

Church  
of the  
Brethren

# MESSENGER

JUNE 2008 [WWW.BRETHREN.ORG](http://WWW.BRETHREN.ORG)

CONFERENCE PREVIEW

300 YEARS OF BEING BRETHREN

## 1958-2008 Peace and possibilities



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among them.—Matthew 18:20

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Church  
of the  
Brethren

# MESSENGER

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Courtesy of Brethren Historical Library and Archives



Nevin Dulabaum



WCC / Peter Williams

## 8 300 years of being Brethren: Peace and possibilities (1958-2008)

In their “golden years,” beloved Brethren figures Anna Mow (p. 8) and M.R. Zigler (p. 10) often provided the voice of the denomination as the second half of the 20th century rolled on. They inspired a new generation of leaders and helped to establish some iconic Brethren institutions. The Vietnam War era (p. 12), meanwhile, challenged Brethren in making their peace witness.

## 14 Moderator Jim Beckwith: Delighted by our diversity

A preview of this summer’s Annual Conference in Richmond, Va., is highlighted by a profile of the 2008 moderator, Jim Beckwith of Annville Church of the Brethren. He has seen the church at home and abroad through a variety of roles and experiences, and he says our breadth should be treasured. A sidebar notes key facts and activities for the Big Meeting.

## 16 WCC ‘making a difference’ 60 years later

The world has changed significantly since the World Council of Churches officially formed in 1948. But “despite all that could have torn it apart, the member churches have held together,” Sara Speicher writes. A sidebar gives snapshots from the recent WCC central committee meetings.

## 18 The Acts of the Apostles: The Spirit moves

This first book after the Gospels continues the story of Jesus with a series of fast-moving and inspirational narratives. Tara Hornbacker says the book can be read through several different lenses.

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### ONTHECOVER

From 1958 to 2008: The 300th anniversary series wraps up its march through history with a look at the period just behind the current day. In a changing era for the church, recent leaders have cast a vision for Brethren to continue to make their mark in the world. Cover photo by Chad Ambrosius.

**S**ometimes former magazine editors publish a book of past editorials as their more permanent mark on the world, perhaps trying to counteract the ephemeral nature of all that writing they did for a periodical. But there are almost none who can pull off what former MESSENGER editor Kermon Thomasson has just completed—a collection of whimsical illustrations for a book that's rolling off the presses before Annual Conference.

*Brethren Brush with Greatness*, written by the prolific Frank Ramirez, tells the stories of 32 people who have achieved some sort of fame (or notoriety) and were definitely Brethren, were rumored to be Brethren, or brushed up close to the Brethren. The stories are the product of honest-to-goodness research in the Brethren Historical Library and Archives, and elsewhere. But they're short and easy to read, so some people may not recognize them as educational. This is not your father's history book.



WENDY McFADDEN  
Publisher

What makes them especially light-hearted is the illustration that accompanies each story. These caricatures take liberties with the historical record. But the more historical details (and pop culture) you know, the more you'll get out of each illustration. (Do you know why the "R" is backwards on Chris Raschka's director's chair?) This is history that plays equally well with dyed-in-the-wool history buffs and those who snoozed through history class in high school.

One piece of MESSENGER trivia: The drawing of Slim Whitman (chapter 23) originally appeared on the programs for the 1982 MESSENGER Dinner in Wichita, where the well-known singer provided the entertainment. Of course, that version of the drawing didn't include Pocahontas or the alien, and it certainly did include Slim's head. (The programs also were adorned with silver glitter, something too expensive to recreate in a Brethren Press book.)

Longtime MESSENGER readers may remember the occasional issues of the magazine that featured Kermon's cartoons. This book is a full gallery compared to those briefer visuals, as the editor brandishes his own brush, with greatness.

*Wendy McFadden*

## HOW TO REACH US

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

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Four generations of the Harms family became part of Hempfield Church of the Brethren on one Sunday this spring.

## Four generations find a home Hempfield congregation welcomes a whole family

Receiving new members is always cause for rejoicing, but blessings are multiplied when four generations of the same family are embraced by a congregation.

On Palm Sunday, March 16, Pearl Miller, her daughter Shirley and son-in-law Ned Harmes, and granddaughter Courtney Barry with her husband, Dave, joined Hempfield Church of the Brethren (Manheim, Pa.). In addition, great-grandsons Spencer and Everett Barry were dedicated to the Lord.

With her entire living family tree represented, Shirley acknowledged the need for strong roots.

"We felt disconnected," Shirley said of the decision to join. "When you're out in the wilderness, you think you're free—but you're just . . . disconnected." Shirley cited the warm, welcoming atmosphere and "blended" worship service as important factors in her family's search process. "Hempfield has something for everyone. There's an open door for all ages."

The decision to come to Hempfield was heartily endorsed by all four generations. Standing in the hallway with his hands in his pockets, 5-year-old Everett nodded approvingly and remarked, "This will be a good church—for our whole family!" —John Layman

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** Members of Meyersdale (Pa.) Church of the Brethren raised nearly \$3,800 for Heifer International this spring, easily topping its goal of \$500. . . . Ambler (Pa.) Church of the Brethren on March 19 hosted an interfaith service and candlelight vigil commemorating the fifth anniversary of the start of the war in Iraq. . . . Fahrney-Keedy Home and Village in Boonsboro, Md., received a \$1,000 donation from the Nora Roberts Foundation for its Benevolent Fund.

**Southeast** Susan Chapman has resigned as program director for Camp Bethel (Fincastle, Pa.) effective Aug. 31. She has been in the role since January 2002. . . . Germantown Brick Church of the Brethren (Rocky Mount, Va.), hosted a 300th anniversary hymn sing and musical program April 27. . . . The 16th annual Shenandoah District Disaster Ministries auction was held May 16-17 at Rockingham County Fairgrounds in Harrisonburg, Va. . . . Camp Placid (Blountville, Tenn.) planned a Reunion Day for June 1.

**Midwest** The Illinois/Wisconsin District office moved to new quarters in Canton, Ill., in April. . . . Tom Benevento led a workshop on "Environmentally Sustainable Living" April 18-19 at York Center Church of the Brethren (Lombard, Ill.), including tips for making church buildings more energy-efficient. . . . Southern Ohio's annual senior adult picnic is scheduled for June 7 at Mill Ridge Village.

**Ozarks/Plains** Antelope Park Church of the Brethren (Lincoln, Neb.) recognized 18 members who "Read Through the Bible" in 2007. . . . Holmesville (Neb.) held a Founders Day celebration weekend for the denomination's 300th anniversary March 29-30. . . . Missouri/Arkansas held its spring rally April 19 at Spring Branch Church of the Brethren (near Wheatland, Mo.) with guest leader Duane Grady.

**West** This year's Arizona Children's Camp is taking place June 5-8 in Payson, Ariz., for children in grades 3 to 8. . . . Pacific Southwest sponsored a day-long seminar with author Dan Kimball (*They Like Jesus, But Not the Church*) May 3 at Pomona (Calif.) Fellowship Church of the Brethren. . . . The Church of the Brethren's Children's Disaster Services will offer a Level 1 Training Workshop at the Tacoma (Wash.) Nature Center June 20-21.

## BY THE NUMBERS

# 21

Number of Church of the Brethren (Iglesia de los Hermanos) congregations currently active in the Dominican Republic. Two more church plants have started in the past year.



"This is not just a 300th anniversary. This is the launching of a fourth century of the Church of the Brethren."

—Annual Conference moderator Jim Beckwith, in an update on Annual Conference



Jaune Grady

Members and friends of Arriba Church of the Brethren ventured out on a frigid Easter morning for this year's sunrise service.

### Colorado congregation braves frosty start for Easter sunrise

Many Christians gathered for sunrise worship services on Easter morning, but few encountered the challenging conditions that faced Bethel Church of the Brethren in Arriba, Colo.

With temperatures below 20 degrees and frost covering everything that wasn't moving, the faithful sang, prayed, and waited for the first sign of the sunrise. Despite the harsh conditions, the mood was festive as birds proclaimed the joy of resurrected hope.

Three crosses stood visibly empty at the rise of a hill in a barren pastureland as the eastern sky lightened. As God's people waited and hoped, we were reminded of the sacrifice made by Jesus and of the joyous good news which Easter celebrates. No matter the circumstances, God is with us.

This is a congregation reflecting the district-wide spirit of positive energy in Western Plains and celebrating where God has called them to be.—Duane Grady

### Springfield 'webservant' helps those who are helping others

Eric Scott Volkel-Barno is a person who likes to help people. He especially likes to help people who are helping other people. A quiet person who tries to live by the motto "Speak less, help more," he didn't always know how to go about it. In 2005 Kres Lipscomb, his pastor at Springfield

(Ill.) First Church of the Brethren, asked Volkel-Barno whether he knew anything about website development. Volkel-Barno decided to learn, bought some software, started reading a book, and began designing what would become 1stcob.net.

He decided to put links on the site to some of the local agencies the church supports, but when he Googled them he couldn't find websites for them. He then thought about putting up a separate page for each of the agencies on the church's website, but somebody at the church discouraged him from this approach. "I thought, 'Fine, I will just contact the agencies and ask if I could develop a website for them.'" That's how he got his first two "customers": the Helping Hands Homeless Shelter (helpinghandssi.org) and Kumler Neighborhood Ministries (knms.org).

"Customers" is in quotes because this 16-year state employee and father of three charges nothing to design websites for nonprofit helping agencies. His charge for

all the work he does—several hours a day—to update and maintain the sites is the same: free. You won't find his name on the sites he designs, because he doesn't want credit, and he eschews the title of webmaster. He tells potential clients up front: "I have to admit that I'm not very good. I'm not a professional, I have a very simple style, and there is a whole lot about website design that I don't have a clue about. But the only cost that is passed on to the agencies is the domain name, and that goes straight to the domain registrar; I don't take any type of cut." He has now developed and maintains 22 sites, including one for Illinois/Wisconsin District's disaster response ministry.

Volkel-Barno is grateful for the people he meets and the friends he's made through his unusual ministry. "I'm just sitting here at home having fun with my computer while they're out there doing the real work of helping people," he says.—Fletcher Farrar

### Ridgeway's display request met with overflow of history

When Barb Myers, the 300th anniversary display coordinator at Ridgeway Community Church of the Brethren in Harrisburg, Pa., put out a request for Brethren artifacts and memorabilia, she had no idea that members of her congregation could produce enough items to cover more than two eight-foot tables.

Items included hymn books dating from 1901, a Sunday school songbook from 1841, and church and pastor's manuals including *The Sick, The Dying, and The Dead* published in 1905. Other display items included a black bonnet, an ironstone love feast soup bowl, a prayer covering, a black hat, a Brethren heritage doll, a Brethren Service cup, and *Revised Minutes of Annual Meetings of German Baptist Brethren, 1778-1898*.

The display opened April 6, the same Sunday congregation members placed their offerings in original offering plates first used in the 1896 sanctuary addition at Philadelphia's historic Germantown Church of the Brethren.

Barb Myers



Ridgeway Community Church of the Brethren received an abundance of historical items in response to its request for a 300th anniversary display.

## LANDMARKS & LAURELS

• A state survey of 224 nursing homes by the Maryland Health Care Commission found that families have an "excellent opinion" of **Fahrney-Keedy Home and Village**. Fahrney-Keedy is a Church of the Brethren retirement community in Boonsboro, Md.

• **EIRENE**, a Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) partner in Germany that regularly sends volunteers to orientations, is marking its 50th anniversary this year. An anniversary celebration will take place Aug. 1 in Marburg, Germany, during an evening that will include a history of Brethren Service in Europe, an address by Brethren author Ken Kreider, and other presentations. BVS is also celebrating its own 60th anniversary this year, Sept. 26-28 in New Windsor, Md.

• Elizabethtown (Pa.) College's **Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies** celebrated its 20th anniversary April 4-5, along with the successful completion of a fundraising effort that earned the college a \$500,000 National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant. The weekend included special lectures, a concert of hymnody, and an ongoing hymnody exhibit.

• In this year of big anniversaries, one Brethren family is celebrating multiple ones in a two-week span. **Russell and Mae Myers** of Northern Indiana District planned to celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary on June 3, while Russell's sister, **Goldie**, in Illinois/Wisconsin District, celebrated 50 years of marriage to **Dale Roher** on May 24. In addition, a third sibling, **Cleo Yonkers**, has her 80th birthday on June 2.

• Happy birthday! **Virginia Lehman Geiser**, a resident of the Brethren Home Community in Windber, Pa., and member of Scalp Level Church of the Brethren, celebrated her 100th birthday on Feb. 26. Her father was superintendent of the home from 1929 to 1931. **Anna M. Stauffer**, a member of Florin Church of the Brethren (Mount Joy, Pa.) and resident of Brethren Village in Neffsville, turned 101 last summer, on Aug. 1. **Henry Aul**, a resident of Brethren Village for 26 years, turned 101 on Feb. 20.

• **Messiah Church of the Brethren** (Kansas City, Mo.) is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

• **West Milton (Ohio) Church of the Brethren** will celebrate its 100th anniversary July 5-6 with games, speakers, ice cream, and other activities.

• **Emma Marten**, age 7, was chosen as one of six Distinguished Kansans of 2007, according to the McPherson (Kan.) Sentinel. In September Marten held an auction of artwork at McPherson Church of the Brethren to benefit the children of Greensburg, Kan., after that town was devastated by a tornado. She recently presented about \$4,000 to Greensburg Elementary School.

# PORTRAIT OF A People

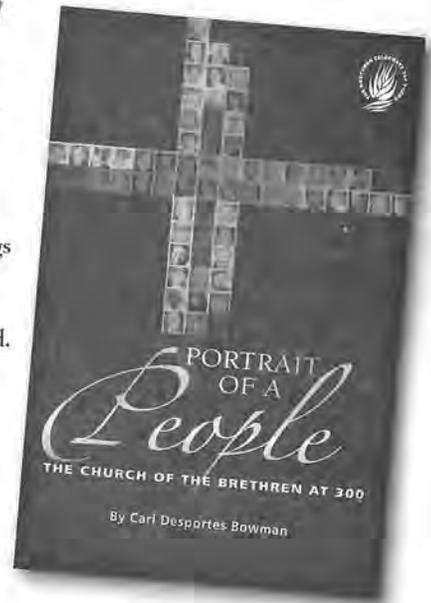
THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN AT 300

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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# Not as simple as they seem

**S**everal years ago, our family welcomed a cat to our home. I say “welcomed” tentatively, for I’ve never been a cat lover, nor had my husband or I ever wanted an indoor pet. However, during a weak moment, as our children were transitioning into a new school, we agreed.

A few weeks into her arrival, we continued to adjust. I wasn’t used to anyone wanting to plop on my lap when I was reading. I disliked the foul smells in the basement near the litter box.

And I most definitely didn’t like the bits of floating fur that drifted across the floors.



YVONNE RIEGE

One of those concerns was unexpectedly addressed while in a meeting one evening, when a young woman across the table shared her new discovery. Her cat adored having the mini-vac gently rubbed over her back. For her, this meant less fur flying.

Thrilled, I made plans to do the same the next day. While our new cat was sleeping, I approached with

the mini-vac. What followed surprised me! Our cat did not take kindly to this new venture. In fact, she arched her back, leapt from the couch, and wasn’t seen again for many hours. To this day, she abhors vacuum cleaners and will run to hide as soon she hears a sweeper of any kind.

To be honest, it was many weeks before our cat would even come within eight feet of me; it was as though she believed the mini-vac was permanently attached to my right

or not do about accessibility issues. More people were aging, a young girl with physical disabilities had challenges with the church steps, and a matriarch in her late 90s had long since given up attempting to come to worship.

However, costs regarding the accessibility issues were daunting at best. So when this subject was broached, it simply was tabled to another time of discussion. Months and even years passed without action.

Then one day, I learned of what seemed to be the perfect solution. Another congregation in our region had enlisted a youth to build an outside ramp as his Eagle Scout project. I was thrilled, for it offered us new possibilities.

At our next leadership meeting, I offered this as an idea worthy of consideration. I knew that one member was even a Scout leader. A perfect meld—or so I thought!

What ensued took me aback. People leaned back in their seats and crossed their arms, seemingly offended that I had provided such a ridiculous suggestion. Objections started flying from the mouths of people that had previously never voiced a word during an entire meeting—even months of meetings.

But we were off dead center. At least we were talking.

What happened next had to be provided by the hand of God after such a tense meeting. One who had voiced vehement opposition suddenly stepped forward to talk with people about a better solution: a chairlift just inside the entryway of the church. (As pastors, we had voiced this idea several times, to no avail.) He took it upon himself to ask questions, make measurements, call various manufacturing companies, and update the leadership

body on the progress of the project. Within six amazingly short months, a scissor lift was installed. When the congregation finally owned this new possibility as *their own* idea, things happened.

My simple suggestion, which met with strong opposition, became the catalyst for an amazing unification of

members. Suddenly the group realized they were able to move ahead with an innovative plan that worked. Their ideas jelled for the best possible solution.

In retrospect, I’ll always treasure the moment a certain 99-year-old matriarch shuffled into the recently renovated foyer, onto the brand-spanking new lift, and returned to the newly remodeled sanctuary she dearly loved. Her eyes bonded with members in silent words of simple blessing.

Thankfully, things are not always as simple as they seem. 

Yvonne Riege is pastor of Goshen (Ind.) City Church of the Brethren.

**WHAT HAPPENED NEXT HAD TO BE PROVIDED BY THE HAND OF GOD AFTER SUCH A TENSE MEETING. ONE WHO HAD VOICED VEHEMENT OPPOSITION SUDDENLY STEPPED FORWARD TO TALK WITH PEOPLE ABOUT A BETTER SOLUTION . . .**

arm. Months later she gingerly inched her way toward my chair, hoping to sit on my lap. And it was at that point we began to live in harmony. We’ve bonded, in spite of our rough beginning.

Quite obviously, I made a mistake in my assessment of what would be helpful in this situation. What had worked for my friend and her cat didn’t work for us. Sometimes things are just not as simple as they seem.

As I recalled this situation the other day, I was reminded of a similar one in a church my husband and I co-pastored several years ago. Our congregation had balked over what to do

**“We are all vulnerable. It doesn't matter what we have.”**

—Jessica Deras López of Honduras, visiting disaster work in New Orleans on a Mennonite Central Committee trip to the region.

**“I feared for my own spiritual well-being if I allowed my country's war to become background music in my daily life.”**

—Karl Shelly, pastor of Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., speaking about his arrest at a protest against the Iraq war. He was quoted by *Mennonite Weekly Review*.

**“Camp is a very forgiving place. It was the first place where I learned to do something new, and if I messed it up I was given a chance to do it better.”**

—North Central College graduate Alyssa Dallner, reflecting on her experience growing up as a camper at Wesley Woods, a United Methodist camp. She was quoted in *The United Methodist Reporter*. (The Church of the Brethren has 29 camps and retreat centers.)

**“Not one of us Brethren is off the hook for making the church continue, through every act of ministry we undertake.”**

—Audrey DeCoursey of Portland, Ore., writing in the Church of the Brethren Women's Caucus *Femailings* newsletter about the “priesthood of all believers” and women in ministry

**“When injustice happens to someone in Darfur, we are all responsible.”**

—Sharon Silber, founding member of Jews Against Genocide, speaking to this year's Church of the Brethren youth Christian Citizenship Seminar in New York

**“It's fair game to assess the background of a candidate's spiritual life, but it needs to be a fair assessment.”**

—the Rev. John Thomas, president and general minister of the United Church of Christ (UCC). Thomas was speaking about comments made by Sen. Barack Obama's former pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright of Trinity UCC in Chicago, that had been reported in the media. (RNS)

**“In entering Christ's service we commit ourselves to a spirituality of resistance, challenging the spiral of violence that threatens our planet.”**

—the Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, writing in the WCC's 2007 Christmas message

CULTUREVIEW

• Answers to questions about the **church and political campaigns** can be found in *Politics and the Pulpit 2008: A Guide to the Internal Revenue Codes Restrictions on the Political Activity of Religious Organizations*, recently released by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. This guide sets out rules governing political activity that apply to nonprofit organizations (including churches and other religious groups) that are exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal

Revenue Code. To access the full report, go to <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=280>.

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



JUST FOR FUN: YOU HAIKU

In the March issue, MESSENGER shared some Brethren *haiku* poems written by Neil Fancher of La Verne, Calif., and invited readers to submit their own Brethren-themed *haiku*. Thank you to all those who wrote; a sampling of the responses is printed below:

**Water and basin  
Our Savior with a towel  
Brethren do follow**

—Jack Malenke  
New Oxford, Pa.

**Seekers of the Way  
Eight left all to follow him  
The Eder flows on**

—Violet Pfaltzgraff  
Lancaster, Pa.

**Your love spreads as seeds  
We sow the seeds, branches span  
Through the world, we will**

—Kay Guyer  
Woodbury, Pa.

**C.O.B. manna?  
More like holy smorgasbord  
Covered dish dinner**

—Don Parker  
West Salem, Ohio

**Gather in Richmond  
Celebrate your heritage  
Our three hundredth year**

—Judy Cupp  
Thornville, Ohio

**Studying God's Word  
Small groups together, praying  
Discerning God's will**

—Dave Fouts  
Maysville, W.Va.

**I'll not fight; I'll help  
I believe all war is sin  
Brethren peacemaking**

—Don Parker  
West Salem, Ohio

**The tithe is our debt  
We have rich blessings daily  
Our gifts go beyond**

—Jack Malenke  
New Oxford, Pa.

**Down through the ages  
Leadership has many names  
Can you count the cost?**

—Judy Cupp  
Thornville, Ohio

**Come to the water  
Turn away from the world  
Triune immersion**

—Dave Fouts  
Maysville, W.Va.



# Anna Beahm Mow: A fount of inspiration

'Sister Anna' was known for her insight and wit

**I**n the early 1950s the district youth of eastern Pennsylvania held a weekend retreat at Camp Swatara. An Elizabethtown College co-ed whispered to another co-ed, "Have you seen the speaker for this weekend? This is going to be dull, boring."

Indeed, dressed in a plain black dress, black stockings, and white prayer covering, this short, stocky lady, Anna Mow, did not look terribly exciting to the teenagers. As she began speaking, an early illustration mentioned Elvis Presley; surprised, the

Courtesy of Brethren Historical Library and Archives



*Anna Beahm Mow speaks at the 1978 Annual Conference in Wichita, Kan.*

youth wondered, "What does this lady know about Elvis?"

With inspiring anecdotes, comedy, and insight, this master communicator quickly had them all on the edge of their seats. Mesmerized by her intriguing, relevant, and inspiring message, the youth were astonished as the hour was quickly spent. One of the lessons learned was illustrated by the remark of the co-ed who had anticipated a boring hour: "Never again will I judge someone by their outward appearance."

Anna Beahm Mow was born on July 31, 1893, in Daleville, Va. Her parents were Isaac Newton Harvey (affectionately known as INH or Brother Beahm) and Mary Bucher Beahm.

Her father was an educator and evangelist who traveled widely among the Brethren. He saw to it that she and her siblings received the best education available, including his own academic instruction. Her parents taught and lived a life of virtue, acceptance, and understanding. Her father, for example, never wanted to be dressed so nicely that he could not identify with the poorest parishioner in the congregation.

This standard was difficult for his young daughter to accept. When he informed his family that they would be moving from California to Pennsylvania, where he was chosen as the first principal and president of what would become Elizabethtown College, the 6-year-old Anna "cried and cried." Her father told her that she would have to change her wardrobe, because the conservative Brethren in eastern Pennsylvania would never tolerate frilly petticoats on the daughter of a Church of the Brethren preacher and head of the new college.

She made the necessary adjustments, excelled as a young student, and decided at an early age that her goal was to be a missionary to India. She earned degrees from Manchester College and Bethany Bible School, and married Baxter M. Mow, who held degrees from the University of Idaho, Bethany Bible School, and the University of Chicago. He was a Rhodes scholar to Oxford University and acquired knowledge of many languages, including Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, German, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Hindustani (Urdu), and Arabic.

They both dreamed of service on the mission field in some distant land, but they were sent to the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia to carry out a "home mission" assignment. On a salary of \$23 per month, they rented a log house for \$1 per month. With no car, and living in a village 27 miles from the nearest railroad station, they were obliged to carry out their mission on foot. Their willingness to live on the same level as their neighbors contributed to their popularity and acceptance in that mountain community (21st-century Brethren will gain a true idea of poverty, dedication, sacrifice, and faith if they read the first two chapters of Dorothy Garst Murray's excellent biography of Anna, *Sister Anna* (Brethren Press, 1983)).

After two years of dedicated service in Rappahannock County, Va., the Mows received a notice from the General Mission Board of the Church of the Brethren that there was an opening for them to go to India. Within a month, in October 1923, they arrived in Bombay. Their service in India coincided with the heroic efforts of the great Gandhi to achieve national independence from Great Britain by the seemingly unrealistic

tactics of nonviolence and non-cooperation with the occupier.

Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence and respect for the dignity of all individuals was quite radical in Indian society, which for centuries had lived with strict caste divisions. While radical for the established powers, these ideas fit quite comfortably with the background of the Mows, fresh from the mountains of Virginia and the teachings of the Brethren. Consequently, they became somewhat estranged from the majority of the foreign community living in India, but were accepted by the Indian community—both the untouchables and a few of the upper class.

Their three children were born during the early years of their service in India. While attending the missionary-operated boarding school at Woodstock, the Mow children became friends with the children of Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, a sister of Prime Minister Nehru. From this a long-lasting friendship developed between Anna Mow and Madame Pandit.

After 17 years on the Indian mission field the Mows were dismayed to learn that political reasons caused the Indian government to refuse to renew their visa for further service in India. India's loss was gain for the Church of the Brethren. From 1940 to 1958, "Sister Anna" taught courses in Christian education, missions, and biblical studies at Bethany Biblical Seminary. Her students were impressed by her knowledge,



Courtesy of Brethren Historical Library and Archives

Anna and Baxter Mow sit with baby Lois as missionaries in Vyara, India, in 1924.

gist. She served her denomination on the General Board and on Annual Conference committees. Service for 10 years on the Evangelism Committee of the Federal Council of Churches (later called National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA) illustrated her dedication to ecumenical cooperation with

Christians of other persuasions.

Not only was her teaching an electrifying influence on many of the future leaders of the church, but also her home was known as a sanctuary of fellowship for people from all over the world. E. Stanley Jones and Madame Pandit were only two of the multitude of "citizens of the world" who enjoyed the hospitality of the Mow home.

Madame Pandit visited with Sister Anna in Chicago before going to Washington to present her credentials as India's ambassador to the United States. Madame Pandit also represented her country as ambassador to the Soviet Union, Mexico, and Ireland, and as the first female president of the United Nations General Assembly. Sister Anna was asked to look after the three Pandit daughters while they attended college in the United States. Madame Pandit once wrote, "Anna Mow is perhaps my dearest foreign friend. I have gained enor-

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wisdom, and "common sense," accompanied by her radiant sense of humor (sometimes referred to as "holy hilarity"), and ability to convey the love of God with insight and humility.

Her hectic schedule of teaching and family duties also included scholarship. She authored 10 books that had wide appeal, as they sold by the tens of thousands. *Say Yes to Life* was her first book; nearly 50,000 copies were sold. Even more popular, her second book—*Your Child from Birth to Rebirth*—was dedicated to "Concerned Parents and Teachers of Children." Translated from English into three other languages, worldwide sales exceeded 78,000. Her third book spoke to teenagers and young people; *Going Steady with God* went to 14 printings and more than 47,000 copies.

Sister Anna was one of the first women ordained in the Church of the Brethren and was a popular preacher and evan-

gelist. She served her denomination on the General Board and on Annual Conference committees. Service for 10 years on the Evangelism Committee of the Federal Council of Churches (later called National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA) illustrated her dedication to ecumenical cooperation with

Christians of other persuasions. Not only was her teaching an electrifying influence on many of the future leaders of the church, but also her home was known as a sanctuary of fellowship for people from all over the world. E. Stanley Jones and Madame Pandit were only two of the multitude of "citizens of the world" who enjoyed the hospitality of the Mow home. Madame Pandit visited with Sister Anna in Chicago before going to Washington to present her credentials as India's ambassador to the United States. Madame Pandit also represented her country as ambassador to the Soviet Union, Mexico, and Ireland, and as the first female president of the United Nations General Assembly. Sister Anna was asked to look after the three Pandit daughters while they attended college in the United States. Madame Pandit once wrote, "Anna Mow is perhaps my dearest foreign friend. I have gained enor-

ously by her friendship and have been sustained by her love. I've also learned a little humility from her." In addition to her teaching, preaching, writing, running a home, and raising a family, Sister Anna was in constant demand as a lecturer and discussion leader for retreats, weekend institutes, camps, seminars, and training sessions. Those who were privileged to hear her will never forget her contagious and bubbling enthusiasm, her simple, down-to-earth illustrations, practical logic, solid personification of Christian love toward all people, infectious humor, and her spontaneous, unique, and distinctive laughter (sometimes lovingly referred to as a "cackle").

A missionary to India; friend of a national leader of India; seminary professor; author; delightful, entertaining, and inspiring lecturer; along with being a devoted wife and mother, Sister Anna's life has been summarized as the "story of a Christian life joyously, bravely, and perceptively lived." Anna Beahm Mow was one of the great leaders of the Church of the Brethren. Her inspiring insights and infectious joy of life were an inspiration to thousands. Sister Anna's rich and full life on this earth ended on July 7, 1985; her dynamic Christian influence, however, will last indefinitely. 

J. Kenneth Kreider, professor of history emeritus at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College, is an author and a member of the Brethren Historical Committee. He lives in Elizabethtown.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Bridgewater (Va.) College sponsors an annual Anna B. Mow Lecture Series. . . . A recent book published by Bethany Theological Seminary, *The Something-Else Lady*, tells the story of Anna Mow. It is written by Earle Fike Jr. and illustrated by Mow's great-granddaughter Yolanda Wenger. . . . Mow is also remembered in Andy and Terry Murray's song, "Sister Anna, Beauty Queen."



# M.R. Zigler: A crusader for peace

Legacy includes Brethren Service Center in New Windsor

**“W**hen will Christians stop killing their fellow Christians?” thundered M.R. Zigler, as he spoke to countless congregations, district conferences, international assemblies, and Annual Conference delegates. He constantly chided, prodded, and encouraged Brethren and fellow Christians to put their professed faith and standard of conduct in the teachings of the Prince of Peace rather than in secular national leaders and nationalism.

Michael Robert Zigler (M.R., as most called him) was born Nov. 9, 1891, in the ancestral Zigler homestead, called the Tunker House, in Broadway, Va. The Tunker House—also significant as the site of the 1832 Brethren Annual Meeting and

Courtesy of Brethren Historical Library and Archives



*M.R. Zigler converses with WCC official Dr. John Mackie.*

the former home of outstanding 19th-century Brethren writer and theologian Peter Nead—is commemorated as a historic landmark by both state and national registers. It is located just across the road from the home of another Brethren patriarch, John Kline, who was martyred during the Civil War.

Growing up in this historical setting, M.R. became firmly rooted in Brethren values and beliefs, especially those of peace and nonviolence. These views were reinforced at Bridgewater College, where he considered mission work, became head of the campus Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), and was elected president of his gradu-

ating class (1916). He accepted the offer of free tuition, room, and board at Vanderbilt University's School of Religion.

During M.R.'s first year of study at Vanderbilt the United States entered World War I. He enlisted in the YMCA to participate in the Y's program of providing spiritual guidance for the thousands of young men pouring into military camps. After a few months of training, Zigler was assigned to Parris Island, the United States Marine Corps training camp in South Carolina. Throughout his life he would refer often to this assignment as the impetus that solidified his dedication to a lifetime as a crusader for peace.

In 1918 M.R. married his college sweetheart, Amy Arnold, a petite, quiet schoolteacher. She has been referred to as the “woman who stayed behind,” as she created a solid home as “a refuge from the whirlwind of her husband's active public life.” They had two children, Robert and Geraldine.

Although he always maintained that the Marines also desired peace (but used different tactics to achieve it), his experience at Parris Island convinced him that he needed to work through the church. In 1919 M.R. accepted the offer to become general secretary of Home Missions under the General Mission Board and chairman of the Home Missions Advisory Committee. Turning his back on a YMCA post in New York at a salary of \$5,000 per year and free rent, Zigler felt the “call of the church” and moved to Elgin, Ill., for an annual salary of \$1,500, out of which he had to pay \$720 annually for rent.

As Home Missions secretary he personally visited practically every Church of the Brethren congregation in North America. Only 25 out of 1,100 congregations did not benefit from his inspiring presentations. Through these visits and his other work he became known as a denominational leader.

When World War II broke out, Zigler became chairman of the Advisory Committee for Conscientious Objectors and

## DID YOU KNOW?

One of the main buildings on the Brethren Service Center campus in New Windsor is named Zigler Hall. . . . Historian Donald F. Durnbaugh wrote a biography of M.R. Zigler, titled *Pragmatic Prophet*. It is available from Brethren Press (800-441-3712). . . . Zigler's gravesite is in Broadway, Va., near John Kline's.

executive secretary of the Brethren Service Committee. He worked with the Mennonites and the Society of Friends to develop an alternative to military service, Civilian Public Service (CPS). M.R. was elected the first chair of CPS, which provided an alternative to military service for thousands of conscientious objectors.

M.R. spearheaded the 1944 Brethren Service Committee purchase of the campus of Blue Ridge College in New Windsor, Md. This center became the collection center for millions of dollars' worth of material aid for subsequent distribution to people in need all over the world.

He was also a driving force behind the formation of Church World

Service (CWS), a combined effort of various denominations to alleviate suffering around the world. The Brethren Service Center in New Windsor was the collection and shipping center of material aid for CWS and other relief organizations.

An ecumenical approach to service was characteristic of M.R. Zigler, who was also a participant at the first meeting of the World Council of Churches in 1948 in Amsterdam. The Church of the Brethren was thus one of the founding members of the approximately 150 denominations from all continents, a number that had doubled by 1980. For seven years (1954-1961) M.R. was a member of the prestigious WCC central committee, which met annually to supervise the policies and programs of the WCC. He continually pricked the consciences of the international churchmen by reminding them that wars would cease when Christians of one nation refused to kill fellow Christians of another nation. Although some Brethren were uneasy about denominational membership in the WCC, M.R. was a life-long and enthusiastic advocate of cooperation with all Christian groups in the ecumenical spirit.

In 1948 Zigler was appointed director of Brethren Service in Europe and made his headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. As director he supervised Brethren Service projects in Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Poland, Greece, Turkey, and Italy. These projects were staffed with idealistic young people who had joined Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) to give two years of their lives serving others. Although these young people were inexperienced, naïve, and had varying degrees of ability to speak the native language, they received complete confidence, encouragement, and support from M.R. Zigler. At worship services, conferences, and meetings the volunteers were mesmerized and invigorated by his stimulating and inspirational speeches and leadership.

His official service to the church ended with the commemorations of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Church of the Brethren in Schwarzenau, Germany, on Aug. 6, 1958. With hundreds of international visitors in attendance, Zigler presided over the dedication of the new Alexander Mack ele-



*A Mennonite Central Committee poster bears a favorite quote from Brethren leader M.R. Zigler.*

mentary school, which had been financed by a sizable donation from the Church of the Brethren. Aided by an interpreter, he interviewed a recipient of a heifer from Heifer Project. During the main worship service, he was especially exhilarated to be able to introduce his friend, W. A. Visser 't Hooft, first general secretary of the World Council of Churches, who delivered congratulatory greetings to the Church of the Brethren from the world body.

With the anniversary commemoration concluded, the Ziglers set off for a well-earned vacation. While driving in Sweden they were involved in a terrible automobile

accident that took the life of his beloved Amy and the two people in the other vehicle. M.R. was in the hospital for 99 days before he could be released to return to the United States.

Unable to quietly retire, he began years of riding Greyhound buses all over the United States to visit friends and acquaintances of a lifetime—and to ask them to financially support his new idea for peace. The response was positive. In 1974 the first On Earth Peace Conference was held in New Windsor. Semi-annual conferences were held for years as people were inspired by M.R.'s leadership and vision. On Earth Peace sponsored peace academies and the printing of various books on Brethren history. Now an Annual Conference agency, it continues into the 21st century as an influential advocate of reconciliation and peace.

In addition to world peace, other life-long passions of M.R. included restoring relations among the Brethren bodies (who trace their origins back to Schwarzenau), and the publishing of a Brethren encyclopedia. Invited by M.R. Zigler to an unofficial meeting at the Tunker House in 1973, influential leaders of various Brethren bodies met, "shook hands," and learned to know each other. Out of this meeting developed cooperation between leaders representing the Church of the Brethren, The Brethren Church, the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, Old German Baptist Brethren, and the Dunkard Brethren Church.

This group appointed eminent Brethren historian Donald F. Durnbaugh to be editor of *The Brethren Encyclopedia*. With contributions from more than 1,000 people from the various Brethren groups, the first two volumes were published in 1983. Seeing this achievement and knowing that the representatives of the Brethren bodies were meeting together regularly, publishing books on Brethren heritage, and planning for the future, M.R. died in peace in 1985. 

J. Kenneth Kreider, professor of history emeritus at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College, is an author and chair of the Germantown Trust. He lives in Elizabethtown.



# Fighting the war at home

Brethren peace stance faced challenges during Vietnam era

**H**e was walking to class when the bullet hit him. The damage to his vertebrae and spine would cost him part of a lung and leave his legs permanently paralyzed. Others were not so lucky. Shortly after noon on Monday, May 4, 1970, Dean Kahler—along with 12 other Kent State University students—would become a victim in one of the most polarizing events of the era. Kahler, a member of the Church of the Brethren, was one of 13 wounded when National Guard troops opened fire on a rowdy group of students who had gathered to protest American involvement in the Vietnam conflict. Four of the 13 would not survive their wounds.

The incident at Kent State became a pivotal example of the duality of the Vietnam conflict. It had become a two-front war: a conflict between armed soldiers in Southeast Asia, and one of public opinion at home in the United States. This tension tore at America and its people from the mid-1960s until the fall of Saigon in April 1975.

As early as 1965, mere months into American involvement in the Vietnamese war, anti-war activists were staging marches, protests, and sit-ins. Gallup polls taken that year indicated a large minority were not satisfied with military intervention in a conflict on the other side of the world. By war's end in 1975, millions of Americans had voiced opposition to the combat in the form of strikes, protests, petitions, letters, marches, and literature. Those who resisted bloodshed in Southeast Asia ran the gamut from students to clergy, and even some veterans who had served in Vietnam. The Brethren, as one of the Historic Peace Churches, added their official voice to those who spoke against war in numerous Annual Conference statements.

Brethren pacifists knew that seeking peace would not be easy. Civilian Public Service (and later Brethren Volunteer Service) had been successful as an alternative to mandatory military service during World War II. It had not, however, erased the memories of Brethren who were persecuted for their refusal to take up arms. Brethren pacifists remembered John Kline, killed for refusing to fight for either the North or South during the American Civil War, and the Brethren imprisoned for treason and sedition for refusing to participate in the First World War.

Dean Kahler would discover this persecution not long after his near-fatal shooting. Although he was registered as a conscientious objector, he had not been a part of the violent protest at Kent State. He was not among the students hurling insults and debris at the National Guardsmen. He was simply on his way to class. In the ensuing months, however, he received

Courtesy of Brethren Historical Library and Archives



*Church of the Brethren member Dean Kahler, shown shortly after the Kent State shootings in 1970 and back at Kent State on the 20th anniversary of the shootings, in 1990.*



*Brethren and others protest the imprisonment of Church of the Brethren member Ted Glick, who was sentenced to 18 months in federal prison for destroying his draft files in 1970. Glick was known as one of the "Harrisburg Eight."*

**FOR MANY BRETHREN, SPEAKING OUT AGAINST AN UNPOPULAR WAR WAS NOT EASY, BUT THEY CHOSE TO SUFFER RATHER THAN BETRAY THEIR CONVICTIONS.**

hate mail accusing him of being a Communist sympathizer.

Brethren who actively protested the war were persecuted by their fellow Americans. In 1967, as protesters marched from Manchester Church of the Brethren to the campus of Manchester College in North Manchester, Ind., they were heckled by assailants who pelted them with eggs and rocks, attempting to knock the candles from their hands and prevent entry to the chapel, where the march was to conclude.

J. Kenneth Kreider, a now-retired professor at Elizabethtown College, was treated harshly for his opposition to the conflict in Vietnam in 1965. Despite his assurance that his stance was not anti-American, but rather anti-violence, Kreider was verbally attacked by other members of the faculty, many of whom circulated a petition to have him fired. Parents of many students who supported American foreign policy contacted the college president, demanding that the professor be dismissed. He received angry letters, some addressed to "Comrade Kreider." One even offered to buy him a one-way ticket to Russia. One morning, the Elizabethtown campus awoke to find an effigy of Kreider hung from a tree by a rope.

Cold war tensions extended beyond the Brethren college campuses. In an effort to foster good relations between East and West, Brethren participated in a series of exchanges with the Russian Orthodox Church. In 1963 and 1967, the Brethren hosted Metropolitan Nikodim and a delegation of Orthodox clergy. They visited the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., the General Offices in Elgin, Ill., and individual congregations across America. The visits were picketed by Americans who accused the Orthodox clergy of being Soviet agents and their hosts, W. Harold Row and M.R. Zigler of the Brethren Service Commission, of being communist sympathizers.

Some Brethren chose to make a much more public statement by refusing to register for the draft. Among them were Robert Gross and Larry Anderson, both convicted and sent to prison. In 1973, Anderson spent 19 weeks in jail, during which time his father took up the mantle of peace activism, co-authoring an Annual Conference query supporting a World Peace Tax Fund and taking it to Washington, D.C., to rally political support.

Although the official position of the Church of the Brethren was total objection to the armed conflict in Vietnam, they did not forbid members from joining the military. Many enlisted, and many Brethren served in Vietnam, much like the generation before—during World War II.

For a number of Brethren, though, war was simply not an option. Some attempted to wage peace on the front lines by serving with International Volunteer Service in Southeast Asia. They provided humanitarian aid, did refugee and relief work, and attempted to create awareness of the destruction and death caused by the military action. Each risked their life by serving in a war zone, and some lost their lives in the name of peace. Chandler Edwards, who trained with a Brethren Volunteer Service unit, was killed shortly after delivering supplies to a Laotian village in April 1969. Two years later, Ted Studebaker was gunned down by the Vietcong as he worked on an agricultural project with Vietnam's mountain people.

Closer to home, other Brethren volunteered their time and money for refugee work. They participated peacefully in protests, even when others lashed out violently against the government. The 1969 Annual Conference in Louisville, Ky., saw nearly 1,000 attendees march to the nearby federal building and hold a peace vigil in silence, probably the largest single Brethren display of peace witness to date.

These Brethren, drawing from the New Testament and their pacifist heritage, knew their duty was to choose peace. Seeking peace would not come without a cost. Some paid in jail time; some risked their professional careers to speak their minds. One young man lost the use of his legs. A few lost their lives. For many Brethren, speaking out against an unpopular war was not easy, but they chose to suffer rather than betray their convictions. ❗

*Sources: The Brethren Encyclopedia, Messenger (October 1979), Annual Conference Minutes (1964, 1966, 1967, 1972), and Uniting Work and Spirit: A Centennial History of Elizabethtown College by Chet Williamson.*

Logan Condon has served the past two years as an intern in the Brethren Historical Library and Archives in Elgin, Ill. He is a member of Naperville (Ill.) Church of the Brethren.

# AC 2008 RICHMOND, VA.



## **Delighted by our diversity** by Jamie Denlinger *Moderator Jim Beckwith had formative experiences in Nigeria, California*

**This year's Annual Conference in Richmond, Va., will be an exciting time for the Church of the Brethren.** The celebration of the Brethren tercentennial and the beginning of a fourth century leaves expectations high for forthcoming generations.

Annual Conference moderator James M. (Jim) Beckwith has a sense of that history. A life-long member of the Church of the Brethren, he has a rich Brethren ancestry. In 1899, Beckwith's great-grandfather, Truman Judson Beckwith, led a group of Brethren from Cando, N.D., to western Idaho and founded the Fruitland and Payette Valley congregations. Beckwith's father, Carl Beckwith, was born and raised in Fruitland, where he met and married his wife, Carrie. Following their marriage, they had four children, of which Jim was the second.

When Carl Beckwith was called to the ministry, the family moved to West Van Buren Street in Chicago, where Carl worked a full-time job while attending Bethany Biblical Seminary. In 1956, the family moved to Wiley, Colo., when Carl took a pastorate. After four years filled with periodic but consistent illnesses, the Beckwith family moved to join the Reedley, Calif., congregation, now known as Cornerstone Community Church.

They remained in Reedley through Jim's junior high years until he was 13, when his father accepted the position of business manager for the Church of the Brethren mission program in Nigeria. The three years as a missionary child spent at Hillcrest Boarding School in Jos, Nigeria, with a wide variety of other students were extremely influential in Jim Beckwith's life.

"All of Nigeria was just a whole big sense of identity," he says. "That's a very important piece of my life, very formative in . . . understanding God's call to be in ministry to the whole world. Just having that experience was a big shaping force for my life."

Following the time in Nigeria, the family returned to America to live in Modesto, Calif., where Carl managed a Brethren Service center. Jim was an active member at Modesto Church of the Brethren through his senior year of high school and his

four years attending La Verne (Calif.) College (now University of La Verne). It was through the youth group at Modesto that Jim was introduced to his wife, Carolyn.

In 1971, a unique service at Modesto brought both the marriage of Carolyn and Jim and Jim's licensing to the ministry. They then joined Brethren Volunteer Service and were placed in Ludwigshafen, Germany, assisting underprivileged children in an after-school program. Their efforts while working for the program led to an expansion from 18 students to almost 100 over the course of a year and a half.

The experience led Beckwith to consider becoming a child psychologist (as suggested by a principal in Germany), but after returning to the US, he chose instead to attend seminary for a broader calling.

"In church you get to be with the child in worship, in children's activities. You get to be with the child in context of their families, and their grandparents, and there is just so much more you can do in pastoral ministry," he says. "I like the diversity within the ministry. It isn't just a matter of working with kids, although that is really important, I think. People want to be a part of a congre-

Walt Wiltschek



### **THE MODERATOR**

**Name:** Jim Beckwith

**Home:** Lebanon, Pa.

**Congregation:** Annville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Family:** Wife, Carolyn; children Naomi, Amanda, and Tim; five grandchildren (the youngest born on March 18 of this year)



gation where everyone can feel they are being cared for.”

Beckwith did summer pastorates at La Verne, Empire (Calif.), and Waynesboro (Pa.), en route to earning Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from Bethany Theological Seminary, and he was ordained by Modesto in 1976. Prior to Beckwith’s current ministry at Annville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, which he began in 2004, he served as pastor of Green Tree Church of the Brethren in Oaks, Pa., for 12 years and the Montezuma congregation near Dayton, Va., for 16.

He has also taught courses on Brethren heritage and worship; chaired the Germantown Ministry Board, the Committee on Interchurch Relations, and the Nominating Committee of Annual Conference’s Standing Committee; and served in numerous district positions.

When nominated for the position of moderator, Beckwith admits he could not have accepted the position without the support of his home congregation and all those in prayer for him. “You can’t do this role without lots and lots of support from your church family,” he says.

During Annual Conference and the time leading to it, Beckwith is anticipating and enjoying the fellowship. “I just look forward to people being able to rejoice in our belonging together, as diverse as we are,” he says.

Beckwith also feels strongly that this diversity is what makes the Church of the Brethren stronger: “I think it is important for the church to recognize that it is called to be the body of Christ, through whom the risen Lord Jesus wants to be at work today. As 1 Corinthians 12 teaches us, the body is made up of many parts, each quite different from another, and each part is important.

“As in the human body, different parts of the body of Christ will pull in differing directions—one muscle pulling in the opposite direction of another muscle. That does not mean that the muscle should expect that the whole body will move in the direction it is pulling. Rather, each muscle does its pulling as a way of keeping the body in balance as it moves. As we prepare to launch the fourth century of the Brethren, it is important for each body part to function as the Lord calls it to function, with respect for and in partnership with all other parts of the body of Christ, so that we can continue the work of Jesus together.”

Jamie Denlinger is a student at the University of Ohio; she did an internship with Brethren Press and Brethren Benefit Trust earlier this year. She is a member of Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren in Kettering, Ohio.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2008

**Where:** Richmond, Va. (population 193,000)

**When:** July 12-16, with some related events before and after

**Theme:** “Surrendered to God, Transformed in Christ, Empowered by the Spirit”

**Projected attendance:** 7,000 to 8,000. All the initially reserved Conference hotels had been booked by mid-April; more were being added.

**Fees:** Delegates, \$245; non-delegates, \$75 for adults and \$25 for ages 12-21 for the full conference if pre-registered online, \$100 and \$43, respectively, for onsite registration. Special rates are available for weekend only, Sunday only, and daily participants, and for current Brethren Volunteer Service workers. Children age 11 and under are free. Meal events and age-group activities carry separate ticket/registration fees.

**Unique features:** As part of the 300th anniversary celebration, two main worship services and some other events will be held in conjunction with The Brethren Church (based in Ashland, Ohio), which separated from the Church of the Brethren in the 1880s. The Brethren Church will be holding its annual conference concurrently. . . . Numerous sessions on Brethren history and identity will be offered. . . . A “service blitz” will take place throughout the city on two days. . . . The National Christian Choir and Ken Medema will give evening concerts. . . . The John Kline Memorial Riders will give a presentation and show their horses.

**Key business items:** Two unfinished business items, including a recommendation from the Review and Evaluation Implementation Committee to merge the General Board and the Association of Brethren Caregivers; five new business items, including an update on ministerial ethics, a resolution on the “ministers’ medical insurance crisis,” and the “Resolution Urging Forbearance.” Business is scheduled to be conducted Monday and Tuesday.

**Church setting:** The Shenandoah and Virginia districts are serving as hosts. The closest Church of the Brethren congregation (and only one in the Richmond area) is West Richmond ([www.wrcob.org](http://www.wrcob.org)).

**What to see:** Some free-time attractions might include the Virginia State Capitol, Monument Drive, historic Fan District, Metro Richmond Zoo, Science Museum of Virginia, nearby King’s Dominion amusement park, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, and the Richmond Braves baseball team.

**For more information:** Visit [www.brethren.org/ac](http://www.brethren.org/ac).



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# WCC 'making a difference' 60 years later

World's largest ecumenical entity  
faces changing landscape

by Sara Speicher

**F**or some, celebrating a 60th birthday is a milestone marked by visions of retirement. The World Council of Churches (WCC), however, on its 60th "birthday" in 2008 does not want to rest on past feats as it looks ahead. The largest, most inclusive fellowship of churches in the world is grappling with a very different world today—politically, economically, religiously—than the one it faced following the Second World War.

The WCC came into formal existence on Aug. 23, 1948, in Amsterdam, where delegates of 147 churches (including the Church of the Brethren) from 44 countries met to participate in the first and founding assembly.

In practice, the WCC already existed. In 1938 a provisional committee had been formed by church leaders to establish a structure for the new body and organize a first assembly set for 1941. But the outbreak of war had scuttled those plans. Instead the provisional committee served to maintain links between churches on both sides while assisting prisoners of war and refugees and preparing for post-war reconciliation and aid.

At the Amsterdam assembly, the experience of war set a

tone that was both humble and defiant as the world's tragic disunity called for radical reconciliation. Willem Visser 't Hooft, the first WCC general secretary, spoke to the fear of creating a "superchurch" and announced the vision of making a difference together: "We are not forming this Council in a spirit of ambition and in order to join in any struggle for power. We form it in a spirit of repentance for our failure to be the Church together and in order to render clearer witness together to the Lord who came to serve all."

In many ways the witness of the WCC over the past decades can be clearly enumerated: tangible contributions to the formation of the United Nations and the text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; landmark theological work and significant contributions to missiological reflection; prophetic work on issues such as sustainable development, racism, interreligious dialogue, and climate change before they became popular platforms.

Few achievements came without controversy. During the 1970s, many evangelicals distanced themselves from the WCC over

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# *transformed*

BY THE RENEWING  
OF YOUR MINDS

■■■ Romans 12:2

DO NOT BE  
CONFORMED TO THIS  
WORLD, BUT BE



# transformed

BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MINDS,  
THE WILL OF GOD—WHAT IS GOOD

**Romans 12:2 seems fitting for our 300th anniversary year.**

Our church grew out of a place of nonconformity with the world when the first eight Brethren were baptized in the Eder River outside

of Schwarzenau, Germany. Ever since, the Church of the Brethren has been sharing the gospel's good news through both word and action. Discerning God's will within the context of community has shaped each step of our journey. As we celebrate this milestone of the church, I pray that the Holy Spirit will renew our minds, allowing us to continue our life-

*An event at the Germantown Church of the Brethren in Philadelphia hosted the first event of a year-long celebration of the 300th anniversary. Children participated in a service project to plant flowers around the church's parsonage.*

giving spiritual heritage of discernment and relationship.

This past year has been filled with opportunities to share Jesus Christ's love with brothers and sisters. Whether volunteering at a disaster response project or praying with others about evangelism, let us remember to focus on where we sense God is leading us as a faith community.

In the next few pages, you will read about a few of our expressions of faith as a church. To further explore the church's ministries, please read the full



Shawn Ringel



SO THAT YOU MAY DISCERN WHAT IS  
AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT.

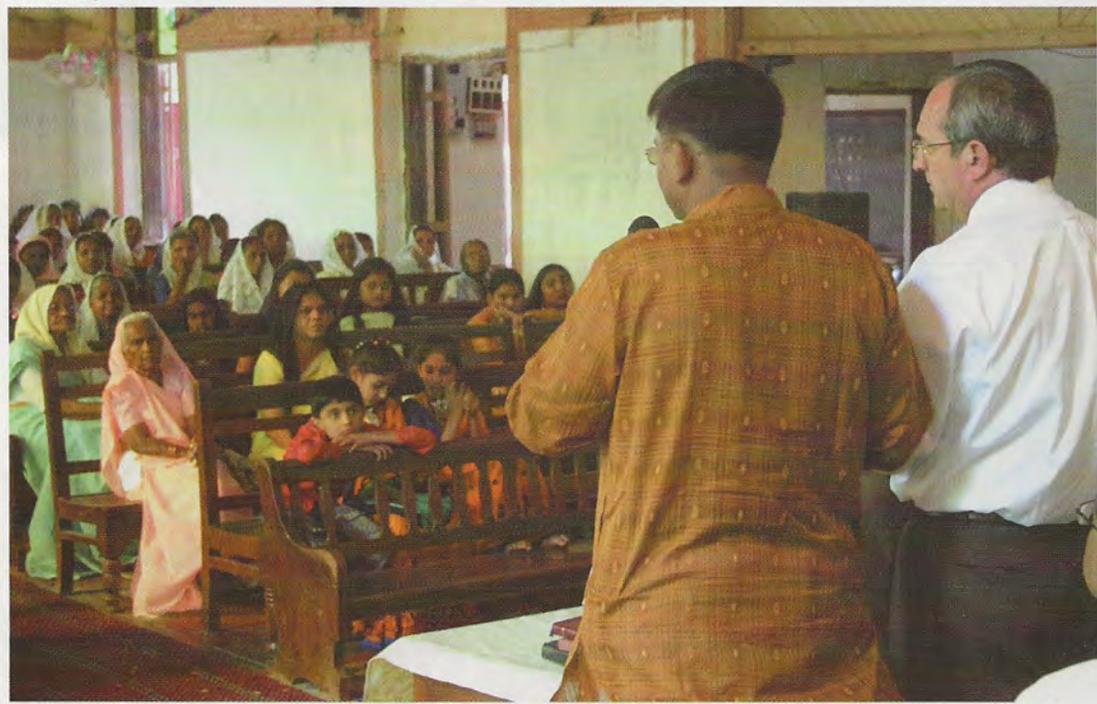
■■■ Romans 12:2

annual report (printed in the 2008 Annual Conference book) and visit [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org). You are always welcome to visit the General Offices or the Brethren Service Center, or invite a General Board staff member to visit your congregation.

Sisters and brothers, as we continue to choose another way of living and enter our 301st year, living for the glory of God and our neighbor's good, may the Holy Spirit transform us!

*Stanley J. Noffsinger*  
General Secretary

David Sollenberger



*Stanley Noffsinger, with the help of Daryl Solankey, brings greetings from the US church to a group gathered in Valsad, India, to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the Church of the Brethren, an event held at the Wilbur Stover bungalow.*

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ *be transformed*  
SHARE THE GOOD

■ Brethren Witness/Washington Office and Brethren Disaster Ministries staff represented the Church of the Brethren in Churches Supporting Churches, an organization created to restore

and rebuild church communities in the Gulf region despite the racial and economic issues uncovered by Hurricane Katrina.

■ ■ ■ In an exciting expansion of the workcamp program, almost

900 youth and adults participated in 36 workcamps from Oregon to Florida, from South Dakota to Guatemala.

■ ■ ■ Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN), the Church of the Brethren

Glenn I. Riegel



Nearly 800 youth and advisors took part in the first National Junior High Conference.

Y NO OS CONFORMÉIS Á ESTE SIGLO; MAS REFORMAOS POR LA RENOVACIÓN DE VUESTRO ENTENDIMIENTO, PARA QUE EXPERIMENTÉIS CUÁL SEA LA BUENA VOLUNTAD DE DIOS, AGRADABLE Y PERFECTA.

■ ■ ■ Romans 12:2 ■ Spanish

# NEWS

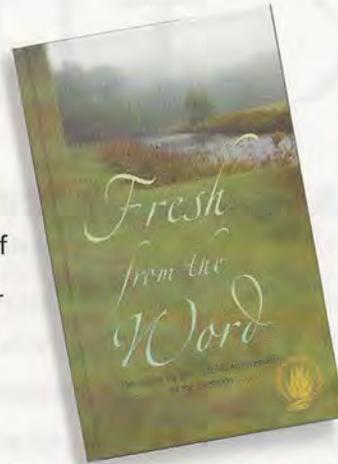
in Nigeria, continues preparing leadership for its growing congregations with the assistance of an annual scholarship grant from the US church that supports nearly 200 students seeking theological training.

■ ■ ■ The first National Junior High Conference was held June 15-17, 2007, at Elizabethtown College. Participants came from 19 of the church's 23 districts for a total attendance of almost 800 youth and advisors.

■ ■ ■ During the past year, Material Resources staff facilitated over 2,000 shipments of clothing, blankets, health kits, school kits, baby kits, and medical supplies to 45 countries and 32 US states. The shipments were valued at more

than \$21 million in total. The risk of expired and possibly contaminated toothpaste from China created an unusual problem and prompted the removal of more than 200,000 tubes from health and hygiene kits.

■ ■ ■ For stewardship-oriented youth retreats, General Board staff created a new educational series consisting of four planning resources, titled *Reality Check*.



■ ■ ■ *Fresh from the Word*, a book of daily devotions, was a blockbuster hit by Brethren standards, attracting widespread interest and praise

across the Church of the Brethren and beyond. In this signature anniversary publishing project, 366 devotions were written by members of six Brethren bodies that trace their roots to Schwarzenau.

■ ■ ■ Also released in celebration of the anniversary was a four-DVD set, *The Brethren Heritage Collection*, by David Sollenberger, which brought together 30 videos and films from Brethren history, some of them never before available to the public.

Almost 900 youth and adults participated in 36 workcamps during the past year.



Walt Wiltschek

be transformed

# SEEK THE HOLY

■ “Seeking God’s Yearning & Guidance: the Future of Ministerial Leadership” was the theme of the Consultation on Ministerial Leadership held in May 2007 at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill. Clergy and lay persons from across the denomination, numbering 85 in total, gath-

ered for worship, Bible study, theological reflection, and visioning about ministerial leadership.

■ Ministry Summer Service involved 15 college students who spent 10 weeks of the summer exploring ministry as a possible vocation and calling for their lives.

■ In preparation for the 300th anniversary, each district named two youth to serve on a Youth Heritage Team. The youth were invited to the General Offices for a weekend training event, during which they worshiped, learned about Brethren heritage and values, and gained public speaking and drama skills. During the anniversary year, teams visited congregations within their own districts to share knowledge and enthusiasm.

■ The emerging fellowship in Haiti continues to request more training, especially in the areas of Brethren beliefs and practices. A week-long training event in August was led by Ludovic St. Fleur, Merle Crouse, and pastors Anastasia Bueno and Isaiás Teña of the Dominican Republic. Although the fellowship in Haiti numbers fewer than 100 members, 61 people attended at least



Joseph Craddock, center, of Germantown (Pa.) Church of the Brethren leads out in a song at the Cross-Cultural Celebration in New Windsor, Md..

Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

PA FÈ MENM BAGAY AK SA MOUN AP FÈ SOU LATÈ. MEN, KITE BONDYE CHANJE LAVI NOU NÈT LÈ LA FIN CHANJE TOUT LIDE KI NAN TÈT NOU. LÈ SA A, N'A KA KONPRANN SA BONDYE VLE, N'A KONNEN SA KI BYEN, SA KI FÈ L' PLEZI, SA KI BON NÈT ALE.

■ ■ ■ Romans 12:2 • Haitian Creole

# SPIRIT

part of the event and 42 completed the entire course.

■ ■ ■ Young Adult Conference, held at Camp Harmony, drew 82 participants. Planning began for the second National Young Adult Conference, which will be held Aug. 11-15, 2008, in Estes Park, Colo.

■ ■ ■ Worth celebrating are ordination and licensing figures for 2007: 50 individuals (35 men and 15 women) were ordained, and 78 (63 men and 15 women) were licensed. These numbers, up slightly from the previous year, are an exciting indication of a commitment to calling gifted and faith-filled individuals for ministerial leadership.

■ ■ ■ The 2007 Christian Citizenship Seminar



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

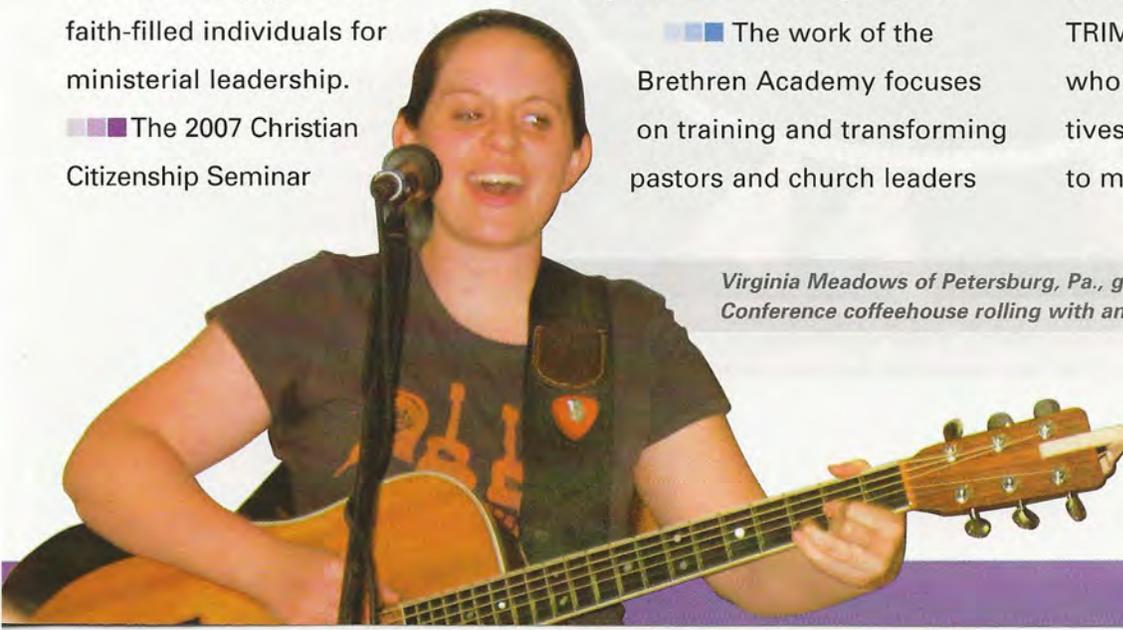
*The Consultation on Ministerial Leadership provided an opportunity for clergy and lay persons to reflect, vision, and discuss ministerial leadership.*

provided 72 youth and advisors the opportunity to see how Christian faith intersects with the issue of healthcare. Highlights of the seminar included visits to the United Nations in New York City and to Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

■ ■ ■ The work of the Brethren Academy focuses on training and transforming pastors and church leaders

for faithful and effective ministry with the church and in the world, and includes the Training in Ministry (TRIM) program. A funeral director, a retired school teacher, a hospital patient care coordinator are among the 90-plus TRIM students from 18 districts, who bring a variety of perspectives as they respond to God's call to ministry.

*Virginia Meadows of Petersburg, Pa., gets the Young Adult Conference coffeehouse rolling with an upbeat song.*



■■■■ be transformed

# CULTIVATE REL

■ Becoming a more diverse church, as mandated by the 2007 Annual Conference, affects all areas of ministry within the life of a congregation, including evangelism, stewardship, and mission outreach. In an effort to support con-

gregations and the denomination in the journey toward becoming intercultural, a staff position was created to focus specifically on intercultural opportunities and challenges. Rubén Deoleo began in this position in late 2007.

■■■ The relationship between Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria (EYN), the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria, and the Church of the Brethren in the United States was deepened when EYN hosted Annual Conference moderator Belita Mitchell, her husband, Don, and Mervin Keeney, executive director of Global Mission Partnerships. A highlight of the journey was Mitchell’s preaching and participation in love feast at the Dala congregation in Maiduguri, one of five EYN churches burned during religious riots in February 2006. Encouraged by spiritual support and financial gifts exceeding \$50,000 from the US church, the five damaged churches are in various stages of reconstruction.

■■■ Torit, a town in the Sudanese state of Eastern Equatoria, was chosen as the starting location for the Sudan



Mark Winterschick

About 40 camp enthusiasts and outdoor ministry staff cultivate relationships at their biannual Outdoor Ministries Association National Conference.

KADA KU KAMANTU BISA GA KUMAR WANNAN ZAMANI  
 KUMA; AMLA KU JUYU BISA GA SABONTAR AZANCHINKU,  
 DA ZA KU GWADA KO MINENE NUFIN NAN NA ALLAH MAI  
 KYAU, ABIN KARBA, CHIKAKKE.

■■■ Romans 12:2 ■■ Housa

# ATIONSHIPS

Initiative mission. Ministry will be focused on healing and rebuilding communities while planting churches.

■ ■ ■ A delegation of US Brethren composed of Stanley Noffsinger, David Sollenberger, and Mervin Keeney visited the India church. The delegation's visit included a day-long celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Church of the Brethren, held at the Wilbur Stover bungalow in Valsad. They brought greetings to the churches at Valsad, Ankleshwar, and other rural communities.

■■■ The Brethren Witness/Washington office sponsored a



Ken Wenger

*The General Board's executive committee visited an active Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM) rebuilding site in St. Bernard Parish, La. Pictured with the group of visitors and Brethren volunteers is homeowner Ron Richardson.*

Faith Expedition to Vietnam. The delegation explored the changes that have taken place in the years since the war ended and recognized the challenges still ahead. A tangible result of this expedition was

a joint project with Church World Service to develop a water and sanitation project aimed at helping Vietnamese children in a school setting. Brethren have provided \$6,000 of support to this project through the Global Food Crisis Fund.



Don Mitchell

*Belita Mitchell, right, visits with EYN president Filibus Gwama in Nigeria.*

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# MAKE PEACE

■ Joint participation by the US and India Brethren at an Asia conference of the Historic Peace Churches was a milestone for the India relationship, underlining the centrality of peace in Brethren

identity and theology. The Rev. Ashok Solankey of the Valsad congregation was selected to represent the India Brethren and make a presentation on poverty at the conference. The president

of the Church of the Brethren in India, Kantilal R. Rajwadi, also attended. US Brethren representatives included Stanley Noffsinger and Mervin Keeney, along with Donald Miller, former general secretary and emeritus faculty at Bethany Theological Seminary; and Scott Holland, seminary faculty for peace and cross-cultural studies. At the conference, participants explored topics of poverty, religious pluralism, and injustice as a part of the theme "Peace in Our Land."

■ The General Board approved the "Resolution Against the Use of Depleted Uranium in Weaponry" and "Resolution on Modern-Day Slavery: A Call to Awareness, Education, and Action."

■ Since the late 1970s, the Church of the Brethren has been in partnership with the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC), which



Stanley Majka

Through the Emergency Disaster Fund, Brethren are helping the Angolan people recover from almost 30 years of civil war.

UND STELLET EUCH NICHT DIESER WELT GLEICH, SONDERN VERÄNDERT EUCH DURCH DIE ERNEUERUNG EURES SINNES, AUF DASS IHR PRÜFEN MÖGET, WELCHES DA SEI DER GUTE, WOHLGEFÄLLIGE UND VOLLKOMMENE GOTTESWILLE.

■ ■ ■ Romans 12:2 ■ German

Dave Sollenberger



merged this year with the New Sudan Council of Churches with our support. The new agency, retaining the name Sudan Council of Churches, continues coordinating Christian peacemaking efforts, facilitating collaboration and support among churches, and provid-

*Within the US Church of the Brethren context, discussions of peace often address issues related to war. Yet at the Historic Peace Churches Conference in Asia, participants from developing countries reminded all that in many countries, environmental issues, such as air pollution and rising sea levels due to global warming, are the peace issues.*

ing humanitarian assistance to the civil war-ravaged South.

■ ■ ■ In Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN), the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria, a peace program was recently developed to provide a more intentional way for the church to constructively engage Muslim-Christian tensions.

■ ■ ■ Transforming our nation's foreign policy away from acts of war remains a priority of the Brethren Witness/Washington Office. Staff have been active in educating youth on the topic of conscientious objection. Direct advocacy to national legislators included sharing the resolutions

of the Church of the Brethren to end the war in Iraq and call for a time of repentance and confession for the nation's involvement. In addition, staff facilitated visits by Brethren who came to the Capitol to participate in public protests and nonviolent actions specific to US involvement in the Iraq and Afghan wars.

Becky Ullom



*Youth at a workcamp visited this girl's community in Mexico to distribute gifts of food and clothing.*

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# SERVE OTHERS

■ Through the Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF), the Church of the Brethren touched lives throughout the world by aiding people in 23 nations through 31 international grants totaling almost \$428,300. Africa received 11 grants, with focused efforts in Sudan and Angola. Still working on tsunami

recovery, Indonesia was further challenged by 19 major disasters in 2007. Special attention was also given to the Dominican Republic and the Brethren there after tropical storm Noel caused significant flooding. In the United States, 14 EDF grants totaling \$275,000 were used to train and support volun-

teers to rebuild homes and provide services for children.

■ The Igreja da Irmandade, the Church of the Brethren in Brazil, continues to touch communities with the message of God's love. A new ministry at Campo Limpo reaches out to individuals with addictions and their families

Becky Ullom



Workcampers begin to understand more deeply the spiritual significance of service as they work alongside those the participants came to serve. Here, senior high youth prepare to construct a cinder block and cement wall.

E NÃO VOS CONFORMEIS A ESTE MUNDO, MAS TRANSFORMAI-VOS PELA RENOVAÇÃO DA VOSSA MENTE, PARA QUE EXPERIMENTEIS QUAL SEJA A BOA, AGRADÁVEL, E PERFEITA VONTADE DE DEUS.

■ ■ ■ Romans 12:2 ■ Portuguese

through professional counseling. A freshly updated website provides an online way to communicate the church's mission and identity.

■ ■ ■ The church's long-term commitment to the war-torn community of Union Victoria, Guatemala, was renewed by the support of a youth delegation, the continued presence of human rights accompaniment volunteers, and an EDF grant to repair a village hydro-electric system and develop a reforestation program.

■ ■ ■ Givers enabled the church to distribute 18 Global Food Crisis Fund (GFCF) grants totaling \$338,200 during the year; GFCF donations totaled \$320,000. Beyond fundraising and grant making, the Global Food Crisis Fund provided resources for hunger education across age groups, urged citizen input on the US Farm Bill, encouraged support of the Millennium Development Goals, and coordi-



Genelle Wine

nated growing projects for the Foods Resource Bank.

■ ■ ■ This past year 72 new volunteers came through Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS), a 38-percent increase over 2006. Volunteers took placements in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany, Guatemala, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Serbia, and the US.

■ ■ ■ Over 1,000 Brethren Service Center volunteers gave 17,552 hours of service supporting programs and agencies on campus.

■ ■ ■ During the year, 158 homes were restored by Brethren Disaster Ministries volunteers who gave over 11,000 workdays at an estimated value of \$1,676,990. Projects included Katrina recovery in Lucedale and McComb, Miss.; Pearl River and

Chalmette, La.; as well as flood recovery in Rushford, Minn.

■ ■ ■ Over 3,000 children were served by 131 volunteers responding to nine different disasters in the US. The largest response was in New Orleans, at the Welcome Home center where volunteers served for 8 1/2 months in 2007 as part of a long and intense Hurricane Katrina response. Other responses were in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and Ohio after flooding; in Kansas after a tornado; and in California during fall wildfires. Volunteers served 1,339 days, for an estimated value of slightly more than \$200,000.



Amy Haskett



*be transformed*

# SHARE GIFTS



Genelle Wine

■ Solid net assets allowed the board to budget a shortfall for Core Ministries in 2007. As the year ended, donations were substantially under budget. However, investment income and under-spending in a number of areas filled the gap, resulting in a net income of \$129,900.

The Emergency Disaster Fund received \$879,100, down about \$9,000 from 2006. Giving to the Emerging Global Mission Fund increased over 2006, reaching a total of \$66,900. The Global Food

Crisis Fund received \$320,000, slightly higher than 2006. Gifts to the fledgling Sudan Initiative totaled \$200,300.

Four self-funding ministry areas receive income through sales of goods and services. Material Resources, formerly called Service Ministries, ended with a deficit of \$13,700. Brethren Press sales topped \$1 million but, after larger-than-expected inventory adjustments, experienced a net expense of \$80,700. *Messenger* had another good year, ending

## Core Ministries Fund \$5,495,300 (net expenses)

### Congregational Life Ministries.

Provides training and resources in church development, evangelism, stewardship, spiritual formation, and youth and young adult ministries.

**\$838,500**

### Office of Ministry.

Provides leadership for calling, training, credentialing, placement, and sustaining ministerial leadership for the church. Nurtures pastoral leadership through ministry training with Bethany Seminary and Brethren Academy. Works with district staff and pastors. **\$337,800**

### Global Mission Partnerships.

Guides international church planting, development, leadership training, and theological education. Manages Global Food Crisis Fund and Brethren Witness/Washington Office. Orients and places volunteers in projects focusing on peace, justice, human need, and the environment. **\$1,219,400**

### Brethren Press Communications.

Fosters identity, unity, and vision. Publishes *Messenger* (which has separate budget), *Tapestry*, *Source*, *Newsline*, and the website. Interprets program, conducts news service. **\$319,300**

### Treasurer/Centralized Resources.

Handles finances of General Board and Annual Conference. Manages and maintains technology, archives, and Elgin facilities. Covers costs of telephone, technology, postage, support services for all program areas. Offers financial resource counseling on stewardship and estate planning. **\$2,244,800**

### Brethren Service Center.

Hosts local, national, and global service ministries; operates conference center; provides public information; maintains buildings and grounds. Costs are covered largely by self-funding programs of the center. General Ministries Fund portion: **\$23,700**

with \$20,100 income over expense. The New Windsor Conference Center also

ended the year positively, with a net gain of \$25,600.

The Stewardship team is challenged by the growing financial pressures on our congregations and districts, and the very real demands of the world on General Board ministries. Congregations and donors continued to be loyal

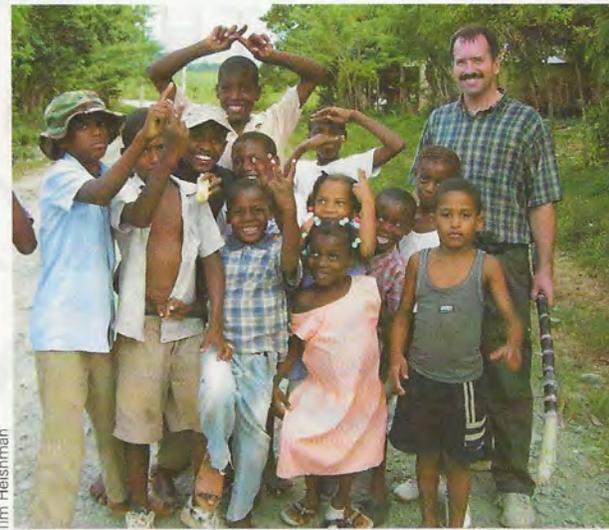


Irv Heishman

and generous in 2007. Over 3,000 individual donors and 859 congregations transformed their gifts from

God into gifts of Christ's love through our work together. The team is extremely grateful for that trust and support!

*Far left: BVS worker Paula Hoffert helping improve a neighborhood. Above: Baptism in the Dominican Republic. Right: Irv and Nancy Heishman guide the church's work in the Dominican Republic. Irv and this group of children stop their game long enough for this photo to be taken.*



Tim Heishman

### Special-purpose funds (donations)

**General Secretary.**  
Administers work of the General Board and serves as spiritual guidepost for staff and General Board ministries. Oversees human resources. Heads ecumenical representation.  
**\$511,800**

**Emergency Disaster Fund**  
\$879,100

**Global Food Crisis Fund**  
\$320,000

**Emerging Global Mission Fund**  
\$66,900

### Self-funding units (gross revenue)

**Brethren Press**  
\$1,138,100

**New Windsor Conference Center**  
\$872,500

**Service Ministries**  
\$793,000

**Messenger**  
\$256,600

The above amounts were provided prior to completion of the 2007 audit. Complete financial information is available in the General Board audit report, published in June 2008.



TO 

PROCLAIM  
AND LIVE  
THE WORK  
OF JESUS SO  
THE WORLD  
MAY BE

*transformed*

We, the General Board, strive to be:

**Christ-like:** Reflecting the love and heart of Jesus.

**Servants of the Spirit:** Serving with both humility and boldness.

**Guided:** Following God as shown to us through our Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

**Able to discern:** Seeking the leading of the Holy Spirit through prayer, the gathered community, and scrip-

ture centered within the New Testament.

**Community-minded:** Cultivating relationships and building up the body of Christ.

**Stewards:** Caring for all God's gifts and the resources of the Church of the Brethren.

**Unpretentious:** Living simply so that we have room in our lives for God and for others and so that we might preserve the gift of this planet.

**Evangelists:** Following Jesus' example of loving and respecting all people and inviting them into his fellowship.

**Peacemakers:** Acting as Christ in love, reconciliation, and justice.

**Globally focused:** Recognizing that in Christ there are no boundaries of nation, culture, race, or geography.

**Witnesses:** Modeling a life of service and proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ.



CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN GENERAL BOARD

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**ITS GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT HAS NOT BEEN A PARTICULAR ISSUE, PROGRAM, OR PUBLICATION, BUT THE FACT THAT DESPITE ALL THAT COULD HAVE TORN IT APART, THE MEMBER CHURCHES HAVE HELD TOGETHER.**

what they considered weak efforts regarding mission and evangelism. Meanwhile, the Programme to Combat Racism was a lightning rod for criticism in the face of its unflinching support for the anti-apartheid movement in southern Africa.

Yet talking to those touched by the WCC over the years, its greatest achievement has not been a particular issue, program, or publication, but the fact that despite all that could have torn it apart, the member churches have held together. As an Asian ecumenical leader says: "The relationships built between churches are the WCC's finest accomplishment. It's not unity in the strict sense, but in building a knowledge of heritage and customs and awareness—like a family."

And the WCC is growing. It now brings together 349 churches and denominations in more than 110 countries and territories throughout the world. The Russian Orthodox Church joined in 1961, and the Roman Catholic Church works closely with the WCC in many program areas.

The growth of the WCC is a sign of success and a challenge to the future, as it demonstrates the changing face of ecumenism and Christianity itself. Most of the WCC's founding churches were European and North American, although churches from other regions were also among them; today most members are in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East, and the Pacific.

The breadth of its membership creates the living challenge of ecumenism: connecting, assessing, changing to more truly reflect unity. Intensive dialogue between Orthodox churches and other traditions over the past 10 years allowed the fellowship of churches to realize that some practices comfortable to most Western members felt unfamiliar and disempowering to many others. Significant changes in how the WCC conducts its business followed, notably with the introduction of consensus decision-making.

As the 60th celebration theme "Making a difference together" underlines, it is not about the anniversary of an institution, but a fellowship, a movement, and a vision. Six decades ago in Amsterdam, participants confessed, "We are divided from one another not only in matters of faith, order, and tradition, but also by pride of nation, class and race." While this reality persists, so does the ecumenical vision. "But Christ has made us his own, and he is not divided," the Amsterdam message continued.

The WCC is not just celebrating a birthday, but the visible and viable commitment of the churches, who despite all their own and the world's divisions reclaim the 1948 affirmation: "We intend to stay together." 

Sara Speicher, a freelance writer, is a member of the Church of the Brethren now living in England. She is former coordinator of the World Council of Churches Public Information Team.

**Kobia will not continue**

World Council of Churches general secretary Samuel Kobia announced at the WCC's February central committee meetings that he would not seek a second term in office. The central committee (pictured at left) appointed a search committee to fill the position at its next meeting, in September 2009.

"The central committee received this news with regret but accepted the decision of the general secretary," said WCC moderator the Rev. Dr. Walter Altmann, who also expressed "deep gratitude" for Kobia's "dedicated services." Kobia, who began as general secretary in January 2004, has "full support to carry out his duties until the end of his term," Altmann added.

Kobia will remain in office until Dec. 31. An acting general secretary will assume office as of Jan. 1, 2009, until a new general secretary elected by the central committee at its September 2009 meeting takes office, likely by the end of 2009. (WCC News Service)

WCC / Peter Williams



**Peace convocation planned for 2011**

The WCC central committee chose Kingston, Jamaica, as the host city for the 2011 International Ecumenical Peace Convocation. The convocation will culminate the WCC's Decade to Overcome Violence, in which the Church of the Brethren has been an active participant.

It is expected that more than 2,000 participants will gather in Kingston under the theme "Glory to God and peace on earth." The central committee selected Kingston over Nairobi, Kenya, in a consensus process.

A series of "expert consultations" on a variety of peace and reconciliation-related topics are taking place as momentum builds toward the convocation. Five took place in 2007, and eight more were planned for 2008.

"The peace convocation should be a milestone in our ecumenical deliberations on peace and justice," said Fernando Enns, a theology professor and member of the Mennonite Church in Germany. "It is not only preaching to the world, but reflecting on ourselves."—Walt Wiltschek

**Ground statements in scripture**

The Rev. Kjell Magne Bondevik, former prime minister of Norway and a national legislator for more than 30 years, called on the WCC central committee to be sure its public statements are grounded in scripture and carry a distinctly religious tone.

"The church must not act like another NGO (non-governmental organization)," said Bondevik, now moderator of the WCC's Commission of the Churches on International Affairs. "We have value when we make public statements as a church, but we must always try to root our statements in these (Christian) values."

While he was prime minister, he received many statements from churches. But he and his colleagues would often ask, "Why are they saying this as a church? These could have been made by any group."

"The church voice is wanted," Bondevik said in a later interview, "but if it is to be heard it must do what I said (rooting statements in scripture), or else it will only be one of many others and may not be heard at all."—Walt Wiltschek

# The Acts of the Apostles: *The Spirit moves*

Powerful book offers multiple approaches for reading

by Tara Hornbacker

**O**ne snowy Sunday afternoon, I read through *The Acts of the Apostles*. What an afternoon!

From the commissioning of the disciples to be Gospel witnesses (1:8) to the final summary of Paul's work (28:30-31), the reader travels through the world of the early church.

Acts flows through great stories, great characters, the Great Commission—and surfaces so many questions. First came the questions of the church planter. What did the apostles do to continue the work of Jesus? How did they plant all those churches? A deeper read invited me to think further about the actual work of the Spirit. These early church planters did not conceive of their work on their own and head out with the latest business plan and a blueprint under their arms. They waited until they received the Holy Spirit. Following the gift of the

Spirit, they began to live their lives as a witness to the teachings of Jesus across all cultures.

Three lenses through which we might examine a multi-faceted reading of Acts include church planting and evangelism, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the call to be a multicultural church.

• **Church planting and evangelism:** Acts moves according to Jesus' commission for the disciples (1:8) to be witnesses in Jerusalem, all of Judea and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth. Following this commissioning we can plant churches by reaching out to those in our neighborhood; those who are nearby, but strangers or marginal to us; and those who are geographically, ethnically, or otherwise foreign to us.

Upon receiving the Holy Spirit, the 120 in chapter 2 begin to speak in other languages (2:4) so that all might receive the

Gospel and join the *missio dei* (mission of God.) Acts moves through the witness in Jerusalem (2:5-8:4), witness in Judea and Samaria (8:5-40), witness to the Gentiles (9:1-14:28), Council at Jerusalem (15:1-35), Paul's mission to the Gentiles (15:36-22:21), and Paul accused and in custody (22:22-28:31). Acts bridges between the four Gospels and the Pauline and Catholic epistles, introducing the background for some of the ongoing conversations and enduring characters of early Christianity.

• **The Spirit at work:** Another way to read the book of Acts is to pay particular attention to the work of the Holy Spirit. Try reading Acts as *The Acts of the Spirit*. Note at least 40 times that the Holy Spirit is mentioned. For those of us in the Anabaptist/Pietist tradition, intentional regard for the actions of the Spirit is important as we discern the work of the Spirit not only among us, but in the world. Where and how is God urging us to serve and proclaim the Gospel? How does the Holy Spirit empower us to join in the *missio dei*? Does the call of God require us to share more than our recipes with our sisters and brothers (4:32)?

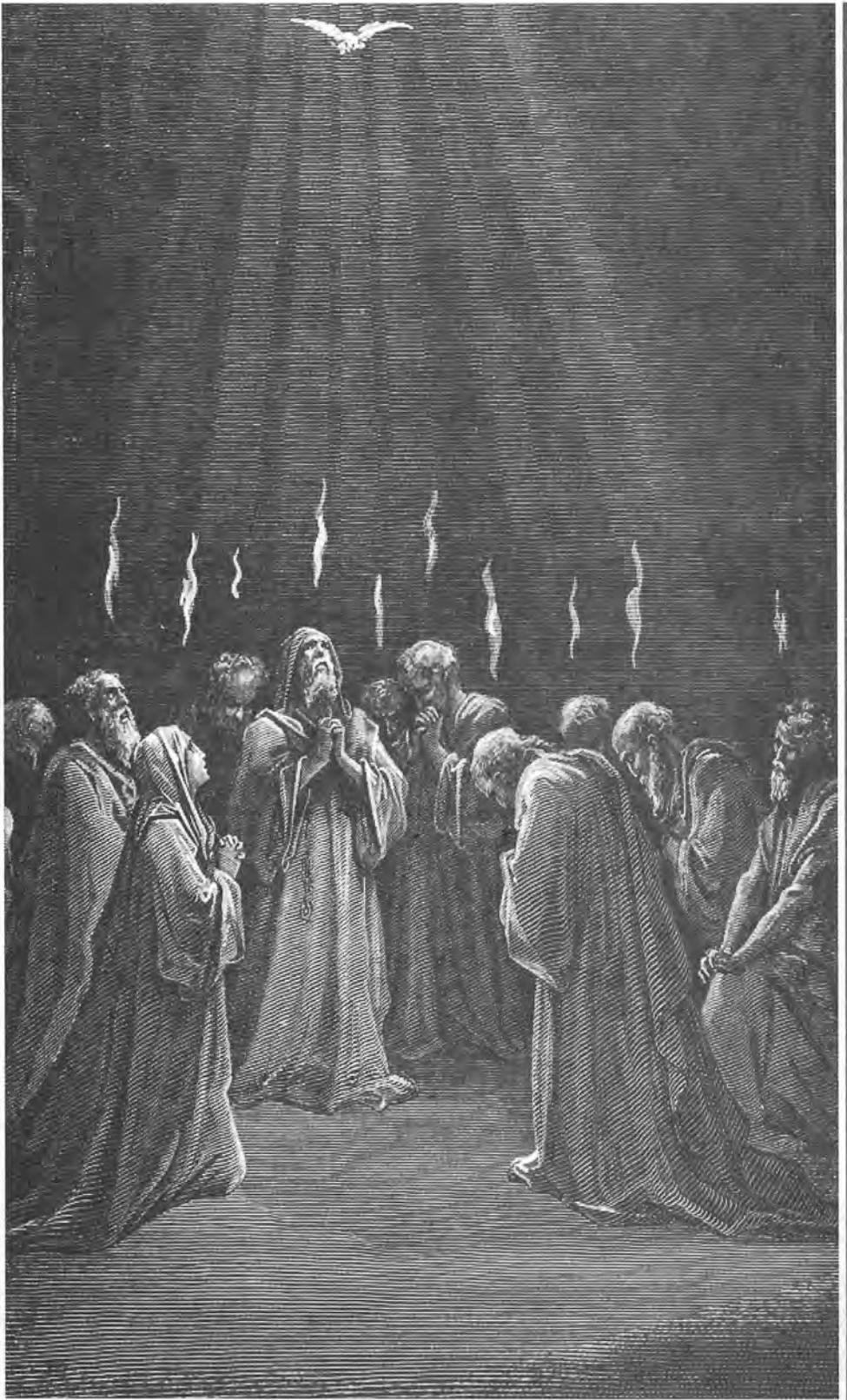
• **Called to be multicultural:** It is most urgent for us to read Acts with the lens of becoming a multicultural church. Here we see the Spirit-led church struggling with the essence of what and who the church is called to be. The apostles were faced with issues of circumcision and purity codes when encountering the Gentiles. A critical turning point for the continuing conversion of the church begins in Acts 8 and stretches throughout the remainder of the text. As soon

## ACTS: A CLOSER LOOK

**Authorship:** Most scholars agree that the evangelist Luke wrote both *The Acts of the Apostles* and the *Gospel of Luke* in the first century, around 85 AD. The focus of Acts is on the mission of the apostles and formation and expansion of the community of believers through the gift and work of the Holy Spirit.

**Key texts:** "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (1:8); "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability" (2:4); "All who believed were together and had all things in common . . . and day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved" (2:44-47).

**Suggested reading and references:** *Called to Be Church: The Book of Acts for a New Day*, by Anthony B. Robinson and Robert W. Wall (Eerdmans, 2006); *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary: Volume X—Acts commentary*, by Robert W. Wall (Abingdon, 2002); *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit*, by Craig Van Gelder (Baker Books, 2007).



as the apostles begin to move out of the circle of Jerusalem, they encounter cultural differences. If the early church had focused upon cultural differences rather than the work of God, the message of the Gospel would have stopped at the city walls of Jerusalem. Instead, the apostles and the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) were open to discerning God's will and the Spirit's work beyond their previous experiences.

How much of our faith identity (who we are) and actions (what we do) are culturally conditioned and not essential to the reign of God? What are the non-negotiables of our faith and practice? Are we focused on God's will or majority rule? The missional church discerns where God is at work and sends us, like Paul, to be "welcoming all, . . . proclaiming the kingdom of God, and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance" (28:30-31). How might a fresh living into Acts give us a better understanding of the missional, multicultural church?

So many questions came as I began this article with that snowy Sabbath reading. This summer, as we read Acts in community with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, may we find inspiration to be the surrendered, transformed, and empowered church for the future. **W**

Tara Hornbacker is associate professor of ministry formation at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind. She lives in New Paris, Ohio.

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 July/August: Romans, by Rick Gardner.

**THEY WAITED UNTIL THEY RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT. FOLLOWING THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT, THEY BEGAN TO LIVE THEIR LIVES AS A WITNESS TO THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS ACROSS ALL CULTURES.**

# Genocide: Will it ever be 'Never again'?

Youth Christian Citizenship Seminar explores difficult issue

Story and photos by Walt Wiltschek

**genocide** (jen' o sīd') n. *The systematic extermination or destruction of a political, racial, or cultural group. (Webster's Dictionary)*

**T**he word "genocide" was coined by Raphael Lemkin, who served as an international lawyer during the post-World War II Nuremberg Trials in Germany. Lemkin had direct experience of the Nazis' crimes against the Jews and others, personally losing many family members to the Holocaust.

It comes from the Greek word "genos," for race or tribe, and the Latin word "cid," to kill. Its meaning has generally broadened to include any systematic acts that cause widespread physical or mental suffering or that destroy a culture or way of life. While the exact definition is sometimes debated, the word has lost none of its power over the decades.

Church of the Brethren youth and advisors, about 75 in all, spent a week wrestling with that term during this year's Christian Citizenship Seminar (CCS), held March 29-April 3 in New York and Washington, D.C. Discussion began with a look at history, even before the word "genocide" was officially used, and moved to an examination of the current situation in Sudan's Darfur region.

"It's the hardest issue, I think, that I have to address," Brethren Witness/Washington Office director Phil Jones said, introducing the topic to the group. "This story of genocide must become yours this week." A repeated question came from the Gospel parable of the Good Samaritan: "Who is your neighbor?"

The stories include poignant sharing from Holocaust survivor George Brent, whose family was taken from

Czechoslovakia in 1944, when he was a teenager. After being taken to Auschwitz-Birkenau, he never saw his mother or brother again. "If you can put your foot down and say it shouldn't be done, do it," said Brent, now a dentist in Illinois.

Brethren historian and author Jim Lehman told how the lives of early Brethren and Native Americans intersected as migration pushed west in America. Brethren were among 20 to 30 people killed in a massacre at Morrisons Cove, Pa., in the 1760s. Lehman raised questions about the complexities of land and culture: "Where is God in this picture?" he asked. "Who do you identify with?"

The group explored one recent genocide, the mid-1990s Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Rwanda, by viewing the movie *Hotel Rwanda* in an evening session. Amid the heavy mood that followed, small groups discussed the implications of what they had seen, and how those lessons can apply today.

David Fracarro of the World Council of Churches US Conference offered some possible answers the next morning, encouraging youth to look at the root causes of mass discrimination and killing. He noted the cliques and stereotypes that occur in schools, asking the group to call out the ones they had seen. "Behind genocide, a key issue is all wrapped around identity," Fracarro said. He noted the dynamics of exclusion in some of the recent US school shootings.

Looking at the larger world stage, he pointed to the responsibility the US carries for this issue due to its "disproportionate influence" and size. "We have responsibility because we have put ourselves there," Fracarro said. "We have put ourselves forward.

"There is no reason why genocide should be taking place," he added.

Sharon Silber, found-

## ABOUT CCS

Christian Citizenship Seminar is sponsored annually, except in National Youth Conference years, by the Church of the Brethren's Youth/Young Adult Ministry office and Brethren Witness/Washington Office. Details are at [www.brethren.org/genbd/yya/CCS.htm](http://www.brethren.org/genbd/yya/CCS.htm). In addition to sessions on the theme topic, the week includes visits to area churches for Sunday morning worship, a tour of the United Nations, daily devotional/worship times, and free time to explore the two cities.



Justin Faiola of Palmyra, Pa., and Tamy Santos, an exchange student from Brazil, look over remnants from the Hiroshima bomb zone at the United Nations.

George Brent, a Holocaust survivor, shows the tattoo he received as a Nazi prisoner.



Activist Sharon Silber goes over details about the situation in Darfur.

ing member of Jews Against Genocide, echoed those sentiments as she centered on Darfur. "I really think Darfur is a test for us," she said, "and I don't think we're passing."

The focus remained on Darfur as the seminar shifted south from New York to Washington and youth prepared for visits to their representatives and senators. Efforts targeted the need for a strong supplemental funding bill for Darfur peacekeeping in the 2008 fiscal year budget and Darfur-related resolutions in the House and Senate.

"These are not topics that are easy for any of us to read about, to talk about, to grapple with," said Manchester College peace studies faculty member Tim McElwee, who addressed the group in Washington. "These are issues that, frankly, we would rather ignore. . . . It's easier to pretend things like what happened in Rwanda don't happen."

McElwee directed small-group discussion that highlighted parts of a 1996 Annual Conference paper on Nonviolence and Humanitarian Intervention and the "responsibility to protect." Youth found many areas of agreement and some differences in how they would respond in hypothetical cases.

More personal stories followed the Wednesday afternoon lobby visits, from a former Sudanese diplomat and from two CCS youth participants—Serena and Wilfred Lohitai—who

were born in southern Sudan and later came to the US as refugees sponsored by the Church of the Brethren.

Serena, now a member of Manchester Church of the Brethren in Indiana, told the group about growing up in refugee camps. "I didn't feel it was bad," she said, "because I didn't know anything else." She said she would "love to go back" to Sudan someday, and to help where she could.

Jones pointed out that the world community loudly stated "Never again!" after the Holocaust in the mid-20th century, yet genocide has occurred repeatedly around the world in the years since—more than 40 such cases, by some estimates.

"I hope you're beginning to see . . . the responsibility you have," Jones said in a closing session.

As youth shared their reflections on the week, they demonstrated a sense of that weighty call.

"Genocide is a lot closer to us than we'd feel comfortable in admitting," said Loren Horst, from Shippensburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.

And many affirmed the words of Billy Miller of St. Petersburg (Fla.) First Church of the Brethren: "As I leave this week," he said, "I want to take action."

Ideas named by others included holding retreats on the subject in their districts, writing to school and local newspapers, continuing contacts to congressional representatives, and learning more about genocide.

"We were challenged to go back home and talk with our friends and families, congressmen and churches about the horrible act of genocide that is taking place today," said Marcus Harden of Miami First Church of the Brethren, who hopes to run for office in the future. "If there was one thing I brought back home to share, it was learning the importance of having compassion for others." ❧

Walt Wiltschek is editor of MESSENGER and was among this year's CCS participants.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The Church of the Brethren's Emergency Disaster Fund and Global Food Crisis Fund (call 800-323-8039 to give, or send to 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120) have combined to send \$325,000 in aid for the Darfur crisis through spring 2008. That includes two grants, one from each fund, that sent \$85,000 earlier this year. Aid is being channeled via Church World Service to the Darfur Emergency Relief Operation of ACT/Caritas. Details are at [www.churchworldservice.org/news/Sudan/](http://www.churchworldservice.org/news/Sudan/).

## RESOURCES

- Visit websites including [www.savedarfur.org](http://www.savedarfur.org), [www.genocidewatch.org](http://www.genocidewatch.org) (which lists the "Eight Stages of Genocide"), [www.standnow.org](http://www.standnow.org), and [howgenocidesend.ssrc.org/](http://howgenocidesend.ssrc.org/).
- The 1996 Annual Conference Statement on Nonviolence and Humanitarian Intervention is at [www.brethren.org/ac/ac\\_statements/96Nonviolence.htm](http://www.brethren.org/ac/ac_statements/96Nonviolence.htm).
- A good basic book is *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, by Adam Jones; for Darfur, *The Devil Came on Horseback*, by Brian Steidle, or *Not On Our Watch*, by Don Cheadle and John Prendergast.



## Church is lead sponsor for Nicaragua farm program

The Church of the Brethren is the lead sponsor of the Rio Coco farm program in Nicaragua, through the Global Food Crisis Fund and its partnership with the Foods Resource Bank and Church World Service (CWS).

The project will establish the Rio Coco Demonstration Farms in an area of Nicaragua that borders Honduras, with the help of a Global Food Crisis Fund grant of \$35,000 for the first year of the program. The funding will come from the Global Food Crisis Fund's growing project accounts in the Foods Resource Bank.

Eight demonstration farms will heighten the food security and health of the populace, which is largely Meskito. So far, funding for one demonstration farm has been arranged by the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, and the Church of the Brethren will be the lead sponsor for three



A farmer demonstrates how to grow rice crops in a plot near Waspan, Nicaragua.



A local farmer shows off his work at a demonstration farm near Wiwinak in the Rio Coco region of Nicaragua.

other demonstration centers. Each demonstration farm will enlist 10 participating groups from surrounding communities. From each group, six workers will train at the demonstration center, then return to their home communities to teach what they have learned to others.

The demonstration center programs will deal with the production of grain, vegetables, trees, livestock, and vermiculture. Eventually, stores are to be opened at each center, operated by women from participating communities. Partnering with the Foods Resource Bank is Accion Medica Cristiana, which already has a central pharmacy in Waspan, the main municipality, and 100 small "box" pharmacies in outlying villages.

### Recent grants from the General Board's Global Food Crisis Fund

- \$50,000 supports four farm cooperatives in North Korea, the fifth year the fund has supported Agglobe International, which oversees the work
- \$35,000 goes for an emergency relief operation in Darfur, Sudan

## Bethany board passes budget, begins process of visioning

The Bethany Theological Seminary board of trustees meeting March 28-30 in Richmond, Ind., included spirited discussion and deliberation about many significant items related to the seminary's mission and program, including conversation on the "core testimonies" of the Church of the Brethren.

Faculty and administration joined the board for an evening meal followed by a time of creative visioning about the seminary's mission. Board chair Ted Flory described the conversation as a discussion about "How we might refocus that mission around Church of the Brethren core testimonies in order to meet the

needs of the denomination and wider church, and the world, for the 21st century." No decisions were made other than a consensus to continue the conversations and build on the creative energies that were ignited during the meeting.

The board approved 16 candidates for graduation on May 3, pending successful completion of their studies. The board also received a report from academic dean Stephen Breck Reid that 51 percent of seminary students in the US are women; during the 2007-2008 academic year, 57 percent of Bethany students were women. A new course titled "Women in Ministry" will be added to the curriculum for 2008-2009, taught by Tara Hornbacker, associate professor of Ministry Formation.

Academic year budgets for 2008-2009 were approved for Bethany operations, the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, and the Brethren Journal Association. The Bethany operations budget is \$2,406,280, an approximately \$186,500 increase.

The board retained its current officers for 2008-2009: Flory, of Bridgewater, Va., as chair; Ray Donadio of Greenville, Ohio, as vice chair; Frances Beam of Concord, N.C., as secretary; Carol Scheppard of Mount Crawford, Va., as chair of the Academic Affairs Committee; Elaine Gibbel of Lititz, Pa., as chair of the Institutional Advancement Committee; and Jim Dodson of Lexington, Ky., as chair of the Student and Business Affairs Committee.

## Annual Conference Council discusses deficit, merger

The Annual Conference Council received an update on funding for Annual Conference during its March meeting. The group also addressed issues related to the merger of the Association of Brethren Caregivers and the General Board, among other business.

The Annual Conference Fund ended 2007 with a deficit of \$46,376, a figure \$45,000 better than was projected. The deficit represents losses Annual Conference has experienced over the past five Conferences. The 2007 deficit alone was \$15,501. Income for the 2007 Conference—including registrations, district contributions, etc.—exceeded budget expectations by \$57,000, but facility expenses in Cleveland, Ohio, were \$24,000 more than budgeted. The unexpected costs were due primarily to excess labor charges at the Cleveland Convention Center.

The council anticipates that the 2008 Annual Conference in Richmond, Va., will help resolve the financial problem, as registrations and lodging reservations have been showing encouraging increases. If the Conference hotels are filled, costs of the convention facilities will be minimal.

In other business, the council:

- Put finishing touches on its report to Standing Committee about a revision of the process for dealing with "special response queries." The council was asked by Annual Conference to revise the 1988 document in response to a recommendation from the Denominational Name Committee in 2004. If approved, Standing Committee will send the paper to the 2009 Conference for approval.

- Reviewed proposed bylaws for the new denominational structure merging the General Board and the Association of Brethren Caregivers, and decided that the entire document should be considered polity. The group noted that extensive changes will be required to the *Manual of Organization and Polity*, which has just recently been revised and reissued. There have been more orders than expected for paper copies of the revised manual.

- Accepted an invitation from general secretary Stan Noffsinger to have a joint meeting of the council and the proposed new denominational leadership team in August, to follow up on 2008 Annual Conference decisions and facilitate transition of responsibilities from the council to the leadership team.



Brethren Disaster Ministries volunteers are rebuilding homes in Louisiana following the destruction caused in 2005 by Hurricane Katrina.

## Brethren Disaster Ministries opens new Katrina project site

Brethren Disaster Ministries has opened a new Hurricane Katrina rebuilding site in East New Orleans (Arabi), La. An allocation of \$25,000 from the Church of the Brethren's Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) is helping to fund the new project, where volunteers will rebuild homes damaged or destroyed by Katrina.

The rebuilding site in Pearl River, La., was moved to Arabi in April. "There is little work left at the Pearl River site," explained Brethren Disaster Ministries coordinator Jane Yount. "Volunteers have been traveling across Lake Pontchartrain down to East Orleans daily. It will be much more convenient and better stewardship for both the project directors and the volunteers to be housed closer to where they are working."

Volunteer groups and project directors in Arabi will continue to work on cases provided by the Southeast Louisiana Recovery Network. The work will be mainly in the Orleans and St. Bernard parishes.

Elsewhere, the Brethren Disaster Ministries rebuilding site in Rushford, Minn., is now a long-term rebuilding project working with Lutheran Social Services/Lutheran Disaster Response. The project is scheduled to rebuild eight homes, with the help of a local construction coordinator.

## Recent grants from the General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund

- \$50,000 to support a Church World Service (CWS) appeal for Darfur, Sudan, for broad aid and relief efforts
- \$40,000 to CWS work in Mozambique, where flooding displaced tens of thousands of people
- \$35,000 supports the Brethren Disaster Ministries Hurricane Katrina Rebuilding Site 2 in Pearl River, La.
- \$35,000 supports the Brethren Disaster Ministries Hurricane Katrina Rebuilding Site 4 in Chalmette, La.
- \$19,700 aids Kenyans following post-election violence, through CWS
- \$15,000 supports the Brethren Disaster Ministries project in Rushford, Minn., following flooding
- \$10,000 goes to CWS following a devastating cyclone in Bangladesh
- \$7,000 responds to the tornados and violent storms in the south-central US in February
- \$4,000 to assist displaced people in Afghanistan through CWS
- \$2,000 aids CWS response to a massive storm system in the Midwest

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**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.

**July 10-12** Council of District Executives meeting, Richmond, Va.

**July 12** Church of the Brethren Credit Union board and members meeting, Richmond, Va.

**July 12-16** Annual Conference, Richmond, Va.; General Board meeting, Richmond, Va.

**July 15** Brethren Benefit Trust board meeting, Richmond, Va.

**July 25-26** Northern Plains District conference, Waterloo, Iowa

**July 25-26** South/Central Indiana District conference, Anderson, Ind.

**July 25-27** Northern Ohio District conference, Ashland, Ohio

**July 25-27** Southeastern District conference, Mars Hill, N.C.

**Aug. 1-3** Western Plains District conference, McPherson, Kan.

**Aug. 3** 300th Anniversary Celebration Sunday

## Personnel moves

• **Joshua Brockway** has been called by Bethany Theological Seminary to a one-year, half-time position in Brethren Studies during the 2008-2009 school year. He is a graduate of Manchester College and holds master's degrees from Bethany and Candler School of Theology. He will teach on the seminary's campus in Richmond, Ind., and will teach online courses. He currently is a doctoral student in church history at Catholic University of America.

• **Thomas N. Finger** has been called as scholar-in-residence at Bethany Theological Seminary for 2008-2009. He will teach four courses in the area of theological studies. Finger earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy of Religion and Systematic Theology from Claremont Graduate School. Author of numerous articles and the recent book *A Contemporary Anabaptist Theology*, he has taught at Eastern Mennonite University and Seminary, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Garrett-Evangelical Seminary,

and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, and currently is teaching at Meserete Kritos College in Ethiopia.

• **Scott Holland**, Bethany Theological Seminary's associate professor of Theology and Culture and director of Peace Studies and Cross-Cultural Studies, has been named acting director of the Master of Arts program for 2008-2009. He will be the instructor for the M.A. Research Seminar, the M.A. Thesis Seminar, and thesis completion courses. He will continue as director of Peace Studies and Cross-Cultural Studies; he also will direct the Peace Studies Forum and teach several courses, as well as lead a travel seminar to Nigeria in partnership with the General Board.

• The Mutual Aid Association (MAA) board of directors called **Eric K. Lamer**, most recently president of MarketAide Services Inc. of Salina, Kan., to succeed Jean L. Hendricks as president of MAA effective May 1. Lamer had worked at MarketAide in several positions since 1986, becoming president in

1999. He served as the primary account executive for MarketAide's largest accounts and was directly involved in creating marketing plans and campaigns. A native of Salina and a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, he previously worked for Premier Pneumatics Inc. and Kansas Technical Institute. He is a graduate of the University of Kansas.

• **Stephen Breck Reid**, academic dean at Bethany Theological Seminary, has accepted a position as professor of Hebrew Bible at Baylor's George W. Truett Theological Seminary in Waco, Texas, beginning Aug. 1. Reid has served in his current position at Bethany since 2003. Reid graduated from Bethany in 1976 and earned a Ph.D. from Emory University in 1981. He was professor of Old Testament Studies at Austin (Texas) Presbyterian Theological Seminary prior to joining the Bethany faculty. Reid also served as an adjunct professor at Bethany for many years, and was a member of the board of trustees from 1990 to 1998. Former dean **Rick Gardner** will serve as interim academic dean effective Aug. 1.



## A CONTINUING TESTIMONY

### Dialog with a President

Annual Conference  
Insight Session

Monday, July 14  
6:45 - 7:45 p.m.

Marriott Hotel,  
Salons 7-8

Learn more about  
**Bethany's mission.**  
Join in the conversation  
with President  
Ruthann Knechel Johansen.

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## General Board names mission advisory group

The Church of the Brethren General Board has called a new advisory group to help guide the denomination's mission program through a time of discernment and transition. General secretary Stan Noffsinger announced the appointment of the group, which held its first meeting May 2 by conference call.

Those named to the mission advisory group are Bob Kettering, senior pastor of Lititz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren; Dale Minnich, a member of the General Board and former staff member; James F. Myer, vice chairman of Brethren Revival Fellowship; Louise Baldwin Rieman, co-pastor of Northview Church of the Brethren in Indianapolis and a member of the assessment team for the Sudan mission initiative; Carol Spicher Waggy, a former mission worker in Nigeria and the Dominican Republic; Earl K. Ziegler, a retired minister and a past moderator of Annual Conference; and Mary Jo Flory-Steury, executive director of Ministry for the General Board. R. Jan Thompson was involved in the first meeting of the group as interim executive director of the board's Global Mission Partnerships.

**ONCAMPUS**

**Bridgewater College** (*Bridgewater, Va.*)

Five Bridgewater alumni were honored during the college's annual Alumni Weekend celebration April 18-19. David Radcliff, a 1975 alumnus, received the West-Whitelow Award for Humanitarian Service. Siblings John S. Flory Jr. (1932) and Peg Flory Wampler Rainbolt (1937) received the 2008 Ripples Society Medals. John Milleson (1978) received the 2008 Distinguished Alumnus Award. And A. David Ervin (1991) was presented with the 2008 Young Alumnus Award.

**Elizabethtown College** (*Elizabethtown, Pa.*)

The Ephrata Cloister Chorus presented hymns composed by Conrad Beissel and music from other German and American religious and communal groups at an April 13 concert. It commemorated both the 275th anniversary of the founding of the Ephrata Community and the 300th anniversary of the Brethren. . . . Elizabethtown's Hillel (campus Jewish organization) offered a Passover model seder for the campus community on April 15.

**Juniata College** (*Huntingdon, Pa.*)

Douglas Stiffler, assistant professor of history, has been named a Fulbright Research Fellow for the 2008-2009 academic year. He will research the relationship between Communist China and the Soviet Union from 1949 to 1960 as a scholar-in-residence at Capital Normal University in Beijing, China. . . . The Pennsylvania House Republican Policy Committee held a public hearing March 25 in Alumni Hall on the cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

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

Works by Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Nick Ut were on display in an exhibition at Irene Carlson Gallery this spring. A special reception for Ut was held at the gallery on April 15. Ut won the Pulitzer for his work photographing the violence of the Vietnam War. Now based in Los Angeles, Ut continues to work for the Associated Press.

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

Sarah Hall, a member of Roaring Spring (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, was a top presenter at this year's Manchester Student Research Symposium. Hall's research explored the possibility of Germany prosecuting former US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity during the war in Iraq. She received a \$150 prize as a winner of the Jo Young Switzer Award for Excellence.

**McPherson College** (*McPherson, Kan.*)

In celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Church of the Brethren, the 33rd annual Mohler Lecture on April 6 featured Andy Murray, director of the Baker Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies at Juniata College. Murray's lecture, titled "War, God, and Inevitability," was held at McPherson Church of the Brethren.



The spirited music of the band Outspoken, made up of Bridgewater students, helped to create an energetic atmosphere at Roundtable.

**Roundtable rocks with celebration**

More than 300 youth and adults from Maryland to Florida gathered on the Bridgewater (Va.) College campus April 4-6 for the 2008 Roundtable regional youth conference. This year's theme was "Peacefully, Simply, Together . . . Celebrate!" And what a celebration!

Roundtable celebrated three centuries of the Church of the Brethren and hope for the new century ahead, including a visit from early Brethren leader "A-Mack," who explained the start of the church. The main speakers were Brian and Amy Messler from Frederick (Md.) Church of the Brethren, both Bridgewater alumni. They focused on one part of the theme in each worship time, using a variety of creative illustrations.

"Part of trusting God is knowing the story of Jesus and going back to that every time," Amy Messler said in the first session, as youth formed a paper chain bearing words for all the "stuff" they deal with in their lives. "We offer up to God who we are, our 'stuff.' "

Roundtable is planned and hosted by the Interdistrict Youth Cabinet (a group of six Bridgewater students) and advisor Steve Spire. IYC members for 2007-2008 are Chelsea Spade, Beth Stovall, Bethany Funkhouser, Jessica Flory-Steuery, Pam Dirting, and Bradley Garst. Tricia Ziegler and Tyler Broyles were called to join the group for the coming year, replacing two graduating members.

Bridgewater rolled out the welcome mat with a greetings from president Phil Stone, music from the upbeat student band Outspoken, a concert by the Bridgewater Jazz Band, and more. Students also assisted with registration, leading small groups, workshops, and other duties during the weekend.

The Roundtable offering raised \$6,500 to fill a Heifer Project Ark (15 pairs of animals), easily topping the lofty goal of \$5,000 and resulting in colorful hair for the IYC members. (Dawn Ziegler contributed to this article.)

**Bits and pieces:**

• The next Church of the Brethren **National Junior High Conference** has been scheduled for June 19-21, 2009, at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Va. Rebekah Houff will serve as coordinator through the denomination's Youth/Young Adult Ministry office. More details will be announced as they become available.

Wall Wilschick



# The Harry Potter series: A gift to our children

I recently completed reading *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the seventh book written by J.K. Rowling about Harry and his adventures.

Christy, our 12-year-old daughter, finished it in September. Stephen, her 18-year-old brother, bought the book with birthday money last July at a Wal-Mart in

Lewisburg, W.Va. He proceeded to settle into the back seat and read it throughout our drive home from vacation (with the exception of the 2-hour shift he took at the wheel).

Thirteen hours later, and 15 minutes before we turned in the lane to our home in Warrensburg, Mo., he completed the 756-page tome.



JERRY CROUSE

This is the young man who was first introduced to the Harry Potter series more than seven years ago by a fifth-grade classmate during our term of service in the Dominican Republic. He has read all seven books, most more than once. I have read and enjoyed them all.

In the mid-1980s, during a class titled "The Gospel and Mother Goose," Bethany Theological Seminary professor Donald Miller reminded his students that nursery rhymes and children's litera-

ture can play an important role in the faith development of our children.

For example, the story of Little Red Riding Hood invites children to explore themes of innocence, deceit, and violence—but with images that engage the young imagination and that enable the reader to experience the story without being overcome by the evil described therein. Such a challenge to children can provide a developmentally appropriate opportunity for growth towards emotional and spiritual maturity.

We live in a culture where violence and evil impose themselves upon young eyes, ears, and imaginations every day. Television shows, video games, Internet sites, pop songs, news reports, family conflicts, government policies, and school yard bullies often stoop to violence as the means to achieve a purpose. The themes of violence and evil are certainly present throughout the Potter adventures. Yet interwoven throughout the fabric of this enchanting, seven-volume story are the unbreakable threads of selfless love, friendship, courage, and hope.

I know folks who have forbidden their children to read any of the Harry Potter books. Some cite concern over how a child will be affected by reading about magic, witches, and wizards. Others fear that this is not a Christian work of literature and, therefore, it may put pagan ideas in the minds of our children. But as for me and my house, we consider J.K. Rowling's stories to be a precious gift to children everywhere!

Rowling has given our children an enchanting tale that frees them to enjoy the frontiers of their imaginations. She has provided seven big books that millions of young readers don't want to put down once they've opened the cover. So after thanking God for Rowling and her gift to us all, my petition is this: "Lord, use this tale as yet another of your creative ways to expand the imaginations of a new generation. Lord, when young readers across the planet are faced with the realities of evil, help them to imagine that selfless love, friendship, courage, and hope will prevail."

By God's grace, may the ability to imagine such a thing take every reader another step towards a lifetime of faith in the One whose life, death, and resurrection has revealed that it is so! **M!**

Jerry Crouse, an ordained minister and high school counselor, is part of the pastoral team at Warrensburg (Mo.) Church of the Brethren and former Church of the Brethren mission co-director in the Dominican Republic.

**INTERWOVEN THROUGHOUT THE FABRIC OF THIS ENCHANTING, SEVEN-VOLUME STORY ARE THE UNBREAKABLE THREADS OF SELFLESS LOVE, FRIENDSHIP, COURAGE, AND HOPE.**

ture can play an important role in the faith development of our children. For example, the story of Little Red Riding Hood invites children to explore themes of innocence, deceit, and violence—but with images that engage the young imagination and that enable the reader to experience the story without being overcome by the evil described therein. Such a challenge to children can provide a developmentally appropriate opportunity for

## ABOUT THE SERIES

**Author:** J.K. Rowling.

**Books:** The seven books (published by Bloomsbury/Scholastic Press) were initially released in hard-back form (list price \$22.99 to \$34.99) and have gradually been released in paperback (\$8.99 to \$9.99). Rowling said the seventh book, released last summer, was the finale of the popular series.

**Movies:** Each of the first five books has been made into a movie by Warner Brothers, beginning in 2001. The sixth, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, is scheduled to hit screens in late November. They are among the highest-grossing films of all time.

**What others are saying:** "It is Ms. Rowling's achievement in this series that she manages to make Harry both a familiar adolescent—coping with the banal frustrations of school and dating—and an epic hero." —Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*

"J.K. Rowling will captivate you with this intriguing tale from the very first page. . . . Use this magical series to enjoy some time with your teenager." —Denise Witmer, *Parenting of Adolescents (About.com)*.



**Watch the wording**

As one of the progressives in the church, I was dismayed to read the results of the latest survey by Carl Bowman. But I was particularly dismayed about one of the data results reported on page 15. The statement reads: "22 percent believe homosexuality should be considered an acceptable alternative lifestyle."

What if it had read, "78 percent believe heterosexuality is an acceptable lifestyle?" The majority would have risen up to proclaim that heterosexuality is not a lifestyle. Nor is homosexuality a lifestyle. Rather, homosexuality and heterosexuality are inherent in who we are, not a "lifestyle." If this indeed is the original wording of the survey, then I'm afraid I don't consider it to be a reliable survey.

I would suggest that the wording in MESSENGER is meant to say that covenantal relationships are considered an acceptable alternative lifestyle. Even if the correct terminology were used in the publicized data, the results were still sobering.

**Jan Eller**  
Portland, Ore.

**Editor's note:** The statistics shared in the February issue were taken directly from a presentation of the survey results given at the March 2007 General Board meeting.

**Let's tell our story**

Many thanks for the fine issues on our heritage. We seem to be so reluctant to tell our story.

Since I live near the Brethren Service Center, I keep hoping we can use it as an opportunity to "speak up" and tell our story. The center is visited by some 20,000 people a year. I keep hoping for a heritage center or at least some kind of a recognition of brave peacemakers who have given their lives. We are

**CORRECTION**

• The author of the "In Touch" piece about the Somerset (Pa.) Church of the Brethren that appeared on page 3 of the February issue was misidentified. David Hay wrote the item.

• The author of the Bible study article on Matthew was incorrectly listed on the Contents page of the February issue. The article itself correctly identified former Bethany Theological Seminary academic dean Rick Gardner as the writer of that piece.

close to a myriad of statutes and other recognitions of warriors nearby at Gettysburg. Can't we tell our visitors that there is a way of peace? Why not a chapel dedicated to peace?

**Roy Johnson**  
New Windsor, Md.

**Selective truths**

When I read the "Pressured prognosticators" editorial in the February issue of MESSENGER, I was struck by the simi-

larities in Wiltschek's words and those of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community in the Church of the Brethren. If it is truth we are striving toward as a church, we cannot choose which truths we want to hear. Wiltschek mentioned that "it takes guts to speak the truth in a lot of situations today." I would add to this that it takes even more guts for an LGBT member of the church to speak their truth, knowing that truth will be shamed by the church at large.

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**Carol Mason**  
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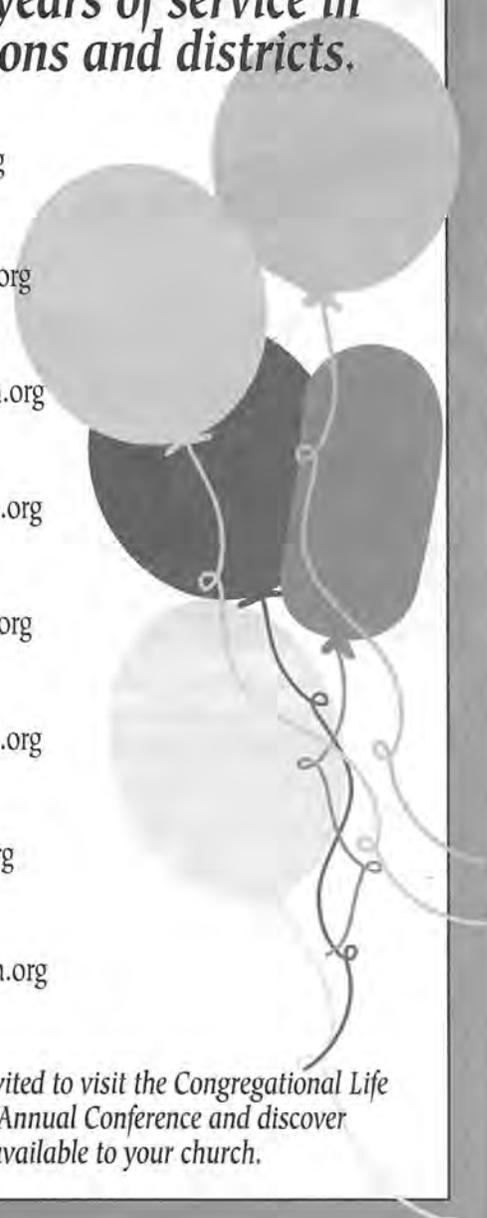
**Jeff Glass**  
Jglass\_gb@brethren.org

**Steve Gregory**  
Sgregory\_gb@brethren.org



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 Pontius' Puddle



When Wiltschek writes, "Our lack of honesty is a problem," I uproariously agree. When an LGBT person feels called to come out to the Church of the Brethren—that is, when they share their honest truth with the church—the reaction is more than often dreadful. In noticing that it "becomes more and more difficult for a voice of truth to speak up," I am reminded of the countless number of stories from LGBT individuals who repeatedly are being silenced by their church.

I was pleased to read the acknowledgement that we "remain largely silent in the face of war, injustice, abuse, and other ills." The LGBT Brethren community is far too familiar with the experience of non-LGBT individuals who offer private support, yet publicly are silent. Silence harms each of us, and will continue to cause painful damage to the LGBT community in the Church of the Brethren, as well as to the church itself. For a church striving toward a peaceful world, this ignorance and exclusion has lasted long enough.

In summarizing thoughts, Wiltschek warns us against "ducking back into our holes for another season of dishonesty." I agree! When an LGBT individual in the church finds more safety in the closet than telling their truth and coming out, the church has managed to create yet another season of dishonesty. I am embarrassed and ashamed to be a member of a church that claims to strive for truth, yet will not value the truth of all its members.

**Maggie Miller**  
North Manchester, Ind.

**Movie has good lesson**

Paula Bowser has it right in her article "Stuck in Groundhog Day" (February 2008). I watch that movie on Groundhog Day, as she does, and find it to be an excellent lesson in how we tend to be the same person year after year and wonder why nothing changes.

It reminds me to review what I have done in the past year, how I have grown spiritually and in relationships with my family and friends. If you get past the silliness, the movie has a wonderful lesson for us all.

Thank you, Ms. Bowser, for reminding us.

**Leroy M. Keeney**  
York, Pa.

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## Who is exempt?

I cannot remember when I first heard the story Jesus told of the "Good Samaritan" as recorded in Luke 10:25 and following. It was often the basis of dramatization in Sunday school or at summer camp.

The other day I was reading it again satisfied that I had understood it. But when the two men—the priest and the Levi—walked by, I realized that I had always seen them as uncaring persons. At best I thought they were in a hurry to get to some meeting at the temple in Jerusalem. But I realized they were not

just ordinary people. They were leaders in the religious community. The priest was not to touch a dead person or he would be disqualified to serve when asked. Here the "Institution" has spelled out what the leadership should do, and the priest was following instructions. The Levite was also of the priestly tribe and would be under the same rule.

But that was then, and this is now! What of our leadership expectations today? Several years ago when I was able to go and work on a disaster project I talked to a minister of another denomination about his people—and especially the

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**2008 Ecumenical Luncheon  
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Tuesday, July 15—Richmond, Va.  
12:00 Noon—Marriott Salons 4-5



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Monday, July 14—Richmond, Va.  
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pastors—leading out in doing disaster work. His  
reply was that since most of them had graduated  
from seminary they were overqualified. Perhaps  
they could go as counselors. Perhaps he had  
never heard of the encounter Dr. Schweitzer had  
with one of his students in Africa.

But the question remains: Is there any place or  
time when we are exempt from helping someone  
in need? If we say we are too busy, then we are!

**Herb Fisher**  
Cabool, Mo.

**CLASSIFIEDADS**

**100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!!** We, the West Milton  
Church of the Brethren, located in the Southern Ohio District, invite  
you to join us for our 100 Year Celebration. The festivities are  
scheduled for Saturday July 5th through Sunday July 6th. The variety  
of activities planned include children's games, a Petting Zoo, an  
Ice Cream Social, Shay Watson from Nashville, Tennessee; hear stories  
from years past, and help create stories for tomorrow. Hope to  
see you there!! West Milton Church of the Brethren 918 S Miami St  
West Milton, OH 45373; 937-698-4395.

**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](mailto:jclements_gb@brethren.org).

**Mediterranean Cruise/Tour 14 days beginning Nov. 14,  
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**PASTORS NEEDED.** Congregations in many of the denomination's  
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gregations vary widely in size and program. A full listing of open-  
ings can be found at [www.brethren.org/genbd/ministry/place-ment.htm](http://www.brethren.org/genbd/ministry/place-ment.htm). Contact the appropriate district executive or call the  
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Send cover letter, resume' and references to: Lisa Easter, Human  
Resources, PO Box 1402, 1600 E. Euclid, McPherson, KS 67460 or  
e-mail [easterl@mcpherson.edu](mailto:easterl@mcpherson.edu). No phone calls please.  
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- TM ALUMNI MYSTERY TOUR (October 15-23)
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- PANAMA CANAL ADVENTURE CRUISE TOUR (Jan. 3-13)
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(February 9-20)
- VISIT MEXICO and its COPPER CANYON (Feb. 27-March 8)
- EXPLORE the WORLD of PAUL with TOM YODER NEUFELD  
(April 29-May 15)
- ISRAEL and PALESTINE (May 24-June 3)
- EUROPEAN HERITAGE TOUR (June 4-17)
- ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 8-19)
- MWC #1 - BRAZIL, IGUAZU FALLS, PARAGUAY (July 2-20)

- MWC #2 - CHILE, URUGUAY, PARAGUAY (July 5-20)
- 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)
- RUSSIA and UKRAINE (August 1-15)
- MENNONITE STORY in POLAND (September 15-23)
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## New Members

**Beacon Heights**, Fort Wayne, Ind.: Patty Rinker, Jeanne Lavallee, Scott Dercks, Brian Zehr, Kyla Zehr

**Beavercreek**, Ohio: Zachary Hollinger, Ashlyn Farwell

**Bridgewater**, Va.: Lou DeMonte, Pat DeMonte, Jason Eye, Debbie Eye, Michael Figgs, Patty Figgs, Michael Figgs, Jr., Jesse Robertson, Wilma Robertson, Jan Thompson, Roma Jo Thompson

**Champaign**, Ill.: John Aldrich, Ruth Aldrich, Wanda Avent

**Circle of Peace**, Peoria, Ariz.: Rick Ridenour

**Conestoga**, Leola, Pa.: Robert F. Kennedy

**Dupont**, Ohio: Charles McIntosh, Grace McIntosh, Hannah McIntosh, Jeff Nicholson, Jessica Gilliland, Joe Gilliland

**East Cocalico**, Reamstown, Pa.: Georgia Klesko

**Ephrata**, Pa.: Geraldine Bealer, Sharon Dull, Fred Martin, Deloris Martin, Kirk Meiskey, Renee Meiskey, Shawn Nolt

**Fairview**, Cordova, Md.: Agnes Bridge, Robert Bridge, Vane Voshell, Jr., Shirley Voshell, Trent Riggs, Alan Hutchison, Jr., Austin Myers

**Fairview**, Unionville, Iowa: Rex Campbell, Denise Campbell

**Fellowship**, Martinsburg, W.Va.: Gerry Daniels, Duane Strickler

**Greenmount**, Harrisonburg, Va.: Frances Smith

**Grossnickle**, Myersville, Md.: Timothy Noffsinger, Susan Noffsinger

**Grottoes**, Va.: David Baumann, James Justis, Sue Justis, William Via, Karen Via, Harold Via

**Harrisburg, First**, Harrisburg, Pa.: Felipe Arce, Irma Arce, Serenity Mitchell, Christine Patrick, Ramon Sanchez

**Hempfield**, Manheim, Pa.: Anthony Jarrett, Ed Lull, Jean Lull, Jo Beth Jarrett, Pearl Miller, Ned Harms, Shirley Harms, Dave Barry, Courtney Barry

**Henry Fork**, Rocky Mount, Va.: Amber Collier, Crystal Perdue, Betty Jones, James Powell, T. J. Hodges, Jessica Hodges, Ramon Martinez

**Ivy Farms**, Newport News, Va.: Ganell Callahan, Micah Greiser, Megan Holley, Kaitlyn Kracke, Kevin Mason, Michael Mason, Steven Peternel

**Lacey Community**, Lacey, Wash.: Mark Ullery, Catherine Ullery, Dever

Haffner-Ratliffe

**Linville Creek**, Broadway, Va.: Ted Bair, Alice Bair, Kandace Nagy, Tom Lantz, Becky Lantz, Kathleen Lantz, Ann Lantz, Margaret Lantz

**Lititz**, Pa.: Jordon Tucker, Greta Weidemoyer, Heidi Weidemoyer, Brandon Worthington, Jim Weidemoyer, Lisa Weidemoyer, Renee Child, Steve Child, Derek Eichelberger, Ralph Fortna, Louella Fortna, Tamara Anderson, Trevor Boyer, Derek Lewis-Eby, Sarah Ober

**Marsh Creek**, Gettysburg, Pa.: Anna Coale, Andrew Coale

**McPherson**, Kan.: Logan Schrag, Kerrick van Asselt

**Mechanicsburg**, Pa.: Steve Vinson, Kathryn Vinson, Bill Creps, Judy Creps, Sherry Wilson

**Memorial**, Petersburg, W.Va.: Roger Sites, Mary Elizabeth Sites, Imogene Miller

**Mill Creek**, Port Republic, Va.: Samuel C. Flook, Zachery T. Lambert, Bryli M. Long, Logan A. Nelson, Casey N. Patterson, Dale D. Sager, Chloe A. Scanlan, Gerald Myers, Julie Myers, Susanne F. Myers, Scarlett Shirey, Chuck Wenger, Windria Wenger

**Milledgeville**, Ill.: Jim Ruane, Tina Ruane, Rod Grove, Lois Grove, Ken Weaver, Diane Weaver, June Diehl, Chad Judd, Peggy Kolb, Audrey Brown, Joann Haefner

**Mount Pleasant**, Pa.: James Daniels, Shirley Hart, Betty Hysong, Ronald W. Moose, David Stambaugh, Sandra Stambaugh, Edward Patrick Novak, Patricia Margariquta Ohoma

**Mountville**, Pa.: Jackie Hart, Kirsten Hart, Beth McConathey, John Miller, Steven Hess, Nancy Hess

**Naperville**, Ill.: Ashley Patel, Judith Porter, Stanley Christian, Rekha Christian

**New Paris**, Ind.: Jim Best, Jill Best

**Parker Ford**, Pottstown, Pa.: Kira Rupert, Richard Rupert, Diane Rupert, Rich Rupert

**Pottstown**, Pa.: Ellen Dennis, Scott Major, Arlene Major

**Spring Creek**, Hershey, Pa.: Jill Buckle, Gregory Breidenstine-Howe, Gabriel Plebani, Joseph Plebani, Chester Rose

**White Oak**, Manheim, Pa.: Elizabeth Brubaker, Jim Kime, Lois Kime, Nina Fahnestock, Chloe Weaver

## Anniversaries

**Cain**, Norman and Sara, Salisbury, Md., 50

**Cannaday**, Jimmy and Betty, Floyd, Va., 50

**Dorris**, Lewis and Ardith, McPherson, Kan., 50

**Frey**, James and Melodie, Boonsboro, Md., 55

**Groff**, Eugene and Ellen, Lancaster, Pa., 50

**Hollinger**, Paul and Doris, Stuarts Draft, Va., 65

**Lutes**, Boyce and Norma, Ceres, Calif., 50

**Morris**, Elzie and Carrie, Grottoes, Va., 65

**Roher**, Dale E. and Goldie M., Downers Grove, Ill., 50

**Snow**, Don and Rachel, Harrisonburg, Va., 50

**West**, Bob and Lois, Peoria, Ariz., 60

**Young**, Elwin and Evelyn, Beaver Creek, Ohio, 50

## Deaths

**Alger**, Alda, 81, Stanley, Va., March 16

**Alger**, Emory, 81, Stanley, Va., Feb. 28

**Bare**, Howard, 80, Lancaster, Pa., Dec. 4

**Bennett**, Gladys, 87, Brooklyn Park, Md., March 19

**Berry**, John, 76, Harrisonburg, Va., March 10

**Bevington**, Barbara, 76, Troy, Ohio, Feb. 3

**Bollinger**, Ralph, 74, Lititz, Pa., Feb. 25

**Bomberger**, Harold Z., 89, Palmyra, Pa., March 17

**Boone**, Marceil, 84, Tipp City, Ohio, March 21

**Bosserman-Flora**, Bernice, 84, Peace Valley, Mo., April 14

**Bosserman**, Margaret, 94, Fort Wayne, Ind., March 29

**Bowman**, Harold I., 65, Bridgewater, Va., April 9

**Bowman**, Robert F., 77, Roanoke, Va., April 10

**Brown**, Molly Jane, 85, Singers Glen, Va., March 22

**Brubaker**, Naomi W., 91, Ephrata, Pa., Jan. 24

**Buchtel**, Carol, 93, Goshen, Ind., March 16

**Butzer**, Mary K., 95, Lititz, Pa., Jan. 31

**Carroll**, Winton D., 75, Palmetto, Fla., Jan. 2

**Coen**, Fannie, 85, Lititz, Pa., Dec. 31

**Cripe**, Maynard C., 90, Goshen, Ind., March 22

**Davis**, Ritchie, 50, Mifflintown, Pa., March 26

**Diehl**, Betty, 82, Milledgeville, Ill., Sept. 25

**Ditmars**, Edith L., 82, Washington, Kan., March 29

**Douple**, Mildred, 95, Lancaster, Pa., March 16

**Douple**, Rufus, 91, Lancaster, Pa., Dec. 8

**Dove**, Vernon, 76, Petersburg, W.Va., March 16

**Draper**, Glen, 56, Bridgewater, Va., Feb. 25

**Earhart**, Ruth G., 86, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 3

**Ferguson**, Carl Bruce, 94, Kettering, Ohio, Feb. 15

**Fyock**, Eula G., 98, Lancaster, Pa., March 12

**Gokey**, Cy, 90, Modesto, Calif., March 8

**Green**, Berman, 92, Troy, Ohio, March 19

**Greiner**, Noah, 85, Manheim, Pa., May 21, 2007

**Hanscom**, Marie, 75, Newport News, Va., March 19

**Harms**, Melvin C., 95, Modesto, Calif., March 8

**Hollar**, Lillian, 91, McPherson, Kan., March 7

**Horner**, Ardis P., 86, Elton, Pa., April 4

**Hornish**, Glenn, 95, Defiance, Ohio, Dec. 19

**Johnson**, Myrtle, 95, Keyser, W.Va., Feb. 17

**Keinberger**, Clara, 99, Kansas City, Kan., March 16

**Keller**, Dorothy Lea, 80, Greeley Hills, Calif., March 20

**Keller**, John B., 85, Lititz, Pa., Aug. 24

**Koons**, Carroll, 97, Ankeny, Iowa, March 1

**Krumbine**, Margaret, 91, Lititz, Pa., Dec. 8

**LaBombard**, Naomi, 84, Easton, Md., Feb. 21

**Leatherman**, Clarence, 83, Myersville, Md., Nov. 3

**Lee**, Alice Mary, 81, Keyser, W.Va., June 7, 2007

**Lee**, Helene, 87, Defiance, Ohio, Feb. 18

**Lehman**, Clyde Beryl, 78, Chillicothe, Ohio, Feb. 22

**Lightner**, Gilbert, 91, Troy, Ohio, April 4

**Long**, Dorothy, 85, Manheim, Pa., Dec. 16

**Martin**, Evelyn Z., 89, Lancaster, Pa., Dec. 23

**Mason**, Blanche, 85, Moulton, Iowa, March 24

**McInnis**, Roberta, 77, Virden, Ill., Dec. 24

**McMullen**, Charles L., Jr., 85, Harrisonburg, Va., March 21

**Messerschmidt**, Gordon H., 60, Burr Ridge, Ill., March 28

**Miller**, Ruth Neff, 101, Dayton, Ohio, March 16

**Moneyheffer**, Jacob, Jr., 85, Goshen, Ind., March 19

**Monke**, Melvin, 93, Kingsley, Iowa, March 15

**Moore**, Ethel L., 91, Uniontown, Pa., March 29

**Morris**, Elzie Jarrels, Sr., 83, Grottoes, Va., March 16

**Nies**, Ann King, 94, Ephrata, Pa., March 9

**Odgers**, Melvin, 82, Lacey, Wash., March 14

**Pepper**, Gary, 45, Queen Anne, Md., Jan. 28

**Pezzanite**, Joseph, 69, Keyser, W.Va., April 25, 2007

**Pieratt**, Otis, 98, Mountain Grove, Mo., March 27

**Reddig**, Virginia, 60, Ephrata, Pa., Feb. 18

**Rose**, June, 87, Brethren, Mich., Feb. 24

**Royer**, Dolly, 81, Lancaster, Pa., April 1

**Ruffner**, Sallie, 94, Lancaster, Pa., Feb. 6

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

**Seng**, Olive Mae, 90, Milledgeville, Ill., Oct. 11

**Senseman**, Frances, 92, Tipp City, Ohio, March 11

**Shadle**, Bill, 72, Boone, Iowa, Feb. 10

**Shemon**, Mary Frances, 81, Gettysburg, Pa., March 13

**Shirkey**, Viola Elizabeth, 90, Woodstock, Va., Sept. 21

**Shober**, Les, 90, Ephrata, Pa., Feb. 17

**Smith**, Nelva, 74, Milledgeville,

Ill., Feb. 27

**Sollenberger**, Robert W., 90, Annville, Pa., March 20

**Statler**, Ruth, 81, Burlington, W.Va., Jan. 24

**Stauffer**, John E., 91, Dayton, Ohio, March 21

**Stephens**, Ruth, 87, Waterloo, Iowa, April 7

**Stover**, Leona, 98, Mount Carroll, Ill., Sept. 21

**Strack**, Eleanor C., 94, Camp Hill, Pa., March 10

**Stump**, Nelson, 66, McPherson, Kan., March 14

**Tome**, James, 75, Lancaster, Pa., Jan. 29

**Townsend**, George, 94, Des Moines, Iowa, March 23

**Troxel**, Alma, 94, New Holland, Pa., Jan. 25

**Vannorsdel**, Dana, 78, Kingsley, Iowa, Jan. 19

**Voshell**, Vane, Jr., 75, Cordova, Md., April 12

**Wheaton**, Diana R., 72, Trotwood, Ohio, Jan. 15

**Witters**, Kathryn, 93, Lancaster, Pa., March 3

**Young**, Evelyn, 75, Beaver Creek, Ohio, March 1

**Youngblood**, Conrad Henry, 73, Williamsport, Md., March 13

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

## Licensings

**Froman**, Marie, Mo./Ark. Dist. (Broadwater, Essex, Mo.), July 15, 2007

**Gonzalez**, Manuel, Virginia Dist. (Roanoke, First, Roanoke, Va.), Sept. 23

**Johnson**, Dan, N. Ohio Dist. (Brook Park, Ohio), Feb. 10

**Leck**, Joshua, W. Plains Dist. (Monitor, McPherson, Kan.), March 16

**Veal**, Douglas E. O., S/C Ind. Dist. (Richmond, Ind.), Feb. 17

## Ordinations

**Baker**, David A., W. Pa. Dist. (Bethel, DuBois, Pa. and Greenville, Grampian, Pa.), Dec. 9

**Kreighbaum**, Jason M., S/C Ind. Dist. (Nettle Creek, Hagerstown, Ind.), March 30

## Placements

**Beam**, Frances S., from interim to pastor, Living Faith, Concord, N.C., April 1

**Fether**, Eric J., from pastor, Fairview, Williamsburg, Pa., to pastor, Ligonier, Pa., April 1

**Garrison**, Dennis W., from pastor of special ministries to senior pastor, Spring Creek, Hershey, Pa., March 10

**Johnson**, D. Edward, pastor, Pipe Creek, Peru, Ind., March 1

**Kreighbaum**, Jason M., pastor, Nettle Creek, Hagerstown, Ind., March 1

**Reist**, Pamela, from associate pastor, Lititz, Pa., to associate pastor, Elizabethtown, Pa., April 15

**Reynolds**, Philip B., pastor, Bear Creek, Dayton, Ohio, March 16

# Handle with care

**A**cross the street from the Church of the Brethren offices in Elgin, Ill., tucked between I-90 and the Fox River, sits a green oasis.

Called Trout Park, it contains a unique feature—a “wilderness area” that encompasses a rare ecosystem amid the low bluffs tumbling down toward the river. It gurgles with



WALT WILTSCHKEK  
MESSENGER Editor

streams, and plant species normally found much farther south make their homes there.

It’s one of my favorite spots when I want to get away from the area’s suffocating traffic and urban sprawl. At an entrance to the area stands a sign describing the unusual features. It also notes the damage that comes from straying off the trails, littering, or picking plants. And so it offers this advice: “Enjoy this place, but gently.”

The sign could well be placed in large letters for our entire planet. We

are clearly told in Genesis that the earth is a gift to humanity, and that we are meant to enjoy it. We are also to take good care of it. That theme comes forward in this summer’s Outdoor Ministries curriculum, titled “Handle with Care,” which proclaims that God looked at creation and “called it all good.”

Whatever one’s position on the immediacy of climate

**LIKewise, WE ARE INVITED TO ENJOY THE RICHNESS OF COMMUNITY IN A WORLD POPULATED BY A WIDE VARIETY OF PEOPLE. WE CAN AND DO MAKE SOME WONDERFUL CONNECTIONS, ESPECIALLY IN AN AGE WHEN IT IS AS EASY TO COMMUNICATE WITH SOMEONE IN NIGERIA AS IN NEBRASKA.**

change concerns, we are called to be good stewards. That responsibility comes straight from scripture. Instead, though, we have ravaged the world with pollution, overconsumption of natural resources, gas-guzzling vehicles, and other forms of wastefulness.

Enjoy this world, but gently.

Likewise, we are invited to enjoy the richness of community in a world populated by a wide variety of people. We can and do make some wonderful connections, especially in an

age when it is as easy to communicate with someone in Nigeria as in Nebraska.

Yet at a variety of church events we regularly hear stories of pain and exclusion—stories heard again at the denomination’s recent cross-cultural gathering, even amid celebration of some progress that has been made. On a larger scale, the gap between rich and poor widens daily, especially as the current economic difficulties challenging all of us are magnified in developing nations. News reports continue to be filled with pictures of war, genocide, and suffering.

Enjoy this fellowship of God’s children, but gently.

And we have been blessed with a church that possesses 300 years of deep heritage and a legacy of world-changing initiatives. It offers us stirring musicians and artists, meaningful worship, and vital programs of peace, volunteerism, mission, hunger relief, and more.

Yet too often we vie for control, pursue pet interests at the expense of the whole, marginalize those with whom we disagree, and occasionally threaten to pull out completely.

Enjoy this church, but gently.

Returning to nature, we might learn from a species of primate called Francois’ langur, native to southeastern Asia. Primate curator Sue Margulis, in Lincoln Park Zoo’s magazine, explained that these langurs live in communal groups, in which all the females help to rear the group’s offspring.

They get a cue when it’s time to pitch in. The adults, you see, are black and white, but the young langurs are a vibrant orange.

“The females are attracted to the orange fur displayed by the infants, which prompts them to

help to carry and feed them,” Margulis said.

If only everything and everyone needing care bore such obvious signals. When they don’t, it is up to us to pray and to discern who or what around us needs us to be the hands of Christ. Or perhaps we could just work more intentionally at living out of that gentle spirit all the time.

The planet, its people, and the community of Christ at work among them: God has entrusted us with their care. Can we handle it?—Ed. 

**COMING IN JULY/AUGUST:** Our annual combined summer issue features the conclusion of MESSENGER’s 300th anniversary series, looking ahead with the question “Now what?”; cross-cultural celebration; hunger relief; Bible study on Romans; and more.

**Dates you need to know! Dates you need to know! Dates you need to know!**

# National Young Adult Conference

August 11-15, 2008

register before **June 1** at [www.nyac08.org](http://www.nyac08.org)

After June 1 call the NYAC office to be waitlisted.



- worship**  
music, praise and inspirational speakers
- community groups**  
build relationships
- workshops**  
forums for growth and communication
- recreation**  
hiking, swimming, volleyball, frisbee, plus more
- fellowship**  
see old friends, meet new ones

Come to the Mountain with us where we will explore God's call in our lives. See new perspectives, reconnect with God, and learn what it means to walk in God's paths.



NYAC '04 photos by Chris Detrick



NJHC '07 photos by Glenn Reigel



## National Junior High Conference

June 19-21, 2009  
James Madison University  
Harrisonburg, VA

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



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

*1 John 3:18*



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