

# ***Brethren Historical Library & Archives***

## ***News and Notes***

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### **Don Murray, Brethren Service and the Origins of the Peace Corps**

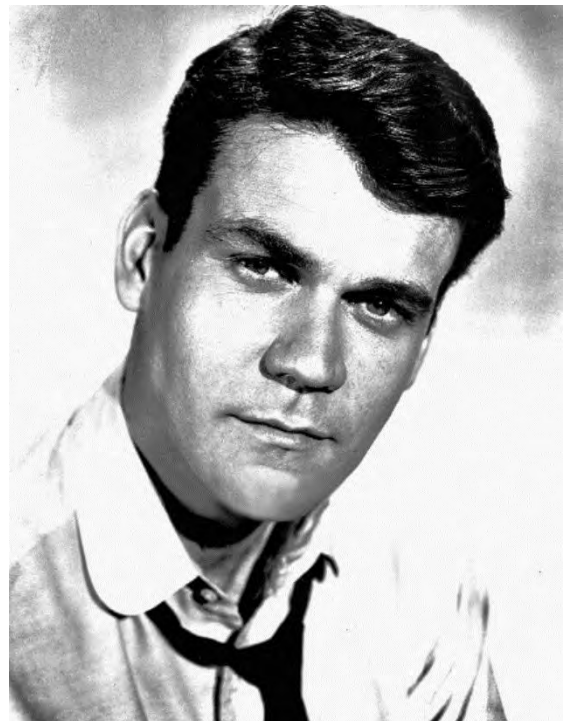
(Excerpts of an Oral History Interview with Don Murray, November 14, 2016)

The Peace Corps actually was inspired by Brethren Service. And Brethren Service became its template. It was fashioned after Brethren Service. And the Peace Corps was not President Kennedy's concept. It was actually Senator Hubert Humphrey's inspiration. And he got the idea from a speech that I made -- impromptu speech I made at a rally -- a political rally for [Estes] Kefauver when he was running as vice president under [Adlai] Stevenson back in 1956. And it actually happened by accident, as Senator Humphrey once wrote me, "About your idea of the Peace Corps..." And I wrote back to him. I said, "I have no concept of the Peace Corps. All I was trying to do was to keep people from walking out of the convention because Kefauver's plane was late." But what happened was that, because I had done a movie with Marilyn Monroe, and it had just come out, and got a lot of publicity, the Democratic Party asked me to introduce Senator Kefauver at a political rally in Hibbing, Minnesota, a big mining and union town. And I went there with the idea of just saying, "Ladies and gentlemen, the next vice president of the United States, Estes Kefauver." And that's all I was prepared to do. But as I'm on the podium there, before these thousands of people. It was a huge convention hall -- and Senator Humphrey was making a wonderful speech. The master of ceremonies came to me and whispered, "Senator Kefauver's plane is late. We need you to make a speech to stall for time." I said, "A speech? What about?" He said, "Talk about Hollywood. That's what they want to hear." So I said, "How long?" He said, "I'll let you know." So they introduced me, but they still hadn't told me how long. So I whispered very loudly to the fellow, "How long?" And he says, "Half an hour." Well, I had made one movie, and then moved right back to New York. I didn't even live in Hollywood. I

had no idea about what Hollywood was really like. So I couldn't talk about Hollywood for five minutes, much less half an hour. So I ignored that totally and told them about Brethren Service and what we did in Europe, and then my service, also, in Italy, with the Congregational Christian Service Committee. So that's what I talked about. And from hearing about what Brethren Service people did, and Congregational Christian Service Committee, Humphrey got the idea of having a government-sponsored entity like Brethren Service. And he started talking about that in Congress. And he tried to get them to pass the law. Well, for all the time that he was trying to do that, for several years starting in '56, he worked at this for five years. And he couldn't get it through Congress. Now, when President Kennedy started running for president he took Humphrey's idea without giving Humphrey credit for it. And he talked about how many of you would like to go out and spend two years? And he described exactly what Brethren Service was, even to the two-year period and so on, learning the language and so on, and living with the people at their standard of living and so on.

So, this all came out by accident. If I had done this movie -- a Western movie -- without Marilyn Monroe, nobody would have invited me because it was her name that was famous .... But I found very quickly that the name Marilyn Monroe opened doors everywhere. I mean, in Rome, we could get through in places where politicians couldn't get in, because people wanted to -- we'd go and start talking about refugees. They'd say, "Oh, yes, that's very interesting. Now what's it like to kiss Marilyn Monroe?" And this is what I found. So I was using Marilyn Monroe's name constantly, because that was opening doors for us. So anyway, this is how Brethren Service influenced on a big program like the Peace Corps. It would not have happened if I had not been in Brethren Service, and it would not have happened if I hadn't made the film with Marilyn Monroe. At least it would not have happened as it did, because it was such a good idea it might have started some other way. Who knows? But it -- the way it did start was that. That's because of the Brethren and also the association with Marilyn Monroe.

Don Murray is a distinguished actor who served in Brethren Service from 1953-1956 working with refugees in Italy. For more on Murray and the Brethren Service story see J. Kenneth Kreider, *A Cup of Cold Water: The Story of Brethren Service*, available from Brethren Press. The full interview can be heard at <https://soundcloud.com/user-645413236>



## Donald Durnbaugh's Ecumenical Vision

By Don Miller

The invitation to write this article comes at the 50th anniversary of the first Believer's Church Conference. In his invitation to me William Kostlevy commented, "I have often reflected on something you said to me years ago that Don's vision united an intensely Anabaptist, even sectarian, view with equally intense ecumenical commitments." So let me focus upon Donald Durnbaugh's ability to hold together a sectarian and ecumenical vision.

I believe it is helpful to begin the story with Ernst Troeltsch's publication of *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, the English version of which was first published in 1931. This book promoted studying Christian ideas in their social context. Troeltsch gave Karl Marx credit for this innovation into the social sciences. However Troeltsch was in no way committed to communism, as Marx was.

Troeltsch's study of the social teaching of the Christian churches proposed the following three-fold social typology for all Christianity from its beginning to the present: Church, Sect, and Spirit. (The summary conclusion of Volume I of the English translation discusses these three types, pp. 378-382.) "The Church is the principle of universalism and of Christian civilization, of mobility and power adaptation, but she binds herself to incarnate her Divine content in dogma and in the priesthood, and... claims external and exclusive dominion over the State and over Society," p. 380.

Volume I of *The Social Teaching* describes the Church type from the organization of early Catholicism through the Middle Ages. Volume II describes Protestantism and its development from Lutheranism and its relationship to political territories. With the rise of Calvinism there were elements of the free church without political boundaries. Calvinism led to an ascetic sectarianism. The free church elements were picked up by the Mennonites, the Baptists, and various sectarian groups. Troeltsch's third type is Spirit. He suggests that Spirit can be fused to any type of social organization. Spirit can be either passive or active. Passive Spirit has little social effect. Active Spirit fused with neo-Calvinism leads to the growth of free church sectarianism.

In summary, from its earliest beginning the sociological development of Christian thought took three sociological forms: Church, Sect, and Spirit. The historian can trace the manifold developments which Church, Sect, and Spirit take in the unfolding history of Christianity. The historian as an individual believer may be more committed to one type or another. As an individual believer, the historian may be committed to the Western Church type or the Eastern Church type. The historian as an individual believer may be committed to one

sect group or another. As an individual believer, the historian may express an active or passive Spiritualism.

At the same time the historian researches the development of the wider Christian movement and therefore describes the three social forms in their unfolding story. Admittedly the historian's individual commitment will affect the historical development being described. Troeltsch created and followed this method by which the historian can be totally sectarian and totally ecumenical at the same time. In my view Troeltsch's method is the basis for Donald Durnbaugh's being totally sectarian and totally ecumenical at the same time.

Having suggested the root source for Donald Durnbaugh's affirmation of both sectarianism and ecumenism, I now turn to his creative interpretation of the Believers' Church. Durnbaugh describes how he came to the concept of the Believers' Church in the book he authored under the title, *The Believers' Church*. Durnbaugh asserts, "It was Max Weber in his seminal work on the Protestant Ethic who coined the term 'Believers' Church' in the course of a description of the Anabaptists and 'Quakers' seeking a community of personal believers of the reborn, and only these." (Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Parsons; New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958 pp. 144-45. I studied sociology of religion at Harvard with Talcott Parsons, so this topic is particularly interesting to me.)

Martin Luther identified the faithful who make up the church as those who accept God's grace through faith. Luther was then critical of the many who claimed to be faithful, but rejected the authority of the church. A primary example is Luther's urging the rulers during the Peasant's War to attack those peasants who didn't accept the rulers' divinely given authority. Durnbaugh says that Luther's criticism of the peasants shows that the concept of Free Church needed delimitation. Max Weber recognized this need, and therefore suggested that the Anabaptists and Quakers seek "a community of personal believers of the reborn, and only these." It is worth noting that Max Weber is indebted to Ernst Troeltsch in making this observation.

Durnbaugh indicates that the first study conference of the concept Believers' Church was held by the General Conference Mennonite Church (August 23-25, 1955.) (Page ix of the preface to *The Believers' Church* by Durnbaugh.) A second conference was held June 26-30, 1967. Some 100 participants from seven different denominational families affirmed that they found the following characteristics of the Believers' Church in history, in their fellowship, and in scripture: "The Lordship of Christ, the authority of the Word, church membership regenerated by the Word, the covenant of believers, the need for perpetual restitution of the church, the need for separation from the world, proclamation and service to the world, and a special conception of Christian unity." (Page x of the Preface to Durnbaugh, *Believers' Church*.)

To say that Donald Durnbaugh was both thoroughly sectarian and thoroughly ecumenical, one must qualify the statement in terms of what is said above. Durnbaugh points out that the word "sectarian" is used by those who stand outside the movement, and likely are critical of it. Durnbaugh takes the view that within the movement, one must use an affirmative term, for which he borrowed and reformulated the concept Believers' Church. The term "sect" is framed by those who define the Church type by its creed. So the Believers' Church type is non-creedal by definition, thereby not permitting the creed to define what it is to be a believer.

This does not mean that there is no structure to the Believers' Church. It is not a radically individualistic view in which every person has her/his own opinion unrelated to everyone else's opinion. Rather, Believers are joined together in their commitment to their Lord and in their love for one another. In his book, *The Believers' Church*, Durnbaugh studied such groups from the beginning of the Christian movement, through the Medieval period, and into the contemporary church. He always looked for both the believer's self-understanding and their relationships with one another. He also consulted various Believers' Church participants from various denominations to help define the Believers' Church. His approach has both a radical openness and a disciplined scientific use of original sources. Troeltsch's and Weber's use of the term "sect" informs Durnbaugh's concept of Believers' Church, but the latter is a creative concept from within rather than from the outside.

Durnbaugh's use of the term "ecumenism" shows a transformation similar to what one sees in the change from "sect" to Believers' Church. Ecumenism may mean a commitment to the ecumenical movement rather than to a particular church, or it may mean a commitment to the Church type. For Durnbaugh ecumenism is the story of the total community of those who consider themselves Christian. Durnbaugh is as interested in the whole developing story of Christianity in relation to the Believers' Church. Troeltsch and Max Weber studied sectarianism within the total history of the church, and they were the inspiration for Durnbaugh. It is quite appropriate to say that Donald Durnbaugh's vision of the church unites an intensely Anabaptist, even sectarian view with intense ecumenical commitments.

Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, The Macmillan Company, 1951; Translated by Olive Wyon.

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958; Translated by Talcott Parsons.

Donald Durnbaugh, *The Believers' Church*, Wipf & Stock, 2003.

Don Miller, friend and colleague of Don Durnbaugh, has served on the faculty of Bethany Theological Seminary and was General Secretary of the Church of the Brethren from 1986-1996.

# ***BHLA Notes***

## **Haley Steinhilber Named BHLA Intern**

Haley Steinhilber has been named to the 2017-2018 internship at the Brethren Historical Library and Archives. A native of Valparaiso, IN, Haley is a recent graduate of Manchester University with a BA in history. While at Manchester Haley worked in the Funderburg Library assisting the campus archivist. She has also worked at the Fort Wayne (IN) History Center and is currently a Digitization Intern at the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum, Auburn Indiana.

### **Some Recent Additions to the Brethren Historical Library and Archives**

Robins (IA) Church of the Brethren, 1 foot, council and board minutes, membership records, Sunday School records minutes and women's missionary society records, 1879-2016.

Chalmer and Mary Faw Papers including journals and family history.

Arthur G. Gish Papers, 2 feet, including writings, letters to the editor documenting his work with the Brethren Action Movement, Christian Peacemaker Teams and local social justice ministry in the Athens, OH area.

Russell and Bertha Robertson Correspondence, 3 inches, correspondence of Russell and Bertha Robertson, missionaries to Nigeria during the 1920s with family and supporters.

Sermons of Berwyn Oltman, Church of the Brethren minister, 1 foot, including sermons and an index.

Correspondence of M. R. Zigler relating to the Church of the Brethren Peace Action program of 1936-37, 3 inches. Correspondents include Kermit Eby, W. J. Swigart and George Phillips.

*Messenger* correspondence of Ken Morse and Wilbur Brumbaugh, 1961-1977, 2 feet.

Ernest and Olivia Ikenberry Correspondence, 1936-1971, 10 inches, documenting their careers as missionaries in China and among Native Americans at Lybrook, NM.

Dale Aukerman Papers including correspondence, subject files writings, sermons and journals, 1950s-1999.

Woodland (MI) Church of the Brethren Plates.

William Eberly Papers, 1 foot, include correspondence, research files of Brethren hymnology, history, controversial issues and church structure.

The BHLA website contains a list of used books for sale. We would like to highlight several titles. Roger E. Sappington, *Brethren Social Policy, 1908-1958*—\$10.00; J. E. Miller, *Wilbur Stover: Pioneer Missionary* — \$10.00; Don Durnbaugh, ed., *The Church of the Brethren Past and Present (1971)*—\$12.00; Floyd Mallott, *Studies in Brethren History*—\$16.00; Kurtz, Blough, Ellis, *Studies in Doctrine and Devotion*— \$10.00; Miller & Royer, *Some Who Led*—\$10.00; For a detailed list of other titles for sale, see <http://www.brethren.org/bhla/documents/bhla-books-for-sale.pdf>. All books are postpaid. Please send payment to BHLA, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.



### **Mission Statement**

The Brethren Historical Library and Archives is the official repository for Church of the Brethren publications and records. Its purpose is to keep alive the Brethren faith heritage, by:

- Collecting and preserving materials relating to the cultural, socio-economic, theological, genealogical, and institutional history of the Brethren;
- Giving historical perspective and understanding to the mission of the church through counsel and publication;
- Providing a centralized Brethren research center and;
- Serving as a clearinghouse for information on Brethren historical materials in other repositories.

## Historical Documents Wanted

In an effort to reclaim storage space, church leaders often discard documents, not realizing that they tell the story of the work of people of God in communities around the world. If you have items relating to the history of your congregation, district or even ministries of the national church, even bulletins from special services, please forward them to the BHLA. Our address is BHLA, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.



“Presented to 1994 Church of the Brethren Annual Conference  
From Garden City, Kansas Church of the Brethren  
...And they shall beat their swords into plowshares. Isaiah 2:4”

If anyone knows anything else about this item, please let us know. We’d like to know the full story!

**Please let us know if your mailing address has changed by emailing us at [brethrenarchives@brethren.org](mailto:brethrenarchives@brethren.org). Thank you!**

### Support the BHLA with Your Financial Gifts

The Brethren Historical Library and Archives is supported through the Core Ministries fund of the Church of the Brethren. Financial gifts to the church are not only welcomed but needed. Please send your checks payable to the Church of the Brethren to BHLA 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.