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Church
of the
Brethren

MESSENGER

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ONTHECOVER

In 1977, Brethren in southeastern Pennsylvania began an auction to aid disaster relief. Three decades later, the concept has blossomed and grown. The original event has grown into a huge annual affair in Lebanon, Pa., while several other districts have started auctions of their own. Pictured on the cover is Richard Wright spotting a bid at Shenandoah's auction.

Cover photo courtesy of Shenandoah District.



Courtesy of Brethren Disaster Relief Auction

8 Going once, going twice . . .

Every year, several district disaster relief auctions provide major support for the denomination's disaster response efforts. As 2007 marks 30 years since the first auction began, this month's cover story takes a look at this important and far-reaching ministry.

12 No excuse for intolerance

"Racism and justice cannot exist in the same realm." So says Doris Abdullah, a member of Brooklyn (N.Y.) First Church of the Brethren who serves on a United Nations sub-committee examining racism issues. She examines the myth of "racial superiority," prevailing attitudes, and the role of the church.

16 The pursuit of passion

While using the Natural Church Development process, many Brethren congregations show low scores in "passionate spirituality." It signals a reluctance to tell our story. There is hope, though. Spirituality needs a balance of discovering gifts, bearing fruits, and taking responsibility.

18 Micah: Country prophet

Micah comes at his prophesying from a rural perspective, and his words look out for those who work Israel's farms in troubled times. He also sows seeds of hope for a future when a new king will come from another small town: Bethlehem.

DEPARTMENTS

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They say you should write what you know. What I know right now is less than profound.

There's the small flood in the basement. Not much. Just enough to saturate the carpet pad and begin growing mold in 48 hours.

That was three days before we were to begin the remodeling project to make the tiny master bathroom handicap-accessible before the arrival of my 90-year-old father. Soon the bedroom was full of tile and grab bars, the dining room was stacked with books and toys, the computer was set up in the kitchen, the garage was full of furniture and construction debris, and the tree bank was loaded with wet carpet and bags of trash.

Since most of the family members were in the midst of changing bedrooms in a domino effect caused by the new arrival, collections of clothing and toiletries ended up in random locations around the house. Then the 25-year-old vacuum cleaner died and the washing machine stopped spinning the water out of the clothes.



WENDY McFADDEN
Publisher

The garbage company passed up the soggy carpet rolls two weeks in a row, advising us finally that we were not in a designated flood area. Then the city code inspectors stopped by during Sunday lunch to cite us for uncollected trash. Though they worked for the same city that told us the ruined carpet would be picked up, they couldn't check out this miscommunication themselves. Just figure it out within 48 hours, they said, or we would be fined.

That was a few hours before we discovered that my father, who was just settling in to our home, was wearing only one hearing aid. Was the missing one at home, at church, or in the van? Eh?

Throughout the chaos, however, we found ourselves feeling mostly grateful. Grateful that the water wasn't truly a flood, the way it was for some in the area. Grateful that we had dry places, however crowded, to fill with boxes. Grateful for friends with whom to commiserate. Grateful for the opportunity to host my father for several months. The world produces plenty of real disasters; our problems were mere inconveniences.

When those real disasters do strike, Brethren know what to do. In fact, if there's one activity that unites the Church of the Brethren, it's our common commitment to Christ-like service. Write about what we know? This month's cover story is about some Brethren, but it's also a little bit about all Brethren.

Wendy McFadden

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Broadfording adds some elbow room Congregation hopes new space will enable new ministries

Broadfording Church of the Brethren Fellowship near Hagerstown, Md., found itself with a church growth problem: The church was outgrowing its building.

Starting anew after a church split in the late 1970s, the remaining Brethren group worshiped in several rented meeting spaces until constructing its own 6,690-square foot structure in 1984. Since then, the congregation has grown to more than 250 people, according to pastor Len Smith. That number was stretching the church's facilities.

So the congregation began planning for an addition. A groundbreaking ceremony took place in December 2004, and construction began the following spring.

More than two years later, the dream is complete. The 8,380-square foot addition, more than doubling the building's size, was officially dedicated on Aug. 19 with a meal, piano recital, and program. The addition includes a large multipurpose room, a new and much larger kitchen, five additional Sunday school classrooms, and new restrooms.



The Broadfording congregation's major new addition was officially dedicated in August.

Smith and church board chair Paul Reid told *The (Hagerstown) Morning Herald* that a host of new ministries are envisioned for the new space. Sponsoring Scout troops or operating a day care center, an after-school latchkey program, a food co-op, or adult education are possibilities. Many current congregational activities will also be better served, they said.

Total cost for the addition was about \$800,000. About two-thirds of that amount had been paid off by the summer thanks to a building fund, a capital campaign, bequests, and fundraisers.

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.

Northeast Camp Blue Diamond's (Petersburg, Pa.) annual Heritage Fair was scheduled for Sept. 29. Camp Harmony (Hooversville, Pa.) held its Heritage Festival Sept. 15. . . . The Brethren Peace Fellowship held its "Tri-District Retreat" Aug. 25 in Spring Grove, Pa. . . . Atlantic Northeast and Southern Pennsylvania collaborated on a major 300th anniversary celebration kickoff event Sept. 23 in Strasburg, Pa. General secretary Stan Noffsinger spoke.

Southeast Southeastern District conference took place July 27-29 in Mars Hill, N.C. Two Bible study projects begun in 2005 were closed, but a new Hispanic Bible study project in Asheville, N.C., was approved. The HIS Way project in Hendersonville, N.C., was given full church status. . . . Camp Bethel's (Fincastle, Va.) 13th annual benefit golf tournament was held Aug. 22. . . . West Marva's district conference included a craft sale that benefited the General Board's new Sudan Initiative.

Midwest "Faith Is in the Following" was the theme for Northern Ohio District conference July 27-29 in Ashland. Total registration was 333. Delegates approved fellowship status for Faith in Action of Delta, Ohio. A camp board was newly formed to oversee Inspiration Hills. . . . Black River Church of the Brethren (Spencer, Ohio), which burned to the ground on Christmas Eve night 2006, reported in August that it was close to breaking ground for a new building. Pastor Mark Teal said the congregation hoped to worship in the new facility by the end of this year.

Ozarks/Plains Western Plains will hold its third "The Gathering" event Oct. 26-28 in Salina, Kan. The weekend focuses on congregational transformation. . . . Northern Plains had an all-ages family camp Aug. 31-Sept. 2 at Camp Pine Lake in Eldora, Iowa.

West Oregon/Washington District held its first District Song and Story Fest Aug. 17-19 at Camp Koinonia in Cle Elum, Wash. The purpose of the camp was "to get to know other district folks" and "have fun together using music and stories," according to the district newsletter. . . . Musician Ken Medema will be featured at this year's Pacific Southwest District conference, Oct. 12-14 in La Verne, Calif.

BY THE NUMBERS

130+

Number of people attending this year's Song and Story Fest, held in late June at Inspiration Hills in Ohio. The annual music and storytelling event is sponsored by On Earth Peace. The 2008 event will be July 6-12 at Camp Brethren Woods in Keezletown, Va.



"The Brethren that we met are truly amazing people. . . . We are praying that one day they will build a (Church of the Brethren) here in Slidell, La."

—excerpt of a thank you letter received from a family helped by Brethren disaster relief workers at a project in Louisiana

Huntington, Trees for Life build Nicaragua partnership

For Huntington (Ind.) Church of the Brethren, neighbors can be found far beyond the local community. For more than 10 years, the congregation has maintained a sister church relationship with Misión Cristiana Sixth Church in Tisma, Nicaragua, about an hour's ride from the capital of Managua in the back of an old pickup truck.

"They didn't want to be our project," said Carole Baker, a retired Spanish teacher who uses her language skills in her leadership role on Huntington's sister church committee. "They wanted to have an equal relationship with us. So we don't go and paint houses or build houses—they just want us to know how it is down there."

The Huntington congregation has baked cinnamon rolls to sell at county fairs and taken the money to the Tisma congregation, which helped it build a new church building. But according to Baker, "Every time we went down there peoples' lives seemed the same—or poorer."

Baker and her husband decided to approach Balbir Mathur, founder and president of the nonprofit Trees for Life, where they sometimes volunteered, for advice. Mathur went to Nicaragua with a group and talked to some farmers and church women to find out how they wanted to improve their lives economically.

As a result of those conversations, Trees for Life partnered with Huntington to help set up a preschool for children in the Tisma community who couldn't afford to go to school. "The school doesn't have a lot of the material things needed for a school, but they're teaching them," Baker said. The school is in its second year of operation.

In addition to the preschool program, Trees for Life has expanded its work in Nicaragua to include working with communities to plant trees, provide more efficient stoves, provide agricultural education, and build libraries.

The Huntington church remains focused on the preschool as its primary mission, though, and it has a sponsorship program that allows contributors

to provide money for schooling and lunches for students. The program currently has 32 sponsors.—**Nick Miller Kauffman**



Generations of ministry: *When Abby Mader (left) was licensed in Western Pennsylvania District this past year, she became the third straight generation of her family to enter the ministry. A recent Grove City (Pa.) College graduate, she is enrolled in Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center classes. Her mother,*

Ruby, was ordained to the ministry in 2005 and now serves as pastor of Rummel Church of the Brethren in Windber, Pa. And Ruby's father, Kermit L. Jones, who passed away in May, was ordained in 1975 and served several district congregations before retiring.

REMEMBERED

• **Isaac Clarence Kulp Jr.**, who did lectures on Anabaptist history and culture and authored numerous articles on Pennsylvania German folk-life, died Aug. 5. He was a member of Indian Creek Church of the Brethren in Harleysville, Pa.

• **Tom Nelson**, a former long-time Brethren Volunteer Service worker in the Middle East, died June 22 in Mount Morris, Ill., at age 96. Nelson and his wife, Ruth, worked with Palestinian children for six years. He was a member of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren, Elgin, Ill.

LANDMARKS & LAURELS

• **Columbia United Christian Church**—affiliated with the Church of the Brethren, United Church of Christ, and Disciples of Christ—received the 2007 Community Dignity Award of ARC "for significant contributions to the dignity of persons with developmental disabilities and promoting their inclusion in the community to lead meaningful lives."

• Virilina District executive **David K. Shumate** received this year's "Faith in Action" Award from the Virginia Council of Churches (VCC). The award, established in 1991 "to recognize persons who exemplify personal faith commitment and who build bridges that make human community possible" was presented at a surprise luncheon May 14 in Roanoke, Va. Shumate was one of 18 individuals, programs, and congregations to receive the award. A member of the VCC coordinating cabinet since 1993, Shumate served as president of the organization for two years and more recently as treasurer.

• **Kathy Goering Reid**, executive director of the Association of Brethren Caregivers, was one of four people to receive the Manchester College Alumni Honor Award on May 31. Reid, a 1973 English major graduate, has also founded a congregation, enormously expanded a network of homeless shelters across Texas, and authored curriculums on preventing child abuse. Others honored were 1987 graduate Cara M. Bergen, 1959 graduate Harry L. Keffer, and 1968 graduate J. Michael Jarvis, who also serves on Manchester's board of trustees.

• **Karen Doss Bowman**, a member of Sunrise Church of the Brethren in Harrisonburg, Va., and an occasional writer for MESSENGER, is a contributing author to the book *Faith in Children: Stories from Faith-Based Children's Centers*. Her chapter, "Caring for Children During Disasters," chronicles the Church of the Brethren General Board's Disaster Child Care (now Children's Disaster Ministries) services to children during the past 25 years. More than two dozen authors present a collection of stories and information about church-related children's programs in the book, edited by Roberta R. Owens and published by Providence House Publishers.

• **Shirley Norman**, district disaster coordinator for Western Pennsylvania District, received the Individual Award for Excellence in Disaster Response and Recovery at this year's Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) conference. She has been involved in disaster response for nearly 30 years.

• **Westernport (Md.) Church of the Brethren** welcomed 141 current and former members and friends as it celebrated a double anniversary homecoming on Aug. 5 with the theme "Precious Memories." This year marks the 50th anniversary that the church has held services at the present site and its 80th anniversary as a congregation. Guest speaker for the morning service was former pastor Ervin Huston, and the worship leader was current Pastor William C. Shimer, Sr.

• **Scalp Level Church of the Brethren**, Windber, Pa., planned to celebrate its 50th anniversary at its present site on Sept. 30. Belita Mitchell, the 2007 Annual Conference moderator, was scheduled as the guest worship speaker.

• **Olivet Church of the Brethren**, Thornville, Ohio, was among the Lancaster, Ohio, congregations featured in a photo exhibition titled "Lancaster to Lancaster: Pennsylvania-German Architecture in Ohio." Fairfield County District Library hosted the exhibition June 19-July 13.



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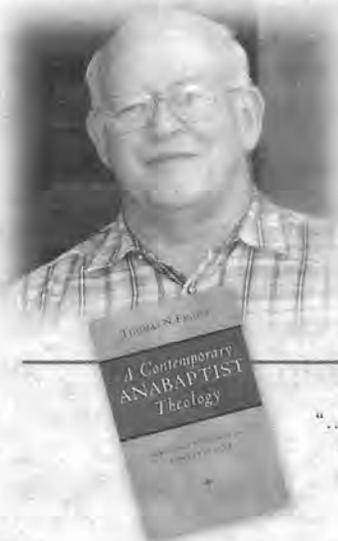


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Finding faith anew amid futility

"For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it."

Romans 8:20

Make no mistake, contrary to what we might say or even consciously believe, the Brethren have a creed. The Brethren Creed holds tremendous sway over our decisions and actions precisely because its existence is denied.



PAUL GROUT

This is our creed: "The New Testament is our creed." This statement in and of itself has become the Brethren Creed. It has become the foundational justification in building and defending our personal perspectives.

From a historical perspective, it may have been a good idea not to establish a creed so that we would need to continually enter and re-enter God's word and the Word made flesh. The problem is that each year fewer and fewer of us find the

time to read the New Testament, much less enter into its depth, its life, its fullness and mystery. So we find passages within the Bible, scriptural themes that support our points of view, and we spend lifetimes quoting those passages married to our personal themes, to our creed.

The other creed we occasionally fall back on is "No creed but Christ," or "Jesus Christ is my creed." Sometimes a church will say, "We are a Christ-centered church." The ease with which such statements can be spoken reveals how completely the power behind them has been lost. If we truly understood what we were saying, our knees would buckle, we would fall on our faces upon the ground weeping in shame as we began to comprehend the depth of our delusion.

This is the truth of our lives upon which a new person, a new community, a new reign of God could begin to be built—the blueprint for a contemporary Brethren creed: "My life, my

If we truly understood what we were saying, our knees would buckle, we would fall on our faces upon the ground weeping in shame as we began to comprehend the depth of our delusion.

creed, is not built upon Jesus Christ, but upon my vanity, my fears, my opinions; upon illusions of openness, upon the empty political, socio-economic, and theological values of a culture on a collision course with all that Christ was and is and will be."

Since I left the pastorate some years ago a small but growing number of us have begun the process of seeking to allow God to reshape our lives and our understanding of faith community. We have grown increasingly uncomfortable with what is perceived as "Christian" within North American church and North American culture. We began by agreeing that we would, so much as humanly possible, give up our knowing of what it meant to be a Christian.

When asked what we are about, we tend to answer in this

fashion: "We are seeking to be re-created within Jesus; we are seeking a rebirth that demands a death within and without; we are seeking to be fully human, fully alive without shame or fear. We are seeking to fall in love with Jesus, and so we are falling in love with life. We seek the love of each other, our enemies, ourselves, all creation that is Christ. We seek the fire that was alive in his heart. We seek his face. We seek the union of his body and spirit. We seek his loneliness and his suffering and his abandon. We seek to live in the abundance Jesus offered and lived. We know that we cannot fully live within the freedom that Jesus offered until all are free to do so, so we seek justice for the oppressed and peace for the downtrodden. We seek above all to dare to not know, to live within the mystery of not knowing."

We are continually failing in our quest, but our failure feels more hopeful than so much of our previous success, or what our culture deems success. Even the most successful of our North American churches begins to appear empty.

There exists a futility within most aspects of North American life. The Empire, its values, its creed, its direction are harshly exposed. Could it be that this futility is now becoming God-ordained? Do we need to recognize the futility of our religious practices, our empty creeds, our consumer lifestyles before we can authentically begin to enter into the new reality of life that Jesus introduced? Could embracing the futility be key to the emergence of new life? Is this the futility that the apostle spoke of in the eighth chapter of Romans?

The Old Testament people of Israel had been taken in chains from their kingdom, their promised land, from all that they had built their lives on, from all they had held onto, from all that was familiar.

In the midst of their captivity in Babylon, the Spirit of God appeared to the prophet Ezekiel and showed the prophet the complete and absolute devastation in a vision. Ezekiel looked out upon a valley of the dead, corpses so beyond rot that only the empty shell of their former life remained. "Can these bones live?" the prophet is asked, and Ezekiel answers, "O Lord God, you know."

Will you find a depth of meaning in your life? Will your

church be renewed? Will the denomination be restored? These questions are not only beyond our knowing; in an age of God ordained-futility these questions are beyond our concern. "O Lord God, you know."

What can we do in our waiting? We enter into the God-ordained futility. We open ourselves to not knowing; we become like children again in our not knowing. We open our eyes and our ears, our minds, our hearts and our souls. We enter into the mystery of not knowing, into the wonder of what will begin to be revealed. **LU**

Paul Grout is an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren. He works with the "A Place Apart" project in Putney, Vt.

“Your ecumenical presence was always touched with humility.... Believe me, my friends, we need your voice in this hungry, hurting, and war-weary world.”

—the Rev. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell, former general secretary of the US National Council of Churches, speaking to Brethren at the MESSENGER Dinner at Annual Conference in Cleveland, Ohio.

“Church has become a football game that's never played. . . . Members pack the pews, sing worship songs but never go into the streets to help the people God called on us to take care of such as the homeless, the sick, the hungry, and the lonely.”

—The Rev. James T. Meeks, pastor of Salem Baptist Church in Chicago. He was announcing a community outreach initiative called “Vision 2007,” in which the church closed its doors on April 7 so congregation members could head out into the streets and serve in areas of greatest need.

“My faith teaches me that I can sit in church and pray all I want, but I won't be fulfilling God's will unless I go out and do the Lord's work.”

—US Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.), a member of the United Church of Christ, addressing the UCC's General Synod in Hartford, Conn. (RNS)

“The challenge for the Historic Peace Churches is to be faithful to God's calling in the midst of continuing violence as they pray and work for communities that live together peacefully.”

—Donald E. Miller, writing in *Brethren Life and Thought* (Vol. 51, No. 3) about the peace churches in Africa

“I trust those conversions when they happen on the road to Damascus, not on the road to Des Moines.”

—US Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-Colo.), at a Republican presidential debate, referring to candidates who shift to conservative positions on hot-button issues before the Republican caucuses in Iowa. He was quoted by the *Washington Post*. (RNS)

CULTURE REVIEW

• The average American spends the equivalent of 65 days a year **watching television**, according to the US Census Bureau. In all, the typical American spends 3,518 hours a year consuming media.

• **Mark Edward Beach**, an American Mennonite, is the new director of communications for the World Council of Churches. Beach, formerly director of communications for Mennonite Central Committee, brings 25 years of experience in communications strategic planning, management, and supervision.

• A new book from Judson Press is titled *Hope for Children in Poverty: Profiles and Possibilities*, edited by Ron Sider and Heidi Unruh. Ten percent of proceeds from sales of the book support the **Children in Poverty initiative** of National Ministries, American Baptist Churches USA.

• Fifty-one percent of those **who left their former church** said they did so because they were “disenchanted with the pastor or church,” according to a LifeWay Research study of Protestants published in *USA Today* on Apr. 23. Other top reasons: It wasn't fulfilling their needs, and “something changed about the church.” Nearly 90 percent said they chose their new church due to its beliefs

or doctrines.

• The 2008 **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** in January will mark the 100th anniversary of the event. The theme is “Pray without ceasing.” Worship resources in three languages are available at www.oikoumene.org/?id=3939.

• Americans **trust the military and the police force significantly more than the church** and organized religion, a new Gallup Poll says. Only 46 percent of respondents said they had either a “great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in the church, compared with 69 percent who said they trusted the military and 54 percent who trust police officers. (RNS)

• The National Council of Churches USA (NCC) has named **the Rev. Ann Tiemeyer**, an experienced community organizer and Lutheran pastor, to the post of program director for Women's Ministry effective Oct. 1.

• The **Christian Reformed Church (CRC) Synod 2007** made a historic decision in June, voting to remove the word “male” as a requirement for holding ecclesiastical office in the church. It opens the way for any CRC congregation to ordain women as ministers, elders, deacons, or ministry associates.



JUST FOR FUN: MAKE A MATCH

LIVING LITERATURE The Church of the Brethren's 300th anniversary celebration has officially begun. Try to match the book title on the left with the Brethren subject of the book on the right. Answers are printed below:

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. <i>The Tall Man</i> | a. M.R. Zigler |
| 2. <i>The Middle Man</i> | b. John Kline |
| 3. <i>The Little Man</i> | c. Dan West |
| 4. <i>Pragmatic Prophet</i> | d. Anna Mow |
| 5. <i>An Uncommon Woman</i> | e. Sarah Righter Major |
| 6. <i>Passing on the Gift</i> | f. I.N.H. Beahm |
| 7. <i>The Meanest Man in Patrick County</i> | g. John Naas |
| 8. <i>Sister Anna</i> | h. Cain Lackey |

District events
provide major support
for disaster relief



Wait Witschek

LIGHTS, CAMERA, AUCTION!

by Nick Miller Kauffman

Goats, quilts, and a whole lot of love: Those are just some of the things you'll find at one of three annual disaster relief auctions organized by four Church of the Brethren districts.

Mid-Atlantic and Shenandoah districts host their own events, while Atlantic Northeast and Southern Pennsylvania have a joint auction planned by a separate board. The one- or two-day events raise impressive sums of money to support Brethren Disaster Ministries' (BDM) Emergency Disaster Fund.

"We certainly need those funds, because it costs a lot of money to keep [Brethren Disaster Ministries] projects open," said Diane Gosnell, BDM secretary in New Windsor, Md. "They definitely bring in a lot of support for us."

The first recorded disaster relief auction was held in 1977 by the Atlantic Northeast and Southern Pennsylvania districts, while the Mid-Atlantic and Shenandoah districts started having auctions in 1981 and 1993,

respectively. The auctions have grown since then, and people flock from all over to buy garden-fresh vegetables, quilts, food, livestock, farm equipment, furniture, homemade items, and just about everything else one might expect—or not expect—to find.

While there are similarities, each auction is different.

"It's interesting because each auction has its own personality," said Roy Winter, director of the Brethren Service Center (New Windsor, Md.) and Brethren Disaster Ministries for the Church of the Brethren General Board. "That's partly because of the folks that run it, and partly because of the communities they're in."

At the Atlantic Northeast/Southern Pennsylvania auction in Lebanon, Pa., for example, livestock plays an especially important part. That auction also has the distinction of being the oldest and biggest, having brought in more than \$11 million for the Emergency Disaster Fund and local projects over three decades.

"We have something in the range of 10,000



Wait Witschek

Top, left and right: Baked goods and other homemade foods filling many tables are sold at the Brethren Disaster Relief Auction in Lebanon, Pa., each year;

below: Brethren supplement the fundraising ministry of the auctions by packing hundreds and hundreds of health kits;

bottom: An auctioneer calls out bids from the crowd at the Lebanon, Pa., auction.



Courtesy of Brethren Disaster Relief Auction



Courtesy of Brethren Disaster Relief Auction

“YOU NEED TO BE THERE TO APPRECIATE IT. IT’S ONE OF THOSE DEALS WHERE PEOPLE’S TRUE COLORS AND TRUE FEELINGS FLOW FROM THE HEART.”

—Duane Neff, chair of the Atlantic Northeast/Southern Pennsylvania disaster relief auction board

people rolling through in an auction weekend,” said Duane Neff, chair of the Atlantic Northeast/Southern Pennsylvania auction board.

He says there can actually be five separate auctions happening simultaneously on-site the Saturday of their auction. The past few years have even included a children’s auction, where buyers must be age 12 or younger.

“It’s amusing to see 6-, 7-, 8-year-old kids bidding on stuff and burning through somebody’s money,” Neff said. “It can be really cool, because it’s the future of the auction.”

Mid-Atlantic District, which has the only one-day auction, is well known for selling quilts, often made by women’s groups in area congregations. “That’s Mid-Atlantic’s biggest draw,” said Gosnell, who herself works with a group that does quilting for the auction.

Often the top design of a quilt will be sewn together and displayed at the Mid-Atlantic auction and somebody will choose to sponsor the quilt, covering the costs of finishing it.

“The quilt-making is an important

image,” Winter said, “that whole concept of people spending months and months on each quilt trying to produce something, and planning ahead often a couple years for doing these quilts.”

Shenandoah District is particularly well known for “sell it again,” a concept common at charity auctions. Often someone will buy an item and then re-gift it to be sold again, effectively donating the money. “I saw a goat that was ‘sold again’ three times, and in the end it was given back to the pastor who donated it,” Winter remembered. “He cared for it for another year and brought it back the next year, and it was sold again twice.”

A LITTLE BIT OF LOVE

McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren hosted a special art show and auction Sept. 22 to raise money for schools in Greensburg, Kan., which were devastated by a major tornado in May.

The show featured work done by Emma Marten, age 7. The collection included 25 pieces with paintings and drawings in crayon, marker, and colored pencil, according to an article in the *Salina (Kan.) Journal*. “Some of the pieces are just kid art,” Emma’s mother, Amy Marten, told the *Journal*, “but others, like some of the paintings, are really eye-catching.”

Top: A happy customer picks up dessert at the Mid-Atlantic District auction;

bottom: It takes a forklift to move all the health kits and other disaster relief supplies gathered at the Atlantic Northeast/Southern Pennsylvania auction.

For the past few years Mid-Atlantic has had a part of the auction during which people can simply donate money. The auctioneer will call an amount—say, \$100—and people willing to give that amount will just raise their cards to be counted. “It’s not really about the auction,” Winter added. “It’s about something much bigger, and the people who are there recognize it.”

Neff has plenty of stories to back up that idea. Just last year a man in failing health due to needing a pancreas transplant hand-made a tall case clock to donate to the auction. Literally within days of finishing the clock he received a call saying a pancreas was available. He went to the hospital and got the transplant in August; by the September auction he was well enough to attend and see his clock sell for more than \$25,000.

Neff also remembers someone recently shoving something into his hand as he was busy at the auction. “When I looked at

“THERE ISN’T A DISCUSSION OF HAVING PAID TOO MUCH FOR SOMETHING THAT YOU BOUGHT. IT JUST DOESN’T HAPPEN. PEOPLE ARE VERY GENEROUS WITH ALL THAT THEY DO—THEIR TIME, LABOR, AND THEIR MONEY—ON THAT WEEKEND.” —Duane Neff, chair of the Atlantic

Northeast/Southern Pennsylvania disaster relief auction board

it later, it was a check for \$10,000,” he said.

The auctions have plenty in common, too—particularly the sheer size of the project.

“[It takes] a lot of planning and organization,” said Gosnell. Another common theme at the auctions is for area youth groups to get involved, either helping out with the auction directly or helping to secure donations.

For many Brethren, the auctions represent more than just a chance to raise money for disaster relief.

“[An auction] is a combination of a large reunion of sorts and a social event where you have the opportunity to do something good: raise money for disaster



Alice Houck

response,” said Winter, who added that many families actually plan their family reunions around the auctions. “It’s interesting how these little communities work.”

There’s nothing little about the good that comes from the auctions, though. Revenue from disaster response auctions can account for one-third of the Emergency Disaster Fund’s income in a typical year. (That fraction is lower in years when major disasters such as Hurricane Katrina occur, which cause an increase in both individual donations and in the amount of fund money spent.)

Winter says the auctions allow greater stability in BDM’s funding.

“[The auctions] provide a more consistent and known level of donation, so we’re able to count on that and build a program around having that resource available,” Winter said. “There’s lots of variability year to year in what other organizations that rely on donations are able to do because of reliance on unpredictable giving.”

This stability in giving is especially crucial, he says, because it allows BDM to respond to smaller, less-publicized disasters such as localized tornados that are less likely to spur increased donations.

And since districts are responsible for running the auctions, BDM doesn’t have to get tied up in the organization.

“The primary thing they ask us to do is provide information about our response that they can put in auction booklets. So we send them articles and some letters and pictures that share what some of the auction funds go towards,” Winter said. “[The auctions] are completely independent from our office and don’t require much effort from our staff, which allows us to focus on being responders.”



Courtesy of Brethren Disaster Relief Auction



An outdoor auction stage at the Lebanon, Pa., auction offers up nursery products for bid.

Courtesy of Brethren Disaster Relief Auction

funds that way. We [also] went the route of kickoff dinners and so forth to raise some money."

Other districts with special projects geared towards supporting the Emergency Disaster Fund include South/Central Indiana, Northern Plains, Western Pennsylvania, and West Marva.

The auctions, as well as the other fundraisers, give people a good opportunity to support disaster relief efforts.

"People talk about how they're not able to go out on disaster response for any number of reasons," said Winter, "so this is something they can do that really makes a big difference." ❗

Nick Miller Kauffman is a junior at Manchester College, North Manchester, Ind., and a member of Goshen (Ind.) City Church of the Brethren. He worked with MESSENGER through the General Board's Ministry Summer Service program this past summer.



Courtesy of Brethren Disaster Relief Auction

Children are invited to be part of the bidding, too, at the Atlantic Northeast/Southern Pennsylvania auction.

The four districts that hold auctions aren't the only ones supporting Brethren Disaster Ministries. Middle Pennsylvania District, for example, found limited success with their attempts at a disaster response auction, so they hold "disaster dinners" for the same cause.

Southern Ohio had five disaster response auctions, according to Ron Scammahorn, who organized them, but also found limited success and did not hold one this year. "We feel like our area just isn't into auctions," said Scammahorn. "People just have a different mindset in this part of the country. They didn't look as much at the giving and just at getting the product in return—they were looking at how cheap they could get it." Scammahorn says people in Southern Ohio would prefer to just give money than participate in an auction.

There may be something to the idea of regional differences: All three auctions that have had great success are in the East. Scammahorn says Southern Ohio is exploring other ways to raise money for disaster response.

"We decided to do some different fundraisers," he said. "We're trying to do an ice cream social this year to see if we can get

WHEN, WHERE, HOW MUCH?

Some key statistics for Church of the Brethren disaster auctions:

MID-ATLANTIC

Next auction: May 3, 2008

Where: Westminster (Md.) Ag Center

Amount raised: \$1,113,116 from 1981 to 2006

SHENANDOAH

Next auction: May 16-17, 2008

Where: Rockingham County Fairgrounds, Harrisonburg, Va.

Amount raised: \$2,213,515 from 1993 to 2006

ATLANTIC NORTHEAST/SOUTHERN PA.

Next auction: September 26-27, 2008 (The 2007 auction just took place Sept. 21-22)

Where: Lebanon (Pa.) County Fairgrounds

Amount raised: More than \$11,000,000 from 1977 to 2005 (Proceeds are split between the Emergency Disaster Fund and a local relief fund kept for area congregations to use in meeting local needs through a grant process.)

NO EXCUSE for intolerance

‘Racism and justice cannot exist in the same realm’

by Doris Abdullah

The 13th-century Persian poet Saadi wrote, “The human family is one body with many parts, Creations arising from one unseen essence. Any harm to any part summons an awakening, a dis-ease and a healing response from all parts. You who fail to feel the pain of others cannot be called truly human.”

I think the poet was saying we are one in the Lord, and I do not think many would argue with that. But we also appear to long for power and privilege over others who look different from ourselves. Racial discrimination appears to satisfy that desire and leave a guilt-free conscience. We do fail to feel the pain of others, and sometimes we even go so far as to call the other non-human.

India or Cambodia. We can use the African-American experience in the United States to tell the story of racism over the past 400 years, because the achievements, wealth, and prestige—as well as the nonviolent fights for justice past and present—of millions of African-Americans inspire people across the globe to fight the injustice of racism and racial discrimination.

For more than 250 years (1619-1865) chattel slavery went on unimpeded in our country. While the nation grew in wealth and fame from this unpaid labor a doctrine of racism formed to ease the consciences of slave masters and further perpetuate slavery’s brutal practices. Those of African descent were deemed less than human (three-fifths of a person), thereby cre-

CHURCH IS ALL ABOUT DEALING WITH THE OTHER PERSON, BE THEY YOUR ENEMIES, YOUR TORMENTORS, OR YOUR FRIENDS. WE WANT GOD’S AMAZING CHANGES TO ENTER OUR LIVES, NOT A COMFORT ZONE FOR WORSHIP. BESIDES, I HAVE NOT FIGURED OUT HOW I AM GOING TO WORSHIP WITH ALL THOSE “OTHERS” IN HEAVEN IF I CANNOT DO IT HERE.

Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance are worldwide problems not limited to any one country. We often witness this “scourge” on human history within our midst while at work, at worship, or even at play, and we are unable to run away from it.

Daily we hear or read of violence against indigenous people from South and Central America or small tribesmen in faraway

ating a myth of genetic superiority for whites.

The three-fifths of a person status for a slave gave the slave master more power by allowing him increased voting privileges. Three-fifths of a person was never about the slave as a person: only about wealth, power, and privilege. Thomas Jefferson – our third president, author of the Declaration of Independence, and owner of many slaves – wrote in his classic



Notes on the State of Virginia that “blacks are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind.”

While his words did not have any scientific basis, they are nevertheless difficult to undo. When slavery was no longer financially profitable or morally acceptable, a new form of discrimination was created through institutional segregation, with laws and regulations put in place for another 100 years (1865-1965). Segregation further refined the genetic superiority myth.

The myth finds truth in the disproportionately high numbers of undereducated and poverty-stricken people of color who dot the US today. It finds truth in higher infant mortality rates, shorter life expectancy rates, higher unemployment, and a host of other unfavorable data among persons of African descent.

It has been recognized that education holds the door open for advancement in racial development, as well as developmental growth for nations. It moves minds from bias and prejudice to respect and appreciation of others, as well as lifting up entire nations with empowering tools of the learned.

The myth of racial superiority that feeds racism cannot be conquered with laws, but will have to come through changes in hearts and minds. In a Brown University study on slavery and its aftermath the majority of American whites do not believe the country has a racial problem today.

Yet the assertion of no racial problems becomes difficult after being an eyewitness to the spectre of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. It resulted in the deaths of 2,000 people of color—their bodies floating in an American city for five days after the hurricane struck. The shock of seeing those tragic deaths plus thousands trapped without food and water only reinforces the trau-

matic residue of slavery and segregation.

It sometimes appears that we humans will look for any excuse for intolerance towards each other. In the Darfur region of the Sudan all the people involved are people of color, and they share the same Islamic religious sect and traditions. Yet senseless violence has caused the recorded deaths of more than 450,000 people, left burning villages across thousands of miles, and driven close to 3 million people to the neighboring countries of Chad and the Central African Republic, further destabilizing a continent already torn by ethnic wars.

It is very difficult to put out the flames of passions that engulf people in racism, racial discrimination, and ethnic/religious wars. But we find words from the Lord Jesus that have echoes in others' traditions and religious communities around the globe: “Do for others what you want them to do for you: this is the meaning of the Law of Moses and of the teaching of the prophets” (Matt. 7:12).

It would seem that we have been given the words and saints to follow, but not the will. Maybe it is too difficult to live and act like God's people and open our places of worship to reflect a Pentecost people. It is a puzzle that Christian Protestant churches, including our own, are the most segregated of all the religions.

We do not practice what we preach. Sometimes we say, “I do not like the music over there,” or place the blame for not carrying out God's commands on some material or style-related excuse. It's as if we go to church to be comfortable rather than to worship God. We do not want to “deal” with racism on Sunday.

RACISM AND JUSTICE CANNOT EXIST IN THE SAME REALM, JUST LIKE FREE MEN AND SLAVERY COULD NOT. IT MAY TAKE ANOTHER 100 YEARS, BUT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION WILL BE DEFEATED.

Yet church is all about dealing with the other person, be they your enemies, your tormentors, or your friends. We want God's amazing changes to enter our lives, not a comfort zone for worship. Besides, I have not figured out how I am going to worship with all those "others" in heaven if I cannot do it here.

We must rid ourselves of the notion that color of skin makes one capable or incapable of a task. We must wonder aloud at the negative images allowed to enter our consciousness time after time. And we must disavow the notion that people of color are inferior.

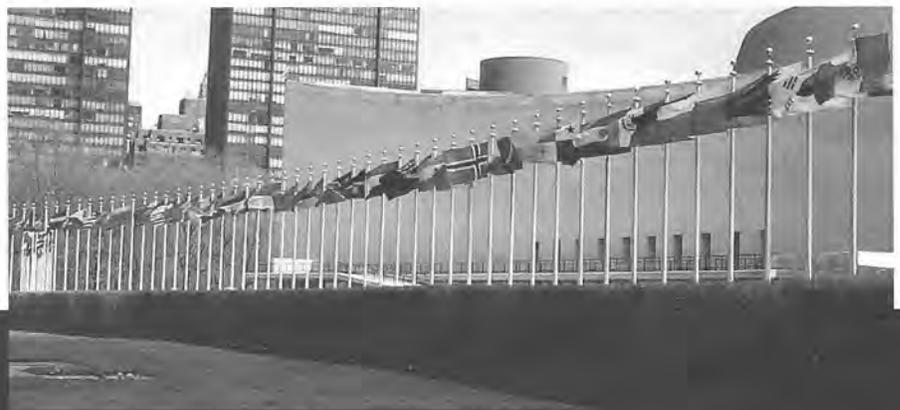
Racism and justice cannot exist in the same realm, just like free men and slavery could not. It may take another 100 years, but racism and racial discrimination will be defeated. We can all contribute to racism's

demise by treating others as we want to be treated.

A report in 2004, prepared for the 5th Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates, described a people who live in the flat mangrove swampland of Indonesian New Guinea. The tribe consists of about 20,000 people, and it is said they live in harmony with the environment and do not organize for total war.

They call themselves "Asmat." Asmat means "the people—the human beings." They call everyone else "Manowe." Manowe means "the edible ones." The Asmats are cannibals. And so I ask—which kind of a people are we? 

Doris Abdullah is a member of Brooklyn (N.Y.) First Church of the Brethren and a member of the On Earth Peace board. She represents the Church of the Brethren on the United Nations NGO Committee on Human Rights' Sub-Committee for the Elimination of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance.



AT WORK AT THE UNITED NATIONS

"The purposes of the United Nations are . . . to achieve international co-operation . . . in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, and religion." —Charter of the United Nations (Article 1)

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." —United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 1)

The World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance was held in Durban, South Africa, from Aug. 31 to Sept. 8, 2001. The conference recalled that the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993, called for the speedy and comprehensive elimination of all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance. It noted with grave concern that, despite the efforts of the international community, the principal objectives of three Decades to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination had not been attained and that countless human beings continued to the present day to be victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The General Assembly proclaimed 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue Among Civilization, which underlines tolerance and respect for diversity.

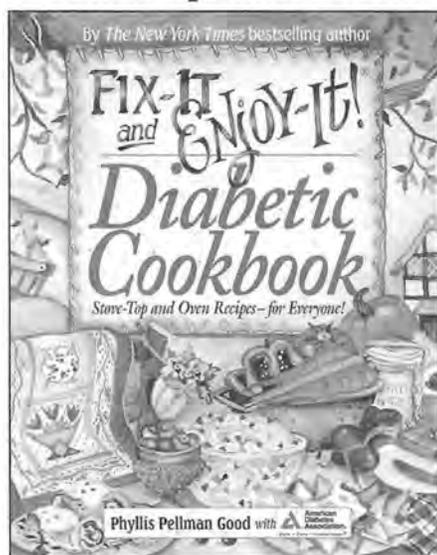
The United Nations' Sub-Committee for the Elimination of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance of the International NGO Committee on Human Rights resulted from the conference. The sub-committee's mission is the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and to work to enhance the ratification and implementation of the International Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Racial Discrimination by working with the NGO community and member states of the United Nations.

The sub-committee stresses the need for education via programs such as the one they held at the UN on March 29, 2007, for the 200th anniversary of the Abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to address the intergenerational consequences and transformation of the 400-year-old slave trade.

The Church of the Brethren is represented on the sub-committee by Doris Abdullah, a member of Brooklyn (N.Y.) First Church of the Brethren.

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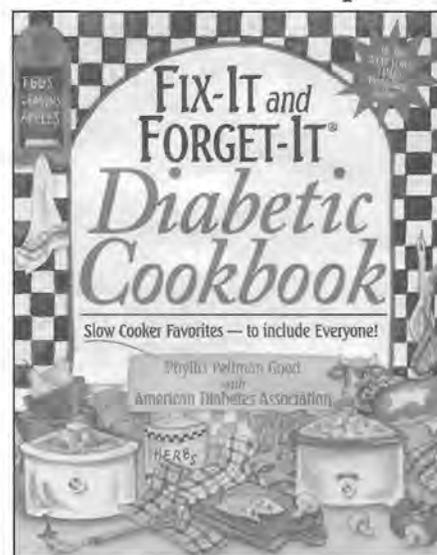


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SPIRITUALITY NEEDS
BALANCE OF GIFTEDNESS,
FRUIT-BEARING, AND
RESPONSIBILITY



by Carol Mason

The pursuit of PASSION



Some of the words that Christian Schwarz, founder and director of the Institute for Natural Church Development in Emmelsbuel, Germany, chooses for his “eight characteristics of a healthy congregation” just aren’t ones we commonly use.

In fact, the first time I introduced one of those characteristics to a church, it was met with an immediate outcry of disbelief: “‘Passionate spirituality!’ What in the world is ‘passionate spirituality?’ Are we all going to have to start shaking maracas?” Fortunately we all burst out laughing, and my first meeting as a trained Natural Church Development (NCD) coach was off and running.

It is an odd phrase, and one we just aren’t used to tossing around when we talk about our church life. But Schwarz is German, and so perhaps in the original “*leidenschaftliche Spiritualität*” we find a more meaningful concept to ponder. *Leiden*—meaning to suffer—gives *leidenschaft* the same intensity our prayers hold when we sit at the bedside of an ill child or a dying spouse.

So in this sense of passion as coming out of suffering—or as we put it, “counting the cost”—we find his true use of this phrase to mean, in Brethrenese, “What is God to you?” or “How has he

bers I was talking to, and they each had a story to share in answer to those questions. It brought them to a sober sense of reflection. I, meanwhile, absorbing this spontaneous outburst, came to a clearer vision of how to revitalize our congregations by calling them to connect what it is about being “surrendered, transformed, and empowered” to their being sustained, seen through, and worth the cost.

In addition, I noticed a few telling things about the phrasing of the spontaneous outburst:

- First, that passionate spirituality was thought to be something we all do in the same way. Not so! It is individual in community and privately in the home, as well as corporately in the house of God.

- Second, it was seen as something we *had* to do. Yes, it does involve personal commitment, practice, and engagement with worship. But as God says so generously in Genesis 4, “thou mayest...” In other words, “If you choose,” for we are creatures of free will and nothing stirs a rebellious spirit faster than “have to!”

- Third, it was seen as something put on us or foreign to us, something that wasn’t “natural” to the way we are. But if anything, it is calling us to greater authenticity in our relationship with our God and with each other. If we are not ourselves, who will be?

So what *is* “passionate spirituality”?

- It is the witness of story—talking about one’s own journey.
- It is the connection between believing the Word of God and reading it daily or regularly discussing it with others.
- It is worshiping openly, ardently, wholeheartedly, freely, and without self-conscious hindrance (which may or may not involve the use of maracas, but definitely involves authenticity of the worshiper!).

But it seems instead we are:

- Reluctant to “tell our stories” (except perhaps to our closest friends).
- Too busy to read, and hesitant to share the Word (for don’t we and everyone else already know all those Bible stories anyway?).

PASSIONATE SPIRITUALITY IS ABOUT LIFE AS A SACRED GIFT FROM GOD. IT IS ABOUT DAILY CHOICES AND DAILY FOCUS, “NEW EVERY MORNING” AND “FOR ALL ETERNITY.”

seen you through?” and “What are you willing to lose for his sake?” How much do we trust God to guide every aspect of our lives, direct our speech and actions, and provide all that we need?

These phrases caught the imagination of the church mem-



NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

Natural Church Development (NCD) was created as a way to measure congregational vitality. Focusing on the vitality of a church rather than numerical growth has proven to be more helpful to most congregations. The NCD survey measures congregational health in eight categories:

- Empowering Leadership
- Passionate Spirituality
- Inspiring Worship
- Need-oriented Evangelism
- Gift-oriented Ministry
- Effective Structures
- Holistic Small Groups
- Loving Relationships

Congregations taking the survey can be compared to going to visit a doctor for a yearly physical, assessing areas that need improvement. An NCD coach will work with a congregation to help them improve in each of the eight categories.

More than 50 Church of the Brethren congregations have taken the survey, working with the General Board's Congregational Life Teams. Though each congregation scores differently, some trends have emerged among our churches. We tend to score lowest in "Passionate Spirituality" and "Inspiring Worship." We tend to score highest in "Empowering Leadership" and "Loving Relationships." —**Jeff Glass**

Jeff Glass is a member of the General Board's Congregational Life Teams based in San Diego.

• And too worried about fitting in (with the rest of those in the pew, to the expectations of the leaders, to the bulletin format) to worship un-selfconsciously.

Gifts versus fruits

In English, "passionate" carries a heavy connotation of far too much emotion involved for most Brethren. It is just the opposite of our typical gifts of "patience, gentleness, and self-control" — gifts that aren't even listed in Schwarz's "30 Spiritual Gifts."

Schwarz himself was once asked if they shouldn't be included, and he responded, "No! The characteristics you mention are not spiritual gifts. Rather, they belong to the fruit of the Spirit, as mentioned by Paul in Galatians 5:22. In the areas of spiritual gifts we need to concentrate on those we have and not worry about those gifts that we do not have. This does not apply, however, to the fruit of the Spirit, where it is exactly the other way around."

Have we ever thought of this distinction? Schwarz maintains that "a spiritual gift is a special ability that God gives, according to his grace, to each member of the body of Christ to be used for the development of the church. The New Testament teaches us that each member of the body of Christ has received at least one spiritual gift." Schwarz has found in the NCD surveys, though, that 80 percent of all Christians are uncertain about their gifts. "This reveals a critical spiritual situation," Schwarz said. "Apparently, in the past we have failed to give this topic the attention that it deserves."

Schwarz also identifies a third area of church life that he calls "universal Christian responsibilities," practices such as "sharing your faith with others" that every Christian should carry out to the best of his or her ability, regardless of giftedness.

"The application of each spiritual gift cannot be expected from every Christian, but only from those who have the corresponding gift. Universal responsibilities, on the other hand, are to be practiced by all Christians," Schwarz writes in his latest NCD book, *The 3 Colors of Ministry*.

A spiritual synergy

Developing the fruit of the Spirit, utilizing our gifts for building up the body of Christ, *and* practicing universal Christian responsibilities—all are required by the "priesthood of all believers" before they can really be called a priesthood or a covenanted body. We are fond of saying, "Peacefully, simply, together," but Schwarz would maintain that unless we consciously act accordingly, the words are empty. Our passion is dispassionate, our fruit wizened, and our responsibilities neglected.

Conversely, you can imagine what happens when a church responds to the call to develop all three—increased practice in the fruit of the Spirit, discernment and utilization of the gifts of each covenanted member, and renewed commitment to the basic Christian responsibilities. Wow! Is it easier said than done?

Seven churches in Virlina, Shenandoah, and West Marva districts who have contracted to do this process would say that it gets easier as each person becomes more aware that each of us has a spiritual nature, that each of us is gifted by God for the building up of the body, and that the fruit of the Spirit can be developed through practice, with responsibilities shared by all.

It doesn't matter if we are contemporary or traditional, rural or urban, large or small: Spirituality is not about lifestyles. It doesn't matter if we are questioning whether to renovate or relocate, healing from past hurts, or addressing present difficulties, whether we are looking to try Powerpoint or recalling our a capella past: Spirituality is not about worship styles.

Passionate spirituality is about life as a sacred gift from God. It is about daily choices and daily focus, "new every morning" and "for all eternity." It is about our true nature as spiritual beings "made in the image of God," surrendered to, transformed, and empowered by him. And it is about revitalized congregations, for it is as contagious as a smile. 

Carol Mason is a member of the General Board's Congregational Life Teams based in Blacksburg, Va.

Micah: Country prophet

Book foresees new king arising from tiny Bethlehem

by Robert Neff

When I lived in Chicago and taught at Bethany Theological Seminary, I never designed a course on Micah. It was not until I moved to Huntingdon, Pa., and later worked in Martinsburg that I discovered this country seer.

My life has been lived between small towns and big cities: Williamsburg and Pittsburgh, Pa., then Chicago and back to central Pennsylvania. The perspectives are

However, the farmers in these areas were oppressed by large landowners (developers) from the city who were buying up land at the farmer's expense. Micah describes this loss of land in Micah 2:2: "They covet fields, and seize them; houses, and take them away; they oppress householder and house, people and their inheritance." Some scholars believe that these were land-grabbers from the king's court in Jerusalem. Micah champions the

ply say what the people want to hear. By being tied to popular causes, these people become blind to the source of their calling (3:6b-7). On the other hand, Micah claims: "But as for me, I am filled with power, with the spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin (3:8)." Only the spirit could ignite a messenger with this kind of courage, passion, and radical message.

BUT JUST AS IN OUR TIMES OF TERROR, MICAH BEGINS WITH A TIME OF SIEGE AND INDIGNITY... THIS LEADS TO A REFLECTION ABOUT THE TRUE DAVIDIC KING THAT FOLLOWS IN THE NEXT VERSES AND IS THE INSPIRATION FOR ONE OF CHRISTIANITY'S FAVORITE CAROLS, "O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM."

different. I can remember the stench of the paper mill in little Williamsburg and the smoke and grime of Beechwood Boulevard in big Pittsburgh. In the country town there were no gangs, just the idyllic countryside. In the city the tough kids lived just a block away. I was careful how I walked to school. Hustle and bustle marked the activity of the city; a more deliberate pace marked my years in "The Cove," an atmosphere that remains until this day.

Micah is a small-town boy who grew up in one of the little villages, about 25 miles northeast of the big city of Jerusalem. He mentions a number of these small towns, like Zanaan, Lachish, Achzib, and others. Some of these towns occupied no more than five acres of land.

cause of the family farm and condemns the action of the wealthy that is impoverishing the rural countryside. Micah foretells that in the end these ill-gotten lands will fall into the hands of the enemy, and the wealthy will be dispossessed (2:4-5).

Micah is a fearless prophet, and speaks the words that few others dare proclaim. In chapter 3 he declares: "Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins" (12). Years later these words are quoted in defense of Jeremiah (Jer. 26) when the people want to put him to death.

Micah was undoubtedly portrayed as a traitor when he spoke these words. Yet he condemns the prophets who proclaim peace as messengers for hire. They sim-

The basis for this judgment comes from Micah's belief in a moral God and a moral universe. Micah 6 describes a trial scene set in the open countryside, with the mountains and hillsides called to be witnesses. The people are invited to present their case, but in the end they plead ignorance as to what God really wants (6:6). Then the prophet reminds them that they already know what is required because it is written in the law. These beautiful words were the high point for the ethical teaching of the prophets and The Goals for the '80s in the Church of the Brethren: "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, to love faithfully, and to walk humbly with your God" (6:8). The



MICAH: A CLOSER LOOK

Author/history: Micah began preaching in the eighth century BC after an era of prosperity and relative absence of warfare. After the deaths of two great kings, one in the Jerusalem and the other in Samaria, the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III began to consolidate his power and followed a relentless path of conquest that eventually led to the destruction of Samaria in 722. Jerusalem lost much of its territory in 701 in Sennacherib's invasion, after many of the small towns in Micah's region were ceded to Philistia. Micah prophesied during a time of war, distress, and suffering that lasted long after he died.

Key texts: "But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days" (5:2); "He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (4:5).

forth from me (5:2); 2) "feed his flock in the strength of the Lord" (5:4a); and 3) "in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God (5:4b)." These definitions of the new ruler highlight the lordship of Israel's God in whose service the true leader is called. The king leads by his ultimate dependence on God's guidance. Such dependence will lead to peace, because the task of the great ruler is reconciliation (5:5a).

Bethlehem is still a small town caught up in a larger web of conflict. Nonetheless people still stream to that spot to celebrate the Prince of Peace, and pilgrims still sing the strains of my favorite Advent hymn, "The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight." 

Robert Neff has served on the Bethany Theological Seminary faculty, as president of Juniata College, and as general secretary of the Church of the Brethren General Board. He is co-author of a new Covenant Bible Studies edition on Micah and Isaiah published by Brethren Press. He lives in State College, Pa.

MESSENGER's "Journey through the Word" series will provide a brief overview of a different book (or books) of the Bible each month through December 2009. Coming in November: Nahum/Habakkuk, by David Valeta.

essence of this summary is to seek justice for the lowly, maintain one's devotion to God and neighbor, and to walk modestly with one's belief in God.

After judgment, however, Micah sees the emergence of a new king like the David of old who came from Bethlehem. I first saw this small town when I was living in the outskirts of Jerusalem in 1963. I lived on the edge of "no man's land," with barbed wire stretched on the other side of the street to guard against trespassers. At night I could see the lights of the town in the distance as I peered between the strands of the barbed wire. In my boyhood I had sung "O little town of Bethlehem . . ." and had images of peace and serenity when Micah

preached or when Christ was born.

But just as in our times of terror, Micah begins with a time of siege and indignity suffered by the king (5:1). This leads to a reflection about the true Davidic king that follows in the next verses and is the inspiration for one of Christianity's favorite carols, "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

Micah recalls the time of David's anointing, which places him in the small town of Bethlehem as a shepherd boy. His rise to power and might hinges upon his sole dependence on God and not the trappings of the monarchy, such as horses and chariots.

For Micah the emphasis falls on the origin of the rule: 1) "from you shall come

Brethren agencies talk with Implementation Committee

A previously scheduled Aug. 6-7 meeting of the executive committees of three Church of the Brethren program agencies at the New Windsor (Md.) Conference Center took on new significance when members of the Annual Conference-elected Implementation Committee were invited to attend.

The Implementation Committee was elected by Conference delegates as they adopted recommendations from the Review and Evaluation Study Committee that assessed the program work of the denomination. Following adoption of the study committee's report, the delegate body elected a seven-member committee to address ways the recommendations could best be implemented.

Members of the Implementation Committee are the executives of three agencies and the Annual Conference office—general secretary Stan Noffsinger for the General Board, executive director Kathy Reid for the Association of Brethren Caregivers, executive director Bob Gross for On Earth Peace, and executive director Lerry Fogle for Annual Conference—and elected

members Gary Crim, John Neff, and David Sollenberger.

The Implementation Committee's task is to bring about a transformation of the organizational structure for the Church of the Brethren, specifically the General Board, the Association of Brethren Caregivers, and the Annual Conference Council. On Earth Peace is involved in the process as well.

The meeting at New Windsor was originally scheduled to address ways the agencies could better collaborate on programs of the wider church. It quickly became a consultation between the agencies and the Implementation Committee. Although this gathering was not an official meeting of the Implementation Committee, the group worked through a process to identify core ministries of each agency and how the values and programs of each agency could be enhanced by greater collaboration with one or both of the other agencies.

It was agreed that the mission and vision documents of each agency will serve to guide the collaborative work of the denomination during this period of transition in organizational structure.

A congenial spirit permeated the two-day meeting led by Glenn Mitchell, a spiritual director and former chair of the General Board. Stan Noffsinger, general secretary of the General Board, commented, "How wonderful it is that we have all shared openly and honestly today, and everyone is still present!"

A follow-up meeting with the agency executives, board chairs, and representation from the Implementation Committee was scheduled for Sept. 26-27 at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill. The Implementation Committee will meet officially for the first time in late October, and will bring an update of its work to the 2008 Annual Conference in Richmond, Va.

Expenses for the New Windsor meeting as well as the follow-up meeting will be supported by each of the program agencies, with some of the participants donating all or part of their individual expenses. The General Board, Association of Brethren Caregivers, and On Earth Peace all indicated the importance of continued prayerful and financial support during this time of transformation.



Eddie Edmunds

The executive committees of the boards of the Association of Brethren Caregivers, the Church of the Brethren General Board, and On Earth Peace met with members of the new Implementation Committee to begin conversation about a new organizational structure.

Personnel moves

- **Sandra L. Bosserman** has announced her resignation as executive minister of Missouri/Arkansas District, effective on or about Nov. 15. She has served for almost eight years, originally called to the position on Jan. 1, 2000. Bosserman has broad denominational and district experience, having served as a member of the General Board (1986-1987 and 1990-1995). She also has served on the Annual Conference Standing Committee of district representatives, the Annual Conference Council, and the Inter-Agency Forum. Previous to her district position, she was pastor of Peace Valley (Mo.) Church of the Brethren for more than six years. She has also written the Lenten devotional *A Time to Lie Fallow*, published by Brethren Press.

- **Stephanie Hartley** of Lewistown, Pa.,

completed a two-year term of service as a mission worker in Nigeria with the Global Mission Partnerships of the General Board. Her term was completed at the end of the school year. In 2005-2006, she taught math and social studies at the Comprehensive Secondary School of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN—the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria), near Mubi. In 2006-2007, she taught middle school history at Hillcrest School in Jos. Hartley is returning to Nigeria to teach at a private international school.

- **Nancy Klemm** retired Sept. 28 as managing editor of Brethren Press, a ministry of the Church of the Brethren General Board. She has worked for the General Board since 1985, beginning as a secretary and editorial assistant for the People of the Covenant program. Her job titles have included editorial assistant, copy editor, associate editor, and managing

editor. Among her varied tasks, she has carried major responsibility for *Guide for Biblical Studies*, the Living Word Bulletin Series, Covenant Bible Studies, Perspectives, Brethren Press books, and copyrights and permissions. She culminates her employment with completion of a major project, the newly published *Fresh from the Word* daily devotional for the 300th anniversary of the Brethren.

- **Brandy Fix Liepelt** and **Paul Liepelt**, who have been mission workers in Nigeria with the General Board's Global Mission Partnerships, completed their term of service Aug. 3. They taught Bible and Christian doctrine at Kulp Bible College, a major training institution for the church leadership of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria. The college, located at EYN Headquarters near Mubi, has an enrollment of approximately 200 students. Paul Liepelt began his term of service in July



Disaster project directors met for training July 30-Aug. 3 in New Windsor, Md. Pictured are, front row from left: Zach Wolgemuth (staff), Trudy Stamy, Jane Yount (staff), Mary Mueller, John Mueller, Alan Oneal, Denise Oneal, Sigrid Horner, Charlie Horner, Steve Keim. Back row: Bob Pittman, Marianne Pittman, Jerry Moore, Christine Delawder, Rodney Delawder, Jim Graybill, Alice Graybill, Lee Stamy, Doretta Dorsch, Jim Dorsch, Mike Siburt, Ruth Siburt, John Tubbs, and Janet Tubbs.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct. 11-13 300th Anniversary academic conference, Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, Elizabethtown (Pa.) College

Oct. 14 General Board World Mission Offering emphasis

Oct. 16 Church of the Brethren Credit Union board meeting, Elgin, Ill.

Oct. 19-21 Interfaith National Observance of Children's Sabbath

Oct. 20-22 Church of the Brethren General Board meeting, Elgin, Ill.

Oct. 26-28 Bethany Theological Seminary board of trustees meeting, Richmond, Ind.

Nov. 4 National Junior High Sunday

Nov. 5-9 Sustaining Pastoral Excellence National Vital Pastor retreat, San Antonio, Texas

Nov. 11 National Donor Sabbath

Nov. 16-17 Brethren Benefit Trust board meeting

Dec. 1 World AIDS Day

Disaster project leadership trainees are 'hooked' on disaster response

"My name is Larry, and I'm an addict." The roomful of fellow addicts responded, "Hi, Larry!" This is not the typical opening for a meeting of Church of the Brethren volunteers, but Larry Williams offered this caveat: "I'm addicted to disaster response."

Williams is a disaster project director for Brethren Disaster Ministries. He served as co-trainer for a five-day disaster project leadership training event held at the New Windsor (Md.) Conference Center July 30-Aug. 3. All Brethren Disaster Ministries project leaders are volunteers. Teams of trained leaders work together in various capacities at each project site, where the program carries out cleanup, repairs, and rebuilding following disasters.

Eighteen trainees took part in the event, learning all aspects of disaster project oversight—volunteer management, coordinating work, safety, household management—and the various nuances of relationships, faith, and ethics that are an integral part of the work.

When asked what they thought makes people volunteer for disaster relief, the group was quick to respond: "To give back to people. It's what we are commissioned to do—what Jesus tells us to do," explained Doretta Dorsch.

Christine Delawder added, "They get hooked. Once you see the families and the smiles on their faces, you want to go back and help more."

The training ended with a commissioning service led by Marianne Pittman, one of the trainers for the event, who instructed the group to look intently at their hands. "The saying that Christ has no hands but your own is true for disaster service," she said. "Blessed be the hands that bring help to one another."

She invited other trainers to share from their own experiences, and John Mueller offered the group this challenge: "Just try to leave more than you bring back. It's not possible. . . . Welcome to the losing battle of not being able to give back more than you received."

2004. Brandy Fix Liepelt began in July 2005. The couple, who married in Nigeria, plan to make their home in Everett, Pa.

• **Matt and Kristy Messick** will be delaying their participation in the General Board's Sudan mission initiative, director Bradley Bohrer announced in mid-August. The Messicks were introduced as members of the lead team of mission workers for Sudan at the 2007 Annual Conference in July. "After prayerful consideration during this preparatory time, the decision has been made that they and their family will be able to serve the church and the Sudan initiative at a later date," Bohrer said.

• **Dan Poole** of Bradford, Ohio, began a half-time position as coordinator of Ministry Formation at Bethany Theological Seminary on Aug. 1. He will work closely with Tara Hornbacker, associate professor of Ministry Formation, in the administration and teaching of the ministry formation com-

ponent in the local and Connections programs. He brings 16 years of pastoral experience and has served as an adjunct faculty member for the past several years. Poole is a 1991 graduate of Bethany Seminary. He will continue to serve as pastor of Covington (Ohio) Church of the Brethren in a half-time capacity.

• **Kathy Royer**, director of admissions at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind., resigned effective Sept. 3. Since her appointment in September 2004 she has guided and shaped recruitment and admissions work at Bethany, traveled extensively to connect with potential students, worked to enhance enrollment, increased Bethany's exposure in areas beyond the Church of the Brethren, and deepened connections with Brethren college students. Previously, Royer served in various roles at Hospice of Miami County, Ohio, for nine years. She is an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren and plans to focus on spiritual direction.

David Eller is sentenced to term in state prison

David Eller, former chairman of Elizabethtown (Pa.) College's Religious Studies Department and former director of the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, has been sentenced to two-and-a-half to 10 years in state prison, followed by five years of probation.

The court's decision was announced June 1, according to a report in the *Lancaster (Pa.) New Era* newspaper. Some 60 people were in the court to support Eller, the newspaper said, many from his congregation at Elizabethtown (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.

In February, Eller pleaded guilty to charges of criminal use of a computer and unlawful contact with a minor. Last summer he had been arrested after having contacted four undercover agents posing as children on the Internet, and after having made an appointment to meet one of the agents who was posing as a young girl. The agents were members of the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Child Predator Unit.

Toothpaste is removed from donated hygiene kits

"We are in the process of removing toothpaste from hygiene kits (formerly "health kits") and checking the contents to be sure only the correct items are included in the kits," Loretta Wolf, director of the Material Resources program of the General Board, reported this summer.

The program packs, stores, and ships disaster relief materials worldwide from the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., on behalf of partner organizations such as Church World Service (CWS) and Lutheran World Relief.

Brethren and others who donate hygiene kits are being alerted that toothpaste will no longer be included in kits. "This goes for Church World Service and Lutheran World Relief kits," said Wolf. "It is also helpful to mark the donation carton 'hygiene kit w/o toothpaste,'" she said.

The decision to remove toothpaste from the kits' contents came in response to an initial problem with expiration dates, Wolf said. Now, with the potential for "poisoned" toothpaste from China, she reported that CWS is purchasing bulk toothpaste to send alongside hygiene kits for onsite distribution. No decision has been made as to the disposal of the toothpaste that is being removed from donated kits, Wolf said.

More information about the toothpaste poisoning is available from the Food and Drug Administration at www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hot-topics/toothpaste.html.



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Consider these Wellness Steps

- Check your progress in the 300-Day Challenge to celebrate the 300th Anniversary of the Church of the Brethren – visit the Wellness Ministry website for ideas to celebrate the gift of life given to you!
- Schedule an annual physical if it's been more than a year. Your health-care insurance may even cover 100 percent of annual physicals!
- Get a flu shot this fall, if appropriate. Ask your public health department and area clinics for discounts.
- Research health concerns with respected sources such as the Mayo Clinic and Johns Hopkins newsletters.
- Explore the many books and DVDs from the Wellness office at (800) 323-8039.
- Download from ABC's website inspirational and idea-filled brochures for individuals and congregations.
- Join the e-mail list serve for weekly words of encouragement for healthy living of body, mind and soul.
- Use the worship, program and study materials created by Brethren for the Health Promotion Sunday theme of "Christ Exalted in the Body: Congregational and Personal Health," available at ABC's website.



Parish Nursing Offers Health AND Faith Benefits

Parish nursing is recognized as a specialty nursing practice and important ministry that supports a healthy congregation. Parish nurses focus on the whole person to emphasize wellness, disease prevention and health promotion, including healthy spirituality. Parish nurses offer prayer, presence and knowledge to those in need of support, providing spiritually based nursing care in a church setting.



Photo courtesy of the General Board, photo by Glenn Riegel.

For more information, contact Church of the Brethren nurses Tammy Kiser, RN, MSN, Parish Nurse Educator, thekisers2@aol.com; or Donna Lerew, RNC, dlerew@webtv.net. Kiser teaches an online course titled "The Basics of Parish Nursing"; visit www.emu.edu/nursing/parish.

Celebrate National Donor Sabbath this November 11

More than 96,900 men, women and children nationwide wait for organ transplants each year, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Some 19 patients die each day while waiting.

Support organ and tissue donation by wearing donor pins and talking about National Donor Sabbath during worship this November 11. Donor pins and study/worship resources are available from ABC.



Association of Brethren Caregivers

Serving the Caring Ministries of the Church of the Brethren
(800) 323-8039 www.brethren-caregivers.org

ONCAMPUS

Bridgewater College (Bridgewater, Va.)

Bridgewater announced on Aug. 16 the purchase of Oak Manor Farms, a 75-acre equestrian center in Weyers Cave, Va. Oak Manor, renamed the Bridgewater College Equestrian Center, has hosted the college's equestrian program for the past seven years. . . . The 24-member Bridgewater College Alumni Choir presented a concert Aug. 26 at Bridgewater Church of the Brethren.

Elizabethtown College (Elizabethtown, Pa.)

Elizabethtown is marking the 300th anniversary of the Brethren movement with several events this fall. A free exhibit of artifacts and pictures about the Brethren love feast is on display Sept. 4 to March 15 in the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies. An academic conference will be hosted by the Young Center Oct. 11-13. Registration is required; visit [www. etown.edu/ YoungCenter](http://www.etown.edu/YoungCenter) for details.

Juniata College (Huntingdon, Pa.)

Jenifer Cushman, former director of international and off-campus study at The College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio from 2005 to June 2007, has been named dean of international programs and associate professor of German.

University of La Verne (La Verne, Calif.)

Friends, fans, and former students were invited to Roland "Ort" Ortmyer's 90th birthday celebration on July 7, hosted by the Ortmyer family and the university. Ortmyer served as head football coach from 1948 to 1990. During 43 years at ULV, he also coached other intercollegiate sports teams and served as athletic director and professor of physical education.

Manchester College (North Manchester, Ind.)

Three more Manchester alumni received Fulbright scholarships this summer, bringing the college's total of Fulbright recipients to 22. The 2007 Fulbrights went to Stacey A. Carmichael of South Bend, Ind., a 2007 graduate in elementary education; Samuel A. Cox of Kokomo, Ind., a 2007 graduate in history and German; and Rachel A. Paske of Fort Wayne, Ind., a 2004 graduate in sociology and German. Manchester has graduated more Fulbrights per capita than any other Indiana college.

McPherson College (McPherson, Kan.)

Jack Roberts of Overland Park, Kan., received the Jay Leno/Popular Mechanics Scholarship for the 2007-2008 school year. Leno, host of "The Tonight Show," and the magazine collaborate to offer the auto restoration scholarship each year.

National Youth Cabinet issues a 300th anniversary challenge

The 2007-2008 National Youth Cabinet held its first meeting Aug. 1-3 in Elgin, Ill., giving input for the national youth program, selecting a 2008 youth ministry theme and developing resources for the 2008 National Youth Sunday, and preparing for the denomination's 300th anniversary.

Elizabeth Willis (Tryon, N.C.), Tricia Ziegler (Sebring, Fla.), Joel Rhodes (Huntingdon, Pa.), Seth Keller (Dover, Pa.), Turner Ritchie (Richmond, Ind.), and Heather Popielarz (Prescott, Mich.) are serving on the cabinet. Dena Gilbert (La Verne, Calif.) is serving as advisor to the group, along with General Board Youth/Young Adult Ministries director Chris Douglas.

The cabinet settled on "By the Manner of Their Living" for the next year's youth ministry theme, drawing on a familiar quote attributed to Alexander Mack for the denomination's 300th anniversary year. The theme scripture is Colossians 3:12-15. Resources will be drawn on this theme for the annual National Youth Sunday, next scheduled for May 4, 2008.

In addition, the group issued a 300th anniversary challenge to youth groups across the denomination, following up on a General Board challenge to do some-

Members of the 2007-2008 National Youth Cabinet are, front row from left: Joel Rhodes, Tricia Ziegler, Elizabeth Willis, Heather Popielarz; back row, Dena Gilbert, Seth Keller, Turner Ritchie.



thing in multiples of 300 (such as rebuilding 300 homes in disaster areas or having 300 more people participate in summer workcamps) for the anniversary year. Suggestions to youth groups include giving 300 hours of service, preparing 300 school kits, giving 300 cans to a local food pantry, or offering 300 prayers of peace.

The meeting also included conversations about Brethren Volunteer Service, a tour of the offices, and several times of worship.

The cabinet next meets July 31 to Aug. 3, 2008, in Elgin.

Bits and pieces

• **Rebekah Houff**, a 2006 graduate of Bridgewater (Va.) College and member of Palmyra (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, has been called as coordinator of the 2008 National Young Adult Conference. She began the Brethren Volunteer Service position May 21 and will continue through August 2008. The conference will take place Aug. 11-15, 2008, in Estes Park, Colo.

• **Nappanee (Ind.) Church of the Brethren** awarded its "Waging Peace" Scholarship to **Christina Prochna** of Northwood High School. The church worked with the school's "Dollars for Scholars" committee to award the scholarship. The committee said it chose Prochna for her random acts of kindness, positive influence in the community, and being a positive role model.



Creating cultures of peace

In churches today—sometimes even the Church of the Brethren—“peace” is sounding more and more like a four-letter word. We constantly use it to talk about opposition to the war, drawing a line right down the middle of our communities as we separate based on politics.

For some, peace is an added interest, perhaps an extra option to customize their Christianity. For others it is a loaded word that represents a distasteful liberal politics they find deeply unnerving in some of its implications.

What a tragedy! Peace is so much more than a foreign policy opinion or a political persuasion. Peace is a way of life. It's how

we live with each other and follow the example of the Prince of Peace. And how refreshing it is to find a book that takes a day-to-day look at peace, asking how we can develop the attitudes and reflexes of peacemakers and learn to handle conflict well in our churches and communities.

A Culture of Peace: God's Vision for the Church goes far beyond abstract questions of war, and brings questions of peace right to our doorstep. The 203-page book, written by Mennonite trio

Alan Kreider, Eleanor Kreider, and Paulus Widjaja, examines peace between friends and enemies, at work and in church, with a wide range of angles including peace and evangelism, peace in wartime, the effectiveness of peace, and more.

The book is a fairly quick read—so quick, in fact, that you may need to read it more than once to really let it soak in. The

soldier living in Caesarea: the very heart of Roman power in Palestine! We do not know what became of Cornelius, but if Peter, a Palestinian Jew, could make peace with a Roman Gentile, how much more hope is there for a culture of peace in our lives?

A Culture of Peace moves on to discuss, among other things, the need for us to train ourselves to have peaceful reflexes. We must keep peaceful attitudes and habits so that when we come under pressure, and biology poses the “fight or flight” question, we respond with a third way reflective of Jesus’ teachings. One person who had the reflexes of a peacemaker was Dirk Willems who, fleeing from capture, turned back to help his pursuer when he fell through ice into freezing water. The pursuer was later forced to capture Willems, who was executed for heresy.

Many, even Christians, would call Willems’ actions a sort of heresy in themselves. Who would turn back to help the man trying to bring them in for execution? But Willems committed the loving act of a peacemaker, one who in church had honed his attitudes and reflexes to be a faithful follower of Christ.

The church, then, must be an academy for peacemakers. Just as the military trains soldiers to effectively and instinctively perform their jobs, so we must train our faithful in the attitudes and skills of peace, so that we may reflexively take up our cross and follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

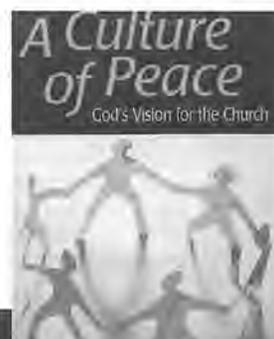
Another important point emphasized in this book is that there will be conflict: in the home, at work, and in church. Jesus assumes there will be problems in the church and gives us instructions for how to deal with them. He never said “be nice” or indicated that we should avoid conflict, but as a culture of peace

we need to search for the best and most constructive ways to use and deal with conflict.

A Culture of Peace is wide-reaching and can serve as a sort of guide for the attitudes we can

use to be better followers of Christ in all aspects of life. The book is smart, quick, and thorough, and would certainly be a good resource for Christians of all ages, places, jobs, and persuasions. It echoes a need for a sort of peace talked about by Martin Luther King Jr., who said, “We must fix our vision not merely on the negative expulsion of war, but on the positive affirmation of peace.”

Nick Miller Kauffman is a junior peace studies major at Manchester College, North Manchester, Ind., currently studying abroad in Mexico. A member of Goshen (Ind.) City Church of the Brethren, he served as an intern with MESSENGER this past summer through Ministry Summer Service.



NICK MILLER KAUFFMAN

Just as the military trains soldiers to effectively and instinctively perform their jobs, so we must train our faithful in the attitudes and skills of peace, so that we may reflexively take up our cross and follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

text reads much like a conversation, with many points reiterated so that on my first read-through I would often catch myself skimming and have to flip back a couple of pages.

But *A Culture of Peace* is by no means shallow: It has a solid biblical foundation and intelligent theology worthy of a much thicker, more painful book, and the authors don't pull any punches with the tough questions. They are not shy about discussing reservations people have towards peace, and they carefully examine each topic they present.

The book starts its description of the church as a culture of peace with the story of Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10. This important story illustrates the unity (and peace) that is in God. What more unlikely a person for God to send Peter—whose friend had just been crucified by Roman occupiers—than Cornelius, a Roman

ABOUT THE BOOK

Title: *A Culture of Peace: God's Vision for the Church* **Authors:** Alan Kreider, Eleanor Kreider, and Paulus Widjaja
Publisher: Good Books (2005). **Pages:** 203. **Cost:** Retail list price is \$9.99. **To order:** Call Brethren Press at 800-441-3712.

Heifer goes green

It may be of interest to readers of MESSENGER to know that Heifer International was the cover story in the July 16, 2007, *Chemical and Engineering News*, the official organ of the American Chemical Society.

On the cover is a picture of the new Heifer facility. What caught the reporters eye is that "Heifer's headquarters is the vanguard in a future wave of green building . . ." In fact, the article states that "Heifer's headquarters is one of the top 10 green construction projects for 2007."

Ray White, a spokesperson for Heifer International said, "We ask farmers in the developing world . . . to do sustainable agriculture. We would be hypocrites if we didn't do the same."

It is certainly a tribute to the integrity of Heifer International to demonstrate leadership in environmental protection, even at an additional cost of construction, in an increasingly profit-oriented society.

Ernie Barr
North Manchester, Ind.

Welcome needs consistency

On the night at Annual Conference when there was a strong emphasis on welcoming persons of other races and cultures, I wanted to fully join in the celebration of diversity, because that cause is right and good. But I kept thinking about our gay sisters and brothers who are still not fully accepted in the church, and feeling that there is a piece of the inclusiveness picture that is still sadly missing.

I strongly agree with Ralph McFadden in his July/August MESSENGER [Letters] gracious appeal for more consistency in our embrace of diversity. We simply need to keep in dialogue about the church's position of denying ordination to gays and lesbians, and the Annual Conference policy of refusing exhibit space to the Brethren/Mennonite Council (BMC) who are advocating for acceptance of persons with other than heterosexual gender orientation. I appreciated the solidarity with the BMC shown by Voices for an Open Spirit and the Womaen's Caucus in also taking their exhibits to another, non-official, location in Cleveland.

Surely the Brethren can find our way to a more humane, Christ-like attitude in relation to the gays and lesbians among us, one that will more closely reflect the all-embracing love of God.

Fran Nyce
Westminster, Md.

More involved in mission

I was delighted to read Janis Pyle's article, "Side by Side in Nigeria" in the June issue of MESSENGER. It is clear that Janis did some careful research and told the workcamp story well.

However, I was amazed that there was no mention of Monroe Good, former missionary to Nigeria, who was the organizer of 10 of the denominational workcamps. he was ably succeeded as

organizer by Jeff Mummau, who had experienced God's leadership by participating in workcamps 1983-1995.

I was also amazed that not one word was written about workcamps sponsored and underwritten by the Atlantic Northeast District from 1999 to 2005, supplementing those sponsored by the denomination. Monroe led seven of those workcamps, at the request of EYN (Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria—the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) leader-

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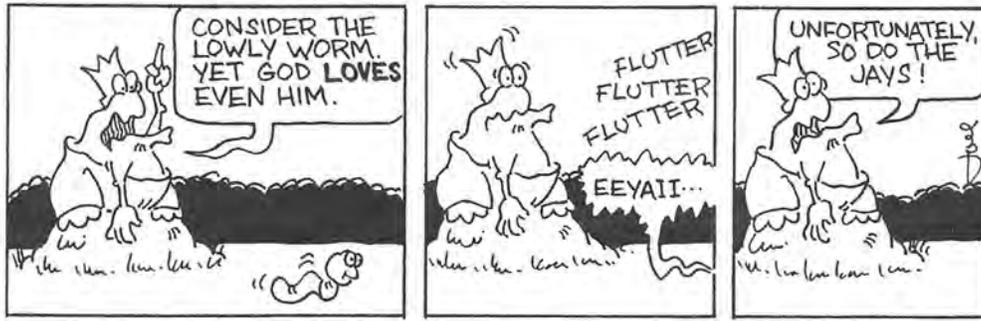
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MM 10/07

Pontius' Puddle



ship; James Haldeman led the last two. Among other projects, Monroe led camps assisting in the building of the EYN church in Abuja, the nation's capital, and Lagos, the former capital.

Charles M. Bieber
Lancaster, Pa.

Recognize sin for sin

I just read the letters to the editor in the new MESSENGER [July/August 2007]. I appreciated what Jerry Waterman had to say but his statements were not well documented. He recommended checking out "the other side" but he didn't say how, for example. I think this is a very

important, and not simple, issue for our church today and people need to look into it carefully.

I have been reading in Isaiah lately. Chapter 42:21-22 says, "It pleased the LORD for the sake of his righteousness to make his law great and glorious. But this is a people plundered and looted, all of them trapped in pits or hidden away in prisons. They have become plunder with no one to rescue them; they have been made loot, with none to say, 'Send them back.'"

And then read on to chapter 43 and 44. This sounds very current to me. I see so many people coming to the clinic from

their pits and prisons of sexual relationships gone terribly wrong because they didn't follow God's good laws. They are coming to us to somehow get rid of the pain and misery with drugs, etc. But I don't see that we help them much.

The church needs to recognize sin for sin (not just homosexuality, but divorce, fornication, adultery, greed, materialism, unforgiveness, etc.) and again preach that we can be forgiven and can have the strength to build a new life in Jesus, full of power to tell others the Good News, too.

Elaine Foster
Onekama, Mich.

It's not 'okay'

I use the New American Standard Bible, and I'm sure there are other versions that say the same things. Both 2 Peter 1:20-21 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17 say that the Bible was written through the Holy Spirit.

In Matthew 5:17, Jesus said that he didn't come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. When he spoke of marriage he said a wife and husband or a man and

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woman; never did he say a man and a man or a woman and a woman (Matt. 19:4-5). Romans 1:24-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and 17-20, 1 Timothy 1:8-11, and Jude 6-7 are other scriptures to read.

We all sin and fall short of the glory of God, but we don't say that's the way were made and it is okay. An alcoholic does not take that first drink even though his body is made that he can't stop after

the first one. We can sympathize and pray, but not say it is okay.

We all need Jesus' redeeming love and be thankful that he loved us enough to die for each and every one of us when we come to him with a repentant heart and spirit.

L. Imogene Gosnell
New Windsor, Md.

CLASSIFIED ADS

300th Anniversary Celebration in Schwarzenau. Persons contemplating attending the 300th Anniversary Celebration/2008 Brethren World Assembly in Schwarzenau, Germany, on August 2-3, 2008, are asked to contact Dale Ulrich at 26 College Woods Drive, Bridgewater, VA 22812, by phoning 540-828-6548, or via e-mail: daulrich@comcast.net. This celebration is being planned and coordinated by the Board of Directors of Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc. representing all of the Brethren bodies. Ulrich is serving as the *Brethren Encyclopedia* coordinator for the event.

Winter in Florida! RV sites to rent and leased lots for the placement of mobile or constructed homes in a Church of the Brethren Adult Retirement Community SE of Sebring in Florida, Florida. Amenities include citrus grove, screened heated swimming pool, fellowship hall, hobby house, planned activities, canal leading to 27,000-acre Lake Istokpoga. Call Dick or Verna Forney for information. 863-655-1909, e-mail thepalms@embarqmail.com, web: www.cob-net.org/home/palms-estates

MCC Representative: Mexico City. This three- to five-year volunteer person provides overall leadership and vision to MCC work in Mexico. Must have a strong identification with MCC's mission, philosophy of development, and manner of working. Must respect and have the willingness to work and live within the Mexican culture. Knowledge of community development theory and models preferred. Ability to create, write, monitor, and evaluate plans and budgets needed. Ability to communicate in Spanish required. The large geographic focus of the MCC programs in Mexico requires significant travel and limited team time. Candidates of a gender or ethnic group typically underrepresented in this type of MCC assignment are encouraged to apply. Contact Kathy Jackson at krj@mcc.org or call (717) 859-1151 for more information or to apply.

2008 Brethren Anniversary Tours Ed-Ventures, Inc., a tour operator with over 30 years of experience in European group travel, is offering 3 different and creative itineraries to Europe in summer 2008, all to include the 300-year anniversary celebration in Schwarzenau. Each tour accompanied by a professional tour director and Brethren pastor. Zurich-Amsterdam (Host: Jim Miller); Berlin-Zurich (Host: Jim Hardenbrook); Munich-Amsterdam (Host: Fred Bernhard). For information and brochures call 800-658-7128 or visit: www.ed-ventures.com

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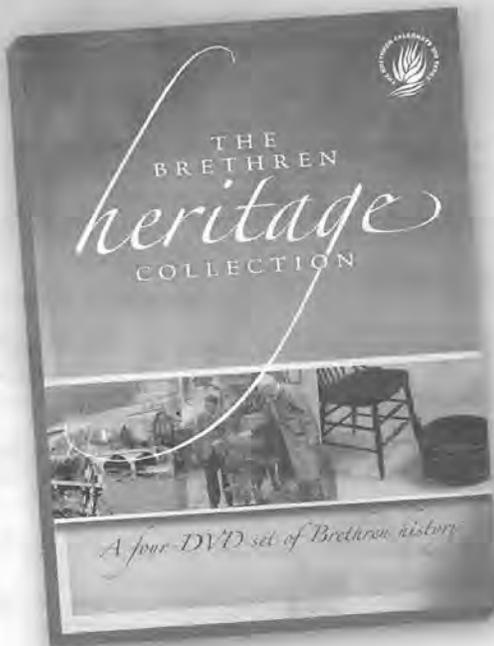
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New Members

- Beech Run, Mapleton Depot, Pa.:** Olivia Hawbecker, Brooke Stake, Tierney Snyder, Stephanie Leach, Jeff Cantrell, Amy Foster, Gloria Madilia, Tammy Blair
- Bush Creek, Monrovia, Md.:** Devin Clark, Abbie Stidley, Eric Brown, Janet Brown, Ted Brown
- Cincinnati, Ohio:** Elizabeth Black, Katherine Black, Bob Mentzer, Shannon Stahl, Joe Stahl, Steve Stone
- Columbia City, Ind.:** Rex Johnson, Darla Johnson, Heather Johnson, Travis Johnson, John Nicodemus, Kristan Nicodemus, Justin Nicodemus, Jordan Nicodemus, Jason Nicodemus, Donna Reichert, Rick Wagner, Melissa Wagner, Kaleb Wagner, Alea Wagner, Lorele Yager, Larry Rice, Barbra Rice, Glen Whisler, Kay Whisler, David Whisler
- Green Tree, Oaks, Pa.:** Colleen Ford, Desiree Maurer, Rick Maurer, Ashley Turner

HIS Way Fellowship,

- Hendersonville, N.C.: Gorge Barrera, Esthela Barrera, William Barrera, Telma Barrera, Vicente Garrido, Yolanda Contreras, Fidel Jose Portillo, Sandra Portillo, Alejandro Portillo, Ariel Jose Portillo, Julieta Moztafa, Taisha Green, Ruth Cruz, Danna Cruz, Luz Moralez, Issac De Leon, Liury Doe, Ruby Doe
- Huntsdale, Carlisle, Pa.:** Louise Sweger, Brandon Gordon, Malinda J. Parson, R. Lee Shenk, Barbara Shenk

Jacksonville, Fla.:

- Winston Shanks
- La Verne, Calif.:** Mary Jo Becker, Irene Beltran, Josh Burns, Donald Charles, Kate Kerby-Cole, Kerri Kerby-Cole, Margaret Coston, Michelle Davis, Sarah Doramus, Anne Lilje, Diane Kieffaber, Jo-Ann McDonald, Tyler Miller, Rebecca Van Voorhis
- Manor, Boonsboro, Md.:** Iris Cooksey

Marion, Ind.:

- Tim Harris
- Mohican, West Salem, Ohio:** Marvin Stover, Deb Stover, Lincoln Stover, Olivia Stover, Mason Stover, Harold Burgett, Zachary Burgett, Jeff Layton, Debbie Layton, Brandon Layton

Mountain Grove, Fuls Run, Va.:

- Lee Dove, Carolyn Dove
- North Fort Myers, Fla.:** Russell Beardmore, Teresa Beardmore

- Rocky Mount, Va.:** Barbara Smith, Melissa Strickler, Miranda Orr
- Rummel, Windber, Pa.:** Deborah Hoover, Emilee Leydig
- Scalp Level, Windber, Pa.:** Mary Baxendale
- Somerset, Pa.:** Jennifer Weyand
- Springfield, Ore.:** Pearl Rohrer, Don Griffin, Emma Rohrer, Anjanette Burchett, Janet Mason, Stella Brower, Sterling Brower
- Trinity, Sidney, Ohio:** Christopher Mouk, Jacob Sharp, Layne Sharp, Stan Carter, Betty McCasland, Annette Smith, Karen Ransbottom, Brittany Strunk, Rob Hollinger
- West Charleston, Tipp City, Ohio:** Shannon McRoberts, Danielle McRoberts, Don Rees, Tom Swisher, Lorna Swisher, Savannah Swisher, Sarah Swisher
- White Oak, Manheim, Pa.:** Brandon Alwine, Damon Crouse, Jason Diffenderfer, Brian Kegerreis, Taysia Longenecker, Coleman Wagner, Mikael Weaver, Eric Laughman, Katrina Laughman, Nehemiah Laughman, Derek Laughman
- Winter Park, Fla.:** Gordon Rollins, Pamela Rollins, Sean Phillips, Ashley Westfall, Samantha Stephens, Gary Smallwood, Barbara Smallwood

Anniversaries

- Berkey, Dennis and Marilyn,** Windber, Pa., 55
- Bittinger, Emmert and Esther,** Bridgewater, Va., 60
- Brown, Bob and Julia,** Hagerstown, Md., 50
- Bucher, Gene and Fern,** East Petersburg, Pa., 50
- Dove, Maynard and Loretta,** Fuls Run, Va., 50
- Fisher, Max and AnnaBelle,** Fuls Run, Va., 65
- Forry, Roger and Janice,** Somerset, Pa., 50
- Foust, Carl and Kathryn,** Johnstown, Pa., 50
- Garner, Glenn and Margaret,** Bridgewater, Va., 60
- Good, Roy and Janice,** Doylestown, Ohio, 50
- Harclerode, Raymond and Frances,** Windber, Pa., 50
- Hays, Jim and Denise,** Johnstown, Pa., 50
- Hefner, Gordon and Barbara,** Moorefield, W.Va., 55
- Hess, Clarence and Martha,** Robesonia, Pa., 60
- Hess, Gerald and Carol,** Lititz, Pa., 50
- Hillgoss, Robert and Betty,** Columbia City, Ind., 70
- Hoffman, Floyd and Ann,** Windber, Pa., 50
- Hoffman, William and Janet,** Windber, Pa., 55
- Johns, Laurence and Patsy,** Hagerstown, Md., 55

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- VIETNAM** (January 18 - February 4)
- AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND** (February 1-21)
- LEARNING ABOUT MENNONITES in PUERTO RICO and a SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN CRUISE** (February 27 - March 8)
- SPRINGTIME CRUISE from AMSTERDAM to PARIS** (March 22 - April 2)
- EXPERIENCE SOUTH AMERICA** (March 28 - April 11)
- VISIT "TRANSYLVANIA EMERGING" - ROMANIA and HUNGARY** (April 21 - May 2 - with MEDA)
- MOSCOW and SIBERIA** (May 24 - June 4)

ISRAEL/PALESTINE with AMBS (May 25 - June 4)

- ALASKA CRUISE TOUR** (June 4-16)
- ENGLAND, SCOTLAND and WALES** (June 25 - July 7)
- EUROPEAN HERITAGE** (July 7-20)
- CHINA and a YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE** (October 8-21)

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Kurtz, Willis and Hazel, Hartville, Ohio, 65
Lautzenhiser, Glenn and Glennis, Hartville, Ohio, 55
Lavy, Daniel and Wilma, Uniontown, Ohio, 60
Lewallen, Delbert and Beverly, Cando, N.D., 60
Lewis, Richard and Doris, Harrisburg, Pa., 55
Litten, Norm and Janet, Hagerstown, Md., 55
Miller, Charles and Doris, Hagerstown, Md., 50
Miller, Wilmer and Luella, Windber, Pa., 75
Mohler, Eugene and Arlene, North Canton, Ohio, 55
Moyer, Walton and Jean, Elizabethtown, Pa., 50
Nantz, John R. and Joyce, Harrisburg, Pa., 50
Robertson, Jesse and Wilma, Bridgewater, Va., 60
Shaffer, Clarence and Luella, Dallastown, Pa., 50
Smith, Joseph and Virginia, Moorefield, W.Va., 65
Smith, Kenny and Dorothy, New Paris, Ind., 65
Thawley, Stanley and Freda, Boonsboro, Md., 55
Weatherholt, Otis and Bette, Fisher, W.Va., 50
Wenzel, Earl and Lorraine, Manheim, Pa., 50

Deaths

Alt, Martha Rebecca, 88, Petersburg, W.Va., June 11
Andes, Calvin Lindberg, 78, Grottoes, Va., April 16
Anstine, Lela R., 100, Canton, Ohio, June 26
Baker, Lillie Mae Eagle, 85, Staunton, Va., May 13
Baker, Richard, 86, Staunton, Va., June 7
Balsbaugh, Betty, 81, Newmanstown, Pa., May 30
Bazze, Weldon Lincoln, 88, Broadway, Va., March 9
Branner, Dorothy Keister, 89, Timberville, Va., May 12
Buchanan, Pearl Virginia, 95, New Market, Va., March 31
Callahan, Ronald L., 59, Johnstown, Pa., July 18
Coffman, R. Paul, 85, Harrisonburg, Va., April 11
Cridler, Lawrence Riley, 64, Bergton, Va., March 9
Croy, Dorothy, 96, Dayton, Ohio, July 6
Cullers, Carlton Edgar, 80, Mathias, W.Va., Feb. 28
Delagrange, Richard D., 71, Hartville, Ohio, June 12
Dove, Nina Marie, 75, Criders, Va., April 19
Dovel, Charlotte Irene, 85, Stanley, Va., April 11
Engle, Kenneth Samuel, 89, Purgitsville, W.Va., July 1
Engle, Vincent, 80, Middletown, Pa., April 16
Flory, Byron M., Jr., 78, Beavercreek, Ohio, July 21
Flory, Marion Joseph, 81, Timberville, Va., April 11

Fritz, Esther L., 96, Davidsville, Pa., April 22
Fry, Donald Earl, 85, Bettendorf, Iowa, April 15
Funk, Richard, 57, Pomona, Calif., June 7
Gardner, Nelson S., 76, Bridgewater, Va., July 8
George, Retha Irene, 85, Moorefield, W.Va., April 9
Getz, Evelyn, 99, Brandywine, W.Va., May 15
Gochenour, T. Isabelle, 77, Luray, Va., May 9
Good, S. Mickey, 75, Grottoes, Va., April 9
Gorman, Beulah Nell, 86, Franklin, W.Va., May 21
Goss, Richard, 79, Mechanicsburg, Pa., June 30
Grandstaff, Annie May Shadwell, 90, Edinburg, Va., April 15
Guerrero, Audrey, 95, Connellsville, Pa., May 9
Harm, Janet L., 75, Harrisburg, Pa., July 31
Herr, Albert S., 82, Limerick, Pa., July 14
Hilbert, Naomi H., 85, Dayton, Va., March 10
Hodges, James William, 72, Vinton, Va., July 8
Hupman, Dorothy Mae Botkin, 82, Staunton, Va., May 27
Jeffrey, George H., 86, Chesterfield, Va., May 7
Johansen, Vera, 95, South Bend, Ind., July 5
Johnson, Edna Z. Likin, 96, Scherr, W.Va., May 26
Keener, Paul David, 70, Plymouth, Ohio, June 4
Keeny, Dean L., 72, Winterstown, Pa., May 24
King, Homer, 93, Rittman, Ohio, April 27
King, Lucy, 92, Johnstown, Pa., April 16
King, Wanda Cundiff, 45, Roanoke, Va., June 5
Kintner, Alvin L., 87, Topton, N.C., May 12
Kline, Alice, 85, Broadway, Va., June 7
Kline, Orrin, Sr., 98, Manassas, Va., March 24
Kopp, Robert, 86, Columbia, Pa., June 1
Layton, Beulah, 100, Milford, Del., June 22
LeCount, Leslie, 91, Norton, Kan., May 16
Leininger, Mark, 65, Lititz, Pa., May 1
Mason, Rae Hungerford, 90, Centralia, Wash., Dec. 5
Medlin, Joseph, 68, North 16 Liberty, Ind., March 16
Mercer, William, 94, Beaverton, Mich., March 4
Michael, Gertrude Theising, 85, McCune, Kan., April 29
Miller, Jacob C., 95, Williamsburg, Va., Feb. 19
Misler, Betty Fasset, 79, Beaverton, Mich., April 24
Moser, Minnie, 84, Orrville, Ohio, May 12
Myers, Bertha, 91, Peru, Ind., May 27
Naill, Thomas, 67, Mount Airy,

Md., Sept. 12
Olsen, Sarah, 88, Goshen, Ind., May 30
Osburn, Leota, 95, Ashland, Ohio, June 27
Pearl, William, 85, Annapolis, Md., Nov. 16
Pennoek, Roland, Jr., 79, Harleysville, Pa., June 1
Pisle, Mary Jane, 75, Shippensburg, Pa., May 21
Plunkett, Mildred Naff, 87, Boones Mill, Va., Feb. 20
Pope, Thomas W., 83, Duncansville, Pa., July 5
Rager, Tessie, 42, Johnstown, Pa., March 9
Richards, Robert, 72, Lancaster, Pa., May 9
Rippeon, Mary Louise, 76, Frederick, Md., June 9
Ritchey, James, 75, Ashland, Ohio, June 2
Ross, Walter, 67, Sebring, Fla., March 26
Rowley, Leroy, 80, Hillsdale, Pa., June 19
Salvia, Anthony P., 75, Johnstown, Pa., July 5
Sankis, Joan, 70, Franklin Grove, Ill., May 5
Schools, Harry, 73, Annville, Pa., May 12
Shonk, Thom, 61, Quarryville, Pa., April 15
Shrock, Lloyd H., 81, Columbia City, Ind., June 15
Shuff, S. S., Jr., 78, Arcanum, Ohio, April 24
Sink, Denton, 85, Rocky Mount, Va., Dec. 6
Smallwood, Angelean Lavern, 65, Staunton, Va., May 24
Smith, McBride, 94, Grottoes, Va., May 16
Smith, Melody, 50, Horsham, Pa., May 31
Smith, Verna, 92, Johnstown, Pa., May 2
Spangler, Agnes, 95, Shanksville, Pa., Feb. 18
Tobias, Roy, 86, Wyomissing, Pa., May 12
Tomes, Donna, 55, Harrisburg, Pa., May 2
Travis, Irene, 82, Batesville, Ind., April 2
Unger, Donald W., 84, Dixon, Ill., July 5
Webb, Herb, 89, Easton, Md., May 29
Weighley, Mary, 90, Friedens, Pa., April 24
Weller, Erby, 86, Newburg, Pa., March 4
Wieland, Raymond D., 85, Hastings, Mich., May 4
Williams, Lois, 91, Sigourney, Iowa, May 29
Wolf, Thomas R., 52, Hollidaysburg, Pa., June 27
Zehner, Dorothy M., 97, Branford, Conn., Oct. 24

Licensings

Fuchs, Rebecca, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Lancaster, Pa.), Feb. 4
Grew, Dottie Herring, W. Pa. Dist. (Meyersdale, Pa.), July 15
Johnson, Roland D., S/C Ind.

Dist. (White Branch, Hagerstown, Ind.), June 17
King, Michael J., Southeastern Dist. (Trinity, Blountville, Tenn.), June 3
Potvin, Doug, Mid-Atl. Dist. (Community of Joy, Salisbury, Md.), Jan. 21
Smyth, Michael R., S/C Ind. Dist. (Harvest Fellowship, Wabash, Ind.), July 8
Stein, Robert R., W. Pa. Dist. (Uniontown, Pa.), July 15
Tanner, Andrew S., Virlina Dist. (Green Hill, Salem, Va.), May 15
Townley, Timothy D., W. Plains Dist. (Independence, Kan.), April 29

Ordinations

Adams, Philip L., W. Plains Dist. (Independence, Kan.), April 29
Bradley, Larry G., N. Ohio Dist. (Reading, Homeworth, Ohio), May 6
Carrasco, Fausto, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Nuevo Amanecer Fellowship, Bethlehem, Pa.), July 22
Carrasco, Mercedes Diaz, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Nuevo Amanecer Fellowship, Bethlehem, Pa.), July 22
Crain, Steve, N. Ind. Dist. (Beacon Heights, Fort Wayne, Ind.), June 10
Derr, Amelia J., W. Pa. Dist. (Indiana, Pa.), May 27
Diaz, Jan, S. Pa. Dist. (Chambersburg, Pa.), June 10
Eikler, Carrie, S/C Ind. Dist. (Manchester, North Manchester, Ind.), May 6
Eikler, Torin, S/C Ind. Dist. (Manchester, North Manchester, Ind.), May 6
Fleishman, Gregory E., Virlina Dist. (Mount Union, Bent Mountain, Va.), July 22
Hawbaker, Wayne Lee, S. Pa. Dist. (Upton, Greencastle, Pa.), June 17
Loose, Vaughn A., Mid. Pa. Dist. (Holsinger, New Enterprise, Pa.), May 20
Martin, Michael D., Pac. S.W. Dist. (Papago Buttes, Scottsdale, Ariz.), June 3
Shaak, Martha J., Atl. N.E. Dist. (Palmyra, Pa.), June 5
Stewart, Kenneth, Atl. N.E. Dist. (West Green Tree, Elizabethtown, Pa.), June 3
Stoner, John W., W. Pa. Dist. (Somerset, Pa.), July 8
Stoner, Linda K., W. Pa. Dist. (Somerset, Pa.), July 8
Swindell, Beverly J., Mid. Pa. Dist. (Everett, Pa.), June 10

Placements

Baker, Jimmy Lee, from interim to pastor, Florida, Fla., July 1
Bollinger, Susan, team pastor, Lewiston, Minn., April 29
Clark, Randy S., from team pastor, Romney, W. Va., to pastor, Brummetts Creek, Green Mountain, N.C., June 1

Crain, Steven D., campus minister & church relations, Manchester College, North Manchester, Ind., July 1
Crandall, Jonathan W., youth pastor, Pleasant Dale, Decatur, Ind., May 1
Davis, Barbra Sue, pastor, Olathe, Kan., June 17
Derr, Amelia, J., from Christian education pastor, Indiana, Pa., to Christian education director, Pleasant Hill, Johnstown, Pa., and chaplain, Beacon Ridge Nursing Home, Indiana, Pa., June 30
Derr, Horace E., from pastor, Indiana, Pa., to chaplain, Visiting Nurse Association of Indiana County, Indiana, Pa., June 30
Dunlap, Robert, pastor, Winter Park, Fla., June 24
Eikler, Carrie, co-pastor, Morgantown, W.Va., May 8
Eikler, Torin, co-pastor, Morgantown, W.Va., May 8
Gleason, Michael, pastor, East Nimishillen, North Canton, Ohio, June 10
Hoffert, Gordon R., team pastor, Lewiston, Minn., April 29
Hollinger, Donald E., from pastor to associate pastor, West Green Tree, Elizabethtown, Pa., June 6
Houts, Robert B., pastor, Pleasant View, Mount Jackson, Va., Aug. 1
Hubbell, Donald G., from pastor, Black Rock, Glenville, Pa., to pastor of witness, York, First, York, Pa., Aug. 5
Kunselman, Dorothy, pastor, Oakdale, New Bethlehem, Pa., Aug. 1
Longenecker, David L., chaplain, Homestead Village, Lancaster, Pa., June 4
Major, Gary R., from interim to pastor, Mount Zion, Luray, Va., Aug. 1
Meyerhoeffer, Kelley, from pastor of youth ministries to senior pastor, Happy Corner, Clayton, Ohio, May 27
Miller, David L., from pastor, Mohrsville, Pa., to pastor, Rockhill, Rockhill Furnace, Pa., Aug. 1
Nogle, Joel F., from pastor Marsh Creek, Gettysburg, Pa., to pastor, Martinsburg Memorial, Martinsburg, Pa., June 10
Ritenour, Eric R., associate pastor, Codorus, Loganville, Pa., June 5
Stewart, Kenneth, from associate pastor to pastor, West Green Tree, Elizabethtown, Pa., June 3
Studebaker, Guy M., pastor, Lower Deer Creek, Camden, Ind., July 1
Ulm, Adam, director of youth and young adult ministry, Mechanic Grove, Quarryville, Pa., June 1
Waters, Robert G., pastor, Bethel, New Middletown, Ohio, Feb. 20
Yoder, Ruth, from interim to pastor, Plymouth, Ind., Aug. 1

May contain nuts

Taking an airline flight is a bit like going to kindergarten: You're to stay in your seat most of the time, you do some reading and listen to music, you gaze out the window periodically, and, of course, you look forward to snack time.

Sooner or later as you cruise through the clouds, the cheery flight attendants come by with a beverage and a tasty treat to hold you over. Sometimes it's crackers, sometimes dried fruit, sometimes pretzels or peanuts.



WALT WILTSCHKEK
MESSENGER Editor

On this particular flight, peanuts were the snack of choice. I looked at my shiny little bag to see where the snack was made and what nutritional value the peanuts possessed. And then I saw a curious line near the bottom of the bag: "May contain nuts." Oh, good. I was hoping so.

Why would a bag clearly marked as "peanuts" in several places carry such an advisory? I assumed it was for legal protection, given the rise of peanut allergies and the rise of lawsuits the

US has seen. Still, it seemed rather redundant.

On a later trip I inspected a small packet of black pepper that I received to sprinkle on my sandwich. The word "pepper" was emblazoned on it in large, black letters. Underneath it was an ingredient list. It was short and to the point: "Ingredients: Pepper." Period. That's truth in advertising.

If these marketing departments were in charge of our church, I wonder what words they might use to describe

low in "passionate spirituality," a measure of how well we do in sharing our stories and deeply engaging the Word of God.

It seems as if we may be the only denomination that's joined the witness protection program. There are others, certainly; we probably just haven't heard of them. As a 2004 case study in *Your Church* magazine concluded, "Many church leaders have no idea how invisible the local church is to their community." The same could likely be said about many church members.

Why? An article about that case study goes on to say that "there is a diminished sense of relevance" for the church in the minds of many people. Another study found many "rootless" congregations, with members no longer living near their congregation's building (and thus near the surrounding community). Jesus asked, "Who is your neighbor?" and many of us don't know in a literal sense.

And then there's that troublesome resistance to talking about ourselves. We can send as many queries as we want to our districts and to Annual Conference, raising the red flag over our membership decline, but ultimately it's the responsibility of each member to tell the story, to bring a friend, to connect our faith with our communities.

More than that, we must make sure our churches are places of life and welcome and true discipleship. Otherwise, people may find little reason to stay once they come in the doors. Arkansas State University campus minister Eric Van Meter, a Methodist, recently observed in the *United Methodist Reporter*, "Perhaps our task is not to find answers for saving our church but to learn to ask questions that will lead us to become more fully God's church, even in a changing world."

One wonders how many people pass our congregations in their various shapes and sizes and have no idea what's going on inside. We may think it's obvious ... but probably a lot of folks in our communities have no idea.

what's inside. Perhaps it would say "Church of the Brethren" at the top with the advisory "May contain Christians" in small print at the bottom.

One wonders how many people pass our congregations in their various shapes and sizes and have no idea what's going on inside. We may think it's obvious that good things are happening within the doors, but probably a lot of folks in our communities have no idea.

Brethren's general hesitancy toward anything resembling evangelism has been well documented. A story in this month's issue notes that most Brethren congregations score

On further thought, "May contain nuts" might not be a bad new slogan for the Church of the Brethren. You have to be a little nuts to go into Brethren Volunteer Service, to travel to disaster relief projects, to give your own resources to help the hungry, or to wash feet as part of the love feast.

We have a lot of strengths, but how many people know? And are we honestly asking the right questions so that our present and future ministries continue to fill unmet needs and, more importantly, continue to live out God's call for us?

If we look deeply, we may even surprise ourselves with what's inside. —Ed.

COMING IN NOVEMBER: A visit with Brethren race car driver Sam Hornish Jr., School of the Americas, Bethany Advocate Hospital, talking about our faith, Bible study on Nahum/Habakkuk, and more.

NEW DIRECTIONS

These institutions share a common heritage with the Church of the Brethren. Diverse in location, size, and offerings within their academic and extra-curricular programs, each offers a world of educational value and opportunity to its students.

To find out more about the exciting direction in which these institutions can lead, visit the websites listed below.

Bridgewater College

Bridgewater, Virginia
www.bridgewater.edu

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La Verne, California
www.ulv.edu

Bethany Theological Seminary

Richmond, Indiana
www.bethanyseminary.edu

Elizabethtown College

Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania
www.ETOWN.EDU

Manchester College

North Manchester, Indiana
www.manchester.edu

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Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania
www.bcaabroad.org

Juniata College

Huntingdon, Pennsylvania
www.juniata.edu

McPherson College

McPherson, Kansas
www.mcpherson.edu

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Paul Jeffrey/ACT USA

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Send your contribution to Church of the Brethren Global Food Crisis Fund, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120. For more information call 800 323-8039, ext. 264, or visit www.brethren.org/genbd/global_mission/gfcf.htm.



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