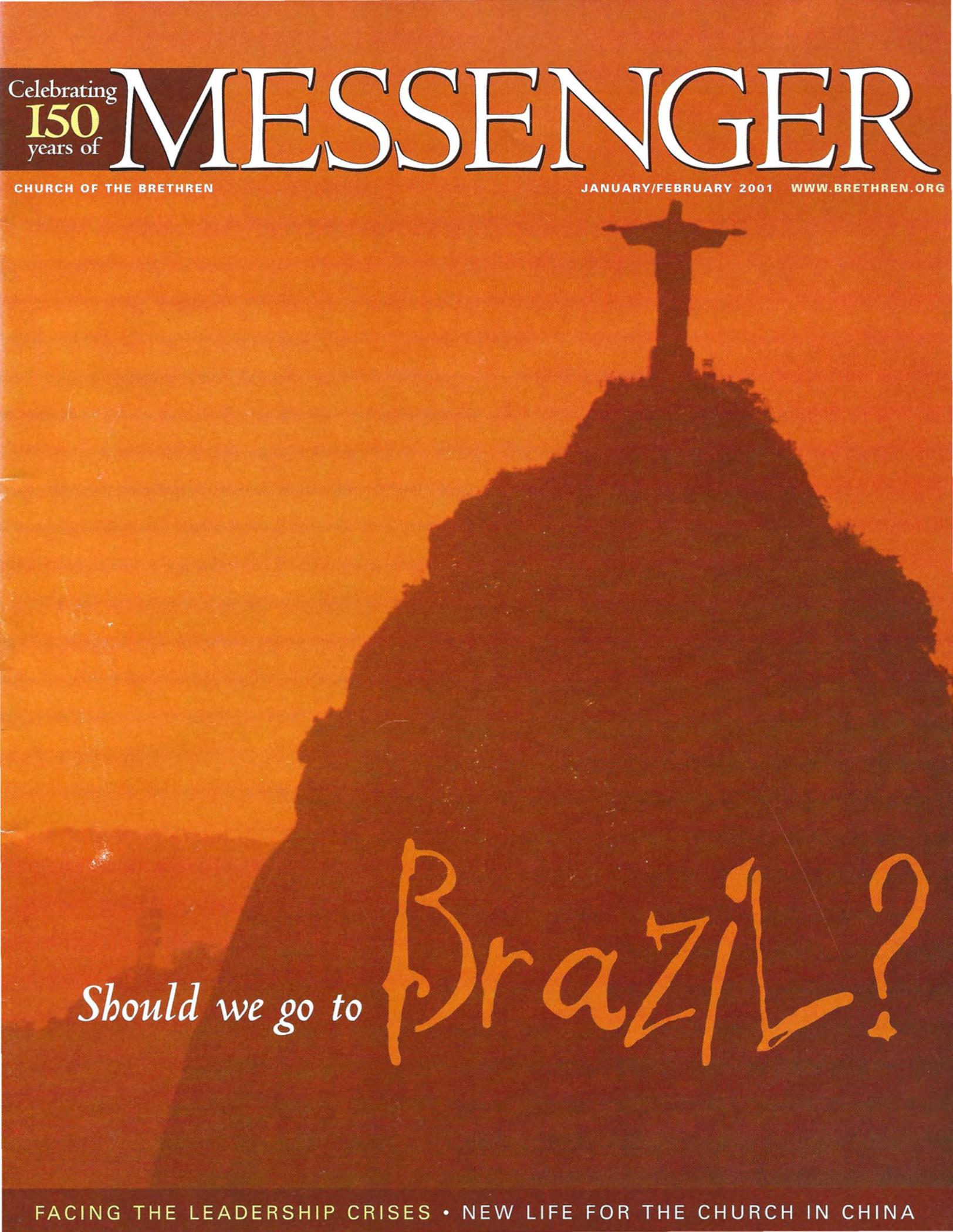


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# MESSENGER

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*This is a combined January/February issue.  
The next MESSENGER will appear in March.*



## ONTHECOVER

The most famous landmark of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, is "Christ, the Redeemer." The 100-foot-tall statue stands on a hill overlooking Rio, and blesses the city with open arms. It is a fitting image for this month's cover story, which asks whether Christ is calling the Church of the Brethren to new mission and ministry in Brazil, South America's largest country.

## DEPARTMENTS

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## 12 School of the Americas protest

Nearly 100 Brethren were among the 10,000 who demonstrated in November against the School of the Americas at Ft. Benning, Ga. Why? Answers are in this special report by Marc Rittle and Greg Laszakovits of the Washington Office.

## 14 Brethren to Brazil?

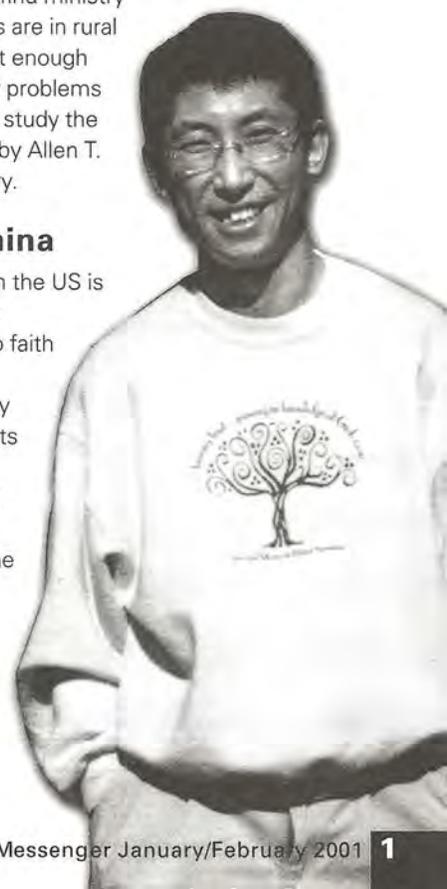
Church of the Brethren leaders are considering new mission opportunities in Brazil. But there are many questions, like where to start, and how much will it cost? And how can the church avoid mistakes made the last time we went to Brazil?

## 22 Not enough ministers

Too many churches must go without trained pastors, while not enough women find ministry jobs. Most of our churches are in rural areas and small towns; not enough are in inner cities. Ministry problems become clearer when you study the statistics, presented here by Allen T. Hansell, director of ministry.

## 28 The church in China

Now attending seminary in the US is the grandson of a Chinese Christian pastor brought to faith by Brethren missionaries. Interviewed by Dorothea Fry Mason, Hongtao Yin reports on the thriving Christian church in China today, and his hope to be a bridge of understanding between the US and China.



## FROM THE PUBLISHER



**T**here is no shortage of things that I would like to know, but most of the time I just want to know them—not actually *learn* them. Learning seems like a lot of work. I want to skip the hard part and head straight for the reward.

Discipleship is something like that. Lots of us have good intentions about being followers of Jesus, but not too many are studying. Education is generally crammed into 45 minutes after worship—not counting summers, holidays, and other times the schedule doesn't suit. Of course, Christian education isn't really confined to the Sunday school hour. But the foundation that Sunday school provides is crucial to faith development.

As an increasing number of activities, both inside and outside the church, vie for our attention, it's clear that nurturing discipleship involves a commitment to Christian education in all its forms. Now that she has reached sixth grade, my oldest daughter has two new important ways of relating to the church. One is by being a member of the junior high youth group. The other is by having a mentor, a relationship created by and cared for through a carefully run program at church that connects adults, youth, and their families. Cassidy's mentor, who takes the responsibility very seriously, honored her recent baptism by giving her a song she had written just for her.

Not only was the decision to be baptized a statement of faith on Cassidy's part, but the day took on the character of a rite of passage, not unlike those that are practiced in other traditions. A small group of family and friends came together to mark the occasion. It was simple, but memorable. My daughter does not yet have many words to express what her baptism means to her. But then, don't we all find that the meaning in a special event is not fully known until later?

The other young person being baptized that day was baptized in a Jubilee T-shirt. It was a wonderful symbol for me of the confluence of the various efforts a congregation makes as it nurtures a child. It begins with child consecration, but before long involves the Bible story taught through the Jubilee Sunday school curriculum, and eventually brings in many other formative experiences.

For Christian educators everywhere, a guiding scripture is the Shema, in Deuteronomy 6, from which comes the name of Brethren Press's membership curriculum, *Heart, Soul, and Mind*. It concludes this way: "Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

It's a tall order, but I know that my whole congregation—and even the wider church—is helping us parents teach our children how to live the greatest commandment.

*Wendy McFadden*

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Jeff Metzler



Jeff Metzler

**Using state-of-the-art material, Harold Metzler builds earthquake-resistant houses in Honduras.** Above, left: Harold holds the reason for building better houses. Above, right: On location in Honduras, Harold assembles the special framework that he designed.

## Harold Metzler builds houses and a lot more

Harold Metzler is a builder. Professionally, he worked as a builder prior to his retirement in 1995. Beyond his profession, however, Harold helped Mennonite Central Committee build health clinics in Armenia after the earthquake and the Church of the Brethren build two churches in the Dominican Republic. He is a member of Memorial Church of the Brethren, Martinsburg, Pa.

In 1999 and 2000, Harold decided that there must be a better way. As Domenico Biardini said following the earthquake in Colombia, "If you want to save lives you have to build a better house."

So Harold designed a better house. Using composite, state-of-the-art material, a house was designed that would resist earthquakes, hurricanes, and termites while still allowing for ease of construction. The prototype house was first test-built in Martinsburg, Pa., then disassembled and shipped to Honduras where a team from the Memorial Church of the Brethren spent one week erecting the frame and enclosing the house.

The construction team (Dane Mountain, Marlys Hershberger, Ike Wright, Darrell Smith, Charles Copeland, and Jamie, Jeff, Randy, and Harold Metzler) shared the dream of building a better house. They were also building a stronger faith and building a bigger bridge between the two worlds. That shouldn't be surprising; Harold Metzler is a builder.—Chris Bowman

## Black Valley celebrates a history of unity

The Black Valley Federated Church of the Brethren and Christian celebrated in October the 25th anniversary of the federated church. The theme for the service was, appropriately, "Unity Fellowship."

Located seven miles south of Everett, Pa., the church has a history of unity. It was founded as the Black Valley Union Church in 1882 by a coalition of Methodists, Lutherans, and Brethren.

In 1975 the Church of the Brethren congregation of the

church formed a federation with the members of the Christian church who worshiped there. Since then, the church has been served by one pastor, although it divides its outreach spending 50/50 between denominations.

A report prepared for the anniversary has this to say about unity: "Most members don't see themselves as two different groups in the congregation, but as one congregation with ties to two denominations."

Frank Wheeland serves the church as pastor.

## In Northern Ireland, walking on holy ground

by Gail Erisman Valeta

I was walking on holy ground. My colleague, Barbara Daté, and I were in Ireland at the request of a Methodist Irish peace and reconciliation worker, Geoffrey Cory.

About two weeks before we left for Ireland, the Executive (the governing body that came into being because of the Good Friday Agreements in 1998) became activated again. When Sinn Fein, the political party attached to the Irish Republican Army, agreed to weapons inspections, the peace process began to speed forward after a two-year standstill.

We witnessed history in the making. We also heard the stories of incredible steps toward reconciliation and peace between



people who have been at war with each other for the past 30 years.

We witnessed a gathering of "victims" of the violence in Ireland and Northern Ireland known as "the Troubles." At the request of the victims, a time was set up for participants to meet with politicians from Ireland and Northern Ireland. This event was called the L.I.V.E. (Let's Involve the Victims' Experiences) Convention.

**Brethren peace workers** Gail Erisman Valeta, left, and Barbara Daté, right, with Irish lay peacemaker Colin Murphy at Northern Ireland's Christian peace center, Corrymeela.

It took only about five minutes to realize I was walking on holy ground. We met an Orangeman whom I will call "Will." The Orange Order is a group of Northern Irish Protestants who, in their best moments, stand for human rights. At other moments, they incite their Protestant membership to violence.

As you can imagine, Will's presence at this ecumenical event with both Protestant and Catholic victims put him at considerable risk with his community back home. Will bore some physical scars from being at the "wrong place at the wrong time" during "the Troubles." What impressed me the most was being privileged to hear Will describe his emotional scars. He confesses that he had to overcome alcoholism, anger, rage, damaging behavior toward his family members, and the deep desire for revenge. On his healing journey, he has come to choose the path of reconciliation. He knows that in this room with other victims, his feelings are okay and it is safe to have them.

From victims I heard these comments: "I can say things to people here in this room that I can't say to my own family. Back home I have to be a man and not show my feel-



A place for contemplation: Manchester's Gladdys Muir Peace Garden.

## Manchester College dedicates peace garden

About 100 people gathered in October for the dedication of Manchester College's Gladdys Muir Peace Garden, at the intersection of College Avenue and Wayne Street. Muir established the college's peace studies program in 1948, the nation's first such program. The college began construction of the garden in 1998 in celebration of the program's 50th anniversary.

Designed by Daniel Krall, a 1968 Manchester graduate and an associate professor landscape architecture at Cornell University, the garden is intended to give visitors the opportunity for relaxation and contemplation.

ings, not say, 'I love you.' I try to make myself do it, but I can't." And, "This L.I.V.E. weekend for victims is my chance to get help for me. I don't want to live with the hate anymore. I want to be whole again." I know I was walking on holy ground that day.

By conventional wisdom standards, the people we met should be the ones to perpetuate the violence, not call an end to it. They have the right to be angry, to seek revenge, and seek justice for wrongs they suffered and refuel the fires of "the Troubles." If the victims of the "enemy" refuse to continue the hate, what excuse does the rest of society have to perpetuate the cycle of violence?

Ireland lives with the history of 800 years of oppression by the British, including ethnic cleansing and the ravages of the potato famine. How can a society trans-

form 800 years of oppression? It was the victims who taught me the answer. It is one person at a time. From the victims we heard the declaration that the transformation has to come in their own generation and they will spend their lives helping to bring about those changes.

There are no simple solutions to a conflict that has lasted more than 800 years and has more sides than I can count. But there are people in the rest of the world who can stand in the gap! There are people who can dare to hope for our brothers and sisters when it is too painful and too soon to risk hope again. There are people who can stand in the gap when "the will" and "the way" need support from outsiders.

Opportunities with the Christian Peacemaker Teams may materialize to literally "stand in the gap" during Northern Ireland's tense

weeks leading up to the annual commemoration parades celebrating the July 12, 1690, battle victory of Protestant William of Orange.

From prayers to informed advocacy, those supportive outsiders can be you and me.

Church of the Brethren members Gail Erisman Valeta and Barbara Daté spent 30 days during June and July 2000 as consultants for peace and reconciliation workers in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Barbara, a professional mediator and reconciliation counselor from Winnipeg, Canada, was again in Northern Ireland last month for peacemaking consultations.

Gail Erisman Valeta is an ordained pastor in the Church of the Brethren. She has served the church as a teacher in Jos, Nigeria, as a copastor at Trinity Church of the Brethren in Massillon, Ohio, and as a pastor at Buckeye Church of the Brethren near Abilene, Kan. Gail currently serves as the associate coordinator of Justice and Peace Studies at Liff School of Theology in Denver, Colo. She is completing her master's degree in conflict resolution from the University of Denver. She is married to David Valeta and is the mother of two children.

### **She sought meaningful work, and found it**

Beth Weddle, 88-year-old longtime member of the Ellisforde Church of the Brethren, Tonasket, Wash., is making plans for her third trip to do volunteer work in Wichita, Kan.

After the 1998 death of her husband of 68 years, Weddle searched for meaningful volunteer work she could do. Since she had reared six children and several foster children, worked at a youth ranch, and helped her husband organize and manage their own ranch, she decided to go as cook for the 12-member Church of the

Brethren Washington Disaster Relief Team that went to aid victims of the Haysville tornado in 1999.

Trees for Life (TFL), an international organization that has planted millions of fruit trees in Third World countries, housed the workers in their volunteer residence called The Tree House. "Come back and do volunteer work with us," TFL's Balbir Mathur suggested. And so, after praying for guidance, Weddle flew back to Kansas in January of 2000.

"It was the most mind-expanding, challenging experience of my life," says Weddle, "even though most of the group were 50-60



years younger than me."

A highly energetic person who enjoys a good laugh, Weddle sharpened her typing skills and learned about the computer while she sorted, dated, and organized art pictures submitted by thousands of Kansas children to TFL's contest for a

new button design.

"God willing, I'm coming back," Weddle promised with her trademark smile, when she left this past February. So Beth Weddle made plans to pack her suitcase and return in January 2001, to spend another six weeks as a TFL volunteer in Wichita, Kan.

—Irene S. Reynolds

### **"The most mind-expanding, challenging experience of my life"**

*is how Beth Weddle describes her volunteer experience at Trees for Life.*

### **Remembered**

**Galen Ogden, 88**, died Dec. 3 in La Verne, Calif. For 18 years he was an executive of the General Board. From 1959 to 1968 he was executive of the Ministry and Home Missions Commission; from 1968 to 1977 he was an associate general secretary and executive of the General Services Commission. In this latter capacity he was also executive of the Pension Board.

A small group discusses the death penalty during Bible study session at the Antioch Church of the Brethren, near Roanoke, Va.

Ronald Berkheimer



## BRETHRENSPEAK

Every now and then I may sound a tad critical of the church, but I love the church. I love the Church of the Brethren. I love where we've been; I even love where we are, but I'm also sad where we are."

*Annual Conference moderator-elect Paul Grout, during a workshop for youth leaders*

### Virgina approves a Call to Action against the death penalty

Delegates to the Virgina District conference voted to call for an end to capital punishment in Virginia, North Carolina, and West Virginia.

The Virgina District consists of 92 congregations and fellowships in portions of those three states. West Virginia is one of 12 states without the death penalty, but proposed legislation providing for capital punishment is introduced in the West Virginia state legislature from time to time. Virginia, however, is second only to Texas in the number of executions since 1976, when a US Supreme Court decision allowed states to reinstate the death penalty.

With few dissenting votes, delegates to the November district conference in Rocky Mount, Va., passed "A Call to Action on the Death Penalty."

The "Call to Action" says in part: "... we oppose publicly the imposition of the death penalty by the Commonwealth of Virginia and the State of North Carolina and the reintroduction of the death penalty in

the State of West Virginia."

The document also said church members should urge legislators to reconsider their positions on the death penalty, to heed calls for another moratorium "so that alternatives to the death penalty can be explored in an environment that encourages open and candid discussion." It also called for repeal of Virginia's "21-day rule," prohibiting the introduction of new evidence in any case more than 21 days after sentencing.

When the Virgina district conference began, Texas had carried out 235 executions, Virginia 80, and North Carolina 16 since 1976. Newspaper and magazine stories had pointed out that Virginia, with a smaller population than Texas, was conducting proportionately more executions until a few months ago. Texas has now passed Virginia even in this respect, with 37 executions this year through mid-November, compared to Virginia's 6.

Virginia's record troubled many young church members in the Virgina District. Although the district includes parts of North Carolina and West Virginia, most of its churches are in southern Virginia.

When the district Youth Cabinet expressed its concern about the death penalty to district officers, the matter was referred to the Peace Affairs Committee of the district. The committee—Tom Bryant, Clyde Carter, Tim Emmons, Janice Kulp-Long, and Jack Karpenske—wrote the "Call to Action" and its accompanying recommendations.

The Church of the Brethren as a denomination has declared its opposition to the death penalty three times at Annual Conference (1957, 1959, and 1975). In addition, in 1979, a General Board resolution reaffirmed the Annual Conference statements.

Members of the Peace Affairs Committee knew, however, that some Brethren continue to support the death penalty. In an effort to give church members throughout the district an opportunity to comment on the "Call to Action," a series of Bible study discussions on the death penalty was held during the fall at six local churches.

The discussions were lively. Some participants, including both opponents and supporters of the death penalty, had compiled lists of scriptural references that they believed



Ronald Berkheimer

**Clyde Carter, a member of the Peace Affairs Committee of Virlina District, makes his point during death penalty discussions.**

validated their own opinions.

Death penalty supporters relied mostly on Old Testament verses. But a retired minister, Fenton Platter, attending the discussion at the Cloverdale church in Roanoke, argued that there is support for the death penalty in the New Testament as well. He said Jesus advocated the death penalty in Matt. 26:52 when he said, "... all who take the sword will perish by the sword." Others disagreed, indicating that they regard Jesus' command in the Sermon on the Mount to extend mercy to others, and his refusal to condemn a woman caught in the act of adultery, as convincing evidence that he didn't approve of the death penalty.

About 30 participants in the discussion at the Antioch church, between Roanoke and Rocky Mount, seemed to agree that the New Testament rejects the apparent Old Testament approval of the death penalty for a variety of offenses ranging from murder to blasphemy, adultery, and striking or cursing a parent. An Antioch parishioner said she regarded Jesus as more authoritative than Moses.

"The Church of the Brethren is a New Testament church," added Clyde Carter of Daleville, Va.

At the Virlina district conference, 23 delegates went to microphones to comment on the "Call to Action" and on the death penalty in general during

a discussion lasting more than an hour. Most speakers opposed capital punishment, and the "Call to Action" passed by an overwhelming margin.

The Virlina District's action was especially satisfying to Jeff Carter, associate pastor of the Manassas Church of the Brethren in northeastern Virginia. The peace committee of the Manassas church has been advocating alternatives to the death penalty since 1996. Following a series of meetings in the homes of congregation members, a weekend retreat, and discussions in Sunday school classes, in November 1998 the Manassas church passed its own resolution against the death penalty.

Copies of the document were mailed to every Brethren congregation in Virginia, with a letter asking each church to initiate a dialog on capital punishment among its own members, and to take part in local or statewide activities in opposition to the death penalty.

Carter said he believes support is growing in Virginia for a death penalty moratorium, a first step toward abolition.

Since 1993 the Virginia Council of Churches has been conducting its own campaign against the death penalty. All 23 denominations affiliated with the council have adopted statements against capital punishment.—Ronald Berkheimer

Ron Berkheimer, of Moneta, Va., is a member of Central Church of the Brethren, Roanoke, Va. He is retired. He writes magazine and newspaper articles about wildlife and insects, illustrated with his own photographs.

## Youth leaders hear call to seek Christ

More than five dozen youth advisors and others who work with youth attended this year's National Youth Ministry Workshop, an all-day event held Nov. 18 at the Chambersburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren. The annual event is sponsored by the General Board's Youth/Young Adult Ministries office and its Jr. High Ministry Task Force.

Paul Grout of Putney, Vt., served as the keynote leader for the event, using the theme, "The God-Centered Life: What It Means to Be Alive."

"We must help our young people understand what's getting in our way of being alive," Grout said, asserting that we don't ask enough of youth.

Grout urged youth leaders to be in tune with the popular culture that engages youth. He used clips from several films to illustrate nuggets of truth found in contemporary media, while also discussing society's destructive consumer culture. Personal stories, artwork, and writings, including his recent "Seven Symptoms of Wellness," further illustrated his remarks, all pointing to the importance of a relationship with Jesus Christ.

David Sollenberger of Annville, Pa., videotaped the workshop, and those tapes will be available through the Youth/Young Adult Ministries office. Call 800-323-8039 or e-mail cdouglas\_gb@brethren.org for details on obtaining a copy of the video.

## New youth cabinet will plan NYC 2002

The General Board's Youth/Young Adult Office has announced the members of the 2001-2002 National Youth Cabinet, which will plan the National Youth Conference scheduled for July 2002.

Youth members are Kristin Frick, La Verne, Calif.; Jeff McAvoy, Live Oak, Calif.; Justin North, Greenville, Ohio; Brandy J. Shelton, Winston-Salem, N.C.; and Crystal Waggy, Goshen, Ind.

Wendi Hutchinson of North Manchester, Ind.—an NYC assistant coordinator in 1994—and David Steele of Martinsburg, Pa., are adult advisors for the cabinet, joining Youth/Young Adult Ministries coordinator Chris Douglas.

## Regional conferences to draw youth

Four regional conferences are planned for Church of the Brethren youth in 2001, stretching from the East Coast through the Plains (West Coast youth meet only once every four years). The conferences are as follows:

- Regional Youth Conference**, McPherson (Kan.) College, Feb. 9-11
  - Eastern Regional Youth Conference**, Juniata College (Huntingdon, Pa.), March 10-11; keynote leader Paul Grout
  - Regional Youth Conference**, Manchester College (North Manchester, Ind.), April 20-22; keynote leader Jeff Carter; music by Ken Medema
  - Roundtable**, Bridgewater (Va.) College, April 21-22; keynote leader Gilbert Romero
- Contact district offices for further information.

## UPCOMINGEVENTS

**Jan. 13-Feb. 12 Global Mission Partnerships'** Nigeria workcamp

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

**Jan. 21-Feb. 9 Brethren Volunteer Service Unit 242**, Orlando, Fla.

**Feb. 1-12 Association of Brethren Caregivers'** Older Adult workcamp to Puerto Rico

**Feb. 4 Launch of World Council of Churches' Decade to Overcome Violence**, Berlin, Germany

**Feb. 9-11 Regional Youth Conference**, McPherson (Kan.) College

**Feb. 16-18 Anabaptist Evangelism Council**, Church of the Brethren General Offices, Elgin, Ill.

**Feb. 23-25 Dominican Republic Iglesias de los Hermanos conference assembly** (La Conferencia), San Juan de la Maguana, D.R.

## BrethrenPress.com opens its virtual doors

A new Church of the Brethren e-commerce site opened its Internet doors Dec. 1 when Brethren Press' online store, at [www.BrethrenPress.com](http://www.BrethrenPress.com) hit cyberspace. It became the only current e-commerce site of any of the denominational agencies.

The project, in development for the past 10 months, is the result of a partnership of the General Board's Brethren Press unit and Brethren Benefit Trust's eMountain Communications. Brethren Press marketing manager Russ Matteson calls it a "valuable partnership."

The site features a dynamic data structure that provides customers with advanced search queries of 1,400 products and allows new items and product categories to be added with relative ease. "We believe that customers will find the site easy to navigate and find what they are looking for," Matteson says.

A thumbnail image of each product is provided along with title, author name, description, and other information. Other features allow customers to review their previous purchases, receive e-mail verification of

each purchase, and send purchased items to alternative shipping addresses—for example, sending holiday gifts.

Credit card purchases were expected to be possible by January. Until then, existing or new Brethren Press accounts were used for placing orders.

Additional enhancements are expected in coming months. For more information or to be placed on a list to learn of BrethrenPress.com updates, write to [brethrenpress\\_gb@brethren.org](mailto:brethrenpress_gb@brethren.org). Information on eMountain Communications is available at [www.emountain.net](http://www.emountain.net) or by calling 800-250-5757.

## Annual Conference names leaders for Baltimore 2001

The Annual Conference office has announced musical and Bible study leadership for the 2001 Conference, to be held June 30-July 4 in Baltimore, Md.

Sarah Baile Steele of Martinsburg, Pa., has been named music coordinator for the event. Susan Dommer of Manassas, Va., will serve as choir director; Don Horn of Arlington, Va., as Conference organist; and Linda Hollinger of Haymarket, Va., as pianist. The chancel choir of the York (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren, directed by David Diehl, will provide special music for the Saturday evening worship service.

Warren Eshbach (Thomasville, Pa.), dean of graduate studies for Bethany Theological Seminary's Susquehanna Valley Satellite, will lead evening Bible studies during three days of the Conference. Morning Bible studies will be led by Larry Dentler, pastor of the Bermudian Church of the Brethren (East Berlin, Pa.); Carol Schep-

pard of Bridgewater (Va.) College; and Kim McDowell, pastor of the University Park Church of the Brethren (Hyattsville, Md.).

Jaime Díaz of the Castañer (P.R.) Church of the Brethren is serving as Hispanic Bible study coordinator.

## Seminary board sets strategic plan in motion

The Bethany Theological Seminary Board held its semi-annual meeting Oct. 27-29 in Richmond, Ind., welcoming four new members. In a major item, the board approved a strategic plan for 2001-2006 that anticipates the following outcomes:

- Design and implementation of a distributed education programming (permitting off-site study).

- Implementation of the program of the Institute for Ministry With Youth and Young Adults.

- New ministers in the Church of the Brethren served by Bethany's programs will have increased significantly beyond their current number.

- Students participating in Brethren Academy programs will have expanded opportunities for utilizing Bethany-related learning experiences and will recognize themselves as alumni/ae of Bethany.

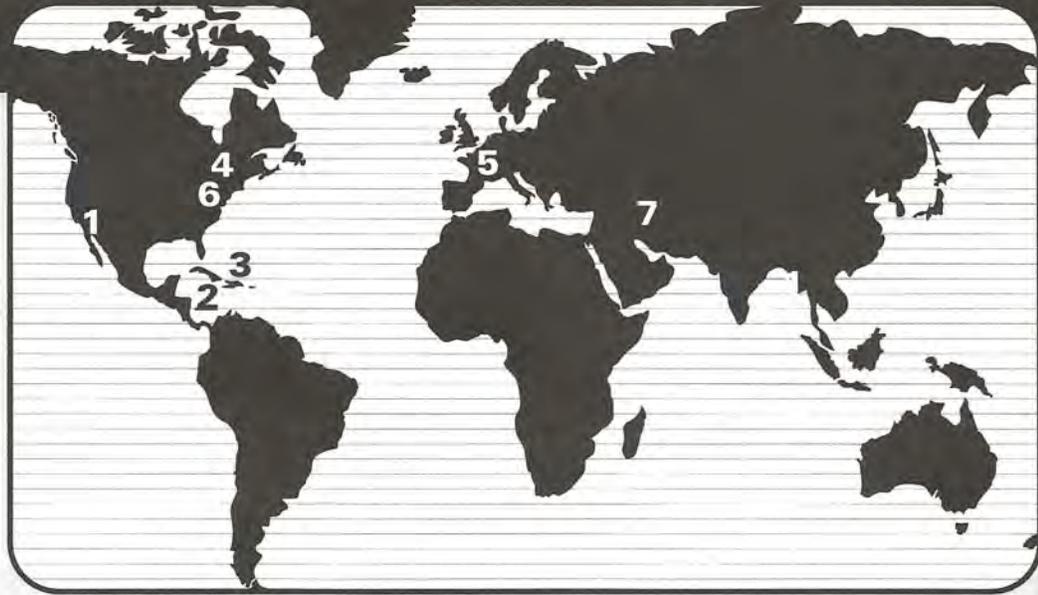
- The balance of the monies from the Fountain Square sale (the former seminary location in Oak Brook, Ill.) will be added to the unrestricted endowment.

- The seminary works with the appropriate denominational agencies and judicatories to develop programs among Brethren youth to heighten awareness of ministry as a vocation.

The board also granted sabbaticals for two faculty members: academic dean Rick Gardner for the summers of 2001 and 2002, for work on his book on the



## WORLDWATCH



**1. Los Angeles, Calif.** The Church of the Brethren's Emergency Response/Service Ministries unit sent a Crisis in Aviation Response (CAIR) team to assist with child care following the crash of a Singapore Airlines jet in Taiwan. The flight was bound from Taipei to Los Angeles.

**2. Honduras.** A delegation of 11 Church of the Brethren women completed an eight-day Faith Expedition visit to the Central American nation Nov. 5 after visiting sites, attending a regional women's conference, and spending time in several poor, rural communities. The General Board's Brethren Witness office sponsored the trip.

**3. Dominican Republic.** About 25 local Church of the Brethren leaders in the Caribbean nation held an envisioning summit in late October. It drew up seven recommendations to be considered at the annual assembly of the Dominican church. It includes a proposal to move toward becoming a "national church" and gradually phasing out subsidies from the General Board, which coordinates mission activity there through Global Mission Partnerships.

**4. Bethlehem, Pa.** Representatives of the historic peace churches and others planned to participate in an annual 10-

mile Peace Pilgrimage from the town of Nazareth to downtown Bethlehem Dec. 9. Gene Stoltzfus of Christian Peacemaker Teams was this year's speaker.

**5. Strasbourg, France.** Ben Long, a peace studies major at Manchester College and a Brethren Colleges Abroad student this year, was selected to serve an internship at the International Institute of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Long is from the Crest Manor Church of the Brethren, South Bend, Ind.

**6. Washington, D.C.** President Bill Clinton on Nov. 6 signed a foreign aid package that includes \$435 million to reduce or eliminate the debts of many of the world's poorest

nations. The Church of the Brethren Washington Office, the National Council of Churches, and many other religious groups had been encouraging such a "Jubilee year" gesture.

**7. Iraq.** The general synod of the Church of England in November called for changes in United Nations-imposed sanctions to stop making ordinary Iraqi citizens pay the price of Saddam Hussein's misdeeds, according to Religion News Service. The Church of the Brethren General Board and its Washington Office have also spoken out against the sanctions, imposed 10 years ago. Ways are being explored for stronger Brethren involvement in the movement to end the sanctions.

Sermon on the Mount; and Nadine Pence Frantz, associate professor of theological studies, for the fall of 2001, for work on her book on theology and material culture.

Reports from several of the board's committees were given—including the Business and Finance Committee, which reported that the seminary received an unqualified "clean" audit that showed net assets increased by \$2 million during the past year.

In other Bethany news, the seminary has received a

\$148,000 grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations for cataloging, restoration, and automation of library collections for three of its historic book collections.

### Personnel changes

**Nevin Dulabaum** has been named Brethren Benefit Trust's director of communications and information services effective Nov. 20. It is the first time that the two departments have been combined, according to BBT president Wil Nolen.

Dulabaum will coordinate BBT's public relations and marketing initiatives, oversee issues of corporate identity, serve as systems administrator, and coordinate BBT's internal hardware and software systems. He will also serve as director of eMountain Communications, BBT's electronic ministry that provides Internet and technology services.

Dulabaum joined the BBT staff in September 1999 as manager of marketing and public relations. Since July 11 he had been serving as

interim director of information services. Prior to joining BBT, Dulabaum served as manager of news services for the Church of the Brethren General Board from November 1994 through August 1999.

**Verneda Cole** has begun as the new subscription specialist for Brethren Press. Her main duties will be working with subscriptions for MESSENGER.

Cole has been employed by the Church of the Brethren General Board since May, having previously worked in the finance department.

## BVS enrollment hits record low in 2000

Brethren Volunteer Service recorded its lowest 12-month placement total in its history in 2000. BVS placed 57 volunteers in 2000, down from 68 the year before.

BVS placed 50 volunteers in 1948, the year it began, but units did not begin that year until September. It placed 67 in 1949 and reached an all-time high of 177 in 1962. Despite a series of ups and downs, the total has not topped 100 since 1984, when it shot up to 130 before falling again.

BVS director Dan McFadden attributes the drop, being felt by many other volunteer agencies as well, to a number of factors: the diminished role of the church in society, the strong economy, an absence of wars that raise alternative service requests, and a culture that emphasizes "me first." With more options competing for people's time and energy, McFadden believes the need to highlight BVS as a choice becomes even greater.

"I think a lot of people don't know about it," McFadden says. "Young people are simply not aware of that option of BVS."

European placements have been hit particularly hard, with only four new volunteers heading to projects there in 2000. Nearly two dozen projects in Europe, which currently require a two-year commitment, remain open. Interest in projects in Central America and the Caribbean has been growing, however. And in the US, where only a one-year commitment is required, many volunteers have been returning for multiple years.

### BRETHRENSPEAK

We need the help of the whole church to encourage people to serve. We need volunteers who are willing to give, and willing to make some sacrifices.

*Brethren Volunteer Service director Dan McFadden*



**BVS Unit 241 Orientation at Camp La Verne, Angelus Oaks, Calif., Sept. 17–Oct. 7, 2000.** *Back row, from left:* April Angel, Dove, Inc., Decatur, Ill., and Women's Aid, Belfast, N. Ireland; Ulla Hellein, Meeting Ground, Elkton, Md.; Jennifer Bosserman, COBCOA/Youth & Young Adult Ministries, Elgin, Ill.; Karen Hollinger, Tri-City Homeless Coalition, Fremont, Calif.; David Quick, Bread & Roses, Olympia, Wash.; Philip Stafford, Human Resources Development Council, Havre, Mont.; Tracy Stoddart, staff; Faye Gregory, Innisfree Village, Crozet, Va.; Sue Grubb, staff. *Middle row:* Gwen Edwards, Gould Farm, Monterey, Mass.; Andrea Lantz, Bread & Roses, Olympia, Wash.; Sarah Stover, Washington City Soup Kitchen, Washington, D.C.; Sabine Feisel, Center for Nonviolence, Ft. Wayne, Ind.; Mary Skjelset, Hnuti DUHA, Brno, Czech Republic; Torin Eikenberry, staff; Daniel Buecker, Camp Ithiel, Gotha, Fla.; Everlyn Ebert, Bread & Roses, Olympia, Wash. *Front row:* Michael Bandlow, Su Casa, Chicago, Ill.; Sarah McLaughlin, Peace & Reconciliation Group, L'Derry, N. Ireland; Robyn Boettner, People Lacking Ample Shelter and Employment, Baltimore, Md.; Beth Layton, no placement; Ingrid Bockstahler, Human Resources Development Council, Havre, Mont.

Ninety-seven BVSers are currently serving.

McFadden says that BVS will continue to emphasize recruitment. Recent years have brought more frequent visits to Brethren colleges, annual direct mailings to Brethren youth, and promotion of new older-adult units. He urges congregations to help spread the word also. About half of this year's volunteers were from the Church of the Brethren, a percentage that has remained fairly constant over the years.

"We need the help of the whole church to encourage people to serve," McFadden says. "We need volunteers who are willing to give, and willing to make some sacrifices."

BVS had set a goal of 65 volunteers placed for 2000. The goals are 70 in 2001 and 75 in 2002.

## NCC assembly examines poverty, other issues

The National Council of Churches held its 51st annual General Assembly Nov. 14-17 in Atlanta, Ga., with 36 member communions participating in business, worship, dialog, and other events. The moderate Alliance of Baptists officially joined the NCC as the assembly began, becoming the 36th member.

Delegates representing the Church of the Brethren at the event were General Board executive director Judy Mills Reimer, Global Mission Partnerships director Merv Keeney, Frances Townsend, Gene Bucher, David W. Miller, and Valentina Satvedi. It was the first assembly for this group, beginning a four-year term.

Reimer commended the way that NCC general secretary Bob Edgar, president Andrew Young,

and other leaders handled the business sessions, allowing ample discussion on each item. Scheduled "conversation groups" allowed small-group input before major items came to the floor. Highlights of that business included the following as delegates:

•**Launched** with unanimous support a 10-year "Mobilization to Overcome Poverty," seeking to enlist broad ecumenical engagement around specific, measurable goals and objectives.

•**Called** on the NCC's 36 member denominations to "commit themselves to participating, with Evangelical and Pentecostal churches and with the Roman Catholic Church in a process of discernment to ascertain what new national expression of Christian life, faith, and action

the Holy Spirit may enable us to bring into being in which we may be and act together."

•**Adopted** statements on "Conflict in the Middle East," "Vieques," "AIDS in Africa," and "In Support of Farm Workers Organizing in North Carolina" (where farm workers are attempting to form a union to seek "a greater measure of justice and dignity").

•**Heard** that the NCC would eliminate an additional 17 staff positions effective Nov. 20 in order to finish with a balanced budget this year and live within its means in the future. It reduces the total number of NCC employees to 47.

•**Honored Young**, who is from Atlanta, and numerous other ecumenical leaders and programs with achievement awards.



## MESSENGER DINNER

at Annual Conference, 5 p.m. Sunday July 1

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TRYING TO CLOSE A

# school for violence

Brethren participate in a major demonstration against the School of the Americas

We stand with those who have fallen victim to the acts of violence and oppose our government's facilitation so contrary to God's greatest commandment, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself.'



Linda Penetta

by Marc Rittle  
and Greg Laszakovits

**Ten thousand peaceful demonstrators gathered Nov. 17-19** at the gates of the Ft. Benning US Army base in Columbus, Ga., to call for the close of the School of the Americas (SOA) housed at the base.

Nearly 100 Brethren—from Christian Peacemaker Teams, On Earth Peace Assembly, the Washington Office, Brethren Volunteer Service, various Brethren congregations, and McPherson, Juniata, and Manchester colleges—converged for the solemn vigil and action.

According to the watchdog group called School of Americas Watch, the facility teaches courses in counter-insurgency, infantry tactics, military intelligence, anti-narcotics operations, and commando operations to military personnel from Latin America and the Caribbean. Often these skills have been taken home only to

abuse those within their own borders.

The US Army, meanwhile, claims that the school is a vital piece of the US defense strategy that promotes stability and democracy in the region. Further, acts of violence committed by SOA graduates are not only out of the hands of the US Army, but are rare. Each party does agree on several points: the SOA is a US Army training school for soldiers and military personnel from Latin American and Caribbean countries, more than 56,000 members of Latin American and Caribbean militaries have attended since it opened in 1946, and the training is fully funded by US taxpayer dollars.

In 1997, the Church of the Brethren General Board reaffirmed that "the Church of the Brethren has repeatedly condemned all forms of warfare." The board also called upon the US government to "close the US Army School of the Americas... we stand with those who have fallen victim to the acts of violence... we must oppose our government's



Marc Rittie

**Seth Good and Christine Sheller, before line crossing procession begins.** *White crosses were held by line crossers in memory of victims in SOA graduate-related incidents. Seth and Christine are members of the McPherson College Peace Awareness Organization.*

facilitation so contrary to God's greatest commandment, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself.'

John Eshelman of Manchester College came to Ft. Benning to "stand in solidarity with victims and victims' families" of SOA graduates. April Schmidt, a Manchester College student from McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren, attended the vigil action as a "voice for the voiceless" and served as a "visual representation" of the violence instituted by SOA graduates.

Sunday, demonstrators were given the option to "cross the line" in an organized solemn procession, enter the military base itself, and risk arrest. Up to that point, all participants stood outside the gates of Ft. Benning and were legally demonstrating on public property. Those who chose to process onto the military training base would be illegally demonstrating on government property. Of the 3,600 people who crossed the line onto government property, 1,700 were arrested. More than 40 Church of the Brethren members participated in this act of civil disobedience; fewer than half of them were arrested.

Seth Good and Christine Sheller of McPherson College's Peace Awareness Organization crossed the line and were processed without incident by the military police. Noting the cumbersome arrest process, Good noted, "Civil disobedience without inconvenience has no effect."

Building relationships and spreading the word was also a focus for many. While Cliff Kindy of Christian Peacemaker Teams and Phil Rieman, pastor of Wabash (Ind.) Church of the Brethren, sat on a bus awaiting processing for arrest, they had a lengthy conversation with the driver of the bus, an African American man named "Mack." After first joking about their common predecessor, Alexander, they moved to more serious conversation. They connected their pending arrest as nonviolent action with the nonviolent actions of Martin Luther King, Jr.

For Kindy this conversation defined the effectiveness of the weekend. Mack, a retired Air Force sharpshooter, listened to Kindy and other Brethren aboard the bus talk about documented violent actions by multiple SOA graduates. Mack then reflected out loud, "If what you're telling me is true, then what you're doing is the right place to be."

"The opportunity to talk with police and military personnel is rare," Kindy stated, adding that he would love for Mack to add his voice to that of thousands who call for a close of the school. Kindy then reflected that the scene was



Marc Rittie

reminiscent of Paul's journey on the road to Damascus. Through struggle, all involved are given the opportunity for transformation.

The weekend was deemed a success by both Ft. Benning military personnel and by those who came to call for the close of the SOA. Tina Rieman of Manchester Church of the Brethren, in calling to close the school, said, "It felt wonderful to be with people who care about the same things I do. The atmosphere was empowering, comfortable, and radical all at the same time."



**Demonstrators outside the gates of Ft. Benning, Ga.,** *were, from left to right: Rosita Huston of Atlanta, Ga., Seth Good of McPherson, Kan., Steve Brady of Washington, D.C., Barb Saylor, co-director of On Earth Peace Assembly, New Windsor, Md., and Erica Sweitzer of North Manchester, Ind.*

Greg Laszakovits is coordinator, Church of the Brethren Washington Office. Marc Rittie is legislative associate and Brethren Volunteer Service worker in the Washington Office.



*Should we go to*

# Brazil?

**W** by Walt Wiltschek

While walking through a Brazilian town, one might be wished “bom dia” by a passing citizen. It’s Portuguese for “good day,” a cheerful greeting appropriate for an energetic and exuberant culture.

It’s also an appropriate phrase for the Church of the Brethren right now if a question mark is placed behind it. With the General Board considering a new mission venture in the large South American nation, many are considering whether it is indeed a “good day” for such an endeavor.

Global Mission Partnerships director Merv Keeney has said several times that he wants to hear from members throughout the denomination as the church ponders the issue. History has shown the importance of having the church supportive of new mission efforts, and, while staff must still take the lead in such endeavors, current leaders have seen those past lessons and don’t wish to repeat them.

“We want members to think about this and

pray about it so that the church can function more collectively as a community working together,” said Keeney, who has been visiting a number of congregations to gain input. “Does the church discern a leading for us to get involved here?”

With that in mind, it seems appropriate to take a closer look at this Southern Hemisphere giant, a country known for the Amazon and Carnival, coffee and bananas, for potential and poverty.

It’s not unknown territory for the Church of the Brethren (see sidebar, page 20). In the 1980s and early 1990s the General Board supported a fledgling church in the town of Rio Verde under the leadership of Onaldo Pereira, a native Brazilian. Internal and external conflict in the mid-90s, however, caused the church to fracture and dissipate, and Pereira’s ordination was suspended.

As the board scaled back its ministries in the late 1990s, it appeared that Brethren mission in Brazil was a possibility whose day had passed.

But then a new glimpse of daylight appeared at the 1998 Annual Conference in Orlando,



Church leaders are considering new mission opportunities in South America's largest nation. But first they want to know what you think.

Fla. Divino Silva, a member of the Rio Verde group and former Training in Ministry student, had sought to continue ties with the Church of the Brethren after the congregation's breakup. He came to the 1998 Annual Conference and held extensive conversations with several General Board and district staff members.

Those talks eventually led to a General Board delegation that traveled to Brazil in November 1999 for evaluation and assessment. Keeney, director of Ministry Allen Hansell, and Shenandoah district executive Jim Miller—who had previously served with Mennonite mission work in Brazil—formed the team.

They departed for Brazil with low expectations.

"I had been convinced before going that we needed to fold up and come home, because I didn't feel what we'd done there was working, and, in fact, it wasn't," Hansell told the General Board this past October. "But I came away with a very different feeling."

Hansell said the primary reason for his

change of opinion was a meeting during the trip with Marcos Inhauser, whose name has become central to the current conversations. "If he weren't there, I don't think we'd be having this conversation," Hansell said.

Inhauser is a native Brazilian who also came into contact with the Brethren and graduated from Bethany Theological Seminary along with his wife, Suely. They were ordained in Indiana, and served several churches in Indiana and Ohio in the early 1990s before returning to Brazil. Inhauser attempted to mediate in the Rio Verde situation once there, but without success.

Most recently, he worked with the General Board to design the training program for potential ministers in the Dominican Republic—a program that produced its first graduates a year ago. In Brazil, Inhauser has been pastoring a Mennonite church in Campinas and teaching at a seminary.

At the board's October meetings, Keeney called Inhauser "the kind of person that mis-



**Opportunities in fast-growing Brazil.**

*A prospective site of Brethren involvement is the city of Jundiaí, located about 35 miles from the sprawling metropolis of São Paulo, shown above.*

sion directors would give their eyeteeth for.”

“I think having a person who knows the Brethren, and is indigenous and knows the church already is a tremendous asset,” Keeney says. “He sees value for the Brethren being in his country and is eager to help that happen.”

Inhauser submitted a preliminary proposal for a new mission program in Brazil that Keeney presented to the board. It calls for a new church to be planted, perhaps within a year of approval, in a site hundreds of miles from Rio Verde.

The top prospective site is a fast-growing city called Jundiaí, about 35 miles from the sprawling metropolis of São Paulo. With a population of nearly 300,000, booming development, many new residents, and a hunger for an “authentic church,” according to Inhauser, he says it represents an ideal starting place. Keeney noted that a second church plant within the first five years would not be out of the question.

The proposal—which will be refined and brought back to the board in March for action—calls for a national mission coordinator to guide the ministry in Brazil, similar to the structure in place in the Dominican Republic and Nigeria. It requested a two-year startup budget of \$65,000, not including any additional staff needed in the US or travel needs for US personnel.

“In the last five years, Brazilian society experienced an increasing openness to the gospel,” Inhauser says. “Many new churches started up, evangelical leaders are more visible in the Brazilian media, and new expectations about the role of the evangelical (Protestant) church are raising up.

“On the other hand . . . many of the new

churches have appeared without any theological background, historical basis, and connections with other church bodies. It produced many different religious expressions, some of them that are not recognized as real Christians by some mainline churches.

“Also,” he adds, “because of the increasing level of urban violence, the theme of peace is more and more a concern for most of them, and there is no church that is targeting the theme of peace in a prophetic and practical way.”

Inhauser’s description illustrates the dynamic environment that the country of Brazil itself offers at this juncture of history.

Many news reports identify Brazil as one of the leading economic powers in the Southern Hemisphere and especially in Latin America. According to the *New York Times* (Aug. 30, 2000), “Today an increasingly confident and assertive Brazil is emerging as both an American partner and rival in Latin America.” US ambassador Anthony Harrington says Brazil is “stepping out onto the world stage in a way that it never has before.”

It is the sixth most populous nation in the world and fifth largest in land area, just behind the United States. The population is growing, according to a publication called “CultureGrams,” and the vast majority of the people live in a wide strip along the Atlantic coast—a region that includes Jundiaí.

“With some of the largest cities in the world, it has a population that would provide tremendous opportunities for evangelism and church development,” says David Shumate, executive of the Virlina District.

The country also contains great natural

resources and environmental treasures, including the rain forests and jungles of the Amazon and the Pantanal. Membership in the Roman Catholic Church has fallen from 95 percent of the population to less than 70 percent, according to the CultureGrams report, while Protestant Christianity is booming. The Mennonites, Mennonite Brethren, and Grace Brethren are among the groups that have programs in Brazil, some of them longstanding.

At the same time, Inhauser's comments point to the embryonic state of many churches, as growth has outpaced available leadership. The economy has also left many behind, according to reports, with much of the land and the wealth in the hands of a small percentage of the elite. The resulting poverty and high unemployment in some areas, including São Paulo, has contributed to an increase in crime.

"A nation of immigrants, Brazil is a rich racial and cultural mix," the General Board delegation said in its report. "Yet distribution of resources is highly unequal, and both rural and urban poverty is a serious problem affecting one-third of the population. . . . There are numerous opportunities for mission that both gives and receives. We observed that the dynamic Brazilian culture and church context has considerable potential to stimulate growing edges for the American church."

Inhauser and Divino Silva each feel that the fallout from Rio Verde would not have a negative effect on a return of Brethren activity since some time has passed since then, especially if it is carried out in a new location. Inhauser says even people in Rio Verde simply refer to the congregation's conflict and breakup as "the accident."

"If we start a new group in a different place, I'm sure that it will work," Silva says. "We need God's message, but we also need social justice, and the Church of the Brethren can give the encouragement to people to change their lives. The Kingdom of God will come if we search for it and not only wait for it to come. The Church of the Brethren can teach us that."

A group continues to meet in Brazil with Onaldo Pereira, who now lives in Goiânia, using the Church of the Brethren name.

"The Igreja da Irmandade ("Church of the Brethren" in Portuguese), still meets and considers itself an official part of the Brethren," says Pereira, who adds that he also still counts himself as a member of the Church of the Brethren. "The Brethren have a lot to offer to Latin America with their peace and non-creedal position. Brazil needs the Brethren mood and way of being."

Keeney says the name issue is "something that needs to be clarified" if a return of

Brethren mission work occurs. He says that Inhauser has a different formulation of the name in Portuguese that could be used.

Even with the potential headaches, however, the General Board's delegation gave a strong recommendation to move forward.

"We see the coming together of many factors as perhaps creating a key moment for the Church of the Brethren to revive the Brazil mission venture rather than walk away from a significant church planting opportunity," the report says. "We believe that this mission opportunity in Brazil deserves further exploration and consideration by the denomination."

## Issues to ponder

"I think we're ready to look at another mission locale," says Keeney. "I think we're excited and energized by what's happening in the Dominican Republic. From my seat, I'd like to rebuild some of the existing program in Nigeria and Sudan, which suffered cuts in redesign, but I think we're also ready to look at another geographical location."

General Board members have begun giving input on making Brazil that location. At their fall meeting, they voiced overall support but raised several cautionary flags. Others in the denomination have expressed similar views. Some of the areas of concern and attention include the following:

**Funding:** As with many things, the question of doing ministry includes looking at whether the dollars for it are available. That message rings especially loud after the budget-cutting reality checks of the 1990s. Projects can always be started, but being able to sustain them requires agencies to "count well the cost."

"If the Brethren return to Brazil, we should devote considerable financial, human, and spiritual resources to this task," David Shumate says. "Impacting Brazilian culture with the unique Anabaptist/Pietist insights of the Brethren in a manner similar to our work in Nigeria would be the goal over the next century. Any lesser commitment would appear to be 'playing church.'"

"A multitude of little mission projects sap our denomination of strength, focus, and resources that are needed where the call of the Spirit is clear, such as the Dominican Republic."

At the General Board Executive Committee meeting in October, Keeney called Inhauser's initial proposal of \$65,000 for the first two years "modest." Several board members expressed similar concerns, urging a more realistic amount before the final proposal comes

Because of the increasing level of urban violence, the theme of peace is more and more a concern for most of them, and there is no church that is targeting the theme of peace in a prophetic and practical way.

—Marcos Inhauser

Impacting Brazilian culture with the unique insights of the Brethren in a manner similar to our work in Nigeria would be the goal over the next century.

—David Shumate

back in March. Board member Merle Crouse, a former missionary with a longtime interest in church development, said at the October meeting that several previous Brethren mission projects floundered because they were not “adequately prepared for and supported.”

“New church development has taught us in the past two decades that you need to plan carefully where you go, how much it will cost, where the money is coming from, and how to get the right partners, or you’re not going to go anywhere,” Crouse said later in an interview.

A General Board “Emerging Global Mission Fund,” approved by the board but still in the development stage, was suggested as one possible source of funds.

Jim Myer of Manheim, Pa., vice chairman of the Brethren Revival Fellowship Committee and director of its Brethren Mission Fund, believes the money is available for the right project. So long as a new venture in Brazil is clearly separate from previous work there and has an evangelical focus, Myer says he would support it.

“We’re having a positive reaction to the

people are baptized, and not just economic development . . . I’d see no reason why we wouldn’t be interested in participating.”

Silva, after seeing Brethren mission in his country fold once before, also urges the church to look at the big picture.

“If you have a child, you have the responsibility for its life,” Silva says. “It’s the same with a church. If you help to start a new community, you have the responsibility for it. Is the Church of the Brethren prepared for this responsibility? Is that what you want?”

**Leadership:** Closely related to the question of funding is that of staffing. Can the right people be found and supported, and what would that staffing model look like?

Inhauser’s proposal calls for a “national coordinator/mission coordinator” to guide ministry in Brazil. Keeney has said that the project needs to have indigenous leadership, including Inhauser and others whom Inhauser has identified as good candidates to be mentored.

In the board discussion several cited the need for a “team” approach, similar to what Jerry and Becky Crouse are doing in the Dominican Republic. They serve as mission coordinators, working with numerous local pastors and leaders plus a host of volunteers from the United States. Additional staff have recently been added to work with the Crouses as the project has grown.

Moderator-elect Paul Grout, part of a ministry team that planted a congregation in Vermont in the 1980s, said he “would be concerned about starting a new mission endeavor anywhere without a team” to lead it.

Merle Crouse underscored that, saying that building mission with ample support and guidance from people well-grounded in Brethren theology is essential.

“I am concerned that we plant well,” Crouse says. “We must have a strong enough team that we’re able to do something and not leave a good Brazilian leader blowing in the wind.

“I just hope whatever we do, we do with enough strength that it will enhance the life and ministry of Brazil and the leadership we’re fortunate to have there, rather than squeeze the juice out of them and leave them hanging to dry.”

He suggests a “good, strong mission coordinator” who can assist Inhauser with tasks like communication, strategy, and teaching Brethren beliefs.

Myer agrees, and says he would “want to see evidence of a strong, evangelical faith and a commitment to Church of the Brethren values” in whomever was called.



The map shows locations of Rio Verde, site of an earlier Brethren work, and Jundiá, the proposed site of a new church.

Dominican Republic and the work there, so we need projects. We’re bursting at the seams with money and people,” Myer says of the BRF. “I’m glad to see this kind of thing happening. If this is going to be a mission project where the gospel is preached, churches are started, and

**Key to future mission efforts is Marcos Inhauser.** *Inhauser is a Brazilian with a strong theological background and knowledge of the Church of Brethren. He developed the curriculum for the five-year theological education program in the Dominican Republic.*

**Reconciliation:** Crouse said during the board meeting that the current proposal would be “a brand new ballgame that has nothing to do with Rio Verde. We need to take that approach that this is a fresh, new planting.”

And, indeed, it is new in geographical location, leadership, and approach. Some, however, feel that before that work moves forward, or as it does, past fences must be mended with Onaldo Pereira and others involved in the conflict in Rio Verde (see sidebar, page 20).

The 1999 delegation members said they hoped to meet with Pereira during the trip, but schedule changes didn't permit that to happen. Pereira, meanwhile, says he feels his part of the story was never fully heard during past conversations.

“No matter what he's done, our Brethren view of reconciliation demands that we at least have conversation,” says former Bethany professor Dale Brown, who has maintained contact with Pereira. “What I would advocate is that... we get people on both sides of the issue together and talk it through.”

Brown also voices support for Inhauser, whom he mentored while Inhauser was a student at Bethany. “I like him very much, and I wouldn't oppose a proposal that he start a church in Brazil,” Brown says.

New General Board member Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford of Windsor, Colo., also raised the reconciliation issue around the board table.

“There's a question of whether we're really starting new, or whether we need to do reconciliation work with our past experience,” Brumbaugh-Cayford said. “Leaving the past experience unresolved may lead to future rifts.”

Annual Conference moderator Phill Carlos Archbold affirmed that. “If something there is smoking,” he said, “we should take care of it.”

Keeney responded by saying, “As we go along here, we'll have to work at reconciling those relationships along the way. I hope it's not a hurdle if we return there.”

**Ecumenism:** As mentioned earlier, numerous other American church bodies have activity in Brazil. Some feel that if the Church of the Brethren ventures back into this area, it should



Merv Keeney

make intentional efforts to work in concert with those groups.

Jim Miller, the current executive of Shenandoah District and director of Mennonite Central Committee's Brazil program from 1981 to 1985, has seen the value of this approach firsthand. He's concerned that the Brethren not miss the step of making ecumenical connections.

“I think we've been really thin on doing our homework,” Miller says. “I think we should talk to the Mennonites especially, due to the similarity of our faith and beliefs plus their experience there, but also with the Methodists, Presbyterians, Catholics, Anglicans—any number of groups there who could help us understand. In doing that, I think we'll get welcome, affirmation, and support.”

The delegation he traveled with in 1999 met only with an Old Order Brethren group and with Church of Christ members currently meeting in the Rio Verde building.

“A better understanding and learning of other experiences will test out whether there is affirmation for the Church of the Brethren to begin new work in Brazil,” Miller says. “My sense is that it would be there. I'd rather see us do that beforehand rather than on-site.”

**Language:** While most of South America speaks Spanish, Brazil does not. Portugal colonized that portion of the continent, and Portuguese remains the official and dominant language today. In fact, the majority of Brazilians are of European descent, most of them Portuguese.

We need God's message, but we also need social justice, and the Church of the Brethren can give the encouragement to people to change their lives.

—Divino Silva

If the church senses this is something God is calling us to do, then I have no doubt it will succeed. If not, we shouldn't spend the time and energy to do it.

—Merv Keeney

That could present a challenge for the Church of the Brethren. A number of Brethren speak Spanish, and interest in that language has been enhanced by congregations in Puerto Rico, work in the Dominican Republic, and projects in Central America. Even so, finding Spanish translators at major church events can be a challenge.

Beyond Miller and perhaps a few others, Portuguese speakers appear to be a rare commodity in Brethren circles. An observer at the board meetings wondered why Brazil was being considered over another Spanish-speaking country in Latin America.

Keeney cited the prior relationship there that had been affirmed by Annual Conference and having a highly interested person—Inhauser—already in the country who could provide key leadership.

**Type of ministry:** Dale Brown says that the church model Inhauser proposes would likely be a “middle-class” church, similar in many ways to a mainline congregation in the United States.

Inhauser's own proposal identifies Jundiá

as a place where “many professionals and students” are in transition and seeking a new, Christian community to join. He feels, however, that a new church can follow the model of US Brethren in being a community of service.

“We could share in a positive way . . . a way to help needy people develop local resources rather than asking and waiting for foreign resources, a new approach to church mission,” Inhauser says.

Silva echoes those feelings, saying the Brethren “have a very strong message in social issues.”

“We need God's message, but we also need social justice, and the Church of the Brethren can give the encouragement to people to change their lives,” he says.

Keeney feels the church would be “distinctly Brazilian, yet rooted in Brethren values and heritage,” or “the Church of the Brethren with a Brazilian twist.”

The economic and other needs there are plentiful, he says, and he believes a Brethren church could address them with “a theology that God has called us to pay attention to this.”

Crouse said at the board meeting that in

## MISSION FAILURE: *Problems with past efforts in Brazil*

**The 1997 Review and Evaluation Committee affirmed the work of the General Board in guiding mission work** but said that “outcomes have not always matched hopes.” That was certainly true the first time that the Church of the Brethren engaged in activity in Brazil.

The story began in the early 1980s, when a young Brazilian man named Onaldo Pereira came across a group of Old Order Brethren in Brazil and dis-

covered the Church of the Brethren in the *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*. Pereira wrote to the General Offices in Elgin, Ill., saying that he identified with many of the core beliefs of the Brethren, like baptism and trine immersion, and wanted to learn more.

After reading books by Brethren historian Donald Durnbaugh and issues of *MESSENGER*, his love of the Brethren grew, and he came to study at Bethany Theological Seminary during the 1984-85 school year. He returned to Brazil and began a fellowship group of

others wishing to explore these beliefs and values.

The General Board formally entered the picture in 1986, passing a “Resolution on Relationship with Fellowship Group in Brazil” after the group requested recognition. It lifted up the group's “pacifist, nonviolent position” and said that it “bears witness to the ideals and practices of the Church of the Brethren in the United States.” It called for continued conversation and sharing between the US and Brazil.

Pereira, who was ordained in Virlina District in 1987 and interned at the Mount Bethel congregation near Eagle Rock, Va., initially built a worshipping community in the Brazilian town of Fortaleza in 1988, according to a brief history written for *The Brethren Encyclopedia* by Virlina district executive David Shumate.

That group dissolved, but in the next few years Pereira organized a new church. Known as Igreja da Irmandade (“Church of the Brethren” in



**The Rio Verde church building, now being rented by a Church of Christ congregation.** Ownership issues concerning the property are under discussion.

Merv Keeney

Brazil “there is potential to open up another important field of church planting,” but he also urges attention to this question of helping those who most need help. “We really need to look over the nation of Brazil and see where we’re needed.”

**Church support:** If a mission project is begun in Brazil, will the denomination support it?

Clyde Carter, an ordained minister and member of the Williamson Road congregation, Roanoke, Va., was a strong supporter of the first Brethren mission work in Brazil and feels the church needs to go back.

“There is a definite need . . . throughout Brazil for the Brethren witness to God’s love as shown in Jesus of Nazareth two millennia ago,” Carter says. “Brazilian law recognizes the Church of the Brethren as a historic peace church where members, upon request, are to be exempt from military service without penalty. The love feast is very meaningful. There is a hunger in Brazil for a church that is continuing the work of Jesus, peacefully, simply, together.”

He adds, too, that Brethren in the US can “gain

much from our Brazilian brothers and sisters.”

Silva, looking at things from the Brazilian side of the relationship, expresses a similar desire for Brethren to come back.

“You can help us to grow as a father helps his son. Maybe the son will not be like the father, but they are part of one another,” Silva says. “You can give us financial support. You can give us training. You can give us the chance to be ‘Brethren’ in its deepest sense.”

The question before church leadership, then, is whether others feel the same as Carter, Silva, and others who have spoken up thus far.

“There’s tremendous potential, but we also want the sense of the community of faith,” Keeney says. “If the church senses this is something God is calling us to do, then I have no doubt it will succeed. If not, we shouldn’t spend the time and energy to do it.”

So, is this a “bom dia” for Brethren to return to Brazil? The church is listening.



Walt Wiltschek is manager of news and information for the Church of the Brethren General Board.

There is a need throughout Brazil for the Brethren witness to God’s love as shown in Jesus of Nazareth two millennia ago.

—Clyde Carter

Portuguese)/Comunidade Pacificista Christa-Tunker, it began to thrive in Rio Verde with financial assistance from the General Board.

The next step came at the General Board’s July 1992 meeting, with a vote to “urge the Annual Conference through Standing Committee to accept the emerging church groups in Brazil.”

Standing Committee recommended that proposal be adopted, and delegates voted to do so. New global mission polity also approved by Conference assigned the Brazilian groups to Virlina District.

Within two years after that, however, the happy story began to unravel. Theological differences, property issues, and possible cultural misunderstandings resulted in fractured relationships, both within the congregation in Brazil and between members of the Brazilian group and the US church. Fingers were pointed in both directions amid accusations and sternly worded letters.

Virlina District suspended Pereira’s ordination in 1995 over the property issues and “ministerial discipline,” according to Shumate’s article, and the

Rio Verde congregation split. A portion of the church wishing to maintain ties to the US Church of the Brethren was reorganized as the Evangelical

Anabaptist Church, but problems persisted and membership dwindled.

“The interpersonal fallout from these actions was very destructive in this highly relational body,” said Global Mission Partnerships director Merv Keeney at the board’s March 2000 meeting. “The result was that in recent years only a handful of people were meeting for worship.”

Meanwhile, the mid-90s also marked a time when the General Board was experiencing a financial crisis and cut programs, including the global mission projects in Korea and Brazil.

Former Bethany Theological Seminary professor Dale Brown, who has made several trips to Brazil, this fall called the Brazilian project “a church that has completely failed.” Others used phrases like “disabled” and “on the rocks.”

The former Rio Verde church property is now being rented by a Church of Christ group, according to Keeney. Keeney said the group is a temporary tenant, while ownership issues around the property continue to be resolved.—Walt Wiltschek



**Onaldo Pereira**, the Brazilian who led earlier Brethren mission efforts, with Bethany Seminary professor Dale Brown in the mid-1980s.



# MINISTRY

## by the numbers

by Allen T. Hansell

**S**ome look at ministerial leadership in the Church of the Brethren and say without hesitation that the denomination is in the midst of a leadership crisis.

Others examine the same issues and use words like challenge and opportunity. Regardless of how people choose to see the glass (half empty or half full), all agree that we face some serious leadership needs.

The Office of Ministry tabulated data from a questionnaire completed by district executives in all 23 districts in May 2000. Using the results of the questionnaire, what are the issues at the heart of our plans for calling, training, placing, and supporting ministerial leaders in the Church of the Brethren?

### Women in ministry

Thirteen percent of the ordained pastors in the Church of the Brethren are women. Here are two ways to look at that statistic:

1) Up until the 1970s, Church of the Brethren women were not encouraged to enter the ministry, and those who did attend seminary were guided into non-pastoral vocations such as Christian education.

2) Even though the 1958 Annual Conference stated that ministry is open equally to men and women, the denomination has been slow to provide women the same opportunities as men in pastoral roles.

Most district executives today acknowledge that many congregational search committees are reluctant to grant interviews to women. And we know that some of our congregations

simply will not accept a female pastor. One can conclude, therefore, that over the years women have faced a system that has been largely closed to them. Given these facts, even reaching up to 13 percent represents a great deal of change over the past 30 years. Pastoral ministry in our denomination was almost exclusively male until the last third of the 20th century.

Many of the objections to women being in pastoral roles are based on biblical interpretations. Those objections are addressed by two well-known pastors, Galen Hackman and Christy Waltersdorff, in the *In Our Midst* resource of May 2000. Galen and Christy wrote one of four chapters on ministerial leadership, titled: "Open Equally to Men and Women." This valuable study guide can be ordered from Brethren Press.

While many are discouraged, disappointed, and frustrated over the slow pace of the progress for women in ministry, there has been progress. Bethany Theological Seminary reports that 44 men and 30 women graduated from Bethany between 1996 and 2000.

Fifty-seven of those graduates (36 men and 21 women) graduated with master of divinity degrees. Thirty of the 36 male graduates (83 percent) with master of divinity degrees are serving the denomination in pastoral or other denominational ministries. Thirteen of the 21 female graduates (62 percent) are serving in pastoral or other denominational ministries. We would likely find similar statistics in the other ministerial training tracks in the denomination.

While the current news is encouraging, much remains to be done in opening up ministry to all persons, regardless of race, gender, or age.

### Location and minority leadership

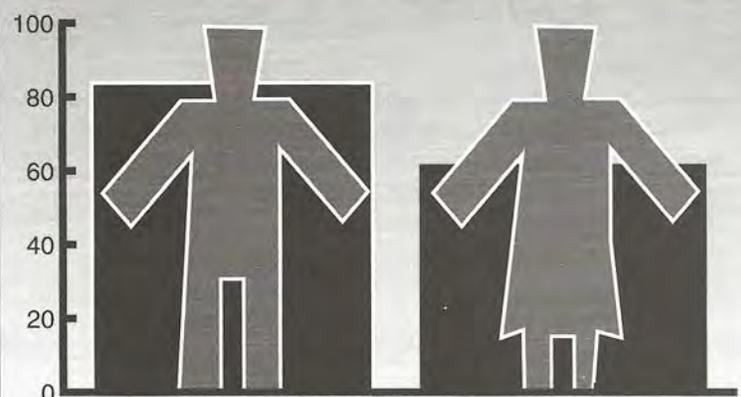
The Church of the Brethren is still a small town and rural denomination. Approximately 30 percent of our congregations are in small towns (population less than 50,000), and nearly 50 percent are in rural areas. Thus, close to 80 percent of our congregations are located in those two areas. The location of congregations in other areas: 15 percent in cities with a population over 50,000, and 3 percent of those are inner-city ministries. Another 8 percent find themselves in suburbs near large cities.

It has been very tough for the Church of the Brethren to plant and support congregations and ministerial leaders in large urban centers, and inner-city ministries have been especially difficult.

The small number of inner-city congregations (3 percent) have very caring and creative ministries. They are especially creative in that they must operate with extremely limited funds. We should be encouraged by the fact that districts, as well as small town and rural congregations, provide the financial support for many of these urban congregations to survive. In this sense, our rural-oriented denomination is committed to small but very successful urban ministries. The downside of this long-distance support is that we have the tendency to send our money to support a few ministries that we desire not to do ourselves.

In many urban areas, especially in the inner city, our non-white ethnic pastors (African American, Hispanic, Korean, Haitian, and others) are providing the pastoral leadership. But the numbers are quite small. The denomination has a total of 27 ethnic pastors (less than 3 percent of our ordained leadership). Many of these leaders serve faithfully with low salaries and poor benefits, and with limited congregational budgets. Some work under the handicap of not having materials printed in their native language. Increasingly, non-white ethnic pastors are seeking pastorates in rural areas and small towns, and it is difficult for these leaders to find jobs in white congregations. Conversely, it is difficult to find white pastors, with a few notable exceptions, who are willing to live and serve

### Are women finding jobs as pastors?



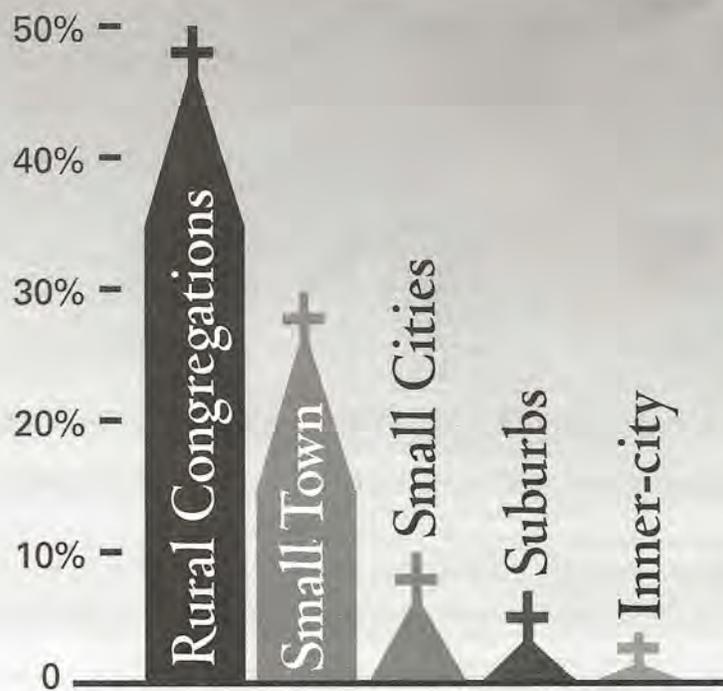
Between 1996 and 2000, 36 men and 21 women graduated with master of divinity degrees from Bethany. Of the 36 male graduates with master of divinity degrees, 30 (83 percent) are serving the denomination in pastoral or other denominational ministries. Of the 21 female graduates, 13 (62 percent) are serving in pastoral or other denominational ministries.

in inner-city ministries. The United States is urban and becoming more so each year. But, the denomination continues to make attempts at “growing the church numerically” in areas where the population is declining.

The small percentage of non-white ethnic pastors actually reflects the small number of non-white members in the denomination. This may well raise a question about our willingness to seek non-white members and ministerial leaders. This is a huge problem for us. We must learn to embrace God’s children everywhere.

This means planting new churches in cities. It means calling, training, and supporting ministerial leaders who will live and proclaim the Good News where most people live, in the cities of America. The Good News of Christ Jesus calls us to open our churches to the ministerial lead-

## Are our congregations where the people are?



Approximately 30 percent of our congregations are in small towns (population less than 50,000), and nearly 50 percent are in rural areas. Thus, close to 80 percent of our congregations are located in those two areas. The location of congregations in other areas: 15 percent in cities with a population over 50,000, and 3 percent of those are inner-city ministries. Another 8 percent find themselves in suburbs near large cities.

ers sent to us by God, regardless of gender, race, or color. God also needs committed individuals who are willing to go to those places where God needs leadership. Those places will include small towns and rural areas, but they will also include urban areas.

### Ministerial training

For nearly a century, Bethany Theological Seminary has been a major player in ministerial education in the Church of the Brethren. More than a third of the current ordained leaders in the denomination are graduates of Bethany, and approximately 25 percent of our ordained pastors hold the master of divinity degree (or its equivalent). While we may wish those percentages were higher, that's not bad for a denomination where 73 percent of its congregations have an average worship attendance of 100 or fewer. Yes, we do want the numbers of students attending Bethany to increase, and our recent focus on leadership development is making a difference. The incoming class at Bethany this current year is the largest (26 new students) since the seminary relocated to Richmond, Ind.

Bethany should be our first priority among theological schools when individuals are making that important decision about ministerial education, and Bethany's educational min-

isterial program goes beyond the master of divinity degree. Bethany has begun planning for more "distributed learning" opportunities, offering courses in a variety of settings and formats, including online courses and video-conferencing. Bethany also helps to prepare ministerial leaders through the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, jointly supported by Bethany and the General Board.

The Academy is essential to the denomination in the future. Many of our small churches cannot afford to pay for a full-time pastor, especially one with a graduate degree, but they deserve the best leadership the denomination can provide. The Academy is fulfilling that important role, as student enrollments clearly indicate. District ministry commissions have great responsibilities when they license individuals to the ministry. The commissions must insist upon an approved training track, and that means getting students into an accredited seminary (preferably Bethany) and fully certified non-degree programs (preferably the Academy).

Two of the Academy's three training tracks, Training in Ministry (TRIM) and Education for a Shared Ministry (EFSM), have met a need in the denomination for a number of years. Jonathan Shively, the new coordinator of the Academy,

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reports that 105 students are currently enrolled in the Academy (non-degree) level training: 77 in TRIM and 28 in EFSM.

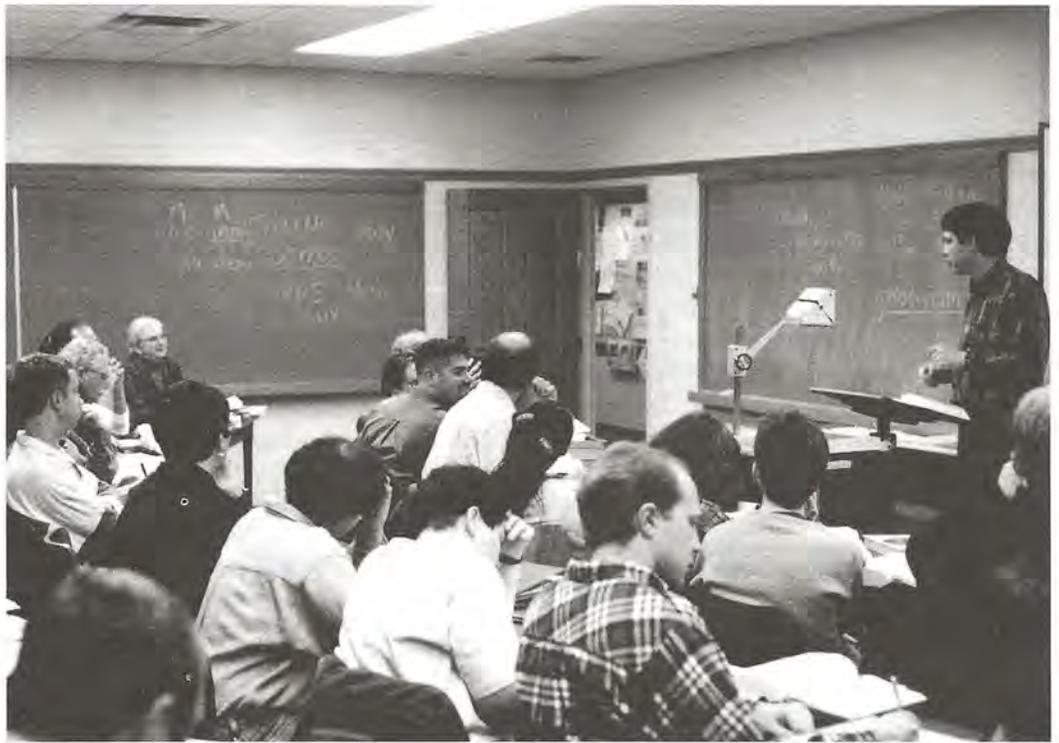
Since 1987, TRIM has graduated 179 students. EFSM, initiated in 1979, has trained leadership in 75 small membership churches. These graduates are serving the church in a variety of ways, including pastoral leadership. A number of these graduates have gone on to complete master of divinity and master of arts in theology degrees.

The third level of training in the Academy is now called "district-administered training." This new effort, called for in the 1999 Ministerial Leadership paper, replaced the "three-year reading course."

The reading course has been called "inadequate" as a ministerial training track by most districts for 10 or more

years. Over the past five years, several districts redesigned the three-year reading course in an effort to make it more effective. This meant that we were left with different standards of quality and ministerial competency in different districts. Some districts, especially the smaller ones, felt that, while the reading course was inadequate, they did not have the resources to change it. For these reasons, the 1999 Annual Conference discontinued the three-year reading course as a ministerial training track, and asked the Brethren Academy to replace it with a uniform program for all districts.

More of our current pastors came through the three-year reading course than graduated from Bethany with the master of divinity degree: 280 to 241. We do not have reliable statistics on this, but it is likely that more than 100 students may be engaged in district-administered training at the present time.



**Preparing future leaders of the church,** *Dan Ulrich leads discussion in Introduction to New Testament at Bethany Theological Seminary.*

# A plea for mutuality

by Scott Duffey

**Mutuality is what the Bible calls "one anothering."** A small group study book by that title addresses eight New Testament passages on this important subject. They include: love one another, pray for one another, care for one another, bear one another's burdens, encourage and build up one another, submit to one another, admonish one another, and spur one another toward love and good deeds. Mutuality or "one anothering" seeks the good of the whole body, while also offering some sense of accountability and discipline.

We are part of each other as we are part of the body of Christ. We are not lone rangers in ministry, doing our own thing, negotiating our own deals, answering to no one. We may feel very alone at times, but our ministry is part of something much bigger than any one person.

Mutuality seems to be less important to us today, and the change in our med-

ical insurance plan is symbolic of the times in which we are living. Because many of the younger pastors in the denomination left the Brethren plan to purchase less expensive coverage elsewhere, Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT) was forced to discontinue the self-insured plan on Jan. 1, 1999. BBT now contracts with other insurance carriers, such as MAMSI, and the rates continue to increase in these contracted plans.

We find ourselves in a Catch-22 situation. As younger pastors continue to pull away from insurance through BBT, because they can purchase insurance with lower premiums, the average age of the remaining pastors in the Brethren plan increases; thus, the remaining pastors pay even higher premiums. Much of the pressure placed on BBT comes from congregations, especially our small churches. These changes have been especially costly for our retired brothers and sisters. Retired pastors are now paying significantly more than they were two years ago.

The strong individualism in our culture has infiltrated the church. Mutuality is a hard sell when an individual pastor or congregation believes it is advantageous to seek lower rates elsewhere.

I fear that individualism will continue to overthrow mutuality in our decision-making as clergy and as congregations. Is the biblical concept of "one anothering" being replaced with individualism? Are we to the point of saying that "my personal needs are more important than the needs of everyone?"

I fear that the way we talk about money, salaries, and benefits for pastors, at the local level, will drive potential leaders away from pastoral work. How can we call and welcome those persons who are gifted for ministry while also failing to meet their needs for support, or doing it grudgingly each year at business meetings? The laborers are still too few.



Scott Duffey is pastor of the Westminster (Md.) Church of the Brethren. He first presented these issues to the Ministers' Association meeting at the 1999 Annual Conference.

We must assure that this level of training is adequate or we fail ourselves and the church.

As mentioned above, the 1999 Annual Conference gave the Academy the task of redesigning this level of training, and it is working to establish new standards and accountability procedures. The Academy started the process of change and improvement by preparing an initial draft for an expanded curriculum, increased contact hours for students, and by incorporating a ministry formation component and supervision by an experienced pastor. This spring, the Academy will bring together leaders from each of the 23

districts to discuss the new initiatives and to gain important input from those who plan and direct the district-administered training programs.

Districts that want certification from the Academy will need to meet or exceed the Academy's standards. Students who graduate from a non-certified, district-administered training program will see that indicated on the pastoral profile when they seek a pastoral placement.

#### Pastor salaries and benefits

Only about 22 percent of our pastors are paid salaries on or above the scale recommended annually by Annual Conference.

Given the number of small membership churches, this should not come as a surprise to anyone. What should we do? Lower the scale? Discontinue it? Change it? Many make the point that the scale still serves as a guide for our larger churches. Others make the point that the recommended scale would have value even if no pastor were on scale. The scale has helped to raise pastors' salaries over the years; thus, pas-

### Where did our pastors receive training?



PASTORAL LEADERSHIP IS NOT JUST ABOUT NUMBERS; IT IS ALSO ABOUT THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP. PASTORS MUST NOT LOSE SIGHT OF GOD'S CLAIM UPON THEIR LIVES. PASTORS AND ALL OTHER MINISTERIAL LEADERS MUST CONTINUALLY REDISCOVER GOD'S CALL.

Graduates of the Brethren Academy*	395
Graduates of Bethany Seminary	241
Graduates from non-Brethren seminaries	181
Self-trained**	168
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>985</b>

\* Graduates of the Brethren Academy include those with training from TRIM (34), EFSM (46), district-administered training (280), and non-Brethren certificate-level training (35).

\*\*These are ordained pastors with neither the M. Div. degree or approved certificate-level training.

tors would be worse off financially if we had not had the scale. Today, even those churches who do not pay scale use it as a benchmark toward which they should be moving. Should the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee consider a variety of pastoral scales, taking into account different regions of the country, and different sizes of congregations?

Attracting and keeping capable leadership will require the denomination to pay attention to salaries and find ways to revive a sense of mutuality in our medical insurance programs. Many younger pastors have left the Brethren Benefit Trust medical plan in search of lower premiums, but this has left older pastors with very high premiums. (See sidebar, p. 25)

#### Growth and congregational size

There are numerous reasons for denominational growth or decline. The Church of the Brethren has been declining

since 1960, losing more than 60,000 members during this 40-year period. We have not paid enough attention to two of the reasons for our decline: congregational size and pastoral leadership.

Studies indicate that the “program-size” churches (150-350 members) and the “corporate-size” churches (350+ members) have the greatest potential for numerical growth. These larger churches simply offer a much greater variety of services than small membership churches are able to offer. But they are understaffed.

There is an abundance of scholarship in evangelism and church growth that teaches us that growing congregations “staff for growth.” Simply stated, if a congregation with 350 members wants to grow to 400 or more members, it should call another pastoral leader. Several writers for the Alban Institute, Washington, D.C., point out that there should be a full-time pastor for every 100 members. If we wait until we achieve the desired growth before calling additional staff, we will likely never get to where we want to be. Our largest congregations, with a total of 76,000 members, should have more than 750 pastoral leaders merely to serve the needs of the current membership. Currently they have the services of 375.

The “pastoral-size” churches (50-150 members) are not staffed to grow either. One pastor can care for a church with up to about 150 members. This size church rarely grows larger because it is staffed to stay the same. If a congregation with 150 members wants to grow to 200 or more members, it should call a second pastor. This additional staff person might well be given the responsibility for developing multiple “entry points” (small groups, another type of worship service, service projects in the community) that welcome new members into the life of the congregation. Studies show that this size church has been in a serious decline over the past 40 years.

Our congregations are not “staffing forward,” and at this point we do not have the available leaders even if we had the will to plan for growth. The larger churches are understaffed, and many of our small membership churches are without trained leadership. At any given time, more than 20 percent of these small churches do not have the leadership of ordained pastors.

Do these small churches deserve well-trained ministerial leaders? Of course they do! Where will we find them? Many of them are already present within the life of the small church, and we need to revive the “free” (non-salaried, plural ministry) and call out bi-vocational leaders. We have the means to train these persons through the Brethren Academy programs such as TRIM, EFSM, and the district-administered training track. For this reason, the Office of Ministry challenged the denomination to call 500 new ministerial leaders between 1999 and 2003.

### Pastoral leadership

Pastoral leadership is not just about numbers; it is also about the quality of leadership. Marva Dawn and Eugene Peterson state in their new book, *The Unnecessary Pastor*,

## You do the math

How many of the following questions can you answer correctly about ministerial leadership in the Church of the Brethren? The answers are printed at the bottom.

### The number of . . .

1. Ordained ministers in the Church of the Brethren?
2. Pastors in the Church of the Brethren?
3. Ordained ministers who are Bethany graduates?
4. Bethany graduates who are pastors?
5. Academy graduates who are pastors?
6. Ordained women?
7. Female pastors?
8. Pastors likely to retire by 2003?
9. Pastors from non-Brethren backgrounds?
10. Persons of color serving as pastors?
11. Pastors who live in parsonages?
12. Pastors on or above the recommended salary scale?
13. New ministerial leaders needed by 2003?

Answers to questions: 1) 1895; 2) 1150; 3) 630; 4) 285; 5) 395; 6) 240; 7) 155; 8) 165; 9) 285; 10) 25; 11) 320; 12) 260; 13) 500.

that pastors must not lose sight of God’s claim upon their lives. Pastors and all other ministerial leaders must continually rediscover God’s call.

Dawn and Peterson define the word “unnecessary” this way: God does not need any of us; God wants all of us to do God’s will. The term unnecessary is a positive one for these writers. We step outside of our God-given call when we think we are necessary for a variety of reasons and causes.

According to the authors, “unnecessary pastors” do not take their cues from culture or from their own desires for self-importance. And they do not give congregations only what they think they need. The church needs courageous and visionary pastoral leaders who are spiritually hardy, grounded in the Scriptures, who have a heart for evangelism and church growth, and who are not afraid to try new things.

The church needs ministerial leaders who feel called. Ministerial leadership is more than a profession or a career. Ministry is a vocation, a calling by God and the church. It is a call to go where God defines the need and provides the message. The need is next door and it is also global. The message is the Good News of Christ!



Allen T. Hansell is director of ministry for the Church of the Brethren General Board.

*The Unnecessary Pastor*, by Marva Dawn and Eugene Peterson, is available for \$14 from Brethren Press. Ask for item #0411.

# CHINA

by Dorothea Fry Mason

**The Chinese church today has risen out of ashes.** Between the Japanese military (October MESSENGER) and the Cultural Revolution, the church seemed to have been destroyed. A whole generation was lost to Christ. But now the church has risen from those ashes and is stronger than ever in some places. Hongtao Yin is a living example of this resurrection.

Hongtao's great-grandfather was the first Chinese elder in the Church of the Brethren in China. Hongtao's grandfather, Yin Ji Zeng, was nurtured by Church of the Brethren missionaries in Shanxi Province and became senior pastor of the largest church in Beijing. At age 76 he founded a seminary because of his strong desire to train younger leadership. The January 1989 MESSENGER featured his story. He and his wife, both aged 90, are living in Beijing.

Pastor Yin does not preach much anymore. In fact, Hongtao said after his grandfather retired he grew a beard which reaches his waist. Pastor Yin, in accordance with the old tradition, said, "Now I cannot preach because I have a beard."

Pastor Yin's grandson, Hongtao Yin, is now studying in the United States at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. I visited with Hongtao and his wife, Gu Hong, in October, on the second anniversary of their wedding. Hongtao was born in February 1967 and grew up in the Chong Wen Men Church in Beijing, where Pastor Yin was senior pastor for many years. There are no denominations throughout China — only one Protestant church, which is growing by leaps and bounds. Hongtao says in his home church there were 700-800 members in 1985 and now there are over 10,000. Attendance often exceeds membership. This is true all over China, especially in rural areas.

The Chinese people have many difficult situations. They have a great need for God, so they pray diligently and find strength and power to face each day. Before the Cultural Revolution the Chinese people had a strong culture built on loyalty to family and friends. After this period, idealism was eroded and the Chinese people, with no belief system, turned their attention to money and things. They've been taught not to do business with friends and not to believe in each other. The church brings out the contrast to this current culture. The church emphasizes relationships. People are hungry for a belief system. So all ages, young and old, want to go to church.

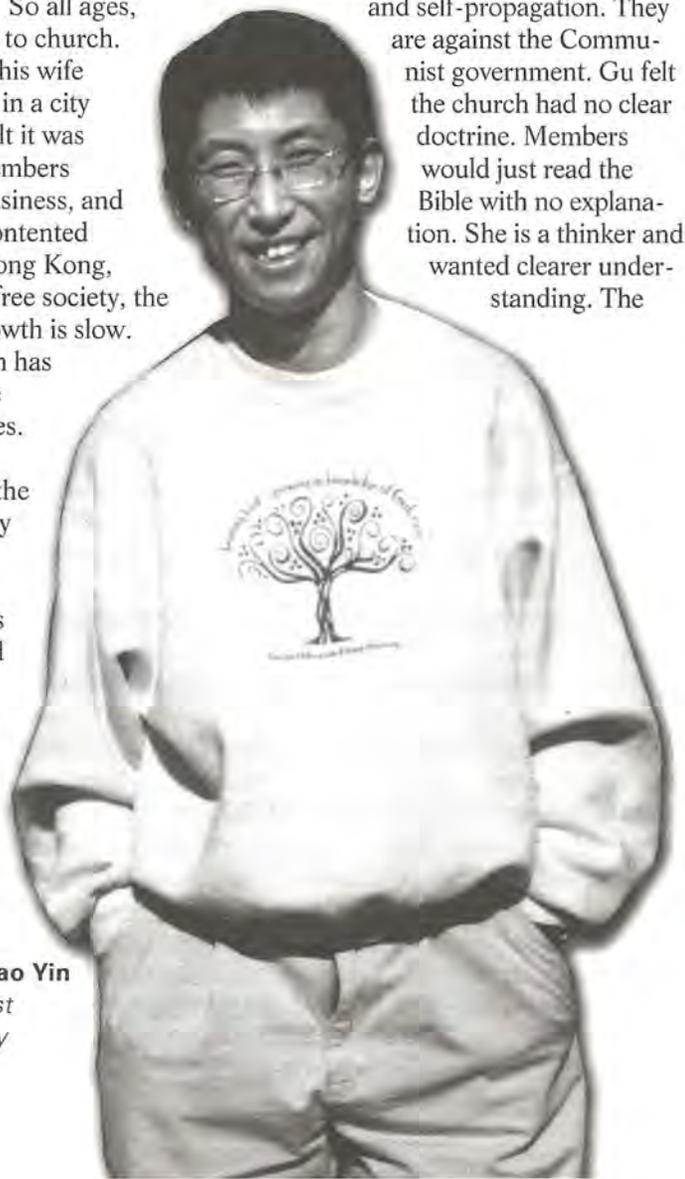
In the US Hongtao and his wife visited the Chinese church in a city near the seminary. They felt it was more like a club, where members spoke Mandarin, talked business, and felt too comfortable and contented with life. In Taiwan and Hong Kong, where people also enjoy a free society, the churches are small and growth is slow. But in China, individualism has been considered a negative term, and the church thrives.

According to Hongtao, pastors are free to preach the Good News in China. They are restricted only from preaching about political issues. In his eight years as pastor, Hongtao never had to account to the Chinese government. The Roman Catholic Church, however, is very much out of favor with the government. Over 100 years ago, during the "Boxer Movement," the Chinese

government believed Catholic missionaries passed military information to the US government. In other words, the Chinese government labeled these missionaries as spies. In October 2000, the Catholic church canonized these same missionaries as saints, a move that further angered the Chinese government.

Gu Hong did not grow up in the church. About age 26 she started going to an underground church. Underground churches are small groups, less than 100, which meet in houses. They oppose the three-self movement, which stands for

self-education, self-sovereignty, and self-propagation. They are against the Communist government. Gu felt the church had no clear doctrine. Members would just read the Bible with no explanation. She is a thinker and wanted clearer understanding. The



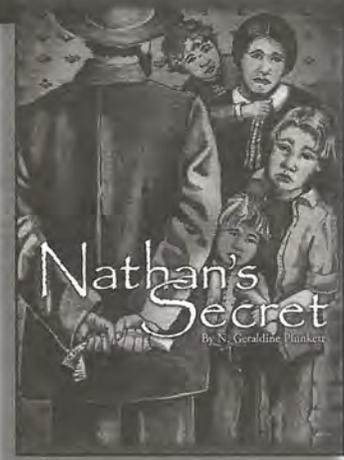
**Seminary student Hongtao Yin** is spreading the gospel first brought to his ancestors by Brethren missionaries.

underground church said theirs was the narrow way that led to heaven, and that the big church was the wide broad way that was evil. This seemed negative and simplistic to Gu Hong and she sought true answers. She went to Chong Wen Men Church to talk with the pastors.

It was here she first met Hongtao, one of four pastors. He took time to listen to her questions and explain things of God to her. She also talked with others. She would listen and then think over what she had heard. At age 29 she made the decision to be baptized.

Chong Wen Men Church in Beijing requires candidates for baptism to be at least 18, have one year of church

*As the Civil War threatens  
his home in Roanoke  
County, Virginia, Nathan  
Garst must keep many  
secrets: his papa's hiding  
place, papa's heroic deed,  
and the message that only  
Nathan can deliver.*



Based on a true story, this short work of historical fiction shows what life was like during the Civil War for a family who loved peace. *Nathan's Secret* is a delightful story for children that reinforces the values of friendship, faith, and peacemaking.

Geraldine Plunkett weaves this story from her family history, from the stories about the Civil War that her grandmother shared with her. She still has two letters written by Henry Garst that tell about his time in hiding and away from his family.

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attendance, two intensive weekends of Christian teaching, and an interview with a pastor, who decides whether the candidate is ready for baptism.

Gu Hong and Hongtao were married on a Saturday because on Sunday the church building was too busy. Their wedding sounded very similar to a western church wedding. Both of them walked down the aisle together with their four-year-old nephew and two-year-old niece holding the long train of Gu's white wedding gown. Pastor Yin married them, putting his hands on theirs as he asked them their vows and shared his comments.

Gu Hong is a nurse by profession. This year she is studying English in preparation for an exam.

After Hongtao graduated from Nanjing Seminary he served eight years as one of four pastors at Chong Wen Men. He dreamed of studying in the US. A Nanjing seminary friend graduated from Eastern Mennonite Seminary and paved the way for Hongtao to come to

Associated Mennonite Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. He is supported by the Mennonite Church. The day we met he had just come from a preaching class where he said they pay much attention to details such as hand gestures, eye contact, organization of notes, etc. This was not taught in China where they emphasized the message and what it means to the daily life of the people.

He likes the Brethren/Mennonite peace message and believes it is not only good for the church but is greatly needed for the world. Hongtao sees the people in China and the US as good and wants to be a bridge of understanding between them. As a fourth-generation Christian, he continues to nurture seeds planted by Brethren missionaries so many years ago. 

Dorothea Fry Mason, an ordained minister, is married to Joe Mason. They live in the retirement community of Timbercrest in North Manchester, Ind. She and her first husband, Ivan Fry, were sent by the Church of the Brethren in 1988-89 to teach English in the Brethren agricultural exchange program in Nanjing, China.

### CLASSIFIED ADS

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**Linking caring Americans with needy children,** their families and communities in the developing world. Western PA District COB Mission Program, with 20 years experience operating a child sponsorship program, is now partnering with International Christian Aid supporting orphanages and child educational programs in Honduras, Nicaragua and a developing program in India. We need you. For only \$25 per month you can sponsor a child. For information contact International Christian Aid, 115 Spring Rd., Hollsopple, PA 15935 or phone 814-479-7963.

**TRAVEL —Tour Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and England** with emphasis on unique gardens, July 13-August 3, 2002. For information please write (or email kreiderk@etown.edu) to J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022

**2001 Jacob and Magdalene Eller Reunion.** Eller descendants are invited to the 2001 Eller Reunion at Bridgewater College in Bridgewater, Virginia on July 6-7, 2001, following the Baltimore Annual Conference. There will be activities for all ages. Invitations are being mailed in January and registration forms in March. If you don't receive the January invita-

tion, if you want to be put on the mailing list, or if you want more information, contact Heather Replogle, 112 College View Drive, Bridgewater, VA 22812.

**Coordinator of Shared Services** (Search Extended). The Association of Brethren Caregivers is seeking a full-time Coordinator of Shared Services to assist the Executive Director with programming and services for the association and the Fellowship of Brethren Homes, a ministry of Brethren retirement communities. Ideal candidates will demonstrate the following qualifications: working knowledge of the mechanisms and processes which impact services to the aging; experience in retirement community management; understanding of Church of the Brethren heritage; bachelor's degree in a related field; proficiency in interpretation and consensus building; comfort providing leadership in an environment with diverse interests; excellent communication, organization and computer skills. The position is available immediately. Applications and inquiries will be accepted until the position is filled. All interested parties should direct inquiries or letters of application with résumé and three references to Steve Mason, Executive Director, ABC, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120.

**DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.** 120 average worship attendance, 70 church school attendance, church seeks staff member to develop and implement education ministries, enlist and train staff, assist VBS and other Christian education ministries. Part time, 15 hours / week, Salary negotiable. Send resume via mail, fax, or e-mail to: Nokesville COB, P.O. Box 56, Nokesville, VA 20182; fax: 703-594-2289; Nokesville\_COB@juno.com

This month's Turning Points includes all listings received prior to 11/22/00 not previously published.

## New members

**Ankeny, Iowa:** Brittany Telk  
**Arcadia, Ind.:** Belinda Rulon, Walter Tharp, Jean Tharp  
**Beaverton, Mich.:** Bonnie McKimmy, Mildred McKimmy King, Olan Whitmer  
**Beech Run, Mapleton Depot, Pa.:** Connie Maclay Robert Maclay, Dave Flasher, Don Grove, Jan Grove, Bert Grove, Kelly Rowe, Lauren Crouse, Anita Park, George Hamman  
**Bethesda, Grantsville, Md.:** Kayla Nazelrod, Lucas Moore  
**Cedar Creek, Garrett, Ind.:** Elwood Johnson, Nancy Johnson  
**Circle of Peace, Glendale, Ariz.:** Jim Toomey, Amy Toomey, Dawn Nolan, Walter Pottorf  
**County Line, Champion, Pa.:** Rebekah Pletcher  
**Dupont, Ohio:** Nick Herr, Steven Scherer  
**English River, South English, Iowa:** Marie Lewis  
**Ephrata, Pa.:** Gary Heistand, Abbye Zimmerman, Danielle Shumate, Tracey Marion, Sharon Dull, Kristie Wanner, Brian Wanner, Michael Morrow, Susan Morrow, Vicki Kreider, Angie Rapchinski, Ben Eisemann  
**First Central, Kansas City, Kan.:** Jacqueline Elaine Cofelt, Dawn McCormick  
**Germantown Brick, Rocky Mount, Va.:** H. B. Ingram, Sherry Ingram, Ross Flora, Ellie Flora, Sara Starkey, Tyler Flora, Lindsey Saul, Ryan Saul  
**Glendora, Calif.:** Amy Walsh  
**Greenmount, Harrisonburg, Va.:** Rebecca Lynn Hott, Jeffrey Scott Armentrout, Andrew Michael Ayala, Crystal Dawn Ayala, Samantha Dawn Brumfield, Tanna Lynn Carr, Dwight E. Freed, Holly Danielle Knupp, Jamie Caitlin Knupp, Wesley Aaron Miller, Brandon Craig Mitchell, Codie James Mitchell, Jared William Sherman  
**Lebanon, Mount Sidney, Va.:** Larry Moore, April Moore, Betty Hubert, John Ware, Jeanna Ware  
**Liberty Mills, Ind.:** Harry Barrett, Deborah Barrett, Kim Barrett, Hilary Wagoner  
**Maple Spring, Hollsopple, Pa.:** Laurel Lichvar, Eva Mostoller, Mallory Ott, Tom Hubbard, Sandy Hubbard, Maggie Mostoller  
**Modesto, Calif.:** Juan Adrover, Maxine Parrish, Falina Sanquineti  
**Monitor, Conway, Kan.:** Rob Koop, Jill Koop  
**Mount Hermon, Bassett, Va.:** Don Surber, Judy Surber  
**Pine Creek, North Liberty, Ind.:** Brandon Coffey, Evelyn Hartsough, John Hartsough,

Rebekah Mangus, Julie Stone  
**Pleasant View, Burkittsville, Md.:** Ted Lackey, Thomas Stowers  
**Plymouth, Ind.:** Larry Miller, Lois Miller, Terry Cole, Diane Cole, David Finney, Kate Finney, Jackie Eveland, Christy Weiss, Virginia Aker  
**Polo, Ill.:** Gene Schmidt  
**Pymont, Delphi, Ind.:** Tim Deardorff, Kim Deardorff, Molly Cripe, Kayleigh Mellinger  
**Sangerville, Bridgewater, Va.:** Dale Rumsisel, Steve Fawley  
**Topeka, Kan.:** Ivan Dean Newland  
**Troy, Ohio:** Amber Fessler, Michael Reed  
**Walnut Grove, Johnstown, Pa.:** Ralph Gerber  
**West Green Tree, Elizabethtown, Pa.:** Randy Estep, Melvin Hoffer, Sandy Hoffer  
**White Oak, Manheim, Pa.:** Elvin Groff, LaVere Stump, Dorothy Keller, Jesse Wantz, Amber Wantz, George Heller, IV, Monika Copenhaver, Shelia Shirk

## Wedding anniversaries

**Bergy, Keith and Jean, Caledonia, Mich.,** 55  
**Bowman, Wilbur and Evelyn, Polo, Ill.,** 50  
**Brubaker, Mark and Phyllis, Lancaster, Pa.,** 60  
**Crunkleton, Ted and Cora, Chambersburg, Pa.,** 50  
**Dickson, Hector and Betty, Torrance, Calif.,** 60  
**Fike, Paul and Ella Mae, Bridgewater, Va.,** 60  
**Hostetler, Denny and Alice, Somerset, Pa.,** 50  
**Judy, Roy and Jean, Greenwood, Del.,** 50  
**Kalp, J. Paul and Louraine, Jones Mill, Pa.,** 60  
**Lape, Donald and Dorene, Johnstown, Pa.,** 50  
**Leatherman, Ray and Doris, Goshen, Ind.,** 50  
**Leedy, Glenn and Peggy, Chambersburg, Pa.,** 50  
**Lucas, Ray, Sr., and Frances, Brunswick, Md.,** 60  
**Mathews, Howard and Mary, New Paris, Ind.,** 55  
**Neff, Charles and LaVeta, Goshen, Ind.,** 60  
**Pence, Cliff and Crystal, Ontario, Calif.,** 50  
**Reed, Arlen and Clara, Troy, Ohio,** 50  
**Rehn, Frank and Ila Jane, Johnstown, Pa.,** 50  
**Rhynard, Albert and Naomi, Troy, Ohio,** 65  
**Rowe, James E. and Nelda, Mapleton Depot, Pa.,** 60  
**Wissinger, Sylvester, and Janet, Johnstown, Pa.,** 50

## Deaths

**Alexander, Bertha Rebecca, 88, Upper Tract, W.Va.,** Oct. 17  
**Alt, Eldon Henry, 85, Petersburg, W.Va.,** Oct. 16  
**Alt, Luther P., 89, Harrisonburg, Va.,** Oct. 8

**Anders, Luella, 83, Brownsville, Md.,** Nov. 10  
**Anderson, Betty P., 69, Rocky Mount, Va.,** July 10  
**Arnett, Don, Laura, Ohio,** Aug. 19  
**Baile, Beulah Mae, 92, Warrensburg, Mo.,** Nov. 17  
**Baker, Rodney D., 75, Dixon, Ill.,** Oct. 12  
**Bingenheimer, Ernest A., 76, New Enterprise, Pa.,** Oct. 25  
**Blackburn, Leonna, 87, Windber, Pa.,** Oct. 17  
**Bolen, Thelma Mae, 81, Luray, Va.,** Oct. 5  
**Boothe, H. L., 91, Bassett, Va.,** Aug. 13  
**Boyd, Orlo Walter, 76, New Enterprise, Pa.,** Nov. 2  
**Bruner, Merle, 99, Paris, Ohio,** Oct. 9  
**Bush, Mary, 91, Johnstown, Pa.,** June 21  
**Cameron, Ivella, 92, Johnstown, Pa.,** May 10  
**Carr, Mary Katherine, 96, Fulkus Run, Va.,** Oct. 1  
**Christian, Berle, 84, Redondo Beach, Calif.,** April 25  
**Combs, Edna Bell Miller, 92, Mathias, W.Va.,** Sept. 30  
**Comerford, Clint, 78, Covina, Calif.,** Sept. 3  
**Connor, Janet, Johnstown, Pa.,** June 25  
**Deardorff, Paul, 91, Chambersburg, Pa.,** Aug. 7  
**DeSeelhorst, Dorothy, 87, Modesto, Calif.,** Nov. 15  
**Dove, Charles Warren, 80, Harrisonburg, Va.,** Oct. 28  
**Ebersole, Jennie, 86, La Verne, Calif.,** Nov. 4  
**Eidemiller, Richard, 63, Ephrata, Pa.,** Nov. 10  
**Erbaugh, Wilfred M., 85, New Carlisle, Ohio,** Sept. 7  
**Evers, Ruby Huffman, 73, Dayton, Va.,** Oct. 30  
**Fahnestock, J. Ira, 84, Manheim, Pa.,** July 28  
**Fassnacht, Robert, 79, Ephrata, Pa.,** Sept. 21  
**Flora, Lloyd P., 82, Boones Mill, Va.,** March 14  
**Freeman, Leora, 89, Johnstown, Pa.,** Oct. 28  
**Getty, Edythe, 83, La Verne, Calif.,** Oct. 25  
**Gilbert, John William, 85, Staunton, Va.,** Oct. 15  
**Graybill, Leah, 94, Lancaster, Pa.,** Aug. 5  
**Grim, Earl Ray, 87, Kansas City, Kan.,** Nov. 1  
**Haldeman, Daniel C., 76, Hagerstown, Md.,** Oct. 12  
**Haynes, G. Nash, 85, Bassett, Va.,** Sept. 30  
**Hemsey, Bill, 63, Winona, Minn.,** Sept. 15  
**Hershberger, Neva, 87, Davidsville, Pa.,** Sept. 7  
**Hodgson, Cecil, 86, San Diego, Calif.,** Oct. 7  
**Holsinger, Gladys Elizabeth, 82, Broadway, Va.,** Oct. 17  
**Hood, Grace, 98, Palmyra, Pa.,** Nov. 2  
**Huet, Frederick, 72, Johnstown, Pa.,** June 21  
**Hughes, Virginia, 89, Redondo Beach, Calif.,** Oct. 14  
**Johnson, Ruby L., 94, Modesto, Calif.,** Nov. 9  
**Kiefer, John, 84, Ephrata, Pa.,**

Sept. 15  
**Larson, Russelle Rust, 39, Cabool, Mo.,** Oct. 14  
**Lauver, Marlin H., 85, Potomac Park, Md.,** Oct. 10  
**Lewis, Gladys, 91, Harper, Iowa,** Aug. 25  
**Markley, Cecil, 86, North Manchester, Ind.,** Oct. 6  
**McDowell, Melvin, 84, Johnstown, Pa.,** Sept. 14  
**McKinnon, Neil, 89, Modesto, Calif.,** July 10  
**Myers, Jacob Weldon, 85, Harrisonburg, Va.,** Oct. 7  
**Myers, James M., 84, Chambersburg, Pa.,** Oct. 28  
**Newcomer, Paul, 84, Chambersburg, Pa.,** July 27  
**Newland, Ivan Dean, 65, Topeka, Kan.,** Oct. 6  
**Nicklaus, Ralph, 84, Dixon, Ill.,** Oct. 4  
**Norwood, Glen D., Kokomo, Ind.,** Oct. 25  
**Ober, Frank L., Jr., 89, Johnstown, Pa.,** Sept. 26  
**Phillips, Vada, 90, Louisville, Ohio,** Oct. 28  
**Poe, John, Liberty Mills, Ind.,** Oct. 2  
**Preston, Helen A., 67, Garrett, Pa.,** Oct. 8  
**Ribblett, Patty, Johnstown, Pa.,** June 28  
**Rogers, Lewis, Johnstown, Pa.,** Sept. 15  
**Seaman, Gladys, 82, Lebanon, Pa.,** Oct. 23  
**Schnepp, Elsie, 81, Beaverton, Mich.,** Sept. 23  
**Sheffer, Wilson Henry, 90, Bridgewater, Va.,** Oct. 18  
**Shelor, B.B., Palghar, India,** Oct. 10  
**Sink, J. B., 80, Rocky Mount, Va.,** Aug. 28  
**Smith, ErmaLee, 69, Topeka, Kan.,** Aug. 28  
**Snyder, Elda, 91, Johnstown, Pa.,** Sept. 11  
**Snyder, Lester, 84, New Carlisle, Ohio,** Oct. 28  
**Stump, Oliver, 101, Cushing, Okla.,** Sept. 5  
**Trimmer, Rodney W., 66, Shiloh, Pa.,** Oct. 18  
**Ulery, Harold D., 68, Logansport, Ind.,** Nov. 4  
**Vinard, Myrtle, 84, Pymont, Ind.,** Nov. 16  
**Westfall, Arlene, Arcanum, Ohio,** Jan. 3  
**Weston, James R., 71, Harrisonburg, Va.,** Sept. 27  
**White, Alberta Patricia Fisher, 89, Verona, Va.,** Oct. 1  
**Wiant, June, West Milton, Ohio,** Jan. 25  
**Woof, Kathryn H., 77, Harrisonburg, Pa.,** Oct. 19  
**Wright, Maggie H., 47, Bridgewater, Va.,** Oct. 5  
**Zunkel, Cleda, 97, North Manchester, Ind.,** Nov. 9

## Licensings

**Beckner, Richard Keith, Nov. 12, Fraternity, Winston-Salem, N.C.**  
**Bethel, David Leroy, Oct. 22, Mountain View, Boise, Idaho**  
**Black, Brian S., Dec. 15, 1996, Middle Creek, Lititz, Pa.**  
**Bond, Gilbert, June 18, Brooklyn, N.Y.**

**Bowman, Stacey Anne, Sept. 17, Free Spring, Mifflintown, Pa.**  
**Brought, Ryan E., Feb. 13, Hempfield, East Petersburg, Pa.**  
**Burk, Kelly, Oct. 8, Westminster, Md.**  
**Clark, Byron Eugene, Nov. 5, Brookville, Ohio**  
**Crenshaw, Tobin, Oct. 29, Eaton, Ohio**  
**Den Hartog, Benton, Oct. 15, Worthington, Reading, Minn.**  
**Dcnlinger Daniel Isaac, Oct. 29, Eaton, Ohio**  
**Erbaugh, Wendy Noffsinger, Sept. 12, 1999, Elkhart City, Elkhart, Ind.**  
**Eshelman, Robert, June 11, Ephrata, Pa.**  
**Gerber, Linda Kay, July 30, Black Rock, Glenville, Pa.**  
**Gill, Edward, June 4, Conewago, Hershey, Pa.**  
**Hershberger, Marlys, Oct. 29, Roaring Spring, Pa.**  
**Kinsey, Chad Blake, Nov. 19, Mohrsville, Pa.**  
**Miley, Jeffrey, Nov. 22, 1998, Lancaster, Pa.**  
**Myer, Nathan, March 13, Chiques, Manheim, Pa.**  
**Olivencia, Guillermo, March 28, 1999, Harrisburg, Pa.**  
**Olivencia, Marisel, March 28, 1999, Harrisburg, Pa.**  
**Pennington, R. Wayne, Oct. 29, Bethel, Arlington, Va.**  
**Quijano, Lorette, Nov. 24, 1999, Brooklyn, N.Y.**  
**Ream, Kim, June 11, Ephrata, Pa.**  
**Ream, Todd D., June 11, Ephrata, Pa.**  
**Sargent, Dennis C., Oct. 15, Bradford, Ohio**  
**Shumate, Bryan, June 11, Ephrata, Pa.**  
**Walker, Luke Thomas, Oct. 1, Black Rock, Glenville, Pa.**  
**Weiss, David, Nov. 19, Mohrsville, Pa.**

## Ordinations

**Auker, Kevin, Feb. 7, 1999, Blue Ball, Pa.**  
**Carlson, Melinda Kay, Sept. 24, Dundalk, Baltimore, Md.**  
**Farquharson, J. Keith, June 4, Peace Valley, Mo.**  
**Manthos, Michael, Aug. 27, Oak Park, Oakland, Md.**  
**Marshall, Dick A., Oct. 15, East Sugar Creek, Sugar Creek, Ohio**  
**Neuwirth, Richard K., Nov. 5, Swan Creek, Delta, Ohio**  
**Peterson, Deborah D., Oct. 5, North Webster, Ind.**  
**Schildt, Dwane E., Oct. 29, Pleasant Hill, Spring Grove, Pa.**

## Pastoral placement

**Campbell, James Warren, from interim pastor to pastor, Spring Branch, Wheatland, Mo.,** Oct. 1  
**Farquharson, J. Keith, from team interim pastor, Peace Valley, Mo., to pastor, Fellowship, Martinsburg, W.V.,** Nov. 1



## The life and death of Liberty

**A** carpet of needles from two ancient white pines covers the walkway leading to the front door of the Liberty Church of the Brethren. This is the first Christmas season the walk hasn't been swept clear. Joye Dell Uhland, who has attended here all her life, like her mother and grandmother, struggles to unlock the door for us. The heat is on inside, a reminder that members are still taking care of the building as they always have.

In the back of the sanctuary is an enormously long walnut table, which in the old days accommodated a panel of preaching elders. Now it holds relics of recent life—a Bible board game and a *Source* packet from August 1999. The board on the wall announces, like a stopped clock, Attendance Today 19; Attendance Last Sunday 20. Uhland shows us the old Bible on the pulpit, presented on March 27, 1850, when the church was already 18 years old.

Andrew Jackson was President when a few dozen settlers gathered to organize a church 17 miles southeast of Quincy, Ill. Harvest chores were pressing, but they appointed a council which visited every household. Finding everyone to be "in love and union," they gathered in one of their cabins on the fourth Saturday of September, 1831, for an all-day love feast. The church's first leader was Elder George Wolfe, Jr., who would serve this new congregation for 34 years, until his death in 1865. The great Brethren leader is buried two miles from here.

Before his move north to the Quincy area, Wolfe had become known in southern Illinois as a principled man and a persuasive preacher, who loved to debate opponents of his religious beliefs. It is said that after one fierce debate, Elder Wolfe offered his hand to his opponent in respect and reconciliation. The gesture inspired the name and the symbol of a handclasp on the seal of Union County, Ill. When a referendum threatened to turn Illinois into a slave state in 1823-1824, Wolfe rode his horse to the state capital to speak against it. During the Blackhawk War of 1832, just after his move to Liberty, he secured from the governor exemption from military service for Brethren in Illinois.

For many years these "Far Western" Brethren in Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri had been alienated from the main body of the church, over modes of footwashing and other disputes. During the first week of May 1856, a delegation of elders sent by Annual Meeting arrived at Liberty to discuss reconciliation. They were greeted warmly and drew up an agreement which served as the basis for restoration of full union.

After Wolfe died in 1865, his son David took over as leader of the congregation. The church grew and prospered to a membership of about 200. In 1874 they built a larger meetinghouse, which would serve them for the next 126 years. By

1880 the membership was scattered over three counties, so three new churches were started.

The glory days were far outnumbered by days of ordinary faithfulness. Church council minutes show this entry from Sept. 1, 1900: "Elder Brubaker read Scripture. He then extends invitation to members to give a word of exhortation. Was gladly excepted." And this: "The trustees was authorized to stop trespassing through the yard and fix the windows in the church house."

More than once the Liberty church teetered on the edge of survival, only to be brought back by a new family or a fresh pastor. Attendance was dangerously low in the 1920s, but in 1925 the Liberty Presbyterian Church disbanded and some of its members became faithful workers in the Church of the Brethren, helping it to survive.

In 1977 Liberty welcomed a new part-time pastor in Terry Hatfield, who was then struggling to re-enter pastoral ministry after a divorce. "We needed each other," says Hatfield, now pastor of the Panora (Iowa) congregation. He says the "corporate warmth and safety" of the Liberty congregation gave him the courage to go on to be a full-time pastor again. He recalls the Sunday afternoon they baptized 12 people in a farm pond—"a 33 percent increase in church membership in one day!"

In September 1981 the church marked its 150th anniversary with a two-day celebration. Guest speaker Robert Faus of the General Board staff cautioned the congregation: "To look back without looking ahead is to affirm a past without a future," he said. "It leads to the hardening of our Christian arteries."

The small congregation continued on for another 19 years. "Everybody worked in Quincy or Hannibal [Mo.] and they would move there," lamented Uhland. Finally they tried two pastors of another denomination, but, after the second moved to Michigan last spring, only eight members were left. Former pastor Clinton Kessler, Jr., came back from Ohio for a last sad but celebratory congregational dinner, and on May 31, 2000, the old church closed for good.

When the Illinois/Wisconsin district conference met this fall, it held a memorial service after the vote to officially close Liberty and two other venerable churches. Though the room was filled with tears, district minister Jim Yaussy Albright reminded us to remember the lives of the churches, not their deaths.

An old footwashing tub hangs on the wall of the abandoned Liberty church basement, silent testimony to a long rich life. Terry Hatfield writes, "They washed feet and kept the feast, awaiting the return of the Lord, pleasing the spirits of the clouds of witnesses, and acting out the faithfulness of being a people of God."—FLETCHER FARRAR

An old  
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tub hangs  
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of the  
abandoned  
Liberty church  
basement,  
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# Acceptance

***At Brethren colleges all are welcome!***

We represent an exciting mix of backgrounds, faiths, nationalities and experiences. Our students challenge, respect, and celebrate each others' differences.

A Brethren education strives to educate and develop the whole person with Christian values, high standards of excellence and integrity. Students are challenged to think deeply and critically, and gain the confidence to explore new ideas.

Within a caring, learning community, students have the freedom to flourish—and talents, aspirations and dreams are turned into reality.

***A Brethren education will make a difference ... in YOU!***

For more information about Brethren colleges, visit our website: [www.cobcoa.org](http://www.cobcoa.org) or email: [cobcoa\\_gb@brethren.org](mailto:cobcoa_gb@brethren.org) or call 1-800-323-8039

Brethren Colleges Abroad  
North Manchester, Indiana  
(219) 982-5238

Bethany Theological Seminary  
Richmond, Indiana  
1-800-287-8822  
ext. 1810

Bridgewater College  
Bridgewater, Virginia  
1-800-759-8328

Elizabethtown College  
Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania  
(717) 361-1400

Juniata College  
Huntingdon, Pennsylvania  
1-800-526-1970

University of La Verne  
La Verne, California  
1-800-876-4858

Manchester College  
North Manchester, Indiana  
1-800-852-3648

McPherson College  
McPherson, Kansas  
1-800-365-7402



COBCOA

# 215th Annual Conference

## Church of the Brethren



### Revive Us Again

Will you not revive us again, so that your people may rejoice in you? Psalms 85:6

## Baltimore, Maryland

## June 30-July 4, 2001

### Program Booklet (available in May)

Please send the following:

- Copies at \$9.00 each of the 2001 Annual Conference Booklet (regular binding)
- Copies at \$12.00 each of the 2001 Annual Conference Booklet (spiral binding)
- Copies at \$2.00 each of the 2001 Annual Conference Information Packet

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Amount remitted \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Delegates sending the delegate authorization form and registration fee will automatically receive one program booklet.)

Information about conference programs and reservation forms may be obtained by contacting your pastor or:

Annual Conference Office  
1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin Illinois 60120

### Volunteer Helpers

I am volunteering my help with the Conference tasks I have marked below.

Please number them in order of preference.

- Registration (computer experience required)
- Usher (business and general sessions)
- Teller
- Information/mail desk
- Nurse

I plan to arrive at Conference on \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle age group:

16-22 23-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61+

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Additional volunteers may indicate your interest in serving on a separate sheet.