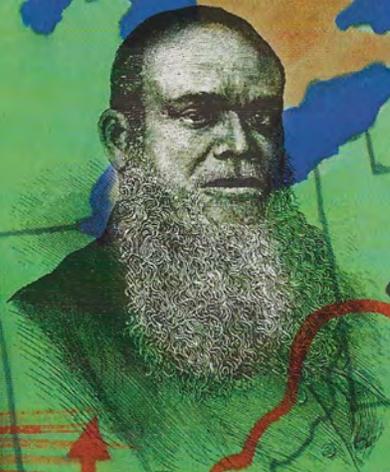


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MESSENGER

MARCH 2008 WWW.BRETHREN.ORG



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By 1981, when I arrived in Elgin, Ill., the hot lead, linotype machines in Brethren Press had been replaced by slick Compugraphic typesetting machines that spewed out long pages of type. We would cut the columns to the right length and wax them onto "boards," the layout sheets for the magazine. If the spacing between letters in a large headline was a little gappy, Leon Miller in the paste-up department would just cut them apart with his knife and scoot them closer together.

Despite these modern advances in the typesetting area, the presses were pretty much what they had been for years. The big two-color presses transferred images from metal plates onto large sheets of paper. To achieve full color, the sheets were run through the press twice to lay down all four colors. The metal plates were etched from film in a dim room that smelled like chemicals. The photos were cut into a thin sheet of rubylith, which was stripped to the film with the text (by "strippers").

The printing operation was sold in 1986, a necessary but sad transition that was happening in many other denominational publishing houses as well during those years. I can still visualize the room-size camera that used to occupy the space that is now home to Information Services, the prepress department housed where Brethren Volunteer Service now has its offices, and the big presses that noisily filled the warehouse.



WENDY McFADDEN
Publisher

After the presses went quiet, it took a while for people to understand that printing and publishing are not the same thing. One evening at the end of the workday, I heard someone from down the hall tell two travel-worn visitors who were looking for Brethren Press, "Oh, they closed a few years ago." I shot out of my office pretty fast to assure them that we were still alive and well.

Nowadays printing is one of the various services we farm out. This means that we can save money by selecting the printer best suited for a particular job. We use one printer for hardcover books, another for spiral books with tabs, another for color fliers. And now (as of four months ago) we have a new one for MESSENGER—a large company that prints only magazines. Because of the efficiencies resulting from this specialization, MESSENGER will save about \$25,000 a year.

That's very good news, because it means we don't have to pass along last year's hefty postal rate increases, or worry quite yet about subscription levels that track closely with denominational membership trends. Our capability to periodically find better ways to print MESSENGER allows us to continue providing a denominational magazine, even when the numbers are small. Stretching a dollar is definitely a part of our Brethren heritage that we plan to take into the church's fourth century.

Wendy McFadden

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

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A ministry with real growth potential

Maryland congregations' growing project helps the hungry

A partnership of four Maryland congregations is producing a bountiful harvest for the world's hungry.

Spearheaded by Grossnickle Church of the Brethren (Myersville, Md.), a "growing project" has dedicated 55 acres of corn, hay, and wheat to the fundraising effort each of the past two years. All crop proceeds are donated to the work of Foods Resource Bank through the General Board's Global Food Crisis Fund. More than \$18,000 was raised in 2006 and more than \$20,000 this past year.

Hagerstown, Harmony (Myersville), and Welty (Smithsburg) are the other congregations participating. About 120 members of the four churches gathered in October for a harvest festival, celebrating the crop along with equipment demonstrations, scarecrow making, and traditional African games and foods. Fran Troxell of

Lutheran World Relief spoke on behalf of Foods Resource Bank, and Hagerstown provided music with a small praise band. A cake auction raised an additional \$1,950 for the project, and a service of thanksgiving focused on the world's hungry.

The Maryland growing project has been earmarked for programs in Africa—Kenya in 2006 and Zambia in 2007—assisting hunger relief, food security, health, and education work. Several corporate sponsors have aided the church efforts.

There were nearly 200 growing projects across the United States in 2007, with 17 of those sponsored by Church of the Brethren congregations or organizations (including a camp and a retirement community). Five of those, including the Maryland project, raised about \$20,000 or more. The others were Elkhart Valley (Indiana), Ivester (Iowa), South Waterloo/Hammond Avenue (Iowa), and Polo (Illinois).

The Global Food Crisis Fund has set a goal of 25 Brethren-sponsored growing projects for 2008, with the Maryland project already planning to be among them.



Children could do activities and crafts while learning about hunger issues at the Maryland growing project harvest festival.

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 A General Board-sponsored leadership training event featuring Mennonite pastor/author Shane Hipps drew 52 people to Chambersburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren and 26 to Carlisle (Pa.) for a pair of workshops in November. . . . Western Pennsylvania's 300th anniversary celebration will be May 18 at Somerset Church of the Brethren, featuring Jonathan Shively as keynote speaker. . . . Brian Bert is the new program director at Camp Blue Diamond (Petersburg, Pa.).

Southeast Virgina is planning a second "Mother Church Bus Tour" on April 12, visiting historic congregations in the district. District executive and history buff David Shumate is serving as guide for the tours. . . . Camp Placid (Blountville, Tenn.) has a new mulch trail around its pond, courtesy of a grant from Outdoor Ministries Association. . . . West Marva youth held a skiing retreat Feb. 22-24 in Terra Alta, W.Va.

Midwest Illinois/Wisconsin held its first district retreat for junior high youth in January in Peoria, Ill. More than 20 middle schoolers attended. A second retreat is planned for April 25-26 in Mount Morris. . . . Chicago First Church of the Brethren co-sponsored a Jan. 19 Martin Luther King Day event that included poetry, film, and discussion sessions. . . . Camp Mack (Milford, Ind.) held its Annual Dinner Feb. 22, featuring General Board Youth/Young Adult Ministry director Chris Douglas.

Ozarks/Plains Missouri/Arkansas was scheduled to host a "Matthew 18" conflict resolution training event for trainers Feb. 28-29. . . . Volunteers were being sought this winter to help at a Brethren disaster relief project in Rushford, Minn., continuing cleanup and repair work from severe flooding last summer. . . . Western Plains is planning a fourth "Gathering" conference, focused on evangelism, for Oct. 24-26 in Salina, Kan. . . . Kim Sittig has resigned as program director of Camp Pine Lake (Eldora, Iowa).

West January storms in northern California took down a number of trees and some fencing at Live Oak (Calif.) Church of the Brethren. . . . A Children's Disaster Services Level I training workshop is scheduled for April 11-12 at La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren; congregational deacon/caregiver training sessions are being held April 19 at Modesto (Calif.) and May 10-11 at Lacey (Wash.) Community Church and Wenatchee (Wash.).

BY THE NUMBERS

9

Number of denominations (including the Church of the Brethren, through the General Board) that are part of the annual One Great Hour of Sharing effort, which began as a relief program in post-World War II Europe. Church World Service is also a partner. The central goal of helping those in need remains the same more than 60 years later. This year's One Great Hour of Sharing offering emphasis is scheduled for March 9.



"Transformation is not something that is imposed from the outside; it happens from the inside out."

—Glenn Timmons, co-coordinator of the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, speaking in Western Plains District

REMEMBERED

• **John Samuel Horning**, a former Brethren mission worker in Ecuador and Nigeria, died Dec. 26. He was 82. A graduate of Manchester College and an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren, he and with his wife, Estella, were medical mission workers in Ecuador from 1956 to 1971, and later worked with the Lafiya health program in Nigeria from 1973 to 1976. He was later a medical family doctor, retiring in 1990, and served on the board of Bethany Hospital in Chicago. Horning also was instrumental in forming the Brethren Health and Education Foundation. He was a member of York Center Church of the Brethren (Lombard, Ill.) for many years, and more recently of Goshen (Ind.) City Church of the Brethren. Services were held at York Center on Jan. 12 and at Goshen City on Jan. 19.



The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership has proven significant for Illinois/Wisconsin 2008 moderator Jerry Sales, left, and moderator-elect Gil Crosby, and other district leaders.

Brethren Academy proves valuable to Illinois leaders

Students and graduates of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership have played a major role in leadership for Illinois/Wisconsin District recently.

At the district conference in Freeport, Ill., in November, two products of the Academy were consecrated as moderator and moderator-elect. Jerry Sales, who graduated from the Academy and later also took courses from Bethany Theological Seminary, was serving as pastor of Franklin Grove (Ill.) Church of the Brethren when he was called as the district's 2008 moderator. In Freeport another Training in Ministry (TRIM) student, Gil Crosby, was called as moderator-elect. Crosby expected to complete

the TRIM coursework this year.

District executive Kevin Kessler, also pastor of Canton (Ill.) Church of the Brethren, came from the Academy's Education for a Shared Ministry (EFSM) program.

Crosby and Sales both currently call Peoria (Ill.) Church of the Brethren their home church, which is pastored by TRIM graduate Dana McNeil. Crosby is a retiree who spent 35 years in the corporate world. Sales now works full-time as a computer specialist after serving several years as a part-time pastor.

"The TRIM program is strong in the Illinois/Wisconsin District," Crosby writes. "This district, like many in the brotherhood, needs qualified, Brethren trained pastors, and TRIM is attempting to meet the demand along with Bethany Seminary."

A bunch of treble-makers: Members of the Manchester College Symphonic Band, including several Church of the Brethren students, left North Manchester, Ind., to spend their January term in Puerto Rico, sharing via the international language of music. The group donated instruments, did at least a concert a day, and visited Brethren congregations in Caimito (San Juan) and Castañer.



LANDMARKS & LAURELS

- **Venice (Fla.) Church of the Brethren** celebrated its 25th anniversary on Feb. 17, with guest speaker Berwyn Oltman.

- **Lewiston (Minn.) Church of the Brethren** is preparing to celebrate its 150th anniversary this year.

- A new initiative of the General Board's **Global Food Crisis Fund** is providing tuition for a member of the Church of the Brethren in the Dominican Republic to study and work with ECHO, a sustainable agriculture program located in North Fort Myers, Fla. The fund sent \$2,265 to cover expenses for **Vildor Archange** to spend several weeks with the program. ECHO is also the site of one of the General Board's youth workcamps each summer.

- Former Church of the Brethren missionary **Ellen Edmister Cunningham** celebrated her 101st birthday on Jan. 22. She and her late husband, E. Lloyd Cunningham, responded to a call for missionaries to go to China in 1938. After unrest developed in China they were in the Philippines for language study when Pearl Harbor was attacked in 1941, and along with more than 400 other civilians they and their young son, Larry, were in a Japanese internment camp from 1941 to 1945. They later returned to China and then served in India.

- **Dorothy Van Landeghem**, a Green Tree Church of the Brethren (Oaks, Pa.) member who now resides at the Peter Becker Community in Harleysville, Pa., turned 100 years old on Jan. 12. Dorothy credits her health to being an avid dancer, which she did with her husband, Conrad, for nearly 50 years.

- The *Roanoke (Va.) Times* did a feature article on **Earson and Lois Huffman**, who celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary on Dec. 20. Both in their 90s, they were married and raised their family in Hollins Road Church of the Brethren in Roanoke. They now live in a retirement community in Botetourt County.

- **John and Mary Mueller**, long-term volunteer directors at a Brethren Disaster Ministries Hurricane Katrina rebuilding project, are part of the largest volunteer response in US history, according to a Jan. 15 *USA Today* article. The Muellers were the lead for the feature, titled "Katrina Volunteers Come to Stay." It focused on people who are rebuilding the New Orleans area as full-time volunteers. "Our place is here," John Mueller told the newspaper.

- Church of the Brethren minister **Zandra Wagoner**, currently assistant professor of philosophy and religion at the University of La Verne (Calif.), was among the authors and signatories of an interfaith proclamation calling for compassion toward animals. A launch event for the movement was held in November in Washington, D.C. It marked the beginning of a long-term campaign led by Best Friends Animal Society to bring issues of animal compassion to the forefront of religious concern.

- **Jerry Miles**, a member of La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren, became the first person to be inducted into the National High School Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame on Dec. 1. Miles is a former newspaper sports writer and sports editor as well as an NCAA staff member, and he helped to begin the Baseball Coaches Association.

- **Kathryn Oller**, former associate dean of the School of Library and Information Science at Drexel University in Philadelphia, and now a member of Waynesboro (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, was featured in the *Waynesboro Record Herald* in January. She is helping the Waynesboro church plan its events to celebrate the denomination's 300th anniversary. Her doctoral dissertation focused on early Brethren leader Christopher Sauer.

- **Manchester College** (North Manchester, Ind.) on Feb. 1 commemorated the 40th anniversary of **Martin Luther King Jr.** visiting the campus and delivering a speech titled "The Future of Integration." A convocation in Cordier Auditorium included reflections, video and still photography, student recitals from King's writing, reflections by professor emeritus Kenneth L. Brown, and music by the college's A Cappella Choir.

- **Emmanuel Church of the Brethren** (Mount Solon, Va.) has moved to a new building, as its former building—dating from 1896—is scheduled to be torn down, according to a report in the Harrisonburg (Va.) *Daily News Record*. The new \$1.5 million building was dedicated with worship on Dec. 30.



Jim and Nancy McAvoy promote Trees for Life during the Alternative Holiday Market at Live Oak (Calif.) Church of the Brethren.

California holiday market educates while raising funds

An Alternative Holiday Market was held by Live Oak (Calif.) Church of the Brethren in November, an event planned and organized by church member Sandy Shepherd.

Gifts from around the world were available for purchase, and congregational and community members had the opportunity to donate in the name of a friend or loved one to any of 12 non-profit agencies including Heifer International, A Greater Gift, New Community Project, Trees for Life, and On Earth Peace.

Booths for each agency were staffed by church members well-versed in that agency's programs and projects, with the goal of educating the public. The kitchen was open to provide breakfast, lunch, and snacks, with funds raised going to the General Board's Global Food Crisis Fund. The market was a huge success, raising nearly \$8,000 for non-profit organizations.—Anne Palmer

Guided by God: An intercultural journey

Rev 7:9: After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

Have you ever wrestled with a scripture verse?

For three years? Members of the denominational Intercultural Study Committee spent three years with one verse: Revelation 7:9. The journey of the committee during those three years is one that can simply be described as being guided by God—and what an awesome journey it has been.



DARLA KAY
BOWMAN DEARDORFF

The story of this journey begins with names of those being selected for the committee on the Annual Conference ballot. Even the way in which the names got on the ballot was without doubt “a God thing.”

The first meeting of the study committee in Elgin, Ill., brought together

members from five different cultural backgrounds and from different walks of life: pastors, academics, laypersons.

Each person brought his or her own perspective, own cultural background and lens, own language, own experiences, own faith walk. We each had preferred ways of working

we knew we had just heard God’s voice. And there were real celebrations, rejoicing and praising God. I recall that we spent one whole morning of our precious time together in Bible study, and God led us to the story of Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10. We realized how God would open our eyes time and time again to understand scripture in a different way, guiding us as we worked through the writing of the final report.

Revelation 7:9 became a verse that we would almost live, eat, and breathe for three years. It became part of us. With such in-depth study came a way of seeing in a different way—seeing God’s way, a way no longer as colored by our own experiences or agendas.

The process culminated in our presentation of the final paper, “Separate No More,” to the Annual Conference body in Cleveland. The presentation itself was guided by God, with the singing of “Fluye, Espíritu, Fluye” at the beginning. The words so aptly described our journey: “Flow, Spirit, flow.” The power of God’s presence was palpable as we sat on the stage listening to affirmation after affirmation from the delegates and witnessed the paper pass nearly unanimously as written with no changes.

As we hugged each other backstage and thanked God for his guidance, we truly felt as one, despite all the many differences that could have kept us apart. And then we realized it. We were of different languages and different tribes, and we were praising and worshiping God together—we were experiencing Revelation 7:9 in the here and now. Mere words cannot begin to describe the holy joy and awesome power of God in that moment.

The journey is not over. In many ways, it’s just begun. God is calling all members of the Church of the Brethren to be open to God’s guidance. We as a committee believe that God is speaking to us—as individuals, as a denomination—in many ways, including through the words God gave us in the “Separate No More” paper.

We experienced the heavenly joy that comes from worshiping and praising God together. We learned that our differences don’t keep us apart, but, rather, that our differences help broaden our experience of God, enriching our faith walk in ways we never imagined before. And we learned that what matters most in the end is our relationship with God and our relationships with each other as sisters and brothers in Christ.

Sisters and brothers, there is so much more that God wants to do for us and with us and through us: Are we ready for that journey? Are we ready to be guided by God? **Y!**

Sisters and brothers, there is so much more that God wants to do for us and with us and through us: Are we ready for that journey? Are we ready to be guided by God? **Y!**

Darla Kay Bowman Deardorff served on the Annual Conference Intercultural Study Committee along with Asha Solanky, Thomas Dowdy, Nadine L. Monn, Neemita Pandya, Gilbert Romero, and ex officio member Glenn Hatfield. She is a member of Peace Covenant Fellowship Church of the Brethren in Durham, N.C. For a copy of the “Separate No More” paper, go to www.brethren.org/ac_statements/2007MultiEthnic.pdf.

AS WE HUGGED EACH OTHER BACKSTAGE AND THANKED GOD FOR HIS GUIDANCE, WE TRULY FELT AS ONE, DESPITE ALL THE MANY DIFFERENCES THAT COULD HAVE KEPT US APART.

through issues: Some of us were more results-/task-oriented and felt the pressure of producing a report for Annual Conference. Others were more process-oriented and felt that the process—our prayers, our discussions, what we were doing at each moment—was what really mattered. This committee, with the many differences among its members, was brought together by God, and this was clearly felt at that first meeting. We spent quite a bit of time in prayer discerning God’s will for the group, and we came away believing that there was indeed a reason why God called us together to engage the two queries that addressed the Church of the Brethren’s response to Revelation 7:9.

And so it was for three years: We prayed, discussed, and wrestled together over this one scripture verse and how God was calling the Church of the Brethren to respond. There were bumps along the way—frustrations, misunderstandings, discouragement, perceived setbacks. We prayed together and cried together. But there were also real joys, moments when

“Secrecy is a terrible thing, especially in the context of the church.”

—Donna Freitas, professor of religion at Boston University. She was commenting on the efforts of some in the religious community to organize boycotts of the movie *The Golden Compass*, based on atheist Philip Pullman's books. (RNS)

“(Transformation) is being more than we are, and being all God has designed for us. Transformation takes us to a different place than where we are now.”

—from the “New Day Vision for the Brethren Church,” printed in *The Brethren Evangelist*

“Online hate is at the vanguard of societal misunderstanding and intolerance,”

—Vinay Vallabh, member of the Hindu American Foundation executive council and lead author of a 52-page report on online hate speech against Hindus

“If we are serious about ending extreme hunger and poverty around the world, we must be serious about transforming agriculture for small farmers, most of whom are women.”

—Billionaire Bill Gates of Microsoft, announcing a new effort of more than \$300 million in grants as “creative capitalism.” He was quoted by CNN.com.

“We have done some wonderful things throughout our history as a church, but we have also spent an awful lot of time telling the Holy Spirit where it should be blowing instead of trusting enough to follow where it leads.”

—Christy Waltersdorff, pastor of York Center Church of the Brethren, Lombard, Ill.

“There's no comparison between Iraq now and [under Saddam]. Things are the most difficult they have ever been for Christians—probably ever in history.”

—The Rev. Canon Andrew White, an Anglican priest known as the Vicar of Baghdad, speaking on CBS' 60 Minutes (NCC News Service). He estimates that 90 percent of Iraq's Christians, once thought to number over a million, have either fled or have been murdered by Islamic extremists during the religious civil war.

CULTUREVIEW

• **Leith Anderson**, a Minnesota megachurch pastor who has twice served as interim president of the National Association of Evangelicals, was formally named president on Oct. 11.

• The board of directors of Church World Service in December re-elected **John L. McCullough** to a third four-year term as CEO and executive director. McCullough has led the global humanitarian agency since 2000. McCullough is ordained in the United Methodist Church.

• The **United Methodist Publishing House** cut 30 staff positions—about 3 percent of its workforce—this past year due to a projected decline in sales and increased expenses. (*The United Methodist Reporter*)

• Churches working for peace amid a wave of **post-electoral violence in Kenya** received a pastoral and solidarity visit from an international ecumenical delegation sent by the World

Council of Churches Jan. 30-Feb. 3. Church World Service has also been providing emergency aid in the wake of the violence.

• The international affairs and peace program of the National Council of Churches USA (NCC) has endorsed a nationwide “**Tents of Hope**” program for congregations to raise awareness of the genocide in Darfur through education, advocacy, and fundraising for humanitarian aid. Congregations or groups wishing to learn more about participating can visit www.tentsofhope.org.

• The national governing body of the Anglican Church of Canada in 2007 defeated by the tightest of margins a motion to forge ahead with **same-sex blessings** across the country. The church's lay and clergy delegates voted to allow same-sex blessings, but church bishops defeated the move, 21-19. Majorities in all three groups would have been needed to approve the measure. (RNS)



JUST FOR FUN: HAIKU

DO YOU HAIKU? Church of the Brethren member Neil Fancher of La Verne, Calif., composed a series of Brethren-related *haiku* poems (a Japanese form consisting of three lines, in which the first line has five syllables, the second line seven syllables, and the third line five), including the following. MESSENGER invites readers to send in their own Brethren haiku; some will be chosen to be published in future issues. Send to messenger@brethren.org or 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

Anabaptism
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
Dunked forward three times

Simply. Peacefully.
New Testament as our creed
Church of the Brethren

Uplifting to think
The priesthood of believers
Includes scum like me

Potluck and Council
Approval by consensus
It was a long day



by Pamela K. Brubaker

Sarah Righter Major: Preaching with power

Her 'uncommon' ministry stretched boundaries of Annual Meeting

Sarah Righter Major (1808-1884) was the first known Brethren woman to preach publicly. Her story is not only inspiring; it also offers insight into church polity and practice among 19th-century Brethren.

Sarah was born to John and Elisabeth (Stern) Righter on August 29, 1808, in Germantown, Pa. She was not yet a member of the church when she heard Harriet Livermore preach in August of 1826. Livermore was a writer, teacher, and traveling evangelist who called herself "The Pilgrim Stranger."

Courtesy of Brethren Historical Library and Archives



Thomas and Sarah Major

mother whom Harriet Livermore ever afterwards called 'my daughter' as Paul called Timothy his son, and was not lacking in parental solicitude for her welfare."

Sarah was baptized on November 12, 1826, according to the records of the Philadelphia congregation. Shortly thereafter

she felt a call to preach, but knowing the views of the Brethren was fearful of doing so. Sensing her distress, her father asked what was troubling her. After she told him of her call, they went together to consult Brother Peter Keyser. He helped her overcome her fears and to begin speaking. Elder Israel Poulson invited her to speak at the Amwell, N.J., congregation. Her preaching seemed inspired, and several other congregations invited her to come and hold evangelistic meetings. Abraham Harley Cassel, one of her converts and a noted Brethren antiquarian, wrote, "I have heard many sermons, but none ever surpassed hers."

Sarah's preaching came to the attention of the 1834 Annual Meeting, where it was strongly disapproved on grounds of scripture and the ancient order of the church. In addition, it was charged that "Such sister being in danger, not only expos-

Livermore had been invited to preach by Peter Keyser Jr., pastor of the Germantown and Philadelphia con-

A COMMITTEE OF ELDERS WAS SENT TO SILENCE HER, BUT AFTER HEARING HER PREACH COULD NOT DO SO. ELDER JAMES H. TRACY EXPLAINED, "I COULD NOT GIVE MY VOICE TO SILENCE SOMEONE WHO COULD OUTPREACH ME."

gregations. Sarah's son later wrote, "Here it was that my mother heard The Pilgrim Stranger and as the first fruits of her labors in Philadelphia was the conversion of my

ing her own state of grace to temptation, but also causing temptations, discord, and disputes among other members."

A committee of elders was sent to silence her, but after hearing her preach could not do so. Elder James H. Tracy explained, "I could not give my voice to silence someone who could outreach me." Sarah defended herself in a letter written in 1835 to printer Jacob Sala: "I conceive it would be very inconsistent in an apostle [Paul], who had laid his hands on men and women, and pray'd over them that they might receive the Holy Ghost, to quench the gift of the spirit of God because it was given to a woman—in answer to prayer—when at that time it may not be given in such measure to more mature Christians."



Courtesy of Brethren Historical Library and Archives

Sarah's life changed again when she married Thomas Major (1811-1888) on March 10, 1842. Major was a carpenter who had boarded in the Righter home. In 1841 he and John Righter (Sarah's father) were elected to the Brethren ministry. In the spring of 1843, Sarah and Thomas moved to Ohio, first to Scioto County and then to Highland County (southeast of Dayton). There they farmed and supplemented their income with Thomas' carpentry work. Five children were born to them, although the first was stillborn and the second died at three months of age.

Thomas and Sarah continued to preach in Ohio, without remuneration. Family records indicate, "Each Sunday they held from one to three services, often traveling a distance of ten to fifteen miles over poor roads to meet those eagerly gathered to listen to them. Their joint efforts resulted in the building of a church at what was then called New Lexington." According to various people who heard Sarah preach, she usually sat with the congregation until invited by her husband to come up to preach. If the congregation had asked that Sarah not preach, she would often lead in prayer. The Majors also preached in homes, infirmaries, and prisons.

In Ohio, Sarah and Thomas helped resettle freed slaves from the South. Their involvement with Samuel Weir, the first African-American Brethren minister (see story, p. 12), was recounted by Elder Landon West in a pamphlet in 1897. Brother B.F. Moomaw of Virginia brought Sam, who was at the time illiterate, to Ohio, where he told him, "Sam, you are now a free man and on free soil, where you can enjoy your freedom as all other free men." They traveled to the home of the Majors, where Sarah received and cared for them since Thomas was away from home. Sarah and Thomas became friends and supporters of Samuel, who learned to read and write and study the Bible. Eventually he began to preach and was then elected to the ministry. In October 1865, the Majors were the first

"white" Brethren to participate in an integrated love feast. In addition to Samuel, the recently baptized Harvey and Martha Carter participated. In 1872, Brother Carter was also called to the Brethren ministry.

Only recently have we learned from family records made available to Nancy Kettering Frye (*Uncommon Woman: The Life and Times of Sarah Righter Major*, Brethren Press, 1997) that Thomas and Sarah "were very active in the movement for the abolition of slavery[,] their farm was a stop on the 'Underground Rail[way],' which conveyed slaves to Canada for freedom." As early as 1782, Annual Meeting had opposed slavery: "Concerning the unchristian negro slave trade, it has been unanimously considered, that it cannot be permitted in any wise by the church, that a member should or could purchase negroes, or keep them as slaves . . ." As family records indicate, the Majors went further, opposing the slave trade itself and breaking the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which required citizens to assist in the capture of fugitive slaves.

Sarah and Thomas both seem to have been guided by their own strong sense of calling, carrying out a ministry not always authorized by US law or Annual Meeting. Its stern 1834 decision against women preaching was slightly revised in 1858, when women were granted permission to pray and prophesy but not to preach.

However, in 1878 Sarah preached to overflow crowds at the Annual Meeting in North Manchester, Ind. Some of her contemporaries, such as Brother J.H. Warstler of Indiana, described her as "the picture of meekness and humility, completely subject to the will of her husband." Perhaps, but her marriage may have been based on the view of mutuality she expressed in her 1835 letter: "I believe man to have been first in creation, but I also believe woman was made to be an help meet for or equal to him, having a soul and body, capable of helping him, in his natural, and spiritual world . . ."

Sarah and Thomas worked as a team, sensitive to the feelings of those who did not share their understanding of their call, but forging ahead nevertheless. And the church never prohibited them, once they experienced the inspiration and power of their ministry. We can learn much from this approach to controversy about who is permitted to preach and minister in our midst. ❧

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by James Benedict

The Wolfes: Leading the way west

Three generations of family gave key leadership to frontier church

In the great western migration that defined the late 18th and the 19th century in North America, Brethren were largely non-participants. To this day, the vast majority of Brethren in the United States live within a few hundred miles of the Atlantic Ocean. But a few brave Dunker families did go west, and among them none had a bigger impact on the life of the church than the Wolfe family. In the course of three generations, they carried the Brethren message from Lancaster County, Pa., to the Pacific slope of California.

It just so happens that in each generation of the Wolfe family, the boldest pioneer was named George. It began with George Sr., born in Lancaster County in 1750. Most likely ordained to the ministry there, at age 37 he moved his young family to Fayette County, Pa. It isn't far by modern standards, but in those days the distance was significant. Lancaster County was well established; Fayette County was essentially frontier wilderness.

But evidently it was not wilderness enough for the Wolfe family. After 13 years there, George Sr. and his sons built a flatboat and migrated down the Ohio River to Logan County in far western Kentucky. Other Brethren accompanied them, and George Sr. continued the work of ministry, including preaching forays into what is now southeast Missouri and southern Illinois. In fact, it was while on a preaching tour in Illinois that George Sr. died suddenly in 1809.

By that time, George Jr. (pictured) had married and left Kentucky with a brother Jacob and brother-in-law Abraham Hunsacker, heading farther west. Not far from the settlement of Cape Girardeau, they encountered excellent hunting near present-day Jonesboro, Ill. With only guns, ammunition, corn, and a few tools, they set to work building shelter. They then returned to Kentucky and brought their families to the area, becoming the first non-Native American residents of what became Union County.

Though the son of a minister, married, and nearly 30 years old, George Jr. had not yet been baptized. Apparently religion was not a major concern. All that changed, however, when the earth shook. In the winter of 1811-1812, the infamous New Madrid earthquake sent several shocks through the area, the biggest of all on Feb. 7, 1812. Estimated at 8.0 or higher on the Richter scale, it created new lakes, changed the course of the Mississippi, and even cracked sidewalks as far away as Washington, D.C. In addition to dramatic changes in the geography of the area and a number of deaths, the quake also caused a religious revival. One eyewitness reported, "A lot of people thinks (sic) that the devil has come here. Some thinks (sic) that this is the beginning of the world coming to a (sic) end."

The Methodists were first to capitalize on the new religious fervor among the settlers. A circuit rider formed a class in the community and made George the class leader. It wasn't long, though, before the Brethren heritage of most members of the class led them to seek guidance from Brethren in Kentucky. One of their number was sent to fetch John Hendricks, a Brethren minister. In what must have seemed to them a clear sign of God's approval of their decision, it turned out that Hendricks was already on his way to visit them. The messenger they had sent met Hendricks halfway. Shortly thereafter, 14 people—including George Jr. and his wife Ann—were baptized.

A few months later, Hendricks returned to establish a formal congregation and to oversee the election of George Jr., to the ministry. Initially reluctant to accept the call, Wolfe proved to be an able leader. He was a large man, more than 6 feet tall and weighing 275 pounds, but he was known as much for his intelligence, good sense, and kindness as for his size. He established a strong congregation in Union County,



Courtesy of Brethren Historical Library and Archives



FAR WESTERN BRETHREN RESISTED, AND WITHOUT THE WISE AND PATIENT LEADERSHIP OF GEORGE WOLFE JR. THERE COULD HAVE BEEN A PERMANENT SPLIT. WOLFE AND A FEW OTHER OF THE FAR WESTERN BRETHREN DID NOT GIVE UP. THEY MET AND CRAFTED A COMPROMISE.

and traveled to encourage Brethren elsewhere in the region.

In 1831, George Jr. and his family were part of a migration of 20 or so Brethren families northward from Union County to Adams County. There he helped organize the Mill Creek congregation. A successful farmer, he also found time to continue his preaching and his visits with other congregations of what came to be called the Far Western Brethren.

The leadership of George Wolfe Jr. among the Far Western Brethren proved critical. Time, distance, and other factors had led to the development of significant differences between the Far Western Brethren and the Brethren back in the East. Two differences were especially problematic. First, the Far Western Brethren believed in universal restoration. Universal restoration is the belief that all people will ultimately enjoy salvation, although some only after a period of punishment. This had been a minority view among Brethren, possibly from the earliest days in Germany, but in the first half of the 19th century it was frowned upon by the majority of Brethren in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia.

The second difference between Brethren in the East and Far Western Brethren was even more controversial. It regarded the proper way to practice love feast. Far Western Brethren practiced the "single mode," in which each participant would wash and dry the feet of one other person. Brethren in the East, on the other hand, practiced the "double mode," in which a pair of members would rise from the table, one taking the basin and the other the towel, and they would proceed to wash and dry the feet of several others.

As new waves of Brethren began to come west, the difference became problematic. Newer settlers complained that the "single mode" was contrary to tradition. Older settlers, including Wolfe and others, insisted that the "single mode" was actually the most ancient and proper way. Eventually the

disagreement over footwashing and questions about universal restoration made it all the way to Annual Meeting. Brethren in the East being so much more numerous, the outcome was predictable. Annual Meeting declared that the Far Western Brethren were in error and must change.

Far Western Brethren resisted, and without the wise and patient leadership of George Wolfe Jr. there could have been a permanent split. Wolfe and a few other of the Far Western Brethren did not give up. They met and crafted a compromise. Although this compromise was also initially rejected by Annual Meeting, five years later its essentials were included in an Annual Meeting decision that preserved the unity of the church.

George Wolfe Jr. remained an effective and respected leader in Illinois until his death in 1865. By then his nephew and namesake, George Wolfe III, had completed the family journey across the continent. Born in 1809 in Union County, Ill., George III was baptized in 1833. Ten years later he was ordained by two elders: his uncle and Charles Dougherty. After a few years of service in Iowa and Illinois, the urge to head west struck the third generation as forcefully as it had the first two. George III headed for California, where he organized the first congregation and presided over the Brethren for 35 years.

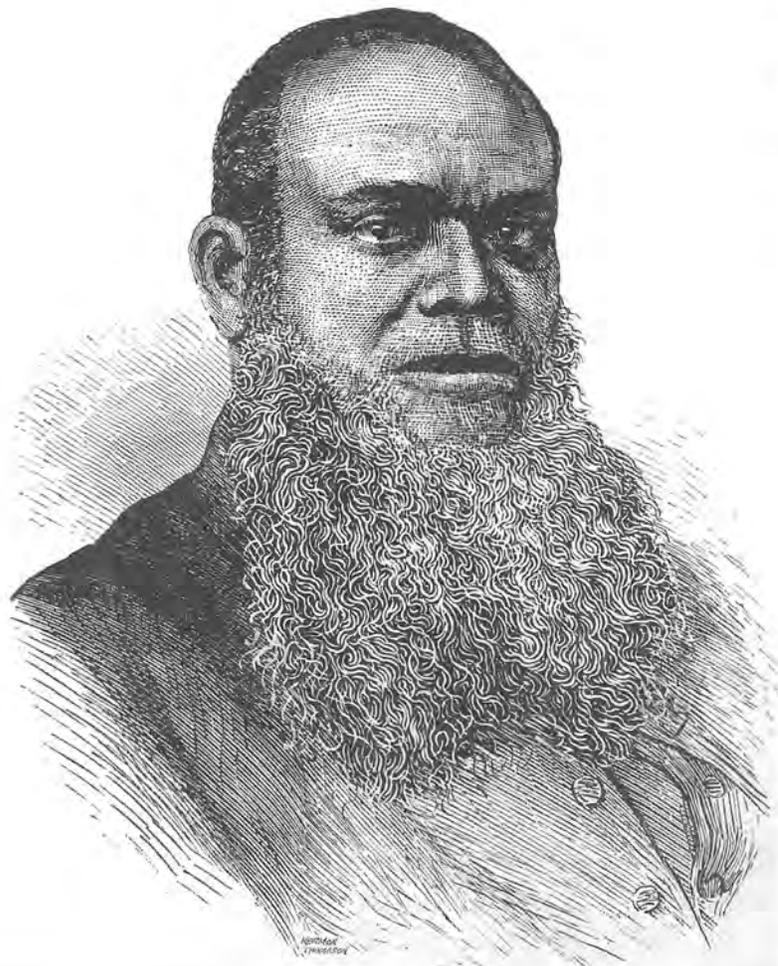
Courage and a sense of adventure never seemed in short supply in the Wolfe family. Three generations of Georges led the way as Brethren headed west. But the most important contribution from the Wolfe family was the strong but gentle leadership of George Jr., who helped a church dangerously close to schism reach a compromise—proving pioneers can also be peacemakers. **W**

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Samuel Weir

African-American preacher and elder



Kernon Thomasson / Courtesy of Brethren Historical Library and Archives

Samuel Weir was born a slave, in Bath County, Virginia, April 15, 1812. So begins an 1896 sketch of the life of a remarkable man. Weir's life story is a testimony to gracious perseverance in the face of many obstacles.

When Samuel Weir was 12 years old, he experienced one of the heartbreaks of slavery: For the price of \$280 he was sold away from the rest of his family, enslaved to a Virginia landowner. Weir was fortunate only in that his buyer, Andrew McClure, treated him relatively well. McClure was a farmer who labored in the fields alongside Weir. Young Samuel retained a measure of autonomy in keeping the surname of his father, James Weir, rather than adopting the name of his owners as many slaves did.

Weir's enslavement continued for 19 years. It ended because of tragedy in the McClure family. When the son of the family was killed in a horseback riding accident, the McClures turned to religion and soon petitioned to become members of the local Brethren congregation. For the Dunkers, though, the existence of a slave in the household was grounds for denial of membership. Unlike most other American faith groups at that time, the Brethren had been officially antislavery since the Annual Meeting of 1782. The minutes of that meeting recorded that "it can not be permitted in any wise by the church, that a member should or could purchase negroes, or keep them as slaves."

The McClures' religious conversion was genuine enough that they were willing to give up their free labor in order to join the church. And their adoption of Brethren views was in more than name only: McClure refused an offer of \$1,500 for the now 31-year-old Weir, claiming he was now "opposed to

Westward ho, Brethren!

by Jane Davis

Groups gradually moved across nation

After receiving a Spanish land grant in 1796, Pennsylvanian Daniel Clingingsmith moved his family by boat down the Ohio River and then up the Mississippi to a new settlement in southeastern Missouri called Cape Girardeau. Brethren members of George Frederick Bollinger's wagon caravan from North Carolina (1800) and Brethren from western Kentucky soon added to the settlement along the Whitewater River near Cape Girardeau.

By 1806, Kentucky elder George Wolfe Sr., minister to the scattered Brethren along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, had moved to Cape Girardeau. Whether he traveled north of St. Louis to visit the Hostetter Brethren near Saint Charles is unknown. We do know Wolfe became ill in traveling from

Kaskaskia, Ill., to Ste. Genevieve, Mo. His verbal will is recorded there, as are the names of those verifying his identity at his death on Aug. 8, 1808. The Hostetter family began arriving in northern Missouri from Kentucky after receiving a land grant about 1797. Brethren elder Francis Hostetter (1739-1806) was one of the earliest Protestant ministers in northeastern Missouri, preaching in German to English-speaking listeners.

The majority of Missouri and early Illinois Brethren were part of the movement out of North Carolina following the split over universalism and love feast practices. Southern Brethren followed the opening of lands westward into states bordering the Ohio River. Responses to frontier living and religious movements led

Ministry gifts prompted outreach to blacks in Ohio

by Anna M. Speicher

the sale of humanity." McClure freed Weir, and the McClures were baptized Brethren in February 1843.

Weir continued to work for McClure as a field hand for the next eight months. Like his former owners, Weir was also attracted to the Brethren way of belief and life. When the local Methodist minister told him they had been "fishing for [the McClures] this long time, but we didn't catch them," Weir replied, "Brother, you didn't fish in deep enough water." Weir also was baptized into the church in May 1843, becoming the first black member in that part of Virginia. Unfortunately, being antislavery in principle did not make Dunkers egalitarian in practice. Weir was received into Brethren fellowship with the right hand of fellowship, but the congregation declined to welcome him with the usual kiss of charity.

As a freedman, it was not possible for Weir to remain in Virginia. By law, any emancipated slave was required to leave the state within one year or be subject to re-enslavement. Fortunately, a white brother, B.F. Moomaw, was planning to travel to the free state of Ohio and offered to take Weir along with him. This was critical, as free blacks traveling alone through slave states risked capture by unscrupulous whites.

In Paint Creek, Ohio, William Bryant offered to house Weir. Weir lived with the Bryants and worked there as a farm hand for the next two years. The Bryants offered not only lodging but the services of their 10-year-old granddaughter as a reading and writing teacher. The different light of that time shows, however, in Weir's recounting—without malice—that Katy would sometimes lose patience with his progress and tell him that he was "nothing but a black Negro, and that she could do nothing more for me." Weir said that he would approach her the following evening saying,

"Now, Miss Katy, please try me again; I will do better this time."

Weir moved to Highland County, Ohio, and continued his studies, although he said, "When I found that I could read the Bible I was satisfied, and I gave up all other books but that." As in Virginia, the local Brethren congregations were willing to admit African Americans to membership but did not welcome them to attend worship services, so Weir attended meetings at black Baptist churches. He began to preach at these meetings and was eventually invited to address an all-white Brethren audience. The Paint Creek congregation in southern Ohio called him to the ministry in 1849 and charged him to travel and preach to blacks wherever he could.

Weir traveled and preached for 16 years before he succeeded in winning anyone to baptism. Harvey and Martha Carter were baptized in August 1856, and they and Weir formed the Franklin Colored Church, celebrating their first love feast in October (which was attended by Thomas and Sarah Righter Major). In 1872 Weir was authorized to baptize and conduct weddings, and in 1881 he was further ordained as an elder, with the responsibility for overseeing "all the colored members in the Scioto Valley." After nearly four decades of ministry, Samuel Weir died in March 1884, requesting that his home and property be transferred to the "colored brethren" of the Scioto Valley for a meeting place.

Weir's life is a lesson for us today in humility and persistence. It is also a reminder that we should examine ourselves for lingering prejudices that we may harbor in spite of our caring hearts and good intentions. ❧

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Brethren to resolve issues of baptism, love feast, slave-holding, bath-taking, and military stance in different ways. While most of the southern Indiana and eastern Kentucky Brethren were lost to the German Baptist Brethren, many western Kentucky Brethren moved into southern Illinois and Missouri, establishing the Clear Creek congregation (Ill.) and the Whitewater congregation (Mo.) in 1812. Under the leadership of elders George Wolfe and James Hendricks (from Kentucky), these churches flourished.

By 1827 they began moving north to near Quincy in Adams County, Ill., organizing the Mill Creek congregation in 1831 with George Wolfe as elder. Members from this congregation soon established new church organizations in Illinois; Libertyville, Iowa (1844); and northern Missouri. A caravan of Mill Creek members arrived in Oregon in 1852, a second group in California in 1856.

By 1858 Brethren were scattered across Missouri. They represented mainline Brethren from Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, with concentrations in west-central, south-

western, and northwestern Missouri. Missouri Brethren lived peaceably beside their slave-holding neighbors until the Civil War erupted around them early in 1861. Too scattered and isolated yet to organize as a district, Missouri Brethren maintained some contact with Brethren in Iowa, Illinois, and later Kansas.

When the Kansas Territory opened for settlement in 1854, Brethren were among the first to arrive. Early church organizations were near Emporia (1856) and south of Lawrence in Douglas County (1858). Situated along the Oregon and Santa Fe trails, the Douglas County Brethren hosted many arriving settlers. Early visitors included John Brown and James Lane, soon to figure prominently in the border warfare between Kansas and Missouri (1854-1861). Brethren also checked out the gold fields of California in 1849 and those of Denver, Colo., in 1858.

Jane Davis is chair of the General Board's Brethren Historical Committee and has served as a pastor and chaplain in Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. She lives in Castle Rock, Colo.



Following Christ on pretty feet

Love feast remains crucial to understanding Jesus

by James Benedict

My wife tells me I have pretty feet—not beautiful feet (the kind the prophet Isaiah describes) and not handsome feet (a description that seems more appropriate for one of my gender), but pretty feet. I am not sure exactly what she means by this, and I don't spend a lot of time pondering the appearance of my feet or anyone else's, but I assume what she means is that my feet are proportional to the rest of me, with nice, straight toes, healthy nails, and sound arches. To whatever extent all that is true, my parents deserve the credit for passing along their good genes.

At any rate, it is an odd compliment because, well, we are talking about feet. Even the most attractive normally don't generate much attention or interest. Name just about any other physical trait or body part, and you can most likely readily name a celebrity known for being especially attractive because of it: hair, eyes, lips, nose, torso, legs, jaw line, chin,

even hands. But feet? Forget it. Who knows (or cares) whether someone else has pretty, or handsome, or beautiful feet?

The reason no one really cares is that even the most beautiful feet are still just feet—ordinary, down-to-earth, useful in getting around, but not particularly inspiring feet. Among the body parts typically described as beautiful, they rank somewhere down near the end of the list, along with kneecaps and elbows. Chapter 52 of Isaiah assumes as much: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news." We gather the prophet's meaning more clearly if we add the word "even." When those who bring good news appear on the mountains, they are such a sight for sore eyes that even their feet seem beautiful!

Normally, the ancient Israelites didn't spend any more time than you or me thinking about the appearance of feet. Feet weren't something you showed off. They were something you

Chris Detrick



DID YOU KNOW?

Most Church of the Brethren congregations observe love feast twice a year, once in the spring and again in the fall. The spring observance often falls on Maundy Thursday (the Thursday before Easter, named from the Latin word "*mandatum*," or "commandment"; it is also known as Holy Thursday), when Jesus and his disciples observed the Last Supper. Some congregations hold love feast on Palm Sunday or on another day. Love feast includes a time of self-examination, a simple meal, feet-washing, and bread and cup communion.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LOSE A LOVED ONE? YOU MUST STAND AT THE SIDE OF A GRAVE TO KNOW. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A PARENT? YOU MUST HOLD A CHILD OF YOUR OWN IN YOUR ARMS TO KNOW. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A FOLLOWER OF JESUS CHRIST? YOU MUST WASH THE FEET OF YOUR BROTHER OR SISTER, AND ALLOW ONE OF THEM TO WASH YOUR FEET TO KNOW—TO REALLY, FULLY KNOW.

used to get around, and at the end of the day you took care of them yourself, or—if you were fortunate enough—perhaps you had a slave to wash and anoint them. You certainly didn't get together to admire one another's feet, and you didn't expect anyone but a slave to wash them for you.

This is why Peter was so upset when Jesus laid aside his garments, tied a towel around himself, took a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet. In Peter's eyes, washing another person's feet was humiliating and certainly not in keeping with the glory and honor he thought Jesus deserved. So he objected when Jesus knelt and gestured for Peter to put forth his feet for the bath.

Jesus' initial response to Peter's objection is often overlooked, in favor of Jesus' later words that seem to convince the hesitant apostle. When Jesus says, "Unless I wash you, you can have no share with me," Peter eagerly consents and asks for Jesus to wash not only his feet, but his hands and his head. But what Jesus says first to Peter is, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter doesn't consent to be washed because he grasps what Jesus is getting at. In truth, he only consents because he fails to grasp it. By being washed all over, he simply hopes to get more of whatever Jesus is giving than any of the other disciples get.

Of course, Jesus goes ahead and washes Peter's feet anyway, even though Peter clearly doesn't understand. Why? Because Peter needs the experience in order to understand later on. Without the experience of being washed, Peter will

never be able to fully comprehend who Jesus is or what Jesus' mission is all about.

Some things in life simply cannot be adequately described in words alone. Experience is required for a full understanding. What does it mean to lose a loved one? You must stand at the side of a grave to know. What does it mean to be a parent? You must hold a child of your own in your arms to know. What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus Christ? You must wash the feet of your brother or sister, and allow one of them to wash your feet to know—to really, fully know.

Later on, after Jesus had died on the cross, been placed in a tomb, and then gloriously resurrected, Peter and the others could finally understand what Jesus was doing with the basin and the towel. They understood that such humble giving and receiving were at the very heart of what Jesus was all about. They understood that following Jesus was not about achieving status, but about loving others enough to lay aside rank, privilege, and power in order to serve. And they understood that faith isn't just thinking good thoughts; it is a way of life.

That is why we Brethren still wash feet, pretty or otherwise. We believe that it is impossible to fully understand who Jesus is and what it means to have faith in him apart from this ritual. And that is why a time comes in every love feast for us to stop talking. Words are not enough. There comes a time to take in hand the basin and the towel, and learn by doing. **W**

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



Faith o' the Irish

Celtic 'martyr' tradition has echoes in Brethren-dom

by Frank Ramirez

We Brethren are more Irish than we know. That might seem like an odd statement,

since most people have a picture of the Irish that seems at odds with the popular conception of the Germanic people as thoughtful, measured, and restrained. Of course that doesn't do justice to either the Irish or the Germans.

But I'm thinking more of the foundations of Irish Christianity. The Celts were a wonderfully disorganized ancient people who stretched from the British Isles across what is now northern Europe. They were great salt miners, which led to their creation of wonderfully colorful dyes and the preservation of pork as hams. Their crafts and arts were admired then and now. Though the Romans looked down on them as a people without literature, this could not have been further from the truth. Their folk tales were a delightful collage of divine and human foibles.

The Celts went into battle with a fierceness that frightened the Roman cohorts. They impaled the heads of their foes on staffs, and were it not for their tribal structure—which prevented an organized approach to military matters—they might have conquered the Romans rather than vice versa.

The thing is, when they became Christian they went whole hog. Their entire society was transformed. They stopped slapping severed heads on spikes, for instance. Instead, they took their symbol for life, the circle that is the sun, and put it squarely in the

middle of the cross to make it clear their old life had been crucified and transformed.

Even though they had no part in the crucifixion of Jesus, once they were introduced to Christianity it was as if it had happened to them personally. That mystic bent was a part of their approach to faith. There was only a thin line between the divine and the human, and the concept of Jesus as Christ made perfect sense to them.

So when they strayed a bit from their original faith the Apostle Paul was able to say to them, "You foolish Celts!" (more or less), "Who has

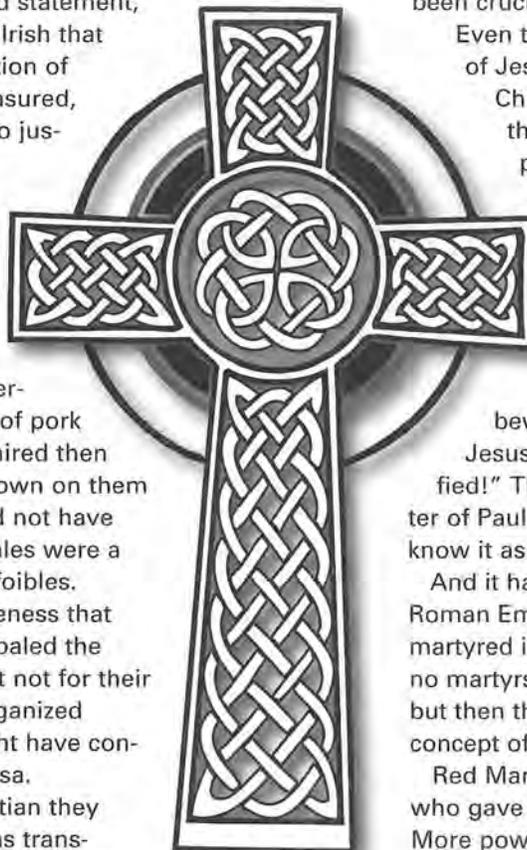
bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified!" This is from the first verse of the third chapter of Paul's famous Letter to the Celts (You may know it as his Letter to the Galats, or Galatians).

And it happened peacefully. Unlike Christians of the Roman Empire, who were tortured, mutilated, and martyred in many and horrible ways, the Celts had no martyrs of their own. At first this bothered them, but then they thought it over and came up with the concept of Red, Green, and White Martyrdom.

Red Martyrdom is obvious. Blood is red. Those who gave their lives for the faith were red martyrs. More power to them! But not everyone is killed for their faith. The Green Martyrs were those who

moved within their native land—from the city to the country, for instance—and lived beyond their comfort zone. The White Martyrs went further, and gave up the land they loved (and Celts tend to really love the land of their childhood) because they loved the faith more. They left the Emerald Isle and traveled to the purgatory of England, or worse yet Gaul or France, to instruct others in the faith. White Martyrs had given up something as precious as life itself, their attachment to this beautiful earth, their homes.

In the Gospels we read of the rich young ruler who had obeyed all the commandments and earned the approval of



IRISH CHRISTIANITY

Want to learn more about Irish Christianity? Former Bethany Theological Seminary professor Graydon F. Snyder looks at Celtic faith in his book *Irish Jesus, Roman Jesus*. It is available at www.brethrenpress.com; cost: \$24.

Jesus, but when invited to follow the Master he turned away. Jesus would say, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life."

That brings me back to us Brethren. Whenever we get together with our Mennonite cousins to work on curriculum

But Green and White Martyrs we have plenty, from John Naas to Laura Wine. The first Brethren were economic refugees, hounded from place to place because of their faith, finally making the choice of cutting themselves off forever from their homeland by making the dangerous ocean crossing to the Colonies.

Brethren continued to leave their homes to settle farther and farther west. They willingly risked life and limb to travel to distant countries as missionaries to India, China, and

THE FIRST BRETHREN WERE ECONOMIC REFUGEES, HOUNDED FROM PLACE TO PLACE BECAUSE OF THEIR FAITH, FINALLY MAKING THE CHOICE OF CUTTING THEMSELVES OFF FOREVER FROM THEIR HOMELAND BY MAKING THE DANGEROUS OCEAN CROSSING TO THE COLONIES.

or service projects or the work of peace and service, sooner or later the subject of martyrs comes up. Our Mennonite friends have thousands of them. They have a whole book of them, *The Martyr's Mirror*, and you can read with admiration and wonder about our ancestors in the faith who were burned, drowned, chopped, diced, and run through in many and horrible ways for their faith. The word "martyr" is the Greek word for "witness," and this witness is very powerful.

Indeed, so anxious are they to quote from *The Martyr's Mirror* that at one curriculum writing retreat the word came down from on high: "No more Dirk Willems stories." They had done that character to death (pardon the expression). And if you don't know who Dirk Willems is, then go Googling. There's an online *Martyr's Mirror*.

We Brethren were Johnny- and Jilly-Come-Latelys, when Europe had gotten tired of killing people all the time, and were content to beat them or banish them or work them to death. We don't have the rich history of martyrs. There are a few—John Kline, Ted Studebaker, John Bowman, John Fisher—but not many. Not Red Martyrs, anyway.

Nigeria. They would be gone for decades, and when they returned their relatives had died and the world had changed. Brethren did not hesitate in the name of peace to travel to distant places to become "smoke jumpers," medical guinea pigs, to participate in the "Starvation Experiment," or later to travel to Southeast Asia with a shovel rather than a rifle.

In this, our tercentennial year, I wonder if it is time to embrace once more this wonderful history of Green Martyrs by doing a little traveling ourselves. Most Brethren don't get out much. We don't even leave our county without squawking.

Is there a district disaster relief trip coming up? A chance to work in a food pantry? An opportunity to go into Brethren Volunteer Service?

Do you even support someone else's ministry of mission? Have the General Board's mission efforts crossed your consciousness?

Think about going green or white, in a witnessing sort of way! ❗

Frank Ramirez is pastor of Everett (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.

Mark: *The good news of God's power alive among us*

Gospel focuses on Jesus Christ's identity and proclamation

by Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm



Christ Bearing the Cross. Illustration by Albrecht Dürer.

The Gospel of Mark proclaims the power of God on the loose in the world as never before. With the heavens torn open at Jesus' baptism (1:10) and the curtain of the temple torn apart at his crucifixion (15:38), Christ reveals God's unstoppable will to intervene in human lives and events. But his power is entirely different than that exercised by human institutions and leaders. Stripped of economic security, political clout, and military support, the Messiah comes to proclaim the good news of God's gracious, just, and loving reign for all people.

Mark's Gospel was likely composed around the time of the Jewish-Roman war in 66-70 CE and reflects the interests and concerns of a community struggling amid great religious and political turmoil. This explains the apocalyptic fervor and sense of urgency that permeate the narrative (see especially Mark 13).

Several themes dominate Mark. First and foremost, the identity of Jesus Christ

MORE THAN ONE-HALF OF THE GOSPEL TURNS OUR ATTENTION TO THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION... THE FAILURE OF THE CROSS TO PRONOUNCE THE LAST WORD IN THE GOSPEL ASSURES US THAT THERE IS NO COSMIC, DEMONIC, INSTITUTIONAL, OR PERSONAL SOURCE OF EVIL THAT CANNOT BE OVERCOME BY THE POWER OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST.

occupies much of the Gospel's interest. At the beginning of the Gospel, he is introduced as "Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1). In the very middle of the narrative, Peter confesses, "You are the Messiah," and Jesus describes what his messianic role means (8:29-38). At his trial near the end of the Gospel, Jesus admits to being the Messiah (14:61-62). Yet he is reticent to proclaim his identity at many points along the way and commands his followers not to share what they have seen until after his death and resurrection (9:9).

Jesus also tells others not to speak of what he has done even though it was impossible to conceal his miraculous healing power (i.e., 1:43; 5:43). This motif of the "messianic secret" compels us to wait until we have witnessed Christ's crucifixion and resurrection before we share the gospel story with others. Interestingly enough, strangers and marginalized people are the first real evangelists to proclaim who Jesus is and what he has done (i.e., 1:45; 5:20; 7:36).

A second theme is Jesus' encounter with the cross. More than one-half of the Gospel (ch. 8-16) turns our attention to the events leading up to Christ's crucifixion. This section also includes three instances when Jesus foretells his impending rejection, suffering, death, and resurrection (8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34). The failure of the cross to

pronounce the last word in the Gospel assures us that there is no cosmic, demonic, institutional, or personal source of evil that cannot be overcome by the power of God in Jesus Christ.

Another theme is Jesus' proclamation of God's reign. At the very beginning of his public ministry, Jesus announces the good news of the nearness of God's kingdom (1:15). All of his words and deeds proclaim God's will to transform human sin to faith, shatter false boundaries, exorcise demons, confront hard-heartedness, heal the diseased, and call humankind to serve one another. As religious interests play an ever-increasing role in US politics and international relations, Mark's Gospel calls us to consider anew Jesus' way of actively engaging others in God's just and loving reign.

Discipleship is also a major concern. Jesus devotes much of his time to teaching his followers (see ch. 4, 8-10). However, the disciples' initial enthusiasm turns to incomprehension and faithlessness by the end of the narrative. Christ's closest followers abandon him. Even the women who stand vigil at the cross flee the empty tomb in fearful silence (16:8).

Yet this strange and enigmatic ending urges us to consider anew the messenger's command to go and tell others that Jesus is "going ahead of you . . . just as he told you" (16:7). The

MARK: A CLOSER LOOK

When and where written: Mark is the earliest of the canonized Gospels, written around 66-70 CE probably somewhere in southern Syria or just north of Palestine. It draws extensively from Hebrew Scripture, yet its many explanations of Jewish practices suggest that Mark wrote for a largely Gentile Christian community.

Distinguishing features: With remarkable brevity and momentum, Mark addresses the ultimate realities of life in just 16 chapters. The frequent use of the words "immediately" (included 41 times) and "again" (25 times) move us forward and backward into extended and repeated reflection on the text.

A strange ending: Mark is the only Gospel not to include post-resurrection appearances by Jesus. As noted in most English translations of the Bible, the earliest manuscripts end at 16:8 and do not include the shorter or longer endings that introduce new vocabulary and stylistic differences (verses 9-20).

Well-known verses: "You are the Messiah" (8:29); "...whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all" (10:43-44); "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory" (13:26).

dramatic ending of Mark 16:1-8 calls us to go in search of the resurrected Jesus Christ and proclaim his power among us. 

Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm is associate professor of preaching and worship at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind. She is author of *Preaching the Gospel of Mark: Proclaiming the Power of God*, published by Westminster John Knox Press, coming in fall 2008.

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 April: Luke, by Harold S. Martin.

Historic Peace Churches meet for third international gathering

Representatives of the Historic Peace Churches gathered in Indonesia Dec. 1-8 to focus on the theme "Peace in Our Land" through the interrelated topics of injustice, religious pluralism, and poverty. These churches include the Church of the Brethren, the Mennonites, and the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

David Sollenberger



Members of the Brethren delegation to the Historic Peace Churches gathering in Asia enjoy a moment of fellowship as a group.

The Brethren were represented regionally by 17 members of the Church of the Brethren in India, which has roots in the mission efforts of the US church in India beginning in 1895. The representatives included Kantilal R. (K.R.) Rajwadi, president of the church in India.

Present on behalf of the US Church of the Brethren were Stanley Noffsinger, general secretary of the General Board; Mervin Keeney, executive director for Global Mission Partnerships; Donald Miller, faculty emeritus at Bethany Theological Seminary; and Scott Holland, Bethany faculty for peace and cross cultural studies.

Miller served on the planning committee along with Darryl Sankey, a Church of the Brethren member from Valsad, India. Brethren videographer David Sollenberger also was present to photograph and film the event.

This was the third in a series of regional conferences of the peace churches, invited by the Decade to Overcome Violence program of the World Council of Churches. Previous gatherings have been held in Switzerland in 2001, and in Kenya in 2004. Each gathering has been funded and

Stan Noffsinger greets a children's choir that sang during the Historic Peace Churches Asia gathering. Noffsinger is general secretary of the General Board.

planned by the peace churches themselves.

This gathering included participants from Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, New Zealand, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the US.

Representatives came from a wide array of backgrounds in professions and industry in addition to church work.

In addition to speakers, plenary sessions, and small group discussions, the conference integrated visits to Indonesian churches, cultural events, and short trips that helped to ground discussion in the local reality.

Differences within the region surfaced by the end of the week. The activist approach of the Australian and New Zealand participants, who felt free to speak out and confront their governments, contrasted with the real risk of such expression in some nations. Some reported that Christianity in the East often is seen as a foreign religion, associated with the worst aspects of the West. This perception creates a credibility challenge for Asian churches. As a result, a slower, relationship-building approach to peacebuilding is used by most Asian churches within their communities and nation.

Sankey reflected on the event at its conclusion: "As the Church of the Brethren in India, we have learned what the Historic Peace Churches actually mean. For the last several years,

we have felt left out of this process, of relating to other churches. This (was an) opportunity to participate in an international conference where we, as a peace church, have realized the importance of being a peace church. This has been a very great learning experience, not only for me, but for everyone who has been part of this delegation.... I think this could be a revival for our church."—Mervin Keeney

David Sollenberger





The Church of the Brethren was officially received as a member of Christian Churches Together at the new ecumenical organization's 2008 annual meeting. Annual Conference moderator Jim Beckwith and moderator-elect David Shumate, as well as Committee on Interchurch Relations chair Michael Hostetter were among the church leaders present from across the spectrum of US Christianity.

Church of the Brethren is received into Christian Churches Together

The Church of the Brethren was one of seven new churches and organizations formally received into the ecumenical organization Christian Churches Together (CCT) during its second annual meeting in Baltimore in early January.

Representatives of 37 participating churches and six organizations attended. CCT's main objectives are evangelism and domestic poverty, and the organization seeks to bring Christians from across the theological and denominational spectrum together for fellowship and common witness.

"It was a very simple but meaningful ceremony," said James Beckwith, moderator of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference. "They called us forward, identified us, and gave thanks to God for us in prayer." Beckwith was one of two delegates representing the Brethren, along with Michael Hostetter, chair of the Committee on Interchurch Relations. Annual Conference moderator-elect David Shumate attended as an observer.

"I think our part in the CCT is intended to complement our work with other ecumenical groups, not to compete with other national associations," Hostetter said. "It is intended as a much more broadly based national Christian organization and to bring a variety of Christian

expression at the table."

Throughout the meeting, participants met in small discernment groups to pray and think together about what God may be calling CCT to do—as individuals, as churches and as CCT together—in regard to poverty and in addition to the organization's Statement on Poverty.

The full body approved next steps, including dedicating the largest part of the 2009 annual meeting to a continued exploration of the convergences and divergences of the participant churches and organizations regarding poverty. The group also decided to press the new US president-elect to make the elimination of domestic poverty a part of his or her administration's goals.

Wendy McFadden, executive director and publisher of Brethren Press, was affirmed as one of the new members of the CCT Steering Committee.

Committee makes progress on new agency organization

The committee charged with the task of how to implement the streamlining of two church agencies (the Church of the Brethren General Board and Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC)) while incorporating the functions of the Annual Conference Council held its second meeting Dec. 10-11. The committee was formed after passage of the 2007 Review and

Evaluation study by the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference.

The Implementation Committee reported that it is making continuing progress on its assignment, and is preparing documentation for the new organization. The proposed merger agreement, including a new set of bylaws and revised articles of incorporation, will be reviewed in early March during a combined meeting of the General Board, the ABC board, and the Annual Conference Council.

Each board will be invited to approve the proposed plan before it is considered by the 2008 Annual Conference. A summary of the implementation plan along with the bylaws, articles of incorporation, and merger agreement will be posted on the Annual Conference website shortly after they are considered in March.

The Implementation Committee is recommending that the General Board and ABC be united in a single entity, incorporated as "Church of the Brethren, Inc." and doing business as "Church of the Brethren." The inclusion of the term "Incorporated" or "Inc." will only be referenced in legal documents.

Pending approval, the new organization will become effective Aug. 1. For more information about the work of the Implementation Committee, go to www.brethren.org/ac/review-eval.html.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 2 Brethren Press spring curriculum quarter begins

March 7-9 Association of Brethren Caregivers board meeting, Elgin, Ill.

March 8-10 General Board meeting, Elgin, Ill.

March 9 One Great Hour of Sharing offering emphasis

March 17-21 Brethren Volunteer Service spring retreat, Newark, Ill.

March 27-30 Fellowship of Brethren Homes Annual Forum, St. Louis, Mo.; Health Ministries Assembly, St. Louis, Mo.

March 28-30 Bethany Theological Seminary board of trustees meeting, Richmond, Ind.

March 29-April 3 Youth Christian Citizenship Seminar, New York and Washington, D.C.

April 3 Ministry of Reconciliation workshop, "Keeping a Cool Head in a Hot Meeting," New Windsor (Md.) Conference Center

April 4-6 Mission Alive 2008, Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren; Regional Youth Conference, McPherson (Kan.) College; Roundtable Regional Youth Conference, Bridgewater (Va.) College

April 12 Deacon Ministry Training Event, Spurgeon Manor, Dallas Center, Iowa

David Sollenberger



General secretary Stan Noffsinger addresses a congregation of India Brethren during a visit of US church representatives.

INDIA

A group of Church of the Brethren leaders from the US visited Brethren in India Nov. 27-30, finding a church that is maintaining its faith and identity.

The US group joined in celebrations of the 300th anniversary of the Church of the Brethren, but also heard church members speak about difficult issues such as the continuing persecution of Christians in India, the struggle to carve out a daily living, and the desire to educate children to keep them from child employment.

It was the first visit to the India churches by Stanley Noffsinger as general secretary of the General Board. Also present was Mervin Keeney, executive director for Global Mission Partnerships, and Brethren videographer David Sollenberger, who filmed the visit.

The group was met at Mumbai and traveled north to Gujarat State, passing by the property of the former Church of the Brethren mission hospital at Dahanu. One day was spent in worship in the Valsad church building, which dates to 1908, and celebrating the 300th anniversary at the Wilbur Stover bungalow nearby.

The following day, the group traveled to Ankleshwar, where a new building had been constructed for the congregation, and made a visit to the Vocational Training School. The group also viewed new buildings of the church and brought greetings at Bhilwara, and at Centenary Church at Vali, and by the end of a long travel day had reached a new building under construction at Dariya village. A surprising introduction at this stop was meeting the Hindu man from the village who had donated the land for the church building, which is located on a prominent ridge.

The final day of the India visit was spent orienting and preparing the 17 Brethren representatives from India who participated in the Asia conference of the Historic Peace Churches (see p. 20).

Darryl Sankey, the India church leader who coordinated the visit, spoke to its importance. The visit "really boosts our church," he said. "Their presence itself helps the church because it gives us a feeling of belonging. It gives us a feeling of brotherly love. We don't expect any financial aid; we don't expect any support from them. But just their being there with the church with whom we have had relationships for the past 100 years does provide us with inspiration."

David Sollenberger



The India Brethren extended a generous welcome for the visit of representatives from the General Board. In the delegation were Stan Noffsinger, general secretary, and Mervin Keeney, executive director of Global Mission Partnerships.

Recent grants from the General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund

- \$30,000 continues funding of Brethren Disaster Ministries Rebuilding Site 2 in Pearl River, La., following Hurricane Katrina
- \$30,000 continues funding for Brethren Disaster Ministries Rebuilding Site 4 in Chalmette, La.
- \$10,000 for outstanding expenses for Brethren Disaster Ministries Rebuilding Site 1 in Lucedale, Miss., now closed
- \$8,000 to Church World Service (CWS) for the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar (Burma)
- \$7,000 and \$5,000 to two different partner church agencies in the Dominican Republic following Tropical Storm Noel
- \$5,000 to Action by Churches Together following an earthquake in Peru
- \$5,000 to support Children's Disaster Services work following California fires
- \$5,000 to CWS following California fires
- \$4,000 to CWS for work in Somalia with some 400,000 displaced people
- \$3,000 to CWS after flooding in Nicaragua
- \$2,300 to CWS to aid those displaced by political unrest and violence in Kenya
- \$2,000 to CWS for flooding in the Pacific Northwest

'Regnuh' poster project invites kids to help turn hunger around

On the heels of senior high youth and senior adult campaigns for "Regnuh: Turning Hunger Around," the opportunity comes for children to put forth their ideas on reducing global hunger.

A kids' Regnuh Poster Project invites children ages 6 to 14 to illustrate ways humankind can better respond to the world's 1 billion people who lack adequate food. The Regnuh Poster Project is sponsored by the General Board's Global Food Crisis Fund as part of its 25th anniversary celebration.

While Regnuh (hunger spelled backwards) is the overarching theme, the posters may also illustrate biblical sayings, Brethren teachings, or health and environment concerns related to hunger.

The drawings are to be on 8 1/2 x 11-inch paper with the name and age of the child, congregation, and district legibly noted on the reverse side. Entries are to be postmarked by April 30 and sent to the Global

Food Crisis Fund, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

Tentative plans are to display the drawings at Annual Conference or to post them on the Global Food Crisis Fund website.



Mennonites plan to join bulletin series in 2009

The Mennonite Publishing Network will be joining Brethren Press in the Living Word Bulletin Series. The two publishing houses, which already work together on the Gather 'Round Sunday school curriculum, will begin the new partnership with the 2009 series of bulletins.

Mennonite Publishing Network staff took part in a photo selection meeting for the 2009 bulletin covers late last year. The bulletin covers are offered for weekly worship services, and feature a cover theme based on the scripture text, which is printed on the back of the bulletin along with a short meditation or worship resource.

Beginning in 2009, Mennonite customers will be using the same bulletin cover images and scriptures on the same Sundays as Church of the Brethren congregations across the country.

Brethren Press also is offering a special 300th anniversary commemorative bulletin cover as part of the Living Word Bulletin Series this year. This special bulletin cover may be particularly appropriate for use on Aug. 3, which has been designated as the 300th Anniversary Celebration Sunday for the Church of the Brethren.

"We have contracted with Anchor Wallace publishers to have a limited number of these covers printed," said Jeff Lennard, director of marketing and sales for Brethren Press. "Churches who participate in the Living Word Bulletin series will receive these covers as part of the program. Churches not enrolled in the program will have their orders filled on a first come, first served basis."

The commemorative bulletins will be ready for shipment by June. Interested churches can place orders by calling Brethren Press at 800-441-3712.

PERSONNEL MOVES

• **Jonathan Shively** has accepted the call to serve as executive director of Congregational Life Ministries for the Church of the Brethren General Board beginning July 1. Shively previously served as pastor of Pomona (Calif.) Fellowship Church of the Brethren from 1993 to 2000, when he was called to serve as director of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, a partnership of the General Board and Bethany Theological Seminary located in Richmond, Ind. He will resign from that position effective June 30. While with the Academy, he was a catalyst for the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Program funded by the Lilly Endowment Inc., strengthened and developed standards for the Academy's certificate-level training programs, and provided leadership for a variety of other programs. Shively has a B.A. from Elizabethtown College, a M.Div. from Bethany, and a D.Min. from Fuller Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Kim, and their three children will be moving to the Elgin, Ill., area in July.

• **Jay Gibble** is filling a volunteer leader-

ship role with the Deacon Ministry of the Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC). He is a former executive director of the agency. His primary responsibilities will be to plan and hold a series of regional Deacon Ministry Training Events this spring, at which he also will serve as keynote speaker. The regional events will be held in the Plains, Southwest, Northwest, and Eastern regions of the country in April and May. In 1998, Gibble retired as executive director of ABC after more than 17 years with the agency. In 1998-1999 Gibble and his late wife, June, served as part-time program field staff touring the US and Puerto Rico on a Denominational Deacon Ministry Tour.

• **Jay Wittmeyer** began in January as interim director of Pension Plans and Employee Financial Services for Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT). Wittmeyer was hired at BBT in October 2006 as manager of publications. He holds master's degrees in English and conflict transformation with a focus on organizational development. Previously he served as assistant director of Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Peace Center, and has worked for Mennonite Central

Committee in Bangladesh and Nepal. He is a licensed minister in the Training in Ministry program of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, and is a member at Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin, Ill.

• **Randy Yoder** began Jan. 1 as director of Insurance Services for BBT, working part-time out of his home in Huntingdon, Pa., with periods at the General Offices. In this new position, Yoder's main duties will be to provide oversight of BBT's Insurance Services, administer the service grants program related to the Ministers' Group Medical Plan, continue working with the Wellness Program, and have responsibility for exploring and developing new initiatives in insurance and insurance services. Since April 2006, Yoder has served as interim director of Brethren Insurance Plans, and previously was a field staff representative with most of his work focused on the Brethren Medical Plan and the Brethren Foundation. In 2005, he helped establish the Brethren Medical Plan District Advocate Network. Prior to joining BBT, he served for 20 years as district executive minister for Middle Pennsylvania District.



A
CONTINUING
TESTIMONY



M. Andrew Murray
M.Div. 1968;
D. Min. 1980
professor of religion and
founder and director,
Baker Institute for
Peace and Conflict
Studies, Juniata College

Barbara Saylor
M.Div. 1999
coordinator of communications,
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**Bethany board meets with
new chair, new president**

The Bethany Theological Seminary board of trustees met Oct. 26-28 in Richmond, Ind., led by a new chair, Ted Flory of Bridgewater, Va., and a new president. The meeting began with a time of worship and an anointing service for incoming Bethany Seminary president Ruthann Knechel Johansen.

The board also welcomed new member Martha Farahat of Oceana, Calif., and accepted with regret the resignation of Jim Hardenbrook of Caldwell, Idaho, as he and his wife, Pam, prepare for mission work in Sudan on behalf of the Church of the Brethren.



The Academic Affairs Committee shared a progress report on the search process for two full-time faculty who will be responsible for the areas of theology, church history, Brethren studies, and the master of arts program. Because of the potential for faculty overload, the board approved an additional search for a half-time position in Brethren studies.

The board approved a recommendation from the Student and Business Affairs Committee to increase tuition for the 2008-2009 fiscal year from \$296 to \$325 per credit hour. A joint committee of board members, faculty, and staff announced dates for an Inaugural Forum on March 30-31.

On Saturday evening, the board invited faculty and staff to a dinner and an envisioning discussion to identify core values that guide the seminary's mission. Sunday's closing session included a report by Johansen on her first 100 days. She identified three items for development: strengthening internal procedures, clarifying and renewing the seminary's mission focus, and marketing that mission.

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ONCAMPUS

Bridgewater College (Bridgewater, Va.)

Former Virginia Gov. Mark R. Warner visited students Jan. 11, as part of his Hometown Days tour. During the tour, Warner revisited some of the major projects and initiatives he launched during his tenure as governor from 2002 to 2006. Warner spoke to students in a political science class, then spent an hour with faculty in the Kline Campus Center.

Elizabethtown College (Elizabethtown, Pa.)

The Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies met a Jan. 31 deadline to raise \$2 million and receive a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) challenge grant of \$500,000. The NEH grant required a 4:1 match, and the Young Center surpassed that goal by more than \$100,000. The resulting \$2.5-million endowment will create a faculty chair in Anabaptist and Pietist Studies and enable and expand other programs.

Juniata College (Huntingdon, Pa.)

Juniata honored the college's longstanding connection to the Church of the Brethren by holding a commemorative service in the original college chapel (now the registrar's office) in Founders Hall on Jan. 24. The service was led by Juniata chaplain David Witkovsky, assisted by Dale and Christy Dowdy, co-pastors of Stone Church of the Brethren in Huntingdon. Robert Neff, president of Juniata from 1987 to 1998, spoke about the importance of church-college relations at the ceremony.

University of La Verne (La Verne, Calif.)

Three ceremonies were held on Feb. 2 to mark La Verne's 2008 Winter Commencement celebration. Each ceremony in the Sports Science & Athletics Pavilion highlighted a different group of graduates in the undergraduate and master's programs offered at the main campus and numerous regional campuses.

Manchester College (North Manchester, Ind.)

A class of political science students studied the Iowa caucuses up close by volunteering for a candidate of their choice, attending precinct caucuses in the state, and keeping a daily blog. The group included Brethren students Stephen Hendricks (South Bend, Ind.) and Ben Martin (Myersville, Md.)

McPherson College (McPherson, Kan.)

A Feb. 10 Religious Heritage Lecture on the campus focused on "300 Years of History and Heritage: What will the next 100 years look like?" Among the panelists were McPherson president emeritus Paul Hoffman, Bethany Theological Seminary president Ruthann Knechel Johansen, and Brethren Academy director Jonathan Shively. Religion and philosophy professor Herb Smith moderated.

Peaceful Pines plans Western Regional Youth Camp

Camp Peaceful Pines is planning to host a Western Regional Youth Camp this summer, in lieu of the Western Regional Youth Conference normally held every four years for youth in the denomination's three westernmost districts (Pacific Southwest, Idaho, and Oregon/Washington).

The conference would normally fall in 2008, but there were no plans to hold it this year. The camp's program committee met and decided instead to host a regional event at the camp, located high in the Sierra Mountains of east-central California. The special camp, open to youth who have completed grade 9 through one year beyond high school, will be held June 29-July 4.

Leadership will include New Community Project director David Radcliff, MESSENGER editor Walt Wiltschek, and former National Youth Conference and workcamps co-coordinator Cindy Laprade. A variety of campfires, sessions, recreation, and other events are planned. Cost is \$120 for registrations received by June 1.

• Two other regional youth conferences, the **Eastern Regional Youth Conference (ERYC)** in Pennsylvania and the **Regional Youth Conference (RYC) at Manchester College** in North Manchester, Ind., have been cancelled for this year.

Manchester cited declining attendance in recent years and an overcrowded schedule in the spring, when the conference has typically been held. Manchester staff met with area youth pastors to begin brainstorming a new way of approaching a regional gathering, perhaps during a different time of year. "We have decided to take a sabbatical from RYC and use the time to develop a new program for 2008-2009," Manchester executive vice president Dave McFadden said in a letter.

Eastern Regional Youth Conference normally rotates between Elizabethtown College and Juniata College in alternate years. It was due to be held at Elizabethtown this year, but a new regulation prohibits the gymnasium being used as a sleeping space, as it had been for ERYC. That left Elizabethtown unable to host while students are on campus (the college said it would be open to hosting the event outside the academic year in the future), and Juniata was already booked for the scheduled weekend. A meeting of the participating districts was planned "to look at the past structure of ERYC as to its relevance for future similar gatherings," according to a district release.

The denomination's other two regional conferences for youth, **Roundtable**, at Bridgewater (Va.) College, and the **RYC at McPherson (Kan.) College**, are both scheduled to take place April 4-6.

Jesse Reid



Regional youth conferences across the denomination are in transition this year. The Manchester College RYC in Indiana (pictured from 2007) is one of two that will not be held this year, and another will shift from a conference to a camp.

'Irresistible Revolution': Ordinary radicalism

There is no question that contemporary American culture presents a significant challenge to the life and message of Jesus. Sit down for a 30-minute television show and one is bombarded with images meant to feed the covetousness of the human psyche. Walk into any department



JOSHUA BROCKWAY

store, and it is clear that almost everything we buy is meant to be thrown away. Pick up a newspaper, and read how every candidate for office uses their faith tradition for political gain.

In recent years, aging religious leaders have tried to call the entire church to account for its lack of prophetic witness to a culture of rampant desire, consumption, and use of God's name in vain. Meanwhile, younger generations seem to run screaming from organized religion in the face of such

acquiescence to social pressure. It's as if American culture has domesticated the followers of Christ.

That's not what Shane Claiborne believes. His recent book, *Irresistible Revolution*, is an honest yet faithful attempt to show that the gospel lifestyle is indeed possible in contemporary America. Each page presents the stories of people Claiborne knows who have done the unthinkable: embody the Gospel in the presence of a world hell-bent on silencing it. Yet for Claiborne this way of life is not something reserved for the elite, or saints, but something that is ordinary and at the same time radical. It is ordinary in that everyday people can do it, and radical in that it gets back to the roots of Jesus' way of life and teachings.

Claiborne provides example after example of people who have taken on the mantle of being an ordinary yet radical Christian. The chapters carry the reader from Calcutta with Mother Teresa, to the bomb-riddled roads of Iraq with a group of Christian Peacemakers, and into the alleys of Philadelphia with members of the Simple Way community. His recollections and reflections on these events have a way of making what seems impossible a reality. As he recounted his journey to India to work with Mother Teresa, I found myself feeling a bit ashamed that I had not done the same. This small bit of shame came not because Claiborne lays on the guilt trip, but because he made it seem so ordinary and simple that anyone could have done the same.

What more could you expect from a

writer who dedicates his book to "all the hypocrites, cowards, and fools . . . like me." This is clearly a book meant to be read by everyone, not just the theologically astute or the spiritually snobbish. It also is a book meant to challenge liberal and conservative alike. Those who frequent the local anti-war rally will find their lingo of transformation and progress couched in sentences explicit about the role of Christ. At the same time, conservatives will hear their vocabulary of conversion and belief used as the foundation for social activism. By writing with a lighthearted style that is both honest and without malice, Claiborne is able to disarm even the harshest cynic while communicating a vision for today's church. From cover to cover, it's a book meant to challenge everyone's status quo.

Reading through *Irresistible Revolution*, I couldn't help but hear the voices of the Schwarzenau Eight and their spiritual ancestors through the words on the page. As I finished each chapter, I paused to recall people during the 300-year history of the Church of the Brethren who lived the same ordinary radicalism, such as Alexander Mack, Sarah Righter Major, and Ted Studebaker.

Yet, with each page I also kept asking myself when the Brethren lost this voice and radical lifestyle. In the 300 years of our existence, generation after generation has stood for another way of living through committed lifestyles of peace, simplicity, and community. Now, it's as if we have been domesticated by the consumeristic and antagonistic habits of the world around us. How is it that someone outside the Church of the Brethren is able to embody the values of our heritage better than we do?

There is no doubt Claiborne is a radical Christian, and his book has a way of putting the lifestyle of Christ within reach. This book stands as a prophetic—and I would say fundamentally Brethren—witness to the American church. This is a book for any Sunday school, no matter its theological perspective, to digest. I believe those who wade through these pages will be both challenged and empowered to take on the radical life of Christ, a truly Brethren way of living.

As Claiborne says at the end of the book: "We are not just laying our lives at the altar with nothing to pick up, but we are also picking up an irresistible revolution that the world is waiting for. So with every head bowed and every eye closed, let's get started." **W**

Joshua Brockway is a graduate of Bethany Theological Seminary and a member of East Nimishillen Church of the Brethren in North Canton, Ohio. He is currently doing a doctoral program at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.



ABOUT THE BOOK

Title: *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical*. **Author:** Shane Claiborne.

Publisher: Zondervan (2006). **Pages:** 368. **Cost:** \$12.99. **To order:** Contact Brethren Press, 800-441-3712.

Reviews: "If there is such a thing as a disarming radical, 30-year-old Claiborne is it. . . . He somehow skewers the insulation of suburban living and the hypocrisy of wealthy churches without any self-righteous finger pointing." —*Publishers Weekly*

Athlete doesn't belong on cover

As a regular long-time reader of MESSENGER, I look forward each month to the upcoming issue. As is usually the case, when the mail included the November issue, it was the first item I picked up to read. I didn't recognize anything on the front cover having any meaning beyond "Brethren race car driver." I didn't follow the Indy 500 event this year so remembered nothing about the winner.

The more I looked at the cover and the featured article, the more I thought, "There is something wrong about this," and a number of questions came to mind. Is this intended to be something the church exalts and we should strive for? I wish in no way to disparage Sam Hornish Jr.'s accomplishments. His picture portrays a healthy-looking young man embodying admirable character traits.

I look to the MESSENGER as a source for information, church news, challenges, inspiration, and creative thinking. For me, these are largely lacking in this feature.

In an attempt to lend a bit of perspective to this letter, let me say that I am not anti-sports/athletics per se. I have been a participant and follower since childhood of baseball, basketball, and a very, very small bit of football at McPherson College in the 1940s. Yes, and I have watched my share of obscenely commercialized professional sports.

We are reminded that while we are in the world, we should not be of the world. I look forward with much anticipation to future MESSENGER issues.

Joe Dell
The Dalles, Ore.

Jesus exemplified pacifism

David Elmer Leckrone, in his letter published in the November 2007 issue, asserts that "Jesus was a peacemaker, but he definitely was not a pacifist." I must wholeheartedly disagree.

It is only in Luke's Gospel that Jesus suggests his followers arm themselves, and he does so while telling them that this is to fulfill the scripture: "And he was counted among the lawless" (Luke 22:37). In this context, the swords are props, symbols (perhaps ironic ones) to show that Jesus is indeed among the lawless, which is how his enemies wish to per-

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ceive him. His faith at this point leads him to not resist this identification or its consequences.

Later that evening, when confronted by armed guards, the disciples ask him, "Lord, should we strike with the sword?" Not waiting for an answer, one of them lashes out and cuts off the right ear of the slave of the high priest (Luke 22:49-50). Jesus' response to this is not to affirm this action but to condemn it (22:51). (In Matt. 26:52, Jesus adds, "... for all who live by the sword will perish by the sword.")

Jesus' pacifism illustrated in this scene was embraced and emulated by those who then founded the church. Indeed, for the first 300 years of church history Christians were forbidden to engage in any kind of profession that involved violence against others. Our Brethren forebears studying the New Testament came to embrace pacifism as well, affirming as we do today: "All war is sin."

With regard to Brother David's assertion that our "American freedoms to live and worship" are "thanks to a soldier," I must once more disagree. During the Revolutionary War, there were Brethren who were tarred and feathered for not taking sides in the conflict. No soldiers protected them. When Brethren faced social ridicule and violence for our pacifist stance in the Civil War and for our German heritage and use of that language during World War I, no soldiers protected them.

Soldiers do not guarantee our right to free worship; our God does. We worship our God and practice our faith regardless of what the government or military allow. And we vow to live in peace, because of Jesus' actions and repeated admonitions to love not only those who are our friends, but our enemies as well.

Debra L. Eisenbise
Kalamazoo, Mich.

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to the
Water*
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Donald Kraybill
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We struggle with pacifism

In the January MESSENGER, two letters were written in response to David Leckrone's letter [November] questioning Jesus as a pacifist. He ends his letter wondering whether the points he raises are worthy of dialogue. Yes, they are.

Leckrone states: "All civilized societies and individuals oppose war." I would tend to disagree. Jesus said there will be "wars and rumors of wars" (Matt. 24:6). There are those Christians who believe this is inevitable and pray for Armageddon to

come. How many times have we had wars in the past with the hope this would be it?

Leckrone cites Luke 22:36 as proof of his disciples having swords. I agree with Paul Coffman's response in the January letters that the sword is a figurative symbol. Even so, if we look ahead to Luke 22:38—Jesus' response to his disciples' inventory of swords—my Bible has a note on Jesus' words, "It is enough," meaning a rebuke as in, "Enough of that sort of talk."

I wonder also if we disagree on "pacifist." Leckrone readily admits Jesus was a peacemaker but not a pacifist. If pacifists only sit-in and carry signs then I can understand Leckrone's point of view.

However, his view that peace is determined by freedom is prevalent in our society. In a sense, are we relying on our government for peace? We will continue to struggle with how Christians should respond to evil around us.

Brian Hartman
Wakarusa, Ind.

Why single out one group?

This response relates to the report in the January 2008 MESSENGER (p. 23) concerning actions by the Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee, and specifically questions the rationale used for denying a booth to BMC (Brethren and Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Interests) as has been done for 20 some years.

BMC's application for a booth proposed an exhibit that would honor the 1983 Paper on Human Sexuality and would focus exclusively on helping the church address the concerns regarding treating LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) people with respect and protecting them from violence. The Program and Arrangements Committee affirmed these concerns as "extremely important." In this context the rationale is similar to not allowing the voices of women to be heard related to gender issues, or not allowing the voices of African Americans to be heard related to racism. Who can better help us to address those "extremely important" concerns than BMC?

BMC represents members in our midst just as other organizations that are granted booths, and which of these organizations would claim to follow all of the actions of Annual Conference? Why is BMC the only organization so singled out?

Do we not make room for conscientious

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- ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 4-16)
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- EUROPEAN HERITAGE (July 7-20)
- EXPLORING SWISS-GERMAN FAMILY ROOTS IN EUROPE (August 25-September 7)
- MENNONITE STORY IN POLAND WITH PETER KLASSEN (September 16-24)
- CHINA AND A YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE (October 8-21)
- TM ALUMNI MYSTERY TOUR (October 15-23)
- FOLLOWING THE STEPS OF MOSES (November 2-14)

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differences at some points where we are quite willing to extend grace to other organizations? So why not BMC? How can this not be seen as injustice, or hypocrisy, or both?

As with David in 2 Samuel 12 there may be something for us in the words of Nathan the prophet about a rich man

sacrificing the little lamb of a poor man. In terms of recognition and respect given to various groups at Annual Conference, certainly BMC is like the poor man whose little lamb is sacrificed by their being again denied a booth. It seems we should respond more like David in being shocked by injustice and

repenting of our sins.

Is Jesus, the despised and rejected One, among us in the people who are a part of BMC? How long until we realize that these are among God's specially chosen?

Roger Eberly
Milford, Ind.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Parish Resource Center seeks President for national organization that serves congregations by training, coaching, and equipping members for leadership and service. Job description, qualifications, and application process online at parishresourcecenter.org.

Traveling to and from Annual Conference in Richmond, Va., July 12-16? Consider visiting these Brethren heritage centers in the Harrisonburg area: Bridgewater Retirement Community, Bridgewater, 540-828-2550 or 800-491-9129; CrossRoads Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center, Harrisonburg, 540-438-1275; John Kline Homestead, Linville Creek CoB, Broadway, 540-896-5001, and the Reuel B. Pritchett Museum, Bridgewater College, 540-828-5462. For details, check these respective websites: www.bridgewaterretirement.org; www.vbmhc.org; www.johnklinehomestead.org; and www.bridgewater.edu/pritchettmuseum. Call regarding hours or to make an appointment to visit.

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"Travel with a Purpose" with MYW Tours. Tour opportunities for 2008 include: Mexico's Copper Canyon—March 27-April 6 (full for 2008, check for 2009); California Parks, Farms & Coastline—May 12-23; Alaska & Yukon Tour/Cruise—June 12-28 (wait list only); Iceland Circle—July 8-18; Maritime Provinces of Canada—August 12-22; Peaks, Parks & Canyons—September 17–October 4. Ask for 2008 full-color Tour Brochure and detailed itineraries of specific tours: Box 425, Landisville, PA 17538; phone 800-296-1991; e-mail: myw1525@aol.com; website: www.mywtours.com.

Travel to Schwarzenau in 2008! Join Mark and Mary Jo Flory Steury for a Faith Heritage Tour, July 26-August 9, 2008. Participate in the special anniversary celebrations August 2-3 in Schwarzenau. Visit significant Martin Luther sites. See the birthplace of Pietism at Halle. Tour Zurich and other important Anabaptist sites in Switzerland. Contact Mark and Mary Jo Flory Steury, 4017 Wagner Road, Kettering, OH 45440, mflorysteu@aol.com for more information. Only several seats left. Deadline for participation is March 31.

2008 Brethren Anniversary Tours

There is now limited space for the 3 tours to Europe this summer, all to include the 300-year anniversary celebration in Schwarzenau. Deadlines for booking air with the groups are the end of April. After that, applications can be made, but space cannot be guaranteed. Tours include: 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.

Connecting Families Weekend, April 18-20, 2008 at Antiochian Village, Bolivar, Pa. Theme: "Welcome home: Why the church needs sexual minorities—a biblical and pastoral vision for a way forward." Speaker is Weldon Nisly, pastor of Seattle (Wash.) Mennonite Church, part-time monk, and active contemplative peacemaker. Connecting Families welcomes families, friends, and supporters of all gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people as well as GLBT persons themselves. This is intended to be a safe, relaxing weekend to share stories and common concerns regarding sexual orientation issues as they affect our families, friends, churches, and ourselves. Contact Rose & Bob Moyer, 215-256-0247 or rmoyer@verizon.net.

Brethren Service Commission 1959 workcamp crew members! We are looking for you! The tour, led by Graydon Snyder, began in Amsterdam with 22 participants: **Pennsylvania**, Ruth Derstine, Faye Fulk, Barbara Peifer, Ann Scheib, Eva Wagner, Guy Wampler, Jr., Fred Zimmerman; **Indiana**, Dan, Lucy, and Steve West, Richard Ecklebarger; **California**, Kathryn Bowers, Mildred Brandt, Jeanne Elliott; **Ohio**, Sonia Studebaker, Willard Walls; **Arizona**, Helen Thompson; **Illinois**, Janet Carson, Nancy Zickuhr; **Colorado**, Kenneth Ullom; **Nevada**, Jon Kettenhofen; **New York**, Ann Aukerman. Please contact: Willard Walls (willwalls@cmfi.org) or Sonia Studebaker Ewald (sjewald1@verizon.net).

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

Small churches can aim high

"Faith on the Frontier" in the December MESSENGER by editor Walt Wiltschek stirred my memory of the small and lonely churches I served as a "summer pastor" during my college and seminary years. It also reminded me of the 15 churches I served as interim pastor during 25 years of retirement.

As a beginning district executive many years ago, I learned a very important lesson from a small church. The district board stopped all financial support to the part-time pastor with this rationale: "That church is about dead now, and it seems nobody cares." But it didn't die! They had Sunday school and worship every Sunday without a pastor or preacher. About nine months later I learned from one of their members that they had restored every one of their inactive or non-participating members: "about a third of our total membership." "How did you do it?" I asked. And his ready response was, "As a church we decided what needed to be done, and we did it." I questioned him a bit further, and his response was, "A church usually gets done, by the grace of God, about what it sets out to do." Across the decades I have yet to see it fail, small church or large.

In our Gospel according to Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, "I will build my church." He did it then, and he does it now, by calling and making disciples. And in his plan every disciple then becomes a disciple-maker. His final word to every one of us according to Matthew: "Go make disciples; baptize them into the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and teach them to observe (know and do) all I have taught. And I will be with you always." The Gospel story tells us that in about three years he had made 120, 500, 3,000 disciples.

In our small churches and larger ones, Jesus is still making disciples—multitudes of them—through those of us who love and obey him. "A church

usually gets done, by the grace of God, about what it sets out to do."

Olden D. Mitchell
North Manchester, Ind.

Don't forget Georgia

Thank you for the wonderful article "Faith on the Frontier" in the December issue. Having visited the Falfurrias church several times in recent years, I know the difficulties faced by that congregation. I have also seen their faith lived out through a visit to Reynosa, Mexico, with pastor

Stanley Bittinger to deliver clothes and supplies to a single working mother struggling to raise her family.

One correction is needed in the "Small-Membership States" box on page 11. I was board chair of the Faithful Servant congregation in Atlanta, Georgia, when it disbanded 10 years ago. At the time it was the only Brethren fellowship in Georgia. To my knowledge, no church starts have occurred since then, making Georgia another state with no Brethren congregations. While active, Faithful Servant was about a 6-hour drive from the clos-

est church in the Atlantic Southeast District (although Citronelle, near Birmingham, Ala., in the Southeastern District was about 2 hours away).

Chris Eberly
Manassas, Va.

Editor's note: You're correct, Chris! We apologize for that omission. Hopefully another congregation can begin in the Peach State soon.

CORRECTIONS

• Due to incorrect information received by MESSENGER, the name of a newly licensed minister was listed prematurely in the February issue under "Turning Points." Guillaume Marceau has not yet been licensed by Atlantic Southeast District.

Please send information to be included in *Turning Points* to Jean Clements, 1451 Dundee Ave, Elgin, IL 60120; 800-323-8039 ext. 206; jclements_gb@brethren.org. Information must be complete in order to be published. Information older than one year cannot be published.

New Members

Beaverton, Mich.: John A. Glasscock

Champaign, Ill.: Eulalia Copeland

Friendship, Linthicum Heights, Md.: Courtney Cowger, Leonard Daley, Benjamin Hickerson, Darren Palozzi, Joseph Seleski, Joshua Seleski

Mechanic Grove, Quarryville, Pa.: Josh G. Bledsoe, Krista L. Grasty

Memorial, Martinsburg, Pa.: Brooke Bosar, Alexa Foor, Connor Greenland, Tristan Greenland, Aaron Kreider, Adam Kreider, Ethan Lewis, Bridget McCready, Kristen McCready, Ryan Mills, Derek Nothstein, Kendal Querry

Mount Zion Road, Lebanon, Pa.: Jena Meck, Jeremy Bender, Jesse Lehman

Parker Ford, Pottstown, Pa.: Todd Yeager, Jennifer Yeager, Dave Simon, Liz Simon, Dan Driscoll, Lynne Driscoll, Richard Ralston, Joe Wood

Reading, First, Wyomissing, Pa.: Karen Ferlazzo, James Frasso, Helen Frasso

Springfield, Ore.: Edith Roberts, Ken Locke

Woodbury, Pa.: Leah Muthler, Ryan Frederick, Daniel Oberman

Anniversaries

Anderson, Elmer and Catherine, Hampstead, Md., 60

Black, Selby and Sara, Union Bridge, Md., 50

Furry, Carl and Leona, Camp Hill, Pa., 70

Graupp, Ludwig and Eleanor, Reading, Pa., 50

Hinton, William and Emma Jane, Martinsburg, Pa., 65

Holsinger, Glenn and Virginia, Martinsburg, Pa., 60

Johnson, Don and Jo, Martinsburg, Pa., 50

Kcim, Robert and Sybil, Tucson, Ariz., 60

Deaths

Ake, Denver, 85, Martinsburg, Pa., Jan. 7, 2007

Andrews, Raymond Donald, 82, Bridgewater, Va., Nov. 13

Bailey, Thelma Louise, 77, Harrisonburg, Va., Nov. 26

Batdorf, Frank, 80, Harrisburg, Pa., Nov. 30

Bennett, Henry Clay, 48, Moorefield, W.Va., Nov. 21

Bowman, Ernest A., 84, Palmyra, Pa., Dec. 7

Breneman, Velma Turner, 92, Harrisonburg, Va., Oct. 31

Brieker, Andrew, 90, Chambersburg, Pa., Nov. 24

Bridenbaugh, Betty, 79, Martinsburg, Pa., Sept. 26

Bridges, Emory F., 92, Harrisonburg, Va., Oct. 26

Butler, Mary, 91, Martinsburg, Pa., Dec. 27

Carr, Gregory Allen, 45, Harrisonburg, Va., Oct. 13

Click, Ruth Rebecca, 91, Bridgewater, Va., Dec. 22

Cline, Franklin A., 87, Dixon, Ill., Dec. 31

Cline, Oliver Wendell, 91, New Hope, Va., Nov. 3

Crawford, Jonathan William, 31, Harrisonburg, Va., Nov. 27

Crumpacker, Vela Margaret Evers, 91, Roanoke, Va., Dec. 24

Damewood, Esther, 90, Modesto, Calif., Dec. 13

Dean, Blanche Elizabeth Simmons, 91, Bridgewater, Va., Oct. 23

Dove, Ava Gray, 70, Broadway, Va., Oct. 4

Dunafin, Jerry, 83, Goshen, Ind., Dec. 6

Ebie, Evelyn G., 85, Mogadore, Ohio, Dec. 31

Eichelberger, Ura, 79, Chambersburg, Pa., March 19

Eller, Elizabeth B., 84, Sebring, Fla., Sept. 18

Fitzwater, Stanley Nelson, Sr., 65, Singers Glen, Va., Nov. 20

Gandy, Maudie, 92, Dayton, Ohio, April 1, 2007

Garber, Calvin W., 91, Weyers Cave, Va., Oct. 9

Garrison, Mildred, 90, Palmyra, Pa., Dec. 13

Hale, Rodney Allison, 69, Selma, Va., Oct. 20

Harvey, Lois Jean Thompson, 80, Bridgewater, Va., Nov. 30

Helmick, Mary Eloise, 72, Moorefield, W.Va., Dec. 28

Hicks, Grady, 77, Dayton, Ohio, May 16

Holsinger, Betty Louella, 75, Harrisonburg, Va., Oct. 21

Horning, John S., 82, Goshen, Ind., Dec. 26

Hubert, Elizabeth Marie, 76, Bridgewater, Va., Nov. 30

Huffman, Louise Fannie, 94, Luray, Va., Dec. 29

Judy, Donald Richard, 72, Petersburg, W.Va., Oct. 21

Keplinger, Donald Edward, 61, Broadway, Va., Nov. 17

Kiracofe, Henry Vanlear, 94, Sangerville, Va., Dec. 24

Kline, H. Ronald, 79, Linville, Va., Dec. 20

Lambert, Thelma Virginia Boyers, 88, Harrisonburg, Va., Nov. 5

Lewis, Edith Marie, 77, Woodstock, Va., Oct. 28

Mauck, Elmer Cecil, 79, Woodstock, Va., Nov. 10

McGroover, Catherine M., 84, McPherson, Kan., Dec. 4

Messamer, Homer, 89, Modesto, Calif., Nov. 22

Michael, Lorraine Good, 78, Harrisonburg, Va., Nov. 5

Miller, Frances Elizabeth, 95, Bridgewater, Va., Jan. 1

Miller, Roberta G. Hall, 48, Fort Worth, Texas, Oct. 31

Mongold, Donnie Eugene, 58, Linville, Va., Dec. 10

Packett, Anne Deerfield, 74, Harrisonburg, Va., Oct. 12

Petefish, Ruth Maxine, 81, Luray, Va., Dec. 9

Piper, Charles, 38, Roaring Spring, Pa., Dec. 10

Plebani, Roselle, 60, Palmyra, Pa., Dec. 18

Pratt, Ruby Autumn, 95, Moorefield, W.Va., Dec. 13

Reighard, Sara, 85, Martinsburg, Pa., Aug. 15

Rhodes, Frank Reuben, 77, Dayton, Va., Dec. 8

Richard, Delphia Dora Hilbert, 85, Winchester, Va., Nov. 24

Richards, Alma Catherine, 75, Luray, Va., Nov. 2

Shenk, John R., 77, Newport, Pa., Jan. 1

Smith, Alfred Russell, 79, Broadway, Va., Oct. 3

Strayer, Katherine, 90, Baltimore, Md., July 21

Weese, David A., 60, Franklin, W.Va., Dec. 22

Whetzel, Arvella Delia Turner, 72, Dorcas, W.Va., Oct. 19

Zigler, Madaline Florence, 85, Bridgewater, Va., Nov. 23

Zigler, Nina Collins, 96, Edinburg, Va., Dec. 23

Zigler, Nina Collins, 96, Edinburg, Va., Dec. 23

Licensings

Carr, Jeffery, Shen, Dist. (Bridgewater, Va.), Oct. 14

Stover, Paul J., Jr., Virgina Dist. (Jeters Chapel, Vinton, Va.), Dec. 30

Tuttle, Mary Beth, W. Plains Dist. (Holmesville, Neb.),

Jan. 6
Watson, Michael, Mid-Atl. Dist. (Frederick, Md.), May 24

Ordinations

Major, Scott, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Coventry, Pottstown, Pa.), Sept. 30

Zepp, Christopher, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Mountville, Pa.), March 4, 2007

Placements

Berube, Jeannine L., associate pastor, Maitland, Lewistown, Pa., Jan. 1

Eberly, Karen C., associate pastor, Manchester, North Manchester, Ind., Jan. 1, 2007

Gorrell, James J., pastor, Faith in Action, Delta, Ohio, Dec. 17

Hileman, Michael C., youth pastor, Zion Hill, Columbiana, Ohio, Jan. 31, 2007

Kline, Valarie, from pastor, Upper Fall Creek, Middletown, Ind., to pastor, Pleasant Chapel, Ashley, Ind., Jan. 1

Liepert, Paul A., pastor, Dranesville, Herndon, Va., Jan. 1

Mason, Steven W., from pastor, Yellow Creek, Goshen, Ind., to pastor, Cedar Creek, Citronelle, Ala., Jan. 1

Miller, David W., from pastor, West Richmond, Richmond, Va., to pastor of nurture, Black Rock, Glenville, Pa., Jan. 1

Morrison, Donald S., pastor, Fruitland, Idaho, Jan. 1

Paddock, Clyde, associate pastor, Messiah, Kansas City, Mo., Jan. 1

Pennington, R. Wayne, from pastor, Bethel, Arrington, Va., to pastor, Hopewell, Va., Jan. 1

Scenes from a plane

Our ancient little 20-seater Otter aircraft, somehow holding together, buzzed westward across the skies of central Nepal.

To the right of the plane, the mighty peaks of the Himalayas spread out majestically. My friend Laura, sitting next to me, leaned over for a better view out the window.



WALT WILTSCHKEK
MESSENGER Editor

"It's so beautiful," she remarked in awe. And then, after a pause, she added, "From up here you can't see all the poverty."

She was exactly right. We had spent the past few days visiting Kathmandu and some surrounding villages, learning about the realities of life in one of Asia's poorest countries. About 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, and it's especially difficult for women. We were headed to the smaller city of Pokhara to do some similar visits.

On the ground we saw the struggles and the faces behind them firsthand. But here, at 15,000 feet up, all that was obscured amid the rugged landscape.

From 15,000 feet up, you couldn't see that two out of three women in Nepal are illiterate. You couldn't see the "power cuts" that leave most regions without power for six or more hours per day due to insufficient supply. You couldn't see

WHEN WE'RE NOT AWARE OF A PROBLEM OR FAIL TO LEARN MUCH ABOUT IT, IT'S NOT OUR PROBLEM. OUR FAITH, HOWEVER, FOLLOWS A SAVIOR WHO TAUGHT US TO LOOK AT THE WORLD IN A DIFFERENT WAY. "BLESSED ARE YOUR EYES BECAUSE THEY SEE," JESUS TOLD HIS FOLLOWERS, "AND YOUR EARS BECAUSE THEY HEAR."

the high rates of infant and maternal mortality, the lack of sanitation, or the children begging in the streets.

And you couldn't see the beautiful smiles of so many who pressed on despite a deck stacked against them, and who opened their arms in generous hospitality.

Things look different from several miles in the air, but altitude isn't required to play tricks on our vision. From the relative comfort in which most of us live in the United States, the realities of much of the world can seem very far away—even when they're just on the other side of town. At best, we might catch glimpses of war or famine or extreme poverty in clips on the evening news, but such stories usually fade

away soon unless they affect us directly.

Our ongoing challenge is to allow these issues to enter our consciousness, and to live and act differently as a result. This particular "learning tour" to Nepal was sponsored by Brethren-related New Community Project. Similar up-close experiences are offered by the Church of the Brethren General Board, On Earth Peace, our colleges and seminaries, and other groups, to a wide variety of places.

It does cost money to travel, although usually less so for these trips than for typical tourist group travel. It's important that the expense is seen as an investment, part of a commitment to return home bearing the stories and pictures of those we meet and to work for change.

As a piece of Jewish wisdom states: "If you want to raise people from mud and filth, do not think it is enough to keep standing on top and reaching down to them a helping hand. You must go all the way down yourself, down into the mud and filth. Then take hold of them with strong hands and pull them and yourself into the light."

For those who can't or don't wish to travel, a wealth of information can be found on the Internet, in religious or secular periodicals and books, by attending presentations and lectures, or by talking with those who have made trips off the beaten path. Some hands-on opportunities may even be available nearby.

Ignorance can be comfortable. When we're not aware of a problem or fail to learn much about it, it's not *our* problem.

Our faith, however, follows a Savior who taught us to look at the world in a different way. "Blessed are your eyes because they see," Jesus told his followers, "and your ears because they

hear" (Matt. 13:16)

As we learn, we may also enjoy the riches of those we reach out to: practical wisdom and spiritual depth beyond our imagining, giving us some new "light" as well. That's part of the reward of looking at the world through the eyes of Christ: We discover a host of hidden gems amid the rubble of an unjust world.

Even in the Information Age, it can be remarkably easy to stay in the dark. "Knowledge is like a garden," an African proverb says. "If it is not cultivated, it cannot be harvested." May we tend the fields well, so that we may harvest an abundance of fresh perspectives.—Ed. 

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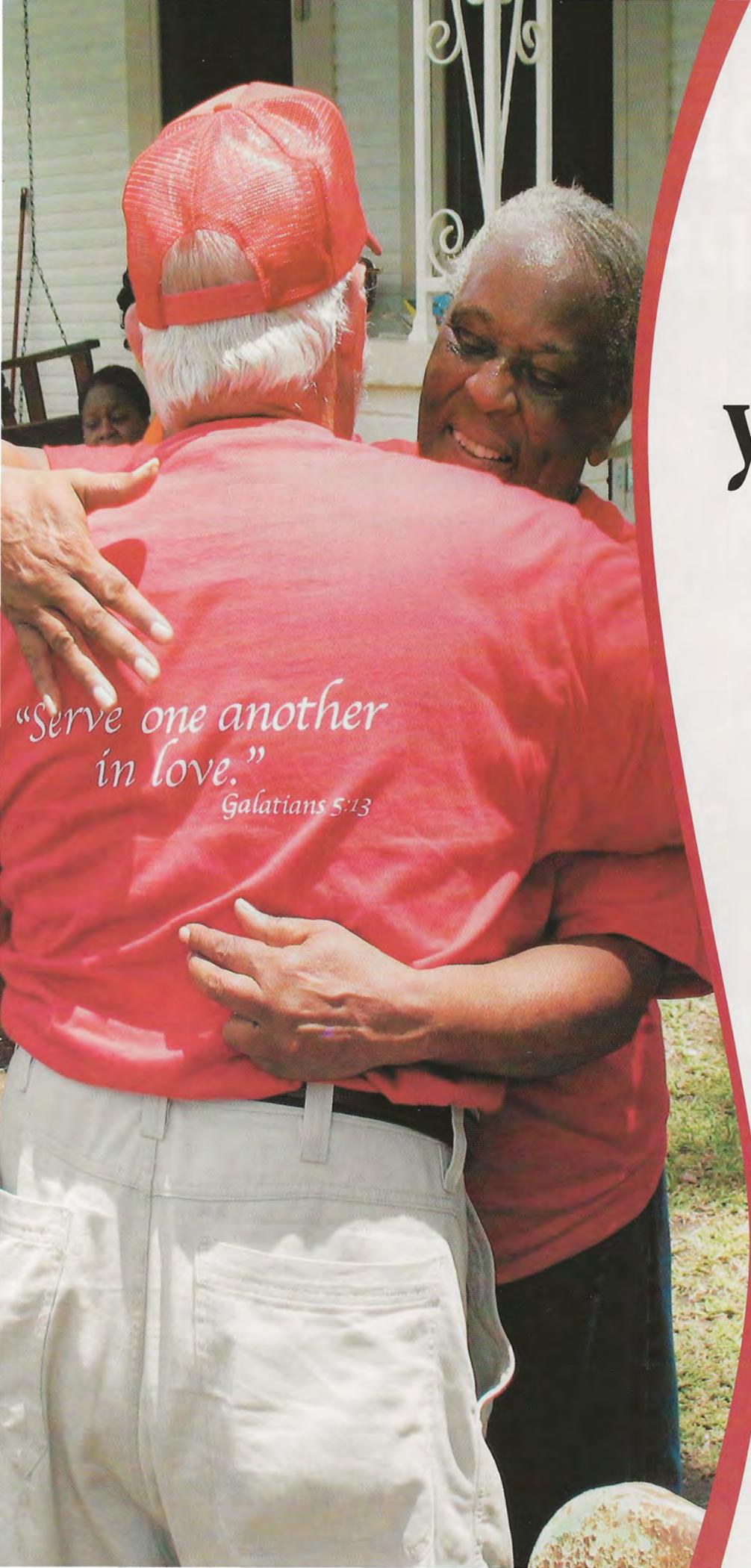
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not what
you say...
it's what
you do.**

*"Serve one another
in love."
Galatians 5:13*



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*"Little children, let us not
love in word or speech, but
with action and in truth."*

1 John 3:18