

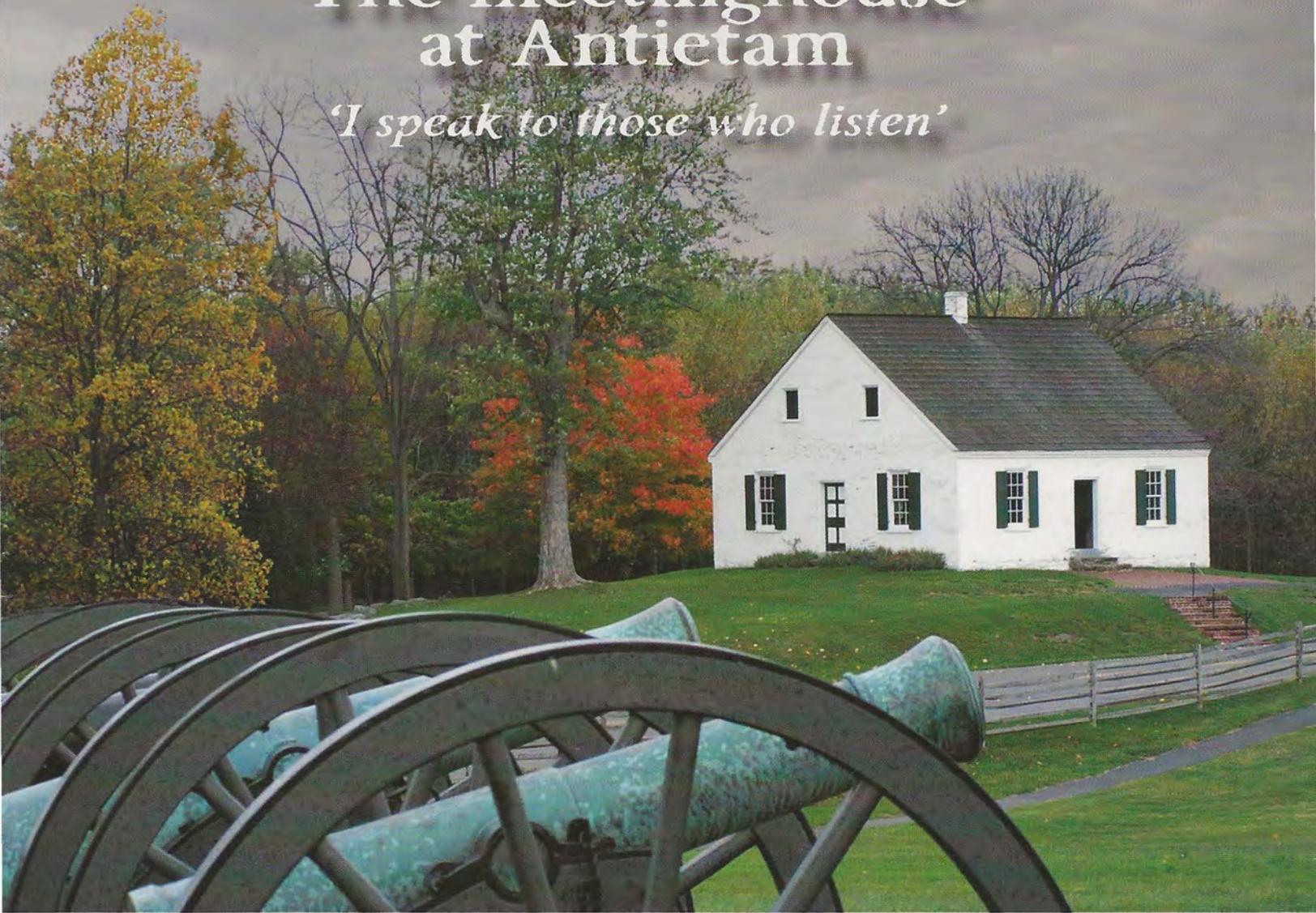
Church of the Brethren

MESSENGER

NOVEMBER 2010 WWW.BRETHREN.ORG

The meetinghouse at Antietam

'I speak to those who listen'



Be a

bigger

part of the world.

At Elizabethtown College big ideas come to life. Because they're your ideas. Here you'll join other students who are preparing for lives of service and leadership as citizens of the world. Find out more about our corner of the world at Elizabethtown College.



**Explore other colleges in the
Brethren College Network:**

Bridgewater College (www.bridgewater.edu)

Juniata College (www.juniata.edu)

University of La Verne (www.laverne.edu)

Manchester College (www.manchester.edu)

McPherson College (www.mcpherson.edu)

Bethany Theological Seminary
(www.cob-net.org/bethany)

Brethren Colleges Abroad (www.bcanet.org)

Elizabethtown College
Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania

www.ETOWN.EDU • 717-361-1000

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

Church
of the
Brethren

MESSENGER

Interim Editor: Randy Miller Publisher: Wendy McFadden News: Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford Subscriptions: Diane Stroyeck Design: The Concept Mill

ONTHECOVER

"If these walls could only speak," we often muse in the presence of a building that has witnessed momentous events. The Dunker Church in Sharpsburg, Md., sat amid the smoke and cannonballs during the Civil War battle at Antietam. Today, thanks to words from a sermon and lines from a poem, we have a sense of what the walls of that church may say if they could speak.

Cover photo by Chris Christner/
www.toptechwriter.us



Alexander Gardner/Library of Congress

8 Antietam meeting house

On September 19, worshippers gathered at the old Dunker Church in Sharpsburg, Md., to mark the anniversary of the Civil War Battle at Antietam. The church, built a decade before that battle on land donated by Samuel Mumma, was at the center of the fighting. The September service was a chance to look back, but also an opportunity to examine what it means to be holy in a world that is "often blind to the radical compassion of Jesus," as Brethren pastor Frank Ramirez said in his sermon at that anniversary service.

12 The writing life

"Writing, to me, is a form of prayer, a spiritual discipline," says York Center (Ill.) Church of the Brethren pastor Christy Waltersdorff. During her sabbatical last spring, rather than taking a break from writing—which consumes most of a pastor's working hours—she immersed herself in it. "I had time to think about the meaning of words in our life of faith, and what it means for us to say that we are 'people of the Word.' I soon realized that we probably couldn't be Christians without words, and especially without the Word of God."

14 Amazing grace

Is God's grace too cheap? Does that unconditional, sweeping away of our misdeeds by a merciful God come too easily? One could argue that it does—especially to one who's wronged us and is in desperate need of a comeuppance. Check the Bible, and even it can seem contradictory on the subject at times. Still, even when we know we don't always deserve it ourselves, it really is what we crave.

16 Behind the hymn

Ever wonder what's behind some of those favorite hymns you sing Sunday mornings? Many were written so long ago that their creators are no longer here to ask. But Steve Engle, whose "Beyond a Dying Sun" was originally titled "I See a New World Coming," was kind enough to give us the back story to that hymn about those "... golden sails full-billowed on the wind."

18 The dysfunctional family revisited

Bob Neff takes another look at the parable of the prodigal son and suggests that we bear a striking resemblance to the older brother in the story. We are not entirely comfortable with the elaborate welcome our younger brother has received upon his return home, and yet "...we are dependent on God's grace just as much as the younger son."

DEPARTMENTS

2	From the Publisher	24	Media Review
3	In Touch	25	Youth Life
6	Reflections	27	Letters
7	The Buzz	31	Turning Points
20	News	32	Editorial

The most popular stop on a tour of the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill., tends to be the Brethren Historical Library and Archives. You don't have to be a serious researcher to be entranced by the treasure trove of historical documents, genealogical data, books by and about Brethren, and artifacts (including the barely legible tombstones of Alexander Mack Sr. and Christopher Sower).



WENDY McFADDEN
Publisher

It might be easier for visitors to tear themselves away if they could take some of this treasure with them. Wouldn't it be fascinating to thumb through those thick binders of periodicals at one's leisure? Could they be available online so they could be read at home? Best of all, could they be searchable?

That would surely be impossible.

But wait. It isn't. There's a group working to digitize all the Brethren periodicals of the various Brethren bodies that trace their origin to the baptism near Schwarzenau, Germany, in 1708. They are beginning with Henry Kurtz's

Monthly Gospel-Visitor (1851) and will continue through those published at the end of the 20th century. The first phase of the project includes the periodicals published before the divisions of the early 1880s—which translates to 49 volumes, 1,504 issues, and 23,000 images or pages.

In this collaboration, which began three years ago, the Church of the Brethren is working with counterparts in the Brethren Church, Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, Conservative Grace Brethren Churches International, Dunkard Brethren, and Old German Baptist New Conference, as well as the Brethren Heritage Center in Ohio.

The project is of special importance to readers of this magazine, since Henry Kurtz's periodical is the first of a number of newspapers that were the ancestors of today's MESSENGER.

The BDA committee is feeling some urgency. One reason is that the documents in question are crumbling. Every time the pages of the oldest periodicals are turned, fragments are lost. The other reason is that a major grant expires at the end of 2010, and its continuation is not assured. The committee hopes to raise enough money by that time to send the first phase of documents to be scanned.

To see the full list of publications that will comprise the archive and to support the project financially, visit www.brethrendigitalarchives.org. Gifts may be sent to the Brethren Heritage Center, 428 Wolf Creek St., Suite No. H1, Brookville, OH 45309-1297, specified for the Brethren Digital Archives.

Note: While a number of Church of the Brethren people are connected to the efforts of the Brethren Digital Archives, a major contributor has been Ken Shaffer, long-time director of the Brethren Historical Library and Archives. Ken died Oct. 23, just before this issue of Messenger went to press. As general secretary Stan Noffsinger said during a prayer with employees, Ken not only preserved our history but he helped shape it.

HOW TO REACH US

MESSENGER

1451 Dundee Avenue
Elgin, IL 60120

Subscriptions:

dstroyeck@brethren.org
Phone: 847-742-5100 ext. 247
Fax: 847-742-6103

Advertising:

messengerads@brethren.org
Phone: 800-323-8039
Fax: 847-742-1407

Editorial:

messenger@brethren.org
Phone: 800-323-8039 ext. 263
Fax: 847-742-6103

Subscription rates:

\$17.50 individual rate
- \$32 for 2 years
\$14.50 gift rate
\$14.50 church club rate
- \$27 for 2 years
\$ 1.25 student (per month)

If you move, clip address label and send with new address to MESSENGER Subscriptions, at the above address. Allow at least five weeks for address change.

Connect electronically: For a free subscription to Newline, the Church of the Brethren e-mail news report, write cobnews@brethren.org.

Visit MESSENGER online at www.brethren.org/messenger.

A free study guide for each issue of MESSENGER is available at this site, along with other information.

MESSENGER is the official publication of the Church of the Brethren. Member of the Associated Church Press. Biblical quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the New Revised Standard Version. Copyright © November 2010, Church of the Brethren.

MESSENGER (ISSN 0026-0355) is published 10 times a year by Brethren Press, Church of the Brethren. Periodicals postage paid at Elgin, Ill., and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694.



Printed on recycled paper
(20% post consumer)

T-shirts turn into bountiful blessings

Kalamazoo project connects church, community

Just before summer began, eight women gathered at Skyridge Church of the Brethren in Kalamazoo, Mich., to make reusable fabric bags out of used T-shirts. Skyridge member Carie Gross had seen the pattern in *Family Fun* magazine as an idea for what to do with your child's favorite T-shirts that had been outgrown. She saw a possible outreach project.



Courtesy of Carie Gross



Carie Gross

Left: Carie Gross, left, and Julie Miller busily work at sewing T-shirts into new fabric bags. Above: Some of the finished bags from the project, including one from Song & Story Fest.

Gross began collecting donations from local churches, schools, and anywhere else she could think of in February and scheduled the work day for May 15. Thanks to a letter to the editor she wrote to the local paper, they not only received donations, but two women from the community joined them on their work day along with six women from the congregation.

By the time the work day arrived, over 600 T-shirts had been donated. The women were able to finish 180 bags that first work day. During the cutting/sewing session, the women from the congregation even discovered they had several mutual friends with the community volunteers. "Another sign of the Holy Spirit's presence with us!" Gross said.

The bags were blessed the following day during the worship service, and then delivered to Ministry with Community, a local daytime drop-in shelter that provides a large variety of services to the homeless in the Kalamazoo area.

Gross said plans were under way to schedule another work day soon.

Do you have district or congregational stories that might be of interest to MESSENGER? Short items with a photo, if possible, are best. Send them to MESSENGER, c/o In Touch, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120 or messenger@brethren.org.



YOU SAID IT

"My whole idea about stewardship is that it's everything you do after you say 'Yes' to Jesus: It's money, time, talent, taking care of the environment. It's a whole-life experience."

—Ray Glick, coordinator of donor visitation and planned gifts for the Church of the Brethren. He was quoted in the eBrethren newsletter.

BY THE NUMBERS

90,000

Number of people in Pakistan who had received food packages from Church World Service and its partners as of late September. The Church of the Brethren recently gave another \$40,000 to the work in Pakistan, responding to floods.

Northeast Mid-Atlantic senior high youth held a beach retreat on the Atlantic coast Sept. 10-12. . . . The major annual Brethren Disaster Relief Auction at Lebanon (Pa.) Valley Expo Center took place Sept. 24-25. . . . Camp Eder (Fairfield, Pa.) held its 32nd annual Fall Festival on Oct. 16, featuring an auction, pig and turkey roast, crafts, and other family activities.

Southeast Staunton (Va.) Church of the Brethren on Oct. 23 hosted a Church of the Brethren Credit Union/Ministry of Reconciliation workshop on "Faith, Family, and Finances." . . . A recent benefit concert by Brethren band Mutual Kumquat at Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren netted \$1,176.16 for the "Back to School: Burma" campaign of New Community Project. A generous matching fund grant was given by Rodney Smith of Midland (Va.) Church of the Brethren.

Midwest Camp Emmanuel (Astoria, Ill.) had about 60 people take part in its Labor Day weekend family camp. . . . Camp Emmaus (Mount Morris, Ill.) served an appreciation dinner to about 100 people on Sept. 11. . . . The Goshen (Ind.) and York Center (Lombard, Ill.) congregations are partnering to send a volunteer group to the St. Bernard's Parish disaster relief project near New Orleans Nov. 14-20.

Ozarks/Plains Newton (Kan.) Church of the Brethren on Sept. 26 hosted a presentation by Dr. Paul Ullom-Minnich about his experiences with a Church of the Brethren medical mission to earthquake-stricken Haiti. . . . A workshop on the changing landscape of the church, titled "Job's Lament, Job's Friends, and Us: Re-Imagining the Kingdom of God" and led by Bethany Theological Seminary president Ruthann Knechel Johansen, was offered Sept. 25 at First Central Church of the Brethren in Kansas City, Kan.

West Pacific Southwest District planned to hold deacon trainings at three congregations in Arizona and California this fall with worship, workshops, and lunch. The district conference Nov. 12-14 will feature the theme, "In Worship and Play We're the Brethren Today." . . . Idaho District held a "Fifth Sunday Worship" Oct. 31 at Boise Valley Church of the Brethren. . . . Oregon/Washington District served as hosts for this fall's Brethren Volunteer Service orientation unit, in Portland and at Camp Myrtlewood.

Kansas congregations cooperate to send \$30,000 in hunger aid

On the 2009 Foods Resource Bank (FRB) projects roster, 27 Brethren congregations were listed representing 10 states.

Four Kansas churches in Reno and McPherson counties have completed four years in the program. Church of the Brethren congregations participating include McPherson, Hutchinson, and Monitor, along with the Presbyterian Church of Hutchinson. Land has been supplied in McPherson County by MaryEllen Yoder, Jay and Amy Warner (2007) and Ellis and Rita Yoder

(2008, 2009, 2010). Crops grown include wheat, grain sorghum, and soybeans.

Funds are raised by the congregations involved to pay for farming expenses so that when the crop is harvested and sold, all of the proceeds will go into a designated project.

Fund-raising has involved soup suppers, alternative Christmas fair opportunities, personal gifts, and church donations. FRB projects supported (through the Church of the Brethren Global Food Crisis Fund) have been in Guatemala, Peru, and Malawi. During a four-year period, more than \$30,000 has been sent as assistance.

The congregations involved have annual planting and harvest celebra-

tions at the Monitor Church of the Brethren in rural McPherson. Members of the churches supply a carry-in meal or a home-made ice cream and cake feed along with a music program supplied by the host church. Appreciation for the opportunity to serve others is expressed by pastors and/or members of the congregations. The 2011 project will be corn production on the Ellis and Rita Yoder farm.



A McPherson, Kan.-area Foods Resource Bank project has raised more than \$30,000 in four years.



REMEMBERED

• **Mary Elizabeth (Flora) Eikenberry**, 95, a former mission worker in Nigeria, died Sept. 1 at Timbercrest Senior Living Community in North Manchester, Ind. With her husband, the late Ivan Eikenberry, she lived and worked in Nigeria for 35 years. Beginning in 1945 she taught elementary school at Garkida Mission School and at Waka Teachers Training College; from 1959 to 1977 she was administrative assistant for the Northern Education Advisory Council in Kaduna, where she also hosted international mission visitors, served as chair of the service committee, and as president of the International Women's Club; and from 1979 until retirement in 1981 taught at Kulp Bible School near Mubi. After retirement the couple moved to Trotwood, Ohio, and participated in mission interpretation. Other volunteer service for the church included terms on the Southern Ohio District board and as district moderator. She earned a degree from Manchester College, was active in church youth camps, and served on the youth cabinet in Southern Ohio District. A celebration of her life was held Sept. 4 at Trotwood Church of the Brethren.

• **Esther Mohler Ho**, 79, former staff in the denomination's peace office, died Aug. 20 in Hayward, Calif. From 1957 to 1961 she worked with the director of Peace Education and Action for the Church of the Brethren. Previously she served in Brethren Volunteer Service in Kassel, Germany, as a representative for International Christian Youth Exchange. She continued her work for peace in later years by joining the Hayward Peace and Justice Fellowship, the Ecumenical Peace Institute of the Bay Area in Berkeley, Interfaith Witness for Peace in the Middle East,

and the American Muslim Voice Foundation. With Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) she worked in the West Bank city of Hebron and in Chiapas, Mexico. She held degrees from McPherson (Kan.) College and Northwestern University in Illinois, and worked as a speech and language specialist. She was a member of Modesto (Calif.) Church of the Brethren and Fremont (Calif.) Congregational Church. A memorial service was held at Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley on Sept. 5.

• **Merlin G. Shull**, 83, passed away Sept. 22 at Bridgewater (Va.) Retirement Community. He served as executive minister for Shenandoah District from 1985 to 1992 and previously was a mission worker in Ecuador. He and his late wife, Grace, who passed away in 1997, also served pastorates in Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Shull, born in Chicago, was a graduate of Manchester College, Bethany Theological Seminary, and Lutheran Seminary of Gettysburg, Pa. His service to the church also included a term of Brethren service in Austria. He was a member of Bridgewater Church of the Brethren, where a memorial service was held Oct. 2.

• **Susanne Windisch**, 93, who worked in Kassel, Germany, with Brethren Service following World War II, died on Aug. 30. She was a secretary, administrative assistant, translator, interpreter, and a "guide and diplomat" for the Brethren Service program, and a personal friend to many Brethren volunteers who served in or traveled through Kassel. A remembrance by Wilbur Mullen, who directed the Brethren work in Germany beginning in 1954, describes her as "one of the great and devoted friends of the Church of the Brethren."

Mack-tastic: About 70 Manchester College students and faculty and staff members traveled about 45 minutes northwest on the weekend of Sept. 25-26 for Camp Mack Days at Camp Alexander Mack in Milford, Ind. The annual tradition shifted from a weekday to a weekend this year but still included canoe races, ultimate frisbee, crafts, and a service project, along with an evening campfire and a Sunday morning worship service by the lake.



Marilyn Mitchell

International students Satomi Imai and Alejandro Vargas finish up a crafts project at Camp Mack.

Peace Mobile helps to mark Day of Prayer for Peace

Trotwood (Ohio) Church of the Brethren planned to welcome a special guest as it participated in International Day of Prayer for Peace observances on Sept. 21: the Dayton Peace Museum's Peace Mobile.

The large, colorfully painted RV carries exhibits around the region as part of the museum's educational program. The museum also agreed to donate a generator for the sound system at the Sept. 21 neighborhood prayer vigil, sponsored by the Trotwood Ministerium along with the museum. The vigil was to be held at a former school on Main Street in Trotwood, including a time of naming those who had been victims of violence.

A statement from the church said the purpose of the vigil was "to heighten our understanding of various kinds of violence; to name some of the victims of violence; to listen to the stories and experiences of persons affected by violence; and to pray for God's peace in all circumstances."

LANDMARKS & LAURELS

- **Miami (Fla.) First Church of the Brethren** celebrates its 75th anniversary with a weekend of events Oct. 23-24. Saturday afternoon featured a luncheon event at the Shula Hotel in Miami Lakes, followed by a program of remembrances, greetings, and music, and a variety of activities Saturday evening. On Sunday morning the celebration continued with a worship service and a light lunch.

- **Middlebury (Ind.) Church of the Brethren** is holding a congregation-wide logo competition for its 100th anniversary, to be observed in 2011. The theme is "The Year of Jubilee."

- **Boones Chapel (Snow Creek) Church of the Brethren** held its 100-year celebration on July 18 with worship, music, and a covered dish meal.

- **Sam's Creek Church of the Brethren** (New Windsor, Md.) marked its 150th anniversary with a combined love feast service Nov. 7 at the Brethren Service Center.

- **Mount Bethel Church of the Brethren**, located near Eagle Rock, Va., celebrated its 125th anniversary on Aug. 29.

- **Douglas Park Church of the Brethren** in Chicago celebrated its 100th anniversary on Oct. 17 with a fellowship time, worship, lunch, and afternoon celebration.

- The nursery school at **Manchester Church of the Brethren** (North Manchester, Ind.) celebrated its 50th anniversary on Oct. 3.

- On June 11 **Brethren Home Community** (New Oxford, Pa.) campus pastor Merv Wunderlich oversaw a ceremony in which 10 residents renewed wedding vows they had made 30 to 71 years earlier.

- Happy 100th birthday to **Naomi Wenger**, who celebrated at The Brethren's Home in Greenville, Ohio, on June 5. An open house for **Homer Kerr's** 100th birthday was planned for Sept. 5 at English River Church of the Brethren in South English, Iowa.

- **Erwin (Tenn.) Church of the Brethren** in June opened its new sanctuary for worship, two years after a fire started by lightning destroyed its former building. **Shiloh Church of the Brethren** (Kasson, W.Va.), which lost its building to a fire in January, has started rebuilding with most of the needed funds in hand thanks to insurance and donations. The first services were held in the partially finished new building in July.

- **Atlantic Southeast District** has launched a new website at www.atlanticse-brethren.org.

- **Zack Wolgemuth**, associate director of Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM), was among those invited to speak at a "Champions of Hope" volunteer dinner on April 22, sponsored by the Lakeshore Area Regional Recovery of Indiana. BDM received an award in recognition of its ongoing partnership and work following flooding in northwest Indiana, where relief work continues. This summer, other Brethren Disaster Ministries work occurring around the Tippecanoe River was featured by WLFI-TV 18 of Lafayette, Ind.

- The **Heeding God's Call** movement against gun violence on Sept. 16 received a human rights award from the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations, the city agency that enforces civil rights laws and deals with inter-group conflict and neighborhood disputes. The Heeding God's Call movement began in early 2009 at a Historic Peace Churches conference held in Philadelphia.

- The Henry Luce Foundation has awarded \$120,000 to the **Journal of Religion, Conflict, and Peace**, an online publication of the Plowshares peace studies cooperative of the three Historic Peace Church colleges in Indiana: Manchester, Earlham, and Goshen. The publication is the only research journal focused on ways religion can cause or exacerbate war and how religion can foster peace despite religiously-influenced conflict around the globe. The journal is at www.religionconflictpeace.org.

- The family of **Art Gish**, a Brethren peacemaker who died in a farming accident in July, has established a memorial "Art Gish Peacemaking Fund" to help young people get started in peacemaking. New Covenant Fellowship in Athens, Ohio, is receiving contributions to the fund.

Finding God in the fringes

The city has tremendous appeal. It is beautiful. It is glimmering.

There is a sense in which the city offers the world something exciting, something new. The economic centers of the world are cities. The political centers of the world are cities. The cultural centers of the world are cities. There is a beauty to the city that is sometimes difficult to articulate.



CHRISTOPHER J. MONTGOMERY

The city is also glamorous. At late-night parties, the sounds of jazz and frivolity fill the streets; street markets offer fresh fruits and vegetables; dazzling lights at the premier of a new play or movie give us moments of Hollywood. We can lose ourselves in the allure of the city. It is enticing, and in it we find glamour and excitement.

But that is not the only reality to be found in the city. Dig a little deeper. On the outskirts of light and skyscraper we find despair and poverty. Buildings, aged and worn under the tyranny of scarcity and neglect, appear abandoned. Neighborhoods on the fringe become unsafe environments, used by drug dealers and prostitutes, each attempting to dig themselves out from the oppression of poverty and neglect.

The desperate attempt to bring some beauty to the dark and dreary margins of the city is mixed, unfortunately, with the demands of territorialism. Graffiti provide visual reminders that the need to mark boundaries is interwoven with what N.T. Wright calls our natural leanings to beauty and art. The toll of our polarization in society does not stop

status to come eat at the table. He ministered to prostitutes, to aliens, to widows, to foreigners. He condemned the establishment for its abuse of the poor, and the oppression of those without. The pursuit of economic and political gain in the middle of such rampant oppression, Jesus argues, is an affront to the right-side-up nature of God's reign.

Mark shows us that the reign of God is not coming through the center, where the beauty of the city lies. It is, instead, coming through the fringe. Power, Jesus demonstrates, comes through powerlessness. If you want to be the greatest of all, you must become the least of all. You cannot neglect the poor, the homeless, the estranged, the abandoned, and claim to love God.

In the Church of the Brethren, we emphasize living together peacefully and simply as we continue the work of Jesus. The Church of the Brethren finds its identity as a community of counter-culture. We do not pursue relevance, according to society's standards. We do not pursue glitz. We carry out three specific practices of Jesus in our effort to live as a community of counter-culture. In baptism, we yoke ourselves to Christ and his community and message by throwing off our allegiance to the political, economic, and social structures of our world. This is our practice of becoming. In eucharist, we join with brothers and sisters around the world in remembering our future, as we declare Christ's death until he comes. This is our practice of proclaiming.

But there is a third element. In the pursuit of a faith that is radically counter-cultural, we engage in the practice of foot-washing. This is our symbol for continuing the work of Jesus. In taking a towel and basin and washing each other's feet, we are reminded to continue the work of Jesus with those on the fringe: those whose feet and lives are dirty and

broken from walking the harsh and rocky road of life in the city. And so we carry our practice of continuing as

MARK SHOWS US THAT THE REIGN OF GOD IS NOT COMING THROUGH THE CENTER, WHERE THE BEAUTY OF THE CITY LIES. IT IS, INSTEAD, COMING THROUGH THE FRINGE.

with the decay of buildings and the loss of aesthetic appeal. The human factor is staggering. On any given day in the city limits of Philadelphia there are an estimated 4,000 men, women, and children living on the streets.

The Gospel according to Mark demonstrates consistently that Jesus sides with the fringe. His ministry in Galilee and on the outskirts of what was deemed glamorous and beautiful included healing lepers, touching blind people, eating with the poor and the sick, and allowing those with no social

a symbol of service and a call to remember the work of Jesus. It serves as a tangible reminder that in our effort as counter-culture, we work with Jesus in the restoration of all things. We follow Jesus into the world with a towel and basin to clean and restore a dirty and broken city. It is uncomfortable. It is painful. But it is always good news. **W**

Christopher J. Montgomery pastors the Drexel Hill Church of the Brethren near Philadelphia, Pa., and works with other congregations to develop healthy and sustainable worship practices.

QUOTE WORTHY

“As Christians we should be not only horrified about it, we should make it our focus.”

—Susanne Scholz, assistant professor of Old Testament at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, speaking about world hunger and poverty. She was quoted by the *United Methodist Reporter*.

“BVS (Brethren Volunteer Service) shattered my stereotypes. It showed me just how naive I really was. It wasn’t easy, but I’m glad that BVS has ‘ruined me’ for life.”

—Nancy Miner, a former Brethren Volunteer Service worker now working in the denominational offices in Elgin, Ill. She was quoted in the Church of the Brethren “eBrethren” newsletter.

“We don’t want to merely ‘tolerate’ our fellow human beings, but rather to engage them at the deepest level of what makes us human, through both our phenomenal commonality and our dazzling cultural and religious differences.”

—Islamic scholar A. Rashied Omar of the University of Notre Dame’s Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, speaking at Bethany Theological Seminary’s Inaugural Forum

“The numerical growing edge of Mennonite Church USA, like many other denominations, is in churches planted by various racial ethnic groups.”

—Ervin Stutzman, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, speaking to Eastern Mennonite University’s *Crossroads* magazine

“Religion, uncontaminated by power, can be the source of a great deal of private solace, artistic inspiration and moral wisdom. But when it gets its hands on the levers of political or social authority, it goes rotten very quickly indeed.”

—Philip Pullman, author of *The Golden Compass*, writing in London’s *The Guardian* newspaper during “Banned Books Week” about the controversy his book attracted in the Catholic Church (RNS)

CULTUREVIEW

• Bread for the World president **David Beckmann** and Heifer International president **Jo Luck** were named World Food Prize laureates this year. The award is the equivalent of the Nobel Prize for food and agriculture; it recognizes key efforts of nongovernmental organizations to mobilize people to end hunger in communities around the world.

• A group of nearly 50 religious, civic, and community service organizations have banded together to launch the **“Fight Poverty with Faith”** campaign, which seeks to cut poverty in half over the next 10 years. Details are at www.fight-povertywithfaith.com. . .

Former National Council of Churches president Michael Livingston will direct a new NCC Poverty Initiative. (NCC News)

• Princeton (N.J.) Theological Seminary professor and noted author Kenda Creasy Dean has published her latest book, ***Almost Christian***, looking at the religious lives of teenagers. Previous books she has written or co-written include *The Godbearing Life* and *Practicing*

Passion.

• The World Council of Churches has published ***Justice Not Greed***, a book addressing the international economic crisis. Edited by Pamela Brubaker and Rogate Mshana, the book is an anthology of articles by 14 leading Christian economists, theologians, ethicists, and sociologists dealing with recent failures of the world’s financial structures.

• An interfaith summit held in Washington, D.C., in September looked at concerns about **anti-Muslim rhetoric**, denouncing bigotry and calling for greater religious tolerance. (NCC News)

• A recent survey by the Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion & Public Life found that Americans correctly answered just 16 of 32 (or 50 percent) of a **list of religious knowledge questions**. Atheists, agnostics, Jews, and Mormons all outperformed evangelical Christians, mainline Christians, and Catholics. The full report is at www.pewforum.org.



JUST FOR FUN: MATCH GAME

NOW AND THEN Match the name of the past Brethren leader on the left with the organization or event they’re associated with on the right. Answers are printed below.

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1. Dan West | a. Ephrata Cloister |
| 2. Anna Mow | b. Bethany Theological Seminary |
| 3. Henry Kurtz | c. Heifer International (Heifer Project) |
| 4. M.R. Zigler | d. First female preacher |
| 5. Conrad Beissel | e. <i>Messenger</i> magazine |
| 6. Christopher Sauer | f. Brethren Service Center |
| 7. Sarah Major | g. Mission to India |
| 8. A.C. Wieand | h. Early printing press |

ANSWERS: 1-c; 2-g; 3-e (Kurtz started *The Gospel-Visitor*, Messenger’s ancestor); 4-f; 5-a; 6-h (especially noted for Sauer Bibles); 7-d; 8-b (co-founded Bethany Bible School with E.B. Hoff).



ANTIETAM MEETINGHOUSE

OLD BIBLES AND RADICAL COMPASSION

by Frank Ramirez

[This article is adapted from a sermon delivered by Frank Ramirez on Sept. 19 at the old Dunker Church in Sharpsburg, Md., to commemorate the anniversary of the Civil War Battle of Antietam, and the role the church played in it. —Ed.]

A good Bible tells a story. Sometimes you don't even need the whole Bible. I'll never forget the time, 34 years ago, I met an ancient Armenian woman (ancient in the sense that she carried in her carriage and the lines on her face the weight of her people) who had survived the genocide, had been aided by the Brethren, and was living in America. She wept as she showed me a few scattered leaves of Armenian print—all that remained

of the Bible she had owned when she was a girl. These were the pages she'd been able to smuggle out. These tattered pieces of paper spoke louder than any TV evangelist.

I'm retiring one Bible I've owned for 20 years. It fits in a pocket and it's been everywhere with me, and it's just worn out. No cover. The margins are crammed with scrawls. Pages are falling out. And it opens on its own to Lamentations 3:23-27 (my anointing scripture), 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (communion), and Psalm 23 (funerals).

I have before me the Mumma Meeting House Bible, but I like to call it the John Lewis Bible. Bless his heart, he sent it back here. After the Battle of Antietam, it was grabbed as a souvenir by a Union soldier. People took off with anything that wasn't nailed down after the battle was over. The Bible went on a long journey, making its

CONVERSATION AT ANTIETAM

by Mary Sue Rosenberger

Little Dunker meetinghouse, so peaceful and serene,
How I wish that you could speak of what you've heard and seen.
Wondering brought me here inside your walls that, whitewashed, glisten.
The silence here speaks loud to me, **"I speak to those who listen."**
Then speak to me, small sentinel, of that which gave you birth:
Who raised your sturdy walls? And why on this sad bit of earth?

***"'Twas Samuel Mumma gave the land and helped to build this place,
Ten years before the war scourge, God had come and filled this space.
Those who gathered here to pray were simple folk, and strong.
They believed that, in God's goodness, war and slavery were wrong.
On Sundays when they gathered here 'twas God's will, not their own
They sought and followed faithfully. But now, those days are gone."***

Then tell me, little meetinghouse, of that awful fateful day
When on Antietam's near-by banks blue armies met the gray.

***"It's painful to remember that day's carnage, loss of life.
For nearly a century and a half I've re-lived those hours of strife.
I still hear the screams of men and beasts. Smell cannon smoke and blood.
Feel the shells that broke my walls, and grieve that senseless flood.
I had a glimpse of hell that day and tremble still in terror
At the awful price of human pride, stubbornness and error."***

So now, deserted meetinghouse, from what you've seen and heard,
What wisdom would you share with us. Oh, speak to us your word.

***"The Dunkers said it long ago and its truth continues still:
'All war is sin and goes against God's gracious sovereign will.'"***

way to upstate New York. No doubt it went to many reunions of the unit.

Eventually, when the soldier died, his family decided to send it back to Sharpsburg. But there was a problem: they didn't know any Dunkers. Then someone realized they did. Everyone in that part of the country knew John Lewis. He was that rarity, an African-American Dunker, who'd been baptized in Maryland, but moved further north to find employment. He still wore the plain garb and the long beard with no mustache. He was well known to and admired by Mark Twain, and that was before he risked his life to leap through the air and calm a runaway horse dragging a cart to doom, saving two of Twain's relatives from certain death in the process. That brought instant fame—and some fortune—to the hardworking Lewis, who some say served as the model for the runaway slave Jim in the Great American Novel *Huckleberry Finn*.

I like calling it the John Lewis Bible, and I wonder: Where would the John Lewis Bible open to automatically? What Bible passage would it point to if it could speak? John 13—the foundation text for the feet-washing—that signature ordinance which defines us even more than the mode of baptism which gave us our Dunker nickname? Matthew 5 to 7—the Sermon on the Mount—which describes the way Jesus taught us to live? James 1:27—which tells us that religion calls us to take care of widows and orphans in their distress and keep oneself unstained from the world?

I know where I would like it to open.

When I was in seminary, my favorite professor, Dr. Graydon F. Snyder, insisted

Mary Sue Rosenberger was inspired to write this poem following a visit to the Antietam battlefield in 2005 with her husband, Bruce. About the visit, she wrote in her journal: "In the center of those memory-soaked acres of granite monuments, mute cannons, and reconstructed split-rail fences stands a little Dunker church house. It is known as the Mumma meetinghouse because it was built on land donated by Samuel and Elizabeth Mumma for the construction of a house of worship for the local Dunker (German Baptist Brethren) congregation. The tiny structure was built a decade before the historic battle took place around it. One of the most famous images of the Battle of Antietam is an unfocused old photograph of that little white church house standing, battered and broken, in the midst of piles of dead soldiers. What a paradox: the humble meetinghouse of peaceful Dunkers standing in the midst of the bloody strife of the Battle of Antietam."



Frank Ramirez preaching at the Dunker Meetinghouse at the Antietam for the anniversary service. The Mumma Bible is pictured in the lower right of the photo.

that the letter of James should be called "The Brethren Bible." Its choice of works defining faith and its practical, New Testament Christianity, defined who we are as Brethren.

But, with all due respect to Grady, I think the letter of James, the Sermon on the Mount, and the ethics of Jesus are all grounded in Leviticus 19. That chapter, which I call the heart of the holiness code, enjoins all of God's people to be holy, as God is holy.

Leviticus may not rank as most people's favorite book of the Bible. Perhaps our first thought when we hear the word Leviticus is chloroform in print. We think of arcane rituals, priestly garments, tests for cleanliness, and warnings against uncleanness. Leviticus is the solid brick wall that stops a lot of folks cold in their tracks when they think they're going to read the Bible straight through and start out with Genesis 1:1 on January 1.

But Leviticus is a celebration of becoming a people pleasing to God, and holiness is not simply a matter of acting better than the neighbors. It's about loving the neighbors. All of them.

According to Bernard J. Bamberger, the objective of holiness "is not to produce a few saints, withdrawn from the world in contemplative or ascetic practices. Rather, does the Torah aim to create a holy people which displays its consecration to God's service in the normal day-to-day relations of farming, commerce, family living, and community affairs" (203).

It's all here: use honest weights and measures for everyone, obey the ten commandments, respect your elders, pay your workers on time and the full amount you promised, protect the rights of those on the margins, love your neighbor as yourself (Jesus got it from somewhere), and even more important (take notice, Arizona), you shall love the alien as yourselves. Scholars call this the most radical verse in the whole Bible. This is what it means to be holy.

But the truth be told, it doesn't matter where the Bible opens up, because Brethren are not meant to be proof-texters. We don't have a one-verse Bible. We believe in the whole Bible, and we believe we don't understand the whole Bible unless we walk through it together.

The fourth-century preacher John Goldenthroat Chrysostom said that we are not to read the scriptures, we're to *search* the scriptures. Study, talk, deliberate, and come back and talk some more a couple decades later.

So what does it mean to be this gathering of Dunkers in the Dunker Meeting House 124 years after one of the pivotal battles in the war that is still defining us? What do we Brethren have to say in a place like Antietam? This is a place of death and carnage, but also courage and conviction. The armies that met here were perhaps the most literate armies ever. The soldiers wrote copiously, and from their writings we know that one thing that sent them marching through the cornfield, or holding their place in the Bloody Lane, or crossing Burnside's Bridge was that both sides passionately believed in their cause, in the justice of their cause, in their heavenly duty to their cause. There is much to admire in this. What do we Brethren have to say in response to this bravery? Should we be ashamed we set ourselves apart?

It's not enough to simply say, "How ironic that this meeting house was at the center of such a terrible battle." There was nothing ironic about it. The war spilled out everywhere. The miracle would have been if some place had not been touched, either by invasion and despoiling the properties or by the loss of loved ones.

I'm struck by what was said in a Mennonite commentary on Revelation. Mennonites seem to have an edge on us

DID YOU KNOW

The Dunker meetinghouse was restored for the 100th anniversary of the battle in 1962 on the original foundation with as much original materials as possible and now stands as a beacon of peace on the battlefield.

—from the National Parks Service

Brethren when it comes to martyrs. So many of them died, and died in horrible ways, and they said such profound things when they died, much of it saved thanks to the Martyrs Mirror. In some ways we are poor cousins in relationship to them. But in that commentary on Revelation, the Mennonite author said that in the face of overwhelming evil, the faithful Christian has no other faithful choice but to die.

That's good as far as it goes. But I want to suggest that Brethren have learned to do something even braver. In the face of overwhelming pain and suffering, we as faithful Christians have had no other faithful choice but to live.

Our greatest witness here on this battlefield is that we are still here.

We're not going to die. We're going to live. Because we are the leaven, and we're needed to raise the whole lump.

Yes, we had Civil War martyrs—John Kline and a few others. We were sitting ducks in the south, since we've always stood against slavery, and at its core the war was about slavery. Every other issue that nearly brought the states to arms could be and was settled by compromise. But in the end there was no compromise about slavery, and Brethren knew it.

But most of us Brethren survived. P. R. Wrightsman, the minister from Limestone, Tenn., survived several dangerous situations and at the end of the war he led the faithful Brethren to their meeting house for love feast, even though it was surrounded by hostile Confederate soldiers. Although technically the soldiers could not have officially taken part in the communion because they were not baptized Brethren, most people don't realize that the food of love feast was shared with any who wanted some. Wrightsman's act of love was to share the food of the love feast with ragged and starving soldiers, who listened to him preach and told him they hoped to hear him again after the war.

I'm not sure what good we did the day of the battle, but afterward one Confederate who was nursed in a hospital for weeks afterward wrote home to tell his folks that the Dunker pastor came to visit him every day, and that the pastor's wife brought him her Bible every day for his use. Brethren

were among the residents of every stripe who buried the dead—and later led grieving relatives to graves and helped dig them up to show them one last glimpse of their loved ones.

We fail a lot. We fail to be holy. We fail to be faithful. We Brethren have had spectacular failures. But we also have quite a legacy: Heifer Project International, Church World Service, CROP, BVS, Brethren Service Commission, the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches, not to mention our hand in the founding of the Peace Corps and the United Nations.

The way I see it, being a holy people like God is holy; committing to living like Jesus 24/7 no matter what the cost, is a lot like chicken soup.

What good does it do for us to live like Jesus if everyone else is going to live like the devil? What good does it do to turn the other cheek when there are some who are perfectly willing to strike that cheek too?

What good is chicken soup in the face of all this terrible evil? All I can say is: "It couldn't hurt."

It couldn't hurt. And it just might heal the world. That's what being leaven is all about.

After Hurricane Camille hit the Gulf Coast decades ago, Brethren work crews showed up, like they always do. Many of the homes had been little more than shacks before they'd been destroyed. They didn't even have indoor plumbing. The Brethren workers didn't want to just restore the homes. They wanted to improve them. But they were told they could not install indoor plumbing if a home had been without it before the storm hit.

So one of the workers bought an old used toilet, and at every work site where the Brethren appeared the toilet appeared also. When government officials showed up they assumed this meant that the home used to have indoor plumbing, and they approved its installation.

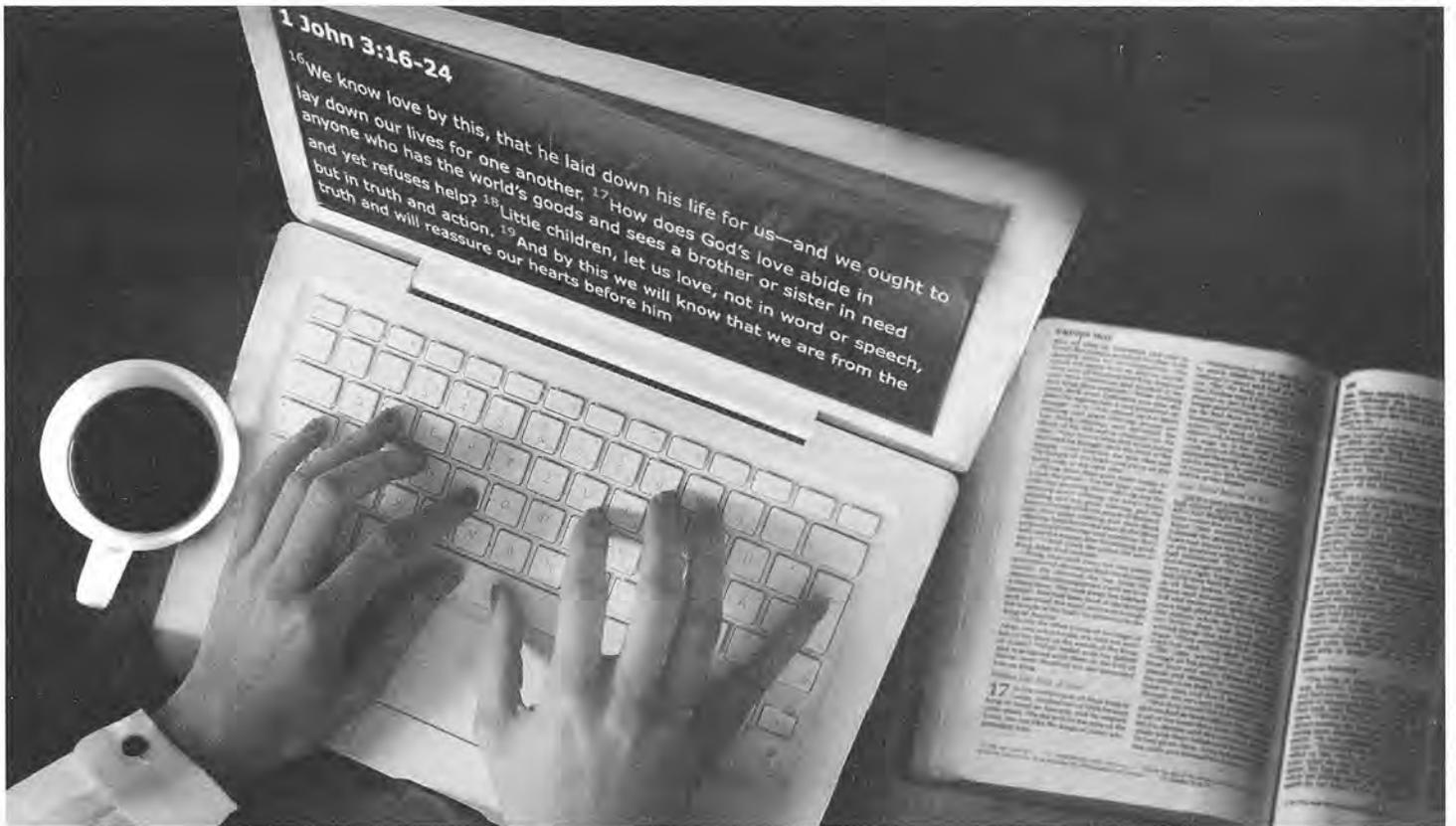
Brethren, we are sometimes called to such unorthodox holy living, searching for ways to bring the radical compassion of Jesus to a world that is often blind to it. **W**

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

JOURNEY OF THE MUMMA BIBLE

Daniel Miller donated the leather-bound volume to the Dunker congregation in 1853. After the battle Sergeant Nathan Dykeman, 107th New York, took the Bible. It remained in his home in Schuyler County, N.Y., until his death in 1903. Dykeman's sister decided to return the Bible to its rightful owners and sold it to the veterans organization of the 107th New York. They in turn gave it to Mr. John T. Lewis, an African-American who had moved from Maryland to New York. Lewis returned the Bible to the Sharpsburg congregation in 1903. It eventually was acquired by the Washington County Historical Society and donated to the National Park Service. Today the Mumma Bible is on display in the visitor center.

—from the National Parks Service



The writing life

by Christy J. Waltersdorff

Miss Kime would be so proud. She was my fourth-grade teacher at the Ore Valley Elementary School in York, Penn.

She spent a lot of time and patience teaching a class of active 9-year-olds the joys of creative writing. We studied poems and short stories then we wrote our own. We even wrote and created our own books. I still have mine: *The Christmas Fire* (a children's book) and *Jody's Africa*. She instilled in me a love for writing that remains with me to this day. Neither Miss Kime nor my fourth-grade self would have ever guessed where that love for writing would take me.

"Working pastors do more writing than almost anyone else," so declared writer and professor Lauren Winner at the 2010 Festival of Homiletics. I had never thought of it that way before, but I agree. A pastor's life is a writing life. We are mostly known for writing sermons, but we also write worship resources and prayers; newsletter articles and bulletin announcements;

children's stories and Sunday School lessons; thank-you notes and sympathy cards; letters of recommendation and press releases. We make our living and our life with words. So why would a pastor, who spends every day putting words together in sentences and paragraphs, choose to spend her sabbatical doing the same thing?

It is simple. Writing, to me, is a form of prayer—a spiritual discipline. As a pastor and a preacher, I sometimes feel as though I am writing just to meet a deadline. I don't always take the time to listen for the voice of God as I write. My sabbatical this past spring was an opportunity for me to immerse myself in the world of words, faith, writing, and reading. I had time to think about the meaning of words in our life of faith, and what it means for us to say that we are "people of the Word." I soon realized that we probably couldn't be Christians without words, and especially without the Word of God. "In the beginning," the book of Genesis tells us, God

spoke the world into being. With a word, chaos became creation. "Then God said...." And it was so.

In the Old Testament, God sent priests and prophets, kings and foreigners to speak the word of life to the people. They would listen for a while and then they would go off on their own, abandoning the word of life and love, abandoning God's invitation to a holy relationship. The words slowly lost their meaning for God's people. So the next step was to put flesh on the words. After all, how can you ignore the Word when it is standing right in front of you? The Gospel of John gives us some of the most beautiful and mysterious poetry in the Bible. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

I think what it means, quite simply, is that Jesus is the messenger, the word-bearer of God. In Jesus, human beings could read God's words, hear God's words and, literally, follow God's words down the road. They could see God's

very heart beating. Through the incarnation, God became human, so we could not only hear the Word, but we could touch the Word, be fed by the Word, be healed by the Word. Through the person of Jesus of Nazareth we see that God's words aren't just a good theory to be read or an interesting doctrine to be studied, they don't just tell a compelling story, they are living actions of love that changed, and continue to change, lives.

Jesus is God's memoir writ large on the face of the earth. He is God's autobiography telling us, if we are brave enough to read it, "This is who I am. This is where I have been. This is where I am going. I would like you to come too."

As pastors and preachers, we are keepers and tellers of this Word. We stand in the pulpit with no other foundation but this Word. If we are writers, then we must also be readers and not only of books, but also of God's creation, God's people, nature, and the world around. Everything we see, hear, feel, touch, and taste is covered with God's fingerprints. It is up to us to read those messages and then share them with our congregations.

What I have learned through my time of Sabbath rest is that because Jesus is the Word of God, we should not take our own words lightly. Psychologist and writer Mary Pipher calls us, through our writing, "to create a grammar of hope and a syntax of salvation." She believes in the power of words to change the world. And so do I.

Our words and our writing express just how seriously we take the Word of God, Jesus Christ. With our words we can both hurt and heal; cut and cure; wound and welcome.

With our words—spoken or written—we crucify and cleanse, accuse and affirm, ruin and revive, break and bless. Our words can invoke chaos or creation. Our words can be hateful or hopeful.

As people of the Word, our words matter. 

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

Resources for the craft of pastoral writing: *Novel Preaching: Tips from Top Writers on Crafting Creative Sermons*, Alyce M. McKenzie, Westminster John Knox Press, 2010.



Let's grow together

Welcome to the new Everence – the result of MMA and Mennonite Financial Federal Credit Union growing together to offer you complete financial services rooted in faith and values.

Talk to your local representative or visit www.everence.com to learn about the new benefits of becoming a member.

2101345

Peace Witness Ministries

Brethren Advocating for Things That Make for Peace

- › Alleviating Hunger
- › Advocating Conscientious Objection
- › Promoting Brethren Values
- › Seeking the Elimination of Violence
- › Protecting God's Creation
- › Creating Pathways Out of Poverty
- › Connecting with Congregations
- › Seeking Justice for ALL

Join us as we seek to make God's realm a reality in this world!

Find us on the web: Brethren.org/peace
 To Receive Action Alerts: jblevins@brethren.org
 Twitter: @CoB_Peace
 Facebook: Brethren Advocacy



Church of the Brethren

Saving Christians and other wretches

by Ken Gible



Where do you stand on this business of amazing grace? I don't mean the hymn. I mean the *idea* of grace, the *doctrine* of it. Do you believe that the mistakes of the past, the wrongs a person has done, even very grievous wrongs, can be wiped away once and for all by God's love and mercy? Can someone, can anyone, can you, be freed from a life-time burden of guilt by the grace of God? Is that grace poured out, without condition, so liberally, that it can, in the words of the famous hymn, save the person who once was lost, give sight to blind eyes?

That's what the Christian faith proclaims, you know. Many volumes of theology have been written on the subject of grace, but sometimes it finds its best expression in the most unlikely places. A character in one of John Irving's novels puts it like this:

The point is, God doesn't love us because we're smart or because we're good. We're stupid and we're bad and God loves us anyway.... (John Irving, *A Prayer for Owen Meany*)

That says it about as plainly as it can be said: God doesn't love you or me because we're smart or even because we're good. By the normal, human standards of justice, this idea of grace presents some serious problems.

Some time back I listened to a presentation by a college philosophy professor. His subject was the religion of Islam. He told us that the Islamic faith stresses justice: good behavior is to be rewarded, bad behavior is to be punished, both on the human level and on the sacred level. The presenter said that even though he was a Christian minister and had many times taught and preached the doctrine of grace, he thought that the approach of Islam made a whole lot more sense.

It does, doesn't it? Shouldn't good behavior be rewarded and bad behavior suffer consequences? There's something in us that objects to sinful deeds going unpunished, even our own sinful deeds. A character in another contemporary novel expresses this point of view. Referring to the practice in Catholicism of the

faithful declaring sins to a priest in the confessional booth, this character says:

Confession is a thing I can't agree with. I say it's cheap. You kneel down in that box and say what you done. And then, basically, you get off scot-free, only cranking out a few Hail Marys or some Our Fathers. No restitution demanded, no community service. (Louise Erdrich, *The Bingo Palace*).

The Bible itself struggles with the issue of God's grace. Some passages of scripture demand the highest moral standards of the faithful. Other passages tell of God's great love for everyone, even for the vilest of sinners.

Two examples:

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. (James 2:14,17)

If the writers of scripture can't seem to agree, then we can perhaps be excused for being a bit confused ourselves.

One of the best explorations of this debate I've come across appears in Anne Tyler's novel, *Saint Maybe*. The story is about Ian, a young man who blames himself for causing his brother's death in a car accident. Actually, the death resulted from circumstances beyond Ian's control, but he blames himself nonetheless. Distraught by guilt, Ian one evening wanders into a store-front church. During the prayer time, he says to the small group of worshipers: "Pray for me to be good again. Pray for me to be forgiven."

After the service, Ian is feeling better. He asks the minister, "Don't you think I'm forgiven?"

"Goodness, no," Reverend Emmett said briskly.

Ian's mouth fell open. He wondered if he'd misunderstood. He said, "I'm *not* forgiven?"

When I bring my life into the presence of the Holy One, I really don't want justice. I don't want what I deserve. I want mercy, divine mercy. I want God's amazing grace.

"Oh, no."

"But ... I thought that was kind of the point," Ian said. "I thought God forgives everything."

"He does," Reverend Emmett said. "But you can't just say, 'I'm sorry, God.' Why, anyone could do that much! You have to offer reparation—concrete, practical reparation, according to the rules of our church."
(Anne Tyler, *Saint Maybe*)

The form that Ian's "reparation" takes is the financial support of his brother's stepchildren. It's a very heavy burden for such a young man, but he sacrifices his own plans and future in order to atone for his guilt.

At the end of the novel, the reader is left to wonder whether Ian did the right thing. On the one hand, he did make a positive difference in the lives of his brother's stepchildren. On the other hand, he spends much of his own life suffering from a burden of guilt that even his good deeds do not eliminate. He doesn't find grace until the very end of the novel. And it comes in a way that has nothing to do with his sacrifice.

So, where do *you* come out on this business of amazing grace? Maybe it *is* too easy, too cheap. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian martyred by the Nazis, warned of what he called "cheap grace." In his own words:

[With cheap grace] no contrition is required, still less any real desire to be delivered from sin. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance...grace without discipleship, grace without the cross. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*)

Bonhoeffer's words ring true. Surely it's a mistake to think of God as an indulgent grandparent who turns a blind eye to the wrongdoings of humanity. Our faith teaches that the cost of salvation was the cross of Calvary. This is *costly* grace indeed. But it is God's grace that saves us, not our own efforts.

John Newton was the son of an English sea captain.

At age 11, Newton went to sea himself and, after some years, captained his own ship, one that carried African slaves. Converted to Christian faith, Newton left his old life behind to become a minister and hymn writer. Remembering his former lifestyle and his part in the evils of slavery, Newton wrote the words that have become beloved by millions.

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.

The editors of *The Brethren Hymnal* (1951) took some liberties with Newton's words. Apparently the editors objected to the word "wretch." I suppose to them it sounded so... well... so *wretched*. Most people who sing this hymn aren't wretches, the editors probably reasoned, they're good people, most of them churchgoers. So they substituted for the words, "saved a wretch like me," the phrase, "saveth men like me."

It was a bad decision, not only because it used that non-inclusive word "men," but because not one of us escapes the state of wretchedness at various times in our lives. We mess up, sometimes badly. We slip into petty hatreds, we betray confidences, we remain silent in the face of injustice, we break promises, we fail to love our neighbors as ourselves, we fail even to love ourselves properly. There are times when we feel our lives amount to nothing more or less than colossal failures. We may even hate ourselves.

Wretch is the word for it. A wretch like me. A wretch like you.

When I bring my life into the presence of the Holy One, I really don't want justice. I don't want what I deserve. I want mercy, divine mercy. I want God's amazing grace.

What do *you* want? ❧

Ken Gibble, a retired pastor, lives in Greencastle, Pa. You can visit his poetry blog at kenslines.blogspot.com.

Beyond a dying sun I saw
a vision on the sea
of golden sails full billowed
on the wind.
And echoing above the waves
a voice called after me,
"God's dwelling place is
with you till the end."

Refrain:

*I see a new world coming
when everyone is free!
And all shall be God's people
in justice, love and peace.*

For God at last shall wipe away
the tears from every eye.
The sting of death shall pierce
the heart no more.
When grieving turns to laughter
all the pain from us shall fly,
and former ways lie bleached
upon the shore

(Refrain)

Though hatred rages on the wind
and wars defile the land,
I see those golden sails
still coming strong,
for through the eyes of faith still shines
the vision of the Lamb,
and o'er a weary earth
there rings this song

(Refrain)

Text and music copyright © 1970 Steve Engle
and the Church of the Brethren, LaVerne, Calif.



Steve Engle in 1973 as he composes "The Saint Judas Passion." The score for the musical is spread out before him on the desk.

Behind the hymn:

Beyond a dying sun

by Jim Tuten

As a convert to the Church of the Brethren and as someone with a musical background, I enjoyed the exposure to a hymn tradition different from my Southern Baptist upbringing. One of the hymns that stuck me the first time I sang it on a Sunday morning was "Beyond A Dying Sun" (*I See a New World Coming*). Only later did I realize that the composer,

Steve Engle, stood not far from me in the Stone Church of the Brethren (Huntingdon, Pa.).

A few years later I had the pleasure of working with Steve during the debut of his musical, *Rumors of Angels: A Story of Mary and Joseph*, on the campus at Juniata College.

Brethren who remember the turbulent late 1960s and early 1970s may appreciate the origin of this

hymn, but for the generations that have grown up since then, a little background about Engle's hymn may help them appreciate it even more.

You wrote *Beyond a Dying Sun* in 1970 expressly for Annual Conference that year. How did that commission come about?

SE: In the spring of 1970, after graduating from Juniata College and finishing my Brethren Volunteer Service in southern California, I was working as youth director and head of special music projects at the La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren. Pastor Leland Wilson was scheduled to give the Sunday morning sermon at Annual Conference that year and asked if I would be interested in trying to write a song to go along with his sermon. His scriptural text included Revelation 21:1-4.

Can you describe the composition process for both the lyrics and the music?

SE: Armed with this biblical text, I returned to my apartment, got out my guitar, and started strumming. The music came rather easily, which doesn't happen often enough. The text took longer, which for me is quite normal. The intent was to create more of a folk song than a hymn. The original music had four-part harmony only on the choruses. The verses were unison.

The lyrics (*wars defile the land, hatred rages...*) seem to speak to the conflicts of that era, such as civil rights and the Vietnam War. What inspired the text?

SE: Some of it was inspired by the conflicts of the era, as you mentioned, though unfortunately there seems always to be conflict somewhere about something, so it is also a universal theme.

How did you come up with the imagery of the ships?

SE: Frankly, I don't know where it came from. It was just a product of the creative process which seemed to work. Much of the rest of the lyrics come from the Revelation text.

Revelation 21:1-4

¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (NIV)

What has the life of this song been like since its debut?

SE: It was first printed in the 1970 Annual Conference issue of MESSENGER and then in the (red) Brethren Songbook, where Brethren composer Donald Frederick helped with the harmonization.

The text was revised in 1984 to change some gender-specific language, and was printed in the "blue" *Hymnal: A Worship Book* in 1992 thanks to Nancy Faus-Mullen. The Mennonite co-sponsors of the book were against its inclusion specifically because those "golden sails" weren't scriptural, as I understand. Without Nancy's firm resolve, it wouldn't be there. It has also been published in several other denominations' hymnals and songbooks.

Most recently, Nancy commissioned me to arrange a hymn-anthem version for 2008 NOAC (National Older Adult Conference), which was also sung at the 2009 San Diego Annual Conference.

Steve Engle lives in Alexandria, Pa. where he continues to compose music and perform his puppet ministry. You can learn more about Steve at his website: <http://www.steve-engle.com/> and www.dunkertownworkshop.com. 

Jim Tuten is associate professor of history at Juniata College and a member of Stone Church of the Brethren, Huntingdon, Pa.

What is so great about 'Beyond A Dying Sun'?

Singing this hymn, I can see myself in the implied position of a Christian—sitting on the dock of the bay, to echo Otis Redding's classic song—consumed with morose thoughts of the dark times in which he or she is living. But instead of despair, the Christian has a beautiful vision of a ship sailing into the harbor, calling to mind the English Christmas carol heralding Christ's arrival. Our concerned poet now sees the grievous troubles of the day as passing, only a blip on God's long horizon, and finds comfort in his faith that at some point in the future "justice, love, and peace," will replace wars.

It is this Christian hopefulness in difficult times that I find inspiring enough to give a full-throated voice to it each time I get the opportunity. —Jim Tuten



Luke 15: The story of the two brothers

The dysfunctional family revisited

by Bob Neff

We began this series back in January by a study of the dysfunctional family of Jacob and his sons. The younger son, Joseph, is given preferential treatment that brings the hatred of his brothers. They sell him into slavery, and he ends up in a distant land. The family is reunited by the action of an older brother, Judah, that brings the reunification of the family during the time of a great famine.

The story of the "Prodigal Son" in Luke features similarities.

The younger son receives preferential treatment, leaves the household, and goes to a far country. A crisis ensues, not only in the loss of wealth by the younger son but by a famine in the land. The family is reunited when the younger son returns home, but the discord in the family—at least for the older brother—is only heightened by the son's return.

The teaching context in Luke 15 is defined by the comments of the scribes and Pharisees who accuse Jesus of "welcoming sinners and eating with them." Jesus responds to this criticism by telling the parables of "The Lost Sheep" and "The Lost Coin" that celebrate the joy of finding that which was lost. The application of the parables for the religious community is reiterated at the end of each parable: "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (15:10).

Jesus then tells a story that is one of the best known in the Christian community, "The Parable of the Prodigal Son." The parable opens with a jolt: The younger son asks for his inheritance. Such action is paramount to saying, "Father, I wish you were dead." Property was not distributed to the next generation before the death of the owner. Asking for this, leaving the community, and then squandering this fortune among the Gentiles would mean that this younger son would be banished from his hometown; he could not return (See Kenneth Bailey, *The Cross and the Prodigal: Luke 15 Through the Eyes of Middle Eastern Peasants*, p. 42ff).

As soon as the younger son leaves, his situation deteriorates. He loses his inheritance; at the same time a famine hits. He must violate another tradition by becoming a swineherd. He cannot even touch the fodder provided for these pigs. He is starving. He decides to return home in order to survive and knows that shunning and ridicule will await him. He rehearses what he will say when he returns. I am not always sure about this son's repentance. Is it an act of contrition or a strategy to survive for the time being? He finds himself in a situation

Prodigal Son by Rembrandt van Rijn, c.1668-69



where, to survive, he must return home.

What about the older son? He appears to be in the background. Kenneth Bailey, in the book cited above, asserts that at this point in the story the elder brother should intervene as a mediator, much as Judah does in Genesis 44. Any villager in the Middle East would assume that the older son will do everything possible to keep the family intact. The refusal to do anything by the elder brother is a clear indication that the relationships in the family are broken. Even though he is duty bound to seek the family's restoration, the older son remains silent and at a distance (Bailey, p. 45).

When the younger son is on his way home and at a great distance from the town, his father sees him and runs to meet him. For a patriarchal figure such behavior is an embarrassment. Fathers don't behave in this way, particularly in the Middle East. Perhaps it's the only way the son can re-enter the community, but the father's action is unique and unexpected. The father embraces him, shields the son from communal abuse, and welcomes him home with an extravagant party. The father acts out of compassion and love for this wayward son. Such an outpouring of love by a male figure runs counter to every impulse of a patriarchal society.

Henri Nouwen wrote two books on this parable and traveled to Russia to observe the painting of the *Prodigal Son* by Rembrandt. After viewing the painting for several days, he came to the following conclusion: "The life force I saw was more than a father. The Divine I saw was also a Mother. I knew in my heart how the reminder by Jesus to become like a child, so as to enter into the kingdom, was portrayed as a return to the womb of God" (*Home Tonight: Further Reflections on the Parable of The Prodigal Son*, p. 17). Out of this experience he found his way home and could embrace his responsibilities at L'Arche Daybreak, as a priest to this community. The undeserved and unrestrained love of God that drives this biblical story was embraced by Nouwen.

Again, what about the older son? Clearly he represents the religious community with which this chapter in Luke began. These religious leaders believe the father's favor rests with them. Actually a good portion of the parable is directed to the behavior of the older brother who is in the field when the party starts. He has been working, probably as a supervisor, in the fields. He hears the music and the dancing and discovers that his brother has returned safe and sound. He becomes angry and refuses to join the party. When the father discovers that he

is there, he goes to meet him as he did the younger son.

We discover a series of details about the older son. He has no interest in family relationships as we would normally expect of the older son. He refers to his brother as "this son of yours." He whimpers that he has never had a party, has always worked hard, and never had even a goat to celebrate his hard work. He has been working as a slave, probably not out of loyalty to his father but for the property that awaits him at his father's death. Like so many families that I have observed over the years, this family seems to be destroyed by inheritance issues as well. Relationships are pushed away for the right of ownership. The older son doesn't care about the family. He cares about his claims for the family inheritance.

The father seeks to comfort him with the statement, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours" (v. 31). First of all, the father reassures him that he is his son. Secondly, he tells him his inheritance is intact. Thirdly, there is no restriction on what belongs to him. The father holds nothing back. Is this son able to see that which the father offers, unrestrained and unlimited love? Isn't that the greatest gift?

The passage in Luke opened with the observation that "there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents than over the ninety-nine persons who need no repentance" (v. 6). Isn't this the point of the whole section? We are all in need of God's love. Who of us can declare that God owes us this unbounded compassion? The parable is written about us, the older brothers and sisters, who feel we have labored in the field and deserve our inheritance. The parable reminds us that we are dependent on God's grace just as much as the younger son. It is also a reminder that we should speak on behalf of all those in need and be ready to act as any older child should, to assist the young when they move away from home.

We are the audience today. We may witness and embrace the unbounded love of God as Nouwen did and become changed and freed. Jesus left the story open-ended. We can choose the ending we desire, not just for these characters, but more importantly, for ourselves! Scripture invites us to participate in God's way in wisdom's path. **✠**

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 was previously on the faculty of Bethany Theological Seminary, served as general secretary of the Church of the Brethren General Board, and was president of Juniata College. He lives in State College, Pa. This article is the ninth installment in a year-long Bible study series on wisdom literature.

We are the audience today. We may witness and embrace the unbounded love of God as Nouwen did and become changed and freed. Jesus left the story open-ended.



Courtesy of On Earth Peace

International Day of Prayer for Peace events connects Brethren around the world. Left: A young artist works on Brooklyn (N.Y.) First Church of the Brethren's new peace pole as part of the observance. Below: Breakthru Church International, a group of South African Anabaptists, carried out a listening initiative in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Below right: A Muslim woman offers up prayer for peace and understanding during an event held by Durham (N.C.) Churches in Action.



Day of prayer for peace brings hope for future beyond violence

More than 90 congregations and community organizations in 20 states and three countries took part in the International Day of Prayer for Peace as partners with On Earth Peace. These communities joined tens of thousands of people on five continents who participated in events in the week surrounding Sept. 21, 2010—the sixth observance of the World Council of Churches' International Day of Prayer for Peace, which joins the United Nations' 25-year commitment to an International Day of Peace.

On Earth Peace's more than 90 partner groups planned public vigils, interfaith worship services, prayer drop-in times, childrens' mural making, installation of peace poles, and many other events.

As part of the activities, Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN—the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) launched an effort in Jos, Nigeria, to build bridges among Christians and Muslims as they shared their mutual concerns for peace following sectarian violence. Prayer services in Jos included both Muslims and Christians praying for peace in the wake of church burnings, looting, and killings.

In Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, Breakthru Church International sent 30 people door-to-door wearing bright orange

T-shirts to ask about obstacles to peace and to point to signs of hope in preparation for a prayer service and a later public meeting to build hope and investment in their community.

Several prayer services in the United States brought people of different faiths together to pray, an action that seemed prophetic in the face of rising anti-Muslim sentiment.

"Observing the International Day of Prayer for Peace is more than a day. It is a process," said Matt Guynn of On Earth Peace. "Wherever there is hard-heartedness, violence, or poverty, there is a crooked path that God can make smooth. That doesn't happen overnight or in a year, but over time, in each heart, in each village, town, and city, in each society, as we work to build a culture of positive peace and active nonviolence.

"In local group after local group, we see that each year, there is a growing sense of possibility for God's peace. The prayers offered up each Sept. 21 are an opportunity for community members to ask God for help, for inspiration, for guidance for overcoming evil with good."

For more information contact Matt Guynn, program director and coordinator of Peace Witness, at mguynn@onearthpeace.org or 503-775-1636.

Disaster ministry opens project in Tennessee

Brethren Disaster Ministries is establishing a new home rebuilding site in Tennessee, in an area hit by devastating floods in May. A grant of \$25,000 from the Church of the Brethren's Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) is supporting the new project site.

The EDF also has given grants to con-

tinue work at two current rebuilding sites of Brethren Disaster Ministries: \$30,000 for the Hurricane Katrina Rebuilding Site 4 in Chalmette, La., in a grant expected to carry the project through the end of 2010; and \$25,000 for continued work in the area of Winamac, Ind., along the Tippecanoe River following heavy rains and flooding in 2008 and 2009, where the response is expected to

be complete as of the beginning of 2011.

The grant request for the Louisiana site noted, "Since doubling volunteer capacity in the summer of 2008, Brethren Disaster Ministries' monthly expenses have nearly doubled as well.... With continued need and financial and volunteer support, BDM staff anticipates a continued presence in the region through mid-year 2011."

Brethren periodicals to be digitized

The committee working to develop the Brethren Digital Archives is closing in on its goal of sending the first phase of documents for digitizing by the end of the year. The group's long-term mission is to digitize Brethren periodicals dating back to 1851, when Henry Kurtz began publishing the *Monthly Gospel-Visitor* (forerunner of MESSENGER magazine).

The Brethren Digital Archives is a collaborative effort of publishers, libraries, and archives affiliated with the various Brethren groups that trace their spiritual ancestry back to Alexander Mack. To accomplish the digitizing, the BDA committee has partnered with Lyrasis, the nation's largest regional membership organization serving libraries and information professionals. Grant funds make it possible to scan these publications for approximately \$50,000, far less than the original estimate of \$150,000.

For a full list of the partner Brethren groups and the periodicals to be digitized, visit www.brethrendigitalarchives.org.

The Brethren Historical Library and Archives has been represented by archivist Ken Shaffer. Several committee members who attended the September meeting of the Brethren Digital Archives are pictured above. *From left:* Liz Cutler Gates, Brethren Missionary Herald; Darryl Filbrun, Old German Baptist Brethren, New Conference; Gary Kochheiser, Conservative Grace Brethren; Steve Bayer, Old German Baptist Brethren; Paul Stump, Brethren Heritage Center; Eric Bradley, Morgan Library, Grace College and Seminary; Larry Heisey, Brethren Heritage Center. *Seated:* Shirley Frick, Bible Monitor.



Courtesy of Liz Cutler Gates

Selective Service agrees to memo of understanding

A Memo of Understanding between the federal government's Selective Service System and the Church of the Brethren has been signed by Stan Noffsinger, general secretary of the denomination, and Lawrence G. Romo, director of Selective Service.

The memo represents an agreement that goes into effect in the event a military draft is reinstated in the United States. In that event, the Church of the Brethren working through Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) will be able to place conscientious objectors assigned to alternative service work.

"It's good to be prepared," said BVS director Dan McFadden. "Do I think there will be a draft? No."

Global Mission Partnerships executive director Jay Wittmeyer commented, "We need to be prepared and maintain our historical position just in case."

A similar agreement recently was made between Selective Service and Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) and the Mennonite Mission Network. MVS is a program of the Mennonite Mission Network, which is the mis-

sion agency of Mennonite Church USA.

McFadden noted that both agreements are the fruit of a number of years of effort by the Church of the Brethren and the Mennonites to maintain a relationship with the Selective Service System and with each other's provisions for conscientious objectors.

He said a key part of the agreement is that "in the event of a draft, the Church of the Brethren and BVS would be in a position to negotiate the details of being a site for conscientious objectors."

Among other stipulations in the memo, the church and BVS will meet a legal obligation to place alternative service workers "in work that benefits the nation's health, safety, and interests"; a Selective Service officer will be assigned as a liaison to the church; Selective Service will provide transportation to and from their residences for alternative service workers placed with BVS; and the church and BVS will supervise the alternative service workers assigned to them. The agreement is considered provisional and will be reviewed every 36 months.

UPCOMINGEVENTS

Nov. 4 Faith essentials for Anabaptists with Stuart Murray Williams, Elizabethtown (Pa.) College

Nov. 5 Faith essentials for Anabaptists, Frederick (Md.) Church of the Brethren

Nov. 6 Faith essentials for Anabaptists, First Church of the Brethren, Roanoke, Va.

Nov. 6-13 Haiti Workcamp, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Nov. 9 Faith essentials for Anabaptists, Somerset (Pa.) Church of the Brethren

Nov. 7 National Junior High Sunday

Nov. 11 Intercultural Competency event, First Church of the Brethren, Harrisburg, Pa.

Nov. 12-13 Children's Disaster Services training workshop, Salem Church of the Brethren, Englewood, Ohio

Nov. 13-14 Powerhouse Regional Youth Conference, Manchester College, North Manchester, Ind.

Nov. 14 Stewardship Sunday

Nov. 14 Deacon Training Workshop, Bermudian Church of the Brethren, East Berlin, Pa.

Nov. 14-18 Outdoor Ministries Association Annual Retreat, Camp Eder, Fairfield, Pa.

Nov. 19-20 Brethren Benefit Trust Board meeting, in southern California

Nov. 28 First Sunday of Advent

Sowing Seeds... Harvesting Hope

Now available
in your church...



Learn from this 10-minute video how a growing project in your community can connect with small-holder farmers in poor countries abroad. See how Church of the Brethren and other members of Foods Resource Bank help transform people and the land that sustains them in Guatemala and Nicaragua. Use an accompanying discussion guide to weigh in on ways of growing lasting solutions to world hunger.

Video and guide produced by the Church of the Brethren with partners Foods Resource Bank, Church World Service, and United Methodist Committee on Relief. Distributed to congregations in November 2010 Source packet.



For further information contact
**Church of the Brethren
Global Food Crisis Fund**

800 323-8039, ext. 264
brethren.org/globalfoodcrisisfund

PERSONNEL CHANGES

An interim ministry team was announced by Southeastern District, as of Aug. 1. The team will be in place while a search process for a district executive continues. The three-member team includes Wallace Cole, Loretta Sheets, and John Markwood. Cole is responsible for pastoral support and consultation/conversation, and pastoral placement, and is the district contact person. Sheets is carrying out administrative duties such as forms and mailings, Weekly News and Visions, prayer requests, and other tasks as needed. John Markwood is the district designee to assist treasurer Beverly Graeber with financial matters.

Terrell (Terry) Barkley starts Nov. 1

as director of the Brethren Historical Library and Archives (BHLA), located at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill. Barkley is currently archivist at Marion (Ala.) Military Institute. He was archivist/museum curator at Bridgewater (Va.) College from 1993-2005 and has chaired the Shenandoah District Historical Committee, contributed to the Brethren Encyclopedia, and served on several Brethren- and Mennonite-related committees including the Elder John Kline Bicentennial Celebration and the Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center in Harrisonburg, Va. He holds a degree in history/political science from the University of North Alabama, a master of



The summer orientation training unit for Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) was held in Harrisonburg, Va., from July 18-Aug. 6. The new volunteers, their hometowns or congregations, and their project placements:

Front row (from left): Katherine Philipson of Portland, Ore., to Jubilee USA Network in Washington, D.C.; Cori Miner of North Manchester, Ind., to Su Casa Catholic Worker House in Chicago, Ill., and Greenhill YMCA in Newcastle, Northern Ireland; Martin Kutter of St. Katharinen, Germany, to Innisfree Village in Crozet, Va.; Rachel Reeder of Arlington, Va., to Emmaus Community in Rouen, France; Susan and Patrick Starkey of Ninth St. Church of the Brethren in Roanoke, Va., to Casa de Esperanza de los Niños in Houston, Texas; Anna and her mother Jill Emmelhainz, of Ostrander, Ohio, who along with husband, Randy Emmelhainz, and son Jacob will be serving at Lybrook (N.M.) Community Ministries.

Middle row: Jacob Emmelhainz; John Clucas of Glen Ellyn, Ill., to Abode in Fremont, Calif.; Simon Brendel of Berlin, Germany, to Project PLASE in Baltimore, Md.; Rebecca Marek of Crestline, Ohio, to Holywell Consultancy and the Junction in Derry, Northern Ireland.

Back row: Ellen Zemlin of Carmel, Ind., to EIRENE in Neuwied, Germany; Randy Emmelhainz; Adam Stokes of North Manchester, Ind., to Su Casa Catholic Worker House in Chicago, Ill., and Greenhill YMCA in Newcastle, Northern Ireland; Daniel Hoellinger of Waldkraiburg, Germany, to Abode in Fremont, Calif.; Leon Buschina of Vaihingen, Germany, to Project PLASE in Baltimore, Md.

arts degree in theology from the Citadel, a master of library science degree from the University of Alabama specializing in archives and special collections, and has done doctoral study in history and historical preservation.

Kirk Carpenter, customer service specialist for Brethren Press, resigned effective Sept. 17. He began working for Brethren Press on May 12, 2008, just after completing a bachelor of arts degree in Biblical and Theological Studies from North Park University in Chicago. He has helped maintain an e-commerce site, monitored inventory, and assisted with the book store at National Youth Conference.

Lina Dagnew began Aug. 2 as editorial assistant for *Gather 'Round*, a Christian education curriculum jointly published by Brethren Press and Mennonite Publishing Network. Originally from Ethiopia, she graduated in January from Manchester College in Indiana, majoring in political science and economics. At Manchester, she worked in the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Office of the President, and was a writing consultant and peer tutor. She also has served advocacy internships in Chicago and Montana.

Amanda (Mandy) Garcia has begun as coordinator of donor invitation for the Church of the Brethren. Her responsibilities include promoting and securing online and direct mail gifts, working in the Stewardship and Donor Development department. She comes to the position from Brethren Benefit Trust, where she has been administrative office assistant since February 2008. She is a graduate of Judson University in Elgin, Ill., where she earned a degree in worship arts/communications and media.

Irvin and Nancy Sollenberger Heishman have announced a decision not to seek renewal of their service agreement as co-coordinators of the Church of the Brethren mission in the Dominican Republic. The couple will end their service as mission coordinators in early December, after serving in the DR for seven and a half years. Nancy Heishman also finishes her service as director of the Theological Program in the DR, a position she assumed in the fall of 2008. During their years in the DR, the Heishmans have provided coordination for the mission, working with leadership of Iglesia de los Hermanos (Dominican Church of the Brethren) and providing guidance and support to the DR church and to others involved

in the mission including Brethren Volunteer Service workers. Key ministries of the mission during their term included theological education, a BVS/BRF volunteer house, a micro-loan program, and guidance and accompaniment to the DR church during a difficult time of conflict in previous years. Until June 2011 they will do mission interpretation in the American church community.

Randy Yoder has resigned as director of Insurance Services with Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT) effective Dec. 31. He will continue to work with Insurance Services as client development representative in a part-time arrangement through at least June 30. Yoder began his current assignment as director of Insurance Plans in March 2006, and has worked since then to stabilize the Brethren Medical Plan.

Willie Hisey Pierson began Sept. 21 as director of Insurance Services for Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT). He has been a business owner in the home health field and has more than 16 years of experience in the insurance industry, including underwriting. Additionally, while working for American Family Insurance, he was credited with developing and executing marketing strategies which incorporated multicultural awareness. He has sat on the Church of the Brethren's Mission and Ministry Board and currently is on the board of directors for Athletes Against Drugs (Chicago). He attends Neighborhood Church of the Brethren, Montgomery, Ill.

James S. Replogle has been appointed operations director of On Earth Peace. He will handle daily operations for the organization, create and implement longterm strategy, supervise paid and volunteer staff, expand program income and constituencies, and provide leadership in developing program and financial plans and objectives. Replogle and executive director Bob Gross will share authority for the organization as a whole. The new appointment allows Gross to focus more on fundraising and development. Replogle also continues as president and owner of J.S. Replogle & Associates. In prior positions with the church, he has served on the board of directors for On Earth Peace, directed the Brethren Foundation for Brethren Benefit Trust, directed planned giving for the former General Board, and was a general manager of Brethren Press.



We've been in the business of insuring Churches for more than 100 years.

With the peace of mind that a Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company policy brings, your church leaders can be free to concentrate on the work to which God has called them.

Brethren
MUTUAL AID AGENCY
A Mutual Aid Association Company

For more information call
800-255-1243
or visit our website at
M A A B R E T H R E N . C O M

© 9/9/BMAA/1/3/P

Will we choose to fail or succeed?

According to Jared Diamond, in his book *Collapse*, the Norse in Greenland starved to death not only because they deforested the landscape, but also because they refused to learn basic survival skills from the Inuits who shared the shoreline. The Anasazi civilization of the American Southwest collapsed through a combination of climate change, environmental damage, and population growth. The Easter Islanders refused to unite and cooperatively preserve their fragile ecosystem, so their religious and political practice of creating those impressive stone faces ended in deforestation and social breakdown.



FRANK RAMIREZ

On the other hand, the Tokugawa shoguns of Japan and the 16th century German landowners made deliberate choices to reforest their depleted countrysides. Environmental choices made in the Dominican Republic led to markedly better results than those made in the Haitian half of the island. The isolation of the Tikopia Islands

forced choices that created a sustainable 3,000-year-old society.

Maybe you are wondering why I'm reviewing a five-year-old book. Well, good books, unlike bread, don't go out of date and get all moldy.

More important, what does this book have to do with being Brethren? I could say we Brethren like used books because they cost less—but the real answer is "Everything."

The book's subtitle suggests that societies make conscious choices that lead to their success and failure. Jared Diamond traces choices that led to the rise and fall of several "lost" civilizations, such as the Maya, the Anasazi, Easter Island, and the Greenland Norse. Utilizing archaeological, historical, and climatological evidence, Diamond makes their collapse even more fascinating by removing the mystery.

But this is not just a book about the past. Diamond reex-

amines the histories of Haiti and the Dominican Republic (who share the same island), the social breakdowns in Somalia and Rwanda, and economic stresses in Montana, where he lives part of the year, to ask what hope there is for human society in the 21st century.

Diamond examines the multiple problems we face through the lens of a five-point framework: environmental fragility or resilience, climate change, hostile neighbors, decreased support from friendly neighbors, society's response. And despite the complexity of his material, he writes in a clear, understandable style.

Diamond warns against the flip answers that many use to address environmental concerns, as well as the blinders that limit most political discourse to the current 24-hour cycle. And he reminds us forcefully that we are all connected. First World residents must make tough choices in order to be able to accommodate the aspirations of those in the Third World. Despite all this, Diamond is cautiously optimistic.

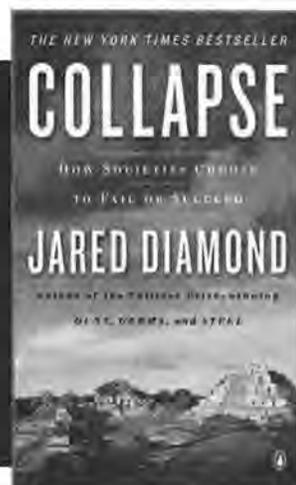
The collapse of the Greenland Norse might be the most instructive. One of the reasons for their demise is that their brand of Christianity required them to waste resources on elaborate church hierarchies and buildings. Choices based on religion weakened more than one of the societies examined.

Brethren have tried to be good stewards of the soil and of their resources. We consider ourselves managers, not owners, of what is rightfully God's. And we believe in free will. But there are those among the Christian faith who seem to go out of their way to either deny the facts of climate change or to discount their significance. For these Christians, environmentalism is a moot point because Jesus is returning soon. Perhaps. Scripture is clear, however, that we are to be good stewards of the earth for always. Sooner or later Jesus, the heir of all things, will return and reign. The parables of Jesus suggest that poor stewardship is frowned upon, to put it lightly. **✠**

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

ABOUT THE BOOK

Title: *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. **Author:** Jared Diamond. **Publisher:** Viking, 2005. **List price:** \$29.95. **Note:** "At times Diamond comes close to a counsel of despair when contemplating the environmental havoc engulfing our rapidly industrializing planet," says Publishers Weekly, "but he holds out hope at examples of sustainability from highland New Guinea's age-old but highly diverse and efficient agriculture to Japan's rigorous program of forest protection and, less convincingly, in recent green consumerism initiatives." Jared Diamond, professor of geography at UCLA, is a member of several prestigious societies, such as the National Academy of Sciences and the American Philosophical Society. He has received numerous awards, from the National Medal of Science and a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, to the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement and the Pulitzer Prize.



ONCAMPUS

Bridgewater College (Bridgewater, Va.)

An inaugural seminar titled "Bridgewater College and Another Way of Living" was held Oct. 8 to honor the inauguration of new president George E. Cornelius. The seminar looked at values shared by Bridgewater and the Church of the Brethren. Speakers included David Radcliff, Timothy Kreps, Carl Desportes Bowman, and Betsy Hayes.

Elizabethtown College (Elizabethtown, Pa.)

The Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies on Oct. 19 hosted Texas A&M professor Katherine Carte Engel for a presentation on "German Pietists in a British Atlantic World." Engel received the 2010 Dale W. Brown Book Award. . . . Elizabethtown has 63 international students representing eight countries on campus this fall.

Juniata College (Huntingdon, Pa.)

Juniata has launched the everGREEN Eco-House to bring together environmentally conscious students. Eight students are living in the house this fall, trying to live with as little environmental impact as possible. . . . Juniata on Sept. 22 held a panel discussion on the Islamic community center proposed near Ground Zero in New York.

University of La Verne (La Verne, Calif.)

US News & World Report and *Forbes* magazine both gave La Verne strong rankings this year in their annual lists. La Verne ranked eighth among private colleges and universities in California and a highest-ever 136th nationally in the *US News* list and ranked among the top 15 percent for *Forbes'* list.

Manchester College (North Manchester, Ind.)

Retired medical ethicists Harry and Jan Keffer have announced that they plan to give 90 percent of their multi-million-dollar estate to the school as an unrestricted bequest for "the greatest needs and priorities of the college." Harry Keffer is a 1959 alumnus.

McPherson College (McPherson, Kan.)

The school has launched the Horizon Fund to help fund students who have original entrepreneurial ideas. A total of 19 projects involving 22 students were awarded funding in the initial round of the project. A "Global Enterprise Challenge" team competition for projects in Haiti is also taking place this fall.



A volunteer reads to a child at a summer workcamp in Roanoke, Va.

Summer workcamps involve more than 350 participants

In 2010, more than 350 participants took part in 15 workcamps offered by Church of the Brethren Youth/Young Adult Ministry.

Young adults served at New Covenant School in St. Louis du Nord, Haiti, leading crafts, games, songs, and providing a Bible story theater and snacks at a Vacation Bible School. They also worked on the school's new building.

Intellectually disabled youth and young adults served at the "We Are Able" workcamp held at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md.

Junior high youth took part in workcamps in Elgin, Ill.; Brooklyn, N.Y.; Indianapolis; Ashland, Ohio; Roanoke, Va.; Harrisburg, Pa.; and Richmond, Va. Junior high students at the Harrisburg workcamp worked alongside the Brethren Housing Association, helping to provide housing and social services to the homeless.

Brethren Revival Fellowship (BRF) senior high youth took part in workcamps in the Dominican Republic and Mexico.

And an intergenerational workcamp at the Brethren Service Center and co-led by On Earth Peace gave participants of all ages the opportunity to serve and learn about peacemaking.

For more information about youth and young adult workcamps, contact the Workcamp Office at 800-323-8039 or cobworkcamps@brethren.org, or visit www.brethren.org/workcamps.

National Junior High Conference plans take shape 'piece by piece'

"Piece by Piece: Finding Your Place Within God's Story" will be the theme for the 2011 Church of the Brethren National Junior High Conference, June 17-19 at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College.

The biennial conference was held once previously at Elizabethtown, in 2007. In 2009 it took place at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Va., with about 600 people attending.

Serving on the planning committee are Sarah Kolbe, Emily Tyler, Bekah Houff, Dave Steele, Rich Troyer, and Sam Cupp, along with Church of the Brethren Youth/Young Adult Ministry director Becky Ullom. Cindy Laprade Lattimer and Walt Wiltschek are worship coordinators, with Kay Guyer as visual consultant.

Registration begins Jan. 10 on www.brethren.org. Cost is \$150 per person, going up to \$175 after April 15. Watch the website for more details.



Love your life

Remarkable Dining & Catering



{ Executive Chef Christian Laire }
Ask any resident, staff member or even guests about the dining experience at Hillcrest and you'll hear them rave about the culinary wizardry of Chef Christian Laire. Educated in the French system of culinary education known as Culinary Aptitude, Chef Laire worked in several restaurants, including his own and in many different countries.



Chef Laire welcomed the opportunity to join Hillcrest. He enjoys that his work is mission-driven and has purpose. He has a relationship with the residents; he sees them everyday, they give him feedback and he can see the results of his efforts in the kitchen. That connection and exchange allows him to give back through his cooking and to make Hillcrest residents happy.

Remarkable Wellness Program



{ Resident Sharon Wright }
"I'm busier than ever, but having so much fun! Between my clients, the drama club, and swimming, the excitement never ends! I can't think of any place else on Earth like this. The freedom to do as much as or as little as you want is limitless. Hillcrest is like a B&B but more than that – it's an extended family."



{ Residents Joan & Jack Rosenbrock }
Joan and Jack Rosenbrock enjoy the quiet life at Hillcrest, especially their relaxing outdoor space, where they often have a glass of wine and chat with neighbors. "It's like having another room" says Joan. Also very active in water aerobics, Joan raves "the Aquatic Center alone is worth moving to Hillcrest for!"

Remarkable Residents



{ Residents Jerry & Berkley Davis }
Jerry and Berkley Davis are very involved at Hillcrest, participating in several aspects of campus life. Jerry heads up Channel 3, the community's in-house television station, while Berkley serves on the management team of the Hillcrest gift shop and assists with the production of "Hillcrest Happenings," the community's resident newsletter. "There is more to do and learn here than one can imagine," says Jerry. "I think we made a good choice in Hillcrest!"



{ Resident Ann Doty }
Ann's advice on making the move to a retirement community. "Remember that nothing is certain, everything changes and we don't know what the future holds – so look at it as an adventure!"



A Remarkable Retirement Community®

2705 Mountain View Dr., La Verne, CA 91750
909.392.4375 | www.LivingatHillcrest.org



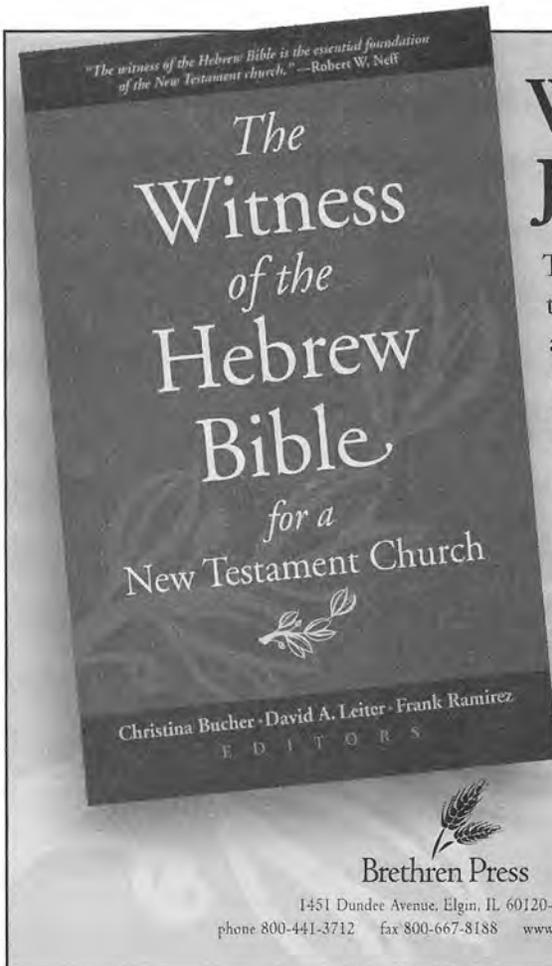
DSS #191501662
Certificate of Authority #069

Denying basic respect

Our congregation just completed the study of the "special response process" for dealing with controversial issues in the Church of the Brethren. I know people are not of one mind on this issue, and that many are dealing with it in what they feel is a respectful manner. However, one line of the covenant that opens the study keeps coming to mind. It states that we are to respect the "intrinsic worth of each participant."

What is the intrinsic value of a person? How do we determine it? How do we decide what is or is not to be valued? How do we tell a person that they cannot partake of all we find to be good and wonderful about our lives as members of the Church of the Brethren, and still claim to respect that person's intrinsic value as set forth in this process?

The news of the past few weeks has been filled with stories of young people committing suicide after being bullied about their sexual orientation. These people were humiliated and abused by their peers because they are part of a group that many treat as unworthy of respect or decency. They were treated as sub-human by these tormenters. Throughout history, groups of people have been able to



What did Jesus read?

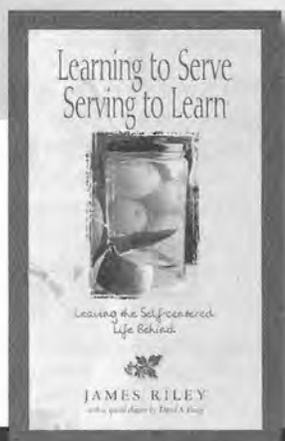
The Hebrew Bible was the scriptures known and loved by Jesus and they provide an essential foundation for a New Testament church. In this collection of thirteen essays by Brethren scholars, the rich themes of the Old Testament are explored and believers are challenged to rethink how they interpret Christian faith and practice.

Brethren Press
 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120-1694
 phone 800-441-3712 fax 800-667-8188 www.brethrenpress.com



**Learning to Serve,
 Serving to Learn**

a guide to leaving the self-centered life behind



Discover the true meaning of learning to serve and joy of service. Through inspiring and true stories, James Riley encourages the reader to embark on a lifelong journey of service to others. Basic principles of service are presented as are the necessary concepts to understand and sustain that journey.

A Great Gift For Family And Friends!

BUY FOUR and GET ONE FREE!

Order Now at www.highroadfirsteditions.com

\$15.99 at Amazon.com 25% OFF with "Direct Discount" at www.highroadfirsteditions.com

Incarnational Education



Embodied in Meaningful Service



615 National Road West, Richmond, Indiana 47374
800-287-8822, www.bethanyseminary.edu
contactus@bethanyseminary.edu

viciously attack and harass "others" only after they have been taught by their societies that these "others" are so evil as to be beneath normal human concern.

When we Brethren continue to deny access to the vocations and rites of our denomination based on a person's intrinsic creation, we deny these children of God basic human respect. We deny them the acceptance many of us take for granted. We have made them the "others." When we continue to dehumanize people in a group such as this, we are legitimizing, in the minds of some, the emotionally and physically violent actions taken against them. Even though we ourselves may show a simple kindness to a member of the LGBT community, we still are responsible for the actions of the larger church we belong to. Until the church begins to show concern, respect, and unconditional love for the LGBT community in our midst, we are part of the problem of violence and hate that plagues this group of people.

Mark Shafer
Niles, Mich.

What is most essential

Thanks to Randy Miller for his October editorial. In it, he offers a beautiful glimpse into what is most essential to us as Brethren. Such simple yet profound hospitality helps heal what so ails us as a church and a culture.

Glenn Mitchell
Spring Mills, Pa.

Mercy involves repentance

I don't often read MESSENGER, but my wife gave me the editorial in the July/August issue to read. Randy Miller writes well and makes interesting points. But at the heart of this matter is whether homosexuality is a sin. Slavery was a sin. But it's a mistake to paint slavery and homosexuality with the same brush.

Mel White, who is a controversial figure in the homosexual debate, states that the Bible indicates men and women should be put to death for a long list of activities practiced today. That's true, and I'm glad we live under grace. Christians should show love and mercy. But mercy involves repentance and forgiveness.

The Bible says homosexuality is detestable behavior. But the homosexual community says "God made me this way," and they have said it loud enough and often

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR 40 YEARS

2010 TOURS

TM MYSTERY TOUR (October 15 - 23)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE (November 12 - 21)

2011 TOURS

THE AMAZON RAIN FOREST & THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS
(January 6 - 16)
JAMAICA - ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY & FRUITS
(January 28 - February 6)
CHURCHES & SAFARIS IN KENYA & TANZANIA
(February 7 - 18)
PANAMA CANAL CRUISE TOUR
(February 23 - March 5)
EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 20 - April 2)
MEDA IN MOROCCO (March 25 - April 5)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE WITH PASTOR JAMIE GERBER
(April 27 - May 6)



"Building bridges among Mennonites and other Christians and faiths around the world through custom-designed travel."

EXPLORE THE WORLD OF PAUL WITH TOM YODER NEUFELD (May 4 - 20)
LEGENDARY RHINE & MOSELLE RIVER CRUISE
(May 11 - 24)

ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7 - 18)
ICELAND COUNTRY TOUR (June 14 - 23)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE WITH JOHN RUTH
(June 23 - July 6)
WILLIAM PENN, THE POETS & MORE...
(ENGLAND & SCOTLAND) (July 22 - August 4)
MENNONITE STORY IN POLAND (August 9-17)
VISIT UKRAINE WITH EDGAR STOEZ
(September 19 - 28)
A PILGRIMAGE TO PORTUGAL (September 20 - 30)
EXPERIENCE IRELAND WITH THE LEDERACHS
(September 22 - October 3)
FROM NAZARETH TO ROME (November 10 - 22)
BEHIND THE VEIL-EXPERIENCING EGYPT WITH MEDA
(November 14 - 26)

2012 TOURS

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND (February 3 - 23)
MEXICO & ITS COPPER CANYON (March 5 - 18)
FOLLOWING THE STEPS OF MOSES (April 16 - 27)

CALL 1-800-565-0451 FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK YOUR TOUR

E-MAIL: office@tourmagination.com WEB: www.tourmagination.com

9 Willow Street, Waterloo, ON N2J 1V6 Canada

Reg. #50014322

2308 Wood Street, Lancaster, PA 17603 USA

enough that the church now believes it. The homosexual community has also funded research to show that their behavior is genetic. But honest scientific research doesn't have a bias driving the research.

In my church, we show love and compassion to all people, regardless of who they are. But the New Testament also has much to say about church discipline and confronting a brother who is living in an unrepentant condition. And if that brother refuses to repent, he should not be in a place of leadership or service within the church. If confronting sin is unloving (and today's church seems to feel that way), then Christ was extremely unloving. But we are called to be like Christ.

Today's church will be harshly judged by the Lord for not preaching about and confronting sin. That's a shame. Jesus came to save us from our sin and the penalty of that sin. But we have to be willing to receive that gift with an open hand that's not still grasping tightly onto the pleasures of sin.

Clay Gibney
Rocky Mount, Va.

Missing the essence of Jesus' message

I am writing in response to Chuck Boyer's article in the September 2010 MESSENGER concerning the polarities in our Church of the Brethren. I come from a multi-generational history in the Church of the Brethren. Having been aware of the decades-old history of strong differences among our members over the role of women and sexual inclusivity issues, I empathize with the pervasive frustration felt by the Brethren on both sides of these issues.

I find myself agreeing with Pastor Boyer's thoughts and suggestion that it is time to recognize the reality that these issues cannot be resolved without one side or the other compromising with their strongly held values. It appears each side deserves to uphold and maintain the integrity of their beliefs. I also accept the reality of evolution of our social beliefs and institutions. We, as a society and individually, continue to evolve. Sometimes that brings pain, insecurity, and eventually growth. That seems to be the current experience of the Church of the Brethren.

On the other hand, I am saddened that such a large number of Church of the Brethren members who have had equal

Pontius' Puddle



CoBCU ... for you and your church.

Help yourself.

Need to finance a car, repair your roof, consolidate some debt, or pay for college expenses?

CoBCU offers competitive rates for auto, personal, and share-secured loans.

Help your church.

For each Church of the Brethren member who initiates any loan with CoBCU during November, your church will have an opportunity to receive **\$500 for its ministry!** There's no limit to how many opportunities any church may have.

Eligibility restrictions apply. The drawing will be held on Dec. 1, 2010, for all new loans initiated during the month of November 2010.

 CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
CREDIT UNION

1505 Dundee Ave. • Elgin, IL 60120 • 888-832-1383 • www.cobcu.org • cobcu@brethren.org

access to scholarly literature about the teachings of the historical Jesus fail to embrace the essence of his message of unconditional love and acceptance of people regardless of lifestyle and social/sexual orientation. Scriptures indicate Jesus to have engaged in a radical and humanistic approach with all persons in his early Mediterranean culture. How have so many seemed to have missed the essence of his message?

Philip Walker
Coarsegold, Calif.

We need a two-position paper

Chuck Boyer raises some intriguing questions in his article in the September MESSENGER. I agree that the church can't come to a consensus on human sexuality, but I don't think this impasse needs to divide or define our denomination. I think it's time to write a two-position paper with a Bible study for those who want more direction. Deciding by majority vote who's right and who's wrong won't serve us now. A two-position paper would challenge

us to treat those we disagree with respectfully, fairly, and equally.

Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34). This is an extraordinary call to noble service that could transform our church and our world. We need a new paradigm of mutual encouragement. We don't need to be of one mind to seek out and support each other's strengths. We don't need to approve of each other to build on the power of our agreements. Our differences could be used to cre-

A Time to Rebuild



Church loans from Everence

United Revival Mennonite Church – a catalyst for change.

Their once economically depressed community in Brooklyn, N.Y., is now a vibrant and diverse neighborhood. The energetic congregation outgrew their building – and launched a 16,000-square-foot construction project more than eight years ago.

Thanks in part to a church loan from Everence, United Revival Mennonite Church is completing their new building – another step in building and growing their mission and ministry.

To learn more about Everence's church loan program, talk to your Everence representative, call (800) 348-7468, or visit us online at www.everence.com.



CLASSIFIEDADS

Gather 'Round writers. The Gather 'Round curriculum, a project of Brethren Press and Mennonite Publishing Network, is accepting applications to write for the 2012-13 year. Writers are hired for one or two quarters for a particular age unit: Preschool, Primary, Middler, Multiage, Junior Youth, or Youth. Writers produce well-written, age-appropriate, and engaging material for teacher's guides, student books, and resource packs. All writers will attend an orientation conference March 6-10, 2011, in Chicago, Illinois. For more information, visit the Job Opportunities page at www.gather-round.org. Deadline for applications: January 1, 2011.

Looking for a warm and friendly church in a warm and friendly community? Come to Venice, Florida for a week, a month, a season...or longer! The Venice Community Church of the Brethren invites you to stop by, introduce yourself, fellowship and worship with us in the charming city of Venice. Beautiful beaches, abundant fishing, volunteer opportunities, fun activities, and a church with joyful worship in the Brethren tradition. Call 941-928-1515 or visit our website: www.venicebrethren.org for more information.

A Christian Cruise. Join COB Pastor John and Pastor Linda Stoner as they cruise Canada and New England aboard the stunning liner Poesia. This adventure takes place September 28 to October 8, 2011 and features bus transportation from Western Pennsylvania. Travel arrangements from any gateway city are possible as well. Departure is from New York City and includes Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Rhode Island. Christian messages, worship and fellowship galore!! Contact: 814-444-8800 or jnljaunts@floodcity.net for details.

Cruise with fellow Brethren while visiting Scandinavia, Russia, etc. After a 4-day visit of Oslo and Norway's magnificent fjord country, board Emerald Princess for Baltic cruise, with stops in Copenhagen, Stockholm, Helsinki, Petersburg (2 days), Tallinn (Estonia), Warnemunde (Berlin). August 4-20, 2011. For information please write to: J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022 or kreiderk@etown.edu or mailto:kreiderk@etown.edu

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

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

This is a periodical publication.

Publication Title:	MESSENGER
Publication No.:	0026-0355
Filing Date:	September 30, 2010
Owner:	Church of the Brethren, 1451 Dundee Ave, Elgin IL 60120-1674
Publisher:	Wendy McFadden, 1451 Dundee Ave, Elgin IL 60120-1674
Editor:	Randy Miller (interim), 1451 Dundee Ave, Elgin IL 60120-1674
Total Circulation:	10,948
Cost:	\$17.50

ate a safe space for God's healing, energizing, surprising, and inspiring presence. If we could learn how to live faithfully with our disagreements, we could show the world new ways to live respectfully in the midst of conflict and crisis. Mutual encouragement offers unlimited opportunities for us to fulfill our calling to continue the work of Jesus, peacefully, simply, and together.

Rebecca Herder
Claremont, Calif.

God's word or ours?

I am writing in response to Brother Gary Wakeman's letter to the editor in the September MESSENGER regarding the pamphlet sent out by the BRF under the guise as God's word. I pray he and others will take the opportunity to open themselves to study and better understand the scriptures in the forthcoming district small study groups. One word of caution: When someone claims to write

definitive words as God's word, it just may be someone writing from their own biases. Our God is much greater than our words. Our God is unspeakably awesome—more than we, in our finiteness, can fully grasp. The Hebrews would not even mention God's name—it was too holy. Have we become too familiar and now "know it all?"

Dorotha Fry Mason
North Manchester, Ind.

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

New Members

Chiques, Manheim, Pa.:

Richard Witmer, Jennifer Witmer, Sarah Witmer, Josh Witmer, Emily Witmer, Curtis Brown

Fraternity, Winston-Salem, N.C.:

Preston Harris, Amber Harris

Geiger, Friedens, Pa.:

Daniel Berkebile, Heather Berkebile, Megan Berkebile, Megan Oakes, Katherine Oakes, Charles David Kurtz, William Shaffer, Sandy Weigle, Aleaha Weigle, Alyssa Weigle, Susan Beck

Lakewood, Millbury, Ohio:

Pat DeHook, Donna Farmer, Brenda Stiles

Lancaster, Pa.:

Ron Yunginger, Joan Yunginger

McPherson, Kan.:

Jamie Risser, Heidi Risser

New Covenant, Gotha, Fla.:

Jess Schload, Tram Pokorney, David Sheets, Carole Sheets, Max Sheets, Becki Whitaker, Jared Whitaker

Northview, Indianapolis, Ind.:

Emily Kain, Katrina Kain, Abram Pentecost, Leeann Sausser, Lydia Thornburg, Hayley Wigman, Matt Boersma, Nykki Boersma, Chris Kelsey, Laura Kelsey, Trysha Miller, Michael Smith

Pleasant Dale, Decatur, Ind.:

Randy Collier, Julie Collier, Lucas Collier, Joseph Collier, Jim Oliver, Andrew Oliver, Deb Brown

Rocky Mount, First, Rocky

Mount, Va.: Garry Wilkerson, Donna Sloan, Estelle Wray

Smith Mountain Lake

Community, Wirtz, Va.: Chris Hassell, David Valentine

Stevens Hill Community,

Elizabethtown, Pa.: Rosemarie Gallagher, Helen McCurdy

Waynesboro, Va.:

Craig Edmond Cunningham

Anniversaries

Barkdoll, Stanley and Hazel,

Kearneysville, W.Va., 60

Bixler, Howard and Pearl,

Goshen, Ind., 50

Hamilton, Dave and Velma,

Virden, Ill., 82

Mellott, Thomas and Carol,

Columbiana, Ohio, 50

Myers, Dave and Charlotte,

Lancaster, Pa., 50

Powell, Robert and Phyllis,

Kingsley, Iowa, 55

Shenk, Laysar and Elizabeth,

Manheim, Pa., 70

Stephens, Charles and Mary,

Goshen, Ind., 50

Weaver, Mark and Thelma,

Lancaster, Pa., 70

Deaths

Barnum, Robert I., 81,

Midland, Mich., April 9

Barrack, Christopher Alan,

23, Forest, Va., Sept. 4

Berndtson, Lois M., 82, Saint

Petersburg, Fla., Sept. 2

Boyer, Charles L., 75, La

Verne, Calif., Sept. 2

Cauley, Ruby Catherine, 98,

Waynesboro, Va., Jan. 21

Combs, Glen C., 81,

Trotwood, Ohio, Sept. 15

Craig, James, 78, Waynesboro,

Va., May 23

Dalton, Ruby Elizabeth

Brown, 81, Waynesboro,

Va., May 11

Daugherty, Cinderella

Kathryn, 93, Waynesboro,

Va., Aug. 28

Deal, Frances L., 86,

Onekama, Mich., Aug. 28

Eikenberry, Mary Elizabeth, 95, North Manchester, Ind., Sept. 1

Flory, Dawn McIntyre, 57, Bridgewater, Va., Sept. 17

Gearhart, William Jacob, 88, Hagerstown, Md., Aug. 19

Gocking, Carla Jean, 63, Polo, Ill., July 22

Kaufman, Donald, 84, Midland, Mich., May 23

Kaylor, Richard M., 86, Elizabethtown, Pa., June 14

Kussart, Vada Mae, 94, Lovington, Ill., Aug. 23

Landes, Peggy L., 70, Fishersville, Va., July 14

Lautzenhiser, Annabel Mae, 84, North Lawrence, Ohio, July 6

Lee, Ruby Reed, 77, Fincastle, Va., July 24

Lewis, James, 40, Peoria, Ill., July 31

Michael, Dudley Ernest, 67, Denver, Pa., Aug. 10

Miller, Paul E., 81, Lancaster, Pa., Aug. 13

Nalley, Raymond F., 75, Mount Morris, Ill., Sept. 16

O'Day, Mildred Shaffer, 99, Greenwood, Del., Aug. 24

Ober, Margaret E., 85, Manheim, Pa., Aug. 12

Paine, LaVonne, 81, Caldwell, Idaho, March 16

Perry, Dave, 62, Cabool, Mo., April 29

Peterson, Lloyd, 82, Nampa, Idaho, Jan. 17

Powers, Philip Wayne, 62, Frederick, Md., June 17

Pugh, Clyde, 86, Bridgewater, Va., April 26

Rainey, Elizabeth E., 89, Gresham, Ore., July 10

Rakowski, Lucille K., 90, Dixon, Ill., Aug. 17

Ramsburg, Calvin, 69, Middletown, Md., March 11

Ramsburg, Hilda L., 82, Frederick, Md., May 13

Reid, Julian David, 81, Broadway, VA July 6

Rice, Emmert F., 79, North Manchester, Ind., July 26

Risser, Alvin B., Jr., 68,

Mount Joy, Pa., July 19

Rockwood, Richard H., 83, Goshen, Ind., Aug. 14

Ruff, Carlton Woodrow, 89, Weyers Cave, Va., July 30

Schultz, Ethel, 87, Nampa, Idaho, Feb. 22

Shafer, Preston, 68, Frederick, Md., March 31

Shaw, Dorothy M., 80, Bowmont, Idaho, March 12

Shoemaker, Bennett E., 81, North Canton, Ohio, June 27

Sievers, Benjamin Thomas, 15, Brookville, Ohio, June 24

Smith, Harold David, 89, Bridgewater, Va., July 21

Smith, Harold L., 80, Adel, Iowa, Aug. 18

Snavely, Royal Emerson, 78, Elizabethtown, Pa., July 18

Spitler, Elizabeth S., 99, Bridgewater, Va., April 28

Summers, Virginia, 80, Mount Airy, Md., Sept. 12

Teeter, Louise Keim, 94, Nampa, Idaho, March 1

Thompson, Clifford William, 77, Knoxville, Md., Feb. 18

Tucker, Drusilla, 89, Frederick, Md., Feb. 8

Tucker, Jeanette, 82, Waynesboro, Va., March 10

Ulrich, Nellie Grace, 96, Garden City, Kan., July 20

Vanderbeek, James B., 78, Nampa, Idaho, Oct. 3, 2009

Varner, Marian E., 81, Lancaster, Pa., Aug. 4

Wagenschein, Miriam, 93, Bridgewater, Va., April 7

Wagner, Rufus J., 73, Gettysburg, Pa., July 27

Waltz, Mary, 90, Frederick, Md., Jan. 11

Warrenfeltz, Bruce M., Sr., 85, Boonsboro, Md., May 25

Watring, Glenn R., 92, Beaver Creek, Ohio, Aug. 6

Wheeler, Ellen Harsh, 90, New Philadelphia, Ohio, Aug. 23

Williams, Robert M., 84, Lima, Ohio, Sept. 24

Willis, Doris, 90, Waynesboro, Va., July 5

Wolf, Woodrow W., 89, Smithsburg, Md., July 11

Young, Marguerite M., 87, Akron, Ohio, June 6

Licensings

Barnes, Olinda, S/C Ind.

Dist. (Pleasant Dale, Decatur, Ind.), Aug. 15

Chaulk, C. Devin, S/C Ind.

Dist. (Pyrmont, Delphi, Ind.), Aug. 15

Lehman, Timothy R., S. Pa.

Dist. (Falling Spring, Shady Grove, Pa.), Aug. 22

Long, Philip A., S. Pa. Dist.

(Falling Spring, Shady Grove, Pa.), Aug. 22

Maurer, Donald P., S. Pa.

Dist. (Buffalo Valley, Mifflinburg, Pa.), Sept. 12

Peters, Franklin D., Jr., Virgina

Dist. (Beaver Creek, Floyd, Va.), Sept. 12

Pickens, Mark K., S. Pa. Dist.

(Mechanicsburg, Pa.), Aug. 29

Ordinations

Dougherty, Clark A., S. Pa.

Dist. (Yorkana, York, Pa.), Nov. 15, 2009

Purcell, Andrew M., Virgina

Dist. (Oak Grove, Roanoke, Va.), Aug. 1

Stover, Paul J., Jr., Virgina

Dist. (Jeters Chapel, Vinton, Va.), Aug. 22

Placements

Anspaugh, Eric C., from pastor, Florin, Mount Joy, Pa., to pastor, Antioch, Rocky Mount, Va., Sept. 15

Chaulk, C. Devon, pastor, Pyrmont, Delphi, Ind., May 23

King, Janice Glass, pastor, Woodbridge, Va., Sept. 7

Scrogam, Cole R., pastor, Summit, Bridgewater, Va., Sept. 15

Leaf-falls from the family tree

“I am from clothespins, from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride. I am from the dirt under the back porch. (Black, glistening, it tastes like beets.) I am from the forsythia bush, the Dutch elm whose long gone limbs I remember as if they were my own.”

So begins the poem *Where I’m From*, by George Ella Lyon, from *Reading, Writing and Rising Up*.

Lyon knows where he’s been, so he knows who he is. And perhaps, too, knowing where he’s been, he knows where he’s going.



RANDY MILLER
Interim MESSENGER Editor

It’s easy to get off track, to lose the thread of who we are. Life can rush over us in a torrent and push us off our path. Elements of the familiar can help set us aright.

Memories that get my gyroscope back on track include dusty rides on a black and white two-wheeler with my collie racing beside me through acres of prune trees in northern California.

And a backyard full of cousins climbing cargo nets that Uncle Chalmer had strung up on towering oaks. And floating down irrigation canals on inner tubes through peach and walnut orchards. They include my dad showing me the Milky Way one clear, cloudless night when I

times. Who have we been, who are we now, and who will we become?

“I am from fudge and eyeglasses, from Imogene and Alafair. I’m from the know-it-alls and the pass-it-ons, from the perk up and pipe down. I’m from He restoreth my soul with a cottonball lamb and ten verses I can say myself,” Lyon continues. “I’m from Artemus and Billie’s Branch, fried corn and strong coffee. From the finger my grandfather lost to the auger, the eye my father shut to keep his sight.

“Under my bed was a dress box spilling old pictures, a sift of lost faces to drift beneath my dreams. I am from those moments—snapped before I budded—leaf-fall from the family tree.”

Occasionally, we seem to need a nudge to help us remember who we are and where we came from. The Schwarzenau eight, Alexander Mack, Peter Becker, Sarah Major, John Kline, Dan West, Anna Mow—they are among those who blazed the trail upon which we walk today. They are our “Imogenes and Alafairs.” And the Eder River, foot-washing, service to others, our peace witness, and a strong sense of community are our “fudge and eyeglasses,” our “dress box spilling old pictures.” They help us remember the fabric of who we are as a denomination.

Today, we are the leaf-falls from the family tree. Sometimes I wonder where the wind will blow us.

SUCH MEMORIES HELP ME REMEMBER WHO I AM AND WHERE I’VE COME FROM. THEY REMIND ME THAT I AM BUT A SMALL BRANCH ON A TREE OF WONDERFUL PEOPLE WHO CARED A GREAT DEAL . . .

was six. And watching my grandfather gently tend his fuchsias on a summer morning in Portland. And listening to pastor Agnes Border tell stories from the pulpit, and wondering why she wore that funny little hairnet. And stirring apple butter bubbling in 50-gallon cast-iron kettles on a chilly autumn morning in rural Illinois. And watching Al Brightbill lead 8,000 people at Annual Conference singing Bob Dylan’s *Blowin’ in the Wind* a capella as if it were a hymn. And watching M.R. Zigler, in his 80s, walk down a deserted hallway in a cavernous convention hall, and wondering what was on his mind.

Such memories help me remember who I am and where I’ve come from. They remind me that I am but a small branch on a tree of wonderful people who cared a great deal about their immediate and extended families. And their church family.

Who are we as Brethren? I find myself wondering some-

Al Brightbill, introducing Dylan’s *Blowin’ in the Wind* at Annual Conference years ago, said the wind was God’s spirit blowing through us. “The answer, my friend, is blowin’ in the wind, the answer is blowin’ in the wind.” Who knows where the wind may blow? Perhaps we will one day wind up a comfortable pile of golden leaves, content beneath an expansive oak. Or perhaps more insistent gusts will scatter us to new terrain, where we will mingle with leaves from other trees, and even other orchards.

We are leaf-falls from the family tree, carried by the wind of God’s spirit into the unfolding future.

That is the important thing to remember: that it is God’s spirit blowing through us. While some of us may be blown this way and others that, as long as we are attuned to that spirit moving among us, we may just remember who we are. And, perhaps more importantly, *whose* we are.

COMING IN DECEMBER: Bible study on wisdom, a biblical view of ecojustice, meditation on a firefly, media review, reflections, and more.



CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN ADVENT OFFERING

PREPARE THE WAY

ISAIAH 40:3

PREPARE THE WAY

Your gifts to the Church of the Brethren Advent Offering prepare the way for Christ's perfect peace and justice to be born again in the world. Together, we provide a host of wonderful gifts for our brothers and sisters, our neighbors, and even those who might be considered enemies—gifts that tell the Good News of God's presence with us through the birth of the Christ child.

Suggested offering date: December 5, 2010

PREPAREMOS EL CAMINO

Su aporte a la Ofrenda de Adviento de la Iglesia de los Hermanos prepara el camino para que nazca nuevamente la paz y la justicia perfecta de Cristo en este mundo. Juntos proporcionamos una gran cantidad de obsequios maravillosos para nuestros hermanos y hermanas, nuestro prójimo e incluso para aquellos que podrían considerarse enemigos: obsequios que cuentan la Buena Nueva de la presencia de Dios entre nosotros a través del nacimiento del Cristo niño.

Fecha propuesta para la ofrenda: 5 de diciembre de 2010

Church of the Brethren 

Looking for alternatives this Christmas?



Think outside the box.

- \$45 provides one month's emergency food rations for a family in Pakistan
- \$115 purchases a Shelter Kit for Pakistani flood survivors
- \$485 supplies roofing tin for a new house in Haiti
- \$6,500 completes a 3-room Haitian home with separate kitchen and latrine



- \$70 provides training and screening of a volunteer to care for children
- \$150 allows a CDS volunteer to care for children at a disaster site for two days
- \$500 completes a "Kit of Comfort" for use with traumatized children



- \$20 feeds a disaster response volunteer for an entire week
- \$100 per room adds extra insulation and lowers utility costs for a low-income family
- \$200 purchases needed power tools for disaster repair and rebuilding work



Any size gift will help Brethren Disaster Ministries continue the work of Jesus this Christmas — and beyond.



BRETHREN
Disaster Ministries

Send your gift to: Emergency Disaster Fund
Church of the Brethren, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120
800-451-4407 Give online! www.brethren.org/disaster

Photo credits
top down:
Roy Winter,
Judy Bezon, and
Amy Fishburn.