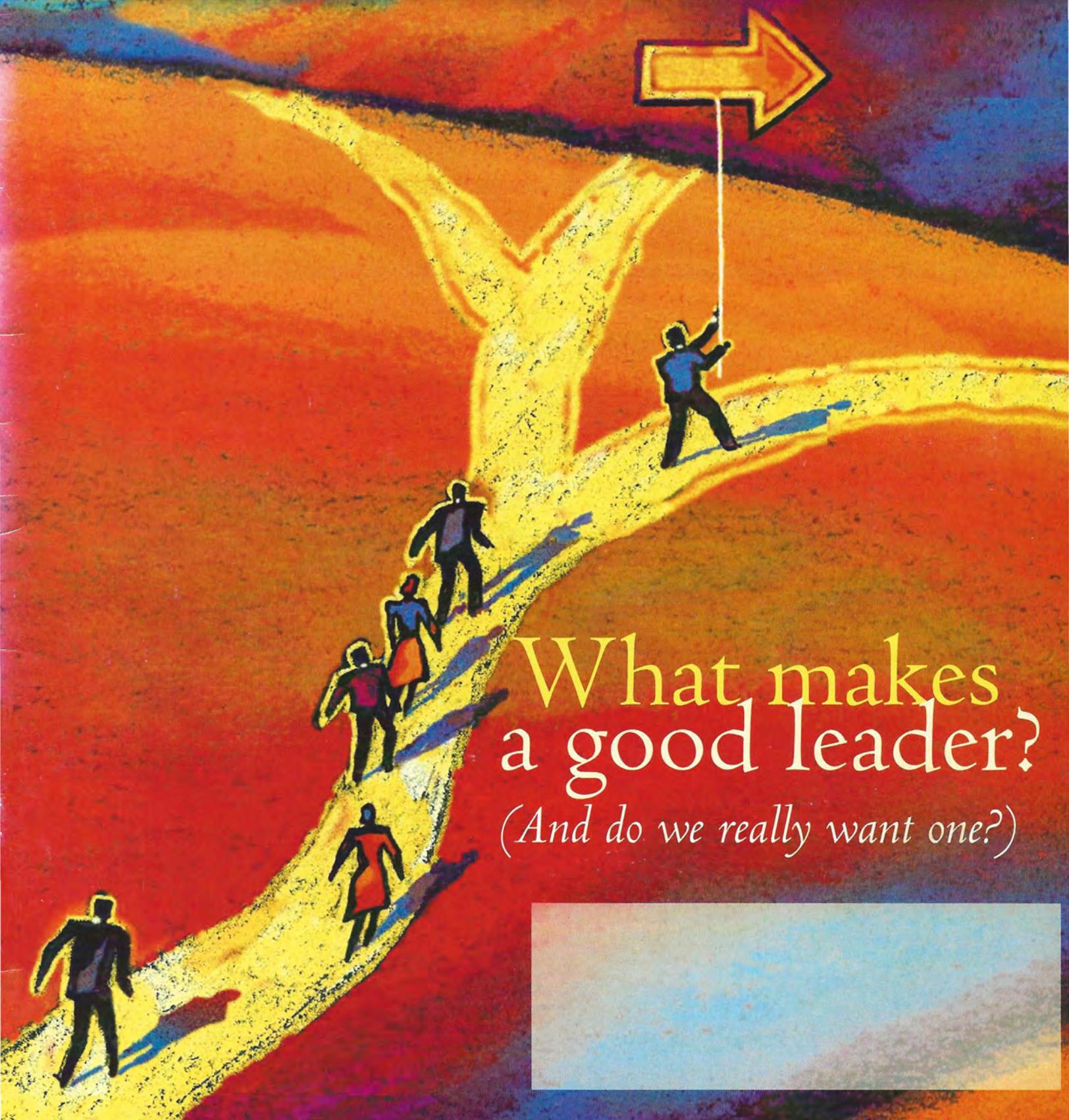


Church
of the
Brethren

MESSENGER

JULY/AUGUST 2007 WWW.BRETHREN.ORG



What makes
a good leader?
(And do we really want one?)



Hurricane Katrina

August 29, 2005

Today



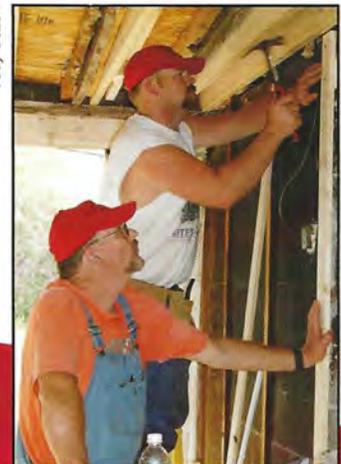
The impact and aftermath of Hurricane Katrina left over one million people displaced from their homes.



Today more than 80,000 people still live in FEMA trailers, often in the midst of the debris from their destroyed home.

Brethren Build Hope

- Brethren volunteers have helped more than 300 families return home.
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- Nearly 2,000 Brethren volunteers have served in response to Hurricane Katrina.



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

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MESSENGER

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ON THE COVER

Follow the leader. Simon says. A variety of children's games teach us about being a leader and about being a follower. As we take on those roles as adolescents and adults, though, how well do we do? A cluster of articles this month looks at the nature of leadership in the church.

8 Take me to your leader

We talk a lot about leadership, but what is it really, and what does it mean for us? Jonathan Shively, director of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, suggests that a full toolbox of skills and trust between leaders and followers are needed for success.

13 Weak leadership all around us

Tom Ehrich has noted several key ingredients to good leadership. He's also noted a dearth of it as he looks around, and particularly as he looks toward organized religion.

14 Knee-high to Nehemiah

Want a biblical model of a great lay leader? Judd Mellinger-Blouch says you need look no further than Nehemiah: follower of God, rebuilders of the walls of Jerusalem, and quite a good manager.

16 Called into mission ...

Three generations reflect on what being called into mission has meant in their lives. What does it mean to reach beyond the established community of the church and extend Christ's love to all?

18 Amos and Obadiah: Seeking justice

Amos is a book rich with images of social justice, and its words have often been used as a rallying cry for the poor and oppressed. Obadiah, one of the Bible's shortest books, seeks justice of a different kind—against an enemy nation.

DEPARTMENTS

2	From the Publisher	25	Youth Life
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Sometimes hymn texts settle into your being the way a line of scripture does.

When Brethren Press gathered a group to help name a book of devotions for the 300th anniversary year, the title that finally emerged was *Fresh from the Word*, which some will recognize as a phrase from the hymn "Morning Has Broken."

The text, by writer and poet Eleanor Farjeon, is a hymn of praise to the Creator. The words are based on Psalm 118:24: "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." Each new morning is a reminder of God's original creation. While the lilting Gaelic melody requires a bit of vocal stretching for those singing first thing in the morning, before voices have warmed up, the hymn frequently comes to mind for early morning watch in camp and retreat settings.



WENDY McFADDEN
Publisher

Nowadays most people's familiarity with the hymn comes from the Cat Stevens version of 1971, but he's simply the one who brought it out of obscurity. Farjeon wrote the text 40 years earlier, and it was married to a traditional tune, BUNESSAN (known previously as a Christmas hymn), that dates to 1888.

A creation-inspired text seems appropriate when we recall the early morning baptisms in 1708 that gave birth to the Church of the Brethren. The first Brethren may not have known they were creating a church, but surely they were filled with expectation and a sense of God's potential. They chose the radical act of believers baptism as a direct result of reading the Word. One of God's mysteries is that centuries later we can read the same Bible and our understandings are fresh for our own time and place.

Another mystery is that God can speak through any one of us. Thus the devotions in *Fresh from the Word* are from a wide range of people—senior church leaders and teenagers, ordained and lay, English-speaking and Hausa-speaking. Each writer has studied an assigned scripture text, and then offered up a brief meditation that is fresh from the Word.

The anniversary year is just being launched, and the devotional book is now off the press. As we approach the Eder River on the eve of the anniversary, we do not know what is about to be created for our next hundred years. But we can do as our forebears did and study the Word together. We can expect God's re-creation of the new day.

Wendy McFadden

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messenger@brethren.org
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Subscription rates:

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

MESSENGER is the official publication of the Church of the Brethren. Member of the Associated Church Press. Biblical quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the New Revised Standard Version. Copyright © July/August 2007, 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.



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'God's math is amazing!' Community of Joy finds a new home

Easter 2007 will be remembered as a day of resurrection for Community of Joy, a Brethren congregation in Salisbury, Md.

After several years of praying and looking for a building to host its ministries, the young congregation's leadership team announced on Palm Sunday that it had a contract on a church building five blocks from Salisbury University. And with that announcement came a further announcement of a special Easter Sunday offering to raise the necessary funds.

The goal was to raise \$83,000 in 60 days to add to the \$77,000 the congregation had saved in a building fund. One week after the announcement, the offering was taken. While Martin Hutchison (who co-pastors the congregation with his wife, Sharon) was preaching, the assistant treasurer was counting. When all was said and done, the one-time gift was more than \$124,000, with monthly commitments for the next two years of \$1,800 a month over and above regular giving.

The congregation of 45 has now raised more than \$212,000 toward the purchase, and more continues to come. "God's math is amazing," Martin and Sharon Hutchison wrote.

Community of Joy, one of Mid-Atlantic District's newest church plants, then voted unanimously on April 22 to purchase its first building. The congregation was expecting to hold its first worship service in its new home on July 1. And members already have been busy planning ways to utilize the building for reaching out to the community!



The Community of Joy congregation is eager to move into its new home in Salisbury, Md.

(Adapted with permission from the Mid-Atlantic District "Together on the Journey" newsletter.)

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



"My philosophy about life: If you want to live to be 100, eat wholesome food, exercise, find a project that you love, and go for it 100 percent with the Lord's help."

—Gladys Grossnickle, 101-year-old member of Lakeview Church of the Brethren in Brethren, Mich.

Northeast Middle Pennsylvania District and Camp Blue Diamond will host the annual Heritage Scramble Golf Tournament Aug. 14. . . . The Ligonier (Pa.) congregation sent members to New Orleans, La., for a week April 29 to help repair damage to the insides of homes. Ligonier sends members about every three months to areas damaged by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. . . . The Center Point Pond Tour was scheduled for June 23 in Warminster, Pa. The tour was held to benefit COBYS.

Southeast After sending 10 volunteers from North Carolina almost 800 miles to McComb, Miss., to help restore homes damaged by Hurricane Katrina, Southeastern District reports that most of the damage to the inland communities they visited has now been repaired. . . . CrossRoads (Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center) is sponsoring a Tears and Ashes bus tour July 21. The tour will visit Civil War battlefields in the Cross Keys, Port Republic, and New Hope areas of eastern Rockingham County, along with places of importance to both Brethren and Mennonites.

Midwest The Northern Ohio peace task team arranged a silent auction at district conference July 28 to raise money for the Peace Endowment Fund. . . . Illinois/Wisconsin District is co-sponsoring an environmental "Green Fair" July 21 at York Center Church of the Brethren, Lombard, Ill. . . . Grace Mishler, a mission worker in Vietnam, is visiting Northern Indiana through August before heading to Elizabethtown, Pa. Mishler works with people with disabilities in Vietnam.

Ozarks/Plains The Open Circle (Burnsville, Minn.) congregation collected 300 pounds of food for the March Minnesota FoodShare drive and raised \$5,000 to provide a one-year sponsorship for a DARTS bus that will provide transportation for area senior citizens and disabled persons in Burnsville. . . . Twenty-five members of Missouri/Arkansas District joined several hundred others in celebrating the third anniversary of the Nueva Vida congregation March 17.

West Pacific Southwest District held an "Evangelism for the Rest of Us" event April 27-28 at the Imperial Heights congregation in Los Angeles. . . . Pacific Southwest's district conference will take place Oct. 12-14 at the La Verne (Calif.) church. The theme is "Alone Together With the Spirit," from John 14:15-17. . . . The Pomona (Calif.) congregation held a women's fellowship brunch May 12. Berkeley Davis spoke on "Reflections on Life in Puerto Rico."

BY THE NUMBERS

65

Percentage of rural Africa's population that lacks access to a "sufficient and safe water supply," according to the Ecumenical Water Network (WCC News Service).

Walt Witschek



Acts of kindness: Youth at this year's Southern Pennsylvania District "Hilltop" spring retreat lived out the 2007 "Now Follow Me" national youth theme by performing service projects around the community. Here, Andrea Gibble, front, and Nikki Brant of Codorus Church of the Brethren, Loganville, Pa., plant a garden in front of the host Newville (Pa.) congregation. The retreat was held April 20-22, with about 75 youth and advisors attending.

Rescuers answer prayers of lost Brethren cavers

Several Brethren from Southern Pennsylvania District were among a group rescued from a West Virginia cave in late April. Jason Ross, Skye Fisher, Dan Sampson, Heidi McWilliams, and Keri Krall spent two days lost in Mingo-Simmons Cave in the south-central part of the state before being found by a rescue crew.

Sampson and Ross are members of Wolgamuth Church of the Brethren near Dillsburg, Pa., and most of the group has been involved at Southern Pennsylvania District's Camp Eder.

After running out of food and water, the group was thankful when their prayers were answered. "I collapsed and started crying," Williams told the Associated Press, recounting their contact with the rescuers. "I thought we were hearing things."

Everett golfers get spotlight in new 'Chicken Soup' book

It should have been a disaster—three sisters out for a little round of golf, and before it's all over there's an out of control cart, a separated shoulder, a trip to the emergency room—and no love lost, because they all still love each other just as much. Maybe that's because for Anna Swindell, Bev Swindell, and Gloria Koontz of Everett (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, golf is "More Than a Game."

Lee Eshleman brought joy and new biblical insights to a wide range of Brethren through his drama ministry.

"More Than a Game" is their story, and it appears in the new *Chicken Soup for the Woman Golfer's Soul*. In summer 2002 the women were playing golf together at Down River Golf Course in Everett, as is their custom. Anna regularly drives a golf cart because of a disability, but for an unexplained reason the cart took off while Bev stood in front of it. In a moment Bev had been run over, separating her shoulder and causing her extreme pain. Anna in her panic had confused the pedals, making the injury worse. Gloria went for help, summoning the ambulance.

What happened next is the subject of the story as written by their pastor, Frank Ramirez. The book is edited by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen. They are assisted by Matthew E. Adams, a 20-year veteran of the golf industry and a bestselling author, as well as Patty Aubery, president of Chicken Soup for the Soul Enterprises. A portion of the sales will be donated to the Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization.

Nevin Dulibaum



REMEMBERED

• **Lee Eshleman**, known widely through the Church of the Brethren for his performances with Ted Swartz as part of the Mennonite comedy duo Ted & Lee, died May 17 in Harrisonburg, Va. Eshleman, a 1986 Eastern Mennonite University graduate, took his own life after a long struggle with depression. He is survived by his wife, Reagan, and three children. "It feels like there's a piece of me missing," Swartz said in an article by EMU staff member Jim Bishop. At Eshleman's memorial service May 21 at EMU, Swartz observed that "Lee loved wrapping laughter around magical moments of God's grace and presence." EMU president Loren Swartzendruber said that Eshleman "helped thousands of people see the biblical stories in a new light." Ted & Lee were major presenters at the last three National Youth Conference events and at two National Older Adult Conferences, and had been booked to lead worship at the National Junior High Conference in June. A long list of condolences has been posted at www.emu.edu/response/lee/.

• **Tim Hissong**, president and chief executive officer of the Brethren Retirement Community of Greenville, Ohio, and an Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC) board member, died

April 15 after battling cancer. Hissong joined the ABC board in January 2006 in his role as chair of the Fellowship of Brethren Homes. He had a long history with the Brethren Retirement Community, having served since 2005 as president and CEO, and previously for 13 years as vice president of operations and treasurer. A member and former board member of Happy Corner Church of the Brethren in Clayton, Ohio, Hissong also had a long history of serving in Southern Ohio District. An informal community gathering to remember Hissong was held April 23 at Oakland Church of the Brethren in Gettysburg, Ohio.

• **Leland B. Newcomer**, former president of the University of La Verne (Calif.), died April 9 at age 86. He is credited with growing the student body of the school from less than 1,000 to 5,000 students, developing an adult education program, and adding satellite campuses. Newcomer became president of then-named La Verne College in 1968, following the retirement of Harold Fasnacht. Newcomer graduated from La Verne College in 1942 and earned a master's degree from Claremont Graduate University and a doctorate from the University of Southern California. His career included positions as superintendent of school districts in Nevada and California.

• **Pomona (Calif.) Fellowship Church of the Brethren** celebrated its 100th anniversary on March 18 with worship, lunch, and an afternoon program. Each Sunday leading up to the celebration featured a different decade in the life of the church.

• **Westernport (Md.) Church of the Brethren** will hold a homecoming on Aug. 5 to mark its 50th year of service at its present site, and its 80th year as a church. Leon Swigart will be the guest speaker. Activities will include morning worship, lunch, and an afternoon program with a "Walk Down Memory Lane."

• **Fairview Church of the Brethren** (Unionville, Iowa) on April 15 celebrated completion of an extensive remodeling project to its building. Last May, the congregation voted to initiate renovations to make the building completely handicapped accessible and to replace the aging furnace with a ground-source heat pump to improve energy efficiency. A new fellowship hall, kitchen, and youth facilities were also added.

• **Mount Hermon Church of the Brethren** (Bassett, Va.) and **Bassett Church of the Brethren** were highlighted in the *Martinsville (Va.) Bulletin* this spring for the donations and volunteer time they have been giving to a rapidly growing area food giveaway.

• **Western Pennsylvania District's** 25th annual Brethren Heritage Festival will take place Sept. 15 at Camp Harmony, near Hooversville, Pa.

• The Upper Room's *Pockets* magazine for children in its March 2007 issue profiled Parker Ford Church of the Brethren member **Sarah Brunner**. Sarah, age 10, is a member of the *Pockets* advisory board.

• **Deb Oskin**, peace minister at Living Peace Church of the Brethren near Columbus, Ohio, and president of Central Ohioans for Peace, has been receiving some significant media attention recently. She was interviewed by the *Columbus Dispatch* this winter about the peace movement in the region. That piece was picked up by the Associated Press, and *The New York Times* called her for a phone interview, later sending a photographer and columnist. She also appeared on local television.

• **Ashland (Ohio) Theological Seminary**, the theological education school of the Brethren Church, marked its 100th anniversary during this academic year. A "Wall of Remembrance" was dedicated at the seminary this past fall.

NOTE: The e-mail contact information for Wes and Sue Richard, authors of the article "Ministry Where the Rubber Meets the Road" in the May issue, has changed. They can now be reached at wrichard@arabellaol.net.

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Plenary speakers include Carl D. Bowman, Christina Bucher, Stewart Hoover, Richard Hughes, Marcus Meier, and Dale Stoffer. Concurrent sessions will feature approximately thirty additional presenters.



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BEHIND THE VEIL - EXPERIENCING EGYPT
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MOSCOW and SIBERIA (May 24 - June 4)

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EUROPEAN HERITAGE (July 7-22)

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Inquiring minds want to know...

I am frequently asked, "How did you come to be Brethren?" And I'm always obliged to give the following answer:

"I am a Brethren by choice. Simply stated, that means I wasn't born into the Church of the Brethren. I didn't marry into the Church of the Brethren. I made a conscious choice to become a member of this denomination that has become my family of faith. I made that choice because I experienced God's presence being lived out in practical acts of faith and love."



BELITA MITCHELL

I am also asked, "What do you feel about the condition of the church?" Typically, I respond something like this:

"Over the years I have made many observations about our culture as Brethren. On the one hand, we have forged ahead into the field of world missions and continue to promote

expansion in that area, yet we have failed to acknowledge the mission field in our own country. It has been said that the United States is the fourth-largest mission field in the world, because the world has come to America! Our urban and rural areas have experienced an influx of people who have not been encountered by the Church of the Brethren in an intentional manner. I believe we need to change that reality.

"The time is past due for us to explore the development of resources in evangelism and church planting. Many of our local congregations are experiencing the opportunity to

I believe we are on the brink of a breakthrough in the Church of the Brethren. I sense that many of us are ready for God to do new things in our midst. Many of us are willing to risk moving beyond our comfort zones to meet the challenge of fulfilling the Great Commission with new strokes of boldness.

engage with other cultures but feel ill-equipped in knowing how to move forward. An increased focus on intercultural inclusion and multicultural awareness is sorely needed . . . "

If time permits, I usually continue by adding:

"I believe we are on the brink of a breakthrough in the Church of the Brethren. I sense that many of us are ready for God to do new things in our midst. Many of us are willing to risk moving beyond our comfort zones to meet the challenge of fulfilling the Great Commission with new strokes of boldness. Many of us are ready to confront the fears that have the church in a stranglehold and held hostage. Many of us are opposed to 'business as usual.' "

As Brethren, we have a valuable perspective to share in this age of "spiritualism." We are a living peace church in a nation that is besieged with a lack of peacefulness. We are a servant people who can teach others "another way of living." It is time for us to speak with greater enthusiasm, demonstrating through proclamation the certainty of God's hope for our future.

My vision for the church is for us to be more openly confident in the marvelous gift we have: the supernatural power of God. Through that power, we can continue the work of Jesus with relevance. We can focus more intently on building bridges and tearing down barriers. We can strengthen the ties that bind us together, and we can be transformed.

There are so many scriptures in the Old Testament and New Testament that speak about the power of God. Let us not be afraid to appropriate that power to enliven our ministries and renew our church.

Another question I am asked repeatedly: "How's it been being moderator?"

With tremendous joy, I always respond: "Great!" I never imagined I would have the privilege to serve in such a vital manner. The role of moderator is that of ambassador, encourager, itinerant preacher, evangelist, and interpreter. The person in this position is expected to hear, see, understand, and articulate the state of the church.

I have had the opportunity to do that across the United States and in Nigeria. In every instance, I have found myself in the midst of people who desire to be faithful disciples of Christ. I have witnessed the power of God being manifested

in the birthing of new ministries and the seeking of new ways to serve in the name of Jesus.

I have done my best to be a proponent for the mission of Annual Conference and to

challenge the church to reach for even greater accomplishments than what we have already achieved. I believe that "with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26), and that if we open ourselves to the boundless possibilities for becoming a church—fearlessly straining for God to do a new thing among us—it shall be done.

Let us "Proclaim the Power of God" together and watch God do great things in our midst. **AM**

Belita Mitchell is pastor of Harrisburg (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren and moderator of the 2007 Annual Conference in Cleveland, Ohio.

QUOTE WORTHY

“We can expect to find Jesus wherever we go.... Christ is already there. We can be surprised by Jesus in ways we didn't expect.”

—Bethany Theological Seminary faculty member Dan Ulrich, leading a Bible study for the denomination's Consultation on Ministerial Leadership

“God is weeping. God weeps and says: ‘Who will help me so we can have a different kind of world, one in which the rich know they have been given much so they can share and help others?’ ”

—Archbishop Desmond Tutu, speaking to ecumenical participants at the start of the 2007 World Social Forum in Nairobi, Kenya (WCC News Service)

“Confessing Anabaptists are not interested in nonviolence, peace studies, or peace theology primarily because it is an effective practical tactic or strategy. We believe in nonviolence because of our understanding of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and the life to which the church is called.”

—Victor J. Hinojosa, assistant professor of political science at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, writing in the *Mennonite Weekly Review*

“I think it brings you a lot closer to the people around you.”

—Ian Dean, senior high youth group member of Peoria (Ill.) Church of the Brethren, commenting to *The Journal Star* newspaper about the love feast

“There are so many ridiculous things about human existence, and if you can't joke about them and see the irony in what's going on, I don't know how you can make it in this world.”

—Stan Lee, creator of Spider-Man, in an interview with Southwest Airlines' *Spirit* magazine

“We feel very strongly about serving the forgotten folks.”

—Church of the Brethren member William Gay of Lansing, Mich., who has been volunteering with disaster relief projects along the Gulf Coast. He was quoted in the McComb (Miss.) *Enterprise-Journal* newspaper.

CULTURE REVIEW

• Individual congregants of 65 Christian denominations that reported financial information for publication **gave an average of \$713** to their church in 2005. That figure was reported in the *75th Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches* published this spring by the National Council of Churches USA. The per capita amount represents “an increase of just \$18.93 per person from the previous year,” the *Yearbook* reported, less than the official rate of inflation.

• The National Council of Churches' **Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches** 75th edition finds The Catholic Church, 69,135,254 members (increase of 1.94 percent); The Southern Baptist Convention, 16,270,315 members (increase of .02 percent); and The United Methodist Church, 8,075,010 members (decrease of 1.36 percent) as the three largest. Overall, Pentecostal churches are showing strong growth, while mainline Protestant ones are declining.

• For the third consecutive year, the number of Americans calling for **less religious influence in public life** exceeded the number

of Americans who want more, according to a new Gallup poll. Most Americans, however, remain “generally satisfied” with organized religion's role in the US, the survey found (RNS).

• Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has named **Lynette Meck** as its new associate executive director. She will oversee the day-to-day operations of the Akron, Pa., office of the relief, development, and peacemaking agency. She had served as executive director of MCC US from 1989 to 1998.

• The World Council of Churches (WCC) launched an international, **inter-church advocacy initiative for peace in Israel and Palestine**—the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum—at a conference June 17-21 in Jordan. The initiative is a major step toward the WCC's goal of mobilizing churches around the world for peace with justice in the Middle East. Its launch took place during observances of 40 years under occupation for Palestinians. The plan was approved by the WCC Executive Committee in early March.

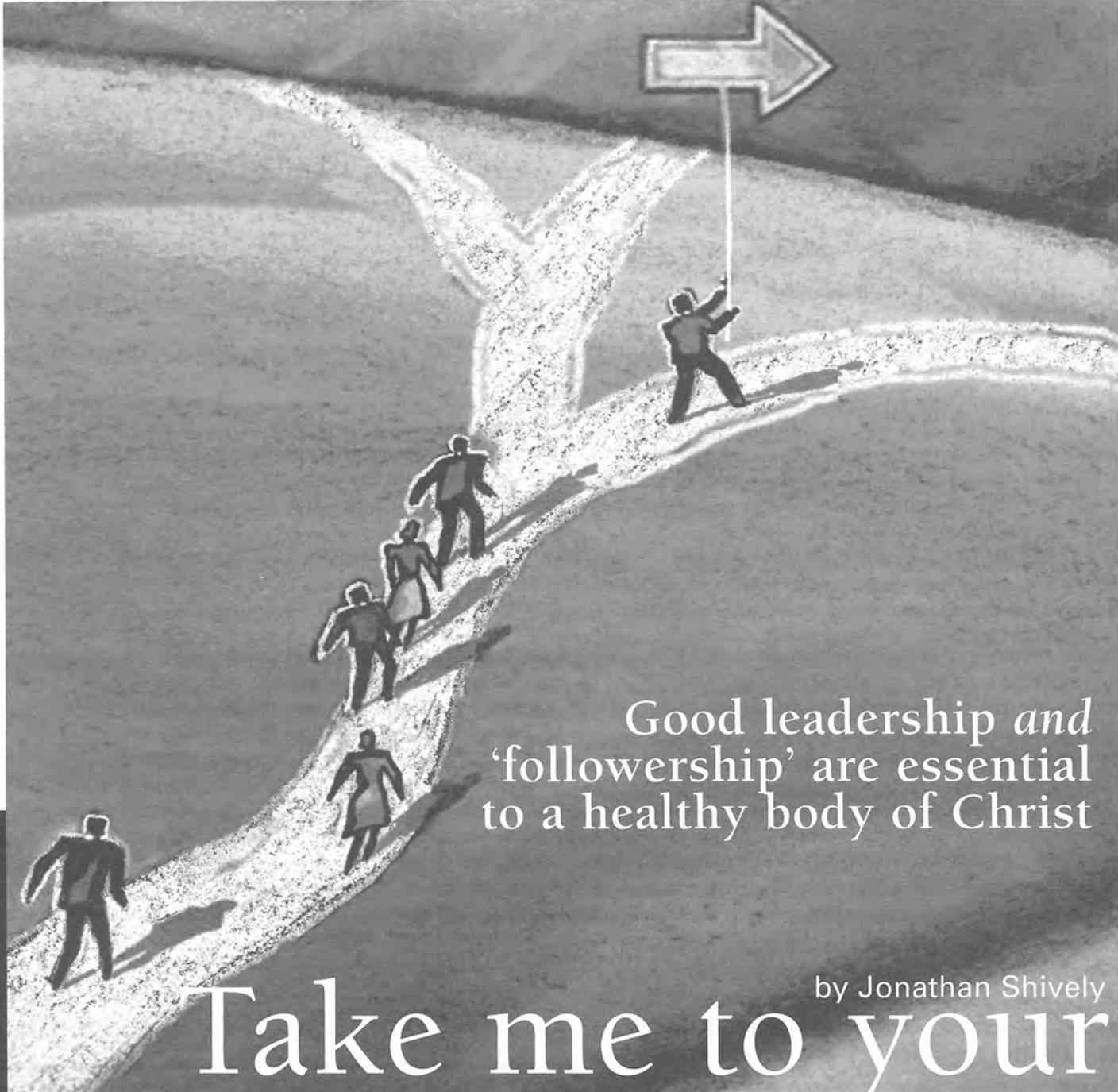


JUST FOR FUN: SCRAMBLE

BACK TO THE BIBLE MESSENGER's “Journey through the Word” Bible study series is wrapping up the Old Testament this fall, and studies of the New Testament will begin early next year. To help prepare, unscramble the New Testament books listed below (“1” and “2” designations are eliminated; i.e. 1 or 2 Timothy would simply be “Timothy”):

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| HINTICARSON | SUITT |
| LEAVETORNI | EWHERBS |
| SCAT | SALTSHINESOAN |
| SINESHAPE | SMEJA |
| TREEP | MILPHONE |
| LOANSOCSIS | |

ANSWERS: Corinthians; Revelation; Acts; Ephesians; Peter; Colossians; Titus; Hebrews; Thessalonians; James; Philimon.



Good leadership *and* 'followership' are essential to a healthy body of Christ

by Jonathan Shively

Take me to your LEADER

Leadership. As buzzwords go, it is right at the top of today's list. It is one of those words that, while frequently invoked and longingly sought, is slippery to define.

Any group of people, no matter how small or how large, requires leadership in order to grow and mature in fulfillment of its mission. Intuitively we know this. But what really is leadership, and what does it mean to have leaders in our midst?

I doubt I knew it at the time, but ever since singing the role of Moses in the fifth-grade musical, my life's work has become understanding, equipping, and exercising leadership. Far from having it figured out, I offer these observations as part of an ongoing process of learning.

An initial distinction needs to be made between "leadership" and "leader." For practical purposes we use the two interchangeably.

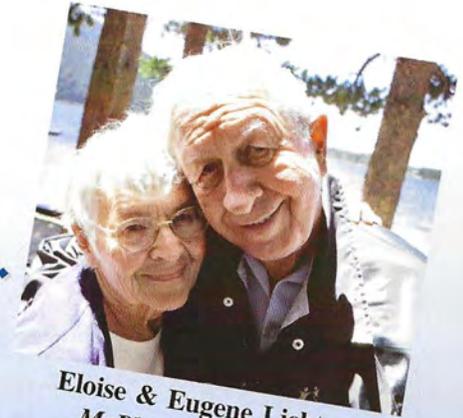


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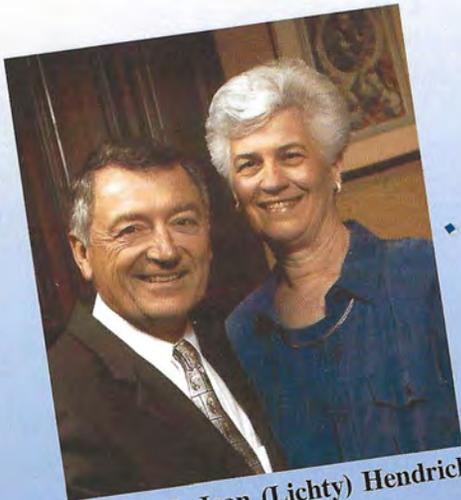
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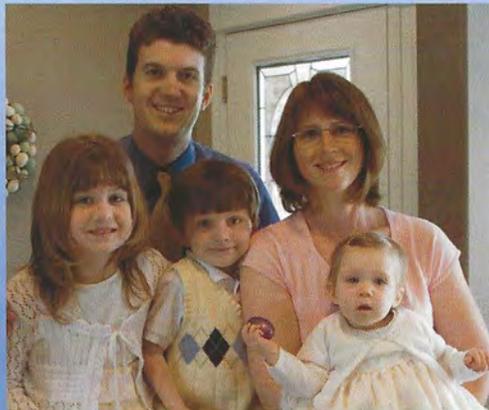
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CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN HIGHER EDUCATION



NEW OPPORTUNITIES

A LEADER HAS A VISION FOR WHAT GOD IS CALLING THE COMMUNITY TO AND TRUSTS THAT VISION ENOUGH TO ARTICULATE IT, INVITING OTHERS INTO IT.



Leadership, however, is the role and function of influence within a group. The leader is the individual who, at a given moment, exercises personal influence for the good of the group.

Leadership within a group is not the possession of one individual. As leadership (influence) is carried out in a group, it emerges through different individuals. In the congregation, for example, yes, it comes from the board chair and the pastor, but it also comes from youth and new participants in the community's life.

While leadership is a function within the body, particular individuals are not off the hook in serving as leaders! To say that leadership is a function in the body is simply to remind us that no one individual holds the corner on the "leadership market." But individuals do exercise leadership. We call them leaders.

Leadership also implies change. Just because leadership brings change, however, does not mean all leadership is good leadership. Good leadership requires that the actions, influence, and invitation to change and transformation be in the best interests of the body. Leadership for Christ's church is that which serves the church in becoming a vital agent of God's mission in the world. Excellence in leadership looks beyond the self-interests of an individual or a particular congregation and toward the best interests of the good news of Christ in our towns and neighborhoods.

HEALTH AND INTEGRITY

So, what is a leader? A leader is an individual with the personhood and skills to mobilize (influence) God's people for

God's mission in the world.

Leadership in a community begins with an individual who has the personhood of Christ in them. The Christian leader is a disciple of Christ, demonstrated in two principle aspects of their living: One is integrity; the other is health.

Integrity is the alignment of one's convictions, words, and practice. When leaders demonstrate what is important to them through what they say and how they act, and when there is continuity among stated beliefs and observed behaviors, leaders are experienced as having integrity.

Many factors contribute to a leader's ability to sustain integrity, and perhaps the most essential element is health. The model for good health is found in the greatest commandment. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27) emphasizes exercising our spiritual, emotional, physical, intellectual, and relational health.

A leader's spiritual life must be well tended. We are aware of many disciplines for a healthy spiritual life: scripture, prayer, and worship are three common areas of practice. Emotional health requires that we recognize our feelings and find appropriate expression for them. Physical health means attending to the rhythms of rest, exercise, and nutrition. Intellectual health calls us to engage in an active thought life and to broadly explore ideas and perspectives in order to engage creatively with our complex world. Relational health calls leaders to carefully attend to essential relationships with spouse, family, and holy friends.

The personhood of a leader is not measured by perfection, but rather by healthfulness. How are the relationships of the leader? How is their relationship with God? Does the leader have appropriate avenues for emotional expression? Is the leader eating right, exercising, and getting enough sleep and time away? What is the leader thinking about these days?

THE SKILL SET

A leader builds upon integrity and a holistic healthfulness with a combination of attitudes and skills. First, **leaders exhibit confident purposefulness balanced by a teachable spirit.** A leader has a vision for what God is calling the community to and trusts that vision enough to articulate it, inviting others into it. You might say that a leader is "on a mission." Leaders have insight into what God is doing in the world, a passion for joining into that work themselves, and a calling to take others into that work with them.

But visions are rarely static, seldom absolutely clear, and never the sole possession of one person. Leaders must balance their confidence with a teachable spirit, being continually open to learning. Learning comes from God, from companions on the journey, and from the experiences shared in acting on the original vision, and it can appear at any moment.

A teachable spirit is akin to humility, not in the sense of denying the credit, but in the practice of being reflective learners. A teachable spirit is not one that denies the ego, but rather one in which the ego is willingly placed into accountable relationships.

Secondly, **leadership is intuitive and**



BEING A LEADER MEANS CONTRIBUTING TO A CULTURE OF LEADERSHIP IN WHICH PERSONAL POWER IS NOT THE OBJECTIVE, BUT RATHER A CULTURE IN WHICH THE BEST OF EACH PERSON'S LEADING CONTRIBUTES TO THE COMMUNITY'S LEADERSHIP.

artistic. Rarely does a one-size-fits-all formula for transformation succeed. Jesus was an artistic leader who responded with creative resourcefulness to the varieties of ministry opportunities and challenges he faced. In the 21st century, artistic leaders respond with passion, cultivated skills, and imagination.

Contrary to popular usage, intuition is not a disconnected impulse that arrives through thin air. Rather, intuition guides when accumulated knowledge and experience, coupled with perception and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, results in a willingness on the part of the leader and/or group to act. Intuition is credible only in the context of a lifetime of learning. That learning enhances the leader's ability to see the present as a connecting point between the past and the future. Openness to the Holy Spirit insists that leaders listen deeply and look broadly. Ultimately intuition requires action. Action requires artistry.

Third, **leadership requires multi-focal vision.** Leaders help the community see the "devil" in the details, the day-to-day steps and actions required to keep moving forward. Leaders also see the broad horizon, the big picture or kingdom vision of the community's gathering and work. Ultimately it is the leader who also sees how the small steps of today help keep us moving toward the broader kingdom vision.

Fourth, **leaders are willing to take risks.** Sometimes what we describe as risk is simple stupidity or self-serving ego. But smart risk-taking is an action or stance that a leader takes, regardless of the potential for personal pain, loss, or martyrdom, because the leader understands it to be necessary for the group (community/church) to fulfill its calling. For us Christians, the ability to act under potentially difficult consequences is rooted in our faith.

So, too, is our willingness to undergo change, to be transformed. Change doesn't begin "out there" somewhere. A fifth

aspect of leadership recognizes that **deep change is often required first** in those who would lead. Sometimes change means disrupting old patterns and establishing entirely new practices. Leaders who undergo such change set an example for others to follow. If a leader calls for change in others but never changes himself or herself, a severe integrity gap develops. Deep change in a leader both models and inaugurates the changes sought in the congregation.

A sixth aspect of leadership is that **leaders help others become leaders.** You're

not a leader until you've shaped another leader who is shaping other leaders. Being a leader means contributing to a culture of leadership in which personal power is not the objective, but rather a culture in which the best of each person's leading contributes to the community's leadership.

Helping others become leaders requires mentoring and coaching, safe places for practicing leadership skills, and a community context that welcomes leadership as an important function for the good of the body's mission in the world. A community of leadership is one in which disciples of

NEW THINKING ON MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP

A Consultation on Ministerial Leadership held May 7-10 in Elgin, Ill., brought together some 90 people from across the country to think together about issues and questions related to ministry in the Church of the Brethren. Participants included pastors, lay leaders, district and denominational staff, and Annual Conference officers. Discussion focused on four major areas: calling, training, credentialing, and sustaining ministerial leaders.

The meeting was sponsored by the General Board's Office of Ministry, in consultation with the Ministry Advisory

Council and the Council of District Executives. Participants attended by invitation, and funding for the meeting came through designated reserves of the General Board, accumulated over about six years.

Organizers designed the consultation as preparation for an upcoming revision of the 1999 Ministerial Leadership Paper of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference. The consultation became a kind of "think tank" for those responsible to rewrite the paper. A revised ministerial leadership document may be ready to present at the 2009 Annual Conference.

The meeting included worship and brief presentations from denominational staff and faculty of Bethany Theological Seminary, but the heart of the event was small-group discussion. Mary Jo Flory-Steury, executive director of Ministry for the General Board, invited

The conversation about how the church calls, trains, credentials, and sustains ministers was recorded in various ways during a recent Consultation on Ministerial Leadership in Elgin, Ill. In some sessions, participants were encouraged to jot notes on newsprint that covered the tables.

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all ages are given opportunities to enhance their personal capacities to lead for the good of the mission.

PASTORS AS LEADERS

Because leadership is an art, many other aspects could be considered. A specific area of concern for us in the Church of the Brethren is the role of pastoral leadership. Considerable ambivalence exists about what it means to “set apart” ministers in a church where everyone is “ordained” into ministry at their baptism. What unique and specific function does a pastor serve in a ministry shared by all? I believe that the essential role of the pastor today is leader.

Small-group discussion formed the heart of a Consultation on Ministerial Leadership held in Elgin, Ill., in May. Discussion began with Bible study and theological reflection, and focused on four major topics: calling, training, credentialing, and sustaining ministerial leadership.

While there have been and continue to be many models of pastoral ministry (priest, prophet, preacher, counselor, teacher, shepherd, administrator, CEO, coach, and servant, to name a few), what we need more than anything right now are

pastoral leaders who have the personhood and skills to help congregations grow in their capacity for missional leadership.

In essence, the most important function of a pastor today is tending to a congregational environment that provides safe



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

the gathering to “conversation about what questions God wants us to be asking for this age and season of life in the church. How do we grow, sustain, value our ministerial leadership?”

Some of the discussions began as Bible studies, while others were introduced as theological reflections, with questions about personal experiences of ministry, signs of the Holy Spirit’s presence, and the naming of tensions in ministry. “World Cafe” conversations—intense bursts of discussion on the four major topics—took up most of one day, with participants moving from table to table for 15 minutes at a time as new topics were posed and new questions asked. Working groups later presented their conclusions in an evening session.

“You’ve made it clear that Christ is central to ministerial leadership,” said Dan Ulrich, Bethany’s associate professor of New Testament, as he summed up one discussion period. “We are called also to combine authority and humility,” following Christ’s example, he said.

Participants came up with many ideas for changes in the way the church calls, trains, credentials, supports, and grows

ministerial leadership. A few of those ideas were: using “discernment” rather than “search” language in pastoral placement, active mentoring for ministers, requiring ministers to have intercultural competence and attentiveness to spirituality, retraining pastors every five or 10 years to meet changing socie-

tal needs, focusing on bivocational ministry, and credentialing churches as well as pastors.

In the Church of the Brethren, “ministry is not just for the set-apart,” noted Jonathan Shively, director of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, during a theological reflection. Much discussion at the meeting related to the Brethren concept of the “priesthood of all believers”; Shively observed that the group struggled to describe the relationship between the ministry of all, and that of set-apart leaders.

“We are confident that God is doing something with us in the Church of the Brethren right now,” Shively added. “But we have a lot of change and growth to undergo together.”—Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

Nampa (Idaho) pastor Jim Hardenbrook shares thoughts on ministry with others at his table during a Consultation on Ministerial Leadership held May 7-10 in Elgin, Ill.

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT THE WELL-BEING OF THE CHURCH'S WORK IN THE WORLD, NOT PRIMARILY ABOUT THE WELL-BEING OF THE CHURCH ITSELF!

spaces and substantive resources for disciples of Christ ministering in the world. Pastors lead congregations into missional engagement. Pastors are set apart for the purpose of cultivating a congregational culture in which deep discipleship, passion for Christ's ministry in the world, and specific skills for the ministry of each person are the priority. Pastoral leadership is about the well-being of the church's work in the world, not primarily about the well-being of the church itself!

There is a flip side to pastoral leadership, too, and that is the perspective of "followership." Time and again I hear that we are losing our sense of covenantal accountability with our leaders. We can blame it on an individualistic culture, on a distortion in the concept of the priesthood of all believers, on sick family systems, or a host of other factors, but accountability is challenged.

It is easy to think only of the set apart leader's accountability to the expectations and polities of the body and the position, and indeed that is an important aspect of accountability. Denominationally we have given a great deal of attention to this type of accountability through the ministerial leadership manual, readiness for ministry, and the ministerial ethics standards.

But there is another side to accountability, and it is the accountability we accept when we call an individual into leadership. By calling a person into leadership, setting them apart, and blessing them in this role, we pledge ourselves to honor and respect the authority for leadership that we recognize in them.

Too frequently it seems that we call people into leadership, pastoral or otherwise, covenant with them to accept their leadership authority, and then do everything we possibly can—both consciously and

unconsciously—to undermine their ability to do the very thing we have called them to do. I am not suggesting unthoughtful following of every whim and fancy of our leaders, but I am challenging us to think about why we call someone into leadership and what commitments we make to those leaders when we call them and authorize them to lead us.

Leadership is a complex and difficult process. Being a leader is challenging and risky. Following the lead of others is also challenging and risky. Yet both are essential if the body of Christ is to continue to grow and mature in its mission in the world. Under the leadership of Christ, may it be so. **W**

Jonathan Shively is director of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership for Bethany Theological Seminary and the Church of the Brethren General Board. He lives in Richmond, Ind.



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Weak leadership all around us



Consider this small incident as a lens for looking at leadership:

We are driving to Easter worship. The car chugs and dies. I pull off the road. My wife and I assess the situation. Could be fuel supply. We agree that I will walk home to get another car and some gasoline.

Others might decide differently. The point isn't achieving a perfect plan, but how we go about it.

Three key elements: First, once the immediate crisis is handled, we assess the situation before acting. Second, we work together and openly. Third, our concern is for the good of the whole.

I get it wrong about as often as I get it right. But I have learned, partly through my own mistakes, that healthy leadership will generally contain these three elements: thoughtful assessment, shared and transparent process, and seeking the good of the whole. Not only will better decisions be made, but those who are led will follow with confidence and trust.

As I look around, I am dismayed by the current state of leadership. Not bad decisions, necessarily, but weak leaders and

self-serving process.

In my city's dysfunctional school board, for example, a board member quietly crafts a plan and then is amazed that those shut out of her problem-solving process don't accept her solution. Meanwhile, some board members grandstand for political advantage, forgetting whose interests they serve.

Once the immediacy of Sept. 11 gave way to action-planning, politicians sought to exploit the situation. Rather than assess strategic vulnerabilities, leaders deployed long-simmering ideas about suspending *habeas corpus*, spying on citizens, and going to war to enhance worldwide stature.

Or so it appeared. Because plans were drafted secretly and then rushed into practice, many citizens instinctively distrusted the plans. Calculation of advantage isn't the same as thoughtful assessment. A closed and overly hyped process feeds distrust. Hiding outcomes from public scrutiny feeds distrust. That distrust will do more damage to the commonweal than poor decisions or heated debate.

Weak leadership typically spawns doubts about motive. "What are they up to?" "What will they do to us next?"

Weak leadership encourages blaming, scapegoating, and grandiose assertions. Those behaviors, in turn, kill debate, undermine community, and, in the end,

produce followers who are fickle and vengeful.

Organized religion is plagued by weak leadership. I don't mean holding different opinions from mine, or operating within different ecclesiastical systems. I mean weak. I see too much secrecy, conflict avoidance, and manipulation. I see too much name-calling. I see partisans lobbing grenades, rather than thoughtfully considering the whole. I see decisions made but not explained, actions taken but not evaluated, outcomes hidden or denied. I see more zeal for control than for consensus, more fear of losing than curiosity about options, more eagerness to exploit discord than to heal wounds.

As a result, our congregations and judiciaries are seething with distrust and discontent. Whose motives can be trusted? Whose data is honest? The outcomes are mediocrity, withdrawal, lethargy.

My fear is that weak leadership at the political level will turn ugly and destructive, resulting in significant losses of freedom, and our faith communities will be too weak to recognize danger, too fragmented to imagine the good of the whole, and too self-serving to stand against actual forces of darkness, as opposed to doctrinal foes. ❧

Tom Ehrich is a writer, consultant, and leader of workshops. An Episcopal priest, he lives in Durham, N.C. His column is distributed through Religion News Service.



TOM EHRRICH

I SEE DECISIONS MADE BUT NOT EXPLAINED, ACTIONS TAKEN BUT NOT EVALUATED, OUTCOMES HIDDEN OR DENIED. I SEE MORE ZEAL FOR CONTROL THAN FOR CONSENSUS, MORE FEAR OF LOSING THAN CURIOSITY ABOUT OPTIONS, MORE EAGERNESS TO EXPLOIT DISCORD THAN TO HEAL WOUNDS.



Knee-high to

by Judd Mellinger-Blouch

NEHEMIAH

Measuring up to a great lay leader

For a lay person involved in the church, one of the best role models in the Bible is Nehemiah. Here is a man who was called to lead, took many risks, gathered people to help with the task, and fulfilled the purpose God set before him.

Nehemiah is a short book in the Old Testament, and it's interesting reading—particularly for anyone who likes history

or human behavior. To refresh, Nehemiah is employed as the cupbearer (wine, not coffee) for King Artaxerxes in Susa. His brother tells him that Jerusalem has fallen on hard times, laying a conviction on Nehemiah's heart to return and rebuild.

With the permission and protection of the king, Nehemiah returns and—working with the prophet Ezra—takes the lead on a project to rebuild the wall around

Jerusalem. Several people conspire to prevent the Jews from rebuilding, and Nehemiah even has to correct some bad behaviors among his own people. In the end, the job is finished, a celebration is held, scripture is read, and glory is given to God.

That, of course, is a mere synopsis of the story. But throughout, Nehemiah exhibits good leadership characteristics.

First and foremost, he's a good follower. Every great leader knows that he or she has a boss of some kind who needs to be followed. The president answers to the American people. Bill Gates answers to his customers and shareholders. In Nehemiah's case, he's following God but he also knows he is under the reign of King Artaxerxes and must behave accordingly.

What else does Nehemiah do?

- He reaches out to God to make sure that what he wants is what God wants ("I mourned for days, fasting and praying before the God-of-Heaven"), and then he asks for God's guidance and blessing ("O Master, listen to me . . . and make me successful today so that I get what I want from the king").

- He clearly sees his mission, including its limitations. His role is to rebuild

Jerusalem, not to rebel against the king.

- He assesses the situation before taking action, quietly and unobtrusively observing and gathering data. "Under the cover of night I went past the Valley Gate toward the Dragon's Fountain to the Dung Gate looking over the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken through and whose gates had been burned up."

- He leads by calling the priests and the people alike to action, saying, "Come—let's rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and not live with this disgrace any longer."

- He allows the people to work where they see the need without micromanaging. Chapter 3 of Nehemiah is the record of how groups and families tackled various sections of the wall and the gates. A key ingredient, of course, is the willingness of the people to do the work without being begged, cajoled, or forced.

- He does not allow distractions from the work, telling his non-Jewish detractors, "Keep your nose out of it. You get no say in this." Later, when these detractors want to meet with him, he tells them, "I am doing great work; I can't come down.

Why should work come to a standstill just so I can come down to see you?"

- He communicates the dangers to his people and prepares them for attack from the outside: "Our enemies learned that we knew all about their plan, and that God had frustrated it. And we went back to the wall and went to work."

- He holds the people accountable to a higher level of behavior (see chapter 5), and they respond to the challenge.

- He knows the value of keeping good records. Chapter 7 is an inventory of the people returning from exile and the

jerked them by the hair." We should all be thankful those kind of management techniques have gone by the wayside!

• • •

After looking at the example of Nehemiah, we can ask ourselves a few questions: How do we, as Christians, reach out to God for guidance? Do we see our mission clearly? Do we need more information to assess the spiritual needs of our community?

Are the leaders of our congregations call-

ARE THE LEADERS OF OUR CONGREGATIONS CALLING MEMBERS TO SERVICE, AND ARE THE PEOPLE ANSWERING? DO WE ALLOW THE PEOPLE WE CALL TO DO THEIR JOBS WITHOUT A LOT OF SECOND-GUESSING AND MICROMANAGING? HOW DO WE HOLD EACH OTHER ACCOUNTABLE IN LOVE?

resources (human and otherwise) available in Jerusalem. Record-keeping and budgets can't be all we do, but they are extremely important. Glory be to God for the record keepers!

- He worships, reads scripture, and leads the people in repentance (including his own). He even had a leadership retreat! "On the second day of the month the family heads, . . . the priests, and the Levites gathered around Ezra the scholar to get a deeper understanding of the words of the revelation."

- He celebrates the finishing of the wall, giving credit where it belonged (to God) while allowing the people to revel in what had been accomplished through their sweat: "That day they offered great sacrifices, an exuberant celebration because God had filled them with great joy."

- He takes corrective action when needed. Sometime after his departure, Nehemiah finds out that some of the people of Jerusalem have regressed to their old sinful ways. While confronting Jews who married women from outside of the faith, he even "slapped some of them and

ing members to service, and are the people answering? Do we allow the people we call to do their jobs without a lot of second-guessing and micromanaging? How do we hold each other accountable in love?

What are some of the distractions around us, and do we allow ourselves to succumb to them? It's hard for peaceful people to think of enemies, but do we have them? How are we preparing ourselves to repel their attack?

We have wonderful record keepers, but do we spend an appropriate amount of time on budgets and numbers or do they become our main focus?

Do we truly celebrate God's goodness and the wonderful work God does in and through the Church of the Brethren?

Nehemiah is the kind of instructive book that we can put to practical use. How do you think we measure up to Nehemiah and the people of Jerusalem? 

Judd Mellinger-Blouch is director of marketing communications for the Pennsylvania Medical Society in Harrisburg, Pa., and a former editorial assistant with MESSENGER. He lives in Hershey, Pa., where he is a member of Spring Creek Church of the Brethren.



Members of the Rieman family visit with Nigerian Brethren in the capital of Abuja.

Called into Mission ...

THREE GENERATIONS REFLECT ON WHAT THE CALL HAS MEANT IN THEIR LIVES

Called ... to offer a more abundant life

by A. Ferne Baldwin

My husband, Elmer, and I grew up with fathers who were pastors, so the call to service was instilled in us early. The question was not whether to serve, but how and where. The book *Abundant Living* (by E. Stanley Jones) helped us settle that question, and in 1944 we went to serve in Nigeria.

The mission call was to help develop a more abundant life for the people. Missionaries shared the life and teachings of a loving Jesus, offered education to people with no written language, provided scientific health care where communities relied on witch doctors, and introduced better farming and diets where many were malnourished. Each day brought new challenges: preparing a teacher's aide in the local language, meeting with the church board to discuss a problem, or taking a patient to the hospital miles away.

Sunday afternoons were a time for visiting: Under a tree in the village center, we watched hair-dressing, listened to stories,

saw children play with simple things. Visiting homes was fun, but sometimes sobering. Over time, the homes of church members were cleaner, had more bins of food, had no idols in sight. The children were happier and more energetic. There was less fear and more contentment.

Every fifth year, when we came to the US for a year's furlough, we visited churches and shared about our work. We were often asked about the sacrifices we made. The benefits were far greater than the sacrifices. I learned so many things: a better understanding of the Bible, a broader acceptance of differences, that most Muslims are good neighbors, and how to live with fewer things.

In the US I taught at Manchester College, where there were daily opportunities to touch the lives of the students—and they touched mine. Now I find ways to serve in retirement at the Timbercrest community and in other organizations. The call to share abundant life continues a lifetime.

In 2005 I returned to Nigeria with my children and grandchildren to visit the places we lived and worked. The church excited me: I could feel its spirit and vibrancy. To know that we had a small part in its growth towards the "real life" in Christ of which the Bible speaks is a great satisfaction.

Called ... to live as family and work together

by Louise Baldwin Rieman

I was born into mission—at least to missionary parents: Elmer and Ferne Baldwin, serving in Nigeria. There my two sisters and I lived in a global family. Our first playmates were Nigerian. When we went to the mission boarding school, Hillcrest, our family grew to include around 15 nationalities.

Such an expanded family instilled in me a desire to serve, and that desire grew through Bible study, prayer, and meditation. Being a part of Christ's Young Missionaries affirmed my identity and call to mission. I wanted to help others. I taught Sunday school to Nigerian youth and nurtured the younger children at Hillcrest, whose parents, like mine, were far away. During vacation in Garkida, my sister and I helped feed babies whose mothers had tuberculosis.

Then, at 16, my family moved to the United States. I experienced culture shock and missed my international family. I couldn't understand food fights, eating contests, or other values that supported a stereotype of Americans as materialistic and arrogant. It took me several years of struggle to feel at home in this country, but I realized the Americans I felt alienated from were part of the global family I am called to love. Attending workcamps and working for reconciliation, peace, justice, and equality opened my heart to greater love, and thus to a greater sense of mission. We are ALL born into and called to love this global family, God's family, which knows no borders. We are ALL born into mission—to be the Good News for all people. When some at our table don't get food, we pass it. When someone's home is destroyed, we rebuild it. We wash each other's feet AND we let our own feet be washed. We live with and love the one tribe on earth.

After raising three children, my husband, Phil, and I went to the mission field in Sudan. My call meant not simply helping others but creating partnerships of mutuality. It is a reciprocal gift to offer presence, respect, love, and openness. We grow together. An Australian Aboriginal educator, Lilla Watson, stated, "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time; but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."

Working together, we experience deep joy. Searching for an overseas leprosy mission nurse, a recruiter asked, "Do you want to have the time of your life?" One woman went, and she did. That's the call for us all: to have the time of our lives, sharing and working together within our huge family here and afar in the love and passion of God.

Called ... to learn a better way

by Ken Miller Rieman

No single event of my life signaled a "call to mission," but a few influential experiences grounded me as I navigated the cultural crosscurrents of my youth.

At the 1984 Annual Conference, Roger Schrock—newly returned from Sudan—led a junior high session. Divided into continents taped off on the floor, most of us stood shoulder to shoulder in Africa and Asia. The lucky few in North America had several chairs apiece. Being good Brethren, we grasped the lesson and played along, until Roger broke out the M&M's. The playing stopped, and fighting began. The unwillingness of the rich to share their candy seemed to leave us no option but resistance. On the world stage, the unfair distribution of life's most basic resources leads to much more serious violence. I learned that being in mission means bringing justice to the poor and oppressed.

With eyes opened to injustice, I soon learned of the CIA's mining of Nicaraguan harbors. I struggled to understand why my nation would support "Contra" insurgents in their violence against teachers, pastors, and health care workers. A few years later, I traveled to Nicaragua with other Brethren. We didn't go to build a church or distribute Bibles, but to learn to know our brothers and sisters. We spent three weeks with peers from Mision Cristiana and Iglesia Cubana Pentecostal and came to see that in the effort to eradicate the "cancer" of communism, US intervention was widening desperate social inequities. Together, we harvested coffee on a cooperative farm. Many workers were on the war's front lines, and every family's income depended on what their members could pick, so we picked the least productive plants and left the most productive for those with greater need.

Working together, we discovered that each of our denominations had been forged by leaders who stood courageously against cultures of greed and violence. Each had survived persecution to proclaim a gospel of love for all people; each had claimed the responsibility of living according to Jesus' example. The cultural differences between us were greater than those that create high tension within the Church of the Brethren, yet working together was one of the most joy-filled experiences I've ever had. We learned to see ourselves as true sisters and brothers in Christ. Being in mission gave me the courage to add my voice to the growing numbers of Christians calling on our government to end its violent intervention.

The call to love all requires a radical transformation, a surrendering of our pursuit of ideological uniformity, political expediency, and social privilege. When our culture stands silent in the face of injustice and human tragedy, the call to mission requires that followers of Jesus allow God to begin to change us. We don't need to know in advance what that change may be. Our brothers and sisters near and far can help us learn a better way. **W**

A. Ferne Baldwin, Manchester College professor emeritus, lives in North Manchester, Ind.; she is a member of Manchester Church of the Brethren. Louise (Louie) Baldwin Rieman is co-pastor of Northview Church of the Brethren in Indianapolis. Ken Miller Rieman is pastor of Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren in Seattle.



WOC - Peter Williams / Messenger file

Phil and Louie Rieman, front right, help provide advice and reconciliation in a small village in Sudan.

Amos and Obadiah: *Seeking justice*

by Christina Bucher

'Minor' prophets bring a significant message

The books of Amos and Obadiah both belong to the collection of prophetic books known as "The Book of the Twelve." People sometimes refer to these books as "minor prophets," but this term can mislead. These 12 books are not minor in importance. Rather, the term "minor" refers to their length. The 12 books together can fit on one scroll—hence, the term "Book (or scroll) of the Twelve."

Although there are some similarities between Amos and Obadiah, the differences are notable. Amos' prophecies were originally directed to the northern kingdom

of Israel in the 8th century BC. Obadiah's likely audience was the 6th-century BC people who had suffered the Babylonian invasion of Judah (nearly two centuries after the Assyrian destruction of the northern kingdom). Amos directs his prophetic critique against the Israelites themselves. Obadiah speaks out against Judah's enemies.

Amos addresses issues of social and economic justice. Much of the book speaks critically of the rich Israelites' oppression of the poor and needy in their society. The Israelites "oppress the poor" and "crush the needy" (see 4:1). Amos utters "woe oracles" against the idle rich who eat and drink well in homes that are richly appointed with furniture decorated with expensive ivory carvings: "Woe to those who lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat lambs from the flock, and calves from the midst of the stall; who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp, and like

Israelites who oppose the just and honest deliberations of the community elders. He challenges the people who have the means to bribe the judges to rule on their behalf and against the poor people who bring the accusations of injustice.

Apparently, some of the elders accepted bribes and they, too, are criticized: "For I know how many are your transgressions, and how great are your sins—you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and push aside the needy in the gate" (5:12).

Amos appeals to the Israelites to mend their ways: "Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate"; but he also

THE BOOK OF AMOS HAS ESPECIALLY APPEALED TO READERS CONCERNED WITH SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE. DURING THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT OF THE MID-20TH CENTURY, THE REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. QUOTED THE WORDS OF AMOS, "LET JUSTICE ROLL DOWN LIKE WATERS, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE AN EVER-FLOWING STREAM" (5:24).

David invent for themselves instruments of music; who drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the finest oils, but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!" (6:4-6 RSV).

These wealthy Israelites also oppress the poor through their abuse of the legal system. In ancient Israelite towns, legal complaints were brought to community elders who sat in the public space located inside the city gates. When Amos says, "They hate the one who reproves in the gate, and they abhor the one who speaks the truth" (5:10), he criticizes those

announces that God will judge their behavior. Because the rich Israelites have oppressed the poor, the nation will suffer. Without giving specific dates, Amos proclaims that the Israelites will suffer invasion and exile (see, for example, 6:7).

Despite the overwhelming emphasis on criticism and divine judgment, the book of Amos ends on a hopeful note that stresses restoration of the people (9:11-15). The outraged "No!" of God that we hear throughout much of the book is not the final message for the people: "I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel" (9:14a).

Biblical prophets have two primary functions: They criticize people for their failure to follow God's teaching, and they offer words of hope for the future. The book of

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of Israel in the 8th century BC. Obadiah's likely audience was the 6th-century BC people who had suffered the Babylonian invasion of Judah (nearly two centuries after the Assyrian destruction of the northern kingdom). Amos directs his prophetic critique against the Israelites themselves. Obadiah speaks out against Judah's enemies.



AMOS: A CLOSER LOOK

Author: An anonymous individual collected the prophetic speeches and sayings of the prophet Amos and added additional material, including a narrative about Amos and the priest Amaziah (7:10-17) and, possibly, a message of hope directed to the post-exilic community (9:11-15).

Date and location: The majority of the book of Amos reflects the 8th century BC northern kingdom of Israel.

Structure of the book: 1. Prophetic messages concerning the nations and concerning Judah and Israel (1:1-2:16); 2. Judgment of Israel (3:1-6:14); 3. Four vision reports and a narrative of confrontation (7:1-9:8); 4. Messages of hope (9:9-15).

Significant verses: "You trample on the poor" (5:11a); "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (5:24); "Seek good and not evil, that you may live, and so the LORD, the God of Hosts, will be with you, just as you have said" (5:14).

Main theme: Social and economic justice within the communities of God's people.

OBADIAH: A CLOSER LOOK

Author: Little is known of the prophet Obadiah whose message is contained in this book.

Date and location: The 6th century BC community in Judah.

Structure of the book: 1. Judgment of Edom (v. 1-9); 2. Edom's crimes against Israel (10-14); 3. Future restoration of Israel (15-21).

Significant verse: "The kingdom shall be the LORD's" (21b).

Main theme: Divine justice and God's sovereign rule.

the message that their enemies would be defeated is welcome news. The book ends on a note of hope for all who experience the hostility of enemies: "The kingdom shall be the LORD's" (21b). **W**

Christina Bucher is a professor of religion at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College.

MESSINGER'S "Journey through the Word" series will provide a brief overview of a different book (or books) of the Bible each month through December 2009. Coming in September: Jonah, by Eugene F. Roop.

The book of Amos has especially appealed to readers concerned with social and economic justice. During the civil rights movement of the mid-20th century, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. quoted the words of Amos, "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (5:24). King's many speeches resonate with echoes of the prophet Amos' message. Latin American liberation theologians similarly use this book as a source for their critiques of economic systems that support the wealthy and crush the poor. In these ways, the message of Amos can be applied to later contexts.

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The book of Obadiah is less easy to re-contextualize. At 21 verses, Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament.

Its message is directed primarily against Judah's enemies in the 6th century BC. For Obadiah, the people of Edom, who occupied territory to the southeast of Judah, head the list of Judah's enemies. Although the book of Obadiah does not explicitly identify the reason for its condemnation of Edom, we know from elsewhere in the Bible that Israel and Edom were long-standing enemies.

For many modern readers of Obadiah, this prophet's message can sound disturbingly vindictive. It may help some readers to keep in mind that Obadiah's audience consists of a demoralized group of people who have survived the invasion and destruction of their homeland. For the people of ancient Judah,

Seminary board honors president Eugene F. Roop

The semi-annual meeting of the Bethany Theological Seminary board of trustees in Richmond, Ind., March 23-25 included significant moments of celebration and recognition. Eugene F. Roop, who retired June 30 after 15 years of service as president of the seminary, was honored at a dinner for board members and guests. It included a

time of recognition, with faculty and representatives of educational, civic, and church organizations participating.

The board also expressed appreciation to Jeff Bach, associate professor of Brethren and Historical Studies, for his 13 years of service. Bach has accepted an appointment as director of the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies.

In other business, the board approved 19 candidates for graduation pending suc-

cessful completion of course work, the largest number since 1998. This includes Bethany's first graduate of "Connections," the school's distributed education Master of Divinity program: Christopher Zepp of Bridgewater, Va. The board noted that the undergraduate grade-point average of Bethany graduate students continues to rise, with 43 percent at a 3.5 undergraduate GPA or above.

A budget of slightly more than \$2.2 mil-

Bethany Theological Seminary marks 102nd commencement

Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind., celebrated its 102nd commencement on May 5 with a ceremony for conferring degrees in the seminary's Nicarry Chapel and a public worship celebration at Richmond Church of the Brethren.

President Eugene F. Roop spoke at the degree ceremony. His

The seminary also recognized significant faculty accomplishments of the past year. Russell Haitch, associate professor of Christian Education, was granted tenure and received the Rohrer Book Award for his book *From Exorcism to Ecstasy: Eight Views of Baptism*. Scott Holland, associate professor of

Theology and Culture, also received the award for his two books, *How Do Our Stories Save Us?* and *Seeking Peace in Africa*.

Nineteen students received degrees or certificates, the largest class since 1998:

Master of Divinity, Peace Studies

Emphasis: Carrie Eikler, Manchester Church of the Brethren, North Manchester, Ind.

Master of Divinity: Michael Benner, Koontz/Waterside (Pa.) Church of the Brethren; Jerramy Bowen, West Milton (Ohio) Church of the Brethren; Torin Eikler, North Manchester Church of the Brethren; Tasha Hornbacker, Pleasant Hill (Ohio) Church of the Brethren; Daniel House, Glade Valley Church of the Brethren, Walkersville, Md.; Rebecca House, Union Bridge (Md.) Church of the Brethren; Jennifer Sanders Kreighbaum, Bear Creek Church of the Brethren, Accident, Md.; Brian Mackie, New Life Christian Fellowship, Mount Pleasant, Mich.; Barbara Menke, Oakland Church of the Brethren, Bradford, Ohio; Kelly

Meyerhoeffer, Pleasant Valley Church of the Brethren, Weyers Cave, Va.; Nathan Polzin, New Life Christian Fellowship; Thomas Richard, Fairview Church of the Brethren, Cordova, Md.; Donald Williams, Stone Church of the Brethren, Buena Vista, Va.; Christopher Zepp, Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren.

Master of Arts in Theology: Rachel Peterson, New Carlisle (Ohio) Church of the Brethren; Carrie Smith, Beaver Creek (Ohio) Church of the Brethren.

Certificate of Achievement in Theological Studies: James Sampson, Eagle Creek Church of the Brethren, Forest, Ohio; Ronda Scammahorn, Oakland Church of the Brethren.

Christopher Zepp received distinction for his academic work in biblical studies. Carrie Eikler, Torin Eikler, Menke, and Meyerhoeffer received distinction for their work in ministry studies.



Jim Chepulis

Bethany Theological Seminary held commencement ceremonies on May 5. The 19-member graduating class was the largest since 1998. Front row, from left: Carrie Smith, Tasha Hornbacker, Barbara Menke, Rebecca House, Carrie Eikler, Rachel Peterson, Ronda Scammahorn, Jennifer Sanders Kreighbaum. Back row: Jerramy Bowen, Daniel House, Kelly Meyerhoeffer, Brian Mackie, Nathan Polzin, Donald Williams Jr., Torin Eikler, Christopher Zepp. Not pictured: Michael Benner, Thomas Richard, and James Sampson.

address, titled "Blessing," was based on Genesis 12:1-3 and two Gospel passages. He exhorted the graduates, "You go into ministry as an envoy and agent of God's blessing." Roop, who retired June 30, was thanked for his 15 years of service as part of the commencement celebrations.

Dena Pence, a former Bethany professor and now director of the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, was the speaker for the afternoon worship service. In her message, "What Do You See?," Pence referenced the response of Marilyn Lerch to the Virginia Tech shootings. Lerch serves as pastor of Good Shepherd Church of the Brethren in Blacksburg, Va., and is one of the campus ministers at Virginia Tech.

"Carry that image with you," Pence said, "a person looking at the community in which they dwell, in all its goodness and all its brokenness, and then knowing, with real clarity, what they can do to be a part of it."

lion was approved for the 2007-2008 fiscal year, an approximately 2.5 percent increase from the current year. The board approved searches for administrative staff and teaching faculty positions: a half-time coordinator for Ministry Formation, and two faculty positions in historical and theological studies.

Ted Flory of Bridgewater, Va., was named as the new chair, beginning July 1. Other officers called are vice chair Ray Donadio of Greenville, Ohio; and secretary Frances Beam of Concord, N.C. Carol Scheppard of Mount Crawford, Va., was called as chair of the Academic Affairs Committee; Elaine Gibbel of Lititz, Pa., as chair of the Institutional Advancement Committee; and Jim Dodson of Lexington, Ky., as chair of the Student and Business Affairs Committee.

Forum discusses future of Annual Conference

The Inter-Agency Forum marked its 10th anniversary as the group met April 26-27 in Elgin, Ill. The forum, created by the Standing Committee of Annual Conference in 1998, meets annually to serve as a coordinating group for the life and activities of the Church of the Brethren by providing links among agencies.

All 16 members were present including Ron Beachley, chair and past moderator of Annual Conference; Annual Conference moderator Belita Mitchell, moderator-elect Jim Beckwith, secretary Fred Swartz, and executive director Lerry Fogle; Sandy Bosserman of the Council of District Executives; Kathy Reid, executive director, and Wally Landes, board chair, for the Association of Brethren Caregivers; Gene Roop, president, and Anne Murray Reid,

board chair, for Bethany Theological Seminary; Wil Nolen, president, and Harry Rhodes, board chair, for Brethren Benefit Trust; Stan Noffsinger, general secretary, and Jeff Neuman-Lee, board chair, for the General Board; and Bob Gross, executive director, and Bev Weaver, board chair, for On Earth Peace.

On the agenda were discussions relating to the effectiveness and future of Annual Conference, the mentoring of potential denominational leadership, implications of several reports coming to Annual Conference, outreach challenges for the denomination in relation to the 300th anniversary year, and the call for the church to be more inclusive.

Fogle reported a steady decline in Annual Conference attendance over the past several years. In response, the forum gave overall support for the Conference but agreed that there needs to be some new ways of doing Conference, such as enhanced worship, more involvement of youth, more insight-type sessions, and consideration of options for altering the annual status of the meeting.

The idea of a program of mentors for young adults and others interested in serving in denominational leadership was initially suggested to the General Board by a Bethany Seminary student. One of the concerns that prompted this idea was the need to have more minority persons in leadership. Forum members affirmed their willingness to provide such mentoring and to be alert to opportunities to do so, and said that mentoring also needs to be encouraged at the local and district levels.

The forum looked at several recommendations coming to Annual Conference from the Review and Evaluation

Committee, including a reuniting of the program agencies and the Annual Conference Council under one board of directors for the denomination. There was a common concern that Conference delegates need to have more information about the work of the agencies before making their decision, and that there be no compromise of the agencies' integrity with their constituents. Agencies are in conversation with the Review and Evaluation Committee to provide this material.

Issues relating to the inclusiveness of the denomination, especially acceptance of gay and lesbian members, also commanded a lengthy discussion. It was observed that the emotions and fears currently accompanying opposing viewpoints on the issue are a hindrance to a constructive, face-to-face denominational discussion, and that the Church of the Brethren communion, which values its biblical heritage, needs to find ways to study the scriptures together, accepting the Annual Conference recognition that not all agree in the interpretation of scriptures. Forum members also observed that the church's strength and unity often has been enhanced and expressed by coming together in concrete acts of mission and service.

The forum also expressed support for a General Board initiative, sparked by a suggestion from Missouri/Arkansas District, that calls the church to consider new mission goals to mark the 300th anniversary; and received a presentation from Carl Desportes Bowman, professor of Sociology at Bridgewater (Va.) College, who reported results of the "Brethren Member Profile 2006."

The forum's next meeting is scheduled for April 23-24, 2008, in Elgin, Ill.

'Messenger' receives three awards from Associated Church Press

MESSENGER received three awards at this year's Associated Church Press (ACP) conference, held April 22-25 in Chicago: an "Award of Merit" (second place) for 1- or 2-color magazine design and "Honorable Mention" (third place) for Bible resource and magazine editorial or opinion piece.

The design award was for the September 2006 issue. Judges praised the work of designer Paul Stocksdale, calling it, "Well organized, [with] good use of photos. . . . Good contrast in use of type and design elements." It is the third straight year that MESSENGER placed in this category.

The Bible resource award was given for MESSENGER's "Journey through the Word" Bible study series; sample articles written by Robert Neff, Stephen Breck Reid, and Harold S. Martin were submitted for the competition. The magazine editorial writing award was presented for Walt Wiltschek's November 2006 editorial column, "Violent tendencies."

Nearly 200 publications, websites, news services, and individuals in the United States and Canada are ACP members, representing a combined circulation of several million.



UPCOMING EVENTS

June 30-July 4 Annual Conference, Cleveland, Ohio

July 3 Brethren Benefit Trust board meeting, Cleveland, Ohio

July 22-Aug. 10 Brethren Volunteer Service orientation, New Windsor, Md.

Aug. 19-29 Brethren Volunteer Service orientation (BVS/BRF unit), New Windsor, Md.

Aug. 27-31 Brethren Volunteer Service mid-unit retreat, Plano, Ill.

Sept. 2 Brethren Press fall curriculum quarter begins

Sept. 6-8 Caring Ministries Assembly, Lititz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren

Sept. 8 Reunion of Brethren Volunteer Service and Mennonite Central Committee voluntary unit "normal control patients" at The National Institutes of Health

Sept. 15-16 300th anniversary opening event, Germantown Church of the Brethren, Philadelphia

Sept. 21-22 On Earth Peace board meeting, New Windsor, Md.

Sept. 21-23 Association of Brethren Caregivers board meeting, Elgin, Ill.

Sept. 23-Oct. 12 Brethren Volunteer Service orientation, Peace Valley, Mo.



BVS Older Adult Unit 274: The New Windsor (Md.) Conference Center hosted the nine members of Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) Older Adult Unit 274 for orientation April 23-May 4. Volunteers, with home congregation or hometown and placement (if known at this time) are as follows: *Front row, from left:* Kent Switzer, Cedar Lake Church of the Brethren, Auburn, Ind., to World Friendship Center, Hiroshima, Japan; Maria Huber, Yellow Creek Church of the Brethren, Goshen, Ind., to New Windsor (Md.) Conference Center; MaryAnn Davis, Live Oak (Calif.) Church of the Brethren; and Marilou Booth, Pasadena (Calif.) Church of the Brethren. *Back row, from left:* Genelle Wine (orientation staff); Sarah Switzer, Cedar Lake Church of the Brethren, to World Friendship Center; David Huber, Yellow Creek Church of the Brethren, to New Windsor Conference Center; Ron and Barbara Siney, West Charleston (Ohio) Church of the Brethren, to be placed at Alderson (W.Va.) Hospitality House; Steve VanZandt, Washington, D.C.; to Cooperis, Mill Spring, N.C.; and Alice and Larry Petry (orientation staff). For more information about BVS call 800-323-8039 or visit www.brethrenvolunteerservice.org.

PERSONNEL MOVES

• **Cindy Bravos** of St. Charles, Ill., began May 14 as Congregational Contact Network coordinator for Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT). She will work to foster stronger relationships among BBT and congregations, assist in development and maintenance of BBT's denominational database, and as a Communications Team member will help shape and create BBT's interpretive resources. She served as narrator of *Without Fear or Hesitation*, a Brethren heritage CD-ROM produced in 2001. Bravos has a broadcast journalism degree from Northern Illinois University. She and her family are members of Saint

Sophia Greek Orthodox Church in Elgin.

• On Earth Peace approved a request from co-director **Barb Saylor** for reassignment of job responsibilities, dropping her role as co-director and reducing her work to half-time. She will continue as coordinator of communications. **Bob Gross** will move from the shared co-director's role to that of a solo director. The change took effect May 1. Saylor has moved with her family to the Bay area in northern California, where her husband, Mark, has accepted a position. She can be reached at her home office: 5192 Carriage Dr., El Sobrante, CA 94803; 510-275-9960; bsaylor_oepa@brethren.org.

• **Aaron and Becky Johnston**, a husband and wife team from Salisbury, Md., are serving with Global Mission Partnerships of the General Board, through Brethren Volunteer Service. They began an assignment as human rights observers at Union Victoria CPR, Guatemala, on April 1.

• **John L. Warner** has been appointed acting president and chief executive officer of the Brethren Retirement Community in Greenville, Ohio, following the death of president and chief executive officer Tim Hissong. Warner has held the position of chief financial officer and will continue to carry those duties in the interim.

Brethren disaster programs adopt new, clearer names

New names have been chosen for three disaster response programs of the General Board: Emergency Response, Disaster Child Care, and Service Ministries.

- "Brethren Disaster Ministries" is the new name for the Emergency Response program, which encompasses the Brethren Disaster Response rebuilding ministry.
- "Children's Disaster Services" is the new name for Disaster Child Care.
- Service Ministries is returning to a



Children's Disaster Services



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former name, "Material Resources."

New logos also have been created for the programs.

For some time, General Board staff have been discussing changing the names of the programs for several reasons. The names have not readily identified the programs as Brethren, and have not accurately identified what the programs do, staff said. The new names more adequately

reflect the identity and mission of the church's disaster response work.

The name of Disaster Child Care, for example, seemed "to carry the connotation of a babysitting service rather than helping children cope following disasters," said a memo that announced the name change to child care volunteers. The new name, "Children's Disaster Services," encompasses the program's expanding services.

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Youth Heritage Teams prepare to share denomination's story

How do you inject new life and energy into telling a 300-year-old-story? How do you put a forward-looking emphasis on the study of Brethren history and heritage?

Why not invite youth to tell the story? That's what the Annual Conference 300th Anniversary Committee, in partnership with the General Board's Youth/Young Adult Ministry office, decided to do.

Each district was asked to nominate two youth who would come to Elgin, Ill., for an intensive weekend of Youth Heritage Teams training.

Twenty-one of the 23 districts accepted that invitation, and April 13-15 that original vision of the anniversary organizers finally became reality.

"We thought, 'Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could have a group of youth steeped in Brethren history and able to go out and share their passion?' " said anniversary committee member Rhonda Pittman Gingrich, addressing the 42 youth Friday evening before leading get-acquainted activities. General Board Youth/Young Adult Ministry director Chris Douglas noted that the event was the fruit of two and a half years of planning.

The energetic group that came together was a microcosm of the church itself, representing a great deal of diversity in geographic areas, gender, and ethnic backgrounds. They came together quickly, though, and a rich spirit filled the weekend.

Highlights of the training included presentations on Brethren history and theology by author Jim Lehman and Bethany Theological Seminary faculty member Jeff Bach; music leadership by anniversary committee member Leslie Lake; workshops on drama, storytelling, music, and public presentation; and several periods of worship, including footwashing.

"You are part of creating this picture," Lehman said, capping a rapid trip through three centuries of Brethren personalities and events. "You may be the leaders, the ones to fill this picture out in the future."

Each youth also composed a one-minute speech that he or she delivered in front of a video camera. Small groups then reviewed the videos, offering ideas and suggestions to each other with abundant affirmation of each youth's particular gifts.

Youth will be employing their learnings in their respective



John Dentler of East Berlin, Pa., reads a text for a Bible study as Serena Lohitai of North Manchester, Ind., listens.

Walt Wiltschek

Walt Wiltschek



Bethany Theological Seminary faculty member Jeff Bach leads a session on Brethren theology for Youth Heritage Teams members, using the theme of gifts as an illustration.

districts over the coming year. The two-person teams will do Brethren heritage presentations at congregations and other district events as they are invited.

"We prepare now to send each of you out as new seeds," Lake told the group during one of the worship times. "Tell the church of today who we were, who we are, and who we yet will be."—Walt Wiltschek

Walt Wiltschek



Paula Langdon, top left, leads a group-building activity as part of a Youth Heritage Teams workshop on drama.

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ONCAMPUS

Bridgewater College (Bridgewater, Va.)

GEICO chairman and president/CEO O.M. "Tony" Nicely urged 298 graduates to "protect your integrity and reputation" during commencement ceremonies on May 13. Nicely went on to list six principles for success through ethical behavior. The day also included a President's Luncheon for seniors, their parents and guests, and faculty.

Elizabethtown College (Elizabethtown, Pa.)

Two Elizabethtown physics and engineering professors have been awarded a \$188,653 grant from the National Science Foundation's Division of Civil, Mechanical, and Manufacturing Innovation to study the cure rate of cement. The grant, awarded to Nathaniel Hager and Ilan Grave, will provide 12 students with intense research experience through the next three years.

Juniata College (Huntingdon, Pa.)

Pamela Reist, associate pastor of Lititz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, has been named to the Juniata board of trustees as church trustee for a two-year term. . . . Donald Mitchell, professor emeritus of chemistry at Juniata and founder of the Science in Motion program, received an honorary doctor of humane letters degree during Juniata's 129th commencement ceremony on May 12.

University of La Verne (La Verne, Calif.)

The 15th annual ULV Golf Tournament, a major fundraising event for the university scholarship fund, was held at Glendora (Calif.) Country Club on June 11.

Manchester College (North Manchester, Ind.)

Manchester's A Cappella Choir sang at Manchester Church of the Brethren, Springfield Church of the Brethren (Akron, Ohio), and Martinsburg (Pa.) Memorial Church of the Brethren en route to its May 26 performance at New York's Carnegie Hall. . . . Faculty member Rainn MacPhail was killed in an April 27 car crash as she traveled to a class in field biology. MacPhail had directed the college's Koinonia Environmental and Retreat Center since September 2004 in addition to teaching biology.

McPherson College (McPherson, Kan.)

Dee Erway-Sherwood received McPherson's Professor of the Year Award in ceremonies at the end of the school year. Service Learning Awards went to Adrielle Harvey of Beverly, Kan., and Jordan Shay of Healy, Kan. . . . Avid Duesenberg collector Denny Duesenberg has willed nearly \$400,000 as well as all his tools, machinery, and other shop equipment to McPherson's auto restoration program.

Pair of regional conferences challenge youth

McPherson: Sixty-nine youth, advisors, and leaders from the Plains region gathered at McPherson (Kan.) College and McPherson Church of the Brethren April 20-22 to explore this year's Regional Youth Conference theme: "Soli Deo Gloria," using the words of Colossians 3:17, "To God alone be the glory."

With Seth Hendricks, composer of last year's National Youth Conference theme song leading the music, Jon Shirley of Overland Park, Kan., providing a Christian music concert, and David Radcliff, director of New Community Project in Elgin, Ill., providing keynote leadership, this year's RYC challenged young people in powerful ways. Worship leadership was provided by Leslie Frye, co-pastor of Monitor (Kan.) Church of the Brethren; Shawn Flory-Replogle, pastor of McPherson Church of the Brethren; and Travis Walker and Joel Grosbach, McPherson College students.

Young people were challenged to intentionally develop their personal relationship with God and, with that relationship, learn to serve God's people. A Saturday evening time of commitment led many youth to pledge their lives to loving Christ, striving to reach out to help love all of God's children by making intentional decisions about how we each live our lives.—Tom Hurst

Walt Wiltschek



Three Rivers Jenbe' Ensemble drummers invite Manchester College Regional Youth Conference participants to join the show.

Manchester: Nearly 100 youth and advisors from the Midwest met at Manchester College in North Manchester, Ind., April 28-29 for this year's Regional Youth Conference, which used the national youth theme, "Now, Follow Me."

MESSANGER editor Walt Wiltschek spoke at three worship services, and Seth Hendricks and Jesse Eisenbise led music through the weekend. Youth were encouraged to think about the step-by-step journey they take in choosing to follow Jesus Christ. Bev Eikenberry served as RYC coordinator, assisted by a group of Manchester students.

Numerous workshops and Manchester's "Peace Week" activities were available Saturday afternoon, and the Three Rivers Jenbe' Ensemble of Fort Wayne, Ind., provided rhythmic music and dancing from the African tradition for Saturday evening's entertainment.

District youth cabinet members from several of the region's six districts had a pre-conference gathering Friday evening, led by General Board youth/young adult workcamps coordinator Steve Van Houten, who focused on issues of leadership and making choices.

Bits and pieces

- Fifteen young adults are interns in this summer's **Ministry Summer Service** program. They are working with mentors in congregations and agencies from California to Pennsylvania for nine weeks following orientation June 2-7 in Elgin, Ill.

- A full slate of denomination-sponsored **youth and young adult summer workcamps** began in June with young adult trips to Guatemala and to the Gulf Coast disaster response projects. About three dozen are occurring in all through mid-August.

'Contemplative Youth Ministry' It's about presence

Spending the past five years in specialized ministry with youth has taught me about organization, administration, and communication. I have learned that youth like to have fun, have an unending supply of energy, and have a passion for God.

This passion fuels the desire for sincere, honest relationships that reach beyond the superficiality of "programs." They want adults to listen to the questions they have, rather than lecture salvation. They want adults to be honest and struggle over the same questions about God, rather than to explain a small- or narrow-minded perception of God.



KEITH CARTER

Perhaps the most important lesson I have learned so far, though, is that youth want caring adults to walk alongside them, to help them feel validated, heard, and loved. They hunger for genuine relationships that provide stability in a crazy world. The adult presence is a glimpse of the holy that is often denied because of social pressures, deadlines, and demands. Youth want to be in and to feel the presence of God.

Like many youth workers (I use "workers" to refer to part-time/full-time paid staff members in any ministry setting), I was called to serve in a programming role. Programming includes having regular youth meetings, teaching Sunday school, attending camps, conferences, and concerts. As a youth worker, the

tions of spiritual disciplines that help individuals feel, experience, and be in the presence of God.

Yaconelli shares from his own experiences, and challenges those of us who work with youth to always stay focused on that presence. He introduces three main contemplative points and supports his ideas through 14 chapters of stories, quotes, and suggestions about effective practices for working with youth and the contemplative life. Yaconelli expresses his main points as follows:

1) Contemplative youth ministry is an invitation to slow down and receive the young people in our lives. It's a reminder that what youth need most are people who know how to be present to God and present to others.

2) Contemplative youth ministry isn't just another ministry model; it's an opening of the heart, an attentiveness to God, a receptivity to the Holy Spirit, a growing relationship with Jesus and his way of compassion. Contemplative youth ministry isn't about becoming mystics or turning kids into cloistered monks and nuns; it's about helping kids become alive in Christ. It isn't about candles and labyrinths; it's about youth and adults becoming present and available to God's love.

3) Contemplative youth ministry honors the desire to listen as well as teach in our interactions with kids. It grounds our ministries in prayer as well as evangelism—in silence as well as acts of justice. Contemplative youth ministry is about refusing to be so busy that you overlook God in your ministry. It's about remembering that Jesus goes before and beside us.

This book changed my approach to youth ministry. I am not as eager to have every moment programmed. I do not squirm in my

This looks beyond the lock-ins and pizza nights, beyond the shopping trips and workcamps, and beyond the games and Bible studies... (and) goes back to the ancient traditions of spiritual disciplines that help individuals feel, experience, and be in the presence of God.

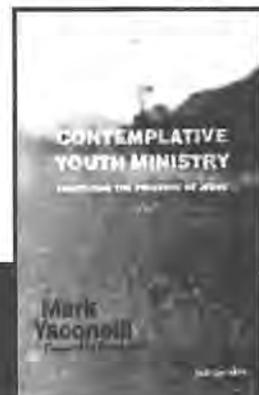
expectation is to work with the youth to help them feel a part of the church. I attended several youth worker conferences and seminars and diligently made an effort to keep up with printed literature on youth ministry. I wanted to have the "tools" in my pocket as I planned programming for the youth. I worked really hard to be the kind of youth worker that no one will forget.

However, about two years ago I was introduced to an ancient practice of contemplation in the book *Contemplative Youth Ministry: Practicing the Presence of Jesus* by Mark Yaconelli. While reading and digesting the information Yaconelli shared within the pages, my eyes were opened to a whole new practice of doing and being in youth ministry. This practice looks beyond the lock-ins and pizza nights, beyond the shopping trips and workcamps, and beyond the games and Bible studies. This practice goes back to the ancient tradi-

seat when youth discussions go a different direction than I anticipated. In fact, I intentionally allow for quiet and meditation time. Most importantly, I try to be that adult who walks alongside youth, pointing out when I feel God's presence and removing myself to allow God's presence to be.

This book focuses primarily on ministry with youth. However, its practices and suggestions are valid for anyone in any specialized ministry setting, including spiritual direction, outdoor ministries, chaplaincy work, campus ministry, seminary professor, or pastor. 

Keith Carter is director of children and youth at Goshen (Ind.) City Church of the Brethren.



ABOUT THE BOOK

Title: *Contemplative Youth Ministry: Practicing the Presence of Jesus*. **Author:** Mark Yaconelli.

Publisher: Youth Specialties (May 2006). **Pages:** 256. **List price:** \$21.99 (hardcover).

To order: Call Brethren Press at 800-441-3712.

Brumfield argues that the church must make multiculturalism a priority. And I would also argue that the church must become open and affirming not only of people of color and cultural differences, but also persons who are gay or lesbian.

Another blog is born

I was delighted to read the January MESSENGER's focus on integrating technology into our work as a church. There seem to be lots of Brethren out there making the most out of this new tool, using it to direct our focus onto the real work of Christians: sharing God's peace and love through our living in the world.

The piece was timely, too: the Women's Caucus of the Church of the Brethren has just launched its own weblog (womaen-scaucus.wordpress.com), at the beginning of 2007. We post articles from our "Femailings" newsletter, as well as regular analyses of current events and church developments. We invite all Brethren women and those who love them to visit, leave a comment, suggest additions, and help us use this new media to strengthen our work as feminists in the church.

Audrey deCoursey
Berkeley, Calif.

Thank you for caring

A very big thank you to Dr. Allen Clague and to Olden Mitchell for their letters to the editor in the April 2007 MESSENGER. As the parent of a lesbian, I am so appreciative of reading positive, caring, compassionate, understanding statements in my favorite magazine. It hurts when I read hateful comments about individuals who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. I feel that Jesus never intended for us to use scripture to promote hatred. Thank you again, Dr. Clague and Mr. Mitchell.

Helen K. Brubaker
Gratis, Ohio

God blesses all uniqueness

I very much appreciated the article by Larry Brumfield in the "Reflections" section of the March MESSENGER.

Mr. Brumfield wrote, "One of the most seemingly innocent but false statements perpetrated on the American public and particularly church folk, is that 'God doesn't see color.' 'Color does not matter to God; God loves us all.' "

Brumfield continues, "The truth is God not only sees it, God made it. This is awesome. The same God who didn't fill

the ocean with all blue fish, the same God who didn't fill the jungle with all white flowers is the same God that made many nations of different people. God not only sees color, he loves it. God loves the variety, the changes, the cultures."

The article reminded me of my own

uniqueness. I am, among a thousand other attributes, gay. And I believe the same truth that Brumfield believes, though I do not, of course, assume that he agrees with me. When it comes to being gay or lesbian, the truth is that God not only sees my uniqueness, but



MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

Fall 2007 Workshop Schedule

October 8-10	<p>Western Plains Matthew 18 Training for Trainers <i>Great Bend, KS</i> Matthew 18 leadership skills for Area Ministry Team members Leadership: Annie Clark, MoR Coordinator</p>
October 14-15	<p>Western Pennsylvania Matthew 18 Training for Trainers <i>Johnstown, PA</i> Matthew 18 leadership skills for D & R Committee members Leadership: Annie Clark, MoR Coordinator</p>
November 3	<p>Peaceful Family Playshop <i>Oakton Church of the Brethren, Vienna, VA</i> Parenting and peace skills for the entire family Leadership: Pam Young-Schultz, MoR Volunteer and Annie Clark, MoR Coordinator</p>
November 4	<p>Surviving the Holidays: A Toolkit for Families <i>Long Green Valley Church of the Brethren, Glen Arm, MD</i> Tools for dealing with the stress and conflict generated at holiday times <i>For adults, youth, and young adults</i> Leadership: Annie Clark, MoR Coordinator</p>
November 14-16	<p>Appreciative Inquiry Workshop and Practitioner Consultation <i>Camp Mack, Milford, IN</i> Tools for facilitating positive change in congregations followed by a practitioner exchange of skills and ideas <i>For conflict transformation practitioners</i> Leadership: Marty Farahat, Congregational Consultant and Annie Clark, MoR Coordinator</p>

For details and registration information, go to: www.brethren.org/oepa/mor/upcoming/ or contact annie.clark@verizon.net or 260-982-8595.

Pontius' Puddle

God made me. I celebrate the whole person that I am, and that God loves.

Brumfield argues that the church must make multiculturalism a priority. And I would also argue that the church must become open and affirming not only of people of color and cultural differences, but also persons who are gay or lesbian.

Of course, many will say that being gay or lesbian is different. We know that being a person of color or of a different culture is not sinful or against God's will. Odd isn't it, that some good white Christians still argue that being a person of color does, as a matter of scripture, run against the grain of the gospel. But we who are believers and are thoughtful and intelligent know that such thinking is prejudiced and biased.

One day, I believe, the majority of the people of God will realize that being gay or lesbian is not a sin or a mental illness or a crime. Thank you, Brother Larry, for giving me an insight about culture—and about human dignity.

Ralph McFadden
Elgin, Ill.



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Flags send wrong message

Flags symbolize groups of people. Like money, or any totem, they become more than just a function; they actually come to represent something more tangible. It is not their fault, as flags are inanimate objects. People attribute more meaning to them than what is there. People make flags a symbol of who they are and to whom they belong. They have the inherent quality of separating people into "us" and "them."

To talk about this in religious language, we can easily say that flags quickly turn into idols. They represent a human institution in which our membership is more important than our membership in the people of God. Instead of looking to God's Son, who is the image of the unseen God (see Col. 1:15 ff), we look to the nation or the state or another smaller political unit that cannot save us or anyone else.

In a very concrete and recent example, most American Christians accepted that we Americans needed to start a war. How does one explain this? They used good Christian values as their reason, but let the state (and fear and a selfish desire for cheap oil) to determine means. Then, to make it worse, this war in Iraq—which became, in effect (if not in hidden prior intention), a war to conquer, to plunder

and subjugate—was dressed up as a Christian activity, which is blasphemy.

The flags in sanctuaries across America represent a popular faith, not a faith in Jesus. This popular faith is emphasized by most television preachers and the mass media. This faith does have its message, but it is the limited message of a faith that thinks it has conquered the state but has actually been conquered by the state.

I heartily prefer to not have a flag in a sanctuary dedicated to God, the Spirit, and the Son. If we must have a symbol, let it be the cross where Jesus saved all humanity and where Jesus shows us our life's meaning. I hope that at least others might understand me, even if they don't agree.

Jeff Neuman-Lee
Denver, Colo.

Trust scripture, not theories

In the April MESSENGER, two people wrote letters about homosexuality. Apparently, these two accepted the studies of the American Academy of Psychology and the American Academy of Psychiatry as the truth they were seeking. According to both institutions, homosexuality is not a disease, a choice, nor can it be taught.

The other side of this discussion is that homosexuality is a choice, and homosexuality can be learned. There are more studies out about homosexuality that just these two academies'. Why not check out their material? There are many plausible reasons why people gravitate toward this sin. Human sexual orientation is such a fragile process that anything interfering with the natural process of learning can affect God's intended income.

The first letter ended with a scripture out of context. The writer's point is that since Jesus made this statement about children, then that should cover homosexual people because they are also his children.

The conservative Christian stands for the truth of scripture, not the theories brought out of an educated mind. If God calls homo-

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. Please include hometown and phone number.

John Kline
he's not!

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to be a hero too?*



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sexuality a sin, what human then has the authority to change that scripture? No one does. Conservative Christians are simply quoting scripture when they say that homosexuality is a sin. To tell someone the untruth is an injustice.

It is true that every Christian must love the homosexual, but we are not to accept heresy or false theories. Conservatives tell the scriptural truth of sin, which is repentance and change. Unfortunately, scriptural truth contradicts with some modern theories about homosexuality. When scriptural truth collides with educated theory, it creates sides, or opposing ideas. Our denomination has gotten away from preaching against sin. If no one tells that sin demands repentance and change, that is a complete breakdown in Christian responsibility.

The second letter on homosexuality was in agreement with the first one. I agree with the author that Jesus did not reject individuals and that he had compassion on the crowd. But the larger truth is that to become Christ's followers meant change had to take place. No one is ever called to fellowship with God without correcting sin. We are never told that we can come into the

church and remain just as we are, unrepentant and unregenerated.

Telling the truth of scripture is not judging; we are merely restating what God says about this issue. It is never popular to tell the truth of scripture, but it is a duty that all Christians are called to share. Since homosexuality is a spiritual matter, it is sufficient to say that scripture should provide the answer. Jesus had a great theory about preaching: "If no one preaches, how can the people hear?" I believe Jesus meant preaching the truth of scripture, not the theories of mankind.

Jerry Waterman
Marshalltown, Iowa

CORRECTIONS

• A name in the February 2007 In Touch article "West Milton celebrates ministry of sponsorship" was incorrect. Zelma Studebaker sent the first letter to Henk and Annie Brunsveld as they were preparing to move to the United States.

• The name of former Brethren Volunteer Service worker Jim Stokes-Buckles was printed incorrectly on page 10 of the May issue.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Be a co-participant in the worship service and the commemoration of the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Church of the Brethren in Schwarzenau on August 3, 2008. Plan now to participate in a Brethren Heritage Tour of Brethren historical sites in Europe, plus some "tourist" highlights from Holland to the Swiss Alps. July 29-August 10, 2008. For information please write to J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022, or email kreiderk@etown.edu.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S DISASTER SERVICES:

This newly created, full-time, salaried position provides oversight and administration of Children's Disaster Services for the Church of the Brethren General Board. Located in New Windsor, Md., this individual will be responsible for insuring program growth while expanding Church of the Brethren, ecumenical, and secular relationships that enhance responding to children impacted by disaster. This position works closely with the director of Brethren Disaster Ministries on program development, volunteer deployment, and training. Required experience in: disaster response; making effective presentations or adult education; management of staff or volunteers; working directly with at-risk children (i.e. teaching, counseling, providing programs). Related undergraduate degree required, advanced degree preferred. Some travel is required. Application deadline is July 15, 2007. Candidates should send a cover letter and resume to: Office of Human Resources, Brethren Service Center, 500 Main Street Box 188, New Windsor, MD 21776; fax 410-635-8789; e-mail jmcgrath_gb@brethren.org.

Live for a year or two in the nation's capital, and support a Brethren/Anabaptist witness . . . The University Park Church of the Brethren in Hyattsville, Md.—just a few miles from the heart of D.C.—is seeking one or more persons to reside in and manage our church house part-time in support of our church mission through an as-yet undeveloped project or program centered at the house. We are seeking an active partnership with folks who will bring their experience and vision and passion into working with us to establish and develop such a project. Our hope is to build on congregational interest in using the house to extend our witness into the local area through hospitality, peace work, care for creation, cross-cultural understanding or many other possibilities.

The structure and terms of the agreement, including the way-below-market rental rate for the house, are negotiable and will evolve in conjunction with the person(s) serving as facilities manager(s); as will the very vision for the use of the house. This position will easily accommodate outside employment or involvements.

We welcome inquiries from persons at least 21 years of age, retirees or folks on unconventional career and lifestyle paths who can bring practical experience and energy. If you have a background with Brethren/Anabaptist tradition and would like to work with us, but always thought city living expenses, especially in D.C., would be way too high, we may have an opportunity for you. Inquiries from denominational or Brethren/Anabaptist-related organizations are also welcome.

Let us know of your interest with an e-mail or a letter. Contact Hooker Monroe, University Park Church of the Brethren, 4413 Tuckerman St., Hyattsville, MD 20782 or upcob@aol.com. Shalom.

On Earth Peace seeks part-time Communications staff as part of communications team. Responsibilities include writing, editing, publicity and news services, using both print and electronic media. Must be self-motivated, well-organized and flexible. Requires commitment to Christian peacemaking and understanding of the Church of the Brethren. Starts September 1, 2007. Location negotiable. Interested persons should make contact immediately: applications are already being reviewed. Send resume, writing samples and letter of interest to oepa_oepa@brethren.org. Call 410-635-8704 for more information.

PASTORS NEEDED. Congregations in many of the denomination's 23 districts are in need of strong, trained Christian leaders who are dedicated to Church of the Brethren beliefs and practices to serve as pastor. The available placements are both full-time and part-time and include some associate/second staff positions. The congregations vary widely in size and program. A full listing of openings can be found at www.brethren.org/genbd/ministry/placement.htm. Contact the appropriate district executive or call the Ministry office at 800-323-8039.

Is the church and the world calling you?
Opportunity: MCC Executive Director

Mennonite Central Committee is seeking a person with strong leadership skills to build understanding and support for its mission among an increasingly diverse constituency and growing worldwide program.

Letters of intent and resumes are now being accepted. The application review begins June 5, 2007 and continues until a suitable candidate is found. The anticipated start date is Jan. 1, 2008.



For a job description and information on the application process please contact Lowell Detweiler via email at lcd@mcc.org, send a letter of inquiry to P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501; or call 717-859-2806.

In 2007 the MCC budget is \$44 million USD, with more than 700 staff in more than 50 countries.

Please send information to be included in *Turning Points* to Jean Clements, 1451 Dundee Ave, Elgin, IL 60120; 800-325-8039 ext. 206; jclements_gb@brethren.org. Information must be complete in order to be published. Information older than one year cannot be published.

New Members

Anville, Pa.: Keith Kreamer, Sue Kreamer, Fred Yeagley
Dupont, Ohio: Kevin Chastain, Madison Chastain, Daran Elston, Cody Dickerson, Harley Davidson Lane, Alex Murphy, Judy Kaufman, Kellen Baisle, Vanity Del Campo, Alex Meuse
Elm Street, Lima, Ohio: Kris Knight
Fairview, Unionville, Iowa: Darrell Koehler, Cindy Koehler, Carl Heien, Sharon Heien
Grotoes, Va.: Sabrina Allen, Denell Clem, Shannon Clem, Damien Mallette, Dustin Mallette, Nancy Mallette, Jerry Mallette, Wanna Randall, Douglass Shifflett
Hempfield, Manheim, Pa.: Cory Amman
Lafayette, Ind.: Orville Chinn, Barbara Chinn
Lampeter, Pa.: D. Matthew Johnson, Alexander R. Johnson, Alexa M. Lantz, John Erb, Kelly Erb
Lick Creek, Bryan, Ohio: Rhonda Boylan, Steven Boylan, Karleigh Ebert, Amber Badillo, Darren Gonzalez
Longmeadow, Hagerstown, Md.: Diane Evans
Manchester, North Manchester, Ind.: Ernie Barr, Cleona Barr, Dennis Butler, Rosemary Butler, Leona Campbell, Josh Garber, Kessie Karg, Jo Anne Martin, Maurice Metzger, Julia Metzger, Louise Nolt, Phyllis Penrod, Caitlin Sautter, Jennifer Schall, Daisy Schmidt, Mary Shearer, Lois Thompson, Elizabeth Waas-Smith, April White, Whitney Woods, Donna Priest, Steve Priest, Randy Sare, Viona Brown, Katie Gray Brown, Mia Miller
Maple Grove, Lexington, N.C.: Pete Aslanis, Jr.
Marion, Ohio: James Ballinger, Emily Ballinger
Marsh Creek, Gettysburg, Pa.: Brooke Chronister, Jeremy Ingle, Darlene Beamer, George Matthew, Hope Matthew, Larry A. Swartz, Christine M. Swartz, Amber Orndorff
Middle Creek, Lititz, Pa.: Cathy Stoltzfus, Rodney D. Lehman
Mill Creek, Port Republic, Va.:

Derek Dennis Diehl, Marcus Antonio Figgatt, Blair Morgan Long, Joshua Adam McCauley, Amanda Paige McDaniel, Eddie Allen McDaniel, Jr., Katie Elizabeth Nelson, Travis Clinton Nelson, Caleb Lee Sheets, Hunter Olear Shuke, Cory Atkins, Gary Atkins, Andy Brunk, Erin Miller, Michael Miller, Gleamer Sullivan
Mountain View, Boise, Idaho: Anne Henscheid, Dustin Larsen, Randy Haily, Hurbert Hoyt, Rusty Christiansen, Chris Green, Jack Waller
New Carlisle, Ohio: Glenda Konechney, Lowell Tarves, Carol Hall
Peace, Portland, Ore.: Richard Bittinger, Bette Bittinger, Nathan Sheller, Hal Sheller, Gayle Sheller
Piqua, Ohio: Susan Link
Roaring Spring, Pa.: Ben Wilt, Bradley Dick, Brandon Dick-Giordano, Blake Miller, Jarrett Ritchey, Megan Witkovsky
Saint Petersburg, Fla.: Ron Strine, Jean Strine
Somerset, Pa.: Randall Spoerlein, Sandra Spoerlein, Randall Spoerlein, Jr.
Topka, Kan.: Nicole Smith, Lori Jenkins
Twenty-eighth Street, Altoona, Pa.: Justin Biddle, Adam Weaver
Warrensburg, Mo.: Deborah Starke Bulloc
Welty, Smithsburg, Md.: Barbara Bricker, Casey Mickel, Jan Beyer, Cheyenne Wagner, Sierra Wagner, Conner Potts, Mike Manthos, Tammy Manthos, David Manthos, Adler Garrett, Carol Plante
Zion Hill, Columbiana, Ohio: Joyce Kissinger

Wedding Anniversaries

Bowman, Fred and Wanda, Bridgewater, Va., 60
Brumbaugh, Gerald and Elizabeth, Roaring Spring, Pa., 60
Bucher, Gordon and Darlene, North Manchester, Ind., 60
Butler, Donald and Velva, Grundy Center, Iowa, 50
Custer, George and Velma, New Carlisle, Ohio, 55
Gibbel, H. Lewis and Louise, Harrisburg, Pa., 60
Grossnickle, Richard and Mary Sue, Woodsboro, Md., 50
Hays, Ronald and Pat, Boonsboro, Md., 50
Mason, Earl and Betty, Centerville, Iowa, 50
Morgan, Bill and Madeline, Roanoke, Va., 65
Nichols, Perry and Irene, Modesto, Calif., 70
Richwine, Albert and Jane, Palmyra, Pa., 60
Sesser, Joe and Helen, Modesto,

Calif., 70
Shearer, Light and Rita, Harrisburg, Pa., 50
Shenk, Paul and Blanche, Carlisle, Pa., 60
Silvers, Carl and Peggy, Lawrence, Kan., 50
Smart, Jack and Carol, Greenville, Ohio, 65
Snoberger, Clarence and Pauline, Martinsburg, Pa., 70
Stinebaugh, Vernon and Angela, York, Pa., 65
Wray, Roland and Violet, Modesto, Calif., 74
Wright, Owen and Pat, Cottage Grove, Ore., 50
Young, Frank and Hazel, Dayton, Ohio, 50

Deaths

Achilles, Ron, 65, Quinter, Kan., April 4
Allerding, Arthur, 86, Hastings, Mich., April 4
Alwine, Paul E., 82, Roanoke, Va., March 30
Baber, James S., 75, Charlottesville, Va., March 15
Barclay, Cleo, 91, Somerset, Pa., March 6
Bendsen, Lucille, 86, North Manchester, Ind., Jan. 17
Berger, Emma R., 95, Hagerstown, Md., April 13
Bishop, Everett, 82, Bassett, Va., May 2, 2006
Bishop, Freda Phillips, 90, Indian Valley, Va., March 4
Bittner, Arlene, 86, Johnstown, Pa., April 24
Bloom, Rosalie, 87, Dayton, Ohio, April 14
Bowden, Ruth Virginia, 87, Oaks, Pa., April 30
Boyd, Les, 76, Thaxton, Va., March 12
Bromley, Walter, 72, Smithsburg, Md., Sept. 28
Brown, Pearl, 97, Smithsburg, Md., April 14
Burkholder, Dorothy, 99, Harmony, Minn., March 14
Compher, Burns, 75, Williamsport, Md., March 4
Congdon, Bill, 89, Piqua, Ohio, April 15
Cote, Anna Mary, 95, Downers Grove, Ill., April 7
Dallas, Dawn, 58, Kaleva, Mich., April 15
Davis, Lester, 91, North Manchester, Ind., Aug. 28, 2006
Deardorff, Eleanor Summy, 94, Port Townsend, Wash., April 20, 2006
Engle, Sylvia, 85, Waynesboro, Pa., Dec. 30
Eshelman, C. Furry, 86, Martinsburg, Pa., April 6
Frey, Kenneth H., 79, Mercersburg, Pa., March 19
Gardner, Liz, 75, Montvale, Va., March 30
Garner, Florice M., 91, Lemoine, Ohio, Feb. 23
Harsh, Karla F., 65, Warrenton, Va., April 16
Hartzler, Ruth, 92, Monticello, Ind., March 23
Hefner, Rosella, 84, Lima, Ohio, March 22
Hilton, Russell, 95, Morgantown, W.Va., April 14
Howard, Dana Frances, 86, Knob Noster, Mo., April 20
Hundley, Frances A., 81, Bassett, Va., Aug. 3, 2006
Jones, Kermit L., 81, Windber, Pa., April 20
Keeny, Gilbert J., 77, Seminole, Fla., April 17
Keller, Hazel Wright, 82, North Manchester, Ind., Oct. 4
Lewis, Helen, 84, Hagerstown, Md., April 20
Mason, John Marion, 85, Moulton, Iowa, April 7
Matthew, David, Jr., 86, Lafayette, Ind., Dec. 7
Maurer, Alyce, 82, Westmont, Ill., April 9
McCraw, Paul, 60, Bassett, Va., May 11, 2006
McNally, Percy, 84, Roaring Spring, Pa., April 11
Metzger, Maurice E., 88, North Manchester, Ind., Aug. 29, 2006
Metzler, Bonnie J., 64, Lancaster, Pa., March 26
Miller, Dick, 52, Goshen, Ind., April 6
Miller, Elma, 92, Somerset, Pa., March 9
Miller, Lois, 84, North Manchester, Ind., June 21, 2006
Nelson, June, 89, North Manchester, Ind., Dec. 7
Park, Ethel, 87, Altoona, Pa., Feb. 25
Peters, Olive Whitacre, 80, Boonsboro, Md., March 22
Rohrer, Jay H., 72, Manheim, Pa., April 5
Schall, Jerry, 76, North Manchester, Ind., May 10, 2006
Schwalm, Florence, 96, Goshen, Ind., Feb. 15
Sheets, Martha Berniece Diehl, 86, Linville, Va., Feb. 17
Snyder, Walter, 83, Martinsburg, Pa., April 9
Sollenberger, Barbara, 81, Carlisle, Pa., Feb. 18
St. John, RuthAnn, 55, North Manchester, Ind., March 15
Swarner, Nancy, 75, Carlisle, Pa., Feb. 4
Swimm, Irene Morlan, 92, Centerville, Iowa, March 9
Taynor, Brent, 50, Dayton, Ohio, April 8
Teets, Naomi C., 88, Boonsboro, Md., Feb. 19
Westmoreland, Donald Andrew, 74, Copper Hill, Va., Feb. 17
Winger, Helen, 92, North Manchester, Ind., June 1, 2006
Yok, Sar, 86, Manheim, Pa., Feb. 14
Zeiler, Herbert, 78, Loveland, Colo., April 18
Ziegler, Curtis R., 90, Bethel, Pa., March 31

Licensings

Alphonse, Ilexene, Atl. S.E. Dist. (Miami, First, Miami, Fla.), April 15
Bayes, Donald L., Idaho Dist. (Fruitland, Idaho), April 1
Camps, Michaela Denese, Atl. S.E. Dist. (Miami, First, Miami, Fla.), April 15
Green, Gary W., W. Pa. Dist. (Tire Hill, Pa.), April 29
Heidt, Philip, Pac. S.W. Dist. (South Bay Community, Redondo Beach, Calif.), April 22

Ordinations

Krieg, Lisa, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Lititz, Pa.), Jan. 14
Miller, Robert P., N. Ind. Dist. (Crest Manor, South Bend, Ind.), April 15

Placements

Black, Larry G., from pastor, Beachdale, Berlin, Pa., to associate pastor, Hartville, Ohio, Jan. 1
Carmichael, Paula S., chaplain, St. Mary's Hospital, Decatur, Ill., May 7
Criswell, Scott W., from pastor, Claysburg, Pa., to pastor, Three Springs, Blain Pa., April 22
Fackler, Jeffrey, from pastor, Pleasant Chapel, Ashley, Ind., to pastor, Penn Run, Pa., April 15
Fittery, Nancy J., from interim to pastor, Swatara Hill, Middletown, Pa., April 1
Gonzalez, Manuel, pastor (yoked parish), Floyd, Hispanic Outreach, Floyd, Va., and Roanoke, Hispanic Outreach, Roanoke, Va., April 15
Heidt, Philip, pastor, South Bay Community, Redondo Beach, Calif., Aug. 28
Heien, Carl, from interim to pastor, Fairview, Unionville, Iowa, April 1
Katonah, John G., from chaplain, Evanston Hospital, Evanston, Ill., to pastoral education coordinator/chaplain, Sutter Medical Center, Sacramento, Calif., April 9
Leddy, Peter J., Sr., from interim to pastor, Elk Run, Churchville, Va., April 1
Potvin, Doug, pastor, Green Hill, Westover, Md., April 30
Simmons, Keith, from pastor, Agape, Fort Wayne, Ind., to pastor, Sebring, Fla., May 1
Swindell, Beverly J., assistant pastor, Everett, Pa., April 1

Living beautiful-Lee

A story is told of an award-winning farmer in the Midwest who amassed a large quantity of blue ribbons due to the high quality of his corn.

One enterprising journalist learned of his accomplishments and went to do an interview. They talked about planting methods, crop rotation, fertilizers, and other such topics. The real surprise came, though, when the farmer said that every



WALT WILTSCHKEK
MESSENGER Editor

year he shared some of his prized seed with his neighbors.

The journalist didn't understand. Why would the farmer give away some of his best seed to other growers? Why not keep it to himself? Simple, the farmer answered. When the prevailing winds blew through, some of his crops would be pollinated by his neighbors'. If his neighbors grew an inferior strain of corn, then it would gradually dilute the quality of his own corn, too.

It echoes back to Paul's message in 2 Corinthians 9:6: "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously" (NIV). A recent Home Depot commercial expresses a similar thought with a more colorful spin: "If you grow good things in your garden and in your life, then you're surrounded by beauty."

In my experience in the Church of the Brethren, few people have brought more beauty and wonder to more lives than the Mennonite comedy duo of Ted Swartz and Lee Eshleman. Whether they were in front of a congregation or thousands of

the church—the whole church—a better place.

Thus when Lee succumbed to a long battle with depression and took his own life on May 17, many people felt as if the wind had been knocked out of them. It seemed impossible for darkness to come over something so bright.

In a letter to youth advisors who had attended last summer's National Youth Conference, where Ted & Lee performed, General Board Youth/Young Adult Ministry director Chris Douglas offered a reaffirmation of Lee's ministry. She urged advisors to help their youth "understand that (Lee's) personal struggle with depression does not invalidate his faith, and does not negate the important things that he taught about following Jesus."

Lee helped many of us see beauty and love and truth that we hadn't seen before, or at least hadn't seen in the same way. It's a tragic irony that his illness prevented him from seeing some of that brilliant world himself at the end, but it doesn't diminish the gift he and Ted have given us.

A memorial tribute on the Ted & Lee TheaterWorks website by Curt Cloninger expressed it well: "(Lee) was a stumbling follower and lover of Jesus," Cloninger said. "He was an introverted artist who, despite his reluctance, stood on stages all around the world so that he could do his best to brag on the hero he loved."

Ted Swartz sent out an e-mail message in the week after the sad news, saying that he expected the on-stage ministry that had been Ted & Lee to continue, in some form. He said he still sensed a need for that unique witness of drama, and he's right.

In the shrinking field that is our globe, we find ourselves increasingly affected by the well-being (or lack thereof) of our neighbors. We see these concerns arising in a variety of

Whether they were in front of a congregation or thousands of youth at a National Youth Conference or a thousand-plus seniors at National Older Adult Conference, Ted & Lee created an almost magical atmosphere.

youth at a National Youth Conference or a thousand-plus seniors at National Older Adult Conference, Ted & Lee created an almost magical atmosphere.

They captivated any room with laughter, but it was more than that. They used their dramatic gifts to open up the scriptures in a way that made the stories come alive. They brought not only entertainment, but transformation.

They shared their gifts generously and joyfully, often leading workshops to help others seek "the holy whack," as they called it, in finding the very human element of the Bible's stories. And in that sharing on stage and elsewhere, they made

forums—political, scientific, religious, and others. Many competing forces tend to push us apart.

But Ted & Lee brought people together through laughter, and through connecting their audiences again and again to God's story revealed in Jesus Christ. They shared their best seed, and it has grown and blossomed bountifully in countless neighbors' hearts.

A fitting legacy for Lee Eshleman is for that message to continue to be borne by all those whose lives he touched, bragging on Jesus and shedding a bit more beauty and love on the world.—Ed.

COMING IN SEPTEMBER: Full coverage of Annual Conference 2007, from business decisions to worship highlights; junior high gathering; Bible study on Jonah; and more.

Join Our Quiet Ministry

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

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



Brethren Retirement Centers

Brethren Hillcrest Homes

La Verne, Calif. — (909) 593-4917

The Brethren Home Community

New Oxford, Pa. — (888) 624-8242

Brethren Retirement Community

Greenville, Ohio — (937) 547-8000

Brethren Village

Lancaster, Pa. — (800) 367-9899

Bridgewater Retirement Community

Bridgewater, Va. — (800) 419-9129

Casa de Modesto

Modesto, Calif. — (209) 529-4950

The Cedars

McPherson, Kan. — (620) 241-0919

Church of the Brethren Home

Windber, Pa. — (814) 467-5505

Fahrney-Keedy Memorial Home

Boonsboro, Md. — (301) 733-6284

Garden Terrace & Garden Terrace West

Wenatchee, Wash. — (509) 663-2154

Good Shepherd Home

Fostoria, Ohio — (419) 435-1801

Lebanon Valley Brethren Home

Palmyra, Pa. — (717) 838-5406

Northaven Retirement Residence and Assisted Living

Seattle, Wash. — (206) 365-3020

The Palms Estates of Highlands County

Lorida, Fla. — (863) 655-1909

The Palms of Sebring

Sebring, Fla. — (863) 385-0161

Peter Becker Community

Harleysville, Pa. — (215) 256-9501

Pinecrest Community

Mount Morris, Ill. — (815) 734-4103

Pleasant Hill Village

Girard, Ill. — (217) 627-2181

Spurgeon Manor

Dallas Center, Iowa — (515) 992-3735

Timbercrest Senior Living Community

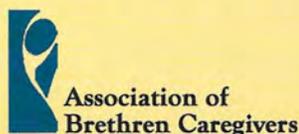
North Manchester, Ind. — (260) 982-2118

The Village at Morrisons Cove

Martinsburg, Pa. — (814) 793-2104

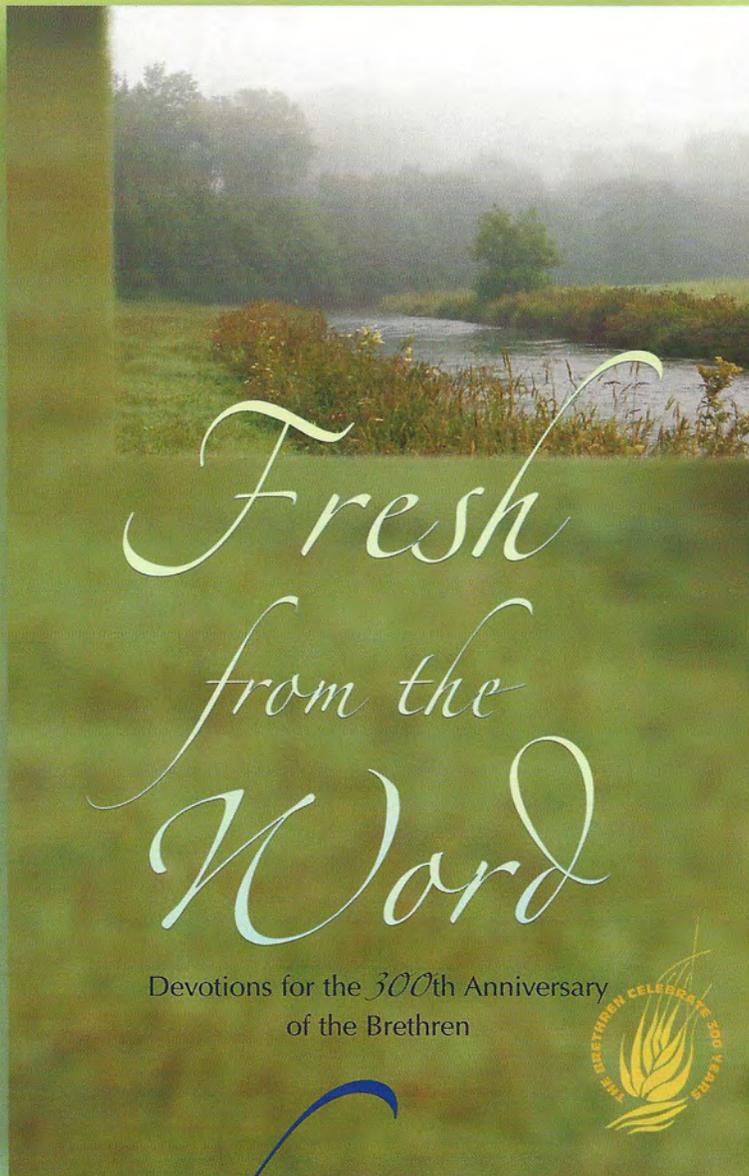
West View Manor

Wooster, Ohio — (330) 264-8640



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



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