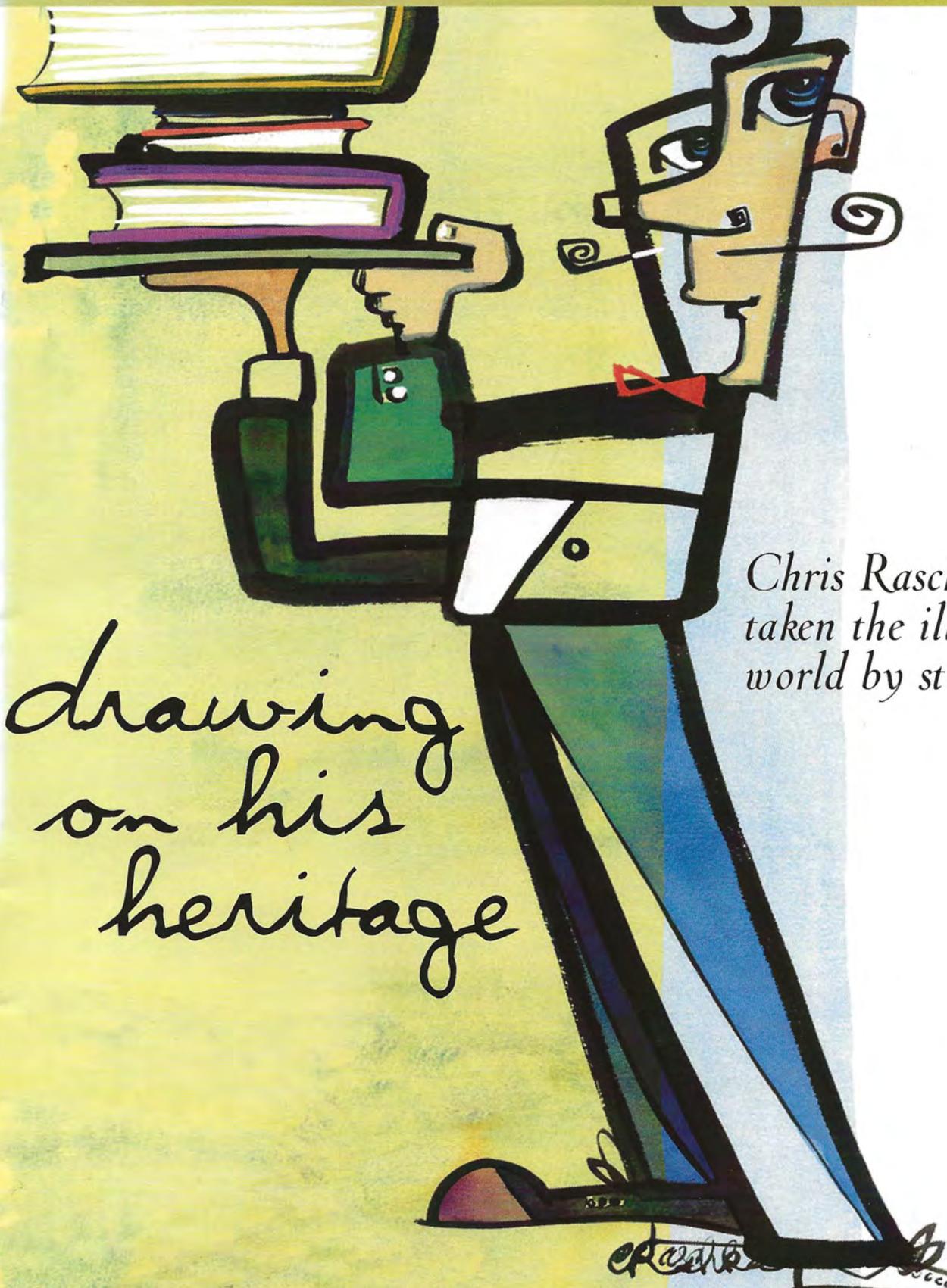


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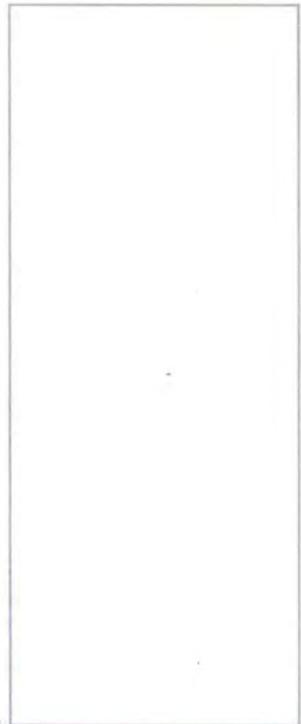
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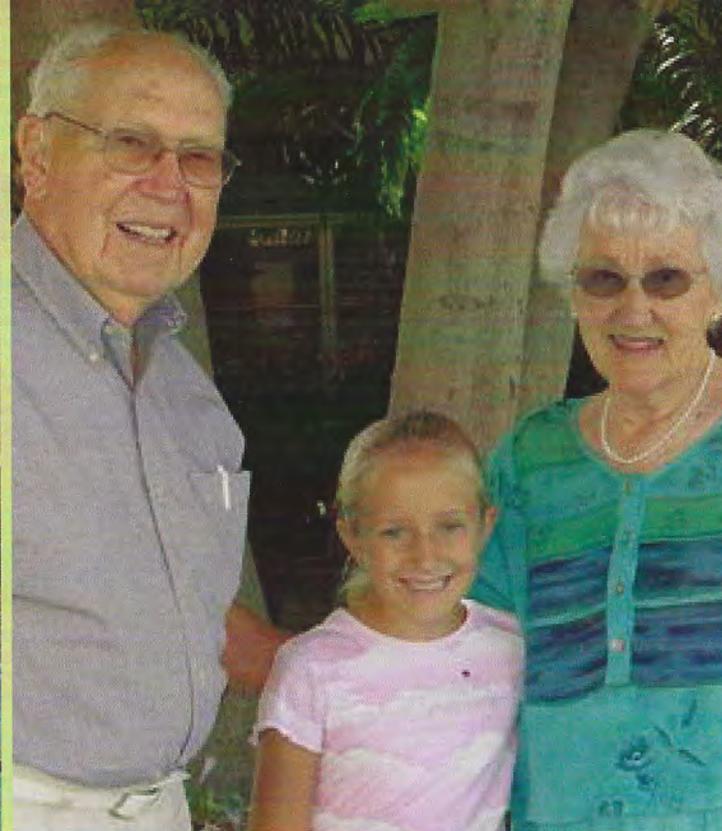
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*drawing
on his
heritage*

*Chris Raschka has
taken the illustration
world by storm*





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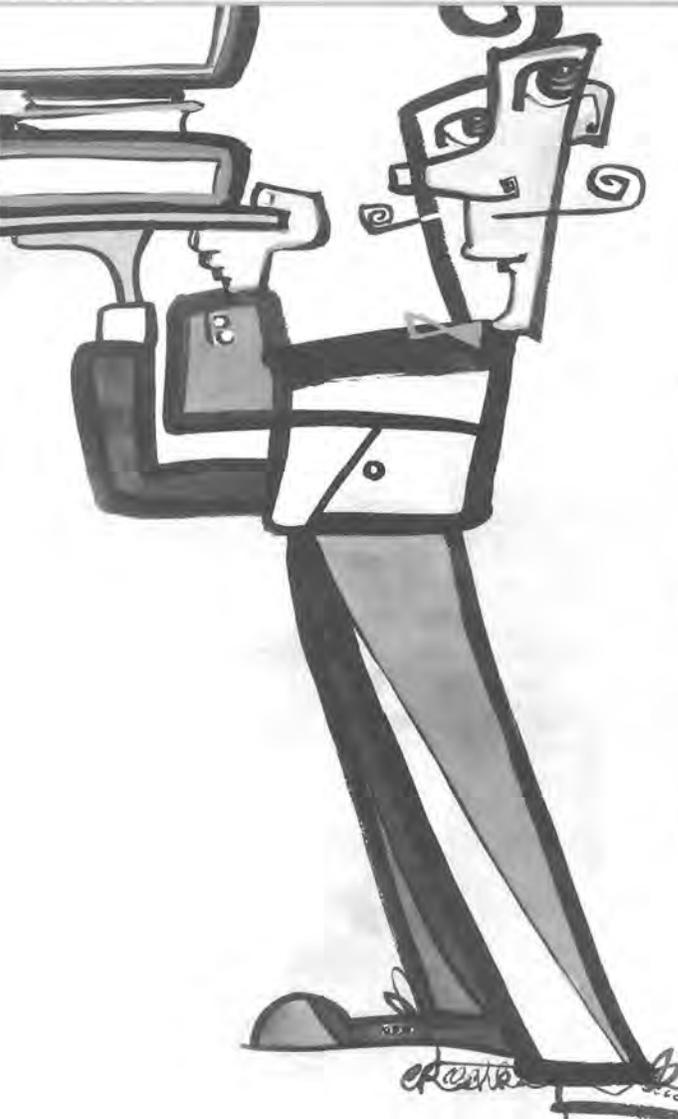


“ . . . publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works” (Psa. 26:7b KJV).

Church
of the
Brethren

MESSENGER

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ON THE COVER

For illustrators, winning the Caldecott Medal is like an actor winning an Oscar. It represents the peak of their craft. Chris Raschka won that award this year for his work on the book *The Hello-Goodbye Window*, leading to lots of attention and a flurry of interviews. He's still Brethren at heart, though, and he took some time to talk with MESSENGER, too. The illustration on the cover (and at left) was created by Chris for the National Children's Book Week in 2004.

8 Customer Service 101 for churches

Too many churches, says Tom Ehrich, are not "user-friendly." What lessons can churches learn from the mistakes of the corporate world in an era where "brand loyalty" isn't automatic?

10 Have you met Chris Raschka?

Chris Raschka grew up in the Church of the Brethren, in a well known family. He changed his name when he married, and he moved away, but he says he still feels close to his heritage. Marilyn Kieffaber visits with this award-winning artist and writer to give Brethren a chance to become better acquainted with him again, too.

13 Stem cell research: Pros and cons

It's been a hot-button issue in political and religious circles. Graydon Snyder and Linda Dooly present perspectives from two sides of the debate to help Brethren wrestle with this complex topic.

16 Not by sight: Virginia congregation takes risks

Mount Hermon Church of the Brethren has walked a difficult path at times, but it hasn't been afraid to step out in faith. That approach has helped to create an inspiring story of success.

18 Psalms: Jerusalem's 'new blue' hymnal

The book of Psalms is a "collection of collections," hymns that provided the worship script for the Hebrew people. Stephen Breck Reid looks at this much loved book and compares it to our hymnal experience of today.

DEPARTMENTS

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Editor's note: This is our annual combined July/August issue. Your next issue of MESSENGER will be delivered in September.

If you're Methodist, Lutheran, or Presbyterian and you hear about someone from your denomination, you probably don't try to figure out whether you know the person. And it wouldn't even occur to you to wonder how you're related. That's something peculiar to the Brethren (and the Mennonites too, we hear).

One of the things we have going for us is our deep sense of community. And one of the things we have working against us is our deep sense of community—which sometimes is a close-knit family feel that can be misconstrued as clannishness. Like families, churches can be sanctuaries or they can be claustrophobic.

Maybe we're torn between the two. We wish we were as well-known as the Methodists, the Lutherans, and the Presbyterians. Or as large as the community church down the road. But we also want to be where everyone knows your name, where we feel that we belong. The Brethren name game can feel exclusive if your name is not on the list, but wonderfully welcoming if you can make a connection.



WENDY McFADDEN
Publisher

One newcomer commented on her second or third visit to a Brethren congregation that she'd never had so many people interested in knowing her last name. That may have been because folks were just thorough in their greeting. Or it could be that everyone was trying to place her into context—and figure out whether they knew her grandparents. The good thing was that, even though she

wasn't related to anybody there, she liked the church and found a meaningful spiritual home for herself and her family.

Annual Conference, that big event that is part business meeting and part family reunion, is a curious mix of the old and the new. A surprisingly large percentage of delegates are first-time conferencegoers. But to act knowledgeably on the business requires background about the church, its polity, and previous decisions. How do we welcome new decisionmakers and also orient them? How do we carry out a big family reunion, but always create openings for new family members? How can we be distinctively Brethren but not make new folks feel like there's a secret handshake?

At Annual Conference and also within our thousand congregations, these are questions to work on, so that anyone who wishes may find a spiritual home in our house.

Wendy McFadden

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Subscription rates:

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

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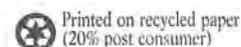
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A free study guide for each issue of MESSENGER is available on the site; go to keyword "MESSENGER" and click on the study guide link.

MESSENGER is the official publication of the Church of the Brethren. Member of the Associated Church Press. Biblical quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the New Revised Standard Version. Copyright © July/August 2006 Church of the Brethren General Board.

MESSENGER (ISSN 0026-0355) is published 11 times a year by Brethren Press, Church of the Brethren General Board. Periodicals postage paid at Elgin, IL and additional mailing offices.

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



Printed on recycled paper
(20% post consumer)

AROUND THE DENOMINATION

Updates and highlights from the Church of the Brethren districts

Atlantic Northeast: Brethren Community Ministries in Harrisburg, Pa., will hold its sixth annual chicken barbecue and 3-on-3 basketball tournament fundraiser on Aug. 23.

Idaho: The district will have its annual intergenerational camp at Camp Wilbur Stover, located near New Meadows, the week of July 9.

Illinois/Wisconsin: Chicago-area Church of the Brethren congregations met at the York Center congregation in Lombard, Ill., June 4 for a joint Pentecost service.

Michigan: The Lakeview congregation in Brethren, Mich., hosted 80 elementary school students recently to share about the history of the town, founded by Brethren. Several long-time members shared their memories and helped with other activities. It is expected to become an annual event.

Mid-Atlantic: The district outreach & service ministry team offered a day-long disaster awareness and education workshop June 24 at Washington (D.C.) City Church of the Brethren.

Middle Pennsylvania: Kris Shunk recently began as the new secretary for the district office. . . . A Heritage Scramble Golf Tournament fundraiser is planned for Aug. 15 in Roaring Spring.

Missouri/Arkansas: The Osceola (Mo.) congregation plans to hold Bible school for the first time in 65 years. It will be offered on Sunday afternoons this fall, part of a growing children's program.

Northern Indiana: A district-wide worship service with the theme "Be Joyful Always" was held June 4 at West Goshen (Ind.) Church of the Brethren. Annual Conference moderator-elect Belita Mitchell gave the message.

Northern Ohio: Delegates at district conference July 28-30 in Ashland will be asked to approve disorganization of the Canton First congregation. Gift of the Heart health and school kits will be assembled at the event.

Northern Plains: Root River Church of the Brethren (Greenleaf, Minn.) has begun a Foods Resource Bank Growing Project on a 1.5-acre plot across the street from the church.



Atlantic Southeast: *Nine Brethren from Atlantic Southeast District joined 18 from Pennsylvania in Puerto Rico this spring to help put an addition on the church at Rio Prieto and to do a host of improvements on the church at Yahuecas. "The work that was done was only part of the trip as we felt God's loving presence throughout our time there," Atlantic Southeast District executive minister Martha Beach said. "Brothers and sisters in Christ experienced warm fellowship and overcame language barriers as we worked and relaxed together."*

Oregon/Washington: District conference moves from its usual summer time slot and camp location to a fall meeting this year, Oct. 13-15 at Portland Peace Church of the Brethren.

Pacific Southwest: The district's environment-focused, intergenerational work-camp, called "Crawdad Camp," was planned for June 23-30 this year in Arizona. Campers will remove an invasive species of crayfish from a stream.

Shenandoah: The annual district disaster auction took place May 19-20 at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds outside Harrisonburg, Va.

South/Central Indiana: Ron and Harriet Finney will present the "Together" conversations process at a pastors and chaplains gathering July 19 at Kokomo Church of the Brethren.

Southeastern: Camp Placid (Blountville, Tenn.) held its reunion day June 4. It included swimming, hayrides, games, and a cookout. A work day took place at the camp May 20.

Southern Ohio: A loan taken out to support the Woodland Altars camping ministry was paid in full as of April 1. Additional debts remain from money loaned to the camp by the district.

Southern Pennsylvania: This year's meat canning project, shared with Mid-

Atlantic District, produced 83,000 pounds of canned chicken. It will be distributed overseas and to various local projects.

Southern Plains: The district is among the first in the denomination to hold its district conference, scheduled for July 28-30 at Roanoke (La.) Church of the Brethren. The theme is "Love: Little Things Mean a Lot."

Virginia: The 17th annual World Hunger Bike Ride was held June 17, beginning from Antioch Church of the Brethren in Rocky Mount, Va. Rides ranging from 5 to 50 miles were available.

West Marva: A district senior citizens' camp was held at Camp Galilee (Terra Alta, W.Va.) on June 6, led by Herman and Ruth Bailes.

Western Pennsylvania: Camp Harmony (Hooversville, Pa.) reported that its debt had been reduced from more than \$125,000 to just \$10,000 since the fall thanks to abundant donations and volunteer efforts from district members.

Western Plains: "Together: Conversations on Being the Church" will be offered as a pre-district conference event July 28. . . . McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren used \$1,200 in "seed money" for a hunger campaign in which members raised nearly \$32,000.

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



Courtesy of Jani S. Kornegay

Wendy Matheny is taking her studies from the US Capitol to the capitals of Europe with a Fulbright award.

Manchester student earns a Fulbright scholarship

As a Manchester College student, Wendy Matheny learned about politics in West Africa, where she worked to help women break their cycle of poverty. After graduation, she studied Capitol Hill politics as an intern for US Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Now, with a full-ride Fulbright scholarship, the Peoria native will research politics at the seat of the European Union and NATO—in Brussels, Belgium. Matheny, a 2005 cum laude graduate and a member of Peoria (Ill.) Church of the Brethren, is Manchester's 19th Fulbright in 11 years. Her scholarship is for the 2006-2007 school year.

As a graduate student at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, she will study the political impact of the increased involvement of women in Belgian-European politics. "The idea came to me when I was in Togo—seeing women at the bottom of the political food chain," said Matheny, who volunteered for six weeks in West Africa with ECHOPPE Inc., which helps women start their own businesses and individual initiatives for economic improvement.

And after her Fulbright year in Belgium? "I love the political game and want to continue that in some form, whether on the domestic front or internationally," Matheny said. "I'd love to

work on the Hill again, but I also want to do grad school."

Two members of the Manchester faculty—Gregory W. Clark, associate professor of physics, and Steven S. Naragon, associate professor of philosophy—will also do research in Europe next year as Fulbright Scholars. Clark will travel to Cardiff University in Wales to work on nanoscience research; Naragon will transcribe, edit, and translate into English a set of student notes from Kant's metaphysics lectures. Both attend Manchester Church of the Brethren (North Manchester, Ind.).

New CD is music to ears of disaster relief efforts

Oakland Church of the Brethren, Gettysburg, Ohio, has produced a new CD as a fundraiser for disaster relief. The music was recorded at Oakland and Bridge Street Media. It was pro-



I'd like wet fleeces for \$400, please

Two Northern Ohio youth groups battled it out over the Bible recently.

Youth from the Elm Street and County Line congregations spent a Sunday evening answering questions about Gideon and the woman at the well using a quiz-show format. Buzzer-and-light technology was provided by County Line Church of the Brethren.

Bethany Dukehart, from Elm Street, served as questioner; her husband, Joe, kept score. Ray Hadley, County Line, used his cell phone as a timer.

Both teams prepared by studying Judges 6-8 and John 4. No one had heard the questions until that evening.

Ohio youth tested their Bible knowledge in a game-show format this spring.

Afterward the contestants got better acquainted over snacks. Teens and advisors from both groups evaluated the evening positively and said they look forward to trying it again soon.—Wes Richard



Wes Richard

duced by Delbert Blickenstaff and engineered and mixed by Brett Clark.

The CD features the congregation's adult, men's, and women's choirs; the Simple Gifts Quartet; duets by Sara Vallo and Mike Hogg and by Joseph Helfrich and Delbert Blickenstaff; solos by Helfrich, Chelsea Martin, and Michael Weaver; and hymns sung by the Oakland congregation.

All proceeds from sales of the \$15 CD, titled "Oakland Sings," go to Southern Ohio District's Emergency Response Fund. For more details, call the church at 937-448-2287.—**Becky Maurer**

College student is now a 'branded' Brethren

When Manchester College (North Manchester, Ind.) freshman Nick Kauffman decided to get a tattoo this past fall, he didn't want just any design.

"I knew I wanted something both unique and meaningful," says Kauffman, from Goshen (Ind.) City Church of the Brethren. He eventually settled on something that represented an important part of his life: the Church of the Brethren logo.

"Not only was I born and raised in the Church of the Brethren, but the values I've been taught through the church are the ones I hold most dear," Kauffman says. "Besides, I like the logo, and it's certainly unique.

He got it on the inside of his ankle, and he says he has no regrets in doing it.

"The cross, the world, and the wave are all important aspects of my own theology," he says. "The logo as a whole represents that I came from the Church of the Brethren, and (now) the Church of the Brethren is carried with me wherever I go."



Nick Kauffman's ankle now bears a distinctively Brethren mark.



Kathy Benedict

Bringing home the bacon: A busy season of animal-kissing continued in Union Bridge, Md., this spring, as Union Bridge pastor Jim Benedict puckered up with a porcine partner. Benedict had promised the children's department to do so if they raised enough money to purchase five Heifer Project pigs. The children topped the goal, raising nearly \$1,000. The pig-kissing occurred after worship on April 28 as Union Bridge member Melvin Baile, right, helped Benedict do the honors. "You should have heard that pig squeal!" one witness said.

LANDMARKS & LAURELS

- **Lewiston (Maine) Church of the Brethren** will hold its 25th anniversary celebration Aug. 26-27. James Myer, Craig Smith, Paul Schildt, and Merv Keller will speak, and a picnic will follow morning worship.

- **Yellow Creek Church of the Brethren** in Goshen, Ind., will celebrate its 150th anniversary Sept. 9-10. The weekend includes an open house, light meal, and revival service on Saturday and a history session, revival service, and carry-in meal on Sunday. Both revival services will feature The Master's Quartet. Scrapbooks and cookbooks have also been created for the occasion.

- **South Waterloo (Iowa) Church of the Brethren** kicked off its 150th anniversary with a celebration in March. A homecoming event is planned for July 23, a joint worship and meal with nearby Hammond Avenue Brethren Church on Sept. 17, and finally, a concluding celebration service on Nov. 19 with Paul Roth and Shawn Flory-Replogle speaking.

- General Board Youth/Young Adult Ministry director **Chris Douglas** and former Manchester College faculty **Allen Deeter, William Eberly, and Arthur Gilbert** were among those receiving the Alumni Honor Award at this year's Alumni Days at Manchester (North Manchester, Ind.).

- **Jonah Neher**, age 9, who attends York Center Church of the Brethren in Lombard, Ill., took second place in the 50-meter dash and first place in the tennis ball throw in the Northeastern Illinois Special Olympics April 23, earning a trip to the state competition in June.

- Pastor Jack Cary of Pleasant Valley Church of the Brethren (Middlebury, Ind.) and Jorge Maldonado of Elkhart handed out more than **200 Spanish-language Bibles** during a week in the Caimito area of Puerto Rico, conducting revival meetings with local Brethren pastor Juan Figueroa.

- **Melvin Hill Church of the Brethren** (Columbus, N.C.) is celebrating its 100th anniversary on Aug. 13 with worship and a covered dish meal.

From the moderator: Where is our heartbeat?

What do you believe is the most frequently asked question of the Annual Conference moderator?

I'm sure the questions may vary from year to year, but in conversations with a number of past moderators the questions are similar if not exactly the same. The way we hear and respond to the questions and concerns will vary because of our faith journey and experiences; thus, what I share is from my perspective and what I have heard and observed.



RONALD D. BEACHLEY

The moderator is called to listen, discern, and then reflect the pulse of the denomination. The question becomes, "Where does one look for the pulse of the Church of the Brethren?" Where would you begin to look for the denomination's heartbeat? Would you begin by looking to individuals, special interest groups, or local leadership? Could the pulse

be found in our peace witness, service ministries, or individuals who will gather and join in the "Together: Conversations on Being the Church" process? Maybe the heartbeat of the church can be found in the small-membership congregations throughout the denomination?

When Christ is our main focus, other values and concerns become less important and will not become the center of our attention.

I could keep expanding the list of areas where one could look, but the question still remains: Where do I sense or see the heart or pulse of the denomination? I doubt the answer will be found in any one of the ideas or areas expressed in the previous paragraph. Each may represent a small part of the truth, but only a very small part of where our attention should be focused.

Maybe there is no heartbeat or pulse, and that is why membership continues to decline. This may be the result of all the divergent views and expressions found throughout the denomination. We all—and I include myself—believe that our ideas, concerns, or needs should become the centerpiece of our faith. When this happens, we miss that which we are called to be in our commitment to Christ. Our faith and trust must be centered in Jesus Christ, not in the ideas, concerns, and issues that surface from time to time. When Christ is our main focus, other values and concerns become less important and will not become the center of our attention.

Let me share a few observations that each have a positive and negative side. You may not agree with my reflections, but I am not looking for support or approval. I do hope my thoughts will give some food for thought as we ponder and reflect where we are as a denomination.

A key concern heard throughout my travels is the diminishing membership across the denomination. In numerous situations people in local congregations lament the fact that their worship and church school attendance continue to decline. There are some congregations in which this is not the case, but those are the exception. Comments about individual lack of commitment and unwillingness to assume leadership responsibility were heard in many places.

I would make two comments about diminishing membership. First, there is an inability on the part of most people to share their faith verbally. Second, as a denomination it appears that our focus has become other-oriented, rather than sharing God's love through Jesus Christ. "What can be done?" This question needs to be addressed quickly if the diminishing membership trend is to be reversed.

A key concern for many is the fragmentation seen in a variety of issue groups that have developed within the denomination. These are seen in a variety of forms, from styles of worship, to type of music, and lifestyle choices

that often create divisions in congregational life. In some settings, the divisive issues begin to take all our time and energy and detract

from our reaching out to others in the name of Christ our Lord. My hope is that the Conversations on Being the Church may help us find the heartbeat of our faith.

A number of people commented about the lack of financial support in congregations and districts. This area of commitment has not been a priority in our faith formation. The past year was an example of how individuals and congregations can give when they are challenged by special needs. A question I ponder: How can we encourage and challenge people to see the value and blessing of tithing? Maybe the query coming to Conference this year on a "Call to Stewardship Education" will provide an answer to this question.

My prayer is and will continue to be that the Holy Spirit will guide each of us as we search the scriptures and "Together Exercise Daily in God." 

Ronald D. Beachley is district minister for Western Pennsylvania District and is serving as Annual Conference moderator this year. He lives in Davidsville, Pa.

CULTUREVIEW

QUOTE WORTHY

“If you’re looking for God, look for the poorest, the most vulnerable people. That’s where God hangs out.”

—U2 lead singer Bono, writing in *Bread for the World* newsletter

“If you go to the Scriptures, justice is all over the place... I want justice for all people—that’s biblical.”

—author/speaker Tony Campolo, in an address at the 2006 Associated Church Press conference

“Dan Brown has given the church a gift. More people in the world will be talking about Jesus on May 19 than ever before.”

—The Rev. John Tanner, pastor of Cove United Methodist Church near Huntsville, Ala. Tanner was commenting on Dan Brown, best-selling author of *The Da Vinci Code*, which premiered as a movie May 19. (RNS)

“Under the present circumstances, our ability to pursue the ministries of peace, good news, and good will to which we are committed is being compromised by our nationality.”

—from a letter by Eastern Mennonite Missions to the US government over visa refusals for guests coming to the US

“Today, as I look at the situation, the ocean is still there, but I don’t see myself swimming alone. There are people that are swimming alongside.”

—Gopar Tapkida, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) peace worker in Jos, Nigeria, on the growing peacemaking ministry in the city. Tapkida successfully worked with others to defuse Muslim-Christian tensions in the city in February, avoiding violence. He was quoted by Tim Shenk of MCC Communications.

“I believe with all my heart that workcamps help young people begin to make a connection with the larger church.”

—Youth/Young Adult Ministry director Chris Douglas, reflecting at General Board meetings on the power of workcamps

“I have always been wary of those who claim to be sure of the truth about the biggest questions. If God has a plan, it will be carried out. That is heaven’s jurisdiction, not ours.”

—former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright (RNS)

• The National Council of Churches’ 2006 *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* records **continuing growth of Pentecostal, historic African-American and other non-mainline churches** in the US. Among the largest 25 churches in the US, the fastest growing are the Assemblies of God (increasing 1.81 percent to 2,779,095), the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (increasing 1.74 percent to 5,999,177) and the Roman Catholic Church (increasing .83 percent to 67,820,833). Only three mainline Protestant churches are among the 10 largest churches.

• The Presbyterian Church (USA) announced **major staff cutbacks** on May 1, cutting 75 positions at its Louisville, Ky., headquarters, and another 55 positions among overseas mission workers in a “radical restructuring.” Some of the cuts were made by not filling open positions. Most cuts took effect immediately, but some will not be implemented until October. The agency needed to reduce its budget by more than \$9 million.

• Americans living in Alabama, Louisiana, and South Carolina are **most likely to attend church** on a regular basis, a new analysis by the Gallup Organization shows. Fifty-eight percent of peo-

ple polled in each of those Southern states said they attended church weekly or almost weekly. New Hampshire (24 percent), Vermont (24 percent), and Rhode Island (28 percent) were among the states where people reported the lowest levels of regular attendance. (RNS)

• **Church World Service** on May 10 announced the appointment of Reginald K. Ingram, CFRE, as Chief Development Officer and William E. Wildey as Resource Development Director, two key fundraising positions for the humanitarian agency.

• A recent Pew Internet and American Life Project survey found that almost half of US Internet users went online to find **help with major life decisions** such as finding a college for their child or looking for a new place to live.

• Mennonite Central Committee US will sponsor a **conference on counter-recruitment** at San Antonio (Texas) Mennonite Church Nov. 3-5. The conference will bring together youth and adults from communities heavily targeted by military recruitment. It grew out of an Anabaptist consultation on the topic held in March 2005 in Elgin, Ill.



JUST FOR FUN: SCRAMBLE

Annual Conference visits Iowa this month, as Brethren gather July 1-5 in the Hawkeye State (with various other events before and after those dates). Try unscrambling the names of these 10 Iowa cities. Answers are printed below.

1. ACRD SPIDAR
2. QUUUBED
3. UNCLOIC FLUBSF
4. EDS INSOME
5. ROOTWALE
6. SEAM
7. ROADVENTP
8. KUKUKEO
9. MATWUTO
10. ISOXU TYCI

ANSWERS: 1. Cedar Rapids; 2. Dubuque; 3. Council Bluffs; 4. Des Moines; 5. Waterloo; 6. Ames; 7. Davenport; 8. Keokuk; 9. Ottumwa; 10. Sioux City.

Customer Service 101 for churches



Too many congregations are user-unfriendly

by Tom Ehrich

Listen up, church leaders. This parable is for you.

Dell Computer Corp. is losing a repeat customer, because their process and data requirements overwhelmed my need to buy their product.

Last week I wanted to order a \$39 USB memory key. Dell's website required me to locate a username and password (serving their purposes, not mine). Dell's toll-free number led me into a labyrinth of voice commands. A second toll-free number landed me with a live person who insisted on creating a "profile" for me. No, I said, I simply want to make a \$39 purchase.

I persevered long enough to complete my purchase. But I will think twice before making another one. No business can afford to make purchasing its products this difficult.

This is the way many churches seem to all but a few insiders. User-unfriendly, concerned with processes and power struggles serving institutional needs, but not attuned to the actual needs of people. Quite unintentionally, I'm sure, we make it difficult to deal with us.

At the macro level, consider the conflicts that dominate church life. My own Episcopal Church, for example, is preparing for yet another pitched battle over homosexuality. So are the Presbyterians. Meanwhile, Roman Catholics and Southern Baptists are fulminating over *The Da Vinci Code*, as if a novel and movie threatened the Christian enterprise.

Combatants believe their causes just and necessary. But I wish zealots would consider the

"user-friendly." They don't intend that, but what else happens when an individual or family shows up at church, isn't welcomed, cannot find Sunday school, doesn't understand the local protocols, cannot follow the service, and seems little noticed by people making a beeline for coffee and cliques?

What else should we expect when the faith-hungry receive newsletters that focus on money, visit websites that show buildings and not people, and place telephone calls to automated answering systems?

We are making it too difficult to belong and to participate. We don't see our own enterprise through "customer eyes."

As computer makers discover or die, brand loyalty doesn't just happen. Computers are a commodity, and so are churches. The differences between Presbyterian and Lutheran, or between liberal Presbyterian and conservative Presbyterian, might mean everything to insiders. But to those outside the circle, the distinctions mean nothing. People don't hesitate to shop around.

People want hope, not a doctrine on hope. They want to feel loved, not tested for orthodoxy. They want to know God, not be required to navigate barriers. They want to ask basic questions of faith, not be embroiled in never-ending control battles over church property and power.

As an entrepreneur myself, I know Dell pursues data-gathering, profiling, and account systems for good business reasons. They just don't happen to be my reasons as a customer. And I

am the one buying the product.

As a pastor, I know why churches behave the way they do. But the same logic

applies. A few care deeply about who wins the latest battle, but most aren't interested, especially when the fight gets in their way. Few people will attend a church that is trapped in stale dispute or seems uninterested in their presence. ■

Tom Ehrich is a writer, consultant, and leader of workshops. An Episcopal priest, he lives in Durham, N.C. His book, *Just Wondering, Jesus: 100 Questions People Want to Ask*, was published by Morehouse Publishing. His column was distributed through Religion News Service.

People want hope, not a doctrine on hope. They want to feel loved, not tested for orthodoxy. They want to know God, not be required to navigate barriers.

impact of their fighting. Nondenominational churches are thriving on people driven away by relentless bickering within denominations. So are restaurants serving Sunday brunch.

It's like the "profile" that Dell agents are required to seek. It makes business sense to them, but to me it is an unnecessary annoyance. Fighting about gay clergy or about judicatory spending might matter to a few insiders, but to most, such fighting is an unnecessary annoyance.

At the micro level, too few congregations are

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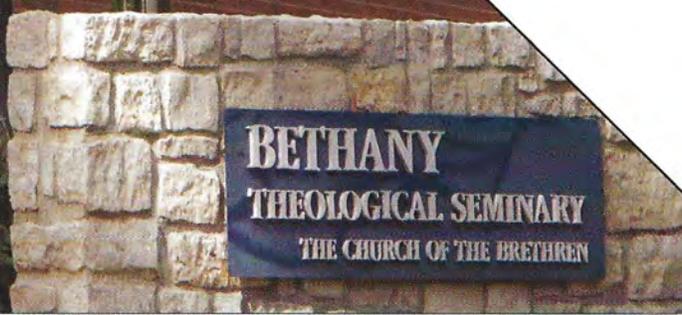
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Have you met
**Chris
Raschka?**

Artist/author with Brethren roots is making his mark in the world

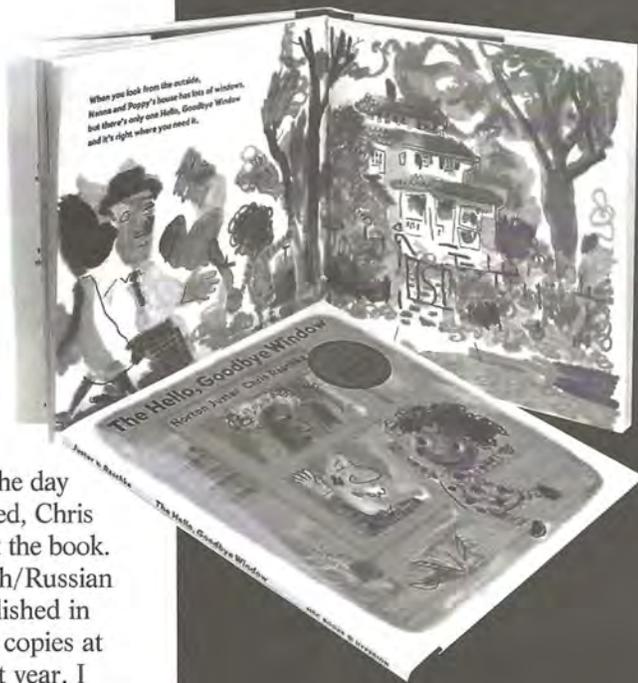
by Marilyn Kieffaber

Chris Raschka is a well known artist in the world of children's books. Mention his name to a group of children's librarians, and chances are good they will offer a variety of opinions about his picture books. Many teachers and book-loving parents and grandparents are also familiar with his highly individual style.

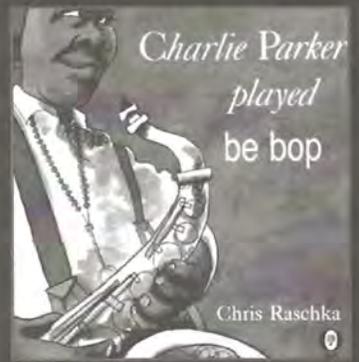
Until recently, however, most Brethren had no idea who he was. Over the past 14 years, as his work as an illustrator earned critical praise and numerous awards, he has remained virtually incognito within Brethren circles. Even those who know his books and

his name may not have realized that Chris Raschka is the son of two well known Brethren, Hedda Durnbaugh and the late Donald F. Durnbaugh.

Now the secret is out. In January, Chris was named winner of the 2006 Caldecott Medal. A committee of the National Library Association awards this honor yearly to the illustrator of "the most distinguished American picture book for children" from the previous year. His artwork for *The Hello-Goodbye Window*, written by Norton Juster and published by Hyperion, earned Chris this prestigious award.



Chris Raschka won the prestigious 2006 Caldecott Medal for his illustration work on *The Hello-Goodbye Window*, pictured at left.



Chris Raschka's distinctive illustrating style—and sometimes his text, as well—can be seen in a wide variety of books.

Winning the Caldecott is like winning an Oscar. It conveys a kind of celebrity status. The day after the 2006 Caldecott award was announced, Chris appeared on NBC's *Today* show to talk about the book.

I still have my copy of his bilingual English/Russian *R and Я: A Story about Two Alphabets*, published in 1990 by Brethren Press. Chris autographed copies at Annual Conference in Milwaukee, Wis., that year. I called him this spring at his studio in New York to ask him about his life and work, especially about how he managed the transition from Annual Conference to nationwide television.

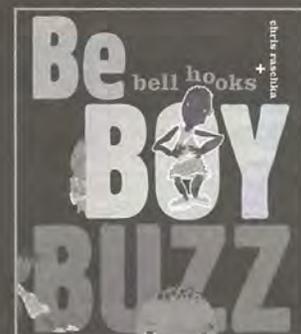
My first question was the one inquiring Brethren want to know: Why did you change your name? He laughed and explained, "I was like a lot of other Brethren young people in the '70s. When we decided to get married, Lydie and I wanted to have the same name, but we didn't like the idea of automatically taking my father's name." They thought briefly of putting all four of their parents' names—their mothers' maiden names as well as their fathers' surnames—into a hat and drawing one. Finally they just decided to choose the one they liked best.

"My father was totally supportive," Chris says. "My mother was the one who was most surprised."

Don met Hedda Raschka, a native of Vienna, at a refugee camp in Austria after the Second World War, and they married soon after. Chris was born in Pennsylvania in 1959, while Don was teaching at Juniata College. Chris' brother, Paul, is six years older, and sister Renata is six years younger. The Durnbaughs moved to Lombard, Ill., in 1962, when Don joined the faculty of Bethany Theological Seminary.

Although he and Lydie are members of Trinity Lutheran Church in New York, Chris says he still feels very close to his Brethren roots. He grew up on the edge of the Bethany campus, and he remembers the Bethany community as an environment rich in opportunities for artistic expression.

When he was in high school, Chris and his father took a weekly art class at York Center Church of the Brethren in Lombard. The class was taught by Paul Grout, then a student at Bethany. "Paul was a wonderful teacher, very encouraging," Chris remembers.



The Bethany community was rich in opportunities for artistic expression... Chris and his father took a weekly art class at York Center Church of the Brethren in Lombard. The class was taught by Paul Grout, then a student at Bethany.



The York Center youth group also provided a variety of art activities.

"My father was a very artistic person, although he would have denied it," Chris says. He remembers fondly Don's habit of bringing home "found objects" from his walks, and fashioning them into interesting and sometimes beautiful constructions.

Lydie Raschka's heritage is Norwegian, and their 10-year-old son, Ingo, also has a Norwegian name. The Raschkas lived in New York for a summer to "try out" life in the big city, and moved to Manhattan permanently in 1989.

As a newcomer to New York, Chris joined several illustrators' groups. He began visiting editors, and several were cordial and encouraging. He sent a draft of a book to Richard Jackson, an editor in California who published books Chris admired. Since then, the two have worked together on numerous projects.

Orchard Press published Chris' first major picture book in 1992. The offbeat text Chris created for *Charlie Parker Played BeBop* echoes the sounds of the famed jazz saxophonist's music. Reviewers praised his quirky, impressionistic illustrations, as well as the unusual text, which in the words of one reviewer "begs to be read aloud."

The following year, Orchard Press published his second book, *Yo! Yes?* It was named a 1994 Caldecott Honor Book. That recognition led to more books with a variety of publishers.

Chris explained that the idea for *Yo! Yes?* came from a childhood memory of wordplay with his father. With a text of only 34 words, the book explores the many meanings and expressions that can be part of a simple one- and two-word conversation. The striking illustrations show two boys, one white and one black, meeting and becoming friends. The boldly hand-lettered text forms part of the illustrations. Chris dedicated the book to his parents.

Since then, Chris has illustrated more than 40 books. His innovative artistic style has won him praise from readers and critics. Norton Juster, best known for his book *The Phantom Tollbooth*, chose Chris to illustrate *The Hello-Goodbye Window*. "He's so different and so venture-some," Juster says. "He's absolutely fearless. The book has such a life because of his illustrations."

The fearlessness is obvious in the wide variety of books Chris has illustrated, and in the unconventional artwork one critic called "visual haiku." His books range from the whimsical to the serious. He writes many of his own texts, and he has illustrated the words of such well known authors as Margaret Wise Brown, Dylan Thomas, and Nikki Giovanni.

Brethren will enjoy his beautifully illustrated *Simple Gifts: A Shaker Hymn* (Henry Holt and Company, 1998). Also of special interest is *I Pledge Allegiance*, by Bill Martin Jr. and Michael Sampson (Candlewick Press, 2002), explaining the meaning of the words every American schoolchild memorizes.

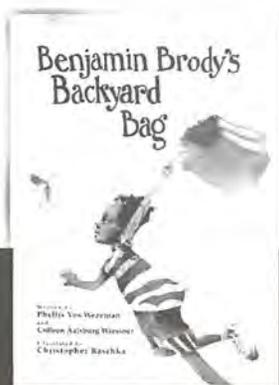
On the book flap, Chris Raschka says, "My parents have always respectfully refused to recite the Pledge of Allegiance—for religious reasons and reasons of personal experience. That's why I was drawn to this project. In America, we each have the freedom to choose, including the freedom to choose whether or not to say the pledge." The artwork is dedicated to his parents.

A trio of books by black poet Bell Hooks, published by Jump at the Sun, are notable examples of Chris' artwork: *Happy to Be Nappy* (1999), a celebration of a little girl's black hair; *Be Boy Buzz* (2002), a riff on boyhood; and *Skin Again* (2004), which begins: "The skin I'm in / is just a covering. / If you want to know who I am / you have got to come inside / and open your heart way wide."

Chris wrote the text for *Five for a Little One*, his latest book. Published this summer by Atheneum, its theme is the five senses. It is aimed at the youngest set.

Watch for many more books from this gifted artist—still part of our extended Brethren family. Chris, you may change your name, move to New York, and become a famous artist, but we're glad to finally know who you really are!

Marilyn Kieffaber is a member of Denton (Md.) Church of the Brethren, where her husband, Alan, is pastor. She holds a master of education degree in international literature for children and young adults from Wright State University and supervises student teachers for Salisbury University.



BRETHREN TITLES

Two Brethren Press books still in print were also illustrated by Chris Raschka: *Benjamin Brody's Backyard Bag*, a children's picture book on homelessness, and *This I Remember*, a memoir by Juniata College professor emeritus George Dolnikowski about his experiences leaving Russia during World War II and resettling in the US through the Church of the Brethren.

Both of these titles and other books by Chris Raschka will be available in a special display at the Annual Conference bookstore.

Chris also illustrated two children's books written and published by Brethren publisher Jim Lehman: *The Saga of Shakespeare Pintlewood and The Owl and the Tuba*.

Stem cells: Present help, future hope

Brethren heritage, beliefs should lead to support of more research

by Graydon F. Snyder

Sarah, the wife of my good friend David, had high-level cancer of her lymphatic system—non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Three years of chemotherapy failed to cure her.

Last year, as a final resort, she was given stem cell replacement. Her stem cells were removed as her sister donated the replacements. Rather quickly, the new stem cells entered Sarah's bone marrow. At this moment she's living a fairly satisfactory life, sharing with David and caring for their grandchildren when needed.

Just before Christmas a Chicago alderman, Richard Mell, appeared before the public with tears in his eyes. His wife, Marge, suffered from serious brain degeneration, a progressive supranuclear palsy. Mell thought her life might be saved by a stem cell transplant. So he contacted the famous Korean scientist Woo Suk Hwang, who claimed at that time to have cloned a human. The scientist said he might indeed create the stem cells needed for Mell's wife.

But, sadly, it turned out to be a dead end. The Korean scientist could not produce the proper cells. Mell openly expressed his grief and asked that more resources be placed at the disposal of those doing stem cell research. We are not there yet.

The transfer of stem cells from one person to another, as with Sarah, may be effective, but often happens only as a last resort. The second procedure, the creation of specific replacement stem cells, as for Marge Mell, has not yet been very successful. Stated simply, an egg can be fertilized, placed in a petri dish, and in a few days the embryo multiplies into a spherical blastocyst. The blastocyst cells may be programmed to replace diseased or weakened cells in the human body. Helping people with Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, or diabetes seems especially likely.

In another replacement approach, the genetic material of a particular organ—like a liver or kidney—is placed in the egg rather than using a sperm. These specified cells eventually replace the body's diseased organ cells with identical healthy stem cells (called cloning).

Brethren are too small a denomination to cover the waterfront of faith issues. We are best known, of course, for our opposition to war and our insistence on reconciliation. Simplicity of life would be nearly as obvious. It can be seen by most that we build simple churches, avoid expensive clothing, and reject extravagance. That very simplicity allows us to contribute quickly and heavily to others in need, especially in case of disasters like the tsunamis or floods.

Care for the sick and the elderly also mark the Brethren. Our homes for the elderly are among the finest. And from the 17th century until today our many medical personnel have recognized the physical and social nature of good health.

In the first part of this century Brethren have an important role to play. We will want to continue seeking the good health of others, especially the elderly. So one would expect us to encourage the use of stem cells in medical practice and to back federal and state support of stem cell research.

Finally, however, all of this comes down to a faith issue. It has to do with the formation of life. For many, life begins when, scientifically speaking, an egg is fertilized. Consequently, for

Yes, given our faith stance, Brethren need to join hands with the 60 percent and openly support the kind of stem cell research that might create lifesaving opportunities.

them the use of a fertilized egg amounts to killing. But for many Brethren and other like-minded groups, life begins when a covenant is formed. Life cannot be defined in any other way than the bonding between parent and child. Or to be more specific, life begins

when the mother acknowledges a child in her womb. For many people a blastocyst or even an embryo is thus not a life. It is a life only when it is lodged in the mother's womb.

Brethren have seldom joined hands with a majority. This is one exception. Sixty percent of Americans believe the federal government should, with appropriate guidelines, support stem cell research. Many of the 60 percent say so because they share the covenant/faith view of life rather than the scientific; many, including such famous people as Nancy Reagan or Dana Reeve or Alderman Mell, because they have or have had seriously disabled family members who might be helped by stem cell replacement; many others, especially scientists, because they fear Americans may not benefit from the research now proceeding in other countries.

Yes, given our faith stance, Brethren need to join hands with the 60 percent and openly support the kind of stem cell research that might create lifesaving opportunities. **ZU**

Graydon F. Snyder is a former professor at Bethany Theological Seminary. Today he lives in Chicago and is a member of Chicago First Church of the Brethren. This article is based on a lecture given at Eastern Mennonite University in 2003. The lecture can be found in the book *Viewing New Creations with Anabaptist Eyes: Ethics of Biotechnology*.

Stem cell research:

Let's keep it ethical

by Linda Dooly

Advances can be made without destroying embryos

Followers of Christ must take the stand that *all* human life is created by God and is therefore sacred. The Bible makes no such differentiations as embryo or fetus. Simply stated, it calls all young humans "babies," whether they are born or not yet born. People have invented the term "embryo" and "fetus" to dehumanize unborn babies to the point of allowing people to think of them as not human.

Today, cloaked in a battle of terminology and creating labels devoid of humanity, there are those who wish us to forget that we once snuggled in a womb. At conception, genetic instructions from both parents interacted to begin a new and unique individual. Around the fifth day after my conception, I burrowed into my mother's womb. I knew I was safe there; it is a knowing of safety available to all human beings even before they can

explain it in words. Forty-five generations of cells divide before I reach adulthood. Forty-one of those divisions have already taken place before I was born.

No matter what some people want to claim I was before I was born—a blob, a mass of cells, the product of conception, an embryo, or a fetus—I was, without a doubt, a flourishing child of my parents, thriving and growing.

So whether I am conceived in my mother's body or in a Petri dish in a lab, I am a human being as soon as conception takes place. Why then do scientists want to kill me to harvest my stem cells?

With increasing frequency, Americans and others from around the world are experiencing newfound freedom from disease, affliction, and infirmity. Individuals' lives are forever changed with the strengthened faith and renewed hope arising from healed bodies and physical

RELATED RESOURCES AND EVENTS

• The **Church of the Brethren General Board and the Association of Brethren Caregivers** are partnering on a study of stem cell research, as affirmed by their respective boards in the past year. Agency staff have been working with a small committee of Church of the Brethren members who have expertise in the field. The study is expected to be presented to the 2007 Annual Conference as a report with study guide for denomination-wide discussion, helping Brethren think about the complex issue in "theological and ethical ways." **Annual Conference statements** related to issues of bioethics and medical technology were most recently made in 1987 (www.brethren.org/ac/ac_statements/87GeneticEngineering.html), and updated in 1997. A statement on fetal tissue use was also proposed in 1997 (www.brethren.org/ac/ac_statements/97GeneticEngineering.htm) but was rejected by delegates.

• A major conference on the theme **"Ethics of Biotechnology: Viewing New Creations through Anabaptist**

Eyes" was held in fall 2003 at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. It covered a wide range of topics, including stem cell research. A number of Brethren were among the more than 700 people participating. A report on the conference can be found at www.bioethics.emu.edu/news. A book containing the proceedings of the conference has also been published. Titled *Viewing New Creations with Anabaptist Eyes: Ethics of Biotechnology*, the 310-page paperback retails for \$23.95. It is available through Brethren Press; call 800-441-3712.

• Committees of the Canadian Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches USA met in Niagara, Ontario, earlier this year to lay plans for an **international biotechnology conference in fall 2007**. The conference is expected to "bring together church delegates with expertise in the area of biotechnology from the various . . . regions of the world." Another planning meeting, including biotechnology professionals from the Latin America Council of Churches and

the Middle East Council of Churches, was scheduled to be held in May.

• Last November, the **US National Council of Churches General Assembly** received a policy on biotechnologies from the policy development committee, titled "Fearfully and Wonderfully Made." The policy, intended to guide practitioners and pastors through the maze of moral decision-making in the rapidly developing field of biotechnology, was approved as a first reading and is being studied by the NCC's member communions for a year.

• **Embedding Christian Values in Science and Technology** will take place at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., July 28-31 at the 61st annual meeting of the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA). Program chair Hessel Bouma III says the conference will cover "everything from the ethics of human stem cells to evolution and how life began to the proper role of biotechnology in growing our food." US Congressman Vern Ehlers will be among the speakers. Details are at www.asa3.org.

restoration. These seemingly miraculous cures are the result of adult stem cell treatments. Yet debates in the media tend to ignore and obscure the medical breakthroughs made by *adult* stem cell research—success that has conspicuously eluded embryonic stem cell treatments.

We must realize that truth: that the power of adult stem cells is not nebulous, but tangible and real. They have produced wonderful results in many places. They have

been documented in clinical trials. Physicians have successfully treated autoimmune diseases such as lupus, multiple sclerosis, and rheumatoid arthritis with adult stem cells.

Adult stem cells have also helped avert corneal degenerative vision in cases of blindness. They have restored proper cardiac function in heart attack sufferers and movement in spinal cord injury patients. Advocates of embryonic stem cell research can only dream about these types of results.

Again, it is imperative to note that all of these success-

es have come exclusively from adult stem cell research. Embryonic stem cell research requires the killing of a new human life to acquire the cells. The killing of new humans to harvest their stem cells for scientific research crosses an ethical line. But, as science proves, actual

The killing of new humans to harvest their stem cells for scientific research crosses an ethical line. But, as science proves, actual cures are to be found with ethically obtained stem cells.

cures are to be found with ethically obtained stem cells.

The many people who have been cured using adult or umbilical cord stem cells are walking evidence that there is no justification for destroying newly formed human beings. Stem cells obtained from umbilical cords or other ethical sources should be regarded as the hope for the future, not science that kills human life for the sake of researchers' curiosity. **■**

Linda Dooly is a Church of the Brethren member living in Mulberry Grove, Ill.



Not by sight

Virgina's Mount Hermon congregation has grown as it walks by faith

by Karen Doss Bowman

Faith often is tested during times of uncertainty. Four years ago, the Mount Hermon congregation of Bassett, Va., was engaged in a search for a full-time pastor while the local economy was extremely depressed as area furniture manufacturers and textile mills closed factories and relocated operations elsewhere.

Few churches in a similar situation would take financial risks, much less take on a nearly \$400,000 building project. While the congregation had some of the money already saved, nearly half of the amount had to be borrowed for the project to enlarge the fellowship hall, add Sunday school rooms, and renovate older sections of the structure. At the same time, the congregation purchased more property for additional parking.

"A lot of churches, when they're without a pastor they just kind of go on hold and try to go to saving money where they build up a bank account," says Marvin Wade, Mount Hermon's current pastor. "[But] Mount Hermon realized that even though they were without a pastor, the work of the kingdom continues on. So they walked by faith, and that was encouraging to me."

That's not to say that some members didn't question the wisdom of taking on a major building project during such uncertain times. But even without a pastor, the church was growing—becoming something much larger than the little country church it used to be—and board chair Donnie Wood says most people recognized the need to expand facilities.

"As you grow, you deal with what's in front of you," Wood says. "A lot of prayers and work went into it. It's neat for a church that's no bigger than we are to commit to something on faith."

Perhaps the church's long and rich history gave members the confidence to take such a leap of faith. Established nearly 115 years ago in 1892 with eight charter members, Mount Hermon has been a rock not only for its community but for the entire denomination, having nurtured and sent out dozens of pastors and leaders. Former members who have served at the national level include Brethren Benefit Trust president Wil Nolen; former Brethren Volunteer Service executive Anne Haynes Price; and former Annual Conference moderators Phillip Stone (now president of Bridgewater College) and Guy Wampler Jr.

When Mount Hermon paid off its debt earlier this year—with help from two major gifts—the congregation still had nearly \$140,000 left even after tithing the gift. At the note-burning

GROWING SEASON

Virgina District has seen several other congregations grow rapidly in recent years. Some of those fast-growers include the following:

Smith Mountain Lake Community, Wirtz, Va.

2000 membership: **34**
2005 membership: **66**
Growth in membership: **98%**
Growth in attendance: **105%**
(This was a new church plant begun in 1995.)

Living Faith, Concord, N.C.

2000 membership: **35**
2005 membership: **54**
Growth in membership: **54%**
Growth in attendance: **60%**
(This was a new church plant begun in 1996.)

Mason's Cove, Salem, Va.

2000 membership: **94**
2005 membership: **160**
Growth in membership: **70%**
Growth in attendance: **24%**

Collinsville, Va.

2000 membership: **145**
2005 membership: **193**
Growth in membership: **33%**
Growth in attendance: **36%**

Pleasant Valley, Floyd, Va.

2000 membership: **117**
2005 membership: **170**
Growth in membership: **45%**
Growth in attendance: **18%**

Henry Fork, Rocky Mount, Va.

2000 membership: **223**
2005 membership: **259**
Growth in membership: **16%**
Growth in attendance: **38%**

service on March 5, Virginia District executive David Shumate said Mount Hermon's building represented the warmth and welcoming nature of the congregation. "I think Mount Hermon has a tremendous outreach ability," Shumate says.

In addition to supporting needy people throughout the local community, the congregation has a special interest in missions in Haiti and supports various missions projects at the district and national level. Congregational members also have been active volunteers for Camp Bethel, Disaster Child Care, and workcamp projects.

"We don't just look at what's happening here, but the church reaches out and ministers beyond its doors," Wade says. "That's a church that God's going to bless."

When Wade started service as pastor in August 2002, the average worship attendance was around 135, he says. Today, more than 200 people regularly attend the worship service, and a Sunday evening service and Wednesday night Bible studies also are well attended. During Wade's tenure, there have been 42 baptisms. He attributes the church's growth to "trying to preach and teach the Word and to live it out."

The greatest strength of the congregation, he says, is "leadership in abundance." The music program, for example, is volunteer-driven, with multiple piano players and choir leaders who are able to fill in for each other. A small group of youth who play different instruments have formed an orchestra, and praise singers lead the congregation in singing contemporary praise music prior to the regular Sunday morning worship service. "It's the most musically gifted congregation I've been around," Wade says.

The congregation also is full of "workers" he says, who are willing to put time and energy into the church's ministries. The annual Vacation Bible School, for example, is an important min-

istry, drawing an average of 200 children—both regular attendees and those living nearby—for the week-long event each summer. Nearly 80 church members are needed to staff the event. Last year's safari theme was celebrated in the weeks leading up to the event, with the entire sanctuary decorated like a jungle.

A newer ministry venture for the congregation is the Southside Extreme Youth Rally, a two-night event open to all teens living in the Martinsville/Henry County area. Spearheaded by Wade and several youth leaders in the congregation, the rally involves numerous area churches from different denominations. The event, funded by nearly \$20,000 given through love offerings and donations, features Tennessee-based evangelist Jason Kerr as the keynote speaker and several Christian rock bands. The second annual rally, held in April, drew more than 1,000 youth each night.

While growth is good, it does present challenges. The congregation is outgrowing its sanctuary and parking lot, and the church's setting on a hill with a cemetery in the background limits expansion possibilities. As the congregation's only paid pastor, Wade says ministering to everybody becomes difficult. Still, he can't contain his excitement, and the enthusiasm of members is obvious to Sunday morning visitors.

"When exciting things are happening in your church and around your church, the fever kind of catches," Wade says. "And I think that's a lot of the growth [here]. People are catching the vision that it's a God thing, it's a bigger thing, and this is what happens here. It's just the natural ripple-down effect." ❏

Karen Doss Bowman is a freelance writer based in Bridgewater, Va. A former member of the Mount Hermon congregation, she now attends Sunrise Church of the Brethren in Harrisonburg.

Church plants drive southern growth

by Martha Beach

Atlantic Southeast District, one of the smallest districts in the denomination with only 25 churches, grew in average worship attendance in 2005 by an amazing 21 percent. While there was significant growth in some congregations, the growth was not limited to just a few. Eighteen of the 25 congregations had overall increases in attendance, with 10 congregations having double-digit percentage gains.

Two new church starts, Arecibo in Puerto Rico and Naples (Fla.) Haitian, went from zero in 2004 to 50 and 42, respectively. The Orlando Haitian congregation grew in attendance from 20 to 95. New Covenant Church in Gotha, Fla., had

a 78 percent increase, going from 14 to 25. The largest numerical gain was in the Miami Haitian Church, where attendance soared from 298 to 450.

While the overall membership of the district in 2005 grew a modest but respectable 7 percent, the combined average weekly worship attendance of 2,030 in the 25 churches nearly equaled the district's official combined membership of 2,091 (up 138 from 2004).

What is the reason for this growth? It is the result of church planting over the past several years. The five newest congregations in the district had the greatest percentage growth and accounted for

330 of the total worship attendance increase of 364. A worship attendance and membership analysis by the district's director of witness, Terry Hatfield, revealed some earlier reporting errors but also, more importantly, that two ethnic churches had not reported children in attendance in the prior year because that was the church statistical practice in their culture.

Atlantic Southeast District includes the state of Florida and Puerto Rico, with district offices in Sebring, Fla.

Martha Beach is district executive minister of Atlantic Southeast District.

Psalm:

Jerusalem's 'new blue' hymnal

by Stephen Breck Reid

Collection is carefully structured to reflect worship process, tradition

I am old enough to remember when our "new blue" hymnal was brand new. I've also heard the stories about the debates and needs that gave rise to the current hymnal.

In the span of a decade, many denominations, including our own, fashioned new hymnals. Across these many denominations, the stories from the projects have tremendous overlap and common themes. In fact, these stories provide a helpful view of the rise of the ancient hymnbook of the temple, which we call the Psalms. While many readers focus on the individual psalms, we can increase our understanding, learning, and faith, by looking more broadly at the Psalms as a whole, reflecting on how this ancient hymnal reflected the faith of God's people and still speaks across the ages.

A collection of collections

First, the Psalms—sometimes called the Psalter and the hymnal—is a collection of collections. It might be helpful to think about the ways that one could collect the hymns by Isaac Watts, Fanny Crosby, or Charles Wesley. Perhaps someone could publish a collection of hymns on a theme: for example, hymns from around the world, Spanish hymns, or even hymns from African-American communities.

The biblical Psalter consists of a collection of five collections or books (Book One, Psa. 1-41, Book Two 42-72, Book

Three 73-89, Book Four 90-107, Book Five 108-150). There are a variety of ways for readers to recognize the collections themselves.

Within the books of the Psalter, similar superscriptions or headings introduce individual psalms. The superscription or heading is not included in the English verse structure (It is in the Hebrew structure.) For instance, we find the superscription "a Psalm of David." Another group of superscriptions are labeled as the descendants of Korah (Psa. 42,44-49) and Asaph (Psa. 50, 73-83).

Another way to recognize a collection is to note the divine name used. An example would be the "Elohistic" psalter (Psa. 42-83), which uses the title "Elohim" (God) as a divine name instead of LORD (Yahweh). LORD (Yahweh) is more common in most Psalms as the divine name.

Another way of understanding the collection of Psalms is to group them by literary types. One can distill at least eight different types: hymns of praise (i.e. Psa. 8, 29, 33), royal Davidic psalms (Psa. 2, 18, 20,21, 45, 61, 89, 101, 110, 132, 144:1-11), prophetic psalms (50, 81, 82, 95:7b-11), prayers of supplication (i.e. Psa. 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 36), thanksgiving psalms (i.e. Psa. 18, 23, 34), prayers of confidence (i.e. Psa. 11, 16, 20, 23, 27, etc.), wisdom psalms (Psa. 1, 25, 32, 34, 36, 37, 111, 112, 119, 146) and acrostic psalms (Psa. 9-10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 146).



Location, location, location

Second, the order and structure of a good hymnal has a particular design in order to lift up particular theological commitments. So it makes sense that the location of a psalm within a collection is not an accident. The Psalms demonstrate a structure and theological affirmation shaped by the location of individual psalms and the overall structure of the Psalter.

Today, our "new blue" hymnal is titled *Hymnal: A Worship Book*. Even the title suggests something about the theological assumptions used to organize the hymnal itself. Instead of just listing hymns in alphabetical order or some random assignment of number, the current hymnal moves the singing congregation through a typical Sunday worship to more specialized worship experiences.

The Psalter likewise has a structure and movement. Psalm 1 invites the reader to be happy through the life of the Torah (God's teaching). Psalm 2 reminds the reader of the importance of God's designate, the king. For many Christians this will be understood as a reference to Jesus Christ.

This framing precedes a collection of laments that dominates the first three books in the Psalter. Book three concludes with the royal lament commemorating the loss of the Davidic monarchy and the trauma of the exile. Many of the psalms of David use the superscriptions to depict David as the model human being. The first three books



The world of the Psalms begins with the recognition of human brokenness. . . . The function of sacrifice was the restoration of the human from this brokenness.

(Psa. 1-89) of the Psalms describe a human being as one acquainted with sorrow.

The message of the first three books prepares the reader for the good news of books four and five (Psa. 90-150). After some affirmation of God's devotion to the faithful, Psalm 93 begins with the affirmation "The LORD is king" (Psa. 93:1). This celebration of the reign of God is augmented with the imperative of the faithful to "Sing unto the LORD a new song" (Psa. 96:1). The hymns in the Psalter occur disproportionately in books four and five.

Finally, the Psalter concludes with the full-throated songs of praise, often known as the *Hallel* (Praise!) psalms (Psa. 146-150). The Psalms are organized in such a way as to suggest a thematic flow from Torah and Christ, to face human brokenness, to a celebration of the sovereignty of God, and an ending celebration of the fact of God's rule.

In the beginning was worship

Third, an important aspect of any hymnal is that it provides the script for worship. The "new blue" hymnal invites the singing congregation to a particular understanding of worship. The Psalter, on the other hand, presupposes a worship process hidden from many of today's readers.

A New Testament scholar once said that to understand the New Testament one needed to remember that in the New Testament "in the beginning there was the sermon." Much traditional Protestant worship has focused on and been centered in the preaching event. But in the religion of ancient Israel it was not so. The worship of ancient Israel revolved around sacrifice and pilgrimage.

The world of the Psalms begins with the recognition of human brokenness. This brokenness is described as transgression, sin, and iniquity. The function of sacrifice

was the restoration of the human from this brokenness. The language of sacrifice occurs only nine times in the Psalter (Psa. 20:3; 40:6; 50:5; 51:16; 54:6; 107:22; 116:17; 118:27; 141:2). Many of these reflect a debate about the efficacy of sacrifice. In other words, the reader is reminded that sacrifice was not and is not a magical thing (Psa. 40, 50, 51) or even divine desire except in a particular context (Psa. 54, 107, 116, 118, 141).

Back to the future

Fourth, a hymnal frames and re-frames previous traditions. A great example of this reframing can be seen in the hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God": The words of Martin Luther were set to the tune of an old German drinking song. Likewise, a hymnal models a theology that takes what is close to hand and uses it to give witness to God.

When one looks at the gospel songs in the hymnal, from Thomas Dorsey's "Precious Lord" to Andre Crouch's "Soon and Very Soon," a reader can see how secular musical forms have been refashioned. Similarly, in the biblical hymnal the Psalter includes material that is used time and again.

For instance, Psalm 29—one of the earliest of the psalms—uses metaphors often associated with Baal, the thunder god. It seems likely that the psalmist reworked the song, taking out the name Baal and replacing it with the Yahweh language. Psalms 82 and 93 follow the same pattern. The psalms of the pilgrims fleeing the destruction of Samaria (722 BC) were re-used by the exiles taken

from Jerusalem (586 BC). In this way a hymnal opens up the future through the use of hymnic traditions of the past.

It takes a village

Fifth and finally, a hymnal takes a village, as they say. A hymnal shapes the theology of a believer, but it is not the work of a solitary theologian. On the contrary, it is an intensely communal process.

If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a committee to put together a hymnal. The story of each of the modern major hymnals reflects the committee process and its concomitant give and take. An example is the compromises and discussions about whether "606" ("Praise God from Whom") in the previous Mennonite hymnal could be renumbered to become "118" in the new hymnal. I wish I could have been a fly on the wall when the committee talked about what it would do with that hymn.

The more we look at the hymnbook of the second temple period, the more we are challenged to understand the hymnal of our faith. The Psalms themselves, an ancient hymnal, brings us a window to experience how our spiritual foreparents' theology was shaped by their own traditions of hope and lament. **■**

Stephen Breck Reid is academic dean and professor of Old Testament at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind.

MESSENGER'S "Journey through the Word" series will provide a brief overview of a different book (or books) of the Bible each month through December 2009. Coming in September: Proverbs, by Harold S. Martin.

PSALMS: A CLOSER LOOK

Who: A collection of authors from both Israel and Judah

When: Some psalms are earlier than Saul and the monarchy; others are as late as after the exile in 587 BC and possibly as late as the time of Alexander the Great, 333 BC.

Where: Some of the psalms were written in Israel and Judah, while others (at least Psalm 137) were clearly written in Babylon.

Memorable quotations: No book of the Bible has more memorable quotations than the Psalms, here are just a few:

"Out of the mouths of babes . . . for what is a person that God is mindful . . . a little less than the angels" 8:2-5. "My God, my God why have you forsaken me" 22:1. "The LORD is my shepherd" 23:1. "Taste and see that the LORD is good" 34:8. "Be still and know that I am God" 46:10. "Create in me a clean heart" 51:10. "Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path" 119:105.



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

Haitian Brethren from Miami and Orlando, Fla., led hymns in French Creole and English at the Cross-Cultural Consultation. The group included, from left, Fustal Jourdan, Founa Augustin, and Ilxene Alphonse, as well as a youth participant who was one of some 20 teenagers who took part in an intercultural youth event.

Cross-Cultural Consultation reflects on 'household of God'

Lancaster (Pa.) Church of the Brethren hosted the denomination's annual Cross-Cultural Consultation and Celebration May 4-7. The surrounding countryside, with its plain people and rich farmland, offered vivid reminders of a Pennsylvania Dutch heritage as more than 140 Brethren met to offer an intercultural model of church.

"Built Together: The Household of God," from Ephesians 2:17-22, provided the theme. "This is the way church should happen," said James Washington Sr., pastor of Faith Center Fellowship Church of the Brethren in Whitehouse, Texas. "I pray that we learn . . . that the world is beautiful because it has color."

Brethren from African-American, Hispanic, Dominican, Mexican, Indian, Haitian, Puerto Rican, Jamaican, Anglo, and other heritages attended from across the US and Puerto Rico. Worship featured scripture, prayer, and singing in many languages. Musicians from several congregations led praise music that got the congregation to its feet and contemplative hymns that called on the Spirit's presence. A new music group of African-American and Anglo Brethren made its debut at the event, led by Washington.

A message about taking personal responsibility for racism was given by Ken Quick, chair of the pastoral theology department at Capital Bible Seminary in Lanham, Md., and John Gordon, a medical professional and seminary student. Quick and Gordon focused on confession. Telling his family's history of slave ownership, Quick said, "I have to first of all apologize for the horrors that my family perpetrated. I owe debt."

Gordon followed with a confession of his own from the African-American perspective, telling how he awoke to his own racism when his daughter began to date a white man. Gordon's reading of a pledge to

live an anti-racist life was followed by an invitation for the congregation to receive communion.

Larry Brumfield, a licensed minister and member of Westminster (Md.) Church of the Brethren, gave the closing sermon. He called the church to "acknowledge that some of our behaviors and some of our biases do not reflect the behavior that God would have . . . in the body of Christ." He issued a challenge, too, for pastors to speak against racism from the pulpit. "Do you know how successful we would be if we attacked this problem as a unified church of God?" he said.

The meeting also included an intercultural youth event—a first for the Brethren, organizers said. Some 20 youth from several congregations held an overnight gathering, then led morning worship and discussion of issues. A youth panel presented two topics for open discussion during worship: the pros and cons of tradition in the church, and alternative lifestyles, including homosexuality. The panel elicited numerous responses from the adults present, who expressed a wide variety of viewpoints. The youth closed the discussion with their own statements about unity.

The consultation received a presentation on the denomination's disaster work, a report from the Annual Conference Intercultural Study Committee (see www.brethren.org/ac/desmoines/business_old.pdf, pp. 215-234), and a report from a January event in Baltimore at which church leaders talked about how to deal with racism.

Discussion and testimony throughout the consultation reflected the ups and downs of cross-cultural ministries. Participants spent much time reflecting on the barriers to inclusion and the continued existence of racism in the church. "Anti-racism work needs to be a commitment of the Annual Conference agencies at the top level," said a participant who had been at the Baltimore meeting. "Without that commitment, there will not be funding, and there will not be follow-through."

Participants also expressed enthusiasm and love for the denomination. "Don't be discouraged, the barriers are coming down," said Rene Quintanilla, a pastor from Fresno, Calif. "The Spirit is leading."

The Cross-Cultural Ministries Steering Committee includes Barbara Date', Thomas Dowdy, Renel Exceus, Sonja Griffith, Robert Jackson, Alice Martin-Adkins, Marisel Olivencia, Gilbert Romero, and Dennis Webb, with Duane Grady as staff from the General Board's Congregational Life Teams. Area congregations hosted many participants in their homes,

and also provided meals. More photos of the event are available at www.brethren.org, keyword "Photo Journal."

The next Cross-Cultural Consultation and Celebration is planned for April 19-22, 2007, at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md.

Bethany Seminary holds its 101st commencement

Bethany Theological Seminary celebrated its 101st commencement May 6 in Richmond, Ind., with a ceremony for conferring degrees in Bethany's Nicarry Chapel and a worship celebration at Richmond Church of the Brethren.

Eight students received master of divinity degrees: Lisa Mary Baker of Union City, Ind., with distinction in Biblical Studies; Bradley Alan Faler of Archbold, Ohio, with distinction in Biblical Studies and Ministry Studies; Diana Lynn Lovett of Medway, Ohio; Jerry John Pokorney of Lucerne, Ind.; Laura Price-Snyder of Waterford, Calif., with an emphasis in Ministry with Youth and Young Adults; Keith Walter Simmons of Fort Wayne, Ind.; Linda Titzell of Mifflintown, Pa.; and Flora L. Williams of Lafayette, Ind.

Two students received master of arts in theology



Jim Chagares

degrees: Dustin Michael Gregg of Nickerson, Kan., with an emphasis in Peace Studies; and Wendi Adele Hutchinson of Lititz, Pa., with an emphasis in Ministry with Youth and Young Adults.

Norman Edward Baker of Union City, Ind., received a Certificate of Achievement in Theological Studies.

Graduates' future plans include pastoral and congregational ministry, chaplaincy, college administration, writing, and further graduate education.

The 2006 commencement services at Bethany Theological Seminary included anointing. Here student Laura Price-Snyder (left) is anointed by Tara Hornbacker (right), associate professor of Ministry Formation, and Jeff Bach (center), associate professor of Brethren and Historical Studies.

Theology students celebrate graduation in Puerto Rico

The Instituto Teologico de Puerto Rico Iglesia de los Hermanos (Theological Institute of Puerto Rico, Church of the Brethren) held its graduation service April 9 at Yahuecas, Cristo Nuestra Paz Fellowship Church of the Brethren.

Graduates include Ildefonso Baerga Torres, Carmen Cruz Rodríguez, Carmen L. Fernandini Ruiz, Miguelina Medina Nieves, Jose E. Medina Ojeda, María Otero Encarnación, Elizabeth Perez Marrero, and Gloria Sanchez Piyeiro.

The theme text for the service was Ephesians 4:3, "Making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The graduates selected Encarnacion as their representative to deliver the afternoon message. Worship was lively and filled with praise, prayer, and proclamation.

The class dedicated the service to Carol Yeazell, one of the Congregational Life Teams staff for the General Board, for distinguished work with the Puerto Rican churches. Yeazell was present at the serv-



Carol Yeazell

The Instituto Teológico de Puerto Rico Iglesia de los Hermanos held its graduation service April 9 at Yahuecas, Cristo Nuestra Paz Fellowship Church of the Brethren. Graduates, left to right, were: front row, Elizabeth Perez Marrero, Jose E. Medina Ojeda; back row, Miguelina Medina Nieves, Carmen Cruz Rodriguez, Gloria Sanchez Pineriro, Maria Otero Encarnación, Carmen L. Fernandini Ruiz, and Ildefonso Baerga Torres.

ice to receive a plaque, along with words of appreciation. Mary Jo Flory-Steury, executive director of Ministry for the General Board, was also present, on behalf of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership.

The Brethren Academy is a ministry

training partnership of the Church of the Brethren General Board and Bethany Theological Seminary. The Instituto Teologico de Puerto Rico has worked closely with the Brethren Academy since its inception. Elba E. Velez is director of the institute.

GUATEMALA



Ken Gresh



“We were in Union Victoria after Hurricane Stan to build two kinds of bridges,” said Tony Banout, coordinator of a March 11-18 workcamp in the Guatemalan village. The delegation was co-sponsored by the General Board’s Emergency Response and Global Mission Partnerships offices.

Other workcampers were Ray Tritt of Neighborhood Church of the Brethren, Montgomery, Ill.; Josiah Nell, Josh Yohe, and John Hilty of Pleasant Hill Church of the Brethren, Spring Grove, Pa; and Ken Gresh of Denton (Md.) Church of the Brethren. The trip was hosted by Rebecca Allen, Global Mission Partnerships staff and Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) worker in Union Victoria.

Banout had known Union Victoria before October 2005, when all crops were destroyed, more than 60 mudslides occurred, and the community’s only bridge was washed away during the hurricane. Previously a BVS worker and mission staff with Global Mission Partnerships, he explained some of the village’s history: “Virtually every person in the community was profoundly affect-

ed during the (civil) war, from firsthand experiences of torture to having loved ones killed or disappeared.”

The village is situated alongside a mountainous river, which “grew to dramatic proportions and entirely wiped out a bridge that provided vital access to the two sides of the community, coffee plantations, crops, and even the children’s school,” with the rains of the hurricane, Banout said.

Workcampers hauled wood boards out of the forest, where they had been cut, through mountainous terrain to the bridge site. The group worked with villagers to prepare the foundations of the bridge by collecting and hauling sand from the river banks and digging the holes for the buttresses. The workcampers also lived in villagers’ homes, eating with families and sharing their stories.

Tritt, who described himself as “a hands-on guy who has been in construction for 50 years,” commented on the difficulties of making a “solidarity” visit to the village, rather than a visit focused only on construction. “At first it was hard for me,” he admitted. “[But] the Mayans gained respect for us as individuals because we listened to them rather than told them what to do.”

Ken Gresh, a veteran of Habitat for Humanity, Red Cross, and denominational faith expeditions, said the workcamp “hit home because it was not just a hands-on, doing-what-was-needed effort. It was moving beyond words to hear the stories of people who experience multiple injustices.”



Ken Gresh

The workcamp to Guatemala helped a rural community rebuild a bridge destroyed by Hurricane Stan last fall. Participants were, back row from left: Brethren Volunteer Service worker Rebecca Allen, workcamp coordinator Tony Banout, Ray Tritt, Josiah Nell, Joan Kropf, Josh Yohe, and John Hilty; front row from left, Ken Gresh, Petrona, Elyana, and baby Jacqueline.

On Earth Peace starts nonviolence news blog

On Earth Peace has announced a new blog, "Nonviolence News," featuring "experiments in nonviolence from around the globe in the tradition of Jesus, Martin Luther King Jr., Gandhi, Dorothy Day, Aung San Suu Kyi, Badshah Khan, Dolores Huerta, A.J. Muste, Cesar Chavez, Ammon Hennacy, Barbara Deming, and a few others."

The blog is located on the web at <http://nonviolencenews.blogspot.com>. It includes current postings from On Earth Peace's Peace Witness Action List and links to devotions and resources for Christians exploring radical discipleship and Jesus' call to peacemaking.

"For those seeking examples and inspiration for creative and spiritually-rooted peacemaking, this is it," said Matt Guynn, coordinator of peace witness. For more about On Earth Peace, go to www.onearthpeace.org.

Personnel moves

• **Jim Yaussy Albright** has announced his resignation as Illinois/Wisconsin District executive minister effective between July 15 and Aug. 31. He had served as executive for the district for six years, moving from full-time to part-time during his tenure due to district financial constraints. He has also worked part-time with the district's New Church Development Board. Yaussy Albright said he plans to return to the pastorate.

• **Christina Bucher** has been named dean of the faculty at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College. She is the Carl W. Zeigler Professor of Religion and Philosophy at the college, where she chaired the Department of Religious Studies from 1995 to 2005 and has been a member of the faculty for nearly 20 years. She edited *Brethren Life and Thought*, has been active in the Society of Biblical Literature, and is former chair of the society's "Study of Peace in Scripture" research group.

• **Enten Eller** begins July 1 as director of Distributed Education and Electronic Communications for Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind. A graduate of Bethany and of Bridgewater

(Va.) College, Eller has been employed as a pastor, teacher, and in various information technology positions including training and computer support for the New Sudan Council of Churches and the All Africa Council of Churches. He has been a member of the On Earth Peace board and the Ministry of Reconciliation. Eller will move to the seminary from La Verne, Calif., where he is owner and senior consultant of Eller Computer Services.

• **Jim Hardenbrook**, past moderator of Annual Conference and pastor at Nampa (Idaho) Church of the Brethren, is working part-time as interim director for the General Board's Sudan initiative while continuing his pastoral duties. He traveled to Sudan last spring with an ecumenical delegation and reported about that experience to the 2005 Annual Conference. The assignment likely will continue through the summer.

• **Karin Krog** began June 5 as director of Human Resources for the General Board, working in Elgin, Ill. Her career has been centered in human resources since 1988, in a variety of organizations. Most recently she has supported human resources functions for the West Chicago (Ill.) Public Library District. She is a graduate of Judson College in Elgin,

with a bachelor of arts degree in management and leadership.

• **Steve Van Houten** will fill a new position as coordinator of Workcamp Ministry for the General Board, in the Youth and Young Adult Ministries Office in Elgin, Ill., as of July 6. He has been senior pastor of Akron (Ohio) Springfield Church of the Brethren for 11 years, and also spent 12 years as pastor of Cloverdale (Va.) Church of the Brethren. Over the past 10 years he has been a volunteer leader for several General Board workcamps. He holds degrees from Manchester College and Bethany Theological Seminary.

• **David Whitten** will begin in August as Nigeria mission coordinator for the General Board, on the Global Mission Partnerships staff. He will lead the Church of the Brethren team in Nigeria and will relate to leadership of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN—the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria). Whitten served the General Board in Nigeria as rural development consultant 1991-1994. Since then he has returned to Nigeria on several occasions, including leading the 2006 Nigeria workcamp. He has most recently served as pastor of Moscow Church of the Brethren in Mount Solon, Va.

UPCOMINGEVENTS

June 29-July 1 Council of District Executives meeting, Des Moines, Iowa

July 1 Church of the Brethren Credit Union members meeting, Des Moines, Iowa; **Northern Plains District Conference,** Des Moines, Iowa; **Church of the Brethren General Board meeting,** Des Moines, Iowa

July 1-5 Annual Conference, Des Moines, Iowa

July 4 Brethren Benefit Trust board meeting, Des Moines, Iowa

July 5-6 The Other Stream: Alternative Forms of Radical Pietism, Amana, Iowa

July 5-11 Wild Rose Song and Story Fest, Camp Pine Lake, Eldora, Iowa

July 9-13 Junior high workcamp, New Windsor, Md.

July 16-20 Junior high workcamp, Keyser, W.Va.

July 22-27 National Youth Conference, Fort Collins, Colo.

July 28-30 Northern Ohio District Conference, Ashland, Ohio; **Southeastern District Conference,** Mars Hill, N.C.; **Southern Plains District Conference,** Roanoke (La.) Church of the Brethren; **Western Plains District Conference,** McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren

Author explores experiences of Jesus

Some Christians want to ask what you think and believe about Jesus. Others want to know if you are following him. G. Scott Sparrow wants to know what experience you've had.

Sparrow has been interviewing people and recording their visions and dreams of Jesus. "Taken together," he writes, "these experiences raise the possibility that some people will readily accept and others will summarily dismiss—that Jesus can be experienced as directly and as personally today as when he walked the earth two thousand years ago."



JAMES H. LEHMAN

Christ comes to the people Sparrow interviews in many different ways—and not only to Christians, but to people of other faiths as well. The overpowering

reality of each experience is light and love. "I found myself in the arms of a being of white light," says one (p. 181). "It was hard to bear the intensity of the love emanating from him and coursing through me," writes the author about his own encounter (p. 128).

Sometimes Jesus appears at a moment of crisis. "Then putting his arm around me, we began to walk together. He started to explain some things I needed to know" (p. 53).

Often these encounters bring physical healing. "In the morning, just before actually waking, I distinctly felt the touch of hands massaging, manipulating, and pressing lightly on the lower region of my back. I slipped out of bed and as though there had never been an injury." (p. 58)

But the healing is not always physical. Sometimes the person finds the strength to go on even when the illness is terminal. And not all the encounters are easy. "Except for that beam of love, the encounter was a devastating experience that left me in shock for some time afterward" (p. 111).

Often judgment and love are united in a deep knowing. "At this point, Jesus turned and looked at me. He was beautiful. He gazed at me and his eyes penetrated to the depths of my being. He knew everything about me. He knew me like I have never been known before. His look stilled me; and I was not elated nor ashamed. I just felt known—absolutely and utterly known" (p. 116).

Humor is a mark of many encounters. "I found myself

looking straight into the glorious, sparkling eyes of Jesus" (p. 162). "He was laughing at me with his eyes, much as one who is amused by a small but stubborn child" (p. 52).

Often people are left with a sense that there is a larger purpose for their lives. Sometimes, the encounter with Jesus leaves the person with a deep sense of confirmation. "I experienced myself as a perfect, whole being with no sense of boundaries or limitations. I was in complete union and peace with God" (p. 186).

A VISION STATEMENT

Brethren are not given to visions and mystical experiences, so there are few such accounts in Brethren writings. But one of our "saints," Anna Mow, did have a visionary encounter with Jesus in 1934 that profoundly affected her life. She wrote about it in a long letter to the evangelist E. Stanley Jones. Anna Mow's biographer, Dorothy Murray, quotes at length from the letter in *Sister Anna* (Elgin: Brethren Press, 1983). Anna's description of the "shining, definite Presence" can be found on pages 47-48.

In these visions and dreams Jesus rarely gives advice. He is much more likely to ask probing questions. As in his earthly life, Jesus does not seem to be interested in getting it "right." Instead these encounters seem to invite people into relationship.

Those who argue that visions and dreams are projections of deep hopes and desires will point out how easy it might be for the unconscious to produce such wonderful images. Others might say they are the disguised products of the demonic because the Jesus of these encounters does not always perform in expected ways. They may be troubled by the fact that this Jesus is more broadly inclusive than many Christians.

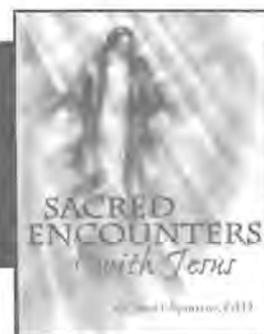
What moves me most is that the visions and dreams produce love where there is often pain and hurt. One person says, "I was overwhelmed by the beauty and love I experienced for myself and for all other people" (p. 186).

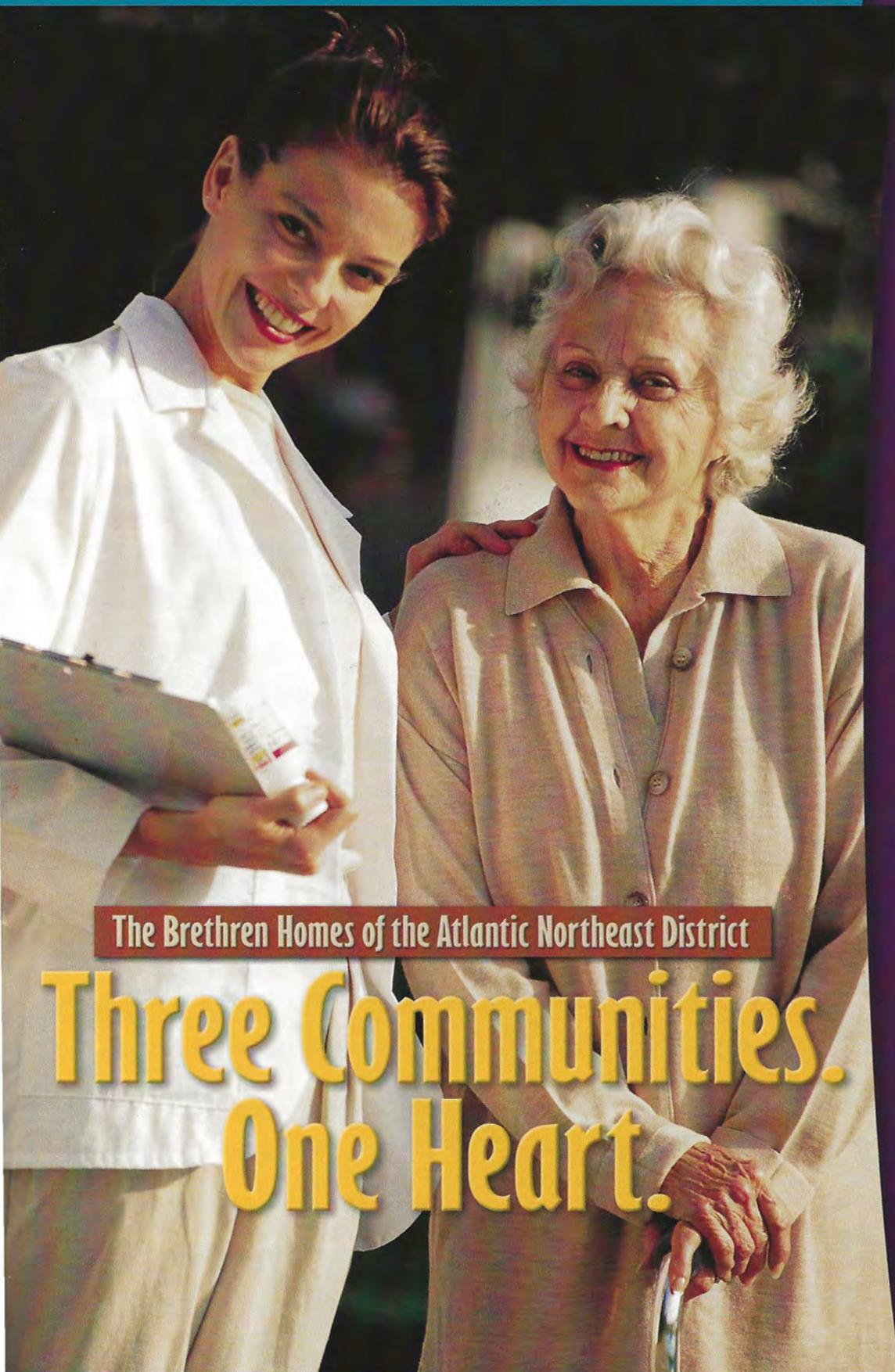
James H. Lehman is an author and owner of Brotherstone Publishers. He is a member of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin, Ill.

ABOUT THE BOOK

G. Scott Sparrow. *Sacred Encounters with Jesus*. Allen, TX: Thomas More Publishing, 2003.

Sacred Encounters with Jesus was initially published in March 2003. The 208-page paperback retails for \$12.95. It can be ordered through Brethren Press; call 800-441-3712.





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www.manchester.edu

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McPherson, Kansas
www.mcpherson.edu

Bethany Theological Seminary

Richmond, Indiana
www.bethanyseminary.edu

Brethren Colleges Abroad

Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania
www.bcaabroad.org

CHURCH OF THE
BRETHREN COLLEGES



Bridgewater College (Bridgewater, Va.)

Four Bridgewater seniors received awards from the department of history and political science. Amelia Crouse, from Chesapeake, Va., received the Bly-Neal Outstanding Student Award. Alexander Kettering of Manheim, Pa., was presented the M.R. Zigler History and Political Science Service Award. Clay Michael Inwood, W.Va.) and Andrew Royer (Manheim, Pa.) were named the George C. Marshall Scholars.



Elizabethtown College (Elizabethtown, Pa.)

Elizabethtown elected David Benton of Media, Pa.; Doris Gordon of Washington, D.C.; J. Alexander Risser of Chesapeake, Va.; and Judy S. Ware of Lancaster, Pa., as new members of its board of trustees. Dave Hosler of Lititz, Pa., a 1972 graduate, was re-elected as chair. ... Fletcher McClellan, professor and chair of the Department of Political Science, has been named interim provost and senior vice president for the 2006-2007 academic year.



Juniata College (Huntingdon, Pa.)

Philip Horn, executive director of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, addressed this year's commencement ceremonies. . . . Henry H. Gibbel, retiring chair of the board of trustees, received the John C. Baker Award for Exemplary Service from Juniata at a spring meeting of the board.



University of La Verne (La Verne, Calif.)

La Verne held five graduation ceremonies on four days in May, for the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Education and Organizational Leadership, Doctoral Program in Organizational Leadership, the College of Business and Public Management, and the College of Law. Brethren Hillcrest Homes chaplain Myrna Long Wheeler spoke at the Arts and Sciences commencement.



Manchester College (North Manchester, Ind.)

The Princeton Review has listed Manchester as a "best value" and "little-known gem" in its 2007 guidebook, *America's Best Value Colleges*. The book profiles a total of 150 "best" colleges in 40 states. . . . Manchester associate director of career services Elizabeth Bushnell received the Governor's Award for Tomorrow's Leaders.



McPherson College (McPherson, Kan.)

McPherson conferred 86 degrees at its 118th commencement ceremony held May 21. . . . This year's Award for Commitment and Service went to Beth Krehbiel of Pratt, Kan., and Lisa Sader of Augusta, Kan.

MESSENGER file photo



Children and youth will enjoy campfires, Bible study, and a host of other activities at the denomination's 30 camps and outdoor ministry centers this summer.

Going to camp? Beware!

It's camp season, and many Brethren children and youth have been and will be heading to one of the denomination's 30 camps and outdoor ministry centers. Dean Wenger, co-director of Camp Blue Diamond in Petersburg, Pa., created the following tongue-in-cheek "top 10 reasons not to send your child to camp this summer":

10. They may grow spiritually and ask you to chauffeur them to more church activities and camp retreats.
9. They may learn a few more Bible verses and challenge you to a memory verse faceoff.
8. They may make a new friend and start tying up the phone line, computer time, or using all the postage stamps.
7. They may learn to understand and appreciate Brethren heritage, and insist on planting a peace pole in the front yard where all the neighbors can see it.
6. They may enjoy the singing at camp and spend the next several weeks serenading you with the new songs they learned.
5. They may become environmentally aware and ask you to start a recycling program, quit buying Styrofoam cups and paper plates, and challenge the family to zero-waste food.
4. They may enjoy cooking out over an open fire so much that they expect you to never prepare meals in the kitchen again.
3. They may successfully endure "polar bear" swims or an all-day hike and come home a little too pleased with themselves and become a little less humble.
2. They may overcome their fear of the woods and insist on building a cabin and spending more time in the back yard.
1. They may have so much fun, they talk all year long about returning to camp for a retreat and another summer camp experience.

Bits and pieces

• The National Youth Cabinet announced in May that **Seth Hendricks** had won the 2006 **National Youth Conference theme song** contest. Hendricks, a Bethany Theological Seminary student from Nampa, Idaho, will also be part of the NYC band leading music during worship. The song takes its title from the NYC theme, "Come and See." NYC will be held July 22-27 in Fort Collins, Colo.

• This year's **Ministry Summer Service (MSS)** program includes 13 interns working at sites around the denomination. Interns are paired with a mentor and, following an orientation in Richmond, Ind., in early June, are serving for nine weeks in a ministry setting. This summer's group is working at several congregations, with the Youth Peace Travel Team, at Camp Blue Diamond, at Harrisburg (Pa.) Community Ministries, in the MESSENGER office, and in the Brethren Witness/Washington Office.

• More than 100 young adults took part in this year's worship-filled **Young Adult Conference**, held over Memorial Day weekend at Camp Swatara in Bethel, Pa. More details will follow in the September issue.

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Bible studies are superb

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The assignment seems to be to encapsulate an entire book into two pages, include all the essentials, and lift up one or more segments of enduring worth that connects with our present world. That's an incredible task, and each writer is doing a superb job of achieving it. My thanks to the writers and to the staff who developed the series. I look forward to the next.

Dorothy Gall
 New Paris, Ind.

Esther good, Menno was later

Our May MESSENGER came the first day of May. It is an excellent issue. I especially appreciated Eugene F. Roop's article on Esther. The closing paragraph was most fitting.

The cover is unique, but a bit deceiving: Menno did not get on board until 1536.

John Ditmars
 Washington, Kan.

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It appears that decisions about exhibit space are made more for the comfort of some parts of the church, rather than offering space to any groups who are faithful in their reading of scripture.

We're still shunning

I want to respond briefly to two articles which were in the April issue. Earle Fike, Jr., wrote a letter to the church that I highly recommend. He notes that the church has been so much more "than we think it is" and so much less than it could be.

He particularly talks about unanimity vs. conformity/uniformity in these sentences: "Community is not dependent upon uniformity of the parts, in function or conduct or belief. Our togetherness is rooted in our faithfulness to the head of the body, Christ. . . . The body of Christ is not dependent on uniformity, but on unanimity of faithfulness to the Head. We parts are only a problem to one another if we allow ourselves to be so. Our Head is more accepting of differences in belief and conduct and contribution to the body than are we parts."

He also talks about times when we "shunned" or "banned" those who differed from the main parts of the church. He says, "I've often suspected that the discipline was more for the comfort of some parts rather than faithfulness to the Head."

Contrast that with the article on p. 21 about the Program and Arrangements Committee meeting with representatives of the Brethren Mennonite Council. It seems to me that we have effectively "banned" BMC from participation in the body of Christ that we call the Church of the Brethren. In the article, moderator Ron Beachley states that "the representatives of the . . . committee felt that the major reasons exhibit hall space was not given to BMC had to do with . . . a concern for those in the denomination who view scripture differently." Sounds like "shunning" to me.

Let's review some of Earle's words: "I've

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often suspected that the discipline was more for the comfort of some parts rather than faithfulness to the Head." Well, I'm not comfortable with some of the groups currently allowed to exhibit, but I'm not going to ask for them to be "shunned."

So it appears that decisions about exhibit space are made more for the comfort of some parts of the church, rather than offering space to any groups who are faithful in their reading of scripture and faithful to the church. We would rather be comfortable in the Conference setting than challenged. Decisions about exhibit space are not always made fairly, in spite of our concerns for justice in the wider world. It is long past time for BMC to be offered exhibit space at Annual Conference. I look forward to the day when all parts of the church can be represented at the family reunion we call Conference.

Jan Eller
Portland, Ore.

Column made people think

I look forward to reading the MESSENGER each month, but the March 2006 issue was especially stimulating.

I was very enlightened by reading Wendy McFadden's account ["From the Publisher"] of the reactions of some Church of the Brethren members regarding the holiday honoring the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. It appears we still need to remind people that Dr. King, his wife Coretta Scott King, and Rosa Parks were all drum majors for peace and justice.

My thanks goes to Wendy for doing a thorough job addressing our attitudes and actions as followers of Christ's teachings. The article was presented in a way that really made one look at oneself and think. It's very refreshing to know that we have such talented writers in our midst.

Let us continue with our dialogue.

Grover Haynes
Seattle, Wash.

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

Letters should be brief, clear, and respectful of the opinions of others, with strong differences handled in the spirit of Matthew 18. Preference is given to letters that respond directly to items in MESSENGER.

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The article was presented in a way that really made one look at oneself and think. It's very refreshing to know that we have such talented writers in our midst.

Atheism overlooks Jesus' suffering

I would like to respond to the letter written by Brother Tim Kreider [April 2006], claiming he is now an atheist.

I've been a member of the Church of the Brethren a long time after having a very personal relationship with Jesus as a teenager. Yes, the church has been through a lot of changes over the years, but Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He never changes; it is we, as his followers, who change sometimes for the good and sometimes for the bad. The important thing we must do is to keep our eyes totally on him.

I know a lot of us don't want to be reminded how Jesus suffered, bled, and died for us that we might be forgiven of our many sins and have everlasting life. Does my brother have any idea what it would be like to be beaten, spit upon, and whipped at least 29 lashes before he was on the cross waiting to die? Does my brother have any idea what it would be like to have nails driven in your hands and feet? Can you imagine every breath of air? It was a slow and painful death that took six hours hanging there with some of the people making fun of you.

These are some questions to think about.

Patricia Connell
Sandwich, Ill.

Don't forget about BMC

Great article about the ties that bind Mennonites and Brethren. My Mennonite friend Charity and I get a kick out of standing up for the Anabaptist movement, in our classes here at seminary (Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, Calif.), being the only two Anabaptists in the school. We even got to teach our classmates how foot washing is done!

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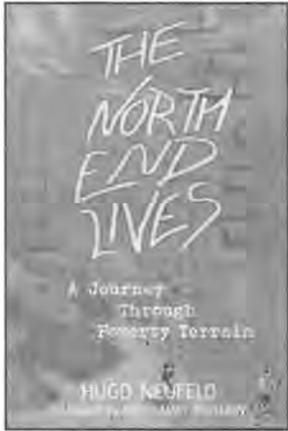
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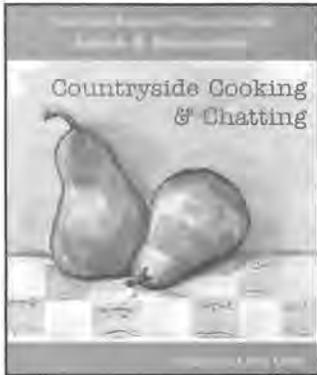
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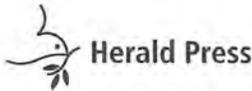
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by Wendy McFadden seemed to miss is the group working to create hospitality for all people in our churches, the Brethren-Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Interests (the partnership's in the very name!). Abbreviated as BMC, I have been impressed with the work of this group in transcending denominational differences to call both of our church bodies back to the way of our loving, welcoming Messiah.

Through respectful discussion about the topic of Christian hospitality—a subject uncomfortable to too many people in our churches—the BMC has also fostered discussion among believers of different historical faith traditions. In doing so, they have modeled their mission that we recognize how we are all one body in Christ.

Audrey deCoursey
 Berkeley, Calif.

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Community of Joy, Salisbury, Md.: Douglas Potvin, Sara Potvin
Coventry, Pottstown, Pa.: Kaitlyn Kulp, Robin Rude, Francesca Memoli, Marianne Stanton, David Blacketter, Heather Blacketter, John Rude
Curryville, Pa.: Janice Worthing, William Worthing, Haylai Zimmerman, Deb Hall, Frank Estep
Daleville, Va.: Ruth Craft, Gene Lee, Ruby Lee, Susan Lee, Ashley Lee, Heather Ehalt
Dixon, Ill.: Margaret Brockwell
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Green Hill, Salem, Va.: Rebecca Tate Wimmer
Haxtun, Colo.: George Davis
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Hempfield, Manheim, Pa.: Derek Witmer, Parke Eckman, Elaine Eckman, Peggy Martin
Holidaysburg, Pa.: Arlina Weitzel, Connie Bert, Joel Bert, Mark Liller
Lebanon, Pa.: Jacob Bradley, Quentin Gable, Earl Buckmoyer
Lititz, Pa.: Chad Bomberger, Mackenzie Buckwalter, Brian Cox, Brittany Cox, Virginia Enck, Scott Griffith, Abby

Grove, Trevor Havemann, John Huber, Jordan Lausch, Taylor Luckenbill, Katie McLean, Katie Tucker, Derrick Hill, David Kammerer, Peggy Kammerer, Jody Lausch, Gordon Mumshaw, Shirley Mumshaw, Karen Risser, Jason Widders
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Mountain View, McGaheysville, Va.: Tina Glover
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Pittsburgh, Pa.: Joshua Maina, Ladi Maina
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Smith River, Stuart, Va.: Tanner Lee Boothe
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West Charleston, Tipp City, Ohio: Kevin McAdams, John Caleb Miller
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Anniversaries

Ball, Arden and Charmaine, Goshen, Ind., 55
Bowe, Forrest and Jeannine, Roanoke, Va., 55
Brightbill, Richard and Betty, Lebanon, Pa., 55
Bruckhart, Abram and Mary, Palmyra, Pa., 71
Cassell, Bernie and Alice, Arcanum, Ohio, 60
Eggert, Marshall and Pauline, Osceola, Mo., 60
Falls, Cliff and Ida, Wallbridge, Ohio, 55
Gerber, Robert and Mary Louise, Dillsburg, Pa., 60
Hartle, Herman and Gloria, Mount Morris, Ill., 50
Hartman, Dale and Janet, Huntingdon, Pa., 60
Heffelfinger, Homer and Verna, Richland, Pa., 65
Hitz, Earl and Eleanor, Lebanon, Pa., 50
Holland, Louis and Shirley, Altoona, Pa., 60
Kaylor, Earl and Harriet, Huntingdon, Pa., 55
Kegerreis, John and Helen, Myerstown, Pa., 55
Keltner, Wayne and Margaret, Strafford, Mo., 60
Pittman, Robert and Marianne, Blacksburg, Va., 50
Rainey, Osborn and Greta, Huntingdon, Pa., 65
Reed, Clyde and Lois, Floyd, Va., 50
Reichert, Fred and Eileen, Auburn, Ill., 50
Roberts, Max and Lois, Cerro Gordo, Ill., 60
Roop, Curtis and Lois, Riner, Va., 50
Sumey, Merwin and Rita, Hopwood, Pa., 50
Webb, Roy and Margaret, Fincastle, Va., 60
Weik, Harvey and Mary, Myerstown, Pa., 60

Deaths

Augustine, Ralph, 78, Johnstown, Pa., Jan. 28
Baker, Clyde, 95, Clymer, Pa., April 17
Baker, Virginia, 75, Cerro Gordo, Ill., March 15
Bennett, William E., 58, Elgin, Ill., April 28
Bloom, Irene, 77, Uniontown, Pa., March 26
Blough, Nathan E., 85, Quarryville, Pa., June 27, 2005
Boothe, Mary Ramsey, 65, Stuart, Va., March 17
Bruckhart, Abram, 92, Palmyra, Pa., April 19
Buterbaugh, Eugene, Jr., 79, Dixonville, Pa., May 4
Cartwright, Francis, 82, Midland, Mich., Sept. 15
Cherry, Mary Elaine, 95, Phoenix, Ariz., March 27
Cookman, Ann, 95, Cando, N.D., April 25
Cunningham, E. Carlisle, 83, Waynesboro, Va., March 18
DeLong, Grace L., 82, Quarryville, Pa., Sept. 6
Diebus, Ardella, 91, Palmyra, Pa., March 27
Diehl, Mary E. (Mitzie), 92, Port Republic, Va., April 13
Duncan, Woodrow, 86, Troutville, Va., Dec. 4
Eshleman, Miriam P., 91, Quarryville, Pa., Dec. 20
Godfrey, Helen L. Anderson, 74, Seven Valleys, Pa., May 6
Gordley, Ronald D., 90, Lancaster, Pa., Dec. 14
Harbold, David C., 90, Dillsburg, Pa., April 10
Heaston, W. Gordon, 93, Modesto, Calif., April 21
Hefley, Louise, 69, Urbana, Ill., April 9
Higgins, Kathryn, 89, Martinsburg, Pa., April 4
Howdyshehl, C. Thurston, 87, Harrisonburg, Va., April 27
Ikenberry, Hazel B., 87, Daleville, Va., March 31
Ikenberry, Justus H., 100, Daleville, Va., March 7
Keilholtz, Martha, 96, Palmyra, Pa., April 18
Keim, Doris P., 92, Goshen, Ind., May 5
Keppen, Neoma M., 90, Freeport, Ill., Jan. 2
Kesler, Mary E., 76, North Manchester, Ind., March 8
Krall, Leroy, 70, Cerro Gordo, Ill., April 21
Krall, Warren, 78, Myerstown, Pa., Nov. 28
Krehmeyer, August M., 86, Haxtun, Colo., Nov. 29
Landes, Gerald, 93, Morgantown, Ind., March 16
Leatherman, Alfreda Virginia, 67, Moorefield, W.Va., April 5
McKibben, Robert F., 91, Dayton, Ohio, April 8
Millar, Helen J., 85, New Oxford, Pa., April 13
Miller, Destiny Grace, 5 days, Milford, Ind., Jan. 31

Miller, Faye E., 91, Saint Petersburg, Fla., April 12
Moneyheffer, Delbert, 86, Milford, Ind., April 7
Mullins, Kathryn Marie, 87, Phoenix, Ariz., Feb. 10
Obenshain, Mae, 88, Fincastle, Va., Jan. 17
Orr, Marison, 82, Elderton, Pa., April 24
Petry, Echo M., 86, Richmond, Ind., April 18
Schneiders, Francis A. (Tony), 52, Argos, Ind., April 28
Schrader, Alice, 88, Freeport, Ill., Nov. 28
Scotfield, Donald, 84, Kansas City, Mo., Feb. 16
Shingler, Mary, 91, Tyrone, Pa., Dec. 20
Showalter, Flora, 96, Roanoke, Va., Feb. 12
Shull, Arthur G., 94, North Manchester, Ind., April 30
Snodderly, Phillip R., 54, Hagerstown, Md., March 18
Stauffer, Lois, 91, Lancaster, Pa., July 7, 2005
Stuckey, Rebecca, 85, Lebanon, Pa., April 7
Trpistle, LeRoy, 81, Quentin, Pa., June 30, 2005
Tucker, Albert, 88, Warren, Ill., Jan. 10
Webb, Richard A., Sr., 56, Williamsport, Md., May 1
Wilkinson, Edith, 93, Beaverton, Mich., April 4
Wyman, Duane, 82, Sanford, Mich., Aug. 26, 2005

Licensings

Chew, Dustin C., S/C Ind. Dist. (White Branch, Hagerstown, Ind.), April 2
Peruso, Russell J., W. Pa. Dist. (Pleasant Hill, Johnstown, Pa.), March 19

Ordinations

Haney, Virginia K., N. Ind. Dist. (Goshen City, Goshen, Ind.), April 30
House, William D., S/C Ind. Dist. (Marion, Ind.), March 26
Major, Gary R., Shen. Dist. (Blue Ridge Chapel, Waynesboro, Va.), April 9
Oesterling, Richard, N. Plains Dist. (South Waterloo, Waterloo, Iowa), March 19
Shifflett, Glenn D., Shen. Dist. (Shiloh, Stanardsville, Va.), April 25

Pastoral Placements

List, P. Henry, from interim to pastor, Crystal, Mich., May 1

Monstrous imbalances

A frightening thing happened last season on "Sesame Street."

According to an Associated Press report, Cookie Monster—the furry, blue, chocolate chip-guzzling fixture of the PBS children's show—has become an advocate of healthy eating. That's right—Cookie Monster. No more constant "Me want cookie." He's controlling his cravings and broadening his menu. An eggplant and some other talking vegetables have even joined him in the show's cast.



WALT WILTSCHKEK
MESSENGER Editor

Why has the champion of insatiable sugar rushes cut back? It seems that the show's producers (and many others) became concerned about childhood obesity and related issues, launching a "Healthy Habits for Life" campaign. Cookie Monster's healthier fare was just one piece of that emphasis.

"We're teaching him moderation," a vice president of the show said in the article. Cookie Monster even performed a new song, "A

Cookie Is a *Sometimes* Food."

Learning moderation and balance is a healthy habit in many areas of life, including church life. An article in *The Mennonite* a few years ago focused on overcoming what it called "lopsided Christianity." It noted the frequent divorce of word and deed in the church, observing that "the only way to be faithful to Jesus is to put together evangelism and social ministry."

Marcos Inhauser, national director of the Church of the Brethren in Brazil, made a similar observation while speaking at a Brethren conference. Service and evangelism are like the two wings of a bird, he said. Without either one, the bird can't fly. That balance of speaking the Word and serving others has been a cornerstone of the fledgling Brazilian church.

In Brazil, Inhauser said many of the new Protestant/Pentecostal churches have done plenty of evangelism but don't connect it to meeting the physical needs of people. In the US, Brethren often seem to tip the other way: doing wonderful acts of service but failing to connect it, at least outloud, to the reason for the hope that is within us.

It's often as if we live by some twisted version of the famous Las Vegas advertising phrase: "What happens in

Vegas, stays in Vegas." But do we really want what happens in the church to stay in the church? Perhaps we should be starting churches in Las Vegas instead.

Mark Thiessen Nation, in a journal article on moving "Toward a Theology for Conflict Transformation," cited some writings on peacemakers by Jewish scholar Marc Gopin. Gopin observed that many Mennonite peacemakers "rarely used words to describe what they loved about their faith, at least not in public."

Gopin suggested that the reason for this, at least for some of the peacemakers, was due to concerns over living in a world of religious pluralism and to mission work in the past that was often patronizing, paternalistic, and arrogant.

We would do well to learn from the mistakes of the past, and have, in some ways. Mission work is done much more indigenously now, and service projects seek to work "in solidarity" with the local people (as the "International Spotlight" in this issue highlights). We also need to be sensitive to the dynamics of living among people who belong to other religious traditions.

That said, however, there is still an intense hunger in the world for a word of hope. There are ways to share our faith with integrity, speaking out of our experience without bludgeoning people with the Bible. Humble Brethren or not, our shining lights cannot be kept under a bushel.

We excel at disaster relief, at volunteer service, at giving money to relieve hunger and other needs, and a host

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of other ministries. Let's hope that never stops. We need some other tools in our faith toolbox, though: balancing the "why" along with the "what." If we truly want to "continue the work of Jesus," we can't forget that Jesus preached and taught amid healing and serving.

Participants in a recent church planting conference said planting new churches is "do-able." So let's do more of it. Many existing congregations are virtually unknown in their communities. Let's do better at connecting. If the Church of the Brethren is a "best-kept secret," let's squeal a bit.

Cookie Monster once sang, "C is for cookie, that's good enough for me." If we always serve in silence, though, that's not good enough. A talking eggplant won't tell our story for us.—Ed.

COMING IN SEPTEMBER: Reports and highlights from the 2006 Annual Conference, looking at "Gather 'Round," the book of Proverbs, movie review, and more.

Join Our Quiet Ministry

The oldest existing Brethren home was established in 1889 when one district responded to the need for a faith-based community to care for older adults. Since then, 21 more Brethren homes have been established, all of which came out of congregational and district ministries. Twenty-two retirement centers serving more than 7,000 residents, employing more than 3,000 people, and caring for countless other families associated with the homes, makes this ministry one of the largest and longest undertaken by the Church of the Brethren. And in true Brethren tradition, this vibrant ministry is done in a quiet, unassuming fashion.

These retirement facilities invite you to participate once again in the ministry we all have created and maintained for more than 100 years, so that they can continue for another 100 years. Call the Brethren Retirement Center nearest you and ask how you can work to enrich and enhance this quiet ministry.



Brethren Retirement Centers

Brethren Hillcrest Homes

La Verne, Calif. — (909) 593-4917

The Brethren Home Community

New Oxford, Pa. — (888) 624-8242

Brethren Retirement Community

Greenville, Ohio — (937) 547-8000

Brethren Village

Lancaster, Pa. — (800) 367-9899

Bridgewater Retirement Community

Bridgewater, Va. — (800) 419-9129

Casa de Modesto

Modesto, Calif. — (209) 529-4950

The Cedars

McPherson, Kan. — (620) 241-0919

Church of the Brethren Home

Windber, Pa. — (814) 467-5505

Fahrney-Keedy Memorial Home

Boonsboro, Md. — (301) 733-6284

Garden Terrace & Garden Terrace West

Wenatchee, Wash. — (509) 663-2154

Good Shepherd Home

Fostoria, Ohio — (419) 435-1801

Lebanon Valley Brethren Home

Palmyra, Pa. — (717) 838-5406

Northaven Retirement Residence and Assisted Living

Seattle, Wash. — (206) 365-3020

The Palms Estates of Highlands County

Lorida, Fla. — (863) 655-1909

The Palms of Sebring

Sebring, Fla. — (863) 385-0161

Peter Becker Community

Harleysville, Pa. — (215) 256-9501

Pinecrest Community

Mount Morris, Ill. — (815) 734-4103

Pleasant Hill Village

Girard, Ill. — (217) 627-2181

Spurgeon Manor

Dallas Center, Iowa — (515) 992-3735

Timbercrest Senior Living Community

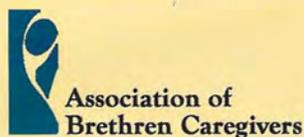
North Manchester, Ind. — (260) 982-2118

The Village at Morrisons Cove

Martinsburg, Pa. — (814) 793-2104

West View Manor

Wooster, Ohio — (330) 264-8640



The Fellowship of Brethren Homes is a ministry of the Association of Brethren Caregivers. Call (800) 323-8039 or visit www.brethren-caregivers.org to download a brochure about the Brethren Retirement Centers.

For where two or three are
gathered in my name,

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I am there
among them.—Matthew 18:20