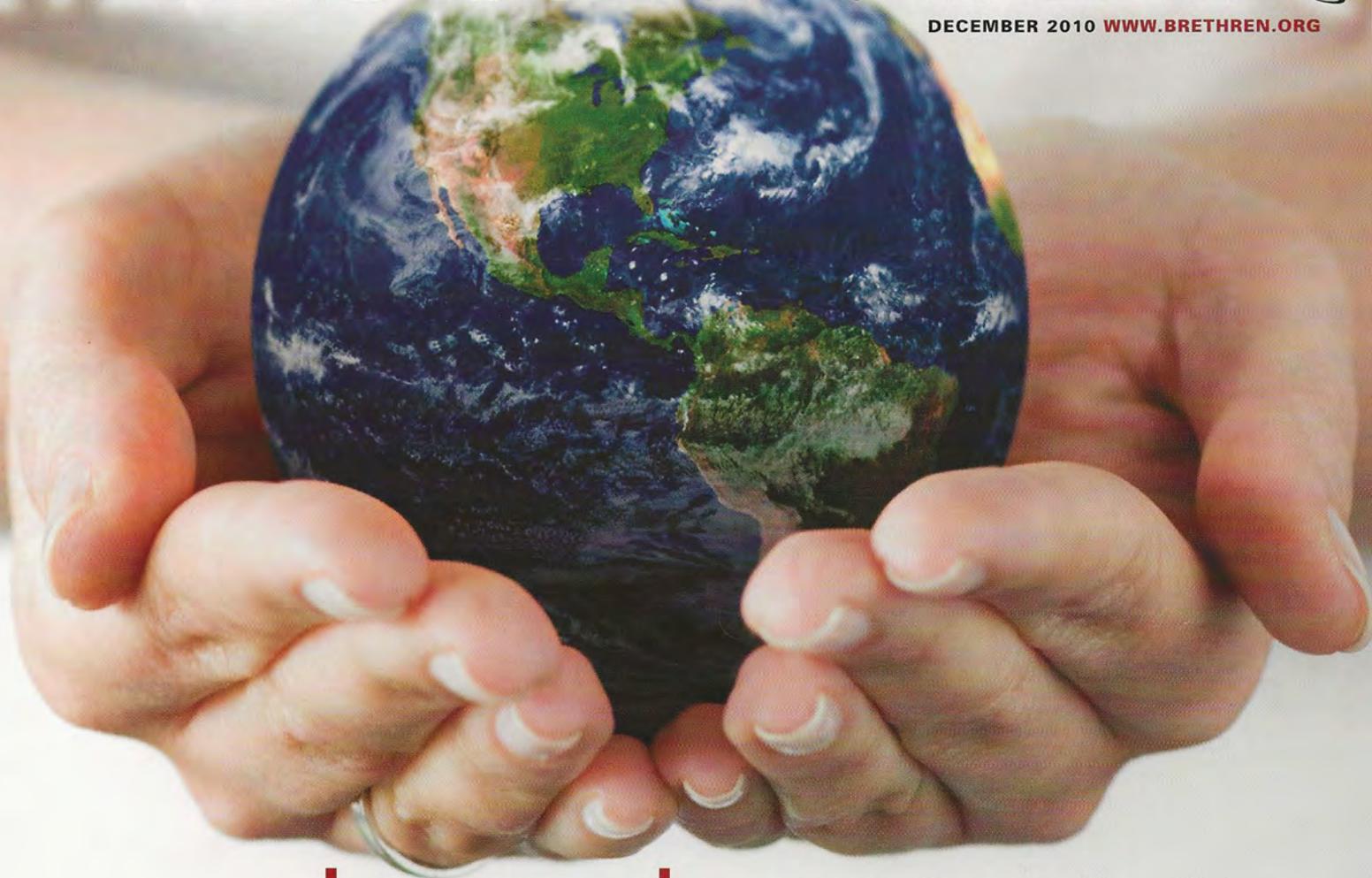


Church of the Brethren

# MESSENGER

DECEMBER 2010 [WWW.BRETHREN.ORG](http://WWW.BRETHREN.ORG)



## shalom

BIBLICAL VISION OF ECOJUSTICE

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Church  
of the  
Brethren

# MESSENGER

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## ONTHECOVER

At first glance, the photograph on the cover seems to imply that the world is in our hands. Of course, while the planet—and the universe—ultimately is in God's hands, perhaps we have more of a role in caring for it than we have imagined.

### 8 **Shalom: the biblical vision of ecojustice**

Noted theologian and author Rosemary Radford Ruether encourages us to take another look at biblical stewardship as it has been filtered through conventional Western understanding. Perhaps we have misread Genesis 1:28, which instructs humanity to “... fill the earth and subdue it ...” Has our understanding of this instruction in Genesis led to an imbalance in which we see ourselves as autonomous owners, rather than caretakers of the earth under God?

### 12 **The firefly**

She wasn't sure what to expect when she entered the remote Mayan village in Guatemala. But what emerged amid the wood and tin huts, machete-toting field-workers, and a tool shed filled with fireflies caught her and her companions by surprise, and slowly opened their eyes to a renewed sense of hope and compassion.

### 16 **Can we agree?**

In this second installment in our periodic series on the Special Response Process, Robert Johansen asks that, whether or not we actually can agree, we at least treat one another with dignity and respect—basic Golden Rule stuff that, sadly, seems to evaporate too often when those with opposing viewpoints have come together in recent years.

### 18 **God's wisdom is the pathway of love**

Bob Neff wraps up his series on God's way in wisdom's path with an examination of the story of the Magi, and a new understanding of wisdom that has emerged in the process of preparing this series. “In a world gone awry,” he says, “the sage advice is to enjoy the simple gift of a mealtime with friends. In the scene of Mother and Child, the grace of God is revealed to strangers and wise men. The Incarnation is the highest form of wisdom. God's way is an invitation to enjoy our humanity and relationships, because God's love dwells among us in this one named Immanuel.”

## DEPARTMENTS

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**I**t used to be that I had trouble keeping track of baby Jesus. When our youngest child was small, she would tuck Jesus safely into a purse or small container. He would be missing, then, when I packed away the crèche and hauled the Christmas boxes into the attic. In a busy household, it was no small feat to make sure that he was where he needed to be by the next Christmas.

After all, what kind of Christmas would it be if we couldn't find Jesus?

But finding Jesus may turn out to be inconvenient. What Jesus brings "makes for a great deal of Christmas discomfort, in a society that stands for comfort and total security and status," according to Sister Joan Chittister in a reflection written years ago for



WENDY McFADDEN  
Publisher

*Whose Birthday Is It Anyway?* (but unfortunately even more relevant today).

"We like 'peace through strength,' we say. Then we spend the money of the poor on the militaristic agendas of the mighty. We don't have enough money for day care or education or job retraining programs in this country, we insist. We don't have enough money to develop the earth, but we have enough money to arm the heavens. Our peace is clearly not in the crib—our peace is in the sword," Chittister writes.

"We look for Jesus in the clean and the comfortable, not in the down and out, not in the uncouth, not in shepherds, not in mangers. We expect a syrup and butter Jesus, not the one

who cleansed the temple or called the Pharisees hypocrites or told Pilate he had no authority over him."

And then Chittister quotes part of the Church of the Brethren tagline. Well, actually, she quotes the Gospel of Matthew: She points out that the Magi "departed to their own country by *another way*."

That is, they embarked on "another way of living," as we Brethren say. That's what finding baby Jesus requires.

May you be blessed this season with Christmas discomfort and joy.

*Wendy McFadden*

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## Pastor's passion leads to 'Story Barn Project' Celebration ties into Florence church's anniversary

A passion for barns and their stories is one of the outcomes of a recent sabbatical for Nina B. Lanctot, pastor of Florence Church of the Brethren Mennonite (Constantine, Mich.). In the coming year she will interview local residents to learn the stories of their barns.

Through photography, taped interviews, a blog, and gatherings of interested people, Lanctot aims to share the Story Barn Project with the local community and



*Barns built by George Sherck, first pastor of Florence Church of the Brethren, are of special interest to current pastor Nina Lanctot as she develops a "Story Barn Project."*

churches. Pole barns, centennial barns, remade barns, and abandoned barns are all of interest as part of the story of changing farm culture. The Florence church's rural heritage will also be celebrated as part of the project as it celebrates in 2011 the 80th anniversary of its official founding in the Church of the Brethren (Florence has also joined Mennonite Church USA as an affiliated congregation in the last 15 years).

As a recipient of a Lilly National Clergy Renewal Grant, Lanctot explored "Vibrant Rural Churches and Communities." A pastor with an urban background, Lanctot wanted to experience rural life on small farms over a two-month stay. When Ezra Graber, long time Constantine seed corn farmer, learned that Lanctot grew up in Philadelphia, he said of her project, "You have a lot to learn!"

And so in Lanctot's sabbatical away from the congregation in February and March, she lived and worked on small farms in Costa Rica. After studying Spanish as a child and through college, Lanctot's life-long dream was to gain fluency. After two months in Costa Rica on her own, Lanctot returned for two weeks in the summer with her family to find that indeed, conversational Spanish flowed with ease. Spanish is used frequently at Florence and in the local community.

A potluck kick-off for the Story Barn Project took place Nov. 21 at the home of Karla Kauffman. The former Gleason Farm was purchased recently by Kauffman and has been renamed Maple Tree Meadows. The story of the main barn and a tour were part of the evening.

A final multi-media celebration of the project is scheduled to take place on Nov. 20, 2011. More information about the project can be found at [storybarn.blogspot.com](http://storybarn.blogspot.com).

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](mailto:messenger@brethren.org).

**Northeast** Western Pennsylvania's fifth annual district auction took place Nov. 6 at Camp Harmony (Hooversville, Pa.). Proceeds benefit district ministries. . . . Bob Neff and Chris Bowman led a continuing education event on "Preaching Beyond Sunday Morning" Nov. 12 at The Village at Morrisons Cove in Martinsburg, Pa. . . . Bermudian Church of the Brethren (East Berlin, Pa.) hosted the final deacon training event of the year on Nov. 14. . . . The Outdoor Ministries Association held its annual retreat Nov. 14-18 at Camp Eder (Fairfield, Pa.).

**Southeast** Camp Bethel held its annual Brethren Heritage Day Festival on Oct. 2, including food, crafts, 34 vendors, and train rides for kids. . . . World Hunger Auction events in Virginia District raised more than \$55,000 this year, up about 10 percent from the previous year. . . . Brethren Woods and Camp Bethel received Outdoor Ministries Association environmental grants this year for special projects.

**Midwest** Windfall (Ind.) Church of the Brethren held its final worship service Aug. 29 before closing and signing over the property to the district. . . . Timbercrest Senior Living Community (North Manchester, Ind.) on Oct. 19 offered a free seminar for pastors on "Emotional Intelligence and Pastoral Relationships." . . . Illinois/Wisconsin District is planning a district youth disaster relief trip to Tennessee June 19-25. . . . Springfield (Ill.) First Church of the Brethren is hosting an alternative holiday fair Dec. 3-4.

**Ozarks/Plains** Western Plains held its "Gathering VI" conference Oct. 22-24 in Salina, Kan., with the theme "Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me." . . . Central Iowa congregations gathered Oct. 3 at Dallas Center for a joint love feast, the third time area churches have come together in the fall. . . . A Western Plains District cookbook is in the works, with each congregation asked to gather favorite recipes. Plans call for selling the cookbook at the 2011 district conference.

**West** Pacific Southwest will offer an "All Ministers Workshop" Feb. 28 to March 2 in Arizona, focusing on spiritual practices and ministry skills. . . . Olympic View Church of the Brethren in Seattle partnered with a local elementary school to provide food baskets for those in need at Thanksgiving. Baskets were purchased, assembled, and distributed Nov. 21-23.



### YOU SAID IT

**"Seeing people is a lot different that looking at them."**

—Retired Church of the Brethren pastor and current Bethany Theological Seminary staff member Fred Bernhard, speaking at Southern Ohio District conference.

### BY THE NUMBERS

# 4

Number of Church of the Brethren district conferences held in November. Pacific Southwest held its conference Nov. 12-14, ending the slate of district conferences in 2010.

The recipients of the Mercedes-Benz USA scholarship for 2010 show off the 1886 Mercedes-Benz currently at McPherson College. They are, from left to right: Taylor Adams, Ashland, Va.; Rod Barlet, Elizabethtown, Pa.; and Kendall Critchfield, Hesston, Kan.



Adam Puchl / McPherson College

## New Shiloh church rises from the ashes

Seven months after construction began, Shiloh Church of the Brethren has completed its rebuild. The church near Kasson, W.Va., had lost its building to a fire on Jan. 3 this year.

"The only work that remains is a small amount of work in the kitchen area," pastor Garry Clem reported in a November e-mail. "We have seen first-hand how God and God's people can really be a blessing to each other. We have received support from the coast of California to the East Coast of the United States. We even received support from Nigeria. More than 200 gifts of money, supplies, and services have been received to this point. And we shall never forget the greatest gift of all, and that is the prayers that have been prayed for us here at Shiloh."

As a gesture of thanks to supporters, the church is held an open house on Nov. 20. The official dedication will take place Jan. 2, "which coincides with the first anniversary of the burning of our beloved Shiloh," Clem noted. "All are wel-

come and encouraged to attend these celebrations. May God bless each of you in a very special way."

## Historic church hosts memorial service

Black Valley Federated Church of the Brethren and Christian (Everett, Pa.) joined Clearville United Church of Christ for an annual Memorial Sunday remembrance event.

The event is held at the Frame Church, which has been closed for many years and has no utilities, but more than 100 people now gather there each Memorial Day weekend. The service this year included the Black Valley Crusaders Children's Choir, a combined community adult choir, readings, a flag ceremony, and several sermonettes.

The church, located on the grounds of a cemetery where many past members of the host congregations are buried, was able to continue to hold church status in Bedford County due to the annual service. Offerings from the day go to maintain and care for the historic church and cemetery.

## McPherson students get jump start with new Mercedes scholarships

Mercedes-Benz USA recently agreed to provide three annual scholarships totaling \$15,000 per year to McPherson (Kan.) College, the only school that offers a four-year degree in automotive restoration.

Each year, one \$5,000 scholarship will be awarded to each of three students working toward an automotive restoration degree. This year, the recipients are Rod Barlet, Elizabethtown, Pa., senior; Kendall Critchfield, Hesston, Kan., sophomore; and Taylor Adams, Ashland, Va., sophomore.

In addition to the scholarship, the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center in Irvine, Calif., will offer at least one internship to a qualified McPherson automotive restoration student each year. The internship will be expanded in length from just a summer to also include most of the spring semester as well. The Classic Center's technician team already includes three graduates of the McPherson automotive restoration program, and all are former interns at the Classic Center in Irvine or in Germany.

As a child, Barlet—a member of the Church of the Brethren—used to take apart anything mechanical, starting with his bicycle at age 6. Later, he recalled what a treat it was to ride in his grandfather's 1974 Mercedes-Benz 240D. That early exposure has carried through his life and on to McPherson.

Barlet said the new internship opportunity would take an automotive restoration student's learning to the next level.

"Just like any other profession, your education never really stops," he said.

## LANDMARKS & LAURELS

- **David Shoup** retired in October after 46 years of service as treasurer for Southern Ohio District. He was honored at district conference by being named "treasurer emeritus" and was given a stained glass artwork.

- The University of Notre Dame will begin offering a Ph.D. in theology and peace studies. The new program is a partnership between Notre Dame's Department of Theology and the Kroc

Institute for International Peace Studies. Church of the Brethren member **Robert C. Johansen** is director of doctoral studies at the Kroc Institute.

- **Bermudian Church of the Brethren** was featured in the York (Pa.) Daily Record for its ongoing tradition of performing outdoor baptisms in Bermudian Creek. The feature section cover story featured a photo of 11-year-old Katie Hann's baptism, noting that the running water was significant for "symbolizing the washing away of

sins." The Pleasant Hill and Black Rock Church of the Brethren congregations were also mentioned in the article.

- **Melanie Snyder**, author of the Brethren Press book *Grace Goes to Prison*, was the keynote speaker at the 2010 graduation ceremony for Bethel Ministries, an organization that helps men leaving incarceration change their lives to become law-abiding, productive members of society. The ceremony and dinner took place Nov. 20 at Mountain View Church of the Brethren in Boise, Idaho.

# Remembered

• **Kenneth L. Brown**, 77, died Nov. 3 at the Cleveland (Ohio) Clinic. He was a national peace studies pioneer and professor emeritus at Manchester College in North Manchester, Ind., a nonviolent activist, and an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren.

"Ken was an amazing man,"

Manchester president Jo Young Switzer said in a release. "For decades, his name was synonymous with our Peace Studies program. His students grappled with big questions and ambiguities. We respected him for all that and more."

For 25 years, beginning in 1980, he directed the nation's oldest peace studies program at Manchester. He also served as a consultant to peace studies programs across the country and around the world, and led study teams to Vietnam, Brazil, Northern Ireland, Haiti, Thailand, India, Jamaica, Colombia, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Cuba. Brown and his wife, Viona, also hosted weekly discussions for students in their home since their arrival in North Manchester in 1961. After retiring in 2006, Brown continued to teach. His daughter, Katy Gray Brown, is a current peace studies professor at Manchester.

In 2005, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Peace and Justice Studies Association. He also was a founder of several organizations, including the Brethren Action Movement and the War Tax Resisters Penalty Fund. A native Kansan, he graduated from Wichita East High School in 1951, and from McPherson College in 1955. He

attended Wichita State University and pursued graduate work at the University of Kansas. He held degrees from Bethany Theological Seminary and Duke University, where he received his doctorate in 1964, and also attended Garrett School of Theology and the University of California. Early in his career, he held pastorates at two Church of the Brethren congregations, and taught in the Chicago school system.

A memorial service was held at the college on Nov. 14.

• **Kenneth M. Shaffer Jr.**, 64, director of the Brethren Historical Library and Archives (BHLA) at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill., passed away Oct. 23 at his home in Elgin. In May he had announced his plans to retire Dec. 31. He had served as BHLA director since January 1989, holding responsibility for the extensive archival collection housed in the basement of the General Offices.

Shaffer regularly aided researchers, provided information for church programs and projects, served as staff liaison for the Brethren Historical Committee, oversaw the work of interns, and wrote about Brethren history. He began work for the Church of the Brethren in August 1970 as consultant for curriculum development for the former General Board. From 1972 to 1988 he worked at Bethany Theological Seminary in Oak Brook, Ill., where his positions included bookstore manager, acquisitions librarian, administrative assistant to the Doctor of Ministry program, and library director.

He served as book review editor for the journal *Brethren Life and Thought* from 1986 to 1999. From 1987 to 1989 he was editor of *A Guide for Biblical Studies*, the Brethren Press Bible study curriculum for adults. Most recently he had contributed to a new project to digitize Brethren periodicals in a cooperative endeavor with several other Brethren bodies, and along with co-author Graydon Snyder was writing articles for *Brethren Life and Thought* to bring their



Amy Heckert

books on *Texts in Transit* up to date. He also wrote numerous articles for *MESSENGER*, including recent contributions to the coverage of the 300th anniversary of the Brethren movement.

Originally from the eastern shore of Maryland, Shaffer graduated from Bridgewater (Va.) College in 1967. He received a Master of Divinity degree from Bethany Theological Seminary in 1970. In 1983 he also completed a master of arts degree in Library Science from Northern Illinois University. He was an ordained minister and early in his career filled two summer pastorates.

His funeral was held Oct. 27 at Denton (Md.) Church of the Brethren. A memorial service is planned Dec. 12 at Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren, where he was an active member.

• **Brett K. Winchester**, 57, a member of the Church of the Brethren Disabilities Ministry, passed away Sept. 20 at home in Garden City, Idaho. Blind since birth, he developed a great deal of experience coping with blindness and low vision, and shared this experience with his employer, the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. He served as ICBVI Reading Services Coordinator for the Boise office, coordinating radio reading services. He also was involved in numerous advocacy efforts on behalf of persons who are blind or visually impaired. A memorial service was held Oct. 2 in Boise.



Manchester College

# Brethren forbearance

## Forbearance as practiced by the Church of the Brethren

(see "The Recovery of Brethren Forbearance," *Brethren Life and Thought*, vol. 54[4]: pp. 14-23) implies much more than simply tolerance of persons with views unlike your own. It carries with it a deep concern for the welfare and well-being of those individuals with whom we disagree. It means equal treatment of all Brethren. It means speaking up for the minority, no matter how small or large that minority is.



WILLIAM R. EBERLY

Forbearance and the early phrase, to bear with one another, appear often in the minutes of Annual Conference. Likely, the first was in 1799 when the members were admonished to "bear with

him" in patience. It always refers to our relationship with other Brethren, person to person, group to group.

The following example illustrates the interaction of two factions in the Church of the Brethren in 1969. On the one hand, there were two liberal activist peace groups, Brethren Peace Fellowship and the Brethren Action Movement. On the other side there was the Brethren Revival Fellowship, a small conservative, fundamentalist movement within the Church of the Brethren. Theologically, the two sets of believers were about as far apart as one could imagine. Of particular interest to the topic of this little story are these words

**MUCH MORE THAN SIMPLY TOLERANCE OF PERSONS WITH VIEWS UNLIKE YOUR OWN, FOREBEARANCE CARRIES WITH IT A DEEP CONCERN FOR THE WELFARE AND WELL-BEING OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS WITH WHOM WE DISAGREE.**

of the leader of the BRF in 1968: "... we cannot be called 'pacifists.' Pacifism covers many types of opposition to warfare. It is Satan's counterfeit for the doctrine of nonresistance. True Christians have never advocated the doctrines of present-day pacifism."

At that time, the Annual Conference officers were reluctant to turn over conference time slots to any private special interest groups not directly related to one of the program aspects of the General Board. Because the BRF was disturbed with what they saw as a one-sided presentation of many issues on the Annual Conference program, they wanted an evening program directed by the BRF to present their

conservative take on some of these issues. The following signed petition was received by the Conference officers:

**November 1, 1969.**

**To Annual Conference Central Committee:**

**"We, members of Brethren Peace Fellowship and Brethren Action Movement, are concerned that the request of Brethren Revival Fellowship to present one evening program at Annual Conference this coming year has reportedly been denied. If this is true, we urge reconsideration. We feel that the conservatives have been discriminated against for too long and should be given opportunity to present their concerns, just as the concern of some brought Archie Hargraves to Conference this past year. We request that Central Committee work with Brethren Revival Fellowship in planning an evening of Annual Conference this next year."**

**(Signed) James Poling; Warren M. Eshbach; Jim Drescher; J. Kenneth Kreider; Dale Aukerman; Gary Shank; A. Stauffer Curry; Ted Glick; Peggy Gish; James C. Gibbel; Richard D. Bittinger; Charlotte Kuenning; Mary Sue Rosenberger; Bruce E. Rosenberger; Art Gish; Paul E. Myers.**

Over the next few years, deliberate efforts were made by the officers and the Central Committee to increase the exposure of the BRF on various Conference appointments and committees. Major speakers were at times selected from the conservatives among us. The ballots contained conservative names, and BRF members were elected to General Board and even the moderatorship. In 1980, the Saturday evening worship service was a "celebration of our diversity," with presentations of a number of representative segments of our denomination, including the BRF.

In 1983, an amendment to the paper on Human Sexuality disapproving of same-sex covenantal relationships was adopted. The BRF Witness commented, "The 1983 Annual Conference in Baltimore could well have been our spiritual Gettysburg." Gettysburg, you remember, was the decisive battle in the Civil War which marked the change in military successes which ultimately won the war. I didn't even know there was a war going on.

In 1987, the BRF said, "There is no rigid pattern that every congregation must follow. The local congregation does not have to adopt all the resolutions and statements of Annual Conference." But that is not how it played out on the issue of same-sex covenantal services. For example, the Brethren Mennonite Council has consistently been denied a display booth at Conference.

Wouldn't it be a marvelous gesture of forbearance if the BRF would compose a petition to the Program and Arrangements Committee asking, after years of denial, that the BMC finally be allowed a booth in the display area? ❗

William R. Eberly was secretary of Annual Conference from 1968-1977 and moderator in 1980.

QUOTE WORTHY

**“Migrants are not commodities, illegal aliens or mere victims; they are human beings.”**

—excerpt from a statement by participants at a hearing in Beirut, Lebanon, on Migration and the Changing Ecclesial Landscape, co-sponsored by the World Council of Churches and Middle East Council of Churches

“I think what everyone longs for is certainty. What’s interesting is that God doesn’t give us certainty; he gives us mystery. He doesn’t require proof, he requires faith.”

—Adam Hamilton, author of *Seeing Gray in a World of Black and White*. He was interviewed by *The United Methodist Reporter*.

“We need mentors, heroes and saints. We need positive role models. People of faith throughout the ages have understood this. For that reason the church has often preserved the memory of exceptional Christians, honoring them as ‘saints.’

—Former Church of the Brethren pastor Tom Wagner, writing in his “Gleanings” column in a Michigan Council of Churches newsletter

“Unfortunately, the arguments and even the animosities that exist among Christians are like a cancer that is metastasizing within the body of Christ.”

—former US President Jimmy Carter, speaking about divisions in the Southern Baptist Convention (RNS)

“The call for the universal reign of peace and harmony is the central hope of all, irrespective of religious affiliation.”

—the Rev. Fr. Anthony Fom, coordinator of the Justice, Peace, and Development Commission of the Catholic Diocese of Jos, Nigeria. His remarks appeared in the Mennonite Central Committee Peace Office newsletter.

“The witness of the Hebrew Bible is the essential foundation of the New Testament church.”

—Bible scholar and current Village at Morrisons Cove staff member Bob Neff. He was quoted in the fall issue of the “Seed Packet” newsletter.

CULTUREVIEW

The **National Council of Churches** held its annual assembly as a “Centennial Gathering” to mark the 100th anniversary of the 1910 World Mission Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, that sparked the modern ecumenical movement. More than 400 people were expected to attend the assembly in New Orleans Nov. 9-11.

• A gathering of 60 delegates at an **international consultation on Muslim-Christian relations** in Geneva, Switzerland, called for a “mutual commitment to justice” and recommended the formation of a joint working group that could address future interreligious crises.

• A new book by Bible scholar John Dominic Crossan, titled **The World’s Greatest Prayer**, seeks to make a fresh interpretation of the Lord’s Prayer and to “reclaim its original meaning,” according to David Crumm of ReadtheSpirit.com.

• A protest vigil was scheduled again this year at the **School of the Americas** at Fort Benning, Ga., Nov. 17-19. The annual gathering protests the role of the school, renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, in training Latin American soldiers for involve-

ment in actions that have been widely condemned internationally, including acts of torture.

• Church World Service reported in October that it had **reset-tled more than 7,000 refugees** in the US during the past year, representing about 10 percent of all refugees resettled during that time period. The largest group resettled came from Iraq.

• A recent article in the *Detroit Free Press* noted the **increasing use of the Web for “church shopping**, with sites like ChurchRater.com that allow visitors to post reviews of congregations. “The whole issue of how to use the Web and communications is gigantic,” the Rev. Gary Hall of Christ Church Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills, Mich., said in the article.

• **PARADE** magazine asked Americans earlier this year **what they would do if given \$100,000 to donate to charity**. The top responses: food and shelter for the needy, research to cure disease, disaster relief, animal welfare, and youth programs. About 94 percent of respondents in the survey said they “believe it’s important to be involved in a community cause.”



JUST FOR FUN: MATCHING

**O CHRISTMAS TREE** Match the Advent/Christmas tradition or observance on the left with the country with which it is most typically associated on the right. Answers are printed below.

- |                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. St. Nicholas Day | a. United Kingdom |
| 2. Boxing Day       | b. Mexico         |
| 3. La Befana        | c. China          |
| 4. St. Lucia’s Day  | d. Greece         |
| 5. Las posadas      | e. Brazil         |
| 6. “Trees of light” | f. Germany        |
| 7. “Christmas rice” | g. Sweden         |
| 8. Christmas market | h. Italy          |

ANSWERS: 1-d; 2-e; 3-f; 4-g; 5-b; 6-c; 7-g; 8-h.

# shalom

## THE BIBLICAL VISION OF ECOJUSTICE

by Rosemary Radford Ruether

**T**he 1970s until today has been a time of an increasing recognition that the Western industrial style of development is unsustainable, although this has yet to be acknowledged by leaders of corporate growth. This system of development, based on an affluent minority using a disproportionate share of the world's natural resources, is fast depleting the base upon which it rests. We need an entirely new way of organizing human production and consumption in relation to natural resources, one that both distributes the means of life more justly among all earth's people and also uses resources in a way that renews them from generation to generation.

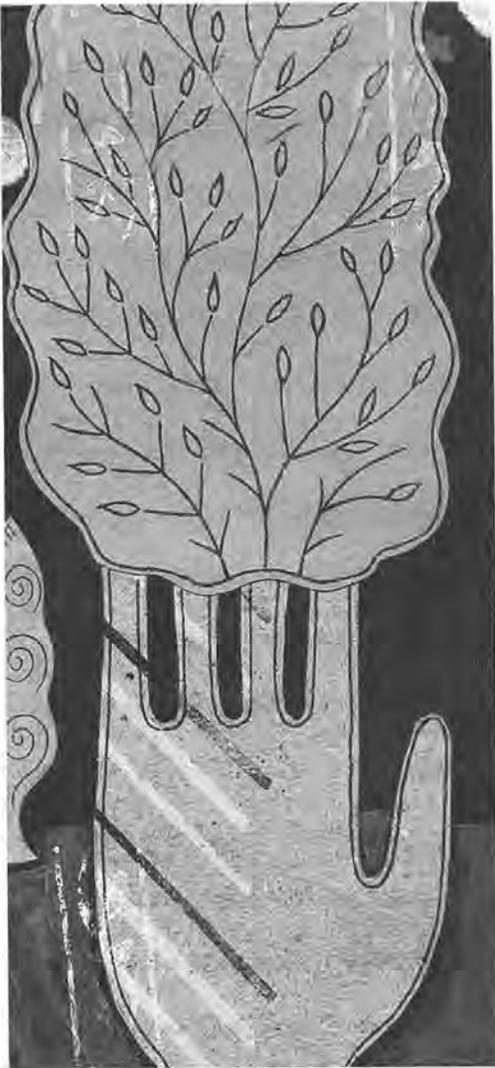
As the seriousness of the ecological crisis of modern industrial development became more and more evident, there has been an effort among theological or religious thinkers to respond to this crisis. To what extent have the different religious systems contributed to a destructive relationship with the earth? To what extent do world religions have positive resources that can teach us to be more caring of the earth? Christianity, in particular, as the dominant religion of western industrial countries, has been challenged as to its ecological impact.

In 1967, Lynn White, a historian of science, wrote an article entitled, "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis," in which he claimed that the biblical doctrine of human dominion over creation has been the key cause of the destructive relationship of

western Christians with nature. This article has been widely read and caused much soul-searching among Christian theologians and scholars of the Hebrew Bible.

There have been two main responses by western religious thinkers to this challenge. One response, dominant among scholars of the Hebrew Bible, has been to protest that Genesis 1:28, which mandates that humanity "fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" has been misread as allowing humanity a destructive domination over creation. Read in the context of the view of humanity in relation to God and nature generally, the Hebrew Bible teaches that God remains Lord of creation. We humans are mandated to be caretakers of the earth under God, not autonomous owners who can do whatever we wish with the earth. Our relationship to the earth should be one of stewardship in which we are responsible to God, rather than destructive exploiters.

Other religious thinkers have rejected this stewardship model of human relationship to the earth. They see this as still handing over all creation to humans as rulers. These thinkers see scripture as much less recoverable for an ecological spirituality and ethic. They agree with White that the main impact of biblical thought has been to locate humanity outside of and over nature, rather than as a part of nature. We need to recog-



nize that we are latecomers to the planet. Humans have existed on Earth for only half a million years—a mere blip on the timetable of Earth history that goes back four and a half billion years—most of that time as a non-dominant species. Fish, birds, and animals have been here far longer than we, and they got along quite well—and indeed better—before we assumed power over them.

These writers argue that we need a more animist view of the natural world that sees the whole of nature as sacred, permeated by the spirit of the divine. We need to recover a sense of reverence for the earth and a recognition of our own place in it as one species among others. We need to learn how to enter into mutuality and fellowship with nature, rather than separating ourselves from nature and imagining ourselves as having been given a divine mandate to rule over it. Since, in the view of these thinkers, such views cannot be found in scripture, we need to set aside biblical thought for a moment and consider the religious worldviews of indigenous peoples, such as Native Americans, or Asian religions, such as Hinduism or Daoism.

I have no objection to people exploring

The biblical dream of redemption is one of a flourishing nature in the peaceful kingdom of God's shalom. Springs of water return and the land flourishes abundantly.

the ecological potential of other religions, especially if they enter into deep and responsible dialogue with other traditions, and do not just seek to use them without real relationship to them. But I believe that the biblical traditions have precious resources for an ecological spirituality and ethic, or what I would call an ecojustice ethic, that should not be neglected. Moreover, it is evident that the almost two billion Christians, close to a third of humanity, are not going to be moved to concern about ecology by the message that their religions are part of the problem, but not part of the solution, and should be discarded. If we wish for Christians to care about ecological crisis, we must speak about it in language that appeals to the Bible. This is not simply a matter of strategy. It is also a matter of truth. In fact the Bible has deep resources of ecology that we can and must recover.

Those who dismiss the Bible as hostile to nature have mistakenly confused the biblical worldview with its 19<sup>th</sup> century German interpreters. In German thought we find a view that sets nature against history and sees God as the Lord of history against nature. Nature is decried as static and stifling to the spirit, while history is seen as emancipatory, allowing us to transcend nature. This split between nature and history, however, is foreign to the Bible. In the Bible we have an understanding of God as the creator of the whole world, of the stars and planets, animals and plants, as well as humans, as one. The same steadfast love of God is present

## We humans are mandated to be caretakers of the earth under God, not autonomous owners who can do whatever we wish with the earth.



when God “spread out the earth on the waters, . . . made the great lights,” made “the sun to rule over the day . . . the moon and stars to rule over the night,” and also when God “brought Israel out from among them . . . with a strong hand and an outstretched arm . . . divided the Red Sea . . . and made Israel pass through the midst of it . . . but overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea” (Psa. 136: 6-15).

The view of nature that has triumphed in Western science from the 17<sup>th</sup> century until today sees non-human nature as dead matter without animating spirit. This shift in attitude toward nature is what science historian Carolyn Merchant calls “the death of nature.” But this view is totally foreign to the Bible, and indeed to Christian thought generally until modern times. The Hebrew worldview, and that of Christianity until the scientific revolution, assumes that nature is alive, filled with soul or spirit. We interact with this animate spirit in nature. Nature is responsive to God as living creatures who relate to God in their own right.

God is seen as taking profound pleasure in God’s work of creation, and creation in turn responds to God with praise. God rejoices in the world which God creates, and the planets, mountains, brooks, animals, and plants return this rejoicing in their relationship with God. God visits the earth in rain showers, watering its furrows abundantly, blessing its growth. The earth responds with overflowing abundance and joy. “The hills gird themselves with joy, the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout, they sing together for joy” (Psa. 65: 9-13).

It is important to remember that the world of Hebrew scripture, as well as that of Jesus in his hometown of Nazareth, was a world of small, mostly subsistence, farmers. They were keen observers of nature, dependent on nurturing its growth in a stony and

water-scarce environment. Hebrew religion also constructed an ethic of care for nature through practices of letting fields lie fallow periodically, and regular land reform that sought to prevent over-exploitation of the land. These agricultural laws were embodied in the Levitical codes about the cycles of the week, the sabbatical year, and the Jubilee.

In this reflection on the biblical vision of ecojustice, I would like to focus particularly on what I see as a key prophetic pattern of thought. This thought knits together injustice of humans to one another and the devastation of the earth. It also lays out a vision of redemptive hope in which a human conversion to justice renews the earth and restores harmony among humans, nature, and God. This view rests on an understanding of the covenant among humanity, the earth, and God which is holistic. The land is itself an integral part of the covenantal relationship between humanity and God.

In this covenantal view, nature’s response to human use or abuse itself becomes an ethical sign. The erosion of the soil, drought, the drying up of the springs of water, and the pollution of the earth are themselves judgments of God upon unjust ways of living between humans with each other and with nature. Thus Psalm 107 declares: “He turns rivers into a desert, springs of waters into thirsty ground, a fruitful land into a salty waste, because of the wickedness of its inhabitants” (Psa. 107: 33-34). This text is a religious interpretation of the reality of the ecological disasters in the ancient Middle East, caused by abuse of the land in which deforestation and over-irrigation was causing desertification and salination of the land.

From the biblical point of view, when humans break their covenant with God and one another by social injustice and war, the covenant between God, humanity, and

nature is broken. War and violence in society and the polluted, barren, hostile face of nature are both expressions of this violation of the covenant. They are linked together as expressions of one reality. Isaiah 24 vividly portrays this link between social and ecological violation and violence:

The earth shall be utterly laid waste and utterly spoiled. . . . The earth mourns and withers, the world languishes and withers, the earth lies polluted under its inhabitants. For they have transgressed the laws, they have violated the statutes, they have broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse devours the earth and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt. . . . The city of chaos is broken down, every house is shut up so that none can enter. . . . Desolation is left in the city, the gates are battered to ruin. . . . (Isa. 24: 3-6, 10,12).

But this divine judgment expressed in desolation in society and nature is not the end of the prophetic vision. When humanity mends its ways with God, the covenant of creation is restored and renewed. Restoration of just relations between peoples restores peace to society and also heals nature's enmity. Just, peaceful societies where people are not enslaved, where violence has been overcome, also blossom forth in a peaceful, harmonious, and fruitful land.

The biblical dream of redemption is one of a flourishing nature in the peaceful kingdom of God's shalom. Springs of water return and the land flourishes abundantly. "The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom, Like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing" (Isa. 35: 1-2). This redemptive promise includes abundant

harvests: "The tree bears its fruit, the fig trees and vine give their full yield. . . . Rejoice in the Lord for he has given early rain. . . . The threshing floors shall be full of grain, the vats shall overflow with wine and oil" (Joel 2: 22-24). "Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when the plowman will overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed; the mountains shall drip sweet wine and all the hills will flow with it" (Amos 9:13).

Justice in human affairs and harmony with nature together reflect a humanity made right with God, thereby filling the earth with peace and abundance. As Isaiah puts it in his vision of a redemptive future, "They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord" (Isa. 11:9). This redemptive vision that knits together nature and society as one is expressed succinctly in Jesus' Lord's prayer as he prays for God's kingdom to come, God's will done on earth. In that coming of God's kingdom upon the earth, we can hope for all people to be fed. The debts that turn some into debt-slaves will be forgiven. The temptations to dreams of power over others are surrendered. "Give us this day our daily bread; forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." The biblical kingdom of God is ecojustice realized on earth, as it is in heaven. 

Rosemary Radford Ruether is a noted Roman Catholic theologian and prolific author praised for her wide range of inquiry. Her books include the seminal *Sexism and God-Talk*; *Faith and Fratricide* (an examination of Christian anti-Semitism); and *The Wrath of Jonah* (a study of Zionism and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict). Ruether is an emerita professor of feminist theology at Pacific School of Religion and the Graduate Theological Union, as well an emerita professor of applied theology at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary.



When humanity mends its ways with God, the covenant of creation is restored and renewed.

# The firefly

by Meredith Morckel

**I** traveled to Guatemala the summer before my senior year at Bluffton University. The brochure called it a “faith expedition.” I’m not sure I would have gone if it had been a “mission trip.” I’ve never been an evangelist or a teacher. I don’t know how to build a house or dig a well. So I was thrilled that the “expedition” had simple goals: learn about the native people and, hopefully, from them: about their culture, beliefs, politics, language, family, and priorities. That didn’t sound so hard.

I joined a group of a dozen college students led by the quiet, contemplative leader and his 6-year-old son, Zach. Zach wore a red, sweat-stained baseball cap and socks rust-colored from dust. His cheeks were swollen with baby fat and his blue eyes were intelligent and mischievous.

For the first time in my life as a North American Caucasian, I experienced what it was like to truly be a minority. I was careful not to take pictures of the shacks that most of the Guatemalans lived in. How would I like it if Bill Gates or someone else obscenely rich put a picture of *my* home in some scrapbook?

The people we met were so happy and accepting, and extremely generous in spite of their poverty. One family fed us their only chicken, which meant that they wouldn’t have meat for months.

Even though the meat wasn’t thoroughly cooked and there wasn’t a salt shaker in sight, it was the best meal I’ve had.

We went to a remote Mayan village in the mountains. We traveled north in the bed of a pickup truck that vibrated like an unbalanced washing machine. I don’t remember how many hours it took to reach the peak of the mountain, but we started at sea level and ended up inside the clouds. The village was little more than a general store, an old church, and a cluster of wood and tin huts on the edge of a cliff. The scenery was breathtaking. A crazy quilt of teal-brown fields cascaded below us until the world curved. Columns of brassy sunlight transformed the forest into a palace hall. Spider webs twinkled like tinsel on a Christmas tree.

“The Mayans will be afraid of you,” our Guatemalan guide and translator warned us. “Many of them have never seen white skin. All they know about white people is that they murdered their ancestors for bananas and coffee beans. They won’t like you.”

The first villagers I saw from the truck bed were little kids with baskets balanced on their heads and firewood slung over their backs. Their feet were bare and their clothes were worn. We said “Hola” (unaware that Spanish wasn’t their first or primary language) and waved our hands in a universal greeting.

The children froze. Then they turned and fled, shouting “Gringos!” like I would shout “Fire!” if I saw something burning. After that, we went through a gauntlet of



Meredith Morckel

glares. Men walking home from the fields fingered their machetes as if preparing to defend themselves. Women scowled from shadowed doorways while children hid behind their frayed, fuchsia-colored skirts. I wished I knew how to say "We come in peace," but all I could do was smile and try to look harmless.

At dusk, we shoehorned ourselves into a tool shed beside a sand-colored Catholic church. We stayed on a dirty concrete floor while spiders rappelled from the rafters and rats burrowed into our suitcases. It was so cold that I longed for the heat and humidity of Guatemala City that I'd cursed hours before. To stay warm, I wrapped my body in every piece of clothing I had: dirty socks on my hands like mittens, extra bras wrapped around my neck, and shoelaces tied around the cuffs of my jeans to keep out the critters.

Outside, the village kids threw rocks at the walls of the shed. I understood their child-logic. I knew that they didn't want to hurt us. They just wanted to poke us, the strange, foreign beasts, to see if we roared. Most of us in the expedition were from the Church of the Brethren, a historic peace church. We don't roar (at least not in our own defense).

Between the rocks hitting the walls and the bugs crawling over me, I was anxious. I was on the wrong side of the equator. The people hated me because of the color of my skin. How could I accomplish our goals when I couldn't communicate? Meanwhile, Zach decided that we needed a bedtime story to help us fall asleep.

He told us a story about a little boy in a red baseball cap who went to a strange land and became best friends with the people who lived there. I knew that he was talking about us, about what he hoped would happen with the Mayans. While he spoke, silent fireworks appeared above my head. There were fireflies inside the shed with us! Dozens and dozens of lightning bugs. *Hundreds*. They celebrated Zach's vision. They hovered above me like stars in the night sky to wish upon. They broke through all literal and figurative darkness, and I was able to sleep.

Zach was bored the next day, and wanted to play a game of tag. He was "It" most of the time (on purpose, I suspect, as children sometimes play). At first, I didn't notice that Zach's antics were drawing the villagers' attention. I was busy observing a spider crawling across our truck. It was light brown, hairy, and as wide as the gas cap. In the Mayan village, women cook and eat spiders. It's supposed to make them weave clothes, rugs, and blankets as well as a spider spins a web.

After a while, the mothers left their doorways to watch the game, and the men took a detour on their way home from the fields. Another half-hour went by and there were almost 100 Mayans. Initially, the scowls were still there, but then the villagers started chatting to one another and pointing, trying to figure out what we were doing. Their eyes and fingers followed "It" around the square as they learned the rules. The audience grew. Some of the men climbed up telephone poles and onto the roof of the store to get a better view.

Suddenly, Zach ran into the crowd. Instead of tagging one of us, he went up to a middle-aged Guatemalan man who had a machete clipped to his belt. Zach ignored the knife, smacked the man in the arm, and shouted, "You're it!"

I gasped, and so did everyone else. The entire village went still. Everything on that mountain seemed to depend on how the man would react. I imagined the worst-case scenario: the man swinging the machete. And I imagined the best-case scenario: the man ignoring Zach altogether. Incredibly, there was a better scenario than the one I had imagined.

The man dropped the machete and joined the game! He raised his arms straight out like Frankenstein's monster and chased after Zach, who yelled in delight as he ran. Soon two, then six, then ten villagers were playing with us. Zach even figured out how to climb up onto the roof of the store and the men perched up there pretended to be afraid of being "It." They swung off the gutters like monkeys and slid down the telephone poles like

The game continued until sunset. For the rest of our time in the village, the children played Uno with us, the women showed us how to weave (luckily, they didn't insist that we eat the spiders), and the men shared stories about their lives.

firemen. Zach ended up on the roof alone, with his hands on his hips, crowing with laughter like Peter Pan.

The game continued until sunset. For the rest of our time in the village, the children played Uno with us, the women showed us how to weave (luckily, they didn't insist that we eat the spiders), and the men shared stories about their lives.

Zach accomplished in a moment what a dozen educated adults couldn't in a day. He got the Mayans to play with us. One little boy and a simple game of tag bridged the barriers of race, culture, and language, of light and darkness.

He was a firefly in the dark. 

Meredith Morckel is a former Brethren Volunteer Service worker, a graduate of Bluffton University, and a member of Springfield Church of the Brethren in Akron, Ohio. She lives in Canton, Ohio. This article is dedicated to her parents, Bruce and Kim Morckel.



# Entry room

by Ken Gibble

Hated getting out of bed  
that winter I worked for Bob Kurtz  
whose farm was up the road a ways  
Hated getting up two hours dark  
before the school bus came  
so I could help Bob milk his damn cows  
Hated what I had to do —  
pour feed into the troughs  
lug steaming pails to the milkhouse  
fork manure into the spreader  
But mostly hated  
the getting up and going

Icy air hit me as I left the house  
swung my legs onto my bike  
lunged into the darkness and the wind  
the cold amazed me every time  
stunned my throat my lungs  
burrowed through my clothing to the skin  
I shivered—shook—ground  
my teeth in useless freezing rage

Strain up the hill and—at long last—  
see the gable light beckon like the star the wise men followed  
park the bike outside, yank open the stable door  
cattle warmth surrounds—embraces—blesses  
I sob with glad relief

You're late again says Bob  
but merry Christmas anyway  
he tosses me a ribboned Hershey bar and grins

Some say it's sad that Christ the king  
had just a cattle trough for crib  
I say a warm stable on a bone-cold morning  
feels like the entry room to heaven

Maybe—for the Child—the entry room to earth

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

# 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!"



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# Can we agree?

by Robert C. Johansen

*[Note: This is the second in a series of essays that will appear periodically during the year leading up to the 2011 Annual Conference. It is intended to provide different points of view that we hope will add to the discussion taking place in churches and districts over the coming year. —Ed.]*

**At this time in our history, we in the Church of the Brethren cannot agree** on whether it is sinful for two people of the same sex to form a loving, covenantal relationship. That is a fact of our lives, whether we like it or not. So what should we do? After a lifetime of studying the Bible and trying to take Christian stances on political, social, and personal issues, I have come to believe that it is more Christ-like to be in loving relationship with others than to try to

agree that we should not threaten or punish those with whom we disagree, especially if they express love and respect for God, for us, and for one another?

Can we agree not to punish women who do not cover their heads and hair during holy communion? Can we agree not to punish men who depart from plain clothing and choose to wear ties and colorful shirts or hats? Can we agree not to exclude from our fellowship or from ordination those people who divorce and remarry? Can we accept in our fellowship those who serve in the military, even while many of us, assembled in our Annual Conferences, affirm that all war is sin? Can we agree not to punish women who seek ordination and men who do not favor the ordination of women?

Jesus often befriended someone whom other religious people discriminated against as sinful persons who

they be accepted?

We know that some members of our beloved church strongly want to reaffirm every sentence in the 1983 statement "Human Sexuality from a Christian Perspective." We also know that other members of our beloved church want not to discriminate against those with a minority sexual orientation as some words of that statement condone. In view of these differences, might it make sense for Annual Conference and its Standing Committee to choose simply not to comment on the most controversial sentences? Of course each church member might have his or her own views on precisely which sentences should be affirmed or revised, but they conscientiously may not want to legislate new statements at this time, because any new statement might feel like adding insult to injury for one group

## Can we agree that, even while we disagree on an issue of sexual conduct, we should hold one another in respectful, loving relationship?

impose on them my understanding of the correct stance to take on issues. Loving others takes priority over getting them to agree with me. In the words of the 2008 Annual Conference "Resolution Urging Forbearance," "... we are called to love and care for each other before we are called to correct one another."

If so, can we agree that, even while we disagree on an issue of sexual conduct, we should hold one another in respectful, loving relationship? Can we agree that the ultimate judgment about sin should be left in the hands of God? Can we

should not be invited to eat with him or to be engaged in respectful conversation. Can we agree that we should be as loving and accepting as he? Would it be acceptable to allow individual congregations to decide whether to welcome people of different sexual orientations and, if so, how to receive them?

No doubt we can agree to bar from our ordained clergy anyone who acts unlovingly and unforgivingly toward others, because this would be un-Christ-like, but if any in Christian faith act lovingly and forgivingly toward all, can

or another. Any new Annual Conference statement might in practice seem to cut off one part of our body or another.

Of course each person may freely seek to persuade others to agree with his or her own position, but that is different from seeking to threaten or punish others because they disagree. Would it make sense for the Standing Committee and Annual Conference to ask for a pledge from all members not to punish those who seek to hold others in respectful, loving relationship, even though they disagree, thereby avoiding pharisaical legal-

### LEARN MORE

For resources for the Special Response process go to [www.cobannualconference.org/special\\_response\\_resource.html](http://www.cobannualconference.org/special_response_resource.html), where there are links to the Bible study prepared by the Special Response Resource Committee, a detailed timeline of the Special Response process, and the Annual Conference paper that is guiding the process—the "Structural Framework for Dealing with Strongly Controversial Issues."

ism and judgmentalism that Jesus noted violate the spirit of love?

Such a non-punishing initiative would tacitly acknowledge that the 1983 statement exists while also acknowledging that its implementation would be uneven, reflecting the uneven support for it as a Christian reality. Such an action would encourage those people who emphasize that a covenantal homosexual lifestyle is "unacceptable" to remember that the 1983 statement also calls each member to challenge the "widespread fear, hatred, and harassment of homosexual persons . . ." A non-punishing pledge might enable our beloved church to model, for others as well as for ourselves, a Christ-like ability to hold in loving relationship people who disagree on one issue or another, but who also agree on the overriding importance of the love of God for all of God's creation.

Although the issues vary in moral gravity, could expressing love and forgiveness toward both supporters and opponents of revising the 1983 statement be analogous to welcoming into our church both those who favor plain dress and those who do not, those who use prayer coverings and those who do not, those who remarry after divorce and those who would not, and those who participate in military combat and those who do not?

For those who conscientiously believe that homosexual conduct is sinful, can they practice love and forgiveness toward those with a different view? For those who conscientiously believe that a loving, covenantal relationship among two people of the same sex is not sinful, can they practice love and forgiveness toward those with a different view? Can both groups encourage all marriages and covenantal relationships to be truly loving, monogamous, without adultery or promiscuity, and filled with Christian fidelity and mutual respect?

Could steps such as these express Christ-like love toward those with whom we disagree, no less than toward our enemies? 

Robert C. Johansen is the director of doctoral studies at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame and a life-long member of the Church of the Brethren. He teaches Sunday school at the Crest Manor Church of the Brethren in South Bend, Ind.

# Peace

*This Christmas,  
May the peace of Christ dwell  
within each of us,  
within our communities,  
and around our world.*

*The students, staff and faculty of Bethany Theological Seminary*



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Matthew 2:1-12: The story of the Magi

# God's wisdom is the pathway of love

by Bob Neff

**I** have always believed that teaching and learning is a relational enterprise. Our early tradition of inviting other members to respond to the preacher's sermon seems both appropriate and necessary.

When I began this series, I invited a group of readers to look at each article before it was sent to the editor. They included ministers, a college professor and dean, and one trained in Christian education. I am deeply in debt to Christina Bucher, Chris Bowman, David Leiter, Frank Ramirez, and Dot Wiggins for providing useful insights and guidance for each of these articles. Thank you for your steadfast assistance. I am also grateful to Walt Wiltschek, who sustained his editorial oversight throughout the year, provided careful reading and sound advice in the final format for these articles.

Nowhere was the relational aspect more apparent than in the comment of a student, Becky Zeek, pastor of the Twenty-ninth Street Church of the Brethren in Altoona, Pa. Early in the process I scheduled two classes to discuss these articles on biblical wisdom. At the end of the first class Becky said, "What you are really saying is that biblical wisdom is relational and personal." While I had not thought of it quite in that way, she helped me understand the thread of relational instruction that runs through these texts.

Her observation is one of the reasons I selected the story of the Magi in Matthew 2 instead of Paul's discussion of the wisdom of God in 1 Corinthians 1 for this final article. Becky helped me realize that not only the teaching enterprise but also the wisdom texts are relational and personal.

The story of the Magi begins with the identification of wise men, astrologers from the East—a metaphor for the place of wisdom in the Hebrew Bible. These individuals are trained and gifted in reading the signs of the heavens and stand at the pin-

nacle of non-Jewish wisdom. Through their study they have discovered the birth of a new king whose star has appeared. The conjunction of two royal planets (Venus and Jupiter) near Regulus, the king star, in the constellation of Leo the Lion—which represents Judea in ancient astrology—directs them to Jerusalem, the seat of Jewish power and wisdom. Their study has carried them as far as they can go, and they need an additional source to determine the location of the child's birth.

The scene shifts from the heavens and the East to the household of Herod and Jerusalem. When Herod hears the news that the wise men bring, he assembles the religious authorities and scholars, chief priests and scribes, to make a determination of the child's birthplace. They search the source of Jewish wisdom, The Hebrew Scriptures, and declare that the location is "in Bethlehem in the land of Judah." The authorities are experts in the scriptures the way the Magi are experts in reading the stars. They give an accurate answer based on Micah 5:2-4. Go to Bethlehem! But there is a problem.

Matthew informs us that the king, the religious leaders, and the people were frightened by the message of the Magi. Their initial response is one of shock and trepidation. Their fear of instability, the unsettling nature of the succession, and Herod's paranoid fears are increased because they recognize the truth of the news from the Magi, but they do not wish to have it interfere with their standing and position. They want life to remain under their own control. They recognize that the scripture tradition can be useful but refuse to internalize it and make it a way of life. The scrolls of wisdom stay on the shelf and remain out of reach for determining the way of God's wisdom and are only retrieved because of the outsiders' request.

Meanwhile the Magi journey to Bethlehem and find the child with Mary his mother in a local home. This scene of domestic tran-

**In this child God embraces humanity in a personal form** that humans can touch and see. The wise men, focused on the stars all their lives, now kneel and present gifts in a Judean household.



The Three Magi by Jacopo Bassano, c. 1562, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

quility stands in sharp contrast to the household of Herod and the machinations of power in the prior verses. In these verses God's wisdom is portrayed in human form—in the relationship between child and parent. In this child God embraces humanity in a personal form that humans can touch and see. The wise men, focused on the stars all their lives, now kneel and present gifts in a Judean household. The Greek word for "worship" used here connotes both a sign of honor shown to a human king and the adoration appropriate to the divine presence. They have found the object of their lifelong search in the simplicity of human relationships and the personal interchange between mother and child. They embrace Wisdom in human form, personal and approachable.

In the concluding verse, The Magi are warned in a dream to go home by another way. In Matthew's Gospel dreams become a way of relating divine purpose and protection, as in the warning to the parents to go and then return from Egypt. In this chapter alone we discover four sources for wisdom: the stars, treasured texts, dreams, and a person. The focus of our study has led us to this One who embodies what is personal and relational in God's way, the crown of wisdom.

As Matthew makes clear, Herod seeks to destroy the good news by his order to massacre the infants in Matthew 2:16-18. His bloodthirsty and paranoid behaviors portrayed in Matthew are consistent with what historians have demonstrated. His interest is the retention of power, pure and simple. He neglects the role of the true king as defined in Psalm 72 and Isaiah 9 and 11.

The wisdom of God appears in a person. The power elite reject this personal and relational wisdom as seen in both the Christmas and Easter stories. They want no part of this relational aspect of life, nor the call to justice and the fair treatment of

the dispossessed and the outcast so central to both Testaments.

I think the French Jewish philosopher and student of the Talmud, Levinas, who survived the Holocaust and became the principal interpreter of German philosophy to the French intellectual community, puts the matter very clearly: Philosophy is not the love of wisdom, as the word suggests, but "the wisdom of love." It is in the encounter with another person that we find the "signals of transcendence" in our lives.

When I began this series of articles on biblical wisdom, I could only see dimly the direction we'd take. Now that I have come to the end, for this time at least, I see more clearly that God's Way in Wisdom's Path has been relational and personal.

From the encounter between Joseph and Judah to the story of the prodigal sons, God seeks just and satisfying relationships. From the language of the Psalter to the quandary of Job, the searcher finds the God who meets him/her in a personal way. In a world gone awry, as in the Book of Ecclesiastes, the sage advice is to enjoy the simple gift of a mealtime with friends. In the scene of Mother and Child the grace of God is revealed to strangers and wise men. The Incarnation is the highest form of wisdom.

God's Way is an invitation to enjoy our humanity and relationships, because God's love dwells among us in this one named Immanuel. **W**

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 10th and final installment in a year-long Bible study series on wisdom literature.

## Denomination's board sets framework for strategic planning, 2011 budget

A framework for strategic planning for the next decade of denominational ministry, and a 2011 budget, were approved by the Church of the Brethren's Mission and Ministry Board on Oct. 15-18, meeting at the church's General Offices in Elgin, Ill. The board used a consensus style of decision making, led by chair Dale E. Minnich.

The bulk of the board's time was spent on a framework for strategic planning for the next decade. The document features a preamble prayer, six broad directional goals, and a plan for next steps such as development of strategic objectives and how the resulting strategic plan will be implemented. Previously adopted vision, mission, and core values statements are considered foundational to the effort.

Six directional goals give broad guidance for denominational ministries in five large program areas—"Brethren Voice," church planting, congregational vitality, international mission, and service—and an organizational goal of sustainability.

"The possibilities before us are indeed exciting," said Minnich as he introduced the framework to the board.

Using an "appreciative inquiry" process that focuses on identifying strengths of the organization, data for strategic planning has been gleaned from a five-year evaluation of the work of the general secretary and a survey of seven leadership groups in the denomination: the board members themselves, the Standing Committee of district delegates to Annual Conference, district executives, executive staff of the church, the denominational Leadership Team (Annual Conference officers and general secretary), Intercultural Ministry Team, and participants in a Young Adult Forum.

Consultant Rick Augsburger of the Konterra Group based in Washington, D.C., is providing assistance for the

*The board heard from a recent delegation to China during its October meeting. Delegation members displayed a large banner that was part of the centennial celebration of medical facilities that have emerged from the original Brethren mission hospital in Ping Ding, China.*

strategic planning. A Strategic Planning Working Group has been named from board members and executive staff: board chair Dale Minnich; board members Andy Hamilton, Frances Townsend, and Colleen Michael; treasurer Judy Keyser; and general secretary Stan Noffsinger. This working group also was in conversation with the envisioning committee of Annual Conference as it created the framework for strategic planning.

A final strategic plan and any resulting changes in program or staffing are not expected for at least a year.

The board agreed to schedule a half day of private conversation at its next meeting in March, at the recommendation of its Executive Committee. The conversation will be held in order "to share their views on issues of intense conflict and discord like the current issue of human sexuality and to listen attentively and respectfully to the thoughts of their colleagues," according to the proposal.

Two international delegations reported: a delegation to China in August for the centennial of the Ping Ding mission hospital started by the Brethren, and a delegation representing the denomination at the 40th anniversary of the Church of North India (see p. 22).

A review and evaluation of the Committee on Interchurch Relations (CIR) was set in motion, at the request of CIR and the Executive Committee. CIR is jointly answerable to Annual Conference and the Mission and Ministry Board. CIR chair Paul Roth presented the request "that Standing



*Dale Minnich, chair of the denomination's Mission and Ministry Board, displays the first document to come to the board for approval as part of a strategic planning process.*

Committee and the Mission and Ministry Board review the CIR's mission and discern what is most appropriate for the ecumenical work of the Church of the Brethren in the 21st century." The denomination's Leadership Team will facilitate the review.

The board affirmed a change in designation of the Church Loan Fund to become a board-designated fund.

Becky Ball-Miller was chosen as chair-elect beginning at the 2011 Annual Conference, to assist the next chair, Ben Barlow, for a two-year term as chair-elect, and then to serve as chair for two years. The term of service of current board chair Dale Minnich ends in July.

Todd Eichelberger of Bedford, Pa., was named to the board to fill the unexpired term of Willie Hisey Pierson, who became ineligible for the position when hired by Brethren Benefit Trust. The appointment will come before Annual Conference delegates for confirmation.

Board member Wallace Cole was named as Church of the Brethren representative to the On Earth Peace delegation to Israel and Palestine in January.



*Cheryl Blumberg-Cayford*

## Church of the Brethren general secretary visits White House

Church of the Brethren general secretary Stan Noffsinger was one of the Christian leaders who met with President Barack Obama on Nov. 1. The White House invited the delegation of leaders of denominations connected with the National Council of Churches (NCC) and Church World Service (CWS) in celebration of 100 years of ecumenism in the United States.

"What an event! It wasn't just a feel-good meeting, it was substantive," commented Noffsinger in a phone interview following the meeting. "We had a very pastoral visit. There was no partisanship. We were there as people of faith."

As the meeting opened, Wesley S. Granberg-Michaelson of the Reformed Church in America read James 3:16-18 as a way of acknowledging a seeming lack of civility as the country deals with issues. At the invitation of the President, the meeting concluded with prayer led by Bishop Thomas L. Hoyt Jr. of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

"We set the stage with scripture and closed with prayer." Noffsinger said.

The Christian leaders thanked President Obama for robust engagement with the faith community, and for passage of health reform legislation, while also pressing him to take a strong stance on behalf of people facing poverty and hunger.

They urged the President to prioritize a number of issues, including strengthening the country's fraying safety net; extending unemployment benefits as the economy continues to falter; lifting people out of poverty with a focus on job creation for those in poverty, job training, and education; Middle East peace; and the US relationship with Cuba, urging the President to lift the travel ban from the US to Cuba so that American-based organizations like Church World Service can support churches and communities there.

Meeting on the eve of the mid-term election, the Christian leaders also emphasized the need to work together for the common good and spoke of the power of churches to lead and break down walls of division.

"Almost in every issue we laid on the table he (the President) was crisp in his responses, very well thought out," Noffsinger said. "I was very impressed with his caring for and



**Stan Noffsinger and other denominational leaders associated with Church World Service and the National Council of Churches met with President Barack Obama at the White House on Nov. 1.**

concern for the unemployed, those who need health benefits, those who face violence in their lives."

Noffsinger was chosen to take part in the delegation as a member of the executive committee of the NCC, and was one of two leaders representing the peace churches along with Thomas Swain of the Religious Society of Friends, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

The delegation presented the President with a Saint John's Bible, a framed sampler of statements commemorating 100 years of ecumenism, and a picture plaque commemorating the CWS "Feed the Future" initiative.

At a reception hosted by the Office of Faith-Based Initiatives, members of the delegation had an opportunity to meet directors of that office's 12 focus areas. "There was significant conversation," said Noffsinger, who had a chance to speak with staff related to AmeriCorps, US AID, and the Department of Agriculture, regarding Church of the Brethren initiatives against hunger and the work of the Brethren Service Center and Brethren Volunteer Service.

## Church Yearbook goes to electronic format

The 2010 *Yearbook of the Church of the Brethren* is now available from Brethren Press in an electronic format on CD. The *Yearbook* will no longer be available in printed form.

"The CD *Yearbook* is an essential resource for Church of the Brethren information," says a description from Brethren Press. The disc format is searchable, easy to navigate, and contains contact information for congregations, districts, pastors, ministers, moderators, and Church of the Brethren agencies. The disk also includes the previous year's Statistical Report for 2009.

In new features made possible by the electronic format, *Yearbook* information can be downloaded to a personal computer, searchable navigation includes devices such as bookmarks, there are clickable links to other sections of the book or to external websites, the e-mail addresses are clickable, and a "find" tool enables quick searches of the entire listing.

Packaging for the CD is friendly to the environment, using vegetable inks and a minimum of 10 percent post-consumer recycled content, as well as a 100 percent recycled tray and the option for the user to only print what is needed on paper.

The *Yearbook* on CD is available from Brethren Press for \$21.50, plus shipping and handling. Call 800-441-3712 to order. For more information or questions, contact managing editor James Deaton at 800-323-8039 or [jdeaton@brethren.org](mailto:jdeaton@brethren.org).

## Moderator joins Archbishop of Canterbury at Church of North India celebration

Annual Conference moderator Robert Alley joined the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, and other Christian leaders in October to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Church of North India.

CNI was formed Nov. 29, 1970, by six Protestant denominations including the Church of the Brethren. The 1970 ceremony included Shantilal Bhagat, Loren Bowman, Joel Thompson, and Howard Royer, along with a number of mission workers representing the Church of the Brethren in the US, and Bishop Ishwarlal L. Christachari of the Indian Brethren was named as one of the original bishops of CNI serving in Gujarat Diocese.

The three-hour thanksgiving service for the 40th anniversary took place Oct. 14 in Nagpur, central India, and was attended by two dozen CNI bishops and over 5,000 church members.

The moderator of CNI, Bishop Purely Lyngdoh, rededicated a hexagonal unity monument erected to commemorate the union, with the name of a founding member on each side. Alley and Williams then released balloons and pigeons in celebration. The most memorable moment during the service was the lighting of candles by Alley, Williams, and Lyngdoh, symbolizing the rededication of CNI to its uniting mission. With

lighted candles in their hands, bishops, clergy, laity, and delegates of the church repeated a pledge of rededication to unity.

"While we celebrate our common unity that is expressed in our common worship and in our common mission towards working among the marginalized and dispossessed, we also recognize that being a united and uniting church implies that we continue to name the sin of disunity among us even today," stated CNI General Secretary Alwan Masih, reading out a unity declaration.

The Annual Conference moderator was accorded a high level of respect, Alley said in his report to the Mission and Ministry Board. "It was an honor to the Church of the Brethren," Alley told the board.

CNI is the dominant Protestant denomination in northern India with about 1.3 million members and 3,500 congregations in 27 dioceses. Its headquarters are in New Delhi. The six founding members are the Council of Baptist Churches in Northern India, the Church of the Brethren, the Disciples of Christ, the Church of India (Anglican, formerly known as the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon), the Methodist Church (British and Australasian Conferences), and the



*Annual Conference moderator Robert Alley and Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams release a pigeon as part of the 40th anniversary celebration of the Church of North India.*

United Church of Northern India.

Leading up to the anniversary, Alley and Jay Wittmeyer, executive director of Global Mission Partnerships for the Church of the Brethren, participated in numerous events in CNI communities with a Brethren heritage and also met with the India Brethren in Ankleshwar and the Rural Service Center. Annual Conference has stressed the value of maintaining relationship with both CNI and the India Brethren.

### PERSONNEL CHANGES

**Keith R. Bryan** has been named president/CEO of Fahrney-Keedy Home and Village, a Church of the Brethren retirement community in Boonsboro, Md. He has been at Fahrney-Keedy filling that position in an interim role since January. Bryan is an accomplished fundraiser and has extensive expertise in the field. Prior to starting his own business in 2003, he worked with nonprofit groups for 13 years in leadership roles. He graduated from the University of Maryland with a bachelor's degree in law enforcement and sociology, and continued his studies at St. Joseph's College in Windham, Maine; Pennsylvania State University;

Morgan State University; and University of Pennsylvania. He is a retired law enforcement officer. He and his family live in Westminster, Md.

**Emily Osterhus** has begun as advocacy assistant in the Washington (D.C.) office of the Church of the Brethren and the National Council of Churches, after finishing a year of Brethren Volunteer Service with the Capital Area Food Bank. Born and raised in coastal North Carolina, she joined BVS after receiving a degree in Political Science and English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she was president of the UNC Wesley Campus Ministry.

**David D. Shetler** begins Jan. 1, 2011, as district executive minister for Southern

Ohio District in a half-time position. Most recently, since September 2006, he has been on the staff of Mennonite Mutual Aid as an agency manager/counselor. He has more than 30 years of experience in ministry, having served several congregations as pastor, associate pastor, or interim minister. From October 1996 – June 2003, he was director of Admissions and Student Development at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind. He holds a master of arts in Religion degree from Eastern Mennonite Seminary, with an emphasis in historical and theological studies, and a bachelor of arts in Philosophy and Religion and Business Administration from Bridgewater (Va.) College.

## New medical initiative is announced for Haiti

A new Church of the Brethren medical initiative is in the early stages of development for Haiti. Members of the Brethren Disaster Ministries medical team sent to Haiti in March to serve earthquake survivors have been reaching out to others in the denomination with experience in Haiti, in order to develop a more comprehensive approach to medical needs there.

The intention for the new initiative is to hire Haitian medical professionals to help develop the plan. It will likely begin as a one-year pilot project serving five different communities where Eglise des Freres Haitiens (the Haitian Church of the Brethren) already has a church presence.

The medical operation will be mobile, operating out of the back of a large van or small bus. The same communities will be visited each week, in order to establish relationships between caregiver and patients. Haitian staff, once hired, will be charged with the task of learning about other medical initiatives in those communities such as clinics, hospitals, or community health organizations, and nurturing mutually beneficial connections to existing programs.

The announcement of the new initiative came as Haiti was struggling through an outbreak of cholera, and as the island awaited a hit from Hurricane Tomas, noted Jay Wittmeyer, executive director of Global Mission Partnerships. At least one member of Eglise des Freres Haitiens has died of cholera. Wittmeyer asked for prayer for those affected by the cholera outbreak, and noted that other ongoing efforts by the Brethren will help support health for the Haitian people such as the building of wells and water collection systems alongside the rebuilding of homes and churches destroyed by the earthquake.

A Benefit Dinner on Nov. 6 at McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren began the task of raising "seed money" for the initiative. Funds to support the medical initiative in Haiti can be sent to the Emerging Global Mission Fund, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120. For more information contact Jeff Boshart at peggyjeff@yahoo.com or call the Global Mission Partnerships office at 800-323-8039.



*A new medical initiative is being launched in Haiti by the Church of the Brethren, with help from a Brethren medical delegation that served there in March, following the earthquake. Shown here, a woman brings her child to see one of the Haitian physicians at the clinics last spring.*

## Brethren couple begin teaching in North Korea

Classes started Nov. 1 for Robert and Linda Shank, Brethren workers who have begun teaching at a new university in the People's Democratic Republic of Korea. The Pyongyang University of Science and Technology, located at the edge of North Korea's capital city, has opened and is in operation.

A call to prayer for the Shanks was issued by the Church of the Brethren's Global Mission Partnerships. "Pray that they get sorted out in the first months, that they have good rapport with their students and colleagues from around the world," said executive director Jay Wittmeyer.

For the previous several months the couple had been at a sister university in China, preparing curriculum as they and other faculty got ready to

teach at the brand new institution.

From Kansas, the Shanks' road to North Korea has taken them through a succession of agricultural assignments in developing countries: Ethiopia, Liberia, Nepal, and Belize. Robert Shank holds a doctorate in wheat breeding and has conducted rice research. Linda Shank holds a master's degree in counseling and learning disabilities.

They are working in North Korea under the auspices of Global Mission Partnerships and the Global Food Crisis Fund. Since 1996, the fund has provided grants in North Korea for hunger relief, agricultural development, and farm rehabilitation, and currently supports a cluster of farm cooperatives in order to help North Koreans boost agricultural production and equip their country to avert periodic famine.



**Robert and Linda Shank**

### UPCOMINGEVENTS

**Nov. 28 First Sunday of Advent**

**Dec. 1 World AIDS Day**

**Dec. 5 Advent Offering Emphasis**

**Dec. 25 Christmas Day**

**Jan. 3 Youth/Young Adult Ministries Workcamp** registration begins at [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org)

**Jan. 10 National Junior High Conference** registration begins at [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org)

**Jan. 17 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

**Jan. 18 Church of the Brethren Credit Union Board Meeting**

**Jan. 18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

**Jan. 23-30 Brethren Disaster Ministries Workcamp in Haiti**

**Jan. 25 First day of class for spring semester** at Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind.

**Jan 30-Feb. 18 Brethren Volunteer Service** Winter Unit Orientation, Gotha, Fla.

# Something never seen before

**“You’re about to see something you ain’t never even seen before.”** This is the tagline of the movie *Secretariat*. They might well have added, “You’re going to like what you see.” *Secretariat* is the story of perhaps the greatest racehorse of all time, but even more, the story of Penny Chenery (Diane Lane), the horse’s owner.

The movie opens with a long quote from Job 39, where God is speaking to Job: “Do you give the horse his strength

KEITH A. NONEMAKER

or clothe his neck with thunder? He paws fiercely, rejoicing in his strength, and charges into the

fray. He laughs at fear, afraid of nothing. In frenzied excitement he eats up the ground; he cannot stand still when the trumpet sounds.” The biblical story of Job is the story of a man who had everything and then lost everything. Job’s “friends” encouraged him to curse God and die, but his faith remained steadfast. In the end, his faith was rewarded as he received double from the Lord.

Penny Chenery’s story is similar to Job’s. She is a well-to-do suburban housewife. Then her life is turned upside down by the death of her mother. Her father is incapacitated, and so it

**“... WHAT THIS STORY GIVES US IS A SENSE THAT THERE ARE CAPABILITIES IN EACH OF US THAT ARE BEYOND WHAT WE THINK WE CAN HAVE.”**

falls upon Penny to run the family ranch, which is doing poorly due to a crooked manager, whom she fires. The only hope for the ranch is to find an excellent horse and a team to work with him. She hires a wiry jockey, Ronnie Turcotte, (Otto Thorwarth), and a trainer, Lucien Laurin (John Malkovich). The only thing more colorful than Lucien’s clothes is his personality.

As for the horse, Chenery’s best hope is to win a scheduled coin toss, which will divide two not-yet-born horses between her and a competing ranch. She loses the toss, but ends up getting the horse she would have chosen anyway. When the foal is born, he stands to his feet almost immediately, to everyone’s amazement. They call him Big Red, but his official name is Secretariat.

As a two-year-old, Secretariat wins seven races and is named horse of the year. Then disaster strikes

again. Penny’s father dies, and Penny is saddled with a \$6 million inheritance tax. A competitor offers her \$7 million for Secretariat. Penny’s brother and her husband urge her to take it, but she declines.

In his first race as a three-year-old, Secretariat places third in a race he should have won. He has always had an awkward style. He is late leaving the gate and pulls ahead only at the end of the race. Perhaps he is unfit for the tougher competition of three-year-olds. But Penny does not give up. She recognizes the fighting spirit of the stallion. She has faith in Secretariat, and is just as stubborn as he is. Ultimately, she learns that the loss was caused by a painful abscess.

One day, Penny sees the groom washing the horse while singing, “Oh happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away. He taught me how to watch and pray and live rejoicing every day.” This restores her hope, and with daily rejoicing, they nurse the horse back to full health. They set their sights on the elusive Triple Crown.

Penny’s faith in Secretariat pays big dividends when he wins the Kentucky Derby and then the Preakness, both in record time. But the Belmont is a different kind of race. Most

racehorses have either speed or endurance but not both. Secretariat had speed, but did he have the endurance for the much longer Belmont Stakes? Indeed he did. He won it by 31

lengths, a record that has never been approached before or since. It remains the fastest 1½-mile race ever run.

Director Randall Wallace says “. . . what this story gives us is a sense that there are capabilities in each of us that are beyond what we think we can have.” He conveys the message by starting with a remarkable true story told accurately. You know from the outset how the movie will end, yet you find yourself holding your breath through each critical scene. The characters are complex—it’s hard to tell the good guys from the bad guys at first. Added to that is exceptional close-up and high-speed camera work that puts you right in the center of the action. The result is one of the best feel-good movies in a long time. **W**

Keith Nonemaker and his wife Beth are ordained ministers who have pastored in Rio Prieto, Puerto Rico, and East Los Angeles, Calif. Keith has also worked as a teacher. He has contributed to Brethren Life and Thought and The Brethren Encyclopedia.

## ABOUT THE MOVIE

**Title:** Secretariat. **Rating:** PG. **Director:** Randall Wallace. **Running time:** 123 minutes. **Theater release:** Oct. 8, 2010. (**DVD release** slated for February 2011.) **Notes:** Based on a true story, Secretariat follows the rise of the 1973 Triple Crown winner. Mother and housewife Penny Chenery takes over her father’s stables and, facing incredible odds, brings the horse she acquired through a coin toss to the first Triple Crown victory in 25 years. **What others are saying:** “Even if one knows the outcome of the racing events, it is hard not to sit with needles and pins on the edge of your seat rooting for Secretariat to win. I loved this story!” —Michelle Malsbury, *American Chronicle*



**ONCAMPUS**

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

Mennonite dramatist Ted Swartz presented "The Big Story" for Bridgewater's Fall Spiritual Focus on Oct. 28... G. Steven Agee, a judge on the Fourth Circuit of the US Court of Appeals, received the Distinguished Alumni Award Nov. 4 at the annual President's Dinner... Gary Telgenhoff, a forensic scientist and consultant to the TV show "CSI," spoke at Bridgewater on Oct. 14.

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

E. Fletcher McClellan has been named dean of faculty, replacing Christina Bucher, who returns to a position as professor of religious studies... WGAL-TV 8 recently featured Elizabethtown's partnership with Somat Company of Lancaster, Pa., and Mount Joy (Pa.) farmer Mike Brubaker, which turns food waste from the college's dining facilities into electricity.

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

Nationally known scientist Edith Widder, who received a MacArthur "genius" grant for her work on deep ocean ecosystem protection and conservation, spoke at Juniata on Nov. 16. On Nov. 8, Elizabethtown College president Ted Long lectured on "Educating for Global Citizenship."

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

The school reported a record undergraduate enrollment of at least 1,875 students this fall, up 23 percent from a year earlier... La Verne followed up its opening convocation on Sept. 2 with a free picnic lunch for the entire campus community in Sneaky Park.

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

The number of first-year Brethren students on campus is up for the first time in at least five years... A dedication during homecoming on Oct. 23 celebrated the recent \$1.5 million addition to the Physical Education and Recreation Center (PERC).

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

McPherson hit a total of 622 full-time students this fall, its highest total in 40 years... Paul Neher, Wylene Gaeddert Lengel, and Becky Ullom were the recipients of this year's McPherson Young Alumni Awards. Neher is a member of Ivester Church of the Brethren in Iowa, and Ullom is director of Youth/Young Adult Ministry for the Church of the Brethren.



**Raking up is hard to do:** Illinois/Wisconsin District youth spent part of their Nov. 5-7 retreat at the Pinecrest Community retirement complex in Mount Morris, Ill., helping out with various tasks as a service project. Above, youth help rake leaves in one of the community's courtyards.

**Bits and pieces**

• The "Brethren Voices" community cable show of Portland (Ore.) Peace Church of the Brethren in September carried an interview with **Kay Guyer**, a Manchester College (North Manchester, Ind.) sophomore from Woodbury, Pa., and a member of the 2009-2010 Church of the Brethren National Youth Cabinet. Guyer spent part of the summer working with On Earth Peace in Oregon. In October, the show featured Brethren band **Mutual Kumquat**.

• The video and brochures for the **2011 Church of the Brethren youth/young adult workcamps** are now available. This year's workcamp theme is "We Are the Body," from 1 Corinthians 12. The video, along with other information, is available at [www.brethren.org/workcamps](http://www.brethren.org/workcamps), from district offices, or by calling the workcamp office at 800-323-8039. More than 30 junior high, senior high, and young adult workcamps are being planned. Registration opens Jan. 3.

• **Assistant workcamp coordinators** are being sought for the 2012 Church of the Brethren workcamp season. Interested young adults should visit [www.brethren.org/workcamps](http://www.brethren.org/workcamps), e-mail [cobworkcamps@brethren.org](mailto:cobworkcamps@brethren.org), or call 800-323-8039.

• Applications for the **2011 Youth Peace Travel Team** are being accepted through Jan. 19. The team of young adults ages 19-22, sponsored by several denominational organizations, travels to camps and conferences around the country each summer to provide leadership in faith and peace education. Applications are available at [www.brethren.org/youth](http://www.brethren.org/youth).



Listed on these pages are articles, editorials, columns, and opinion letters that have appeared in MESSENGER during 2010. They are classified in five groups: authors, In Touch contributors, letters to the editor, congregations, and subjects. Numbers following the listings indicate month and page number, with 1/2 and 7/8 representing the combined January/February and July/August issues.

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## You already belong here

When I read the beautiful pictorial essay about NYC (October MESSENGER), my heart rejoiced, especially when I read the quote from Angie Lahman Yoder: "No matter where you are in the process of believing, you already belong here." Could it be that today's Church of the Brethren is so welcoming? Then I read in the same issue a letter from Claysburg, Pa., quoting scripture in favor of casting out a staff member for his view on scriptural authority.

Having missed reading the May issue of MESSENGER, I immediately read the article that had offended the writer of the letter to the point of strongly suggesting that the author leave the Church of the Brethren and "visit another church." Obviously, the letter seemed to imply, here was an example of someone who did not "belong here." Here was someone who was not worthy of struggling along the Christian journey within the context of the Church of the Brethren.

I read the article, which in essence proclaimed the wisdom of studying the scriptures with others, even those who might disagree. I read that it is possible that the texts can be "opened" through the process of sharing our readings with one another. Above all, the article said that scriptures are to be read and studied in community.

Mr. Brockway, I want you to belong, to be a part of the congregation where I worship, and to be a member of the study groups I attend. I need to read with you and with the pastor from Claysburg. We must struggle together to hear the scriptures anchoring our lives day by day.

Max Parmley  
Chicago, Ill.

## Are only the righteous welcome?

There are more than 34,000 denominations of Christians, probably more since I started this sentence. In light of the fact that each of us thinks our beliefs are correct, humanity has an uphill battle for tolerance. Let us pray long before judging another's beliefs, realizing that the log in our own eye often prevents us from seeing clearly to remove the toothpick from the eye of another.

In my opinion, a backlash against religion results when non-believers see churches as being a club with only the "righteous" welcome. This view of the Christian church is common among the non-religious. I like to

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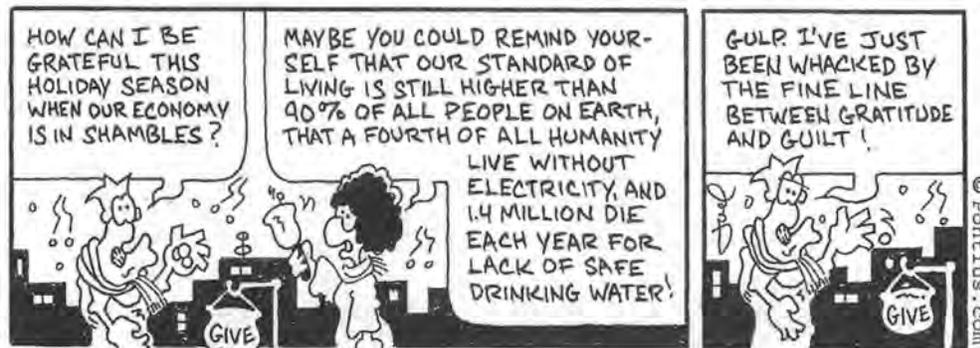
**“When Jesus said lose yourselves and follow me, maybe that means go from person to person, standing in their shoes, until you have lost your shoes and spend all your time in bare feet.”**

But although an adulterous relationship between a man and a woman has always been considered a sin, how in God's name have we so easily come to the conclusion that when unmarried gays or lesbians enter into a relationship of love with one another, that this is equally a sin? I have come to believe that when partners in a same-sex relationship care for one another, when they support one another through tough times and become productive citizens of our society, when they save

each other from a lonely, unhappy life, when they adopt children and rescue them from being tossed into impersonal orphanages—they are *not* sinning, but are in fact living out the will of a gracious God whose son said, the first commandment is to love. French writer Albert Camus said “We don't have to wait for God's last judgment upon us. It takes place every day.” And so it does, Brother Herman. And so it does.

**Edward Huber**  
Philadelphia, Pa.

### Pontius' Puddle



think that the Church of the Brethren's quiet nurturing, which Randy Miller put so beautifully in his [October] editorial, remains one of the places where people of all kinds are welcomed.

Draft a letter to the author of a writing that has disturbed you, or invite the person whose lifestyle is hard for you to accept for supper at your house. Remember Jesus saying to forgive a person 70 times seven. What does that mean? Once we realize we are no better than the worst type of person we can imagine, we get a tiny glimpse of the power of love that Christ tried to teach humanity. This truth of Christ is not so much a religion as it is a recognition that a life of love is ultimately the strongest. When Jesus said lose yourselves and follow me, maybe that means go from person to person, standing in their shoes, until you have lost your shoes and spend all your time in bare feet, hoping the person you disagree with will wash them.

**Greg Heigel**  
Lancaster, Pa.

#### Living out God's will

Herman Babilles, in his attempt to enlighten us on the homosexual issue, (October MESSENGER Letters) makes the rather questionable assumption that if two men (or women) love one another and enter into a loving relationship, this would clearly be a sin which Jesus condemns and which we in the church should also condemn unless the “sinners” repent by ending the relationship and become good, moral Christians. He backs up his answer to the popular question “What would Jesus do?” with the words of our Lord, “Go and sin no more.”



**Jeff Carr, MDiv '05**  
Senior pastor  
Bridgewater Church  
of the Brethren  
Bridgewater, Va.

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**We are all sexual beings**

My children were born in the 1970s. I was constantly looking for guidance in raising my children. What I believed and what I said to them had great power. Parenting is a humbling experience for me. I was, and still am, a prayerful parent.

Action at Annual Conference on the Human Sexuality paper led me on a personal journey to be ready to parent my children as God would want me to parent. What did the Bible say? What was the experience of the homosexual

man I had dated in high school? Is homosexuality a choice? If we accept homosexuality as normal, will it just be easier to relate only to our own gender?

I was grateful when my congregation decided to go learn more about homosexuality. Extensive Bible study and hearing personal stories were part of the process. Feeling safe to talk with each other was part of the process. I also looked up my old friend and e-mailed questions to him about homosexuality. He comes from a strong Church of the Brethren background, so I valued his thoughts. During this time,

a thought came to me that felt like divine revelation. Here it is:

We are all sexual beings. Sexual sin is when our behavior as sexual beings is abusive and destructive. I believe God intends for us to live in loving, committed relationships. Sex is simply a part of that love and commitment. When expressed in that way, our sexual practice is blessed and good. If we are to talk about sin and sex, let it be clear that we talk about abuse and destructive behavior, including verbal and emotional.

**Beverly Eikenberry**  
North Manchester, Ind.

**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](http://www.everence.com).



**CLASSIFIEDADS**

**Worship with us in Northern Virginia.** Do you know of someone living in, moving to, or visiting the Virginia suburbs of Washington D.C.? The people of the Oakton Church of the Brethren warmly invite everyone to join us Sunday mornings for Church School at 9:45 a.m. and Worship at 11:00 a.m. Contact the church office at (703)281-4411, email us at [office@oaktonbrethren.org](mailto:office@oaktonbrethren.org), or visit the church website at [www.oaktonbrethren.org](http://www.oaktonbrethren.org) for more information.

**Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes in Goshen, Ind., seeks candidates for Executive Director.** The ED is responsible for all programs, staff and activities in the GL region, and is responsible to the MCC GL board. The ED will play a key role in guiding the transition as GL works with all of MCC to implement new vision and structures.

The position requires: familiarity with MCC constituency, strong relational administrative skills, cultural competency, strong Christian faith and practice, ability to relate and build relationships with theologically diverse constituents and partners, ability to articulate Anabaptist theological perspectives as the foundation of MCC's work, and passion for and commitment to MCC's mission and vision. Experience with budgeting and administration also required; fund-raising experience preferred. Position includes significant travel time within the region.

A job description is available at <http://mcc.org/serve/positions/executive-director-great-lakes>. Submit resume and letter of interest by **December 31, 2010**, to: Prem Dick at: [psd@mcc.org](mailto:psd@mcc.org)

**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 [ijnjaunts@floodcity.net](mailto:ijnjaunts@floodcity.net) for details.

**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](http://www.brethren.org/congregationalvacancies). Contact the appropriate district executive or call the Ministry office at 800-323-8039.

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

## New Members

**Antelope Park**, Lincoln, Neb.: Cindy Leer, Adam Cardoza, Larry Ditmars

**Bermudian**, East Berlin, Pa.: Robert Gould, Sharon Gould, Steve Glatfelter, Michelle Glatfelter, Wilmer Grim, Doris Grim, Paul Grout, Dorothy Grout, Katie Kann, Christiana Lipsitz, Ion E. Lipsitz, Larry McKinley, Kayla Miller, Larissa Miller, Alysha Sweitzer, Eli Thonrton, Ella Thornton, Jerry Weeks, Debbie Weeks, Miranda Zerbe

**Chambersburg**, Pa.: Esther Lee Webb

**Columbia City**, Ind.: John Shumaker, Tephania Shumaker, Morgan Shumaker, Kelly Peterson, Nickolas Frank, Kendra Reimer, Lucas Kumfer

**Denton**, Md.: Larry Johnson, Janice Burt

**East Cocalico**, Reamstown, Pa.: Robert Rogan

**Everett**, Pa.: Linda Sutton, Patricia Lashinsky, Haley Lashinsky, Olivia Hillenbrand, Alex La Salle, Nathan La Salle

**Faith Community of the Brethren Home**: New Oxford, Pa.: Inez Long

**Freeport**, Ill.: Doug Paul

**Garden City**, Kan.: Norman Tedford

**Green Tree**, Oaks, Pa.: Andrew Hallman, Adam Messner, Emily Messner

**Henry Fork**, Rocky Mount, Va.: Wray Furrow, Joey Smith, Melissa Simmons, Kali Faith Woods, Austin Wilcher, Amber Wilcher, Autumn Wilcher, Iris Akers, Dillard Akers, Terry Ivan Hodges, Christa Holland, Ken Hall, Monica Ferguson, Kim Painter

**Holidaysburg**, Pa.: Courtney Byrnes, Jeffrey Harlon, Morgan Hinich, Heather Kelly, Lisa Mobley, Cathy Bassett, Kirsten Eaton, Miriah Hershberger, Colleen Murphy

**Hope**, Freeport, Mich.: Zander Willoughby

**Kokomo**, Ind.: Lily Grace Lipinski

**Lancaster**, Pa.: Ron Bohannon, Robin Bohannon

**Lebanon**, Mount Sidney, Va.: David Ralston, Charlotte Ralston, Michael Cupp, Tammy Cupp, Morgan Patterson, Sarah Kline, Alvin Michael, Dillion Berry

**Marilla**, Copemish, Mich.: Zander Willoughby

**Mechanic Grove**, Quarryville, Pa.: Joseph Graybeal

**North Webster**, Ind.: Will Darr, John White, Nancy Fretz

**Peace**, Portland, Ore.: Beth Merrill

**Pleasant Valley**, Weyers Cave, Va.: Bill Hall, Carl Leake, Jack Gordon, Calvin Heatwole, Elijah Haag, Hunter Brittle, Sarah Wampler, Michael Cook, Meryn Wilson, Alex Ribelin, Annie Shreckhise, Jake Shreckhise, Jessica Reynolds, Loretta Stewart

**Somerset**, Pa.: Brandy Liepelt, Paul Liepelt

**Wolgamuth**, Dillsburg, Pa.: Ingrid Cook

## Anniversaries

**Bollinger**, Harold and Nancy, Akron, Pa., 50

**Bolton**, Randy and Margaret, Harrisonburg, Va., 50

**Brode**, Robert and Marian, Mechanicsburg, Pa., 55

**Diehl**, I. W. and Mildred, New Market, Va., 60

**Kerr**, John and Nancy, Webster, Iowa, 50

**Little**, Lionel and Harriett, Mesick, Mich., 65

**Martin**, Wilmer and Arlene, Denver, Pa., 55

**Nauman**, John and Mataline, Palmyra, Pa., 50

**Patterson**, Ivan and Clara, Greenville, Ohio, 60

**Royer**, Merrill and Eunice, Greenville, Ohio, 70

**Stern**, Dale and Joanne, Martinsburg, Pa., 50

**Swindell**, Duane and Gladys, Everett, Pa., 50

**Walton**, Buddy and Myrtle, Timberville, Va., 50

**Weaver**, Robert and Jean, Hershey, Pa., 60

## Deaths

**Adams**, Betty, 77, Lincoln, Neb., May 8

**Anthony**, Beatrice E., 85, New Oxford, Pa., Sept. 19

**Armstrong**, Mildred J., 77, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 19

**Baer**, Mary Ann, 74, Broadway, Va., Oct. 4

**Bowman**, Helen V. Strickler, 95, Pittsburgh, Pa., Sept. 15

**Buffenmyer**, Tom, 59, Kankakee, Ill., July 9

**Burall**, William E., 84, Frederick, Md., June 13

**Byrem**, Gerald H., 87, Strasburg, Pa., May 24

**Chio**, Brenda Fern, 60, Defiance, Ohio, July 27

**Clark**, Mitchell A., 48, Harrisburg, Pa., Feb. 3

**Cole**, Florence, 86, Lincoln, Neb., July 26

**Corbett**, Betty Jean, 78, Mount Morris, Ill., Oct. 22

**Duncanson**, Harold W., 91, Modesto, Calif., Oct. 10

**Elwood**, Edward E., 61, Lima, Ohio, Sept. 21

**Ensinger**, Evan Michael, infant, Reinholds, Pa., June 29

**Fawley**, Eunice Marie Rhodes, 88, Bridgewater, Va., Aug. 27

**Gibson**, Martha, 94, Lebanon, Pa., Aug. 27

**Gordon**, Forrest B., 92, McAlisterville, Pa., Aug. 9

**Grossnickle**, Garold George, 65, Kaleva, Mich., Sept. 17

**Harman**, Anna M., 95, Harman, W.Va., Oct. 11

**Heaston**, Emma V., 96, Modesto, Calif., July 7

**Hicks**, Wilford L., 80, Callaway, Va., Sept. 14, 2009

**High**, Catharine Stewart, 91, Westminster, Md., June 18

**Hoch**, Edna V., 88, Shippensburg, Pa., April 25

**Hodges**, Wilford W., 97, Boones Mill, Va., May 19

**Hoffer**, Ethel K., 95, Elizabethtown, Pa., June 6

**Hollinger**, Naomi Hosler, 97, Hershey, Pa., Sept. 17

**Hoover**, Charles C., 90, Myersville, Md., Feb. 18

**Hoover**, Robert R., 87, Roaring Spring, Pa., June 5

**Hopkins**, Lois M., 85, Onekama, Mich., June 25

**Huffman**, Martha A., 101, Timberville, Va., Sept. 3

**Hulvey**, Priscilla B., 91, Mount Sidney, Va., Sept. 19

**Hursh**, Elberta L., 85, Palmyra, Pa., May 5

**Johnson**, Francis, 89, Dunkirk, Ind., June 18

**Keeney**, Mary, 89, Frederick, Md., June 6, 2009

**Kinzie**, Phyllis Olwin, 82, Cushing, Okla., June 11

**Koontz**, Freda E., 97, Martinsburg, Pa., Jan. 2, 2010

**Koontz**, Gloria J., 65, Everett, Pa., June 18

**Kreider**, Mildred P., 86, Quarryville, Pa., Sept. 7

**Kyser**, Justus Dale, 95, Pleasant Hill, Ohio, Sept. 20

**Leckrone**, Genevieve C., 88, Lancaster, Pa., June 16

**Lehman**, Janet, 80, Frederick, Md., Nov. 11

**Leisure**, Ada Mae, 61, Elizabethtown, Pa., July 7

**Linker**, June I., 87, Polo, Ill., Jan. 2

**McGuire**, J. Brian, 68, Duncansville, Pa., Sept. 21

**Mahan**, Grant, 82, Salisbury, Md., June 27

**Main**, Paul 83, Frederick, Md., Sept. 25, 2009

**Martin**, A. Eugene, 54, Fredericksburg, Pa., May 25

**Martin**, Vernon, 73, Frederick, Md., Nov. 5

**Maurer**, Oleta Breshears, 94, Wheatland, Mo., July 3

**McGhee**, Birdia, 88, Chicago, Ill., Jan. 10

**Metz**, Ann Sue, 60, Frederick, Md., Sept. 29, 2009

**Metz**, Douglas K., 66, Dixon, Ill., May 22

**Meyers**, Laban H., 92, Mercersburg, Pa., May 22

**Miller**, Anna, 72, Jonestown, Pa., Sept. 2

**Miller**, Catherine, 63, Frederick, Md., Dec. 28

**Miller**, Dale L., 89, Lewisburg, Pa., May 29

**Miller**, Libby, 95, North Redington Beach, Fla., Sept. 12

**Miller**, Marjorie Stinebaugh, 91, North Manchester, Ind., June 5

**Moss**, Edith, 76, Frederick, Md., Oct. 4, 2009

**Mylin**, Verna M. Lloyd, 95, Quarryville, Pa., March 5

**North**, Ella, 92, Easton, Md., Sept. 9

**Olvera**, Ester Navarro, 72, Alice, Texas, Aug. 26

**Orr**, David Alan, 59, Somerset, Ohio, Sept. 15

**Petticoffer**, Lee B., 96, Akron, Pa., July 10

**Pleasant**, Ethel F., 91, Trotwood, Ohio, Sept. 28

**Riethof**, Mary Lou, 85, Harleysville, Pa., Sept. 29

**Riley**, Donna J., 82, Bedford, Pa., Sept. 8

**Roberts**, Max G., 89, Cerro Gordo, Ill., Sept. 19

**Rowley**, Albert, 74, Hillsdale, Pa., July 27

**Saylor**, Glenn Ellis, 82, Evans, Ga., June 21

**Shaffer**, Kenneth M., Jr., 64, Elgin, Ill., Oct. 23

**Shaub**, Ethel Mae, 80, Quarryville, Pa., July 31

**Shelton**, Doris, 78, Bassett, Va., Aug. 24

**Shull**, Merlin G., 85, Bridgewater, Va., Sept. 22

**Simmons**, Rosa M., 94, Garden City, Kan., Oct. 13

**Starkey**, Daisy C., 88, Easton, Md., Aug. 26

**Stockslager**, James Franklin, 81, Hagerstown, Md., Aug. 30

**Stover**, Clark Albertus, 92, Hagerstown, Md., Sept. 21

**Summers**, Helen E., 84, New Oxford, Pa., Sept. 2

**Swindell**, Paul Fred, 87, Everett, Pa., Sept. 11

**Switzer**, Janet H., 94, Staunton, Va., Sept. 27

**Tulloh**, Winnie Lee Davis Morris, 90, Stanardsville, Va., June 12

**Turner**, Minnie I., 88, New Oxford, Pa., Oct. 3

**Valentine**, Roberta Hope Melton, 96, Trotwood, Ohio, June 26

**Van Brocklin**, Winona Marion, 67, Onekama, Mich., April 19

**Wachter**, Ruth, 100, Frederick, Md., July 12, 2009

**Wade**, Linda, 62, Frederick, Md., June 23, 2009

**Wales**, Helen Lucile, 100, Polo, Ill., April 19

**Wenger**, Mary M., 94, Liitz, Pa., April 4

**Werner**, Wilma Ruth, 78, Mount Morris, Ill., Sept. 28

**White**, Grace Jane, 89, Oakland, Md., July 6

**Wiles**, Mary, 82, Frederick, Md., Oct. 10, 2009

**Williard**, Wava, 94, Glen Campbell, Pa., Aug. 10

**Winchester**, Brett K., 57, Boise, Idaho, Sept. 20

**Wisner**, Letitia I., 98, Milledgeville, Ill., Jan. 17

**Witman**, Paul B., 81, Mount Joy, Pa., April 8

**Wright**, Paul J., 90, Twin Falls, Idaho, June 29

**Yingling**, Harold L., 79, Martinsburg, Pa., April 16

**Young**, Francis, 78, Frederick, Md., Oct. 8, 2009

## Ordinations

**Alley**, Linda L., (Shen. Dist., Bridgewater, Va.), Oct. 15

**Lee**, James, N. Ohio Dist. (Center, Louisville, Ohio), April 18

## Placements

**Brubaker**, Carl L., from associate pastor, Midway, Lebanon, Pa., to pastor, Mohler, Ephrata, Pa., Oct. 1

**Kahler**, Allen R., pastor, Paradise, Smithville, Ohio, Oct. 15

**Morrow**, David M., pastor, Wenatchee Brethren-Baptist, Wenatchee, Wash., Aug. 8

**Samaan**, Milad Sobhy, pastor, Light of the Gospel Fellowship, Brooklyn, N.Y., Oct. 9

**Thacker**, Robert M., pastor, Dunnings Creek, New Paris, Pa., Oct. 1

# Missing the markers

**“On your left! On your left! On your left!”** she said insistently, almost frantically.

Wind whistled in my ears as I sped 45 miles per hour down a steep road amid a pack of cyclists. We had just finished an arduous, mile-long climb and turned right, following small, tape markers on the pavement that showed riders where to go. I eased to my right and she coasted by, pushing perhaps 47 or 48 miles per hour. We flew block after block down the winding grade, a blur of neon-colored spandex, windbreakers, and whirring spokes, until the road began to level off.



RANDY MILLER  
Interim MESSENGER Editor

This was my third time to ride in the annual Tour de Foothills, sponsored by the Upland Chamber of Commerce. I'd signed up once again for the metric century—a 100 kilometer (62-mile) circuit that wound through several communities in Southern California's San Gabriel Valley and Inland Empire region. So I was fairly familiar with the route,

although sometimes planners make subtle changes for one reason or another. Which is what I figured they must have done as I rolled further west. However, this year they had added a 100-mile ride, and the metric century and the 100-

So suddenly I was riding with the big guns—one of whom I noticed was wearing a “ride marshal” sign on his back. I pulled next to him and explained my predicament. “Just follow me,” he said with assurance. So I rode with him and the group he was riding with—right into a dead end street. He fished out his directions sheet, turned us around, and got us back on track.

I caught up with a couple friends, Larry and Ben, who'd signed up for the 100-mile ride, and they suggested I just do the full century. The cost was the same for both rides and, at 27 miles, I still felt pretty strong. Why not? Larry handed me his directions sheet, saying “I don't like to read this while I'm riding.” Not wanting to get lost again, I became our unofficial navigator. Ten miles later, when someone asked if we were on the right road, Larry hollered, “Ask Randy. He's got the map.” Even though I had a map, I told them they'd better take my directions with a big grain of salt, since it was a missed turn that had landed me in their group to begin with.

Between the maps, tiny bits of tape at intersections, and general group consensus, we managed to make the 100-mile circuit (although while pedaling uphill into 40-mile-per-hour winds in Fontana after 75 miles, I thought: If I hadn't missed that turn, I'd be done by now). At the end, there were clanging cowbells to welcome us across the finish line, and lasagna and music and even complimentary massages.

Sometimes it feels as if we, as a denomination, are out

**IT CAN BE A BEWILDERING RIDE AT TIMES, SO WE MIGHT AS WELL TRY TO HELP EACH OTHER OUT, WHETHER WE'RE SHARING A WATER BOTTLE OR A DIRECTIONS SHEET.**

mile loop shared the same route much of the time.

After a while, it dawned on me that the ride planners may not have changed the route for the metric. I may have missed the marker.

“The turn for the metric? That was about a mile or two back,” said one cyclist when I asked which ride he'd signed up for. He was doing the full century. And, as of that moment, so was I.

In my defense, those little arrows that the ride planners tape to the asphalt at intersections the night before are tiny, and very hard to spot when you're speeding downhill. Yes, the planners give you a sheet telling which turns to take, but it's hard to ride a bike and read those at the same time—kind of like texting when you're driving a car.

there battling the wind and the hills (the rigors of life), with our signposts and markers (the Bible and the Holy Spirit), our ride marshals (pastors and lay leaders), and our collective sense of where we're going (Annual Conference). Sometimes we read the signs wrong, or miss them altogether. Sometimes our leaders, despite their confidence and bravado, lead us into blind cul de sacs. And sometimes, despite our collective wisdom, we seem to get confused.

It can be a bewildering ride at times, so we might as well try to help each other out, whether we're sharing a water bottle or a directions sheet. But if we remember that we're in this ride together, we just might do all right. And that whether we hear cowbells or harps at the finish line, we'll all wind up eating lasagna around the same table. 

**COMING IN JANUARY/FEBRUARY:** Bible study, Brethren involvement in Sudan, media review, reflections, letters, and more.

# 2011 National Workcamps

# WE ARE THE BODY

**"It's more than just what we do, it's who we are."**

— A. Mack at WYC 2010

2011 workcamps offer the chance to step out of our singular day to day lives and enter into a spirit of unity with fellow workcampers, people of other cultures and communities, and God's creation. It is through this movement, that we can evolve into the living Body of Jesus!

[www.brethren.org/workcamps](http://www.brethren.org/workcamps)

Online registration opens January 3, 2011 at 7 p.m. CST.

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. *Romans 12:4-5 (NIV)*



Church of the Brethren

### Junior High (Completed Grades 6 – 9)

- |                     |                                           |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1. June 14-17       | Stone Creek Kettle, Pennsylvania          |
| 2. June 22-26       | Elgin, Illinois                           |
| 3. June 22-26       | John Kline Homestead – Broadway, Virginia |
| 4. June 27 – July 1 | Greenville, Ohio                          |
| 5. July 6-10        | Kalamazoo, Michigan                       |
| 6. July 13-17       | Lancaster, Pennsylvania                   |
| 7. July 18-22       | New Windsor, Maryland                     |
| 8. July 20-24       | Indianapolis, Indiana                     |
| 9. July 27-31       | Roanoke, Virginia                         |
| 10. July 27-31      | Richmond, Virginia                        |
| 11. August 3-7      | Portland, Oregon                          |

### Senior High (Completed Grade 9 – Age 19)

- |                |                              |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| 12. June 12-19 | Idaho Mountain Camp          |
| 13. June 12-18 | Innisfree – Crozet, Virginia |
| 14. June 20-26 | Lybrook - Cuba, New Mexico   |
| 15. June 20-26 | Haitian COB- Miami, Florida  |
| 16. June 20-26 | Brooklyn, New York (BRF)     |
| 17. June 20-26 | Gastañer, Puerto Rico        |

### Senior High (continued)

- |                    |                                  |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 18. June 26-July 2 | Cairito, Puerto Rico             |
| 19. July 11-17     | Brooklyn, New York               |
| 20. July 10-16     | Disaster Response I & II         |
| 21. July 17-23     | Disaster Response I & II         |
| 22. July 24-31     | Disaster Response (BRF)          |
| 23. July 18-24     | St. Croix                        |
| 24. July 18-24     | Chicago/Lombard, Illinois        |
| 25. July 24-30     | Reynosa, Mexico                  |
| 26. July 25-31     | Los Angeles, California          |
| 27. July 31-Aug 6  | Eastern Shore, Maryland          |
| 28. August 1-7     | ECHO - North Fort Myers, Florida |

### Young Adult (ages 18-35)

- |               |                                       |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| 29. June 4-14 | Taize, France and Geneva, Switzerland |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|

### We Are Able (ages 16-23)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 30. July 11/12-July 15 | New Windsor, Maryland |
|------------------------|-----------------------|

### Intergenerational (ages 11-100+)

- |                |                                    |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| 31. June 25-30 | Cocconino National Forest, Arizona |
|----------------|------------------------------------|

If you have any questions, please contact Jeanne Davies, Carol Fike, or Clara Nelson in the workcamp office at 800-323-8039 or [cobworkcamps@brethren.org](mailto:cobworkcamps@brethren.org).

Workcamp 2010 photos by Jeanne Davies, Carol Fike and Donna Parcell.



# Thank you

WORKING TOGETHER WE TOUCH LIVES WITH GOD'S LOVE  
AROUND THE CORNER AND AROUND THE WORLD.



Church of the Brethren

[www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org)