

Church of the Brethren

MESSENGER

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Moving toward **just peace**

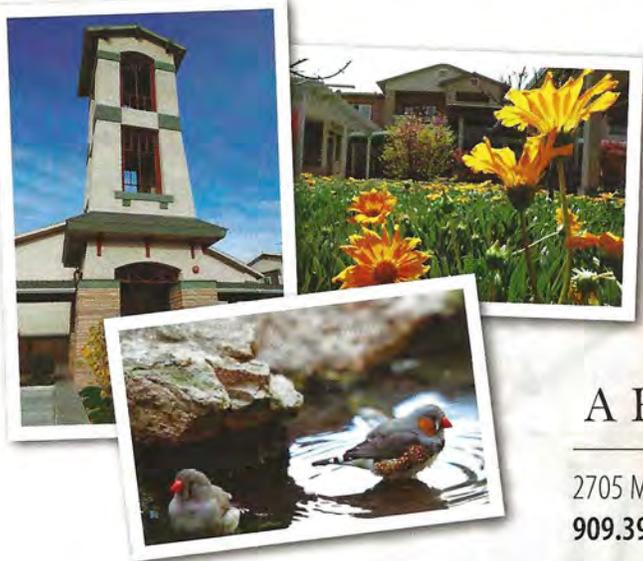
Brethren look forward at the conclusion
of the Decade to Overcome Violence

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Church
of the
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ONTHECOVER

The Decade to Overcome Violence has ended, but the cause remains, and those behind it are more committed than ever to addressing the root causes of violence in the world.



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8 Moving toward “just peace”

The International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, held May 18-24 in Kingston, Jamaica, culminated with a “final message,” which stated: “We are moving the doctrine of just war towards a commitment to Just Peace.” MESSENGER has devoted an extended section to this important event, including an interview with Bethany Theological Seminary president Ruthann Knechel Johansen, who was a delegate at the convocation, and Bethany faculty member Scott Holland, who served on the writing committee for the study document on just peace.

14 Making peace in the music war

Annual Conference choir director Alan Gumm notes that even though we claim to be a peace church, our worship services often reveal a tension between traditional vs. contemporary music, choral vs. folk, etc. The professor of music education at Central Michigan University says we could enrich our worship immensely by embracing the wide range of musical tastes and talents in our churches that often go overlooked or shoved aside.

18 Matters of conscience

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, his fifth installment, Snyder takes a look at how our conscience—shaped by our background and Christian grounding—guides us as individuals, and how our collective conscience informs our course as followers of Jesus, and particularly as Brethren.

In the midst of competing emotions after the killing of Osama bin Laden in May, one of the popular Facebook posts was a peace-minded quotation from Martin Luther King Jr. But the blogosphere went into overdrive when it was discovered that part of the quote (the part that seemed especially pertinent) didn't come from King at all.

As it turned out, the mistake was neither sinister nor ignorant. The cause: lack of attention to punctuation and the speed of the Internet. A woman posted her personal feeling about the reaction she was seeing to bin Laden's death, and added a clearly identified quote from King. But an eager friend forwarded the post without the quotation marks, and suddenly things were out of control.



WENDY McFADDEN
Publisher

King's words also made the news last fall when a new rug in the Oval Office included this famous quotation: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." While King spoke these words many times, people pointed out that he was actually echoing the words of Unitarian minister and abolitionist Theodore Parker. Who, according to MLK scholar Clayborne Carson, also uttered these words: a government of all the people, by all the people, for all the people—words made famous 13 years later in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. That quotation is also on the new rug in the Oval Office.

The Internet makes it easier than ever to spread information, but it also makes it easier to check the facts. Did Nelson Mandela say those words about "our deepest fear," or was it the not-quite-as-famous Marianne Williamson? Did Kurt Vonnegut deliver that lively commencement address about sunscreen, or was it Chicago columnist Mary Schmich? Does "God helps those who help themselves" appear in the Bible, or did it come from Ben Franklin?

Speaking of the Bible, everybody knows that Eve took a bite of an apple, cleanliness is next to godliness, there were three kings and they rode on camels, and money is the root of all evil.

And now, perhaps, we can all agree that punctuation does matter. Furthermore, if I were Theodore Parker, I'd like a little more credit.

Wendy McFadden

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Residents, staff, and board members of Peter Becker Community pose for a commemorative photo to celebrate their 40th anniversary.

Peter Becker Community celebrates 40th anniversary

From its modest opening in 1971, Peter Becker Community has grown over the last 40 years into the outstanding continuing care retirement community that it is today. An array of activities and events marked the 40th anniversary celebration, which was held from May 19-22.

The celebratory week began with the Benevolent Fund Dinner on Thursday, May 19. This event

invited friends and benefactors to help the facility along the journey toward meeting this year's goal of raising over \$137,000 for the Benevolent Fund. Generous donations brought the amount raised to \$112,000 toward that goal.

The activities on May 20 focused on thanking the staff at the community for the service they provide. Events included a 1970s dress-up contest, a picnic lunch,

and informal Hula-Hoop and trivia challenges. On Saturday, May 21, several picnics were held to honor the residents, their families, and guests. The picnics were followed by a free concert.

A culminating event on Sunday was held in the chapel. Its focus was "Our Journey of Faith." The anniversary worship service had special guests, including each of the facility's three CEOs: Ronn



Walnut Grove packs lunches for shut-ins

The Walnut Grove Church of the Brethren family (Damascus, Va.) works hard to pack lunches for local shut-ins. Pictured are, left to right, Martha Roudebush, Pastor Pete Roudebush, Mary Forrester, and Carl McMurray. In the background are Beth Richardson and Linda McMurray.

Moyer (1971-1993), Rod Mason (1993-2005), and Carol Berster (2006 to present). Ronn Moyer commented on the beginnings of the community. "There are only a few of us left who began this journey. We are proud of all it has become."

Rod Mason talked about the impact of service. "The biggest challenges that happen to you when you serve an organization like this one are those that happen in your heart." Carol Berster honored the past, and then looked to the future, noting the current expansion project, and offered thanks. "Sincere appreciation must be given to the incredibly caring people who have served as volunteers, caregivers, employees, and leaders over the years. Working together, we are able to be "The Best Place to Live" and "The Best Place to Work." Tours were given before and after the service, offering a firsthand glimpse of what residents experience daily.

To meet the needs of a growing older population, Peter Becker Community's Health Care Center is currently being renovated and expanded, with completion anticipated in mid-2011.



Support staff networking at Elizabethtown

On April 12, the Atlantic Northeast District offered a workshop for church secretaries and administrative assistants. The event was held at Elizabethtown College (Pa.) and provided opportunities for learning, sharing, and networking. Following a welcome from district executive Craig Smith, the workshop was led by the Atlantic Northeast District support staff: Linda Williams, Jan Reed, and Wanda Rohde. The 21 attending from the district congregations included: Bonnie Hookey (Akron), Robin Rude and Mary Stouch (Coventry), Jinny Petrosky (East Fairview), Judy Powell and Mary Smith (Elizabethtown), Amy Smith (Hempfield), Mallory Brinser (Hershey Spring Creek), Diane Lamborn (Lititz), Charlene Keeney and Jean Wise (Little Swatara), Diane Lamborn (Lititz), Joann Martin (Middle Creek), Phyllis Ernst and Regina Felix (Mohrsville), Jackie Sands (Mountville), Fausto Carraso and Aida Lymaris Sanchez (Nuevo Amanecer), Gail Wagner (Palmyra), Becky Elliott (Parker Ford), Paula Jones (West Green Tree), and Barbie Kuhns (Wyomissing).

REMEMBERED

Phyllis Louise Miller, 79, died June 6 at her home in Richmond, Ind. She was the wife of Donald E. Miller, who was general secretary of the Church of the Brethren from Sept. 1986 until he retired in December 1996, and is professor emeritus at Bethany Theological Seminary. Born Oct. 4, 1931, in Dayton, Ohio, to J. Paul and Verda Hershberger Gibbel, she grew up in Hollansburg, Ohio, and attended Manchester College. She taught home economics in public schools in Illinois and Ohio. After she and her husband were married on Aug. 19, 1956, they moved to Chicago where

she taught in elementary schools. In 1969 she helped develop and direct a nursery school program related to York Center Church of the Brethren in Lombard, Ill. In 1986 she and her husband moved to Elgin, Ill., and she became deeply engaged in the ministries of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren.

She retired to Richmond, Ind., in 1997, where she was an active member of Richmond Church of the Brethren. Over the years she taught Sunday school and helped coordinate Christian education in congregations. She was one of the initiators of the

Global Women's Project and is regarded as an advocate of women's leadership in the ecumenical church. Survivors include her husband, daughter Lisa Kathleen Miller (Cyrille Arnould) of Luxembourg, sons Bryan D. Miller of Chicago and Bruce D. Miller (Michelle Ellsworth) of Boulder, Colo., and grandchildren. The funeral was held at Richmond Church of the Brethren on June 12. Memorial contributions are received to the Global Women's Project and Richmond Church of the Brethren. Condolences may be sent to the family at www.doanmillsfuneralhome.com.

What's next for peacemaking?

The World Council of Churches recently marked the conclusion of the Decade to Overcome Violence, an initiative in which the Church of the Brethren was prominently involved. Now that the decade is over, what comes next? What does Christian peacemaking look like today?

I would propose three essential aspects of an answer to this question, and offer a few examples.



BOB GROSS

Jesus' call to peacemaking is grounded in the commandment to love. We do not all understand the Bible in the same way, but this point is hard to miss. Jesus was asked which commandment is more important than all other commandments. He gave a direct answer. The answer was love. We are to love God with all that we have, and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

Jesus also made it clear that loving our neighbors means *all* neighbors, including those who wrong us. In Matthew 5 and Luke 6, the command to love our enemies is emphasized, amplified, and illustrated with examples. Loving enemies is one of the essential marks of Jesus' followers.

Faithful, effective peacemaking needs deep roots.

Loving your enemies is not easy; neither is confronting your friends. Jesus did both, and we are called to follow in this path of radical love. When the way is hard, our faith

opposing all forms of violence, including physical, social, and economic, and also the yes of working with individuals and communities near and far to build healthy communities in a world at peace.

To stir our hearts and minds, here are some examples of powerful peacemaking—ways people are turning back violence and building peace.

Withdraw support from systems of violence. Let us take the logs out of our own eyes first. We can reduce our participation in economic systems, and in specific companies, which violate people and destroy the environment. While we will always be "in the world," we can free ourselves from complicity in violence in real and significant ways, if we choose to do so. By limiting our wants, simplifying our needs, and recognizing enough, we reduce our participation in violence.

Work where you live. The greatest peacemaking opportunity for most of us is right where we live, work, or go to school. Violence affects us all, and we all can do something to stop it. On Earth Peace is working with local churches and community groups to confront racism and economic violence in Rockford, Ill.; youth violence and drugs in Harrisburg, Pa.; militarism in Philadelphia; and ethnic prejudice in South Africa. These peacemaking ministries change the world by changing local communities.

Cross boundaries. Through the Parents Circle/Family Forum, Palestinians and Israelis who have lost loved ones to violence have come together to work for peace in Israel and Palestine. Military families and pacifists work together here in the US to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. What bound-

LOVING YOUR ENEMIES IS NOT EASY; NEITHER IS CONFRONTING YOUR FRIENDS. JESUS DID BOTH, AND WE ARE CALLED TO FOLLOW IN THIS PATH OF RADICAL LOVE.

and practice need to be deep enough to hold firm. A vital relationship with God sustains us in these hard times, and a solid community of support and mutual discernment is essential. Without these nourishing, stabilizing roots, we will not be able to sustain a peace witness which involves significant sacrifice or public disapproval.

It's about stopping violence and building peace. The World Council had it right: we *must* overcome violence. While it was a decade-long emphasis for the Council, for Christians it is our life-long work. Violence is contrary to the will of God. Organized violence defies the will of God. Organized violence on a global scale is idolatry.

My colleagues and I at On Earth Peace have committed ourselves to a mission of eliminating violence and building a just and peaceful world. This requires both the no of

aries separate you from others who could be your partners in peacemaking? How will you cross those boundaries?

Take a risk. Write a letter to the local newspaper, stating what you really believe, even if your neighbors won't like it. Join a Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation. Stop paying taxes for war. Say something to intervene when your coworkers make racist comments. Organize a public witness as part of the International Day of Prayer for Peace. Pray, listen, and respond.

Let us work together to turn back violence. Romans 12:21 shows us the way: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." 

Bob Gross is executive director of On Earth Peace, the peace and reconciliation agency of the Church of the Brethren. He and his wife live in community with others near North Manchester, Ind.



The representatives of the Historic Peace Churches—Church of the Brethren, Mennonites, and Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)—held a couple of informal evening gatherings during the IEPC to consult with each other.

Moving toward just peace

story and photos by Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

A major initiative of the ecumenical movement and the World Council of Churches, the Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010) has ended with a new Christian emphasis on “just peace.” The International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Kingston, Jamaica, on May 18-24 was the culminating event of the decade.

Featuring daily worship, panels of speakers, Bible studies, workshops, and seminar sessions, the convocation brought together nearly 1,000 people from churches around the world. It focused on a background study document, “An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace.” On the writing committee for that document was Scott Holland, professor of theology and culture and director of peace studies at Bethany Theological Seminary. Bethany president Ruthann Knechel

Johansen served as the Church of the Brethren delegate to the convocation.

The Brethren group that attended also included Church of the Brethren general secretary Stan Noffsinger; Jordan Blevins, peace witness advocacy officer; Robert C. Johansen, director of doctoral studies at the Kroc Institute of International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame; Bradley J. Yoder, professor of sociology and social work at Manchester College in N. Manchester, Ind.; Pamela Brubaker, professor emeritus at California Lutheran University; and news director Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford. In addition, a theology student from Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria (EYN—the

More resources on the IEPC

The background document from the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, “An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace” is available at www.overcomingviolence.org along with the final message from the convocation, webcasts from plenary sessions and worship services, and more resources. Documents are available in the four languages of the WCC: English, Spanish, French, and German. A Haitian Creole translation of the final message is online at www.brethren.org.

Links to all the Newline reports from the peace convocation and a photo album are at www.brethren.org/news.

Peace witness staff Jordan Blevins also blogged from the convocation at <http://blog.brethren.org>.





Adam Dubrowa FEMA

When disaster strikes... Brethren respond

The 2011 spring storm season was one of the most destructive in recent memory. Violent tornadoes and uncontrollable floods disrupted thousands of lives across the country. Families lost everything. Children were frightened and confused. In the aftermath of disaster, hope is restored to disaster survivors as Brethren Disaster Ministries volunteers repair and rebuild homes. Young children feel safe and comforted by Children's Disaster Services caregivers.

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A variety of garbs and robes worn for worship displayed the diversity of the meeting, which included people from some 100 countries and many different Christian traditions.



Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) was part of a seminary course that took place concurrently with the convocation.

Highlights included the presence of Jamaican Prime Minister Bruce Golding at the opening plenary—a sign of the importance of this gathering for the Christian community in Jamaica; the keynote address by Paul Oestreicher, an Anglican leader from New Zealand with dual membership in the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers); and lively panel discussions on the four themes: “Peace in the Community,” “Peace with the Earth,” “Peace in the Marketplace,” and “Peace Among the Peoples.”

It was a celebration of 10 years of peace work, with upbeat moments such as the theme song, “Glory to God and Peace on Earth,” composed by Jamaican musician Grub Cooper, and an open-air concert in a Kingston park with some of the country’s world-renowned bands and singers.

But the gathering also mourned the continuing violence in the world, and used the convocation to renew commitment to a work that remains incomplete.

During opening worship, while a litany of lament was read, a dancer lifted up a piece of cloth from a basin of water and wrung it out high above her head—the water running like tears down her face and body. Readers reminded the congregation that the people of the earth still suffer from violence, even after a decade of churches working together to overcome it: “We weep for all those who simply disappear in the world. . . . All victims of the illegal drug trade. . . . Those held in detention, those on perilous journeys. . . . All those who are dying as a consequence of climate chaos. . . . Those who have been injured in body and mind in wars the world over. . . . Those who have been tortured or killed because of their faith. . . . We remember all those who through their faith become peacemakers in our broken world.”

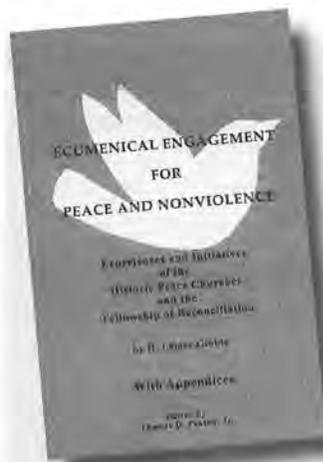
Panelists highlighted the many different types of violence that inflict the world today. Among them was Martin Luther King III, director of the King Center for Nonviolent Social Change, on a panel on “Peace in the Community” that also included among others Asha Kowtal from India, a Dalit (untouchable) activist; Palestinian Christian Muna Mushahwar; and Deborah Weissman from the

The group of young adult “stewards” who served as onsite staff for the peace convocation, also performed several dramatic interpretations to introduce the participants to the themes on particular days.

International Council of Christian and Jews and the Israeli peace movement.

On the day given to discussion of the environment, Tafue Lusama from the south Pacific island nation of Tuvalu, told how his people are threatened by rising sea levels. Adrian Shaw invited the world’s Christians to join the Church of Scotland in becoming “eco-congregations.”

A hard-hitting panel on economic violence included Bishop Valentine Mokiwa of Tanzania, president of the All Africa Conference of Churches, whose church has been monitoring effects of the mining industry. Those corporations aim “to make 100 percent profit” at the expense of the Tanzanian people, he said. Jamaican talk show host



A detailed account of how the Historic Peace Churches and Fellowship of Reconciliation worked within the World Council of Churches to advocate the centrality of the peace witness to the Christian faith is the topic of a book by H. Lamar Gibble, *Ecumenical Engagement for Peace and Nonviolence: Experiences and Initiatives of the Historic Peace Churches and the Fellowship of Reconciliation*

(2006, HPC/FOR Consultative Committee and the Church of the Brethren Global Mission Partnerships). The book features a historical review starting with colonial Pennsylvania, where associations between peace churches were established, through the Civil War, the two world wars, the formative years of the WCC, the Civil Rights Movement, and the opening of the 21st century. Included is an essay by Donald E. Miller on the origins of the Decade to Overcome Violence.



Brethren delegate Ruthann Knechel Johansen (center), president of Bethany Theological Seminary, listens intently to a conversation partner during small group discussion at the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation.

Garnett Roper, who also is president of Jamaica Theological Seminary, facilitated that panel. "Where labor and capital meet, that is increasingly a blunt instrument," Roper said. "We are concerned that human dignity . . . become a measure of whether the market really works."

The panel on "Peace Among the Peoples" was moderated by Kjell Magne Bondevik, former prime minister of Norway and president of the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights. He pressed for discussion of difficult

ethical and political issues that arise when Christians undertake peacemaking, such as national security and the concept of a "responsibility to protect" vulnerable people. However, the day's panelists—who included Lisa Schirch, professor of peace building at Eastern Mennonite University—seemed skeptical of such political goals.

Jesus did not talk about security, Schirch pointed out, adding that the language of the church is much more about justice and peace than security. When governments talk about a need for national security, the best the church can do is talk about the safety of the people, she recommended. "God gives us a security strategy when he tells us to love our enemies and do good to those who hurt you."

Countries like the United States have a "fantasy about fire power," she added. "That fantasy ends in a nightmare that is the suffering of civilians on the ground."

Schirch was one of the strongest speakers to touch on a



Invited to be faithful to the gospel

On the last day of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, after closing worship was over, the meeting tent was emptying, and technicians were taking down equipment, Ruthann Knechel Johansen and Scott Holland sat down to talk about their feelings at that moment. Johansen, president of Bethany Theological Seminary, was the Brethren delegate. Bethany faculty member Scott Holland served on the writing committee for the study document on just peace. The interview quickly turned into a conversation about the meaning of the event for the peace churches and the Brethren. —Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

Question: How are you feeling about the convocation, now that it's over?

Johansen: The convocation has been exciting in many ways, because of the diversity and yet the sense of unity that is so obvious here. At home we often don't see and value this combination. The diversity here is palpable, and yet there is this sense of common commitment to Christ and the gospel of peace that inspires. We heard speeches translated from Spanish, French, German, Portuguese. In my Bible study group I read texts with a New Zealander,

Jamaicans, a German, an Indonesian, a Norwegian, with women and with men.

Holland: The invitation to this journey of just peace has captured hearts and minds. I have a sense that people are moving this Kingston experience into the church of the future. This is a new paradigm.

Q: Explain this new paradigm.

Holland: Change doesn't come by accumulation of facts but by a new way of seeing, a new model of understanding that develops. What we have been seeing in the ecumenical movement is a paradigm shift in churches away from just war to just peace. Just war had been a standard theological assumption of tragic necessity. The shift is to a new longing to seek cultures of peace. The documents for this meeting are grounded in the assumption that we are in a paradigm shift ecumenically. In the writing committee there was consensus about this. It was amazing, as I talked with others on the writing committee from just war traditions that there was a great deal of willingness to affirm that war is obsolete. This isn't something World Council of Churches theologians imposed on churches. It is something

organic and deeply spiritual that has emerged from the grassroots.

Johansen: Part of this paradigm shift occurs as we connect with a global faith body. At the same time, a different movement is going on in the US Church of the Brethren—one that mirrors secular culture expressing a more nationalistic, patriotic, ideological attitude toward religion. Here in Kingston these two directions crossed. We ought to name that this is a profound educational moment for us as human beings and for the church.

Q: What does this convocation mean for the Church of the Brethren?

Holland: It is an occasion to talk about just peace and peacebuilding. Some in the Church of the Brethren have felt the peace witness had become stale, and they became disinterested. In the broader culture we are seeing a kind of "military metaphysics," and it is tempting to yield to those political and philosophical assumptions.

Johansen: There are wonderful opportunities for Bethany Seminary to take up the experience of this gathering and the just peace documents. Scott

topic that seemed to divide participants: the idea of international policing, and the related concept of a “responsibility to protect” and how it may be put into practice by coalitions like the United Nations or NATO. At times during the convocation, the case of Libya came up. Some voices expressed approval of military intervention there, while others expressed doubt about the ultimate effects of any military intervention on vulnerable people like women and children—even when the stated motivation is humanitarian.

Pressed on the question of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, another panelist, Patricia Lewis, deputy director and scientist-in-residence at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, pushed the argument further:



“The survival of our planet demands nothing less than the abolition of war,” Oestreicher said. Quoting Jesus’ words, “Love one another as I have loved you,” he asked the assembled Christians some

Scott Holland gives a presentation during one of the workshops at the IEPC. Holland is a faculty member at Bethany Theological Seminary, and served on the writing committee for the background study document for the IEPC, “An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace.”

will be teaching a course in the fall around just peace themes. But I don’t see it limited to Bethany. Several of us have called other seminaries, colleges, all schools to teach peace and peacemaking in their curriculums.

Holland: This is a fresh document, and our Brethren participation could develop renewed peace convictions around it. There are so many ways that congregations can use it and connect with their communities since it is a broad international, ecumenical call to reimagine peace and justice in a violent world.

Johansen: Our church has been lamenting its small size and declining membership. Paradoxically, here it is the Historic Peace Churches that are invited to reclaim or embrace something that is our heritage, and apply it in fresh and living ways.

Holland: Previously the Historic Peace Churches were somewhat at the margins of the ecumenical movement.

Johansen: A movement away from the margins, however, to the center of influence and power can be dangerous. There is a creative space at the margins for prophetic witness.

Holland: During the Decade to Overcome Violence, the peace churches have been centrally involved with ecumenical partners. But in the ecumenical movement we are in a different space than one of the mainline churches.

Johansen: I would like us to remain the leaven in the loaf, leading from the margins.

Holland: Does God come to us most often at the center of history or at the margins? I think we’d answer at the margins.

Q: Does this ecumenical development affect the identity of the Historic Peace Churches?

Holland: The phrase “Historic Peace Churches” is a description of our tradition and identifies an important heritage and history. At Bethany Seminary we want to foster and form living peace churches. We’re delighted that our ecumenical partners are beginning to name peace as central to the gospel.

Johansen: It is an invitation for us to be what we ought to be, to be faithful to the gospel.

Holland: I want to note the really good spiritual energy at this meeting, and how inviting it feels. The energy is so

life-giving. It’s my hope this energy can move us forward in really productive ways.

Johansen: That is an important point, because there is a tendency to focus on documents. It is not documents alone that lead us to courageous faithfulness. Our focus should instead be on the spiritual, intellectual, emotional energy that faithfulness calls forth.

Holland: At this meeting I’ve been staying up late and getting up early, but I’m not worn out because of the spiritual and intellectual energy here.

Johansen: That energy comes from welcoming and embracing genuine diversity, respect for diverse points of view, and confronting difficult questions about the meaning of scripture in this time.

Holland: We have been so preoccupied in the Church of the Brethren with the troubles and conflicts, that we don’t open ourselves to this energy, which is a gift of the Spirit.

Johansen: And the life-giving value of difficult questions. At this convocation there was not a shirking of the difficult questions. Sometimes at home we’re less willing to see those as divine gifts.



Members of the Brethren delegation met the American ambassador to Jamaica and her husband. (From left) Bethany Seminary president Ruthann Knechel Johansen, Ambassador Pamela Bridgewater, Church of the Brethren general secretary Stan Noffsinger, and Rev. A. Russell Awkard.

hard questions: "Do we want to hear him [Jesus]? Our record suggests that we do not. Most of our theologians, pastors, and assemblies, Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant, have bowed down ever since the time of the Emperor Constantine . . . to empire and nation, rather than to the single new humanity into which we are born."

Listing examples of how the church has blessed violence, from the blessing of German soldiers in World War I

to the blessing of the first use of a nuclear weapon over Hiroshima, he condemned the way the church has allowed itself to be used by political and military powers. And he issued a stern warning that the church, in so doing, is betraying Christ.

"Unless we change," he warned, "unless the church moves to the margins and becomes the alternative society that unconditionally says no to war . . . until we throw this justification of war, this 'just war' theology, into the dustbin of history, we will have thrown away the one unique ethical contribution that the teaching of Jesus could make both to the survival of humanity and to the triumph of compassion.

"Yes to life means no to war."

The last day of the convocation was dedicated to the creation of a "final message"—not considered an official statement of the sponsoring body, the World Council of Churches, but intended to represent a sense of the meeting. The short, three-and-a-half page document was informally adopted by means of applause. A first draft presented earlier that morning was revised by the writing committee, after nearly 75 people lined up at the microphones to give feedback and suggestions for changes.

The final message made strong statements signaling a shift toward a "just peace" stance in the ecumenical movement. "Member churches of the World Council of Churches and other Christians are united, as never before, in seeking the means to address violence and to reject war in favor of



Decade results in full inclusion

One result of the Decade to Overcome Violence has been the full inclusion of the Historic Peace Churches in the ecumenical family of the World Council of Churches (WCC), asserts Fernando Enns. Interviewed during the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, Enns reviewed the role of the Brethren, Mennonites, and Quakers in the Decade,

and commented on what he sees as a major shift in attitude toward the gospel of peace by many other churches.

Enns held a lot of responsibility at the convocation. A delegate from the Mennonite Church in Germany, he is a member of the WCC Central Committee, moderated the convocation planning committee, and was a consultant to the "message committee" that wove the convocation experience into a final message. He teaches theology and ethics at the University of Hamburg, with a special focus on peace theology.

This decade has made it obvious how needed the Historic Peace Churches are in the WCC—

especially in the areas of theology and spirituality, Enns said. In particular, he has seen the peace churches being a connecting point, aiding other churches to come together on a theological level and facilitating discernment.

Peace churches also have been putting concepts of peacemaking to work in local settings. He pointed to the example of Mennonites who have started a peace center in Berlin. On national levels, for example in the US and in Indonesia, he has seen peace churches able to be part of larger ecumenical involvements, "to call the other churches to become messengers of reconciliation." On the international level, the continental gatherings of the Historic Peace Churches in Europe, Africa, Asia, North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean have answered a call from the WCC to bring a strong contribution to the discussions of the decade.



Mennonite ecumenical leader Fernando Enns (at center) was one of the worship leaders for the closing worship service of the IEPC.

'Just Peace,'" the message read, adding in a later paragraph, "We are moving beyond the doctrine of just war towards a commitment to Just Peace."

"We are unified in our aspiration that war should become illegal," the message asserted.

With regard to nuclear weapons it said, "We advocate total nuclear disarmament and control of the proliferation of small arms."

The message included many expressions of concern for situations of violence and injustice and the sufferings of diverse groups of people, as well as the way religion has been misused. It confessed "that Christians have often been complicit in systems of violence, injustice, militarism, racism, casteism, intolerance, and discrimination" and confessed that "issues of sexuality divide the churches."

Churches are called to active peacemaking on a number of fronts, for example moving peace education to the center of school curriculums, naming violence against women and children as sin, supporting conscientious objection, advocating for "economies of life" in contrast to "unfettered economic growth as envisioned by the neoliberal system," addressing the concentration of power and wealth, and more.

On one evening, peace convocation participants had a special treat, as Jamaica "showed off" for its international guests. Along with the rest of Kingston, they were invited to a free, open-air concert in a central park, featuring several of the country's world-renowned bands and singers.

Many statements were directed to governments, who were urged to, among other things, "take immediate action to redirect their financial resources to programs that foster life rather than death."

In a nod to the Historic Peace Churches, the message stated that their witness "reminds us of the fact that violence is contrary to the will of God and can never resolve conflicts."

The background study document, "An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace," which includes language condemning just war as "obsolete," was not acted on at the convocation. It is expected to come to the next WCC world assembly in 2013 for action by the world's churches. **W**

Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford is director of news services for the Church of the Brethren.



of peace churches

Leaders in the WCC itself have tried to make sure the voices of the peace churches are heard, Enns said. But as the Decade to Overcome Violence closes, "the voice of our churches is still very much needed," he added. It is useful, he said, to have a voice at the WCC table that does not accept military intervention as an option.

This is where he has witnessed what he calls a "major shift" in ecumenical circles. Those who still consider the military as an option now have to justify themselves. The conversation has shifted to active peacemaking by nonviolent means. The conversation about what peace means has become much broader as well, now including conflict prevention, nonviolent conflict resolution, processes of healing and reconciliation, and more.

This shift has not come about simply through the Decade to Overcome Violence.

The 2001 terror attacks, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, conflict in the DR Congo, and other world events have contributed to a growing awareness of the complexity of issues surrounding violence. Some churches, especially in Europe, the US, and Canada, "have realized that to stay with the powerful all the time is corrupting your being a church," Enns said. These churches are "realizing they are selling out their identity if they don't have a critical voice."

Speaking of voice, Enns quickly pointed to another outcome of the decade: discernment that Brethren, Mennonites, and Quakers actually can speak with a common voice. This was the main purpose of the first continental meeting of the peace churches in 2001, held in Bienenberg, Switzerland. There it became clear that the peace churches need to listen much more to "the voices of the South," Enns said, in part to gain insight from the

struggles of peace churches who suffer most directly from economic violence, violence in cities, violent consequences of climate change.

There is a lot more to be done, Enns emphasized. A theology of just peace is needed, as well as work on how the concept of just peace "unfolds through the different dimensions of society." For example, economics is a "pressing and ever-growing root cause of violence," he said. Civil war is becoming a major challenge, as is the culture of violence in the large cities of the world. "More people die in big cities on the streets . . . than all the wars we see," he noted.

As the Decade to Overcome Violence concludes, Enns will continue to be one of those working tirelessly in the background, helping Christians discern their own responsibility to ask critical questions of the use of violence around the world.—Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

Making peace in the

music war

by Alan Gumm

The Church of the Brethren is a historic peace church, and yet we willfully participate in a war—what Kenneth Hull calls in *Liturgy*, a church worship “music war.” The war pits contemporary music against traditional music, praise chorus against hymn, and praise band against choir and church organ.

This isn't our war, yet we fight it nonetheless whenever we use these labels in choosing music for our worship, whenever we put music into one or the other of these categories, or pronounce our services as being in one of

these two styles. We even fight it when we combine them into a “blended” worship, because this merely pays homage to the two sides, and represents a compromise position and not a solution of any authenticity, integrity, or real identity with the Church of the Brethren.

In fighting this war, we are in danger of further losing our identity as the Church of the Brethren. Our interpretation of the New Testament is to live peacefully, walk humbly,

love our neighbors, help those in need, and live simply. That interpretation includes showing our beliefs in how we choose to live our daily lives in Christ's example. Likewise in our worship, the music we choose tells who we are and what we believe. But neither side in the music war represents such a vision for the Church of the Brethren. This war is based on popular taste and is aimed

toward mainstream religion, with a generic message that simplifies complicated issues of worship, lifestyle, and belief for easy consumption.

But given our Brethren ways of spiritual discernment and nonviolent conflict resolution, we can surely find a peaceful alternative to taking part in this music war. Following Jesus' example to be in the world but not of the world, or as Paul instructed, to “not be conformed to this world” (Rom. 12:2), we can choose not to conform to this very worldly struggle. Brethren have a unique message of “another way of living” in the world, simpler, and set apart from the consumerism and mainstream popular beliefs behind this war. We can instead cultivate our own unique musical message, on our own terms, with a clear sense of direction and ownership.

A peaceful alternative is to not confine our worship to the classifications and limitations of contemporary versus traditional music. We can instead choose to be open to a wider variety of options. We can break down the dividing line and see the wealth of possibilities that have been crowded out in the conflict. We can take a fresh look at the possibilities, gather the people of the church together, and have a real Brethren discernment discussion about a musical and spiritual direction that is all our own in following Christ. It is my hope that a more open discussion of the issues would not heighten the conflict but expose a broader range of options in determining worship music solutions across our denomination.

The popular music war going on in churches would lead us to believe that there are only two choices, but this hides the fact that there is a much richer set of choices available. So a first peaceful alternative is to open our consideration to diverse worship music styles. Each style offers spiritually uplifting alternatives that are more flexible, engaging in the number and types of musicians, more



Keith Hollenberg

THE POPULAR MUSIC WAR GOING ON IN CHURCHES WOULD LEAD US TO BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE ONLY TWO CHOICES, BUT THIS HIDES THE FACT THAT THERE IS A MUCH RICHER SET OF CHOICES AVAILABLE.



Ragtime Harmonies



engaging of the congregation, and varied in their musical challenges to future musicians in the church.

Part of the problem is how to make worship more accessible in drawing new youth, young adults, and young families into church. But choosing contemporary Christian music as the solution is an oversimplification, as our youth are more musically sophisticated and varied in taste than this stereotype suggests. They may just as well be "into" classical, folk, gospel, ethnic, and world music, as well as other current popular musical styles than soft rock.

Music is so accessible through modern technology that it is shortsighted to think that everybody would be interested in one style of worship music. With a 40-year history, Contemporary Christian Music is merely one music tradition among many, and "traditional" music is full of fresh perspectives and innovations that can be brought to the table. The spiritual, white gospel, black gospel, folk, ethnic, and world music traditions all thrive in different churches today, and could be considered as legitimate sources of inspiration in our Brethren churches.

Examples of each of these traditions can be found in our blue *Hymnal*—such as #611, "Soon and Very Soon," which is set in a black gospel style. The main problem is to find a musical solution that established members and newcomers recognize as having genuine value and appeal to the varied tastes of parishioners. We need to retain familiar elements and be open to newer elements that bring new excitement to worship, not for entertainment value but in drawing on the power of music to develop a deeper worship experience.

The Church of the Brethren has its own age-related musical difference to grapple with—which hymnal to sing from. I grew up with the 1951 red hymnal, but I heard the

complaints of missing hymns from the 1925 dark blue hymnal. I also learned to appreciate the effort in our latest blue hymnal to take the best of different musical styles from contemporary, Taizé, spirituals, world music, old favorite hymns, newfangled hymns, and even semi-classical treatments, such as stripping "O Come, O Come, Immanuel" of its 19th-century harmony to take it back to its original chant quality. The church has continued to respond to emerging musical tastes with *The Brethren Songbook* and *Hymnal Supplement* series providing a wealth of choices.

Not fairly considered is that the hymn tradition is not so out of date, as argued in the worship music war. There is a modern hymn movement going on in which new hymns are being composed and old hymns are being given new words to reflect current times and needs. So the hymn tradition is a living, current, "contemporary" tradition that can help keep worship fresh and alive.

And what about new music by Brethren composers, in whichever style? Where is this collection of contemporary music? How is it being recognized and made available for use in churches across the denomination? For one, the theme song for 2010 National Youth Conference, "More Than Meets the Eye," was by the Brethren composer Shawn Kirchner. "Move in Our Midst," by Kenneth Morse, remains among a handful of songs and hymns by recognized Brethren composers. Our energies should go into nur-

BEYOND THE OPTIONS OF CONTEMPORARY PRAISE BAND AND TRADITIONAL ORGAN, THE FULLER OPTIONS OF UNACCOMPANIED SINGING AND BAND, ORCHESTRAL, FOLK, ETHNIC, AND WORLD MUSIC INSTRUMENTS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.



turing our own music tradition, claiming our own message in original compositions, and inspiring Brethren poets to put their new inspired words to familiar old tunes.

Historically, with every new development in musical instruments has come a conflict with previous instruments. In the 14th century the conflict was between unaccompanied vocal music and

the use of secular dance instruments—instruments that eventually developed into our modern orchestral instruments. This conflict later played out in Brethren churches, and may remain an issue in certain congregations. So the contemporary war between praise band and organ is merely the modern equivalent of this age-old conflict. Seen in this light, this isn't a contemporary struggle at all, and the solution does not have to fall on one side or the other, but can stay open to other possibilities.

Related to this issue is that young folks are perhaps more interested in learning guitar and drums than the organ or piano, making a praise band easier to staff than an organist position. The same dilemma of finding church musicians dates back to early churches in America. Other than singing unaccompanied, the solution was to send someone back to the Old World for training, and then for the newly trained musician to teach others here in the New World. On the frontier, where there were few organs or pianos, let alone organists and pianists, the solution was to use common folk instruments. In early lumber towns of Michigan, for example, the hammered dulcimer became the instrument of choice, and dulcimer festivals and organizations still exist in this state and others to this day.

The peaceful resolution to this issue is to open our consideration to whatever instruments match the talents, traditions, musical tastes, and spiritual needs of an individual congregation. Beyond the options of contemporary praise band and traditional organ, the fuller options of unaccompanied singing and band, orchestral, folk, ethnic, and world music instruments should be considered. Folk musi-

cians often are amateurs who play for their own pleasure, and band and orchestra musicians typically put their instruments away after their school days are over, so these musicians need to be purposefully encouraged to develop and share their talents in worship.

We also need to address the educational needs of church musicians. Current musicians could give lessons on their instruments to younger generations, or the congregation could pay for piano and other music instrument lessons in return for playing in church. The congregation could play a role in encouraging participation in school music programs by establishing a fund to help church families rent or pay for an instrument, and by providing a welcoming outlet for budding musicians to share their talents. No longer can we sit idly by and wait for someone to step into vacant music positions. We must be more proactive in cultivating future church musicians, the same as was done in earlier history.

An educational problem that has surfaced in the worship music war is the difference in the level of congregational participation and engagement required. This problem can also be informed by history. Before the Reformation, music education was only available through either a selective system of apprenticeship, to the aristocracy and their select court musicians, or to clergy and select individuals trained to provide music in church. In other words, common folk were not musically educated and did not play a significant musical role in church. This changed when Martin Luther began a program of common education—which included music—so that everyday people could read and interpret the Bible and sing God's praises for themselves. The Protestant hymn played a role in helping common people take control and be full participants in the worship music experience. Four-part harmony also played a vital role, allowing voices high and low, male and female to participate in church music.

As a career music teacher and professor, I came to realize that beginning with the junior high changing voice, singing must be done in harmony in order for every person to learn to sing. People's voices naturally fall in different ranges, so harmony is necessary to match these ranges. Applying this to church music, harmony is essential for a full congregation to successfully participate, as unison singing of melodies extends out of range for low voices. On these grounds, the current trend toward melody singing is not more inclusive, but excludes the congregation from successfully joining in with worship music.

Melody singing also runs counter to the strong Brethren



Glenn Fogel

tradition of harmony singing. It is an inspiration and joy to hear a congregation break out in full harmony in weekly church services, annual Christmas caroling, and in awesome proportions at Annual Conference. But the current entertainment-industry model of worship music places the congregation in the role of an audience listening silently to a music concert on stage. As noted by one choral director, worship services have become like a spectator sport, a live version of television watching on a Sunday morning. Without congregational singing, our Brethren heritage of harmony singing is doomed to wither from neglect.

The tradition of hymn singing is also one of reading music. I remember the first time I noticed how the pattern of rising and falling black notes in the hymnal matched the harmony part I had learned to sing by ear. The current trend is leading away from printed music to learning songs from recordings, following the tune of a lead singer, and by reading words on a projector screen.

History informs us of these differences as well. The first form of music education in America was the practice of “lining out” a hymn, in which a music leader would sing a line and the congregation would echo it back, perhaps with harmony parts added by ear. That was replaced by the first printed hymnals, which included only the words to hymns—the first Brethren hymnals printed in 1720 and 1739 were of this type. A church friend recently showed me a hand-sized version of one of these passed down in her family, complete with notes to mark favorite texts. But having only words printed out led to two problems—people could not recall tunes so they sang different texts to a decreasing number of tunes, and the state of church singing became so abysmal that there was a call for reform.

In came the next form of music education—the singing school. In this system, an itinerant singing master would come into a community and teach singing and music reading for a week or so in a local church. Though this system dwindled when public schools and public school music programs developed in the mid- to late-19th century, the singing school and its descendant, the singing convention, continued in the southern shape-note tradition into the 20th century.

Finally came the hymnal as we know it today, complete with music notation—ours starting with the *The Brethren's Tune and Hymn Book* of 1872. The modern hymnal represents the fulfillment of a centuries-long desire for everyday people to participate in worship. It reflects that music

reading had become a common and accepted skill, with the intention to maintain these skills.

However, current practices of worship music take us backward instead of forward. Learning music by ear through recordings may be easier, but it removes the challenge of learning to read music for ourselves. Recordings also influence musicians to reproduce the sound on the recording or use the recording itself instead of adapting the tempo, dynamics, and style of music to fit different parts of a service or a particular sermon. The practice of projecting only the words to songs and hymns on an overhead screen takes us back to the words-only songbooks of early America. Relying on a singer or two to remind the congregation how the tune goes takes us back yet another step to basic song leadership before there were printed songbooks. We are even being taken back to a time when the congregation's role in worship was to simply observe the show.

The peaceful alternative on this issue is to plan worship music that actively engages the congregation apart from the inspiration provided by select musicians, and to present music in enough ways to make music easy to follow and yet continue to encourage improved music and reading skills. Those who cannot sing or read music need support enough to join in, and those who can sing need to learn to lend a hand—or lend a voice—in helping others join in.

With school music programs and enrollment dwindling, perhaps it is time for the church to play a greater role in music education once again. Drawing on the singing school model, lessons in singing and music reading could be held in church on a weekday evening, perhaps scheduled around a choir practice, Bible study, or church dinner.

History gives us plenty of tools to include everybody in worship music, we just need to make sure modern technology is added in a way that we do not lose what we have historically gained. ❗

Alan Gumm is a researcher, author, and professor of music education at Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant, Mich., and past director of choral activities at McPherson College. He is the choir director for the 2011 Annual Conference in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Matters of conscience

by Graydon F. Snyder

[This Bible study by Graydon F. Snyder is the fifth 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.]

While conscientious objection to war has been a significant mark of the Church of the Brethren, conscience itself involves the heart of the human personality. By definition, it means conformity to what one considers to be morally correct, right, or good.

There are several ways to think about "conscience." We know conscience primarily as an interior awareness of right and wrong. Most of us speak of a good conscience or a clear conscience, meaning we have no immediate sense of having done something wrong.

Some Christian groups assume that there is always in us a sense of conflict between right and wrong. They believe they constantly stand in need of God's mercy. Others, however—especially those of the Believers' Churches—can feel at peace with their interior psyche. They have a "good conscience." For them, everyday life is much less complicated.

Biblical writers frequently speak of having a good conscience. Paul, for example, always sought to follow his conscience: "I always try to maintain a clear conscience before God and all people" (Acts 24:16).

There are several origins of conscience. The most apparent would seem to be tied to early family and community life. Brothers and sisters might quarrel, but in the end they recognize (they are reminded by their conscience) that their relationship rejects violence. This is true not only in the family but the broader community. While unfortunately it is not always true, for the most part each individual can feel the violation of human relationships: i.e., the pangs of conscience.

Of course, it is not always possible to maintain a clear conscience. And when we have done something that violates our own moral standards of right and wrong, our conscience—the interior reminder that comes when we know we have blown it—lets us know this clearly by hitting us

with a strong dose of guilt. It is the feeling of shame or embarrassment resulting from such behavior that one regrets. For the most part, these are minor violations. For example, the clerk at a grocery store may give you more change than you are due. You do not call attention to the error, and your conscience hurts for a day or two. If you make a racial slur or refer to someone as a ghetto type, your conscience will likely hurt every time you see such a person. The worst, however, involves violence. Your accidental hitting of a child with your speeding auto will leave a scar on your conscience that will never go away.

The most powerful form of conscience comes from divine insertion. It is not our human conscience, available to almost all people, but a sense of right and wrong that derives from faith in God. When we violate our divine conscience, we have not simply turned against ourselves or our friends. We have instead turned against the nature of God. For example, when we violate a covenant which we have made in God's name on a Bible, we have fractured our divine conscience in matters that are ultimate.

We find references to these types of conscience, especially in the New Testament. And in the Hebrew scriptures, the awareness of what is just and right comes from the very heart of Judaism:

In that day, the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious (Isa. 11:10).

The Apostle Paul often claimed that he lived according to his conscience:

Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, "Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day." And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth (Acts 23:1-2).

This passage describes in a remarkable way how the political forces at the time of Paul objected to the following of one's conscience over their accepted human law. Christians often underwent legal trials or even persecution for doing so. In a key description of such trials, we see that the believer is instructed to maintain a good conscience, just as Jesus did:



Christian Reading, illustration from *Pilgrim's Progress*, published by Porter & Coates, 1876

But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame (1 Pet. 3:14-16).

As far as Brethren are concerned, the most frequently referred to matter regarding conscience is conscientious objection to war. Among the peace churches (Quakers, Mennonites, and Brethren), the Quakers refused to participate in the military as early as the 1660s. Brethren were the most prominent "objectors" during the First World War.

Some states eventually allowed the peace church members to perform duties other than military service. These tasks varied considerably. Some who were opposed to fighting were allowed to work as medical helpers in the army. Many served as non-combatants—that is, they served in the armed forces but did not carry or use weapons. Others performed alternative civilian service. They did tasks that helped promote human welfare. Some tasks, like medical

FOR THEM IT WAS THEIR CONSCIENCE—THEIR INNER RUDDER—SHAPED BY THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS, THAT CAUSED THEM TO FOLLOW WHAT THEY BELIEVED TO BE GOD'S LEADING. FOR THEM, IT ALL CAME DOWN TO A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE.

experimentation, were quite dangerous.

During the Vietnam War, many Brethren refused to even cooperate with the Selective Service System by performing alternative service. They were led by their conscience—which, for most, had been shaped by Brethren teachings they received during their upbringing—to oppose an entire government system that they believed was in direct opposition to the teachings of Jesus. Some of these young men were convicted of violating the law and sentenced to perform community service. Others were convicted and served time in prison.

Brethren did not stop with refusing military service. They opposed the execution of criminals, for example. In some instances they even defended in court persons who had killed members of their own family. In short, Brethren opposed killing in any form.

Like Paul, these Brethren—and many, many others over the decades—have been led by their conscience to do what they believed to be the right thing. For them it was their conscience—their inner rudder—shaped by their understanding of the teachings of Jesus, that caused them to follow what they believed to be God's leading. For them, it all came down to a matter of conscience. **■**

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Brethren disaster relief programs respond to spring tornadoes, floods

Since April, a spate of severe tornadoes, spring storms, and flooding have affected the United States. Grants have been given from the Church of the Brethren's Emergency Disaster Fund, and Brethren Disaster Ministries and Children's Disaster Services have been responding in various places including the devastated town of Joplin, Mo.

Teams of Children's Disaster Services (CDS) volunteers have been working in Joplin to help care for children of affected families, at the request of the American Red Cross and FEMA. As of early June, more than 20 CDS volunteers had helped staff children's disaster services centers in several shelters housing families who had lost homes, including a shelter at Missouri Southern State University.

The volunteers were caring for children in the aftermath of the EF 4 tornado that devastated areas of Joplin on May 22, packing winds up to 198 mph and cutting a path a mile wide and six miles long through the most densely populated area of the city.

In light of the high number of fatalities in Joplin, CDS also dispatched a Critical Response Childcare team to work with traumatized children in the FEMA family assistance center.

Darrell Barr, Western Plains District disaster coordinator, and Gary Gahm, Church of the Brethren member from Kansas City, Mo., helped represent Brethren Disaster Ministries in meetings with the Missouri state VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster), FEMA, and other disaster response partners.

Carolyn Schrock, Missouri/Arkansas district executive, confirmed there are no Church of the Brethren congregations close to Joplin, but a non-Brethren congregation with informal ties to the district was affected: the Nueva Vida church, located in Carthage, Mo., and its pastor, Edwin Reyes, and his family who live in Joplin.

Children's Disaster Services also responded to a tornado in Tuscaloosa, Ala., where volunteer teams worked with children at the Belk Center Park Recreation Building shelter. CDS volunteers initially arrived there on April 29.

The most recent CDS response has been in Springfield, Mass., following a tornado that hit that city in early June.

Brethren Disaster Ministries associate director Zachary Wolgemuth remarked that "the 2011 spring storm season has been one of the most devastating on record." The BDM office was inundated with calls following the severe tornado outbreak that roared across the South on April 27—called the worst in four decades—which itself followed hard on the heels of the tornado outbreak of April 16 that plowed through the area of Raleigh, N.C., and 18 other counties. On May 6, Wolgemuth attended the North Carolina VOAD meeting. BDM is staying involved in long-term recovery planning in that state, with the goal of deciding on an area in which to set up a rebuilding project.

In addition, Brethren volunteers from Virginia and Shenandoah Districts have been doing home repairs in response to the Pulaski County,



Eaton (Ohio) Church of the Brethren collected clean-up buckets for Church World Service in response to the spring's tornadoes and flooding. The church's Fellowship Class sponsored the project, holding an Italian dinner to raise funds. Many of the churches in Southern Ohio District helped purchase items and sent volunteers to help assemble the buckets at a "bucket party" in early June. In total 304 buckets were assembled along with 9 cartons of 100 school kits, 4 cartons of hygiene kits, and 1 carton of baby kits.



Lorna Grow

Teams of Children's Disaster Services (CDS) volunteers have been working in Joplin, Mo., to help care for children who have lost homes and family members in the devastating tornado.

Va., tornadoes that struck April 8. BDM is assessing the possibility for a long-term response site there as well.

Severe flooding in Tennessee, for the second May in a row, did not threaten the newly established Brethren Disaster Ministries rebuilding project site in Ashland City, northwest of Nashville, that was started in January. A second BDM rebuilding site in Tennessee opened June 1 in the Brentwood area south of Nashville.

However, BDM staff requested prayer for communities affected by Mississippi River flooding downriver. "BDM is now in its last few weeks of Katrina recovery work" in the New Orleans area, reported coordinator Jane Yount. "We're certainly praying that these communities don't get inundated again." The long-running Hurricane Katrina rebuilding project in Chalmette, La., was to be completed by mid-June.

The church's Emergency Disaster Fund has requested a number of grants to aid with the tornado and flood response of BDM and CDS, and to support ecumenical partners:

- A grant of \$30,000 establishes the BDM project site in Brentwood, Tenn., to assist residents affected by the devastating floods of May 2010. Funds will underwrite operational expenses related to volunteer support, including housing, food, and travel expenses as well as volunteer training, tools, and equipment.

- Two grants support the work of Church World Service (CWS) following this spring's storms: an initial grant of \$7,500 and a follow up grant of \$15,000. CWS is responding in numerous communities, shipping clean-up buckets, hygiene kits, school kits, baby kits, and blankets, and helping develop long-term

recovery groups in affected communities.

- A grant of \$5,000 has funded the work of Children's Disaster Services in Joplin, Mo.

In continuing international relief efforts, the following EDF grants have been given:

- A grant of \$300,000 continues support for the Brethren work in Haiti following the earthquake of January 2010. The money continues the collaborative response of Brethren Disaster Ministries with Global Mission Partnerships and Eglise des Freres Haitiens (the Haitian Church of the Brethren). The five grants given to this project in 2010 totaled \$700,000. This year, the work in Haiti has the goals to build 25 new homes, repair 25 damaged homes, provide safe drinking water in locations with clusters of Brethren-built homes, support sustainable agricultural development in communities affected by the earthquake or receiving survivors, build a hospitality center for disaster volunteers and a national office for the Haitian church, support partners in improving healthcare for all Haitians, and support pastors and church members in emotional and spiritual recovery.

- A grant of \$15,000 responds to an appeal from the Asia Rural Institute in Japan for help with earthquake damage. ARI is a partner of the Church of the Brethren through the Global Food Crisis Fund and Brethren Volunteer Service. The earthquake caused expensive damage to the ARI training facility, estimated at over \$4,500,000.

- An allocation of \$10,000 responds to a CWS appeal following displacement of families from violence in Libya.

To support Brethren disaster relief send your gift to the Emergency Disaster Fund, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120, or give at www.brethren.org/disaster.

UPCOMINGEVENTS

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

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

July 2-6 Church of the Brethren Annual Conference, Grand Rapids, Mich.

July 6 Brethren Benefit Trust Board meeting, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Aug. 1-12 Bethany Theological Seminary August Intensives, Richmond, Ind.

Aug. 21-31 Brethren Volunteer Service/ Brethren Revival Fellowship unit orientation, Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md.

Aug. 25 First day of class for fall semester, Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind.

Aug. 29-Sept. 2 Brethren Volunteer Service Summer Mid-Year Retreat

Sept. 5-9 National Older Adult Conference, Lake Junaluska (N.C.) Conference and Retreat Center

Sept. 15-17 On Earth Peace Board of Directors meeting

Sept. 18 Bethany Sunday

Sept. 21 International Day of Prayer for Peace

AmeriCorps education awards cut off to faith-based volunteer network

After 15 years of participation in the AmeriCorps education award program, Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) has learned its access to the program has been cut off. Federal budget cuts mean the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is not funding such grants to the volunteer networking organization of which BVS is a member, for the 2011-2012 term.

BVS participates in AmeriCorps through the Catholic Volunteer Network (CVN), a networking organization for a number of faith-based volunteer groups. BVS membership in CVN means that its volunteers may apply to receive the \$5,350 education award from AmeriCorps, and BVS gains access to other benefits like a health insurance program for volunteers.

"The decision process for the 2011 federal budget was particularly grueling, with several months of delays and continuing resolutions," said CVN. "The final decision had a devastating effect on CNCS and programs operating under the corporation's umbrella. CNCS was funded at \$1.1 billion, which is \$72 million below the 2010 fiscal level. The Learn and Serve America program was cut entirely from the 2011 budget. AmeriCorps programs received a \$23 million cut. On top of these budget cuts, CNCS received nearly twice the amount of applications for national service funds, as compared to last year. Over 300 organizations applied for Education Awards Program grants—of these programs, only 50 were funded."

"There's dismay" among the BVS staff, said director Dan McFadden. The cuts will be a loss particularly for volunteers who enter BVS carrying large college debt, he said. To support these volunteers BVS may have to look for other ways the church can help, such as paying the

interest on school loans, which average \$20,000 to \$30,000 for current volunteers. "The debt load that volunteers come out of college with continues to rise," McFadden said. "We have had volunteers with up to \$50,000."

Thirteen BVS volunteers currently are in the AmeriCorps education award program. In 2009-2010, 21 BVSers received the award, but that was an unusual year, said McFadden. Since BVS began participating in the program in 1996, more than 120 BVSers have received the education award, estimates orientation coordinator Callie Surber. This represents some \$570,000 or more that has helped BVS volunteers repay student loans, she said.

Former BVS director Jan Schrock was instrumental in making it possible for faith-based volunteer organizations to participate in AmeriCorps, McFadden said. At first, BVS and other such groups worked through the National Council of Churches to participate with AmeriCorps. CVN then picked up administration of the program for the past 13 years.

Loss of access to the education award is not expected to affect recruitment for BVS. "Most BVSers don't come into BVS because of the AmeriCorps education award," McFadden said.



BVS staff: (from left) director Dan McFadden, Katherine Boeger, Jeremy McAvoy, Dana Cassell, Don Knieriem, and Callie Surber. Not shown: Kristin Flory, European coordinator.

PERSONNEL NOTES

Michael Colvin has resigned from On Earth Peace. Since May 2008, he has worked as a full- or three-quarter-time volunteer in key organizational roles, including coordinating the International Day of Prayer for Peace (IDPP) campaign and providing web design and maintenance. He was also central in the early development of the Change for Peace program.

Joan Daggett has been named acting district executive minister of Shenandoah District. John Foster, Bernie Fuska, and John W. Glick have been called as the 2011 Placement Team to work with her on pastoral placement. Daggett will give oversight to district ministries during the transi-

tion following the retirement of former district executive James E. Miller. She has been associate district executive since 1998.

Sue Daniel will retire Dec. 31 as district executive minister for Idaho District. She started as administrative executive in Jan. 2006. In addition to administrative, executive, and clerical responsibilities in the district, she has been active with the Council of District Executives, having served on the "District Purpose Committee," and currently is representative to the Ministry Advisory Council. She holds a degree in sociology from the University of La Verne, Calif. She first retired in 2004 from the state of Oregon, having

worked 13 years as a caseworker with the Children's Services Division and 24 years as a distance education center director for Eastern Oregon University.

Steven W. Gregory retires as district executive minister for Oregon and Washington District on Sept. 31. He began his ministry as district executive on Nov. 1, 1999. He was licensed to the ministry in 1962 and ordained in 1969 at Lacey (Wash.) Community Church of the Brethren and is a graduate of La Verne (Calif.) College, now the University of La Verne, and Bethany Theological Seminary. In between pastorates in Washington, California, and Idaho, he served as campus minister at ULV from 1977-89, and then was a



Civilian Public Service (CPS) Camp No. 1 was a forest service base camp in Michigan, operated by the Brethren Service Committee from June through July 1941. The camp opened in Copemish, Mich., on the site of the Brethren work camp at the Joseph farm, but also was known as the Manistee or Marilla camp. Work focused on firefighting in fire season, and preventive work for fire control. Shown here, director L.C. Blickenstaff poses in front of the camp tents with his wife, Marie Blickenstaff.

Celebration held for 70th anniversary of first Civilian Public Service camp

May 15 was the 70th anniversary of the first Civilian Public Service (CPS) camp opening in Patapsco, Md. A special celebration was held, open to the public and sponsored jointly by the Church of the Brethren, Mennonite Central Committee US, the Center on Conscience and War, the American Friends Service Committee, and the Kansas Committee for a CPS Memorial.

The event marked the launch of a new website for Civilian Public Service at <http://civilianpublicservice.org>. The website features listings of CPS workers and camps, along with historical photos.

The team of archivists and historians who worked on the CPS Memorial Website Project included Terrell Barkley, director of the Brethren Historical Library and Archives (BHLA),

and the late Ken Shaffer, former director, along with a number of others from Mennonite and Quaker organizations and related educational institutions. J. Kenneth Kreider, professor emeritus of history at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College, helped with content review. Jonathan Keeney, a Brethren member from Elgin, Ill., was hired by the project to scan images for all the CPS units/camps from the photo collection in the BHLA.

The anniversary celebration was held at what is now Patapsco Valley State Park near Relay, Md. On the program were speakers Edward Orser, a historian who has examined the Patapsco Camp; Cassandra Costley of the Selective Service; J.E. McNeil from the Center on Conscience and War; and John Lapp, former director of Mennonite Central Committee; among others.

member of the denomination's Congregational Life Ministries team from 2000 to 2009. He and his family plan to continue to live in Wenatchee, Wash.

Ferol Labash started April 16 as chief executive officer of Pinecrest Community, a Church of the Brethren retirement community in Mount Morris, Ill., following the retirement of Carol Davis. Labash was director of development for Pinecrest, and had been employed there for nearly four years. She holds a bachelor of science in accounting with a minor in business management from Purdue University, Krannert School of Management. She has passed the

Illinois Nursing Home Administrator Supplemental Exam and plans to take the national exam. She and her family live in Mount Morris and are active at Crossroads Community Church in Polo, Ill.

Ed Palsgrove resigned May 10 as director of buildings and grounds at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., where he had worked for 35 years improving, fixing, and recreating the rooms and buildings needed for the ministries housed there. He began work at the Brethren Service Center on Oct. 15, 1975, as a truck driver. He has been commended for approaching the work at the center with integrity, careful stewardship,

and care for God's creation. He continues to live in New Windsor, where he has a new position with a local manufacturer of high-tech testing equipment.

Roseanne Segovia is the new editorial assistant for the Gather 'Round curriculum. From Oak Lawn, Ill., she is a graduate of Loyola University with a degree in journalism and English.

Michael Wagner, peace worker with the Church of the Brethren in southern Sudan, resigned as of May 20 after nearly a year in the seconded position with the Africa Inland Church-Sudan. He has taken a position as field coordinator for the John Dau Foundation in the State of Jonglei, South Sudan.

BBT board approves changes affecting Pension Plan retirees

Phasing out of the Brethren Pension Plan Annuity Benefit Reduction Assistance Program and a change in how the fund that pays out all Pension Plan annuities is invested were two major action items at the Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT) Board of Directors meeting April 30-May 1.

While board members also addressed other business, including the BBT securities lending program, compliance and data security issues, socially responsible investing screens, and BBT's clean audit opinion for 2010, it was the Pension Plan that received substantial discussion time.

"Nothing that we do as a board and staff is more important than safeguarding and strengthening the Brethren Pension Plan for all of our members—both retirees and actives—

using the means that we have," said BBT president Nevin Dulabaum.

"Having made a number of decisions over the past two years that immediately strengthened the Pension Plan, the board at the April meeting focused its attention on action steps that are intent on helping the plan weather economic challenges in the future."

In Oct. 2009, the month that Pension Plan members received a reduction in their annuity payments due to the underfunded status of the Retirement Benefits Fund (from which the annuities are paid), a grant program was established for qualified members who were left most vulnerable. Members who qualified for a grant received a payment that was equal to no more than the reduction in their pension annuity payment. Grants were made

from BBT reserves, and the program was intended to be reviewed each year.

In April, the board approved a plan that will bring a gradual end to the grants; financial assistance from the grant program will steadily decline over the next three years. Grants will continue unchanged through the end of 2011. In 2012, members who qualify for grants will receive no more than 75 percent of the amount their annuity payments were reduced. They will receive up to 50 percent of their annuity reduction amount in 2013, and 25 percent of their annuity reduction amount in 2014, through Sept. 30, at which point the grant program will end, a full five years after its inception.

The ending of the grants will not affect regular annuity payments in any way.—*Brian Solem*

Hoslers provide update on the violence in Nigeria

Nigeria mission staff Nathan and Jennifer Hosler have provided an updated report on post-election violence in Nigeria, how it has affected Brethren congregations there, and how Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN—the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) is responding. The Hoslers are teaching at EYN's Kulp Bible College and working with the EYN Peace Program:

"Nigeria held a presidential election on April 16. The winner, Goodluck Jonathan, is a Christian southerner. A Muslim northern candidate, General Buhari, won in the north. Goodluck Jonathan was able to get at least 25 percent of the vote in northern states and he held the entire south. Many Muslim supporters in the north were certain that because they supported Buhari he was sure to win. When Buhari lost, rioting erupted all across northern cities. There was an allegation of corruption by the loser, but all the international observers concurred that the election was relatively free and fair, a huge step for Nigeria.

"In total, five EYN churches were attacked. Four were burnt in Biu and one damaged in Kaduna. Other denominations were also affected; the targets of attack were anything Christian, or Muslim supporters of the Christian candidate.

"In the aftermath of the violence, EYN will press forward. Much of its ministry will continue as normal, while also picking up the pieces, rebuilding, and trying to heal from the trauma of burnt homes, shops, and churches. With the crisis reaching new places that had never experi-

enced violence (Mubi, Michika), it makes one wonder how far-reaching the next crisis will be. We have heard people say, 'How can this happen in little Michika, a fairly small community that hasn't experienced violence?'

"Encouraging events in Michika include a unified response. There were no revenge attacks in Michika. Community elders were able to stop people from retaliating. In Michika, Christians also are finding nonviolent ways of expressing their displeasure with the violence, organizing a community boycott of a specific market day.

"While prevention work can be done, the long-term circumstances of the conflict have not changed. The next crisis could be just around the corner. Yet the church is not standing still, waiting for crisis to break out. Jesus commanded his followers to be 'as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves' (Matt. 10:16, KJV). Peace work will press forward, cautiously. Trust has been broken—and there was not much trust between Muslim and Christian communities to begin with. A needed initiative is a conflict monitoring system, a communication structure in place that involves paying heed to warning signs, rumors, and alerting authorities before violence occurs."



Nathan and Jennifer Hosler

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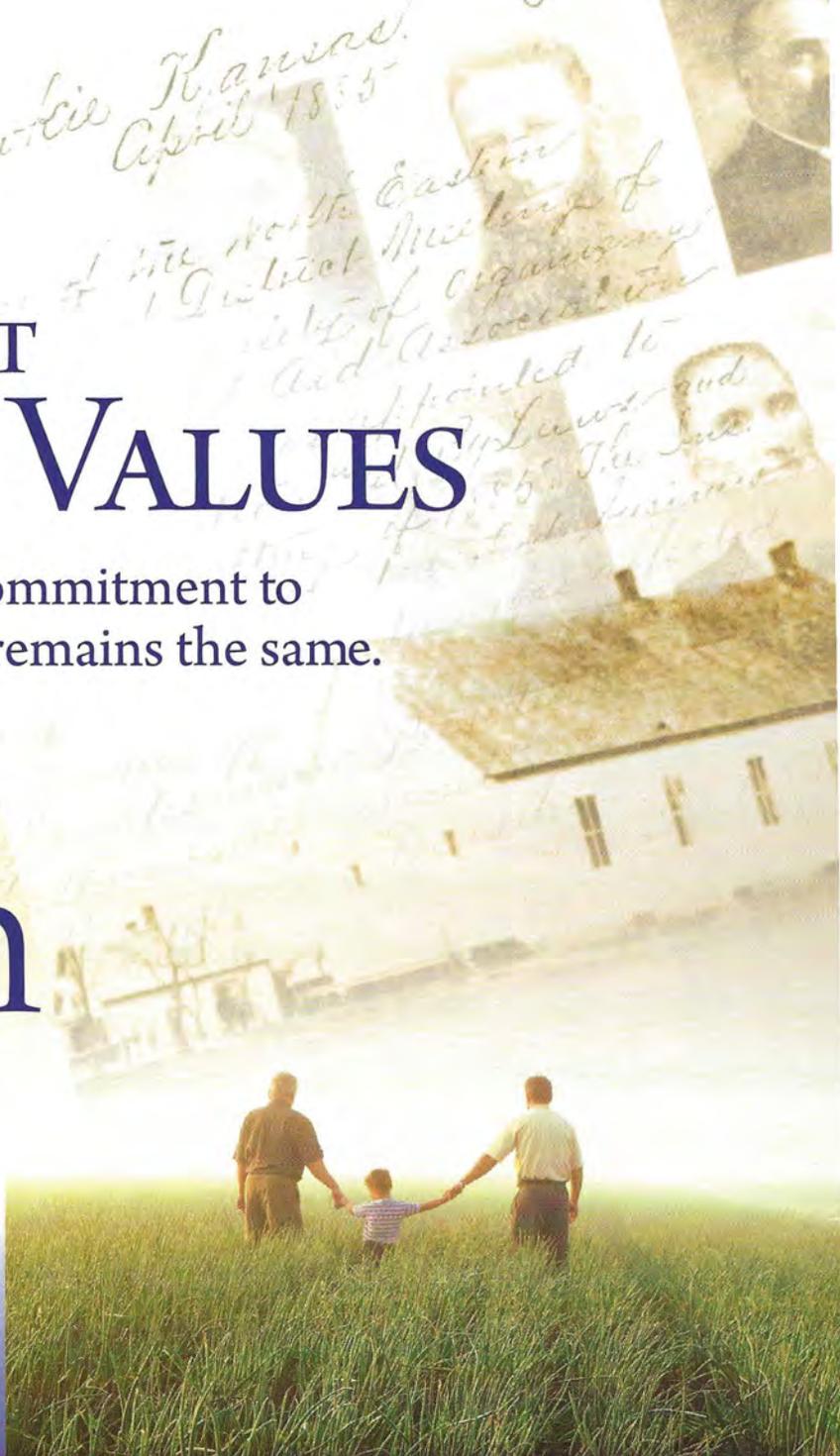
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GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS FUND

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Bridgewater College (*Bridgewater, Va.*)

Senior business majors at Bridgewater College, competing against 4,267 teams from 302 colleges and universities around the world, finished in a tie for first place in a semester-long computer simulation contest. Operating under the team name of "A Juggernaut," Rudbel Alfaro of Arlington, Va., Will Conti of Earlysville, Va., and Curt Power of Winchester, Va., competed in publishing giant McGraw Hill's Business Strategy Game as part of a strategic management course.

Elizabethtown College (*Elizabethtown, Pa.*)

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CHCS) honored Elizabethtown College as a leader among institutions of higher education for its support of volunteering, service-learning, and civic engagement. The college was admitted to the 2010 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for engaging its students and faculty and staff members in meaningful service that achieves measurable results in the community.

Juniata College (*Huntingdon, Pa.*)

Brandon Moyer, a senior from York, Pa., studying chemistry at Juniata College, has been granted a Fulbright Fellowship to join a research team at Philipps University in Marburg, Germany, for the 2011-2012 academic year by the US Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board. Moyer will spend his year working to develop a catalyst system to synthesize natural products.

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

University of La Verne College of Law professor and dean emeritus Charles S. Doskow has been awarded the 2011 Erwin Chemerinsky Defender of the Constitution Award, which recognizes outstanding work in constitutional law. Doskow, a longtime professor and frequent contributor on legal issues, is the first academic to receive the honor from the Federal Bar Association Inland Empire Chapter.

Manchester College (*North Manchester, Ind.*)

Tough-talking Michelle Rhee, the former chancellor of District of Columbia Public Schools, is Manchester College's 2010 Innovator of the Year. Rhee's high-powered commitment to change as CEO of the 45,000-student, 4,000-teacher D.C. school system has brought praise and scorn, but no one can deny her effectiveness, said Jim Falkiner, the Mark E. Johnston Professor of Entrepreneurship at the college. "Ms. Rhee broke down barriers to improved student performance while demonstrating that the most intractable problems of inner city public education can be addressed with energy and dispatch," said Falkiner.

McPherson College (*McPherson, Kan.*)

Church of the Brethren member Carol White Leland, a McPherson College graduate of the class of 1974 from Maxwell, Iowa, has been re-elected to a five-year term on the college's board of trustees. She has served on the Admissions and Advancement Committee, and the Committee on Trustees. Leland works as a licensed mental health therapist and clinical supervisor, serving on the advisory committee for foster and adoptive issues for the state of Iowa.

Manchester College students honored

Manchester College senior Natalie Collar will develop her language skills this summer in Kyoto, Japan, with a 2011 Critical Language Scholarship from the US Department of State.

Collar, a first-generation college student from Fort Wayne, Ind., spent a year in Sapporo, Japan, with Brethren Colleges Abroad (BCA) and wants more. The mathematics major knows this opportunity to immerse in the Japanese language with other students will be life-changing. "Throughout eight weeks of intensive language study in Kyoto, I will not only have a better grasp of Japanese, but I will also be able to eat, sleep, and breathe in one of the most culturally rich cities in the world."

After completing the program, Collar will return to Manchester College for one more semester. Then, it's on to graduate school in Japanese studies, and then back to Japan to teach English.

Another Manchester College senior, Erin Cole, is recipient of the 2011 Capstone Senior Leadership Award for contributing significantly to



Manchester senior Erin Cole working with immigrants at a Houston shelter and medical clinic

the quality of campus life throughout her Manchester College career. The dedicated, highly motivated student from Mooresville, Ind., is a trailblazer, said Jeff Osborne, associate professor of chemistry.

"Erin is the first person in her family to attend college, and has had to learn to navigate the academic culture of higher education," said Osborne. "She takes responsibility for whatever task she has in front of her, which, combined with her intelligence, yields high-quality results."

Cole has led the Manchester College chapters of Pre-Professionals of Science (and founded it), American Chemical Society, and Alpha Mu Gamma Foreign Language Society. She is a group leader for new student orientation, a photographer for *The Oak Leaves* campus paper and yearbook, and plays violin with the Manchester Symphony Orchestra.

Cole also has contributed her Spanish skills, working with immigrants in a Houston shelter and medical clinic, and joining alumni medical professionals in an arduous practicum in Nicaragua, as well as tutoring area immigrants in English. Next on her life agenda: the rural medicine program of the Indiana University School of Medicine at Terre Haute.

Manchester students have a reputation for service to their communities, their churches, and their college, with more than 20,000 hours logged annually.



Natalie Collar

When the Bible says 'Kill'!

The title of Eryl W. Davies' book, *The Immoral Bible*, is certainly provocative, but its more practical purpose is found in the subtitle:

Approaches to Biblical Ethics. Which approaches in interpretation can help those of us who love the Hebrew scriptures deal with texts that seem to sanction slavery, genocide, and dismemberment?

Davies, who is a reader in the School of Theology and Religious Studies at Bangor University, in the UK, knows it can be difficult to reconcile passages from the Old



FRANK RAMIREZ

Testament that depict what he calls the "vision of a golden age of universal peace and justice" with more difficult passages, in particular the holy war of Joshua 6-11, where it seems that Israel is commanded by God to not only kill enemy armies but women and children. Whether we understand these as literal or symbolic history, how do we interpret these passages?

Because whether we admit it or not, everybody interprets the Bible. If you had ham with your eggs (Deut. 14:8), wear a shirt with blended fabrics (Lev. 19:19), ate beef stroganoff (Deut. 14:21), or did not kill your son when he talked back to you (Deut. 21:18-21), then you have either disobeyed the scriptures or you have interpreted the Bible.

Davies suggests troublesome passages "must be faced head-on," and offers six strategies for doing just that.

These include the Evolutionary approach (God's people, like children, needed to mature before they could be led to higher levels of ethical and religious insight), or Cultural Relativism (you can't judge the beliefs, customs, and practices of a people without understanding their social and historical context). Then there's the "Canon within a Canon" approach, which invites us to simply jettison those scriptures which we find unsuitable. The Canonical approach insists we only understand difficult texts in light of the entire canon of scripture. There is also the Paradigmatic approach, which allows one to name the most representative selections of the

Old Testament, those uplifting portions of the Hebrew Bible, then name them the most foundational.

Each of these approaches has difficulties and limitations. Certainly a century of genocide casts doubts on the idea that we are evolving to a higher morality. Some of the other approaches allow us to cherry-pick those passages we like and ignore the rest. The Canonical approach, championed by the scholar Brevard Childs, is one many of us use. Brethren have always interpreted the Old Testament in the light of the New Testament, and the New Testament in the light of Christ. But most people simply cannot claim they have read and digested the entire Bible to be able to do this properly.

The final approach, which Davies calls the "Reader-Response approach," is the one for my money. It demands that we, the readers, go beyond asking what the text is saying, but ask as well what the text is saying *to us*, as well as what we ought to say back to the text. Instead of being a passive recipient of the Word, this approach invites us to critique, to understand, and to interpret. It forces us to get involved, and to ask what a passage means for our lives of discipleship.

Isn't this what Job does, when he takes God seriously enough to ask serious questions about God? This is certainly the approach of the ancient rabbis, who argued and interpreted across the centuries in the Talmud. And isn't this what Jesus does during the Sermon on the Mount when he redefines elements of the Torah? (See, for instance, Matthew 5:38-39, and compare it to Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20, and Deuteronomy 19:21.)

It is certainly at the heart of the biblical approach shared by the early Brethren, who studied scripture together, asked tough questions, and assumed that by this method they would come to understand the implications of the text for their lives. The first Brethren, who knew their Bibles inside and out, were certainly familiar with the stories of slaughter in the Old Testament, yet they did not feel obligated to go and do likewise.

Neither do we. ❧

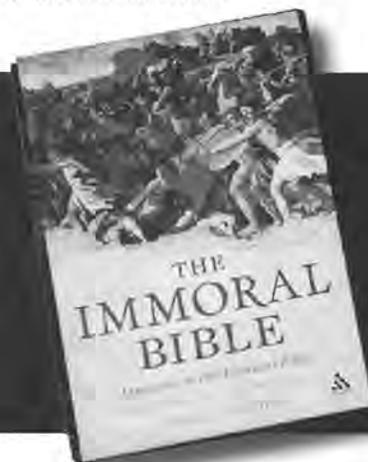
Frank Ramirez is pastor of Ephrata (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Title: *The Immoral Bible: Approaches to Biblical Ethics.* **Author:** Eryl W. Davies.

List price: \$28.59, paperback. **Pages:** 192. **Publisher:** T&T Clark Int'l (November 13, 2010).

According to a review in Amazon.com, "In this work, Eryl W. Davies [examines] . . . the Bible's at times problematic stance upon slavery, polygamy, and . . . the sanctioning of violence and warfare. This is most pertinent in respect to Joshua 6-11, a text which lauds the 'holy war' of the Israelites, annihilating the native inhabitants of Canaan, and a text which has been used to legitimize the actions of white colonists in North America, the Boers in South Africa, and right-wing Zionists in modern Israel."



Truth or opinion—on which will we rely?

I am writing in response to Paul Munday's article in the April edition of MESSENGER. He raises a key point that reaches to the heart of Christianity. Is the Bible the authoritative Word of God? I affirm that it is.

The Holy Scriptures were given by God and receive their authority from him, not from the church. Because they are from God, we know they are true. Since they are true, we ought to conform our thoughts and lives to them, rather than try to make them conform to our human understanding.

The church has faced, is facing, and will continue to face controversial issues. We can look to God's Word to inform our decision-making or we can give preference to the wisdom of the day. In his book, *Scripture Alone*, R.C. Sproul rightly observes that "When the church loses its confidence in the authority of sacred Scripture, the church inevitably looks to human opinion as its guiding light. When that happens, the purity of the church is directly threatened." Truth or opinion—on which will we rely?

Marsha Smith
Johnstown, Pa.

Thank you for an all-accepting MESSENGER

The May MESSENGER gave me renewed appreciation for our lifelong subscription (50 yrs!) to that significant church publication. Perhaps because it brought back significant events in my own life of 90 years.

First, the lead article on the King James Bible reminded me of the presentation I made in 1951 in Mountain Grove, Mo., introducing the Revised Standard Version to an ecumenical audience. At that time, we called it the *New Revised Standard Version*, which it truly was in that southern Missouri area.

Next, I could empathize with Wallace Cole in "Is Jesus still weeping over the Holy Land?" It was in the 1960s when two other Brethren and I toured a much divided Holy Land. As

we left Jordan to cross the border into Israel, the immigration officials wanted us to be sure we did NOT wish to return to Jordan, since Israel did not officially recognize the border. Accordingly, porters carried our luggage to the center of a barren border and deposited our bags there, after which the Israeli officials carried our bags the

remaining distance. All the while we were being observed by soldiers on both sides! Even today, 50 years later, members of the Christian Peacemaker Teams and others experience difficulties at similar borders.

The comments regarding devastated coastal Japanese cities reminded me of the morning in 1991 when we

 **Pontius' Puddle**



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“THE CHURCH HAS FACED, IS FACING, AND WILL CONTINUE TO FACE CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES. WE CAN LOOK TO GOD’S WORD TO INFORM OUR DECISION-MAKING OR WE CAN GIVE PREFERENCE TO THE WISDOM OF THE DAY.”

left Hiroshima following a year of volunteer service at the World Friendship Center. We experienced a small earthquake at that historic city. Fortunately, it was nothing compared to the recent one 500 miles to the north.

Finally, in the “Letters” section, it was encouraging to see that my McPherson College colleague, Joe Dell, also my age, can still write an inspiring letter to the editor!

Thank you for an all-accepting MESSENGER.

Eugene Lichty
McPherson, Kan.

A fundamental question

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 the MESSENGER for keeping me abreast of Church of the Brethren events.

I was inspired by your March issue—its breadth of coverage and timeliness of the articles. I identify with those who feel we ought to desist further give-and-take on the

sexual orientation issues. My experience is that time does bring more light on this issue, 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. I’m sorry my writing is almost unintelligible. My unsuccessful efforts to get access to a computer/typewriter have left me to do it the old way.

Joe Dell
Galt, Calif.

Confusing letter

I found the letter by Allen M. Clague, M.D., in the May issue of MESSENGER to be quite confusing. First of all, Clague is a medical doctor, but he quotes the Academy of Psychiatry and Psychology instead of the American Medical Association. Secondly, I did a Google search and a Bing search and could not find such an organization with the exact name of the American Academy of Psychiatry and Psychology, so I cannot comment on the existence of such an organization or on how the organization arrived at its statement on homosexuality being inherited.

I do know, however, that several years ago a national organization of psychologists made a similar statement based on only about a 52 percent vote in favor of the statement. Clague probably does not reference the A.M.A.

ASK SOMEONE WHO HAS TRAVELED WITH US!

2011 TOURS

- 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)
- OBERAMMERGAU CHRISTMAS MARKET (Dec. 7-11)

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 2-11)
- 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 with JOHN RUTH (July 10-23)
- MENNONITE STORY in POLAND & UKRAINE (September 18-29)
- MEDA TOUR to ETHIOPIA & TANZANIA (Oct.12-22)
- SERVICE TOUR to ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (Oct. 13-22)
- ISRAEL/PALESTINE with NELSON KRAYBILL (Nov.12-21)
- VIETNAM and SINGAPORE (November 12-26)

2013 TOURS

- AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (February 1-21)
- CHURCHES & SAFARIS in KENYA & TANZANIA (February 8-20)
- TOURMAGINATION MYSTERY TOUR (April 17-26)



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because it deals with actual medical scientific evidence instead of opinion. Clague dismisses his own words that a genetic cause of homosexuality is "not confirmed scientifically as yet." I would add that this statement includes all genetic work done by the Human Genome Project, which was completed in 2003. In other words, to date, there has not been any gene identified that transfers homosexuality.

Clague goes on to give eye color and left-handedness as examples of genetics. Would you listen to the A.M.A. or the Academy of Psychiatry and Psychology if you had a question on either of these issues?

Finally, I base my theology on what God says in the Bible. Dr. Clague would have a problem with my last statement because he says he does not believe in a literal interpretation of the Bible since "it was written by humans." I would say to Dr. Clague and others who do

not believe in the literal interpretation of the Bible: Which is harder to believe: that homosexuality is a sin, or that a man who claimed to be God died on a cross, took on all the sins of the world, arose from the dead, and still lives in heaven for eternity?

Carl D. Haas
Elizabethtown, Pa.

Our true spiritual heritage

When I received the May 2011 issue of the Messenger, the first article I read was "I don't know . . . but I believe. . ." by Bill Kidwell (p.6). In just a few lines, the author quickly dispensed with the core of the historic Christian faith.

He wrote, "I don't know much about



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the historical Jesus...," rather than affirming that the four canonical gospels preserve reliable information about our Savior's life, deeds, and teachings.

He also stated, "I don't know what happened to Jesus when he died..." rather than believing the apostolic witness that Jesus' body was resurrected and transformed, leaving an empty tomb, and making possible multiple appearances of the risen

Lord to his followers, resulting in their psychological/spiritual transformation from fearful, defeated disciples into bold witnesses of God's grace and power in Christ.

Kidwell seems to think Jesus only survived death as a "Spirit (risen Christ)." But the scholar N.T. Wright has demonstrated that the Jewish-Christian conception of "resurrection" involved a *bodily* transformation.

Mr. Kidwell even confessed, "I

don't know that good will ultimately triumph over evil..." rather than rejoicing in the clear biblical hope that God's Kingdom will indeed be completely victorious over all evil powers, resulting in the transformation of this earth itself and the resurrection of his redeemed people, and God's eternal reign.

There were other disappointing statements made in Kidwell's article, but those were the most troubling. He repeatedly echoes the views of Robert Funk, John Dominic Crossan, Marcus Borg, John Shelby Spong, et al, rather than proclaiming the life-transforming, evangelical faith anchored in the apostolic witness of the New Testament. That evangelical faith is the true spiritual heritage of the Church of the Brethren and every other group that can honestly claim to be part of the Christian church. I pray that your publication will affirm it rather than undermine it.

Tom Warner
Boise, Idaho

Denominational Deacon Ministry

Resources

Deacon Manual for Caring Ministries
www.brethrenpress.com

Essential Servants: Reflections on the Caring Ministries of Deacons
www.brethren.org/deacons; click Resources

Basin & Towel
www.brethren.org/basintowel

Deacon E-mail Updates
www.brethren.org/signup

Fall 2011 Deacon Workshops:

www.brethren.org/deacontraining

Saturday, September 24
Oakton Church of the Brethren, Vienna, Virginia

Saturday, October 22
Quakertown (Pennsylvania) Church of the Brethren

Saturday, November 12
Lakeview Church of the Brethren, Brethren, Michigan

Consultation

The deacon ministry also offers consulting services to help you create a spirit-filled deacon ministry in your congregation, or help to breathe new life into the one you have.



Church of the Brethren

For more information on these and other deacon ministry topics, contact Donna Kline, Director of Deacon Ministry, 800-323-8039; dkline@brethren.org



CLASSIFIED ADS

Have you placed your Sunday school curriculum order yet? This is the time to place your fall order for Gather 'Round, Guide for Biblical Studies, or other Sunday school curriculum. If you have had an automatic, yearly order in the past, you need to renew that order now for the upcoming Sunday school year. Please call Brethren Press at 800-441-3712 if you have any questions, or would like an order form.

Pre-School Director needed for a Pre-School Start up Program. Green Tree Church of the Brethren, Oaks, PA. The position begins November 2011. Email resume to mistymyers@yahoo.com. For a copy of the job description see greentreecob.org.

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.

Please send information to be included in *Turning Points* to Jean Clements, 1451 Dundee Ave, Elgin, IL 60120; 800-523-8039 ext. 206; jclements@brethren.org. Information must be complete in order to be published. Information older than one year cannot be published.

New Members

Black Rock, Glenville, Pa.: Barbara Bortner, Steve Forbush, Connie Forbush
Cerro Gordo, Ill.: Leslie Carter, Barbara Brown
Denton, Md.: Audrey Owen, Dakota Owen, Michael Lezotte
Fairchance, Pa.: Kathy Opal, Pamela Dodson, Ernest Dodson
Garden City, Kan.: Sherry Stalter
Green Hill, Salem, Va.: Dillon Bryant, Cynthia Cochran, Melissa Conner, Courtney Haga, Heather King, Caitlyn Myers, Cierra Radford, Tristan Tanner, Dustin Thomas, Cody Woolwine
Hempfield, Manheim, Pa.: Jeff Peters, Lynn Peters
Lancaster, Pa.: Lukas Murray, Sarah Shearer, Conner Snyder
Lebanon, Pa.: Hannah E. Ditzler, Amy Kreider
Lititz, Pa.: David Erb, Sandra Erb, Nevin Walter, Judy Walter, Nora Fleischer, Todd Christophel, Janet Christophel, Scott Stuber, Jackie Stuber, Linda Clark, Mike Zimmerman
Maple Grove, Ashland, Ohio: Linda Francis, Don Bassett, Nancy Bassett, Anne Oberholtzer, Flo Oberholtzer, Tommy Oberholtzer, Clyde Benner, Jr., Lynda Benner, Adalia Brindle, Ashley Brindle, Carrie Crossen
Marsh Creek, Gettysburg, Pa.: Michael J. Nonemaker, Alan Patterson, Donald Trostle, Shirley Trostle, Matthew Daubert, Desiree Daubert, Lance Martin, Rebecca Martin, Bryan Warner

McPherson, Kan.: Johanna Hoffman, Brooke Holloway, Audrey Miller, Kaitlyn van Asselt, Ruth Whitacre
Miami, First, Miami, Fla.: Margo Menconi, George Pacheco, Naomi Thomas
Montgomery, Commodore, Pa.: Jean Woods
Nappanee, Ind.: Kenny Grimm, Vern Zentz, Dean Kauffman, Dora Kauffman, Marlin Miller, Anita Miller, Carlin Swihart, Ken Heckathorn, Wanda Heckathorn
New Enterprise, Pa.: Ashlyn Baker, Krista Foor, Whitley Furry, Kim Shope, Robert Shope, Jerry Mellott, Nancy Mellott, Vaughn Loose
Peace, Portland, Ore.: Shane Anderson Copenhagen, Paul Libby
Peoria, Ill.: Jocelyn Lewis, Dorinda Dare, Rosemary Davenport
Prairie City, Iowa: Gavin Johnson, Isabelle Johnson, Tristan Johnson, Keith Timmons
Purchase Line, Clymer, Pa.: Laura Simms, Brian Spencer
Roaring Spring, Pa.: Courtney Frye, Cameron Norris, Alyssa Acker, Trey Reininger, Julie Dilling-Mussleman, Marissa Delozier, Codie Delozier, Madeline Bartek
Sam's Creek, New Windsor, Md.: Judy Bowlin, Ann Colson, Doug Colson, Mary Colson, Bill Colson, Clarence Maring, Beverly Maring, Debbie Mirfin
Spring Creek, Hershey, Pa.: Alicia Blizzard
Topeka, Kan.: Kylee C. Dutch
White Oak, Manheim, Pa.: Melissa Brubaker, Demas Moyer, Jasmine Clapper, Deitrick Copenhaver, Alayna Gregory, Wendall Hess, Charlotte Martin, Tenaya Metzler, Esme Negley, Auguste Nolt, Blaine Rohrer, Kya Snyder, Madison Wagner, Samuel Zuck

Wedding Anniversaries

Ebersole, Harold and Beulah, Palmyra, Pa., 60
Eveland, Herb and Diane, Plymouth, Ind., 50
Fourman, Jim and Donna, Greenville, Ohio, 60
Mathis, Andrew and Caryl, Tampa, Fla., 65
Miller, Howard F. and Eva Mae, Takoma Park, Md., 60
Olwill, Willard and Virginia, La Verne, Calif., 70
Snyder, Bill and Sharon, Plymouth, Ind., 50
Thompson, Hubert and Irene, Greenville, Ohio, 70
Yoder, Pete and Shirley, Sarasota, Fla., 50
Harleysville, Pa., April 30
Hartman, Bryan, 88, Franklin, W.Va., Aug. 10, 2010
Hershey, Glenn H., 83, Manheim, Pa., Jan. 27
Hopkins, Ovilla Marie, 73, Woolwine, Va., May 19
Jacoby, Dorothy E., 94, Lancaster, Pa., April 14
Jenkins, Betty Louise, 77, Gettysburg, Pa., May 15, 2010
Jenkins, Daniel Herman, 80, Gettysburg, Pa., May 27, 2010
Kagarise, Vergie Brumbaugh, 92, New Enterprise, Pa., May 8
King, James, 63, Clinton, Tenn., March 8
Kleinke, Frank Elliott, 86, Plymouth, Ind., April 20
Landis, Ella Mae, 86, Lititz, Pa., Feb. 28
Long, Richard Melvin, 88, Hagerstown, Md., May 5
May, Twila LuAnn, 70, Bridgewater, Va., Jan. 5
McCroary, Harold, 94, Lenexa, Kan., May 10
Miller, Kathryn M., 84, Lancaster, Pa., April 22
Miller, Marvin C., 73, Plymouth, Ind., April 16
Moyers, Mary Martha, 82, Franklin, W.Va., Jan. 17
Neff, Paul L., 93, East Petersburg, Pa., May 1
Nissley, Erma M., 83, Manheim, Pa., April 27
Nissley, W. Scott, 88, Lancaster, Pa., May 12
Orebaugh, Elizabeth G., 80, Stuarts Draft, Va., April 26
Puffenbarger, Virgil D., 85, Franklin, W.Va., April 20
Reppert, Arlene K., 88, Lititz, Pa., April 2
Sales, Louella M., 77, Peoria, Ill., Dec. 8
Selmon, Alice K., 86, Cherry Grove, W.Va., Feb. 12
Selmon, Otis, 102, Cherry Grove, W.Va., April 19
Smith, Goldie Arlene, 73, Milam, W.Va., May 1
Snider, James M., 79, Goshen, Ind., May 11
Strayer, Ruby Marie, 92, Norton, Kan., March 9
Swope, Clarence E., 83, Manheim, Pa., April 26
Thornburg, James O., 84, Plymouth, Ind., May 14
Tidd, Charles Franklin, 82,

Stuarts Draft, Va., Jan. 13
Toews, Jacob J., Jr., 95, Lititz, Pa., April 28
Unrau, Neva, 86, Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 20
Vandevander, Jenny Almira, 95, Franklin, W.Va., May 8
Waggy, Erma Alice, 88, Franklin, W.Va., April 26
Wagner, Elaine L., 88, Lincoln, Neb., Nov. 29
Wampler, Mary Lenora Brumbaugh Spitzer, 108, West Milton, Ohio, May 16
Wareham, K. Geraldine, 88, Roaring Spring, Pa., April 11
Wittman, Barbara A., 59, Polk, Ohio, April 24
Ziegler, Esther L., 85, Audubon, Pa., May 10

Licensings

Duhai, Karen M., Mid. Pa. Dist. (Bedford, Pa.), May 8
Isaac, Connie L., W. Plains Dist. (Prince of Peace, Littleton, Colo.), April 2
Montgomery, Christopher, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Drexel Hill, Pa.), Dec. 19

Placements

Emmons, Timothy H., from associate pastor, Mount Bethel, Eagle Rock, Va., to pastor, Nineveh, Hardy, Va., April 1
Haldeman Scarr, Sara, associate pastor, Pomona Fellowship, Pomona Calif., May 1
Hershberger, Stephen C., pastor, Friendship, Linthicum, Md., May 1
Howell, Gregory M., associate pastor, Pleasant Dale, Fincastle, Va., May 1
McDaniel, L. David, pastor, Bethel, Arrington, Va., May 22
Reyes, Lillian E., pastor, Iglesia de Los Hermanos y Centro Familiar, Inc., Bayamon, P.R., May 1
Veal, Douglas E. O., pastor, Daleville, Va., May 1
Weaver, Ann M., pastor, Waterford, Calif., July 1, 2010
Weldy, Allen C., pastor, Rossville, Ind., May 15
Worhun, Dore Lynn, pastor of visitation, Akron, Pa., April 1

Why the elephant will not leave

Tired of talking about homosexuality, inclusivity, the Special Response Process? It's been the elephant in our denominational living room for the past two years, especially this past year. And it just seems to be getting bigger.

Some people would like to ignore it, or leave it behind. Can't we just move on? Didn't we settle this in 1983? One unhappy member called the Elgin offices recently and com-



RANDY MILLER
Interim MESSENGER Editor

plained that MESSENGER has become essentially pornography, what with all the material it's run about the Special Response *issue du jour*. (Don't kill the messenger. . . .)

The late Harry Chapin—the 1970s folksinger most known for his hit, “Cats in the Cradle,” about a father who spends too little time with his son and lives to regret it—started a nonprofit organization called World Hunger Year. People often asked him, “What happens when the year is up?” To which he would reply, “Every year is World Hunger Year until we eradicate hunger from the planet.”

An ad for MSNBC in the June 13 and 20 *New Yorker* magazine carried a quote from *Hardball* host Chris Matthews. He says, “Over time, people who advance liberties tend to win the argument, whether it's for women, African Americans, immigrants, or the gay community. In

no longer embodies the kind of embracing love Jesus was talking about, maybe it's time to split. Because ultimately, the denomination is merely a vehicle for carrying out the kind of justice-filled love Jesus was talking about. We are called to love one another, not preserve an institution.

This “elephant in the room” has been the focus of a disproportionate number of these editorials over the past year, not so much because there's nothing else to write about, but simply because it's been the major focus of the denomination. (Back during the Vietnam War days, it was our Brethren tradition of nonviolence that tended to get the lion's share of attention.)

As you may have noticed, while some who have contributed letters and columns have pressed for a split, I have quietly urged us to try and find a way to recognize and respect one other as brothers and sisters, agree to disagree, and move ahead as one. Because I love the Church of the Brethren. I love singing “Move in our Midst” in a big arena filled with harmonizing Brethren as much as anybody. And if we split, that experience—along with many others we have grown to cherish—may become a thing of the past.

The Decade to Overcome Violence has ended, as our cover story for this issue indicates. But that doesn't mean our job is done. There is still plenty of violence in the world. To borrow from Harry Chapin, every decade is the Decade to Overcome Violence until it is eradicated from the planet.

The struggle for peace never ends as long as there are those living with violence. The quest for liberty and justice for

THAT ELEPHANT IS JUST GOING TO KEEP ON LUMBERING AROUND
IN OUR LIVING ROOM UNTIL SOMEONE PAYS ATTENTION TO HIM. . . .
FROM WHAT I HEAR, ELEPHANTS CAN BE VERY PATIENT.

the end, America takes the side of the people looking for rights. That's one of the wonders of this country. Eventually, we live up to our ideals.”

What are our ideals? Our beliefs as Christians? And, more specifically, as Brethren? What defines us? That's a big part of what we've been wrestling with as we've gone through this Special Response Process. It matters because we love our denomination. We love our rich heritage and our traditions. But while that's important, what really matters is how we treat one another. “Love one another, as I have loved you,” Jesus said. That was the bottom line for him.

Some have argued that if the denomination we cherish

all—as promised even in the American pledge of allegiance—will not rest until everyone can experience that promise.

That's why this topic won't be left alone by those who, guided by their conscience and their understanding of the teachings of Jesus, continue to press for a hearing.

It's not really a matter of homosexuality. It's a matter of justice. A matter of rights and respect. And a matter of compassion.

That elephant is just going to keep on lumbering around in our living room until someone pays attention to him and gives him some respect. From what I hear, elephants can be very patient. 

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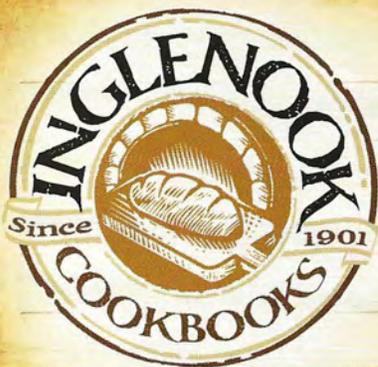
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