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CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

NOVEMBER 2001 WWW.BRETHREN.ORG

*By the tender **mercy** of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give **light** to those who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to **guide** our feet into
the way of peace.*

Luke 1:78-79



Perspectives

A new series of essays by Brethren on faith issues that confront Christians today. Published by Brethren Press, the series invites a wide variety of Brethren authors to speak personally and passionately on faith issues that are important to them and the wider church. Views of the writers are their own and are offered for study, personal reflection, and group discussion. Study questions are included.

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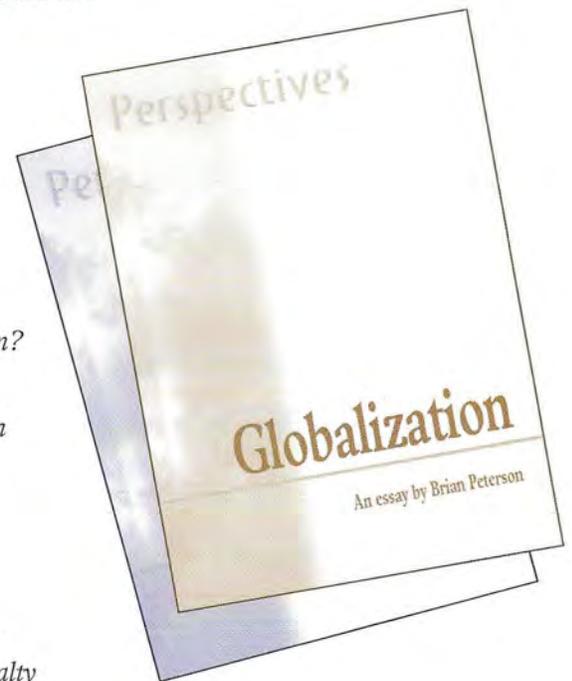
In the 21st century, cultures, politics, religions, and ideas are colliding the world over. Will Christian pacifism continue to be a marginalized point of view or a viable and inevitable path in the new century?

God's Plan for Peace by Virginia Wiles

The Gospels and letters of the New Testament harmonize to reveal God's priority for peace and God's invitation to us to be partners in making it happen.

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Old animosities between Arab countries and the United States grow scorching hot. This background study on Islam and US-Arab relations helps Christians understand the conflict between faiths and politics.



Perspectives are 32 to 48 pages in length and are \$2.50 per copy, plus shipping and handling.

Additional Perspectives will be published throughout the year.



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ONTHECOVER

In the first MESSENGER edition since the attacks of Sept. 11, we survey the peaceable responses of Brethren across the country. There were candlelight vigils to remember victims, searching of scripture to remember God's plan, and appeals from leaders to remember who we are.

DEPARTMENTS

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10 Anthology of response

From around the country Brethren responded to events of Sept. 11 and its aftermath with public statements of faith in Jesus' message of peace and love. Here is a collection of Brethren voices in sermons, prayers, letters, and essays.

22 Introduction to Islam

When world events promote confusion about religion and when ignorance results in persecution of innocents, it is time for Christians to learn more about another great monotheistic religion, Islam. It is a good way to show concern for our Muslim neighbors.

26 World churchman

Kurtis F. Naylor, who died this year, "was a service- and peace-minded minister with strong ecumenical convictions." As a Brethren Service Commission worker and leader, he brought the Christian message of peace and service to a needy world. Naylor is admirably remembered here by Don Durnbaugh.



FROM THE PUBLISHER



Almost a hundred years ago, Mark Twain wrote "The War Prayer," a searing commentary on the invocation of God's blessing to wage war. In it he describes a patriotic worship service where the preacher prays a long prayer for the victory of the young men heading off to war. As he finishes, a stranger enters the church and addresses the congregation, "bearing a message from Almighty God."

God has commanded him, he says, to put into words the *unspoken* part of the prayer: "O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with their little children to wander unfriended through wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst. . . ."

The object of Twain's pen was a different war than the one we face today, but some things do not change. Today, understandably seeking to express compassion for the victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and our unity as a country, Americans are expressing themselves with God Bless America signs. The words appear on stores, schools, daycare centers, automobiles, advertisements—places that a few months ago would never have mentioned God.

What do people mean when they use God's name in a time of national crisis? It's hard to be critical of an apparent religious awakening across the country, but is it really about God? More important, is it benign? Who can identify the moment when the phrase evolves from a heartfelt prayer for national healing to a statement of manifest destiny?

As is typical during the early stages of a war, there's massive support for swift military action and little room for dissent. There have been disturbing accounts of reporters fired for writing articles critical of the nation's response to the terrorism, and there have been reports of death threats targeted at the only US representative to vote against military action. Twain couldn't get "The War Prayer" published while he was alive. Apparently, in 2001 dissent is still an early casualty of war.

As a people who seek to follow Jesus, we in the Church of the Brethren should be alarmed when God's name is used to justify our nation's participation in war. We don't believe God is blessing misguided but religiously inspired terrorists. Should we believe that our bombs are any more pleasing to God than theirs?

We can be reassured, however, if all who express their faith in God by displaying God Bless America signs are committing themselves to doing as Jesus did and bearing witness to his gospel of peace. That would be a religious awakening that would be felt around the world.

Wendy McFadden

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Brethren at the PAX 50 Reunion

Over a dozen Brethren participated in the gathering at the Oakwood Park Retreat Center in Syracuse, Ind., Sept. 13-16. The event was a reunion of the American Mennonite "PAX Boys" sent to many service projects around the world between 1951 and 1976. More than 500 people attended. It was a well-planned and full weekend of stories, pictures, and renewed friendships.

Mennonites Cal Redekop, Harrisonburg, Va., and Orville Schmidt, Wakarusa, Ind., led the reunion planning group. Calvin was a co-founder and the first director of PAX. Paul Peachy, also present, was the other co-founder.

The Brethren who served at the Karlsschule project in Vienna, Austria, between 1951-1961 were included in this reunion. That project was a joint effort of the Brethren Service Commission and the Mennonite PAX program. At least 57 Brethren and 73

San Diego First helps build a peace center out of straw

Two historic peace churches (Church of the Brethren and Friends) and two well-established and respected nonprofit organizations (the Peace Resource Center of San Diego and the American Friends Service Committee U.S.-Mexico Border Project) have joined to create something unique in San Diego, Calif. Their vision and plan is to build a center for peace, justice, and spiritual growth.

The center, which will be called "The Friends Center," will provide space for worship, offices, meetings, workshops, and programs with a focus on nonviolent social change.

First Church of the Brethren of San Diego has been long in discovering a purpose for its undeveloped acreage and is pleased with the joint decision for the center by four like-minded groups with a focus on peace. A common goal for the center among all the groups is that collaborative efforts will serve the whole community of San Diego.

But what really makes this joint building project unique is that it is to be a straw bale building. Buildings constructed with straw bales have very high insulation qualities, are

Mennonites worked on the Karlsschule project (see March MESSENGER).

Also attending the reunion were the spouses of many of the BSC and PAX workers.

Arlo Thimm, a youth in the first family to move into a new house built by the PAX

boys in Bachnung, Germany, about 1955, spoke to the group on Friday night.

The Mennonites quoted Dag Hammarskjöld saying, "The road of holiness necessarily leads through the road of action." The Brethren too can say

fire-, moisture-, and pest-resistant, and are in keeping with the right use of the earth's resources. The model project will also feature solar power, passive solar design, water recycling, and other energy-efficient components.

San Diego First Church of the Brethren is committed to raising \$60,000 for the construction of the apartment and shower room. The apartment plan was added by the church to be used by Brethren Volunteer Service workers. The showers will benefit not only BVSers, but also other peace workers making trips to Mexico. Ground-breaking is planned for January 2002.

For more information, contact San Diego First Church of the Brethren, 3850 Westgate Place, San Diego, CA 92105. Tel. 619-262-1988. Also check this website: www.friendscenter.net.

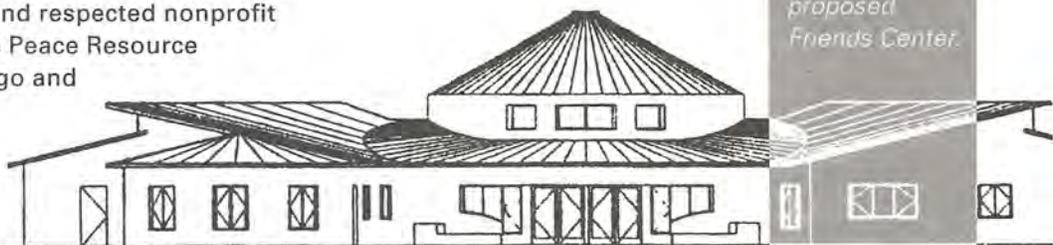
"Service is the story of our genealogy."—Marie Willoughby

Beaver marks a century in Iowa

The building of the Church of the Brethren in Beaver, Iowa, was built 100 years ago.

The occasion was marked with a celebration Sept. 15-16, with a picnic and an old-fashioned Brethren service. The Church of the Brethren and the United Methodist Church have met as a yoked parish for the past 30 years.

A house made of straw. An architect's drawing of the proposed Friends Center.



New windows let in the light of God

The Northern Colorado church in Windsor, Colo., on Aug. 26 dedicated a set of stained-glass windows made for its sanctuary by member Don Elliott, of Greeley, Colo. In the morning worship service, the congregation dedicated each window in turn "to the glory of God and our neighbors' good."

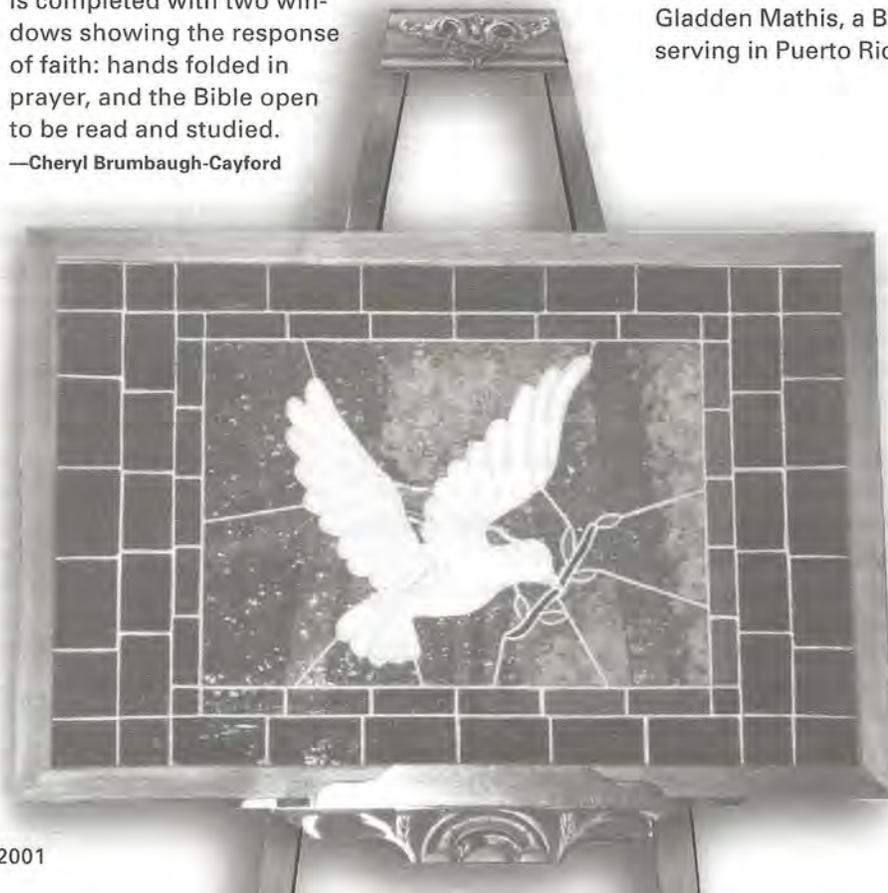
Elliott is one of the founding members of the congregation, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this month.

The new windows join an original stained glass "butterfly" set above the sanctuary's cross as a symbol of resurrection, also made by founding members of the church from the Frantz family.

With inspiration and help from his wife, Jan, Elliott created and crafted the new windows as a "walk through scripture" using the copper foil method of stained glass construction. Noah's Dove is represented in the first window: the dove brings back life, the green olive branch that grew after the flood waters subsided as a symbol of a new beginning for humanity.

The next six windows feature central symbols from the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus: the Bethlehem star, the basin and towel, the bread and cup, the crown of thorns, the crosses on the hill, and the empty tomb. The series is completed with two windows showing the response of faith: hands folded in prayer, and the Bible open to be read and studied.

—Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford



Through the years many missionaries have spoken, and films of a missions theme have been viewed.

Each evening begins with a light meal prepared by a Sunday school class. Then classes are held in age group settings to study a mission theme. A worship service followed by a speaker or an audio-visual closes out the evening.

The influence of "School of Missions" is very evident in the fact that many in the congregation have served in the mission field at home and abroad.

Congregation members have served in Bible school at Mud Lick, Ky; in disaster child care; hurricane rebuilding in Copahee, S.C.; flood damage repair in Richmond, Mo.; tornado rebuilding in Wisconsin; reconstruction work in Guatemala, Honduras, and Puerto Rico; youth work camp in Mexico; mission work in Nigeria and India; and in Heifer Project International leadership.

Currently, John and Patty Crumley and family from the Polo congregation are home from Nigeria on furlough, expecting to return soon to Nigeria.

—Evelyn Bowman

Polo's School of Missions at 50

The Polo (Ill.) Church of the Brethren has an interesting anniversary coming up in January 2002. The congregation will celebrate 50 years of holding a "School of Missions" at the church.

The very first "School of Missions" was held in January of 1948.

There is no record for the following 3 years, but in January 1952, and continuing through January 2001 the records are complete and the series has been uninterrupted.

Speakers for the very first school in 1948 were C. C. Wang, Anna Mow, William M. Beahm, and Frank Crumpacker.

The School in 1952 included Mrs. D. J. Lichty, former missionary to India, and Gladden Mathis, a BVSer serving in Puerto Rico.

BRETHRENSPEAK

"I don't know if he eats locusts and wild honey...but I wouldn't be surprised."

—Jim Myer

Brethren Revival Fellowship (BRF) leader, comparing Annual Conference moderator Paul Grout to a modern-day John the Baptist.

"Noah's Dove" at Northern Colorado Church of the Brethren.

New Haitian church begins in Orlando

Orlando, Fla., now hosts a new congregation of the Church of the Brethren. It is called for now the Haitian Project. Recently a dedication service was held by this group to consecrate a new meeting space in the Sadler Elementary School.

En masse the Miami Haitian church, the proud sponsor of the group, was present to bless its fledgling daughter.

The dream began with the Miami Haitian church, Eglise des Freres Haitiens, seeking areas in which to evangelize. As key leaders moved to Orlando, some began to see that a new church start was needed. Miami pastor Ludovic St. Fleur, his wife Elizabethette, and other leaders in the Miami church would make the four-hour trip approximately once a month to conduct a Bible study in the home of one of the members. For several years this nucleus spent time studying and praying. But it became apparent that the group was not going to grow as long as it had to rely on an apartment to host worship celebrations. There were size limitations and parking problems.

The Church Develop-

ment Council of the Atlantic Southeast District was asked to assist in finding a more suitable home for the group. Numerous attempts to do so failed. Finally a call was made to a school in the neighborhood where many Haitians reside. This one was amenable to having the group use its facility.

Seven members are responsible for continuing the ministry in the weeks when St. Fleur is not present. They spread the word that a special service would be held the last Sunday of August. Their efforts brought results for some 20 to 30 people were first-time visitors that day.

On the day before the special service, five men in their twenties and thirties were baptized at Camp Ithiel in Gotha, Fla. At this point there were 21 members. More members were soon to be added.

Berwyn Oltman,

former executive minister of Atlantic Southeast District described the celebration: "The spirit was joyous, and the sense of unity was great. There was spirited singing, accompanied by guitar, bass, piano, and drums. Special music was offered by three soloists, a quartet from Orlando, and two choirs from the Miami Church. Scriptures were read. The newly baptized members were recognized. There must have been 150 people present." The festivities ended with a bountiful Creole meal.—Carol Yeazell, *Congregational Life Team Area 3*

Finding our voice in Roanoke

"Finding Our Voice: Meeting God Again in Worship" was the title for a workshop held Saturday, Sept. 8, at the Oak Grove Church

of the Brethren in Roanoke, Va. Sixty-nine people from 14 Church of the Brethren congregations attended. Jonathan Shively, coordinator of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership at Bethany Theological Seminary, was the worship leader, plenary speaker, and provided two sessions on contemporary worship and another on hymnody.

Other workshop topics included drama ministry, liturgical dance, worship centers, and art work in the church. Sharon Flora (minister of Christian nurture) and Carol Elmore (music director) at Oak Grove planned the event, along with Julie M. Hostetter, coordinator of Congregational Life Team Area 3. It was an exciting day filled with information, insights, and ideas for worship.

The choir of the Miami Haitian congregation traveled to Orlando to sing at the new Haitian congregation's worship service in a school.



BRETHRENSPEAK

“They are praying that God’s love, joy, and hope will illuminate the world through each of you as you stand firm in your faith in Jesus Christ.”

—**Jerry and Becky Baile Crouse**,
Global Mission Partnerships mission coordinators, expressing the thoughts of the Dominican Brethren following the Sept. 11 attacks.

In response to 9/11, Church of the Brethren wages peace

As talk of war swirled through the nation’s capital and elsewhere in the weeks following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks along the East Coast, Brethren were seeking to respond with acts of peace and love. In many places and in many ways, the response began quickly and continued.

New Windsor. The Brethren Service Center in north-central Maryland quickly became a hub of activity. The Emergency Response/Service Ministries office made plans to activate child-care teams, prepare needed supplies and funding, and set up an emergency field office for Church World Service personnel.

A \$25,000 grant from the General Board’s Emergency Disaster Fund was approved the day following the attacks, and Child Care in Aviation Incident Response (CAIR) volunteers were soon on their way to New Windsor, driving by car from points as far away as Nebraska.

By the weekend, three CAIR teams had headed to New York. The 18 volunteers began work in a converted warehouse on one of Manhattan’s Hudson River piers, helping children cope in the aftermath of the tragedies, dealing with stress and a host of emotions.

“For a lot of kids, it’s the first time (since the events) that they’ve been in an environment that feels safe to them, and ‘normal,’” said Roy Winter, coordinator of ER/SM’s Disaster Child Care program and the CAIR teams.

Winter said the family care center in Manhattan grew “increasingly busy with children.” Local

At the 25th anniversary Brethren Disaster Relief Auction in Lebanon, Pa., Sept. 21-22, the national disaster was much on the minds of those who attended. In addition to the cash for long-term disaster relief efforts from items auctioned such as this quilt, people brought donations for immediate needs of victims of the Sept. 11 attacks. Auctioneer is Glenn Wenger.



Walt Wiltschek



Church World Service set up its National Disaster Field Office at Brethren Service Center following the Sept. 11 attacks. Pictured is Rick Augsburger, director of the CWS Emergency Response Program.

volunteers were being trained to assist. CAIR volunteers also helped at a second site set up in nearby New Jersey, but with less need there, that site was turned over to local volunteers.

As the initial CAIR teams finished their assignments and returned to New Windsor, other volunteers from the Disaster Child Care program traveled to New York to take their places.

Brooklyn. Local relief efforts took place through the two Church of the Brethren congregations in the New York area, Brooklyn First and First Haitian—both only a few miles from the World Trade Center site. “The city is slowly pulling back together,” Brooklyn First associate pastor Phill Carlos Archbold said two weeks after the attacks, “but there’s a lot of fear.”

Church members helped to distribute face masks and blankets the day of the attack and other supplies thereafter. Later, he said the church’s emphasis turned to helping people through bereavement, doing “a lot of listening.” One of the victims of the World Trade Center attack, Joseph Anchundia, was from a family that had long been part of the Brooklyn First church.

Brooklyn First is planning a Nov. 25 memorial service in honor of the firemen from the area who lost their lives. It has also sought to support its many Arab members.

“We have received so much help from our district and other districts,” Archbold said. “We have been blessed. We have not been alone. We really feel those prayers.”

Archbold said material needs were met to overflowing, but financial donations would still be needed to support victims of the disaster.

Statements. The weeks after the attacks were also filled with statements and letters from faith groups, expressing solidarity and caring or calling for peace, tolerance, and restraint.

Judy Mills Reimer, general secretary of the General Board, sent out a letter to all congregations, saying, “Let us, out of our Church of the Brethren convictions, continue to witness to

Keith Hollenberg

Jesus' gospel of peace" [see p. 10].

Other statements came from the Brethren Witness office, the Church of the Brethren Washington Office, the Decade to Overcome Violence steering group, the National Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches, and others, including several Brethren districts and congregations. An Interfaith "Religious Response to Terrorism," bearing more than 1,500 signatures, was delivered to all congressional offices and the White House.

On Earth Peace began a new initiative titled "Seeking Peace," calling the Church of the Brethren to be "not only a historic peace church but also one with a living witness to the gospel."

"The peace witness of the Church of the Brethren is vitally needed today in light of recent events and reactions," On Earth Peace co-executive Bob Gross said.

Action. Prayer services took place at hundreds of churches immediately after the attacks and in following days and weeks. Some congregations reached out to participate in community and/or interfaith services.

Brethren Press sought to equip congregations by creating an online pool of resources titled "The Way of Peace" and also asked pastors and others to send in worship resources that had been created for the time of crisis and subsequent response.

On the Antietam battlefield near Sharpsburg, Md., Frederick (Md.) pastor Paul Munday led a service focused on peacemaking at the park's historic Dunkard Church. The annual service, typically focused on peace, happened to fall just after Sept. 11. Near Toledo, Ohio, the Lakewood congregation sent a letter of support to an Islamic community center in the city. In La Verne, Calif., some Brethren provided support for an Islamic school in nearby Pomona.

And in Lebanon, Pa., the mammoth Brethren Disaster Auction marked its 25th anniversary, raising well over half a million dollars for disaster relief. Emergency Response/Service Ministries manager Stan Noffsinger addressed the large crowd in attendance, and skids were piled high with donations for disaster relief in addition to the financial contributions.

"We can't all go to New York, but we can do what we can," said Helen Patches of the Midway congregation. "Everyone has been so helpful. They really have."

Details on the Church of the Brethren response are being updated at www.brethren.org/usresponse.



Stan Noffsinger

The first group of CAIR (Childcare in Aviation Incident Response) volunteers prepares to leave the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., for New York City to help with child care following the Sept. 11 tragedies. They are, from left, Allen Sollenberger (van driver), CAIR/Disaster Child Care coordinator Roy Winter, Sheryl Faus, Patricia Bub, Beverly Lineweaver, Jean Myers, Lydia Walker, Betsy Fisher, Barbara Weaver, Don Weaver, Anne Price, Charlotte Ranck, and Donna Uhlig.

Violence spreads into central Nigeria

Rioting and violence that had affected other parts of Nigeria over the past two years hit the city of Jos in September. Jos, located in the central part of the country, is home to several schools of the Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) and center of much activity for US Church of the Brethren Global Mission Partnerships workers.

The Red Cross put the death toll at a minimum of 165, and a United Nations estimate said it could be as high as 500. Hundreds of others were injured or displaced by the three days of intense fighting, and many buildings were burned—including a mosque and two churches.

Merv Keeney, director of the Global Mission Partnerships, said his office received notification that Church of the Brethren missionaries John and Janet Tubbs and Tom and Janet Crago were safe. They reported hearing yelling and gunshots and were making tentative evacuation plans should it become necessary, but in the three weeks following the mid-September riots fighting had stopped.

The violence was sparked by tensions between Muslims and Christians, according to reports. Similar incidents have occurred elsewhere as Muslim groups, particularly in the north of the country, have implemented Islamic "sharia" law. Ethnic and economic tensions in the nation have also contributed to outbreaks.

In February 2000, violence in Kaduna state resulted in the destruction of an EYN church in Badarwa and the death of three EYN members. More violence occurred in Kaduna a few months later. The EYN congregation continues to meet there. The northern city of Kano also reported some disturbances and riots in September.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 1-2 Huston Peace Lecture, Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind.

Nov. 2-3 Shenandoah District Conference, Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren

Nov. 4 National Junior High Sunday

Nov. 7-20 Brethren Witness Faith Expedition to Nicaragua

Nov. 9-10 Virgina District Conference, Bonsack Baptist Church, Roanoke, Va.

Nov. 10-14 Brethren Witness Faith Expedition to Nogales, Mexico

Nov. 11 National Donor Sabbath

Staff changes and transitions

Mary Lou Garrison of Mount Morris, Ill., was named manager of human resources for the Church of the Brethren General Board, and was scheduled to begin employment at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill., Oct. 15. For the previous 12 years, Garrison had been human resources director for Pinecrest Community, a Church of the Brethren retirement facility in Mount Morris, Ill.

•**Kim Stuckey** of Hummelstown, Pa., began as On Earth Peace program coordinator for peacemaker formation on Oct. 1, working at the agency's main offices in New Windsor, Md. Stuckey had previously done a one-month internship at On Earth Peace and served two years in Brethren Volunteer Service. Most recently, she worked

with children in the mental health field.

•**Ralph McFadden** began as coordinator of shared services for the Association of Brethren Caregivers in Elgin, Ill., on Oct. 1. McFadden comes to ABC from the Regional AIDS Interfaith Network, Fox Valley, in Illinois, where he was project director. He has also served the Church of the Brethren as a pastor, district executive, and General Board staff member.

•**Becky Ball-Miller** has announced her resignation as executive director of Camp Alexander Mack, Milford, Ind., effective Dec. 31. Ball-Miller began on summer staff at the camp in 1975. She joined the full-time staff there in 1983 and became executive director in January 1994.

•**Paul A. Hoyt** began serving as president of the Bridgewater (Va.) Retirement Community the week of Sept.

3. Hoyt, a certified nursing home administrator, had been assistant administrator of McCarrick Care Center in New Jersey since 1997.

•**Peggy and Jeff Boshart** accepted a joint assignment with the General Board's Global Mission Partnerships team in the Dominican Republic and began on Sept. 17. They will work with economic development projects. Both served from 1998 to 2000 in Haiti as agricultural community development workers/intern coordinators for ECHO Inc.

•**Mike Leiter** resigned as coordinator of funding and communication for On Earth Peace effective Sept. 28 to become director of marketing for the Brethren Home Community in New Oxford, Pa. He has been serving part-time with On Earth Peace in New Windsor, Md., since August 1999.

Christian education network disbands after 21 years

Members of the Church of the Brethren Association of Christian Educators (CoBACE) Steering Committee/Transition Team have decided to disband the organization, which began in 1980. The committee held its final meeting in a retreat Sept. 10-11 at Camp Blue Diamond, Petersburg, Pa.

"Committee members believe that CoBACE has finished its work and that by God's grace, new ways are already emerging that will nurture the educational ministries of the Church of the Brethren," a release from the organization said.

Based on the data from a consultation held at this year's Annual Conference, CoBACE

concluded that congregations still desire resources, support, and advocacy for Christian education. "However, due to diminishing membership in CoBACE, minimal financial support, as well as a variety of shifts in the environment for Christian education in the

Church of the Brethren, the CoBACE organization does not have the resources to meet those needs," according to a release.

A Christian education publication begun in the past year, titled "The Seed Packet," will continue under the direction of its other partners, Brethren Press and the General Board's Congregational Life Teams. Serving on the Steering Committee/Transition

Team were Kitty Collier, Joan Daggett, Audrey Finkbiner, Julie Hostetter, Donna Rhodes, Donna Forbes Steiner, and Dean Wenger.



Brethren Revival Fellowship holds its annual assembly

Brethren Revival Fellowship held its 2001 general meeting Sept. 8 in Windber, Pa., with about 200 Brethren from 25 congregations attending. Speakers Craig Alan Myers of Columbia City, Ind.; Samuel M. Cassel of Manheim, Pa.; and Donald Matthews of McHenry, Md., spoke on the theme "The Church of the Brethren and Revival." Walter Heisey served as moderator for the

day-long meeting. David Kent of the Welsh Run congregation, Mercersburg, Pa., and Kenneth Leininger of the Cocalico congregation, Denver, Pa., were re-elected to five-year terms on the BRF Committee. John Shelly Jr. of the Shanks congregation, Greencastle, Pa., was elected to fill a one-year unexpired term.

The host Berkey congregation had the most members present, followed by the White Oak congregation of Manheim, Pa., and the Blue River congregation of Columbia City, Ind.

UPCOMINGEVENTS

Nov. 11-15 Outdoor Ministries Association directors/managers retreat at Shepherd's Spring Outdoor Ministries Center, Sharpsburg, Md.

Nov. 15-17 Ministry of Reconciliation workshop, "Approaches to Congregational Conflict," Camp Mack, Milford, Ind.

Nov. 16-17 Brethren Benefit Trust board meetings; School of the Americas Watch vigil, Ft. Benning, Ga.

Nov. 30-Dec. 2 "DOV 23" event for Decade to Overcome Violence district contact people, New Windsor, Md.

Dec. 9 Christmas Offering Sunday

WORLDWATCH

1. Siren, Wis. An Emergency Disaster Fund grant from the Church of the Brethren General Board sent \$5,000 in aid to this northwestern Wisconsin town, where a June tornado destroyed 94 homes. A rebuilding project is also under way through Emergency Response/Service Ministries.

2. Texas/Louisiana. A \$6,700 Emergency Disaster Fund allocation will support Church World Service's ongoing relief work in the region, which was struck by major flood damage following Tropical Storm Allison.

3. Nigeria. The Rev. Mbode Ndirmita has become the latest Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) leader to study at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind. Bethany and the General Board's Global Mission Partnerships office have worked cooperatively to provide the training opportunities.

4. Dominican Republic. September marked one year since the first team of Brethren Revival Fellowship/Brethren Volunteer

Service volunteers arrived at the Brethren Mission House in Azua, serving as English teachers in the Caribbean nation as part of Global Mission Partnerships ministry there.

5. Durban, South Africa. Archbishop Desmond Tutu delivered a statement from an Ecumenical Caucus to the United Nations World Conference Against Racism as it took place in early September. The caucus included the World Council of Churches and numerous other church groups. The statement bluntly said, "Racism is a sin," and called on the conference to

address several issues.

6. Washington, D.C./northern Virginia. Brethren Volunteer Service unit 246 held its orientation Sept. 23-Oct. 12 in the nation's capital and at Brethren Woods in Keezletown, Va. Nineteen volunteers participated, including six Brethren and five Europeans.

7. Eastern Tennessee. The Southeastern District has been active in responding to flooding which occurred in the Smoky Mountain foothills, with more than 500 hours of donated labor to help five families given through mid-September.



Remember

An anthology of Brethren responses



who we are to the September 11 tragedy

On Sept. 13, Judy Mills Reimer, general secretary of the Church of the Brethren General Board, addressed this letter to the denomination's membership.

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." —Psa. 46:1

Like you, I feel a great sense of grief and disbelief in the wake of the terrorist attacks on our country. I join you in prayers for the victims and their families, for those responding to the needs of survivors seeking to cope, and for those within the Church of the Brethren who are providing direct care. We also pray for our nation's leaders, as they seek to bring to justice those guilty of this atrocity.

As we struggle to make sense of the senseless, let us in the Church of the Brethren remember who we are and whose we are. This is a time to stand by our belief as Christians that all war is wrong. Let us urge our government to respond in ways that do not escalate the level of violence and result in the loss of other innocent lives. Let us be instruments of healing in our neighborhoods, where people of other faiths and backgrounds are being unfairly targeted. Let us, out of our Church of the Brethren convictions, continue to

witness to Jesus' gospel of peace.

I pray for God's spirit to guide us in this day, and in the days to come.

In the name of Jesus, who taught us to love our enemies,

—Judy Mills Reimer

Our new vulnerability

The following is from a reflection written the evening of Sept. 11 by David Radcliff, director of Brethren Witness for the Church of the Brethren General Board.

We in this nation are no longer an island of tranquility, protected by oceans, affluence, fences, from the violence that plagues so many of our global neighbors. We suddenly know ourselves to be vulnerable.

This vulnerability will likely now shadow us on what heretofore were routine outings. Those of us who fly often may never again glibly say to landlubbers that "going by air is the safest way to get there"—even if statistically it remains so. We may never again venture to the top of a skyscraper for the view without one eye on the lookout for danger on the horizon. We may not be able to assume that the pillars of American military/economic prowess are quite as invincible as they seemed even yesterday—helpless as they were in the face of determined but relatively

powerless foes.

But this vulnerability also provides opportunities, should we be able to seize them once the dust has cleared and our passions subsided. For one, we can now better empathize with vulnerable people all around the world, for whom walking to school in a hostile environment, or going about village life even while threatened by government bombers, or coming home to an abusive spouse is a daily exercise in gut-wrenching vulnerability. Perhaps we will be moved to stand more closely by them, minister more substantially to them, and take up their cause with a passion born of those who can now empathize rather than merely sympathize.

This new-found sense of vulnerability can also remind us that we are not and cannot be made secure by all the weapons we may want to place on land or sea or in space. Life is now more tenuous, and less easily secured. It becomes somehow more urgent now, as a nation but more pointedly as Christians, to name and commit ourselves to nurturing the things that make for peace.

—David Radcliff



God's love runs deep

The following is excerpted from a sermon preached Sept. 16 by Nicholas Beam, pastor of Pleasant Hill (Ohio) Church of the Brethren.

In the frigid waters around Greenland are countless icebergs, some little and some gigantic. If you'd observe them carefully, you'd notice that sometimes the small ice floes move in one direction, while their massive counterparts flow in another. The

explanation is simple. Surface winds drive the little ones, whereas the huge masses of ice are carried along by deep ocean currents.

When we face trials and tragedies,

it's helpful to see our lives as being subject to two forces, surface winds and ocean currents. The winds represent everything changeable, unpredictable, and distressing. But operating simultaneously with these gusts and gales is another force that's even more powerful. It is the sure movement of God's wise and sovereign purposes, the deep flow of his unchanging love.

We are being inundated with a lot of rhetoric, calls for war and revenge and retaliation. These are surface winds blowing us around wherever. But it was those deep ocean currents of the love of God that restored all that belonged to Job, that brought the Jews home from exile, and will lead us through this time of trial in our lives.

—Nicholas Beam

A season of silence

Paul Grout, moderator of the Church of the Brethren, suggests that Brethren read Psalm 46 in preparation for "a season of silence." Other scriptures he suggests are Revelation 18, Matthew 5,6,7, Acts 2, and Romans 8.

The events of Sept. 11 were catastrophic. It is not wrong to describe what we have seen as evil, but the roots of this

evil go far beyond what we can imagine.

We are at war, we have been for a long time. The enemy is not flesh and blood, not people, not nations. Our warfare is with influences and powers that dominate individuals, families, churches, communities, whole countries.

I believe that God would speak to us through this event. It will be painful for us to hear. Our refusal to listen could reap tragic consequences. Listening could provide a new openness to the way of Christ.

This is not a time for speaking or constructing statements. This is a time for listening, a time for prayer. Pray that our ears would be opened, that our eyes would see.

Within this interim of time we can mourn with those who mourn. We can stand with those persecuted on account of their sharing a common ethnic and religious background with those who have committed a horrible crime. We can enter a holy silence.

There are moments when the most faithful response is silence. Such silence is not about dropping our hands in futility or despair. Within this silence we raise our hands to heaven, we open our hands to receive.

—Paul Grout

Bear testimony to another way

James F. Myer is a member of the staff of the Brethren Revival Fellowship and a minister of the White Oak congregation, Manheim, Pa. This statement is adapted from a devotional talk he gave at the White Oak church Sept. 16.

What do the Brethren have to offer the world at this time of national crisis? Some would say we should wave the flag, jump on the high-spirited national bandwagon, smoke out the terrorists, and rid the world of this evil by whatever forceful means is necessary. Right now nine out of ten Americans say this is the way to go.

Let us Brethren be among the other ten percent who would bear testimony to another way. May we give to the world the teachings of Jesus and the instructions of the New Testament. Let

us also give the world a consistent example of non-resistant love.

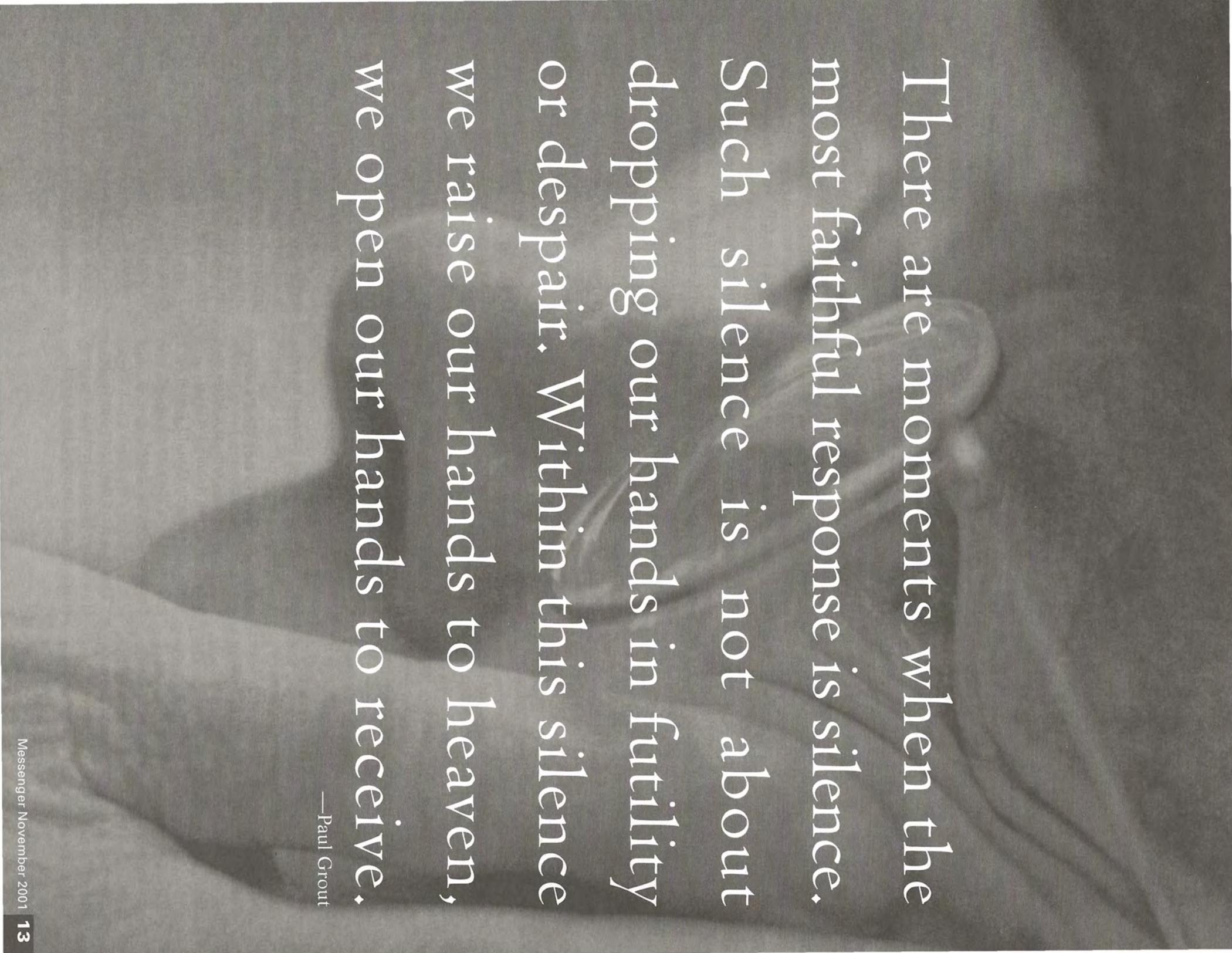
In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus shares God-given instructions on how his followers should treat enemies. It begins in Matthew 5 with a series of nine beatitudes which show the basis for a happy and blessed experience in the kingdom of heaven. Among these are the words, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. 5:9). These words suggest that there are times when we should actively seek to promote peace.

Then Jesus gives a much more detailed set of instructions in verses 38-48 of Matthew 5. What about responding to a person who hauls off and hits you on the face? Jesus says we should not choose the low road and hit back as was done in former times. Rather, we should choose the high road and be willing to be hit repeatedly and respond with a witness of "restraining strength."

Jesus does have a plan telling us how to disarm our enemies. It is to not resist one who is evil. It is to give more than expected to one who would take away from us. It is to bless those who curse us. It is to love our enemies with deeds of kindness and compassion. And if this doesn't work (to stop aggression), it is still better to die on a cross than to marshal thousands of militant angels to crush the aggressor. So says Jesus Christ by precept and example.

This is a time for us to be very clear that we will not harbor in our hearts the spirit of revenge and retaliation which is evident all around us. We should be willing to let that response be up to God. "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). This is a time for us to be very clear that we affirm the long-standing Brethren position that "all war is sin." This is a time for us to encourage our young people to develop their convictions to not participate in military service, and to not hesitate to declare themselves as conscientious objectors to war. It would be helpful for those who are the middle-aged and





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—Paul Groust

older among us to share again their experience of engaging in an alternative service program in lieu of military service during and since World War II.

We are in name one of the historic peace churches. This is a time for us to live up to that name.

—James F. Myer

A letter to Muslim neighbors

This letter was written by Ed Heilman, pastor of Lakewood Church of the Brethren, Millwood, Ohio.

Sept. 16

Dear neighbors at the Islamic Center of Greater Toledo,

We who follow God through the life and teachings of Jesus, are taught to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Therefore in light of the recent acts of hatred in this country, we the

friends and members of the Lakewood Church of the Brethren extend to you our love. We reassure you of our neighborliness during

these troubled times.

We pray for the happiness and well-being of you who worship at the Islamic Center of Greater Toledo. We will work together with you for a future of peace and justice. We invite you to ask us for whatever aid a good neighbor can give.

—Ed Heilman

A prayer for peacemakers

Delivered at the Northern Indiana District Conference, Middlebury (Ind.) Church of the Brethren, Sept. 14, by Daniel Petry, pastor of the Middlebury congregation.

Great, loving, eternal God: no one here knew, when the plans were laid for this conference, that we would be gathering on a national day of prayer and mourning. But let our prayers be added to those across this land as we

plead for the healing of our nation.

We stand in need of your amazing grace as we sort through the rubble of our devastated cities and shattered sense of security. But even as we share with our countrymen the sadness, the anger, and the great sense of violation that these horrible acts of terrorism have caused, give us the courage to remain true to our own best selves as members of the Church of the Brethren.

We have come once again to a time of great testing. Sabers are rattling; war fever grows more intense with each passing day. Will we, your church, hide in a corner, say nothing about our convictions, and let violence have its way throughout our land? Or will we stand tall for Jesus, speak the convictions we learned from him, and teach our children by word and example that true discipleship is neither easy nor popular in times like these?

Lord, you told us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. It will take great fortitude for us to do so. It will require boldness to remind our sisters and brothers of this command. Many, if not most, will think we are speaking nonsense. Our words may be lost in the hot wind of war rhetoric. But, O Lord, we believe in your way. We have seen the power of the cross—the power of love to conquer evil, the power of grace to transform hearts of stone. And we have seen the power of the Resurrection. You can bring life from death; you can wrest victory from hell's grasp. And all without an army.

Christ lives! And because he lives, we shall live also. Make us bold, Lord Jesus. Make us soldiers of your peace. Amen!

—Daniel M. Petry

Returning evil is not God's way

The following was sent as a letter to the editor of the Ashland (Ohio) Times-Gazette by Donald Parker, who is chair of the Church of the Brethren General Board.

This is a time that tests our faith. How do we respond to such a vicious attack on our country? I just read

this quote: "The challenge for us as a society is to respond in a manner that reflects our values."

Does our resolve include the commitment to live by the deepest understanding of our faith in a loving God? In a forgiving God?

My belief in God, as manifested in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, calls me to practice in my living the type of love Christ showed when he was confronted with evil and violence. In many instances he was able to face evil with the power of love and turn the tables to thwart the evil intent. When he was overpowered by violence, he did not resist but forgave his attackers. He did this knowing that there were those that followed him capable of establishing his church; and he did this in complete trust of God's ability to bring about good from his suffering and death.

I do not know if I have the kind of resolve that would carry me through that kind of suffering, with God's love holding highest priority in my response. But I live each day with the desire to grow into a greater capability of showing God's unconditional love in every circumstance.

I cannot speak for those who have lost loved ones, who are injured and suffering at this moment, who have been traumatized emotionally in unimaginable ways. I do not know for sure what I would do in similar circumstances. But I am more deeply convinced since the tragic events of Sept. 11 that returning evil for evil is not God's way. Retribution that takes human lives is descending to the level of the terrorists themselves. The intent may be different, and the language of justification may be different. But unless the response of our nation can be gauged in terms of Christ's example of how God intends for us to live, I cannot fully support that response.

I sense that this overwhelming tragedy is a wake-up call to consider the values that mean the most to each of us.

—Donald Parker



A talk over mangos in Thailand

Joel Ulrich is a member of York Center Church of the Brethren in Lombard, Ill. A 2000 graduate of Macalester College, he is now serving as a volunteer for Mennonite Central Committee in Thailand with Burma Issues, a Bangkok-based non-governmental organization working to support the grassroots movement for a true and lasting peace in Burma.

Mae Pa, Thailand, Sept. 12—The woman in the market who sells me mangos asked, “So, are you afraid for yourself about what happened in America?” Even the mango sellers in the little village of Mae Pa, near the Burmese border in Thailand, knew just 12 hours after it happened. It was all over the TV and radio. “I’m not afraid,” I said. “Just sad. Please think about my people today.”

It is not a good time to represent America in another country right now. I had heard about the tragic destruction an hour before in a telephone call from another Mennonite Central Committee volunteer who was working in the Thai capital of Bangkok. The World Trade Center gone, and hundreds dead in the Pentagon. I spent the bicycle ride back home lost in thought about impending American retaliation, which I know has a great chance of happening.

I hope that out of all the sadness we can begin to work to learn something from this, and work toward the future. I hope that this can be a wakeup call for Americans, that for many people in the world, the Stars and Stripes do not always symbolize justice and freedom as the speech writers present in their prose. Many oppressed people experience just the opposite.

Such contradictions I see everyday. In living and working in South America and then Southeast Asia, it is impossible to get through even my best friendships with loving people without at least one conversation where others speak of the US as an

oppressor. They say it oppresses by dominating global military and economic activities, providing weapons to militaries that destabilize their own countries, and by being in the forefront of global economic policies that keep the majority of people poor and elevating a small wealthy segment of the society in each country, while providing global security to protect a system which keeps America at the top.

Now I must be clear. This was a horrible act that no one deserves, we certainly did not, and certainly not the thousands who died. But as we search for causes, I believe there are grounds for shared responsibility in this that we must examine. What can we do as Americans to learn from this tragedy to change our individual lifestyles and then challenge our government to change? How must our church change to truly be a shaker and a mover in the justice-oriented movement for the oppressed in the world? When will we see other countries and other peoples of the world as truly equal to ourselves? When will we see that we are in this together?

Ghe Hu, my fellow Karen community organizing trainer, told me at a breakfast of rice and fish paste this morning, “I think as long as one country or group dominates the world militarily and economically, problems like this will always happen to the American people.” I believe that this simple statement may lie very close to the heart of it all.

Max Ediger, the Mennonite founder of Burma Issues, where I currently work, wrote: “Muslims talk about two kinds of peace struggle: the big peace struggle is the one inside of us, and the smaller peace struggle is the one in society. If, in the midst of such terrible suffering, we can focus on that peace struggle within ourselves, then we can continue our struggle for peace in our global society.”

Should I worry how recent events will shape the future? A quote we use in our nonviolence training is, “The best way to predict the future is to

work to create it.” I want to work to change myself, change America, and change America’s effects in the world to make them wholly positive and truly deserving the mutual respect of our neighbors in the world. Our country is great; we have so much potential. We must become the change we seek.

Secondly, I want to work to see myself as a world citizen first, and an American citizen second. Each in our own way, we can choose to work for a world that truly is the kingdom of God on earth for all its people, whether Christian or Buddhist or Muslim (the three parts which equally make up the village of Mae Pa where I live), whether American or Arab or Burmese or Karen.

—Joel Ulrich



On patriotism

Carl Bowman chairs the department of sociology at Bridgewater (Va.) College and is author of Brethren Society: The Cultural Transformation of a Peculiar People. This is excerpted from an essay that appeared in the Harrisonburg (Va.) Daily News-Record.

While neighbors rally around the flag, my favorite profile of patriotism has always been that of 19th-century Brethren martyr, John Kline, who claimed to have a higher conception of patriotism than the one expressed by guns. The highest conception of patriotism, Kline said, is found in one “who loves the Lord his God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself.” This kind of love, to be sure, radiates outward until it encompasses family, community, and country. But, as Kline observed, it continues to expand until it finally “takes in the whole human family.”

Ironically, Kline concluded, were



this kind of love, or patriotism, to become universal, “the word patriotism, in its specific sense, meaning such a love for one’s country as makes its possessors ready and willing to take up arms in its defense, might be appropriately expunged from every national vocabulary.”

—Carl Bowman

When bad things happen

This is from the sermon “When Bad Things Happen,” preached Sept. 16 by Christy J. Waltersdorff, pastor, at York Center Church of the Brethren, Lombard, Ill.

The late Henri Nouwen once wrote, “The good news of the gospel is not that God came to take our suffering away, but that God wanted to become a part of it. The agony of the world is God’s agony. Outside of God, human suffer-

ing is not only unbearable, but cannot even be faced.”

I wish it could be different. I wish that we did not have to face the realities we faced this week. I wish that pain and suffering were not such a part of our world. But they are, and the only way I know of to walk through this and emerge whole on the other side is to walk through it with God. Being children of God does not protect us from life’s tragedies. Being children of God gives us the promise that no matter

what happens, we will not be alone.

We worship a God who walked the earth, in the human body of Jesus Christ. We worship a God who suffered and

was killed. But the story doesn’t end there—because he rose to life again on the third day. And he offers that promise of new life and hope to us as well.

Helen Keller once said, “Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it.” As Christians, this is our message. We do not deny the realities of pain. We do not deny the need for us to grieve and to hurt and to cry.

We also, however, need to remember that the promises of God are true and, even if we cannot see God, God is with us, as close as our own heartbeat.

So the question for us this morning is, how will we respond to the tragedy of this week? Our national leaders are talking about revenge, retribution, and war. As Christians, perhaps we need to model another response.

Let us make the right choices in this crisis—to pray, act, and unite against the bitter fruits of division, hatred, and violence. Let us rededicate ourselves to global peace, human dignity, and the eradication of the injustice that breeds rage and vengeance. Let us begin a process of seeking the healing and grace of God.”

—Christy J. Waltersdorff

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem

This is a prayer offered on Sept. 16 at the New Freedom (Pa.) Church of the Brethren by Harold Martin, editor of the Brethren Revival Fellowship’s newsletter, the BRF Witness.

We address you as the God whose eyes are in every place beholding the evil and the good.

We saw again this past week something of the depths of human depravity, when buildings were blown apart and human lives were lost in horrendous acts of violence.

We pray that you:

—will have mercy on those who planned the dastardly deeds.

—will use the shock and fear and inconvenience of these events to bring revival to your church and salvation to many.

—will pour in comfort and healing to the families of those who died in the disaster.

—will give strength and courage to those whose job it is to risk their lives

in order to rescue others.

—will bless those who work in fire service, and police service, and medical service.

—will give wisdom to the leaders of nations and to the President of the United States (and those who counsel him).

Remind us that the root of the problem centers around a city and move us often to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem.”

May the experiences of this past week cause us to reflect on our lives, to make new commitments of devotion to Jesus Christ, and to become more and more conformed to the image of Christ.

We pray in the powerful, saving, victorious name of Jesus. Amen.

—Harold Martin

Friend sees a sign of peace

Chuck Fager, a Quaker writer from Bellefonte, Pa., sent this out to many in the Quaker community during the week following the tragic events.

Yesterday I drove a few hundred miles to attend my granddaughter’s seventh birthday party.

All the way down and back along the highways, there were flags and signs and flashing messages, the most frequent of which was, “God Bless America.” On the radio there were the continuing calls for revenge and retaliation.

But as we passed through the town of Martinsburg, W. Va., I saw something different, which I want to bring to your attention.

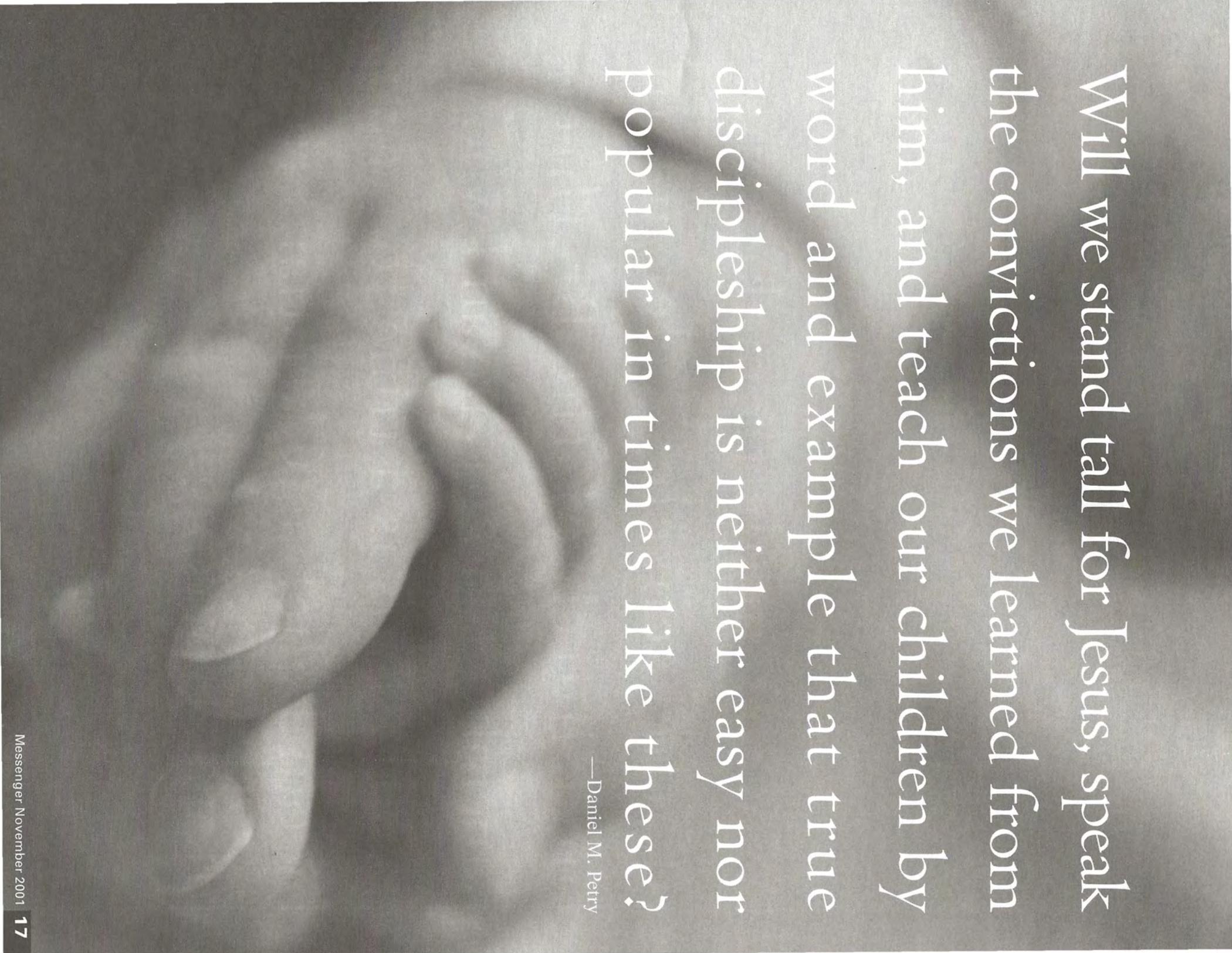
A small church there had a plastic message board on its lawn, the kind which usually has some preacher’s quip, intended to be attention-getting in an innocuous sort of way (e.g., “If you’re going the wrong way, God allows U-Turns,” etc.).

But last night the message, in sizeable black letters, was as follows:

“God will repay those who deserve it, “God bless all of humanity.”

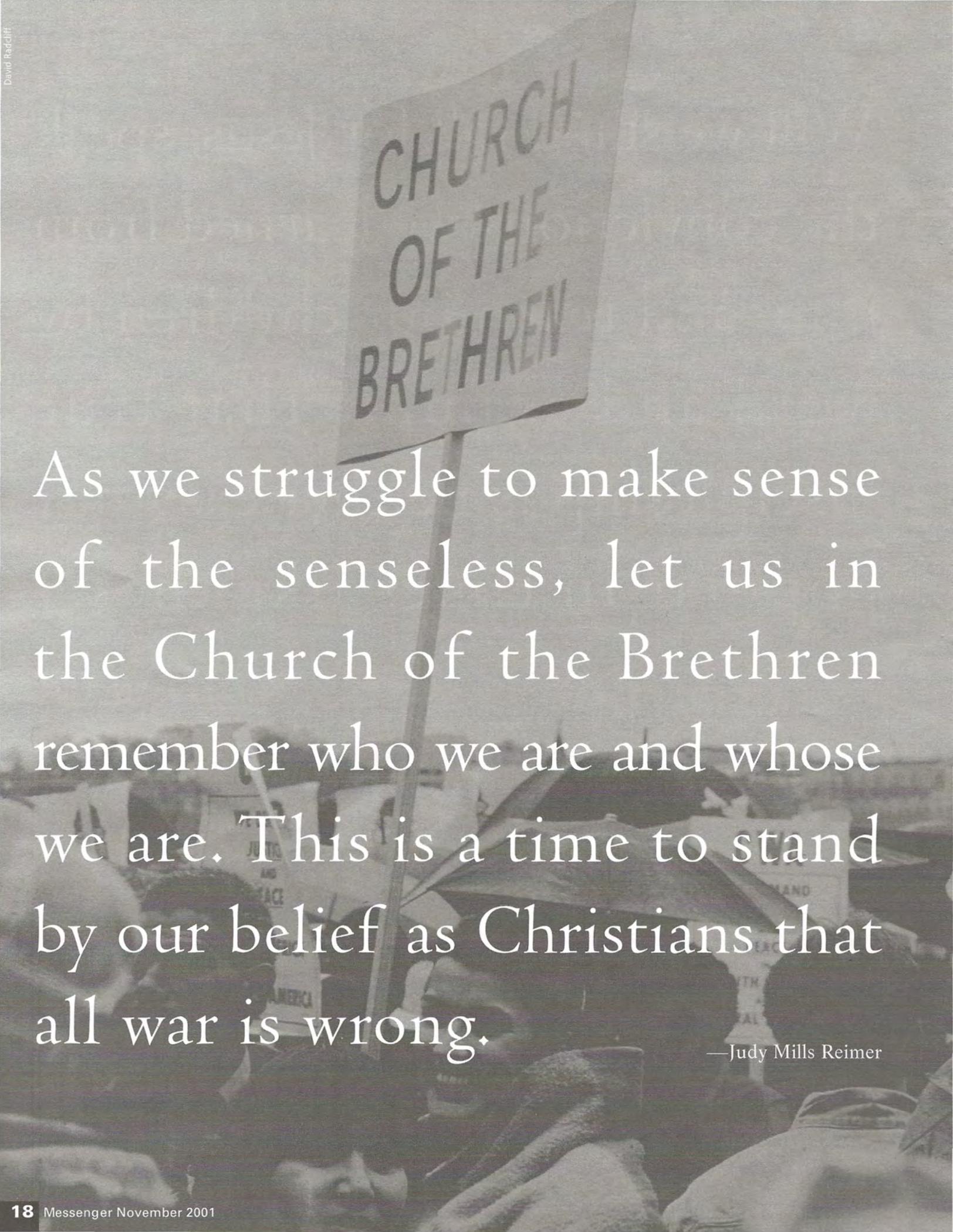
Simple. Quite orthodox as far as theology goes. But so different from all I have been seeing in the dark





Will we stand tall for Jesus, speak
the convictions we learned from
him, and teach our children by
word and example that true
discipleship is neither easy nor
popular in times like these?

—Daniel M. Petry



CHURCH
OF THE
BRETHREN

As we struggle to make sense of the senseless, let us in the Church of the Brethren remember who we are and whose we are. This is a time to stand by our belief as Christians that all war is wrong.

—Judy Mills Reimer

days since Sept. 11 that it seemed daring, almost radical. And very comforting, to me at least.

Returning home after sundown, we passed the church again, and the sign was lit up from within. It seemed even more remarkable in the gathering darkness.

This morning I did some surfing and found the church's e-mail address, and sent them a note of thanks and encouragement.

For the record, it was the Moler Avenue Church of the Brethren. The Brethren are one of the so-called "peace churches," which includes Friends. Moler Avenue lived up to its heritage this week. I hope Friends can do as well.

—Chuck Fager

Must we propose an alternative?

Soon after the events of Sept. 11, the Church of the Brethren General Board's Washington Office sent out an appeal urging Brethren to ask the President to refrain from a violent military response. Washington Office coordinator Greg Laszakovits received a letter from a church member complaining that the appeal lacked a "nonviolent alternative" to military action, and asked: "What act will we as Brethren perform to help end the scourge of terrorism? I will not forward a hollow demand for a nonviolent response that carries with it no specific meaningful alternative." Here is part of the letter Laszakovits wrote in reply:

Responding to your larger point that any plea to the President must have an alternative or else it will be "hollow," I respectfully disagree biblically, theologically, and strategically.

Asking the President not to strike back violently is worthy in and of itself. Jesus did not say, "...turn the other cheek—unless another strategic option is available." Our New Testament and Brethren traditions outline a history full of pain brought on because of our faith and suffered through without turning to violence.

Jesus and the disciples were the first to suffer the anger of other religious groups and governments, and we know well what happened to Paul, Peter, and other early Christians. I don't believe there is one instance of them fighting back or seeking revenge for the wrongs committed against them—they viewed suffering as a part of being true to their faith, and even Christ-like. Additionally, Brethren have been tarred and feathered, beaten, had their homes, businesses, possessions taken from them, and even been killed in order to uphold their position of nonresistance. Though this tragic event tests our pacifism, we can look to the example of our Christian and Brethren forerunners for guidance and inspiration. I won't intimate that this is an easy response, for it certainly is not. I do believe though that it is an ongoing test of faith and love.

Strategically, I am opposed to a violent reaction as well. It will only hurl us further into the cycle of retaliation and the myth of redemptive violence. When we strike bin Laden, Afghanistan, or whomever, do we really think we will eliminate everyone involved and that will be the end of it? Unlikely. Rather, we will create new converts to anti-Americanism, and rejuvenate the hatred in those who already scorn us.

I want be clear that I do not disagree with you that we need to be thinking about reasonable nonviolent responses. We should be thinking about these more than ever before. Part of our nonviolent response includes all of the things we are currently doing as a nation: seeking capture and eventual justice for those who have participated in these terrible acts, tightening security, and questioning why a group or groups would harbor such hate toward us.

While it is not clear everything that we should be doing immediately, it is clear that we need to respond in a Jesus-like manner in calling to attention the inhumanity of these acts against us. This is the tradition of Matthew 5—responding

to the unjust action taken against you, but in an always-nonviolent manner, never degrading ourselves or others to defile the image of God in one another.

—Greg Laszakovits

Seeing through an eye for an eye

This is an abridged version of the sermon delivered Sept. 16 by Sharon Nearhoof May, pastor of the recently renamed Papago Buttes Church of the Brethren (formerly First Church of the Brethren, Phoenix). The text is Matthew 5:38-48.

There were no blockbuster action films in Jesus' day to teach children the lessons Hollywood teaches ours. There were no televisions to broadcast the murders and the reactions, but the people passed down the ancient religion anyway—and I'm not talking about the ancient religion of Judaism. I refer to an older and deeper religion that tells us we can count on violence to save us from trouble. It is a pagan religion as old as humanity and as current as the live pictures on our color TVs.

It is called the myth of redemptive violence. The easiest way to see it clearly is to watch an action movie or certain television shows and pay attention to the moral of the story. It usually starts with a hero who is attacked or beaten in some way by a bad guy. For most of the show, this good hero battles the villain bravely even though it looks like he can never win. Only at the last minute does the hero finally kill or destroy his enemy, usually in one great show of violence which leads to peace and order (and in Hollywood the hero gets the girl).

The scary part, of course, is that the myth of redemptive violence does not just play out on the silver screen. It plays out in our own lives and in our



country and in our world. Over the ages, entire societies have built their belief systems on this pattern of salva-



tion through violence. And for all our technology and modern advancement, we are no different. The myth of redemptive violence is truly the religion of our times.

We suffer an attack by terrorists and in response we declare war—it's completely natural because deep down we believe that war will save us. Our leaders, and a 90 percent majority of Americans just like us (if you believe the Gallup poll) are absolutely counting on more violence to save us from this terrible violence. It makes all the sense in the world, but can you hear just how crazy it sounds?

If we listen to Jesus, he'll help us hear how crazy we sound. He's sitting up there on that hill, arranging his notes for the Sermon on the Mount, gazing out over all the people who have been plagued by the loss, the hatred, the exhausting never-ending brutality of it all, and he says it as clearly as he can. "You've all heard that it was said, 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'" And all the people nod approvingly because that's the

Hebrew Law, that's justice, retribution, punishment, vengeance, and that is how the world works. And then Jesus continues: "Well, I say to you, 'Do not resist an



evildoer.'" And all of a sudden, the silence falls so hard you can hear it drop. What do you mean, do not resist an evildoer? If you don't resist evil, it will run right over you!

A few verses later, he says, "You have heard it said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'" And again everybody agrees. That makes total sense. "But I say to you, love your enemies and

pray for those who persecute you."

These are the hard days of our faith—the days when it is hard to be counted among the Brethren with our deep heritage of peacemaking and objection to war and violence. And yet now is when God needs us the most. In one way or another, our country is going to war. Some of the people God has created as surely as he created you and me are about to be demonized and hunted down and slaughtered in the name of vengeance, righteousness, and God. Our young men and women will once again be sacrificed on the altar where we worship the beast named Violence, who promises to save us but fills our fields with graves instead.

In the days ahead, many voices will vie for our attention and our loyalty. Uncle Sam will come calling, and the pundits from the left and the right will debate the minutiae late into the night, and the people will be polled, and the editorials will spill gallons of ink, and so on and so on. My prayer for us and for the world is that the voice we listen to the most will be the voice of that man who climbed a mountain so many years ago and taught us to overcome evil with good. We are a people who have known from our beginnings that an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind. May we be the people who shatter once and for all the myth that violence saves us so all the world may see.

—Sharon Nearhoof May

Litany of headlines and scripture

Kelly Burk, pastor of the Richmond (Ind.) Church of the Brethren, compiled this litany for two readers. It was used at the Sept. 16 service.

Terrorism: Explosions rock New York, D.C.; Planes crash into World Trade Center, heralding string of acts: In a horrific sequence of destruction, terrorists crashed two planes into the World Trade Center and knocked down both the twin 110-story towers this morning. Explosions also

rocked the Pentagon and the State Department and spread fear across the nation. President Bush ordered a full-scale investigation to "hunt down the folks who committed this act."

"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:36-39).

A Pentagon official said the United States will launch sustained military strikes against those responsible for the attacks as well as their support systems.

"But I say to you that listen, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:27-31).

Bush, Congress vow war on terrorism: Congressional leaders spoke of a strong and sustained—if unspecified—response to terrorism. "I think everybody is so angry they want to hit somebody," Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle said Wednesday as lawmakers discussed an initial installment in the \$20 billion range for the anti-terrorism effort.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and

thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matt. 5:1-9).

Afghanistan vows revenge if US strikes: The ruling Taliban threatened revenge Friday if the United States attacks Afghanistan for shielding suspected terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden.

While Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.” At once he came up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him. Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you are here to do.” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Matt. 26:47-52).

A letter to Brethren youth

Jeff Bach, a minister and a member of Nettle Creek Church of the Brethren, Hagerstown, Ind., teaches at Bethany Theological Seminary. The following letter is written, he says, “with the wish that the church could send a message to all its youth and young adults to encourage them to come to faith in Jesus Christ, if they haven’t already, and to stay faithful to his way of peace in this time of war.”

Dear sisters and brothers,

You have been in my thoughts and prayers very much alongside the victims of the attacks on Sept. 11, and the rescue workers who died with

them. The shock and grief of such massive suffering will not go away soon. We will all be different after this, even as healing begins.

I am sorry that the church is not in better condition as you face these times. We older adults have left you with the impression that church should entertain you and that being a Christian is fun. We have not taught you very well that faith is total life commitment to Jesus Christ that includes joy *and* sacrifice. Sometimes Christians must follow a different path than the one our neighbors and government try to pressure us to take. Faith in Jesus Christ sometimes requires us to suffer opposition from well-meaning people.

We have left you with a church that gives the impression that you should pick and choose what parts of Christian faith are comfortable to you, and disregard the rest. Faith is the church’s collective witness to Jesus Christ, not a matter of preferences. Sometimes we talk about peace as though its only purpose is to secure international political stability. We have not spoken clearly enough that disciples of Jesus trust in and work for his peace, regardless of the condition of international politics.

For these and other weaknesses in the church, I am sorry, especially for ways I might have unintentionally supported them. I pray for God’s forgiveness, and God’s power to make our church more faithful to Christ and to the New Testament.

Now Christians face the most outrageous scandal of our religion, namely Jesus’ teaching and example to love enemies. How can we even suggest such a thing in light of the intense suffering of those grieving the deaths of thousands of people? Shouldn’t US citizens answer their government’s call to support and participate in retaliatory actions to redress this attack?

Baptism by faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ brings believers into God’s design to bring about forgiveness and reconciliation with God, and the possibility of reconciliation with others. At the cross

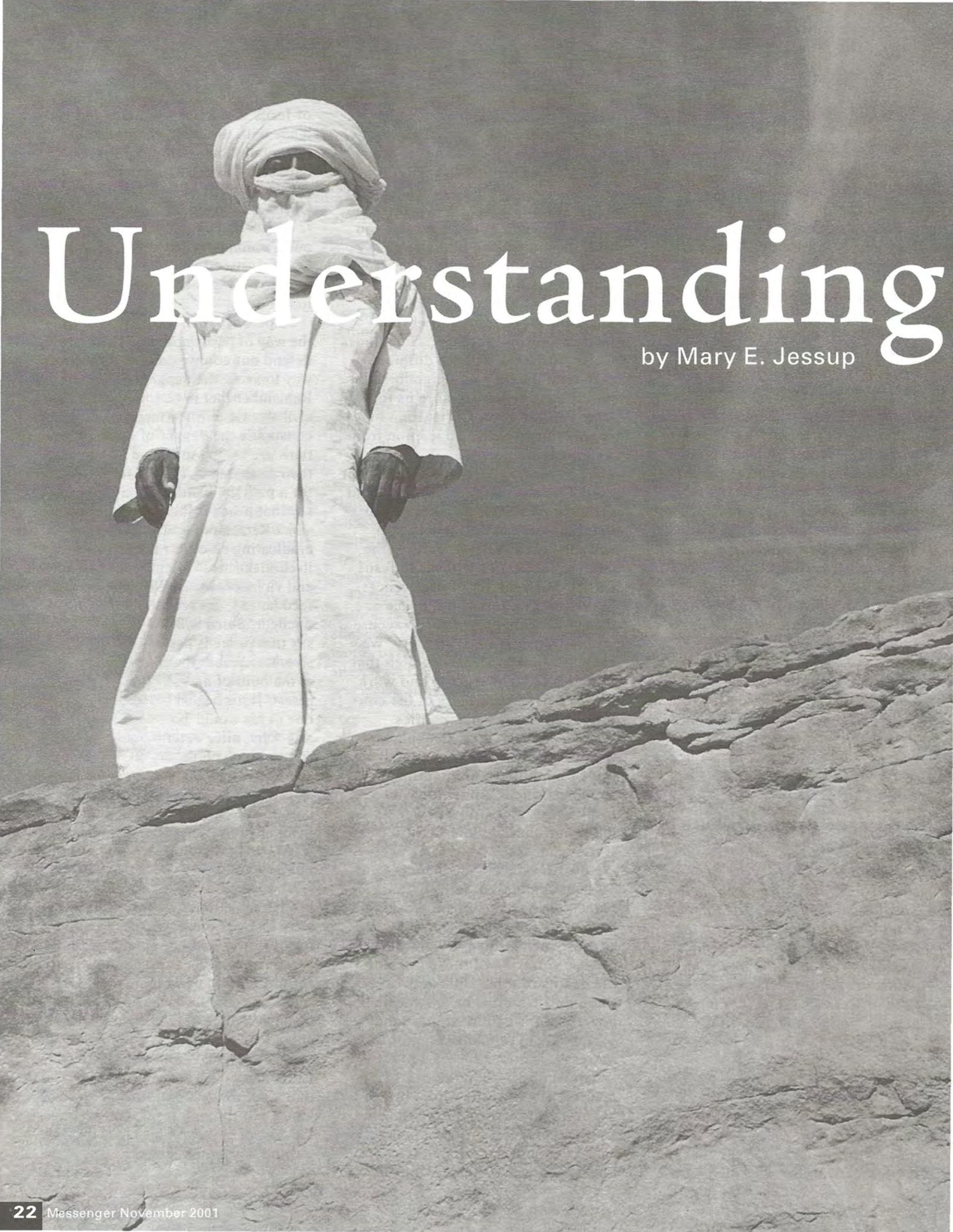
of Jesus, God met sin, hate, and violence with the offer of forgiveness, not retaliation. Through faith and baptism, Christians receive the gift of Christ’s forgiveness. It enlists us to serve our Commander in Chief, Jesus Christ, in reconciling, not in killing.

Some will say that the way of peace amounts to failure to defend our country, and is a cowardly way to avoid the dangers of war. Remember that in terrorist war, all civilians are military targets who share constantly the danger of death. Christians are willing to live and to die for their faith, but not to kill for it, nor for a political institution. Some will say that peace is idealistic and impossible. Remember that the lofty goal of eradicating all evil or terrorism is itself idealistic. Violent force will not end violence. Massive retaliation will feed hatred, not reconcile it. Some will say that peace is passive. Remember that at the hour of his arrest, Jesus healed one of his would-be attackers, after Peter struck him with the sword. Disciples of Jesus can be just as active in healing, for those who have lost loved ones, and hopefully for the many innocent civilians in harm’s way by the threat of international military force.

Now, of all times, God’s love is needed in action, for those whose lives were lost, for those who survive them, for ourselves and our neighbors, and yes—as impossible as it sounds—even for those who intend more violence. Such love cost Jesus his life, and through that cost, God extends reconciling love abundantly. The time is urgent to repent, to confess Jesus Christ, and trust in God’s love. I pray that all of us will count the measure of God’s gift through Jesus, and count the cost of taking up his cross by putting down all weapons.



—Jeff Bach



Understanding

by Mary E. Jessup

Islam

Christians can seize this teachable moment to learn about another faith

Educators are always on the lookout for teachable moments, when students are most attentive. Currently Americans are wanting to learn about Islam. It's important that we take the time as individuals and as congregations to learn about this faith.

The teachings of Islam are not difficult for Christians to grasp. Islam is related to Judaism and Christianity, and together these are considered the three great monotheistic religions. Judaism, with its 4,000-year-old tradition and Christianity with its 2,000 years are seen as precursors to the 1,400-year-old religion of Islam.

Similarities include the understanding that God is One and that over time God has sent prophets to earth with a message. Muslims believe Jesus to be a great prophet. They believe Jesus was born of the virgin Mary and worked miracles. Muslims believe in a Day of Judgment that comes to all, with heaven or hell as the final outcome. While understanding the religions of Hinduism and Buddhism require Christians to learn new concepts (such as reincarnation), Islam is easily understandable for Christians.

Vocabulary first

Teachers often spend time on basic vocabulary. This is necessary for an introduction to Islam. Here are some terms often used in Islam.

Islam: The name of the religion. It means "Submission to God."

Muslim: A follower of Islam. It means "One who submits to the will of God." The followers are not Muhammadans, for Muslims do not worship the prophet Muhammad; they worship God. At Muhammad's funeral it was said, "If anyone worships Muhammad, Muhammad is dead. If anyone worships God, God is immortal."

Arabic: The language used by Islam.

Allah: The Arabic word for God, who is seen as the same God as the "People of the Book," Jews and Christians.

Muhammad: Muhammad is considered by Muslims to be the final and greatest prophet God has sent to humankind. He was fully human, yet provided an ideal example as to how to live as a Muslim, one who submits to God. He was born in Mecca in 570 A.D. He was orphaned at an early age and raised by an uncle. Muhammad was unable to read or write. This fact is important to Muslims, for at the age of 40 the Angel Gabriel began to reveal to Muhammad a message from God. Muhammad turned to a scribe, who recorded this message word for word.

Qur'an: The holy book of Islam. Its text is believed to be the literal words delivered through the angel to

Muhammad from 610 until his death in 632. References are made in the Qur'an to many Old and New Testament figures, such as Noah, Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mary.

Mosque: The Muslim house of prayer and assembly. In Arabic the word is "masjid."

Mecca: The holiest city within Islam. The birthplace of Muhammad and the sight of the annual pilgrimage (hajj).

Islam in the US

Here is a word of caution to those in search of information about Islam. A lot of published information is outdated. Islam has grown significantly in recent years. It is now the second largest religion worldwide, with 1.2 billion followers. Only Christianity is larger, with 2 billion.

The religion has experienced a revival in recent decades and, like Christianity, seeks converts.

In 1965 President Lyndon Johnson signed into law new immigration poli-



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cies opening the doors of the United States to more immigrants from Asia. This resulted in an influx of followers of Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, religions that were not represented in significant numbers before that date. Consequently, the US has a new religious identity.

The Muslim population in America is projected to be between 5 million and 8 million. A significant minority are African Americans who have converted to Islam from Christianity. Many African American Muslims will say that have "reverted" to the religion of their pre-slavery African ancestors. Other Muslims in the US are first-, second-, and third-generation immigrants from South Asia (24 percent) and Arab countries (12 percent).

Many US mosques resemble a mini United Nations. Praying shoulder to shoulder are Muslims from many different countries, of various shades of color, and representing the various sects of Islam.

The five pillars

A basic introduction to Islam would include knowledge of the Five Pillars of Islam, what is required of a devout Muslim.

- First, the profession of faith:

"There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is God's messenger."

- Second, Muslims worldwide are expected to respond to the call to prayer five times daily. They will then wash, face Mecca, and go through the various prostrations of prayer, reciting the prayers in Arabic. Most of the time the prayers are said in the home, in the workplace, or wherever the Muslim might be at the time. But once a week, on Friday at noon, attendance for communal prayer in the mosque is encouraged.

- Third is almsgiving, or charity for the needy, 2.5 percent of one's wealth annually.

- Fourth: During the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, Ramadan, Muslims are to fast each day from sunup until sundown. During the daylight hours one is not to eat or drink. At the conclusion of the month of fasting, the Feast of Id al Fitr is celebrated. In Chicago the Muslim community has

Stepping Stones for Stumbling Saints

by Robin Wentworth Mayer

This whimsical collection of conversational essays illustrates the familiar ways we all stumble in the walk of faith, but it also offers stepping stones to help us regain our footing. You may recognize Mayer from her popular Messenger columns of the same title. Here are readable essays that focus on coping with fear, failure, and feelings of inadequacy, learning from our mistakes, personal growth through painful experiences, working on building healthy relationships, making changes, accepting limitations, and focusing on things above. Walk beside someone who will help you see faith's stepping stones.

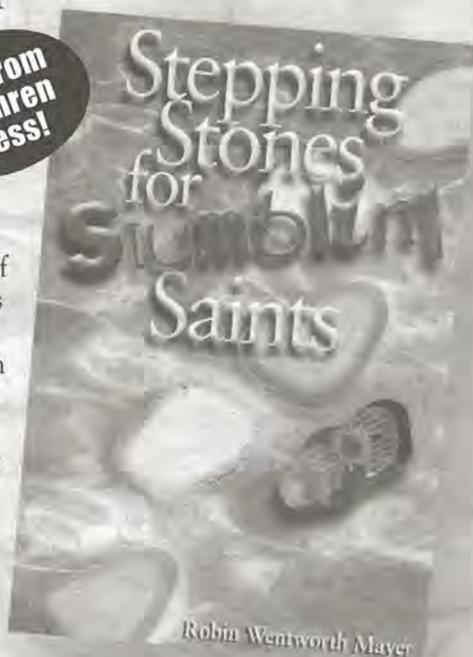
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Robin Wentworth Mayer

gathered at McCormick Place for this celebration so that the thousands of Muslims of that metropolitan area might gather together.

• Fifth: Once in the lifetime of each Muslim, if physically and financially able, he or she is to participate in the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. There they will gather with other Muslims from around the world.

Many have the mistaken notion that jihad is a sixth pillar. Jihad is sometimes translated “holy war,” but it is more accurately defined as a “holy struggle.” For most Muslims jihad means a spiritual struggle. A Muslim friend talks about her jihad with her diet. Another Muslim woman writes about her jihad with her grandfather over his interpretation of the Qur’an on passages dealing with the role of women. Jihad also means fighting against injustice. But the definition that has gained attention is jihad as the defense of Islam when under attack.

Just as Christianity has its various branches (Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Protestantism), Islam, too, has various sects. But more importantly, all religions have movements that may be described as moderate and other movements that can only be described as extremist. Islam by its very nature is a conservative religion, but its majority cannot be judged by its extreme factions. Just as almost all Mormons are quick to distance themselves from the few polygamists making the news in

Utah, and almost all Christians can see no connection between themselves and those bombing abortion clinics in the name of Jesus, Muslims, too, cannot be judged by those declaring jihad on innocent civilians.

Further steps

We have work to do as Brethren to educate ourselves and our congregations about this cousin of ours, Islam. Take a serious look at these suggestions and give them prayerful consideration.

—Offer a course on Islam at your church. Invite a professor from a local college or university to lead a session on “Introduction to Islam.”

—Purchase books for your church library on Islam. Don’t forget to include children’s books.

—Contact your local mosque. Ask for an invitation to visit with the Islamic community there.

—Check your local library for videos on Islam.

—Mount a current world map on a wall in a well-traveled, well-lit place in your church.

In a climate that is increasingly anti-Muslim, Brethren must model a compassionate way of reaching out to their neighbors. Learning more about Islam is a good way to start. 

Mary Jessup, a Church of the Brethren minister serving Buffalo Hart Presbyterian Church, teaches world religions at Millikin University in Decatur, Ill.

Books and resources

Islam: A Short History, by Karen Armstrong

Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet, by Karen Armstrong

The Qur’an

The Oxford History of Islam,
by John Esposito, ed.

Video

Islam: Empire of Faith, PBS Home Video

Television

“Religion and Ethics Newsweekly,” weekly program on PBS stations

Websites

www.Beliefnet.com

www.pbs.org (click on Religion and Ethics Newsweekly)

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World churchman

KURTIS FRIEND NAYLOR: 1916-2001

"...to work toward the day when suffering and strife will be replaced with cooperation and love and when peace shall abide in place of war."

by Don Durnbaugh

The scene was the controversial All-Christian Peace Assembly convened in Prague in 1961 at the height of the Cold War. Czech Brethren theologian J. L. Hromodka had created the unique international gathering to bring together Christian leaders from East and West, seeking to bridge political differences. Conference members were thunderstruck by the strident accusations against American imperialism voiced by Bishop K. H. Ting of Nanking, China. To mend the strain that threatened to disrupt the conference, leaders asked Kurtis Friend Naylor, director of Brethren Service Commission work in Europe and an assembly observer, to respond.

Speaking the next day to a deathly quiet assemblage of a thousand, Naylor delivered what was called a "thoroughly Christian" response, deftly answering charges by agreeing that the bishop's message should be thoughtfully studied, and where his critique was justified, appropriate forgiveness should be sought. He assured the bishop that a "cherished benefit" of the United States was that citizens could challenge government policies, pointing out that he, along with many others, had been granted the status of a conscientious objector in World War II.

Assembly members responded to Naylor's brief but sincere message with a lengthy standing ovation as they saw him approach Bishop Ting to shake hands. Later the two had serious interchanges, leading the bishop to invite Kurtis to visit China as his guest. Although this visit did not take place, the reconciliation effected in that tense moment was the highlight of the conference.

A direct effect of Naylor's actions at Prague was his subsequent key role, along with other Brethren leaders, in facilitating the membership of the powerful Russian Orthodox Church in the World Council of Churches. These events are told in detail in the recent excellent history of Brethren Service, *A Cup of Cold Water*, written by J. Kenneth Kreider.

Known as a service- and peace-minded minister with strong ecumenical convictions, Kurtis Friend Naylor (1916-2001) was educated at McPherson College and Bethany Biblical Seminary, where he became known for his keen mind and strong presence. During these years he served on the National Youth Cabinet. He was waiting to go to England in 1942 as a service worker, when BSC asked him and Paul Hoover Bowman to go to Ecuador. When their anticipated project fell through, they creatively organized a boys' club to

deal with street children in Quito. For this work Naylor received the Ecuadoran government's highest civilian award. He became so well-attuned to the local society and its political developments that the American ambassador named him to an important post.

Shortly before leaving for Ecuador, Kurtis married his college sweetheart, Gladys Shank, his vivacious and able wife of 58 years. They had four daughters, Merylee, Cheryl, Mariza, and Illana.

In 1948-1950 the Naylor family lived in Europe, where Kurtis was administrative assistant in Geneva and then directed BSC work in Kassel, Germany. They returned in 1959 to direct the entire Brethren program, and also to represent the Brethren at the World Council of Churches in Geneva until 1963. During this time, Kurtis traveled in Spain with an important WCC delegation to support the suppressed Protestant church. From 1967 to 1972 he was associate director for international affairs with the National Council of Churches. Before, between, and following these assignments, he held significant pastoral posts at Denver, Colo.; Wenatchee, Wash.; and Pomona, Calif.; before retiring in 1980 to a ranch in the Ozarks. Later the Naylor family moved in final retirement to McPherson, Kan.

Kurtis Friend Naylor was an intellectual, always sharply questioning loose talk and slovenly reasoning. He enjoyed the give-and-take of theological discussion, delighting in provoking new insights, both given and received. A dedicated family man, he was dedicated as well to the church in its widest proportions. A credo he drafted in 1966 closes with these words:

"Believing that God calls us and His power is our strength, because of faith in Jesus Christ, we join with others in a common effort to respond to His call and to do His will. For there is no other alternative but to serve God in every moment of our lives, . . . to work toward the day when suffering and strife will be replaced with cooperation and love and when peace shall abide in place of war. We are not alone in this task. The strength of Christ is ours. Divine resources flow through us, and human fellowship sustains us as we seek to know and to do His will."



A former Brethren Service worker in Germany and Austria, Don Durnbaugh is currently the archivist of Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pa.



“Humans love war. We claim to be higher thinkers, yet we still allow ourselves to be controlled by primal urges to fight one another.”

People love war

Around the time of the Persian Gulf War, I recall coming across an old article written by William Broyles in a 1984 issue of *Esquire* magazine, entitled “Why Men Love War.” Now, as we are facing a war against terrorism, I am once again reminded of that article. Americans are getting caught up in a blind patriotic fury and are being forced to take sides—either pro-America or pro-terrorism.

Humans love war. We claim to be higher thinkers, yet we still allow ourselves to be controlled by primal urges to fight one another. We talk about how sorry we are that human lives were lost, yet we are more than ready to take some more. In Broyles’ article, he argues that war is like summer camp, only it is more dangerous and more exciting. He states, “To love war is to mock the very values that we supposedly fight for. It is to be insensitive, reactionary, a brute. But I believe that most men, if they are honest, knew that somewhere inside of themselves they loved it too, loved it as much as anything that has happened to them before or since. And how do you explain that to your wife, your family, or your friends?”

What will be the result of war? Many, many innocent lives will be lost, and some of those will be American too. We may risk the possibility of a world war, chemical warfare or, God forbid, nuclear weapons. Perhaps your family and

friends and maybe yourself will be among the dead. I imagine that Osama bin Laden is having the time of his life right now with all the public attention.

He is probably saying with a smirk, “Bring it on!” And in the future will the heinous acts of terrorism cease? I seriously doubt it.

But we must respond somehow, we cannot let these actions go unnoticed, is the argument I am hearing. I ask you, what would happen if it did go unnoticed? The act is done and we can’t change that. We must get on with our lives. Perhaps we need to reevaluate security measures on our airlines. We also need to work on better foreign relations.

I hope that as Brethren we can listen to Christ’s words and not allow ourselves to be influenced by the temptation of war.

Harvey “Butch” Weaver
Dayton, Ohio

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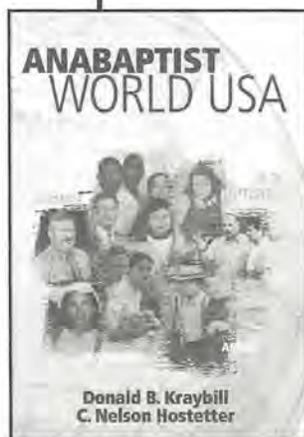
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“Inclusivism, compassion, love, pacifism are not religions, just convictions and beliefs. More specifically, they are not Christianity.”

Inclusivism is not religion

I was quite disturbed when I read Zandra Wagoner's letter [September] in response to Annual Conference worship. Unfortunately I believe she has greatly misunderstood the gospel of Jesus Christ. In fact, Jesus Christ is the only Lord and Savior and he died for our sins and the Bible teaches us this. Will we accept others to pick and choose what they like out of the Bible and say it is the gospel, twisting it around?

Inclusivism, compassion, love, pacifism are not religions, just convictions and beliefs. More specifically, they are not Christianity.

Though I am a pacifist, I must

admit that if these opinions reflect the Church of the Brethren then I made the right decision to join another denomination.

Joy Schempp
Lansdale, Pa.

Fishers of men

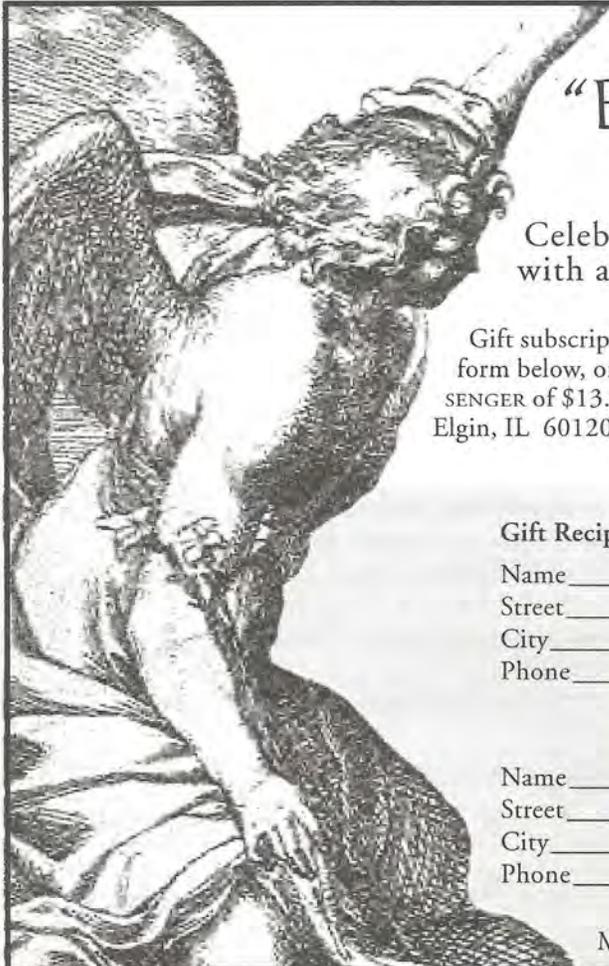
No congregation can be unconcerned about the faithfulness and quality of its congregational life. The upgrading of congregational life is a continuing process that demands dedication by leadership and willingness on the part of all Christians to reach maturity and to become "fishers of men."

The congregation should not forget

the reasons God called it into existence. A true congregation can be measured or judged by how effective it is in touching people for God.

One of those great mysteries of the gospel is that God often uses immature, unlearned, and imperfect people to bring others to Christ. If every congregation delays its evangelistic endeavors until each member is perfect, then the day of judgment will arrive first. We sometimes forget that congregations are groups of forgiven sinners.

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is to be faulted in the underlying spiritual purpose of the congregation. A congregation serves as a lighthouse pointing people to spiritual safety through Christ. The doctrine of the Brethren is to have faith in our brothers and sisters and in God. That faith gives us the courage to go forward, and to make disciples for Christ.

Herman B. Turner
Fulks Run, Va.

"To stir our flagging zeal"

Thanks for your fine MESSENGER piece about "If You Believe" [see September Editorial]. The additional information you provided will be helpful to efforts to have the song widely used throughout the denomination. Perhaps note should be made that it is copyrighted, so our joyous zeal to have others join us in singing will need to be tempered by conforming to regulations about copying.

I applaud your suggestion that we personalize the promise with "And set the Brethren free." Some additional "closers" have occurred to me: "To stir our flagging zeal"; "To heal our fevered ills"; "And set God's church on fire"; "And fill us with Christ's love"; etc. All these might be sung in true folk song style to inspire others to make the song "special" to them on other occasions.

Norman L. Harsh
Lorida, Fla.

Bold love

I, like many others, have been doing a great deal of thinking on evangelism these days. In the wake of the terrorism of Sept. 11, 2001, I realized what is needed is bold love. Loud evangelism and quiet service are simply not enough to transform our world.

I pray for an act of love that is as bold, surprising, well-planned, effective, and massive as the acts of violence on Sept. 11.

Bold love is difficult because it requires us to change. We cannot

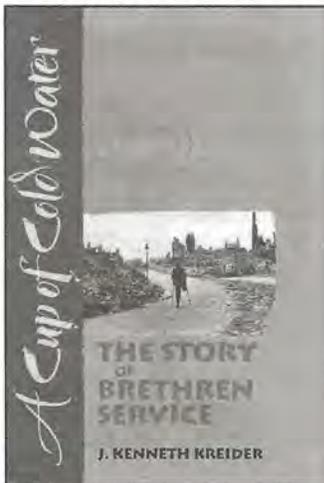
allow our judgments, our criticisms, or our self-doubts to define us. No one will feel loved if they need to change before they are accepted. No one will feel loved if they are criticized for what they haven't done more than they are appreciated for who they are. No one can share love boldly if they do not feel worthy themselves.

"For God so loved the world that

he gave his only son so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:16,17).

We are loveable. We are valuable. And we are loved! And so is everyone else.

Bold love is an act of faith because it requires that we listen as much as



A Cup of Cold Water

New From Brethren Press by J. Kenneth Kreider

"Brethren Service touched countless lives. It initiated numerous services which continue in a variety of forms and under many names and sponsoring groups. It is time to have this story put together in one place. Kenneth Kreider, an enthusiastic participant in a variety of Brethren Service programs, has contributed a 'a gift of love' by putting this story in writing."

- Hazel Peters, Administrative Assistant,
Brethren Service Commission (1953-1968),
and member of BVS Unit #5 (1949)

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Seminary

FACULTY OPENING

Bethany seeks applications for the newly created position of **Associate Dean and Director of Distributed Education**, beginning July 1, 2002. For a position description, including responsibilities and qualifications, see the Seminary's homepage at www.brethren.org/Bethany and go to "position openings," or call (765) 983-1821 to request a copy.

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Deadline for Applications:
December 1, 2001

we witness. It requires that we speak as much as we serve. It requires that we give up those things and activities that separate us from the holy. It requires that we act on the leading of the Spirit regardless of what the world expects from us.

This is a time of faith. I pray that all may have the courage to love boldly.

Reba Herder
La Verne, Calif.

We can remove barriers

When the September MESSENGER arrived I read it through, as usual beginning with the Editorial. I would place myself with those who believe that we are not in a position of instructing the Holy Spirit as to what it "must" do.

The thing that prompted me to put my thoughts on paper was the sentence: "The key to revival, it was said many times at Conference, is for God to remove the barriers holding us back." To me it is unbelievable that there are those who believe that God is to remove the barriers. God did not place the barriers. Why is it then that God should be pleaded with to remove them? If we are asking God to remove the barriers and we remain the same, then it becomes God's fault.

We must take responsibility for our thoughts and actions. Those barriers have been placed there by us, trying to establish something less demanding to meet our arrogant, selfish, and greedy desires. We must decide to follow the teachings of Jesus, and live a life that is modeled after Jesus, and our prayer should be for God to give us that strength.

Membership is a concern of the church. I would suggest that the letter from Zandra Wagoner be read again. It will reveal some of the problems that are causing current members to leave the church and is also keeping others from becoming members.

The frantic search for new members should be tempered with a concern for the nurturing and support of those who are or have been members and present a program and worship that will meet those spiritual needs. People should not be turned away, overlooked, and forgotten about because there is a different interpretation of the life and teaching of Jesus.

The song that we all sang at camp "Make new friends, but keep the old, one is silver the other gold" should be remembered at this point.

Phyllis Howard
Nampa, Idaho

CLASSIFIED ADS

A new book of comfort and hope—TEARS IN A BOTTLE: COMFORT FOR LIFE'S HURTS by Noah Martin, D.Min., Church of the Brethren pastor, counselor, author. Offers a biblical perspective to deal with the emotional and spiritual pain that come from the losses and disappointments of life. Highly endorsed by pastors, chaplains, psychologists, grief counselors. Useful for

individuals, expressions of comfort, self-help groups. Order via www.new-day.org, e-mail newday@charter.net, or call Brethren Press at 800-441-3712. Cost is \$10 plus S & H.

Pastor position available—Genesis Church of the Brethren in Putney, Vermont. Excellent opportunities for outreach and church growth. Congregation strongly committed to growth. Beautiful rural

setting close to larger communities. Good place to raise a family. Contact: Joe Detrick, Southern Pennsylvania District Office, PO Box 218, New Oxford, PA 17350-0218.

WANTED—Copies of the December 2000 MESSENGER. We are short because of strong demand for that issue. If you are willing to donate a copy, please mail to MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

This month's Turning Points includes all listings received prior to Sept. 28 not previously published. Please send information to be included in Turning Points to Jean Clements, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120; 800 523-8039 ext. 206; jclements_gb@brethren.org. Information must be complete in order to be published.

New members

Bear Creek, Dayton, Ohio: Ray Arriola, Jessie Arriola, Sarah Arriola, Kevin Arriola, Kelly Hicks, Michelle Earls, William Earls

Bethesda, Grantsville, Md.: Benjamin Moore

Bluc Ridge, Va.: Glenn Stevens, Pat Stevens

Bridgewater, Va.: Sigrid Reger

Canaan, Gibbon Glade, Pa.: Wendell Seese, Roberta Seese, Anthony Seese, Jennifer Seese, Darcy Savage, Judy Glisan, Fred Glisan

Champaign, Ill.: Carolyn Tryon

Curryville, Pa.: Lorrie Bechtel, Pam Rhodes, Kevin Rhodes, Pam Shoenfelt, Dustin Shoenfelt, Lindsey Shoenfelt

Dupont, Ohio: Zachary Webb, Ron Harlow, Raymond Mays, Eric Kleman, Amy Kleman, Angie Dockery, Chelsea Grant

Eversole, New Lebanon, Ohio: Sandra Stewart, Julia Angel, Taria Meade, Karen Meade

Frederick, Md.: Tom Belcher, Crystal Bolding, Fred Collard, Jim Craig, Arlene Craig, Olive Engle, Lisa Fouché, Virginia Lochstamphor, Charles Mangano, Sandra Lynn Nicoulin, Tony Nofi, Julie Nofi, Creed Parker, Vonnie Parker, Stan Remsburg, Darlene Remsburg, John Risser, Ruth Risser, Tom Simmons, Sara Simmons, Donald Specht, Martha Specht, Patricia Sumner, John Trussell, DeAnna Trussell, Dave Weldon, Debby Weldon, Don Weldon, Corrie Weldon, Arin Weldon

Friendship, Linthicum, Md.: Suzanne Howard

Garbers, Harrisonburg, Va.: Sue Atkins, Alvin Dove, Tony Dove, Pam Dove, Frances Kite, Gary Propst, Janet M. Propst, Sheila Schaeffer

Garden City, Kan.: Alma Rojo, Michelle Rojo

Hickory Grove, Dunkirk, Ind.: Dahla Townsend

Kokomo, Ind.: Christopher Fruth, Stephanie Fruth, Trina Nelson, Rhonda Simpson, Matthew Stone, Steve Morgan, Norman Cory, Martha Cory, Mike Dziera, Pat Dziera, Andrea Dziera, Danny Turnpugh, Sam Cox

Lebanon, Mount Sidney, Va.: Riley Cox, Emily Moore, Laura Cupp, Natalie Pence, Anthony Calise, Andrew Kania, Daniel Sheffer, Erin Augst, Jim Mas-

incup, Janie Masincup

Maple Grove, Lexington, N.C.: Jerreé Walser, Sarah Walser

Mohican, West Salem, Ohio: Shauna Zoltai, Jonathan Wellert, Maryann Guerin, Jenne Leaver, Rachael Gortner, Shannon Carillon, Kyle Clark

Moorefield, W.Va.: Laurel Kessel, Myra Kessel, Eric Ratliff, Jaime Ratliff, Ben Ratliff, Amber Cutlers, Laiken Shoemaker, Laci Shoemaker, Connie Shoemaker, Sarah Staley, Warren Staley, Loring Shockey, Michael Sions, Sheldon Sions, Carissa Wilson, Michelle Taylor, Elva Black, Mark Smith, Alreda Whitaker, Doug Hines, Brenda Hines, Branson Keller, Annabelle Keller

New Paris, Ind.: Tina Green, Buck Barton, Stephanie Mishler, Allison Miller

Pleasant Hill, Ohio: Jennifer Addington, Phillip Addington, Tom Addington, Nick Beam, Annette Beam, Noah Beam, Pat Beam, Lucas Delcamp, Jordan Hutchinson, Jerry Jackson, Janet Jackson, Larry McKibben, Matt Stockslager, Valerie Stockslager, Connie Stockslager, Kim Weeks, Joe Yingst, Martha Yingst

Pymont, Ind.: Gretchen Welk

Quakertown, Pa.: Christopher Baker

Somerset, Pa.: Katie Huet

Waterford, Calif.: Cecil Fager, Lucile Jackson

Welty, Smithsburg, Md.: Robert Engle, Sylvia Engle, Charles Newcomer, Cathy Newcomer, Steven Burdette, Kathy Burdette, Rusty Burdette, Missy Burdette

West Goshen, Goshen, Ind.: LaVonne Eiler-King, Melisa Holley

West Milton, Ohio: Angie Winterbotham, Paul DeAngulo, Philip DeAngulo, Steve Hughes, Rachelle Hughes, Otha Schumpert, Sandra Schumpert, Jennifer Schumpert, Bret Schumpert, Jacob Schumpert

Winter Park, Fla.: Bob Brubaker, Jan Brubaker, Frank DuChaine, Tom DuChaine, Bill Koch, Donna Koch, Rosemary Hansen, Tammi Eubank

Wedding anniversaries

Best, Arlie and Rosie, Summerfield, Fla., 60

Brown, Maurice and Jane P., Glen Arm, Md., 50

DeBey, Carl and Margaret, Garden City, Kan., 55

Engle, Kenneth and Ruth, Purgitsville, W.Va., 55

Flory, Laurell and Alvina,

Fairborn, Ohio, 50

Garst, Raymond and Miriam, Troy, Ohio, 55

Garvey, Jim and Rosemary, Cerro Gordo, Ill., 50

Hauger, Ralph and Ann, La Verne, Calif., 60

Kissingar, Warren and Jean, Hyattsville, Md., 50

Meek, Warren and June, Mechanicsburg, Pa., 60

Metzler, David and Doris, Bridgewater, Va., 50

Meyers, Harry and Ruth, Norton, Kan., 70

Noll, Edwin and Barbara, Pleasant Hill, Ohio, 50

Ream, Alvin and Mary, Silver Spring, Md., 60

Renner, Ivan and Ruby, Pleasant Hill, Ohio, 50

Scarff, Robert and Ellen, Troy, Ohio, 50

Sciotti, A.J. and Darlyne, Windber, Pa., 65

Smith, Fletcher and Theora, Loganton, Pa., 60

Spittler, Dale and Esther, Troy, Ohio, 50

Ziegler, Earl K. and Vivian, Lancaster, Pa., 50

Deaths

Armentrout, Blanche Marie, 77, Keezletown, Va., June 14

Ausherman, Carroll Sr., 90, Jefferson, Md., July 20

Barger, Lucy Irene, 87, Maysville, W.Va., June 24

Bealor, Donald, 55, Dayton, Ohio, July 29

Beery, Fay, 84, Oregon, Ill., Aug. 25

Brallicer, Hazel Rouse, 86, Rogersville, Mo., Aug. 16

Brubaker Leo L., 84, Prairie City, Iowa, Aug. 10

Christenson, Paul, 50, Kingsley, Iowa, Nov. 18, 2000

Cline, Charles David, 89, Harrisonburg, Va., June 30

Coffelt, Katherine May, 84, Wakemans Grove, Va., July 1

Combs, Vada Elaine, 76, Harrisonburg, Va., July 19

Cook, Fred James, 76, Edinburg, Va., July 21

Creech, Dennis, 47, West Milton, Ohio, Dec. 30

Creviston, Edward, 80, Lovington, Ill., Aug. 5

Crowe, Eddie, 92, Brookville, Ohio, Aug. 27

Davis, Charles Foster, 27, Aurora, Colo., Aug. 7

Dawson, Randolph Herbert, Jr., 52, Bridgewater, Va., June 22

Delawder, Blanche C. Whetzel, 82, Moorefield, W.Va., July 5

Dibert, Katharyn, 84, Everett, Pa., Sept. 4

Diehl, Boyd, 85, Martinsburg, Pa., July 21

Dietz, Elsie, 95, Harper Woods, Mich., Aug. 13

Dohner, Blanche, 97, Delphi, Ind., July 5

Ebersole, Mary, 92, Deland, Fla., Aug. 8

Ellis, David, 52, Rice's Landing, Pa., June 14

Erbaugh, Ruthanna, 72, West

Alexandria, Ohio, Sept. 2

Fike, Paul S., Jr., 68, Uniontown, Pa., Aug. 4

Flinn, Aletha M., 77, Moorefield, W.Va., July 2

Funkhouser, William (Billy), 84, Moorefield, W.Va., April 26

Garber, Paul Wilson, 87, Waynesboro, Va., July 16

Green, Verla M., 84, College Park, Md., May 28

Haldeman, Ruth, 85, Mannheim, Pa., Sept. 13

Hartman, Mable Marie, 68, Franklin, W.Va., June 16

Helfrecht, Russell, 81, Fruitland, Idaho, Sept. 3

Hensley, Berniece Biller, 70, Harrisonburg, Va., July 21

Hildebrand, Raymond, Jr., 78, Frederick, Md., Aug. 8

Hinggardner, Ethel Mathias, 81, Mathias, W.Va., July 6

Hinkle, Bonnie, 67, Middletown, Md., Sept. 19

Hostetter, Matthew A., 21, Dalton, Ohio, Sept. 6

Hurst, Audrey, 81, Pekin, Ill., July 22

Johnson, Floyd Samuel, Sr., 76, New Hope, Va., July 1

Kaetzel, Sterling Dorsey, 83, Peoria, Ill., July 3

Kested Charles, 94, Dixon, Ill., Aug. 21

Kinney, Beatrice, 96, Florida, Fla., Feb. 7

Leiter, F. Lorraine, 79, Waynesboro, Pa., Aug. 27

Lineweaver, Albert Lester, Jr., 59, Stephens City, Va., June 16

Long, Olive Susanna Ora, 87, Middletown, Md., July 16

Loomis, Elma Emswiler, 83, Roanoke, Va., Aug. 5

Martirosov, Michael Suren, 23, Harrisonburg, Va., Aug. 14

Marx, Kenneth, 59, Frederick, Md., June 5

May, Vaughn, 65, Breezewood, Pa., Sept. 5

McAninch, Scott A., 37, Uniontown, Pa., Sept. 22

McDowell, Charles W., 81, Mount Storm, W.Va., July 23

McKee, Verda, 80, West Milton, Ohio, Aug. 17, 2000

McKimmy, Merle L., 71, Beaverton, Mich., Aug. 25

Merrifield, Bonnie, 58, Glendale, Ariz., July 17

Miller, Loren, 99, Sebring, Fla., Aug. 17

Minish, Frances Williard, 77, Kernersville, N.C., Aug. 2

Mongold, Wanda M., 70, Timberville, Va., June 28

Myers, Carrie B., 92, New Paris, Ind., July 26

Neher, Iris Elaine, 56, Paola, Kan., Jan. 6

Noll, Geraldine, 89, West Milton, Ohio, Feb. 4

Potter, Susan, 50, Knoxville, Md., July 22

Propst, Lester B., Sr., 85, Moyers, W.Va., June 22

Prugh, Lela, 95, Vandalia, Ohio, June 4

Puffenbarger, Clyde Robert, 86, Headwaters, Va., July 22

Reynard, Elizabeth Elaine Scott, 78, Woodstock, Va.,

Aug. 9

Rose, Rosemary, 78, Canton, Ill., Feb. 17

Schildknecht, James, 67, New Carlisle, Ohio, July 4

Schlossnagle, Nellie Lurene, 97, Bridgewater, Va., July 12

Seay, John William, 61, Hinton, Va., July 23

Sexton, Clifford, 87, Florida, Fla., Feb. 14

Shafer, Steven, 49, Frederick, Md., May 25

Shifflett, Mary Bell, 91, Dayton, Va., June 27

Simmons, Clara Esther Bodkin, 84, Staunton, Va., Aug. 3

Simon, Edmund Grant, 81, Fort Seybert, W.Va., July 23

Smith, Robert Fulton, 77, Grottoes, Va., July 8

Smith, Ruth Gertrude, 80, Luray, Va., July 27

Smith, Vincent Moyer, 72, Broadway, Va., July 15

Snyder, Myrtle Lambert, 88, Harrisonburg, Va., June 17

Sollenberger, Joyce, 39, Curryville, Pa., Aug. 22

Soria-Hernandez, Angelica Charles, at birth, Castle Rock, Colo., July 8

Soria-Hernandez, Cristina Lynne, at birth, Castle Rock, Colo., July 8

Stanley, Larry Linden, Jr., 24, New Hope, Va., June 30

Sturgeon, Hazel, 90, Uniontown, Pa., Sept. 15

Townsend, Elizabeth Sarah Hartman, 86, Kalamazoo, Mich., Aug. 25

Unruh, Sara, 70, Cedar Falls, Iowa, Aug. 21

Welty, Patsy W., 71, New Paris, Ind., July 31

Wolfe, June, 83, Glen Burnie, Md., Sept. 7

Wratchford, Mary Lucy Wilson, 96, Moorefield, W.Va., July 27

Yoder, Kaye, 84, McPherson, Kan., Sept. 7

Licensings

Stover, William Jesse, West York, York, Pa., Aug. 26

Strawser, Deborah, Maple Spring, Eglon, W.Va., July 29

Pastoral Placements

Edwards, Gary Wayne, from pastor, Mount Union, Bent Mountain, Va., to pastor, Bassett, Va., Sept. 1

Moon, Samuel G., from pastor, Asher Glade, Friendsville, Md., to pastor, Brookside, Aurora, W.Va., Aug. 1

Stevens, Glenn Douglas, from manager, Camp Bethel, Finncastle, Va., to pastor, Blue Ridge, Va., Sept. 1

Walters, Benjamin Clark, minister in training, Cincinnati, Ohio, Sept. 17

Worline, James, from pastor, Red Hill, Roanoke, Va., to pastor, Copper Hill, Va., Sept. 1



In search of new ideas

As we finished the October MESSENGER the US was being attacked. As November goes to press, the US is attacking. In this issue we have concentrated on the church's reaction to the violence. In the future we plan to report on the church's action. What will the Church of the Brethren do in the face of the current situation? That part of the story is not yet written.

The search is on for new ideas. Commentators have quoted Abraham Lincoln, who was involved in a similar search when he addressed Congress on Dec. 1, 1862: "The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country." Historians are still arguing over how much Lincoln thought or acted anew, but his words can still remind us to listen carefully for God's voice in fresh thoughts.

Sometimes old thoughts become fresh in a new situation. The 1935 Annual Conference "Restatement concerning war and peace" rings true in its clarity and simplicity: "We believe that all war is sin; that it is wrong for Christians to support or to engage in it; and that war is incompatible with the spirit, example, and teachings of Jesus. We believe that war is not inevitable. Those beliefs are not based upon a peculiar peace doctrine of our own; they are from our application of Christian standards to all human relations, whether individual, group, class, or national. To settle conflicts in any of these relationships by war is not efficient, not constructive, not permanent, and certainly not Christian. We believe that nonviolence, motivated by goodwill, is more powerful than the sword, making possible the survival of both parties, while warfare insures the ultimate destruction of both. War is a far greater calamity to victor and vanquished alike, than would be the hazards incidental to a renunciation of war by a nation and the settlement of all their disputes by peaceful means."

Though it is not known for timeliness, the journal *Brethren Life and Thought* carries in its current edition some of the best reading for Brethren concerned about the current situation. In his article "Our Conscience is Bound," historian Jeff Bach of Bethany Theological Seminary traces the history of the Brethren peace witness from Alexander Mack to the present. It is inspiring to

read again of the witness of Christopher Sauer II, who in 1778 was arrested and had his printing press seized because he refused to fight the British. There are as well stories of courageous Brethren pacifism from the Civil War and from all the US wars of the 20th century.

But peace has never been easy. As interesting as the stories of heroic peace witness are Bach's accounts of all the backsliding and wavering from the church's teachings during all the wars. Today's patriotic fervor is not so rare. For various reasons, the Brethren peace witness broke down during World War I and reached new lows during World War II. "The Brethren no longer had a church that expected its members to act on its rhetoric," Bach writes. Still, a significant minority continued to act on the belief that following Jesus meant not fighting. Those who believed in active non-violence rather than war brought about the formation of Civilian Public Service, and later Brethren Volunteer Service, Heifer Project, and the Christian Rural Overseas Program (CROP).

Would we recognize a fresh idea if we saw one? John Paul Lederach, a professor in conflict resolution at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., has laid out an intriguing approach in an essay he calls "The Challenge of Terror." He asks Americans to seek to understand the root of the anger directed against the US, and to understand the nature of the organization that perpetrated the Sept. 11 violence. "We should avoid doing what they expect. What they expect from us is the lashing out of the giant against the weak, the many against the few," he writes. "What we need to destroy is their myth, not their people."

Lederach also challenges Americans to apply the power of simplicity to terrorism: "From the standpoint of the perpetrators, the effectiveness of their actions was in finding simple ways to use the system to undo it. I believe our greatest task is to find equally creative and simple tools on the other side."

Each generation of the church must revalidate its peace witness. From where in the church will fresh thinking come during this war? Who will preach Jesus in a way that opens the hearts of Americans under the spell of nationalism and seeking revenge? What congregation will find simple, creative ways to begin to heal the world? What group or organization will drop its business-as-usual attitude to galvanize the Brethren behind peace? Who will lead?—FLETCHER FARRAR

"From where in the church will fresh thinking come during this war? Who will preach Jesus in a way that opens the hearts of Americans under the spell of nationalism and seeking revenge?"

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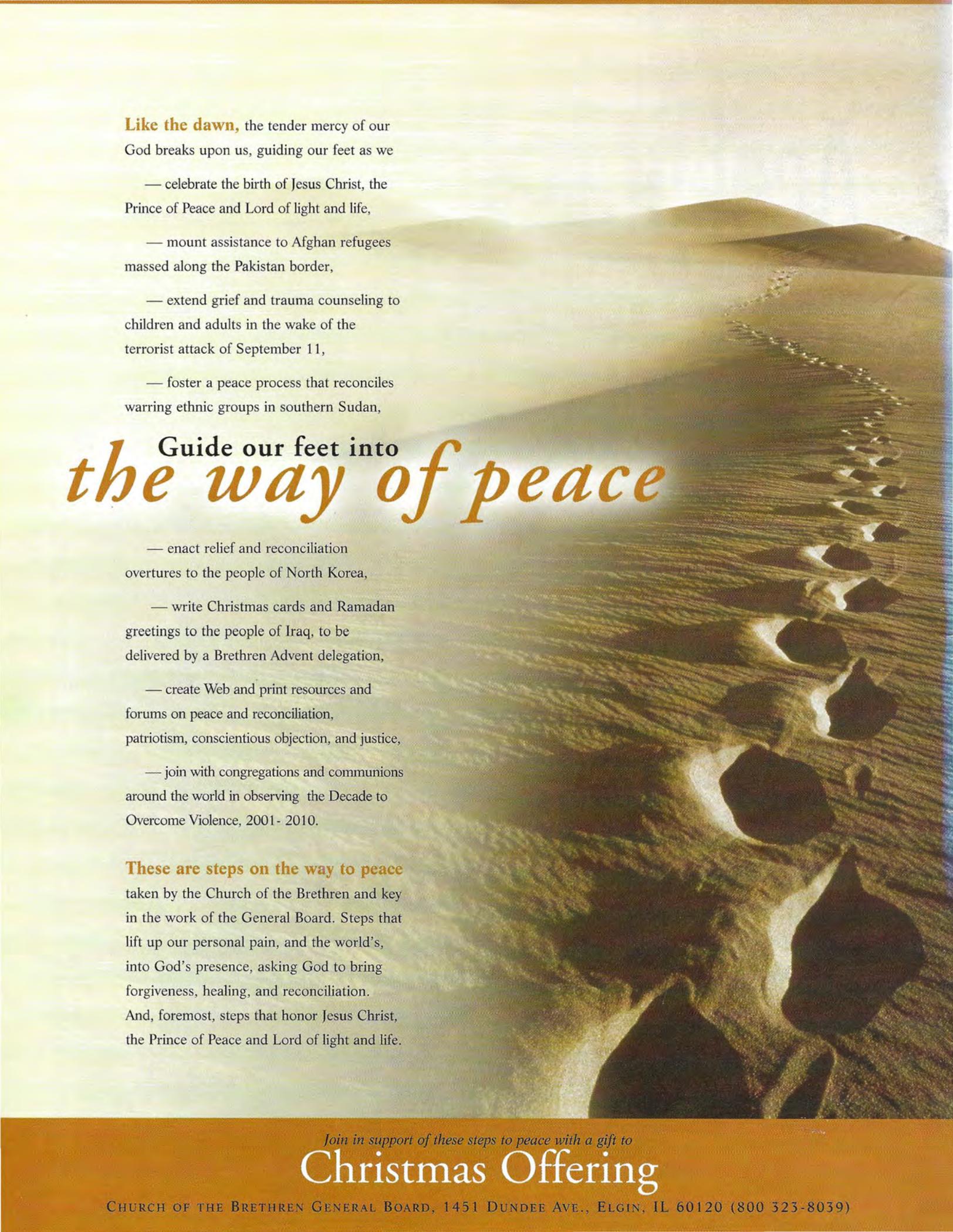
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Like the dawn, the tender mercy of our God breaks upon us, guiding our feet as we

— celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace and Lord of light and life,

— mount assistance to Afghan refugees massed along the Pakistan border,

— extend grief and trauma counseling to children and adults in the wake of the terrorist attack of September 11,

— foster a peace process that reconciles warring ethnic groups in southern Sudan,

Guide our feet into *the way of peace*

— enact relief and reconciliation overtures to the people of North Korea,

— write Christmas cards and Ramadan greetings to the people of Iraq, to be delivered by a Brethren Advent delegation,

— create Web and print resources and forums on peace and reconciliation, patriotism, conscientious objection, and justice,

— join with congregations and communions around the world in observing the Decade to Overcome Violence, 2001- 2010.

These are steps on the way to peace

taken by the Church of the Brethren and key in the work of the General Board. Steps that lift up our personal pain, and the world's, into God's presence, asking God to bring forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation. And, foremost, steps that honor Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace and Lord of light and life.

Join in support of these steps to peace with a gift to

Christmas Offering

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