

Church of the Brethren

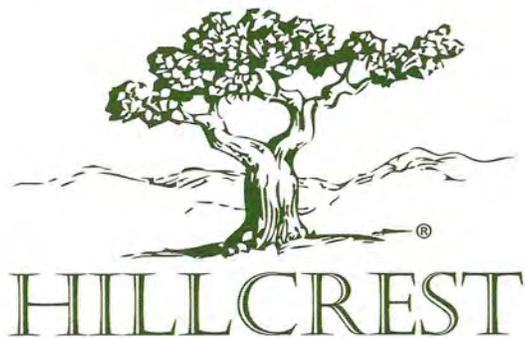
# MESSENGER

OCTOBER 2012 [WWW.BRETHREN.ORG](http://WWW.BRETHREN.ORG)

## Widening circle of God's love

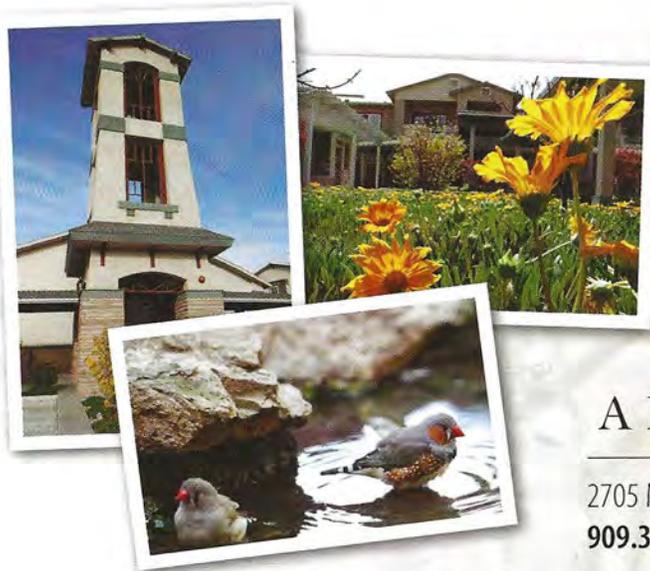
**WHAT THE STORY OF THE EUNUCH TELLS US**

# Love Your Life



## A Remarkable Brethren Community

- In following our Brethren roots of Peacefully, Simply, Together
- On-site full-time Chaplain, vesper services
- Three Brethren churches within 5 miles of Hillcrest
- University of La Verne is walking distance from Hillcrest and offers senior audit programs
- The Interfaith Festival, Doctor's Symphony and shuttles to cultural art activities
- Community Gardens
- Great location, campus and weather
- Hillcrest offers all levels of care. You will be welcomed with open arms and enjoy the love and comfort of lifelong friends!



## Remarkable Residents



### { Residents Jerry & Berkley Davis }

Jerry and Berkley Davis are very involved at Hillcrest, participating in several aspects of campus life. Jerry heads up Channel 3, the community's in-house television station, while Berkley serves on the management team of the Hillcrest gift shop and assists with the production of "Hillcrest Happenings," the community's resident newsletter. "There is more to do and learn here than one can imagine," says Jerry. "I think we made a good choice in Hillcrest!"



### { Resident Shantilal Bhagat }

"Hillcrest, a model community for retirement: orderly not chaotic, unambiguously secure living with caring residents, friendly responsive associates and staff, top-rated physical facilities for swimming, exercising, dining, nursing and healthcare. You are in experienced hands at Hillcrest, why go anywhere else?"



### { Chaplain Tom Hostetler }

"Hillcrest... what a great place to live and work! As chaplain, I am privileged to participate in the spiritual life of many of the residents and the community as a whole. Opportunities abound for worship at all levels of care; bible studies, phone devotions, sharing and inspiration to meet a variety of needs and expectations. The care for neighbors, the interaction and activity of residents, the desire to learn and grow, and the beautiful facilities and surroundings all work together to make Hillcrest a remarkable place. Come and see!"

## A Remarkable Retirement Community®

2705 Mountain View Dr., La Verne, CA 91750  
909.392.4375 | [www.LivingatHillcrest.org](http://www.LivingatHillcrest.org)



DSS #191501662  
Certificate of Authority #069

“... publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works” (Psa. 26:7b KJV).

Church  
of the  
Brethren

# MESSENGER

Editor: Randy Miller Publisher: Wendy McFadden News: Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford Subscriptions: Diane Stroyeck Design: The Concept Mill

## DEPARTMENTS

- 2 From the Publisher
- 3 In Touch
- 6 Reflections
- 7 The Buzz
- 17 Poem
- 20 News
- 24 Media Review
- 25 Youth Life
- 26 Letters
- 30 Turning Points
- 32 Editorial

## 8 A funny thing happened on the road to Gaza

It is referred to as the Wilderness Road—a desolate route from Jerusalem to Gaza—and Philip’s encounter with a stranger there as described in Acts 8 may not seem out of the ordinary. But sometimes another trip down a seemingly familiar path can reveal new insights, as this one does in the capable hands of Old Testament scholar and former Church of the Brethren general secretary Robert Neff.

## 13 Blisters worth having

Why does she do it? Why does she grab a pair of oars each morning and row and row and row until her palms blister and bleed? What could she possibly be thinking? Find out what kind of passion drives Virginia Harness—and others like her—to do things they once considered impossible and even crazy. And then there was no turning back.

## 15 How to grow a pastor

“When a child is dedicated to the Lord, it is really the congregation that is making a commitment. They are promising to raise a child in the ways of the Lord. In my case, that is something that I feel the Circleville Church of the Brethren has done well.” Brethren pastor Daniel Fullen reflects on the nurturing he received growing up in a caring and supportive Brethren congregation.

## 18 Sighs too deep for words

Sometimes scriptures become so familiar we become almost immune to their messages. Then, suddenly, it feels as if we are reading them for the first time. That happened to Joshua Brockway when he read Romans 8 again—for the first time.



**ONTHECOVER** “As they were going along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, ‘Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?’ He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him” (Acts 8: 36-38). The ripples in the water from that baptism continue to spread, even to today.

**I**t's been interesting to follow a dispute between Amazon and a group of five large publishers that were charged with an antitrust violation when they allegedly organized to set prices on their own e-books. Amazon just won a settlement in the suit, and touted it as a win for everyday customers, who would once again get their e-books for \$9.99—the price Amazon sets.

The fine points of the case are pretty complicated and it's difficult to figure out what it will all mean in the end. But I have a feeling that Goliath won.



WENDY McFADDEN  
Publisher

Most customers will happily agree with Amazon, since paying \$9.99 seems better than paying \$12.99. But low prices aren't the only measure of what's good for customers. Prices that are too good to be true are probably not good for someone.

Take Brethren Press, for example. Amazon has typically ordered a few books from Brethren Press each month—but doesn't like to pay its bills. After a number of months of our requests for payment, Amazon made an "adjustment" and decided that instead Brethren Press owed it \$1,400. This is a little like the rich man killing the poor neighbor's only lamb for company dinner. For the time being, Brethren Press is no longer filling any book orders from Amazon.

But as Brethren Press lives each year on the knife's edge of solvency, it appears that it doesn't take an Amazon to put the squeeze on: Brethren frugality may do us in. For example, an unsettling number of customers buy one Sunday school book and then photocopy what they need. Some of them actually tell us this.

What's the harm? Well, of course we worry about the souls of those breaking one of the Ten Commandments. We also worry about Brethren Press: The choice to use copyrighted materials without paying for them undercuts the financial foundation of the publishing house. Unlike for-profit companies, Brethren Press makes no surplus income and exists only to be a ministry for the members of the Church of the Brethren.

When you buy church resources and MESSENGER subscriptions from Brethren Press, you can be sure that the price is fair and that every penny (except for shipping, which goes to UPS) is invested in your church publishing house. We are grateful for all your investments. And you, as an investor, can be too.

*Wendy McFadden*

## HOW TO REACH US

### MESSENGER

1451 Dundee Avenue  
Elgin, IL 60120

### Subscriptions:

dstroyeck@brethren.org  
Phone: 800-323-8039 ext. 327  
Fax: 847-742-1407

### Advertising:

messengerads@brethren.org  
Phone: 800-323-8039 ext. 308  
Fax: 847-742-1407

### Editorial:

messenger@brethren.org  
Phone: 800-323-8039 ext. 376  
Fax: 847-742-1407

### Subscription rates:

\$17.50 individual rate  
- \$32 for 2 years  
\$14.50 gift rate  
\$14.50 church club rate  
- \$27 for 2 years  
\$ 1.25 student (per month)

If you move, clip address label and send with new address to MESSENGER Subscriptions, at the above address. Allow at least five weeks for address change.

Connect electronically: For a free subscription to Newslines, the Church of the Brethren e-mail news report, write cobnews@brethren.org.

Visit MESSENGER online at [www.brethren.org/messenger](http://www.brethren.org/messenger).

A free study guide for each issue of MESSENGER is available at this site, along with other information.

MESSENGER is the official publication of the Church of the Brethren. Member of the Associated Church Press. Biblical quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the New Revised Standard Version. Copyright © October 2012, Church of the Brethren.

MESSENGER (ISSN 0026-0355) is published 10 times a year by Brethren Press, Church of the Brethren. Periodicals postage paid at Elgin, Ill., and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694.



Printed on recycled paper  
(20% post consumer)

# COBYS Bike & Hike sets new record

Buoyed by picture-perfect weather, the 16th annual COBYS Bike & Hike set new records for income and for the number of walkers and bicyclists participating. Held Sept. 9 at the Lititz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, the event attracted 514 participants and raised more than \$90,000 so far to support the ministries of COBYS Family Services. The overall attendance was the best in five years. Income and participation for 2011 were \$89,605 and 428, respectively.

"It was just a glorious day," said event planner and Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board member Don Fitzkee. "It was really exciting to see more than 500 people walking, riding, and giving to benefit children and families."

The Bike & Hike consists of a three-mile walk, 10- and 25-mile bicycle rides, and the 65-mile Dutch Country Motorcycle Ride. Participants choose their event and either pay a registration fee, obtain support from sponsors, or both. Participating were 203 walkers, 169 motorcyclists, and 142 bicyclists.

Seven area Church of the Brethren youth groups participated, including four who earned a gym and pizza night by raising at least \$1,500. Top youth groups were Little Swatara Church of the Brethren, Rehrersburg, \$3,355; Midway Church of the Brethren, \$3,000; Chiques Church of the Brethren junior high, \$1,671; and West Green Tree Church of the Brethren, \$1,605. Other participating youth groups came from Middle Creek, Mount Zion Road, and Mohrsville.



COBYS Family Services is a Christian agency affiliated with the Atlantic Northeast District of the Church of the Brethren. Founded in 1979 as a teen foster care program, the organization originally was named Church of the Brethren Youth Services (COBYS). Today, the organization provides services in adoption and foster care, counseling, family life education, and a permanency program. To better reflect its broadened scope of services and clients, in 1992 the organization adopted the name "COBYS Family Services." While the letters of the acronym "COBYS" no longer have specific meaning, the name "COBYS Family Services" continues to represent Christlike concern for children and families.

Do you have district or congregational stories that might be of interest to MESSENGER? Short items with a photo are best. Send them to MESSENGER, c/o In Touch, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120 or messenger@brethren.org.



## YOU SAID IT

**"The fundamental frame of what he (Jesus) came to give us is the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, the kingdom of peace."**

—Bill Scheurer, executive director of On Earth Peace, speaking for a Peace Day chapel service at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill.

## BY THE NUMBERS

# 20,591

Dollars raised to date for the Haiti Medical Project endowment fund as part of an effort to support Church of the Brethren medical clinics in Haiti.

# Rolling for a cause in Indiana

Middlebury (Ind.) Church of the Brethren and Goshen City Church of the Brethren were stops on Richard Propes' 23rd Annual Tenderness Tour Against Family Violence. Propes works for the State of Indiana, Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services, and is interim pastor at Nettle Creek Church of the Brethren in Hagerstown, Ind. Since 1989, he has traveled over

3,500 miles by wheelchair and helped raise thousands of dollars for children's organizations.

Propes, a paraplegic/double amputee born with spina bifida, is a sexual abuse survivor who recently published his story, *The Hallelujah Life*, on his own imprint, Heart n' Sole Press. This year his Tenderness Tour through Elkhart County, Ind., on Sept. 1-6 raised funds for Child

and Parent Services, Inc. Sponsors included the Middlebury and Goshen City churches, the Independent Critic, and Das Dutchman Essenhaus, among others.

Propes preached at the Middlebury church on Sunday, Sept. 2, before beginning his countywide wheeling on Labor Day. On Sept. 5, he was hosted by Goshen City Church of the Brethren. The tour included visits to Elkhart and Wakarusa, a public reading from *The Hallelujah Life*, and meetings with city leaders, media, and schools. Propes began wheeling at 9 a.m. from each community's city or town hall, and ended each day at the same location.

For more information go to [www.tendernesstour.com](http://www.tendernesstour.com). To meet Propes or invite him to speak, contact 317-691-5692 or [Richard@theindependentcritic.com](mailto:Richard@theindependentcritic.com).



**Richard Propes in downtown Elkhart and on a road near Goshen during his 23rd Annual Tenderness Tour Against Family Violence. Since 1989, he has traveled over 3,500 miles by wheelchair and helped raise thousands of dollars for children's organizations.**



## Pacific Southwest women pray their way through Yosemite

Women from throughout the Pacific Southwest District gathered in May for a retreat centered on the theme "Weekend of Wonders." Although most of their time was spent at the Evergreen Conference Center in Oakhurst, Calif., one day was set aside for a visit to Yosemite National Park. "It was an awesome setting for spiritual renewal," one participant remarked. "Special booklets with scripture that highlighted each point of interest were used to pray and meditate through the park."

# Lord, when did we see you ...?

## How one congregation is responding

In 2007, a small group in the Lancaster (Pa.) Church of the Brethren developed a passion for responding to hunger, poverty, injustice, and homelessness. This Hunger and Poverty Group (H&PG) educated itself and sought ways our congregation could respond. As a first step, we promoted the "2 Cents a Meal" offerings that have been a Brethren project for years. We send two-thirds of the money to the Global Food Crisis Fund, and one-third to the Food Bank of the Lancaster County Council of Churches. LCCC used the \$14,000 we gave them to purchase nearly 39 tons of food for hungry folks in Lancaster. The GFCF used the other \$28,000 in its remarkable ministry. Our second project was to begin collecting food for the LCCC food bank before every love feast and every Sunday morning communion (four times a year).

Also in 2007, the School District of Lancaster (SDL) reported that it expected 1000 homeless students during the school year. We were astonished that this could be true in such a small city. SDL requires all students to wear uniforms, which is a real problem for homeless families. Every year since 2007, the congregation has responded with gifts of school supplies and uniforms. With 1,200 homeless students expected in 2012-13, H&PG set a goal of purchasing 500 uniforms during July and August. The congregation responded by contributing over \$11,000 to purchase 824 uniforms, and an additional

\$1,750 worth of school supplies. When God touches our hearts, amazing things happen.

Lancaster has a long history of helping those in need. Other outreach efforts include 55 refugees sponsored since 1956; \$80,000 raised in the 1990s to build two Habitat for Humanity houses in the midst of a major capital campaign to expand our facilities; money to build five houses in Haiti since the recent earthquake; 14,000 Hygiene Kits and dozens of Clean-up Buckets assembled for CWS; homes secured for two homeless mothers and their children; many volunteers for disaster relief work and processing materials at New Windsor.

Matthew 25:31-46 has guided our efforts. This powerful scripture moves those who serve and those who don't to ask the same question: "When did we see you, Lord" in any those situations? It is our question, too, and the Lord answers: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

God comes to us in powerful ways through the faces of the poor, the hungry, and the homeless.—Allen T. Hansell



(Above) Nicky Spann, facilitator of Homeless School Project, and Lois Hansell, co-coordinator of the Be An Angel Project. (Left) Children help carrying boxes of school uniforms.



### REMEMBERED

**Alma Maxine Moyers Long (86)** passed away July 31 at Lima (Ohio) Memorial Health System surrounded by her family. She was one of the young people who in 1948 brought a proposal to Annual Conference for a volunteer program for Brethren youth. This resulted in the formation of Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS), of which Alma was a member of the first unit. She was born Oct. 20, 1925, in Bruceton Mills, W.Va., to Charles and Stella Guthrie Moyers. On June 10, 1951, she married Urban L. Long, who survives her. She was a graduate of Bridgewater (Va.) College and began her teaching career in the last one-room school in Preston County, W.Va. She taught chemistry, biology, and earth science in the Upper Scioto Valley School System for 30 years and received the Acker Teaching Award. Dan McFadden, director of Brethren Volunteer Service, shared his memory of Alma from the BVS 60th anniversary celebration. "At 82 years of age," McFadden recalled, "Alma still had a spring in her step and a gleam in her eye as she held us all spellbound with the story of the birth of BVS. She was a gift to all who knew her."

**William G. "Bill" Willoughby, 94,** died on Aug. 28. He was a Brethren historian and ordained minister, and author of a number of articles and books including *Counting the Cost: The Life of Alexander Mack* and *The Beliefs of the Early Brethren 1706-1735*. He also translated the book *Hochmann von Hochenau* by Heinz Renkevitz from German into English. The Brethren Press website notes that "Willoughby's translation is the only work on Hochmann in English," adding that some regard Hochmann, an important Pietist leader, as a co-founder of the Brethren movement. Willoughby taught at Bridgewater (Va.) College and the University of La Verne, Calif., and was an early supervisor for Brethren Colleges Abroad. He was predeceased by his wife, Lena.

# Ecclesiastical disobedience

**T**he church has always struggled to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” The New Testament letters reveal profound differences concerning numerous matters. To name a few: circumcision, special holy days, welcoming Gentiles into the church, and eating meat offered to idols.

On this last matter, the Apostle Paul urges believers on all sides of the issue to speak clearly about their own convictions without condemning those who think and believe differently: “Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of Another (i.e. God) ... and why do you despise your brother or sister?” (See Romans 14.)



PAULA BOWSER

We still differ, and we still struggle to understand and accept each other despite conflicting views. That is almost always the case at Annual Conference, as it was in St. Louis this summer.

The following statement in the On Earth Peace report to Conference was cause for concern for some: “We are troubled by attitudes and actions in the church which exclude persons on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or any other aspect of human identity. We believe God calls the church to welcome all persons into full participation in the life of the faith community.”

As an agency of the Church of the Brethren, On Earth Peace is expected to provide ministry that is within the

## BAPTIZING ADULTS WAS AN ACT OF DELIBERATE DISOBEDIENCE (BOTH CIVIL AND ECCLESIASTICAL) ON THE PART OF ALEXANDER MACK AND THE SEVEN SOULS WHO STEPPED WITH HIM INTO THE EDER RIVER.

scope of Annual Conference directives, and this statement falls outside those directives. That creates a dilemma for On Earth Peace and for Standing Committee and denominational leaders.

The concept of civil disobedience, articulated by Henry David Thoreau and practiced by the likes of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., is the active refusal to obey the laws and decrees of a government or occupying power. It is a form of nonviolent resistance and has often been used prophetically to denounce injustice and to bring about change. Quakers and abolitionists practiced civil disobedience as they hid slaves and helped them to gain their freedom by means of an “underground railroad.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer

and Corrie Ten Boom also come to mind as examples of Christian citizens who refused to comply with laws and policies they deemed wrong.

There is an important corollary for the ecclesia (those who are called by Christ), and it’s this: just as it is a morally right for citizens to refuse to obey laws that they deem unjust, it is also a moral and spiritual obligation for Christians to oppose church policy that they believe is contrary to the spirit and teachings of Jesus.

Please let me be clear. I am grateful to serve in a denomination where there is a central authority, just as I am grateful to live in a nation with laws and statutes that govern human behavior. I respect Annual Conference and, as a pastor, I take very seriously my commitment to abide by the decisions made by the church through this yearly meeting. Nevertheless, I believe that, in some cases, I and others must voice our opposition to its decrees.

Our denomination began with just this sort of dissent. Baptizing adults was an act of deliberate disobedience (both civil and ecclesiastical) on the part of Alexander Mack and the seven souls who stepped with him into the Eder River. By gleaning grain and by healing on the Sabbath, Jesus himself practiced this kind of intentional disobedience to the Law of Moses, and it was for this offense that he was crucified.

Ecclesiastical disobedience, if it’s practiced in the Spirit of Christ, is not born of hubris, malice, or a desire for division. Rather it flows from a longing for justice and a clearer understanding of the spirit of the gospel. It gives those with a dissenting voice a place to stand in times of controversy.

It always listens to the other side; always works for unity; always hopes for eventual reconciliation. It humbly accepts the consequences of maintaining integrity.

Once, we were “a house divided,” on the issue of slavery, but as the years passed it became clear that the Spirit was leading us to be united against its cruelty and tyranny. We stood together then, though there were deep divisions in the body, and we can do so now.

Our denomination has a longstanding tradition of respecting the conscience of our brothers and sisters, even those with whom we strongly disagree. This is not easy, but I believe it is well worth the effort. **W**

*Paula Bowser is pastor of Trotwood (Ohio) Church of the Brethren. She is the author of *Jonah: God's Global Reach*, (a People of the Covenant Bible study guide) and *The Word Made Flesh*, the 2007 Church of the Brethren devotional for Advent and Epiphany.*

# “Are there flaws in the church? Absolutely. But is there great beauty in the church? Absolutely.”

—Comedian Stephen Colbert at a “Catholic Comedy Slam” in New York’s Fordham University with Cardinal Timothy Dolan and author James Martin, quoted in *The New York Times*

“I so strongly believe that the great religions of the world are stronger than any insults. They have withstood offense for centuries. Refraining from violence, then, is not a sign of weakness in one’s faith; it is absolutely the opposite, a sign that one’s faith is unshakable.”

—US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, speaking about an anti-Muslim video that has sparked anti-American riots across the Middle East

“In the end, I’m encouraged by ... the recognition that, if I only sat down with people who agreed with me, and I with them, or with those who were saints, I’d be taking all my meals alone.”

—New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan, writing in his blog to defend his invitation to President Obama to attend the annual Al Smith Dinner, despite his fierce fight with the White House over contraception and abortion

“As hard as we work to try to convince the rest of the world that Mississippi has changed—and, in fact, we have—to see an unfortunate situation like that occur is very disappointing.”

—Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant, commenting to *The Associated Press* about the predominantly white Mississippi church that did not permit the wedding of a black couple

“If you are serious about your relationship with Jesus Christ, you just can’t be for same-sex marriage.”

—Corliss Carter, quoted by *The New York Times*, as she ate at a Chick-fil-A restaurant in Marietta, Ga., during a show of support for the company’s traditional Christian values

“Thinking back over things I don’t think I’ve got right over the last 10 years, I think it might have helped a lot if I’d gone sooner to the United States when things began to get difficult about the ordination of gay bishops.”

—Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams reflecting on the splits between liberals and conservatives in the Anglican Communion of homosexuality. He was quoted by the *Daily Telegraph*

➔ **The first ecumenical affirmation of mission since 1982**, invoking a new understanding of mission and evangelism amid a changing world and ecclesial landscape, has been presented to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC). The statement, titled “Together towards life: Mission and Evangelism in changing landscapes,” was prepared by the WCC’s Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME). It was presented to the WCC Central Committee in August. The WCC Central Committee is a governing body representing the 349 member churches. The statement draws on insights from Protestant, Evangelical, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic mission theologies, and will be presented at the WCC 10th Assembly in Busan, Republic of Korea, in 2013.

➔ **Religious art pieces carved out of ivory** have played a considerable role in the rise of black market trade of the precious material since the 1989 ban on its international trade, according to a National Geographic investigation. “No matter where I find ivory, religion is close at hand,” said investigative reporter Bryan Christy, whose article, “Ivory Worship,” is included in the October edition of National Geographic magazine. “Elephant poaching levels are currently at their worst in a

decade,” Christy wrote. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) estimates that at least 25,000 elephants were poached in 2011, mostly for their ivory tusks.

➔ **A new census of the Amish population** in the United States estimates that a new Amish community is founded, on average, about every three and a half weeks, and shows that more than 60 percent of all existing Amish settlements have been founded since 1990. This pattern suggests the Amish are growing more rapidly than most other religions in the United States, researchers say. Unlike other religious groups, however, the growth is not driven by converts joining the faith, but instead can be attributed to large families and high rates of baptism.

➔ **Two U.S. regional groups of the Seventh-day Adventist Church** have recently approved the ordination of women pastors, moving faster than the worldwide church’s study of the issue. The Pacific Union Conference voted 79 percent to 21 percent on Aug. 19 to “approve ordinations to the gospel ministry without regard to gender.” Weeks earlier, the Maryland-based Columbia Union Conference adopted a similar change in its policy, with 80 percent in favor.



## JUST FOR FUN: SCRAMBLE

**THE VOTING BOOTH** It’s presidential election season. Unscramble the 10 related words below. Answers are printed at the bottom.

BLIPANCURE  
TACODREM  
LATERCOLE  
PAGANIMPC  
TOVE

BADTEE  
SIGNVIATRED  
DRE TTEAS  
STEEPNDINDEN  
IAMNOTNION

ANSWERS: Republican; Democrat; electoral; campaign; vote; debate; advertising; red state; independents; nomination.



**A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE ROAD TO GAZA . . .**

# the circle got bigger

by Robert Neff

**L**ast year when I returned for my 50th reunion at **Yale Divinity School**, I went to the opening worship service, which dealt with Acts 8:26-40. This is the passage which talks about Philip meeting and baptizing an Ethiopian eunuch while traveling on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. The bishop who preached focused on Philip and not the Ethiopian eunuch. She used the text as way of illustrating how to preach to people in our society from whom we generally shy away.

Like so many commentators, she spent little time on the eunuch and centered on the activity of Philip. He was a convincing evangelist; he had just converted the masses in

Samaria and was on his way up the coast from Ashdod to Caesarea to meet with more Jewish prospects. He manages to communicate the gospel in this offbeat setting.

The trend in many commentaries is to ignore the eunuch and focus on Philip, the Evangelist. Even when interpreters direct attention to the eunuch, they deal with his capacity as treasurer, based on their assumptions about the term eunuch. In other words it's his title that is of importance. This argument runs counter to the early Christian reluctance to provide titles to the members of the community, as indicated in the burial practices that seldom if ever identify an individual by rank or profession. Or like William Willimon,



In Acts, the writer has been building a story about the acceptance of people who have been excluded from the worshiping community, . . . Luke is arguing that **no individual stands outside the circle of God's love.**

in his commentary on Acts, maintains the reason Luke selected this story depends upon the exotic character of the Ethiopian, a person from the edge of the world so to speak, someone whose dark skin made him an object of wonder for Jews and Romans alike (pp. 71-72). Philip, in other words, has added a rare character to the notches of his evangelistic gun belt. For many commentators the crucial fact of the eunuch's sexual identity is simply overlooked or not addressed.

Yet the eunuch's sexual identity is key to understanding this story. F.D. Gealy, in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, says categorically that "Luke's fivefold use of 'eunuch' unqualified, suggests that he means it as a castrated male and does not simply think of this term as a synonym for 'minister' or 'treasurer' without any implication of mutilation." The eunuch fits the pattern in both the Greek and non-Greek world for court officials when the ruler was a queen, as in this case in Acts, or otherwise served as keepers of harems when the ruler was a king. The Ethiopian eunuch is a castrated male in the service of Queen Candace. That may be a necessity when it comes to serving royalty, but according to Deuteronomy 23:1 it disqualifies him from being a member of the Jewish community of faith.

What else can we say about this individual? He serves in the queen's cabinet as a treasurer and carries great responsibility. He is well trained, as courtiers were expected to be. He is literate. He has a library and access to scrolls, which is

most unusual. Such private libraries depended on great wealth. He has carried this reading material with him for this extensive trip to Jerusalem, which the text tells us he had visited in order to worship. He reads this material aloud as was the custom in the ancient world.

He has chosen the more desolate road home, as indicated by the text's reference to the Wilderness Road, which passed by the old city of Gaza that had been destroyed 100 years earlier. This description emphasizes his separation from the community and may also be required for his own protection. For whatever reason, he avoided the coastal road by the new city of Gaza. He was on his way home in a horse-drawn cart. When he got to Egypt, undoubtedly he took a barge down the Nile to reach his residence that lay to the south of Aswan, where the present dam exists.

How did he come to live this far south and remain a Jew? It's not impossible on the face of it. Many commentators forget that as early as the sixth century there was a Jewish community in Elephantine, an island in the Nile, south of Egypt, at the border of Ethiopia. The prophet Jeremiah was taken there after the destruction of the first temple; it remained an active community beyond the Persian period. Just as there were Jews in Babylon, so there were Jews in Egypt and much further south. We can't be sure, but it could be that this man came from this community and was a Jew, not a proselyte or simply one on the fringe of the Jewish community. This fact would explain his study of the Hebrew

Why did this life and death and new life speak to the eunuch? In the suffering of Jesus **the eunuch sees the identification with his suffering** and the justification that comes through the cross.



Scripture and his journey to Jerusalem, a most time-consuming and arduous one.

The eunuch has apparently gone to Jerusalem on one of the high feast days, perhaps Pentecost. As in Acts 2, many Jews from all over the Roman world came to celebrate the founding of Israel through the giving of the law. What isn't mentioned in the text is that, as a eunuch, he couldn't worship as other Jews. He would have had to remain in the outer court of the Gentiles at the temple. The text in Deuteronomy is clear: no eunuch will be permitted to worship with the covenant community, the assembly of Israel. Josephus and Herodotus confirm that castrated males were not permitted to be part of the worshiping community in Judaism at the time of Jesus and later. Although his deep faith takes him to Jerusalem, by law he is held at arm's length. Because of his sexual identity, he is forbidden access to the gathering of his own people.

Now let us look at the passage that he is reading. It's from Isaiah: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life was taken away from the earth" (Acts 8:32-33). Could not this describe the life of this eunuch? Justice is denied him. Not through discipline, act, or fault of his own, the full life of devotion is denied him. The vicarious suffering line in Isaiah is not included: "By his stripes we are healed." This absence highlights the suffering of the individual. While Willimon is correct in his assessment of his social position and wealth, he is incorrect in the assessment of this individual's condition. As a devout Jew he is kept outside the worshiping community; in this sense he is in deep pain. It is one reason why this text speaks to him.

At this point Philip enters the scene, which parallels the experience of the two disciples with the risen Jesus on the Emmaus road in Luke 24. In that passage Jesus interprets scripture so the sorrowful disciples can understand the crucifixion and resurrection. Philip does the same thing in this passage and takes the eunuch from the text he is reading to

the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Why did this life and death and new life speak to the eunuch? In the suffering of Jesus the eunuch sees the identification with his suffering and the justification that comes through the cross. As Christians we often jump to the saving function of the cross without first recognizing the power of Christ's suffering for those who themselves suffer.

Claus Westermann, an Old Testament scholar, maintains that "both in Christian Dogmatics and in Christian worship, suffering as opposed to sin has receded into the background: Jesus' work of salvation has to do with forgiveness of sins and eternal life; it does not deal, however, with ending human suffering. ... The impression given is that although Jesus actively cared for those who suffered and took pity on those who mourned, the crucified and resurrected Lord in contrast was concerned with sin and not at all with suffering" (*The Role of Lament*, p. 33). When Jesus recites Psalm 22 on the cross, he embraces the life of the sufferer. Jesus died for human hurt. Jesus' ministry deals with those who suffer from personal loss as well as illness. Jesus impresses us with his compassion even at his most desolate moments, as we hear in the words, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

**A**fter Philip's explication of the scripture, the eunuch declares, "Look here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" No further questions, no further elaborations! The chariot stops, they go down into the water, and the eunuch is baptized. Now this quick acceptance was too hasty for some traditions, so certain texts add, "And Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he replied, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'" However, the oldest tradition holds that his request is enough. No confession of faith, no confession of sin, no cross examination by Philip, the desire to be baptized is enough.



The eunuch's request however is not as precipitous as it first seems. It was born of years of study. The only thing that had been stopping him before from joining the covenant community had been the age-old law against eunuchs. Philip's act is a radical departure from Judaism that had a norm for sexual identity. Yet Philip's decision to baptize the eunuch is not precipitous either. It must be said that in a text just three chapters later in Isaiah, this norm no longer applies in the eschatological age. The new day has arrived with the birth of the Christian community so that acceptance is a historical reality in the earliest Christian church. This acceptance is a bold act made possible by the Spirit. The reader knows that this eunuch is a serious student of Scripture and has been excluded from the covenant community not because of lack of faith but because of a misguided view of his sexuality. The eunuch, who does not fit any conventional sexual role, nevertheless belongs without extended questioning simply on his desire to be baptized.

At the end of the story, Philip is simply snatched away to continue his evangelizing up the coast. The eunuch saw him no more. Overcome with joy he continues on his way home. Eusebius, the great church historian, says that after going home the eunuch went on to become an evangelist in his part of the world. His sexual condition no longer kept him

from being an active participant in the life of discipleship.

How is this radical change possible so early in the life of the church? The church is born at Pentecost, at which time Peter declares, quoting the prophet Joel, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they will prophesy" (Acts 2:17-18). In light of Acts 8 we may well add those whose sexual identity does not fit the norm of society.

This radical redefinition of the covenant community is demonstrated in early Christian art and burials. In a very hierarchical society, boundaries of social station were simply abandoned. The earliest Christian sociology, as found in Paul's letter to the Galatians, no longer distinguishes between male or female, slave or free, and Jew or Greek. The Spirit has broken all boundaries that separated people. The faith in Christ bound them all together.

Now we are able to understand Luke's positioning of this conversion at this point in the book of Acts. This conversion is not, as some commentators suggest, a foreshadowing of the Gentile mission in Acts 10 and Peter's visit with Cornelius. What we see in chapter 8 is that the early church accepted Samaritans and eunuchs—those rejected by the

Jesus identifies with those who suffer,  
and the cross is emblematic of this  
**embrace for those who are desolate,  
deprived, and isolated.**





**Two thousand years later, what is this text saying to us?** As a welcoming church, we are not set in some new direction by looking beyond the early church. We are guided by it.

contemporary Jewish community into full fellowship—regardless of their cultural or sexual identity.

The idea that the Christian mission must first reach out to those excluded from the household of Israel before it could be extended to the Gentiles is fulfilled in this chapter. The mission to the Gentiles can now begin. Far from foreshadowing the Gentile mission, as many scholars suggest, it has another radical message. Samaritans, who were seen as enemies of the faith, are now included. For our purposes, individuals who do not fit the sexual norms of the Jewish community and society, are now included, as indicated by the eunuch's baptism.

In Acts, the writer has been building a story about the acceptance of people who have been excluded from the worshipping community, those who are sick, those who were despised by the authorities, those whose sexual identity did not meet the norm, like the eunuch. Before Luke moves to the acceptance of Gentiles into the Christian community, he includes the conversion of Saul, who watched the death of Stephen and sought to have other Christians executed. The last Jew in this march to inclusiveness in Acts, unlike the other conversions, is an enemy and detester of the faith. Luke is arguing that no individual stands outside the circle of God's love.

**T**wo thousand years later, what is this text saying to us? As a welcoming church, we are not set in some new direction by looking beyond the early church. We are guided by it. As these early Christians were forced to look beyond primary sexual characteristics when accepting eunuchs into the covenant community, we also need not be caught up by contemporary church doctrine that is bound up with the thinking that primary sex characteristics define sexuality. Such thinking fails to recognize that sexual behavior is defined by hormonal structure. As is often the case, passages like Acts 8 are overlooked because the church is

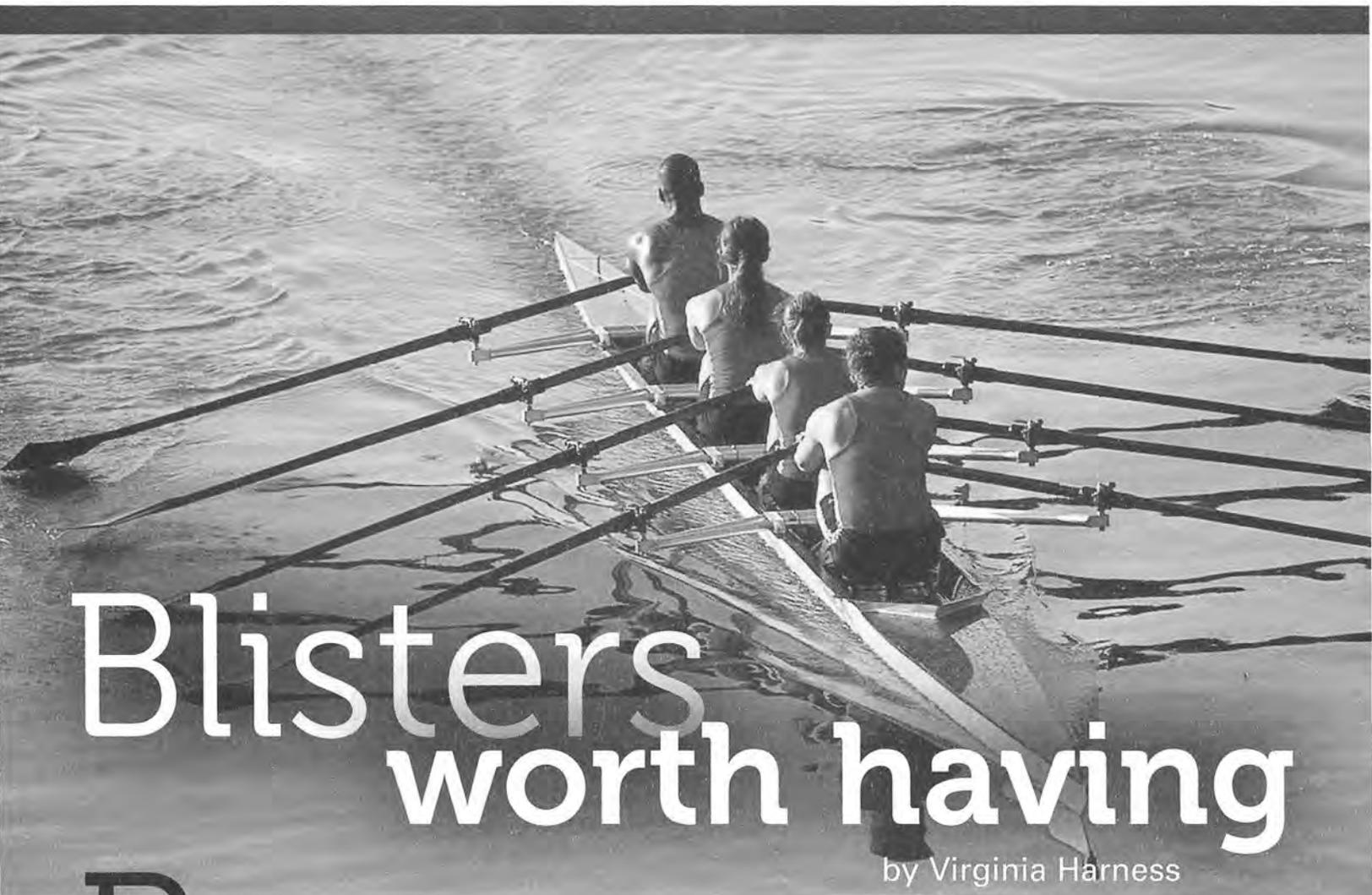
often frightened of talking straight about human sexuality. This text is categorical in its acceptance of the eunuch and, by extension, those whose sexuality identity differs from norms imposed by traditional societies.

Perhaps now we see why commentators focused either on Philip or the high standing official, or failed altogether to deal with the issues of the eunuch's sexuality. In fact in many cases it was ignored completely. But this radical dimension of the early church is most challenging for many of us. And, paradoxically, it makes clear that the conservative choice is to be a welcoming church. Those who use questions of gender or sexual identity to exclude are, in fact, the ones who have strayed from the original teaching of Scripture.

Harvey Cox, in his recent book *The Future of Faith*, talks about the appeal of Jesus to those who stand outside the faith. It was his compassion for the dispossessed and "his willingness to stand up to corrupt political and religious authorities. But what attracted them more than anything else was his emphasis on the possibility of another kind of world where gentleness and equality prevail. . . . Jesus called this other possible world, 'the Kingdom of God'" (p. 48). Jesus identifies with those who suffer, and the cross is emblematic of this embrace for those who are desolate, deprived, and isolated.

Luke, in his description of Jesus and this movement, portrays a compassionate Christ and a compassionate community who reach out to embrace those who are hurting. This means that the earliest church was a welcoming church. Gender inclusiveness is not a new idea but rather is at the center of the earliest church, according to Luke. To be true to our heritage, we should simply hang out a sign which says: "Welcome all, no exceptions."

Robert Neff served as general secretary of the Church of the Brethren and was president of Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pa. He also was a professor of Hebrew and Old Testament at Bethany Theological Seminary. He lives in State College, Pa., and volunteers at the Village at Morrison's Cove in Martinsburg, Pa.



# Blisters worth having

by Virginia Harness

**B**listers have become a fact of life for me over the past four years. Until the summer of 2008, I hadn't had much experience with them, nor did I want to. Then, that summer before college, I took up the sport of rowing. By the time the first course was over, my hands looked like they'd been put through a meat grinder, and that was only after a few weeks.

In the fall, I joined my college crew team, and unexpectedly found myself in the varsity boat. Soon my hands were taking a beating up to six days a week for two hours each day. It is considered sacrilege in the rowing community to complain about your blisters—and don't even think about wearing gloves. Tape and Band-aids might get you through the first 15 minutes of practice before falling off and leaving your hands at the mercy of your oar handles once again. As the upperclassmen assured us, there was little to be done about it except to keep rowing and wait for the calluses to come in.

So I dutifully poured hydrogen peroxide over my hands every morning after practice and stocked up on waterproof band aids (which never turned out to actually be waterproof). And I endured my inability to wash my hair or do

the dishes without doubling up in pain.

By mid-season the reality of my commitment to the crew team was starting to hit home. The lack of sleep, the intense workouts, the dreaded circuit training on days we couldn't get in boats, and the blisters, were all beginning to take their toll.

As I sat in seminar late one night that fall my thoughts began to drift. But I snapped to when my classmates began to debate the various moral implications in the story of Job, with particular attention on his suffering. It made me think of the pain in my hands, and I suddenly asked myself "Why?" Why do I endure suffering? Not suffering like what Job endured, of course, but rather the suffering we inflict upon ourselves willingly. I sat there for several minutes studying my busted-up hands under the fluorescent light and thinking to myself, "I must be mad. Nobody would go through all this willingly unless they were crazy."

But the more I thought about it, the more I felt that there was more there than madness. After all, the world is full of examples of people willing to endure suffering for one thing: love. From the gardener who endures stiff



**It's not easy, and it's often not pleasant, but despite this we carry on,** because we are still holding on to whatever love brought us here in the first place.

knees and sunburns (and maybe a few blisters too) for the sake of his plants, to the thousands of women who give birth each day, and a thousand other examples I could name, humans are in the habit of suffering willingly for causes they believe in.

So when I asked myself that night in seminar why I endured all the difficulties of crew, the answer came down to a simple truth: because I loved it. I loved my team, and the secret time before sunrise, and the stillness of the mirror-like water, and, to steal a line from Homer, the rosy-fingered dawn over the river, and the rhythm of the rowers in perfect unison, and the trickle of the water on the hull, and passing within a few feet of blue herons and osprey nests, and, and, and—the list could go on forever.

It wasn't exactly a miraculous epiphany. It didn't require jumping through a series of difficult logical hoops, but it is a moment that has stuck with me.

It occurs to me that these days the Church of the Brethren has a lot in common with a blister-laden rower, or a stiff-kneed gardener, or a woman in labor. We are in the midst of a painful process, the outcome of which we can't be too certain. It seems to me the people of this denomination—people in the pews, people serving on boards, and people working as staff in districts and at the national level—are suffering and struggling. They are opening some wounds and building up some calluses. It's not easy, and it's often not pleasant, but despite this we carry on, because we are still holding on to whatever love brought us here in the first place.

If I were a proper philosopher, my next question would probably be: "What is the nature of that love?" It can't just be any love. English is a poor language to use for this analysis, since love is kind of a catch-all word for a lot of different things. Greek would serve us better, and fortunately there's no need to memorize declensions to talk about the three words for love in Greek. They are *eros*, *philos*, and *agape*. Loosely translated, *eros* would be romantic love,

*philos* is friendship, and then there's *agape*. That last one—*agape*—I always found a little harder to translate in Greek class, but that's the one we want in this instance. If I recall, my lexicon used the word charity in the definition, but that doesn't quite hit the mark. No, the kind of love reflected in the word *agape* is bigger than that. It is typically the word used to describe the love God has for humankind. The easy way out would be to call it unconditional love, but even that seems too simple to encompass the whole idea. Probably the best definition of *agape* I've seen, is in 1 Corinthians 13. A passage that, I admit, in my teenage years, I cynically rolled my eyes at more than once. As I've grown older, that perspective has changed.

The love that Paul speaks of in that passage is the love that we must look to when we want to know why we endure the trials of our times. Too often I find myself being impatient, unkind, irritable, and resentful, all in the name of love for my ideals. In those moments, we endure suffering willingly for a love that is not the *agape* of 1 Corinthians 13, but something else. That kind of love won't carry us through, but *agape* will, if we let it.

As I continued my education, I faced a crisis of faith more than once on the basis of some logical difficulty, trying to reconcile free will with an omnipotent God, trying (and failing) to logically disprove my classmates when they claimed people only ever act out of self-interest. Yet in those moments I often took solace in the idea that there are some things, like *agape*, that can't be confined to words or equations or logic. When I think of the love I have that mirrors God's—the love for my family, my friends, yes, even for crew—and I think of that love multiplied by God, I have hope again. ❧

Virginia Harness grew up as the child of two pastors in the Church of the Brethren. She served as the archival intern in the Brethren Historical Library and Archives from July 2011 to June 2012. She graduated from St. John's College in Annapolis, Md., in 2011 with a B.A., in liberal arts. She is currently pursuing her a master's degree in architectural history at the University of Virginia.



# HOW TO GROW A pastor

by Daniel L. Fullen

*[Circleville (Ohio) Church of the Brethren celebrated its 100-year anniversary Sunday, Sept. 16. In the pulpit that day was Daniel Fullen, pastor at Good Shepherd Church of the Brethren in Tipp City, Ohio. Fullen (pictured above at his licensing in 2004) was raised in the Circleville congregation, and credits the upbringing he received there with guiding him toward the pastoral ministry. On these pages he reflects on the years he spent there, and how they shaped his life. —Ed.]*

**M**y earliest connection to the Circleville Church of the Brethren is a small, baby-blue, New Testament. It holds a special place on the shelves in my study. It was given to me by the Circleville congregation 23 days after I was born, on the Sunday that I was dedicated as a child.

When a child is dedicated to the Lord, it is really the congregation that is making a commitment. They are promising to raise a child in the ways of the Lord. In my case, that is something that I feel the Circleville Church of the Brethren has done well.

My earliest memories include sitting in a Sunday school classroom in the basement of the church. Duct tape stretched across a hole in the middle of our study table. There were old, tattered Bibles in the room, and wrinkled, cracked pictures of Jesus on the walls. Listening to Bible studies those Sunday mornings, I learned about God's love, and I witnessed that love in those who cared enough to tell me those stories.

This has always been a small church, but over the course of 100 years the members have learned that faith in God is much stronger than numbers.

Jesus said, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Be moved,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible" (Matt. 17:20).

Over the years, this church has encountered some mountains. As members of this church, we, on our own, may not have had what it takes to move those mountains. But somehow, through us, God found a way to move those mountains. Some years back, we decided to make the church handicap-accessible—a costly project. After much discussion and debate, we raised enough money to install an elevator.

Of course, there were a few kinks to be ironed out. One Sunday morning the emergency bell rang and all the men in the church ran to the elevator. It was stuck between floors with three women inside. I don't know how she did it, but somehow Eleanor—one of our older members—managed to squeeze out of the elevator and pull herself onto the main floor. Gasping for air, she said, "I will never get back on that elevator!"

Years later, my wife and I visited with Eleanor in her home. She hadn't been to church in a while. "I would love to attend, but I just cannot make it up those steps anymore." My wife innocently suggested that she could use the elevator.

Eleanor's eyes got big and she cried, "Oh, no! I will



*The congregation expresses their praises as past ministers share during the 100-year anniversary. (far right) The New Testament given to Daniel by the congregation when he was a child and the skeleton key that he found in desk drawer at the church.*



never get back on that thing!" All I could do was smile.

One Sunday morning, years later, the congregation watched in amazement as a quiet, 14-year old kid stepped into the pulpit wearing his Sunday best.

"Who is this?" they asked. "Isn't he that shy kid who never spoke a word in all those Sunday school classes and prayer meetings?"

I opened my Bible. My body shook and my lips trembled.

**Today, after six years of doing my best to simply love these people as their pastor, the congregation had finally finished its job of "growing me."**

But I opened my mouth and began to speak. I preached the only thing I knew: what they had taught me. I preached God's love. I told them that God's love was seated there in the pews.

Some years later, on another bright Sunday morning, Charles Cupp, or Chuck, as we liked to call him, baptized me in that same church, and I felt the Spirit rush over me. When Chuck came to the church to serve as interim pastor, he figured he'd just be there a little while. That little while turned into a six-year interim. Some in the congregation joked that Chuck would be with us until I had finished growing up. I think God must have a sense of humor because that is exactly what happened.

The congregation invited me to fill the post. I soon began working from an office in the basement of the church, right next to the Sunday school classroom where it all began. The space was no brighter or warmer, but somehow it felt right when I sat down at that old desk where many pastors had sat to write their sermons. I was only 19, and a Bible college

student, but I had been called to the pastorate of my home congregation.

One day, while working in the church office, I got distracted. I should have been working on my sermon. Instead, I decided to clean out the desk drawers and discovered an old skeleton key. I figured it must be the key to the office. After nearly six years, I finally found it.

I tried it and discovered that it worked. I turned the key and locked the door. But when I tried to unlock it the key broke. Suddenly, I was a prisoner in my own office. I called my wife. I told her not to call anyone, but she immediately called my uncle. I never knew that he was a karate expert until he kicked

in the door to my office. To this day there is tape covering my cracked, splintered office door. But at least I was free.

Today, after six years of doing my best to simply love these people as their pastor, the congregation had finally finished its job of "growing me." As difficult as it might have been to leave home, I decided it was time to move on. Still, I find it comforting and enriching to recall those stories of my beginning among such a loving church family.

As the Circleville Church of the Brethren celebrates 100 years, of all the stories that I have shared, and of all the stories that could be shared, these are all stories of faith, hope, and love. It is this congregation's embodiment of these three things that has grown the church. And it is the love that these people have shared with me that has led me on this journey. **AMEN**

Daniel L. Fullen is a licensed minister in the Southern Ohio District of the Church of the Brethren. He is pastor at Good Shepherd Church of the Brethren in Tipp City, Ohio, and is a master of divinity student at Bethany Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Heather, are the parents of two daughters: Zoe, 5, and Leigh-Ellen, 1.

# The woman taken in adultery

It really had almost nothing to do with me. I understood that nearly from the first. Somehow his wife had wormed it out of him, our liaisons I mean. I hated her then for that but now ... well, time is healing salve. Had I been in her place ... But that is neither here nor there.

The point is I was terrified. Oh, not the stoning. I really never thought that it would come to that. It was the shame, ruin of everything I was or hoped to be. My father would, I knew, turn his back on me. And did.

Try to understand. Try to imagine being snatched from lover's bed, clutching cloth to cover your trembling body, being dragged through streets, then thrown like trash before the one they called the rabbi.

I knew what they were up to. I'd heard how they were out to get him into trouble. Yes, they used me as their bait. Men are very good at that, using us, I mean.

He knelt down then, acted like he hadn't heard the charge they brought against me, hadn't heard their question put to him.

He fingered figures in the dust. I wish that I could tell you what he wrote. I cannot. Then he stood and faced them, calm as an unfluttered flag. He spoke and knelt again and wrote.

One by one they went away, eyes downcast, faces sour and sullen. He rose and looked me in the face. His eyes were bathed in light. They spoke to me his sorrow, not contempt. I wonder to this day what he felt sorry for: for me, for those who walked away, for all of us, himself included? Some say when he was hanging on the cross he prayed forgiveness for the very ones who'd hung him up to die. If so, I'm not surprised. I'm not surprised at all.

Ken Gibble is an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren and a prolific author. He lives in Greencastle, Pa.



The Widow I, by Kathe Kollwitz, 1921

# Sighs to deep for words

by Joshua Brockway

**T**here are times when a scripture I have heard dozens of times stands out as if I had never read it before. For me, Romans 8 is a perfect example.

Romans 8 is a grand narrative on life in the Holy Spirit. Ask many Christians to share their favorite scripture passages, and verse 28 is sure to be mentioned. "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." Others turn to verse 31 as a source of great comfort: "What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?"

One afternoon, stretched out on the couch reading for class, I came across a reference to Romans 8:26. "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." I found myself asking "Why haven't I heard this before?" I felt as though Paul was talking specifically to me. The words of comfort lifted a significant

weight from my shoulders. I don't need to know how to pray, I just need to pray. Or, as a number of Christian writers have said, the desire to pray is in fact prayer. The Spirit does the work. I don't need to find the right prayer or the perfect method. As Jesuit writer J.J. O'Leary said, my wanting to pray "is the evidence that God is already at work."

In our technological society, where science has defined the ways we think about all of our lives, we often find that preachers are quick to give us the right equation for spiritual growth. The shelves of Christian bookstores are full of books that purport to give the perfect method or the tidy way of growing up in Christ. The number of titles on ways of praying alone could fill a library. Each writer and speaker is ready to give everyone that one technique that will give us the spiritual high we all long for.

Nothing could be further from the way Paul talks about our lives in the Holy Spirit. At the end of chapter seven

he outlines what some might call a pessimistic portrait of human effort. "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (Romans 7:15). Even more starkly he notes later that "I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand" (Romans 7:21). The tone, however, shifts in chapter eight. While we are bound by our inability to do good, "there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (8:1).

That refrain continues as Paul turns toward the prayers of Christ's followers. He even says without qualification that we do not always know how to pray. That is just the way things are. The greater news is that our inability, our own weakness, is not the last word. Rather, the indwelling of the Spirit bridges the gap between our faults and God's love. As soon as we confess Christ we are simply pointing to the fact that God, in the Spirit, is already at work within us. There is

mentality of our age simply cannot make space for our failings, nor can it fathom the need for companionship and empowerment. So we turn to techniques that seem infallible and present masks of accomplishment to those around us. Yet, when struggles mount that are beyond formulas and reveal the cracks in our public image, what are we to do?

This is especially poignant with regard to prayer. We attend worship, lead meetings, and serve with fervor. Yet, when asked about our prayer lives, the image we have worked so hard to present begins to crumble. Or when events around us spiral beyond our abilities to manage the outcomes, it becomes all too clear where our true and natural weakness lies.

This is far from mere poetics or abstract theology. In St. Louis this summer, those of us at the Church of the Brethren's Annual Conference heard from our Nigerian brothers and

---

## IT DID NOT MATTER MUCH WHAT WE WERE SAYING. IN FACT, IN THE FACE OF SUCH LOSS AND FEAR, WORDS ARE TRITE. YET, KNOWING THAT THE SPIRIT INTERCEDES FOR US ALL, IT WAS IF THE "SIGHS TOO DEEP FOR WORDS" WERE FINALLY AUDIBLE.

no technique or method that can guarantee a return on our effort. God is already working in us. In any dictionary that is the very definition of grace.

I was seeking a technique as I lay there on the couch. I wanted to know how one ought to pray. In the language of Paul, I knew that how I wanted to relate to God was not what was actually taking place. So I was hoping there would be some method to make what I longed for happen. All that was needed, I thought, was a "some assembly required" instruction manual: "Insert prayer A into time slot B and rest in God." To read Paul's reminder that my prayer life does not depend on my techniques but emerges out of the Holy Spirit's activity within me was eye-opening. It simply lifted the weight of performance from my shoulders and allowed me to realize that the gift of God's Spirit speaks when I cannot.

Throughout Romans 8 Paul is reminding the readers that the life in Christ is also the life of the Spirit. That is to say simply that in confessing Christ, our own spirit and the Holy Spirit work collaboratively. In the Roman Empire, where status, citizenship, and piety were paramount for any kind of success, Paul reminds both Gentile and Jew that the work among us is not a product of our status or ability. Rather, the workings for good around us are a result of the Spirit's companionship with us as believers. Thus he says, "When we cry 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:15-16).

For us today, the idea that our ability is not just our own, but a product of a relationship, is nearly heresy. The "bootstraps"

sisters about the violence in their home country. Moderator Tim Harvey invited the Conference into a time of prayer, especially around the delegate tables. Soon, out of the silence, the multiple prayers could be heard filling the hall. Yet, the words were not intelligible; only a quiet murmur arose from the circles. It did not matter much what we were saying. In fact, in the face of such loss and fear, words are trite. Yet, knowing that the Spirit intercedes for us all, it was if the "sighs too deep for words" were finally audible. In our weakness and inability to change the events, the Holy Spirit was doing the heavy lifting.

Listening to the sounds of prayer that afternoon, I could not help but think that we were doing exactly what Paul had explained to the Romans. We were not looking to processes or beliefs to keep us together. We simply did what the church does: In the presence of a fallen world, we prayed together and let the Spirit do the work on our behalf. Regardless of where we stood in the previous vote, we turned to God together in the common sighs and murmurs of petition. We lifted sisters and brothers in Christ around the world in one prayer with many words and voices. Yet that single prayer was not our work. Our prayer was made one through God's own Spirit among us in our common weakness. Our masks of ability and competence were shattered in the face of violence beyond our control. Bowing in prayer, we finally heard the Spirit's sighing companionship which we have longed to know for years. **W**

Joshua Brockway is director of spiritual life and discipleship for the Church of the Brethren.

## Children's Disaster Services helps families in Louisiana and Oklahoma

Children's Disaster Services (CDS) spent a week in early September aiding children in Louisiana who were displaced by Hurricane Isaac. Fifteen CDS volunteers were deployed to this heavily impacted area on Sept. 3. R. Jan Thompson served as project manager for the response.

Photo courtesy of CDS



The group of CDS volunteers ended up serving in two teams and set up temporary child care centers in separate American Red Cross shelters in the towns of Baker and Gonzales, La. Thompson worked out of Port Allen, La., to coordinate the response.

"They are very busy with children, taking the children in shifts," reported Roy Winter, associate executive director for Global Mission and Service and Brethren Disaster Ministries, shortly following the start of the effort.

"Please keep our volunteers and all disaster survivors—especially the littlest ones—in your prayers," said CDS on the program's Facebook page.

Previously, CDS volunteers had spent nine days in August caring for children affected by fires in Oklahoma.

Working cooperatively with FEMA and the American Red Cross, CDS provides trained and certified volunteers to set up child care centers in shelters and disaster assistance centers. Specially trained to respond to traumatized children, CDS volunteers provide a calm, safe, and reassuring presence in the midst of the chaos that follows disasters.

Go to [www.brethren.org/cds](http://www.brethren.org/cds) for more about CDS and a list of fall workshops to train more CDS volunteers at a variety of locations around the country. Updates from CDS are posted regularly at [www.facebook.com/cds.cob](http://www.facebook.com/cds.cob).

*A child paints pictures of trees while being cared for by Children's Disaster Services in Oklahoma, after families were displaced by wildfires. CDS associate director Judy Bezon remarked that children affected by disaster are faced by the*

## Moderator Bob Krouse plans visits to congregations and districts

Annual Conference moderator Bob Krouse, who will preside in Charlotte, N.C., at the 2013 Conference from June 29-July 3, is welcoming invitations to speak at congregations and district events in the coming year. "While he may not be able to accept every invitation he receives, he hopes to visit many of our districts during the coming year," said a memo from Conference Office director Chris Douglas. "These opportunities provide districts and congregations ways to maintain contact with Annual Conference, as well as giving

the moderator important feedback on the pulse of our denomination."

Honoraria for the visits will not be accepted. However, the Conference Office hopes the hosting body will provide travel reimbursement to the Annual Conference fund. Checks for travel reimbursement should be made payable to "Annual Conference" marked "Moderator Travel Expenses," and sent to: Annual Conference Office, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120. Extend invitations to the moderator in care of [annualconference@brethren.org](mailto:annualconference@brethren.org).

Cheryl Brumbaugh-Crayford





*Two youth smile despite the heat at a workcamp at ECHO in Florida.*

Cat Gong

## Workcamp coordinators wrap up their service, review the summer

The Church of the Brethren Workcamp Office has simultaneously wrapped up the summer and begun gearing up for next summer's events.

Twenty-three workcamps were held this summer: seven for junior high youth, 13 for senior highs, one for young adults, and two for intergenerational groups. Some 500 people attended the camps, including 100 advisors and adult participants and more than 350 youth and young adult participants. At each camp there were also two leaders provided by the Workcamp Office. Of those leaders, more than 30 were volunteers.

Cat Gong and Rachel Witkovsky, working through Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) in the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill., served as coordinators for the 2012 season.

Gong grew up in State College, Pa., and attended University Baptist and Brethren Church. After graduating from Penn State

with a degree in sociology she decided she wanted to give back. Growing up, she had always done workcamps with her youth group, and when she heard about BVS placements in the Workcamp Office she applied right away. "It has been an amazing year here in Elgin," she commented, "and an amazing summer serving with youth and young adults from our denomination!"

Witkovsky graduated from Elizabethtown (Pa.) College in 2010 with a theater performance major and a creative writing minor. Her home congregation is Stone Church of the Brethren in Huntingdon, Pa. "I've gone on many service trips before," Witkovsky said, "but the places I went and the people I worked with this summer will always have a special place in my heart." Her time with BVS is not ending, however. She will continue as National Junior High Conference coordinator, working in the Youth and Young Adult Ministries Office.

## Working with displaced in northern Iraq

Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) is reporting success in its work in northern Iraq. The Iraq team has spent years working against attacks on displaced residents of villages along Iraq's borders with Turkey and Iran. In 2006, CPT began visiting people forced to evacuate their homes every year, conducted investigations, and detailed impacts on civilians. In 2011, Iranian mortar, rocket, and shelling attacks, and bombing from Turkish fighter jets damaged and destroyed more life and property than in any year since the operations began.

In August 2011 the CPT team started a series of public events to raise awareness of the attacks, as the villagers themselves feared personal repercussions from speaking out against the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq. The CPT team witnessed outside the Iranian, Turkish, and US consulates and the KRG parliament; visited the KRG Human Rights Committee; and, on behalf of village partners, delivered letters and goodwill gifts to the Turkish and Iranian consulates. A full report can be found at [www.cpt.org/cptnet/2012/08/07/iraq-reflection-change-happens-be-good](http://www.cpt.org/cptnet/2012/08/07/iraq-reflection-change-happens-be-good).

## UPCOMINGEVENTS

**Oct. 5-6 Children's Disaster Services Training**, at two locations at Modesto (Calif.) Church of the Brethren, and at New Hope Christian Church in Oklahoma City, Okla.

**Oct. 7 World Communion Sunday and Global Mission Offering**

**Oct. 12-13** is the date for three district conferences: **Atlantic Northeast District Conference** at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College, **Atlantic Southeast District Conference** at Good Shepherd Church of the Brethren in Bradenton, Fla., and **Mid-Atlantic District Conference** in Easton, Md.

**Oct. 12-13 Children's Disaster Services Training** at Camp Brethren Heights in Rodney, Mich.

**Oct. 13 Deacon Training** at Camp Pine Lake, Eldora, Iowa

**Oct. 19-20** two district conferences take place: **Middle Pennsylvania District Conference** in Bedford, Pa., and **Southern Ohio District Conference** at West Charleston Church of the Brethren in Tipp City, Ohio

**Oct. 20-22 Mission and Ministry Board** meeting at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill.

**Oct. 26-28 Progressive Brethren Gathering** at La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren

**Oct. 27-28 Children's Disaster Services Training** at Camp Ithiel in Gotha, Fla.

**Oct. 27-28 Deacon Training** at the Gathering in Western Plains District, Salina, Kan.

## Reorganized BBT Board focuses on committee work and investments

The annual reorganization of Brethren Benefit Trust's Board of Directors marked the beginning of a three-day series of meetings involving board members and staff in Elgin, Ill., from Aug. 3-5. Led by re-elected chair Karen O. Crim and vice chair Ann Quay Davis, the board's committee work drove key decisions in the areas of investments, Brethren Pension Plan, the Retirement Benefits Fund Contingency Fund, and the administration of the board.

Brian Solem



*Representatives of Boston Common met with members of the Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT) Board in August. The BBT Board met in August this year, in place of holding the board's usual post-Annual Conference meeting in St. Louis.*

This year's summer meeting replaced a much shorter four-hour meeting typically held in July at the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference. "We expanded the summer meeting so that we had enough time to delve into issues both as committees and as a full board," said Crim.

The Investment Committee interviewed two

investment managers to replace its current short-term manager, and it chose Ponder Investment Co. based on strong performance history and willingness to meet BBT's socially responsible investing parameters.

A third investment manager was also interviewed during the day-long Investment Committee meeting—domestic large-cap core and international equity manager Boston Common. Representatives of the Boston-based firm responded to a questionnaire and presented information about its performance as part of a three-year review cycle for BBT's eight investment managers.

Two new board members had their first meeting on the committee: Tom McCracken, a financial adviser from Dallastown, Pa., and Eric Kabler, an investment adviser from Johnstown, Pa. They joined Harry Rhodes, an attorney from Roanoke, Va., and voted him committee chair.

"We need to continually assess the funds that we're offering our clients and members so that we can best meet the investment and diversification needs of those we serve," said Rhodes. "It is this committee's responsibility to give BBT's constituents the tools they need to manage their assets well."

The Governance Committee met to continue its mission of assessing board performance, developing resources to train new board members, and growing the pool of candidates for future board members. Donna Forbes Steiner and Carol Hess were elected chair and vice chair of that committee, respectively. The Budget Audit and Review Committee also met to elect Ann Quay Davis chair and Karen O. Crim vice chair, as well as to review a recommendation from BBT staff. The Property Task Force gathered to assess BBT's office space needs.

—Brian Solem is publications coordinator for Brethren Benefit Trust.

## Brethren Press, MennoMedia to develop Gather 'Round successor

Brethren Press and MennoMedia are beginning work on a successor to the Gather 'Round Sunday school curriculum. The two publishing houses, working on behalf of the Church of the Brethren and the Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, plan to continue their decades-long cooperative work to produce joint Christian education curriculum.

Gather 'Round, which has received kudos from other Christian denominations who have signed on as cooperating and

endorsing partners, has been used in congregations across the US and Canada for six years. Gather 'Round continues through the summer of 2014.

The new curriculum will build on Gather 'Round as well as its predecessor, the Jubilee curriculum. Plans are to make the next curriculum in the series available to congregations beginning in the fall of 2014.

MennoMedia and Brethren Press have hired Rebecca Seiling and Rose Stutzman to begin development of the new curriculum. MennoMedia

will administer the project on behalf of the two publishing houses. For a period of time, work on the new project will run concurrently with Gather 'Round.

Seiling began May 1 in a one-year assignment as project developer. She has been a Gather 'Round writer and editor since 2004. Stutzman started June 4 as project director. She also continues as editor for Gather 'Round, a position she has held since 2006, until next May when she will shift to fulltime on the new project.

## BVS-BRF orientation unit completes training

Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) unit 298, a unit held jointly with the Brethren Revival Fellowship (BRF), completed orientation Aug. 19-28 at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. The seven new volunteers, their congregations or home towns, and project sites follow: Joyelle Bollinger and Hannah Wagner of Cocalico Church of the Brethren in Denver, Pa., will serve with the Root Cellar in Lewiston, Maine. Sarah Bucher of Heidelberg Church of the Brethren in Myerstown, Pa., is to work at the Maine Home School Project in Lewiston. Carol Fretz and Joe Fretz of Cocalico Church of the Brethren in Denver, Pa., are going to Maine Ministries in Lewiston. Ross Gingrich of Heidelberg Church of the Brethren, will work at the Good Shepherd Food Bank. Sandra Hughes of Central, S.C., will go to Cross Keys Village Brethren Home in New Oxford, Pa.

Photo by courtesy of BVS



*The members of BVS-BRF Unit 298: (front from left) Hannah Wagner, Sandra Hughes, Sarah Bucher, Joe Fretz; (back from left) Peggy and Walter Heisey (orientation coordinators), Ross Gingrich, Joyelle Bollinger, Carol Fretz.*

NJHC 2013

For more information  
and to register, visit  
[www.brethren.org/njhc](http://www.brethren.org/njhc)

Registration  
opens online  
January 4.

National Junior High Conference  
 Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, PA  
 June 14 - 16, 2013

Photo by Glenn Riegel

Church of the Brethren

## Couple goes to Israel/Palestine with accompaniment program

Church of the Brethren members Joyce and John Cassel of Oak Park, Ill., have begun work in Palestine and Israel with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program of the World Council of Churches.

They departed Sept. 1 for a three-month tour of duty, from September through November. The Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) brings international workers to the West Bank "to experience life under occupation," according to the description of the program ( [www.eappi.org](http://www.eappi.org) ).

Ecumenical accompaniers provide protective presence to vulnerable communities, monitor and report human rights abuses, and support Palestinians and Israelis working together for peace. When they return home, participants are expected to campaign for a just and peaceful resolution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict through an end to the occupation, respect for international law, and implementation of UN resolutions. Those who participate go through an extensive interview process and receive training and several days of orientation from EAPPI staff.

A group of 33 from all over the world are working with EAPPI this fall, including people from Australia, South Africa, the Philippines, Canada, and European countries, as well as the US. The Cassels, who are retired, are the only Americans in the team, and are two of the three oldest members. The group is divided into small teams living in various areas. The Cassels will

*Joyce and John Cassel, Church of the Brethren members from Oak Park, Ill., are serving as ecumenical accompaniers in Israel and Palestine this fall.*



be working in two different locations in the West Bank during their months of service.

The Cassels are receiving support from the denomination's Global Mission and Service program, including travel costs and travel insurance. They are supported by On Earth Peace with blogging and social networking support. OEP peace witness coordinator Matt Guynn is their denominational support person.

"We assume we will learn much and hope we can find ways to share our learnings and experiences to the benefit of the larger church in the US," they wrote in a letter of appreciation for the support they are receiving from the church.

After their return from the Middle East, the Cassels are scheduled to report to the Mission and Ministry Board next March. During their time in Israel and Palestine they are blogging about their work at [www.3monthsinpalestine.tumblr.com](http://www.3monthsinpalestine.tumblr.com).

### PERSONNELCHANGES

**Martha R. Beach** will retire as executive minister of Atlantic Southeast District, effective Jan. 1, 2013. Beach began her ministry as district executive in 2000, as a long-time active lay leader in the church. During her tenure as district executive she was both licensed (April 2003) and ordained (July 2011) at St. Petersburg (Fla.) Church of the Brethren. Prior to moving to Florida, she served numerous terms as chair of the church board at her congregation as well as chair of the Trustee Board of Morrison's Cove Home in Pennsylvania. Her professional experience was in the insurance industry as owner of her own agency and representative

for several other agencies. In that work she attained the CLU designation from American College in 1995 and the LUTCF designation from Life Underwriters Training Council in 1989.

**John R. Hipps** began Sept. 24 as director of Donor Relations for the Church of the Brethren. He is a member of Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren and brings a broad range of knowledge and expertise in fundraising to the position, having helped carry out a \$40 million fundraising campaign at Bridgewater College. In previous work, he has been director of development at the Shenandoah County Free Clinic in Woodstock, Va., and served in the

Office of Institutional Advancement at Bridgewater College where from 2008 to 2011 he was executive director of development, and from 2005 to 2008 was director of special gifts. Other professional experience has included 13 years with Air Products and Chemicals Inc. in Allentown, Pa. He holds a bachelor of science in Business Administration and Economics from Bridgewater College, and a master's degree in Business Administration from the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va. He will work out of a main office in Bridgewater while also working one week per month at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill.

## Candidates discuss how they will deal with poverty

President Barack Obama and Mitt Romney both responded to an invitation by the "Circle of Protection" initiative to go on the record about their intentions for dealing with poverty, according to the National Council of Churches. View the presidential candidates' video statements at [www.nccendpoverty.org/praythevote](http://www.nccendpoverty.org/praythevote).

Brethren staff person Nate Hosler is one of the Christian leaders quoted in an NCC release about the Circle of Protection, which is made up of more than 65 heads of denominations, including Church of the Brethren general secretary Stan Noffsinger, alongside relief and development agencies and other Christian organizations.

"The Church of the Brethren has firmly believed that as followers of Jesus we are called to serve one another in the way that Jesus demonstrated by washing his disciples' feet," Hosler said. "We urge all leaders to support programs that care for persons in poverty. We recognize that as individuals and families are assisted they will not only lead healthier lives but will be able to assist others in need."



Serving the  
Church of the Brethren  
for more than 125 years



We've been in the business of insuring Churches for more than 100 years.

With the peace of mind that a Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company policy brings, your church leaders can be free to concentrate on the work to which God has called them.

# Brethren

MUTUAL AID AGENCY  
A Mutual Aid Association Company

For more information call

**800-255-1243**

or visit our website at  
[MAABRETHREN.COM](http://MAABRETHREN.COM)

© 9/9/BMAA/1/3/P

## Time-tested perspectives for everyday life



**DUNKER GUIDES**  
*Accessible. Concise. Brethren.*



**Brethren Press®**

1451 Dundee Ave, Elgin, IL 60120

phone (800) 441-3712

fax (800) 667-8188

[www.brethrenpress.com](http://www.brethrenpress.com)

[www.facebook.com/brethrenpress](http://www.facebook.com/brethrenpress)



# A different kind of resolution

*I never liked jazz music because jazz music doesn't resolve. But I was outside the Bagdad Theater in Portland one night when I saw a man playing the saxophone. I stood there for fifteen minutes, and he never opened his eyes. After that I liked jazz music. Sometimes you have to watch somebody love something before you can love it yourself. It is as if they are showing you the way. I used to not like God because God didn't resolve. But that was before any of this happened. —Donald Miller, *Blue Like Jazz**

**T**he film *Blue Like Jazz* is loosely based on Donald Miller's book by the same name, which is largely comprised of Miller's personal reflections while attending classes at Reed College in Portland, Ore. In the film, writer-director Steve Taylor explores similar themes through the narrative arc of a boisterous, quirky, romantic comedy.



MIKE MCKEEVER

The film focuses on a 19-year-old, also named Don Miller, who is a devoted son to his divorced mother and is active in the life of a strict, Southern Baptist church in Houston. As he prepares to attend a nearby conservative Baptist Bible college, his entire world is upended when he discovers that his mother is involved in an affair with his revered youth

pastor. Attempting to flee the failings of his own community, Don quickly finds himself thrust into a starkly different kind of community when he enrolls at Reed College, portrayed as the most liberal, contrarian and godless campus in America.

Reed's cultural and political landscape serves as a backdrop for the film's focus on Don's spiritual journey. As the story unfolds we discover, along with Don, that God is at work not just inside the church but also without in some surprising ways. We also see that Don is not so much running away from his faith as he is on a quest for a more authentic expression of faith beyond the borders of his fundamentalist upbringing.

Steve Taylor's own evangelical subculture has provided a large target for his keen eye over the years, but never in a mean-spirited fashion. In the film, Taylor explores hypocrisy, conformity, and cultural blinders both in the church and on the campus. Both communities are seen as capable of

authenticity and hypocrisy, virtue and folly. However, if you were to flip the script and tell a secular tale of an atheist going to a highly religious school, one wonders if students and faculty would be treated as charitably and evenhandedly.

This kind of nuanced and textured story is rare in Christian film. It is a sad truth that Christian films are often thinly veiled advertisements or endorsements of a particular point of view. Rarely do they rise above the level of propaganda, let alone challenge preconceptions or inspire reflection. Nevertheless, some Christians have critiqued Taylor's satire because it does not provide audiences with answers. Others found it anticlimactic and unsatisfying because the story is not neatly resolved. It simply did not fit the categories of a typical Christian film. Of course, this raises questions about the kinds of expectations Christians bring to a film and what constitutes a "Christian" movie.

*Blue Like Jazz* is certainly not like Christian films such as *Fireproof*, *Courageous* or *Facing the Giants*, all produced by Sherwood Baptist Church. (In fact, the senior pastor of Sherwood Baptist Church declared that anyone working with Miller or Taylor would be banned from ever working on films that the church produced. This proclamation was handed down before the film was ever viewed.) Such films provide a triumphant view of Christian life in which believers always conquer adversity by the end of the story. *Blue Like Jazz* portrays believers as fallible, struggling, and wrestling with doubt. Christians face problems which may not yield simple or immediate solutions. But does the life of faith always have clear resolution?

For those who believe that faith is about having all the answers, the film's plot and conclusion may prove unsatisfying. For those who view faith as living out the questions, *Blue Like Jazz* may prove rewarding. It will nourish those who hunger to find authentic incarnations of the faith, engaging the broader culture in all of its open-endedness and freeform character. As with jazz, such persons may hear a different kind of resolution. **W**

Mike McKeever is professor of biblical studies at Judson University in Elgin, Ill., where he also directs the Reel Conversations film series. He is a member of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren.

## ABOUT THE MOVIE

**Title:** *Blue Like Jazz*. **Theatrical release:** April 13, 2012. **Running time:** 108 minutes.

**Director:** Steve Taylor. **Written by:** Steve Taylor, with Donald Miller and Ben Pearson.

**MPAA rating:** PG-13 for mature thematic material. **Production Company:** Ruckus Films.

In a review of the film in *Variety*, Justin Chang says, "The film abstains from any overt message-mongering; if it has a lesson to impart, it's that spiritual transformation begins from a place of inward-looking humility, of owning one's own shortcomings before decrying anyone else's."

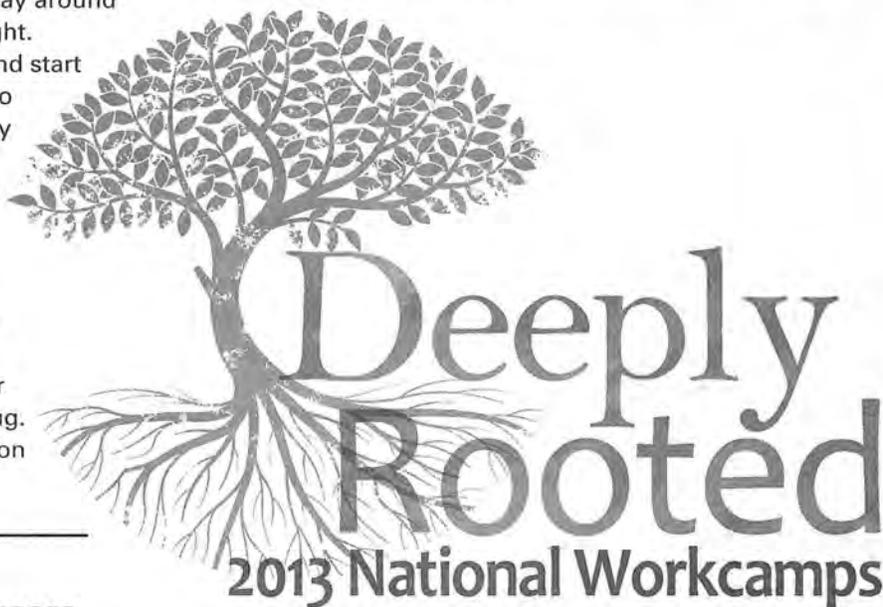


## Workcamp ministry announces theme for 2013

The Church of the Brethren Workcamp Ministry has announced a theme and released a logo for the 2013 workcamps to be held next summer.

The theme, "Deeply Rooted," with the tagline "Let your living spill over into thanksgiving," is based on Colossians 2:6-7 (The Message): "My counsel for you is simple and straightforward: Just go ahead with what you've been given. You received Christ Jesus, the Master; now live him. You're deeply rooted in him. You're well constructed upon him. You know your way around the faith. Now do what you've been taught. School's out; quit studying the subject and start living it! And let your living spill over into thanksgiving." The logo was designed by Debbie Noffsinger.

New workcamp coordinators have begun preparations for 2013. Katie Cummings of Summit Church of the Brethren in Bridgewater, Va., and Tricia Ziegler of Sebring (Fla.) Church of the Brethren, are serving as workcamp coordinators through Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS). They began their work Aug. 20, and they will complete BVS orientation later this fall.



### McPherson celebrates 125 years

McPherson (Kan.) College is celebrating 125 years since its founding, and its deep roots in the Church of the Brethren, with a special worship service on Oct. 21. The service will begin at 10 a.m. in Brown Auditorium on the campus of McPherson College.

The planning committee features one person from the five closest Church of the Brethren congregations. Already, members of Church of the Brethren congregations in McPherson, Monitor, Hutchinson, Wichita, and Newton are planning to come to McPherson College for the occasion. Campus minister Steve Crain will deliver a message on "Kneeling Before the Lord of the Harvest."

For those unable to attend, plans are being made for a live online stream of the service. Watch for details on [mcpherson.edu](http://mcpherson.edu).

### Manchester welcomes pharmacy students

The 64 first students of Manchester University's new College of Pharmacy received their clinical white coats in a ceremony Aug. 9. In her welcome, president Jo Young Switzer spoke of the Manchester heritage.

"We meet today in Cordier Auditorium, named after Manchester graduate Andrew Cordier, a top aide to Dag Hammarskjold who, with others, founded the United Nations," said Switzer, who also spoke of alumni Paul Flory, who won the Nobel Prize in chemistry, and his roommate Roy Plunkett, who invented Teflon. "And, we meet today on a campus where the nation's first academic program in Peace Studies was established in 1948 and where it thrives today, known worldwide for its combination of theory with practice."

Students received their white coats from faculty mentor and dean Dave McFadden.

*The new College of Pharmacy at Manchester University.*



The Church of the Brethren  
Office of Ministry  
gratefully  
acknowledges  
the faithful  
ministry and  
leadership of  
the pastors  
of the  
Church of the Brethren.



  
Church of the Brethren

**MESSENGER in print or sent electronically?**

Paper . . . print . . . I like to hold MESSENGER and can read it so much easier than electronic. I will happily pay for it.

**Jim Kipp**  
Newport, Pa.

**A plurality of methods needed**

Jonathan Stauffer, in his July/August MESSENGER article, "Why our roots in the land still matter," puts at odds different segments or methods of agricultural production. My life's experience in agriculture recognizes a plurality of agricultural production methods, for which validity is associated more with plurality than with any one method.

**John Hartsough**  
North Manchester, Ind.

**A one-sided perspective**

Other than the hopeful but misleading name of "Christian Peacemaker Teams"—with whom members of the Mission and Ministry Board will soon be traveling to the Holy Land—it is hard to understand why our pacifist denomination is so involved with an organization that has such a heavy-handed and one-sided perspective on the region. Also note the "impartial" former Israeli defense security officer scheduled, one of the very few who have changed their perspective about their earlier activity. This is not a "fair and balanced" effort to look at the situation and work for peace; it is only reinforcing previous convictions of these members and perhaps the entire board.

There have been more than enough anti-Jewish activities by Christians over the centuries without

**ASK SOMEONE WHO HAS TRAVELED WITH US!**

**2012 TOURS**

- SCENIC AUTUMN CRUISE: CANADA and NEW ENGLAND (October 6-16)
- MEDA TOUR to ETHIOPIA and TANZANIA (October 12-24)
- SERVICE TOUR to ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (October 13-22)
- ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR DOUG KLASSEN (October 17-26)
- ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR KEITH BLANK (November 7-16)
- VIETNAM and SINGAPORE (November 12-26)
- MUSIC and MARKETS: DANUBE CHRISTMAS CRUISE (December 1-9)

**2013 TOURS**

- JAMAICA - Its PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY and FRUITS (January 11-20)
- AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (February 1-21)
- CHURCHES and SAFARIS in KENYA and TANZANIA (February 8-20)
- PANAMA CANAL CRUISE (February 26-March 8)
- HOLY LAND TOUR with TRACY SPROAT (March 13-21)
- MEDA in MOROCCO (April 2-12)
- ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR PHIL WAGLER (April 16-25)
- MYSTERY TOUR (April 17-26)
- LANDS of the BIBLE with PASTORS SEBASTIAN and CAREY MEADOWS-HELMER (April 28-May 7)
- EXPLORE the WORLD of PAUL with TOM YODER NEUFELD (May 1-17)
- EUROPEAN HERITAGE with PAUL ZEHR (May 2-15)
- GREAT TREK TOUR with JOHN SHARP (May 7-18)

- HESSTON COLLEGE TOUR to EUROPE (May 24-June 6)
- EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (June 6-19)
- ICELAND ECO TOUR (June 10-19)
- COLUMBIA BIBLE COLLEGE ANABAPTIST HERITAGE TOUR (July 2-15)
- FOLLOWING the STEPS of MOSES with PASTOR NELSON KRABILL (July 22-31)
- ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (July 23-August 3)
- RUSSIA and UKRAINE: The MENNONITE STORY (September 4-16)
- THE BRITISH ISLES (England, Scotland and Wales) with DAVID and JOYCE ESHLEMAN (September 13-25)
- BEHIND the VEIL - EXPERIENCING EGYPT (October 17-28)
- CHINA and a YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE (November 1-15)
- ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR RICH BUCHER (November 5-14)
- EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS MARKETS (December 9-15)

**2014 TOURS**

- THE AMAZON RAINFOREST and GALAPAGOS ISLANDS (January 16-26)
- EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 15-27)
- SPECTACULAR SCANDINAVIA and its FJORDS (June 13-26)



*"Building bridges among Mennonites and other Christians and faiths around the world through custom-designed travel."*

CALL 1-800-565-0451 FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK YOUR TOUR  
E-MAIL: [office@tourmagination.com](mailto:office@tourmagination.com) WEB: [www.tourmagination.com](http://www.tourmagination.com)

9 Willow Street  
Waterloo, ON N2J 1V6 Canada

Reg. #50014322

2308 Wood Street  
Lancaster, PA 17603 USA

our denomination joining in this long history of persecution. Let alone calling it "peacemaking."

**Wayne Bishop**  
Altadena, Calif.

### Still called to be peacemakers

At the height of the conflict called "The Troubles" in Ireland and Northern Ireland, people were engaged in violence and revenge killing. Each side thought the other could not be trusted, and the conflict seemed endless.

After 30 years, a ceasefire was called, and Ministry of Reconciliation/Church of the Brethren peacemaker Barbara Date' and I were invited by Irish peacemaker Geoffrey Corry to help at his workshops. The intent of the workshops was to help rebuild peace among mid-level politicians by creating a safe and neutral place for them to

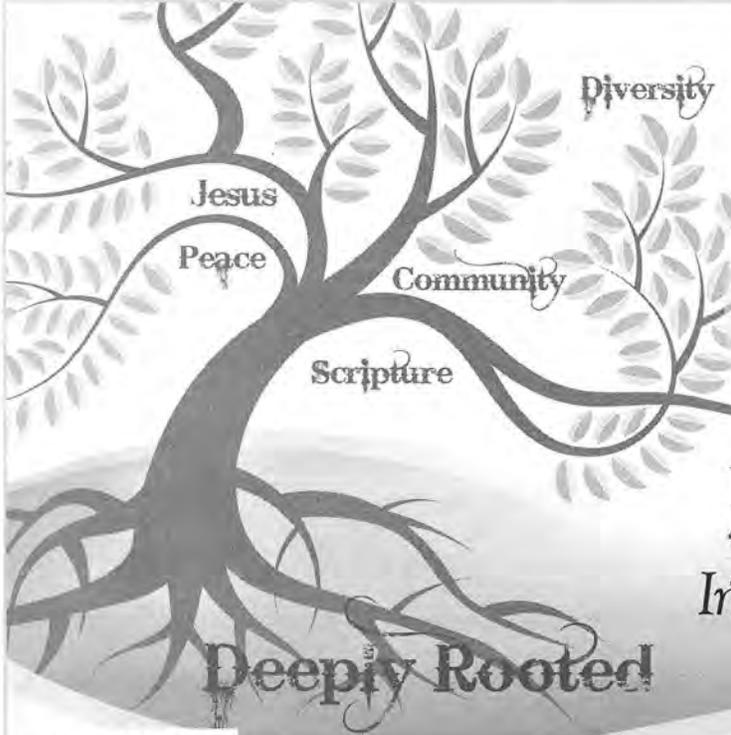
meet one another. At this retreat setting, politicians learned to know one other as human beings who could be trusted. Later on, if and when trouble erupted, each political group had the relationship and contact information of a trusted person from the other side.

The channels of communication established at that retreat could be put into service to help lower the tension and resolve the incident.

In the June, 2012 MESSENGER, I saw a similar effort being implemented by Church of the Brethren mission workers

### Pontius' Puddle





*Master of divinity and master of arts, one-year certificate program,  
local and distance tracks  
Grounded in distinctive Anabaptist and Radical Pietist perspectives*



# Discernment

*Intentional study, infinite possibility*



**Spring 2013 Application**  
**Deadline: December 1, 2012**



**BETHANY**  
*Theological Seminary*

Richmond, Indiana  
800-287-8822  
[www.bethanyseminary.edu/2omp](http://www.bethanyseminary.edu/2omp)

Nathan and Jennifer Hosler, who had recently finished work among Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Both groups have ample reason to not trust the other. The actions of extremists on both sides are attempting to silence all other voices and stop all efforts to build peace. However, through the good-faith efforts of Christian pastors and Muslim imams, the channels of communication to verify information and increase trust were

used to build peace with justice.

As it was in Ireland years ago, there are those on both sides who want to work to build up trust and create pathways to lasting peace. Our Annual Conference theme this year was "Continuing the Work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together." Is this not the work that Jesus would have us continue?

**Gail Erisman Valeta**  
Denver, Colo.

*The opinions expressed in "Letters" are not necessarily those of MESSENGER. Readers should receive them in the same way as when differing views are expressed in face-to-face conversation.*

*Letters should be brief, clear, and respectful of the opinions of others, with strong differences handled in the spirit of Matthew 18. Preference is given to letters that respond directly to items in MESSENGER. Anonymous letters will not be considered.*

*Send letters to MESSENGER, Attn: Letters, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120 or email messenger@brethren.org. Please include hometown and phone number.*

## When Elaine Frey turned 65 ...



She got quotes from several health insurers, but she said,

*"The only person I talked to was Steve Fath, my Everence representative. I knew I'd get an honest answer from him."*

If you're looking for a relationship with your insurer that's based on trust, call (800) 348-7468 ext. 2463 or visit [www.Everence.com/medsupp](http://www.Everence.com/medsupp).



## CLASSIFIED ADS

**Travel with a Christian group.** Visit Beijing, China (Great Wall, Forbidden City, etc.) before boarding Diamond Princess for cruise of South China Sea. Shore visits will be made with opportunity to visit interesting sites in Korea; Japan; Shanghai (China); Hong Kong; Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam; Bangkok, Thailand; and Singapore. October 3-25, 2013. For information please write to J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Bear Creek Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022 or email [kreiderk@etown.edu](mailto:kreiderk@etown.edu)

**The Shepherd's Guide through the Valley of Debt and Financial Change.** This is a comprehensive manual for financial management, counseling, and spiritual guidance. Designed with facts and processes for educators, deacons, pastors, mentors, coaches, study groups, and individuals combining personal finance with personal devotions. An Anabaptist perspective, it is based on 42 years experience at Purdue University and ministry. (AuthorHouse 978-1-4490-0572-6) Order direct from author Rev. Dr. Flora Williams, [florawill@aol.com](mailto:florawill@aol.com), 765-474-4232, 3815 Gate Road, Lafayette, IN 47909. \$21.60 includes postage.

**Renewal: Spiritual Messages through Flora's Poetry.** Messages through poems are life changing and thought provoking. They give hope, renewal, inspiration, and courage to believe. Worship aids, transitions, celebrations, birthdays, funerals, disability, pain, suffering, and loss are included. Most are Scripturally referenced. Use in worship services, meetings, mealtime, and devotions. Give as gifts or to library. Author Flora Williams PhD, MDiv, RFC, Professor Emerita and Ordained Minister. Order direct from author: [florawill@aol.com](mailto:florawill@aol.com), 765-474-4232, 3815 Gate Road, Lafayette, IN 47909. \$8.00.

**Hand in Hand with God: Witnessing on the Way.** More than sharing faith journey, Flora shows ways for witnessing and making changes especially after her tragic accident in Mexico. It gives hope and inspiration, extraordinary events, encounters with the Holy, and God-incidents. Chapters increase awareness of disability, interaction with those disabled, and ways to relearn. Use for study groups, personal/family devotions, and gifts. Author Flora Williams, Professor Emerita at Purdue University and Ordained Minister. Order direct from author: [florawill@aol.com](mailto:florawill@aol.com), 765-474-4232, 3815 Gate Road, Lafayette, IN 47909. \$10.50.

**Winter Camper Sites available in South Alabama** at the Cedar Creek Church of the Brethren in Citronelle. Contact Don Henderson at 251-510-4701 or Yvonne Williams at 251-827-6694.

Please send information to be included in *Turning Points* to Jean Clements, 1451 Dundee Ave, Elgin, IL 60120; 800-323-8039, ext. 320; [jclements@brethren.org](mailto:jclements@brethren.org). Information must be complete in order to be published. Information older than one year cannot be published.

## New Members

- Annville, Pa.:** Olivia Blauch, Jason Brimmer, Deb Finkbinder, Larz Kegerreis, Rebekah Kegerreis, Jack Kintigh, Toby Mongkon
- Bermudian, East Berlin, Pa.:** Betty Clouser, Trent Dayley, Ashley Frantz, Mike Frantz, Cynthia Helm, Janet Laughman, Donna Malone, Kathy McWilliams, Barb Messinger, Pat Miller, Wayne Miller, Joyce See, Hayley Sweitzer, Rodman Thompson
- Bethany, New Paris, Ind.:** Galen Groves, Marilyn Groves, Dorothy Kistler
- Blue Ridge, Va.:** Emily Price, Cameron Price
- Defiance, Ohio:** Christopher Hoover, Mandy Hoover, Emma Hoover, Rylee Hoover, Shane Hoover
- Fairview, Cordova, Md.:** Kara Hutchison
- Fellowship, Martinsburg, W.Va.:** Alma White, Geneva Sherman, Don Nisewarner, Danny Barrett, Bonnie Barrett, Trent Urias
- Glendora, Calif.:** Gabriela Sanchez
- Hempfield, Manheim, Pa.:** Libby Myers, Katie Miller, Jordan Hess, Cameron Hess, Peter Kontra, Shelley Kontra, Zach Kontra, Sara Kontra
- La Verne, Calif.:** Alexandra Brehmeyer, Aimee Butzlaff, Corrina Hofer, Matt Quinn, Barbara Quinn, Mike Peel, Cassie Cona-Peel, Donna Meekins
- Maple Grove, Ashland, Ohio:** Benjamin Freer
- Modesto, Calif.:** Haley Walker, Robin Edwards, John Edwards, Matthew Hazen, Marvin Thon

**Mount Herman**, Bassett, Va.:  
Tabitha Zeigler, Jasmine  
Zeigler, Courtney Hawkins

**Mountain Grove**, Fulks  
Run, Va.: Westley Larsen,  
Phyllis Dove, Patricia A.  
May, Carl A. Miller, Jr.

**Nampa**, Idaho: Tom Vance,  
Brenda Vance, Andrea  
Gonzales, Allie Gonzales,  
Jenetta Ahlers, David Langlo

**Neighborhood**,  
Montgomery, Ill.: Becky  
Shipman, Lauren  
Shipman, Tegan Zoephel,  
Renee Peter, Reese Peter,  
Owen Leibrock, Andy  
Gallo, Megan Douglas

**North Webster**, Ind.: Scott  
Powers, Kristin Powers,  
Lillian Smaluk, Clairra  
Tom, Kaitlin Waldbeser

**Osage**, McCune, Kan.: Edna  
Brubaker, Wilber  
Brubaker, Monica Collins,  
Bobbi Copenhaver,  
Nicolas Copenhaver, Patty  
Egbert, Cody Leonard,  
Andrew Long, Barbara  
Long, Patricia McElwain

**Pleasant Dale**, Decatur, Ind.:  
Tricia Moser, Mykayla  
Rodenbeck, Mandy  
Walden, Kelsey Rupe, Steve  
Gagle, Vickie Gagle, Zack  
Gagle, Ava Kintz, Ryan  
Burriss, Bobbie Heyerly,  
Amber Landis, Ryan Landis

**Troutville**, Va.: Susan  
Jennings, Carissa Robertson

**Union Center**, Nappanee,  
Ind.: Byron Smith, Eloise  
Smith, Doug Kauffman,  
Linda Kauffman, Gary  
Mishler, Myiah Chanley

**Uniontown**, Pa.: Brenda  
Workman, Sam Workman,  
Eric Springer, Marisa  
Springer, Elizabeth  
DeFazio, Britni Young

**White Oak**, Manheim, Pa.:  
Amanda Eberly, Anna  
Bowman, Nathan Stoltzfus,  
Larry Kreider, Lisa Kreider,  
Jayden Fahnestock,  
Christina Patches, Hunter  
Longenecker

## Wedding Anniversaries

**Allison**, Charles and LaRue,  
Johnstown, Pa., 60

**Bowman**, Fred and Wanda,  
Bridgewater, Va., 65

**Bucher**, Gordon and  
Darlene, North  
Manchester, Ind., 65

**Bucher**, L. Gene and Fern,  
Lancaster, Pa., 55

**Buckwalter**, Richard and  
Betty, Lancaster, Pa., 70

**Clark**, Ken and Barbara,  
Lincoln, Neb., 60

**Coffman**, David and Donna,  
Nipomo, Calif., 60

**Cosner**, John and Karen,  
Modesto, Calif., 50

**Fisher**, Max and AnnaBelle,  
Fulks Run, Va., 70

**Groff**, Warren and Ruth,  
Bartlett, Ill., 65

**Haag**, Lloyd and Joan,  
Baltimore, Md., 60

**Haldeman**, Gern, Sr. and  
Pat, Hummelstown, Pa., 55

**Heffner**, Lawrence and  
Oneida, Knoxville, Md., 60

**Higdon**, Leonard and June,  
Knoxville, Md., 65

**Meek**, Jeff and Joy, Palmyra,  
Pa., 50

**Miller**, Leighton and Betty,  
Shepherdstown, W.Va., 50

**Myers**, Galen and Sylvia,  
Stuarts Draft, Va., 70

**Snell**, Galen and Ruth,  
Posey, Calif., 60

**Stern**, Don and Betty, Lacey,  
Wash., 65

**Stickel**, Wayne and Barbara,  
Elkhart, Ind., 50

**Wenger**, Richard and  
Marjorie, Lancaster,  
Pa., 65

## Deaths

**Albright**, Gerald Ellis, 84,  
Nampa, Idaho, Nov. 25,  
2011

**Anderson**, Robert W., 70,  
Ashland, Ohio, June 20

**Anson**, Donna Jean, 76,  
Nampa, Idaho, Aug. 22,  
2011

**Armbruster**, Vivian Marie,  
95, Mount Morris, Ill.,  
April 18

**Atkins**, Arthur G., 97, Boise,  
Idaho, Aug. 15, 2011

**Bard**, Mary Arlene, 98,  
Brookville, Ohio, June 24

**Bardell**, Clair T., 92,  
Millerstown, Pa., Aug. 16

**Bashore**, Ada R., 85,

Hershey, Pa., July 24

**Beedle**, Viola Louise, 84,  
Edinburg, Va., July 25

**Briggs**, Betty Jane, 87,  
Dayton, Ohio, July 17

**Burdette**, Myrtle Irene  
Roderick, 97, Frederick,  
Md., July 6

**Buzzard**, Virginia Mae, 93,  
Johnstown, Pa., July 19

**Cable**, Miriam Weybright,  
95, North Manchester,  
Ind., Aug. 14

**Caplinger**, Robert Leroy, 80,  
Eaton, Ohio, May 24

**Capps**, Robert L., 90,  
Hedrick, Iowa, June 18

**Cassell**, Bernis M., 89,  
Arcanum, Ohio, March 27

**Cook**, Alvin Chester, 84,  
Englewood, Ohio, July 10

**Cook**, Margaret A., 78,  
Ashland, Ohio, Aug. 1

**Crumpacker**, Glenn Criss,  
79, McCune, Kan., Jan. 1

**Domer**, Claris A., 77, North  
Canton, Ohio, Aug. 4

**Dowty**, Dean R., 84,  
Syracuse, Ind., March 26

**Ebersole**, Pauline D., 87,  
Lancaster, Pa., April 20

**Eller**, Margaret Sue  
Brubaker, 80, San  
Marcos, Calif., May 2

**Fisher**, AnnaBelle Shoulders,  
89, Fulks Run, Va., Aug. 2

**Flora**, Louise I., 96, Elkhart,  
Ind., April 7

**Flory**, Lloyd G., 86, Lititz,  
Pa., Aug. 10

**Garman**, Charlotte G., 95,  
Lititz, Pa., July 28

**Gates**, Daniel C., 93,  
Hershey, Pa., July 18

**Gross**, Dorothy Dell, 97,  
Bowmont, Idaho, Oct. 17,  
2011

**Hammond**, Charlotte  
Swigart, 88, Dayton,  
Ohio, July 11

**Hanawalt**, Dwight, 92, La  
Verne, Calif., June 14

**Hoover**, Raymond A., 90,  
Goshen, Ind., Aug. 17

**Hostetter**, Pearl J., 92,  
Greenville, Ohio, Aug. 2

**Kline**, Thelma E., 79,  
Manheim, Pa., June 9

**Leland**, Kirby Jay, 59,  
Maxwell, Iowa, Aug. 21

**Long**, Alma Maxine Moyers,  
86, Ada, Ohio, July 31

**Ludwick**, S. Frances, 87,  
Burlington, W.Va., March 8

**McDonald**, Amelia Gertrude,  
88, Woodstock, Va., July 20

**Miller**, Gary Lee, 70,  
Lebanon, Pa., July 24

**Ogle**, Leland W., 87, Nampa,  
Idaho, Aug. 23, 2011

**Price**, Patsy, 83, Northridge,  
Calif., Aug. 16

**Ringer**, Bertha E., 97,  
Hartville, Ohio, Aug. 1

**Rohrer**, Levi F., 95, Lititz,  
Pa., Dec. 28

**Shifflett**, Samuel Paul, 90,  
Bridgewater, Va., June 14

**Shook**, Opal K., 90, Mount  
Morris, Ill., Aug. 4

**Smith**, Matthew L., 52,  
Ashland, Ohio, March 28

**Snyder**, Priscilla J.  
McChesney, 82, Stuarts  
Draft, Va., July 18

**Thompson**, Thelma M. Hanes,  
98, Knoxville, Md., Aug. 8

**Timmerman**, John L., 88,  
Nampa, Idaho, Sept. 26,  
2011

**Waggy**, Arlie E., 92, Goshen,  
Ind., July 9

**Whitaker**, Sandra Lee, 72,  
New Carlisle, Ohio, June  
28

**Wilson**, Christine L., 74,  
McVeytown, Pa., July 25

**Wine**, Evelyn Baker, 85,  
Kingsport, Tenn., Aug. 8

**Wright**, Mildred Stanley, 90,  
Waynesboro, Va., Aug. 12

**Younkins**, Alberta Mae  
Higdon, 88, Knoxville,  
Md., July 26

## Licensings

**Birt**, Jeffrey A., S. Pa. Dist.  
(Pleasant Hill, Spring  
Grove, Pa.), July 15

**Bomberger**, Todd, Atl. N.E.  
Dist. (Middle Creek,  
Lititz, Pa.), Aug. 26

**Martin**, Kimberly, S. Ohio  
Dist. (West Milton, Ohio),  
Aug. 12

**Miller**, Larry E., S. Pa. Dist.  
(Pleasant Hill, Spring  
Grove, Pa.), July 15

**Oellig**, Michael, Atl. N.E.  
Dist. (Conestoga, Leola,  
Pa.), Aug. 12

**Pyles-Dodds**, Ryan, S. Ohio  
Dist. (West Charleston,  
Tipp City, Ohio), Aug. 12

## Ordinations

**Christian**, Matthew R., W.  
Plains Dist. (Community,  
Hutchinson, Kan.), July 1

**Hornbaker**, Judson K., W.  
Plains Dist. (Community,  
Hutchinson, Kan.), July 1

**McCumber**, Jay, Atl. N.E.  
Dist. (Cornerstone  
Christian, Lebanon, Pa.),  
June 10

**Thompson**, Katie Shaw, N.  
Plains Dist. (Ivester, Grundy  
Center, Iowa), July 29

**Thompson**, Parker, N. Plains  
Dist. (Ivester, Grundy  
Center, Iowa), July 29

## Placements

**Auker**, Thomas E., from  
interim to pastor, Eden,  
First, Eden, N.C., Aug. 1

**Beachley**, Linda E., pastor,  
Nanty Glo, Pa., Aug. 1

**Howdysshell**, Darren A.,  
from associate pastor,  
Briery Branch, Dayton,  
Va., to pastor, Moscow,  
Mount Solon, Va., Aug. 1

**Jantzi**, John N., from pastor,  
Mount Bethel, Dayton,  
Va., to district executive/  
minister, Shenandoah  
District, Weyers Cave, Va.,  
Aug. 1

**Kontra**, Peter J., from pas-  
tor, Oakland, Bradford,  
Ohio, to pastor,  
Hempfield, Manheim, Pa.,  
Aug. 1

**Leatherman**, Chris E., pas-  
tor, Capon Chapel, Points,  
W.Va., Aug. 1

**Richard**, Thomas W. from  
pastor, Fairview, Cordova,  
Md., to pastor, Meadow  
Branch, Westminster, Md.,  
Aug. 19

**Rowe**, Twyla D., from minis-  
ter of Christian nurture,  
Westminster, Md., to  
director of pastoral care/  
chaplain, Fahrney-Keedy  
Home and Village,  
Boonsboro, Md., Aug. 1

**Vaughn**, Timothy L., from  
pastor, Dry Run, Pa., to  
pastor, Beachdale, Berlin,  
Pa., July 1

# Listening to the river

**I** watched him picking up stones along the rocky banks of the Smith River. Flat and round were best, but they were hard to come by. Still, with persistence, he found some and, standing there in his swim trunks under the piercing summer sun, he flung them one by one across the expanse of frigid water that flowed through the Redwoods.

My son Tyler has gotten better at skipping stones in northern California's Jedediah Smith National Park as he has grown. Every two years our family travels north from southern California for a family reunion at Camp Myrtlewood, a Church of the Brethren camp in southwestern Oregon. My



RANDY MILLER  
MESSENGER Editor

parents went to family camp there when they were kids. My wife and I have brought our children there since before they could walk. It has become the thing we do on the calendar's even years. To not attend these reunions would be unthinkable.

Watching Tyler skip stones across the Smith River, and thinking about how we'd returned to that very spot for years, brought to mind a passage from Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha*:

"Out of all the secrets of the river, he saw only one today, and it touched his soul. He saw that this water ran and ran incessantly, and nevertheless was always there at all times, the same and yet new at every moment!"

what things about us are worth holding onto, and what things should be deposited upon the shores?

It is good to have regular reminders of who we are: camping spots to visit every year or so; seasonal and family traditions; and yes, even Annual Conference. But it is also good to acknowledge that, while some things remain the same, some things never will. The water in the Smith River is never the same from minute to minute, let alone from year to year. We're not the same either. Tyler wasn't even a toddler when he first saw that river. This summer, at 6'1" and 180 pounds, and gearing up for his sophomore year of college, he has most definitely changed.

I love going to Annual Conference. I love browsing the Brethren Press bookstore and poring over titles by Brethren authors and others who have insights that enrich and challenge our perspectives. I think I was 10 or 12 when I was captivated by a book called *Indian Lore*, by E. Wendell Lamb and Lawrence W. Shultz. My copy must be in a box in the attic now, but it made a big impression on me back then. Here were Brethren authors who had developed a keen interest in American Indian culture. I got to meet Lawrence Shultz at that Conference, and he told me he'd even been given an Indian name by the people he'd come to know: Skookum Killikum.

He was a pretty old guy then, and I'm sure he's passed on, because I'm on the verge of becoming a pretty old guy myself now, some 40 years later. But I like that he was part of our river back then.

**NEW INSIGHTS MOVE US FORWARD, IF WE'RE OPEN TO THEM.  
GOD CAN'T POSSIBLY BE DONE SPEAKING TO US.**

Soon after that trip to the Pacific Northwest I would be attending Annual Conference in St. Louis. It was the same yearly gathering I'd been going to since I was a child, when attendance was a given part of summer vacations for children of Brethren pastors, like me. Just like *Siddhartha's* river, it was the same Annual Conference, with the usual offerings of business, worship, insight sessions, quilt auctions, and exhibit booths. And yet, like *Siddhartha's* river, it was never the same.

It made me wonder: As the river of years has drifted past,

We change, we grow. We discover new things about our heritage. We learn that what we once thought to be true may have been 180 degrees off the mark. New insights move us forward, if we're open to them. God can't possibly be done speaking to us. The river will continue to flow past banks we have come to know for decades, for centuries. They are familiar banks, and we love returning to them. And yet we may discover that, with each passing year, with each passing minute, really, new truths are being revealed. All we have to do is listen. **Z**

**COMING IN NOVEMBER:** What holds Brethren together.

# JUNIATA COLLEGE

think · evolve · act



*“The Juniata community  
has inspired me to recognize that my  
role as an educator is part of a greater  
call to live out the love of God  
in every teachable moment.”*

—Ann Ziegler '12, elementary and Spanish education, Juniata College

**A**t Juniata, students are challenged to **think**, encouraged to **evolve**, and empowered to **act** in a global world. Most Juniata students complete one (or more) internships, nearly half study abroad, and everybody gains hands-on experience in and out of the classroom. And **we guarantee students will graduate in four years or less**. The result? Our students' outcomes—from **jobs to graduate school placements to service to global experience**—speak for themselves.

[www.juniata.edu](http://www.juniata.edu)

#### Your Brethren College Network

Bridgewater College  
[www.bridgewater.edu](http://www.bridgewater.edu)

Elizabethtown College  
[www.etown.edu](http://www.etown.edu)

Juniata College  
[www.juniata.edu](http://www.juniata.edu)

University of La Verne  
[www.laverne.edu](http://www.laverne.edu)

Manchester University  
[www.manchester.edu](http://www.manchester.edu)

McPherson College  
[www.mcpherson.edu](http://www.mcpherson.edu)

Bethany Theological Seminary  
[www.bethanyseminary.edu](http://www.bethanyseminary.edu)

BCA Study Abroad  
[www.bcaabroad.org](http://www.bcaabroad.org)



in alleviating *hunger*  
we all have a part to play



Discover some ways you can play a part at [www.brethren.org/gfcf](http://www.brethren.org/gfcf).



## GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS FUND

To contribute, write your check to Global Food Crisis Fund and send to Church of the Brethren,  
1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin IL 60120. Or give online by visiting [www.brethren.org/gfcf](http://www.brethren.org/gfcf).