

Church  
of the  
Brethren

# MESSENGER

JUNE 2009 WWW.BRETHREN.ORG



## Statistics and the Spirit

How can demographic research aid church outreach?

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CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN HIGHER EDUCATION

“... publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works” (Psa. 26:7b KJV).

Church  
of the  
Brethren

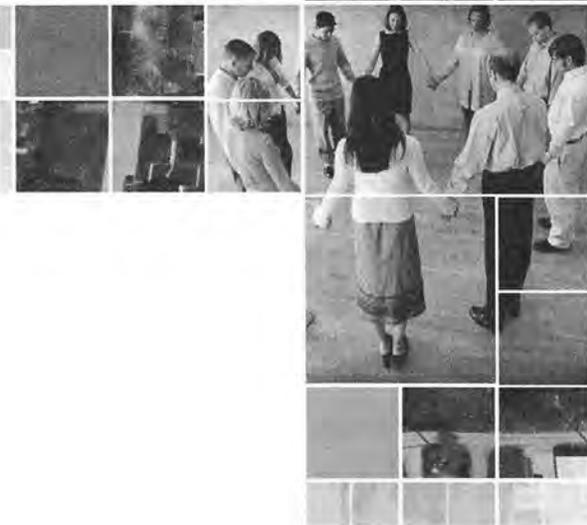
# MESSENGER

Editor: Walt Wiltschek Publisher: Wendy McFadden News: Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford Subscriptions: Diane Stroyeck Design: The Concept Mill



## ON THE COVER

All those high school math classes just might come in handy after all. In this month's cover feature, Stan Dueck and Jeff Glass explain how numbers can aid the Word. They say some demographic research and study, using resources like The Association of Religious Data Archives ([www.thearda.com](http://www.thearda.com)), can provide a clearer picture for a congregation to focus its work and witness.



## 8 Statistics and the Spirit

Who are the people in your neighborhood? It's not just a "Mister Rogers" song; it's a critical question in understanding a congregation's ministry. By knowing its community and region, a church can do a better job in planning its outreach.

## 14 Out of the wilderness: Interim ministry

Interim pastors provide a valuable ministry to congregations, serving as a "bridge" between past and future in times of transition. When done well, it provides space for decision-making and any needed healing.

## 16 Breaking the chains—and the silence

Did you know there are more slaves in the world today than there were during the early 1800s? Youth from across the denomination learned about modern-day slavery at this year's Christian Citizenship Seminar and were encouraged to take action.

## 18 Hebrews: Sustenance from the past

The New Testament book of Hebrews draws heavily on the Old Testament, providing a connection to help in understanding new realities. Later chapters give stirring testimonies of faith as one generation equips the next.

## DEPARTMENTS

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**F**acebook users have likely encountered the fad "25 Random Things About Me." When you receive such a list, you've been "tagged." You're supposed to write your own list and then send it to 25 of your friends. In case the Church of the Brethren ever gets tagged, I'm ready with our list:

1. We're 301 years old.
2. There are about 301 different ways to spell "Brethren," judging by the mail received at the Brethren Offices in Elgin, Ill.
3. Two misspellings are among the top 20 search terms that take people to [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org).
4. After the variations of "Church of the Brethren," the top search terms are "water pollution" and "Brethren Volunteer Service."
5. The most popular day for surfing our site is Monday.
6. We're not connected to the Sanctified Brethren, the Supreme Court, the John Grisham book, the music group, or the cult.
7. We're frugal to a fault.
8. We like our ice cream best when it's free.
9. We're willing to pay up to \$5 if it's "all you can eat."
10. Where two or three of us are gathered, somebody's related.
11. We don't really like change.
12. We are descendants of Alexander Mack, but we've changed so much that it's not clear that he would recognize us.
13. It was one of our own, Dan West, who began Heifer International.
14. Many non-Brethren think it was their denomination that began Heifer International.
15. From January through March, the Church of the Brethren gave a total of \$330,000 to food banks in Brethren communities.
16. Adjusting for size, this would be like the Methodists giving \$21 million.
17. The late senator Paul Simon was a subscriber to MESSENGER.
18. The singer Paul Simon is not.
19. The Brethren Church is a different denomination.
20. We've heard that the Mennonites are a little like us.
21. More than 31 percent of our members live in Pennsylvania.
22. Two years ago the number of Brethren in Antarctica was four.
23. The closest thing we have to an official hymn is "Move in Our Midst," which works for almost any occasion—except maybe a dance.
24. When Bishop Desmond Tutu visited the General Offices in the early 1980s, two young women working there launched into a softshoe routine, singing "Tea for Tutu, and Tutu for Tea."
25. Which shows that Brethren do know how to dance—if sufficiently moved.



WENDY McFADDEN  
Publisher

*Wendy McFadden*

## HOW TO REACH US

### MESSENGER

1451 Dundee Avenue  
Elgin, IL 60120

### Subscriptions:

[dstroyeck\\_gb@brethren.org](mailto:dstroyeck_gb@brethren.org)  
Phone: 847-742-5100 ext. 247  
Fax: 847-742-6103

### Advertising:

[messengerads\\_gb@brethren.org](mailto:messengerads_gb@brethren.org)  
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A free study guide for each issue of MESSENGER is available at this site, along with other information.

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A comforter donated by Brownsville (Md.) Church of the Brethren goes up for bids at the Mid-Atlantic auction.

## Auction season is under way Mid-Atlantic event enjoys strong attendance

Mid-Atlantic District held its 29th annual disaster response auction on May 2, drawing big crowds to the Carroll County Agricultural Center in Westminster, Md.

Despite concerns that the gloomy economy might drive down proceeds, it appeared after the event that both the number of people attending and the dollars given exceeded expectations. The day included a general auction, food booths, a variety of items for sale, and the centerpiece quilt auction. Volunteers from district congregations staff the booths and other stations.

The auction had raised more than \$1.25 million in its history through 2008. Proceeds benefit the work of Brethren Disaster Ministries and the travel fund for Mid-Atlantic members who respond to disasters around the country. A 23-member committee, chaired by John Laudermilch and Jeffrey McKee, coordinates the auction.

In addition to dozens of quilts and comforters, items up for sale this year included an Alexander Mack throw, several paintings, Brethren historical materials, and a week on North Carolina's Outer Banks.

*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.*



### YOU SAID IT

**"Even with all the different cultures we have, we all worship the same God. Even with all the different songs we sing, we all worship the same God."**

—Naperville (Ill.) Church of the Brethren member Purvi Satvedi, leading worship at the denomination's 2008 Cross-Cultural Consultation and Celebration

### BY THE NUMBERS

# 32

Percentage of congregations reporting financial difficulties related to the economy, according to a National Association of Church Business Administration online survey in February. Forty-seven percent had reduced or frozen staff benefits.

**Northeast** The cemetery wall at Germantown Church of the Brethren in Philadelphia is being repaired, and other improvements to the building have been made, through the work of the Germantown Trust. . . . Skippack Church of the Brethren (Collegeville, Pa.), hosted a May 5-6 Prayer Summit sponsored by the Church of the Brethren Evangelical Network.

**Southeast** Craig Howard has replaced Garry Clem as moderator-elect for West Marva District, after Clem resigned. . . . Atlantic Southeast District held a youth retreat May 22-24 in Orlando, Fla., with the theme "Soul Mates: Friends for the Journey." . . . Virgina District held a mini-golf tournament on May 16 to benefit the annual World Hunger Auction. . . . Shenandoah District on March 7 held a kick-off dinner for its annual disaster ministries auction.

**Midwest** The Brethren Heritage Center in Southern Ohio held a "Grand Re-Opening Celebration" on May 2. The center recently expanded and renovated its space to better serve the public. . . . Michigan District has found a buyer for its former Harper Woods church property, for a land contract of \$375,000.

**Ozarks/Plains** Matt and Betsy Kuecker began April 1 as managers of Northern Plains District's Camp Pine Lake in Eldora, Iowa. The Kueckers are members of Prairie City (Iowa) Church of the Brethren. . . . Pleasant Valley Church of the Brethren (York, N.D.), the last Church of the Brethren congregation in North Dakota, will hold a closing worship and celebration June 14. Official closure action will take place at district conference.

**West** Idaho District will hold a Brethren Disaster Ministries Auction June 13 in Meridian, with a concert preceding the main auction. . . . The finance committee of Oregon/Washington District has written a letter to congregations asking for ideas to help attain sufficient funding for the district. The committee was appointed when the district budget was adopted at last year's district conference in September. . . . La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren hosted the annual meeting of Heifer International for Southern California on Feb. 28.

## New historical marker honors Saur's influence in Philadelphia

An official Pennsylvania Historical Marker honoring the life of Christopher Saur (1695-1758) was dedicated in Philadelphia on April 19. The Historical Committee of the Church of the Brethren's Atlantic Northeast District held the event in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Saur printed the first European-language Bible in America as well as numerous other religious books and hymnals. His German newspaper was the most widely read in Colonial America, and he used his power and the influence of his press to improve conditions for the German immigrant minority in Pennsylvania.

The event took place at Trinity Lutheran Church on Germantown Avenue in Philadelphia, across the street from where the marker is to be placed. On the church grounds is the only building owned by Saur that survives to this day. Street construction prevented the marker from being installed on the day



Members of the Atlantic Northeast District Historical Committee join keynote speaker Steve Longenecker at a dedication for a new historical marker honoring Christopher Saur in Philadelphia.

Glenn Regel

of its dedication, but it should be placed by the end of June. A similar marker was installed at the Germantown Church of the Brethren meeting house last year.

About 40 people attended, including two families who are Saur descendants. Ken Leininger, a book dealer and avid Saur collector from Cocalico Church of the Brethren (Denver, Pa.) brought a 1743 Saur bible and several books printed by Saur. Stephen L. Longenecker, professor and chair of the Department of History and Political Science at Bridgewater (Va.) College, gave a keynote address describing Saur as a man of conviction who was a staunch

separatist, fought slavery, and used his influence politically to improve the life of the German immigrant minority group.—David Fuchs

## Virlina District gathering looks 'Beyond the Walls'

Beginning with praise music and ending with stories of outreach, Virlina District's "Beyond the Walls of the Church" conference on March 28 put evangelism front and center.

Sixty-seven people attended the event at Germantown Brick Church in Rocky Mount, Va. Summerdean Church of the Brethren (Roanoke, Va.) pastor Stafford Frederick gave an address on "How To Do Evangelism, Jesus-Style," noting five points: begin where people are, begin from a position of humility, be honest in your conversation, begin to know people in a caring relationship, and be a student of the Word of God.

After worship, people were given a choice of sessions on "Evangelism in the Urban Setting," led by Jim Hardenbrook, or "Evangelism in the Rural Setting," led by Marvin Wade. Both emphasized the importance of building relationships and prayer, and shared some stories. Wade told about a series of "Extreme Youth Rally" events that have been taking place in Floyd County, Va., and bringing many youth to Christ. Hardenbrook described the kingdom of God as "where what God wants done gets done with enthusiastic expectancy."

The conference ended with a panel and roundtable discussion. Wade, Hardenbrook, and Frederick served on the panel, along with Brian Turpin, talking about stories of outreach from their congregations and answering questions from the audience about ways and opportunities to reach out.—Mike Huffaker



Courtesy of McPherson College

**A garden of peace:** McPherson (Kan.) College planted a peace pole in its Harnly Garden on April 1. The peace pole was purchased by the Epsilon-Eta Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta (History Honor Society) and donated to the college. Pictured, from left to right, are Phi Alpha Theta members Chris LaBrie, Eric Sader, and Jillian Overstake. Standing in the back is faculty advisor Gary R. Entz.



Chris Hudson

**Flower, power:** *Church of the Living Savior, a Church of the Brethren congregation in McFarland, Calif., adds flowers to the cross to add to a festive atmosphere for Easter at the church. Standing by the cross is Cara Dawn Hudson, who officially became a member of the congregation a few weeks after Easter.*

**Nebraska church uses blankets to reach out**

The *Lincoln (Neb.) Journal-Star* ran a feature on the city's Antelope Park Church of the Brethren this winter, highlighting the congregation's blanket project.

When Antelope Park became aware of a multicultural school in Lincoln where many students were in need, pastor Joyce Petry had an idea, according to the article. The project started small three years ago, and has grown each year since, with congregation members delivering 53 blankets to the school this year. Special offerings have helped to fund the effort.

"It's such a simple idea," Angela Gebhart, family care coordinator at Clinton Elementary, said in the article. "And it's become such a big thing."

On this year's "Dedication Sunday," the article reported, Antelope Park draped a blanket over each pew in the 80-member church. During the service, the blankets were carried to the front of the sanctuary and dedicated in prayer and thanksgiving.

Each blanket bore a tag with these words: "We pray this blanket will bring you warmth and comfort in body and spirit . . . Antelope Park Church of the Brethren."

- The **Brethren Retirement Community Auxiliary** in Greenville, Ohio, held a 50th anniversary open house on April 2, including a time of reminiscing.

- April 8 marked 50 years since the dedication service for the **Church of the Brethren General Offices** facility in Elgin, Ill. A 50th anniversary celebration was held at the offices on May 13.

- **Harman (W.Va.) Church of the Brethren** will celebrate the 150th anniversary of its first organized church service Sept. 2. A special celebration will take place Sept. 13 at the church.

- **New Life Christian Fellowship**, a Church of the Brethren congregation in Mount Pleasant, Mich., held a dedication service for its new church building on March 29.

- **Onekama (Mich.) Church of the Brethren** will celebrate its centennial June 13-14 with a Saturday night hymn sing and other special events.

- **Daniel Lafayette "Lafie" Wolfe**, a member of Harmony Church of the Brethren in Myersville, Md., celebrated his 104th birthday on March 14. "We praise God for his good mind and health," pastor Tracy Wiser said.

- **Gladys Grossnickle**, a member of Lakeview Church of the Brethren in Brethren, Mich., celebrated her 103rd birthday on March 14. She said in the district newsletter that she "keeps going for it 100 percent with the Lord's help," and challenged everyone to, "Be a dynamo!"

- Church of the Brethren member **Art Gish** of Athens, Ohio, has written *At-Tuwani Journal: Hope and Nonviolent Action in a Palestinian Village*, a chronicle of his time serving through Christian Peacemaker Teams in the West Bank. A follow-up to his earlier book, *Hebron Journal: Stories of Nonviolent Peacemaking*, it is published by Herald Press.

- **Jay Shell**, president and CEO of Fahrney-Keedy Home and Village, a Church of the Brethren retirement community near Boonsboro, Md., has accepted an appointment as a member of the LifeSpan Products and Services board of directors. LifeSpan is the largest senior care provider association in the Mid-Atlantic region.

- **Lerry Fogle**, executive director of Annual Conference for the Church of the Brethren, has been nominated to serve on the Religious Conference Management Association (RCMA) board of directors for a two-year term. He has been a member of the organization for seven years. RCMA represents more than 1,000 diverse religious organizations; the Church of the Brethren was one of the early members. Fogle, based at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., is a member of Frederick (Md.) Church of the Brethren.

- **Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren** (Fort Wayne, Ind.) has received a Flourishing Congregations Matching Grant of \$6,000 from the Center for Congregations, which is affiliated with the Alban Institute and related to Lilly Endowment Inc. The congregation will use the grant for a Stephen Ministry and to bring in a consultant to assess the church's environmental impact, according to a newsletter report. The church is raising matching funds.

- The Elgin (Ill.) City Prayer Breakfast gave its Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian Award to **Bettina Perillo**, a member of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin. Perillo was honored for her commitment to peacemaking, which has included civil disobedience protesting the Iraq war, and leadership in an alternative recruitment program in local high schools.

- Black Rock Church of the Brethren (Glennville, Pa.) pastor **David Miller** has been named vice president of the Hanover Council of Churches.

- **R. Jan and Roma Jo Thompson** did two spring book signing events in Carroll County, Md., for their new Brethren Press book, *Beyond our Means, How the Brethren Service Center Dared to Embrace the World*. The signings were April 30 at the Brethren Service Center SERRV Store in New Windsor, Md., and May 2 at the Mid-Atlantic District Disaster Auction in Westminster, Md.

# Seeing with new eyes

**O**n my desk are a pair of glasses with hard brown plastic frames, real glass lenses, and metal clips shaped like rocket ships. They are the glasses that I wore for the first time in 1969, the year men walked upon the moon and Jesus came into my heart. When I try them on now, they distort my vision. As an 11-year old, however, they made me realize that I had not really been seeing reality as it is before I had them. They helped me to comprehend the world with new vision.

Likewise, our transformation as Christians causes us to see



DAVID SHUMATE

in new ways. In 2 Corinthians 5:16, the apostle Paul states that he "once knew Christ from a human point of view." Having been transformed, he now knows the Lord in a new way.

Undoubtedly he is remembering the experience that he had, as Saul, on the road to Damascus and during the days following his conversion. He had viewed the crucifixion as a just sentence and engaged himself in persecuting the infant church. In Acts 9,

his transformation is described in great detail. After encountering the Lord, Saul arose from the ground, "and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing." For three days he was without sight. Ananias, a faithful servant of Christ's way, was moved in a dream to go to Saul. He came, prayed, and laid hands upon him. It is written that "immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored."

While this restoration was undoubtedly a literal, physical fact, it points toward the deeper truth of Saul's new personhood and perspective. Saul, soon to become known as Paul, was a new creation. He was changed from the inside out! The old had passed, the new had come!

Paul vows that from now on he and the new believers in Corinth will regard no one from a human point of view. The scripture teaches that our relationships with one another and with others are a commentary upon the truth and depth of our relationship with the Lord.

The prophet Micah reminded God's people that good is "to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:6-8). Jesus taught that the greatest commandment is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matt. 22:34-40). And a second commandment is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." John, a New Testament writer, declared that "those who say, 'I love God,' and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen" (1 John 4:20).

If we are new creations, our connectedness with others is inextricably bound up with our tie to him. The old has

passed, the new has come!

Such a teaching should seem trite and obvious. But our lives, sadly, do not always live up to the truth we affirm. We find ourselves believing the worst about one another. We hear ourselves talking about others in a manner that we would find offensive if we were the objects of the conversation. We see one another from the perspective of hardened hearts and distorted perspective.

Some of our church meetings, meant to be a place where the Spirit guides us to greater insight, faith, and unity, have become occasions for partisan display and divisive speech. Some of our methods of evangelization, meant to represent the reconciliation that is in Christ, speak more to attitudes of power, control, and one-uppedness. Some of our viewpoints toward others, whom God has created and for whom Christ has died, betray a sense of superiority and a lack of grace. Some of us even deny the image of God in others and demean what God has called good! What do our relationships within and outside of the body of Christ say about who we are with him who is the Head of the body? Has the old passed? Has the new come?

Little things, as the old song proclaims, mean a lot. Being ambassadors of reconciliation is as much about our family life, our church life, and our community life as it is about crucial national and worldwide situations. Too often we preach reconciliation to society while being unwilling to live in a humble, forgiving manner with those closest to us. Both ends of the spectrum are important and necessary.

As recipients of the grace found in the cross of Jesus Christ, we are continually reborn and remade as those who bear the cross with him. It is his presence within that allows us to look at ourselves and those around us from the divine perspective rather than the human. It is the Holy Spirit that empowers us to act in a reconciling manner. We must show forth the Prince of Peace whom we claim to serve or be revealed as those in need of his transforming power. Let the old pass and the new come!

Being a new creation is both point and process. We are already, but not yet. My old glasses, very effective for an 11-year-old, no longer work well for my 51-year-old eyes. Time and life experience have changed my eyes, both for the better and for the worse. God's transforming power in Christ has given me new perspective on the divine, on myself, and on others. My mind, faith, and attitude are different from my baptismal day 40 years ago. I am a new creation.

Nevertheless, I continue to experience that change for the better and not for the worse. Let that be true for all of us, and for all of humankind. The old has passed, the new has come; all this is from God! **AMEN**

David Shumate is this year's Annual Conference moderator. He serves as district executive for Virginia District and is a member of Daleville (Va.) Church of the Brethren.

# “I think failing is a wonderful thing that we should do more often.”

—Danniel Shroyer, pastor of the emergent Journey Church in Dallas, on allowing worship to be more participatory. “It’s a mess sometimes on Sunday night, and that’s OK,” she added. She was quoted by *The United Methodist Reporter*.

“We still pray. And we believe in the power of prayer.”

—Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Fouad Twal, speaking to a World Council of Churches “Living Letters” delegation about the situation for Palestinians as conflict continues with Israel

“Ah, the irony! We are all for world peace so long as there is no cost to us.”

—from a CNN.com blog post, responding to a story that South Africa had denied a visa for the Dalai Lama to attend an international peace conference in Johannesburg. A presidential spokesman said it was “not in the interest” of South Africa—a significant trade partner with China—for the Dalai Lama to attend.

“The actual practice of the discipline of forgiveness is like learning a craft, a process that can endure for the entirety of one’s life. The craft of forgiveness entails loving enemies.”

—J. Denny Weaver, professor emeritus of religion and Harry and Jean Yoder Scholar in Bible and Religion at Bluffton (Ohio) University, writing in *Mennonite Quarterly Review*. Weaver was analyzing the writings of L. Gregory Jones, author of *Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis*.

“It signals a new day when the needs of the most vulnerable are again given priority.”

—The Rev. Garland F. Pierce, senior program director for Education and Leadership Ministries at the US National Council of Churches. He was commenting on the expansion of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program signed into law in February. (NCC News Service)

“To live healthy and hopeful never means we short-circuit grief. We simply grieve with hope.”

—Church of the Brethren member John Wenger, writing about wellness in difficult times for the “Lighten Up, Brethren!” campaign

“At some point in your life, I think everyone gets called, whether it’s when you’re 5 or when you’re 50. . . . At some point, you’ll get called. It’s whether or not you’re listening.”

—Peter Larson, a 14-year-old youth from Messiah United Methodist Church in Plymouth, Minn., who sleeps in a box outdoors 40 or more nights each winter to raise money to combat homelessness. He was quoted by United Methodist News Service.

## CULTUREVIEW

• **The Brethren Church** will hold its 2009 General Conference July 13-17 in Ashland, Ohio. Among other business, delegates will vote on a recommendation for Ken Hunn to serve a second six-year term as executive director of the denomination.

• Of 39 countries that have ratified the International Convention on the **Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families** so far, none is a “host country” of migrants in the developed world. “No other international convention shows such a split between developed and developing countries,” said William Gois, regional coordinator of Migrant Forum Asia. (WCC)

• Lancaster, Pa.-based **Association of Anabaptist**

**Risk Management**, an insurance provider serving peace church organizations, announced in March that it had changed its name to Resource Partners—Risk Management Solutions. Its Peace Church Risk Retention Group serves the Brethren homes/retirement communities.

• A project to put online the entire five-volume **Mennonite Encyclopedia** was completed in late February. The 14,000-plus articles are available at [www.gameo.org](http://www.gameo.org) (*Mennonite Weekly Review*).

• **Dick Benner** of Harrisonburg, Va., a former member of the New Life Ministries management team, has been named the new editor/publisher of *Canadian Mennonite* magazine.



## JUST FOR FUN: WORD FIND

**BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY** The cover feature in this month’s issue looks at demographics. In the puzzle below, find the 12 cities listed—all among the 20 largest in the United States.

NEW YORK	PHOENIX	SAN JOSE
LOS ANGELES	PHILADELPHIA	DETROIT
CHICAGO	SAN DIEGO	INDIANAPOLIS
HOUSTON	DALLAS	AUSTIN

S	I	L	O	P	A	N	A	I	D	N	I
E	A	F	R	I	S	C	O	L	U	M	L
P	T	C	H	I	C	A	G	O	B	O	O
T	H	E	S	O	J	N	A	S	C	S	S
P	H	I	L	A	D	E	L	P	H	I	A
L	X	E	S	A	N	A	N	T	A	N	N
N	E	I	L	N	E	D	F	W	R	O	G
I	O	L	N	V	W	C	I	A	L	T	E
T	A	S	P	E	Y	V	S	E	O	S	L
S	D	E	T	R	O	I	T	J	G	U	E
U	B	A	L	T	R	H	N	A	S	O	S
A	T	R	O	P	K	T	P	X	L	H	V



# Statistics and the Spirit

by Stan Dueck  
and Jeff Glass

DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH CAN AID A CHURCH'S  
OUTREACH AND MINISTRY

**W**ho are our neighbors? If you are a member or active participant in a Church of the Brethren congregation, your neighbors more than likely live in a small town or medium-size city. If your congregation desires to be a relevant witness, it strives to understand the community—assessing where and how people live, along with their needs and aspirations.

Understanding our local communities utilizing demographic research is a significant resource for churches to address the question, "What is God calling us to be and do in our community?" Our purpose is to share insights and resources on the importance of community studies and to exchange discoveries of six areas in the United States where Church of the Brethren congregations are located as an encouragement for congregational outreach.

## Defining our neighborhood

In the Gospel of Matthew we read, "See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" (Matt. 6:28-30).

Jesus teaches us not to worry about our future. If Jesus is Lord, then he also controls our future. Yet he gives advice as to how we should prepare for our future in these verses. The word "see" in New Testament Greek means to carefully observe, to study over a period of time. It doesn't mean take a quick look or glance. As we walk into our future, we need to carefully study the communities and cultures around us to increase our ability to share the Good News of our Savior and serve our neighbors. Doing careful demographic work is one way to "see" our communities.

Before initiating a demographic study of your community there are several questions to ponder. First ask, "What is God calling us to be and do in the community?" Understanding your community's demographics is helpful in knowing how to reach and serve your neighbors. Viewing the community through the lens of faith helps us to

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IT'S IMPORTANT TO DISCERN A SHARED UNDERSTANDING AMONG THE CONGREGATION OF WHERE GOD IS LEADING IT TO REACH OUT AND SERVE. **WHEN MEMBERS HAVE A SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF "WHAT IS OUR NEIGHBORHOOD," LEADERSHIP IS ENERGIZED AND MINISTRY TO THE COMMUNITY IS AS RELEVANT AS POSSIBLE.**

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see our neighborhood as Jesus might. If Jesus were to walk or drive through your community, what would he see? What would he be drawn to? Starting your demographic from this perspective helps in being sensitive to the Spirit's guidance.

Next ask, "What is our neighborhood?" Why? There are numerous ways to define a neighborhood. Natural geographic features or major roads create boundaries. Note ZIP codes, square mile or radius circles, US census tracts, or postal carrier routes. Think about economic and ethnic group considerations, as well. And talk to people. People have different responses to how your community defines itself depending on whether you interview a real estate agent, a church neighbor, or someone at the local park. People may think in terms of historical or cultural definitions.

It's important to discern a shared understanding among the congregation of where God is leading it to reach out and serve. When members have a shared understanding of "what is our neighborhood," leadership is energized and ministry to the community is as relevant as possible.

#### **Where Brethren live**

Our study involved an overview of six areas in the country with Brethren congregations: Elkhart County, Ind.; King County, Wash.; Lancaster County, Pa.; Los Angeles County, Calif.; Preble County, Ohio; and Shenandoah County, Va.

US census data indicates population growth in all six areas between the years 1990 and 2000. Elkhart County had the greatest percentage population growth: 17 percent, with population increase from 156,198 to 182,791. Preble County, Ohio, showed the lowest percentage of growth: 5.5 percent, increasing from 40,113 to 42,337. From 2000 to 2007 Preble County had a slight decrease in population, by 1.4 percent, while the other five areas grew.

In 2007, 75 percent of Preble County's 42,337 residents and Shenandoah's 40,403 lived in rural areas, whereas 75 percent

of the population in Elkhart County (population 197,942) and Lancaster County (498,465) inhabited city areas. Markedly, 96 percent of the 1.8 million people in King County, Wash.—home to Seattle—are urbanites.

Counties with significant numbers of urban residents have greater ethnic diversity. In Elkhart County, 33,000 residents (16.7 percent of the county's population) are non-white, of which 17,000 are Hispanic. In Lancaster County, 53,000 people (10.7 percent of the county's population) are non-white, with nearly 30,000 people of Latino-Hispanic origin.

In King County, Wash., and the Los Angeles basin, ethnic diversity is much greater. Of the 1.8 million people in King County, 494,570 residents are non-white. Together, Latino and African-American people account for 41 percent of the non-white population. Further south, the Los Angeles basin population is estimated at 14.9 million; 6.1 million are Hispanic, 5.7 million white, 1.4 million Asian, and 1.1 million African-American. Another sizeable ethnic group includes American Indian people.

The Church of the Brethren has been called to be a multicultural church, yet it has few congregations in regions with significant ethnic populations.

#### **Church participation**

The Association of Religious Data Archives (ARDA) tracks Judeo-Christian bodies accounting for "adherents," which include full members, children, and others who regularly attend services, and historically African-American denominations. ARDA's information can fluctuate between census collections, but its website ([www.thearda.com](http://www.thearda.com)) provides an interesting overview of Church of the Brethren membership for each study area.

"Religious practice" data identifies counties with greater church attendance and areas with less. Of the areas studied, Shenandoah, Los Angeles, and Lancaster had the highest per-



WHEN JESUS SAYS, "SEE THE LILIES OF THE FIELD," HE IS ASKING US TO BE DILIGENT AND CAREFUL IN OUR OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH. . . . **EACH NUMBER, EACH FACT, REPRESENTS THE LIFE OF A REAL PERSON WHOM GOD LOVES AND DESIRES TO BE PART OF THE BODY OF CHRIST.**

centage of adherents compared to population. According to ARDA, Shenandoah County has 107 congregations with 20,903 church adherents, equaling more than half the county's population. That includes 14 Church of the Brethren congregations with 2,097 adherents, accounting for 10 percent of the county's church membership and approximately 5 percent of the county's total population.

Surprisingly to some, Los Angeles has 5,840 churches with 8.9 million adherents out of 14.9 million residents. In the greater LA area there are 13 Church of the Brethren churches with more than 1,600 people. The Church of the Brethren is an underrepresented presence in the area. In Lancaster County, Pa., population near 500,000 people, 662 congregations serve as faith communities to more than 250,000 people, of which 23 churches and 10,000 adherents identify with the Church of the Brethren.

What do Elkhart and Preble counties have in common with King County, Wash.? Nearly 60 percent of residents are unchurched—more than 110,000 in Elkhart, 21,000 in Preble, and more than 1 million people in King County. Los Angeles and Lancaster counties, on the other hand, have an estimated 40 percent of the population (5 million in LA, 240,000 in Lancaster) unchurched.

King County has more churches (1,097) than the 1,053 churches in all of the Church of the Brethren. Nearly 750,000 residents have a church connection. In this area there are three Church of the Brethren churches with approximately 500 worshippers.

Elkhart and Preble counties also have a significant number of churches. In Elkhart County there are 281 churches with more than 80,000 adherents, including 18 congregations and 3,830 adherents in the Church of the Brethren. Preble County, smaller than Elkhart County, has 63 churches with more than 16,000 church adherents, including six Brethren churches ministering to 1,655 worshippers.

Are you skeptical about the demographic statistics? Great! But most telling are the number of churches and adherent statistics. Why? In the six study areas, and for Brethren in the same areas, the increase of church adherents parallels the addition of churches. At the same time, decline of church participation correlates with the stagnation or decline of number of churches in an area. Jeff

Woods, in *New Tasks for the New Congregation*, noted there are 350,000 congregations in the United States, of which 25 percent have been new church starts since the late 1980s.

Here are some examples of this correlation:

First, in 1980 Preble County had 65 churches with more than 17,000 adherents. By 2000 there were 63 churches and approximately 16,500 adherents. Between the years 1980 and 2000, the Church of the Brethren in Preble County grew from four to six churches and 983 to 1,655 adherents.

Second, by 1980 Elkhart County had 144 congregations and nearly 55,000 worshippers. In 2000 the county had 281 churches with more than 80,000 adherents. During the same period the Church of the Brethren went from 19 to 18 churches, and worshippers declined from 4,870 people to 3,830.

Third, King County, Wash., had 719 churches with more than 400,000 worshippers in 1980. By 2000, churches totaled 1,097 with over 700,000 worshippers. By contrast, the Church of the Brethren had three congregations with nearly 550 people in 1980 and by 2000 only retained the same numbers.

### Conclusion

The day before Easter, one of the authors went across the street to ask permission to cut two cala lilies for use at church on Easter morning. The neighbor was happy to oblige and helped in cutting them. Standing over the flower bed, he gave a lesson on how to cut the flowers: Rather than cutting the stem halfway between the flower and bulb, he taught that one should cut the stem as close to the bulb as possible, without cutting the bulb. What started as a simple request for two flowers turned into an educational experience.

When Jesus says, "See the lilies of the field," he is asking us to be diligent and careful in our observations and research. This is vital as we seek to understand the context in which our churches sit. Each number, each fact, represents the life of a real person whom God loves and desires to be part of the body of Christ.

Each number and each fact also represents tremendous

## HOW TO DO DEMOGRAPHIC WORK

No matter how long a congregation has been in its community, those who attend often learn their neighborhood is different than their perceptions. There are people in the community who are invisible to the eyes of church members—people who are important in the eyes of God. It is vital to look at the numbers to help you see everyone that God sees.

### The basic information to include in a demographic study:

- Population and household figures.
- Ethnicity
- Income brackets and vocations
- Age distribution
- Types and average size of households
- Changes of census figures by decades

### Four steps to gathering community information.

#### 1. Visit demographic websites.

Some options:

- [http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?\\_lang=en](http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en) (US census site)
- [www.neighborhoodplace.com](http://www.neighborhoodplace.com) (Quick facts about counties and states)
- [www.city-data.com](http://www.city-data.com) (Information by city and ZIP codes)

- [www.link2lead.com](http://www.link2lead.com) (Fee-based Christian site provides demographic and psychographic information. Shares types of ministries your community may be requesting. Utilizes marketing research.)

- [www.thearda.com](http://www.thearda.com) (The Association of Religious Data Archives)

- Many local city and community websites also have good information.

#### 2. Conduct community interviews.

Interview people who know the community: postal carriers, real estate agents, school administrators, local government representatives, and people who have lived in the community several years.

#### 3. Tour the community

to interpret your research. Research numbers do not speak for themselves. Tour the neighborhood either by walking or driving. Walking is preferred to more easily hear and see what is around you. While touring your neighborhood watch for the following:

- How do the “numbers” compare to what I’m seeing?
- Opportunities for “new ministry” within the community. What is missing? What is needed?
- New observations about neighborhood/community items that may be obscure.
- Familiar things that may go unnoticed.

- Assess similarities and distinctions between the congregation and community people.

- How is God speaking to you in your tour? Ask God to help you see as God sees.

Everyone in your congregation can participate. The number does not matter. If groups go out, each group should explore a different direction from the church. Visit local malls and shopping centers. Walk side streets and alleys as well as main streets and sidewalk areas. Assign group members to look at the community through the eyes of a disabled person, a young family, a single parent, older adult, young adult, and an ethnic person.

After the tour discuss significant observations and surprises. Take good notes to be used for future referencing, information, and brainstorming.

#### 4. Finally, as leaders or as a congregation, spend time in worship and prayer.

As you reflect on the data you uncovered ask the following questions: How is God speaking to our congregation? What needs might God call us to minister to? What resources do we have? What resources must God provide to meet community needs? As you are led by God, begin planning ways to reach and serve your community.

opportunity for us. Our research shows that church attendance in the six areas we looked at varies from 39 percent to 60 percent. Thus, there are many who can be reached by the Gospel.

Also, as the ethnic diversity grows in our communities, we are challenged to find ways to reach out and include all people in the church. Being faithful to our calling in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) means reaching out to all people—those who are like us as well as those who are different. God has created great diversity within humanity.

How well do you know your community? How is Jesus calling you to reach and love those who live around you? Demographic research for our community is a good starting point in answering those questions and increasing our faithfulness to God’s calling to our church. **W**

Stan Dueck is director of transforming practices for the Church of the Brethren’s Congregational Life Ministries office. An ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren, he lives in Denver, Pa. Jeff Glass is a former member of the Church of the Brethren Congregational Life Teams and also an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren. He lives in San Diego.

# The survey says: by Adelle M. Banks US is growing less religious

## 'MAINLINE' CHURCHES SQUEEZED BETWEEN NONRELIGIOUS AND NONDENOMINATIONAL TRENDS

**T**he nation has grown less religious in the last two decades, a new study shows, with a 10 percent drop in the number of people who call themselves Christians and increases in all 50 states among those who are not aligned with any faith.

Between 1990 and 2008, the percentage of Americans who identified themselves as Christian dropped from 86 percent to 76 percent, according to the wide-ranging new American Religious Identification Survey released in March.

The group that researchers call the "Nones"—atheists, agnostics, and other secularists—have almost doubled in

that time period, from 8.2 percent to 15 percent.

And, in a further indication of growing secularism, more than a quarter of Americans—27 percent—said they do not expect to have a religious funeral when they die.

"Traditionally, historically, people are interested in their immortal soul, salvation, heaven and hell," said Barry Kosmin, co-author of the survey and director of the Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture at Trinity College in Connecticut.

"If you don't have a religious funeral, you're probably not interested in heaven and hell."

### BY THE NUMBERS

#### Anabaptist figures

Mennonite researcher C. Nelson Hostetter, who co-authored *Anabaptist World USA* with Donald Kraybill, has conducted extensive research on the numbers of Anabaptist-related groups (Brethren, Mennonite, Amish, and independent) in the United States. He counts about 645,000 members of such groups nationwide. According to Hostetter's latest data, the following are the states with the largest reported Anabaptist membership:

1. Pennsylvania 168,316
2. Ohio 98,731
3. Indiana 69,615
4. Virginia 40,743
5. California 26,018
6. Kansas 25,886
7. Illinois 22,575
8. Maryland 17,470
9. Michigan 14,515
10. Iowa 13,479

The states with the largest Church of the Brethren membership (counting affiliated congregations), according to Hostetter's data:

1. Pennsylvania 38,296
2. Virginia 25,329
3. Ohio 13,766
4. Indiana 10,986
5. Maryland 8,542
6. West Virginia 6,989
7. Illinois 3,633
8. California 2,341
9. Iowa 2,321
10. Kansas 2,145
11. North Carolina 1,823
12. Michigan 1,396

(Total Church of the Brethren membership (US and Puerto Rico), according to the 2008 Church of the Brethren Yearbook published by Brethren Press: 125,964 in 1,055 congregations, fellowships, and projects)

#### National figures

The 10 US metropolitan areas with the highest numerical growth from April 1, 2000, to July 1, 2006, according to the US Census Bureau:

1. Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, Ga. 890,211
2. Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, Texas 842,449
3. Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, Texas 824,547
4. Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, Ariz. 787,306
5. Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, Calif. 771,314
6. Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, Calif. 584,510
7. New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, N.Y.-N.J.-Pa. 495,154
8. Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va. 494,220
9. Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Miami Beach, Fla. 455,869

10. Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, Ill.-Ind.-Wis. 407,133

The 10 fastest-growing US metropolitan areas by percentage of population growth from April 1, 2000, to July 1, 2006, according to the US Census Bureau:

1. St. George, Utah 39.8%
2. Greeley, Colo. 31.0%
3. Cape Coral-Fort Myers, Fla. 29.6%
4. Bend, Ore. 29.3%
5. Las Vegas-Paradise, Nev. 29.2%
6. Provo-Orem, Utah 25.9%
7. Naples-Marco Island, Fla. 25.2%
8. Raleigh-Cary, N.C. 24.8%
9. Gainesville, Ga. 24.4%
10. Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, Ariz. 24.2%

**"IT LOOKS LIKE THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM OF AMERICAN PROTESTANTISM—MAINLINE VERSUS EVANGELICAL—IS COLLAPSING. A GENERIC FORM OF EVANGELICALISM IS EMERGING AS THE NORMATIVE FORM OF NON-CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY IN THE UNITED STATES."**

**—MARK SILK, DIRECTOR OF THE PROGRAM ON PUBLIC VALUES AT TRINITY COLLEGE IN HARTFORD, CONN., WHICH CONDUCTED THE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION SURVEY**

The survey of more than 54,000 respondents followed similar large studies in 2001 and in 1990. Though the largest increase in "Nones" occurred between 1990 and 2001 (from 8.2 percent to 14.1 percent), Kosmin said more people have been willing to identify themselves as atheist or agnostic in the past seven years.

In the past, the typical "None" was a young, single male living in the West, but the image of the nonreligious is broader now, even if it remains 60 percent male.

"It's increasingly middle-age and relatively across the board, less specific now," Kosmin said. "It's increasingly ex-Catholics in New England."

In fact, researchers found that while there was a 14-percent drop in self-identified Catholics in New England—from 50 percent to 36 percent—there was an increase in Nones of exactly the same percentage—from 8 to 22 percent.

Mark Silk, who directs Trinity College's Program on Public Values and helped design the new study, said the almost threefold increase in "Nones" in New England was larger than the increases in other states.

"You've got Vermont, 34 percent Nones," said Silk, co-author of *One Nation, Divisible: How Regional Religious Differences Shape American Politics*. "Northern New England now is more the None zone. The Pacific Northwest is still up there, but the increase in New England, that's very striking. It says a lot about the decline of Catholicism."

The research echoes findings of a recent Gallup Poll that revealed that 42 percent of Vermonters said that religion is "an important part" of their daily lives—the lowest percentage of state residents polled across the country.

The Rev. R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., said the findings really bring home the secular nature of a sizable slice of the US population.

"As an evangelical Christian, I see this as further evidence of the fact that American Christians live in the midst of a vast mission field, and this should be a wake-up call—I would say, yet another wake-up call—to the magnitude of our task in sharing the gospel in modern America," he said.

## SHIFTING LOYALTIES

Consumers are more choosy about Charmin or Colgate than they are about church, according to a new survey.

According to a Phoenix-based research firm, 16 percent of Protestants say they would consider only one denomination, while 22 percent of them would use only one brand of toothpaste and 19 percent would use just one brand of bathroom tissue.

Experts say the findings may be more telling about Americans' views of the plethora of Protestant groups than how they choose between Quilted Northern and, say, Cottonelle.

"When you have a whole bunch of different brands out there and not a lot of differentiation among some of them—and not a lot of knowledge about them—the denominational world is facing the same problem as many other brands," said Ron Sellers, president of Ellison Research, which conducted the survey.

The Ellison findings seem to echo a large national survey conducted last year by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, which found that 44 percent of Americans have switched from one faith, or one denomination, to another.

Ellison detected a profound difference between Protestants and Catholics on the question of denominational loyalty: 60 percent of active Catholics said they would only consider attending a Roman Catholic congregation.

Nancy Ammerman, a sociologist of religion at Boston University School of Theology, said the survey reflects changes in how people choose congregations.

"You can have very, very theologically conservative Presbyterian churches and very, very liberal Presbyterian churches (for example), so people have . . . gotten into their heads that the label on the door doesn't tell them what they need to know," she said.

Still, denominations do have some competitive advantage. The 16 percent figure for denominational loyalty was higher than consumers' loyalty to a particular brand of athletic shoe, department store, major appliance, light bulb, and numerous other products, according to the study.—**Adelle M. Banks (RNS)**

Beyond the secular nature of the country, the survey found a surge in the number of people who called themselves "nondenominational Christians," from less than 200,000 in 1990 to more than 8 million in 2008.

"Brand loyalty is gone," Kosmin said. "Those labels are no longer meaningful." (see sidebar)

Experts say the "Nones" figure, combined with the increases in "nondenominational" numbers, explain why mainline Protestantism continues to be a shrinking phenomenon, from 18.7 percent in 1990 to 12.9 percent in 2008.

"What you see is the erosion of the religious middle ground," said Kosmin. "Liberal (mainline Protestant) religion has been eroded by irreligion and conservative religion."

The overall findings are based on phone interviews with 54,461 respondents, with a margin of error of plus or minus 0.5 percentage points. Certain questions, including the one about religious rituals such as funerals, were asked of a nationally representative sample of 1,000 respondents, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. **W**

Adelle M. Banks is a writer for Religion News Service.

# OUT OF THE WILDERNESS

by Karen Doss Bowman



## INTERIM PASTORS CAN BE VALUABLE 'BRIDGE' FOR CONGREGATIONS

**S**ooner or later, every congregation faces a "wilderness time"—the time of transition between pastors. An article about interim ministry, distributed by the Church of the Brethren's Office of Ministry, describes John the Baptist as the ideal biblical model of an interim pastor. The sole focus of his ministry was to "prepare the way" of the One who would follow: Jesus. After completing his ministry, John the Baptist stepped aside to allow Jesus to carry out his ministry.

Joe Detrick, district executive for Southern Pennsylvania, likes to share that article—and the analogy—with churches facing the interim period. That time is important to allow the congregation to grieve for what they have lost, heal any broken relationships, and look forward to the future.

"In a sense, what an interim pastor does is prepare the soil in a number of ways, and part of that is looking at issues that need to be addressed before the new pastor comes, [such as] conflict and issues that are hidden," Detrick says. "[It's part of] getting the congregation prepared for the new pastor."

The interim period is a valuable and necessary time of change for any congregation. Because the placement process for a new full-time pastor can take an average of six to 18 months, an interim pastor can provide continuity and keep the work of the church going. The interim pastor serves as a person who is available to conduct funerals or baptisms, to visit members who are ill, or to provide leadership and counseling when crises arise. Additionally, having an interim pastor on board means the church's search committee doesn't have to rush to find a new full-time minister.

"The interim pastor is the in-between; they help the church make the transition from the past to the future," says David Shumate, 2009 Annual Conference moderator and district executive for Virginia. "They take a lot of pressure off the placement process . . . and I think that makes for better decision-making [when it comes to] calling a pastor."

### A bridge between past and future

Whether a beloved pastor has departed on good terms, or he or she leaves amid tension and division, the end of a pastor's era of service to a congregation "creates strong emotions," says Peggy Stoner, a retired elementary school teacher from Mechanicsburg, Pa., who has embarked on a second career as an interim pastor.

An ordained minister, Stoner says her most important task as an interim pastor is to help the congregation to work through the grieving process and to facilitate healing in broken relationships. Hurt feelings, anger, and conflicts among church members often have been ignored, and the negative feelings can pile up and hinder the congregation's ministry. The interim period is an appropriate time to resolve those issues, she says, with hopes that the congregation will be united in supporting a new full-time pastor.

"One of the biggest challenges of being an interim is dealing with relationships and with [issues] that have been pushed under the carpet—things that people want to leave there," Stoner says. "But if these issues don't come out, that pile under the carpet is going to get deeper and deeper, until one day they will trip over it."

Whether the exiting pastor has been with the congregation for decades or for just a few short years, church members will have become accustomed to their former leader's style of worship, talents, and capabilities. The interim period gives congregations an opportunity to prepare for the next pastor, who likely will have his or her own way of doing things.

It's not really the role of an interim pastor to come into a church and make sweeping changes in worship or to start new programs, says Cindy Barnum-Steggerda, the Sunday pastor for the La Porte (Ind.) congregation. During several stints as an interim pastor, she has learned that it's most important for the interim pastor to be a good listener and to nurture the congregation as it navigates its way through

**"THE INTERIM PASTOR IS THE IN-BETWEEN; THEY HELP THE CHURCH MAKE THE TRANSITION FROM THE PAST TO THE FUTURE. THEY TAKE A LOT OF PRESSURE OFF THE PLACEMENT PROCESS . . . AND I THINK THAT MAKES FOR BETTER DECISION-MAKING"**

—DAVID SHUMATE, VIRGINIA DISTRICT EXECUTIVE

change. In doing so, an interim pastor may "help them chart a direction based on listening to their needs and wants and desires," she says. "They can help people get engaged in church again and help people see new possibilities."

#### **Spiritual renewal during the interim**

Though it may be difficult for church members to say good-bye to a full-time pastor, the interim period also can be a time when a congregation celebrates its past and searches for a new identity, says Mary Jo Flory-Steury, director of the denomination's Office of Ministry.

Does the congregation want to change its mission and chart a new course for the future? What does the congregation hope to look like in the next five to 10 years? It's an excellent opportunity for church members to engage in the kind of soul-searching that may lead to spiritual renewal. Examining these questions, Flory-Steury says, "can be a real exciting part of the search for a pastor who can best walk with them into that vision."

While a full-time pastor would have to dance carefully around conflicts or negative patterns within his or her congregation, the interim pastor "goes in with more of a sense of freedom because they know they're not going to be there forever," says Flory-Steury. That freedom opens up the opportunity to ask difficult questions and to point out inappropriate or dysfunctional behaviors within the church community, she says. When a congregation can face up to these issues, there's a better chance for spiritual growth and strengthening relationships within the church family.

"With nothing to lose, you don't have to be afraid to say the hard things," Flory-Steury says. "That's a real freeing time, and I think when a congregation opens itself up for that kind of intentional ministry, some really exciting things can happen." 

Karen Doss Bowman is a freelance writer based in Bridgewater, Va. She is a member of Sunrise Church of the Brethren in Harrisonburg.

#### **TRAINING FOR INTERIM PASTORS**

While an interim pastor needs to have the same basic ministry skills of any full-time pastor—a solid foundation in theology, a gift for preaching, and an ability to counsel hurting souls—the interim also may benefit from specialized training to understand how to guide a congregation through times of change. The Interim Ministry Network, based in Baltimore, Md., is an organization that offers continuing education seminars and certification programs for individuals who want to provide leadership to congregations facing transition. A number of Church of the Brethren pastors have taken courses through the network.

"During those times of transition, the congregation has different needs than what they do on an ongoing basis," says Cynthia Huheey, executive director of the Interim Ministry Network ([www.imnedu.org](http://www.imnedu.org)).

"We firmly believe that ministers need to have specialized training to deal with those times of change and in giving them some additional skill sets to use during those times."

Training offered through the Interim Ministry Network can include anything from strategic planning and re-evaluating the mission and vision of the church to dealing with conflict and identifying and overcoming power struggles within a congregation. Peggy Stoner, an ordained minister and retired elementary school teacher from Mechanicsburg, Pa., went through the network's certification program. The coursework, she says, taught her how to "focus her ministry, rather than just being pulpit supply."

Stoner says one of the most helpful lessons she learned was the value of listening to church members, hearing their stories and learning the history of the church. Through these conversations, she could help them celebrate their past while getting to know each other better.

This specialized training helps interim pastors understand and identify trouble spots in the congregation, offering them strategies for building healthier relationships and new perspectives. From there, the interim pastor can guide the congregation through re-examining their vision for the future.

"The interim period is a time when individual members start to take more responsibility for their congregation," Huheey says, "and that can foster great depth and growth for the congregation." —

**Karen Doss Bowman**

# BREAKING THE CHAINS— AND THE SILENCE

by Walt Wiltschek

## YOUTH STUDY MODERN-DAY SLAVERY AT CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP SEMINAR

**A**ccording to estimates of several human rights organizations, at least 27 million people around the world today live in slavery. That's more than three times the population of New York City, where the Church of the Brethren's Christian Citizenship Seminar began on Apr. 25.

The seminar, which ran through April 30, drew 94 senior high youth and advisors from 10 states to study the eye-opening realities of modern-day slavery. It's an issue that came before the full church last summer, when delegates at the 2008 Annual Conference overwhelmingly approved a statement to "reaffirm our denomination's historic opposition to slavery."

Indeed, Brethren have officially spoken out against slavery 11 times in their history. Anna Speicher, a Church of the Brethren member who did her dissertation on the abolition movement, reviewed that history for the seminar participants—and said all that good work is only a beginning.

"You're already way ahead of the game right now," said Speicher, who is also director of the *Gather 'Round* curriculum project for Brethren Press. "You know it's not over."

She noted that while slavery is illegal in every country worldwide, it is often underground and thus hard to see. It exists in many forms and under many different names, such as debt bondage, human trafficking, sex trafficking, and forced labor. It can be found in many places—including the United States, where an estimated 14,500-plus slaves are trafficked in each year. The vast majority, some 80 percent, are women and children.

Sam Ott, from Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren in Fort Wayne, Ind., said he was struck by the breadth of the issue. "Slavery's everywhere," he said. "The food you eat, the clothes you buy—you really can't avoid it."

Other speakers addressing the group during the week included Roni Hong, herself a victim of slavery in India as a child; Lariza Garzón, who works with undocumented farmworkers in Florida; staff from the World Council of Churches (WCC) US Conference and the National Council of Churches (NCC), who organized a conference on modern-day slavery last year and adopted a resolution; and staff from advocacy organizations Free the Slaves and Global Centurion.

"This is a complex topic that plagues all of humanity," said David Fracarro, young adult ecumenical formation coordinator for the WCC's US Conference. "I think it's very good that you're tackling this issue. Not many people are going there, especially people in high school. This is not an easy issue for anyone."

Fracarro characterized human trafficking as an "abuse of power" used to exploit another person.

Several personal stories, told first-hand as in Hong's case or

Walt Wiltschek



*During a worship service in Washington, D.C., youth were invited to place on a drawing of the globe ways that they could make a difference on the issue of modern-day slavery.*

### ABOUT CCS

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



2009 Annual Report

# BE TRANSFORMED

Romans 12:2

BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MINDS



Church of the Brethren



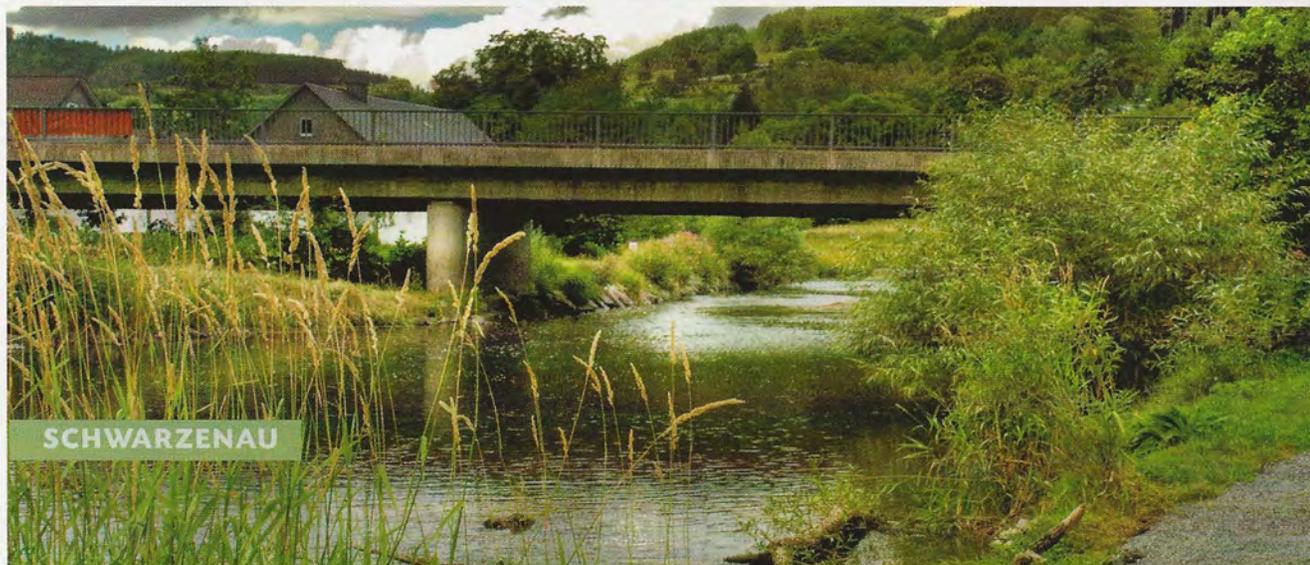
# BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MINDS

THERE'S NO QUESTION THAT THIS PAST YEAR HAS BEEN A DIFFICULT ONE, AND THE CHURCH IS NOT UNSCATHED BY THE TRAVAILS OF THE WORLD. MANY OF THE NUMBERS FOR 2008 WERE ALARMING.

But the followers of Jesus do not measure success the way the world does. While staff and board members are concerned about investment losses and shortfalls in congregational giving, we take heart in the stories behind other numbers. When we hear "318," we are amazed that this is the number of congregations rushing to raise money for local food banks during the 10 weeks after Christmas. The number 90 reminds us of Haiti, where this many people met for theological training. The vastness of 3,806 tons of blankets, kits, and medical supplies is a number we can scarcely visualize, but this quantity was shipped to 41 countries and 35 states.

We also celebrate two other significant numbers: 50 years for the General Offices in Elgin, Ill., and 65 years for the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. These

Glenn Riegel



SCHWARZENAU



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford



places represent you, whether or not you have been here in person, because your prayers and participation populate the buildings.

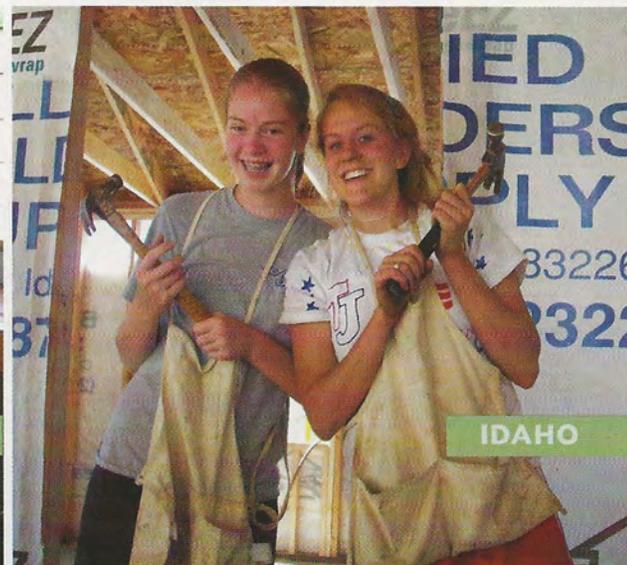
There is another number to mention, and that is the number one. As of 2008 the General Board and the Association of Brethren Caregivers have become one new organization, called simply the Church of the Brethren. The action of the delegates also clarifies and strengthens the way this organization is connected to the Annual Conference, which continues to be the highest legislative authority in the church.

While the transformation spoken of in Romans 12:2 is not written about church structures, of course, we believe that everything about our church—people, places, programs, and polity—can be enlivened by a newness of mind and spirit. That is the calling from God, and we are privileged to share it with you.

Stanley J. Noffsinger  
General Secretary

Brad Bohrer

Workcamp office





# SERVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Jerry O'Donnell



SAINT CROIX

# 6,500

volunteers during the  
60 years since BVS began

Ed Garrison



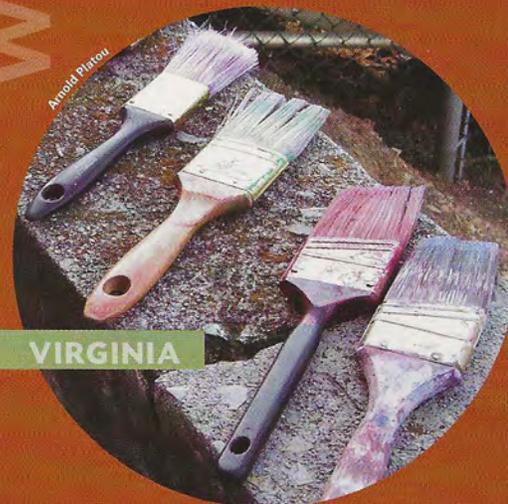
NORTH CAROLINA

**COMMUNITY FOOD BANKS RECEIVED MORE THAN \$330,000 FROM THE BRETHERN**, when congregations mobilized quickly to respond to matching grants from the Global Food Crisis Fund and the Emergency Disaster Fund. The invitation prompted 354 congregations to raise funds that were matched up to \$500. "We were able to collect \$525 in three Sundays from our small, mighty congregation," wrote one church in Illinois. Across the whole church, the high-energy partnership benefited 318 food pantries.

- A total of 127 homes were rebuilt by Brethren Disaster Ministries, many of them in areas of Louisiana still recovering from Hurricane Katrina. The estimated value of the volunteer labor: more than \$2 million.
- A major anniversary makes the Brethren Historical Library and Archives a popular place. Staff there handled almost a thousand requests for assistance during the church's 300th anniversary year.
- The summer orientation unit of Brethren Volunteer Service was hosted by the Sunnyslope and Olympic View congregations in Washington. BVSers are serving across the United States and in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and Serbia.
- Participants at the National Older Adult Conference prepared 635 school and hygiene kits for distribution by Brethren Disaster Ministries.
- Three major water projects were completed with Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria).

What can you do?

**REGISTER FOR A WORKCAMP.** There were 28 last summer, and they're available for junior highs through young adults. Plus there's a special Nigeria workcamp in January. To learn more, visit [www.brethren.org/workcamps](http://www.brethren.org/workcamps).



VIRGINIA



# SHARE THE GOOD NEWS

Nancy Heishman



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

# 1,500

## Brethren in the Dominican Republic



Nancy Heishman

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

**THE DENOMINATION'S CHURCH-PLANTING EFFORTS AND DISASTER RESPONSE WORK ARE CONVERGING IN THE TINY COUNTRY OF HAITI,** which was battered repeatedly during last year's brutal hurricane season. One of the poorest countries in the world, Haiti is home to five active Brethren congregations and 10 preaching points.

• A new denominational website is designed to be more welcoming for visitors unfamiliar with church structure and language. The site also makes it possible for people to customize their preferences so that they receive information about the ministries that interest them.

• Nigeria mission partners met for the latest biennial consultation, held this time in Germany to coincide with 300th anniversary events in Schwarzenau. Partners were the US Church of the Brethren, EYN, and Mission 21.

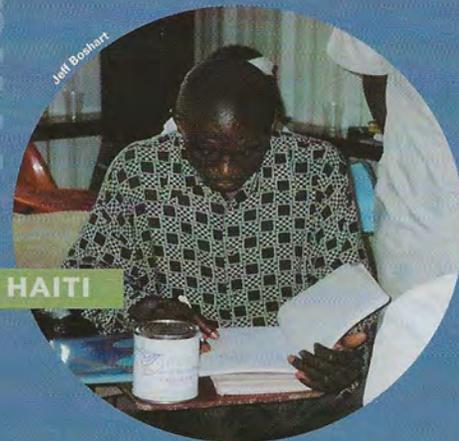
• A year-long prayer initiative is the first phase of a major focus on new church development. Bold dreaming characterized the church's fourth biennial church-planting conference, held last May.

• About 630 people in Brazil are part of the five fellowships and groups in the Church of the Brethren, which is living out the Brethren values of community, peace-making, and care of creation.



What can you do?

**GIVE** to the Church of the Brethren and support the worldwide ministries of the church. To share financially, go to [www.brethren.org/core](http://www.brethren.org/core).



Jeff Boshart

HAITI

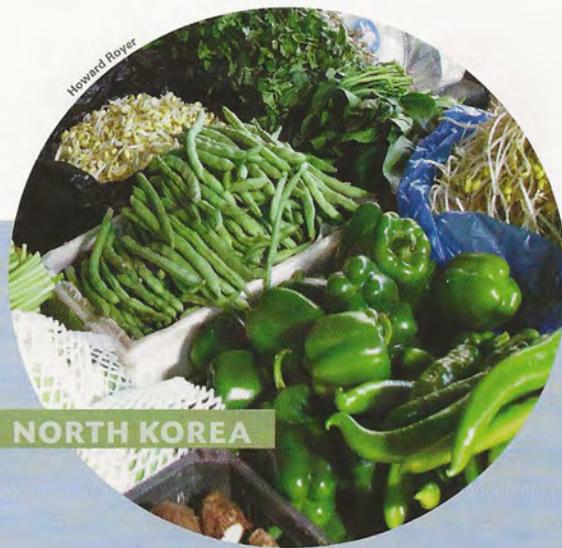


# GROW IN FAITH

Walt Wiltschek



COLORADO



**NORTH KOREA**

**25**

years of feeding the world through the Global Food Crisis Fund

Cheryl Brumbaugh-Gayford

**PENNSYLVANIA**





# EQUIP LEADERS

Walt Witschek



ARIZONA

participants in the Vital Pastors track of the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program.

**A SMALL GROUP OF YOUNG ADULTS WERE BROUGHT TOGETHER** for a "Theological Conversation on Ministry." Their reflections will help inform a forthcoming rewrite of the Ministerial Leadership paper.

- The church celebrated the 50th anniversary of women's ordination. A clergy women's conference gave women in ministry time for professional growth, fellowship, and rejuvenation.
- A new and improved edition of *Manual del Pastor*, a pastor's manual in Spanish, was completed just in time for the Cross Cultural Consultation and Celebration.
- The involvement and leadership of young adults was nurtured through Ministry Summer Service and a National Young Adult Conference.
- More than 90 people attended a second annual theological training event in Haiti.
- An updated Ethics in Ministry Relations paper was approved by Annual Conference.

Mary Jo Flory-Steury



CALIFORNIA



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

ILLINOIS

What can you do?

**CULTIVATE** a culture of calling within your congregation. Who in your community has gifts for ministry?



# YOUR GIFTS AT WORK

Like many organizations, the Church of the Brethren suffered a significant shortfall at the end of 2008. The gap was caused by increased expenses, a decline in giving, and a sharp loss in net assets caused by the market downturn. Net assets (or net worth) for the total organization decreased by \$7 million, to \$23 million.

In response to the recession's effect on the organization's finances, in March the Mission and Ministry Board revised 2009 income projections for core ministries downward by close to \$1

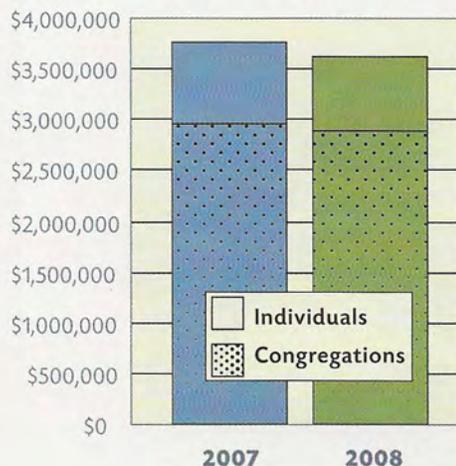
million. To meet this shortfall, the board reduced the operating budget by \$505,000 and approved the use of \$497,000 in net assets and \$166,000 in designated funds. A number of employees were laid off in early 2009 as a result.

The change in the 2009 budget does not affect the organization's four self-funding ministries, which are outside core ministries, but those ministries are also taking measures to reduce expenses. Self-funding units are those that receive income through sale of

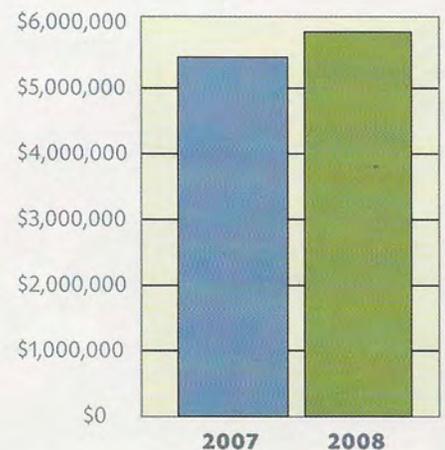
## CORE MINISTRIES FUND

The Core Ministries Fund is the primary fund for Church of the Brethren ministries. It includes global mission, congregational life, caring ministries, the office of ministry, communications, the general secretary's office, and all support services.

INCOME FROM GIFTS



EXPENSES



Beth Merrill



goods or services. *Messenger* magazine and Material Resources both had a positive year-end (\$15,930 and \$70,340, respectively). Brethren Press finished the year with a small deficit of \$10,700. The New Windsor Conference Center was hit by unprecedented cancelations, causing a loss of \$201,041.

For the special-purpose funds, giving was up by more than \$45,000 for the Emergency Disaster Fund but declined for the Global Food Crisis Fund (down almost \$26,000) and the Emerging Global Mission Fund (down by a third to \$44,670).

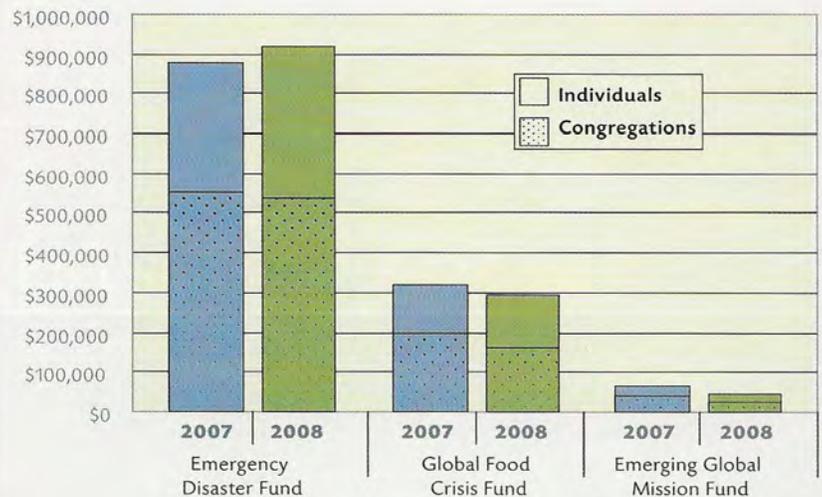
Despite the seriousness of the overall financial situation, the Church of the Brethren still has sufficient cash reserves and net assets are strong. It also has no outside debt.

**IN THE MIDST OF UNCERTAIN TIMES, WE MOVE FORWARD WITH STEWARDSHIP THAT IS BOTH CAREFUL AND BOLD—STRENGTHENED BY YOUR SUPPORT AND BY THE GRACE OF GOD.**

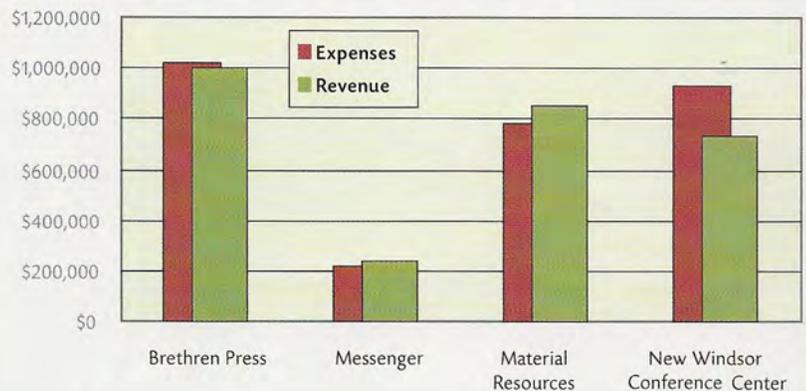
*All numbers are pre-audited figures. Complete financial information is available in the Church of the Brethren audit report, published in June 2009.*

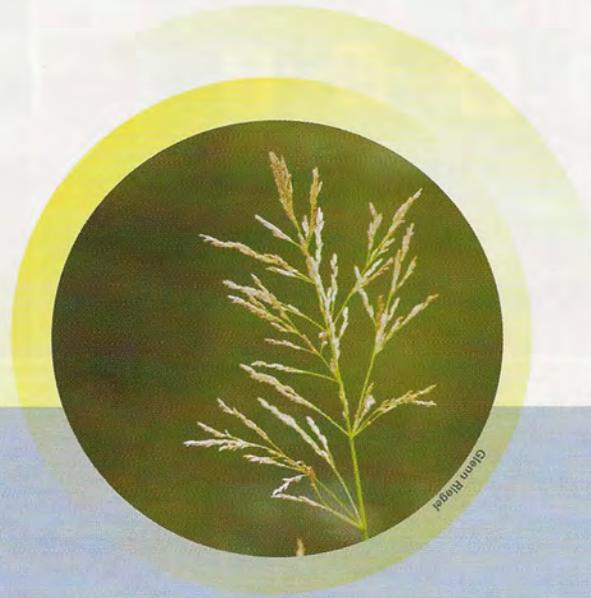
## SPECIAL-PURPOSE FUNDS

### GIVING



## SELF-FUNDING MINISTRIES





## 2009 Annual Report

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



# Church of the Brethren





*Youth from California share thoughts with speaker Roni Hong, right, after a session in New York.*

## RESOURCES

• Several speakers at the seminar emphasized the most important step: If there is any suspicion of slavery, call the **National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline: 888-373-7888**. "You don't

have to be an expert on the issue or know for sure that it's trafficking," said Aashika Damodor of Free the Slaves. "Call the hotline." As another speaker put it, "Have your antenna up."

• The **2008 Annual Conference Statement on Modern-Day Slavery** and the study/action guide can be found at [www.brethren.org/slavery](http://www.brethren.org/slavery); the **National Council of Churches Resolution on Human Trafficking** is at [www.nccusa.org/NCCpolicies/humantrafficking.htm](http://www.nccusa.org/NCCpolicies/humantrafficking.htm).

• Some **other helpful websites** include Free the Slaves ([www.freetheslaves.net](http://www.freetheslaves.net)), the Polaris Project ([www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org)), Not for Sale ([www.notforsalecampaign.org](http://www.notforsalecampaign.org)), the Tronie Foundation ([www.troniefoundation.org](http://www.troniefoundation.org)), Stop Child Trafficking Now ([www.sctnow.org](http://www.sctnow.org)), Interfaith Action ([www.interfaithact.org](http://www.interfaithact.org)), and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers ([www.ciw-online.org](http://www.ciw-online.org)).

• The US State Department annually publishes the comprehensive **Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report**. The 2008 edition and previous editions are available at [www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/](http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/).

• **Support organizations** that work with locally owned cooperatives and other fair-trade initiatives in developing nations, such as SERRV ([www.serrv.org](http://www.serrv.org)) and the Church of the Brethren Global Food Crisis Fund ([www.brethren.org/globalfood-crisisfund](http://www.brethren.org/globalfood-crisisfund)).

## DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly a quarter of this year's Christian Citizenship Seminar group came from Kansas. Shawn Flory Replogle, pastor of McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren, said it was a "perfect storm" in which youth at his church had recently studied the issue and many were interested in attending. In all, 22 youth and advisors from the McPherson and Quinter congregations attended, including four international students. Indiana and Pennsylvania were also well represented at the seminar.

related by those who have worked with former slaves, helped to make the issue real. A number of media pieces provided additional glimpses into the many lives that have been affected.

"Every story has a heart," Hong said. "Every story has a name."

For James Van Voorhis, who came to the seminar from La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren, getting to hear Hong speak and talk with her was a highlight.

"It was really nice to meet Roni," said Van Voorhis, who is part of a club at his school that is studying the issue. "I haven't been face-to-face with someone who was actually sold into slavery. When I saw Roni, I wanted to go up and give her a hug."

Youth carried their stories and experiences to Capitol Hill during the second half of the seminar, as it moved to Washington, D.C. Some groups were able to meet their representatives or senators personally, while others raised the issues with aides—particularly urging full funding for the recently renewed Trafficking Victims Protection Act. Worship and debriefing times during the week offered additional outlets to process the heavy topic.

Maddison Brumbaugh, a youth from Saxton, Pa., said she had no hesitations about coming to Christian Citizenship Seminar for a third time.

"My first two years were very interesting and moving, and gave me a lot to take home," Brumbaugh said. "It still affects the decisions I make and the way I look at things."

Youth were encouraged to let this issue stick with them, too, brainstorming ideas for speaking up and taking actions after they returned home.

"We're beginning to make progress, but there's so much more to be done," said Laura Lederer, vice president of Global Centurion. "I'm more hopeful now that I've been before. There's a new human rights movement springing up all around the world." ❏

# Hebrews:

by Bob Neff

## Sustenance from the past

### Later chapters give stirring testimonies of faith

**W**hen I went to Yale Divinity School in 1958, one of the first papers I wrote was on Christ in the book of Hebrews. As I remember, I got a B-minus on that paper, which is somewhere in storage now. Then in 2002 I gave the Bible studies for National Older Adult Conference. The conference had selected as its theme “While we run this race,” generated by the text from Hebrews 12:1: “Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.” And now, seven years later, I am reviewing Hebrews once again. You can see that for some reason my life keeps leading me back “To The Hebrews,” which is the title of this biblical book.

I used to tell my Old Testament class at Bethany Theological Seminary that I became a Christian so that I could claim my Jewish heritage. The writer of Hebrews says the same thing in the first sentence: “Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son” (Heb 1:1-2a). He believes that we may enrich our understanding of what is occurring in Jesus Christ by embracing the entirety of this tradition, from the law and the devotional books to the prophets. This may come as a shock to New Testament-happy Brethren!

#### The sacrificial system

What makes this a difficult book for some Christians is its heavy reliance on the sacrificial system found in the books of the law and the references to “a priesthood after the order of Melchizedek,” found only in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110. Such an obscure comparison in Hebrews, which may have been widely embraced by first-century Jews and Christians, doesn’t match the images of our daily lives.

The writer was writing to both Jews and Gentiles who had grown up with a sacrificial system that required the slaughter of animals for reconciliation with God and a priesthood that provided the knowledge and the liturgy to effect such forgiveness. We Brethren have much more in common with the worship experience of the Jews who met in their synagogues with their Pharisee rabbis interpreting texts.

When one considers that the Jewish temple and its practicing priesthood were eliminated in 70 AD, a writer who suggested that a once-for-all sacrifice had been made by Christ for the forgiveness of sins is powerful and reassuring. In addition, unlike the high priest in the old sacrificial system who died and had to be replaced by yet another in a long succession of priests, the Christian has a permanent High Priest in the person of Jesus

Christ, who stands before God as an eternal advocate on behalf of all believers.

The writer explains the nature of Christ’s priestly acts on the grounds of the old sacrificial system and thus provides a direct link to people who thought all was lost in the destruction of Jerusalem. He interprets the sacrificial texts found in the Law Codes of the Hebrew Bible through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Throughout the book of Hebrews the writer has a lofty view of Christ and provides a series of comparisons to sustain his point of view by a direct appeal to Old Testament texts. In the opening chapter he uses a series of Psalms to show that Christ is superior to the angels—only the Son is invited to sit at the right hand of God (Heb. 1:13). Christ is superior to Moses—who was only a servant in the house of God, while Christ was a son in this household (Heb. 3:1-6). Christ, because of his descent from the priesthood of Melchizedek, predates the levitical priesthood and is therefore superior to it (Heb. 7). Christ is the mediator of a better covenant outlined in Jeremiah 31:31ff and quoted extensively in Hebrews 8:8-12. In his deep knowledge of the Hebrew Bible, read by him in the Greek translation, the writer has found the full meaning of Christ.

## HEBREWES: A CLOSER LOOK

**Author and date:** The book of Hebrews is a sermon composed between 60 and 95 AD. Its author remains anonymous, although scholars have attributed it to Apollos, Barnabas, or Priscilla, and only later to Paul.

**Unique features:** The conclusion to the book suggests that the text was circulated to another congregation other than the one to which it was first delivered. . . . “The Greek of Hebrews is among the most sophisticated in the New Testament, involving a broad vocabulary . . .” —Harold W. Attridge in the *Harper Collins Study Bible*, p. 2251.

**Key texts:** “Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins” (9:22b); “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (11:1); “Looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, . . . has taken his seat at the right hand of God” (12:2); “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks” (12:28a); “For indeed our God is a consuming fire” (12:29).

Runners on an ancient Panathenaic vase



## A history of faith, and a handoff

The appeal of Hebrews for the contemporary reader is found particularly in the concluding chapters of the book, 11-13. In chapter 11 the writer gives a history of what faith means. Faith does not mean a set of beliefs or creed, but a deep and abiding trust that God will be there for the believer.

Unlike Paul in Romans 4, where Abraham becomes a paradigm for all disciples, this writer sees that different circumstances call for different kinds of faithful action. The way we live our lives will vary, but it will be underscored by an abiding trust in God. From acts of civil disobedience to belief in the impos-

**ONE OF THE POWERFUL IMAGES OF THE WRITER IS THE RELAY RACE THAT IS DESCRIBED IN CHAPTER 12. "BEING SURROUNDED BY SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES" SUGGESTS THOSE WHO HAD FINISHED THEIR LEG OF THE RELAY RACE, WHICH REQUIRED A HANDOFF TO THE NEXT GENERATION. HOW WE PASS OFF THE BATON OF FAITH TO THE NEXT GENERATION IS IMPORTANT.**

sible, each believer contributes to this long list of testimonies that began with Genesis 4 and continues to the time of Christ. The last verses of the chapter underscore the difficulty of the journey and the requirement of endurance and forbearance.

The background of the book is a persecution that is hard to date. Was it from Nero or Domitian or the Roman destruction of Jerusalem? Clearly the circumstances of the audience are filled with trials and anxiety. At the conclusion of chapter 12, the writer describes the shaking of the world, and then invites his audience "to give thanks for receiving a realm that cannot be shaken" (Heb.12:28). This text

became famous when it was recited by the three chaplains as they went down with their ship. For us in our contemporary setting in which we are witnessing the shaking of the global financial markets and increased violence in all parts of the world, we as believers are discovering once again what the unshakeable dimensions of our lives are.

Most commentators believe that this book was meant for second-generation Christians who now had to deal with the continuity of received beliefs. One of the powerful images of the writer is the relay race that is described in chapter 12. "Being surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses" suggests those who had fin-

ished their leg of the relay race, which required a handoff to the next generation. How we pass off the baton of faith to the next generation is important. We need to run this race with responsibility and perseverance, "looking to Jesus who is the pioneer and perfecter of our faith." ❏

Bob Neff is an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren; he serves on the development staff and as chaplaincy coordinator at The Village at Morrisons Cove in Martinsburg, Pa. He lives in State College, Pa.

MESSENGER'S "Journey through the Word" series will provide a brief overview of a different book (or books) of the Bible each month through December 2009. Coming in July/August: James, by Harold S. Martin.

## Dominican Republic Brethren meet, move forward in faith

"Without faith, it is impossible to please God!" With this challenging theme from Hebrews 11:6, moderator José Juan Méndez opened and guided the 18th Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren in the Dominican Republic. The conference was held at a Nazarene Church campground in Los Alcarrizos in Santo Domingo, Feb. 20-22.

Two new congregations were received into the denomination and prayer was held for five new preaching points. The 74 delegates also approved a new constitution for the church, elected leaders for the national board and other positions, approved the 2009 budget, and dealt with some challenging issues of discipline.

Jay Wittmeyer, executive director of Global Mission Partnerships for the Church of the Brethren, presented plaques to national leaders recognizing their work during the past year and led the delegates in a closing service of bread and cup communion.

Jorge Rivera, associate district executive for Puerto Rico in Atlantic



*The 18th Asamblea (Annual Conference) of the Church of the Brethren in the Dominican Republic was held in Santo Domingo. The conference included 74 delegates from congregations in the DR. Here, mission co-coordinators Irvin and Nancy Heishman lead the conference in prayer.*

Southeast District, presented a moving tribute following a time of silence in honor of the late Guillermo Encarnación for his many years of service in the DR, Puerto Rico, Texas, and Pennsylvania.

Nancy Heishman, director of the

Church of the Brethren's theological education program in the DR, led morning Bible studies on the theme of faith, utilizing the talent of some of her students as co-teachers. Irvin Heishman, co-coordinator of the DR mission for the Church of the Brethren, said, "It's a joy to see the Dominican church emerging from several difficult years with such vitality and health."



*Delegates at the Asamblea (Annual Conference) in the Dominican Republic approve a new constitution for the Church of the Brethren in the DR.*

### Two Brethren staff take part in White House service discussion

Two Church of the Brethren staff—Kathy Reid, associate general secretary and executive director of Caring Ministries, and Dan McFadden, director of Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS)—participated in an April 17 conference call with the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, and the Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation.

Reid said the purpose of the meeting was to continue the dialogue between the faith community and the White House around strengthening the call to service, one of President Barack Obama's priorities. With the passage of the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, Obama has called on Americans to engage in the economic recovery agenda and

to commit to service as a life-long endeavor, she said.

"On Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, both the President and the First Lady challenged people of all ages to commit to a day of service," Reid said. "Very shortly they will again call on Americans, this time to commit to a summer of service (mid-June through mid-September). The four priority areas of service are economic recovery, health care, energy, and education. This call will be supported by tool kits, websites, and other support services to enable Americans to find opportunities and skills for this summer of service."

Reid said the conference call was the first of a series for the White House to seek guidance from the faith community and from those who have a history of providing service opportunities. She said the Church of the Brethren, and the BVS office in particular, would continue to participate to support these service opportunities within the church and the wider community.

## Bethany Seminary board works on strategic plan

The Bethany Theological Seminary board of trustees focused on the strategic direction plan for the seminary as it gathered at the Richmond, Ind., campus for its semi-annual meeting March 27-29.

Over the past year, a re-visioning of Bethany's mission and role in the Church of the Brethren and society at large has been undertaken by the board, faculty, and staff. Composition of a draft strategic direction plan was a directive from the board's fall 2008 meeting, and is the first formal step of a long-range planning process for the seminary. The plan was drafted by Bethany president Ruthann Knechel Johansen, drawing from discussions with and input from trustees and all members of the Bethany campus community.

The plan presented challenges facing the seminary, goals that address the challenges, and strategies for achieving the goals. "In these challenges lie seeds of opportunity for the seminary to imagine and implement a bold vision faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ and essential for the 21st-century church and world," Johansen said in the plan.

With a few revisions, the plan was approved, and the creation of a Strategic Planning Committee approved as a next step. The committee will be appointed by the board chair in consultation with

the president.

In other business, the Student and Business Affairs Committee recommended a tightened and balanced budget for 2009-2010, which was approved. Concern was expressed about economic uncertainties over the next several years. Staff are hopeful that 2008-2009 will end with a balanced budget. It was noted that Bethany's endowments put it in a better financial position than many schools.

Also approved were graduate tuition and fees for 2009-2010; the 2009-2010 budgets for the Brethren Academy, Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program, Brethren Journal Association, and Brethren House; the Brethren Benefit Pension Plan Resolution of the board of trustees; the TIAA-CREF Pension Plan Resolution of the board of trustees; and a Resolution Regarding Investments.

An encouraging admissions report shared that applications in general are at a 12-year high, and applications to the Connections distance-learning program are at an all-time high. More than 40 prospective students have visited campus through formal visit days, a new initiative this year.

The Institutional Advancement Committee devoted time to a survey of district executives on denominational awareness and higher education. Results were mixed, with strong support for the witness and mission of the Church of the Brethren, congregational leaders with a

Brethren education, and ministry education made available in the districts. Less agreement was expressed on suitability of various ministry training programs and factors of location and cost in education.

The Academic Affairs Committee recommended and received board approval of the list of nine potential graduates for 2008-2009. Also, the seminary has received final approval from the Pennsylvania Department of Education to operate an education program at the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center (SVMC) in Pennsylvania. Donna Rhodes, SVMC executive director, reported that the center has established an Hispanic Academy for Lay Leadership in collaboration with Atlantic Northeast District. The board approved the committee's recommendation to promote Scott Holland to the rank of professor of Peace Studies and Cross-Cultural Studies.

The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership reported that the Training in Ministry program included 77 students this year. Nine students and supervisors participated in Education for Shared Ministry.

Trustees also heard that Bethany's special collections archival project has been completed. Funded by an Arthur Vining Davis Foundation grant, the project involved cataloging and preserving the Abraham Harley Cassel collection, Huston Bible collection, and William Eberly hymnal collection, housed in Earlham College's Lilly Library.



*The Manchester College A Cappella Choir sang at Bethany Theological Seminary's Presidential Forum, with special guest James Hersch.*

## Presidential Forum explores wisdom, the arts, and peace

Bethany Theological Seminary hosted its second annual Presidential Forum March 29-30 with the theme "Weaving Wisdom's Tent: The Arts of Peace." Focusing on scripture from the Wisdom of Solomon 7:23-81, wisdom was invoked and examined throughout the forum. Gathered together to weave poetry, painting, song, and spirit, participants experienced varied forms of art over the two full days of the event.

Highlights of the forum included three plenary sessions led by artists who embody peacemaking through their work. Marge Piercy, poet and novelist, shared reflections on art affecting consciousness a little bit at a time. John Paul Lederach, professor of International Peacebuilding with the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, highlighted the "craft of noticing" and how careful noticing and listening are expressed through thoughtful words of poetry and artistic expression. Painter Douglas Kinsey displayed several paintings portraying places where justice is absent. He shared his creative work as a way to bring about justice by exposing injustice. All three plenary speakers stimulated thoughtful questions and fruitful conversations.

Outside of the plenary sessions were imaginative worship services, creative workshops, and reflective conversation groups that engaged a variety of arts striving for peace. The Manchester College A Cappella Choir, with special guest James Hersch, offered music, and several seminary and college students had the opportunity to share their creative works in a panel discussion.



### Recent grants from the Church of the Brethren Emergency Disaster Fund

- \$40,000 to support a Church World Service (CWS) appeal for Darfur, Sudan
- \$35,000 for a Brethren Disaster Ministries project in Johnson County, Ind.
- \$30,000 for a CWS appeal for famine relief in Kenya
- \$10,000 for the now completed Brethren Disaster Ministries program in Rushford, Minn.
- \$5,000 for a CWS appeal after a destructive

spring storm season across the US in 2008

- \$5,000 to assist people ineligible for federal funding following major flooding in Hawaii, aiding the Hawaii State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

### Recent grants from the Church of the Brethren Global Food Crisis Fund

- \$5,000 to assist Church Aid Inc., in a program of seed distribution and skill training in Liberia

## PERSONNEL MOVES

• Bridgewater (Va.) College president **Phillip C. Stone** has announced that he will retire at the end of the 2009-2010 academic year, concluding 16 years at the helm of the institution. Stone took office on Aug. 1, 1994, as the seventh president of the college. His retirement will be effective June 30, 2010. Stone, a 1965 Bridgewater alumnus and former Annual Conference moderator, said he anticipates more time with his family and his hobbies, including Lincoln research. During Stone's administration, the college made numerous capital improvements, increased its endowment, expanded co-curricular opportunities, and nearly doubled its enrollment. James L. Keeler, chair of the Bridgewater College board of trustees, noted that Stone's "leadership roles in the Church of the Brethren translated into a unique understanding of the church's joint heritage with the college."

• **Stephen E. Abe** will conclude his service as district executive/minister of West Marva District effective Sept. 30. He has served in the role since Jan. 1, 2000. Previously he served as pastor of Elkins (W.Va.) Church of the Brethren. He is a graduate of Ashland Theological Seminary.

• **Stan Dueck**, formerly a member of the Church of the Brethren Congregational Life Teams, accepted the position of director for Transforming Practices in the Church of the Brethren's Congregational Life Ministries office effective April 6. This new position, created as part of a redesign of Congregational Life Ministries, will develop new networks and focus on

helping leaders of congregations and other groups in the Church of the Brethren influence change, expand mission, cultivate evangelism, and assist the church through the process of transformation. Dueck, an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren and a trained strategic consultant, had been serving with the Congregational Life Teams since June 1999.

• **Sonja Griffith** has accepted the call to serve as Western Plains District executive, a half-time position, beginning Jan. 1, 2010. Ken and Elsie Holderread will retire from their positions as co-district executives on Dec. 31. Griffith has served as pastor of First Central Church of the Brethren in Kansas City, Kan., for the past 12 years and has served as district moderator, on the district board and transformation steering team, and as an area minister. She attended McPherson (Kan.) College and is a graduate of the University Of Kansas School Of Nursing, the University of Minnesota, and St. Paul School of Theology. She has also completed the Training in Ministry (TRIM) program of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership. Griffith will continue to live in Kansas City serving part-time as pastor of First Central; the district office will continue to be in McPherson.

• **Gene Hagenberger** has been called as district executive minister for Mid-Atlantic District beginning Aug. 1. Hagenberger has more than 27 years of pastoral experience in the Church of the Brethren, most recently at the Easton (Md.) congregation since June 1998. He

has also served as chair and vice-chair of the district's leadership team and on various other committees. Hagenberger is a graduate of Elizabethtown College and Western Maryland College and attended Drew Theological Seminary. He earned a certificate in Clinical Pastoral Education from Shore Health Systems in Easton and completed the Advanced Foundations of Church Leadership program of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership.

• **A. Joan Lowry** retired as district executive/minister of Southern Plains District effective March 31. Lowry began her service in 2003. She previously served team pastorates in Thomas, Okla., and Waka, Texas.

• **Bob Mosley** has announced his retirement as director of financial operations for Brethren Benefit Trust, effective Oct. 23. Mosley was hired by BBT as staff accountant on Sept. 14, 1998, and promoted to senior accountant on July 2, 2000. In October 2005, he was named manager of accounting; he was promoted to director of financial operations on May 1, 2008.

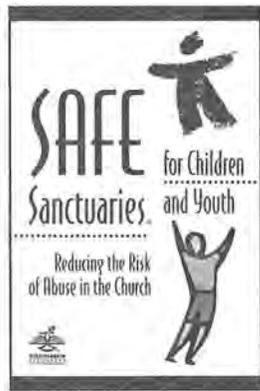
• **Shelly Wagner** returned to the position of director of Conference Center and Marketing in New Windsor, Md., effective March 19. Wagner served in the position for seven months last year before leaving to work in leadership development for regional sales staff. Wagner has 12 years of experience in domestic and international marketing in the for-profit arena. She is also a member of the Welty Church of the Brethren (Smithsburg, Md.) and lives in Waynesboro, Pa.

## New child protection resource is available for congregations

Church of the Brethren Caring Ministries has made available to districts a new resource on child protection. In its interim report on child abuse prevention, made at the 2008 Church of the Brethren Annual Conference, the program had pledged to identify resources to assist churches to develop and implement child protection policies.

"As a faith community, we have a moral obligation to assure that our children are safe and that the adults supervising them at church activities are properly screened and trained for working with children and youth," said Kim Ebersole, director of Family Life and Older Adult Ministries.

"Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church for Children and Youth" by Joy Thornburg Melton has been sent to all 23 dis-



trict offices. The Spanish-language version, "Santuarios Seguros: Prevención del Abuso Infantil y Juvenil en la Iglesia," has been presented to three districts with Spanish-speaking congregations.

The resource offers information about the scope of the problem of abuse as well as procedures for recruiting, screening, and hiring workers and volunteers. It also gives guidelines for safe ministry with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Policy implementation strategies, a model for training workers, and sample forms are included.

District offices are encouraged to publicize the books and make them available to congregations. The Caring Ministries office is available to assist with child protection policy development and has made sample policies and other resources available at [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org). For more information contact Ebersole at [kebersole\\_abc@brethren.org](mailto:kebersole_abc@brethren.org) or 800-323-8039 ext. 302.

## Two Indiana districts will benefit from new Lilly grant

The Church of the Brethren's Northern Indiana and South/Central Indiana districts have jointly received a grant of \$335,000 from the Lilly Endowment's new Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Indiana Pastors. The two districts are among 16 regional bodies from a variety of denominations to receive awards totaling more than \$11 million.

In December 2007, the endowment awarded planning grants to Protestant regional judiciatories in Indiana to study financial challenges faced by their pastors and ways to address them, according to a press release from the endowment. The groups conducted extensive surveys and engaged in in-depth interviews with pastors and congregational leaders about their current economic situations.

The groups then submitted proposals for new programs designed to address the most challenging economic issues their pastors face. In late 2008, the endowment gave grants to those groups that submitted compelling program plans. The amounts of the grants were based on the number of congregations served.

"The planning process during the past year identified a number of economic challenges impacting our pastors," Northern Indiana

District executive Herman Kauffman said. "These were very similar to those impacting pastors of other denominations in Indiana. The financial concern listed most often as a serious stressor was the cost of health care. Second was inadequate retirement funds. Third was salary and benefits. Financial management was also a significant issue."

Kauffman said providing education to clergy and congregations related to specific ways to help alleviate stress on pastors and to improve congregational life will be a key component of the districts' program. The two districts are considering such things as financial management seminars for clergy, stewardship education and financial management at the congregational level, and perhaps individual counseling with clergy where needed.

The two district boards have appointed a Ministerial Excellence Board consisting of six people—two appointed by each district board plus the two district executives—to oversee the hiring of a quarter-time director and to give oversight to the program and the grant funds. Barry Belknap, pastor of Huntington (Ind.) Church of the Brethren, was called to the director role beginning in mid-May. The Ministerial Excellence Board also will work at recruiting consultants and at generating matching funds to allow the program to grow and continue beyond the initial four-year period.

## UPCOMINGEVENTS

**May 30-June 4** Ministry Summer Service orientation, Elgin, Ill.

**June 19-21** National Junior High Conference, Harrisonburg, Va.

**June 24-26** Council of District Executives meeting, San Diego, Calif.

**June 25-26** Ministers' Association continuing education event, San Diego, Calif.

**June 26-30** Church of the Brethren Annual Conference, San Diego, Calif.

**June 26** Mission and Ministry Board meeting, San Diego, Calif.

**June 29** Brethren Benefit Trust board meeting, San Diego, Calif.

**July 3-9** Song and Story Fest, Camp Peaceful Pines, Dardanelle, Calif.

**July 19-Aug. 7** Brethren Volunteer Service Unit 285 orientation, New Windsor, Md.

**July 24-25** South/Central Indiana District conference, Anderson, Ind.

**July 24-26** Northern Ohio District conference, Ashland, Ohio; Southeastern District conference, Mars Hill, N.C.

**July 31-Aug. 2** Northern Plains District conference, Eldora, Iowa; Western Plains District conference, McPherson, Kan.

## CCT's 2009 meeting calls for 'global witness' on poverty

Calling poverty a "moral scandal," leaders from the full spectrum of US Christian churches met Jan. 13-16 in Baltimore to dig deeper into the issue and then take their message to Washington.

The participants in Christian Churches Together reaffirmed their conviction that service to the poor and work for justice are "at the center of Christian life and witness." They were building on a statement developed by consensus at a previous gathering, but recognized a new sense of urgency because of the economic collapse.

"In every way the context has changed since we last met," noted David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, and one of several people who addressed the group. He reported that the number of poor people has increased alarmingly during the very years that the country was experiencing unprecedented economic growth, and that now many more people are at risk.

Setting a course to end poverty "will be a powerful global witness to the power of Jesus Christ," Beckmann said. "In the midst of economic contraction, the biggest risk is spiritual contraction."

At a meeting with President Barack Obama's transition team for domestic policy, CCT leaders expressed their support for his pledge to cut poverty. They urged that any stimulus package care not only for Main Street and Wall Street, but also for those who have no street address.

To achieve its goal of cutting poverty in half within 10 years, CCT is promoting four objectives: strengthening

families, strengthening communities, "making work work," and improving education. These will require the joint efforts of churches, government, business, communities, and families, they said.

"The whole gospel demands that we speak to the poor," said James Leggett, presiding bishop of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church. "We believe God is working in this moment of time."



CCT is the broadest Christian association in the country. Its participant church bodies are evangelical, Pentecostal, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, historic black, and Protestant. The organization also includes several national Christian organizations, among them Evangelicals for Social Action, Sojourners, Bread for the World, World Vision, and the American Bible Society.

The Church of the Brethren was represented at the meeting by Annual Conference moderator David Shumate and Brethren Press publisher Wendy McFadden, who serves on CCT's steering committee. Participants also spent three sessions discussing evangelism, which will be the focus of next year's meeting in Seattle.

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Shelly Necke, RN, BSN,  
Director of Resident Care (left)  
Annemarie Miller,  
Director of Wellness (right)

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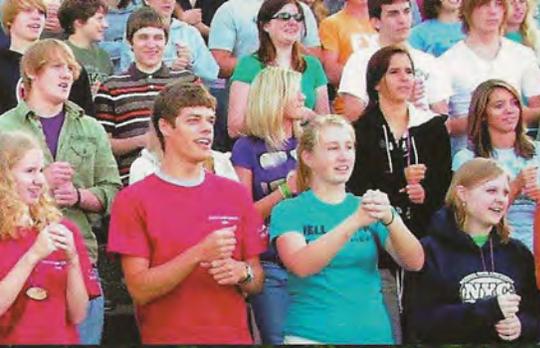
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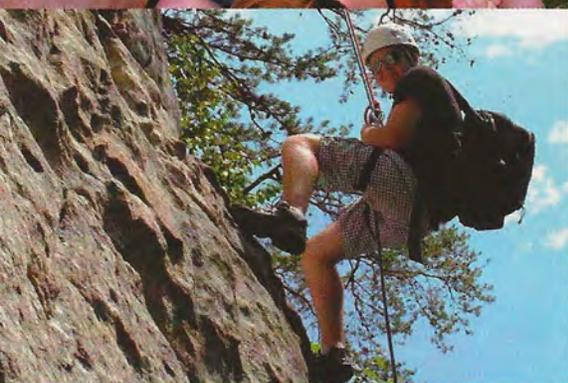
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**ONCAMPUS**

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

Bridgewater has announced a presidential search committee, who will call a successor for Phillip C. Stone. Stone is retiring in June 2010. Members of the committee, which has already begun meeting, are the Hon. G. Steven Agee, chair; William S. Earhart; Michael K. Kyles, Judy Mills Reimer, Robert I. Stolzman, James H. Walsh, W. Steve Watson Jr., James L. Wilkerson, and Kathy G. Wright.

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

On April 16, Elizabethtown presented a workshop titled "Divided by Faith: Racial Diversity and Anabaptists Today," featuring author Michael O. Emerson, founding director of the Center on Race, Religion, and Urban Life at Rice University.

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

Juniata has received a \$125,510 grant from the II-VI Foundation to develop and start a weeklong science summer camp targeted toward 7th grade students from across Pennsylvania and New Jersey, who would come to Juniata for five days and immerse themselves in lessons in chemistry, physics, biology, and environmental science.

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

More than 30 student clubs and outside vendors took part in an environmental fair as La Verne celebrated Earth Day on April 22. . . . Los Angeles County District Attorney Steve Cooley was scheduled to be the keynote speaker for the College of Law commencement ceremony on May 17.

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

Senior Colleen Hamilton, a member of the Church of the Brethren, was a winner of the Jo Young Switzer Award for Excellence in Writing at this year's 11th annual Student Research Symposium. Hamilton researched "The Protection and Promotion of Regional and Minority Languages in Europe." Senior Utsav Hanspal also received an award.

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

McPherson's board of trustees at its spring board meeting in March adopted a revised Plan for Sustainability. The original plan was written to address financial concerns relating to a declining endowment and a need to balance the budget and create a plan for future growth of the college.

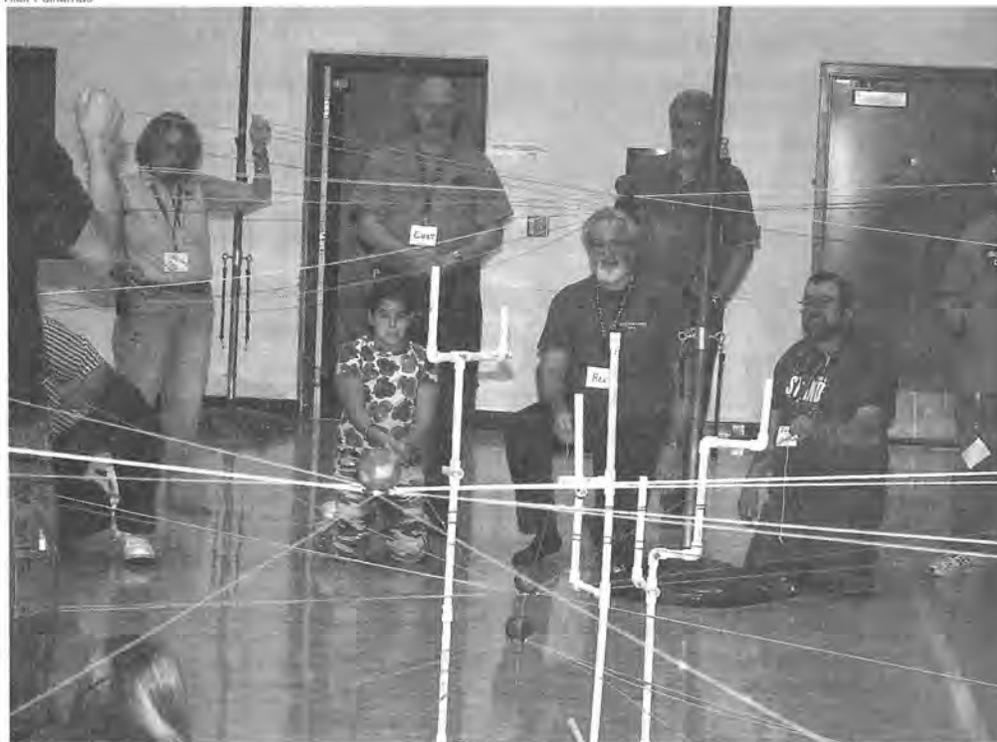
**Youth explore creation at McPherson conference**

On a rainy Kansas weekend, 47 youth from Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, Colorado, and Kansas, along with their advisors and leaders, gathered on the campus of McPherson College for the 2009 Regional Youth Conference.

Rex Miller, executive director, and Curt Rowland, program director, of Camp Alexander Mack in Milford, Ind., used the theme "The Heavens Declare the Glory of God" from Psalms 19 to focus the youth on a variety of aspects of outdoor ministries. Jen Jensen of Lincoln, Neb., led three worship services for the April 17-19 gathering.

For some hands-on learning about creation, RYC participants also visited the Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita, Kan., a center with 125 species of wildflowers and 160 species of birds. Eleven young people directly participated in the Sunday morning worship service that the RYC group provided to the congregation of McPherson Church of the Brethren.—**Tom Hurst**

Rick Poltharnus



**Camp Mack staff members Rex Miller and Curt Rowland lead an interactive activity at McPherson College's Regional Youth Conference in April.**

**BITS AND PIECES**

- The Church of the Brethren **National Junior High Conference** meets this month at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Va. Nearly 600 junior high youth and advisors had registered as of late April. The June 19-21 event, with the theme "Transformed: Inside Out," will feature comedic actor Ted Swartz, musician Ken Medema, and Waynesboro (Pa.) Church of the Brethren associate pastor Amy Messler in worship times, along with workshops and recreation.
- A new **survey of 750 teens** on ethical behavior, conducted by Junior Achievement and Deloitte, reports that only 3 percent of teens see members of the clergy (pastor, priest, rabbi or imam) as "role models." In contrast, most teens (54 percent) see their parents as role models, followed by friends (13 percent), teachers or coaches (6 percent), and brother or sister (5 percent). About one in 10 teens (11 percent) say they have no role models.

# U2: *Sailing into sacred waters*

**W**ithout a line on the horizon, it may feel like there is no limit to how far we can go. But it also makes the seas difficult to navigate.

That is, in many ways, where we find ourselves today. It's as infinitely terrifying as it is exciting. Where do we go from here, and how do we find our way?

Irish band U2's 12th studio album, "No Line on the Horizon," gives a few great answers, if you have the ears to hear and the eyes to see.

More than 25 years ago, when I dropped the needle on a U2 album for the first time, my soul did a backflip and kept on tumbling. This spring, while listening to "No Line on the Horizon," I felt that familiar movement in my spirit over and over again.

It happened first with the sacred anthem, "Magnificent," which tossed me into the air and sent me soaring. Listen to the words:

*I was born to sing for you  
I didn't have a choice  
But to lift you up  
And sing whatever song you wanted me to  
I give you back my voice  
From the womb my first cry  
It was a joyful noise . . .  
Justified until we die  
You and I will magnify  
Magnificent*

Some misled critics have booed Bono for that song, misinterpreting "I was born to sing for you" as a boast to his audience, rather than the prayer to his Maker that it is.

There is plenty of rock 'n' roll levity and grandeur on the new album, but it is eclipsed by the record's heart and soul—it is perhaps the most dynamic gospel music I've ever heard.

With The Edge, Larry Mullen Jr., and Adam Clayton, Bono began the odyssey that became "No Line on the Horizon" at an international festival of sacred music in Morocco in 2007.

"(Bono) thought that our job was to create contemporary gospel music . . . that we are essentially soul musicians that look for soul in what we do," Daniel Lanois, one of several producers on the new album, told *Rolling Stone* magazine.

As he has for years (but not as explicitly so since 1991's "Achtung Baby"), Bono, the band's chief lyricist, has laced

"No Line on the Horizon" with the language and images of his humble Christian faith.

The result, however, is a work of gospel music—"gospel" in its literal sense as "good news"—for people of all faiths and none. The ecstatic language and imagery Bono evokes throughout could have been penned by the Hebrew King David or Sufi Muslim poets Rumi or Hafez, as much as by a latter-day Christ-follower from Dublin.

One of the most eloquent examples is "Moment of Surrender," which says in part:

*My body's now a begging bowl  
That's begging to get back  
Begging to get back to my heart  
To the rhythm of my soul  
To the rhythm of my unconsciousness  
To the rhythm that yearns  
To be released from control*

Faced with a horizon-less journey, isn't that what so many of us want right now—to have someone else steer the ship? To lose control and surrender?

The Spirit feels like the unnamed fifth member of U2 on this album more than any other. Its presence is subtle, but powerful.

In a beautifully confessional song (with a tune based on the 16th-century hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"), Bono seems to say that even when it feels like we've lost sight of what matters, what's real and enduring is right there. "White as Snow," which Bono says was written about a dying soldier's last moments in Afghanistan, says:

*Once I knew there was a love divine  
Then came a time I thought it knew me not  
Who can forgive forgiveness where forgiveness is not  
Only the lamb as white as snow*

U2 intends to release another album by year's end, tentatively called "Songs of Ascent." Bono has said it will be "a more meditative album on the theme of pilgrimage."

I'd guess it will be for a place that has to be believed to be seen. My bags are packed. **U!**

Cathleen Falsani is a columnist for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, and author of the new book *Sin Boldly: A Field Guide for Grace*. Her column is distributed through Religion News Service.

## ABOUT THE ALBUM

**Band:** U2. **Album:** "No Line on the Horizon," 11 tracks. It is their first album since 2004.

**Released:** Feb. 27, 2009. **Notes:** The album reached No. 1 on the US' *Billboard* chart.

**Cost:** The CD was released in five formats. The standard CD jewel case version lists at \$13.98.



IT IS MY FERVENT HOPE AND PRAYER THAT AT THE UPCOMING ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN SAN DIEGO—AND BEYOND—WE WILL FOCUS UPON OUR MISSION OF CONTINUING THE WORK OF JESUS IN THE SPIRIT OF UNITY IN CHRIST—NOT UNIFORMITY.

**Brethren may reap benefits if we can embrace diversity**

I read with great concern Brother Greg Davidson Laszakovits' suggestion ("Reflections," November 2008 MESSENGER) that the denomination might be better off splitting along the lines of one or more of the issues with which we are currently dealing.

I recently heard former US Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor say that when she first joined the other justices, they participated in some training to help them "disagree agreeably." I think there could be some good wisdom there for us. And I respectfully submit that there is much more that unites us than that which divides us. I truly fear that our ability to "continue the work of Jesus" would be dealt a severe blow if we were, indeed, to divide and thereby (from my perspective) diminish this body of Christ called the Church of the Brethren.

Perhaps we would do well to consider a concept I recently encountered called "Sfumato—A willingness to embrace ambiguity, paradox, and uncertainty." As I understand it, when we hold so tightly to the conviction that I/ we have "a corner on the truth," we ignore the fact that our sisters' and brothers' understandings of God's yearnings might include some eye-openers for us.

It is true that when we hold what we consider to be "non-negotiables" that differ from our brothers' and sisters' perceptions of God's will, we definitely need to do some prayerful grappling with the question of how we will live together with our diversity, without letting it divide us. It is my fervent hope and prayer that at the upcoming Annual Conference in San Diego—and beyond—we will focus upon our mission of continuing the work of Jesus in the spirit of unity in Christ—not uniformity.

In conclusion, I would like to

encourage us to consider what benefits this body of Christ called the Church of the Brethren might enjoy if we become intentional about doing the following:

- Hold in love and fellowship our brothers and sisters with whom we

agree—and, challenge though it might be, to also hold in love and fellowship those with whom we disagree.

- Respect diversity, and not let it divide us.
- Pray for God's grace and love to

*Let's talk about vision . . .*

- that affirms Church of the Brethren testimonies as profoundly relevant today:  
*Vines, Grapes, & Wineskins: Bethany Seminary's Mission and Vision*
- that explores new ministry models for a faithful church now and in the future:  
*What if we Thought of Ministry Differently*
- that encourages intergenerational dialog about wisdom, works and worship:  
*. . . Where the Old and New Shall Meet*
- that is informed by what we learned from the *Together* conversations:  
*Ecclesiology 101: What Makes It a Church*
- that prepares those who are called through a variety of educational tracks:  
*Educating for Ministry*
- that offers quality ministry education without relocation:  
*The New Has Come: Theological Education to Where You Are*

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 Pontius' Puddle



guide us as we seek to discern when God may be calling us to agree to disagree.

• Seek the mind of Christ and pray that we'll see how best to show God's will and love in our lives, focusing on unity, not uniformity.

Linda K. Williams  
San Diego, Calif.

**Political activism is not mission of the church**

I am moved to respond to the letter in the March issue by Olden D. Mitchell concerning the decline in church membership. I shall offer an explanation, but perhaps in the end it may not be far from his analysis.

If you look at the timeframe, it takes us back to the '60s, when the era of activism set in for changes in social, economic, and political arenas. The Church of the Brethren (plus most other mainline churches) joined the fray. The mentality of "at least we are doing something" prevailed, and soon the ends justified the means. Busing for equal rights and public housing projects to assist the poor are two prime examples. Years later both have been declared failures. The millions spent could have built quality schools where students live and paid top dollars to attract teachers for such schools. The housing projects of 30 to 40 years ago are now piles of rubbish created by demolition crews.

To quote Shelby Steele: "Individualistic ethos doesn't satisfy demands for conspicuous actions." Unfortunately, I have seen many young families leave my congregation during the 50-plus years I have attended that church. Many left because they did not feel comfortable exposed to such activism in the socio-economic/political areas. The reaction to

*The opinions expressed in "Letters" are not necessarily those of MESSENGER. Readers should receive them in the same way as when differing views are expressed in face-to-face conversation.*

*Letters should be brief, clear, and respectful of the opinions of others, with strong differences handled in the spirit of Matthew 18. Preference is given to letters that respond directly to items in MESSENGER. Anonymous letters will not be considered.*

*Send letters to MESSENGER, Attn: Letters, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120 or messenger@brethren.org. Please include hometown and phone number.*



# Plant Generously, Reap Bountifully

*I (Paul) planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.*  
—1 Corinthians 3:6

A movement is gaining energy for new mission points and church starts throughout the Church of the Brethren.

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9-11 on the part of the church saw others leave.

Unfortunately, there is no honest debate on the decline in membership as Mr. Mitchell apparently would like to see. From my own experience, since I am no longer a member of the church (though I still attend), I can attest that no one in a leadership position in the Church of the Brethren has made any effort to seek an explanation and/or understanding of why I dropped my membership.

I could go on, but let me close with a reference to the letter by the publisher in the February 2009 issue of MESSENGER. Attending to the poor is "at the center of Christian life and witness," declared Christian Churches Together. "In a mid-January meeting the new president's transition team welcomed this message from CCT—and offered a challenge in return: Why don't more people get the connection between what they hear in church and how they vote?" This blew my mind. Continuing: "We need to throw our weight behind specific programs and decisions."

I rest my case on this comment. If there are references that show that Jesus advocated using the power of government to accomplish his goals, I would be open to receiving that information. Perhaps it is as simple as Mr. Mitchell suggests: "Go make disciples."

**John C. Graybeal**

Hanover, Pa.

### Conference can set a vision for the church

It is with a great deal of sadness we will not be going to Annual Conference this year. My husband, Joe Mason, has attended 60 consecutive Annual Conferences. That's a lot. I have made 56 Conferences with gaps between the years. As a child, Annual Conference was often our one and only vacation that year.

This particular Conference has very important issues—even life- and career-affecting decisions. It's also a time of financial difficulties, which have resulted in hurtful personal and churchwide cuts.

I have always been thankful to know our church is right there immediately in a disaster with the money we, in the local churches, have already given. Then

we give more to replenish the fund to be ready for whatever may come again.

I am thankful for the many wonderful things our church is and does, such as written materials, caring and outreach locally and globally, etc. I pray we continue to open ourselves to our great God of love and be the living, breathing community God intended us to be: a community built on relationship with God and each other. This is what, it seems to me, is our call to be the church.

May this 2009 Conference be one of vision and abounding love.

**Dorothea Fry Mason**

North Manchester, Ind.

### Propaganda only makes fools out of everyone

Although I am against the taking of human life, I respect the right of those who enter one of the military services. Humanity has been given the freedom to make choices; however, my choices have taken me in a different direction.

Does it make sense for us to go into a country whose culture we do not understand and try to kill them before they kill us? We do it not because we have a personal argument with them, but because our leaders on both sides have required it of us. Some family may be grieving because we took the life of a loved one.

# joining Faith & Fair Trade

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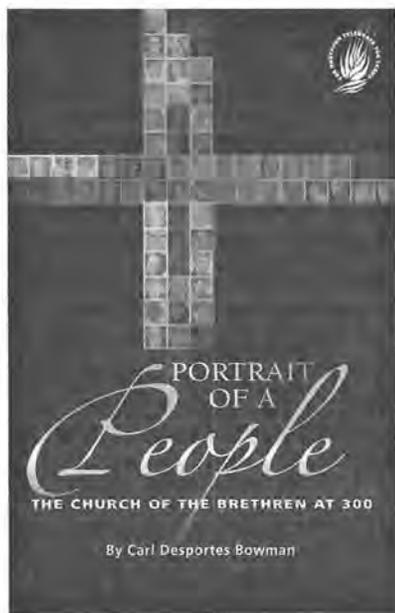
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The person we kill may be someone's mother or father, daughter or son, brother or sister, etc.

I share this because I wish to show that there is another side. We see them as the enemy, but they see us as the enemy, as well. Propaganda has influenced them as it has us. Is this being civil as humanity is thought to be, or is it like animal behavior? Isn't this what animals do?

Propaganda is the perfect tool: One has to be taught to hate and kill. Jesus said, "Love your enemies." How can we love them and kill them? And Andrew Young has said something like this: "If you travel the world you see how other people are quite like us. If we don't learn to live as brothers and sisters, we will perish as fools." Think about it!

**Gilbert Walbridge**  
Easton, Md.

### CORRECTIONS

In the Quoteworthy section of the April issue (p. 7), the name of Bethany Theological Seminary's magazine was misidentified in the attribution for Ruthann Knechel Johansen. Johansen was writing in Bethany's *Wonder & Word* magazine.

### CLASSIFIED ADS

**Have you always wanted to work in a bookstore?** Brethren Press is looking for volunteers to assist in set-up, operation, and tear-down of the Annual Conference bookstore in San Diego. If you have interest and time to volunteer, contact James Deaton at 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120 or [jdeaton\\_gb@brethren.org](mailto:jdeaton_gb@brethren.org).

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with JOHN SHARP (June 29-July 12)  
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with PAUL ZEHR (September 5-18)  
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## New Members

**Bear Creek**, Accident, Md.: Leola Sivits, Logan Staggs  
**Beaverton**, Mich.: Meghan Fetterolf, Tom Prager, Jo Ann Prager, Haley Prager, Hannah Prager, Joshua Prager  
**Blue Ridge**, Va.: Jack Waddell  
**Chambersburg**, Pa.: Hannah Cherry, Erica Danzberger, Cheryl Egan, Gregg Hamilton, Bryan Hoke, Joel Horst, Judith Horst, Gabrielle Keefer, Rose Kennedy, Allen Melius, Michael Oldham, Gloria Oldham, Jeffrey Proulx, Andrea Proulx, Gary Russell, Donna Russell, Dennis Simmers, Matthew Yarnell, Eva Zsiros  
**Curryville**, Pa.: George Replogle, Debbie Replogle, Matthew Replogle, Michelle Replogle, Joel Scritchfield, Terrie Scritchfield, Erik Whisker, Christa Whisker, Todd Stock, Deanna Stock, Christy Feathers, Joe Feathers, Jacob Feathers, Danny Replogle, Lauren Knepp, John Michael Knepp, Alison Moses, Nick Bechtel  
**Daleville**, Va.: Jenna Flanagan, Mariah Flanagan, Bess Price, Jim Driver  
**Dixon**, Ill.: Christian D. Rodabaugh  
**Elizabethtown**, Pa.: Trevor Dennehy, Rachel Engle, Nicholas Good, Justin Martin, Owen Musser, Chad Rosenberger, Marie Rhoades  
**Elm Street**, Lima, Ohio: Phyllis Altenberger  
**Fair-View**, Masonstown, Pa.: Trudy Marie Diamond, Emily Louise Diamond, Katie Elizabeth Diamond, Beverly G. Diamond, Joshua Tyler Jones, Zachary Jones, Diane L. Jones, David V. Jones, Jr., Jeremy Allen Schmidt, Kenneth Schmidt, Jr., Joseph Edward Schmidt, Kenneth

Schmidt, Sr.  
**Florin**, Mount Joy, Pa.: Alex Koser, Carly Dohner, Grant Dohner, Emily Fritz, Terese Neal  
**Green Tree**, Oaks, Pa.: Bobbi Mellinger  
**Lanark**, Ill.: Kara Giles, Karoline Kniss, Deb Rausch, Kenneth Rausch, Ethan Riley, Rachel Riley, Jack Shepard, Alex Smith, Carrie Smith, Eric Smith, Kim Smith, Peyton Sturtevant, Trey Sturtevant, Brenda Westfall, Randall Westfall  
**Lancaster**, Pa.: J. Curtis Dehney, Janet Groff, Paul Groff, Jennifer Haines, Jason Haines, Bob Hopple, Linda Hopple, Mary Martin, Troy Nace, Laurie Rhoades, Karly Shultz, Christine Turkki, Marian Varner, Jodi Yingling  
**Leakes Chapel**, Stanley, Va.: Jessica Anderson, Kelsey Anderson, Michael Anderson, Robbie Meadows, Stephen Robbins  
**Manassas**, Va.: Matt Raible, Jennifer Raible, David Smith, Kris Smith, Justine Rhoads, Kevin Cernoch, Michelle Cernoch, Jordan Rigney, Alex Eberly, Angela Harner, Elizabeth Byrne, Olivia Kline, Nicholas Kline, Ali Craighead, Ryan Dommer, Robbie Ratchford, Evan Szklennik  
**Manchester**, North Manchester, Ind.: Kristen Lahman  
**McPherson**, Kan.: Chris Goering, Lisa Goering, Taylor Swartzendruber, Sarah Ullom-Minnich  
**Mechanic Grove**, Quarryville, Pa.: Edward Faulkner, Sara Faulkner, Amanda Faulkner, Aaron Kilmer, RoJan Kilmer, Zoltan Sebestyen  
**Memorial**, Martinsburg, Pa.: Chloe Brown, LuAnn Fisher, Robert Detwiler, Bernice Detwiler, Neal Garrison, Mara Hershberger, Kris Hoover, Al Mills, Julie Mills  
**Middle Creek**, Lititz, Pa.: Mikayla Nolt, Aaron Nolt, Lauren Bollinger, Jordan Dohner, John Hosler, Natalie Embiscuso, Debby Saenz, Kaylyn Horst, Mollie Rohrer, Kameron Kline, Keri Miller, Joey Sommers, Kristine Turner,

Emily Weaver, Kenzie Horst, Joelle Garman  
**Middlebury**, Ind.: Katie Humble, C. K. Lee, Darla Lee, Ed Mercer, Dave Mevis, Katrina Mevis, Levi Mevis, Rebecca Bellaire, Myra Bontrager, Mike Pluimer, Tammy Pluimer, Taylor Quick, Dean Brovont, Jamie Brovont, Brad Burton, Ellie Burton, Kay Gregg, Juanita Miller, Art Serna, Jean Wilhelmsen, Norm Mattocks  
**Midway**, Lebanon, Pa.: Donald Kessler, Dorlee Millett, Dale Martin, Marie Martin, Jeremy Martin, Shaya Martin, Anita Stokes, Bruce Monroe, Heidi Fittery, Derek Good  
**Nettle Creek**, Hagerstown, Ind.: Daniel W. Ulrich, Paula Ziegler Ulrich  
**North Liberty**, Ind.: Mark Shoue, Joshua Bolen  
**Paradise**, Smithville, Ohio: Paul Horst, Helen Horst  
**Peters Creek**, Roanoke, Va.: Jeff Ball, Regina Ball, Sandy Broughman, Norma Cregger, Elayne Garrett, Morris Gill, John Kelly, Nikki Kelly, Terri Kelly, Bruce Kropff, Velma Kropff, Joe Kropff, Betty Kropff, Adelia Mau  
**Pleasant View**, Fayetteville, W.Va.: Dianne Tincher  
**Rossville**, Ind.: Robbie Gibson, David Bliss, Sheila Bliss  
**Saint Petersburg**, Fla.: Lois Berndtson  
**Smith Mountain Lake**, Wirtz, Va.: Phoebe Truman, Daniel Truman, Nancy Dalton  
**Spring Creek**, Hershey, Pa.: Taylor Heisey, Bradley Shockey  
**Woodbury**, Pa.: Mara Laird  
**York Center**, Lombard, Ill.: Christopher Collins

## Anniversaries

**Caricofe**, J. H. and Betty, Union Bridge, Md., 55  
**Foster**, Paul and Janet, Harrisonburg, Va., 65  
**Geesaman**, Victor and Virginia, North Liberty, Ind., 50  
**Getz**, John and Helen, Charlottesville, Va., 60  
**Kurtz**, Paul and Mary, Lititz, Pa., 60  
**Wheeler**, Wayne and Ellen, New Philadelphia, Ohio, 65

## Deaths

**Akers**, Raymond, 87, Manassas, Va., Dec. 29  
**Banks**, Wilbert E., 75, Williamsburg, Pa., March 25  
**Beach**, Dorothy, 91, Martinsburg, Pa., March 10  
**Beach**, Dorothy, 79, Roaring Spring, Pa., Feb. 16  
**Beery**, Irene, 94, North Manchester, Ind., Feb. 19  
**Beery**, Robert W., 96, North Manchester, Ind., Oct. 7  
**Bittle**, Clarence U., 85, Myersville, Md., Feb. 26  
**Borgmann**, Egon, 72, North Manchester, Ind., March 13  
**Bowers**, Kenneth, 81, Johnstown, Pa., March 29  
**Burke**, Barbara, 80, Wilmington, Del., Feb. 4  
**Byers**, Delores, 81, Forreeston, Ill., April 3  
**Cable**, Ethel E., 98, North Manchester, Ind., Sept. 7  
**Carlson**, Edward, 79, Rheems, Pa., March 12  
**Fogelsanger**, Marjorie M., 70, Chambersburg, Pa., Nov. 16  
**Frey**, William, 88, Goshen, Ind., April 6  
**Funkhouser**, Sylvia M., 89, Midland, Va., March 18  
**Gerlach**, Kathryn, 93, Elizabethtown, Pa., March 26  
**Gibson**, Eileen, 87, North Manchester, Ind., June 18, 2008  
**Goss**, Emma, 100, Lancaster, Pa., June 21, 2008  
**Greenly**, Elizabeth Bollinger, 92, Lititz, Pa., March 23  
**Groff**, Esther, 88, Lancaster, Pa., Feb. 9  
**Groff**, Ruth, 97, Manheim, Pa., June 14, 2008  
**Hanlin**, Dores, 75, Accident, Md., March 29  
**Harnish**, Betty Jane, 79, Millersville, Pa., Oct. 8  
**Helman**, A. Blair, 88, North Manchester, Ind., March 22  
**Hess**, Freda, 86, Lancaster, Pa., March 22  
**Hoke**, Katie, 94, Goshen, Ind., Feb. 1  
**Hoover**, Alma, 98, Martinsburg, Pa., March 24  
**Hoover**, Pauline, 93, North Manchester, Ind., Dec. 5  
**Huffman**, Clifford B., 86, Lancaster, Pa., Nov. 30  
**Jones**, Dave, 75, Middlebury, Ind., Nov. 21  
**Kauffman**, Betty Jane, 84, Columbiana, Ohio, March 3  
**Keener**, Elsie, 83, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 16  
**Kreider**, Rhoda, 92,

Lancaster, Pa., Jan. 31  
**Layman**, Vivian, 91, Daleville, Va., Feb. 13  
**Leath**, J. Huber, 85, Lancaster, Pa., Dec. 16  
**Leonard**, Richard, 77, Lancaster, Pa., Dec. 14  
**Mauck**, Robert, 77, Middlebury, Ind., Dec. 12  
**McKibben**, Hazel, 99, Bradford, Ohio, March 21  
**McKinney**, Shirley, 83, Lancaster, Pa., Jan. 14  
**Metz**, George Allen, 79, Roanoke, Va., March 24  
**Miley**, Lucy, 82, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 12  
**Miller**, Barbara J., 63, Goshen, Ind., March 23  
**Miller**, Eleanor, 93, North Manchester, Ind., Sept. 20  
**Miller**, Garnetta Jean Reamer, 85, Weyers Cave, Va., March 9  
**Miller**, Zola A., 91, North Manchester, Ind., Feb. 8  
**Mitchell**, Pearl E., 84, Manassas, Va., Sept. 24  
**Moyer**, Carolyn, 83, Baltimore, Md., March 15  
**Mussleman**, Lois, 87, Roaring Spring, Pa., March 24  
**Myers**, C. Russell, 90, Milford, Ind., Feb. 17  
**O'Neal**, Karen Elizabeth, 51, Galloway, Ohio, March 21  
**Patterson**, Prentice, 90, Daleville, Va., April 5  
**Predmore**, Donald, 79, Baltimore, Md., Dec. 19  
**Query**, David, 76, Martinsburg, Pa., March 11  
**Ritenour**, Arlene V. Coy, 75, Bradenton, Fla., April 2  
**Rodamer**, Lawrence, 96, Hebron, Ky., April 5  
**Schrack**, Irene, 97, Lancaster, Pa., Aug. 21  
**Shoemaker**, Lloyd, 91, Martinsburg, Pa., March 26  
**Spangler**, William, 90, Annville, Pa., March 26  
**Stine**, Opal, 84, North Manchester, Ind., March 6  
**VanDusen**, Eugene, 93, Goshen, Ind., March 21  
**Warner**, Elsie, 75, Manassas, Va., July 15, 2008  
**Waters**, Carolyn, 69, Middlebury, Ind., March 28  
**Weldy**, Gilbert, 85, North Manchester, Ind., Dec. 20  
**Wentz**, Wilbur Dwight, 86, Friedens, Pa., April 21  
**Wilt**, Scott, 19, Roaring Spring, Pa., March 23  
**Wisdom**, LaVerne G., 77, Farmington, Mo., April 14  
**Witmer**, Lloyd, 93, Lampeter, Pa., Aug. 20

# The 'S-word'

**S**ex. There, I said it. I should probably alert the office's postal carrier.

I'm always a bit surprised by which articles and columns generate letters to the editor and which ones don't. Some pieces on seemingly significant topics don't generate a peep. Any that mention that "S-word," however, are a near-lock to get the pens and keyboards going.



WALT WILTSCHER  
MESSENGER Editor

What is it that makes this subject such a lightning rod in the church? It seems we're almost afraid to talk about it, or don't want to. When we do, it's usually in either whispers or strident voices, depending on the setting and situation.

With three of the five new business items on this year's Annual Conference agenda directly or indirectly related to the subject of homosexuality, it's bound to come to the

forefront again. So how are we going to talk about it?

There is a genuine theological divide here. As several papers have stated, we are "not of one mind" on this issue. For one side, it's a matter of doctrine. There *are* scriptures that raise concern over this subject, although some argue it's important to consider the context. How do we understand them today? For another side, it's a matter of justice. Jesus *did* give a model of extending boundaries, although

**LIKE A DOUBLE-EDGED WEAPON, IT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE BOTH A BEAUTIFUL PIECE OF GOD'S CREATION AND SOMETHING THAT CAN CUT, DIVIDE, AND WOUND DEPENDING ON HOW IT'S WIELDED.**

some argue even that extravagant welcome had its limits until transformation occurred. What are the limits of our human interpretation? For others along the spectrum, the jury on this issue is still out. Is it a choice? Is it a sin? Where do we draw our lines?

There is room for a debate—a civil debate—over the issue of homosexuality. For better or worse, it's the hot-button issue of the day, for very many days now. Frankly, in the grand scheme of faith, it's probably a pretty minor issue. Even within the realm of sexuality, subjects like domestic violence, rape, and infidelity are probably more pressing for the church's attention.

But while we debate whether a Christian can "come out," the church has managed to keep the entire issue of human sexuality pretty firmly in the closet. Elsewhere, sex is everywhere: On TV, in movies, in other media, and in our communities, often being acted out in fairly unhealthy ways. Mention sex in church, though, and one can usually hear crickets chirping, or see cheeks flushing. When was the last time you heard a sermon on a text from Song of Songs?

We treat the "S-word" as something dirty or taboo, so why are we surprised when other people treat it the same way?

The church has an opportunity instead to provide a healthy perspective of sexuality in the context of God's creation. At the denomination's Young Adult Forum held in Arizona this past winter, several young adults voiced a desire for the church to be more open in discussing sex as a dimension of the human, and spiritual, experience. They also noted the importance of being able to talk about intimacy in church relationships, and not automatically equating it with sex.

One recent survey found that fewer than 10 percent of US seminaries require a course on sexuality issues before graduation, yet many pastors find themselves confronted with such complex situations when they serve a congregation, especially in counseling. If sex is discussed, it's usually in the context of law and ethics, such as sexual harassment. "It's controversial," one seminary president acknowledged in a Religion News Service article. "It makes people feel uncomfortable."

It seems appropriate that "S-word" in print looks very much like "sword." Like a double-edged weapon, it has the poten-

tial to be both a beautiful piece of God's creation and something that can cut, divide, and wound depending on how it's wielded. It *is* an uncomfortable topic, yet somehow we must move past our discomfort if we're going to address the subject in a healthy and honest way.

In the buildup to this Annual Conference, some members of both poles on the homosexuality debate have been marshalling the troops to come to San Diego and advocate for "their" position. I've seen letters (marked "not for publication") flying back and forth between the camps, each accusing the other of being "obsessed" with sex. It would almost be funny if it wasn't so serious.

In fact, most of our nation is indeed obsessed with sex and all its seamy undertones. We can debate where the boundaries lie, but let's get over our hang-ups and talk with honesty and integrity as children of God. We can provide a better model, centered on a different Word.—Ed. 

**COMING IN JULY/AUGUST:** Ingredients to Heifer International's success, food bank matching grant program, immigration and justice, reflections on hospitality, Bible study on James, and more in MESSENGER's combined summer issue.

# Fay Hanna Gustav Ike

## 100 Homes in Haiti



Jeff Boshart



Klebert Excus



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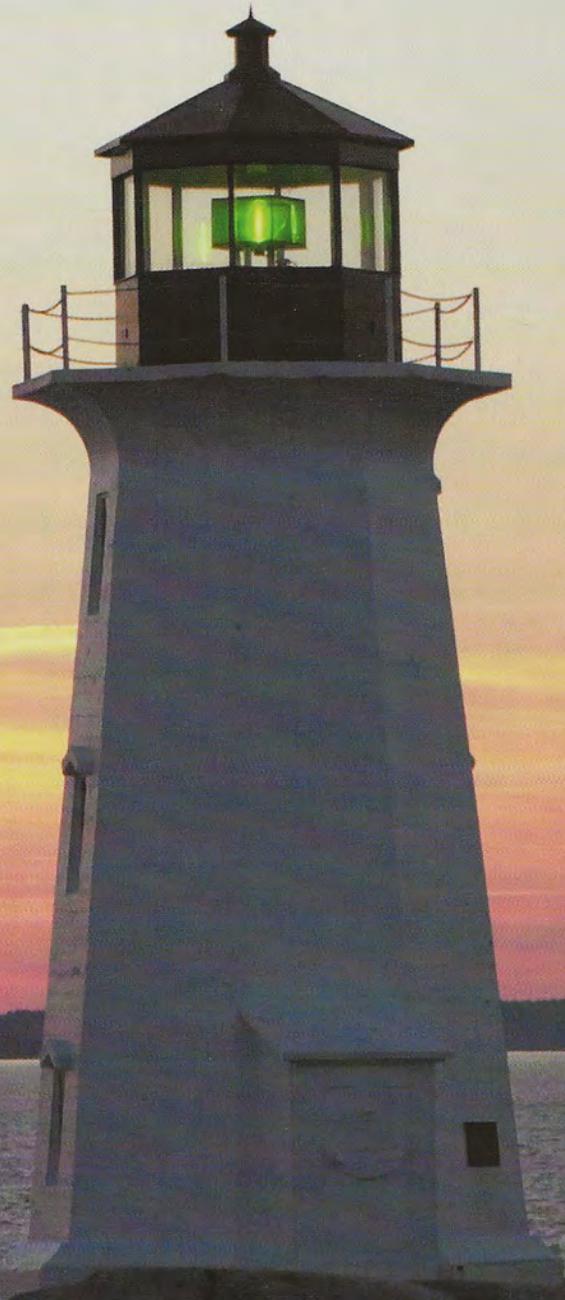
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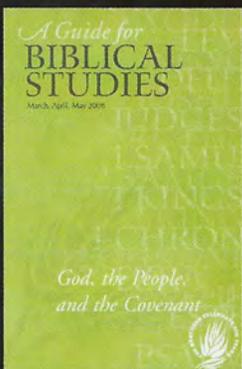


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