

Church
of the
Brethren

MESSENGER

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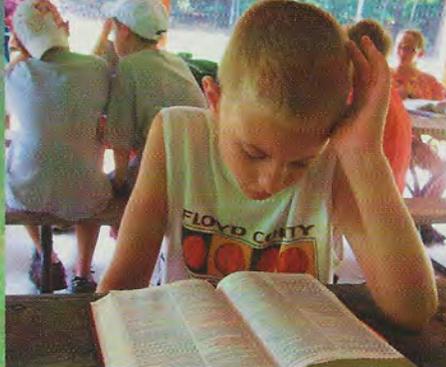
300 YEARS OF BEING BRETHREN

1908-1958

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Church
of the
Brethren

MESSENGER

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8 300 years of being Brethren: Into all the world (1908-1958)

Brethren expanded by leaps and bounds in the first half of the 20th century, with leaders such as Dan West (p. 12) urging creative thinking and bold steps and I.N.H. Beahm (p. 8) building schools and evangelizing. Camps were started (p. 14), and new mission began in Nigeria (p. 17)

and China (p. 15). Setbacks also occurred, including the withdrawal of the Goshen Statement (p. 11) and a major flu pandemic (p. 10).

18 Practicing biblical hospitality

Congregational Life Team member Duane Grady recently struck out into the unknown—an unfamiliar church congregation. His experiences were a good reminder for the church to think about how it welcomes visitors in its midst.

20 John: Signs of the divine

The fourth Gospel is quite different than the first three, in tone and in topics. A particular emphasis is given to “signs” that point to Jesus as the source of divine truth.



Kermon Thomason/BHLA

ONTHECOVER

From 1908 to 1958: The 300th anniversary series rolls into the first half of the 20th century, when the Brethren movement blossomed even as it experienced some growing pains. The cover backdrop is a snapshot from the denomination's 200th anniversary celebration in 1908. Inset images (from left to right): Brethren begin mission to China, the “four horsemen” visit Brethren camps, and Dan West initiates Heifer Project.

Images courtesy of Brethren Historical Library and Archives.

DEPARTMENTS

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Back when I learned to read, the main characters in the primers were named Dick and Jane.

Later, when curriculum began including overtly ethnic names, the effort sometimes came across as well-intentioned but contrived. I wasn't sure the result was particularly realistic. That is, until a few years ago when I was in my neighborhood elementary school and saw the names under the coat hooks outside the kindergarten classroom. Few people would have invented a fictitious classroom as diverse as the one on display in that hallway.

Today the kindergarten class at my daughter's school includes children named Alitovski, Figuero Rivera, Inthavongsa, Vasquez, Muhammad—oh, and a Smith. The first grade includes three Ramirezses, a Shee, a Siddique—and one more Smith. This international flavor is not unique to schools near big cities; it's increasingly common in small towns across the country.



WENDY McFADDEN
Publisher

One might expect that all this proximity would increase our understanding of other cultures and other religions. But in truth, most of us in our free time associate with people just like ourselves. On a larger scale, we as an American people are not always adept at understanding the unique situations in other countries—particularly the religious issues that underlie many of the world's conflicts. Unfortunately, in many places lack of understanding is a matter of life and death.

Bethany Theological Seminary took a step toward increased understanding when it marked the new presidency of Ruthann Knechel Johansen by bringing together three scholars—a Christian, a Jew, and a Muslim—for an inaugural forum on "Hearing Scriptures of Peace" (learn more at www.bethanyseminary.edu). It was a chance to hear about common yearnings and beliefs, as the scriptures for each of these Abrahamic faiths speak profoundly of peace. (There was also recognition that these same scriptures contain troubling words about violence and war.)

The forum was not just about finding common ground. In fact, underlying the presentations was the conviction that we actually clarify our own beliefs when we talk honestly with those of other faiths. And mere tolerance is not good enough, said Dr. Rashied Omar, a Muslim imam, professor, and longtime peace activist from South Africa. Tolerance is a secular concept that diminishes the distinctions between religions, he pointed out. Rather, he advocated the ethic of *ta'aruf*, of "embracing the other." That word is new to me, but the idea is not; I find it in our own scriptures.

A minister, a rabbi, and an imam walked into a ... It sounds like the beginning of a joke. But maybe it's really the beginning of a new chapter in the book we're writing together.

Wendy McFadden

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Getting an education about outreach

Creative programs help Modesto learn where its dollars go

In 2005, most in the Modesto (Calif.) congregation were largely ignorant of the nine areas in our outreach budget. In order to align the 2006 budget with projected giving, the allocations to outreach were cut drastically.

As we entered 2006, many were concerned about the cuts. As we voted to raise the budget and restore the cuts, we knew we needed to do more than just ask for more funds. If we were going to reach this goal we needed to educate the congregation about the ministry that our partners do.

Five people were called to serve on a subcommittee. In the final four months of 2006 we saturated the church newsletter, Sunday bulletins, worship services, and the weekly Wednesday night fellowship meal time with information about the three largest areas: Bethany Theological Seminary, the district, and the General Board. Videos, speakers,

tent cards on the tables, skits, articles, and news blurbs were all used.

On the last Sunday of each month, a special offering was taken for the program emphasized that month. The result was that 2006 giving to those three areas was greater than the increased budget called for, and we met all of our other expenses in addition.

The committee was asked to continue work in 2007 with emphasis on all nine outreach areas, including the Association of Brethren Caregivers, ABC, On Earth Peace, and Guatemala Accompaniment. At a fall kickoff dinner and program, people were invited to come to the "Brethren Outreach Village"—nine homes created from refrigerator boxes and decorated to represent an area of outreach. Many people were recruited to sing or expound or in some creative way entertain and educate about their particular outreach area. One man, representing the homeless shelter where we serve dinner once a week, came out of his "box" wearing a night shirt and carrying a candle. A high school youth performed an original song about On Earth Peace.

Our goal was for \$10,000 over and above budget pledges to be raised that Sunday. After the meal expenses were paid, the net was \$13,000 for outreach ministries, or one-third of our annual budget. The dollars are great, and we all appreciated what was given. But the important part of all this was educating ourselves and the rest of the congregation to what we are giving and why we need to support these various ministries.—**Pat Royer**



A "Brethren Outreach Village" helped Modesto Church of the Brethren members learn about their outreach giving.

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 Western Pennsylvania is holding a Ministry of Reconciliation workshop on "Healthy Congregations" May 3 at Camp Harmony in Hooversville, led by former General Board staff Jim Kinsey. . . . A pair of 300th anniversary-related tours of area churches took place March 9 in northern Maryland, culminating in an "old-time hymn sing" and supper.

Southeast March 9 was a momentous day for the fast-growing HIS Way (Jesucristo El Camino) Fellowship in Hendersonville, N.C., with another 29 new members received on that single morning. The church recently purchased land to construct a new building. . . . The Lake Side fellowship near Moneta, Va., held a chartering service on April 6. . . . Southeastern youth had a luau/lock in at the Melvin Hill congregation (Columbus, N.C.) March 14-15.

Midwest Creekside Church of the Brethren (Elkhart, Ind.) is planning a "blessing of the bikes" and escorted motorcycle ride through the community on May 17, with a goal of 100 bikes. Donations benefit a local charity, and youth are serving lunch. . . . Annual Conference moderator Jim Beckwith visited Northern Ohio area clergy meetings in late March.

Ozarks/Plains Carolyn Schrock is serving as district coordinator for Missouri/Arkansas during an interim period of assessing leadership needs. . . . The Western Plains board has recommended to district conference a district vision statement/slogan of "Rooted together in love to be Christ's transforming hope and power." . . . The McPherson (Kan.) College Choir performed a concert at Panther Creek Church of the Brethren (Adel, Iowa) on April 13 as part of a central US tour.

West Jeff Carter, pastor of Manassas (Va.) Church of the Brethren, will provide leadership for this year's Idaho District gathering at Camp Wilbur Stover. It will be held June 22-28 with the theme "On the Way." . . . The April edition of "Brethren Voices," a community cable television program offered by Peace Church of the Brethren in Portland, Ore., featured Brethren Volunteer Service.

BY THE NUMBERS

25

Number of students enrolled in Bethany Theological Seminary's online/intensive "Connections" program as of this spring. The students come from eight states. The seminary recently restructured the program to allow even greater flexibility.



"To people who are looking for a faith that makes a difference, we can offer the hope of radical transformation in Christ. . . . We just need to be the peculiar people we are!"

—Ashland (Ohio) Theological Seminary theology instructor Brenda Coljin, writing about Brethren beliefs in *The Brethren Evangelist* (the magazine of The Brethren Church)



Gil Crosby

The Peoria shoppers hit the supermarket. From left are Rachel Garrison, Mary Grace Patton, Wyatt Freiburger, Carter Davis, Kennedy and Keely Whalen, and Aaron Stachnik.

Little children lead in Peoria hunger project

On a bright Sunday morning in February the children of Peoria (Ill.) Church of the Brethren gathered in the fellowship hall to decorate heart-shaped cookies. The children had heard there were other children in the Peoria area who didn't always have enough food in their homes and went hungry. With help from their teachers Pat Crosby and Kathy Reese, the children spent the morning decorating the cookies so they could be sold to raise money for a local food bank.

Once the cookies were decorated, the children put them in plastic bags and stacked them on a table in the narthex. After church they gave the cookies to exiting parishioners who generously donated to the "Feed My Lambs" project. They successfully raised \$83 to help feed hungry children.

But the project wasn't over. On Feb. 24 the children gathered with teachers and some parents at a nearby supermarket to spend the money they had raised. Each child was given the responsibility to spend a little over \$10 for non-perishable food. The children considered what to purchase, many times based on what they

liked to eat but still stretching their money as far as they could. The main task of the teachers and parents was to emphasize restraint! Parents helping with the purchases were Bob Davis, Jamie Patton, and Karen and Kevin Stachnik.

The following Sunday the purchases were presented for dedication as the children wheeled their shopping carts up the aisle of the church, and then the food was taken to the food bank to be distributed to families with children.—**Gil Crosby**

English River congregation addresses hunger issues

Hunger issues also received attention at English River Church of the Brethren in South English, Iowa, where two events were held this winter, according to a newspaper report.

The first, a benefit luncheon, coincided

with a tractor ride through southeastern Iowa; the second was preparing more than 4,300 meal packets for "Kids Against Hunger," a local charity. More than 20 members gathered to assemble the packets, each of which contains enough food for six people for one day.

Add it up, and that means church was able to put together enough packets to feed more than 25,000 people. Plans for another hunger relief event are in the works.

Bridgewater group shares witness via Walk for Peace

The Walk for Peace had been planned for March 7, however Bridgewater, Va., had a rain shower that kept us watching the sky and finally postponing the walk until the next Friday.

March 14 was a bright sunny day that looked like the beginning of spring. Five people participated in the Walk for Peace down a stretch of Dinkle Avenue. We received many horn honks of approval and a "V" for support, and one person slowed her car at the "Care for Vets" poster and said "Amen."

There was much traffic from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., so we felt good about the witness we made in two short hours of sharing our message of peace. In conversation with several long-time residents of Bridgewater, I learned that as far as they could remember, there had not been a poster sign witness for peace ever before in this small college town.—**Roma Jo Thompson**

From left to right, Bridgewater residents Wayne Judd, Roma Jo Thompson, and Hugh Whitten take their peace witness to the streets.



Courtesy of Roma Jo Thompson

REMEMBERED

• **Harold Z. Bomberger**, 89, died March 17 at Lebanon Valley Brethren Home in Palmyra, Pa. Bomberger was an ordained Church of the Brethren minister, moderator of Annual Conference in 1971, a member of the Church of the Brethren General Board for a five-year term beginning in 1966, and at one time an editorial associate for the *Gospel Messenger* (now MESSENGER) magazine. He served as executive minister of Atlantic Northeast District from 1971 to 1983, and during the 1950s as executive secretary of the church's Eastern Region. A graduate of Elizabethtown (Pa.) College, Bethany Seminary, and Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, Pa., he served in several pastorates. Other service included two terms on the Standing Committee of Annual Conference, the Committee on Interchurch Relations, presidency of the Kansas Council of Churches, and membership on the Pennsylvania Council of Churches Governing Board. In 1967, he was an exchange preacher to Great Britain, which included an invitation to attend Queen Elizabeth II's garden party at Buckingham Palace, and a later audience with Pope Paul V. A celebration of his life was held at Annville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren on March 24.

• **Helen J. (Jefferson) Goodwin**, 95, died Feb. 8. One of the earlier African-American women to earn the doctor of philosophy degree from Johns Hopkins University, she had been a member of First Church of the Brethren in Baltimore since 1978. She was born in Norfolk, Va., and earned degrees from what is now Hampton University, New York University, and Johns Hopkins, later serving as a faculty member at several schools. She served as an early board member of the Association of Brethren Caregivers; her daughter, Barbara Cuffie, has served on the Church of the Brethren General Board. Services were held Feb. 16 in Baltimore.

• **May Patalano**, 52, secretary for the Northern Ohio District office since 1995, died March 6 at her home. The funeral service was held March 10 at Ashland (Ohio) Dickey Church of the Brethren, where she was a member. Her husband, Bob, serves as camp administrator of the district's camp, Inspiration Hills. They served together for two years in Brethren Volunteer Service from 1993 to 1995.

• **Robert (Bob) Roller**, who passed away March 3 in Harrisonburg, Va., is remembered by MESSENGER with special thanks. Roller, 76, faithfully clipped obituaries of Brethren in the Shenandoah Valley and sent them each month to MESSENGER in a full manila envelope, helping to keep the list in "Turning Points" and the files up to date. Roller had been a pastor in several congregations until retiring in 1998 and previously served in Brethren Volunteer Service in Falfurrias, Texas. A memorial service was held March 8 at Harrisonburg First Church of the Brethren.

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MWC GLOBAL CHURCH TOUR with LARRY & ELEANOR
MILLER (November 10-24)

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MWC #3 - IGUAZU FALLS and PARAGUAY (July 9-20)
MWC #4 - IGUAZU FALLS, PARAGUAY, PERU (July 10-24)
MWC #5 - PARAGUAY and BOLIVIA (July 12-25)
MWC #6 - IGUAZU FALLS, PARAGUAY, PERU (July 12-29)
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From nostalgia to grief to hope

Nostalgia, which someone called “an unearned emotion,” can settle into the cavities of our lives.

For example, it can enter into an empty marriage. A woman may confide to a friend, “I remember when my husband was so romantic—slim and athletic—he got down on one knee when he proposed to me. If he were to try that now, he probably couldn’t get up.”

Long-time members of a congregation may recall the “good old days”: “I remember when so-and-so was a trusted and respected leader here. Those were the days.”



GUY WAMPLER

When the children of Israel stalled in the bleak and barren desert, they complained about their monotonous diet: manna seven days a week, quail on rare occasions, water in short supply. In their craving for tastier food, they remembered Egypt. Memories of melons, cucumbers, leeks, and onions danced in their heads. They said, “Let us go back to Egypt.” Never mind slavery, never mind cruel and demanding

taskmasters, never mind the killing of their infant sons.

Sugarcoating the past, nostalgia crept into their weary heads.

Recently I was chair of the five-member listening team for the Brethren “Together conversations.” Across a two-year period, our team visited 19 of the 23 districts across this country. In all several thousand Brethren gathered around tables, usually in clusters of eight to 10, to talk about the church: their memories of bygone years, their yearning for years to come. The task of the listening team was to sit on the sidelines and write down, sometimes almost verbatim, what we heard peo-

SAYING GOODBYE TO THAT WHICH IS PAST MAKES ROOM FOR SOMETHING NEW TO HAPPEN. GRIEF, WHILE PAINFUL, HAS THE POTENTIAL OF BECOMING MORE LIBERATING.

ple saying. By the time the conversations ended, we had accumulated several hundred pages of notes.

Occasionally the conversations dripped with nostalgia. Sometimes nostalgia centered on love feasts of the past, sometimes back to the era of growth in church membership. The listening team noticed that the conversation seemed most alive when people were talking about the past: their gestures were more animated, their voices more expressive, their faces more aglow. We five listeners were bothered by this attraction to the past.

So at our final meeting we took a few minutes to analyze Brethren nostalgia. We distinguished between nostalgia and grief. “Nostalgia,” we said, “is to romanticize the past, and to long to recover it. Grief is to mourn the loss of that which was once cherished, but to let it go and to allow something new to come into being.”

Grief is more realistic than nostalgia and more likely to rediscover hope. Those who romanticize simpler lifestyles of a previous century cannot go back to that era. Do we even want to? Is

it not more realistic to turn away from those century-old patterns and toward new expressions of simplicity and spirituality in the 21st century? Saying goodbye to that which is past makes room for something new to happen. Grief, while painful, has the potential of becoming more liberating.

When Steve Clapp, a Brethren church consultant, carefully reviewed and analyzed the copious notes from the Together conversations, he made a discovery that fascinated the five listeners. Steve singled out one category of Brethren who were least susceptible to nostalgia. Their identity may surprise you. Steve noted that older Brethren, having the benefit of healthful perspective, were the most realistic about the past and the most likely to affirm change.

For example, these older Brethren did not idolize our “heroes” of the past. Having known in person several of the Brethren superstars about whom we now sing ballads and write biographies, the elderly seemed most aware that we are all made of clay. Older people, being more realistic, tend to encourage the rest of us, saying, “Don’t be too discouraged about the inadequacies of leaders today. We critically need strong leaders, but that was equally true when we were young. In our day, we failed to recognize the outstanding leaders among us because we were distracted by their foibles. Undoubtedly a dozen or more leaders rub shoulders with us today but we will not recognize their greatness until later when we look back. The shortage of great leadership in the church troubles us today, but every generation thinks that that is true. The children of Israel in the wilderness murmured against one of the greatest leaders of all time.”

I do not mean to minimize the challenges the Church of the Brethren faces today. The denominational decline in membership is ominous not only for Brethren but also for most of our sister mainline denominations. I hope that our beloved denomination not only survives but also thrives and expands its very relevant witness. But I try not to worry. Worry will not free tomorrow of its troubles; it only robs today of its strength.

I cannot predict the long-term future of the Church of the Brethren. The roots

must be strong, inasmuch as the church has existed 300 years. What will our denomination be like after the next 300 years have passed? Will it survive? Downsize? Merge? Will it double or triple or more in size and initiate a multitude of new ministries in the name of Christ? Who of us knows the future? We must trust Brethren in each era to respond to the challenges and opportunities unique to that period of time.

In the long stream of history flowing toward the kingdom of God, the perpetual existence of any one institution and any one ritual may not matter very much. Who knows? Along the way, God may do a new thing.

In the meantime, instead of worrying about the future or dwelling on the past, claim the possibilities of each moment. Joy and hope is the antidote to nostalgia. When hope and joy fill the cavities of our lives, nostalgia disappears. **W**

Guy Wampler is a retired ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren and a former Annual Conference moderator. He lives in Lancaster, Pa. This column is condensed from a sermon he initially gave at Lancaster Church of the Brethren.

QUOTE WORTHY

“Using military power is like taking a hammer to a beehive.”

—Eastern Mennonite University (Harrisonburg, Va.) professor Lisa Schirch, speaking at Ecumenical Advocacy Days in Washington, D.C., about finding a solution in Iraq. Schirch instead advocated development and diplomacy.

“In the church, there is a diarrhea of prayers and a constipation of action.”

—Naperville (Ill.) Church of the Brethren pastor Dennis Webb, speaking at Fairview Church of the Brethren in Unionville, Iowa

“The Reformers really came up with a strong, rational theology that spoke to people’s minds. But we’ve got to wake up and realize that the Enlightenment is coming to an end. The hunger for spirituality is everywhere evident. . . . If the church does not speak to the spiritual hungers of people more effectively, then people will look for this elsewhere.”

—Tony Campolo, in an interview with ReadtheSpirit.com.

“Having a passion for Christ will determine the life of the church in terms of quality as well as its potential for growth. People who are really excited about God are more likely to talk about God and more likely to invite others to worship.”

—Royal Speidel, retired United Methodist pastor, discussing his book *Evangelism in the Small Membership Church*. He was quoted in *The United Methodist Reporter*.

“To choose to be with people not on our list of favorites is to open ourselves to the rigors and riches of getting outside of ourselves for a bit. There is nothing more liberating in this life.”

—Paul Escamilla, senior pastor of Spring Valley United Methodist Church of Dallas and author of *Longing for Enough in a Culture of More*, in an interview with *The United Methodist Reporter*

“I have come to realize that God’s call comes to each of us in a very broad, yet dear way. . . . It has already been said and is for each of us, namely to love one another, and in particular, the least of these, and do justice, wherever that may be.”

—Church of the Brethren member Tom Benevento, reflecting on his call in the 2007 General Board World Mission Offering materials

CULTUREVIEW

• Research by The Barna Group found that church attitudes about people in general and gays in particular are driving a **negative image of the Christian faith among people ages 16-29**. The vast majority of non-Christians—91 percent—said Christianity had an anti-gay image, followed by 87 percent who said it was judgmental and 85 percent who said it was hypocritical. Such views were held by smaller percentages of the active churchgoers, but the faith still did not fare well: 80 percent agreed with the anti-gay label, 52 percent said Christianity is judgmental, and 47 percent declared it hypocritical. (RNS)

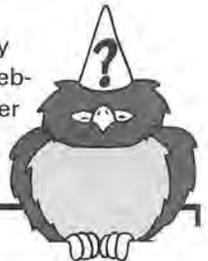
• Almost three-quarters of Americans who haven’t darkened the door of a church in the last six months think it is “**full of hypocrites**,” and even more of them consider Christianity to be more about organized religion than about loving God and people, according to a new survey by LifeWay Research. Almost half those surveyed—44 percent—agreed that “Christians get on my nerves,” but

the survey of “unchurched” Americans also found that some 78 percent said they would be willing to listen to someone who wanted to tell them about his or her Christian beliefs. (RNS)

• The English version of *The Peace Church and the Ecumenical Community: Ecclesiology and the Ethics of Nonviolence*, by German Mennonite Fernando Enns, was launched at the February World Council of Churches central committee meetings. Enns said he hoped it helped the Historic Peace Churches tradition to “present (itself) in a clearer way.”

• **Abortion rates** have reached their lowest since 1974, according to a new study of US abortion clinics released by the Guttmacher Institute. The study found that both abortion rates and the total number of abortions have declined. (RNS)

• Former Vice President **Al Gore** was named “Baptist of the Year” by EthicsDaily.com, the website of the Baptist Center for Ethics. (RNS)



JUST FOR FUN: MATCHING

CAMP QUIZ An article in this issue describes the beginning of Brethren camps, an area that has grown to include 29 camps and outdoor ministry centers across the denomination. As summer camp season again approaches, can you match the 12 camps listed below with the districts where they are located? Answers are printed below.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Camp Wilbur Stover | a. Mid-Atlantic |
| 2. Camp Eder | b. Virlina |
| 3. Camp Bethel | c. Illinois/Wisconsin |
| 4. Camp Mount Hermon | d. Southeastern |
| 5. Camp Pine Lake | e. Idaho |
| 6. Camp Carmel | f. Western Plains |
| 7. Camp Mardela | g. Oregon/Washington |
| 8. Camp Peaceful Pines | h. Southern Pennsylvania |
| 9. Camp Emmaus | i. Middle Pennsylvania |
| 10. Camp Myrtlewood | j. Northern Plains |
| 11. Camp Blue Diamond | k. Atlantic Southeast |
| 12. Ithiel Camp & Retreat Center | l. Pacific Southwest |

ANSWERS: 1-e (New Meadows, Idaho); 2-h (Fairfield, Pa.); 3-b (Fincastle, Va.); 4-f (Tonganoxie, Kan.); 5-i (Eldora, Iowa); 6-d (Linville, N.C.); 7-a (Denton, Md.); 8-l (Dardanelle, Calif.); 9-c (Mount Morris, Ill.); 10-g (Myrtle Point, Ore.); 11-f (Petersburg, Pa.); 12-k (Gotha, Fla.). For a full list of camps, visit www.brethren.org/links/camps.htm.



I.N.H. Beahm: 'Little Man' with a big heart

Isaac Newton Harvey Beahm was born in 1859 at Good's Mill, Va., near Bridgewater. He is probably best known today as the "Little Man" from the Brethren Press children's story by Dorothy Brandt Davis. But I.N.H., or "Brother Beahm," as he was often called, is still remembered by an older generation as a minister, educator, and tireless Brethren evangelist.

As a young man, I.N.H. worked as a farmhand, shoemaker, and wheelwright. Baptized in 1879, he was called to the ministry in 1881 and ordained as an elder in 1904. He enrolled at Bridgewater College in 1884 and was valedictorian of his graduating class in 1887. After a short stint as principal of schools in Bonsack, Va., he was called to join the faculty at Bridgewater in 1888. The teaching load was quite different then than it is today; in the two years he served at Bridgewater he taught nine subjects, including elocution, rhetoric, psychology, and arithmetic. In 1890 he married one of his students, Mary G. Bucher.

I.N.H. Beahm had a lifelong commitment to education at a time when many Brethren were skeptical about secular schooling. He not only taught but helped found numerous schools at the high school and college level: Botetourt Normal College (later Daleville Academy); Prince William Normal School in Brentsville, Va.; and Hebron Seminary in Nokesville, Va. He moved to California to serve as president of Lordsburg College (now La Verne) in California, although he left the college after only a few months because of an illness then described as "neurasthenia." He was one of the early presidents of Elizabethtown College. A ministerial colleague once commented that I.N.H. Beahm "did more to make education acceptable in the Church of the Brethren than any single individual."

Brother Beahm also traveled widely as an itinerant preacher. This was not a very lucrative position, but I.N.H. was committed to simple living as well as to his min-

istry. When one of his sisters paid a tailor to make him a good suit, he went to the tailor and asked for the money, telling the tailor that he needed the money more than he needed the suit. He then gave the money to a struggling congregation. In other cases, he borrowed money to assist churches.

His generosity toward others meant that he often had little for himself and his increasing family. On Jan. 9, 1895, he wrote in his diary: "Father dines with us and I sit on Annie's high chair, eat from a tin pot lid and use a paring knife and a spoon for my knife and fork. It is cheap to be poor but unhandy." His

BROTHER BEAHM WAS A STAUNCH PROPONENT OF CONSERVATISM AND MAINTAINING A "SET APART" BRETHREN IDENTITY. . . . BUT UNITY OF THE BODY WAS MORE IMPORTANT TO I.N.H. BEAHM THAN TRADITIONALISM.

daughter Mary said that they used to accuse their father of "tithing for the family and giving the balance to the Lord's work." Two of his six children later became well known figures themselves in the Church of the Brethren: Anna Beahm Mow was a missionary, minister, teacher, author, and beloved speaker for many years; William Beahm was a missionary, teacher, and dean of Bethany Seminary from 1944 to 1962.

Brother Beahm was a fixture at Brethren Annual Meetings for 60 years. According to his son-in-law Baxter Mow, I.N.H. had an "inexhaustible fund of native wit" that sometimes helped to relieve tension and restore good feelings. Baxter once commented that his father-in-law's wide reading and oratorical skills must serve him well, and I.N.H. replied—he said, with a twinkle—"Yes, I have it all pretty well mastered, except for two points. . . . First, what to say; second, how to say it."

Brother Beahm was a staunch proponent of conservatism and maintaining a "set apart" Brethren identity. In 1888, when the denomination began to talk about changing its official name—"German Baptist Brethren" being deemed misleading—Brother Beahm spoke on behalf of the old-fash-



Brethren gathered in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1908 to celebrate their bicentennial during the Annual Meeting.



Brethren Historical Library and Archives

ioned name “Dunker Brethren” as opposed to the more newfangled “Church of the Brethren.” In 1941, he petitioned the denomination to withdraw its membership in the Federal Council of Churches, precursor to the present National Council of Churches of Christ.

But unity of the body was more important to I.N.H. Beahm than traditionalism. Baxter Mow commented that “when . . . schism threatened, Brother Beahm advised the minority to be content and to go along with the majority.” Around the time of the Second World War, a new schism was threatened. Brother Beahm was invited to preach at a conservative Bible conference and, according to one of those present, it was expected that he would be the “Moses” to lead the group out of the “Egypt” of the Church of the Brethren. But when he got up to preach, what he said to the group of 500 to 600 present was: “Brethren, I know the significance of this meeting. I know why you have gathered, what you intend to do. I know why you invited Brother Beahm to come and preach. . . . I am here to preach to you, and tell you why I am staying with the Church of the Brethren and why I think you ought to.”

Brother Beahm characterized himself as one “of fervency for the oneness and conservation of Brethrenism.” He is known for an unparalleled feat of preaching: on July 26, 1931, he celebrated his 50 years of ministry by traveling 200 miles throughout Virginia by train and preaching 20 half-hour sermons in different locations that day. At age 91, he was still traveling and preaching. On Nov. 11, 1950, he attended a love feast at Jones Chapel, Va., with the intention of preaching the next day in a new church in Spray, N.C. But the car in which he was riding that night was struck by another driver; I.N.H. Beahm was thrown from the car and died instantly. Various tributes to Brother Beahm noted that this venerable preacher had always said that he wanted to die with his boots on—and that is what he did. 

Sources: *The Brethren Encyclopedia*; I.N.H. Beahm, “Twenty Reasons on the Federal Council”; Carl Bowman, *Brethren Society*; Baxter M. Mow, “I.N.H. Beahm” and “A Tribute to I.N.H. Beahm”; Dorothy Garst Murray, *Sister Anna*; John W. Wayland, *Men of Mark and Representative Citizens of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County, Virginia*.

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Ring in the bicentennial

by Frank Ramirez

1908 Annual Meeting brought a name change

The acoustics weren’t great, the speakers read long addresses from manuscripts, and it’s not clear if anybody was selling ice cream, but the Bicentennial Annual Conference proved to be an exciting event for Brethren who traveled all the way out to Des Moines, Iowa, June 3-11, 1908. *Gospel Messenger* editor J.H. Moore delivered his account in breathless paragraphs printed in two installments in the June 13 and June 20 issues that year.

Attendance was less than anticipated; even so, in addition to the 414 delegates there were more than 7,000 Brethren present! Unlike today, the moderator and other officers were not selected until the delegates had been seated. But some things would have been familiar to modern Conference-goers, such as the concern for good transportation between hotels and the conference center. On more than one occasion Moore praised the electric trains that shuttled the Brethren back and forth.

The 1907 Annual Meeting had recommended a committee that included two women be appointed to a planning committee, but only five men were selected, including such worthies as historian, educator, and future governor of Pennsylvania Martin Grove Brumbaugh; the world traveler D.L. Miller; famed preacher I.N.H. Beahm; humanitarian and missionary S.N. McCann; and the neglected historian G.N. Falkenstein.

The essays they commissioned were presented at Annual Meeting and published as *Two Centuries of the Church of the Brethren: or the Beginnings of the Brotherhood*. This book, along with John Lewis Gillin’s *The Dunkers: A Sociological Interpretation*, the massive *Literary Activity of the German Baptist Brethren in the Eighteenth Century* by John S. Flory, and John Walter Wayland’s *The German Element of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia*, were all meant to establish that the founders were all extremely educated men, and that no church had wielded as great an influence as the Brethren on Colonial America. (All four books can be obtained for free on the Internet through Google Books).

The packed 1908 agenda included one item that has had lasting influence: The official name of the denomination was changed from German Baptist

Continued on next page

Brethren to the Church of the Brethren, by a two-thirds voice vote.

"So far as we could learn" Moore wrote, "the decision of the Conference on this point gives excellent satisfaction. And now, since the question is settled, we should leave it settled. It is one of the things that cannot be changed every few years without serious consequences."

Moore's confident prediction that Annual Meeting would soon become primarily concerned with Christian education and missions work, and that the time spent on queries and church problems would diminish, has not been fulfilled.

The food, a feature always important to Brethren at Conference, earned high praise. A new twist was the additional presence of a newfangled cafeteria. The idea of entering without paying, selecting dishes priced at five cents each, and paying upon exiting was something novel to the editor. "Our people take to the idea quite readily," he noted.

Two Centuries of the Church of the Brethren made it into print during the bicentennial year, and although some of the articles may seem dated, "The Higher Spiritual Life of the Church" by Albert Cassel Wieand probably preserves the essence of how Brethren past, present, and hopefully future balance revelation and experience.

It states: "Practically, then, if we wish to grow in the ability to discern and enjoy the guidance of God we must set ourselves with all diligence, in the first place, to study the Bible to discover and understand the eternal and universal principles of righteousness which must control our lives.

"In the second place we must see to it that the Holy Spirit has full sway in our hearts, and that we never grieve nor quench nor hinder him in the least, nor shrink back when he would lead us on." Amen. ❧

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

by Frank Ramirez



Brethren and the Pandemic

Influenza outbreak killed millions around the world

The year 1918 was a tough time to be Brethren.

Prior to the America's entry into the Great War the leaders had confidently assumed their nonresistant stand would be respected by the government and society. After all, there had been tremendous resistance in the culture at large against entering what was seen as a European conflict. But the sentiment expressed in songs like "I Didn't Raise My Boy To Be A Soldier," which was a hit song in 1915, melted away when the United States entered the war in 1917.

Overnight, German-Americans forgot their German, flags suddenly made their way into sanctuaries, the National Anthem became a fixture before ballgames, and Brethren became the object of persecution, especially in the military camps that sprang up overnight. Some were tortured and killed. Forced to choose between compliance, noncombatant service, and total resistance against service, Brethren men turned to their leaders—who punted! The Brethren met in January 1918 in Goshen, Ind., drafted what came to be known as the Goshen Statement, then repudiated it when the government threatened to jail Brethren leaders (see story, p. 11).

Yet the greatest danger to Brethren in the camps, as well as in the churches, had nothing to do with the fighting. As the war wound to a bloody close, the Pandemic of 1918-1919, known in that era as the Spanish Influenza, killed up to 675,000 in the United States and up to 100 million people worldwide, far more than the conflict that preceded it. Death was dramatic and sudden, beginning with a dull headache that gave way to shivering, delirium, and semi-consciousness. The feet turned black, the face turned purple, with death caused by drowning as the patient's lungs filled with blood.

More than 25 percent of the population of the United States contracted the flu as it swept through large cities, as well as military camps where soldiers were crowded in close quarters.

Nor did the Angel of Death pass over Brethren enclaves.

Churches were closed for weeks or even months. Love feasts were cancelled. Colleges were shut down. The obituary pages of *The Gospel Messenger* swelled as many died. Yet judging from the front pages of that periodical you would never have known that one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse had descended in their midst! There were numerous articles on the war, the Armistice, on missions, and on the Forward Movement in Sunday Schools, but all references to the pandemic were relegated to the "Round Table" columns, obituaries, and correspondent sections inside the periodical. These included one mistaken news item early in the pandemic that reported those who abstained from alcohol were safe from the flu. Experience quickly proved that false.

By and large, articles about the flu were not written by the male elders of the church, but by women. Brethren writers such as Julia Graydon, Rose D. Fox, and Alice Trimmer addressed not only the pandemic but the important pastoral opportunities that accompanied the disaster, setting a tone for the rise of women in ministry among the Brethren.

The pandemic was at the divide between failure and change. The failure was that of the old guard who failed to provide counsel and support for young Brethren men in the military camps. Following the pandemic, Brethren experienced a shift in mission philosophy from an emphasis on evangelism to one of service, along with a growing ecumenicity, an increasing role for women in ministry, the rise of the professional ministry, as well as an intentional increase in cooperation between church and state that gave greater opportunities for conscientious objectors to serve God and humanity rather than take part in war. The flu may have been one of the factors that led to the Brethren Service explosion of the 1930s and '40s. ❧

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Caught off-guard at Goshen

Brethren recanted anti-war statement under threat of sedition charge

Only once in 300 years did an immediate crisis require Brethren to convene as a denomination prior to their next annual gathering. During World War I a national draft of men into military service jeopardized Brethren pacifists, and the denomination responded with an emergency meeting in Goshen, Ind.

Conscription caught the denomination unprepared. The World War I draft was the nation's first in several generations, and at that point only the third in American history. Except for the Civil War and the Revolutionary War, volunteers had fought all other conflicts.

The new draft law gave conscientious objectors (CO's) few options. Regulations required all men between the ages of 18 and 45 to register and provided no opportunity for them to indicate CO status. Draftees who were CO's had to report to military camp first, then declare their intent. But as CO's arrived, authorities were reluctant to accept their word, and documentation of their beliefs became essential. Moreover, Brethren draftees and the ministers who visited them complained that authorities treated CO's roughly.

Additionally, unforeseen philosophical questions arose regarding the Brethren relationship to conscription. Was the draft system itself sinful, even if CO exemption ultimately resulted? Could Brethren even register for the draft, or should they refuse to cooperate? Could Brethren accept government-run alternative service, or should the denomination administer



Brethren Historical Library and Archives

Henry C. Early served as moderator of the Church of the Brethren in 1918.

the program? Was noncombatant status acceptable? Could noncombatants wear a uniform? Confusion reigned.

Many called for clarity. Accordingly, 400 Brethren gathered on Jan. 9, 1918, at Goshen in an extra meeting that had no standing in Brethren polity. Inviting delegates on short notice from each congregation was unrealistic, so Standing Committee, the Peace Committee, and pastors who had visited military camps comprised the 100-member delegate body. They passed a strong statement advising young men to "refrain from wearing the military uniform" and to avoid drilling and other military activities. The statement became a pamphlet used by Brethren CO's to verify their scruples.

When the War Department saw the Goshen document, authorities summoned W.J. Swigart and J.M. Henry, members of the Central Service Committee, to Washington, D.C. Authorities were upset because the Brethren at Goshen had discouraged participation in the military. The government recognized the right of individual conscience but not the right to express it. The War Department, therefore, threatened Swigart and Henry with sedition, which carried a lengthy prison sentence. Other opponents of the war had been jailed, and the warning was real.

Under pressure, the Brethren leaders repudiated the Goshen doctrine. Government officials went over the Brethren statement line by line with the denominational representatives before agreeing to it. Swigart had always favored noncombatant service ("that is all we ask"), and Henry claimed that at Goshen he had denounced the majority viewpoint as treasonous. Perhaps that made their recantation easier.

Justifying the new policy, Swigart explained in the *Gospel Messenger* that a "man is entitled to his opinion" and to practice it, but "he is not always at liberty" to express it or to "urge his conscience on others."

Score one for Big Brother. 

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THE SEDITION ACT

"Whoever when the United States is at war, shall willfully cause or attempt to cause, or incite or attempt to incite, insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny, or refusal of duty, in the military or naval forces of the United States, or shall willfully obstruct or attempt to obstruct the recruiting or enlistment services of the United States . . . shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or the imprisonment for not more than twenty years, or both." —excerpt from The Sedition Act of 1918, an amendment to the Espionage Act of 1917. The acts were repealed in 1921.



Dan West: Pied piper for peace

Brethren 'visionary' helped to begin several major programs

I discovered many treasures while working at the Brethren Historical Library and Archives. In the bottom of an old filing cabinet, for example, I found a flute in a moldy, black case that once belonged to Dan West.

It seems an apt symbol for West's leadership. Like the legendary Pied Piper, Dan West played an original tune and led Brethren youth down a new path. Unlike the legend, however, he did not lead young people down the road to destruction; instead, he called youth to lives of peace, justice, and harmony. The song he composed while luring young men into alternative service, drawing young women into the camping movement, and inviting teenagers into peace education at times created strident notes within the denomination he loved.

Dan West's influence in the Church of the Brethren and around the world is itself legendary. Throughout the world, people have benefited from Heifer Project gifts, Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS), and education in peace studies programs. His extensive legacy cannot be fully described here, so instead consider three aspects of his life.

The music of peace

Born in 1893, West grew up in a Brethren home and attended both Bethany Bible School and Manchester College, so World War I presented the first real challenge to his Brethren ideals. His older stepbrother, Pearl West, wrote to Dan on April 26, 1917: "You can avoid conscription by entering in arduous duties on the farm, but certainly I believe by entering the forest-service—if you do not wish to go to war."



Dan West with his wife, Lucy.

Dan had begun to investigate alternatives to military service upon his graduation from Manchester, but in 1918 found himself drafted and installed at Camp Wadsworth, S.C., for training. In a letter to his brother Sam West on May 19, 1918, he wrote, "...the Co. Commander came by and asked if there were any COs (conscientious objectors). I think I was the only one in the company who stood up. It was a bit lonesome before that crowd who thot [thought] otherwise, but I didn't mind so much.... But I feel out of place here."

West's letters reflect his struggle with military service, even service as a noncombatant who taught soldiers basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills. West's later concern with alternative service reflects his own interactions with

the military and his desire to make sure other young men did not have to face military service.

The tune of justice

In 1937-1938 West traveled as a relief worker with the American Friends Service Committee to war-ravaged Spain. He wrote moving letters home to his wife, Lucy, about his experiences. On Dec. 5, 1937, he wrote, "The hard part was having to refuse some of the needy who came in hope and went home empty-handed. It was very rough on me, but we had come to help the neediest only—not everybody. A few children poorly clad, with sores on their faces would have touched you deeply."

His daily missives to Lucy were full of stories about both the suffering and generosity of the people he met. He wrote on Oct. 7, 1937: "We were fed lunch . . . in an inn by one of the few families left in the little village and they would not take anything for a full course dinner for eight people! I didn't get many of their words, but I got the meaning—new evi-



Brethren Historical Library and Archives

Dan West, right, presents cattle as part of the "Heifer Project" he envisioned.



Brethren Historical Library and Archives

dence that I always meet good people everywhere I go." Clearly his famous quotation, "I will not eat cake as long as there are those in the world who don't have bread to eat," strongly reflected the horrors he witnessed in Spain.

Looking across the Spanish countryside, West noted its resemblance to his Indiana home, leading to his idea for the Heifer Project. If farmers in Indiana could supply the Spanish people with cattle, babies would no longer starve from lack of milk. He quickly put the idea to folks back in Indiana, and soon it turned into a denominational, interdenominational, and finally international organization, eventually becoming today's Heifer International.

In 1960, Dan and Lucy had the opportunity to travel across Europe and Asia. The trip was a triumphal moment for West, who had the opportunity to meet many people the Heifer Project had benefited. In his notes from the trip, he wrote a short reflection on justice in which he compared the American representation of blind justice holding scales to his alternate understanding of justice: "Justice has her eyes open to see, her hands free from both scales and sword—free to work." West's understanding of justice reflected his life philosophy: Look at the world with hands ready to serve.

BVS IS BORN

Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) began in 1948, when a group of young adults—encouraged by Dan West and others—proposed to Annual Conference an item not on the agenda: beginning a volunteer service program for the denomination. Delegates approved it, and the first orientation unit was held just months later, in September 1948.

BVS provided alternative service placements during the Korean and Vietnam wars, and it began accepting conscientious objectors from Germany in 1968. Volunteers serve across the United States, in Europe, in Latin America, and elsewhere.

Orientation unit 279, an older adult unit, was scheduled to hold orientation April 21 to May 2 in New Windsor, Md., and unit 280 will be in Wenatchee, Wash., this summer. BVS plans to celebrate its 60th anniversary with a reunion gathering Sept. 26-28 in New Windsor.

The harmony of service

From 1927 to 1930, West traveled around the country with Perry Rohrer, Al Brightbill, and Chauncey Shamberger, breathing life into the camping movement. Years later, many Brethren men and women involved in West's discussion groups have remarked on the powerful impression he made on them during these years.

West took an official job with the denomination in 1930, using both his visionary potential and renegade spirit to create new youth and service programs. M.R. Zigler related about West, "His imagination was tremendous, he was hard to live with really." West often wanted to take the church in a more radical direction than the more pragmatic Zigler believed it was ready to go. Zigler respected West as a visionary, but maintained, "Dan was hard to live with because the way . . . he dressed, where he thought you ought to live, on the farm and down the line." West challenged others to live in a way that encouraged peace and justice in all aspects of life, making him a difficult model to imitate.

West's work with youth was influential in the formation of BVS and peace studies programs. He refused to present the idea for BVS to Annual Conference himself, but became a discussion leader for BVS training units during the program's inception. He also pushed Manchester College to begin a peace studies program, even teaching the first class, "A Basis for an Enduring Peace."

Annual Conference chose West as the 1966 moderator, the first non-ordained moderator of the Church of the Brethren. During his address, titled "Not to Destroy But to Fulfill," he urged Brethren to "select the best from Brethren and other heritages (the measure is always the mind of Christ) and bid steadily for the hearty cooperation of all other groups going

our way." West respected Brethren heritage, but also urged Brethren toward peace, cooperation, and harmony with other Christians to benefit the world.

Dan West left an indelible impression on the Church of the Brethren. He became a legend remembered by the young people he influenced and memorialized by the organization that he envisioned on a Spanish hillside. Zigler, in his eulogy at

Dan West's funeral in 1971, stated, "If Dan West would have been born 10 years early, he

couldn't have been Dan West that we know. If he had come 10 years later, he could not have been Dan West."

West arrived at the necessary moment in the Church of the Brethren. He played his tune of peace and justice for the people of the world and inspired generations of Brethren who willingly followed him in the path of service. ❧

(All quotations are taken from the Dan West Papers at the Brethren Historical Library and Archives in Elgin, Ill.)

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Left to right, Perry Rohrer, Dan West, Chauncey Shamberger, and Al Brightbill made up "The Four Horsemen" who traveled to Brethren camps in the 1930s.

Courtesy of Becky Whas / BHLA



by Jane Davis

Let's go camping

Outdoor ministry blossomed in first half of 20th century

Long recognized as an excellent teaching tool, camping began as early as 1823 in Massachusetts.

The Fresh Air Movement (1872) raised awareness for the nation's poor in the ghettos and slums of the cities, while organized groups such as the YMCA began establishing campgrounds in rural areas. Soon, other religious groups considered camping and campgrounds.

Brethren expansion across the United States by 1908 led to district organizations, and district meetings involved travel time and expense. Families looked forward to attending these meetings for the spiritual and social aspects as well as business. In an effort to strengthen ties among district churches, activities for youth and adults were offered in rented campgrounds. Edgar Rothrock and Virgil Finnell organized a summer assemblies family camp for the Nebraska District (1917) that became an annual event.

Numerical growth allowed districts to purchase camp sites. Western Pennsylvania led the way with Camp Harmony (1923). A centralized, traveling leadership sponsored by the Board of Religious Education in Elgin, Ill., aided the growth of these summer camps, further enhanced by missionaries on leave from India, Africa, and other areas of service sharing their experiences and encouraging service work.

Later, Brethren Volunteer Service workers filled an important role in camping programs. District ministers and local church workers completed the leadership, acquainting local youth with others across the brotherhood. Often time spent at camp became a turning point for campers, as many dedicated their lives to Christ, with baptism at camp or their home congregation. Camping brought a world view to the local

campers, introduced them to new cultures, Brethren leaders, and missionaries, and created a mix of Brethren from across the brotherhood. One camper later remarked that with leadership such as this at their camp, "We knew they were real people with hair on their arms like the rest of us."

The 1930s group known as the "four horsemen"—Dan West, director of Young People's Work; Perry Rohrer; Alvin Brightbill; and Chauncey H. Shamberger—traveled by auto from camp to camp during the summers. By the end of the 1930s Brethren had 15 permanent camps and had held 60 sessions with 6,280 campers attending. A brochure advertising the 1930 Young People's Conference at Camp Hillyard, near St. Joseph, Mo., contains a picture of 70 attendees at the 1929 conference. Worship, numerous discussion groups, informal time and recreation, a closing vespers, and campfire made up the day's activities.

The Great Depression and Dust Bowl days of the 1930s brought financial problems to camps in the Plains states. District leaders considered discontinuing camping, but youth in the Northern and Middle Missouri districts strongly believed camping should continue. A scrapbook containing photographs of activities, hand-drawn camp scenes in white India ink on black scrapbook sheets, names of campers and leaders, and courses taught at camp was presented to the district elders. Camping in the Missouri districts continued as families provided food for camp and other cost-cutting measures were implemented.

Growth in the camping program peaked with 12,058 campers in 1955 and 38 district camps in 1957. District mergers lessened the number of camps needed. Programs were implemented to meet the needs of the local districts and organizational changes in denominational structure. Winterized camping, year-round paid staff, historical tours, and outdoor education environmental classes for public school children are some of the newer offerings at Brethren camps today. ❧

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DID YOU KNOW?

There are 29 camps and outdoor ministry programs in the denomination today, stretching from the Pacific Northwest to Florida and from Pennsylvania to California.



China revisited: A legacy of mission

Brethren work began in the country in 1908

On July 30, 1908, while the newly renamed Church of the Brethren was celebrating its 200th anniversary, the vanguard of Brethren mission work in China—Frank and Anna Crumpacker with Emma Horning and George and Blanche Hilton—left Seattle on the *USS Minnesota*. Four weeks later they arrived in Shanghai and traveled to Taiyuan, capital of Shanxi province. There, with the help of Paul Corbin of the American Board mission, they investigated the possibility of establishing mission work in Shanxi.

After 2,000 years of government under the imperial system, China was in the midst of a century of turmoil. Western powers had opened treaty ports following the Opium War of 1839-1842. Now, in 1908, Shanxi province was still reeling from the 1900 debacle of the anti-Western, anti-Christian “Boxer” rebellion and the subsequent violent suppression by Western powers. All of the missionaries in Shanxi had either fled or been killed, and mission work was only slowly returning.

In April 1910 two young Chinese men, the first Brethren converts, were baptized. Later that year a Brethren mission station was established in Ping Ting, and on Sunday, June 12, the first public preaching service was held in the Crumpacker home with about 40 attending. By the following year the Hiltons had taken an early furlough for medical reasons and Minerva Metzger joined the group. On May 10, 1911, the first love feast was celebrated in the Crumpacker home with four Americans and three Chinese participating.

Six new missionaries arrived in September 1911 but had to remain in the coastal city of Tientsin along with the Shanxi workers who had evacuated to the same city. China was in the process of overthrowing the imperial government and establishing a republic. That revolution was successful, but the country remained unsettled as various Chinese factions struggled for control.

Despite the turmoil, Brethren returned to Shanxi in the spring of 1912 and the mission work grew. Schools and hospitals were established in Ping Ting, Liao Chou, and Shou Yang. Additionally, evangelistic centers were located in Taiyuan, Ho



Mission meeting at Ping Ting, September 1912. The Chinese characters, from right to left, read “Ping Ting County Friend Love Society (Church of the Brethren) gathering.”

Shun, Ku Cheng, Ma Tien, Yu She, and Chin Chou. Major relief efforts were undertaken during the plague in the winter of 1917-1918 and the famines of 1912 and 1920. By 1929 there were 1,255 members in four congregations with one Chinese pastor and 42 paid evangelists. A student population of 644 was being educated in 14 schools. The outlook was very positive.

Open conflict between China and Japan began in July 1937 with the incident at Marco Polo Bridge near Peking (now Beijing), and conditions deteriorated rapidly. Since America was not yet at war with Japan, US citizens were on polite relations with the Japanese army. But missionaries were helping Chinese refugees and making it more difficult for the Japanese to assert full control. In December 1937, Alva and Mary Harsh and Minneva Neher disappeared, presumably killed by the Japanese. By late 1940 tension between the occupying Japanese and Brethren in Shanxi was extreme. In addition to the three missionaries, 13 Chinese Christians accused of spying were executed. In December, Chinese church leaders asked that the Americans leave, and plans were made to do that.

Six new missionaries had arrived in August 1940 and were in the Peking Language School. They, along with Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham, moved with the school to the Philippines in the spring of 1941 and spent the war in a Japanese internment



Mission meeting in Ping Ting, 1930.

camp. Three others who had chosen to remain in Peking were interned in China. The rest returned to America in early 1941.

Between 1908 and 1941, 83 Brethren had served in China and 12 lost their lives to that service, either in China or as the result of diseases contracted there.

Ernest Wampler and O.C. Sollenberger returned to lay the foundation for a Brethren Service medical/relief effort in "Free China" in September 1941. But America's entry into the war three months later prevented the rest of the group from going. Wampler and Sollenberger were able to coordinate some relief work with the American Advisory Committee and returned to America in July 1943.

After the war a strong contingent of missionaries returned to China. Brethren Service sent a group of "Plowboys" to help reclaim farmland, and a shipment of heifers was sent in 1946. But the developing Communist revolution limited work in Shanxi province, and the mission work was moved to southern China. This initiative was also stymied as the Communists advanced south, assuming full control of the mainland in 1949. The last Brethren missionary returned to the United States in 1951.

Very little physical evidence remains of the Brethren mis-

sion work. The hospital in Ping Ting has a memorial to the Brethren work there, recognizing that the Brethren had established the hospital, but none of the buildings remain. The church building in Liao Chou (now Zuoquan) is a restaurant. As I stood in the former pulpit area to take a picture, Wang Baotien (whose father, uncle, and cousin were killed by the Japanese) commented, "This is where your father baptized me, three times under the water." He had fought the Japanese during the war and risen to a middle-level administrator afterwards. His daughter credits his training in the mission schools for teaching him the qualities of honesty and fairness

that gained him the trust and respect of his fellow workers.

What does remain of the work and sacrifice of more than 100 Brethren missionaries and Brethren Service workers? There are several answers.

First, lives of individual Chinese were changed. Souls were brought to Christ. The seed of Christianity was planted. The Christian Church in China is thriving. A former Methodist mission church served in recent years by Pastor Yin—son of Elder H. C. Yin, a leader in the Chinese Brethren church since 1912—now numbers 5,000 members. It is one of 10 Protestant churches in Beijing.

Not surprisingly, the situation in rural areas is very different from the large, cosmopolitan cities. Local government is more conservative and exercises stronger control than in the major cities. While Christian congregations exist, they keep a low profile.

Second, children were educated. When Communism came to China peasant children were the favored class, and those who had been educated in mission schools were better prepared for leadership. The influence of their Christian training remains today.



Remembering "Wang mushi" in Chin Chou, now Quinshen, during a visit in 2006.

ENCOUNTERS IN CHINA

In the summer of 2006, Joe and Gene Wampler led a family group back to Shanxi province and visited again the area where they were born and spent most of their early years.

Gene relates: "During a taxi ride in Beijing, as we passed the former mission compound, I mentioned to the driver that I had lived there in 1947. The driver said there was a church there. I said, 'I know, I used to attend that church.' Then I asked if he was a Christian and he said he was. He said that a lot of people attend that church; some understand the meaning and some do not. (I took him to mean that he did understand.)"

"The Brethren mission work and the missionaries themselves are fondly remembered," he adds. "In the village where Joe and I had spent our early childhood, Joe struck up a conversation with an old gentleman who was playing Chinese chess and mentioned he had lived there 70 years earlier. The gentleman said, 'Wang mushi' ('Pastor Wampler'). Joe asked if he had known Wang mushi and the man replied, 'Everybody knew him and everybody loved him.'"

Third, lives were spared and made easier. In 1930 the three hospitals treated some 20,000 patients. Famine relief, plague control, and health education spared many thousands more. Missionaries who had been raised on farms interacted easily with farmers in central Shanxi province, introducing improved crop varieties, hybrid sheep, and an associated wool industry.

Finally, the status of women was greatly improved. Because educated men often left the village for opportunities in the cities, women played a major role in educating local commu-

nities and the next generation. Often the only person in a village who could read was a woman. Educated girls, wives, and mothers introduced a basic understanding of nutrition, child care, and health care, while small handicraft industries contributed to their economic stability. ❧

Gene Wampler was born in China, the son of missionaries Ernest and Elizabeth Wampler. He is a member of Indian Creek Church of the Brethren in Harleysville, Pa. His brother, Joe Wampler, also contributed to this article.

by Janis Pyle

From humble beginnings to the largest of all

Nigerian church now has more than 150,000 members

After initial mission efforts to Denmark (1876), India (1894), and China (1908), the Church of the Brethren felt called to Africa. The first Brethren worship service in Nigeria was held on March 17, 1923, by H. Stover Kulp and Albert D. Helser under a tamarind tree in the village of Garkida.

"Each of us prayed that this spot might be a fountain to which people might come and drink of the Water of Life and eat of the Bread of Life," Helser wrote. Although beset by personal tragedies, the missionaries began to translate the Scriptures into the local Bura language, engage in health care, and establish schools and a hospital. In the following decades, the Church of the Brethren Mission (CBM) continued to establish schools and other programs, and its influence spread from Garkida into new areas.

In 85 years, Ekklesiar Yanu'wa a Nigeria (EYN)—the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria—has grown to be the largest Church of the Brethren national body in the world, with more than 150,000 members in 1,000 churches. The energy and vitality of the membership has resulted in active evangelism and church planting efforts within Nigeria and recently to other neighboring countries. Continual pastoral leadership training is needed for this growing church, as 10 to 15 new congregations are formed annually.

Invitations to the US church to send teachers for key assignments have become areas for meaningful partnering in ministry. The following schools were begun and continue with Brethren vision and support:

- Kulp Bible College (KBC), near Mubi, is the major training institution for Nigerian church leadership with an enrollment of approximately 180 students;

- the church-sponsored Comprehensive Secondary School, based on the KBC and EYN headquarters property;
- and Hillcrest School in Jos, a K-through-12 school started by the Church of the Brethren and now run by a consortium of missions, providing American-style education for the children of mission workers throughout West Africa.

Leadership development grants from the Church of the Brethren's Global Mission Partnerships office also support more than 200 people annually as they prepare for pastoral ministry, graduating 60 to 70 people each year for service in the church. The Theological Education by Extension program trains over 1,500 people annually in basic Brethren beliefs and practices and denominational history. The program results in a biblically grounded laity, and some graduates are prompted to consider pastoral ministry.

Active programs of

wells, health care, and schools—central mission ventures since the beginning of mission work in Nigeria—have been handed over to the Nigerian church for direction and implementation. The Mason Technical School joined with a number of these ministries as the church adapted an integrated community development approach.

These church outreach ministries continue to assist communities in some of the more isolated areas of northeast Nigeria. And an annual workcamp continues to build strong relationships between the US and EYN churches. ❧



Brethren in Nigeria hold an outdoor footwashing service.

Janis Pyle is coordinator of mission connections for the General Board's Global Mission Partnerships office. She is a member of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin, Ill.



Practicing biblical hospitality

by Duane Grady

Churches must focus on the needs of those who visit

As a member of the Congregational Life Team staff of the General Board, I regularly find myself in a different church each Sunday. Often I enter a church for the first time, but usually I have at least one contact and a defined role prior to my arrival.

Recently, I found myself with a Sunday morning without any specific responsibilities, and I chose to go as a first-time visitor to a church where I had no connections. I chose a church that wasn't Church of the Brethren but that was similar in size to many of our congregations. I wanted to experience what it feels like to enter a church as a stranger.

I was immediately surprised by how unsettling it is to enter a church for the first time. Nervousness and anxiety went with me. I had no reason to be fearful yet I was hesitant, especially about going alone. Attending church is familiar to me, and I

have had many wonderful and positive experiences in worship, yet I hesitated to go someplace new. I can only imagine how much more difficult this must be for people who have never gone to church or who have had negative experiences.

In my travels I meet many people who want to attend church but who talk themselves out of going. Likely this reluctance occurs from the fear of the unknown. Will people ignore me? Will I be smothered with undesired attention? Will I be ridiculed and laughed at? Churches can appear as mysterious places.

My experience as a first-time attendee was mostly positive. I was immediately aware that the church had received training in welcoming newcomers. I could also tell that a first-time attendee was an infrequent experience. I entered the church and looked to locate the sanctuary. Two elderly gentlemen rushed to greet me and hand me bulletins. I received two bul-

PEOPLE DECIDE TO ATTEND CHURCH FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS. OFTEN, THEY ARE FEELING THAT SOMETHING IS LACKING IN THEIR LIVES. MANY PEOPLE GO TO CHURCH FOR THE FIRST TIME FEELING VULNERABLE AND TIMID. IT IS HARD FOR ME TO IMAGINE GOING TO CHURCH BECAUSE THE THING MISSING IN MY LIFE WAS A DESIRE TO BE ON A MAILING LIST OR BECAUSE I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH COFFEE MUGS.

letins and a request that felt like a demand to fill out a visitor card so the church would have record of my attendance.

One of the greeters mentioned not knowing who I was and then demanded to know my name. The other shoved a visitor's gift into my hand: a nicely wrapped coffee mug filled with information about the church. All of this happened within the first 30 seconds of my entering the building.

Neither greeter opened one of the doors into the sanctuary nor offered to help me find a seat. I was eager to find a seat and found none available in the back pews. The only available seats were in the front rows. I was not eager to proclaim my presence by walking all the way to the front, so instead I chose to squeeze into a side aisle seat towards the back, which I had to enter by going through a side door.

As would be true of most first-time attendees, I deliberately arrived a few minutes after the church service had begun. This reduces the attention drawn to oneself and provides time to get acclimated to the worship service. Within a couple of minutes of my arrival, the church had a time of greeting and passing the peace. Many people around me were warm and friendly. The only snags here were the people who remarked about not knowing me, then asking for my name without volunteering theirs. In this way, I was reminded that I did not belong and felt forced to give up information about myself. I was also reminded to fill out the visitor card so that the church would have a way of contacting me, whether I wanted them to do so or not.

When the worship service continued, I was moved by the children's story and the pastoral prayer. It felt like the pastor was speaking directly to me and the concerns that were real to my life. The sermon was equally good. I came on a Sunday when the church was offering communion, and the instructions were clear and easy to understand.

After reflecting upon this experience, I am appreciative that the church is eager and prepared for new people. I would encourage them to be more sensitive to people who may be apprehensive about wanting to give them information. I left feeling that the church was determined to find out information about me (name, address, how to add me to their mailing list) without anyone seeming to care about my spiritual needs.

The church was assertive in providing me with written information about their activities, but no one personally invited me to stay for Sunday school or helped me find my way to where coffee and refreshments were available. The "gift" for first-time attendees was a nice touch; however, it was a bit awkward in my case since I had walked to the church and would have to carry it two miles.

In my specific case, a gentle offering of it with an option of saying "No thanks" would have better served their purposes.

I pondered the question of whether I would attend this church again and wavered until Monday morning, when I received a call from a member of the church wanting to add me to their mailing list even though I had not left any contact information. My only guess is that I was tracked down by someone who remembered my name, then hunted me down in the phone book. Given my personality, this felt intrusive. I felt like I was being recruited to join their church without being asked about what I was yearning to discover.

There are many ways to help first-time attendees feel welcome. Signs and quality worship help, as does a warm welcome. Opportunities to share information without making it feel like a requirement allow people with different personal temperaments to respond as they choose. Jesus-style evangelism seeks to help people find what they are seeking rather than persuading new people to help the church with its established programs.

People decide to attend church for a variety of reasons. Often, they are feeling that something is lacking in their lives. Many people go to church for the first time feeling vulnerable and timid. It is hard for me to imagine going to church because the thing missing in my life was a desire to be on a mailing list or because I didn't have enough coffee mugs. I can imagine wanting to feel connected to God, to learn about forgiveness, or to find relationships with people who already understand these things.

This process can be made easier if we simply invite new people to attend, then offer to bring them so that they do not need to come on their own. Not everyone will accept this invitation, but those who do will already feel more connected and less anxious about coming for the first time.

Last year's Annual Conference in Cleveland challenged us once again to take seriously the need to reach out to new people. We have heard this request before, as the delegate body affirmed the intent of the 1981 report on "Diminishing Membership in the Church of the Brethren."

What stops us from acting on this desire to grow our churches? Likely a fear of people we do not know. What prevents more people from coming on their own to our churches? Likely a fear of people there that they do not know. Wouldn't it be good if the church could become a place where fears were overcome and cast out in the name of Jesus? 

Duane Grady is coordinator of the General Board's Area 2 and 4 (Midwest/Plains) Congregational Life Teams and conducts numerous workshops for congregations. He lives in Anderson, Ind.

by Graydon F. Snyder

John: *Signs of the divine*

Fourth Gospel varies significantly from other three

“You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (8:32). This famous slogan occurs on the main entrance of many colleges and universities. Indeed, the truth we learn and experience may help set us free from the falsifications and road blocks of society that keep us from a full life.

For John, however, the source of truth does not lie in a classroom. Instead, “grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (1:17). Even more strikingly, Jesus says of himself, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (14:6). Truth comes from God. Truth is the Word that was with God from the beginning (1:1). And that Word became flesh (historical), and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth (1:14).

Because John stresses Jesus as the source of divine truth, his Gospel does differ from the Synoptics (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and from Paul. For the most part, in

the other three Gospels we find real life when we follow Jesus as his disciple.

In John, Jesus makes the truth known to us through his signs. While some might prefer to call them miracles, John insists they are revelations (6:26-27). While Jesus must have done many signs (20:30), only five are described. All have to do with the life of the faith community.

Two relate the nature of the love feast in the early church: The first sign, the wedding at Cana, describes the source of the wine of the communion. Jesus takes the Jewish water used for ritual cleansing and transforms it to Christian ritual wine (2:1-11). Skipping over to the third sign (6:1-14), we find the source for the bread (and fish) at the early church communion. A crowd en route to Passover at Jerusalem was hungry. Jesus took five loaves and two fish offered by a boy, gave thanks for them

(*eucharist* in Greek), and distributed them. When the people were satisfied, the disciples gathered up 12 baskets of fragments (seven [note Mark 8:8] or 12 baskets of bread are always seen in pictures of the early church love feast).

These two signs constitute for John the establishment of the Lord’s Supper. Actually in John there is no Passover/Lord’s Supper as there is in the Synoptics (Mark 14:17-25, Matt. 26:20-29, Luke 22:14-23). The supper in John 13:1-30 does not mention any Passover elements. In fact, the meal occurred a day before the Jewish Passover (13:1). While chapter 13 does not give us a basis for the Lord’s Supper, it does describe an action that has been dear to Brethren from their beginning—feetwashing. At the time of Jesus a servant would wash the feet of the table guests so they did not make the bench pillows dirty. In this story Jesus took the place of the servant (13:14-16). Feetwashing was not only a humble service, but also symbolized Jesus baptizing the disciples (13:8-11).

The other signs also revealed how Jesus affected our life. The second sign was performed at Capernaum when an official asked Jesus to save the life of his son. Jesus did so at a distance (4:46-54)—a sign of how faith heals us.

The resurrection of Lazarus (11:1-44) is designated as the next sign (11:47). Jesus hears that his friend Lazarus has died. The family of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, are like family to Jesus. Jesus waits three days before he goes to Bethany (Jewish customs assumed a person was not necessarily dead in less than three days). Mary and Martha loved Jesus, but did not really believe he could raise Lazarus from the dead. Nevertheless they took him to the grave. Despite protests, he had them roll away the gravestone and called

JOHN: A CLOSER LOOK

Author: Tradition says the Apostle John wrote the Fourth Gospel, but John 21:20-25 indicates a person named the “beloved disciple” was the author. Many attempts to identify the nameless disciple have been made. Most readers assume he is John the Elder, who wrote the three Letters of John (2 John 1:1 and 3 John 1:1).

Stories: Of the many beloved stories in this Gospel, best known are the visit with Nicodemus at night (3:1-21), the encounter with the woman of Samaria at Jacob’s well (4:1-30), the healing of the man born blind (9:1-41), the resurrection of Lazarus (11:1-41), and the feetwashing at the Last Supper (13:1-20).

Well-known verses: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (3:16); “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’” (14:6).

Other notes: The book appears to end with verses 30-31 in chapter 20. So apparently chapter 21 was added somewhat later. The story of the woman taken in adultery (7:53-8:11) is missing from several very early manuscripts, and can be found elsewhere.

Lazarus forth—a sign of new life and resurrection for us!

Finally, after the crucifixion, on the first day of the week (that is Sunday), Jesus appeared to the disciples in the Upper Room (20:19-31). The next Sunday evening he offered the skeptical Thomas a chance to confirm the resurrection by examining his wounds. Jesus established the first faith community “Sunday” meeting and has made his resurrected presence known ever since (20:30-31)—a sign that Jesus always meets with us.

John gives us narratives from the life of Jesus, but, as with the signs, they always have a faith meaning. In chapter 3 his friend Nicodemus (see 19:39) comes to see him at night. Jesus tells him he must be “born again from above,” and then he will see the light (vv. 19-20). In chapter 4 Jesus stops at a well in Samaria. He asks a Samaritan woman (who ought not speak to him, or drink from the same vessel) for some water. In response to her astonishment he tells her he can give her the real water of life, and she will never thirst again. That water is not well water, but living, flowing water that will surge up in her to give her a real, satisfactory life. In chapter 9 he passes by a man born blind. Everyone supposes that someone sinned to make him blind. But Jesus doesn’t buy sin as the source of human problems, so he gives sight to this man born blind. Because the man can see, he eventually believes in the Son of Man (v. 38).

Who wrote the Fourth Gospel? Early tradition assumed the Apostle John did, but most readers today doubt that. John, James, and Peter take a backseat to the unnamed beloved disciple, the source of the Gospel material (21:20-25). To our surprise, as Jesus is dying



IN RESPONSE TO HER ASTONISHMENT HE TELLS HER HE CAN GIVE HER THE REAL WATER OF LIFE, AND SHE WILL NEVER THIRST AGAIN. THAT WATER IS NOT WELL WATER, BUT LIVING, FLOWING WATER THAT WILL SURGE UP IN HER TO GIVE HER A REAL, SATISFACTORY LIFE.

on the cross he asks the beloved disciple to replace him as the son of Mary (19:26-27). So the honored, beloved disciple surely penned the Fourth Gospel.

Unfortunately we cannot associate the beloved disciple with any known historical person. A few suggest Lazarus, since Jesus loved him (11:5). A very few think the beloved disciple might be a woman hidden as a man. Certainly the author describes a Jesus who has a compassionate attitude toward women. He loved the family of Mary and Martha at Bethany. At one Bethany dinner Mary poured ointment on the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair (12:1-3). Only a very close friend would do such an intimate act in public. The other Mary, Mary Magdalene, encountered the resurrected Jesus outside the tomb

and tried to hug him. She couldn’t, because Jesus was no longer available as a physical being (19:11-18).

Regardless of who wrote the Gospel of John, it has come to us as one of the greatest documents of Christianity. It presents to us a clear, powerful picture of faith and truth. And because these historical narratives that occurred in Palestine have meanings that transcend history, the Gospel of John speaks to any culture at any time. **W**

Graydon F. Snyder is a member of Chicago First Church of the Brethren and a former faculty member of Bethany Theological Seminary.

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 June: Acts, by Tara Hornbacher.

Committee shares merger plan at joint agency board meeting

Meeting jointly on March 8, the board of the Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC), the Church of the Brethren General Board, and the Annual Conference Council heard a presentation from an Implementation Committee working toward a merger of the General Board and ABC.

No action was taken at the meeting, which was held for the purposes of information sharing, discussion, worship, and fellowship. After the two boards separately approve or affirm the plan, it will come to the 2008 Annual Conference as an item of business.

The new structure would allow all the ministries of both ABC and the General Board to continue to serve the church, and would assign the functions of the Annual Conference Council to various components of the organization. The Implementation Committee will recommend that the new entity's board be called "Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board." Other agencies, committees, and structures of the denomination remain unchanged. Annual Conference continues as the annual meeting of the church and as the highest and final legislative authority in the Church of the Brethren.

The Implementation Committee was elected by the 2007 Annual Conference to create a plan for the merger, after the Conference adopted the recommendation of the Review and Evaluation Committee to unite the agencies into a new incorporated legal entity. "Most members of the Church of the Brethren will not experience significant change in the way this new structure serves the church," the committee's report said.

The recommendation calls for the General Board and ABC board to be combined into a new 15-member board led by a chair and chair-elect. All current members of the General Board and ABC board are entitled to complete their terms, so the number recommended by the Implementation Committee will be achieved by attrition over time. Ten board members would be elected by Annual Conference, five chosen by the board and affirmed by the Conference, and a chair and chair-elect would be chosen by the board from its members. Ex officio members will represent Annual Conference, the Brethren Benefit Trust, On Earth Peace, Bethany Theological Seminary, and the Council of District Executives.

Members of the board elected by Annual Conference would no longer represent districts, but rather an area of the

denomination. Each of the five areas would be represented by two elected members of the board. The nomination process for these positions would be handled by the Annual Conference Standing Committee of district representatives.

A new Leadership Team for the denomination would be created, to include the Annual Conference officers—moderator, moderator-elect, and secretary—and the general secretary, who will continue to direct the day-to-day work of the operations and program staff of the board.

A new office of Conference Planning would be created within the new entity to arrange logistics for all denominational conferences, including Annual Conference, National Youth Conference, and National Older Adult Conference. Annual Conference officers and committees would continue to hold non-logistical responsibility for Annual Conference, and the respective program staff would continue to plan content of the other denominational conferences.

Although Annual Conference strongly encouraged On Earth Peace to join with the new entity, that agency declined. "It became clear that the On Earth Peace board and constituency felt the church's peace witness could be better served by On Earth Peace working outside the new entity, as a sister program agency, but in close collaboration with it," the Implementation Committee reported.

Much of the new bylaws document was taken directly from existing agency bylaws and Annual Conference polity, and only those sections necessary to create the new board and its structure have been revised, the committee said. The General Board and the ABC board will approve or affirm the plan of merger before Annual Conference in July, and ABC will seek approval from the Fellowship of Brethren Homes, which represents the organization's official dues-paying members.

If the plan of merger and bylaws are approved by Annual Conference, the first meeting of the new board will take place in October. At that meeting, a new chair and chair-elect and a new executive committee will be chosen. The Annual Conference secretary will serve as secretary of the new board.

The Implementation Committee includes elected members Gary Crim, John Neff, and David Sollenberger, as well as the executives of three agencies and the Annual Conference Office—Stan Noffsinger, general secretary of the General Board; Kathy Reid, executive director of ABC; Bob Gross, executive director of On Earth Peace; and Lerry Fogle, executive director of Annual Conference.



ABC executive director Kathy Reid explains the new structure of the denomination, pending approval of the merger of the General Board with ABC at the 2008 Annual Conference.

General Board approves paper on ethics, capital improvements

After participating in a joint meeting March 8 on a plan of merger with the Association of Brethren Caregivers, the General Board continued its meetings in Elgin, Ill., March 9-10.

Major items of business included a revision of the denomination's Ethics in Ministry document, a resolution celebrating the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women to ministry, and a capital proposal for replacement of air conditioning equipment.

- The board approved a revision of the denomination's Ethics in Ministry paper, using a consensus model of decision-making. The document, which has been in a revision process for several years, will go to the 2008 Annual Conference for approval.

- The board approved a "Resolution on 50 Years of Women's Ordination in the Church of the Brethren," marking 2008 as the 50th anniversary of the 1958 Annual Conference decision "that women be granted full and unrestricted rights to ordination." The full resolution is at www.brethren.org/genbd/GBResolutions/2008WomensOrdination.pdf.

- The board approved an initial capital expenditure of \$390,000 for a thermal ice storage air conditioning system at the General Offices in Elgin, and directed staff to "boldly seek energy source solutions that reduce our dependence on commercial electricity and fossil fuels. Solar, geo-thermal, and similar energy sources should be given high priority in the General Board property master planning." The expenditure was made necessary when one of the facility's two 50-year-old "chillers" failed. The capital proposal from staff offered options for replacing the whole heating, air conditioning, and ventilation system of the building with more energy efficient and "green" technologies.



Sister and brother Vickie Samland and Chris Whittaker, board members of the General Board and the ABC board, respectively, could soon be sitting at the same board table.

- In other business, Barbra Davis was appointed the board's representative to the Brethren Support Staff Association, and numerous reports were received, including financial reports. The General Board's Core Ministries Fund ended 2007 with a net income of about \$130,000. Total giving to the board increased by 9.5 percent over 2006, adding in all individual and congregational gifts to all the funds of the board, and including bequests and donor restricted gifts, but giving from congregations to the Core Ministries Fund fell 2 percent.

- A report on the Sudan mission initiative prompted much discussion. Director Brad Bohrer told the board the goal of doing mission in Sudan "is not lost" despite recent setbacks and transition in the project, initially approved by the board in October 2005. Some board members, however, expressed a need to revisit the total direction of the mission in Sudan. General secretary Stan Noffsinger said the executive committee of the board has already begun work with mission and funding staff on issues related to the Sudan initiative. The discussion closed with moments of silent and spoken prayer for Sudan and all those involved with the mission.



Annual Conference announces new dates for 2009 gathering

The Program and Arrangements Committee of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference has announced a date change and a shift in the normal daily pattern for Annual Conference 2009, to be held in San Diego, Calif.

The 2009 Annual Conference will take place from opening worship on Friday, June 26, through closing worship on Tuesday, June 30. The dates for the Conference had already been shifted to one week earlier than previously

announced. These new dates place the Conference on a Friday-Tuesday pattern for 2009 only; the normal Saturday-Wednesday pattern will return in 2010.

The revisions to the schedule were requested by host facility Town and Country Resort, and the city of San Diego, to accommodate a citywide event starting Tuesday evening, June 30. In appreciation for the willingness to accommodate this departure from the normal Conference daily pattern, room rate reductions and other considerations have been made by the city and facility. The new dates are being announced as far in advance as possible to allow for scheduling adjustments by all Annual Conference constituents.

The 2008 Annual Conference will take place July 12-16 in Richmond, Va.

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 1-31 Mental Health Awareness Month, Older Adult Month

May 3 Healthy Congregations workshop, Camp Harmony, Hooversville, Pa.

May 4 National Youth Sunday

May 10 Deacon Ministry training event, Lacey (Wash.) Community Church of the Brethren

May 11 Deacon Ministry training event, Wenatchee (Wash.) Brethren-Baptist Church

May 11 Pentecost Offering (suggested date)

May 15-17 Church Planting Conference, Richmond, Ind.

May 18 Health Promotion Sunday

May 19-21 Spiritual Directors Retreat, Shepherd's Spring, Sharpsburg, Md.

May 31 Deacon Ministry training event, Frederick (Md.) Church of the Brethren

June 1 Brethren Press summer curriculum quarter begins

June 23-26 Brethren Academy new student orientation, Richmond, Ind.

July 6-12 Song and Story Fest, Brethren Woods, Keezletown, Va.

BVS Unit 278: Orientation for Brethren Volunteer Service Unit 278 was held at Camp Ithiel in Gotha, Fla., from Jan. 27 to Feb. 15. The volunteers spent several days serving the community, including workdays with local Orlando agencies and Greater Miami Habitat for Humanity. The group also explored many issues of faith, community, peace, and social justice throughout their three weeks. For more information about BVS, call 800-323-8039, or visit www.brethrenvolunteerservice.org. Volunteers, their home congregations or hometown, and placements are:



(left to right): Beth Merrill (staff); Heidrun Herrenbrueck, Bielefeld, Germany, to Gould Farm, Monterey, Mass.; Lauren Farrell, Rochester, N.Y., to Quaker Cottage in Belfast, Northern Ireland; Jutta von Dahl, Bell, Germany, to Brethren Nutrition Program, Washington D.C.; Elizabeth Barnes, Sioux City, Iowa, to Casa de Esperanza de los Niños, Houston, Texas; Julia Seese, Delphi, Ind., to Bridgeway Home for Pregnant Teens, Lakewood, Colo.; Jim Leyva, York Center Church of the Brethren, Lombard, Ill., to Lancaster (Pa.) Area Habitat for Humanity; Dennis Kottmann, Lage, Germany, to Tri-City Homeless Coalition, Fremont, Calif.; Rita Schuele, Buchen, Germany, to Bridgeway Home for Pregnant Teens, Lakewood, Colo.; Brandon Bohrer, Brook Park Church of the Brethren, Berea, Ohio, to San Antonio (Texas) Catholic Worker House; Callie Surber (staff).

Personnel moves

• **Mervin B. Keeney** resigned as executive director of Global Mission Partnerships for the Church of the Brethren General Board effective March 14. He had held the position since 1997, with responsibility for overseeing the denomination's international mission programs, Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS), and the Brethren Witness/Washington Office. He first began work for the board in 1978 as coordinator for BVS recruitment and interpretation, and then as a recruiter for mission staff through 1985. He held an assignment in Sudan from 1985 to 1987 as a medical administrator and consultant for the Sudan Council of Churches. From 1991 to 1997 he worked for the General Board as Africa/Middle East representative.

• **R. Jan Thompson** was appointed interim executive director of Global Mission Partnerships for the Church of the Brethren General Board, beginning April 1. He is a former General Board member and former mission worker for the church. As mission staff in Sudan, he and his wife, Roma Jo, worked on a Theological Education by Extension (TEE) program and with the Sudan Council of Churches. He was called to head the Church of the Brethren's Disaster Response Program for a term of

service beginning in 1978. He also has filled several volunteer positions in the church, most recently as moderator of Pacific Southwest District in 2005, and he was part of a Faith Expedition to Sudan in 2002. He is an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren. He will work out of the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill.

• **Jim and Pam Hardenbrook** resigned from the lead team position of the Church of the Brethren General Board's Sudan Initiative, effective April 7. The Hardenbrooks had done visits to congregations this past fall and had been expected to travel to Africa to begin the work there later this year. The Hardenbrooks, from Nampa, Idaho, are now serving an interim pastorate in Virginia.

• **Allen T. Hansell Sr.** announced his retirement as director of church relations for Elizabethtown (Pa.) College, effective April 5. He had filled the position since May 2005, serving as the primary liaison between the college and the Church of the Brethren. He is succeeded by **Donna Forbes Steiner**, who began April 1. She holds a bachelor's degree from Drake University and a master of religious education from Bethany Theological Seminary. She began serving in ministry in 1964 and served from 1997 to 2002 as associate executive minister of Atlantic

Northeast District. Since then she has served as a consultant and interim pastor.

• **Sharon E. (Shari) McCabe**, chief executive officer of The Cedars, announced her retirement effective May 1, after nearly 30 years in the health care field. The Cedars is a Church of the Brethren retirement community in McPherson, Kan., that also is associated with the Free Methodist Church. McCabe has served as CEO of The Cedars since 2003.

• **Shelly Wagner** began as director of the New Windsor (Md.) Conference Center on March 24. This is a new salaried position with the Church of the Brethren General Board. Wagner comes to the position with 12 years of experience in domestic and international marketing in the for-profit arena, and brings skills in strategic planning, niche marketing, branding, and customer service. She previously worked for I.M.I, a commercial tires and accessory parts company. She lives in Waynesboro, Pa., and is a member of Welty Church of the Brethren, Smithsburg, Md. **Kathleen Campanella**, who has worked for the last several years as a part-time director of the conference center during a period of transition in addition to her responsibilities for public information, moves to a new role as director of Partner and Public Relations for the Brethren Service Center.

ONCAMPUS

Bridgewater College (Bridgewater, Va.)

Seven Bridgewater students took up hammers and paint brushes to volunteer as construction workers for Habitat for Humanity's Collegiate Challenge Spring Break 2008. The students, accompanied by chemistry professor Joseph Crockett, traveled to Sumter, S.C., March 15-22. . . . Former ambassador and congressman Andrew Young kicked off Bridgewater's observation of the 300th anniversary of the Church of the Brethren with a March 31 speech on nonviolence.

Elizabethtown College (Elizabethtown, Pa.)

Elizabethtown is among the 528 colleges or universities named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for exemplary service efforts and service to disadvantaged youth. . . . A Brooklyn, N.Y., school teacher and a Baghdad school teacher who created an e-mail exchange program for their students and colleagues presented a talk on "Putting a Human Face on Collateral Damage" on March 10.

Juniata College (Huntingdon, Pa.)

Alumni John (Class of 1954) and Irene (1958) Dale have donated \$1 million to Juniata as part of a capital campaign to restore and expand Founders Hall. The hall is Juniata's original campus building and currently its main administrative facility. The project, with an approximately \$8 million budget, will create new classrooms and new office space for two humanities departments. A bell tower and circular staircase will also be restored.

University of La Verne (La Verne, Calif.)

The annual Career Services survey found that within six months of the May 2007 commencement, 97.8 percent of graduates had found jobs, were continuing their studies, or were full-time volunteers. . . . Human rights activist John Prendergast on Feb. 18 delivered a convocation address and participated in a panel discussion and dialogue about genocide and mass atrocities.

Manchester College (North Manchester, Ind.)

Manchester is awarding a record total of more than \$9.9 million in academic scholarships for the 2008-2009 school year, including 198 to high-performing high school seniors. All of the scholarships recognize academic achievement, and range from \$44,000 to more than \$80,000 over four years. The school said applications have been up significantly this year.

McPherson College (McPherson, Kan.)

McPherson students Victoria de la Torre, Orlando Domínguez, and Melisa Grandison, and faculty sponsor Ocie Kilgus attended the 26th annual conference of the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute in Chicago in February. About 2,000 people attended in all. Jesse Jackson Jr. was among the keynote speakers.

Three called as 2009 workcamp coordinators

Emily Laprade, a member of Antioch Church of the Brethren in Rocky Mount, Va., and Meghan Horne, a member of Mill Creek Church of the Brethren in Tryon, N.C., will serve as coordinators for the 2009 Church of the Brethren young and young adult workcamps.

In addition, Bekah Houff—who is coordinating this summer's National Young Adult Conference—will stay on another year to assist as a part-time workcamp coordinator, along with coordinating the 2009 National Junior High Conference. Houff is a member of Palmyra (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.

Laprade, who graduates from Bridgewater (Va.) College this spring, and Horne, a 2006 University of North Carolina graduate who is now finishing a master's in school counseling, will serve through Brethren Volunteer Service. Both will begin their terms in August. Houff will be a program intern.

Details on the workcamp program, including a listing of the 26 workcamps being offered this summer, are at www.brethren.org/genbd/yya/workcamps.

Bits and pieces:

- Applications are now available for those wishing to apply for a Brethren Volunteer Service position as a **2010 National Youth Conference coordinator**. The positions will begin in May 2009. To receive an application, contact Church of the Brethren Youth/Young Adult Ministry director Chris Douglas at cdouglas_gb@brethren.org or 800-323-8039. Applications are due to the Youth/Young Adult Ministry office by Oct. 20.

- Youth in grades 6-12 are invited to enter a **300th anniversary writing contest** on the theme "Why will you continue to be part of the Church of the Brethren?" Entries are limited to one page in length and can be in the form of poetry, short stories, or essays. Each entry should include name, grade, congregation, and district. Contact information should be submitted on a separate sheet of paper. Send submissions to Loreley Yager at loreleyager@aol.com or 425 Woodland Place, Churubusco, IN 46723. Deadline for submissions is June 1. Entries will be exhibited at Annual Conference in Richmond, Va., and some may be published in MESSENGER. Entries will not be returned to participants.



Have heritage, will travel: One key component in the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Brethren movement over the past year has been Youth Heritage Teams. Teams of two youth from 21 of the 23 Church of the Brethren districts received training last April in Elgin, Ill., and the teams have been sharing in a variety of ways in their respective districts since then. One of the most active teams has been in Western Plains District, where J.J. Krehbiel and Jamie Frye have shared during worship in numerous congregations (with a goal of 20), at district conference, and at The Gathering III revitalization conference held in the district this past fall. Above, Frye (left) and Krehbiel don traditional garb to enact the parts of figures from Brethren history in a series of skits at The Gathering.

A ratty road to transformation

'Ratatouille' won this year's best animated film Oscar

Ever since I outgrew *Mighty Mouse* I've always wondered: Why do we root for cartoon mice? Most of us consider them vermin, yet who's the good guy, Tom or Jerry? And why is Mickey Mouse the ultimate cartoon icon?

When it comes to the movie *Ratatouille* we're not even talking about mice, who move with a certain grace if you get past the creepiness factor, and who pick up crumbs with a wonderful delicacy if you can watch without getting the shivers. This film is about rats. You know—the black plague, those guys.



FRANK RAMIREZ

But the folks at Pixar who just picked up five well-deserved Oscars for *Ratatouille* deliberately selected a rat for the hero of this film, and it's not because they're ignoring the great divide between *rattus rattus* and human beings. In fact, they're emphasizing it, and that's why it's a great film for the family to watch together.

Jesus said to love your enemies. Rats count as enemies. There are some monumental "yick" moments in this film when the rats swarm all over the screen. Still, we fall in love with Remy the rat. That's what makes the conflict so real and

think Jesus had some of the same difficulty with his folks.)

But the central conflict establishes that we are not the prisoners of our genes, our past, or our circumstances, as painful or constricting as these factors might be. Choices matter. We can be transformed. This is what separated Christians from the Romans in the first century. As Paul said, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:2). Or better, as Jesus put it, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:15).

Remy is separated from that family while escaping the murderous rage of a human and ends up in Paris (Did I mention the film is set in France?). With the encouragement of a figment of his imagination—the ghost of the late legendary French chef Gusteau (Brad Garrett)—he follows his dream all the way to the kitchen of Gusteau's former five-star restaurant. There, with the help of the new garbage boy Linguini (Lou Romano), he transforms French cooking.

More important, Remy's loving father Django (Brian Dehenny), the crabbed reviewer Ego (Peter O'Toole), and the hard-nosed and hard-hearted Colette (Janeane Garofalo) all experience the sort of transformation that Christians believe

is possible through the love of God, especially when we claim the person God made us.

There is the usual cast of Disney villains, including the jeal-

REMY'S LOVING FATHER DJANGO, THE CRABBED REVIEWER EGO, AND THE HARD-NOSED AND HARD-HEARTED COLETTE ALL EXPERIENCE THE SORT OF TRANSFORMATION THAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IS POSSIBLE THROUGH THE LOVE OF GOD, ESPECIALLY WHEN WE CLAIM THE PERSON GOD MADE US.

the resolution so satisfying. *Ratatouille* confronts the ultimate interspecies yick divide and challenges us to cross barriers without being especially preachy.

Remy (voiced by Patton Oswalt) is a rat who has an extraordinary sense of taste and smell, a true gourmand who longs to be a chef. However his extended family has only one use for his gift: Remy's ability to identify poisoned food. This is hardly a satisfying use of his talent. Like any good film, *Ratatouille* has several conflicts to resolve, including the tension between loyalty to a loving family versus a calling to vocation. (I

ous head chef Skinner (Ian Holm), who provide enough of a foil to produce real conflict. I'm not sure why everyone speaks with a French accent except for the outsiders like Linguini, the rats, and the critic, but who cares? Once again, Pixar comes through with another great family film because they recognize that it's not enough to have the best special effects in the business; you have to have a story with heart.

That's why *Ratatouille* won the Oscar for best animated film. Here's a rat I can root for! I highly recommend it for family viewing and family discussion afterwards. **4/4**

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



ABOUT THE MOVIE

Title: *Ratatouille*. **Rating:** G. **Released:** 2007. **Directors/writers:** Brad Bird, Jan Pinkava.

Run time: 1 hour, 51 minutes. **On DVD:** Available in stores or online, list price \$29.99.

Notes: Previous Pixar films include *Toy Story*, *Finding Nemo*, and *The Incredibles*.

What others are saying: "I don't pretend to know how the folks at Pixar do it. How do they make you love a rat? . . . It's more of a spiritual matter. How do you give a rat a soul? I don't really want to know. I'll just be a child about it: It's magic." —Wesley Morris, *Boston Globe*

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ABC Recognition Dinner

Finding Your Healing Gifts

featuring Laura Pole

Sunday, July 13, 5 P.M.

Marriott Salons 4 & 5

Healing is the human experience of recovering wholeness, and each of us is endowed with our own unique healing gifts. Join



“Chefnurcian” Laura Pole as she uses music, story and song to honor you and guide you in discovering your healing gifts.

Laura Pole, President of Eating for a Lifetime, is a Health Supportive Gourmet Chef, a Registered Nurse and Clinical Nurse Specialist, Certified Nia Fitness Instructor and a professional musician with over 25 years experience in health care, health education and entertaining people.

ABC's Recognition Dinner will also honor recipients of the Caregiving Awards and provide an opportunity for ABC supporters to gather at Annual Conference.

Denominational
Deacon Luncheon

Grief, Hope, & Healing

featuring Ray Donadio

Monday, July 14, Noon

Marriott Salons G - J



When a car accident suddenly took the life of his young adult daughter, Ray Donadio embarked upon a journey that he never imagined for himself and his family. Ray will share his own experience of grief, hope and the beginnings of healing. What does it mean to minister to those deep in personal grief? How can deacons be helpful to those who have lost a loved one? Ray's message will inspire you and encourage you to reach out intentionally to those around you who have suffered a loss.

Ray Donadio is an attorney in Greenville, Ohio and a member of the Oakland Church of the Brethren. He is currently the Vice-Chair of the Bethany Theological Seminary board of directors and is a former board member of Brethren Benefit Trust.

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Tickets regularly sell out, so order your tickets early using the Meal Events order form in the Annual Conference packet or through Annual Conference's on-line registration site.

Pontius' Puddle



We need some 'active creativity'

by S. Loren Bowman

The three decades since I left official denominational life in 1977 have been an active time of transition in society: world-wide migration of people, significant shifts in basic economic resources, modification of personal moral values, and serious questions arising about the role of the church.

It is exciting to be alive when the basics are being challenged or transformed. One may experience a new burst of energy, moments of anxiety, or outright fear.

It has been especially exciting to me as my faith includes an assumption that God is involved in the unfolding process of an expanding consciousness to draw the human family together. We are being urged to move beyond a "one world view" to being part of a living cosmos. This concept of life influences my view of the church today.

I have some concerns about the organizational life of the church. It shows up in the frequent restructuring of the General

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**... THE MAJOR CALL TO "LOVE GOD AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,"
COUPLED WITH A SERIOUS SEARCH TO INCREASE THE FREEDOM OF PEOPLE
TO DISCOVER AND ACT OUT A PICTURE OF JUSTICE.**

Board and staff, the separations of agencies, the distribution of staff across the geographical areas—thus reducing the chance for general staff fellowship and a sense of community. On the other hand, it has been heartening to see the evidence of social concern, the search for peace, and the emphasis MESSENGER has on ministries that shape and build vital congregations.

At the Annual Conference and in cooperative agencies it seems increased attention and support goes to select groups and other established listed groups. It seems that many discussions are made as individual issues rather than family considerations. In a global community that is searching for ways to cooperate, it is unfortunate that the church cannot give a view of inclusiveness.

The issue seems sharpest in our theological view of the nature of Jesus' life and our understanding of how we are touched by his ministry. Our differences may reside in how we view the biblical record from the visions of Jesus. To see it as set in finality by him ignores the fact that it was determined long after his death by governmental leaders, church bishops, and assemblies such as Nicean councils, and given shape by the

churches. The early disciples were not at hand in the formal shaping of the established code as we know it.

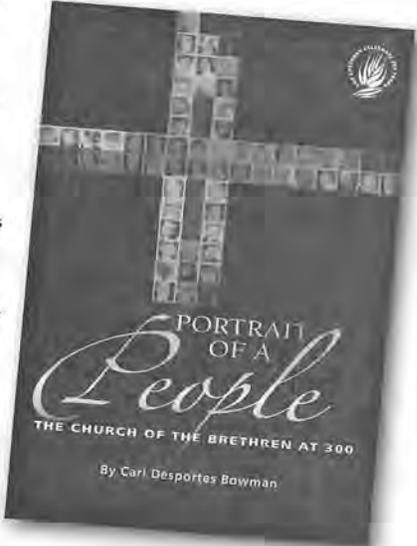
The issue is not every word Jesus spoke, but the major call to "love God and your neighbor as yourself," coupled

**PORTRAIT
OF A**
People
THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN AT 300

Portrait of a People summarizes the findings of the Brethren Member Profile 2006, the most comprehensive and representative survey of Brethren members ever conducted. Sociologist Carl Desportes Bowman, who directed the study, reports on a wide range of new information—Brethren beliefs about God and the afterlife; attitudes about military service, abortion, and politics; practices in the areas of personal Bible study, worship, and love feast; and much more. Readers will find themselves surprised, pleased, and dismayed. All will find themselves better informed about the people who call themselves Brethren.

"This is a story that every member of the Church of the Brethren should read."
—Donald B. Kraybill

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A CONTINUING TESTIMONY



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 pastor,
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 Pacific Southwest
 District
 est. 2006

Thomas Hanks
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 educate children from ages 8 to
 88 about events and influences
 which affected the life of
 Alexander Mack, first minister
 and organizer of the Brethren
 Churches.*

Hardback book with 64 pages is priced at \$22, and available
 May, 2008. See www.mgrovebooks.com for information and
 purchase. Book is also available at www.brethrenpress.com and
www.masthof.com.

with a serious search to increase the freedom of
 people to discover and act out a picture of justice.

It is amazing that the church's reactions have
 failed to face the new "one world" with active
 creativity! It causes me to wonder how we can
 be faithful to our calling unless we join the
 growing, multiple human family that is a part of
 our daily reality. My hope is that in the next
 three decades we will become a vital part of the
 earth's people. **ZU**

S. Loren Bowman is a retired Church of the Brethren minister and
 former general secretary of the Church of the Brethren General
 Board. He lives in La Verne, Calif.

CLASSIFIEDADS

**Bethany Theological Seminary announces a new half-time
 position in Brethren studies.** This person will teach courses in
 Richmond, Indiana, as well as online. The position begins July 1,
 2008. Send letter of interest, curriculum vitae, and three references to
deansoffice@bethanyseminary.edu, with "Brethren Studies" noted in
 subject line.

Have you always wanted to work in a bookstore? Brethren
 Press is looking for volunteers to assist in set-up, operation, and tear-
 down of the Annual Conference bookstore in Richmond, Va. If you
 have interest and time to volunteer, contact Jean Clements at 1451
 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120 or jclements_gb@brethren.org.

Consignment sales at Annual Conference. Brethren Press makes
 space available at Annual Conference for individuals and groups to sell
 items to Conference attendees on a consignment basis. Consignment
 space must be reserved by June 1. For information on consignment
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 ity rack, waterless cookbook, lifetime warranty. Our 48th year.
 Information: 1-800-852-3765.

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/pritchettmu-
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 seum). Call regarding hours or to make an appointment to visit.

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www.brethren.org/genbd/ministry/placement.htm. Contact the appro-
 priate district executive or call the Ministry office at 800-323-8039.

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

Beaver Creek, Bridgewater, Va.: John Hoover, Deborah Hoover, Amy Hoover, Joe LaPrade, Darlene LaPrade, Michael LaPrade, Phil Liskey, Brenda Liskey, Megan Liskey, Kenny Wheelbarger, Misti Wheelbarger

Cedar Creek, Garrett, Ind.: Danielle Chisholm, Jordyn Knott, Dawn Shull, Lindsay Yarde

Chambersburg, Pa.: Doris Diller, Ray Diller, Ray Frazer, Tate Frazer, Zachary Garnes, Ethan Mangum, Louie Martin, Sheri Martin, Megan Murray, Dwight Shilling, Benjamin Stevenson, Glenn Stouffer, Dottie Stouffer, Samuel Wingert

Charlottesville, Va.: Eddie Via, Jean Via, Patrick D. Kelliher

Community of Joy, Salisbury, Md.: Connie Polovina

Crest Manor, South Bend, Ind.: Ray Barkey

First Central, Kansas City, Kan.: Vic Lee, David Reynolds

Greenmount, Harrisonburg, Va.: Jennifer Mongold, Ian Hinkle, Mary V. Messerley, Ryan A. Messerley, Kelsey Messerley, Joshua W. Messerley, Matt Morris

HIS Way, Hendersonville, N.C.: Evelin Campos, Joao Campos, Cristina Cervantes, Patricia Cervantes, Laura Cordero, Martin Cordero, Cruz Marisol De La Mora, Gabriela Gonzalez, Jaime Guerrero, Catalina Hernandez, Candelario Hernandez, Jose Hernandez, Maria Hernandez, Rafael Limon, Guadalupe Lopez, Lourdez Martinez, Ester Molina, Orlin Molina, Hector Morales, Maria de Rosario Silva, Satis Patel, Antonio Ramirez, Benjamin Ramirez, Grecia Ramirez, Virginia Ramirez, Maria Salgado, Emanuel Verrujio, Lili Verrujio, Angelica Zapata

Long Green Valley, Glen Arm, Md.: Robyn Boettner

Manor, Boonsboro, Md.: Charles L. Dieterich

Maple Grove, Ashland, Ohio: Jeremy Roar, Jenny Roar, Michael Harris, Summer Bednar

Mechanicsburg, Pa.: John Pickens

Messiah, Kansas City, Mo., Donnie Paddock

Moorefield, W.Va.: Morgan Branson, Russell Webster, Lucy Webster, Walter Webster, Nathan Webster, Candace Webster, Beverly A. Sion Ketterman, Debbie Borrer, Treena Helmick-Branson

Mount Vernon, Waynesboro,

Va.: Winston Doug Spiller

Mount Wilson, Lebanon, Pa.: Brad Blauch, Charlene Stokes

Pleasant Hill, Ohio: Ryan Grube, Mark Thompson

Reading, First, Wyomissing, Pa.: Charles Cope, Linda Cope

Rossville, Ind.: Chadd Gibson, Jennifer Gibson, Nathan Burkle, Sarah Burkle, Eric Mellinger, Jodi Mellinger, Nolan Mellinger, Jordan Mellinger, Sandy Bond, Tracy Wiegand, Ed Smith

Smith Mountain Lake, Wirtz, Va.: Michelle Keffer, John Keffer, Martha Clark, Connie Peterson, Lisa Dillon, Darleen Fiel, Andrew Fiel

West Goshen, Goshen, Ind.: Christine Davis, Margaret Grass, Chelsea Stutsman, Paul Stauffer, Betty Stauffer, David Stutsman, Kate Stutsman, Mike Wagner, Linda Wagner, Dustin Stutsman

Wilmington, Del.: William Riley, Linda Tolentino

Anniversaries

Clark, Tom and Anna, Goshen, Ind., 50

Cochran, Grayson and Elsie, Boonsboro, Md., 65

Cowger, Ivan and Elouise, Moorefield, W.Va., 60

Dickensheats, Walter and Evelyn, Hanover, Pa., 60

Eichelberger, Charles and Marjory, Newport News, Va., 50

Garst, Wilbur and Christina, Blountville, Tenn., 70

Gerber, Carl and Doris, Garrett, Ind., 60

Hays, Ronald and Pat, Boonsboro, Md., 50

Helfner, Steve and Edna, Sharpsburg, Md., 65

Kitchen, Willis and Betty, Williamsport, Md., 65

Kline, Harvey S. and Ruth, New Oxford, Pa., 65

Long, Lawrence and Hazel, Williamsport, Md., 65

Morris, Wellman and Madeline, Charlottesville, Va., 55

Ruger, Jack and Retha, Garrett, Ind., 50

Shenk, John R. and Ruby K., Newport, Pa., 50

Smith, Clarence and Thelma, Charlottesville, Va., 55

Spire, Ron and Shirley, Dandridge, Tenn., 50

Spitzer, Danny and Patricia, Broadway, Va., 50

Stalaker, Gary and Betty, Moorefield, W.Va., 50

Stauffer, John and Bessie, Dayton, Ohio, 65

Thompson, Clarence and Margaret, Independence, Mo., 65

Torakeo, David and Shirley, Reading, Pa., 55

Waggy, Arlie E. and Naomi Whitacre, Goshen, Ind., 60

Deaths

Arnold, Onie Jane Cash, 95, Luray, Va., Jan. 6

Barclay, Lucille, 87, Clymer, Pa., March 3

Baughner, Mildred Isabella, 79, Grottoes, Va., Feb. 7

Berg, Eyy, 88, Seattle, Wash., July 25

Berlin, Sci, 86, Wyomissing, Pa., Jan. 2

Blaine, Ruby F, 82, Grottoes, Va., Jan. 5

Bolender, Wilbur, 84, Hoodspout, Wash., Feb. 8

Bowdle, Virginia, 84, Piqua, Ohio, Feb. 4

Brashear, Mary, 82, Mount Airy, Md., Jan. 12

Brent, Cassius, 83, Gettysburg, Pa., Feb. 9

Britton, Thomas Hutton, 86, Virginia Beach, Va., Feb. 9

Broadwater, Betty, 84, Preston, Minn., Jan. 10

Buchmeier, Donna, 76, Garrett, Ind., Dec. 26

Carmichael, Wendall, 80, Mooreland, Ind., July 19

Christ, Donald M., 85, Timberville, Va., Feb. 4

Corle, K. Joseph, Jr., 75, Johnstown, Pa., Feb. 10

Cullers, Ethel Elizabeth Ratliff, 81, Moorefield, W.Va., Jan. 8

Daub, Leo Eugene, Jr., 78, Basye, Va., Jan. 2

Delawder, Vernon Dean, 59, Timberville, Va., Jan. 12

Disbrow, Ruth, 78, Martinsburg, Pa., Feb. 3

Earhart, Isaac, 98, Lancaster, Pa., Feb. 10

Edelmann, William, 89, Johnstown, Pa., Aug. 4

Embrey, Ashby Earl, 88, Midland, Va., Feb. 11

Fahnstock, Rufus G., 94, Manheim, Pa., Feb. 2

Fite, Alvida, 89, Lynnwood, Wash., Sept. 7

Fostin, Elizabeth K., 92, Cridersville, Ohio, Feb. 12

Frederick, Grace I., 96, Goshen, Ind., Feb. 28

Frost, Clarence, 89, Continental, Ohio, Feb. 1

Garrety, Dolly, 78, Defiance, Ohio, April 26, 2007

Goodwin, Helen Jefferson, 95, Baltimore, Md., Feb. 8

Gowl, Goldie Elizabeth Shiflett, 90, Harrisonburg, Va., Feb. 5

Grove, Ruby, 97, Stuarts Draft, Va., Oct. 4

Hand, Leah, 91, Battle Creek, Mich., Feb. 6

Harlow, Sadie Rose, infant, Grottoes, Va., June 20, 2007

Harper, Eugene, 79, Sugar Grove, W.Va., Jan. 3

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

Higgs, Lee Franklin, 81, Luray, Va., Jan. 8

Hoffer, J. Mark, 85, Lebanon, Pa., Feb. 13

Holsinger, Ray, 87, Silver Spring, Md., Feb. 21

Irby, Nancy Lee, 89, Mount Jackson, Va., Feb. 9

Johnson, Pauline Mary, 93, Luray, Va., Jan. 24

Judy, Jean M., 75, Greenwood, Del., Feb. 19

Kagarise, Leon, 70, Baltimore, Md., Jan. 26

Keeney, Galen E., 77, Palmyra, Pa., Feb. 3

Kuykendall, Charles William, 62, Moorefield, W.Va., Jan. 14

Kyser, Ruth, 89, Troy, Ohio, March 3

Lambert, Hancel Daniel, Sr., 96, Harrisonburg, Va., Jan. 6

Langstaff, Henry, 88, Lenexa, Kan., Feb. 2

Laslo, Ruby Agnes, 82, Luray, Va., Feb. 8

Lehman, Clyde B., 79, Chillicothe, Ohio, Feb. 22

Lehman, June, 85, Mechanicsburg, Pa., Jan. 30

Mason, Earl Edward, 87, Udell, Iowa, Feb. 13

Mason, Floyd Russell, 88, Bridgewater, Va., Jan. 8

McBride, Ralph, 90, Bryan, Ohio, June 24, 2007

McCamey, Robert H., 91, Millbury, Ohio, Feb. 12

Miller, Lawrence Wilson, 86, Harrisonburg, Va., Jan. 30

Miller, Lowell Koontz, 81, Harrisonburg, Va., Jan. 10

Miller, Virginia Lee Wilcox, 88, Bridgewater, Va., Feb. 5

Nash, Richard, 90, Edmonds, Wash. Dec. 30

Nesselrodt, Vivian Elaine Lichtler, 46, Frederick County, Va., Feb. 17

Noffsinger, Emma K., 90, Dayton, Ohio, Jan. 25

Obenchain, Harold, 85, Montvale, Va., Feb. 4

Oswalt, Sylvia Joan Eidemiller, 79, Plymouth, Mich., March 2

Owen, Sheila Denise Fulk, 49, Harrisonburg, Va., Feb. 9

Patalano, May Hays, 52, Ashland, Ohio, March 6

Peale, Paulette Florence, 52, Mount Solon, Va., Feb. 1

Poole, Preston, 87, Frederick, Md., Jan. 11

Pride, Al, 83, Seattle, Wash., Nov. 26

Rager, Archie, 88, Johnstown, Pa., Jan. 20

Rankin, Elaine, 89, Renton, Wash., Jan. 28

Reed, Douglas E., 85, Floyd, Va., Feb. 21

Rexrode, Ralph A., 81, Franklin, W.Va., Feb. 4

Rhodes, Daniel D., 97, Johnstown, Pa., Jan. 24

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

Rindels, Ardie, 69, Preston, Minn., Jan. 20

Ritchie, Daphna I., 86, Bergton, Va., Jan. 5

Robison, Ralph, 93, La Verne, Calif., Feb. 15

Roller, Robert Samuel, 76, Harrisonburg, Va., March 5

Root, Emmett L., 88, Claremont, Calif., Aug. 5

Roth, Harold S., 88, Lacey, Wash., Jan. 7

Rummel, Dean, 84, Johnstown, Pa., Jan. 21

Rusmiscel, Margaret L., 88, Lima, Ohio, Feb. 22

Russell, Ronald, 89, Mill Creek, Wash., Sept. 16

Seese, Rosemary Frances, 78, Harrisonburg, Va., Jan. 4

Sharp, Meade M., 88, Harrisonburg, Va., July 22

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

Sickmiller, John, 81, Bryan, Ohio, March 5

Sine, Clifford J., 85, Woodstock, Va., Feb. 26

Smith, Ava Roberson, 92, Stanleytown, Va., March 4

Smith, Mary Elizabeth, 84, Frederick, Md., Nov. 30

Southerly, Betty Mae, 74, Moorefield, W.Va., Dec. 13

Southerly, Gladys Cain, 87, Moorefield, W.Va., Jan. 4

Spitzer, Carl E., 75, Broadway, Va., Feb. 14

Statter, Ruth, 81, Burlington, W.Va., Jan. 24

Strawderman, Leroy Victor, 76, Harrisonburg, Va., Jan. 7

Stump, Margaret, 77, Greenville, Va., Sept. 15

Thompson, Freda, 96, Roaring Spring, Pa., Feb. 21

Todd, Gaylene J., 66, New Market, Va., Feb. 14

Tooman, Helen, 90, Garrett, Ind., Sept. 25

Via, Eddie, 74, Palmyra, Va., Feb. 17

Wakeman, Peggy Ann, 63, Edinburg, Va., Jan. 7

Walker, Dorothy Virginia Holsinger, 86, Woodstock, Va., Jan. 1

Ward, Barbara J., 75, Elgin, Ill., Feb. 29

Warner, Rebecca Ann Hammer, 65, Manassas, Va., Jan. 17

Weber, Mabel, 94, Temperance, Mich., Feb. 22

West, Conalee, 57, Goshen, Ind., Jan. 24

West, Kenneth, 83, Goshen, Ind., Jan. 7

Whetzel, Luther, Sr., 70, Moorefield, W.Va., Feb. 17

White, Keith, 76, Seattle, Wash., Dec. 19

Wirth, Lena M., 88, Modesto, Calif., Feb. 24

Wonderley, Glenna Rodgers, 81, Port Republic, Va., Jan. 5

Zimmerman, Allen Joseph, 61, Bridgewater, Va., Jan. 5

Zimmerman, Elmer Joseph, 93, Dayton, Va., Jan. 14

Licensings

Alley, Linda L., Shen. Dist. (Bridgewater, Va.), Feb. 17

Webster, Lucy Ann, W. Marva Dist. (Moorefield, W.Va.), Feb. 17

Webster, Russell W., W. Marva Dist. (Moorefield, W.Va.), Feb. 17

Ziler, Sherri, W. Marva Dist. (Danville, Rawlings, Md.), Feb. 10

Ordinations

Suders, Donald Neil, S. Pa. Dist. (Brandts, Saint Thomas, Pa.), Feb. 24

Walters, Benjamin Clark, S. Ohio Dist. (Cincinnati, Ohio), Feb. 10

Placements

Barto, Ronald E., pastor, Walnut Grove, Johnstown, Pa., Jan. 7

Davies, Jeanne A., from associate pastor, Highland Avenue, Elgin, Ill., to workcamp ministry coordinator, General Board, Elgin, Ill., Jan. 14

King, Mary Jane, associate pastor of congregational life, West Shore Fellowship, Enola, Pa., May 18, 2007

Leck, Joshua R., team pastor, Monitor, McPherson, Kan., March 16

Mason, Sarah C., team pastor, Monitor, McPherson, Kan., March 16

Between good and good

For all his wisdom, King Solomon didn't do so well in the restraint department. We're told (in 1 Kings) that he had 700 wives and 300 concubines, along with 1,400 chariots, 12,000 horses, and an abundance of silver and gold. His excesses—especially the wives and concubines—eventually caused him a lot of trouble.



WALT WILTSCHKEK
MESSENGER Editor

I've managed to avoid acquiring anything on that list, but I confess I haven't done so well when it comes to T-shirts. I seldom meet one I don't like. Some remind me of places I've been, some advertise things I like, and some just make me laugh, not to mention all the free ones from camps and church events. As a result, the leaning towers of T-shirts now occupy a long shelf in my closet.

When you like something, it's hard to say no, even when having more may not be the wisest course of action. Sometimes we're forced to make tough choices.

General Board treasurer Judy Keyser illustrated that nicely during a chapel time at the offices last year, when she presented us with a list of values. They included things like creativity, money, power, independence, adventure, security,

new Sudan Initiative has had difficulty even getting off the ground in two and a half years. Our new ties in India and work in Haiti have received little denominational exposure or attention so far. And all that doesn't even touch the need for more attention to "mission" in our own country.

We are certainly called to go into all the world and make disciples. It is good to dream big, take some risks, and to step out in faith. If we cannot do it well, though, it is better not to do it at all. If we can't put our money and time where our words are, we would do best to keep our mouths shut. People in these countries have been disappointed by broken vows and unfulfilled commitments before. We don't want to promise more than we can deliver.

As a former denominational staff person said, it's not that we are choosing between good things and bad things; we're typically choosing between good and good. We face the reality that our resources are limited, and we cannot be all things to all people, no matter how good that feels.

It sometimes seems as though we are trying to put Humpty Dumpty back together again, looking at the church's glory years in the mid-20th century and trying to re-create that. But while the need for Christ is the same, the church and certainly the culture are not.

We experiment with new structures and new programs, some of which have been effective and some of which

haven't. Ultimately, though, none of that matters if our path—at all levels of the church—is not firmly aligned with where the Holy Spirit is

IT'S NOT THAT WE ARE CHOOSING BETWEEN GOOD THINGS AND BAD THINGS; WE'RE TYPICALLY CHOOSING BETWEEN GOOD AND GOOD. WE FACE THE REALITY THAT OUR RESOURCES ARE LIMITED, AND WE CANNOT BE ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE, NO MATTER HOW GOOD THAT FEELS.

and nine others. She instructed us to cross out the three that were least important to us, then another three, and so on until only three remained.

By the end, the selections were rather difficult. Eventually, though, we were left with our top three—what we valued most.

The Church of the Brethren may face such a list. Take, for example, our recent mission efforts. In the past decade, we have started new mission work or relationships in Brazil, Vietnam (a short-term project), Haiti, India, and Sudan. We have expanded projects in Central America and continued work in the Dominican Republic and Nigeria. Go back another decade, and you would find programs in South Korea and a first effort in Brazil.

The first Brazil effort floundered, and the current one has struggled to find sufficient funding despite assurances of new money at hand. The Korea mission also folded. The

leading. That may mean giving up some control for the good of the whole, or putting our personal desires on the back burner.

Perhaps our resources can best be used by finding partners who can aid and support us, as we have often done in our past. Perhaps we can support others who are already doing good work around the world, rather than re-inventing the wheel ourselves. Perhaps some things we have been doing (or failing to do well) need to come to an end, or blessed and sent off on their own way.

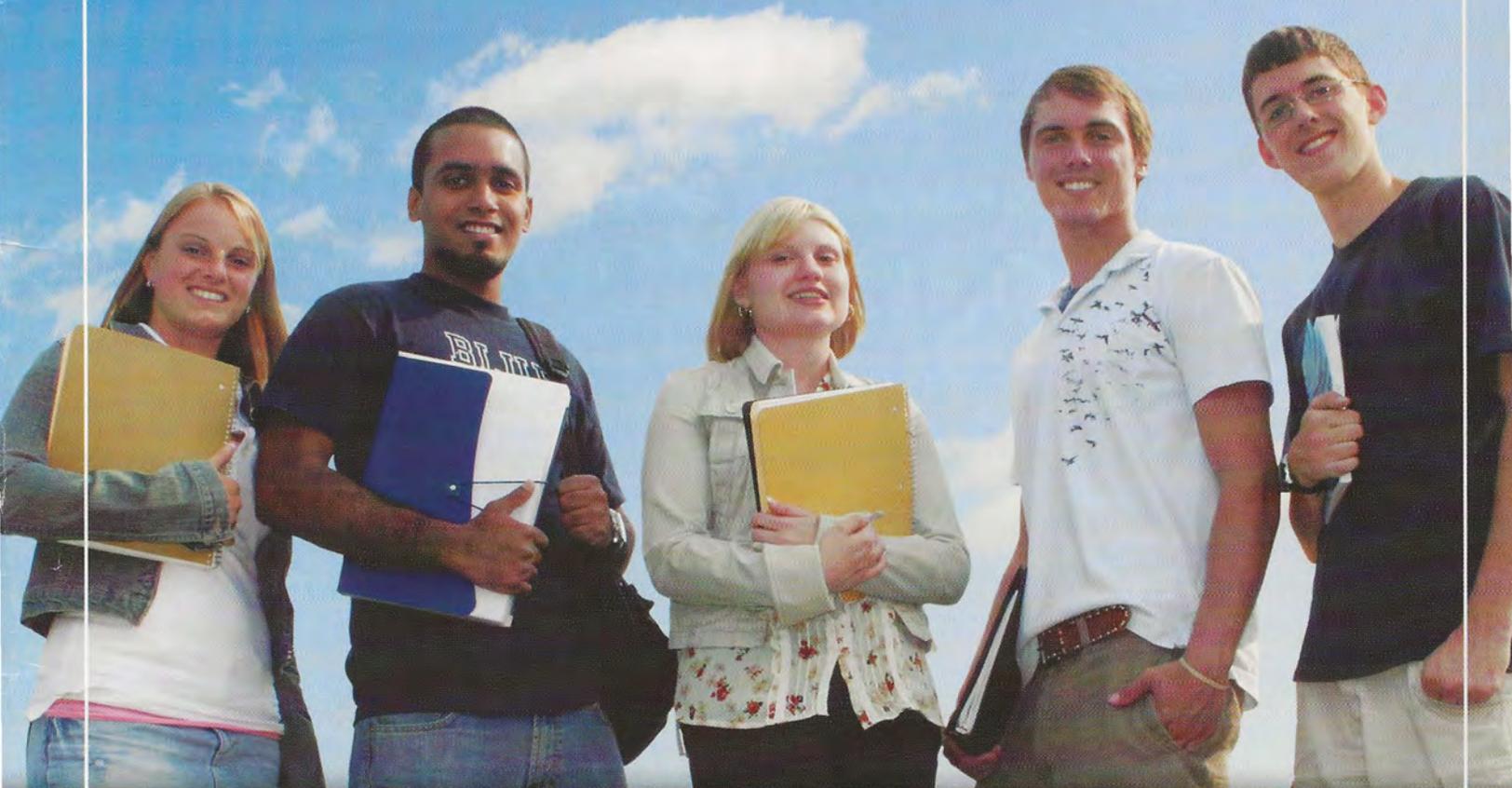
A mantra at the World Council of Churches meeting this year was "Do less, do it well." The United Methodist Church has set four key areas of emphasis to help the church "focus on the main thing."

It doesn't take Solomon to see that such counsel may be wise advice for us, as well.—Ed.

COMING IN JUNE: MESSENGER's 300th anniversary trip through Brethren history comes up to the present, with a look at the period from 1958 to 2008 and profiles of Anna Mow and M.R. Zigler; a report on genocide; World Council of Churches; Bible study on Acts; and more.

Your Opportunities are Wide Open.

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



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

Bridgewater College

Bridgewater, Virginia
www.bridgewater.edu

Elizabethtown College

Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania
www.etown.edu

Juniata College

Huntingdon, Pennsylvania
www.juniata.edu

University of La Verne

La Verne, California
www.ulv.edu

Manchester College

North Manchester, Indiana
www.manchester.edu

McPherson College

McPherson, Kansas
www.mcpherson.edu

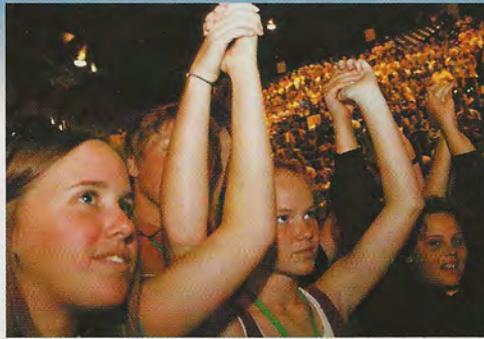
Bethany Theological Seminary

Richmond, Indiana
www.bethanyseminary.edu

Brethren Colleges Abroad

Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania
www.bcaabroad.org

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Pentecost – Anniversary Offering

New Heart New Spirit



A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you... Ezekiel 36:26a

Honoring the past, celebrating the present, and looking towards the future,
we join our hearts and hands to share gifts from all of us to the whole church for the new day!

Pentecostés – Ofrenda de Aniversario

Un Corazón Nuevo Un Espíritu Nuevo

Os daré corazón nuevo, y pondré espíritu nuevo dentro de vosotros... Ezequiel 36:26a

¡Rindiendo honor al pasado, celebrando el presente y con nuestra mirada puesta en el futuro, unimos
nuestras manos y corazones para compartir ofrendas de todos nosotros a toda la iglesia para este nuevo día!

Pentecost – Anniversary Offering, Church of the Brethren
Suggested offering date: May 11 or 18, 2008

Pentecostés - Ofrenda de Aniversario, Iglesia de los Hermanos
Fecha sugerida para la ofrenda: 11 ó 18 de mayo del 2008