

Church
of the
Brethren

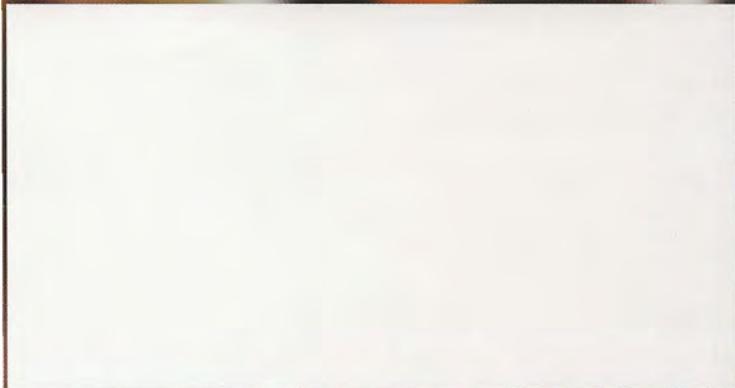
MESSENGER

SEPTEMBER 2008 WWW.BRETHREN.ORG



REUNION IN RICHMOND

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2008



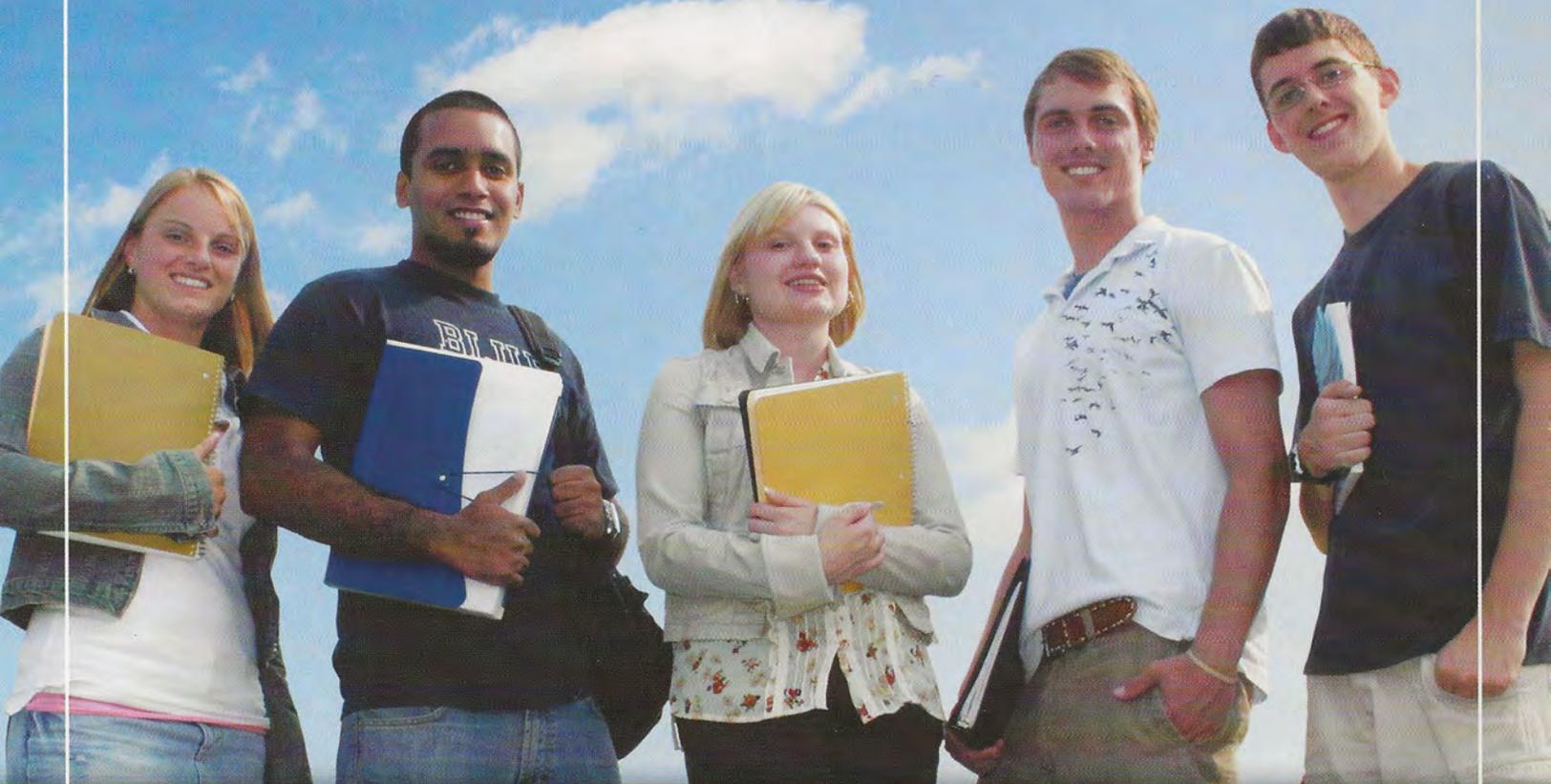
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Church
of the
Brethren

MESSENGER

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Glenn Riegel

8 Annual Conference 2008: Reunion in Richmond

This year's Annual Conference celebrated 300 years of the Brethren movement, and people came in droves. A crowd of well over 6,000 official Church of the Brethren registrants joined members of the Brethren Church for the party. Joint worship services, special workshops and presentations, and other activities filled the week. And amid the festivities, the usual work of business and meetings also went on, as delegates worked through a sizeable agenda. A series of stories shares highlights from the big gathering in Richmond.

15 Peace is systemic

Last year, Bethany Theological Seminary's Peace Studies Program—in partnership with MESSENGER—invited entries for an essay contest on the theme, “What story will a peace church tell the world?” First-prize winner David Lee Jones of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary says that difficult issues require a broad and thoughtful response.

18 Living without answers

It's tempting to give easy answers to life's problems. Life, however, is usually more complex than that, even for people of faith. Just look at Jesus, who asked far more questions than he answered.

20 1 Corinthians: Straight letter to a crooked church

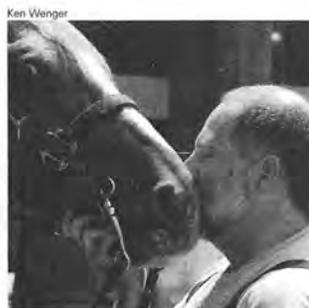
Corinth was the Las Vegas of its time, says Harold S. Martin. In Paul's letter to this earnest but challenged church, the apostle gives a wealth of advice and a code for Christian conduct.

ONTHECOVER

They came, they saw, they celebrated. And they talked and they worshiped. And they ate and they voted. Annual Conference is always a big event, and never more so than this year.



Regina Roberts



Ken Wenger



Regina Roberts

DEPARTMENTS

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My earliest memory is of being bathed in the bathroom sink. At least I think it is. Maybe by now it's really just a memory of a memory. Or maybe it never even happened at all. It's hard to be sure when it comes to memories.

My almost-grown son remembers that there was a large incline from the hall to his bedroom in the house where he lived his first three years. Actually, there was some slight unevenness in the floor, making for a noticeable but modest rise—perhaps an inch. His perception is “true” for a toddler, but not very reliable for recreating blueprints.

My sister seems to remember lots of things. She still knows all the words to childhood ditties that I don't even remember singing. She recalls family activities that don't ring a bell for me. Sometimes I wonder where I was all those years. Was I just not paying attention?



WENDY McFADDEN
Publisher

How can we trust our memories, when they can so easily be corrected by others? How can we live in the same family and have such different experiences? We each record life through our own lenses, thinking that the picture is true because we were there. But our documentaries are each shot from a point of view, and sometimes we don't know what we have recorded until much later.

This year, as the half dozen or more groups that trace their history to a courageous baptism 300 years ago are coming together for historic family reunions, there is a sense of true celebration and spiritual kinship. But for all the groups there might also be some figurative glancing across the crowd at the relatives we don't really know. It can be difficult enough to define “Brethren” within our own church; how do we come to understand all these other folks gathered under the same tent?

I wonder whether the Brethren in these cousin groups grew up with the same admonition familiar to so many within the Church of the Brethren: “Remember who you are.” This was said so often to Brethren of a certain generation that decades later they can't forget the familial instruction. Parents and grandparents didn't have to cite Bible verses or church statements for their teenagers to know what was meant, because there was already a lifetime of teaching and example behind the words.

Remember *whose* you are would be another way to say it. However different we are, this is an identity we can all claim—and remember.

Wendy McFadden

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Help flows in for Tennessee churches

Lightning destroys one building, damages another

Churches and friends have been rallying around Erwin (Tenn.) Church of the Brethren since the congregation's 50-year-old building was destroyed in a lightning-caused fire.

Lightning struck the Erwin steeple on June 9, as an evening storm moved through the area. The same storm passed through Bristol, Tenn., where it also struck Bristol First Church of the Brethren; only the steeple was destroyed there, with some smoke and water damage to the rest of the building.

"We appreciate the prayers," Southeastern District co-executive minister Martha Roudebush said as the news spread through the denomination. "Everyone is just so thankful that no one was hurt."

The district quickly began a fund to help the churches. Among the aid efforts, the Pleasant Valley congregation (Jonesborough, Tenn.) held a BBQ meal fundraiser for Erwin on July 19, congregations in neighboring Virginia District took up a special offering on Aug. 10; and Southeastern planned a Gospel Sing fundraiser on Aug. 24.

In addition, a community member donated a piano, and the French Broad congregation (White Pine, Tenn.) provided hymnals.

Both Erwin and Bristol have been able to worship in their fellowship halls while the sanctuaries are unavailable. Members at the churches have urged other congregations to be sure their steeples are equipped with proper lightning rods and grounding.

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.



The steeple of Erwin Church of the Brethren burns after it was struck by lightning during a June storm. The fire destroyed the church, although an adjacent fellowship hall was saved.

Northeast Ambler (Pa.) Church of the Brethren held a rummage sale in June to raise money for the Global Food Crisis Fund and a local food bank; it brought in more than \$1,000. . . . The Middle Pennsylvania District Disaster Response Action Team held two workdays to put a new roof on a garage behind the district office and do painting and other repairs. . . . University Baptist and Brethren Church (State College, Pa.) has partnered with St. John's Baptist Church in New Orleans through the ecumenical, post-Hurricane Katrina Churches Supporting Churches effort.

Southeast Southeastern District conference included a celebration for Clay and Georgia Sheets, who are retiring from their work at Camp Carmel. About 185 people attended the conference. John Markwood was called as moderator-elect. . . . Twenty youth attended an Atlantic Southeast District Memorial Day weekend retreat at Saint Petersburg (Fla.) Church of the Brethren.

Midwest Michigan District executive minister Marie Willoughby and her husband, Don, celebrated their 50th anniversary with an open house Aug. 17 at Hope Church of the Brethren in Freeport. . . . Children's Disaster Service sent five teams of child care volunteers to help children of families affected by flooding in Indiana and Iowa. . . . Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren (Elgin, Ill.), was among more than 275 congregations across the country that displayed anti-torture banners in June.

Ozarks/Plains Northern Plains District announced that Panora (Iowa) Church of the Brethren, with support from the district, on July 15 reached a settlement with former church leaders and members who voted last fall to leave the Church of the Brethren. According to the settlement, the departing leaders and their group will return church property, accounts, and records to the Brethren. The Brethren resumed worship services in their facility on Aug. 3.

West Idaho District held a 300th anniversary celebration Aug. 9 at Mountain View Church of the Brethren in Boise. It included food, games, music, worship, and displays. . . . Whitestone Church of the Brethren (Tonasket, Wash.) entered a float in the Tonasket Founders' Day Parade on May 31. The float, which highlighted the 300th anniversary and local church activities, won first place.

BY THE NUMBERS

18

The number of Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) volunteers from Shenandoah District over the past three years, highest total of any district in the denomination. Second is Atlantic Northeast with 15, followed by Mid-Atlantic with 13 and Illinois/Wisconsin with 10. BVS celebrates its 60th anniversary Sept. 26-28 in New Windsor, Md.



"Seeds don't write mission statements; they are mission statements. You have to let go of what you once were if you're ever going to be what you're to become."

—Oakton (Va.) Church of the Brethren pastor Chris Bowman, speaking at the Annual Conference Sunday morning worship service

Martinsburg church ministers with plenty of puppet power

Children at Fellowship Church of the Brethren (Martinsburg, W.Va.) have a hand in a new and growing ministry of the church—quite a few hands, actually.

A group of five young people ages 10-12 and leader Dee Clingan make up God's Handy Workers, a puppet troupe that performs skits and music in the church and the community. One recent skit focused on the Church of the Brethren's history for the 300th anniversary.

"We want to be able to go out and share the news about Jesus and make it fun for children and older people," Clingan said in an article published in *The (Martinsburg) Journal*.

The group held one fundraiser to buy materials, raising about \$900. Clingan said the puppeteers were planning a trip to a local nursing home and hoped to have a booth at the county's youth fair in the future.

"It's encouraging young people, everybody, to use the gifts God's given them," former pastor Duane Strickler said in the article.



Christine Minter

Simple celebration: Daleville (Va.) Church of the Brethren offered a traditional "meeting house"-style worship service on April 13, continuing its celebration of the denomination's 300th anniversary year. About 40 people attended as a board of "elders" shared on contemporary issues and concerns of the day in the simple and undecorated worship space. No instruments were used, and hymns were "lined" to the congregation. In words of preparation to the congregation, pastor Mary Cline Detrick said, "God will be the center of our focus in worship, with the gathered community a reflection of the Holy Spirit in our midst."

Rescue efforts unite churches after Iowa's summer flooding

Briery Branch Church of the Brethren (Dayton, Va.) recently received a special thank-you card. It came from South Waterloo (Iowa) Church of the Brethren, nearly 1,000 miles to the northwest.

Waterloo was among many Iowa com-

munities affected this summer when severe flooding struck the state in June. Five South Waterloo families were directly affected by the disaster.

As news of the flood problems made its way

through the denomination, pastor Randy Cosner of Briery Branch contacted South Waterloo asking how his church could be of help.

With plenty of cleanup needs coming, Briery Branch assembled and sent 60 personal hygiene kits to Iowa, telling South Waterloo to use whatever it needed and then to send the rest to the local Red Cross.

South Waterloo pastor Rick Oesterling summed up the spirit of this mutuality on the pastor's page of the congregation's newsletter: "Rescue efforts unite God's people."

Members of South Waterloo have also been assisting the cleanup work directly, with about 75 people assisting two of the church families who suffered damage to their homes. Three times to serve were set up during a week in late June.



Thank You!

Pastor Randy:
Standing left to right is
Pastor Rick Oesterling,
Sandy Marsau Bd. Chr.,
Bob Bradshaw, Moderator
Marlene Wagenaar, Minister of Nurture.

God's Blessings on you and your church.
SWCOB

REMEMBERED

• **J. Rodney Davis**, 80, died May 25 in La Verne, Calif. Davis graduated from La Verne (Calif.) College (now University of La Verne) and later worked there for three decades, in the public relations department and as a psychology professor. A member of La Verne Church of the Brethren, he also served as director of training for Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) and later as overall BVS director in the 1950s and early 1960s. A memorial service was held at the La Verne church May 28.

• **Lillian Dako**, funding systems specialist for the finance office of the Church of the Brethren General Board, died at her home June 30. She had been working for the General Board since August 1984. Her work included processing donations and accounts receivable and working with fundraising efforts. A memorial service was held July 5 in Wood Dale, Ill.

• **Andrew Holderreed**, long-time pastor and mission worker in China and India for the Church of the Brethren, died July 15 in Idaho at the age of 93. He and his family served overseas from 1947 to 1967, and he did several pastorates in California, Washington, and Idaho before and after that time. Holderreed was a member of Twin Falls (Idaho) Community Church of the Brethren. A celebration of his life and ministry was held at the church on July 24.

• **J. Earl Hostetter**, 90, died April 18. He twice served as interim district executive minister for Northern Indiana District, in 1986 and again in 1994 when he worked in a half-time position as interim executive for pastoral care. He also served several pastorates and was a volunteer staff member for the Church of the Brethren General Board in the early 1990s, when he served as volunteer staff working for the Evangelism Office. Beginning Sept. 1, 1991, he was appointed special ministries associate for the Evangelism Office and worked with emerging programs and Annual Conference events. A memorial service was held April 26 at New Paris (Ind.) Church of the Brethren.

LANDMARKS & LAURELS

• **Manassas (Va.) Church of the Brethren** was a winner in this year's Great Green Congregations contest, sponsored by the Eco-Justice Program of the National Council of Churches. Manassas won in the Children's Ministry category for their Junior BUGS (Better Understanding of Green Stewardship) program, designed to teach care of creation to the children of the congregation. Winners in each of eight categories received a \$500 grant to continue their work.

• **Pipe Creek Church of the Brethren** (Union Bridge, Md.) is celebrating its 250th anniversary Sept. 28 with a worship service containing both "old-time" and modern elements, sharing from former pastors, a catered meal, an afternoon service led by the congregation's youth band, and sharing remembrances. Those planning to attend the lunch should call 410-848-8149 or e-mail maring2@verizon.net.

• **Codorus Church of the Brethren** (Loganville, Pa.) has created a special logo to mark its 250th anniversary this year. It includes a variety of images, including those of the current and former church buildings. Other special events are being held through the year.

• **Venice (Fla.) Church of the Brethren** is marking its 25th anniversary this year.

• **Cerro Gordo (Ill.) Church of the Brethren** celebrated 100 years in its current building on Aug. 10. Alexander Mack, as played by Howard Shockey, made an appearance, and Dan Krall did an area Brethren history presentation.

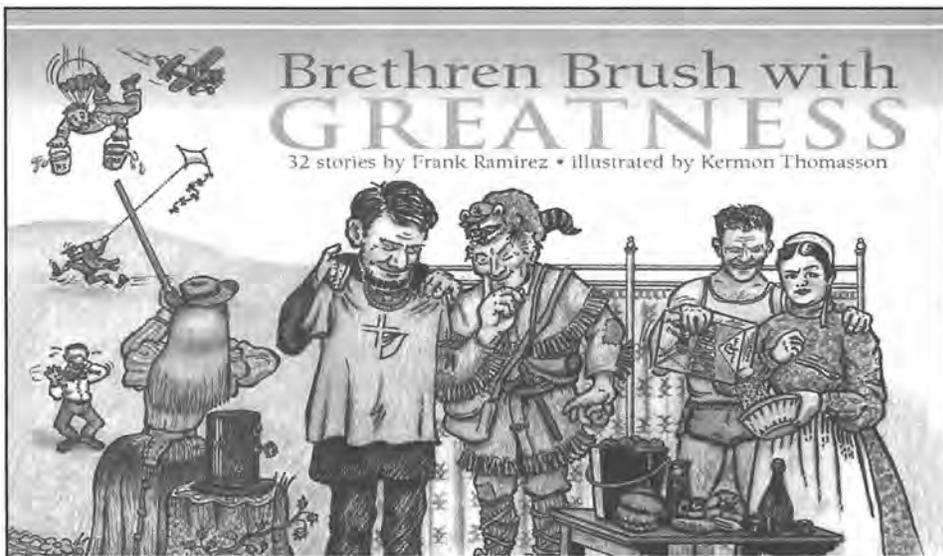
• Church of the Brethren-affiliated **New Community Project**, focusing on social justice issues, marks its fifth anniversary this year.

• **Geneva B. White** on May 2 received the Valiant Woman Award from Church Women United of the Roanoke (Va.) Valley for 2008. White has served as CWU president and vice president and on several CWU committees. She is a lay speaker in Virlina District, where her husband, Paul, is currently interim pastor at Vinton (Va.) Church of the Brethren.

• Happy centennial birthday to **David Hamilton** of Virden (Ill.) Church of the Brethren. Hamilton, born while the Brethren were celebrating their 200th anniversary, turned 100 on July 2. His daughter says he still is outside "working every day it doesn't storm."

• **Lena B. Webster**, believed to be the oldest member in Virlina District at age 106, died June 28 in Roanoke, Va. She was a member of Roanoke First Church of the Brethren.

• The **Peter Becker Community**, a Church of the Brethren retirement community in Harleysville, Pa., held its 25th Annual Flower Show March 13-15. More than 8,000 people were expected to attend the "winter pick-me-up" event.



Different Strokes about DIFFERENT FOLKS...

Frank Ramirez spins tales about 32 individuals whose lives have touched the Brethren. Tales include famous brushes with Abraham Lincoln, Annie Oakley, Daniel Boone, Benjamin Franklin, James Earl Jones, and many, many more. Sprinkled throughout with delightful caricatures from illustrator Kermon Thomasson, *Brethren Brush with Greatness* will have readers of all ages exclaiming, "Did you hear the one about?"

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for our time the good news of God's peaceful reign." — Richard B. Hays, professor of
New Testament, Duke Divinity School [from book review in *The Christian Century*]



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Glory to God and peace on earth

Glory to God—and peace on earth! This phrase from Luke 2 is right at the center of the Christmas story. It is also the motto that has been chosen for the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, sponsored by the World Council of Churches to mark the culmination of the Decade to Overcome Violence in the year 2011.

Four aspects seem to be important here for our further reflections towards that convocation:



FERNANDO ENNS

Doxology first!

Peace is a gift of God. Peace is an eschatological reality. It is not something we are making; it is something we are awaiting, expecting. In this message of incarnation, God is revealed to us as God becomes one of us and is given to this world of violence. In this way the kingdom of God becomes a reality for us.

As Jesus says (John 14:27),

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.” This is God’s promise: Violence will be overcome—entirely. Therefore, rejoice: Glory to God!

Yes, peacebuilding starts with doxology. Holding on to this promise of the peace of Christ prevents us from linking our

THEY STARTED TO LIVE THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION WHERE THE VIOLENCE TOOK PLACE; BEING WITH THE ONES ON WHOM IT WAS INFLICTED, GOING OUT TO THE MARGINS. THAT IS THE WISDOM OF INCARNATION.

own human ideologies too quickly and too simply to God’s will. Starting with doxology to the triune God provides us with a clear orientation: There is no theological legitimization of bringing peace with violence; there is no such thing as a “holy war.” There is only a “holy peace with justice.” Anticipating the fulfillment of God’s *shalom* is the lens through which Christians understand the world.

Peace on earth is peace with the earth

The incarnation is more than God reconciling humankind to God. Revealed in the love of Christ, God’s incarnation prepares the redemption of all creation. What we find here is a theological concept of cosmic dimension: peace on earth is included in

the will of God’s peace. Therefore we cannot reduce peacebuilding to interpersonal conflicts or structural violence but must also include our responsibility for all of nature.

And to be sure, it includes people of other faiths. The motto is not, “Glory to God and peace to the (church).” The good news has direct implications on how we relate to people of other faiths.

Incarnation as a model for the local church

The movement of incarnation tells us something about how to become a peacebuilding church. At the very beginning of the Decade to Overcome Violence I visited a church in Boston. They were confronted with terrible violence among their youth on the streets in their neighborhood. Only after they realized that they would have to incarnate themselves into the context of violence—leaving behind the sacred walls of their beloved church building—were they actually able to overcome violence.

They started to live the ministry of reconciliation where the violence took place: being with the ones on whom it was inflicted, going out to the margins. That is the wisdom of incarnation.

The community of churches: an icon of reconciliation

“*Ora et labora*”—prayer and work—was the wisdom of medieval monks, as it was to many of the early church fathers. Praying and working for peace are inseparable. The universal church—that is, the community of churches worldwide—is called to be an icon of God’s peace. And it is! Ecumenism is reconciliation.

Since the ecumenical church transcends all confessional, ethnic, national, and economic boundaries, it is the people of God, the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit—or it is not the church at all. This tells us something about the outstanding gift of reconciliation that was entrusted to the church. There is no such thing as a “holy nation,” a “holy ethnic group,” or a “holy economic dogma,” there is only the one holy church.

Something very special has happened. We have received the greatest gift of all, God coming to earth announcing peace for all. As God’s Spirit has been left with us, we become part of this God-story in order to play a role in it. Thanks be to God for this good news. **W**

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Fernando Enns is a professor of theology at the University of Hamburg, Germany. He is a member of the Mennonite Church in Germany and of the World Council of Churches central committee. This column was excerpted with permission from a presentation made at the WCC central committee meeting in February.

“Most of us can cope on Sundays; it’s the Tuesdays that get to us.”

—Donna Schaper, pastor of Judson Memorial Church in New York, preaching on “Practicing the Presence of God”

“The scandal of hunger demands the immediate attention of the churches.”

—the Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia, general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC News)

“We remain committed to work side by side with the churches.”

—Salva Kiir Mayardit, president of Southern Sudan, speaking to an international ecumenical delegation in Juba, Southern Sudan, in April (WCC News Service)

“We can disagree agreeably with each other, which we understand to be the real essence of what holy conferencing is about.”

—Jorge Acevedo, senior pastor of Grace United Methodist Church in Cape Coral, Fla., commenting on his delegation’s covenant to stay in dialogue and “Christian unity” despite different viewpoints on issues at the Methodist General Conference. He was quoted in *The United Methodist Reporter*.

“Passion makes us human, and our challenge is to find what we’re passionate about and express that.”

—actor Masi Oka of the TV show “Heroes.” He was quoted in *Southwest Airlines’ Spirit* magazine.

“If we ‘blood Brethren’ don’t embrace the cross-cultural project, we will remain strangers . . . while the Gospel flourishes elsewhere.”

—Chicago First Church of the Brethren pastor Orlando Redekopp, speaking at the denomination’s Cross-Cultural Consultation and Celebration

“There is no shame in recognizing your failings or getting help if you need it. The tragedy comes when we fail to take responsibility for our weaknesses and surrender to them.”

—US President George W. Bush, in graduation ceremony remarks at Furman University

• Church of the Brethren-related New Community Project has agreed to purchase and preserve **137 acres of rainforest** adjacent to the Cuyabeno Ecological Reserve in the Ecuadorian Amazon for \$23,000. A local non-profit partner will oversee the site.

• Some 110 nations agreed on a **cluster munitions ban** during a meeting in Dublin, Ireland, in late May. The United States and sev-

eral other major countries were not among the signatories.

• Media mogul Ted Turner has partnered with Lutherans and Methodists to launch a \$200 million campaign to **fight malaria in Africa**, telling the United Nations General Assembly, “you’ve got to have faith to build a better world” and that he regrets past negative remarks against religion. (RNS)



JUST FOR FUN: TOP 10

This top 10 list was shared by MESSENGER editor Walt Wiltschek at the 2008 Annual Conference MESSENGER Dinner in Richmond, Va.

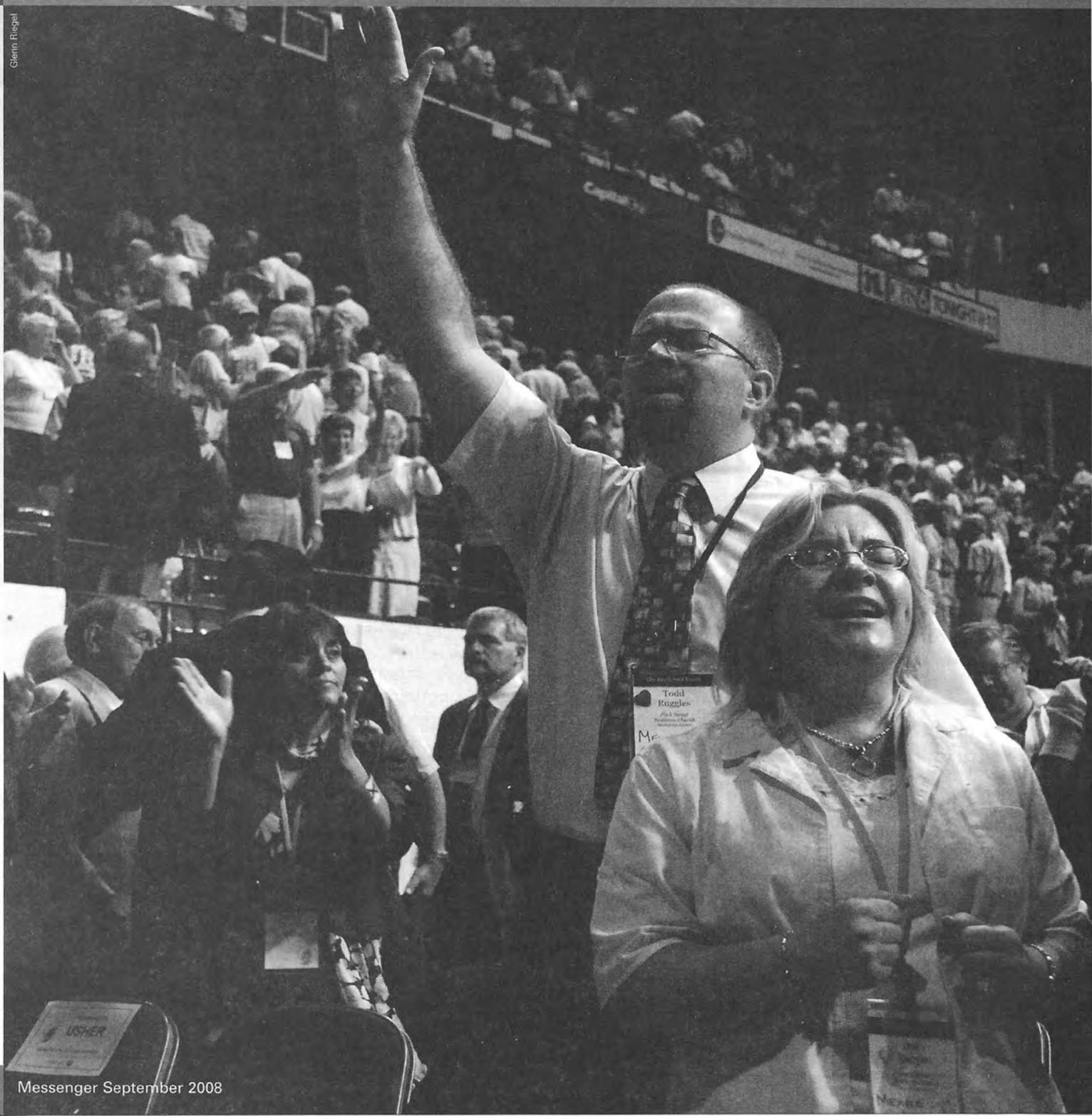
The top 10 ways to increase the name recognition of the Church of the Brethren:

- 10** Richmond’s baseball team is relocating after this year. Maybe we could start a new one playing at Brethren Ballpark with the tagline “Steroid-free since 1708.”
- 9** Start an exciting new TV reality show, “So You Think You Can Wash Feet”
- 8** Get Quaker Oats to change their name to Brethren Oats—it’s time for some other Pietists to get some face time! (Our tradition may have often gone against the grain in the past, but we can be for a grain now.)
- 7** Batman has the Batmobile. Oscar Mayer has the Weinermobile. Where’s the Brethrenmobile? It could be shaped like a giant casserole dish.
- 6** Place the Brethren logo on Mack trucks everywhere (or maybe on Sam Hornish Jr.’s race car).
- 5** Create a Brethren-themed amusement park—maybe Dunkards’ Dominion. All the water rides would take you under the surface three times.
- 4** New Ben & Jerry’s flavor: Radical Reformation Ripple.
- 3** If we sell a few more copies of the *Fresh from the Word* devotional book, we can land it on the *New York Times* Bestseller List. At last count we’ve sold about a million, if you round up to the nearest million. It may take a few more. We can work at it.
- 2** Convince everyone that the old rhyme goes, “Peter Becker picked a peck of pickled peppers...” Who really knows what they’re saying anyhow?
- 1** Get “A-Mack” on David Letterman’s show with a Brethren Top 10 list (if anyone has connections, please let us know!).



Reunion in **RICHMOND**

Glenn Fiegel



This page, left, youth enjoy activities at Conference; right, the Annual Conference 300th anniversary planning committee of Annual Conference executive director Lerry Fogle (ex officio), Rhonda Pittman Gingrich, Dean Garrett, Jeff Bach, Leslie Lake, and Lorele Yager gather at the big event.

Justin Hollenberg



Cheryl Brimbaugh-Caylor



Opposite page, members of the Brethren Church worship with the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference Sunday morning.

W

hen members of the Brethren Church and Church of the Brethren last worshiped together at an Annual Conference, it was still called Annual Meeting. Chester Arthur was president, and the Civil War was only a couple decades past.

Then came a split, as the church divided in the early 1880s after a meeting in Indiana. But in 2008, 125 years later, members of the two groups came together again as the Brethren movement celebrated its 300th anniversary in Richmond, Va.

"Let me say how blessed the Church of the Brethren is to be sharing many activities with our brothers and sisters in the Brethren Church," Annual Conference executive director Lerry Fogle said. "We're delighted to share this anniversary with the Brethren Church family."

Two joint worship services, on Sunday morning and Wednesday morning, highlighted the common heritage. Each featured three speakers, representing both denominations. The Sunday morning worship appropriately included the song, "Brethren, we have met to worship and adore the Lord, our God!" Representatives from the Old German Baptist Brethren, Dunkard Brethren, and Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches were also introduced prior to the Sunday worship. Church of the Brethren moderator Jim Beckwith welcomed them as "faith cousins."

All those groups (and numerous others) trace their history to 1708 in the village of Schwarzenau, Germany, where the eight founders of the movement were baptized in the

Eder River. Water from that river was poured into a fountain worship center this year, along with water from the Wissahickon Creek in Philadelphia where the first Brethren baptisms in America took place, and from the districts of the Church of the Brethren and the Brethren Church.

On Sunday afternoon, participants could choose from workshops and presentations under the theme "An Experience of Brethren Faith Journeys." Options included Bible studies, panel discussions, history lectures, dramas, music, and inter-cultural events. An evening celebration of mission featured music and stories from the international mission work of the Church of the Brethren and the Brethren Church.

Anniversary committees from the two denominations worked jointly on the celebration. The Church of the Brethren's 300th Anniversary Committee has been planning for this Conference for eight years. The committee included Jeff Bach (chair), Dean Garrett, Rhonda Pittman Gingrich, Leslie Lake, Lorele Yager, and Annual Conference executive director Lerry Fogle. The late Donald F. Durnbaugh also was a member of the committee.

Attendance in Richmond neared 6,200 (including 864 delegates), by far the highest total in recent history. Offerings at the week's worship services (including special offerings) exceeded \$75,000.

Additional coverage of the Conference can be found online, at www.brethren.org/genbd/newsline/2008/AC2008/.

This report was compiled by Church of the Brethren communications staff and Annual Conference news team volunteers.

ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Moderator-elect (will serve as moderator for 2010): Shawn Flory Replogle, pastor of McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren

Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee: Diane Mason

Association of Brethren Caregivers board: Tammy Kiser, Chris Whitacre

Bethany Theological Seminary board: Nathan Polzin, Raymond M. Donadio Jr.

Brethren Benefit Trust board: Jack H. Grim

On Earth Peace board: Jordan Blevins

Committee on Interchurch Relations: Paul Roth

Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee: Linda Sanders

'Doing Church Business' process committee: Ron Beachley, Phyllis Davis, Don Fitzkee

The following appointments were confirmed by Annual Conference delegates:

Church of the Brethren General Board: Ben Barlow, Willie Hisey Pierson, Andrew Hamilton, Wallace Glenn Cole

Association of Brethren Caregivers board: John Grindler Katonah, Daniel J. McRoberts, John Wenger

Bethany Theological Seminary board: Francis S. Beam, Philip C. Stone Jr.

Brethren Benefit Trust board: Carol A. Davis, Craig Smith, Ann Quay Davis



David Shumate, bottom left, and Shawn Flory Replogle are consecrated for service.



Wide-ranging WORSHIP



Glenn Fliegel

Thousands of voices joined in song, sometimes in four-part harmony; thousands of hands reaching into pockets and offering tens of thousands of dollars; preachers projected on giant screens with closed-captioning and translation into Spanish; songs of choirs and organs, trombone and saxophone, while dancers danced and people poured out water from baptismal pools across the Brethren Church and Church of the Brethren: This was worship during this year's Annual Conference, as Brethren met to worship in the Richmond Coliseum.

Sermons focused on the Conference theme, "Surrendered to God, Transformed in Christ, and Empowered by the Spirit," from John 12:24-26a, as well as daily scriptures. Messages pondered the need for a seed to die to bring forth life, what it means to be Brethren, and the importance of sacrifice, transformation, unity, and inclusiveness in the church. They presented a vision for a renewed church and issued calls for faithfulness. On Sunday morning, Brethren

Church preacher Arden Gilmer focused on the need to die to ourselves and surrender to the Lordship of Jesus. Shanthi Edwin preached on the need to stand in unity to resist Satan and be strong as a church. And in a message peppered with humor and colorful illustrations, Oakton (Va.) Church of the Brethren pastor Chris Bowman spoke of the need for the church to die in order to move into what it needs to become, noting benefits for both asparagus and the church when they are "dumped on" by fertilizer.

Conference messages did not shy away from controversy; some named controversies in the church. Moderator Jim Beckwith spoke of differing views on homosexuality, deal-

“Our new life in Christ cannot be lived in isolation.”

—Church of the Brethren General Board Ministry executive director Mary Jo Flory-Steury, Monday morning speaker

John Kline rides again

The special visitors to the 300th anniversary Annual Conference in Richmond, Va. weren't limited to people. Following Sunday morning's service, the John Kline Memorial Riders displayed eight of their horses outside the Coliseum as they greeted worshipers.

The group tells the story of 19th-century Brethren elder John Kline, whom Memorial Riders founder Emmert Bittinger calls "one of the truly great Brethren ministers of this state (Virginia)." "He devoted his life to the propagation of the Gospel," Bittinger says. Kline spoke frequently, helped to keep the church together during the Civil War, and served as Annual Meeting moderator multiple times. He was ambushed and killed in June 1864 while returning home from a meeting.

Kline is said to have ridden more than 100,000 miles over the course of his ministry. The Memorial Riders began their mission in 1997, the 200th anniversary of Kline's birth, with an eight-day horseback ride to visit churches that Kline had been part of during his life. It began and ended at Linville Creek Church of the Brethren, which sits on part of the Kline family farm.

"We shared with them the story of John Kline," said rider Glenn Bollinger, recalling that first trip. "It rekindled some of their own history they had lost."

It started as a one-time event for the anniversary, but many of the riders enjoyed it so much that they decided to do a shorter trip again the next year to other congregations. It has continued annually ever since, although one year the route had to be changed due to a horse disease warning in West Virginia.

More than 30 congregations in four states have hosted the Shenandoah Valley-based group over that time, with about 10 to 20 riders of all ages each year.

The horses got a break traveling to Richmond—they came by trailer, riding down early Sunday morning and returning home later that day.—Walt Wiltschek



Karen Whinger



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford



Left, Brethren band Mutual Kumquat sings at a peace witness; right, youth help to clean up an island.

ing with people of other religions, and ways of doing mission. He affirmed that all are welcome to come to Jesus, that all will be transformed, and that we surrender to God, not to one another. In a wide-ranging sermon, Bob Neff focused on the empowerment of the Spirit and the diversity of the church after the first Pentecost. He spoke of how the church needs everyone to be whole, and how everyone—even our enemies—needs peace and justice. Melissa Bennett noted that Jesus met a woman at the well who was surely an outcast. She noted how Jesus' honest encounter with this woman resulted in her gushing forth with faith, and proclaiming the glory of the power of our Savior.

The full texts of the sermons can be found at www.brethren.org and are available on DVD (call 800-441-3712).—Eric Miller

Eric Miller is a member of Pittsburgh (Pa.) Church of the Brethren currently living in Dubuque, Iowa.

A full-service Conference

This year's Conference included a new "service blitz" of volunteer work in the host city, with groups spreading out across Richmond on two days. The blitz was sponsored by the 300th Anniversary Committee as a way to reach out to the community during the Annual Conference.

"In honor of our anniversary and 'for the glory of God and our neighbor's good,' we want to shower the community of Richmond with acts of service that they might 'know we are Christians by our love,'" a statement from the committee said.

Groups of volunteers worked at the Black History Museum, elementary schools in low-income public housing communities, and the Central Virginia Food Bank, which was also the recipient of a food drive at the Conference. Youth and older children's group joined the service effort on Monday, doing outdoor clean-up projects in two neighborhoods, a park, and an island in the James River.

Around the Brethren world

This year's Annual Conference had an international flavor, as members of Church of the Brethren and Brethren Church mission areas overseas traveled to Richmond for the anniversary.

Official guests of the Church of the Brethren General Board from sister denominations included Cristian Aquino Encarnacion, a pastor from the Dominican Republic; Filibus Gwama, president of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN—the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria), and Jinatu Wamdeo, EYN general secretary; and Ludovic St. Fleur, coordinator of the mission in Haiti and pastor of Eglise des Freres Haitiens in Miami and the Orlando (Fla.) Haitian Fellowship.

Several mission coordinators and mission staff of the Church of the Brethren attended as well: David Whitten, mission coordinator for Nigeria, and his wife, Judith Whitten; Irvin and Nancy Heishman, mission coordinators



Ken Wenger



Ken Wenger

for the Dominican Republic; and Marcos and Suely Inhauser, mission coordinators for Brazil, along with their children and grandfather.

Also at the Conference was a group of 32 EYN members representing the Brethren Evangelism Support Trust (BEST), an organization of Nigerian business leaders who work to impact communities for Christ through their local churches. BEST president David Garnuwa spoke at the Brethren World Mission breakfast in Richmond. The group's visit to the United States and Annual Conference was sponsored by Atlantic Northeast District; Virlina District churches also helped to host them during their time in Virginia. Paul Steiner, Monroe Good, and Earl Ziegler coordinated the group's itinerary.



Getting down to

BUSINESS

Merger plan, ministerial ethics paper highlight agenda

Delegates had to work briskly in Richmond, with only four sessions over two days allotted for business.

"Extra sessions are not an option," moderator Jim Beckwith cautioned delegates at the opening session, "so we need to be efficient with our business."

He suggested that some items could even be postponed until 2009, but that proved unnecessary. All major pieces were handled, although two reports were not given on the floor and the last few agenda items went through at rapid-fire pace.

Beckwith, pastor of Annville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, led the tightly scheduled sessions with a calm and steady demeanor as the body handled several key items, including a merger of agencies, a "Resolution Urging Forbearance," and a revision to the denomination's ministerial ethics paper.

Plan of merger

Annual Conference unanimously adopted resolutions approving the lengthy plan and agreement of merger of the Church of the Brethren General Board and the

Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC) into a single corporation. The new organization will also take on the functions of the Annual Conference Council and conference planning.

The action changes the name of the new organization to Church of the Brethren, Inc., although the "Inc." will only be used in formal legal settings. The changes took effect Sept. 1.

The resolutions were presented by the Implementation Committee elected in 2007 to create a plan for the merger, after Conference adopted the recommendation of the Review and Evaluation Committee to unite the agencies into a new incorporated legal entity. The resolutions also have been approved by the ABC board, the Fellowship of Brethren Homes (the legal members of ABC), and by the General Board.

"Let me tell you brothers and sisters, this has been a God-process for us," ABC executive director Kathy Reid said as she and General Board general secretary "spoke from the heart" to delegates. Both had given their full endorsement to the plan.

In adopting the resolutions, the Conference also approved articles of incorporation as well as amended and restated bylaws. Delegates were invited to take concerns

and suggestions for improvements of the bylaws to the Annual Conference officers or to the general secretary, as bylaws will be reviewed again as the plan is put into place.

The action combines the agency's two boards into one new board called the Mission and Ministry Board (see reorganization report in News, p. 22). It creates a new Leadership Team for the denomination, which will include the Annual Conference officers and the general secretary. All ministries of the two boards will continue in the new organization through the transition period.

The new agency remains reportable to Annual Conference, which is the highest legislative authority of the denomination.

Resolution Urging Forbearance

The Resolution Urging Forbearance brought by ABC, the General Board, and On Earth Peace was adopted with one amendment after significant debate. It reviews Brethren tradition and related scripture, and resolves to commit to practices of forbearance amid differences.

The text of the short resolution begins, "We find ourselves in a world where people are driven apart by deep differences. These divisions seep into the church, pitting us against one another in action and language. Yet God has entrusted us with a ministry of reconciliation."

The paper cites 2 Corinthians 5:17-19 and Matthew 5:17 and gives a brief review of other scriptural references to forbearance, as well as several Annual Conference statements.

Concerns came particularly from districts recently involved in conflict, with questions about whether the paper changes polity and would bypass district decisions. Some feared it could keep Brethren from holding one another accountable.

"If it is adopted, I fear it will be abused," said one delegate at the microphones. Another countered that the resolution was an "invitation to walk together, to let God be among us."

Reid, executive director of ABC, assured delegates that polity was not being changed. "This is a call to remember our heritage as brothers and sisters in Christ and hold each other in love," she said.

The resolution was adopted on a show of hands, although with significant opposition. Beckwith cautioned



Grant Hooper

Glenn Ringold



Glenn Ringold



Left and right, delegates come to the microphones on the Conference floor to speak to issues on the agenda.

the church to “enact it in a way that is respectful to one another, and to the body.”

Update to Ethics in Ministerial Relations

The largest amount of session time went to the revised Ethics in Ministerial Relations paper, which was adopted with several amendments. Mary Jo Flory-Steury, executive director of Ministry, explained that the update came out of more than a decade of experience with the 1996 paper.

Main amendments concerned pastors ministering to former congregations, and required congregations to study the denomination’s paper on congregational ethics while working on the hiring of pastoral leadership and during extended pastorates. Another strengthened the paper’s call for ministerial leaders to live by high standards, and added

a reference to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Several speakers pointed out places where they thought the wording did not go far enough in naming specific types of misbehavior and abuse. Those concerns did not result in any amendments to the paper.

An amendment was proposed because of concern that pastors could be abused by malicious anonymous complaints. The paper allows people to anonymously complain and initiate a grievance process. However, Flory-Steury pointed out that if the complaint is taken through the full process outlined in the paper, the name of the accuser would become known to investigators, although kept confidential. The amendment was voted down.

A woman who came to the microphone after hours of debate emphasized, “I do *not* have an amendment,” and

‘The elephant in the room’

Standing Committee, a body made up of district delegates that holds meetings prior to Annual Conference and processes Conference business, adopted “A Statement of Confession and Commitment” with the recommendation that it be adopted as a statement of the 2009 Annual Conference in San Diego.

The statement came in response to a request for counsel from the Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee, who observed that the Conference exhibit hall has become a “battleground” between those who are for and against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. A committee chosen by Standing Committee worked on formulating an appropriate response.

“We really need to do something,” Standing Committee member Glenn Bollinger said during discussion on the statement, “because this is the elephant in the room.”

The request prompted a discussion in Standing Committee of whether the denomination should revisit the 1983 Annual Conference statement “Human Sexuality from a Christian Perspective,” and the committee also held several closed sessions on the matter.

The one-page statement begins, “The issue of homosexuality continues to bring tension and division within our Body. We are not of one mind on this matter. We believe it is time to name that brokenness.” The statement goes on, in part, to affirm the 1983 Annual Conference statement as containing “an honest tension,” and to state that the tension “provides a healthy, if uncomfortable, growing edge that turns us toward one another and toward Christ rather than away from each other.” It also states that “the 1983 paper remains our official position,” commits to continue to wrestle with tensions in that document, calls for the avoidance of unkindness toward those who differ, and commits “to continue to seek the mind of Christ together.”

The “Statement of Confession and Commitment” was adopted by Standing Committee without opposition or abstention. Discussion focused on how to present the statement to the 2009 Conference and how to distribute it.

Meanwhile, at the 2008 Conference, the Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Interests (BMC)—which has regularly been denied a booth in the exhibit hall—sponsored a picture project titled “Count Well the Cost of Exclusion.” The organization invited supporters in the Church of the Brethren to submit pictures of those who have left the church, and those “who remain yet struggle,” BMC director Carol Wise said. More than 80 photos were received and were carried as part of a silent witness.



An umbrella serves as a ‘portable booth’ witness for BMC in the exhibit hall.



earned laughter and sustained applause. The paper passed with only a few votes against a short time later, drawing another round of applause.

Resolution on Slavery in 21st Century

A Resolution on Slavery in the 21st Century was adopted near the end of the session without debate. It included an amendment made by Standing Committee, adding a phrase that calls on Brethren "to change our personal lifestyle habits that support it (slavery)."

It is the 12th time that the denomination has made a major statement on slavery issues. Beckwith expressed regret that the item had to be rushed, and urged Brethren to take time to study the resolution in the coming year. A Study and Action Guide on Modern-Day Slavery that provides resources to accompany the resolution is available at www.brethren.org.

Resolution on Ministers' Medical Insurance Crisis

A Resolution on Ministers' Medical Insurance Crisis was adopted, following last year's vote that eliminated the Ministers' Group portion of the Brethren Medical Plan.

The resolution reaffirms the value of congregations providing health insurance for pastors and their families, calls on the General Board to work at the issue in several ways, and encourages Brethren Benefit Trust to extend aid through assistance funds. It was brought because staff had heard of churches that erroneously interpreted last year's

decision to mean they no longer had responsibility for providing medical insurance for their pastors.

Other business

- The concern of the **Query: Conference Witness to Host City** was adopted and referred to the Program and Arrangements Committee to coordinate with the host district. It was noted that service projects through the city of Richmond had already been added in 2008;
 - A revision to the **Annual Conference paper on Unfunded Mandates** also passed;
 - ABC gave an interim report on its response to the 2007 **Query on Child Abuse Prevention**;
 - Numerous reports were received, including those from the five Annual Conference agencies. An ABC report included a light-hearted and popular moment in which Chris Stover-Brown inflated a surgical glove while wearing it over his head.
 - Annual Conference executive director Lerry Fogle reported that the financial situation of Annual Conference is much better than a year ago, and a sum of \$44,000 is being returned to the Conference by the 300th Anniversary Committee, which did not need the full funding it had received. "We expect to end the year 2008 well into a surplus," Fogle said.

This report was compiled by Church of the Brethren communications staff and Annual Conference news team volunteers.

BITS AND PIECES

- The Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee has selected **Charlotte, N.C.**, as the host city for the 2013 Annual Conference, to be held June 29-July 3, 2013. Next year's Conference is in San Diego, June 26-30, 2009, with Dave Shumate as moderator. Other upcoming sites: 2010, Pittsburgh, Pa.; 2011, Grand Rapids, Mich.; 2012, St. Louis, Mo.
 - The Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee recommended a 4.2 percent cost-of-living increase in the denomination's **pastoral salary scale** for 2009; it was approved by delegates.
 - The Church of the Brethren General Board met just prior to Annual Conference and approved a **2009 budget parameter** of \$5,747,000 in income and \$5,887,000 in expenses for the Core Ministries Fund, a deficit budget of \$140,000. The deficit would have neared \$400,000, but designated funds available

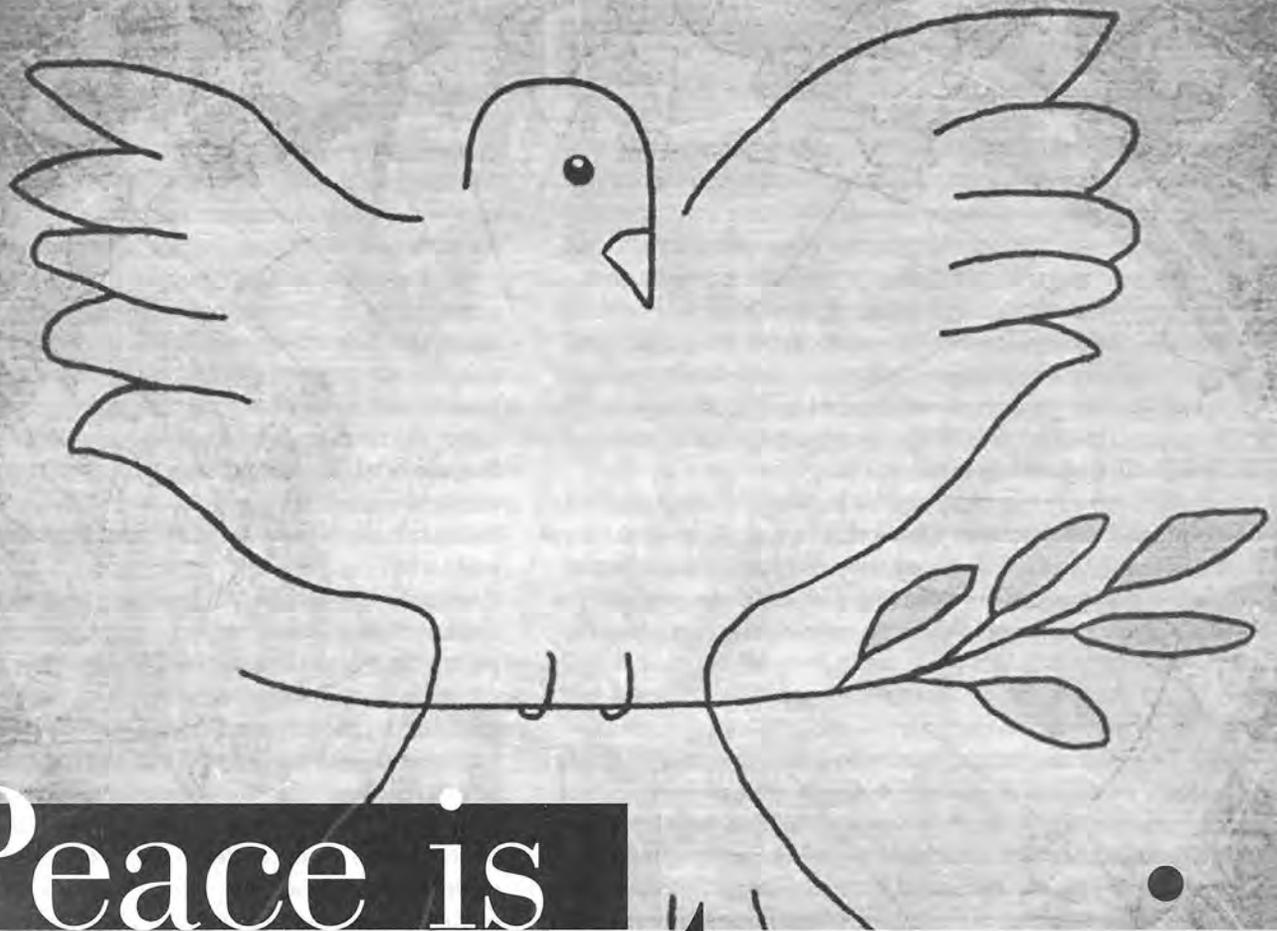
for one-time use were earmarked to reduce the amount while the agency reorganizes over the next year.

- Brethren Witness/Washington Office director Phil Jones was interviewed by Richmond's WRIC-TV 8 as a **peace witness march** organized outside Richmond Coliseum Tuesday. Jones highlighted the denomination's heritage and continuing witness as a "living peace church." About 200 people took part in the march from the coliseum to Richmond's City Hall.
 - The Annual Conference **blood drive** collected nearly 250 units during the week. A **food drive** gathered more than 3,650 pounds of food and \$613 in cash for the Central Virginia Food Bank.
 - The annual **quilt auction** sponsored by the Association for the Arts in the Church of the Brethren raised \$19,200 for hunger relief projects. About 225 congregations sent in fabric to be included in a special anniversary quilt.
 - A reception was held during the Conference in honor of Brethren Benefit Trust president **Wil Nolen**, who has announced plans to retire by the end of the year after more than 25 years of service to the organization.
 - Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm, Russ Matteson, and Jonathan Shively provided leadership for the pre-Conference Church of the Brethren **Ministers' Association** meeting, which drew more than 100 pastors to explore "Ways to Worship."



- Ben Bear and Melani Hom were the first place overall male and female, respectively, in this year's Brethren Benefit Trust **5K Fitness Challenge**. Don Shankster and Bev Anspaugh were the top walkers.
 - The Association of Brethren Caregivers presented its **annual caregiving awards**, this year recognizing Mary Cline Detrick, Shari McCabe, and La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren. The ABC board also gave a special recognition to ABC executive director Kathy Reid.
 - **Five new fellowships** were officially received at the Conference: Church in Drive, Saginaw, Mich.; Faith in Action, Delta, Ohio; Lakeside Fellowship, Smith Mountain Lake, Va.; Una Nueva Vida en Cristo, Virlina District; and Flowing Faith, Stokesdale, N.C. In addition, Puerta Del Cielo Church of the Brethren, Atlantic Northeast District, and His Way Church of the Brethren/Iglesia de los Hermanos Cristo El Camino, Southeastern District, were welcomed as full congregations.





Peace is systemic

by David Lee Jones

The Outdoor Life Network documentary *The Case of the Missing Salmon* chronicles the plight of the Oweekeno Village in northern British Columbia, Canada. The Oweekeno Tribe inhabits the village of Rivers Inlet which, prior to the fall of 1999, saw more than 3 million salmon make their annual spawning run through their inlet. In the fall of 1999, however, the unthinkable happened: Only 3,500 salmon came—3 million less than usual.

The villagers were first alerted that something was terribly wrong when the local grizzly bears, who lived in relative harmony with the natives for thousands of years, presented a serious problem. The bears, who made their annual pre-hibernation trek to the streams to gorge themselves on the fall run of salmon, altered the peace and stability of the village by rummaging through garbage cans and threatening to break into houses for food. The bears were starving.

That fall, the villagers shot 14 bears—mostly mothers and

their cubs. It was a sad chapter in an otherwise longstanding peaceful relationship between the bears and the village. What began as a “bear problem” soon revealed itself to be a salmon problem, which ultimately pointed to a massive—possibly global—environmental problem.

Scientists and environmentalists searched for clues to unlock the mystery of what happened to the missing salmon. The documentary suggests there was a convergence—“a perfect storm”—of related issues that contributed to the salmon’s disappearance.

First, Rivers Inlet has endured longstanding commercial fishing. Second, since the 1960s the area has significantly increased mass lumbering of its old growth forests. Razing the forests has had a profound effect on the rivers and inlets in the area. Removing trees near the banks of rivers increases silt runoff and depletes necessary shade. The increase of silt and the loss of shade cause water temperatures to rise, and salmon are very susceptible to changes in water temper-



When human beings feel anxious and threatened they usually acquiesce to the impulses of the least developed part of the brain, which sends the alarm: fight or flight!

ature. One environmentalist in the film noted that just a one-degree increase in water temperature can cause salmon to turn away from an inlet.

Additionally, the warming of the river opened the door for a nasty and unnatural predator of salmon eggs and fry—the mackerel—to come into Rivers Inlet. Add to this the lumber companies' policy of spraying Round-up and other herbicides into recently logged areas and things get worse. Since the Oweekeno depend on the salmon for their livelihood they increased their logging efforts to make up for the loss of fishing income.

When the salmon disappeared the eagles flew away. The bears and villagers didn't have that luxury. Further, the local trees are now at risk because they get about 75 percent of their nitrogen from the decaying salmon carcasses that the bears eat and discard. Fewer salmon equals less nitrogen.

• • •
When human beings feel anxious and threatened they usually acquiesce to the impulses of the least developed part of the brain, which sends the alarm: fight or flight! So it is understandable that anxious villagers turned to deadly violence when the bears ransacked their village, but violence is far too quick and easy a solution to complex systemic problems. In today's volatile world, far too few patiently pursue

them. Fighting generally only increases the conflict and leaves a residual of hard feelings with a long shelf life, sometimes over many generations.

When one hears that 14 bears went on a rampage in a small Canadian village it is easy to assume that the bears perpetrated the violence and deserved to be shot. But when you learn they were starving and were just trying to survive, you instead rightly conclude they were actually the "symptom bearers" crying out for help in a sick system.

Human beings are not very good at calmly peeling back the layers of our respective systems because we are not very good at either discovering or acknowledging that we always share in the complicity of a sick system. The French have a saying, "For the response, we are all responsible." If we pull back the lens far enough we always discover underlying and often surprising reasons for conflict. Such mature self-assessment is not for the faint of heart.

Family systems theory (in concert with Paul's theology of the church being the body of Christ) invites us to question our initial assumptions about peace and conflict.

First, family systems theory suggests that as soon as we blame one part of a system for a system's problems, we have lost the appropriate focus. In family systems theory there are no "good guys" and there are no "bad guys"—one country's freedom fighter is another country's terrorist. Rather, systems theory rightly focuses on how anxiety



In October 2006, the Amish in Nickel Mines, Pa., responded to unspeakable terror and violence in their community with commendable spiritual aplomb, for I suspect they understand both the human condition and Christian humility and meekness far better than our political leaders.

peaceful alternatives to violence. Peeling back the many layers of this story we see that shooting the bears eliminated a symptom, not the underlying systemic causes.

The starving bears present for the church a powerful metaphor. When those who ordinarily exist in relative peace and harmony with others one day become uncharacteristically aggressive, shouldn't we find out why they are so hungry and try feeding them before killing them? I was a pastor for over 21 years. On my best days, family systems theory helped me appeal to my higher brain and spiritual self in anxious and threatening times in order to remain less reactive. Occasionally, I could transcend my carnal nature and learn to pause and ponder rather than react primitively when angry or upset parishioners began "clawing" at my office door. Instead of responding by yelling, "Honey, get the Winchester!" I began to wonder why they were so hungry or hurting and what was going on systemically. Unfortunately, learning such patient curiosity is a spiritual art that demands remarkable diligence and discipline. I tried to ponder whether there was a way to feed them instead of fight with

affects the interconnectedness of all the parts. Anxiety increases any system's capacity to become volatile and react violently. Family systems theorists are famous for noting that there can be no pathology without a host cell. Systems get sick because their self-regulating antibodies have been compromised, or there is an absence of mature leadership or the presence of immature leadership at the top. Every healthy body, organization, or nation has a healthy "head" that monitors and regulates the body's health and actions.

In his book *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times: Staying Calm No Matter What*, theologian and systems expert Peter Steinke notes that the family systems' concept of self-differentiation has four salient constructs. These four constructs offer fresh and practical applications for peace-making.

- First, self-differentiation means articulating a clear statement of self: "This is me—this is not me." "I like this and I don't like that." "This is where I end and you begin." Differentiation is always about maintaining appropriate

boundaries with others, and not meddling in other people's business or territory. It means taking the log out of our own eye before noticing the speck in the other's. Self-differentiation requires individuals first to ask themselves how they are functioning in the system; its focus begins by assessing oneself and not diagnosing others.

- Second, differentiation depends on a mature commitment to staying appropriately connected to the larger system. In systems theory, a clear articulation of self is always married to remaining connected to the larger system. There can be no "Lone Ranger" mentality in a maturely self-differentiated person or system. One always weighs how one's behavior will affect and effect the larger system. Incidentally, compromise and meekness and self-differentiation are not mutually exclusive

- Third, differentiated people and systems possess the capacity to remain non-reactive even in anxious situations. The Oweekeno people had other options to solve their "bear problem." The bears could have been fed with the hope that they would peacefully hibernate, or they could have been tranquilized and relocated to a healthy system elsewhere. Differentiated people and systems always "look before they leap." Remaining non-reactive is essential.

- Fourth, differentiated people and systems have the capacity to base and make decisions on time-tested principles rather than capricious whims, rumors, unsubstantiated threats, or fear. Well differentiated people and systems take time to pause and ponder a situation and base decisions not on highly charged emotion or inadequate data, but on a thoughtful process of information-gathering that patiently questions and probes. It bases decisions on time-tested spiritual principles such as: "If you live by the sword you'll die by the sword" (Matt. 26:52), "turn the other cheek" (Matt. 5:39), and "beat swords into plowshares" (Is. 2:4).

• • •

The 9/11 attacks on America were unthinkable, but had America responded to 9/11 from a maturely differentiated sense of self rather than out of raw reactivity we might be in a vastly different place today. Had we listened more openly to the world community and attempted to stay connected with it, had we gathered better information on supposed weapons of mass destruction, had we remained more calm and taken the time to consider alternatives to solely military interventions, had we considered the global spiritual ripple effects of our "shock and awe" campaign, and had we based our decisions more on time-tested spiritual principles, we might still be in good favor with the world who showed our nation an unprecedented outpouring of goodwill, empathy, understanding, and sympathy. At this juncture it is simply hard to measure the long-term spiritual and systemic damage our response has done both to ourselves and God's good earth.

We had an opportunity to model to the world a vastly different response to unspeakable terror, and we dropped the ball (or was it a bomb?). In October 2006, the Amish in Nickel Mines, Pa., responded to unspeakable terror and violence in their community with commendable spiritual aplomb, for I

suspect they understand both the human condition and Christian humility and meekness far better than our political leaders. They masterfully applied all four features of self-differentiation as noted above.

First, they showed great self-differentiation. They never wavered from their communal definition that they are a pacifist community. They showed remarkable clarity amid an incident where many people of faith would have lost spiritual focus, compromised or jettisoned spiritual values, or acquiesced to retaliation or vengeance.

Second, that they immediately prayed for and started a fund for the family of the man who terrorized and killed their innocent children is nothing short of a remarkable commitment to staying magnanimously connected to the larger community.

Third, the Amish's behavior epitomizes non-reactivity. Their response remains a powerful witness to the world that violence does not have to beget violence, and acts of terror do not have to beget hatred. Remarkably, the Amish found a way, as a spiritual community, to tap collectively their faith and non-violent values instead of their most base and primitive human instincts.

Fourth, the Amish immediately applied the time-tested spiritual principles of their cherished Anabaptist tradition by reminding themselves that harboring hatred, fanning the flames of revenge, or refusing to forgive is toxic to any system—but especially to spiritual systems. They wisely chose the higher ground.

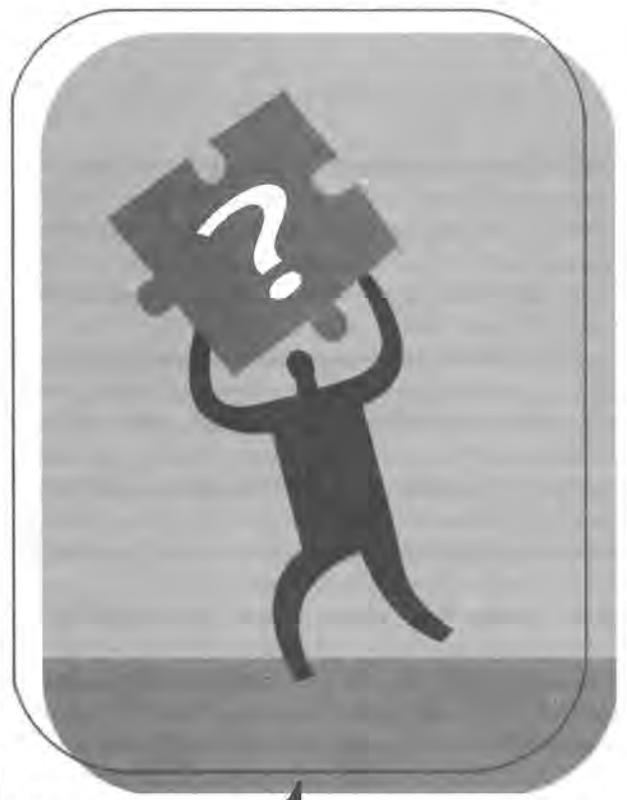
Because from a systems perspective, systems must be self-correcting, a peace church cannot just "tell the world a story" about peace. Unfortunately, preaching peace just isn't enough. A peace church must ultimately understand, remember, embrace, live, and model the hard truth that peace and violence are always systemic, and only systemic assessments and interventions ultimately work. A peace church must not just tell the story but must, like the Amish, live the story—because in systems thinking, abiding change only happens when spiritual principles take on concrete behaviors.

Paul sums up the systemic nature of peace and violence best when he said, "For if one member suffers, the whole body suffers, but if one member is honored, all rejoice together" (1 Cor. 12:26). ❗

David Lee Jones is director of the Doctor of Ministry program at Austin (Texas) Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

ABOUT THE PEACE ESSAY CONTEST

Last year, Bethany Theological Seminary's Peace Studies Program—in partnership with MESSENGER—invited entries for the Jennie Calhoun Baker essay contest on the theme, "What story will a peace church tell the world?" The first prize, which carried an award of \$2,500, went to Dr. David Lee Jones of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary; his essay is printed here. Second prize (\$1,000) went to Jana Carter of Oakland, Calif. Her essay will appear next month.



Living without the answers

Jesus' way of asking questions forced a look within

by Ken Gible

I remember, years ago, seeing a poster with the following words: "For every difficult social problem, there is a simple answer . . . and it's wrong!" Reading that first made me smile, and then it got me to thinking. And I decided it was true: There are no simple, one-size-fits-all answers to difficult social problems.

NO EASY ANSWERS

Take a problem like world hunger or drug addiction or racism: How wonderful it would be if these ills that plague humanity could be solved by writing a book or passing a law or creating a government program. But as good and necessary as books and laws and programs might be, solving the problem is not that simple.

The same is true when it comes to questions about faith—questions such as: Why is there pain?, Where does evil come from?, What is God's will for my life? We long for an answer that makes sense, a simple answer that will lay to rest our uncertainties, our doubts. And, for Christians, there is indeed such an answer. You may remember seeing it as part of a nationwide campaign by a Christian group some years ago. It was a four-word phrase: Christ is the answer.

But I must tell you that whenever I saw those words—on a billboard or stuck on somebody's bumper—I found myself getting angry.

I do indeed believe that Christ is the answer. But I also believe it is dangerous, unloving, even un-Christlike, to toss those four words around—either written or spoken—like so much verbal confetti.

When somebody is dealing with a deep-seated problem or facing a personal crisis or asking questions that are a deep cry of the soul, just about the worst thing you can do is to say, "Oh, don't worry, just have faith, just believe that Christ is the answer." I have known people who have said that and done that with the best of intentions, and in so doing have inflicted terrible damage on the one they had thought to help.

The Bible does not offer simplistic answers to the deeply troubling questions we face. The psalms contain great testimonies of faith. But the psalms also contain testimonies of doubt and anguish: "How long, O Lord, how long?" That question is repeated three times in Psalm 13. You can tell from those words that the suffering has been going on for a long, long time. And though the psalm ends with an affirmation of faith, it is a faith that has been sorely tested, that has

come through the fire, a faith that had to learn what it means to live without the answers.

The apostle Paul had that kind of faith. His accomplishments for the cause of Christ are truly staggering: a founder of churches all across the Roman Empire; a writer of magnificent letters that, nearly 2,000 years after he wrote them, still have the power to comfort and convict. And yet Paul had to learn an important lesson from the Lord. It had to do with what Paul himself called a thorn in the flesh.

There have been many guesses about what Paul's thorn in the flesh might have been—epilepsy, poor eyesight, sexual temptation. Three times he implored the Lord to take it from him, and the Lord did not give him the answer he wanted. For a time, we don't know how long, there was no answer. Then finally the Lord did answer Paul's prayer.

Anyone who has ever wrestled with God in the darkness—asking, beseeching God for something—knows that satisfactory answers are sometimes very hard to come by. In fact, what God sometimes sends us in response to our questions are even more questions!

YOUR OWN SEARCH

Try to remember a time in your life when you asked God for an answer. You asked God to make someone well who was very sick, perhaps a grandparent or a parent. Or let's say you prayed for something similar as a grown-up. You prayed for it constantly, fervently. You promised God you would do anything if only God would say yes to your request. And then you waited for an answer. And you waited. And you waited some more.

But an answer didn't come. Your need was not addressed, at least not directly. God was silent, or if God was speaking, you couldn't hear the answer.

What then? Did you keep on asking or did you decide to ask in a different way or did you, finally, stop asking all together? What did it mean for you to live without an answer?

One of my friends, a director of pastoral care at a health care center, says that many people have lots of simple answers to life's difficulties until the questions appear in bold fashion in their own lives. He says:

"You may think you know about divorce, the death of a child, suicide, homosexuality, abortion, depression, unemployment, a runaway child, until it happens to you or your loved ones. When it does, you realize how little you knew, how little you know. Life may be simple in the armchair, on the sofa, or in the grandstand. On the playing field, it is complex, and downright difficult."

Anyone who has ever wrestled with God in the darkness—asking, beseeching God for something—knows that satisfactory answers are sometimes very hard to come by. In fact, what God sometimes sends us in response to our questions are even more questions!

That's so often what Jesus did when he was confronted with a question. Once a rich young man came to Jesus with a heartfelt question: Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? The teacher responded first with a question of his own: What is written in the law? What do you read there?

Jesus is the great question-asker:

- Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? (Matt. 6:25)
- Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm? (Mark 3:4)
- Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" (Luke 10:36).

HOW GOD ANSWERS

Again and again, Jesus listened to those who came to him for answers and then turned them around to look at their own lives and at the world around them—not because he didn't have the answers, but because he wanted them to engage more fully in life, both their own life and the lives of others. He wanted them to encounter God in the depth of their questions.

Perhaps this is why the answers you and I often desire from

God are not forthcoming. Of course, we cannot know the mind of God. But when we look at the way Jesus so often spoke about God, how he related to the people who came to him—telling them stories that surely left them scratching their heads, answering their questions with questions of his own—we surely catch glimpses of how God deals with many of the questions in our own hearts.

You and I want answers and sometimes we do not get them. Sometimes we do receive answers, but not the answers we hoped for. It was that kind of answer Paul got when the Lord finally responded to his request to take away the thorn in his flesh. Paul tells us the answer the Lord gave was: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

That wasn't the answer Paul wanted, but it changed him, transformed his understanding about how God was at work in his life. And so Paul could at last say, "I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Paul discovered what we also may discover by the grace of God: that indeed Christ is the answer. But if you get to the point where you can say that, you will have walked through the fire. It will not do to say "Christ is the answer" to someone else with even a hint of arrogance. If you say it at all, it will likely be spoken to yourself, in a whisper, and there may be tears streaming down your face when you say it. And as you say it, you will be learning the truth that Paul learned, that the grace of the Lord is sufficient for you, that the power of the Lord is made perfect in weakness: your weakness, my weakness, the weakness of all those who so often find themselves living without the answers they crave.

What is given to us, finally, is better than the answers we ask for. We are given the presence, the blessing, of the One who is himself the Holy Answer to every question. 

Ken Gibble is an author and an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren. He lives in Greencastle, Pa.

1 Corinthians

A straight letter to a crooked church

by Harold S. Martin

Corinth in New Testament times was the largest city in Greece. It was populated by many diverse groups of people, including Greek philosophers who delighted in shallow philosophy, priestesses attached to the temple of Aphrodite (the goddess of carnal love); and merchant traders from Asia and Italy. The population included vagabonds, merchants, fortune-hunters, and pleasure-seekers.

As a result, immorality and drunkenness were rampant in the city. Corinth

was the Las Vegas of the New Testament world. The church was seeking to reach the people in that city.

The church at Corinth was established by Paul while on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1-17). Paul was able to spend almost two years in Corinth. Later, he heard about the state of the Corinthian church through a resource known as "Chloe's people" (1 Cor. 1:11). Also, the church had addressed a letter of inquiry to Paul (1 Cor. 7:1). The letter known to us as 1 Corinthians is Paul's response to the

church at Corinth (and to all Christians) in light of those developments.

The letter gives readers a good picture of life in the early church. It deals with Christian conduct. It is essentially an epistle of correction.

Numerous problems had beset the young believers at Corinth. Brethren elder I.N.H. Beahm appropriately called the epistle "a straight letter to a crooked church." There were competing factions, lawsuits against fellow Christians, problems related to marriage and divorce, and a case of flagrant sexual immorality. Questions about the role of women, head coverings, the Lord's Supper, and spiritual gifts were troubling the congregation. In 1 Corinthians, Paul addressed those issues, and set down principles that have become instructions for God's people through the ages.

A general outline of 1 Corinthians can be given in six parts:

- A call to unity (1:10-4:21);
- sexual morality (5:1-7:40);
- Christian liberty (8:1-10:33);
- public worship (11:1-14:40);
- bodily resurrection (15:1-58);
- personal matters (16:1-24).

Brethren from the earliest years cited texts from 1 Corinthians as a response to problems that arose in the church. They did not accept the notion that parts of the letter apply today (e.g. 11:17-34), and that other parts were mere local social traditions (e.g. 11:2-16). The letter is addressed to "all those who in every place" call on the Lord (1:2), and so the message of the epistle applies to believers everywhere. **W**

Harold S. Martin is an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren and editor of Brethren Revival Fellowship's BRF Witness newsletter. He lives in Lititz, Pa.

MESSANGER'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 October: 2 Corinthians, by Graydon F. Snyder.

THE LETTER GIVES READERS A GOOD PICTURE OF LIFE IN THE EARLY CHURCH. IT DEALS WITH CHRISTIAN CONDUCT. IT IS ESSENTIALLY AN EPISTLE OF CORRECTION.



Paul Teaching, by Joan Stradkin Stradkinus

1 CORINTHIANS: A CLOSER LOOK

Author: Paul

When written: about AD 56

Famous sections: The exhortation to unity in the body (1:10-17); the description of the Lord's Supper (11:17-34); the grand hymn on love (13:1-13); the defense of bodily resurrection (15:1-58)

Well-known verses: "To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours" (1:2); "My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God" (2:4-5); "But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (6:11); "For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, she should wear a veil" (11:6); "Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth" (13:4-6).

Other notes: C.S. Lewis, in his introduction to J.B. Phillips' *Letters to Young Churches*, says: "A most astonishing misconception has long dominated the modern mind on the subject of St. Paul. It is to this effect: that Jesus preached a kindly and simple religion (found in the Gospels), and that Paul corrupted it into a cruel and complicated religion (found in the Epistles). This is really quite untenable. . . . There is no real evidence of a pre-Pauline doctrine different from [that of] Paul's."

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PERSONNELMOVES

• **Nevin Dulabaum** was called as president of Brethren Benefit Trust, succeeding Wil Nolen, effective Sept. 7. Dulabaum has been serving as director of communications and information services for BBT. He began with BBT in September 1999 as manager of marketing and promotions, joining the agency's senior management team in November 2000. Previously, he was director of news services and managing editor of MESSENGER for the General Board. A graduate of Manchester College, Dulabaum has also served on the Church of the Brethren Credit Union board for nearly



a decade. He and his family live in Elgin, Ill., where they are members of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren. Nolen will continue as an advisor to Dulabaum through the end of 2008.

• **Lerry W. Fogle** has announced his retirement as Annual Conference executive director, effective Dec. 5, 2009, allowing time for a new director to be trained. He will have served for more than seven years, since October 2002, initially working from Elgin, Ill., and more recently at New Windsor, Md. He was previously an associate pastor at

Frederick (Md.) Church of the Brethren.

• **Todd Bauer** began July 1 as Latin America and Caribbean specialist with Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) and Global Mission Partnerships. Bauer will work with the BVS office in placing and supervising BVS volunteers in the field, and project oversight and development. He has served in Guatemala since 2001, the first five years as a volunteer.

• **Malinda Berry** will join the Bethany Theological Seminary faculty in the 2009-2010 academic year as an instructor in theological studies and director of the master of arts program. Berry is a doctoral candidate at Union Theological Seminary in New York, and is currently visiting scholar in religion and women's studies at Goshen (Ind.) College. She is a graduate of Goshen and holds a master's degree in peace studies from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. She also served as interim minister at Manhattan (N.Y.) Mennonite Fellowship, and as associate director of Mennonite Voluntary Service.

• **Tim Button-Harrison** has been called as executive minister of Northern Plains District on a half-time basis. He had been serving as interim district executive since November 2006. Button-Harrison attended Manchester College and graduated from the University of Iowa. A graduate of Bethany Theological Seminary, he has had two pastorates in Iowa. He was officially installed in a service during the Northern Plains District conference.

• **Annie Clark** resigned as coordinator of the Ministry of Reconciliation (MoR) program for On Earth Peace, effective July 30. Clark, who has led the reconciliation program for four years, plans to return to full-time classroom teaching in August. Clark has served previously as a consultant with Goshen (Ind.) College, and has worked as an educator in the public schools and as mediation services coordinator with Education for Conflict Resolution, a mediation center in northern Indiana. She is a member of Manchester Church of the Brethren in North Manchester, Ind.

• **Darryl Deardorff** has announced his retirement as chief financial officer/treasurer of the board for Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT) effective Sept. 30. He began as director of investments for BBT in January 1997, and in June of that year took on additional assignments as interim director of information systems and services, and consultant to the treasurer and the Brethren Foundation director. In January 1998, he was named chief financial officer. His work has included supervising financial operations and management and investments, and supervising financial services planning and program development. In addition, he maintains administrative oversight of the Church of the Brethren Credit Union. Prior to coming to BBT, Deardorff was treasurer for the Church of the Brethren General Board beginning in 1987.

• On Earth Peace has named **Leslie Frye** as program coordinator for the Ministry of Reconciliation. Frye graduated from

General Board approves deficit budget for 2009

The General Board met July 12 in Richmond, Va., and affirmed plans for transition to a new organization pending action by Annual Conference (which was later approved) on the resolutions of merger with the Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC). The board also approved budget parameters for 2009, among other business.

The General Board spent time reviewing the plans for the new organizational structure with ABC and incorporating the functions of the Annual Conference Council, and took action to affirm the transition plans. The new entity, "Church of the Brethren Inc.," takes effect on Sept. 1.

Two new staff leadership roles were announced. The associate general secretary of Operations will be Judy Keyser, who has been chief financial officer/treasurer and executive director of Centralized Resources. The associate general secretary of Ministry and Program will be Kathy Reid, who had been executive director of ABC. They will provide leadership and direction in the day-to-day work of the ministry of the new organization.

The board set budget parameters for its Core Ministries in 2009 with projected income of \$5,747,000 and projected expense of \$5,887,000, for a net deficit of \$140,000. The pro-

posed deficit would have been larger, according to finance staff, but the one-time use of designated funds and other accumulated assets was approved to reduce the deficit and allow time for the organizational transition to take place. Without those measures, the deficit would have been \$381,000.

In other business, the board received several reports, including the recent work of Brethren Disaster Ministries, the upcoming National Young Adult Conference, and mission reports from the Dominican Republic, Nigeria, and the Sudan Initiative.

The board also welcomed international guests, recognized the service of staff, and board members who finished their terms with the meeting: chair Tim Harvey, Russell Betz, Jay Carter, Vicky Samland, and ex officio member Stephen Breck Reid, who has served as Bethany Theological Seminary dean.

The General Board later reorganized for the transition period, calling an executive committee of chair Dale Minnich, vice chair Ken Wenger, Susan Fitze, Kate Spire, and Mike Benner through Aug. 31. As of Sept. 1, the executive committee of the new organization's Mission and Ministry Board will be chair Eddie Edmonds (previously the ABC board chair), chair-elect Dale Minnich, Vernne Greiner, and Ken Wenger.

Bethany Theological Seminary in 2004 with a Peace Studies emphasis, and was ordained to ministry in the Church of the Brethren in 2005. She is currently a member of a non-salaried pastoral team serving Monitor Community Church of the Brethren in McPherson, Kan., and is serving as Western Plains District moderator. A Kansas State Supreme Court-approved mediator, she has worked with the Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution as a trainer and a volunteer mediator. She will work from her home in McPherson.

• **Julie Mader Hostetter** was named director of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, based in Richmond, Ind., effective July 1. Hostetter has most recently been director of academic and student services at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. She previously worked for the General Board as coordinator of Congregational Life Team Area 3, focusing on small-membership and urban/ethnic congregations, and earlier was a pastor and minister of music in Brethren congregations. She also has served as interim executive director of Metropolitan Churches United in Dayton and has edited and written numerous Christian education resources. She currently is enrolled in a doctor of ministry program through the Center for Ministry and Leadership Development at Union-PSCE in Richmond, Va.

• The McPherson (Kan.) College board of trustees has announced that president **Ronald D. Hovis** will resign at the end of the 2008-2009 academic year. Under Hovis' leadership the past five years, McPherson has seen full-time student enrollment grow from 340 to about 500, improved student retention and graduation rates, and completed a major fundraising campaign. Hovis said he and his wife plan to move to Wyoming or Texas and enjoy more time to spend with family and travel.

• **Elizabeth J. Keller** of Richmond, Ind. was named director of admissions for Bethany Theological Seminary beginning July 1. She had served as interim director of admissions since August 2007. Keller is a 2008 graduate of Bethany and a 1997 graduate of Manchester College. Previously she was director of recruitment and training for Heritage College in Denver, Colo., admissions counselor at Colorado State University, and senior admissions counselor at Manchester.

• **Dennis Kingery** resigned as director of Credit Union Operations with Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT) effective Aug. 8. He has been accepted to the University of Denver (Colo.) Graduate School of International Studies. Kingery began working for BBT in February 2004, when it began providing third-party administrative services for the Church of the Brethren Credit Union. Prior to working for BBT, he worked for the General Board as controller from 1998 to 2004. He also is an elected member of the McPherson (Kan.) College board of trustees and serves as treasurer for Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin, Ill.

• **Bob Mosley** has been named director of financial operations for Brethren Benefit Trust, effective May 1. He was hired by BBT as staff accountant on Sept. 14, 1998, and was promoted to senior accountant on July 2, 2000. In October 2005, he was named manager of accounting.

• **Andrew Murray**, director of the Elizabeth Evans Baker Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies at Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pa., and Elizabeth Evans Baker Professor of peace and conflict studies, retired at the end of the 2007-2008 academic year. Murray came to Juniata in 1971 as a faculty member in the religion department and campus minister after serving Church of the Brethren pastorates in Virginia and Oregon. He was named college chaplain in 1986, a post he held until 1991. He founded the Juniata Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies in 1985, and has directed Juniata's peace and conflict studies program since 1977. He has led the Baker Institute, named for the John C. and Elizabeth Evans Baker family in 1986, since its beginning.

• **Laura Nedli**, director of finance and information services for Brethren Benefit Trust, resigned her position effective July 31. She ceased active duties at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill., as of April 30.

• **Patrice Nightingale** has been hired as manager of publications for Brethren Benefit Trust. She will serve as senior writer and copy editor and provide oversight of newsletters, press releases, the website, and other special projects. She began work on May 5. She has worked in the publications field in various capacities since 1973, most recently for Examiner Publications in Bartlett, Ill., where she was a production manager for eight weekly newspapers. A graduate of Manchester College, North Manchester, Ind., she is a member of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin, Ill.

• **H. Kendall Rogers** has been called by Bethany Theological Seminary as professor of historical studies, beginning in the 2008-2009 academic year. Rogers has been a professor in the Religion and Philosophy Department at Manchester College for 30 years. He is a Manchester graduate and holds degrees from Oxford University in England and from Harvard University. He has also served as resident director for Brethren Colleges Abroad in Germany and China, as Fulbright program advisor for Manchester, and as coordinator for the Ministry Training Institute of Manchester College and the Church of the Brethren in Indiana.

• **Ed Woolf** has moved into a staff position with the Church of the Brethren General Board as manager of Office and Gift Operations in the office of the treasurer and the department of Centralized Resources. He has worked for the General Board as a gift management/Centralized Resources assistant since May 1998. Previously he served as an intern in the General Board's Human Resources Office.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Sept. 1-5 National Older Adult Conference, Lake Junaluska, N.C.

Sept. 7 Brethren Press fall curriculum quarter begins

Sept. 14 Bethany Theological Seminary Sunday

Sept. 19-20 Northern Indiana District conference, Milford, Ind.; Southern Pennsylvania District conference, York, Pa.; West Marva District conference, Moorefield, W.Va.

Sept. 21 International Day of Prayer for Peace

Sept. 21-Oct. 10 Brethren Volunteer Service fall unit orientation, New Windsor, Md.

Sept. 25-27 On Earth Peace board meeting, New Windsor, Md.

Sept. 26-27 Missouri/Arkansas District conference, Roach, Mo.

Sept. 26-28 Brethren Volunteer Service 60th anniversary celebration/reunion, New Windsor, Md.; Middle Pennsylvania District conference, Petersburg, Pa.; Oregon/Washington District conference, Seattle

Oct. 1-31 Disabilities Awareness Month, Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Oct. 12 World Mission Offering emphasis

Bethany Seminary celebrates its 103rd commencement

Bethany Theological Seminary celebrated its 103rd commencement May 3 with a ceremony for conferring degrees in Nicarry Chapel on the Richmond, Ind., campus and a public worship celebration at Richmond Church of the Brethren.

Sixteen students received degrees or certificates: 11 students received a master of divinity degree, one with an emphasis in peace studies; two received a master of arts in theology degree, and three received a certificate

in theological studies.

Steven L. Longenecker, professor and department chair of history and political science at Bridgewater (Va.) College, spoke at the degrees ceremony on the topic, "The Useful Dunker Past." Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm, associate professor of preaching and worship at Bethany, spoke at the afternoon worship service with a message titled "Where the River Goes," based on Ezekiel 47:1-12.

Receiving a master of divinity degree were David Beebe of Bear Creek Church of the Brethren, Dayton, Ohio; Nan Lynn Alley Erbaugh of Lower

Miami Church of the Brethren, Dayton; Stephen Carl Hershberger of Roaring Spring (Pa.) Church of the Brethren; Elizabeth Jacqueline Keller of Richmond (Ind.) Church of the Brethren; Jason Michael Kreighbaum of Nettle Creek Church of the Brethren, Hagerstown, Ind.; Matthew Eugene McKimmy of Good Shepherd Church of the Brethren, Blacksburg, Va.; V. Christina Singh of Richmond; Karl Edward Stone of Richmond; Paula Ziegler Ulrich of Richmond; and Douglas Eugene Osborne Veal of Richmond. Brandon Grady of Madison Avenue Church of the Brethren, York, Pa., received a master of divinity degree with a peace studies emphasis.

Receiving a master of arts in theology degree were Marla Bieber Abe of First Church of the Brethren, Akron, Ohio; and Susan Marie Ross of Churubusco (Ind.) United Methodist Church. Certificates of achievement in theological studies went to Mildred F. Baker of Diehls Crossroads Church of the Brethren, Martinsburg, Pa.; Nicholas Edward Beam of Pleasant Hill (Ohio) Church of the Brethren; and Jerry M. Sales of Peoria (Ill.) Church of the Brethren.

Nan Erbaugh received distinction for her academic work in biblical studies. Matthew McKimmy received distinction for his work in ministry studies. Karl Stone received distinction for his work in biblical studies and ministry studies. Paula Ulrich received distinction for her work in theological and historical studies, and ministry studies.



Bethany Theological Seminary held commencement ceremonies in May. Graduates are (front from left) Christina Singh, Marla Abe, Susan Ross, Elizabeth Keller, Nan Erbaugh, Paula Ulrich; (back) Karl Stone, Stephen Hershberger, Matthew McKimmy, Douglas Veal, Brandon Grady, and Jason Kreighbaum. Not pictured are Mildred Baker, Nicholas Beam, David Beebe, and Jerry Sales.

Two colleges receive large Wal-Mart grants

Two Church of the Brethren colleges—Manchester College in North Manchester, Ind., and Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pa.—each received \$100,000 Wal-Mart College Success Award grants recently. The awards are administered by the Council of Independent Colleges and made possible by a grant from the Wal-Mart Foundation.

In a press release, Manchester announced that it is the only Indiana college to receive the grant, and that only 20 grants were awarded nationwide. The grants are part of a nation-

wide initiative to increase the number of first-generation college graduates.

Manchester "already is deeply committed to the program," the release said, adding that 25 percent of Manchester graduates are the first in their families to receive a college degree. With the two-year grant, Manchester plans to build on its already successful recruiting and retention programs. The release said the college will identify and match potential first-generation candidates at area high schools to Manchester students and mentors. Students will attend overnight workshops to learn how to prepare and apply for college, and

what to expect.

Similarly, Juniata was the only higher education institution in Pennsylvania to receive the award, said a Juniata release. Juniata will use the award over the next two years to increase financial aid to allow first-generation students to attend the college's Inbound Retreats program, a week-long pre-orientation program for incoming freshmen designed to help students become accustomed to campus life and meet students with similar interests. Students demonstrating financial need will receive free admission to the program as Next Generation Scholars.

ONCAMPUS

Bridgewater College (*Bridgewater, Va.*)

Nathan Rittenhouse, a senior this fall, received the Esther Mae Wilson Petcher Memorial Scholarship for the 2008-2009 academic year, recognizing leadership in campus activities with an emphasis on religious life.

Elizabethtown College (*Elizabethtown, Pa.*)

Dennis Hollinger, a 1971 Elizabethtown graduate who was most recently president and professor of Christian ethics at Evangelical Theological Seminary in Myerstown, Pa., was named the sixth president of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Mass., effective Aug. 1.

Juniata College (*Huntingdon, Pa.*)

Juniata presented five alumni-related awards June 7, during Alumni Assembly: Carol McFate of Stamford, Conn., was awarded the Alumni Achievement Award; Charlie Goodale of West Grove, Pa., received the Harold B. Brumbaugh Alumni Service Award; Nicholas Bower of Reading, Pa., received the Young Alumni Achievement Award; David Orth-Moore of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was awarded the William E. Swigart Jr. Alumni Humanitarian Award; and Thomas Terndrup of Hummelstown, Pa., received the Health Professions Alumni Achievement Award.

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

La Verne has made its appearance on Major League Baseball this year, with advertising signs appearing behind home plate at Los Angeles Angels and Dodgers games. . . . Cramer Products Inc. has presented the inaugural Bill Cramer Professional Development Award to the University of La Verne Athletic Training Education Program. It includes \$2,000 for professional development.

Manchester College (*North Manchester, Ind.*)

A Manchester business class in May presented a check for more than \$1,600 to The Firehouse, a free music venue for area youth that has hosted indie rock bands and local garage bands. In July 2007, the roof of the former fire station in downtown North Manchester collapsed under heavy rains. The money came from the profits of a mock corporation run by the class.

McPherson College (*McPherson, Kan.*)

McPherson student Eric Sader, from Salina, Kan., successfully broke the world record of "longest individual drum roll" on April 29, logging a time of 1 hour, 22 minutes, 5 seconds in the student union.

West Coast youth enjoy mountaintop event

Western Regional Youth Conference took place at 6,200 feet this year, hosted by Camp Peaceful Pines in the sunny Sierra Mountains near Dardanelle, Calif., June 29-July 4. About 40 people from Arizona, California, and Washington attended.

The "AWE" band from the Circle of Peace congregation in Peoria, Ariz., provided music leadership throughout the week, while New Community Project director David Radcliff, former National Youth Conference and work-camps coordinator Cindy Laprade, and MESSENGER editor Walt Wiltschek spoke at daily sessions and campfires. Garry Pearson of Davis, Calif., directed the camp.

"By the Manner of Their Living," this year's national youth theme taken from a quote by Alexander Mack, served as the focus for the week. Study times looked at various aspects of the theme text from Colossians 3:12-15.

Other highlights of the conference included a 12-mile hike in the mountains, swimming in a nearby river, a sleepout under the stars, and water balloon activities and other games.

Walt Wiltschek



The "AWE" praise team from the Circle of Peace congregation in Peoria, Ariz., leads music outdoors for Western Regional Youth Conference.

Bits and pieces

- A video report about a youth workcamp to clean up the **historic John Kline home** in Broadway, Va., was posted by WHSV Channel 3 in Harrisonburg, Va. The report interviewed Linville Creek pastor Paul Roth, who has been instrumental in the effort to preserve the homestead, and youth who volunteered to clean it up in preparation for those who were expected to visit on their way to and from the 2008 Annual Conference. A total of 27 high school students from across the country came together for the workcamp.

Indiana Jones and the rejection of power

Up on the mountaintop, the apostle Peter suggested that three booths be erected to commemorate the appearance of Moses and Elijah with the transfigured Jesus. Though he probably meant no harm, there is something familiar about that urge to control the intersection of the human and divine.



FRANK RAMIREZ

You can't control God by planting a historical marker where angels danced or boats ran aground. Nor can you gain power by owning an object touched by the Lord. That's true in the Bible and true, as well, in the remarkable series of films about Indiana Jones, the newest of which—*Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*—was released earlier this year. I enjoyed this movie as much as any of the previous films.

The films involve artifacts from the Old Testament (the Ark of the Covenant), Hindu mythology, and the New Testament (the Holy Grail). The fourth installment's crystal skull might be identified with the secular New Wave; certainly the inclusion of the Roswell and Area 51 mythologies confirm this. But more to the

Professor Jones can escape a nuclear blast, proving in the process that even your mom can be wrong once in a while—like when she told you never to climb into a refrigerator and close the door.

However George Lucas and Steven Spielberg, the creators of the series, suggest that the pursuit of secret knowledge is more dangerous than the A-bomb. The crystal skull is sought by Colonel-Doctor Irina Spalko, wonderfully portrayed by Cate Blanchett, who seems to be able to play any part she wants. She represents the atheist Soviet Union's ruthless yet idealistic search for knowledge, and is the ultimate Gnostic. Fortunately, Indiana Jones—the ultimate skeptic, archaeologist, and professor—stands in her way.

The series of four movies has villains worth rooting against: ruthless religion fanatics, commies, and Nazis (twice!). If these were real human beings we'd feel guilty watching them be pummeled, pounded, and pulled off by legions of army ants on steroids, but in these movies right and wrong are pretty clearly defined. Much like the drama of Revelation, we know what side we're rooting for.

Yet even in this series where there are few shades of gray, ambiguity enters, especially in the form of FBI agents in an era in the grip of McCarthyism.

The commies are real enemies, but the greater threat to democracy and freedom is more likely to come from within than without.

In all four films the hero triumphs because of the rejection of

power. And if there is any power inherent in these objects, it is in their rejection. Indiana Jones rejects possession of the Ark, the Grail, and the skull. Between reconnection with a father in the third film, and a young man (Shia LeBeouf) who in this movie represents Indy's connection with the future, it's clear that Indy's reward is abundant life.

Then there's the present. As someone who turned around and realized he is now old enough to qualify for National Older Adult Conference, I can't help but enjoy the fact that in this film a lot of loose ends are tied together, that with the reappearance of Karen Allen (the romantic interest in the first movie) Indy seems ready to finally settle down for good.

I probably should write something about faith, hope, and love abiding in this space, because there really are happy endings. They come with the rejection of power for relationship, for letting go and letting God. **W!**

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

THERE REALLY ARE HAPPY ENDINGS. THEY COME WITH THE REJECTION OF POWER FOR RELATIONSHIP, FOR LETTING GO AND LETTING GOD.

point, it's really recycled Gnosticism. Taken from *gnosis*, the Greek word for knowledge, Gnostics believe there is secret knowledge available only to the initiate.

Harrison Ford, who once again is perfect playing Jones, has gotten older, and so has his character, but the principles remain the same. What I like about the series is that Indy, our rugged and rakish hero (though something of a skeptic), intuitively recognizes a basic truth: There is no owning God.

In the four episodes of the series various villains attempt to seize a sacred object at any cost for their own selfish purposes. By contrast, in the end Indiana Jones is willing to give them up.

Crystal Skull is set in the 1950s. The shadow of the mushroom cloud looms over the film. But





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Pontius' Puddle



JOEL WASSERMAN@GOL.COM

Brethren must be partners

I read with great interest the blurb on Christian Churches Together (March 2008, News). It is my hope that this is a not just a parallel effort to the World Council of Churches but that it has unique goals.

Regardless, It is my hope that Brethren in either CCT or WCC will be raspberry seeds under the dentures of members of either group for reaching out to leadership of the Muslim religion in whatever projects they undertake. I believe it is important, if we wish to foment peace-making in today's world where Christians and Muslims are at odds, that Brethren be a voice for working on people issues in some partnership with Muslims.

That expands a bit on CCT goals of helping with domestic poverty and evangelism, but the dividends could be astounding. After all, we are all descendants of Abraham, and both religions have interests of the individual at heart. If Brethren can convince either group to reach out in attempt to include Muslims, we will begin the process of building relations on concerns we have in common, not focusing on differences and allowing that focus to fester into terrorism via extremists.

As the war in Iraq languishes, our leaders have said it is no longer a military issue, but it is a political problem. I firmly believe that it is not a political problem, but a religious one. This is an area where Brethren can have an impact.

Craig Coble
Elizabethtown, Pa.

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Rianna Barrett (left) and Phil Jones (right, waving) on their delegation to Chiapas, Mexico

Forty co-operatives in twenty countries provide fairly traded coffee, tea and chocolate to Brethren congregations. In January of this year, Phil Jones & Rianna Barrett of Brethren Witness/Washington Office visited two of these co-operatives in Chiapas, Mexico.

On a delegation with Equal Exchange and Witness for Peace, they learned about the world of small coffee farmers in Chiapas and how your Fair Trade purchases benefit them.

Brethren are particularly invited to join Phil and Peter Buck of the Equal Exchange Interfaith Program for next January's delegation.



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Sins of the times

I'm always relieved when writers in the MESSENGER discover new sins, like extreme bureaucratic inertia and overeating. It distracts people's attention from the old classics I keep committing.

Ed Isaacs
Salisbury, Md.

Genocide is key issue

The Christian Citizenship Seminar [June 2008, p. 20] held March 29-April 3 was not the only Church of the Brethren disclosure on the subject matter of genocide recently. The Church of the Brethren was one of the sponsors for "Eliminate Racism Prevent Mass Atrocities" presented by the Sub-Committee for the Elimination of Racism at the United Nations on March 27 in observance of

the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21) and International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade (March 25).

Among the speakers were Yvette Rugasaguhunga, a survivor of the Rwanda Tutsi genocide, and Ben Majekodunmi, human rights officer, Office of the UN special representative on the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities. Majekodunmi was also the sub-committee guest speaker for our monthly meeting in May and pointed out some reoccurring themes found in societies that experience genocide. Among the findings are weak or non-existent judicial systems, restrictions of movement on the targeted group, a collapsing political system, and intercommunity violence. He has been based in Rwanda, Burundi, Italy, Geneva, Sudan, Lebanon, and Nepal.

While it is wonderful that Church of the Brethren is now speaking on this subject, we must also continue that discussion every day in our workplace, and most of all in the church on Sunday morning. Genocide can happen any place. It is not

confined to small, Third World nations, but—as the ravages of World War II have shown—genocide can occur wherever men and woman decide that an OTHER exists among themselves, and the OTHER is not just a non-neighbor but is not human and can be killed without impunity by a non-caring world.

We Brethren should not find the subject of genocide either “difficult” or “hard,” but instead relish the opportunity to speak out on and live that great commandment to “love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matt. 22:39) and “this do, and thou shall live” (Luke 10:28b).

Doris Theresa Abdullah
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Let's journey together

Jerry Waterman's letter in the April 2008 MESSENGER deserves a response. And the problem related to liberal vs. conservative is bigger than he describes. Such thinking from both the right and the left is worldly, judgmental, and polarizing.

This way of thinking and acting and reacting is not Jesus' way (Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 5, 6, and 7) and it

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EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN SHARP (July 31-August 13)
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becomes even more dangerous when religious people and their misuse of holy books add to this worldly and judgmental polarizing that God is only on one side or the other (and often the other side is in various ways demonized).

Jesus' way is not liberal vs. conservative; rather, Jesus is the best of both conservative and liberal—wonderFULLY conservative and liberal. When we are truly better liberals, then we will be better conservatives, and vice versa. This is so crucial in our times because of our tendency toward worldly thinking that often sees in terms of conservative vs. liberal rather than liberal and conservative working in wonderful tandem.

Another caution is our tendency to be like James and John (Luke 9) in being judgmental and violent in words and actions and reactions that can be manifested in various ways of calling down fire on others. This brings a rebuke from Jesus. Do we know what spirit we are of?

I also remember Jesus' very serious warning in Matthew 12 about not calling something evil that is of God. That is so dangerous as to be sinning against the Holy Spirit. May we ever more respectfully and gracefully journey together while we remain open for more light along the way.

Roger Eberly
Milford, Ind.

CLASSIFIEDADS

Pilgrimage to the Holy Lands, Israel, Greece, and Rome—in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and St. Paul. March 16-29, 2009. For information please e-mail kreiderk@etown.edu or write to J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Road, Elizabethtown PA 17022.

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Anniversaries

Beach, Jim and Evelyn, Martinsburg, Pa., 60

Becker, Garth and Helen, Lititz, Pa., 55

Bucher, Luke and Naomi, Myerstown, Pa., 50

Carter, John and Phyllis, Goshen, Ind., 60

Deidiker, Everett and Lila, Apache Junction, Ariz., 50

Duncan, Howard and Jan, Evergreen, Colo., 50

Fourman, David and Darlene, Eaton, Ohio, 50

Gibbel, Henry and Joan, Lititz, Pa., 50

Ginder, Becker and Vera, Manheim, Pa., 50

Hager, Sam and Shirley, Lima, Ohio, 50

Holsinger, Don and Jo Ann, Richmond, Va., 50

Kipp, Wilbur and Lois, Haxton, Colo., 60

Krieder, Dayton and Helen, Englewood, Ohio, 72

Landis, Wesley and Janice, Hershey, Pa., 50

Lewellen, William S. and Marjorie K., Morgantown, W.Va., 50

Lineweaver, Warren and Mary, Lebanon, Pa., 70

Mahan, Grant and Louise, Salisbury, Md., 60

Markey, David and Marian, Harrisburg, Pa., 60

Miller, Paul and Kathryn, Manheim, Pa., 60

Poince, Kent and Sue, Tipp City, Ohio, 55

Sherrad, Lyall and Vivian, Denver, Colo., 50

Sifrit, Bob and Mina, McPherson, Kan., 55

Willoughby, Don and Marie, Kaleva, Mich., 50

Wilson, Elby and Evelyn, Weyers Cave, Va., 60

Wilson, Warren and Pat, Brookville, Ohio, 60

Deaths

Alexander, John, 45, Shillington, Pa., March 26

Anderson, Elmer E., Sr., 80, Hampstead, Md., March 13

Arbaugh, Marguerite, 94, Westminster, Md., July 10, 2007

Balsbaugh, Lester H., 87, Lititz, Pa., June 1

Barnett, Earl, 89, Lutz, Fla., June 12

Bassler, James W., 81, Martinsburg, Pa., Jan. 8

Beach, Earl, 72, Martinsburg, Pa., Dec. 4

Bealer, C. La Verne, 89, Lancaster, Pa., May 9

Beard, Tim, 39, Westminster, Md., Dec. 19

Bechtel, Joan L., 51, Martinsburg, Pa., Sept. 27

Bohrer, Rebecca Elizabeth, 79, Martinsburg, W.Va., April 6

Bousman, Howard L., 82, Wirtz, Va., May 29

Brandt, Miriam, 91, Elizabethtown, Pa., April 26

Buck, John S., 100, Mount Morris, Ill., May 13

Buchler, Milton F., 87, Freeport, Mich., April 23

Click, Ruth, 88, Taneytown, Md., July 17, 2007

Coffey, Rachel Arnold, 84, Waynesboro, Va., June 6

Cope, Elnora, 90, Lancaster, Pa., June 27

Corle, L. Raymond, 71, Martinsburg, Pa., Dec. 6

Davis, Bertha M., 98, Modesto, Calif., May 8

Davis, John Rodney, 80, La Verne, Calif., May 25

Dilling, Bonnie H., 51, Martinsburg, Pa., Dec. 2

Dinsmore, Patty, 91, Indianapolis, Ind., June 22

Draper, Sarah, 41, Bassett, Va., March 21

Eshelman, Helen L., 87, New Enterprise, Pa., June 16

Felton, Marjorie J., 81, Windber, Pa., May 25

Fleagle, Betsy A., 76, Greencastle, Pa., April 1

Foley, Oneida, 92, Altoona, Pa., June 16

Forney, Ruth, 80, Somerset, Pa., April 23

Fraver, Mae, 96, Hagerstown, Md., April 5

Gibson, Geneva, 91, New Carlisle, Ohio, April 28

Gordon, Virginia, 86, Broadway, Va., May 22

Grim, Lorraine M., 82, Defiance, Ohio, June 30

Harig, Sharon, 64, Freeport, Mich., March 21

Harmon, Pat, 70, Cushing, Okla., Nov. 28

Harms, David K., 53, Dixon, Ill., May 31

Hauser, Sandra Roth, 62, Aurora, W.Va., March 27

Heckman, William Bryan, 83, Windber, Pa., May 31

Heisey, John, 85, Manheim, Pa., April 27

Heiskell, Cord, 78, Trotwood, Ohio, May 7

Herr, Francis, 86, Nappanee, Ind., May 4

Herr, Jane, 89, Ligonier, Pa., May 27

Hirst, Mildred E., 87, Elizabethtown, Pa., April 1

Honeyman, Evelyn Spittler, 90, Laura, Ohio, May 26

Horner, Karen, 53, Roaring Spring, Pa., May 25

Hornish, A. Genevieve, 91, Defiance, Ohio, May 12

Hossler, Mildred, 73, Lancaster, Pa., May 4

Hostetler, Evelyn, 88, Windber, Pa., April 21

Hostetler, Louise E., 76, Goshen, Ind., June 30

Hunsberger, C. Henry, 79, Mercersburg, Pa., May 26

Irving, Kathryn, 88, Ashland, Ohio, June 8

Kendall, Frank, 88, Milledgeville, Ill., May 23

Kensing, Mary E., 87, Martinsburg, Pa., Sept. 29, 2007

Kercheval, Edward C., 79, Hagerstown, Md., Jan. 6

Kreider, Nora Mae, 69, Holtwood, Pa., Dec. 28

Kretzer, Frank, 50, Smithsburg, Md., Feb. 26

Kuhn, Ralph, 95, Palmyra, Pa., June 2

Lambert, S. Mervin, 89, Harrisonburg, Va., May 23

Little, Wilbur, 72, Westminster, Md., Feb. 23

Loughrie, Janice Arnold, 77, Grantsville, Md., March 26

Maier, Martha, 94, Beaverton, Mich., April 14

Martin, Wilbur A., 95, Lancaster, Pa., June 7

Mathias, William, 85, Stuarts Draft, Va., May 19

McOwen, Gordon, 81, New Carlisle, Ohio, March 22

Miller, Marcelene, 89, Stockton, Ill., June 18

Millet, Angel, 82, Adrian, Mich., March 29

Naragon, Dorothy Maxine, 92, North Liberty, Ind., Feb. 27

Nolen, Aaron D., 95, Harrisonburg, Va., June 13

Peters, Collin, 19, Manheim, Pa., Nov. 7

Peters, Harry H., 88, Hillsboro, Ohio, May 25

Preston, T. William, 85, Frostburg, Md., April 30

Reck, Ruby, 79, Piqua, Ohio, May 26

Reighard, Fred, 76, Martinsburg, Pa., May 4

Rentfrow, Michael J., 63, Waynesboro, Pa., Feb. 25

Rhoades, Floyd, 90, Yellow Springs, Ohio, Feb. 13

Roop, James E., 90, Omaha, Neb., July 5

Schmidt, Edith, 90, Osage City, Kan., May 17

Schmitt, Velma Mae, 101, Modesto, Calif., May 21

Schrock, Kathryn, 85, Goshen, Ind., April 18

Seng, Chester, 89, Milledgeville, Ill., April 27

Sheeler, Dorothy, 86, Somerset, Pa., April 14

Shenk, Chester, 84, Manheim, Pa., April 23

Sites, Anna E., 80, Franklin, W.Va., May 27

Smith, Henry S., 89, Mount Joy, Pa., April 23

Smith, Ruth E., 81, Waynesboro, Pa., March 8

Stern, Robert, 70, Somerset, Pa., Jan. 11

Studebaker, Samuel, Jr., 84, Tipp City, Ohio, June 13

Symensma, Theda, 87, Elkhart, Ind., March 26

Tyler, Miles, 82, McPherson, Kan., May 18

Umbaugh, Marguerite, 93, Goshen, Ind., Nov. 18

Vance, Allen, 87, Goshen, Ind., June 10

Waid, Calvin, 83, Shillington, Pa., June 4

Waters, William Tyson, 22, Troutville, Va., June 4

Weber, Sarah, 87, Shillington, Pa., July 7

Webster, Lena B., 106, Roanoke, Va., June 28

Weeks, Gene, 74, Pleasant Hill, Ohio, May 2

Werking, Mark C., 92, Hagerstown, Ind., April 9

West, Naomi Miller, 100, Bridgewater, Va., June 5

Wilhide, Wilma M., 92, Chambersburg, Pa., April 21

Wolfe, Russell, 84, Lebanon, Pa., May 21

Zirk, Wilma Virginia, 94, Franklin, W.Va., April 19

Licensings

Breidenshtein, John D., Atl. N.E. Dist. (Lancaster, Pa.), June 29

Brenneman, Jonathan, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Mount Wilson, Lebanon, Pa.), March 2

Buckley, Jason, W. Marva Dist. (Oak Park, Oakland, Md.), June 29

Forrester, Donald, W. Marva Dist. (Laurel Glen, Oakland, Md.), June 22

Gross, Anna Lisa, S/C Ind. Dist. (Richmond, Ind.), May 11

Harrison, Woodrow R., S. Pa. Dist. (Pleasant View, Red Lion, Pa.), June 8

Horstman, Thomas J., W. Marva Dist. (Romney, W.Va.), July 6

Hugg, Matthew, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Skipack, Collegeville, Pa.), Jan. 13

Kellihier, Patrick D., Shen. Dist. (Charlottesville, Va.), June 8

Leatherman, Paul N., III, Mid-Atl. Dist. (Harmony, Myersville, Md.), May 25

MacClennan, Robert, S. Ohio, Dist. (Union City, Ohio), June 1

McWilliams, Jonah J., S. Pa. Dist. (Pleasant View, Red Lion, Pa.), June 8

Stahl, Andrew G., S/C Ind. Dist. (Salamonie, Warren, Ind.), May 18

Stoner, Shawn, Atl. N.E. Dist. (White Oak, Manheim, Pa.), Nov. 25

Torres, Gloriana, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Puerta del Cielo, Reading, Pa.), April 20

Van Ausdal, Stanley, S. Ohio Dist. (Eaton, Ohio), May 25

Ordinations

Banaszak, Linda S., M. Pa. Dist. (Clover Creek, Fredericksburg, Pa.), June 22

Black, Rachel E., Mid-Atl. Dist. (Beaver Creek, Hagerstown, Md.), May 25

Cesar, Carrie F., Pac. S.W. Dist. (Papago Buttes, Scottsdale, Ariz.), June 8

Ehret, Victoria L., Atl. S.E. Dist. (Saint Petersburg, Fla.), July 22, 2007

Erbaugh, Nan L., S. Ohio Dist. (Lower Miami, Dayton, Ohio), May 18

Fuchs, Rebecca R., Atl. N.E. Dist. (Lancaster, Pa.), May 18

Howdyshell, Darren A., Shen. Dist. (Briery Branch, Dayton, Va.), June 1

King, Daniel M., Shen. Dist. (Mount Zion, Linville, Va.), June 15

King, Mary Jane, S. Pa. Dist. (West Shore, Enola, Pa.), May 4

Menke, Barbara, S. Ohio Dist. (Oakland, Bradford, Ohio), May 3

O'Donnell, Rodney, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Green Tree, Oaks, Pa.), June 8

Rivera, Eduardo, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Lebanon, Pa.), May 11

White, Randy, S. Ohio Dist. (Constance, Hebron, Ky.), May 11

Placements

Bashore, Ronald M., pastor, Claysburg, Pa., July 16

Beach, Gregory Allen, pastor, Woodland, Astoria, Ill., June 1

Brenneman, Jonathan, pastor, Mount Wilson, Lebanon, Pa., July 15

Dehney, J. Curtis, associate pastor for youth and children's ministry, Lancaster, Pa., June 1

Diamond, Douglas M., from pastor, Peak Creek, Laurel Springs, N.C., to pastor, Fellowship, Martinsburg, W.Va., June 1

Fuchs, Rebecca R., pastor, Mountville, Pa., June 25

Glasscock, John E., pastor, North Fort Myers, Fla., June 29

Harness, C. Bryan, from chaplain, Prairie View Hospital, Newton, Kan., to chaplain, Centra Health Care, Lynchburg, Va., May 27

Hilton, Dennis K., pastor, Upper Fall Creek, Middletown, Ind., April 15

Hughes, J. Robert, pastor, White Pine, Purgitsville, W.Va., May 4

Hylton, Gerald L., pastor, Stonewall, Floyd, Va., July 1

Kulp, Daniel J., associate pastor, Lampeter, Pa., July 1

McElfresh, Richard E., pastor, Virden, Ill., June 1

McKimmy, Matthew E., pastor, Richmond, Ind., June 16

Meeks, Gary, from pastor, Fruitdale Community, Grants Pass, Ore., to pastor, Maple Spring, Eglon, W.Va., June 1

Miller, Richard D., from pastor, Jennersville, West Grove, Pa., to pastor, Waterford, Calif., July 15

O'Donnell, Rodney, associate pastor, Green Tree, Oaks, Pa., June 8

Robinson, Jimmy R., from interim to pastor, Monte Vista, Callaway, Va., July 1

It's about time

If you ever want to get a greater sense of the passage of time, stop by the National Watch & Clock Museum in Columbia, Pa.

I had a chance to visit a few years ago prior to a meeting in New Windsor. Room after room is filled with timepieces of every imaginable variety. Tick, tick, tick—you can almost feel time flowing around you (I thought it might be deafening when the hour struck, but fortunately most of the chimes have been disabled).



WALT WILTSCHKEK
MESSENGER Editor

For millennia, humans have created new ways to keep track of this movement of time, but so far nothing has been discovered to stop it or even slow it down. It's both maddeningly and dependably constant.

A more recent reminder of time's march came this summer, during a love feast service at camp. The graduating seniors who are at youth camp for the last time "host" the event, inviting others to their tables. I was seated at a table with nine others, including four seniors. It was a beautiful moment, but tinged with sadness, too. I wondered when this group, which has grown quite close over the years, would all be together again. I could have stayed there forever.

For the first time, I felt like I better understood a bit of

wonderful memories and some wonderful results. But it may be time to push back our chairs and open some new doors of our own.

The lengthy debate and fragmented vote on the Resolution on Forbearance at Annual Conference—a paper designed to address how we can disagree respectfully—clearly showed that many of us do not fully trust each other. How do we rebuild trust? How do we show the world that Christians can get along and work together?

Carl Desportes Bowman's recent survey showed that most of us like the concept of being "Brethren," but we have vastly different ideas of what that word means. In an era when denominationalism is on the wane or at least shifting dramatically, how can we spend less energy drawing the boundaries of Brethren-ism and more on our core purpose of following Jesus Christ and carrying out his work? Can we be less rigid and recapture the non-institutional passion of those original Brethren? Do we need to forge some new partnerships?

Can our worship and outreach styles be flexible enough to embrace new generations, new cultures, and new Christians? Can we more intentionally connect with our communities, as another Annual Conference paper urged? Can we engage heart, soul, and mind with depth in our faith communities? Can we seek out shoots of new life in the church and nourish them? Can we leap into the waves of culture rather than damming them up?

IT'S BEEN GOOD TO SIT TOGETHER AROUND OUR TABLE, WITH SOME WONDERFUL MEMORIES AND SOME WONDERFUL RESULTS. BUT IT MAY BE TIME TO PUSH BACK OUR CHAIRS AND OPEN SOME NEW DOORS OF OUR OWN.

what Jesus might have been experiencing at that original love feast, the Last Supper. He knew that his time with his beloved group of disciples was near the end. The joy of sharing a meal with them was probably tinged with grief. Big changes were about to occur for all of them.

However tempting it might have been, staying in that room—staying at that table—was not an option. New doors were waiting to be opened.

As the Church of the Brethren wraps up its 300th anniversary celebration, a similar moment may be at hand for us. It's been good to sit together around our table, with some

this spring, she told the audience, "You didn't cause the emergence, and you're not going to stop it. It's going to happen. 'Do you like it or not?' That's as silly as asking, 'Do I like the sun rising?' The sun is going to rise regardless."

Students must graduate and move on with their journeys of discovering who God is calling them to be. Jesus needed to go on to the cross and the resurrection beyond. And our church must shake off complacency and insular attitudes to burst out of our cocoons and into new life.

Tick, tick, tick. Time isn't slowing down, and we can't afford to either.—Ed.

Author Phyllis Tickle calls this era "The Great Emergence," a time of seismic change for the church. In an address to the Associated Church Press convention

COMING IN OCTOBER: Women in ministry, National Young Adult Conference, fair trade, Bible study on 2 Corinthians, book review; and more.

Join Our Quiet Ministry

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

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



Brethren Retirement Centers

Brethren Hillcrest Homes

La Verne, Calif. — (909) 593-4917

Brethren Home Community

Windber, Pa. — (814) 467-5505

Brethren Retirement Community

Greenville, Ohio — (937) 547-8000

Brethren Village

Lancaster, Pa. — (800) 367-9899

Bridgewater Retirement Community

Bridgewater, Va. — (800) 419-9129

Casa de Modesto

Modesto, Calif. — (209) 529-4950

The Cedars

McPherson, Kan. — (620) 241-0919

Cross Keys Village/

The Brethren Home Community
New Oxford, Pa. — (888) 624-2161

Fahrney-Keedy Memorial Home

Boonsboro, Md. — (301) 733-6284

Garden Terrace & Garden Terrace West

Wenatchee, Wash. — (509) 663-2154

Good Shepherd Home

Fostoria, Ohio — (419) 937-1801

Lebanon Valley Brethren Home

Palmyra, Pa. — (717) 838-5406

Northaven Retirement Residence and Assisted Living

Seattle, Wash. — (206) 365-3020

The Palms Estates of Highlands County

Lorida, Fla. — (863) 655-1909

The Palms of Sebring

Sebring, Fla. — (863) 385-0161

Peter Becker Community

Harleysville, Pa. — (215) 256-9501

Pinecrest Community

Mount Morris, Ill. — (815) 734-4103

Pleasant Hill Village

Girard, Ill. — (217) 627-2181

Spurgeon Manor

Dallas Center, Iowa — (515) 992-3735

Timbercrest Senior Living Community

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

The Village at Morrisons Cove

Martinsburg, Pa. — (814) 793-2104

West View Manor

Wooster, Ohio — (330) 264-8640



For more information about the Fellowship of Brethren Homes call (800) 323-8039 or visit www.brethren-caregivers.org to download a brochure about the Brethren Retirement Centers.

Suggested date: October 12, 2008



Called... by remembrance

Llamados... por su recuerdo

Luke / Lucas 22:19b

In remembrance of the sacrifice and blessing of Jesus' life, and answering the call to continue his work, the Church of the Brethren reaches around the world through your generous gifts! Your 2007 support made possible Christ-like ministry through mission leaders who serve in Jesus' name.

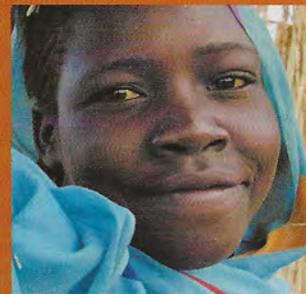
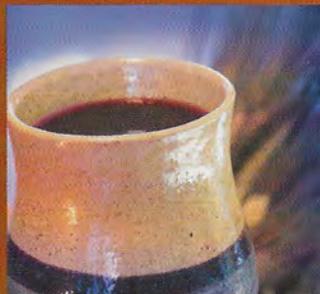
Give generously in remembrance of Jesus.

En memoria del sacrificio y las bendiciones de la vida de Jesús, y en respuesta al llamado de continuar su obra, la Iglesia de los Hermanos alcanza al mundo entero mediante las generosas ofrendas de todos ustedes. Su apoyo para el año 2007 hizo posible el ministrar como Cristo lo haría a través de líderes misioneros quienes van en el nombre de Cristo.

Demos generosamente en memoria de Jesús.



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Photos: Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford, Joe Wampler, Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford, Veer Photo, Paul Jeffries

