efficient than is now the case. Eventually redesign will mean program reductions.

A second response is to encourage congregations to make modest annual increases in their giving to denominational programs. The increasing cost of health insurance and of very modest wage increases (two-three percent annually) requires an annual increased income of approximately \$200,000, which is about five percent of congregational contributions each year. We anticipate congregational giving for 1995 will be several percentage points above 1994, for which we are very grateful. Many congregations have indicated a modest increase of self-allocation for 1996. We realize that the pressures the General Board feels also are felt by congregations and districts, and that we all need to work together to address these issues.

A third General Board response is the "Behold" campaign to encourage individuals who are able to do so to contribute to denominational programs without diminishing their congregational and district support. At the beginning of the decade we approached individuals to contribute to Brethren Vision for the '90s, and about \$4 million was given over a five-year period. This allowed the Board to increase programs in evangelism, overseas church planting, youth and young adult ministry, curriculum, denominational identity materials, ethnic ministry, health, and peace.

As Brethren Vision for the '90s is nearing completion, Annual Conference has authorized the "Behold" approach to individuals for a new five-year commitment to denominational programs. "Behold" contributions will allow the Brethren Vision for the '90s programs to continue until 1998, when the General Board intends to have implemented its new program design. "Behold" also will allow the Board to respond to Annual Conference's call for a five-year emphasis on leadership. Furthermore, "Behold" will serve to rebuild the declining Board reserves, something that is essential to fiscal accountability. By 1998 the Board hopes to have a redesign that is sustainable in the years thereafter.

The fundamental way of supporting the denomination is congregational giving. However, the giving of individuals directly to the General Board has been a very important supplementary source of income through the years, and "Behold" is in that tradition. The Board wants to be responsive to the church's call for ministries that touch today's needs, and yet these ministries must be within the Board's means. The ultimate purpose of the "Behold, I make all things new" campaign is to strengthen the witness to Jesus Christ of our congregations locally and worldwide.—DONALD E. MILLER

Donald E. Miller is general secretary of the Church of the Brethren.

ple who worked hard and lived simply, invested wisely but not conservatively, and turned a seed-corn farm into assets to support the work of others through seed money and leverage,

Even if not direct recipients, we all can benefit from the Cable legacy of *M.* seed-corn stewardship.

Wilfred F. Nolen is president of Brethren Benefit Trust.

The urgency of peacemaking

I appreciated the cluster of stories on Brethren peacemakers in the December MESSENGER. It was the Brethren belief that all war is sin that convinced me to join the denomination four years ago.

I am repeatedly disappointed, however, by the lack of conviction regarding this historical belief. I hear

The opinions expressed in Letters are not necessarily those of the magazine. Readers should receive them in the same spirit with which differing opinions are expressed in face-to-face conversations.

Letters should be brief, concise, and respectful of the opinions of others. Preference is given to letters that respond directly to items read in the magazine.

We are willing to withhold the name of a writer only when, in our editorial judgment, it is warranted. We will not consider any letter that comes to us unsigned. Whether or not we print the letter, the writer's name is kept in strictest confidence.

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JOEL KAUFFMANN

Brethren of all ages supporting military enlistment, war in general, the death penalty, guns, and violent toys.

I am impressed by the 1995 Annual Conference statement "Nonviolence and Humanitarian Intervention" (August 1995, page 15). I urge congregations to refamiliarize themselves with the historical and biblical roots of our peace beliefs and to witness to others about them.

*Jackie Kimmel
Shelocta, Pa.*

For the price of a hamburger

A recent letter from church headquarters warned of an impending shortfall of \$504,570. In 1994 it was \$219,130. This is a horrendous financial catastrophe.

The November 1995 MESSENGER (page 7) reported that the Reformation Presbyterian Church in South Korea no longer wished to join us; having heard of our financial situation, it was skeptical of our real spiritual dedication. Spiritual lethargy can deaden the soul.

If each member of the denomination sent the General Board \$5, the price of a large hamburger, our debt could be paid and we would have about \$100,000 left over.

But it wouldn't solve the spiritual problem of the Church of the Brethren. In stewardship, the spiritual and the financial go hand in hand.

*Ernest Detrick
North Manchester, Ind.*

Hospitality hints

I was a delegate to Annual Conference in Phoenix (1985). I often have regretted going; I have not felt the same about the denomination since then.

My grandparents, parents, and I had been life-long Brethren. I went to Phoenix thrilled to be able to learn more about the church and meet more Brethren. But from the registration line until dismissal, Brethren everywhere

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Monday: Annual Conference officers

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Wednesday: District executives, Bethany Seminary, colleges and university

Thursday: General Services

Friday: Parish Ministries

Saturday: World Ministries

February prayer concerns:

Congregation: Lenten preparations (February 21 is Ash Wednesday).

Conference: Executive director Duane Steiner and his assistant, Susan Thompson, as they prepare for Cincinnati.

General Board: "Behold" commitment program. Preparation for March General Board meeting.

Districts and schools: Seniors seeking employment or education directions.

General Services: Planned Giving staff

Parish Ministries: Personal faith-sharing seminar in Sarasota, Fla., February 5. Global Living Study Committee.

World Ministries: On Earth Peace Assembly board retreat, February 25-25. Washington Office as it presents Brethren viewpoint on political issues.

Letters

made it clear they neither knew my husband and me nor were interested in learning to know us. They turned from our introductions to talking with people they knew from home, college, seminary ... wherever.

Last October we went to an Arizona Church of the Brethren, assuming the Sunday service began at 11 a.m. (no hours were listed outside the church or in the phone book). The service was half over, having begun at 10:50. After church, one man said "Good morning" to us. That was it.

At a Baptist church the next Sunday, by the time the service started, some 10 people had greeted us, given their names and asked ours, and inquired about us. The pastor had us stand and, during the morning prayer, asked for traveling mercies for us. After the service, everyone, including some of the children, welcomed us in friendly

fashion and struck up conversations.

Once again the Brethren had come across as an insular group that either doesn't trust "outsiders" or simply doesn't care about others.

The Lord instructed us to minister to the least of these and to seek out the lonely, the lost, and the stranger in our midst. They are all around us, and a kind word goes a long way toward furthering the Lord's work.

*Cora Hunt
Detroit, Mich*

Not getting my money

The Church of the Brethren has many important ministries that deserve support. But this same church has an official policy of bigotry that makes it difficult for me to offer that support.

The church won't embrace me because I am gay, but it would eagerly embrace my money. In spite of its "good works," a church that relegates gays and lesbians to second-class membership status is not worthy of support.

*Steve Newcomer
West Hollywood, Calif*

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Blocher, Henry and Mary, La Verne, Calif., 50
Bowman, Gladys and Ralph, Reedley, Calif., 50
Bowman, Loren and Claire, La Verne, Calif., 60
Clague, Don and Betty, La Verne, Calif., 50
Clark, Clinton and Donna, Delphi, Ind., 50
Decter, Bill and Delores, Greenville, Ohio, 60
Fike, Paul and Ella, Bridgewater, Va., 55
Good, Earl and Doris, Troy, Ohio, 60
Heisey, John and Fern, Manheim, Pa., 50
Kenworthy, Vernon and Florence, Delphi, Ind., 55
Kindy, Wayne and Glenna, Goshen, Ind., 50
Langley, George and Jane, Springfield, Ohio, 50
Lentner, Jack and Mary, Delphi, Ind., 50
Matthews, Harold and Mary, New Paris, Ind., 50
McQuiston, Gilbert and Violet, Kokomo, Ind., 50
Miller, Doyle and Marjorie, Delphi, Ind., 50
Miller, Garland and Edith, Bridgewater, Va., 55
Miller, Vergal and Grace, Centerville, Iowa, 55
Mitchell, Olden and Myrtle, North Manchester, Ind., 55
Moyer, Glen and Mabel, Greenville, Ohio, 75
Reppert, Lee and Alice, Monticello, Ind., 55
Rhynard, Albert and Naomi, Troy, Ohio, 55
Ritter, John and Freda, Uniontown, Pa., 60
Schneider, George and Nettie, Wooster, Ohio, 55
Sellers, Harry and Martha, York, Pa., 55
Sollenberger, Robert and Verna, Annville, Pa., 50
Taylor, Jim and Estel, Wenatchee, Wash., 50
Ward, Chester and Freda, Troy, Ohio, 55
Weaver, Harold and Grace, Annville, Pa., 50
Wilkinson, Virgil and Eulene, La Verne, Calif., 50
Winkler, Golan and Gertrude, Tulsa, Okla., 50

Pastoral Placements

Albright, W. David, from retirement to Newton, W. Plains
Bartholomew, Paul, from Pipe Creek, S/C Ind., to Mohican, N. Ohio
Bitner, Robert, Union City, S. Ohio, from interim to full-time

Blough, Lester Jr., Syracuse, N. Ind., from interim to full-time
Bowers, George, from secular to Antioch, Shen.
Brumbaugh, Alan, Point, M. Pa., from interim to full-time
Carraseo, Fausto, from other denomination to Rio Prieto, Atl. S. E.
Fike, Matthew, from Blue Ridge, Virlina, to West Alexandria, S. Ohio
Fultz, Larry, from Cedar Creek, S. E., to Christ the Servant, Atl. S. E.
Hendricks, Joseph, from Vinton, Virlina, to Rocky Ford, W. Plains
Hinton, George, from Salkum, Ore. Wash., to Salem Community, W. Plains
Hooks, Eric L., from secular to Robinson, W. Pa.
Hoover, Barbara, from secular to Valley Point, M. Pa.
Hostetler, Bruce A., from Timbercrest Home, S. C. Ind., to Roann, S. C. Ind., assoc.
Hullihen, James, from secular to Ten Mile, W. Pa.
Hutchinson, Martin, from Spring Run, M. Pa., to Florin, Atl. N. E., team
Hutchinson, Sharon, from Spring Run, M. Pa., to Florin, Atl. N. E., team
Johnson, Jeffrey H., from Morrellville, W. Pa., to Mountain Valley, S. E.
Johnson, Robert, from Melrose, Shen., to Mount Vernon, Shen.
Jordan, Donald R., Pleasant Chapel, N. Ind., from interim to full-time
King, Phillip, from other denomination to Pleasant Hill, W. Pa.
Klinedinst, Steven, from secular to Washington Creek, W. Plains
Lohr, Dennis M., from Easton, Mid-Atl., to Palmyra, Atl. N. E.
Mason, Steven, from secular to Pleasant Hill, Shen.
McClelland, Golda, from Myersville, Md. Atl., to Loon Creek, S. C. Ind.
Moore, Lorene, from other denomination to LaPlace, Ill., Wis.
Naff, Lee, from Pleasant Dale, Virlina, to Cedar Bluff, Virlina, team
Naff, Robin, from Pleasant Dale, Virlina, to Cedar Bluff, Virlina, team
Paulsen, Gordon, from other denomination to Bethel, W. Plains
Pfaltzgraff Eller, Enten, from Root River, N. Plains, to Lafayette, S. C. Ind., team
Pfaltzgraff Eller, Kathryn, from Root River, N. Plains, to Lafayette, S. C. Ind., team
Powers, Walter Jr., from secular to County Line, N. Ohio
Reiff, Ray G., from seminary to Union Grove, S. C. Ind.
Reimer, Judy Mills, from semi-

nary to Smith Mountain Lake, Virlina
Sherlock, Douglas, from secular to Lewistown, M. Pa.
Shipman, William J., from other denomination to Hammond Avenue, N. Plains, assoc.
Sloughfy, Julie Anne B., from Good Shepherd Home, to Fruitland, Idaho
Smalley, David, from New Covenant, Atl. S. E., to Eden Valley, W. Plains
Steele, David, from Bakersfield, Pac. S. W., to Martinsburg Memorial, M. Pa., assoc.
Twigg, David J., Christian Church Uniting, Virlina, from interim to full-time
Waltersdorff, Christy Jo, from Westminster, Mid-Atl., to York Center, Ill., Wis.
Wine, Ronald K., from other denomination to French Broad, S. F.
Wolfe, David E., from other denomination to Manchester, S. C. Ind., assoc.
Workman, Jeff, from other denomination to Woodland, Ill., Wis.

Licensing/Ordination

Andes, Greg, licensed May 9, 1995, Mount Bethel, Shen.
Ashworth, Jeremy, licensed Aug. 24, 1995, Greenville, S. Ohio
Baker, Allen J., ordained Aug. 20, 1995, Glendale, M. Pa.
Baker, Lisa, licensed Sept. 5, 1995, Pittsburg
Balmer, Richard, licensed Oct. 22, 1995, Chiques, Atl. N. E.
Barnett, Gail, licensed Oct. 5, 1995, Richmond, S. C. Ind.
Belford, Virginia W., licensed Sept. 9, 1995, Naperville, Ill., Wis.
Benner, Michael S., ordained Sept. 7, 1995, Free Spring, S. Pa.
Binkley, Timothy Scott, ordained April 22, 1995, Onekama, Mich.
Bollinger, Dale, ordained Aug. 5, 1995, Coaleho, Atl. N. F.
Brill, Steve, licensed May 9, 1995, Calvary, Shen.
Cable, Sherman Ace, licensed Sept. 16, 1995, Blue Ridge, Virlina
Campbell, Tony, licensed Sept. 12, 1995, Blue Ridge Chapel, Shen.
Clark, Wanda, Ordained Sept. 9, 1995, Pipe Creek, Mid-Atl.
Cohick, Dean Arthur, licensed Aug. 31, 1995, Mount Olivet, S. Pa.
Delk, Brian, licensed Sept. 20, 1995, Castine, S. Ohio
Ditmars, Larry, ordained Aug. 4, 1995, Trinity, W. Plains
Doss, Martin C., licensed Sept. 16, 1995, Mount Hermon, Virlina
Edmonds, Edwm, ordained Nov. 11, 1995, Moler Ave., Mid-Atl.
Fahnestock, Della M., ordained Oct. 7, 1995, York First, S. Pa.
Fairchild, Jan, licensed Aug. 5, 1995, Lincolnshire, N. Ind.
Finley, Donald C., ordained Feb. 25, 1995, Spring Branch, Mo., Ark.
Godfrey, Richard, licensed Oct. 18, 1995, Codorus, S. Pa.
Gregersen, Joseph P., ordained April 22, 1995, York Center, Ill., Wis.
Groff, Mervin C., ordained Feb. 7, 1995, White Oak, Atl. N. E.
Haines, Frank D., licensed May 20, 1995, Connellsville, W. Pa.
Hale, A. Chester, ordained Aug. 29, 1995, Wolf Creek, S. Ohio
Hess, Nancy H., licensed Aug. 1, 1995, Palmyra, Atl. N. E.
Holland, Scott J., ordination received Aug. 4, 1995, Monroeville, W. Pa.
Hyre, Greg, licensed May 16, 1995, Eaton, S. Ohio
Jones, Eugene Westly, licensed Aug. 31, 1995, Mount Olivet, S. Pa.
Keith, Jean, ordained June 5, 1995, Douglas Park, Ill., Wis.
Kingrea, David, licensed April 11, 1995, Evergreen, Shen.
Kinnick, Carl Scott, licensed April 8, 1995, Johnson City, S. F.
Krabacher, John, licensed June 21, 1995, New Carlisle, S. Ohio
Martin, George H., licensed Oct. 18, 1995, Falling Spring, S. Pa.
Nation, Mark K., ordained Dec. 10, 1994, Ladera, Pac. S. W.
Neubauer, Frank III, ordained 9, 1995, Reisterstown, Mid-Atl.
Nichols, Mark W., ordained Sept. 16, 1995, Mason's Cove, Virlina
Norris, Esther, ordained Nov. 4, 1995, Garden City, W. Plains
Papke, Angela, licensed Jan. 17, 1995, Calvary, Shen.
Reiff, Ray G., licensed Oct. 5, 1995, Richmond, S. C. Ind.
Sanders, Cynthia S., ordained Feb. 25, 1995, Cabool, Mo., Ark.
Sellers, Nada B., ordained Aug. 15, 1995, Pasadena, Pac. S. W.
Smith, Melvin R., ordination received Aug. 29, 1995, Charleston, S. Ohio
Stroup, Donald, licensed Nov. 4, 1995, Lakeview, Mich.
Teeter, Allene, ordained Sept. 21, 1995, Amaranth, M. Pa.
Tusing, Frank, licensed Sept. 12, 1995, Damascus, Shen.
Wade, Marvin D., licensed Sept. 16, 1995, Pleasant Valley, Virlina
Weber, Linda, ordained Sept. 9, 1995, York Center, Ill., Wis.
Whetzel, Diann, licensed Feb. 7, 1995, Front Royal, Shen.
Whitaere, Christopher, ordained Aug. 4, 1995, Prince of Peace, W. Plains
Witmer, Nelson H., licensed July 17, 1995, Shanks, S. Pa.

Deaths

Aldinger, R. Emmert, 70, Elizabethtown, Pa., Dec. 14, 1995
Allen, Justus B., 87, Verona, Va., Nov. 24, 1995
Baker, Stuart D., 85, Arlington, Va., Oct. 20, 1995
Brown, Philip, 58, Glen Arm, Md., June 10, 1995
Buchanan Jr., Ralph M., 49, Mount Jackson, Va., Nov. 25, 1995
Buckwalter, Beatrice, 71, New Holland, Pa., Dec. 15, 1995
Buffenmyer, Lillian S., 88, Lancaster, Pa., Nov. 11, 1995
Cline, Mary D., 89, McGaheysville, Va., Nov. 16, 1995
Cosner, Glenn T., 61, Mount Storm, W. Va., Nov. 7, 1995
Davis, D. Franklin, 75, Harrisonburg, Va., Nov. 24, 1995
Flora, Betty W., 68, Boones Mill, Va., Dec. 22, 1995
Foster, Esta, 88, Bridgewater, Va., Oct. 22, 1995
Funk Jr., Marcellus P., 64, Strasburg, Va., Nov. 25, 1995
Halterman, Lula V., 90, Dayton, Va., Nov. 28, 1995
Harper, Alva L., 90, Moyers, W. Va., Nov. 28, 1995
Jamison, Levi E., 97, Boones Mill, Va., Dec. 21, 1995
Knicely, Doris K., 55, Woodstock, Va., Dec. 9, 1995
Kolp, Emma G., 71, Elizabethtown, Pa., Dec. 19, 1995
Lipscob, Ralph E., 70, Purgitsville, W. Va., Nov. 28, 1995
Longenecker, Dorothy H., 72, Reading, Pa., Dec. 19, 1995
Longenecker, Lizzie L., 106, Manheim, Pa., Dec. 20, 1995
Martz, Lewis A. M., 75, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 2, 1995
Miller, Daniel L., 96, New Lebanon, Ohio, Dec. 15, 1995
Mohler, Maud N., 92, Lancaster, Pa., Nov. 15, 1995
Morris, Russell T., 77, Grottoes, Va., Nov. 30, 1995
Myer, Emma M., 97, Ephrata, Pa., Dec. 9, 1995
North, Donald E., 42, Long Beach, Calif., Oct. 15, 1995
Pence, Annie H., 95, Luray, Va., Oct. 18, 1995
Shenk, Mary G., 90, Willow Street, Pa., Nov. 29, 1995
Shifflett, Vada B., 79, Broad way, Va., Nov. 14, 1995
Shirk, Gladys, 90, Martinsburg, Pa., July 25, 1995
Simmons, Virginia S., 90, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 2, 1995
Switzer, J. Woodrow, 82, Staunton, Va., Nov. 28, 1995
Turner, Alda E., 80, Timberville, Va., Nov. 30, 1995
Whetzel, Lucy S., 89, Arthur W. Va., Oct. 26, 1995
Wood, Bernice D., 74, Kennett Square, Pa., Nov. 25, 1995
Yates, Marguerite E., 91, Tipton, Iowa, Nov. 15, 1995
Young, David G., 76, La Verne, Calif., Nov. 8, 1995

Confession or just damage control?

Time was, in the Church of the Brethren, when the “deacons’ visit” was a viable institution, and the occasion, just preceding love feast, gave pause to those individuals who had sins weighing on their heart and conscience.

The deacons of a congregation went in pairs, house to house, asking whether the members still adhered to their baptismal vows, whether they were in peace with the church, and whether they continued to work toward an individual and congregational “increase in holiness.” The purpose of the visit (which, in a church that made much of strictly following the New Testament, actually lacked direct scriptural authority) was to determine the spiritual condition of the congregation and to reconcile differences. As the Brethren approach their 500th anniversary (2008), the practice of the “deacons’ visit” continues only among the Dunkard Brethren and the Old German Baptist Brethren.

Likely in most cases, the “deacons’ visit” didn’t result in dramatic confessions of sin. We may suppose that household members, aware of the upcoming visit and its purpose, had worked things out in their mind, heart, and conscience beforehand, and could put a check mark in the yes box on all the above questions. The *big* discipline problems were dealt with by the congregation, sometimes leading to the ban or disfellowship for those found guilty of sin and resisting confession and repentance.

That was the *Brethren* practice. We know that in the Roman Catholic church, at least in pre-Vatican II days, the Saturday-night confession box was the means of dealing with one’s shortcomings. In most Catholic parishes today, the Saturday-night lines at the confession box have been replaced by semiannual reconciliation services during Advent and Lent.

Confession has been on my mind recently, not that I am holding the lid down on any big personal sin, but because of the many fascinating instances of confession and apology by public figures in the last year. There has been a pattern emerging—confession as damage control.

Think of the Southern Baptist Convention, kicking off its sesquicentennial last June by finally apologizing for its long-standing support of slavery and racism. It’s about time, I’m sure most African-Americans said.

Last July, Pope John Paul II, in his “Letter to Women,” offered something of an apology for past sins committed against women by members of the church. Hey! Permit women to be priests, and we’ll believe you.

Former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara wrote a whole book to confess his complicity in carrying on the Vietnam War even after he decided it was wrong. Never mind the thousands of Americans and Vietnamese who died because he couldn’t bring himself to admit that in 1965. Thirty years later, he finally asks us, “Remember the Vietnam War, folks? Well . . .”

The prize for the most pathetic apology goes, of course, to Senator Robert Packwood, who said he didn’t see that he had done anything wrong in his playfulness around women, *but* just in case he had, he certainly was sorry.

And as 1995 closed, we were reminded by a new film, “Nixon,” of the all-time master confession-evader, who went from declaring he was not a crook to grudgingly conceding (years later) that, well, “mistakes were made” . . . *maybe*.

How good are public confessions? We are becoming jaded with shallow confessions by politicians caught in a lie or a tryst, and the blathering of talk-show guests on television. The public confession too often is a gambit to gain sympathy or moral advantage. Too often it is a way to get a cheap catharsis. Confession without repentance and contrition—a changing of one’s ways—doesn’t cut it.

Where does all this leave us Brethren? The deacons don’t visit anymore, and when was the last time you heard of an unrepentant brother or sister being put in “avoidance”? Are our Discipleship and Reconciliation Committees adequate successors to the older methods of keeping Brethren in line?

Truth is, before the deacons or the committees kick in, it’s up to each of us to maintain our own moral vigilance, being humbly willing to let God point out our flaws, and then working things out between us and him. A good and repentant heart is demanded, open to the harms and sufferings our actions cause others.

We can take a cue from the Catholics, for whom the acid test of a true confession is the penitent’s “firm purpose of amendment.” Genuine repentance demands both a realistic intention to change one’s ways and a commitment to make up for harms done to others.

Think on these things as you read this MESSENGER’s cover story on practicing hospitality, Paul Munday’s article on the likelihood of there being a church in the future, Robin Wentworth Mayer’s column on “getting right,” and letters from some wounded Brethren.—K.T.

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NOAC III is sponsored by the Association of Brethren Caregivers and Church of the Brethren General Board.

1996 National Older Adult Conference

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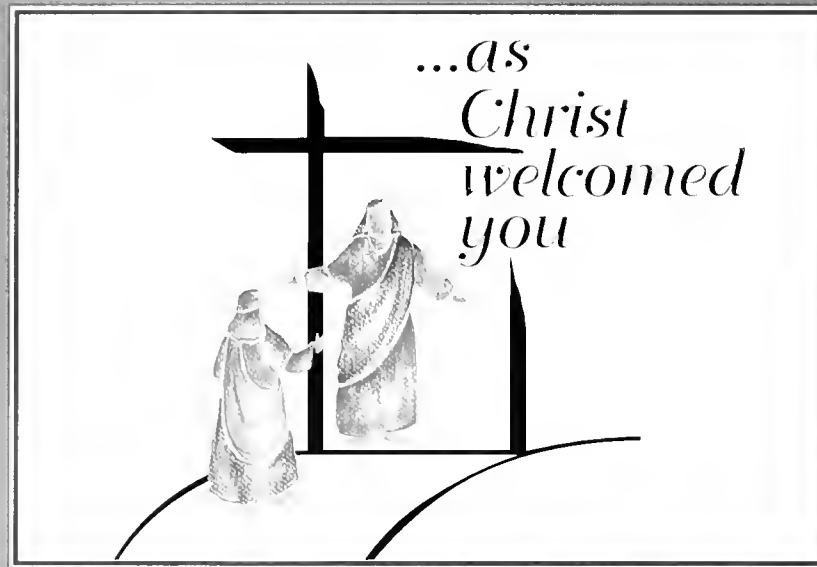
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Annual Conference Office
1451 Dundee Avenue
Elgin, Illinois 60120

Church of the Brethren

March 1996

Messenger



Midnight of my madness

From the Editor

Luxuriant clusters of green ferns and other plants form the border. Inside, an area of gravel is carefully raked into concentric circles. At the center, water flows from a bamboo pipe onto a monolith, at the base of which is a clear pool lined with water-smoothed rocks. A scene from halfway around the globe?

No, this beautiful Japanese garden is located in the Maryland countryside, at the home of its creator, Phil Grout. Amazingly, the exotic garden occupies what was a dump five years ago. Back then, writes Phil in our March cover story, "this bit of paradise was buried under piles of dirt, scattered timbers, cement bags, concrete blocks, and discarded pallets. We were in the midst of building a studio and office so that I could have a place to work at home. This was the construction site dump."

As the garden stands in stark contrast to the dump site it occupies, so does Phil's present creativity in forming the garden and returning to innovative photography stand in stark contrast to the period in which he struggled with manic depression. His forthright telling of his experience with mental illness (page 18) will rivet your attention as



This peaceful rock garden scene belies the mental struggle and anguish that form the story behind its creation.

surely as does his Japanese rock garden.

The cluster of articles on mental illness, which begins on page 12, represents a great deal of work on the part of two people in particular. Pat Roop Robinson, writer of the lead article as well as several sidebars, lobbied me for several years before I got around to slotting a mental illness cluster on our MESSNGER planning board. Sara Speicher, associate director of the Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC), pulled the cluster together, including persuading Phil Grout to submit his story and photographs. We are extremely pleased with the results and, as always, hope that our work speaks to our readers and provides handles for dealing with the issues and problems of our day.

Kermon Thomasson

Printed on
recycled paper



COMING NEXT MONTH: Easter season articles by Patricia Kennedy Helman and Ryan Ahlgrim.

Messenger

Vol. 145, No. 3 March 1996

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Patricia Roop Robinson uses the story of her own struggle with mental illness to encourage others who have the problem. It's a problem everyone can do something about. Sidebars by the author.

Uncovering the garden 18

Phil Groug dug through the January 1996 snow to find the heart of his Japanese rock garden. Five years ago there was no rock garden. Five years ago darkness was closing in.

The Church of North India: Living together in unity 22

In the 25-year-old Church of North India there are challenges aplenty, but, as Lamar Gible points out, there is much progress to celebrate.

Back home to India 25

Former India missionary Laura Sewell reports on a return visit to the country and people she served for 56 years.

Gospel-learning in El Salvador 24

Worth Weller (and three other men) drove 5,400 miles to deliver a van. He tells what he learned about the gospel from the van recipient.

Can Christ be both exclusive and inclusive? 27

For both sides in the debate about an exclusive and inclusive Christ, Dale W. Brown has good news.



Cover story: *Does our March cover look a trifle different from the usual? On page 20, you can read how photographer Phil Groug "stumbled upon a way of evoking impressionistic colors from black and white chemistry and paper" while recovering from a mental illness. The cover photo, which Phil titled "Midnight of My Madness," is an example. Read the whole cluster on mental illness, of course, beginning on page 12.*

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Credits:

Cover, inside front cover,
1, 19-20: Phil Groug
2: Jeff Leard
5 left: Kermon Thomasson
5 top: art by Jack Hull
6: Nevin Dulabaum
8: Nevin Dulabaum
9: Frohnapple family
10 top: Art by Maggie Sykora
10 bottom: Art by Church
 World Service
22: Eric Gass
24-25: Worth Weller

In Touch

A new addiction

"How did you travel like that in such a short amount of time?" was a question posed to **Trendy Castro** during a recent conversation with a friend. "One day you were a kid, the next day you were a minister, and

player from developing further. Before long he was blacklisted for breaking his contract, disqualified from playing on any major league team. As he spiraled downward, he reached the point where he was spending \$1,500 a day on crack cocaine. He became a des-

time pastor in Puerto del Cielo Fellowship in Reading, Pa. Last July he returned to his home country to begin churches among the Dominicans.

In January this year, Trendy began a fellowship in a small community near Santo Domingo. The success of his ministry is evidenced by that group's rapid expansion. Eight people attended the first meeting. Within three weeks, there were more than 50 people at Sunday morning services.

Trendy attributes the success of his ministry to the visiting that he and his wife do. Before he held any services, he spent many weeks getting in touch with neighbors. "We take young people into our house, we talk with them, and have a Coca-Cola or something. We talk; we share. That's the hard work of ministry, just being people to people. We show them that we love them and that that's what we came here for—to share the love of Christ."

Is Trendy proud of his successful ministry in the Dominican Republic? The answer is yes and no. "I try to stay away from being proud," says Trendy. "Pride has always been my problem. It was the cause of my failure in baseball. I just try to be Trendy—the one God called to serve my people in the Dominican." —JEFF LEARD

Jeff Leard is a Brethren Volunteer Service worker from Glendale (Calif.) Church of the Brethren. He is serving with the office of Interpenetration, on writing and photography projects. Just back from an assignment in the Dominican Republic, he will report on developments there in the April MESSAGE.



Trendy Castro (right) and Gilbert Romero (center) helped with logistics for the annual assembly of the Brethren in the Dominican Republic, held in January. Trendy has begun a new fellowship near Santo Domingo.

now you are ready to counsel me, who has been in the ministry for over 40 years."

A glimpse at the tortuous road Trendy has traveled during 25 years of life is testimony to the grace and mercy of Jesus, whom he credits for his personal faith journey and for the success of his ministry in the Dominican Republic.

When he was only 16 years old, Trendy left his home in the Dominican Republic and went to the United States to play minor league baseball.

His talent won him a spot within the Yankees baseball organization. Things went well for the next few years, and Trendy became a Yankees outfielder.

But addiction to drugs and alcohol kept the rookie

player from developing further. Before long he was blacklisted for breaking his contract, disqualified from playing on any major league team. As he spiraled downward, he reached the point where he was spending \$1,500 a day on crack cocaine. He became a des-

perate, violent outlaw, stopping at nothing to get money. Ironically, being busted during a drug deal began a chain of events that saved Trendy from utter self-destruction. He recalls the night he was "set up" in the deal. "All I knew was that a policeman was pointing a gun at my head telling me, 'Don't move or I'll blow your brains out.' Something inside me told me this was the end of the road."

In prison, Trendy studied the Bible and was visited by Church of the Brethren interim director of Hispanic Ministry Guillermo Encarnacion. Out of prison after a year, he got counseling, attended church, and worked in prison ministry. He became a part-

Fight No More Forever

Names in the news

Jim Hardenbrook, pastor of Nampa (Idaho) Church of the Brethren, is serving January–March as chaplain for the 1996 session of the Idaho House of Representatives. Appointed by the House speaker, he opens each floor session with an invocation, provides pastoral services to out-of-town members and their families, and gives requested spiritual or ethical guidance regarding legislation.

- **Bruce Barwick**, a member of Elkhart (Ind.) City Church of the Brethren and chairman of the Mutual Aid Association board, has received a Golden Hammer award from the Indiana Builders Association and a Sagamore of the Wabash award from Indiana governor Evan Bayh. Both awards are in recognition of Bruce's work with Habitat for Humanity.

- **Melanie May**, dean of Women's Studies at Colgate Rochester Divinity School, has had a new book pub-



Melanie May

lished: *A Body Knows: A Theopoetics of Death and Resurrection* (Continuum Publishing Group).



Michael Stern

Mike Stern, Brethren musician from Seattle, appears on the cover of his new release on CD and cassette tape.

- **Mike Stern** of Seattle, Wash., who has recorded four albums of original music, has a new release on CD and cassette tape, titled "Fight No More Forever." Mike and his musical group Just Us performed for the 1991 MESSENGER Dinner in Portland. He currently performs with the band Men II Geezers.

- **Stewart Hoover**, associate professor of journalism and mass communications at the University of Colorado, and former General Board staff for Media Education and Advocacy (1975–1980), will be the keynote speaker for the 1996 Religious Public Relations Council's national convention in Dallas, Texas, March 14–16, dealing with the topic "Shaping Opinion, Shaping Perception." The author of the book *Mass Media Religion*, he recently completed a three-year study "Religion in Public Discourse: The Role of the

Media," funded by the Lilly Foundation.

- **Edgar Stokes**, a member of Lorida (Fla.) Church of the Brethren, began January 1 as president of the Florida Cattlemen's Association. "Water quality, water quantity, and endangered species will continue to be the issues to deal with this year," the new leader said. He has served Lorida as moderator and as church board chairman.

Been there; done that

Brothers **David** and **Galen Julius** of Bermudian Church of the Brethren, East Berlin, Pa., farm land that has been in the family since Julius forebears helped found the congregation in 1758.

The land lies along Conewago Creek, which overflowed its banks during the mid-January floods that resulted from the earlier

deep snow followed by heavy rain. One day while Galen was helping David secure his creekside home against the rising waters, one of the children ran to tell them that a car was trying to cross a nearby bridge that had been closed by authorities.

As the brothers watched, the stalled car was swept away. David had a boat, so he and Galen jumped into it and made their way to the sinking car. The lone occupant of the car had crawled through a window and onto the roof. A rescue was accomplished in a situation headed for a fatality. "By the time we got back to the edge of the water," said Galen, "you could barely see the car."

But the brothers would not hear to talk of heroism. According to Bermudian pastor Larry Dentler, the two refused to attend their Sunday school class unless the other members agreed not to "make a big deal" out of their rescue act.

And when a newspaper reporter questioned them, their response was in the same vein: "It's not anything that hasn't been done before."

No one but the two modest brothers shared that view, however.

Remembered

Rachel Myers Zigler, 90, died January 15, 1996, in Bridgewater, Va. She and her husband, Earl, served as missionaries in India 1957–1964.

Close to Home

Casting bread on water

A donkey pulling Brethren relief goods across an international border probably is unique among the delivery systems of Brethren Service. But that's the way the Brethren in Clovis, N.M.,

Brethren was asked to work with other area churches and a community food ministry to get relief to the hungry and otherwise needy on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande. Clovis provides a trailer that takes down three tons of food a month, pro-

clothes, bedding, furniture, and medical supplies.

Members of the Clovis church, including youth, sort and box the materials. Pastor Rolan Norsworthy and other men in the congregation regularly make the trip to deliver aid.

At the river, the bags and boxes are loaded onto a small boat. A man from the Mexico side hitches a donkey to the boat and hauls it across, transporting boatload after boatload over the river. The Clovis men then use the boat to get across, and help distribute the material to churches, in some instances, and to individual families as well.

How dark a frown border officials might cast on this operation is open to question. The fact remains that, for the recipients, the deliveries are a lifeline in an area with almost nowhere to turn in time of need. For the Clovis folks, it's an opportunity for hands-on mission work, and the satisfaction of face-to-face contact with the neighbor in need.



Clovis pastor Rolan Norsworthy (right) watches relief goods cross the Rio Grande by donkey power.

vide material aid across to the needy in Mexico.

A couple of years ago, Clovis Church of the

vided by a Texas donor. One couple in the church provides a storage trailer into which are collected

This and that

Middlebury (Ind.) Church of the Brethren built a meetinghouse in 1911 that has served it for over 80 years. In April 1996, the congregation will move to a brand new building, erected on a 14-acre lot northwest of town. The project cost \$1.1 million. A 9 a.m. celebration is planned for the last Sunday of occupancy of the old church.

That Sunday, it is hoped, will be March 31, but the date depends on construction progress.

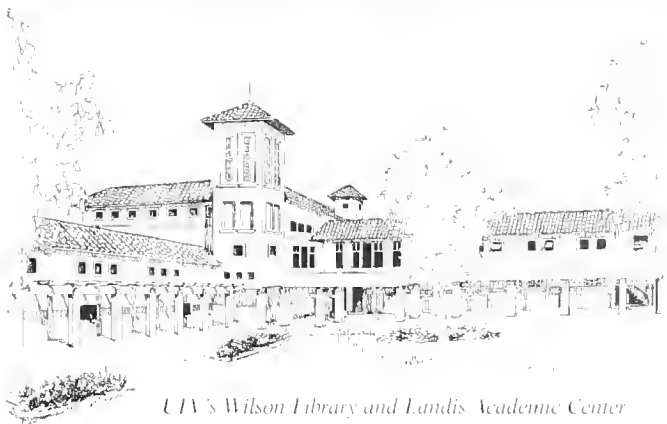
• **Champaign (Ill.)** Church of the Brethren and three multi-racial groups that use its building held a Children's Sabbath to celebrate unity in diversity. The children worshiped, studied, played, and participated in arts and crafts projects. The event emphasized a world in which chil-

dren can live in peace, without hunger, homelessness, or poverty. As a group activity, the children went door to door collecting food donations for the church's food pantry.

• **Arlington (Va.)** Church of the Brethren is hosting a *Harmonia Sacra* Singing March 31 at 5 p.m. The public is invited for the enjoyment of singing from *Harmonia Sacra*, a shape-note hymnbook first pub-

Close to Home is a regular feature in the Messenger. If you have a story or photograph to share, please contact the editor at the address below. Send photos to the editor at the address below. Send photos to the editor at the address below.

Close to Home
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 1451 Dundee Ave.
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 Dundee Ave. E. in H. 60120



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lished in 1852 in the Shenandoah Valley. These singings are traditional in Virginia. **Flatrock** congregation in Quicksburg, Va., hosted an all-day singing in the 1920s that attracted 1,500 people. For information, call Gary Smucker at (703) 549-4259.

- Virginia District's **Smith Mountain Lake** church planting began forming a core group in January. Pastor Judy Mills Reimer plans to hold the initial worship service on Palm Sunday, March 31. The group has use of warehouse space in Moneta, Va.

- Virginia District has appointed a steering committee to develop a Church of the Brethren fellowship in **Concord**, N.C., 25 miles northeast of Charlotte. Robert Williard of Winston-Salem, N.C., is committee chairman.

Campus comments

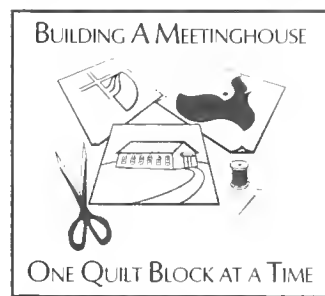
In **Elizabethtown College's** series of religious lectures, Jim Myer, a minister in White Oak Church of the Brethren in Manheim, Pa., presented a "Celebration of Praise" on February 11.

- The **University of La Verne** dedicated its new Wilson Library and Landis

Academic Center February 5. The complex represents the largest construction project in UV's 103-year history. The library, with 32,552 square feet of space, contains 185,000 volumes and can expand to 275,000.

Building with quilts

Columbia (Mo.) Mennonite and Church of the Brethren Fellowship, a new-church development group, is holding a big quilt auction and crafts and baked goods sale April 27. Profits will go to the group's building fund. The quilts



will be blessed during a worship service on April 26.

Right now the group is still looking for quilts for the event. Brethren interested in donating quilts for the auction should call Evelyn Schrag at (816) 747-9661. For general information about the event, call Denise Gabbert at (514) 874-1190.

Brethren and floods

It was their month of discontent for Brethren in areas of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and other eastern states. The "Blizzard of '96" early in January, followed by warm temperatures and then heavy rain in mid-month combined to cause devastating flooding. Older Brethren in Pennsylvania's Morrisons Cove area likened the 1996 flood to the St. Patrick's Day flood of 1936.

The high waters damaged some Brethren churches and provided opportunities for others to lend a hand to needy neighbors.

Loysburg, Pa., children on buses headed for school on January 19 became stranded between a flooded bridge and a washout. The buses were directed to **Yellow Creek Church** of the Brethren near Everett, Pa., where an emergency shelter was established. Pastor George Yocum and other volunteers cared for about 100 children and adults until parents could get through to pick up the students. The local Red Cross provided food throughout the day.

At the same time, **New Enterprise (Pa.) Church** of the Brethren had a shelter operating for flood evacuees and people without heat in their houses. The church used vans to bring people in for meals. It also found housing elsewhere for some people and provided day care for children for several days while their parents were busy mudding out. In addition, New

Enterprise organized volunteer clean-up crews to work in the community.

At press time, Refugee Disaster Services was aware of six other congregations that were providing flood relief: **Montezuma** near Bridgewater, Va.; **Mill Creek** near Port Republic, Va.; **Hyndman (Pa.)**; **Moorefield (W.Va.)**, **Moler Avenue** in Martinsburg, W. Va.; and **Pocahontas** in Dummore, W.Va.

Not all churches were on the giving end of flood relief. **Onego (W.Va.)** congregation lost its foundation in the flood, requiring major reconstruction, to be done when spring breaks.

Note: This article does not attempt to be comprehensive in naming the congregations hit by flooding and those providing relief.

Let's celebrate

The Women's Fellowship of **Conestoga Church** of the Brethren in Leola, Pa., will celebrate its 50th anniversary in April. Before 1946 it was known as the Ladies Aid Society, formed in 1904. Through the years, making quilts and comforters has been a favorite project of the Conestoga sisters.

- **Pine Grove Church** of the Brethren near Harrisonburg, Va., dedicated its newly built social hall November 19. The event included a history of the congregation, remarks by former pastor Alton McDaniel, and a fellowship meal.

RSC releases initial report, cites 'a lack of confidence'

After several months of information gathering—through visits to Church of the Brethren sites and through dialog with Brethren members and organiza-



David Radcliff, director of Denominational Peace Witness and Korean Ministry (third from left), adds his input during the General Board staff district executives consultation in January near Lake Geneva, Wis. With Radcliff is Dave Longenecker, Atlantic Northeast associate district executive; Dale Minnich, General Services executive; Wendy McFadden, Brethren Press director; Ken Neher, planned giving officer and Oregon-Washington district executive; and John Talbot, Redesign consultant.

tions—the Church of the Brethren General Board's Redesign Steering Committee (RSC) on January 29 released its initial report. In a news release, RSC chairman Chris Bowman said the committee found "a clear lack of confidence" in "the denominational leadership system," and in the ability of "the denominational structure to relate meaningfully to congregations." It also found a lack of confidence "that the denomination's unique values will survive beyond another one or two generations."

"We see this issue of lack of confidence as a major focus for our future efforts," Bowman said.

Though RSC members spent October through January visiting Brethren sites and speaking to Brethren members and organizations, most of the information gleaned for this report came from responses to a letter sent by the RSC in November to its ad hoc advisory group—about 100 laity and 100 pastors, and General Board employees. The laity and pastors were selected by the Council of District

Executives (CODE).

The group represents various voices of the denomination, and has been asked to give input to the RSC as well as help in communicating the status of the redesign process to church members at large. In the RSC's November letter, members of the group were asked to identify what they believe should be the four primary core functions of the General Board, and four things the Church of the Brethren should not be involved in.

"We received responses from more than half of those we mailed to," said Bowman. "We view this as another sign that church members are very concerned about the future of the Church of the Brethren."

Items listed as top priority (in order) were: equipping and resourcing congregations; communications and networking across the denomination; leadership development; and mission, especially when linked to congregations. Areas cited for scaling back (in order) were: areas where there is duplication of effort; special-interest groups; ecumenical involvement; and local and regional fund raising.

Along with releasing its findings, the RSC in January also asked its ad hoc committee, "What are the positive things about the Church of the Brethren you would like the General Board to build on?" The RSC is expected to compile the responses and release its report in a few months.

In the meantime, RSC members met in February to formulate their report to the General Board during the Board's March meetings. As of last fall, the RSC had hoped to present three options in March for the future structure of the General Board. With much dialog and information gathering still to be done, however, the committee is expected to present its progress report and ask for a modification of its timeline. Prior to the General Board meetings, the RSC's timeline called for the General Board's redesign process to be completed by January 1998.—NEVIN DUBAUM

The news items in this column are from the Church of the Brethren, 200 and its members, and/or of a nation and people of mission, or affiliated with the Church of the Brethren. News items are intended to inform—they do not necessarily represent the opinions of Messenger or the General Board, and should not be considered to be an endorsement.

Problems perceived by the RSC's advisory committee

The following is paraphrased and condensed from the Redesign Committee's January 29 report.

Calls for an increased emphasis

Congregational/district support.

Many said the front line of ministry is at the local and district level, and that denominational programs should be geared toward supporting these levels. Congregations want denominational support that will make them more effective.

Communications. Congregations and districts want to know about each other and about denominational activities: They want to network. Though current publications are supported, there is a belief that Brethren rely too heavily on print media.

Leadership development. There is great concern about a perceived lack of leadership throughout the denomination. National Youth Conference, National Older Adult Conference, and workcamps were cited as being good for developing leadership.

There is a call for the General Board and general secretary to establish a clear vision and clear goals for the denomination. The Board should

focus on a few things it can do well rather than diluting itself by trying to do everything. Programs should be examined regularly to determine if they are cost effective.

Mission. Most want much stronger congregational and district involvement in mission efforts. People want to be able to make a difference.

Beneath the initial four categories listed above, support quickly fragmented. However, four additional items were mentioned.

Denominational organization. Many expressed concern that the issue of redesign needs to go beyond the General Board level.

Annual Conference directives. Many believe a primary function of the General Board is to carry out Annual Conference policies.

Brethren heritage and identity. People want this incorporated in ways such as Sunday school curriculum and leadership development.

Promote management skills. The hiring of people needs to be based on management, not "church," skills.

Calls for a reduced emphasis

Duplication of effort. People want the General Board to stop putting time and effort into programs that can be more efficiently and effectively

done by or in cooperation with someone else. Some also questioned owning two denominational offices, in Elgin, Ill., and New Windsor, Md.

Special-interest groups. There is strong sentiment that much of the denomination's efforts are being diluted by attention to special-interest groups. The fear is that a few loud voices are being allowed to sidetrack the denomination.

Ecumenical involvement. A large number of respondents believe too much time and effort is being spent in this area at the expense of churches and districts.

Local and regional fund raising. Congregations and districts are tired of denominational fund-raising programs that they see as being in competition with their own efforts. Denominational staff should spend more time promoting denominational vision. If this were done, money would not be an issue. There also was a strong call for more programs that will help congregations work at the issue of stewardship.

World mission. People believe the General Board is spread too thin and should refocus its efforts. Mission efforts should be redesigned so programs are more closely linked to congregations and districts.—N.D.

General Board's '95 fiscal year better than anticipated

The Church of the Brethren General Board sustained a \$155,850 deficit in 1995, though it was considerably less than anticipated. Board members in October were told that the deficit could reach \$526,000.

Board income totaled \$6,594,150, with \$5,554,260 in congregational giving; \$558,040 in direct gifts; gift annuities of \$189,970; and \$946,994 in bequests (though \$146,994 was transferred into the bequest reserve fund). Other income included \$606,410 in investments and other income; endow-

ments of \$124,160; \$207,590 in Gahagen funds; \$275,000 from Goals for the '90s; \$500,000 from the "Behold, I make all things new" program; and \$60,000 from bequest reserves.

Board expenses totaled \$6,816,750—\$1,649,070 by Executive Committee; \$1,497,050 by General Services Commission; \$1,591,140 by Parish Ministries Commission; \$1,785,250 from World Ministries Commission; \$277,200 in transfers; and \$17,040 on the General Board's redesign process.

The response by some 2,000 Brethren to a year-end mailing and special efforts made by some congregations are being cited as the two pri-

mary reasons why the deficit was less than expected.

The year-end reports for four Board programs that maintain budgets outside the Board's General Fund also were released. Brethren Press ended its year with a \$55,520 deficit, on sales of \$1,497,500.

The Brethren Service Center's Center Operations showed \$2,812,620 in income, but with a \$269,940 deficit. SERRV International showed \$4,627,450 in sales, but with a \$228,770 deficit.

The fourth program, The Andrew Center, ended 1995 with a \$12,150 deficit.—N.D.

Brethren Business Network searches for new members

The fledgling Brethren Business Network (BBN) is seeking members. The intent is for the network to become an organization that entrepreneurs and upper managers of corporations can join to discuss what it means to be a Christian in the business field, and how to instill Christian values in working environments.

The BBN's Advisory Council, which met January 20 in Lancaster, Pa., eventually would like to see BBN chapters organized throughout the country. It also would like to see the focus expand from being one solely for resourcing and connecting to becoming one of assistance, where businesspeople help people in their communities, possibly through training and low-interest business loans.

Council members currently are Iudd Peter, coordinator, of Oswego, Ill.; Warren Eshbach, Thomasville, Pa.; Lowell Flory, McPherson, Kan.; Earl Hess, Lancaster, Pa.; Robin Lahman, North Manchester, Ind.; and Judy Mills Reimer, Goodview, Va. Tim McElwee, director of the



Members of the Brethren Business Network Advisory Council meet on January 20 to discuss its 1996 agenda. Council members include Judy Mills Reimer, Robin Lahman, Earl Hess, and Tim McElwee.

General Board's Washington Office, is serving as staff liaison.

In 1996 the council plans to produce a periodic newsletter; subscribe members to "Marketplace," a magazine produced by Mennonite Economic Development Associates; produce a new membership brochure; and sponsor a breakfast and insight session at Annual Conference.

The council also hopes to provide a Sunday school curriculum pertaining to dilemmas of faith for Christians in business, and to assemble a bibliography and speakers bureau.

Funding for the network comes from membership fees, and from a \$50,000 grant from the General Board's "Behold, I make all things new" program.—N.D.

SERRV International to close its New York City store

SERRV International announced in January that its New York City store, located in the Interchurch Center, will be closed on March 22 due to declining sales.

"Sales at the store in the early '90s were strong, but over the last several years they have declined," said SERRV director Bob Chase.

Other factors include not enough retail space (only 400 square feet), and a change in the composition of tenants in the building. Many of SERRV's customers were employees of religious organizations that have relocated elsewhere. The store, which opened in 1990, is located at 475

Riverside Drive, in the same building as the National Council of Churches.

Ethnic products that are sold by SERRV are not as popular as they were a few years ago, and the products that still are sought after now are commonly sold by mainstream retailers, Chase said.

Although sales at SERRV's Towson, Md., store are improving, Chase is evaluating whether to keep it open. The store's lease is up in May and a decision will be made by that time.

SERRV's store at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., is doing well, considering the tough year retailers had in 1995, Chase said.

SERRV stores bring in 14 percent of SERRV's income. The rest is from catalog and congregational sales.

Congregations prepare for One Great Hour of Sharing

"That God's works might be revealed" is the theme of the 1996 One Great Hour of Sharing offering emphasis, slated for March 24.

The Church of the Brethren participates in this Church World Service emphasis along with eight other denominations.

A resource guide, prepared by Tim Sollenberger Morphew, director of Congregational Support, was sent in January to each congregation.

Contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing fund hunger, development, refugee, and disaster service ministries in 70 countries. For more information, call (800) 525-8059, ext. 512.

Weekly Brethren news update now is also available by fax

Five years ago it began as a voice mail message. Then it expanded to being sent as E-mail. And now *Newsline*, the Church of the Brethren's weekly news update, is available by fax. This new service is intended for Brethren individuals, churches, and organizations who are not online, but who want to receive breaking denominational news.

Each week *Newsline* is heard on voice mail by 10-25 callers and is read by over 340 electronic subscribers in the US and abroad. Only time will tell how many Brethren members and organizations will utilize the *Newsline* by fax option, said Nexin Dulabaum, director of News Services.

"It is our goal to get current Brethren news to as many members and organizations as possible, and this is our latest step toward meeting that goal," Dulabaum said.

Newsline is recorded on voice mail and sent by E-mail each week by Thursday morning. *Newsline* will be sent out by fax by 11 p.m. each Thursday.

To hear *Newsline*, call (410) 655-8758. To receive *Newsline* by E-mail or by fax, call (800) 525-8059.

Standing Committee ballot for elections at Cincinnati ready

The Standing Committee ballot for elections at Annual Conference in Cincinnati, July 2-7, has been selected.

In pre-Conference meetings, Standing Committee members will select half of the nominees for election by Annual Conference delegates.

• Moderator-elect—Clyde Carter, Daleville, Va.; Herbert Fisher, Mountain Grove, Mo.; Jimmy Ross, Lititz, Pa.; and Donna Forbes Steiner, Union Bridge, Md.

• Program and Arrangements Committee—Darlene Bucher, North Manchester, Ind.; David Eastis, Warsaw,

Ind.; Ginny Dupras Hollis, Modesto, Calif.; and Peter Kaltenbaugh, Jr., Mogadore, Ohio.

• General Board, at-large—Isabel Figueroa, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico; Marie Fortney Hamilton, State College, Pa.; Wayne Judd, Elizabethtown, Pa.; Kreston Lipscomb, Springfield, Ill.; Paul Myers, Fostoria, Ohio; Sue Sappenfield Overman, Morgantown, W.Va.; Kurt Snyder, Roann, Ind.; and Marie Hoover Willoughby, Copemish, Mich.

• General Board, Mid-Atlantic—Linda Frey Barkdoll, Hagerstown, Md.; Warren Kissinger, Hyattsville, Md.; Paul Reid, Hagerstown, Md.; and Paul Wampler, Manassas, Va.

• General Board, Southern Ohio—Ronald Fleming, Columbus, Ohio; Dorla Kinsey Morgan, Dayton, Ohio; Mary Jo Flory Steury, Kettering, Ohio; and Dwayne Yost, Manchester, Ky.

• General Board, Virginia—David Miller, Roanoke, Va.; Anne Murray Reid, Roanoke, Va.; Ronald Sink, Blue Ridge, Va.; and Owen Stultz, Roanoke, Va.

A complete listing of the ballot will be printed in the May MESSENGER.



Jasarevic Velid, 25, from Bratunac, Bosnia, plays with some members of the Frohnaple family, whom he joined in North Carolina last September. Velid was one of 2,012 refugees relocated by the Church of the Brethren Refugee/Disaster Services in 1995. The office had projected it would help relocate 1,200 refugees.

Most of the refugees came from Bosnia, Cuba, and Somalia, according to Donna Derr, director. Although the increase was unexpected, Derr credited the successful resettling of the refugees to the support and interest of Church of the Brethren congregations.

"The need was great and churches responded," said Derr.

Calendar

Pastoral Seminar, "Digging In or Walking Away?" Shepherd's Spring Retreat Center, Hagerstown, Md., April 16-21 [Contact Bethany Satellite, Elizabethtown College, (717) 561-1450].

Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC) Board meetings, General Offices, April 19-21 [Contact ABC, General Offices, (800) 525-8059].

Church of the Brethren Association of Christian Educators (CoBACE) Conference, Richmond, Ind., April 19-21 [Contact CoBACE, (717) 567-2656].

Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT) Board meetings, Elgin, Ill., April 20-21 [Contact BBT, (800) 746-1505].

National Youth Sunday, May 5

Brethren Volunteer Service Retreat, Wesley Woods, Lake Geneva, Wis., June 4-7 [Contact BVS, General Offices].

Bethany Theological Seminary Commencement, Richmond, Ind., June 15

210th Annual Conference, Cincinnati, July 2-7

Faith the Cow, the story of the first animal sent overseas through Heifer Project International, is in its third printing in six months. The children's book has been read on television broadcasts in Lima, Ohio, and Sarasota, Fla., and Susan Hoover, author of *Faith the*

Cow, was featured with the book in the Troy (Ohio) *Daily News*.

The Character Counts Coalition included *Faith the Cow* on its list of recommended children's books.

Character Counts is a non-sectarian project that promotes character education in schools and youth groups.

Faith the Cow can be purchased for \$14.95 through Brethren Press Customer Service, (800) 441-3712.

The Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) allocated \$50,000 to two projects in late January. EDF will help fund the Habitat for Humanity project at Annual Conference in Cincinnati by granting \$40,000 to the project. A grant of \$10,000 was approved for Partners in Accompaniment, Guatemala, a joint project of the Church of the Brethren's Latin America Office and Denominational Peace Witness, which assists refugees returning to their homes.

Speaking of the Guatemalan accompaniment program,

Rebecca Wentling of Annville, Pa., departed for La Esmeralda, Guatemala, in early February as the first volunteer to work through the Partners in Accompaniment program. There she will help provide support and security for long-displaced Guatemalan refugees who are returning home. Wentling will be supported by Brethren congregations and by the Refugee/Disaster grant as she lives among the returnees. Other accompaniers will follow Wentling, and some will be linked to Brethren congregations through the accompaniment program.

The 1996 Legislative Preview from the Church of the Brethren Washington Office was released in January. This four-page newsletter highlights what are expected to be key political issues for Congress this year—crime, immigration, welfare, chemical weapons, endangered species, affirmative action, foreign aid, land mines, the 1995 Beijing women's conference, agriculture, tobacco, housing, and Medicare/Medicaid. The Legislative Preview also includes articles concentrating on issues being dealt with in Haiti, the Balkans, and Cuba. Each issue is accompanied with a reference to a General Board or Annual Conference statement or paper speaking to the issue. To request a Legislative Preview, contact the Washington Office at (202) 546-3202.

The North American Conference on Christian Philanthropy

1996 is scheduled for April 17–19 in Toronto, Canada. Beth Sollenberger-Morphew, director of stewardship education, is on the conference committee and is taking interested Brethren with her.

The conference is sponsored by the Ecumenical Center for Stewardship Studies. Guest speakers will include Alban Institute founder Loren Mead. Call Sollenberger-Morphew at (800) 323-8039 for more information.

North Korea received over \$95,000 in money and supplies

from the Church of the Brethren in January. EDF granted \$20,000 to aid 500,000 North Koreans who have been affected by flooding last summer. An additional \$20,000 was granted from the Global Food Crisis Fund. In addition, 400 cases of beef from the Southern Pennsylvania/Mid-Atlantic Beef Canning project, worth about \$40,000, is scheduled to be shipped this spring. The shipment also will include medical boxes valued at \$15,000, provided through donations from Brethren in Missouri.

In addition, General Board staff continue to seek permission from the North Korean government to send a disaster response team to assist in the rebuilding process. An initiative with Heifer Project International to provide livestock also is being explored.

A packet of 1996 youth theme materials

was sent to youth advisors in December by Chris Douglas, director of youth and young adult ministry. The resources will help advisors and youth plan worship services for National Youth Sunday, May 5, based on the theme "Searching for God, for hope, for belonging."

Included in the packet are a theme poster, a Bible study, various worship resources, a copy of the 1996 Church of the Brethren Youth Fellowship Devotional Booklet, information on the "Generation Why" youth curriculum, and materials on the Global Food Crisis Fund. For more information, call Douglas at (800) 323-8039.

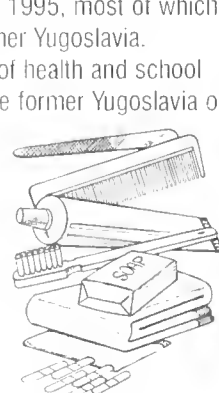
A music leadership workshop,

a follow-up to last year's "Sing Through the Hymnal" conference, is scheduled for August 2–4 at Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind. The workshop is specifically designed for district trainers and people interested in leading music in worship services. Sponsoring the workshop are Bethany Seminary, Brethren Press, Parish Ministries Commission, and various districts. For more information, contact Nancy Faus, Bethany Seminary, at (317) 983-1813.

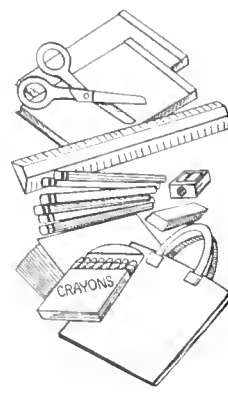
About 5,100 Gifts of the Heart kits

were produced by Brethren in 1995, most of which were sent to the former Yugoslavia.

Another shipment of health and school kits will be sent to the former Yugoslavia on April 20. For individuals or congregations that would like to contribute kits for that shipment, contact Disaster/Refugee Office at (410) 635-8710. Kits must be received by April 1.



health kit



school kit

stepping STONES

by Robin
Wentworth Mayer

You don't have to read too many self-help books before you come across the idea that you need to be expressing your feelings. But there seems to be some confusion about what that means. Often, those who sincerely attempt it report that it backfires, creating more hurt and alienation. So we are going to review Communication 101.

For relationships to grow beyond the bounds of mediocrity and to transcend the superficial, we need to acknowledge and own our feelings ... *and* have the freedom to express them. I see countless individuals and couples, however, stumbling in their attempts to put this into practice because they confuse *feelings* with *thoughts*.

Feelings are a spontaneous interaction with a person or situation. Feelings are connected to our basic emotional needs—self-worth, love, belonging, and autonomy. Feelings, in and of themselves, are neither right nor wrong. Feelings will come and go.

Thoughts, on the other hand, can be controlled and changed. They are a product of our education, our religious orientation, our attitudes and prejudices, our culture and upbringing. When someone has been hurt, deeply hurt, by another's words, what has been expressed is usually a *thought*, not a *feeling*.

So how do you tell the difference?

Realize that feelings tend to fall under some very broad categories; happiness, sadness, anger, hurt, and fear are the five most often listed. If your intent is to express a feeling, you should be able to fit your word choice under one of these headings.

If you are indeed expressing a feeling, you will be able to substitute the phrase "I am" for the phrase "I feel." Listen: *I feel* angry ... *I am* angry. *I feel* lonely ... *I am* lonely. *I feel* excited ... *I am* excited. *I feel* I've been lied to ... *I am* I've been lied to. Oops! That last one doesn't make sense. That's because a thought slipped in masquerading as a feeling.

Along the same lines, if you find yourself using the phrase "I feel *that* ...", be careful. What you're about to express probably is a thought and not a feeling: "I feel that you're not doing your job." *I am* that you're not doing your job." A thought expressed under the guise of a feeling equals a judgment. A better way to say it: "I *feel* angry over your job performance."

This doesn't mean there are no times and places for expressing thoughts and opinions; there are. But the ground rules are different. Feelings can't be argued with. They need only to be accepted and understood. Thoughts, on the other hand, are the products of a numerous sources of information such as peers, media, education, politics,

and religion. When it comes to thoughts and opinions, these areas need to be open for discussion, negotiation, and compromise.

When you are on the receiving end of someone's genuine feelings, you have a choice: You can defend, which will create distance. Or you can empathize, which will deepen intimacy.

That doesn't mean you have to enable destructive behavior or accept unwarranted criticism. Simply identify with the feeling underneath the rest of the words.

It is also my opinion (not *feeling*) that the very act of expressing your feelings implies a commitment to the relationship and a willingness to persevere to a successful resolution. This is another area where there is a lot of damage. Many people will dump intense, painful feelings ... and then vamoose. Many a spouse has been shocked to hear: "I feel very resentful toward you, and I want a divorce." That's not dialog. That's hit and run.

Communication is art, science, and skill. Those who are particularly gifted in the area can be intimidating to those who are not. But the encouragement I hold out to you is that the principles outlined here are things anyone can learn and use to improve relationships at home, work, school, or church. *M.*

Robin Wentworth Mayer is pastor of Kokomo (Ind.) Church of the Brethren.

Stepping Stones is a column offering suggestions, perspectives, and opinions—snapshots of life—that we hope are helpful to readers in their Christian journey. As the writer said in her first installment, "Remember, when it comes to managing life's difficulties, we don't need to walk on water. We just need to learn where the stepping stones are."



Neither crazy nor

by Patricia Roop Robinson

As I was growing up, my knowledge of mental illness was limited at best. The state hospital for the mentally ill was located in the same county in which I lived. As children, we made jokes about each other's behavior being enough to get us sent to Sykesville, where Springfield State Hospital was located. Underneath the joking, we knew that being sent there was like a death sentence. Only "crazy" people ended up there.

It's not just children who fear mental illness.

Mental illness has been with us since the beginning, and is so common that one out of every five people suffers from a mental illness. Our knowledge of its causes and symptoms has dramatically improved in the last century. Yet mental illness is still shrouded in stigma and draped with guilt.

Margaret and Wayne Keltner know this all too well. Their son, Steve, was diagnosed as having paranoid schizophrenia at the age of 21. At the time of his diagnosis, the prevalent belief was that poor parenting was a factor in many, if not in all, mental disorders. Mothers, especially, were identified as being the "contributing" culprit. Margaret and Wayne were shocked when they heard this accusation. If it was true, they wanted to change their ways before their conduct impacted their other three children.

Margaret carried this guilt for 20 years before she learned differently. Getting involved with the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill helped her gain new insights. Schizophrenia is a disease of the brain, not a result of parental failure. The amount of a chemical, dopamine, in Steve's brain was excessive and the direct cause of his illness. Too little of the same chemical could result in Parkinson's Disease. It was a classic case of an illness resulting from a chemical imbalance. Margaret and Wayne can now rise up and shout "Not guilty!" But only they can tell you how long, how painful, how lonely their search proved to be.

Because of our reactions of uncertainty, fear, and blame, people whose friends or family members—or even themselves—suffer from any of the various types of mental illness often try to address the problems on their own, not sharing their burdens with their community or family of faith. And when such experiences are withheld, our opportunities to learn more about mental illness, about the possibilities for a caring, helpful response, to grow in our ability to provide support, are limited.

How can we break this cycle? We can make our congregations safer for people to express such personal needs by becoming more informed about mental illness, respecting the wishes of patient and family, and above all, responding in the caring, practical, nonjudgmental way of Jesus.

Demons, death, and the growth of understanding

To some, emphasis on the gospel as a guide to responding to mental illness is fearful because the stories in the gospels portray mental illness as evidence of demon possession:

"And when (Jesus) had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain . . . Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; and he shouted at the top of his voice, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I abjure you by God, do not torment me.' For he had said to him, 'Come out of the man, you unclean spirit.' Then Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' He

In responding to people who are mentally ill, we may feel particularly unsure of what we should say or do. Yet the most important response is to try, for it is never inappropriate to demonstrate the love of God.

unclean

replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many." (Jesus ordered the unclean spirits to leave the man and enter a herd of swine, which rushed to the sea and drowned.) (Mark 5:2-15, NRSV)

These verses suggest that the man had a mental disorder. Because of a lack of knowledge of mental disorders' causes and treatments, the

common belief in biblical times was that they resulted from demonic possession. Yet Jesus did not shun this man. He treated him with compassion and with understanding. This was the same approach Jesus used with lepers, the blind, and others having physical ailments. Jesus underlaid the healing tools available to him with faith and compassion just as we try to underlay the tools available today with similar faith and compas-



You and your church can help

Individuals and families suffering mental illness need the same caring, supportive response given to patients with physical illnesses.

- Include families and patients on your prayer list. Just because someone is not quickly or easily cured doesn't mean he may not be "healed" by prayer. Not continuing prayer suggests that even the faith community has abandoned hope.

- Offer families respite from the constant care of their loved one with a mental illness. Provide substitute caregivers; the permanent caregivers sometimes need a night or a weekend away.

- Offer support groups for the mentally ill and their families. This may need to be an ecumenical effort if the need is not great in your own congregation. Existing community groups such as Recovery, Inc., or Emotions Anonymous can help with this.

- Know when symptoms are more serious than just a mild case of the "blues." Don't be afraid to ask if a person is feeling suicidal. Give people per-

mission to talk about how they are feeling, without fear of judgment. Take the person seriously and assist in finding help.

- Know where to refer a person for mental health help in your community. Begin with a hospital or social service agency.

- Make mental health a Sunday school curriculum topic. Read *No Longer Alone: Mental Health and the Church* as part of your Sunday school class activity.

- Preach the *gospel* in your congregation. A punitive, judgmental God has never helped anyone out of the morass of mental illness. More often this only aggravates the problem.

- Have a Mental Health Sunday. Let people tell their stories. Bring in a mental health professional to give accurate information about complex disorders.

- Tour a mental health facility in your area. Dispel any myths or preconceptions your church may have about such facilities.

- Volunteer at a state mental hospital. Dispel your personal myths. People with

mental illnesses are real people who have their own personalities. They have joys and concerns not unlike your own.

- Include individuals dealing with mental illness in the life of your congregation if they so desire. (One congregation drafted a query to district meeting seeking more inclusion for the mentally impaired.) The mentally ill have gifts and talents too. Encourage them. Nurture them.

Laurelville Retreat Center near Pittsburgh has been the site for up to 12 families of the mentally ill to gather, worship, and discuss their concerns over the last several years. As co-leader of this event, I was heartened to see some of the pain being relieved as these families expressed themselves openly and honestly.

Most of these suggestions come from that experience as well as from my work with Pathways to Promise, an ecumenical organization educating clergy and laypeople of the needs of the mentally ill, and from work on health and welfare committees of the Church of the Brethren and Mennonites.

—PATRICIA ROOP ROBINSON

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sion. Despite the vast increase in our understanding of mental illness, there is no less need today for empathic understanding.

The belief that mental illness stemmed from demonic possession did not die easily. During the 17th and 18th centuries, thousands of mentally ill people were executed in Europe, many by agencies of the church. The belief in witches and demons also was common in the New World. Accusations of witchcraft and demonic possession led to imprisonment, public punishment, and death. Even today, many people showing signs of mental illness sometimes are thought to be victims of the devil and his supernatural associates.

The 19th century finally saw serious attempts to equate "madness" with physical, emotional, and social factors. Treatment became slightly more humane, and responsible people demanded "moral treatment" for the insane. During this period the Quakers founded Friends' Asylum for the Insane in 1817 in Philadelphia. Initially, the clergy played a significant role in patient treatment, yielding only gradually to "specialists." Dorothea Dix, a Unitarian, crusaded for reform. To her, imprisoning the mentally ill with criminals was wrong. As had been true of the Quakers, her efforts were gradually replaced by what may be termed "the medical model."

The role of medicine and the faith community

Throughout the evolution of treatment methods, there has been divisiveness between the medical and faith communities. Such division implies that mental illness is either a sickness of the soul or of the body, not some combination of both. Unfortunately, that either-or thinking still largely persists in 1996. However, many mental health professionals believe that adequate treatment of mental illness must combine appropriate medical, psychosocial, and spiritual approaches.

We need to use all of our available resources if we are to bring health and wholeness to a patient's mind.

The interaction between the faith and medical communities is critical because *over 50 percent of the mentally ill first seek help from their church*. This large percentage may be surprising, yet many of us were taught that the church is a place of healing and wholeness. To many patients, mental illness first manifests itself as some sort of spiritual problem. During severe depression, one's faith may vanish just as does one's appetite and interest in daily aspects of living. The church can play a critical role, then, in the person's journey to health. The initial responses that beleaguered people receive from their churches may well determine the outcome or length of their illnesses.

Soft turn-away phrases such as: "Pray more"; or "When you change jobs or go to college, things will get better"; or "You'll outgrow it" are not enough. Instead they may only increase a growing feeling of hopelessness, guilt, and shame. What we need to work toward is honest understanding and response, when someone in the church truly hears the cry for help, understands the pain, and directs the patient to a source of psychiatric help.

Ideally, the person needing help will be directed to a trained clinical therapist (psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or professional counselor) who is able to address all of the patient's mental concerns, whether they are religious, familial, or physically generated. These all play a critical role in self-perception and overall mental health.

Frequently, patients are considered "ill" because they have exceeded their own personal limits. Limits vary from person to person. Therefore, just as a diabetic has to avoid or limit the intake of sugar, a person predisposed to depression needs to limit exposure to stress. Time away from work or longer vacations may prove essential. Such people need to understand their own daily cycles and schedule critical work for times when they are best able to cope with external pressures.

A personal journey

These comments reflect my personal experience with clinical depression during my second year in college. I had battled depression during high school, but thought I would be fine when I entered college. Everyone told me that college was to be the magic cure, and I wanted to believe that. By all outward appearances, I had nothing to be depressed about in my life. I was popular with the college student body and was an officer of my freshman class. I was in the May Day court. My grades were average, which distressed me since I had very high standards for myself. I failed to appreciate my own built-in limits and attempted to carry 18 course hours, work a part-time job, and participate in every campus musical

event. I was attempting to be the "perfect" student in every way.

Insomnia was warning me that I had to slow down, that I was overcommitted. I didn't know, however, how to become uncommitted. I thought I *must* do all these things; I saw other people doing them. Never was I told that people have major personality differences as well as physical ones: We are not all able to do the same things.

I began to take prescribed sleeping medication. One pill a night became two pills a night. I would check into the infirmary just to get a night's sleep. Finally I knew I was heading for addiction if I didn't stop the overmedication, and I called my parents. They came immediately and brought me home. After being home a few days I began to feel better and even thought about

Over 50 percent of the mentally ill first seek help from their church.



Anabaptist churches and mental health

Over 50 years ago, a small group of conscientious objectors made a profound difference in the treatment of people with mental illness in the United States.

World War II was a catalyst for service for Mennonite and Brethren churches. Most of us are familiar with the shipping of clothing, medical supplies, refugee resettlement, and Heifer Project. Conscientious objectors (COs), primarily representing Brethren, Mennonites, Quakers, and Methodists, who worked in Civilian Public Service (CPS) during the war years, served in projects such as forest service, soil conservation, emergency farm labor, medical service, training for relief work, and mental hospital service.

The severe shortage of attendants in mental hospitals provided the opportunity for service, but resistance to conscientious objectors delayed approval for COs to serve their time in the hos-

pitals until 1942. Several men were en route to Elgin (Ill.) State Hospital in 1942 when they were told that opposition from the local American Legion and the hospital's labor union would prevent them from serving there. It wasn't until later in 1942 that service actually began at Eastern State Hospital in Williamsburg, Va.

Hospital locations expanded to other parts of Virginia and to Ohio, Maryland, Connecticut, Maine, New Jersey, and Washington. The men served mainly as ward attendants, providing custodial care.

The men were horrified at the conditions they found. One worker assigned to 100 patients was a normal ratio. Locked wards and barred windows were standard. Conditions were more like a prison than a hospital conducive to healing and wholeness.

The COs began to go public with their observations. Journalists published their findings. As a result, resignations

of highly placed officials in mental health delivery systems took place. With more humane treatment, patients began to respond.

Out of this service and other projects came the mental hygiene program of CPS, which promoted education and research to meet institutional needs. This program eventually developed in 1946 into the National Mental Health Foundation. The COs shook the very foundations of the mental health care system in the United States.

After the war, the Mennonites went a step further. They created their own mental health delivery system. Brook Lane Psychiatric Center in Hagerstown, Md., was the first of the eight hospitals spread across the country. They have received commendations from The National Institutes of Health for their work in the field. A history of their story is found in *The Turning Point* by Alex Sareyan (Herald Press).

—PATRICIA ROOP ROBINSON



A lane crossing a brook over a picturesque stone bridge provides the name for Brook Lane Psychiatric Center, the first of eight hospitals developed by Mennonites in response to mental illness.

retardation and completing my sophomore year.

Then I began to experience insomnia again. I lost my vision. My speech became slurred. Suicide was uppermost in my mind. Once I went outside with a knife to cut some flowers and needed to run inside the house to lay it down because I had an overwhelming urge to turn the knife against myself. My God! I was one of those people with mental illness, and I knew it.

I had to seek help, but finding effective help proved difficult. I was family- and church-oriented, but my problems were possibly beyond their personal ability to effectively respond. I needed professional help, and it took more than one attempt to find the right place and the right people. Even then I experienced the devastation of "hearing" in the context of a sermon, "If people had enough faith they would not become mentally ill." Finally a combination of medications, ECT (electroconvulsive therapy), and psychotherapy brought results that were nothing short of dramatic—spiritual, emotional, and physical healing. Much later I returned to college and completed my undergraduate work, taking courses at my own pace. Then, when circumstances permitted, I pursued graduate work in pastoral counseling. On a very personal basis, I understood the need to integrate the behavioral sciences with the personal faith experience.

I became aware that health concerns were being intentionally addressed within the Church of the Brethren and attended conferences held by the Brethren Health and Welfare Association (now the Association of Brethren Caregivers, ABC). It was exciting to see that others in the faith community understood this need for the church to be involved in the health of its members. I became co-coordinator of the mental health task group for ABC. And during this period, in 1988, I became an ordained minister.

After I completed my graduate studies, I also completed the courses needed to gain state of

Maryland and national certification as a professional counselor/therapist. In 1987 I began my employment at Brook Lane Psychiatric Center as associate chaplain and pastoral counselor. I continue in this role today and see both hospital inpatients and outpatients.

Hope and compassion

I tell these personal details because they may offer hope to others facing some form of mental illness. And I also hope they can add to the understanding of those who may never have had close contact with someone who is mentally ill. Mental illness is mostly treatable. People can and do recover. They do go on to live productive and fulfilling lives.

The effects of the various forms of mental illness differ. And some forms of mental illness are not yet as treatable as others. But people need to understand that patients with incapacitating mental illness still benefit from support. They need the love, the understanding, and the concern of their faith communities.

In John 9:1-7, Jesus approaches a blind man with compassion and understanding. No questions are asked. No judgments are made. He heals him. But just as many of us would do, his disciples want to ask about guilt. Surely someone was to blame. To them, that seemed to be more important than the possibility that sight could be restored.

Jesus made the situation clear to his disciples. Guilt is not the issue. No one is guilty—not the man, not his parents. No one is to blame. No one is crazy. No one is unclean. Our response should not be judgment, but work that reveals the love and light of God.

As Christians, we are called to respond with compassion to those in need. In responding to people who are mentally ill, we may feel particularly unsure of what we should say or do. Yet the most important response is to try, for it is never inappropriate to demonstrate the love of God.

May all our congregations become places of love, not blame—of hope, not fear. And let us all journey together toward healing.

Phyllis Kay Robinson is a member of Union Bible Methodist Church in Brethren.

M.



What is mental illness?

The term *mental illness* is used for a number of disorders that cause severe disruption in thinking, feeling, and relating. Anyone—no matter what age, economic status, or race—can develop a mental illness. At any given time, 50–45 million Americans, about one in five, suffer from a clearly diagnosable mental disorder that reduces their capacity to cope with the ordinary demands of work, school, or daily life.

Mental illness is not the same as mental retardation. People who are mentally retarded generally have a diminished intellectual capacity from birth. Those with mental illnesses usually have normal intelligence, although they may have difficulty performing at a normal level because of their illness.

Depression

Depression is probably the most commonly diagnosed emotional problem. While everyone feels “blue” occasionally, for some people, such a feeling lasts a long time, accompanied by feelings of guilt and hopelessness. Up to one quarter of all Americans suffer from such a depression at some point in their life. Psychiatrists categorize it as an “affective” disorder, that is, related to emotions.

People suffering *severe depression* may have several of the following characteristics:

- difficulty sleeping
- loss of interest in daily activities
- loss of appetite
- fatigue
- feelings of worthlessness, guilt, and hopelessness
- despondency
- inability to concentrate
- possible psychotic symptoms
- suicidal thoughts and even actions

Some people suffer from a *manic-depressive disorder*, in which their moods may swing from depression to an abnormal elation or hyperactivity. In

their manic period, they may have the following characteristics:

- boundless energy, enthusiasm, and need for activity
- decreased need for sleep
- grandiose ideas and poor judgment
- rapid, loud, disorganized speech
- short temper; argumentativeness
- impulsive and erratic behavior
- delusional thinking
- rapid switch to severe depression.

Sometimes depression is a result of stress or grief, but in some cases there is no external cause. Given treatment, primarily psychotherapy and medication, most people with depression can recover and lead full lives.

Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia also refers to a group of serious and disabling mental illnesses, caused by a biochemical imbalance in the brain, although researchers still are searching for more information on causes. Approximately one person in a hundred develops schizophrenia, usually in the late teens or early twenties.

Myths about schizophrenia abound. People with schizophrenia do not have a “split personality” and are not prone to criminal violence. Schizophrenia cannot be cured, but it can be controlled. Like people with diabetes, people with schizophrenia probably will have to be permanently under medical care for the rest of their life.

Some of the characteristics of schizophrenia include:

- disconnected, confusing language
- poor reasoning, memory, and judgment
- high levels of anxiety
- eating and sleeping disorders
- hallucinations
- delusions, persistent false beliefs
- deterioration of appearance and personal hygiene
- loss of motivation and poor concentration
- withdrawal from others

Anxiety

When fear becomes an irrational, pervasive terror or a nagging worry or dread that interferes with daily life, a person may be suffering from some form of anxiety disorder. Approximately 50 million Americans suffer serious anxiety symptoms. Under the broad category of severe anxiety are included:

- Phobic disorders: irrational, terrifying fears about a specific object, social situations, or public places. Agoraphobia, one of the most serious social phobias, causes terror of either being alone or being in public places.

- Panic attacks: occur unpredictably, sometimes accompanied by a specific phobia. They often create a sudden, intense apprehension, fear, or terror, and can cause heart palpitations, chest pain, choking or smothering sensations, dizziness, hot and cold flashes, or trembling and faintness.

- Obsessive-compulsive disorder: Though not often thought of as a form of anxiety, obsessive-compulsive behaviors reflect a person's uneasiness about the world. Obsessions—recurring, persistent, and involuntary thoughts or images—often occur with compulsions—repetitive, ritualistic behaviors. The person does not get pleasure from such behavior, and, in fact, recognizes that it is excessive and has no real purpose.

The causes of these anxiety disorders are not entirely clear, although studies have indicated that traumatic childhood events or chemical imbalances may be connected. Again, a combination of medication and psychotherapy often effectively treats the mental illness.

Compiled from “Mental Illness Is Everybody's Business,” by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) and “Mental Illness: There Are a Lot of Troubled People,” by the American Psychiatric Association



Uncovering the g

by Phil Grout

It is day two of the Blizzard of '96. More than two feet of snow has covered our woods. Twice yesterday I snaked through the Japanese garden and shoveled my way up to the studio. And with every third bite or so I uncovered another section of stepping-stones that months ago had led us past azalea blooms and ferns, on to the maroon filigree of a lace-leaf

Japanese maple, along with splashes of day lily oranges and yellows and reds.

Today the gashed, white path slices underneath the scaled, reddish arms of a prized dawn redwood tree and runs over chips of blue—the traces of what had been the neatly raked “sea” of blue basalt stone spreading out through the Zen section of the garden. A grayish patch of stone protrudes from the tallest white mound and is flanked by two larger but shorter humps under which massive boulders slumber, unaware of the maelstrom swirling above their white blankets.

I dig faster as I near the rocks. The 40-miles-per-hour wind makes it difficult to hear, so I get on my knees, protected by a new pair of waterproof snow pants that laugh at the cold. Like some strange archeologist, I brush aside the final layer of snow to find the bed of rounded river rocks I have collected over the years. I am close, but I still hear nothing against the wind's fury. But then the howl hushes for a moment, and I hear that my treasure is still alive. There under more than two feet of snow is the familiar gurgle that joined the sounds of the tree frogs and katydids to lull us to sleep so many summer nights ago.

The sound is muffled inside a crystal shell of ice that houses a small stream of water constantly bathing a five-inch, rounded rock. Sixteen years ago, I stood along the Hebridean Sea and stared at this striped, white-gray-black beauty, debating whether or not to add its five pounds to my backpack. And every time I gaze into its singular, grayish eye it gives me a glimpse again of the

West Highlands of Scotland. Today the water dances across the rock face, which seems to wink at me from under its frozen display case, and the remains of our garden pool remind me that even in our coldest, darkest moments, hope still springs eternal. It is a metaphor I had turned my back on five years ago.

Five years ago no water flowed here. There were no azaleas, no Japanese maples, no dawn redwood, no waving ferns. There were no stepping-stones and no gurgle of water dancing around massive boulders. In fact, this bit of paradise was buried under piles of dirt, scattered timbers, cement bags, concrete blocks, and discarded pallets. We were in the midst of building a studio and office so that I could have a place to work at home. This was the construction site dump.

As the dump grew, I discovered some new feelings. At first it was a tinge of anxiety as I glanced out the kitchen window and started to notice the growing pile of debris. But then I realized I was standing at the window for longer periods, and the anxiety was lasting longer too. It stayed with me even when I wasn't at the window.

The construction stopped with the onslaught of winter, and my view from the window became an obsession. Slowly, dark thoughts crept in.

For nearly 50 years my eyes have led me around the world on a journey capturing moments that otherwise would pass me by. My camera has been a third eye. My vision had been out there for so long, it was strange to sense it turning inward. I was frightened to see the metamorphosis from light to dark. I discovered I was transporting the view of the dump and casting it inside. I started to equate my being with that of the dump—worthless debris.

I could sense my downward slide, but I seemed unable to pick myself up out of the pit of depression. I attempted to find some relief through lengthy prayers that always began with “heavenly Father . . .”, and would go on some-

Just as this garden lay frozen under the snow, just as it once lay under dirt and debris, God's light has always been there, encasing a frozen rock or thawing a frozen heart left whimpering in the darkness.

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times for hours as I searched for a glimmer of light.

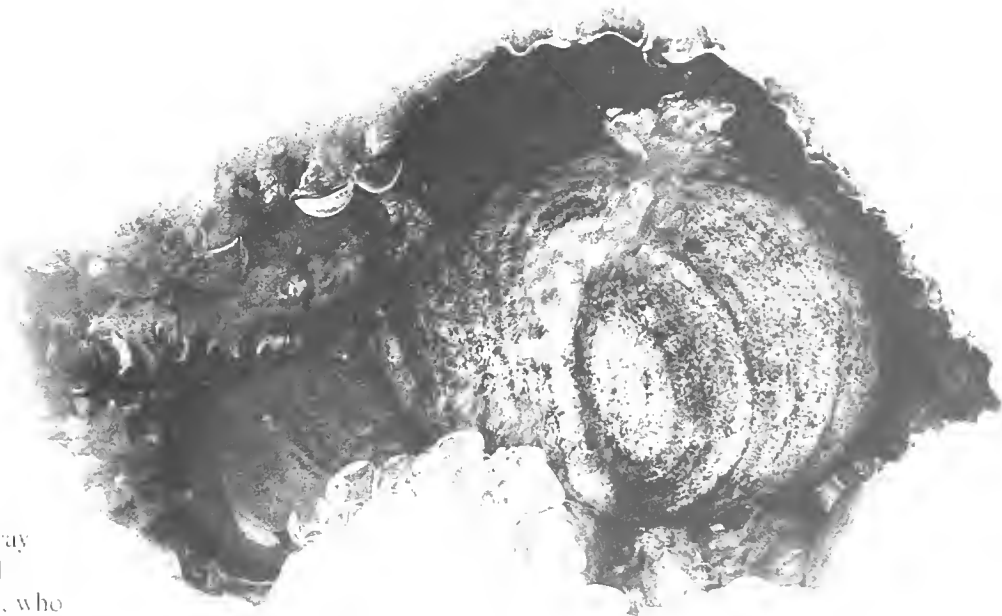
Eventually my strength weakened to the point at which I could mumble only the words "heavenly Father." Then the words were deadened as I drifted away into a type of catatonic speechlessness. I mustered up "happy" words for my wife, who I sensed left for school each morning wondering what she would find of me when she returned. I saved the pleadings for the cast of psychologists, one of whom was convinced I suffered from systemic candidiasis—the mother of all yeast infections. He had me on a diet that left me panic-stricken at the grocery as I studied every content label before I placed the food in my cart, fearful that the "wrong" food would make me crazier.

Then I found a new source of energy. My waking moments were consumed by the darkly playful task of sorting through my options for ending the pain forever.

I begged my regular psychologist to refer me to a psychiatrist who might be able to help me with medication. He declined the referral, so I referred myself. I was obviously depressed and suicidal, harboring active thoughts about an attempt. So the new psychiatrist prescribed 50 tablets of a powerful antidepressant. After three days of the new regimen, the dark thoughts remained; it wasn't like aspirin and a headache. I deducted if three won't do it, why not 46. That thought nearly erased everything. I was on a respirator for two days.

On June 21, 1991, my wife followed the trail of vomit and found me collapsed in bed. I had taken a massive dose of Lithium and Prozac in a second suicide attempt. After the first attempt three weeks earlier, I promised her I would not try again. But during the final week, I was convinced the blackness would never end. Hell could be no worse than this.

I had broken my promise to this woman who



had been the love of my life for 21 years. Through a mixture of frustration, hurt, and anger came the words "Do you want me to leave so you can finish it?" But the woman who saved my life then asked, "Or do you want to live?" And in the muffled voice of a child I whispered, "I want to live."

Within a half hour I was inching my way back up out of the pit, gagging down a stomach pump tube.

During the next two weeks, the blackness was explained to me. After 45 years, I started to get some answers. My psychiatrist at the psychiatric hospital looked at me and said, "You are going to recover from this. You have what is called Bipolar Affective Disorder or manic-depression. I have depression too."

I learned that my illness was not the shameful result of a defective character, as I believed for so many years. I was born with several mechanical problems that affected my left hip and my left kidney. I was also born with a defect in my brain that caused a depletion of certain neurological chemicals called neurotransmitters; they control the flow of impulses and information through the brain. The chemical maelstrom was also affecting my mood and sense of well-being. Sometimes, the ride would take me on wonderful highs, and then it would throw me

The frozen remains of our garden pool remind me that even in our coldest, darkest moments, hope still springs eternal. It is a metaphor I had turned my back on five years ago.



During my final week in the hospital, I discovered that the artist in me was still alive. I went to the ceramic studio and sat at the potter's wheel for the first time in 10 years.

During the depth of depression totally out of my control, I also learned, however, that certain drugs such as the simple salt lithium carbonate could stabilize the chemical imbalance in my brain. I learned that I could live happily and productively in spite of the disorder that twice had almost killed me.

During my final week in the hospital, I also discovered that the artist in me was still alive. I went to the ceramic studio and sat at the potter's wheel for the first time in 10 years. I took a handful of clay, slapped it down on the wheel and created a rather primitive, yet treasured, Japanese tea bowl. I was learning how to blow upon the fire, a glow of coal burning deep inside me.

Several months after my discharge, I stood at the edge of the dump and stared at the debris and mounds of dirt. I put on my work gloves, grabbed a shovel, and started to unearth the first stepping stone. A pick and digger moved the second stone into place, and the contractor needed to have the dirt brushed off. It could never be moved by hand. Gradually a path of stepping stones was taking shape.

Eventually, there was more path than dump. I have a favorite photograph that hangs in my lab. It depicts the first phase of the Japanese garden in the middle of the first winter storm. It is also one of the first photographs I made after a lengthy hiatus. My illness had prompted me to put down my camera for what seemed like an eternity. The pain and suffering I witnessed through my lens, coupled with the illness, made me fearful of ever

looking into the black box again.

During the following year of my recovery, azaleas, rhododendrons and Kousa dogwoods were planted in the former dump site, along with a special Japanese maple from my psychiatric hospital. Then I cut a streambed through the garden, and in a modified *karensansui* style I filled it with bluish gray and white stones to create the illusion of running water when the sun hit it just right. More photographs came from the garden as it evolved. And then came the confidence to take on regular photo assignments again.

And instead of laying on my back for hours in my new "dark room," staring into the darkness searching for the slightest hint of any physical and spiritual light, I was now creating new photographs in what had been a haven from the light of day.

During that second winter after my hospitalization, I stumbled upon a way of evoking impressionistic colors from black and white chemistry and paper. I truly was finding my light within that wonderful darkness, which at times was unorthodoxically filled with daylight during part of the print development process. The sunlight was intensifying the colors of the new, mystical images. Today much of my work is in that place where I used to hide and plead with my "heavenly Father" to show me the light, even if it be a way to end myself and the darkness forever.

The blizzard has subsided, and I see a patch of blue to the south. For months I struggled to create the illusion of a streambed rambling through this garden, and now in less than two days, a sea of white waves has crashed upon this woodland paradise and buried the make-believe water two feet below.

But over here, the gurgle continues inside the crystal dome. And just a little bit farther, I brush away some more snow along the rock ledge to find this treasured artifact from my past.

And for this moment, I caress the imperfec-

tion of a Japanese tea bowl made near the bottom of insanity long, long ago.

"Heavenly Father: Just as this garden lies frozen under two feet of snow, just as it once lay buried under mounds of dirt and debris, your light has always been here, encasing a frozen rock or thawing a frozen heart left whimpering in the darkness. Just as you guided my hands around a lump of clay, you taught me to blow

upon the tiny, glowing coal deep within my heart. You taught me to hear the flowing of the water in the middle of a blizzard, to feel your caress as you ran your fingers round my imperfections. Amen." *M.*

Photographer/writer Phil Groun, a member of Westminster (Md.) Church of the Brethren, has photographed Annual Conference and other events and created many photo images for the Church of the Brethren.



Resources on mental illness

- *Pathways to Understanding: A Manual on Ministry & Mental Illness*. Student copy: \$25; Instructor copy: \$50. Send order and payment to: Pathways to Promise, 5400 Arsenal St., St. Louis, MO 65159-1424; (514) 644-8400; FAX (514) 644-8854.

- *Pathways to Understanding: A Videotape on Ministry & Mental Illness*. \$20 a videotape. Order from Pathways to Promise (see above).

- *A Minister's Handbook of Mental Disorders*. Joseph W. Ciarrocchi, Paulist Press, 997 MacArthur Blvd., Mahwah, NJ 07450-7450. Addresses adult psychopathology by a person familiar with ministry and on staff at Loyola University's Pastoral Counseling Department. It addresses psychological information along with the related inclinations for people involved in pastoral care. This handbook can be used by both experienced pastors as well as those preparing for helping roles in the church.

- *No Longer Alone: Mental Health and the Church*. John Toews with Eleanor Loewen, Herald Press, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottsdale, PA 15685; (800) 245-7894; FAX: (412) 887-5111. Author integrates the psychological and theological issues that mental illness raises. Designed as Sunday school curriculum.

- *The Gift of the Dark Angel: A Woman's Journey through Depression toward Wholeness*. Ann Keiffer, LuraMedia, 7060 Miramar Rd., Suite 104, San Diego, CA 92121. A personal story of a woman who plummeted into the fatigue and despair of suicidal depression. She discovers unexpected gifts buried in her depression and journey to recovery.

- *Simply Sane: The Spirituality of Mental Health*. Gerald May, Crossroads, Order through Shales Institute, 5450 Grosvenor Ln., Bethesda, MD 20814. May is a psychiatrist and author of seven books on spirituality and psychiatry. Approaches

psychotherapy with a spiritual eye. Addresses the need for allowing the spirit to be a part of the process of healing through psychotherapeutic approaches.

- *A Path Through the Sea: One Woman's Journey from Depression to Wholeness*. Lillian V. Grissen, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505. Writer describes factors that contributed to her depression, and the process by which she faced the roots of her pain, of her perfectionism and excessive guilt. Gives the family and religious environment, which was a factor, without blame or bitterness.

- *A Brilliant Madness: Living with Manic-Depressive Illness*. Patty Duke and Gloria Hochman, Bantam Books. Personal experience of this illness, coupled with the clinical aspects from a psychiatrist's view. People struggling with this illness will find it helpful reading in understanding themselves or a loved one.

The Church of North India

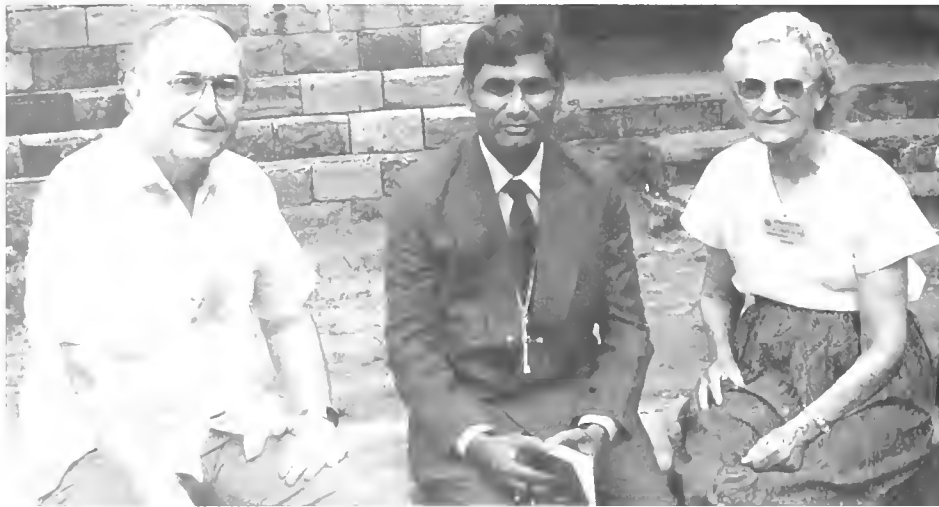
by H. Lamar Gible

The celebration began with a hearty unison declaration from Psalm 133: "How good and pleasant it is when people live together in unity." Twenty-five years had passed since the inauguration of the Church of North India (CNI) in the fall of 1970 under the great *shamiana* (tent) in Nagpur. The ecclesiological road traveled since that time had not always been smooth. Conversations with Indian friends, coming from the six traditions that formed the united church, openly and compassionately recalled the "rough places" during these years that with God's "merciful care had become plain." Delegates witnessed in the unity in Christ that they had come to know in a fresh way. There was a pride in their observations that at synod meetings they no longer gathered in cliques as former Brethren, Baptists, or Anglicans, but in interest and issue groups around the pressing issues and needs of their church.

The Silver Jubilee celebrations at the ninth Ordinary Synod meetings (October 5–10, 1995) of the CNI were largely confined to one day. The remaining five days of meetings engaged the 250 delegates, 10 from each of the 25 dioceses, on decisions regarding the work and witness of their church. The anniversary celebration was impressive and featured K. Nad Raiser, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, as keynote speaker. Retired bishops and former missionaries were present for the celebration and were given special recognition. Former Brethren missionary Laura Sewell and I represented our denomination.

Participation in the jubilee were exhibits from each of the dioceses featuring highlights of their work over 25 years. I was drawn to these exhibits and became impressed in the graphic pictures of their work, handerafts from their areas, and implements related to development projects. In one exhibit, I was attracted by photographs of a youth gathering in which they were celebrating the love feast, including feetwashing. The youth at the booth eagerly told me that this was a contribution the Brethren tradition had brought to the united church.

Most of the key issues for the synod's deliberation were not dissimilar to those we Brethren address at Annual Conference and in the General Board. Formation and nurturing of capable and responsible leadership within the CNI is central, as is more adequate support of pastoral leadership. Limited finances for the programs that challenge this young church was another. Some issues, however, are strikingly different. These brothers and sisters live in a religiously pluralistic cul-



One of the most pleasing developments in the CNI for Lamar Gible and Laura Sewell was the election of a new Bishop of Gujarat, Vinodkumar M. Malaviya. Observed Gible, "He reminds me of the late Bishop Ishwarlal Christachari." (Christachari, first Bishop of Gujarat, was a product of the Brethren mission.)

ture quite different from our own. In their society, Christians represent only 2.4 percent of the population. As a minority religion, they experience interreligious tension and violence. Peace education and action within their church then are often related to interreligious tolerance, understanding, and dialog, and focused heavily at a local level. Facing growing interreligious tensions in our society and world, we can learn much from this experience of our Indian brothers and sisters.

What most impressed me in the celebration and synod meetings is the work that the CNI is doing "toward a Holistic Understanding of Mission" (HUM), a three-year emphasis that will now be continued for at least another three years. The church in India faces a situation not unlike the differences faced within US Protestantism—the impact of a conservative evangelicalism that shares the personal and savioric aspects of the gospel, but shies away from the social claims of Christ's teachings. The HUM program emphasis within the church works concertedly and effectively at local and diocesan levels to see the mission of the church in holistic terms, witnessing to and incarnating a gospel that is as importantly social as it is personally savioric. The theme for the anniversary celebration was "A Community in Mission for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation." In keeping with this theme and the HUM process, it was challenging and enriching to witness this young church demonstrating that concerns related to poverty, justice, intercommunal and interreligious violence, and development were not means to evangelization, but essential to evangelization itself—central and not peripheral to the gospel.

While not disguising the differences within its community of faith—challenges to leadership, differences in priorities, disputes over properties, and the like—the Church of North India, gathered in this celebrative synod meeting, demonstrated "how good and pleasant it is when people live together in

Living together in unity

unity." My experience with them in their "big meeting" convinced me that this young church is alive and well, relevant in its holistic gospel witness, and in its unity is much more effective than it ever could have been in its separate Brethren, Anglican, Presbyterian, Disciples, Baptist, and Methodist parts. As I reflected during these meetings in New Delhi about the Brethren centennial celebration in 1995 of the first

"preaching and teaching meetings" conducted in the Bulsar railroad library by Wilbur and Mary Stover and Bertha Ryan. I became convinced that these pioneer Brethren missionaries too would have celebrated the wider and greater witness and work in India reflected today in this united church. *M.*

H. Lamar Gibble is representative for Europe and Asia on the World Ministries Commission staff.

Back home to India

India is a second home to me. I was very pleased to be invited to attend the 25th Anniversary of the Church of North India (CNI). I could again visit the church and my many friends there.

After 25 years of the CNI, the founding leaders who led the church into union with hopes of a spiritual unity of Christians are gone. They had given to the church their strength and administrative abilities. Many of the leaders who came after them were not aware of all the efforts and problems of organizing so many diverse peoples into one church. There were struggles for position and honor. The church has grown despite that. These 25 years have been a testing time, and the church has reached an age of maturity. There is much more emphasis on spiritual values now, and less on property, place, and the joining-church differences.

I remember the first synod meeting and the time spent in talking and arguing about customs, beliefs, language, and rules. In that first synod, because of an uproar about ordination of women, that part of the agenda was tabled until the next synod meeting, three years later. At this 1995 synod, the moderator, Bishop Anand C. Lal, led in giving thanks for the church and included the communion service. The leaders who assisted him were all ordained women, with no objections raised by anyone. Many other problems caused by groups with deep-seated beliefs have been solved over the years, and there is a greater sense of unity growing in the church. That doesn't mean the problems are all gone, but it does indicate a willingness to listen to

and learn from one another.

From Delhi, I went home to Gujarat. I spent a week in Ahmedabad at the Gujarat United School of Theology. The school principal had written to me, requesting me to come and help in the school library, where I had reorganized and catalogued the books years ago.

I arrived in Anklesvar to begin my visit to South Gujarat. I went to many villages. I visited the churches and pastors, visited from house to house, and even went out into the fields. I drank cups and cups of tea and ate huge meals everywhere. I traveled by train, bus, jeep, car, scooter, and motorcycle, and walked many miles. I enjoyed every minute of it. I am grateful to all the friends in the Anklesvar-Raj, Vyara, and Bulsar areas for their care and love.

Many of the churches arranged meetings at noon and in the evening so that I could meet more people. My message to them was the theme of the Bible study from the Synod: We are on a journey. The church has grown up. We are not children anymore. It is time to walk together in love, reaching out to those who are seeking help in their spiritual journeys, instead of dwelling on our differences.

The people are all my friends, and I did not ask to which church they went or to which group they belonged. If people asked me for the church in America to help them solve their problems, I told them that the church loved them, cared for them, and prayed for reconciliation among them, but the solution to their problems was in their

own hands. They needed to sit together and love one another.

I was favorably impressed by the number of young people in the church. They are taking places of leadership. Many of these young people come from the Vyara and south Raj areas. That is where the church is growing. It is in the old established churches where the disputes and disagreements occur and where there is little growth. The diocese has asked each church to add a line to its budget for missionary work. Young people are preparing to go out to serve, and they need money for salaries and expenses.

There is much that the Christian community can do to serve the people of India and to address the country's problems. It must put aside its discord and begin working for the good of all. Where there is witness to the gospel, the church is growing. Where there is an emphasis on control and ownership, the church is dormant. Members of all groups are concerned about this.

The leadership must listen to the opinions and be more considerate of the feelings of the members.

With the election of a new bishop in the CNI's Gujarat Diocese, there is hope for reconciliation among the peoples. The church is alive. I had a wonderful time in the churches and homes of friends in India. I pray that they may sit down together soon to work out solutions to their problems as they travel on their spiritual journey of hope.—LAURA SEWELL

Laura Sewell served as a Church of the Brethren missionary in India 1948-1984. She is a member of Peace Church of the Brethren in Portland, Ore.

Gospel-learning in El Salvador

by Worth Weller

Two New Mexico teens, 1,000 miles to El Salvador, carry letters to donate to Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel. This is what they learned about the works of Christ in a remote, war-torn, poverty-stricken country.

Carrying the gospel to the people of El Salvador is a uniquely Central American experience, understood best in the constant context of war and poverty. As Miguel Tomas Castro, pastor of *Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel*, a sister parish to Manchester Church of the Brethren, puts it, "We work with the gospel at the very personal level."

Pastor Castro, an animated yet gentle Salvadoran, who has seen his country plunged into poverty and despair through 12 years of war, says that the gospel is not merely a collection of writings, but rather the word of Christ as it is lived among his people.

"Sometimes people have read the gospel as if it were just a matter of information. This is not true. You must be *in* the gospel," he continues, with the word "in" emphasized by drawing it out into almost two syllables. "You must bring the gospel to yourself, as if it were your own skin."

To make the gospel so personal is a call to work, believes pastor Castro, a 1980 graduate of San Salvador's Theological Baptist Institute. "We cannot confess ourselves as Christians without doing something with our poor, with our sufferers."

El Salvador's poor and sufferers are many. The civil war, which ended four years ago, has left a legacy of unemolument throughout a mountainous country about the size of Massachusetts. *Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel*, which runs health, education, and agricultural assistance programs in 28 villages and neighborhoods around San Salvador, recently completed an orphan resettlement program after caring for children displaced during the violent and exhausting political struggle. With little pride and much sadness, pastor Castro displayed a bulletin board of pictures—the faces of children whose parents were killed or who "disappeared" during the fighting. "We were not able to find relatives for 11 of our children," he said, noting that in some cases, entire families were caught in the deadly crossfire between the FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) guerrillas and the US-sponsored Salvadoran army.

Pastor Castro and his congregation are no strangers to the death squads that epitomized the particularly nasty nature of political conflict in El Salvador. His own brother was brutally killed at the age of 17, for no more than being a student and church activist. And the following year, pastor



David Rogers (left) and Julio Cesar Vásquez (right) talk with Lorena Suyapa, a village girl who attended Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel's youth congress on the environment.

Castro himself was dragged from his home in the middle of the night by four gunmen and accused of aiding the FMLN. He was lucky to be a church leader in the capital city, where the US embassy staff was particularly sensitive to the brutal slayings that since have been acknowledged as government sponsored. His sentence was not death, but exile.

Returning from Canada three years later, pastor Castro found his country in shambles and his church reeling from the shock of the death squads, with several more members, male and female, having "disappeared" or having been savagely murdered and dumped in public places in the city. One congregation member, a teacher, was dragged from her school; two hours later, she was found dead. And Carlos



Left: Jaime Wilfreilo Pena, who works with the San Martin refugee community, shows off the craftwork of a women's cooperative.

Below: Pastor Miguel Tomás Castro blesses the bread during a communion service attended by the North American Brethren, including David Rogers (left).



Avalos Valencia, who later was sponsored by Manchester Church of the Brethren at the 1990 National Youth Conference, was arrested and interrogated by treasury police.

So how do you keep your faith in times like those, pastor Castro was asked by his visitors from North Manchester, Ind., who drove 5,400 miles to deliver a "Van for Peace" to *Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel*.

"We are not supposed to ask such difficult questions," he replied with a wistful smile. "Faith is not something that is static. It moves with experience."

"We already know about salvation. We are already preparing to enter the kingdom. Those are givens for a Christian. To live a Christian faith is more than that.

"Faith is to be truly with others, as Jesus was with the poor and infirm of his time," he explained, describing large circles in the air with his rapidly moving hands.

"If we want to be men and women of faith, we must be willing to face risk," he said. "We must be on the side of those who struggle for justice. Your faith calls you to serve a God of justice, of peace, and of life for everyone, equally. It is in the gospel."

But peace and justice are not coming quickly to El Salvador.

Pastor Castro reported that in just the past month the newly formed civil police had murdered a disabled army veteran who was participating in the leadership of a protest for veterans benefits. "Here the retired officers get huge pensions, while the peasants who served and were wounded in the war get absolutely nothing," he pointed out.

"Little has changed other than the level of violence. The economic policy is still one that benefits the wealthy at the expense of the poor. We must tell you that you must understand what our reality in Central America is, for without that

understanding we are doomed to repeat our history, to be stuck forever in this reality."

Despite the daunting task of changing that reality, *Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel* never flinches. A congregation of 200 families works tirelessly at coordinating and implementing programs that benefit the rural and urban poor. Some of their missions are half a day's drive from San Salvador, over incredibly difficult roads, to remote areas where ox carts with solid wooden wheels are the chief means of transporta-

From the General Secretary

Facing into change

The pre-audited financial report for the General Board for 1995 indicates the anticipated excess of expense over income has been reduced by some \$190,000. The actual excess of expenses was \$156,000, considerably less than was anticipated in October.

This good news was the result of the effort of people all across the church. We know that many congregations took up a special offering late in the year for the ministries of the General Board. Contributions from congregations came within \$15,000 of equaling contributions the previous year. Since earlier reports from congregational budgets projected a \$70,000 decline, we were pleased with this strengthened outcome. The letter that was sent to individual Brethren in December appealing for contributions to balance the budget received a remarkable \$140,000 response from nearly 2,000 individuals and families, a heartening vote of confidence in the work of the Board on behalf of the wider church. We also were able to reduce expenses significantly. All these efforts taken together dramatically reduced the anticipated over-expenditure.

Some will quickly ask why an over-expenditure was budgeted in the first place. Until two years ago, the Board had balanced budgets for seven years in succession. Cost-of-living increases each year, including health insurance, have meant constant reduction of programs, and in some instances, the elimination of positions. These costs were overcome by special contributions during 1991-1995 to the Goals for the '90s. When congregational giving declined for four years in succession, however, the underlying trend became evident.

This prompted the Board to begin a process of fundamental change, seeking to sharpen and refocus ministries within reduced resources. The Board has developed a new mission statement and appointed a Redesign Steering Committee. The committee has recommended that changes be done prayerfully, thoughtfully, and with opportunity for discussion throughout the church. Such changes, including downsizing, ought not be done arbitrarily or impulsively. Therefore, the Board decided to allow expenses to exceed income for the years 1995-1997, during the time the redesign is being planned and implemented. By 1998, the budget is to be balanced and the reserves re-established.

People often ask me whether the Board is really serious in its plan to redesign its ministries. Indeed, the Board is very serious. It is taking bold steps while prayerfully seeking the leading of the Holy Spirit and while listening to many voices across the church. The strong financial support at the close of 1995 strongly suggests that people are supportive of what the Board is doing. When people discover that the Board is really serious in facing into change, the usual response is deep affirmation.

The vision that guides the redesign focuses upon partnership with and support of congregations. One legitimate concern is whether we are turning into ourselves and losing the remarkable global concern that has characterized the Brethren in the 20th century. The neighbors we are to love in Christ's name are both near and far. The new vision must include both. —DONALD E. MILLER

Donald E. Miller is general secretary of the Church of the Brethren.

tion. In these hot, dry, dusty villages, the needs of the people are very basic. "We bring them the gospel, but in the context of working with their faith in a very personal way, in a way that sus-

tains life," reported pastor Castro.

Mission project coordinator Julio Cesar Vasquez puts it this way: "First we bring them God, then we look for bread."

Vasquez, who doubled during the war as a driver for the guerillas while preaching the gospel in the countryside, said that his job is "to teach the villagers to fish." In that, *Iglesia Bautista Inmanuel* is considerably different from the churches that proclaim the kingdom of heaven and the abundant life of the hereafter. "We proclaim heaven on earth, that in Christ this is the abundant life," he explained.

In addition to its health, education, and agricultural programs, the congregation recently sponsored a youth congress to study environmental issues. "El Salvador has long been destroying its environment," observed pastor Castro. "Our children know that there will be nothing left for *their* children if the country continues on this course."

The pastor believes that the young people are the future of the country, and that by sharing the gospel with them his congregation can break the cycle of greed and selfishness that dominates political thought in El Salvador. "Ours is a society that doesn't work according to the gospel. There is too much selfishness and egoistical values among our leaders."

But that is the same throughout much of the world, he noted. "In many churches, God is just another article you can buy for your personal comfort."

But for pastor Castro and *Iglesia Bautista Inmanuel*, faith is a walk in solidarity with the poor, a walk in which churches, such as Manchester Church of the Brethren and *Iglesia Bautista Inmanuel* work together to ease burdens and cure suffering.

"This truly is the gospel that Christ taught," murmured a gentle voice filled with the pain and anguish of love for a wounded people. M.

Worth Weller is a member of Manchester Church of the Brethren, North Manchester, Ind. and publisher of The News Journal, a North Manchester newspaper. The three other men on the journey were Bob Shepherd of First Brethren Church, David Rogers of Manchester Church of the Brethren, and Matt Givins, a 1995 Peace Studies graduate of Manchester College.

Can Christ be both **exclusive**

& INCLUSIVE?

by Dale W. Brown

Brethren are debating what we can say and believe about Jesus Christ. Much of the current unrest centers around relationships to other world religions and popular cultural fads such as the New Age movement. Many Christians fear that dialog with people of other faiths will compromise and even destroy the foundation of our faith in Jesus Christ. Others are turned off by proclamations that seem to quickly consign non-Christians to hell. Many want to hold to the exclusive claims of Christ. Others desire to be open to the revelation of God in other religions. Amazingly, our Brethren "creed," the New Testament, maintains both. In our present atmosphere, faithfulness to both exclusive and inclusive themes in our canon can foster greater unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

For me, such a possibility emerged in a June 1994 gathering titled "Peace Theology and Relating to People of Other Faiths" at Messiah College. In a paper delineating biblical perspectives on the theme, Professor John Toews from Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary verified that the exclusive texts were addressed to Christians while inclusive missionary passages were directed to people of other faiths.

The exclusive Christ

The exclusive texts about Jesus Christ were addressed to minority Christian communities that lived in a religiously pluralistic world. The masses were attentive to cults of many gods. There were more than 50,000 known gods

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and idols in ancient times. Cultic demands to worship Caesar as Lord led Christians to the early confession that "Jesus is Lord." Their exclusive allegiance to Jesus Christ empowered them to reject cultic support of temple prostitution, bloody gladiatorial combats, the gods and goddesses of war, and the abandonment of unwanted infants. The scandal of declaring Jesus as the only Lord incited others to call

Christians atheists, for they refused to worship the gods of the families, cities, nations, and empire.

Their espousal of no other name (Acts 4:12), no other foundation (1 Cor. 3:11), and no other way to salvation (Acts 4:12; John 14:6) related Christ (Messiah) to God in such a way that all who were attracted to monotheism could maintain or adopt the Jewish affirmation of one God. This intimate relationship between God and Christ is stated positively in Paul's discussion of the eating of food to idols (1 Cor. 8:1-15). After declaring the knowledge that "no idol in the world really exists" and that "there is no God but one" (verse 4), Paul adds, "Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist" (verses 5-6).

These interpretations of the exclusive texts may offer the basis for an uncommon definition of "high Christology" from a Mennonite brother. The way he interpreted Christology surprised me. "You Brethren," he said "have a higher Christology than we Mennonites." I protested, "Not true. There are more Brethren than Mennonites who raise questions about the divinity of Christ." He replied, "But you Brethren allow Christ to be Lord over more areas of your lives." I felt he was unfair to many Mennonites I know and too complimentary to us. But he was speaking out of his experience of being with some who so stress Christ as Lord of the

church traditions teachings are not applied to all areas of life.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer posed a similar analysis in his call for a Christianity without religion. In saying this, he offered negative definitions of the "religion" of religion. In his view, the "religious" person divides life into compartments. In one compartment of time, the person may sincerely worship in many outward marks of religion: attending public worship, prayer, reading the Scriptures. Yet in other times they have little relationship with the rest of life. For Bonhoeffer, religionless Christianity is where Christ meets us "not on the outer edges of life but at its center."

This sentiment led the old Brethren to insist that what we say in Christ must be reflected in all of life. As Seneca wrote the Mount people, "I am quoted, I say, 'Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.'" (Matt. 7:21)

This inclusive message that Jesus Christ's love for all is basic to biblical faith. Brethren often bear Alexander Mack's words: "Look alone to Jesus Christ, Redeemer and Savior." Christ's love for all has been integral to our faith.

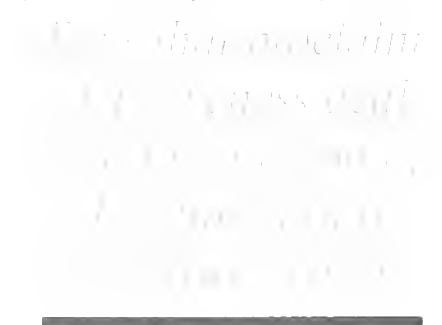
The inclusive Christ

The message of the inclusive Christ is an essential biblical faith. Texts that recognize inclusiveness are relevant to contemporary issues, for they deal with the mission of the church in a pluralistic world. "Platzer's Jews" paper continues to describe the missionary strategy of the old Brethren, assumed both the "general revelation of God in Christ and God's special revelation to others."

In Roman 1:19-20, Paul affirms a universal revelation of God in holding people responsible for their sins: "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world, his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have

been understood and seen through the things he has made."

John 1:9 refers to Jesus as the "true light, which enlightens everyone..."



This has been a favorite text of Quakers because it teaches that everyone has received something of the light of Christ or that of God within. Some missionaries have testified to discovering in the lives of other people something of the spirit of Jesus that preceded them.

In Acts, mission texts relate stories of the extension of the gospel beyond Judaism to the world. The visions of Cornelius, a Gentile worshiper of God, and the apostle Peter in Acts 10, offer a model for evangelism and missions. The story reveals that God speaks to both Christians and non-Christians; that what we may regard as profane, God has made clean (Acts 10:15, 11:9); and that openness to others through mutual sharing of visions is important. Peter begins telling the good news of Jesus Christ to Cornelius with an affirmation of acceptance: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34-35).

Paul's speech on Areopagus, a hill in Athens where politicians gathered, is regarded as a masterpiece of cross-cultural communication. Perceiving Paul to be making trouble by preaching Christ's resurrection on the streets, philosophers invited him to explain his strange teaching. His speech is a model of how to communicate the gospel to people for whom it is for-

eign. He begins with God's general revelation. Before referring to scriptures, he concludes his introduction by quoting a pagan poet: "From one ancestor, God made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God, and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring'" (Acts 17:26-28).

First Timothy 2:4 claims that God's universal intention "desires everyone to be saved and come to the knowledge of truth." John 5:17, seldom quoted with John 5:16, adds that through Jesus, God wants to save the *cosmos*, the whole world.

There are texts suggesting that what God wants, God will eventually bring about. Universalists believe that God will save all people. Texts often cited include Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:22-28; and Colossians 1:15-20. Romans 5 describes sin as a force that brings all people and creation into its orbit and states that Christ is the cosmic force to reconcile all the world to God.

The early Brethren took literally the message that "as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ" (1 Cor. 15:22) while adhering to passages about God's judgment and hell. Their peculiar synthesis, which affirms God's eventual restoration of creation, has been named universal restoration. The larger consensus of Christians has rejected both versions of universalism, maintaining that God's intention to save all depends on whether believers respond. Brethren Annual Meetings refused to affirm or reject universalist doctrines. Instead they forbade public debates in an 1878 minute, the last dealing with this issue. In obedience to this decision, I will not testify in favor or against this doctrine. I report it here to demonstrate how universalist themes have been found in the Bible.

A Native American Christian from Oklahoma spoke at the Messiah College conference. He told how Mennonite missionaries were open to his people keeping some native customs and rituals. To those who looked puzzled, he elided: "What about some of the practices you have embraced in celebrating Christmas and Easter?" He contrasted the way his tribe had been treated with the way that Hopi Indians had been treated by other missionaries. The Hopis were a peaceful people, who refused to go to war. Instead of appropriating Hopi peacefulness for common dialog or as the schoolmaster which could lead them to Christ and his Way, the missionaries rejected their pacifism because it was not founded on Christ.

Exclusive and inclusive Christ

As New Testament Christians, we need messages of both the exclusive and inclusive Christ. Living in a society which, like the early centuries, is fraught with a pluralist plethora of gods, idols of materialism, violence, war, licentiousness, and depraved celebrities, we need to declare Jesus as Lord and Savior. At the same time, we live in a world afflicted with ethnic hatreds and bitter conflicts between peoples. It becomes imperative for Christians to have dialog with others. If we fail to be open to God's revelation through others, we box the presence of the Holy Spirit into our categories. And if we fail to tell the good news we have received, we rob others from knowing what and who are precious for us.

In studying the exclusive texts, which are directed primarily to Christians, it becomes clearer that their purpose is to call us to wholehearted and life-changing acceptance of Jesus and his saving message and ways. Likewise, it becomes apparent that the inclusive texts are meant to tell others that they need not accept all of our interpretations, customs, and rules in order to accept Christ. They already may embody his truth in ways that help us be more faithful Christians.

In the biblical story, the particular is for the sake of the universal. In Genesis 12, the particular election of one, Abraham, was for the purpose of

In studying the exclusive texts, it becomes clearer that their purpose is to call us to wholehearted and life-changing acceptance of Jesus and his saving message and ways.

blessing all peoples of the world. Jesus completely redefined his lordship by contrasting it with the way the kings of the Gentiles lord it over others. It is not to be like that with us, he said to his disciples. The meaning of Lordship and greatness for us is that the greatest must be the servant of all (Luke 22:26). Although the concept of lordship has been used to support hierarchical structures, we call the person Lord who radically redefined the word to mean serving others.

For Brethren, the stronger our allegiance to Jesus and his way, the more we will obey his command to love and understand all people, even our enemies. Our unique faithfulness to one spouse should enhance rather than diminish our ability to lovingly serve others. Our rootedness in our special tradition should energize our mutual seeking of truth with others. I often have observed that rather than compromising our faith, students in interfaith dialog become more committed and clear about their own faith stance.

In his *Ethics*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer referred to secular humanists who lived out their Christian roots with

courage and faithfulness in struggles for justice, humanity, and freedom against Nazism. In order to define his relationship with them, he borrowed a phrase from Jesus, "Whoever is not against us is for us" (Mark 9:40). But in the midst of large numbers of professed Christians who remained neutral or supported Hitler's regime, the need for a clear confession caused Bonhoeffer, a confessing Christian, to say with Jesus: "Whoever is not with me is against me" (Matt. 12:50). Here he felt it appropriate to refer to the exclusive and inclusive nature of Christ. In the same section of the book, "The Total and Exclusive Claim of Christ," Bonhoeffer wrote, "The more exclusively we acknowledge and confess Christ as our Lord, the more fully the wide range of his dominion will be disclosed to us."

Annual Conferences

At the recent Portland and Charlotte Annual Conferences, queries requested the church to work at some clarification about what we believe as Brethren. Although it is against our long heritage to formulate creeds that are required of all, Conference often has adopted faith statements on a variety of practices and beliefs for the purpose of helping Brethren seek guidance as to what we believe. Personally, I favor honoring these requests. Conference study committees constitute one way a church with "no creed but the New Testament" endeavors to clarify its faith.

Contrary to my desire, the delegates at Portland *returned* the query that requested a general statement about what we believe. Perhaps this prompted the church to pay a sizable amount of money to outsiders to formulate mini-confessional statements for us. The Portland Conference did deal with a more specific query asking Conference to affirm Christ as head of the church. In discussing this, a sister offered an amendment to declare Christ as the Son of God. The delegates passed both. After the discussion, I met a group that was debriefing

in typical Brethren style. One person asked, "Why didn't someone rise and move to declare Christ as the Prince of Peace?" Another asked, "Why didn't someone move to adopt the title that is used by Jesus more than any other, namely, 'Jesus is the Son of Man?'" In listening, I felt that our noncreedal stance may be better than I sometimes have judged. If the New Testament is

our creed, we can have all of the Christological titles. There will be those who will focus more on some names and those who will give greater emphasis to other New Testament convictions about Jesus.

Professor Joews prefers "the Lordship of Christ" over phrases such as "the finality of Christ," "the supremacy of Christ," or "the absolute

ness of Christ." He believes that these non-biblical phrases carry baggage that then needs to be unpacked in interfaith dialog and mission.

Ideally, we should have a balanced Christology. As we proclaim both the exclusive and inclusive Christ, so we proclaim both his divinity and humanity. In the Christian tradition, it is just as heretical to deny or ignore one as the other. Brethren often have been regarded as a people who offer a corrective to a docetic or gnostic Christology that minimizes or rejects the humanity of our Lord. Recently, a brother told me of an insight about the Apostles Creed that is present yet not identified in our new hymnal (number 712). In this creed, confessions of Christ skip from affirmations of his birth to his death and resurrection. The creed completely neglects what is very important in our tradition, namely, the life and teachings of Jesus.

There are two things I question about the one-sentence answer to the queries at the Charlotte conference (1995), which stated: "It is our understanding that not only members of the church, but especially all those called to set-apart ministry, should clearly affirm the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the only divine Lord and Savior." My first concern is to seek clarification whether this will be used in a way that led the early Pietists to reject creeds, namely to polemically reject members for not agreeing with the wording instead of dealing with one another with loving persuasion. If so, it would go against Brethren tradition throughout our history. For generations, Brethren have been satisfied with affirmations about Jesus Christ in our baptismal vows.

Although I can affirm the one-sentence answer, I believe the statement represents at best a half-Christology, which could be misused and lead to an inadequate mission strategy. As a people who claim the entire New Testament as our creed, we long for a *full*, not a *half*, Christology. *M.*

Dale W. Brown of Elizabethtown, Pa., is Professor Emeritus, Bethany Theological Seminary.

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Use Board money elsewhere

I'm troubled by studies continually being made by the General Board, the latest being "End of Life Decision-making" (February, page 6).

Alexander Mack and his followers based their beliefs on the New Testament teachings of Jesus. The Bible does not change. The Holy Spirit teaches the truth. And every Bible-reading member knows what is moral and what is not.

So why do we need studies on subjects such as homosexuality, abortion, and common-law marriages, when the Bible clearly states that each of these is an abomination?

The General Board should put its money to better use than to printing papers on such subjects.

*Fern Yarrick
Johnstown, Pa.*

(Note that when Annual Conference assigns a study to the General Board, that study must be made. The "End of Life Decision-making" study is an example. And such assignments from Conference are voted on by delegates from the congregations and districts. So when the General Board is assigned a study by Conference, it's the folks back home calling the shots, not the Board.—1 d)

Evangelistic zeal waning?

The January cover article ("No Other Gospel") is well done and speaks for many Brethren at the grass roots.

I have a growing concern over our waning evangelistic zeal. So I particularly appreciated Carl Braaten's comment "Why evangelize if all peoples are

The opinions expressed in Letters are not necessarily those of the magazine. Readers should receive them in the same spirit with which differing opinions are expressed in face-to-face conversations.

Letters should be brief, concise, and respectful of the opinions of others. Preference is given to letters that respond directly to items read in the magazine.

We are willing to withhold the name of a writer only when, in our editorial judgment, it is warranted. We will not consider any letter that comes to us unsigned. Whether or not we print the letter, the writer's name is kept in strictest confidence.

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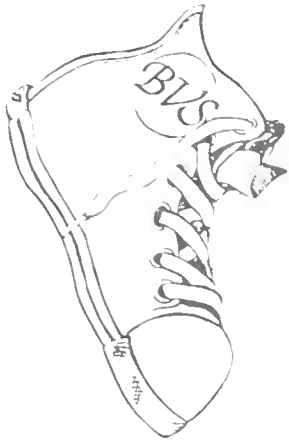


equally blessed by the same God who is working to save them through the great variety of religious rituals and experiences? The best we can expect of a church acting on pluralist vision is a mission of dialog to discuss ideas."

As an evangelical in the Church of the Brethren, I affirm this type of article. Keep them rolling.

*Paul W. Brubaker
Ephrata, Pa*

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Braaten says it for me.

Carl Braaten's "No Other Gospel" (January, page 18) expresses the personal experience of my husband and me. Jesus Christ is not only our Savior and Lord; he is the Savior of the world. According to Acts 4:12, "there is salvation in no one else (but Jesus), for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved."

*Mrs. Luke Bucher
Myerstown, Pa*

A clarifying article

The article "No Other Gospel" (January, page 18) did justice to the Brethren stance of the New Testament being our only creed. It presented Jesus as the only Son of God and as the Lord and Savior of the world, even as the New Testament also so clearly does.

*Marion ("Bud") Sechler
Cando, ND*

Making Jesus out a liar?

I liked "No Other Gospel" (January, page 18) and also found the article on Christian unity (January, page 24) interesting.

I don't judge people by labels. Some of my Catholic friends have a better comprehension and acceptance of evangelical faith than do many Brethren.

My understanding of one's relationship to God centers on the place one gives to Jesus Christ and his word of

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Daily prayer guide:

- Sunday:** Your congregation's ministries
- Monday:** Annual Conference officers
- Tuesday:** General Board and staff
- Wednesday:** District executives, Bethany Seminary, colleges and university
- Thursday:** General Services
- Friday:** Parish Ministries
- Saturday:** World Ministries

March prayer concerns:

- Congregation:** World Day of Prayer, March 1. Love feast and communion.
- Conference:** Study committees that will be reporting at Annual Conference on Ministerial Leadership, Simple Life, and Congregational Futures.
- General Board:** Executive Committee and Goals and Budget Committee, meeting March 7-8 in Elgin, Ill. The General Board, meeting March 9-12 and working with the Redesign Steering Committee.

Districts and schools: District executives participating in the General Board meeting, Bethany Seminary's president, Gene Roop, and dean, Rick Gardner, participating in the General Board meeting.

General Services: Commission meeting March 9-10. Don Fitzkee, chairman; Dale Minnich, executive.

Parish Ministries: Commission meeting March 9-10. Phyllis Crain, chairwoman; Glenn Timmons, executive.

World Ministries: Commission meeting March 9-10. Bonnie Kline Smeltzer, chairwoman; Joan Deeter, executive.

Letters

truth as he taught it in the New Testament. If we try to explain away John 14:6 ("I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"), we make Jesus to speak that which is not truth.

We need to strive for unity, but it does not mean accepting that which is contrary to God's Word.

*Paul F. Neff
Lancaster, Pa.*

*Jerry C. Stanaway
Lombard, Ill.*

page 24). Members of Pax Christi, the Catholic Peace Fellowship, and the Catholic Worker movement would disagree.

Since these Catholic peace groups take a much stronger stand against abortion than does the Church of the Brethren, one could argue that they are more consistently nonviolent.

Who's more pacifist?

Gregg Wilhelm says, "Catholics will never embrace pacifism" (January,

What kind of God would . . . ?

I appreciated the January editorial on universal salvation.

Zillions? That's a good number for the people lost if we hold a narrow position on who knows God.

Jesus said to forgive 70 times 7, and he wouldn't stop at 490.

Can a loving, compassionate God consign to eternal punishment a poor human being who has lived a miserable, trapped life here on earth, or a smart aleck amassing heaps of possessions, without even a chance in purgatory?

It is liberating to believe that God welcomes all. I do believe in hell, but it's here on earth — in child abuse, grinding poverty, mental illness, and so on and so on, ad infinitum.

*Don Snider
North Manchester, Ind.*

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CLASSIFIED ADS

ANNUAL CONFERENCE— Ride the bus with us to Annual Conference in Cincinnati. Leave Elizabethtown (Pa.), July 1, return July 8. For information write to J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022.

INVITATION— Considering a move? Continue your journey of faith on a new frontier, come to Carroll County, Ill. Become part of gathering of caring people of faith with strong sense of community. Three long-established Church of the Brethren congregations, each invested in work of Christ locally & in wider church. Anabaptist community, agriculturally based, multiple manufacturing/production facilities. Fertile rolling landscape overlooking Mississippi River in N.W. Ill. Diligent supportive people give high priority to education, moral development. Considering a move? Make it a journey of faith. Contact: Carroll County Brethren, 326 S. High St., Lanark, IL 61046. Tel: (815) 225-7812.

INVITATION— Shalom Church of the Brethren, new & growing fellowship in Durham, N.C., invites Brethren moving to Research Triangle area (Raleigh, Durham,

Chapel Hill) to worship with us. Eager to provide moving assistance (unloading, childcare, area info.) for those relocating to area. For info., contact Fellowship, PO Box 15607, Durham, NC 27704. Tel: (919) 490-6422. E-mail: ShalomCOB@aol.com.

TRAVEL— Pilgrimage to Israel, Jordan, & Greece, Oct. 20–Nov. 2, 1996 (14 days). You are invited to join Wendell & Joan Bohrer on their 10th pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Visit Jericho, Capernaum, Jerusalem, Hebron, the Dead Sea, Oumran, Petra, Athens, Delphi, and much more. Cost: \$2,489 from New York. For info, write or call: 8520 Royal Meadow Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46217. Tel./Fax: (317) 882-5067.

TRAVEL— "Alaskan Adventure Tour" leaves Seattle July 28, 1996. Travel by plane, bus, train, and Sun Princess tour ship (Glacier Bay & Inside Passage Cruise) 14 days, July 28–Aug. 10, 1996. Special price available until Feb. 14, 1996. For details, contact tour host, Dr. Wayne F. Geisert, Box 40, Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, VA 22812. Tel: (540) 828-5494, or (540) 433-1433.

Turning Points

New Members

Note: Congregations are asked to submit only the names of actual new members of the denomination. Do not include names of people who have merely transferred their membership from another Church of the Brethren congregation.

Antioch, Virginia: Mark Sloan

Bachelor Run, S. C. Ind.: Cassandra Allbaugh

Bear Creek, S. Ohio: Michelle Williams

Beaver Dam, Mid-Atl.: Donnie Moorfield

Black Valley, M. Pa.: Timothy James, Angela Miller, James Price, Barbara Seville

Bridgewater, Virginia: Marjorie Dearhart: Catherine, Philip & Ralph Shively

Bush Creek, Mid-Atl.: Robert Brunner, William Ernest, Elizabeth & Jack Green, John & Mary Hargett, Martha Kehne, Betty Lee, Lee Mann, Elissa & James Ohlweir, Richard Regnier, Willfred Rice, Dawn Weister, Cathy Wolfe

Chambersburg, S. Pa.: Leon Bierbower; Janora Ebersole. Terry & Tangela Gibbons; Susina Helm; Kelly Horst; David Krieger; David Pittman; Andrew, Dione, Linda, Margaret, Ordo & Reid Pletcher; Becky & Jonathan Rotz; Lisa Wenger; Tim Yost

Christ the Servant, Atl. S.E.: Vickie Adams, Karen Bedalov, Karen Bogan, Scott Colhia, Melissa & Stefanie Hendrix, Bob & Wayneth Jackson, Jim Naclitz, April & Bill Rees, Augusta & Robert Skaggs, Begib & Mimi Yousis

Cocalico, Atl. N.E.: Christina Hecker, Laina Martin, Brenda & Neil Wagner, Kathy Zimmerman

Dayton, Shen.: Elizabeth Adjei; Amanda, Angela & Arnold Adjete; Micah Bowman; Joel Brunk; Andrew, Lee & Lee Ann Jackson; Cindy May; Marilyn Reish

Detroit First, Mich.: Martin & Thelma Campbell, Jason Flint, Judy Weaver, Christen Williams

Eastwood, N. Ohio: Michelle Bridgewater, Charlotte Gilbert, David & Leone Gindlesperger, Natalie Krause, Joe & Shelly Lahtonen, Cathy Richards, Wilma & Woody Troxell

Elizabethtown, Atl. N.E.: Elaine Burns; Lori Freedman; Lori Funck; Donald & Lori Henriques; Cindy Markham; Anthony & Debbie Musser; Doreen & Todd Wallen; Todd Wisotzky; Rachel Yohn;

Johnny, Linda & Wayne Zunkel

Emmanuel, Virginia: Margaret Lawson; Leonard & Patsey Martin; David & Eunice Murphy; Dan, Sam, Stan & Sue Myers

Ephrata, Atl. N.E.: Michael & Theresa DeAcosta, Karen & Manfred Eller, Mona Lisa & Randy Hechman, Karen & Steve Wiker

Everett, M. Pa.: Ruth Beck, Mike & Rosa Leidy, Chuck Reuter

Fellowship, Mid-Atl.: Nicole Honsaker, Nicholas Smith

Florin, Atl. N.E.: Connie Miller; Bob, Barb & Rob Strickler

Harrisburg First, Atl. N.E.: Susy Atkins, Tom Beene, Darlene & Farrell Black, M.E. Harris, Lisa McGill, Bob Snyder

Hartsville, N. Ohio: Austin Clay, Theresa Keaton, Melinda Klundt, Jeffrey Lineweaver, Jeffrey & Mary Morgan, Michael & Tracey Parker, Emily Pettigrew, Sarah Wahlert

Kokomo, S. C. Ind.: Terri Gingerich, Brenda Holloway, Holly Kirkpatrick, Dennis & Betty Mitchell, Doug Soblonie

La Verne, Pac. S.W.: Richard Coles; Kay Lynne Cox; Dorothy & Robert Deal; Karin Heckman; Patty McGrady; Joe Martinez; Carol Moore; Annette, Jan & Jonathan Reed; Frances Welch

Lafayette, S. C. Ind.: Rory Greene, Donna Keener

Litzitz, Atl. N.E.: Jess Schلود

Lone Star, W. Plains: Andrew & Matthew Fishburn; Clint & J.D. Flory; Jeff & Kathy Heeb; Fran Johnson; Dean, Martha & Sarah Nieder; Justin & Kellie Stebbins; Jeanne Waisner

Long Green Valley, Mid-Atl.: Mickey Marsh, Paula Sagandoy

Maple Grove, N. Ohio: David, John, Kathy & Mark Ballinger; Courtland & Eileen Dessenberg; Audrey, David & Matthew Horn

Morgantown, W. Marva: Joshua Cottrill, Lois Harder, Richard & Joy Hostetter, David & Cindy Wellen, Steve Rinehart

Mount Pleasant, N. Ohio: Don, Pat & Tim Johnson

Nampa, Idaho: Ivan & Lorraine Dunbar, Vern Elliott, Gordon & Lilah Hansen, Mable Quarnberg

Nappanee, N. Ind.: James Dunn; Mark, George Malcolm; Deena & Londa Newcomer

Northern Colorado, W. Plains: Jan Elliot, Shane Knutson

Oak Park, W. Marva: David & Melissa Deem, Todd Hetrick, Karen & Wayne Ray, John &

Joyce Williams

Phoenix, Pac. S.W.: Melville & Olive Carraro, Renee Downhour, Albert Goletz, Annette Martin, Esther McMane, Leo & Juanita Sartan, Connie Smalley, John Wolf

Pine Creek, N. Ind.: Al Crutchfield, Don & Mary Ecker, Sandy Norris

Pleasant View, Mid-Atl.: Chad Sowers, Josh Strite, Terry Thrasher

Prices Creek, S. Ohio: Brad & Leslie Bowers, Brent Dane, David Huhn, Abby Miller

Reading, Atl. N.E.: Dennis and Vicki Clements, Jennifer Ravel, Dennis Werner

Roanoke, S. Plains: Joyce & Kelly Derouen, Nick Prejean, Jason Wenzel, Bruce Woodard

Rummel, W. Pa.: Kristi & Michael Cordetsky, Kerry Dullak

Springfield, Atl. N.E.: Daniel Burnsides, Robert & Corrine Walters

Staunton, Shen.: Christina & Shirley Fultz, Crystal Hudlow, Gary Johnson, Christie Lunsford, Stephanie Massie, Laurie Nolley, Vina Rankin, June Sellers, Roy Sprouse, Gary Traxler

Syracuse, N. Ind.: Mark & Patty Neibert, Al Patrick

Tucson, Pac. S.W.: Marie Bowman, Bob & Sybil Keim, Merna Swihart

Woodgrove, Mich.: Ann Sandusky

Deaths

Abbot, Alice, 89, La Verne, Calif., Dec. 18, 1995

Anderson, Roy Michael, 46, Bassett, Va., Jan. 29, 1996

Austin, Vincent, 78, Philippi, W.Va., Oct. 22, 1995

Baile, Mary, 82, Hanover, Pa., Oct. 25, 1995

Bailey, Lil, 85, Quinter, Kan., July 1, 1995

Ball, Ted, 82, Moatsville, W.Va., Sept. 11, 1995

Becker, Marlene, 55, Gordonville, Pa., Oct. 3, 1995

Bentzel, Roy, 78, Manheim, Pa., May 7, 1995

Betts, Bert, 92, La Verne, Calif., Sept. 12, 1995

Bollinger, Mary, 85, Manheim, Pa., Nov. 1, 1995

Bowman, Ezra S., 94, Callaway, Va., June 19, 1995

Boyd, Ellen, 77, Cambridge City, Ind., Aug. 18, 1995

Bridenbaugh, Gertrude, 94, Martinsburg, Pa., Nov. 20, 1995

Brightbill, Beulah M., 85, Lebanon, Pa., Dec. 16, 1995

Bryant, Violet, 75, Quinter, Kan., Oct. 8, 1994

Button, Cecile, 79, Claremont, Calif., Dec. 13, 1995

Carey, Stanley R., 85, Uniontown, Pa., Nov. 10, 1995

Carpenter, Jean, 68, Lebanon, Pa., Dec. 11, 1995

Crill, Beulah, 94, Wenatchee, Wash., Feb. 24, 1995

Crist, Roy, 105, Quinter, Kan., May 6, 1995

Diffenbach, Anna, 75, Litzitz, Pa., June 16, 1995

Erickson, Velma, 87, Wenatchee, Wash., Feb. 16, 1995

Eshelman, Mark, 65, Manheim, Pa., Aug. 31, 1995

Fletcher, Muriel, 95, Quinter, Kan., Nov. 26, 1994

Flora, Howard, 76, Boonesville, Va., Dec. 10, 1995

Flory, Emmert, 71, Troy, Ohio, March 16, 1995

Foster, Esta, 88, Bridgewater, Va., Oct. 22, 1995

Fulk, Roy W., 80, Giral, Ill., Aug. 25, 1995

Funderburg, Glen, 89, New Carlisle, Ohio, Dec. 7, 1995

Gibble, Rufus, 87, Manheim, Pa., Sept. 28, 1995

Griffin, Wovetta, 76, Quinter, Kan., Dec. 20, 1994

Hageman, Pauline, 80, Troy, Ohio, Jan. 15, 1995

Harnish, Richard, 87, Defiance, Ohio, Nov. 10, 1995

Harper, John L., 88, Moyers, W.Va., Aug. 9, 1995

Hartman, W.A., 82, Harrisonburg, Va., Oct. 25, 1995

Hilton, Janet, 50, Hanover, Pa., Oct. 30, 1995

Hodges, Evelyn W., 81, Boones Mill, Va., July 29, 1995

Hoover, Rosemary, 77, Kokomo, Ind., Oct. 3, 1995

Horst, Daniel, 84, West Salem, Ohio, Nov. 30, 1995

Huxman, I. Allene, 87, Quinter, Kan., Nov. 22, 1994

Jamison, Kenneth, 90, Quinter, Kan., July 9, 1995

Kindy, Elma, 99, North Manchester, Ind., May 5, 1995

Kintner, Ethel, 84, Fort Wayne, Ind., Sept. 7, 1995

Kissinger, Stuart, 89, Waynesboro, Pa., Nov. 25, 1995

Lahman, Ralph, 88, Quinter, Kan., Jan. 19, 1995

Lehman, Mary E., 75, Campbelltown, Pa., Aug. 20, 1995

Leonard, Willard B., 69, Cambridge City, Ind., Dec. 14, 1995

Lowc, Maurice, 85, Manheim, Pa., May 19, 1995

Lowell, Sperline, 75, East Wenatchee, Wash., May 1, 1995

Lucabaugh, Alverta, 92, Hanover, Pa., Nov. 11, 1995

Magec, Nicole L., Kansas City, Kan., Aug. 16, 1995

Marinello, Esther, 78, Troy, Ohio, March 17, 1995

Matile, Ulysses, 81, Alpe, Kan., July 4, 1995

Messersmith, Minerva F., 89, Glen Rock, Pa., Nov. 30, 1995

Miles, Charles, 86, Queen City, Mo., Sept. 21, 1995

Miller, George W., 95, Bridge-

water, Va., Sept. 5, 1995

Miller, John A., 89, Lebanon, Pa., Nov. 20, 1995

Miller, W. Eldo., 80, Fort Wayne, Ind., July 17, 1995

Mohler, Fern, 88, McPherson, Kan., Nov. 27, 1995

Moore, Ethridge, 74, Galveston, Ind., Sept. 17, 1995

Moore, Nellie, 80, Wenatchee, Wash., Aug. 9, 1995

Moorehouse, Vivian, 81, Warsaw, Ind., Oct. 5, 1995

Neidermyer, David, 18, Litzitz, Pa., Sept. 25, 1995

Ness, Charles E., 84, York, Pa., Dec. 10, 1995

O'Claar, Laura, 74, Clayburg, Pa., March 8, 1995

Ogden, Dwight, 85, Moulton, Iowa, June 31, 1995

Pearson, Art, 81, Wenatchee, Wash., June 1, 1995

Pippenger, Irene, 77, Nappanee, Ind., May 5, 1995

Price, Mildred, 95, La Verne, Calif., Aug. 27, 1995

Reazin, Melvin, 76, McPherson, Kan., Nov. 19, 1995

Reinecker, Lila, 81, Quinter, Kan., June 9, 1995

Reynolds, Etha, 91, Ankeny, Iowa, June 27, 1995

Rudisill, Ellen, 85, Sebastian, Fla., Nov. 7, 1995

Shafer, Allen, 81, Nappanee, Ind., Dec. 15, 1995

Shaffer, Ruth D., 79, New Oxford, Pa., Nov. 30, 1995

Shelly, Clyde, 85, Manheim, Pa., Nov. 4, 1995

Shenk, Mary Elizabeth, 86, Lancaster, Pa., March 20, 1994

Shonk, Clyde, 61, Ephrata, Pa., Sept. 5, 1995

Shonk, Steve, 26, Stevens, Pa., Sept. 1, 1995

Simmons, Virginia, 90, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 2, 1995

Smith, Anna S., 82, Ankeny, Iowa, March 6, 1995

Sooby, Robert, 65, Kansas City, Kan., Oct. 28, 1995

Stoner, Hilda, 90, Westminster, Md., Dec. 6, 1995

Tecter, Frederick K., 65, Westminster, Md., Dec. 11, 1995

Tilton, Michael, 15, Quinter, Kan., March 15, 1995

Tuttle, Ada, 97, Quinter, Kan., March 7, 1995

Waggoner, Eva, 86, Warsaw, Ind., Nov. 4, 1995

Waggy, Leslie "Joe", 40, Franklin, W.Va., Aug. 24, 1995

Wells, Cameron, 89, Lancaster, Pa., May 25, 1995

Wertz, Howard, 87, Quinter, Kan., June 7, 1995

Williams, Vernon, 72, Sharpsville, Ind., Sept. 18, 1995

Winchester, Jesse E., 70, New Castle, Ind., Aug. 24, 1995

Woods, Louise F., 85, Ankeny, Iowa, Feb. 15, 1995

Zigler, Rachel Myers, 90, Bridgewater, Va., Jan. 17, 1996

Clueless on how the denomination works?

I long have been intrigued by the apparent similarity between Americans' perception of "Washington" and Brethren's perception of "Elgin."

For many Americans, "Washington" is just a bunch of scoundrels interested in nothing but lining their pockets with money gained through political connections, bent on making the system work for themselves and their cronies, forever favoring the rich over the poor. These Americans can't imagine any elected federal official or federal government employee being just an ordinary joe like themselves. Let me hasten to admit that I teeter dangerously on the edge of subscribing to this view myself.

And, for many Brethren, "Elgin" *apparently* is just a bunch of people who, if they haven't actually made a pact with the devil, at least have rudely elbowed their way up the leadership ladder, ensconced themselves in seats of power, and enjoy nothing more than flaunting themselves before the folks in the pews, flying off overseas or to conferences in southern Florida, and busying themselves with piddly little programs irrelevant to the life of the denomination. For such Brethren, it likely is hard to keep in mind that "Elgin" staff members, before they traded their souls for a mess of pottage, were ordinary joes like themselves. It pains me, as one of those "Elgin" people, and as a self-perceived ordinary joe, to feel that anyone would look at me as one who schemed, worked, wangled, and maneuvered to get a General Board staff job.

The February 5-11 *Washington Post* weekly edition's cover story is titled "Clueless: Americans Who Don't Know how Their Country Works." It commented at length on a scientific survey of 1,514 randomly selected American adults—general knowledge questions about how their government works and who their leaders are. The results revealed a knowledge gap that is, well, abysmal.

Like the parallel images I described above, there seems to me to be something of a parallel between that survey's findings and what I would wager might be the findings of a survey of 1,514 Brethren on how their denomination works and who their leaders are.

Let me first cite some of the conclusions drawn from the *Washington Post* survey. As you read them, hear the familiar ring:

- Knowing basic facts does matter. Without basic facts about the players and the game, Americans tune out politics and turn off to voting.
- Less informed Americans are far more likely to believe their country is in decline.

- Less knowledgeable Americans are much more likely to believe that actions by the federal government invariably make every problem worse.

- Lack of knowledge makes it more difficult for the President or Congress to get credit for efforts they have made; thus it supports the sense that neither ever gets anything done.

The report went on to cite such things as:

- Four in 10 couldn't name the Vice President. Nearly half couldn't name the Speaker of the House.

- Nearly half of those surveyed did not know that the Supreme Court has the final responsibility for deciding whether a law is constitutional.

- Nearly six in 10 incorrectly believed that the government spends more on foreign aid than on Medicare. Ironically, when asked how much of the budget *should* be allocated to foreign aid, the average response was 15 percent, or fully six times more than what the government actually spends!

The *Post* drew the conclusion that "many people only know or care about those issues that directly affect their lives and not those that are of broader importance."

With knowledge comes the power to influence what government does and does not do: "The better informed are more likely to participate in politics, more likely to vote, and more likely to contribute money and the like."

Enough. You're catching my drift. If you haven't yet, then read the news item at the top of page 7—findings of an informal survey done by the committee designing the restructure of the General Board.

Many "Elgin" staff members were pained by the committee's report. They inferred that those Brethren who were surveyed have the perception that the present General Board program doesn't amount to much and that staff efforts largely are ineffectual. Staff winced at being asked how to *restore* momentum, rather than how to *increase* momentum.

So, whose perception, if either's, is correct? Does "Elgin" know the folks in the pews any better than the folks in the pews know "Elgin"? Or vice versa? One learning that certainly is on target from all this studying done by the Redesign Steering Committee is that there is work aplenty to do as both the Brethren in the congregations and the General Board—the served and the servers—get better acquainted.—K.T.



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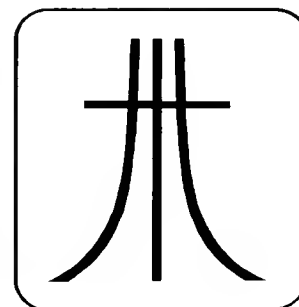
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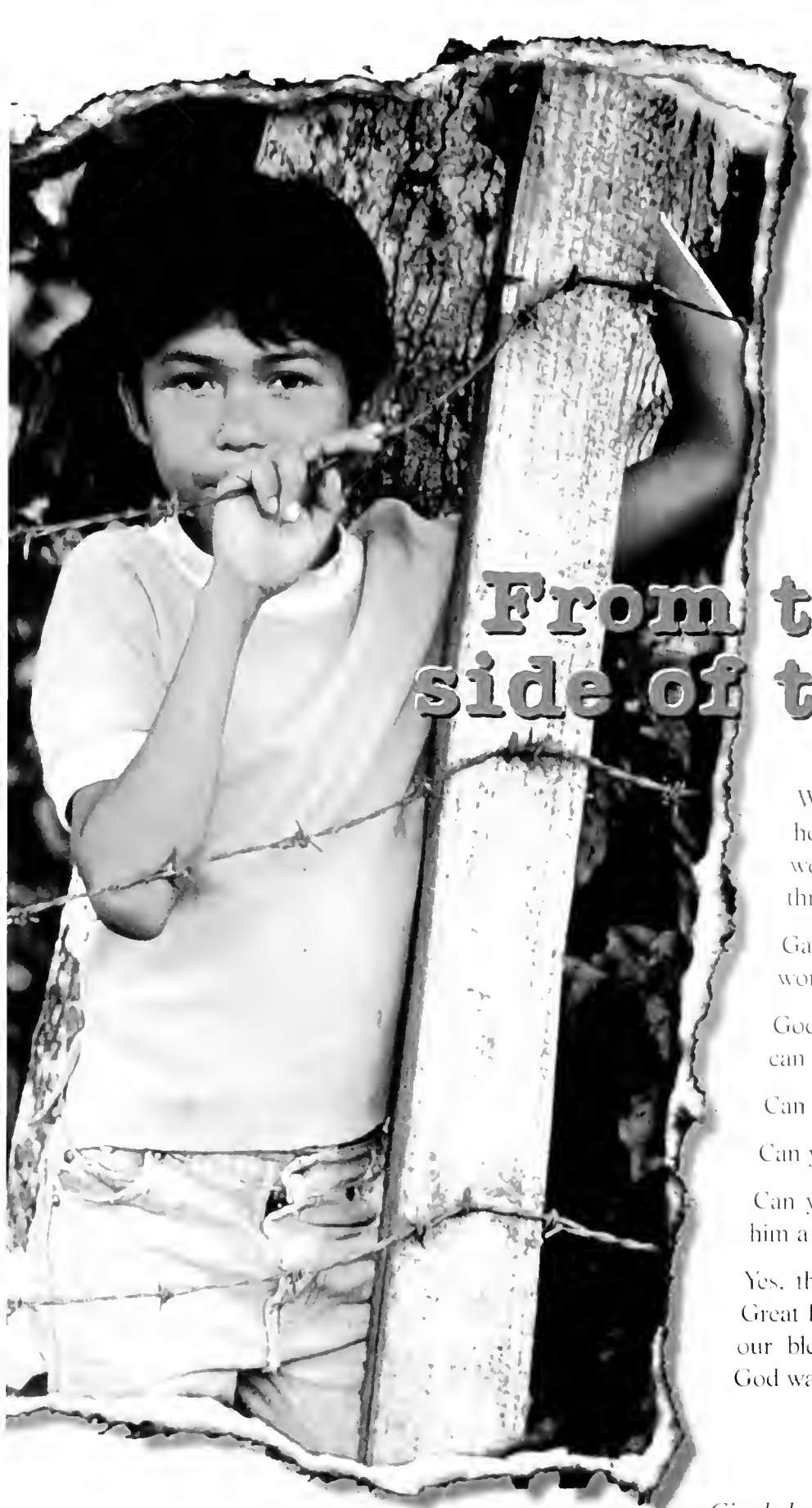
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ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING



Church of the Brethren April 1996

Messenger



The costly gift

By pouring this ointment on my body
she has prepared me for burial.

Matthew 26:12

From the Managing Editor

Glance at the masthead to the right and you will see a newly listed position—Study Guide Editor.

For more than a decade, a study guide is included in each issue of MESSENGER, offering thought-provoking questions and conversation by individuals, Sunday School groups, and church study groups. The study guide is free to receive it. Currently, 615 readers receive it.

From the early 1980s through 1995, the study guide was written by MESSENGER Editor Ken Gibble.

But after a long illness of his wife Ann at Arlin Brethren, the two daughters, Ken accepted the position of Editor of MESSENGER last fall, and suddenly I was on the MESSENGER staff.

While Linda Myer took over most of Ken's duties, we continued to write. We did not have a new Editor, "Duly" (named after Linda Dulabaum, "Duly" assumed the position of Editor.)

Duly is a member of the Church of the Brethren, a graduate of Manchester Seminary. He has previously served as a campus pastor at a college and as recruiting and training director for the Brethren Service. He has written two Brethren Service books and a youth curriculum, and has served as a Conference worship leader.

Study guide writing now is one of the things he does when he is not driving buses in the Elgin area. He is active in community service, teaches two weekly Bible classes, serves as a Chicago Architecture Foundation member, and even holds a real estate license. He currently resides in Carol Stream and Rockdale, Illinois.

Duly's wife and children also are active in Brethren service. His two daughters each serve as a Brethren member, and his son works for some Brethren churches. We welcome Duly to the MESSENGER staff, by looking at this month's study guide, which is inserted into the magazine.



Willard "Duly" Dulabaum is the newest member of the MESSENGER staff, serving as writer of our study guide.

Willard Dulabaum

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Is there a splinter in Matthew's Great Commission? Ryan Ahlgrim thinks so, but he explains that while the splinter is a source of pain, it also gives us hope.

Stations of the Resurrection 16

Through his art and words, Paul Grout takes us to the last week of Jesus' life, when Jesus embarked on his journey to Jerusalem that ultimately led toward life, not death.

Angels: They're everywhere 20

From the *New York Times* best-seller list to a two-hour television network special, angels seem to be everywhere. Ken Gibble tells us, however, that there are many reasons why we shouldn't give too much attention to them.

No one is beyond redemption 22

Convicted of multiple crimes he committed by betraying a man's trust, a repeat offender is sentenced to prison. Such a scenario happens each day throughout the US. So is it a news story? It is, says Patricia Kennedy Helman, when the victims attend the sentencing hearing and express concern, not condemnation, toward the perpetrator.

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Cover story: Over the past two years, while contemplating Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem, Paul Grout has been on a journey of his own. He has immersed himself in scripture, prayer, and thought, and has produced 17 pieces of art he calls "Stations of the Resurrection." Paul's work has been on display throughout Lent at Elizabethtown College's Young Center, which is where Jeff Leard caught up with him to photograph the display.

In Touch

A 'Tiny' contrast

John "Tiny" McTaggart's nickname belies his six feet three inches, 260 pounds. Other contrasts surface in the life of John,

role as mayor of Edwardsville, Kan., population 4,000. John is equally comfortable espousing economic theories, articulating his spirituality, or demonstrating sign painting techniques.

His artistic abilities have led to unique projects, such as painting a zebra design on a bus used by the Kansas City Zoo. But the project of which he is most proud is a hippo head and brick wall design painted on a local radio station van.

John's artistry has led to articles featuring him in two national trade magazines, *Signs of the Times* and *Sign Business*.

John and his wife, Sandra, have attended First

and divinity of Christ and God as creator. He thinks all artists have a need to search and contemplate.

Believing that creativity has no boundaries except the universe, John holds creativity and reality in balance. While some artists turn to self-destruction or addictive behaviors because of this tension, John chose self-discovery and spiritual growth. Interest in the mayoral position developed from this process.

After being a sign painter for over 50 years, John wanted to combine his creativity with a desire to strengthen his organizational skills. His election as mayor in 1995 and reelection in 1995 provided that opportunity.

When asked how he keeps the parts of his life balanced, John points to his workshop space, noting similarities to his life. One side is cleared and uncluttered; the other side he calls "creative chaos."

"It doesn't always stay in balance," he admits. For this man of contrasts and creativity, that seems just right.—CONNIE BURKHOLDER

Connie Burkholder is pastor of First Central Church of the Brethren, Kansas City, Kan.



John "Tiny" McTaggart works on a "thank you" gift to one of the suppliers to his business, Tiny Signs, Ltd.

a member of First Central Church of the Brethren, Kansas City, Kan. At his sign painting shop, Tiny Signs, Ltd., John listens to tapes of Tibetan monks chanting, Zen lessons on the art of leadership, and popular music.

His contemplative spirit is contrasted with a public

Central for several years, where he has served as an Annual Conference delegate, chairman of deacons, and moderator.

The organized church hasn't provided all the spiritual food John needed. Delving into mysticism helped him better understand the humanity

Four men and a lady

For the past 16 years, **Bob Kettering** and **Ron Ludwick** have sung with Ministers of Music, a male quartet that sings familiar hymns as well as contemporary Christian

music. All four of the members have been or currently are involved in a church music ministry.

"We also are interested in new church development, and the group is a good way to bring people in to

the church," said Bob.

Bob, a member of Luitz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, is the Church of the Brethren director of New Church Development. Ron pastors Hanoverdale Church of the Brethren, in

In Touch profile: Brethren we would like you to meet. Send story ideas and photos to "In Touch," MESSENGER 1451 Dundee Ave., Ugin, IL 60120

Dale Fingie



Ministers of Music includes Church of the Brethren members Ron Ludwick and Bob Kettering (on the left).

Hummelstown, Pa.

The social director of the Brethren Village, Lancaster, Pa., and a Brethren in Christ minister complete the quartet. A Brethren in Christ organist accompanies the group, sometimes lending her voice.

The group has performed at the 1995 Annual Conference in Indianapolis, district events, and on tours throughout Florida and New England. The group is scheduled to perform at National Older Adult Conference III in September at Lake Junaluska, N.C.

In January, the Ministers of Music and 85 other Brethren, Mennonite, and Brethren in Christ members spent a week on a Caribbean cruise. **Earl Ziegler**, 1994 Annual Conference moderator and pastor of Lampeter (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, served as the chaplain. The group spent each morning in meditation and with music from Ministers of Music.

The group, which has recorded two tapes, hopes to travel to Wales, United Kingdom, to compete in a festival competition in 1997, and to take a group with them on a tour of the Greek Islands and the Holy Land in 1998.

Names in the news

Andy Brunk, a member of Summit Church of the Brethren near Bridgewater, Va., was pictured in a January *Gospel Herald* (a Mennonite magazine) article wearing his camping backpack as he received his diploma from Eastern Mennonite University last spring. Andy, a former Brethren Volunteer Service

Lending a hand

Ryan Krenek and Michael Wenger were enjoying a sled ride with their friend, Zachary, following one of the East Coast's major snow storms in January, when they were called on to perform acts of heroism.

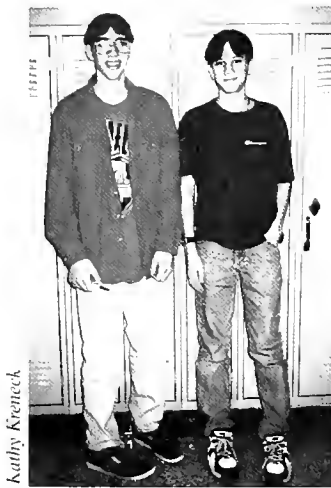
Ryan and Michael, members of Mohler Church of the Brethren (Ephrata, Pa.) junior high youth group, helped Zachary, who broke his leg during a ride down the hill.

The two boys immobilized their friend's leg, covered him with a blanket, and placed him on

worker and Youth Peace Travel Team member, was emphasizing his major—camping, recreation, and outdoor ministries. He now works for Shenandoah District's Camp Brethren Woods. The magazine article was titled, "Wanderer, Come Home, but First, Wander."

• **Jo and Fred Wampler**, members of Walnut Grove Church of the Brethren near Damascus, Va., recently returned from a three-month stint in India. At Dahanu Road Hospital, where the Wampplers served as medical missionaries in the 1960s, Fred volunteered his services as a general practitioner. The Wampplers took along \$1,000 in donations, which was used mainly for hospital repairs. Another visit to India is tentatively planned.

• A 1995 book, *Democracy on Trail: The Japanese-American Evacuation and Relocation in World War II* (by Page Smith, Simon and Schuster), highlights the work of **Mary and Ralph Smeltzer** of the Church of the Brethren in getting Japanese-Americans out of concentration camps into which the US government had thrust them (December 1981, page 10). Comments **Dean L. Frantz**, who followed the Smeltzers' work as director of Brethren Ministry to Resettlers (November 1988, page 11). "Author Page Smith has confused the Church of the Brethren with the United Brethren, but who cares about the credit? The work was done!" (See **Florence Daté Smith's** "Days of Infamy," November 1988.)



Kathy Kreneck

When the time came for them to help a friend in need, Ryan Krenek and Michael Wenger showed intelligence, composure, and compassion.

Chief Charles Steiner. "Their friend could have sustained more serious damage had they not acted so quickly and efficiently.

"They need to be recognized for doing an outstanding job," Steiner said.

"We've gotten letters from the police department and our friends and family talk about it a lot," Michael said.

the sled to move him to the road while an ambulance was called for help.

"We learned what to do by watching shows like *Rescue 911*," Ryan said.

"When they saw the accident, they kicked into gear," said Ephrata Police

Close to Home

Turkeys spread joy

It began as a challenge from one person to give Christmas turkeys for urban churches in **Atlantic Northeast District**. It turned into something much larger than anyone could have predicted.

One Sunday in Novem-



Photo: Fitch

When the members of Chiques delivered their turkeys to Brooklyn First pastor Phill Carlos Archbold (right), they received something in return—a beautiful solo by a Brooklyn resident.

ber, **Chiques Church of the Brethren**, Manheim, Pa., member Kevin Hicknornell challenged the congregation to give 225 turkeys for distribution in Lancaster and Germantown, Pa., and Brooklyn, N.Y.

The project quickly captured the imagination of the members so that, by Christmas, the Chiques Brethren had over 500 12- to 14-pound turkeys, most of which were accompanied by several cans of fixin's and pies, estimated at nearly \$10,000.

Campus Comments

Bridgewater College has named its new \$10 million science and mathematics building the McKinney Center for Science and Math-

"It was a total church effort," Kevin said. "It sparked a new breath of life in the church to be involved with outreach ministries."

Cash donations alone totaled over \$6,000. Individuals and families packed over 100 boxes on their own, and one successful hunter provided venison for eight dinner boxes.

Nearly 60 people helped pack the boxes containing food for both body and soul. Most boxes included a book of poetry by Ruth Wolgemuth and a flyer by Mike Wise explaining the gift of salvation. Both Ruth and Mike are Chiques members.

The dinners were distributed to a local rescue mission, and through the **Alpha and Omega, Germantown, and Brooklyn First** congregations.

Phill Carlos Archbold, pastor of Brooklyn First, expressed appreciation for the turkeys and for the many other ways that the churches of the district support the congregation's AIDS ministry.

"We thank God for this extended family," Phill said. "We thank you for always thinking of us."

—DONALD FITZKEE

Don Fitzkee is a member of Chiques Church of the Brethren and the General Board

ematics. The name honors the college's most generous benefactor, the late Robert Myers McKinney of Westminster, Md. The center, which opened last August, will be dedicated this

Founders' Day, April 12.

• Robert W. Neff, president of **Juniata College**, has been chosen as a member of the President's Commission of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Division III. Among its responsibilities, the NCAA establishes athletic standards and official playing rules for college sports.

• The Alumni Association of **Manchester College** will conduct a summer workcamp in Jamaica, in which participants will help with building and maintenance at Maranatha School for the Deaf. Non-alumni also are invited.

• **Bridgewater College** celebrated Black History Month (February) with a professor and student discussing "Celebrating Diversity" on "Bridgewater College Presents," a local television program. Bridgewater sociology professor Mwiizenge Tembo, a Zambian, talked about his homeland and keeping his three sons in touch with their heritage. Student Larenda Ridley of Chesapeake, Va., told how the college and community can be more welcoming to African-American young people.

• **Juniata College** will be the location of the DuBois Business College branch campus. The branch, which is scheduled to open in the fall, will offer 18-month associate degrees in specialized business programs and nine-month diploma programs in accounting and stenography.

• **Bethany Theological Seminary** hosted a photography exhibit of people in

"Close to Home" highlight news of congregations, districts, colleges, homes, and other local and regional life. Send story ideas and photos to "Close to Home," MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Ugin, IL 60120

Tim Peter



Youth from Prairie City and area churches show off the "Gifts of the Heart" kits they assembled.

Kids with hearts

The youth group of **Prairie City** (Iowa) Church of the Brethren, with 20 other youth from three area churches, held a "fast-a-thon" in November, raising \$800 to buy supplies for "Gifts of the Heart" kits for Bosnia war victims. The kits were presented at the Prairie City community Thanksgiving worship service.

war-torn Sudan titled "God Cannot Let His People Die," February 17-March 8. The exhibit was on loan from the Mennonite Central Committee and sponsored by Bethany's Peace Studies program.

• Twenty-seven **Bridge-water College** students spent their spring break, February 24-March 2, working at Habitat for Humanity projects across the country.

Miami church dedicated

Eglise de Freres Haitiens (Church of the Brethren Haitian Church), Miami, Fla., dedicated its church building on February 11. Atlantic Southeast District helped the church purchase the 55-year-old building, where over 280 people regularly attend.

According to Berywn

Networking in Maine

Brunswick Fellowship, Lewiston, and Gardner congregations of the Church of the Brethren have joined together to form Church of the Brethren Maine Ministries (CBMM).

The organization, which officially was formed on January 1, will oversee the work of the three Maine congregations that were

Oltman, Atlantic Southeast district executive, the number of attendees could increase to 350 now that the 15-year-old fellowship has its own building. The congregation is one of the top Brethren churches in the rate of growth and worship attendance.

The 350-seat sanctuary was filled for the dedication, with 59 Brethren from

planted through the Brethren Revival Fellowship (BRF).

"CBMM is not directly affiliated with the BRF," said Merv Keller, chairman of CBMM. "However, for the first three years there will be BRF representation on the committee."

This and That

Pasadena (Calif.) Church of the Brethren hosted the 1996 Gilbert Peace Lecture on February 25. Dr. James William McClendon Jr., scholar-in-residence at Fuller Theological Seminary, delivered the lecture. The lecture series was instituted in 1985 in honor of church member Walter Gilbert.

• **Northern Indiana, Southern Indiana, and Michigan** districts helped sponsor Ecu-Care '96 conferences

during February and March. The conferences, which were held in Columbus and Plymouth, Ind., and Lansing, Mich., celebrated their 20th anniversary of nurturing church leaders. The American Baptist Church, United Church of Christ, Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis, and Disciples of Christ also sponsored the three conferences.

Let's Celebrate

Elizabethtown (Pa.) Church of Brethren will celebrate its 100th anniversary as a congregation and 40th anniversary at the Mount Joy Street building on April 28. The anniversary will be celebrated with a commemorative worship service, a multimedia presentation, and a luncheon.

Present and past members and friends are invited.

Karen Carter



Haitian members in Miami and their pastor, Ludovic St. Fleur, celebrate their new building.

the Sebring and Lorida, Fla., areas attending. Ten Haitian pastors from Miami churches brought their greetings and two churches brought their music groups to participate in the service.

1996 Annual Conference moderator Fred

Bernhard spoke at the dedication, concentrating on how the church at-large needs the participation of people from other cultures, like the Miami church, where most of the members, including its pastor, were boat people.

General Board accelerates redesign, conducts business

A look at these news pages or at the *Source* packet that is sent monthly to each Brethren congregation will give the correct impression that General Board programming continues to be active throughout the US and the world, even though the Board currently is in the midst of a redesign process and subsequent downsizing.

That doesn't mean that the future isn't already affecting the present. At the Board's Spring meetings, March 7-12, little was discussed or decided without the ever-present redesign process looming about, with Board members and staff aware that reductions to program and staff will be completed by January 1998.

No more deficit spending

The General Board approved budget parameters for 1997, calling for the Board's first balanced budget in three years. The approved budget calls for income and expenses of \$6,497,000, with an estimated \$472,000 reduction in Board programs and personnel needed so that the budget can be met.

The Board also revised its 1996 budget, which calls for \$6,629,000 in income and \$6,897,000 in expenses, with a deficit of \$268,000.

Though Board members in October expressed concern about approving a third year of deficit spending in 1996 and a fourth in 1997, they realized it would be counterproductive to make major reductions before the Board's Redesign Steering Committee (RSC) recommends what shape Board pro-

grams should take in the future. So the preliminary budget parameters for 1997 called for a deficit of \$514,000, with permanent budget reductions of \$164,000.

RSC members, however, told the Board that it is well on its way toward making its initial recommendations (see sidebar). So well on its way, in fact, that reductions of program or staff needed to balance the 1997 budget will be able to be made in keeping with the new redesign plan. Thus, the RSC asked the Board to approve a balanced 1997 budget, which it did, saving \$514,000 in reserves.

Korea: The beginning of the end?

The Church of the Brethren will stay in South Korea, at least for now. That is what members of the World Ministries Commission decided after a lengthy review of the program.

What began in 1990 with an Annual Conference directive received a setback last fall, as the denomination's partner in South Korea—about 55 Reformation Presbyterian Church congregations—unexpectedly broke off the relationship. Without a partner and without a facility, the commission in October decided to review the program.

Upon the return from South Korea in February of General Board and Atlantic Northeast District representatives (the sponsoring district of the



General Board's action on its redesign process attracted so much attention that the meeting room was filled to capacity, forcing attendees to listen from outside the room.

The new pages include news of Church of the Brethren organizations and members, and of organizations and people of interest to or affiliated with the Church of the Brethren. News items are intended to inform—they do not necessarily represent the opinions of Messenger or the General Board—and should not be considered to be an endorsement.

Timeline

March 1996

Board adopts core functions.
—
Board adopts modified timeline.

July 1996

Board receives options for study.
—
RSC meets with Standing Committee.
—
Board reports redesign process to Annual Conference.

Aug. 1996 Oct. 1996

RSC members begin dialog with districts about options.

South Korea mission), three alternative recommendations were drafted.

The first called for field staff Dan Kim to establish a Brethren facility, which would establish the denomination's seriousness and legitimacy in the Asian country, and would be used for worship, Bible study, and English classes. To rent such a facility, the Board would have had to make a \$500,000 refundable down payment.

Option two called for about \$200,000 to be used to rent a smaller facility, which would have inhibited program development and wouldn't have gained Brethren official status from the South Korean government.

Option three called for maintaining the status quo—\$84,000-per-year in costs, \$5,000 in revenue—with Kim trying to develop the Brethren mission out of his apartment. Though Kim, Korean Ministries representative David Radcliff and Atlantic Northeast district

executive Allen Hansell each said option one would be the only option that would allow the program to grow and prosper—while option three would pretty much end the mission—commission members voted for option three, keeping the program functioning as is, at least until more is known about the redesign process.

General Board decisions

Curriculum. The General Board approved new guidelines for Church of the Brethren curriculum development. The last guidelines were approved by the 1986 Annual Conference.

These newly approved guidelines will be sent to Annual Conference this summer for adoption, and then for use throughout the denomination.

- **End-of-Life Decision-Making.** Through a Board recommendation, the End-of-Life Decision-Making paper will be presented to Annual Conference



Jeff Leard

Ron Finney, co-director of Family Ministry and co-district executive of South/Central Indiana, pores over the Redesign Steering Committee's report during its open forum.

Core functions, timeline are approved by General Board

Though the focus and structure of the redesigned General Board won't be decided until the Board's October meetings, the ideas that will be used to shape the new focus and structure, and the revised timeline in which the work will get done, are in place.

During their March meetings, Board members approved "Core Functions of the General Board," which were developed by the Redesign Steering Committee (RSC) using the Board's vision statement adopted last June.

The functions are divided into three categories (with many subpoints):

- "Participate with Annual Conference in the discernment of God's lead-

ing and assist the Church of the Brethren with the implementation of the will of the body."

- "Equip the church to make faithful disciples continue to the work of Jesus peacefully, simply, together, both locally and around the world."

- "Administer the General Board as Christian stewards of human and physical resources."

The timeline adopted by the Board calls for the RSC to submit three options at the Board's summer meeting. Those options will be discussed this fall, with a final decision made in October.

The timeline also calls for a preliminary decision on location to be submitted to the Board in October, with a final decision to be made next March.

In the meantime, the Board's Executive Committee and Administrative Council have adopted a process to be used as programs and staff are reduced. Employees at the General Offices were informed following the Board meetings that reductions could begin as soon as Annual Conference.

design of the General Board

October 1996	January 1997	March 1997	July 1997	October 1997	January 1998
Board selects single option.	RSC and Transition Team work in collaboration.	Board approves redesign.	RSC meets with Standing Committee.	Board makes final adjustments.	Transition complete.
Board receives report on location.		Board acts on location proposal.	Annual Conference acts on polity changes/RSC dismissed.	Program adjustments continues.	Evaluations of new design scheduled.
Program adjustments to begin.		Transition strategy shared with board.	Board acts on transition plan.		
Transition team named.					

delegates in July. As requested by Annual Conference, the paper—which was crafted by Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC)—includes last year's query on assisted suicide.

- *Child Exploitation.* The Board is sending a paper on child exploitation to Annual Conference. The paper originated from Christian Citizen Seminar 1995, and was drafted by five CCS '95 attendees and David Radcliff, director of Denominational Peace Witness. If accepted by Conference, the document will become a congregational study paper for one year.

- *Global Food Crisis Fund.* The Board voted to turn the Global Food Crisis Fund, which has assisted those in situations of hunger or homelessness since 1987, into an ongoing fund instead of being reauthorized every three years. The Board also approved using the fund for development purposes.

- *Aid through military force?* After a year of study by congregations, the Board's revised "Nonviolence and Humanitarian Intervention" paper will be forwarded to Annual Conference for final approval.

This paper was written after the US occupation of Somalia in 1992–1995, to address how the Church of the Brethren should respond to armed forces delivering humanitarian aid.

- *A resolution for peace.* The Board passed a resolution concerning the upcoming Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, scheduled to begin in May.

"The Church of the Brethren joins with Muslims, Jews, and Christians in the US and in the Middle East to support principles of justice, religious liberty, and peaceful resolution of the question of Jerusalem," the resolution reads.

- *Unfunded Mandates.* A proposal calling for a study and cost analysis of unfunded Annual Conference mandates was brought before the Board. The proposal originated from the RSC and came to the Board as an Executive Committee recommendation.

The Board modified the proposal, deciding to ask that the Annual Conference moderator join the Board

chairwoman in each naming two people who will deal with the proposal and then report to Standing Committee and to the Board. No timeline was given.

- *Street Violence.* In the wake of a discussion concerning the paper on nonviolence and humanitarian inter-



General Board Chairwoman Katherine Hess listens to one of the many reports given during the General Board's March meetings.

vention abroad, the Board was challenged to deal with US street violence, by Board member Gilbert Romero.

The Board passed a motion requesting the Board's Peace Team to produce a recommendation on how the church can best respond.

According to David Radcliff, the Peace Team will "provide resources along with denominational partners" to address the issue.

Parish Ministries

Hispanic Ministry proposal. The Hispanic Steering Committee decided to delay presenting its Hispanic Structure proposal until more is known about the Board's redesign process. The committee also decided to postpone the Hispanic Assembly from 1996 to 1997.

- *Michigan District model.* After

PMC spent time listening and resourcing a handful of Brethren congregations in Florida in January 1995, the staff developed another model for Michigan District. This model is designed for Board staff to train district board members, who in turn will work with pastors and congregations in addressing congregational needs. If the model proves successful, PMC will use it in other districts.

- *Ministry forms.* PMC approved two new forms for ministry leadership interviews and profiles—a release form for pastoral profiles, and a revised background check that focuses on ethics in ministry relations.

General Services

Giving. The General Board's direct mail campaign—under the direction of Jim Replegle, director of Planned Giving—earned \$5.25 per dollar invested in 1995. To date the direct mail campaign has generated \$401,505.

The commission also discussed aspects of the redesign process, such as how congregational giving could be affected. According to Replegle, the process could result in lower giving because of the uncertainty.

- *Program Volunteers.* Concerns were expressed about reduced numbers of program volunteers, both at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. and at the General Offices. New Windsor programs under financial stress are less able to afford the cost of residential volunteers than in the past. At Elgin, volunteer use has declined in the absence of a volunteer coordinator for program volunteers.

- *Elections.* New committee members elected during the meeting were Mark Flory Steury to the Brethren Historical Committee, and Roy Johnson to the Germantown Trust.

- *MESSNGER.* Commission members were told that increased marketing efforts have been implemented, and that individual and group club rates won't be increased this year. —NEVIN DULABAUM, JEFF LEARD, and PAULA S. WILDING

Miller announces he will retire on December 31

Donald E. Miller, general secretary of the Church of the Brethren, has announced his resignation from the denomination's top administrative position, effective December 31.

Miller announced his retirement to General Board members and staff on March 9, during the Board's spring meetings in Elgin, Ill.

"My mission has been to seek the mind of Christ as we listen to our people, and to bring about changes that are both faithful to the mission of the church . . . and are fiscally responsible," Miller said.

Miller has served as general secretary since September 1986. In addition to supervising General Board employees and program, he also sits

on the boards of Brethren Benefit Trust and Bethany Theological Seminary.

Miller also has fostered strong ecumenical ties. He serves on the National Council of Churches Executive Coordinating Committee and General Board, based in New York City, and is a member of the 150-person Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC), based in Geneva. Among his many accomplishments, in 1994 he played a key role in helping create and implement the WCC's *Programme to Overcome Violence*. Miller also is a steering

committee member of The Meeting US Church Leaders, which represents over 20 million Christians.

Prior to joining the General Board staff, Miller served for 25 years as professor at Bethany Theological Seminary. From 1975-1986, Miller also served as the seminary's director of graduate studies.

Miller, who will turn 67 in December, earned his Bachelor's degree from Manchester College. He then attended the University of Chicago (Master's), Bethany Theological Seminary (Master's of Divinity), and Harvard University (Ph.D.). He also has studied at Yale and Cambridge.

From 1976-1986, Miller helped design and implement Bethany's Doctor of Ministry program. He also was instrumental in the creation of the Education for a Shared Ministry and TRaining in Ministry programs, which are administered jointly by Bethany and the General Board.

Other Church of the Brethren involvement has included serving on numerous Annual Conference study committees, and testifying in 1978 before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Miller has written seven books, co-authored five others, and has written numerous articles, including his monthly "From the General Secretary" column in MESSENGER.

Miller is married to Phyllis Gibbel Miller. They have three grown children, Bryan and Bruce Miller, and Lisa Arnould, and three grandchildren, Natasha, Madeleine, and Jacob.

A five-person Search Committee, composed of General Board members, was named to search for Miller's successor—Don Fitzkee, chair; Kathy Hess; Lori Sollenberger Knepp; Stafford Frederick; and Beth Middleton.—NEVIN DULABAUM



Donald E. Miller

Staff changes

Paul Hoffman, president of McPherson (Kan.) College since 1976, has announced his retirement, effective in August.

Gerhard Spiegler, president of Elizabethtown (Pa.) College, also has announced his retirement, effective this summer. Spiegler has served as president for 11 years.

John David Bowman, director of Bethany Theological Seminary's Susquehanna Valley Satellite, Elizabethtown, Pa., has resigned, effective March 1. Bowman, who directed the satellite since its inception in 1995, currently works with Eastern Mennonite University.

H. Dale Zimmerman has succeeded Bowman as interim Bethany satellite director. He recently retired from Kutztown University, where he taught in the graduate counseling psychology program. He is a Bethany graduate, and he assists Atlantic Northeast District in preparing members to enter the ministry.

Dan Ulrich has been named assistant professor of New Testament

studies of Bethany Seminary, effective August 1. Ulrich, a 1985 Bethany graduate, spent 1995 teaching New Testament at Bethany's satellite campus.



Paul Hoffman



Gerhard Spiegler



John David Bowman



H. Dale Zimmerman



Dan Ulrich

Brethren focus on religious tensions in Jerusalem

The coexistence of Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Jerusalem was the focus of a conference attended by six Brethren and 250 other Christians from 50 countries January 22-27, in Jerusalem.

The Church of the Brethren delegates to "The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians and of Christians in Jerusalem" included 1996 Annual Conference moderator Fred Bernhard, and his wife, Joice, Arcanum, Ohio; General Board member Ernest Bolz, Jonasket, Wash.; Janice Kulp Long, Blacksburg, Va., a former worker with Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) in the Middle East and current CPT staff; David Metzler, Bridgewater, Va., who represents the Church of the

Brethren with the National Council of Churches Interfaith Relations in work pertaining to Muslim and Christian dialog; and David Miller, pastor of Roanoke (Va.) First Church of the Brethren, and a former Brethren Volunteer Service worker on the West Bank and former CPT worker.

"We were considering historical, religious, social, and political history of the city of Jerusalem and the religious communities that have lived in this city pretty much simultaneously since the 7th century," Miller said. He added that though Palestinians have long-standing roots to Jerusalem, Israel has all but eliminated access to Jerusalem for the 900,000 Palestinians living on the West Bank.

A resolution was passed, calling for Israel to remove all roadblocks and obstacles preventing Palestinians from

getting to Jerusalem, and to halt all land expropriation in the West Bank and the further development of Jewish settlements there.

It also called on Israel to release political prisoners, ensure equal rights and opportunities for all Palestinians living in Israel, and to permit Palestinians to build houses and develop institutions, which hasn't been permitted since 1967.

The conference was sponsored by *Sabeel*, an ecumenical Center for Palestinian Liberation Theology; the Middle East Council of Churches; and other Christian organizations.

Information gleaned from the conference was used by Brethren Middle East and Washington, D.C. staff to draft a proposed General Board resolution, which was submitted to the Board at its March meeting.

NSCC executive secretary encourages additional aid

Offering words of gratitude to the Church of the Brethren for its support in Southern Sudan, New Sudan Council of Churches Executive Secretary Haruun Ruun in February said that additional aid and advocacy on Sudan's behalf still is needed.

Speaking to employees at the Church of the Brethren General Offices, Ruun spoke of the role of Christianity in his war-torn country. Because the Sudanese government is ineffective in improving the oppressed living conditions in the south, the work of Christian organizations has been greatly needed and appreciated.

"For the Southern Sudanese people, the only thing that is keeping them going, the only hope they have . . . is faith in Christ," Ruun said.

"The only credible group at this point is the church, and it is the church that is sustaining and keeping that hope in the people."

According to Ruun, it was helpful that the US recently classified Sudan

as a country that uses terrorism. This act has helped focus international attention on the region.

However, the situation has received little media coverage. "The media have not really picked up the Sudan case in the same way as it did with Somalia or Rwanda, and you cannot expect people to understand what is going on in Sudan

unless the media bring it to their attention," Ruun said.

Ruun called for Brethren to continue their active support of the Sudanese churches and to work through political means to draw greater attention to the ravaged country.—JEFF LEARD



Jeff Leard

Haruun Ruun

Calendar

National Youth Sunday, May 5 [Contact Youth Ministries, Church of the Brethren General Offices, (800) 525-8059].

Brethren Volunteer Service Orientation, Unit 221, New Windsor, Md., June 21-July 10 [Contact BVS Office, General Offices].

Bethany Theological Seminary Commencement, Richmond, Ind., June 16

210th Annual Conference, Cincinnati, Ohio, July 2-7 [Contact Annual Conference Office, General Offices]

EFSM/TRiM Orientation (Education For a Shared Ministry Training in Ministry), New Windsor, Md., August 5-8 [Contact Ministry Training Office, General Offices].

Brethren Volunteer Service Orientation, with Brethren Revival Fellowship, Unit 222, Camp Eder, Pa., August 11-21 [Contact BVS Office, General Offices].

National Older Adult Conference (NOAC) III, Lake Junaluska, N.C., September 2-6 [Contact Association of Brethren Caregivers, General Offices].

Bethany Emphasis Sunday, September 8.

In Brief

Earth Day Sunday is April 21, and there are many ways Church of the Brethren members can be involved. Shantilal Bhagat, director of Eco-Justice Concerns, sent a letter with two resources to 465 congregations in 18 states where congressional support for the Endangered Species Act—which is being reconsidered in Congress—is crucial. The resources—a bulletin insert and action alert on the Endangered Species Act—also are included in the April *Source* packet sent to all congregations. For a list of several environmental justice resources, call (800) 323-8039, ext. 227.

Making his appearance as a guest commentator, Donald Miller, Church of the Brethren general secretary, in February filmed five segments of *The American Religious Town Hall Meeting* in Dallas.

The programs are scheduled to air on over 250 US commercial television stations, beginning in mid-April.

Miller appeared on the programs with an ecumenical panel of six pastors. Topics discussed included the US military in Bosnia, the atomic bomb, and separation of church and state.

For program information, call News Services at (800) 323-8039.

Nearly \$3 million had been received through verbal commitments by the time the General Board's "Behold, I make all things new" program formally began.

At its February launching in Carlisle, Pa., General Secretary Donald Miller announced that 20 commitments totaling \$1,010,000 for "Behold" programs already had been received. He also reported that three deferred gifts totaling \$1.7 million also had been received through verbal commitments.

"We are very encouraged by these early and very generous expressions of support for the Church of the Brethren," Miller said.

The program calls for the raising of \$5 million for "Behold" program needs during 1996-2000, and \$10 million in deferred gifts.

A total of 3,634 people volunteered 66,473 hours in 1995 as Brethren program volunteers, according to statistics released in February. Ninety-one volunteers worked 14,609 hours at the General Offices, Elgin, Ill., and 3,543 volunteers worked 51,864 hours at the Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md.

Approximately 1.5 million more pounds of clothing will be processed and shipped annually through the Material Resource Program at the Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md., now that it is processing clothing for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). This new agreement, which went into effect in mid-February, will generate more than \$50,000 each year.

In 1995, 1,454,625 pounds of clothing were processed by the Material Resource Program, meaning the ADRA contract will more than double the volume of clothing processed at the Service Center each year.



Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) Unit 220 completed orientation on February 2, in Orlando, Fla. Participants were: (front row) Carolyn Pesaturo, Rob Key, Scott McElvany, Thomas Schoder, Pete Brubaker, and Carlos Schandel. (Back row) Kimball Cartwright, Rita Ware, Tobias Guhl, Scott Shively, Troy Reimer (assistant to coordinator of BVS orientation), Kai Nygaard, Todd Reish (coordinator of BVS orientation), and Petra Beck. See page 31 for assignments.

With \$400 billion gambled every year in the US, the National Council of Churches and the Christian Coalition have joined together to take a stand against gambling. The two organizations announced earlier this year that they would work together through the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling.

This alliance plans to establish a national commission to research the impact of gambling on communities, and investigate organized crime and political ties with gambling. According to the press release announcing the joint venture, gambling is one of the fastest growing industries in the US. (*Religion News Service*)

CPTGAMEnet, an electronic discussion group to address the issue of video game violence, was established by Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) in February. This new venture in CPT's ongoing campaign against violent toys is an open forum for discussion by parents, educators, and game players and creators. CPTGAMEnet discussions will focus on responsible computer and electronic games, creative alternatives to violence in video games, criteria to evaluate specific games, and ideas for public witness against video game violence.

"CPT's hope for this discussion forum is to help individuals and families critically examine the connections between faith and fun," said Janice Kulp Long, Church of the Brethren member from Blacksburg, Va., and CPT staff member. To join the discussion, contact the Virginia CPT office at (540) 951-2788.

A boundless ministry

by Jeff Leard

As church leaders in February watched participants of the Annual Assembly of the Church of the Brethren in the Dominican Republic arrive in Haina, the seaside site of this year's gathering, they thought they had a problem. Having endured long journeys to attend the assembly, weary participants piled off the tightly packed buses while the leaders slowly began to realize that there were 70 more people in attendance than had been expected.

Though it appeared to be a logistical nightmare at the time, the problem of overcrowding was more of a blessing than a curse. And it was the kind of problem that has blessed the Church of the Brethren's Dominican Republic ministry since its official inception five years ago: Leaders simply are overwhelmed by all of the people the ministry is attracting.

The Dominican Republic is about the size of Maine. Yet in its five years, the Brethren movement has attracted over 550 baptized members in 11 churches.

The opportunities for growth by the Brethren movement appear to be almost endless. An energized new partnership of more than 50 members in Azua is one of four mission sites that are serving communities in the Dominican Republic. These sites could be accepted as official Church of the Brethren fellowships as early as 1997.

Though there is great growth potential, making growth happen is not as easy as it may seem. Further expansion has been hampered by a lack of funding to begin new fellowships.

"We began in the small rural towns, but if we could move to the big cities, we could get more members," said Guillermo Encarnación, interim director of Hispanic Ministry. Church planting in cities requires a greater monetary commitment, he added.

Despite funding limitations, several Dominican Republic congregations

have constructed buildings with the help of US partners. In February, former Annual Conference moderator Earl Ziegler, pastor of Lampeter (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, headed a workcamp to construct a church in the small community of Paraiso, for which he also helped raise funds. Alongside Dominican Republic brothers and sisters, his crew of 11 made the comple-



Few children in the Dominican Republic have the opportunity for formal education, yet many acquire a comprehensive understanding of the Bible while they still are young.

tion of a small church possible. A similar project was completed last year in San Juan with the help of Chester Fisher, pastor of the Mount Hermon congregation in Bassett, Va.

As the Church of the Brethren in the Dominican Republic rapidly expands, it is in need of leadership as much as meeting space. To meet this need, Milciades Mendez, consultant for Christian education in the Dominican Republic, last year relocated with his family from Peru and began a training program for Church of the Brethren ministers and educators.

Mendez, who now works with more

than 50 individuals who are enthusiastic to learn about the Brethren tradition, is in the Dominican Republic as the result of an agreement between the World Ministries Commission and Atlantic Southeast District to train and license Brethren pastors.

According to Encarnación, Mendez has made a terrific impact on the attitudes of Dominican Republic Brethren pastors.

"Before he came, they would rely on Pentecostal religion," Encarnación said. "Now they identify themselves as Anabaptists and as Brethren."

"Their frame of mind has changed from, 'What can I take from the church?' to 'What can I give?'" Mendez said.

Along with this attitude change, age has been a huge factor in the rapid membership growth. The average age in the Dominican Republic is very young, and many of Mendez' students are still in their teens. Their youthful excitement is palpable during worship, which bodes well for the future of the church.

According to Puerto Rican minister Oscar Villanueva, the students have an earnest desire to work for the Lord, which he believes to be good.

In its short history, the Church of the Brethren has made impressive strides in the Dominican Republic. The success of the ministry there is a result of capturing the enthusiasm of new members and funneling it toward the goal of church growth. In cooperation with US Brethren, Dominican Republic Brethren are hopeful that they can keep up with the continual expansion of the church.

"If they keep growing," said Atlantic Southeast district executive Berwyn Oltman, "they'll grow to be bigger than we are."

It's a problem they are eager to face.

M.

Jeff Leard is a Brethren Volunteer Service worker from Glendale (Calif.) Church of the Brethren, serving in the office of Interpretation.

stepping

STONES

by Robin
Wentworth Mayer

I'm always interested in the verbs individuals choose to describe the counseling process. It says a lot to me about a person's orientation and motivation, and serves as a sort of dip stick for a preliminary prognosis.

Some people, for instance, *take* counseling—I suppose the way one might *take* an aspirin or an antibiotic. These folks often feel swindled and indignant when they realize a couple of *doses* of counseling won't *cure* a problem the way penicillin might cure an infection.

Others *get* some counseling, not unlike the way they *get* some gas for their car or food for their table. Years ago, a businessman with a marriage in crisis came to me. With his wife of 25 years threatening to leave, he thought perhaps counseling was the answer.

At the close of our first session, when I asked if he wanted to meet again, he responded with: "Just what am I buying? What do I get for my money?" I couldn't give him the answer he wanted. I couldn't provide an ironclad guarantee that his wife would not leave. I never saw him again. And though I have no information concerning the status of their marriage, I'd be very surprised to learn she stayed. Approaching coun-

seling with a strict consumer mind-set is like wearing baseball cleats for ice-skating.

Still others *see* a counselor like they *see* a movie or a ball game. And while spectator viewing is perfectly acceptable for recreational activities, it doesn't translate well into recovery processes. Consequently, those who merely *see* a counselor often are disappointed with the results . . . or lack of them.

Finally, there are those who speak of how they *did* some counseling. The implications of this particular verb choice are a world apart from the others.

The one who *does* counseling is an active participant rather than a passive recipient—a convert rather than a customer, a partner as opposed to a patient.

Someone who talks about *doing* some counseling is communicating the need, desire, and willingness to incorporate precept into practice, suggestions into decisions, intentions into behavior, and talk into walk. It goes without saying, then, that someone who *does* some counseling has an excellent prognosis for a successful outcome.

One of my favorite things to do in seminary was to audit the interesting classes I didn't have time to take.

And it was a delightful low-risk, low-investment way to glean information. But now, 12 years later, it is not at all surprising to me that I remember far less from the classes in which I was a "spectator" than I do from those in which I was a student.

You can attend a class, but you won't learn much without doing the homework. You can attend church services, but you won't experience many benefits without doing what is taught. You can join a weight loss group, but you aren't going to shed any pounds if you don't *do* the program. And you can attend counseling sessions week after week. But there's no magic: If there is no follow-through, there will be no fulfillment.

However, that thousand-mile journey does begin with the first step, a first step of which the importance is impossible to overstate. Showing up at a counselor's office—even brimming with hostility, resentment, and skepticism—is indeed a first step. Just remember to follow it with a second, then third, then fourth, then fifth. . . . *M.*

Robin Wentworth Mayer is pastor of Kokomo (Ind.) Church of the Brethren.

Stepping Stones is a column offering suggestions, perspectives, and opinions—snapshots of life—that we hope are helpful to readers in their Christian journey. As the writer said in her first installment, "Remember, when it comes to managing life's difficulties, we don't need to walk on water. We just need to learn where the stepping stones are."

by Ryan Ahlgrim

"Now the 11 disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'" (Matt. 28:16-20)

Last summer I trimmed all of the bushes in my backyard and cut out all of the saplings and branches growing through my fences. When I was washing up, I noticed that every time I rubbed the end of my little finger I was getting a sensation of pain. Upon closer inspection, I discovered a tiny splinter embedded in the tip of my finger, so small I could barely see it. I tried to pull it out with a tweezer, but it was too deep. So I left it there, depending on nature to slowly work it out. But all week, every time I brushed the tip of my finger against something, I felt that little pain.

Every time I read the Great Commission in Matthew 28:16-20, I feel a little pain. A splinter is embedded in the passage, so small it is barely noticeable. I would guess that most people never see it. But if you brush up against it, it gives you a little pain.

The splinter is: "but some doubted." The 11 disciples (Judas is now dead) go back to Galilee. They go to a mountain that Jesus had instructed them to go to. There they see Jesus—

Doubting the reigning Jesus

*Every time I read the
Great Commission,
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noticeable.*

alive, risen from the dead! They fall down on their knees and worship him. But some doubted.

What really is irritating about this splinter is that it is never removed. It stays there. It is the last word about the disciples in Matthew's Gospel. Did the doubters ever change their minds? Matthew does not say. Did they go to their own deaths doubting that Jesus was among them? Matthew does not say. This truly is a painful splinter.



Why did Matthew put that splinter in there? He didn't have to add those three words, "but some doubted," did he? If he had left out those three little words, do you think anybody in his church would have noticed? Or minded? In fact, would not the ending of Matthew's Gospel have been improved if he had just left out those three words?

So why did Matthew stick that splinter in there? Why did he have to admit that some of the 11 disciples doubted? Maybe because that is what actually happened, and he felt obligated to tell the truth. Yes, but did he have



to be that truthful? When we report an actual incident, we don't give all the details. We feel free to leave out details that don't help the story. So why doesn't Matthew just leave out that detail since it doesn't help the story?

Maybe because not only did some of the original disciples have doubts, but so did some of the Christians in Matthew's church. Perhaps Matthew wants to say to the people in his church: Just because you have some doubts does not mean you are excluded from Christ's Great Commission. You are no different from those 11 disciples. Some of them had doubts, too. But Jesus still wanted them, and Jesus still wants you.

What exactly were some of the people in Matthew's church doubting? Were they doubting that Jesus was alive, raised by God? Apparently so. But I think it may have been something even more specific than that. What does it mean to be raised by God? What does that say about the

person who has had this unique and miraculous thing happen to him? I think what some people in Matthew's church were doubting was the very first thing Jesus said to his disciples: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

Think about that statement. It is indeed hard to believe. It is one thing to believe that God may have somehow resuscitated someone and that this person in some way lives on, but it is quite another thing to believe that this person now has all authority in heaven and earth. Some of the 11 disciples doubted that. Some of Matthew's church members doubted that. Some of us in the church today doubt that. But the risen Jesus makes this incredible claim: I am now king of everything everywhere. I have all authority. My kingdom has now begun and I reign over all.

Jesus' authority is the authority of truth, goodness, and spiritual reality.

The book of Revelation mentions that Christ will have a thousand-year reign on earth, when the dragon and forces of evil are bound and thrown in a pit. But according to Matthew (and according to Paul, for that matter), the reign of Christ is now. Christ actually is reigning over all the earth now. The present age is not under the rule of Satan. The king of this world is not some dark force. No, Jesus is the ruler.

Is his kingdom readily visible? No. Are there various forces in rebellion against his authority and reign? Obviously. But even when certain factions are in rebellion, the king is still the king. And what makes Jesus king is the

fact that he has all the authority. Jesus does not use his authority to crush rebellion and coerce obedience. Rather than being the authority of force, Jesus' authority is the authority of truth, goodness, and spiritual reality. These are the things that will bring the rebellions to an end, and Jesus will be recognized as lord of all.

I have to admit it is hard for me to believe that Jesus is king of this world. My first instinct is that money is king of this world. For example, about 90 percent of elections in the United States are won by the candidate who spends the most—not the candidate who is most intelligent, honest, or capable. Money runs world politics, determining which nations have power. Money is the physical basis of our continued existence.

But can't you imagine the risen Jesus, on a hilltop in Galilee, telling a group of rough fishermen: "President Clinton isn't king of the world. Oil isn't king of the world. Economics isn't king of the world. The military isn't king of the world. Big business isn't king of the world. Money isn't king of the world. Evil isn't king of the world. . . . I'm king of the world."

And then Jesus turning to the doubters and saying: "I want you to make my kingdom known. I want you to overcome the rebellions by making people into my disciples. Conquer them with my teachings. Wash them with my baptism. Open their eyes to my truth, my goodness, my reality. And although it's hard to believe, I'm with you always, helping to make this happen, till the end of the age."

The splinter in Matthew's Gospel is a paradox, giving us pain but also giving us hope. Even with our doubts, Jesus Christ is still lord of all. *M.*

Ryan Ahlgrim is pastor of First Mennonite Church in Indianapolis, Ind.

by Paul Grout

The Roman Catholic tradition depicts Jesus' walk to the cross, crucifixion, and death through 14 "Stations of the Cross."

I have interpreted Jesus' walk—a message of salvation—through 17 painting-constructions titled "Stations of the Resurrection."

For the past two years this journey of Jesus through death to life has occupied much of my thinking and time. It has been a season of revelation. The Old and New Testaments came newly alive. Every chapter, nearly every verse, began to speak in relation to Jesus' journey.

Beginning with Jesus setting his face to go to Jerusalem, the depictions continue from the time he enters Jerusalem through his death, resurrection, and ascension. There is a message at each stage of Christ's final walk, which come together to form a whole.

The journey of Jesus into Jerusalem ultimately was toward life, not death. Resurrection awaited Jesus following his physical death on the cross. Spiritual death is the state of separation from God. It is the condition humanity maintains by going its own way over and against God. It is this death, this separation, that Jesus is ultimately about reversing.

To understand what life is, how life is to be found and lived, we must see both the final result of Christ's journey and resurrection, along with the life-giving journey itself.

Jesus faced death every step of the way. A battle was being waged for his loyalty, his devotion, and his soul. In choosing God's way, Jesus chose life.

Today, the wide way is idealized over and against the narrow way. The way of Christ, if considered at all, is made relative to the way we choose. We pick out convenient pieces of scripture to affirm our personal journey. We echo with our culture the politically correct words of Pilate: "What is truth?"

We have lost sight of the battle for our souls. We have succumbed to the



Stations of the

dark forces that not only rob us of life, but blind us even of its possibility.

This journey of Jesus exposes us to our blindness, our self-absorption, our sin-sickness, and death. It is my hope that these "stations" can in some way turn us again to Jesus, to the way of Jesus, the choices of Jesus, and the battle that Jesus engaged in to find life.

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" John 14:6

This way of Jesus has consumed me. It has related to every aspect of my life. As the blindness, shallowness, and self-absorption of those around Jesus was exposed, I became exposed. I rediscovered how much Jesus is asking for and, at the same time, how much he gives. It began as the illumination of a system, a way of living. It became for me the illumination of life itself. M.

Paul Grout is pastor of Genesis Church of the Brethren, Putney, Vt. His "Stations of the Resurrection" exhibit was featured in a Lenten season exhibit at Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, Pa., from February 21 through April 5.





He set his face

"When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem." Luke 9:51

Jesus knew that suffering and death awaited him in Jerusalem. He could see ahead to death, and beyond to life:

"From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised." Matt. 16:21

This, then, was a journey for Jesus that ultimately led toward life, not death. Jesus is on a journey on behalf of humanity to restore us to the relationship God

Resurrection

Two basins

"Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him." John 13:5-5

Jesus' action is in diametric contrast with what Pilate does at Jesus' trial. Pilate knows that Jesus is innocent, but fears the crowd and surrenders to their will. He abdicates responsibility for his actions, washing his hands in public.

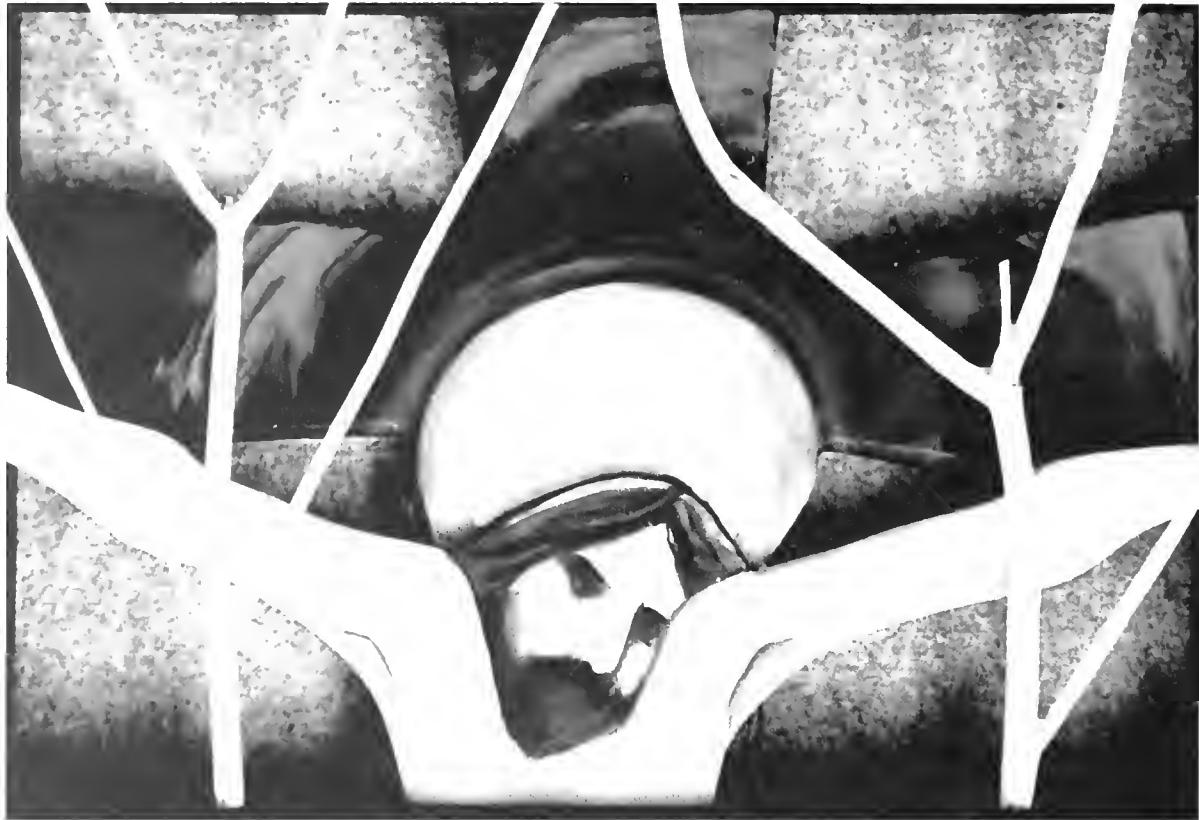
Peter denies Jesus

After supper, Jesus tells Peter that he will deny him three times before the night is out and the cock crows.

Arriving outside of where Jesus is being interrogated, Peter is accused of being a follower of Jesus. Three times he denies. Peter thinks he is lying and means to lie, but he is telling the truth; at this point he does not know Jesus.

Peter's delusion of his strength and personal power is broken. The realization is both tragic and hopeful. For Peter, and for us all, this breaking can lead to a new beginning.





The crucifixion

"When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.'" Luke 23:33-34

Jesus became the Passover lamb whose blood is shed for the forgiveness of our sins. We now can journey to the promised land.



The scourging

After he was condemned to death, the soldiers took Jesus and beat him.

"They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'" Matt. 27:28-29

Jesus was tortured. Fallen humanity is capable of incredible inhumanity.

Mary, mother of Jesus

"Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her." Luke 1:58

Mary, faced with a decision that will open her to disgrace, surrenders control to God. Through her obedience, the fruit of her womb comes into the world.



Resurrection

"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen." Luke 24:5

Jesus the Christ has passed through old Jerusalem to the New Jerusalem. The resurrected Christ reigns.

"And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb." Rev. 21:25

"And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.'" Rev. 21:5

ANGELS



Angel by Vincent Van Gogh/Superstock

THEY'RE EVERYWHERE

by Kenneth L. Gibble

Angels are back, big-time. Angelic figurines and designs are hot items in gift shops. Books about angels are all the rage. Just who are these heavenly beings called angels?

people feel they have encountered one.

Angels—these days they're everywhere. Who are these heavenly beings called angels?

Belief in angels was common at the time the Bible was written. Angels could be found in many different reli-

gions, not just in Judaism and Christianity.

But belief in angels suffered a setback with the coming of the Enlightenment, that period in 18th century Europe when human reason came to the forefront. Science and technology began to shape people's thinking about how the world works. That didn't leave much room for things like angels.

What about the angels that people claim to be meeting these days? Most current accounts of angel encounters include stories of rescue from difficulty or danger. These angels offer a nurturing presence characterized by warmth and light. They demand no repentance or conversion. Often they call attention only to themselves, with no reference to God.

All of this marks a radical departure from angels we meet in the Bible. The word "angel" is the translation of a Hebrew word meaning "messenger." In biblical writings, God uses angels to convey the divine word to humans and to carry out appointed tasks. The writers of scripture gave much more attention to what angels do than to what they look like.

For example, there is only one allusion to angels having wings, in Daniel 9:21. In the Bible we hear what angels say and we see what they do, but we are never really told much about them.

What the Bible makes absolutely clear about angels is that they are subordinate to God. They do not exist on

When I was a first-year student at Bethany Seminary back in the '60s, I sang in the seminary choir. One morning during rehearsal, a member of the choir raised his hand. "I can't sing this anthem," he told the choir director. When the choir director asked why, he answered, "Because of the words. There's all this stuff about angels. I just don't believe in angels. If the rest of you want to sing it, fine. But I'd be a hypocrite if I sang it with you."

I don't remember what the choir director said, and I don't even remember if we ever sang that anthem, but I do remember that many of us in the choir agreed with the one who objected. I certainly had never seen an angel, nor did I know anybody who had. We figured that angels were simply relics of a bygone belief system. The human race, we thought, had outgrown angels.

Boy, were we wrong! Angels are back, big-time. At least they're back in the popular imagination. Angelic figurines and designs are hot items in gift shops. Books about angels are all the rage; some of them have enjoyed extended runs on the *New York Times* best seller list. Their success has spawned a whole angel industry of books, calendars, and newsletters. One of the TV networks carried a two-hour special on angels. *Time* and *Nursweek* ran major articles about angels and reported that not only do a majority of Americans believe in angels, but many

their own; they do not scoot off to earth on self-appointed missions of mercy or protection. And the most frequent human reaction to the appearance of an angel is terror.

Do you remember how Luke describes the experience of the shepherds? My favorite translation is the familiar King James Version:

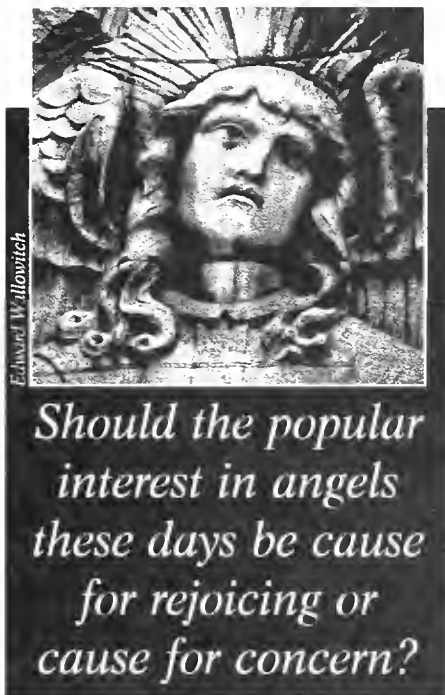
And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

"Sore afraid" because an encounter with one of God's angels is enough to set any sensible person's teeth to chattering. And so the first thing the angel says to the shepherds is "Fear not."

Yet, even though the first reaction to biblical angels is often great fear, their purpose is not to terrify. They are sent by God to announce God's intentions.

In the Bible, angels also provide protection. On the wall of my parents' kitchen hung a picture that captured my childhood attention. It depicted two children—a boy and a girl—alone in a dark forest. They are walking over a rickety bridge spanning a deep ravine. It's an altogether scary picture, except for an angel dressed in gold and white who hovers over the children. It's clear that this is the children's guardian angel. The angel will make sure no harm befalls them.

How does this popular concept of a guardian angel square with what we read in the Bible? Well, there are only two references in scripture to angels assigned to protect individuals, in con-



Should the popular interest in angels these days be cause for rejoicing or cause for concern?

trast to more than 500 references to other ministries that angels carry out. "Guardian angels" are more products of popular religious imagination than of biblical record.

So where does all this leave us? Should the popular interest in angels these days be cause for rejoicing or cause for concern?

It's cause for rejoicing if angels remind people that a purely secular, scientific view of the world is inadequate. We have been created with a need for resources that go beyond what the human mind can explain. No doubt the increased interest in angels demonstrates the longing of the human spirit for transcendence, for a spiritual dimension.

But interest in angels is cause for concern if we concentrate too much on them. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews apparently thought that some members of the church were paying

more attention to angels than to Christ, perhaps even worshiping them. In the opening verses of that book, the writer makes it clear that angels have inferior status to Christ. It is Christ, the writer insists, who commands the worship of angels, not vice versa.

And the writer of Hebrews also provides another helpful word of counsel about angels.

In the final chapter of that book, the faithful are urged to remember those who are in prison and those who are ill-treated. Verse 2 reads: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it."

That idea of how angels come to us doesn't have much in common with current-day stories of angel encounters. Who would suspect that in doing a kindness to a stranger, we are meeting an angel? Modern accounts of angels usually have the angels doing something good for the person visited. Hebrews tells us that by showing hospitality to strangers, we can do something good for the angels.

So, do you believe in angels? There's no reason not to believe in them. But there are lots of reasons not to give too much attention to them. A hymn writer prayed, "I ask no dream, no prophet's ecstasies ... no angel visitant, no opening skies ..." Whether or not that is your prayer, surely you can join with that same hymn writer in praying: "Teach me to love thee as thine angels love." That is undoubtedly a better prayer than "send me an angel."

The angels love God by praising God and serving God. We can pray to love God the same way. *M.*

Kenneth L. Gible is pastor of Chambersburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren

No one is beyond



Photo illustration by Paul Stocksdale

The trial attracted the media for two reasons. One was the 251-year sentence, but an even more intriguing reason was the statements from the victims of the crime. The statements were of a nature that are seldom heard in the courts of law, and the surprise of the listeners was obvious.

by Patricia Kennedy Helman

The phrase "No one is beyond redemption" was headlined on the front page of the *Indianapolis Star* on December 14, 1995. Under the headline, which had a theological ring to it, was a picture of a middle-aged couple standing in front of an exquisite Victorian home, complete with a dramatic turret that stood out boldly against the winter sky. They had been photographed at the end of a trial that brought to a close, legally speaking, eight hours of terror that would color the rest of their lives.

The perpetrator of the nightmare was given the longest sentence that the experienced prosecutor had ever witnessed. The trial attracted the media for two reasons. One was the length of the sentence, but an even more intriguing reason were the statements with which the victims brought closure to a story that began on Friday afternoon, June 10, 1994. The statements were of a nature that are seldom heard in the courts of law, and the surprise of the listeners was obvious.

It was a very special time for Peter Michael, a grant writer for Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis. He and his fiancée, Donna Barr, an interior designer, were just two weeks away from their wedding day. Peter was working alone that day, readying the house where the couple hoped to spend their lives.

redemption

The doorbell rang. A man Peter knew only as Jerry was at the door and asked to use the bathroom. Peter hesitated a moment, and Jerry pushed the door open farther and entered the house. Jerry had once been hired by Peter to do some work on the house and yard after it had come to Peter's attention that Jerry was desperate, with no money for food or rent. Peter also helped Jerry get an apartment, and loaned him tools when he found a job. Coming out of the bathroom, Jerry brandished a handgun, initiating what would become a long and tortuous ordeal for Peter, and for Donna, who would arrive at the home soon thereafter.

One of the tortuous elements in this appalling situation was the slow way in which Jerry worked, and always with the gun in readiness and with death at hand. According to the *Star*, the victims were bound and untied several times, first with rope and later with wire. Twice they were driven to a bank drive-through window where Peter was forced to cash a \$500 check. Another trip was made for more money, this time to another bank. And again, Peter and Donna were held hostage, under the threat of death if any false move was made.

Upon returning to the house, the situation worsened. Once again, Jerry bound the couple tightly and put duct tape over their eyes and mouths, resulting in excruciating pain. Jerry held the gun to Donna's side and threatened again to kill her. Instead he fired the gun at his reluctant host, barely missing Peter's head. The *Star* article brings this part of the story to a close: "Then Jerry tells them he's going to burn the house down, using gasoline, and he tells them to say their last prayer. And as they are saying the Lord's Prayer, he pours a liquid over them. They are just waiting for the match."

Instead, Jerry cut Donna free and took her into an upstairs bedroom. The end came when Donna managed to escape from Jerry, and ran down the stairs and into the night, screaming for help. By God's grace, help was nearby, as a patrol car rounded the street corner and the policemen heard her cries. Within minutes other patrol cars arrived; an hour later, Peter managed to free himself and jumped from the third floor into the yard. The harrowing experience had lasted over eight hours, followed by emergency room treatment for both victims. Two weeks after their ordeal, while the enormity of it all was still stark in their memories, Peter and Donna were married.

Jerry had succumbed to the numbing effects of alcohol, purchased on the outings to the banks. He was found by the police in the second story bathroom, asleep in the bathtub.

The officers took Jerry prisoner and he was held in custody in Indianapolis until the trial was over. A prolonged wait of 18 months followed before the wheels of justice had done their work and the prisoner heard his sentence pronounced. Judge William Young found the prisoner guilty of all charges. The drastic sentence of 251 years reflected the clear evidence of "two kidnappings, two robberies, attempted murder, attempted rape, torture (mental and physical), handgun charges, and the status of being an habitual offender—having criminal records in at least three other states." Judge Young said, "I believe the offender was in a position of trust. He had known these people and knew they had been sympathetic to him in the past, and he took advantage." Peter has often wondered why Jerry chose him to rob, considering that he had befriended Jerry when he was in need.

Star staff writer George McLaren noted "that most violent-crime victims who come to court for sentencing plead for justice and demand the maximum for their assailant. Sometimes they complain even that is not enough." He also noted, however, that "Peter M. Michael did not fit the mold." The courtroom was quieted by Peter stating, "Nobody is beyond redemption, and everyone needs love."

The response from those involved in the proceedings was one of sheer surprise—some weren't certain they had heard correctly. Peter also said he might go to prison and visit Jerry, or they might occasionally send care packages to the one who violently attacked them. Peter made it a point to inform the court of what he knew about Jerry: As a child, Jerry suffered under the rule of an abusive stepfather. As a child, Jerry stuttered and was constantly made fun of in such a way that the building of self-esteem was almost impossible. As a child, Jerry had never known the kind of love and care and direction that Peter and Donna had both known through their parents' concern for their well-being.

In a tearful statement, Donna acknowledged that life would never be the same again. She also expressed the hope that no one else would ever face such torture and suffering. She said, "I, too, feel blessed to have been a part of such a caring and responsible family. While I condemn Jerry's actions, I am reluctant to censure Jerry as a person. I agree wholeheartedly with Peter that we need to teach those who know nothing of God's love and to do all we can to assist in building His kingdom in every part of the world."

In the articles's final paragraph, George McLaren noted,

From the General Secretary

Something to celebrate

Brethren often are better at enumerating our weaknesses than in celebrating our blessings. Even so, it might be well to pause for a moment and count our blessings.

I am reminded of Paul's letter to the Philippians. Though written from a Roman prison, the letter is full of joy. He opens the letter by saying that he constantly prays for them with joy (1:5). He rejoices that Christ is preached, whether for the wrong or right reason (1:18). He suggests that even in our difficulties we are to rejoice without murmuring or arguing (2:14, 17-18).

Foremost for Brethren celebration is the abiding faith of so many in the saving power and living Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is evident all across the church, from the smallest to the largest congregation, from the least known to the best known individual, from the occasional volunteer to the full-time staff member. One is humbled and inspired by the deep and abiding faithfulness of so many.

We can also celebrate the strong sense of family among us in our Annual Conference, our congregations, and all our gatherings.

We can celebrate the growing youth movement in the church. The youth themselves speak of it as a tidal wave about to wash over the church. Some 600 youth are signed up for workcamps this summer and BVS constantly has a hundred or more young adults serving throughout the world to Christ's way of peace, places such as Bosnia, Ireland, and the Middle East.

We can celebrate the older adult movement in the church. The National Older Adult Conference this fall promises to be a feast of fellowship and worship.

Brethren support of disaster response is worth celebrating. Annual contributions have grown to nearly a million dollars. Dozens of congregations prepare throughout the year for annual auctions. Hundreds of Brethren regularly go to disaster sites to help clean up, reconstruct, care for children, and care for the grieving. Our support for Church World Service is far beyond our size.

Our seminary is regaining its strength. Our six colleges are strong. Brethren retirement homes recently received a national citation for quality. Our pension and insurance plans are outstanding.

The new Brethren hymnal is widely celebrated within and beyond the church. The Jubilee curriculum is enthusiastically received and is used by two-thirds of our churches.

Many Brethren are engaged in a witness for peace and justice, of which On Earth Peace Assembly, the Ministry of Reconciliation, and the work in the Sudan are only beginning examples.

EYN in Nigeria continues its remarkable witness to Christ's love. There is a new sense of evangelism to which The Andrew Center contributes. The stewardship of our people has continued at a strong level.

In all these things our people are sustained by the saving power and living spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have our problems to address, but let us remember to pause long enough to rejoice in the Lord always.—DONALD E. MILLER

Donald E. Miller is general secretary of the Church of the Brethren

"Jerry's brutality could easily cause some people to lose their faith in humanity, to turn bitter and hateful. But Peter and Donna expressed concern, not condemnation." Prosecutor

Suzanne O'Malley said. "They are obviously not typical of our normal victims. Peter's background and upbringing is very charitable." O'Malley, who was struck by the couple's unique per-

spective, added, "They are very compassionate people. In a way, I would be surprised that people would be forgiving and compassionate. But I think they truly are."

The interesting responses of the judge, the prosecutor, and the *Star* staff writer all are related to the climate of the culture in America. It is difficult to assess how much the media dominate our lives, often in extremely negative ways. There is a palpable fear concerning the presence of strangers at our doors. People are surprised to actually experience compassion and concern, for most of what creates the news has to do with violence, competition, money, and mayhem of various sorts.

Peter noted that they were pleased to have both the *Indianapolis Star* and the *Indianapolis News* publish their "No one is beyond redemption" message. "However," he said, "we are sad that even though there are many people in this nation who profess to be Christians, our response was seen as so unusual that it warranted a front-page story with a full-color photograph. We like to think it was a slow news day and actually people are not surprised when Christians respond with mercy and forgiveness."

The Michaels are members of Northview Church of the Brethren in Indianapolis. Both of them have church histories that stretch back into the Brethren archives. What happened at the end of the trial was related to their lives as Christians in the Church of the Brethren. It also was related to the sense both of them had concerning a privileged life with parents who had created loving homes and for whom their faith was central in the rearing of their children. They were fortified in the early days following the ordeal by the flow of responses from a caring community. One of Donna's clients, speaking of their courage and kindness remarked, "What a way to walk your faith!"

Said Peter, "It is hard to attend a Christian worship service or a Sunday School class without hearing multiple references to being forgiven and forgiving others. At the sentencing a year and a half after the ordeal, we were

THE LANGUAGE OF GOD

still debating about the concept of forgiveness. Jesus forgave his persecutors while he was still on the cross."

At a recent Sunday service, Donna and Peter were moved by the hymn, "Strong, righteous man of Galilee." The following stanza seemed to speak directly to them:

*Calm, suffering man of Galilee,
Clad in Thy grace we follow thee;
Love at the well, share Martha's loss,
Forgive the nails, and take the cross,
Clad in Thy grace we follow Thee,
Calm, suffering man of Galilee.*

The word "redemption" does not often make it into headline news in America. In this special season, when the earth turns green, when new life appears abundantly and beautifully, when the glorious hymns of Christendom are being sung, when forgiveness of sin is offered to all, the cross is our central motif. How fitting that this story be told. In their concern for the one who persecuted them, they were quick to note how painful and shabby the life of Jerry had been. A quotation from Pascal seems lighted by truth. He said, "Drink too deeply of the cup of sin, and you shall find goodness staring at you. Drink too deeply of the cup of goodness, and you shall find sin staring in your face."

I think of that admonition at this time, when we must all go to the cross and confess our sins. It is a wilderness time, inviting us to face our own souls and note that "perfection attends no one." It becomes a time of forgiving and being forgiven, of blessing and being blessed. For through the story of Jesus' death, and his willingness to take on the sins of the world, we are all recipients of that gracious truth exemplified on the cross: "No one is beyond redemption!" *M.*

Patricia Kennedy Helman, a member of Lincolnshire Church of the Brethren, Fort Wayne, Ind., is an ordained minister and a writer.

Peter Michael was born in Garkida, Nigeria, the son of Herbert and Marianne Michael, missionaries in Africa. He is a graduate of Manchester College, Bethany Seminary, and Indiana University. Donna Michael is the daughter of Francis and Evelyn Barr of Fort Wayne, Indiana. She is a graduate of Purdue University and has her own interior design business.

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On the New Testament as our creed

Dean Garrett

I, too, carry a Brethren's Card

I appreciated seeing the Brethren's Card appear once again in MESSNGR (September 1995, page four). It might be a good idea to print the card at least once a year since there are many people who have not even heard of this brief statement of basic Brethren beliefs. I happen to be a card-carrying Brethren.

The card was printed in the 1925 conference minutes, not because it was adopted as a position paper, but because it was revised for distribution as an accurate summary of Brethren beliefs and practices. The card was printed in the 1925, 1940, and 1946 pastor's manuals as an aid to help instruct new members. It would be a good idea to expect our pastors to teach these traditional values yet today. I have found at least 12 congregations (from five districts) that have printed this doctrinal statement over the past few years in their local church directories.

While some of the statements on the card are basic evangelical beliefs of orthodox Christianity, other statements are influenced by Anabaptist/Pietist practices, a study of the early Christians, and a literal interpretation of the New Testament. These statements are matters of principle rather than matters of method. While methods may vary from one congregation

to another, or from one period of history to another, principles are timeless and should not be subject to endless revisions or elimination. Yes, we should be open to new truth, but that does not necessarily mean that "old" truth has to be discarded in favor of the latest theological fad. As a matter of fact, our creed—the New Testament—admonishes us to avoid superficial faddishness. "Truth" should have a certain perennial quality about it, or else it is "falsehood."

Any doctrinal description of the Brethren should not be used to set a limit to our faith. Our creed has 260 chapters in it, but keep in mind that not all are referenced in the card.

Maintaining the New Testament as our creed, however, does not forbid us from stating what we understand our creed to say. There is nothing wrong with the statement: "We believe in feetwashing," for example. Neither is there anything wrong with stating that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that he brought from heaven a saving Gospel. Anything that we state should be subject to our creed. Some of Alexander Mack's writing consists of doctrinal explanation of Scripture.

You would think that after nearly 500 years of studying the New Testament together that we would come to grips with at least some of the things it teaches. It does little good to just sit around studying it if we never draw any conclusions about what we study. Rather than being closed to new truth, we should have a willingness to graduate to a new level from time to time. Being settled on some of the things that our creed teaches rules out a state of constant confusion.

Let us remember that God has not left us on our own. He has given us His Spirit and also the written Word. It seems that even the evangelical segment of the church often goes after what is more palatable, instead of what is scriptural. Perhaps it would do well

for us to someday have an Annual Conference with the primary business consisting of studying the New Testament. *M.*

Dean Garrett is pastor of Pleasant Valley Church of the Brethren, near Union City, Ohio, and vice minister with Fruitful Vine House Project, West Alexandria, Ohio.

Jan Orndorff

A war memorial adorns my wall

My favorite war memorial hangs matted and framed on my living room wall. (See October Editorial, "Going to grieve, not to gloat.")

Between my junior and senior years of high school, I spent 10 weeks as an exchange student in Germany. There I was struck by the German way of discussing history. Everything was referenced by its relationship to "the war."

The example of the war's destruction that moved me the most was a place along the Berlin Wall. My host father pointed it out to me, saying, "The house I grew up in was on this street. It survived the war, but was leveled by the Russians when they built the wall."

My host father was one of the most intelligent, caring, and compassionate people I have ever met. He had served in Hitler's army. He had not wanted to, but felt that there was no choice. The incongruity of this gentle man killing people shocked me.

Furthermore, while the German people as a whole impressed me as having the same mix of heroes and villains as we Americans, I had a deep sense of tragedy as I realized that many of the truly good German men I met were World War II veterans who had tried to kill American soldiers, some of whom I also know and respect.

The reverse also was true. I spent

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We do not acknowledge receipt of obituaries. Opinions pieces are printed only at sampling of what we receive. All Opinions are edited for publication.

Memorials of war

many hours struggling with the implications of war and strengthening the practical side of what, to that point, simply had been a theological peace position.

As I was leaving Germany, many people gave me farewell gifts. One woman brought me a portfolio of watercolor paintings done by her husband before his death in World War II. She asked me to choose the one I wanted. I took my time, because I wanted a memento that captured the totality of both the positive and the thought-provoking aspects of my experience. I chose a picture of an old-fashioned German street. The half-timber houses were painted with bright colors, and the street was orderly and well-kept in the German way. The feeling evoked by the painting was that of cheerfulness, welcome, and peace. The title was "*Der Flöhvirkel 1945 zerstört*" ("Flohvirkel Street, Destroyed in 1945").

That's my favorite war memorial, hanging matted and framed on my living room wall.

M.

Jan Orndorff is a member of Valley Pike Church of the Brethren in Mauertown, Va

Don Hess

They're about people, not war

As a Brethren veteran who attended the dedication of the Korean War Veterans Memorial, I did not see nor do I know any veterans who visit a memorial to gloat (See October Editorial). Rather, veterans I know go to those memorials to grieve the loss of friends and comrades just as the editor grieved for his great-great grandfather. We do not see them as monuments or glorifiers of wars. I would hope people could see them as

memorials to veterans.

The Korean War Veterans Memorial (not the Korean War Memorial as it was described) is totally focused on honoring Korean War veterans. What was described as a "macho bunch of warriors slogging their way through a muddy battlefield—a tribute to military action." I see as cold, weary soldiers, clad in foul-weather ponchos, suffering from the trauma and emotions of front line service in war. I see faces showing features of Caucasian, African-American, Asian, Hispanic, and American Indian. I see the inscription, "Lest we forget—the dead, the missing, the captured, the wounded. Freedom is Not Free." What I did not see was any mention of this inscription in the editorial.

As to the difference between the Korean War Veterans Memorial and other memorials, they should be different. They should symbolize the events or circumstances unique to that period of time, as the Korean War Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam War Veterans Memorial capture so well. Veterans don't perceive all memorials as symbols of war. They perceive them as symbols of the faces of those whom they served with—some who came home, some who did not, and some who were captured. I see the Korean War Veterans Memorial as a memorial of faces which complements a memorial of names for Vietnam veterans.

I have spent many years working with Veterans for Peace and other forums in opening and maintaining dialog between conscientious objectors and veterans. I am saddened by such provocative words as "a macho bunch of warriors," "chest thumpers," and "glorifiers of war" to characterize those with a different viewpoint. They weren't necessary to support the position against the proliferation of memorials to veterans (not to wars).

M.

Don Hess is a member of Oakton Church of the Brethren in Vienna, Va



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Key to 21st century

Reading about the adoption by Annual Conference of a creedal statement about the nature of Jesus (August, page 14) reminded me of a shipboard encounter 40 years ago.

On my way to Nigeria as a mission ary doctor, I became acquainted with a French Canadian Roman Catholic

priest headed for France. In our last conversation before he disembarked, I said, "Perhaps we will worship together someday." The priest, after a pause, replied, "Yes, when you believe as we do."

That ended our friendship and our conversation. He left cloaked in his sense of religious superiority; I left in amazement and anger.

The adoption of creedal statements—litmus tests for correctness of belief—results in a narrowing of viewpoint and an impediment to our ability to cooperate with other people.

Early astronauts circling the moon looked back and saw the planet Earth amid the myriad stars. In the vastness of space, Earth alone was their home, and it alone is the home to all human-kind and every known living thing.

Understanding this must be a watershed event for all religions. Religious thought, pronouncements, and activity

must now recognize that our survival and that of future generations depend on living and cooperating with our neighbors in the stewardship of the earth. We must shed the religious concept of "chosen people," which relegates others to a lesser stature and destroys cooperation.

To enter the 21st century effectively, the Church of the Brethren must develop and adopt paradigms that recognize the mutual interdependence of Earth's people.

*Marvin I. Blough
Nampa, Idaho*

Behold that star

I have read many explanations for the star of Bethlehem (December 1995, page 27). My father, Edward Kintner, led me to an understanding of what the "star" might have been—the

**“When someone seems different,
how can I affirm kinship?”**



Steve and Denise (Shively) Rickleff '69 work with lower-income, inner-city children in the Indianapolis Public Schools. A social worker, Steve juggles counseling and monitoring duties. Denise, a psychologist, tests, counsels, and mentors. Recognizing diversity as an opportunity not a barrier, both are committed to peer mediation. They diffuse anger, give validity to feelings, and tap potential, believing peaceful resolution is a lifestyle rather than merely a philosophy.

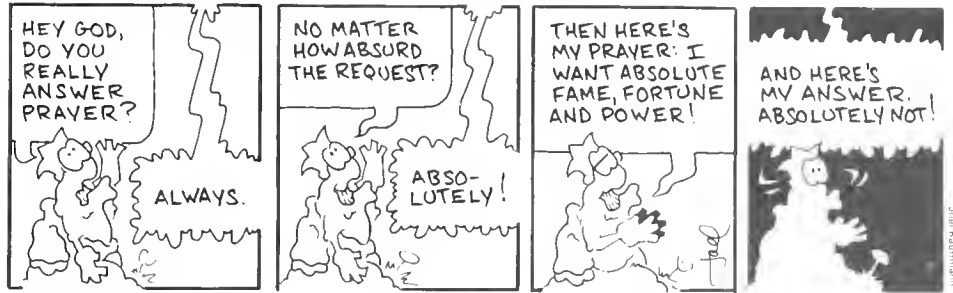
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Pontius' Puddle

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planet Venus.

The key to the problem is the fact that Venus can be seen in the daytime. That fits the scriptural description of what the wise men saw. If there was a miracle, it was the fact that the wise men were traveling at a time when Venus was near the earth, when the planet can be seen in the daytime with the naked eye. It is so positioned every year and a half.

*Elgin P. Kintner
Maryville, Tenn.*

More hospitality hints

The February MESSENGER carried a general theme of hospitality through it.

Before the morning service at my church, the pastor moves down the aisles speaking to members and looking for visitors to meet. And during the service there is a break for people to shake hands and greet one another. In this, special emphasis is put on welcoming visitors. As a result, we look for visitors before and after the service.

Pastors especially need to lead in showing hospitality. They may be meeting new people searching for a church home.

*Melvin Holt
Bloomington, Ill.*

Valuing God's peace

My esteem for the Church of the Brethren was forcefully strengthened after reading "Brethren and the 'Peace Process'" by Mervin Keeney (February, page 12). Rarely are people who are concerned with making peace given such an opportunity to analyze the Middle East peace process in the light of the imbalance that exists between the American-Israeli negotiators and those representing the Palestinian people.

Let's hope publications like MESSENGER will continue to help their readers avoid simplistic conclusions and give the peace process the closer look it deserves. I believe Keeney's



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Daily prayer guide:

Sunday: Your congregation's ministries

Monday: Annual Conference officers

Tuesday: General Board and staff

Wednesday: District executives, Bethany Seminary, colleges and university

Thursday: General Services

Friday: Parish Ministries

Saturday: World Ministries

April prayer concerns:

Congregation: Powerful Easter worship services, Children's ministry programs.

Conference: Moderator Fred Bernhard as he conducts denominational briefings.

General Board: Staff during the current "redesign" process, Redesign Steering Committee, Executive Committee, and Administrative Council, meeting April 19-20.

Districts and schools: Bible commentary event at Bethany Seminary, April 28-29, Regional youth conferences, District executives working on pastoral placements.

General Services: Brethren Historical Library Archives employees.

Parish Ministries: Christian Citizenship Seminar, April 15-18, CoBACE conference, April 19-21.

World Ministries: Peace programs, Brethren Service Center.

Letters

article goes a long way in reflecting the Church of the Brethren as truly a "Church that values God's peace in the fullest and richest sense of that word."

Rita McGaughey
LaCrosse, Wis.

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Wrestling with Jesus' identity

"No other gospel" was the highlight of the January MESSENGER (page 18). I found the article to be honest and open with regard to the person of Jesus Christ. From my perspective, our denomination wrestles with the identity of Jesus. You have helped advance what I feel is an acceptable position on the topic.

James I. Chronister
New Paris, Ohio

BVS 'pay' is no compromise

John C. Graybeal's January letter to the editor "Will We Pay Our BVSers?" caught my attention. The same news that dismays Mr. Graybeal pleases me. I am encouraged by the realization that the US government values contributions made by Brethren Volunteer Service workers and is willing to provide more than a proverbial pat on the back. I don't see this as government compromising BVS. I recently returned from three years in BVS, and although my projects don't qualify for the \$4,725 education grants, education grants do have an appeal.

Chris Fornex
Silver Spring, Md

CLASSIFIED ADS

ATTENTION—RV tent campers, next time travelling (May-Sept) through southwestern Virginia near Roanoke, make Camp Bethel one of the stops. Call Camp Bethel for site rates & availability. Tel (540) 992-2940

INVITATION—Shalom Church of the Brethren, a new & growing fellowship in Durham, N.C., invites Brethren moving to Research Triangle area (Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill) to worship w/us. Eager to provide moving assistance (unloading, childcare, area info) for those relocating to area. For info, contact Fellowship, PO Box 15607, Durham, NC 27704. Tel (919) 490-6422. E-mail, ShalomCOB@aol.com

POSITION OPENING—Hartville Meadows an ICF-MR 32-bed facility in Hartville, Ohio, has immediate opening for Administrator. Business background w/computer knowledge & interpersonal skills necessary. Two or more years of administrative & management in MR or related health care field preferred. Send resume & salary requirement to Hartville Meadows, 844 Sunnyside St S.W., Hartville, OH 44632, Attn: Personnel Committee

THOUGHT-FOR-THE-WEEK—Offered to pastors: "God will whisper His secrets to anyone who will listen," "No Christian rises higher than his prayer," & "The Ten Commandments are not the Ten Suggestions" just a few of the single-sentence spiritual thoughts for meditations, bulletins, outdoor signs. For 100 Thoughts, send a SASE to Thought-For-The-Week, Route 1 Box 13-61 High Hill, MO 63350. No charge for this service.

TRAVEL—Pilgrimage to Israel, Jordan, & Greece Oct. 20-Nov. 2, 1996 (14 days). You are invited to join Wendell & Joan Bohrer on their 10th pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Visit Jericho, Capernaum, Jerusalem, Hebron, the Dead Sea, Qumran, Petra, Athens, Delphi, and much more. Cost \$2,489 from New York. For info, write or call 8520 Royal Meadow Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46217. Tel Fax (317) 882-5067

WANTED—Info about life of Barbara Nickey, M.D., Diaries, articles, letters, photos, personal memories, etc. Write to: Jo Wampler, RR 1 Box 269, Mountain City, TN 37683. Tel (423) 727-4722.

New Members

Note: Congregations are asked to submit only the names of actual new members of the denomination. Do not include names of people who have merely transferred their membership from another Church of the Brethren congregation.

Acts Covenant, Atl. N.E.: Josh Boyd, Lisa Carrillo, John & Rose Dienner, Steve Eikenberry, Josh Gibbel, Anne Gingerich, Theda Good, Vicki Groff, Jeremy Harder, Derartu & Fedisa Kilifa, Ellie Newswanger, Naomi Paine, Rick Rutter, Dustin Sauder, Janelle Shantz, Jay Shertzer, Kyle & Nathan Smoker, Gerry & Sheila Stauffer, Teresa Stoltzfoos, Travis Yoder

Agape, N. Ind.: Jim & Renee Kart, Tim Shipe, Elizabeth & Sarah Spurgeon

Bannerville, M. PA.: Tabetha Gjendem, Steve Wagner, Amanda Wright

Beaver Creek, Mid-Atl.: Mary & Michael Creek, Jamie Doyle, Matthew Keefer, Brent Myers, Carrie Shank, Natalie Wolfe

Beaver Creek, S. Ohio: Earl McDaniel

Bunkertown, S. Pa.: Briana Bashore, Sabrina Boop, Kurt & Marc Hoffman, Matt Houtz, Jonathan Hummel, Ruth Miller, Sandra Treaster, Adam Truitt, Angelica Weaver

Conestoga, Atl. N.E.: Christopher Minnier, Mark Oellig, Jordan Yingling

County Line, W. Pa.: Amanda, Betty, Roy & Roy Jr. Countryman; Kate Healy; Eleanor Stauffer; Samuel Withrow

Florin, Atl. N.E.: Caitlyn Bowers, Mindy Kline, Laura Pepper

Fraternity, Virgina: Charlotte Beckner, Kelsie Chappell, Elizabeth Schumacher

Hanover, S. Pa.: Glen & Helen Kinsel, Raymond Musselman

Keyser, W. Marva: Robert Barber, Margaret Keister, Serena Liller, Lee Ridenour, Marindy Weaver, Melanie Wilson

Lacey Community, Ore. (Wash.): Susie & Etta Callahan, Kanina Chavez, Brad Frederickson, Loren Gregory, Harold Linderson, Hazel Nichols, Shelley & Tim Reisher, Haiyang Zhang

Lampeter, Atl. N.E.: Donald Billet, Jerry & Rhea Clunan, Deborah Keener

Liberty Mills, S-C Ind.: Chris Clark, Drew Royer

Live Oak, Pac. S.W.: Lillie Alder, Katie Bryant, Danny & Debra Fillmore, Evelyn

Nesmith, Darylene & Norman Stein

Pyrrmont, S. C. Ind.: Randy Welk

Salamonic, S. C. Ind.: Jane & Tom Schenkel, Marsha Timbers

Sheldon, N. Plains: Jared & Jed Cox, Sheena Rolston

South Bay Community, Pac. S.W.: Ann Martin

Union Center, N. Ind.: Aaron & Eric Bolt, Annemarie Buss, Dawn Deak, Andrew Kauffman, Rachel Neff, Cheryl Stouder

White Oak, Atl. N.E.: Reba Brubaker, Reuben Cater, Donna Hahn, Mark Reed, Jennifer Stauffer, Jennifer Trupe, Brandon Ziegler

220th BVS Orientation Unit

Beck, Petra, Wehretal, Germany, to Catholic Worker House, San Antonio, Tex.

Brubaker, Peter, Mount Joy, Pa., to Trees for Life, Wichita, Kan.

Cartwright, Kimball, Pittfield, Mass., to Casa de Proyecto Libertad, Harlingen, Tex.

Guhl, Tobias, Pirmasens, Germany, to Camp Myrtlewood, Myrtle Point, Ore.

Key, Robert, Oak Park, Ill., to PACE, Belfast, Northern Ireland

McElvany, Scott, Upland, Calif., to Mladi Most ASF Mostar, Zagreb, Croatia

Nygaard, Kai, Skaala, Norway, to COBYS Family Services, Leola, Pa.

Pesaturo, Carolyn, Venice, Fla., to Amsterdam, Netherlands

Schaudel, Carlos, Leola, Pa., to The Palms of Sebring (Fla.)

Schoeder, Thomas, Dautphetal, Germany, to Bread and Roses, Olympia, Wash.

Shively, Scott, North Manchester, Ind., to Computer Operations, COB General Offices, Elgin, Ill.

Ware, Rita, Salisbury, Md., to Interfaith Conference, Washington, D.C.

Wedding Anniversaries

Anglemyer, Frank and Dorothy, Nappanee, Ind., 55

Bell, Ammon and Ruth, Hummelstown, Pa., 50

Blough, Ira and Dorothy, Chambersburg, Pa., 50

Bontrager, Joseph and Kathryn, Silver Lake, Ind., 60

Byerly, Robert and Helen, South Bend, Ind., 60

Chandler, Robert and Betty, Beaver Creek, Ohio, 50

Deardorff, Paul and Mable, Chambersburg, Pa., 65

Doolen, Guy and Fern, La Place, Ill., 55

Erb, Samual and Beulah, Ephrata, Pa., 75

Ferry, Don and Cora Mae, Martinsburg, Pa., 55

Foor, Clifford and Naomi, Curryville, Pa., 50

Fox, Delbert and Bernice, Goshen, Ind., 60

Gougnour, Joe and Alice, Woodbury, Pa., 50

Guyer, Ted and Evelyn, Woodbury, Pa., 55

Harshbarger, Charles and Dorothy, Peoria, Ill., 60

Hirsch, Louis and Evelyn, La Place, Ill., 55

Holmes, Harold and Wilma, Wakarusa, Ind., 50

Lindsay, William and Mildred, Huntingdon, Pa., 60

McCaman, Samuel and Donna, Florida, Fla., 50

Metsker, Sylbert and Arloa, Lacey, Wash., 60

Metzler, Elwood and Helen, Curryville, Pa., 55

Millard, Edward and Ann, North Canton, Ohio, 55

Miller, Warren and Treva, Beaver Creek, Ohio, 50

Monninger, George and Maria, Hagerstown, Md., 60

Norris, Hugh and Velma, Dayton, Ohio, 60

Ritchey, James and Evelyn, Curryville, Pa., 50

Robison, Ralph and Lucille, Montebello, Calif., 60

Ronne, Joe and Louise, Lacey, Wash., 50

Roth, Harold and Julia, Lacey, Wash., 50

Rowlands, Bill and Ginny, Wyomissing, Pa., 50

Rudy, Ray and Minnie, Huntingdon, Pa., 65

Schieber, Virgil and Alma, Goshen, Ind., 50

Singer, Ray and Margaret, McAlisterville, Pa., 60

Sollenberger, Robert and Verna, Annville, Pa., 50

Spade, Clarence and Mildred, McAlisterville, Pa., 50

Winc, Clarence and Fern, Mount Sidney, Va., 60

Ziegler, Wilma and Myra, Lebanon, Pa., 55

Zuck, Joe and Ruth, Overland Park, Kan., 60

Pastoral Placements

Brockway, Wayne, from East Nimishillen to Center East Nimishillen, N. Ohio

Caldwell, Rodney, from Freeport, Ill. Wis., to Yellow Creek, Ill. Wis.

Glover, Clara, from secular to Brook Run, N. Ohio

Jacobsen, Bruce, Bethel, N. Ohio, from interim to part-time

Jones, Kermit, from secular to Sugar Grove, W. Pa.

Menker, Mel, from Medina, N. Ohio, to Oak Park, W. Marva

Metzler, David, from secular to Cedar Run, Shen.

Moon, Samuel G., from secular to Asher Glade, W. Marva

Moore, Lorene, from other

denomination to Good Shepherd, Mo., Ark.

Rulon, Dale, from Kent, N. Ohio, to Lake Breeze, N. Ohio

Shumaker, Terry L., from Buena Vista Stone, Shen., to Pleasant Dale, S. C. Ind.

Yoder, Leon, from Harmony to Broadfording, Mid-Atl.

Licensing/ Ordination

Bosler, Lucy, ordained Jan. 15, 1996, Rice Lake, Ill. Wis.

Cayford, Cheryl, licensed Sept. 15, 1995, Highland Avenue, Ill. Wis.

Deeter, Jeanne, licensed Aug. 24, 1995, Mack Memorial, S. Ohio

Fisher, Neil, ordained May 5, 1995, Mohrsville, Atl. N.E.

Hinkle, John Shannon, licensed Jan. 15, 1996, Martin Creek, Ill. Wis.

Knotts, Donald Raymond, licensed Nov. 9, 1995, Knobley, W. Marva

Moon, Samuel G., licensed Nov. 9, 1995, Gortner, W. Marva

Schultz, Gary, licensed Jan. 15, 1996, Astoria, Ill. Wis.

Shelton, Susan, ordained Nov. 4, 1995, Middle District, S. Ohio

Shockney, Richard, licensed Sept. 5, 1995, Salem, S. Ohio

Tinkal, Paul D., ordination received Jan. 15, 1996, West Eel River, S. C. Ind.

Weatherholt, Otis "Buzz", July 29, 1995, South Mill Creek, W. Marva

Wolfe, David E., ordained Jan. 15, 1996, Manchester, S/C Ind.

Deaths

Andrews, Edwin, 75, Nappanee, Ind., Dec. 20, 1995

Bard, E. Glenn, 84, Chambersburg, Pa., April 25, 1995

Bense, Edward V., 56, Windber, Pa., Aug. 4, 1995

Bontrager, G. Joseph, 86, Silver Lake, Ind., Dec. 30, 1995

Bryan, Irvin, 84, Lacey, Wash., May 10, 1995

Clark, Roger, 90, Greenville, Ohio, June 25, 1995

Coddington, Mae, 95, Troy, Ohio, Nov. 14, 1995

Conover, Olive, 95, Nappanee, Ind., Nov. 10, 1995

Cook, Jeffrey, 58, Pipp City, Ohio, Dec. 25, 1994

Cook, Maurice, 90, Lacey, Wash., Oct. 24, 1995

Deardorff, Helen M., 82, Hartsville, Ohio, Nov. 4, 1995

Derringer, Mabel, 86, Greenville, Ohio, April 25, 1995

Fackler, Catherine, 79, Syracuse, Ind., Nov. 17, 1995

Feazelle, Sarah, 51, Roanoke, Va., Sept. 17, 1995

Firebaugh, Ola Mildred, 89, Roanoke, Va., Sept. 3, 1995

Flora, Betty W., 68, Boones Mill, Va., Dec. 22, 1995

Flora, Mildred, 85, Boones Mill, Va., Nov. 19, 1995

Fronk, Martha, 87, McAlisterville, Pa., Jan. 29, 1995

Frushour, Lelia E., 85, Chambersburg, Pa., Feb. 8, 1995

Geiman, Michael, 47, Chambersburg, Pa., Oct. 27, 1995

Grosnickle, Roy, 56, Stonelick, Ohio, Dec. 4, 1995

Guyer, Edward S., 79, Roaring Springs, Pa., Jan. 29, 1996

Hale, Edwin "Pete", 78, La Place, Ill., Dec. 10, 1995

Hepler, Arlene, 72, Nappanee, Ind., Dec. 15, 1995

Hicks, Lottie R., 81, Roanoke, Va., March 9, 1995

Hodges, Rufus F., 87, Roanoke, Va., April 3, 1995

Hoover, Walter, 77, Windber, Pa., Sept. 28, 1995

Horst, Paul D., 81, Hagers-town, Md., Nov. 30, 1995

Hummer, Mae, 86, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 15, 1995

Jackson, G. Larry, 99, Cerro Gordo, Ill., Jan. 24, 1996

Jamison, Levi E., 97, Boones Mill, Va., Dec. 21, 1995

Keepert, Evelyn, 85, Wyoming, Pa., Nov. 24, 1995

Knavel, Vergie, 95, Windber, Pa., July 1, 1995

Layman, Weldon E., 65, Harrisonburg, Va., March 17, 1995

Leight, Mary F., 78, Chambersburg, Pa., May 50, 1995

Miles, Charles, 86, Queen City, Mo., Oct. 6, 1995

Miller, Daniel L., 96, New Lebanon, Ohio, Dec. 15, 1995

Minser, Donald R., 78, Hartville, Ohio, Dec. 7, 1995

Myers, Olive R., 87, Chambersburg, Pa., Aug. 20, 1995

Over, Naomi, 84, Roaring Spring, Pa., Jan. 11, 1996

Overstreet, Gordon H., 80, Penhook, Va., Dec. 22, 1995

Picking, John F., 88, Chambersburg, Pa., April 19, 1995

Puffenbarger, Virgil, 74, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 5, 1995

Reed, Donald, 80, Olympia Wash., Sept. 11, 1995

Rice, Maude, 89, Lacey, Wash., Oct. 25, 1995

Schumacher, DeLane C, Winston-Salem, N.C., Nov. 24, 1995

Seifman, Wayne, 79, Dayton, Ohio, Aug. 12, 1995

Slichter, Evelyn R., 88, Chambersburg, Pa., Oct. 18, 1995

Snyder, Maurice, 85, North Canton, Ohio, July 26, 1995

Suhre, Arthur, 76, Tipp City, Ohio, Jan. 18, 1995

Wampler, Edna M., 95, Harrisonburg, Va., April 17, 1995

Warden, Samuel, 68, Winston-Salem, N.C., Sept. 4, 1995

Wehrley, Walter, 84, Vandalia, Ohio, Nov. 14, 1994

Wirick, Richard H., 67, Windber, Pa., Aug. 15, 1995

Leeward to stay on even keel

Spending some time in Virginia in late winter, I found reading matter to my liking in a new biography of Robert E. Lee. Lee, the great and revered Confederate general, is a fit subject for any true Virginian.

As a subject of my interest, he goes back a good way. When I was a high school junior, Lee was the focus of a research paper I did in English class. As best I recall, it was the first "major" piece of research and writing I had done. I was quite pleased with my finished paper; particularly taken was I with its title, "Only a Poor Old Confederate." I picked that up from a reference the modest soldier once made to himself. Indeed, I presumed that, with my stack of index cards, extensive bibliography, rough drafts, carefully done footnotes, and typed manuscripts, I had produced the definitive work on Lee for that time.

But even if it were that, my work has been superseded by that of other scholars, so I was ready during my recent Virginia interlude to read of Lee again and see what fresh insights there were to gain. And there were many.

I did not read the book with any thought of finding grist for a *MESSINGER* editorial. But this current biographer made much of Lee's religious faith and life, and set me to reflecting.

Lee was not an overtly religious person. Although he did not join the Episcopal church until he was 46 years old, Lee always had been a faithful, active church attender, and he mouthed all the correct pieties expected of him.

Let it be clear that Lee is not a martial hero of mine. I do not resonate to his military career or to his acceptance of using armed force and its attendant violence to gain a nation's ends. I abhor his belief that government and society should be run by the elite—the well-born, the wealthy, the powerful—and, although Lee freed his slaves, it was more because he wearied of having to manage them (by force) than because he believed they deserved freedom and equality. Indeed, by today's standards, Lee held scandalously racist views, believing that African Americans were inferior in all ways to whites.

What intrigues me is the question of what sustained Lee throughout the terrible war in which he cast his lot with the enemy of the Union, and eventually led its armies in what he figured from the beginning was a lost cause. How do you keep going

when you know you are going to lose? And, having lost the war, what sustains you when you see that the reunited nation is never going to recapture the old values you had so revered? Something sustained Lee. But what was it? Surely the answer would hold a moral lesson worth learning.

Lee talked a lot about "duty," and I am not sure what all he meant by that. But he seemed always to count the cost, take the course he believed it was right to take (not necessarily the one best calculated to reward him, you understand), and then tough it out, come what may. That's faith as I understand it: It matters not that I succeed, but that I have been faithful.

Another thing that seemed to sustain Lee, and which ties right in with the other, was his knack, when setbacks came, of making the best of it—*not* becoming depressed and grieving for what might have been, but accepting the new reality and starting afresh from that point. I personally have known some people with that same attitude, and they all seemed to live with a calmness and serenity that made their life rich.

One day during the time I was making Lee's biography my bedtime reading, I was driving through wooded Virginia hills and came upon a landscape ruined by loggers. I found myself wishing that there was some way to stay the hands that seem bent on destroying the beauty of everything they touch, some way to preserve things the way I would want them to be.

That set me to thinking: Well, what is it, really, that we can hold onto, when we control so little (actually nothing) in this world? Mulling the answer to my own question, I realized anew that ultimately, all we have is our faith in God. All that we hold onto, we have to turn loose.

As I drove along that road through the mangled forest, it struck me that my thoughts were very much in tune with what sustained Robert E. Lee in the devastation of the defeated Confederacy. All that is material fails us, ultimately. It matters not that we succeed, but that we are faithful.

If my conscience had been disturbed that I was reading and enjoying the biography of a military man, it now was assuaged. I put the scene of pillaged hillsides behind me and continued along the road.—K.T.

Messenger

study guide

April 1996

Stations of the Resurrection (pages 16–19)

Our Bible study for April centers on the journey of Jesus as depicted by the artist and the corresponding scriptures, with comments and questions for group discussion or individual meditation.

1. *He set his face* (Luke 9:51, Matt. 16:21, 17:12) Jesus' disciples were looking for a royal, Davidic messiah. The thought of the Messiah having to suffer was beyond their comprehension (Matt. 16:22, Mark 9:50–52). So with his closest followers not aware of the role he would take, nor of the depth of his agony, can you imagine how very alone Jesus must have felt in those last moments on the cross (Matt. 27:46, Psa. 22:1–5)? But this was, as the writer John puts it, the purpose for which he had come (John 12:27).

2. *Two basins* (John 13:3–5, 12–16) Consider the contrast between the two paintings. Notice when Pilot is in charge, how he and Jesus relate, including body language, and how he uses the basin. By comparison, Jesus' style of "leadership" is to become as a servant (John 13:12–16). As followers of Christ, what is our relationship to those with whom we serve? What manner of leadership is ours?

3. *Peter denies Jesus* (Mark 14:29–31, 66–72; John 13:36–38, 18:25–27) What a collage the artist gives us! At once we focus on the proud rooster in full voice and on Jesus with hands bound before the authorities, while Peter suddenly, at the crowing of the cock, realizes his worse fears have come true. Notice in the texts how in denying his master, he denies himself as well, even down to disclaiming his nationality and accent. So when we deny allegiance to Christ, what do we deny in ourselves?

4. *The crucifixion* (Luke 23:33–34, Heb. 4:14–16, 9:11–15) Jesus' mission was one on our behalf, that through his life and death we might experience forgiveness and know God's love and acceptance in our lives. In what ways does that open up new possibilities for living and loving?

5. *The scourging* (Matt. 27:28–29) What are you reminded of by the Centurion in armor behind Jesus? Or by the barbed wire? Or the crown of thorns? What is it about our humanity that we make others the targets of hostility? Jesus served as a lightning rod to discharge the mob's anger at his authority and straightforward goodness. What are some of the lightning rods for anger in our day? How does the cycle of retaliation finally stop?

6. *Mary, mother of Jesus* (Luke 1:58) Are there times when the call of discipleship places you in a position of unpopularity? In such times, what good fruits can be born out of your obedience?

7. *Resurrection* (Luke 24:5, Rev. 21:5, 25) Can you agree with the artist's untraditional title of this article, emphasizing the resurrection and thus affirming that the journey of Jesus was "ultimately toward life, not death?" Is this a helpful point of view as you consider the renewing power it offers for our lives? Note the depiction of the empty tomb.



8. For additional consideration, as an example of how the resurrection can be for us “a way of living” (page 16), complete your Bible study with a brief summary of the story on pages 22–26, as a contemporary example of “how life is to be found and lived.” Can you see parallels between Jesus’ journey and that story? What are some aspects of new life and victory coming out of that story?

Doubting the reigning Jesus (pages 14–15)

1. When you read that even among the 11 disciples closest to Jesus, some had doubts even as they met one last time, are you left with a sense that you’re getting a realistic report about people like us?
2. So what of our doubts today? With violence so prominent in our streets and corruption at the seats of power, do you sometimes doubt that Jesus really reigns with authority? Note how the author turns our doubts into reassurance, that even when you’re not sure, you’re among some of the faithful! And just because you can’t see signs of Jesus reigning over all the earth doesn’t mean he isn’t! After all, can you and I hope to be unflinching in our trust every moment of our lives? I doubt it!

Angels: They’re everywhere

1. What’s your favorite angel story from the Bible? If angel appearances don’t readily come to mind, check out Gen. 16–19; Job 1–2; Daniel 5:24–50, 9:21; Psa. 91:11; Luke 1:26–58, 2:12–15; and Mark 1:12. Can you see a pattern of angels as messengers? And of their being subordinate to God?
2. Check out both the cause for rejoicing and cause for concern given on page 21. Are you one who needs help in seeing beyond a purely scientific view of our world? Have you ever thought of a stranger as an angel in disguise? If so, in what sense did that person help you in serving or praising God?

No one is beyond redemption (pages 22–25)

1. When news reporters say, “Peter . . . did not fit the mold” (page 25) and “they (Peter and Donna) are obviously not typical of our normal victims,” what is the prevailing sense of a “mold” or of being “normal?” The hymn stanza quoted on page 25 suggests another “mold” by which our lives may be formed, that of the “calm, suffering man of Galilee.” So how normal are you? And by which standard do you measure?
2. What about forgiveness, really? How do you let go of your anger and your desire for retribution when you’ve been violated? Does it help to remember that we all need forgiveness and redemption? Or that “Jesus forgave his persecutors while he was still on the cross?”
5. It’s common to hear people decry how much violence fills the news. But if news is defined as what is unusual, there is at least some small measure of comfort that bad news still is unusual and not the norm. So in a society where “no one is beyond redemption” becomes a headline, or where people are surprised when Christians respond with mercy and forgiveness (page 25), there is cause for concern. What can we do in families, congregations, and communities to establish acts of mercy and love as the norm?

Editorial—Leeward to stay on even keel (page 52)

1. It’s an age old question, really, whether to be faithful to your principles or successful in the eyes of the world. Which is it for you? Think of examples of when you’ve been in such a dilemma.
2. With this issue’s resurrection emphasis, the contrast becomes clear that a Christian convinced of the ultimate triumph of God’s reign over the world has a luxury General Lee did not have—being called to service for a winning cause. How do you answer the editor’s call for a commitment that is faithful, leaving the future in God’s hands?



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N

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The 210th annual meeting of the Church of the Brethren returns to Ohio's Queen City from July 2-7, and our extensive Conference preview highlights the week's activities.

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The Committee on Ministerial Leadership will present its final report to Conference delegates, and it lists the ills that are affecting the denomination's ministerial leadership structure. Is there any good news? Robert Faus gives us the answer in his preview of the report, while Nevin Dulabaum presents some tangible data in a sidebar. Other business items expected to be considered at Conference are summarized in sidebars by Paula Wilding.

What, where, and when 14

Want to know what will happen when and where? Paula Wilding includes it all in this roundup of miscellaneous information.

Brethren in the land of the Miamis 18

When settlers moved into southwestern Ohio's Miami Valley in the late 18th century, "one of the most remarkable men in colonial America" was among them. David Eller tells us about this amazing Brethren evangelist. And James Tomlinson gives us the historical background of the 200-year history of the Church of the Brethren in Cincinnati.

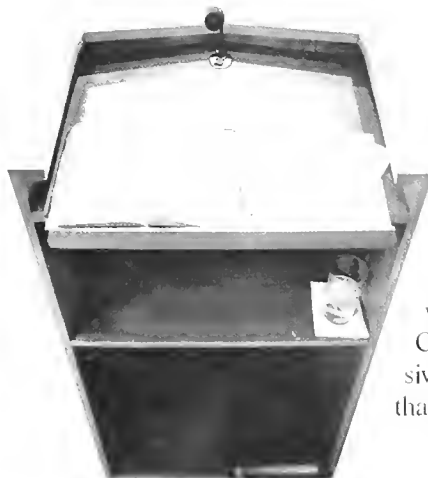
Being a 'Lone Ranger' is not enough 22

A Brethren tenet is serving others. But do we serve unselfconsciously and stick with it to help others over the long haul? David Radcliff says if we don't, maybe we shouldn't serve at all.

Lending a hand in Marlinton 25

When the second "500 year" flood in a decade" struck West Virginia counties in January, Brethren came to the rescue. Jason Bauserman recounts the story and adds a sidebar comparing Brethren disaster response of today to that of 25 years ago.

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Cover story: A congregation staring at an empty pulpit. It's a scene that is becoming more and more common throughout the Church of the Brethren, as pastoral vacancies increasingly are not being filled for a variety of reasons. These reasons have been identified by the Committee on Ministerial Leadership, which will be making its final report at Annual Conference. Robert Faus begins our extensive Conference coverage with a preview of that report. (Cover photo by Jeff Leard.)

In Touch

Ninety years of music

Between them, sisters
Verna Sollenberger and



Sisters Arlene Keller (left) and Verna Sollenberger have blessed the church with their music for a combined 90 years.

Arlene Keller have 90 years of serving the Church of the Brethren through music. Until recently, Verna

served as music director at Annville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, beginning in 1950. Arlene began her work at the Midway congregation in Lebanon, Pa., during the same year, and continues to serve in that role.

"It was so obvious that music was our gift," said Arlene. "We didn't need to find ourselves like many other people do."

The sisters, daughters of Ira and Ada Schlosser, both earned degrees in music at Lebanon (Pa.) Valley College and taught music in public schools.

Their father was a self-taught musician who directed music at Heidelberg Church of the Brethren, Myerstown, Pa. While their father influenced them in music, the sisters credit their mother with the encouragement to pursue music.

One of the sisters' highlights from their years of music service was combining their choirs for joint programs. One secondary effect: Six couples who met during the joint practices led by Arlene and Verna eventually were married.

On the denominational level, Arlene and Verna were coordinators of music at the 1980 Annual Conference in Pittsburgh.

Last fall, the sisters' respective congregations honored them for their years of service. During the service for Arlene, former choir members joined her at the front of the sanctuary as she led the opening hymn.

Former choir members also honored Verna during her special service, as did her daughter Nancy Heishman, team pastor of Harrisburg (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren.

Working for others

For the past 15 years, **William Pletcher**, a member of Elkhart (Ind.) City Church of the Brethren, has been active with Elkhart Community Hospice as its medical director.

A well-known doctor in the area, William sees Hospice as "a way of helping people look at terminal illness and a means of providing support."

In more communities across the country, people are turning to hospice programs to provide relief and direction during the last months of their lives, as an

alternative to hospital care.

"People who are dying have a lot of physical and emotional needs—that's where Hospice comes in," William said. "We help with social, religious, and financial needs—interdependence is emphasized."

This is in contrast to the message given by the world. According to William, everything in modern life, including the media, helps people ignore the fact that we can't escape death and we may not be able to go it alone.

"It's like the poem 'Invictus.' 'I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul.' That's the Ameri-

can thesis, that life is what you make it."

But nothing will get your attention like learning you have a terminal disease, William said.

"We hear all sorts of responses from patients," he said. "Some say they're going to fight this thing, that it won't get them, that they're going to Hong Kong for the latest cancer cure. Others say, 'You can't scare me, I'm going to live forever with Jesus.' Others give up, I think that is where the hospice concept comes in."

William said he thought of Hospice as more of a con-

In Touch is a column in the Messenger. Send articles, photos, and letters to "In Touch," Messenger, Box 1451, Dundee, Pa. Phone: 860/220.

cept than an organization. "That's what these support services are about, helping people look at terminal illnesses and how to be supported."—FRANK RAMIREZ

Frank Ramirez is pastor of Elkhart Valley Church of the Brethren, Elkhart, Ind.

Music for a lifetime

When Peters Creek Church of the Brethren, Roanoke County, Va., celebrated its sesquicentennial in 1995, it also recognized two of its musicians for an outstanding mark.

Beginning to play in their preteen years, **Estelle Vineyard** and **Kathleen Craun** have served as organist and pianist for almost half of the congregation's 150 years.

Estelle first played the organ at Peters Creek in the 1920s. When the small pump organ was replaced by a piano, Estelle and Kathleen took turns playing at services. Estelle became the full-time organist when an electronic organ was purchased in 1954.

Kathleen originally had played the organ at a Peters Creek mission church in Salem. When the mission stopped having services, she played at Peters Creek, eventually becoming its full-time pianist.

Besides working with each other, Estelle and Kathleen also have worked with family. Kathleen's brother, Theron Garst, organized Peters Creek's first adult choir and directed it for more than 20 years. Estelle's daughter,

Pietist relations abroad

He was the only American invited to the conference. In fact, he is the only American ever invited to the conference during its four-year history.

Jeff Bach, assistant professor of Brethren Studies and director of Peace Studies at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind., attended the Fourth International Symposium for Young Pietist Scholars in Switzerland, March 4–6.

Jeff, who is working toward his doctorate from Duke University, was one of 16 scholars invited to give a presentation on his research. His topic, which was based on his doctoral research, was "The Understanding of Sophia

Betty Lou Carter, has served as the congregation's music director since 1967.

The congregation plans a special recognition service for its musicians in the fall. —GERRY PLUNKETT

Gerry Plunkett is a member of Peters Creek Church of the Brethren in Roanoke, Va.

Names in the news

Mary Cline Detrick, a former General Board staff, was elected chairwoman of the International Committee of the Fellowship of the Least Coin.

Mary, who also is the current director of Ecumenical Celebrations



Courtesy of Jeff Bach

according to Conrad Beissel and Solitaries at Ephrata."

The dissertation and paper "explore the European roots of Beissel's concept of Holy Wisdom, or Sophia, and its interface

Jeff Bach and former Bethany student **Marcus Meier** stand on a Schwarzenau, Germany, street named after Brethren founder **Alexander Mack**.

with the lives and roles of the celibate sisters at Ephrata," Jeff said.

His paper, as well as papers by the other presenting scholars, were critiqued by seven senior scholars who are internationally recognized authorities on Pietism.

Following the conference, Jeff went to Germany, where he visited with former Bethany student Marcus Meier and visited Schwarzenau, home of the Church of the Brethren.

for Church Women United, is the first non-Asian to chair the Least Coin, an international movement for peace and reconciliation. The organization helps support worthy women's projects with the collection of pennies, the "least coin."

• **Jessica Shuman**, a member of Chiques Church of the Brethren, Manheim, Pa., will spend April–December in service with an Eastern Mennonite Missions Youth Evangelism Service team in Lebanon, Pa.

She will assist Cornerstone Christian Fellowship, a Church of the Brethren church planting in inner-city Lebanon, in evangelism, children's and youth ministries, and discipleship.

Remembered

William P. Nyce, 71, died on February 25. Nyce served as director of SERRV International from 1964–1981. Nyce is credited with being a pioneer in the international alternative trades market.

"Bill's philosophy was that of the Church of the Brethren... 'For the glory of God and my neighbor's good,'" said Nyce's wife, Frances.



William Nyce

Close to Home

Special members

After the deacon board of **Buffalo Valley Church of the Brethren** in Millinburg, Pa., was presented with the concept of receiving people with developmental dis-

abilities, Association of Brethren Caregivers director Jay Gibble encouraged the congregation to develop and implement its own policies, and perhaps lead the way in ministries for the developmentally disabled and their families for other congregations to follow.

The deacons presented the Special Person Membership amendment to Buffalo Valley members, which they unanimously approved in May 1994.

Judy and Andy were received into membership at the church in a special July service.

Both Andy's and Judy's families

commented how much the service meant to Andy and Judy, as well as to themselves.

"It has given us a warm and wonderful feeling knowing that the 'Family of God' has given Andy this blessing," said Andy's parents and sister in a letter to the congregation.

abilities as special members of the congregation, they decided to do just that with two of the congregation's regular attendees—Judy Fleming and Andy Haines—both who are developmentally disabled.

Since there are no denominational policies concerning special mem-

A joint project

McPherson College and McPherson Church of the Brethren jointly hosted two concerts by Berleburger Kammerchor, a 40-member chamber choir from Bad Berleburg, Germany, in March.

The choir performed in

"This is a group whose talent is worthy of the largest concert arenas in the big cities," said Dr. Alan Gumm, director of McPherson choirs. "Yet, through the positive contacts made on our tour, they were most interested in visiting our community of McPherson and sharing their considerable talent with us."



McPherson College Choir

Campus Comments

McPherson College announced the resignation of James Dodson, executive vice president and treasurer, effective September 1. His future plans are undecided.

- **Manchester College** will host its Mindpower youth program, July 7-19. The two-week academic camp is geared for gifted and talented seventh to ninth graders.

Courses will include math, philosophy, history, writing, astronomy, Mandarin Chinese, mediation skills and conflict resolution, and Appalachian culture.

- **Juniata College** entered into a formal affiliation with Tulane University School of Medicine, New



Celebrating Buffalo Valley Church of the Brethren's Special Person Membership are Ruth and Judy Fleming; Randall Fiske; and Andy, David, and Ruth Haines. Judy and Andy were the congregation's first members received through the Special Person Membership.

"Close to Home" highlights 650+ of congregations, districts, colleges, homes, and other local and regional life. Send story ideas and photos to "Close to Home," MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120

Orleans, La. Tulane has agreed to provide opportunities for early acceptance of Juniata's pre-med students. Juniata students will be given preferred status in application review and enrollment.

Juniata pre-med students will have the opportunity to work toward the medical degree concurrently with various Master's degrees.

- **Manchester College** instituted CampusLine, a phone line for access to the latest campus information. CampusLine, which began in February, features sports scores, information about concerts, the Public Program series, campus day visits, and other events and information. CampusLine can be reached at (219) 982-5060.

- **Bridgewater College's** men's basketball team was doubly honored this winter. Coach Bill Leatherman was named Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC) Coach of the Year. Point guard Craig Tutt was named

to the All-ODAC team.

The Bridgewater Eagles men's team also was given an at-large bid to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division III tournament.

Returning the favor

In February, **Shiloh** Church of the Brethren, located north of Stanardsville, Va., returned a much-appreciated favor.

When the Shiloh church had \$50,000 worth of damage to church property, due to flooding last June, people from Marlinton, W.Va., helped them with labor and goods. So when Marlinton experienced flooding this past February (page 25), the Shiloh church remembered what had been done for them.

The Shiloh church gathered money and a semi full of clothing, food, and other necessities that the people of Marlinton needed.

east District Historical Committee did not know exactly where.

George Landis, pastor of the Amwell congregation, likely the only living person who knew where Naas' grave was located, assisting the Historical Committee in finding it.

With George's help, the grave was marked with a temporary stone, and a permanent marker was placed in the fall by the Palmyra clean-up crew.

Let's Celebrate

Middlebury (Ind.) Church of the Brethren celebrated its first service at its new building on April 7, Easter Sunday.

The congregation held special services on March 28 and 31 in their old facility, which was sold to Roselawn Conservative Mennonite Church.

- **Madison Avenue** Church of the Brethren in York, Pa., celebrates its 60th anniversary this year. In honor of its celebration, an anniversary cookbook

was published, as well as a history of the congregation, written by Elmer Gleim, pastor.

This and That

Sebring (Fla.) Church of the Brethren held its sixth annual Community Choir Festival on February 17. Adult and youth choirs, mimes, and men's choruses from seven area congregations participated in the event, which drew nearly 600 people.

Courtesy of Diane Groff



Steve Hoffer, Diane Groff, and Al Graves survey the clean-up work their group from the Palmyra (Pa.) church did at the John Naas gravesite and cemetery.

During the November project, the 10 Palmyra members worked not only on Naas' gravesite, but also throughout the cemetery.

The cemetery, which is approximately 60 feet by 100 feet, is surrounded by a stone wall that was in

need of repair. Besides repairing the wall, the crew also set grave markers upright and cleaned away brush.

A gift of \$100 was given to the Palmyra group by the farmer whose land the gravesite is located on.

Finding John Naas

Ten members of **Palmyra** (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, spent a November day cleaning up the gravesite of John Naas.

Naas, an early leader in the Church of the Brethren who migrated to America in 1755 and started the Amwell, N.J., congregation soon thereafter, is buried in an Amwell cemetery. However, the Atlantic North-

CWS celebrates its 50th anniversary this month

Church World Service (CWS), the international relief effort of the National Council of Churches (NCC), which provided \$55 million worth of



In 1995, CWS spent \$2.4 million on aid to the former Yugoslavia, which included shipments of food (above) and "Gift of the Heart" school and health kits. Brethren alone produced more than 5,100 kits in 1995, and kits put together so far this year will be shipped overseas in late April from the Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md.

clothing, food, and other supplies to people in developing and war-torn countries in 1995, celebrates its 50th anniversary this month.

The Church of the Brethren will commemorate the anniversary at the World Ministries Commission Dinner this summer at Annual Conference. Former CWS executive Ronald Stenning will be the featured speaker.

The commemoration of the anniversary will honor not only CWS's current efforts, in which the Church of the Brethren participates, but also the fact that the Church of the Brethren has been involved with CWS since its inception, during the first week of May 1946.

It began after M.R. Zigler, executive secretary of the Brethren Service Committee, and others supported the concept of denominations working together through the NCC (known at that time as the Federal Council of Churches) to start a program that

would assist in the delivering of relief supplies to those in need around the world. This program integrated the Church Committee on Overseas Relief and Rehabilitation of the Federal Council, the Church Committee on Relief in Asia, and the World Service Committee of the World Council of Churches. The Church of the Brethren was represented at that meeting, and, according to the *Brethren Encyclopedia*, was instrumental in its formation.

The Church of the Brethren also was instrumental by providing the Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md., facilities for CWS material aid processing.

Christian Rural Overseas Program (CROP) began as a CWS program in July 1947, another program Zigler helped create. Current CWS initiatives Brethren are involved with include One Great Hour of Sharing, Blanket Sunday, and "Gifts of the Heart" kits.

CWS' 50th anniversary festivities were kicked off in April when the NCC met in Charlotte, N.C. Other events are scheduled throughout the year and will conclude November 13-15, when the NCC General Assembly meets in Chicago.—HOWARD ROYER and PAULA WILDING

June 1 scheduled as national day to celebrate children

A day of celebration in honor of children is scheduled for June 1, with a program titled "Stand for Children: A National Day of Commitment to Children," scheduled at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C. The day is intended to be one of spiritual and community renewal and moral commitment to children. It will not be a partisan political event, according to Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund, organizer of the event.

Donald Miller, Church of the Brethren general secretary, has endorsed the special day, saying, "The time in which

The news pages include news of Church of the Brethren organizations and members, and of organizations and people of interest to or affiliated with the Church of the Brethren. News items are intended to inform—they do not necessarily represent the opinions of MESSENGER or the General Board, and should not be considered to be an endorsement.

we live has become increasingly unfriendly to children, and the church should be a leader in objecting to the violence, abuse, neglect, and poverty that so many children are experiencing." Miller added that he encourages Brethren and others to attend the Lincoln Memorial event, or for individuals and congregations to find other ways to support children within church settings, in communities, and across the nation.

For more information about the Washington, D.C. event or for resources, contact Amanda Vender at the Church of the Brethren Washington Office, (202) 546-5202.

NCC-produced documentaries to be aired on network TV

"Restoring Justice," the first of three documentaries intended for network broadcast by the National Council of Churches (NCC), is scheduled to air in late May or early June by NBC affiliates that decide to broadcast it.

This program—as well as the other two—are produced for the NCC by the Presbyterian Church (USA).

"Restoring Justice" will present a successful solution on how to effectively deal with crime and punishment through restorative justice, which is "a community-based approach that seeks to restore the victim through the offender's confrontation with the consequences of his or her crime," according to an NCC release.

Topics of the other two documentaries that will be offered to network affiliates include violence against children (late September, ABC affiliates) and "Reaching Out to Refugees" (October, CBS affiliates).

These three programs are part of the "Horizons of the Spirit" series, presented by the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission, of which the NCC is a member. Call your local affiliates to see if the programs will be shown in your area.



Nevin Dulabaum

June Adams Gibble conducts one of the meeting sessions with members of the People of the Covenant planning team in February at the Church of the Brethren General Offices. Shown are Christina Bucher, Frank Ramirez, and Cathy Myers Wirt. Members not shown are J.O. Williams and Gary Wilde. The group meets twice annually to plan the People of the Covenant series.

New POC titles discussed, planned for '96-'97 release

The People of the Covenant Planning and Management team met February 25–27 to continue work on three Bible studies that are expected to be released during the 1996–1997 school year.

Those studies are *A Spirituality of Compassion* by Harriet Finney and Suzanne Martin, *Esther* by Eugene Roop, and *Paul's Prison Letters* by LaTaunya Bynum.

People of the Covenant (POC) was started by the Church of the Brethren in 1982, in response to the perceived calling by Brethren for small group Bible study and spiritual growth resources. In addition to leading to the study of selected books of the Bible, POC resources also include suggestions for group sharing and prayer.

Joining the Brethren with POC in the late 1980s was the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). So far the program has involved over 4,000 Brethren and 8,000 Disciples. Additional Brethren, Disciples, and other ecumenical groups and organizations also use POC's resources in Sunday school classes and Bible study groups.

Current POC books include *Wisdom* by Chris Bowman, *The Gospel of Mark* by Frank Ramirez, and *Biblical Imagery for God* by Christina Bucher.

June Adams Gibble, director of Congregational Nurture and Worship for the General Board, and who coordinates the work of this team, said future POC studies will address calling; living beyond racism; hymns and songs in the Bible; and the books of Daniel, Amos and Hosea, and Romans. —NEVIN DULABAUM

Brethren recognized for their advocacy against tobacco

The White House on March 20 hosted a reception for organizations that support President Clinton's proposed Food and Drug Administration regulations that would reduce access to tobacco products by children and youth, and would reduce tobacco advertising and promotion directed at adolescents. Tim McElwee, director of the Church of the Brethren Washington Office, attended the event and spoke to Clinton following the reception.

In recognition for his "unprecedented leadership in the fight against the use of tobacco by children and teens," the Coalition on Smoking OR Health awarded Clinton the first Mike Synar

National Public Service Award. The Coalition—a cooperative effort of the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, and the American Lung Association—named the award after the former congressman who, prior to his death in January, led numerous efforts pertaining to tobacco-related health concerns.

In 1981, Annual Conference adopted a statement that asks the church to "develop education and action programs to present its witness against the raising of tobacco as an agricultural crop, its subsidization by the federal government, its public sale, and its use as a dangerous and habit-forming drug."

The need for Brethren and others to follow that directive is obvious, said

McElwee, who cited these statistics:

- Each day 5,000 children and youth start smoking; 82 percent of adult smokers had their first cigarette before they were 18.

- Tobacco use results in more than 420,000 deaths in US each year, more than the combined deaths due to alcohol, motor vehicles, AIDS, homicides, suicides, illegal drug use, and fires, according to the US Centers for Disease Control.

- An astounding 86 percent of youth who smoke prefer three brands of cigarettes, each which relies on advertisements that portray images of strength, beauty, and popularity.

McElwee urges Brethren to contact their members of Congress in support of the proposed regulations.

In Brief

Seven congregations in five districts have signed up to sponsor people who will serve as accompaniers in Guatemala. Those congregations are Plumcreek (Shelocta, Pa.), Western Pa.; Highland Avenue (Elgin, Ill.) and Naperville (Ill.), Illinois/Wisconsin; Lorida (Fla.), Atlantic Southeast; University Park (Hyattsville, Md.) and Westminster (Md.), Mid-Atlantic; and Ivester (Grundy Center, Iowa), Northern Plains. Ivester is sponsoring Kay Yanisch, the second accompanier to be sponsored by a Church of the Brethren congregation (see March, page 10). She was scheduled to arrive in Guatemala on April 10.

Graydon Snyder, a member of Chicago First Church of the Brethren and professor at Chicago Theological Seminary, announced his retirement as professor of New Testament, effective June 30.

Last year, Snyder submitted a libel suit against the seminary, citing defamation of character after the seminary sent a memo to its faculty and students concerning a sexual harassment suit filed against Snyder by a female student.

"Concurrent with this (retirement) announcement, the lawsuit pending against the seminary has been dismissed," reads the press release. Snyder will continue teaching part time at the seminary, and the seminary will institute a scholarship in his name.

National Older Adult Conference is scheduled for September 2–6, in Lake Junaluska, N.C. NOAC is held every two years and is for adults over 50. Registration information is available from the Association of Brethren Caregivers, (800) 323-8039. Housing and meal reservations can be made by calling (800) 222-4930.

A retreat for families coping with mental illness is scheduled for May 10–12 in Sturgis, Mich. Jim Kinsey, district executive of Michigan District and co-director of Ministry, will serve as a resource leader. Information on the retreat, which is sponsored by the Christian Reformed Church and Mennonite Mutual Aid, is available by calling MMA at (800) 348-7468.

Over \$50,000 was granted through the Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) in March. Flooding in the northeastern and mid-Atlantic states prompted a \$30,000 EDF grant. The funds will be allocated to the Disaster Response and Cooperative Disaster Child Care programs helping in the effected areas.

A grant of \$10,000 was made in response to a February earthquake in China. Another \$10,000 was allocated to Church of the Brethren child care centers in Washington and Oregon that were set up in response to recent flooding. A grant of \$3,000 was made to Haitian sugar workers in the Dominican Republic.

Four young adults have been chosen to serve as this summer's conflict resolution trainers at two Church of the Brethren camps, a program sponsored by On Earth Peace Assembly.

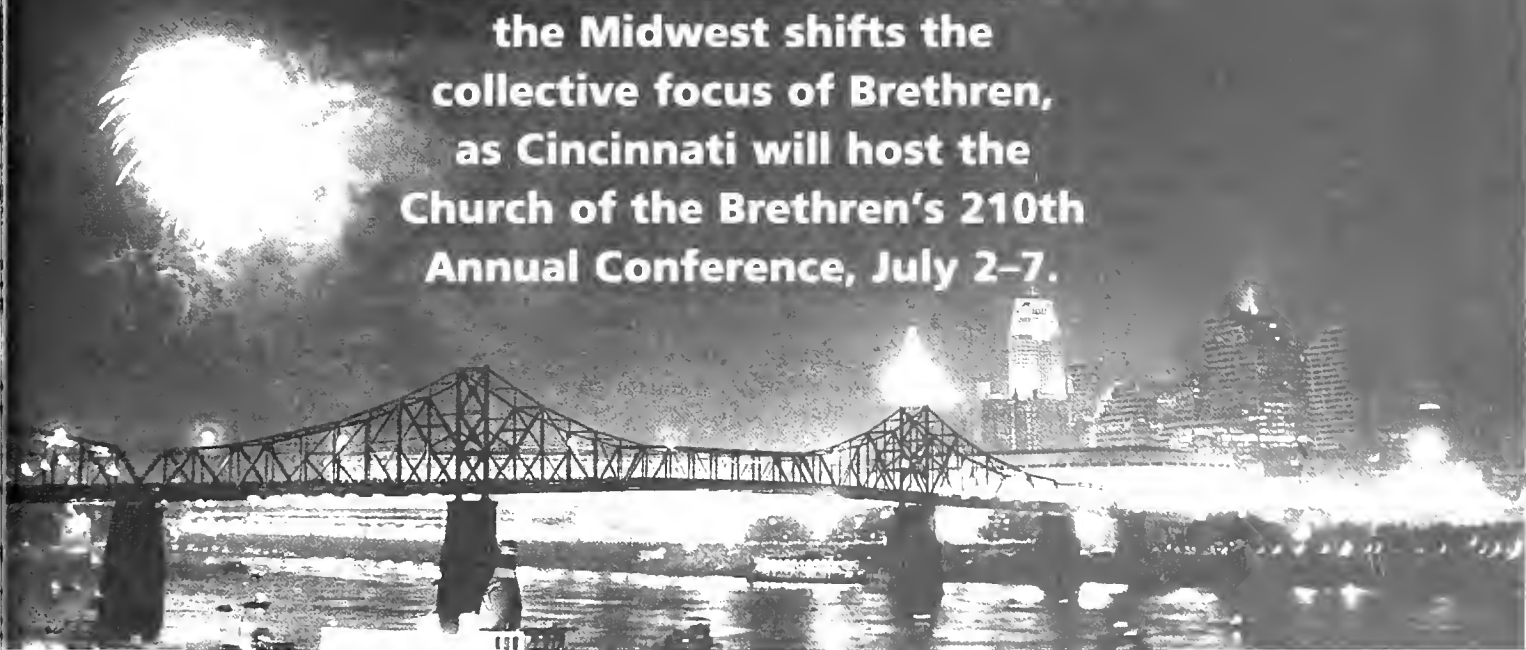
The four—Jeff Brehmeyer, La Verne, Calif.; Lorna Sands, Williamsport, Pa.; Jacki Hartley, Lewistown, Pa.; and Emma Webb, Olathe, Kan.—will train for a week in early June, and then spend the summer at Shepherd's Springs Outdoor Ministries Center (Mid-Atlantic District) and at Camp Blue Diamond, Middle Pennsylvania District.

Along with providing leadership, the four also will serve as camp counselors and will assume other responsibilities as needed.

CINCINNATI ANNUAL CONFERENCE



**From the Queen City of
the South to the Queen City of
the Midwest shifts the
collective focus of Brethren,
as Cincinnati will host the
Church of the Brethren's 210th
Annual Conference, July 2-7.**



Phil Gr

Returning to Queen City of the Midwest for the first time in nine years, the 5,000 delegates and attendees expected to participate in worship, business, and fellowship during Annual Conference 1996 in Cincinnati will be led by Moderator Fred Bernhard.

Fred, pastor of Oakland Church of the Brethren, Gettysburg, Ohio, will have the honor of moderating in his own Southern Ohio district, just as Judy Mills Reimer moderated last year's Conference in Charlotte, N.C.—the Queen City of the South—in her home district of Virginia.

Serving as moderator-elect will be David Wine, president of Mutual Aid Association, and member of Buckeye Church of the Brethren, near Abilene, Kan.

This year's theme, "...as Christ welcomed you," is based on Romans 15:7, and is taken from Fred's personal crusade to increase hospitality throughout the denomination.

Business sessions, worship, displays, booths, and other activities will be held in the Cincinnati

Conference Center, which last hosted Annual Conference in 1987.

Nine new business items and eight unfinished business items will comprise the business agenda. A focus on one of the key returning business items—ministerial leadership—begins our preview with an article by Robert Faus. Included with that are brief summaries of all other business items.

Paula Wilding then presents a myriad of information detailing everything from what will happen to where people can stay.

Two history lessons conclude the preview. David Eller writes about the founder of numerous Brethren congregations in Virginia, Indiana, and of course, Southern Ohio; James Tomlinson describes the Church of the Brethren's 200-year history in the Cincinnati area.

So glean all the information you can from this preview and we'll see you in Cincinnati. If you can't make it in person, check out the preview to see how you can be involved each day by phone, fax, or e-mail.—NEVIN DUEBAUM

Fireworks will light up the Cincinnati skyline on the evening of July 4, as they did in 1987, when Annual Conference was last held in the Queen City.

New Business

Atlantic Northeast District originated the **Congregational Structure** query after an appointed task committee concluded that all congregations cannot fit into the present denominational structure system. According to District Executive Allen Hansell, the committee found that the current structure is "not flexible enough with a board and three commissions," and "ministry issues should mold ministry teams," not vice versa, as is done in the current structure.

Hansell added that Annual Conference has not addressed the issue of congregational structure in more than 30 years.

Northern Indiana District will send **How Christian Faith Should be Expressed in the Political Process**, a query that originated in a Crest Manor Church of the Brethren, South Bend, Ind., Sunday school class. The class determined that the church's involvement in politics is an issue for denominational study.

According to District Executive Herman Kauffman, the concern is over various groups taking a political stance in the name of the church.

The New Testament as our Rule of Faith and Practice, a query from the Middle Pennsylvania District Board, questions the recurring issues that have come to Conference in recent years concerning "this basic denominational tenet," said District Executive Randall Yoder. The query asks Annual Conference for "a statement of interpretation on our understanding of the New Testament."

Who will fill

Ministerial Leadership to

by Robert Faus

An examination of Annual Conference minutes for at least the past 50 years reveals a troubling cycle. About every five years or so, major issues regarding ministry in the Church of the Brethren have come to Conference delegates for consideration. Brethren, it seems, are never finished working on ministry issues and problems. And while these issues emerged from particular needs or difficulties somewhere within the church, they have not always been distinct and different. In fact, the same or similar issues have kept coming back. Both the repetitiveness of persistently unresolved issues and the regularity of ministry matters coming to Conference are striking features of these past cycles.

So it was not without reason that Annual Conference in 1990 handed over to its Committee on Ministerial Leadership a set of six mandates that were so comprehensive in their scope that one message seemed clear: It is time to look at the ministry of the church as a whole as well as in parts.

The resulting committee report, which will come before the delegates this summer in Cincinnati, is extensive and comprehensive, addressing particular problems, but within the context of the ministry system of the church.

It will not be without its critics. In fact, some who read an early draft of the report were quick to respond: too much, too complicated, too many recommendations, especially in this time of revisioning and downsizing. Yet the committee has been

attempting to be responsive to the task it was given. If the result is formidable, the charge given the committee also was formidable.

The stresses in the church's ministry system are widespread. A sampling of them will help show not only the diversity of the issues, but the appropriateness and timeliness of dealing with them as a whole as well as in parts.

Any analysis of ministry in the church is hampered by what the committee perceived as an inadequate record-keeping plan. Some

Training programs for ministry have increased, but the number of students in all of them together is fewer than needed to provide for current pastoral needs.

of the data concerning ministers is gathered and maintained in district offices, some in the denominational ministry office, and some in the yearbook office. But it is not complete; nor is it maintained systematically.

As a result, information about ministers is scattered, partial, and unreliable. The committee was left with the need to use such information

as it was, along with impressions and stories from representative groups and individuals throughout the church.

In the change from the free ministry to the pastoral ministry—primarily in the 20th century—congregations have become responders to people who have volunteered for the ministry, rather than initiators of calls, even though historically, volunteers for the ministry were frowned upon. To be sure, pastors and other church leaders have represented the church when they encour-

our pulpits?

Annual Conference agenda



aged individuals to consider the ministry. But congregations as congregations are initiating calls to fewer people for the ministry than they have in the past. In fact, when congregations now use the term "calling," they mostly refer to the process of calling pastors.

Licensing and ordination are official steps on the pathway to pastoral ministry, as well as to a few other particular ministries. Since 1975, however, ordination has become job-specific and functional, even though a 1985 Annual Conference paper on ministry asked the church to find a clearer balance in ordination between who one is and what one does.

The authority for licensing and ordaining has been given by the church to the districts, through their ministry commissions and boards. Districts license and ordain, not just for their own districts, but for the whole church. Yet there are some differences in the expectations that districts have of their candidates, and a few districts are on the verge of re-examining ministers previously ordained by other districts. On the other hand, the church is not likely to approve a system which imposes uniform standards on district boards and ministry commissions from above or from the outside.

Training programs for ministry have increased, but the number of students in all of them together is fewer

than needed to provide for current pastoral needs. And the shortage of pastors for certain particular settings is acute: large membership congregations, bivocational ministries in small congregations, new church starts and emerging congregations, and short-term leadership for conflicted congregations.

Yet, in spite of these shortages, the church has difficulty placing women and racial or ethnic pastors, even when they have satisfied educational and credentialing processes.

An increasing number of congregations are struggling or unable to sustain full-time pastoral programs. Or worse, congregations will claim to be supporting full-time pastors, but offer less than adequate support packages. Small congregations do not like to yoke with other Church of the Brethren congregations or with non-Brethren congregations very well. They like to have their own pastors.

The stresses in pastoral ministry, for pastors and for pastoral families, have seldom seemed higher. Ministering to the diversity within congregational memberships, trying to meet high expectations for satisfying congregational

goals—like church growth and increased giving—and serving as lightning rods, if not the focal points, for congregational stresses all take their toll. Too many pastors, effective ones included, leave the pastoral ministry. Some return in time, some never return.

For many different reasons, a steady stream of congregations are finding

pastoral leadership from outside the Church of the Brethren. When these min-

In less than a century, our church changed its entire ministry system. In light of such dramatic change, we have managed fairly well.



Denominational Polity: Property and Stewardship Issues, a query from Pacific Southwest District, originated from the district board. It concerns a property issue between the district and a congregation. The query asks Annual Conference to "define what means districts may use to preserve real congregational assets for the denomination," and to clarify the discrepancies in denominational polity on property and stewardship.

In the query **World Mission philosophy and Global Structure**, Virgina District asks that Annual Conference determine district responsibilities with congregations outside the US, define set-apart ministry and calling in other countries, and develop a better system to include these congregations in the actions of Annual Conference.

The **Ethics in Ministry Relations** statement revision was initiated by Standing Committee after Conference adopted the paper in 1992. The paper has been revised and expanded, especially in the area dealing with allegations of sexual misconduct. The final report will be brought to Standing Committee and, if approved, to Annual Conference delegates.

Originating from the 1995 Christian Citizenship Seminar, the **Statement on Child Exploitation** received General Board approval in March and is being sent to Annual Conference with the recommendation that it become a study paper for one year, returning in 1997 for final approval. The paper deals with ethical behavior of multinational corporations, and consumers who buy



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goods made by children from developing countries.

The General Board will send **Guidelines for Developing and Recommending Curriculum in the Church of the Brethren**. If approved by Conference, the guidelines will be available for use throughout the denomination. The last set of guidelines were approved by the 1986 Annual Conference.

A proposed change in the **Church of the Brethren Pastors' Insurance Package** will be brought by the Annual Conference Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee. The committee recommends that the maximum Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment benefit be increased from \$40,000 to \$50,000.

Returning Business

The **Simple Life Study Committee** will present its paper to Conference delegates. The committee, which was named at the 1994 Annual Conference, was chosen to "study ways to re-emphasize the Brethren tradition of the simple life and to discern its full meaning in our time."

The final draft from the **Congregational Ethics Study Committee** will be presented to delegates. The paper, which grew out of the 1992 "Ethics in Ministry Relations" statement, reviews the ethical guidelines of congregations in such areas as church responsibilities to its pastors and the denomination at large.

The General Board will present its paper on **Nonviolence and Humanitarian Intervention** for final approval.

isters bring their ordinations to be recognized by the Brethren, expectations for them vary greatly from district to district. Far too many ministers who have come in from other denominations or religious bodies have little knowledge or interest in the Church of the Brethren and receive little help or orientation along the way.

Conflicts between pastors and congregations continue to plague the church, in spite of all that has been learned about the dangers of unresolved long-term congregational divisions, pastoral and congregational self-awareness in both identity and leadership styles, and the need to mediate differences in the interests of health and wholeness.

At this point in the limited litany of stresses within the Brethren ministry system, one could easily conclude that there is very little good news. That is not so. There is good news, but it begins by addressing the issues as a whole, not as

individual parts.

It is important to remember that the Church of the Brethren changed its entire ministry system in less than a hundred years. That includes the way ministers were called, where they served, and how ministry was overseen. In light of such

dramatic change, the church has managed fairly well. But, in light of the above evidence, the time may be right to take stock.

The church cannot go back to a former day or a previous system of ministry, no matter

How can we fashion and develop cooperative means for addressing ministry issues as they emerge?

how much some would like to do so. But the church can ask, as the Leadership Committee has done, "What has been lost in the changes which have taken place, and can steps be taken to remedy some of the losses?"

The committee's strongest conviction is that ministry and leadership issues are



Ministerial statistic

Though the Committee on Ministerial Leadership has conducted its study over the past six years, much of the information it has used to form its conclusions has been anecdotal.

In June 1995, James Kinsey, the General Board's co-director for Ministry and Michigan District executive, did compile some stats, which underline the concern for ministerial leadership issues within the Church of the Brethren:

- In June 1995, there were 1,127 worshipping "units" in the denomination—1,077 churches, 45 fellowships, and five projects.

- There were 1,126 pastors listed in

the Church of the Brethren yearbook—461 full-time, 265 part-time, and 400 with no information regarding full- or part-time employment.

- Ordained ministers who will be of retirement age in the next five years—276.

- Forty-eight churches with full-time pastoral vacancies had a pool of 40 candidates in the pastoral placement file from which to choose.

- Twenty-six churches were seeking part-time pastors, with less than that number seeking employment through the placement system.

- Eleven churches were seeking second staff people, though the placement system



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whole church concerns. They cannot only be issues for congregations, the 23 districts, Bethany Theological Seminary, the General Board, or whoever else might be designated to handle them.

That is, in part, why the committee urged, and the delegates at the 1995 Annual Conference agreed, to highlight ministry and leadership development for special attention over the next five years. That means ministry is a priority for the denomination—all members, congregations, and agencies of the church.

The church has been at its most effective in handling ministry matters when people, groups, and agencies have collaborated or served in partnership. Such partnership has been very much a part of the development of the Education for a Shared Ministry and TRaining in Ministry programs, where districts, the five Brethren colleges and one university, the seminary, and the General Board served as partners on the Ministry Training Council. But partnerships like that one should become the norm rather than the rare example, and should extend to

include congregations and congregational leaders.

A whole ministry system for the whole church will mean many things. It will mean that discernment of gifts, encouragement of those with leadership abilities, initiating calls to ministry, and supporting leadership will be normal and expected activities in congregations.

It will mean that the whole church—individuals and agencies—will have a clearer vision of the way that the church's ministry system works. The overriding concern will be, "What is my (for the individual) or our (for agencies and instrumentalities of the church) part in that system?" And then, "How can we fashion and develop cooperative means for addressing ministry issues as they emerge?"

The challenge of the Committee on Ministerial Leadership will be before the delegates: In considering ministry, it is time to address the whole, as well *M.* as the parts.

Robert Faus served as staff to the Committee on Ministerial Leadership. He resides in Richmond, Ind.

val. The paper, which was a congregational study document during the past year, questions the use of armed forces to deliver humanitarian aid. According to Tim McElwee, director of the Washington Office, this business item is "an example of a paper that had its origin from congregational inquiries."

The final draft of the **End of Life Decision-Making** statement will be submitted to Conference delegates by the General Board. The paper includes last year's query on "Assisted Suicide."

Although this statement began as a rewrite of the 1975 Annual Conference "Life Stewardship" paper, the committee instead chose to present a brief faith statement because "so much has happened with 'end-of-life' issues since 1975." Thus, a rewrite of an existing paper seemed insufficient, the committee said.

A progress report on the **Office of Deacon** statement will be given by the drafting committee as it aims to bring recommendations to the 1997 Conference. The committee's work centers on reviewing and updating the 1983 statement on the Office of Deacon.

The study committee on **Human Genetic Engineering and Fetal Tissue Use** will give a report of its review of the 1987 statement as it prepares for its final report in 1997.

The **Review and Evaluation Committee** will give its interim report, and will return to the 1997 Annual Conference with its final evaluation. The five-member committee has spent its first year reviewing the General Board and its programs.
—PAULA WILDING

Underline concerns

only occasionally has such candidates.

- Only 13 Church of the Brethren members were expected to receive their Master's of Divinity degrees this year; six from Bethany Theological Seminary and seven from non-Brethren seminaries. Of those, 10–12 are expected to seek pastoral placement. However, Faus believes the denomination needs a minimum of 15 graduates each year to keep the placement system in balance.

- Eight people graduated from TRaining in Ministry in 1995; seven are expected this year. Five people graduated from Education For a Shared Ministry in 1995; two are expected this year, which was

cited as a trend, as fewer congregations have been applying for EFSM training.

- Fifteen to 25 percent of Brethren pastors come from non-Brethren backgrounds.

- There has been no standardization process for pastors who are not trained in seminaries, who do not have Brethren backgrounds, or who have been out of the pastorate for a long time.

- There has been no process for determining minimum competency guidelines.—NEVIN DULABAUM

This information was gleaned from documents obtained from the Yearbook, Ministry, and Ministry Training offices, district offices, and Bethany Theological Seminary.



CONFERENCE INFORMATION

Candidates for Moderator-elect



Clyde Carter



Herbert Fisher



Jimmy Ross



Donna Forbes Steiner

What, where, and when

by Paula Wilding

Candidates for moderator-elect

Clyde Carter, 60, of Daleville, Va. (Virginia District), is a member of Williamson Road Church of the Brethren. He is a retired pastor, and has been active on the local and district levels. He has served as a Brethren Volunteer Service worker and trainer and camp volunteer. He has served on Annual Conference Standing Committee, on a task group on Conditions of Childhood, and as Conference time keeper. He also has served as a community mediator, state magistrate, state emergency foster care volunteer, and has participated with a local clergy group and with a conflict resolution center.

His vision is "that individuals choose to participate in group worship with other people who are both similar and different." His priority is "to nurture one another while we witness to the world."

Herbert Fisher, 75, of Mountain Grove, Mo. (Missouri-Arkansas), is a member of Cabool Church of the Brethren. He is a retired pastor and former General Board planned giving officer. He has served in several congregational and district positions and as an EFSM-TRIM supervisor, camp counselor, and a chaplaincy agency officer. He has served at a conference on hunger and malnutrition, and has participated with CROP walks, a service club, and a state council of churches.

His vision is "to see the Church of the Brethren affirm and strengthen the life of the local church with a sense of mission that encompasses the globe." His priority is "to develop leadership, both lay and clergy, at all levels of denominational life."

Jimmy Ross, 60, of Lititz, Pa. (Atlantic Northeast), is pastor of Lititz Church of the Brethren. He has served in several district positions and as an Annual Conference speaker and song leader. He has served on Annual Conference Standing Committee and Nominating Committee, and on a worship committee. He also has served on a hymnal council, a college

board of trustees, and a Bethany Theological Seminary presidential search committee.

His vision is "that the Church of the Brethren will continue to emphasize radical discipleship while maintaining a strong unity in Christ as Lord and Savior." His priority is "to answer the question: 'What is God calling the Church of the Brethren to be and to do as part of the body of Christ?'"

Donna Forbes Steiner, 58, of Union Bridge, Md. (Mid-Atlantic), is a member of Union Bridge Church of the Brethren and a ministry consultant. She has served in several congregational and district positions and as an Annual Conference speaker and General Board member. She has served on a ministry training council, church school curriculum council, continuing education committee, as a hospital chaplain, and on a public education study team.

Her vision is "that we strive individually and corporately to become who we claim to be—disciples of Christ Jesus." Her priority is "to speak and serve as a leader with integrity while embracing diversity to meet the challenges of the 21st century."

Annual Conference ballot

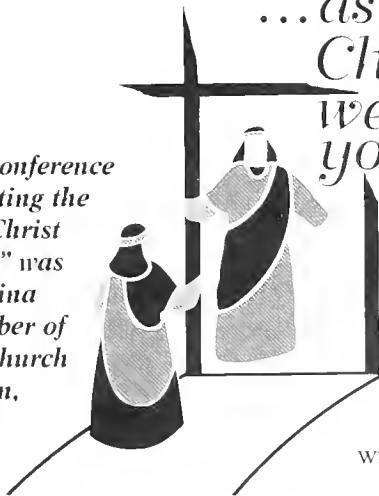
In the meetings prior to Annual Conference, Standing Committee will select half of the nominees on the ballot for election by Annual Conference delegates.

Annual Conference Program and Arrangements: Darlene Bucher, North Manchester, Ind.; David Eastis, Warsaw, Ind.; Ginny Dupras Hollis, Modesto, Calif.; Peter Kaltenbaugh Jr., Mogadore, Ohio.

General Board. At-large: Isabel Figueroa, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico; Marie Fortney Hamilton, State College, Pa.; Wayne Judd, Elizabethtown, Pa.; Kreston Lipscomb, Springfield, Ill.; Paul Myers, Fostoria, Ohio; Sue Sappenfield Overman, Morgantown, W.Va.;

...as
Christ
welcomed
you

The Annual Conference logo representing the theme "...as Christ welcomed you" was designed by Nina Roher, a member of York Center Church of the Brethren, Lombard, Ill.



Pre-Conference events

Standing Committee will hold its meetings Saturday evening through Tuesday noon at the Regal Hotel.

The **General Board** will meet Tuesday at the Convention Center. The Board's Goals and Budget Committee will meet on Saturday, and its Executive Committee on Sunday, also at the Convention Center.

"Re-Forming the Family—Living with Paradox" is scheduled for Tuesday at the Regal Hotel. The seminar will feature Herbert Anderson of Union Catholic Theological Seminary, and is sponsored by Family Ministries, Association of Brethren Caregivers, Program for Women, and Ministry of Reconciliation.

"Managing Church Conflict," a conference sponsored by the Ministers Asso-

ciation, will be held from Monday evening until Tuesday afternoon at the Convention Center. Hugh Halverstadt, professor of Ministry at McCormick Theological Seminary and author of *Managing Church Conflict*, will be the featured speaker.

A **New Church Development** seminar is scheduled for Monday afternoon through Tuesday afternoon at the Convention Center. The seminar, sponsored by the New Church Development Office, will feature author Steve Sjogren.

A two-day conference will be held for those interested or involved in **Brethren Homes**, scheduled for Sunday afternoon through Monday afternoon. David Scruggs will be the featured speaker.

An **Association of Brethren Caregivers** meeting and reception is scheduled for Monday, 7 p.m., in the Convention Center.

First-time Conference delegates and attendees orientation, led by Moderator-elect David Wine, is scheduled for Tuesday, 5:30–5 p.m., at the Regal Hotel.

Day of Intercessory Prayer is scheduled for Tuesday, 2:30–4:30 p.m., at the Convention Center.

Kurt Snyder, Roann, Ind.; Marie Hoover Willoughby, Copemish, Mich.

Mid-Atlantic District: Linda Frey Barkdoll, Hagerstown, Md.; Warren Kissinger, Hyattsville, Md.; Paul Reid, Hagerstown, Md.; Paul Wampler, Manassas, Va.

Southern Ohio District: Ronald Fleming, Columbus, Ohio; Dorla Kinsey Morgan, Dayton, Ohio; Mary Jo Flory Steury, Kettering, Ohio; Dwayne Yost, Manchester, Ky.

Virginia District: David Miller, Roanoke, Va.; Anne Murray Reid, Roanoke, Va.; Ronald Sink, Blue Ridge, Va.; Owen Stultz, Roanoke, Va.

Pastoral Compensation and Benefits: Carol Bowers, Seattle, Wash.; Colleen Michael, Wenatchee, Wash.; Peggy Deal Redman, La Verne, Calif.; Karen

Schmidt, Prairie City, Iowa.

Interchurch Relations: Ernest Barr, Carmel, Ind.; Cheryl Cayford, Richmond, Ind.; Allen Deeter, North Manchester, Ind.; Harold Martin, York, Pa.

Brethren Benefit Trust: Martha Beach, New Enterprise, Pa.; Wayne Fralin, Fremont, Calif.; Norman Harsh, Lorida, Fla.; Gail Morgan Habecker, Coatesville, Pa.

Bethany Theological Seminary Elector. *Representing colleges:* Dorothy Lehman Hershberger (incumbent), Martinsburg, Pa.; Bill Puffenberger, Elizabethtown, Pa.; Phillip Stone, Bridgewater, Va.; Ronald Wyrick, Huntingdon, Pa.

Representing laity: Floy Detwiler, Hagerstown, Ind.; Robert Kintner, Wenatchee, Wash.; Michael Leiter, Boalsburg, Pa.; Jim Weaver, Shannon, Ill.



Transportation and housing

The official headquarters hotel will be the Regal Cincinnati, but there are seven hotels within four miles of the Convention Center with which the Annual Conference office has made lodging arrangements. Prices begin at \$42 per night in the outlying areas and reach about \$90 per night across from the Convention Center. University housing and camping also are available.

Delta Airlines is offering airfare discounts. Call (800) 241-6760 and refer to file L1102.

Ground transportation between the airport and downtown Cincinnati is provided by Jet Port Express motorcoach every half hour, \$15 per round trip.

Conference information available all day

From July 1–7, Newsline will feature daily updates from Annual Conference, which will include information concerning business decisions, daily speakers, and events.

The 24-hour phone service, which regularly provides weekly updates on Church of the Brethren news, can be accessed by calling (410) 635-8738.

Brethren with fax access can request Newsline by Fax by calling (800) 323-8039, ext. 257.

Internet users can receive Newsline by contacting the General Board's Communications Department with a request to: COBNews@AOL.com.

Along with Newsline, Internet users will receive each evening's sermon and the daily Conference Journal.

Requests for Newsline by Fax or e-mail must be made by June 21.



CONFERENCE INFORMATION

Evening Speakers



Fred Bernhard



Robin Wentworth Mayer



Pete Kaltzenbaugh



Joyce Stoltzfus



Ronald Schroekhise



Stafford Frederick

Leonardo Wilborn will be leading a cross cultural choir that will perform on Saturday evening at Annual Conference.

Worship

Tuesday evening: Fred Bernhard, Annual Conference moderator and pastor of Oakland Church of the Brethren, Gettysburg, Ohio, will preach on "O give me a home." David Wine, 1996 moderator-elect and president of Mutual Aid Association, will lead worship.

Wednesday evening: Robin Wentworth Mayer, *MESSINGER* columnist and pastor of Kokomo (Ind.) Church of the Brethren, will speak on "Come as you are." Bob Kurtz, pastor of Potsdam (Ohio) Church

of the Brethren, will lead worship.

Thursday evening: The message by Pete Kaltzenbaugh, pastor of Hartsville (Ohio) Church of the Brethren, will be on "Who is welcome at the table?" Leading worship will be Mary Jane and Tim Button-Harrison, team pastors of Ankeny (Iowa) Church of the Brethren.

Friday evening: Bringing the message, "An honest welcome," will be Joyce Stoltzfus, pastor of Glade Valley Church of the Brethren, Walkersville, Md. Jim Chinworth, pastor of Mountville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, will lead worship.

Music

Congregational singing will begin 50 minutes prior to each worship service. Andrew Wright, pastor of New Carlisle

(Ohio) Church of the Brethren, will **coordinate music.**

Terry McRoberts, Jackson, Ind., will be the **conference organist**, and Beth Bowman, Cambridge City, Ind., will be the **conference pianist.**

The **Annual Conference choir**, which will sing at each service, will be directed by Michelle Grimm, Onekama, Mich. Choir rehearsal will be held daily from 4:45-5:45 p.m. To participate in the choir, register through the Annual Conference office.

Two Saturday evening concerts will be available to Conferencegoers. *Glad*, a gospel ensemble, will perform at 9 p.m. in Halls A and B. Also at 9 p.m., a Southern Ohio District musical group will present songs from Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals in Ballroom B.

Early evening concerts are scheduled in Ballroom B, 6-6:45 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday.

Wednesday, Lee Krähenbühl and David Frantz will perform acoustic folk music. Peg Lehman, a folk musician and storyteller will perform Thursday evening. Vocalist Frank Lethe Jr. will perform Friday evening. A cross-cultural choir directed by Leonardo Wilborn will perform on Saturday evening.



Karen Carter



AC Tidbits

Business sessions are scheduled for Wednesday through Saturday, 8:55–11:30 a.m. and 1:55–4:30 p.m. in Convention Center Halls A and B.

Food service will be available in the Convention Center. There also are over 25 restaurants within walking distance. The Conference packet offers a list as well as a map.

Volunteers are needed for program areas and activities. Contact the Annual Conference office.

The **annual blood drive** will be held Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, noon–6:30 p.m., in Hall C.

The **annual quilt auction** is scheduled for Saturday afternoon in Hall C.

A **canned food/diaper drive** sponsored by Association for the Arts and Young Adults will be held during the week. Canned soup and diapers will be donated to local shelters in Cincinnati.

The **11th Annual Walk/Run** sponsored by Outdoor Ministries will be held at 6:30 a.m. Thursday.

The **General Board Live Report** is scheduled for Thursday morning.

Bible Study Electives will be held in the Convention Center, 7:30–8:30 a.m., Wednesday through Saturday.

Over 50 **Insight Sessions** will be offered Wednesday through Friday, 9–10 p.m. Two sessions are scheduled for Wednesday, 12:30–1:45 p.m.

Annual Conference wrap-ups will be available in print and video. A set of 50 printed wrap-ups (\$10) and the video (\$24.95) can be ordered through Brethren Press, (800) 441-3712.

Annual Conference packets can be obtained by calling (800) 323-8039.

Meal Events

A ticket order form for meal events is included in the Annual Conference packets. To order tickets before Conference, contact the Annual Conference office. Tickets also may be purchased at Conference with a 72-hour advance before the meal.

Breakfasts. *Wednesday:* Chaplains Networking. *Thursday:* Brethren Business Network, Brethren Press. *Friday:* People of the Covenant, Bethany Seminary Board Association, Washington Office Network (\$5.00). *Saturday:* On Earth Peace Assembly. (Tickets are \$7.50 unless otherwise noted.)

Luncheons. *Monday:* Brethren Homes Networking. *Wednesday:* Ecumenical, Caregivers Recognition, Ministry of Reconciliation, Outdoor Ministries, Program for Women. *Thursday:* Brethren Mennonite Caucus (BMC), Brethren Journal Association, Church of the Brethren Association of Christian Education (CoBACE), Older Adult, Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS), Urban Ministry, Association for the Arts tour (luncheon cost included in \$15 tour price). *Friday:* Association for the Arts in Church of the Brethren (AACB); Congregational Deacons; The Andrew Center, Brethren Volunteer Service, Disaster Services, and News Services; Women's Caucus; Brethren Encyclopedia. *Saturday:* Black Brethren and Friends (\$4.50), Bridgewater College Alumni, Elizabethtown College Alumni, Juniata College Alumni, University of La Verne Alumni, Manchester College Alumni, McPherson College Alumni. (Tickets are \$9.50 unless otherwise noted.)

Dinners. *Wednesday:* Church Growth and Evangelism, Brethren Non-Profit Organizations. *Thursday:* MESSENGER, Outdoor Ministries Insight Session (bus ticket is \$5.00). *Friday:* World Ministries, Committee on Higher Education. *Saturday:* Nigeria Partners (\$9.00), Bethany Seminary 1956 Class Reunion. (Tickets are \$11.75 unless otherwise noted.)

Saturday evening: Richard Schreckhise, pastor of Annville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, will focus on "Someone's knockin' at the door" during his sermon. Elizabeth Kee, interim pastor of Covington (Ohio) Church of the Brethren, will lead worship.

Sunday morning: The message, "Living or dying, glorify God," will be given by Stafford Frederick, pastor of Olathe (Kan.) Church of the Brethren and a General Board member. Worship will be led by Keith Funk, pastor of East Chippewa Church of the Brethren, Orrville, Ohio.

Special Events

A **Habitat for Humanity** house will be built by Conferencegoers. June 29–July 5. Those wishing to participate must pre-register with the project by June 1. A youth workcamp will work on the house the week preceding Conference.

Age-group activities will be offered throughout Conference. Groups holding activities include children (K-4), junior high, senior high, young adults, and single adults.

Hearings on proposed General Board and Annual Conference statements and papers will be held in the Convention Center from 9–10 p.m., Tuesday, on the following: Simple Life, End of Life Decision-Making, Ministerial Leadership, Nonviolence and Humanitarian Intervention, and Ethics for Congregations.

A **forum** on the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, 9–10:50 p.m.

The **Redesign Steering Committee** will hold an insight session on Tuesday evening.

A reception for **New Church Fellowships** will be held on Tuesday, from 9–10 p.m., at the Convention Center.

MESSENGER representatives, district and congregational, will meet Wednesday, 9–10:50 p.m., at the Regal Hotel.

Brethren in the land

by David Eller

When Brethren gather this July in Cincinnati, they will be traveling to a region where Brethren settlements and churches have flourished for over 200 years. This fertile and heavily-timbered region is drained by the two Miami rivers, each gently flowing southwest into the Ohio. The Miami valleys were a powerful magnet to pioneer Brethren families, "Dunkers," from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the upper South, who were in search of new farmlands and economic opportunity.

The Miami and the Little Miami rivers were named after the American Indian inhabitants—themselves named by French explorers—who resided at the time of white settlement in what is now southwest Ohio and eastern Indiana, primarily along the Maumee and Wabash rivers. The Miamis are remembered as a courteous people; peaceful, but strong and courageous in battle. In southwest Ohio—Miami University at Oxford; Miami County and the city of Piqua (after Pickawillany, a principal Miami village); the city of Miamisburg in Montgomery County; and the nearby Lower Miami Church of the Brethren—place-names reflect this rich American Indian heritage.

Permanent white settlements along the Ohio River and later in southwest Ohio began to mushroom in the late 1790s. This immigration included a significant number of German-speaking Americans, including many Brethren. The passage of the Northwest Land Ordinance of 1785 provided for the orderly survey and sale of a vast public domain north and west of the Ohio River. It mattered little to Congress that American Indians already lived there. The land act was followed by the



Above: Detail of Rufus Putnam's 1804 map of the Ohio frontier
Right: Map of Dayton area with the Lower Miami Church, founded in 1805, and four other churches that formed soon thereafter.



of the Miamis



passage of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which guaranteed settlers certain political rights (including religious freedom) and created a process whereby regions of the Northwest could eventually become states. Ohio passed through the prescribed stages of territorial development and statehood was granted in 1805.

The Miami, Shawnee, and other native Americans, however, were reluctant to cede their lands to the federal government and resisted the advance of white settlement. Small war parties attacked isolated pioneer cabins and flatboats of settlers floating down the Ohio.

President George Washington approved three military expeditions that headed north toward the Wabash and Maumee rivers from Fort Washington (now Cincinnati) in an effort to quell the Indians. The first two campaigns ended in humiliating defeats for the US Army and volunteer forces. A third excursion, led by General "Mad" Anthony Wayne, finally crushed the Miami-Shawnee confederation at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794. (Conferencegoers who wish to take in the outdoor drama "Blue Jacket," the story of the Shawnee chief who led this battle, can see it performed summer evenings in Xenia, Ohio.)

The resulting Treaty of Green Ville (Greenville in Darke County, site of The Brethren's Home) was signed by the principal Miami chief, Little Turtle. General Wayne's frank but honest treatment of the American Indians ended the warfare and opened up the lower two-thirds of Ohio to pioneer settlement.

Following the Green Ville Treaty, most of the Miamis and Shawnee in southwest Ohio moved their villages farther west. But there still were American Indian camps in the Miami Valley when Dunker pioneer Jacob Miller arrived on a high tract of land six miles south of the village of Dayton in 1800.

Miller, the first known Brethren preacher to settle north of Cincinnati, was the founder of the Lower Miami congregation. According to tradition, he not only treated the natives fairly, but held worship services for them. In return, he gained their respect and was promised protection. He was regarded as "a good man the Great Spirit sent from the east."

Whether or not Miller was "sent" is open to question. There can be little doubt, however, that he was a faithful servant of God. His ministry led to the formation of pioneer congregations in Virginia, Ohio, and Indiana. He was regarded by the late Brethren historian Floyd Mallott as "one of the most remarkable men in colonial America."

According to tradition, Miller was born in Franklin

A 200-year history in Cincinnati

The Church of the Brethren's presence in the Cincinnati area began over 200 years ago with the founding of its first congregation.

In 1795, the Stonelick congregation was organized on the banks of O'Bannon Creek by Elder David Stouder, with people coming from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia to attend. The present building was built in 1854. With the addition of classrooms, it serves the congregation well. An unique feature of this building is its separate cook stove for making the love feast and communion meal, incorporated into its present kitchen. The congregation is served by Merle Rummel, pastor, and Howard Watkins, moderator.

A second congregation began with a prayer meeting on New Year's Eve in 1897, in a home located across the Ohio River from Cincinnati in Constance, Ky. The founding couple were not Brethren, but, after careful research and study, they decided that "the Church of the Brethren was the nearest (to) the Bible." By the end of the next year, a Sunday school class and several baptisms led to the building of the present church building, which was dedicated in 1902. The Constance Church of the Brethren continues to meet, under the leadership of Pastor Shelby North.

The first Cincinnati proper congregation was organized in 1912 by Charles and Mabel Knoepfle, members of the Constance congregation who were "feeling the need" to expand the Church of the Brethren into the city. It began with a Sunday school class and then, with the help of district funds, expanded to its first rented meeting space. After canvassing for funds from congregations within Southern Ohio, a lot and house were purchased for \$6,000.

A church building was dedicated in 1919. This congrega-



The first congregation within the city limits of Cincinnati was organized in 1912 by Charles and Mabel Knoepfle, who were among members of the Constance congregation "feeling the need" to expand the church into the city.

tion continued until 1960, when the church council sought approval from the District Board to sell its building and parsonage to another denomination. Members from this group who remained in the area found their new church home in similar denominations.

At this same time, leaders from the Lower Twin congregation in Preble County, Ohio, were planning a new presence in nearby Middletown. In 1910, there were eight people living in this community who were drawn together for prayer meetings and song services, held in different homes. Ministers from the Lower Twin Church were called to supply preaching. In 1915, the first services were held in a nearby church, where 45 people participated

in Sunday school. Within two years, a lot was purchased and the first Middletown church was dedicated. Presently, the Middletown congregation is worshipping in yet another building, which was purchased from another congregation. Lois and Harold Wenger are the co-pastors.

A preaching point was chosen by people from the Middletown congregation, and in 1924 a ministry was begun between Middletown and Cincinnati, in Hamilton. As with other new church beginnings, people met in homes and then met in rented property. From there they moved to a nearby church, and in 1925 secured a lot for their own building. By 1937, a new building had been built and dedicated, at the cost of \$10,567. The congregation continued until the early 1980s when it was dissolved.

New church activity in this part of our district then took a long break. It was not until 1995 that the Southern Ohio District Board took action to create a new church project in Cincinnati.

Presently, there is a group of people meeting in homes in the eastern part of the city. They, like people before them, are searching for a location in another building so that they can have a "home." The group meets twice a month for worship and Bible study. They are supported by members of Southern Ohio District's New Church Development Task Force, and draw upon the services of area ministers for preaching and teaching. During the week of Annual Conference, several of these people will be active volunteers. Gerry Harley of Batavia is the contact person for this new church project.

—JAMES TOMLONSON

James Tomlsonson is district executive of Southern Ohio District

County, Pa., in about 1735; his parents were first generation Swiss-German immigrants and German was his first language. He united with the Brethren as a young man and was placed in the ministry by William Stover in the Antietam (Conococheague) congregation, in 1762.

Shortly before the outbreak of the American Revolution, Miller, with his wife and young children, relocated to the rolling hills and red clay soil of southwest Virginia. His home was on the north fork of the Blackwater River on Maggoty Creek in Franklin County. Here Miller preached, baptized, and organized German settlers into a Dunker church.

Under the leadership of Miller and William Smith, an English pacifist whom Miller baptized, the Franklin County Brethren grew into a thriving congregation with several preaching points. Their labors also extended into neighboring Floyd County, Smith's home county, where additional centers of church life developed. The Franklin "Germantown" settlement became so well known that Annual Conference was held there in 1797. At this Annual Meeting, Brethren were forbidden to own slaves and church elders condemned the doctrine of universalism (no hell punishment).

Within months of this gathering, however, Miller began to sell his Virginia holdings in preparation for the move north. Why Miller elected to move to the land of the Miamis north of the Ohio is a matter of conjecture. Most who have studied his life conclude that his opposition to slavery was a factor, since slavery was forbidden in the Northwest Territory.

Another important consideration may have been Miller's interest in land speculation. Over a 20-year period, he bought and sold more than a thousand acres in Franklin County. In Ohio, he bought three sections (three square miles, or just under three thousand acres) at the land office in Cincinnati on credit, with a deposit of only \$157.76. He then gradually sold these choice sections to later arrivals.

Miller also bought another nearby section (640 acres) two miles east of the Miami River, on which he built a log cabin. This entire region became prime farmland. Germantown, a few miles southeast, was laid out in 1818 and attracted a thriving community of German settlers. Miller's home was located about a mile from where the Lower Miami meetinghouse would later be built (1845), just west of the Germantown Pike.

Miller lost no time in continuing his labors as a pioneer preacher. He performed his first baptism in 1800, and a few years later posted bond as a Dunker preacher in Dayton, seat of newly created Montgomery County. Sufficient Brethren families had settled in the Miami Valley by 1805 to form a congregation. This church usually is regarded as the second or third Dunker church organized on Ohio soil.

The dense forests were gradually cleared for farming. New settlers poured in each year, and both Miller and the

Miami Church prospered. By 1810, the congregation included perhaps 50 or 60 Dunker families, including the Arnolds, Bowmans, Bowers, Burketts, Caylors, Coblentzes, Cripes, Diehls, Florys, Forneys, Keens, Kuns, Metzgers, Noffsingers, Rohrsers, Shanks, Shivelys, Ulrichs (Ullerys), Vanimans, Wagners, Wolfs, and Weybrights. This membership, which also included several ministers, was scattered over a wide area of Montgomery County, and to the east on to Beaver Creek in Greene County.

Details are lacking, but internal dissension threatened the life of the young church. Given the number of ministers and the wide territory, the controversy may have been over the frequency and location of meetings.

A visit by church leaders from Virginia in 1811 produced an amicable decision, which was to divide the membership into four congregations, each with two ministers and two deacons. The record of this decision, written in German and preserved in the Brethren Historical Library and Archives at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill., carefully established clear boundaries for these churches. Each was named after a nearby watercourse: Lower Miami, Wolf Creek, Bear Creek, and Lower Stillwater. Strong congregations in Dayton and Montgomery County gradually developed out of these four pioneer churches. Jacob Miller kept his oversight of the Lower Miami church, assisted by his son David Miller and Benjamin Bowman.

Miller also pioneered Brethren missionary efforts to the west. In 1809, he and John Hart organized the Brethren living in Preble County into the Twin Creek congregation. They also pressed across the state line into Twelve Mile Purchase, Indiana Territory, meeting with Brethren who had moved to this area from the Miami Valley. That same year they formed Four Mile congregation, the second in Indiana. It included among its early membership the Lybrook, Houston, Miller, and Moss families, all of whom were in-laws or close relatives of Miller.

Jacob Miller died in 1815 and was buried on his farm. Shortly afterward his wife, Barbara, moved to the home of their daughter, Anna Lybrook, in the Four Mile settlement. Barbara died a few years later.

Miller's legacy to the Brethren in the land of the Miamis can hardly be overstated. Four of his sons—Abraham, Daniel, Aaron, and David—became Brethren preachers and played a prominent part of the growth of the Brethren in Ohio and Indiana. A daughter, Mary Darst, became the mother of two Ohio ministers, Isaac and John Darst.

Commemorative markers at the Lower Miami and Germantown Brick (Franklin County, Virginia) churches pay honor to this pioneer preacher who carried his Dunker faith into the wilderness, and laid the foundations for the Brethren movement to flourish. *M.*

David Eller, former professor of history at Bluffton College and book editor for Brethren Press, currently is executive director and publisher for the Swedenborg Foundation. He and his family live in West Chester, Pa.

Being a 'Lone

Serving the world puts us into challenging situations, as Joan Mangum of Bridgewater, Va., learns at the feet of Francisco Rodríguez in San Francisco, Honduras.

We must go beyond even the gallant role of the unnamed masked man. Ours is not to ride into town as the well-endowed benefactor, sure of what ails 'em and how to fix 'em, only then to gallop away at day's end.

to his head and led him astray. And aren't we shocked to find Jesus' disciples arguing over who will be most highly regarded—at the very moment Jesus is preparing to lay down his life for others (Luke 22:24–27)?

How could they have been so long with Jesus, yet so short on understanding the example he set as someone who cared for others with no thought for recognition for himself? In a story from John 5, a paralyzed man healed by Jesus can only refer to him as "...the man who made me well..." when interrogated by the authorities. He didn't catch his name! Indeed, Jesus' unselfconscious service is all the more remarkable, as he more than anyone deserved to be recognized for his deeds of compassion and grace.

The needs of our world are as press-

ing as those in the days of the "old west" or of biblical Palestine. For all the advances in the healing sciences and in the field of "development," people around the world still languish in disease and despair, or find themselves without the bare necessities of life. One quarter of the world's 5.7 billion people live in absolute poverty, while malnutrition stalks some 850 million people, stunting the growth of bodies and minds. They say that 55,000 children still die daily from preventable causes—often for want of \$5 immunizations or a cup of clean water.

Traveling to places where our denomination carries out mission and ministry gives this a stark reality:

- Refugees walking the dusty roads of Sudan, seeking to escape a brutal civil war that in the past decade has claimed 1.5 million lives and devastated a rich agricultural region and equally rich cultural traditions.
- Children in Central America who cannot get an education for want of a monthly \$7 tuition—beyond the reach of families whose annual income is \$250.
- Girls and boys on nearly every continent—200 million of them—made to work their childhoods away as field hands, bonded servants, or sex slaves. In many cases, they are paid pennies a day to make rugs and running shoes for the world's consumers.

Even where people have suddenly found "prosperity," a poverty of spirit threatens, as people turn to the accumulation of wealth rather than to God or to one another to salve life's deepest longings.

Seeing these needs, we wonder what to do. Much can be done. Our resources and our resourcefulness are plentiful. And yet, by what motives do we offer who we are and what we have? Are we, like the Babelonians of old, interested first in making a name for ourselves? Do we, as the disciples did, seek first our kingdom and its glory?



David Radcliff

By David Radcliff

“Who was that masked man?” That was the question that ended every episode of the “Lone Ranger,” a 1960’s western featuring a masked hero. After helping those in need, the star of the show whirled his white stallion about and galloped off, before the beneficiaries of his aid even knew his name.

This kind of unselfconscious attitude in serving others is refreshing. Today, it seems that name is everything. We want to be known for who we are and for what we do. Certainly, we want to be known as someone of worth, if not importance. And yet, even this understandable tendency can be dangerous.

“Come, let us make a name for ourselves.” This intention on the part of the builders of the Tower of Babel caused them to lose identity rather than acquire it. This longing to be known for who we are and what we have done also merits God’s disapproval, as we seem to be usurping God’s role as the giver of all good things.

Other biblical stories provide a similar lesson. It was shortly after King David “won a name for himself” (2 Sam. 8:15) that his kingly power went

'Ranger' is not enough

A Sunday School class is gratified to receive a letter from a struggling child naming that class as the child's link with a better life. Individuals whose financial gifts can make an impact on church programs appreciate the attention received as potential donors.

As a denomination, we like to see our name attached to particular mission programs. When a Honduran community tells Brethren workcampers that they were like "angels from heaven," we are tempted to accept such accolades as our due. Is there a point, however, at which the point becomes our own gratification, rather than a complete devotion to our Lord, to the church, and to the world's suffering people? Several key questions may help us determine when we have come to this point.

Does our ministry always point beyond ourselves to our Lord? If Jesus can tell those he healed to return home and "declare how much God has done for you," we, too, should be able to point not to ourselves but beyond ourselves as we do God's work in the world. After all, God is the source of our compassion and our ability to share; we are simply those through whom God works.

A second question: Is our ministry undertaken in cooperation with the ones we serve? Those out to make a name for themselves enjoy setting the terms for any service they render. A tragically humorous example: A European agency determined that people in a poor Honduran community would benefit from a large grain drying facility. Trouble was, no one asked the Hondurans. They now call it the "elefante blanco (white elephant)," and use it for a tool storage shed. Out of respect for others, as well as for practical reasons, our mission plans must be cooperative at every stage. This would include working with other church agencies that have a long history in a particular region.

Third, in our interest in being direct-

ly connected to a mission project—and thus directly receiving credit—do we actually diminish the effect of the ministry for the recipients? I ponder this question regularly in planning workcamps and learning tours. Would it be better to simply send money to be used by agencies in the area, rather than spend money to take a group?

Generally, I have found that those who go to another area often are transformed by the experience; this, in turn, is to the lasting benefit of the work of the church and the needs of the world. Visitors also are often deeply moved by the religious faith and dogged determination to build a better life on the part of the host community.

I also find that when service is offered in a cooperative and humble style, recipient communities often feel empowered and blessed by the visiting group. However, should the experience simply feed our need to give or to be recognized or to travel to an "exotic" location, we must then question its worth.

This leads to a more troubling question: Are we willing to look beyond the immediacy of the needs of a person or community to search out the underlying causes for their suffering? Only as we take time to understand why a person or people or nation lives in a certain condition can we truly begin to minister to them. This often leads to a wider array of ministries in a given context, as we come to realize that meeting the immediate need is only a small part of the solution to the problem. For example, while sending SOS kits to Sudan was helpful, this needed to be accompanied by multifaceted ministries that included peacemaking, Bible translation, and leadership assistance.

One key dimension of the story of the man Jesus healed in John 5 was that it took place on the Sabbath. Jesus was aware that healing others, while valuable in itself, needed to be

complemented by attempts to change a dehumanizing religious system. This represented a crucial step toward setting people free to live as God intended. It also meant that those who benefited from the system would be angered. Indeed, Jesus' violations of the Sabbath laws for the sake of people's needs led directly to the authorities' efforts to destroy him.

Looking for the deeper reasons for the suffering of others can also have another troublesome consequence—we begin to question ourselves. As we compare our abundance to someone else's poverty, we have to wonder how things got this way. What keeps them this way? In God's eyes, is this an arrangement that reflects justice and leads to peace? If things were to be different, how would this affect us and our way of life?

In short, we must go beyond even the gallant role of the unnamed masked man. Ours is not to ride into town as the well-endowed benefactor, sure of what ails 'em and how to fix 'em, only then to gallop away at day's end. Our work—the work of Christ, of God, of the church—is long-term work. It is done with others, not for them. It seeks God's purposes and the good of the neighbor, rather than name recognition for the giver. It leaves the giver vulnerable to change—a change of heart and lifestyle, as well as in feelings toward the recipient. It invites other changes as well—changes in the way the world works. Thus, it becomes work that demands as much courage as compassion, as those same forces Jesus faced as he sought change will be found in our own time as well.

It is, as an earlier Brethren put it, work for the glory of God and our neighbor's good. It is, as we now like to say, continuing the work of Jesus—peacefully, simply, together. *M.*

David Radcliff is director of Denominational Peace Witness and Korean Ministries for the General Board

stepping STONES

by Robin
Wentworth Mayer

"If mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy!"

Whether it's good or bad, fair or not, or the result of nature or nurture, I won't attempt to debate it. The reality is that this little "down home" proverb carries more than a kernel of truth. Because no matter how "modern" a family becomes, there are a number of family functions usually carried out by the mother that can become seriously impaired if mama ain't happy.

Take the job of "traffic control" (please, take it!).

A couple of summers ago, I glanced at my babysitter's calendar. Now this is a mother who, in addition to providing daycare for others, had four children of her own ranging from diapers to designer jeans. Her schedule was packed every day with nearly hourly practices and lessons. It struck fear into my heart to even consider coordinating such a complexity of commitments. I seriously doubt that the CEOs of the nation's most progressive corporations keep a more intense pace. Can you imagine the ensuing "operations collapse" if that mama weren't happy?

Mothers also tend to determine the emotional climate of the home. This is dramatically illustrated

when the mother in a family is suffering from clinical depression, which has a way of spawning destructive decisions that can severely damage family relationships. I've found, in several years of marriage counseling, that often a key component of recovery for the couple was to help the husband and children "change the rules" of their household in order to give Mom the support and freedom to take care of herself, and the opportunity to grow and develop in her own right. And believe me, a happier mama made for a happier family.

More often than not, mothers function as the glue that holds the family together in various ways. I have a long-time friend whose mother died suddenly and unexpectedly when my friend and her siblings were in their 20s. What had been a close-knit Irish Catholic family has, over the past 10 years, gradually disconnected. Their father had never been the one who planned holiday celebrations, remembered birthdays, or corralled everyone for family reunions. And his new wife has rejected the role of presiding matriarch.

Now I could talk a *long* time on why it *shouldn't* be that way. But the bottom line is that without a happy

mama, this extended family's happiness has been significantly diminished.

I can remember my own father saying that it was his job to keep my mother happy. While I can't agree that it's ever anyone's job to take *responsibility* for another's happiness, I think my dad was on the right track. A man cannot *make* his wife happy, but there's a lot he can do to contribute to the conditions whereby she can create her own happiness.

This will be different things to different mamas. A mother's happiness is not determined by whether or not she has a career, how much laundry she does or doesn't do, nor by clubs, hobbies, or activities in which she participates. The key is for husbands to *know* their wives and do whatever it takes to support her happiness.

And here's the clincher: Don't do it for *her* sake, do it for *you*! You see, it is in your *own* best interests for the mama in your life to be happy. Because when we're not, we have an uncanny ability of making everyone else miserable as well.

And if you don't believe me, just ask my husband!

Robin Wentworth Mayer is pastor of Kokomo (Ind.) Church of the Brethren.

Stepping Stone is a column offering suggestions, perspectives, and opinions—snapshots of life—that we hope are helpful to readers in their Christian journey. As the writer said in her first installment, "Remember, when it comes to managing life's difficulties, we don't need to walk on water. We just need to learn where the stepping stones are."



Lending a hand in Marlinton

Volunteers respond after the January flood

by Jason Bauserman

I awoke from a deep sleep at 5 a.m., January 19, 1996, the phone ringing just inches from my ear. Calling were Joretta and Wesley Coleman, members of Durbin (W.Va.) Church of the Brethren, who were asking for prayers for their safety and against the waters that were beating on their back door. While promising to pray, I begged them to leave immediately with their two young daughters.

The previous day, the National Weather Service (NWS) had requested me to do a snow pack melt measurement. Having an official NWS station at our Bartow, W.Va., home, we gladly obliged. Half of the *Blizzard of '96* still remained, with some bare ground visible while other areas of turf were covered under three-foot drifts. Picking an average spot was difficult. The chosen foot of slushy snow for a core sample quickly melted down on the kitchen stove to 2.61 inches of water.

The worst-case scenario occurred in the middle of the night. Pounding rains measured 2.68 inches. With temperatures in the mid-50s, very strong southwest winds melted most of the existing snow, including that in the highest elevations. The final warning came with a dash of thunder and light-

The raging waters were reminiscent of the 1985 flood that devastated West Virginia. The local newspaper ran the headline, "Second '500 Year' Flood in a Decade." No recorded floods in the past century have come close to these two. And, as in 1985, Brethren volunteers arrived by the vanload to help.

ning at 7:25 a.m. As a strong cold front swept in, the temperatures descended 55 degrees, reading a shivering two degrees the next morning.

Pocahontas County, highest in average elevation (5,161 feet) east of the Rockies, is the birthplace of eight rivers. The famous Greenbrier River, the longest free-flowing river in the East, bisects the county. Up to six

inches of water came plummeting off 4,000-foot mountain ranges to the Greenbrier River Basin below. The muddy waters spread out hundreds of feet in the floodplains, with the crest lasting around five hours.

This raging flood was very reminiscent of the 1985 flood. The *Pocahontas Times* ran a headline stating, "Second '500 Year' Flood in a Decade." No recorded floods in the past century have come close to these two. Is it global warming, more logging roads, or last-day Bible prophecy? Only God knows, and hopefully we have his attention.

The smaller headwater towns of Bartow, Durbin, and Cass were not damaged as extensively as Marlinton, Ronceverte, and Alderson, with their greater population and downtown business districts. At Durbin, Seneca Mental Health patients were evacuated to Durbin Church of the Brethren, which overlooks the town. Pastor Donnie Curry, stranded on the other side of the river, was glad that the 50-year-old church was available, as it also was in 1985.

Forty miles downstream at Marlinton, the county seat, the situation was far different. With no working flood gauges and very few automatic rain gauges functioning above Marlinton,



Students prepare for a new stadium in the '50s.

*The
Service
Continues...*



Students build for Habitat for Humanity in the '90s.

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is healing and healthy.*

... Laughter all by itself is spiritual."

—Ted & Lee—

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the hydrologist in Charleston, W.Va., had few statistics to predict a flood crest. For a seven-hour period, the flood crest was predicted at 13–14 feet at Marlinton. At 10:50 a.m., with flood waters bearing down, the NWS crest prediction was suddenly jacked to 20 feet, 10 feet above flood stage. Many in Marlinton were caught with no warning. Most lost all personal possessions. With up to six feet of water in the business district, store inventories became debris. The new First National Bank, open for just two months, had water coming in its windows. Praise the Lord that no lives were lost this time!

David Rittenhouse, senior pastor of the yoked Pocahontas Church of the Brethren congregation, lists 75 members who aided mostly Marlinton flood victims. There really was no organized church effort. On their own, members gathered up shovels and cleaning supplies to remove mud and debris. These Brethren, members of churches that were originally planted by the legendary John Kline, continued to carry on his spirit of service in the name of Christ.

For two weeks following the disaster, Shenandoah District sent two vanloads of volunteers to Marlinton and Cass. From these early "emotional" ties, the Brethren asked for and received Marlinton as their project area. Donna Derr, director of the Church of the Brethren's Disaster Services, made an initial three-month commitment for workers to be in Marlinton, which could be extended if needed.

Wade Hutchinson performed the set-up work for the hosting Shenandoah District. An abandoned church building was remodeled, complete with sleeping quarters and showers. This building will be left to house future response teams.

Disaster Services also secured a list of the neediest families without insurance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which was used to deter-

From the General Secretary

Anticipating a new day

mine which families and houses were to receive Brethren assistance.

Surrounding church districts were assigned specific weeks to supply a vanload of volunteers. According to Donna, districts take this witness commitment seriously, keeping Disaster Services extremely busy. Besides the Marlinton project, Brethren in March were ministering in St. John, Virgin Islands; Wilkes-Barre and Hyndman, Pa.; and Washington state.

Marlinton and Pocahontas County now have serious questions to answer. Located in God's country in the heart of the Monongahela National Forest, jobs have become very scarce. Recently closed were the world's largest leather tannery at Frank, and the Hanover Shoe Company at Marlinton; both of which had Brethren employees. With unemployment at 20 percent, this is sure to increase to Depression-type figures. Many businesses still had debts from the 1985 flood. Individuals are contemplating relocation.

Decisions hinge on whether to build a mainstream dam on the Greenbrier River two miles above Marlinton. Man has tried to tame nature on most other rivers in this country. This beautiful border county in this border state again has been split as it was in the Civil War—north versus south. Marlinton and southern counties along the river basin want the dam, while Pocahontas County, a county to the north, opposes the construction of such a dam.

If the dam is to be built, it will take many years to be completed. In the meantime, I have taken the voluntary task of implementing the countywide early warning emergency system. Lord willing, this will include strategically placed flood gauges, a local repeater for the federal government's weather radio service, a local antenna to link the automatic rain gauge system to the Charleston weather office, and possibly some type of alarm system or link to 911.

A big "thank you" goes out to all

The announcement of my retirement at the end of this year has brought many expressions of appreciation, for which I am grateful. I came into this position 10 years ago committed to listening to our people and to the Annual Conference as we prayerfully sought the direction for denominational programming. Taking new initiatives required additional resources, which were given through Brethren Vision for the '90s commitments.

For some time, I have anticipated retiring this year, hoping to leave the church with a strong sense of God's purpose, and well-positioned for the next century. That hope continues, but now it will come through the redesign process in which the General Board currently is engaged. People often ask why the Board is facing financial difficulty when they have understood that we have balanced our budgets for seven of the past 10 years.

It is not because our people have slacked off in their giving. Total giving to all church causes is up about 60 percent from what it was 10 years ago. The percentage of income that Brethren give has increased from 2.57 percent to 2.97 percent. Clearly, Brethren have continued to support the church.

It is not because outreach contributions now are going for local church expenses. Giving to local church programs has increased about 50 percent in the decade, while giving to outreach has increased about 60 percent.

It is not that congregational giving to the General Board has radically declined, though recent years show a decline. Over the decade, it has maintained the same level. But it has not increased at the rate of other outreach giving. In the meantime, expenses increase \$200,000–\$500,000 per year. The result is an increasing problem for the Board.

We get a better picture by analyzing outreach giving. Percentages of increase during the 10-year period for various categories are as follows: the General Board's general fund, 4.9 percent; Emergency Disaster Fund, 7.9 percent; homes and hospitals, 30.9 percent; Bethany Theological Seminary, 50.2 percent; districts, including camps, 65.6 percent; colleges, 86.7 percent; other outreach, 106.6 percent.

What becomes clear is that most Brethren institutions have kept pace with the average increase in giving, while giving to the Board's general fund has remained level. One can imagine that many church budgets increasingly include Heifer Project International and local outreach programs. Giving to the General Board has not kept pace with these other appeals.

The Board balanced its budget over the decade by appealing to people for the Brethren Vision for the '90s, but most of those commitments were completed in 1995. That is why the problem appeared just now. We had hoped that giving to the general fund might begin to increase, but it has not.

Someone has suggested that an additional penny a day per member would balance the budget this year, and that is true. Even so, we must find ways for Board programs to be in touch with what congregations want and need. That is what redesign is all about. I believe redesign presents a unique opportunity for denominational programs to be well positioned for the next century, my fond hope as I anticipate retirement.—DONALD E. MILLER

Donald E. Miller is general secretary of the Church of the Brethren.

church disaster volunteers. When a disaster strikes your own community, it is nice to know that Brethren from afar will respond to the overwhelming trials of strangers. Good Samaritans

still abound within the Church of the Brethren!

M.

Jason Bauseman is a member of Pocahontas (W.V.) Church of the Brethren, and a writer for the Pocahontas Times

Responding to disasters fo



Jason Bauserman

In the aftermath of Hurricane Camille in 1969, 10 BVSers were sent from the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. A few of those volunteers are shown above clearing debris in Long Beach, Miss.

After Hurricane Camille devastated Mississippi's Gulf Coast in 1969, 10 BVSers were sent to help clean up. From that early beginning arose the Brethren Disaster Services. Jason Bauserman, one of the 10 BVSers, describes the program then and now.

by Jason Bauserman

In August 1969, 10 Brethren Volunteer Service workers were sent from the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., to Mississippi's Gulf Coast. We were told that the Church of the Brethren wanted to initiate a disaster response network, similar to Mennonite Disaster Service.

Even though some churches and individuals had responded to local dis-

asters over the years, it was not until 1975, on a mandate by Annual Conference, that the vision for disaster response, through the General Board's Disaster Services, came to fruition. The main office always has been located at New Windsor. Directors have been Mac Coffman, Jan Thompson, and for the past seven years, Donna Derr.

There are a number of changes that have occurred in disaster response since Hurricane Camille struck more than 25 years ago. We BVSers flew by airplane to Gulfport, Miss. We worked under the direction of Mennonite Disaster Service and the Red Cross.

Oftentimes, we had to drive many miles to a job site. Sleeping on saggy Army cots in an old, abandoned school was not very comfortable. Soap in the soft water showers did not want to come off. Meals were prepared by Red Cross volunteers and served in the cafeteria. Our assignments often split the young and eager group into two or three segments.

Today, different districts send a van full of volunteers, normally for a five-day stay. Airline flights would only be used to transport volunteers overseas, like to a recent project in St. John, Virgin Islands.

When relief agencies have left, Brethren set up for the long-term. Often a large house is fixed up in exchange for rent. A home atmosphere with new friends, good conversation, comfortable beds, and home-cooked meals now is provided. The on-site project coordinator, in conjunction

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with Donna, keeps the operation running smoothly.


Unheard of in 1969 were child care and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Both have since grown by leaps and bounds. The trauma for children in a disaster was recognized and addressed. Training sessions now are held for child caregivers.

FEMA was created in 1978 "to provide a single point of accountability for all federal activities related to disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness and response." As a result, "Church response has changed dramatically," Donna said.

History was made on March 4, 1996, in Charleston, W.Va. It was the first time FEMA and volunteer church agencies met together to discuss expectations. Booklets and literature—measuring four inches in a stack—provide federal guidelines to help today's disaster victims. Besides quick repair, FEMA now emphasizes relocation, elevation, flood proofing, flood walls, and protection of utilities.

In Charleston, I was pleasantly surprised by the church representatives in attendance. The majority of people there represented the Brethren, Mennonites, and Friends. The historic peace churches continue to serve the hurting in Christ's name. These three small denominations still are making a large witness by putting their faith into action.

The support for disaster response as a church program has been phenomenal. The majority of volunteer workers are retirees. Three annual disaster auctions, held by the Atlantic Northeast, Shenandoah, and Mid-Atlantic districts, add more than \$500,000 to this designated fund. Prayer support and the outpouring of hearts keeps this program strong.

Over the past 25 years, through experience, the disaster program has grown and matured. It now is well-known for being at the forefront for those in need. We, as Brethren, showing Christ's love and service, do belong in this ministry. 

*"The gifts Christ gave were that some would be
apostles,
some prophets,
some evangelists,
some pastors,
some teachers..."*

EPHESIANS 4:11

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Don't dismiss difficult truths

Last week I sat down with nine ministers to review the Redesign Steering Committee's (RSC) initial report. Included in our group were two former General Board staff, a past Annual Conference moderator, a former chair of the Council of District Executives, and a former pastor of Highland

Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin, Ill. All of these people were involved in the gathering of data for the report.

These are people who know intimately how the Brethren operate, who are experienced with the highest structural levels of the denomination. And these are people that the editor thinks may be clueless on how the denomina-

tion works (March Editorial, page 36).

During our discussion, none of these people expressed any significant disagreement with the RSC's report.

I don't know to what extent the editorial reflects the thinking of General Board staff members, but the editor appears to be suffering from a serious case of denial. The editorial seems to argue that if people perceive a problem with the work of the General Board staff, it is likely because those people simply don't understand what the staff does. It suggests that folks are ignorant about how the structure of our denomination works.

The problem, the editorial claims, is the great "clueless" unwashed. We don't require any fundamental change, we need only to do a better job of communicating. If this isn't denial, what is?

For those who have not read the report, I recommend the excellent summary on page 7 of the same issue, or contact your district office for a copy. Contrary to the editorial, you will not find any criticism of people.

The editorial refers to "pact(s) with the devil," "mess(es) of pottage" or "piddly little programs," none of which is referred to in the report. You will not find statements that the "present General Board program doesn't amount to much." According to the editorial, all of these are what some people "infer." None of these are actually in the report, nor do I believe that the report reasonably suggests them.

Instead, readers of the report will find a strong sense that the General Board needs to re-examine its priorities. The report is not critical of the

The opinions expressed in Letters are not necessarily those of the magazine. Readers should receive them in the same spirit with which differing opinions are expressed in face-to-face conversations. Letters should be brief, concise, and respectful of the opinions of others. Preference is given to letters that respond directly to items read in the magazine. We are willing to withhold the name of a writer only when, in our editorial judgment, it is warranted. We will not consider any letter that comes to us unsigned. Whether or not we print the letter, the writer's name is kept in strictest confidence. Address letters to MESSENGER editor, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.



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efforts of General Board staff, but of the decisions that the General Board has made in directing those efforts.

The report suggests that the General Board's limited resources should be directed primarily toward equipping and strengthening congregations, with other calls for increased emphasis, including better communication, flowing from that general concern. It is hard for me to see how the current state of our denomination could lead to any other conclusion.

The nine distinguished servants of Christ's body I met with are not disaffected outsiders who perceive themselves as excluded from the councils of power. They are not "clueless" about how the General Board works. These men and women were carefully selected for the survey because of their experience and knowledge of the denomination at various levels.

I hope that the General Board and the denomination at large, rather than dismissing difficult truths, will engage in a careful reading of what we learn from these people, and will prayerfully and creatively face the challenges that the report puts before us. I pray that we can develop a vision for the General Board that will truly equip congregations to continue a distinctive witness and ministry for many generations to come.

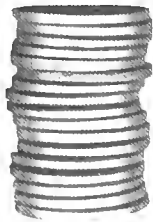
*Jeffrey Davidson
Woodbridge, Va.*

Decide now, disagree later

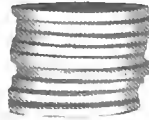
I am in complete agreement with the March Editorial. As a Sunday school teacher, I often was asked, "How do you know all of this?"

What I find on the local and district levels is a very strong feeling that what we do is entirely our own business. I've had a hard time convincing people that what comes out of Annual Conference and most of what Elgin does is the will of the grass roots.

Why do we send delegates to Conference? For whatever other purpose than to express our local wills? Why don't churches instruct their delegates how to vote? In all my experience, I've



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never seen or heard our local delegates instructed how to vote. Sometimes I wonder if the locals even know what the issues are. I have served as a delegate several times and once on Standing Committee; never have I been instructed how to vote, even after asking for instruction.

But once decisions are made, people on the local and district levels refuse to pay attention or listen to the decisions they sent you there to make! I sometimes wonder just how much people, Brethren included, really believe in representative government.

Let me assure you, some of us on the grass-roots level believe the "Flgin" bunch to be talented, dedicated, and respected "ordinary joes."

*Don Snyder
Waynesboro, Va*

Seeing is believing

Right on with March's Editorial! When I read statements in the Redesign Steering Committee's report that we need to be in more "cooperation with someone else" and "too much effort is being spent in (ecumenical involvement) at the expense of churches and districts," I wonder how one does cooperate while cutting the ecumenical involvement that is the cooperation.

I only wish that everyone could spend some time working in Flgin in some capacity for a period, to find out just what really does go on there.

*Bill Christiansen
Franklin Grove, Ill*

The mission field is here

Paul Munday's article, "Does the Future Have a Church?" (February, page 22) is very significant. Most significant is the statement about the mission field being on our doorstep.

I have served as Brethren pastor in a metropolitan area for almost 18 years, in a congregation that now has 18-55 worshipers each Sunday morning. This congregation has given well to Church of the Brethren mission programs. But, it appears to be dying.

It is dying because of a lack of resource people for leadership roles moving toward change or transformation. This congregation is one of two Brethren churches in a metropolitan area that contains over five million people. This congregation has struggled to change, but if it and all of us in the Church of the Brethren are to consider "Another way of living. Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together," or as Judy Mills Reimer has said, "present a window of faith" to allow others to see the uniqueness of our Brethren Christianity, we need to see Munday's challenge.

The mission field is at our doorstep. We need to do more than let people see our uniquely flavored faith. We need to become open doors bringing people in. Windows are difficult passageways into any building. We need to consider the Church of the Brethren commissioning missionaries to the U.S. Maybe it is possible to consider a new type of Brethren Volunteer Service, like district BVS.

Munday's question, "Does the future have a church?" can find answers in the Lord through us. Will we answer God's call?

*Don Hlim
Detroit, Mich*

What's up with the cover?

When the March MESSENGER came, my first reaction was "What are they up to now?" I had read Phil Grout's article (page 18) before I turned back to the front cover and made the connection.

Phil deserves a pat on the back for what he has done—and written about.

*Channex Shamberger
Boise, Idaho*

Dialog helps to understand

I would like to commend you on the two articles on mental illness (March). Patricia Roop Robinson was right to lobby the MESSENGER about this issue.

I have been battling bipolar depression most of my life. Like Phil Grout, I've done a lot of talking to God about my condition. When I was 20 years

old, I wrote God letters that I still have. I'm now 42.

It grieves me that my 16-year-old daughter has had the disease for several years. The medication that helps me also helps her.

I have talked openly of my illness and been on the church prayer list. I feel that educating people about mental illness is the key to acceptance. Thus, I started a support group; we often talk about the spiritual aspects of the disease. I encourage people to ask to be put on prayer lists, to ask for anointing, and to ask friends to pray for them: I tell people to take advantage of every resource available to them.

It has been a long journey for me to find my way out of the darkness of depression into the light of wellness. I praise God that he has given me so many loving people in my life.

I will call attention to these articles in my congregation, hoping to reach others who are ill, and to teach others about our pain.

God bless Patricia, Phil, and those at MESSENGER for these articles.

*Aline Huey
Rockton, Pa.*

Stand up for inclusion

In response to Cora Hunt's letter (February, page 50), I, too, know about conferences and the snubs one can receive while attending them.

I am a member of the Brethren Church and have felt like an outsider many times. As a result, I have not attended the national conference in Ashland, Ohio, for many years. In spite of the snubs and the cold shoulders, I now realize that I am the one who has lost out.

I don't believe the treatment is intentional; however, it does hurt to feel like a stranger. Don't give up! Stand up and express how you feel, perhaps we are oblivious to the fault. Make the church aware of what is wrong, then try to right that wrong. We, the body, are an extension of the love of Jesus, and we need to be him, who said, "I will never forsake you."

*David Powell
Longton, Kan.*

Pontius' Puddle

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Sunday: Your congregation's ministries

Monday: Annual Conference officers

Tuesday: General Board and staff

Wednesday: District executives,
Bethany Seminary, colleges
and university

Thursday: General Services

Friday: Parish Ministries

Saturday: World Ministries

May prayer concerns:

Congregation: National Day of Prayer, May 1; National Youth Sunday, May 5; Mother's Day, May 12; Pentecost Sunday, May 26.

Conference: Standing Committee members as they prepare for their pre-Annual Conference meetings.

General Board: General Secretary
Search Committee; Redesign Steering Committee and subcommittees.

Districts and schools: District Executive's cross-cultural event in Puerto Rico, May 16-18; Bethany Theological Seminary intensives—*Narrative Theology and Christian Spiritual Direction*

General Services: "Fill the Ark,"
May 5-June 2.

Parish Ministries: Educare, May 5-5.
Corapolis, Pa.; Rural and small churches—May 12 is Rural Life
Sunday; Volunteer Summer Service orientation, May 24-31.

World Ministries: Two Honduran workcamps, May 15-25 and 21-31; people serving in Africa and the Middle East; Dan Kim, serving in Korea.

Letters

Is there more to the circle?

After reading Dale Brown's article, "Can Christ be both exclusive and inclusive?" (March, page 27), I had the opportunity to sit in on a class about Thomas Merton (a modern-day Trappist monk who sought to live the contemplative life and

to be an active peacemaker).

In that class, I heard a quote of Merton's that he told to a visitor who had just entered into church membership. Merton said, "I have only one thing to say to you: The church is a very big place. Always remember to go your own way in it."

This advice reminds me of what Brown may be trying to say to us Brethren. Yes, we as Christians do have boundaries. But what if the church were not only a big place, but a very big place? Could this be what has helped the Catholic church to survive in all of its diversity for 2000 years?

Could there be more to the circle than what we have usually envisioned? Perhaps it is by seeing the Church as a very big place that we can continue to sing, "Shall the circle be unbroken?"

*Gail Lrisman Valeta
Denver, Colo.*

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Understanding our diversity

Thank you so much for the excellent article by Dale Brown in the March MESSENGER. I found it extremely enlightening, and it helps me understand why some of us cling so tightly to some texts while other passages seem so imperative to other people.

*Lvelyn Prantz
Harrisburg, Pa.*

CLASSIFIED ADS

ANNOUNCEMENT—The 51st Annual Eastern CPS Reunion will be held Aug. 3-4, 1996, at Lancaster Mennonite High School, 2176 Lincoln Highway East, Lancaster, Pa. Open to all who served in CPS Programs & registration forms will be sent to mailing list. If you want on mailing list, or more info., contact John B. Sauder, 1001 E. Oregon Road, Lititz, PA. Tel. (717) 560-4256.

ATTENTION—RV/tent campers, next time travelling (May-Sept.) through southwestern Virginia near Roanoke, make Camp Bethel one of the stops. Call Camp Bethel for site rates & availability. Tel. (540) 992-2940.

INVITATION—Shalom Church of the Brethren, a new & growing fellowship in Durham, N.C., invites Brethren moving to Research Triangle area (Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill) to worship w/ us. Eager to provide moving assistance (unloading, childcare, area info.) for those relocating to area. For info., contact Fellowship, PO Box 15607, Durham, NC 27704. Tel. (919) 490-6422. E-mail: ShalomCOB@AOL.COM.

INVITATION—Considering a move? Continue your journey of faith on a new frontier, come to Carroll County, Ill. Become part of gathering of caring people of faith with strong sense of community. Three long-established Brethren congregations, each invested in the work of Christ locally & in wider church. Anabaptist community, agricul-

turally based; multiple manufacturing, production facilities. Fertile rolling landscape overlooking Mississippi River in N.W. Ill. Diligent supportive people, give high priority to education, moral development. Considering a move? Make it a journey of faith. Contact: Carroll County Brethren, 326 S. High St., Lanark, IL 61046. Tel. (815) 225-7812.

TRAVEL—South Africa: Land of Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Tutu. Jan. 3-15, 1997. Visit old Johannesburg, Pretoria, gold mine, Kruger National Park and other parks for big game safaris. Swaziland, Zululand, Cape Town, and Cape of Good Hope. Optional visit to Victoria Falls. For info., write: J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022.

TRAVEL—Pilgrimage to Israel, Jordan, & Greece. Oct. 20-Nov. 2, 1996 (14 days). You are invited to join Wendell & Joan Bohrer on their 10th pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Visit Jericho, Capernaum, Jerusalem, Hebron, the Dead Sea, Oumran, Petra, Athens, Delphi, and much more. Cost \$2,489 from New York. For info., write or call 8520 Royal Meadow Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46217. Tel./Fax (317) 882-5067.

WANTED—Info. about life of Barbara Nickey, M.D. Diaries, articles, letters, photos, personal memories, etc. Write to: Jo Wampler, R.R. 1 Box 269, Mountain City, TN 37683. Tel. (423) 727-4722.

Turning Points

New Members

Note: Congregations are asked to submit only the names of actual new members of the denomination. Do not include names of people who have merely transferred their membership from another Church of the Brethren congregation.

Bakersfield, Pac. S.W.: Clarence & Jewell Johnson, Doris Ladd, Cheri & Chuck Miller
Bassett, Virginia: Marcus Stone
Chiques, Atl. N.E.: Joshua Bowman, Jared Brandt, Naomy Brubaker, Kristin & Nicole Bruckhart, Lynette Ebersole, Vernon Heisey, Bryan Hoffer, Anita Messick, Sarah Miller, Jordan Walgemuth, Evan White
Copper Hill, Virginia: Patricia Conner, Sarah Gearhart, Alma Lou & Vester Manning, Eula Richards, Benson & Jason Williams, Dean Wood
Danville, N. Ohio: Jara Stoll, Mary Jo & Robert Wittel, Lisa Moreland
Drexel Hill, Atl. N.E.: Bradley & Eulalia Lowry
Fairview, Mid. Atl.: Lee Cook; Ryan Forbes; Philip MacDonald; Chris, Daniele & Margaret Pennington; April Willis
Frederick, Mid. Atl.: Christopher & Rachel Arnold, Louise Cline, Lois Frederick, Joseph & Donna Gezelle, William Hawkins, Arrod Martin, Helen Mercer, Ronald Miller, Mary Zimmerman
Germentown Brick, Virginia: Susan Flora, Brandon Page
Glendora, Pac. S.W.: Caroline Acevedo; Kevin Carlson; Brenda Horne; Kellee, Marjorie & Robert Preston; Jennifer Snyder; Carol, Joseph & Michael Vecchio; Brooke Wolf
Greentree, Atl. N.E.: Doug & Margaret Bosler, Gerald & Nancy Daywalt, Barry Mallard, Barbara & Larry O'Neill, Mary-Elizabeth & Robert Ormsby, Nathan Raudenbush, Barry Shoemaker
Hooversville, W. Pa.: John Witcof
Mack Memorial, S. Ohio: Robin Cain, Jeff Hamilton, Rebecca Slough
Maple Grove, N. Ohio: Jenna & Rusty Gortner
Middle Creek, Atl. N.E.: Arlene, Edward, Nichelle, & Nathan Ginder; Joan Kline; Heather Long; Tessa Pelger; Gayle Schnupp; Bobbie Shonk
Nappanee, N. Ind.: James Dunn; George Malcolm; Deena, Londa & Mark Newcomer
Rayman, W. Pa.: Rhoda Henry, Shirley Patton
San Diego, Pac. S.W.: Lee

Albert, Pearl Hartz, Duane & Jill Johnson, Ellen Moomaw, Richard & Pat Stehlik
Sunfield, Mich.: Ellen & Joel Scheffer
Syracuse, N. Ind.: Jerry & Nancy Neibert
Trotwood, S. Ohio: Megan Hoover; Bonnie, Robert & Trent Smith; David Tucci
Welsh Run, Mid. Atl.: Adam & Phillip Evans, Caleb & Christy Long, Matthew Piper, April & Tonya Weller, Chad & Jeremy Witmer
West Goshen, N. Ind.: Mindy Lloyd, Anna Tubbs
Westminster, Mid. Atl.: Patricia & Ted Burnett, Regina & Richard Hubble, Linda Taggart, Nancy & Stephen Uhlgart

Deaths

Agee, Demus, 78, Eden, Va., Feb. 14, 1996
Anstine, Albert, 95, Louisville, Ohio, Feb. 4, 1996
Auker, David, 75, Ephrata, Pa., Feb. 2, 1996
Backus, Lola, 94, Greenville, Ohio, Feb. 3, 1996
Baker, Dorothea, 68, Greenville, Ohio, Dec. 12, 1995
Baker, Seth, 81, Greenwood, Del., Jan. 4, 1996
Bakker, La Vonne, 79, Kingsley, Iowa, March 7, 1996
Baldner, Milton, 87, Chambersburg, Pa., Feb. 18, 1996
Barnhart, Frank, 100, Greenville, Ohio, Nov. 27, 1995
Bauerline, Andrew, 98, Hanover, Pa., Feb. 20, 1996
Blocher, Orvetta, 87, Flora, Ind., Dec. 28, 1995
Bolt, Inez, Jacksonsville, Fla., Nov. 15, 1995
Border, Clyde, Everett, Pa., Dec. 4, 1995
Bowman, Elizabeth, 85, Lancaster, Pa., Dec. 25, 1995
Bremer, Bertha, 86, Kalona, Iowa, Feb. 27, 1996
Brown, Merle, 70, Fayetteville, Pa., Feb. 6, 1996
Brumbaugh, Daniel, 84, Saxton, Pa., Jan. 18, 1996
Buckwalter, Beatrice, 71, New Holland, Pa., Dec. 15, 1995
Bullock, Russell, 80, Rossville, Ind., Jan. 20, 1996
Burkey, Gordon, 75, Lititz, Pa., Feb. 9, 1996
Bushong, Anna, Harrisonburg, Va., Feb. 19, 1996
Butler, Donald, 80, Rossville, Ind., Jan. 22, 1996
Carl, Pauline, 77, Chambersburg, Pa., Feb. 9, 1996
Click, Sharon, 26, Charlotte, N.C., Feb. 6, 1996
Coffman, Cleo, 92, Kalona, Iowa, Feb. 17, 1996
Coles, William, 74, Westminster, Md., Jan. 18, 1996
Cornbower, Raymond, 85, Hanover, Pa., Aug. 17, 1995
Crabtree, Edward, 85, Bedford, Pa., March 10, 1996
Craun, Beulah, 86, Harrisonburg, Va., Feb. 14, 1996

Craun, Nelson, 76, Bridgewater, Va., Feb. 12, 1996
Crim, Kenneth, Greenville, Ohio, March 22, 1995
Crouse, James, 82, Arcanum, Ohio, Feb. 19, 1996
Crum, Elsie, 87, Waynesboro, Pa., Feb. 17, 1996
Cabbage, William, 65, Midland, Va., March 7, 1996
Custer, Leonard, 86, Winona Lake, Ind., March 10, 1996
Damewood, Lloyd, 85, Modesto, Calif., Dec. 21, 1996
Dantzie, Stanley, 50, Keyser, W.Va., June 15, 1995
DelPrato, Joseph, 57, West Chester, Pa., Dec. 1, 1995
Dennison, Elwood, 88, Troutville, Va., Feb. 12, 1996
Dinsmore, William H., 85, Troy, Ohio, Dec. 50, 1995
Dove, Lessie, 102, Troutville, Va., Jan. 15, 1996
Dreibelbis, Ellen, 95, Lancaster, Pa., Feb. 12, 1996
Eikenberry, John, 76, Arcanum, Ohio, Dec. 7, 1994
Elliott, Carl, 76, Hanover, Pa., Jan. 19, 1996
England, Anna Mae, 95, San Diego, Calif., Feb. 14, 1996
Enyeart, Truman, Silver Lake, Ind., March 14, 1995
Farmer, James, 71, Virden, Ill., Dec. 26, 1995
Fells, H. William, 75, Sun City, Ariz., Nov. 19, 1995
Fisher, Joseph, 81, Waynesboro, Pa., Feb. 9, 1996
Flinchum, Ethel, 96, Roanoke, Va., March 10, 1996
Fouch, Willard, 80, New Lexington, Ohio, Aug. 8, 1995
Fowler, Elsie, 76, Ashland, Ohio, March 2, 1996
Frantz, Louise, 76, Blue Ridge, Va., Jan. 15, 1996
Frantz, Rachel, 74, Buena Vista, Colo., Feb. 8, 1996
Frantz, Rose, 95, Lansing, Mich., Feb. 19, 1996
Garber, Clarence Sr., 89, Harrisonburg, Va., Feb. 15, 1996
Gibson, Erald, 79, New Carlisle, Ohio, Jan. 25, 1996
Godfrey, Ella, 85, New Oxford, Pa., Feb. 6, 1996
Goletz, Albert, Phoenix, Ariz., Oct. 2, 1995
Good, Bertha, 77, Lancaster, Pa., March 11, 1996
Good, Doris, 84, Troy, Ohio, Dec. 8, 1995
Good, Robert, 88, Lancaster, Pa., Oct. 25, 1995
Griest, Mae, 84, East Berlin, Pa., Feb. 29, 1996
Gross, Gazelle, 88, Vinton, Va., Jan. 10, 1996
Guyette, Isaac, 89, Stanley, Wis., Dec. 26, 1995
Guyton, Gerlando, Frederick, Md., March 21, 1995
Harman, Eva, 95, St. Petersburg, Fla., Jan. 8, 1996
Harnley, Eugene, 84, East Petersburg, Pa., Feb. 1, 1996
Hanslacker, Raymond, 65, Strasburg, Va., Jan. 28, 1996

Hay, William, 68, Friedens, Pa., Oct. 31, 1996
Heisey, Arthur, 78, Lebanon, Pa., Jan. 28, 1996
Hempfling, Curtis, 71, Hanover, Pa., May 1, 1995
Hershey, Elwood, 78, Lititz, Pa., Jan. 26, 1996
Hildebrand, Georgie, 70, Waynesboro, Va., Jan. 50, 1996
Hirsch, Grace, 98, La Place, Ill., Feb. 27, 1996
Hodges, Ruby F., 75, Phoenix, Ariz., Dec. 31, 1995
Holden, Mary, 90, New Oxford, Pa., Nov. 29, 1995
Hollen, Mary, 92, Montezuma, Va., Feb. 18, 1996
Hoover, Kathryn, 81, East Berlin, Pa., Jan. 50, 1996
Hoover, Mervin, 77, Flora, Ind., Feb. 2, 1996
Huffman, Warren, Harrisonburg, Va., July 8, 1995
Hughes, Bernard, 91, Troutville, Va., Jan. 25, 1996
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Kidwell, Velma, 89, Harrisonburg, Va., Jan. 29, 1996
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Meets, Irene, Dayton, Va., Oct. 2, 1995
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Miller, Douglas, 55, Baker, W.Va., Feb. 10, 1996
Miller, Galen, 85, Glendale, Ariz., Jan. 3, 1996
Miller, Preston, 81, Keyser, W.Va., Nov. 24, 1995
Miller, Raymond, 85, St. Petersburg, Fla., Oct. 21, 1995
Miller, Stephane, 17, Harrisonburg, Va., April 27, 1995
Mummert, Paul, 81, Hanover, Pa., Feb. 26, 1995
Myer, Emma, 97, Ephrata, Pa., Dec. 9, 1995
Myer, Lloyd, 74, Kensington, Md., Feb. 16, 1996
Myers, Calvin, 89, York, Pa., Jan. 16, 1996
Noit, William, Sr., 85, Miller, Md., June 17, 1995
Nyce, William, 71, Westminster, Md., Feb. 25, 1996
Ober, Mildred, St. Petersburg, Fla., Sept. 17, 1995
Pence, Myrvin, 97, Wevers Cave, Va., Feb. 8, 1996
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Reedy, Ward, 78, Broadway, Va., Jan. 50, 1996
Roberson, Edna, 82, La Verne, Calif., Dec. 29, 1995
Rockenbaugh, Ray, 91, West Goshen, Ind., Jan. 27, 1996
Rohrer, Pearl, 98, Greenville, Ohio, Feb. 20, 1996
Rook, Carrie, 88, Waynesboro, Pa., Dec. 18, 1995
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Royer, Lillian, 97, New Oxford, Pa., Jan. 50, 1996
Rule, Wayne, 81, Norton, Kan., Dec. 25, 1995
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Rupp, Mary, Miller, Md., Oct. 21, 1995
Sandbridge, Mary, 89, Bridgewater, Va., Feb. 11, 1996
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Schaller, Isabelle, 76, Waynesboro, Pa., Jan. 4, 1996
Schultz, Dorothy, 87, La Verne, Calif., Dec. 20, 1995
Sensenig, Adin, 56, Ephrata, Pa., Feb. 2, 1996
Sheffer, Edward, 69, York, Pa., Jan. 50, 1996

Ends and beginnings

In Virginia, the "Blizzard of '96," which ushered in the new year, will long be remembered. For the next month, snow storms were a regular weekend occurrence. Word got around that the really "big one" was going to hit at the end of March. But at this writing, it is early April, and that prediction has lost its punch.

Spring is on its way, although it is a late one. Easter was an April event this year, but the holiday had to make do without the flowering burst of spring that is as important to our image of Easter as wintry snow and evergreens are to Christmas.

I have had the privilege this year of being back home in Virginia as spring approached. To one who was bred and born in these hills, there is nothing like touching the soil and witnessing the emerging signs of new life to renew one's faith and revive one's spirit. I was outside every chance I got, but not enough, what with the capricious turns of weather.

One day I was searching for what signs I might find of an ancestor's cabin, working with only the vague directions given to me by my mother before her death, directions remembered from her girlhood. After enduring a sudden thunderstorm in the woods, I found the site, marked partly by a stone chimney remnant and a spring. I was happy to have triumphed in the discovery, but what really gladdened my heart was the sight of daffodils blooming in the yard. The home had been abandoned in the 1890s, but the hardy little flowers kept the faith, coming up and blooming each March for over a hundred years. Consider the lilies of the field. Consider the daffodils of the forest.

Mother and her sister had taken home some of the daffodils and planted them, over 75 years ago. It pleased me to do the same.

On another day, I climbed Blue Knob, a prominent peak locally, and one that I had long laid off to ascend. All the way up, from the branch in the hollow at the bottom, where pretty yellow trout lilies bloomed in profusion, to the peak, where twisted, stunted oaks clung to the rocky soil with bare roots that looked like gnarled hands, the scene was a constant reminder of how our human life mirrors that of plant life. Depending on circumstances, we flourish in shaded glades by the streams, or we hold tenaciously to rocky hilltops, shaped by the winds that blow there. Yet, in all cir-

cumstances, God is there, watching over us. "We blossom and flourish, like leaves on the tree; we wither and perish, but naught changeth thee."

As I pruned the aging fruit trees at the homeplace, so that the farmer who cuts the hay can get under them, and as I raked the lawn, preparatory to another season of mowing—in fact, as I performed each springtime task or took each ramble in the woods—I felt overwhelmed by the presence of God. The images I project here are not new ones to the writer, nor to the reader, but remarkably they can kindle the senses as if they were being experienced for the first time.

Easter came with the church services that remind us of Christ's death and resurrection. But, for me, it is an incomplete Easter experience unless I have been in touch with God's world around me, moving in rhythm with the earth's pulses. It is fulfilling to have weathered another winter—rejoicing in the arrival of spring. Death and resurrection, the essence of our earthly experience as well as our spiritual life.

My mother died at Easter a year ago. The spring of 1995 was an early one, and at Easter the whole world seemed abloom. I can't remember my mother's passage to eternity without seeing the way decked with springtime azaleas, dogwood, redbud, and garden flowers.

"In our end is our beginning;
in our time, infinity;
In our doubt there is believing;
in our life, eternity;"
In our death, a resurrection;
at the last, a victory;
Unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see."

Spring arrived late in 1996, and spells of freezing temperatures muted the colors that had been so glorious in 1995. But the "big one" that was forecast never showed up, which was a consolation. And there is always next year to look forward to. For the believer, knowing that ends are beginnings, that in death is resurrection, that at the last is victory . . . that's a promise to live with and find life in.—K.T.

Church of the Brethren

June 1996

Messenger



**Is this
your child's
best friend?**

From the Editor

As I worked with the television viewing articles by Howard Royer and Stewart Hoover (pages 11-15), I had brought back to mind my years parenting a little boy who spent a lot of time watching television. I attempted to do what was advised even then for parents to do: I watched TV with my son and discussed what was on the screen. I don't make any big brags about how good a job I did. I do remember some of it with a nostalgic smile.

One Christmas season, I persuaded my son to forgo something he wanted to watch and join my wife and me in listening to a Chicago music group perform selections from "Messiah." He agreed, with misgivings, and sat grimly beside us for awhile. The choir was into that "stuck record" part where they repeat over and over "For we like sheep... for we like sheep." Unable to contain himself, my son burst out, "So, we like sheep. So what?"

We got along more amiably watching Saturday morning cartoons together. That was because I as a boy back in pre-TV days dearly loved cartoons, even though I very seldom got to the movies. What grated on my son's nerves was my ongoing biting critique of today's cartoons, so vastly inferior in technical quality to those of my day. I don't think I ever got around to dealing with the violence, so sidetracked was I by remembering Disney animation of the 1940s.

I don't know what my 27-year-old son watches today, nor how girded he is against TV's influence from our days of watching programs together. I do know I don't need the V-Chip or any other solution to TV's violence and other drawbacks. My little nest empty of impressionable children, I turned off the telly for good. And (in case you are wondering) yes, I *have* read some good books lately.

Kermon Thomasson

COMING NEXT MONTH: A cluster of articles on evangelism, new-church development, and holistic outreach. Also, a tribute to our magazine's founder, Henry Kurtz, born 200 years ago, July 22, 1796.

Messenger

Vol 145, No 6 June 1996

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By: Patricia

Worrying about your child's television fare? Howard Royer's article and viewing tips (page 11) will be helpful reading.

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Should TV get away with murder? 11

During the recent Christian Citizenship Seminar, 80 Brethren youth came to grips with television's negative impact on their lives. Howard Royer, who was with the youth, talks about Brethren living "peacefully, simply, together" in a media culture that promotes just the opposite. Sidebar: Tips for TV viewing.

The V-Chip: Problem or solution? 14

Stewart Hoover explains how the "V-Chip" is supposed to keep children from seeing harmful TV programs. But, he asks, is the V-Chip what's really needed?

Keeping the spirit of Beijing alive 17

Amanda Vender tells how last summer's World Conference on Women is being followed up by action to carry out the resolves of the women who met in Beijing. Sidebars: The "Platform for Action" and suggestions for supportive activities.

Frank Sinatra doesn't live here anymore 20

People who feel compelled to control things wreck many a Brethren congregation. Paul Munday calls for church members to be "new people . . . permission-giving, risk-taking, Holy Spirit empowered people."

Another man from Galilee 25

If Elias Chacour sounds like a preacher just down from the Mount, it may have something to do with his being a Galilean. But, as Richard Kauffman's interview shows, Elias Chacour, for whatever reasons, takes the Beatitudes seriously . . . and lives them out.

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Johnny Harvey

Cover story: At the 1996 Christian Citizenship Seminar, Nevin Domer, of Union Bridge (Md.) Church of the Brethren, asks a question of a Clinton administration official as 80 Brethren youth learn about the negative impact of television on viewers. Much of the insidious programming targets children and youth. On pages 11-15, Howard Royer and Stewart Hoover discuss ways to counteract the television industry's wiles. (Cover photo by Nevin Dulabaum.)

Correction: May, page 9: Charlotte, N.C., is in Southeastern District, not Virginia.

In Touch



Hal Forney carried the Olympic torch through San Diego.

In Touch profile. Brethren who could like you to meet. Send story ideas and photos to: In Touch, MESSENGER 1451 Dundee Ave., Ugin, IL 60120

Carrying the torch

Hal Forney ran through the streets of San Diego on April 28. No Old Testament prophet impersonator, the San Diego (Calif.) Church of the Brethren member was carrying the Olympic torch, one of the many "Community Heroes"

chosen by United Way and the Olympic Committee for this honor.

Hal, an orthopedic surgeon, was chosen for his unselfish

volunteer medical work. Over the past 17

years he has made 14 volunteer trips to countries such as South Korea, Pakistan, Iraq, Bosnia, and Zaire (March 1990, page 5, and February 1992, page 6).

For his San Diego performance, it helped that Hal is an avid runner, who has competed in events such as the Boston Marathon.

Kudos from a Kennedy

As a young woman, Eunice Kennedy Shriver was interested in women prisoners and their treatment, and paid an extended visit in 1950 to the Federal Penitentiary for Women in Alderson, W.Va.

There she became acquainted not only with the prisoners but with three young women on project at Alderson as Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) workers.

This was 10 years before Eunice's brother Jack became president of the United States, so, ironically,

the BVSers did not afterward remember the future president's sister, but she certainly remembered them.

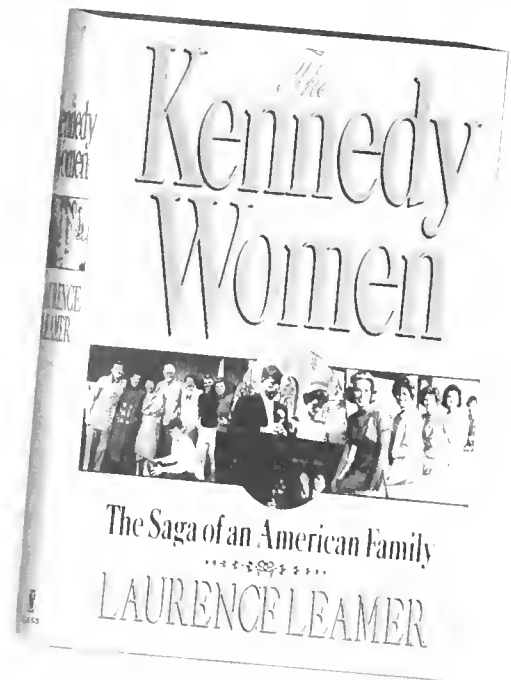
In a 1994 book, *The Kennedy Women*, by Laurence Leamer (Willard Books, New York), Eunice tells about meeting the BVSers and being impressed by them.

On a softball field at Alderson she talked to a "young attractive redheaded player ... laughing and cheering as if this were the World Series." Eunice was surprised to learn she was not an inmate, but BVSer Catherine (Katie) Millsap, of Ligonier, Pa.

As the book records, to

Butterbaugh (all members of BVS Unit 7, June 1950). "They were superb examples of what can be done by the average citizen to help those whose distorted and shattered lives have brought them within the confines of a reformatory."

Unfortunately, by the time the 1994 book was written, Eunice couldn't come up with the right name for the volunteer group that so impressed her, and referred to the BVSers as members of "the United World Brethren." But her impression still holds, and what she said about BVS is heady stuff.



Eunice "this idea of titling one's life, giving up a year or two, was new and exciting..." Later she remembered, "Never in my life have I seen a more inspiring example of Christian service." She went on to say of Katie, Mary Lou Zimmerman, and Donna

coming from one whose husband is Sargent Shriver, first director of John F. Kennedy's Peace Corps.

Katie Millsap (now Bristol) lives in Grand Junction, Colo.; Mary Lou Zimmerman (now Pruitt) lives in St. Petersburg, Fla.; and Donna Butterbaugh (now Lehman) lives in Ugin, Ill.



Carol Stark

At 105, Mabel Ebersole enjoys playing checkers with all comers and pushing wheelchairs for her disabled friends.

John were life-long members of Mohler Church of the Brethren, in Ephrata.

Playing checkers demonstrates Mabel's mental alertness. Her volunteerism demonstrates her continued physical ability. When it's time for manor residents to attend services, meals, or other activities, Mabel may be seen pushing a wheelchair for someone unable to walk.

Folks marvel that a 105-year-old woman is pushing wheelchairs, but Mabel dismisses it matter of factly: "I can walk just as good pushing somebody as walking alone."

So Mabel pushes on . . . and her checkered past and present beckon forward to the future. Checkers, anyone?

Names in the news

Alvin Conner, a member of Manassas (Va.) Church of the Brethren, received the honorary degree Doctor of Humane Letters at Bridgewater College's April 11 Founder' Day convocation.

• Two Manchester College graduates have received Fulbright Scholarships and will be in Germany during the 1996-1997 academic year. **Jedd Schrock**, a member of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in

Elgin, Ill., will teach English in a German high school.

Angela Rogers, a member of Manchester Church of the Brethren in North Manchester, Ind., will study human biology at Marburg University in Germany.

• **Marjorie and Richard Bigler**, members of Goshen (Ind.) City Church of the Brethren, received honorary degrees from Manchester College at the May 19 commencement. The Biglers established an endowed scholarship fund in 1989, to which they gave \$1 million.

• **Phil Burkholder**, a member of Florence Church of the Brethren, Constantine, Mich., began a three-year term in January as executive director of the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors (NISBCO), headquartered in Washington, D.C.

• **Eric Bachman**, a member of Midway Church of the Brethren, Lebanon, Pa., received the 1996 Brethren Peacemaker of the Year award from Atlantic Northeast District's Brethren Peace Fellowship. Eric, who lives in Germany, has conducted seminars on peace issues, trained people for nonviolent action and resolution, and prepared volunteers for work in other countries.

• **Hiram J. Frysinger** was honored June 2 by a gathering of his family and friends at Lebanon Valley Brethren Home, Palmyra, Pa., marking the 50th anniversary of the "filmstrip library" he founded (now called the Audiovisual Library). (See MESSENGER, June 1975, page 2.)

• **Donald B. Kraybill**, who has taught at Elizabethtown College since 1971 and authored 14 books in the areas of sociology and anthropology, begins July 1 as provost of Messiah College, Grantham, Pa.

Remembered

Mary Platt Faw, 87, died March 26 in McPherson, Kan. She and her husband, Chalmer, served as missionaries in Nigeria 1959-1945 and 1965-1976.

• **Ivan Fry**, 71, died April 14 in Fort Wayne, Ind. Besides serving in several pastorates, he served 1955-1957 as Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) training director and 1994-1995 as interim director of BVS. At the time of his death he was director of the Habitat for Humanity



George Keeler

Ivan Fry

project in Cincinnati that will be carried out during Annual Conference there next month.

• **Lois Teach Paul**, 78, died April 16 in Elgin, Ill. She served on the General Board staff as managing editor of *Agenda* 1974-1977.

Close to Home

Becoming Bible literates

Columbia City (Ind.) Church of the Brethren challenged its members to read the New Testament through a structured program over 15 weeks. Sixteen adults read at least

story a day for the children. To encourage each other, readers made weekly reports during the Sunday worship services, reflecting on the past week's reading.

Reading goals reached were reported on paper

• **Trinity Church of the Brethren** in Sabetha, Kan., hosted a **Western Plains** District Area Three rally, March 24. Besides Trinity, participating congregations were **Lincoln** (Neb.); **Bethel**, Carlton, Neb.; **Holmesville** (Neb.); and **Washington** (Kan.). Among the activities, a Trinity group portrayed an 1890s church council meeting based on actual council minutes. Several members were expelled for attending a county fair. A sister was expelled for having a man staying at her house who was not her husband. And a brother was expelled for wearing a "military" beard.

• When **Faith Community** fellowship at the Brethren Home in New Oxford, Pa., ended 1995 with a surplus of \$7,440 in its treasury, it donated the money to the General Board.

Back to Puerto Rico

The ties between **Bremen** (Ind.) Church of the Brethren and Puerto Rico go back to World War II times, when Homer Burke of Bremen helped establish a hospital in the Puerto Rican village of Castañer. Dick Corl and Fern Kring Troche were other Bremen members who worked at Castañer in the '40s.

So it felt natural to renew those ties when Bremen decided in 1994 to participate in projects with Caimito *Iglesia de los Hermanos* (Church of the Brethren) in a suburb of Puerto Rico's capital, San Juan.

In February a group of



Bible readers at Columbia City surround their "learning tree," which reflects their achievement.

10 of the 15 readings, and four children had daily Bible stories read to them.

The monthly schedules included three chapters a day for the New Testament goal, one chapter a day for the Gospels, and one Bible

leaves, signed, and attached to a bare tree at the back of the sanctuary. The project ended with a meal and celebration program.—DAVE BELL

Dave Bell is pastor of Columbia City Church of the Brethren

This and that

Eleven Brethren workers from Pennsylvania participated in a workcamp in the Dominican Republic January 16-February 5. The group rebuilt a church in Villa Nizao, Paraiso, that was destroyed by a flood. The workers represented seven churches:

Lampeter; Martinsburg Memorial; Curryville; Everett; Woodbury; Conewago, in Hershey; and **Florin**, in Mount Joy. While in the Dominican Republic the Pennsylvanians attended the fifth Annual Assembly of the Dominican Church of the Brethren congregations (April, page 12).

Close to Home (page 10) is a column of compilation of local and regional life. Send story ideas and photos to "Close to Home," MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, Ill. 60120



Among the projects of Bremen Brethren in Puerto Rico was installing a tile floor in the Caimito church sanctuary.

Bremen members made the congregation's fourth mission trip to Caimito. While there they painted a house they earlier had bought and renovated and laid floor tile in the Caimito church.

Bremen also has donated 28 goats, pigs, and rabbits and 100 chicks to the Small Animal Project, begun by Caimito with Bremen help (January 1995, page 4).

Campus comments

Elizabethtown College's new Leffler Chapel and Performance Center was dedicated January 28. It provides a central place of worship on campus as well as a place to showcase the creative talents of student musi-

cians, faculty, and professional artists.

- Dubois Business College is opening a branch campus at **Juniata College**, offering 18-month associate degrees in specialized business programs and nine-month diploma programs in accounting and stenography. "Together we are providing a full range of post-secondary educational opportunities to the people of Huntingdon County," said Juniata's president, Bob Neff.

- On April 22, the Peace Studies Institute of **Manchester College** dedicated a peace pole erected near the presi-

dent's house. Peace Poles are poles inscribed in different languages with the words "May Peace Prevail on Earth." There are about 100,000 such poles in 160 countries.

- A May 11 convocation at **McPherson College** recognized President Paul Hoffman and celebrated his 20-year tenure. He is retiring at the end of August (April, page 9).

- Artist P. Buckley Moss has donated 500 copies of a limited-edition print of **Bridgewater College's** Memorial Hall to the school to fund a scholarship for special education teachers. The prints are on sale for \$94 each at the college bookstore. Moss is famous for her "simple living" scenes of the rural Shenandoah Valley.

- **Elizabethtown College's** Young Center is hosting a multidisciplinary conference on "Church-related Institutions" June 15-15. The focus is on the future of Church of the Brethren and Mennonite institutions. Among the presenters is Brethren historian Don Durnbaugh.

- **University of La Verne** students have been working to clean up a nearby nature center's one-acre pond and ensure its biological balance. The pond, overgrown with algae and plants, was being treated with chemicals. But the students are helping to manage the pond naturally. In their cleanup they removed 6,000 pounds of cattails.

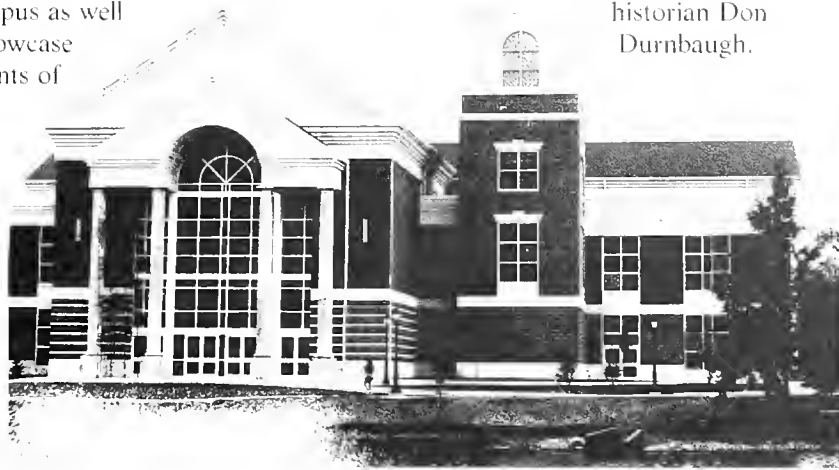
- **McPherson College's** 1996 Religious Heritage Lecture, March 31-April 1, featured John Gingrich, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences of the **University of La Verne**. His topic was "Coloring Outside the Lines: Theological and Educational Necessities."

Let's celebrate

Boise Valley Church of the Brethren, Meridian, Idaho, will mark its 90th anniversary June 15-16 with a Saturday evening dinner and service, followed by Sunday morning service and noon potluck.

- **Staunton (Va.) Church of the Brethren** is celebrating its centennial throughout 1996. A special invitation is extended for the centennial homecoming November 3. Bob Richards will preach at the morning service, with a meal and afternoon festivities following.

- **Brethren Village**, Lancaster, Pa., is observing its centennial from mid-1996 through mid-1997. A calendar of events was published in the March-April issue of the retirement home's newsletter, *BV Villager*.



Leffler Chapel and Performance Center

'My 2¢ worth' helps feed homeless in Washington

The largest-ever grant allocated within the US by the Global Food Crisis Fund was granted April 10 to the



Courtesy of Duane Ramsey

The Soup Kitchen, which provides about 160 meals each weekday to Washington, D.C., homeless, recently received the largest grant ever allocated stateside by the Global Food Crisis Fund. The Kitchen is run by the Washington City Church of the Brethren.

Soup Kitchen operated by the Washington City Church of the Brethren in Washington, D.C.

The \$50,000 granted by the Church of the Brethren fund will be used to directly help feed the area's homeless, repair or replace equipment used to prepare the food, and provide wages for the Kitchen's coordinator.

The fund, established in 1987 to assist those who are hungry or homeless, receives the majority of its funding through the "My 2¢ worth" promotional program used by congregations and individual members, and through private contributions. The fund currently contains \$221,000.

In addition to feeding an average of 160 people each weekday, the Soup Kitchen serves as the mailing address for many of the homeless. It also hosts lawyers from a local clinic to assist people in legal matters, distributes clothing, and invites local chaplains in to meet with those who want to talk.

Along with the two to three Brethren Volunteer Service workers who are

assigned to the Soup Kitchen, labor to run the facility is provided through a "tremendous ecumenical venture," says Duane Ramsey, Washington City pastor, which includes Catholics, Episcopalians, Methodists, and Presbyterians. Twelve to 15 congregations spend one day each month volunteering at the Soup Kitchen, Ramsey said.

An interfaith agency food bank provides some of the food served at the Soup Kitchen, as does the beef canning project sponsored by Southern Pennsylvania and Mid-Atlantic Districts.

A tremendous effort by the community also helps keep the Soup Kitchen functioning. US representatives and congressional staffers are among the many people who occasionally give their time serving as volunteers. And two local supermarkets provide bread, produce, milk, and canned goods.

The Soup Kitchen, which has been open since 1980, received the Church of the Brethren General Board grant after Ramsey applied for it through Shantilal Bhagat, director of Eco-Justice Concerns and the GFC fund administrator.

New Habitat site coordinator appointed to succeed Fry

Jan Thompson has been appointed site coordinator of the Church of the Brethren Habitat for Humanity house that will be constructed over two weeks this month and next in Cincinnati by workcampers and Annual Conference attendees.

Thompson succeeds Ivan Fry, who died unexpectedly in April (see page 5, this issue).

Thompson, a member of Community Church of the Brethren, Mesa, Ariz., is a former director of Church of the Brethren Disaster Response.

People interested in volunteering for the project should send their registrations to Disaster Services, Brethren Service Center, 500 Main Street, P.O. Box 188, New Windsor, MD 21776.

The news page includes news of Church of the Brethren organizations and members, and of organizations and people of interest to or affiliated with the Church of the Brethren. News items are intended to inform—they do not necessarily represent the opinions of Messenger or the General Board—and should not be considered to be an endorsement.

Seven youth become the first Summer Service volunteers

As Brethren college students in May began their summer vacation, seven of their peers embarked on a unique summertime experience, becoming the Church of the Brethren's first Volunteer Summer Service (VSS) workers.

The volunteers are B.J. Bucher, North Manchester, Ind.; Becki Dilley, Bonner Springs, Kan.; Brandy Fix, Everett, Pa.; Alison Flory, McPherson, Kan.; Ginger Gates, Brownsville, Md.; Andrew Hutchinson, Thomas, Okla.; and Matt Messick, Middletown, Pa.

Orientation for the group was held in South Elgin, Ill., May 24-31, with Judy Mills Reimer, VSS coordinator. During orientation, discussions centered on urban ministry, Brethren heritage, peace and justice issues, Brethren polity and structure, and leadership and working styles. The volunteers also spent time working at Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren Soup Kettle in Elgin, Ill.

Immediately following their training, the volunteers fanned out throughout the eastern US to their various 10-week assignments. During that time the seven are expected to teach Sunday school, lead vacation Bible school, and possibly preach.

Bucher is serving at Open Circle Community Church, Burnsville, Minn.; Becki Dilley is working at Ridgeway Community Church, Harrisburg, Pa.; Brandy Fix is assigned to Antioch Church of the Brethren, Rocky Mount, Va.; Alison Flory is working at Manchester Church of the Brethren, North Manchester, Ind.; Ginger Gates is serving at Good Shepherd Church of the Brethren, Springfield, Mo.; Andrew Hutchinson is assigned to Lancaster (Pa.) Church of the Brethren; and Matt Messick is serving at McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren.

VSS, in the first of a two-year pilot project, is co-sponsored by Brethren Volunteer Service and Youth and Young Adult Ministry.



Howard Royer

Meeting with US legislators is one of the long-standing goals of Christian Citizenship Seminar participants. During this year's seminar in April, a group of Virginians had the opportunity to do just that, with US Rep. Thomas Bliley Jr., R-Va. (left). The group included Cheryl Brush, Tiffany Nelson, Alexis Bear, Joel Brush, and Kevin Taylor.

Youth contemplate biblical values versus materialism

The 1996 National Youth Christian Citizenship Seminar, with "Biblical Values and Media Myths" as the theme, challenged 80 Brethren youth and their advisors in April to become better informed and more critical consumers of US media. (see related articles, pages 11-15)

The seminar drew attention to the effects of violent programming and advertisements directed at youth that promote materialism, debased sexuality, and tobacco use. Seminar participants learned that at least half of all adult smokers became addicted to nicotine before their 18th birthday and that by 18 the average youth will have seen over 200,000 violent acts on television.

These concerns have previously been emphasized in Annual Conference statements such as the 1994 Statement on Violence in North

America, which condemns "increasing use of violence in the entertainment media" and declares: "Out of devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ we cry out against the violence of our times."

Regarding the damaging health effects of tobacco use, the 1981 Annual Conference called the church to "develop education and action programs to present its witness against the raising of tobacco as an agricultural crop, its subsidization by the federal government, its public sale, and its use as a dangerous and habit-forming drug."

To become more active in media education, contact the New Mexico Media Literacy Project, (505) 828-5264, or the Center for Media Literacy, 800-226-9494. To become more involved in tobacco concerns, contact the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, (202) 296-5469, or the Coalition on Smoking OR Health, (202) 452-1184.

'Service' is cited as most positive building block

"What are the positive things about the Church of the Brethren you would like to see the General Board build on?"

That question was asked to about 400 pastors, laity, General Board members, and General Board staff in January by the General Board's Redesign Steering Committee.

The RSC asked these four groups, which compose its ad hoc committee for redesigning the General Board, to answer the question as the second part of an ongoing question and answer series the RSC is having with the committee. The purpose for soliciting responses is to have RSC members hear from many denominational voices as it prepares to present its preliminary options on redesign to the General Board at Annual Conference.

About 100 people responded and on April 10 the RSC released its findings, stating that the top four categories out of 10 cited were service, peace, oneness within diversity, and discipleship. The following is a summary of the 10 categories:

Service. Laity and pastors indicated that service should witness to Jesus Christ more directly, stating that the link is tenuous at best. The RSC reported it believes that while that belief might have been true at one time, a shift has occurred. That perception by laity and pastors, however, continues to exist despite the shift.

Peace. The traditional Brethren peace witness was cited as a strength, and the words peacemaking and reconciliation were frequently used. Dealing with crime, specifically spousal and child abuse and urban gangs, was cited as an area where the Brethren voice can be helpful.

Oneness within diversity. This category, which elicited the strongest emotions, ranked second with Board members and third with the other groups. Included in this category were multiculturalism and inclusiveness of culture and ideas. Though there still is



The service that the Church of the Brethren provides to its members and to the world is unique, and should be built upon by the denomination in the future, according to findings the General Board's Redesign Steering Committee received from its ad hoc advisory committee. One successful Brethren service project is the annual beef canning project for those in need, sponsored by Southern Pennsylvania and Mid-Atlantic Districts .

the feeling that people who are different are accepted by the Brethren "family," there was "some mourning over the sense that some of this feeling of acceptance has eroded in recent years with a . . . growing sentiment of intolerance."

Discipleship. The RSC describes this as "walking the talk," which ranked fourth with pastors and laity but not as high with the other two groups. Many affirmed the discernment of the New Testament to shape how Brethren behave in the world.

National gatherings. This category received a broad base of support, with people viewing such gatherings as a high point in their spiritual life.

Denominational expansion. The belief is that there is a place, both locally and globally, for "the unique interpretation (of the gospel) by the Church of the Brethren."

Local connections. Programs meaningful to congregations were affirmed, such as the Jubilee curriculum, EFSM and TRIM ministerial training programs, a congregationally based mission program in Nicaragua,

and The Andrew Center.

Heritage and identity. All groups appreciate the denomination's heritage and identity. "The new tagline resonates strongly among many people as a way to quickly sum up who and what we are as a body." Many hope this will strengthen the denomination's corporate identity.

Talented people. Board members and staff cited people already in leadership positions, while the pastors and laity cited people who are not. This "indicates an interesting potential for shared leadership development in all areas of the church."

Ecumenical work. All groups affirmed the denomination's participation with ecumenical organizations and programs.

The RSC's third set of questions, which were sent to the four groups along with these findings from the second question, deal with where the denominational offices should be located.

A copy of the full report is available by calling News Services at (800) 525-8059.—NEVIN DULABAUM

Booklet on what it means to be Brethren re-released

A Guide for New Church Members, which can be used for Brethren newcomers or as a refresher course for long-time members, is now available.

Written by Rick Gardner, the booklet formerly known as *Manual for New Church Members* explains church polity, history, and beliefs. It also comes packaged in a more extensive packet called *Welcome to the Church*. For information, contact Brethren Press at (800) 441-5712.

EDF grants \$63,000 for aid to Bosnia, Virgin Islands, Gaza

Emergency Disaster Fund granted \$65,000 to five projects in April:

- \$20,000 to Bosnia, making that \$185,000 that has been allocated to the Bosnia since 1992.
- \$20,000 to disaster teams in St. John, US Virgin Islands (\$64,000 since November).
- \$20,000 to assist people of the Gaza Strip.
- \$2,000 to Heifer Project Interna-

Brethren Press unveils logo that reflects agrarian roots

In preparation for its centennial in 1997, Brethren Press has introduced its new logo.

The words "Brethren Press" and "This day" are printed in dark green under two gold-colored wheat stalks, which represent "Brethren agrarian roots, as well as the sowing and reaping of daily bread," according to Jennifer Leo, director of marketing.

The logo was designed by Communicorp, the communications consulting firm that crafted the



Brethren Press
This day.

tional to help Tibetan farmers.

- \$1,000 to the land mine crisis affecting the world.

On Earth Peace, Bethany announce staff changes

Kate Johnson will begin work as program coordinator of On Earth Peace Assembly, effective mid-July.

Johnson is a member of Modesto (Calif.) Church of the Brethren, and served on the 1995 Journey of Young Adults team.

Debbie Eisenbise, associate of institutional advancement for Bethany Theological Seminary, has resigned, effective July 19. Eisenbise has served in the position since 1992.

Eisenbise plans to move to Michigan with her husband, Lee Krähenbühl, and pursue a pastorate.



Kate Johnson



Debbie Eisenbise

denomination's identity lines.

The first book that will feature the new logo will be *Fruit of the Vine*, Don Durnbaugh's history of the Brethren, which will debut at Annual Conference in Cincinnati.

Annual Conference also will be the setting for the official introduction of the logo.

"By publishing materials that foster the application of biblical truths to every day life, Brethren Press sows, cultivates, and eventually reaps—toward widespread nourishment of both people and institutions," reads the logo's statement of purpose.

1996 District Conferences

This month's calendar is composed of a listing of all 25 Church of the Brethren district conferences.

Atlantic Northeast: October 12, Palmyra (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.

Atlantic Southeast: October 11-12, Camp Ithiel, Gotha, Fla.

Idaho: October 25-26, Nampa (Idaho) Church of the Brethren.

Illinois/Wisconsin: October 11-15, Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren, Elgin, Ill.

Indiana, Northern: September 20-21, Camp Alexander Mack, Millford, Ind.

Indiana, South/Central: September 15-14, Mexico (Ind.) Church of the Brethren.

Michigan: August 15-18, Wesleyan Campground, Hastings, Mich.

Mid-Atlantic: October 11-12, St. Mark's United Methodist Church, Easton, Md.

Missouri/Arkansas: September 6-8, Windmere Baptist Assembly, Roach, Mo.

Northern Plains: July 26-28, Wartburg (Iowa) College.

Ohio, Northern: August 9-11, Ashland (Ohio) University.

Ohio, Southern: October 11-12, Castine Church of the Brethren, Arcanum, Ohio.

Oregon/Washington: October 4-6, Lacey Church of the Brethren, Olympia, Wash.

Pacific Southwest: October 11-15, Modesto (Calif.) Church of the Brethren.

Pennsylvania, Middle: October 11-12, Maitland Church of the Brethren, Lewisstown, Pa.

Pennsylvania, Southern: September 20-21, New Fairview Church of the Brethren, York, Pa.

Pennsylvania, Western: October 19, Center Hill Church of the Brethren, Kittanning, Pa.

Shenandoah: November 2, Bridgewater (Va.) College.

Southeastern: July 26-28, Converse College, Spartanburg, S.C.

Southern Plains: August 1-5, Waka (Texas) Church of the Brethren.

Virginia: November 8-9, Bonsack (Va.) Baptist Church.

Western Plains: August 2-4, McPherson (Kan.) College.

West Marva: September 20-21, Moorefield (W.Va.) Church of the Brethren.

Qualifications for successor to Donald Miller announced

The General Board's General Secretary Search Committee, which has been charged with finding a successor to Donald Miller, has named the core qualifications and skills required of nominees for general secretary of the Church of the Brethren.

Candidates must have "a dynamic, vibrant faith in Jesus Christ; be dedicated to the work of the Church; have proven administrative experience in a complex, dynamic organization; be well grounded in Brethren heritage, theology, and polity; and exhibit excellent communication skills that

facilitate dialog among diverse Brethren constituency."

Interested people should contact Don Fitzkee, committee chairman, by calling (717) 567-2052.

Brethren support of wage hike entered into official record

During an April 29 speech in support of proposed legislation that would increase the U.S. minimum wage, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) submitted three letters that support a minimum wage increase into the *Congressional Record*.

One of the letters was drafted by Tim McElwee, director of the Church of the Brethren Washington Office.

In his letter, McElwee asked that the minimum wage be increased to \$5.15 per hour. He stated that 69 percent of all minimum wage earners are adults, and many families that are supported by minimum wage earners are trapped well below the poverty line.

The proposed legislation to increase the minimum wage is even more crucial, McElwee said, because Congress also is considering legislation that would reduce welfare benefits, which would affect many minimum wage families.

In Brief

The Performing Arts Network of the Association for the Arts of the Church of the Brethren (AACB) has released its first directory, listing over 80 Church of the Brethren members interested in the arts. AACB, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this summer, is an organization for Brethren artists in music, dance, storytelling, preaching, poetry reading, and clowning. To purchase a directory, write to Lee Krahenbuhl, 404 College Ave., Richmond, IN 47374.

Several Brethren have collaborated with Brethren Rodney Custer on the new textbook *Technology & the Quality of Life*, which explores the ways technology has influenced various aspects of our culture, Custer said.

Custer is an assistant professor of Technology Education at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Jean Hendricks, director of Church of the Brethren Ministry Training, wrote a chapter on social and interpersonal relationships. Stewart Hoover of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Colorado, wrote on technology and the media. Marvis Custer, Advance Practice Nurse at the University of Missouri, wrote on health care. The textbook costs \$18.96. Call (800) 334-7344.

Brethren donated \$157,450 for Church World Service blankets in 1995. Donations to the CWS's blanket program were made by over 400 congregations.

Two overseas trips are being sponsored by Brethren organizations in January 1997. On Earth Peace Assembly and Association of Brethren Caregivers are co-sponsoring a Southern Africa study tour to Zimbabwe and South Africa, January 24-February 6. Con-

tact ABC by November 15 at (800) 323-8039. Bethany Theological Seminary is sponsoring a study tour to Greece and Rome, January 6-18. Contact Rick Gardner or Murray Wagner by July 25 at (800) 287-8822.

Church World Service's 50th anniversary devotional guide, titled *For the Healing of the Nations*, now is available. The booklet provides 30 daily devotions centered on the spiritual roots of global ministry. The facts, stories, songs, and prayers come from CWS programs and partners in 70 nations. The booklet costs \$3. Contact CWS, P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515.

A \$4,850 grant to a program for health, agriculture, and nutrition in Ecuador was allocated by the Global Food Crisis Fund in April. The project is partially administered by International Voluntary Service, Inc., which requested the grant through the Church of the Brethren Latin America and the Caribbean Office.

More than one in four US children under 12 are hungry or at risk of hunger. Bread for the World's "Elect to End Childhood Hunger" campaign seeks to make hunger among children in the US a significant issue in this fall's congressional elections. This year's campaign will ask church members and others to write to congressional candidates asking them to sign a commitment form promising, once elected, to vote for legislation and support federal programs that will help overcome childhood hunger.

Bread for the World has prepared a resource kit and a video for those who want to participate. Contact Will Stott at (301) 608-2400 to order materials or for information on the campaign.

For decades broadcasters have gotten away with murder and mayhem, turning television into an instrument of child exploitation and abuse dominated by salesmen, animated assault artists, and leering talk-show hosts.

Should TV get away with murder?



by Howard E. Royer

Media watchers who have long contended that the level of violence shown on television is excessive and dangerous now have hard data to document their claim. The most comprehensive scientific assessment of TV violence ever undertaken, produced by four US universities and released in February, concludes that "psychologically harmful" violence pervades television entertainment. Moreover, the findings warn that young viewers are put "at risk" by programs that leave violence unpunished or show no consequences for violent acts.

But violence is not the only aspect of television putting viewers at risk, the 80 teens and youth advisors at this year's Church of the Brethren Christian Citizenship Seminar (CCS) learned. A concept common to the 16,000 paid commercials

aired on American television each day is that money or things can assure self-esteem, provide security, give meaning to life. Got a problem? Spend. Pamper yourself. Through the magic of materialism, soar to new heights.

Especially targeted with such messages are the teens who were in attendance at the 1996 Christian Citizenship Seminar (see page 7), along with their peers and younger siblings. Marketers are keenly aware, as one research group holds, that children ages 4-12 represent "the greatest sales potential of any age or demographic group, controlling \$17 billion themselves and directly influencing over \$167 billion of additional spending by adults." The race is to get children to develop brand loyalty early.

In their opening volley in New York City, the seminar youth were informed of the Center for Media Ministry's claim



"Despite denials from the industry, many tobacco ads and images aim to influence kids four, five, and six years of age. That's why Joe Camel is a cartoon character."

Marilyn Yager, deputy assistant to President Clinton, speaking to Christian Citizenship Seminar participants at the White House complex.

that the most coveted ad space is not a billboard in Times Square or a 30-second commercial during the Super Bowl, but *you*—especially if you are young. "In the consumer-driven culture, *your* dreams, wants, and desires help advertisers create the commercials that get you off the couch and running to the mall to spend, spend, spend," states the Center for Media Literacy. "Buying things becomes not just something you *do*, but who you *are*."

Within the seminar, the case against rampant consumerism came in two presentations by Bob McCannon, who heads the Media Literacy Project in New Mexico—the only state mandating media education in the public schools. An "entertaining and impassioned man," as CCSer Heather Harper, 16, Jacksonville, Fla., described him, McCannon graphically divulged how viewers are seduced to buy products they do not need; to accept as a norm images of the female body so slender, so underweight as to be devastatingly unhealthy; even to focus their attention span around seven minutes—television's time between commercial breaks. "Media construct our culture, our reality," McCannon observes.

Screening clip after clip of current commercials, he engaged youth in discerning how greed, lust, deceit, gender, power, and racism are used to sell products. He showed how in print ads and TV spots women are sexually objectified. He identified the worst kind of violence as cartoon violence.

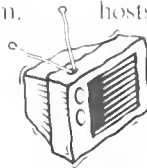
McCannon maintains that media literacy is not anti-media: what it seeks is for children to choose what they watch with care. That requires students from kindergarten through high school learning the mechanics and intent of television programming and mastering critical viewing skills. "You gain greater freedom when you analyze, assess, evaluate, and even produce media yourself," he counseled the youth.

Much the same appeal is made to churches in a policy statement issued last fall by the National Council of Churches General Board. Congregations are urged to become "media

literacy centers" that enable members to perceive the place visual storytelling and metaphor and symbol have in shaping culture, that demonstrate creative use of technology for interactive communication, and that enable families and individuals to take charge of the media they consume.

Yet if the media environment is to undergo a quality change, something more is needed than media literacy, vital as it is. Families and educators and church leaders need to help reshape the media climate, not merely learn how to respond to it. An area in dire need of improvement is children's TV fare.

In the book *Abandoned in the Wasteland: Children, Television, and the First Amendment*, Newton N. Minow and Craig L. LaMay contend that for decades now broadcasters have gotten away with murder and mayhem, turning television into "an instrument of child exploitation and abuse" dominated by "salesmen, animated assault artists, and leering talk-show hosts." Minow's term "wasteland" refers to the vast educational opportunities that go unrealized by children's programming that caters mainly to peddling junk food and toys.



For the 80 Brethren who went to New York and Washington to rethink media, the first challenge is to assert control over one's own interaction with media.

During a visit to the White House complex, an unusual invitation for CCS, two top officials of the Office of Public Liaison discussed "Kids and Violence" and "Kids and Tobacco." In a vigorous give-and-take with Marilyn Yager and Barbara Woolley, the seminar youth discussed the impact of media on the 5,000 young people a day who begin smoking, one-quarter of them under 12 years of age. "Despite denials from the industry, many tobacco ads and images aim to influence kids four, five, and six years of age," Yager commented. "That's why Joe Camel is a cartoon character."

On violence, Yager, who is deputy assistant to President Clinton, said that nationally the crime rate among adults is going way down but among youth is going way up. As one response, the White House has initiated dialog with broadcasters about reducing the level of violence in programming and increasing educational programming for children.

A key strategy of the Clinton administration for reducing violence on television and restricting tobacco promotion and access to children is to encourage industry leaders to enact voluntary restraints. One recent agreement is the



Johnny Harvey

"I'm far more aware now of the importance of actively analyzing television, not merely zoning in front of the tube and allowing all sorts of garbage to seep into my mind."

Meg Fuchs, 16, of Lancaster, Pa., summing up her experience at the Christian Citizenship Seminar.

pledge of professional baseball players to cease chewing tobacco during the game.

But at all levels the resistance to change is formidable. As groups from CCS voiced their concerns about media with their respective senators and representatives, they sensed that what was driving telecommunications reform were the interests not of the public but of media owners, whose number is dwindling.

For the 80 Brethren who went to New York and Washington to rethink media, and for others who have been schooled in media literacy elsewhere, the first challenge is to assert control over one's own interaction with media. "I'm far more aware now of the importance of actively analyzing television and consumerism, not merely zoning in front of the tube and allowing

all sorts of garbage to seep into my mind," Meg Fuchs, 16, of Lancaster, Pa., summed up as the seminar ended.

To be media literate means to curb the amount of time spent watching television, certainly the time given to mindless programming. It encourages watching TV less often alone and more often with family or peers and discussing what has been presented. It means leaving the throng of the unanalytical and the manipulable, to whom most television is pitched.

And rightly so for a people called by their church to live peacefully, simply, together in the context of a media culture whose dominant appeal is to live violently, materialistically, selfishly. *M.*

Howard E. Royer is director of Interpretation on the General Board's Communication Team



Seven tips for TV viewing in the home

1. Decide how much TV your family will watch.

Set limits on the number of hours you and your family will watch each week, and stick to it.

2. Plan your TV viewing.

Encourage a family attitude that television should be turned on only to watch a specific show, not just to "see what's on." Choose your shows ahead of time, using a weekly television program guide.

3. Develop family guidelines for selecting programs.

Be sure to discuss values you believe are important and the reasons for your choices. Check channel listings, including cable, and note reviews of programs with themes and subjects that match your family's guidelines. Look for shows that offer different viewpoints and help in your child's education.

4. Make TV watching an interactive family event.

Television doesn't have to end family discussion and interaction. Watch it together, and use every opportunity to talk about what you are seeing and hearing. Use storylines and characters to stimulate conversation on topics that can be difficult to discuss: family relationships, feelings, appropriate sexual behavior, divorce, or death. Try "thinking out loud" as a nonthreatening way to let your children hear your values and prompt their response.

5. Talk back to your TV.

When appropriate, express your opinions by "talking" directly to the TV as you watch. Respond to sexism, racism, and unnecessary violence, but point out positive portrayals as well. Don't forget to challenge commercials and the way

they try to sell us not only products, but attitudes and lifestyles.

6. Let TV expand and enlarge your world.

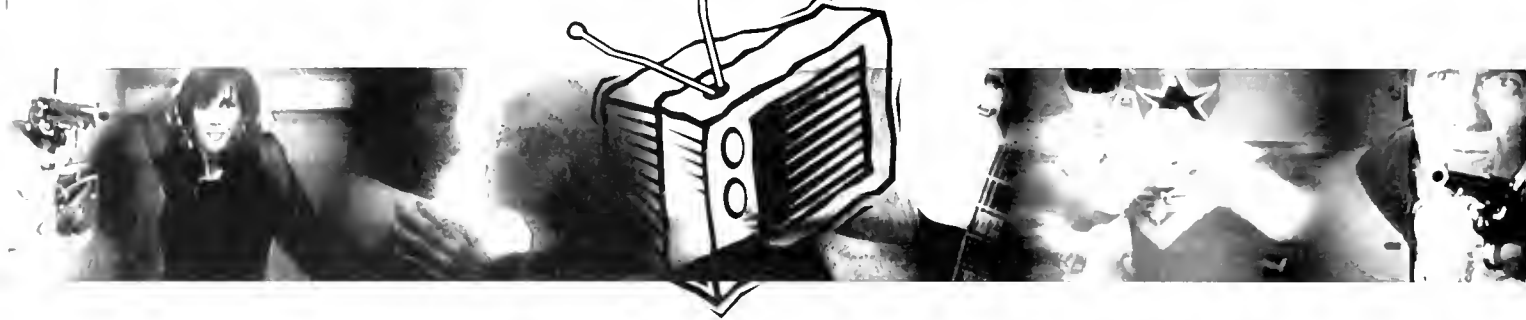
Find related books and magazine articles at your public library, and go on family outings based on ideas you've seen on TV. Keep an atlas or globe next to your television and find places mentioned on the news.

7. Be positive about TV's contribution to our world.

Television is the dominant force in our media culture and an important part of children's lives. It should be evaluated fairly, not denigrated.

©1994 Center for Media Literacy, 1962 S. Shenandoah St., Los Angeles, CA 90074. Call (800) 226-9494 for a free media literacy catalog

The V-Chip: Problem or solution?



by Stewart Hoover

Years of conflict between parents, teachers, and broadcasters might have come to an end recently when Congress passed, and the President signed, the first comprehensive revision of American communications law since 1934. This bill's most far-reaching impact will be felt in telecommunications regulation, where it will free up telephone, cable, and computer companies to compete directly, and — it is hoped — develop an information system for the 21st century.

But this bill also will be known for a provision that relates directly to a problem of the 20th century — the problem of television violence. No single issue throughout the history of broadcasting has led to so much debate, research, and political struggle as this issue, and the Telecommunications Act proposes a solution to it — the so-called "V-Chip."

The V-Chip is a computer circuit board that will be fitted in all new television sets sold in the United States. The chip has a very simple function. It can be set by viewers to automatically block any programs that carry a computer code of their own — one which identifies them as programs with "violent" (or possibly other "objectionable" content). The V-Chip has been touted as the magic solution to the problem of violence.

And it does address one of the most vexing issues in the violence debate. For years, broadcasters have pointed out that the switch to control television vio-

lence already exists — *on the television set*. If parents want their children not to watch certain programs, they can exercise that control. This is a logical argument, but it ignores a fundamental reality of modern life: The vast majority of child television-viewing takes place without parental oversight or control, and this most often cannot be blamed on parental inattention. More and more families are single-parent families, and in most of them the parent must work outside the home and thus is unable to be present when children are watching television.

A device such as the V-Chip that can offer peace of mind to such parents — a way of controlling what is viewed when they are not present — is a welcome



The V-Chip has been touted as the magic solution to the problem of violence. But it is an open question whether the V-Chip actually is a solution.

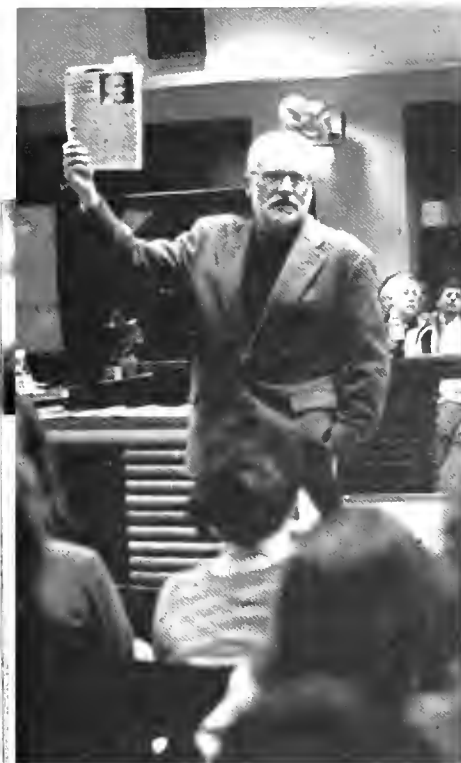
development. Today's parents face many challenges not faced by parents in earlier times. Among the most pressing of these is the challenge of accounting for a public culture that increasingly targets children with symbols, ideas, and messages. The V-Chip is an attempt at answering this challenge.

But it is an open question whether the V-Chip actually is a solution. First,

the broadcasting industry thus far has accepted the chip only with great reluctance. It is unsure as to what this device will do to its business in a time when it is facing increasing competition from other media channels and from other attractions to the child audience — attractions that include computers, computer games, home video, and popular music. There still is a chance that one or more of the television networks will challenge the law in court.

The chip also faces legal challenges from those concerned about its First Amendment implications. And these are serious implications. Just because the chip might be used to filter out violence today doesn't mean it could not also be used to filter out political or religious messages tomorrow. The law — and the chip — thus may never come into use. Even without legal challenge, it will be years (at the present rate of replacement) before even the majority of television sets is equipped with the device. And as the sets are replaced, the chips will appear first in those homes (the homes of the better educated and more affluent) where they presumably are needed least. Single-parent homes and poorer homes will still be using unequipped sets for years to come.

But there is a more fundamental issue to watch as things develop. The legislation only provides for the chips to be *installed*. It is left up to others to define exactly what constitutes a violent program, and thus which programs will be coded — and filtered — by the chip.



Stewart Hoover leads a workshop about media during the recent Christian Citizenship Seminar attended by 80 Brethren youth.

Leaders of the entertainment industry were called to the White House in February and encouraged to develop cooperative, industry-wide standards for violent programs. This is really the only constitutional way standards can be set. The government cannot set the standards without violating the First Amendment, according to most constitutional scholars.

Such industry-based standards are nothing new. Twenty years ago, when the three broadcast networks dominated the television diets of most Americans, each of them had an office of "standards and practices" that essentially censored violent and sexual content. There was very little variation among these standards. So there essentially was an industry-wide standard then, and most evidence demonstrates high levels of violence even at that time. It remains to be seen how the V-Chip will result in anything more



restrictive than what television audiences experienced in the 1970s.

Certainly, times are different now. The level of political pressure that brought about the V-Chip as a solution was unprecedented. But standards have changed, too. Certain network prime-time programs regularly include scenes that would not have been allowed even five years ago. In such a climate, what will the standards be? And, the process of rating programs for their violent content also will be a challenge. The movie rating system—which has been pointed to as a model—has to deal with only a fraction of the number



Parents, teachers, and churches must recognize the need for more assertive and serious responses to the new media, and develop those responses.

of productions that come out of the television industry in a year's time.

In some ways, then, we are back to square one. The V-Chip will give parents who can afford a new television set, and who care about their children's television diets, a tool they have not had before. This is a good thing. It will not, however, ultimately solve the problem. For too long we have trivialized the role of the new media in the lives of the children of the 20th century. In a way, the V-Chip is

a trivial response. Parents, teachers, and churches must recognize the need for more assertive and serious responses to the new media...and *develop* those responses. Television programs are not "just entertainment." They need to be treated with the care, concern, and seriousness we devote to great art and great literature. They are the art, literature, and culture of the present age.

The V-Chip represents an "automatic" solution to a problem that is more subtle, nuanced, and resilient than most of us think. Like much of current public policy, it relies on a "market-place" approach to solve a collective problem. Autonomous individual parents are to make decisions about the V-Chip for their homes. What really is needed is something that we Americans lack: a public discourse about the role of media—and the role of cultural products more generally—in our lives. There is a tendency to leave the job to the national political arena. (And, granted, it is a national problem of national industries, so there is a role there.) But so long as we do not have a language with which we can articulate what we want and expect our media to do for us (instead of what we see there that we don't want) we will continue to get partial solutions such as the V-Chip, and the problem will not go away. *M.*

Stewart Hoover is associate professor of journalism and mass communications at the University of Colorado. He served on the General Board's Communication Team 1975–1980 as staff for Media Education and Advocacy.

stepping STONES

by Robin
Wentworth Mayer

Five months after I started calling Kokomo "home" I learned that my late grandfather was ordained into ministry at the First Baptist Church of Kokomo on February 2, 1919. Now, doesn't that seem ... *prophetic*?

Learning that my grandfather was ministering in the city of Kokomo 76 years before me has left me with a powerful sense of legacy.

What couples did you marry, Grandfather White-sell? Where are their descendants? Whom did you baptize? Did they remain firm in their vows? Did they raise their children in the faith? Were the hungry fed, the lost found, the naked clothed? And perhaps most urgent for me, did you leave any unfinished business behind? And if so, how do I pick up where you left off?

What I have been grappling with on a personal level is the same thing we as a denomination grapple with on a corporate level.

In what ways does our spiritual legacy define our destiny?

I'm not an ethnic Brethren. My roots don't go back to Germantown. I didn't grow up with prayer coverings and plain clothes. I wear earrings. And when I first came into the denomination, I asked questions such as "Who's Dan West?"

But I've been Brethren long enough to know that Brethren really, *really* like to talk about their heritage.

Throughout the Old Testament, God seems to put a great deal of importance on the *place* where we minister. Nehemiah took a delegation to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple ... the twelve tribes were divided along geographical lines ... and the Exodus is the story of God's people reclaiming the land. In each case, the *place* and its history were essential to the out-workings of God's plan.

Now, I don't think God wanted his people in Canaan just to build equity. Their inheritance was not just something to preserve and sit around and enjoy and pat each other on the back about. In fact, God got pretty frustrated with the Israelites every time they ran into conflict and started talking about the good old days: The good old days in Egypt when the water was sweet and plentiful ... the good old days when they sat by pots of meat and ate their fill of bread ... the good old days when there were leeks and onions and garlic. ...

How tempted we are as Brethren, in times of confusion and conflict, to do likewise. "Let's go back to the good old days. Let's go back to Schwarzenau. Let's go back to Germantown. Let's go back to the glory days of Dan West and M.R. Zigler."

Oh, my beloved Brethren, there is no going back. One might argue that the children of Israel were a unique peo-

ple in Egypt. They had their community, their identity, and their traditions, but God did not want them to go back. God wanted them to move forward. Their *legacy* was valuable only to the degree that it propelled them towards their *destiny*. And when they tried to abandon that, God did not take it lightly. God, in fact, said they had spurned him. Consequently, they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years.

There's a powerful message there for us. Just being afraid of moving forward doesn't mean we have the option of going back. If we try it, we'll wander.

Joshua finally took the second generation into the land, saying, "How long will you be slack about going in and taking possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, has given you?" (Josh. 18:5)

The land was their legacy. But it was a legacy that demanded action ... aggressive action.

We are not where we are by accident. Whether it be on a personal level or corporate level, our legacy is part of a spiritual blueprint that forever beckons us to move forward into our destiny.

And how long will we wait before we pursue the inheritance that the Lord, the God of our ancestors, has given us?

M.

Robin Wentworth Mayer is pastor of Kokomo (Ind.) Church of the Brethren.

Stepping Stones is a column offering suggestions, perspectives, and opinions—snapshots of life—that we hope are helpful to readers in their Christian journey. As the writer said in her first installment, "Remember, when it comes to managing life's difficulties, we don't need to walk on water. We just need to learn where the stepping stones are."

Keeping the spirit of Beijing alive

As a group, we exchange information and ideas for media campaigns, magazine articles, publications, and grassroots initiatives that work for the improvement of women's lives. We won't let the spirit of Beijing die.

by Amanda Vender

In a building sandwiched between the Supreme Court and the Dirksen Senate Office Building, a group of women of diverse faith backgrounds gathers once a month. The first item of business of the Interfaith Beijing Working Group (IBWG) is reporting the work of our respective offices and denominations on follow-up efforts to the Fourth World Conference on

Women in Beijing last September. Although most of our members did not attend the conference, we build on the stories and information of those who did. Reading the Conference's Platform for Action in itself (see sidebar, page 18) has been extremely energizing. As a group, we exchange information and ideas for media campaigns, magazine articles, new publications, and grassroots initiatives that work for the improvement of women's lives. We

won't let the spirit of Beijing die.

We then move to our work at the national level, work that we can do because of our location in the capital. One of our central aims is to monitor the work of the President's Interagency Council on Women. President Clinton announced the formation of the council prior to the Conference on Women. The council is an intragovernmental body charged with coordinating the implementation of the Platform for Action. It

Beijing follow-up

❑ Attend or hold a Beijing event in your community. Many organizations are planning follow-up activities. Contact your state Commission on the Status of Women, or your regional administrator for the Women's Bureau, US Department of Labor for information on events. For resource materials to conduct a workshop or event, you may order "Women Connecting Beyond Beijing" facilitator's packets and workbooks from the Center of Concern, 3700 15th St. NE, Washington, DC 20017, (202) 655-2757. Guides are available in Spanish and English. A copy of the Platform for Action may be obtained from the Internet at <http://www.undp.org/fcw/dawfwew.htm>. Or call the UN Public Information Office at (212) 965-4475.

❑ Support national efforts to implement the Platform for Action. Contact your congressional representatives at (800) 962-5524 and ask them to support implementation of the US commitments to the Platform for Action. Also, remind them that the United States must fulfill its financial responsibilities to support the United Nations.

❑ Advocate for the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which 15 years after its drafting still has not been ratified by the US Senate. The US is one of the few countries

that have not ratified the treaty. Contact the Church of the Brethren Washington Office for a copy of the treaty by calling (202) 546-5202.

❑ Urge legislators not to cut spending for programs that help poor women and children, and suggest that savings be made by cutting defense spending. According to the Clinton Administration's seven-year budget plan, spending on weapons would increase by 50 percent by 2001.

❑ Promote nonviolent conflict resolution and the reduction of human rights abuses. US military personnel continue to train Latin American soldiers for combat at the Army School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Ga., despite the fact that many of the soldiers trained at the school later have been accused of gross human rights abuses in their own countries. Ask your congressional representatives to close the School of the Americas.

❑ Pressure the Department of Defense to be consistent with the Platform for Action. Write to Secretary of Defense William Perry, The Pentagon, Washington, DC 20501, and urge that the department promote nonviolent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse while reducing spending on weapons.

❑ Organize a group that meets regularly to educate members on the status of women around the world and to take action at a local, national, or international level.

is composed of a few members from several government agencies. A briefing and public discussion for NGOs (non-governmental organizations) is held once a month. It is important for us to attend these briefings in order to enter into dialog with the government and to ensure that our concerns are addressed. Past briefing presenters have included representatives from the Department of State, the United States Aid for International Development, and the Department of Defense (DoD).

In March, two other members of IBWG and I attended a meeting at the Pentagon with an assistant secretary of Defense, the Interagency Council Representative for the DoD, and the executive director of the Defense Advi-

sory Committee on Women in the Services. We discussed initiatives of the DoD to advance the aims of the Conference of Women, and concerns that we felt were not adequately addressed at the DoD Interagency Council briefing. I was impressed that such high-level personnel took the time to meet with us. They admitted that reaching out to educate the public on what the DoD is doing to improve the lives of women is necessary to reverse a negative image of the DoD. Of course, to proudly note that the DoD is the largest employer of women in the country is not particularly positive from a Brethren perspective. Nonetheless, we were pleased to learn of some programs designed to enhance the employment

and advancement of women in technical and engineering fields and to promote the health and education of women in the military including assistance for victims of violent crimes.

Our group's primary concern for the meeting, however, was to learn about what the DoD is doing to comply with the sections of the Platform for Action that call for controlling arms proliferation and use and expanding peacekeeping missions. The vast majority of the initiatives by the DoD to improve the lives of women is focused on women employed by the military or women in military families rather than on women around the world hurt by military actions. One of our

The Platform for Action

The Platform for Action, referred to here as "the Platform" is the consensus reached by official government delegates representing over 180 nations, including the United States. The following is a summary of the 180 page document and of the strategic objectives and actions.

Women and poverty. *Women represent 70 percent of the 1.5 billion people living in poverty.*

Review, adopt, and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs of women in poverty; revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women equal rights and access to economic resources; develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminization of poverty.

Education and training of women. *Almost a quarter of the world's adult population—905 million women and men—is estimated to be illiterate. Sixty-five percent of those who are illiterate are women.*

Ensure equal access to education; eradicate illiteracy among women; improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education.

Women and health. *Heterosexual transmission is the*

leading cause of HIV for women. Worldwide, 5,000 women are infected daily with the virus that causes AIDS.

Increase women's access throughout the life cycle to affordable, appropriate, and quality health care; promote research and disseminate information on women's health.

Violence against women. *It is estimated that one-fourth of women worldwide are physically battered.*

Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women; study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures; and eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking.

Women and armed conflict. *Civilian victims of armed conflict often outnumber casualties among combatants and most are women and children.*

Increase participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels; protect women living in situations of armed conflicts; reduce excessive military expenditures and work towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Women and the economy. *Women work an average of 15 percent more hours than men in every country.*

Promote women's economic rights and independence; facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets, and trade; eliminate occupational segregation and all


hosts emphasized that in altering the male-dominated culture of the military by increasing the rate of participation of women, DoD programs and actions eventually will have a more favorable effect on women.

According to the United Nations Development Fund for Women, women and children are more likely than ever to be killed or wounded in wartime. While only five percent of casualties in World War I were civilians, in conflicts currently underway the figure is almost 80 percent. This concern, which needs to be addressed immediately by our military, cannot be altered by means of a trickle-down change in the culture of the Department of Defense. DoD programs need

to do more to promote nonviolent forms of conflict resolution and to limit the production and use of weapons. In 1995, less than half of one percent of the Pentagon budget was spent on peacekeeping operations while the US public believes that the figure was 20 percent.

Many of the issues important to the Church of the Brethren and for which the Washington Office advocates can find support from the Platform for Action. I believe that our presence and work there is well recognized and respected and that women and families around the world need us to carry through with the work initiated by the Fourth World Conference on Women.

The years 1988–1998 are the Ecu-

menical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women. The 1988 Church of the Brethren Annual Conference adopted a statement that firmly supports the Ecumenical Decade and urges congregations to act by "celebrating the gifts of women ... searching for ways for all members to become aware of women and women's concerns in different areas of the world" and to encourage district and national agencies to continue to examine and include "women's full participation in church and community, and women's perspectives and commitments to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation." 

Amanda Vender is a Brethren Volunteer Service worker at the Church of the Brethren Washington Office

forms of employment discrimination; promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men.

Women and power and decision-making. *Women held nearly 50 percent of decision-making positions in only eight countries in 1994.*

At levels of 50 percent, women start to have a visible impact on the style and content of political decisions. Ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures; increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.

Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. *Tax laws discriminate against women in some countries. In Switzerland, married women may not fill out their own income tax forms; their husbands must do it for them.*

Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, and programs.

Human rights of women. *The constitutions of many countries allow discrimination against women in vital areas such as property rights, employment, and access to education and health services.*

Promote and protect the human rights of women through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; ensure equality and nondiscrimination under the law and in practice.

Women and the media. *In Western industrialized societies the desire to conform to cultural standards of physical beauty causes many young girls and women to compromise their health.*

Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media; promote a balanced portrayal of women in the media that avoids stereotypes.

Women and the environment. *In both urban and rural areas, environmental degradation results in negative effects on the health, well-being, and quality of life of the population at large, especially girls and women of all ages.*

Involve women actively in environmental decision-making; integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programs for sustainable development; establish mechanisms to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

The girl child. *Female genital mutilation—the ritual cutting and removal of all or part of the clitoris and other external genitalia—affects an estimated 2 million girls and women each year.*

Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls; eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training, health and nutrition; eliminate the economic exploitation of child labor and protect young girls at work.

Frank Sinatra doesn't live here

by Paul Munday

Answer true or false to the following statements:

1. Once I have formulated an opinion, I am likely not to change it.
2. I tend to use words such as should, ought, must, and can't when I am talking to other people.
3. I would rather let people have a false beneficial impression of me, rather than be open and vulnerable.
4. Critical thoughts come to mind more often than I would like.
5. I have a mental list of ideals that people should meet before I accept them.
6. I am uncomfortable with ideas that are different from mine.
7. I get impatient when other people can't understand what needs to be done.
8. I use silence to chastise those who disappoint me or differ with me.
9. I tend to do important jobs myself because someone else might not do them right.
10. I hate to admit my weaknesses, even if they seem obvious to others.

If you answered true to fewer than one or two of these statements you probably are a very agreeable, composed person. If you responded true to three or four of them, you probably are normal. But if you answered true to five or more of them, you may be inclined toward an obsessive need to control.

Yes, *control*, the legitimate task of oversight, which often nose-dives into the imperative need always to be on top, always to be dominant, always to be in charge, and always to be right. Such a life stance is well epitomized in one of the most famous popular songs of the century, Frank Sinatra's "My Way." As crooned by Sinatra, this song celebrates defiantly the "on top, in charge, imperative way of life." At every crossroads, at every bend in the highway, Sinatra cal-

lously wails, "I did it my way."

Reflecting on this worldview, band-leader Tommy Dorsey once aptly remarked, "Frank is the most fascinating man in the world, but don't stick your hand in his cage."

It is not surprising, then, to discover that controlling or imperative personalities do not contribute greatly to harmonious, unified relationships. In fact, they destroy relationships. This is especially true for the collective relationships we know as the body of Christ. Controlling, imperative individuals wreak havoc in congregations, often holding the advancement of God's work hostage to personal, picky, pharisaic whims. You might not see the label "controller" on their forehead, but the words and spirit of imperative people mark many a church debate:

"We've heard enough about this harebrained idea," the chairman of the Christian education committee remarks. "The proposal goes back in the drawer, and that's it."

"I'm tired of all these new people trying to take over," Sarah Smith moans. "My father erected the rafter beams in this meetinghouse, and, by golly, no stranger is going to tamper with it."

"You just don't understand," Bob Buster admonishes. "Without Mom Sherman's permission, it just can't be done. Won't you be satisfied with just your ushering?"

Writing in his book *Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers*, church consultant Bill Easum reflects "The life and spirit of established churches is being drained by . . . controllers. . . ." When he first started as a consultant, Easum thought that "the sacred cow was 'maintaining the status quo.' Not so. Established churches worship at the altar of control."

Either we stop worshiping at such a shrine, Easum goes on to conclude, or we will perish. The apostle Paul said a similar thing in Galatians 6. "It is obvi-

ous what kind of life develops out of trying to get our own way all the time," he writes. "Cutthroat competition; . . . divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone; . . . ugly parodies of community. I could go on" (Gal. 5:16–21a. *The Message*).

Ironically, the apostle also implied in these words the antidote for such selfish, dead-end behavior. Rather than producing parodies of community in Christ, he implies, we should be producing prototypes of community in Christ. We should move beyond imperative control to authentic life together, in and through the Spirit.

In my experience, authentic community, biblically functional community, comes about as we strive to become a new people, specifically a permission-giving, risk-taking, Holy Spirit empowered people.

How authentic community develops

First, authentic community develops as we strive to be a permission-giving people. If we intend to move beyond a stance of "getting our own way," of imperative control, Paul suggested in Galatians 5:22, we are called to develop a new warmth and trust for one another. When we attempt to live God's way, not our way, he wrote, "He brings into our lives—much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others (and) exuberance about life. . . ." (Gal. 5:22-25. *The Message*). Such an atmosphere of growing trust encourages us to grant consent, rather than withhold it from others.

In a congregation dominated by a climate of control, however, suspicion and unbridled fear reign. People become anxious and paranoid. Subconsciously, existing leadership keeps emerging leadership and ideas under its thumb, reigning them into a corral

nymore

of conformity. It usually is unintentional, but the corralling comments are unmistakable and pointed. Examples: "A new church nursery? Who gave you permission to consider this idea?" "A ramp for the handicapped? Your Sun-

If geese have the sense
to work together,
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Stop going it alone.
Stop doing things
'your way.'
Trade in defiance
for discipleship.
Trade in obsession
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Trade in control
for community
and thus rejoin
the body of Christ.

day school class had better let the stewards handle this." "A contemporary worship service? You don't understand; it's contrary to the bylaws and charter of this congregation."

It is possible, however, to send different signals among church family members—signals that grant permission rather than withhold it, signals that accept different ideas and people rather than push them aside.

In her short story "The Whisper Test," Mary Ann Bird tells of growing up with a cleft palate and with partial deafness in one of her ears. Rejected by most of her peers, she found special acceptance in her second grade teacher,

Mrs. Leonard. One day the teacher gave the annual hearing test to Mary's class. She conducted the test by whispering a different sentence to each pupil.

"Finally it was my turn," Mary Bird writes. "I knew from past years that as we stood against the door and covered one ear, the teacher, sitting at her desk, would whisper something and we would have to repeat it back ... things like, 'The sky is blue' or 'Do you have new shoes?' I waited there for those words which God must have put into her mouth, those seven words which changed my life. Mrs. Leonard said, in her whisper, 'I wish you were my little girl.'"

Biblically functioning communities whisper empowering, accepting words rather than restrictive, inhibiting words. They give consent for God's people to be in Christ and to be in service rather than to be tied up in fear and debilitating tradition.

A practical way of whispering an empowering word, an accepting word in congregational life is to begin minimizing committees. Do you realize how many church committee meetings are held each and every day? According to Drew University's Leonard Sweet, 520,000. Committee meetings in and of themselves are not evil, but an overdependence on this decision-making process tends to restrict and encumber new ideas and new leadership. Like good food that has been overprocessed, good ideas that have been overcommitted tend to be tasteless, lacking in healthy and vital ingredients.

When I presented this idea to Lititz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren a few years ago, an enthusiastic lay leader remarked, "You are absolutely right. Probably the most effective outreach ministry of this church, the Lititz Run for Peace, didn't emerge from a committee, but from the vision of a single individual. We all caught his vision, and ran with it, no pun intended."

In his book *Effective Church Leadership*, consultant Kenyon Callahan argues, "It is a myth that every cause

needs a committee; quite simply a cause needs a leader. ... Discover the leader or leaders whose longings ... are a match for the cause. Nominate one of those persons to the post. Give him opportunity to advance the cause and build his own team in whatever way makes sense to him."

Callahan's dream, and mine as well, is a church filled with more ad hoc ministry teams and fewer standing committees. Don't misunderstand. There always will be a need for some standing committees. But the urgent cry of our day is for mission-minded people to come face to face with lost, disoriented people and do something. We have enough *talk*; what we need is more *walk*.

Second, biblically functioning community not only develops out of a permission-giving people, but out of a risk-taking people. When I talk of risk-taking in this instance, I am specifically referring to the risk of vulnerability. Control reigns and community wanes unless more of us are willing to become transparent and real. Imperative, controlling behavior is developed, in part, out of the obsessive need always to be perfect and always to be right, what Paul, in Galatians 5:20, called "paranoid loneliness (and) cutthroat competition." Biblically functioning community, on the other hand, is developed out of the Christ-like need to humble ourselves and confess wrongdoings.

As we speak of confession, I need to confess that vulnerability is hard for me. In line with our opening quiz, I would rather let people have a false impression of me than to be open and vulnerable. But I am learning. My wife and I hit a bump in our relationship that was connected to a turning-point birthday in her life. In "celebrating," we made the mistake of seeing the film "Mr. Holland's Opus." Although it is a great story, with a happy ending, it is not the best film to see if you are struggling with birthday issues and the beginning of a midlife crisis. In the film there is just enough sense of life passing you and your dreams by that things get turned upside down emotionally. My wife and I strug-

gled with all this on a long-long-long trip home from the movie theater.

The next day I felt terrible about the tone of our conversation and some of my misplaced words. Usually I would strut through the week trying to dance around my wrongdoing. But I decided to do something that, I am embarrassed to say, I haven't done in years: I bought my wife flowers, a dozen roses, no less. And I accompanied them with a card that simply said, "I'm sorry." I was amazed at my wife's reaction. With my contrition came genuine warmth and an eagerness to fully re-engage the relationship. When my wall fell, an entry point was created for love, warmth, and community to flow.

So, too, with our prideful, willful hearts when they fall and we express vulnerability to one another. When we are no longer demanding always to be right or always to be in control, an entry point is created for love, warmth, and community to flow into our personal relationships—and into our corporate relationships as well. Or as Paul said in Galatians 5:22–25, we find ourselves in mutual commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.

To whom do you need to send flowers right now? To whom do you need to simply say, "I was wrong. I'm sorry"? Where do you need to risk vulnerability?

Third, biblically functioning community not only develops out of a permission-giving and risk-taking people, but out of a Holy Spirit-empowered people. Ultimately the remedy for imperative, controlling people is to be controlled by an authority and sovereign greater than their own influence, God Almighty.

A number of years ago, I decided to drive by the church I attended in college, Trinity Church of the Brethren in Baltimore. It was a nostalgia visit so there was a fair level of emotion involved. But as I drove up Roland Avenue, I was shocked and deeply saddened. In front of the beautiful building filled with so many memories was a realtor's sign that read "For sale." The

congregation had run into hard times; the church was closing.

As I drove away, a flood of feelings came over me. I thought, "Who can sell a church anyway?"

For that matter, who *owns* the church? Did you ever think about that? Is it the stewards' commission, the district, the state government? Who owns the church?

I'll tell you this much: In conflicted, divided, un-unity parishes, controlling personalities *think* they own the church. They *think* they can possess and hold the heart strings and purse strings of congregational life. But it is a futile endeavor. In fact, in Galatians 5:19, Paul called it a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage.

But there is a positive alternative: Six our natural inclination to possess and run the relationships of our lives and give them over to the proprietorship, the ownership of Christ. As Paul went on to say in Galatians 24, "Legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way. Among those who belong to Christ, everything connected with getting our own way . . . is killed off for good—crucified." Now Christ is in charge, whether it is as the head of our homes or as the head of our church.

I can't tell you the number of unity problems this one simple principle will solve in the life of countless congregations. Deciding once and for all who calls the shots around a particular congregation will do more to bring cohesion than any other element. Who is the boss around your church, anyhow? Who owns and runs your congregation? An imperative personality? A controlling leader? A ghost from the past? Or Christ Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords?

A while back, Frank Sinatra celebrated his 80th birthday. Many festivities led up to this event, including a two-album set, commissioned by his record company, titled simply "Duets." On these albums, a who's who of the recording industry sings along with Sinatra to a medley of

his most famous songs, including "My Way." Ironically, not a single duet partner was actually in the studio to sing with Sinatra. All the singing was done in separate locations, across the miles, through the marvel of digital technology.

Whether we know it or not, many of us have been singing a duet with Sinatra across the miles as well. Whenever we insist on our own agenda, push beligerently our own program, or attempt repeatedly to manipulate an outcome, we too are crooning right along with Frank Sinatra the song "My Way."

But as Paul reminds us in Galatians, such sentiment doesn't enhance relationships; it only erodes relationships. It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get our own way all the time, he wrote in Galatians 5:16: "Cut-throat competition . . . divided homes and divided lives . . . small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone . . . ugly parodies of community."

Unity in the church, however, doesn't arise from parodies of community, but rather from prototypes of community, conceived by permission-giving, risk-taking, Holy Spirit-empowered people. Let us commit ourselves to that perspective and to that vision. May we resolve that Frank Sinatra doesn't live here anymore. It is not my way, but God's way.

Scientists tell us that geese do not fly in a V formation unintentionally. It is deliberate and on purpose. As each bird in the V configuration flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. In fact, when a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front.

Now if geese have that much sense, why don't we? Stop going it alone. Stop doing things "your way." Trade in defiance for discipleship. Trade in obsession for obedience. Trade in control for community, and rejoin the body and flock of Christ. *M.*

Paul Munday is director of Evangelism on the Parish Ministries Commission staff.

Another man from Galilee

by Richard A. Kauffman

Elias Chacour is a man of peace. In 1947, Zionist soldiers duped him and his family out of their Galilean homes in the newly formed Israeli state; nevertheless, Chacour has demonstrated a Christ-like attitude toward his "enemies" by making his life work the reconciliation of hostile parties. It is no wonder that he has been nominated several times for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Chacour also is a man of action. Committed to restoring justice for the oppressed, he founded Prophet Elias Technological High School and College for students of all religious and ethnic backgrounds. When plans for the high school were frozen in Israeli bureaucracy, Chacour took a detour to get the job done: on a visit to the US, he knocked on the door of then Secretary of State Jim Baker. Susan Baker, the secretary's wife, warmly welcomed him into the house but said she couldn't visit for long. She was making preparations for a women's Bible study she was about to host.

When he discovered they were going to study the Sermon on the Mount, Chacour asked Mrs. Baker, "How can you understand that? It wasn't written for the American mentality, but in our language."

She invited Chacour to speak about the passage with her study group, turning a short visit into a two-hour Bible exposition, and a friendship was born. Ultimately, the Bakers personally intervened with the Israeli government, which issued the building permit for Chacour's school.

In past years, Chacour has had a working relationship with the Church of the Brethren, dealing with peace issues in the Middle East.

His life story has been told in *Blood Brothers* (Chosen Books, 1984), which has been translated into 22 languages. Richard Kauffman spoke with Chacour about peace in the Middle East, the future of Palestinian Christians in the region, and how he works for the welfare of both Arabs and Jews.

Where does the Middle East peace process stand in light of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin?

What is tragic about the assassination of Rabin is that the climate in Israel was so hostile beforehand that the prime minister was "killed" long before he was shot down. Jewish extremists were not just saying "Death to the Arabs" in response to the peace treaty with Arafat; they were saying "Death to Rabin," calling him a traitor and a murderer. The climate was ready for some crazy, very hot-headed Jew to assassinate this man.

We Palestinian Christians were shocked more than anybody else. But what shocks us even more than the death of Rabin is the prevailing climate now in Israel of hostility, accusations, and verbal assault. It's very, very

dangerous. If there were to be a fair international trial for the Rabin assassination, many would be judged as guilty because they prepared the assassin to kill this prime minister.

Was it hard for you to accept Rabin as a man of peace given his past as a warrior who fought against Arabs?

No matter what he once was, what matters for me is this: For what did he die? He did not die while giving orders to kill and massacre and break the bones of the Arabs. He died because he dared to change attitudes and actions, and he wanted to bring peace with the Palestinians. And that's extremely courageous. History, I think, will forgive him for everything that he has done and will remember that Rabin died for peace.



"I believe that being a follower of Jesus Christ means you cannot kill. I have been the victim of violence by Israeli Jews, and I've told them that time after time, but I don't want them to blame me for being equally as violent."



Robert F. Ingersoll

“If you are really hungry and thirsty, you would do everything to bring justice where there is no justice.”

What do you think about Yassar Arafat? How do you account for his transformation?

Arafat understood that unless big concessions were made by the Palestinians—geographic concessions—and unless there were an acceptance of Israel by the Palestinians, there would only be despair. After having tried all kinds of terror on both sides, all kinds of violence, both Arafat and Rabin realized that either they live together or they will have to die together. So with Rabin, Arafat will also be known in history as one who had the courage to initiate peace.

Do you think that Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza will be able to maintain peace in that area?

The current situation is not at all what the Western world expected. Westerners said, “Wait till Arafat comes, and you will see Palestinians massacring each other. They will kill each other; none of them will be safe.” But the Palestinians did not kill each other. On the contrary, the Palestinians seem to be more and more united. It is the Jews, unfortunately, not the Palestinians, who killed each other over peace. Rabin is not the first victim of the peace process.

You have experienced all kinds of indignities in your life as a Palestinian Christian living in Israel. How do you keep your anger from escalating into hatred and hostility?

Simply because I’m a Christian. And I’m a Christian who believes in Jesus Christ in a certain way. There are so many Christians who believe in violence and are even encouraging the Israelis to act violently. The initial funding that was given to Israel to invade Lebanon in 1982 is said to have been given by

Christians from the West, from America. I’m not that kind of Christian.

What kind of Christian are you?

I believe that being a follower of Jesus Christ means you cannot kill. I have been the victim of violence by Israeli Jews, and I’ve told them that time after time, but I don’t want them to blame me for being equally as violent. My upbringing in a simple Christian family of Galilee has taught me something that’s so simple: Never meet violence with violence; corruption will corrupt. Palestinians must do everything possible to change the situation without ever reversing the roles. We do not want to become the persecutors of our persecutors.

You have a strong emphasis in your faith and practice on the teachings of Jesus, especially the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes.

In my family we were always told that Christ did not teach us to sit and wait until justice happens. Look at the original texts of the Beatitudes: “Blessed” is *lovaloun* in Hebrew, *Ashrei* in Aramaic. And neither of these words means only *blessed* or *happy*. The meaning of these words is to straighten yourself up so that you can reach the goal.

So, first of all, you need to define your goal. Is it righteousness and justice? Then ask how eager you are to work for the goal. For what do you hunger and thirst? Is it the same hunger and thirst of a Rwandan who would do everything to have a piece of bread to survive? Or the same hunger and thirst of a Palestinian in Gaza who would do everything to have a job to buy bread for his wife and his children? Or is it a kind of spiritual hunger that does not stir you to do anything? If you are really hungry and thirsty, you would

do everything to bring justice where there is no justice.

Is a peacemaker somebody who stands between two hostile groups, or who takes sides on behalf on one side?

No, a peacemaker doesn’t stand between. It’s clear-cut: It means taking the side of the oppressed, underprivileged, and persecuted without becoming one-sided against the persecutor and the oppressor. If you really want to help the oppressed, since he is always at the mercy of his oppressor, you have to care for both—convert the oppressor and uplift the oppressed. And that’s the difficult task: to stand in between might bring a cease-fire but not peace.

How extensively is the Palestinian Christian community committed to Peace?

We’ve witnessed very, very little violence from the Christian community. Sometimes it seems there is too much passivity. But we are trying to find more ways to understand, to dialog, to bridge the gap that exists. We are almost labeled a people who forgive and forget.

This is what we can contribute to this conflict between Muslims and Israelis—forgiveness rather than turning the page until I can settle accounts. Forgive and forget: This is the condition for reconciliation.

I think the term “two states for the two nations” started with Christian Palestinians: Two states should exist—one for Palestinians, one for Israelis—side by side but independent politically and geographically. To become viable, they need also to be interdependent. But the common element between them needs to cease being military power and start being a pursuit of common interests.

How has the rise of Islamic fundamentalism put stress on relationships between Muslims and Christians?

It has created more stress for Muslims who are not fundamentalist than for Christians. For example, the third-

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McPHERSON COLLEGE



The Presidential Search Committee of McPherson college invites inquiries, nominations, and applications for the position of president. Dr. Paul W. Hoffman, who has been president for 20 years, will retire in August of 1996.

McPherson College is a private, four-year, liberal arts college located in McPherson, Kansas. Founded in 1887 by leaders of the Church of the Brethren, McPherson College is committed to developing whole persons through scholarship, participation, and service. The college values its identity and connection with the Church of the Brethren and seeks candidates who know and appreciate this relationship.

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Dr. LaVon Rupel, Chair
Presidential Search Committee
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largest Arab city in Israel was run by secular Muslims. Then the Islamic fundamentalist movement caught on, with an emphasis on Islamic Jihad, and the Hamas extremist group slowly became very strong there. They won the election in that town.

And the first thing they did was to separate the schools, separate boys from girls, and to go back to the way things were 30, 40 years before. And the crisis in that city became so strong they don't know what to do with it. So they are hurting themselves with fanaticism. It's exactly the same thing when it's Christian fanaticism. Christians in Galilee are not afraid of Islamic fanaticism alone but afraid of fanaticism no matter from where it comes.

Is there Christian fanaticism within the Palestinian community?

No. But the Christian fanaticism from the West is affecting us so much. Take Christians here in the United States who are more Zionist than many Jews. These Christians in the West who come to Israel to encourage Zionism refuse even to have any contact with the local Christians in the area.

What do you say to Christians who, for theological reasons, are strongly supportive of a Jewish Israeli state but seem to have little regard for Palestinian Christians?

I would divide them into two groups: those who are willing to consider the other side of the story—we can dialog with them—and those who dismiss the other side. There's nothing to do but to pray for them.

What do you say to American Christians who ask, "What can we do to be supportive of our Palestinian Christian brothers and sisters?"

I always tell them: So far you have been the friends of the Jews. God bless you. Continue to give your friendship to the Jews, but stop interpreting that friend-

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“We have to show our Muslim neighbors that we are not the descendants of the Crusaders but the descendants of Jesus Christ.”

ship as automatic enmity with the Palestinians you never knew. And if you truly love the Jews, it's time to care for the Palestinians so that the Jews, Muslims, and Christians can live at peace with each other.

If one of your sons has an enemy and you know that he is in danger, what should you do? Should you just support your son's hate toward his enemy? No. If you are intelligent and have the power, you should try to bridge the gap between them — so that he becomes the friend of his enemy, and his enemy comes to appreciate him.

We prefer not to exist in your media than to exist in the way you have portrayed us. Portray us as we are — a people who have lost their country,

their freedom, who are paying the bill for what others have done against the Jews, and who are not happy because of that. When our children are born, I assure you none are born with swords in their hands, none of them. And that's very important for Westerners to understand.

Interreligious dialog is a hot topic today. I know that you've been active in promoting better understanding among Christians, Muslims, and Jews. What's your perspective?

I consider the best way to make rapprochement is to give all sides a chance to live together. We don't dialog enough about how to live together or how to share things together. For

example, in my school, 54 percent of the students are Muslims. I teach Christianity to Christians, and I hire a Muslim to teach Islam to the Muslims. But whenever we have Christian celebrations, Muslims also participate.

Is your objective merely to bring about better understanding and peaceful coexistence between these different religious bodies?

No, much more. My objective is to help our Christians to become more authentically Christian. We have to show our Muslim neighbors that we are not the descendants of the Crusaders but the descendants of Jesus Christ, eager to help them know who Jesus Christ is.

Do you have any sense of call or conviction about inviting Muslims or Jews to faith in Jesus Christ?

We don't invite them to faith. We invite them to share what we do. And

“If change doesn't happen immediately, am I willing to keep trying?”



Shoveling mud after a flood in Iowa. Rebuilding homes in hurricane stricken Miami. Ivan Fry '46 found satisfaction in helping others. Having served as Interim Brethren Volunteer Service Director as well as a Disaster Project Coordinator, Ivan sought to follow in Jesus' footsteps serving those in obvious need. Patient, unselfish, and organized, Ivan's career as teacher, pastor, coordinator and director combined years of leadership into meaningful and satisfying service opportunities.

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From the General Secretary

Will denominations survive?

we invite them to understand. It's illegal to proselytize in Israel. But even if it weren't illegal, we wouldn't proselytize. But if a Muslim would come to me and say, "Could you teach me about Christ?" I would never say no.

For example, two young people wanted to get married. The man was Muslim and the woman was Christian. He came to me and said, "I want to marry this woman but I can't because I'm a Muslim. Can you baptize me so I can marry her?" I said, "No, I can't impose baptism on you just so you can get married. I can bless your marriage without your becoming Christian. You stay Muslim as you are; I respect you as you are."

I celebrated their wedding. After their honeymoon, they came back, and the man told me, "You respected me so deeply. I know that would never happen in any Muslim society. I want you to tell me about Christ." And for over six months, once a week, he and his wife came to my place for teaching about the Christian faith. After this period he asked to be baptized, and I did baptize him.

You emphasize Jesus as the one who breaks down the dividing wall of hostility between peoples. Can there be genuine peace between alienated peoples unless they both acknowledge Jesus as Lord?

Absolutely. We cannot wait until Israel and the Arab countries become Christians to make peace. They are making peace as Muslims and Jews without our Christian contribution. Are nations which are not Christian able to make peace between themselves? Surely they are. And as proof of that, they are living together in a peaceful coexistence. But if we speak about communion in Christ and the peace that that generates, that's something else, something much deeper.

M.

Richard A. Kauffman, a Mennonite, is an associate editor of Christianity Today.

Reprinted with permission from Christianity Today, March 4, 1996.

The topic of a recent meeting of church leaders from around the nation was "Will Denominations Survive?" Well-known sociologists and theologians were brought in to address this question. They pointed out that the United States no longer is unofficially Protestant, nor even Judeo-Christian. The new basis is multicultural because of the growing presence of Islam, Buddhism, and other religions and cultures.

Americans also are increasingly wedded to television, computers, and commuting to work. More and more we provide information and services rather than goods to purchase.

The new pattern of living is accompanied by a new spirituality that is expressive rather than ascriptive. The older spirituality ascribed to people a pattern of belief and behavior according their religious commitments. Lutherans believed and behaved according to the Lutheran pattern. The same was true for Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, and Brethren.

With the new spirituality, each person wants to express the uniqueness of his experience. The marriage of a mountain-climbing couple may take place on a cliff because it is their most meaningful experience. Funerals aim more at expressing the uniqueness of the person who died than the well-established traditions of his faith.

The result of the new spirituality is that worship patterns are decided by consensus rather than tradition. No decision holds for any length of time. Controversy often accompanies decision. Commitment to stewardship is replaced by giving to specific projects.

The new spirituality is uncomfortable to us, akin to being a visitor in a strange land. We sometimes wonder whether God is still with us. Secularism seems to be winning. The moral standards are in question. And we ask whether denominations will survive.

The commentators are saying that denominations will continue because the patterns of relationship and commitment are too deep to give way. Spiritual questions won't go away. Questions about meaning, suffering, and justice call us ever back to God's revealed truth in spite of the new technologies. The relationships between people are too deep to disappear.

But denominations will change even while holding to the deepest sense of what is true. The corporate business organization of the denominations is giving way. People do not want top-down decisions. Denominations must address the pressing issues at home as well as around the world. Such issues include secular meaninglessness, family brokenness, widespread violence, addiction, economic need, exclusions of minorities, care of the young, and the need for community.

For Brethren this means the recovery of inward fervor and outward discipline, the root of our Pietist-Anabaptist tradition. It means turning to the leading of the Spirit and the study of the Scriptures to discern the mind of Christ. It means recovering the power of the gathered church to speak to all and of all to speak to the gathered church. It means turning to the will of God to address the lostness of our time. It means openness and tolerance of difference as an expression of the devotion to Christ. It means continuing the work of Jesus, peacefully, simply, together.

Will denominations survive? Indeed they will, say the commentators. But they must find their spiritual roots, and they must adapt to the new patterns of life in the 21st century.—DONALD E. MILLER

Donald E. Miller is general secretary of the Church of the Brethren.

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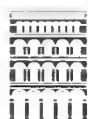
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Letters

Samaritans and homosexuals

There are parallels in New Testament references to Samaritans and our relating to homosexuals in our society today (February, page 50).

Jews looked down on Samaritans, yet Jesus highlighted a Samaritan who for his healing was uniquely thankful. Another Samaritan was a true neighbor to a man beaten and robbed. And the first evangelist unleashed by Jesus in Samaria was not Philip, but the woman met at the well.

Along similar lines, I am grateful for the many cups of cold water I have received from "Samaritans" homosexuals and from the families and friends of homosexuals.

For fresh insight, we ought to explore the dynamics and parallels of relating with Samaritans in the New Testament and our relating with homosexuals today.

*Roger Eberly
Milford, Ind.*

We don't want their money

Regarding the February letter "Not Getting My Money," money is not the issue.

I feel sorry for those with the affliction of being gay. Church members should pray for their deliverance.

I would not want money from those who follow this sinful lifestyle. If the church embraces this lifestyle it will fur-

The opinions expressed in Letters are not necessarily those of the magazine. Readers should receive them in the same spirit with which differing opinions are expressed in face-to-face conversations.

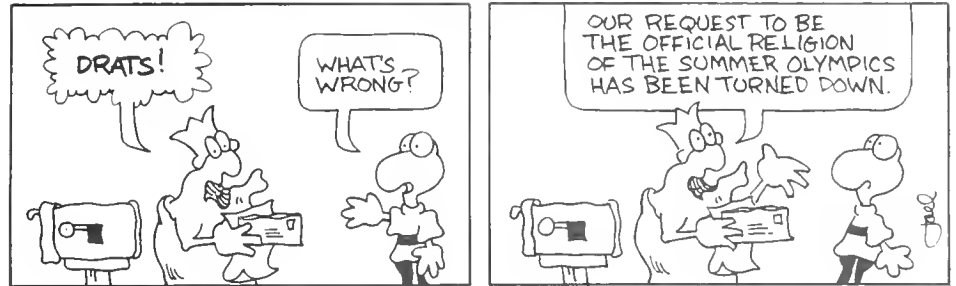
Letters should be brief, concise, and respectful of the opinions of others. Preference is given to letters that respond directly to items read in the magazine.

We are willing to withhold the name of a writer only when, in our editorial judgment, it is warranted. We will not consider any letter that comes to us unsigned. Whether or not we print the letter, the writer's name is kept in strictest confidence.

Address letters to MESSENGER editor, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

Notice: Send payment for reprinting "Pontius' Puddle" from MESSENGER to Joel Kauffmann, 111 Carter Road, Goshen, IN 46526. \$25 for one time use. \$10 for second strip in same issue. \$10 for congregations.

 **Pontius' Puddle**



ther reduce our membership. Gays wouldn't want to be blamed for helping destroy a church.

*Wilfred Keagy
La Verne, Calif.*

No tolerance for sin

Regarding the February letter "Not Getting My Money," the church is not a business in which you invest your money and get something in return. Money can't buy God's grace and salvation. That comes only through Christ, and it is free.

The church has no "official policy of bigotry." But Christ and his church cannot tolerate sin. We have to be born again, putting aside sinful ways.

Good works are not enough for God. We must live in his will. Homosexuality is a sin; there is nothing else to it. The Church of the Brethren, as the body of Christ, has to stand firm against it.

I am not judging against homosexuals; the Word of God is clear.

Keep the discussion of homosexuality out of MESSENGER, and leave it to the Annual Conference committee.

*Milton J. Garcia
Castañer, Puerto Rico*

All we need is the Bible

Each year at Annual Conference we deal with queries that call for clarification of the Bible (February, page 6; May, pages 10-15). Why? Scripture already is clear about how to walk with our Savior, Jesus Christ. Yet, every year we strive to rewrite his Word.

We have defined and redefined such things as elders, deacons, and baptism, to name a few, and now are working on assisted suicide. As an example of the clarity of the Bible, Titus 1 gives clear instruction on the office of elder, and 1 Timothy 1 presents God's instruction for deacons. What more needs to be said?

Concerning the end times, the Bible says that the enemy will gain strength and use any manner of things to

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Daily prayer guide:

Sunday: Your congregation's ministries

Monday: Annual Conference officers

Tuesday: General Board and staff

Wednesday: District executives,

Bethany Seminary, colleges
and university

Thursday: General Services

Friday: Parish Ministries

Saturday: World Ministries

June prayer concerns:

Congregation: High school and college graduates; vacation Bible school.

Conference: Pre-Conference meetings in Cincinnati; Cincinnati Habitat project; Conference, its officers and preachers, July 2-7.

General Board: Search committee for the new general secretary; Executive Comm. and Goals & Budget Comm. meetings June 29-30; General Bd. meeting July 1; General Bd. staff "coping" with the redesign process; Redesign Comm. presenting options to General Bd.

Districts and schools: Bethany Seminary commencement June 16; CODI meeting June 30-July 2.

General Services: Beth Sollenberger Morphew's summer visits to congregations.

Parish Ministries: New Life Assembly June 14-16; Church-related Institutions Conference at Elizabethtown College June 15-15; ABC Brethren Caregivers Conference July 1-2.

World Ministries: Refugee Disaster Services, Donna Derr, director.

Letters

deceive us. Are we opening the door?

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth; then he separated the light from the dark. I see no gray areas. Brothers and sisters, I implore you to seek first the kingdom of God and to work to bring glory to his name.

*R. Keith Beckner
Winston-Salem, N.C.*

Stick to approved list

The April editorial suggests we can learn from Robert F. Lee: He was faithful and he made the best of things. We can learn from Lee even while disapproving of his leading a war to create a nation of slaveholders.

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It also would be possible to point to others of whom we *can* approve, and who were no less remarkably sustained despite ongoing defeats. What sustained Quaker abolitionist Elihu Burritt? What sustained Jane Addams as she opposed US involvement in World War I? What sustained pacifism activist A.J. Muste?

Sometimes it would be better if people were *not* sustained in their conceptions of duty and honor. Lee fought on despite his near certainty of defeat, allowing thousands of people to die unnecessarily.

For spiritual inspiration appropriate to our historic peace church tradition, turn to biographies of peace heroes.

*James C. Juhnke
Elizabethtown, Pa.*

My trust was shattered

Last year at Conference I displayed a quantity of my book *Flowers for Peggy: One Couple's Experience with Alzheimers*. Each book had a note in it requesting a nominal payment be sent to me.

My faith in Brethren was badly challenged when only a third of the people who took a book sent the payment. I grieve that Brethren are not as trustworthy as they once were. I'm not surprised that there is a decline in national trust, considering that we Brethren have the same problem.

*Franklin K. Cassel
Lancaster, Pa.*

CLASSIFIED ADS

INVITATION—Shalom Church of the Brethren, a new & growing fellowship in Durham, N.C., invites Brethren moving to Research Triangle area (Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill) to worship w/ us. Eager to provide moving assistance (unloading, childcare, area info.) for those relocating to area. For info., contact Fellowship, PO Box 15607, Durham, NC 27704. Tel. (919) 490-6422. E-mail: ShalomCOB@AOL.COM

INVITATION—Are you in transition? Wish to relocate? Consider Pueblo, Colo., great place to live, work & worship w/ a Church of the Brethren Fellowship. For info. & transition assistance, contact Wayne Bowman, 1622 Jackson, Pueblo, CO 81004. Tel. (719) 564-0742.

TRAVEL—South Africa: Land of Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Tutu. Jan. 3-15, 1997. Visit old Johannesburg, Pretoria, gold mine, Kruger National Park and

other parks for big game safaris, Swaziland, Zululand, Cape Town, and Cape of Good Hope. Optional visit to Victoria Falls. For info., write: J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022.

TRAVEL—Pilgrimage to Israel, Jordan, & Greece. Oct. 20–Nov. 2, 1996 (14 days). You are invited to join Wendell & Joan Bohrer on their 10th pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Visit Jericho, Capernaum, Jerusalem, Hebron, the Dead Sea, Qumran, Petra, Athens, Delphi, and much more. Cost: \$2,489 from New York. For info., write or call: 8520 Royal Meadow Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46217. Tel./Fax: (317) 882-5067.

WANTED—Info. about life of Barbara Nickey, M.D. Diaries, articles, letters, photos, personal memories, etc. Write to: Jo Wampler, R.R. 1 Box 269, Mountain City, TN 37683. Tel. (423) 727-4722.

Wedding Anniversaries

Barnes, James and Thelma, Bassett, Va., 50
Beach, Lester and Naomi, Martinsburg, Pa., 60
Bechtel, Doug and Cora Jean, Reading, Pa., 50
Bowers, Alfred and Ethel, Woodstock, Va., 50
Bowser, Luke and Lola, Martinsburg, Pa., 50
Brandt, Abner and Martha, Manheim, Pa., 55
Buckingham, Sam and Francis, Prairie City, Iowa, 50
Byerly, Robert and Helen, South Bend, Ind., 60
Corle, Harold and Hazel, Roaring Spring, Pa., 50
Duncanson, Harold and Kathryn, Modesto, Calif., 55
Fox, Delbert and Bernice, Goshen, Ind., 60
Gates, Glenn and Jane, Hollidaysburg, Pa., 50
Haldeman, Robert and Viola, Manheim, Pa., 50
Hershey, Jacob and Verna, Lititz, Pa., 50
Hundley, Albert and Frances, Bassett, Va., 50
Kuhn, LaVon and Donna, Nappanee, Ind., 50
Lutz, John and Anna, Lititz, Pa., 60
Lutz, Howard and Mildred, Lititz, Pa., 55
Phillips, Paul and Rachel, Goshen, Ind., 60
Rhodes, Robert and Madeline, Martinsburg, Pa., 55
Roth, Book and Arlene, Carlisle, Pa., 50
Scheffer, Joel and Ellen, Charlotte, N.C., 50
Shoemaker, Warren and Dorothy, Piqua, Ohio, 50
Watson, Alice and Stanley, Modesto, Calif., 55
Webb, Roy and Margaret, Fincastle, Va., 50
Wenger, Henry and Mary, Lititz, Pa., 60

Licensing/Ordination

Barkley, Kathleen D., licensed Feb. 17, 1996, Purchase Line, W Pa
Crull, Walt, ordained Feb. 27, 1996, Fairview/Mount Clinton, Shen.
Donadio, Raymond M., licensed Feb. 6, 1996, Oakland, S. Ohio
Fitchett, William, ordained Feb. 27, 1996, Columbia Furnace, Shen.
Hulford, Lisa, licensed March 12, 1996, Harrisonburg First, Shen.
Mellou, Dorothy, ordained Oct. 24, 1995, Free Union, Shen.
Thomas, Rodger J., ordained Feb. 17, 1996, Berkeley, W Pa.
Tschetter, John, ordained Jan

15, 1996, West Charleston, S. Ohio
Whitten, David, licensed March 12, 1996, Middle River, Shen.
Young, Wilbur, ordained Oct. 24, 1995, Little River, Shen.

Pastoral Placements

Collins, John, Pulaski First, Virgina, from interim to full-time
Doss, Martin, from secular to Blue Ridge, Virgina
Lawson, Mark, from secular to Fairchance, W Pa
Nalley, John, from Spring Mount, M Pa., to Meyersdale, W Pa
Reichenbach, Douglas, from other denomination to Hope, Mich.

Deaths

Anderson, Esther E., 55, Fulks Run, Va., Jan. 19, 1996
Beery, Harry E., 69, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 11, 1995
Berg, Gary V., 85, Maysville, W Va., Dec. 28, 1995
Bihle, Reva J., 48, Maysville, W Va., Dec. 10, 1995
Bowman, Mary E., 67, Penn Laird, Va., Apr. 20, 1996
Brownsberger, Roy D., 79, Mount Joy, Pa., Mar. 20, 1996
Bullenmeyer, Richard P., 66, Lebanon, Pa., Apr. 17, 1996
Campbell, Ruby V., 81, Penn Laird, Va., Mar. 5, 1996
Carmany, Martha A., 56, Elizabethtown, Pa., Apr. 4, 1996
Collman, Betty Jean G., 64, Edinburg, Va., Mar. 25, 1996
Cook, Ethel M., 79, Woodstock, Va., Jan. 16, 1996
Corbin, Phillip A., 79, Bridgewater, Va., Dec. 27, 1995
Craun, Helen O., 82, Mount Sidney, Jan. 26, 1996
Crowe, Annabelle S., 97, Staunton, Va., Mar. 7, 1996
Cullip, Terence A., Sr., 54, Criders, Va., Jan. 11, 1996
Davis, Margaret M., 85, Bridgewater, Va., Apr. 14, 1996
Davis, Carl T., 72, Keezletown, Va., Dec. 29, 1995
Deitz, Maurice A., 96, Wardensville, W Va., Jan. 17, 1996
Delawder, Yonnie, 57, Fulks Run, Va., Dec. 19, 1995
Driver, Beulah W., 92, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 10, 1995
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Do we hear our Savior calling?

How many readers have a mother like mine, who, when her child is all wrought up and thinks the world is coming to an end because of the problem of the moment, sizes up that problem and pronounces, "This, too, shall pass"?

That's what I'm ready to say about the present spate of agonizing over who scholars say that Jesus is. You know about the phenomena: TV talk shows host smarty-pants Bible scholars who scoff at Christian beliefs; tabloid media give the subject their usual outlandish spin. The three major news magazines simultaneously give Jesus cover-story treatment. Preachers join the lute and cry.

My own pastor took up the subject of who Jesus is, and led me to believe that we listeners were charged with coming up with an answer. I took him seriously. After two Sundays of such sermons, I was all worked up in a lather, but I must have missed something because the next Sunday I was jarred by his switching to preaching about family values.

There I was, ready to tell who I say Jesus is, only to discover that the subject had been changed. In such a case, what's a parishioner who also is an editor supposed to do? Here goes:

Much of the present brouhaha has been occasioned by the doings of the "Jesus Seminar" (October 1990, "Is That Jesus We Hear Speaking?" by Rick Gardner). The Jesus Seminar is a highly publicized scholarly think tank that has met twice a year since 1985 to vote on the historical accuracy of the sayings attributed to Jesus in the Gospels.

As if the very notion of such an exercise weren't sufficient affront to believers, the outcome of the vote is even more of an outrage. According to these scholars, 82 percent of the words attributed to Jesus were not spoken by him. They decided that only one statement in Mark came from Jesus, and that nary a saying in John is reliable.

The problem with this lead balloon that the Jesus Seminar has launched is that it has put Jesus on trial again, and the only evidence admissible to it is what can be known about Jesus from history, literary sources, anthropology, and reason. There is a lot of scholarly study that can help us along our faith journey—learning about the social conditions of first-century Palestine, for example. But to assume that a social context captures the *meaning* of a person is like accepting a job-hunter's résumé as an autobiography divulging the essence of the applicant.

Was Jesus just an unwashed peasant carpenter, just one itinerant preacher among many, or just the earthy founder of a movement? Who cares? What's important to me is the core claim of the New Testa-

ment that Jesus was the unique incarnation of God by whose life, death, and resurrection salvation is freely offered to the world. Jesus asked, "Who do you say that I am?" (Mark 8:29), not "What do you make of my social context?" Yes, I know the Jesus Seminar says Jesus didn't ask any such thing; the only authentic Jesus quote in Mark is the line about rendering unto Caesar (Mark 12:17).

I like the way one Seminar critic put it: "To assume that the earnest though bewildered Jesus of the Jesus Seminar . . . could have affected the course of human history as Jesus Christ really has is like stumbling upon a crater and supposing it the result of a cherry bomb."

As I understand the Gospels, Jesus did not say he had come to start a little dialog about what is true. He said, rather, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). And, again, I know the Jesus Seminar discounts the entire Gospel of John.

Look, we mere mortals don't have the resources, on our own, to think about matters such as God, truth, and justice before we know Jesus, who is for us, the way, the truth, and the life. So, let's not get the cart before the horse, thinking that just as we are, we are capable of thinking about such matters without first knowing Jesus, without conversion.

We don't arrive at truth through skillful argument, as if it were accessible through common sense. If it were, we ought to worship ourselves rather than learn to worship Jesus. That's the whole point, isn't it? Jesus was deadly serious when he said he was the way, the truth, and the life. We would not have a clue to what was going on, or how to think about things, if God had not loved us enough to send the Son who incarnates the truth and the Spirit who guides us into all truth.

As Bethany Seminary dean Rick Gardner says (October 1990, page 24), "The most important agenda in our study of the Gospels is not whether Jesus spoke a particular saying long ago. The most important agenda is, rather, *whether we hear Jesus speaking through the word the Gospels proclaim, and whether we respond in obedient trust*" (italics Rick Gardner's).

So, pastor, who do I say Jesus is? Let's put it this way: He's that narrow, narrow bottleneck in an otherwise dead-end canyon through which we must squeeze if we are to gain the vista of eternal truth beyond. Given the darkness on this side, scarcely illumined by our own feeble light, it's worth the pain of the squeeze. Through that narrow aperture I can hear my Savior calling.—K.T.

e're gonna sit at the welcome table.
We're gonna sit at the welcome table
one of these days, hallelujah!
We're gonna sit at the welcome table.
We're gonna sit at the welcome table
one of these days.

—Traditional Spiritual



The welcome table

Since 1980, the Washington City Church of the Brethren has operated the only soup kitchen on Capitol Hill. Each weekday it feeds 160 of the neighborhood's hungry and homeless people. It also arranges legal counsel, distributes clothing, and cares for spiritual needs.

Workers from Brethren Volunteer Service and volunteers from a dozen churches of the area

regularly help staff the Brethren Soup Kitchen.

A Global Food Crisis grant of \$30,000 is enabling the Soup Kitchen to purchase food and replace ovens, tables, and chairs.

Just "...as Christ welcomed you," you can help host a welcome table for the hungry or homeless on Capitol Hill and around the world. Give to the Global Food Crisis Fund.

Global Food Crisis Fund

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Church of the Brethren

July 1996

Messenger



HOLY BIBLE

**Following Jesus' teaching:
A twofold task**

Messenger

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On the cover: Sometimes Habitat for Humanity is called the mission of the Bible and the hammer. Nevin Dulabaum explains why in the introductory article (page 16) to a cluster on Brethren balancing the concepts of evangelism and social action.



Features

12 Our little German brother

His name means "short," and he was short, but Henry Kurtz was a giant among the Brethren, blazing a trail of reform and change that the church has followed ever since. Story by Kermon Thomasson. Sidebar by Donald E. Durnbaugh.

16 Bringing out the best

It is symbolic and fitting for Brethren to build a Habitat for Humanity house during Annual Conference, writes Nevin Dulabaum. In so doing, they merge two concepts of what "continuing the work of Jesus" is all about.

18 Saving and serving: Overcoming 'one-sided Christianity'

When Jesus told the synagogue crowd in Nazareth that he had come to preach and proclaim the good news, was he talking about evangelism or social action? If you examine the record of what followed, writes Don Fitzkee you will see he was talking about both.

20 Saving souls without losing our own

Are we really the New Testament church we claim to be? If so, writes Paul Munday, it's time we moved out of the warm, but excluding patterns of an Old Testament clan. Sidebar on ecumenism through evangelism.

25 Welcoming strangers

In a social climate of shunning the stranger for our own safety, it is just as urgent as ever for congregations to put out the welcome mat. Fred Bernhard and Steve Clapp provide a guide for making visitors to our churches feel right at home.

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From the Editor

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Coming next month

Coverage of Annual Conference in Cincinnati. Also, August 1708 in Schwarzenau.

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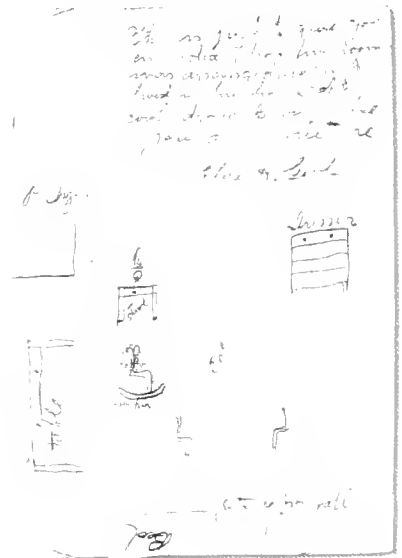
I struggled many years to "get organized." I not only believed it was a goal worth pursuing; I believed that eventually the goal would be met. Then I would have my books, notes, letters, clippings... and a lot of ephemera... sorted and filed, against the day when I would write definitive works on the subjects they represented.

As the years passed and the goal eluded me, two realizations emerged: I was never going to "get organized," and, moreover, I didn't really want to. I was a happier person accepting the fact that when I periodically start going through boxes of clutter, my motivation is not really a desire to be organized; I just like to poke through boxes and piles and rediscover and fondle items I have squirreled away.

That same motivation—the fun of poking through things—also operates in my hobby of genealogy. People urge me to take advantage of such high-tech shortcuts as the computerized records the Mormons maintain and make available. I patiently explain that part of the fun is going through musty old books and papers in county courthouses, shuffling old deeds and marriage records, unfolding and deciphering old letters.

So, in my work with MESSINGER, I am always keen for writing such stories as this month's piece on the magazine's founder, Henry Kurtz (see page 12). It gives me a chance to head to the Brethren Historical Library and Archives. There I root through old folders filled with all sorts of material, as happy as a pig in a mudhole.

And the things that come to light. In the folder labeled "Kurtz, Henry," I found the original little scrap of paper on which Kurtz' granddaughter, Eliza Good, drew a sketch of her grandfather's room (see page 14). Handling the original of that little drawing was worth more to me than a whole day spent peering at microfilm copies of Kurtz documents. Here reproduced is what the elderly Eliza remembered and sketched in 1959. Too bad we can only provide this copy. If you ever visit the historical library, ask to see the original. It will literally put you in touch with history.



As an old woman, Eliza Good sketched her memories of her Grandfather Henry Kurtz' room.

Termon Thomasson

In Touch

Bring a torch

Pete Crouse, a licensed minister in New Covenant Fellowship, Gotha, Fla., is joining former US President Jimmy Carter and 10,000 other runners in the 1996 Olympic Torch Relay (June, page 2), bringing the Olympic torch 15,000 miles in a circuitous route across the US from Los Angeles to Atlanta.

Pete will be a torchbearer as the torch is run through Orlando, Fla., July 7-8. Each runner carries the flame up to one kilometer before lighting the next runner's torch.

If Pete had had his way, he would be saving his energy

Bearing the torch. *Pete Crouse will carry the Olympic torch through Orlando, Fla.*

for the actual Olympics. He competed in Olympics trials in 1995, but failed to qualify.

Pete is a driver for United Parcel Service, and was nominated as a runner by his UPS supervisor. He is well known as a leader in raising funds at Christmastime for an Orlando children's home.

In addition to his UPS job, Pete serves in youth ministry at a local United Methodist church.

The Olympic Torch Relay goes back as far as the first known Olympic games, held



in Greece in 776 BC. The relay was not a part of the modern Olympics, however, until 1956.

What's that in the sky?

While some Brethren are torchbearers in the Olympic Torch Relay (see accompanying story), **Scott Huffman** of Quinter (Kan.) Church of the Brethren, has higher hopes ... 19 feet, 7 inches, at

least. That's his best height as the holder of the American record in pole vault (October 1990, page 2).

But "ranking and records don't matter when it comes to getting into the Olympics," says Scott. "Performance on the first day of the trials determines whether one advances to the trial finals two days later and can then qualify."

But Scott has been plagued with injuries for the past year. "It started last summer with tendinitis in my groin," says Scott. "But what was really frustrating was pulling a hamstring just when my groin got okay, keeping me from training properly last fall and winter."

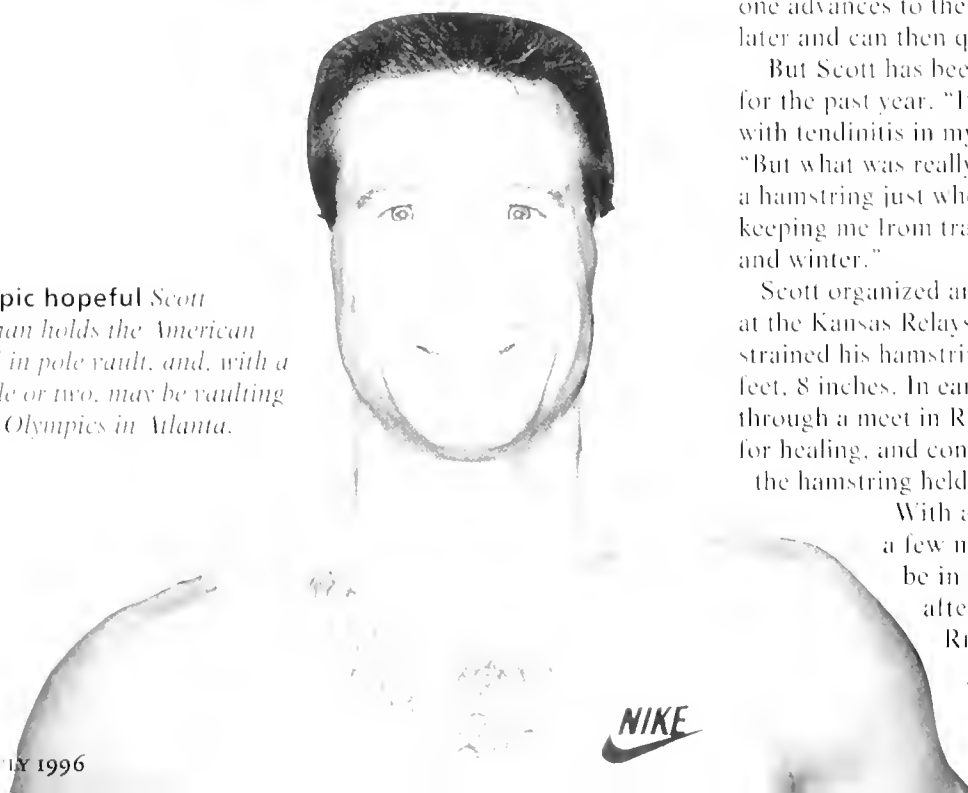
Scott organized an invitational pole vault at the Kansas Relays in April. But he restrained his hamstring trying to clear 19 feet, 8 inches. In early May, however, he got through a meet in Rio de Janeiro. "I prayed for healing, and consider it a miracle that the hamstring held."

With a few more miracles at a few more meets, Scott may be in the Atlanta Olympics after all.—IRENE S.

REYNOLDS

Irene S. Reynolds is a freelance writer from Lawrence, Kan.

Olympic hopeful *Scott Huffman holds the American record in pole vault, and, with a miracle or two, may be vaulting at the Olympics in Atlanta.*



Names in the news

Randy Litzinger, a member of Westmont Church of the Brethren, Johnstown, Pa., received the Gold Key and the Crown American Hotel award for a pencil study of the Rio Motel in Wildwood, N.J.

• **Lora Coffman**, a member of English River Church of the Brethren, South English, Iowa, has been named Outstanding Graduate Student in Psychology, 1995–1996, at Central Missouri State University.

• Physical education teacher **Gail Fillmore Garvick**, a member of Nampa (Idaho) Church of the Brethren, is the Idaho recipient of the Pathfinder Award by the National Association for Girls and Women in Sports. She also received the Idaho Distinguished service award for Volleyball from the National Federation of Interscholastic Officials Association.

• **Patriek Myers**, an ordained minister in Pleasant View Church of the Brethren, Red Lion, Pa., is serving with World Evangelism for Christ in Waikato, New Zealand. He was accompanied there by his wife, Karen, and their four children.

• **Rosemary Paxson**, a member of Donnels Creek Church of the Brethren, North Hampton, Ohio, has been recognized for 45 years of service to people with mental retardation and developmental disabilities by being named to the Earl Keefner Hall of Honor by TAC Industries and the Clark County (Ohio) Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.



Stafford-Fredrick

A new student center at Kansas City Kansas Community College is named after J. Paul Jewell for his work at the school.

J. Paul Jewell Day

J. Paul Jewell looks around the new student center at Kansas City Kansas Community College (KCKCC) and remarks, "I don't think stu-

dents today can appreciate this." Years ago, Paul, then director of student services for the college, persuaded the dean to convert an old building into a makeshift student center. It had 12

tables and served coffee, rolls, and packaged sandwiches.

The new center, named the J. Paul Jewell Student Center, houses a full-service cafeteria, a game room, TV room, a bookstore, and lots of tables for students. Dedication day was April 9, and Paul was on hand to cut the ribbon.

A member of First Central Church of the Brethren in Kansas City, Kan., Paul served 41 years at KCKCC. Among his duties over the decades, he taught economics, history, and literature and coached basketball and football.

After retiring, he wrote a history of the college. It's on sale in the J. Paul Jewell Student Center's bookstore, of course.

Quietly quilting

When **Alice Bucher** jumped in and made a single blanket for Cumberland County (Pa.) Nursing Home in the 1970s, she had no idea of going on to make over a thousand quilts, coverlets, and blankets for various good causes.

"She's been at it for 20 years," beams her husband, Mark, "and she's worn out three

sewing machines on this project."

Alice prefers to call her sewing a hobby. "I just like to be doing something to keep busy," she puts it.

Her pastor, Ed Poling, of First Church of the Brethren in Carlisle, calls Alice "a quiet person; you don't realize what she's doing. She's always looking out for people in the community."

In addition to area retirement homes, Alice supplies the Salvation Army, Brooklyn (N.Y.)

Church of the Brethren, and Chicago's Bethany Hospital. She sent Bethany 175 baby blankets in 1995 alone.

Mark's part of the work is packing and shipping, and helping shop for material. Not only is the work done free of charge; the Buchers pay for most of the fabrics themselves.

When the sheep and the goats are separated, this couple need not be anxious.



Bill Smith/The Sentinel

"In Touch" profiles Brethren we would like you to meet. Send story ideas and photos to "In Touch," MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120

Close to Home

In a pig's eye

What do things look like through a pig's eye? Palestinian pigs of long ago, at least. Remember, the Jews despised pigs and had religious laws against them.

Lorele Yager, drama director at **Beacon Heights Church** of the Brethren in Fort Wayne, Ind., has created a musical, "Parables: Pigs' Perspective," retelling some of Jesus' parables with music, song, and dance. It premiered late last

fall, with a cast of some 20 Beacon Heights junior highs.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, wolves fall upon a sheep along the Jericho Road. Two other sheep pass by. But a pig, anathema to the sheep, proves itself the real neighbor by coming to the aid of the injured one.

The Prodigal Son story has sheep and pig neighbors at odds because of religious laws. Pamela Pig scores the sheep for their prejudice: "Their religious laws say we are disgusting because we don't chew cud."

"When you hate some-

one for something he can't change, it's prejudice, and it's wrong," says Papa Pig.

Brethren at Annual Conference could attend a performance of "Parables," staged at an insight session Wednesday evening...open to everyone, pigs and sheep alike.



A pig's point of view. Four cast members of "Parables," are (front) Sonia Miller, Becky Hollenberg, (back) Carol Guess, and Shawna Dick

Let's celebrate

West Branch Church of the Brethren near Mount Morris, Ill., will celebrate its sesquicentennial July 28. Former Illinois and Wisconsin District executive Carl Myers will be the main speaker.

• **Pleasant Hill (Ohio)** Church of the Brethren held Silver Celebration Weekend June 29-30 to mark its 25th anniversary. Southern Ohio District executive Jim Tomlinson was among the speakers

Campus comments

Elizabethtown College held its second annual International Festival in late March. The theme, "Into the World," focused on service opportunities for students and others through agencies such as Brethren Volunteer Service and the Peace Corps.

• **Bethany Theological Seminary's** president, Gene Roop led the 101st Spiritual Life Institute at **Bridgewater College** March 19-21. Also speaking was former Annual Conference moderator Elaine Sollenberger.

Just a phone call away

When was the last time you made 9,500 phone calls in 15 days? For **Circle of Love Fellowship** in Buckhannon, W.Va., it was last February.



The new fellowship held its "The Phone's for You!" campaign to tell area people about the new Church of the Brethren group in town, which was organized in August 1995.

Circle of Love is a church planting project of West Marva District. Several other congregations in the district helped with the calling campaign, reaching almost 2,700

people in the first four days.

As a result of the 9,500 dial-ups, 90 people attended the first "official" service on Palm Sunday, held in the fellowship's Family Worship Center. Since then, attendance has ranged from 40 to 50 people. According to pastor Paul Dietz, nearly half of them are high school age or younger.

The phone blitz behind it, Circle of Love continues its outreach with mailings and more phoning.

"The beautiful thing is that this phone program can be used by existing congregations and can bring similar results," wrote the pastor in the church newsletter.—PAULA WILDING



On home turf. Henry Dorsey Davy served as moderator for a record 12 times. One of the times was in his own district.

The hometown boys

In the May MESSENGER (page 9) we pointed out that 1996 Annual Conference moderator Fred Bernhard is hosting the Big Meeting right in his home district of Southern Ohio. That is true. But we erred when we went on to say that the 1995 moderator, from Virginia, was on home turf also. (Charlotte is in Southeastern District, we blushing clarified in June, page 1.)

The matter did lead us to wonder just how many

Brethren have been Annual Conference moderators in their home district. Mind you, we didn't have districts until 1856.

The best we can figure, seven moderators besides Fred Bernhard were on home turf as they gaveled Annual Conference to order:

Charles C. Ellis (1944), in Huntingdon, Pa.

Woodford W. Peters (1945), in McPherson, Kan.

C. Ernest Davis (1941), in La Verne, Calif.

Isaac W. Taylor (1918), in Hershey, Pa.

Enoch Eby (1880), in Lanark, Ill.

Henry Dorsey Davy (1875), in Covington, Ohio.

John Kline (1861), in Rockingham Co., Va.

Henry Dorsey Davy (1811-1895) had another distinction (aside from having the most lyrical name that ever rippled off a Dunker tongue), serving as moderator 12 times (1865-1876), a record. And he went on to serve the Old German Baptist Brethren as their Annual Meeting moderator seven times after the 1881 split.

Jesse O. Garst, in *History of the Church of the Brethren of the Southern District of Ohio* (1920), said of Henry Dorsey Davy, with archaic metaphor, "He was the most dignified and efficient chairman that ever swayed a scepter over an Annual Conference. Being of a pleasant countenance, he could order a brother to take his seat, or inform him he was out of order without any danger of offense. He was a natural diplomat and peacemaker."

Despite this good report, the *Brethren Encyclopedia* informs us delicately that "as a result of allegations pertaining to his private life," brother Davy was disfellowshipped and removed from office for two months in 1877. Moderators thus need to take pause when swaying the scepter in their own district.

Michelangelo, move over

The white walls of our youth room at McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren were boring; we wanted a change. Brainstorming produced the idea of painting a mural.

We decided to stick to an overall theme, rather than have several murals. What could be better than the Church of the Brethren tagline "Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together"? To that we added a globe, symbolizing the world community.

Getting the mural on the wall was the next step. Natalie Dutrow made transparencies of a globe and the tagline. We teamed those on the wall with an overhead projector and traced the outlines. Then we painted the mural. We left the background white and painted a border on the other walls. McPherson Attender Cindy Kinnaman, an interior designer, helped us select colors and carpet.

When everything was

finished, we hosted a reception after church one Sunday, inviting everyone to visit our youth room and see what we had done. Everyone was impressed. Since then we have added another touch: cutouts of people and animals mounted on the globe.—KENDRA FLORY

Kendra Flory is a member of the McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren youth group

Painting their world. McPherson Church of the Brethren youth, (left to right) Natalie Dutrow, Emily Flagg, Jen Taylor, Emily Tyler, Erin Flory, and Kendra Flory decorated their youth room with a mural using the tagline "Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together." as the theme.



"Close to Home" highlights news of congregations, districts, colleges, homes, and other local and regional life. Send story ideas and photos to "Close to Home," MESSENGER, 1451 Duindee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120

Brethren are disappointed by weak new land mine policies

Imagine having the fear that any step taken outdoors in yards, fields, parks, forests, or on beaches could be your last, or at least lead to permanent dis-

figurement. While that is not a concern to many, if any, in the U.S., millions of people worldwide do have such fears because of land mines. And for good reason.

An estimated 110 million land mines have been sown throughout the world. According to the International Campaign to Ban Land Mines, land mines kill or maim 26,000 people each year and are a daily threat to the people of Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia, Croatia, Iraq, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Somalia, and many other countries. In Cambodia alone, an estimated 55,000 people are amputees

because of land mines.

Over the past few years voices

world-wide, including

Church of the Brethren voices, have called for the immediate elimination of land mines.

In May, two significant events regarding land mines failed to result in a worldwide ban. However, the events could lead to a reduction in the production and use of land mines.

It was announced on May 5 that a compromise was reached in Geneva among the 55 nations participating in the revision of the Protocol on Land Mines of the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons. That agreement calls for the elimination of non-detectable mines and will limit the life-span of mines that are not in properly marked, fenced off, and guarded mine

fields. These mines must self-destruct within 50 days or self-deactivate within 120 days. Nations also have nine years to switch to detectable, self-destructing "smart" mines.

According to David Radcliff, director of Denominational Peace Witness, this agreement is a weak compromise.

"This is not simply a military or political issue," said Radcliff. "It is a human issue, as land mines are among the most inhumane implements of war. Their maiming effect on soldiers is bad enough, but when they inflict their ruinous injuries on civilians for years afterward, they go far beyond the bounds of civilized conduct.

"In refusing to deal immediately and drastically with this threat to people around the world, the international community has given in to the interests of nations and arms suppliers whose decisions are driven much more by economics than by morality.

The second event was President Clinton's May 16 land mine policy announcement, which calls for an international ban. Until such an accord is reached, however, the US will continue using land mines—all land mines until 1999 and only "smart" mines thereafter.

Clinton also pledged that all US mines sown will be removed by 1999 except for those used for training and those in the zone between North and South Korea.

In deciding against an immediate, total ban, Clinton ignored many people who were calling for such a ban, including many officials of the State Department's Agency for International Development and 15 high-ranking retired military officers, including Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, who asked Clinton to ban these weapons.

"Mr. Clinton's pronouncement regarding the use of land mines is a disappointment to the Church of the Brethren," said Donald Miller, general secretary. "It was hoped that the president would take a stronger leadership role on this humanitarian issue."

—NEVIN DEUBAUM



Land mines such as this Soviet-era one (left), which was unearthed in Afghanistan, yearly kill or maim 26,000 civilians, such as this unidentified victim shown above.



Photo of the mine courtesy of the U.S. State Department. Photo of the child at the opening of MES USGR in the Church of the Brethren and mine shown in captioned by an unidentified victim of land mine.

Nearly 600 youth and young adults registered to attend workcamps throughout the summer

The 1996 season of denominational youth and young adult workcamps began in May, with an all-time high number of registrants signing up for a record number of workcamps.

A total of 582 participants will be involved in 21 workcamps offered throughout the summer. The workcamps are sponsored by the Church of the Brethren's Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

Workcamps began May 21 in Honduras and will conclude August 17 in Perryville, Ark., and Manchester, Ky. Workcamps will be held throughout the US, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

According to Kelly Burk, workcamp co-coordinator, the popularity of some of the workcamps is at an all-time high. Despite offering 14 senior-high workcamps, the most ever offered, 50 senior-high students were turned away. Six junior-high workcamps also have been filled. Young adults was the only category with light registration. So light, in fact, that both of the two scheduled young adult workcamps had to be canceled.

Sarah Stafford of Oakland, Ohio, receives some of the materials she and the other Brethren workcampers to Rio Colorado, Honduras, used in May to construct a church.



Young adults challenged to make small donations grow

A new program inspired by the Parable of the Talents has been implemented by On Earth Peace Assembly.

Thirty-five young adults who have attended peace academies or who have been members of Youth Peace Travel teams or Journey of Young Adults teams were sent \$10 or \$20 bills by OEPA board members.

The recipients were challenged to increase the funds at least tenfold, and to return the raised money by Christmas. To reach that goal, OEPA suggested soliciting donations and holding car washes, bake sales, peace-a-thons, and work projects.

"On Earth Peace Assembly has always viewed itself as a grassroots organization, an organization run by and for the people we work to serve," said Tom Hurst, director. "I welcome this challenge by members

of our board to directly involve a number of young adults who have taken part in programs we support and run in making this parable come alive again for people in 1996."

Updated Brethren and NCC yearbooks now available

The 1996 editions of the Church of the Brethren and National Council of Churches yearbooks now are available.

The Brethren yearbook lists names and addresses of congregations, pastors, moderators, and ordained and licensed ministers. Also listed is information on General Board members and staff, districts, camps, colleges, and homes.

The NCC's yearbook includes trends and developments; a directory of national cooperative organizations, religious bodies, regional and

local ecumenical agencies, theological seminaries, Bible schools, and religious periodicals in the US and Canada; a calendar of religious observances of various faiths; and statistical information.

Call (800) 525-8059 to order the Church of the Brethren yearbook; call (800) 672-1789 to order the NCC's.

New books offered to explain sensitive issues to children

On Earth Peace Assembly announced in May that its Peace Place now carries a line of children's books that deal with sensitive issues.

More than 50 books are in the collection, with topics including disabilities, pregnancy, single-parent homes, alcoholism, AIDS, adoption, divorce, domestic violence, and death.

To order, call (410) 655-8708.

Congregational giving is up 7.3 percent from 1995

According to figures released in May by the General Board's Stewardship office, congregational giving to the General Board increased by 7.5 percent during the first four months of this year, compared to the same time-span in 1995.

A 2.5 percent increase was projected for 1996, said Dale Minnich, executive of the General Board's General Services Commission, which includes the Stewardship office.

Minnich credits the greater-than-expected increase to "a greater awareness of the acute need of the General Board" in light of the Board's current redesign process.

"They see that the need is great and changes are coming, and they are trying to do what they can to help," Minnich said.

Although it is encouraging to see increases in congregational giving, the General Board's biggest source of income, it is "too early to see a

clear trend," said Judy Keyser, General Board treasurer.

Fifteen districts raised their giving during this year's first four months, with Oregon and Washington District leading the way at 47.9 percent.

"The district was struggling so congregations may have given more," said Ken Neher, who serves as the district's executive as well as a General Board planned giving officer. "We have 17 churches in the district and many of the congregations are (financially) strong again."

Other large increases are from Southern Ohio (26.2 percent), Northern Plains (25.6), Western Pennsylvania (25.2), Pacific Southwest (24.7), Northern Ohio (24.6), and Southern Pennsylvania (24.4).

Keyser added that bequest income also is up, with over half of the \$700,000 budgeted as income already received.

According to budget reports, congregational giving declined in 1994 and remained fairly flat in 1995.

PAULA WILDING

McElwee testifies before Congress on selective service

Tim McElwee, director of the Church of the Brethren Washington Office, testified before Congress on behalf of the Church of the Brethren on May 15 regarding Selective Service.

McElwee spoke regarding fiscal year 1997 appropriations for the Selective Service System before the House Appropriations Subcommittee that oversees Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, and independent agencies. He asked that mandatory registration for the draft be eliminated by closing the Selective Service System.

McElwee noted that the Brethren historical belief in peace conflicts with registering for military service. He encouraged the subcommittee to allow Brethren and others who do not believe in war to be accepted as conscientious objectors and allowed to serve in alternative service.

"I urge you to seriously consider bringing to an end the draft registration process, and by so doing, build upon our nation's heritage of religious liberty and release several million dollars that could provide practical and effective means of exploring the pursuit of peace through peaceful means," McElwee concluded.

McPherson College names interim president and VP

McPherson (Kan.) College announced in May that Steven Gustafson has been appointed to serve as interim president.

Gustafson, who normally serves as vice president of Academic Services, will serve as interim president until a permanent successor to President Paul Hoffman is appointed.

Serving as interim vice president of Academic Services is Susan Krehbiel Taylor, an associate professor of Journalism.



The first-ever Volunteer Summer Service workers gathered in late May in Elgin, Ill., for a week of training with coordinator Judy Mills Reimer. The volunteers then fanned out throughout the denomination to serve for 10 weeks at various Brethren churches. VSS is a first year pilot project, sponsored by Brethren Volunteer Service and Youth and Young Adult Ministries. First row: B.J. Bucher, Drew Hutchinson, and Matt Mes-sick. Second row: Ginger Gates, Alison Flory, Becki Dilley, and Brandy Lix.

Don't tell the IRS who your church supports for president or any elected office, or your congregation may lose its tax exempt status for publicly supporting or opposing a candidate. The National Council of Churches' Washington Office advises that churches can avoid losing their tax-exempt status by not endorsing candidates in sermons, newsletters, or sample ballots. Churches also should refrain from providing financial support; distributing or displaying literature; or organizing, establishing, or supporting a political action committee.

Although individuals may be involved in political campaigns in any of these ways, church members should make it clear that the church itself is not involved. For more information, contact the NCC Washington Office, (202) 544-2350.

The Sixth Annual International Festival, hosted by SERRV International, was held at the Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md., on May 11. Over 50 ethnic craft and food booths were made available to attendees, as was entertainment by people from West Africa, Haiti, and the Philippines.

Over 21,000 cans of meat and nearly 6,000 cans of broth were made from 61,800 pounds of beef for Church of the Brethren disaster relief in March and April. Over 450 volunteers from Southern Pennsylvania and Mid-Atlantic districts assisted in this annual project, which was held March 25-27 and April 1-3 at the Meadow Brook Turkey Farm, York, Pa.

This year's Shenandoah District Auction raised over \$115,000, according to associate district executive Larry Glick. The disaster response auction was held May 17-18 at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds. Over 1,000 people attend the auction on Friday evening for the oyster dinner and livestock auction, which brought in over \$32,000. Another 1,000 were on hand Saturday for the auctioning of quilts, wall hangings, crafts, and food.

The Mid-Atlantic District annual auction raised \$36,000 for the denomination's disaster relief program on May 4. Roy Johnson, chairman of the auction committee, estimated 1,000 people attended the auction, held in Westminster, Md. Several churches in the district donated quilts and comforters that brought in \$12,000. The district has held the auction for 16 years and has raised \$495,000 for disaster relief.

Nominees for the board and nominating committee of the association of Brethren Caregivers were announced in May and will be voted on at ABC's annual meeting in June. Nominees are Bob Cain Jr., Greenville, Ohio, as chair-elect; Scott Douglas, Elgin, Ill.; Phil Flory, Bridgewater, Va.; Margaret Fultz, Lemoyne, Pa.; Janice Kensinger, Elizabethtown, Pa.; Heidi Loomis, State College, Pa.; Steve Mason, McPherson, Kan.; Marilyn Scott, Naperville, Ill.; and Martha Waas, Indianapolis, Ind.

Avanelle Woody and John Eller have been nominated to serve at the 1996-1998 nominating committee terms for Warren Eshach and Mary Ann Harvey-Melleby.



Ferman-Thomason

Up to 1,500 people are expected to attend the National Older Adult Conference, September 2-6, at Lake Junaluska, N.C. As of late May, 775 people were registered. The previous NOAC, also held at Lake Junaluska, was in September 1994.

The Church of the Brethren and the National Council of Churches have responded through actions and words to the burning of over 50 African-American churches in the southeastern US over the past five years—10 alone in the early months of 1996.

In May, a \$2,000 grant was allocated from the Church of the Brethren's Emergency Disaster Fund in response to the fire-bombings and related vandalism.

In April and May, the NCC sent a delegation to affected sites in Alabama, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Mississippi as a part of the NCC's efforts to help catch the culprits, raise the public's awareness of these crimes, and demonstrate solidarity with congregations that have been victimized, said Mac Charles Jones, NCC associate for racial justice, who led the delegation.

The NCC also held rallies in New York City, Elmhurst, N.Y., and Washington, D.C.

The NCC has set up a Burnt Churches Fund to help rebuild the churches and end racist violence. Donations may be sent to Joan Brown Campbell, 475 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10115.

The fifth biannual "Church's One Foundation" spring rally was held on April 27 in Pacific Southwest District and attended by 50 Brethren from seven area congregations. As stated in a release, the rally focused on Jesus Christ as "the Son of God, Savior of the world, and the Head of the church, according to the Scriptures," and as the "only divine Lord and Savior."

The next rally is scheduled for November 16.

Bethany Theological Seminary will host "Make a Joyful Noise" August 2-4, at its Richmond, Ind., campus. This follows up to last summer's "Sing Through the Hymnal" conference is designed for district music trainers and people interested in leading music in worship services.

For information or registration, contact Nancy Faus, Bethany Seminary, (317) 983-1813.



Standing up for children

BY AMANDA VENDER

Nearly 50 members of the Church of the Brethren from as far away as Iowa gathered in Washington, D.C., the morning of June 1 in support of children at the Stand for Children rally, held at the Lincoln Memorial. Ideal weather made for a pleasant breakfast on the lawn of the United Methodist Building, home of the Church of the Brethren Washington Office, and located across the street

from the Capitol and Supreme Court. "We come today seeking the vision, understanding, and commitment to 'welcome' our world's children as you, God, would have us," Brethren said during the morning prayer service.

The group walked 17 blocks from the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial behind a bright yellow Church of the Brethren banner to join about 200,000 people on behalf of children. The event was criticized by some groups who claimed that participants

were using children to advocate for "big government." Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund (the rally's principal organizer) countered, "We do not stand here advocating big government, we stand here advocating just government."

Demonstrators young and old of various religions, ethnicities, and backgrounds came for diverse reasons, but the underlying motivation was the sense that our country is not doing

Now is the time to nurture our children

The words of Marian Wright Edelman's favorite spiritual ran through my head many times during the weekend I traveled to Washington for the Stand for Children rally.

*"Guide my feet
while I run this race . . ."*

We sang the song as a family during the day before my six-year-old daughter, Katie, and I left. We sang it at our local rally and bus send-off in Fort Wayne, Ind., the night before the national event. I heard it echo in my mind as Katie and I tried to sleep on the 11-hour overnight bus trip. And

finally, we heard it at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial, sung by a glorious tenor at the event.

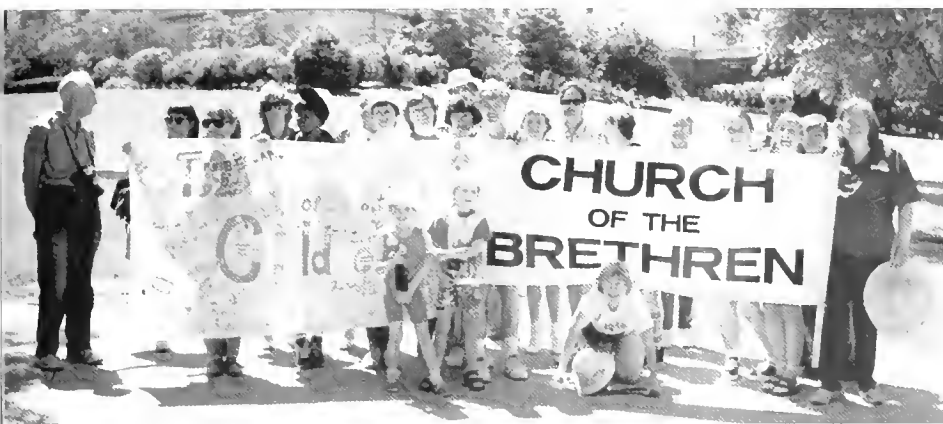
Why did I leave half of my family behind and put my daughter through such an intense experience?

I did it because, like thousands of people who attended Stand for Children or who were with us in spirit, I felt it was time for a shift in priorities for this nation. It was time for us all to realize that children are to be treasured and nurtured instead of pushed to the margins.

I went because I knew Edelman organized the event to offer people a

chance to commit themselves to bettering the lives of children. I wanted to be a part of an event that shouted to the world that children are precious. I wanted my daughter to know that there are people who are committed to children. I wasn't disappointed.

A spirit of community permeated the weekend. We rode the bus with nine members of Manchester Church of the Brethren, North Manchester, Ind., our home church. Joining us were 11 members of Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren in Fort Wayne, and 27 other people who actively work with children or are concerned with issues



For some Brethren, the walk to the Stand for Children rally began with a group picture beside the Capitol (left). Annie and Katie Clark, and Erin Gratz of Manchester Church of the Brethren were three of the walkers making the 17-block trek to the rally (below). Reaching the rally, the Brethren delegation participated in the two-hour event (opposite page).

enough for its children. A country that ranks first among industrialized nations in the number of millionaires, first in defense expenditures, and first in Gross Domestic Product, should not also rank 17th in child poverty.

The rally was refreshing in that it truly focused on children. Big-name celebrities took a back seat to kids and community leaders who advocate on behalf of children, and no politicians were invited to speak. These were the leaders who spoke to the crowd about the realities of children's lives today.

An interfaith service brought to the participants religious texts that focus on children. Kim McDowell, pastor of University Park Church of the Brethren, Hyattsville, Md., processed to the Stand for Children stage with an ecumenical group of clergy including international church leaders. They remained there for the entire program.

each accompanied by a child.

McDowell said that talking to the other clergy on the stage about children was "hopeful and empowering." she found them "impassioned by what they're doing for kids." So was looking into the crowd, which was "diverse and cut across what normally are divisive lines."

The group of Brethren watched the program from a shady area beside the reflecting pool. Large-screen televisions that were placed the length of the reflecting pool made it easy to see what was happening on stage. Members of the group occasionally visited the organizational display tents, where various groups distributed flyers and talked with the crowd.

There were also activities for children in addition to dipping toes in the reflecting pool and splashing water to cool off. Some people were content to stretch out under a tree for a nap, try-



ing to compensate for their long overnight bus ride.

The day was both inspiring and energizing. Participants came away with even greater motivation to advocate on behalf of children with a clearer understanding that we can't afford to do otherwise.

Amanda Vender is a Brethren Volunteer Service worker assigned to the Washington Office

hat affect children.

Katie and her friend Daniel Brown, also age 6, were the youngest members of the group. Throughout the weekend, they were welcomed wherever they went, from the bus trip—where our fellow riders smiled at them as they jolted and got a little rowdy—to the Church of the Brethren breakfast and prayer service at the Washington Office—where people went out of their way to talk to the two littlest children. The Methodists, from whom the Washington Office rents space, gave them small tokens to remember the day. During the two-hour main event, different

people from the northeast Indiana contingent helped entertain them.

The event itself was set up in an organized way, making it easy for families to attend. It was kid-friendly, right down to the Stand for Children personnel offering squirts of sunscreen for all who needed it.

Throughout the day we experienced the necessary components for supporting children: a respect for children and their needs, and a strong sense of community to back them up. We stood together with a common purpose. I am grateful that my daughter could be part of a day

devoted to her and to all children.

As I rode the bus back to Indiana and mused over the memory of Katie splashing her feet in the reflecting pool before the Lincoln Memorial while feeling totally secure in a crowd of 200,000, I knew that Edelman was on the right track. Her goal of inspiring us to go home and strengthen community support of children and families is the answer. We need to be moved to action and pray for guidance to do right by children "while we run this race."—ANNIE CLARK

Annie Clark is a member of Manchester Church of the Brethren, North Manchester, Ind.

Our little German brother

Henry Kurtz wasn't just starting a magazine for the Brethren when he founded The Monthly Gospel-Visitor in 1851; he was becoming the key architect of the renewal of the church.

BY KERMON THOMASSON

Years after Henry Kurtz' death, one Brethren leader, in reminiscing about Kurtz' founding of our denominational magazine, tentatively referred to him as "our little German brother." But what did he mean by "little"?

Henry Kurtz was a *giant* in Brethren history, so pivotal a figure that it is jarring to look back and realize how incidental it was that he figured in Brethren history at all. He virtually disappeared into the Brethren world by hitting hard times that forced a move from western Pennsylvania to northern Ohio. In his new location he met the Brethren and the direction for the rest of his life was set.

Kurtz was born 200 years ago (Nov. 22, 1796) in Germany and emigrated to the United States in 1817. A Lutheran, he first worked as a school teacher and pastor in eastern Pennsylvania. After a successful pastorate there, Kurtz was called in 1825 to pastor one of the largest churches in Pittsburgh. He met with initial success there, as well, but eventually ran into trouble with his congregation.

Kurtz attempted to bring more discipline to the Pittsburgh Lutherans,



No known portraits of Henry Kurtz were done in his lifetime. This 1976 drawing was based on descriptions provided by a Kurtz granddaughter, with the artist using a photograph of a Virginia elder, Benjamin Miller (1829-1915), as a model.

but they balked at the tightened reins. Matters came to a head when Kurtz pushed too hard for the congregation to reorganize as a Christian community. He had come under the influence of Robert Owen, the Scottish reformer who headed the New Harmony colony in Indiana. This was an experiment in communal living that collapsed after a time.

Kurtz' leanings toward Christian communal living are indicative of his affinity for the Brethren ideal of recreating the New Testament church as nearly as possible. His problem with Owen was that reformer's too liberal views on religion and marriage. So Kurtz decided to found a Christian community himself, which he called Concordia. He began working in earnest to make Concordia a reality. That zealous work atop the problems he already was having with his Pittsburgh church was too much. Not only was he drummed out of his pastorate, but Concordia collapsed before it got beyond the recruitment and fundraising stage. Kurtz gave up and turned over the project's assets to a similar colony, named Teutonia.

By that time, Kurtz and his family had moved to Ohio, to be near the anticipated site of Concordia. In

THE MONTHLY GOSPEL-VISITOR
Vol. 1 APRIL 1851 No. 1.

Der Brenderbote.

Brethren's

Christian Family Companion.

Primitive Christian.

The Pilgrim.

The Primitive Christian

Stark County, the Kurtzes were so poverty-stricken for a time that they relied on the charity of neighbors even to have food on the table. This plight, coupled with the fizzling out of the Concordia project, was the low point of Kurtz' life.

And it was at that point that, providentially, he met the Brethren. The significant Brethren he met was Elder George Hoke. Kurtz discovered in the Brethren just what he had been vainly seeking in Lutheranism and the communal movement: a simple, disciplined life based on the New Testament and the early church. Hoke baptized Kurtz in 1828, and the new convert's life took the turn from which it never deviated thereafter.

Kurtz was well educated in a time when education was not a priority for Brethren. He also was aggressive. Within two years he was called to the ministry. Eleven years later he was placed in charge of the Mill Creek congregation in Mahoning County. His bilingualism and education led to his serving as Annual Meeting clerk year after year. He was a printer on the side, and published German-English hymnals that met a great need for Brethren.

Kurtz more and more felt that his calling was in printing and publishing.

After 1857 he printed the Annual Meeting minutes. During the same years he attempted two German-language periodicals, both of which died for lack of patronage.

He finally found the right formula with his English-language *Gospel-Visiter*, the first issue of which was printed in April 1851. The Brethren were leery of his project at first, and gave it only cautious, Gamaliel-like affirmation. This caution lasted only two or three years. After that the publication took off and became a respected communication vehicle across the brotherhood.

Before long, other publications popped up. Complementing the trend, Brethren became accepting of higher education, and the era of college and academy founding began. Kurtz himself began one of the academies. He also promoted Sunday schools and missions.

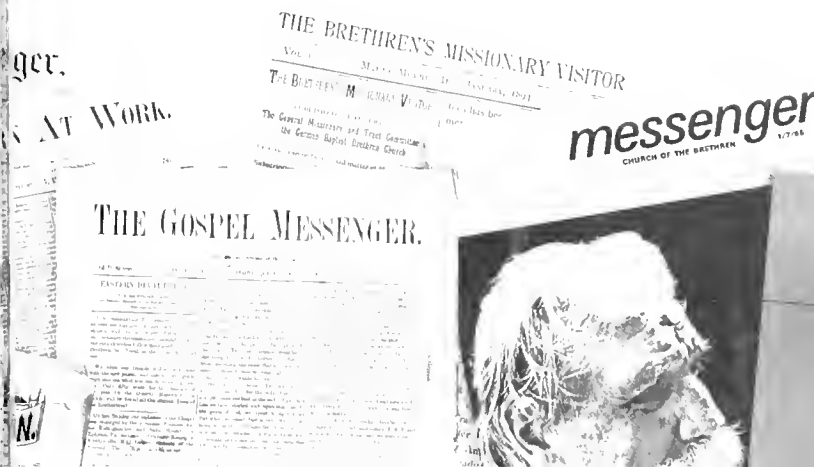
Characteristic of Kurtz, his aggressiveness and his initiatives caused tension. Fortunately, he seemed to have learned from his earlier setbacks and practiced patience and friendly persuasion with the Brethren. Still the tensions of the new ideas eventually led to the 1880s divisions among the Brethren. Kurtz would have grieved, but by then

he was dead, spared from the furies born of his newfangled ideas.

The two groups that split off from the main body of Brethren—The Brethren Church and the Old German Baptist Brethren—founded their own publications. Kurtz' *Gospel-Visiter*, after undergoing some name changes and mergers, became, in 1885, *The Gospel Messenger*, and continues today as *MESSINGER*, 145 years after Kurtz printed his first issue of *The Gospel-Visiter* in his spring house near Poland, Ohio.

Kurtz the man comes down to us today through the printed page—mainly *The Gospel-Visiter* and his *Brethren Encyclopedia* (a collection of Annual Meeting minutes published in 1867). Reminiscences by those who knew him also help to flesh him out.

Henry Holsinger, an apprentice in the Kurtz print shop who went on to found The Brethren Church, recalled with amusement how Kurtz could never overcome his tobacco addiction. From time to time, he would have his wife hide his pipe, only to later admit defeat and suffer humiliation, begging to know its whereabouts. Holsinger also told about Kurtz' love of music. He kept a pipe organ in his home, but in deference to Brethren bias against instrumental



Our magazine's lineage. Today's *MESSINGER* traces its beginning to Henry Kurtz' *Gospel-Visiter*, first published in 1851. *The Gospel-Visiter* merged with other magazines, went through name changes, and in 1885 became *The*

Gospel Messenger. In 1965 the magazine officially took the name *MESSINGER*, as it had been called familiarly for the past 82 years.

Henry Kurtz: *Renewal architect*

Two influential Brethren leaders of the 19th century were born in 1796: Henry Kurtz and Peter Nead. Both had backgrounds in German Lutheranism. Both came to the Brethren in mature years. Both found avenues for their church work through publication. Both had great impact upon the future of their chosen church family.

But here their paths parted. The thrust of Nead's influence was the preservation *without change* of Dunker practice and belief. The title of the periodical he helped establish presents his platform: *The Vindicator of the Ancient Order, and Self-Denying Principles of the Church, as Taught by the Savior and Held Forth by the Fathers of our Fraternity*. Begun in 1870, *The Vindicator* is still published in 1996 as the official organ of the Old German Baptist Brethren.

The policy of Henry Kurtz was different. While just as convinced as Nead that the Brethren held more closely to New Testament order than other church bodies, he contended in the first issue of *The Gospel-Visitor* (1851) that, individually, Brethren "are all learners, and are progressing with more or less speed in the knowledge of truth." He opened the pages of the periodical to essays on gospel truth, presented for correction or commendation. Those Brethren with questions or doctrinal points could pose them in print, confidently expecting that some member of the church would have the answer.

Thus, Kurtz designed, Brethren could preserve unity as they streamed across the American continent, settling the frontier and founding new congregations.

Given the meager organization of the Brethren in the mid-1800s, without church boards and staff workers, periodical editors became *de facto* bishops, serving as gatekeepers for information and doctrinal statements. As they traveled and reported, they became well-known and leading figures in the church.

Kurtz, along with his associate James Quinter, introduced in tactful but persistent manner innovations that increasingly shaped the course of the mainline Brethren. These innovations included Sunday schools, protracted meetings (revivals), academies of higher learning, and domestic and foreign missions. Unlike some of their publishing contemporaries, Kurtz and Quinter had a good sense of how rapidly the church could be moved along these advanced lines. They exhibited patience, goodwill, and respect for those who differed.

It was Kurtz who first collected and published the past minutes of Annual Meeting, so that greater consistency in decision-making could be achieved. It was he who collected and published documents of Brethren history to create a better sense of Brethren identity.

And so it was Henry Kurtz, rather than the prolific author Peter Nead, who became the key architect of the renewal of the church and the predominant shaper of mainline Brethren development.—DONALD F. DURMBAUGH



Donald F. Durmbaugh

Donald F. Durmbaugh of James Creek, Pa., is the foremost Brethren historian, with a career that has included professorships at Juniata College, Elizabethtown College, and Bethany Theological Seminary. His first major historical work was European Origins of the Brethren (Brethren Press, 1958), followed by The Brethren in Colonial America (1967). He has just completed the first truly comprehensive history of the Brethren, Fruit of the Vine: A History of the Brethren, 1708–1995 (Brethren Press, 1996).

music and rules against instruments in the meetinghouse, he played his pipe organ only privately. His young apprentice once found him playing the organ and listened outside the door, "much delighted by the strains." When he paid compliments, Kurtz "explained that he had been tired of reading and writing, and had sought recreation and solace in the music."

The most appealing recollection of Henry Kurtz comes from his granddaughter Eliza Good. In 1959 this elderly resident of Youngstown, Ohio, wrote about her grandfather on the request of *Gospel Messenger* assistant editor Harry Brandt, who was gathering material for his book *Meet Henry Kurtz*.

"He was a small man with a hump on his back, and he always used a cane when he walked, and took short, quick steps. He had rather long white hair, but the top of his head was bald, and in cold weather he always wore a little silk cap to cover that bald spot. He had long, white whiskers.

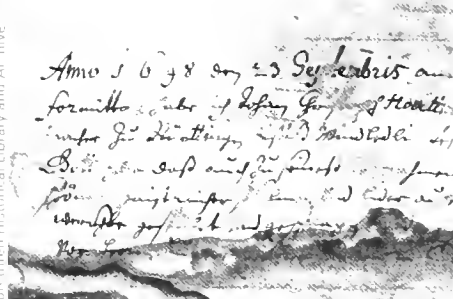
"His home was in Columbiana, Ohio, when I was staying with them. There was no Church of the Brethren near. He went with me to the Grace church a time or two until I got acquainted. It was quite a walk for him, but I was very much pleased to walk by his side to Sunday school.

"We used to get books to read which were very interesting. I remember the first one I brought home. After I was through reading it, he said he wanted to read it. He wanted me to write what I read about, in my own words. I did the best I could, for I would try to do whatever he asked me to, for I loved him, and I know now it was a good thing for me to do.

"I remember very well how his room looked. We entered it from a hall, in which were shelves of books. His room was about 20 x 20, I think, and there was an old-fashioned heating stove and his rocker to



Brethren Historical Library and Archive



Henry Kurtz' 298-year-old organ, now displayed at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill., is the oldest one still in use in the United States. The inscription (above) found inside the organ, reveals that it was built by Johan Christoph Hartman in Nurttingen, Germany, in 1698. It is not known whether Kurtz brought the organ from Germany or acquired it after emigrating. After joining the Brethren, he had to keep his organ-playing private. The instrument spent many years of this century stored in a barn before it was salvaged in the 1950s. In the 1970s it was restored, in time for the quasiqui-centennial of MESSENGER in 1976. That year a concert was played on it at Annual Conference.

Oma Karn, writing in *The Gospel Messenger*, July 28, 1917, described the conditions under which *The Gospel-Visiter* was produced, in the spring house on the Kurtz farm in the late 1850s:

“Upstairs in the old spring house there was a lack of conveniences, and there were but crude implements for work, but the hearts of those interested never once faltered in the undertaking. Most of the foundation of the old spring house is still standing. The structure was built of logs, and was quite large for a building of its kind. It was two stories in height. The printing business occupied the entire upper story. In the room below this, Miss Harriet Stump, later sister Jacob Kurtz, looked after the dairy and laundry work of the home—the sound of

her vigorous ‘rub-a-dub-dub’ or the rhythm of the ‘plash, plash’ of the churn dasher keeping company with the high thinking going on in the room above. The spring was directly beneath the front entrance. Two logs, laid close together, formed a walk over the spring to the door.

“Of the working force, Elder Henry Kurtz was editor-in-chief; brother James Quinter, associate editor; Jacob Kurtz, son of Elder Kurtz, proofreader; Gustavus Shale, H.R. Holsinger, and Joseph Reel, typesetters.

“Every Friday morning, Elder Kurtz would hitch an old white horse to an old-fashioned top-buggy and take the mail to Poland. Thence it went by stage to Pittsburgh, Pa. A bushel sack, made of homespun linen, contained the entire output.”

Two hundred years after Henry Kurtz' birth, and 145 years after he founded our denomination's magazine, MESSENGER is produced with printing technology that would astound those men in the spring house loft. Henry Kurtz likely would be astounded as well by the place he holds in Brethren history. Historian Don Durnbaugh, writing in the April 1976 MESSENGER, ended a piece on the founding editor this way:

“The German word ‘kurtz’ means ‘short.’ The printer-preacher was short in physical stature and had his share of human frailty of body and personality. We can see now that he blazed a trail of reform and change which most—not all—of his beloved Brethren followed. From this perspective it can be seen that in the ranks of Brethren leaders of the past century Henry Kurtz stands tall.” *M.*

The definitive work on Henry Kurtz is “Henry Kurtz, Man of the Book,” by Donald F. Durnbaugh (Brethren Life and Thought, Vol. 16, No. 2, Spring 1971). Durnbaugh also wrote “Standing Tall: The Life and Witness of Henry Kurtz” (MESSENGER, April 1976). James H. Lehman treated Kurtz at length in his book The Old Brethren (Brethren Press, 1976). In addition, H. A. Brandt wrote a fictionalized biography, Meet Henry Kurtz (Brethren Press, 1941).

the left. Also on the left was a stand with a lamp on it. In the corner back of him was the old pipe organ from Germany, and along the wall was a long table used as a writing desk.

There was a dresser to the right of the stove. He always had a buffalo robe thrown over his chair.

“Sometimes he played the organ and taught me little songs on Sunday afternoons after Sunday school. He gave me many good suggestions and rules, some of which I have followed all my life.

“He was very particular about himself, neat and clean, and he expected those in his home to be the same. He was a great man for order. He had a place for everything; if you did any dusting or cleaning you had to be pretty careful to replace everything just as it was or you would hear from him.

“His room was used for worship every night. He would read from the Bible, sometimes in German; then we would kneel in prayer, closing with the Lord's Prayer.”



Bringing out the best

The Habitat project in Cincinnati was designed to demonstrate that Brethren are at their best when they balance social justice with evangelism. That's what Jesus taught, but sometimes Brethren seem to forget.

BY NEVIN DULABAUM

Each year hundreds of American families from the Pacific to the Atlantic receive what at first must seem like the greatest gift. They are only half right.

These families, many of them hovering at or well below the poverty line, are selected to receive a brand-new house, courtesy of Habitat for Humanity, an ecumenical Christian organization. Habitat branches nationwide find sponsors to donate funds, supplies, and workers to construct houses for families in need.

But a house is the second of two items each family receives from Habitat, gifts that together do indeed symbolize the greatest gifts Christians can give.

The first step in the construction process of a Habitat house is designed for the soul, not the body. Before the physical work begins, a ground-breaking ceremony is held, during which each recipient family is presented with a new Bible. The Bible is promptly put to use, its words used to bless the project that is about to commence and to offer words of hope, compassion, and direction during morning devotions each day of the construction phase.

When the house is finished, the final, symbolic step is the recipient family again receiving its now almost-new Bible along with its new house—the Bible, a sign that faith in God and the desire to follow in Jesus' footsteps is what led the volunteers to construct the house and invite the recipient family to begin or continue its journey of faith.

Call it the mission of the Bible and the hammer. Call it ministry to the soul and body. Call it whatever you want; it is a wonderful example of Christians witnessing their faith through words and deeds, says Rick Beech, director of Church Relations for Habitat for Humanity. These two gifts symbolize

the greatest gifts Christians have to offer: As they follow in the steps of Jesus, they serve as evangelists by professing their faith and inviting recipient families to join them in their faith-filled journey, while "walking the talk" of Jesus by helping people in need.

Likewise, it is symbolic and fitting that Brethren at Annual Conference this month construct a house with Habitat for Humanity, one of 10 Habitat houses that will be built this year in Cincinnati, Habitat's 10th year in the Queen City.

In 1989, Annual Conference adopted its current World Mission statement, which included the following:

"The Church of the Brethren, with ministries of evangelism, agriculture, education, disaster relief, medical and other services, is called to carry God's message of love to all the world."

Despite this call by Conference seven years ago, there are many within the Church of the Brethren who believe that over the past 10 years, and maybe even the past 20–30 years, Brethren have been at the forefront of social justice issues and concerns. During that same time, however, Brethren as a whole have been humble to the extent of being fairly silent before non-Brethren when it comes to professing their faith, values, and traditions, which is the impetus for Brethren to be engaged in social justice issues in the first place. And when Brethren have "evangelized," it was apart from social justice concerns.

"I think in the last 55 years, the two have become pretty much mutually exclusive," says Paul Munday, director of The Andrew Center, the Church of the Brethren's Evangelism program.

Moderator-elect David Wine and General Board chairwoman Kathy Hess agree. And that's why both are strong supporters of this summer's Brethren Habitat project.

After the successful Brethren Habitat project during National Youth Confer-



ence in 1994, Munday and several other General Board staff members spoke with Annual Conference officers about the possibility of organizing such a project during the annual meeting. Munday; Donna Derr, director of Refugee/ Disaster Services; and the late Ivan Fry, then director of Brethren Volunteer Service, agreed that such a project would be fitting for the Annual Conference environment. Annual Conference officers agreed that 1996 would be the year.

Having the General Board's Evangelism program team up with Refugee/ Disaster Services and BVS, symbolizes the re-emphasis within the Church of the Brethren General Board of Jesus' teaching that social justice concerns and evangelism together hold the key to salvation. It is in keeping with the 1989 General Board mission statement. And prophetically, it brought together the areas of service and evangelism within the General Board a year before the Board's Redesign Steering Committee report that Brethren strongly believe the Church of the Brethren should be about both, today and in the future.

For those Brethren who want to engage in a service project at Conference, the Brethren/Habitat project is an excellent opportunity. Each year about 4,000 non-delegates attend Conference. This project will give an estimated 200 workers and an expected 500 onlookers the opportunity to experience the Church of the Brethren witness in action, David Wine said.

In a Conference atmosphere that in recent years has been divisive as Brethren dealt with conflict by talking at each other instead of to each other, the Brethren/Habitat project will have brothers and sisters in Christ working alongside others with different beliefs and opinions. This could be an ever so small step toward understanding and acceptance.

The project also will serve as a way

for Brethren to witness their beliefs to non-Brethren.

July 1, the day before Conference begins, has been designated as a "Bring a Friend" day, affording friends of Brethren the opportunity to learn a little firsthand about what it means to be Brethren as they assist with the construction project.

Residents of the Cincinnati area also will learn more about the Church of the Brethren, since aspects of the project are expected to be picked up by the local media. With a Brethren workcamp providing the first of two weeks of labor needed to construct the house, the ground-breaking ceremony will occur eight days before the start of Conference. Yet, Church of the Brethren representatives will join local Habitat officials, the Cincinnati mayor, and others for the ceremony.

That's where News Services, the final piece of the puzzle, comes in. With News Services becoming a sponsor of the event, to ensure that Church of the Brethren's social justice and evangelistic witness is expressed in the local press, the General Board's three commissions (World and Parish ministries, and General Services) all are involved directly with the event.

"I find it wonderful that General Board staff can model how we Brethren do a service project and at the same time articulate to those around us why we're doing it, which is for Jesus," says Kathy Hess. "To me this project lifts up the way we need to be doing ministry in the present and the future, and I think it is a beautiful illustration of how God wants us to weave together the gifts we're given so that his name might be exalted."

What is so attractive about this project, says David Wine, is that it brings out the best of what it means to be Brethren, connecting evangelism with social justice concerns. "And two strands woven together are stronger than two separate strands." *M.*

Call it the mission of the Bible and the hammer. Call it ministry to the soul and body. Call it whatever you want: It is a wonderful example of Christians witnessing their faith through words and deeds.





Saving and serving: Overcoming 'one-sided Christianity'

If the Church of the Brethren really is a church that continues the work of Jesus, it will put aside one-sided definitions of what that work is and embrace the full scope of Christ's mission in the world. When they have been at their best, that's what Brethren always have done.

BY DON FITZKEE

"Churches today are tragically split between those who stress conversion but have forgotten its goal, and those who emphasize Christian social action but have forgotten the necessity for conversion" (Jim Wallis, The Call to Conversion, New York: Harper, 1981).

"Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together."

When the General Board unveiled this new identity line for the Church of the Brethren in 1994, responses from across the denomination were largely positive. Brethren of various stripes, who disagree with each other on many points, have embraced this simple line as a good description of what our church does. Or at least what it *ought* to do.

But, I suspect, if we were to assemble a committee of five to define exactly what the statement means, agreement quickly would give way to acrimony. At the heart of the debate would be the question, "Exactly what was the work of Jesus?"

Many Brethren point to Jesus' death and resurrection as his primary work. Proclaiming the good news of salvation for all who believe—evangelism—is the church's central task. Many others, observing Jesus' confrontation with authorities, his concern for the poor, his teachings on peace and justice, would lift up social action as the work of Jesus that the church should continue. Far fewer would enthusiastically embrace both.

Even the structure of our denomination separates the two. The General Board Evangelism program is lodged with the Parish Ministries Commission. Most peace, service, and justice ministries, on the other hand, fall under the World Ministries Commission. Sharp philosophical differences over how to define the work of Jesus at times has divided the staff of these two commissions.

In his recent book *One-sided Christianity* (Zondervan/Harper, San Francisco, 1995), Ronald J. Sider charges:

"Most churches today are one-sided disasters. In some suburban churches hundreds of people come to Jesus and praise God in brand-new buildings, but they seldom learn that their faith has anything to do with wrenching, inner-city poverty just a few miles away. In other churches, the members write their senators and lobby the mayor's office, but they understand little about the Holy Spirit. And they would be stunned if someone asked them personally to invite their neighbors to accept Christ."

Sider, professor of theology and culture at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wyncwood, Pa., and the head of Evangelicals for Social Action, argues passionately that "the work of Jesus" includes both evangelism and social action, saving and serving. Anything less is unbiblical, "one-sided Christianity."

I believe that even a cursory glance at the ministry and teachings of Jesus leads to the same conclusion. Luke 4:16-21 is an important text in determining just what "the work of Jesus" includes.

Some consider these verses to be a manifesto of sorts, whereby Jesus declared what he intended to do with his life. The setting is a synagogue in Nazareth at the outset of his public ministry. Jesus is handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, from which he reads these words:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

As the audience looked on, Jesus rolled up the scroll and declared, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." Perhaps a clearer translation



would be "Today this scripture that you have just heard has been fulfilled."

These brief words, quoted from Isaiah 61, Jesus seemed to say, summed up his ministry. What the prophet had predicted hundreds of years earlier was coming to pass in Jesus Christ. What was the work of Jesus?

Jesus declared first of all that he had come to preach and proclaim the good news, words that evangelism advocates readily embrace. But he also specifically mentioned the poor, the oppressed, the blind, as those he would preach to and release from their oppression, providing support for those who believe service or social action was at the heart of Jesus' ministry.

But what did Jesus mean? Had he come to preach to the poor or the poor in spirit? Was he talking about people imprisoned by injustice and oppression or those who were captives to sin? Was he concerned about the physically blind or the spiritually blind?

Those who define the work of Jesus primarily as evangelism tend to spiritualize these words. Social action advocates would argue for reading the text more literally. Jesus really was talking about people who were physically poor, blind, or imprisoned.

The context of these verses as they appear in Isaiah 61 clearly points to physical, not spiritual, realities. The social action advocates are correct.

On the other hand, Jesus often took Old Testament passages and breathed new meaning into them. Maybe he is taking a familiar passage about physical conditions and using it to point to spiritual truths. The evangelism advocates may also be right about this text.

In fact, the record of Jesus' ministry in the four Gospels confirms that both sides are correct. Jesus literally did heal people of blindness, but he also lamented for those who though "seeing they do not perceive" (Matt. 13:13). He cared for the physically

poor and the oppressed, but he also released people from "the power of reigning sin," to use the words of a familiar hymn. He gave bread to the hungry, but declared that we do not live by bread alone.

The whole nature of Jesus' ministry was that he ministered to total persons, caring for physical and spiritual needs. Shouldn't a church that desires to continue the work of Jesus do the same?

Both evangelism and social ministries are essential parts of the work of Jesus. Rather than being at odds with each other, Sider points out in *One-sided Christianity*, evangelism and social action actually are closely intertwined and mutually supportive.

On the one hand, social ministries foster evangelism. A church that actively serves the poor and shows Christ's love in practical ways to those in need is an attractive and winsome testimony to the power of Jesus. The evangelist's call to accept a Savior who transforms lives is made credible by a caring community that demonstrates the fruits of that transformation.

On the other hand, biblical evangelism also promotes social action. As Sider puts it, "The gospel creates new persons whose transformed character and action change the world." People who truly have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior cannot help but share Christ's love in tangible ways with those around them.

If the Church of the Brethren really is a church that continues the work of Jesus, it will put aside one-sided definitions of what that work is and embrace the full scope of Christ's mission in the world. When they have been at their best, that's what Brethren always have done. *M.*

Don Fitzkee, a minister in Chuques Church of the Brethren in Manheim, Pa., is just completing a five-year term on the General Board, serving this past year as chairman of the General Services Commission. He also is chairman of the search committee charged with finding a new general secretary to succeed Donald E. Miller. Fitzkee served 1986-1988 as an editorial assistant with MESSENGER.

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Saving souls without losing our own

We really have set ourselves up for decline, as we have created a polarity between two concepts that do not need to be mutually exclusive: evangelism and identity.



BY PAUL MUNDEY

The scene is Annual Conference. Huddled in a focus group, a handful of conference attendees begins to respond freely and candidly. "What about Brethren growth and evangelism?" the focus group conveners ask.

"Our denomination is kind of wishy-washy," one participant volunteers. "The church wants new people, but mainly it says, 'Come join our church; we'll do this and this for you.' I'm ready for the church to take a strong stance about who we are."

"I agree," another participant notes. "A lot of our evangelism efforts just push for new members. I'm not happy with that. They're approaching this as just another 'Christian denomination,' not as the Church of the Brethren. Our message is 'Come, experience all this religious stuff'—not things like social justice and peace, and *that's* who we are."

"So often, evangelism tries to market itself," still another participant suggests. "Find out what the Baby Boomers want, and give it to them" approach. We don't have enough sense of discipleship. We're more casual about our values than we should be. Our values are peace, simple life, reaching out to help, warmth and fellowship."

"We need to accept it," a last focus group member concludes. "Our teaching is not popular. It won't impress or attract a lot of people. I'm no longer apologetic for not witnessing. All I try to do is to live my faith."

I'd like to say these are hypothetical or manufactured statements. They are not. They are verbatim comments transcribed by Communicorp, an Atlanta-based public relations firm, during a series of focus groups held at the 1994 Annual Conference. Though painful reading for me as evangelism director for the denomination, they are actually enlightening in understanding our paralysis as a people. We really have set ourselves up for decline, as we have created a polarity between two concepts that do not need to be mutually

exclusive: evangelism and identity.

In unraveling this debate, I have found it helpful to test some familiar but problematic assumptions:

Assumption 1: Few want us

Is it accurate to conclude, in the words of one focus group participant, "that our teaching is not popular; it won't impress or attract a lot of people"? If by "a lot of people" this person means mega-church, he is probably right. It is hard to imagine a Church of the Brethren congregation numbering 5,000–10,000 people. But if by "a lot of people" this person is constructing a rationale for not reaching out (which his comment implies), we then have a problem on our hands. The problem? An insular, provincial mindset, which slides toward indifference.

In my travels, I have found that *many want us*, if by "us," we first and foremost mean our vision and values. Many want to be part of a church that feels like family. Many want to be a part of church that demonstrates how to establish a simpler way of living. Many want to be a part of a church that works to counter violence and bloodshed. Many want to be a part of a church that operates out of a sense of community, rather than rigid rules and regulations.

Actually, the issue is not whether others want us, *but do we want them?* Consider Cora Hunt's experience, recounted in a February 1996 letter in *Messenger*:

"Last October we went to an Arizona Church of the Brethren, assuming the Sunday service began at 11 a.m. (no hours were listed outside the church or in the phone book). The service was half-over, having begun at 10:50 a.m. After church, one man said, 'Good morning' to us. That was it. At a Baptist church the next Sunday, by the time the service started, some 10 people had greeted us, given their names and asked ours, and inquired about us Once again the Brethren had come across as an insular group that either doesn't trust 'outsiders' or simply doesn't care about others."

Sometimes I wonder: Does our identity flow primarily from the widening welcome of the New Testament church, or the protective familiarity of the Old Testament tribe? Is our sense of security and safety, radically rooted in Jesus Christ and his new community, or the habitual routine and ancestry of a Germanic, ethnic clan?

In actuality, our answer to those questions have more to do with our commitment to justice and service than our commitment to evangelism and growth. (It's interesting to note the way Cora Hunt concludes her letter:

"The Lord instructed us to minister to the least of these and to seek out the lonely, the lost, and the stranger in our midst. They are all around us, and a kind word goes a long way toward furthering the Lord's work."

Cora Hunt's concern (and that of others outside our walls) is rooted in Jesus' admonition in Matthew 25:31-46 (a traditional justice and service passage), as opposed to Matthew 28:16-20 (a traditional evangelism and growth passage).

"Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you . . . ; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, *I was a stranger and you welcomed me . . .*'" (Matt. 25:34-35).

Will we practice hospitality, embracing those currently not in our midst?

Assumption 2: Faithful mission does not require the inclusion of outsiders

Is it accurate to conclude, in the words of yet another focus group participant, that the essence of our mission boils down to 'social justice and peace, and *that's* who we are'? Is that it?

Operating out of a different set of assumptions, the 1989 Annual Conference attempted to *widen* our mission identity. In passing a Mission Theology and Guidelines paper for the denomina-

tion, it affirmed — among other things — that we are called:

- To reach out and receive as sisters and brothers all who are near and far, to proclaim the gospel, to bear witness to our faith in word and deed.
- To become peacemakers in whatever capacity we can, renewing the ministry of reconciliation as Christ has reconciled us.
- To nurture a deep prayer life and openness to the Holy Spirit, and to receive gifts of spiritual renewal that are offered to all those who love God and Humanity.

Why then do we reduce our witness artificially to one or two tenets? Brethren mission identity *must* include a strong, unapologetic emphasis on social justice and peace, but it must also include other critical elements required for faithful, biblical witness.

One of these elements is the biblical mandate to reach out and include the outsider, the stranger. In fact, the 1989 Mission Theology and Guidelines paper identifies as the first biblical mandate for mission, "bringing persons to a new awareness of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord." In his book *Proclaim Glad Tidings*, Brethren theologian Vernard Eller goes so far as to argue that "evangelism is actually an item demanding to be listed (along with peace, the simple life, radical discipleship, and what all) as one of the *core distinctives* of Brethrenism (italics added)."

Will we embrace evangelistic outreach as a Brethren distinctive . . . again?

Assumption 3: Inclusion of outsiders 'waters down' discipleship

Is it accurate to conclude, in the words of yet another focus group participant, that "evangelism tries to market itself . . ." "Find out what the Baby Boomers want, and give it to them' . . . We don't have enough sense of discipleship . . . ?"

In part, this person is correct. Effective outreach to outsiders (that is, evange-

Why then do we reduce our witness artificially to one or two tenets? Brethren mission identity must include a strong, unapologetic emphasis on social justice, but it must also include other critical elements required for faithful, biblical witness.





Few outsiders are attracted to a set of mandatory customs, but many are attracted to a set of enduring values.

lism) does attempt to “market” the gospel, in that it attempts to position Christ and the church in relationship to the needs of the outsider in winsome, relevant ways. But does such an approach to outreach, “sell out” the gospel and water down discipleship? Not necessarily so. As Tex Sample notes in his book *US Lifestyles and Mainline Religion*:

“Paul . . . maintained . . . that he had been all things to all people (1 Cor. 9:22). His plan was not one of accommodating the church to the various cultural arrangements he found . . . (rather that) to be all things to all people *is only a first step* in . . . transformation. People often object that baby boomers will not make commitments and that they should not be welcomed into the church. . . . Yet it simply does no good to tell people they ought to have commitments; interestingly enough, the Christian faith does not approach people this way, at least not in its authentic forms. According to the gospel, God does not first require commitment. Instead, God acts on our behalf, sends Christ to live and die for us, and raises Christ as our promise and hope. *Christian faith does not begin by telling us what we must do, but by proclaiming what God has already done . . .*” (italics added).

Holistic, evangelistic outreach is best seen as a continuum of activity, which begins with an engaging, “just as I am” invitation to the outsider—but dares not end there.

In evaluating the Church of the Brethren’s Passing On the Promise effort, George Mendenhall was struck by the level of discipleship resulting from the three-year evangelistic process. Specific outcomes are best expressed, however, in the words of actual participants:

“Our discipleship program changed a man so completely it amazed me, his wife,

and all who daily associate with him. By his change of spirit . . . he truly excelled in discipleship assignments and became a powerful witness to others.”

“The most exciting (result) is our Alternative Toy Fair People will have the opportunity to see what our congregation values. We want the people in our community to see us as *a peace church that welcomes them*” (italics added).

Are effective evangelism and deep discipleship mutually exclusive?

A peace church that welcomes

The last discipleship testimony cited above contains a powerfully descriptive phrase that says, in so many words, “We aspire to be: *A peace church that welcomes.*” Not a bad melding of identity concerns and evangelism. But how can that happen? In light of our discussion, here are three direct suggestions:

1. Reaffirm the values of the Anabaptist, Pietist movement.

It’s an unsettling, but accurate statement: Few outsiders are attracted to a set of mandatory customs, but many are attracted to a set of enduring values.

Values are different from customs. Customs are the conventional habits and routines of a particular clan or tribe. Values, on the other hand, are the underlying desired results of a dynamic movement. The chart below left shows some straightforward examples.

Every social structure *must* have a certain cluster of customs to pass on its identity and heritage. Some of those customs *must be literally sustained and passed on, generation after generation.* Please hear this.

However, when too many customs become too fixed and *unamendable* (allowing little or no variation in expression) they end up *excluding*, rather than including.

This was the dilemma confronting the early church. Circumcision was a common expectation and custom in the tight-knit Jewish-Christian community. In order to make a transition more fully, however, from clannishness caught in custom to

Customs

- Swapping names of common friends and ancestors
- Meetings, meetings, meetings
- Feetwashing
- Conscientious objector status

Values

- Community
- Priesthood of all believers
- Servanthood
- Peace and justice

community commanded by Christ, it needed to rethink the role and authority of his required, communal "admission ticket" (see Acts 11). Although it ebbed and flowed on this issue, the early Jewish-Christian church realized the ultimate, desired result was not the *custom* or rite of circumcision; the ultimate, desired result was the *value* of life-change in and through Christ.

Is your congregation confusing customs with values? What contemporary forms of circumcision might you be insisting upon—without even being aware that you are?

At your next church board meeting, retreat or congregational business meeting, list the values central to your congregation. Try to affirm, however, that there might be more than one route toward honoring them (more than one way, that is, of "being Brethren").

2. Work at becoming a multi-celled congregation

For a number of years, I have floated the notion that we Brethren attempt to shape community through the three C's: centralization, control, and conformity. Because much of our identity is derived from a clannish, tribal mentality, we have high need to rein in people and ideas toward a hushed, but forceful "political correctness."

This is ironic, given the denomination's historic commitment to diversity, plurality, racial integration, and justice for all peoples. But look at the color composition of our people. In spite of powerful position papers, marches through the streets, and race awareness education, we are largely a lily-white communion.

Why? Because we are largely a single-cell communion. Traditionally, it has been hard for us to allow a decentralized, diverse, multicolored approach to being Brethren. Whether we admit it or not, there is an unwritten code of conformity, an "in or out" list, for being an acceptable member of our denomination. True, it is not as explicit as 19th-century Annual Conference decrees that banned lightning rods and buttons on coats, but it is very much alive attitudinally and relationally. A

fraternity mindset still governs our life together.

Unfortunately, there is no single, simple solution out of such a familial pattern. We can begin, however, to crack the code on a congregational level by making a transition from being a single-cell congregation to being a multicell congregation. Writing in the early 1980s, Church of the Brethren consultant Roy Johnson defined a single-cell church as one "that for practical purposes exists as a single group of people with no adhesive, functioning sub-groupings. Everyone in such a church tends to know what others are doing and feels obligated to take part in whatever programs are planned."

It was Johnson's thesis—and mine—that "single-cell anemia" is one of the principle reasons the Church of the Brethren has not arrested its ongoing, pronounced decline.

Some practical steps you and your congregation might take (all resources listed available from The Andrew Center [800] 774-5560):

- **Multiply the number of adult Sunday School classes.**

The proverb is true: New groups equal new growth. This is the simplest way for a congregation to begin multiplying options and opportunities for people.

Resource: *Growth Principles and Methods for Adult Sunday School Classes* (Video presentation by Herb Miller).

- **Use a more decentralized form of church organization, formed around decentralized ministry teams.**

A query to the 1996 Annual Conference from Atlantic Northeast District relates to congregational organization. As district executive, Allen Hansell notes that our current structure is "not flexible enough with a board and three commissions," and "*ministry issues should mold ministry teams, not vice versa, as done in the current structure*" (italics added).

Resource: *Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers*, by Bill Easum, Abingdon Press.

- **Consider adding a second worship service.**

According to Win Arn, "Every congregation, regardless of size, location, denomination, or present growth trends, should be offering at least two quality

Whether we admit it or not, there is an unwritten code of conformity for being an acceptable member of our denomination. It is not as explicit as 19th-century Annual Conference decrees, but it is very much alive attitudinally and relationally.



worship styles each week.”

Resource: *Multiple Services, Strategy for Growth Kit*, Church of the Nazarene.

3. Make Jesus Christ central

In his book *Assimilating New Members*, Lyle Schaller titles his initial chapter with a provocative but probing question of

congregational life: “What’s the Glue?” Is it denominational identity, the personality and magnetism of the minister, the enemy, group life, heritage and nostalgia, social class, the church secretary?

Actually, more than one of these “glues” is needed to hold a church together. But one controlling, catalytic element is needed in all settings: the living reality of Jesus Christ. Without it, the ties that bind, become gummy, inflexible, and exclusive.

In the famed Jerusalem Council, Peter rose to quell a fierce debate over the inclusion of outsiders. In essence, the church was debating what we debate today, the meaning of identity, in relation to outreach.

“Friends, you well know that from early on God made it quite plain that he wanted the pagans to hear the Message of this good news and embrace it . . . *He treated the outsiders exactly as he treated us, beginning at the very center of who they were and working from that center outward, cleaning up their lives as they trusted and believed him.* So why are you trying to out-god God, loading these new believers down with rules . . . ‘Don’t we believe that we are saved because the Master Jesus amazingly and *out of sheer generosity moved to save us just as he did those from beyond our nation?*’ So what are we arguing about?” (italics added) (Acts 15:7–11, *The Message*).

And so what are we arguing about? Evangelism and discipleship, inclusion and identity are not mutually exclusive. Contrary to conventional wisdom, it is possible to “save souls” without losing our own.

In his book *Thank God for New Churches*, James H. Lehman tells of Harvey Brumbaugh, a president of Juniata College at the turn of the century. Brumbaugh often referred to Juniata as a “right little, tight little college.” After quoting Brumbaugh, Lehman next turns the tables and asks, “Are we a ‘right little, tight little denomination’?”

Well, are we? God help us to move out of the warm, but excluding patterns of an Old Testament clan to the warm, but inclusive patterns of a New Testament church.

Paul Munday is director of Evangelism on the Parish Ministries Staff.

Ecumenism through evangelism

A familiar proverb teaches that happiness is like a butterfly: the more you pursue it, the more it evades you. But if you turn your attention to other things, it will come and land gently on your shoulder. That is also true of ecumenism.

For years we have attempted to develop closer relationships with The Brethren Church, General Conference Mennonite Church, and the Mennonite Church. Direct, head-on attempts often have failed, but as we have “turned our attention to other things,” be they curriculum or hymnal development, peacemaking or mission initiatives, relationships meld and the vision of John 17:20–26 — the vision of ecumenism — gently wings its way into our midst.

This also has been true as we have turned our attention toward evangelism over the last decade. In the 1980s, as we were developing the Evangelism Leaders Academy and *Passing On the Promise*, the Church of the Brethren was approached by the Mennonite Church, the General Conference Mennonite Church and subsequently (in the early 1990s) by The Brethren Church, for assistance with their evangelism programming. Resulting from this contact was “official” cosponsorship by these communions of the Evangelism Leaders Academy, and denominational, customized versions of *Passing On the Promise*. The Brethren Church kept the name *Passing On the Promise*; the Mennonites adapted and redeveloped materials under the banner of LIFE — Living in Faithful Evangelism.

Our relationship with The Brethren Church perhaps has been the most striking. After decades of historic separation, it has been extremely gratifying to work together on a major project affecting hundreds of Brethren congregations across traditional denominational barriers. Reflecting on our partnership through the Evangelism Leaders Academy and *Passing On the Promise*, Ronald W. Waters, a Brethren Church seminary professor and former executive, has reflected:

“I first met Paul Munday in May 1991 to discuss using *Passing On the Promise* in The Brethren Church . . . I remember joking at the time that it was a humbling experience for us in The Brethren Church to come to the Church of the Brethren to learn about evangelism . . . Our continuing partnership in The Andrew Center . . . further broadens our potential for expanding our witness . . . Together, we are ‘spur(ing) one another on toward love and good deeds’ (Heb. 10:24). I value a partnership such as this that is breaking down human walls of division and building relationships for the advancement of the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Breaking down walls, building relationships; ecumenism through evangelism . . . Brethren style. — PAUL MUNDAY



Welcoming strangers

BY FRED BERNHARD
AND STEVE CLAPP

Concept: While our culture teaches us to fear strangers, we also know that our best friends were once strangers to us. Life is transformed when we see the stranger as a potential friend.

We all have received and extended advice about strangers. Most of that counsel consists of admonitions to protect ourselves and others from the harmful influence or actions of those who are unknown to us.

Statements and accounts such as the following are commonplace:

"Don't accept a ride from a stranger."

"Don't go to the bathroom alone at the movies."

"Don't accept gifts from strangers."

"Don't accept candy from someone you don't know."

"Be careful of people who look like___.

You can never be sure what someone like that will do."

"Did you hear what happened to that man who stopped to help a person who had a flat tire?"

"Did you hear what happened to that woman who let the stranger into her house?"

"It probably doesn't mean anything, but I just had such an uneasy feeling when I met him."

We know that the world in which we live is not a safe one. Much of the advice contained in the preceding quotations is especially relevant for children. Yet we must be careful that we don't instill too deep a fear in our children and teenagers, and we need to avoid the trap of living in fear ourselves.

Our view of the home

How we view our homes correlates to an extent with our attitudes toward strangers:

- Do you see your home as a castle with a moat around it and towers from which you can defend your property and those who live there?
- Do you see your home as a gathering place? Do you like to entertain?
- Do you see your home as a getaway or an escape from the pressures of life? Do you want to avoid bringing problems or controversy into the home?
- Do you see your home as a continuing work of art? Do you take great pride in the design, the furnishings, and the cleanliness of your home?
- Do you find yourself feeling resentful when other people are in your home, or do you covet opportunities to show people what you have accomplished?
- Do you see your home as Grand Central Station with lots of people passing through all the time—some of whom you know well and some not at all well?

An image of the home as Grand Central Station or as a gathering place tends to make us more receptive to strangers, whether we encounter those strangers in the work place, the neighborhood, the grocery store, or the church. If your home seems like a castle or a getaway, you may be more cautious about encouraging people to call or visit you at home. Does that attitude extend to your relationships outside the home?

There is nothing wrong with the attitudes toward the home just expressed. Most of us have feelings about the home that shift depending on what is happening in our lives. After an extended period of the home as Grand Central Station, we may develop great fondness for the home as a getaway, although closing down Grand Central Station can be a tough job.

We need, however, to be sensitive to the



Putting his faith into action, Fred Bernhard works on a building project in Kentucky.

Someone who has just moved to a community finds everyone a stranger and is very conscious of the need to begin making friends with the strangers who are encountered.

reality that our attitudes toward strangers are formed by various influences:

- The things we have heard from other people.
- Accounts in the media.
- The way we feel about our homes and families.
- The experiences we have had.

Another influence can be the many good friends we already have. Someone who has just moved to a community finds everyone a stranger and is very conscious of the need to begin making friends with the strangers who are encountered. Those of us who have lived in the same place for many years may already have so many friends that we don't feel a particular need for one more. We may wish we could figure out how to find more time for the friends we do have. Such an

the stranger, we may in fact be locking out the blessings of God:

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it" (Heb. 13:2).

Hospitality to the stranger is assumed throughout the Old and New Testament scriptures. Again and again, as in the parable of the Good Samaritan, the questioning is not on the worthiness of the stranger but on the faithfulness of the one encountering the stranger. The Samaritan did not ask the man who was injured: "Did you bring this on yourself? Were you trying to do a drug deal? Why weren't you traveling with someone else for safety?" The Samaritan simply responded to the human need that was encountered. The priest and the Levite who passed by are the ones whose behavior is called into question by Jesus's telling of the parable. Look once more at these core definitions:

- *Hospitality is the attitude and practice of providing the atmosphere and opportunities, however risky, in which strangers are free to become friends, thereby feeling accepted, included, and loved. The relationship thus opens up the possibility for eventual communion among the host, the stranger, and God.*
- *The stranger is any person or group not known to the host person or group. The host perceives that this unknown person or group has the potential for relationship as an enemy or as a friend.*

Whether we start with the assumption that the unknown person will be an enemy or a friend makes a difference. When anyone comes to our church or shows an interest in religious concerns, our starting assumption certainly should be that such a person shares with us a pull toward the heart of God. Such a person is a potential friend, perhaps sent to us by God for the enrichment of our lives.

Think how your view of the new person in your neighborhood, your workplace, or the church would be transformed if your starting assumption was: "This is a person sent by God who may be a great



Making people feel at home is one of the keys to Oakland Church of the Brethren's steady growth.

attitude, however, closes us to what we might gain from new friendships, and especially from friendships with people who are different from us in significant ways. We may miss some of the blessings God offers us through new relationships.

The essence of hospitality

Our best friends were once strangers to us. There are valid reasons for wanting our homes to feel insular and safe, but those efforts do not always have the desired effect. By avoiding or locking out

...blessing to my life, or this is a person sent by God in order for me to be a blessing to his or her life."

Obviously such blessings have a tendency to flow in both directions. How can we best show hospitality in the church?

What we want when we are strangers

There are some important things that most of us want to experience when we are in the position of strangers, especially in terms of the church. Reflect on what it would be like to be a visitor to your congregation. Read this list carefully, and note those items that need more attention from you or your church in order to provide a more welcoming setting:

- When visiting a church, most people don't want to be ignored. People expect those who are sitting near them to give brief introductions before or after the service or Sunday school class.
- When visiting a church, almost no one wants to be overwhelmed. Two-thirds of those who visit congregations for the first time do *not* want to be introduced in worship to the whole congregation. They prefer meeting people on a one-to-one basis. Introduce the new person to a few other people, not to every single person whose attention you can get.
- People especially do not want to feel ignored during a designated fellowship time. If they go to a gathering spot for coffee and doughnuts, they assume that some people will visit with them. They feel ejected if church members are all in tight groups with people they already know. Be alert during such times for people who are standing alone.
- Visitors generally appreciate name tags or themselves and for the members of the church. That makes it easier to remember names and avoids awkwardness over names not being heard correctly the first time they are spoken. Remember that you as a member have only the name of one new person to learn; the visitor has dozens or hundreds of names to eventually learn upon joining the church.

Name tags also make it easier for you to introduce the new person to others in the church whose names may not be as familiar as you would like.

- People don't want to feel they are being required to pass a litmus test. Most will feel resentful of conversations that make it appear that someone is attempting to do research on family background and church activity. Churches with a strong ethnic membership, such as those with many descendants from Sweden or Germany, for example, sometimes act as though people with certain last names are more acceptable than others.

In the ancient Near East, the name of the guest was not even asked until after a meal had been shared. While we exchange names at a much earlier time in our culture, we need to be careful that the process of doing so does not cause us to act as though the name makes a difference.

- Some people are anxious about how others will respond to certain aspects of their background. A person may be divorced, a single parent who has never married, unemployed, an alcoholic, or an ex-convict. These are pieces of information they are not eager to disclose.

In an initial conversation, do not push people to fill in the gaps in their history. When we see an adult with a child, we should not immediately move to a question such as: "Where is your husband?" or "Where is your wife?" It's better to let such people disclose family information as they wish to.

- People want to feel that others are interested in them and pleased to have them present. They respond well to genuine expressions of delight at their presence.

There are many conversation topics that are good ones with people you have just met in the church:

- Ask how those people chose your church to visit.
- Tell how you became involved in the church.
- Ask those people how they feel about living in your community.

There are some important things that most of us want to experience when we are in the position of strangers, especially in terms of the church.



The next time you go to your church, make observations from the perspective of a visitor to your congregation. You will be surprised what a difference that makes in your view of the life of your church.

A hospitality workshop

Complementing the release of Fred Bernhard's new book, *Widening the Welcome of Your Church: Biblical Hospitality and the Vital Church*, is a special "teaching church" workshop November 16 at Oakland Church of the Brethren, Gettysburg, Ohio. Pastored by Fred Bernhard, Oakland has experienced marked and steady growth through a hospitality outreach. Call The Andrew Center for more details. (800) 774-5560.

- Say something about the weather; it's trite, but it works.
- Ask those people where they are originally from. (Just don't pursue the question as though it were a litmus test or more important than it is.)
- Tell something that you especially like about your church.
- Ask those people if they have any questions about the church.
- Parents always are delighted when people show interest in their children. Direct part of your conversation to the child or teenager who is with the adult.
- A visitor with a physical disability will appreciate an offer of assistance, such as information on elevator location for a person using a wheelchair or a walker. A person who is visually impaired or blind may need assistance in moving from one place to another. Beyond such clearly needed assistance, people with disabilities generally prefer that conversation not center on the disability (thus making it appear that the disability is more important than the person).
- People appreciate directions to the sanctuary, an appropriate Sunday school class, or a gathering place for refreshments.
- People almost universally appreciate an invitation to a meal either that day or at a mutually agreeable date later in the week. Few things show hospitality in a more meaningful way than having someone as your guest for a meal. Even if a person declines the initial invitation, the fact that it was given is still appreciated. Churches that focus on hospitality have a lot of people hosting others for meals.
- People appreciate being remembered with a phone call the week following their visit. It feels good to know that someone remembered you and took the time to call and reinforce how good it was to have you present. That can be an opportunity to extend an invitation to a meal, a Sunday school class, or a special program.
- People appreciate returning the following week and finding that those to whom they were introduced remember them and

are delighted to see them again.

- People who are insecure about church involvement or who feel uncomfortable in large crowds appreciate sensitivity to their desire to go slowly in getting acquainted with others.

Estimates are that between three percent and nine percent of the North American population experiences significant discomfort in large crowds. What appears to be aloofness may in fact simply be an unavoidable response to a large group of people. Such people often will respond better to a phone call or a visit during the week than to a lengthy discussion in the middle of a crowd on Sunday morning. Very few people who experience such anxiety in crowds ever talk about it with other people. Be sensitive to the possibility that this could explain the behavior of another person.

- People appreciate receiving literature about the church. Brochures, newsletters and copies of *MESSAGE* can help answer questions at their leisure.
- Young adults and teenagers who come as visitors may dress more casually than some congregational members. A compliment to such visitors about something they are wearing (assuming the compliment is sincerely meant) is a good way to affirm that informal dress is accepted in your church.

Members of your church may not feel that informal dress is appropriate. That is a position that many congregations, however, are rethinking. There are two factors behind the trend toward casual dress.

First, a large number of workplaces have moved to more casual dress. That in turn has changed expectations about the weekend, with people investing less money in suits, ties, and dress shoes.

Second, many young adults increasingly are dressing casually for all sorts of occasions. Surveys of young adult males in 1994 and 1995 revealed that 40 percent of them did not own a suit or sport coat.

- Strangers appreciate arrangements that make it easy for them to know how to find

From the General Secretary

A 50-year anniversary

the church, where to park, where to enter the church, and where to find things in the church. Clear signs to the church, clearly marked parking, clearly marked entrances, and clearly posted signs and directions inside the church help.

That process can be made even warmer with a greeter in the parking lot and a greeter at each entrance for the Sunday school time as well as for worship services. Some churches have parking places close to the main entrance reserved for visitors as a way of showing that visitors are honored guests.

- Visitors appreciate announcements and members' news items being presented in a way that does not exclude them. Speakers always should give their name, instead of assuming that everyone already knows it. That also means giving sufficient context for announcements and congregational news so that they make sense to visitors.
- If a meeting or activity only involves a small number of people, no announcement should be made.

- People appreciate instructions for the service being clearly stated by the worship leadership or in the bulletin. Is communion open or closed? Do people come to the front of the church for communion? Are people in the church sinners, debtors, or trespassers as far as the Lord's Prayer is concerned? Are words for all responses and songs available in the bulletin or the hymnal?

The next time you go to your church, make observations from the perspective of a visitor to your congregation. You will be surprised what a difference that makes in our view of the life of your church. Also talk with people who recently have visited your congregation, and find out what they experienced. *M.*

Fred Bernhard is pastor of Oakland Church of the Brethren in Gettysburg, Ohio. He has served 1995-1996 as Annual Conference moderator.

Steve Clapp, a member of Lincolnshire Church of the Brethren in Fort Wayne, Ind., is a writer on evangelism topics. He serves as a senior consultant for the Andrew Center, part of the Evangelism program of the General Board.

The Cincinnati Annual Conference marks 50 years since the formation of the General Brotherhood Board, authorized in 1946.

The 1968 Annual Conference gave the General Board the present name and reorganized it from five to three commissions. Now the General Board is considering another redesign, to be presented to the 1997 Annual Conference.

Much has changed in 50 years. In 1946 the church had many missionaries in Africa and India. World War II had given rise to Civilian Public Service, Heifer Project, CROP, Brethren Volunteer Service, the International Christian Youth Exchange, and refugee resettlement led to worldwide Brethren Service activities. The work of the General Brotherhood Board was largely overseas on behalf of the congregations.

World mission has changed radically in 50 years. The Christian church has been introduced into many nations. Those new churches now have their own strength and autonomy, and they stand alongside the churches in Europe and America as equals in the faith.

Material and service has also changed radically. After World War II there were drastic needs for material help and for refugee resettlement. Now the countries of western Europe and the Pacific rim are among the wealthiest countries in the world.

The past 50 years have seen homelessness, drugs, crime, and violence grow in the United States. The result is that many communities have serious problems unknown in the 1940s. Congregations are concerned about addressing these problems in their own communities.

Fifty years ago the overwhelming need was to bring missionary and material resources to overseas people. The General Brotherhood Board did this on behalf of the congregations. Today overseas needs are balanced by the needs that congregations experience in their own communities.

Church membership expanded for a decade or more after 1946, but since then it has declined radically. Church attendance is down in recent years. The American population is aging and congregations are often concerned about how few young adults and young families are attending. From these considerations, the General Board adapted a new mission statement last year that features the resourcing of congregations. No longer can the Board simply receive resources from the congregations for the sake of worldwide outreach. Congregations want to be more immediately related to outreach whether it be local or worldwide. The new situation means that congregations need resources that are adapted to their immediate needs.

New circumstances require new duties for the General Board. But let us remember to pause long enough to rejoice in the Lord always.

—DONALD E. MILLER

Donald E. Miller is general secretary of the Church of the Brethren

stepping

by Robin Wentworth Mayer

Several years and pounds ago, I ran a lot of road races. I often ran them “bandit.” That is, instead of paying the registration fee, receiving a number, and being official, I would hop in at the back of the pack, run the course, and veer off just before the finish line.

It wasn’t exactly allowed. But then, it wasn’t exactly forbidden either. I figured, “Why pay a fee when I can run the same course and get the same benefits for nothing?” After a while, though, I quit running “bandit” and started running “legal.” Here’s why.

My conscience got to me first. It takes an incredible amount of work by many volunteers to pull off a 10-, 15-, or 20-kilometer race. There are pre-race publicity and mailings, registration forms, water stations, statisticians, timers, first aid stations, post-race refreshments, and, of course, the T-shirts. Nobody was getting rich off the \$6 registration fees. I decided that if I intended to reap the benefits of the races, I needed to take an active part in supporting them.

Second, I noticed that as a “bandit” runner I never quite felt a part of the group. There is a peculiar camaraderie and post-race bonding among runners. Everywhere tired, aching, sweaty runners are re-

agonizing over every hill and reliving every turn. Not being named on the roster left me on the outside looking in.

Third, I got in touch with the *real* reason I was not paying the registration fee, which had nothing to do with my budget. The primary reason I didn’t officially join the race was the feeling deep down inside that I didn’t *deserve* to join it.

I have never been athletic. So, when it comes to sports, *any* sport, I have never excelled. I believed my running wasn’t good enough to merit joining, so I felt *my* running didn’t count for anything.

The above reasons have a lot to do with why many of you readers do not *join* your congregation, and why many others who *have* joined remain on the fringes.

In my years in church leadership, both as a lay person and pastor, I have had countless conversations with people who say they dropped out of church because they just never felt accepted. “I felt like I was an outsider.” And while there are many ways congregations can subtly exclude persons, there is also a degree to which the individual has the responsibility to stop running “bandit.”

In his letter to the church at Corinth, Paul goes to great length to communicate just how vital and necessary every member is: “The eye cannot

say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I don’t need you.’ On the contrary, those members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable” (1 Cor. 12:21–22).

I suspect that many believers go about “churching” the same way I went about running: believing in it, enjoying it, working at it, yet holding back for fear that *their* talents aren’t really that valuable. Then they are frustrated and lonely because they don’t feel a part of the group.

After I stopped running “bandit,” I still didn’t win. I still didn’t place, and I still didn’t set any records. But I also no longer felt like an outsider. You know what else I discovered? Some of the *best* runners (those who *did* win, place, and set records) were the ones who gave me the most encouragement.

So if you feel you are on the outside looking in, examine yourself and see if part of the problem is that you have been trying to run “bandit.”

Robin Wentworth Mayer is pastor of Kokomo (Ind.) Church of the Brethren.

Stepping Stones is a column offering suggestions, perspectives, and opinions—snapshots of life—that we hope are helpful to readers in their Christian journey. As the writer said in her first installment, “Remember, when it comes to managing life’s difficulties, we don’t need to walk on water. We just need to learn where the stepping stones are.”

Letters

"I found Paul Grout's 'Stations of the Resurrection' helpful toward my understanding of the events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion."

Help along the stations

I found Paul Grout's "Stations of the Resurrection" (April) helpful toward my understanding of the events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion.

I am a United Methodist who has been introduced to MESSINGER by very dear friends in Northview Church of the Brethren in Indianapolis.

*Wilkie Thompson
Tucson, Ariz.*

Too flippant about angels

Ken Gibble's April article, "Angels: They're Everywhere," bothers me. The current preoccupation with angels reflects humankind's great need for God.

One task of angels is to protect (Psa. 91:11-12; 54:7). We should be wary of too quickly discounting rescue stories.

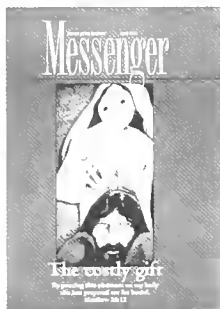
Another task is to guard children: "Their (the children's) angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven" (Matt. 18:10). Those who put stumbling blocks before chil-

The opinions expressed in Letters are not necessarily those of the magazine. Readers should receive them in the same spirit with which differing opinions are expressed in face-to-face conversations.

Letters should be brief, concise, and respectful of the opinions of others. Preference is given to letters that respond directly to items read in the magazine.

We are willing to withhold the name of a writer only when, in our editorial judgment, it is warranted. We will not consider any letter that comes to us unsigned. Whether or not we print the letter, the writer's name is kept in strictest confidence.

Address letters to MESSINGER editor, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120



dren should heed the warning in Matthew 18:6.

The Gibble article lacks a sense of reverence, of awe, toward angels. Who are we to judge?

*Donna Ford
Rifion, N.Y.*

Terrible art in April

I am 88 and have taken MESSINGER all my life. And my parents before me took it. But as I went through the April issue and saw the picture on the cover and those on pages 16-19, how terrible!

*Lula Henderson
Perkins, Okla*

We are not alone

I appreciate the March articles on mental illness. They were well done.

As the father of a child with a serious mental illness, I know how difficult it is to live with a mentally ill person and how alone one can feel in dealing with the illness. Feelings of inadequacy and guilt abound as one wonders why one's family has to be so burdened.

Articles such as those in MESSINGER help to develop support for people in our situation. They also help us to realize that we are not alone in dealing with mental illness.

*Bob Chase
New Windsor, Md.*

Well done and informative

The March MESSINGER had a great set of articles on mental illness. It



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Letters

was well done and informative. Now let's do a similar set of articles on domestic violence. As a domestic violence program coordinator, I'd be glad to help.

*Sharon Burne
Ugou, Ill*

Timely and accurate

As a psychiatrist specializing in treating depression, I found the March articles on mental illness timely and accurate.

Although depression is a prevalent illness, it often goes undiagnosed and untreated because of the public's misunderstanding. The March articles go a long way toward dispelling the many myths and the misinformation, and give much hope to sufferers and their families.

I am passing copies of these articles on to my colleagues and patients.

*Stuart D. Levy
Philadelphia, Pa*

Why debate Jesus Christ

Dale Brown, in his March article, "Can Christ be Both Exclusive and Inclusive?" he says that Brethren are debating what we can say and believe about Jesus Christ.

That's news to me! Jesus doesn't exclude anyone; the person does. Since the New Testament is our only creed, how can there be any debate about Jesus Christ? Why write a statement about what we believe? You either believe or you don't.

Let's get back to basic beliefs in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior of the world.

*Louise C. Herring
Washington, D.C*

Waiting in vain

I had been eagerly awaiting MESSENGER's report of the Promise Keepers Clergy Conference for Men in Atlanta in February. With 40,000

Pontius' Puddle

Send payment for reprinting *Pontius' Puddle* from MESSENGER to Joel Kauffmann, 111 Carter Road, Goshen, IN 46526. \$25 for one time use. \$10 for second strip in same issue. \$10 for congregation.

attendees, it was the largest gathering of Christian clergymen in the history of Christianity.

I attended with concern about the group's all-male makeup, but I left Atlanta a different person. It was one of the richest experiences of my life.

MESSENGER was remiss in not covering this important event.

Larry M. Dentler
East Berlin, Pa.

Who started CROP?

The May MESSENGER, page 6, gives M.R. Zigler credit for starting CROP (Christian Rural Overseas Program). I have always understood that John Metzler Sr. did that.

Ernestine Hoff Emrick
La Verne, Calif.

(We based our statement on the CROP item in the Brethren Encyclopedia, which states that M.R. Zigler, then executive of the Brethren Service Commission, began the consultations that led to CROP's founding. Church World Service then hired John Metzler Sr. to direct the program. Since John Metzler Sr. wrote the encyclopedia article, we consider it definitive.—Ed.)

Who's on first?

David Eller, in "Brethren in the Land of the Miamis" (May, page 18) refers to the Four Mile church as the second Brethren congregation in Indiana.

I grew up in that congregation. Every bit of history that I have ever read about Four Mile gives it as the oldest Brethren congregation in the state—the mother of all Indiana Brethren churches.

Mary L. Cheek
Sebring, Fla.

(There were Brethren in Indiana as early as 1802. Four Mile was

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Daily prayer guide:

Sunday: Your congregation's ministries

Monday: Annual Conference officers

Tuesday: General Board and staff

Wednesday: District executives,
Bethany Seminary, colleges
and university

Thursday: General Services

Friday: Parish Ministries

Saturday: World Ministries

July prayer concerns:

Congregation: Camping ministries;
summer Sunday school.

Conference: Officers Fred Bernhard,
David Wine, and Anne Myers. Staff
members Duane Steiner, Sue
Thompson Moe.

General Board: Board reorganiza-
tion, July 4; General Secretary
search committee; Redesign Com-
mittee presenting options to district
conferences.

Districts and schools: Summer
school programs; district confer-
ences.

General Services: News Services,
cosponsor of Cincinnati Habitat pro-
ject.

Parish Ministries: The Andrew
Center, cosponsor of Cincinnati
Habitat project.

World Ministries: BVS and Disaster
Services, cosponsors of Cincinnati
Habitat project.

Letters

organized in 1809. The group preced-
ing it left the denomination to join the
Disciples of Christ. Thus Four Mile, in
a sense, is the second Brethren con-
gregation in Indiana. Another way to

put it would be to call Four Mile the
oldest surviving Brethren congrega-
tion in Indiana.—Ed.)

What Baha'is believe

I am a Baha'i, and a Brethren friend
made me aware of Carl Braaten's
January MESSENGER article, "No
Other Gospel." I appreciated the
article, which adds perspective to
wide misunderstanding about the
Baha'i faith.

It is important to have unfettered
discussions on matters of faith and
religion and to celebrate what we all
have in common. In this regard,
Braaten has done a service by high-
lighting other religions and their
relation to Christianity from his per-
spective.

Although Baha'is believe that all
religions are valid, we take a more
comprehensive view, which affirms
both the saving grace of Jesus and the
validity of all the world's religions.
This particular teaching of the faith is
known as "progressive revelation."

Christians who investigate the
Baha'i faith will find that it in no way
mitigates the sacrifice and signifi-
cance of Jesus.

*Debra Kirchhof-Glazie
James Creek, Pa.*

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For info, write J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Road,
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Pilgrimage to Israel, Jordan, & Greece, Oct.
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Turning Points

New Members

Note: Congregations are asked to submit only the names of actual new members of the denomination. Do not include names of people who have merely transferred their membership from another Church of the Brethren congregation.

Antelope Park, W. Plains: Erik Anderson, Geoff Friesen
Antelope Valley, S. Plains: Mary Choate; Trisha Horn; Alicia, Heather, & Michelle; Amy, Billy, Melissa, and Sarra McCoy; Staci Mount; Shawn O'Laughlin; Mary Beth & Sherry Sharp; Bradley Unruh; Cecil & Leonna Witherow
Antioch, Shen.: Dealie & Langley Austin
Bakersfield Community, Pac S.W.: Doris Ladd
Bear Creek, S. Ohio: Kathleen & Megan Eichelberger, Alicia Erbaugh
Beech Grove, S. Ohio: Michelle Smith
Black Rock, S. Pa.: Courtney Beard, Bob & Janet Hann, Leonard & Letty Laughman, Kelly Reed, Evelyn Werner Emminger, Selena Wunderlich
Brandts, S. Pa.: Cheryl Gehr, Karen & Tim Stanton, Kevin Tanger, Megan Thomas, Katrina Young
Central, Virginia: Adam Childers, Karen Stanley, Sharon Stoneman
Chambersburg, S. Pa.: Ira & Dorothy Blough, Paul Diffendorfer, Wayne & Hattie Nicarry
Chiquess, Atl. N.E.: Tyler Benner, Shawn Brandt, Sara Gainer, Sonda Haldeman, Philip Hosler, Amanda Nissley, Juan Pham, Andrew Shenk, Tara Shenk
Copper Hill, Virginia: Lowell Iddings, Martha Long, George Thomas
Coventry, Atl. N.E.: Joshua Farman, Mark McMahon, Lucinda Schnovel, Linda Swavely
Dixon, Ill. Wis.: Laurie & Dean Harms, Matthew Bowers, David & Nathan Cornelius, Ean Scholz, Dorothy Frost, Lonnie Yount
Drexel Hill, Atl. N.E.: Warren & Vadia Dewees, Kirk & Tammy Dize, Grace Myers
East Chippewa, N. Ohio: Ashley, Jamie, & Julie Horst; Andrew Hostetter; Nathan Hutson; Douglas & Joyce Imhoff, Keith Kauffman
Eden Valley, W. Plains: Cassie Blakeslee, Rick Jenkins, Phillip & Leigh Kirkland,

Lance & Joyce Miller, Larry & Paulette Miller, Kerry & Jessica Suiter
Eversole, S. Ohio: Wendi Eshbaugh, Joshua Jones.
Fairview, Mid. Atl.: Laci Dulin; Bobbi, Michelle & Carrie Eason; Catherine, Heidi & Kelly Johnson; Jessica Sedgwick
Fraternity, Virginia: Leah Edwards, Eugene & Mary Ann Moore
Freeport, Ill. Wis.: Rosa Buntjer, Arlene Cook, Bud & Marcelene Miller
Friendship, Mid. Atl.: Rose Brocato, Vanessa Howard, Betty & Russell Johnson
Greensburg, W. Pa.: Lynn Grimme, Arlie & Janice Ashe
Hagerstown, Mid. Atl.: Scott Arnett, Mandy Askew, Deanna Castle, Willis Clark, Tina Delauter, Shelby Druggers, Melissa Early, Blair & Cheryl Gardner, Tracey Lapole, Marsha Massey, Mike Metzel, Tiffany Mullendore, Olive Peters, Jay Reichard, Angie & Anita Rhoderick, Julie Shobe, Sarah Shuman, Kevin Snyder, Randy Sprecher
Harrisburg First, Atl. N.E.: Paul Albin, Eric Benson, Alexia Diedel, Brandon Grady, Geoffrey & Rachel Knight, Becki Keitzell, Tia Meyers, Noah Mumma
Hatfield, Atl. N.E.: Andrew Hanks, Karen Rice
Heidelberg, Atl. N.E.: Janelle Hartman
Hollidaysburg, Mid. Pa.: Sylvia Boyles, Carolyn Frye, Tom Wolf
Hopewell, Virginia: Michael Dillon
Huntsdale, S. Pa.: Joni Baldwin, Jessica McCullough, Becky Brougner, David Knight, Jeremy Thumma
Kokomo, S. C. Ind.: Amanda Beckom, Brian Mund, John & Ryan Pyke, Michael Smith, Corrie Wann
Lancaster, Atl. N.E.: Beverly & Connie Bauer; Shawn Beam; Ashley, Joan & William Brinkman; Elizabeth Carr; Phil Clemens; Matthew Harnish; Emily Hess; Melissa Hufford; Craig & Linda Husted; Carrie Lunger; Eric Shulenberger; Charlene Smitley; Emily Sweigart-Rios; Rachel Zubko
Lansing First, Mich.: Anne White
Eititz, Atl. N.E.: Ashley Bomberger, Emily Bingeman, Colin Crosby, Shannon Fleming, Cindy Kreider, Rieky Longenecker, Kara Renn, Alison Runk, Mary Stauffer, Kellye Way
Locust Grove, W. Pa.: Adam

Cobaugh; Amber Haupt; Reese Jeffreys; Thomas, Michael & Matthew Lauffer, Amanda & Amber Sunday
Manor, Mid. Atl.: Vera Parks, Fred Rowland
Mansfield, N. Ohio: Lloyd & Shirley Beach, Elma Harrison, Tim Hill, David & Lois Kiner, Aaron Morris, John Stankovich, Adam Strang
San Diego, Pac. S.W.: Duane Johnson

Wedding Anniversaries

Albright, David & Anne, McPherson, Kan., 50
Bateman, Willis & Eunice, Roanoke, Va., 50
Brown, Al & Evelyn, Phoenixville, Pa., 50
Bruekhart, Abram & Mary, Palmyra, Pa., 60
Brumbaugh, Lloyd & Lois, Sebring, Fla., 60
Brunner, Lloyd & Mae, Sebring, Fla., 50
Cooper, William & Nancy, Woodbury, Pa., 50
Daughtry, Newton & Susie, Shoemakerville, Pa., 68
Detwiler, John & Irene, Elkhart, Ind., 50
Engle, Virgil & Miriam, West Milton, Ohio, 50
Fawley, Dean & Eunice, Bridgewater, Va., 50
Freeman, Harold & Thelma, Hillsboro, Ohio, 55
Giles, Herman & Ruth, Freeport, Ill., 60
Gudykunst, Bill & Elinor, Reading, Pa., 55
Hanawalt, Wayne & Elna, La Verne, Calif., 50
Hand, Leaster & Leah, Lake Odessa, Mich., 60
Harter, Ralph & Phyllis, Elkhart, Ind., 50
Haskins, Kenneth & Dorothy, Sunfield, Mich., 55
Heffner, Stephen & Edna, Keedysville, Md., 50
Hildebrand, Richard & Hazel, Luthicum, Md., 50
Hineline, Forest & Ruby, Rice Lake, Wis., 50
Kuhar, Frank & Jennie, Virden, Ill., 60
Lozier, Cecil & Thelma, Warsaw, Ind., 60
Merrifield, Daniel & Enda, Champaign, Ill., 70
Mishler, John & Naomi, North Manchester, Ind., 55
Monke, Melvin & Phyllis, Kinsley, Ind., 50
Moore, Wesley & Ruby, Warsaw, Ind., 55
Mummert, Ross & May, Chambersburg, Pa., 55
Old, Maxwell & Marian, San Diego, Calif., 50
Petersen, Eldo & Beulah, Waterloo, Iowa, 50
Radeliff, Richard & Margaret, Blue Ridge, Va., 50
Roush, Dwight & Virginia,

Elkhart, Ind., 50
Schaefer, Robert & Ella Mae, Sebring, Fla., 50
Shaffer, Walter & Dorothy, Pomona, Calif., 60
Shawman, Ralph & Edna Mae, Akron, Ind., 60
Teets, Ellis & Marie, Eglon, W. Va., 50
Weaver, Herman & Winifred, Johnstown, Pa., 55
Weaver, Lloyd and Norma, Rochester, Ind., 50
Welch, Virgil & Shirley, La Verne, Calif., 50
Yorty, Rebecca & Luther, One Grove, Pa., 50

Deaths

Akers, Hazel, 95, Roanoke, Va., Dec. 14, 1995
Akers, Robert, 87, Liberty, Ill., Aug. 26, 1995
All, Marie, 84, Scottville, Mich., Feb. 11, 1996
Allen, Mary F., 87, Elkhart, Ind., Mar. 25, 1996
Ammiller, Myrtle, 97, Canton, Ohio, Dec. 5, 1995
Amspacher, Anna, 87, Brodbeck's, Pa., Mar. 18, 1996
Angell, Anna, 77, Westminster, Md., May 7, 1996
Anglemyer, Vera, 76, Goshen, Ind., Feb. 5, 1996
Baker, Russell, 66, Frederick, Md., Sept. 19, 1995
Bartges, Hester, 89, Logan-ton, Pa., Feb. 20, 1996
Bateman, Ernestine, 95, Roanoke, Va., Feb. 15, 1996
Beery, Miriam S., 94, La Verne, Calif., May 6, 1996
Bigam, Cecil E., 84, Johnstown, Pa., Jan. 8, 1996
Bodge, Dorothy, 62, Norris-town, Pa., Dec. 15, 1995
Boyd, Paul, 62, Defiance, Ohio, Feb. 29, 1996
Breneman, Norman, 88, Lancaster, Pa., Mar. 25, 1996
Brillhart, Enola, 91, Roanoke, Va., Mar. 25, 1996
Brown, Josephine, 89, Mansfield, Ohio, Jan. 2, 1996
Burnside, Charles H., 77, Trotwood, Ohio, Mar. 14, 1996
Caldwell, Brittany L., 45 mo., West Manchester, Ohio, Jan. 15, 1996
Cannaday, Rosie A., 81, Stuart, Va., Apr. 12, 1996
Capps, Margaret Bowman, 75, Martinsville, Va., Mar. 2, 1996
Coyne, John J., 76, Walnut Grove, Va., Mar. 20, 1996
Cross, Theodore, Alliance, Ohio, Feb. 25, 1996
Derhertog, Ethel, 77, Hagerstown, Md., Aug. 19, 1995
Diekey, John, 82, La Verne, Calif., Mar. 29, 1996
Dilling, Amy, 55, Frederick, Md., Feb. 24, 1996
Dunn, Ella M., 81, Winston-Salem, N.C., Apr. 21, 1996
Eakin, Melvin E., 85, Stuarts Draft, Va., Mar. 10, 1996
Eicher, Bertha, 94, North Huntingdon, Pa., Jan. 19, 1996
Eiler, Arvilla I., 86, Akron, Ind., Mar. 27, 1996
Elgin, Lynn, 85, Stuart, Va., Feb. 15, 1996
Eller, Paul C., 81, Nampa, Idaho, Mar. 18, 1996
Evans, Helen L., 74, Johnstown, Pa., Mar. 6, 1996
Fair, Mary, 85, Waynesboro, Pa., Mar. 13, 1996
Fawley, Dorothy, 68, Frederick, Md., Jan. 22, 1996
Ferris, Mary, 80, Roanoke, Va., Apr. 25, 1996
Fields, Elva, 77, Alexandria, Va., Sept. 5, 1995
Fike, Orpha, 91, Eglon, W. Va., May 9, 1996
Fleming, Nelson R., 41, Burlington, W. Va., Mar. 50, 1996
Frushour, Ray E., 92, Chambersburg, Pa., Feb. 29, 1996
Gaver, Richard, 78, Trotwood, Ohio, Dec. 20, 1995
Glick, Brian D., 20, Harrisonburg, Va., Apr. 3, 1996
Gray, Hazel, 79, Kokomo, Ind., Mar. 14, 1996
Hackman, Richard, 81, Mannheim, Pa., Mar. 26, 1996
Hendrickson, Grace, 85, Scottville, Mich., Feb. 18, 1996
Holloway, Wade L., 75, Akron, Ind., Mar. 4, 1996
Homestead, Mabel M., 91, Greenwood, Del., Mar. 25, 1996
Horner, Grace, 92, La Verne, Calif., Feb. 19, 1996
Horner, Lois K., 79, Mount Pleasant, Pa., Jan. 24, 1996
Horst, Paul, 81, Hagerstown, Md., Nov. 20, 1995
Hosteter, Retha, 68, Walkerton, Ind., Feb. 28, 1996
Hull, Mary, 100, Fort Loudon, Pa., Jan. 20, 1996
Jamison, Levi, 97, Boones Mill, Va., Dec. 21, 1995
Johnson, Mary, 95, Wardensville, W. Va., Apr. 12, 1996
Johnson, Robert, Orrville, Ohio, Jan. 18, 1995
Jones, Ruth, 88, Lancaster, Pa., Apr. 11, 1996
Keckler, Roy M., 68, Chambersburg, Pa., Feb. 5, 1996
Keeney, Harry G., 59, Frederick, Md., Oct. 4, 1995
Kehne, Dallas Jr., Monrovia, Md., Mar. 25, 1996
Kimmel, Elizabeth, 92, Frederick, Md., Oct. 20, 1995
Kimmel, James, 80, Mount Pleasant, Pa., Jan. 24, 1996
King, Mildred, 97, Charlotte, Mich., Apr. 1, 1996
Klimaszewski, Walter, 79, Fayetteville, Pa., Mar. 19, 1996
Kline, John, 85, Chambersburg, Pa., Feb. 28, 1996
Krull, La Verda, 81, Goshen, Ind., Mar. 4, 1996
Kuhn, Dorothy, 74, Jeanette, Pa., Jan. 1, 1996

Hide it under a bushel? *No.*

In a 1984 editorial titled “Are the Brethren Recognizable?” I confessed that so far no one had ever spotted me in a crowd, pointed me out, and exclaimed, “Hey, look! That guy’s Brethren!” Twelve years later, still no one has blown my cover—my bushel, as it were.

But I do claim one experience of having someone overhear me in conversation and inquire about my church. One day I was having lunch with an exuberant young Brethren minister, overflowing with the Holy Spirit and spouting like a whale. We were having quite an animated conversation about the church. Readers who are familiar with my sourpuss visage and undemonstrative ways may be assured that the animation and conversation came largely from one side. Yet, disengaged as I may sometimes appear, on this occasion even I was so caught up that, like my frisky friend, I was unaware that we were being overheard.

Suddenly the young woman in the booth behind me sprang up and asked us excitedly, “Where is this church you are talking about? I want to learn more about it!”

I felt like one of the Twelve Disciples caught off guard. Nonplussed, I couldn’t even think to haul in my line. Fortunately, my friend was cut out for this business, and he responded appropriately.

As you see, I cannot claim credit for evangelizing that young woman. To do so would make me like the little boy who, returning home from the hunt, proudly reported to his mother, “We killed a bear! . . . Pa shot it.”

In fact, I confess that I keep my lamp, dim as it is, hidden under a bushel, rather than placing it on the lampstand. I assuage my conscience with the balm provided in Romans 12:6: “We have gifts that differ, according to the grace given unto us.” Overt evangelizing does not appear to be my strong suit.

Yet while evangelizing may be done more effectively by one person than another, this is not to let us Brethren as a denomination, or Brethren in our congregations, off the hook. As all four articles that make up this

month’s Bible and hammer cluster agree, evangelism is one of the two great works of the church, addressing our neighbor’s needs being the other.

As the articles demonstrate, there are many ways to evangelize. Standing on the street corner and asking each passerby “Are you saved?” is not the most effective of these.

Don Fitzkee, decrying “one-sided Christianity,” challenges us to “embrace the full scope of Christ’s mission in the world.” When we Brethren have been at our best, that is what we always have done, he says. “On the one hand, social ministries foster evangelism. On the other hand, biblical evangelism fosters social action.”

Paul Munday claims that we Brethren have set ourselves up for the decline we now are scrambling to reverse. “We have created a polarity between two concepts that do not need to be mutually exclusive: evangelism and identity.” He tests three “familiar but problematic assumptions” that have brought us where we are. Then he goes on to tell, step by step, how we can be “a peace church that welcomes.” It’s time, he says, that we “move out of the warm, but excluding patterns of an Old Testament clan to the warm, but inclusive patterns of a New Testament church.”

Fred Bernhard and Steve Clapp provide a whole host of practical things we can do to become a welcoming church. No one who reads this down-to-earth article can avoid finding several things that the individual can do—to say nothing of what the congregation can do—to turn an inhospitable church into a welcoming one.

Our gifts may differ, one member’s from another’s, but collectively we can put aside our bushel and set our lamp on a stand. Shining there, may it light the way for others to come and join us, not primarily to swell our ranks, but that we may be what Christ called us: the light of the world.—K.T.

*Our gifts may differ,
one member’s
from another’s,
but collectively
we can put aside
our bushel and set our
lamp on a stand.*

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Church of the Brethren

August/September 1996

Messenger



Cincinnati '96

*Testing our
welcome*

Messenger

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Publisher: Dale Minnich

On the cover: Everywhere at Annual Conference you see friends hugging. It's good to feel welcomed. But Cincinnati '96 experienced the irony of meeting under the banner of "As Christ Welcomed You," while dealing with a petition to withhold welcome from one special-interest group (see page 15).



Moderator Fred Bernhard, who initiated the Conference theme and who makes welcoming the thrust of his pastoral ministry, had the final word on the subject (see page 26).

Features

10 Cincinnati '96

The MESSENGER staff summarizes all the business covered at Annual Conference in Cincinnati and gives highlights of the week's other activities. Photography was provided by Brethren Volunteer Service worker Jeff Leard, serving his second year in this position. Sidebars on the Habitat for Humanity project in Cincinnati are by Nevin Dulabaum and Suellen Shively-Mack, and on the Redesign Steering Committee's report by Nevin Dulabaum.

29 Acts in August

In an excerpt from his forthcoming book, *Fruit of the Vine*, Donald F. Durnbaugh describes the acts of August 1708 in Schwarzenau, Germany, that birthed the Church of the Brethren. In a sidebar, he summarizes some of the basic beliefs of the Brethren pioneers.



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From the Editor

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Coming next month

A look (askance) at the luring of the developing world into the ways of the West.

District Messenger representatives: Atl. N.E., Ron Lutz; Atl. S.E., Ruby Raymer; Ill. Wis., Kreston Lipscomb; S. C. Ind., Marjorie Miller; Mich., Ken Good; Mid-Atl., Ann Fouts; Mo. Ark., Luc Landes; N. Plains, Faith Strom; N. Ohio, Alice L. Driver; S. Ohio, Jack Kline; Ore. Wash., Marguerite Shamberger; Pac. S.W., Randy Miller; M. Pa., Eva Wampler; S. Pa., Elmer Q. Gleim; W. Pa., Jay Christner; Shen., Tim Harvey; S. Plains, Mary Ann Dell; Virgina, David & Hettie Webster; W. Plains, Dean Hummer; W. Marva, Winona Spurgeon.

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During one of his "Lighten Up With Duane" spots at Cincinnati, the Annual Conference executive director exhibited a 1919 Conference Booklet alongside the 1996 version. My interest piqued, I dug out my 1919 Booklet to refresh my dimming memories of it.

It was 5.5 x 6 inches, had 96 pages (three of them blank, for "memoranda"), and weighed in at 1.7 ounces. I wrestled the 6 x 9-inch 1996 Booklet, with its 580 pages, onto the scales and noted its 1 pound, 5.4 ounce weight. You could slip the 1919 Booklet into your shirt pocket, and still have room for a pocket Testament, the Brethren's Card, and a few Winona Lake postcards to mail home.

The 1919 Conference was billed as the "Becker Bicentennial." I suppose the planners had in mind Peter Becker's 1719 arrival from Europe, since his 1687 birthdate doesn't jibe with 1919. Throughout the Wednesday-Monday Conference week, speeches lifted up the "Coming to America" theme. J. M. Henry led off with a patriotic paean "Our Debt to America: What We Owe and How to Pay It."

Brethren who think Conference these days is bombarded with videos may be surprised to learn that they had their forerunners in 1919. At Winona Lake '19, Conference opened with a "Stereopticon Lecture," a presentation on the China mission field, by F.J. Wampler. Later in the week, Jesse B. Emmert countered with a Stereopticon Lecture on India.

Business? Oh, yes, there *was* business to care for in 1919. Unfinished business was headed by the item "Saving Our Children to the Church." The study committee bemoaned the fact that only 301 congregations bothered to answer its survey form, 700 others reneging. Another Unfinished Business item was "Qualifications and Duties of Deacons"; it was still unfinished at Cincinnati '96.

Among the interesting queries coming in 1919 as New Business was one from Cabool, Mo., that decried such things as membership in secret lodges, musical instruments in church, sisters wearing hats, and "brethren or sisters" wearing neckties. Cabool asked for Standing Committee to form a committee of competent elders, to be called the Committee on Loyalty, to root out these "evils and irregularities."

And that's it, brothers and sisters, from Winona Lake, Ind., June 4-11, 1919.

Termon Thomasson



Duane Steiner
*contrasts the 1919
Conference Booklet
with this year's
edition.*

In Touch

Setting sights on Sidney

Sarah Heeb has a four-year plan to go for the gold at the 2000 Olympics in Sidney. This past April Sarah set an American record in the women's 5,000-meter steeplechase at the Mount San Antonio College relays in California. In June she placed second in the Olympic trials run in 106-degree heat in Atlanta.

Women's steeplechase is a new sport involving jumping barriers (one with a water barrier) around the tracks seven and a half times. It was only demonstrated in Atlanta, but will be an Olympic sport in 2000.

Sarah, a member of Lone Star (Kan.) Church of the Brethren, graduated this spring in meteorology from the University of Kansas. She is now hunting a job that will allow her to train regularly. "I'm hoping to find a shoe or uniform sponsor," she says. "My coach suggests I also find an equipment sponsor, and one to send me to major events."

She was a high school champion in the hurdles. As a university junior, she began distance running. "With both hurdling and distance experience, it wasn't hard to gear up for the Mount SAC steeplechase when Coach Guymon suggested it," she says.

"Sarah is a natural athlete," says Coach

Guymon. "She has endurance and drive, is very well coordinated, and has tremendous muscular flexibility. One more hurdle and she probably would have won in Atlanta."

Having proved in Atlanta that she can handle the pressure of a big event, Sarah is eagerly awaiting Sidney ... and the gold. —IRENE S. REYNOLDS

Irene S. Reynolds is a freelance writer from Lawrence, Kan.



Eligible for the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia, Sarah Heeb captured the American record for the 5,000-meter steeplechase in April

Remembered

Harlan J. Brooks, 98, died July 7 in Sterling, Va. He served as a Church of the Brethren missionary in India, 1924-1960.

• **Altaira Alves Martins** died July 15 in Rio Verde, Brazil, following a stroke. She was a member of the team ministry at the Rio Verde church.

• **Clair Petcher**, 97, died April 4 in Chatom, Ala. He operated an auto repair shop on Chicago's West Van Buren Street 1927-1962 and was known there to many generations of Bethany Seminary students.

Names in the news

Mike Hanger, a member of Oak Grove Church of the Brethren, Roanoke, Va., received a citation at WDBJ-TV's annual "Friday Football Extra" awards banquet. He was commended for his work on behalf of sports in southwest Virginia high school athletics.

• **Donna McKee Rhodes**, minister of nurture at Stone Church of the Brethren in Huntingdon, Pa., has been given a 1996 Silver Angel Award by Excellence in Media for her book *Little Stories for Little Children*. (See July 1995, page 2.)

• **Albert Moore** of Fostoria (Ohio) Church of the Brethren was cited in the spring issue of *Ohio Heritage* (published by the Ohio Department of Aging) for his 20 years of volunteering "with just about every charity and humanistic concern his community

has to offer." He has had numerous honors for his work, including being named the 1994 Ohio United Way Citizens Forum's Volunteer of the Year and receiving President Clinton's 1994 Volunteer Action Award.

- On Earth Peace Assembly (OEPA) has established a Youth Leadership Training Fund in



Hazel Peters

honor of **Hazel Peters** of Roanoke, Va. She has given nearly 50 years of service to the denomination through Brethren Volunteer Service in Europe, serving on the General Board staff, and volunteering at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md.

First-timer feels welcome

Kelly Jones was a first-time Conferencegoer and a delegate to Annual Conference in Cincinnati. Impressions? What initially struck her was the large number of people present for the business sessions. Not everything she heard in those sessions was gripping. "The hardest part," she said, "was sitting through the financial reports."

Aside from her responsibilities as a delegate from Center Church of the Brethren in Louisville, Ohio, Kelly attended several insight sessions. Of special interest to her, since she has cerebral palsy, was an insight session on adapting Brethren ordinances for people with disabilities. The session gave Kelly "the idea of how to overcome the barrier of washing feet. A person with disabilities can use a long-handle sponge."

Kelly was assisted at Conference by fellow Center member Laura Vickers. Laura praised Cincinnati as a wheelchair-friendly city. "The biggest problem," she noted, "was on the Fourth of July, when many restaurants weren't open. Then our options were limited."

Center church is a very accessible church, Kelly says. Recent remodeling added accessible restrooms. Wheelchair ramps have been in place since the 1970s, when member Dean Kahler was paralyzed in the Kent State massacre (see July 1990, "Healing the Wounds of Kent State"). —KARLA BOYERS

Karla Boyers, a journalist, is a member of Arlington (Va.) Church of the Brethren. She served as an editorial assistant with MESSENGER, 1990-1991.



left/Leard

Kelly Jones (left) managed well serving as a delegate at Annual Conference, with some help from her friend Laura Vickers.

Serving in Nigeria will be special

Nigeria is special to **Dennis Kingery**. He grew up hearing his mother, the late Leah Standafer Kingery, tell about her experiences there as a teacher. Now the recent McPherson College graduate and member of McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren is headed to Nigeria as a teacher himself.

At McPherson, Dennis majored in accounting and business finance. Into sports, he played football at Mac and he enjoys "Ultimate Frisbee." Heading into Brethren Volun-

Thomson



Dennis Kingery

teer Service, his general goal was to land an assignment "somewhere overseas."

He had not thought about replicating his mother's experience, but Nigeria's Hillcrest School has been needing a business teacher for many months, so when Dennis entered BVS this summer, he was tapped for the post.

Dennis is enthusiastic about working in Nigeria, seeing it as a great opportunity to broaden his horizons. He got a taste of that during spring break, when he participated in a work-camp in Puerto Rico, led by his dad, Eldred Kingery, working through the Caimito Community Center to build a house for a needy family.

But Nigeria will be special, following a parent's footsteps.

"In Touch" profiles Brethren we would like you to meet. Send story ideas and photos to "In Touch," MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

Close to Home

Campus comments

Juniata College is one of three Pennsylvania colleges cited by Loren Pope in his new book *Colleges That Change Lives* (Penguin Press, 1996). Juniata is cited "for its effective teaching, close mentoring of students, and remarkable success in getting its graduates into the same prestigious medical,

law, business, and other graduate schools that students from Ivy League colleges attend."

- **Bridgewater College's** collection of John Kline artifacts was highlighted in a local television program May 5. John Kline, of nearby Broadway, was a Brethren leader and outspoken pacifist who was murdered during the Civil War. The artifacts

include the peace martyr's Dunker broadbrimmed hat



and the saddle bags he used on his horse, Nell.

- **Manchester College's** Schwalm Hall residents have been recognized by Indiana Campus Compact (ICC) for their outstanding devotion to public service. The residents sponsored a Walk for Hunger and a food drive, as well as donating 5 turkeys to a food pantry. Their service projects totaled more than 800 hours of volunteer service.

BVS a conduit to Bethany

Photos don't lie: Nineteen percent of the 1995-1996 student body at **Bethany Seminary** are veterans of Brethren Volunteer Service. Before school let out this spring, students, faculty, and staff who were former BVSers gathered for this photo with BVS director Dan McLadden. Absent were Steve Brady, Cheryl Cayford, and Kim Yaussy Albright.



BVSers at Bethany. *Out front:* Rhonda Pittman, Shawn Replogle, Murray Wagner, and Debbie Lisenbise. *Seated in center:* Dona Pence Frantz and Jamie Beachy. *Standing:* Dan McLadden, Brenda Petry, Mike Grubb, Greg Laszakovits, Frances Townsend, Dave Miller, and Mark Sloan. *Elevated:* Laura Van Voorhis and Bob Coursen.

Let's celebrate

Bear Creek Church of the Brethren in Dayton, Ohio, will celebrate its 185th anniversary September 28-29 using the theme "Claiming the Call to Serve." Speaker will be 1996 moderator Fred Bernhard and director of Ministry Training Jean Hendricks.

- **Oakley (Ill.) Brick** Church of the Brethren celebrated its 140th anniversary July 20-21, concluding with a potluck meal.

- **Fremont Church** of the Brethren, Hillsville, Va., is celebrating its 75th anniversary on August 11. Virginia District executive David Shumate is guest speaker. A gospel songfest and an impersonation of John Kline by Paul White round out the program.

Time out to celebrate

The Women's Fellowship at Mansfield (Ohio) Church of the Brethren organized in 1951. They meet every Wednesday for fellowship and work, creating hand-craft items that they sell for fundraising or donate to nursing homes and the Brethren Service Center, wherever there is need.

Recently the group celebrated its 65th anniversary. Posing with the cake are officers Margaret Hanlon, Jean Sponseller, Pauline Kennedy (president), and Lee Ward.



When you hear "Hershey," you think ... coffee?

It's a question that many ask: "Where can you buy a really good cup of coffee?" But, Hey! Where can you buy a really good cup of coffee, promote fair trade, protect tropical forests ... and have lots of fun ... all at the same time? Hershey Park, that's where.

Rick Stammel, a member of Palmyra (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, had his first cup of *Forestal Cafe* at a SERRV International display in the fellowship hall at church. He tried it. He liked it. "The coffee was good, and I was happy to learn that, from each bag sold, coffee bean farmers in Costa Rica donate 25 cents toward protecting the tropical forests."

Rick is food and beverage director for the famous Hershey Park in nearby Hershey. Having woken up and smelled the coffee, he ordered 144 bags of *Forestal Cafe* from SERRV. Now at the park you can buy it by the cup at Grinder's Gourmet Coffee Shop, or by the bag at Pippin's Restaurant.

Try it. You'll like it.—KATHLEEN CAMPANELLA

Kathleen Campanella is staff for Public Information at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. Anyone wanting to try one of SERRV's Equal Exchange coffees should call (800) 725-5712



This and that

Kindercritters, an outdoor education program for kindergarteners at Virlina District's **Camp Bethel**,



attracted over 2,000 pupils

and their teachers this past spring. They came to the camp on day-long field trips to learn about the surrounding woods and their wildlife in Camp Bethel's Blue Ridge Mountains setting.

• **Ninth Street Church** of the Brethren in Roanoke, Va., held a service April 21 to honor 17 couples in the congregation who have been married 50 years or more this year. Beulah and Claude Flora, married in 1929, held the record for the longest marriage. The service related to the Golden Age Club, a program for the church's older adults.

• **West Milton (Ohio) Church** of the Brethren hosted a Southern Ohio District observance of the 25th anniversary of the death of Ted Studebaker, a West Milton member who was killed in Vietnam April 26, 1971 while there in Brethren Volunteer Service.



A new church for a new century

Nampa (Idaho) Church of the Brethren dedicated its new meetinghouse on April 14. The 97-year-old congregation has 500 members and welcomes the spacious 16,000-square-foot building, built for growth. The footing was poured March 1, 1995, and the first ser-

vice in the new building was held last Christmas Eve. Best of all, the work was done with volunteer labor, and the congregation is without debt.

"Close to Home" highlights news of congregations, districts, colleges, homes, and other local and regional life. Send story ideas and photos to "Close to Home," MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120

Cross-cultural event joins people of same heritage

Seventeen district executives and others participated in a 12-day journey to Puerto Rico in May on a trip sponsored by Council of District



The Puerto Rico Island Conference was the occasion for Irma Zayas' installation as Atlantic Southeast's associate district executive for Puerto Rico. Participating were Oscar Villanueva Cruz, pastor of the Iglesia Cristiana Getsemani Project in Villa Prades, P.R.; Elsa Groff (Puerto Rico moderator) and Berwyn Oltman (Atlantic Southeast District executive)

Executives (CODE).

"To have this cross-cultural experience is to experience the culture of the island as well as the essence of the Church of the Brethren," said Ron Finney, co-district executive of South Central Indiana with his wife, Harriet.

Event participants attended the Puerto Rico Island Conference, where they witnessed the installation of Irma Zayas as associate district executive in Puerto Rico.

Group members had many opportunities to visit, learn from, and teach with the Brethren in Puerto Rico.

Two days were spent at a workcamp on a building shared by Segunda Iglesia Cristo

Misionera Fellowship and the Christian Community Center. Group members also visited each Brethren fellowship and congregation in Puerto Rico, as well as Castañer Hospital.

Randy Yoder, Middle Pennsylvania district executive, spent one morning talking with Puerto Rican pastors about Brethren polity. Ron and Harriet Finney, also co-directors of the General Board's Family Ministries program, held a workshop on family prior to the conference.

Joining the Finneys, Yoder, and Zayas on the trip were Jan Eller, General Board Ministry staff, and her husband, Doug; and district executives Larry Glick, Shenandoah;

Gene Hipskind, Pacific Southwest (and his wife, Linda); Ken Holderead, Illinois, Wisconsin (and his wife, Elsie); Sidney King, Idaho (and her husband, Verl); Berwyn Oltman, Atlantic Southeast; Shirley Spire, Southeastern co-executive; Jim Tomlinson, Southern Ohio; and Tom Zuercher, Northern Ohio.

"We work so intensely in our own district that there is a real danger in thinking that everyone experiences the spiritual life of the church in the same way we do, as well as in our organizational life," said Finney. "It was a real benefit to be in Puerto Rico, in seeing that worship, as well as business meetings, were very Brethren, but very different from our individual experiences."

CODE organizes cross-cultural events every five years. Past events have taken place in such countries as Mexico and South Korea.

—PAULA WILDING

First New Life Assembly deals with worship and evangelism

About 200 church leaders from North American Anabaptist congregations converged at the first New Life Assembly, June 14-16, to worship and to reflect on how worship can be both faithful and appealing to all who gather together. Held at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, the conference succeeded the Evangelism Leaders Academies.

On Friday evening, Thomas Troeger, Preaching and Communications professor at Hiff School of Theology, Denver, led a service meant for worshipers to remember their baptisms. Worship concluded with participants filing by the altar, receiving a touch to their foreheads with a splash of water from worship leaders, and encouragement to remember their baptism and to be faithful to Jesus Christ.

Saturday morning, Troeger emphasized that each person believes "the

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way we grew up worshipping at church is the way it is." He referred to this way of imagining our world as the landscape of our hearts. He expressed his belief that the purpose of worship is to enlighten and expand that landscape. Resistance and an inability to understand a new landscape comes from our cultural background, childhood upbringings, fear, and a resistance to God's grace.

On Saturday evening, June Alliman Yoder, associate professor of Communication and Preaching at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, led a seeker worship service, designed for unchurched people or those distant from the church. Participants were encouraged to take the role of a family member or friend who does not attend church. After the service, worshipers reflected on the experience in small groups to gain insight into planning worship in their home congregations.

Sunday morning Yoder addressed the group on the theme of remembering their personal stories and the ways those intersect with the biblical story. She and Troeger then led a worship that followed the story of the disciples' encounter with Jesus on the Emmaus road, with verses of the story interspersed with reflections and interpretation.

The variety of music during the services ranged from praise songs to favorite traditional hymns to hymns from *Hymnal: A Worship Book*.

Twenty-three workshops were available during nonworship times, which covered such topics as blending different musical styles, children in worship, and preaching to seekers. A performance by Ted & Lee, a gospel drama team, brought humor and fresh telling of the Good News to participants on Saturday night.

The New Life Assembly was planned by the anabaptist Evangelism Management Team, which includes staff of the General Board's evangelism staff.—REBECCA BAILEY ROUSE



Photo by Dan Kasziban

Bethany Theological Seminary graduated 15 students on June 16. *The graduates are (front row): Sue Snyder, Carol Pfeiffer, Frances Townsend, Alice Archer, Ronald McAdams, Cheryl Cayford, Linda Daigle, and Toshi Sanglir. (Back row): Jack Quinn, Eric Longwell, Kenneth Gresh, Michael Huffaker, and William Christiansen. Not pictured: Joseph Surin and Ronald Little.*

Rejection and redemption theme of June conference

More than 300 Brethren and Mennonites gathered in North Manchester, Ind., June 28–30, for worship, workshops, storytelling, and music. The event, titled "Dancing at the Table: Re-Imagining the Church," was sponsored by the Supportive Congregations Network (SCN).

It began with evening worship. At the center of the worship space stood a block wall covered with graffiti, symbolizing the barrier SCN members say they have felt because of their individual or congregational welcome of gay, lesbian, and bisexual Christians. During the service the wall was converted into a table of welcome as participants reflected upon a reading from the Acts story of Peter and Cornelius, and heard stories from two SCN congregations.

The story of the Syro-phenician woman's encounter with Jesus was presented Saturday morning during worship through drama; Lee Krähen-

bühl also led the congregation in the song "We Are Not Going Away."

Participants were invited to reflect upon hardened crumbs that were distributed by dancers, symbolizing inadequate nourishment and rejection. The dancers then returned with baskets of fresh rolls. Accompanied by the song "Bring the Feast to Every Hillside," they distributed the bread and the service concluded with the symbolism of everyone being welcome at God's table.

The remainder of Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon was devoted to small-group work, and workshops led by Dale Brown and Linda Schlabach Miller.

"Stories of Rejection and Redemption" was Saturday evening's theme. Biblical stories were woven together with music.

The conference concluded Sunday morning with anointing and a blessing. Bowls of water were brought to the table and participants were invited to anoint one another.

—HELEN WELLS QUINTELA

Redesign Committee releases responses regarding location

What can the Church of the Brethren General Board staff do that local and district staff cannot? And where should the General Board's offices be located, determined by what factors?

In April the Board's Redesign Steering Committee asked its ad hoc advisory group to answer those questions, and on July 15 the committee released a summary of the 115 responses received.

Answers to "What can national staff do that local or district staffs cannot," were divided into five categories.

The top response was the "Coordination of national programs," including national conferences, Brethren Volunteer Service, curriculum, and workcamps.

Second was "Unifying the denomination," which received strong support from pastors and laity.

Ecumenical contact rated third, Mission, foreign and domestic, placed fourth, Ministerial issues placed fifth.

Respondents were divided whether the General Board should have one or more office locations, and where that or those locations should be.

The responses for a centralized location equaled responses favoring a regionalized option. And, nearly all respondents agreed that a smaller but national headquarters is still needed.

The Midwest received 57 votes for the national headquarters location, with Elgin, Ill., receiving the most votes at six (four coming from Elgin-based staff). At least five other cities were also mentioned. Thirty-two people responded that the denomination's headquarters should be located in the East, 24 who called for the headquarters to be in New Windsor, Md. (15 New Windsor-based staff).

The Redesign Committee determined that those who live east of Ohio tend to believe the headquar-

ters should be located in their region. Those in Ohio and to the west "were less likely ... to indicate the offices should be located in their region."

As for the issues most important in making a location decision, 40 percent of the respondents said it is cost. Twenty-five percent cited accessibility; 20 percent mentioned being near a population center. Fourth was having a place that can relate to all Brethren; fifth was a potpourri of answers, including "proximity to Bethany Seminary, impact on staff, and accessibility to communications."

RSC members plan to discuss the redesign options and plans it has submitted to the General Board with Brethren throughout this fall at each district conference.

The RSC also has asked its ad hoc committee to respond to: "What are your feelings about the options proposed for designing a new institution?" The RSC will use responses to that question to help prepare for the General Board's October meetings. At that time, the Board is expected to hear the RSC's preliminary location report and to decide on a concept for the redesign. — NIVAS DEL ABUM

Emergency Disaster Fund allocates nearly \$100,000

The Emergency Disaster Fund in May and June allocated grants totaling \$99,862.

Hurricane Marilyn—repairing and rebuilding project: \$24,000 (\$88,000 since November 1995).

Balkan Republic—volunteers: \$20,000 (\$205,000 since 1992).

Church firebombings—repairs, rebuilding, volunteers, advocacy: \$15,000 (\$15,000 since May).

China earthquakes—rehabilitation and recovery services: \$10,000 (\$20,000 since February).

Midwest and South spring storms—cleanup, repair, constructions, pastoral care: \$6,000.

West Virginia flooding—repair, rebuilding, Church World Service: \$5,000 (\$25,000 since February).

Guatemala—food shortages at La Providencia: \$5,000.

Columbia and Peru—food, bedding and other supplies for victims of armed violence: \$2,000.

Massachusetts storms—home repair, child care, replenish supplies: \$1,000.

The following accounts were closed with these allocations:

- Hurricane Andrew: \$6,000.
- Bangladesh floods: \$1,500.
- India drought: \$1,985.75.
- Louisiana flooding: \$1,406.55.
- Tropical Storm Alberto: \$971.89.

Calendar

Brethren Volunteer Service Orientation with Brethren Revival Fellowship, Unit 222, Camp Elder, Pa., August 11-21 [Contact BVS Office at the General Offices, (800) 325-8059]

National Older Adult Conference III, Lake Junaluska, N.C., September 2-6 [Contact Association of Brethren Caregivers, General Offices]

Association of Brethren Caregivers Board meetings, Lake Junaluska, N.C., September 6-8 [Contact ABC, General Offices]

Bethany Emphasis Sunday, September 8

Consultation on Anabaptist Evangelism, sponsored by The Andrew Center at the Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md., September 9-10 [Contact The Andrew Center, (800) 774-5500]

Brethren Volunteer Service Orientation, Unit 225, Indianapolis, Ind., September 22-October 12 [Contact BVS, General Offices]

On Earth Peace Assembly Board meetings, New Windsor, Md., October 5 [Contact OEPA at (410) 655-8705].

World Communion and World Mission Offering Emphasis Sunday, October 6.

Staff changes made in Elgin, New Windsor, Washington

Lamar Gibble, Peace and International Affairs Consultant and Europe and Asia Representative, will retire in March after serving as General Board staff for over 27 years.

David Leatherman and **Nan Spindler**, directors of Human Resources at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill., and the Brethren Service

Center in New Windsor, Md., respectively, were terminated from their positions due to the General Board's redesign. Leatherman served the General Board since 1987; Spindler since 1995 (see page 16).

Tim McElwee, director of the Washington Office, resigned effective July 31. McElwee, who served in that position since 1991, has joined the development staff of Manchester College, North Manchester, Ind.

John Harvey began serving as interim director of the Washington Office in August. Previously, Harvey served in Brethren Volunteer Service for three years; his first year in the Washington Office.

Paul Munday, The Andrew Center director, has resigned, effective September 5. Munday, a full-time General Board employee since 1985, has accepted a pastorate at Frederick (Md.) Church of the Brethren.



Lamar Gibble



David Leatherman



Nan Spindler



Tim McElwee



John Harvey



Paul Munday

In Brief

Coordinators are being sought for the 1998 National Youth Conference in Fort Collins, Colo. Young adults interested in the coordinator and assistant coordinator positions—which run from May 1997 through August 1998—may contact the Youth and Young Adult Ministries office, (800) 323-8039.

Phil and Louie Rieman returned from Sudan in May from their 3½-year service with the New Sudan Council of Churches. They now are traveling throughout the US serving as General Board mission interpreters.

Christian Peacemaker Teams is looking to add seven new peacemakers by January. Two-week to two-month, and three-year terms are available. Call Janice Kulp Long, (540) 951-2788.

The fifth printing of *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, complete with updates and corrections, is now available. Contact Brethren Press at (800) 441-3712.

Nations of the world had better join together to reduce greenhouse emissions, or be ready for inconceivable natural disasters within the next 50 years, according to "International Petition to Governments of Industrialized Countries." In July, General Secretary Donald Miller signed the US edition, which calls for the US to fulfill its 1992 promise of reducing "greenhouse gas emissions to 1990's levels by 2000." It also calls all nations to make

even further emissions reductions after 2000, and to initiate public debate to heighten awareness of the problem.

Constructing classrooms and student housing for a new school will be the focus of the 1997 Nigeria workcamp. Workcampers will leave January 11 and return February 10. Cost is about \$2,000. Call the Africa/Middle East office, (800) 323-8039.

Urban churches that are planning creative responses to violence in their communities can qualify for a grant from the Mennonite Central Committee. Applications for the \$1,000 grants must be submitted by August 31. Call (216) 371-0494.

The Brethren Disaster Relief Auction, September 27–28, sponsored each year by the Atlantic Northeast and Southern Pennsylvania districts, again will feature the auctioning of a house, with proceeds from the house and all auctioned materials going to the General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund. To help finance the project or to volunteer, call (717) 624-8636.

Canned beef valued at \$136,620 and sent to North Korea courtesy of Southern Pennsylvania and Mid-Atlantic districts' annual beef canning project, arrived in June as part of a Church World Service shipment of aid. CWS also expects 7,200 woolen blankets to arrive there in mid-August. The shipments are to help North Koreans deal with the results of flooding in 1995.

Cincinnati '96



Welcome! Nan Erbaugh, dressed as a Conference logo character, offers a "cup of cold water" to Kler Rice

Talking it out. Whatever our problems between one another, we are urged by our leaders to dialog about them. Talking among old friends is easy enough, as Conferencegoer Lee Smith demonstrated, but dialog takes more effort and intentionality.



Annual Conference met under the banner of 'As Christ Welcomed You.' Welcoming others without conditions wasn't all that easy. While Brethren wrestled with that, the business agenda was still worked through. How we did it forms the bulk of our report, written by MESSENGER staff, with photography by Jeff Leard.



Where are we going? Permeating the Cincinnati meeting was the question of where we Brethren are headed...and how to get there. Larry Glick and Carrie Finch symbolized this problem as they pored over a map spread on the convention center floor.

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Taking care of business

The Cincinnati business agenda looked formidable as printed in the Conference Booklet: 10 reports, 8 items of old business, and 10 items of new business. But with no really controversial item to generate lengthy debate, and with adroit handling by the moderator ("Let me test you: Are you ready for the question?" was his oft repeated line), delegates not only worked through the agenda without having to go into overtime, but even adjourned an hour early on Saturday afternoon. Here is a summary of Conference business as understood from the press table:

Old Business

Ministerial Leadership Statement. This statement grew out of a 1990 Conference action forming a 5-year Committee on Ministerial Leadership to review issues related to ministerial leadership and to develop strategies to meet the problems lagged. The committee presented a report in 1995 and was granted an additional year for hearing responses from affected agencies. The 1995 Conference adopted a five-year emphasis on ministry and leadership development.

In its 1996 report, the committee offered a lengthy list of recommended strategies related to ordination; current ministerial leadership; finances; search, call, and placement procedures; and spiritual life.

The part of the paper that drew fire was a recommendation on search, call, and placement procedures that extended to Annual Conference elections. The committee recommended that Standing Com-



mittee, rather than bringing a ballot to Conference as it now does, bring a slate for action. The delegates would approve the slate as presented or amended. Objection to this recommendation centered on the issue of "mistrust in leadership," which the Redesign Steering Committee claims is widespread. Delegates voted to eliminate this recommendation from the report. The report was then accepted.

In an addendum, the report also responded to the 1995 query Set Apart Ministry, coming originally from the La Verne (Calif.) congregation. It asked for a committee to evaluate and study denomination policies related to the set apart ministry. The query stemmed partially from a controversial ordination a few years ago in Pacific Southwest District. The addendum often referred to the recommendations on Min-

Moderator Fred Bernhard turned to the moderator-elect, David Wine, for strategy suggestions as the officers of Conference negotiated sticky wickets during the week.

Bob Faus, counsel to the study Committee on Ministerial Leadership, explained to Brethren at a Tuesday evening hearing the group's perception of the problem.



Cincinnati 9/6



Keeping busy while she waited to fetch up the next proposed "amendment to the amendment," messenger Marla Bieber. She occupied herself with a knitting project.

Annual Conference secretary Anne Myers seems almost like an institution, but 1997 service in Long Beach will round out her 10 years of keeping everyone informed on what has been and what is in process of becoming.



isterial Leadership in responding to the 1995 query.

Simple Life Statement. A 1994 Conference query, coming originally from the Springfield (Ill.) congregation, asked for a committee to "study ways to re-emphasize the Brethren tradition of the simple life and to discern its full meaning for our time."

The committee's report at Cincinnati was fittingly simple itself, calling simplicity "the way of Jesus." That way, it concluded, is one of devotion to God, of integrating inward faith and outward expressions of daily living, and of living the simple life in community. It was adopted overwhelmingly.

Statement of Ethics for Congregations in the Church of the Brethren. This statement grew out of a recommendation in the Ethics in Ministry Relations paper adopted by Conference in 1992. The 1994 Conference called for a congregational code of ethics to be developed.

The statement gained the acceptance of the delegates with two minor amendments. It is not a legal document, but an affirmation of the faith and discipleship to which the church is called if it is to be obedient followers of Christ. The statement ends with 20 ethical guidelines for congregations.

Assisted Suicide Response. A 1995 query called for a study of assisted suicide. Conference decided that the query's concerns should be addressed in the Association of Brethren Caregivers' End-of-Life Decision-Making Statement coming to the 1996 Conference. Delegates at Cincinnati accepted that ABC statement as its response to the Assisted Suicide query. The ABC statement calls assisted suicide unacceptable; also unacceptable is "allowing human pain and suffering to go unrelieved, or prolonging the dying process with extraordinary medical interventions."

Nonviolence and Humanitarian Intervention Statement. This statement began as a one-year study paper coming from the General Board, as voted by the 1995 Conference. The Conference Booklet presented the 1995 and 1996 versions of the statement melded, with lines drawn through the parts of the 1995 version that were to be eliminated. Substituted text was in bold type. With one minor editorial amendment, the statement was accepted. It works at the central question of how we can express God's love faithfully, through nonviolent efforts, to prevent violence before it begins, to stop it after it erupts, and to heal wounds after it ends.

Office of Deacon Progress Report. In response to a 1995 query, the Charlotte Conference directed the National Deacon Cabinet to do a study and report in 1997. In its progress report at Cincinnati the committee reported that during the coming year before the Long Beach Conference, it will be receiving feedback on a first draft of its report, which is being sent to selected reviewers across the denomination.

Human Genetic Engineering and Fetal Tissue Use Progress Report. A query at the 1995 Conference called for the 1987 statement on human genetic engineering to be updated and the issue of the use of fetal tissue in treating disease to be addressed. In its progress report at Cincinnati the study committee indicated that the 1987 statement needs little updating, so the main thrust of its work will be with the fetal tissue concern.

Review and Evaluation Progress Report. The "Rev and Ex" Committee will present its final evaluation report to the March 1997 General Board meeting and to the Long Beach Conference in July.

New Business

Ethics in Ministry Relations. The 1992 Conference adopted a paper on Ethics in Ministry Relations. In 1995 the Council of District Executives expressed concern about the paper's section on dealing with allegations of sexual misconduct. It urged Standing Committee to formulate a re-



view process for that section as soon as possible, rather than waiting until the scheduled review of the paper in 1995. What followed was a rewritten Statement on Ethics in Ministry Relations that was passed by Standing Committee to the 1996 Conference for adoption, replacing the 1992 paper in its entirety.

The debate at Cincinnati centered on section III of the statement, "Code of Ethics for Ordained and Licensed Ministers and Lay Speakers in the Church of the Brethren." Standing Committee had recommended the addition of three more items to the code, including one (number 20) calling for ministers to report all cases of suspected child abuse. Much time was spent deciding if spouse abuse and elderly abuse should be added. They were not. Eventually the three new items were adopted, and the paper in its entirety won delegate approval.

Query: How Should Christian Faith Be Expressed in Political Processes? This query, originating in the Crest Manor congregation in South Bend, Ind., requested a committee to study its question and bring a report advising Brethren how to act in an age when both the religious right and left increasingly attempt to influence politics. Delegates adopted Standing Committee's recommendation that, in lieu of a committee study, Brethren be encouraged to pray and study, using resources available from Annual Conference, the General Board, and the Washington Office.

Query: Denominational Polity: Property and Stewardship Issues. Pacific Southwest District petitioned Conference "to define what means districts may use to preserve real congregational assets for the denomination" in conflicts with congregations over church property. Whereas Standing Committee recommended that districts be advised to have signed contractual agreements following General Board guidelines and procedures, the delegates voted instead to appoint a committee to bring to the 1997 Conference a revision of polity that allows districts and the General Board to

assume ownership of real property in cases of congregations defaulting. Anne Quay of Covina, Calif., and Lowell Flory of McPherson, Kan., were elected to the committee. General Board chairwoman Kathy Hess will appoint a third member, to round out the committee.

Query: Congregational Structure. Atlantic Northeast District petitioned Conference to appoint a committee to study present congregational structure and propose options. Conference voted to accept the concerns of the query, but because of the General Board redesign now in process, action on the query is deferred until 1998.

Query: The New Testament as Our Rule of Faith and Practice. Middle Pennsylvania District asked Standing Committee to prepare for Conference approval a statement of interpretation on Brethren understanding of the New Testament as its rule of faith and practice. Conference agreed, and Standing Committee is forming a committee of three for the task.

Query: World Mission Philosophy and Global Church Mission Structure. This query, from Virlina District, grew out of that district's frustration with its responsibilities for new congregations overseas. It asked Conference to reformulate current world mission philosophy related to the support of overseas congregations. Conference agreed to form a task force that will report in 1997. The five-member task force will include representatives from the districts of Virlina, Atlantic Southeast,

Difficult to hear. One problem that persisted all week was a poor sound system in the auditorium. Officers, as Fred Bernhard demonstrated, often could not readily understand what speakers at the floor mikes were saying. That, however, was not always the fault of the sound system.

Working out the details. Members of Program and Arrangements Committee don't spend all their time making lofty decisions. Member Christy Waltersdorff took her turn as the middle person between sound technicians and Conference officers.





The General Board Live Report, titled "The Bread We Break," used the setting of BVsers in orientation deciding a meal menu. It gave upbeat reports on a range of General Board programs around the world. Karen Cox winces as David Miller samples Church World Service's 50th anniversary cake. The report concluded with junior-high children and General Board members and staff handing out bread to everyone on stage and in the room, saying as they parceled out the bread, "The Lord is risen." This symbolic act played out the breaking of bread at Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35), that scripture having been woven into the report from the opening. General Board staff members Beth Sollenberger Morphey and Elsie Holderread had baked 300 loaves for the occasion.

and Atlantic Northeast, and from the General Board and Standing Committee.

Statement on Child Exploitation. This statement came through the General Board. It grew out of concerns presented to youth at the 1995 Christian Citizenship Seminar. Conference adopted the statement as a study paper for the coming year, to be brought to the 1997 Conference for consideration for adoption. Concerns were raised over the recommendation of the paper to call on the US government to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, it being believed by some that the convention violates the rights of parents.

Guidelines for Developing/Recommending Curriculum in the Church of the Brethren. The General Board approved these guidelines last March and sent them on to Conference. Delegates approved the 12 guidelines and added a 15th, one calling for materials for new seekers and new Christians who may be biblically illiterate or ignorant of church life in general.

Proposed Change in Church of the Brethren Pastors' Insurance Package. A recommendation from the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee was readily accepted: "Effective January 1, 1997, the maximum life and accidental death and dismemberment benefit (will) be increased from \$40,000 to \$50,000 for active participants who are age 65 or under, with an associated premium increase of \$12 per quarter."

End-of-Life Decision-Making Statement. The history of this statement goes back to

the 1995 Conference when an updating of the 1975 Conference statement Life Stewardship was initiated. The 1995 Conference, dealing with the query Assisted Suicide, decided that the End-of-Life Decision-Making Statement coming to the 1996 Conference could include the answer to that query. The statement was duly adopted at Cincinnati and then accepted as the answer to the 1995 query (see old business item, above, on Assisted Suicide). The statement provides guiding Christian principles, faith-values reminders, and resources for end-of-life decision-making.

Other Business

Report of Standing Committee's Subcommittee on Homosexuality. At the 1995 Annual Conference, 85 percent of the delegates reaffirmed the 1985 Statement on Human Sexuality as the position of the Church of the Brethren. Following that Conference, Standing Committee acted as a committee of the whole and received the questions and concerns of the denomination on the issue of homosexuality. In its 1994 meeting, Standing Committee reviewed the information it had received and prepared a report for the delegate body. (See 1994 Annual Conference Minutes, pages 756-757.) The report as accepted by the delegates at Wichita urged congregations "to refrain from requesting additional policy statements at Annual Conference on the homosexual issue for the next five years." (Subsequently this has often been referred to by Brethren as a "moratorium"; likewise it has been misunderstood as an order to not even talk about the issue for five years.)

The 1994 Standing Committee report also included the formation of a subcommittee to design and implement a plan that will facilitate ongoing dialog across the denomination, "with the greatest effort put into the district and congregational levels."

The subcommittee, working with the Ministry of Reconciliation and others, has developed plans for dialog called for in 1994, and this was presented to the delegates at Cincinnati. One plan provides dis-

tricts and congregations with suggested guidelines or processes they can use in discussing homosexuality. Another plan is designed to help a congregation move toward inclusiveness for homosexuals.

In addition, the subcommittee presented a list of study resources, headed by the book *Caught in the Crossfire: Helping Christians Debate Homosexuality*, by Donald E. Messer (Abingdon, 1994, \$12.95).

The subcommittee will distribute its materials to all congregations later this year. For more information, contact Dialog Process Subcommittee chairman John Kreps, 105 Ross Ave., Wabash, IN 46992; tel. (219) 456-2908.

For suggestions of lesbian or gay speakers or their families who are willing to take part in congregational dialog, contact Supportive Congregations Network, P.O. Box 6500, Minneapolis, MN 55406.

For suggestions of people who can provide neutral facilitation of study processes, contact Ministry of Reconciliation, 4898 E 1400N, North Manchester, IN 46962; tel. (219) 982-7751.

The subcommittee will make its final report to Standing Committee when it meets in Long Beach, suggesting additional processes for dialog at all levels of the denomination.

Brethren/Mennonite Council Luncheon.

Because of requests to Standing Committee to cancel the Brethren/Mennonite Council luncheon scheduled for Thursday in Cincinnati, Standing Committee slated time for the Program and Arrangements Committee to speak to its critics and to give reasons for granting the request of BMC for a luncheon. The committee stated that it came to a unanimous decision to grant the luncheon request, believing it was compatible with the 1985 Statement on Human Sexuality and in line with the 1996 Conference theme, "As Christ Welcomed You." Committee spokesman Frank Ramirez expressed the committee's feeling as a question: "How can we *not* welcome everyone?"

Samuel Cassel, a member of Standing Committee and of the Brethren Revival Fellowship, read a statement of concern from the BRF, which had objected to the

At the mike. *Conference business is participatory and allows anyone, not just delegates, to have a say (if not a vote). Timothy Munn of Cumberland, Md., had a turn at the mike on the Ministerial Leadership issue.*



luncheon. After an airing of differing viewpoints, Standing Committee voted to support the Programs and Arrangement Committee action.

Later, at the opening of Conference business, a motion from the floor to add the controversial luncheon to the agenda was defeated.

Unfunded Annual Conference Mandates. Standing Committee and the General Board have agreed to address the problem of Conference occasionally mandating new General Board program with no funding arranged for it. A committee appointed by the General board and Annual Conference officers developed a process for dealing with such mandates. Standing Committee affirmed the process at Cincinnati. The General Board will bring it to next year's Conference as a business item.

A New Model For Annual Conference.

The Program and Arrangements Committee, in the interest of cutting the cost of future Conferences, presented a model whereby a one-day-shorter Conference would open with worship on Saturday evening, begin business sessions on Monday, and conclude Wednesday afternoon with worship. There would be no pre-Conference meetings except Standing Committee and the General Board. The new model could be in place as soon as 2001. Because of that likelihood, the dates for the 2001 Conference in Baltimore have not yet been set.

Program and Arrangements Committee also has in mind special emphases for the 2000 Conference in Kansas City (to mark the millennium transition) and the 2008 Conference (celebrating the 500th anniversary of the 1708 founding of the Brethren).—KERMION THOMASSON



Acting up. *From the General Board Live Report to the MESSENGER Dinner entertainment, to business session openings, to evening worship, comedy skits were this year's favorite medium for getting messages across. During Wednesday evening worship, Pleasant Hill (Ohio) pastor Tara Hornbacker performed "First-day Jitters," a monolog about a new Christian's coming to terms with the reality of her commitment to Christ.*



Chris Bowman, chairman of the Redesign Steering Committee, used overhead projection during the General Board redesign insight session to explain where RSC was in the process of restructuring the Board. At Cincinnati the process was at the strategizing stage. Specifies of the changes lay tantalizingly down the road a ways

GB redesign taking shape

The redesign of the Church of the Brethren General Board, an ongoing process since February 1995, began to take shape in Cincinnati as the Board received specific redesign recommendations and proposals and announced the termination of three employees.

The termination of three Human Resource staff was approved by the Board's Executive Committee in keeping with recommendations submitted by the Board's five-member Redesign Steering Committee in a cross-option document.

The Board also received three proposals for how staff may be deployed in the future — in one centralized location; in three to five regional locations; or in the 25 district offices.

The RSC also submitted a separation policy proposal that specifies the compensation employees terminated in the redesign process will receive, and proposed the naming of a Transition Team that will implement the redesign. Both recommendations were approved and the Transition Team was

subsequently named. It consists of Board members Katherine Hess, chairwoman; Dorothy Gall, and Beth Middleton.

Of all of the information discussed, however, the cross-option document provides the best insight into how the RSC sees General Board programs functioning in the future, regardless of staff deployment. That document is divided into six sections.

The first calls for the General Board's name to be changed because, as RSC chairman Chris Bowman explained, the Board no longer oversees all denominational programs. This section also calls for the Board itself to be reduced from 25 to 20 members, and for a process to be established whereby people with specific skills would be selected to serve on the Board.

In the second section, the RSC recommends that the five-member Administrative Council be reduced to four — composed of a general secretary and administrators of program, leadership, and finance. That group currently consists of the general secretary; treasurer; and General Services, Parish Ministries, and World Ministries executives.

The RSC advises the Board to ask Annual Conference to consider making the General Board a party to the ministry and calling of district executives, and it calls for a new committee to be established where the Board, Annual Conference, and the districts can interface.

In the third section, the RSC recommends that the Material Resources and Disaster Relief programs — located at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. — combine. The RSC also calls for Brethren Press, Communications, Yearbook, and newsletter production to be combined into one organization called Brethren Press, under the supervision of the general secretary.

The fourth section calls for all volunteer services to be placed under the jurisdiction of Brethren Volunteer Service. It calls on the New Windsor Conference Center to break even within three years or be closed.

The fifth section calls for the Board to pare its nearly \$7 million budget by \$472,000 in 1997 and by about another \$2 million by 1998. Between 35 and 40 percent of General Board employees are expected to be terminated.

The last section recommends that the new



Elected at Cincinnati

Moderator for 1998. Jimmy Ross, pastor of Lititz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren since 1985, was elected moderator of the 1998 Annual Conference, meeting in Orlando, Fla. He will serve as moderator-elect through the coming year, beginning his moderatorship next July 6. Ross, a native of Augusta County, Va., has served in several pastorates in the East, including Codorus, in Loganville, Pa. (1970–1985). He has served in numerous high-level positions (including the Hymnal Council that produced the 1992 Hymnal) and was a preacher at the 1984 Annual Conference.

General Board. Newly elected to the General Board, at large, are **Wayne Judd**, Elizabethtown, Pa.; and **Marie Willoughby**, Copemish, Mich. Representing districts are **Paul Wampler**, Manassas, Va. (Mid-Atlantic); **Mary Jo Flory Steury**, Kettering, Ohio (Southern Ohio); and **David Miller**, Roanoke, Va. (Virginia). All five will serve 5-year terms.

General Board reorganization. **Kathy Hess** (1997), Ashland, Ohio, was named chairwoman of the Board for a second year. **Steve Petcher** (1997), Citronelle, Ala., was named vice chairman. Petcher will chair the General Board's Goals and Budget Committee. The chairs of the three commissions (see below) and two at-large members (**Stafford Frederick** [2000] and **Craig Smith** [1997]) complete the membership of the Executive Committee of the Board.

The newly organized commissions of the General Board:

General Services Commission. **Beth Middleton** (1998) Boones Mill, Va., chairwoman; **Ruth Clark** (1999), Froid, Mont.; **Phyllis Davis** (1999), North Liberty, Ind.; **David Miller**; **Tracy Wenger Sadd** (1999), Lititz, Pa.; **Terry Shumaker** (1999), Decatur, Ind.; **Paul Wampler**; and **Marie Willoughby**.

Parish Ministries Commission. **Roger Forry** (1998), Somerset, Pa., chairman; **Krista Carter** (2000), Westminster, Md.; **Phyllis Crain** (1998), Linville Falls, N.C.; **Mary Jo Flory Steury**; **Stafford Frederick** (2000), Olathe, Kan.; **Dorothy Gall** (1997), New Paris, Ind.; **Gilbert Romero**

The Transition Team that will implement General Board redesign is composed of **Glenn Timmons** (Administrative Council liaison), **Beth Middleton**, **Dorothy Gall**, and **Kathy Hess**. By next March up to 40 percent of General Board staff will be terminated. By 1998 the Board's budget will be cut by about \$2,472,000.



Pastor Jimmy Ross of Lititz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren displayed a broad smile upon hearing that he will be moderator for the 1998 Conference in Orlando.

Jay Christner

administration evaluate the current wage and benefit structure for Board employees.

The aforementioned separation plan covers General Board employees dismissed through the redesign process from July 1 through December 31, 1997. These employees are to receive three months notice prior to job termination, and then three months severance pay. Extended insurance coverage and assistance with obtaining another job also are included.

Of the three employees whose jobs will be eliminated effective October 2, Barb Ward's tenure has been the longest. She joined the General Board at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill., in the late 1970s. Since 1985, she has served as a secretary in the Office of Human Resources. David Leatherman joined the General Board in 1987 as director of Human Resources in Elgin. Nan Spindler joined the General Board in 1995 as director of Human Resources in New Windsor.

Two secretaries, one in Elgin and one in New Windsor, are all that will remain of the Human Resources staff. Until the redesign is complete, Dale Minnich, General Service executive, will oversee Human Resources functions.

Hess also announced World Ministries executive Joan Deeter's intention of retiring at a mutually acceptable time in the redesign process. In light of her intent and General Secretary Don Miller's scheduled retirement on December 31, two-year contracts were extended to the other three Administrative Council members—Minnich, Glenn Timmons, Parish Ministries executive, and Judy Keyser, treasurer.

The cross-option recommendations and the staff deployment options have now been released for dissemination and discussion over the next few months. The Board is expected to consider acting on the recommendations at its October meeting.—NEVIN DULABAUM

The new General Board Executive Committee

includes Stafford Frederick, Beth Middleton, Craig Smith, Bonnie Kline Smeltzer, Steve Percher, Kathy Hess (chairwoman), and Roger Lorry.



Newly elected to the General Board were Wayne Judd, Marie Willoughby, David Miller, Mary Jo Flory Steury, and Paul Wampler.

(2000), Montebello, Calif.; and Craig Smith (1997), Eaton, Ohio.

World Ministries Commission. Bonnie Kline Smeltzer (1997), Modesto, Calif., continuing as chairwoman; Ernie Bolz (1999), Tonasket, Wash.; Chris Bowman (1998), Martinsburg, Pa.; Bill Eberly (2000), North Manchester, Ind.; Edith Kiester (2000), Thomas, Okla.; Lori Knepp (1998), Everett, Pa.; and Steve Percher.

Annual Conference Program and

Arrangements Committee. David Eastis (1999), Warsaw, Ind.

Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee. Colleen Michael (2001), Wenatchee, Wash.

Committee on Inter-church Relations. Allen Deeter (1999), North Manchester, Ind. Cheryl Cayford (1999), Richmond, Ind., was named to the CIR by the General Board.

Brethren Benefit Trust. Gail Morgan Habecker (2000), Coatesville, Pa.

Bethany Theological Seminary Board. Phillip Stone (2001), Bridgewater, Va. (representing colleges). Jim Weaver (2001), Shannon, Ill. (representing laity).

Nominating Committee. Elected for two-year terms on Standing Committee's Nominating Committee were Mark Flory Steury, Dayton, Ohio; Ed Garrison, Mount Morris, Ill.; Alice Martin-Adkins, Hershey, Pa.; and Paul Schrock, Indianapolis, Ind. They join four members whose terms expire next year.

Cincinnati '96

Cincinnati sound bites

Registration at Cincinnati hit 4,973 by Saturday afternoon, including 917 delegates. The figure bested Charlotte '95 by 364.

Total offerings from worship services came to \$60,275, better than last year's \$54,506, but still far below that year of bounty, 1992, when offerings hit \$101,549.

SERRV sales reached an all-time Annual Conference high, totaling more than \$58,000—a 15-percent increase over last year.

The annual quilt auction fetched only \$11,100 for the Association for the Arts in the Church of the Brethren. The 1995 event brought in \$24,450. AACB's Art for Hunger sale added \$5,191 to the quilt money, all destined for hunger relief projects.

Brethren Press sales at Cincinnati, even without livestock doing cameo appearances, reached \$95,000, well above last year's \$85,462.

Glad, a five-member musical group, presented a 9 p.m. concert on Saturday,

featuring contemporary Christian music. Glad formed 18 years ago as a progressive rock band, but switched in the 1980s to its present format and style. For several years now, Conference has offered a musical program in the Saturday evening slot.

The Tree of Life, seen at Conference since 1992, sprouted new foliage during the week, with 1,182 leaves. Conference-goers were invited to write the names of new members of their congregations on

Worship. Brethren who come to Conference to hear and sing old-time hymns got a jolt at Cincinnati. The music there was decidedly on the contemporary side, including many numbers from the new (1992) *Hymnal*, as well as songs and music from other sources, including some brand-new pieces by Brethren composers. For the first time, an orchestra performed for worship throughout the week. Among the orchestra members was multi-talented Joe Helfrich of Pleasant Hill (Ohio) Church of the Brethren (*top left*). He not only played several different instruments, but sang as well, and performed at numerous functions during the week. Congregational singing was just a bit different with direction by pastor Andrew Wright of the New Carlisle (Ohio) congregation (*bottom left*). His British accent comes from his nativity and upbringing in England; he met his Brethren wife while teaching at Hillcrest School in Jos, Nigeria. Spirited choir direction was provided by Michelle Grimm of the Onekama (Mich.) congregation (*far left*).



Cincinnati '96



Many music groups provided inspiration at Cincinnati. (above) In the Early Evening Concert Series Leonardo Wilborn of the Imperial Heights congregation in Los Angeles directed a cross-cultural choir performance on Saturday (right) Later in the evening, a pop jazz group, Gilad, gave a concert of contemporary Christian music.



paper leaves and attach them to the tree in The Andrew Center exhibit booth.

More than 250 senior-high youth served in four work projects on Wednesday, doing their bit for Cincinnati. Two projects put youth to work in subsidized housing developments. Another group restocked shelves at the Cincinnati Food Bank. The fourth group did clean-up at the Cincinnati Recreation Parks.

"Give Blood: It's a Heartwarming Experience" was the theme of this year's Annual Conference Blood Drive. The goal was 500 pints for Cincinnati's Hoxworth Blood Center. When the last arm was tapped on Saturday, 421 pints had been collected from Conferencegoers.

Ted and Lee, a Mennonite comedy team with a gospel message, cracked up the more than 250 Brethren who crowded in for their show at the annual MESSENGER Dinner. An ad for the performance had said, "After you meet Ted and Lee, you will think twice before saying, 'We're something like the Mennonites.'" But, it turned out, maybe the Mennonites have a good thing going.

The search goes on as the denomination awaits a new general secretary to succeed Don Miller, retiring at year's end. Perhaps general secretary wanna-bes are chary of applying, given the uncertainties the General Board redesign holds. At any length, the search committee is waiting at the mailbox. Contact: Don Fitzkee, 117 Heisey Ave., P.O. Box 140, Rheems, PA 17570; Tel. (717) 567-2052. He will rush you a handy application packet.

Former Annual Conference manager Doris Lasley underwent brain surgery July 9 to treat sporadic paralysis caused by Parkinson's disease. She welcomes greetings from friends of her Conference years. Address your cards and letters to Doris at 811 Scott St., Elgin, IL 60125.

Women from 15 districts were recognized at the Program for Women luncheon for their contributions to the church. Cited as role models and mentors were Christina Campbell, Helen Constable, Mary Eikenberry, Theresa Eshbach, Denise Gabbert, Sonya Griffith, Mary Mason, Jean Moyer, Judy Reimer, Gayle Sheller, Elaine Sollenberger, Shirley Spire, and June Wolfe. Doris Knieely and Ramona Jagger were recognized posthumously.

A new feature at Conference this year was a "Bring a Can to Conference" project sponsored by the Association for the Arts in the Church of the Brethren (AACB). Diapers and canned food were collected and delivered to Cincinnati food banks. On Monday of Conference week, 1,500 pounds of food was delivered to the Emergency Food Center on Cincinnati's North Side. That early bounty was due largely to a van load of goods contributed by the Manchester College community.

E. Paul Weaver and Richard D. Speicher were presented Ecumenical

Awards by the Committee on Interchurch Relations. Weaver, from Everett, Pa., was cited for his participation in three Assemblies of the World Council of Churches. Speicher, from North Lima, Ohio, served 19 years as executive director of the Mahoning Valley Association of Churches in Youngstown, Ohio.

The Ministers Association elected Wally Landes to its executive committee.

Landes is senior pastor of Palmyra (Pa.) Church of the Brethren. Esther Norris, co-pastor of Garden City (Kan.) Church of the Brethren, is the association's president for the coming year.

Outdoor Ministries' (OMA) Run/Walk winners this year were runners Jerry Crouse and Kim Wyrick. Second and third places went to Dustin Brown and David Brunk in the men's division and to

Sermon sound bites



“Brethren, is our heart's door open to extending Christ's unconditional love to the outsider? If our elder brother, Jesus Christ, judges the Brethren heart tonight, will he find room for those outsiders whom God is sending to us? Is there a place with us for those sinners who are crying, “O! Give me a home”?”—FRED BERNHARD

In our churches we encourage people to keep quiet, to not say things that upset others, to hide the truth of our personal experiences. We imagine that we will be happier if we all can just agree, even when the agreement is not honest.—JOYCE STOLTZBUS



Welcome your brothers and sisters not with façades and secrets. Rather, welcome them with all of who you are. If we are going to have oneness between us, we have to reveal the bad and the good, the trials and the triumphs, the grime and the glory.

—ROBIN WENTWORTH MAYER

If we are to be accepted at the table, we must follow the rules that have been set. But, instead, we want to challenge the rules so they will change just for us. We want it our way. We forget that our heavenly Father has already set the way it must be.—PETER KALTENBAUGH



We can be so busy serving “out there” that we neglect the presence of Jesus in our nearest neighbor—the one beside us in the pew. Christ is present in every corner of everywhere—in all people, in the beauty of our natural environment, in the grandeur of the universe, in quantum theory, in little children. Brethren, somebody's knocking at the door.—RICHARD SCHRECKHISE

Brethren, hear me. We fly like crows when we ought to be flying like geese—in V formation. We must fly to go the distance. Flying together in formation, we provide support for each other. Flying together, we break the winds of division and distrust. Flying together, we glorify our God.—STAFFORD FREDERICK”



Minimally 9/6



Reba Coffman and Vicky Chapman in the women's. In the walk portion, first, second, and third places were taken by Jean Hendricks, Debbie Okeson, and Claire Montoya in the women's division, and by Art Hunn, Ed Okeson, and Benton Wray in the men's. Jean Hendricks raised



Brethren service. This seemingly was the year for a Conference week filled with service projects. The Habitat house-building project (see page 24) was the biggest of these. But there were plenty of other service ops. Some youth put their hand to filling containers with peanut butter for a Cincinnati food pantry (above). Youth also volunteered to do renovation work about the city, including sanding varnish off an old and intricately carved banister (right). Other people stayed busy with a food and diaper drive benefiting local charities (bottom, far right). Literally giving of themselves, 421 Brethren donated a pint of blood to a Cincinnati blood bank. Among them was pastor Cecil Haycock of the Walkers Chapel congregation near Mount Jackson, Va (top, far right).



the most money for the event, securing over \$600 in pledges. Total contributions of over \$1,200 benefit the OMA Environmental Grant Fund.

Jonathan Shively, pastor of Pomona (Calif.) Fellowship Church of the Brethren, composed the anthem "Come on In," which was sung by the Conference choir on Wednesday. It expressed the Conference theme, "As Christ Welcomed You." Shively performed as half of the musical duo AdinGray at last year's MESSENGER Dinner.

When the gavel was passed on Sunday in Cincinnati, we quietly attained the distinction of having our first Baby Boomer moderator. David Wine, born in 1955, is not our youngest moderator, but he is the first one born since World War II. Although born in Nebraska, he stems from the Wines of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. Back in 1794, Annual Meeting was held in the upper room of the home of David's ancestor Michael Wine, near Forestville, in Shenandoah County. If our 1997 moderator is lucky, he won't have to deal at Long Beach with at least two issues that the Annual Meeting of 1794 handled—the validity of the ban, and a heresy case.

Speaking of the Valley, an event there next year that's a must for Brethren history buffs is the June 13–15 bicentennial celebration of the birth (June 17, 1797) of peace martyr John Kline, sponsored by elder Kline's Linville Creek church and Shenandoah District. There will be presentations, dramas, exhibits, meals, worship, tours, and even a John Kline Missionary Horseback Ride (just watch out for rebel bushwhackers). For information contact Paul Roth, 405 East Springbrook Road, Broadway, VA 22815-9631; tel. (540) 896-5001.

One group just looking for trouble at Cincinnati was the Ministry of Reconciliation. Representatives of the group, wearing their yellow MoR buttons stationed behind the delegates during business sessions, monitoring the action on the floor and being available to anyone needing them as reconcilers. MoR was



Among the new church plantings welcomed at Cincinnati was Shalom Church of the Brethren in Durham, N.C., represented here by member Alan Hoal; pastor Irving Glover and his wife, Carol; and Virginia District executive David Shumate.

available at anytime during the week to people experiencing conflict. You could even discuss with MoR conflicts you were having back home. Nobody knows the trouble they've seen, since their reconciliation work is all confidential.

Anyone wondering why Brethren were hurrying off to the Cincinnati Zoo should know that it is billed as the "sexiest" zoo in the country. How did it get such a reputation? Turns out, it's not what you are thinking; it's just the leading zoo in successfully breeding wild animals. *Oh!*

Four new church plantings were celebrated during Conference. The newest project is right in Cincinnati, itself. Other groups welcomed were Shalom Church of the Brethren in Durham, N.C., Community Fellowship in Cleveland, Ala., and Gardiner (Maine) Fellowship.

California, here we come. When Brethren gather next year for Conference in Long Beach, it will be the second time in that city (1961) and the seventh Conference in California. Brethren first met in California in 1907, in Los Angeles, 90 years before the 1997 event. Conference dates: July 1–6. After Long Beach, it's Orlando, Fla., June 30–July 5, 1998; Milwaukee, Wis., June 29–July 4, 1999; Kansas City, Mo., July 11–16, 2000. In 2001 Brethren will return to Baltimore for the first time since 1985, but no dates have been set since it is expected that by that time we will be having a shorter, over-the-weekend Conference, the details of which haven't been worked out yet.



Conferencegoers had five daily Bible studies to choose from, three in English, one in Spanish, and one in Korean. In his opening session, Bethany Seminary professor Murray Wagner discussed "Hosting the Meal" (Psa. 25, Matt. 6:11).

Accepting the keys to her Brethren-built house, along with a Bible and poster, is Vivian Hudson (above). Hudson now lives in the house constructed by senior high workcampers and Annual Conferencegoers with two of her sons. Hudson spent a week's vacation away from her job as a child care worker, joining the workcampers during their week of construction.



A house built at Conference

Brethren came to an empty lot, swung some hammers and swished some paint brushes, and left having built a house. All in 10 days. Talk about teamwork.

The first-ever Habitat for Humanity house constructed by national Brethren of all ages went up in Cincinnati June 24-July 5, in conjunction with the local Habitat affiliate's 10th anniversary.

The house at 825 Blair Avenue was one of three houses on the same block constructed simultaneously as part of Habitat's celebration blitz-build. While local sponsors and workers paid for and constructed the houses at 805 and 807 Blair Avenue, the raising of the 825 house from dust to done was primarily the work of many Brethren nationwide.

The project was sponsored by four General Board programs—The Andrew Center, Brethren Volunteer Service, News Services, and Refugee/Disaster Services.

Jan Thompson of Mesa, Ariz., became



Their week of work now over, Brethren senior high workcampers pose for a picture next to the Habitat house they've helped build prior to departing for the last time.

project director upon Ivan Fry's death in April. Fry had been named director when the project was announced last year. Bruce Barwick of Elkhart, Ind., served as on-site coordinator.

Providing the first week of muscle were 24 senior high workcampers and their directors and advisors. Providing the second week of labor were a couple hundred Brethren who also were attending Annual Conference.

Other Brethren from across the denomination also contributed. A direct mailing to Brethren nationwide earlier this year asked for help in raising funds for the \$40,000-plus project. Over \$56,000 was raised.

At a July 5 luncheon held to celebrate the construction of all three houses and sponsored by the project's four General Board sponsors, Millard Fuller, founder and president of Habitat for Humanity, delivered the keynote address.

"Let your light shine so that others can see your good works," Fuller charged luncheon attendees. He shared his belief that Habitat is a service to those in need and also a powerful tool to spread the word of God's love.

"We do this not only for the family that



Accepting the keys to her Brethren-built house, along with a Bible and poster, is Vivian Hudson (above). Hudson now lives in the house constructed by senior high workcampers and Annual Conferencegoers with two of her sons. Hudson spent a week's vacation away from her job as a child care worker, joining the workcampers during their week of construction.



will receive the home, but also for the dramatic effect and media attention," Fuller explained. "It puts (the church) out there so that people can see what you're all about."

Following the luncheon, Brethren joined a crowd of approximately 250, including Cincinnati mayor Roxanne Qualls, for the dedication of the three houses.

Fuller also spoke at the dedication and commended the Church of the Brethren for its long involvement with Habitat.

While two other families received the keys to their homes, Vivian Hudson and two of her sons were presented with the keys to their new Brethren-built home.

"I want to thank the Church of the Brethren for its help, especially the youth who came from all over the country to help us. I had a lot of fun working with them," Hudson said. She had taken a week's vacation from her job as a day care worker to work alongside the workcampers.

General Board chairwoman Kathy Hess accepted, on behalf of the denomination, a plaque recognizing the Church of the Brethren's efforts.

"It has been a real joy and privilege to participate in this project," said Hess. "Habitat stands for what the Church of the Brethren believes in—pouring Christ's love out into the world. This has my support to become a traditional Annual Conference event." —NEVIN DULABAUM and SUELLEN SHIVELY-MACK



Pre-Conference conferences have proliferated in recent years, but their growth will be pruned back if the "over-the-weekend" format for Conference is instituted. At Cincinnati the several pre-Conference groups included the traditional Ministers' Association. Addressing it was Hugh Halverstadt of McCormick Theological Seminary (*top*), talking about dealing with conflict. "Change is part of being alive," he said. "Our response to change determines whether conflict will be good or bad."

At the Brethren Homes meeting, David Scruggs (*center*), representing the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, explained details of the managed care movement and told how different generations necessitate changes within homes and retirement communities.

Herbert Anderson, from Chicago's Catholic Union Theological Seminary (*bottom*), spoke at the "Re-Forming the Family" seminar. He sees "the future of the American family (as) hopeful because families have the ability to change." He challenged listeners to proclaim their churches a "sanctuary for children," in the manner of declaring churches "nuclear-free zones."





A moderator who emphasizes prayer

New moderator David Wine, in his inaugural remarks on Sunday, covenanted with the denomination that during the coming year he will devote himself to spiritual renewal through a personal commitment to spending an hour a day in prayer, a day a month in prayer, and a week during the year in a personal prayer retreat.

In addition, he joins General Board chairwoman Kathy Hess in continuing the "Partners in Prayer" schedule inaugurated by 1996 moderator Fred Bernhard and the chairwoman. (See "Engaging Partners in Prayer," August 1995, page 24.) "Partners in Prayer" is featured in the back of each issue of MESSENGER, with a regular schedule for prayer throughout each week of the month.

Wait for the healing

BY FRED BERNHARD

When I was in eighth grade, I cut one of my fingers to the bone. I waited a couple of days before I went to the doctor. By that time the finger was infected. That caused it to take a very long time to heal.

During the healing process I was forever bumping that finger. I thought several times, "I wish I could just cut the finger off and get it out of the way; then it would be gone, and I could get on with my life."

The finger did eventually heal, and I have always found it useful. But the scar has bugged me sometimes, and arthritis has gotten into the knuckle. So I sometimes still wish the doctor had cut the finger off.

But every time I pick something up with that hand, I am glad the doctor spared my finger, and that God healed it for the rest of my hand.

The temptation for some of us during our week in Cincinnati was, because we couldn't get the body to agree with us on everything, to cut ourselves off from the body ... or to cut the body off from us. That would be a mistake. When we allow the body to heal itself, it does. Christ's body, especially, heals itself, and when we come back together, we are always stronger for having gone through the trial than we would be if we had cut ourselves off from each other in that painful process.

I have a prayer list that I go to every day. On my prayer list there are people for whose healing, wholeness, and salvation I pray. Urge those of you sisters and brothers who consider others in this body—the Church of the Brethren—to be your enemy to put us on your prayer list. Pray for us as I promise to pray for you.

My parents had two favorite scripture verses. Both verses were found in 1 Corinthians 15. Mother's favorite verse preceded Dad's. It was "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 57). Brothers and sisters, we serve a risen Lord, a Lord who is alive and well. And if we follow after that risen Christ, I am convinced that he will lead us into continued new life, and that the body will, indeed, find healing and restoration so it can do the work that Christ has called us to do, which is to reach out and "welcome one another."

Dad's favorite verse comes at the end of the chapter. It also is my favorite verse. After Paul uses 57 verses to convince us that Jesus is the risen Christ, he ends by saying, "Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (verse 58).

I leave you with those words. If we go from this place and do the Lord's work of "welcoming others as Christ welcomed us," and carry that welcome to the ends of the earth, then someday God will call all of us, without the loss of one, to that table in heaven where, around it, we can praise Christ throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. That is my prayer. M.

Moderator Fred Bernhard spoke these words at the end of the Conference business session on Saturday afternoon.

The times, they are a-changing

Nobody at Annual Conference wants to miss the General Board "Live Report." It appears on the business agenda as an "Order of the Day." Personal agendas and schedules are likewise cleared for Thursday morning, so as not to miss the performance. And "performance" it is. Time *was* when the General Board made do with an exhibit alongside the others in the exhibit hall. But several years ago, it wised up and began giving a presentation on stage during the business session, replete with skits, music, newly composed songs, symbolic acts, cameo appearances of workers from the fields, and that staple of present-day presentations: videos. Not actually a report, it is promotion—promotion that is designed to make Brethren feel good about the worldwide ministries undertaken in their name and underwritten by their financial gifts.

This year's "live report" was no exception. It went from one upbeat program vignette to another, culminating with kids going through the audience sharing luscious loaves of bread and proclaiming, "The Lord has risen!" Be that as it may, the emotions of Conferencegoers had certainly risen. Wow! *We* do all that? This is my kind of church!

But were they talking about the same General Board program next day when the more matter-of-fact General Board *written* report was presented, and we were told what the Redesign Steering Committee has in mind? It didn't sound like it.

We've lost momentum. We operate "top down." There's disenchantment with the system. Advocacy has replaced discernment. "The church no longer speaks for me." "Who are we?" "What can we be, and still be 'we'?"

And because of those developments and those questions... or *something*... congregations are no longer supporting the General Board's ministries with their giving. For 10 years or so, we have had one financial crises after another, dropped a program here, cut a few staff there, and made other staff double up loads and cut operating costs.

Brethren who have been in touch with the saga know that things came to a head in March 1995 when the Board decided it had to get serious. Redesigning and restructuring have followed. The unhappy word "downsizing" has become familiar. We can *almost* say it without flinching now.

*Folks, something
has to give.
Downsizing doesn't
mean keeping
little miniatures of
all our present
ministries.*

But still, judging by what I saw and heard at Cincinnati, we continue in something of a state of denial. Did you hear them say we are going to cut about \$2,472,000 out of the budget by 1998? Did you hear them say we are going to terminate 55 to 40 percent of General Board employees by next March?

But did anyone leave Cincinnati really envisioning what it's going to be like to go to Annual Conference in Long Beach next year and see only 60 percent of this year's General Board staff there, and only 60 percent of its ministries operating?

Where do you think that 40-percent cut will be hitting? Is it going to be your favorite program? Will it hit Brethren Volunteer Service? Will we drop mission in South Korea? Will we close down New Windsor? Can we manage without Youth and Young Adult Ministries? Must we cancel the 1998 National Youth Conference? Will we do away with MESSENGER? Folks,

something has to give. Downsizing doesn't mean keeping little miniatures of all our present ministries.

My perception is that Brethren left Cincinnati denying that anything drastic was really going to happen. Subconsciously, they anticipate as razzle-dazzle a General Board Live Report at Long Beach in 1997 and Orlando in 1998 as at Cincinnati in 1996. But that's not the way I heard it.

I am not faulting either the "live" report for its optimism nor the report of the Redesign Steering Committee for its gloom. What I am doing is bracing for the outcry when reality finally sinks in throughout the denomination, and we realize that downsizing has happened, that we are, indeed, a diminished denomination... alas, by our own doing.

My best hope then will be that with the outcry will come resolve to be better stewards, to be generous givers, to create improved General Board ministries that inspire us while reaching out to the needs of both the Brethren and the rest of the world. If we don't recoil from the enormity of our niggardly giving and, like Scrooge on Christmas morning, announce a new resolve of generosity, then I care not for any financial solvency we might have achieved through this painful redesign.—K.T.

stepping

by Robin Wentworth Mayer

It wasn't a terminal mistake. It wasn't an expensive mistake. It wasn't an unredeemable mistake. It's just that it was, and remains, an *embarrassing* mistake.

It happened several years ago. My first husband had just filed for divorce. Soon after, I received another shock upon learning there were several thousand dollars of debt. Needless to say, my emotional health was not at its best.

There was an angry confrontation over the debt, with a lot of mutual blaming. After several minutes of this chaotic communication, I did something I had never done before, have never done since, and, with God's help, will never do again.

I hit him. Really. With all the frustration, venom, and irrationality of Moses pounding the rock in Numbers 20:11, I raised my hand and struck him. Once.

Chances are, some of you are chuckling . . . perhaps because you understand. But friends, violence is not a laughing matter. Nobody chuckles when a *man* hits his estranged wife.

I don't think there is anything else I have done in my life for which I am more ashamed. So why am I telling you? Because I learned something from it, and I think you can, too.

First of all, I have a plea for

understanding from those of you who have never done such a thing, have never contemplated doing such a thing, and are aghast that someone could do such a thing.

Please bear in mind that people going through major crises and losses can get a little crazy and do things they would never do in less stressful circumstances. We are not allowed to use the term "diagnostically," but the phrase "temporary insanity" has descriptive value here.

I don't think it is a coincidence that 10 verses prior to Moses' violent outburst in Numbers 20, his sister Miriam had died and was buried. Grief and loss often generate and exacerbate anger.

Secondly, for those of you who *are* prone to acting out your anger in destructive ways, you need to know this. I didn't laze my ex-husband. I didn't hurt him. I didn't change him. I did, however, break my hand.

It was awful. I delayed going to the doctor for two weeks because I *knew* he would ask how it had happened. Finally, when I couldn't take the pain and could no longer deny the fact, I went for an X-ray.

The doctor was excited. "Look here, Robin, it's broken all right. See that chip of bone? It's what we call a 'boxer's fracture.'"

(Thanks Doc, I needed that.)

"What did you do? Get

mad and hit a wall?"

"Something like that." It was true, metaphorically speaking.

I wore a splint for several weeks, fielded a lot of questions, and to this day feel an occasional twinge of pain in my right hand.

Here's the moral to the story: Destructive anger has a boomerang effect. This holds true whether it be vitriolic words that diminish credibility, passive-aggressive behavior that results in isolation, grudges that poison spirits, or betrayal that damages trust.

When we act out anger destructively, not only is it *not* effective, not only is it *sin*; we ultimately wind up hurting ourselves as much, *if not more*, than we hurt anyone or anything else.

God forgave me immediately when I confessed. My ex-husband forgave me the next day, when I apologized. It took a little longer for me to forgive myself.

I hope my story will help you to make wiser, healthier choices when consumed with anger during your own crisis. **M.**

Robin Wentworth Mayer is pastor of Kokomo (Ind.) Church of the Brethren.

Stepping Stones is a column offering suggestions, perspectives, and opinions—snapshots of life—that we hope are helpful to readers in their Christian journey. As the writer said in her first installment, "Remember, when it comes to managing life's difficulties, we don't need to walk on water. We just need to learn where the stepping stones are."

ACTS IN AUGUST

Eight baptisms in Schwarzenau, Germany, in early August 1708 were illegal acts that demonstrated the courage of the first Brethren to defy the state churches and be true to their beliefs as Anabaptists and Pietists.

BY DONALD F. DURMBAUGH

It was early August in the year 1708; the site was a tiny village called *Schwarzenau* (Black Meadow) in the modest principality of Wittgenstein in central Germany. Five men and three women gathered in the early morning along the Eder Brook to perform an illegal act. Their intent? To carry out an unauthorized series of baptisms. Under imperial law, such “rebaptisms”—for all eight had been routinely baptized as infants in the established churches according to immemorial practice—were capital offenses. Understandably, there were no witnesses to their dangerous undertaking nor any written record kept of it. Yet this daring action of civil disobedience signaled the emergence of a religious movement that in time grew to considerable size and widespread, indeed, worldwide involvement.

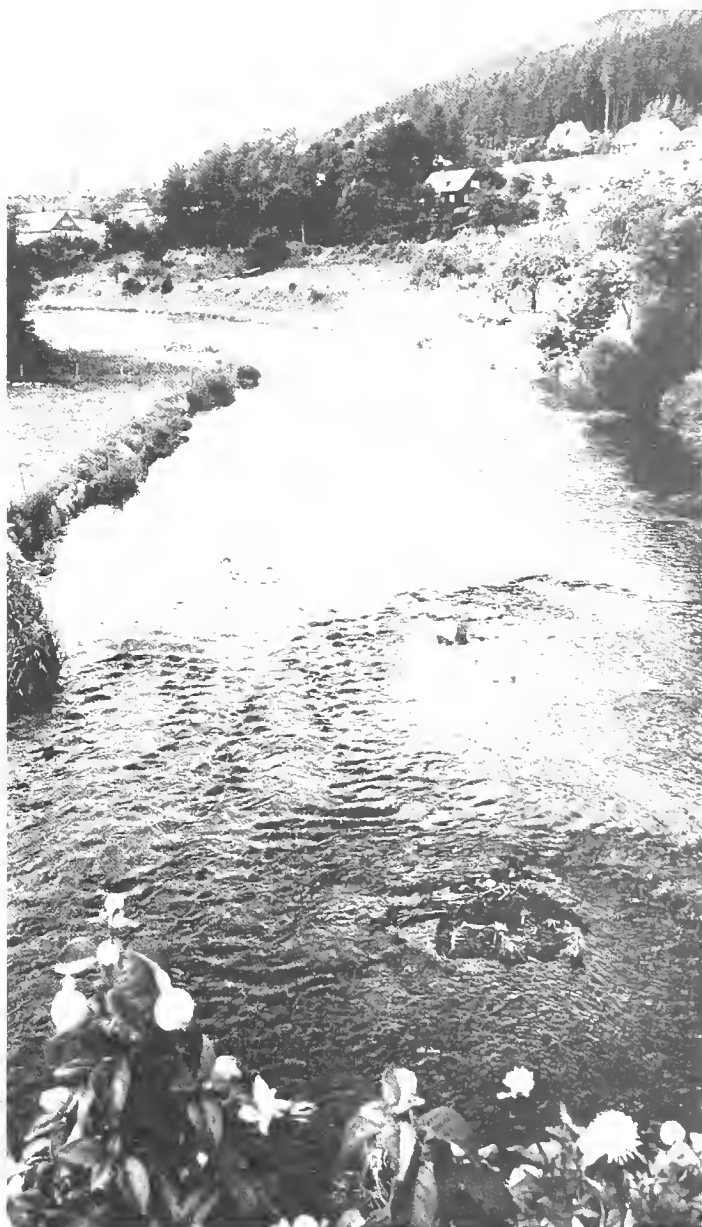
In “the Germanies” at the beginning of the 18th century, petty monarchs ruled in hundreds of tiny states. These states had not fully recovered from the destructive and intolerably protracted Thirty Years War (1618–1648). Fully a third of the population had perished during that conflict. Certain areas were devastated.

Armies at that time were totally dependent for their supplies upon requisitions from the areas where they were quartered. In most cases this amounted to brutal plundering. For this reason, whether the armies were “friendly” or “enemy” made little practical difference to residents. Thousands of villages and towns were destroyed and depopulated by occupation, fighting, looting, and disease.

Parts of the Germanies, struggling to rebound from these crises, were hit again by warfare at the end of the 17th century. Heidelberg, Speyer, and Worms were burned. Mannheim was leveled, and scores of villages were completely razed. Crops were destroyed, vineyards uprooted, and livestock slaughtered. Residents were tortured to induce them to reveal the location of foodstuffs and hidden treasures.

The hardships of these wars had a profound effect on social conditions. Thousands of peasants and townspeople were reduced to begging or thieving because of the loss of their fields, homes, and trades. Disease and corrupted morals were left behind when the undisciplined armies moved on. Vulgarity and coarseness set the general tone.

There were great gaps between the social classes. The rulers succeeded in gathering around them the lesser



Wilber Brumbach

Courageous acts. Somewhere in this area of the Eder Brook the first Brethren baptisms took place in early August 1708.

nobility and the cultivated part of the populace. Court life was brilliant and showy, but corrupt, immoral, and shallow. Common people were considered to be brutish, little better than animals.

Peasants lost interest in replanting fields that were repeatedly overrun and destroyed. Great sections of the land lay idle for lack of workers to till it. Townspeople were impoverished through the effects of plundering or through paying ever heavier taxes.

In 1700 there were three official churches in the German states—Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed. These were state churches, which means that they were integral parts of the government in their areas and subject to political control. None of these were tolerant of dissent.

Dissenters were subject to banishment or punishment if caught. The most numerous among them were the Anabaptists; they had originated in several places in the early 16th century, especially in the Swiss cantons, southern Germany, and the Low Countries. They were tagged as “rebaptizers” because they rejected the customary baptism of infants, convinced by their study of the Scriptures that only the baptism of adult believers was valid.

They rejected the state church and its coercion in affairs of faith, maintaining stoutly the revolutionary principles of religious freedom and voluntarism.

Anabaptists stressed the necessity of strict ethical lives,



using church discipline to keep their ranks unspotted by open immorality. One of their basic tenets was that Christian faith must be demonstrated in daily living. But despite the exemplary conduct of most Anabaptists, they were condemned as heretics and harshly suppressed.

Along with Anabaptism, there rose to prominence in German church life the movement known as Pietism.

Some beliefs basic to early Brethren

Brethren basically shared the orthodox Protestant beliefs established in the Reformation—especially the authority of scripture and the priesthood of all believers. Their differences with the established churches were not over doctrine; they were about religious freedom and the failure of the laity and the clergy of the churches to live moral lives. Here is a representative list of beliefs of early Brethren:

Discipleship and obedience. All early Brethren writings expound the necessity of obedience as disciples to Jesus Christ their Lord. As Sander Mack explained, “It was emphatically opened to (the first Brethren) in their hearts how necessary is obedience in faith if a soul wishes to be saved.”

Restitution. The concept of restitution has been defined as the “recovery of the life and virtue of the early church.” A critical Swiss sepa-

ratist, describing the Brethren in 1719, stated, “Their foundation, as is well known, rests on the mere letter of the scripture, and is an imitation of the early Christians.”

Nonconformity. It was clear to the early Brethren that discipleship and restitution on the pattern of the early church would of necessity bring them into conflict with the general practices and expectations of society. They therefore emphasized the necessity of nonconformity and separation from the world. Brethren drew clear lines of conduct that would show everyone that they followed a different master.

Church discipline. Lengthy passages in Mack’s *Rights and Ordinances* dealt with separation and the ban, because it was one of the points most disputed by Radical Pietists. The question followed: Why can a Christian not keep in fellowship

with someone in sin, who persists in despite loving admonition? The sin, after all, would rest on his shoulders. Would it not be more loving to stay in touch with him? In his answer, Mack demanded absolute separation, saying that it was truly love (rather than feigned love) because it called sinner to repent instead of resting in their wickedness. He used the stark dichotomies of the Old Testament to document his point.

In *Basic Questions*, Mack wrote that genuine love “hates and punishes wickedness and evil.” In doing so, it is in fact more loving than a weakly tolerant love. That parent truly loves the child who disciplines it rather than allowing it to follow its own whims to destruction.

Mutual aid. In a way surprising to modern ways of thinking, Brethren—along with other Anabaptist-minded groups—considered



The view from near the Hüttental displays the peaceful Schwarzenau scene that has impressed Brethren visitors through the years.

became the Radical Pietists or Separatists. The best known and most influential of the Radical Pietists was Gottfried Arnold. Well educated, he preached as well as wrote. The thesis of his writing was that the heretical movements had actually perpetuated the true church, while the orthodox church that had persecuted them was, in reality, the anti-church. His writings became the source book for all those movements that sought to model themselves after the early Christians.

Gottfried Arnold was the intellectual leader of Radical Pietism, but Ernst Christoph Hochmann von Hoehenau was its evangelist. Hochmann was a friend of Arnold and the spiritual father of many early Brethren. He carried out an itinerant ministry, calling on his hearers to repent and learn to know Lord Jesus. His preaching followed three themes: 1) he had been called by Christ to preach the gospel; 2) there is a spiritual church; and 3) the kingdom of Christ is at hand.

The Brethren forerunners studied these Radical Pietists' writings and preaching, as in the early 1700s Pietism struggled against persecution and gained momentum. Among them was Alexander Mack, a miller in the village

Among the tenets stressed by Pietists were 1) more intensive Bible study; 2) more lay activity; 3) Christianity to be practiced in daily life; 4) freedom in religious matters; 5) reform of theological training; and 6) more edifying preaching instead of rhetoric about dogmatic issues.

Pietists dissatisfied with the pace of reform, and not permitted the slightest deviation from the orthodox line.

church discipline to be another and helpful form of mutual aid. Certainly they would care for the physical needs of their sisters and brothers. But to care for the outward necessities and then neglect the inward spiritual need would not be a truly loving action.

The Brethren attitude toward property was that one "owned" material goods only in the sense of being a steward over them. Brethren were known for their generosity to anyone in need.

Biblicism. From the early beginnings, Brethren were known as people of the Book; they were inveterate students of the Bible, and loved to discuss it. Because the Brethren were not highly educated, their approach was to take the Bible in a straightforward, common-sense manner. They undertook to interpret the Bible together, believing that the Holy Spirit

would assist the faithful "two or three gathered" in the name of the Lord.

They were biblicists, taking the Bible at face value. In later years, this attitude was summarized in this saying: "We have no creed, but the New Testament is our rule of faith and practice." One reason that they rejected creeds was their lively expectation that God had more light yet to break through the pages of scripture as they studied it together.

Nonresistance. One of the striking precepts of the Brethren that has distinguished them from many other Protestants at that time and since was their sturdy acceptance of the nonresistant principle. Their lives prior to the baptisms in 1708 may well have predisposed them to this conviction because in their own homes and villages they had learned all too much of war, and that of a most brutal kind.

Love and unity. Early Brethren were known for the love they showed to one another and to the ideal of unity within the community. They rejected the soft and permissive "false love" practiced among Pietists who shrank from honest confrontation. Nevertheless, the warmth and sincerity of their concern for fellow members were widely recognized and proved to be attractive to new converts.

In like fashion, Brethren then and later strove to maintain a unity of belief and practice among their ranks. Unlike the state churches, where a variety of lifestyles and economic conditions was tolerated within the religion as long as creedal conformity and sacramental practices were observed, Brethren believed that unity should be sought in most aspects of life as well as of faith.—DONALD F. DURMBAUGH



This old timbered house (left) in the Hüttental houses a museum today that preserves and tells the Brethren story in Schwarzenau.

of Schriesheim, near Heidelberg. He came under the influence of Hochmann von Hochenau, studied with him, and had him preach in his mill.

Authorities continually attempted to crush the Pietist movement. Expulsions led to many religious refugees making their way to Wittgenstein, where a degree of toleration for them was maintained. Count Heinrich Albrecht, the ruler, was impressed by Pietism and often invited its leaders to his manor house in the village of Schwarzenau.

This village consisted of only a mill, a few small houses, and the imposing manor house. Most of the new settlers were given land on the wooded hills overlooking the village. There they built crude shelters and cabins. One clearing above Schwarzenau, on the path to Berleberg, was settled by those who later became Brethren. It is still known as the Valley of Huts (*Hüttental*).

Those gathering in and around Schwarzenau were a colorful lot whose only common characteristic was distaste for the established churches. These separatists came from a variety of church backgrounds, from Catholic to Unitarian. Not surprisingly, there emerged among them sharp differences in religious views.

The small group soon to be known as the Brethren had an ardent desire to follow Christ's teachings in all things and came to the prayerful conclusion that they had to create some new form of church community. Thus wishing to obey Christ's commandments, they called attention to Matthew 18, which deals with discipline and enjoins followers to settle disputes in the church.

They reasoned that they could not follow this command if there were no church community.

As the seekers considered how necessary obedience in faith was for salvation, they were confronted with the New Testament command to be baptized. They had learned from Hochmann that infant baptism was not scriptural. As early as 1705 some of his followers had urged, "You men, dear brethren; we must be baptized according to the teachings of Jesus and the apostles."

The group held a lengthy period of intensive Bible study to be sure that their wish to be baptized was solidly based on the Scriptures. They also pored over the works of Gottfried Arnold to learn about the practices of the early Christian church. The result was (according to later writings by Mack's son "Sander") "they found in trustworthy histories that the early Christians during the first and second centuries were planted into the death by crucifixion of Christ, according to the commandment of Christ, through trine immersion." As had the Anabaptists before them, those who were to become Brethren concluded that they must cast off traditional religious

observances to model their lives and worship on the primitive church.

Following this period of intense preparation, the small group of religious refugees at Schwarzenau decided to act. In the eloquent words of Sander Mack,

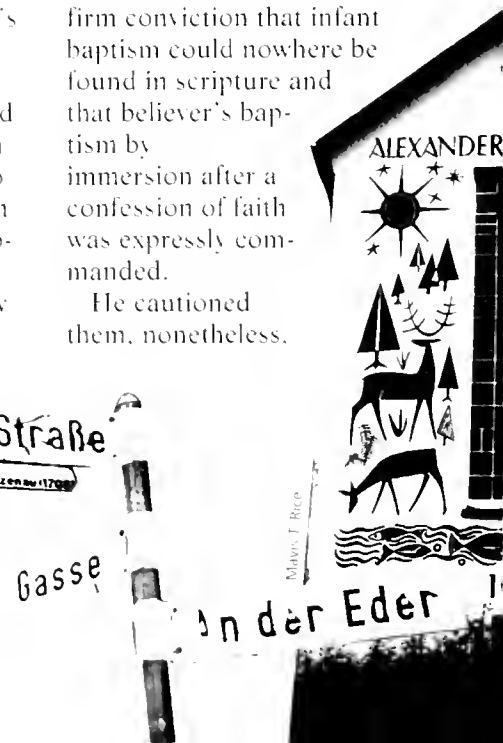
Finally, in the year 1708, eight persons agreed together to establish a covenant of good conscience with God, to accept all ordinances of Jesus Christ as an easy yoke, and thus to follow after their Lord Jesus—their good and loyal shepherd—as true sheep in joy or sorrow until the blessed end. . . . These eight persons united with one another as brethren and sisters in the covenant of the cross of Jesus Christ as a church of Christian believers.

Early in July 1708 they wrote to Hochmann for his advice about their intention to form a congregation through baptism. He answered them in a letter addressed to Georg Grebe and Alexander Mack. It was his firm conviction that infant baptism could nowhere be found in scripture and that believer's baptism by immersion after a confession of faith was expressly commanded.

He cautioned them, nonetheless,



A street and a school named for Brethren leader Alexander Mack reflect the attention that Schwarzenau gives to the significance the village holds for the Church of the Brethren.



From the General Secretary

Redesign calls for \$2.5-million cut

Why did redesign come upon us so abruptly after seven years of balanced budgets?

Our fundamental financial problem has been flat (or declining) giving from congregations, while costs increase about \$200,000 per year, about three percent of the total budget for general programs. The annual increases in cost are due to such items as medical insurance, wages, and utilities.

We managed to balance the budgets from 1987 until 1990 by cutting programs to meet increasing costs. Our hope was that congregational giving would increase. In fact, some congregations did respond to our appeal for annual increases, but others reduced their giving. The result was that giving from all congregations remained flat, even declining during the years 1991–1994.

Congregational giving to *all* church-related causes has increased 50 percent in the past 10 years. Furthermore, the percentage given to local expenses and to outreach has remained the same. In other words, congregational giving to outreach has increased by 50 percent in the past 10 years. However, that increase has not come to General Board programs. Congregations are giving more to local outreach projects such as homeless ministries, food pantries, prison ministries, Habitat for Humanity, Heifer Project International, and locally sponsored missionaries.

These projects in themselves are laudable, but they ought not be done at the expense of denominational programs. Our people *could* do both. It may be that many congregations felt that, by keeping their contributions to the General Board at the same level as previous years, they were giving sufficient support to continue denominational programs. The fact is that cost-of-living increases must be covered by annual increases from congregations, or those programs must be redesigned.

Estimates of how much of their annual income Brethren give to the church indicate that the percentage is increasing. With fewer members, we are supporting more church-related institutions. All of this indicates the dedication and stewardship of our people. However, our people need to understand how their choices affect the program of the General Board.

A decade of \$200,000 expense increases and flat congregational giving points to a \$2-million problem. We were able to delay the problem for seven years, but can do so no longer. The Redesign Steering Committee is calling for a \$2.5-million expense reduction by 1998.

This situation could be dramatically changed if our congregations increased their self-allocations by 50 percent and continued to make 5 percent increases annually. This could be achieved if at least one quarter of our members gave an additional \$5 per month (slightly more than the cost of a McDonald's meal) the remainder of the year, and continued to do so in the coming years. I call upon our people to respond.—DONALD E. MILLER

Donald E. Miller is general secretary of the Church of the Brethren.

the letter to join with them in the planned baptism:

So, then, if some more brethren wish to begin this high act of baptism with us out of brotherly unity according to the teachings of Christ and the apostles, we announce in

humility that we are interceding together in prayer and fasting with God. We will choose him, whom the Lord gives us as the baptizer as God will reveal to us.

The last sentence reveals a serious problem facing the earnest group.

that they must carefully test their desire before God to make sure that it was truly a divine leading. They must "count the cost" to see if they were ready to suffer the trials that would undoubtedly come. (As they had all been baptized as infants, a new baptism fell under the rigorous penalties of existing law.) His further concern was that they must be careful not to become sectarian by insisting that everyone must be baptized, for "promptings on this matter are varied." His attitude was the same about the observance of the Lord's Supper and footwashing.

During this period the eight people who became the first Brethren sent out an open letter to Pietists in the Palatinate (the former home of many of them), after drawing lots to determine who should compose the letter. The anonymous writer began by describing how their conviction had grown about their need to be baptized in apostolic manner, quoting the Great Commission (Matt.

28:19–20) and calling for obedience to the commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism was a covenant of a good conscience with God (1 Pet. 3:21); they were to be baptized into the death of Jesus (Rom. 6). The writer concluded, "As Christ, our head and keeper, had lowered himself into the water, so must we of necessity, as his members, be immersed with him."

Obedience required following Christ's precepts and example. Similarly, obedience demanded the exercise of church discipline for the correction of those in error and the preservation of good order. If these commandments were followed, then it would be possible to commune with integrity. The writer invited readers of



Who was to baptize them? They called upon Alexander Mack to perform this, as he was their leader in teaching the Word. Mack, however, considered himself to be unbaptized and first needing to be baptized correctly before he could baptize others.

The Mennonites were a possible source, for they practiced the baptism of adult believers, but they practiced baptism by *pouring*. The Schwarzenau eight had become convinced through study of the Scriptures and of church history that

threefold *immersion* was the apostolic mode.

They found strength in this dilemma in Jesus' promise that "where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Matt. 18:20). After additional fasting and prayer, they drew lots to see which of the brothers would baptize Mack. After this was done, they went to the clear waters of the Eder Brook early one summer morning of 1708. The brother chosen by lot immersed Mack, who baptized the baptizer and then the other six. They promised never to reveal who had performed the first baptism so that no one could ever call them by that person's name. They left no record of the month or the day, but an analysis of early records reveals that it took place sometime during the first two weeks of August.

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The eight participants were Alexander and Margaretha Kling Mack, Andrew and Johann Nöthiger Bohmi, Johann and Johanna Kipping, Georg Grebe, and Lukas Vetter. The account of Sander Mack reports, "After they had all emerged from the water . . . they were all immediately clothed inwardly with great joyfulness. This significant word was then impressed upon them through grace: 'Be fruitful and multiply' (Gen. 1:28)." Their immediate reaction was to spread widely the word of their new initiative, first in the Schwarzenau area and then farther afield. A contemporary record stated that the response was so great that there was no hall large enough to contain their meetings, forcing them to hold meetings outside. A lot in Schwarzenau is still pointed out as the "Anabaptist lawn" (*Täufer Garten*) where this took place.

Sander Mack explained that "after this the . . . eight persons were more and more powerfully strengthened in this newly begun obedience in faith to witness publicly about the truth in

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meetings. The Lord especially imparted his grace in them too, so that more became obedient to the faith." A critical Swiss writer corroborated the result, stating, "In these muddied waters the New Baptists (*Neutäufer*) fished after 1708 with success, inasmuch as they found it easy to win the over-excited people to their teachings." By 1715 a large congregation was reported to be active at Schwarzenau.

News of the illegal baptism and the rapid growth in Wittgenstein did not go unnoticed by the rulers of surrounding territories, who were indignant at Heinrich Albrecht for permitting religious dissent. Heinrich Albrecht resisted all the charges they brought against him, however, defending the Brethren and other settlers as quiet-living and devout folk who did not deserve to be treated as criminals. Fortunately for the new Brethren, the imperial bureaucracy was so ponderous that officials did not get around to investigating the charges until 10 years later. By that time, the Brethren had left the Schwarzenau area.

The dramatic baptismal initiative of the Brethren met with both interest and criticism on the part of Radical Pietist separatists, their recent associates. Hochmann, upon hearing of the baptisms, wrote that he "brought the matter before God in prayer, and therefore came to the conclusion that (he) should remain in impartial Christian love with all, the baptized as well as the nonbaptized." He emphasized the necessity of an inner baptism without which the outward baptism was meaningless.

In another letter, Hochmann warned the Brethren against making baptism a cause of division; he stressed the need for love and tolerance in these matters. Later, he became more critical of the Brethren because he felt that they, indeed, had become sectarian: "A person who has not been baptized at all but is truly humble would be much more prefer-



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able to me than such an arrogant saint who insists only on dipping and despises others on that account."

Another critic was Eberhard Ludwig Gruber, the former pastor and theologian from Wurttemberg with whom

Johann Kipping earlier had Pietist connections. Gruber had lost his church position because of his separatist views and found asylum, first, in the Marienborn area and, later, in Schwarzenau. In 1715, he directed a

long questionnaire to the Brethren with 40 probing questions in order to obtain their "opinions more fully and authentically" on the "new baptism and church." The young Brethren movement accepted the challenge and published the questions, with responses written by their leader, Alexander Mack, in July 1715 as *Basic Questions*. This is the first known Brethren publication.

Two years later Mack wrote a more extended treatise, composed in the popular style of a conversation between father and son. The book is *Rights and Ordinances of the House of God* (1715). In it, the son is made to complain that he has been attacked because of his beliefs on baptism; he would like to hear from his father the reasons for it. The father replies, using both Old and New Testaments and church history. The range of topics in the book besides baptism is broad: communion, separation, the ban, oath-taking, excuses of nonbelievers, and rewards for believers, among others. These reflect the major criticisms of the Brethren by their separatist opponents.

In the wake of the Schwarzenau baptisms, a number of congregations were established by the zealous Brethren, including the Wittgenstein area itself, the Marienborn area, the Lower Rhine area, the Netherlands, the Palatinate, Hamburg-Altona, and Switzerland. The acts in August 1708, far from being merely one-time steps taken by a tiny group of separatists, were the beginning of a new church, still known nearly 500 years later as the Brethren. M

Adapted from Fruit of the Vine: A History of the Brethren, 1708-1995, by Donald F. Durnbaugh, Brethren Press (1996). The book, which comes off the press this fall, is the first truly comprehensive history of the Brethren.

Donald F. Durnbaugh, of James Creek, Pa., is a former professor at Juniata College, Bethany Theological Seminary, and Elizabethtown College.

In 1708 a small band of believers gathered on the banks of the Eder River to perform an illegal act: unauthorized baptisms that ran counter to the prevailing law. In the nearly three centuries since this daring action, Brethren groups have carried the message of "another way of living" to North America and around the globe.

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Carl Bowman, Bridgewater College



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Letters

“Ministry is so much more than the Sunday morning “moment” by that elevated person, whoever that might be.”

Ministry more than a moment

The May MESSENGER cover with its question “Who will fill our pulpits?” points backward, and so do my memories.

“Ministry” so easily becomes synonymous with “pastor” in our thinking. Despite Brethren having “set-apart” and salaried leadership for most of this century, we still hold to the “priesthood of all believers.”

But it’s still easy to feel that simply having *someone* in that central, elevated box for 20 minutes on Sunday morning, with left hand on the verse *lu jour* and the right-hand quick-draw ready with the water glass, and we’re okay: filled glass, filled pulpit, *full gospel!* Who could ask for more? Except that “ministry” is so much more than the Sunday morning “moment” by that elevated person, whoever that might be.

We need to call, yes, *lay hands* on our youth and our post-50s—tent-makers, housewives, retirees, volunteers, singers, and storytellers, bringing to bear all the resources of our

The opinions expressed in Letters are not necessarily those of the magazine. Readers should receive them in the same spirit with which differing opinions are expressed in face-to-face conversations.

Letters should be brief, concise, and respectful of the opinions of others. Preference is given to letters that respond directly to items read in the magazine.

We are willing to withhold the name of a writer only when, in our editorial judgment, it is warranted. We will not consider any letter that comes to us unsigned. Whether or not we print the letter, the writer’s name is kept in strictest confidence.

Address letters to MESSENGER editor, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.



colleges and seminary, reading courses, lay-speaker training, “enhancing” of deacons, and whatever remains of EFSM and TRIM and all their subsidiaries and satellites.

We also must clearly retain the distinction between “pastoral leadership,” however called, trained, set apart, compensated, and disciplined, and the work of “ministry,” which is the calling and responsibility of all Christians and church members. I have only praise for the challenge in

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Bob Faus' May cover article, but I call for caution in our assumptions and the words we use as we seek and find leadership in all our work of ministry.


*Alan Kieffaber
Denton, Md*

Breaking the heart of God

After Annual Conference in Charlotte, I was sure I heard the creaking wood and clanking chains of a draw-bridge being raised. This year, all I can hear is the almost imperceptible rustle of grass as the crocodiles slip into the moat.

In 1995, we adopted a creedal statement on the Lordship of Christ, defining ourselves at the expense of the religious experience of others. In 1996, we amended a paper on congregational ethics in such a way that we now need not even consider those others to be members of the family of God.

Alexander Mack
HIS GREATEST LEGACY



THE DILEMMA OF THE 19TH CENTURY BRETHREN

AN INQUIRY INTO THE CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY THE CHURCH DURING THE CENTURY PAST

Alexander Mack Mission - Schwarzenau Germany
by Bob Kinsley

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Letters

If our goal is to solidify our position as a set-apart people, we are succeeding. But from what are we setting ourselves apart? We are separating ourselves from the possibility that God is larger than our human understanding, capable of being revealed in diversity beyond our own experience. We are separating ourselves from the wisdom and spiritual insights of the world's religions. We are separating ourselves from our brothers and sisters of other faiths who, like us, seek to know and serve in their daily lives the God in whose image they, too, have been created.

The original wording of the paper's recommendation included Brethren in a spiritual kinship with all seekers of the Divine; the wording of the amendment indicates that we need to regard as co-children of our Parent God only those who claim the name of Christian. If this is, indeed, an ethic by which we want our congregations to be guided, we may be preserving the body of Christ while breaking the heart of God.

*Judith Shear
Fort Washington, Pa.*

Surging toward 2008?

One man took the Heinz company when it wasn't going anywhere with tomatoes and pickles and made it one of the great companies of the world. It uses the tag line "Heinz: Surging toward 2000."

I was struck by that word "surging." Could anything like that happen to the Church of the Brethren? Or do we just go on working with tomatoes and pickles?

*Chauncey Shamberger
Boise, Idaho*

Spurred to action

MESSENGER has published one of the best articles yet: Paul Munday's "Frank Sinatra Doesn't Live Here Anymore" (June, page 20). It tells us how to recapture life and spirit in our churches. It is a profound

statement; yet it is presented so simply. If any readers missed this article, I urge them to read it and discuss it with others. It will be a rich experience that spurs Brethren to action.

*Edith S. Crouse
Adel, Iowa*

Nancy, we needed you

I look forward each year to Annual Conference music. I remember the rousing congregational singing led by such greats as Al Brightbill and Nancy Faus. At recent Conferences, I have looked forward to the *variety* of congregational singing as well, with respect to the cultural diversity of our hymnal.

I was disappointed at Cincinnati that we did not sing any Hispanic or African hymns during the pre-worship singing or in the worship services themselves. The intercultural praise service on Saturday evening was no substitute for that because it was a performance, with little participation besides clapping.

I fondly remember Nancy Faus leading us through hymns such as "Cantemos al Señor" and "Asithi: Amen." Where were you, Nancy, when we needed you?

*Karen S. Carter
Daleville, Va.*

Yes, I hear him

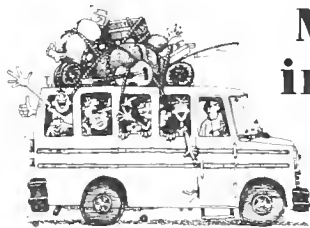
I was so excited by the June editorial, "Do We Hear Our Savior Calling?" It helped me as I prepared a response to Martin Borg's book *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*, which I presented at an insight session at Annual Conference in Cincinnati. The editorial says some of the things I wanted to say.

Thanks for an editorial well thought out and worthy of framing.

*Frank Ramirez
Elkhart, Ind.*

Rallying 'round the flag

I am a fourth-generation Brethren, but also a seventh-generation Ameri-



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- Sunday:** Your congregation's ministries
- Monday:** Annual Conference officers
- Tuesday:** General Board and staff
- Wednesday:** District executives, Bethany Seminary, colleges and university
- Thursday:** General Services
- Friday:** Parish Ministries
- Saturday:** World Ministries

Aug./Sept. prayer concerns:

Congregation: Planning new Sunday school year; working on 1997 budget.

Conference: Moderator David Wine and family; moderator-elect Jimmy Ross and family; secretary Anne Myers and family.

General Board: Redesign Steering Committee at district meetings; General Secretary Search Committee; Transition Team; General Board awaiting redesign configurations.

Districts and schools: District executives working with pastoral search committees; Music and Worship Leadership Event at Bethany Seminary, August 2-4; Beginning of school year.

General Services: Communication Team, getting the news out.

Parish Ministries: Vivian Hudson and family, owners of the Cincinnati Habitat house.

World Ministries: Johnny Harvey, beginning as interim director of the Washington Office.

Letters

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Lafayette (Ind.) Church of the Brethren's 50th Anniversary Celebration, Oct. 5-1996. Sat. registration & social time 2-4:30 p.m.; supper 5 p.m.; worship video open mic 6:30 p.m.; Sun. breakfast 8-9 a.m.; worship 9:30-11 a.m.; dinner noon; closing worship & communion 1 p.m. If possible, RSVP to Larry Weise, History Committee Chair for complimentary housing and meal planning. c/o Lafayette Church of

the Brethren, 1107 S. 18th Street, Lafayette, IN 47905. Tel. (317) 474-5500 (home) or (317) 474-5021 (church). Friten and Kathryn Platzgraff Eiler, pastors.

When I hear the band play "The Star-Spangled Banner," I get goose bumps. When "America the Beautiful" is sung, I picture golden wheat fields and tears fill my eyes. My patriotism strengthens my religious beliefs.

On Memorial Day Sunday, I discovered that none of the 15 Christian patriotism songs that were in the 1951 hymnal are in the new, 1992 hymnal. If our children do not hear these patriotic songs in school or church, where are they to learn them? We no longer display the American flag in the sanctuary or sing patriotic songs in church. And we wonder why our children have no love of America or its flag. Even Memorial Day has become to many just another day for vacation. Patriotism is being watered down in our church.

We may be a peace church, but that should not preclude our being patriotic.

*John Newcom
Rockford, IL*

the Brethren, 1107 S. 18th Street, Lafayette, IN 47905. Tel. (317) 474-5500 (home) or (317) 474-5021 (church). Friten and Kathryn Platzgraff Eiler, pastors.

Shalom Church of the Brethren, a new & growing fellowship in Durham, NC, invites Brethren moving to Research Triangle area (Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill) to worship with us. Eager to provide moving assistance (unloading, childcare, area info.) for those relocating to area. For info, contact Fellowship, P.O. Box 15007, Durham, NC 27704. Tel. (919) 490-0444. Email: ShalomOB@aol.com.

POSITION OPENING

Iowa Peace Network, a peace & justice organization affiliated with the Brethren, Mennonites, Quakers & Unit. Methodists, is seeking a full-time coordinator. Responsibilities include: publishing *Dorcas* newsletter; programming, networking & administration fund raising; Salary range (based on experience): \$13,000-16,000 incl. medical benefits. Job-sharing couples are encouraged to apply. Direct inquiries to Search Committee, Iowa Peace Network, 4211 Grand Ave., Des Moines, 50312-2496. Applications deadline: Sept. 30, 1996.

TRAVEL

South Africa: Land of Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Tutu, Jan. 3-15, 1997. Visit old Johannesburg, Pretoria, gold mine, Kruger National Park and other parks; big game safaris, Swaziland, Zululand, Cape Town, a Cape of Good Hope. Optional visit to Victoria Falls. For info, write J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022.

Turning Points

new members

ote: Congregations are asked to submit only the names of actual new members of the denomination. Do not include names of people who have merely transferred their membership from another Church to the Brethren congregation.

ntioch, Virlina: Jason Altice, Emma Austin, Earl Hoy
ella Vista, Pac. S.W.: Crystal Banasiak, Aaron DeLeon, Fernando Martinez, Art & Olga Rios, Juan Rodriguez
lack Rock, S. Pa.: Jennifer Adelsperger, Kristin & Tina Alwine, Clinton Hoke, Abigail Werner
ue River, N. Ind.: Natalie Bennett, Courtney Gibson, Harold Grabner, Ashley Libbon, Jacob Meinika, Mark Ray, Jeff & Jennifer Shively, Kevin Spurling, Christina & Mark Zumbro
ayton, Shen.: Lynette & Timothy Harvey
ast Cocalico, Atl. N.E.: Ralph & Suzann Cook, Joshua & Frank Foster, Frank & Rhonda Juhas, Clarence Martin, Stephanie Moyer, Kimberly Roth, Rena Shaner, Gwendolyn Shrom
ranksfort, S. C. Ind.: Aaron Knapp
runklin Grove, Ill. Wis.: Doug Brinkmeier, Eric Christiansen, Jeff Morris
reenmount, Shen.: Julia & Tony Cowens, Kyle Cowger, Bea Krantz, David Knupp, Larry & Misty Miller, Danny Sherman, Helen Shifflett, Jennifer Simmons, Deborah & Gary Smith, Betty & Roger Southerly, Eric Stover
anover, S. Pa.: Kathy Bealing; Darlene Bollinger; Doris Grace; Judith Nehrer; Angela, Harold, Linda & Stephame Smith
arrisonburg, Shen.: Sarah Bowser; Greg Brown; Erin Burtner; David, Matt & Vickie Carothers; Sharon Falls; Brenda Groff; John Hedrick; Tricia Lough; Audrey & Vernie McLendon; Darsi Mitchell; Michele Munns; Julie Ritchie; Judy Rolon; Tom Siever; Gloria Shiflett; Cliff Simmons; Charlie Wenger; Mary Winston; Belete Wubet; Mary Ann Young
artville, N. Ohio: Merry Clark, Craig Everhart,

Tonya Good, Alysia Lubbers, Beth Anne Stowers, Jared & Jennifer Tingler, Douglas Wahlert
Haxtan, W. Plains: Kelly Michael, Sara Yost
Highland Avenue, Ill. Wis.: Sonja LeCount, Matt & Sally Medearis, Eric Peterson, Don Post, Daniel & Miriam Radcliff, Suellen Shively-Mack, Jackie Skewes, Kelsey Swanson
Kokomo, S. C. Ind.: Karen Bricker, Jenice & Steve Steiner
La Verne, Pac. S.W.: Jaime & Valerie Beltran, Steve Kinzie, Gladys Neverman, Debbie Roberts, Verna & Wayne Snell
Lampeter, Atl. N.E.: Debra & Shawn Buckwalter, John Eshleman, Nancy & Stanley Ginder, Jerre & Judy Hockenbrocht, Kevin & Susan Stoltzius
Liutz, Atl. N.E.: Virginia Hevener
Long Green Valley, Mid-Atl.: Cori Gervais, Megan Raistrick, Melissa Smith
Mansfield, N. Ohio: Kathy Carter, Crystal Clingan, Dora & Sharon Dickerson, Jolene Edwards, Roy Gallagher
Maple Grove, N. Ind.: Brent & Tonda Carrick, Terry and Lisa Keck, Carissa Garner, Janae Waldron, Erk Wilhelm
Maple Spring, W. Pa.: Cathy & Cheyenne Alwine, Abby Croyle, Terri Harvey, Lisa Jerin, Justin McClellan, Dennis & Suzanne Miller, Harry & Janet Miller, Brad Thomas
McPherson, W. Plains: Krystal Burkholder; Ben Chapman; Calie Crist; Jonathan Dutrow; Todd Frankenbery; Natisha Gehring; Amy Hoffman; Deena Holloway; Dorothy, Mary & Tyler Hughes; Bob Knechel; Jennifer Lolling; Laura Luett; Betty & Russell Reimecker; Eddie, Nikiya & Tristan Penn; Jonathan Rothrock; Jessica Skubal; Amanda Snell; Anna Wagoner
Memorial, M. Pa.: Kelsey Fisher, Clinton Gochnour, Joey Hinton, Nicholas Isenberg, Matthew Kahley, Nicole Scott, Beth Showalter, Amber Tarry, Jarret Yingling, Scott Zook
Middle Creek, Atl. N.E.: Natalie Byler, Chasity Good, Jasen Walton
Middle District, S. Ohio: Ross Combs, Kelly

Gausman, Amy Group, Jenna Lamb, Jennifer Papadakis, Shawn Stout
Middlebury, N. Ind.: Ivan Harter, Gina Hoover, Eric Houser, Mandi & Sandi Hutchinson, Kyle Martin, Dennis & Kathy Neeley, Mark & Catherine Roebuck, Dana Smith, Duane & Linda Stuckel, Carolyn Waters, LeRoy & Amber Weaver, Landon Weber, Kevin Weirich, Melissa Zook
Milledgeville, Ill. Wis.: Justin Adolph, Hally & Theresa Barajas, Ryan Holfner, Melissa Livengood, Conan Stanley
Modesto, Pac. S.W.: Hurley & Thelma Couchman, Katie Cosner, Rachel Gelstrap, Bill Johnson, Adam & Justine Martinez, Janelle Wilkenson
Nettle Creek, S. C. Ind.: Bill & Linda DeVinney, Michelle & Rodney Smith, Bonnie & Dan Turner
New Carlisle, S. Ohio: David & Susan Blocher, Marissa Buckles, Andrea & Heidi Davidson, Emily Lane, Blake Shroyer, David Slanker, Jennifer Smyczek, Rebecca Somers, Susan Spotts, Katherine Strayer, John Switzer, Laura Tooke, Brittany Wright
North Winona, N. Ind.: Larry Coffel, Arvilla Hallev, Christine Lozier, John & Lois Sprong, Alan & Lois Waggoner
Osceola, Mo. Ark.: Cheryl Eggert
Parker Ford, Atl. N.E.: Carl Adrian, Patricia Bartman, Jane Willauer
Pasadena, Pac. S.W.: Peggy Reese, Elizabeth Rowan, Ronni Schwartz
Philadelphia First, Atl. N.E.: Charlie Bisset, Ryan McFarland, Maria Pulido, Tyler Pursel, Andrew & Brian Vaughan
Pine Creek, N. Ind.: Renae Flickinger, Emeric & Cheri Szalay
Pineybrook, Mid Atl.: Matthew Baker, Elaine Hahn, Robin Little, Dennis Robinson, Rebecca Sells
Pittsburg, S. Ohio: Doris Royer, Justin Strawser, Randy Westfall
Poplar Ridge, N. Ohio: Brittany Danford, Carroll Tumblin
Prince of Peace, S. Ohio: Brandon Boas, Julie & Kevin Denlinger, Rene Gindekberger, Chad

McKinney, Katie Phillips, Bob & Dianna Seeley
Reading, Atl. N.E.: Michael Chelius, Corrine & Lisa Clements, Beth & Jon Meneely, Susan Sine
Ridgeway Community, Atl. N.E.: Jonna Davis, Jonathan Derr, Loi Himes, Zachary Jackson, Jennifer Michael, Jennifer Ritter, Brandon Rowe, Amber & Raelyn Witmer, Kelly Whitman
Roanoke, S. Pa.: Alex Blanchard, Joshua Campbell
Roaring Spring, First, M. Pa.: Nathan Cooper, Mitchell Persum, Ben & Doug Ritchy, Deanna Snively, Eric & Nicole Wagner
Sangerville, Shen.: Brent & Martin Driver III, Chad Hanger, Shawn Meyers, Abi Rexrode, Melody Sullivan, Jeremy Withers
Schbring, Atl. S.E.: Ruby Johns
South Bay Community, Pac. S.W.: Silvia Echavarría, Ann Martin
Sugar Ridge, Mich.: Doris Bates, Ardith Regan
Sugar Valley, S. Pa.: Justine Merredy Jones, Michele Mauck
Summerdean, Virlina: David Chewing, Daniel Lucas, Sean Moorman, Ashley Stultz, Jessica Wilkerson
Sunnyslope, Ore. Wash.: Jess & Lavaun Dunning, Gail & Kevin Gilbert, Ele Jones, Brian Odell
Thurmont, Mid-Atl.: Roy Anders, Amanda & Megan Brashers, Gene & Genhi Bollinger, Vanessa Clark, Phillip & Robin Keefer, Wayne Lowe, Clinton Smith, Whitney Waters, Tammy Wine
Trinity, S.E.: Sheyanne & Shoshoney Goebel, Amber Johnson, Noah Miller, Mindy Wheelock
Trinity, W. Plains: Dan Young
Uniontown, W. Pa.: Joanne Ainsley, Zachary Smitlev, Lois Stiffler, Becky Trimpex, Allison Works
Virden, Ill. Wis.: Renee Boston, Matthew Burtz, Carrie Dunn, Sara Follis; Stacey & Stephanie Garner; Brandon Griffin; Jarod, Jason & Justin James; Neil Ringer; Matthew Royer, Kenneth Tate; Jodell & Stacey Wallace
Walnut Grove, W. Pa.: William McDannell
Waynesboro, S. Pa.: Kathryn Potts, Karl Snyder
West Charleston, S. Ohio: Rebekah Davis, Cynthia

Funderburg, Erica & Kelly Hoyt, Erin Karn, Heather Leis, Brooke Pyles, Carl & Chris Swanson, Emily Wray
West Milton, S. Ohio: Nathan Beare, Meke Fuge, Tim & Kim Martin, Garrett & Tyler Rice
Westminster, Mid. Atl.: Adam Hollenberg, Jamie & Jeremy Tippet
White Oak, Atl. N.E.: Tracy Bollinger, Michael Brubaker, Tyler Heisey, Jordan Hollinger, Jason Sauder, Roxanne Sensenig, Paul Weaver IV, Gloria Weaver
Wilmingon, Atl. N.E.: Richard & Alison Barton, Kim Murphy, Beverly & Sarah Perry, Susan Reynolds, George Tinsman
Yellow Creek, N. Ind.: Gary, Nancy & Steve Beas, John Markham, Curvin & Michelle Martin; Michelle & Rod Schrock
Zion Hill, N. Ohio: John Bartholomew, Marla & Timothy Bartholomew, Brian Bomberger, Mary Clark

Wedding Anniversaries

Aukerman, Harold and Cathline Greenville, Ohio, 55
Baugh, David and Betty, Uniontown, Pa., 55
Bowers, Dale and Alice, Dixon, Ill., 50
Brown, Jesse and Leila, Pomona, Calif., 55
Bukrt, Lewis and Elaise, Goshen, Ind., 60
Cox, Don and Elnor, Warsaw, Ind., 55
Crouse, Leon and Arlene, Myerstown, Pa., 50
Fisher, Frances and Russell, Rocky Mount, Va., 55
Ganger, Dallas and Barbara, Elkhart, Ind., 50
Grim, John and Lorraine, Defiance, Ohio, 50
Hocker, Harold and Margaret, Greenville, Ohio, 60
Holdiman, Floyd and Mabel, Hudson, Iowa, 55
Hollinger, Ben and Ruth, Manheim, Pa., 65
Johnson, Bob and Maxine, Warsaw, Ind., 55
Marsau, Bob and Joan, Waterloo, Iowa, 50
Mason, Edward and Nada, Bealeton, Va., 50
Miller, Clarence and Kathryn, Myerstown, Pa., 50
Moyer, Glen and Mabel, Greenville, Ohio, 75
Myers, Wubert and Peg, Goshen, Ind., 50

Turning Points

Nusbaum, 80, Uniontown, Pa., Mar. 1, 1996
 Scheller, Fred, 90, Uniontown, Pa., Mar. 1, 1996
 Sherman, 80, Uniontown, Pa., Mar. 1, 1996
 Smith, 80, Uniontown, Pa., Mar. 1, 1996
 Thompson, 80, Uniontown, Pa., Mar. 1, 1996
 Wagner, 80, Uniontown, Pa., Mar. 1, 1996
 Walborn, 80, Uniontown, Pa., Mar. 1, 1996

Deaths

Adson, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Akers, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Baer, 71, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Baker, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Barringer, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Bittenger, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Blocher, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Bowser, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Bowser, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Bover, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Brooks, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Brubaker, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Burgess, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Burnett, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Carper, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Cassel, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Christy, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Crist, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Davis, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Eaton, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Encart, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Fodor, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Foster, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Fretz, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Frey, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Fruitt, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Gall, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Gochnauer, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996

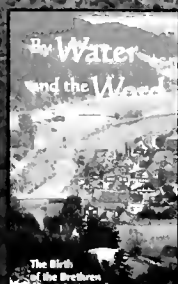
Harbaugh, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Hardy, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Hawbaker, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Hendershott, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Hess, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Jagger, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Jones, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Kenyon, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Kerley, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Kinzie, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Klingler, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Krause, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Kreiser, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Landes, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Lapp, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
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 Leach, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Lutz, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Mallock, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Teach, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Lehman, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
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 Lechner, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Longenecker, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Lowe, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Lundgren, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Maldonado, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Mann, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Martin, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Masemer, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Mason, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Mauger, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996

Mar. 1, 1996
 Maurer, Edward, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Maxwell, Leonard, 78, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 McBride, Ann, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 McCracken, Florence, 81, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 McGillivray, Maude, 82, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 McKinney, Gladys, 81, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Miller, Jacqueline M., 75, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Miller, Joann, 62, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Miller, Millard, 81, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Mills, George, 81, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Mills, Mike, 79, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Mitchell, Paul, 78, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Moberly, Carol J., 57, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Moninger, Edna, 88, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Montel, Wanda, 66, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Mummert, Salome Diehl, 88, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Munson, Violet, 90, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Musey, Blanche, 81, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Myers, Alma, 95, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Myers, Jack, 67, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Myers, Jennie, 72, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Myers, Sarah J., 62, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Nedrow, William F., 82, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Nichols, Mazie, 90, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Nolen, Posey J., 72, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Null, Myrtle, 95, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Nusbaum, Manford, 72, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Oellig, Byron, 65, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Ogle, Herbert, 81, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Olson, Alma, 98, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Outro, Ruth, 85, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Polfenberger, Dola, 88, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Rhoda, Dora, 75, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Richardson, Lloyd J., 87, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996

1996
 Ridenour, Marv, 95, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Roller, John M., 98, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Ross, Mabelle, 95, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Rowl, Goldie, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Rowland, Albanus, 86, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Rowland, Mary, 90, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Rust, James, 75, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Scheets, Maxine, 71, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Schuaitman, Albert, 95, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Seese, Herald V., 95, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Shakespeare, Grace, 95, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Shearer, Samuel, 90, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Sheffer, Nina, 88, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Shelly, Kathryn, 88, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Shifflett, Edith Bell, 84, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Shull, H. Edward, 94, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Shuttleworth, Lowell, 78, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Sidwell, Lula, 89, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Simpson, Loren, 81, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Sisler, Lula, 88, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Sites, Virgil, 87, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Skedgell, Lillian, 78, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Skillings, Robert, 71, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Smith, Edna, 94, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Smith, Emma S., 85, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Smith, Helen, 90, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Snyder, Beulah, 81, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Snyder, Maurice, 85, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Spaid, Robert, 74, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Stanton, John, 64, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Stevenson, Kathryn, 89, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Stiles, Mildred, 95, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Story, Beulah, 70, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996

Stover, Donald Thomas, 64, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Stremmel, Gertie, 81, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Stuart, Kenneth, 78, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Sweitzer, Marie G., 82, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Switzer, Ola, 86, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Thomas, Nina C., 76, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Toy, Minnie, 88, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Trenary, Ada, 86, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Walfer, Albert, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Walter, George R., 76, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Wampler, Elmer, 94, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Waser, Stewart L., 56, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Wasileski, Phyllis, 69, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Weaver, Grace, 90, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Weaver, Mary, 79, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Weise, Lucile, 81, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Weybright, George, 85, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Wheelock, Floyd, 80, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Whitehead, Bessie, 88, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Wiley, Lillie, 89, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Wilhite, Patricia, 45, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Willis, Gonda, 71, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Winbrenner, Thelma W., 88, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Wise, Levi, 87, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Wisler, Claude, 75, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Witkovsky, Ethel O., 87, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Wolf, Carrie, 98, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Wolff, Anna, 71, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Yoder, Donald, 87, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Zechman, Carrie, 87, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996
 Zimmerman, Warren, 86, 7000, Mar. 1, 1996

HEAVENLY
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Coming to your church: "By Water and the Word," a 25-minute video on the birth of the Brethren. Meet courageous members who preached peace in a climate of war, who forged a vibrant spirituality in a visible community, who risked their lives over matters of faith. David Sollenberger, producer; Jill Eikenberry, host; Donald Durnbaugh, consultant. A General Board release with a four-session study guide included. Sale \$19.95 from Brethren Press.

"As Christ welcomed you," the theme that gave
verve to the Cincinnati Annual Conference, lives on.
Wherever strangers come together in Christ, care
for one another and
hold one another
up, the
welcoming
continues.

As in southern
Sudan, for example, where due to the
Nuer Bible Translation Project, war-weary
Christians embrace God's Word in the lan-
guage they know and love.

In Managua, Nicaragua, a cluster of parishes
rejoice in the partnership and kinship they have
with sister congregations in the US.

In the former Yugoslavia, 14 Brethren Volunteer
Service workers have carried out humanitarian and
reconciliation ministries since 1993.

For North Korea, Brethren launched a relief
response to victims of massive flooding,
providing \$170,000 worth of beef, med-
ical kits, and financial assistance.

In hosting the homeless, Brethren

received and placed 2,000 refugees last year.

In the Dominican Republic, stateside and
Dominican Brethren work side by side to construct
church buildings and to train pastors for a
flourishing young church.

In US congregations, new identity
resources help Brethren find their voice in
expressing words of welcome and inter-
preting the faith that drives their action.

It is ministries such as these that you sus-
tain when you give to the World Mission
Offering on World Communion

Sunday, October 6. In support-
ing the work of mission, in
partaking of the bread
and the cup, you nur-
ture and strengthen
the fellowship of
the shared life locally and around the world.

Welcome the stranger, the newcomer, the
broken, as Christ has welcomed you.



**World Mission Offering
Church of the Brethren**



Church of the Brethren

October 1986

Messenger

Impacting the
Developing World

**Trick
or
Treat?**

Messenger

Vol 145, No 9

October 1996

Editor: Kermon Thomasson
Managing Editor: Nevin Dulabaum
Editorial Assistant: Paula Wilding
Production, Design: Paul Stocksdale
Subscriptions: Vicki Roche, Martha Cupp
Promotion: Linda Myers Swanson
Study Guide Writer: Willard Dulabaum
Publisher: Dale Minnich



On the cover: For this young Miskito Indian woman pounding rice in a traditional wooden mortar, what will be the impact of "western civilization"? David Radeliff asks this question and others as he considers the changing world and the impact of taking groups to developing countries.

Features

13 Trick or Treat?

Is the invasion of "modern civilization" a trick or a treat for those who are on the receiving end? Even when the intention of outsiders is noble, will the risks inherent in an invasion of one culture or set of ideas or line of products into the lives of another, less powerful people always outweigh the possible benefits? Story and photos by David Radeliff.

16 Behind the church burnings

Anthony Walton tells the ugly story behind the burnings and behind the articles you read in the newspaper and the scenes you see on television. He reveals that the trends and patterns of thinking that Americans of good faith had hoped were over with are not over with yet. Part one of a two-part series.



Departments

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- 2 In Touch
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- 6 News
- 9 In Brief
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From the Editor

How to reach us

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Coming next month

The concluding installment of Anthony Walton's analysis of the crisis of church burnings.

District Messenger representatives: Atl. N.E. Ron Jutz; Atl. S.E. Ruby Ravner; Ill.-Wis. Kreston Lipscomb; S.C. Ind. Marjorie Miller; Mich. Ken Good; Mid-Atl. Ann Fouts; Mo. Ark. Luci Landes; N. Plains. Faith Strom; N. Ohio. Alice L. Driver; S. Ohio. Jack Klme; Ore. Wash. Marguerite Shamberger; Pac. S.W. Randy Miller; M. Pa. Eva Wampler; S. Pa. Elmer Q. Gleim; W. Pa. Jay Chnstner; Shen. Tim Harvey; S. Plains. Mary Ann Dell; Virgina. Jerry Naif; W. Plains. Dean Hummer; W. Marva. Winoma Spurgeon

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I suppose that in any craft the follower of it develops, over time, a set of maxims that apply. For me with MESSENGER, an important one is "Get me the photo; I'll find the story to go with it." Behind it is the learning that it's easier in most cases to obtain a story than the photos to illustrate it.

This issue of MESSENGER, more than most, demonstrated to its producers the relevance of the maxim. One thing after another thwarted our efforts to obtain the photos we wanted. It began with the cover photo. A colleague showed me a slide one day that led me to exclaim: "That's the perfect cover shot for October!" Then I ignored another maxim that is basic in all areas of life: "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." I left the slide with the colleague, confident that when I needed it, the slide would be retrievable. It wasn't. The bird flew back into the bush. Colleague One claimed he gave the slide back to Colleague Two, the photographer. Colleague Two claimed it was not returned. Both colleagues shook the bushes. I settled for a variation of the slide I had seen.

In the case of another photo, I had arranged far in advance for shots to be taken. But when the photos arrived, their quality was terrible. Thanks to computer magic, we were able to enhance the quality enough to make one of the photos usable. For another story, the photographer who had the photos we needed was unreachable on vacation when we called to make our request. In another story, we had to pay through the nose to get the photos we thought the story called for. Even as he writes, the editor is working on the assumption that he will return from NOAC III with usable photos taken by himself.

We are grateful at this point in history for faster systems of communicating with photographers and photo sources, as well as for in-house technology that can redeem poor photos. One photo in this issue was lifted directly from a newspaper (with permission).

When we finally got the October issue together, it looked good, and without this confession here, the reader likely would be none the wiser. And in telling about my maxim about photos, I have violated the truth behind a maxim my grandma had to guide her in preparing company meals: "Just set out what you have, and don't mention to your company the things that are missing. Likely they won't notice."

I hope you can still enjoy your MESSENGER.

Termon Thomasson



David Radcliff

If good photos are elusive, what more of good subjects?
A Honduran girl keeps a suspicious eye on paparazzo David Radcliff.

In Touch

An old family recipe

Ninety-four-year-old Alva Fike puts the ingredients into a gallon tin can, sets it on the stove, and turns on the burner. He stirs the aromatic medicinal mixture just like his mother, Sarah, did at the beginning of this century. When the mixture is ready, Alva pours it into tin containers, ready for his customers.

Sarah Fike paid \$5 for a salve recipe before she and her husband, Phineas, left their home in Virginia in 1906, moved west, and settled in Peace Valley, Mo. There in Missouri,

Sarah became known throughout the hill area as a competent midwife.

Alva, a member of Peace Valley Church of the Brethren, tells about a man from Pomona, about 10 miles away, who had been trying for a year to cure a running sore on his shin. "Come live with us, and I'll cure you with my salve," Sarah told the man. He did, and she did.

Alva uses an oak hammer handle to stir his batches of salve. The salve sticks to anything it touches. It is called a "drawing" salve, very effective for running sores. It "draws" the infection. That is, it causes the infection to localize at one point.

Testimonials of the healing properties of Sarah Fike's sticky salve increased its popularity early on and made it a household term. "I need me some Fike's Salve" became a familiar refrain.

In recent years, Alva has increasingly found difficulty in obtaining the basic ingredients for the salve. One of these is "English rosin." Alva's oldest son, Harold, buys rosin for him, a pound at a time, in Louisiana. "What Harold buys me may be Scottish," says Alva, knowledgeable about such arcane matters.

Sarah Fike died in 1945. Her daughter, Zella, took a turn at making Fike's Salve, as have Sarah's sons, Lester, Clarence, and now Alva. To whom will Alva turn over the recipe, hammer handle, and can? Maybe to Harold, who is planning to retire to this valley north of West Plains. Or maybe to one of Sarah's granddaughters, Viola Harlan, who lives on a nearby ridge and studies nutrition and herbs.

One thing is sure: the market. As the end of the century approaches, third- and fourth-generation Fikes and their friends—those living in the Ozarks as well as those in other states besides Missouri—continue to call for Fike's Salve to restock their medicine chests. —IRENE S. REYNOLDS

Irene S. Reynolds is a freelance writer in Lawrence, Kan., and one of the Fike kintfolks.

Names in the news

Scott Huffman, a member of Quinter (Kan.) Church of the Brethren, who was featured in In Touch in July as an Olympics pole vaulter who, he thought, would not make it to Atlanta. He was one of the three Americans who competed in the pole vaulting finals, and placed 15th overall.

• **Steve Brady**, a Bethany Seminary student from Mount Carmel Church of the Brethren, near Sparta, N.C. (see "North Carolinians in Leadership," May/June 1995) left in mid-September for a three- to nine-month term of service with the Church of the Brethren



Alva Fike gets out his tin can, hammer handle, and an old family recipe whenever there is need for a fresh batch of Fike's Salve.



Steve Brady

mission in South Korea. He will teach English to elementary and junior high students, lead an English language Bible study for youth and young adults, and assist field worker Dan Kim in the growing church fellowship begun in Seoul. Bethany Seminary is granting Steve credit for this South Korean ministry experience.



5 years of Ministry. Interim Northern Plains District executive Joe Mason presented Charles Albin with a certificate honoring him for his 75 years of ordained ministry. The 97-year-old minister served such pastorates as Ottumwa (Iowa); Ivester in Grundy Center, Iowa; South Waterloo (Iowa); Quinter (Kan.); Garden City (Kan.); and Iowa River in Marshalltown, Iowa.

Ministry was fun

His strong suit as a minister was in visiting and relating to people of all ages. He was a respected leader, role model, and a friend. He was down to earth, cheerful, and mirthful. He still displays those attributes from his hair in Oakview Nursing Home in Conrad, Iowa.

At age 97, **Charles Albin**, was visited there in late July by Northern Plains District officials, bringing with them a certificate of recognition marking his 75 years as an ordained Church of the Brethren minister.

Born and reared in the Maple Grove Church of the Brethren, near Norton, Kan., Charles was called to the ministry there in 1921. He left farm work to get an education, graduating from Bethany Seminary (then in Chicago) in 1932. Members of his family still ask, "How did this quiet, shy farm boy survive Chicago?" (Back then, Bethany students were required to preach on Chicago street corners.)

Most of Charles' ministry was in Iowa churches. He retired in 1966, but served three interim pastorates afterward.

Perhaps he is best satisfied with his influencing young people to enter ministry. Said one person who followed in his footsteps, "He gave the impression that being a minister was fun."

Driving and driven

In the early 1950s, **Darlene Scott** was stricken with polio, much feared in those years before the 1955 introduction of Salk vaccine. The disease affected her legs, and Darlene has used crutches and leg braces ever since.

Today the Hagerstown (Md.) Church of the Brethren member, former counselor, and Sunday school teacher gets into her car a couple of times each month and drives people who need medical care to places as far away as Hershey, Pa., and Baltimore.

"I like to get in my car on a sunny day and just keep on going," Darlene says of her volunteerism. "It's much easier than walking."

She volunteers through the Franklin County Volunteer Transportation Network. But years before she joined the network, Darlene was providing transportation for people on her own. "This is something I can do," she explains simply, "and it's something they need to have done."

"Darlene's heart is bigger than she is," says Steve Barnett, who runs the network.

Darlene has not let polio define her life. "I forget that's the first thing people notice about me," she says. "I don't know anything different."

Darlene once worked as a counselor for a health center, but the caseload burned her out. Being a driver allows her to keep her counseling skills honed. "My passengers get free



Darlene Scott appreciates the freedom of movement that her car allows her, and she enjoys sharing that freedom by providing transportation for others.

counseling," she says.

"They are under stress, and a good talk with a sensitive adult can help them through the day."

Now it's only the car that may suffer burnout. Darlene is in her element, stress-free, and on the go.

Adapted from a story by Steven E. Dennis in The Morning Mail, Hagerstown, Md

"In Touch" profiles Brethren we would like you to meet. Send story ideas and photos to "In Touch," MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

Close to Home

Riding the Ridge

You have to understand, first of all, that the ride is through the Blue Ridge Mountains—up and down over steep terrain. Okay, so there's a 50-mile version and a 100-mile version; you could take your choice. But with either version, the seventh annual **World Hunger Bike Ride** in southern Virginia on July 20 was a grueling undertaking.

More than 50 bikers from eight Franklin County Church of the Brethren congregations participated in the ride, beginning at 6:50 a.m. and following, for part of the route, the Tour Du Pont Bicycle Race, held earlier in the year.

You don't just jump on your bike and pedal off toward the distant goal. Before they headed out, the bikers heard a safety speech by Mike Sledd, from Antioch Church of the Brethren. Mike knows first hand the perils of biking. He was just back from a four-day hospital stay occasioned by a bike accident just the week before.

"The support teams were excellent," said bikers George and Karen Barnhart from **Germantown Brick** church. "There were four rest stops on our 50-mile ride, and eight on the 100-mile course."

Two motorcycleists go ahead of the riders, putting up directional markers. Two support vehicles follow the riders, carrying extra equipment, medical supplies, and people ready to assist. Volunteers from the eight churches provide refreshments at the rest stops. In all, more than 50 volunteers are involved.

Germantown Brick member Guy Buford, the ride chairman, pointed out that "the ride draws in people who otherwise wouldn't participate in the hunger relief efforts." Besides the ride, the area churches sponsored a hunger walk in June, a chicken barbecue on the ride day, and an auction in August. Total receipts exceeded \$30,000.

Participating Franklin County congregations besides Antioch and Germantown Brick were **Bethlehem**, **Monte Vista**, **Bethany**, **Cedar Bluff**, **Boones Mill**, **Oak Grove South**, and **Smith Mountain Lake**.



100-mile ride for hunger.

50 bikers from eight Brethren congregations participated in this year's World Hunger Bike Ride.



Campus comments

Three **McPherson College** students served as summer camp interns among Church of the Brethren camps on the Plains and in the Midwest and East this past summer. The students are Jenny Stover, from **Quinter** (Kan.) Church of the Brethren; Tracy Stoddart, from **Koinonia** Church of the Brethren, Grand Junction, Colo.; and Jennifer Bosserman, from **Peace Valley** (Mo.) Church of the Brethren.

• At the **University of La Verne**, Debbie Roberts, former director of Program for Women on the General Board staff, is now serving as campus minister.

• In a recent issue of *Money Magazine*, **McPherson College** placed 50th in the publication's list of the top 100 US colleges and universities in terms of "schools that deliver the highest quality education for the tuitions they charge." McPherson also was named as the 6th best liberal arts college among liberal arts schools with fewer than 1,600 students.

• At **Bridgewater College**, Tony Campolo, a professor at Eastern College, St. Davids, Pa., spoke during the annual Spiritual Focus Week in September.

• The **University of La Verne** had 14 students serving in its 59-year-old Summer Service Program. The volunteers served in six Church of the Brethren congregations: San Diego (Calif.) First; Peace, Portland, Ore.; Olympic View Community, Seattle, Wash.; Pomona (Calif.) Fellowship;

Bakersfield (Calif.) Community; and Live Oak (Calif.); in three Brethren camps: La Verne (Calif.), Koinonia (Wash.), and Myrtlewood (Ore.); and at Hillcrest Homes, La Verne, Calif.

• **University of La Verne** President Steve Morgan has been elected to a two-year term as president of the



Steve Morgan

Western College Association, the organization that oversees the 150-member Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Morgan is senior among the presidents of Church of the Brethren schools.

Highlighting heritage

A new Anabaptism and Pietism Concentration is being established by **Ashland Theological Seminary**. To help launch the program, historians Don and Hedda Durnbaugh will present five lectures Oct. 28–30 on Brethren, Anabaptist, and Pietist teachings and hymnody. Hosting one of the lectures, a meal, and a hymn-sing on Oct. 29 will be **Maple Grove** near Ashland.

This and that

Middle Pennsylvania District is moving on in Jubilee Year, a project to examine and refocus district ministry. District board members visited congregations to gather information and gain insights. In a retreat, the board will consider the data and chart direction for the future. Former Annual Conference moderator Judy Mills Reimer will lead the retreat.

• **The Cedars** retirement home in McPherson, Kan., has received a \$150,000 challenge grant from The Julia J. Mingenback Foundation in McPherson. The grant will help pay for renovating one of its wings to make a 10-bed Alzheimer's unit. The Cedars, more than a century old, operates a 120-bed health center as well as numerous independent living and assisted living units.

• **Mexico** (Ind.) Church of the Brethren collected 5,000 toothbrushes and sent them to a health-care project in Guatemala. Debbie Ritchey Okeson, who grew up in the Mexico congregation, serves as a nurse in Guatemala.

• **The Circle of Love** Fellowship in Buckhannon, W.Va. (July, page 4) sustained considerable damage in a flood July 31–Aug. 1. Nearby Brethren congregations and West Marva District helped with cleanup and repairs. The denomination's Emergency Disaster Fund donated \$500.

• **Dupont** (Ohio) Church of the Brethren added to its church building in 1987–1988. But the



Passing out popsicles

Children of **Pleasant Dale Church** of the Brethren in Decatur, Ind., got a lesson in giving during day camp this summer. On a hot August day, nine-day campers were taken to a Wal-Mart store, where they stood out front and handed frozen popsicles to surprised kids entering the store with their parents. The object was to provide the Pleasant Dale children with a lesson in giving something away while receiving nothing in return. Well, "nothing" unless you count the delighted look on the face of the popsicle recipients. In the photo, Adam Braun (right) gives a popsicle to another child.

enlarged church is bursting at the seams again. Now the congregation has begun adding a multipurpose building and Sunday school rooms. The project will cost \$320,000. But that is just phase one. Phase two, costing another \$320,000, will be the enlargement of the sanctuary. Over half the first \$320,000 has been raised.

Let's celebrate

Harrisonburg (Va.) **First Church** of the Brethren marked its 95th anniversary on May 19, coupling it with celebrating completion of a \$1 million church construction project that added a fellowship hall and nine classrooms, enlarged the

kitchen, and made restrooms handicapped accessible. Bridgewater College president Phil Stone spoke at the dedication of the additions. Harrisonburg was organized in 1901 as a mission church of three surrounding congregations.

• **New Fairview Church** of the Brethren, York, Pa., celebrated its 75th anniversary on Aug. 11. Special music was provided by the New Fairview Men's Quartet. The congregation separated from **Codorus Church** of the Brethren in 1921.

"Close to Home" highlights news of congregations, districts, colleges, homes, and other local and regional life. Send story ideas and photos to "Close to Home," MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

Brethren music and worship leaders gather to 'make noise'

"Make a Joyful Noise" was both the name of the event and an apt description of what happened at Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind., in August.

Making the noise were more than 100 Brethren who provide music and worship leadership in their congregations.

The three-day event began with a prayer sung as a hymn. "Gather us in and hold us forever; gather us in and make us your own," sang those assembled on the courtyard. Still singing, they processed into the chapel, the words a fitting prelude to what followed.

In a keynote address, Nancy Faus, Bethany's Brightbill professor of Ministry Studies and campus minister, stressed that worship "must center on God and glorify Christ."

"Too much worship these days," she said, "lacks an awareness of God's mystery and majesty. Instead of following the popular practice of having two

different Sunday worship services, "traditional" and "contemporary," she suggested an alternative: "If we wish to shape the church community into a bonded, yet diversified group, we will use many styles of worship and music together."

The workshops that followed the opening worship gave ample opportunity for participants to explore the rich variety of music contained in *Hymnal: A Worship Book*.

There were sessions for directors of congregational singing, adult and children's choirs, handbell choirs,

and instrumental groups.

Other workshops concentrated on hymn texts. Worship leaders were given guidance on how to plan hymns for the church year and how to use the new hymnal as a companion to biblical preaching.

Those who gathered for the event came for a variety of reasons. Some wanted to learn how to enhance their children's music program. Others were interested in discovering more about Brethren hymnody.

But making a joyful noise to the Lord was the heart of the event. Each worship occasion became a festival of music. Though singing predominated, a variety of instruments accompanied the singers. And, the joyful noise-makers embraced music from diverse cultures: Brethren and Mennonite, African-American, Hispanic, African, and Asian.

A hymn used as a theme for the Saturday evening festival included a prayer refrain that participants took home with them: "Your grace surrounds us all our days; for all your gifts we bring our praise."

—KENNETH GIBBLE



Making a 'joyful noise' on her guitar, Deb Peterson, Gilbert Romero, and others in Bethany Seminary's Nicarry Chapel, is Nancy Jackson.

The church's role in caring for people in a hurting world

People interested in the church's role in "caring for people in a hurting world" are invited to the "Caring Ministries 2000" conference, Aug. 11-15, 1997, at Manchester College, North Manchester, Ind.

Conference speakers will include Bernie Siegel, an author and retired surgeon; Marie Fortune of Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence; Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking*; Fred Shaw, storyteller and United Methodist minister; and Wesley Ariarajah of the World Council of Churches.

Brochures will be available in January from Association of Brethren Caregivers, the event's organizer.

News items are prepared by the staff of the Association of Brethren Caregivers. Opinions expressed in this column are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Association.

Calendar

On Earth Peace Assembly Board meetings. New Windsor, Md., Oct. 5 [Contact OEPA, (410) 655-8705; ON.EARTH.PEACE.ASSEMBLY,parti@Ecunet.Org].

World Communion Sunday; World Mission Offering Emphasis. "... As Christ Welcomed You." Oct. 6.

Brethren Mennonite Council biennial convention. "Piecing New Patterns from Old Cloth." Oct. 11-13, Washington, D.C. [Contact BMC, (612) 305-0515, BMCouncil@AOL.Com].

Peace with Justice Week. Oct. 16-24 [Contact National Council of Churches, (212) 870-2141].

The 12th Believers' Church Conference. "The Believers' Church: A Voluntary Church," Oct. 17-18, McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada [Contact Believers' Church Conference, (905) 525-9140, ext. 24685].

General Board meetings, Elgin, Ill., Oct. 19-22 [Contact General Secretary's Office, General Offices, (800) 525-8059, DONALD.E.MILLER,parti@Ecunet.Org].

National Observance of Children's Sabbaths. Oct. 20-22 [Contact Church of the Brethren Washington Office, (202) 546-5202; WASHOFC@AOL.Com].

"Themes in Anabaptist/Pietist History," a fall lecture series with Don and Hedda Durnbaugh, Ashland Theological Seminary, Ashland, Ohio, Oct. 28-30 [Contact Ashland Seminary, FLS Registration, 910 Center St., Ashland OH 44805].

Women's Caucus conference. "Speaking Our Truths: Conversations in Theology," Minneapolis, Minn., Nov. 2-4 [Contact Women's Caucus, P.O. Box 1055, McPherson, KS 67460, (316) 241-6912].

National Junior High Sunday, Nov. 5 [Contact Youth Office, General Offices; COB.YOUTH,parti@Ecunet.Org].



Andrea Stremmel

Orientation was completed Aug. 10 in New Windsor, Md., for Brethren Volunteer Service Unit 221. Participants were: (front row) Shirley Yingling, Rhonda Mellinger, Ute Schulze-Bertelsbeck, Lisa Ebaugh, Chris Bross, Todd Reish (BVS orientation coordinator), Greg Enders, Dorothea Klose, Kim Hulscher, and Jen Flory; (middle row) Troy Reimer (BVS orientation assistant coordinator), Sue Grubb (BVS orientation assistant coordinator), Dennis Kingery, Torin Eikenberry, Liz Kingsley, Cheri Rieman, and Linda Timmons (BVS recruitment coordinator); (back row) Manuel Behle, Carla Kilgore, Tim Kreps, Bill Jorenby, Robert Herr, Mandy Kreps, Laura Mullins, Liz Bidgood, Niels Fischer, and Corrina Rice. (See page 27 for assignments).

Mmm. Tastes great. But do you know what you're eating?

Chemical compounds have brought incredible change to the world throughout the 20th century, from antibiotics and penicillin to products that have helped raise the collective standard of living. But such achievements also have a dark side.

With hundreds of thousands of tons of toxic chemicals being pumped into our air, drained into our water, and dumped into our ground each year, contaminants can be found everywhere, according to the September issue of *Between the Flood and the Rainbow* newsletter, produced by Shantilal Bhagat, director of Eco-Justice Concerns.

Today, toxins "are part of the daily diet of virtually every person on the planet," writes Bhagat. "(They) can

be detected worldwide in human blood, breast milk, muscle, and body fat. Over time ... they add to the body burden of life-threatening poisons.

"Already their role in the decimation of wildlife populations has been well documented. Now there is increasing evidence that birds, seals, and other creatures are, like canaries in the coal mine, foretelling problems for us, the human population."

The eight-page newsletter will be distributed throughout the Church of the Brethren and six other denominations. It includes a list of resources and organizations to contact for more information.

To obtain a copy, call Bhagat at (800) 525-8059.

Bhagat also has drafted a General Board resolution pertaining to dioxin, which will be considered by the World Ministries Commission in October.

Staff changes for districts, General Board, Bethany

Nancy Knepper, director of Outdoor Ministry, has been named coordinator of the newly developed Ministry Team. Also serving on the team are Jan Eller and Jim Kinsey, co-directors of Ministry, and Jean Hendricks, director of Ministry Training.

Bob Kettering, director of Church Development, was named interim director of The Andrew Center, the denomination's evangelism program, effective Sept. 1 through 1997.

Haruun Ruun, executive secretary of the New Sudan Council of Churches (succeeded Brethren Roger Schrock in the position), also is serving as mission associate for the Church of the Brethren.

Kimberly Murray, of Indianapolis, Ind., began teaching music at Hillcrest School in Jos, Nigeria, in July.



Nancy Knepper



Bob Kettering



Haruun Ruun



Kimberly Murray



Jan Kensinger



Connie Burkholder



David and Marcia Shetler

Jan Kensinger, Atlantic Northeast Associate District Executive, has resigned effective Oct. 24. She has served in that position since 1990.

Connie Burkholder has been named executive for Northern Plains District, effective Nov. 1. She currently serves as pastor of First Central Church of the Brethren, Kansas City, Kan.

David and Marcia Shetler have been named associates in Advancement for Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind., effective Oct. 7 and Aug. 26, respectively. David recently had been serving as pastor of Salem Church of the Brethren, Englewood, Ohio; Marcia had served as administrative assistant for Southern Ohio District.

Twenty-two students join ministry programs

The Education For a Shared Ministry (EFSM) and TRaining In Ministry programs in August inducted 22 new students into its programs; 16 into TRIM; six into EFSM. The students began their respective programs at the Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md.

The students heard lectures on such topics as the congregation as context for ministry, conflict resolution in the church, the Bible as resource for ministry, spiritual disciplines for the pastor, and time management.

According to Jean Hendricks, director of Ministry Training, 64 people currently are enrolled in TRIM and 10 congregations are participating in EFSM.

EFSM participants trained in August at the Brethren Service Center (top) were (first row) Randy Beeghly, Marlo Olman, and Bob DeBolt. (Second row) Doug Sherlock, Terri Torres, Judson Hornbaker, and Sam Westerfield. (Third row) Terry Johnson, Esperanza and Vincent Rivera.

TRIM participants were (first row) Dewayne Heck, David Ort, Elsa Lütman, Maynard Baker, and Rachel Black. (Second row) Katherine Cooksa, Anne Loewe, and Scott Kinnick. (Third row) Yvonne Riege, Steven Brill, and Bill Kornis. (Fourth row) Howard Barber, Mark Riege, Tavia Ervin, Tom DeVore, and Vaughn Loose.



More than half of the Brethren Volunteer Service workers who have joined the program this year have been Brethren, according to BVS director Dan McFadden. While the average rate is about 70 percent each year, the summer unit of 23 participants was composed of 65 percent Brethren. McFadden estimates the year-long average will be 55 percent.

A workcamp to Guatemala is scheduled for Oct. 30–Nov. 10, sponsored by the Church of the Brethren Denominational Peace Witness and Latin America and the Caribbean offices. The workcampers will help refugees returning to their home community reconstruct their lives. For more information, contact David Radliff or Mariana Barriga, (800) 323-8039.

The Emergency Disaster Fund granted \$34,500 to nine projects in August. A \$10,000 grant was made in response to the Liberian civil war; the funds will help Church World Service's relief efforts. Other grants included: \$8,000 to malnourished children in Iraq (food, blankets, and supplies); \$4,000 to refugees in India (drinking water, medical care, and shelter); \$3,000 to various needs in post-war Rwanda (women's projects, reconstruction and peacemaking efforts, and humanitarian assistance); \$2,500 to people affected by floods in South Korea (health and cleanup supplies); \$2,000 to Alaskan wildfire relief (repairing and rebuilding projects); \$2,000 to humanitarian assistance needs in Cuba (food, health kits, and medical equipment); \$1,000 to victims of flash floods in Illinois and Pennsylvania and a tornado in Wisconsin (basic relief assistance); \$1,000 to Central American countries affected by Hurricane Cesar (food, bedding, hygienic supplies, and bedding); and \$1,000 to North Carolinians who were affected by Hurricane Bertha (basic relief assistance).

A full page New York Times advertisement pertaining to Jerusalem and scheduled to run in November will include the signature of Donald Miller, Church of the Brethren general secretary. Miller added his name to the statement that will be published in the advertisement, alongside the signatures of many other ecumenical leaders, by signing on to a Churches for Middle East Peace statement in June. "As Christians committed to working for peace, we support a negotiated solution for Jerusalem that respects the human and political rights of both Palestinians and Israelis, as well as the rights of the three religious communities," the statement reads.

The statement also urges the United States government to help in the Middle East peace negotiation process.

CPT Sunday is scheduled for Oct. 27, a day Christian Peacemaker Teams will celebrate the third anniversary of its Peacemaker Corps and will honor Peacemaker Corps members whose first three-year assignment is concluding. A resource packet is available by calling (312) 455-1199, or writing to CPT@IGC.Org. In December, CPT will host its third Christian Peacemaker Congress. "Joining the Nonviolent Struggle: Getting in the Way" is scheduled for Dec. 27–30, in Washington, D.C.



Martha Miller

Weighing and measuring a child, as Dorothy Granada is doing here, is just one task at the nutrition project in Mulukuku, Nicaragua. Children receive one meal each day at the center, and their mothers learn to cook healthy meals. Once healthy, children "graduate," and a new group begins the process. The Global Women's Project this year gave the nutrition project \$1,000, one of three grants it allocated in 1996. The Women's Resource Center, Kansas City, Mo., received \$2,000; the Women's Center, a project of Zumuntar Matan Ekklesiyar a Nigeria (the women's group of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) received \$1,000.

'Boycott Disney' is the call of the Southern Baptist Convention and Assemblies of God. The two denominations have asked their members to not support the Walt Disney company due to its association with a book and a movie that are "sympathetic to homosexuals." The denominations also cite health benefits to live-in partners of gay employees and "gay days" held at Disney as reasons they are boycotting the company. (*Ecumenical News International*)



Lotteries receive more money than churches, according to Associated Baptist Press. When 1994 figures from the US Census Bureau and the Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches were compared, ABP found that \$26.6 billion was spent on lotteries while \$19.6 billion was given to churches. (*ENI*)



Wanda and Galen Miller (left and right) of Wenatchee, Wash., greet two NOACers who are models of the ideal older Brethren. **Raymond Peters** of Sebring, Fla., and **Naomi West** of Bridgewater, Va., 90 and 89, respectively, are healthy, agile, alert, informed, and responsive to the issues of the day.

NOAC III has a thousand Brethren reaching for dreams

The unofficial registration count was at 1,045 as the third National Older Adult Conference (NOAC III) wound up its week at Lake Junaluska, N.C., Sept. 6. That was a 68-percent increase over NOAC I (1992), which attracted 621 Brethren.

NOAC III used a format that had proved popular at the two previous conferences. Under the theme "Reach for Your Dreams," participants followed a daily schedule of early morning devotions, Bible study, and a general session before noon. Tours, recreation, handcrafts, and interest groups filled the afternoon. Evening worship was the main after-dinner activity, although most participants followed that with visiting, games, and line dancing (including the Macarena).

Brethren Bible scholar Steve Reid, associate professor of Old Testament at Austin (Texas) Presbyterian Theological Seminary, led daily Bible study sessions. He explored scriptures dealing with dreams, including the stories of Jacob, Joseph, and Daniel. General sessions speakers were author Keith Miller (*The Taste of New Wine*, 1965)

and Tom Mullen, professor of Creative Writing and Preaching at Earlham School of Religion. On Thursday, the general session featured a panel of three Brethren discussing "Christians and Politics." Speakers at worship services were Keith Miller, retired pastor Nevin Zuck, Bethany Seminary professor Nancy Faus, and director of Ministry Training Jean Lichty Hendricks.

A new twist to communication was added at NOAC III. In addition to the daily newsheet *NOAC Notes*, edited by

Health educator Gayle Appel Doll (back to lake) led daily exercises in early morning sessions by Lake Junaluska.



Manassas (Va.) pastor Fred Swartz, there was *NOAC News*, a daily video presentation produced by David Soltenberger, assisted by Chris Brown. The video team kept NOACers convulsed with laughter, lightening their news updates with slapstick comedy.

The secret of NOAC's popularity continues to be its affirmation of older Brethren's desire to remain involved, informed, and consulted. Raymond Peters of Sebring, Fla., age 90, projected for most participants their ideal of Brethren older adults—healthy, agile, alert, informed, and ready to speak out on the issues.

Coordinators of NOAC III were Emerson and Martha Davidson of Tipp City, Ohio. The conference is sponsored by the Association of Brethren Caregivers. NOAC IV is scheduled for Lake Junaluska, Aug. 31–Sept. 4, 1998.—KIRMON THOMASSON

Bible scholar Steve Reid taught about *Old Testament dreamers*, calling Daniel a "pious Brethren."



In the former Yugoslavia: The offerings of our concern



BY DONNA DERR

I still find it difficult to capture in words the poignancy and promise of what I saw and heard in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina as I traveled there in July. On my journey with Bill Sage of Church World Service and Jennifer Riggs from the Disciples of Christ Refugee office, I was often reminded of a favorite passage from a call to worship—"May the Spirit open our hearts to receive and offer Christ's love to a world torn by enmity and hatred."

That passage guided my response in one of my first conversations. "Have the people in your country forgotten us already?" asked Halima.

'Gift of the heart' received. A young girl from Zenica, Bosnia, displays her new school kit.

I hesitated. Should I respond with the truth as I perceive it—that many have forgotten, knowing the conflict has ended? Finally I spoke the truth I knew. "I care, and so do many of the people from the church I represent."

While in the former Yugoslavia, I spoke with people young and old, Christians and Muslims, the physically and emotionally wounded, and those who have begun to rebuild and those who are still finding their way. Each conversation reinforced the basic message they wanted me to take home—that it is important they not be forgotten.

Church of the Brethren members continue to remember, and respond to the needs of brothers and sisters in these countries with very tangible expressions of their concern. Gifts of the Heart school and health kits, donations to the Church World Service

BVSers in the former Yugoslavia:

Nathan Hegedus of Glendale, Calif., is the fourth BVSer to have served at the International Volunteer Project in Pakrac, Croatia. The cease-fire line from the 1991 war ran through



Pakrac, a UN-protected zone, until May 1995, when the Croatian government "reclaimed" the area.

The project focuses on the social reconstruction of both the Serb and Croat communities through projects such as visits to and repair-work for the elderly and disadvantaged. It also offers training, workshops, a youth club, and women's groups, and conducts language, music, e-mail, and photo lessons. Nathan serves as the general office manager.

Patricia "Trish" King of Richmond Va., arrived in early September, assigned to the Committee for Human Rights in Karlovac, Croatia.

Trish works in the village of Dunjak in Krajina, an area formerly occupied by Serbs that was "liberated" by the Croatian army in August 1995.



Most of the population fled, leaving vulnerable, elderly Serbs behind in looted and destroyed surroundings, a group that is still

largely dependent on humanitarian aid. The Dunjak project provides shelter, support, and legal aid for these people and to returning refugees.

Gail Long of Hummelstown, Pa., has served with peace and girls' groups

since arriving in Serbia in January 1995. She now works mainly with the "Women in Black" movement in Belgrade, a pacifistic and anti-militarist women's organization.

For five years, Women in Black has organized public protests, held annual international conferences, produced anti-militarist publications, and organized frequent visits to refugee camps to



distribute humanitarian aid. Gail's specialties are with publications, translating, and interpreting.

Since March 1996, **Scot McElvany** of Upland, Calif., has been the second BVSer to work in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina, at the "Mladi Most"

Tears on Paper

A quiet winter night
gentle flakes are falling
Quiet
Against a gentle light fresh
Someone's hand, untired
writes.
It is the hand of a child
who is asking
will she see once again
her own home,
and mother.
Gentle, like flakes in the dark,
someone's tears leave
sad tracks on paper.

—BLAZENKA VOJVODA

Blazenska Vojvoda is one of four young editors of OSI magazine, which is sponsored by the XONA Women's Center in Zagreb, Croatia

Blanket Fund, and the efforts of Brethren Volunteer Service workers have been the visible offerings of our concern.

During my visit, I participated in the delivery of several hundred school kits to children in Banovici. The local school, a badly damaged casualty of the war, was in the midst of repair in the hope that it would be ready to open in September. These children had not been to school in over two years. When we arrived, over 200 children, many with their parents, were waiting. What a hopeful moment—children hopping from foot to foot in excitement, parents trying to hush them and maintain some kind of order, and the delighted smiles of the children as they received “their” kits. From the children and adults I also saw tears and heard intense conversations about the future. The memory of that morning is one I cherish. And, the expressions of excitement and delight from those children upon receiving their kits are the memories I offer

to those who have provided kits as an expression of their Christian concern.

Less hopeful were the many visible, open wounds of this war. The incredible number of homes destroyed, the fields that provided a livelihood for many before being sowed with land mines, the physical division of cities into ethnic “sides,” the “collection centers” for people who have nowhere else to go—all are painful reminders of how long the journey will be to reconstruction and reconciliation.

Winter, extremely harsh in this region, is approaching, and many people I spoke with expressed fear of not surviving another one in their current conditions. “May the Spirit open our hearts to receive and offer Christ’s love to a world torn by enmity and hatred.” The call has come clearly. I pray that we will continue to hear and to respond. **M**

Donna Derr, director of Refugee Disaster Services, traveled to the former Yugoslavia July 10–26. She plans to return in October to discuss refugee resettlement

BVSers in the former Yugoslavia:

(Young Bridge) project, a youth community center in this Croat-Muslim divided town known for its “Stari



Most” (old bridge), which was destroyed during the Croat-Muslim war.

Mladi Most offers programs, camps, trips, and courses—such as e-mail, photography, language, and music—for the town’s Croatian, Muslim, and Serb youth. It also provides a safe space for youth of different nationalities to meet.

Scot’s focus is on theater; he recently organized special international summer theater camps that included youth from both sides of Mostar. The participants later performed together in Mostar, a first since the war divided these actors.

Since November 1995, **Holly Peele** of Norfolk, Va., has served at the Gornja Bistra Children’s Hospital outside Zagreb, Croatia, the third BVSer to serve at this home and hos-



pital facility for over 150 mentally and physically handicapped children with chronic illnesses.

Holly functions as a nurse’s aide, works with children on improving certain skills, and runs a playroom.

She also works one day a week in Zagreb at a house for Bosnian refugee women.

In May, **Sharon Snyder** of Fort Gratiot, Mich., followed two previous BVSers at the “Otvorene Oci” (Open

Eyes) Balkan Peace Team office, Zagreb, Croatia.

This international peace team supports and accompanies peace and human rights workers, and promotes a “civil society” in a still quite nationalistic and war-torn country.

Sharon will also focus on making contact with ecumenical and peace-building initiatives in the church communities. Previously, Sharon served two years in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

These people fill six positions, but BVSers are also needed at the Pakrac Project, with the Balkan Peace Team, the Gornja Bistra Children’s Hospital, and at Mladi Most in Mostar.

Trick *or* Treat?



David Radcliff

Is the invasion of “modern civilization” a trick or a treat for those who are on the receiving end? Even when the intention of outsiders is noble, will the risks inherent in an invasion of one culture or set of ideas or line of products into the lives of another, less powerful people always outweigh the possible benefits?

BY DAVID RADCLIFF

We must have been quite a sight. Four fifth-graders on stage pantomiming a recent hit by the Beatles as our contribution to our elementary school talent show. Worse yet, we had somehow fallen for our teacher’s idea that we should wear mop heads to better mimic the “mop heads” of the Fab Four. It was presented to us as an honest contribution toward realism. I am sure in retrospect that Ms. Chittum and her colleagues had a good laugh as we plucked out “Eight Days a Week” on our makeshift instruments and flopping headgear. The “British invasion” had arrived in full force in small-town Virginia.

Such invasions have happened regularly in history. Some invasions are military, as the will of the mighty is imposed on the weak. Others are viral, as heretofore uncaught diseases wreak havoc on unprepared populations. Invasions can be even be botanical: In the space of 40 years, a few errant plants of the European *rush skeleton weed* have spread to cover four million acres in Idaho, in the process crowding out native plants and severely reducing the land’s ability to sustain wildlife or livestock.

While such invasions are nothing new, there is a difference today. This is because of the shrinking global community and the ease with which products—be they intellectual or material or spiritual—can be transported across formerly difficult or even impenetrable borders.

And we cannot say that all such invasions are detrimental. An invasion of malaria-fighting antibodies into a tropical region in the form of beneficial medicines can help stem this ravaging disease. The “invasion” of differing art forms—even the Beatles?—can be enriching to the recipients. The introduction of a more efficient wood-burning stove into a society dependent on an ever increasing amount of wood for cooking can become a step toward curtailing devastating deforestation.

Inevitably, such invasions bring change. This change is sometimes for the better. On other occasions, however, the results are at best mixed, and at times extremely destructive. This is especially true when the invasion is an unwanted intrusion, or even a well-meaning effort that eventually has unintended consequences.

Several decades ago, an international agency thought it was doing the residents of a Pacific island nation a favor

when it encouraged the government to undertake a large dam-building project to generate electricity and thus economic development. An unforeseen consequence of the project, however, was an extreme escalation in the occurrence of malaria, caused by the better breeding conditions the dam's standing water provided for malaria-carrying mosquitoes.

Undeterred, the agency had a solution. It arranged a massive spraying operation to control the mosquito population. The pesticide of choice? DDT. This chemical did indeed decrease the number of mosquitoes, but with unintended side effects. Thousands of birds became ill and died after eating the DDT-filled mosquitoes. The cats of the island ate the birds, and themselves began to perish in record numbers. Which was all good news to another group of island residents – the rats. The rodent population exploded, eating its way through food stores and even the thatch-roofed dwellings of islanders. Not to worry – the agency had a solution. It undertook a massive air drop of cats, complete with kitty-sized parachutes.

Aside from the effects of malaria, and the unknown effects of the dam project on the ecosystem and on the people who once lived where the lake now stands, this story has a comic side. In many other situations, however, the intrusion of outside forces into the lives of people has been at best detrimental and at worst devastating. Gold miners illegally invading the land of the Yanomami people of Brazil bring disease and disrupt traditional hunting and fishing. Imported fast-food franchises in cities from Kenya to China increase obesity and bring a higher incidence of heart disease. It is said that youth from Thailand have more in common with their peers in Brazil than with their own parents, due to increased access to MTV and other western media programming. This, in turn, leads to a steady erosion of family ties and cultural traditions.

As many of the nations of the world strive to “modernize,” which often means adopting a consumer economy modeled after that of the “developed” world, their people find themselves suddenly immersed in a spiritual crisis. Old values of community and sharing are replaced by newer values of individual achievement and material prosperity. “In this new economy, people will do anything – even kill – to get wealthy,” said the father of a Vietnamese college student murdered in a burglary. “Profit



In one sense, people should have the right to enjoy life's simple pleasures, even one as fleeting as downing a bottle of Coke. In this case, however, that afternoon snack can eat up as much as 25 percent of the day's wage.

for oneself at the expense of others and the common good has become the only means of competition,” according to Li Pingye, a researcher at the Chinese Association of Religious Studies.

The potentially destructive nature of the invasion of the consumer culture was made real to a group of Brethren recently visiting the Honduran community of Río Colorado. Populated by descendants of the Lenca, an indigenous group in Honduras, this village of several dozen families is far off the beaten path in the western highlands of this Central American country.

Removed as they are from the rest of the world, they are still within the range of radio waves. And, as in our own and every country, these broadcasts include promotions for many commercial products. Here in the highlands of Honduras, not every item advertised will be available for purchase. Lack of electricity will make many products useless. Lack of money—the average *campesino*, or farmer, earns \$2 a day—will render many more unobtainable.

Some items are available, however, and within the reach of even these poor Hondurans. Soft drinks and snack foods have particular appeal. Radio advertisements exhort listeners to drink Coca-Cola for the same reasons we are told to do so—to bring excitement or “refreshment” into our lives.

And even these very poor farmers are not beyond the lure of such ads. It is common for them to stop at the small store in a community member's house to buy a drink and a bag of chips on the way home from the field at day's end.

In one sense, people should have the right to enjoy life's simple pleasures, even one as fleeting as downing a bottle of Coke. In this case, however, that afternoon snack can eat up as much as 25 percent of the day's wage. This is the wage that is desperately needed by the families of these workers. A primary need is for food, for in this community as in many others in Honduras and throughout Central America, childhood malnutrition runs at nearly 50 percent, and 1 of 10 children does not live to school age.

Maria Candida, leader of the women's group and, at age 40, a mother of 10 children, resented the intrusion of commercialism and the effect it has had on the men of the community. “They do not seem to understand the importance of a balanced diet for the children,” she said. “All they think the children need is corn and beans, and won't

give us money for anything more. We are powerless to make them see things another way. They trade our children's health for a drink on the way home from work."

In Bil'al muk, a community in the Mosquito Coast region in the northeastern corner of Honduras, a second Brethren group found that attempts to spread Christianity have likewise had a profound impact. "Before the Moravians came, every part of life had meaning—the trees, the plants, the animals. Since then, we have experienced a profound loss of respect for our culture and traditions," said Nathan Pravia, a regional leader of the Mosquito people. "They also contributed to the breakdown of our communities along the river, as they forbade Christian converts to travel to non-Christian villages in order to keep them from having contact with indigenous traditions.

Other forces have impinged on the residents of Bil'al muk, even though they are seemingly separated from the rest of the world by hundreds of square miles of rain forest. Spanish words have found their way into the Mosquito language. The forest itself is in jeopardy, as *Ladino* settlers from other parts of Honduras seek sites for homesteads. Flying over the forest canopy reveals disturbing signs of logging operations that have carved out blocks of trees along the banks of the region's streams, adding to the severe deforestation already occurring in Central America (losing one million acres of forest per year). Resulting erosion has turned clear rivers muddy red and increased sedimentation. The consumer culture also impinges, as people in this small village have been introduced to shoes and sugar, both of which must be purchased outside the community. There is, therefore, a new need for money with which to buy these goods.

"The outside culture is so strong that it is almost impossible to resist," Nathan Pravia lamented.

Indeed, people of every culture find it difficult to turn their backs on the opportunity to join fully in the "modern" world—which usually means the kind of life they see being lived in the United States or some other similar country. In the words of anthropologist Roberto Benedito, "the choice seems to be either to embrace the new civilization and move forward, or to embrace the indigenous culture and remain backward." Benedito notes that the word "backward" is normally associated with ancient or indigenous cultures both by native people and by outsiders, the effect of centuries of prejudice and discrimination.

Is the invasion of "modern civilization" a trick or a treat for those who are on the receiving end? Even when the intention of outsiders is noble, will the risks inherent in an invasion of one culture or set of ideas or line of products into the lives of another, less powerful people always outweigh the possible benefits? Do less dominant people have a choice to join or not to join the rush toward modernity, or is their future completely out of their hands—and in the hands of advertisers, loggers, missionaries,

and government bureaucrats... or even (Gasp!) well-meaning Brethren workcampers?

There can be no doubt that the world is experiencing cataclysmic change. We feel this change in our own society as basic facets of life—communication, medical care, work, family structures—are transfigured before our eyes. Along with the forest-dweller first hearing the distant whine of the chain saw, we wonder what lies ahead for us. In some ways, living where we do, we might be considered more the instigators and less the helpless recipients of these incessant invasions. Yet we, too, sometimes feel the old giving way to the new in a manner beyond our control and often not to our liking.

No matter where we live or how disconcerting the invasion we experience, we can recall anew words spoken to people of faith at another point when the very foundations of life seemed to be shaking. "Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints," wrote the Revelator. The readers of his letters knew what it was like to feel that their world had been turned upside down. His words to them were to persevere, to carry on, to steadfastly do what they had been doing all along—even as life as they knew it was crumbling before their eyes.

Similar words could be spoken to us—and to people everywhere whose world seems to be threatened from every side. To those whose homes and traditions are under attack: "Do not be afraid to trust in who you are and where you have come from." To those being told that happiness is only a purchase away: "Remember what you already know about what makes life rich and full—the relationships you share and the faith within you." To people everywhere who struggle to make sense out of a world where changing values wash over us as waves on the shore and where a revolution in communication has brought us no nearer to genuine community: "Love the Lord with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself."

The Church of the Brethren has a role to play in this rapidly changing world. Our concern for the quality of human life, not just in the afterlife but also in this life, places us on the side of confused or struggling people. We seek to be humble in our service and evangelism; itself a welcome relief from those who enter the lives of other people confident that they have what it takes to solve their problems. Our emphasis on simplicity can help us and others not be consumed by the consumer culture. We turn to community as a source of strength in the midst of turmoil; perhaps we can assist others in finding such strength as well.

In such a world as ours, with so many changes and so much at risk, may each of us and all of us together find enduring faith in the things that endure. Thus equipped, we face each new invasion not in fear or confusion, but in the confidence that God's purposes for human life and human destiny can yet prevail on earth. *M.*

David Radcliff is director of Denominational Peace Witness and Korean Ministry for the General Board

Behind the church an uglier story ... and the revelation of thinking that Americans of good with are not over with yet.

BY ANTHONY WALTON

In 1988 Orion Pictures released a film, "Mississippi Burning," that told a fictionalized tale of certain events surrounding civil rights activities in the South in 1964, particularly the weeks and months immediately after the brutal murders of three civil rights workers. The film was controversial—it was charged that historical accuracy was unnecessarily tampered with—but the film was inescapably powerful and moving, horrifying in its hard-hitting renditions of the terror and violence imposed upon southern blacks and their allies. The frames from the movie that remain most vivid in my memory concern the burning of churches, one after the other, throughout the two-hour running time. The only thing that made watching those images bearable was the hope that that time in our history was over, and we would never have to see such images again.

The Technicolor horror of these images has been on my mind the last several months as the nation has observed and endured what appears to be a plague of church burnings throughout the Southeast. Could the country be regressing to the dark days of Jim Crow? Millions of Americans, white and black, have been outraged. President Clinton has spoken forcefully on the issue several times, and there has even been, interestingly, a serious backlash against the media and public reaction to the reports of the fires. The known facts are meager: From Jan. 1, 1995, through July 2, 1996, there were 98 arson fires at American churches that were investigated by the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, which has jurisdiction in these matters. More than half the fires—58—were set at predominately black churches.

Significantly, the rate of arson fires at white churches has remained steady during this time, while the rate of such blazes at black church has skyrocketed. Another way of thinking about it is to remember that black churches make up only roughly 10 percent of the total churches in the United States, yet more than half the arson fires are set in them. That is a great imbalance, and indicates that something is going on. But what?

As the arsons accumulated, there was a substantial amount of public bickering over the cause of the plague—some claiming conspiracy, others coincidence—but in the

spring of 1996, as fire after fire was reported, the nation began to react in horror and outrage. People began to wonder, then worry, if a new phase of racial violence and conflict was loose upon the land. Was there a national conspiracy? Was the Ku Klux Klan, as it had threatened to do for years, rising again and striking back at blacks and their liberal allies? The situation began to be seen as so dire that President Clinton took to speaking regularly about the implications of these losses on the nation, and the story became, for a moment, the focus of the national media.

It also became the subject of a national debunking campaign, as news and editorial outlets ranging from *The New Yorker* to *The New Republic* to Rush Limbaugh began offering detailed analysis as to why the story was not all it seemed to be. If, perhaps, there was a rush to judgment about the existence of a nationwide racist conspiracy to terrorize blacks, the rush to discredit is troubling as well. *The New Republic* stated in an editorial, "Who's doing the burning is unclear... The arsonists range from bright line racists to blacks with lots of drunk and crazed teenagers in between." *The New Republic* criticized the NAACP for not accepting that some of the fires are not racially motivated, and implied that the civil rights organization was demagoging the issue for its benefit.

The trouble with the debunking is not that the arguments are untrue—there is still much too much that is unknown about the actual causes of the fires to make any statements distributing blame—but that the critical arguments are only half true. What is disappointing, and even maddening, about the reaction of the critics is that they react to the nation's horror as if all of this trouble were happening in a vacuum.



burnings there is that the trends and patterns faith had hoped were over



Alabama burning.
An early morning fire destroyed the Rising Star Baptist church in Greensboro, Ala. The fire is still under investigation.

They pay lip service to the civil rights movement of the 1960s, which, apparently, after being quite controversial in its own time is now held up as a time of exemplary public behavior on the part of blacks, but don't seem to want to recognize or acknowledge the psychic trauma and absolute terror—yes, *terror*—that the imagery of burning churches and the like can call up in the minds of blacks.

It wasn't that long ago. There are still millions of blacks with a living memory of Jim Crow, the brutality of the Old South, and the bloody and violent toll of the 1950s and 1960s. Those millions have children and grandchildren who have heard these stories and learned of them historically. Couple this with the anti-black tenor and code of much recent political rhetoric and it becomes easy to understand why blacks might justifiably be upset at even the appearance of a resurgence of racial violence. In a case the debunkers cite again and again as "evidence" of overplaying the racial angle of the fires, the arson burning of the Matthews Murkland Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, N.C., a "troubled" 15-year-old local white girl has

been arrested and charged with the crime. Law enforcement has said that they are satisfied that the child was not racially motivated, while black leaders are not so sure.

Who is to say, given the long and sordid history of racial violence in the south, which view is correct? And how can black communities be expected to take at face value the pronouncements of law enforcement agencies that have often been seen as indifferent, at best, to their needs? In *The New Yorker* article on the fires, Alabama fire marshal John Robison gives a detailed and rational analysis of the church arsons, black and white, in his state: "Of the 54 known arsons, we have made arrests in 20 cases. We have arrested 52 suspects in those 20 cases. With regard to the black church fires, we have arrested 4 blacks and 7 whites. With regard to the white church fires, we have arrested 5 blacks and 16 whites. Of the known motives in the 20 cases, we have 10 attempts to conceal the crime of burglary and or theft, 4 acts of vandalism, 2 fire fighters setting fires so they can put them out and be the big hero, 1 juvenile fascinated by fire, and 1 case

where the suspects were drunk and decided to burn down the first building they came across."

This statement, even if completely accurate, illustrates the difficulty of gaining any insight on this issue. Robison only accounts for 18 of the 20 cases he cited, and he conflates black church fires with white church fires, as if they were the same thing, particularly in the state of Alabama. Should blacks and all other Americans who are concerned about the apparent racial motives in the rash of fires accept such cloudy information as the whole truth? Might it not be in the public and private interests of the officials in Alabama to downplay racial aspects of the case? This difference of perception is similar to some of the issues involving the Rodney King and O.J. Simpson cases, where different people staring at the same set of facts see very disparate scenarios.

So it begins not to matter in the case of the church arsons whether or not there is a national network of racists burning black churches. In some ways, it is not even important whether

the cases are racially motivated as a matter of legal fact, because that interpretation is inescapable as a possibility once the pattern is considered. We have a national consciousness, consisting, in large part, of the electronic media. Everybody knows everything everywhere when it happens, and stories can assume their own reality. Assume, as a matter of conjecture, that is what has happened in the church fires epidemic. These fires are not isolated, they do not happen in a vacuum. They happen, in fact, in the American South, which has a sordid history of this sort of thing, as recently as 50 years ago.

Might there not then emerge something of a de facto conspiracy, a situation in which people—perpetrators and victims—who have no actual physical connection to each other become participants in a widespread drama that plays out on television screens and in their minds? This is what I think happened in the black church fires: People of ill will saw the crimes that were being so widely covered, and imitated them for their own twisted reasons, then implicated

Reaching out to those burned by hate

The Church of the Brethren has always been an advocate for the oppressed and abused. The burning of church buildings occupied mostly by African-Americans is an outrage that challenges Brethren to live out their basic beliefs and the denomination is responding in a variety of ways.

Over the past two years, many churches throughout the country, but mostly in the Southeast, have been torched, vandalized, or firebombed.

"Public awareness of these crimes has increased dramatically, and there has been a strong call for individual advocacy around this issue as well as financial, volunteer, and legal assistance to assist these churches and communities in their renewal and rebuilding efforts," said Donna Derr, director of the Church of the Brethren Refugee Disaster Services.

At the initiative of the Black Advisory Committee (BAC), chaired by Mary Scott-Boria of Chicago (Ill.) First Church of the Brethren, Disaster Services became involved with the cause.

The Emergency Disaster Fund has responded with \$15,000 to help rebuild and repair church buildings through a special program established by Church World Service. The funds raised by the National Council of Churches—\$8.6 million to date—are helping rebuild churches and challenge racism.

Individual congregations have taken up special offerings, some even presenting the funds to neighboring congregations that lost their church buildings.

Contributions may be made to the fund: FDI, Church Burnings Project, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

The Church of the Brethren will be rebuilding a church in South Carolina and hopes to begin the project this

month. Ministry of Reconciliation (MoR) will contribute to the volunteer orientation that precedes the rebuilding efforts with sessions dealing with reconciliation, education on racism, and confronting one's own racism, Derr said.

The General Board's Disaster Services, BAC, Urban Ministry, and MoR are compiling a resource packet on community building and confronting racism, coordinated by Shantilal Bhagat, director of Eco-Justice Concerns. "With the encouragement of BAC, we hope to make this a moment of education as much as we need to build a building," Derr said. The packet was to be sent to all Church of the Brethren congregations in late September.

The Virginia District Board passed a resolution on church burnings at its meeting in mid-July and presented the resolution to its congregations. The resolution calls for congregations to take special offerings for the affected congregations, encourages members to volunteer for rebuilding projects, and invites people of all ages to write cards and letters of encouragement and love to the affected congregations.

Barbara Cuffie Sanders, a member of Dundalk Church of the Brethren, Baltimore, Md., attended an ecumenical worship service in Washington, D.C., earlier this year with pastors from many of the burned churches. Cuffie Sanders, a former General Board member and a BAC member, also attended a briefing by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on instituting an arson hotline and working with insurance companies for the affected churches.

For information on any of the projects, contact Donna Derr, Brethren Disaster Response Office, (410) 655-8751.—PAULA WILDING

into the growing tragedy the innocent victims who carried the memory of similar brutalities, organized and sanctioned, all too clearly in their memories. It doesn't matter, in the end, whether or not the Ku Klux Klan is meticulously plotting the terror in a war room somewhere because that is the effect. And it doesn't make that much difference, really, whether the fires are being set in an organized conspiracy or just by a bunch of drunk, copycatting rednecks. The churches are being singled out as black institutions, in small southern communities the central black institution, and that is trouble for everyone. Remember, black church fires are increasing dramatically while the number of white church fires has not changed.

The church burnings, sadly, are only the latest example that trends and patterns of thinking and behaving that Americans of good faith had hoped were over with are not over with yet. These conflicts over the meaning of the events demonstrate that there is a tremendous lack of merely civil discussion on matters of race, not to mention the sort of sincere and hardheaded consensus that would have to exist for true progress on the problems presented by the legacy of race in America to be possible. The general air of contentiousness and the rampant desire to discredit and dismiss those one disagrees with preempts any possible exchange. In the end, all of this becomes a national, and personal, Rorschach test, in which one's reaction to what is presented is more revelatory than the actual problems and issues being discussed. Rather than being looked at and analyzed as a discrete event, the church fires become the latest in a series of footballs that are tossed back and forth during arguments about race.

It is almost as if we do this because we know, subconsciously perhaps, just how hard it will be to achieve something meaningful in terms of progress. The direct problems stemming from our mishandling of the legacy of race, our divided society and the millions of angry, alienated citizens, black and white, along the subsidiary problems, crime, dependence, poor public education, and contentious disagreement over virtually every important public issue, will not be solved by merely holding hands and singing spirituals. People, black and white, will have to change, will have to give up something, materially and psychically, if we are to move forward from a current impasse on race, and it is questionable, given our history, whether or not we can.

The reason for this is, I think, that so many of the fights are no longer over race per se, but rather that what we call "race," has become the battleground upon which many of the contests over values and allocation of government resources takes place. I don't underestimate the continuing power of simple racism in our society—that is made manifestly clear everyday—but it is equally clear that great gains have been made. Not nearly enough, but real, substantial gains in the quality of life available to large numbers of

People, black and white, will have to change, will have to give up something, materially and psychically, if we are to move forward from our current impasse on race.

black Americans, along with the willingness of large numbers of white Americans to accept those blacks as equals and partners in society. This is undeniable. One of the most moving aspects of the church fires was the response to the tragedies of thousands of whites from all over the country, including those same southern communities where the burnings occurred, pitching in with money, labor, and moral support for those facing rebuilding.

This response, particularly on the part of white Southerners, would have been unheard of 20 years ago. In a similar vein, a recent *New York Times* story reported that the number of black-white married couples in the United States is increasing rapidly, with 12.1 percent of black marriages in 1993 being to white partners (In an interesting and revealing parallel, Asians and Hispanics have much higher percentages of marriages to whites). It appears that in the personal, intimate sphere, Americans are getting along much better than it would appear on the nightly news. This, again, is real progress, and relatively recently. The Loving vs. Virginia Supreme Court case that struck down laws banning black and white marriages was handed down in 1967.

While we acknowledge and celebrate these varying kinds of incremental progress, we must not be deceived by them. There are massive and ongoing problems, and many seem to be getting worse. The parallel drives to dismantle affirmative action and limit immigration, for example, seem to be seen on the part of many whites as some kind of magic bullet that will alleviate much of the legitimate pressure they now feel in their own lives. The US economy has been in a steady climb of expansion since 1990, may be stronger than it has been since the 1950s, and investment in the economy is growing faster than it has since World War II. But where is the benefit to the average American family trying to live the life it knew growing up? *M.*

(To be concluded in November)

♦ ♦ ♦

In next month's conclusion to this article, Anthony Walton will describe the phenomenon of America's middle class whites feeling under siege, and the situation of black Americans being victimized by that sense of siege.

Anthony Walton was born in Aurora, Ill., in 1960, and educated at the University of Notre Dame and Brown. His essays and articles have appeared widely, in the New York Times, Reader's Digest, Mirabella, 7 days, and Notre Dame Magazine. He is the author of Mississippi: An American Journey, a memoir of the state and its history told through the history of his family.

stepping

by Robin Wentworth Mayer

Whenever I have Twinkies, I always eat two.

Back when Twinkies were available only in packages of two, my mother would buy two packages for me and my three brothers to share. So we were rationed to one Twinkie.

There came a summer when I was off to day camp, which of course meant a sack lunch. Wonder of wonders, as a rare treat my mother included an undivided package of Twinkies *all for me*. I was elated. Visions of sponge cake and crème filling danced in my head all the way to camp.

After we arrived at the park, my friend Glynda approached me and began discussing lunch. "I have a bologna sandwich. What do you have? Do you have milk or Kool-Aid? My mom packed me an apple, but no dessert, and I really wanted dessert. I can't believe she didn't pack me any dessert. Did your mom send you dessert?"

"Why yes," I said proudly. "I have a package of Twinkies."

"Really?" (I didn't catch on to her excitement until it was too late.) "Then you can give one to me!"

I had waited a long time for this bountiful fare and had no desire to share it. Totally taken aback, I did what most people do in such situations: I made no com-

mitment and attempted to avoid her.

When lunchtime came, Glynda was right beside me, watching my every bite. "Are you going to give me one of your Twinkies?" I opened the package of Twinkies and silently ate the first one while Glynda accelerated her campaign: "You're almost done. Are you going to give me the other one? Huh? Are you? I didn't get any dessert, and I'm *really* hungry for dessert."

Finally, I took the second Twinkie, broke it in two, and gave Glynda half. I still remember the twin emotions of guilt from not sharing equally and resentment from having to share at all.

"Whoever has two coats must share with whoever has none; and whoever has food must do likewise" (Luke 5:11). I know that now. I knew it then. The point is, though, that our *perceived* needs, and consequently our *perceived* deprivations, affect our choices about sharing.

It's not as if I'm going to start a Recovery Group for ADIK (Adults Deprived of Twinkies as Kids). But, for instance, if I had *believed* there would soon be another two-Twinkie lunch, I might have shared more graciously. If Glynda had *believed* her mother would send dessert the next day, she might have waited more patiently.

There's no escaping the fact, however, that giving ultimately involves sacrifice.

And right or wrong, our ability to sacrifice is intricately connected to those perceived deprivations.

Many of you, when challenged by your church to give, do exactly what I did with Glynda: You commit to nothing, and avoid situations where you are reminded of the request. Then, when you feel cornered, you grudgingly give about half of what you *could* give, which, in turn, leaves you feeling guilty and resentful. No fun, huh?

There's a better way.

When you consider what God would have you give, don't think in terms of dollars. Think in terms of deprivations felt over unmet needs. Because giving is really not about financial planning at all. It's about spiritual regeneration.

As you review those unmet needs, surrender them to God. Then you will find that one of two things will happen: God will either meet the unmet need, or God will heal the distorted perception. Once you experience that, giving will become as easy as ... well ... eating. *M.*

Robin Wentworth Mayer is pastor of Kokomo (Ind.) Church of the Brethren.

Stepping Stones is a column offering suggestions, perspectives, and opinions—snapshots of life—that we hope are helpful to readers in their Christian journey. As the writer said in her first installment, "Remember, when it comes to managing life's difficulties, we don't need to walk on water. We just need to learn where the stepping stones are."

“Since this guideline equally affects all special interest groups . . . , no one can claim injustice or foul play.”



It's as simple as that

Instead of having all the fuss at Annual Conference about what Program and Arrangements Committee allows (August-September, page 5), let's use this simple guideline I'm suggesting: *Only groups and individuals whose special interest fully aligns with denominational policy will be allowed to participate in offi-*

cial Annual Conference functions such as exhibits and meal events.

This guideline follows Christian principles and Brethren policy, and it firmly undergirds our denominational identity line "Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together."

As allowed by law, special interest groups and individuals could promote whatever they liked outside the

convention center. Opposing viewpoints, as deemed appropriate by the moderator, could be discussed during Annual Conference business sessions.

Since this guideline equally affects all special interest groups and individuals, no one can claim injustice or foul play. It continues the work of Jesus: it's peaceful, it's simple, and it allows our denomination to work together.

Let's try it.

Woody Johnson
McAlisterville, Pa.

Credit where it's due

The "multitalented Joe Helfrich" mentioned on page 19 of the August-September MESSENGER is a member of Oakland Church of the Brethren, Gettysburg, Ohio, *not* the Pleasant Hill congregation. The Conference Booklet also had him from Pleasant Hill.

And he prefers to be called Joseph, *not* "Joe."

Alice M. Keller
Greenville, Ohio

(Forgive this editor who knew not Joseph and therefore turned to the handy Conference Booklet to determine the multitalented musician's home congregation. Also forgive the unwarranted familiarity with which he was referred to as "Joe."—Ed.)

The opinions expressed in Letters are not necessarily those of the magazine. Readers should receive them in the same spirit with which differing opinions are expressed in face-to-face conversations.

Letters should be brief, concise, and respectful of the opinions of others. Preference is given to letters that respond directly to items read in the magazine.

We are willing to withhold the name of a writer only when, in our editorial judgment, it is warranted. We will not consider any letter that comes to us unsigned. Whether or not we print the letter, the writer's name is kept in strictest confidence.

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Opinions

On ballots

Elaine Sollenberger

Jesus didn't use a ballot system

When Conference struck from the Ministerial Leadership Statement the recommendation that "Standing Committee . . . use a slate for calling people to leadership," it was not a surprise to me, but it was, however, a deep disappointment. It is time to critically examine our present system for choosing leadership, a system that more closely resembles a political model than a biblical guideline.

For quite some time we have anguished over what we cite as a leadership crisis. Particularly, we use that term in reference to pastoral and ministerial leadership. It also applies to leadership in general. Stories told by nominating and personnel committees of congregations bear that out. It is becoming increasingly difficult to persuade people to allow their names on ballots. Frustration with that has driven congregations to accept a slate or a modified ballot, a ballot that offers choices for some offices but not others. Those generally carry the footnote "Persons not elected will be called upon to fill vacancies that may occur." Somehow, we manage to define and defend that as a "call" to serve!

Jesus had a better way. Competition was not a part of the process. The Scriptures do not even hint that

To hold in respect and fellowship those in the church with whom we agree or disagree is a characteristic of the Church of the Brethren. It is to the continuation of this value, and to an open and probing forum, that "Opinions" are invited from readers.

We do not acknowledge our receipt of obvious "Opinions" pieces, and can print only a sampling of what we receive. All "Opinions" are edited for publication.

System, dumbed down music

A list of 4, 8, 12, or 16 individuals was considered, from which Andrew, James, John, and Peter were chosen. Jesus recognized qualities in people and called them to lead and serve. Somewhere along the way, we Brethren have determined that the political model of beating out the competition is the best way to choose leadership. I contend that our commitment to using that model puts much more emphasis on winning and losing than it puts on choosing leadership. With our marks on ballots we eliminate half or more of our potential leaders. Each year at Annual Conference we turn away 75 percent of those who have been deemed capable for a position and have agreed to serve if elected. This year, of 44 such individuals, 11 were elected. A process that turns away three people for every one that it chooses has to be a significant reason for the crisis in leadership.

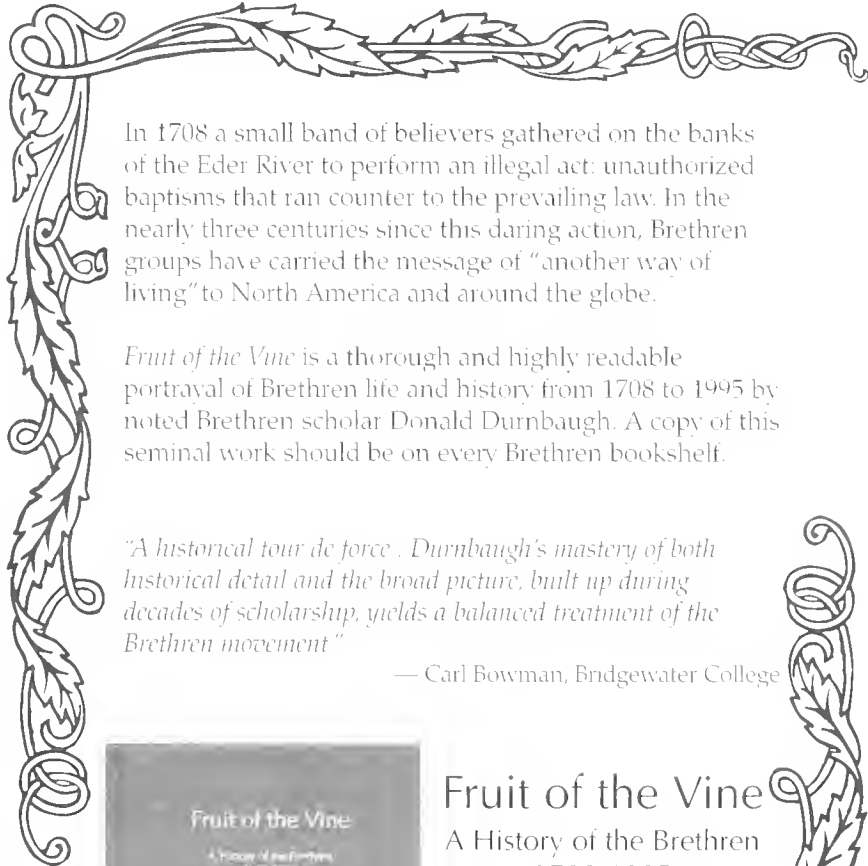
I can personalize that. I have had three opportunities to serve in leadership at the denominational level. In order for me to have those opportunities, nine other qualified people, nominated to the ballot and willing to serve, had to be eliminated. I do not celebrate that.

Over the years, we have encouraged each other not to talk about "losing" an election. Instead, we pull out a few clichés such as "Don't be discouraged; with your capabilities and skills, you will get more opportunities," or "It's so hard to choose one from four such excellent candidates; I hope you will allow your name on the ballot again," or "Don't feel turned down; at least you made the ballot; it gives you name recognition for another time." Such comments do not erase disappointment and the feeling of failure, nor do they necessarily generate enthusiasm for another try.

Following my year as moderator (1988-1989), I decided I would not

again, at any level, compete for an office in the church. Certainly, if called, I will serve. My decision not to compete is neither noble nor courageous because I have enjoyed

more than my share of opportunities to serve. I want others to have similar opportunities to serve because they have the capabilities needed and are willing to offer those in leader-



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Opinions

ship and service. I want them to feel called to serve, not called to first compete for enough votes to top and eliminate the competition.

Even though the recommendation for an Annual Conference slate has been turned down for now, I hope that thoughts and conversations about its merit will continue. They could raise our consciousness about the negatives of our present system of determining who will lead us. Perhaps more people will be led to say, "I will serve if called, but I do not want to compete in an election for the office." Perhaps a congregation or district will be moved to bring a query asking Annual Conference to consider a system of calling people to leadership positions rather than holding elections that eliminate.

If enough congregations, for the right reasons, successfully adopt a slate and reject a ballot, that may give us the spirit and courage at Annual



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From the General Secretary

Issues and dreams

Conference to break with a tradition that results in more rejection than affirmation, a tradition that has no biblical roots or foundation. **M.**

Elaine Sollenberger, a member of Everett Pa.) Church of the Brethren, is a former Annual Conference moderator and General Board chairwoman. She served on the Committee on Ministerial Leadership.

Ronald E.H. Faus

Don't dumb down Conference music

Annual Conference music sets trends. And that's why I was disturbed by the music at Cincinnati.

The texts and music of most of the "praise choruses" were simplistic and repetitious. I can endure singing "The B-I-B-L-E! Yes, that's the book for me" during vacation Bible school, but a steady diet of such songs is sickening and not nutritious.

Two pastors, one from the pulpit, another on videotape, claimed that changing the music does not change the message. Church music was seen as an interchangeable puzzle piece that doesn't matter, as long as the Bible and orthodox interpretation remain the same.

To these pastors, I ask, "Would you prefer that people making decisions about your insurance benefits be formed by singing 'Help Us to Help Each Other, Lord,' or by singing 'Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! There's Something About That Name?'"

Hymns and church music play a significant role in the formation of faith communities. The texts and music may form corporate memory more than the spoken word. (Compare the hymns you remember with the sermons you remember.)

Another novelty in worship at Cincinnati was the introduction of canned music. Although the Bible contains psalms to be sung and instruments to be played in worship,

I am intrigued by the similarity of the issues confronting our denominational family and those confronting other denominations. This is especially true of the Mennonites, with whom we share so many Anabaptist convictions.

Jim Lapp, former general secretary of the Mennonite Church, has identified five "critical underlying issues":

"How we view and interpret the Bible remains one of the most substantive issues, calling for ongoing study, discussion, and definition.

"Our view of Jesus in the context of other religions' claims is a foundational question being raised, especially by younger people, in a new way.

"Authority and how it is experienced and expressed by leaders, conferences, and congregations presents important territory for exploration. These questions press us to define again the authority of leaders in relationship to the members they serve, and the authority of area conferences vis-à-vis congregations.

"Unity and diversity in the community of faith remain important issues. Are there limits to the diversity that we can allow and still be community of brothers and sisters in Christ?

"The international character of the church in a culture of localism is a new concern for many of our people."

Remarkably, these are the same critical underlying issues we in the Church of the Brethren face.

Vern Preheim is the retiring general secretary of the General Conference Mennonite Church. In a recent editorial, he offered his denomination "six dreams for the future":

1. Cooperation. He finds it increasingly important to work together with other Christian denominations. Congregations should not be separated in their isolation, but reach out to nearby congregations of other traditions.

2. Change. Preheim believes that congregations and conferences need to risk change. He suggests including young adults in leadership and allowing a wider variety of worship styles.

3. Respect. We need to respect others' points of view.

4. Communication. We must communicate the larger programs of the denomination so that they are owned and supported locally.

5. Focus. Preheim wishes that each member of the church would memorize the vision statement of the conference.

6. Grace. Preheim calls for congregations to grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace. Vitality and growth will probably be measured by the degree to which these spiritual qualities are embraced.

Jim Lapp's "critical underlying issues" and Vern Preheim's "six dreams for the future" are so relevant that they could have been addressed to us. Many Christians face the same issues. As we face them with penitence and courage, faith, hope, and love, the blessing extends beyond ourselves—DONALD E. MILLER

Donald E. Miller is general secretary of the Church of the Brethren.

they were sung and played "live," not previously recorded. Christian karaoke is better suited for talent shows than for worship.

The logical extension of previously recorded worship takes us to (please don't try this at your home church)

sermons on videotape on Sunday morning, electronic direct withdrawal offerings, and singing hymns into a recorder at home and sending the tape to church so that one does not have to attend on Sunday morning.

Someone has said that the gospel is

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Thursday: General Services

Friday: Parish Ministries

Saturday: World Ministries

October prayer concerns:

Congregation: Clergy appreciation
month; Love Feast and Communion
Services.

Conference: Review and Evaluation
Committee.

General Board: The General Board,
the Board's Executive Committee,
and Goals and Budget Committee,
meeting October 17-22; Board staff
coping with redesign issues.

Districts and schools: Pastoral
search committees; Faculty at
Brethren colleges and university.

General Services: General Services
Commission, which meets Oct.
20-21; Volunteers who assist with
SOURCE and other mailings.

Parish Ministries: Parish Ministry
Commission, which meets Oct.
20-21. Preparing resources for Con-
gregational Ethics paper.

World Ministries: World Ministry
Commission, which meets Oct. 20-21.
Sudan and Dominican ministries.

Opinions

a small boat of crystal glass sailing among oil tankers. The simplicity and strength of worship in the Church of the Brethren is similarly fragile, particularly when we are anxious about the future and willing to do most any-

thing to increase worship attendance.

As Marva J. Dawn writes in *Reaching out Without Dumbing Down*, when we tailor our worship services to attract certain groups, it is easy to forget that the object of worship is God.

There is no dispute that the church needs to constantly add hymns and songs to its worship life. Selection of new hymns and songs should be as carefully thought out as selections of Sunday school materials (unless you believe that singing Assembly of God songs and using Southern Baptist Sunday school material doesn't change the message).

As you add the best of the contemporary, don't forget that singing four-part harmony is a part of the Brethren tradition, and hymns that offer "solid food" through their texts is another.

Ronald F. H. Laus is pastor of Charlottesville (Va.) Church of the Brethren.

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Turning Points

New Members

Note: Congregations are asked to submit only the names of actual new members of the denomination. Do not include names of people who have merely transferred their membership from another Church of the Brethren congregation.

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Pleasant Hill, W. Pa.: Jody Berg, Josh & Nick Fabina, Randy Harrison, Tom Leventry, Cortney Roberts

Quakertown, N. Atl.: Janelle Evans, Teresa Park, Mike Yorgey

Twenty-Eighth Street (Altoona), M. Pa.: Cynthia & Larry Eade, Holly Flumerfelt, Lyndsay Frye, Rachel Helsel, Adam Houser, Sherri Kidd

Union Center, N. Ind.: Steve Blosser, Kelly Chamberlin, Cheryl Deak, Dave & Joan Eshelman, Brent Green, Karen & Nathan Hahn, Dawn & Kevin Koontz, Ryan Morehouse, Jay Olson, Linda Stephens, Suzanne Pierret

Woodbury, M. Pa.: Nathan Cooper, Mitchell Persum, Ben & Doug Ritchy, Deanna Snively, Eric & Nicole Wagner

Zion Hill, N. Ohio: Joel, Marla, Sharon & Tim Bartholomew; Brian Bomberger; Mary Clark; Brian & Sandra Cooley; Miriam & Ray Coy; Michael Douglas; Barbara & Matthew Grate; Carol & Thomas Mellott; Nicole Thompson; Joanne Ward

to Church of the Brethren Office, Washington, D.C.

Ebaugh, Lisa, Westminster, Md.; to Cafe Joshua, West Palm Beach, Fla.

Eikenberry, Torin, North Manchester, Ind.; to Refugee & Disaster Services, New Windsor, Md.

Enders, Gregory, Landisville, Pa.; to Youth & Young Adult Ministries, Elgin, Ill.

Fischer, Niels, Andernach, Germany; to Tri City Homeless Coalition, Fremont, Calif.

Flory, Jennifer, Paris, Ill.; to Religious Coalition, Frederick, Md.

Herr, Robert, Grand Junction, Colo.; to Casa de Proyecto Libertad, Harlingen, Texas

Hulseher, Kim, Enschede, Netherlands; to Tri City Homeless Coalition, Fremont, Calif.

Jorenby, William, Panama City, Fla.; to Trees for Life, Wichita, Kan.

Kilgore, Carla, Fort Wayne, Ind.; to Catholic Worker House, San Antonio, Texas

Kingery, Dennis, McPherson, Kan.; to Hillcrest School, Jos, Nigeria

Kingery, Elizabeth, Bluffton, Ohio; to Koinonia Partners, Americus, Ga.

Klose, Dorthea, Bad Nauheim, Germany; to Catholic Worker House, San Antonio, Texas

Kreps, Amanda, Wabash, Ind.; to Church of the Brethren Office, Washington, D.C.

Kreps, Timothy, North Manchester, Ind.; to Church of the Brethren Office, Washington, D.C.

Mellinger, Rhonda, Manheim, Pa.; to Omega House, Houston, Texas

Mullins, Laura, Frederick, Md.; to Casa del Pueblo, Washington, D.C.

Rice, Corrina, Evanston, Wyo.; to Pesticide Action Network, San Francisco, Calif.

Rieman, Cheri, North Manchester, Ind.; to Catholic Worker House, San Antonio, Texas

Schulze-Bertelsbeck, Ute, Coesfeld, Germany; Bridge-way, Lakewood, Colo.

Yingling, Shirley, Martinsburg, Pa.; to Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md.

Pa., 50

Craun, Roy and Margaret, Temple Hills, Md., 60

Engle, Harold and Sara, Waynesboro, Pa., 65

Glass, Glenn and Sarah, Modesto, Calif., 50

Goodwin, Arthur and Augusta, Uniontown, Pa., 65

Grove, Leonard and Olive Mae, Bridgewater, Va., 55

Hineline, Ruby and Forrest, Ricelake, Wis., 50

Hoover, Eldon and Hazel, Modesto, Calif., 50

Hoover, Robert and Annie, Roaring Springs, Pa., 50

Ikenberry, Ernie and Leona, La Verne, Calif., 50

Inloes, Archie and Helen, Quinter, Kan., 65

Jack, Delaine and Loris, Quinter, Kan., 55

Jamison, Wilford and Mary Jo, Quinter, Kan., 55

Kauffman, Paul and Martha, Smithville, Ohio, 50

Keltner, Wayne and Margaret, Strafford, Mo., 50

Kline, Jack and Louise, Trotwood, Ohio, 50

Knarr, Richard and Irene, South Whitley, Ind., 55

Laipply, Wilbur and Irene, Mansfield, Ohio, 50

Lorton, Richard and Jane, Springfield, Ohio, 55

Messick, Walter and Elva, Broadway, Va., 50

Moser, Lester and Virginia, Thurmont, Md., 50

Murray, Willis and Dorothy, Cambridge City, Ind., 50

Owen, Roy and Edith, Modesto, Calif., 55

Palsgrove, Gene and Lenore, Modesto, Calif., 50

Press, Lorne and Oneita, Quinter, Kan., 50

Reid, Paul and Peggy Holsinger, Broadway, Va., 50

Rhoades, Floyd and Margaret, New Carlisle, Ohio, 60

Russell, Richard and Lola, Roaring Springs, Pa., 50

Taylor, Jim and Estel, Wenatchee, Wash., 50

221st BVS Orientation Unit

(Completed orientation in New Windsor, on Aug. 10, 1996)

Behle, Manuela, Witten, Germany; to Community Medication Center, Harrisonburg, Va.

Bidgood, Elizabeth, Schwenksville, Pa.; to Youth & Young Adult Ministries, Elgin, Ill.

Bross, Chris, Myerstown, Pa.;

Wedding Anniversaries

Adkins, Wayne and Ellen, Camp Hill, Pa., 50

Allstot, Dick and Sally, East Wenatchee, Wash., 50

Baker, Charles and Florence Ritchy, Modesto, Calif., 50

Boitnott, John and Nell, Bridgewater, Va., 71

Brandt, Luke and Anna, Gap,

Deaths

Altis, Anna Adkins, 80, Springfield, Mo., May 17, 1996

Ashworth, Pearl, 81, Quinter, Kan., March 8, 1996

Bachman, Luke, 75, Labanon, Pa., June 8, 1996

Barkdoll, Julie, 55, Waynesboro, Pa., July 15, 1996

Beahm, Nancy, 68, Palmyra, Pa., March 6, 1996

Beckner, Bessie, 99, Mount Morris, Ill., June 28, 1996

Birkett, Ozetta, 85, Wenatchee, Wash., March 27, 1996

Bowers, Kenneth, 80, Carlisle, Pa., June 29, 1996

Brandt, Elizabeth, Lancaster, Pa., June 10, 1996

Glick, Geraldine, 70, Broadway, Va., July 18, 1996

Peters, Duane, 85, Defiance, Ohio, June 18, 1996

Some of us call it Autumn

Here in late August, the first sign of autumn has been observed: As I sit in my office late at night, awaiting inspiration for the October editorial, a cricket down the hall is chirping. About this time of year the crickets receive their own seasonal signal and creep into our building, seeking a haven from the chill that soon will settle over the prairie. And they celebrate with music their happy find.

We have had an unusual summer out here. While last year we had a spell of soaring temperatures that killed some 700 people in Chicago, this year we have experienced pleasant temperatures right on through August. Summer scarcely warranted its name. Are these seasons gone awry a portent of something?

Down home in the hill country, we had a neighbor family with a keen eye for portents transmitted through heavenly phenomena. Instead of portent, these folks used the word "token," but rendered it as "toten." When they saw any otherwise inexplicable sight in the skies, by day or by night, apprehension assailed them, and they declared solemnly, "Hit's a toten of sumpin'."

A dazzling "falling star," the rarely seen "northern lights," or any other aberration of nature—even a "sun dog" or an unusually distinct rainbow—was considered to be "a toten of sumpin'." When, early in World War II, one member of this family perceived a moonlit cloud formation to resemble Old Glory waving high, the whole family took comfort in its prescience that America would prevail. The rest of us awaited further developments in Europe and the Pacific before feeling assured of victory.

Fittingly, when the patriarch of this family of seers lay on his deathbed, there came a meteor that startled our region of the country with its brilliance, accompanied by a blast that rattled windowpanes all around and set the dogs to barking. Talk about a toten! Wrenched from sleep, we were ready to say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth!"

So, whether or not this autumn-like summer of '96 has been "a toten of sumpin'," the seasons have things to teach us. A columnist in *Time* magazine, a periodical not noted for dwelling on eternal verities, wrote, sometime back: "All things must pass, and all things shall return. (The seasons) tell us that every new beginning brings us

closer to an end, and every elegy has within it the echo (and the promise) of a future celebration. They say that love that seems eternal now may soon be a distant memory; and that a new love may come along to revive our sense of eternity. They teach us that suffering is inevitable, and in that inevitability is a constancy that helps take the edge off suffering. We cherish flowers

more than evergreens, precisely because they do not last."

Thus, something of a paradox it is that in endings we sense a promise of new beginnings, yet a beginning merely brings us closer to an end. This helps me understand the sweet/sad feeling I experience on clear, crisp October days—the sadness of endings, ameliorated by a sensed promise of new beginnings awaiting me next spring.

As poet W.H. Carruth wrote,

Some of us call it Autumn,
And others call it God.

The constancy of the changing seasons, softer than the abrupt daily sunrise, and more flexible than the schedule of full moons, is of paramount

importance in our ability to face life. Even our faith is inexorably tied to the rhythms of nature, and while we strive to set our sights on the divine above the natural sphere, we cannot escape resonating to nature's pulse. Did not even Noah take comfort in God's promise that "as long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22)?

Hymn writer Julia Ward Howe, whose eyes had seen the glory of the coming of the Lord, wrote a paean to the changing year that appeared in our old red hymnal. The second verse runs:

Then by sweet length of summer days
I'd measure forth my hymn of praise.
When soft the golden autumn comes,
When winter rules in happy homes,
I marvel in the year's swift round
How new delights are ever found.

I don't know the tune to that, but I have a hunch it's the one the cricket down the hall is strumming.—K.T.

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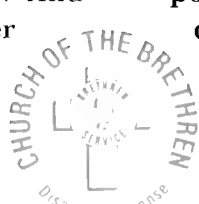


Brethren respond

During 1995 and 1996 alone, more than \$35 million worth of materials were sent to over 100 countries to assist survivors of devastating disasters. And hearts and hands of over 1,200 volunteers, such as these pictured at right, have brought relief and comfort to families and communi-

ties through clean up and rebuilding projects following 16 floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes.

Disasters will continue to happen. There is much work to be done. Will you offer your heart and hands with Brethren Disaster Response? Call now to find out how you can participate. Tel. (410) 635-8730. Fax. (410) 635-8739.



Messenger



Rebecca Samuel Dali

Is Sarah Major alive and well
and living in Nigeria?

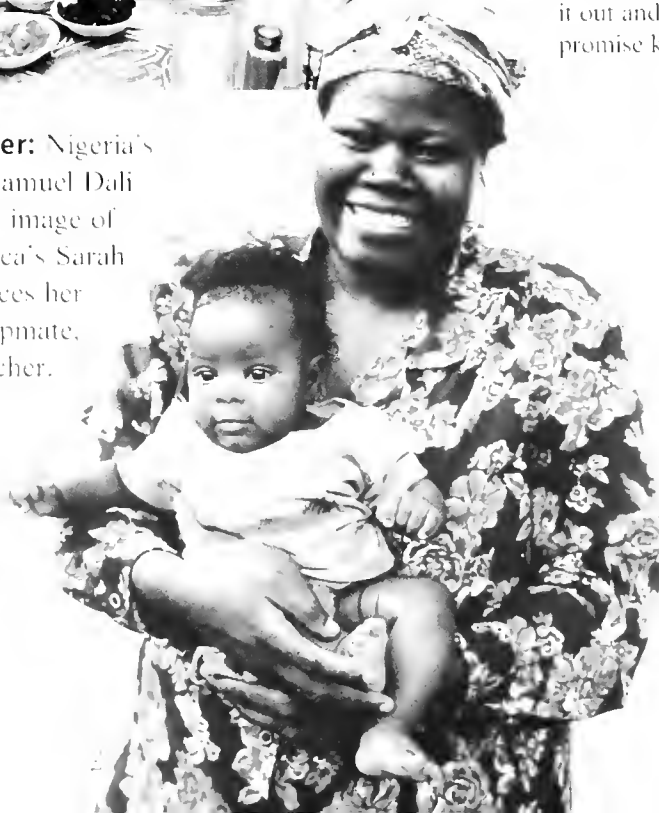
Messenger

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On the cover: Nigeria's Rebecca Samuel Dali evokes the image of 19th-century America's Sarah Major, as she balances her roles of mother, helpmate, teacher...and preacher.



Features

10 Nigeria's Sarah Major

When a Nigerian seminary student titles her thesis "The Issue of Women's Ordination," it's bound to raise official eyebrows. But that isn't all about Rebecca Samuel Dali that raises eyebrows. Story by Glenn Mitchell.

12 Behind the church burnings story

The story of racism in the US is so complex that it's discouraging to hear the complexities laid out. But understanding them is basic to any hope for eventual improvement of the situation. Story by Anthony Walton.

18 A small cafe ... where big things happen

Officially, Marty Shifflett was assigned just to keep the books for Cafe 458; unofficially she serves mainly as a listener, a comforter, and a friend to the cafe's guests. Story by Jeff Leard.

20 Promises to keep

Suspicious at first that "Promise Keepers" was just another religious fad, pastor Gerald P. Baile Crouse checked it out and found himself becoming a committed promise keeper in his own family and congregation.

Departments

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From the Editor

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Coming next month

"Bearers of the Light," a celebration of leadership training in the denomination, with an eye to future needs and directions.

District Messenger representatives: Atl. N.E., Ron Lutz, Atl. S.E., Ruben Raymer, Ill.-Wis., Kreston Lipscomb, S.C. Ind., Marjorie Miller, Mich., Ken Good, Mid-Atl., Ann Fouts, Mo., Ark., Luci Landes, N. Plains, Faith Strom, N. Ohio, Alice L. Driver, S. Ohio, Jack Kline, Ore.-Wash., Marguerite Shamberger, Pac. S.W., Randy Miller, M. Pa., Eva Wampler, S. Pa., Elmer Q. Glem, W. Pa., Jay Christner, Shen., Tim Harvey, S. Plains, Mary Ann Dell, Virginia, David & Hettie Webster, W. Plains, Dean Hummer, W. Marva, Winoma Spurgeon.

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When I was a little lad, at an age when the doings of the church, theological issues, Bible studies, and matters of faith and practice had not yet seized my attention, I always turned to the obituaries when *The Gospel Messenger* arrived. Back then, of course, "Obituaries" wasn't what the feature was called; "Fallen Asleep," it was delicately put. Each week I derived childish satisfaction from determining the oldest person whose death was recorded. Nowadays, centenarians are quite common; back then they were rare enough to keep my game interesting.

But time marched on. Now I am the editor, the magazine is no longer a weekly but an 11-times-a-year publication, and my challenge is to shoehorn not only obituaries, but lots of other statistics into one page an issue. (Sometimes we run *two* pages, to accommodate overflow.)

We occasionally encounter readers who have incorrect assumptions about "Turning Points," so it may be helpful to make a few comments about how our statistics are gathered. BVS units, pastoral placements, ordinations, and licensings come to us routinely from different program units of the General Board. For New Members, Wedding Anniversaries, and Deaths, we rely mainly on our congregational MESSENGER representatives. They are provided forms to mail in. But this imperfect system is undergirded by pastors, church secretaries, and helpful readers who take it upon themselves to send us lists, individual notices, and clipped newspaper obituaries. We welcome them all. (After our gleaning, the newspaper clippings are sent to the Historical Library for filing.)

Some readers ask why a name they are waiting to see sometimes takes so long to appear. The reasons vary. First of all, each issue is assembled a few weeks earlier than the actual printing and mailing. Secondly, as alluded above, we have more material than we can use, and so the spillover may be delayed one or two months. One statistics contributor recently was puzzled to find we had listed New Members she had sent us, but had not listed the Deaths she had reported; she incorrectly assumed they would automatically appear in the same issue. Not so, however; in that issue, we ran out of space to include all the death statistics.

So the bottom line is that *eventually* we will publish the statistics you send us. But, for lack of space, and the other considerations, they may not appear as soon as you would like. We regret that, and hope this explanation will help you to bear with us.

Termon Thomasson

Challenged in El Salvador

Molly Graver's term of service with Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) in Suchitoto, El Salvador, is another positive link in her long chain of experience with the people of Central America.

Long before she began her current project with the Committee for the Defense of Women, Molly became well acquainted with Central American struggles. She worked with Central American political refugees in El Paso, Texas, and she also worked to support Central American issues at Davidson (N.C.) College. Along the

Molly arrived, but she has been an important element in the coalescence of the group. Her Salvadoran co-workers give her much of the credit.

Given the difficulties, Molly is quick to return the credit to the women of rural Suchitoto. "This is a unique project because they are *campesino* women—grassroots rural women. One has a sixth-grade education, the others have third-grade educations, and they are doing amazing work. It's not work that started in the capital city where women have more education and more possibilities and more money. It started right here in Suchitoto."

The small town was a stronghold of the Revolutionary Front during the war, and Molly has been challenged by the experience of working with post-revolutionary trauma. "When you hear about the suffering first hand and you hear it from people you really care about and you really love, you start feeling their pain. It's very moving," Molly says. "El Salvador strips you naked and takes away any facades and protection, and you are faced with the stark reality of other people and the crisis they've experienced."

"What I found is that I'm feeling real joy and real pain. It's been extremes. It's been healthy and it's been good, but it's not been easy."

Molly will be working with BVS in El Salvador for several more months. But she is hopeful that her work with Central American issues will continue long after she leaves El Salvador. "I want their struggle to be part of *my* struggle and my struggle to be part of *their* struggle; I feel it's connected," she said.

When she comes back to the US, Molly has tentative plans to go to law school, eventually putting her experience to use helping marginalized people.—JEFF LEARD



BVSeer Molly Graver (second from right) has been an important element in the organization of the Committee for the Defense of Women, a group that supports battered women in Suchitoto, El Salvador.

way, she met many who had suffered in El Salvador and who were working to change the structural injustices in the country.

"Personal contact with them is what moved me to come down here and be with these people and find out more," she said. "I wanted to bring some skills here. At the same time I wanted to be with the people in a situation of accompaniment and mutuality."

The Committee for the Defense of Women supports battered women and women seeking child support, both legally and psychologically. Culturally, it is difficult for these women to speak out, but trust in the Committee is gradually building. Since August, the group has assisted more than 100 cases.

The committee began to organize before

Jeff Leard, a member of Glendale (Calif.) Church of the Brethren, recently completed a year of Brethren Volunteer Service with the General Board's Office of Interpretation. He has begun a second assignment, serving as newsletter editor for the Middle East Council of Churches, in Cyprus.

Working in Sudan

Merlyn Kettering of Nairobi, Kenya, has begun serving as an organizational consultant with the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC). As he takes on his new work, the only other Church of the Brethren members connected to work in Sudan are Lester and Esther Boleyn, who work in Nuer Bible translation.

Merlyn grew up in the Maple Grove Church of the Brethren near Ashland, Ohio. After graduating from Manchester College in 1965, Merlyn worked in Brethren Volunteer Service in Greece. That piqued his interest in overseas development and led to service with the Peace Corps, as a teacher in Nigeria.

Graduate school followed, and Merlyn got a Ph.D. in development economics. Since then he has served for many years in the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa on projects funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank.

With the NSCC, Merlyn is focusing on strengthening



Merlyn Kettering

the council through capacity-building and institutional development. He tentatively is working under a one-year contract with the Africa and Middle East Office.



"In the year of our Lord 1708, our church founders brought forth on this planet a new denomination ... dedicated to the proposition that man should not be bound by a creed."

Words Abraham Lincoln might say today about the denomination he allegedly joined in secret.

Names in the news

Robert E. Smith has been appointed supervisor of the AmeriCorps program in Winter Garden, Fla., by the Florida Council of Churches. He is district moderator of Atlantic Southeast District and was the organizing pastor of New Covenant Church of the Brethren in Gotha, Fla.

• **Paul Scott**, a member of Naperville (Ill.) Church of the Brethren, has been presented the C.J. Turriff Award as the outstanding teacher of junior high science in Illinois. The award comes from the Chemical Industry Council of Illinois and the Chicago Drug and Chemical Association.

He sure sounds Dunker

A Brethren folk myth persists that Abraham Lincoln was a closet Dunker, secretly baptized by elder Daniel P. Saylor, but for reasons of his own (after all, he was a war-time president during the bloodiest conflict in US history) keeping quiet about his newfound pacifist faith. Like the popular stories of UFOs and alien kidnapers from outer space, the Lincoln story always falls short of producing hard evidence.

But what if this president with the Dunker beard really was in our fold? Would he, instead of glorifying war at Gettysburg that November day 6 score and 15 years ago, said something like the following words provided by **Mark Hamm**?

Mark, a member of Phoenix (Ariz) First Church of the Brethren, frequently writes prose and poetry for his congregation's newsletter. Says his pastor, Russell Betz, "Mark has a gift with words, and is able to present spiritual insights in short, pithy statements."

Here is Mark's idea of what Lincoln the Dunker might say today about the denomination he secretly joined:

"In the year of our Lord 1708, our church founders brought forth on this planet a new denomination, conceived in a belief of a risen Jesus Christ and of eternal life, and dedicated to the proposition that man should not be bound by a creed, but be free to adopt new faith as might be revealed.

"Now we are engaged in a great mission, testing whether that denomination, or any denomination so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are evangelizing in a great field of that mission. We have come to dedicate a portion of our lives to work for such, so that the denomination might live. It is all together God's calling and purpose that we should do this.

"But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this mission. Jesus Christ, still living, not dead, who on this earth has trod and given his mortal life, has consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract.

"The world will little note nor long remember what we say or do here, but it can never forget what Christ did while on earth. It is for us, his believers and followers, instead to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which he and the apostles started and so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from the Lord's spirit we take increased devotion to that cause for which Christ gave the last full measure of devotion, that we here highly resolve that he shall not have been crucified in vain, that this denomination, under God, shall have a new birth of evangelism, and that this denomination of Jesus Christ, by our belief in him and eternal life, shall not perish from this earth."

Like Lincoln's audience at Gettysburg, we have something to think about.

"In Touch" profiles Brethren we would like you to meet. Send story ideas and photos to "In Touch," MESSENGER, 1451 Duodec Ave., Elgin, IL 60120

Close to Home

Let's celebrate

Lafayette (Ind.) Church of the Brethren held its 50th anniversary celebration Oct. 5-6.

- **Walnut Grove Church** of the Brethren in Taylors Valley, Va., celebrated its centennial Aug. 3-4, beginning with a picnic Saturday evening.

- **Morrisons Cove Home**, Martinsburg, Pa., dedicated its new 67-bed, \$5.6 million, 5-story Detwiler-Halbritter building Aug. 18.

- **Eagle Creek Church** of the Brethren, near Williams-

town, Ohio, celebrated its 160th anniversary Oct. 29, with an all-day commemorative service.

- **Bethel** (Mayland) Church of the Brethren, near Broadway, Va., observed its centennial Aug. 25.

- **Cedar Run Church** of the Brethren, near Broadway, Va., celebrated its centennial Aug. 3-4. Bridgewater College president Phil Stone spoke at the Sunday service.

- **Cedar Grove Church** of the Brethren, near Mount Jackson, Va., will hold a year-long celebration of its 160th anniversary, begin-

ning Jan. 26. The year's activities include a heritage tour to Pennsylvania, a heritage Sunday, homecoming (July 27), and making and auctioning an anniversary quilt. An anniversary cookbook has already been published and is for sale.

- **East Chippewa Church** of the Brethren, Orrville, Ohio, held a dedication service Oct. 15 for its building additions and renovations.

- **Greenwood Church** of the Brethren, near Dunn, Mo., celebrated its quasiqui-centennial Oct. 20.

- **Glade Valley Church** of the Brethren, Walkersville, Md., marked its 25th year July 31. Its first pastor, John David Bowman, spoke at the celebration.



Reading to feed. Mark Dowdy (left) and Josh Ward were among nine Antelope Park children who helped raise money for Heifer Project International through a "read-a-thon."

Reading for pay in Lincoln

It's a roundabout way to pay for a cow, but it worked for the kids at **Antelope Park Church** of the Brethren in Lincoln, Neb.

Children in grades 1-6 launched a "Read to Feed" project, in which they read books and recruited sponsors to contribute a stated amount of money for each book completed. Nine children read 86 books and raised \$1,510. With their earnings, the children bought a heifer, a water buffalo, a sheep, a pig, a goat, six rabbits, a hive of bees, and a flock of baby chicks.

The livestock went to Heifer Project International and the praise to the children, as on Sept. 8 the whole congregation celebrated the readers' achievement.

This and that

Lititz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren will host the ninth annual Living Gift Fair, Nov. 30. Fairgoers may purchase live animals or shares of animals. The animals go to needy families around the world. Also on sale at the fair will be crafts products, lunch, and home-baked goodies. The fair, which benefits Heifer Project International, raised over \$15,000 in 1995.

- **Heidelberg Church** of the Brethren near Myerstown, Pa., has collected 27 tons of food, clothing, medical supplies, blankets, and Bibles; packed them in a shipping container; and sent them to Ukraine. In late September, 12 Heidelberg members went to Ukraine to help distribute the relief goods to families in need.

A church on the move

Time was when Brethren turned their homes into meetinghouses, even building them with folding partitions to accommodate the gatherings. **Kingsley (Iowa) Church of the Brethren** has done just the reverse: its meetinghouse has become a home. In July, the little white frame church was towed from Kingsley to neighboring Pierson to be made over into a private residence.

The removal of the church was in response to an unusual ad run in the local newspaper: "The Church of the Brethren building, Kingsley, is free for the asking, but must be moved. . . ." The story behind that ad is not a happy one, but it represents a facing of reality.

The 106-year-old congregation had dwindled to 25 members, with no babies or young people. For some 25 years, it has been yoked with the United Church of Christ. The two groups had met together through those years, using the UCC building part of the year and the Church of the Brethren building (erected in 1945) the other months. The time had come, the groups decided, to close out the Brethren building.

Moderator Robert Powell put his best spin on the development: "We are not unworthy," he said. "We are not failures; we are not insignificant because our numbers are few. We have sent our progeny from the nest with the hope that they will be salt, light, and leaven to their respective families and communities. They carry the torch we have received from our church founders, modified as it has been by our own experiences in an ever changing world."

A moving experience. *Kingsley's little white frame church was towed to neighboring Pierson to be made over into a private residence.*



Bethany Seminary

Bethany Theological Seminary has received a 1996 Circle of Excellence Award in Educational Fundraising. Theresa Eshbach (left) accepts the award on behalf of Bethany.

Campus comments

Bethany Theological Seminary has received a 1996 Circle of Excellence Award in Educational Fundraising. The seminary and 58 other schools were selected from among 5,000 US educational institutions by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

- **Juniata College**, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, and the International Association of University Presidents held their fourth annual series of seminars on arms control and disarmament Sept. 12–25 at the Juniata College Conference Center. Juniata is the only institution of higher education recognized by the UN as a provider of educational seminars on arms control and disarmament for developing countries.

- **Manchester College** has received a \$1-million donation from a Goshen, Ind., couple, Howard S.

and Myra Bates Brembeck. The Brembecks established the Presidential Leadership Awards in honor of former Manchester president Blair Helman and his wife, Patricia.

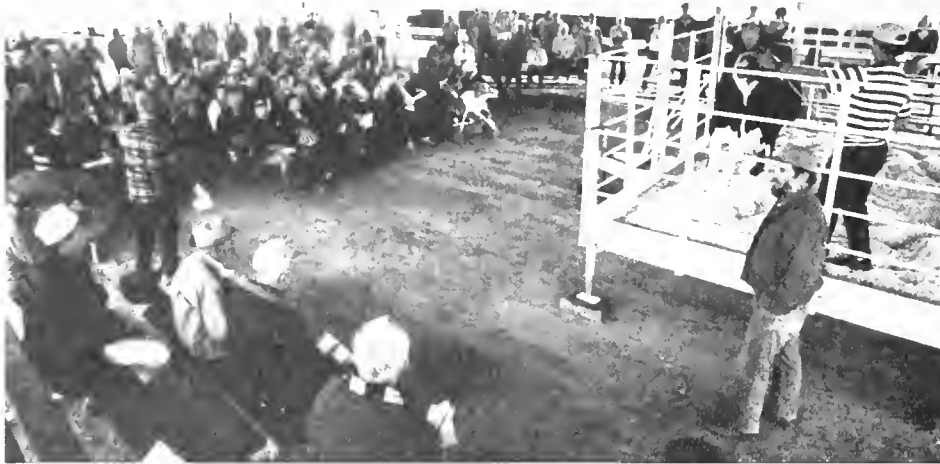
- **Bridgewater College** enrolled over 1,000 students this fall, for the first time in its history. The 18-percent growth over two years moves the college toward its projected optimal enrollment of 1,200 by 2000.

- **Bethany Theological Seminary** ranks first among 1,086 institutions of higher education for the financial support per student, according to the 1995 Voluntary Support of Education survey produced by the Council for Aid to Education. Bethany raised \$55,729 per student in the 1994–1995 academic year.

"Close to Home" highlights news of congregations, districts, colleges, homes, and other local and regional life. Send story ideas and photos to "Close to Home," MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

Disaster relief auction raises about \$400,000 in September

They sold over 115 quilts and wall-hangings, heifers, goats, sheep, produce, hand-crafted items, furniture, and much more, including servings from a 200-pound cherry pie. And when it was over, organizers of the



A big crowd helped heifer sales raise over \$70,000 at the 20th Annual Disaster Relief Auction in Lebanon, Pa. (top). Other auctioned items included limited edition pottery jugs, one of which was given to General Secretary Donald Miller in honor of his 10-year tenure with the General Board.

20th Annual Disaster Relief Auction, sponsored by Atlantic Northeast and Southern Pennsylvania districts, met their goal by raising nearly \$400,000.

The auction, held Sept. 27-28 at the Lebanon (Pa.) Area Fairgrounds, drew an estimated 9,000 people. Though the crowd was mostly regional, the event did draw people from Virginia and Vermont, and a few General Board representatives from Maryland and Illinois.

What began two decades ago as an Atlantic Northeast District youth event has grown into a year-round venture. In addition to the \$400,000 raised at the auction and the estimated \$25,000 that was expected to be received by auction organizers within a few weeks following the event from people who couldn't attend, the auction committee also received \$260,000 from other sources.

The Marvin Messick estate donated \$160,000, and the Wenger Foundation \$110,000. A large portion of those two donations will be used for the auction's endowment fund, which will be used to pay for

expenses. That way, all of the money raised at the auction can be donated for disaster response.

A house constructed by Southern Pennsylvania District to be sold for disaster relief went on the market in late September. When that house is sold, another \$70,000 or so will be donated for disaster relief. Thus, with its various events and donations, the committee expects to raise about \$725,000 this year.—NEVIN DULABAUM

Church rebuilding project to begin this month in S.C.

The Church of the Brethren will begin rebuilding Butler Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church this month, in conjunction with the National Council of Churches and Habitat for Humanity.

Butler Chapel, located outside of Orangeburg, S.C., was burned in March.

Five young people were arrested and charged with the burning. When asked about the appropriate punishment, Pastor Patrick Mellerson stated, "I believe they should be sentenced to a year of attending our church, sitting in the front row, and getting to know God.

"During that time, I would hope they would learn compassion, forgiveness, and love of the Lord," Mellerson continued.

The church, which was founded 110 years ago, has a membership of 150 people.

"This is a church whose members believe strongly that they are to be about reconciliation and restoration," said Donna Derr, director of Refugee/Disaster Services.

Derr anticipates that the reconstruction may take four months.

In the meantime, Shantilal Bhagat, director of Rural and Small Church Concerns, has produced a resource packet on racism that will be sent to each Church of the Brethren congregation.—PAULA WILDING

News items are intended to inform. They do not necessarily represent the opinions of MESSENGER or the General Board, and should not be considered to be an endorsement or advertisement.

Count Well the Cost' is theme of 1997 Annual Conference

Finding zeal and "energy for our faith" is what David Wine, Annual Conference moderator, hopes Brethren will do throughout the year, culminating with Annual Conference 1997 in Long Beach, Calif., July 1-6.

In a letter announcing next year's Conference theme, Wine said sloth or "laziness toward things of the Spirit" is a primary sin of the church.

"So much of what inflicts our church today can be attributed to sloth," Wine wrote. "As moderator, I am calling the Church of the Brethren to a life of deeper and committed prayer. That is the first step for us as Brethren to regain zeal in our faith—zeal to make our walk with Christ our primary focus; zeal to make our congregations' ministries the most important message and activity in our communities; zeal to turn off the TV and other distractions of life in order to shape our lives by the Holy Spirit; and zeal to once again 'Count Well the Cost' of our faith."

In introducing "Count Well the

Cost" as next year's Conference theme, Wine reflected that these words were spoken at the first Brethren baptism and "are at the heart of our Brethren heritage." He added that they call Brethren to find "our common denominator, which is zeal and energy for our faith."

Also announced were the themes, speakers, and worship leaders for Annual Conference worship services:

• Tuesday: "Count Well the Cost." Speaker: David Wine, Abilene, Kan., president of Mutual Aid Association. Worship Leader: Jimmy Ross of Lititz, Pa., 1998 Annual Conference moderator and pastor of Lititz Church of the Brethren.

• Wednesday: "Count Well the Cost of Community." Judith Kipp of Harrisburg, Pa., pastor of Ridgeway Community Church of the Brethren, Harrisburg. Leslie Cooper of Waterford, Calif., pastor of Waterford Church of the Brethren.

• Thursday: "Count Well the Cost of Simplicity." Dawn Wilhelm of Huntingdon, Pa., pastor of Stone Church of the Brethren, Huntingdon. Janet and Skip Ober Miller of Redondo Beach, Calif., pastors of South Bay Community Church of the Brethren, Redondo Beach.

• Friday: "Count Well the Cost of Service." Millard Fuller of Americus, Ga., president of Habitat for Humanity. Olga Serrano of Santa Ana, Calif., pastor of Principe de Paz Fellowship, Santa Ana.

• Saturday: "Count Well the Cost of Peace." Glenn Mitchell of State College, Pa., pastor of University Baptist and Brethren Church, State College. Debbie Roberts of La Verne, Calif., chaplain of University of La Verne.

• Sunday: "Count Well the Cost of Discipleship." Rich Hanley of McPherson, Kan., executive of Western Plains District. Donald Matthews of Oakland, Md., pastor of Oak Grove Church of the Brethren, Oakland.

Jonathan Shively, pastor of Pomona (Calif.) Church of the Brethren,

will serve as music coordinator. Janice Eller Fralin of Fellowship in Christ Church of the Brethren, Fremont, Calif., will serve as choir director.

Nominees for the various offices to be filled by election at Conference are being sought. Offices that are open include Annual Conference moderator-elect and secretary; General Board seats from Idaho, Shendoah, and Western Plains districts, along with two at-large positions; Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee; Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee; Committee on Interchurch Relations; Brethren Benefit Trust; and Bethany Theological Seminary electors.

Submissions for the Annual Conference 1997 logo also are sought, and are due Nov. 8. Drawings and explanations of the logos should be sent to the Annual Conference Office.

For more information, contact the Annual Conference at (800) 525-8059 or at AnnualConf@AOL.Com. —PAULA WILDING

Calendar

National Junior High Sunday, Nov. 5 [Contact Youth and Young Adult Ministries, General Offices; (800) 525-8059; CoB.Youth.parti@Ecunet.Org].

Stewardship Sunday, Nov. 10 [Contact Stewardship Office, General Offices].

Advance Peacemaker Training for young adults, sponsored by Fellowship of Reconciliation, Nov. 14-17, Nyack, NY [Contact FOR, P.O. Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960; fornati@igc.apc.org].

Brethren Benefit Trust Board meetings, Martinsburg, Pa., Nov. 22-23 [Contact BBT, (800) 746-1505].

Young Adult Conference, "Peace-ing it Together: Word and Deed," Camp Pinerock, Prescott, Ariz., Nov. 28-30 [Contact Young Adult Ministries, General Offices].

Moderator Wine produces first monthly newsletter

The first issue of *ModCoB*, a new monthly newsletter designed to keep the denomination in touch with Annual Conference moderator David Wine, was released in September.

ModCoB, a two-page publication, was sent to pastors, district leaders and executives, Standing Committee members, congregational delegates, and General Board employees.

Wine envisions the newsletter being used to answer many of the questions he is asked by Brethren he meets during his travels as moderator. Also included in each issue is his travel schedule.

To contact Wine, call (800) 255-1245, ext. 11, or e-mail dwine@maabrethren.com.

MECC representative to Iraq visits the General Offices

Thankful for Church of the Brethren support of relief programs in Iraq, Michael Nahhal, relief coordinator for the Middle East Council of Churches, visited the General Offices in September to offer his gratitude in person.

During his visit, Nahhal, who has worked in Iraq since 1991, described the poor conditions in the country



Michael Nahhal

and told about MECC relief efforts to improve them. "It is very important for American churches to know what's going on inside Iraq," he said. "It helps the people of Iraq as well as the churches."

Two wars and United Nations-led sanctions against Iraq that have severely restricted the economy since the Gulf War have reduced Iraq to an impoverished society, said Nahhal. Most recently, internal fighting among the Kurds in northern Iraq has forced many to flee the Kurdish safe-haven. "The situation has become chaotic," said Nahhal.

"The Iraqis are very good people and it's sad to see that they are not understood properly by the west," said Nahhal.

According to Merv Keeney, representative for Africa and the Middle East, the Church of the Brethren is a longstanding partner of the MECC and has supported relief in Iraq since the Gulf War. In late August,

Brethren contributed to an effort by Church World Service to send food, blankets, and medical supplies.

"The relief assistance you have been giving us has been really life saving," said Nahhal. "It is very important to show the Iraqi people that the church is present there in moments of crisis."

Nahhal believes that relationships with U.S. churches helps bridge the current rift between Iraq and the West, "not just in relief but also in advocacy." He is hopeful that the Church of the Brethren will continue providing relief support, and also work to improve the political situation in Iraq.—JILL LIARD

Brethren Revival Fellowship hold annual meeting

Over 140 people from 10 districts attended Brethren Revival Fellowship's annual meeting last weekend at Harris Creek Church of the Brethren, near Bradford, Ohio.

According to Harold Martin, a BRF leader, Dean Garrett, pastor of Pleasant Valley Church of the Brethren, near Union City, Ind., was elected to the BRF leadership committee for a four-year term. Kenneth Leininger, Denver, Pa., and David Kent, St. Thomas, Pa., were re-elected to five-year terms.

The 1997 annual meeting has been scheduled for June 29 at Lindsay (Calif.) Community Church of the Brethren.

Brethren Renewal Services disbands its formal ministry

Brethren Renewal Services Committee has disbanded. BRS was a charismatic group that fostered renewal, unity, and mission in an Anabaptist stream, said former BRS chairman Jim Eikenberry.

According to Eikenberry, the committee felt that "this organization is not the vehicle God wants to use to promote renewal in the Church of the Brethren at this time."

"We felt that we are not being called to continue operating in a formal ministry," Eikenberry said. "We see renewal happening, but just feel that Brethren Renewal Services is not the tool to use at this point."

The dissolving of BRS includes ending yearly "Empowerment" conferences, dissolving staff positions, and canceling Annual Conference events.

However, BRS leaders will continue to conduct an annual Holy Spirit Conference at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., a conference BRS has organized in the past with Mennonite Renewal Services.

Long-term debt retirement gives Home 'cause to rejoice'

After several years of struggling through bankruptcy court, the Brethren's Home of Greenville, Ohio, in 1982, restructured its outstanding bond debt of \$8,976,000.

On Nov. 1 the home freed itself from its long-term debt when it will make a \$6,528,882 payment to retire the bonds, 9½ years early.

"We are in the best financial position the home has probably been in since its inception," said Robert Cain Jr., executive director and CEO. Though the home still needs charitable support to operate, Cain said it no longer will be burdened by such long-term debt.

"We're just delighted that we can do this this far ahead of schedule," Cain said. "It's cause to rejoice."

"I'm delighted and truly thankful to God and to the many, many individuals whose faith, commitment, and untiring efforts have made this day possible," said Wilbur Mullen, administrator from 1976 through 1985.

Shantilal Bhagat and Lamar Gibble were recognized by On Earth Peace Assembly Oct. 5 for their long-time service to the General Board. Bhagat, director of Eco-Justice and Rural and Small Church Concerns, has served the Board since 1968. Gibble, director of Peace and International Affairs and representative for Europe and Asia, has served the General Board for over 27 years and is scheduled to retire in March.

In addition to attending various workcamps, young adults will have two other two opportunities to serve the church next summer. The Office of Denominational Peace Witness is looking for 1997 Youth Peace Travel Team members who will travel to Church of the Brethren camps providing peace education. Applications are due by December 1. Contact David Radcliff, director, at (800) 323-8039. Young Adults interested in serving in Ministry Summer Service, which provides leadership opportunities in Church of the Brethren congregations, may contact coordinator Judy Mills Reimer, (540) 890-2176, or livelife@rbnet.com. Application deadline is March 1.

Faced with expenses over income once again in 1996 and a Board mandate that it balance its books for 1997 (sound familiar?), the World Council of Churches will reduce its staff by 16 percent by the end of this year, according to a news release which accompanied the WCC's 1995 financial report. Last year, the WCC spent \$81 million, but had income of only \$64.3 million. According to a letter by General Secretary Konrad Raiser, the reduction means that the WCC will have one-third of the staff it had in 1991, prior to a 20-percent reduction. Raiser blames the budget deficit on worldwide exchange rates against the Swiss franc, and the fact that only 156 of the WCC's 330 member churches contributed funds to the WCC.

A directory for Brethren developmental information has been released by Brethren Foundation. *Directory of Church of the Brethren Executives and Development Professionals* is intended for easier access to and for developmental information on Church of the Brethren sanctioned and affiliated agencies. To request a free copy, contact the Brethren Benefit Trust Office of Interpretation, (800) 746-1505.

Logistical support for the Africa and Middle East Office is being sought. According to Mervin Keeney, Africa and Middle East representative, one or two volunteers are needed to be available on an as-needed basis to track down parts, call on servicing items, and do price checking. Call (800) 323-8039.

Two supplements to Hymnal: A Worship Book are now available through Brethren Press. *Hymnal Companion* is a 752-page reference work that provides articles about the hymns and worship resources and biographies of the writers and composers. *Hymnal Concordance* is a reference guide that is available in hard copy or on software. Contact Brethren Press at (800) 441-3712, or Brethren.Press.parti@Ecunet.Org.



Mervin Dufabaum

Brenda Giles packs one of more than 3,100 Gift of the Heart kits that were constructed by Brethren from April through August and delivered to the Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md.. Many of these school and health kits, which contain staples not readily available in developing or war-torn countries, will be sent to people of the former Yugoslavia. Since 1995, Brethren have assembled more than 8,200 kits.

College or graduate-level students planning a career in mental health are eligible for a scholarship being offered by Mennonite Health Services and MCC Canada Mental Health and Disabilities Program. The scholarships, which are available to members of the Church of the Brethren, Brethren in Christ, and Mennonites, are worth \$1,000-\$1,200. Contact Amy Herr, Mennonite Health Services, 2160 Lincoln Highway East, Box 6, Lancaster, PA 17602-1150.

Christian Peacemaker Teams made an urgent call for volunteers in October to join its Peacemaking Corps. With the number of its projects increasing because of situations in Hebron, Bosnia, and other areas requesting peacemakers, CPT is hoping to add six new peacemakers by January. Call (540) 951-2788 or e-mail cpt2@igc.org.

Americans gave \$144 billion to charities in 1995, up 10 percent from 1994, according to the American Association of Fund Raising Counsel's Trust for Philanthropy. While religious organizations only saw a five percent increase, they still received the largest share of contributions — \$63.4 billion. The report warns that the giving increase was due to many "one-time factors," and suggests that nonprofit groups "will need to step up their fund-raising efforts." (*Religion News Service*)



Nigeria's Sarah Major

Rebecca had never seen a woman preaching or leading in a church service in her whole life, but that would not stop her from following her calling.

BY GLENN MITCHELL

When Rebecca Samuel Dali of Nigeria was seven years old, her teacher asked her what she wanted to be when she grew up. Without a moment of hesitation, Rebecca replied, "I am going to be a preacher." Rebecca had never seen a woman preaching or leading in a church service in her whole life. When pushed on where this seed of ambition was planted, she quickly points to her mother.

Her mother had a crippling case of leprosy when she was young, and so spent a lot of time in the hospital. There she encountered American women serving as mission workers, who also led the patients in Bible studies and worship. She decided that she wanted one of her sons or daughters to

become a pastor. She taught Rebecca early: "Open the Bible every day and read it. If God hears my prayer, you are going to be one of the preachers." When Rebecca replied, "But, mother! How can I be a preacher? I am a woman." Her mother replied: "God will allow you. I am praying for you. You can be one of them."

Rebecca seems to have come naturally to her strong sense of determination and drive. Her mother came to it with a lot of perseverance and an abiding faith. Rebecca's father had lost 2 wives and 24 children to death before marrying Rebecca's mother. His fellow villagers concluded that evil spirits were with him, and no one wanted to marry him after such losses. But Rebecca's mother, having leprosy, was already without status in the culture, and so

she married him. Rebecca is the fifth of seven children.

Her father was a traditional healer in her village and people came to him with all their troubles. Rebecca remembers the way he worked with them to discern the spirits or to ward off evil. He didn't interfere with her mother's strong Christian faith, however, and it was that faith Rebecca received early in her life. Her father died when she was young, and her mother worked hard to keep the family together, clothed, fed, and in school. She farmed, encouraged her children in their faith and studies, and to this day makes the best fried bean cakes (*kwasi*) in her village.

Rebecca continued with her studies and with her own leadership development within the faith. She was president of the Fellowship of Christ-

ian Students for two years while in secondary school. She went on to teachers' college and became a teacher. Her dream was still with her though, and several times she asked pastors, "How can I go to Bible school and fulfill my call to preach?" The response from most was discouraging and from a few, a blunt "Just forget about it." But Rebecca couldn't put it aside.

Like her spiritual forerunner from the 19th-century Brethren world, Sarah Major—who succeeded against all odds in becoming a gifted and highly respected preacher—Rebecca persevered. When she married, she accompanied her husband, Samuel Dali, to the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN). There Samuel was responding to his own call to ministry. Samuel and Rebecca took the four-year Bible school diploma course together, and after graduation both received assignments to Kulp Bible College (KBC), the leadership-training school for *Ekklesiyar Yanuwa a Nigeria* (the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria—EYN). At KBC, Rebecca was chairwoman of Women Studies from 1988 to 1995.

A pastor in EYN earns an average monthly income of \$25. In the Women Studies program, Rebecca worked to teach the women skills that could expand the base of income for the pastor's family. She taught the women how to make batik (cloth printed by a wax and dye process), soap that could be sold and used at home to save money, and Palm Aid—a vaseline-based lotion. All the students at KBC are provided farm plots on which they grow crops for their use and for sale in the market. Farming and small home businesses are essential for undergirding the work of pastoral ministry in Nigeria.

As much as Rebecca enjoyed her work with the women students, she also wanted to teach the men in their

Rebecca teaches women how to create batik (cloth printed by a wax and dye process). Such a skill brings in extra income for a pastor's family.

classes. She pursued this desire with the administration and soon was teaching some of the men's classes in both the regular and advanced programs. She liked teaching ethics, and particularly enjoyed a class in which she pulled together the men and the women for a year-long study of what it means to be a Christian family.

In 1991, Samuel was chosen by EYN to continue his training in the United States. He went first to McPherson College and then to Bethany Theological Seminary. Rebecca and the children remained at KBC. Some people associated with Basil Mission (an EYN and Church of the Brethren mission partner in Nigeria, home-based in Switzerland) offered to help raise the funds to support Rebecca in her own program of studies in the US. When Rebecca tallied up how much money was involved for even a short visit to the US, she realized that it was enough to pay her way through a B.A. program at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria as well as support her own children's schooling for the three years. Remembering her dream and call from God, Rebecca opted for her own educational program in Nigeria.

At TCNN, Rebecca wrote her thesis on "The Issue of Women's Ordination in *Ekklesiyar Yanuwa a Nigeria*." Her topic alone was alarming to some in EYN, yet 80 percent of those she surveyed concluded that they thought "ordination is a set-



apart ministry that any believer in Christ can be called to, regardless of gender." She graduated from TCNN in 1996 with her B.A., and is continuing her studies with the school's Master of Theology program, beginning in the fall of 1996.

True to her dream, Rebecca is a preacher, after filling the pulpit in her congregation in Jos—where Samuel is pastor—with a strong presence, as well as preaching wherever else she is asked. *Ekklesiyar Yanuwa a Nigeria* has not yet ordained a woman to pastoral ministry, so part of her dream yet eludes her. But Rebecca has not let that reality discourage her from her pursuit. As much as she enjoys preaching, Rebecca believes her calling today is in teaching. She hopes that after her training is done, she can teach the next generation of EYN pastors and church workers—both men and women.

Because of Rebecca's preaching, teaching, and example, there is no doubt that the words of her mother will live on in the lives of others: "If God hears my prayer, you are going to be one of the preachers." *M.*

Glenn Mitchell is pastor of University Baptist and Brethren Church in State College, Pa. He recently spent a sabbatical in Nigeria.

Behind the church burnings story

there is another story—the struggle to find hope that eventually we will disengage from the facile and knee-jerk opinions and positions on race that life in the United States often seems to program us for.

Conclusion of a two-part article that began in October.

BY ANTHONY WALTON

Middle-class whites feel under siege, and they should, but the solutions to their woes are not going to be found that easily. After affirmative action is dismantled, after the borders are sealed, after “blacks” are thrown off welfare and taxes are cut (which they won’t be, because welfare makes up a minuscule portion of the federal budget), after all the barriers large numbers of whites feel blacks create for them in society are gone, white Americans will still be living in a ruthless, competitive national and global economy designed to benefit stockholders and a very few elite corporate buccaneers. It is the society that those in the middle class say they want. But after they change all of that, technological advance and the push for profits will still rule the day, and the problems represented by our society’s failure to deal with the needs of large numbers of blacks will still be there.

It is important to understand the way in which economic pressure on whites drives much of this conflict. We live now in what economist Lester Thurow named “The Zero-Sum Society,” a society in which no gains on one side can be made without concomitant losses on the other. All activity adds up to zero. In our multi-ethnic society this conflict over resources and profits has become racialized. It could as easily be looked at in terms of class. Middle-class whites, it is well documented, are losing



Racism and anger. A Ku Klux Klan rally in Connecticut and a demonstration during a Brooklyn trial of two whites charged with killing a black reflect racial tension in the United States.

ground economically, with the boom from 1945 to 1970 beginning to look like a blip rather than a trend. People are working harder for less. Between 1975 and 1995, productivity—output per worker—rose 25 percent, but wages fell 12 percent. Between 1990 and 1995, productivity was up 10 percent, but wages were flat. A lot of money is being made, but not by workers and middle management.

Is it any accident that the furor over affirmative action has heated up in this climate? That is what I mean by “racialization”: Issues that are not in and of themselves racial become that way because of our tendency to be tribal in our allocations of opportunity and blame. A dispassionate analysis of what is causing the economic malaise in the middle class might reveal greed and technology as the culprits, and it might enable us to see that for the first time since the Great Depression more people are being harmed than helped by our economy. This would be a serious political and cultural problem in a homogeneous society; in one as various with potential scapegoats as the United States it is a time bomb, especially given the American tradition of displacing white economic fear onto blacks, other minorities, and recent immigrants.

All of this is driven by market forces and technological advances. It is not going to stop. It is how we live. In

their book *Reengineering the Corporation*, Michael Hammer and James Champy describe changes at IBM: “Prior to reengineering, when IBM Credit put together a financing package for a prospective customer, credit checking was done in the credit department, pricing was done in the pricing department, other terms and conditions were set in the business practices department, and the final offer got pulled together by someone in the bid preparation department. People in these departments passed the work back and forth among themselves, with all the usual errors and delays. But when the company reengineered... it integrated those four separate functions, replacing four departments with one.” And how many workers does that one department employ? One. She does it all with computers and telecommunications.

Downsizing and global competition have become standard practices in American business. In light of its ruthless, dog-eat-dog, Darwinian struggle for survival, racial justice might seem like a quaint, fuzzy-headed relic of the past. One of the tragedies of our racial quagmire is that we spend so much time fighting about what are in actuality tangential issues that we are not concentrating on what needs to be accomplished to save everyone. I don’t think blacks or whites can be saved apart from each other—we are too

tightly bound together for that—and I think we can certainly, and very easily, all go down together. We cannot separate our fates, as seems to be the suburban dream, because we are, even after all this trouble, standing next to each other.

We need to be arguing about education and how to grow the economy, to provide meaningful work for all citizens, but each one of these discussions becomes tangled up in the language and semiotics of race, which guarantees no progress. We need to understand that what is going on in the world economy parallels the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century, which completely changed the ways average people lived and worked. How is it that the argument over the postindustrial revolution has become an argument over race?

Since 1968 the Republican Party has consciously and explicitly used racial appeals to mobilize a base of white supporters in national campaigns. I am speaking of “law and order” rhetoric, constant reiteration of “welfare” as the source of all evil in the nation, and, most notoriously, Willie Horton. This drumbeat, combined with white revulsion and fear to the social unrest—read riots—of the ‘60s and after, has created a climate in which true healing of the sear of race in America is impossible because the sear is being pulled off everyday. Let us imagine, for a moment, a country in which the leadership, Nixon, Reagan, and Bush, had preached cohe-



I don't think blacks or whites can be saved apart from each other, and I think we can certainly, and very easily, all go down together. We cannot separate our fates, as seems to be the suburban dream, because we are, even after all this trouble, standing next to each other.

siveness and mutuality—one America—rather than cynically motivated division. What would that country look like?

Much of the current racial backlash is, I think, nostalgia for a simpler time, a time when things seemed to be in control. One of the many tragic ironies of the black freedom struggle is that just as opportunity was coming about for blacks, the society and its traditional strengths began to come unmoored. I think the two things, unrelated, became associated in the mainstream imagination. This is how our strength as a people and a nation can come to betray us in a crucial hour. The American ability to forget, to put things behind us, to move on and start anew on a new frontier won't help now. The frontier of American infinitude is closing down; everyone is squeezed. Where are we going to find what we need to give, whether it is government assistance, money, opportunity, or simply time? We are in a situation where what is in the best interests of our society is not necessarily in the best interests of any single individual, particularly whites who feel they have something to lose. Do whites—does anyone in our society—have the time to care about these problems anymore? Do they have the economic space?

This brings us back to affirmative action. It is now an issue because it dramatizes the changing economic circumstances most American now find themselves in. It is almost as if economic life has become a game of musical chairs, as whites are conscious of many fewer seats than there have been previously. Such an analysis begs several questions. First of all, why are the seats so much more dear now than they were, say, 20 years ago? If our society is fair and equal and in no need of remediation, why are so few blacks qualifying under the old standards? Are you willing to say that blacks are simply inferior and unfit? (Hmmm, the Bell Curve ...) Or might we look at the inferior, segregated schools that most blacks, 40 years after Brown, are still forced to attend. Why can't we educate all children fairly? Or is that the plan? Handicap them as children, then lock them out as adults, all in the name of "color blindness," which, by the way, has never been the case in America, so why is it so urgent now?

How can a child from the East St. Louis or Chicago

public schools be expected to compete with someone from New Trier or St. Charles?

How can a child on whom a school district spends \$500 dollars a year be expected to have the same skill level as someone on whom a school district spends \$5,000 a year? We must frame this discussion better, with a wider angle that enables us to see all that is involved, or else the elimination of affirmative action will merely be the cementing of white privilege, the final admission of the dollar value and privilege that white skin often carries in our society. Much is made of "preferential treatment" in colleges and the workplace, little of how it works in early education and housing.

Much of the true argument against affirmative action involves displacement, the fact that whites perceive themselves to be losing something tangible. Another way of looking at it is to question the justice of that "place," if it is held at the expense of others. One can respond, "survival of the fittest," but that sort of position justifies, in the end, predatory exploitation by whoever has the power at the moment. And, interestingly, doesn't the argument of displacement also imply that the preexisting order is inherently somehow unjust? The "outsiders" have to be forcibly kept out. How can this be defended morally?

American society has to begin to decide whether or not blacks are to be a full equal partner. But how can this be accomplished if no whites are to give up their "spots"? Perhaps it would be progress if whites were to admit their desire for privilege, that they want, as De Tocqueville delineated in 1851, the possession of white skin to pay the dividends that it always has in America. If they do not want this, and I don't think all of them do, how are we going to bring all blacks who want to be brought, in?



Reignier, David, Servo, Jeffrey



What is to be done, for how long? What will work better than affirmative action, and when can we start?

Last December 14, Cynthia Wiggins, a young black teenager from inner-city Buffalo, N.Y., was hit by a dump truck on a busy road as she struggled through the snow and cold to reach her job as a cashier at the Walden Galleria Mall in suburban Cheektowaga. She died of her massive injuries Jan. 2. By all accounts she was a serious and dedicated young person who had grown up very poor, but dreamed of being a doctor. Cynthia Wiggins was in such a dangerous spot because the mall owners, the Pyramid Corporation, refused to let Buffalo city buses pick up or unload on mall property. This is done to make it as difficult as possible for inner-city blacks to reach the mall. According to Margaret Weir of the Brookings Institution, "There is a tendency to want to form separate localities so you can regulate who lives there and who shops there. Communities can't do it by racial restrictions because that's illegal. But they can do it through other rules and regulations." These are common, if quiet, practices in the suburbs today, and are becoming less quiet all the time, as we see with private police and gated subdivisions.

Recent events in Connecticut bring all of this into

focus. On July 9 the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled that the racial segregation in Hartford's public schools—virtually all black and Hispanic—is unconstitutional, and that it must be remedied. The court concluded that the cause of the segregation was the way in which school district boundary lines were drawn along town lines. "The existence of extreme racial and ethnic isolation in the public school system deprives schoolchildren of a substantially equal education opportunity," the court said.

In the 1950s and '60s, whites decamped virtually en masse from Hartford proper, leaving the city to the minorities. This sort of segregation is not against the law, as it is considered the result of actions of individuals. Opponents of the ruling are threatening to amend the state constitution to say that de facto segregation is not unconstitutional. There is no Connecticut law demanding that blacks and Hispanics live in Hartford, so it is not against the law for all the whites to live in West Hartford and Simsbury, if that is what they choose. And if the town is all white, why is it wrong for the school to be all white?

Hartford and the surrounding towns have a choice here, and an opportunity. Is the status quo what the people of the state, particularly the whites, as they have the power, want? Or will they seize this chance (How many more will they have?) to create a more just, more equal Connecticut? I think it would be safe to bet 100-to-1 that they will fail. The governor has already

vowed that there will be no "forced" busing in the state as long as he is in charge. (How do the kids in rural schools get there? Aren't they "forced" to take the bus?). A state senator asked whites not to "panic." (Panic from what? From whom? Black schoolchildren?)

In 1965, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote, "I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Councilor or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to "order" than justice Shallow understanding from people of goodwill is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection."

I am sure that most of the whites of suburban Hartford do not see themselves as racists, and sincerely so, but will that claim of tolerance manifest itself in the solution to the court desegregation decision? Will the minority children of the city be seen to be of as much worth as the white children in the suburbs? Or will it come down to privilege, maintained at any cost?

And there will be a cost. The children in the city know they are not valued as much as the other children, and

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the United States—and I'm not sure there is; too much has
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they carry that knowledge with them into adulthood. They see how little the wider society cares for, and about, what happens to them. They see that the wider society doesn't care if they are educated, that it is willing to let them live in appalling conditions, that it will not even stop them from killing each other in epidemic proportions. The wider society has tolerated, on a routine basis, a level of lethal violence in cities such as Atlanta, Detroit, Los Angeles, Miami, and, yes, Hartford, that exceeds those of Belfast, San Salvador, and Soweto during conflicts. Knowing this breaks some of them, and makes others full of rage and violence. It leads to Jesse Jackson's question: "Do we want to build schools or prisons?" How do we, with all this economic pressure and change, include everybody? And I would include in that question, the random, rowdy, drunken "rednecks" setting the racially motivated church fires. They are excluded as well, and it is one of the reasons why they hate blacks. True believers in the magical privileges of white skin, that formulation doesn't seem to work as well anymore, and they lash out at those who used to be weaker than they, the only ones.

If there is a solution to the racial conflict in the United States—and I'm not sure there is; too much has happened for too long—it will come from recognizing that there is no longer one single "problem" in the country, but rather, many, and many kinds. There is the problem of "underclass" blacks in the inner city. There is a similar problem in rural areas, but which manifests itself differently. There is the problem of middle-class blacks looking for a fair shake at advancement at work, and who need access to capital and mortgages. There is the whirlwind that is consuming young men and the young women who are left behind. The list goes on. Then there are the problems of whites. How to adjust to the new economy? How to balance justice and self-preservation? How hard to try in coming to understand the true causes and roots of today's society? How to understand that personal and ancestral struggles, brutal as they may have been, might be qualitatively different from those of blacks?

What does give me hope is that there is a possibility that enough of us as individuals will, through experience and soul-searching, begin to evolve toward the ability to disengage from the facile and knee-jerk opinions and

positions on race that life in the United States often seems to program us for. We have to realize that we are shooting at a moving target, a large, ungainly differential equation in which the variables—time, history, race, place, economics, media, etc.—are constantly changing.

I think we also have to, as Ralph Ellison said, grant people their complexity. I was on a trip to Atlanta not too long ago, and I was met at the airport by a business associate, a white woman of about 50, and while we were riding into the city in her spanking new BMW, she asked me if I had ever seen the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial. I hadn't, so we stopped by, and as we walked through the black neighborhood where the tomb is located I realized that my friend, Mary, was saying, "Dr.-King-said-this-and-Dr.-King-that-and-do-you-remember-when-Dr.-King-went-there-and-what-he-did..." about 90 miles an hour in her Georgia drawl, and I thought to myself, what is going on here? Then I remembered that he belonged to Mary, a blonde white woman from Macon, Ga., just as much as he belonged to me. She had, in fact, heard him better than a lot of black folks I know.

One of the things I thought about while standing there at the reflecting pool surrounding the tomb was something Dr. King said the night before he was killed: "I just want to do God's will. And he's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land. And I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." In this metaphor, Dr. King, who had seen all the hate, and death, and burning churches of the Civil Rights Movement firsthand, was describing himself as a sort of Moses. Moses didn't make it to the promised land either; he died in Moab before the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan. The question for us now across the country is where are the Joshuas, Deborahs, Gideons, and Samuels—in all the Hartfords—M. who are willing to lead the rest of the way?

Anthony Walton was born in Aurora, Ill., in 1960, and educated at the University of Notre Dame and Brown. His essays and articles have appeared widely, in the New York Times, Reader's Digest, Mirabella, 7 days, and Notre Dame Magazine. He is the author of Mississippi: An American Journey, a memoir of the state and its history told through the history of his family.

stepping

STONES

by Robin Wentworth Mayer

Recently I paid a visit to someone in the county jail. Upon inquiring at the reception desk, I was directed toward an intercom on a wall. The posted instructions read: "Push button and speak directly into speaker." Pushing the button, I gave my name, church, name of inmate, reason for visit, asked a few questions, made some clarifying comments, preached a sermon (just kidding), released the button, and waited.

I waited . . . and waited . . . and waited.

After a couple of very long minutes, a man walked up to the speaker, pushed the button, *let go*, and waited for a beep. *Then* he stated his name, organization, and purpose.

I turned to two young men who had witnessed the whole thing, and stated the obvious: "So after you push the button, you're supposed to let go and wait for a response?" They grinned and nodded.

It was pretty funny. I said, "And you guys just sat there and let me . . . talk to a wall?"

"I feel like I'm talking to a wall." It's one of my favorite expressions. My guess is that you have used it too.

Wives have used it after trying to tell the day's

events to a husband with a remote control in his hand.

Parents have used it after giving instructions to a kid with a Walkman plugged in his ears.

Teachers have used it after extolling the value of reading, only to have students ask, "Have they made that into a cartoon yet?"

And pastors (though they seldom say it aloud) may wonder on Sunday afternoon, "Was I talking to a wall?"

"I feel like I'm talking to a wall!" Isn't it funny how we say that as though the wall is entirely to blame? What can we learn from my conversation with the wall?

First of all, if we want to invite dialog, we need to issue the invitation, and then wait for confirmation that the invitation has been accepted. The man who followed me at the jail did just that. Unlike me, he made sure his call had been received before he delved into his agenda.

Secondly, if the initial query brings no feedback, make no assumptions. There are a host of reasons why a listener might not receive a signal. In one of her prayers/poems, Ruth Harms Calkin describes her irritation, frustration, and suspicions when an acquaintance did not return her greeting at a bus stop. Ruth had mentally tried and con-

victed the other woman of snobbery, when the friend turned and, with tears in her eyes, said: "Please forgive me. I didn't see you. We've just learned our little boy has leukemia." If you feel like you're talking to a wall, it could be that "wall" is going through some tough times.

Thirdly, we need to evaluate the manner in which we sent the message. Did we make a mistake in process? In word choice? In mechanics? When I sent my message into the intercom the second time, I made changes in the mechanics and timing.

Fourthly, don't look for someone else to blame. I really *was* joking when I insinuated that the observers of my conversation with the wall were responsible for my silliness. But often when we feel we are not being heard, we look for a scapegoat.

And finally, we need to always remember that just because we are talking, we shouldn't assume that we are communicating. **M.**

Robin Wentworth Mayer is pastor of Kokomo (Ind.) Church of the Brethren.

Stepping Stones is a column offering suggestions, perspectives, and opinions — snapshots of life — that we hope are helpful to readers in their Christian journey. As the writer said in her first installment, "Remember, when it comes to managing life's difficulties, we don't need to walk on water. We just need to learn where the stepping stones are."

If we want to invite dialog, we need to issue the invitation, and then wait for confirmation that the invitation has been accepted.



A small cafe... where

BY JEFF LEARD

Every day at noon, a quaint little restaurant in Atlanta opens its doors for business. Most passersby pay little attention to the simple pastel facade, and this place is not listed in the yellow pages. The food is great, but reservations at the restaurant are available only to an exclusive group of people—the homeless.

Cafe 458 is well regarded as the best place in town to get a free meal, but most of the regulars don't come for the food. They come for the support and respect offered by people such as Marty Shifflett.

Marty gives her time to the Cafe and to the homeless through Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS). Officially she is in charge of keeping the books, but for Marty, the most meaningful work is done directly with the guests as a listener, a comforter, and a friend.

Marty came into BVS as an escape from the burnout she was experiencing at work in a state facility. "I thought I would just take a break for a year and do something totally different," she remembers. "I was restless and bored and I needed a change." Seven years later, she still is a volunteer at Cafe 458 and looks back on what she describes as a complete transformation: "I had no idea this would be so life-changing for me."

"Transformation" is also the word she uses to describe the experience of people who come through the Cafe. Throughout her years of service, Marty has watched lives transformed on a daily basis. "I've seen people walk in the door who are just beaten down. I mean just looking like they can barely drag themselves in the door. And then a year later, they're smiling and they have a job, and they're reconciled with their family again. It's beautiful—just miraculous."

Just east of downtown, Cafe 458 is

Cafe 458 is well regarded as the best place in town to get a free meal, but most of the regulars don't come for the food. They come for the support and respect offered by people such as Marty Shifflett.



nestled among large industrial structures and dilapidated store fronts. Pastel-colored exterior walls and translucent glass-block windows are reminiscent of a '50s-style diner. Retro-styled block-lettering painted on the side of the building adds to the effect. Outside the door, a volunteer maitre d' checks to make sure that patrons are on the guest list—a privilege reserved only for those who have gotten a referral from one of several social service organizations in the neighborhood. The upscale appearance of the Cafe is not what one would expect, given its immediate surroundings, unless one considers that many of its patrons have made the ramshackle community their home.

The services offered inside the building are likewise out of the ordinary. Every day at lunch, the Cafe provides a warm meal for homeless people and gives them a place to talk about the issues that affect their lives. Volunteer waiters and waitresses take orders and serve the guests from a varied menu.



"This is a place of mutual respect," says BVSer Spiro Anton. "We give guests respect, a dignified environment, good food, and personal attention, but we ask that they also respect us and take responsibility for themselves."

"Food is important, and it's often what gets people here," says Marty, "but then the whole emphasis is on relationships and sharing meals together and telling their story while we eat. To me it's communion—breaking and sharing bread together—and it happens every single day."

Tacked onto the side of the Cafe is a two-story building that has recently been constructed to house a recovery program. A few of the Cafe's guests also participate in this program which, like Cafe 458, is operated by the Community of Hospitality (COH). Together, the Cafe and the recovery program offer help to homeless people who are deeply committed to recovering from drug and alcohol abuse. Most participants spend about a year in the intensive program.

"What's special about this pro-

Big things happen



Sharing food and stories.

Marty Shifflet dines with Cafe 458 guest Calvin Mullins.

as movies we like. The way I touch people the most is just by caring and being there and laughing a lot."

Dallas Christian has been in recovery for 11 months. Before making his way to the Cafe he was addicted to cocaine and alcohol. He left home when he was 15, and his parents were both killed in a train wreck when he was 17. He has lived in 36 states and has had two wives. "This place is like a family for those who don't have any," Dallas says. "It has given me love and it has given my self esteem back."

For many of those in recovery, Marty's support has been an important part of the COH family. "The little talks Marty and I have had in her office have been of great importance to me," says Dallas, "because no one has ever taken the time to sit and talk and hear sadness and laughter. I've grown to love Marty. There's not a lot of people out there like her."

But Marty is reluctant to take credit for the closeness people feel. "It is a painful process, and when people tell these kinds of stories, you can't help but get close to them. You ask them one question, and it triggers something else. I've had people say, 'No one has ever asked me that before.'"

One of the biggest transitions Marty made when she moved away from her home in rural Virginia was living in the house with other COH volunteers. "The thought of living with a bunch of people was really scary to me and I had no idea I'd love it so much. I guess I never thought I would have home any place but there, and now it's here."

Community life has become one of the most meaningful aspects of Marty's experience with the COH. "To me, community is people gathering in the kitchen or out on the porch

and just telling our stories and laughing, and that's where it happens for me. That's the part I love the best."

Over the years, Marty has seen 50 volunteers come and go. "You get close to people and then you have to say good-bye. Chances are, I will never see some of these folks again, and to be that close to someone and then to never see them again is really hard."

Watching volunteers and guests come in and out of the Cafe, Marty has become a fixture and an ongoing presence. But her motivation for volunteering at the Cafe has undergone a metamorphosis since she first arrived. "At the time I thought I had something to offer, and I thought I could serve and witness to my experience of God with other people, but I stay because of what I've gotten, and I don't think I give a fraction of what I get. In this whole process I've kind of been transformed. In terms of the guests of the Cafe I can put faces to words such as 'hope' and 'love.'"

At the age of 41, Marty is currently the longest-term volunteer in BVS. She will be completing her BVS stint this year, and is being hired to work jointly with the Cafe and with Samaritan House, an organization that helps homeless people become employed.

What compels Marty to dedicate herself to the Cafe is her concern for its future. "Miracles happen here," she says. "And I want those miracles to keep happening, because it's beautiful; people are changing lives. And I don't just mean guests of the Cafe who might get out of the cycle of homelessness; it has happened to me and it has happened to other volunteers here. It has been just a wonderful experience." *M.*

Jeff Leard, a member of Glendale (Calif) Church of the Brethren, recently completed a year of Brethren Volunteer Service with the General Board's Office of Interpretation. He has begun a second assignment, in Cyprus, serving as newsletter editor for the Middle East Council of Churches

gram," says Marty, "is that it lasts a long time, so it gives you a lot of time to figure out what all that stuff is about and provides a safe environment and a lot of caring people to support you while you deal with all of it."

Every day during the morning break, most of the men in the recovery program stand outside the front door to smoke cigarettes and unwind from group therapy. From there, they can see the tall towers of Fulton County Hospital, where most of them began the process of recovery in a 30-day detoxification treatment. They joke about the humiliation of wearing bright orange jumpsuits during the process.

Although she is not involved directly with the recovery program, Marty has helped to make that process a little easier for most of the participants. "I know that I can touch somebody's life just by listening and being his friend," she says. "We all have different roles. I love to laugh. Someone may come in here, and we won't talk about anything deep or significant—just things such



Promises to keep

The need to claim the promises of Christ
and to keep the promises we make
and the need for male spiritual
leadership in the home and church
led me to “Promise Keepers.”

BY GERALD P. BAILE CROUSE

As a pastor who loves God and who loves the people I serve, I found myself growing increasingly frustrated in the fall of 1994.

I was troubled that too many of our sisters and brothers in the church and too many of our “Christian” families are no different from our non-Christian neighbors. We rely on ourselves or our material goods rather than on the promises of Jesus. We find ourselves having little if any real commitment to keeping the promises of the faith. Inevitably, our marriages founder and fail, our children are given over to the ways of the world, and our Lord and his church are betrayed.

And I was troubled that, even in the face of the great spiritual needs around us, many of us men were not taking spiritual leadership.

For example, in the Ephesians 5:21-55 passage on gender roles in the home, husbands are described as “the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church...” (verse 25). And

husbands are admonished to “love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...” (verse 25). Clearly here is a call for husbands to assume responsibility for the spiritual well-being of their wives.

Unfortunately, we in the church had gotten to the point where we had either terribly misinterpreted this scripture by using it as a mandate for male dictatorship in the home or else we had ignored it because we knew

that Jesus certainly did not call us to engage in such abuse of our beloved. Yet, a more faithful interpretation of this helpful Ephesians passage is to see it as a call for each marriage partner to take spiritual leadership. Both are to be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. And the husband is specifically charged with accepting the responsibility for the spiritual well-being of his wife (and his family) just as Christ has accepted such responsibility for the spiritual well-being of his church.

The reality has been that in too many of our homes, if there is praying, Christian education, and involvement in the life of the church, the wife, mother has been the primary initiator. Too often, the men have become passive bystanders. Thank God for the women to whom God has given the strength and courage not only to fulfill their own spiritual responsibilities but to also cover the responsibilities shirked by the men in their households.

The body of Christ is a community God has created through promises. We depend upon Jesus’ promises. In gratitude for the abundant and eternal life God gives to us through our faith in the great promise keeper, Jesus Christ, we have responded by making the promises to him and to one another that he has called us to make.

In the waters of baptism, we promise to repent of our sins, and confess and accept Jesus as Lord and Savior.

A promise keeper’s commitments

1. **Honor** Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and obedience to God’s Word in the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. **Pursue** vital relationships with a few other men, understanding that a man needs brothers to help him keep his promises.
3. **Practice** spiritual, moral, ethical and sexual purity.
4. **Build** strong marriages and families through love, protection, and biblical values.
5. **Support** the mission of the church by honoring and praying for the pastor, and by actively giving time and resources.
6. **Reach** beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity.
7. **Influence** the world, being obedient to the Great Commandment (Mark 12:50-51) and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20).

We promise to live in keeping with the teachings and spirit of the New Testament and to be a faithful member of the church, the body of Christ.

At the altar, a couple promises to be faithful to one another in marriage through all circumstances in life and to love and cherish one another until death.

In the service of consecration of children and parents, the parents promise to support and love their child and encourage the child to grow in faith. The congregation promises its support and loving presence to the child in all times and promises to be a faithful witness for Christ in the life of the child.

We are spiritually healthy as individuals, families, and a church when we live in wholehearted reliance on Jesus' promises and when, by God's grace, we claim and keep the promises we have made to God and each other.

So the need for wholehearted commitment to claiming the promises of Christ and to keeping the promises we make *and* the need for male spiritual leadership in the home and church set me up for the gift from a church member whom God blessed our congregation and me with in late 1994—a book titled *Seven Promises of A Promise Keeper* (Focus on the Family Publishing, Colorado Springs, Colo., 1994).

This book is the basic text outlining a national spiritual renewal movement called "Promise Keepers." The movement began in 1990 as a vision of Bill McCartney, then head football coach of Colorado University, who outlined the group's mission this way: "The strength of any nation depends on the character of its people. Strong character produces solid foundations. Weak character leads to internal collapse. Moral foundations are crumbling today under the weight of broken promises. The pressure is shattering marriages and families, erupting into domestic violence, and creating widespread unrest."

McCartney continues, "Clearly, Christian men have an unprecedented opportunity to influence

others, to heal their marriages and families, and to strengthen their churches and communities."

"Promise Keepers is a movement designed specifically for men who are committed to seizing this opportunity for spiritual growth.

I read the book, and it excited me because it offered a real way to address the concerns for commitment and male spiritual leadership.

Eight men joined with me in the

**Are your
dollars
going
places
your values
wouldn't
take
you?**



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From the General Secretary

Brethren influence the WCC

In September, I attended a meeting of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee in Geneva, Switzerland, which reminded me again how much influence is exercised by the peace churches, and particularly by the Church of the Brethren. The Central Committee is made up of 150 representatives from 350 churches around the world. It governs the Council between General Assemblies held every eight years.

Much time was given at our meeting to the Program to Overcome Violence, which was introduced by the peace churches in the January 1995 meeting. Overwhelmingly adopted, the program has received suggestions from churches around the world. The Central Committee decided to feature "Peace to the City" by selecting seven cities around the world where violence is severe, but where the church actively addresses it. Representatives from each city will visit the other cities to be apprised of what is happening. Churches around the world are thereby encouraged to address the violence in their own region, whether this be family, street, ethnic, or other violence, rather than stand idly by.

Not only was the program introduced by the peace churches, but they are also funding a volunteer staff person for two years. Without doubt, "Peace to the City" could not have done without this volunteer, who will do much of the work to make the seven cities project a reality. The WCC general secretary, Konrad Raiser, publicly thanked the Church of the Brethren for our initiative with the Program to Overcome Violence.

One long-time WCC staff member said to me that nothing has been more inspirational to him through the years than the quiet but persistent witness of the peace churches in the Council. Another staff member thanked us for shipping beef to the starving in North Korea.

One of the vice presidents of the Council said that through the years he has come to be persuaded by the witness of the peace churches. In his own country there is a strong military presence. He has come to believe that the gospel asks of us a nonviolent response to the violence around us. Soon he will be making a television address to 200 million of his compatriots. He wants to describe the Program to Overcome Violence and urge his listeners to accept the gospel teaching of nonviolence.

To those who question the relevance of Brethren participation in the WCC, the above account shows the influence of the peace churches, and in particular that of the Brethren.

The World Council has its own problems just now. Not only are churches in the US and Canada reducing their giving, but so are European churches. Many of the churches in Asia, Africa, and South America contribute nothing to the Council. So the Council is wrestling with reduced income as are many denominations just now.

Other actions included declaring 1997 the year of uprooted people—as many as one out of every five people living on earth.—DONALD E. MILLER

Donald E. Miller is general secretary of the Church of the Brethren

next 10 weeks in studying the book together. We focused our study, prayer, and discussion on the seven basic promises that can lead to spiritual renewal (see box, page 20).

The 10-week session ended but we wanted to continue this new

chapter in our spiritual growth, so the group invited others to join it once a month for a fellowship meal in a restaurant, followed by prayer and study of the seven promises and related biblical texts.

I was one of four men who attended

a 1995 Promise Keepers regional conference in Washington, D.C. Fifty thousand men from many other denominations joined us for that two-day event—an awesome, inspiring time of worship, proclaiming God's Word, recommitment, and spiritual renewal. Our men came home excited about their faith and eager to find ways to express their excitement.

Last February, I was one of 40,000 male clergy from across the nation who attended a three-day Promise Keepers Clergy Conference in Atlanta. The worship, fellowship with Christian brothers, and the outstanding biblical preaching moved me deeply. I was humbled. I realized how weak I am in my knowledge of the Bible. As a result, for the first time in my life I have begun and stuck with a consistent daily discipline of reading through the Bible. I enjoy it and am eager to read because I want to have God's Word written on my heart—so that I may know and live and proclaim the truth and power of God's Word to my family and my congregation and to others.

This year, eight men from our congregation went to Promise Keepers regional conferences. Presently, a group of 12 to 14 men is meeting every Wednesday evening in our church fellowship hall for an hour of Bible study, discussion, and prayer.

Becky, my wife and co-pastor of the Antioch congregation, responded this way to the Promise Keepers movement: "It is the first time since I have been pastor that I have seen men get excited about coming together for Bible study and worship. Previously, men have often engaged in service projects, but this is different in focus—more on spiritual growth."

She continued, "Promise Keepers offers a positive contribution because it has helped men reclaim nurturing roles in the church. In these past few years, more men have come forward with enthusiasm and willingness to teach Sunday school classes and to help with our Wednesday after-school program for children. I have also seen

real changes in worship patterns and church involvement by families within the church that have had a member involved in Promise Keepers."

About Promise Keepers movement affecting family life, Becky said, "I have not felt threatened as a woman by the likelihood of my husband coming home or of other men coming into their households) and taking over all decision-making and leadership in family life. Such a change has not happened. Rather, I have seen the positive effects of men assuming a healthier leadership role in their marriages and families."

From the outset, one of my concerns has been the fact that this wonderful movement that God has given to us for spiritual renewal is limited only to men. I approached the national Promise Keepers staff members and asked them when they were going to initiate a parallel movement for women. Their response was that their calling from the outset has been to provide a much needed ministry for men and their present vision is to stick with that mission.

A second concern I have had with the Promise Keepers movement is that in its advocacy for lay support of the clergy, there is no obvious reference to the important fact that many of our churches are served by women clergy. I specifically inquired about the possibility of Becky attending the clergy conference in Atlanta with me. While she could have gone, it was clear that the conference was designed for male clergy. I applaud the Promise Keepers staff for not speaking out against women clergy, but I yearn for more public, whole-hearted expressions of appreciation for the sisters who serve so faithfully as church leaders in our midst.

Becky responded to the issue in this way, "I am disappointed that the Promise Keepers movement doesn't allow for or acknowledge the role women clergy have been called to play in the life of the church. Yet, being a member of a women's clergy support group, I see the value of single-gender

support groups in our lives."

Many others of our Church of the Brethren congregations have experienced spiritual renewal through involvement of their membership in the Promise Keepers movement. So, praise God for Promise Keepers. And praise God for the great

Promise Keeper, Jesus Christ, who invites us all, male and female, to share in the abundant and eternal life of promises made and promises kept. *M.*

Gerald P. Baile Crouse is co-pastor of Antioch Church of the Brethren, near Rocky Mount, Va.

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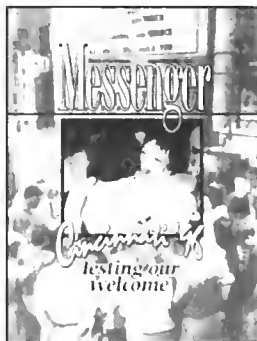
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Letters

"The cover captured the biblical theme without knowledge of the circumstances. I can't help believing that the Holy Spirit was at work...."



Embodying the AC theme

The MESSENGER staff had no way of knowing that the photo inset on the August-September cover was the very embodiment of the Annual Conference theme, "As Christ Welcomed You."

The two women in the photo were my wife, Joice (back to camera), and Bonnie Smith, someone our family adopted and who adopted us. That relationship grew out of our faith pilgrimage of accepting and welcoming others as Christ welcomed us.

The MESSENGER cover captured the biblical theme without knowledge of the circumstances. I can't help believing that the Holy Spirit was at work in the photo selection.

*Ired Bernhard
Acanum, Ohio*

An image that stuck

An image from this year's Annual Conference that sticks with me is that of several adults sitting on the floor in the aisle during a business session, talking to three youth about

their concerns about the church and Conference after one of the youth spoke at the mike.

I was there as a member of the Ministry of Reconciliation (August-September, page 25), but I found it amazing that of the other two adults who stayed throughout the whole hour or so, one was on Program Arrangements Committee and the other on Standing Committee.

This loving concern and humility a powerful testimony to the quality of leadership we are blessed with in our denomination. We may not always agree on issues, but I expect our leaders to challenge and stretch us. This experience at Cincinnati helped me to be confident that their hearts are in the right place.

Especially at this time of restructuring, my prayers are with all who

"If I take this action, what other lives am I affecting?"



More than a place to sleep. But a place called home. In a huge country farmhouse amidst the cornfields near Camden, Ohio, Bev Brubaker '72 helps run a group home for 10 mentally retarded young adults. Bev's Manchester liberal arts, special education, and teacher training provided the foundation for a career with the mentally handicapped. Molding the fragile lives of young adults requires tolerance and commitment, but enhancing the quality of their lives makes it all worthwhile.

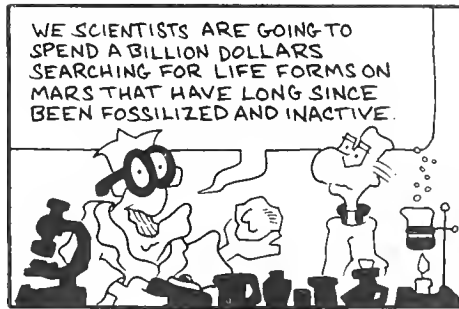
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Send payment for reprinting "Pontius' Puddle" from MESSENGER to Joel Kauffmann, 111 Carter Road, Goshen, IN 46526 \$25 for one time use \$10 for second strip in same issue \$10 for congregation.



work for our denomination, salaried as well as elected.

Enten Pfaltzgraff Eller
Lafayette, Ind.

Utterly in the dark

Regarding the news item "Brethren/Mennonite Council Luncheon" (August/September, page 15), what, exactly, is the Brethren/Mennonite Council?

Seems to me that an ecumenical group connecting Brethren and Mennonites would be a good thing. And, for the life of me, I could see no reference in the article to anything controversial about a group that would call itself the "Brethren/Mennonite Council." Was there something unusual or disturbing about its program?

Neither could I understand the reference to Annual Conference's 1985 Statement on Human Sexuality when people were discussing whether the luncheon should take place. What possible connection could there be between an ecumenical group called the "Brethren/Mennonite Council" and the issue of human sexuality?

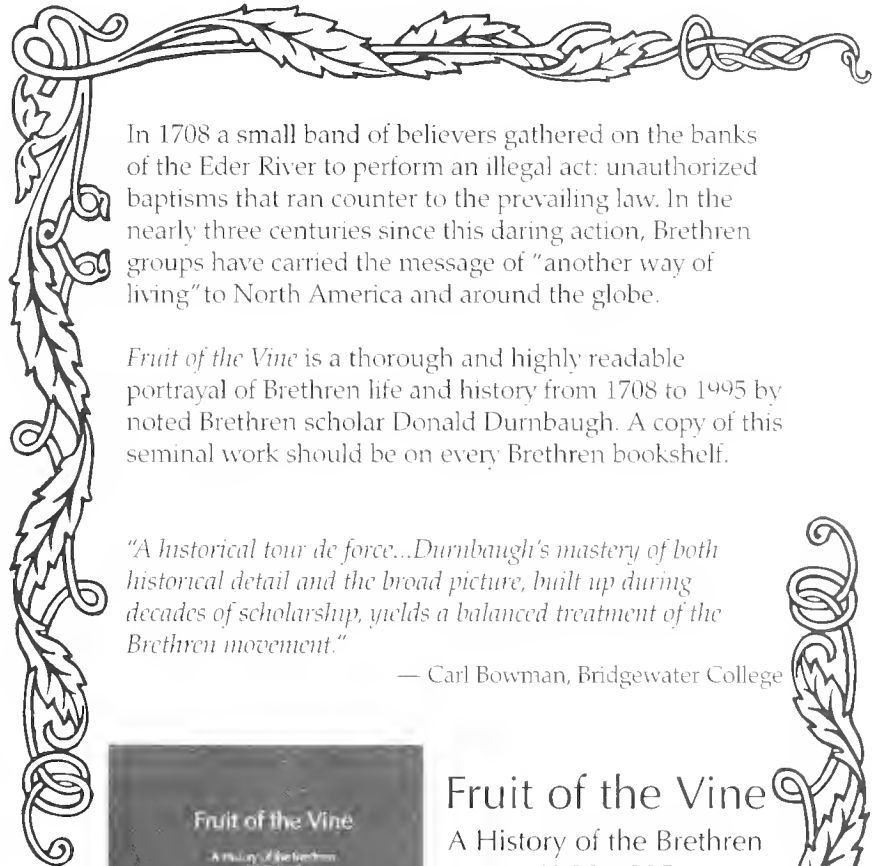
Could there be something you are not telling us?

Bill Bowser
Martinsburg, Pa.

We complain too much

I am responding to the August/September letter "Nancy, We Needed You." I am a "baby Brethren," having been in the denomination for only six years. It grieves me that we do so much complaining about Annual Conference.

I witnessed first hand only a small part of the enormous amount of preparation for Conference music. Many hours were spent in selecting and arranging alone. Andrew Wright did an outstanding job as music coordinator. His work was done with

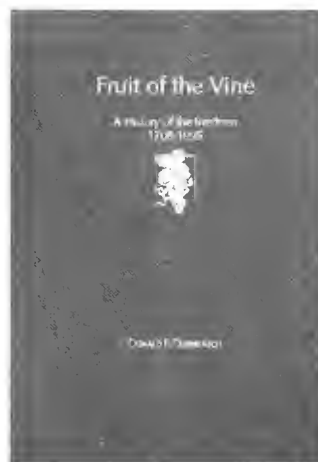


In 1708 a small band of believers gathered on the banks of the Eder River to perform an illegal act: unauthorized baptisms that ran counter to the prevailing law. In the nearly three centuries since this daring action, Brethren groups have carried the message of "another way of living" to North America and around the globe.

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— Carl Bowman, Bridgewater College



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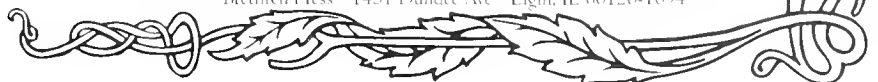
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Partners in Prayer

Daily prayer guide:

Sunday: Your congregation's ministries

Monday: Annual Conference officers

Tuesday: General Board and staff

Wednesday: District executives,
Bethany Seminary, colleges
and university

Thursday: General Services

Friday: Parish Ministries

Saturday: World Ministries

November prayer concerns:

Congregation: Junior High Sunday, Nov. 5; Election Day; Thanksgiving services.

Annual Conference: World Mission Philosophy and Global Church Task Group.

General Board: Redesign and Transition Team meeting Nov. 8-9; General Secretary Search Committee.

Districts and schools: District Boards; Students traveling on ministry teams.

General Services: Stewardship Sunday, Nov. 10; Personnel Needs; Director of Interpretation Howard Royer.

Parish Ministries: Youth Ministry Workshop, Nov. 9, Hagerstown, Md.; Young Adult Workshop, Nov. 29-30, at Camp Pinerock, Prescott, Ariz.; Andrew Center Workshop, Nov. 25, Wooster, Ohio; South Korean stateside Pastor Consultation, Nov. 25-24.

World Ministries: Louise and Phil Rieman interpreting Sudan work; BVS; Bohrer family, serving in Nigeria.

From the Office of Human Resources

Needed regularly: part-time pastors

More than half of the Church of the Brethren congregations call part-time pastors to serve them. Have you considered relocating to serve? Or, in retirement, have you considered serving one of these congregations?

Is yours a calling congregation?

Are you identifying and calling forth persons with gifts for ministry? How long has it been since you have called someone into the ministry of the church?

For more information, contact your district executive, or co-director of Ministry, James Kinsey at (616) 364-8066

Classified Ads

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Celebrate CAS. Over 80 years of compassionate service is being celebrated by S. Pa. District's Children's Aid Society (CAS) with a delightful commemorative coverlet featuring CAS symbols—Casey and Cassandra. As a bed cover, chair accent, wall hanging, or stadium blanket, it makes an appealing gift or cherished keepsake. 100% cotton, Jacquard woven, preshrunk, colorfast, machine washable. 50" x 70". Colors: blue, green, mauve. Cost: \$48 (plus \$5 S & H). Information/order, tel. (717) 264-8552.

FOR SALE

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Letters

an attitude of dedicated service and humility. Certainly even the "greats" such as Al Brightbill and Nancy Faust could not have pleased everyone.

Why do suggestions for improvement of Conference music come now when the past cannot be changed? I witnessed Andrew Wright's willingness to receive suggestions and his flexibility at Conference.

Finally, "Asithi: Amen" was, in fact, sung in the pre-worship music. Where were you, Karen?

Joseph M. Helfrich
Bradford, OH

(Largest book printed in Colonial America. Numerous copies were confiscated during Revolutionary War that the paper could be used in making up cartridge. Page from a 1764 edition of the *Psalterspiel* (Brethren hymn book) printed by Christopher Sower, \$12.50, pages suitable for framing. Original leaves may have some foxing or minor dampstains, as usual. Satisfaction guaranteed. Pa. residents add 6% sales tax. \$4.95 each order (UPS). Mastercard, Visa, American Express over, check, or money order. Brethren Heritage Press, 21 Chambersburg St., Gettysburg, PA 17325. Tel. (717) 354-8634.

INVITATION

Shalom Church of the Brethren, a new & growing fellowship in Durham, N.C., invites Brethren moving to Research Triangle area (Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill) to worship with us. Eager to provide moving assistance (unloading, childcare, area info.) for the relocating to area. For info., contact Fellowship, P.O. Box 15607, Durham, NC 27704. Tel. (919) 490-6422; mail, ShalomCOB@aol.com.

POSITION OPENING

Trees for Life, a non-profit organization that works in areas of education, health & environment, seeks full-time Volunteer Coordinator. This position coordinates & supervises work of community volunteers. Good opportunity for mature, outgoing person who is spiritually-based & works well as a team player. Candidate should be highly organized & have a good supervisory & communication skills. This is a "staff volunteer" position; room, board & a small stipend are available on negotiable basis. Contact: Treva Mathur or David Kimball, 1103 Jefferson, Wichita, KS 67203. Tel. (316) 263-7222.

TRAVEL

European Heritage Tour, July 12-25, 1997. Visiting scenic sites of Anabaptist, Pietist & Brethren significance in Switzerland, France, Germany & Netherlands. Sponsored by Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc. \$2,490 from New York (JFK). For complete brochure contact: D. Durnbaugh, POB 484, James Creek, PA 16657. Tel. (814) 658-3222.

Turning Points

New Members

Note: Congregations are asked to submit only the names of actual new members of the denomination. Do not include names of people who have merely transferred their membership from another Church of the Brethren congregation

Agape, N. Ind.: Jim & Rene Kart, Earl & Mary Lambert, Jaclyn Smith
Akron, Atl. N.E.: Mark Brubaker; Sandra Garman; Rebecca Highley; Cordell Martin, Daphne Shimp; Amanda, Luke, Jason & Shawn Stauffer; Katie Unruh; Jared Weaver; William Wolf
Antelope Valley, S. Plains: Brody, Doug, Karen & Molly Buzzard
Arbutus, W. Pa.: Dorothy & Gene Kelley, Galen Layman
Beachdale, W. Pa.: Dave Decker, Hope Foust, Brandy Knierum, Heath Mankamyer, Jennifer Sanner
Brothersvalley, W. Pa.: Andrew Bowlby, Mindy Ann & Shawn Cochran, Jared Custer, Kimberly Kalaka, Bradley Reiman
Chambersburg, S. Pa.: Erin Bard, Ken Cherry, Jennifer Monn, Kristin Runyon, Iere Stouffer
Deshler, N. Ohio: Bonnie, Gary, Joshua & Narhan Meeks
Dupont, N. Ohio: Bertha & Rollie Bibler; Philip & Tabitha Brown; Benji Brinkman; Nathan & Nicole Culler; Russell Doster; Ian & Nicholas Englehart; Jeff & Lori Fitzwater; Jessica & Laura Frost; Jessica & Kalena Green, Sarah Good; Abbie Holton; Joe, Lauren, Nicole, Sarah Jo & Vicki Kirk; Chris & Tyler Leatherman; Christina & Jennifer Martin; Denise & Renae Noffsinger; Dick & Helen Parrish; Bruce & Penny Russell; Stephanie Sterling; Robert Sutton; Kathy Taylor; Dale Wagner
Elm Street, N. Ohio: Robyn Botkin, Beth Lozzio, Justin Martin, Carmen Miller, Al & Lori Sullivan, Dave & Pat Trusty
Enid Community, S. Plains: Clifford & Opal Caldwell; Dianne, Kathy & Rita Flores; Amy Roper; Debra & Tristanna Sholten
Ephrata, Atl. N.E.: Phillip Fassnacht, Jennifer & Michael Lyons
Fairview, Virgina: Heather Duncan, Sarah Howell, Cheryl Huff, Melissa

Whitlow
Fraternity, Virgina: Matthew Bright, Eugene & Mary Ann Moore
Highland Avenue, Ill. Wis.: Dana McNeil
Hooversville, W. Pa.: Douglas Bench
Hostetler, W. Pa.: Harry Caton, Robyn Hotchkiss, Dolores & Orville Miller, Courtney & Jodie Shaffer, Lisa Schrock
Huntsdale, S. Pa.: Westly Gingrich, Leslie Lopert, Romaine Sheaffer, Christine Stoner
Iowa River, N. Plains: Jennifer Bradley; Kelly Drury; Andy Jacobs; Janeen Johnson; David, Diane & Ted Lewis; Bill Peterson; Abby, Florence, Jo & Tim Ruff; Linda & Ron Simatovich, Thelma Youker
Logansport, S. C. Ind.: Ruth Swindle
Northview, S. C. Ind.: Chuck Brungard, Eric Cooper, Lindsey Norris
Palmyra, Atl. N.E.: Melissa Whitman
Philadelphia First, Atl. N.E.: Gail Inderwies, Joan Reese
Pleasant Dale, S. C. Ind.: Heather & Jerod Adler; Kevin Bingaman; Amy & Kasey Blake; George, Veora & Ruth Ann Borne; Rae Lynn Chambers; Amy Dustman; Ron & Lori Good; Mitchel Harmish; Katie Mitchel, Mycal & Myshel Rodenbeck; Martin Stout; Carolyn Votaw; James Wheeler
Quinter, W. Plains: Jonas Lichty, Matthew Porter
St. Petersburg, Atl. S.E.: Aubrey Lersch
Sugar Ridge, Mich.: Reagan Anthony; Edward & Keri Chelady; Caleb, Callie & Carey Dodson; Aaron Gibbs; Denise Kriesel; Jane & Jared Litwiller; Brett & Morgan Saxton; Abby & Angela Wahr
Thurmont, Mid-Atl.: Clinton Smith
Valley Pike, Shen.: Gloria Gochenour, Helen & Phil Keeler, Ron Stiefel
West York, S. Pa.: Jane Martin, Annette & David Naill, Penny Wetzel, Kevin & Lori Workinger
Westminster, Mid-Atl.: Kathryn Brler, Brian Bowersox, Barbara & Wayne Fink
Wichita, W. Plains: Delbert, Gayle, Kim & Val Ebersole; Aaron & Christie Radford
Zion Hill, N. Ohio: Joel, Ruth, Ryan & Sharon Bartholomew; Deltie Blake-man; Brian Bomberger, Brian & Sandra Cooley; Miriam & Ray Coy; Michael Douglass; Barbara &

Matthew Grate; Carol & Thomas Mellott; Nicole Thompson; Sarah Toot; Joanne Ward

Wedding Anniversaries

Bowman, Harlan and Edna, Boones Mill, Va., 50
Erisman, Bill and Gladys, La Verne, Calif., 55
Fields, Fayette and Opal, Wichita, Kan., 60
Fitzgerald, Robert and Alice, Marshalltown, Iowa, 50
France, Cecil and Genoa, Bassett, Va., 55
Hogancamp, Gilbert and Kathryn, Marshalltown, Iowa, 50
Keplinger, Clifton and Vallie, Bridgewater, Va., 50
Lineweaver, Leroy and Violet, Bridgewater, Va., 50
Naylor, Fred and Shirley, Marshalltown, Iowa, 50
Smith, Henry and Naomi, East Earl, Pa., 50
Snavelly, George and Martha, Annville, Pa., 60
Stauffer, Gail and Marjorie, Wichita, Kan., 50
Steward, John and Virginia, Ashland, Ohio, 60
Tuttle, Charles and Roma, Quinter, Kan., 50
Tuttle, Elvin and Florence, Quinter, Kan., 50
Waybright, Jesse and Carol, South Whitley, Ind., 50
Winegardens, Charles and Hibla, Des Moines, Ind., 50
Zellers, Richard and Ethel, Reading, Pa., 55
Zumbrun, Ted and Margaret, Columbia City, Ind., 60

Deaths

Brandt, Lowell, 76, La Verne, Calif., June 18, 1996
Brubaker, Price, 85, Prairie City, Iowa, July 6, 1996
Canton, Tressie, Wyomissing, Pa., July 15, 1996
Cave, Fanny, 96, Altoona, Pa., April 19, 1996
Crill, Beulah, 95, Wenatchee, Wash., Feb. 24, 1995
Cripe, Harold, 88, North Manchester, Ind., June 21, 1996
Crothers, Audrey, 66, Walkerton, Ind., April 30, 1996
Davis, Ann, 85, La Verne, Calif., June 20, 1996
Deardorff, Ethel, 90, Wenatchee, Wash., Dec. 29, 1995
Dieperink, Dina, 80, New Carlisle, Ohio, April 18, 1996
Early, Florence, Harrisonburg, Va., July 10, 1996
Ebersole, Harry, 95, Palmyra, Pa., Feb. 14, 1996
Eikenberry, Adah Provo, 89, Wenatchee, Wash., May 26, 1996
Enfield, Earle, 91, Rockwood, Pa., Aug. 6, 1996
Erickson, Velma, 88, Wenatchee, Wash., Feb. 16, 1995
Fasnacht, Walter, 85, Lancaster, Pa., July 11, 1996
Ferrell, Hettie, 88, Roanoke, Va., April 12, 1996
Ferris, Mary, 80, Roanoke, Va., April 25, 1996
Fields, Shirley, 61, Uniontown, Pa., July 5, 1996
Fornwalt, June, 81, Johnstown, Pa., July 18, 1996
Fuller, Joyce, 80, Bridgewater, Va., June 25, 1996
Geyer, Lavon, 95, Nappanee, Ind., June 24, 1996
Gordon, Merry Lee, 54, Wenatchee, Wash., Feb. 7, 1996
Grubb, Paul, Sr., 98, Elizabethtown, Pa., July 11, 1996
Grumbine, Helen Jacobs, 86, York, Pa., Aug. 15, 1996
Harmon, R. Judy, 87, Harmon, W.Va., May 25, 1996
Hartsough, Marie, 97, North Manchester, Ind., May 21, 1996
Hechler, Treecy, 62, Rockwood, Pa., April 3, 1996
Heibert, Henry, 89, Wenatchee, Wash., Jan. 5, 1996
Heisey, Paul, 65, Annville, Pa., Aug. 15, 1996
Helwig, Evelyn, 79, Mansfield, Ohio, March 19, 1996
Heminger, Glenda, 82, Wenatchee, Wash., Jan. 27, 1996
Hicks, Annie, 92, Rocky Mount, Va., April 11, 1996
Hochstein, Malvin, 90, Monroe Falls, Ohio, July 11, 1996
Hoover, Ethel Sterner, 72, York, Pa., July 30, 1996
Hornish, Ina, 96, Defiance, Ohio, July 19, 1996
Jamison, Duane, 66, Lucas, Kan., July 20, 1996
Johnson, Elsie, 86, Modesto, Calif., June 21, 1996
Jordan, Edna, 81, Palmyra, Pa., April 12, 1996
Keener, Kathryn, 84, Ashland, Ohio, July 24, 1996
Keener, Richard, 77, Ashland, Ohio, May 4, 1996
Kimmel, Larry, 65, Albion, Ind., May 26, 1996
Kiracofe, Juanita, 72, Gratis, Ohio, Aug. 25, 1995
Kohr, Amy, 81, Palmyra, Pa., May 9, 1996
Krause, Glenna, 74, New Carlisle, Ohio, May 9, 1996
Laycock, Josephine, 89, Woodland, Mich., July 7, 1996
Lehman, Elsie, 75, Newark, Del., July 11, 1996
Lewis, Hazel, Bridgewater, Va., April 29, 1996
Martin, Katie, 91, Lititz, Pa., July 12, 1996
McAvoy, J. Galen, 87, Boones Mill, Va., June 11, 1996
McClintick, Roy, 90, New Carlisle, Ohio, Aug. 9, 1996
McCoy, Frieda, 82, Albion, Ind., June 25, 1996
Miller, Harry, 84, Nokesville, Va., June 5, 1996
Miller, Stuart, 86, Bridgewater, Va., June 16, 1996
Mishler, Marvin, 84, Nappanee, Ind., May 10, 1996
Monesmith, Laura, 96, Wenatchee, Wash., Dec. 8, 1995
Moore, Nellie, 80, Wenatchee, Wash., Aug. 8, 1995
Myers, Margaret, 81, York, Pa., July 8, 1996
Nakata, Ralph, 79, Wenatchee, Wash., July 12, 1996
Ogg, Ruth, 81, Waterloo, Iowa, July 15, 1996
Olson, Ralph, 84, Wenatchee, Wash., Jan. 5, 1996
Papson, Esther, 80, Lebanon, Pa., Aug. 10, 1996
Parks, Amy, 96, Williamsburg, Pa., June 26, 1996
Peters, Duane, 85, Defiance, Ohio, June 18, 1996
Posthumus, Earl, 76, Alto, Mich., July 31, 1996
Priest, Charles, 86, New Oxford, Pa., July 5, 1996
Rittle, John, 44, Montgomery, Ill., June 22, 1996
Roberts, Dale, 86, Quinter, Kan., June 14, 1996
Rudy, Elmer, 85, Palmyra, Pa., April 15, 1996
Saylor, Rhoda Mae, 82, Elizabethtown, Pa., Aug. 9, 1996
Segrest, Kay, 47, Houston, Texas, June 5, 1996
Scidel, Belvin, Lady Lakes, Fla., July 22, 1996
Scnit, Blanche Brennehan, 76, York, Pa., July 9, 1996
Shelov, Phyllis, 78, Altoona, Pa., April 3, 1996
Shuler, Grace, 89, Martinsburg, Pa., April 26, 1996
Shultzaberger, Marian, 82, Altoona, Pa., April 21, 1996
Six, Lera Bowman, 94, Taneytown, Md., Feb. 14, 1996
Smith, Paul, 65, Gettysburg, Ohio, May 15, 1996
Sperline, Lowell, 74, Wenatchee, Wash., March 11, 1995
Sprengel, Charley, 92, Quinter, Kan., April 22, 1996
Stahly, Lloyd, 84, Nappanee, Ind., July 20, 1996
Stiffler, Zola, 65, Somerset, Pa., July 15, 1996
Sturtz, Wayne, 78, Waterloo, Iowa, July 16, 1996
Varnar, Nora, 85, Johnstown, Pa., Jan. 15, 1996
Weaver, Norma, 72, Versailles, Ohio, March 30, 1996
Wentz, JoAnn, 65, Armagh, Pa., March 24, 1996
Will, Edwin, 86, Bridgewater, Va., June 14, 1996
Wood, O. Wallace, 85, Nokesville, Va., June 27, 1996
Wysong, Lois, 80, Kettering, Ohio, July 15, 1996
Young, Robert, 82, Lititz, Pa., July 27, 1996
Zumbrun, Millford, 78, Columbia City, Ind., July 17, 1995

A God without tunnel vision

Have you ever driven a long distance, with two quarrelsome children in the back seat? They bicker and fight until you finally lay down the law. The children are to stay completely separate—one at either end of the seat. But before long, there is a ruckus going on again. One child complains that the other one put his hand across the demarcation line. You refine the law: No hands, even a finger, across the line. Another ruckus: “Daddy, he’s whispering mean things at me.” Another refinement: Not a word is to be spoken or whispered. Then, “Daddy, she made a face at me.” Resisting the growing impulse to abandon the children on the shoulder of the road, you resort to further law refinement. But you know, all along, that this is more than a turf war between the children. Their hostility is caused by deeper grievances. A divided car seat is not the answer.

Well, that’s the Israeli-Palestinian situation in a nutshell—kids confined in too tight a space and unwilling to cooperate to make the best of it. Anyone who has ever been the exasperated parent in the car can easily identify with the Romans, shortly after the time of Christ, running everyone away from Jerusalem and making a parking lot out of the place.

At first glance, it’s difficult for a westerner to see why a tunnel opening in Jerusalem could precipitate such an outburst of violence as the recent Israeli-Palestinian clash. (I am writing as Arafat and Netanyahu meet with President Clinton on Oct. 1 in Washington.) One child just slides a finger onto the other child’s cushion, and all hell breaks loose.

As with all Israeli-Palestinian, Jewish-Muslim fighting...and with children fighting in the back seat...the more history you know, the easier it is to understand the situation. The tunnel wasn’t built *yesterday*. Parts of it were built by the Hasmoneans, way before the time of Christ. Other parts consist of Roman halls. Later parts were created in medieval times. All the Israelis did was open up a second end to the formerly one-ended tunnel. And they had been at the project for 12 years, and everyone knew about it. So, what’s the big deal?

The big deal is that for both Jew and Muslim, the area in question is the holiest of holy ground; any alteration of the premises by either side amounts to the breaking of a powerful taboo and invites an explosion of bloodshed. Ostensibly just a hand slid across the car cushion, but symbolically an aggravation of all the hurts, slights, and oppression that corporate memory can keep festering.

*Jesus did not
grieve for the city;
he grieved for
its misled children.*

Muslims call the grounds, from where they believe Muhammed ascended to heaven, the Harem es-Sharif, or noble enclosure. The golden roof of the Dome of the Rock is, in these times, a symbol of Palestinian government that rules over parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip ceded by Israel during the past four years of peace talks. The area is sacred to the Muslims, and therefore they believe it must not be violated in any way. A tunnel opening or any archaeological project is to present-day Muslims what sacrificing pigs on the temple altar was to ancient Jews.

The Jews, on the other hand, call the site the Temple Mount, where they believe Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac before God intervened, a ground that King David once owned and on which King Solomon built a magnificent temple. Jews pray at the base of the Western Wall, a part of the supporting wall of the old temple platform. Since Israel conquered the Arab-held part of Jerusalem in 1967, all Israeli governments have pledged never to return any piece of the city, including the mount, to foreign sovereignty.

Knowing all this, the Israelis opened the tunnel; they slid their hand across the car seat. The Palestinians yelled bloody murder. The Israelis claimed innocence. The Palestinians accused the Israelis of deliberate provocation to derail the peace process.

I haven’t got the foggiest idea how this mess can be resolved *peacefully*. And the obvious resolution goes against my Christian principles. When in Jerusalem don’t do as the Romans did.

In fact, the best I can do is gain from this unfolding episode a richer appreciation of the founder of my own faith. “Jerusalem, Jerusalem,” he grieved, “the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!” And then that beautiful image: “How often I have desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings...” (Matt. 23:37).

And how eerily the words that follow echo through the ages, as Jews and Muslims kill each other over the stones of Jerusalem: Standing virtually on the site of today’s controversial tunnel, Jesus told his disciples, “Truly, I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down” (Matt. 24:2).

Jesus did not grieve for the city; he grieved for its misled children. Our God, who is love, cares not for sacred places. He cares for his children, and he wants them to care for one another, even for the least of them.—K.T.

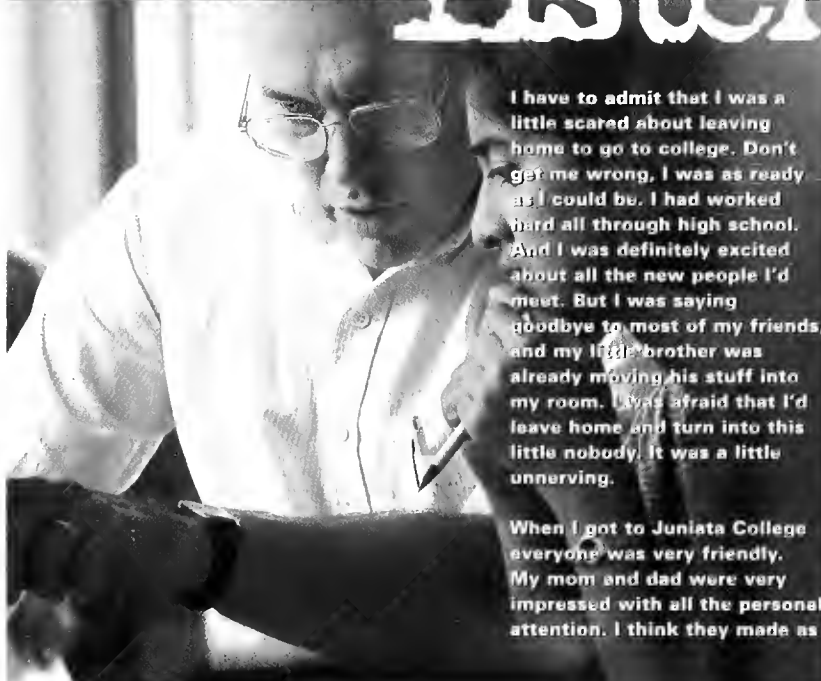


and then



the professor

listened



I have to admit that I was a little scared about leaving home to go to college. Don't get me wrong, I was as ready as I could be. I had worked hard all through high school. And I was definitely excited about all the new people I'd meet. But I was saying goodbye to most of my friends, and my little brother was already moving his stuff into my room. I was afraid that I'd leave home and turn into this little nobody. It was a little unnerving.

When I got to Juniata College everyone was very friendly. My mom and dad were very impressed with all the personal attention. I think they made as

many friends as I did that first day. Still I'm thinking, "yea, yea, sure everything is going to be real nice for the first few weeks... but then what?"

One day, one of my professors said something in class that seemed to contradict what I learned in high school. So I asked her about it. And then the professor listened. She listened like we were the only two people in the room. She cared about what I had to say. But more than that, she was happy that I cared about what I had to say.

That's when I knew that I wasn't really that far from home after all.

Juniata College

1-800-526-1970

<http://www.juniata.edu>

We're gonna sit at the welcome table.
We're gonna sit at the welcome table
one of these days, hallelujah!
We're gonna sit at the welcome table.
We're gonna sit at the welcome table
one of these days.

—Traditional Spiritual



The welcome table

Since 1980, the Washington City Church of the Brethren has operated the only soup kitchen on Capitol Hill. Each weekday it feeds 160 of the neighborhood's hungry and homeless people. It also arranges legal counsel, distributes clothing, and cares for spiritual needs.

Workers from Brethren Volunteer Service and volunteers from a dozen churches of the area

regularly help staff the Brethren Soup Kitchen.

A Global Food Crisis grant of \$30,000 is enabling the Soup Kitchen to purchase food and replace ovens, tables, and chairs.


Just "...as Christ welcomed you," you can help host a welcome table for the hungry or homeless on Capitol Hill and around the world. Give to the Global Food Crisis Fund.

Global Food Crisis Fund

Church of the Brethren General Board, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120

Church of the Brethren December 1996

Messenger



**WE ARE CALLED
AS WITNESSES
TO TESTIFY TO THE**

Light

Messenger

Vol. 145, No. 11

December 1996

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On the cover: "Bearers of the Light" is the Christmas Achievement Offering emphasis. In his cover story (page 14), Earle W. Fike Jr. sets the mood — for receiving the gift of light from God... and for giving of our abundance.



Features

12 The Miller years: Giving his best

He gamely toughed it out as general secretary for 10 years — a decade that began and ended with financial crises. Donald E. Miller talks about himself, his accomplishments, and setbacks in an assessment of the Miller years by Kermion Thomasson.

14 Bearers of the Light

Earle W. Fike Jr. calls on Brethren to be bearers of the Light. "No amount of darkness can overcome God's Christmas gift of light," he writes. And we, in continuing the work of Jesus, can use that gift of light, reflecting it into the dark corners and crevices of the world.

17 Church World Service at 50: The trucks still roll

Brethren were present at the creation in the story of Church World Service. For half a century now, the CWS trucks have rolled out of New Windsor, carrying billions of pounds of material assistance for distribution to the world's needy. Tribute by Kermion Thomasson.

18 What's a 'pair of ducks'?

Jesus, the baby born in Bethlehem two thousand years ago, was both fully God and fully human. "That is a, if not *the* central teaching of the Christian faith," writes Pete Hayden. But it's also a paradox that has been puzzling people ever since the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

Departments

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From the Editor

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Coming next month

We look at how the early Brethren, by taking the New Testament very seriously, created a heritage that still makes us unique nearly 500 years later.

District Messenger representatives: Atl. N.E. Ron Lutz; Atl. S.E. Ruby Kaymer, Ill./Wis. Kreston Lipscomb; S.C. Ind. Marjorie Miller, Mich. Ken Good, Mid-Atl. Ann Fouts, Mo. Ark. Luci Landles, N. Plains, Faith Strom, N. Ohio. Alice L. Driver, S. Ohio, Jack Kline, Ore. Wash. Marguerite Shamberger, Pac. S.W. Randy Miller, M. Pa. Eva Wampler, S. Pa. Elmer Q. Gleim, W. Pa. Jay Christner, Shen. Tim Harvey, S. Plains, Mary Ann Dell, Virginia, David & Hettie Webster, W. Plains, Dean Hummer, W. Marva, Winoma, Spurgeon.

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We have been working closely with the concept of "Bearers of the Light" as we cooperated with the interpretation and stewardship offices in promoting the Christmas Achievement Offering. We looked at many images before we selected the one used on our cover and with the cover article. For that art, our gifted designer, Paul Stocksdale, first selected a photo of cupped hands. Then, with computer wizardry, he added the image of light, the gift of God to humankind through Jesus Christ.

But for our Christmas greeting to our readers, we selected something just a bit lower tech, a linoleum-block print from a decade ago. Even it attests to light, however, with its dominant image of the Christmas star moving over Bethlehem.

As MESSENGER rounds out its 145th year of publication, our hope as the magazine's staff would be that we have been worthy "bearers of the light" for you. Like John the Baptist (John 1:8-9), we are not the light ourselves. More like Alexander Papaderos in the story on page 14, we take our tiny mirror and reflect light as best we can into the darkened world about us. We hope that the rays have shone in directions that illuminated for you some of the deep holes and crevices along your way this year.

And we look forward to serving you in 1997.

Termon Thomasson



IN A MANGER YOU WILL *
FIND AN INFANT WRAPPED
IN SWADDLING CLOTHES

LK 2:12

In Touch

He'd vote with Jesus

When he developed Lou Gehrig's disease in 1991, Rich Buckwalter could have dropped out of his life-long crusade of advocating for peace and justice for "people on the margins" and concerned himself with his personal health cares. But, five years later,



Rich Buckwalter, supported by his wife and co-pastor, Anita, uses their Lansing Mich. pulpit to continue a life-long crusade for social justice. He challenges the community to consider how Jesus would vote on the issues

the co-pastor of Lansing (Mich.) Church of the Brethren continues to pursue his vision even though the pursuit is carried on from a motorized chair (October 1995, page 15.)

In the turbulent 1960s, Rich, as a Juniata College student, was busy protesting the Vietnam War. Hearing Martin Luther King Jr. speak in Washington steered him to the ministry. He has been at Lansing since 1974.

The congregation, under the leadership of Rich and his wife, Anita, has an outstanding record of working for peace and justice. It has settled Vietnam refugees, and provided sanctuary for Guatemalans and Salvadorans fleeing violence in their countries.

For almost 50 years, the Buckwalters have made a protest against taxes going to military funding, withholding the part of their taxes they calculate would be spent by the military. To those who question his patriotism, Rich responds, "I think I am being a patriot and a responsible citizen by calling the nation to its deeper responsibility."

Recently Rich lobbied the Lansing City Council by letter and phone in support of an amended civil rights ordinance protecting people against discrimination in employment housing and public accommodations regardless of sexual orientation. In the weeks preceding the November election, the Lansing church carried a banner across its building with the message "How would Jesus vote on civil rights for all? Vote Yes on Proposition 1 & 2."

Earlier this year, Rich won the Lifetime Peacemaker Award from the Peace Education Center.

Rich is grateful for the time he has been spared to continue the work of Jesus. "I am glad to have made it to my 50th birthday." As he reflects on his ministry, he says he has always tried to make his positions clear. "Even though *literally* I cannot stand, I can take a stance of faith that proclaims the highest calling of what it means to be a Christian."

He adds, "I have no regrets."

Adapted from an article by Sheila Schimpf in the Lansing State Journal

In Touch stories wanted

Do you know someone whose story should be in In Touch? Send us a note about the person, or a full-fledged story, and include a sharp, candid photo, preferably one showing the subject in a setting related to the story.

Remember, we are seeking stories about Brethren who

are presently doing interesting, noteworthy things. (The October stories about Alva Fike, Steve Brady, and Darlene Scott are good samples.) Don't send biographical sketches or tributes. Stories should be short (550 words maximum) and pointed (Alva Fike makes salve; Steve Brady heads for South Korea; Darlene Scott drives people

places). If you find a newspaper story that is a natural for In Touch, send us the clipping (including publication name and date).

Hint: Including a good photo remarkably improves your story's chances of making it into print.

Send your suggestions or stories to MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120

A special letter to Emily

One day this past summer, Dean Neher hand-delivered a special letter to Emily Geisert. It was the 5,000th letter sent to Shenandoah District youth since the district began its Youth Peace Mailings project in 1982.

The peace letters are sent to youth on their 16th, 17th, and 18th birthdays. They contain information about the Church of the Brethren's peace stance, the conscientious objector position, and suggestions for dealing with the matter of responsibility to God and country.



Dean, a Bridgewater College professor and a member of Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren, has coordinated the project since it began.

Emily, is a member of Mill Creek Church of the Brethren, near Port

Republic, Va. She became a freshman at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., this fall.

Names in the news

Christy Young Dowdy received a Young Alumni Award from McPherson College in October. She is co-pastor of Antelope Park Church of the Brethren, in Lincoln, Neb.

• **Pamela Brubaker**, who teaches at California Lutheran University, presented a lecture on Oct. 22 at Elizabethtown College's Young Center, speaking on "Brethren Women Through the Centuries." She is the author of *She Hath Done What She Could* (Brethren Press, 1985), a book about the participation of Brethren women in church life.

• **Jan West Schrock** presented the biannual

Fasnacht Lecture at the University of La Verne on Nov. 7, speaking on "What Is Your Neighborhood? Who Are You in It?" A former director of Brethren



Jan West Schrock

Volunteer Service, she is director of the Ecumenical Program for Urban Service/Americorps.



Cindy Pinkston/The Roanoke Times

Phyllis West gave no thought to her own personal safety as she broke into a burning trailer to save her granddaughter's life.

What are grandmas for?

Phyllis West, a member of Saunders Grove Church of the Brethren near Moneta, Va., keeps a couple of ceramic angels in her kitchen, symbolic of her sense of having guardian angels watching over her. She needed plenty of that watch care in August 1995 when she rescued a granddaughter from a burning trailer.

Phyllis was helping her daughter clean her trailer home when a two-ton truck parked nearby apparently slipped out of gear and rolled toward the trailer. When it hit, the gas tank broke, setting the trailer on fire.

Phyllis and her daughter were outside, but one-year-old Beth was inside. The door was jammed, and the interior of the trailer was ablaze. Phyllis climbed through a window and threw Beth out, then scrambled out of the burning home just in time to save herself.

For her heroism, Phyllis recently received a Carnegie Medal and a \$2,500 check from the Carnegie Hero Fund. The fund was established by industrialist-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie nearly a century ago to honor people who risk their lives to save others.

Taking both her heroic deed and award in stride, Phyllis is using the \$2,500 she got this fall to set up a trust fund for Beth and her brother.

"In Touch" profiles Brethren we would like you to meet. Send story ideas and photos to "In Touch," MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120

Giving folks a lift

Northern Colorado Church of the Brethren in Windsor, Colo., was inspired by the October 1995 *MESSENGER* cover story on churches welcoming the disabled. It decided to make its church a bit more hospitable.

After volunteers worked through the summer of 1996, the congregation dedicated an easily accessible lift for the disabled on Sep. 8. Said one member, "We are sending a message to the community that all of God's people are welcome at our church, whether or not they can walk up a flight of stairs."



Helen Horne is one of Northern Colorado church's members who is benefiting from the new lift that was inspired by a MESSENGER story. In back: Sylvia Argilla and Herb Zeiler.

Big Brother or Mr. Nice?

With the struggle that communities are having keeping youngsters off the streets and out of trouble, one would think that a group of youngsters doing some good with their spare time would be awarded honor citations. Right? Think again.

A group of Church of the Brethren 10–12-year-olds were helping out at **The Brethren Home** in New Oxford, Pa.. On a strictly volunteer basis, they pushed wheelchairs and did other helpful chores. The children, the Home officials, and the residents were happy.

But not the Department of Labor. Always wary of potential child exploitation, it declared in early 1995 that the law was being broken because, it reasoned, some of the volunteer tasks benefited the Home rather than the residents.

Such a charge could have led to a hefty fine, but differences were worked out, and the Home had a successful 1996 summertime student volunteer program. There were 64 youngsters at work, but doing tasks that Labor could beam upon. New guidelines rule out for the kids activities such as helping

with laundry and grounds maintenance. But, happily, they can continue pushing the wheelchairs, visiting residents, and helping with music and other activities.

And the Home sees to it that its young volunteers take away more than just impressions. Twice a week provides the youth with educational experiences, things such as hearing a resident tell about the changes retirement bring in one's life, and what seniors are capable of doing.

Now everyone's happy... including the Department of Labor.

Campus comments

Juniata College, for the first time in its 120-year history, has broken the \$1 million mark in its annual Juniata Fund campaign. The 1995–1996 total was \$1,055,920. The fund raises money from the college's alumni and friends.

- **Bridgewater College** hosted its annual "One Sky One World" kite fly Oct. 6, joining with peace advocates around the world in illustrating the wind currents that unite the global community. Bridgewater's event is sponsored by the Student Council on Religious Activities and the Bridgewater College International Club.

- **McPherson College** enrolled 120 freshmen this year, a 52-percent increase over 1995.

- **Manchester College** has been rated a best buy in education, according to *"Barren's Best Buys in College*

education." *Barron's* profiled 289 US colleges, and based its results on questionnaires answered by college students. For students and parents considering colleges that offer the best education at the best price, *Barron's* said that Manchester's \$15,550 tuition, fees, room, and board in the 1995-1996 school year "couldn't be more right."

- The **University of La Verne** has received a \$1.5 million grant from the Fletcher Jones Foundation for a permanent endowment to establish the Fletcher Jones Chair in Biology. The recipient of the endowment's professorship will begin teaching at ULV next fall.

- **Manchester College** has been named by *Mother Jones* magazine among the top 20 US schools that have, for the past 20 years, pioneered social action and consistently generated students who remain committed to public affairs issues

after graduation. *Mother Jones* called Manchester "a small school with a big impact," noting that "the college founded the nation's oldest peace studies department in 1948, just after the birth of the United Nations."

This and that

- **Chiques Church** of the Brethren, Manheim, Pa., sent a volunteer work crew to **Brooklyn** (N.Y.) Church of the Brethren to repair the church roof, tighten windows, and install ceiling insulation. Brooklyn had been spending over \$1,000 a month heating its building.

- The **Concord** (N.C.) new church planting project moved into new quarters in nearby Harrisburg on October 15. Services are held twice a month. The group expected to receive fellowship status at the November 8-9 Virginia District meeting.



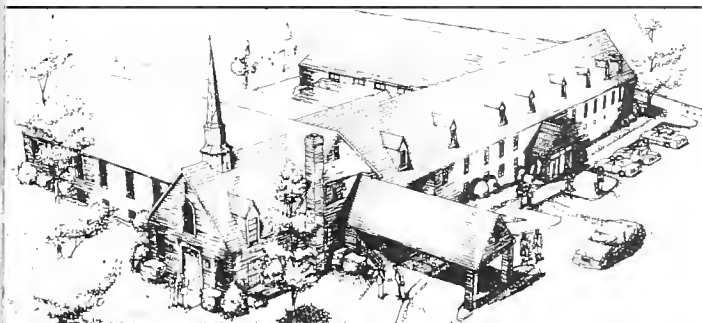
East Fairview honored each of its living former pastors with a garden that features, for each honoree, a plant native to the Holy Land.

Honored in a garden

When **East Fairview Church** of the Brethren in Manheim, Pa., wanted to demonstrate its appreciation for its past ministers, it decided to create a garden in their honor.

This past Father's Day, the congregation gathered for a dedication service in the new garden after morning worship. Each of the living ministers is represented in the garden by a plant from the Holy Land—aloe, mint, tamarisk, lily, rose, hyssop, cedar, and juniper.

East Fairview plans to use the garden as a place of peace and remembrance. Future plantings will symbolize various concepts of the Christian faith. Further information and guidance for creating such a garden can be obtained by writing to Worship and Fellowship Commission, East Fairview Church of the Brethren, Hossler Road, Manheim, PA 17505.



A \$2.1 million wing is planned for Manassas (Va.) Church of the Brethren. Ground was broken in September. Part of the expansion adds to the existing church a multipurpose room containing gymnasium facilities, including a basketball court, showers, and locker rooms. The sanctuary will be enlarged to hold 450 people. In addition, there will be more administrative office space, a courtyard for receptions, and a banquet facility. Completion is expected in about 15 months. The 101-year-old congregation has been pastored by Fred W. Swartz since 1985.

No alchemists here

We now can clear the good name of the **Ephrata Cloister**. On our October 1995 *Close to Home* pages, we reported that excavators at the Cloister had uncovered a glass, funnel-like object that suggested the followers of early Brethren maverick Conrad Beissel experimented in alchemy. After examination of the relic by experts from many quarters, the final verdict is in: The object is a glass replica of brass trumpets produced in

southern Germany and Austria in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. The mystery of what it was doing at the Cloister remains, however. Considering the eerie other-worldly music for which the Cloister choir was famous, could it just be that this glass horn was one of God's trombones?

"Close to Home" highlights news of congregations, districts, colleges, homes, and other local and regional life. Send story ideas and photos to "Close to Home," MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120

General Board takes three steps toward redesign

In an atmosphere that was accentuated by a somber mood, drawn faces, tissue boxes strategically placed throughout the General Offices, and more closed sessions than usual, the



Closed sessions were not an unusual sight during the Board's October meetings. During their 5 days together, Board members met behind closed doors for more than eight hours, addressing the Board's ongoing redesign and many related personnel and program matters.

Church of the Brethren General Board during its meetings Oct. 19-22 in Elgin, Ill., basically discussed two topics—its ongoing redesign, and everything else.

The Board's redesign process, which began in March 1995, consumed a majority of the Board's time and energy during the meetings, with the Board approving three significant items that will lead to possibly the most extensive changes undergone by the Board and its programs since the Board was created in 1947.

Reductions. The action the Board took that will be felt the soonest was the balancing of its 1997 budget. It had been stated at the Board's June meetings that \$472,000 would need to be cut to balance next year's budget, with another \$2 million in cuts coming later to affect the 1998 budget. However, the Board had to reduce its 1997 budget by an addi-

tional \$560,000 because of a projected shortfall in its "Behold I make all things new" financial commitment program. The Board thus accelerated some of its cuts previously intended to be made for 1998.

Of the \$852,000 in cuts made to balance the 1997 budget, \$722,000 came from reductions in staff and program and \$110,000 from other budgeted items in the "Behold" campaign.

Some of the reductions to staff and program had been decided and announced earlier this year, such as the elimination of three Human Resources jobs, which went into effect in October, and the announcement of at least two retirements in 1997, with the expectation that those jobs will not be refilled. However, the majority of the cuts, which will take effect in January, were decided and announced in October:

- The Andrew Center's 1997 program budget was reduced by \$20,000 and the part-time coordinator position for Leadership Development and Networking was eliminated. Bob Kettering had held that currently vacant position before he assumed the interim director's position earlier this year.

- Funding for the international ministry in South Korea has been cut in its entirety. Dan Kim, field director, has served in that capacity since August 1992. Prior to that assignment, Kim served as consultant for domestic Korean ministries, beginning in October 1986.

- The half-time Family Ministry director's position was eliminated. Ron and Harriet Finney, who have served as co-directors since the program was created in October 1995, also serve as co-executives of South Central Indiana District.

- The half-time Urban Ministry director's position was eliminated. Orlando Redekopp, who has served in that position since January 1994, also serves as half-time pastor of First

New items are intended to inform. They do not necessarily represent the opinions of MESSENGER or the General Board, and should not be considered to be an endorsement or advertisement.

Church of the Brethren, Chicago, Ill.

- Two Brethren Volunteer Service part-time positions were eliminated: the coordinator of Recruitment and a support position. Linda Timmons has held the Recruitment position since July 1995.

- The Washington Office received a \$70,000 budget cut, which will be found, said John Harvey, interim director, from the office's move in August from high-rent office space to lower-rent space in the Washington City church, and from not filling a vacant support position.

- The position of library technician of the Brethren Historical Library and Archives was eliminated.

- The Africa and the Middle East portfolio received a \$25,000 reduction, with the Board's understanding that the program's work in the Middle East will conclude by January 1998.

"I can't begin to express our pain and grief to our staff as we need to make these reductions," said Kathy Hess, as she announced these reductions to more than 100 Board members and staff, district representatives, and other guests and visitors. She added that there were five main points the Board considered when identifying which cuts would be made. According to Hess, the Board:

- retained programs that help contribute toward a new style of working with congregations.

- weighed the cost of personnel and program.

- received encouragement from the Board's Redesign Steering Committee (RSC) to "focus on the strengths ... of a few programs and do them well."

- favored ministries that promoted unity within the denomination.

- retained programs the Board felt were "uniquely Brethren in word and witness."

Deployment. The second significant redesign issue addressed was how General Board employees should be deployed in the future.

In June the RSC had submitted



Vincent Rivera, pastor in Summit, Ill.; **Gilbert Romero,** General Board member; and **Wendy McFadden,** director of Brethren Press, view redesign documents during an open session of the General Board.

three deployment options to the Board—centrally, regionally, and district-based. However, the RSC in October recommended a fourth option, a hybrid of the first two. This option, which was approved by the Board after about 90 minutes of discussion, consists of a central headquarters that will house the Administrative Council and its support staff, Brethren Press, Finance, and other specialized staff.

This option also will create teams of field staff, which will be located in three to five areas around the country. These teams will "facilitate local, district, and regional participation" with a newly proposed committee that would be composed of representatives from Annual Conference, the districts, and the General Board. These teams also would "model and encourage the circular interaction process" the RSC insists is needed to increase communication and cooperation between all denominational bodies. Finally, these teams will receive support from "a pool of skilled volunteers."

A blueprint. A special open session was scheduled in which 22 specific RSC recommendations were discussed. These items, most of which were approved as recommended, comprise a blueprint for how the General Board will be structured and function in the future, although

Board members stressed that some of these items could still be changed (see sidebar, page 9).

The RSC will use these recommendations as a guideline as it drafts its final, complete redesign plan, which it is expected to submit to the Board in time for it to be addressed during the Board's March meetings. At that meeting, the RSC is also expected to submit a proposal regarding location of the Board's central office and locations of its regional teams

Other business. Because dioxin "is an unavoidable hazard creating numerous adverse health effects such as cancer, hormonal disruption, infertility, suppression of the immune system, endometriosis, and diabetes," the General Board approved a resolution calling for a dioxin-free future.

The resolution, drafted in response to the 1991 Annual Conference statement "Creation: Called to Care," calls for legislation and actions to phase out the use of dioxin, to promote the use of alternative products; encourages the development of worker protection programs for people who work around toxic chemicals; and supports a prevention-based approach to cancer research and funding.

The resolution also calls for Brethren to avoid purchasing products that harm the environment and challenges Brethren congregations and

individuals to study Annual Conference statements on simple life (1996), creation (1991), Christian stewardship (1985), and lifestyle (1980). Published Annual Conference statements can be ordered by calling (800) 441-5712.

The Board also approved a resolution stating it would join in the celebration last month of Church World Service's 50th anniversary, and commits itself to continue its support of CWS' ministries around the world.

A report of the Emergency Disaster Fund showed that over \$578,500 was approved for disaster response this year from January through September, while \$404,514.95 was actually expended. Twenty-nine projects received funds, with the largest allocation going to Hurricane Marilyn response work (\$140,404.46).

Commission reports. For the first time in more than a decade, *Messenger's* subscriptions are on the rise. Nevin Dulabaum, managing editor, reported to the General Services Commission that a net increase in readers had been recorded over the past five months, reversing a downward trend the magazine had experienced over the past two decades. Dulabaum also reported that he is

working on a joint venture with Brethren Ron Gordon to get General Board programs on the World Wide Web.

GSC elected two people to the Germantown Trust. Chosen by the commission were Earl Eby, representing Atlantic Northeast District for a three-year term, and Ken Kreider, representing the General Board, also for three years.

Parish Ministries Commission participated in the first reading of two documents: "The Ministry of Deacons in the Church of the Brethren" and the "Lay Speaker Pre-Interview Guide." The deacon paper is being circulated by the study committee, which is soliciting responses to the paper. The "Lay Speaker Pre-Interview Guide" began with the "Ethics in Ministry Relations" Annual Conference paper approved this summer in Cincinnati, and will accompany pre-licensing documents for people interested in becoming lay speakers. This document will return to PMC in March for final approval.

The Hispanic Steering Committee explained that various factors have slowed the progress of Hispanic Ministry, and the committee is "disappointed, but not discouraged." The committee's future plans include

joining the church boards in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic with a board composed of US Hispanic congregations through a Hispanic Administrative Council.

The Urban Violence Task Group, which was initiated last March, reported it has had difficulty getting started due to lack of funding. Because of the elimination of Urban Ministry, David Radcliff, director of Denominational Peace Witness, will assume the team's administrative duties in January.

PMC approved the request of Bob Kettering, interim director of The Andrew Center, to consider reinstating the "Passing on the Promise" congregational program. Kettering will return to the commission in March with a proposal and a cost analysis.

Nancy Knepper, director of Outdoor Ministry, was instructed by the commission to work on establishing a congregational policy on child abuse that would be directed toward church volunteers and nonclergy who work with children and youth. "The time it takes and the pain involved with implementing the policy will be nothing next to a charge brought against one of our child care workers and how it will tear into the church," said Roger Fory, PMC chairman, in his report to the General Board.

World Ministries Commission adopted a document titled "Values for Addressing Ministries" as a working document to be used when evaluating whether a proposed mission should become a General Board program. Commission members also agreed that this document should be utilized by the yet-to-be-formed Mission Planning Council.

Miscellaneous news. Board member Phyllis Crain of Linville Falls, N.C., tendered her resignation prior to the October meetings for personal and professional reasons. Crain's term expires in 1998.—NEVIN DULABAUM and PAULA WILDING

General Board members Stafford Frederick and Beth Middleton participate in an open session of the Board. The Board's agenda, primarily issues dealing with its redesign, helped draw over 100 employees, guests, and visitors to the meetings.



The General Board approves "blueprint" for the future

The General Board considered 22 recommendations presented by its Redesign Steering Committee (RSC), intended to guide the RSC as it produces its final redesign recommendations in time for the Board's March meetings. After much deliberation, the Board approved the following, to take place by January 1998 unless otherwise stated or modified at a later date.

- The Board removed the recommendation that it change its name, but approved reducing its size from 25 to 20 and agreed to work with Annual Conference to develop a way to appoint people to the Board "who have specific needed skills."

- The Board agreed to work with Annual Conference and district leaders to create a Mission Planning Council, a committee "where the Board, Annual Conference, and districts interface to discern the program of the General Board," agreeing by consensus.

- The Board's Administrative Council will be reduced by one, and composed of a general secretary and administrators of Program, Leadership, and Finance. The Board also agreed to seek approval from Annual Conference to be involved in the ministry and calling of district executives.

- SERRV International and the Board will try to determine how SERRV can maintain its Brethren identity and have greater control over its finances while limiting the Board's liabilities.

- All publishing, publications, and Customer Service will be combined into "Brethren Press" and supervised by the General Secretary. All volunteer services will be combined into "Brethren Volunteer Service."

- The Board will review the status of the Brethren Service Center's Conference Center by Jan. 1, 2000.



Nevin Dulabaum

Boxes of tissues were strategically placed throughout the General Offices during General Board meetings, a sign of the struggle Board members would face as they dealt with the tough redesign issues of reducing staff and program while shaping the Board's focus for the future.

- Expenses will be reduced by \$2.5 million by 1998, and the wages, salaries, and benefits of Board employees will be reassessed.

- Funding to The Andrew Center will end, though the Board agreed that the center's evangelism resources should be integrated into the Board's congregational revitalization effort. The Board will retain the center's name and materials. The RSC also encouraged the Board to adopt The Andrew Center's "style of inquiry-routing and its orientation toward congregational revitalization."

- The focus of international mission, at least for the short term, should be on mission partnerships in Africa and the Caribbean/Latin America.

- An "Emerging Missions Fund" will be established to "facilitate the emergence of new mission efforts through the Mission Planning Council."

- The Board affirmed the practice of congregational self-allocation to finance Board ministries, through the Congregational Giving office (currently Congregational Support). This office will be com-

bined with Planned Giving.

- By the end of November, the Board agreed to name the new directors of the Brethren Press, Mission Funding office, Mission Partnerships office, BVS, and Youth and Young Adult Ministries, to help make restructuring and personnel decisions through the end of the redesign process.

- The Board affirmed moving the duties of the Planning Coordinating and Goals and Budget committees to the Mission Planning Council and the Board's Executive Committee. Both the Planning Coordinating and Goals and Budget committees would then be dissolved.

- One point added by the Board calls for the Administrative Council to reduce overall General Board administrative costs.

- Two items—the combining of Material Resources and Refugee/Disaster Services and continuing the practice of On Earth Peace Assembly and Association of Brethren Caregivers relating to the General Board, but through the administrator of Program—were tabled until the Board's March meetings by RSC request.—ND

Brethren congregational stats released by Andrew Center

Olden Mitchell, a volunteer for The Andrew Center, in October released 1995 statistics on Church of the Brethren congregations.

In his report, Mitchell states that with 995 members, Frederick (Md.) Church of the Brethren is the largest congregation in the denomination. Four congregations have over 700 members: Manchester, North Manchester, Ind., 757; Bridgewater (Va.), 752; Ephrata (Pa.), 751; and Eaton (Ohio), 747. Fifty-two congregations have over 400 members.

Nineteen congregations reported average worship attendance to be over 500. The top five are White Oak, Manheim, Pa., 550; Frederick (Md.), 524; Eaton (Ohio), 505; Ephrata (Pa.), 424; and Middle Creek, Lititz, Pa., 414.

White Oak also leads in average Sunday school attendance with 452. Fourteen other churches reported 200 or more people in attendance, including Middle Creek, Lititz, Pa., 406; Frederick (Md.), 385; and Chiques, Manheim, Pa., 354.

Twenty-six congregations receive more than \$500,000 in giving. Lancaster (Pa.) ranks first at \$806,189. Next is Montezuma, Dayton, Va., \$640,501; Bridgewater (Va.), \$655,510; Harrisonburg (Va.), \$595,900; and Frederick (Md.), \$586,119.

The report lists 45 congregations that received 20 or more members in 1995. West Goshen, Goshen, Ind., received the most with 79. Next were Hagerstown (Md.), 66; Cape Coral (Fla.), 56; New Enterprise (Pa.), 47; and McPherson (Kan.), 40.

Mitchell also reported that approximately 44 percent of Brethren congregations have 50 people or less in worship services. More than one-third of Brethren Sunday school classes have an attendance of 25 people or less.

Though Mitchell compiles his

report annually, it must be considered unofficial as the information is incomplete and not verified.

—PATLY WUDISG

Eradicating sweatshops the goal of 32 religious groups

The religious community's role in eradicating sweatshops was the focus of an Oct. 22 meeting Church of the Brethren Washington Office volunteer Mandy Kreps and 52 representatives from other religious organizations attended with Secretary of Labor Robert Reich.

Reich stated that though the Labor Department is the "enforcer of our nation's labor laws, these religious leaders (at the meeting) and their congregations are the reinforcers." He added that he looks forward to working further with the religious community.

"As followers of God and as consumers, we have a moral responsibility to advocate for just and humane treatment of workers," Kreps said. "We need to be conscious of where and how our goods are made, especially during the upcoming holiday season of gift giving and buying."

In November the Labor Department released its "Trendsetter List," a directory of companies that ensure their good are not made in sweatshops. For more information about this list or this issue, contact Kreps at the Washington Office—(202) 546-5202 or WashOfce@AOL.Com.

Church of the Brethren cited for post-WWII work in Japan

Miller Davis, executive director of Center Operations, Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md., represented the Church of the Brethren at the 50th anniversary ceremony of Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia (LARA), Nov. 15-19, in Japan.

The Brethren Service Commission, a predecessor to the World Ministries Commission, helped with relief efforts after World War II, and was involved with LARA in the care and distribution of animals and relief supplies in Japan.

According to the ceremony's sponsor, Japanese National Council of Social Welfare, the Church of the Brethren and 12 other nongovernment agencies involved in the inception of LARA were invited so that Japanese people could express "gratitude to those American agencies who implemented the LARA Program, which helped start Japan's post-war development."

Brethren Caregivers announces associate director staff change

Sara Speicher, associate director of Association of Brethren Caregivers since 1995, has resigned, effective Dec. 31. Speicher has accepted a volunteer position with the World Council of Churches' Programme to Overcome Violence in Geneva.



Sara Speicher

Calendar

Christmas Achievement Offering. "Bearers of the Light," Dec. 15 [Contact Congregational Support, General Offices, (800) 525-8059].

Christian Peacemaker Congress III. "Joining the Nonviolent Struggle: Getting in the Way," Washington, D.C., Dec. 27-30 [Contact CPE, (512) 455-1199, cpt5@ncc-ipc.org].

"Introduction to Preaching," offered by Bethany Academy for Ministry Training, Jan. 6-10, Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind. [Contact Kim Yaussy Albright, Bethany Seminary, (800) 287-8822].

Over 20 workcamps offered by Youth, Young Adult Office

Twenty-one workcamps will be offered in 1997 to junior high and senior high students, and young adults.

Sponsored by Youth and Young Adult Ministry, the theme of the workcamps will be "Planting Seeds... Growing in Faith." Liz Bidgood and Greg Enders are serving as volunteer coordinators of the workcamps. For more information, call (800) 525-8059.

A short description of the workcamps can be found at <http://www.tgx.com/cob/wcamp97.htm>.

Young Adult (18 years and older)
May 29–June 8. Quito, Ecuador.

Senior High (Completed 9th grade through one year out of high school)

June 16–22. St. Croix, US Virgin Islands.

June 16–22. San Juan, Puerto Rico.

June 22–29. Philadelphia, Pa.

(Brethren Revival Fellowship)

July 7–15. La Verne, Calif.

July 7–15. Black church rebuilding (location to be announced).

July 14–20. Chicago, Ill.

July 14–20. Sedalia, Colo.

July 21–27. Americus, Ga.

July 21–27. Rosebud, S.D.

July 21–27. Ephrata, Pa.

July 28–Aug. 5. Walker, Ky.

Aug. 4–10. Orlando, Fla.

Aug. 10–16. Perryville, Ark.

Aug. 11–17. Washington, D.C.

Junior High (Completed 6th, 7th, or 8th grades)

June 25–27. New Windsor, Md.

June 25–29. Harrisburg, Pa.

July 16–20. Dayton, Ohio.

July 30–Aug. 5. Philadelphia, Pa.

July 30–Aug. 5. Indianapolis, Ind.

Aug. 6–10. Richmond, Va.

In Brief

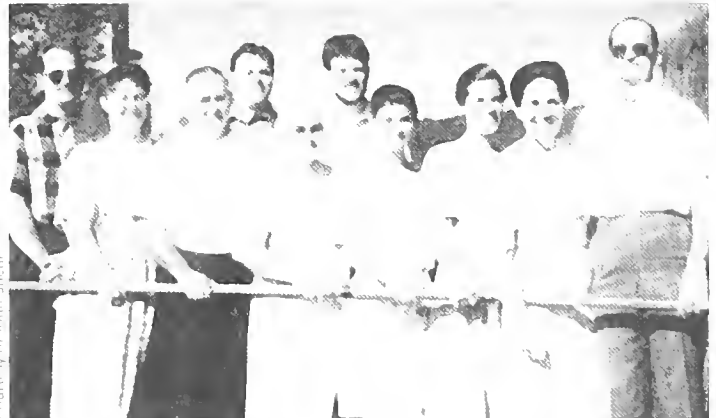
More than \$144,000 was allocated to six projects in October by the Emergency Disaster Fund.

A grant of \$50,000 was allocated to a cooperative venture between the Church of the Brethren and Interchurch Medical Assistance, which involves the shipping of supplies from the Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md., to countries in need.

Other grants included \$55,000 to response efforts in the Virgin Islands following Hurricane Marilyn; \$20,000 to help people in North Korea who were affected by the floods in 1995 that destroyed rice crops and caused food shortages; \$10,000 for disaster child care centers for their work with families in eastern states affected by Hurricane Fran; \$6,000 to help Cooperative Disaster Child Care attend to the needs of people in Puerto Rico following Hurricane Hortense; \$3,600 to help purchase food for repressed and displaced communities in the Chiapas region of Mexico.

Ministry Summer Service, a program for college-age young adults interested in serving in a Church of the Brethren congregation during the summer, is searching for 10-12 interns and congregations for 1997. Orientation for MSS is scheduled for May 23–30. Interns will receive a \$2,000 tuition grant for college expenses. For intern or congregational applications, contact Youth and Young Adult Ministry at (800) 323-8039.

On Earth Peace Assembly's Board unanimously reaffirmed the affiliation it has with the Church of the Brethren General Board and voted to continue the relationship at the same level now and after the General Board's redesign period. The decision was made at OEPA's Board meeting in October. "The current agreement between OEPA and the General Board has been a positive



Courtesy of John Shenk

Ten people participated in Brethren Volunteer Service Unit 222 Aug. 11–25, in Roxbury, Pa. Participants were (left to right) David Balmer, Bettina Balmer, Lowell Witmer, Jereme Reimold, Clara Witmer, Tim Nelson, Teresa Negley, Eunice Hilty, Ruby Shenk, and John Shenk. (For assignments, see page 26.)

itive experience this year," said Tom Hurst, OEPA director. OEPA also approved its 1997 budget of \$300,035.

Orders for the 1997 Church of the Brethren Yearbook are being taken. Information included in the Yearbook includes congregational listings, Brethren serving in denominational offices, district listings, and Brethren institutions. Yearbooks ordered before Dec. 15 are \$15; thereafter, \$17.50. Payment must be enclosed with orders. Send a check to the Church of the Brethren General Board, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin IL 60120. The 1997 Yearbook will be available next spring.

The Miller years: *Giving his best*

BY KERMON THOMASSON

When it was announced in 1977 that Bethany Seminary professor Robert W. Neff had been named as the next general secretary of the Church of the Brethren, the new leader quipped that the appropriate scripture for the occasion was Revelation 8:1b: "There was silence in heaven for about half an hour."

The half hour must have extended to 45 minutes in 1986 when Bethany Seminary professor Donald L. Miller was named as Neff's successor. I exclaimed Miller's Bethany colleague Lauree Hersch Meyer, "If I had been asked what Don's future would be, one thing that would *never* have occurred to me is the job of general secretary!"

There were questions about his leadership qualifications. An excellent seminary professor, yes, but did he have the management skills the job required? And his Dunker humbleness... basically so laudable, but would it serve him well as general secretary? He was not known as a bold and forceful speaker. Don admitted to an interviewer in 1986, "As a child, I was really very shy, and I've had a hard time putting myself forward." With great honesty, he went on: "Some people are just naturally bold and out front. For me, it takes some courage to be in the spotlight, but I'm willing to do it."

And not only willing, Don has endured the glare of that spotlight for the past 10 years—10 roller-coaster years of achievements and crises.

In a recent assessment of that decade, Don remembered his calling to be general secretary. "I was selected in part for my Old Order conservative background and leanings, at the same time having a very liberal education at schools such as the University of Chicago (M.A.,



*Donald L. Miller,
General Secretary, 1986–1996*

1952) and Harvard Divinity School (Ph.D., 1962). The hope was that this span of experiences would pull people together. Many Brethren were dissatisfied with General Board program and directions at the time. There was a conservative turn in the United States in the 1980s, too."

Acknowledging that this hope was not realized during his tenure, Don went on to say, "Those were the same problems we have today, as reflected in the findings of the General Board's Redesign Steering Committee. The General Board staff was perceived as having too much control. The call was to find a better balance between staff and General Board initiatives. Staff was resistant. The Board was restive about whether it was assuming its

proper role. All that has been a factor throughout these 10 years."

Anyone assessing the Miller years must take into account the bombshell that hit his desk just two days into his tenure. Don earlier had been assured, he says, that General Board finances were in good shape. But to his shock and dismay, the new general secretary learned on Sept. 2, 1986, that the Board likely would be short about \$1 million by the end of the year. And reserves had been dipped into too often. Something drastic would have to be done to balance the budget—drastic to the point of cutting program and staff.

"I was already feeling the heaviness of (treasurer) Brad Byer's suicide the previous May," says Don. "At about the time of my appointment at the Norfolk Annual Conference, I had a curious dream. In it was a cluster of colorful telephone wires, and in their midst was a crane with heavy chains and hook reaching down to something. I interpreted the colorful wires as the interesting, exciting aspects of my new job—communication, appointments, travel. The heavy chains and hook represented the overwhelming burden I had accepted."

A profile of Don in the January 1987 *MESSNGER* (by a rookie editorial assistant, Don Fitzkee, who, a decade later, has headed the search committee to find Don's successor) was titled "An Undaunted Dunker." But Don *was* a bit daunted that fall of 1986: "The staff was divided. The Board was divided. The church was divided. I felt the need to bridge the trends in the church, and still be open to the wonderful worldwide witness of the Brethren. That was my calling. It felt enormously heavy. For some weeks I really considered whether I should continue. I had *not* been told it would be like this."

Drafting the interim general secretary, Ken McDowell, to temporarily cover the vacancy in the treasurer's

office, Don called on him and others to discuss the financial crisis. "We decided to balance the budget for 1987 and to reduce the deficit as much as we could yet in 1986. We brought the \$1 million down to \$800,000 by the year's end."

Then there were the Goals for the '90s to establish. Don turned to the congregations for direct input and heard from some 600 of them. But when the goals had been formulated and adopted, they ran into problems with the theological tensions among the Brethren. There was disagreement, for example, on how to do evangelism and how to do missions.

Don observes, "The Goals for the '90s didn't heal the differences. They raised them to the surface. We struggled with how to put the goals into action. After their adoption, we had some difficult Board meetings, deciding on the programs to implement."

And there was the continuing problem of flat giving and rising expenses. "We had to cut the budget, but the Board wasn't willing to do that. So I decided to appeal to individual donors, and we had Brethren Vision for the '90s. We raised \$4 million, to be spent during 1991-1995."

Don believes that "some remarkably creative things were done." But, he adds, "the problem with the goals and the programs created to reach them was that the message didn't get through to the congregations. Some didn't even know there *were* Goals for the '90s. We never achieved the unity of vision that is so important for sensing and feeling a forward movement. *That I really regret.*"

So the Miller years are ending with, to use Don's metaphor, "the tides of history...sweeping on, preventing our catching a common vision." Divisiveness has continued, he points out. "Congregational giving to the Board has remained flat. We were left in 1995 with a heavy challenge to keep the newer programs going, and we still had

growing expenses for the continuing programs. All that has led to the redesign process, now well on its way." (See pages 6-9.)

Still, Don leaves office with optimism. He speaks of the past decade as "fertile years." He reminded General Board members in October that "in the midst of our difficulties, many significant things have happened." Don has been especially enthusiastic about the focus on evangelism and identity. He cites other strong programs such as youth ministry. He notes that the Jubilee curriculum materials are being acclaimed by Brethren and by churches beyond. There is a continuing strong Brethren Volunteer Service program, augmented by the Ministry Summer Service program instituted this past summer.

Don is positive about the giving situation: "Stewardship is as strong as it has ever been," he contends. "Even allowing for inflation, giving to *all* programs has grown from 2.5 percent in 1986 to 2.8 percent in 1996. It means that, even with fewer members, our stewardship has actually increased."

One of Don's most satisfying achievements has been his influence on the World Council of Churches' Central Committee, of which he has been a member. He helped create its Program to Overcome Violence.

Don recently received this assessment from a former seminary colleague, historian Donald F. Durnbaugh: "You should take gratification in having begun your task by mastering an immediate sharp financial challenge, then guiding the denomination successfully through turbulent times, and, finally, in helping to plan for a needed reorientation as you leave."

Reflecting on that, Don says, "The key role of the general secretary is one of linkage, and one is able to do that only after a great deal of listening." There are things he now sees he should have done differently: "I should have been visiting district

executives regularly. I should have had better communication with Annual Conference officers. I should have been out in the congregations more, listening to people."

Don anticipated, with the Goals for the '90s, the major shift in our denomination toward the congregations, recently emphasized in the findings of the Redesign Steering Committee, and he says he agrees with that shift. "Listening to our people must be a major priority for the general secretary."

Finally, Don observes that the problems with which the congregations, districts, General Board, and Annual Conference struggle are not unique. The Brethren situation parallels those of the mainline denominations, and it reflects American society at large.

Don's hope is that, in their struggle, the Brethren will keep central their way of volunteering, that they will stay focused on the peace position and on global outreach. "Otherwise," he says, "we fall into a kind of individualism. I pray that we do not lose God's calling."

In 1986, Don said, "I have friends who tell me that if I decide to do something I'll persist in it until I've done it, or at least I'll have given it my best." With his persistence not having fully succeeded in this case, and with "his best" now going into the history books, Don would have the Brethren believe, as he does, "that God, who has brought us this far, is leading us in a new way." And when that new way is discerned, he says, "I pray that we will be faithful and ready to take it."

That vision of a "new way" is not a sudden insight for Don. In his farewell report to the General Board, he recalled that in 1986 he had suggested that the Brethren were "on the edge of a new time of greatness in the church." Now, in 1996, as the retiring general secretary rides off into the sunset, he would have the Brethren fix their eyes on the eastern horizon, watching for the dawn of that new time of greatness. *M.*

BEARERS OF THE *Light*

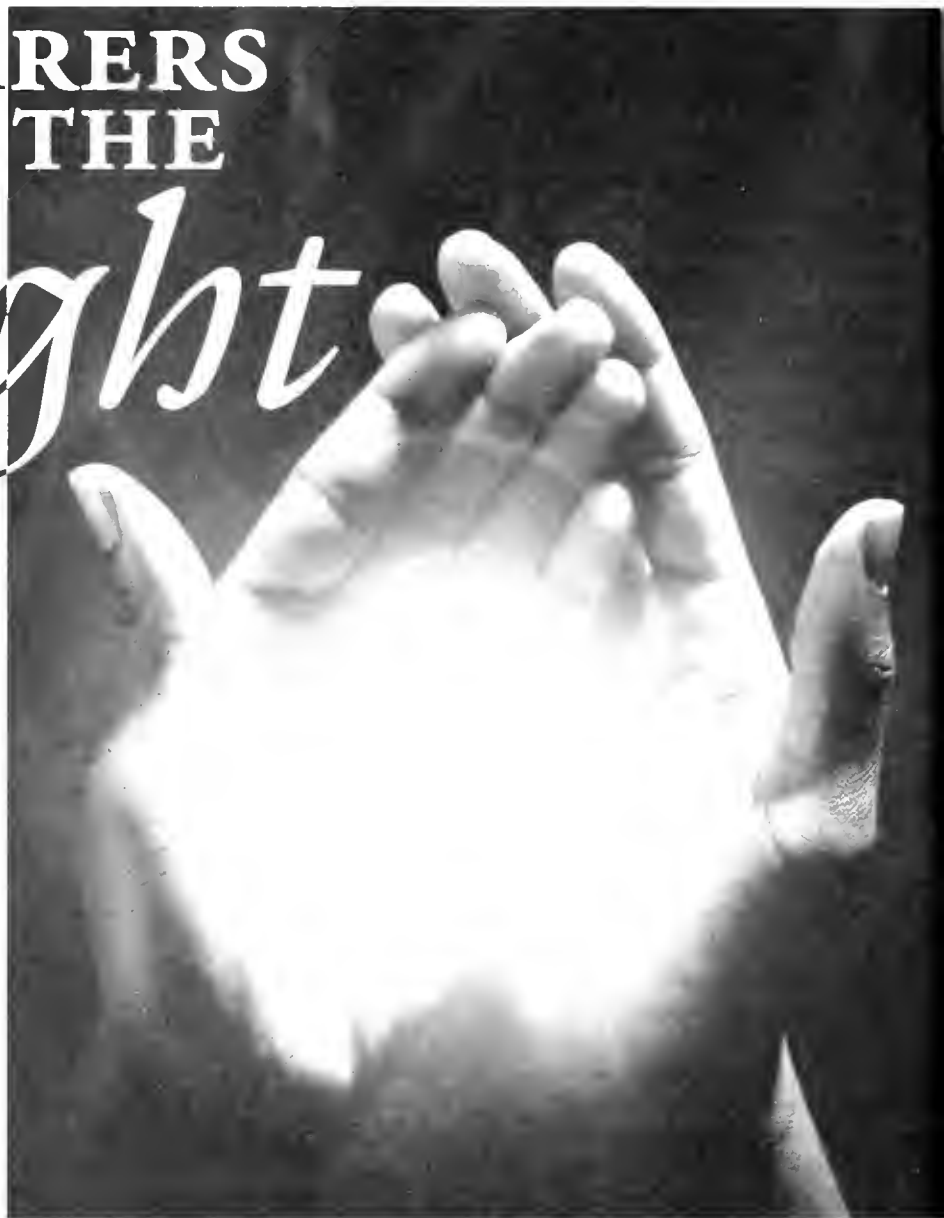
BY EARLE W. FIKE JR.

Not many of us like to be in the dark, either actually or figuratively speaking. There is a certain fearfulness about darkness. True, sometimes it can be a restful blessing. But even at its best, it is no match for the comfort of light. What parent has not heard a small voice plead for a little light: "I leave the door open just a crack, *please!*"

In our own way, we fully understand the desire of the small voice. Although often muffled, it lives in the adult heart. Minute by minute, hour by hour, the media remind us of how we are deluged by darkness. Conflict, injustice, and violence are rampant. Retaliation is more popular than reconciliation: An "eye for an eye" is more prevalent than forgiving. Hope is stretched thin, kindness and compassion are deemed impractical, and genuine joy somehow seems inappropriate. In the winter of such dark discontent, we may hear our own prayerful voice: "Please, Lord, could you leave the good news door against darkness open just a crack?"

At Christmas it happens again: The good news about darkness and light gets remembered. In Luke 1:78-79, Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, foretells it: "By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness. . . ."

Alexander Papaderos was a doctor of philosophy, a teacher, a politician, and a resident of Athens. He was a living legend in Greece—a man of



*In this season of receiving and giving,
we are called to use one of our
greatest gifts—the ability to reflect
the power of the Light into dark places.*

strength and energy; a man of courage, intelligence, and passion. Many said that to speak to him, or even just to shake his hand, was to experience a kind of extraordinary electric personality.

The story goes that on the last morning of a two-week seminar on Greek culture, Papaderos rose from his chair and asked, "Are there any

questions?" The room was quiet. No one dared a question, even though the two weeks had generated enough questions to last the students a lifetime.

"No questions?" he asked again. One young man raised his hand, and somewhat timidly said, "Dr. Papaderos, what is the meaning of life?" The laughter was instant-

neous. How stupid could the student be? People got up to leave. But Alexander Papaderos held up his hand and stilled the room. "I will try to answer the question," he said.

Taking his wallet out of his hip pocket, Papaderos brought out a round mirror about the size of a quarter. He explained that when he was a small child, during World War II, he was very poor. One day, on a road in his remote little village, he found the broken pieces of a mirror from a German motorcycle. He said, "I tried to find all the pieces and put them together, but it wasn't possible." So Papaderos kept the largest piece, and by scratching it on a stone, he made it round. It became his favorite toy. He was fascinated by the fact that he could reflect light into dark places where the sun would never otherwise shine—in deep holes and crevices, and in dark closets. It became a game, getting light into the most inaccessible places.

Papaderos kept the little mirror and as he grew up, he would take it out from time to time and continue the challenge of the game. "When I became a man," he said, "I grew to understand that this was not just a child's game, but a metaphor for the meaning of life. I came to understand that I am not the light or the source of the light. But light—truth, understanding, knowledge, and love; it's all there, and will only shine in the dark places if I reflect it."

Behold, God has done a great thing in giving light to the world in the person of Christ. "In him was life, and the life was the light of all

people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:4-5).

How does our understanding of that light of God become real to us? By the grace of light bearers, of course. It may come by word; that is, we hear it and then do with the word what we will. It may come by experience; that is, we see it and feel it as others reflect the light in their manner of living. The light that shines in the darkness, which the darkness cannot overcome, is a gift. We do not, by our own strength, create it. We receive it by the spoken word and the living acts of those who gladly choose to bear it. In turn, we can bear it, reflect it, allow it to shine in and through us. Or ignore it. The gift to us becomes one of our own gifts—to use or abuse.

Papaderos said, "The light will only shine in dark places if I reflect it." The theme for this year's denominational Christmas Achievement Offering is "Bearers of the Light." It is a call for us, in this season of receiving and giving gifts, to use one of our greatest gifts—the ability to reflect the power of the Light into dark places.

This old dark world needs educated, trained, committed lay and professional leaders—preachers and teachers and service workers and churchgoers who, by their own light bearing, help all of us to become more committed light bearers. The support of programs that bear light will be the destination of the mone-

tary gifts we choose to give in this special Christmas offering.

One of the ways that God's great gift of light can be a blessing to you this season is if you take it upon yourself to reflect that light in unexpected places. Let it bounce from you into dark crevices of hopelessness and despair. Let it come alive in you and reflect in kindness and caring for others. As Papaderos said, reflecting the light is not a game. The very meaning of life is found in our experience of the reflection sent our way by another, and in our own reflecting the light into the dark places of life around us.

As our denominational identity line reminds us, we are people committed to "Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together." In the profound simplicity of that statement, we may at times overlook the word "continuing." That's what bearing the light is about—trying, by word and act, to be a nice reflection of the wonderful light God gave to the world in Jesus Christ.

It is dark! And we are a people deeply aware of the darkness around us. But on us a great light has shined. No amount of darkness can overcome God's Christmas gift of light. Hiding it under a bushel of busyness can thwart it. Refusing to reflect it in the manner of our living can frustrate it. Forgetting it can obstruct it. But it is with us. So be bearers of the light. Bear it proudly. Bear it gladly. *M.*

Earle W. Fike Jr. of Bridgewater, Va., is a former pastor, Bethany Theological Seminary professor, and executive of the General Board's Parish Ministries Commission.



BEARING THE LIGHT

An eager and responsive student

Angelica Maria (Diamira) Berquete grew up in the small village of Viajama in the Dominican Republic, where only minimal education was available. The first member of her family to come to Christ, she encountered the Brethren through the preaching of Jorge Toledo and others from Puerto Rico. Diamira was instrumental in starting a church in her home village and now serves as pastor of the Santo



Bearing the light in Santo Domingo, *Diamira Berquete is pastoring a church of a hundred in a little blue church in the Dominican Republic*

Domingo congregation and moderator-elect of the Dominican church.

How did a simple, uneducated village woman become such a leader in the church? Ten years ago Diamira had a vision that was, for her, a call to ministry. She began to preach on street corners, and people responded. Diamira has been an eager and

responsive student in every ministry training course offered by the Church of the Brethren in the five years of her involvement with it. Diamira knows her Bible well, and others are drawn by her vibrant faith and the clarity of her witness. In a country where many reject women in leadership, the church has recognized and affirmed Diamira's gifts.

The brilliant blue church building is smaller than some Church of the Brethren Sunday school rooms. Yet inside this simple structure, dynamic worship draws a growing number of participants. Seven years ago, a small group gathered in Diamira's home for Bible study and prayer. Now there are a hundred people worshipping and studying in the small bright blue house of worship! The congregation is hoping for a Brethren workeamp next year to come and help it build a larger house of worship.—JOAN DEETER

Joan Deeter is World Ministries Commission executive on the General Board staff.

Special members at Buffalo Valley

Andy is 27 years old, weighs 200 pounds, and is 5-foot-10, yet his mental functions are more like those of a 1-year-old child.

Judy is over 50, yet, because of developmental delays, she thinks like a young child.

Both Andy and Judy are members of Buffalo Valley Church of the Brethren in Millinburg, Pa. They were received as members under a "Special Person Membership" provision developed by the Buffalo Valley deacons and approved by the congregation as an amendment to the congregation's existing membership polity.

The Buffalo Valley deacons and congregation did not take this action lightly. They worked hard, studied hard, and prayed hard about this issue. The deacons spent much time studying the Bible and the Annual Conference statement on church membership. For their "Special Person Membership," no

baptism is required, but a laying on of hands and prayers of blessing are part of the person's reception when the membership is recognized. Following this, the congregation responds with a statement of promised love and support for the people.

In July 1994, Andy and Judy were received into membership in a worship service filled with joy and tears. Andy, who does not express himself verbally, beamed throughout the service with a smile that made it clear to all that he was very happy. While he is usually apprehensive about anyone touching him, he was very still during the laying on of hands and prayer. Judy also beamed. When she was given a special cup as a gift during the service, she happily exclaimed, "Thank you! Thank you!" On the drive home after the service she brought tears to the eyes of her mother when she said, "Mama, I prayed to the Lord!"

The fruit of this action has been a keener awareness on the part of the congregation of the needs of these special people and their families. And there has been a more intentional inclusion of Andy and Judy in the fuller life of the church family. Both Andy and Judy have participated in love feast, whereas before they would have stayed home with a care giver. Andy's mother said, "Words cannot describe the wonderful loving feeling we had at Andy's first communion service. We are sure Andy would have gone to heaven and been made perfectly whole without this 'Special Person Membership,' but it has given us a warm and wonderful feeling knowing that the family of God has given Andy this blessing. It is our hope that the congregation has experienced some of the joy that has been ours as we have cared for him through the years."—FRED SWARTZ AND LARRY DENTLER

Fred W. Swartz is pastor of Manassas (Va.) Church of the Brethren and editor of The Caregiver, a newsletter for deacons in the Church of the Brethren.

Larry Dentler is pastor of Bermudian Church of the Brethren in East Berlin, Pa.

Church World Service at 50: The trucks still roll

BY KERMON THOMASSON

Fifty years of Church World Service. That's an anniversary Brethren can celebrate. Church World Service works in the US and around the world to meet emergency needs, support sustainable self-help development, and address the root causes of poverty and powerlessness. It is a ministry of the National Council of Churches—an ecumenical agency.

But, Hey! We Brethren were present at the creation. In fact, we had a part in the creation. And not only is that a reason for celebration, but the image of Church World Service—even its symbol of extended hands—evokes for us memories of the heyday of Brethren Service in the years following World War II. Then, with a symbolic cup of cold water, we reached out to the people suffering from the destruction caused by that war.

Other denominations were doing the same thing, of course. But, perhaps uniquely for the Brethren, relief work provided a unifying force that put their belief in servanthood into action, helped define who Brethren were, and energized them as they moved forward into a new era.

The Brethren Service Committee of the 1940s cooperated with other

church organizations in distributing relief materials. In March 1946, its executive secretary, M.R. Zigler, attended a meeting of the Federal Council of Churches (which became the National Council of Churches in 1950) and successfully promoted the integration of the various relief agencies into one. In May of that year, Brethren participated in a meeting in New York in which Church World Service (as it was later called) was created.

Brethren had more to contribute than representation. They had bought an old college campus in New Windsor, Md., in 1944 as a center for the collection, processing, and distribution of relief goods. The Brethren offered the use of this Brethren Service Center to Church World Service. And since then, as the big trucks have rolled in and out of New Windsor, 50 years of servanthood to the world have kept the Brethren and Church World Service busy.

Since 1946, Church World Service has provided more than 5.5 billion

Japanese victims (top right) of a 1959 typhoon receive CWS aid. Right: Signs at the Nappanee, Ind., Brethren Service Center reflected the close ties between two agencies. Below: A 1960s truck of relief goods leaves New Windsor for the port of Baltimore.

pounds of material assistance in support of relief and development efforts worldwide—some \$870 million in food, medical supplies, tents, clothing, blankets, tools, seeds, and sewing and school supplies.

Something to celebrate, indeed. *M.*



Religion News Service



What's a 'pair of ducks'?

BY PETE HAYNES

There's a package under our tree that we need to open before Christmas day. No, it's not the latest "Power Ranger" figure. Nor is it a power tool. It is a mighty force, however, although it may not appear powerful. This parcel does not contain new clothes, fine jewels, or fancy perfume. Its beauty is far beyond these things, although a first glance might indicate otherwise. It is not a book or a computer. Even so, this box is filled with the deepest wisdom known to humanity. It remains, nevertheless, hardly noticed amid the piles of crumpled wrapping paper.

When we open this tiny bundle, we see that all it contains is a word: "Incarnation." Just a word.

What is so powerful about this word? How is it beautiful? Why so wise? It's just a word.

Incarnation. Literally, it means "in flesh," as in "Word made flesh." That is, "in human form," just like you or me.

Incarnation. Behind this word is a teaching that some have called the most central doctrine of our faith. To put it simply, the incarnation is about Jesus, whom we believe was both fully God and fully a human being when he was born and placed in that manger long ago.

This is a, if not *the*, central teaching of the Christian faith. Powerful, beautiful, wise, and a paradox.

Paradox? A young boy heard enough of a sermon one day to ask his father afterward, "What's a 'pair of ducks'?"

"I'm not sure," the father replied. "All I know is that the preacher talks about them whenever she's flying higher than the rest of us."

Paradox. In his book *God Was in Christ*, Scottish theologian D.M. Baillie called the incarnation "the supreme paradox." He wrote, "The mystery of the incarnation is the climax of all Christian paradoxes. They all point to it, and indeed they

are all revealed by it."

Paradox. The dictionary defines paradox as "a statement that is seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense, and yet is perhaps true." According to this definition, to say that Jesus was fully God and fully human is a paradox. When you think about it, it just doesn't make much sense. Even so, we believe it is true.

"God gave his only Son," that favorite scripture verse from John's Gospel begins. But words are inadequate when describing the incarnation. Jesus Christ is not to God what my two sons are to me. Tyler and Mitchell look

Put together these two inexplicable mysteries of the incarnation—that this newborn baby was fully God, and that he also was fully human—and you have the supreme paradox of our Christian faith.

a bit like me; they carry a genetic code derived in part from my family tree, and much of their behavior is learned from my own. However, my sons are their own person, and as time goes on they will grow separate from me. They are not little replicas of Pete Haynes.

To say that Jesus is God's Son is different from saying that Tyler or Mitchell is Pete's son. The meaning is much deeper. The apostle Paul once wrote "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell..." (Col. 1:19). That's more than genet-

ics or learned behavior. Somehow, some way, all that God was, is, and will be is contained in Christ Jesus. He is God. When we look at that manger, we are seeing God in human form. It doesn't quite make sense, but it's true. It's a paradox.

John's gospel begins with a run-on sentence that also doesn't quite make sense, but it's one of the most profound statements about Christ found in the Bible. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). "With" implies "side by side." "Was" suggests "same as." The two don't seem to fit together, and yet, strangely, they do. God and this Word that became flesh and lived among us are both "side by side" and "the same." It doesn't quite make sense, but it's true. It's a paradox.

That is only part of the paradox of the incarnation, however. Jesus was is fully God. He was also fully a man—a human being. Hebrews speaks of how God in Jesus "became like (us) in every respect" (2:17), knowing the "weakness" of our existence, experiencing "in every respect" the same "testing" that we do daily, without giving in to it (4:15, 2:18). Paul wrote that Christ Jesus, "though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness" (Phil. 2:6–7). Jesus Christ was fully a human being. This also is a paradox. It doesn't seem to make much sense, and yet it's true.

Put together these two inexplicable mysteries of the incarnation—that this newborn baby was fully God, and that he also was fully human—and you have the supreme paradox of our Christian faith. This combined statement of faith is what sets us apart from every other religion on this earth. Every heresy within the church down

From the General Secretary

Reflections on a decade

through the ages has sought to emphasize one side of this paradox over the other. But they fit together—beyond common sense and ordinary reason.

Paradox. What's a "pair of ducks?" When we reach the end of our ability to understand, we look up and fly with the wings of faith over life's strange and new terrain. To grow in faith is to accept its paradoxes, and trust that what does not make sense in the realm of God, can be true.

Consider the paradox of grace. This doctrine suggests that all the good within us, everything we manage to do right, flows from God, not from our own innate goodness or rightness. This grace is amazing, we sing, in how it happens through our relationship with God in Christ. We admit that once we were blind to the best of what God calls us to be, lost in our inability to live up to God's commandments. But God's grace finds us, or we discover him (whichever), and God gives us the ability to live rightly.

This grace is a paradox, for it asserts that we are most free as human personalities when we are most dependent on God, on how he lives and acts in us. Through God's grace, we are both *free* and *dependent*. Those two don't seem to fit together, and yet they do. Pardon the play on this word, but like the flight of this "pair of ducks," *freedom* and *reliance* on the wind of God, we become graceful when we travel on the wings of faith—faith in Jesus Christ, who was and is fully God, and fully human.

Paradox. When we pull apart the word paradox, we find the same root that is found in the word "doxology." In the New Testament, the Greek word "doxa" means "glory." A doxology is a word (logy) of praise reflecting God's glory. We cannot fully comprehend this glory, for it is a paradox. We can, however, respond to it with thankful hearts. *M.*

Pete Haynes is pastor of Long Green Valley Church of the Brethren, Glen Arm, Md

September 1, 1986, was the day I began serving as general secretary of the Church of the Brethren General Board. December 31, 1996, is the day I have announced as my retirement. Therefore, this is the last column I will write for you in this capacity. During this decade we have focused upon identity, held steady in the midst of serious spiritual and moral questions, faced into financial difficulties, and helped position the programs of the church for needed redesign.

As I reflect upon the current needs of our church, most basic is a childlike *faith* in Jesus Christ as our Savior and guide, our foundation and example. Without a deep and simple faith in God's abundant love for us in the midst of honest realism about our life's circumstances, the church becomes just another social club. Our beloved fellowship needs a sense of *unity*, not only with one another, but with all like-minded Christians. The unity of which I speak is a balance of commitment and willingness to reach out to others who may be different. The church needs a sense of *obedience* to the will of God and to the practices originating in the New Testament as the ordinances of Christ. Such obedience is not a slavish conformity, but is a glorious sense of freedom in God's purposes, even when the way is difficult. The church needs some degree of tension, or *separation* from those cultural norms that tend to suffocate our faith daily—norms such as secularism, self-indulgence, violence, and media addiction.

We have been speaking of basics of the faith. Such basics include adult confession of faith in Christ, the New Testament as our guide, commitment of Christ's way of life, participation in the church as a community of the faithful, and willingness to serve the nearby and global neighbors who are in need.

Yet some issues present themselves as front-burner issues in our lives just now. Let me mention a few. One such issue is the need to learn to confess our belief without being credal. The fear of credalism sometimes silences us in unhealthy ways. Historically, the creeds were tied to military enforcement of religious belief. To renounce such enforcement does not mean we must also renounce the confession of our faith.

Another front-burner issue is the calling out of leadership in the church, something we have been neglecting in recent years. Still another immediate concern is the encouragement of our children, youth, and young adults, which is happening in a remarkable way, but must be continually addressed. Our peace witness can be genuine only when it touches the violence of our time. We live in a time of institutions brought to life by the church in past centuries, but we need to develop ways for these institutions to cooperate more effectively as partners. The very foundation of the church is worship, so we must be willing to try new styles of worship that are vital for a new generation. A front-burner issue is that of challenging the world with our willingness to serve the neighbor for the sake of Christ. Finally, we need a willingness to continue our ecumenical leadership.

Thank you for your support during the past decade. My prayer is for creative leadership and churchwide dedication to address the issues of our time peacefully, simply, together. I move out of this position knowing that the way ahead will be challenging, but remaining confident that God is moving in our midst shaping us to be witnesses to a Christlike way of life. —DONALD E. MILLER

Donald E. Miller is general secretary of the Church of the Brethren.

stepping

by Robin Wentworth Mayer

War is *such* a good idea

Think about it. The quest to protect the innocent, punish the wicked, and defeat evil is so terribly noble and righteous.

War is a good idea.

I watched the action film “True Lies.” (Living with all males, I usually get out-voted on which videos to rent.) But in this film, a woman discovers that her mild-mannered husband is secretly a special agent in government affairs. During a moment of horrifying revelation, she asks her husband, “Do you mean you’ve actually *killed* people?”

“Well, yes,” he says meekly, then hurries to add this disclaimer. “But they were all bad guys!”

You’ve got to admit, “bad guys” getting their just deserts is a *good* idea. Now all that’s left for us to do is figure out who the “bad guys” are.

Let’s see.

The Republicans think the Democrats are the bad guys. The pro-lifers think the pro-abortionists are the bad guys. The Ku Klux Klan thinks that African Americans are the bad guys. Some heterosexual people think that homosexual people are the bad guys ... and vice versa. As nearly as I can figure out, Rush Limbaugh

thinks almost everyone is a bad guy.

The Palestinians think the Israelis are the bad guys ... and vice versa. Capitalists would say communists are bad guys.

The Jews in the first century believed the Christians were the bad guys. The Catholics considered the Reformers to be the bad guys. The Reformers in turn defined the Anabaptists as the bad guys. The Nazis believed the Jews were the bad guys.

This is ridiculous! How are we supposed to have a war when we can’t figure out who the bad guys are?

I watched a *Star Trek: The Next Generation* rerun not long ago that delivered a powerful message: Captain Jean Luc Piccard was held prisoner by a Cardacien who was torturing him just for the perverted pleasure and sense of superiority it gave him. During one interlude, the Cardacien’s little daughter came in and asked her father: “Daddy, do humans have families like us?”

He said to her: “Well, sweetheart, they do. But humans don’t love their children nearly as much as we do.”

It looks like all it takes to be a bad guy is for someone else to decide you’re a bad guy.

Maybe war *isn’t* such a good idea.

In answer to a question, Albert Einstein replied, “I do

not know how World War II will be fought. But I *do* know how World War IV will be fought—with sticks and stones.” And Martin Luther King Jr. said, “We must all learn to live together as brothers (and sisters) or perish together as fools.”

So if war can’t get rid of the bad guys and give us a solution to evil, what can?

“I bring you the most joyful news ever announced and it is for everyone! The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born tonight in Bethlelem ...! Glory to God in the highest heaven ... and peace on earth for all those pleasing Him” (Luke 2:10-14, LB).

War sounds like a good idea, until we realize that at some point or other, *everybody* is *somebody’s* “bad guy.” Jesus Christ is the good news for bad guys everywhere: He “gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father” ... (Gal. 1:4 NASB).

Grace to you this Christmas, and peace. **M**

Robin Wentworth Mayer is pastor of Kokomo (Ind.) Church of the Brethren.

Stepping Stones is a column offering suggestions, perspectives, and opinions—snapshots of life—that we hope are helpful to readers in their Christian journey. As the writer said in her first installment, “Remember, when it comes to managing life’s difficulties, we don’t need to walk on water. We just need to learn where the stepping stones are.”

Letters

"Global overpopulation is a major cause of poverty. This causes political and social unrest.... The Promised Land is already overpopulated."



No room in Promised Land

Contrary to the implication of Anthony Walton (October and November two-part article on church burnings), proposals to limit immigration are not racist conspiracies.

The already overpopulated United States is growing by over 2.5 million a year. At least a third of this growth is from immigration. Both immigration and internal population increase should be curtailed.

Global overpopulation is a major cause of poverty. This causes political and social unrest, which leads to exodus from impoverished and strife-ridden areas. The Promised Land is already overpopulated.

Donald B. Miller
Corvallis, Ore.

Backing a boycott?

I was appalled by the October (page 9) news item on the Disney boycott. The lead in bold type and the graphic give the strong impression that MESSENGER supports the boycott and encourages church members to join it.

Rather than boycotting Disney for

its support of gays and lesbians, we should congratulate the company for its inclusive policy. It is ironic that in this issue MESSENGER carried stories about the atrocities of racism, church burnings, and child labor while encouraging bigotry against gays and lesbians.

Vicky Aeschbacher
Austin, Texas

(On the opening news page each month, we remind readers that news items should not be considered to be endorsements or promotion. By the criterion used in this letter, the next news item after the one on the Disney boycott would have to be judged as MESSENGER's endorsement and promotion of lotteries. So, again we urge readers to see news items as information only.—Ed.)

Contradiction in terms

Having joined the Church of the Brethren a year ago, after searching for a church that holds to beliefs in such things as the divinity of Christ, the virgin birth, the Trinity, and salvation through Christ, I was surprised by the August/September news article "Rejection and Redemption Theme of June Conference."

It's a contradiction in terms to speak of "gay, lesbian, and bisexual Christians." It's like saying "Christian rapist." You are either Christian or you aren't.

It is popular to preach that God is love and that Jesus loves you, but I do not find in my Bible—the King James Version—that anyone can continue in sin and be welcomed at God's table.

I am not being self-righteous. I



Provost/
Dean of the Faculty

ELIZABETHTOWN COLLEGE

The Search Committee invites nominations of and expressions of interest for the position of Provost Dean of the Faculty.

The vision of the founders of Elizabethtown College, members of the Church of the Brethren, was to prepare students for the world of work and to anchor them in the world of the spirit. The College fulfills that mission by offering students a dynamic learning environment which fosters sound intellectual judgment, deepens moral sensitivity, and engenders a sense of stewardship in the appreciation of the world's beauty and resources. The College encourages its graduates to become the living embodiment of the College motto: Educate for Service.

Elizabethtown, founded in 1899, is an undergraduate, residential, coeducational college with an enrollment of about 1,550 students from 19 states and 19 foreign countries. The College's 106 full-time and 45 part-time faculty offer 38 majors in liberal arts and professional disciplines. Elizabethtown's attractive campus and fine facilities have been enhanced recently by the construction of four new buildings, including a library, and the extensive renovation of other structures. With an operating budget of approximately \$50 million, the current endowment of approximately \$23 million is projected to be doubled by an approaching capital campaign. Located in historic Lancaster County, Pa., Elizabethtown enjoys outstanding quality of life and easy access to Philadelphia, Washington, and Baltimore.

The Provost Dean of the Faculty is the chief academic officer of the College and acts on behalf of the President in his absence. The Provost Dean of the Faculty is responsible to the President for planning, implementing, and managing the College's academic and student policies. The Provost Dean of the Faculty supervises the academic program and academic support services, maintains academic and professional standards, and evaluates the quality of both the faculty and student academic performance.

The successful candidate should possess a doctorate in a field represented in the College or clearly related to one such field and should demonstrate a record of teaching and scholarship to qualify for a senior faculty rank. She should demonstrate a commitment to the mission of the College, foster a vision of academic distinction and innovation in both the liberal arts and professional studies, and possess the administrative experience to work collegially with faculty, students, and staff to plan and budget effectively, to advance instructional technology, curricular, and faculty development, and to be an effective campus-wide leader.

Review of background materials will commence on Oct. 21. Please submit nominations and expressions of interest, in confidence, to Provost Dean of the Faculty Search Committee, Elizabethtown College, c/o Educational Management Network, 98 Old South Rd., Nantucket, MA 02554-0000. Questions may be directed via e-mail to etownca@emnmn.com.

Elizabethtown College is an equal opportunity employer.

The opinions expressed in Letters are not necessarily those of the magazine. Readers should receive them in the same spirit with which differing opinions are expressed in face-to-face conversations.

Letters should be brief, concise, and respectful of the opinions of others. Preference is given to letters that respond directly to items read in the magazine.

We are willing to withhold the name of a writer only when, in our editorial judgment, it is warranted. We will not consider any letter that comes to us unsigned. Whether or not we print the letter, the writer's name is kept in strictest confidence.

Address letters to MESSENGER editor, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

Letters

was once an alcoholic, but God healed me, and I claimed that healing in the name of Christ Jesus. Never for one minute would I have called myself a Christian while continuing in my alcoholism. I knew better.

God is love, but he is also a God of wrath. We are to conform to Christ's

image, rather than trying to form him into ours or expecting him to condone our sins. It's all in the Bible. We have only to study it, live it, and stand firm in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Merry Clark
Atwater, Ohio

A luncheon with a purpose

I attended with appreciation the Brethren Mennonite Council luncheon at Conference (August-September, page 15). BMC, as I see it, is not advocating a particular lifestyle. Rather, it exists for all who name and claim Jesus as Lord, to advocate acceptance of diversity and a spirit of inclusiveness.

BMC members are there because they acknowledge and accept Jesus as Lord and want to affirm and practice their faith in the church of their choice. The luncheon provided an additional forum for listening and visiting in an unpressured setting.

Many people who are not in accord with BMC attended the luncheon. They did not share the enthusiasm the BMCers exhibited. They courageously remained seated when others jumped to their feet. I applaud these people; they came and they listened.

If our church wants to keep our gay and lesbian Brethren separate, then prohibit the luncheon hereafter. But BMC will continue to grow in numbers and in faith. We will still eat together and invite others to fellowship with us, but we are not going away.

Irving Glover
Daleville, Va.

Clap if you love Jesus

Ron Faus' criticism of the music at Cincinnati (October, page 25) doesn't make sense in a church attempting to maintain vitality.

I am not aware that songs with "simple and repetitious" features are an affront to a God who asks that our faith to be like that of a child's, and who demands repetitious adulation and obedience. Singing "Shine, Jesus, Shine" isn't going to make us Assemblies of God, any more than singing "Blessed Assurance" makes us Methodist. Our hymnals are filled with hymns written by Methodists and Lutherans, but we haven't begun baptizing babies.

Do you feel like the servant who buried his coin?



Many congregations are deciding that good stewardship requires new investment strategies. The professional managers of the Brethren Foundation direct more than \$34 million in investments for Brethren churches, and church agencies nationwide. If you have been searching

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*"Let the joy
of our faith
shine through."*

Matthew M. Meyer
Dianne H. Rist
© 1972

The students, faculty, and staff of McPherson College wish you and yours a blessed holiday season.

McPherson College



Brethren in my generation are no longer offended by music that invites clapping, toe-tapping, and even Gasp!) an occasional wave of the arm. Visit the Brethren in Latin America, or even in our US cities, and tell me the musical expression here is inappropriate. And Jesus neither commanded nor suggested that we sing in four-part harmony.

Is it possible that as we are asking the Holy Spirit to "move in our midst," we might find that Spirit choosing to move with upbeat rhythm, even with simplistic, Christ-ocussed lyrics?

*David Sollenberger
Annville, Pa*

Even classics lovers love it

I am a 1944 Bridgewater College *summa cum laude* graduate in music, in both the United Methodist Church and Church of the Brethren I have directed choirs that sang Handel, Beethoven, Brahms, Cesar Franck, and Randall Thompson. It should be obvious that I am a lover of the classics. So am I to be labeled "dumb" because I thoroughly enjoyed Andrew Wright's music at Conference?

Each Sunday our choir director at Champaign Church of the Brethren prepares our congregation for worship by leading us in "praise songs." When we have sung "We Are Standing on Holy Ground," then we are really ready to sing "Holy, Holy, Holy."

Lighten up and sing for the pure joy of it. Don't constantly dig for deep theological meaning.

*Mary Ziegler Houff
Champaign, Ill.*

Enthralled by the music

I was totally enthralled by the wonderful gifts of music of the orchestra and choir at the Cincinnati Conference. I was spellbound by the whole Conference experience, but especially by the music.

My daughter and I were so moved that we daily made two-hour round-

trips to be there. And we already have our plane tickets for Long Beach.

My praise goes to those in charge of music selection at Cincinnati. The new styles are a refreshing addition to the "old-favorites," many of which are over 100 years old.

*Vicki Ferguson
Dayton, Ohio*

Going down the tubes?

I was uplifted, heartened, and encouraged by the General Board live report at Conference. But the next day I was concerned by the way the written report was presented. Its message to me was that our beloved denomination is going down the tubes.

I am not debating the facts and figures. What really concerns me is the danger of our becoming unable to operate in such a way that Brethren continue to "feel good about the worldwide ministries undertaken in their name and underwritten by their financial gifts" (August, September editorial). Personally, I need to see a strong continuation of our peace witness; that work is at the very heart of my being enthusiastically Brethren.

May our prayers for discernment lead to choices that continue programs that truly define our denomination.

It is important to maintain positive thinking. So I suggest that we use the term "streamlined denomination" rather than "diminished denomination" to define the Brethren of the future. "Streamlined" should engender and foster a new resolve of generosity that enables us to continue the work of Jesus peacefully, simply, together...and energetically.

*Linda K. Williams
San Diego, Calif.*

Patriotism blocking the path

Brother John Newcomer's August/September letter speaks fervently of his love for America and his concern that we Dunkers are neglecting the promotion of patriotism. He believes

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Letters

that our being a peace church "should not preclude our being patriotic."

Patriotism presents an obstacle as formidable as wealth in our path in the kingdom of heaven. Caesar and mammon are kindred spirits craving an allegiance due only to the Lord of heaven and earth.

The priority of the church is to tell the story of God's love and to begin living that love ourselves. Respect and subjection to civil authority are but a small part of that discussion. Patriotism, which commonly manifests itself as idolatrously prideful nationalism, deserves no quarter in the household of God.

In 1849, Dunker elder John Kluge wrote this definition of patriotism: "My highest conception of patriotism is found in the man who loves the Lord his God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself. Out of these affections spring subordinating love for one's country; love truly virtuous for one's companion and children, relatives, and friends; and in its most comprehensive sense takes in the whole human family. Were this love universal, the word *patriotism*, in its specific senses, meaning such love for one's country as makes its possessors ready and willing to take up arms in defense, might be appropriately expunged from every national vocabulary."

Tom Wagner
Muskegon, MI

The importance of camping

The August, September Messenger carried the faces of many youth I met this past summer as I worked as a traveling camp counselor and promoter of Brethren colleges.

One thing is clear. Camping can be an important part of one's spiritual journey, not only for the campers, but for everyone involved in the community.

There are many ways to get involved: Provide rides to camp; sponsor scholarships to cover campers'

istration fees; volunteer to coun-
or cook for a week.
The Church of the Brethren has a
nderful camping ministry. With
oad-based support, our camps can
ntinue to influence people and
vide that week of camp that chil-
n, youth, and adults look forward
all year.

*Jenny Stover
McPherson, Kan.*

What about a merger?

At the time here when the Church
of the Brethren might consider the
possibility of merging with some
other denomination? We could do
that with the "Ashland Brethren," but
that doesn't mean we necessarily
must give up the idea of uniting with

some other or others.

There is reason to believe we
would not have the present deficit if
we had been operating with a
denomination that had members
accustomed to the bigger problems.

Considering the many struggling
little congregations we have, we may
be nearer than we think to affiliation
with another denomination.

*Chauncey Shamberger
Boise, Idaho*

that Chacour had established for chil-
dren injured in the war. Harold
described Chacour as a person who
"exudes the spirit of Jesus."

Recently he sent me a report about
a blood-donating event set up by Cha-
cour, providing blood for Jews injured
in a terrorist attack in Tel Aviv. It was
a dramatic gesture toward peace and
reconciliation from this man who
"exudes the spirit of Jesus."

*Ruth Griggs
Bourbon, Ind.*

A Chacour peace gesture

When Harold and Betty Jo (Miller)
Warstler participated in a workcamp
in Palestine several years ago, they
met Elias Chacour (see "Another Man
From Galilee," June, page 23). The
workcampers rehabilitated a center



Daily prayer guide:

Sunday: Your congregation's ministries

Monday: Annual Conference officers

Tuesday: General Board and staff

Wednesday: District executives,
Bethany Seminary, colleges
and university

Thursday: General Services

Friday: Parish Ministries

Saturday: World Ministries

December prayer concerns:

Congregation: Advent celebration;
Christmas Eve services; New Year's
Eve services.

Annual Conference: The modera-
tor's Consultation with Brethren
Agencies, December 4.

General Board: Interim General
Secretary; Transition Team;
Redesign Steering Committee.

Districts and Colleges: Students
studying abroad; Students traveling
home for the Christmas holidays.

General Services: Christmas
Achievement Offering, December
15; Planned Giving staff.

Parish Ministries: ABC; New
churches reaching out at Christmas.

World Ministries: Washington
Office, Johnny Harvey and staff;
SERRV, Bob Chase and staff.

Classified Ads

CELEBRATION

Celebrate CAS. Over 80 years of compassionate ser-
vice is being celebrated by S. Pa. District's Children's
Society (CAS) with a delightful commemorative
merch featuring CAS symbols—Casey and Cassian.
As a bed cover, chair accent, wall hanging, or
rug blanket, it makes an appealing gift or cher-
ished keepsake. 100% cotton Jacquard woven,
shrinked, colorfast, machine washable. 50" x 70"
in blue, green, mauve. Cost: \$48 (plus \$5 S & H).
Information order, tel. (717) 264-8552.

FOR SALE

Peaceful Resistance: a strategy game inspired by
Gandhi's nonviolent means of protest. Peaceful Resis-
tance is for 2 or 3 players & great for families. Contains
wood hexagonal blocks, 3 pawns & game board.
Recognized in *Games magazine's* buyers guide issue
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144, Indianapolis, IN 46219. For additional info,
(317) 899-8328. E-mail: gnladd@indy.net or
http://www.indy.net/~gnladd/peace.html

INVITATION

Shalom Church of the Brethren, a new & growing
church in Durham, N.C., invites Brethren moving
to the Research Triangle area (Raleigh, Durham, Chapel
Hill) to worship with us. Eager to provide moving assis-
tance (unloading, child care, area info.) for those
relocating to area. For info, contact: Fellowship, P.O.
Box 15607, Durham, NC 27714. Tel. (919) 490-6422.
E-mail: ShalomCOB@aol.com

TRAVEL

China adventure featuring Yangtze River cruise Aug.
19, 1997 (\$3,189). Visit Narita, Japan; Shanghai,
Nanjing, Shashi, Badong, Wanxian, Chongqing, Xian

in China. Travel on cruise ship on the Yangtze River
stopping at various cities & ports. In Beijing, walk the
largest wonder of the world—the Great Wall of China.
Also, visit Tian Anmen Square & much more. Wendell
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Meadow Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46217. Tel. or Fax:
(317) 882-5067.

Alaska Tour. Brethren group joins Mennonite Year
Way tour leaders for Alaska Tour Aug. 5–16, 1997.
For info, call (800) 296-1991, or David & Sara Wilson at
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European Heritage Tour. July 12–25, 1997. Visit
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cance in Switzerland, France, Germany & Netherlands.
Sponsored by Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., \$2,490 from
New York (JFK). For complete brochure contact: Don
Durnbaugh, P.O. Box 484, James Creek, PA 16657. Tel./Fax:
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Panama Canal Cruise—15 days, Apr. 20–May 5,
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Liner stopping at 3 ports en route to Panama Canal.
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prior to sailing to San Diego & flying home. For details,
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Jhayman, Weldon E.	4-31	Molnar, Aleck	1-31	Rhoda, Dora	8/9-44	Smith, William E.	1-31	Wheelock, Floyd	8/9-44
Jheach, Madge	8/9-44	Monesmith, Laura	11-27	Rice, Maude	4-31	Snavelly, Howard J.	1-31	Whetzel, Lucy S.	2-31
Jheake, Charles E.	12-26	Mongold, Dayton M.	6-31	Richardson, Lloyd J.	8/9-44	Snyder, Beulah	8/9-44	Whisler, Evie S.	6-31
Jhebron, G. Noel	12-26	Monniger, Edna	8/9-44	Ridenour, Mary	8/9-44	Snyder, Jonathan D.	12-26	Whisler, Richard L.	6-31
Jhehman, Charles	8/9-44	Montel, Wanda	8/9-44	Ritchie, Alvin H.	12-26	Snyder, Maurice	4-31	Whitehead, Bessie	8/9-44
Jhehman, Charles P.	8/9-44	Moomaw, Rose A.	6-31	Ritchie, Delmar M.	6-31	Sooby, Robert	3-35	Widner, Wilma	1-31
Jhehman, Elsie	11-27	Moore, Ethridge	3-35	Rittle, John	11-27	Souder, Margaret H.	6-31	Wiley Lillie	8/9-44
Jhehman, Florence	8/9-44	Moore, Nellie	3-35	Rivera, Juan Jesus	6-31	Spaid, Robert	8/9-44	Wilhide, David B.	1-31
Jhehman, Lois	8/9-44	Moorehouse, Vivian	3-35	Rivera, Maria E.	6-31	Spencer, Maari	6-31	Wilhide, Patricia	8/9-44
Jhehman, Mary F.	3-35	Morgan, Audrey J.	6-31	Roberson, Edna	5-35	Sperline, Lowell	11-27	Will, Edwin	11-27
Jhehman, Raymond	8/9-44	Morris, Russell T.	2-31	Roberts, Dale	11-27	Spicher, Elaine	6-31	Williams, Alston R.	12-26
Jheight, Mary E.	4-31	Moyer, Loy F.	12-26	Rockenbaugh, Ray	5-35	Sprekel, Charley	11-27	Williams, Lily	6-31
Jheitner, Cora	8/9-44	Moyers, Layman W.	12-26	Rohrer, Pearl	5-35	Springstube, Lucy	1-31	Williams, Vernon	3-35
Jheonard, Willard B.	3-35	Mulligan, Ruth	1-31	Roller, Carolyn E.	1-31	Stahl, Elizabeth	6-31	Willis, Gonda	8/9-44
Jhewellan, Duane	5-35	Mumma, Esta M.	12-26	Roller, John M.	8/9-44	Stahly, Lloyd	11-27	Winchester, Jesse E.	3-35
Jhewis, Hazel	11-27	Mummert, Paul	1-31	Rook, Carrie	5-35	Stanton, John	8/9-44	Winebrenner, Thelma W.	8/9-44
Jhigggett, Earl	8/9-44	Mummert, Salome Diehl	8/9-44	Ross, Mabelle	8/9-44	Staub, Emily	6-31	Winger, Mary	6-31
Jhiller, Helen	5-35	Munson, Violet	8/9-44	Rowl, Goldie	8/9-44	Stauffer, Grace P.	12-26	Winters, Rosalee V.	12-26
Jhindamood, Marshall B.	12-26	Musey, Blanche	8/9-44	Rowland, Albanus	8/9-44	Steffey, Melvin G.	6-31	Wrick, Richard H.	4-31
Jhindower, Jason Sr.	5-35	Myer, Emma M.	2-31	Rowland, Mary	8/9-44	Stein, Naomi	6-31	Wise, Levi	8/9-44
Jhipscomb, Ralph L.	2-31	Myer, Lloyd	5-35	Royer, Lillian	5-35	Stern, Mabel	6-31	Wise, Margaret	6-31
Jhong, Garland L.	12-26	Myers, Alma	8/9-44	Rudisill, Ellen	3-35	Stiffler, Zoia	8/9-44	Wisler, Claude	8/9-44
Jhongeneker, Dorothy H.	2-31	Myers, Calvin	5-35	Rudy, Charles B., Sr.	12-26	Stiles, Mildred	8/9-44	Witkovsky, Ethel	6-31
Jhongeneker, Lizzie	2-31, 8/9-44	Myers, Oaisy	1-31	Rudy, Elmer	11-27	Stock, Robert	6-31	Wolf, Carrie	8/9-44
Jhoughry, Margery A.	1-31	Myers, Jack	8/9-44	Rule, Wayne	5-35	Stoner, Hilda	3-35	Wolf, Edna	1-31
Jhove, Lovella	8/9-44	Myers, Jennie	8/9-44	Runion, Herman	5-35	Stony, Beulah	8/9-44	Wolf, Anna	8/9-44
Jhove, Maurice	3-35	Myers, Margaret	11-27	Runion Wade E., Jr.	12-26	Stover, Donald Thomas	8/9-44	Wood, Bernice D.	2-31
Jhowell, Sperline	3-35	Myers, Olive R.	4-31	Rupp, Mary	5-35	Stover, Howard	1-31	Wood, O. Wallace	11-27
Jhoy, Robert	8/9-44	Myers, Sarah J.	8/9-44	Rush, Carl E.	12-26	Strawderman, Orpha T.	6-31	Woodcox, Demerice	6-31
Jhucabaugh, Alverta	1-31, 3-35	Nakata, Ralph	11-27	Rust, James	8/9-44	Stremmel, Gertie	8/9-44	Woods, Louise E.	3-35
Jhundgren, Michael	8/9-44	Nedrow, William F.	8/9-44	Sandbridge, Mary	5-35	Strickler, Anna Mae	6-31	Worley, John	6-31
Jhutz, Blanche	8/9-44	Neidermyer, David L.	1-31	Sauder, Margaret	5-35	Strine, Lelia M.	1-31	Wright, Mary	6-31
Jhagee, Nicole L.	3-35	Ness, Charles E.	3-35	Saul, Galen	5-35	Stroop, Bobby L.	6-31	Wysong, Lois	11-27
Jhahoney, Dorothy	5-35	Nichols, Mazie	8/9-44	Saylor, Rhoda Mae	11-27	Stroop, Carrol E.	12-26	Yankey, Clarence F.	12-26
Jhaldonado, Juan	8/9-44	Nies, Raleigh S.	12-26	Schaller, Isabelle	5-35	Stuart, Kenneth	1-31	Yates, Marguerite F.	2-31
Jhallock, Lois	8/9-44	Nolen, Posey L.	8/9-44	Scheets, Maxine	8/9-44	Stump, Eva W.	12-26	Yoder, Aonal	12-26
Jhann, Russell	8/9-44	North, Donald E.	2-31	Schultz, Bernice	6-31	Sturtz, Wayne	11-27	Young, Donald	8/9-44
Jharinello, Esther	3-35	North, Doris J.	12-26	Schultz, Delthy	5-35	Stutsman, Doris	6-31	Young, David G.	2-31
Jhartin, Katie	11-27	Nott, William, Sr.	5-35	Schumacher, DeLane C.	4-31	Suhre, Arthur	4-31	Young, Robert	11-27
Jhartin, Mary	8/9-44	Null, Myrtle	1-31	See, Harold L.	6-31	Sunday, Donna L.	1-31	Zechman, Carrie	8/9-44
Jhartin, Matthew	5-35	Nusbaum, Manford	8/9-44	Seese, Herald V.	8/9-44	Sutton, Sewell	6-31	Zell, William	6-31
Jhartin, Pearl	5-35	Nyce, William	5-35	Segrest, Kay	11-27	Sweitzer, Marie G.	8/9-44	Zigler, Rachel Myers	3-35
Jhartz, Lewis A.M.	2-31	Ober, Mildred	5-35	Serdel, Belvin	11-27	Switzer, J. Woodrow	2-31	Zimmerman, Lois H.	8/9-44
Jhasemer, Pauline	8/9-44	Odum, James G.	12-26	Serfman, Wayne	4-31	Switzer, Ola	8/9-44	Zimmerman, Warren	8/9-44
Jhason, Peggy	5-35	Oellig, Byron	8/9-44	Senft, Blanche Breneman	11-27	Switzer, Walter R.	12-26	Zumbrun, Milford	11-27
Jhason, Velda	8/9-44	Ogden, Dwight	3-35	Senseng, Adin	5-35				
Jhathias, Ollie W. S.	12-26	Ogg, Ruth	11-27						
Jhatlie, Ulysses	3-35	Ogle, Herbert	8/9-44						
Jhauger, Helen	8/9-44								
Jhupin, Virginia V.	6-31								

The Lord God made them all

I become starry-eyed at Christmastime. No, it's not a child's speculation about what Santa Claus is bringing. It's more literal than that. I get a little starry-eyed at Christmas from actually looking up at the heavens above me.

From my "this to my first-time exposure, as a five-year-old, to the Christmas story. My family had become churchgoers and I was getting it, and this was my first Christmas for hearing the Christmas story and seeing images of it. I was particularly impressed by the Christmas story dealing with the star that guided the wise men and the boy of the Lord that shone over the shepherds. Vaguely I remember trudging home from church in the dark woods after a long Christmas program. Looking up at the canopy of stars that night, I got some sight that people have never seen. Wondrous things were happening.

My "wondrous things" became a part of my life. Since that experience, I encountered a Bible passage that I love, re-read and stuck with me. I learned it in the King James version, and still prefer these verses in that form. "When I consider thy heavens, the fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast made, O Lord, that thou art mindful . . .?" "How many human beings, indeed?" "I have seen other, some scientists tentatively claimed, primitive, bacteria-like life on Mars. It is a fact, and if it is further demonstrated that life on Mars arose independently of life on Earth, that is-- then we have a new theological issues to deal with. It is as disturbing, as upsetting as Copernicus' demonstration of Galileo's notions that make other scientists have to move. That is, the earth wasn't the center of the universe after a making Joshua's halt-stand, a remarkable feat that it already was. I have seen other, some scientists tentatively claimed, primitive, bacteria-like life on Mars. It is a fact, and if it is further demonstrated that there are other advanced forms of life out there in space increases considerably. So the earthlings are not alone? Could we have been the revelation of God having children elsewhere? It hadn't been told? Genesis teaches that we are created in God's image and we have dominion over other life forms.

Just as Copernicus shook us out of our belief, seemingly "removing" God's Word, that the earth was the center of the universe and subsequent developments in astronomy have shown us just how insignificant we are-- the size and age of the universe make us as nothing-- can we rethink our theology

to explain God secretly parenting a family somewhere else?

If Genesis teaches that God made us as something special, the rest of the Bible goes on to show that our significance lies in being able to get closer to God, to have a personal relationship with God. Nancey Murphy, a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif., says, "If such relationships are indeed important to God, it should not be at all surprising that God's design of the universe should allow for

as many relationships as possible. So it is certainly theologically conceivable that God's creative intentions should include the evolution of other life forms wherever possible, with comparable intellectual and emotional capacities."

Well, that's certainly food for thought. But start to digest it, and it becomes obvious that we have to go on to another question: Was Jesus unique? What kind of children of God would we be to accept salvation through Jesus Christ and then deny the possibility that the poor joes out

What kind of children of God would we be to accept salvation through Jesus Christ and then deny the possibility that the poor joes out there on those other planets are eligible for salvation?

there on those other planets are eligible for salvation?

Push this any further and you begin to understand why the Inquisition forced Galileo to recant his belief in Copernicus' theory, sentenced him to prison, and felt vindicated when God struck the blasphemous old astronomer blind.

Fortunately for believers like me, who haven't got the theological training to adequately address the questions I have mentioned and the ones that would spin out in further pondering, even the scientists have not agreed yet that primitive life has existed on Mars or anywhere else beyond Earth. So we likely have some time yet before such questions become top priority.

Meanwhile, I shall continue to consider the heavens, the work of God's fingers, and ask with the ancient psalmist the fundamental question, still so pertinent: What are we, that thou art mindful?

And, as for the scientific discoveries, how about pre-empting them by adding another verse to the old hymn:

The primitive bacteria
That prowled around on Mars,
And all the life besides them,
On worlds beyond the stars,

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.

It's not included in the nativity section of hymnals, but it may be on my lips this Christmas as I look heavenward, the starry-eyed child again. — K.T.

Planting Seeds...

1997 National Youth Workcamps Church of the Brethren



We don't always know what's going to happen when we plant a seed. Sometimes we may see the results of our efforts almost right away; other times we may not see the fruits, instead trusting that God will transform the seed into its full potential. Either way, to make a seed grow, we must nurture it with light and water.

During the 1997 workcamps, we will be planting seeds, sharing our lives with other people while we grow in faith. By trusting in God's growing power, we are opening ourselves to the warm light of human relationships and the refreshing waters of service. As Psalm 1:3 states, "They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit into its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper." Come, grow in faith as we both plant seeds and encourage growth in the people around us.



1997 Summer Workcamp Schedule

- May 29-June 8 Quito, Ecuador (Young Adult)
- June 16-22 St. Croix, US Virgin Islands (Sr. High)
- June 16-22 San Juan, Puerto Rico (Sr. High)
- June 22-29 Germantown, Pennsylvania (BRF Sr. High)
- June 23-27 New Windsor, Maryland (Jr. High)
- June 25-29 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (Jr. High)
- July 7-13 Camp LaVerne, California (Sr. High)
- July 7-13 Black Church Rebuilding (Sr. High)
- July 14-20 Chicago, Illinois (Sr. High)
- July 14-20 Camp Colorado, Sedalia (Sr. High)
- July 16-20 Dayton, Ohio (Jr. High)
- July 21-27 Americus, Georgia (Sr. High)
- July 21-27 Rosebud, South Dakota (Sr. High)
- July 21-27 Conflict Mediation: Ephrata, Penn. (Sr. High)
- July 28-Aug. 3 Lend-A-Hand, Kentucky (Sr. High)
- July 30-Aug. 3 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Jr. High)
- July 30-Aug. 3 Indianapolis, Indiana (Jr. High)
- August 4-10 Orlando, Florida (Sr. High)
- August 6-10 Richmond, Virginia (Jr. High)
- August 10-16 Heifer Project International (Sr. High)
- August 11-17 Washington, DC (Sr. High)

To get information on how you can participate in these exciting opportunities please call or write Church of the Brethren General Board, c/o Liz Bidgood and Greg Enders, 1997 Workcamp Coordinators, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120, (800) 323-8039.

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