

Church of the Brethren

MESSENGER

MAY 2011 WWW.BRETHREN.ORG

One
HOLY
BIBLE

The King James
turns **400**

Love your life

Remarkable Dining & Catering



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



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

Remarkable Wellness Program



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



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

Remarkable Residents



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



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



A Remarkable Retirement Community®

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

Church
of the
Brethren

MESSENGER

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ONTHECOVER

The King James Version turns 400 this year. Frank Ramirez takes us through the history of the revered translation.

Cover photo by Celox/StockXchange.

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8 On the shoulders of giants—the King James at 400

While many consider it “the granddaddy of them all,” it wasn’t always so. First published in 1611, the King James Bible was not—as many assume—the Bible used by Shakespeare (that distinction belongs to the Geneva Bible—the “KJV” of its day). Nor was it the Bible of the Pilgrims when they came to the New World. Still, for many, the 400-year-old KJV represents the standard against which all other versions are judged. Frank Ramirez takes a look at its long and storied history.

12 Is Jesus still weeping over the Holy Land?

Mission and Ministry board member Wallace Cole traveled with Christian Peacemaker Teams to Israel and Palestine in January. What he saw made him question some of the issues he once considered black-and-white. “I wonder how I would feel growing up in that environment. Would I hate other human beings? Would I be so fearful of others that I would throw rocks to keep them away from me? I wonder even now if I will build a wall to protect me from seeing the pain of people Jesus died for.”

14 How did the 1983 committee reach consensus?

In this fifth installment in MESSENGER’s Special Response series, Guy Wampler, who nearly 30 years ago chaired a committee charged with studying human sexuality issues and drafting a statement for Annual Conference, reflects on the committee’s process. Despite a wide range of theological perspectives on the committee, prayerful and respectful dialogue enabled members to arrive at a statement to which they all could agree.

18 Called to discipleship

Graydon F. Snyder, former dean and professor of New Testament at Bethany Theological Seminary and Chicago Theological Seminary, continues his MESSENGER Bible study series that examines what it means for a denomination to take the entire New Testament as its creed. In this installment, Snyder examines what it means for the Church of the Brethren to be a covenant people. “Doctrines may differ,” Snyder says, “but it is covenant that defines our church.”

Nowadays you can read an online review of just about anything—a product, a service, even your doctor. There's a good chance you've used ratings to influence an online purchase. Maybe you've even posted your own comments.

But you probably don't expect to be the subject of such reviews. And you probably don't expect your congregation to be reviewed.

It was intriguing, then, to discover that a mystery person had reviewed the Church of the Brethren. "Bob McGrath" chose his pseudonym from the Sesame Street actor who asked, "Who are the people in your neighborhood?" This Bob is asking, "Who are the churches in your neighborhood?"

Bob is visiting 50 churches in his neighborhood over the course of a year, and then



WENDY MCFADDEN
Publisher

blogging about each visit. His observations are thoughtful, engaging, genuine. He seems like the kind of person you'd want to visit with over a cup of coffee. (You can follow his project at <http://neighborhoodchurches.blogspot.com>.)

The Church of the Brethren was the subject of week 12, posted March 22 (with a preview posted two days earlier).

If you were worried, you can exhale now: He liked us!

Of course, if he hadn't we could have blamed it on an atypical congregation or a pastor having an off week. We could say that nobody can be evaluated accurately from a one-hour church service. But we would be forgetting that people do this all the time.

What do most visitors base their decision on when they choose whether or not to return? It might be as intangible as whether the congregation feels right. Or as tangible as the next person in the pew. Check out Bob's experience, and ponder what he would find at your church.

Bob McGrath won't be visiting another Brethren congregation, at least not this year. But somebody else will. That somebody will use the one-hour experience to make a generalization about the Church of the Brethren. That somebody will use the one-hour experience to make a generalization about God.

That's a big responsibility. Thanks, Bob, for the reminder.

Wendy McFadden

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Yard sale book: 50 cents—first pastor's hymn book: priceless

Paul Gruenther is a yard sale fanatic. Each weekend he scours Maryland's beaches and coastal communities looking for bargains. Not long ago, he came across a small, leather-bound hymn book and paid 50 cents for it. Handwritten inside were the words: "William N. Franklin, Sams Creek, Maryland, September 19, 1885."

Gruenther searched the internet and discovered that on July 3, 1885, Franklin became the first pastor of the Sams Creek (Md.) Church of the Brethren. Gruenther immediately called current Sams Creek pastor Paul Leatherman and validated the connection.

The little book of large importance will find its way home at no cost the Sams Creek congregation. Gruenther said, "I only paid 50 cents for it, but it's a priceless part of the history of this little country church. The book is in amazing condition, given that it's so old."

Franklin was a church member who started a Sunday school annex at Sams Creek in 1860. It became a full-fledged church in 1885, and Franklin was elected the first pastor. Leatherman said, "Our Sams Creek Church will celebrate its 150th anniversary in two years. With this hymn book, we now have the only handwritten piece we know of from Rev. Franklin. It will be an important reminder of our long church history."

Leatherman indicated that they had just set up their church web site a few months ago. He said, "God works in many wonderful ways, from the internet to yard sales."



Paul Gruenther with his yard sale find, a hymnal belonging to the first pastor of Sams Creek church.

Courtesy of Sams Creek Church of the Brethren

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

Northeast Peter Becker Community in Harleysville, Pa., will mark its 40th anniversary with a four-day celebration from May 19-22. The first resident moved into the retirement community on May 18, 1971, and by late that year it had reached full occupancy at 72 residents. Today, the campus is home to some 500 residents . . . Shepherd's Spring Outdoor Ministry Center, Sharpsburg, Md., will celebrate its 20th anniversary of their summer camping season with a worship and barbecue August 6-20.

Southeast Bicyclists riding to raise money for the hungry on May 15 as part of the Antioch Church of the Brethren's World Hunger Auction can choose from a 50-, 25-, 10-, or 5-mile course through the mountains and valleys of Virginia's Franklin and Floyd counties, starting and ending at the Antioch Church of the Brethren in Rocky Mount, Va. Since the first World Hunger Auction was held in 1984, \$750,000 has been raised, most going to Heifer International, with a smaller amount going to Global Food Crisis Fund.

Midwest Plans for a Fourth Annual Work Day at Pleasant Hill Village in Girard, Ill., have been set for May 14. Flower beds need cleaning, planting, weeding and mulching. A light lunch will be provided along with refreshments and fellowship throughout. Pleasant Hill Village presents a good opportunity to be involved in Brethren ministry. A tour and history of mission at the Brethren Home of Girard will be offered after lunch.

Ozarks/Plains The Ivester (Iowa) Church of the Brethren supports volunteer companions to live with communities of returned Guatemalan refugees following years of civil war, showing solidarity for their communities and providing additional security for those investigating human rights abuses. Individuals and groups interested in participating are invited to contact the church at: ivester@heartofiowa.net.

West Camp Koinonia, in Cle Elum, Wash., will host the annual Northwest Brethren Arts & Gifts Retreat again this summer. The event, to be held Aug. 12-14, is an opportunity for the Church of the Brethren to come together for music, arts, crafts, and fellowship. It is a time for Brethren to spend quality time camping with old and new friends in a creative environment.



YOU SAID IT

"We claim to be Easter people. Now is the time to live and act like persons filled with hope."

—Roger Schrock, pastor of the Cabool (Mo.) Church of the Brethren

BY THE NUMBERS

10,000

There are more than 10,000 books in the Brethren Historical Library and Archives in Elgin, Ill., including six Sauer Bibles and a 1539 German New Testament.

A vibrant church across the waters

The Haiti Church of the Brethren must have a service component as a prerequisite for recognition as a church. The 50-plus homes that members built for



families impacted by the four hurricanes of two years ago withstood last year's earthquake without damage. And they are building momentum on their way to completing 50 additional homes this year for families affected by the earthquake. With help from Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM), they are shaping a mobile medical team staffed by Haitian medical professionals to supplement already existing health facilities in regions of need.

I was privileged to be one of 11 members of a BDM team that joined four Haitian workers—including four Haitian pastors—working to complete a building that will serve as an office for the Haiti Church of the Brethren and a guest house for visiting volunteers. The well-organized crews into which we were incorporated are meeting high structural standards,

Students explore 'being Brethren'

What does it mean to be Brethren today? About 20 Brethren students and the campus chaplains from Bridgewater (Va.), Juniata (Huntingdon, Pa.), and Manchester (North Manchester, Ind.) colleges explored that question as they met April 1-3 at Grand Vue State Park in Moundsville, W.Va.

The idea of a joint retreat for Church of the Brethren colleges in the East and Midwest grew out of student brainstorming and gradually materialized over the past

year. The West Virginia spot, just south of Wheeling, was chosen as a central point for the colleges attending.

Students led informal discussions on topics including peace, justice, simplicity, sustainability, and community during the weekend. Each of the three college groups also planned and led a worship service. Free time offered opportunities for hiking, disc golf, games, and further conversation. Juniata chaplain Dave Witkovsky contributed his culinary abilities in the kitchen for on-site meals.



A chain bearing descriptions of peace created at the gathering.



From left, Kristi Matthews of Bridgewater, Katie Herder of Manchester, Kelsey Murray of Bridgewater, Kay Guyer of Manchester, and Tyler Goss of Bridgewater share an impromptu tribute to the Brethren colleges through a creative song.

The retreat ended with a mountaintop closing circle and hopes of doing another such gathering in the future. The schools are among six colleges/universities affiliated with the Church of the Brethren, stretching from eastern Pennsylvania to California. According to *Church of the Brethren Yearbook* statistics, they enroll a combined total of more than 300 Brethren students.

moving swiftly on the task, and doing very nice work.

This vibrant church is attracting new members. I worshipped with four different Brethren communities in Haiti. Their dedicated discipleship, fervent worship, and youthful vigor are enviable examples for the Church of the Brethren in the United States. I understand that 19 new members were baptized in January by a visiting Church of the Brethren pastor who was part of the BDM work team. It is not that they are without leadership. They have called out 18 of their own pastors to provide spiritual direction for the 19 congregations scattered across the country.

Much remains to be done as Haiti continues to recover from the quake. The church will have growing pains. There are health problems from cholera, and there is the potential for political unrest. But Brethren workcamps have faced no problems from cholera. And our team was there in the days leading up to the run-off election, and also when former President Aristide returned—times when outsiders expected street violence. There was none. *Pa pwoblem!* (No problem!)

Stretch your love. Be brave. Cross the waters to join hands with sisters and brothers, part of this new manifestation of the Church of the Brethren in Haiti.

—Cliff Kindy, reporting in the South-Central Indiana district's April newsletter on his recent workcamp experience in Haiti



Portrait of many colors is centerpiece for Lent

Members of the Elizabethtown (Pa.) Church of the Brethren took advantage of the Lenten season to reexamine what it means to be the body of Christ. While acknowledging that there are a range of opinions and perspectives within their own 700-member congregation, they have made a conscious decision to be in dialogue with one another over con-

A 6 ½ by 9 ½-foot tapestry portrait of Christ, made up of pieces of fabric contributed by church members, served as a visual centerpiece for Lent.

tentious issues, rather than let themselves become divided.

Sunday mornings during Lent found the congregation focusing on six key questions, beginning with, "What could it mean if we all searched together to discover, discuss, and display the mind of Christ in our community?" and concluding with, "If we truly believed Jesus was alive and in our community, would it make any difference in how we treated each other?"

Visual art, drama, original music, and a blog were included in the Lenten program. A 6 ½ by 9 ½-foot tapestry portrait of Christ, made up of pieces of fabric contributed by church members, served as a visual centerpiece for the series. The piece was hung at the front of the sanctuary one Sunday morning as worshippers filed in. "We wanted it to be an 'aha' moment," said visual arts coordinator Becky Kenderdine in a story about the Lenten series in the local *Intelligencer Journal/Lancaster New Era* newspaper. "It represents that we are all part of the body of Christ. We're all reflected in it. Everyone has ownership."

The portrait was designed and constructed by Amy Engle, with help from fellow members Krista Faus, Karen Wenger, and Lynne Hockley.

REMEMBERED

Louise Garber Holderreed, former Church of the Brethren mission worker in China and India, died March 14, 2011, in Twin Falls, Idaho. While attending Bethany Bible Training School in Chicago, she met Andrew Holderreed who was studying to be a minister. They were married on May 30, 1941, and both graduated the following year in May.

Louise and her husband were called to the mission field in China. On Feb. 14, 1947, the family joined 450 other missionaries on a converted troop ship to set out for China. This was a time of great civil turmoil in China, and by April 1949, the American Consul advised all non-essential foreign personnel to leave in order to avoid becoming prisoners of war

as General Mao Tse-tung marched his Red Army across China. Louise and her family escaped in the back of a freight truck and returned to the United States. On Christmas Eve the same year, they boarded a freighter ship and left for India.

The family lived in several locations as Andy's assignments changed. After completing 25 years of work in India, Andy and Louise returned to Tacoma, Wash., and began to minister in the Larchmont Church of the Brethren. A memorial service was held for Louise on April 1, at Twin Falls Church of the Brethren. The family suggests memorial contributions be sent to Heifer International or Habitat for Humanity.

I don't know... but I believe...



BILL KIDWELL

I don't know how I got here,
but I believe there is a Creator who brought me
and all there is into being.

I don't know who or where God is,
but I believe there is a Cosmic Being beyond
and within me.

I don't know much about the historical Jesus,
but I believe that the same Spirit that dwelled
within him can dwell within me.

I don't know what happened to Jesus
when he died,
but I believe there is a Spirit (risen Christ) present
today to support and sustain me in my journey.

I don't know how prayer works,
but I believe it is the best alternative/
complementary medicine available.

I don't know why there is so much pain and
suffering in the world,
but I believe that the best
option for me is to learn to
live with mystery.

I don't know that good will
ultimately triumph over evil;
but I believe that I have been
called to do justice, to love
mercy, and to walk humbly
with God.

I don't know what will
happen to me when I die,
but I believe there is a
loving God who will take
care of the details.

I don't know what will happen to the animals,
but I believe we should treat them as fellow
creatures of our "God and King."

I don't know the answer to all of life's questions
because I have read the Bible;
but I believe that the Bible, read in the light of
Jesus Christ, is a trustworthy guide.

I don't know how the church can use an
imperfect person like me,
but I believe that by God's grace it does.

I don't know that the faith by which I am living
is the best course for me,
but I have life experiences that convince me
that it is. **W!**

Bill Kidwell serves as volunteer minister of pastoral care at the Oakland Church of the Brethren, Gettysburg, Ohio. He and his wife, Peggy, live at the Brethren Retirement Community in Greenville.

Gaél Chardon



QUOTE WORTHY

“God does not reject people. Neither do we. No matter who you are, you are welcome here.”

—Statement of acceptance in the Sunnyslope Church of the Brethren/United Church of Christ Sunday bulletin, Wenatchee, Wash.

“The more I learn about [World War II], the more I understand that the pacifists were the only ones, during a time of catastrophic violence, who repeatedly put forward proposals that had any chance of saving a threatened people. They weren’t naïve, they were psychologically acute realists.”

—Nicholson Baker, “Why I’m a pacifist—the dangerous myth of the Good War,” *Harper’s*, May 2011.

“Christians are called to reach beyond ourselves, to embrace all God’s children and affirm our interconnectedness and interdependence”

—From “Earth Day and the importance of Christian community,” on the web site of the National Council of Churches: nccusa.org.

“What would happen if Christians devoted the same discipline and self-sacrifice to nonviolent peacemaking that armies devote to war?”

—Question raised on the Christian Peacemaker Teams web site: cpt.org.

“In Brazil, domestic violence is the leading cause of death and disability for women ages 16 to 44. Every year more than 1 million women are victims of domestic abuse.”

—Oscar Benavides, former coordinator of Mennonite Central Committee’s Brazil peace program, citing statistics from Agência Patricia Galvão, a social organization promoting communications and women’s rights.

“Bigger is not always better. Our worth is not determined by what’s in our pocketbooks or our bankbooks. How much do you really need anyway? How many pairs of shoes? How many rooms in a house?”

—Tom Hostetler, minister to older adults, La Verne Church of the Brethren

CULTURE REVIEW

➔ The only way to truly honor the memory of the **more than 800,000 people who perished in Rwanda** 17 years ago is to ensure that such tragedies never occur again, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said as the United Nations in April observed a day of remembrance of the victims of the genocide. In a report from U.N. News Service, Mr. Ban said, “Preventing genocide is a collective and individual responsibility. Rwanda’s survivors have made us confront the ugly reality of a preventable tragedy.”

More than 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and Hutus were murdered in the tiny African nation, mostly by machete, during a period of less than 100 days beginning in April 1994.

➔ A pioneering animal husbandry scheme run by Tearfund is transforming lives among

poor communities in Afghanistan. Improved diets and better standards of living are resulting from the project which is targeting the poorest families in Kandahar province. Each family that signs up to the scheme receives one goat and two chickens. They agree to give the second kid produced by the female goat to another vulnerable family in their community.

“When I received the goat from Tearfund it was pregnant,” one recipient said, “and it was my hope that it would bear a female kid, so that I could help another family. After some time passed, I went to my backyard and I saw the goat with two female kids. Now I can help my neighbor, but I also have one to keep myself, which makes me very happy.”



JUST FOR FUN: WORD FIND

Find these 12 words related to parts of a worship service in the puzzle below. Words can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal, backwards, or forwards.

INVOCATION LITANY OFFERING SERMON MUSIC PRAYER
 CONFESSION SCRIPTURE HYMN CHOIR STORY BENEDICTION

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

On the shoulders of

by Frank Ramirez

giants

The King James turns 400

Truly (good Christian Reader) we never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new Translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one. . . . but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one.

From "The Translators to the Reader," King James Version, 1611.

It may be hard to believe, considering how revered the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible has become, barely this side of idolatry, but

when it was published 400 years ago it was not the most popular translation available. That honor went to the Geneva Bible, first published in 1560.

When the KJV (also known as the Authorized Version) was introduced in 1611, it met the sort of resistance that new translations undergo today. Long use of the Geneva Bible had given it the comfortable phrasing that made it sound ancient and eternal, even divinely inspired. The Geneva Bible was the Bible of Shakespeare, the Bible of religious dissenters, the Bible of the Pilgrims when they came to the New World—and the Bible used by King James himself. It took half a century for the KJV to come into its own.

Today there are many wonderful, more accurate, and clearer Bible translations available. The KJV is still much revered, but it is not the best available and hasn't been for hundreds of years. Indeed, as early as 1653, a bill was introduced in the British Parliament to revise it completely. Not only did the original translators not fully understand the original language, but English has changed over the centuries so that one has to





“Piti piti zwazo fè nich.”

Little by little the bird builds its nest. (Haitian proverb.)

Haiti Rebuilding: 85 homes completed, 50 planned for 2011

Ministry Center: Working together with the Haitian Church of the Brethren and Global Mission Partnerships, the new ministry center will host visitors, meetings and training events, and serve as headquarters for the Haitian church.

As we join with the Haitians to rebuild their lives – little by little – they build the church in Haiti

\$6,500 builds a 3-room Haitian home with latrine

\$500 sponsors medical programming for a day

\$200 purchases doors for one house

\$30 provides seeds for one small farmer

Any amount will help.

Support the Haiti Earthquake Response

Send your gift to:

Emergency Disaster Fund

Church of the Brethren, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120

Give online at www.brethren.org/HaitiDonations

800-451-4407



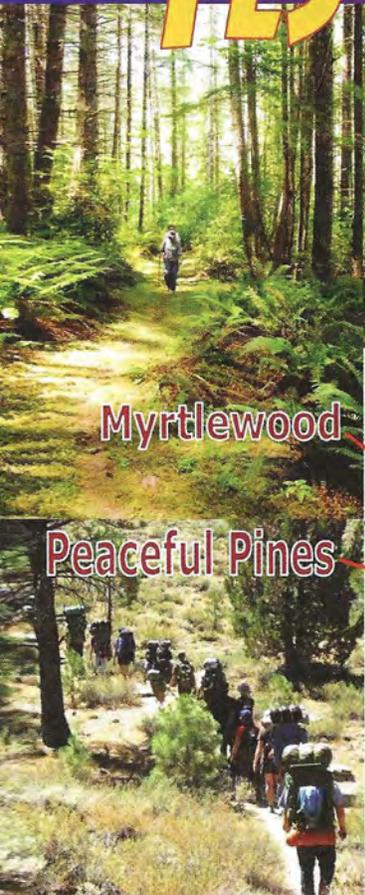
BRETHREN
Disaster Ministries

Photo by: Ilexene Alphonse

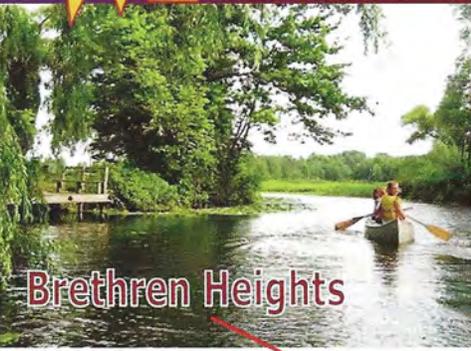
WE'VE GOT SPIRIT! YES WE DO!



Brethren Woods



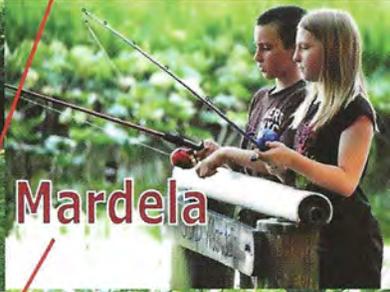
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Brethren Heights



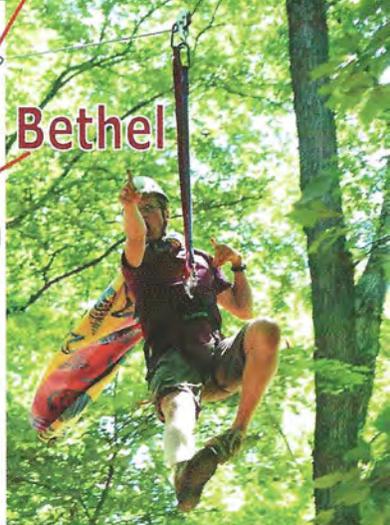
Shepherd's Spring



Mardela



Peaceful Pines



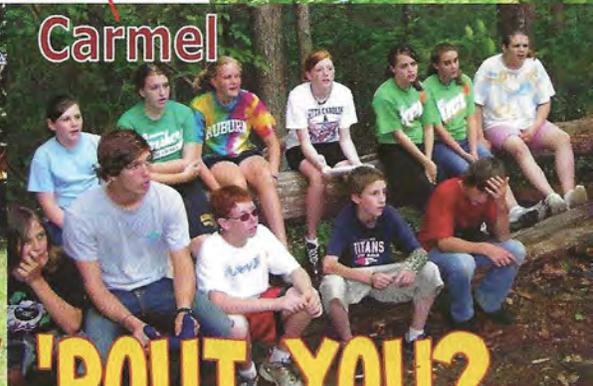
Bethel



Colorado



Ithiel



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WE'VE GOT SPIRIT, HOW 'BOUT YOU?

CATCH THE SPIRIT AT ONE OF 29 CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN CAMPS.

CONNECT TO "OUTDOOR MINISTRIES" AT THE LIFE STAGES TAB OF WWW.BRETHREN.ORG OR

CONTACT YOUR DISTRICT LEADERS.

SPONSORED BY YOUR OUTDOOR MINISTRIES ASSOCIATION.



AT THE LAST, IN 1610, A GROUP OF SIX ENGLISH SCHOLARS CULLED FROM THE DIFFERENT COMMITTEES GATHERED TOGETHER TO READ ALOUD THEIR NEW TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE, VERSE BY VERSE, AS THEY PREPARED THEIR FINAL REVISIONS.

translate the translation before it can be understood!

Still there are many who insist it is the real Bible, the only Bible. It is almost as if they believe that the apostles wrote in Elizabethan English, rather than the common Greek of 2,000 years ago.

I live in an area where it is not unusual for churches to advertise themselves as "King James Only." There is a popular bumper sticker—"If it ain't King James it ain't Bible." Some churches even brag they are King James only.

The irony is that King James churches tend to be fiercely independent and conservative, putting belief in the Bible above human tradition and hierarchies.

In the 17th century, these churches would have used the Geneva Bible because the KJV was designed specifically to uphold the Divine Right of Kings, the hierarchy of bishops, and high church practices that were founded in tradition and not in scripture. Most of the KJV translators did not trust the average believer to interpret scripture on their own. That's what the clergy were for.

So where did the King James Version come from? Before anyone could translate the Bible into English, there next had to be an English language. And after English developed, it was at first only spoken by commoners. Nobles spoke French and Latin. English finally came into fashion with the rise of English nationalism, especially during the reign of Elizabeth I and the defeat of the Armada, along with the flourishing of the English stage. English became the acceptable language of England.

Even so, people in positions of power were nervous about anyone translating the Bible into the language of the common people. John Wycliffe (1328-1384) first translated the Bible from Latin to English, as part of his activities in opposition to abuses of the established church. Though he died of natural causes, his body was later disinterred and burned. The history of Bible translation into English would remain tied up with the twists and turns of politics and faith in England.

William Tyndale (c. 1494-1536), perhaps the greatest translator of them all, was martyred, having been betrayed, strangled at the stake, and his body afterwards burned for the crime of producing scriptures in English directly from the original languages. He faced great opposition throughout his career. He trusted ordinary people. To one cleric who opposed him he replied, "...and if God spares my life,



ere many years, I will cause the boy that driveth the plow to know more of the Scriptures than thou dost!"

His complete New Testament and those portions of the Old Testament that he translated before his death tremendously influenced subsequent versions, including the KJV.

John Rogers, who did some translation of his own and saw to it that all of Tyndale's translations saw print, was also martyred. He was the first to be burned at the stake by Mary, Queen of Scots, when she temporarily made Catholicism the official faith of England once more.

But the door opened by Tyndale could not be closed. A series of translations followed, all taking place in a period of feverish religious and political controversy.

The KJV did not miraculously spring into existence but was the product of eight long years of difficult work. It originated at the Hampton Conference, convened by the newly crowned James I of England, formerly James VI of Scotland, on Jan. 14, 1604.

When James took the throne of England it was assumed by many Puritans that he would be their champion. Scotland was Puritan country, and James had submitted himself to their teachings. But what they didn't know was that he had chafed under their authority and he preferred the high Church of England. This was in no small part because they supported the unquestioned authority of kings. He in turn recognized and supported the rights of bishops and traditional church practices.

In addition, King James (who, by the way, was an expert in both Greek and Hebrew) was no Puritan, in any sense of the world. He had no intention of restraining his various appetites while bowing to the Puritans, whose aim was to call the church into conformity with some of the principals of the Reformation.

Though the conference was ostensibly meant to allow

How it became the Bible

Before anyone could translate the Bible into English, there first had to be a Bible. Neither the first Christians nor the teachers in the synagogues could have put their hands on a Bible as we know it.

For many centuries, the Torah scroll, containing the first five books of our Bible, was scripture. Even in Jesus' day there was great disagreement about whether the Prophets and the Writings, including most of the rest of what we call the Old Testament, was inspired.

Because the Jews were scattered throughout the Roman Empire, a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, known as the Septuagint, established a canon of sorts for believers in the wider world. This was the Bible for many of the first Christians in the Empire who also spoke Greek. The books we know as the Apocrypha were a part of this collection, and were considered sacred by all Christians for centuries.

The Hebrew Bible as we know it was established, according to tradition, at the Council of Jamnia, held around the year 90 AD. This list was adopted by the reformers 1500 years later, and explains why Christians recognize two different lists of books as holy in the Old Testament.

Christians did not have a New Testament for decades, even centuries. Only gradually did the gospels, letters, and other writings coalesce into a canon. Gradually other books—letters of Clement, Barnabas, and the apocalyptic Shepherd of Hermas, though popular, faded away. It was not the result of some sinister conspiracy, as some books and movies suggest, in which the "real" books were suppressed. The community of faith, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, achieved consensus carefully and prayerfully over time.

Finally, when scrolls were replaced by the codex—sheets of lambskin bound together in what we would recognize as a bound volume—and all the books of scripture as we know it were finally gathered together between two covers, could one finally speak of a Bible.

all religious parties to air their views, King James stacked the deck, choosing only moderate Puritans, and then roundly putting them in their place. They had no true opportunity to share their views.

At the conference, the king made it clear that he desired a new translation of the Bible. It was his opinion that the popular Geneva Bible was flawed, even though he himself quoted from it on many occasions. His real objection was with the marginal notes, some of which made it clear that God, who installed kings, could remove them. There might even be occasions when the death of kings would be a good thing. He hated that sort of commentary.

And so began an eight-year process of translation. Six companies were formed among the three universities of Cambridge, Oxford, and Westminster, to translate the Old and New Testaments, as well as the Apocrypha. (All Bibles were printed with the Apocrypha until the turn of the 20th century. It began to disappear because it was cheaper to print Bibles without it, and because of the rise of fundamentalism.)

The translators themselves were a varied and interesting lot. The extremely influential Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626) was mercilessly cruel to his religious opponents, especially those with Puritan tendencies, yet he regularly spent five hours every morning weeping copiously over his own sins. Richard Bancroft (1544-1610), the Archbishop of Canterbury, also adamantly opposed to religious dissent, wrote up the meticulous set of rules that governed the translating companies. The inspirational Laurence Chaderton (1537-1640), who might have been 104 years old when he died, loved archery and played tennis his whole life. He worked quietly for church reforms that most of the powerful translators opposed. And there was Sir Henry Savile (1549-1622), the only translator who was not ordained, who lived a swash-buckling life of adventure and intrigue—but knew his Bible.

At the last, in 1610, a group of six English scholars culled from the different committees gathered together to read aloud their new translation of the Bible, verse by verse, as they prepared their final revisions. They focused not only on accuracy of translation but the sound of the words, for this Bible was meant to be read from pulpits all across England.

At least one of them was there only because he'd been required by law to attend—he was irked that like many of the translators he had not been paid. While his sovereign, King James, indulged his vices, spending lavishly for massive outlays of luxuries, those who worked on the translation of the

Bible that would bear his name did not receive the financial support they'd been promised. The project was habitually starved for cash.

One of the six, John Bois (1562-1644), might not have been there at all if the prejudices of the day had held sway. When Bois, the greatest Greek scholar of his age, was invited to join the translators, there were those who sniffed that "they needed no help from the country." Bois was a pastor and had no academic title.

Few could doubt his qualifications, however. He could read the Hebrew Scriptures by the time he was



AS FOR THE BRETHREN, THEY WERE NOT AT FIRST AFFECTED IN THE LEAST BY THE QUESTIONS SURROUNDING WHICH ENGLISH BIBLE TO USE. THE BIBLES THEY BROUGHT FROM EUROPE AND THE BIBLES THEY PURCHASED IN COLONIAL AMERICA FROM THE SAUER PRESS WERE IN GERMAN.

six. Already familiar with both Classical and New Testament Greek by the time he went to college at the age of 14, he mastered a year's work in his first week, and a month later had advanced beyond the third year's level.

Despite the prejudice against him, Bois proved his worth, finishing his work early, contracting to do the work of another translator who failed to complete his assignments, and finally being selected to work on the final committee that prepared the work of the whole for publication. And he was the only translator whose notes on the process have survived. His notes make it clear the KJV did not descend perfectly from heaven, but was the result of hard work.

Miles Smith (1554-1624) wrote the preface to the KJV. He noted that previous translators had done a good job, and that their aim was to take the best of previous translations. "We are like those standing on the shoulders of giants." Their finished product was magnificent.

Despite initial opposition and a general lack of support from its namesake, the King James Version became one of the pillars of the English language, influencing the way we speak and think. It used a basic vocabulary of only 8,000 words, nine-tenths of which have strong Saxon roots. Its simplicity is its strength. Some have even credited the independence it gave to those reading it for themselves with providing an impetus to the American Revolution.

But the English language continued to change. In 1611, one addressed intimates as 'thee' and 'thou,' and reserved 'you' for formal settings. The use of 'thee' in addressing God had the opposite intent it does today. We now use the word ghost to speak of ghostly things, and spirit for spiritual matters, but in 1611 the meanings were just the opposite. Corn meant wheat, and meat referred to all sorts of food. I often say that the Word of God hasn't changed, but English has.

More important, the translators of 1611 did not have access to the multitudes of ancient manuscripts that were soon to be discovered and published. In 1627, for instance, the 5th century Codex Alexandrinus came to England from Constantinople, sparking interest in older manuscripts. As a result, their Greek and Hebrew manuscripts were decidedly deficient.

Even as the KJV grew in popularity, a fascinating adventure was about to begin. The great manuscript hunters such as Constantin von Tischendorf (1811-1864), would discover treasures like the Codex Sinaiticus, the oldest complete Bible. With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the text of the Hebrew Bible was pushed back a thousand years!

Sometimes what was revealed meant that the KJV presented a flawed text. The Lord's Prayer looked the same in both Matthew and Luke, but that is the work of medieval

scribes who expected consistency. There are really two different versions, neither of which includes the well-known doxology that we are familiar with. The ending of the Gospel of Mark, for instance, and the story of the woman caught in adultery, are not in the oldest manuscripts. Over the centuries, the errors of those who copied the manuscripts by hand were perpetuated.

In addition, discoveries of papyri in the Egyptian desert containing ordinary documents such as business receipts, personal letters, and wedding invitations, demonstrated that the New Testament was not crudely written, as some earlier translators believed. The gospels turned out to be written in clear, business Greek, known as *Koine*, the second language of everyone in the first-century Roman Empire.

Revisions were required, and began to appear in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many met opposition on the part of those who had come to think of the KJV as nearly sacred. Their story is worth a whole other article!

As for the Brethren, they were not at first affected in the least by the questions surrounding which English Bible to use. The Bibles they brought from Europe and the Bibles they purchased in Colonial America from the Sauer Press were in German. However, as English slowly replaced German in the 18th and 19th centuries, they gravitated to the King James Version because by then it was the standard Bible in use.

Brethren did not oppose the new translations into English. Lewis W. Teeter's New Testament commentary of 1894, for instance, printed the King James and Revised Versions (1881) side by side. Some of the early 20th century Brethren publications printed the American Standard Version (1901). But at least officially, Brethren had no stake in the translation controversies. A 1930 Annual Meeting action required that the lesson texts in the Sunday school quarterlies print both the American Revised and King James versions. A 1939 decision rescinded that decision and suggested editors use whichever text they chose.

More recently, the Revised Standard (1951) and the New Revised Standard (1991) versions became the default version used in official publications, but congregations and individuals remain free to use whatever they choose.

Edgar J. Goodspeed, whose *The New Testament, An American Translation* of 1923 was one of the best ever produced, wrote that every translation is a glorious failure. The KJV is as glorious a failure as any. Every home should have a copy of the King James version, but there should be two or three other Bibles as well. ❧

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



Wallace Cole (at right), a member of the Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board, speaks with a young Israeli soldier during a delegation trip to the Middle East in January.

Is Jesus still weeping over the Holy Land?

by Wallace Cole

S*alaam alaikum.* In a land where this Arabic greeting means “Peace be with you,” and the Hebrew greeting *Shalom* also means peace, there seem to be a lot of people seeking—and few finding—this peace.

On Jan. 4 and 5, assembled under the direction of Christian Peacemaker Teams, a diverse delegation gathered in Israel/Palestine. This mix of individuals varied in age between 24 and 70, and ranged from college professors to a plumber, and from one who thought the Bible was a myth to one who was a biblical literalist. However, we were united by a desire to make a difference.

You likely have read about the demolition of Palestinian homes. And, like me, you possibly have come to the conclusion that these homes were torn down because the people living in them were terrorists. In reality, a lot of homes have been torn down because they were built without permits. Very few permits are given to Palestinians, even in their own territory, and their population continues to grow. While permits are restricted for Palestinians homes, Jewish settlement homes continue to

be built on Palestinian land, with many sitting empty.

A friend I made while there, Atta Jaber, has had two homes removed and the one he is living in has a demolition order on it. His family has lived on the land for over 800 years and they have papers showing ownership from the time when French and British authorities were in control of the area.

As his second home was being destroyed, Atta Jaber was charged with “assault with a child.” He had handed his four-month-old child to the soldier in charge, asking the officer to take his child because he had no home for his son and no way to feed him. As the child was wiggling in the officer’s arms, he hit the officer’s face. Although the charge did not stick, it is still on his son’s record.

A former soldier and a founder of the group “Breaking the Silence” spoke to our delegation, describing the conflict of emotions in an Israeli soldier’s life. He had served in Hebron and told about several situations he had encountered. One was a suspicious package placed next to a wall as his team did their nightly rounds.

He said he had three options; one, to shoot into the

Rick Polhamus



Wallace Cole with Palestinian friend Atta Jaber. Although his family has lived on the land for over 800 years, he has had his home destroyed twice and now faces another demolition order.

package to see if it exploded; two, to call for a bomb team to come in, which could take hours; and three, to have a

Palestinian go over and pick up the package. The thought that a person's life was worth no more than a round from an M16 rifle, or the time it would take to have a skilled team come and check out the package, was challenging to me.

A few days later I was talking to a 19-year-old Israeli soldier who was detaining us at a check point. I thought back to the time when I was 19 years old and serving at Fort Jackson. At that age I would not have questioned those in authority, I had the confidence that they would never ask me to do anything wrong or that was not necessary.

As we grow in faith we begin to understand the value God has for human life. His Son suffered and died that we may have life. We also know that when someone's life is ended here on earth, they will stand in judgment.

I don't think I've ever been anyplace where hospitality is so widespread. At every home we were served tea shortly after arriving, and coffee before we left. Children greeted us on the streets with "Helloooooooo. Welcome." A young couple riding the bus with us from Bethlehem to Jerusalem invited all 13 of us into their home, after talking with us for just a short time.

Jesus said, "I was a stranger and you took Me in." I have never invited a group of strangers to my house after meeting them on public transportation. I have a better understanding

of what hospitality is after this trip.

As I walked down the Mount of Olives, looking at the Old City of Jerusalem, I thought back to a time

when my savior wept as he made this journey. I let my eyes wander into the valley to my left, and looked at a wall built through it. I was told the wall was built to protect the Israelis from the Palestinians. At places the wall divides families, and in other places it divides individual farms. Whether you are looking at the 1948 or the 1967 agreements on Israel and Palestine, this wall is constructed well to the East of the line. How can something separating Palestinians from Palestinians protect the Israelis?

If we think back over the past 62 years we can recall a lot of terrible things that have been done by both sides in this conflict, and I wonder how I would feel growing up in that environment. Would I hate other human beings? Would I be so fearful of others that I would throw rocks to keep them away from me? Would I shoot rockets into neighborhoods, or possibly attach an explosive device to my body, killing myself and others? I wonder even now if I will build a wall to protect me from seeing the pain of people Jesus died for.

I wonder, is Jesus weeping over his people today?

Wallace Cole, a member of the Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board, wrote this reflection after participating in a Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation to Israel and Palestine in January. He and his wife, Marty, are managers of Camp Carmel in Linville, N.C., in Southeastern District.

A FEW DAYS LATER I WAS TALKING TO A 19-YEAR-OLD ISRAELI SOLDIER WHO WAS DETAINING US AT A CHECK POINT. I THOUGHT BACK TO THE TIME WHEN I WAS 19 YEARS OLD AND SERVING AT FORT JACKSON.

Church of the Brethren
Annual Conference Statement

Human Sexuality from a Christian Perspective

[Note: This is the fifth in a series of essays that MESSENGER has run periodically during the year leading up to the 2011 Annual Conference. This series is intended to provide different viewpoints that we hope will increase understanding of the issues being discussed in the Special Response Process. In this installment, Guy Wampler, who chaired the committee assigned to study human sexuality issues and draft a statement for action by Annual Conference, reflects on how the 1983 Annual Conference "Statement on Human Sexuality from a Christian Perspective" came into being. We trust that this behind-the-scenes review of the process will provide helpful background as the denomination prepares for deliberation in Grand Rapids this summer. —Ed.]

How did the 1983 committee reach consensus?

by Guy Wampler

Two denominational leaders called me recently to ask about the committee that wrote the 1983 Annual Conference statement on human sexuality. They wanted to know how that diverse committee reached consensus. In response, I identified parts of the paper where agreement was easy, highlighted points of sharp difference, and described how the committee—after intense negotiating—gave unanimous support to the statement they presented to Annual Conference. As the church faces the possibility of controversy over homosexuality at Annual Conference this summer, we may glean some insight from the memories of 1983.

A bit of history gives perspective. The 1977 Annual Conference "Statement on Marriage and Divorce" included a recommendation that the General Board appoint a committee to study human sexuality from a Christian perspective. The General Board appointed a study committee of five: Doris Egge (Virlina District), a high school guidance counselor with some private practice; Mary Sue Rosenberger (Southern Ohio), a registered nurse and writer; Jim Myer (Atlantic Northeast), minister, farmer, and a leader of the Brethren Revival Fellowship; Clyde Shallenberger (Mid-Atlantic), director of Chaplaincy Services at Johns Hopkins Hospital and chair of the General Board; and me (Northern Indiana), a pastor in Fort Wayne.

The committee asked me, as chair, to write the first draft. The committee wanted consistency in writing style and a first draft from which to work when they met. In its 275-year history, the Church of the Brethren had never officially addressed the issue of homosexuality. Nothing in the archives helped us get started.

The committee quickly agreed on two subjects. First, we all believed that sexuality is not superficial or frivolous. Noting such words as "male and female" (1:27), "one flesh" (2:24), and "knew" (4:1) in the Genesis account of creation, we began our report with these words: "Sexuality is *elemental* in human beings."

Second, we readily affirmed that love and covenant are the basic biblical guidelines for sexual expression. We wrote a page about what love is and what it is not. We also wrote a page about covenant and the continuing loyalties that are basic to marriage and family as contrasted with disconnected romantic affairs. We agreed that these two princi-

ples, love and covenant, apply to single persons and to married persons. Do they also apply to homosexual persons?

When we came to the topic of homosexuality (about one-quarter of the paper), we spent a great deal of time interpreting biblical passages. Sharp differences emerged among us. The story about Sodom in Genesis 19 condemned gang rape of angels, but did it have anything to do with covenantal relationships? (We passed over Judges 19 quickly because of its similarity to Genesis 19.) The two Leviticus texts condemned male homosexual acts unmistakably, using such strong words as “abomination” and “should be put to death,” but these two verses were intermingled with numerous other equally specific prohibitions that the church ignores. On what basis would the church enforce the two verses about homosexuality and ignore surrounding verses? Some contended that Leviticus 18:22 & 20:13 regulate morality, whereas surrounding verses prescribe religious ritual. That distinction confused others on the committee: “How do we determine that planting two kinds of seed in one field is ritual, not moral?” Then a different criterion was suggested: “When the penalty is death, the church must take that offense seriously.” That suggestion did not settle our differences. “Do you mean Christians can ignore all restrictions in the Holiness Code that are not punishable by death? Moreover, should a child who curses father or mother be put to death?” (Lev. 20:9).

Unable to resolve our differences over Leviticus, the committee moved on to the New Testament. We looked at the lists of sins in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10. We researched the meaning of the Greek words *mala-koi* and *arsenokoitai*, translated “male prostitutes” and “sodomites” (NRSV). Some concluded that these two words in conjunction with each other referred to male prostitution in the popular fertility cults in Corinth and other cities of the Middle East. They were not convinced that these sins applied to covenantal relationships between people who were homosexual in orientation.

The most difficult text for committee members who advocated covenantal relationship as an option for homosexual persons was Romans 1: 26-27. Romans 1 is a New Testament text, and therefore unlike the two Leviticus texts it cannot be put in the category of Old Testament rules and regulations that the church dismissed under the influence of Paul and Peter.

How did the advocates of covenantal relationships explain this text? They said that Romans 1 does not deal with homosexuality as an orientation. The acts Paul calls “unnatural” for heterosexual persons would be “natural” for persons whose orientation is homosexual.

This difference of opinion led to a discussion about specific verses versus biblical principles. Those who gave precedence to verses that addressed specific situations used language similar to that of Harold Martin in the March MESSENGER: “In every case where homosexual relationships are mentioned in scripture, they are condemned as sinful activities.”

Others favored basic biblical principles, which, they reasoned, are less influenced by local culture than are specific texts. They raised the issue of slavery. A text in Genesis (17:27, only a couple of chapters before the story about Sodom) reports without any reservation that Abraham, who owned several hundred slaves, treated them like property that could be bought and sold (and even circumcised them without their consent.) A text in Leviticus, a book that had already figured heavily in our conversation, regulates slave ownership, but clearly gives permission to buy slaves from foreign lands and keep them for generations as possessions (Lev. 25:44-46). Verses from Paul’s letters sanction slavery (Eph. 6:5-9; Col. 3:22-4:1; Titus 2:9-10). 1 Peter 2:18-20 urges deference to slave owners, even to those who are harsh and abusive. In every case slavery is upheld. A Civil War historian reported that more than 600 tracts were distributed widely in the United States supporting slavery, most of them citing Bible verses. These publications were based on the premise that an accumulation of texts addressing specific situations supersedes broad principles that otherwise might apply.

Brethren, who opposed slavery during that era, took the opposite view. They cited broad biblical standards such as “created in the image of God,” “love your neighbor as yourself,” and “do unto others as we would have them do unto us.” They applied these overarching principles to the issue of slavery and proclaimed that no human being should be bought and sold like an animal. They affirmed human dignity, freedom, respect, and love.

Thus powerful opposing arguments were made, and members of the committee could not agree on biblical inter-

THE COMMITTEE ASKED ME, AS CHAIR, TO WRITE THE FIRST DRAFT. ... IN ITS 275-YEAR HISTORY, THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN HAD NEVER OFFICIALLY ADDRESSED THE ISSUE OF HOMOSEXUALITY. NOTHING IN THE ARCHIVES HELPED US GET STARTED.

WE SPENT A GREAT DEAL OF TIME INTERPRETING BIBLICAL PASSAGES. SHARP DIFFERENCES EMERGED AMONG US. THE STORY ABOUT SODOM IN GENESIS 19 CONDEMNED GANG RAPE OF ANGELS, BUT DID IT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS?

pretation. The best we could do was to state both points of view and then summarize the places where we did agree. We wrote that the seven passages forcefully denounce rape and cultic prostitution, but do not deal specifically with homosexuality as an orientation. We reaffirmed that within the overarching framework from which the Bible approached sexuality, heterosexual marriage is the norm. We cited the creation accounts and the teaching of Jesus. On the other hand, we noted that this biblical affirmation of marriage did not exclude every other lifestyle. For example, the single life was acceptable. Jesus himself did not marry, and he did not prescribe heterosexual marriage for every person. All of us supported this summary of the biblical teaching.

Our discussion about the causes of homosexuality was less intense. Is it nature or nurture? Some claimed that it is a choice. Others argued that it is hard-wired into the brain. We all agreed "that people do not simply decide to become homosexual; it is more complex than that." We supported "efforts to understand how genetic makeup and childhood experiences influence the development of sexual orientation and behavior."

We also agreed to avoid disparaging language. We didn't use the words "deviation from the norm" because the word "deviant" has a sinister sound. We didn't use "abnormal" for the same reason. We chose "variation," a more neutral word. We encouraged open and honest conversations with gays and lesbians in a venture toward understanding.

We did not choose the word "sin." Some, with strong support from outside our group, pushed hard in favor of the definitive sentence: "Homosexuality is sin." A majority on the committee resisted for fear that the word "sin" would be turned into a rock to be hurled at gays and lesbians who have been victims of name-calling (faggots, queers), abuse, and rejection by peers and parents.

Moreover, they asked what it would mean for Annual Conference to declare that all homosexuality is sin. Would that mean the homosexual orientation is a sin? How could it be if it is not a choice? Would it mean that covenantal relationships are a sin? The majority refused to write that homosexuality is a sin. The minority acquiesced, perhaps out of concern about unity within the committee. As a result, the committee did not say that homosexuality is a sin, nor did we say that homosexuality is not a sin. We simply did not use that word.

Next we considered lifestyle options for gays and lesbians. We quickly agreed that celibacy was an acceptable option. We qualified our support of this option by adding that celibacy should be chosen voluntarily, never required. We interviewed a Roman Catholic priest who advised that the vow of celibacy should always be voluntary because

when it is imposed it can go underground and wreak havoc. We know now more about what he must have had in mind than we realized then. We noted that Paul (1 Cor. 7:6-9) preferred celibacy over marriage, but he conceded that "it is better to marry than to burn with passion." We also cited Jesus' teaching (Matt. 19:10-1) that celibacy is not for all, but only for those who are able. The committee unanimously supported celibacy as a lifestyle option but stated clearly that it ought not to be required for those "who are not able."

The committee listed a second lifestyle option that we called "conversion to a heterosexual orientation." This alternative is similar to what James Dobson calls reparative therapy. We wrote that for many this choice is extraordinarily difficult and complex. We even agreed that "For some it is impossible." Nevertheless, we encouraged a strenuous effort to acquire a heterosexual orientation.

The committee interviewed an evangelical woman in Chicago who told us that she had been a practicing lesbian but that she had been cured. This woman spoke very frankly about her life, her dreams, and her desires. It was clear to most of the committee that she was still lesbian in orientation; she merely repressed her sexuality. We listed conversion of orientation as an option but we added clear words of caution.

The most divisive issue the committee faced was covenantal relationships as a lifestyle option for gays and lesbians. The only statement that the committee as a whole could support was this: "*Covenantal relationships* between homosexual persons is an additional lifestyle option. In the church's search for a Christian understanding of human sexuality, this alternative presents the greatest difficulty for acceptance. After struggling with this option, the church is not of one mind."

When delegates to the 1983 Annual Conference acted upon the statement our committee presented to them, they passed one amendment. They deleted the words "this alternative presents the greatest difficulty for acceptance. After struggling with this option, the church is not of one mind." And in the place of these words, they inserted "...this alternative is not acceptable." The motion to amend passed by a vote of 528 to 428. Then the entire statement as amended was adopted by more than the required two-thirds majority.

Overall, the committee was pleased with the Annual Conference action, although some noted that the amendment created an inconsistency in the paper. Those gays and lesbians who did not choose celibacy because they "were not able" and could not convert to heterosexuality because they found it "impossible," now had no option at all.

The 19th century English preacher Frederick W.

Robertson wrote that in the time of controversy the truth does not lie with either extreme or with a soft-headed compromise in the middle; rather truth lies with the principles underlying both extremes.

The truth underlying one "extreme" in the current controversy is order. In discussions about homosexuality with various groups, including at least 60 inquirer's classes, I've noticed that those most anxious about homosexuality fear disorder. They envision gays and lesbians who flaunt their sexuality. They believe a permissive stance will foster moral chaos and raw promiscuity. They worry that same-sex unions would cause marriage and family to crumble, undermining the home, which they believe to be the basic unit of order in our society. They fear that to compromise on any verse will cause the whole Bible to collapse.

They think of the godless city described by Paul in Romans 1: "Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips, slanderers, God-haters . . . rebellious toward parents, foolish, heartless, faithless, ruthless." Paul preceded this list of degenerate people with those who give themselves up to "degrading passions" of a homosexual nature. That sounds not only like ancient Rome, but also some of the cities we know.

Do we not all agree? Do we not all want order in the city—order based on the authority of the Bible?

The truth underlying the opposite "extreme" is free-

dom: the freedom of the Spirit, the freedom of love, the freedom of grace, the freedom to be. Paul contrasted the "old written code" with "the new life of the Spirit" (Rom. 7:6). He proclaimed that the "letter (of the law) kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6). Paul did not favor freedom without order: that is chaos, not freedom. Paul espoused freedom from legalism and rigidity, and openness to the new life of the Spirit.

I remember a conversation with a lesbian couple who had been together several years. They told me that they were happy together, that they brought out the best in each other, that they cared about each other, and that they could count on each other for support. They commented poignantly that they had found something for which both had yearned: family. One of them remarked memorably, "I am able to do something that I had not done for years: I can laugh again." Freedom to be.

Do we not all agree? Do we not all favor freedom—freedom guided by biblical principles?

In the current controversy over homosexuality, the truths that lie beneath the two extremes are order and freedom. Does the Church of the Brethren have room for both "extremes" because of the truth that underlies each? **LU**

Guy Wampler lives in Lancaster, Pa., where he retired as pastor in 2002. He served as Annual Conference moderator in 1987.

Ecumenical Opportunities at the 2011 Annual Conference • Grand Rapids, Michigan

Ecumenical Luncheon

Tuesday, July 5 at 12:00 noon Amway Grand, Ford Ballroom



The Changing Face of American Ecumenism

Featuring Dr. Richard L. Hamm,

Executive Administrator of Christian Churches Together in the USA (CCT)

Christian Churches Together in the USA is an ecumenical forum inclusive of the diversity of Christian families in the United States — Evangelical, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Pentecostals, historic Protestant, Racial and Ethnic churches.

An ordained minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Dr. Hamm has served congregations for 25 years in rural, exurban, urban, and suburban settings. He is a former member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches and a former Vice President of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A.

Purchase tickets through the Annual Conference registration site at www.brethren.org/ac or at the meal ticket table at Annual Conference.

Insight Session

Dr. Hamm will continue the discussion on *The Changing Face of American Ecumenism* at an Insight Session on the same topic on Tuesday, July 5 at 9:00 p.m.

0.1 CEU Available



Sponsored by the Committee on Interchurch Relations
and the Office of the General Secretary



Church of the Brethren

A covenant people

by Graydon F. Snyder

[This Bible study by Graydon F. Snyder is the third installment in a series that examines how the Church of the Brethren's acceptance of the New Testament as its creed has worked over the centuries, and what it implies for us today. —Ed.]

Probably there is nothing more important for Brethren than the word “covenant.” It encompasses all our other faith characteristics. And, when asked, we almost always make ourselves known to others as a “faith community.” Although the term “covenant” itself has fallen somewhat into disuse, we know it as an agreement made between two parties. In the agreement, the various parties make promises to relate to each other in a certain positive way or, also, to refrain from doing anything damaging.

Such covenants are ancient. Because of the covenant made with Moses, we know written agreements existed in the early Bronze Age (ca. 2000 BCE). Actually, oral agreements are infinitely earlier. The first humans are, in a real sense, the product of covenants. The men were “hunters” and the women were “gatherers.” Together, they became *Homo sapiens*, that is, humans as we now know ourselves.

While people all over the world have banded together in communities, most of us know of religious covenants through the Hebrew Scriptures. In Exodus 20, we read of the Sinai Covenant in which Moses comes down from the mountain and speaks to the assembled tribes. He begins the covenant statements with these redemptive words: “I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt [slavery].” Moses then outlines the famous Decalogue that describes what a covenant with God would be like (Exodus 24:7-8). For the best summary of our ancestral covenant, we should look at Joshua 24. Joshua, the primary disciple of Moses, recounts what God has done for the Israelites. They respond with a covenantal agreement:

And the people said to Joshua, “We will serve the Lord our God and obey him.” On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people, and there at Shechem he reaffirmed for them decrees and laws. And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God.

From a Brethren perspective, we are born in communal relationships. We have parents. We have extended families and neighbors. It is not at all helpful to say we were born in sin. To be “in sin” implies we have no covenant relationships. So sin results from people seeking their own self-interests. The Hebrew Scriptures often mention persons who seek their own individuality rather than the good of the community. David sinned because he wanted to know how many Israelites were available for his purposes (1 Chronicles 21:1-6). In Joshua 7 we encounter Achan, a son of the tribe of Judah. Achan broke ranks by taking for himself what belonged to the community. Among other things, he took a beautiful mantle from Shinar, two hundred shekels of silver, and a bar of gold. Eventually he was stoned for his self-centered action.

From a covenant perspective, problems arise when one is self-centered, preferring individuality to community. While the Jews are hardly perfect, nevertheless they have remained the community of the Old Covenant to this day. The importance of the New Covenant is that Jesus brings together groups that had been more individualistic and creates a new community composed of all peoples: Jews and Gentiles. We see it in the famous eucharistic statement:

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the *new covenant*, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:26-29).

Jesus died on the cross to defeat individualism, and arose to embrace a new people in a New Covenant. As he said, “Whoever will save his own life will lose it (individualism). But whoever will lose his life for others will save it (community).” Unlike Moses of the Old Covenant, Jesus did not give any commandments, but summarized our community action with the words: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” You cannot be strictly self-centered because love for self derives from love for the other—that is, awareness of one’s own self depends on how you relate to others in your life.



AND THE PEOPLE SAID TO JOSHUA, "WE WILL SERVE THE LORD OUR GOD AND OBEY HIM." ON THAT DAY JOSHUA MADE A COVENANT FOR THE PEOPLE, AND THERE AT SHECHEM HE REAFFIRMED FOR THEM DECREES AND LAWS.

While the Jesus faith insisted on community, it didn't always work that way. During the Middle Ages there were conflicts among Christians. Some Christians considered they had a more sincere way of life, so they formed a community within the community. One thinks of the Franciscans of Assisi (early 13th century) who, following St. Francis, eschewed wealth and gave all to the poor. Others actually differed with the faith of medieval Catholicism and broke any direct relationships. An example would be the Cathars (11th to 13th centuries), who held a severely dualistic view of God.

Eventually, some groups wished to form communities that did not adhere to the tradition-based medieval structure. While it is true that many people then and now wish for authoritative direction, there are others who reject both a hierarchy of organization and a clear definition of faith (i.e., a creed). In the early 16th century, some Christians formed a faith community based on covenant relationships rather than doctrine or subordination to formal leadership. The Anabaptists, as they were known, began in Zurich, Switzerland, and spread north, especially to Holland. They influenced the formation of many other faith communities, most

significantly the Baptists from England.

Out of this Anabaptist movement came the Church of the Brethren (1708). Though small, it has been well known as a community that is true to the early church. It has several important functions in our time. First, it forms faith communities true to the covenant life of our denomination. Churches like the Naperville (Ill.) Church of the Brethren include Caucasians and Indians. First Church of the Brethren in Chicago (Ill.) includes Caucasians, African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asians. Doctrines may differ, but it is covenant that defines our church.

Some Brethren churches are very conservative, almost fundamentalist. Other churches are very liberal. But we all adhere to the Brethren community. It is important for our continued existence that this covenant community, the Brethren, continue to share these covenant characteristics. 

Graydon F. Snyder, now retired and living in Chicago, Ill., was dean and professor of New Testament at Bethany Theological Seminary and Chicago Theological Seminary. He is an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren and author of many books, including *Ante Pacem: Archeological Evidence of Church Life Before Constantine*.

CWS expedites relief to thousands in neglected coastal Japanese cities

Nearly three weeks after the catastrophic earthquake and tsunami that devastated the northeastern coast of Japan, humanitarian organization Church World Service reports that the country's domestic resources alone aren't sufficient to deal with the disaster, and there are still thousands who haven't yet received assistance.

From Tokyo, Takeshi Komino, CWS Asia/Pacific's head of emergencies, is coordinating CWS efforts in Japan. Komino reported that "It is evident that even a very developed country like Japan is not able to cope with its domestic resources only," due to the magnitude of four nearly simultaneous disasters: a 9.0 earthquake, tsunami, nuclear threat, and freezing winter weather in affected areas.

people who can't even go to these evacuation sites."

That is where local Japanese partner agencies have a distinct advantage, being "stationed in the field and working with the affected population on a daily basis," he said. Those local agencies will play a key role in finding and filling people's changing needs, Komino said, "much more precisely and faster ... and will enable CWS to target the most vulnerable, including those unable to go to evacuation sites."

Relief goods shipped far and wide

The Material Resources program, housed at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., has been busy moving shipments of relief goods. Shipments made over the past few weeks include one 40-foot container of hygiene kits, toothpaste, sheets, quilts, and t-shirts to Serbia for International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC); one 40-foot container of school kits to Syria for IOCC; one 40-foot container of quilts and kits to Armenia on behalf of Lutheran World Relief in cooperation with International Relief and Development (IRD); one 40-foot container with baby kits, sewing machines, and books to Yemen for IRD. Several shipments were sent on behalf of Church World Service (CWS): blankets and hygiene kits to Kansas City, Mo., for those affected by the flooding that began in May 2010; blankets, baby kits, school kits, hygiene kits, and 50 clean-up buckets to Appalachian Outreach in Moundsville, W.Va.; blankets and hygiene kits to St. Louis, Mo., and Fresno, Texas, in response to winter storms; blankets and hygiene kits to Willamantic, Conn., and Brattleboro, Vt., for use by homeless persons in shelters.



CWS/Takeshi Komino

Volunteers from Peace Boat, a Japan-based relief group, move food and other relief supplies made possible by CWS support.

Church World Service is working with local partners in Japan to coordinate emergency relief for about 25,000 individuals sheltered at 100 evacuation sites in Miyagi, Fukushima, Iwate, Ibaragi, and Tochigi Prefectures.

CWS's Komino reports that needs are changing rapidly, even as the government copes with the triple challenge of working to restore safety at the damaged nuclear plant, building temporary shelters, and dealing with the half million people living at evacuation sites or visiting daily because they have no resources at home.

Komino credits the government for working hard to meet these challenges, but points out, that the government simply does not "have the human resources to serve the most vulnerable, including





Courtesy of Pihui Kim-Joo

Cotton ready to be harvested near Ryongyon.

Global Food Crisis Fund makes grant to North Korea

A grant has been approved for \$50,000 from the Global Food Crisis Fund to assist the Ryongyon Sustainable Community Development Program in North Korea. Now in the eighth year of partnership with Agglobe International, the Ryongyon program of community development presents a countrywide model for sustainable agriculture and provides an opportunity for the Church of the Brethren to work at reconciliation as well as food security. Following a disappointing 2010 food harvest, this grant will aid in the purchase of seeds, plastic sheeting, and fertilizer. Previous Global Food Crisis Fund allocations to Agglobe for the Ryongyon cooperatives have totaled \$360,000.

For more about the work of the Global Food Crisis Fund go to www.brethren.org.

Crops on the campus of Pyongyang University of Science and Technology (PUST) grown from GFCF-supplied seeds.



Courtesy of Pihui Kim-Joo

UPCOMINGEVENTS

June 1 Ascension Day

June 3 – 8 Ministry Summer Service orientation, Elgin, Ill.

June 12 – July 1 Brethren Volunteer Service orientation, New Windsor, Md.

June 12 Pentecost Sunday

June 13 – 25 Protestant Church of Germany: Past and Present, Marburg, Germany

June 17 – 19 National Junior High Conference, Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, Pa.

June 21 Brethren Volunteer Service potluck, Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md.

June 26 – July 2 Song and Story Fest, Camp Brethren Heights, Rodney, Mich.

July 1 – 2 Ministers' Pre-Conference Event, Grand Rapids, Mich.

July 2 Mission and Ministry Board meeting, Grand Rapids, Mich.

July 2 Church of the Brethren Credit Union board meeting, Grand Rapids, Mich.

July 2 – 6 Annual Conference, Grand Rapids, Mich.

WCC urges NATO to remove nuclear weapons

The World Council of Churches (WCC) and church organizations on both sides of the Atlantic have urged NATO to remove all United States nuclear weapons still based in Europe and end their role in the alliance's policy. The 200 or so nuclear weapons involved are "remnants of Cold War strategies" the ecumenical organizations say in joint letters.

"NATO should rethink deterrence and security cooperation in Europe" and make good on NATO's new commitment last year to "creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons." The letters were sent to the leaders of NATO, the US, and Russia in mid-March by the heads of the WCC, the Conference of European Churches, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC), and the Canadian Council of Churches. The four organizations acted in anticipation of an important NATO nuclear policy review this year. That review and a NATO summit in 2012 present an "opportunity for change that is long overdue and widely anticipated," the letters say.

Read the joint letter at www.oikoumene.org/index.php?RDCT=f38835e2d3425f25492e.

Youth focus on faith and food at Christian Citizenship Seminar

What does food have to do with faith? How does “our daily bread” become “The Bread of Life?” At Christian Citizenship Seminar 2011, 55 high school youth and adults considered these questions in depth, using scriptures from the Old and New Testaments as guides.

Beginning March 26 in New York City, participants heard the testimony of two Brethren young adult seminarians, Angela and Nathan Inglis of the Brooklyn (N.Y.) Church of the Brethren, who have made radical personal food choices based on their faith. Participants also learned about international hunger relief projects of Church World Service from Ann Walle, director of Innovation and Strategic Affairs. Nelly Gyebi, an exchange student studying in Moundridge, Kan., shared about carrying water and experiencing gender discrimination in Ghana.

Prior to touring the United Nations, participants studied the hunger-related portions of the Millennium Development Goals through the leadership of Phil Jones, director of refugee resettlement of the Church World Service affiliate office in State College, Pa. Participants explored the cultural and culinary treasures of the city, including attending a local church service, before traveling to Washington, D.C., for the remainder of the seminar.

In Washington, D.C., Brethren farmer and sustainable living advocate Tom Benevento challenged the group on a number of issues related to typical U.S. consumption patterns. A highlight of the week was a meeting with Max Finberg, director of the Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the Department of Agriculture.



Jordan Blevins, advocacy officer for the Church of the Brethren, preps CCS participants for their visit to Congressional lobbies.



A group of Christian Citizenship Seminar participants poses near the Capitol building. The youth focused on issues of food and advocacy for the hungry.

CSS participants typically compose the largest group of Brethren who lobby Congress through personal visits on a single day in any given year. On March 30, the tradition continued as the youth and advisors visited their congressional representatives. They received training from Wendy Matheny, a Brethren young adult who works in Washington as the leadership coordinator for the American Association of University Women.

“When you go to Capitol Hill, you realize that the people there are actually people, and it’s not just this big government machine. They listen to you—for the most part,” reflected CCS participant Kinsey Miller, Black Rock Church of the Brethren, Glenville, Pa.

Considering the theme, it was fitting that the gathered community shared communion during worship on the final evening.

“I came to CCS because it combines my two favorite things—the Church of the Brethren and politics!” said CCS participant Evan Leiter-Mason of Glade Valley Church of the Brethren, Walkersville, Md.

“CCS is about identifying and reinforcing connections between the faith we speak and the lives we live,” said Becky Ullom, director of youth and young adult ministry for the Church of the Brethren. “This year, I wanted participants to tackle a topic that is both universal and also very personal. Food is one of the most basic elements of life, and we have complicated relationships with it. I hope participants discovered a new appreciation for the complex justice issues surrounding food and for the questions those issues ask us as faith-filled people.”

Ullom coordinated the event with the help of Jordan Blevins, advocacy officer, and Mandy Garcia, coordinator of donor invitation. Christian Citizenship Seminar is sponsored by the Church of the Brethren, and takes place each spring.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

Exploring your call The Institute for Youth and Young Adults and Bethany Theological Seminary will be presenting EYC: Exploring Your Call from June 17-27. The program is for high school-entering juniors and seniors. Registration, food, and housing are free. The only cost to participants is transportation. Professors and students from Bethany Theological Seminary will provide a majority of the leadership and supervision. Participating youth will also break into smaller groups to prepare for and help lead a Sunday worship service with various local pastors.

More information can be found at: <http://www.bethanyseminary.edu/news/eyc>.

Continuing education in Virlina Steven J. Schweitzer, academic dean at Bethany Theological Seminary, is the leader for "The Sermon on the Mount: Jesus and the Old Testament," a continuing education event for ministers held in the Virlina District on June 4, 9 a.m.- 4 p.m. Roanoke (Va.) Summerdean Church of the Brethren hosts the event. A credit of 0.6 continuing education units is available to ordained ministers. The event is the "Practice of Ministry Day" for the district's Christian Growth Institute. Cost is \$25, which includes lunch.

Brethren Credit Union prepares for merger

After more than 72 years of serving the Church of the Brethren with savings and loan opportunities, as well as checking accounts and online banking, the Church of the Brethren Credit Union (CoBCU) board of directors has unanimously approved a merger proposal with Corporate America Family Credit Union, with an anticipated completion date of June 1.

This decision was necessitated by the impact the economic recession has had on CoBCU and many other credit unions its size. For several years, savings figures at CoBCU have increased, but revenue-producing loans have tapered off. Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT) has served as the administrator of CoBCU since 2004 and has worked to grow membership and push the credit union toward self-sustainment.

"BBT staff worked tirelessly to grow and solidify CoBCU," said Nevin Dulabaum, BBT president and a 37-year member of the credit union. "While the economic challenges experienced by CoBCU finally made it impossible for BBT to continue serving as CoBCU's administrator, we were determined to help the credit union board find a way to provide enhanced services for CoBCU members. A merger with CAFCU achieves that goal."

After performing a search of potential merger candidates across the country, the CoBCU board accepted CAFCU's proposal. This decision was based on CAFCU's mission statement, member service track record, familiarity with credit union mergers, financial stability, and list of products and branch locations.

Once the merger is complete, CoBCU members may access the financial products and services that CAFCU offers its 60,000 members. In addition to the offerings at CoBCU, Corporate America Family Credit Union also offers several credit cards, mortgages and home equity loans, mobile banking, and a variety of educational tools for members.

Questions or requests for more information may be addressed to Lynnae Rodeffer, Connie Sandman, or Jill Olson at 888-832-1383 or cobcu@brethren.org. More about the Church of the Brethren Credit Union is at www.cobcu.org.



SOMETHING'S COOKING



An uncommonly easy read

Why a new translation of the Bible? Well, as I like to say, the Bible doesn't change—but English does! I didn't grow up with the *King James Version* of the scriptures, so I don't have any attachment to it. Instead, while in high school, I read the Jewish Publication Society's *Torah*, as well as the *Good News* New Testament and the entire *New English Bible* while in high school. I've collected translations ever since.

So for me it's a matter of both faith and fandom when a new translation is issued. And I have to say I am an enthusiastic supporter of the *Common English Bible* (CEB). The New Testament is available now. The complete Bible with Apocrypha will be published in August.



FRANK RAMIREZ

The strongest translations represent a wide range of different denominational backgrounds. This tends to smooth out strictly sectarian readings. The CEB's publication board includes Disciples of Christ,

Presbyterian Church U.S.A., Episcopal Church, United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church. In addition, 22 different faith traditions are represented among the 150 translators, including the AME church, Reform Judaism, Roman Catholics, Mennonites, Friends, Baptists of various stripes, Seventh-day Adventists, and Lutherans.

When I encounter a new translation, I look at certain passages. First and foremost is Genesis 1:1. The Hebrew is most often translated "In the beginning God created . . ." but the CEB agrees with the Jewish Publication Society reading (and mine): "When God began to create the heavens and the earth—the earth was without shape or form, it was dark over the deep sea, and God's wind swept over the waters...."

The Hebrew Scriptures, especially in the Psalms, recognize God as one who created from nothing. But in Genesis, God's activity before present human history is not germane, so that is where this account begins.

I also quickly turn to Matthew 1:25, where after the birth of Jesus, it says of Joseph and Mary, "But he didn't have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son." This reading also agrees with my understanding of the original

Greek. It is sometimes moderated in other translations because it depicts Mary as a virgin when she gives birth to Jesus, but not afterwards. I note that the CEB prints both the ending of Mark's Gospel and the story of the woman caught in adultery in the Gospel of John, but notes that they are not contained in the oldest manuscripts.

And Brethren will be glad to know that "Happy are people who make peace, because they'll be called God's children" (Matthew 5:9).

As for three favorite passages of mine, the love chapter of 1 Corinthians 13, the last chapter of Revelation, and the story of Jesus on the road to Emmaus—they all pass muster.

If you're planning to read through the whole Bible when it's printed, it'll go a little quicker than you expect. The CEB is about 30,000 words shorter than comparable translations because it uses contractions, since that is the way English is spoken.

Some biblical phrases have been so familiar as to lose all meaning. "Son of man," a phrase that appears in both Old and New Testaments, is translated "human" in Ezekiel and "the Human One" for Jesus, in an attempt to get closer to what the original authors were trying to say. "Lord of heavenly forces" is the translation in both Old and New Testaments for what often appears as "Lord of Hosts."

Words are translated according to context, not for the sake of consistency. For instance, "Hades" and "Sheol" are variously translated as "grave," "death," or "underworld," as appropriate.

The goal is to translate from the most reliable manuscripts and produce a fresh English translation that accurately reflects what the original authors were trying to say. No translation ever fully succeeds, not even the venerable King James Version, which was produced before some of the best biblical manuscripts had been discovered.

Interested? The CEB New Testament can be read in its entirety at www.commonenglishbible.com.

There are times, as when I read the 23rd Psalm aloud at funerals, that nothing but the King James will do. But I am already enjoying the *Common English Bible* much more than the NRSV. Is it too much to suggest that the CEB will become the new KJV? Only time will tell. **AM**

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

ABOUT THE BOOK

Title: *The New Testament of the Common English Bible*. From the website: "The *Common English Bible* translation was funded by the Church Resources Development Corp, which allows for cooperation among denominational publishers in the development and distribution of Bibles, curriculum, and worship materials. The Common English Bible Committee meets periodically and consists of denominational publishers from the following denominations: Disciples of Christ (Chalice Press); Presbyterian Church U.S.A. (Westminster John Knox Press); Episcopal Church (Church Publishing Inc); United Church of Christ (Pilgrim Press); and United Methodist Church (Abingdon Press)."



Church of the Brethren Global Mission Partnerships Annual Conference Grand Rapids, Michigan

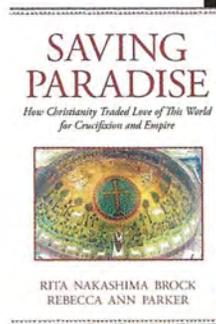
Global Ministries Dinner

Rev. Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock

*“Jesus, the Prophet of Paradise
and Host of the Feast”*

Rev. Dr. Brock led the planning team for the Truth Commission on Conscience in War and is the author of *Saving Paradise*.

Monday, July 4 at 5:00 p.m.



Yen Li Studios

Brethren Volunteer Service Luncheon

Alice and Larry Petry

“For Joy and Adventure” Stories and reflections on a life of service

Monday, July 4 at 12:00 p.m.

Insight Sessions:

Developing Relationships in North Korea, Sunday, July 3 at 9:00 p.m.

Climate Change, Sunday, July 3 at 9:00 p.m.

When Helping Heals: Sustainable Development, Sunday, July 3 at 9:00 p.m.

Fountains of Hope in Haiti, co-hosted with Brethren Disaster Ministries, Monday, July 4 at 12:30 p.m.

Restoring People to the Paradise Table, Monday, July 4 at 9:00 p.m.

Peacemaking in Africa, Tuesday, July 5 at 12:30 p.m.

Lybrook Community Ministries: Reborn, Tuesday, July 5 at 9:00 p.m.

CoB Peace Witness in Washington, D.C., Tuesday, July 5 at 9:00 p.m.



Church of the Brethren

Visit the Global Mission Partnerships booth each day for a variety of ‘mingle in missions’ events with staff, volunteers, and international guests!

Join us for the Brethren Press Messenger Dinner Sunday, July 3, 2011 • Grand Rapids, Michigan

Order tickets before June 6 at www.brethren.org/ac. Tickets are \$20

Waking Up the Historic Peace Churches



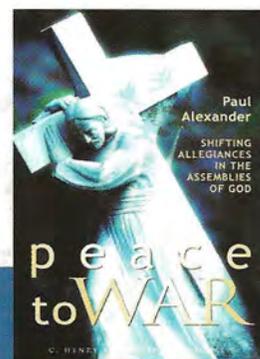
Paul Alexander, Professor of Christian Ethics and Public Policy at Palmer Seminary of Eastern University, is a Pentecostal peacemaker and justice seeker. He grew up in Kansas, became an atheist while doing a PhD in religion at Baylor University, discovered a radical peace witness in his Pentecostal heritage, and now teaches and works for justice and peace as a follower of Jesus. He was a speaker at the Peace Among the Peoples conference in 2010.



Brethren Press
This day.

MESSENGER

Paul Alexander will appear at the Annual Conference bookstore for a special author signing of his book *Peace to War*. Watch www.facebook.com/brethrenpress for further details.



ONCAMPUS

Bridgewater College (Bridgewater, Va.)

Olza M. "Tony" Nicely—a former Bridgewater College student who worked his way up through the ranks of insurance giant GEICO to become its chairman, president, and chief executive officer—was Bridgewater College's guest of honor March 17 and 18 at the annual Scott Symposium on Business Ethics. Nicely, who attended Bridgewater from 1960-61, provided the symposium's keynote address on March 17.

Elizabethtown College (Elizabethtown, Pa.)

Kalie Desimone, a December 2010 graduate of Elizabethtown College, recently became the youngest member of the Broadcast Pioneers of Philadelphia, an organization comprising broadcasting professionals, mostly from southeastern Pennsylvania, with more than 10 years of experience. She graduated from Elizabethtown in December 2010 with a bachelor's degree in communications and moved to Texas to become an on-air reporter at CBS 6 KFDM.

Juniata College (Huntingdon, Pa.)

Two Huntingdon, Pa.-area artists donated 100 hand-made bowls, and more than 15 Juniata College students and community members crafted bowls for hungry diners at an Empty Bowls fund-raiser at the Stone Church of the Brethren in April. To celebrate the fifth anniversary of Juniata's involvement with Empty Bowls, two of Juniata's art faculty made 100 bowls. In addition, eight Juniata students and five community members also made more than 400 bowls for the event.

University of La Verne (La Verne, Calif.)

Erin Gruwell, whose experience teaching English to "unteachable" students at Wilson High School in Long Beach, Calif., was the basis for the 2007 motion picture *Freedom Writers*, starring Hilary Swank, spoke at the University of La Verne during a week-long speaker series in March marking the dedication of the Steve and Ann Morgan Auditorium. Gruwell and her students, several of whom joined her at the university, wrote *The Freedom Writers Diary*.

Manchester College (North Manchester, Ind.)

Manchester College is offering 191 high school seniors almost \$11.3 million in academic scholarships. The students, on track to begin Manchester College careers in the fall, have qualified for four-year scholarships ranging from \$50,000 to \$64,000. Two will receive full-tuition Honors Scholarships. The college offers a "Triple Guarantee: financial aid for every student, a degree in four years, and a job or admission to graduate study within six months of graduation.

McPherson College (McPherson, Kan.)

In March, McPherson College hired Betsy Gatewood of Wake Forest University as its first Entrepreneurship Fellow. Gatewood is one of the foremost experts on entrepreneurship in post-secondary education. "We want to equip [students] with entrepreneurial skills for tackling the complex problems they will face at home and abroad," Gatewood said.

McPherson students spend spring break serving

A typical image of students on spring break has them being waited on and relaxing on a tropical beach. But at McPherson College, students traveled to serve rather than be served.

From March 19 to 26, 18 McPherson College students spent their vacation time helping Navajo Native Americans in Lybrook, N.M., and flood victims in Ashland City, Tenn.

In Ashland City, near Nashville, students helped families rebuild their homes, many of which had been flooded to the roofline in May 2010. Working with Brethren Disaster Ministries, students learned how to lay a cinder block foundation and put up walls and roofing for a family whose home was destroyed. For many of the students, it was their first time working on construction and using power tools.

Junior Matt Willis had always wanted to give back in return for the blessings in his own life, and found his experience in Tennessee to be fulfilling, even fun. "I learned that it's really not that hard to give your time, especially if you have friends with you."

In New Mexico, students helped Lybrook Community Ministries in their service to the Navajo people. While there, they helped run a vacation Bible school, build a horse-training pen, and cultivate a garden. Anna Ruxlow, director of development, said students came away with a new perspective on their own lives and their life conditions. "Any student can do this. It's a learning experience," she said. "We came back with a sense of fulfillment that we were able to make a difference."

Sophomore Curtis Mullins discovered that the needs in Lybrook were not short-term but would take years to turn around. To that end, he's considering going into social work when he graduates. "It did reinforce my desire to work in service, to make some kind of change."

In addition to Matt Willis and Curtis Mullins, the following students also did service trips over spring break: Amy Huxtable, Sarah Taylor, Natasha Chaney, Lane Allison, Cody Taylor, Allison Snyder, Keenan Garrett, Lizette Guzman, and Alexia Kaufman Hall worked in Tennessee. Matthew Watkins, Estrella Medina, Elizabeth Dyche, Brandon Barry, Stephanie Johannes, Tori Carder, and Daniel Barga worked in New Mexico.

McPherson College



Tennessee foundation: McPherson College students work on rebuilding a house destroyed by flooding in Ashland City.



The term "homosexual lifestyle" is inaccurate

After reading the Special Response article by Harold Martin (March 2011 MESSENGER), I have a few comments. First, using the term "homosexual lifestyle" is inaccurate. Lifestyle includes all the things that make up an individual: dress, job where you live, what you

eat, and so on. For homosexuals it is exactly the same as for heterosexuals, except they choose someone of the same sex with whom to share their most intimate moments, which may or may not include sex.

No one has addressed the issue that homosexuality probably is genetic. This is not confirmed scientifically as yet, but research suggests it is.

Does that mean that God has created a sinner intentionally?

No one in the church has addressed the statements by The American Academy of Psychiatry and Psychology regarding their removal of homosexuality from their diagnosis list. They have stated that homosexuality was not a disease or illness, so it requires no medication or treatment. This has been addressed several times since with the same conclusion: homosexuality is a normal variant, just like gray eyes or left-handedness.

How do biblical literalists address the chapters of the Bible that mandate what to eat, or approve of slavery, or give rules about divorce, or speak of uncleanness regarding childbirth and menstrual cycles? I believe the Bible was inspired, but also that it was written by humans who were writing from of their understanding of things at that time. Today we have much more

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insight about certain things. For instance, we now know that epilepsy is not caused by demons.

The [Special Response Process] study groups were helpful, but were sadly lacking in updating the understanding of just what homosexuality is. The 1983 Annual Conference Statement on Human Sexuality ignored medical information that had been available for 10 years. The recent study ignored medical information that has been available for more than 35 years. Should we not know what we are studying before we make decisions?

Allen M. Clague, M.D.
Harrisonburg, Va.

Let God take care of judgment

Sin? I see going to war as sin, according to the New Testament. But do I ask all of my military friends to confess their wrongdoing? Of course not.

I see the Bible teaching as being against homosexuality—and a long list of other vices which we seem to have forgotten in our zeal to wipe out this one.

Robert Johansen (December 2010 MESSANGER), who carefully did not take sides, showed us a refreshing way to deal with our present crisis. Our righteous indignation fills us with hateful vengeance, fractures our body, and diverts us from sharing the love of Jesus.

Let's get on with living and sharing the good news of Christ and let God take care of the judgment.

Maxine M. Ritchie
Tucson, Ariz.

Thank you for MESSENGER!

I really enjoy reading the MESSENGER. I read it in our public library. It brings back so many memories. I grew up in Lane County, Pa., among many Brethren. Some of my boyhood friends were from the Church of the Brethren. I attended some revival meetings at Middle Creek and Conestoga Church at Leola, Pa.

I attended and became a member of the Lane County Old Mennonite Conference. But I was not happy there—too conservative!

I went into volunteer service under the Mennonite Central Committee and spent several years at Gulfport, Miss. There, I met my wife, who was from Newton, Kan. If I had not met her, I would not have stayed a Mennonite. I attended Philadelphia Bible Institute and became a very right-wing Pentecostal.

Here in Newton, I attended Bethel College and received a degree in 1965. If I had met the right Brethren girl, I

would have become a member of the Church of the Brethren!

Thank you for the MESSENGER!

Jack Stauffer
Newton, Kan.

Crossing the line

I have followed the long discussion regarding our church and sexual orientation, and find I must speak up in light of the article by Brother Harold S. Martin in the March issue of the MESSENGER. I feel a line was crossed and actual harm done by some of the article's content.

When I read Mr. Martin's article, my heart fell as he grouped together homosexuals, cocaine traffickers, and child pornographers in one sentence to justify why our church should continue to marginalize members based on their sexual orientation. It was almost as if Mr. Martin forgot there are gay church members who will inevitably be deeply offended and hurt by his words, along

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Church of the Brethren

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

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

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

“OUR EXPERIENCE TOUCHES EVERYTHING—HOW WE THINK, FEEL, UNDERSTAND, AND BELIEVE, HOW WE WEIGH AND INTERPRET SCRIPTURE, AND WHAT LESSONS WE TAKE AWAY FROM DOING SO. ONE MUST BRING A WIDE VIEW AND A FULL HEART FOR SCRIPTURE TO MEAN A THING.”

with many straight members who will cringe with embarrassment.

For him to offer a couple of anecdotes of remorse from dying and imprisoned gay men made me realize he has little experience with gay people and their families. Otherwise, he could not write as he does.

Homosexuality is not only legal, unlike the other two examples cited, but we know, due to the above studies and scholarship, that gay individuals, couples, and their children are every bit as fine and flawed, happy and frus-

trated as heterosexual people. This is fact, not fiction, reality not opinion.

It is not enough to quote scripture. Remember when scripture was used to defend racism and demanded death for adulterers? Our experience touches everything—how we think, feel, understand, and believe, how we weigh and interpret scripture, and what lessons we take away from doing so. One must bring a wide view and a full heart for scripture to mean a thing.

Winter Dellenbach
Palo Alto, Calif.

Jesus deserves better treatment

“Cultural norms and New Testament standards,” by Harold S. Martin in the March 2011 MESSENGER does provide a different point of view. I look askance at his statements.

Those who stand firmly against all homosexual activity as being inadmissible in the church are generally those who accept the message of scripture at face value, i.e., Brethren Revival Fellowship. Following this approach, one must also accept at face value talking serpents, women given pain at childbirth as punishment, adulteresses who should be stoned (while men go free), ownership of slaves, burning of harlots . . . and all the rest of Leviticus. The absurdity becomes apparent. Nor does it stop with the Old Testament. One cannot read scripture, either in the Old Testament or the New, without an open mind and one’s brain in gear.

The 1979 paper “Biblical Inspiration and Authority,” accepted by the Annual Conference of that year, brought clarification in regard to the interpretation of scripture. Perhaps Mr. Martin will remember that he was on the study committee that presented the paper to the delegate body in 1979.

In his MESSENGER article, instead of discussing homosexuality, he attempts to blacken it by associating it with activities that are commonly regarded as sinful. Those who want to discuss the issues are characterized as “activists . . . who have tried to undermine . . .” and who have “called for openness on the issue.” Such statements all tend to have a negative effect upon the beliefs of conservatives and to raise their fears.

Finally, he suggests censorship for the entire denomination by declaring a moratorium on the issue for an extend-

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- MENNONITE STORY IN POLAND (August 9-17)
- VISIT UKRAINE with EDGAR STOESZ (Sept. 19-28)
- A PORTUGUESE PILGRIMAGE (September 20-30)
- EXPERIENCE IRELAND with the LEDERACHS (September 22-October 3)
- ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR GARRY JANZEN (October 14-23)
- FROM NAZARETH to ROME (November 10-22)
- BEHIND the VEIL-EXPERIENCING EGYPT with MEDA (November 14-26)
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2012 TOURS

- AN ANTARCTIC EXPERIENCE (January 2-15)
- JAMAICA – ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY and FRUITS (January 20-29)
- GUATEMALA (February 24-March 4)
- VISIT MEXICO and ITS COPPER CANYON (March 9-18)
- EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 18-31)
- FOLLOWING the STEPS of MOSES (April 16-27)

- ISRAEL/PALESTINE with NELSON KRAYBILL (May 2-18)
- EUROPEAN HERITAGE with PAUL ZEHR (May 3-16)
- ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7-18)
- GLORY of RUSSIA: MOSCOW & ST. PETERSBURG (July 3-13)
- EUROPEAN HERITAGE II with JOHN RUTH (July 10-23)
- MENNONITE STORY in POLAND & UKRAINE (September 18-29)
- MEDA TOUR to ETHIOPIA & TANZANIA (Oct. 12-22)
- VIETNAM and SINGAPORE (November 12-26)

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ed number of years. This drops an iron curtain on dialogue and thinking. This is not acceptable!

For Annual Conference to consider only material that is 1,900 years old for making thoughtful and intelligent decisions on this difficult issue is shortsighted. Has nothing been learned in the past 1,900 years? Jesus of Nazareth deserves better treatment than this.

Marvin Blough
Melba, Idaho

Inspired by the March issue

I moved a few years ago to an assisted living facility. I am currently a member of the Modesto (Calif.) Church of the Brethren. Due to age and health problems, I attend as I am able, so I appreciate how MESSENGER keeps me abreast of Brethren events.

I was inspired by your March issue for its breadth of coverage and timeliness. I identify with those who feel we ought to cease further give-and-take of the sexual orientation issues. My experience is that time does bring more light on these issues, and I would think we ought not be pressured to attempt further clarification.

A question: Do you think we (most members, that is) have determined in our own minds whether or not those who follow homosexual practices and lifestyles feel they have made their choice without undue influence or pressures from the culture of the present age? Is this a free-choice matter? For me this is a fundamental question.

I will be thinking of you especially at Annual Conference. Sorry my writing is almost unintelligible. My unsuccessful efforts to get access to a computer or typewriter have left me to write this the old way.

Joe Dell
Galt, Calif.

Doing as much harm as good

I really appreciated Roy Winter's Reflections column in the March MESSENGER. In so few words, he clearly explains how it is that most aid, however well intended, ends up doing as

much harm as good, and how few aid programs actually manage to help in a way that benefits people long-term: helping people become more independent, rather than create dependency; helping communities to be more sustainable; helping people to help themselves—often said, but so hard to understand how to put into practice. The concrete examples about Haiti that he gives in his article make his points sink in better.

Rita DeCoursey
Leiden, the Netherlands

Grace writ large on every page

Re: "Still waiting"—letter from James F. Myer, April 2011 MESSENGER

Brother James, I wish you could meet my very good friends Sebastian and Jeffery, who were married seven years ago in Ottawa, Canada (where same-sex marriage is legal). I am a former Lutheran pastor who officiated at a

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celebration of their marriage where friends and relatives danced, sang, and drank wine just as our Lord did at Cana years before.

Shortly after this very happy event, Seb developed a case of Crohn's Disease, which is a breakdown of the digestive system, where one is unable to eat the simplest of foods without being subject to extremely painful attacks (and Seb is an excellent gourmet cook!). For the next few years, Seb experienced severe physical and emotional distress until an operation relieved a great deal (but not all) of his excruciating pain. He will have a second operation in June.

During this stressful time, Jeff remained with his beloved Seb, even though he might at any time have decided to abandon him. I witness their profound love for one another whenever I visit them in Ottawa. I believe theirs is a marriage that tran-

scends many of the "straight" marriages in our society. It is a love which comes from God himself. Anyone who says their relationship is sinful ought to go back and read the Bible more carefully and get it right next time.

Brother James, if you are still waiting for the one word in scripture which affirms God's approval of homosexuality, you might do well to hear what Martin Luther said about God's grace in the Bible: "It is writ large on every page." Perhaps the reason you haven't heard it is that you haven't been listening.

Edward Huber
Ambler, Pa.

Thank the Church of the Brethren

I wonder what thoughts were in Dad's mind when he said, "Thank the Church of the Brethren." He said it with such urgency. My father, Lorrel S.

Eikenberry, died on January 31, 2005. He was halfway through his 90th year. One day in his last week he suddenly said with energy, "Thank the Church of the Brethren." I asked him to explain what he wanted me to do. He just repeated twice more with greater insistence, "Thank the Church of the Brethren."

Dad grew up in the Painter Creek Church of the Brethren in southwestern Ohio. Both sets of his grandparents as well as uncles, aunts, and cousins lived on neighboring farms and attended the same congregation. His one-room school was full of Brethren children, and they had a Brethren teacher.

He remembered the adults discussing with sorrow how the church splits of the 1880s had pulled the family apart, some going with the Old Order Brethren and others with the Progressive Brethren. When the U.S.

“THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN WAS CENTRAL TO DAD’S LIFE. I AM NOT SURE WHAT THOUGHTS WERE IN HIS MIND WHEN HE SAID, “THANK THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN,” BUT ON BEHALF OF MY FATHER, THANK YOU, CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN.”

CLASSIFIED ADS

Have you always wanted to work in a bookstore? Brethren Press is looking for volunteers to assist in set-up, operation, and tear-down of the Annual Conference Bookstore in Grand Rapids, Michigan. If you have interest and time to volunteer, contact James Deaton at 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120 or jdeaton@brethren.org.

Consignment sales at Annual Conference. Brethren Press makes space available at Annual Conference for individuals and groups to sell items to Conference attendees on a consignment basis. Consignment space must be reserved by June 1. For information on consignment sales, contact Brethren Press Consignments, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694 or kstocking@brethren.org.

Job Opening: Roanoke, Virginia. Peters Creek Church of the Brethren, in Roanoke VA., is seeking an energetic, enthusiastic individual to encourage and lead our youth in their journey of Christian education. The successful candidate will nurture and educate the young people of the congregation while assisting the pastor on occasion. Education and formal training in the Brethren doctrine is a plus. The position is part-time with a typical work week consisting of 15 to 20 hours without benefits. Candidates should send their resume, including three personal references to: rclark134@aol.com

CoB Pastor's book, *What To Do While You Wait For the World To End*, received Book of the Year Award 2010 by the Christian Small Publishers Association

(CSPA). Written by Noah Martin, D.Min., Johnstown, PA. Endorsed by many CoB pastors and leaders. An excellent and practical interpretation of end-time theology. Order from www.brethrenpress.com (1-800-441-3712), or NoahsArkPubCo@aol.com (814-266-6489). *"Rather than watching for signs of the end, watch for signs of Christ's presence, even now, and join Him in His work."*

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. Christian messages, worship and fellowship galore!! Contact: 814-444-8800, if no answer call 800-462-1592 and ask for John or email jnljaunts@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. Contact the appropriate district executive or call the Ministry office at 800-323-8039.

entered World War II, Dad was drafted. He applied as a conscientious objector. His draft board was going to send him to prison, but a Presbyterian minister came to his defense and attested to the peace position of the Church of the Brethren. While working for the

National Service Board for Religious Objectors, Dad was called to the ministry at the Washington, D.C., City Church of the Brethren. That began a journey that led to Bethany Seminary and over 55 years as an ordained minister. The Church of the Brethren was

central to Dad's life. I am not sure what thoughts were in his mind when he said, "Thank the Church of the Brethren," but on behalf of my father, thank you, Church of the Brethren.

Jim Eikenberry
Stockton, Calif.

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

Antioch, Rocky Mount, Va.:

Eric Anspaugh, Bev Anspaugh, Ruth Booth, Mike Booth

Cedar Lake, Auburn, Ind.:

Susan Hirsch, Earl Hirsch

Chambersburg, Pa.: Jane C. Weaver, Megan E. Rohrer, Rodney L. Walls

Codorus, Dallastown, Pa.:

Madeline Hartman, Ray A. Markey, Sam Innerst, Carly Thoman, Mike Kovacs, Rodney Mummert, Tanya Mummert, Martin Daugherty, Kim Daugherty, Jennifer Mummert, Craig Mummert, Faune Rothermel

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

Inez Long

Greenmount, Harrisonburg, Va.:

Bryce Whetzel

Henry Fork, Rocky Mount, Va.:

Makalia Holloway, Devin Crump, Bethany Fletcher, Linda Rojas, Miguel Gonzalez, Thafia Gonzalez

Keyser, W.Va.: James Dodds,

Gladys Dodds

Manor, Boonsboro, Md.:

Rebecca Isard, Shannon Peters

Marsh Creek, Gettysburg, Pa.:

Linda Paull, Jerry Shaw

Modesto, Calif.: Anna Brown,

Ron Duncanson, Jim Feeney, Carole Greathouse, Gary Lawrence, Sandy Lawrence, Bryan Maderos, Robert Peck, Molly Peck, Zach Roy, Christina Weaver, Rebecca Weaver

Osage, McCune, Kan.:

Braden Lee Buzard, Brenda Crow Egbert, Caleb Chad Egbert, Victoria O'Toole Murphy

Pleasant Hill, Ohio: Daniel

Poole, Kelli Poole

Plumcreek, Shelocta, Pa.:

Dino Caporossi, Jennifer Caporossi, Antonio Caporossi, Benjamin Kimmel, Heather Kimmel

Quakertown, Pa.: James

Madison, Betsy Madison

Rummel, Windber, Pa.:

Mary Jane Hunter, Linda Benning

Spring Branch, Warsaw,

Mo.: Ruth McCarty, Eddie Van Gordon, Bob Leet, Tommie Leet

Wedding Anniversaries

Egbert, Vernon and Barbara, McCune, Kan., 50

Gibble, Marvin and Nancy, Seven Valleys, Pa., 50

Hamilton, Harold and Bessie, Shippensburg, Pa., 55

Huff, Paul and Margaret, McCune, Kan., 70

Keeney, John and Mary, York, Pa., 71

Keltner, Wayne and Margaret, Strafford, Mo., 65

Kirby, Jerry and Janice, McCune, Kan., 50

Ledford, Gary and Betty, Cherokee, Kan., 60

Williams, George and Margaret, Oroville, Wash., 60

Wilson, Marvin and Carolyn, Martinsburg, W.Va., 50

Deaths

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

Bechtelheimer, Retha June Bollinger, 85, Phoenix, Ariz., Feb. 11

Beets, Penney Lynn, 51, Basehor, Kan., Feb. 19

Benedict, Fred W., 81, Union City, Ohio, Feb. 21

Brandt, Lloyd Carlton, 86, La Verne, Calif., March 4

Chaney, Donald Eugene, 62, Tipp City, Ohio, Feb. 16

Cherry, Franklin Roy, 81, Queen Anne, Md., Feb. 19

Clague, William Donald, 90, La Verne, Calif., March 20

Conner, Reuben T., 88, Tiffin, Ohio, March 4

Conrad, Alta Elizabeth, 99, Danville, Ohio, March 5

Crouse, Marguerite L., 84, Lansdale, Pa., Jan. 28

Daggett, Pauline Louise Shively, 88, North Manchester, Ind., Feb. 14

Denlinger, Mayno Rebecca Zumbrun, 99, Trotwood, Ohio, Feb. 16

Dodson, Hattie Mize, 88, Bassett, Va., Jan. 28

Ebersole, Mark C., 89, Lancaster, Pa., Feb. 12

Eby, Kermit Ray, Jr., 79, Mishawaka, Ind., Oct. 18

Fair, Ruth B., 86, New Oxford, Pa., Dec. 24

Fike, Annice E., 92, Easton, Md., Jan. 26

Frantz, Merlin L., 89, McPherson, Kan., March 7

Garber, Hazel Gardner North, 86, Bridgewater, Va., Feb. 25

Gordon, Joyce Eileen, 85, Elkhart, Ind., Jan. 22

Group, Russell, 94, Franklin Grove, Ill., Nov. 15

Hill, Hazel Doreen, 82, New Windsor, Md., March 8

Hisey, Lois, 60, Staunton, Va., Nov. 5

Holderreed, Louise Virginia Garber, 94, Twin Falls, Idaho, March 14

Hollerbush, Mary R., 93, New Oxford, Pa., Feb. 18

Holtry, Mary Alice, 88, Shippensburg, Pa., Feb. 25

Hoover, Minnie Jane, 82, Martinsburg, Pa., March 5

Hottle, Margaret, 100, Somerset, Pa., Jan. 23

Howell, Carol J., 46, Eaton, Ohio, March 5

Hughes, Vivian Edwards, 76, Brunswick, Md., Dec. 19

Ikenberry, Beatrice Flora, 99, Daleville, Va., Nov. 2

Irlle, Elizabeth Mae, 76,

Warrensburg, Mo., March 4

Iseminger, Linda Lu, 70, Keedysville, Md., Nov. 24

Karns, Ethel R., 95, New Oxford, Pa., Jan. 27

Kimmel, Myers P., 91, Tyrone, Pa., March 19

Kinnaman, Kathy Jean Wisner, 55, Frederick, Md., March 12

Klingler, Virginia O., 87, Lima, Ohio, March 5

Lackey, Myra Lyn, 78, Warsaw, Ind., March 11

Latham, June I., 94, Wadsworth, Ohio, Feb. 25

Maurer, Ruth Ann, 84, Rittman, Ohio, March 5

McConnell, Steven R., 90, Dixon, Ill., March 1

Miller, Ralph Wampler, 95, Harrisonburg, Va., Feb. 2

Montel, Enid Arleen, 89, Vandalia, Ohio, Feb. 9

Ness, Esther M., 81, Seven Valleys, Pa., May 6, 2010

Paige, Frances K., 85, Dallastown, Pa., April 13, 2010

Robertson, Kiersten Alexandra, 17, Richland, Pa., March 4

Sanger, Velma Sard, 89, Easton, Md., March 11

Schmucker, Henry F., 82, Elkhart, Ind., Aug. 3

Schuster, Donna Mae, 76, Mountain Grove, Mo., Feb. 22

Smith, Eleanor Mae Overly, 87, Uniontown, Pa., Feb. 10

Stair, Kenneth L., 90, New Oxford, Pa., Dec. 25

Sullivan, Anna Louise Thompson, 98, Knoxville, Md., March 2

Thompson, Lois C., 101, North Manchester, Ind., March 16

Walter, Helen Kestner, 83, Fishersville, Va., March 14

Weaver, William David, 83, Craigsville, Va., Feb. 25

Yocum, Dorothy, 93, Franklin Grove, Ill., Sept. 25

Yoder, Gladys B., 91, New Paris, Ind., Feb. 22

Zullinger, Warren V., Jr., 92, Newburg, Pa., March 13

Ordinations

Dunham, Doris Hopwood, Pac. S.W. Dist. (Bakersfield, Calif.), Sept. 12

Miller, Timothy J., Mid. Pa. Dist. (Rockhill, Rockhill Furnace, Pa.), Feb. 6

Wise, Michael, Atl. N.E. Dist. (New Beginnings Christian Fellowship, Lititz, Pa.), March 13

Licensings

Hubble, Aaron, Mich. Dist. (New Life Christian Fellowship, Mount Pleasant, Mich.), Feb. 6

Morgan, Adam, Mid. Pa. Dist. (Sugar Run, Mount Union, Pa.), March 6

Myers, Janet, Atl. N.E. Dist. (West Green Tree, Elizabethtown, Pa.), Jan. 30

Owens, David K., S/C Ind. Dist. (Grandview, Pendleton, Ind.), Nov. 21

Smith, Michael V., S/C Ind. Dist. (Northview, Indianapolis, Ind.), Dec. 12

Whitsel, Jonathan, Mid. Pa. Dist. (Beech Run, Mapleton Depot, Pa.), Feb. 20

Placements

Bishop, Granville Lee, from pastor, Hiwasse, Va., to pastor, Parkway, Meadows of Dan, Va., March 16

Flora-Swick, Jane Ellen, pastor, Lone Star, Lawrence, Kan., Feb. 1

Link, Terry, chaplain, Pleasant Hill Village, Girard, Ill., Jan. 16

Robbins, Edward T., from pastor, Wolgamuth, Dillsburg, Pa., to chaplain, Claremont Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, Carlisle, Pa., Feb. 1

They became real people

They used to worry about being taken out on the way to school. Friends and relatives had been killed—shot, beaten, or stabbed—sometimes in their presence. Some of them had brothers or uncles in prison. Some of them were in gangs. Many of them wondered just how much time they had left. None of them worried much about their education.



RANDY MILLER
Interim MESSENGER Editor

Then Erin Gruwell came to Wilson High School in Long Beach, Calif., to teach them freshman English. Fresh out of college—with a spanking new teaching credential, a pearl necklace, and a desire to “make a difference in the lives of the disadvantaged” following the civil unrest that gripped Los Angeles in the early 1990s—Erin Gruwell waded into a world that would change her life forever. But, as the years would reveal, it wasn’t just her life that would change.

If you’ve seen the movie *Freedom Writers*, starring Hilary Swank, you know the rest of the story. Erin Gruwell walked into a classroom with Asians, Latinos, African-Americans, and a few random white kids, clustered in segregated clumps. The hostility she encountered initially caused her to doubt herself and her mission. But she dug deep, found her resolve, and forged ahead. Eventually, she discovered ways to dissolve, bit by bit, the calcified walls that ignorance, rac-

footsteps by going into education, although her students up the coast in San Luis Obispo—kindergartners—are a few years younger than Erin’s had been. A few of the Freedom Writers had accompanied Erin to La Verne that day, and sat next to her at a long table in the campus center, signing copies of *The Freedom Writers Diary*. It was fun to watch them kid one another. They were from a variety of races and backgrounds, and yet they treated one another as family. In a very real sense they were. They had come through a lot together, in high school and in the years since.

Thanks in part to an unusually sympathetic superintendent of schools, Erin Gruwell was able to spend four consecutive years with the same 150 high school students she started out with at Wilson High. In four years, these people bonded in ways that many biological families never will. Color barriers dissolved. They learned to know each other not as Asians, Latinos, African-Americans, and whites, but as Maria, Calvin, and Erin. They became real people to one another.

Once, on a field trip to Washington, D.C., the Freedom Writers visited the famous presidential monuments. One evening, on a whim, they joined hands—all 150 of them—and began to snake across an intersection, tying up traffic. An irate driver cried out, “What do you think you’re doing?” One of them called back: “We’re changing the world!”

These young people—who at one time wouldn’t have thought twice about killing each other—had become a family because a suburban school teacher fresh out of college had

THESE YOUNG PEOPLE—WHO AT ONE TIME WOULDN’T HAVE THOUGHT TWICE ABOUT KILLING EACH OTHER—HAD BECOME A FAMILY BECAUSE A SUBURBAN SCHOOL TEACHER FRESH OUT OF COLLEGE HAD THE AUDACITY TO BELIEVE IN THEM.

ism, and intolerance had built. Over time, her students—once bitter rivals—became like family. They overcame their intolerance. They learned to see one another as brothers and sisters. They learned that others had experienced the same kind of oppression and intolerance that they had felt in their own urban neighborhoods.

Erin Gruwell played field hockey for Bonita High School in La Verne, Calif. So when I met her a few weeks ago following a speech she gave at the University of La Verne, I told her that my daughter had followed in her footsteps. Kayla had also played field hockey for Bonita. “Oh my gosh!” Erin said, “I got such bruises on my shins!” Kayla also followed in her

the audacity to believe in them. Because of that, in four years, they learned to care for one another with the kind of love and compassion that Jesus was talking about.

Brethren, we’ve been together for 300 years, and we too have been through quite a lot, especially this past year, with the Special Response Process. Call me crazy, but I’m thinking that if these students from the bowels of Los Angeles can find a way to reach across razor wire and years of ethnic hatred, we might be able to find a way to see the common humanity behind our Dunker beards, dowdy clothes, and flamboyant scarves.

Who knows, come July, we might even find ourselves, hand-in-hand, tying up traffic in Grand Rapids. **W**

COMING IN JUNE: Profile of Annual Conference moderator Robert Alley, music wars, more on the Special Response Process and the New Testament Bible study series, media review, reflections, letters, and more.



“Hearing Jimmy Carter teach Sunday school was an inspiring intersection of my Brethren faith and Manchester education. He challenged us to reach out to others, even those whose lives are far removed from our own. His advice to “Keep working for peace” is an important call to action – whether it comes from a pastor, professor or former president.

–Katy McFadden '11, Manchester College psychology major (far left, next to former President Carter)

Manchester College is committed to being a community of faith and learning where students know that when they graduate they will be prepared to start rewarding careers and assume responsible roles of leadership in society. International study and community service are long-standing traditions at Manchester because students gain experiences that offer valuable new perspectives about themselves and other cultures and countries.

Manchester students are special because they are encouraged to improve themselves – and the world in which they live.



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