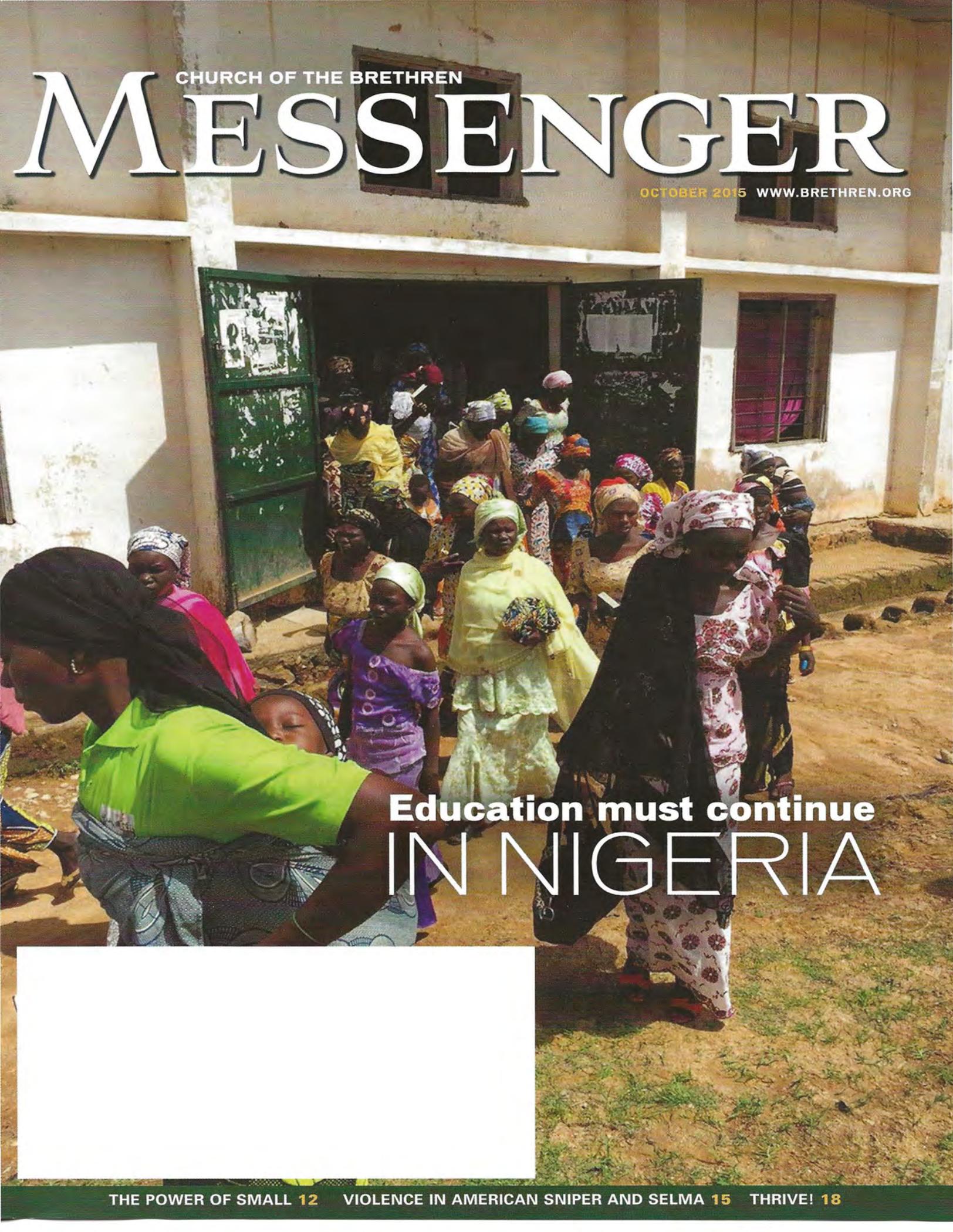


CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN MESSENGER

OCTOBER 2015 WWW.BRETHREN.ORG



Education must continue
IN NIGERIA

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Courtesy of EMCI

8 Education must continue in Nigeria

While immediate needs for safety and shelter are the primary focus in Nigeria, Paul and Becky Gadzama are addressing a key issue at the root of the turmoil: education. They are bringing their passion for teaching and learning, and their background in Brethren schools, to help restore education for Christians and Muslims alike in their homeland.

12 Rebound and renewal at Washington City

Although their number may be small, members of Washington (D.C.) City Church of the Brethren have found that, ironically, their size may have helped put them on the path to renewal.

15 Violence in *American Sniper* and *Selma*

These emotionally charged films evoked feelings of rage and despair, but also hope. Media Review contributor Mike McKeever takes a deeper look at what these films say about us, and how we view violence in our culture.



Bob Hoffman

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Courtesy of the Library of Congress

on the cover Women at the Stephanos camp for internally displaced people receive supplies from EMCI (Education Must Continue Initiative).

Cover photo Courtesy of EMCI (<http://emciniinitiative.org/>)

It was a surprise to see that the pope himself is subjected to the indignity of the Gallup poll. Surely one of the advantages of being pope ought to be that you get to rise above the fray, above the horse race of the US presidential campaign, above the popularity contests of fickle society.



WENDY MCFADDEN
PUBLISHER

But no. Gallup reported recently that the pontiff's popularity had slid from a high of 76 percent early this year to 59 percent just half a year later. According to Religion News Service, some people are getting tired of him. One is Catholic blogger Elizabeth Scalia.

"I love His Holiness Pope Francis, but for a while now, I have been feeling harangued by him, as he's been harping on us to do more, and ever more, to practice mercy on the world; to welcome the stranger, to clean up the rivers, to bring about justice and peace in our time; to level the playing fields, visit the sick, and so on," Scalia wrote.

Had I accidentally stumbled onto a fake news story from the satirical website *The Onion*?

To be fair, the writer didn't disagree with any of the pope's messages. She seemed to be in favor of mercy and justice and peace. But she was annoyed that we weren't being praised for managing to do what we can (referencing Jesus' praise for the woman with the jar of perfume). Furthermore, His Holiness should talk less about poor people and more about the beleaguered middle class, she said. "Some of the sheep have been getting short shrift in his attentions."

Apparently unconcerned about such complaints, the pope has now asked people to do even more—for the poorest of the poor, those who have risked their lives to flee Syria and other countries by whatever means they can. He has called on every European parish and religious community to take in one refugee family.

This kind of talk isn't good for boosting percentage points or winning elections. But it's the Bible that tells us to harangue each other: "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24).

Wendy McFadden

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courtesy of Nappanee Church of the Brethren

Congregation Close-Up

A cup-or bottle-of cold water

It all started with a comment from a pastor in response to the “Revive Indiana” program that many churches in Elkhart County, Ind., participated in early this year. Referring to the life of their congregation, they said, “We’re already revived, thank you very much.”

The town of Nappanee—located in the third largest Amish settlement in the United States—is a tourist attraction in the Midwest. Many people flock to it to take part in local arts and crafts festivals. And, in the summertime, it can get pretty hot.

It occurred to Byrl Shaver, pastor of the Nappanee Church of the Brethren, that “Revive Indiana” wasn’t exactly the way Brethren normally approach evangelism. He remarked to his wife, Janet, who is pastor of the Middlebury Church of the Brethren: “We oughta do something Brethren, like stand on a street corner and hand out bottles of ice cold water. Maybe we could call it ‘Refresh Indiana.’”

The program was based on the words of Jesus: “. . . and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward (Matt. 10:42).”

Members of nearby Union Center Church of the Brethren asked if they could join, and soon it was decided that on the second Saturdays in June, July, and August, folks from the congregations would get together to pass out cold bottles of water. The water was donated by church members and passed out by volunteers from the congregations. Fliers highlighting a local hunger program, as well as a major event by the nearby Creekside Church of the Brethren to support the Nigeria Crisis Fund, were used to publicize the work of the Church of the Brethren.

by the numbers

325,008

Work hours contributed by Brethren volunteers through Brethren Disaster Ministries toward rebuilding efforts following Hurricane Katrina from September 2005 to June 2011

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.



Above: Autumn Lippy held the 2014-2015 title of Maryland State Dairy Princess. Left: Ellie Grossnickle will hold the title 2015-2016.

Back-to-back Brethren princesses

For two years running, two Church of the Brethren youth have captured the title of Maryland State Dairy Princess. Autumn Lippy, of Union Bridge Church of the Brethren, held the 2014-2015 title, then passed it along this summer to Ellie Grossnickle, of Myersville Church of the Brethren.

Both cited their Brethren backgrounds as being influential in their upbringing. "I have been a member of the Church of the Brethren since I was 10, and have been attending as long as I can remember," Lippy said. "I was on the Mid-Atlantic District Youth Cabinet,

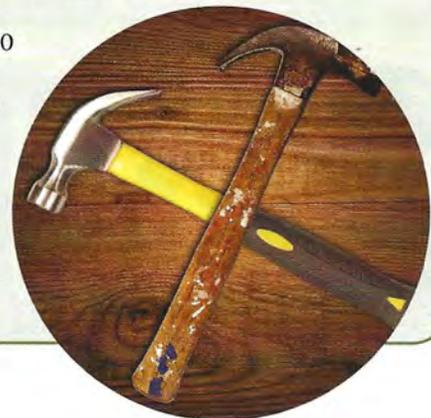
and also attended National Youth Conference last year, which allowed me to meet other Brethren from around the country."

Grossnickle also mentioned NYC as having an impact on her life, and spoke of the importance of having a larger church family. "Being a member of our church has taught me that even when things get a little rocky, my church family will always be there to support me. God has blessed me with the opportunity to be able to go out and talk about the things I have a passion for, and is always available when I am busy and stressed."

Serving others

Brethren raise funds to rebuild churches

Two Church of the Brethren congregations raised nearly \$1,000 to support the rebuilding of black churches burned by arsonists this summer. La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren and Peace Church of the Brethren in Portland, Ore., created fundraising campaigns for the Rebuild the Churches Fund, which was managed by Christ Church Cathedral (Episcopal) in St. Louis, Mo.



Chicago Brethren host New Jersey youth

Members of First Church of the Brethren in Chicago helped host a youth group from First Congregational Church of Westfield, N.J., when the youth were in Chicago for a short-term mission trip. The experience received coverage by *New Jersey Online*, which reported that the annual mission trip has become a summer tradition for the congregation, which sends its youth to serve in a different city each year.

“More than 30 church representatives, including middle and senior high students, friends, clergy members, and chaperones, traveled to Chicago, Illinois, from July 19 to 25, to work with Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection (DOOR), a faith-based organization that stresses local immersion while working with inner-city communities,” said the report. “Under the guidance of DOOR representatives from the First Church of the Brethren, the First Congregational Church volunteers took public transportation to work sites throughout the city, including community parks and gardens, an adult day care center, a food distribution warehouse, and a city-run Safe Haven program for youth. The students also learned about the challenges of living in South Chicago through speakers and activities arranged by DOOR.”

Still good in the world

Springfield News Sun writer Pam Cottrel found evidence that “there is still good in the world” in a local ecumenical effort to pray for schools in New Carlisle, Ohio. Involved in the prayer effort were members of New Carlisle Church of the Brethren, along with members from First United Methodist Church, Honeycreek Presbyterian Church, Great Hope Church, and Medway United Methodist Church. The prayer event started at the Church of the Brethren parking lot, where the group shared communion before heading out to pray at seven different local schools. “The group was careful to ask permission in advance before going onto school property,” the report said.



Children at an orphanage in India receive CWS school kits.

Pennsylvania Brethren sew school kit bags

This summer, 17 women from Brethren churches around Mount Lebanon, Pa., sewed 500 school kits bags for Church World Service. Jeanne Smith of McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren, coordinated the drive, which has been going on for six summers and has put together more than 2,500 school kits.

Seamstresses this year were Jen Pennebecker, Janet Moyer, Sallie Miller, and Carrie Winter from the Mount Wilson Church of the Brethren; Peg Over, Lorinda Haldaman, Susanne Beltzer, and Karen Ungermacher from the Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren; Bonnie Wampler, Velma Gingrich, Diane Kovach, and Elsie Heisey from the Annville Church of the Brethren; Edna Meyerhoffer and Sara Turpin from the Mount Zion Church of the Brethren; Mary Cantrell from the Palmyra Church of the Brethren; Marty Wolfe from the Spring Creek Church of the Brethren in Hershey; and Jeanne Smith, a member of the McPherson Church of the Brethren.

Remembered

Harold C. Mack, 85, of Dallas Center, Iowa, passed away Aug. 12. He was a former Church of the Brethren mission worker in Nigeria, where he served as business manager and taught at Hillcrest School in Jos from 1954-1956, and carried out his alternative service as a conscientious objector. A lifetime member of the Church of the Brethren, he served in many capacities at the congregational and district leaders, including as a Sunday school teacher, youth leader, deacon, treasurer, and board member.

Consider the weeds

As gardening season draws to a close, I think back on the bounty that hard work and fertile soil has brought forth this season.

Of course, fertile soil that yields a fruitful harvest also grows healthy weeds. I prefer to set out a garden in relatively clean, straight rows, while the female half of our household has a much higher tolerance for chaos than do I—especially in the garden. While we agree that a weed is simply a plant out of place, we often disagree about allowing unplanned vegetation to take up space—even if they are edible.



TOM WAGNER

Part of the problem is my preference for tidiness. My more rational concerns relate to the labor we have put into busting sod and grubbing out brush to create more than 5,200

square feet of garden. Much of my resistance is rooted in a lifelong prejudice that some plants are simply weeds and, by definition, have no place in a garden. However, I am warming up to the idea, in part because I realize that, as native species, they have already adapted to the local climate, requiring less maintenance, particularly watering. There is no cash outlay for seed. Also, most of them are at least as nutritious as many of our domesticated plants.

Here are three examples of “weeds” that we commonly use in our kitchen. The most recognizable is the dandelion. While the whole plant can be used for various purposes, we primarily use the greens in fresh salads, or cooked in soups or even quiche. References say the leaves are richer in vitamin A than carrots. Vitamins B, C, and D are also present, along with iron

grew on my parents’ Indiana homestead, where I considered it something of a botanical nemesis during my teen and college years. I learned of its history of culinary, herbal, and fiber uses only about 20 years ago. Nettle leaves are available throughout the growing season, but it’s best to harvest wearing gloves to avoid the sting. It can be steamed as a standalone vegetable or added to soups or casseroles. Cooking defangs the tiny needles that cause irritation in the wild. Nettles are a good source for vitamins A and C, in addition to iron, silica, potassium, manganese, and sulfur.

Adding weeds to our diet reminds me of the admonitions Jesus gave his followers, “. . . do not anxious about your life. . . . Look at the birds of the air. . . . Consider the lilies of the field. . . .” (Matt. 6: 25-34). This was no happy-go-lucky philosophy. Rather, it was part of a broader economic and environmental agenda rooted in the sabbatical and Jubilee year cycles of Mosaic law. Every seven years, fields were left fallow, debts were canceled, and people who had been sold into debt slavery were set free. After seven cycles of seven years came the Jubilee, which added one more requirement: that land be returned to the families of origin.

Some may recall that Jesus invoked the Jubilee tradition by reading Isaiah 61:1-2 at his home synagogue in Nazareth. Most often he returned to the debt forgiveness themes of the tradition. Yet there is some suggestion that Jesus’ teachings in Matthew and Luke specifically addressed the concerns of those worried about where their livelihood would come from when the soil was given a sabbath rest. During the seventh year, people would have to depend on stored surplus food, and even more on foraging volunteer crops and edible wild plants.

Just as he did with the birds and the flowers, Jesus urged

Just as he did with the birds and the flowers, Jesus urged and still urges his listeners to trust that God will take care of our needs. . . .

and potassium. Another green we use quite frequently from late spring throughout the summer is lamb’s quarters. We’ve always had difficulty raising spinach, but have discovered that lamb’s quarters makes a good substitute. The leaves contain vitamins C and B-complex, potassium, fiber, and folic acid.

The third example may be the most surprising—the nettle. Many are aware that skin contact can cause irritation. Nettles

and still urges his listeners to trust that God will take care of our needs when we practice proper stewardship of God’s earth and treat each other well. And when we remember that even weeds have a special place in the kingdom. 

Tom Wagner is a former Church of the Brethren pastor, and serves Muskegon County (Mich.) Cooperating Churches as archivist.

“It was a profoundly moving experience to share in the hope and resilience of the little ones.”

—Kathleen Fry-Miller, associate director of Children’s Disaster Services, a program of the Church of the Brethren, reflecting on the program’s assistance to families affected by Hurricane Katrina

“The question for the Black Lives Matter movement is not whether black lives matter to God; we know black lives matter to God. The question is whether or not the world realizes that black lives matter.”

—Cyneatha Millsaps pastor of Community Mennonite Church in Markham, Ill., pondering a sign in front of a church that read: “Black lives matter, but to God all lives matter.”

“It has been truly amazing to witness the sacrificial giving of our denomination toward the recovery of the church in Nigeria.”

—Carl Hill who, with his wife, Roxane, is co-director of the Nigeria Crisis Response, a cooperative effort of the Church of the Brethren and Eklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria)

cultureview

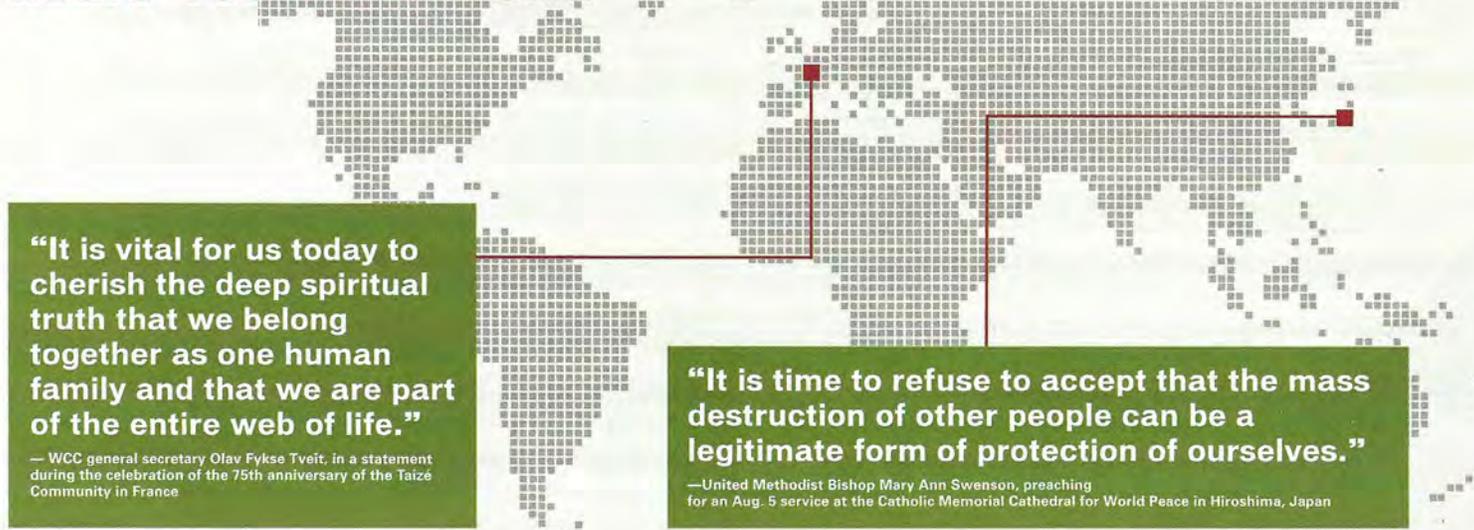
► **More than 13 million children** are prevented from attending school by surging conflict and political upheaval across the Middle East and North Africa, according to a September report from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). “A region which—until just a few short years ago—had the goal of universal education well within reach, today faces a disastrous situation,” says the report, titled “Education Under Fire,” which focuses on the impact of violence on schoolchildren and education systems in nine countries that have been directly or indirectly impacted by violence.

► **Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT)**, which has been active in monitoring the situation of migrants fleeing into Greece in recent months, has issued “a call for emergency ferry transportation and better basic humanitarian assistance,” in a release sent from Lesbos Island, Greece. “We urge the EU Migration Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos to

organize immediately emergency funding from European Union sources to help process and care for the hundreds of migrants and refugees who are arriving on the Aegean Islands each day.” CPT is urging that the care for migrants include a dedicated ferry to take refugees and migrants to Athens, and the provision of good quality tents, blankets, food, and drinking water to migrants.

► **The re-opening of the Church of Panagia (Virgin Mary) Galakdodrofousas in Palekythro, Cyprus**, after 41 years, was hailed by the World Council of Churches (WCC) as an important sign of peace and reconciliation. A WCC release reported that the Church of Panagia reopened on Aug. 16. It was built in 1896, but has been closed for worship since 1974 following a coup on the island of Cyprus that led to a Turkish military invasion, and eventually a ceasefire and United Nations-patrolled buffer zone that divided Cyprus into two ethnically separated portions.

Heard 'round the world

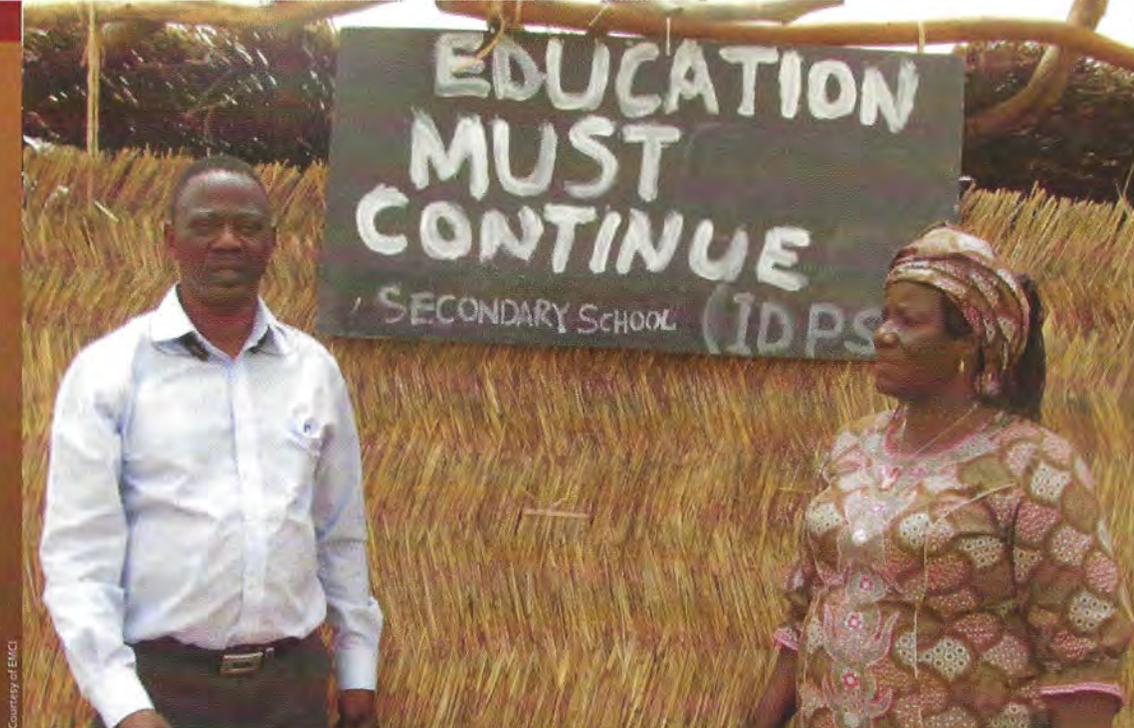


“It is vital for us today to cherish the deep spiritual truth that we belong together as one human family and that we are part of the entire web of life.”

—WCC general secretary Olav Fykse Tveit, in a statement during the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Taizé Community in France

“It is time to refuse to accept that the mass destruction of other people can be a legitimate form of protection of ourselves.”

—United Methodist Bishop Mary Ann Swenson, preaching for an Aug. 5 service at the Catholic Memorial Cathedral for World Peace in Hiroshima, Japan



Paul and Becky Gadzama at the first refugee school they started in 2014.

Education must continue INNIGERIA

Safety and shelter have been the immediate concerns of Nigerians ravaged by Boko Haram in recent years. But issues underlying the unrest, and exacerbated by it, have also been on the minds of Nigerian Brethren Paul and Rebecca Gadzama—in particular, education. While the kidnapping of the Chibok school girls has grabbed the headlines, that incident represents the tip of the iceberg, they say. Hundreds of schools in Nigeria have been destroyed, and thousands of children have gone for months without schooling. The Gadzamas were educated in part at Church of the Brethren mission schools in Nigeria in the 1960s, and are aware of the impact good education can have, which is part of what drove them to create the Education Must Continue Initiative. They spoke about their passion for education with MESSENGER while attending Annual Conference this summer.

Q: When did you begin the Education Must Continue Initiative (EMCI), and what was the catalyst for it?

Paul: We created EMCI in June 2014, in the wake of the Chibok school girls' kidnapping. Students refused to go back to school because they were afraid, and so were their parents. We told them we would provide education for them.

We, ourselves, are the result of a good education, which we received from the Church of the Brethren back in the 1960s. Education has liberated peoples and societies. Even though we don't have training in education, we have been lecturers in higher education. Both of us have worked for nine years at a polytechnic institution before we went to the mission field for Campus Crusade for Christ International.

We have been beneficiaries and providers of education because it is the key to success in all human endeavors. The early missionaries brought education and the gospel. Educa-

tion made it easier to communicate the gospel message.

We work with churches as trainers for the church. Becky has a graduate degree in economics and I have an MBA, which I use in church administration training.

We are passionate about education because, without education, people are enslaved. They miss out on numerous opportunities. But especially where we come from in Nigeria, education has been the platform upon which we have survived as a people. Christians have provided services to other sectors of society. That has given Christians in Nigeria an edge over other religions. Others realized that Christians had an edge because of their education.

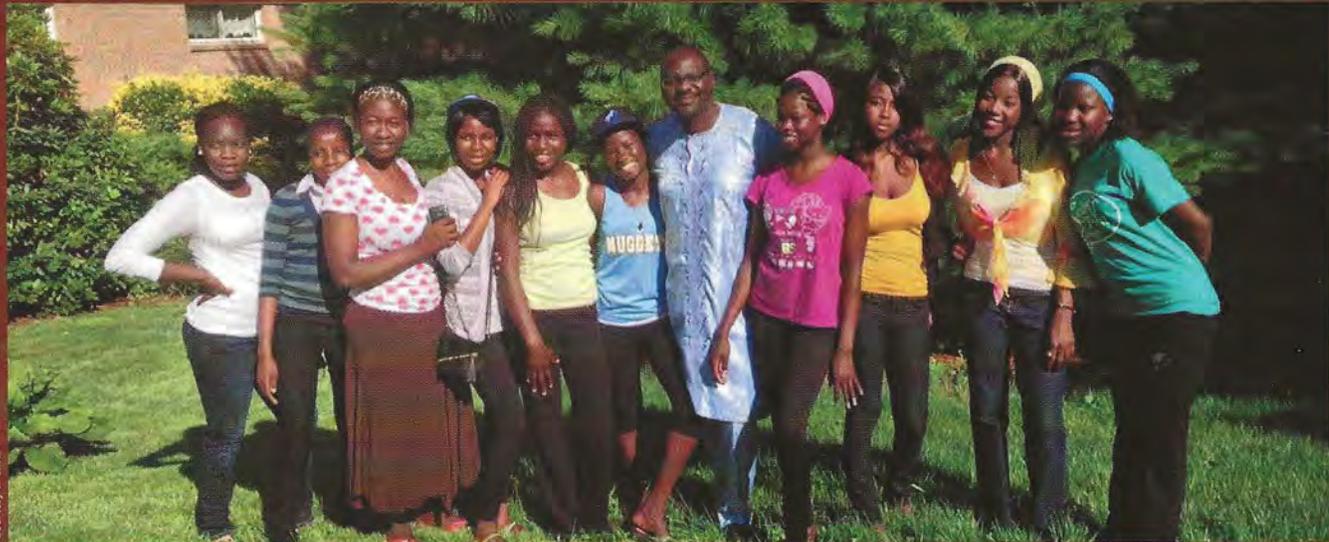
On a positive note, to help others, we have given non-Christians an opportunity to catch up and be at par with Christians. For a long time, however, this did not succeed. The government machinery and political machinery are in the hands of non-Christians. As a result, we have lost key



EMCI youth football team in the IDP camp in Yola.



Teachers for EMCI's refugee schools.



Paul Gadzama with the escaped Chibok schoolgirls who attend school in the US.

positions and power. Unfortunately, because these people are in power, they make these policies. And so they make things skewed against Christians.

There's a tribe in Borno which is 95 percent Muslim, and they have a grip on the political soul of the state. And they determine our fate. So if they cannot catch up, they and others like them who have not had the benefit of education as we have, try to pull us down. They have tried taking over missionary schools, but even after they did that they saw that the disruption was not working. Then they started blocking employment for those who went to Christian schools. This has gone on for generations.

Becky: Regardless of your education level, if you're from Christian areas, they may give you work, but you usually have to report to someone who is your junior, and from another tribe—maybe a former student of yours. So they have frustrated many people.

Most of the school principals were Christian, such as at Chibok. But systematically, as Paul said, over a short time, they dropped all of them. None of the high school teachers are Christian. It seems that, if nothing is done, in the next two or three years, there also will be none in civil service.

Paul: Hundreds of university graduates are unemployed. Because of the structure of our economy, the single biggest

employer is the government. There aren't many smaller entities that can employ these people. So you have hundreds of these graduates roaming the streets. As a result, people back in their communities see this and say, "Education is useless. Come home and farm." So the passion and commitment to education went down. The sacrifices our parents made to get us educated is not felt by the parents of modern children. And social vices have increased. This is true for both Christian and non-Christian areas. So they have just brought us down to their level.

Boko Haram's ideology came through the Islamist jihadist movement. However, it thrived and spread like wildfire because of the ready-made conditions of unemployed youth.

Having said this, our main concern as missionaries is to preach the gospel. So we would like any means to facilitate that. Education is key. When we look back to where we have been, we see that the platform of education is no longer there to carry the gospel, and theology gets distorted. Today, many of our kids have gone to the pentecostal churches. It's not that they're bad, but some of them teach weird doctrines. Our youth are getting carried away because they're excited, but they're not able to discern and analyze good doctrine and theology. So, in part due to the lack of education, it's become difficult to communicate the gospel clearly.

Our specific calling is to help people rise to their potential. We get satisfaction when we see we're helping people move



Paul Gadzama (right) giving supplies to children at the IDP camp.

Courtesy of EMCI

and take control of their lives. When we see them blossom, that is our fulfillment. So education is a tool.

So it pains us, as products of good education, to see our youth not getting good education. And the current crisis makes it even worse.

Our four kids have graduated from high quality institutions. They went through Hillcrest High School. We've seen the benefit of that in our kids. So as we see our kids blossom, we want other kids to blossom too. Just because they may not have had the opportunity, they should not be left like that. Yes, God has helped us, but we have put forth the effort. Our kids have gone through universities in the US. Two have graduate degrees. One daughter has a master's in public administration and is a University of Michigan administrator. One of our sons has a master's in international business. A third has a degree in nursing and is getting her master's in public health. The last one is a senior who is studying political science and wants to go into law.

Other people should have this opportunity, too. We are able to do it because we have had good education. So if you drop us anywhere in the world, we'll find a way to survive thanks to our education. We know that if these kids were educated, they wouldn't be so easily drawn into Boko Haram because they would use their minds.

It is this passion for education that has caused us to work hard.

Becky: It is this passion that has caused us to say, "Hey, let's invest in these [Chibok] girls, just as we did for our own children." Who knows? There are 219 girls who are still missing. Even out of the 57 rescued, only a few are getting educational opportunities. No institution has done much to help them beyond the rescue stage. Nothing has been done for those who have escaped. Ours is the only institution to carry on with these girls. So we feel we just need to continue to try to get them into school.

Everyone was surprised that we were doing this. Only institutions can do this, people said. So we realized that, if we are to make an impact, we must invent a platform because that is what the society wants. There is focus on the immediate

crisis, of course, but we are working alongside, and keep the candle burning for longer-term education.

Q: Have you established individual schools as part of this effort?

Paul: EMCI is not just a school building. It's movement that has the mission of granting opportunity to deprived kids to be educated so they can compete with kids elsewhere. School development is just one area of focus. Schools cannot just spring up. What we've tried to do in the interim is to identify four major strategies that will help achieve the mission:

1. Get the Chibok girls to continue their education wherever possible. The best thing is for them to study abroad where they can be secure. Boko Haram warned them that if they go to school, they will kill them and destroy their families. So they said "We'll never go to school." We are not Chibok; we are a different tribe from those who make up the Chibok school. But we still care, and have helped place 10 girls in two schools here in the US.

2. Twin tactic: a) addressing deficiencies in educationally deficient kids; and b) finding placement in normal schools for the thousands of out-of-school kids arising from internal displacement. Because of the crisis of the jihadist movement, and history, quite a number of those who finish high school are not making it. Regarding the first one, we help kids to catch up, or to raise their levels so that when they return to normal schools they can fit in. The way we do this is home schooling. We started this in our own home. But because of the numerous needs that have drawn our attention, we've hired a teacher in our home. We've had 10 Chibok girls. We found placement for two who caught up. We have four at the moment. These are not just "Chibok girls," but also others.

Our intention is not to just to do this alone, but to take the message of home schooling to the whole community, so that retired educators can take this on so we can multiply this throughout the community. We're just setting up a model to encourage communities in the region and northern Nigeria. Right now we are aware of 3,000 kids in need. We want to find schools in Nigeria to adopt these kids and even sponsor them.

3. We set up two schools for refugees kids, conducted in homes. At one time, we had 26 people in my house. We had people staying in homes. We have over 1 million IDPs (internally displaced people) today. A lot of our members in the cities have absorbed these people. There are two concentrations of refugees in Yola, including some 1,800 kids, with 96 refugee teachers to help us. We mobilized and motivated them. We have no resources, but we organized them, appointed principals—elementary through high school—and started running these schools.

“ We know that if these kids were educated, they wouldn't be so easily drawn into Boko Haram because they would use their minds. It is this passion for education that has caused us to work hard.

Between March and April, the government's efforts in fighting back the terrorists yielded some success. Some of the villages were recaptured from Boko Haram. So as a lot of people returned to their homes, we closed one of the schools. But when they returned home, they found no schools, so many came back.

Our intention is to start something nationwide with refugee kids. We don't want to stop when they go back. We intend to follow up with them, setting up schools even after they return.

4. So the fourth one, as Becky has begun to explain, is more long-term. The immediate strategy is to follow these refugees as security improves and start some kind of schools. We're talking about home schooling because the school buildings have been destroyed. But home schooling is expensive and limited. We want to start "schools for victims" in people's homes now. As for rebuilding, where possible, we are using cheap materials at first so that there is a quick take-off. But we can't use thatch in rainy season because it leaks. So we hope to use tarpaulins in the meantime.

As we mentioned, we are developing a movement. We want to start placing model schools in strategic areas. We may start in Jos and bring people there. Expensive and archaic as it may sound, we may start that way. But we're also going to work in strategic towns. As we plan it, we'll go out and get resources. We believe God will help provide.

Q: Where does your funding come from?

Paul: EMCI is being funded from our pockets, not from the Church of the Brethren. Everything has been from us as a family. Becky runs a poultry business. She has 3,400 layers.

Chalk, soap, and anything else that has to do with the school comes from us. We'll need to increase our fundraising efforts.

Education is an expensive venture. We are not naive enough to think we can do it ourselves. The government must help with this. So we want to implement a strategy that will push the government to do this. We want to spark interest among parents so that the government schools will live up to expectations.

Becky: We got a rebuke from the Nigerian government for bringing the Chibok girls to the US. They wanted us to give them the credit for sending the girls to America. We said no, so they've slapped our hands because of this.

Q: Does EMCI have a board of directors?

Paul: We have a board. We have four EYN members on it, but they're on the board as individuals, not as representatives of EYN.

One time, the board told us that some Muslim students wanted to enroll. They asked, "Shall we accept them?" We said yes, by all means! When they see the benevolence extended to them by Christians, they may decide we're OK.

We don't discriminate. There are both Muslims and Christians in these schools. We have to do everything we can to pass along the message of love.

Becky: We went to the school camp in Yola. We were so excited to visit the students, who were around 10 to 12 years old. I asked them, "How many of you want to be doctors?" Two raised their hands—and it was a huge class of maybe 50 kids. "How many want to be teachers?" A few raised their hands. "How many want to be pastors?" One hand. I felt discouraged. Then I asked, "How many of you want to be soldiers?" Everyone raised their hands. Vengeance is in their hearts. One said, "I want to be a pilot so I can bomb Boko Haram."

So we've been doing some counseling. We have to work at this; otherwise these kids, who are already bitter, will become more so. Boko Haram may go down, but a new militant movement may come up, even from Christian kids. So Paul and I feel compelled to address this. We believe that the Lord will not allow this bitterness to continue. Inside the Brethren there is the DNA of peaceful coexistence. We trust the Lord will instill a spirit of peace, love, and forgiveness as we work with these children.

We want to carry on the legacy that was given to us by our parents, who paid for our education. We want to carry this on. 

Becky Gadzama speaking at the 2015 Annual Conference.



Glenn Riegel



The power of small

REBOUND AND RENEWAL AT WASHINGTON CITY

by Jennifer Hosler

Brethren have been hung up on numbers lately. Fewer people in the pews, decreased giving. It's common to hear people talk about the church and be distressed or dismayed. To some, these numbers signal fading hope for our denomination. But what if small is actually powerful? What if small can be mighty? For Washington City Church of the Brethren, smallness can cause worry and doubt—but it also has provided a path to new life and renewal.

Washington City is a small but growing congregation on Capitol Hill, in Washington, D.C. It's a body of Jesus followers committed to exploring what radical discipleship looks like in the 21st century, and what community, simplicity, and peacemaking look like in the nation's capital.

For the other Stories from the Cities projects, I've visited city churches across the country. This story, however, takes place at my home church in Washington, D.C. While I initially hesitated to include Washington City in this project, after being encouraged by many people to do so, I approached the church's administrative council. They agreed to participate and recruit interviewees. Interpreting others' stories is often challenging, but

A new demonstration vegetable garden thrives at one side of the church.

navigating my home environment and my role as a minister required additional intentionality on my part.

During my interviews with fellow members, what I heard most often is that small is not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, although they said that they would like to grow, and that being small does bring challenges, they viewed Washington City's smallness in a positive light.

Sally Clark, a young adult who grew up in the congregation, said that its small size is actually one of the church's current assets. "There's a strength in the attitude that we may be small but we are mighty."

For this church, smallness has brought openness to change. It has created a willingness to explore and experiment with new models of ministry and styles of worship. Smallness has also provided the space to build relationships and learn how to cultivate intimate relationships in a caring community.

Anya Zook began attending late last year. She said she found Washington City's smallness to be an asset: "I saw how easy it was, when I first started coming, to meet everyone really quickly."

Rebound and renew

Both long-term and new members and attendees were asked to describe the church in a word or a short phrase. For Micah Bales, who has been attending Washington City for only two months, the words "re-



Jennifer Hosler



The congregation gathers for worship at Washington City.



Members plant a peace pole in September 2012.

bound” and “recovery” came to mind. A longer-term member said he saw “a church in transition . . . rising from a low place and re-growing; rediscovering themselves, now with a number of young people.” At Washington City, both newer and longer-term members sense that the church has experienced challenging times, but there is good reason to hope.

It’s hard to sum up more than 120 years of history, which include Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) projects, witness to conscientious objection to military service, participation in the March on Washington, advocacy at the Capitol, participating in Christian Citizenship Seminars, service in work camps or at the Brethren Nutrition Program, and Washington City’s soup kitchen. Many Brethren from across the country have been shaped by the Washington City congregation in some way. The church has a long heritage of ministry, and many people have fond memories of its vitality. Fewer people are as familiar with the struggles in recent years, or the rebound and renewal that is occurring today.

The 45-year-long tenure of pastor Duane Ramsey (1953-1997) was followed by pastor Alice Martin-Adkins (1998-2005), and then by a glaring gap in pastoral leadership

for many years. From 2005 to 2013, the church had intermittent pastoral resources—two stints of short-term interim pastors and a one year pastoral placement that did not continue. During this time, the congregation dwindled and the facility aged. The Brethren Nutrition Program declined and eventually went on a one-year hiatus.

Some stepped up to help the church continue. Jeff Davidson preached two Sundays a month for many years. A few core families committed themselves to keeping the building open, the lawn mowed, and worship services running. They felt a call to continue the church’s heritage, although it was difficult to see what its future might hold.

Holy nudges and creative calls

Before my husband, Nathan, and I left Nigeria in 2011 after spending two years of peace-building work there, someone planted a seed in our minds about Washington City. We were told, “The Washington City congregation could probably use two energetic young people.” Upon moving to DC at the end of February 2012, we began attending, adding two persons to the average 8 to 12 who were coming on a Sunday. We com-

“ For this church, smallness has brought openness to change. It has created a willingness to explore and experiment with new models of ministry and styles of worship.



A new ministry team is installed in 2013.



Jacob Crouse leads music during worship.

mitted to being a part of Washington City—both because of and in spite of its struggles and decline. The church quickly began to utilize our gifts, first asking us to preach and fill some gaps in the pulpit schedule, then calling me as a community outreach coordinator in August 2012.

After struggling for so long, Washington City became open to new ministry styles and to using the gifts of people willing to serve. After Nate, Jeff, and I were rotating through the pulpit for several months, we began to prayerfully discern what each of our roles were in the church. Nate and I had previously worshiped at a “free ministry” or plural, non-salaried congregation. We saw the potential of adapting the model to Washington City. The three of us proposed it to the administrative council, and the church affirmed a ministry team model in July 2013.

Several members said that the ministry team model came at the right time to help re-energize and provide direction for the church’s ministry. Bryan Hanger worshiped with Washington City while serving in BVS through the Office of Public Witness (2012-2015). He sees the model shaping the “ethic” of the church, creating an “openness to the fact that many people have things to teach the church.” Bryan described how, because of small numbers, and this ethic, the congregation has been nudging people into roles they might not have pursued. For him, the request to preach several times—and the congregation’s response—became an affirmation of his gifts and interests. He is now enrolled at Bethany Theological Seminary.

For Jacob Crouse, joining Washington City was a chance to use his musical talents and find a setting to explore radical Christian discipleship. Inspired by the Dunker Punk movement at National Youth Conference 2014, he uprooted himself from Kansas City, Mo., and answered a call to be a part of the renewal in DC. Jacob shares his musical gifts by coordinating worship music and helping the congregation explore new genres and songs. For him, a major draw of Washington City is the chance to be in community, to build deep relationships, and to explore how to live more simply, more sustainably, and care for God’s creation in an urban context.

Challenges and hopes

Things are looking up at Washington City: the church is slowly growing in size, there is a broad diversity of ages, relationships are characterized as “genuine,” and “the people really care.” Yet struggles and challenges still exist. Interviewees were almost unanimous in citing the aging, deteriorating building as a major challenge. While the church’s day-to-day finances are somewhat stable due to partnerships with a preschool and a local Jewish congregation, building repairs threaten to drain all of the church’s savings. Being small cultivates a shared ministry, but having fewer people can also mean that the burdens are heavier for some—or that roles don’t fit gifts or abilities. One interviewee described how at times, in the past, people had been given “responsibilities that they have no business taking care of,” to the church’s detriment.

While smallness brings challenges, the church doesn’t get caught up in the numbers, trying to focus instead what it means to live out the core values of Jesus’ gospel in a busy, transient, and changing city. The Brethren Nutrition Program (BNP) has been revitalized and is now complemented by two new ministry emphases: caring for God’s creation, and simple living through sustainability. A 600-gallon rain barrel sits on the church lawn and offers water for neighborhood use. Two raised garden beds were built this year to serve as demonstration gardens for growing produce, while also supplying some of BNP’s needs.

The Washington City congregation, as Jeff Davidson put it, is “a church with a future, which not everybody would have thought or said maybe eight years ago.” Small but growing, the church is re-envisioning what it means to be a community of faith: following Jesus in love, simplicity, and peace, and inviting the city to be part of Jesus’ kingdom. 

Stories from the Cities is a project of Church of the Brethren’s Congregational Life Ministries (CLM), presented in conjunction with MESSENGER. This series highlights six urban churches from across the denomination, and is being conducted and written by Jennifer Hosler, licensed minister at Washington (D.C.) City Church of the Brethren and community psychologist.



Violence

in *American Sniper* and *Selma*

by Michael McKeever

American *Sniper* and *Selma* were two of the most highly acclaimed and ardently discussed films of 2014. Both films seek to portray heroism, bravery, and the confrontation of evil in a violent environment. Yet the role of violence in each film is radically different and worthy of consideration in regard to their respective moral frameworks, depictions of the enemy, and traumatic aftermaths.

Moral frameworks

Violence takes place within a specific moral framework or ethical outlook. Both movies forcefully frame their stories as moral tales by beginning with the death of innocent children. Yet *American Sniper* does not delve significantly into Chris Kyle's own moral formation. Kyle says he loved God, country, and fam-

ily. But if Kyle's faith was a significant component of his service, it is not explored deeply in the film. The film's principal lens for understanding Kyle's moral outlook is a dinner table discourse by Kyle's father. "Now some people prefer to believe that evil doesn't exist in the world . . . those are the sheep. And then you got predators who use violence to prey on the weak. They're the wolves. And then there are those who have been blessed with the gift of aggression, and the overpowering need to protect the flock. These men are the rare breed that live to confront the wolf. They are the sheepdog."

Eastwood's film portrays Kyle as that "rare breed" who defends his country and protects his fellow soldiers. However, as Kyle describes it, the rules of engagement at the outset of the Iraq war did not provide much of an ethical framework. "If you see anyone from about 16 to 65 and they're

male, shoot 'em. Kill every male you see. That wasn't the official language, but that was the idea." Neither the film nor his memoir explores further personal developments in this regard. Indeed, violence and killing in combat didn't seem to weigh heavily on Kyle. "I loved what I did. I still do. . . . I'm not lying or exaggerating to say it was fun. I had the time of my life being a SEAL." Though some film critics discern the development of anguish and conflict in Kyle's character arc, this is not hinted at in Kyle's autobiography or approximate statements in the film. "It was my duty to shoot and I don't regret it. . . . I can stand before God with a clear conscience about doing my job."

Martin Luther King's moral framework is better understood, having been written about by King and his biographers at different points in his life. Certainly the African-American church was formative for King's ethical outlook, as also were Morehouse College and Boston University. The Sermon on the Mount's assertion that suffering wrong is ultimately more powerful than violence was also a central influence on King.

Yet King did not initially determine to confront evil as a doctrinaire pacifist. He wrote about how he shared the moral struggles that Christian non-pacifists confront. However, he emerged from the struggle as a committed pacifist and this informed his later thinking about war. As King states in *Testament of Hope*, "I'm committed to nonviolence absolutely. I'm just not going to kill anybody, whether it's in Vietnam or here. . . . I plan to stand by nonviolence because I have found it to be a philosophy of life that regulates not only my dealings in the struggle for racial justice but also my dealings with people, with my own self."

King understood nonviolence to be a "courageous confrontation of evil by the power of love." Yet in *Selma* King's perspective is not rigidly deployed but evolving. When the second march advances across the Edmund Pettus bridge toward state troopers, King pauses for prayer and discerns the wisdom of a retreat to the churches. As theologian Stan-

ley Hauerwas has stated, to be successful nonviolent action requires "prophetic insight into timing and symbolism."

King's actions run contrary to homespun homilies such as Kyle's father that some people are sheep who "will prefer to believe that evil doesn't exist in the world." Indeed, despite even refined theological critiques such as those by Reinhold Niebuhr that pacifists must abandon attempts to achieve justice, King was successful in bringing nonviolent action to confront evil and injustice. King recorded the progression of his developing ethic in "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence." "As the days unfolded I became more and more convinced of the power of nonviolence. Living through the actual experience of the protest, nonviolence became more than a method to which I gave intellectual assent; it became a commitment to a way of life. Many issues I had not cleared up intellectually concerning nonviolence were now solved in the sphere of practical action."

Depictions of "the enemy"

American Sniper presents Kyle's story and the American mission in a manner that avoids self-criticism, yet the enemy is depicted as categorically evil and typically nameless. The only exception is a typecast villain, Mustafa, an Olympic sharpshooter who always dresses in black and who never utters a word. He is only shown killing or spinning a bullet by the phone as he awaits further targets. In this sense, Eastwood's film and Kyle's memoir are more closely aligned. "Savage, despicable evil. That's what we were fighting in Iraq. . . . I only wish I had killed more." *American Sniper* does not present Iraqis as complex human beings or include a glimpse of their experience of the war. Empathy is reserved for Kyle, his fellow soldiers, and the suffering they endured. Both the book and movie have been criticized for Kyle's blinkered assessment of Iraqis, and the film has been accompanied by an increase in violent hate rhetoric targeting Arab and Muslim communities.

“Violence and killing in combat didn't seem to weigh heavily on Kyle. “I loved what I did. I still do. . . . I'm not lying or exaggerating to say it was fun.”



Photo: Joseph Gubler



“ King’s actions run contrary to homespun homilies such as Kyle’s father that some people are sheep who “will prefer to believe that evil doesn’t exist in the world.” Indeed, . . . King was successful in bringing nonviolent action to confront evil and injustice.

When depicting the evil of racists, *Selma* does not pull any punches either. King is literally sucker-punched by a white man while checking-in to his Selma hotel. Ample attention is given to Alabama state troopers and horseback riders brutally attacking unarmed and peaceful marchers on “Bloody Sunday.”

Yet *Selma* is not uneven in its portrayal of race. King is not depicted beyond human flaw, and many whites are also shown joining the marchers in response to their brutalization. The film also includes the beating and murder of a white minister because of his solidarity with the marchers. Though the portrayal of President Johnson as both manipulator and ally is the most debated and complex feature of the film, he ultimately provides federal protection for the marchers and introduces the Voting Rights Act by the final march.

As King notes in his last speech from the Montgomery Capitol steps, the enemy targeted by nonviolent resistance was not white people but the forces of evil and injustice that also victimize the oppressor. Indeed, love of enemy is a hallmark of nonviolent resistance. It not only refuses violence but also refuses to hate one’s enemy-neighbor. Nonviolent resistance is meant to bring about an end to hate as well as the reconciliation and redemption of those who have been the oppressor.

Traumatic aftermath

Trauma can be characterized as any experience that makes a person feel that his or her life, or the of life of a loved one, is in serious danger. This theme is partially explored in both

films through the family difficulties and strained relationships that develop in the wake of battle. However, post-traumatic stress is not discussed explicitly as such in Kyle’s memoir. In the film he is briefly depicted as receiving treatment for stress, but triumphs largely through his own resiliency and mentorship of wounded veterans. Yet in the end it isn’t “savage” Iraqis that kill Chris Kyle but a fellow veteran suffering PTSD who shoots him at a Texas gun range. The film only hints at this aftermath of violent conflict before quickly cutting to a montage of actual footage from Kyle’s sizable military funeral in Texas stadium.

Though the struggle for civil rights would ultimately take the life of Martin Luther King as well, *Selma* is not the story of a lone hero. At the film’s end King addresses thousands from the steps of the State Capitol and speaks of their assured victory, as his own fate and that of other marchers are displayed on the screen. Some marchers achieved the dream of voting, some were killed, and others became well-known leaders. As King relates in his memoir, *Stride Toward Freedom*, this was not just his story but also the “chronicle of 50,000 Negroes who took to heart the principles of nonviolence, who learned to fight for their rights with the weapon of love, and who, in the process, acquired a new estimate of their own human worth.” 

Michael McKeever is a professor of biblical studies at Judson University, in Elgin, Ill. He is founder and director of the Reel Conversations Film Series, a joint venture involving the university’s Department of Communication Arts and the Department of Biblical and Theological Studies, which encourages real conversations about culture, faith, and contemporary film. He is a member of the Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin.



Thrive!

by Melody Keller

I love God's idea of seasons. They bring variety, color, and change into our world, and we need all of these. We need variety to splash spice, color to bring beauty, and change to cultivate character.

As I write, it's summer. What a wonderful season! School ends and vacations begin. Baseball fans stream into ball parks, and campers gather around fire pits to enjoy hot dogs and 'smores. There is play time in the pool, growth in the garden, relaxation in the rays, and hay to bale. There are weddings to attend and lawns to groom.

Autumn, winter, and spring have their bonuses as well. Each season brings abundant blessings. But summer is a time to thrive.

I love the word "thrive." It's an exciting, energized, and encouraging word. The first dictionary definition is "to grow vigorously; flourish."

We understand that. Just walk by a garden and you'll see plants that are growing and producing. Spend time with a child who is happy and healthy and whole. Watch a growing church filled with excitement, enthusiasm, and encouragement. You could label all three as thriving.

The second definition is: "to gain in wealth or possessions; prosper."

On a recent trip to Canada, some friends and I spent time on Campobello Island and went to Roosevelt Campobello International Park. We toured the Roosevelt Cottage, chatted

The good news is that, no matter the season, God wants us to thrive. And you can start now.

on the porch of the Hubbard Cottage, and took in the sights. These places speak of wealth and possessions. The grounds were green and well tended. The view included part of the Atlantic Ocean.

Last summer, I toured another home in Asheville, N.C. The 250-room home—the largest privately owned house in the US—was completed in 1895 and boasts 35 bedrooms, 43 bathrooms, and 65 fireplaces. It also has an indoor swimming pool, a gymnasium, and a bowling alley. It was the home of George Vanderbilt II, a very prosperous man.

The third definition: “to progress toward or realize a goal despite or because of circumstances.”

This is harder, but worth it. A number of years ago, I was vacationing with my parents and my brother at Prince Edward Island, in Canada. My brother and I were checking out the sights. At one location we spotted a tree that seemed to be hanging on for dear life at the edge of a cliff. What kept it from falling to its demise were its strong roots. Not a great place to thrive but, from what I could see, it was doing just that despite poor conditions.

I once noticed a boy of about 10 or 11 at a store. He walked, but with great effort. Something was wrong with his legs, so he used a cart to get around. I found myself hoping that this young fellow could still find the will to thrive in spite of what seemed like a difficult journey. At another store I noticed a man sitting in a wheelchair. Part of one leg was missing. What was not missing was his joy. He greeted people with a smile as they came in and talked cheerfully with customers. In spite of his circumstances, he definitely appeared to be thriving.

We live in a world that is crumbling in so many ways. We live in communities where culture and church collide on various fronts. And yet, in these circumstances, God calls the church to thrive.

I’m glad I serve a God who looks at the storm and says, “Peace! Be still!” I’m glad I serve a God who looks at the situation and says, “Don’t worry about anything.” I’m glad I serve

a God who looks at the serious illness and says, “Is anything too hard for me?” I’m glad I serve a God who empowers people to thrive.

God longs for us to thrive, and has given us the tools we need to do so. God loads us with benefits and loves us in so many ways. Still, if I can use myself as a mirror, I know that we fall short in many ways.

The good news is that, no matter the season, God wants us to thrive. And you can start now. You can start to flourish, to prosper and, in spite of your circumstances, to thrive in your walk of faith.

Put away those things that choke the “thriving” out of you. Put away divisiveness, gossip, and greed. Put away the critical spirit, pride, unkindness, lust, apathy, self pity, and fear. Throw those weeds onto the burn pile and take a blow torch to them.

Surround yourself with a love for your brothers and sisters that is deep and wide, peace in the midst of problems, hope for a glorious future, joy in serving with sincerity, patience amid frustrations, long-suffering in the middle of solving differences, faith that sees what the eye cannot, and belief in the great goodness of God.

Imagine the body of Christ taking God seriously and believing the promises God has made. Imagine churches growing and glowing. Imagine people in our world noticing the thriving church and being drawn to the beauty they see. Imagine a revival of faith sweeping our land because people of God dared to thrive.

Pray for God’s help. Start flourishing and prospering in your walk with God. If we follow God’s path, our lives will be changed and our world will be impacted for good.

Thrive so that the world can see that we are different because of God’s grace. Thrive so that we can be agents of hope in a world that needs healing and comfort. Thrive because God wants you to. Through God, you can! **AM**

Melody Keller lives in Lewiston, Maine, and is a member of Lewiston Church of the Brethren.

Nigeria Crisis Response leaders report progress

by Carl and Roxane Hill

Having recently returned from a short trip to Nigeria, we were encouraged by the relief efforts headed by the EYN Disaster Team of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria). The church's large-scale program of assistance is funneling money to EYN with a five-pronged approach. We were happy that progress has been made in all five areas that we have designated.

Five areas where donations are being targeted

1. Food and basic living materials
2. Land acquisition and the building of care centers for displaced people, which includes medical care
3. Trauma and reconciliation workshops
4. EYN strengthening
5. Livelihood, sustainability, and education

Each area is a huge undertaking and donations are enough only to scratch the surface. But each area is so vital for recovery and sustainability that we cannot ignore any of the efforts currently being made.

Food and basic living materials

As the situation in Nigeria continues to be unsettled, these efforts are very challenging, to say the least. This summer



Staff of EYN and Christian Aid Ministries distribute food and relief goods in remote areas of northeast Nigeria.

that were considered safe. At some of the locations in the northeast the Nigerian military accompanied the EYN Disaster Team. No problems were encountered at these sites.

Glen Zimmerman told us that he was amazed at the number of people showing up to receive support. "Many times, almost double the number of people showed up compared to what we were expecting," he said. "We were able to provide for everyone, although sometimes the portions were smaller. But, by God's grace, everybody received something."

The long-range goal is to continue providing emergency food until the fall of 2016.

When we visited a site south of Yola, more than 350 people were waiting for us to arrive. The purpose of our visit there was just to inspect another parcel of land set aside for a new care center (a community for displaced persons). When we saw the desperation of the people who had assembled we pooled the money we had with us and bought food for these very appreciative people.

We wish we could take all of you with us to Nigeria so you could see the look of appreciation on the faces of these people, especially the children. The Church of the Brethren is making a big difference and a huge impact for the kingdom of God.

Our prayer, as coordinators for the Nigeria Crisis Response, is that the church does not tire of doing good. "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9). **W**

one of our American partner organizations, Christian Aid Ministries, based in Berlin, Ohio, has been funding the distribution of food. Their representatives, Glen Zimmerman and Marcus Troyer, have been on the ground in Nigeria encouraging the EYN Disaster Team in its work.

In a two-week period in July, the team was able to reach more than 6,000 needy people. Multiple distributions took place to provide aid to people, reaching from the camps around Abuja and Jos to some of the villages in the northeast

Carl and Roxane Hill are co-directors of the Nigeria Crisis Response, a cooperative effort of the Church of the Brethren's Global Mission and Service and Brethren Disaster Ministries, working with Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria). For more information go to www.brethren.org/nigeriacrisis.

District considers query regarding On Earth Peace, adopts 'Resolution on Same-Sex Marriage'

Southeastern District's 2015 conference gave support to consideration of a query focused on On Earth Peace, which has the potential to come to the 2016 Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren. The district conference also adopted a resolution on same-sex marriage written by district moderator Gary Benesh and distributed by the district office.

The Southeastern District Conference resolution on same-sex marriage was adopted as part of a revision of the district's constitution and bylaws. It was developed after two years of discussion, prayer, and study, report the district executive ministers.

In part, the resolution states that the district "will not accept" the following: performance of same-sex covenants or marriages by its licensed or ordained ministers, performance of those ceremonies on any property that is part of the district, and "any materials or anyone promoting the acceptance of the practice of homosexuality as a lifestyle that is approved by God."

The district conference support for consideration of a query focused on On Earth Peace, received from Hawthorne Church of the Brethren in Johnson City, Tenn., sets in motion a process within the district that has the potential to bring the query to the 2016 Annual Conference.

The district moderator also announced that he will write to the denominational Review and Evaluation Committee requesting examination of such issues, and is available to lead meetings about related issues in congregations in the district, including discussions of the recent Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage.

The district's concerns about On Earth Peace include that "the group has issued a statement of inclusion for full participation in the church by all regardless of sexual orientation and practice which is in conflict with Annual Conference statements," Benesh wrote, in addition to other concerns centered on wording and imagery in the agency's printed annual report for 2015.

The district's "Resolution on Same-Sex Marriage" follows in full:

"We affirm that for the church scriptures provide the final authority for defining practices for followers of Christ and for His church. Timothy 3:16 states that 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.' Therefore, it is our attempt as a body of Christian believers to follow the teachings and commandments in this holy book.

"In regards to marriage Genesis 1:27: 'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.' And he went on to say in Genesis 2:24: 'Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.' Marriage is set forth as the bond between a man and a woman. Jesus re-affirms this scripture in Mark 10:6-8.

"In the Old Testament in Leviticus 18:22 says 'Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.' The New Testament in Romans 1 likewise speaks against such practices as does I Corinthians 6:9-11)

"In addition, Annual Conference in 1983 stated that same sex covenants are not acceptable to the Church of the Brethren.

"We therefore affirm that

"1. All are invited and welcomed to come and worship the Lord.

"2. Marriage is a God ordained covenant that should be entered into by one man and one woman.

"3. The Southeastern District will not accept performance of same-sex covenants or marriages by its licensed or ordained ministers.

"4. The Southeastern District will not accept the performance of those ceremonies on any property that is a part of the Southeastern District.

"5. In addition we will not support any materials or anyone promoting the acceptance of the practice of homosexuality as a lifestyle that is approved by God."

upcoming events

Oct. 3 Atlantic Northeast District Conference, Leffler Chapel at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College

Oct. 9-10 Atlantic Southeast District Conference, Camp Ithiel, Gotha, Fla.; Idaho District Conference, Fruitland (Idaho) Church of the Brethren; Mid-Atlantic District Conference, Hagerstown (Md.) Church of the Brethren; Middle Pennsylvania District Conference, Martinsburg (Pa.) Memorial Church of the Brethren; Southern Ohio District Conference, Happy Corner Church of the Brethren, Clayton, Ohio

Oct. 17-19 Mission and Ministry Board, Church of the Brethren General Offices, Elgin, Ill.

Oct. 17 Western Pennsylvania District Conference, Camp Harmony, Hooversville, Pa.

Oct. 29-31 Bethany Seminary Presidential Forum, Richmond, Ind.

Nov. 1 National Junior High Sunday

Nov. 6-7 Illinois and Wisconsin District Conference, Peoria (Ill.) Church of the Brethren

Nov. 6-7 Shenandoah District Conference, Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren

Nov. 8 Stewardship Sunday

Nov. 13-15 Pacific Southwest District Conference, Brethren Hillcrest Homes, La Verne, Calif.



Brethren Disaster Ministries

Brethren Disaster Ministries begins new partnership

Brethren Disaster Ministries has begun a new partnership for a Disaster Recovery Support Initiative, joining in with disaster programs of other Christian denominations. The ministry has requested an allocation of \$5,000 from the Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) to help fund this pilot program to more quickly and effectively support the formation of Long Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs) in communities affected by disaster.

This new initiative will be developed as a partnership with the disaster programs of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). In this initiative, a three-person team of response specialists deployed within two to six weeks of an event will remain with the community for a period of two to 12 months, serving as a resource to the

local recovery effort.

The team that will be funded with help from the Church of the Brethren “will offer training, teaching, mentoring, and assistance to local LTRG staff and partners as they facilitate early identification, case management, and construction and volunteer management for affected individuals with clear unmet repair or rebuild needs.”

Brethren Disaster Ministries will act as the fiscal agent for this initiative, with additional matching funds provided by the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Funds will support travel to preliminary meetings with affected communities, as well as operational expenses related to volunteer support, including housing, food, and travel expenses incurred on site.

Disaster ministries restructures, makes personnel changes

Brethren Disaster Ministries is restructuring and reshaping its staff and support staff positions to better serve a growing rebuilding ministry and Children’s Disaster Services.

The position of coordinator of Brethren Disaster Ministries has been closed out. **Jane Yount**, who had worked in that position, ended her service to the Church of the Brethren in August. For more than 30 years, Yount served in a variety of roles to support the mission of the denomination at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md.

Sharon Billings Franzén of West-

minster, Md., has been hired as office manager for Brethren Disaster Ministries. Most recently she has been administrative assistant at Meadow Branch Church of the Brethren in Westminster. Her volunteer and church-related work has included a term of service in the Peace Corps in Tanzania, and work for the Lutheran World Federation in New York and in Zambia.

Kristen Hoffman has been hired as program assistant for Brethren Disaster Ministries-Children’s Disaster Services. Most recently, she has volunteered in the Office of Youth and Young Adult

Ministry at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill., serving through Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS). She coordinated this year’s Christian Citizenship Seminar and National Junior High Conference among other duties. She is a life-long member of the Church of the Brethren.

Robin DeYoung of Hampstead, Md., has been hired as program assistant for the rebuilding program of Brethren Disaster Ministries. DeYoung is a recent graduate of McPherson (Kan.) College and attends Westminster (Md.) Church of the Brethren.

Brethren Volunteer Service unit begins work at project sites

The summer unit of Brethren Volunteer Service, the 309th BVS unit, has completed training and the volunteers have been assigned to project sites. The names, home towns, and project sites of the members of BVS Unit 309 follow:

Elena Anderson-Williams of Mountain View, Calif., will volunteer with Quaker Cottage in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Annika Fuchs of Freiburg, Germany, is volunteering at the Washington (D.C.) City Church of the Brethren.

Debbie Kossman of Dulzburg, Germany, will volunteer with Sisters of the Road in Portland, Ore.

Emily Landes of Centennial, Colo., is going to Quaker Cottage in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Isa Mahmut of Herford, Germany, and **Kathi Muller** of Schwarzach, Germany, will work with ABODE Services in Fremont, Calif.

Gillian Miller of Colstrip, Mont., is serving with the Ecumenical Women's Initiative in Omis, Croatia.

Bernd and Maggie Phoenix of Santa

Fe, N.M., are serving as co-directors of the World Friendship Center in Hiroshima, Japan.

Abel Tewelde of Goppingen, Germany, is working at Project PLASE in Baltimore, Md.

Adam and Grae Weaver of Kalona,

Iowa, have been posted to East Belfast Mission in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Anna Zakelj of Modoc, Ind., is with SnowCap Food Pantry in Portland, Ore.

For more information about Brethren Volunteer Service, go to www.brethren.org/bvs.



The 309th unit of Brethren Volunteer Service: (front from left) Adam Weaver, Grae Weaver, Anna Zakelj, Debbie Kossman, Annika Fuchs, Elena Anderson-Williams, Maggie Phoenix; (back from left) Emily Landes, Isa Mahmut, Kathi Muller, Bernd Phoenix, Abel Tewelde, Gillian Miller.

Personnel changes

Carolyn A. Pieratt Schrock will retire Dec. 31 as executive minister of the Church of the Brethren's Missouri and Arkansas District. She has served as district executive minister since January 2008. Schrock began as district executive minister following 35-plus years of service in the Church of the Brethren, including mission work in Nigeria and what is now South Sudan. She was licensed in 2004 by Cabool (Mo.) Church of the Brethren when she began a caregiving ministry there. Upon completion of the Training in Ministry (TRIM) program with the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, she was ordained in 2012.

Nancy Sollenberger Heishman has been named part-time coordinator of the Spanish-Language Ministry Training Pro-

grams for the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership. She will administer the Seminario Biblico Anabautista Hispano (SeBAH-CoB) educational program, design and administer the new Spanish-language track of the Education for a Shared Ministry (EFSM) program, and work with various constituencies to provide leadership for Spanish-language ministry training programs. Heishman is a former Annual Conference moderator, has served as interim pastor of Cristo Nuestra Paz in New Carlisle, Ohio, and interim coordinator for the SeBAH-CoB program. As a former mission co-coordinator in the Dominican Republic, she was director of theological education for Iglesia de los Hermanos en la Republica Dominicana. She will continue to co-pastor West Charleston Church of the Brethren in Tipp City, Ohio.

Open Roof Award given at board meeting

The 2015 Open Roof Award was presented to two Church of the Brethren congregations during the Mission and Ministry Board meeting in Tampa, Fla., in advance of Annual Conference. Cedar Lake Church of the Brethren in Auburn, Ind., and Staunton (Va.) Church of the

Brethren were honored for making efforts to “ensure that all may worship, serve, be served, learn, and grow in the presence of God, as valued members of the Christian community.”

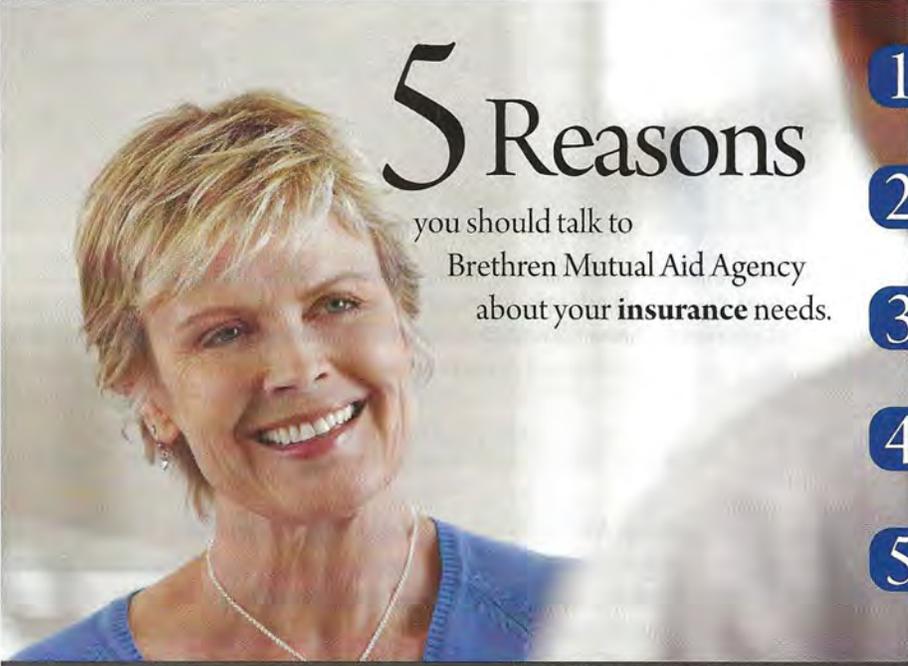
Bob and Glenda Shull accepted the award on behalf of the Cedar Lake church. Pastor Scott Duffey and Becky Duffey accepted the award on behalf of the Staunton church.

Along with a certificate, each congregation received a copy of the book *Circles of Love*, published in June, which features stories of congregations that have broadened their welcome to include persons with abilities. One of the chapters tells the story of Oakton Church of the Brethren, in Vienna, Va., one of the previous recipients of the Open Roof Award, which now number 16. The award is given by Congregational Life Ministries and its Disabilities Ministry.



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

Representatives of churches honored with the Open Roof Award for 2015 pose for a picture with Debbie Eisenbise (left), who presented the award on behalf of Congregational Life Ministries and its Disabilities Ministry.



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MUTUAL AID AGENCY

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When I think of Su Casa

by Sarah Ullom-Minnich

As a Brethren Volunteer Service worker from unit 301, I was placed at Su Casa Catholic Worker: a community living-style shelter for Spanish-speaking families experiencing homelessness, located on the south side of Chicago. At Su Casa, workers and families share many of the common spaces. We held community dinners in our large dining room five times a week, but the rest of our meals were cooked and

eaten independently, at the smaller table in the kitchen. Because this space was shared, there were always community members coming and going, cooking and eating.

Eating together is a central theme of love feast, but my year in BVS has taught me that serving, being served, and eating together have a connection and an importance that extend far beyond the ritual itself.

When I think of Su Casa I think of the kitchen, the center of all social life.
Breakfast or dinner, hungry or not, the tiniest snack might suffice.
Our destination for a morning hello, from the moment that we wake,
to the aroma three stories below, of chorizo and scrambled eggs.

When I think of the kitchen I think of the table, a circle perpetually open.
Crosswords and coffee, joys and complaints, and little girls singing songs from *Frozen*.
Tea kettle whistling, quesadillas sizzling, always plenty to share.
You can cook on your own, but eating together means more, and we're aware.

When I think of the table I think of the laughter, the jokes and the playing of games.
Culinary experiments left on the counter, and the silence that good food makes.
I hear languages blend, mixing and growing, new words created, new ways to show
that the roads that divide us aren't too far to go, and that food is a language that all of us know.

When I think of Su Casa I think of a family, sharing our sorrows and joys.
I think of relationships formed 'round a table, intentional community, a choice.
Reflecting on months of lessons in service, after a year, it is clear, to my eyes
that eating together is at the heart of it all, sharing food, sharing time, sharing life.

Sarah Ullom-Minnich shared her poem this spring at a Maundy Thursday service at Stone Church of the Brethren, in Huntingdon, Pa. She is now a student at Juniata College, and has been attending Stone Church since 2014.

Do we need the New Testament?

I couldn't resist this book's title. It caught my eye as I browsed the new book shelves at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary's library.

As it turns out, I couldn't put it down.

If you're Brethren, you've heard it asked—or asked yourself—"Do we need the Old Testament?" By turning this question upside down, scholar and writer (and he's quite a writer)



FRANK RAMIREZ

John Goldingay challenges Christians to reexamine their assumptions about the differences between the Old and New Testaments.

Goldingay, the David Allen Hubbard Professor of Old Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary, has written plenty of books about the Hebrew Scriptures. I read his *Word Biblical Commentary* on Daniel cover to cover, and cherish what he says about the three young men in the fiery furnace,

writing that they aren't saved *from* the fire, but *in* the fire.

Don't worry. Right off the bat, Goldingay reassures us that we do require the New Testament, but he insists that believers also need to read what he calls the First Testament (and what I call the Hebrew Scriptures) on its own cultural terms, and not as a handy confirmation of our 21st century viewpoints and values.

What I really love about this book is that Goldingay knocked me off my perch on more than one occasion. He insists the Scriptures confront us as often as they comfort us, refuse to confirm our cultural assumptions regardless of our background, and force us to reframe the narrow ways we think, whether we are liberal or conservative.

People who say they don't like the Old Testament haven't

read it. They tend to point to a couple of chapters here and there in Joshua and Judges, along with the final verses of Psalm 137, to condemn the whole kit and caboodle. But Goldingay makes a great case that much of what we consider the exclusive province of the New Testament finds both source and fulfillment in the Hebrew Bible.

Some Brethren like to refer to us as a New Testament church. The author makes the strong case that we find more of what we attribute to the New Testament in the Hebrew Scriptures, and that in many ways a stronger case for the aims and goals of the kingdom of God (and even the concept of kingdom) is to be found in the older portion of the Bible.

The author notes, late in the game, "I often think that students take the view that one of my jobs as a professor is to reassure them that the Bible does not say anything that they do not already think, and to show how, when it says something outrageous, it does not mean it (175-176)."

Goldingay's comments about pacifism will be disconcerting to Brethren, and may challenge us to do more than pick and choose a few verses to proof-text what I think is implicit in the whole arc of the Bible. Maybe that's why I prefer to say we Brethren don't have a peace position. We have a Jesus position.

There's a chapter or two I totally disagree with, but I hope I'm disagreeing with a human author and not with the word of God. And that's the important thing about this book—rather than bend the Bible to fit our preconceptions, Goldingay calls upon us to open our hearts to be changed, to be transformed by God.

Yes, we need the New Testament. But Goldingay's book offers a convincing case for taking another look at the Hebrew Scriptures. After I returned his book to the seminary library, I ordered a copy of my own. 

Frank Ramirez is the senior pastor of Union Center (Ind.) Church of the Brethren.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Title: *Do We Need the New Testament? Letting the Old Testament Speak for Itself.* **Author:** John Goldingay. **Publisher:** IVP Academic, May 15, 2015. **Number of pages:** 184. **Price:** \$22. "A fresh, accessible, and at times provocative explanation of the enduring relevance of the Old ('First') Testament for Christians," Mark J. Boda, professor of Old Testament at McMaster Divinity College, said in a review. "It will challenge readers to embrace the first seventy percent of the canon as truly Christian Scripture."





Kam Abbott / Flickr.com

Faith that calls for pumpkin-esk patience

After my husband and I started growing food in earnest several years ago, we began to look at produce differently. When we went to a pumpkin patch after our first big-garden summer, he looked at the field and laughed out loud. “I never noticed how funny looking pumpkins were,” he said. “How do such big things come from such small vines?”



MANDY GARCIA

He had a point. It hardly seemed possible that enough nutrients for so much fruit could be pumped through such thin veins crawling along the ground—and all from one small seed. Downright miraculous, if you ask me.

You are probably aware that pumpkin growers need to be patient people. Pumpkins need the heat of July, the cooler days in October, and that whole

stretch of time in between to produce the iconic squash. They are not to be rushed.

Pumpkin plants also require quite a bit of space, stretching for many yards, and climbing over anything that gets in their way. Yet their vines are fragile, so, even though they’re unruly, they do require gentleness and careful steps.

Someone recently reminded me that living by faith requires pumpkin-esk patience. You can’t always say a quick prayer and see visible results overnight. Sometimes it even seems like seeds are planted and will never bear fruit. But God will not be rushed, no matter how much we push. “You have to stand still and wait,” said my friend. “Wait for the piecemeal will of God to be revealed.”

And you can’t go trampling through fields trying to find fruit, either. Waiting on God’s will means watching your step, and slowing down enough to pay attention to where you’re going. It means being gentle with what’s growing as it winds

around whatever is in front of it, and remembering that it all stretched out of a tiny seed, planted in your heart by some kind Gardener of souls.

If you get a chance this fall, find a new angle to look at things you’ve seen a hundred times before. Give thanks for the miracle of fruits that grow out of tiny seeds, and for the way that they were nourished before they nourished you. **W**

Mandy Garcia is a freelance writer living in Elgin, Ill.



Quick crisp topping

Apples are another miracle fruit, growing on a tree that came from one tiny pip. One of the simplest things that I like to do with them is slice, sauté in a little butter with cinnamon and brown sugar, and top with a quick “crisp” topping.

Instructions:

Melt 3 tablespoons of butter in a shallow pot or pan over medium heat. When it smells nutty and has slightly browned, add 2 tablespoons of chopped nuts (almonds or walnuts are my favorite) and stir to coat. Then add 1/2 cup of rolled oats, 1 tablespoon of brown sugar or honey, and 1/4 teaspoon of cinnamon. Add a pinch of salt and stir until oats are toasted and golden brown, about 5 minutes. Let cool and serve on top of any fruit, ice cream, or yogurt.

[While it is MESSENGER's policy to carry letters written in response to articles or letters published in the magazine, exceptions are made on rare occasions, such as on the heels of Annual Conference, when individuals feel compelled to discuss an issue, and turn to these pages to reach out to fellow Brethren with their concerns. —Ed.]

Disturbed by the poster

Like several of the delegates at Annual Conference, I was disturbed by the On Earth Peace promotional poster. Stark images carried the violence of practices like disproportionate black incarceration, police brutality, kidnapped girls, privatized prisons, war, the Palestinian struggle, children soldiers, and desperate attempts for peace. They were a jar-

ring reminder of the inequities within our country and of the disproportionate violence that is imposed in our name upon people of color and vulnerable people all over the world. Given the reality that such violence is often done in the name of a masculine God, it was refreshing to reconsider the feminine nature of the Holy Spirit and the possibility of another way of seeing and experiencing the needs and challenges of the world.

The angry tones and the demands for punishment of OEP seemed to me to reflect the kind of harshness and fear that has fueled unrest and systemic violence. I was glad for the image of the rainbow and for its historic and contemporary symbolic witness to both hope and love.

I give thanks to On Earth Peace for

so powerfully pulling us deeper into our fractured world and for provoking us out of our complacent complicity. While disturbing, it made me very grateful for OEP's presence within our church.

Carol Wise
Minneapolis, Minn.

Saddened by the vitriol

I have received e-mails recently from an anonymous source who feels the need to "rescue" me from the "foolish" path I am on regarding the Church of the Brethren's stance on same sex relationships. The method of this instruction is to send me links of the BRF's (Brethren Revival Fellowship) webpage and the blog *The Dunker Journal*, which is maintained by



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Sarah Neher, MDiv
Bethany student representative
to the New Faces of Ministry Tour

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its leader. Typically I delete this as I have enough events in my daily life to worsen my hypertension, but recent events, specifically the Supreme Court ruling on same sex marriage, have brought a flurry of links to my e-mail box and I opened one.

I am saddened by the vitriol and disingenuousness found on these pages. There are items in there that equate progressives and LGBTQ persons with the Manson Family, Hell's Angels, Bernie Madoff, pedophiles, polygamy supporters, ISIS, etc. One of these is a personal blog. I understand that, but this is from the leader of a group, the BRF, which has an official special relationship with the Church of the Brethren. Where is the respect? Where is the Love of Christ in these words?

I ask all persons in the Church of the

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CLASSIFIEDS

Camp Mack Executive Director Position Camp Alexander Mack, on Lake Waubee, Milford, IN, is a year-round camping and retreat ministry of the Indiana Churches of the Brethren. The camp is 65 acres with additional 180 acres of wilderness area. Camp Mack was founded in 1925 and continues to serve 1000+ users per year. The Executive Director will serve as the camp administrator and will develop policy and long range goals for the camping ministry in partnership with the Board of Directors. This full time position has responsibility for developing and implementing policies and programs of the Board of Directors; staffing; overseeing the promotion and scheduling of programs and facilities; overseeing administration of the camp; maintaining professional standards; fund-raising in coordination with the Board of Directors. The qualified candidate will be a faithful Christian with a clear understanding and appreciation of the Church of the Brethren; have a bachelor degree, with IACCA certification preferred; have proven supervisory experience in outdoor ministries; have appropriate emotional maturity and stability and be able to create excitement in persons of diverse backgrounds; be gifted in interpreting the camp's mission.

For more information about the camp visit www.campmack.org. Send inquires, letters of interest and resumes to CampMackSearch@gmail.com. (ACA accredited.)

Brethren, especially those who support the BRF, to stop labelling LGBTQ persons (and progressives, too) as unworthy others to be denigrated, removed or "repaired." This labeling of groups as the "other" to be despised is the kind of hateful background noise that leads to extremism and violence such as that seen in Charleston, S.C. The young man who committed those murders didn't act alone. He learned hate from his society, and we must not let ourselves be conduits of hatred toward others.

Maybe it's time to rethink our special relationship with this group. I think we need to be open to opinions and ideas different from our own, but as a body of believers we need to rethink what this group stands for in 2015.

Mark Shafer
Niles, Mich.



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Showing solidarity with those in the US

I appreciated very much the informative articles about EYN [Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria] and the situation in Nigeria by Roxane Hill and Cliff Kindy in the

June MESSENGER. There is wonderful work being done to try to make the best out of tragic circumstances. Thinking of the great amount of work being shared by NGOs in Nigeria brings to mind NGOs in the US, specifically the NAACP and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund working to bring about a more just society for all.

Would it be a good way to show solidarity with those suffering the injustices of racism for the Church of the Brethren, districts, congregations, and individuals to contribute financially to the NAACP and the NAACP LDF?

Charles Thomas
Murfreesboro, Tenn.

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

New Members

Beaver Creek, Hagerstown, Md.: Anne Johnkin, Christopher Johnkin

Elizabethtown, Pa.: Maureen Fairbanks, Victor Felix, Anna Nornhold

Faith Community, New Oxford, Pa.: Robert Baer, Judy Baer, Peter MacEwan, Roanne MacEwan, Nora Ewing, Charlene Miller

Garden City, Kan.: Larry Skipper, Ila Skipper

Indian Creek, Harleysville, Pa.: Hazel Moyer

Lititz, Pa.: John Henry, Joanne Henry, Marvin Zimmerman, Regina Zimmerman, Judy Mellinger, Ardeth Wolgemuth, Jayne Burns, Leonard Burns, Poe Kwar Hsee, Mu Mu, Noah Johnson, Samuel Tobias

Madison, Brightwood, Va.: Olivia Myers, Caleb Powers

McPherson, Kan.: Cameron Clark, Janis Powers, Robert Powers

Messiah, Kansas City, Mo.: Alyson Heckerth

Paxton, Harrisburg, Pa.: Ronald Varner, Taylor

Albert Pottinger
South Waterloo, Waterloo, Iowa: Don Thompson, Shar Thompson
Spring Run, McVeytown, Pa.: Robert Maclay, Connie Maclay, Megan Maclay
Stone, Huntingdon, Pa.: Fred King, Mark Schweickert, Becky Jones Schweickert

Anniversaries

Angle, Clyde and Beverly, Lancaster, Pa., 67

Bailey, Doyle and Fran, Centerville, Iowa, 67

Bantz, Floyd and Alta, Lancaster, Pa., 70

Beery, Stan and Christine, North Manchester, Ind., 50

Bloss, William and Lois, Uniontown, Ohio, 65

Brode, Robert and Marian, Mechanicsburg, Pa., 60

Burger, Richard and Ann, Moravia, Iowa, 72

Kerr, John and Nancy, Webster, Iowa, 55

Kochler, David and Marilyn, Udell, Iowa, 60

Lengle, John and Donna, Saint Charles, Ill., 50

Main, Robert and Dorcas, Frederick, Md., 60

Oliver, Jim and Pam, Ross-ville, Ind., 50

Pheasant, Clay and Judy, Alexandria, Pa., 50

Shively, Lynn and Lynne, Ronks, Pa., 50

Swords, Gene and Barbara, Lancaster, Pa., 65

Weaver, E. Mark and Thelma, Lancaster, Pa., 75

Weaver, Jay and Mary, Lancaster, Pa., 60

Wicks, Dale and Ruth, Madrid, Iowa, 75

Deaths

Anderson, Barbara Metzger, 84, Huntingdon, Pa., July 30

Belton, Marion, 95, Saint Petersburg, Fla., March 29

Butterbaugh, Kathryn E. Sheaffer, 95, Dixon, Ill., July 21

Carter, Bryan Jarvis, 82, Nappanee, Ind., June 4

Carter, Diane K. Smeltser, 76, Nappanee, Ind., June 4

Craddock, William Leon, 77, Winston-Salem, N.C., Aug. 25

Cridler, Abram D., 82, Shipensburg, Pa., July 15

Crosby, Gilbert M., 76, East Peoria, Ill., Aug. 2

Frenger, Robert L., 84, Syracuse, Ind., July 9

Gowans, Declan E., 87, Modesto, Calif., July 12

Hambrick, Penny, 90, Saint Petersburg, Fla., May 7

Harshbarger, Raymond, 89, McVeytown, Pa., Aug. 22

Hoeffle, Lucile B., 99, Elmhurst, Ill., July 29

Honeycutt, Susan, 70, Nappanee, Ind., June 18

Kenepf, Jeanne O., 85, Reedsville, Pa., Aug. 14

Kiefer, Francis L., Sr., 94, Johnstown, Pa., Aug. 11

Kline, Emyln Harley, 87, Manassas, Va., July 20

Leonard, Rheba M. Goodling, 92, Elizabethtown, Pa., May 22

Lewis, Floris C. Kenepf, 81, Lewistown, Pa., July 13

Mack, Harold C., 85, Dallas Center, Iowa, Aug. 12

Mills, Rachel Light, 94, Salem, Va., July 29

Murrells, Catherine Frances Price, 87, New Oxford, Pa., July 4

Musselman, Edna Mae Berdell, 97, Quakertown, Pa., Aug. 5

Myer, Elizabeth M., 91, Lancaster, Pa., May 21

Olivieri, Michael, 91, Roaring Spring, Pa., June 16

Ruegg, Margaret Lillian, 87, Huntingdon, Pa., July 16

Spinos, Terrance F., 76, Johnstown, Pa., Aug. 1

Stutsman, Richard J., 88, Goshen, Ind., Aug. 18

Stutzman, Laura June, 85, Wenatchee, Wash., July 30

Tucker, Rachel E., 90, Ashland, Ohio, July 25

Warner, Tom, 65, Boise, Idaho, July 17

Warnick, Genevieve Hanna, 95, Flora, Ind., July 12

Wellborn, Marcile E. Neiswender, 91, Fort Wayne, Ind., Nov. 12, 2014

Zeager, Dorothy G. Zerphey, 97, Elizabethtown, Pa., May 20

Zimmerman, Mildred Hummer, 88, Lancaster, Pa., March 25

Ordained

Froman, Marie, Mo. & Ark. Dist. (Broadwater, Essex, Mo.), Aug. 23

Green, Gary W., W. Pa. Dist. (Hostetler, Hollsopple, Pa.), June 16

Hall, Edward W., Jr., Southeastern Dist. (Peak Creek, Laurel Springs, N.C.), Aug. 9

Kennedy, Mary Jane, Southeastern Dist. (Peak Creek, Laurel Springs, N.C.), Aug. 9

Scarr, Jennifer K., Pac. S.W. Dist. (Pomona Fellowship, Pomona, Calif.), July 26

Licensed

Bailey, Dallas L., Virgina Dist. (Henry Fork, Rocky Mount, Va.), July 5

Braunns, James, W. Pa. Dist. (Conemaugh, Johnstown, Pa.), Aug. 16

Dubble, Christopher, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Richland, Pa.), Aug. 23

Gibson, Susan Robinson, Virgina Dist. (Oak Grove, Roanoke, Va.), Aug. 16

Jones-Sale, Jennifer, W. Marva Dist. (Morgantown, W. Va.), July 10

Pisarski, Stanley C., W. Pa. Dist. (Conemaugh, Johnstown, Pa.), Aug. 16

Umbel, Daniel P., Shen. Dist. (Calvary, Winchester, Va.), Aug. 23

Placements

Breegle, Craig, pastor, Rockwood, Pa., June 14

Burkholder, Ryan, from director of youth ministries, Akron, Pa., to director of youth ministries, Ephrata, Pa., Aug. 17

Fike, Lisa J., from pastor, Freeport, Ill., to pastor, Greensburg, Pa., Aug. 1

Maxwell, David, pastor, Upper Claar, Claysburg, Pa., June 7

Morris, James Cody, pastor, Travelers Rest, S.C., May 3

Quinn, F. Roderick, pastor, Blue Ridge, Va., Aug. 15

Saylor, Barbara J., pastor, Beavercreek, Ohio, Aug. 2

Turningpoints

In this together

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

That African proverb is shown at the close of the movie *The Good Lie*, which tells the story of a handful of formerly “lost boys of Sudan” who manage to make it to the



RANDY MILLER
MESSENGER EDITOR

United States to begin a new life. As children fleeing fighting in their homeland, they faced unimaginable obstacles and suffered traumatic loss and hardship. Later, as young adults in a refugee camp, they endured years of uncertainty about when—or if—they would ever leave. Through it all, they stuck together.

A bond often is formed among people driven together by stressful events. The us-against-the-world dynamic can unite people in a powerful way.

That was certainly true for the lost boys—and one girl—who were the focus of the film. It was true of Anne Frank, her family, and friends who were forced to live together in a cramped Amsterdam attic, hiding from the Nazis. It also was true for Alexander Mack and the early Brethren who were bound not only by the strength of their religious convictions, but also in their opposition to oppressive laws of the state.

We have been reminded of the wonderful things we are capable of when differences are set aside in the pursuit of something beyond our immediate concerns.

We’ve witnessed this phenomenon recently in the Church of the Brethren as congregations in the US have come together to offer financial, spiritual, and emotional support to our Nigerian sisters and brothers in Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nìgeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria). In this, we have been reminded of the wonderful things we are capable of when differences are set aside in the pursuit of something beyond our immediate concerns. This came into sharp focus at Annual Conference this summer in Tampa, Fla., where the convention center and meeting rooms were frequently filled with joyous singing and celebration of unity and mutual support. It was a good reminder of what we Brethren can do when the chips are down.

Even though members of a group may be united in a common cause or in repelling a common foe, that’s not to say that tensions don’t exist. Read Anne Frank’s *Diary of a Young Girl* and you learn not only about this small band’s incredible story of sacrifice and survival, but also the strains and squabbles that inevitably arose. Tempers occasionally flared among the Sudanese children over matters of loyalty and leadership. Even the early Brethren, united as they were in their common cause, were not immune to division and strife.

You don’t have to go back to the early Brethren for examples of tension and strife. While this year’s Conference was mostly a feel-good gathering, it stood in stark contrast to Conferences of just a few years ago, when there was no unifying cause or external foe to bind us together, and our internal differences took center stage.

Those differences do need to be examined carefully and taken seriously. They are not petty squabbles that can be settled quickly with a reprimand or even a vote. They will require time, prayer, and honest, respectful dialog among Brethren of goodwill.

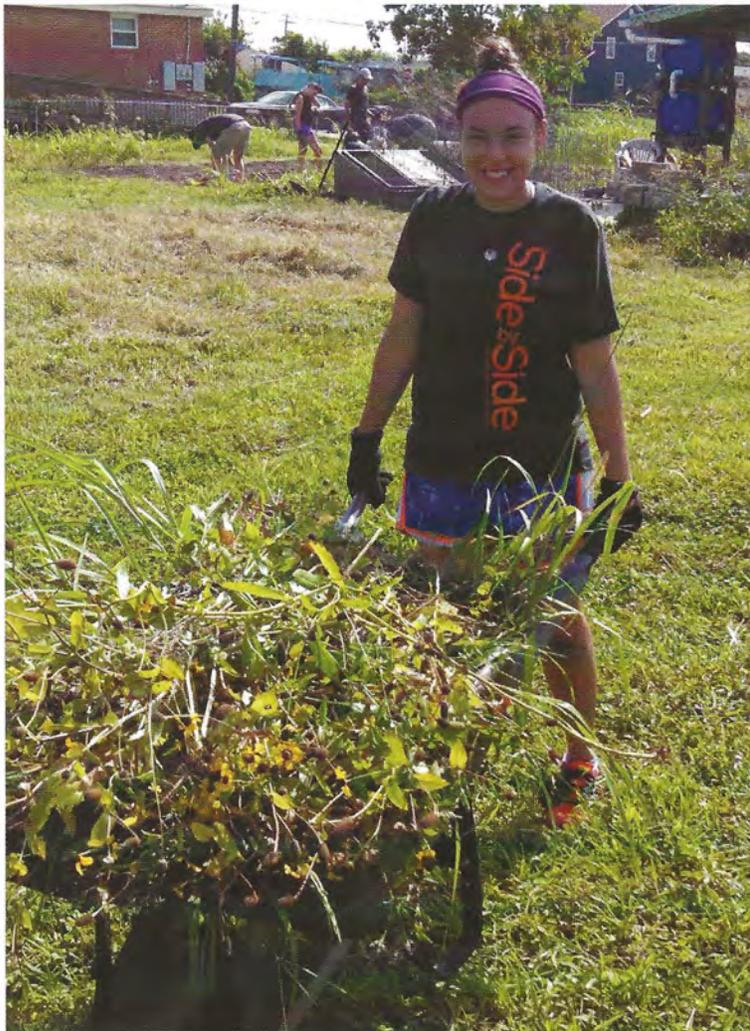
Yet, despite those very real differences that exist in our body, I am encouraged by examples of Brethren of different stripes coming together to carry out the work of Jesus peacefully, simply, and together (to coin a phrase). Conservative and progressive Brethren have come together to cut

lumber and hammer nails in Brethren Disaster Ministries projects. They have joined hands to support victims of hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods. And, thanks to some wise leadership a few years back, they are even sitting together at common tables at Annual Conference to talk about what it means to be Brethren.

Coming together for a common cause can give us a glimpse of what we can look like when we pull together. But I hope what we have seen in our support for EYN is not just a glimpse of an occasional occurrence, but instead is a reminder that, despite our differences, we are bound not just because of our opposition to something, but by our commitment to a new way of living. **AM**

COMING IN NOVEMBER: Sabbath rest

At Juniata College, students are challenged to **think**, encouraged to **evolve**, and empowered to **act** in a global world.



"Because Juniata taught me to think creatively about social issues, helped me to evolve as a leader, and encouraged me to act in service, I was prepared to serve as a Church of the Brethren youth workcamp coordinator where I helped organize work for a community garden project in the Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans. I am looking forward to continuing my service work both locally and nationally."

—Hannah Shultz '14

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Rejoice

The Lord has
done great things

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God
my Savior... for the Mighty
One has done great things."

Luke 1:46-49 NRSV

December
13

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