

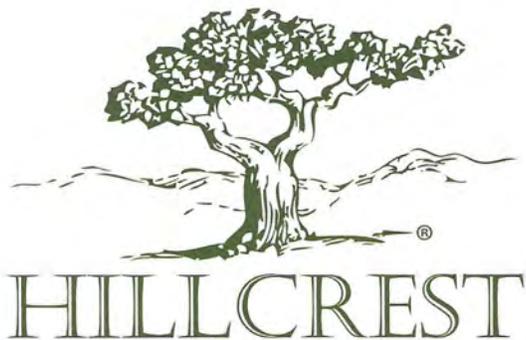
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

# MESSENGER

MAY 2013 WWW.BRETHREN.ORG

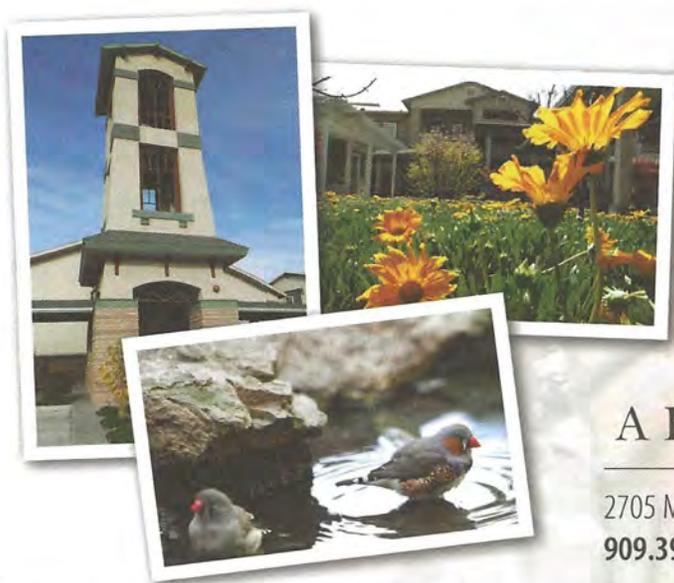
Leaving  
her water jar  
behind

# 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!"

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# CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN MESSENGER

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## 8 Leaving her water jar behind

In God's Kingdom, where you're from, where you worship, what traditions you observe, and who your ancestors are don't matter, Jesus told her. What matters is now. What matters is what you bring with you to worship.

## 11 A touch of sadness and a promise

"I feel like those old, dried leaves, Lord . . . but you bring your touch of renewal and bright promise you're with me to stay," poet Kay M. Bowman writes in this contemplative look at life's cycles.



## 12 Why are the poor poor?

It's a simple question that is too often met with simple answers. But the reasons for poverty are many, and require careful consideration as we seek the best ways to help those whom Jesus said would always be with us.

## 14 Good for nothing

How a college roommate's chain letter led to unexpected insights into what God's grace can mean for our lives.

## 16 What American Christians can learn from Palestinians

It often takes living with someone to get a true understanding of what they endure on a daily basis. Church of the Brethren members John and Joyce Cassel spent three months in Palestine last fall and came away with new insights but also heightened concerns for their newfound friends.



## 18 Carrying the cross in today's environment

"Picking up our cross may lead to a landfill," notes Chris Keating as he recounts his visit to a dump outside of Chicago, "but it can also lead to new life."

## departments

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**Correction:** The artwork on page 12 in the January/February MESSENGER was created by Lillian Moats, who produced this image for "Windows and Mirrors." We regret omitting credit for her work in that issue. —Ed

**T**here's a gospel song in the Church of the Brethren *Hymnal Supplement* that perhaps few have discovered but many would appreciate if they did. Called "My Feet Are Tired" (1091), the song was written by Frances Smith Thomas, a 1939 graduate of Manchester College. She dedicated it to "the 50,000



WENDY MCFADDEN  
PUBLISHER

Negroes of Montgomery (Ala.) who, using only the weapons of love, withstood insults . . . arrests, and bombings . . . and kept 'walking for the glory of the Lord.'" Coretta Scott King was soloist when the piece premiered in 1956.

The musical instruction is to sing at a "walking tempo," and the beginning goes like this: "My feet are tired, but my soul is resting. I'm walking for the glory of the Lord."

Where do those words come from? When an elderly black woman was asked about her weariness during the Montgomery bus boycott, she answered, "My feet is tired, but my soul is at rest." Her words are quoted in Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail," a lengthy response to another letter—one written by a small group of Christian and Jewish clergy who urged restraint and asked him to discontinue the nonviolent protests in Birmingham.

Dr. King's famous letter was published 50 years ago on April 16, 1963. To mark that anniversary, Christian Churches Together has issued its own long letter, a formal response that was just presented to Dr. Bernice King and other civil rights leaders at an event in Birmingham. (See the news story in next month's MESSENGER.)

"We are deeply moved by the key themes of Dr. King's letter and lift them up anew that they may again challenge our churches and our nation," says the CCT's detailed response. (Read the full text at [www.brethren.org/birminghamletter](http://www.brethren.org/birminghamletter).)

The church leaders gathered in Birmingham not only to sign this statement, but to remember the struggle, reflect on the church's calling today, and recommit to justice and nonviolence. I'm grateful that the Church of the Brethren is part of CCT and that we participated in the signing of this letter.

In Birmingham, we engaged in a prayer walk around historic Kelly Ingram Park, a place where the presence of the cloud of witnesses is palpable. With them we were "walking for the glory of the Lord."



## How to reach us

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# Brethren congregations in Spain receive recognition

**R**ecognizing the Church of the Brethren in Spain—and passing on to Annual Conference a recommendation for that body to recognize the fledgling Spanish church—was a key action of the Mission and Ministry Board at its March 8-11 meeting at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill.

The recommendation to recognize the Church of the Brethren in Spain came from the Mission and Ministries Planning Council, and was presented by Global Mission and Service executive Jay Wittmeyer.



Tim Harvey

*Spanish Brethren dance and wave flags during worship. The recommendation for the American church to officially recognize the new Brethren movement in Spain is coming to Annual Conference this July.*

Nuevo Amanecer Church of the Brethren and Atlantic Northeast District made the initial proposal, following the establishment of congregations in Spain by Brethren immigrants from the Dominican Republic. Nuevo Amanecer pastor Fausto Carrasco has been a key leader in the development of the Brethren congregations in Spain.

Wittmeyer informed the board that there are several congregations of Brethren in Spain, located in Madrid and in an area on the northwest coast. Each of the congregations includes an average of 50-70 participants. Those involved with the Brethren congregations in Spain include native-born Spanish citizens as well as immigrants from the DR and a number of other countries. Congregations have been able to register locally but not corporately as a

denomination to this point. The recognition from the US church will support their effort to do so.

The board is recommending to the delegates of Annual Conference that the congregations in Spain be recognized as “being part of the global Church of the Brethren community” and that Global Mission and Service staff be encouraged to nurture the relationship with Spanish Brethren, seeking to encourage efforts toward independence and self-governance.

Many board members expressed excitement about the development, while noting the need to work at ensuring that the new Spanish body does not fall into the trap of financial dependence on the US church. Noted chair Ben Barlow, the action is “not that we are taking the Brethren movement back to Europe, but receiving Brethren there!”

Congregational Close-Up

## by the numbers

7,000

Number of theological education institutions included in a unique online directory launched by the World Council of Churches “to promote mutual sharing and dialogue between establishments in different parts of the world.”

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](mailto:messenger@brethren.org).

## Congregations are 'Going to the Garden'

**C**hurch of the Brethren congregations across the country have begun applying for and receiving "Going to the Garden" grants as part of a new initiative to support congregationally based community gardens. "Going to the Garden" is an initiative of the Office of Public Witness and aims to address food insecurity, environmental degradation, and poverty. It is funded by \$30,000 designated from the Global Food Crisis Fund.

Most congregations that take part receive \$1,000 for community gardening projects on their land or in their neighborhoods, however individual grant amounts may vary depending on each church's situation.

In addition to receiving a grant, congregations that take part may receive advice and help from consultant Cliff Kindy, a long-time Church of the Brethren farmer and peace advocate from northern Indiana. Nate Hosler, director of the Office of Public Witness based in Washington, D.C., is heavily involved in the project as well, along with GFCF manager Jeff Boshart.

So far, five congregations have received grants: Annville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, Champaign (Ill.) Church of the Brethren, Cincinnati (Ohio) Church of the Brethren, La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren, and Living Faith Church of the Brethren in Concord, N.C. A grant application from a sixth congregation, Mount Morris (Ill.) Church of the Brethren, is in process.

**The Annville Church** is starting a new community garden as a project of its Service Ministries Team. Planners anticipate it will be much like the "Plant a Row" program in which

participants designate one row of a garden to be donated to a food pantry or soup kitchen. The church is designating some 10,000 square feet of farm land for the garden, owned by and adjacent to the church. If additional land becomes available, the church will add a low-maintenance wildflower garden with benches and meandering paths both for use in contemplation, and to surround the vegetable garden with healthy, local wild flowers and plants and introduce pollinators such as bees and bats to make the garden more successful.

**The La Verne Church** has had a community garden in place for three years, called the "Peace and Carrots Community Garden."

It is receiving a grant to fund improvements to raise the method of gardening from ground-level beds to permanent raised beds.

Individual gardeners who participate will be asked to contribute \$50 each toward the cost of the improvements. Every year the garden has helped feed neighbors in need through contributions to the local food bank. In 2010 the garden donated 945.5 pounds of food, in 2011 it donated 1,408 pounds, and in the summer season of 2012 it donated 1,268.5 pounds. La Verne also has sold its garden produce at a Farmer's Market, held in the courtyard of the church.

**The Living Faith Church** garden also already is in place, providing "food, fresh vegetables, and the love of Jesus" to neighbors and those in need in the community. Winter cabbage and collard greens grown this past season were given out with Thanksgiving and Christmas boxes, and the church also has been distributing donated food such as turkeys from a local grocer. The group hopes to add a green house to its garden to extend future growing seasons, and is looking at starting a weekly "take what you need" market for those who can come to the site to receive food.

Boshart estimates that about 20 other Church of the Brethren congregations have community gardens or similar projects already established, and hopes that many of them will take advantage of the grant program as well as churches who want to start new projects. The application form is online at [www.brethren.org/bdm/files/going-to-the-garden.pdf](http://www.brethren.org/bdm/files/going-to-the-garden.pdf). Questions about the application process should be directed to Nate Hosler at 202-481-6933 or [nhosler@brethren.org](mailto:nhosler@brethren.org).



Courtesy of Michael Wolfson



Courtesy of Michael Wolfson



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

## Bittersweet tunes

The Bittersweet Gospel Band has produced a music video to its song “Jesus in the Line,” written by Scott Duffey and produced by David Sollenberger. The Bittersweet Gospel Band is composed of several Church of the Brethren pastors—Gilbert Romero, Scott Duffey, Leah Hileman, and Dan Shaffer—as well as Brethren members Trey Curry and Kevin Walsh. They were assisted in this endeavor by Roanoke (Va.) First Church of the Brethren and Roanoke Renacer Church of the Brethren while filming a great deal at the Roanoke Rescue Mission. The band currently is looking for a sponsor to cover the costs of production and distribution (by DVD). Said an announcement: “If a church agency, a congregation, or an individual is interested in more detail, including putting a ‘Brought to you by...’ message at the beginning of the video, please be in touch with Scott Duffey (duffeybs@yahoo.com) or David Sollenberger (LSVideo@comcast.net).” The band hopes to release the music video sometime around Annual Conference.

## Worshipful walks

**Olympia, Lacey Community Church in Lacey, Wash.**, has been holding worship walks, led by pastor Howard Ullery Jr. The congregation is affiliated jointly with the United Church of Christ and the Church of the Brethren. Ullery leads the outdoor walks, with the intention of providing a new perspective on worship and fellowship. The walks are conducted every other Wednesday and Saturday at nearby scenic sites like Chambers Lake and Priest Point Park.

**Frederick (Md.) Church of the Brethren** held an “All Church Prayer Walk” on Sunday, Feb. 10, after morning worship as part of a sermon series on “Praying Circles Around Life!” The event started with an explanation about what a Prayer Walk is, and included a list of possible locations around town where individuals and groups could choose to go walk or drive and pray for the city. Attendees received a Prayer Card based on their choice of route, and prayer prompts for that specific location. Water and a small snack were provided as well.



## LANDMARKS *and laurels*

➔ In an ongoing celebration of its 275 years in ministry, **Black Rock Church of the Brethren** in

Glenville, Pa., welcomed back its first paid minister—Earl K. Ziegler—as guest preacher on the first Sunday in March. Black Rock was established in 1738, and only hired its first full time pastor in 1960 after 222 years of plural non-salaried ministry, said an



announcement from current pastor David W. Miller. Following worship, church members joined in a carry-in meal and the sharing of stories, memories, and photos from the congregation’s long history. Upcoming activities include a Spring Fair on May 4, a summer focus on service to the community launched with a Vacation Bible School on the theme of peace, and a Fall Festival and Homecoming Weekend.

➔ Chicago’s First Church of the Brethren board chair **Duane Ediger** has been taking up the

issue of fracking in the state of Illinois. Ediger has been doing prominent advocacy for renewable energy at the Chicago City Council and in the state capital Springfield, where he has been among those seeking a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing or “fracking” in Illinois.



## Remembered

**James Edward Forbus**, interim director of SERRV in the late 1980s, died March 7 at Frederick (Md.) Memorial Hospital. SERRV, a nonprofit organization with a mission to eradicate poverty by providing opportunity and support to artisans and farmers worldwide, began as a Church of the Brethren program. His professional career included directing band for the Lubbock (Texas) Public Schools, and 30 years with the Social Security Administration and Internal Revenue Service in Texas, Louisiana, New York, and Maryland. He retired as IRS Deputy Associate Commissioner for Operations in Maryland in 1986. His service as interim director of the SERRV program based at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., followed his retirement. He is survived by his wife of almost 60 years, Elin Broyles Forbus, and son David Edward Forbus of Kerrville, Texas.

## Bound together and finely woven

**A**s Roman soldiers huddled at the foot of the cross deciding how to divvy up the few items of Jesus' clothing, they noticed that his tunic was finely woven. And so they chose to cast lots for the tunic rather than tearing it apart and sharing the pieces. The soldiers knew the value of a finely woven garment.

I recently watched a YouTube video in which Ken Medema led a sanctuary full of laughing, singing people in his song, "Bound Together." As I watched, I couldn't help but sing and laugh with the people in the video. Suddenly, a familiar face came into focus. Could this be a group of Brethren singing and laughing like this? I scrolled down the screen and found the answer: the video had been filmed during the Brethren Housing Authority "Concert of Hope" at Elizabethtown (Pa.) Church of the Brethren in October 2010. Watch the video! It offers a beautiful glimpse of a joyful, hopeful Church of the Brethren gathering.



BOB KROUSE

I have seen similar moments of joy and hope while visiting with brothers and sisters across the denomination. If

you have an opportunity to attend the Western Plains District *Gathering*, don't miss it. Last fall, I had a great time with Brethren from Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, and Oklahoma. We gathered in Salina, Kan., to listen, learn, talk, sing, pray, play, and eat. It was a joyful, hopeful event.

and suggested we continue our meeting over lunch. We drove to a Tex/Mex restaurant and spent another couple of hours together. In all, we had laughed, listened, and learned together for five and a half hours that Sunday.

Many other places were on my moderator travel itinerary. I've accepted invitations to Brazil, Florida, Haiti, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. It isn't possible in this short column to tell even half of the stories from these visits, or introduce the amazing people I've rubbed elbows with over the past year. One stays with me, however.

It has to do with Mary, an elderly Haitian sister who miraculously escaped serious injury when the ceiling over her bed collapsed. In the middle of the night someone told her to move her bed. She reluctantly got up, pushed her bed against the wall, and then got back into bed. Some time later, she was awaked by the disturbing sound of her concrete ceiling collapsing onto the floor. It fell directly on the spot where her bed had been before she moved it. "Who told you to move your bed?" I asked. Mary said, "It must have been Jesus."

Other stories involved undocumented workers in Texas, flood victims I worked with in Tennessee, students I had breakfast with in Indiana, and people I prayed with in Pennsylvania. Out of all these encounters, one thing is clear: we Brethren are "bound together and finely woven" not by our family connections or the church camp we attended or the color of our skin or the flavor of our politics. We are bound together by the hand of God, woven

***We are bound together by the hand of God, woven together by the love of Jesus, and we are effective together through the power of the Spirit.***

And while you are putting together your travel itinerary, don't forget to include Falfurrias, Texas, the site of a significant BVS project for many years. The congregation has declined since the project closed in 1968, but two former BVS couples, who are now retired, have moved back to Falfurrias with the hope of bringing renewal and revitalization to the congregation.

I worshiped there on a sizzling Sunday last August with a handful of worshipers. Since our numbers were few and the sanctuary was rather large, we decided to meet in the kitchen in order to be better stewards of the air conditioning. We talked, sang, and prayed together until someone noticed the time

together by the love of Jesus, and we are effective together through the power of the Spirit.

Brethren everywhere want to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Our conversations are compelling when they reveal our commitment to Christ. Our meetings are moving when we invite God to move in our midst. Our worship is wonderful when the Spirit is welcome. And our mission continues to make a difference in the world when it clearly reflects the mission and message of Jesus. **AMEN**

Bob Krouse is moderator of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference, and pastor of Little Swatara Church of the Brethren in Bethel, Pa.

**It is good news that we are not the random byproducts of a meaningless universe, but rather creations of a loving God who wants to live with us forever.**

—Philip Yancey, a speaker at this year's Annual Conference, writing in *Christianity Today* about dealing with grief in the wake of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings.

**“What would it mean . . . if we saw the potential in ourselves, and in everyone we met, to be the Christ among us? I would love to find out. I have a feeling that we would be found bearing fruit.”**

—Chris Zepp, associate pastor, Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren

**“When it comes to God’s grace, there is not even a hint of exchange. No suggestion of payback, or pay it forward. There are no strings attached.”**

—William Graham Tullian Tchividjian, senior pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., in his forthcoming book *One Way Love: Inexhaustible Grace for an Exhausted World*

**“Divine wonder awakens your passion for God. . . . When we begin to look for the wonder of God, we begin to see it in the most unlikely places.”**

—Margaret Feinberg, author of more than a dozen books, most recently *Wonderstruck: Awaken to the Nearness of God*, in an interview with Religion News Service columnist Jonathan Merritt

## cultureview

► **Shunning the spacious papal apartment used by his predecessors, Pope Francis** has chosen to continue living in the Vatican guesthouse where he has been staying since the beginning of the conclave. The Vatican’s chief spokesman explained that Francis will live until further notice in a suite in the Santa Martha Residence, a modern Vatican guesthouse for priests and bishops who work in the Roman Curia or who are visiting the Vatican for meetings and conferences. The pontiff’s choice is a consequence of his desire to adopt a simple living arrangement that allows him to live in community with other priests and bishops.

► **The Bible’s influence is waning among Americans**, according to a new poll conducted by The Barna Group, but not nearly as quickly as some might think. And perhaps not for long. The study, which was commissioned by the American Bible Society,

shows that 88 percent of Americans own a Bible. In 1993, 92 percent owned one. On average, American Bible owners possess 3.5 copies. Interestingly, 6 out of 10 who have no faith or identify as atheists own a Bible.

► **In a move that may seem heretical to some Christians**, a group of scholars and religious leaders has added 10 new texts to the Christian canon. The work, *A New New Testament*, was released nationwide in March in an attempt to add a different historical and spiritual context. Some of the texts date back to the earliest days of Christianity and include some works that were rejected by the early church. The 19-member council that compiled the texts consisted of biblical scholars, leaders in several Christian denominations—Episcopal, Roman Catholic, United Methodist, United Church of Christ, and Lutheran—two rabbis, and an expert in Eastern religions.

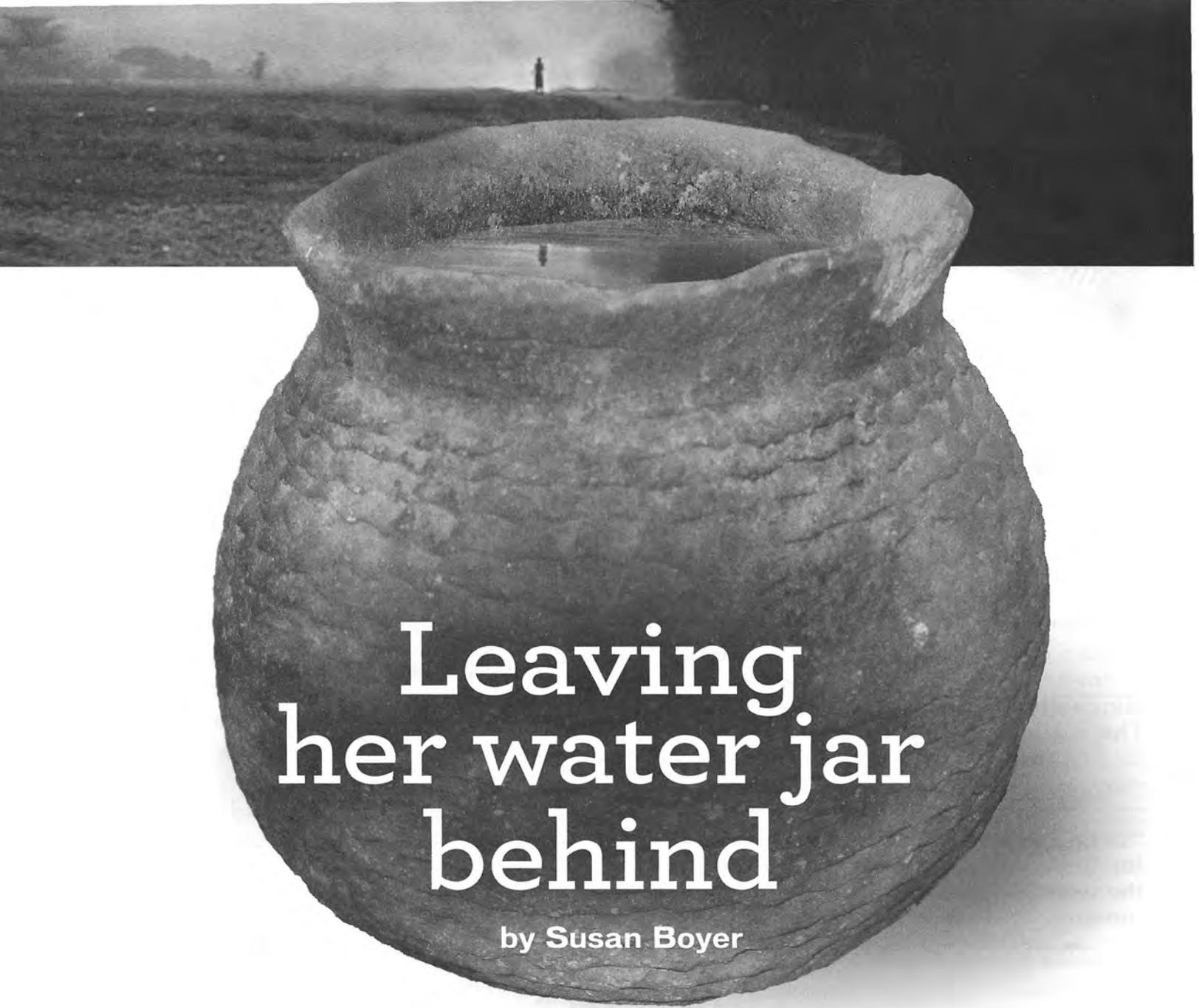
## Heard 'round the world

**“If Pope Francis’ example has left this young priest speechless, then I say good. The people will be spared a dose of craziness.”**

—Michael Sean Winters, a columnist for *National Catholic Reporter*, after a traditionalist Catholic priest said he didn’t know what to say after Pope Francis washed the feet of women at a Rome prison

**“For us, in our time, this means confronting bigotry and hatred in all of its forms, racism, especially anti-Semitism. . . . And let us never forget the link between the two. For our sons and daughters are not born to hate, they are taught to hate.”**

—President Obama, speaking at Israel’s Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial



# Leaving her water jar behind

by Susan Boyer

**I am a fearful flyer. I hate take-offs and landings.** I hate turbulence. I hate being squeezed next to coughing strangers who are practically sitting on my lap. And I hate it when people find out I'm a minister when I am on a plane. The conversation goes something like this:

"So, what do you do?"

"I'm a minister."

"Of a church?"

"Yes."

"How long have you been doing that?"

"Twenty-eight years."

"I didn't know women could be pastors."

"We can."

A couple beats of silence, and I know its coming.

"Say, there is something I have always wanted to ask a preacher . . ."

Talk about being a captive audience. I learn what everyone hates about churches, other pastors, or religion in general. Any theological question that has been burning inside of them for years gets set on my available and trapped lap.

I have tried to figure out how to be incognito on a plane, but I think there is just something about me that must scream, "Minister!"

Not long ago, my husband, Bryan, and I were in the San Francisco Bay area. While there, he graciously agreed to go with me to visit a church, even though we were on vacation. As we were leaving the church the minister stood in

*Gender doesn't matter. Location doesn't matter. Your traditions and rituals don't matter. None of that matters because the hour is coming. In fact, the hour is now.*

front of the church doors and said, "I am blocking the way so that you will have to greet me before you leave." We laughed. We talked for a few seconds and then he said, "You look like a professional." I smiled and said, "Well, I am clergy." He said, "I thought so."

That is what happened to Jesus in Samaria when he was sitting by Jacob's well. In John's Gospel, we learn that it was the middle of the day and Jesus was thirsty. So when a woman came to draw water, Jesus said, "Give me something to drink." The woman was a bit stunned. There are several things going on here. First of all, biblical stories involving wells often include marriage proposals. Plus, men didn't publicly converse with women. And we learn in this scripture that Jews didn't share dishes with Samaritans. There goes that rule-breaking Jesus again.

What comes after Jesus' request for a drink is banter back-and-forth about water, thirst, husbands, and relationships. The Samaritan woman is trying to figure out who this man is who dares to speak to her in public and suggest that they might share a cup of water. If you read commentaries you will find pages and pages on just who this woman is. Is she immoral or is she a widow? Why is she being evasive? Since this story deals with issues of ethnicity, gender, culture, and religious tradition, is it included in the Gospel to show how Jesus ignores all the usual barriers we humans create?

This is one of those stories so rich in meaning that theologians have been chewing on it for centuries. The Samaritan woman stands next to Jacob's well in the heat of the day talking to a male stranger, and he tells her he knows all about her life. Suddenly she realizes she is speaking to a prophet.

"Sir, I see that you are a prophet." A couple beats of silence and Jesus knows it is coming—the inevitable burning theological question she has always wanted to ask. A woman of her time, not trained in theological discourse and not encouraged to talk to a man, she asks, "I have always wanted to ask a prophet this question. My people

worship on this mountain, but you and your people say that the only true place to worship is Jerusalem."

It is interesting how often our conversations about God revolve around our locations. Theology and geography are often related. "My people worshipped on this mountain." She is referring to Mt. Gerizim, located near the city of Schechem. Samaritans believed that Mt. Gerizim was the place Yahweh had chosen for the Holy Temple. In Hebrew it is translated as "center of the land." This woman is a Samaritan. She doesn't understand why the center of the land has been moved to Jerusalem. "How can your people take my people's center away from us?" It is a good question.

When we sit down and study a biblical text we have to ask ourselves several questions. What was happening historically and socially during the event being described? But we also have to ask ourselves, What was happening during the time the actual story was written down? This is a story about a time when Jesus is talking to a woman alone. As far as we know, none of his followers was anywhere near this conversation. There were no witnesses to pass on this story. The only ones there were Jesus and the woman.

So, did it really happen, this conversation sometime around 30 CE? Or was the author of the Gospel of John saying something to his own community near the end of the first century? Was John saying something to the early church about Jewish/Christian relationships or about Jewish/Samaritan relationships? There is also another burning question. What does this story have to say to us in our time and our context?

Listen to Jesus' answer as if he spoke alone to a Samaritan woman during his lifetime. Listen to Jesus' answer as if he was addressing it to the early church. Listen to Jesus' answer as if he is here saying it to us. "Believe me. There will come a time when place doesn't matter. Not this mountain or Jerusalem. Not Washington, D.C., or Sacramento. Not Wall Street or Hong Kong. Not Elgin or Mecca.

Not the mountains or the molehills. Not whether you are a man or a woman. Not whether you are a stranger or friend. Not whether you are a Jew or Samaritan. Not whether you are liberal or conservative. The hour is coming—in fact, it is here—when true worshipers will worship God in spirit and in truth. For God is spirit, and those who worship God must worship in spirit and in truth.”

Gender doesn't matter. Location doesn't matter. Your traditions and rituals don't matter. None of that matters because the hour is coming. In fact, the hour is now. What matters is not where you worship: this mountain or that one, this church or that one, this synagogue or that temple. What matters is not your tradition and your ancestors. What matters is now. What matters is what you bring with you to worship.

The church Bryan and I visited in the Bay Area was called St. Gregory of Nyssa, an Episcopal church. Only ever having been part of this low-church tradition called the Church of the Brethren, I don't worship with incense and robes, crosses on poles, or chanting. So that way of worshipping is always intriguing to me. But what got to me in that worship service was when we were invited to stand up and dance together to the communion table. That's right, we danced.

The communion table sat in the middle of a large, empty room with a beautiful rotunda. On the walls of the rotunda an artist had painted pictures of dancing saints. There were 90 saints, four animals, and they were all prominently led by a dancing Jesus. Some of the saints you

would expect: Francis of Assisi, King David, Paul of Tarsus, Teresa of Avila. But there were some saints that might surprise you: Lady Godiva, John Coltrane, Malcolm X, Anne Frank, William Shakespeare, Thurgood Marshall, Black Elk, Eleanor Roosevelt. They were all people who have spoken truth to power. There were Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and Christians. There were Africans and Americans. There were the living and the dead. There were men and women. There were gay and straight. There were musicians and architects. There were martyrs and activists. They were all children of God dancing together, worshipping God in spirit and in truth. Everything else—all other barriers—had been transcended.

Jesus says, “The time is coming, in fact it is now, when we shall worship in spirit and truth, when we shall transcend geography, race, gender, and questions of worthiness.” The woman at the well says, “I know that the Messiah is coming and will proclaim all these things.” Jesus says, “I am, and I just did.”

And, just like that, the woman departed, and she left her water jar behind. After all, Jesus had told her that she could have living water and she would never need to fill her jar again. “The hour is coming. In fact, it is here.” She ran off leaving the vessel behind and went to tell her people about worshipping in spirit and truth. She left to tell them about living water and the call to dance with all the saints. She left without the things that used to weigh her down. She heads back to be an evangelist of a new way—the way of spirit and of truth.

The spirit seeking after God is bigger than any geography, and turns its eyes toward God's grace, God's wonderful grace—a grace that is deeper than the mighty, rolling sea and broader than we can even imagine.

She understood the world through new eyes and she went dancing home. You can keep on carrying your well water around with you, or you can become aware of the fountain that springs up within from the Spirit of God. As for me, I want to join the dancing saints. **WU**

Susan Boyer is pastor of La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren.



*She ran off leaving the vessel behind and went to tell her people about worshipping in spirit and truth. . . . She left without the things that used to weigh her down.*

# A Touch of Sadness and a Promise

Heather Bradley



## a poem by Kay M. Bowman

*Ecclesiastes 3: 1-2, "Everything that happens in  
this world happens at a time God chooses: a time  
to be born and a time to die."*

They were there that early spring day,  
Blowing in the wind,  
Dead and dried oak leaves,  
Their life had come to an end. . . .

But what a promise where they lay  
Of all that is yet to be,  
For there was a bed of crocus blooms  
For all the world to see. . . .

Hundreds of golden blooms  
Covered the brown leaf ground,  
A promise of brand new life  
In the midst of the old could be found. . . .

I feel like those old, dried leaves, Lord,  
Growing older every day,  
But you bring me your touch of renewal,  
And bright promise you're with me to stay. . . .

A time to be born and grow,  
A time to grow old and die,  
You know the perfect timing, Lord,  
For "a touch of sadness and a promised reply." ❧

Excerpted from *Tears Within My Heart: A Modern-Day Psalms Collection* by Kay M. Bowman, 2013. Printed with permission from Prince of Peace Press. Kay M. Bowman is a writer and inspirational speaker living in Harrisonburg, Va. She and her husband, Harold, served almost 40 years in pastoral ministry in Church of the Brethren congregations. A writer for more than 55 years, she was editor of church newsletters for 12 years and wrote her first book at age 12.



# Why are the poor poor?

by Robert Vroon

**W**hy are some people poor? Scripture tells us that there would be no poverty if there were no sin. But whose sin—that of the poor, or other people in society? Different passages suggest different answers to that question. There are proverbs that suggest that laziness will lead to poverty. Other passages seem to say that those who work hard and live according to God's commands will enjoy prosperity. On the other hand, the Old Testament prophets suggest people are poor because the rich have exploited and oppressed them. They see poverty as a result of social injustices, which invite God's judgment on society.

Is the Bible contradicting itself on this subject? No, it seems to me that poverty is much too complex a thing to give one simple explanation for it. For those of us who have spent time with the poor, it becomes clear that

there are a wide variety of reasons for poverty. For any given individual, there are usually several different factors working in combination with each other.

When I first began my ministry in an urban neighborhood in Wilmington, Del., I asked this question as to why people were poor. I wanted to know so I would know how best to help them. Several social workers at the nearby Community Action Program suggested that substance abuse was a major factor. So our church began a recovery ministry.

One thing we discovered over time is that even after an addict gets past the grip of addiction, he or she often has to deal with a bewildering set of issues that may have led to their addiction in the first place. That's what makes recovery ministry so difficult. That's also what makes it so hard to help people get out of poverty.

Sabrina\* grew up with no father present—he left before she was a year old. Though her mother tried to do a good job of raising her, it was clear that her family life was dysfunctional. She faced a host of challenges growing up, including anger issues. She was also diagnosed with a significant mental health disorder. She was a bright person, and certainly not lazy, but she did not function well in the workplace, and could not hold a job. She ended up on welfare. Her despair ultimately led to addiction.

Through faith in Jesus, she overcame her addiction. But then she had to confront all those issues that were behind her addiction. She—and those of us in the recovery ministry who were working with her—felt overwhelmed. Where do we start? We invested much time in her for several years before she was able to turn her life around. Today, she has completed post-high-school

education and holds a good job. She has seen dramatic changes in many areas of her life. We praise God for this.

In my ministry, I saw a strong connection between mental illness, substance abuse, and poverty. An urban ministry seminar I attended put me on to this connection, and it was frequently confirmed in my ministry experience. The mental health aspect of this is usually not at all the fault of these persons, of course. But the addiction part of it does suggest some bad decisions on their part.

The apparent causes of poverty are often that way—some mix of being a victim, and making some bad decisions. What were some of the other causes of poverty I observed in my ministry? Many came from a father-absent household. Most grew up in a dysfunctional family. Some had physical disabilities severe enough to prevent them from working. Some suffered the lingering effects of racial discrimination. Some were recent

our attitude and behavior toward them. When we realize that most of the poor are poor mainly because of factors they have no control over, we are driven to have compassion for them. I believe that is the right Christian attitude. Beyond informing our basic attitude, knowing why people are poor may help us devise strategies for helping them.

Even in situations where people have had a hand in their own misfortune, we need to show them the grace of God. After all, God has shown us grace and offered us salvation despite all our shortcomings. How can we do any less for others?

What is the bottom line for us as Christians? We need to identify with the poor. God has identified with the poor. Isn't that the point of Matthew 25:31-46 and many other passages of scripture? God has identified with the poor and wants us to do so as well. Part of what that means is that we need to be in touch with the poor. Affluence

poor need more than money or food—they need an investment of our time and ourselves to help them overcome their poverty. Some expertise may help here, so it is good to be involved with a ministry that can supply that. But above all, what is needed are people with God's love in their hearts.

Are there other ways we can help the poor? We can advocate for them. As we become involved with the poor, we can learn about systemic abuses that need to be corrected. We can also see the value of the government safety net for the poor. Though that is not the ultimate answer for them, it certainly does help. I believe we, as Christians, should advocate for it to be maintained in some form or other.

As we get to know the poor, we will be less inclined to stand in judgment of them (as many people in our society do). Instead, we will think: "There but for the grace of God go I." And we will reach out to them with the love of God. We will

**Affluence allows us to distance ourselves from the poor, so we no longer see their pain or understand them. We need to make a point to reach out to them in the name of Jesus.**

immigrants (mostly Hispanic, both legal and illegal). Some had just been laid off in the recent recession, and those over 50 found it especially hard to find work again. A few people simply lacked the talents needed to hold a good job. Some had made bad lifestyle choices, which held them back. Some had criminal records.

Does it really matter why people are poor? I think it does, because it affects

allows us to distance ourselves from them, so we no longer see their pain or understand them. We need to make a point to reach out to them in the name of Jesus.

Giving to ministries that help the poor (in our community or abroad) is good. Even better is to become personally involved with the poor through involvement in some Christian ministry near our homes. Many of the

identify with them, be their friends, and advocate for justice for them. And along the way, we just might learn some great life lessons from them, too. 

**\*Name and identifying details have been changed to protect privacy.**

Robert Vroon served as a full-time pastor for 34 years, and is now retired. From 2005 through 2011, he served as pastor of Wilmington (Del.) Church of the Brethren.



# Good for nothing

by Ken Gible

**I was introduced to chain letters in college.**

Up until then I had only heard about them and had some vague notions about how they worked.

So when my college roommate received a chain letter in the mail, I was fascinated. In the letter were four names and addresses, listed top to bottom. The last name belonged to the person who had sent my roommate the letter. It instructed him to do two things: first, send five dollars to the person whose name appeared at the top of the list; second, mail copies of the letter to six other people, placing his own name in the number four spot. In due time, at least in theory, his name would arrive at the top of the list, and the five-dollar bills would come rolling in.

It didn't take my roommate long to figure out how many five-dollar bills that would be. Were the chain to remain unbroken, he would accumulate a total of \$1,080. I saw my duty at once. I set about to temper my friend's enthusiasm.

"Use your head," I told him. "Nobody takes chain letters seriously. They all end up in the wastebasket. Besides, what's to prevent others from carrying on the chain without sending that five bucks?"

All very reasonable, helpful counsel, to my way of

thinking. Did my roommate appreciate it? He did not.

He quickly pointed out to me that the scheme meant he would have a potential of 236 people to send him five dollars. If only two of those 236 came through, he would double his money. Besides, the chain letter said that breaking the chain would result in a streak of bad luck. Best not take a chance.

I saw that he was hopelessly hooked on his illusion, so I gave a shrug and a final word of advice: "Don't say I didn't warn you." Then I got back to the book I was reading.

By 10 o'clock that night, my roommate had circulated his six letters to guys in the dorm and had given his sales talk to everyone in sight. Now he was sitting on his bed riffling through the more than \$30 he had already collected.

"Come on," he said, "you can still get in on the action. Of course," he mocked, "if you had started right away, your name would now be at the top of a few lists."

I sat there muttering under my breath. I should never have underestimated the power of single-minded, passionate greed. What made the lesson particularly unforgettable was the five dollars I lost getting in on the tail end of the whole business. Yes, I finally succumbed to the madness around midnight. By the next day it was all over. So far as I

In this sense it can be said that we are good, not for any reward to be gained, but simply because God has brought it to pass in us. We are good for no gain to be had. *We are good for nothing.*

know, no one but my roommate so much as broke even.

Chain letters and the other scams that pervade our society—lotteries, sweepstakes, grand prize drawings—are all symptoms of the human longing for magical solutions. Pass on the chain letter (these days, the chain e-mail) and good fortune will result. Buy the lucky ticket and your problems will be solved.

Maybe it's a carryover from childhood. "Clean up your room and you'll get a piece of candy." "Get a B+ in math and you can go on a weekend outing with your friends." Translated into religion, it comes out, "Live a good, clean life, go to church at least occasionally, and good things will happen to you."

Jesus had something to say about all this. He called his followers' attention to the behavior of people who made a big show of their religion and good works. Jesus wasn't saying they should stop doing good things. His point was simply that once they had given their alms and had finished offering their public prayers, they had already gotten what they wanted: attention and admiration from their neighbors. "Truly I say to you," he said, "they have received their reward."

How do these words apply to the kind of religion you and I often practice? If we think that being good will make us acceptable to God, will earn us what we want, we are mistaken. Most of the time we are good to get something in return: respect, social approval—even God's approval.

Jesus makes it quite clear that doing good or being good will not win us God's favor. Instead, God's favor, God's grace, is *already* given to us, and then we may do good, we may even *be* good, at least some of the time. In this sense it can be said that we are good, not for any reward to be

gained, but simply because God has brought it to pass in us. We are good for no gain to be had. We are *good for nothing.*

Such an idea is contrary to what many people believe the Christian faith is all about. That's too bad, because what makes the gospel so exciting is the unexpectedness of grace, the surprise of joy.

We miss it time and time again. We feel guilty so often because we think we aren't good enough. We are not good enough as parents, not good enough as spouses, not good enough as friends.

In one sense it's true. We aren't good enough. In fact, we can never be good enough. But that doesn't seem to matter to the One who created us. The Holy One is far more interested in using whatever good we do for the blessing of God's children.

There is no magic. Chain messages are a sham. There are no secret formulas, no standards of right and wrong that, if carefully followed, will give us what we want. Rain falls on the just and the unjust. Some good people get sick; some bad people live to be 100. There are no guaranteed rewards for goodness; goodness must be its own reward.

There is something better than guarantees. It's the grace and freedom and love of God. They pervade life more than we know, more than we take time to see. In the end, they bring us—often kicking and screaming—into God's kingdom.

Oddly enough, we often have trouble recognizing our salvation, even when it's staring us in the face.

Ken Gible is an ordained pastor in the Church of the Brethren living in Greencastle, Pa. His poem, "Entry Room," published in the December 2010 MESSENGER, won an Award of Excellence from the Associated Church Press

# What American Christians can learn from Palestinians

by John and Joyce Casse

*[Joyce and John Cassel, members of First Church of the Brethren in Chicago, Ill., spent last September through November living in Palestine's West Bank. They were there as part of a World Council of Churches program called Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). While short-term visits can prove eye-opening and life-changing (see Mission and Ministry Board member Pam Riest's account in the April MESSENGER of her visit there in December with a delegation of other Brethren leaders and American Baptists), the Cassels' three-month sojourn revealed to them aspects of daily life otherwise unobtainable.—Ed.]*

**“Welcome!” There is probably no word we heard more often in Palestine than “Welcome!”** And in English, no less—from adults and children, at checkpoints and in stores, at introductions and in the streets. “You are welcome!”

During our three months in Palestine last fall, we found that this welcome was evident not only in words. On many occasions, the welcome was made concrete with tea, Arabic coffee, a few sweets, or even a whole meal.

Hospitality and care for the sojourner is deeply embedded in Bedouin culture. You see it throughout the Hebrew Bible: in Abraham and Sarah welcoming angels unaware, and in the Leviticus encouragement to allow gleaning in harvested fields. So it's not surprising to find hospitality a

central value of these Middle Eastern, predominately Muslim, Palestinians.

But apart from the deeply felt obligation of hospitality, the welcome has another purpose in Palestine. The Palestinians there are convinced that the rest of the world is not aware what their life is like under occupation. They believe that if the world knew about their situation, things would change. So they are eager for people to “Come and see how we (must) live. Come and see what the occupation is really like.”

So, we did. And what we saw broke our hearts. But we discovered that the Palestinian story is not hiding. It is on the Internet and in the world press. The question is whether we Americans are listening, or whether we are keeping ourselves too busy and willfully ignorant. We came away from our visit with a desire to join our Palestinian friends in encouraging our fellow Americans to truly listen. Our Palestinian brothers and sisters can teach us to truly welcome the other and to listen carefully to their stories. If the American public truly hears the Palestinian story, it will change the way we see our world, and pave the way for justice.

The Israeli occupation of the West Bank has been going on for 45 years—three generations! The Palestinians have asked the world for help, only to find themselves more deeply imbedded in a brutal occupation that looks more and more like the “new normal.” The overwhelming military might of the Israeli government has kept Palestine under the Israeli boot. What can Palestinians do in the face of this overwhelming oppression, unconditionally supported by the United States?

Israel has militarily occupied the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza since the Six-Day War of 1967. (Israel “withdrew” from Gaza in 2005, but they continue to control, barricade, and assault this small strip of land, which has become an open-air prison.) Today, Israel continues to build settlements in the West Bank (judged illegal by the World Court) that currently house more than 550,000 Israelis, predominately on Palestinian land. All significant aspects of Palestinian life—including economic activity and freedom of movement—are controlled by Israel. Many see the daily realities of occupation as a form of “collective punishment” (also illegal under International Law).

You are invited to read Joyce and John's three-month blog at: [www.3monthsinpalestine.tumblr.com](http://www.3monthsinpalestine.tumblr.com).





Steadfastness—*sumud*, in Arabic—has become a very important part of Palestinian life. No matter what happens, they say, “We will remain steadfast. We will stick to our values and commitments. Palestinian families and communities work to provide the support individuals and families need to endure.” Like African-Americans in our own civil rights struggle (and the apostle Paul), they are “keeping their eyes on the prize.”

How can American Christians support *sumud*? By standing with the Palestinians and offering encouragement. By resisting—or at least questioning—the unconditional support our government is providing Israel. By supporting the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement called for by Palestinian leaders in 2009 as a way of living our values of justice and reconciliation.

In almost every West Bank conversation, we heard the word “*Inshallah*.” If God wills it. “We’ll meet tomorrow, *Inshallah*.” “I’ve planted some olive trees. They will grow strong, *Inshallah*.”

Perhaps we American Christians have a more active understanding than many Muslims: God accompanies us as we welcome the coming of God’s kingdom; we participate with God in the work of Jesus: loving, forgiving, and doing justice. But *Inshallah* is not simply a passive by-standing. The lesson is straight from the Lord’s prayer: “Not my will, but thine be done.”

Palestinians love bread. Pita; rough, flat bread; thin bread for wraps; communion bread; common bread.

Bread, as Christians know, is about the very foundation of life. It’s communal in its creation and in its eating. So, it’s commonplace in Palestine to enjoy the sharing of bread, the breaking of bread, the nourishment of bread. Palestinian bread is not fancy. It’s plain, often eaten with a little olive oil, perhaps some hummus or eggplant. Bread is eaten before the meal, during the meal. And it is seen in the ubiquitous falafel sandwich.

What’s the lesson? The lesson is one that resonates with Brethren: life is simple. It’s to be enjoyed and shared. You will be sustained by a few staples.

We have the privilege of being friends with a wonderful family who live just north of Al Khahil (Hebron). The wife and mother prizes a jar of dirt from her grandparents’ village, just outside of Gaza. Her hope, *Inshallah*, is to return to that land in a time of peace. She holds that hope, that jar, in a safe place.

This refugee family has been challenged at every point: marriage was delayed due to imprisonment of the husband; a move to Saudi Arabia proved unsatisfactory; a daughter received inadequate medical care due to travel restrictions; the family home is currently under an Israeli home-demolition order.

In spite of these challenges, the family is strong and resilient. They center their life on Allah and Mohammed. They are devote Muslims and believe that, in God’s time, all will change.

As with many Palestinian families we met, they focus on the future and their children. Education is at the forefront. Palestinians repeatedly say you can take our homes, you can put us in jail, but you cannot take away our education. The mother, a college graduate, sits patiently with her children each day and assists with their learning. Two of their four school-age children are first in their classes. The oldest has received an award from the US government acknowledging his excellence in English.

Family living is not an individual effort in Palestine. Our friends are nurtured and loved by their extended family and community. But at the center of this family is a strong mother who fervently hopes for a future of freedom and opportunity. Each day she provides a strong presence, but she confided to us that deep inside she harbors a profound sadness about their daily lives.

Palestinians want the freedom to live their lives simply, but with dignity. They are not looking for a handout. They are accurate in their assessment of their society. They have the knowledge, education, and ambition to be successful. What they need to build a common life is control over their own land and their own resources.

Two peoples, one future. It’s not a tough lesson. ❧

# Carrying the cross in today's environment

by Chris Keating

**J**ust six hours into my trip to Chicago, and I was headed to the dump.

Many of my friends in St. Louis were packing their bags for sunnier, and less smelly, destinations. Spring break is supposed to take people to beaches or ski slopes—not landfills and waste sites.

But here I was—not on vacation, but taking a class—discovering the impact humans have had on this corner of the planet, and discovering new ways of helping churches develop environmental ministries. Organized by McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, I was enrolled in a class on environmental ministry and leadership. It's a broad topic, but for starters we took a tour of a few toxic waste sites in Chicago.

A volunteer from a neighborhood environmental group guided us past giant industrial plants, slag piles, and abandoned steel mills on the city's southeast side. He pointed out polluted waters and huge landfills no longer used for dumping. We saw acres of buried toxins covered by dirt and surrounded by menacing chain link and razor wire fences. With the city's magnificent skyline in the background, we observed miles of former wetland spaces that were now wastelands.

Since my family had lived in Chicago until the early 1960s, with extended family still living in the area, I felt like visiting these dumping sites was similar to visiting my family's ancestral ruins. The area—used for dumping or incinerating of trash since the early 1900s—is surrounded by vacated manufacturing plants. Immense waste areas remain as remnants of the area's past. I looked at the mounds and knew our family's garbage was still in there, slowly decaying.

Visiting that landfill was a visual reminder of why we are called to care for the environment. In a visceral way, it underscored for me what it means to hear Jesus say, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. . . . For what will it profit them to

gain the whole world and forfeit their life?" (Mark 8:34, 36)

That visit made me think about carrying a cross, while caring for the environment.

On average, Americans produce over four pounds of trash each day. (If I get around to cleaning my basement, I'll skew the national average immediately, but that is another story.) Our stuff has to go someplace. While the answers to our ecological dilemmas are not clear, we can begin by discerning God's call to a cross-shaped life. While Jesus didn't appoint a congregational "Green Team," giving them authority over recycling and conserving, he did call disciples to follow him. He speaks of the high cost of discipleship, and how it involves a change of priorities. In chapter eight of Mark's Gospel, he begins to openly discuss the meaning of costly discipleship.

After feeding the 4,000 and curing the blind man at Bethsaida, Jesus provides specific instructions to the disciples, opening their eyes and feeding their souls. He asks them, "Who do you say that I am?" They answer, "The Messiah," which immediately results in Jesus sternly instructing them not to tell anyone about him.

What happens next is particularly intriguing, however. While he has told them to be quiet, Jesus quite openly explores the fine print of what being Messiah is truly about. He tells them that being Messiah isn't about political grandeur and claiming power. It is about suffering, being rejected, even being killed. The job description of the Messiah, according to Jesus, is straightforward, just as it is for those who wish to follow him. What Jesus expects is clear: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

It's the implications of that verse which aren't always so clear. Normally, when someone says "I've got my cross to bear," they're often referring to an illness or a particularly obnoxious relative, or maybe a car with a funky clutch. Instead, as



**The cross is a potent sign of death, as visceral a symbol of decay as those landfills I visited. . . . Being a disciple requires giving of ourselves, taking up the symbolic emblem of death as our own personal crest in order that we might find true life.**

scholars point out, this is about placing God's priorities ahead of ours. It is about seeking first the Kingdom. It includes caring for others, and deepening our care for creation.

When I looked at the grassy slopes of buried garbage, I became aware that denying ourselves may lead to engaging our consumer world that keeps urging us to buy more and more stuff. But it is possible that we could gain a world of stuff yet lose our planet in the process.

While the Old Testament—particularly in Genesis and the wisdom literature—abounds with images of creation and nature, ecological inferences in the New Testament are not always immediately clear. A resource such as *The Green Bible*, which lists environmental references in green ink, can be helpful in locating scriptural guidance for earth care. But as Brethren have known (and have always lovingly shared with this Presbyterian), perhaps the best way to explore our calling to care for each other and creation is to hear again Jesus' invitation to radical discipleship and simpler lifestyles.

For 21st-century Christians, denying ourselves should include increasing our awareness of how we care for the earth. That is our calling. Reducing, reusing, recycling are not just words our kids learn in school, but should also be echoed in the church's worship and life. Picking up our cross includes conversations about earth care at home and Sunday school, in

legislatures and at church picnics.

Jesus has opened the ears of the deaf and cleared the eyes of the blind. Now he broadens the vision of the disciples to see the true nature of his work. He calls them to pick up their crosses and to follow him in pathways of service and self-giving love. The cross is a potent sign of death, as visceral a symbol of decay as those landfills I visited. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer is famously quoted, "When Christ calls a man (or woman), he bids him (her) to come and die." But the cross also leads to new life, resurrection power, and deeper communion with Christ. Being a disciple requires giving of ourselves, taking up the symbolic emblem of death as our own personal crest in order that we might find true life.

This is the sum of the Christian life. It is an action of setting down and picking up. In the words of Bethany Theological Seminary professor Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm, "The challenge and blessing of Jesus' all-encompassing call insists on a radical reorientation of our lives that draws us into a closer relationship with him." Picking up our cross may lead us to the landfill, but it also leads to new life. ❧

Chris Keating is pastor of Woodlawn Chapel Presbyterian Church in Wildwood, Mo. Serving as MESSENGER's Bible study writer during 2013, Keating is connected to the Church of the Brethren through the University of La Verne and an internship with MESSENGER in the 1980s.

## Mission and Ministry Board issues resolution against drone warfare

A Resolution Against Drone Warfare was issued by the Mission and Ministry Board on March 10. Proposed by the Office of Public Witness based in Washington, D.C., the resolution will be sent on to the 2013 Annual Conference for its consideration in early July.

The resolution addresses the use of drones in warfare in the context of a reaffirmation of the Church of the Brethren's longstanding assertion that

President accountable for the administration's use of drones and to institute legitimate oversight of their deployment. "We will no longer tolerate secretive 'kill lists,' and the decision-making process in the matter of armed drones must be made public," the resolution says, "so that the lethal actions of government may be properly understood and judged."

### On Earth Peace and Brethren Benefit Trust support resolution

At its spring board meeting in New Windsor, Md., **On Earth Peace** affirmed the Mission and Ministry Board Resolution Against Drone Warfare.

As an agency of the Church of the Brethren, On Earth Peace is committed to make all its resources available to help the church engage this serious issue. In particular, the On Earth Peace Ministry of Reconciliation is ready to help people from all different points of view seek the will of the Spirit together when this resolution is considered at the upcoming Church of the Brethren Annual Conference in Charlotte, N.C., this July.

**Brethren Benefit Trust's** investment guidelines prohibit investments in the top 25 publicly traded defense contractors or of publicly traded companies that generate 10 percent or more of their revenues from defense or weapons contracts or sales. As a result, BBT does not invest in Northrop Grumman, Boeing, or Lockheed Martin—three companies that are engaged in the manufacturing of drones for warfare.

"BBT supports the Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board's resolution on drone warfare, and we encourage institutional and individual investors to refrain from investing in companies that are on BBT's top 25 and 10 percent defense contractor and weapons manufacturer lists," said Nevin Dulabaum, BBT president.



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

*A group of Mission and Ministry Board members discusses the Resolution Against Drone Warfare during a time for small group discussion. The board held its spring meeting in Elgin, Ill., in March.*

"war is sin." Citing scripture and relevant Annual Conference statements, it states in part, "We are troubled by the quickly expanding use of armed unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones. These drones are being used for surveillance and remote killing of people. In our opposition to all types of war, the Church of the Brethren has spoken out specifically against covert warfare.... Drone warfare embodies the fundamental problems that covert warfare entails."

The resolution calls districts, congregations, and individual members of the church to study the issue in relation to the Brethren history of peacemaking, to care for the victims of drone violence, and to encourage all church-related institutions to follow denominational practices for socially responsible investing.

It calls on the President and Congress of the United States to halt the use of drones and calls on Congress to hold the

**“We will no longer tolerate secretive ‘kill lists,’ and the decision-making process in the matter of armed drones must be made public, so that the lethal actions of government may be properly understood and judged.”**

A Resolution Against Drone Warfare issued by the Mission and Ministry Board.

# 'Shine,' a new Sunday school curriculum, is underway for 2014

Development of a new Sunday school curriculum called Shine is underway by Brethren Press and MennoMedia. Writers are beginning to prepare the first quarter of Shine: Living in God's Light, which will be available for use in fall 2014.

"We are pleased to offer our congregations a user-friendly, enriching curriculum that grows out of our distinct beliefs as Brethren and Mennonites," said Wendy McFadden, publisher of Brethren Press.

The two publishing houses are long-time collaborators on Sunday school curriculum and began more than 18 months ago to prepare a successor to Gather 'Round: Hearing and Sharing God's Good News. Gather 'Round was designed to run for eight years, with summer 2014 as its final quarter.



"We're very excited about Shine's emphasis on God's light shining through us," said Rose Stutzman, project director for Shine. "As you read the Bible, you notice that the theme of light is pervasive. God's light shines

through the darkness for God's people, both then and now."

Shine's foundational scriptures include Isaiah 9:2 and Matthew 5:14-16. Designed for children age 3 through grade eight, Shine will incorporate the latest understandings of the ways children learn. The material is based on a three-year overview of the Bible, with a separate Bible outline for early childhood (ages 3 to 5). Sessions include an emphasis on teaching prayer and other spiritual practices, and also will highlight peace themes.

Congregations are encouraged to continue using Gather 'Round through summer 2014, in order to have a seamless transition to the new curriculum when it becomes available in fall 2014. Gather 'Round may be ordered from Brethren Press at 800-441-3712.



## watch it ONLINE



➔ Candlelighting service, Mission and Ministry Board meeting, March 2013



➔ Recognition of the Church of the Brethren in Spain.

The latest Church of the Brethren videos can be viewed at [www.brethren.org/video/](http://www.brethren.org/video/)

Links to these videos and additional resources can also be found on the online version of MESSENGER.

## upcoming events

**May 3-4**

**Children's Disaster Services Workshop,**  
Litchfield, Conn.

**May 5 National Youth Sunday**

**May 19 Pentecost Special Offering**

**May 25-27 Young Adult Conference,**  
Camp Pine Lake,  
Eldora, Iowa

**May 31-June 5 Ministry Summer Service orientation**

**May 31-June 1 Children's Disaster Services Workshop,**  
Groton, Conn.

**June 14-24 Exploring Your Call,**  
Bethany Theological Seminary,  
Richmond, Ind.

**June 14-16 National Junior High Conference,**  
Elizabethtown (Pa.)  
College

**June 21-27 Song and Story Fest,**  
Camp Myrtlewood,  
Myrtle Point, Ore.

**June 27-29 Council of District Executives (CODE)**  
summer meeting,  
Charlotte, N.C.

## New Brethren Academy program receives funding

A gift from the David J. and Mary Elizabeth Wieand Trust is helping to start a new "Sustaining Ministerial Excellence: Advanced Seminar" at the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership.

"It is a real joy to bring to you something that will undergird the life-long training of our ministers," said associate general secretary Mary Jo Flory-Steury as she requested board approval for use of \$150,000 from the total gift received by the Church of the Brethren. The gift is restricted to specific purposes, including to provide books and other educational resources to ministers, support self-help programs, and for Christian work in inner city Chicago.

The Wieand family has provided decades of leadership in ministerial education in the Church of the Brethren, beginning with Albert Cassel (A.C.) Wieand who was a co-founder of Bethany Theological Seminary. He and E.B. Hoff founded the seminary in Chicago in 1905, originally called Bethany Biblical Seminary. David J. Wieand taught at Bethany when the seminary was located in the Chicago area, and headed up an Advanced Pastor's Seminar that was a continuing education program for Bethany master of divinity graduates after three years in ministry. He also was instrumental in the doctor of ministry

program. Also honored by this gift is Katherine Broadwater Wieand, wife of A.C. Wieand.

The new program at the Brethren Academy follows up on the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) program, which will be completed by June 30. SPE was funded through a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc.

Sustaining Ministerial Excellence: Advanced Seminar will be a continuing education program for ordained ministers who pastor a church, do chaplaincy, or serve in another ministry setting. It will broaden opportunities for continuing education for all Church of the Brethren ministers, as its predecessor focused solely on pastors. It is intended to build on the success of SPE, using surveys and reports of the effectiveness and impact of SPE on those who participated.

The new program aims at ministers who have completed 3-5 years of ministry, but will be open to ministers in other phases of their careers. It is expected to launch in January 2014, and to have a program life of five to ten years. Julie M. Hostetter, executive director of the Brethren Academy, will serve as program coordinator.

Bethany Theological Seminary, which also received a gift from the trust, has approved use of a matching \$150,000 to support the Sustaining Ministry Excellence: Advanced Seminar.

*Mary Jo Flory-Steury, associate general secretary and executive for the Ministry Office, brought the recommendation of use of a Wieand family trust gift to help start a new continuing education program at the Brethren Academy. The academy is a joint program of the Church of the Brethren and Bethany Seminary.*



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

## PERSONNEL CHANGES

**Denise Kettering-Lane** has been named the new editor for *Brethren Life and Thought* by the Brethren Journal Association in partnership with Bethany Theological Seminary. She has been assistant professor of Brethren Studies at Bethany in Richmond, Ind., since 2010. As editor, her focus will be to compile and edit articles

for the print journal. In addition to handling both solicited and unsolicited submissions, she will oversee the peer review process. She will begin her work in conjunction with guest editor Andy Hamilton on volume 59.1, spring 2014, now in the early stages of preparation.

**Joel and Linetta Ballew** have accepted the position of co-administrators at Camp

Swatara, a Church of the Brethren camp in Pennsylvania. The announcement came from Shenandoah District, where Joel Ballew has been pastor at Lebanon Church of the Brethren in Mount Sidney, Va., and Linetta Ballew has been program director at Brethren Woods Camp and Retreat Center. The couple will make the move to Camp Swatara at the end of May.

*Peggy Gish is one of the Church of the Brethren members, along with Cliff Kindy, who was part of the first Christian Peacemaker Teams team in Iraq. Both Gish and Kindy were in Iraq in 2003, during the US invasion 10 years ago.*



## Marking the 10-year anniversary of war in Iraq

Ten years after the US invasion of Iraq, Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), together with uncounted Iraqi families, has lamented the carnage that continues to echo from that moment.

Reports sent before, during, and after the invasion brought rare, non-embedded perspectives that helped earn CPT a reputation for reliable, independent reporting, broad partnering, and bold action.

The first report from the Iraq team after the invasion began on March 20, 2003 can be found at [www.cpt.org/cptnet/2003/03/20/iraq-war-report-team-baghdad](http://www.cpt.org/cptnet/2003/03/20/iraq-war-report-team-baghdad). The CPT team in Baghdad at that time included Church of the Brethren members Cliff Kindy of Indiana and Peggy Gish of Ohio, working alongside Lisa Martens of Manitoba, Canada; Scott Kerr of Illinois; Betty Scholten of Maryland; Shane Claiborne of Pennsylvania; Martin Edwards of California; and Charlie Litke, also from California. Find a list of all releases from the March 2003 team at [www.cpt.org/taxonomy/term/4?page=91](http://www.cpt.org/taxonomy/term/4?page=91).

Following are a few selections from their reports, all from 2003:

Final thoughts. March 19, 7 p.m.:  
"I mourn for all the people who will soon die. But I delight in the beauty of everything around me, and bask in the fellowship of my precious friends here—both the Iraqis and internationals. . . ."

A March 15 letter to the churches in Canada and the United States from CPT in Baghdad: "From prayer and fasting, find the strength to stop paying for war. From joy in discipleship, hold fast to the evangelistic boldness to invite soldiers and corporate technocrats to abandon their posts. . . . Live in Easter hope."

From "Caught," March 19, CPT delegation member John Barber records his interaction with an Iraqi hotel clerk: "My family is here in Baghdad. My father, my brothers. Do you know I go home each night and I just sit. I only think of one thing: 'What am I to do? War is coming, What am I to do?' . . . I look deeply into his eyes. Days, months, years, in this trap. 'Why this war?' he asks. I

cannot answer. I want to console him, but I cannot. I want to hold him like my child, and tell him it will be all right, but it will not be all right. 'Thank you and your friends for being here, you have good hearts,' he says. He puts his hand over his heart—a common gesture here in Iraq. It is a reminder for me. For a moment we stand across from each other, holding our hearts, holding our anguish. We both begin to cry."

These passages were taken from Christian Peacemaker Teams releases. CPT, originally begun by the Historic Peace Churches, including the Church of the Brethren, has the mission of building partnerships to transform violence and oppression, and the vision of a world of communities that together embrace the diversity of the human family and live justly and peaceably with all creation. CPT has had a presence in Iraq since Oct. 2002, six months before the beginning of the US-led invasion. A CPT team continues to serve in Iraqi Kurdistan. For more information go to [www.cpt.org](http://www.cpt.org).

## Christian leaders celebrate world's first Arms Trade Treaty

"We give thanks to God for the adoption of the world's first Arms Trade Treaty and for the efforts by a large majority of countries and many civil society groups to bring it into existence," said an April 3 public statement by World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary Olav Fykse Tveit.

The Arms Trade Treaty was adopted April 2 by the United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York. It was voted for by 150-plus countries including the United States. The WCC is one of the Christian groups around the world celebrating the adoption of the treaty, along with other humanitarian organizations.

Church of the Brethren general secretary Stan Noffsinger and Nathan Hosler, coordinator of the Office of Public Witness, were among the American church leaders to encourage the Obama administration to vote for the treaty.

A *New York Times* report characterized the treaty as "aimed at regulating the enormous global trade in conventional weapons, for the first time linking sales to the human rights records of

the buyers. Although implementation is years away and there is no specific enforcement mechanism, proponents say the treaty would for the first time force sellers to consider how their customers will use the weapons and to make that information public. The goal is to curb the sale of weapons that kill tens of thousands of people every year."

However, the *Times* also reported that the National Rifle Association has vowed to fight ratification of the treaty by the US Congress.

The WCC is calling the Arms Trade Treaty "a milestone in efforts to bring commerce in deadly weapons under much-needed controls," according to Tveit. "This long-overdue act of international governance means that people in many parts of the world who live in fear for their lives will eventually be safer. . . . Churches in all regions share in the suffering caused by armed violence," Tveit noted. "We can all now give thanks that national authorities responsible for public safety and well-being have finally adopted binding regulations for the global arms trade."

## Peeling the onion of John's Gospel

**I**n some ways, the Gospel of John is the simplest gospel. First-year students in New Testament Greek are given passages from John to translate because the vocabulary is the simplest.

But in other ways, it is the most complex Gospel. As with an onion, there are layers and layers, and no one seems to have exhausted the meanings implicit in even the simplest words (including the word "Word"). And the nuances in the conversations that Martha, the Samaritan woman, and, after the resurrection, Peter, all have with Jesus are pearls of great price!



FRANK RAMIREZ

The Gospel of John also can be considered the most rewarding Gospel. If you're not convinced before you get hold of a copy of the *Believers Church Bible Commentary: John* by Willard M. Swartley, you will be after you've delved into its pages.

Swartley, professor emeritus at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., who taught from 1978 to 2004, and who was also former academic dean for many years as well, has authored

the latest volume in this commentary series that features writers from Mennonite and Brethren traditions.

The author presents in readable language the complex discussions about questions of authorship, date of composition, and layers of meaning. He helps readers understand some of the enigmas in this profound story of Jesus Christ.

Swartley shines a bright light on the subtle differences in the varying terms for love, sheep (feeding/tending), and knowing that undergird the post-resurrection dialog between Peter and Jesus. The story of the Samaritan woman at the well, the extraordinary confession of faith by Martha in the wake of her brother Lazarus' death, the deeper meaning of her sister Mary's anointing of Jesus' feet, and the complexities of the poem about the Word that begins John's narrative are just a

few of the wonderfully rewarding passages.

The format of the series is ideal for pastors, Sunday school teachers, and students of the Bible, despite the fact it is nearly 600 pages long. Typically one would not read the book from cover to cover anyway. The commentary is divided into sections with clear headings that identify the shorter sub-passages studied. At the end of each section are essays on "The Text in Biblical Context" (looking at how a passage fits within the larger biblical tapestry) and "The Text in the Life of the Church" (studying the way the passage has been applied by Christians in various times and settings, with special attention given to the Believers Church). This breakdown makes it easy to use for sermon planning, meditations, or personal study.

The book is much longer than most volumes in the series, but it was actually longer in manuscript. An extra 172 pages of material is available online as an easily navigable PDF file.

One disappointment, however, is that the book totally ignores the significance of John 13 and what it means for the faith and practice of the Church of the Brethren and the Amish, both of whom universally practice footwashing as an integral and essential part of the Love Feast. No Brethren writers or examples from history are cited in this regard, although there is a wealth of material and historical record available.

Nor does the author seem aware, after recounting the theory that the Beloved Disciple just might be Lazarus, that the late Brethren scholar and writer Vernard Eller wrote a book on just this subject titled *The Beloved Disciple*. One wonders if the fact that added material is posted online might encourage further additions with regard to matters that especially concern Brethren.

Despite these shortcomings, this is an intriguing and accessible book about a fascinating gospel that merits a place on the shelves of pastors, teachers, church libraries, and Brethren interested in biblical studies. 

Frank Ramirez is pastor of Everett (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.

### ABOUT THE BOOK

**Title:** *John: Believers Church Bible Commentary*. **Author:** Willard M. Swartley. **Publisher:** Herald Press, Harrisonburg, Va., March 2013. **List price:** \$34.99. Pages: 538.

The term "Believers Church" refers to groups like Mennonites and Brethren who share "specific theological understandings, such as believers baptism, commitment to the Rule of Christ in Matthew 18:15-20 as crucial for church membership, belief in the power of love in all relationships, and willingness to follow Christ in the way of the cross."





## Youth voice is heard in New York and Washington during CCS

During the last week of March, 55 Church of the Brethren youth and advisors joined forces to learn more about the issue of childhood poverty at this year's Christian Citizenship Seminar. CCS is a week-long event sponsored by the denomination's Youth and Young Adult Ministries and the Office of Public Witness.

The week began in New York City where Nathan Hosler, coordinator of the Church of the Brethren's Office of Public Witness, and I spoke of our experiences with the issue as part of our work. We spoke specifically of the "sequester" and the effects these cuts to the federal budget have on children facing poverty. In Washington, so much emphasis has been placed on the bottom budget line that the human costs of these cuts has been tragically overlooked. We encouraged the youth to instead look for inspiration from Jesus' example in scripture to care for the "least of these."

This theme was expanded by the first guest speaker, Shannon Daley-Harris, religious affairs advisor for the Children's Defense Fund (CDF). She spoke of the CDF's program "Be Careful What You Cut," which emphasizes long-term effects of cutting anti-poverty programs for young children. (More information is at [www.childrensdefense.org/be-careful-what-you-cut](http://www.childrensdefense.org/be-careful-what-you-cut).)

The second guest speaker was Sarah Rohrer, deputy director of Bread for the World's office in New York. The Church of the Brethren has a history of working with and supporting the mission of Bread for the World through the Global Food Crisis Fund. Rohrer talked about the effects of poverty on children around the world, and spoke specifically about Bread for the World's 1,000 Days program and Offering of Letters advocacy effort. The 1,000 Days program focuses on the early development of children internationally and is designed to eliminate malnutrition of young children and mothers by providing ample and healthy food during the 1,000 days from pregnancy to the child's second birthday. The Offering of Letters is an advocacy effort that provides a way for church members to speak out on issues of poverty from a faith perspective and encourage their representatives and senators to support policies that will help programs like 1,000 Days be effective.

After three days in New York, the CCS group boarded a bus to Washington, D.C., for the second half of the seminar.

There, the tour continued with a trip to the Department of Agriculture (USDA) where three staff members of the USDA's Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships spoke about how they work with churches and social organizations to implement government policies at a community level.

After the USDA visit, the youth had a chance to learn how to put their knowledge into action. For this task our guests were Jerry O'Donnell, a member of Washington City Church of the Brethren and also press secretary for Rep. Grace Napolitano (CA-32), and Shantha Ready-Alonso, director of the National Council of Churches (NCC) Poverty Initiative. O'Donnell provided an insider perspective as a Congressional staffer while Ready-Alonso demonstrated the advocacy skills and strategies needed to be an effective Christian voice on Capitol Hill.

This combination gave our youth the confidence and knowledge to go to Capitol Hill themselves and lift up the issue of childhood poverty with their own representatives and senators. By the time the seminar concluded, Brethren youth had advocated their concerns with senators and representatives from Virginia, Pennsylvania, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, California, Ohio, and Oregon.

Bryan Hanger is an advocacy assistant at the Church of the Brethren's Office of Public Witness.



### Wheelbarrows of pennies for NYC

The Youth and Young Adult office is sharing fundraising ideas for National Youth Conference 2014 at [www.facebook.com/NYC2014](http://www.facebook.com/NYC2014). One of the latest is the \$500 wheelbarrow. A heavy-duty wheelbarrow can hold 50,000 pennies, which amounts to \$500. The webpage suggests youth place the wheelbarrow in a high-traffic area in their church, with a sign explaining what the pennies are for.

# Letters

## Gluten free

I had to chuckle when I read the MESSENGER April Pontius' Puddle cartoon. I am one of those gluten-free people. To make life even more interesting, I am also dairy free. (And you thought life was difficult!) Although one small piece of wheat communion bread is not going to set my

digestive system in a whirl, it may for some others. It could be like serving communion wine to an alcoholic.

I remember the first time I was offered communion with gluten-free bread. It was such a blessing and even better than having my feet washed. It meant the communion steward took the time to notice my need and find the bread: how Christ like. It actually made me feel as if I was one in the body of Christ instead of passing on the bread

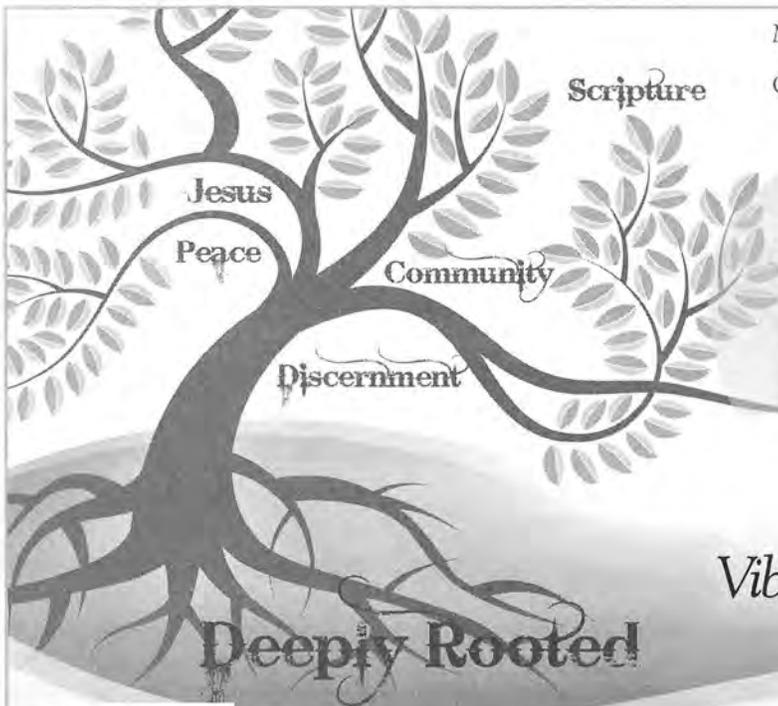
because it contained wheat gluten.

We are all part of the body of Christ, we are just different members with different needs. I appreciate those servants who understand that and provide for my need. Now, if Annual Conference would serve dairy-free frozen desserts at the ice cream social, I might just be in heaven.

**Judith Clister**  
Bruceton Mills, W. Va.



The next time we find ourselves at the Paradise Diner, I hope the *rich man and Lazarus* from Luke 16:19-31 show up so we can learn first-hand what Heaven and Hell really are like.



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## False teaching 101

The next time we find ourselves at the Paradise Diner, I hope the rich man and Lazarus from Luke 16:19-31 show up so we can learn first-hand what Heaven and Hell really are like. They won't be coming from the same place, because verse 26 quotes Abraham as saying to the rich man, "Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from her to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us" (Luke 16:26). It won't cost us much to dine because water is still free in most restaurants, and that could possibly be the only item the rich man will order. I'm sorry, but from what little I know about the Bible, I'd rate the MESSENGER article "False Teaching 101."

**James F. Myer**  
Lititz, Pa.

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at Annual Conference.



2013 Annual Conference  
Charlotte, North Carolina  
**Ecumenical Luncheon**  
Monday, July 1 at 12:00 noon

# Seeking Wholeness

Guest speaker:  
**The Rev. Dr. Sharon E. Watkins**

*General Minister and President of the Christian Church  
(Disciples of Christ)*

**Dr. Watkins will share reflections on  
Christian unity as a gift and a goal for  
the church of Jesus Christ in the complex  
society of the U.S. and the world.**



Church of the Brethren

## Misguided

To call for immigration reform by CCT (March MESSENGER) is a misguided point of view.

These reforms should be that allowable quotas should be terminated or drastically reduced. Supporters of immigration ignore the fact that the US is already overpopulated. Are the im-

migration supporters willing to exchange their lifestyles for a life in a developing country (i.e.: Haiti or Bangladesh)? That would be the consequences if unchecked immigration were to be permitted.

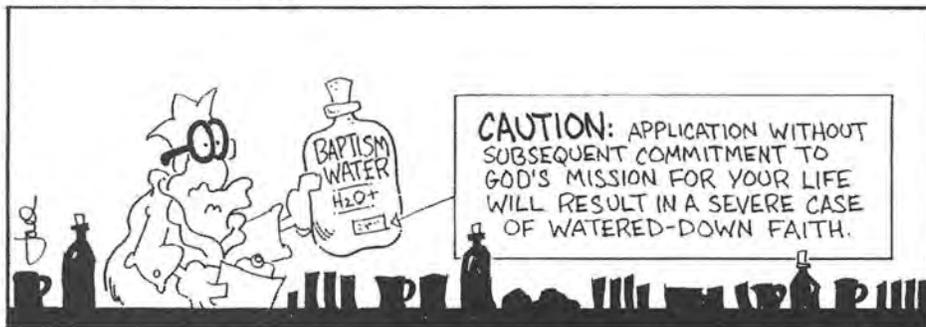
The observation that we are all descendants of immigrants has no relevance now. That was then and this is now. Sometimes the reunion of families is listed as a benefit for the immigration

into the US. Having the lonely immigrant return to his or her homeland would also be more effective in reuniting the family.

**Donald B. Miller**  
Albany, Ore.

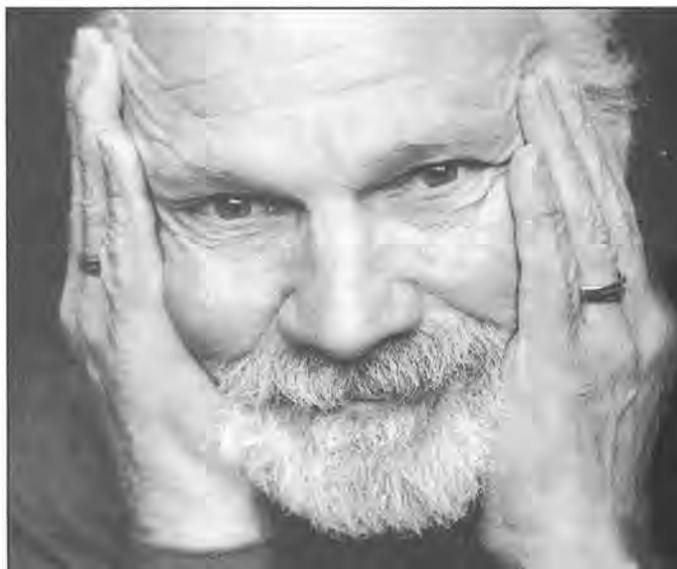
*[With MESSENGER now available digitally (see publisher Wendy McFadden's April column for details), several readers have commented—on line, of course—about the new version of the magazine. Their comments follow. —Ed.]*

## Pontius' Puddle



## Thanks for this new digital resource

I just finished signing in to the new digital MESSENGER format and explored the many links. A wealth of information, easy to navigate, and the several selections that I chose were quite informative. The computer is where I



Brethren Press and Messenger present

# Dinner with Stanley Hauerwas

Sunday, June 30, 2013 · Charlotte, North Carolina  
Order tickets before June 4 at [www.brethren.org/ac](http://www.brethren.org/ac)

**“The overriding political task of the church is to be the community of the cross.”**

Stanley Hauerwas will appear Sunday afternoon at the Annual Conference bookstore for a special author signing. Watch [www.facebook.com/brethrenpress](http://www.facebook.com/brethrenpress) for further details.

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**MESSENGER**



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I just finished signing in to the new *digital messenger format* and explored the many links. A wealth of information, easy to navigate, and the several selections that I chose were quite informative.



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The Share Fund is a non-profit corporation established by the Brethren Mutual Aid Inc. to provide financial assistance to Brethren-related congregations in their caring and sharing ministries. It is funded by contributions from the Brethren Mutual Aid Agency and other individuals and organizations.

Since the Share Fund's inception, it has provided over one hundred and fifty thousand dollars in matching funds to assist individuals and families in crisis. Together we can offer help and hope to those in need.

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**"Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away."—Deuteronomy 6:6–7**

go for most of my information so this format works for me. Thanks to all the MESSENGER staff for providing this new digital resource.

**Gary W. Studebaker**

## Copies are always on hand

Excellent—I like it! I am still a “paper” guy, and print more than I should to be considered “green,” but I flipped through the digital version of MESSENGER and can already say I will use this version for sermon research, Christian education, and study preparation!

Keep up the great work! MESSENGER is one of the very few publications I look forward to receiving, and the most recent and multiple prior copies are always at hand’s reach in my home office!

**Scott A. Moyer**

I really enjoyed Earle Fike’s article in the March issue. It made me really appreciate my roots in Brethren belief.

**Lois Clark**

Thank you. This is a wonderful addition.

**Leroy Keeney**

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### EDUCATIONAL TOURS

- BRITISH ISLES (ENGLAND, SCOTLAND & WALES) with DAVID & JOYCE ESHLEMAN (Sept 13-25/2013)
- CHINA & YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE (Nov 1-15/2013)
- EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS MARKETS (Dec 9-15/2013)
- JAMAICA: ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY & FRUITS (Jan 18-27/2014)
- CUBA with JACK & IRENE SUDERMAN (Feb 7-16/2014)
- CHURCHES & SAFARIS in ETHIOPIA & TANZANIA (Oct 10-22/2014)
- VIETNAM & SINGAPORE (Nov 10-24/2014)

### CUSTOM TOURS

- COLUMBIA BIBLE COLLEGE ANABAPTIST HERITAGE TOUR (July 2-15/2013)
- HAITI CUSTOM TOUR (Feb 27-March 9/2014)
- HESSTON COLLEGE STUDENT CHOIR TOUR to EUROPE (May 13-June 12/2014)

### HOLY LAND TOURS

- FOLLOWING the STEPS of MOSES with PASTOR NELSON KRAYBILL (July 22-31/2013)
- HOLY LAND: HARVEST the OLIVES & EXPERIENCE the BIBLE (Oct 12-21/2013)
- BEHIND the VEIL: EXPERIENCING EGYPT (Oct 17-28/2013)
- ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR RICH BUCHER (Nov 5-14/2013)
- HOLY LAND TOUR with PASTOR PHIL WAGLER (Feb 12-20/2014)
- ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR DAVID BOSHART (April 24-May 3/2014)
- FROM NAZARETH to ROME with PASTOR JIM BROWN (Nov 3-15/2014)

### HERITAGE TOURS

- EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (June 6-19/2013) - **SOLD OUT!**
- RUSSIA & UKRAINE: THE MENNONITE STORY (Sept 4-16/2013)
- INDIA: HISTORY, CHANGE and the CHURCH with BERT & MARTHA LOBE (Oct 6-21/2013)
- EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 16-28/2014)
- EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (June 24-July 7/2014)
- AMISH EUROPEAN HERITAGE TOUR (July 6-31/2014)
- POLAND & UKRAINE: THE MENNONITE STORY (Sept 18-29/2014)



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## New Members

**Chiques**, Manheim, Pa.: Sharon Swope  
**Defiance**, Ohio: Oleta Hasselschwert  
**East Cocalico**, Stevens, Pa.: Paul Enck, Cora Windham, Jeff Bollinger, Cindy Bollinger, Gerald Merklinger, Mary Merklinger, Gary Good, Lisa Good  
**East Fairview**, Manheim, Pa.: Tyler Kauffman, David Graybill, Audrey Martin, Vickie Miller, Jim Sanders  
**Faith Community**, New Oxford, Pa.: Mildred Kline, Mildred Gutshall, Nancy Slaybaugh  
**Free Spring**, Mifflintown, Pa.: James S. Schoch, II  
**La Verne**, Calif.: Tim Nelson, Russell Traughber, Amanda Winchell, Leland Rupel, Ruth Rupel, Lydia Dorje, Francie Ward, Tim Ward, Vicki Bash, Kelly Whittington, Kathy Whittington, Lois Brandt, Ashley Castro  
**Lafayette**, Ind.: Matthew Roop, Natasha Leming, Katie Seward, Lois Gotwals, Linda Reppert  
**Lansing**, Mich.: Ramona Smith  
**Maple Grove**, New Paris, Ind.: Jerod Erb, Megan Erb, Deborah Kauffman, Ned Myers, Linda Myers  
**McPherson**, Kan.: Jerry Bowen, Kendra Bowen,

Lori Crain, Steve Crain, Tony Eves, Jon Flory Schrock, Kathy Freed, Ron Freed, Daisy Friesen, April Lemm, Paul Prose, Renata Prose, Jaymie Rothrock, Tim Swartzendruber, Autumn Wilgers, Dustin Wilgers  
**Mechanicsburg**, Pa.: Hannah Cisney  
**Montgomery**, Commodore, Pa.: Leasa Tyger, Lois Tyger, Alice White, Junior Woods, Caren Balducci, Dannene Craig, Marc Crosmun, Tracey Lee Kensinger  
**Wilmington**, Del.: Dave Crookshank, Doug King, Ted Sammons

## Wedding Anniversaries

**Barkman**, John and Guila, Everett, Pa., 74  
**Bosserman**, Don and Carol, Elizabethtown, Pa., 50  
**Bowman**, Richard and Martha, McFarland, Calif., 60  
**Croushorn**, Kenneth and Helen, Nokesville, Va., 50  
**Jackson**, Charles and Elaine, Bainbridge, Pa., 55  
**Miller**, Wayne and Gwen, Lancaster, Pa., 65  
**Moyer**, Walton and Jean, Elizabethtown, Pa., 55  
**Mumford**, Richard and Keiko, Lancaster, Pa., 55  
**Pugh**, Bill and Bennie, Roanoke, Va., 50  
**Strickler**, Duane and Carol, Gerrardstown, W.Va., 50  
**Weimer**, Carroll, Sr. and Mary, Nokesville, Va., 60  
**Wolf**, Eldon and Roberta, North Canton, Ohio, 55

## Deaths

**Amos**, Jack A., 65, Brookville, Ohio, Jan. 27  
**Anderson**, Charles E., 86,

North Manchester, Ind., March 10  
**Barkman**, Guila Grace, 91, Everett, Pa., Feb. 10  
**Beahm**, Ella A., 96, Catlett, Va., March 2  
**Beck**, Richard C., 74, Duncansville, Pa., March 6  
**Blystone**, Meredith, 78, Shelocta, Pa., Jan. 25  
**Buehler**, M. E., 101, La Verne, Calif., Feb. 10  
**Butler**, Edward R., 76, McPherson, Kan., March 24  
**Claar**, Thomas L., 98, East Freedom, Pa., March 4  
**Craig**, Dorothy M., 91, Johnstown, Pa., March 9  
**Creamer**, Doris A., 91, New Oxford, Pa., Feb. 23  
**Dennison**, James O., 76, Saint Joseph, Mo., March 17  
**Dibert**, James D., 78, Martinsburg, Pa., Feb. 15  
**Diehl**, Pauline B., 98, Charlottesville, Va., Feb. 26  
**Dillon**, Dorothy J., 91, Trotwood, Ohio, Feb. 24  
**Doerr**, Grace, 90, Manheim, Pa., Feb. 5  
**Duhe**, Cyril J., 74, Midland, Mich., Feb. 7  
**Dunn**, Grace M., 92, Palmyra, Pa., Feb. 22  
**Ebersole**, Walter J., 97, La Verne, Calif., Dec. 14  
**Ecklund**, Jetta F., 83, Windber, Pa., March 10  
**Endres**, Dan, 52, Haslett, Mich., Feb. 27  
**Gearhart**, Sarabelle R., 91, Belleville, Pa., Feb. 12  
**Giboney**, Dale E., 90, Elgin, Ill., Feb. 13  
**Gillam**, Nelson R., 69, McVeytown, Pa., Jan. 25  
**Gordley**, Pauline H., 100, Lancaster, Pa., Feb. 21  
**Gordon**, Earl, 93, La Verne, Calif., July 21  
**Graham**, Edgar C., 72, Martinsburg, W.Va., Feb. 9  
**Hagemann**, Duane, 82,

Mount Morris, Ill., March 2  
**Hopkins**, Luther Noel, 97, Stuart, Va., March 21  
**Hutchison**, Palmer Barry, 72, Easton, Md., Feb. 2  
**Ingram**, Elizabeth, 103, Prairie City, Iowa, Jan. 25  
**Jahnke**, Vernon John, 63, Claremont, Calif., July 13  
**Kaufman**, Richard, 81, Elderton, Pa., Feb. 20  
**Lawson**, F. Wayne, 86, Goshen, Ind., March 20  
**Lineweaver**, Ruth Argenbright, 90, Mount Crawford, Va., Jan. 12  
**Longenecker**, Sara J., 80, Annville, Pa., March 8  
**McCuller**, Nancy Jane, 78, Taneytown, Md., March 6  
**McGuigan**, Ronald E., 66, Lancaster, Pa., Feb. 15  
**Michael**, Herbert D., 96, Hills, Iowa, March 15  
**Miller**, DeRay M., 95, Bridgewater, Va., March 25  
**Myer**, Mary Jane, 81, Lancaster, Pa., March 14  
**Myers**, Beatrice M., 94, New Oxford, Pa., Feb. 19  
**Osborn**, Kyle B., 26, Lafayette, Ind., Sept. 13  
**Ray**, Robert Wilbur, 81, Midland, Mich., March 4  
**Reel**, Margaret Frances, 92, La Verne, Calif., Dec. 16  
**Salyards**, Harry H., 79, Duncansville, Pa., March 4  
**Schlegel**, Grace O. Hoover, 83, Thomasville, Pa., Aug. 2  
**Trinks**, Alice R., 85, Hanover, Pa., Jan. 2  
**Wachter**, Ruth Magin, 87, New Oxford, Pa., Feb. 28  
**Wagoner**, Shirley A., 83, Huntingdon, Pa., Feb. 24  
**Walter**, John E., 89, Fishersville, Va., March 18  
**Weaver**, Verna M., 80, Myerstown, Pa., March 9  
**Weaver**, Wilbur Ebersole, 97, Elizabethtown, Pa., Feb. 15

**Whittington**, Kathy, 64, Glendora, Calif., Dec. 14  
**Williams**, George Eugene Jensen, 88, Oroville, Wash., Feb. 5  
**Wilson**, David C., 81, Palmyra, Pa., Feb. 1  
**Yocum**, Cornelia A., 78, Hollidaysburg, Pa., Feb. 18

## Licensing

**Davis**, John, Mid. Pa. Dist. (Maitland, Lewistown, Pa.), Feb. 24  
**Shepherd**, Tara Leigh, Virgina Dist. (Mount Union, Bent Mountain, Va.), March 3

## Ordinations

**Mason**, Sarah C., N. Plains Dist. (Fairview, Unionville, Iowa), March 10  
**Reish**, Todd K., S/C Ind. Dist. (Richmond, Ind.), Oct. 7

## Placements

**Battle**, Michael G., from associate pastor to pastor, Burks Fork, Willis, Va., March 17  
**Bryant**, Millard Lee, pastor, Ferrum, Va., March 1  
**Heien**, Sharon F., team pastor, Fairview, Unionville, Iowa, Feb. 3  
**Koehler**, Marilyn, team pastor, Fairview, Unionville, Iowa, Feb. 3  
**Mason**, Diane, team pastor, Fairview, Unionville, Iowa, Feb. 3  
**Mason**, Sarah C., team pastor, Fairview, Unionville, Iowa, Feb. 3  
**Scruggs**, Craig, pastor, Melvin Hill, Columbus, N.C., Jan. 1

## Is Pope Francis secretly Brethren?

**W**henever the act of footwashing makes the news, Brethren take notice.

It happened most recently when Pope Francis washed the feet of 12 juvenile inmates—including two females—at a recent Maundy Thursday service.

Popes have washed feet before, usually the feet of priests during a solemn mass, although Pope John Paul II performed the rite years ago with a dozen homeless men. The fact that Pope Francis washed the feet of two teenage girls—one being a Muslim—made people take particular notice this time. He was

trying to make the point that everyone has a place in God's kingdom. He said, "I do this with all my heart because it is my duty as a priest, as a bishop. I have to be at your service. I love doing it because this is what the Lord has taught me."

Some conservative Catholics were concerned that this act might usher in a move toward the ordination of female priests. But this is unlikely, as Pope Francis is doctrinally a theological conservative who has stated that he



RANDY MILLER  
MESSENGER EDITOR

is against female ordination.

Even though his theology may not be in line with the Brethren on this point (the Church of the Brethren approved the ordination of women decades ago), other aspects of his behavior have aroused suspicion: Is it possible that Pope Francis is really a Brethren in disguise?

apartment in the Apostolic Palace that his predecessor called home, opting for a simple, two-room suite at a Vatican hotel.

And, since he is from Argentina—home to a number of people whose backgrounds can be traced to Germany—one can only speculate: Is it possible that Jorge Mario Bergoglio's great-great-great-grandparents boarded a barge on the Eder River and fled Schwarzenau soon after Alexander Mack and the seven others birthed the Church of the Brethren? (With a name like Bergoglio, one has to wonder . . .)

When it comes to evangelism, Brethren tend to lean toward understatement, modesty, and being, well, barely audible. But that doesn't mean we're not wily when it comes to getting our message out—even if it means quietly influencing the most prominent figure in the known Christian world. Yes, Pope Francis may be from Argentina, but the Brethren Academy's TRIM (Training in Ministry) program knows no geographical boundaries. Who's to say Cardinal Bergoglio wasn't burning the midnight oil studying authors with names like Durnbaugh, Brumbaugh, and Ziegler?

Sure, we could have copied the tactics of others by grabbing the spotlight, the airwaves, and the front pages and proclaiming the Good News at the top of our lungs. But that's just not our style. No, there's something to be said for subtlety and tact.

Today, thanks to the pope's example, people are abuzz about footwashing. Trying to squelch our pride, we quietly say to ourselves, "Hey, we've been doing that for centuries!"

Today, footwashing; tomorrow, who knows? An example can go a long ways. Maybe that simple living thing will take hold. Beverly Hills billionaires may suddenly abandon their mansions for quaint abodes in Silver Lake. Wall Street wheel-

**Footwashing, simple living—one can only wonder what might happen if our emphasis on *peacemaking catches on.***

It seems absurd on the face of it. But consider the evidence. Sure, other popes have washed feet, but only rarely, on special occasions. But Pope Francis—back when he was a mere archbishop and cardinal in Argentina—washed feet fairly often in jails, hospitals, and old people's homes. Not unlike the Brethren.

Then there's his emphasis on simple living—surely a Brethren trait if ever there was one. Again, back when he was a cardinal in Buenos Aires, he rejected the opulent official residence, choosing instead to live in a modest apartment and travel to work by bus. When he became Pope, Francis declined the lavish

er-dealers may wake up to the fact that the whole 99-to-1-percent equation is a little off kilter.

Footwashing, simple living—one can only wonder what might happen if our emphasis on peacemaking catches on. If that becomes popular, entire industries could be left out in the cold. Jobs could be lost. No, that might be too radical a concept to introduce. Maybe we'd better ease back.

Of course, if the pope finished his TRIM studies, there's no telling what may be in store. The Brethren style of evangelism may be subtle, but it can be potent. **■**

**COMING IN JUNE:** Profiles of moderator Bob Krouse and Brethren hymn writer Ken Morse

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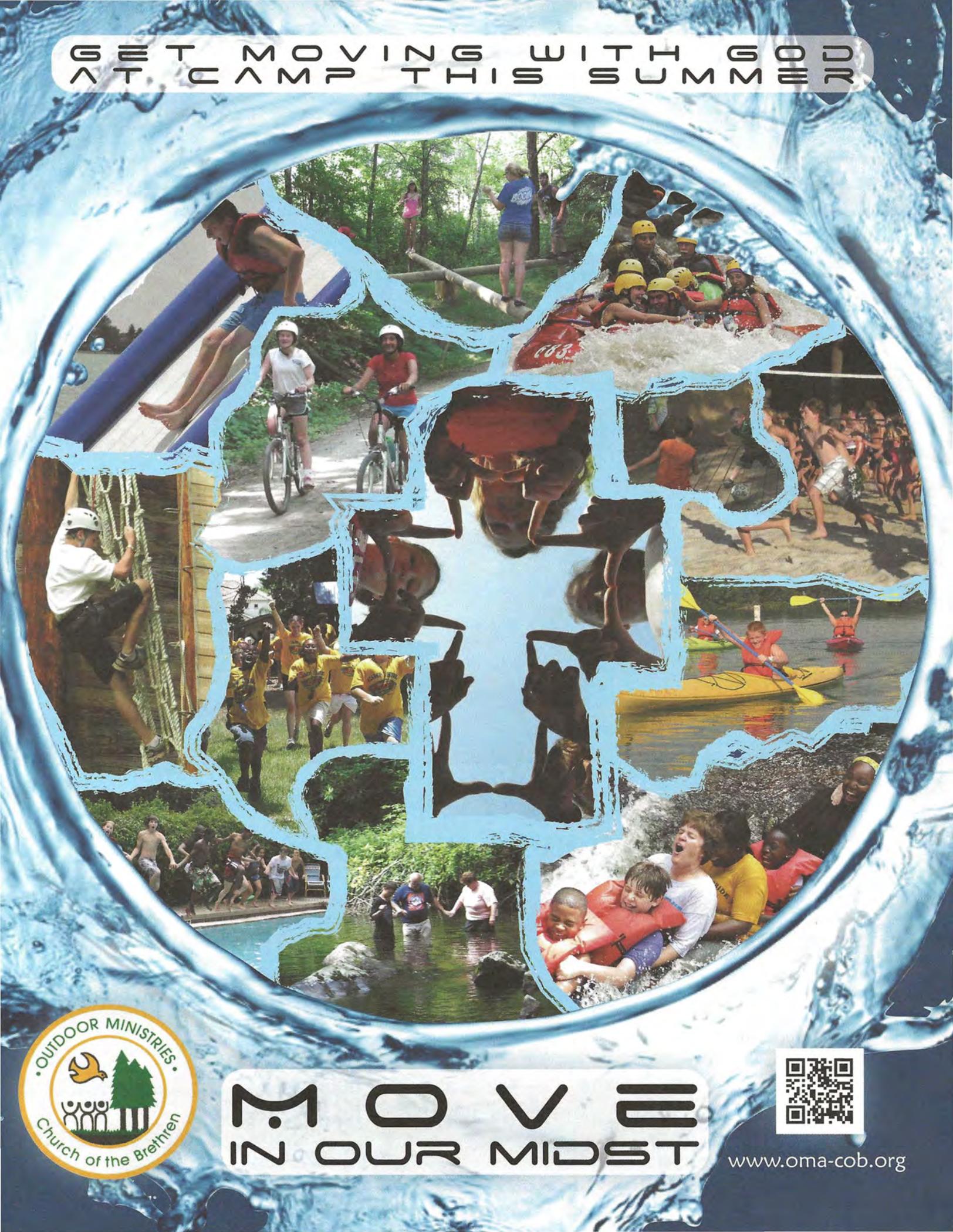
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