

Church  
of the  
Brethren

# MESSENGER

DECEMBER 2006 [WWW.BRETHREN.ORG](http://WWW.BRETHREN.ORG)



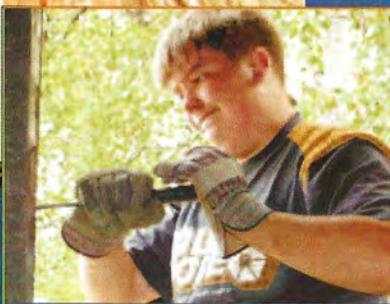
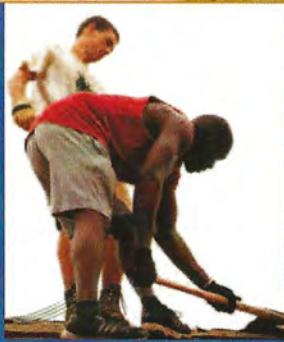
*Art & Soul*

*Creativity can provide gateways to the divine*



# 2007 National Workcamps

## Small Things, Great Love



**Church of the Brethren**  
Youth & Young Adult Ministries

On-Line registrations  
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January 3, 2007

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We can do no  
great things;  
Only small things  
with great love.

- Mother Teresa

### Junior High

(Completed Grades 6 – 9)

1. June 20 – 24 Richmond, VA
2. June 24 – 28 Innisfree Village, VA
3. July 8 – 12 New Windsor, MD
4. July 15 – 19 New Windsor, MD
5. July 25 – 29 Ashland, OH
6. August 8 – 12 Indianapolis, IN

### Junior and Senior High Combined

(Completed Grades 6 – 12)

7. July 8 – 13 Elgin, IL

### Intergenerational

(Completed Grade 6 – Age 100 +)

8. June 17 – 24 Kansas City, KS
9. June 20 – 24 Harrisburg, PA
10. July 30 – 5 Ashland, OH

### Senior High

(Completed Grade 9 – Age 19)

11. June 10 – 16 Katrina "Gulf Coast" Disaster Response
12. June 11 – 17 Los Angeles, CA
13. June 11 – 17 Crossnore, NC
14. June 17 – 23 Katrina "Gulf Coast" Disaster Response (BRF)
15. June 17 – 23 "Lakota Native American" – Kyle, SD
16. June 18 – 24 Idaho Mountain Camp
17. June 18 – 25 Castañer, Puerto Rico
18. June 24 – 30 Katrina "Gulf Coast" Disaster Response
19. July 15 – 21 "Gulf Coast Florida" – N. Fort Myers, FL
20. July 16 – 22 "Eastern Shore" – Maryland
21. July 16 – 22 Phoenix, AZ
22. July 16 – 22 "Pacific Northwest Forest" – Oregon
23. July 23 – 29 St. Croix, Virgin Islands
24. July 23 – 29 "Blue Ridge Mountains" – Roanoke, VA
25. July 30 – 5 "Deep South" – Mendenhall, MS
26. July 30 – 5 Gould Farm, MA
27. July 30 – 5 St. Croix, Virgin Islands
28. July 29 – 4 "Appalachian" – Neon, KY
29. August 5 – 10 Orlando, FL
30. August 5 – 11 Reynosa, Mexico
31. August 6 – 12 Dundalk, MD

### Young Adult

(Ages 18 – 35)

32. June 2 – 9 Katrina "Gulf Coast" Disaster Response
33. June 2 – 9 "Central America" - Guatemala

### Senior High and Adults Combined

(Completed Grade 9 – Age 100 +)

34. June 10 – 16 "Lakota Native American" - Kyle, SD
35. August 4 – 11 Dominican Republic

"... 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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 Promotions: Beth Burnette   Subscriptions: Diane Stroyeck   Design: The Concept Mill



Courtesy Brethren-Cayford

## ONTHECOVER

British artist Roy Adzak once said, "Good art is not what it looks like, but what it does to us." At its best, art—in all its breadth of media and styles—draws us into deeper reflection, inspiration, and imagination. It connects with our souls. This month's cover story examines what some Brethren are doing with art, and what we might draw from it.

### **8 Gateway to the divine: Art and faith**

Drama. Dance. Poetry. Painting. Photography. In a wide variety of forms, art is being used by people of faith to open new windows of seeing the world and God's hand at work in it.

### **13 Christmas? I can't wait!**

When December comes, people want to sing Christmas carols and songs. Some pastors, though, urge patience and instead turn attention to waiting for Christ's arrival: the season of Advent.

### **14 How to act like a King's kid**

In the beatitudes, Jesus promises peacemakers that they will be called children of God. That is indeed a blessing, Jim Benedict says, but it also means a difficult path lies ahead.

### **16 Angels we have seen on high**

The name Catharine Hummer isn't usually prominent in Brethren history. Not much is really known about her. But Frank Ramirez has uncovered some interesting tidbits about the woman who stirred up the Annual Meeting with visions of angels.

## DEPARTMENTS

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### **19 Isaiah: Through despair to hope**

The prophet Isaiah—often quoted in Advent and Christmas season—brought good news to the people of Israel and Judah in tense times. Amid judgment and suffering, God's promises of reconciliation and renewal always reign supreme.

**W**hile getting acquainted with us over a banquet table, the friendly Christian couple renders us speechless by asking casually, "So, is your city having to deal with Hispanics too?"

A nearby town entertains a proposal that it become illegal to sell to anyone who is undocumented, and that English be declared the town's official language.

A school prank hits a racial nerve that instigates a mean-spirited student essay, whose unauthorized circulation inflames emotions, which then boil over into an unpleasant parent meeting. Caucasian parents and Hispanic parents line up at microphones to hurl insults. By the end of the evening it seems the real problem isn't the students, but their parents.

One doesn't need to scratch deep to reveal the ugliness just under the veneer of civility. How fragile our coexistence in a diverse community.



WENDY MCFADDEN  
Publisher

Ambivalence toward immigrants is not new. "In times of prosperity we offer hospitality; in times of recession or depression we react with hostility," was the observation in the 1982 Annual Conference statement on undocumented people and refugees. Today our national distrust of the "other" is heightened when a war on terror is stoked by fanning the flames of fear.

This is easy to do. We are already taught to fear everything. We are afraid of spinach, beef, and germs lurking on kitchen sponges. We are afraid of e-mails purportedly from friends, liquids and gels, head scarves and turbans. When it is time to justify massive militarization,

it is easy and convenient to take aim at swarthy complexions, names that are difficult to pronounce, and foreign accents. When school budgets shrink and health care costs skyrocket, it is natural for the grandchildren of immigrants to point fingers at the latest newcomers. Over and over, the world says, "Be afraid."

But over and over, God has said, "Be not afraid." That's what Mary heard when an angel told her that she would soon be inhabited by an uninvited stranger. That's what the shepherds heard from a host of nighttime visitors who must have been a far cry from the cherubs on Christmas cards.

As we make room for the child who was born in a borrowed stable to people far from home, how can we condone the scapegoating of immigrants? As we celebrate God's act of creating a bridge to humankind, how can we tolerate the building of more walls?

In an October pastoral letter to congregations (find it on [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org)), the Church of the Brethren General Board encourages us to turn to the Scriptures for guidance on the increasingly contentious issue of immigration: "When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 19:33-34).

In these verses, God calls us to a life "vastly different from the fearful living of the culture around us," says the General Board.

Another way of living, as we like to say. That's an idea that comes straight from the Bible.

*Wendy McFadden*

## HOW TO REACH US

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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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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 © December 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, Ill., and additional mailing offices.

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



Printed on recycled paper  
(20% post consumer)

## A city prays for peace

What can you do when world events spiral out of control? You can invite a city to pray with you. That is what a member of Elm Street Church of the Brethren in Lima, Ohio, did.

"The world is a scary place," Bethany Dukehart said in her invitation. "All around us we see injustice, poverty, and conflict. Families are in turmoil and nations are at war. It became heavy on my heart, but what could I do as just one person?"

After considering her options, she decided to start close at home. "If the community of Lima could take one day and know that people all across the area have set aside this special time of prayer, a great roar of prayer will go out to our Creator. There is power in that. We are called to pray for our neighbors and even our enemies," she said.

With the help of her pastors and several members, Bethany contacted 150 local churches first by phone, then with faxes, e-mails, and letters. Several people met to stamp, address,

and fill envelopes with invitations and bulletin inserts to 75 of the churches.

The invitation, on church stationery, encouraged Lima-area churches to designate the 24-hour period beginning Saturday morning, August 5, as PRAY FOR PEACE day. Volunteers at participating places of worship were to sign up for 30-minute prayer periods during that time.

An unknown number of churches participated. One



Wes Richard

*Bethany Dukehart, facing camera, and her husband, Joe, discuss an item with other members of Elm Street Church of the Brethren at the congregation's annual planning retreat.*

Catholic priest e-mailed back, saying, "Please count us in the 24-hour 'prayer for peace' experience. . . . In addition, we will ask members at each Mass that Sunday to continue the prayers throughout the coming week! Great idea! Lord, hear our prayers!"

Not every church responded positively. One pastor said, "We aren't in league with other churches." Another said, "We prayed for peace two weeks ago." And still another called to ask, "Is this a political thing?"

Something unexpected happened when Bethany and her husband Joe entered the Elm Street sanctuary for their time of prayer Saturday afternoon. They saw a community woman praying quietly alone. After a few moments, she asked them if they would pray with her. She was Mexican, and after she shared her concern for a daughter experiencing domestic violence, they knelt together at the altar where she prayed in Spanish and they in English. "It was really uplifting to realize these prayers were needed in our community," Bethany told the congregation the next day.

"This is exactly the kind of ministry we hope to see happen in the congregation," co-pastor Sue Richard said. "When people have a vision for a special ministry, we want to encourage them in any way we can." —Wes Richard

Wes Richard is co-pastor of Elm Street Church of the Brethren in Lima, Ohio.



**The "Together" conversations**, sponsored by the Council of District Executives and Annual Conference agencies, have been occurring around the denomination this past year, and are expected to continue into the first part of 2007. The conversations center around the question "What does it mean to be the church?" Have you had an interesting experience in your conversations? Send it to [together@brethren.org](mailto:together@brethren.org). MESSANGER will be providing further coverage of the process in 2007.

### BY THE NUMBERS

# 101

Number of people employed full-time and part-time by the Church of the Brethren General Board as of October (this does not include 26 program volunteers or staff shared with other agencies)

**NORTHEAST** The 2006 Atlantic Northeast District conference Oct. 13-14 in Elizabethtown, Pa., included a report from the "Turn Around Task Team" that generated much discussion about the current and future state of the church. Delegates passed a budget of \$623,291. . . . Don Vermilyea, fresh off his "Walk Across America," served as keynote leader for this year's family camp at Camp Mardela in Denton, Md.

**SOUTHEAST** Southeastern District held its now-annual Spiritual Growth Event Nov. 4 at Travelers Rest (S.C.) Church of the Brethren with the theme "It Is Important to Keep on Talking." . . . On Sept. 14, Jackson Park Church of the Brethren (Jonesborough, Tenn.) hosted a Christian Peacemaker Team group from northern Indiana led by Cliff Kindy and worked on a nonviolent campaign to end the US military's use of depleted uranium bombs. A covered dish and young adult event were also held.

**MIDWEST** Michigan District conference included an update on plans for a new church plant in the state's Saginaw Valley area in January 2007. . . . The closing worship service for Sunfield (Mich.) Church of the Brethren was scheduled to be held Nov. 26. . . . Brethren Heights reported attendance of 108 campers this past summer.

**OZARKS/PLAINS** Delegates at the Missouri/Arkansas District conference in September accepted the offer of Peace Valley (Mo.) Church of the Brethren to temporarily store and organize the district's historical archives in its parsonage. Delegates also affirmed the life and formal closure of the Carthage (Mo.) congregation and passed a 2007 district budget of just under \$28,000.

**WEST** Idaho District conference was held Oct. 20-21 at Mountain View Church of the Brethren in Boise, opening with worship. It was preceded by a workshop on "Preaching the Old Testament," led by Bethany Theological Seminary dean Stephen Breck Reid.

*The committee working on an autograph quilt fundraiser for Fahrney-Keedy Memorial Home met in October to begin putting the quilt top together. Holding the first two rows of the quilt top are: (first row, from left) Mildred Blickenstaff, June Linton, Edwin Appel, Edna Pryor, Catherine Appel, Armita Reynolds, and Edna Stickler; (back row) Lucia Rice, Olive Peters, Iris Coffman-Sharpes, Richard Gold, Howard Amos, LaVerne Rohrer, and Glenn Rohrer.*



Betsy Miller



Anne E. Pfeiffer

### Cream of the crop:

Live Oak (Calif.) Church of the Brethren provided a special worship service in September with a focus on older adults. This event kicked-off their new Older Adult Ministry, a project created by, with, and for older adults (age 55 and older). Barbara and Bev Brandt gave a report on the denomination's National Older Adult Conference, which they had recently attended in North Carolina. Since it was also Heifer Project Sunday, Norma Fillmore (pictured) shared the story of *Faith the Cow* with the children. The morning's speakers were Anne Deis, Ruby Johnson, and Jack Storne; each spoke about the God-given joy they had found in their lives as older adults.

### Fahrney-Keedy launches star-studded quilt fundraiser

Fahrney-Keedy Memorial Home Inc., a Church of the Brethren retirement center in Boonsboro, Md., is requesting autographs from celebrities for a quilt to be auctioned as a fundraiser for the home.

In early June the home created an Autograph Quilt Committee coordinated by Betsy Miller. The committee has sent letters to more than 300 celebrities, enclosing a fabric square with every letter and requesting that they autograph the fabric.

The first celebrity to respond was Jerry Lewis, and many more soon followed. One autograph recently received was from Elizabeth Taylor. Others who have responded include John Travolta, Charlton Heston, Lauren Bacall, Regis Philbin, Betty White, and NASCAR's Jimmy Johnson and Carl Edwards. As of October, 60 autographs had been received.

The project has brought enjoyment to the residents, their families, staff, and visitors, according to a release from the

home: "Everyone looks forward to seeing 'who we get today' and reminiscing about the movies and shows their favorite stars appeared in. Each autograph received is proudly displayed on the main office window with a picture of the celebrity."

The committee began to construct a quilt top in the fall. Once completed, the quilt will be listed on a national auction website. All proceeds will be donated to the benevolent and operating funds of Fahrney-Keedy Home and Village.

### Faith dinner gives big lift to auction's 30th anniversary

Among the many events supporting the annual Brethren Disaster Relief Auction sponsored by Atlantic Northeast and Southern Pennsylvania districts is a faith dinner held at York (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren.

This year's dinner raised \$10,000 for the auction, which benefits the work of the Church of the Brethren General

Board's Emergency Disaster Fund. The fund assists victims of disaster in the US and internationally. The auction's board also recently announced that it had sent a "significant" check to aid victims of the Amish schoolhouse shootings.

The auction itself was held Sept. 22-24 at the Lebanon (Pa.) Expo Center and marked its 30th anniversary this fall. It raised well over \$500,000 in 2005.

Larry Gible



Duane Ness, left, chair of the Brethren Disaster Relief Auction, and Jay Witman, second from left, founder of the auction, accept a check for \$10,000 from Sally and Bob Bingaman, who chaired a 'faith dinner' at York (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren.

## Congregation dedicates marker honoring its past

The Church of the Brethren in Kingsley, Iowa, was organized by a group of about 12 individuals in 1884. Membership grew over the years, but, as in most small communities, church membership has declined to the point that, in this town of about 1,275 population, the present group has sold its parsonage and church building and now worships with United Church of Christ brothers and sisters.

A parochial cemetery was developed in 1892 and was used by about 100 families up until some 60 years ago. It has become recognized as another "old settlers" burial ground, many of which dot the Midwest landscape. With only about a dozen active members left, in the "grandparent" age



group, the congregation felt a need to identify its ancestral cemetery with a marker. A sand-blasted marker now joins the graves—some marked, some unmarked—and leaves for posterity a bit of recognition for those on whose shoulders we all stand.

"We do not plant this 3,300-pound piece of granite as a tombstone signifying our deaths," Kingsley pastor Bob Powell says, "but as a memorial monolith of our faith that perhaps we have done the best we could with our lives and that the leavening Spirit we received will continue to be effective in years to come. Hopefully other denominations will reap the benefits of our Church of the Brethren background."

## REMEMBERED

• **Olive Wise**, 86, a member of First Church of the Brethren in Johnson City, Tenn., died in late September. A native of Rockford, Ill., she most recently lived at the John M. Reed Home. She was a former nurse and midwife, and from 1948 until 1959 she served as a missionary of the Church of the Brethren in Bulsar, India. Funeral services were held Oct. 2 at the church.



**Going up:** Dupont (Ohio) Church of the Brethren held an old-fashioned barn-raising at the church on Sept. 30. Members of the congregation met at sunrise to begin building the small barn, designed to house the congregation's bus as well as play props and costumes. Some members cooked beans outside all morning for lunch and later made "hobo stew" for dinner for the workers—including the construction talents of pastors Terry Porter and Doug Price. A group of women from the congregation served the meals.

## LANDMARKS & LAURELS

• Church of the Brethren member **Bill Jenkins**, from Northfield, Ill., received the Edith Surran Victim Activist Award from the National Organization for Victim Assistance Aug. 24 in Orlando, Fla. Jenkins, whose teenage son was shot and killed during a robbery in 1997, has written resources to help grieving families, leads workshops, and helped to found Murder Victims Families for Human Rights, an international organization that opposes the death penalty.

• Arcadia (Ind.) Church of the Brethren celebrated the 100th birthday of **Grace Sigo** with an open house on Oct. 19. Sigo, who worked at JCPenney and taught ceramics, has spent her entire life around the Arcadia area.

• The **Every Church A Peace Church** (ECAPC) program has received a grant of \$500,000 for a national expansion program. The grant will be awarded in installments over the next three years. Founded six years ago by an ecumenical group including representatives of the historic peace churches, ECAPC promotes a vision of Christianity which is non-militaristic. The Shumaker Family Foundation of Kansas made the grant. The foundation cited its interests in spirituality and social justice, and the innovative approach of ECAPC, as factors in awarding the grant. A series of eight conferences in major cities will introduce study materials, train organizers, and create a network of regional organizations, peace fellowships, and congregations engaged in just peacemaking.

• Director John Braun in September announced the end of the **Brethren in Business** organization that he had worked at over the past three years. He expressed hopes that some local groups would continue to gather Brethren business owners for dialogue and networking.

• **Ridgeway Church of the Brethren** (Harrisburg, Pa.) received the Outstanding Program Partner of the Year Award from the National Multiple Sclerosis Society's Central Pennsylvania Chapter on Nov. 8. The church has supplied space to the Multiple Sclerosis Society for a variety of events over the past 10 years.

• **Elk Run Church of the Brethren**, Churchville, Va., celebrated its 125th anniversary on Oct. 22 with a special worship service, guest choir, carry-in meal, and historical presentation. An article in the Staunton (Va.) *News Leader* included an interview with member Doris E. Smith, who has written a history of the church.

• **Lewiston (Maine) Church of the Brethren** celebrated 25 years on Aug. 26-27. The congregation was begun by six families from Pennsylvania, who moved to Maine to be part of the new church plant, according to the *Sun-Journal* newspaper.

• **Rockhill Church of the Brethren** (Rockhill Furnace, Pa.) began its 100th anniversary celebration this fall. A series of events is planned, along with a cookbook project collecting favorite recipes.

# Are you aware?

**A**wareness has been on my mind a lot lately.

I've heard it said that awareness is the key to spiritual growth. At a tracking and wilderness survival school I go to, awareness is held up as the single most important skill. Its importance has been clear to me as I practice the hand drill, a primitive method of starting fire by spinning a weed stalk on a thin piece of wood. It doesn't work without perfect form, attention to detail, and use of just the right materials. Awareness.



BOB ETZWEILER

Awareness was once intimately connected to survival. I close my eyes and I can imagine back to a native village a thousand years ago. It's late autumn. A young scout heads out to hunt to provide food for his family. The hunt epitomizes a human at the peak of awareness.

The scout is intensely aware of every aspect of his surroundings. He knows the position of the sun and the shadows it casts that can hide his silhouette. He is intimately aware of the

direction of the wind, which could carry his smell to his quarry and announce his presence. He knows the direction of the wind, from the way it caresses his cheek to the way it makes the grasses dance. He knows from the way the leaves in the treetops quiver, and the way the clouds sail upon it.

As his eyes scan the horizon in front of him and the woods

**I've found peace in the wilderness, in the temples created only by the hands of God. Without the voice of our culture screaming in our ear, it's a place to find rest and to attend to the whispers of our souls. I don't seek the wilderness as often as I know I need to. It's too easy for me to give in and accept the distraction.**

and brush surrounding him, his bare feet delicately feel the ground beneath letting him know where he can silently place his steps. The snap of a stick, the alarm call of a songbird or squirrel, or a slight shift in the wind that went unnoticed, and the hunt would be over. Awareness of that stick, bird, squirrel, the wind, and the thousand other details woven into that hunt add up to success or failure, nourishment or hunger, life or death. Awareness.

Such an intimate awareness of and relationship with creation necessarily means an intimate relationship with the Creator. This relationship, this awareness is something that

was once common but has largely been forgotten. I long for that profound level of awareness and that profound relationship with creation and the Creator. As I search, I meet others who feel the same loss and yearning.

It's a difficult path. Awareness and life in our culture seem mutually exclusive. If we were truly aware of the atrocities perpetrated regularly to give us \$20 jeans, fuel for our cars, freedom from terrorism, and so many of the other comforts we've grown accustomed to, could we continue? If we became fully aware that the things we desire the most can't be found outside of us, we would stop consuming.

The sense of belonging, peace, joy—the things we desire at our core—can only be found within. For our consumer culture to continue, it must have us believe that it has what we need. If we pay attention to the things our culture tells us are important or are regularly distracted, there's no time for awareness or attention to the longing of our souls.

Many of us talk about needing more peace and quiet. When we get it, we sigh in relief. Then in a moment or two we turn on the TV, grab a book, or call a friend. The silence makes us uncomfortable because it's here we remember what we're missing. We don't want to face it, so we seek the distraction. It's painfully true for me.

I've found peace in the wilderness, in the temples created only by the hands of God. Without the voice of our culture screaming in our ear, it's a place to find rest and to attend to the whispers of our souls. I don't seek the wilderness as often

as I know I need to. It's too easy for me to give in and accept the distraction. That's what it is: easy. When we set our awareness aside, we are able to miss the darkness and pain.

Unfortunately, we also

miss the beauty, the splendor, and the sense of awe, amazement, and magic.

The world is in desperate need of people willing to ignore the distractions and become alive and aware. We need to seek the wilderness and the silence and attend to the quiet voice of our neglected hearts and souls and the voice of God.

Maybe I shouldn't speak for anyone except myself. I certainly know that it's what I need. ■

Bob Etzweiler works with the "A Place Apart" project in Putney, Vt. He attends Genesis Church of the Brethren.

# “God takes no side in war. Do not let anyone tell you differently.”

—National Council of Churches general secretary Bob Edgar and retired United Methodist Bishop Felton May, writing a joint editorial in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*

“Most mainline denominations need to be proactive in drawing young people into ministry, yet the most gifted youth are seldom encouraged to pursue the higher education and training needed to serve with excellence in church leadership roles.”

—Melissa Wiginton, vice president of Fund for Theological Education ministry programs and planning

“It is not enough that a church make good decisions. A church is called to make good decisions well.”

—Oakton (Va.) Church of the Brethren pastor Chris Bowman, writing in the church newsletter about the way that we share feelings on potentially divisive issues. Bowman’s thoughts were based on Ephesians 4:1-3.

“Whether the issue is Social Security, spiraling deficit spending, or rising health care costs, telling people the truth about the difficulties they face is not in style these days.”

—from a USA Today editorial (Oct. 17) focusing on US health care issues

“The welfare and possibly even survival of many ordinary North Koreans is in the hands of the international community now.”

—Sophie Richardson, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch, commenting on the dangers of suspending emergency food aid to North Korea as part of sanctions. North Korea suffered massive flooding this past summer, increasing food shortages.

“It’s very important to hear that somebody understands me in order for me to feel open to hearing somebody else.”

—General Board chair Jeff Neuman-Lee, in comments as the board’s executive committee was considering a study paper on stem cell research

“By choosing to forgive, we stand in awe of the horrors that can happen to people in this world, and we decide neither to participate in them nor repay them.”

—the Rev. Lyndon Harris, a priest in Lower Manhattan at the time of the Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center, reflecting five years later

## CULTUREVIEW

- **Bob Edgar**, general secretary of the US National Council of Churches of Christ, told the governing board and staff of the Council in October that he will not seek a third four-year term as chief administrative officer of the ecumenical body. He will conclude eight years of service when his present term ends Dec. 31, 2007. A third term would have been unprecedented in length of service in the general secretary position. A search committee will begin work in early 2007.

- In a US House of Representatives vote on June 9, an amendment to **eliminate funding for the “School of the Americas”** in Georgia received 188 votes of support, 30 short of the number needed to pass.

Another major public witness event was planned at Fort Benning, home to the school (now known as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation) Nov. 17-19.

- **The Democratic Party continues to face a serious “God problem,”** according to a recent Pew Center for Religion & Public Life survey, with just 26 percent saying the party is friendly to religion. However, the proportion of Americans who say the Republican Party is friendly to

religion, while much larger, has fallen from 55 percent to 47 percent in the past year, with a particularly sharp decline coming among white evangelical Protestants.

- The National Council of Churches and numerous other organizations sponsored “**Women in Religion in the 21st Century: A Conference on Commemorating, Celebrating, and Continuing Their Legacy**” Oct. 17-19 in New York.

- Seventy-four percent of 1,013 respondents in a recent CNN poll on **immigration issues** said they would be in favor of more US agents along the US-Mexico border. Only 45 percent, however, said they wanted a 700-mile border fence built.

- As part of a first-time partnership, **Church World Service and Habitat for Humanity International** announced that \$446,000 of a \$3 million grant will be distributed to repair 82 homes on the Gulf Coast, helping low-income individuals and families still displaced by last year’s hurricanes return home. In all, 500 homes will be rebuilt or repaired through the partnership.



## JUST FOR FUN: MAKE A MATCH

**AUTHOR, AUTHOR.** Eight well-known Christmas-season songs are listed below, followed by eight songwriters. Can you match the song name with the person who originally penned the text for that song? (answers below)

1. Silent Night
2. O Little Town of Bethlehem
3. It Came Upon a Midnight Clear
4. Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
5. O Come, All Ye Faithful
6. What Child Is This
7. In the Bleak Midwinter
8. We Three Kings

- |                              |
|------------------------------|
| e. Joseph Mohr               |
| a. Phillips Brooks           |
| g. Edmund Sears              |
| f. Charles Wesley and others |
| b. John F. Wade              |
| h. William C. Dix            |
| d. Christina Rossetti        |
| c. John H. Hopkins           |

# Art & Soul

## Gateway to the divine

*Art and faith can intersect in spiritually powerful ways*

by Jake Blouch



**O**n October 2, 1999, The Brooklyn Museum of Art opened *Sensation*, an exhibit of artwork by young British artists. The exhibit featured various highly controversial works of art, but none as controversial as Chris

Ofili's *The Holy Virgin Mary*. While the Virgin Mary may not be a controversial subject, it becomes so when elephant dung and pornographic images are placed on the canvas.

*The Holy Virgin Mary* ignited a firestorm among Catholics, including then-New York Mayor Rudi Giuliani, who attempted to get public funding removed from the museum.

Supporters of the art exhibit claimed the painting had artistic merit (elephant dung is a revered item in Nigeria, where Ofili's parents hail from). After a US House of Representatives resolution on the matter, and a paint attack on the artwork from an outraged Christian man, a New York judge mandated that it was unconstitutional for the city of New York to withhold funding from the museum. The battle was over, but the war certainly was not.

Clashes between the worlds of art and faith are nothing new. Art and faith have clashed over everything from *The DaVinci Code* this past year to Oliver Cromwell's Puritan gov-

ernment closing all of England's theaters in 1642.

Some of the most famous pieces of art of all time, however, have spirituality written all over them. DaVinci's *The Last Supper* and *John the Baptist*, Handel's *Messiah*, and nearly all of Michelangelo's work have Christian themes to them. And Christians today continue to express their faith through beautiful pieces of art. Unfortunately, a lot of the art that many Christian artists are producing—except for music—are slipping under the radar of most Christians. How are artists expressing their faith through their work, and what effect is this having on them, their audiences, and the church? How are different types of art, including sacred art, being incorporated into worship?



Dance is something that many faith traditions have shied away from. For hundreds of years, dance was seen as sinful—all the way back to Saint Augustine calling the body sinful. But according to liturgical dancer and choreographer Carla Ficke of Denver, Colo., liturgical dance is "a way, for me, of combining my love of movement and expression for God."

"The people I'm most passionate about reaching are



# Dance

*is a way,  
for me, of combining my love of  
movement and expression for God.*

—Dancer and choreographer Carla Ficke of Denver, Colo.,

*Top: Hannah Button-Harrison shares liturgical movement during youth activities at Annual Conference; bottom, dancers take part in worship at the Cross-Cultural Ministries Consultation and Celebration.*



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

church folks," Ficke says, "... particularly younger folks who don't understand." Ficke's work deals with using dance as a way to make a connection with God: not just with the mind, but with the entire body. "It's a soul, body expression in prayer to God," she says. "The point is to be moving to, with, for God."

One very simple exercise she does with congregations is to have people stay in the pews and do simple hand movements to the Lord's Prayer, while encouraging people to create their own movement with the prayer. Ficke also likes having people dance to familiar music or stories, the most powerful of which, she says, is dancing the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. One Easter morning, Ficke had the congregation start in the dark narthex of the church. As trumpets began playing at the front of the church, the congregation moved from the dark narthex into the bright sanctuary to symbolize Christ coming out of the tomb. Dancing to familiar things "brings a whole new depth and meaning to them," she says.

Liturgical dancer Judith Reichsman of Marlboro, Vt., also believes that dance can be a powerful form of worship.

"When you worship dance itself, it can really be a hard taskmaster," she says. "Dance is for worshipping the living

# Improvisation

*Another part of it is joining the spirit that binds us, that flows from one moment to the next. I trust completely in the spirit to carry me.*—Chris Fitz,

member of an acting troupe that focuses on using movement and improvisational theater in worship.

God." Reichsman has been involved with a philosophy and technique of liturgical dance called "interplay." Interplay is about letting the body tell the mind what to do.

"My mind is full of information. . . . My job is to let that come out," she says. Often during prayer Reichsman will begin by simply swinging her arm and let her body lead her through prayer. "I find things about myself that I didn't know when I listen to the body."



Dance is not the only performing art that can bring deeper meaning to worship. Chris Fitz is a founding member of Jubilee, an acting troupe that focuses on using movement and improvisational theater in worship to bring the audience into the theatrical experience, and not be merely entertained by it.

"I find traditional 'spectacle' theater more and more dangerous," says Fitz, who grew up in York (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren. "People become passive and are allowed to only consume, not to become active as part of the worship act." And acting is certainly a worshipful act for Fitz. "When I 'act,' when I dance, I give myself over to something much larger than me," he says, ". . . And another part of it is joining the spirit that binds us, that flows from one moment to the next. I trust completely in the spirit to carry me. It's a dis-



Walt Wilschek

cipline and practice for other parts of . . . where I need to trust in the moving spirit to have faith."

Fitz first became interested in physical improvisational theater after a spiritually enlightening experience with "Contact Improvisation," which he describes as "a kind of dance in which usually two people improvise based on spontaneous interactions of their body weight." Fitz said he felt an incredible experience of God in this situation and wondered why this experience of God couldn't be incorporated into church. "That's when the troupe was born."

One of Jubilee's most popular exercises is called "Fluid Sculpture." The group leader will ask the congregation a question such as, "What are you bringing to worship this morning?" Then a group of three to five actors creates a moving, audible sculpture to express the answer. "When the space is prepared and things flow, the sharing, the answers become increasingly deep and open, powerful," says Fitz. "My impression is that this overall builds a sense of community, of 'who we are' and 'why we're here.'"

Myra Martin-Adkins, from Washington (D.C.) City Church of the Brethren, has done a variety of work with Jubilee ever since its creation. She says it has "given me a means of exploring (my faith) in a different way." She says this type of theater not only creates a community between the actors, but also the very nature of it helps those participating to connect to their own spontaneity. This spontaneity can help them break down their own shell, which can lead to a deeper experience of God.

"Fluid Sculpture" and other exercises like "Playback Theatre," which relies on the audience to give the

# Poems

*are drops of water, and society is parched . . . At best, poems help soften hearts.*

—Poet Matt Guynn, coordinator of peace witness for On Earth Peace

actors inspiration for their work, is often done with school groups. "Playback Theatre is a really powerful tool in resolving conflict," says Martin-Adkins. Having the feelings of those we are in conflict with played back to us, she notes, can help us see the conflict in a different light.



While some art forms, like acting and dancing, create in a more public setting, many other forms are created much more privately. Poet Matt Guynn, coordinator of peace witness for On Earth Peace, says writing his poems has taken him "deeper in faith."

"The experience of waiting for a poem is like waiting in prayer, tracking the trail of a dream," says Guynn. "Following the track towards the place poems are from takes us closer to where God lives."

Guynn began writing poetry in high school, but really got into it years later when he attended a poetry writing retreat, which helped him set aside places for reflection and creativity. While at Bethany Theological Seminary, Guynn was greatly influenced by professor Scott Holland, who talked about the "work of the mind serving the community." Guynn says he began to see how writers can use their work and thoughts to contribute to discussions within the community and help "process difficult

issues," and further the betterment of society.

"My poems are drops of water, and society is parched," he says. ". . . At best, poems help soften hearts."

Guynn says that writing poetry has allowed him the ability to let go more in his spiritual life and follow his deeper impulses, noting that the deeper we get within our creative selves, the closer we get to God. Guynn says his goal for using poems in worship is "to share my dreams and invite what dreams people might have—leave space for people to respond to it."

According to Guynn, worship often has become far too formulaic, and allowing creativity to enter our worship services might allow for a deeper experience of God. Guynn emphasizes the importance of using such things as movement, strong images, color, and poetry, and allowing people to respond to these things in an honest manner to enhance the worship experience.



Paul Grout, from Genesis Church of the Brethren in Putney, Vt., is another artist who creates art that people must not just look at, but respond to.

"What I've tried to do in these last 10 years is produce stuff you have to deal with more rawly," Grout says. "I think

Visual Arts

*There's something in terms of when we're creating . . . is when we are most alive. It's when we're closest to God.*

—Artist Paul Grout, from Genesis Church of the Brethren in Putney, Vt.

# Photography



Robert Miller

my art has gotten a lot more raw."

Over the past few years Grout has been producing these types of works in very public settings. At the 1998 National Youth Conference (NYC), Grout nailed together a wooden sculpture of Christ hanging on the cross; at the 2002 NYC, he showed a time-lapse video of him painting a picture of Jesus with the words "For such a time as this," underneath it. Grout also talks about painting an upside-down picture of Jesus for children at a church, and then turning the picture right-side up.

All of these times people were, for the most part, completely silent, drawn into the creation of the work of art. Grout says creating art in front of people can convey a potent message.

"With a thing like the cross, I create something connecting on a raw level that words can't communicate," he says. "You open up the mystery for people. You open up their childhood. You open up their fears.

"It has to be, in some way, a crucifying of Jesus. If I allow something to happen in me to create and recreate it in terms of putting it up in front of people, something can happen . . . You'd think it's the art itself, but it's not."

For the past few years, Grout has been developing a monastic community in Vermont call "A Place Apart." "It's about giving permission to search, and for giving people permission to be out there," he says. A Place Apart is not

If I can put these images out there and make people see what I saw, feel what I felt, maybe I can change their point of view about that. I do what God wants me to do. He wants me to affect other people's lives."

—Brethren photographer Robert Miller, from New Carlisle, Ohio

just a place for artists, but has been very supportive of artists creating art that isn't the "same old message, different clothes."

"It's not just what you're putting out there. It's about what's happening to you viscerally," Grout says. "It's not a change in media but a change in heart."

Grout also emphasizes the importance of tapping into one's own creativity. "Part of our unwellness is being disconnected to our own creativity," he says. "There's something in terms of when we're creating . . . is when we are most alive. It's when we're closest to God."



Brethren photographer Robert Miller, from New Carlisle, Ohio, also feels he has the responsibility to make his audience feel a certain way instead of just creating a pleasing image.

"I hope I can use the gifts that God has given me to make people feel a certain way," says Miller, who believes his photography is a way of making a "transmission of feeling from my heart to theirs."

In 2005, Miller made a trip to Haiti, out of which came his exhibition "Rock in Water: Haiti Waits." He hopes he can educate people about the situation in Haiti through his art.

"Two hundred miles off the southern coast people are starving to death," Miller says. "If I can put these images out there and make people see what I saw, feel what I felt, maybe I can change their point of view about that. I do what God wants me to do. He wants me to affect other people's lives."



Art is a force to be reckoned with. Not only does it have the power to be the voice of generations and change history—it's also a gateway into the human imagination and soul.

Fitz puts it this way: "I see the arts being so crucial. They're a discipline, a window into the act of creation, and they show us something so real about that act, and the Creator him/her/itself."

The arts are a gateway into the divine.

Jake Blouch is a sophomore at University of the Arts in Philadelphia. He served as a Ministry Summer Service intern with MESSENGER this past summer. He is a member of Spring Creek Church of the Brethren in Hershey, Pa.



# Christmas? I can't wait!

## Some musicians are refocusing on liturgical season of Advent

by Kevin Eckstrom

**The Christmas tree is up and lit at Christ Lutheran Church in Marietta, Ga., and pastor Rusty Edwards just can't wait to sing a few lines of "O Little Town of Bethlehem," his favorite Christmas song.**

"The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight," Edwards said, recalling the 1867 lyrics by Phillips Brooks. "It's the greatest line of any hymn ever written."

But the liturgical calendar, which lays out the songs and scriptures for each Sunday of the church year, doesn't include those beloved Christmas carols and hymns until Dec. 25. That's because, despite what Macy's and Wal-Mart might say, Christmas doesn't start until Dec. 25, and in many churches runs past New Year's Day.

So, during the four Sundays of Advent, Edwards' church will sing Advent hymns, not Christmas ones. It's an area of church music that many musicians say is overlooked and underdeveloped, although a new burst of Advent hymn-writing is helping to fill the gap.

For Edwards, the anticipation of those favorite carols is like a 5-year-old waiting for a visit from Santa on Christmas Eve. Desperate for some Christmas music, the congregation held a carols service one Saturday night. Sunday morning caroling would have to wait a few more weeks.

"Singing Christmas songs after Christmas reminds me of people who send belated birthday cards," Edwards said. "Nice try, but a little late."

In Catholic and many mainline Protestant congregations, the church year is partitioned into different seasons. Unlike a secular calendar, the liturgical church year starts on the first Sunday of Advent, which is four weeks before Christmas. This year, Advent starts on Dec. 3.

The "season" of Christmas doesn't actually start until Dec. 25 and usually lasts for 12 days—with those eight maids a-milking and seven swans a-swimming—until the Feast of the Epiphany, on Jan. 6.

That gives churches one Sunday, Dec. 31, to sing Christmas carols and songs this year. Edwards, for one, says he understands the rules, but still wishes he could sing more of the songs he's already hearing on the radio.

Advent's true believers say the ancient tradition is a season of preparation and anticipation, a sort of kinder and gentler version of Lent, the 40 days of prayer and penance leading up to Easter.

Advent has its own songs and traditions—including lighting

the four candles of the Advent wreath—and musicians say it would be premature to sing Christmas songs about the birth of Christ before he's actually born.

"It would be a little bit like opening your Christmas presents before Christmas morning, like sneaking into the closet and ruining the surprise," said Kathleen Pluth, a Catholic hymnwriter in Washington, D.C. "It's a bit of a letdown."

Added Michael McCarthy, the music director at Washington National Cathedral, "Would you sing 'Happy Birthday' before someone's birthday? That's basically it."

So what's wrong with a little Advent music? To start, there's not much of it—at least not much that is as familiar as Christmas carols. The perennial favorite is "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," based on an ancient 12th-century chant. Others include "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus" and "Comfort, Comfort Now My People."

Pluth, who has written hymns for Advent, admits that "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," yes, is overdone." Edwards, too, has written new Advent hymns, including one, "To a Maid Engaged to Joseph," that can be found in Methodist and Presbyterian hymnals. Pluth is especially proud of her Advent hymn, "On Walls Around Jerusalem."

Mary Louise VanDyke, director of the *Dictionary of American Hymnology* at Oberlin College in Ohio, said hymnwriters are slowly rediscovering Advent, which she said has been overshadowed by all the "bright tinsely stuff" of Christmas.

"People are just so anxious to sing Christmas carols that they're smothering the Advent hymns," VanDyke said. "But there's a lot of new activity going on in composing Advent hymns. These aren't old yellowed hymns."

Pluth and others say Advent hymns are actually easier to write than Christmas songs, in part because the sweet sentiment of Christmas has already been captured for the ages. Advent hymns should have a sense of longing, expectation, and waiting.

And, said Peter Latona, director of music at Washington's Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the type of Advent music that gives him "goosebumps" should also look with hope to the end of time.

"That's what all the good Advent texts have in them—the second coming and the role of Jesus as savior," he said, "not just the baby in the crib."

Kevin Eckstrom is editor for Religion News Service, based in Washington, D.C.

**SONGS OF ADVENT** Songs for the Advent season can be found in the Brethren *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, 172-188, and the *Hymnal Supplement*, 1031-1036.



# How to ACT LIKE A KING'S KID

*Jesus' call to be a peacemaker isn't an easy one*

by Jim Benedict

**F**rom time to time I get asked a question that makes me just a little uncomfortable. I never know quite what to say when someone asks, "What would you like to be called?"

Generally, they mean do I want to be called Pastor, Reverend, Doctor, or just plain Jim? But when they ask the question, it always makes me think of all the names I've been called in the last 46-plus years: James, Jim, Jimmie, Jimbo, Brother Jim, Dr. Jim, Benny, Mister, Pastor, Preacher, Reverend, Rev, St. Benedict, Dad, Daddy, Honey, Baby, Love, Uncle Jim, Uncle Doctor, Hey You, and Kathy's Jim.

Oh, yes, there is one more. When I am behaving in certain ways, my wife will call me, "Russell." That's my father's name. She loves my dad, but from her tone of voice I assume it isn't a compliment.

Still, even when I've run through all the possibilities, I hesitate to declare to people what I want to be called. Somehow, it doesn't seem like it should be my decision. Usually, I just want to say, "Call me whatever you want, as long as it's something nice." But I know most people won't be satisfied with that, so I typically end up telling people to just call me Jim.

I thought about all this again when I read one of the beatitudes in Matthew 5: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." Imagine that—being called a child of God! Jesus says that people will recognize the resemblance between peacemakers and God in the same way that people sometimes say to children, "You look just like your father" or "You look just like your mother." People who see how we behave will know to whom we belong.

Of course, being so closely identified with a powerful figure is not always a piece of cake. Just ask the children of royals. From

what we read in the tabloids and elsewhere, it appears that it isn't an easy life to grow up as a prince or princess. A lot of attention is given to every little detail of your life: everything you say or do, what you wear, what you eat, what grades you get in school, etc., etc. A thoughtless adolescent prank can become international news. A careless remark about another country can force the prime minister to issue a formal apology. That is a lot of pressure to put on a kid. So maybe we shouldn't be so surprised that many children of royalty don't handle it well.

But Jesus doesn't tell peacemakers they will be called children of God in order to put pressure on them. Jesus tells them this as good news, as congratulations. It is a way of saying that in the age to come, when God sets all things right, people will finally recognize you for what you are: children of God.

In fact, all the beatitudes are set in the future tense. Jesus isn't describing the world as it is, but rather the world as it will be. His words are promises. They are words of encouragement to people who are living in troubled times, when the good go beginning and scoundrels prosper. The beatitudes aren't common-sense advice; they are counterintuitive declarations. In other words, we shouldn't expect others to understand. These words are for disciples—wisdom and reminders of truths that are all too easy to lose sight of these days.

So what does this mean for those of us who have pledged to follow Jesus to the end? It means that we march to the beat of a different drummer. It means we should beware of the temptation to give in so we can fit in. It means that as peacemakers, we shouldn't expect to be popular. In fact, it puts a whole different twist on this idea of being called "children of God." Those who speak out for peace and against violence must be prepared to be

accused of being impractical, unrealistic, too heavenly minded to be much earthly good.

And our critics may be right—in this age. We should not expect nonviolence to always work. We do not yet live in the future Jesus was speaking about. We still live in an age where it is considered heroic to be an efficient killer. And those who get in the way of others who are intent on violence are likely to suffer the consequences.

As followers of Jesus, we do not work for peace and refuse violence because it is obviously and unquestionably the most practical approach. We do so because we feel called to do so. If we are followers, we must follow, and we must not deceive ourselves: If Jesus' journey of peacemaking and non-resistance took him to the cross, it is possible that our journeys can end in the same way. As followers of Jesus, we do not pursue the way of peace in order to prosper, or even survive. We pursue it because it is the path we're called to tread.

And how do we walk in this path?

First, we can pray for peace. This might not seem like much, but we fool ourselves if we think it isn't important to start here. It isn't that we need to pray in order to convince God that peace is the way. God knows. We pray to center ourselves, to touch base with our power source, and to refocus our thinking. If our passion for peace is not anchored in prayer, it is hard for it to stand up to the inevitable trials.

Second, we can provoke for peace. I was happy to find that the national junior high theme last year was "Provoke One Another to Love and Good Deeds." This is what is called employing your existing skill set! Middle school-aged children are typically pretty good at provoking one another (and parents and siblings). So they, and we, are simply being asked to use that skill for good.

We provoke others by asking questions. Why? Why not? What if you were in your enemy's shoes: How would you want to be treated? How do we know negotiations won't work? Have we really looked at all the alternatives? Is it worth the cost, financially, spiritually, or in human lives? Why are we so afraid?

Peacemakers who ask such questions will not be popular. At best they may be regarded as a nuisance, and at worst they will be accused of disloyalty. But it is through asking such questions that we remind others that violence is no more an obvious and unquestionable solution than is nonviolence.

Third, we can plant seeds for peace. Every time we return good for evil, every time we go out of our way to help those who can't or won't help us, every time we make the effort to try to understand those who are very different from us, we sow seeds of peace. Every time we speak out against hate, every time we oppose cruelty, every time we demand justice, we sow seeds of peace. Every time we practice integrity, every time we show

mercy, every time we reward decency, we sow seeds for peace.

When I was a boy, I was often compelled to go out to the garden with my father to sow seeds in the spring. There were five of us children, and we all took our turns. It was a big garden, and there was plenty to do. I have to be honest—I didn't enjoy it much at the time.

But when I grew up and got out on my own, I found myself wanting a garden of my own—maybe not as big, but a garden nonetheless—because there is something about being involved with things that grow, something inspiring about having the courage to plant seeds with no guarantee that they will ever yield a harvest. When you plant seeds, you take a chance—several chances, actually. You might lose your crop early to a late spring frost, or lose your crop late to an early autumn frost. Your garden may be ravaged by bugs, gophers, groundhogs, or raccoons. You may have to stand by and watch things wither in a drought, or watch them get washed away by a flood. When you plant seeds, there is always a chance that it may end up being a waste of time. But this much we all know: If you don't plant seeds, there is no chance of a harvest.

**As followers of Jesus, we do not pursue the way of peace in order to prosper, or even survive. We pursue it because it is the path we're called to tread.**

So it is with sowing the seeds of peace. We don't know whether they will grow, whether they will bear fruit, whether the fruit will be ruined by pests, destroyed

by drought, or washed away by floods. But we do know this: If we don't plant seeds of peace, peace has no chance. There will be no harvest.

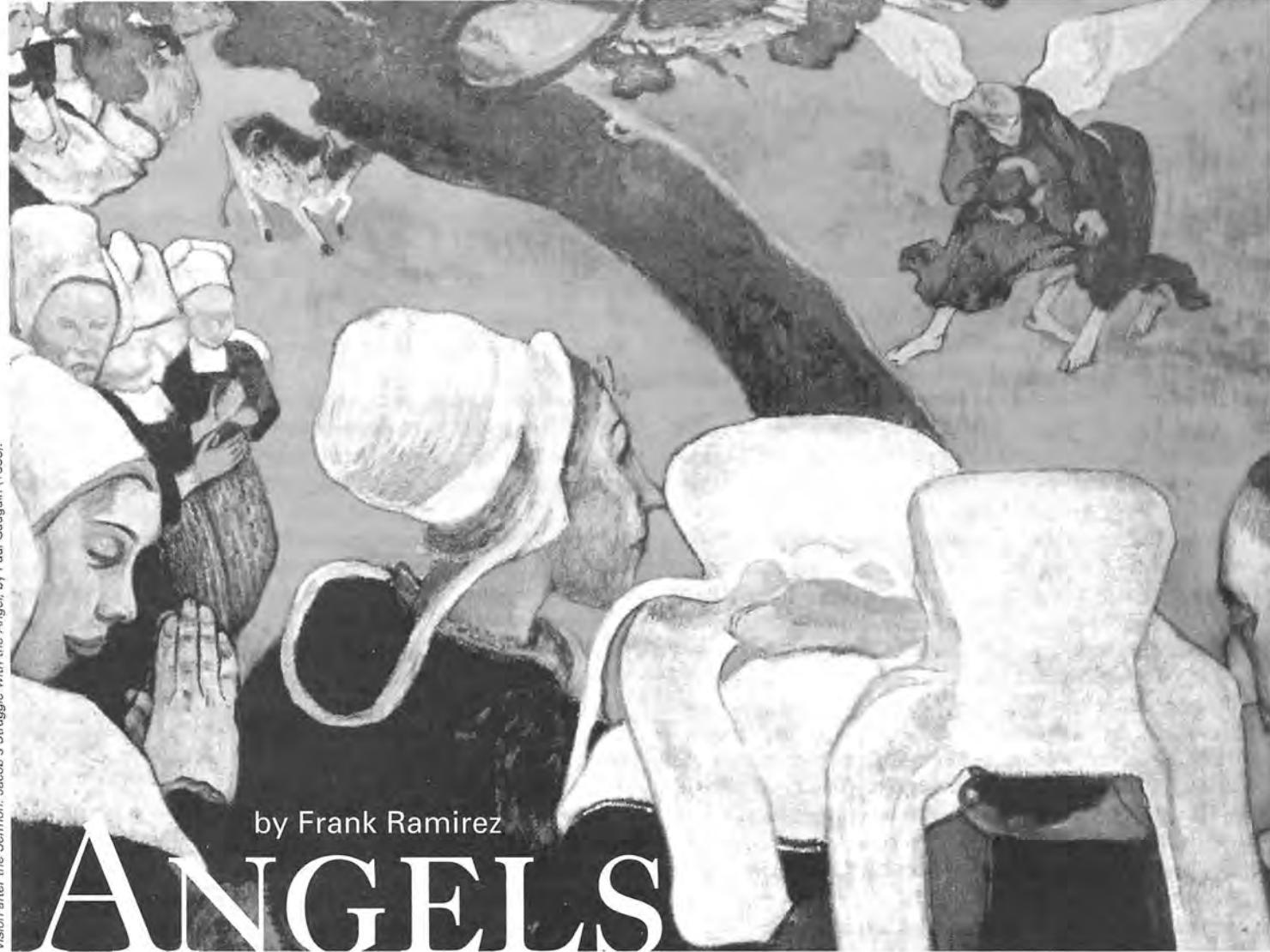
When I stand in my garden, even though I'm a thousand miles away from my home, I feel close to my father. I realize I am, in some important way, truly my father's son. And when peacemakers pray for peace, provoke for peace, and plant the seeds of peace, we are entitled to feel the same way: close to God. And the day will come when we are recognized for what we are, truly children of God. **W**

Jim Benedict is pastor of Union Bridge (Md.) Church of the Brethren.

Amy Atkins



Bekah Houff expresses her hopes with a sign during a peace vigil held at National Youth Conference.



by Frank Ramirez

# ANGELS

## WE HAVE SEEN ON HIGH

*Catharine Hummer's story points to value of love over legalism*

In 1996, while browsing *The Brethren Encyclopedia* at the archives in Elgin, Ill., I discovered the story of Catharine Hummer. The short article about her startled and stunned me. Who is this woman, and why hadn't I ever heard of her?

Nearly 250 years ago, in 1762, Catharine Hummer turned the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania upside-down. She claimed angels visited her and took her, while she was in a trance, into heaven. Her description of what she saw created great controversy. Her father, Peter Hummer, the first minister of the White Oak congregation, encouraged her to tell her story. In the process, she became the first woman to preach among the Brethren.

In 1763 the Brethren met to figure out what to do about her. Both sides, utterly divided by the heated discussion, had scripture to quote for their side. There seemed to be no middle ground. Their decision represents perhaps the most even-handed and hopeful ruling handed down at an Annual Meeting, and could provide guidance for us today as we chart

our own way through troubling and divisive issues.

There is so much I know about Catharine Hummer—and don't know. I've learned the names of her four children and the three stepchildren she helped raise after her marriage to widower Sebastian Keller. But I don't know when she was born nor when she died. I've learned something about what she claimed to have seen in heaven, but I haven't a clue how accurate it is, because it comes to us through the Ephrata Cloister and their charismatic leader Conrad Beissel, who believed the Brethren had gone astray. I've even learned that one of the fundamental beliefs about Hummer—that her visions stopped when she married, which suggested to historians over a century later that they were the ravings of a hormonally unbalanced child—is simply not true.

Hummer was not treated kindly when the first true Brethren histories appeared. Progressives like Martin Grove Brumbaugh were so anxious to portray our early fellowship as a forward-thinking, rational, 20th-century church that they dis-

**"A great water runs from Noon between Morning and Midnight which divides the earthly from the eternal realm. When man dies and leaves this earthly realm he imagines himself alive and does not know anything of his having died, and yet finds himself a stranger on earth. Then he comes to a great road that leads from Evening towards Morning . . ." —vision of Catharine Hummer**

missed Hummer and her visions out of hand. Yet it is obvious from the few sources available that her contemporaries took her very seriously. They either agreed or disagreed with what she had seen, but they seem to have assumed that something happened. One of the things I had to do in my research was learn to let the facts speak for themselves.

While Hummer is criticized by many Brethren historians, she is at least appreciated by the Brethren writers Vernard Eller and Dale Brown, both of whom used the incident as one example of how Brethren placed loving each other ahead of being right. And Donald F. Durnbaugh has done the most important job of presenting the materials about her in his sourcebook, *The Brethren in Colonial America*, and referring to her in his seminal history, *Fruit of the Vine*, in a neutral fashion.

Here's what I know: In 1762 Catharine Hummer received several visions, four of which are described in the *Ephrata Chronicles*. Angels came and told her that love among the Brethren had grown cold, and that they were in need of revival. She reported that despite her anguish for her sisters and brothers in the faith she was filled with joy. And eventually, in heaven, she saw the souls of some who had died, still in a daze, given a chance to be baptized after death.

(This hope of a second chance at salvation was a hallmark of early Brethren, who believed in universal restoration. Universalism is the belief that all are saved, regardless of what they have done. Universal restoration, which has been believed among Christians from the beginning of the faith, is based on particular scriptures suggesting that while only those who in free will accept Jesus as Savior are saved, a merciful God will offer sinners the chance at salvation again and again.)

But as controversial as her visions were, there was a twist. Evidently the unmarried Catharine Hummer could only go into a trance when in the presence of doctor Sebastian Keller. Keller was married at the time, and this created quite a scandal. It's likely he was estranged from his wife, Rosina, who resided at the Ephrata Cloister.

The scandal that the two spent time together may have been an issue, but it's worth noting that in an age before birth control Hummer did not give birth until she married Keller in 1765, after the death of his wife. It seems unlikely, in the absence of children prior to that date, that the two shared sexual relations.

Over a century later some have made disparaging remarks about Keller's skill as a doctor, but in his day all physicians relied on herbs, folk medicine, and harmful practices such as bleeding and purging. Keller was respected enough by his contemporaries to be elected several times to the Pennsylvania State Assembly after the colonies were made

free from Great Britain.

Regardless, the impact of Hummer's preaching was overwhelming. As one contemporary wrote: "It is beyond description how quickly this awakening spread through the country; people came from a distance of more than 60 miles to the house of the above-mentioned Hummer, so that the too-numerous visitors emptied these good people's house and barn of their provisions. Night services were then arranged, to which people came every night . . . at the same time most charming hymns were sung by angels in the air, I give on authority of those who allege that they heard them."

I think many 21st-century Brethren know little about the strong mystical bent of our early forebears. Brethren were prolific poets and hymn writers, who celebrated their close, emotional relationship to God in their writings with intimate images and florid comparisons. They believed the line between the divine and the human was very thin. Heaven could intrude into daily life with the greatest of ease.

It was a time of great spiritual activity. The German-speaking Christians believed God could speak directly to them. Having experienced horrific wars, persecution, exile, and trials, they believed that the end of the world might well be at hand. And they were ready to believe in continuing revelation from God, as long as it was tested by the community against the Scriptures.

In the midst of these travails it is astonishing to discover how pure and radiant joy permeates their writings—and Hummer's visions.

A central character in the drama who must not be ignored was Alexander Mack Jr. (1712-1803), son of the first minister among the Brethren. Mack, perhaps the most prolific writer we have ever produced, was recognized as the leader among the Brethren for over half a century. Born and later baptized in Europe, he came with his father to Pennsylvania in 1729 and became a weaver.

The death of his father in 1735, however, sent him into an emotional tailspin. He left the Brethren and joined Beissel at his Ephrata Cloister. Beissel, who had come to the colonies from Europe looking for spiritual enlightenment, was originally baptized by Peter Becker, the first Brethren minister in America, and had served the Conestoga congregation as a minister himself. However he soon decided that God had called him to lead people into a celibate lifestyle, renounced his baptism, and drew many people into his intentional community, which included both celibates and "householders."

Even today, people are fascinated by the cloister and the

**“Although we have no consensus about the occurrence in question, those who believe in it are not to judge those who do not. Likewise, we shall not look down on those who derive some lesson and benefit from it. In general, we admonish you, beloved brethren, to receive one another as Christ has received us, and to forgive one another as Christ has forgiven us also.”** —from the 1763 Annual Meeting decision regarding Catharine Hummer’s visions

seemingly harsh lifestyle embraced by the people who followed Beissel. Sleeping a few hours at a time on wooden benches with wooden blocks for pillows, his followers ate little, worked hard, and worshipped several times during the day, including services that ran for hours from midnight on. Others who visited the cloister reported that their singing was angelic, and were themselves attracted to this life.

At one point Catharine Hummer herself left the Brethren to visit the Ephrata Cloister. Beissel, who refused to believe the rumors about her, accepted her visions and recorded them for posterity, expressing confidence in her virgin state. But Hummer wanted marriage, children, and a normal life, and eventually she and Keller were married (and the visions largely, but not totally, ceased).

Mack Jr., in his depression, spent 10 years away from the Brethren, first at the cloister and later, when he became disillusioned because of the power Beissel seemed to require, as a hermit. But return he did. After his apology he was reconciled with the Brethren and became their leader for decades. Perhaps his experiences convinced him that love was far more important than being right.

Once, while laying out his scriptural reasons for conducting the love feast in a particular fashion, he noted, “Therefore, dear brethren, let us watch, and be careful, and above all preserve love; for then we will preserve light.”

So perhaps Mack’s leadership informed the decision of the Brethren when they met in May 1763 to determine what was to be done about Catharine Hummer. Brethren did not hesi-

tate to disfellowship someone over matters of garb, or disobedience, or lack of conformity to the order. They were quick to give instruction to each other in the matter of how to live.

Yet in this early decision both love and patience are expressed. The Brethren who met must have realized that when both sides of an argument have scripture to quote, when the truth of a matter is not easily determined, love must rule the day. They decided not to decide whether Catharine had seen angels, or whether the visions—especially in the manner of universal restoration—were true.

Instead, they cautioned Catharine’s father about the anger he displayed when his daughter was criticized, and suggested as well that “unnecessary visiting” should cease. In other words, for the time being Sebastian Keller and Catharine Hummer should not give the appearance of impropriety, regardless of what might actually have happened or not happened.

But most of all they simply advised that those who believed the visions and those who did not should not look down upon each other, but accept each other in love. In other words, they would rather stay together in love than split over who was right and who was wrong. It was more important to worship and serve Christ than settle the matter. After all, time settles most matters sooner or later.

I love Brethren history, and one of the things I’ve discovered is that while Brethren have never shied away from vigorous arguments among ourselves, neither have we felt that we had to come to a decision in a given year on a particular issue. However long it takes to reach consensus, it’s worth waiting for it. That’s because we love each other. ■

Frank Ramirez is pastor of Everett (Pa.) Church of the Brethren and author of several books.

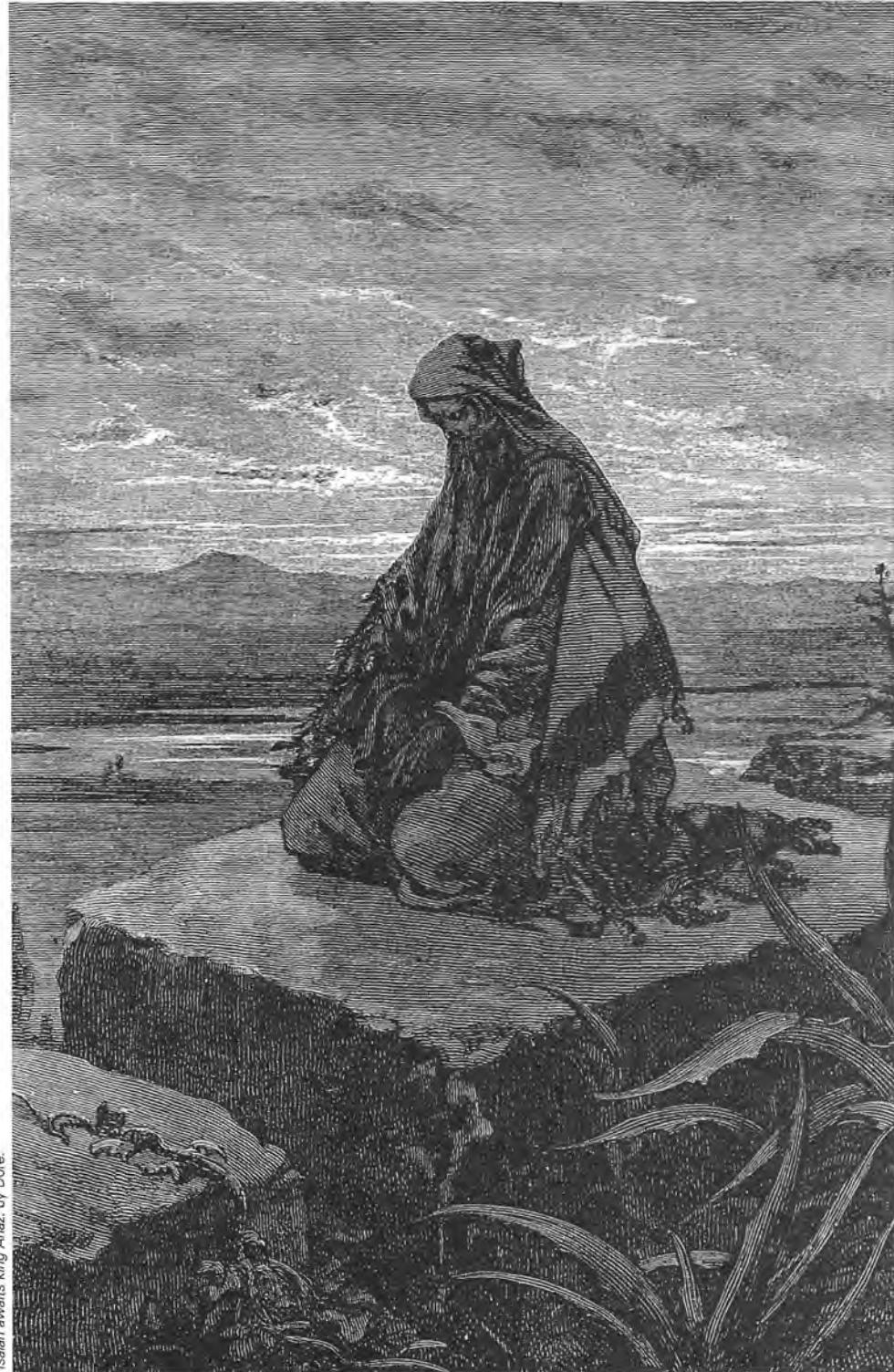
## RESOURCES: LEARN MORE

- Frank Ramirez joined forces with Brethren composer Steve Engle to create a musical based on Catharine Hummer’s life. Titled ***Angels Everywhere: A True Story of the Brethren***, it was first produced in 2004 to raise money for ministry education in Middle Pennsylvania District and has since been performed at a number of other venues.
  - A chapter on Catharine Hummer appears in the book ***The Meanest Man in Patrick County and Other Unlikely Brethren Heroes***, published by Brethren Press. More on the topic of universal restoration can be found in a booklet by that title in the Brethren Press “**Perspectives**” series. Call 800-441-3712 to order.
  - More details on the **Ephrata Cloister** can be found at [www.ephratacloister.org](http://www.ephratacloister.org).

## Isaiah: *Through despair to hope*

Book blends prophetic witness and public theology

by Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm



Isaiah awaits king Ahaz. By Dore.

**E**vil, sin, and bad news hardly surprise us. With our repeated involvement in war and the widening gulf between rich and poor, human sin and the urge to follow our own will before seeking that of God is as evident today as it was to the prophet Isaiah in the eighth century BCE.

Yet hope, love, and newness of life always seem to catch us by surprise. Good news continually arises in new and unexpected ways, awaiting our discovery and reclamation. As the prophet Isaiah understood, God not only judges our sin (5:7-30) but moves through the worst of human circumstances to offer hope beyond despair. God's word will not return empty (55:11) but promises us new life through the power of God's Spirit among us (61:1-4). Even death itself will be defeated (25:6-8) as Isaiah envisions the resurrection to come (26:19).

With its lively mix of poetry, prophetic oracles, and narrative history, the prophet Isaiah offers us a compelling mix of judgment and hope. Speaking to kings and nations, Isaiah's understanding of public theology urges us to trust God's promises and allow faith to guide our public life.

In the Christian canon, the book of Isaiah follows several poetical books or "Writings" and is listed as the first of the Major Prophets (including Jeremiah and Ezekiel). In the Hebrew canon of Scripture, Isaiah immediately follows the books of 1 and 2 Kings, with all three books reflecting similar historical concerns: 2 Kings ends with the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians, and Isaiah continues this concern for the fate of Jerusalem and the destiny of God's people during the period of exile and beyond.

At least two major sections may be

noted in the book as a whole. First, chapters 1-39 (generally known as "First Isaiah") reflect events occurring between 742-701 BCE. During that time, the northern kingdom of Israel was annexed to the Assyrian empire while the southern kingdom of Judah became an anxious tributary. This section anticipates God's harsh judgment against Jerusalem because of its disobedience to God's will (i.e., 1:2-6, 2:6-22, 3:1-4:1) and includes several oracles against the surrounding nations (chapters 13-23).

The political and public dimensions of faithlessness are readily apparent. God's people have not fulfilled the commands of righteousness but have committed violence against others; they have not exercised justice but have taken property and possessions that belong to others (Isa. 5:1-13). Woven throughout these judgments, Isaiah proclaims the hope of God's promises and describes Jerusalem's recovery and restitution (i.e., 2:1-4, 9:1-7, 11:1-9, 34-35). Beyond God's judgment we glimpse the prophetic vision of restoration and newness of life.

The second major section is composed of chapters 40-66 (known as "Second



*The man of sorrows*, by Schmitt.

## Proclaiming some of the most magnificent poetry imaginable, the prophet-as-poet describes the plight of God's people and the hope of divine rescue.

Isaiah" or, if further divided between chapters 40-55 and 56-66, "Second" and "Third Isaiah"). A decisive break is felt at the beginning of chapter 40 with the prophetic call, "Comfort, O comfort my people" who are suffering in exile.

This section, like that of chapters 1-39, moves through despair to hope. Proclaiming some of the most magnificent poetry imaginable, the prophet-as-poet describes the plight of God's people

and the hope of divine rescue. Among the most memorable verses are the four Servant Songs of 42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:4-11 and 52:13-53:12. Addressed to the people of Israel, Christians also hear intimations of Christ's coming through these beautiful verses. In addition, the prophet's words describe God's vision of peace (60:17-19), the restoration of Jerusalem (62:10-12), and a new age when God's rule will be fully established on earth (65:17).

Isaiah was painfully familiar with patterns of sin and dissolution that drive us to despair. The bad news is that we must suffer through despair and the consequences of our sin. But the good news is that God's

judgment is not the final word. There is hope in God's promises of restoration, salvation, and newness of life. ¶

Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm is associate professor of preaching and worship 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 January: Jeremiah, by Robert Neff.

## ISAIAH: A CLOSER LOOK

**When written:** The book of Isaiah reflects various periods in Israel's history, spanning the late eighth through the early sixth centuries BCE.

**Authorship:** Isaiah includes the work of the eighth-century prophet writing to Judah and Jerusalem as well as other "disciples" whose writings continue the prophet's work and reflect the concerns of successive generations.

**Did you know:** Jesus referenced the prophet Isaiah more than any other text in Hebrew scripture.

**Well-known verses:** "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (2:4); "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light . . . For a child has been born for us, a son given to us" (9:2-7); "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength" (30:15); "A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord . . .' (40:3); "The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever" (40:8); "Is this not the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?" (58:6); "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed" (61:1-4).

## Annual Conference announces worship leadership for 2007

Four Brethren pastors and a denominational staff member will preach at next summer's Annual Conference in Cleveland, Ohio. The conference's Program and Arrangements Committee recently announced the list of leadership for the event, which will be held June 30-July 4.

Preachers are Jeff Carter, pastor of Manassas (Va.) Church of the Brethren, on Saturday evening June 30; Belita Mitchell, Annual Conference moderator and pastor of First Church of the Brethren in Harrisburg, Pa., on Sunday morning; Duane Grady, a member of the Church of the Brethren General Board's Congregational Life Team from Anderson, Ind., on Monday; Tim Harvey, pastor of Central Church of the Brethren, Roanoke, Va., on Tuesday evening; and Ataloa Woodin, pastor of Community Brethren Church, a Church of the Brethren congregation in Fresno, Calif., Wednesday morning.

Worship leaders are Chrissy Sollenberger of Annville, Pa., who was a youth speaker at National Youth Conference this summer; James Beckwith, Annual Conference moderator-elect and pastor of Annville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren; Brandon Grady, a Bethany Theological Seminary student from Richmond, Ind.; Bev and Eric Anspaugh, pastors of Florin Church of the Brethren in Mount Joy, Pa.; and Erin Matteson, co-pastor of Modesto (Calif.) Church of the Brethren.

Coordinating worship will be Program and Arrangements Committee member Joanna Willoughby of Wyoming, Mich. Joseph Helfrich, a Church of the Brethren musician from Bradford, Ohio, will coordinate music. Rebecca Rhodes of Roanoke, Va., will serve as choir director; and Raymonde Rougier of Dayton, Ohio, will direct the children's choir. This year's organist is Chris Brewer of Bradford, Ohio, and on the piano/keyboard will be Bob Iseminger of Roanoke, Va.

## BVS Unit 272

Brethren Volunteer Service held orientation for Unit 272 Sept. 24 to Oct. 13 at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., before heading to one- or two-year projects around the country and abroad. Participants, with hometown or home congregation and project assignment are as follows:

*Front row, from left:* Becky Snavely (orientation staff); Nora Schwillk, Ulm, Germany, to Gould Farm, Monterey, Mass.; Amy Rhodes, Central Church of the Brethren, Roanoke, Va., to Youth and Young Adult Ministries, Elgin, Ill.; Cristina Detwiler, Union Center Church of the Brethren, Nappanee, Ind., to The Palms Retirement Community, Sebring, Fla.; Kelsey Hollinger, West Green Tree Church of the Brethren, Marietta, Pa., to Friendship Day Care, Hutchinson, Kan.; Marni O'Brien, Newton, Mass., to Totonicapan, Guatemala; Rachel McFadden, Manchester Church of the Brethren, North Manchester, Ind., to Youth and Young Adult Ministries, Elgin, Ill.

*Second row:* Genelle Wine (orientation staff); Megan Carter, Sacramento, Calif., to Quaker Cottage, Belfast, Northern Ireland; Peter Trabert, Lincoln, Neb., to Brot und Rosen, Hamburg, Germany; Nathanael Schwarz, Trier, Germany, to Innisfree Village, Crozet, Va.; Hannah Kliewer (orientation staff).



*Back row:* Friedrich Sulk, Hoyerswerda, Germany, to Meeting Ground, Elkton, Md.; Skylar Rising, First Church of the Brethren, Litchfield, Ohio, to San Antonio (Texas) Catholic Worker House; Daniel Haenel, Loessnitz, Germany, to Su Casa Catholic Worker House, Chicago; Andrew Miller, Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren, Elgin, Ill., to Brethren Woods, Keezletown, Va.; Daniel Fryman, West Milton (Ohio) Church of the Brethren, to District IV Human Resources Development Council, Havre, Mont.; Travis Beam, Living Faith Fellowship Church of the Brethren, Concord, N.C., to

Youth and Young Adult Ministries, Elgin, Ill.; Matthew Yelton, Melvin Hill Church of the Brethren, Columbus, N.C., to Camp Bethel, Fincastle, Va.; Lucy Gardner, Moscow Church of the Brethren, Broadway, Va., to District IV Human Resources Development Council, Havre, Mont.; Lukas Palm, Ulm, Germany, to Comfort House Services, McAllen, Texas; Athena Gibble, Codorus Church of the Brethren, York, Pa., to Church of the Brethren in Brazil, with an interim placement at Meeting Ground, Elkton, Md.

For more on Brethren Volunteer Service, visit [www.brethrenvolunteerservice.org](http://www.brethrenvolunteerservice.org).

## Brethren Colleges Abroad discusses new initiatives

Presidents of the Church of the Brethren-related colleges and Bethany Theological Seminary met in August with representatives of Brethren Colleges Abroad (BCA) at Bethany's Richmond, Ind., campus. The college and seminary presidents serve as the BCA Board of Directors.

The group included Mell Bolen, who became president of BCA on July 1, and Henry Brubaker, chief financial officer. Bolen is the former director of the Office of International Programs at Brown University. This was the first meeting of the group since she was named president.



Mell Bolen, right, president of Brethren Colleges Abroad, chats with Bethany Theological Seminary faculty members Tara Hornbacker and Jeff Bach at a reception during the board meeting.

The agenda centered on future initiatives for BCA, which works with more than 100 colleges and universities. A new core course for all students who participate in BCA will discuss social justice in a global context and include cross-cultural theory. "It will not be simply another international relations course," said Bolen, "but will combine the best of BCA's history and core vision with educational practice and theory." Another goal is to create new education sites in the developing world, where students will experience a nuanced view of the complexity of global issues.

Bolen believes that cross-cultural experiences are increasingly important for quality higher education. "This generation lives life in a global context,"

she explained. Students "will not be able to effectively address the critical issues that they face, such as the environment, immigration, and ethnic identity, unless they can discuss them in an informed way."

A third initiative under discussion is development of short-term or intensive educational experiences. Bethany president Eugene Roop noted that this option could lead to increased involvement of Bethany students in the BCA program. "Bethany students

need to engage in a cross-cultural course that features both study and direct engagement," he said. "BCA can provide many more of such contexts than Bethany could provide alone."

For more about BCA, go to [www.bcanet.org](http://www.bcanet.org). For more about the Brethren colleges and seminary go to [www.brethren.org/links/relcol.htm](http://www.brethren.org/links/relcol.htm).

## General Board cancels Mission Alive conference

The General Board has decided to cancel the Mission Alive 2007 conference scheduled for April 2007. Staff made the decision after key sponsoring partners withdrew their support over disagreement with staff decisions and process.

Global Mission Partnerships executive Mervin Keeney expressed his disappointment at the turn of events.

"The first mission conference [held in 2005] had been a unifying and energizing event that had been meaningful in the life of the church, and a series of such conferences was proposed to continue to build momentum and common ground," he said. "The General Board seeks to serve and hold together all the parts of the church. This has been a difficult decision, but is made in the best interest of the church."

Brethren Revival Fellowship and the Brethren World Mission group were the primary sponsors of the conference in addition to the General Board. Conversations around future mission conferences are anticipated.

## PERSONNEL MOVES

### • Norman and Carol Spicher

**Waggy** have accepted a position with the General Board's Global Mission Partnerships to develop a health ministry with the church in the Dominican Republic. They will begin in January. A team that brings both health care experience and pastoral training, the Waggs have previously served with the Rural Health Program of Ekklesiyan Yan'uwa in Nigeria (EYN—the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria), a community-based model that

may also be appropriate for the Dominican context. The Dominican church is seeking to find ways to serve the regions of the country where it is active and where many communities have little access to health care.

- Two Mennonite editors have joined the staff of *Gather 'Round: Hearing and Sharing God's Good News*, a Sunday school curriculum published jointly by Brethren Press and Mennonite Publishing Network. **Rose Stutzman**

- Nancy Ryan** both will work from their homes in Goshen, Ind. Stutzman began Oct. 3 as associate editor primarily for the Junior Youth, Youth, and Parent/Caregiver units, working three-quarters time. Ryan will be responsible primarily for editing the Preschool unit of *Gather 'Round*, working one-quarter time. She began Oct. 13.

- Jeff Lennard** began as director of marketing and sales for Brethren Press on Nov. 13. Lennard has spent the past

eight years as manager of the North Park University/Covenant Bookstore in Chicago. Prior to that he owned two bookstores in Omaha, Neb. His experience includes inventory management, store administration, team supervision, customer service, sales and advertising, merchandising, profit-and-loss management, contract negotiation, and market research and development. Lennard lives in Chicago with his family, and is active in the Evangelical Covenant Church.

**Dec. 3 Christmas Offering** (General Board); **Brethren Press winter curriculum quarter** begins

**Jan. 13-Feb. 11 General Board Nigeria workcamp**

**Jan. 28-Feb. 16 Brethren Volunteer Service orientation**

**Feb. 4 Service Sunday** (sponsored by General Board)

**Feb. 16-18 Global Women's Project Conference**, North Manchester, Ind.

**March 9-11 Eastern Regional Youth Conference**, Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pa.

**March 10-12 General Board meeting**, Elgin, Ill.

**March 16-18 Association of Brethren Caregivers board meeting**, Elgin, Ill.

**March 16-18 Roundtable Regional Youth Conference**, Bridgewater (Va.) College

**March 23-25 Bethany Theological Seminary board of trustees meeting**, Richmond, Ind.

**March 24-29 Christian Citizenship Seminar**, New York City and Washington, D.C.



Adrienne S. Kornegay

*Members of the Manchester College community in North Manchester, Ind., sent a birthday banner of personalized greetings to the United Nations, which marked its 61st anniversary on Oct. 24. Students, faculty, and staff signed the banner. Manchester is the only college in the United States to hold permanent observer status with the United Nations, as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). The status gives Manchester representatives access to UN proceedings and, with permission, opportunity to actively debate issues on the floor of the UN General Assembly. Manchester graduate Andrew Cordier, who taught history at Manchester from 1926 to 1944, was a principal architect of the United Nations.*

sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee, where On Earth Peace staff member Matt Guynn was a featured speaker, and a Jan. 10-22 delegation to Palestine and Israel co-sponsored with Christian Peacemaker Teams.

The board called to leadership chair Bev Weaver, vice chair Dena Lee (also serving as pastor to the board), secretary Lauree Hersch Meyer, treasurer Doris Abdullah, and additional executive committee members Dena Gilbert and Robbie Miller. For more details, go to [www.brethren.org/oepa](http://www.brethren.org/oepa).

### New video tells story of post-WWII response

*Food and Clothing, Cattle and Love: Brethren Service in Europe after World War II*, a new documentary reviewing the work of Brethren Service in Europe following the devastation of World War II, is now available as a video. The resource, sponsored by On Earth Peace, was produced by David Sollenberger, with support from a number of individual contributors and from the Church of the Brethren General Board.

The video tells the story of the

church at its best, according to a release from On Earth Peace. "In an outpouring of service backed financially by sacrificial giving, the Church of the Brethren came to the aid of neighbors in need," the release said. "Following Jesus' example, Brethren Service crossed political boundaries to extend a helping hand."

The video offers photos and film footage from the time period, as well as interviews with those who served. To suit a variety of audiences and uses, the story is told in three different styles and formats including a 27-minute version giving a comprehensive look at the work in Europe in the late 1940s and early 1950s; a 12-minute documentary designed for shorter formats and sparking discussion; a 3-minute music video especially for younger audiences; and 29 minutes of historical photos, information, and personal reflections prepared by Mullen.

To order, call On Earth Peace at 410-635-8704 or visit [www.brethren.org/oepa/resources/everyone/bscvideo.html](http://www.brethren.org/oepa/resources/everyone/bscvideo.html). Cost is \$10 for DVD, \$12 for VHS, plus \$3 for shipping.

## On Earth Peace looks at issues of inclusion

With a devotional theme focusing on "Transformational Change," the On Earth Peace board of directors and staff met Sept. 21-23 at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md.

Prior to the meetings, board, staff, and others from the Brethren Service Center community gathered to commemorate the United Nations' and World Council of Churches' International Day of Prayer for Peace. Hundreds of handmade pinwheels for peace were placed around the center.

Throughout the meeting, board and staff joined for four sessions of "Together: Conversations on Being the Church," facilitated by Joe Detrick, executive minister of Southern Pennsylvania District.

Board and staff also considered a proposal and began discernment work on issues of sexual orientation and inclusion in the church. A small group of board and staff members was created to coordinate planning for future discernment.

The finance committee reported that for fiscal year 2006, which ended Sept. 30, it appears income will be sufficient to cover expense, with income somewhat below budget and expenses considerably below budget. The board approved a balanced budget of \$515,000 for fiscal year 2007.

The executive committee reported on subgroups created to provide support and supervision for the On Earth Peace co-directors, the appointment of Bev Weaver as On Earth Peace representative to the Annual Conference Program Feasibility Committee, and board meeting dates for 2008: April 17-19 and Sept. 25-27.

Staff reports highlighted the first of the Shalom Series practical peacemaking booklets, "Shalom—Christ's Way of Peace"; a new video resource; and the launch of On Earth Peace's newly designed website. Upcoming events reviewed included the Counter-Recruitment Conference Nov. 3-5,

# The spirit of the universe

**A**fter years of wrangling and a week of bitter debate, astronomers voted on a sweeping reclassification of the solar system a few months ago. In what many of them described as a triumph of science over sentiment, Pluto was demoted to the status of a "dwarf planet."

So as of 2006, the new solar system boasts just eight planets. Astronomers notwithstanding, I suppose musicians can live with it, because when Gustav Holst composed his most famous and enduring work, *The Planets*, he honored only seven, leaving out Earth, and of course, Pluto, which had not yet been identified.



LANI WRIGHT

Which brings us to Jupiter: In keeping with the ongoing theme of this column, and since there is no room on the pages of the *Hymnal Supplement* booklets to include biographical sketches and anecdotal sidebars, here is yet another installment of a "serial" version of *Hymnal Companion*, expressly for selected *Hymnal Supplement* series songs. The grand and sweeping-sounding tune of

THAXTED (named for the town in Essex where his family had a country cottage) is based on Holst's movement titled "Jupiter." Read on.

### ***Hymnal Supplement #1130, "O Spirit, all-embracing"***

Tune: THAXTED; Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, 2000; Music: Gustav Holst (1874-1934), *The Planets*, 1918

Holst has been described by a biographer as an "oversensitive and somewhat miserable child" who was plagued life-long by physical health challenges. Even so, he combated poor health and the proverbial financial constraint of artists by developing a

**In the end, Dufner's text echoes the psalmist who, in contemplating the heavens (Psalm 8), was over-awed by the frailty of human life and by divine attention to mortals. We need both perspectives.**

habit of prodigious walking or cycling, as well as eating a vegetarian diet decades before it was fashionable. When neuritis in his hand defeated him as a keyboardist, he took up the trombone. It marked a significant juncture in his development as a composer, as he learned to hear entire orchestrations in his mind's ear. With a trombone strapped on his back as he strode over the English countryside, it also marked him as an oddity.

Despite his initial training at the Royal College of Music, Holst was largely self-taught as a composer, learning by experience and pondering deeply on his art. He avoided preconceived systems and academic theory. He went his own way experimenting, constantly searching for the right notes.

Sometimes he was successful in his experimentation, sometimes not. Although he was naturally delighted with success he was wary of it and not put off by failure. "If nobody likes your work, you have to go on for the sake of the work," he said. "And you're in no danger of letting the public make you repeat yourself." He refused the safe, easy answer.

Neither could his personality be pinned down. Even more than most people, he was a remarkable combination of opposing characteristics—gregarious and solitary, perceptive and naïve in life and music. Despite the influence of the simplicity and directness of English folk-songs, he exhibited in his music a strong logical clarity of expression with a capacity to create the most complex contrapuntal forms, along with the irrational, romantic creativity.

Holst was a contemporary and friend of Ralph Vaughn Williams, but never garnered the popularity of Vaughn Williams, perhaps because of the complexity of his works. He was as thorough as he was esoteric in his music and his personal interests—he set to music everything from Walt Whitman texts to the Hindu scriptures of the *Rig Veda* and the apocryphal gospels, for which he learned Sanskrit and Greek in order to most faithfully translate the poems he was interested in.

Delores Dufner's text, "O Spirit, all-embracing," picks up the sense of an endless universe conveyed in Holst's "Jupiter" movement, nicely matching the magnanimity of the tune. Notice how many strong names for the Spirit of God: Counselor all-wise, Stream of endless flowing, Wind of springtime, Beauty ever-blazing, Fire of glory, Undying flame, Passion's power. Yet all this strength and power is best illuminated when we humans, "servants lowly" that we are, are inspired by it to gain an understanding heart, delight in wisdom, and an urge to be always seeking the great Mystery and Light of not only the planets, but of the universe.

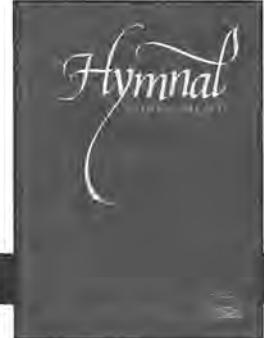
In the end, Dufner's text echoes the psalmist who, in contemplating the heavens (Psalm 8), was over-awed by the frailty of human life and by divine attention to mortals. We need both perspectives.

So try this reminder

from an old rabbinic story: Write on one card or slip of paper: "You are but a speck in the universe." Put it in your left pocket. And go stare at the night sky.

Now write on another card or paper, "For you, the universe was created." Put it in your right pocket. And go stare at the night sky. ■

Lani Wright lives in Cottage Grove, Ore. A member of Springfield Church of the Brethren, she has assisted with several Brethren Press hymnal-related projects.



**For more information** on the Hymnal Supplement, contact Brethren Press at 800-441-3712.

## ONCAMPUS

### Bridgewater College (Bridgewater, Va.)

At the annual President's Dinner on Oct. 20, T. Carter Melton Jr. received the Outstanding Achievement Award, Tina Egge the Outstanding Leadership Award, and Janet E. Whetzel the Merlin E. and Dorothy Faw Garber Award for Christian Service. In addition, Bridgewater seniors Derrick Burroughs and Emily Price each received an Outstanding Student Service Award.

### Elizabethtown College (Elizabethtown, Pa.)

Elizabethtown's first Alumni Peace Fellow, Andrew Murray, founder of Juniata College's Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, offered two talks on Nov. 8. . . . A \$1-million endowed gift from Lancaster, Pa., residents Judy S. and Paul W. Ware will create The Ware Colloquium on Peacemaking and Global Citizenship at the college.

### Juniata College (Huntingdon, Pa.)

Juniata president Thomas R. Kepple dedicated the totally refurbished south wing of Brumbaugh Academic Center in a ceremony on Oct. 20. The wing was renamed Dale Hall in honor of the principal donors for the project, John Dale, and his wife, Irene. . . . Juniata students organized a daylong conference on Oct. 21 focused on the clash of cultures between the major religions of the world.

### University of La Verne (La Verne, Calif.)

The university's 15th annual Communications Day on Oct. 20 featured a keynote address by Phillip Palmer, morning news co-anchor for KABC-TV/Channel 7 in Los Angeles. The event also included a series of workshops with topics involving radio/television production, photojournalism, writing, editing, and media ethics.

### Manchester College (North Manchester, Ind.)

Three pieces of art by Manchester professor James R.C. Adams were unveiled Oct. 26 in the Physicians Atrium of the Science Center. Adams worked 18 months on the project, which he calls "semi-abstract" and "colorful in a dramatic form." Each of the three interrelated paintings is on a 4-foot Masonite square and depicts a different natural science.

### McPherson College (McPherson, Kan.)

Full-time enrollment at McPherson for the fall semester was 468 students. The last time the college's enrollment reached this level was in the 1970s. The 468 students represent a 10-percent increase over last year. About 340 students live on campus. President Ron Hovis said it was the fourth consecutive year of enrollment increases. He primarily credited improved student retention.

## Booming workcamps brace for growth

In most previous years, the Church of the Brethren General Board Youth/Young Adult Ministry office has offered about two dozen summer workcamps. This coming summer, the number climbs to about 40.

It's part of a major expansion of the program approved by the General Board last spring. And, new workcamp coordinator Steve Van Houten admits, it's a bit daunting.

"You have to tell me, 'You can't do it.' That's usually the motivating factor I need," Van Houten says. "I think the youth will be there. I think there's demand for it. The question is if we can get the leadership. My faith says yes."

The recently released 2007 workcamp schedule, with the theme "Small Things, Great Love," includes six junior high workcamps, 21 for senior high, two for young adults, and five intergenerational. In addition, one combines junior high and senior high to aid congregations where those groups regularly meet together. Four workcamps are being done in partnership with Brethren camps.

Another four or five "custom" workcamps are currently being planned for large youth groups that wouldn't fit into the normal workcamp format, which limits the number of participants an individual congregation can send. "It's their workcamp," Van Houten says. "They can decide who they want to come."

The expansion responds to high demand in the past, when many workcamps have filled quickly. At this past summer's National Youth Conference, about 900 youth marked on commitment cards that they wanted to attend a workcamp. Van Houten hopes the expanded schedule allows them to do that in a Brethren context.

"I think we do workcamps differently than what a lot of the competition is doing out there," he says. "It's a whole different kind of experience. . . . It's service-oriented, and it's what Christ calls us to do, to walk beside people." Van Houten says he also hopes it helps youth build connections and relationships across the denomination that will remain important later in life.

Registration for workcamps opens Jan. 3. Watch [www.brethren.org/genbd/yya/workcamps](http://www.brethren.org/genbd/yya/workcamps) for details.

## Bits and pieces

- The **2007 Christian Citizenship Seminar** for senior high youth and advisors will be held March 24-29 in New York and Washington, D.C., with the theme "The State of Our Health." Topics will include the HIV/AIDS explosion in Africa, the impact of poverty on health worldwide, and US health-care programs. Registration, limited to 100 participants, begins Jan. 1. Call 800-323-8039 or 800-785-3246 for more information.

- Applications for the **2007 Youth Peace Travel Team** are being accepted through Feb. 4. Young adults ages 18-22 are eligible. Details are available at [www.brethren.org/genbd/witness/YPPT.htm](http://www.brethren.org/genbd/witness/YPPT.htm). The team is sponsored by On Earth Peace, Outdoor Ministries Association, and the Church of the Brethren General Board's Youth/Young Adult Ministry office, Brethren Witness/Washington Office, and Brethren Volunteer Service.

Walt Witschak



Listed on these pages are articles, editorials, opinion letters, and names of contributors that have appeared in MESSENGER during 2006. They are classified in five groups: authors, In Touch contributors, letters to the editor, congregations, and subjects. Numbers following the listings indicate month and page number, with 7/8 representing the combined July/August issue.

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## What's in a name?

A small but telling detail in the September 2006 MESSENGER left me confused and a bit saddened. That small detail—actually an extremely telling detail—was the discrepancy in how you reported the full name of the group commonly known as "BMC."

On page 5, in the "Landmarks & Laurels" section, BMC was called the "Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Interests." But in a caption to a photograph on page 15, BMC was called the "Brethren and

Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns." It would be easy to berate your staff for shoddy continuity proofreading, but I think that would be a shallow criticism. I fear there is a problem here that is much deeper, ingrained and systemic.

I know BMC used to be the Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns, before it changed its name in order to be more inclusive. I also remember that many in the church leadership garbled BMC's full name back then, too. Surely, surely MESSENGER is in a position to know the correct new name, or at

least to find out what the new name is, and to report that new name accurately.

One of the most basic human rights of any group, is the right to decide what it wants to be called. I remember as a young child hearing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., use the word "Negroes" in many of his speeches; that word later fell out of favor and was replaced by the word "Blacks," which in turn was replaced yet again by "African-Americans." The changes puzzled me at the time, but no longer. When a "minority" is named by what the "majority" wants to call them, that is a most fundamental form of oppression—even when (as with BMC) the majority can't quite make up its mind!

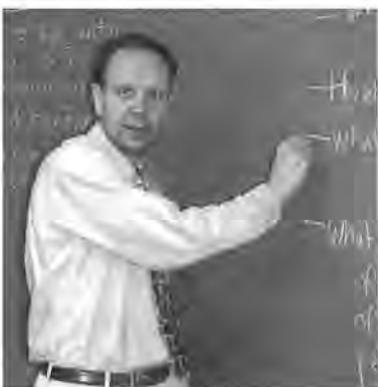
Language really does matter. Salespeople, for example, know the power of remembering a customer's correct name. I remember an optometrist's assistant from 30 years ago—can almost picture her, still today—because she took the time to make notes about me and her other customers on 3-by-5 index cards. Each time a customer came into her cubicle to have their glasses adjusted, she would retreat to the back room and check the notes in her file box while their glasses warmed up in the hot sand. Then she would come back, and ask how Spot was doing, or what Aunt Bea liked best about her trip to Hawaii.

If remembering a name has such great power to affirm, what sort of power does forgetting a name have?

**Bill Bowser**  
Martinsburg, Pa.

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**Editor's note:** The correct name of the organization, Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Interests, was the one used on page 5. The incorrect name appeared in the Annual Conference report due to an editing error. MESSENGER regrets the error.

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

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

Send letters to MESSENGER, Attn: Letters, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120 or [messenger@brethren.org](mailto:messenger@brethren.org). Please include hometown and phone number.

## What the world needs now . . .

The world is a mess. Many say the end of the world is near. Some act and talk as if we must hurry things along so biblical prophecy is fulfilled and the second coming of Christ arrives as soon as possible. I've heard people say that America has a leader who is convinced God has chosen him to be in this position at this moment in history. The president seems to act as if his wisdom cannot be flawed because it comes directly from God.

Yes, Israel must defend itself. Yes, Arabs will never get over being forced out of their homes 60 years ago. The North Koreans hate the South Koreans, and the Hutus hate the Tutsis.

Even 2,000 years after Jesus walked the earth, his words still are light years ahead of humanity: "You have heard it said, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you. If anyone slaps your right cheek, let him slap your left cheek, too. If someone takes you to court to sue for your shirt, let him have your coat as well. If one of the occupation troops forces you to carry his pack one mile, carry it two miles. Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

Folks, these words mean exactly what they say. These words have an upside-down brilliance that the world still does not get. People think the true teachings of Christ seem almost foolish, so we invent our own Christianity that is based little on Jesus' words and a lot on the Old Testament and the resurrection. I believe that many people think that the miracle of feeding the 5,000 was based on a magical bowl that brought forth fish and bread, when the much more impressive miracle was that, while listening to Jesus, you understood the power of love like never before, and you could not possibly eat your own food while your sister or brother may be hungry.

I believe we feel all too often that the reason to be Christian is to have a chance at resurrection, while learning to forgive seven times 70 just doesn't seem all that necessary. Modern-day Christianity is so far from the heart of Christianity that people are leaving churches in droves to search for the thing that Jesus showed the world 2,000 years ago. Jesus said, "The people will listen and listen, but not understand; they will look and look, but not see." Sad. So world, keep hating, be



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content with your "eye for eye" philosophy, while ignoring the power of love, and see what happens. Meanwhile, the true Christians will continue to care for the sick and the unloved, care for the outcasts of our societies, hold our arms around the soldiers on both sides, and tell them not to cry.

**Greg Heigel**  
Lancaster, Pa.

**Our name sends wrong message**

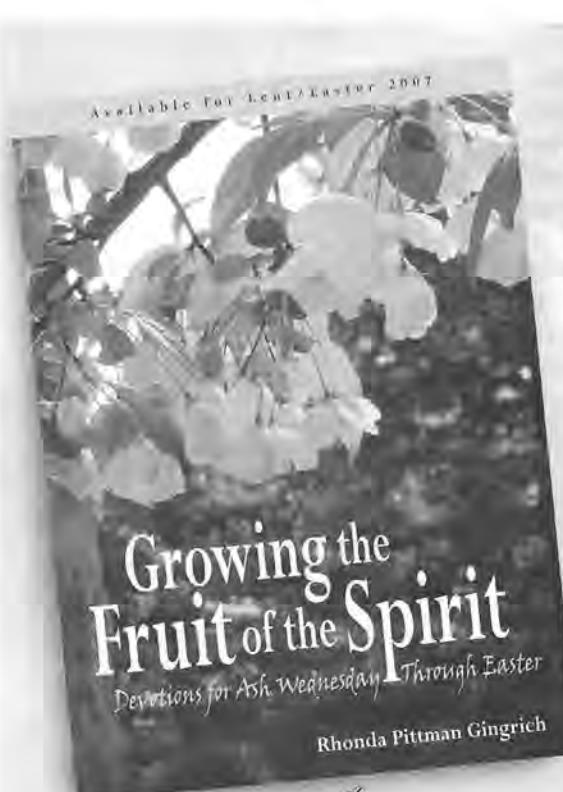
I recently worked for a sizeable social service organization in Minnesota that offered a multitude of programs primarily directed towards women and families. One of my responsibilities was to supervise college interns who staffed a telephone resource and peer counseling program. Most of the interns were bright, confident, engaging women in their junior and senior years who were eager to make a difference in the world.

They often reflected on what the intern experience meant to them and how they planned on integrating it into their lives and careers. To my delight, a good number were interested in doing a year or

more of full-time volunteer service, and they would often ask my advice about programs and opportunities. If it seemed appropriate, I would share that I had done Brethren Volunteer Service and that it had been a transforming experience for me.

Minnesota is a Lutheran-laden state that boasts a total of five Church of the Brethren congregations, or roughly one for every million in the state's population. Given the ratio, I did not expect the students to be familiar with our denomination. So it was not a great surprise when these young women would interrupt me and say, "Brethren? Isn't that just men? Why would I do something with a group called Brethren? Don't they care about women?" I would launch into apologetics and try and explain how the church really did include and value women. But the mere fact that I needed to justify and defend only functioned to underscore their basic intuition that the Church of the Brethren does not, in fact, really care about women—at least not these particular women.

I find it interesting that the discussion about the name of our denomination has overwhelmingly been an internal affair



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characterized by personal feelings and sentiment. Rather than a critical analysis that includes outside perspectives and observations about the impact of rhetoric and language, our conversation has focused almost exclusively upon church member's personal feelings about the name: whether we "like it" or not. This is an invitation for interminable sentimentalism, not a rigorous engagement with the real implications of our name for witness and service.

"Why would I do something with a group called Brethren?" A church that does not care about the impact of its name upon sensitive and justice oriented women like those interns ultimately does not deserve

their commitment. This is essentially an issue of respect. The problem is not that those women erred in their assessment of us; the problem is that we simply don't care enough about them to discomfort ourselves to correct the situation.

Our dwindling numbers indicate that we might be wise to consider the impression that we make upon bright young women who are unaccustomed to second-class status. Such attention would require that we open ourselves to change and relinquish the comforting nest of nostalgia as well as our stubborn insistence that women really are valued and welcomed in the denomination. The fact that women represent a paltry 12 percent of parish

ministers nearly 50 years after women's ordination was "allowed" says quite a bit about our core commitments. It may be that I have value and welcome confused with truth in advertising. Perhaps we are the Church of the "Brethren" after all.

**Carol Wise**

Minneapolis, Minn.

## CORRECTIONS

- Due to incorrect information supplied to MESSENGER, a Disaster Child Care team member was misidentified on page 22 of the September issue. Patricia Flora was the DCC volunteer pictured.

Please send information to be included in *Turning Points* to Jean Clements, 1451 Dundee Ave, Elgin, IL 60120; 800-323-8039 ext. 206; [clements\\_gb@brethren.org](mailto:clements_gb@brethren.org). Information must be complete in order to be published. Information older than one year cannot be published.

## New Members

**Allison Prairie**, Lawrenceville, Ill.: Julia Harrington, Nancy Hunter, Terry Hunter, Carolyn Meredith, Joe Meredith  
**Arcadia**, Ind.: Danielle Woods  
**Beaverton**, Mich.: Jessica Carman  
**Bush Creek**, Monrovia, Md.: Robbie Yeager, Amy Yeager, Judy Burdette, Loretta May, Lori Spell, Jade Spell, Olivia Thews, Bryan Thews, Cassie Thews, Matt Thews, Brady Thews  
**Chambersburg**, Pa.: Ron Burge, Kathy Burge, Jesse Crusey, Joann Crusey, Darin Horst, Jen Horst, Richard Landis, Rodney Mason, Laurie Mason, John Ott, Amber Ott, Joe Pentz, Ruby Pentz, Diane Schuchman

**Chiques**, Manheim, Pa.: Jered Hess, Tiffany Myers  
**Grossnickle**, Myersville, Md.: Joshua Bidle, Melinda Conway, Collin Delauter, Carroll Draper, Dane Grossnickle, Jessica Delauter, Kenton Grossnickle, Christine Mayne, Leah Myers

**Harmony**, Myersville, Md.: Rebecca Twigg

**Hollidaysburg**, Pa.: Cody Beatty, Andrew Heff, Samuel Heff, Joe Marvich

**Lampeter**, Pa.: Emily Creighton, Jeramy Jones, Lisa Jones, Jennifer Kerdeman, Sara Leidich, Elizabeth Racine, Mason Byers, Kelsey Cooper, Samantha Fairchild, Hannah Hostetter, Megan Miller, Brittany Venerick

**Lewiston**, Maine: Kristina A. Clemmer, Jeremy D. Myer, Victor L. Greenwood

**Manor**, Boonsboro, Md.: Dawn Albright Smith, Sarah Cook

Betsy Clipp, Roger Webb, Ginger Gates, Donna Susie Albright, Billy Chapman  
**Marion**, Ind.: Barb Sanders  
**Mechanicsburg**, Pa.: Brandon Baughman, Rebecca Heinz, Rickey Holtzapple, Kirsten Martin, Timothy Keebaugh, Vicki Keebaugh, Josh Keebaugh, Courtney Keebaugh  
**Mohican**, West Salem, Ohio: Rusty Gortner, Jenna Gortner, Jim Erf, Jennifer Orosz, Glenn Wolboldt, Fern Wolboldt, Dave Williams, Deb Williams, Rebekah Williams, Devon Williams  
**Moorefield**, W.Va.: Bob Hughes, Gloria Hughes  
**New Enterprise**, Pa.: Nancy Replogle, Daniel Replogle  
**Reading**, First, Wyomissing, Pa.: Joann Austin, R. Monroe Austin, Peggy Kercher, Elnora Smythe, J. Robert Smythe, Alice Stegeman  
**Skippack**, Collegeville, Pa.: Brian Boyer, Deb Boyer, Scott Boyer, Leanne Boyer, Amanda Clemens, Travis Clemens, Sharon Kulukulski, Frank Kulukulski, Frankie Kulukulski, Samantha Hugg  
**Smith River**, Stuart, Va.: Landis Craig Griffith, Katlyn Brook Stevens, Leonard Belcher  
**Woodbury**, Pa.: Randy Baker, Cindy Baker

## Anniversaries

**Barr**, Bob and Eleanor, Pottstown, Pa., 60  
**Beeghly**, Harry and Sylvia, Oakland, Md., 60  
**Brown**, Maurice and Jane Phyllis, Glen Arm, Md., 55  
**Burkholder**, Noah and Bertha, Chambersburg, Pa., 60  
**Butts**, Lewis and Cleo, Topeka, Kan., 70  
**Crusey**, Jesse and Joann, Chambersburg, Pa., 50  
**Ditmars**, John and Edith, Washington, Kan., 60  
**Johnson**, Dale and Jeanne, Millbury, Ohio, 55  
**Joseph**, David and Mary, Onekama, Mich., 70  
**Kesler**, Claud and Ladonna,

Continental, Ohio, 50  
**Noffsinger**, Walter and Shelby, Continental, Ohio, 50  
**O'Dell**, Wilmoth and Charlie, Blacksburg, Va., 50  
**Puffenberger**, Ernest and Kathleen, Moorefield, W.Va., 65  
**Rhoades**, Floyd and Margaret, Greenville, Ohio, 70  
**Sell**, Vic and Kay, Lincoln, Neb., 50  
**Shoemaker**, Warren and Dottie Faith, Piqua, Ohio, 60  
**Tipton**, Henry and Lois, Girard, Ill., 60  
**Turner**, Paul and Jennie, New Enterprise, Pa., 55  
**Winters**, Bob and Gay, Perrysburg, Ohio, 55

## Deaths

**Aylor**, Jean B., 68, Brightwood, Va., Sept. 4  
**Baer**, Floyd E., 74, Chambersburg, Pa., Sept. 11  
**Baker**, Ann E., 86, Dixon, Ill., Sept. 15  
**Bowman**, William C., 64, McAlister, Pa., Sept. 6  
**Burkholder**, Mary Helen, 87, Waynesboro, Pa., Dec. 28, 2005  
**Carpenter**, Jesse W., 83, Brightwood, Va., Sept. 8  
**Crews**, Mary Hudson, 73, Winston-Salem, N.C., Nov. 22, 2005  
**Deatrick**, Kenneth R., 77, Chambersburg, Pa., March 1  
**Diehl**, Carlos Victor, Sr., 91, Harrisonburg, Va., Sept. 23  
**Douglass**, Mary, 96, Quinter, Kan., June 21  
**Erbaugh**, Flora, 81, Springfield, Ohio, Sept. 3  
**Flack**, Helen Redinger Hawley, 84, Olathe, Kan., July 21  
**Fowler**, Joyce Rinehart, 73, Springfield, Pa., Sept. 6  
**Frey**, R. Agnes, 77, Chambersburg, Pa., April 25  
**Gaver**, Steven F., 62, Boonsboro, Md., June 11  
**Good**, Florence M., 83, Waynesboro, Pa., July 21  
**Grossnickle**, Marshall W., 90, Myersville, Md., Feb. 22  
**Harrington**, Jennie Mary, 95, Ridgely, Md., Aug. 12  
**Harter**, Dixie, 84, Purdy, Mo., Sept. 3

Sept. 22  
**Hershberger**, Hubert E., 83, Waynesboro, Pa., June 25  
**Hoffman**, Anna June, 85, Waynesboro, Pa., July 30  
**Hoffman**, James E., Jr., 72, Landisville, Pa., Oct. 6  
**Holcomb**, Carl, 80, Goshen, Ind., Sept. 7  
**Holderman**, Earl, 82, Modesto, Calif., Sept. 14  
**Horner**, Ruth, 99, Carleton, Neb., Sept. 30  
**Houpt**, Charles Robert, 83, Collegeville, Pa., Sept. 1  
**Huffman**, Louise Murray Spigle, 99, Roanoke, Va., Sept. 29  
**Hurst**, John C., 92, Greenville, Ohio, June 20  
**Johnson**, Basil L., 84, Myersville, Md., Jan. 31  
**Kline**, Mae I., 82, Myersville, Md., Feb. 15  
**Knierim**, Gladys, 94, Greenville, Ohio, Sept. 30  
**Lane**, Gayle, 37, Glen Arm, Md., Aug. 25  
**Miller**, Beverly A. Kestner, 71, Murrells Inlet, S.C., Sept. 12  
**Miller**, C. Roy, 98, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 20  
**Miller**, David, 94, York, Pa., Sept. 15  
**Miller**, Helen Irene Stamy, 83, Chambersburg, Pa., Oct. 16, 2005  
**Miller**, Theda, 81, Frederick, Md., June 12  
**Moyer**, Wesley, 20, Manheim, Pa., Sept. 13  
**Nauman**, Clarence, 91, Manheim, Pa., Sept. 11  
**Nelson**, Lucille Lashmit, 90, Winston-Salem, N.C., Aug. 20  
**Parick**, Della, 98, Goshen, Ind., Sept. 3  
**Ritchey**, Daisy, 79, Bridgeport, Ill., July 15  
**Shearer**, Harry B., 97, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 20  
**Snyder**, Gail A., 75, Topeka, Kan., Sept. 20  
**Spang**, Linda M., 67, Lebanon, Pa., Aug. 27  
**Spangler**, Ruth, 89, Palmyra, Pa., Sept. 22  
**Steele**, Michael Dean, 46, Romney, W.Va., Sept. 19  
**Thompson**, Charlotte, 82, Thurmont, Md., Sept. 9

**Tolsma**, Donald D., 77, Bridgewater, Va., Sept. 2  
**Weybright**, Rachel C., 93, Syracuse, Ind., Sept. 5  
**Williams**, Reese Norman, 82, Harrisonburg, Va., Sept. 21  
**Williard**, Jesse, 77, Winston-Salem, N.C., Sept. 15  
**Wolfe**, Ruth J., 82, Altoona, Pa., Sept. 5

## Licensings

**Noblitt**, Ryan C., S/C Ind. Dist. (Pleasant Dale, Decatur, Ind.), July 30  
**Osborn**, Michael D., S/C Ind. Dist. (Logansport, Ind.), June 4  
**Stevenson**, Sue Ann, S/C Ind. Dist. (Christ Our Shepherd, Indianapolis, Ind.), July 16

## Ordinations

**Coleman**, Ronald D., Virlina Dist. (Henry Fork, Rocky Mount, Va.), Sept. 17

## Placements

**Broadwater**, Kevin L., pastor, Hyndman, Pa., Aug. 6  
**Gandy**, Kate, from associate pastor, Roaring Spring, Pa., to youth and young adult pastor, Mexico, Ind., Oct. 1  
**Hawkins**, Stanley H., pastor, Smith Chapel, Bluefield, W.Va., Sept. 24  
**Keegan**, Gerald P., from pastor, Grandview, Pendleton, Ind., to chaplain, Southern Care Hospice, Springfield, Mo., March 31  
**Kontra**, Peter J., from pastor, Spring Creek, Hershey, Pa., to pastor, Oakland, Bradford, Ohio, Oct. 1  
**Strickler**, Duane Lee, from interim to pastor, Longmeadow, Hagerstown, Md., Oct. 1  
**Yoder**, Gary D., co-pastor, Grandview, Pendleton, Ind., Sept. 10  
**Yoder**, Lisa, co-pastor, Grandview, Pendleton, Ind., Sept. 10

**Turningpoints**

# The silence between the notes

**I**t was almost the end of October this year before I spotted the first Christmas trees going up along the main street of the town where I live. The trick-or-treaters hadn't yet shown up at the door, and it was already beginning to look a lot like Christmas.

I haven't been to the mall in a while, but I expect the decorations started twinkling early there, as well. They always do. The holiday season shopping countdown is on.



WALT WILTSCHKE  
MESSANGER Editor

We usually pause at least briefly for Thanksgiving—eating turkey, watching football, and perhaps remembering to express gratitude for our blessings. Advent, however, usually slides right under our collective radar. Outside of lighting those candles in the wreath at the front of the church each Sunday, the season typically whizzes by in a blur of tinsel, evergreens, and gift wrap.

That's our loss. Preparing ourselves again and again for Christ's coming may be as important as annually celebrating the birth itself. If we don't prepare space in our lives to be filled by Jesus' presence at Christmas, we risk having the essence of what we celebrate fall aside as soon as the calendar page turns.

**Advent is that silence between the notes, the pause between the words. But if we fill it with a torrent of discordant noise in the intensified rush and bustle, we lose the beauty of the music. If we travel its paths at a madcap pace, we lose the cadence of its poetry.**

In a church newsletter article I've held on to in my files, Brethren pastor Dave Leiter wrote: "Advent is a good time for us to simply listen. Listen to the music. Listen to the many sounds of Christmas. Listen to your brothers and sisters in Christ. Listen to a stranger. Listen to God. Listen to the birth of Christ. This list goes on, but one of the keys to a meaningful and eventful Christmas is the art of listening."

**COMING IN JANUARY:** A cluster of stories on technology in the church, living a "wide open" faith, Bible study on Jeremiah, book review, and more.

Appropriate to our cover feature on art and faith this month, listening and art often go hand in hand. Jazz legend Duke Ellington once said that the most important thing he looked for in a musician "is whether he knows how to listen."

That's not surprising for someone in jazz, as so much of that genre depends on improvisation and "feeling" the music. The art of jazz is sometimes described as lying "between the notes." But even Mozart, not known for his jazz riffs, was reported to have said that "The silence between the notes is as important as the notes themselves."

Similarly, in public speaking or acting it is often the pauses between words that make the presentation. Those who excel at their craft know how to use those pauses to great effect.

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Judging by the number of conferences and events I see built around scriptures calling us to "be still," we are craving those pauses. One local radio advertiser even sponsored 20 seconds of gentle, soothing music on a major station, noting at the end that it was a gift of tranquility in the midst of a busy day (brought to you by . . .). I have to admit, it felt good.

It's not just about feeling good, though. It's about doing good. Columnist Deborah Good, in the now-defunct magazine

*The Other Side*, wrote, "In a world fraught with violence, inequality, and abuses of power, we need to create spaces in our lives for the still, small voice that calls us to a different way of being, an alternative vision for the world.

Drowning out that voice may be the most frightening consequence of our fast-paced lives."

It was in the silence of a Bethlehem hillside that a group of shepherds heard the good news of Jesus' birth. And it is in the silence of Advent today that we can hear the Good News anew, as the Spirit beckons us forward into God's ongoing story.—Ed. 



Paul Jeffrey/ACT-CWS

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