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years of

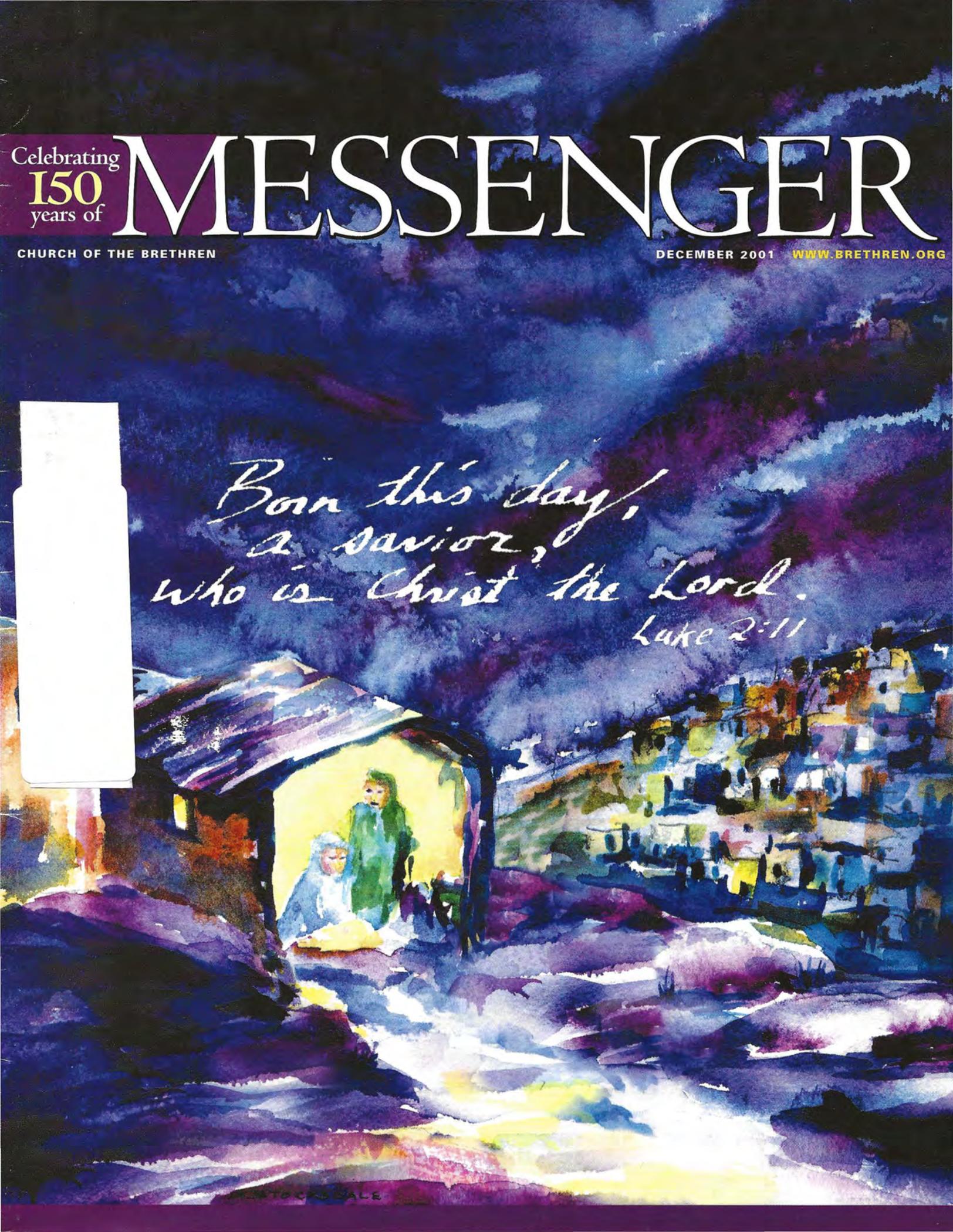
MESSENGER

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

DECEMBER 2001 WWW.BRETHREN.ORG



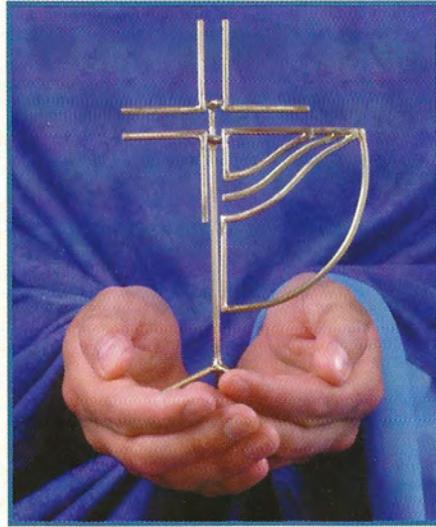
*Born this day,
a savior,
who is Christ the Lord.
Luke 2:11*



WENTWORTH & SONS

*And the Word became
flesh and lived among us...
full of grace and truth.*

— JOHN 1:14



OUR PRAYER FOR YOU THIS CHRISTMAS

- ... is that in hearing Jesus' story anew you embrace
"the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,"
- ... that you tell the story to others at home and afar—
a living witness for Christ in the world,
- ... that in times of terror and fear you keep alive
the vision of peace of the Prince of Peace,
- ... and that the Word engage and embolden you
as an instrument of grace and truth.

Celebrating
150
years of

MESSENGER

Editor: Fletcher Farrar Publisher: Wendy McFadden News: Walt Wiltschek Advertising: Russ Matteson Subscriptions: Verneda Cole Design: Cedar House Group



ONTHECOVER

This month's cover is a watercolor by Don Stocksdale of Union City, Ind. For more than 50 years, he was an active part of the Pleasant Valley congregation, in rural western Ohio. He is well-known regionally for his paintings of Midwest landscapes. This Mideast landscape, however, was not too much of a stretch for him. The painting illustrates the truly uncommon event of the light of the world piercing through the fairly common circumstances of our lives.

DEPARTMENTS

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10 Enduring peace

As Brethren seek ways of faithfulness in the wake of Sept. 11 attacks and retaliation, they move from reaction to action. Brethren Witness director David Radcliff outlines ways to pursue God's justice and peace. Included are inspiring stories of peaceful actions some churches have taken.

18 Christmas in Baghdad

Mel Lehman, who plans to lead a Church of the Brethren delegation to Iraq this month, tells of the suffering he saw on an earlier trip there, and the disturbing Christmas tree he came upon.

20 Prophetic preaching

"If the pastoral and prophetic ministry of Jesus Christ is to form the basis for our practice of ministry, then to be pastoral is also to be prophetic," writes Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm of Bethany Theological Seminary. Here are suggestions to make prophetic preaching effective.

22 Money

Kenneth L. Gible calls money "the most critical spiritual issue." Jesus addressed the issue of money and wealth more than any other single subject. As wealthy Christians, we have much to learn.

25 2001 annual index

A helpful listing of the authors, congregations, names of people, and subjects covered in MESSENGER this year.



FROM THE PUBLISHER

Though anointing in the Church of the Brethren is probably practiced most frequently in hospital rooms and homes, occasionally it is offered to the entire congregation in the midst of a Sunday worship service—as it was recently in my congregation.

When people are waiting for the oil of anointing, they look vulnerable. Fears and burdens are visible in their faces. They bring their whole selves—physical, emotional, spiritual. Even in a suburban, middle-class sanctuary, the lines of people moving forward seem like a microcosm of the world, a world of refugees who have suffered upheaval and the loss of the familiar. It's a world lined up to wait for the blessing of God, for the touch of grace, for the word of hope.

It is into that world that God sent a sign of gentleness. When the people expected a mighty army that would overcome evil, God sent a baby who would surprise us with love. Two thousand years later, God still sends us the Christ child. "In this waiting season of Advent, we are all Mary, receiving the unexpected gift of grace, unasked for, into our individual lives" (Isabel Anders, *Awaiting the Child*).

We are all Mary. Being pregnant is a miraculous experience, but it's also uncomfortable. You are stretched. Your body is taken over by a foreigner. You lose control of your life. But if you decide to say, "Let it be with me according to your will," you will be filled with the gift of grace and it will grow inside you—until finally it is born and is there for all the world to see. "O holy Child of Bethlehem . . . be born in us today!"

Today's world is radically different from the world into which Jesus was born. But back then people were sick and alone and afraid, too. Perhaps responding to that need with the vulnerability of an infant seemed unlikely—even irrational. But so does loving your enemy. So does being Mary. "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

*This is the irrational season
When love blooms bright and wild.
Had Mary been filled with reason
There'd have been no room for the child.*

—Madeleine L'Engle, *The Irrational Season*

We join the rest of the world's needy in awaiting God's touch. May others see that we are great with child.

Wendy McFadden

How to reach us

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My Alaska adventure with sisters in faith

In early September I traveled to Alaska to visit several faithful supporters of General Board ministries. As is always the case, I wished for more time to learn the stories and faith of these gracious donors—residents of the “last frontier.”

One such pair, Monica Francis Messick (4 feet 8 inches tall, 95 years old, recovering from a broken hip, articulate and inquiring) and her daughter Bonnie Smith, a recently retired registered nurse, concluded our visit with an open-ended invitation to make their home my base whenever I wanted to return “for a better look at Alaska.”

As I drove away to rendezvous with my daughter, Miriam, for a three-day whirlwind tour of the Anchorage/Denali area, I sensed I would see Bonnie and Monica again.

Three days later, very early on Sept. 11, Miriam and I were awakened by the telephone and the terrible news. We were to fly home that day, but like many others, we would not be traveling. I telephoned Monica and Bonnie, and asked if they would be willing to see us sooner, rather than later! Without hesitation, they opened their home to us.

And so, four sisters in faith, ages 23 to

95, began a time of sharing and caring that will never be forgotten. As Monica sat quietly knitting her 800th pair of gift mittens for the senior center, we watched news reports and discussed our Brethren call to be peacemakers, wept at memorials, discussed death and dying. We shared more tears and offered shoulders as Monica and Bonnie spoke of mourning a brother and son who died unexpectedly two months earlier. Daily, we broke bread together, laughing over tales of child-rearing, gardening escapades, and college days.

One day Bonnie packed us a lunch and insisted we take her van to see the Kenai Peninsula. In three days we had become family.

When we departed their home on Sept. 15, Monica sat under an afghan, still knitting warmth for others, and said, “I hope I never see you again!” Then with a chuckle, “Well, I mean, not under these circumstances.” We hugged each other one last time.

On the morning of Oct. 10, Bonnie called to let us know that the previous evening Monica Frantz Messick died quickly and peacefully. Bonnie held her, told her she loved her, assuring her that she would soon be with God, “Pop,” and Jim. Monica smiled, and this gracious, giving saint of the church left our world. I said a silent prayer of thanks for this



Monica Messick, seated, and her daughter, **Bonnie Smith**.

wonderful woman and wiped away tears. No, I will not see her again “under these circumstances,” but my faith tells me we will meet again. —**Carol Bowman**

Carol Bowman, of Wenatchee, Wash., is a financial resource counselor for the funding office of the Church of the Brethren General Board.

Dranesville’s service of history and peace

The Dranesville Church of the Brethren, Herndon, Va., discovered it was on the site of a Civil War battlefield. Now the congregation uses history to hold up the church’s peace position to the community.

On Dec. 20, 1861, 10,000 Union and Confederate forces clashed at an accidental meeting at Dranesville while both sides were foraging for hay. The short, sharp battle left 56 men dead and many more wounded. Union artillery stood where the church’s parking lot is now.

Church members researched the battle, collecting the names of the dead and the letters the survivors wrote home after the battle. For many, it was their first battle of the war.

Each year on the Sunday closest to the battle’s anniversary, the congregation extinguishes a candle as each man’s name is called out, symbolizing the loss and devastation that war brings. At the end of the service, as the congregation sits in the dark, a single light, symbolizing the light of salvation, is lit.

The Dranesville peace service, now in its seventh year, has become a Washington-area tradition. This year’s service is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Dec. 23. For more information, call the church office at 703-430-7872. —**John Waggoner**



Brethren Volunteer Service Unit 245, sponsored by the Brethren Revival Fellowship, received orientation training Aug. 19-29 at Roxbury Holiness Camp, Roxbury, Pa. The volunteers and their work assignments are, top row: Martha Copenhaver (Good Shepherd Food Bank, Lewiston, Maine), Jesse Copenhaver (Good Shepherd Food Bank), unit leader Lowell Witmer. Bottom row: Tawnya Rotz (Good Shepherd Food Bank), Petrevian Toledo (Good Shepherd Food Bank), Valerie Nell (Lewiston Area Mission School), and unit leader Clara Witmer.

Gene Yeazell worships in stained glass

Creating things beautiful and unique became a passion for Gene Yeazell when he began doing stained glass work with two friends more than 12 years ago. Among the various pieces he has made are a three-panel room divider, a Hispanic depiction of Christ that adorns a chapel window at Beth-El Farmworker Mission in Wimauma, Fla., and a 1,200-piece work entitled *Melody's Bouquet*, made during the years of his daughter Melody's illness.

He also enjoys making miniature buildings, even designing and replicating the Kramer Dining Center located on the campus of Camp Ithiel. The piece was auctioned at a fund-raising event in Atlantic Southeast District and the proceeds used to complete the dining center.

One morning earlier this year, after his daughter's engagement was announced, he awoke with images running through his brain that led to his doing a piece entitled "One In The Spirit." It was the first multi-dimensional piece he made, and is not typical of stained glass work. Each layer of glass represents various Christian symbols.

An invitation came from the Congregational Life Team committee to create a piece for their Annual Conference booth. "Hearts Aflame" represents the Holy Spirit bringing life to God's children large and small.

Gene, a retired hospital and health services administrator, lives with his wife, Carol, in Orlando, Fla. They are members of the New Covenant Church of the Brethren. —Carol L. Yeazell

Carol L. Yeazell is staff with Congregational Life, Area 3 and liaison with the Hispanic churches in the U.S. and Puerto Rico.



Gene Yeazell.



Becky Baile Crouse

Cross-cultural ministry: *Verel Montauban, pastor of the First Haitian Church of the Brethren in Brooklyn, N.Y., leads an August workshop in the Dominican Republic on the Creole language, spoken by Haitians. Economic refugees from Haiti make up a large minority group in the Dominican Republic, where the Church of the Brethren has reached out to help them.*

Remembered

Former Bethany Theological Seminary president **Paul Robinson** died Oct. 26 in Sebring, Fla. A memorial service was held at the Sebring Church of the Brethren.

Robinson, 87, was president of the denomination's seminary from 1953 to 1975 while it was located in Illinois. He also served as a pastor in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Indiana, and was moderator of Annual Conference 1955-1956.

He was chairman of the denomination's Foreign Missions Commission 1954-1962 and was a 10-year member of the General Board executive committee. A graduate of Juniata College, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Lutheran Seminary of Philadelphia, he lectured and

traveled widely and wrote for numerous publications.

Raymond Peters, former general secretary, died Nov. 2 at Timbercrest in North Manchester, Ind., at age 95.

Peters was hired by the denomination in 1940 as youth director. He carried a decisive role in welding the several previous boards and staffs into a single General Brotherhood Board, and became the first general secretary in 1947, serving until 1952.

In 1955 he was elected to the General Board, serving on the Ministry and Home Missions Commission. In 1959 he was chair of the General Board. He served another term on the General Board 1961-1965, and was chair of the Brethren Service Commission during that time. From 1966 to 1967 he took a leave of absence from the board to

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (February 8-28)

EUROPE AND MORE

EUROPEAN HERITAGE TOUR (July 12-29)

IRELAND (September 20 - October 1)

JORDAN, ISRAEL, VIENNA and BUDAPEST (February 15-28)

SPECTACULAR SCANDINAVIA and its FJORDS

(June 17 - July 1)

SWISS GLACIER EXPRESS (August 12-26)

SWISS-VOLHYNIAN MENNONITE HERITAGE TOUR

(September 18 - October 3)

FAR EAST

VIETNAM (November 6-24)

NORTH AMERICA

ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 19 - July 1)

EASTERN CANADA (August 2-12)

HAWAII CRUISE TOUR (February 14-24)

MAJESTIC CANADIAN ROCKIES (July 15-28)

SERVICE TOURS

SERVICE TOUR in SUNNY JAMAICA (January 25 - February 3)

SERVICE TOUR TO ISRAEL/PALESTINE

(NAZARETH VILLAGE) (April 5-18)

SOUTH AMERICA

PARAGUAY, BOLIVIA and PERU (April 6-22)

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serve as moderator for Annual Conference. He then returned to serve on the General Board from 1967 to 1972.

E. Paul Weaver, 89, a former missionary to Nigeria and longtime leader in the denomination, died Oct. 14 in Everett, Pa.

Weaver served in Nigeria from December 1939 through April 1944 and maintained a strong interest in mission work. He had also served as pastor of the Snake Spring Valley and Cherry Lane congregations and as a district executive in Indiana, and was active ecumenically.

Berdene M. Walmer, 32, of Spring Grove, Pa., died Aug. 9, after more than eight years of dealing with a chordoma brain tumor. A daughter of Harold and Priscilla Martin of Lititz, Pa., she was a member of Pleasant Hill Church of the Brethren, Spring Grove. She had seven radical surgeries during her illness and was fed through a stomach tube. She enjoyed ministering to others by writing letters of encouragement. During April this year she wrote 50 letters to others who were suffering in various ways.

John Kudzar, former chairman of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria), died Oct. 7 while walking from his home to church in Gombi, Adamawa State. The chairman post, later renamed "president," is the top position in the EYN.

Kudzar was retired and had been serving in an honorary capacity as spiritual advisor to current EYN president Toma Ragnjiya and other church leaders. He had visited Annual Conference and participated in the Nigeria-US pastoral exchange program in 1991, serving in the Black Rock congregation, Glenville, Pa.

His son-in-law, Mbode Ndirm-bita, just began study in August at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind.

CAREGIVING IS



"Caregiving is excellent and I hope ABC continues with the same terrific content and design. Thumbs up!"

— R. Kurt Borgmann, pastor
Oakton Church of the Brethren, Vienna, Va.

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BRETHRENSPEAK

"Thank you for helping those kids who needed someplace to stay."

—elementary school student writing a note of appreciation to the Church of the Brethren Disaster Child Care team volunteers.

ABC board adopts vision statement

The Association of Brethren Caregivers board voted unanimously at its Sept. 28-29 meeting in Elgin, Ill., to adopt a new vision statement recommended by the executive committee:

"The Association of Brethren Caregivers extends the healing touch of Jesus by affirming, empowering, and equipping persons and groups within the Church of the Brethren to seek and secure the well-being of all people."

The vision statement continues the Vision and Planning Process, a long-range process adopted by the board at its meeting last spring. The final

step in the process is to develop a strategic plan, which will be prepared by ABC staff.

Also during the meetings, the board recognized the contributions of chair Marilyn Lerch, whose term ends Dec. 31. ABC's chair-elect, Bentley Peters of Elgin, Ill., will become the new board chair effective Jan. 1. Sue Moore of Roanoke, Va., was called by the board to serve as the new chair-elect.

The board called Diane Harden to fill the remainder of Moore's unexpired term on the board. It also called Wally Landes for a first board term and Connie Burk Davis for a second term. Members of the ABC ministry group steering committees elected Allegra Hess to a first term.

In other business, the board:

- Responded to the recommendation by the 2000 Annual Conference "Caring for the Poor" paper, which encourages the development of anti-racism training for agency staff, by asking board member Heidi Loomis to develop an orientation module in cultural competency for ABC staff and board. Loomis will present results of her work in March.

- Received the 2002 operating budget of \$685,350, which contained a deficit of \$35,530. The board instructed ABC staff to present a revised budget to the financial committee and executive committee for consideration and adoption before the end of the year.

General Board examines mission, vision, evangelism

Centered on the theme "Living stones...built into a spiritual house," from I Peter 2, the Church of the Brethren General Board gathered in Elgin, Ill., Oct. 20-23 for its fall meetings.

The meetings began the work of building a comprehensive plan for the General Board, a process expected to continue for 18 months. Led by chair Don Parker, board members also spent time considering issues of peace and justice, evangelism, relations with groups in India, and finances.

Mennonite consultant Dennis Koehn guided the planning process, which began with board members and staff examining the organization's vision statement, mission statement, and core values.

The consensus reached was to develop all three anew with "fresh energy." That work will continue at the March 2002 meetings.

In other activity, the board:

- Heard reports on the General Board's many responses in the wake of Sept. 11 through both "direct care" and "denominational voice." Board members then passed "A resolution on the events and aftermath of September 11, 2001." A copy of the resolution, along with other resources and materials, has been

mailed to every congregation.

- Approved a total budget of \$9.3 million for 2002, including both the General Ministries Fund and the net income of self-funding programs.

- Took part in a panel discussion led by Global Mission Partnerships director Merv Keeney, looking at the complex issues involved in relations between the Church of North India (CNI), Brethren groups that have separated from CNI and now seek recognition, and the US church. Board members agreed to continue examining the issues and the General Board's broader mission philosophy in March.

- Spent an evening considering the General Board's role in evangelism, following up on a query passed at the 2001 Annual Conference. A "two-track" approach of a staff committee and a Congregational Life Ministries-initiated focus group will eventually yield one report to be included in the 2002 Annual Conference booklet.

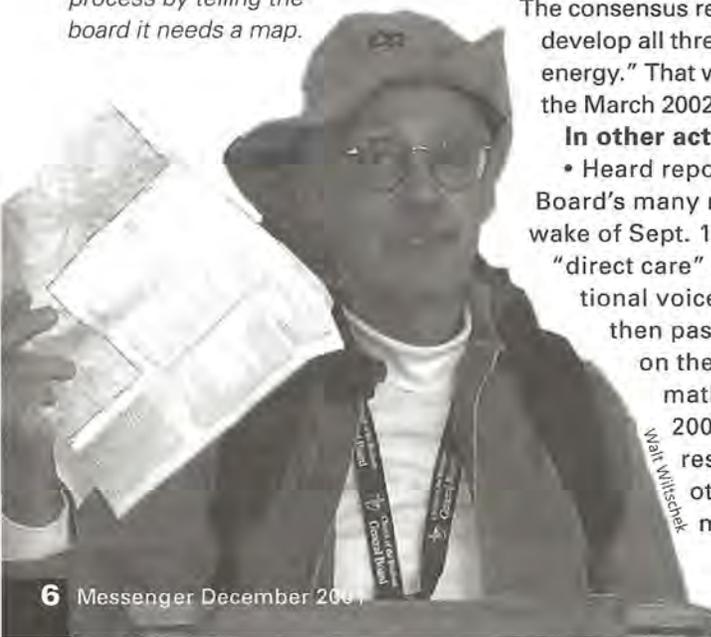
- Heard concerns over the rapidly increasing cost of medical insurance, received a summary of an effort to dialog with pastors throughout the denomination and strongly affirmed continuing such visits, and joined in a "kickoff" celebration for next summer's National Youth Conference.

- Celebrated tenure milestones of Elgin-based General Board staff at a building-wide reception. New Windsor, Md.-based staff were recognized earlier in the month at the Brethren Service Center.

- Experienced sharing with a number of official visitors from districts, the Cross-Cultural Ministry Team, Bethany Theological Seminary, other partner agencies, and the American Baptist Churches USA.

Avid backpacker Don Parker, chair of the General Board, uses an obvious analogy as he introduces the comprehensive planning process by telling the board it needs a map.

introduces the comprehensive planning process by telling the board it needs a map.



Register online for NYC beginning Jan. 1

The registration process for National Youth Conference 2002, now less than eight months away, will look a bit different than in the past. Previously, the registration process required individuals to fill out forms or "bubble sheets." This year, however, registration for NYC 2002 will take place online. Conference organizers hope it will make the process faster and easier.

Several resources are available to facilitate the implementation of the online process. A sample registration form is available at www.nyc2002.com/register.html. Guidelines for online registration have also been sent in the December "Source" mailing and posted on the website.

Beginning at midnight (EST) on Jan. 1, the registration page at www.nyc2002.com will become active, and youth and advisors will be able to register. A free NYC T-shirt will be given to everyone who has registered

on or before Feb. 15. Registration closes on April 1.

Jan. 1 also marks the deadline for entries for the youth speech contest. Details are available at www.nyc2002.com/speech.html. Two entrants will be chosen to speak at an NYC worship service.

For further information or to report difficulties with the registration form, call the General Board's Youth/Young Adult Ministry office at 800-323-8039, ext. 245, or e-mail nyc_gb@brethren.org.

WORLDWATCH

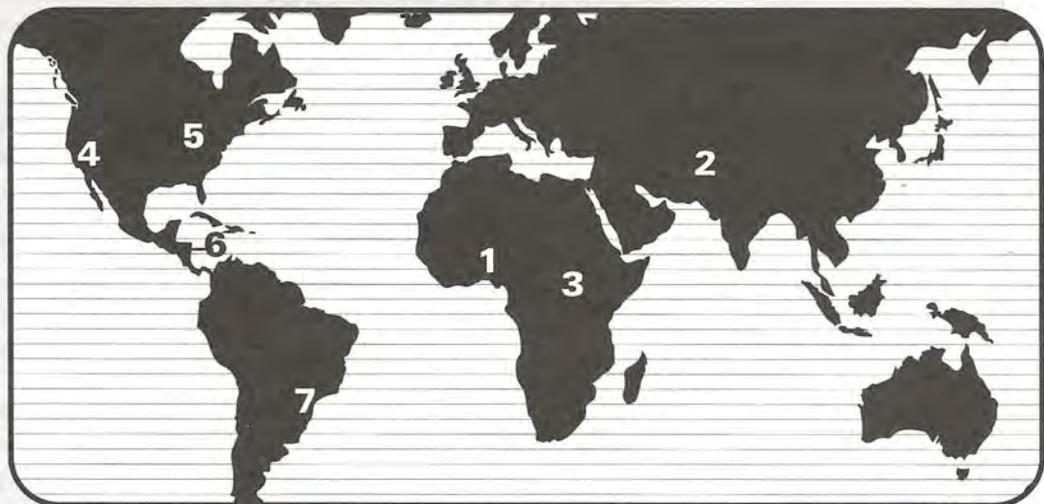
- 1. Kano, Nigeria.** Renewed violence between Christians and Muslims in the northern part of this African country occurred in mid-October, resulting in the destruction of an Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) school and the deaths of six church members.
- 2. Afghanistan.** Church World Service expanded its planned assistance program in the region to \$6.28 million, as large numbers of Afghan refugees are in need of food and shelter. The General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund and Global Food Crisis Fund have committed a combined \$100,000 toward the effort.
- 3. Sudan.** Brethren materials for this year's Peace with Justice Week in late October focused on the continuing strife between the nation's largely Muslim northern half and mainly Christian and tribal southern half. The decades-long war has resulted in thousands of deaths and a massive population of internally displaced people.
- 4. Pomona, Calif.** A grant from the General Board's Global Food Crisis Fund sent \$15,000 to the Pomona-

Inland Valley Council of Churches' programs for poor residents of that community. The funds help them provide food, shelter, counseling, and employment skills to 40,000 clients per year.

- 5. North Manchester, Ind.** The sixth Christian Peacemaker Congress was held at Joyfield Farm this fall, drawing about 130 people. The four-day event included worship, keynote speakers, a public "witness walk," and a tour of an organic farm. It was sponsored by Christian Peacemaker Teams.
- 6. Dominican Republic.** A workshop was held in the Creole

language for the first time, focusing on the Holy Spirit in the life of the church. Led by pastor Verel Montauban of the First Haitian Church of the Brethren in Brooklyn, N.Y., the event drew about 50 Dominican leaders. Three Brethren congregations in the Caribbean nation hold services in both Spanish and Creole.

- 7. Brazil.** Already, four house churches are meeting in the fledging new Church of the Brethren mission effort near São Paulo. The fellowships are meeting in the cities of Limeira, Indaiatuba, Jundiaí, and Campinas. Up to 20 people are attending each one.



UPCOMINGEVENTS

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

Dec. 9
Christmas
Offering Sunday

Dec. 10-21
Brethren Witness Faith
Expedition to Iraq

Jan. 7-17
Brethren Witness Faith
Expedition to Belize and
Guatemala

Jan. 9-18
Brethren Witness Faith
Expedition women's dele-
gation to Honduras

Jan. 18-25
Week of Prayer for
Christian Unity

Jan. 20-Feb. 8
Brethren Volunteer Ser-
vice Unit 247, Gotha, Fla.

Jan. 27-29
Emergency
Response/Service Min-
istries' District Disaster
Coordinators conference

Jan. 28-Feb. 7
Association of Brethren
Caregivers Older Adult
Workcamp to Puerto Rico



Chris Herlinger

To help Church World Service provide food relief for Afghan refugees, the General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund and Global Food Crisis Fund have committed a combined \$100,000.

Denominational responses continue in Sept. 11 aftermath

The Church of the Brethren's Disaster Child Care (DCC) volunteers continued a massive project in New York through the fall, with about 90 volunteers having served in Manhattan through October. They had given more than 8,000 volunteer efforts and made more than 1,600 child-care contacts at two family care centers.

DCC team members have also been training local volunteers to take over some of the caregiving work and assist in staffing the centers. It is a response of unprecedented scope for the program, administered by Church of the Brethren Emergency Response/Service Ministries. It has required DCC to "respond in unique and creative ways," according to DCC coordinator Roy Winter.

The online site at www.brethren.org/usresponse has been regularly updated with news

and resources related to the crisis, including those found at Brethren Press' "The Way of Peace" site and the "Seeking Peace" section of On Earth Peace. The General Board also sent out a packet of continuing response updates and resources to all congregations in late October.

General Board staff have also been involved with several live "webcasts" on www.FaithandValues.com, providing updates from the larger religious community and forums on pastoral care issues. More such broadcasts were planned through the end of the year.

Locally, many congregations and other Brethren groups have held events of prayer, witness, and fund-raising in the past few months. Some congregations, meanwhile, have experienced conflict over peace and patriotism issues; On Earth Peace has made conflict resolution consultants available in the various regions of the denomination to aid in such situations.

On Earth Peace board begins "Seeking Peace" emphasis

The On Earth Peace board of directors met Sept. 19-20 in North Manchester, Ind., with the news and sorrow of the Sept. 11 events still very fresh. Through prayer, discernment, and discussion, the decision was made to begin a major effort in peace education and witness "to encourage and equip the Church of the Brethren to witness in a new and living way to its peace testimony."

Called "Seeking Peace," the new emphasis covers a variety of resources. An online site has been established at www.brethren.org/oepa/seekingpeace.

The board continued to use "formal consensus" as its discussion and decision-making pattern, as initiated in the spring board meeting.

New officers for 2001-2002 were called: Bev Weaver, Anderson, Ind., chair; David Jehnsen, Galena, Ohio, vice chair; Lauree Hersch Meyer, Rushville, N.Y., secretary; Charles Kwon, Evanston, Ill., treasurer; and Ken Frantz, Fleming, Colo., executive committee at-large. Appreciation and gratitude were expressed to outgoing members Illana Naylor and Jan Kulp Long.

In other business, the board:

- Heard reports of program work in all areas, including the Decade to Overcome Violence, a long-term project in partnership with the General Board's Brethren Witness office.
- Reviewed progress on current goals in the organization's strategic plan.
- Adopted an organizational budget of \$338,000 for the 2001-2002 fiscal year, and a new salary structure for staff.
- Received a report of the performance review of the executive directors conducted by the executive committee, in which both the work of the directors and the co-director model were strongly affirmed.
- Received work-in-progress reports on a review of the purposes and use of the organization's endowment funds, a response to concerns regarding fairness in ministry decisions, and a comprehensive development plan.

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Personnel moves

Janis Pyle began Nov. 15 as coordinator for mission connections for the General Board's Global Mission Partnerships office in Elgin, Ill. The new position is designed to help strengthen member connection with and participation in denominational global mission efforts.

Pyle is a member of the Maxwell (Iowa) Church of the Brethren and has served on the Northern Plains District planning committee. She holds an undergraduate degree in home economics journalism from the University of Missouri-Columbia and is currently a graduate student in English at Iowa State University.

Emma Jean Woodard was called as associate district executive of Virlina District in October. She had served since Jan. 1, 2000, as interim associate district executive.

Her previous service includes interim pastorates at the Roanoke First, Troutville, and Cloverdale congregations and serving as administrative assistant at the Westminster (Md.) Church of the Brethren. She is a graduate of Bluefield College and Bowie State University.

Roger Crusier has announced his retirement after 25 years as executive director of Woodland Altars, the Church of the Brethren camp in Southern Ohio District. Crusier's retirement will take effect July 31.

Crusier, who worked in management and accounting before coming to Woodland Altars, has been taking ministry training courses and hopes to serve in interim ministry following his retirement.

Mark and Kim Eller of Southern Ohio District have been called to a new pastor/director of outdoor ministries role for Camp Placid in Southeastern District, fulfilling a new vision as the district retooled the position description with a greater focus on ministry. The Ellers began Oct. 22, succeeding previous camp managers James and Alina Smith.

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ENDURING

For real peace, Brethren are demanding justice.



David Radcliff

by David Radcliff

The events of Sept. 11 make us in the United States feel as though we have stepped over a threshold into a new world. But there is very little truly new about this world. It is just that realities already present but unobserved were thrust into our national consciousness.

On that unforgettable morning, we were shaken awake to the interconnectedness of our world.

We came to the sudden and unsettling realization that people living in an obscure nation halfway around the globe not only had it in for us, but had the wherewithal to deal us a direct blow. Others around the world were already well aware of the way people and institutions in distant places can have a profound and sometimes destructive impact on their lives. We have been less affected by such things, perhaps partly due to

the fact that some of the forces—military, political, and economic—that have so affected others have originated from our nation and its institutions.

We were startled to discover the depths of the anger some people have toward us. But those who travel from the US to other nations already knew that many people resented us. This wasn't merely jealousy over our military or economic preeminence, or the relentless spread of our merchandise and pop culture. It was based on their perception of us as interested only in ourselves and what was good for our nation and its economy.

Recently, our global neighbors have been put off by our unwillingness to join in global agreements concerning the environment, racial equality, space-based weapons, and a range of other matters. We have aligned ourselves with leaders in the Middle East and elsewhere who have served our strategic interests even as they ruled their own people harshly. This has fueled extremist hatred not present in that region half a century ago. Even US aid to other countries is often used to achieve political ends.

We have been taken aback to learn that our tremendous military advantage in the world still

PEACE

God's justice.

leaves us vulnerable to unconventional yet extremely destructive attacks. Christian voices have said for many years that true security in our world depends on much more than the latest and most potent weapons. Over the long haul, they have warned us, the only true guarantors of peace are biblical justice (equality of opportunity), assertive and courageous peacemaking, and respect for the rights of others.

And around the world there is a growing awareness that our planet is indeed rapidly dividing itself more starkly between the haves and the have-nots. This reality is undoubtedly part of the context for the anger of those disenchanted with the new world order. We might have anticipated this frustration had we been aware that the economic boom we have experienced over the past decade has not been widely shared. Indeed, this same period has been a bust for millions of the world's people living in the 90 countries where economies have worsened in that time.

Even if we have not been aware of this, the world's poor have been aware. Our affluence and influence are in the face of the world's poor on a daily basis in the form of adventure tours in their backyards, imported televi-

sion shows, and ubiquitous US fast food establishments. The one-third of the human family living in near-destitution cannot help but notice the disparity.

Perpetrators of acts of violence should be held accountable for their deeds. But if we want to be able to live without fear—a condition God wishes for all people—then we must work to ensure that all people have the chance to live as God intends. And we must do our part to see that nations, including our own, act more for the common good and less from pure self-interest.

Just as this new world is perhaps not as new as it first seems, neither will our response to it as Christians need to be newly developed. The things we have preached and taught, and to which Brethren have witnessed through history, will be needed more than ever in the wake of Sept. 11.

DO JUSTICE

This is a command as old as the prophets, but perhaps never more relevant than today. It is important to recognize that doing justice is not the same as acting charitably. Charitable acts are often needed, especially to assuage immediate needs in the wake of calamity. Justice, how-



David Radcliff

ever, is the pursuit of fundamental fairness in the ordering of society. It is to seek for everyone the opportunity to develop the gifts God has given them to achieve a full life.

Thus, sending blankets and emergency food to people in acute need is important in the short run. However, those who live in conditions of chronic inopportunity or face overwhelming structural obstacles toward their development and well-being will not be satisfied with these good deeds alone.

What does it mean to do justice in today's world? First, it means to be willing to look critically at the way the world is arranged, and then to ask how it got this way. If we come to the conclusion that God has so configured the world, with unseemly affluence for some and untenable poverty for others, then we can live more easily with this arrangement. If, however, we observe that economic structures have been put in place to assure poverty for some and abundance



Nils Carstensen-ACT

A memorable love feast with Afghan friends in Maryland

It was 3 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 7. Deacons at University Park Church of the Brethren, Hyattsville, Md., were arriving to ready the love feast for the evening. Talk was of reports heard en route about the first military strikes in Afghanistan. The news held particular poignancy for the people already working in the kitchen.

The agape meal they were preparing was composed of traditional Afghan recipes shared with them by Feroza Yari and her mother, Khaitima. Last March, the congregation, in partnership with a local church agency, sponsored the Yaris as refugees from Afghanistan. Since then, the two women have been living in a house next to the church. Feroza, 24, had brought the spices and helped to cook the meat and rice dishes for the love feast earlier.

On a table at the center of the circle of round tables around which members gathered that evening were photographs of family members and friends of the refugees. They were set amid beautiful handcrafted garments, leather items, and jewelry loaned by the Yaris to evoke images of the culture from which they've come.

In self-examination, feetwashing, meal, and communion, the congregation at University Park sought the power of Christ reconciling us to God and to each other. Members lifted up the body of Christ struggling with and celebrating its unity. And they remembered their connections with people of all faiths throughout the world, children of the one God. —Kim McDowell, pastor

for others, then we will need to work to inject morality into such structures—or seek to replace them.

Here are some ways to pursue justice:

- Support Brethren efforts to increase the opportunity for people around the world to become what God has created them to become. Think about how to move beyond charitable giving to sacrificial sharing of who we are and what we have (see listing at end of article for contact information for this and other areas).

- Get involved in the work of our Washington Office as it seeks to influence US government policy on things from debt forgiveness to foreign policy. Our government wields tremendous power on the world stage—most often in the service of our own national interests. Let our leaders know there is another point of view.

- Hold a spiritual renewal weekend focused on seeking justice.

- Challenge theological assumptions of those around you when these positions uncritically affirm the status quo or seem out of step with historic Brethren concerns. Help create a climate in which we can talk civilly about issues of justice in our Sunday school classes and from our pulpits.

BREAK DOWN THE DIVIDING WALLS

The Christian church has struggled since its beginnings with the difficulty of including outsiders. Yet nothing is more central to the gospel than welcoming all and accepting all as children of God. We have yet to overcome these challenges, often feeling fear and suspicion toward those of other ethnic, religious, or social backgrounds.

The Church of the Brethren has often refused to conform to the prevailing sentiments of society concerning those who are “differ-

ent.” Church members have stood alongside groups otherwise stigmatized by society, lending support and speaking out for equality. In today’s world, where differences in religious traditions or cultural expressions are front-page news, how can we work to increase understanding and promote acceptance?

Here are some ways to break down the walls:

- Sponsor a forum for your community on Christianity and Islam. Invite speakers from different religious perspectives to participate. Involve other Christian and/or Muslim groups in the planning and invite your neighbors to attend.
- Begin a relationship with a nearby Muslim faith community. Invite them over for a potluck and an evening of music. Make

every effort to respond when they reciprocate.

- Encourage youth or adults from your congregation to visit other countries or cultures on Brethren-sponsored learning and service trips.
- Seek opportunities to build relationships with those on the

other side of a conflict, especially as this can occur in people-to-people contact. While extremists of any stripe may not be open to such interaction, and though repressive governments actively seek to limit it, people around the world are remarkably similar and remarkably willing to respond in friendship. Support and become



Nancy Heishman, co-pastor at First Church of the Brethren, Harrisburg, Pa., welcomes the crowd at the peace gathering.

Sowing seeds in Pennsylvania

Brethren helped to organize a public peace witness on the steps of the state capitol in Harrisburg, Pa., on Oct. 7. Some 300 people attended “Sowing Seeds of Peace: Prayers and Petitions for Nonviolent Action,” a Christian witness in response to terrorism and to the US government’s retaliatory military strikes.

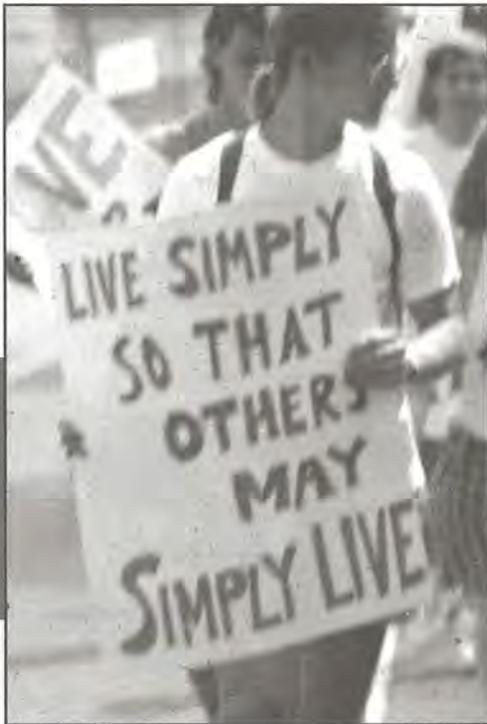
Through prayers, songs, and litanies, attendees grieved for the victims of the Sept. 11 violence, called on leaders to consider nonviolent alternatives to military action, and committed themselves to confronting violence through prayer and action. The service was organized by members of local Brethren, Mennonite, and Brethren in Christ churches, and attended by people from various denominations.

The timing of the event was sadly ironic, according to organizers, as it occurred on the same afternoon that news broke of US air strikes in Afghanistan.

“It is a lonely and difficult journey to maintain faithfulness to the way of Jesus in this time,” said Irv Heishman, co-pastor at First Church of the Brethren in Harrisburg and a member of the planning committee. “However, it was healing and comforting to be able to give witness to another way of living. At the witness, the prayers and fellowship with kindred spirits was a source of strength and encouragement.”

Also on the planning committee were Nancy Heishman, co-pastor at First Church; First Church member Valerie Weaver-Zercher; and Dale Brown, a member at the Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren. Ralph Detrick, co-pastor at Elizabethtown, also participated in the service.

“Sowing Seeds of Peace” raised \$1,600 for Afghan refugee assistance and grief counseling in New York City. In addition, over 220 people signed a letter calling on the government to consider nonviolent alternatives to military action. —Valerie Weaver-Zercher



David Radcliff

Peace takes guts in Indiana

The T-shirts carried a quotation from Franklin Delano Roosevelt that said, "The American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory." Emma Naragon, 12, of the Manchester Church of the Brethren, North Manchester, Ind., politely returned her own and several other cherry red shirts with flags and eagles stamped on them to school administrators.

A local businessman gave the patriotic shirts to every schoolchild in Wabash County as a response to the events of Sept. 11 in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. When the school administration urged all the children to wear their shirts on the same day in a show of patriotism, Emma, Adelyn (nine), and Thomas (six) Naragon, and several other Brethren children declined the opportunity to wear them because they believed the message of revenge was wrong.

The following day, they decided to return the shirts altogether to the school. Emma and four others from her sixth-grade class gathered up their shirts and the shirts of the younger children and took them to the school office.

Kathryn McElwee, eight, a Brethren girl at a neighboring school, returned her T-shirt, telling her teacher, "When I got home and talked with my parents about what the shirt meant, I decided I didn't want to wear it. I didn't like the idea of going to war." Kathryn was the only one in her class to refuse the gift. When she saw everyone else wearing a shirt, she said she felt a lot of pressure to wear it, but she held out.

Her older brother, Ben, 15, refused to accept a shirt in the first place, as did several other members of the Manchester youth group. Though pressure to wear the shirts was considerable, at least 10 children turned back the gift or declined to wear them for reasons of conscience.

A Christian Peacemaker Teams conference was convening on a farm nearby when they heard about the peace witness of the children. They provided an alternative T-shirt that said, "Peace Takes Guts." —Julie Garber

involved in efforts by our church to establish relations with groups or nations seen as adversaries.

OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD

Too often when we use the term "evil," we presume it resides only elsewhere. Jesus taught us that we are all on a continuum between goodness and evil behavior, and that neither pole is the exclusive domain of those on one side of an issue or a border.

How can evil be overcome? This is perhaps the most challenging question for Christian peacemakers. The fact that "evil

acts" take place in our world is the most frequently used justification for a violent response to the evil-doers. Christians who call for some way other than direct force to deal with such realities are accused of being naive or worse.

It's not that we dismiss evil; indeed, we are perhaps more aware of its insidious and destructive nature than others. We regularly observe in communities around the world firsthand the results of destructive acts and equally destructive policies, both of which inflict grievous injury on innocents. Sometimes these actions and policies have been implemented, ironically and tragically, in the name of stamping out evil.

And it's not that we don't want to rid the world of evil. It's just that, first of all, we know that this is something of which God alone is capable. Secondly, evil is not eradicated by force but by love. How then can we join with Christ in harnessing the power of love to overcome and transform evil in our world?

Here are ways to overcome evil with good:

- "Pray for those who persecute you." Jesus' counsel still rings true: reaching out spiritually to our enemies can be the first step toward reconciliation, and is certainly the first step in transforming our own hatred and anger.

- Support Brethren relief and development efforts that reach out to those on the other side of political, social, and military dividing lines. While government aid efforts often serve political purposes, assistance offered by Brethren and other Christian groups seeks to assist the most vulnerable members of society in a way that is respectful of their culture and needs.

- Be willing to take risks for the sake of the gospel and for the sake of Christ's call to peacemaking. It rings hollow when peacemakers refuse to use violence against "evil," yet are not themselves ready to take

risks on behalf of overcoming it. Active Christian peacemaking that takes the believer into insecure settings in the name of Christ is a courageous act. In many ways it is more courageous than a soldier going to war in the name of keeping the peace. The Christian goes armed only with the love of Christ.

BE NOT CONFORMED

Underlying every aspect of our response to the violence of our world is a willingness to take a different path than those around us. This approach is rooted in the gospel and modeled after the life of Jesus. Our Lord repeatedly and boldly held up a higher and more

inclusive vision, and was willing to break with social convention and set aside rules when either of these served the interest of the few over the needs of the many.

Brethren have a heritage of non-conformity, but sometimes find it difficult to clearly stand out from the crowd. We want to be seen as

Standing in solidarity in California

Five miles from our home in La Verne, Calif., are two Muslim schools that I did not realize were there until the days following the terrorist attacks in September. Then came that day, 9-11-01, that changed every American's life in some way. The 9-11 dateline is a reminder of how many felt helpless during the tragedy.

It became a time to be glued to the unbelievable scenes on the television. Later, a questioning thought came to my mind. What could I ever do to help ease the pain in this tough situation? One answer came very unexpectedly.

My husband, Chuck, was invited by a Muslim acquaintance to an interfaith meeting on Friday following the attacks. There, one idea presented was to give support to the Muslim schools which had closed upon hearing the news of the terrorist attacks.

A few days later, a phone call came asking us to go stand in front of these schools when they reopened. All we were expected to do was to be a "presence" there, to show our support of the Muslims as human beings and fellow Americans, not as terrorists. It sounded simple enough.

With some uncertainty, I arrived at the gated school on the reopening day, Sept. 19. Several other Brethren, as well as persons from other denominations came. Our waving, smiling, and greetings began to be returned to us immediately by the parents and teachers as they drove into the drop-off area. Many expressed their appreciation for us being there.

As days passed, we were given donuts, flowers, letters of thanks from the students, a breakfast, and a thank-you luncheon where plaques were presented to the La Verne and Pomona Fellowship Churches of the Brethren. The plaque indicated that we are united under the same God.

We have become acquainted with these dear Muslims who are more like us than I could have imagined. Never have they tried to convert us or terrify us. They have been very accepting of who we are.

It was an amazing moment when one Muslim stated that some of them wanted to come to our worship

service in La Verne. Her faith encouraged learning about other faiths, she reported. The date of Oct. 14 was set for their visit. Thirty of these new Muslim friends were warmly greeted by our congregation.

The following Monday, we heard that their attendance at our church had been a meaningful time for them. They sent a note of gratitude to the La



Bill Puffenberger

Outside the Muslim school where they demonstrated their support are George Borst, Jeanine Borst, and Sharon Marek of Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren, and Shirley Boyer, right, of the La Verne church.

Verne congregation.

For us, a relationship with the Muslim community is just beginning. We have been invited to attend their worship service. We have scheduled a planning session to determine how we can work together. Out of tragedy has emerged a Christian and Muslim relationship that is exciting and fulfilling. Little did I dream of what blessings were in store from being a "presence" at the City of Knowledge School. —Shirley Boyer

good citizens in the community and nation. We pride ourselves on causing little offense to our neighbors. We shun public demonstrations of our piety and principles.

While these ways of behaving serve us well in many situations, they may cost us dearly if they discourage us from standing up for the way of Christ in a time of crisis. How willing are we to express views or take stands different from those of our neighbors when we feel that a different voice needs to be heard?

***Here are ways to
“not conform”:***

- The Harrisburg (Pa.) First congregation organized a vigil against war on the steps of the state capitol building. (see accompanying article p. 13).

- Brethren children from Indiana refused to wear T-shirts with a stridently patriotic message to school when everyone else did (see accompanying article p. 14).

- Members of the La Verne (Calif.) congregation have made it a point to be present at a nearby Muslim school as children came and went in the mornings and afternoons as an act of solidarity and to offer a measure of safety (see accompanying article p. 15).

- Individual Brethren have struggled with how to respond to the outburst of patriotic fervor in the wake of Sept. 11. When they have chosen other ways to express their solidarity with the victims, some neighbors have raised eyebrows while others have found comfort

knowing that someone else shared their perspective.

If there is to be enduring peace in our world, we cannot leave it to the usual cast of actors. Military, political, and economic coercion may indeed have some temporary effect and bring immediate gratification, but over the long haul these will not have what it takes to truly transform our world.

The church, on the other hand, has the message and the means for moving the people of our world toward peaceful coexistence. The question becomes whether the church will commit itself to this goal with the same vigor and determination as national leaders have committed us to war.

It is not a simple or easy enterprise, this business of Christian

Resources for peacemaking

BrethrenPress.com lists peace-related study materials in its topical resources section, including an essay series that includes new listings on patriotism and US-Arab relations (800-441-3712).

Waging Peace is a new six-session study/ action resource from the Brethren Witness office designed to encourage long-range peacemaking in response to the long-term campaign launched by our nation in

response to Sept. 11 (800-323-8039, ext. 228).

The Global Food Crisis Fund invites Brethren to support our global neighbors with food relief and development assistance as they work to fulfill their God-given potential (800-323-8039). The Emergency Disaster Fund responds to the immediate needs of others, helping them weather the storm of war or other disaster (800-766-1553).

General Board-sponsored travel experiences help Brethren learn about the

realities of life for our neighbors living in poverty or under threat of war—and about what our denomination is doing to help. Contact the Youth/ Young Adult office, Global Mission Partnerships, or the Brethren Witness office (800-323-8039).

A Christian Citizenship Seminar for adults titled “Peacemaking—For Such a Time as This” is being offered April 6-11 in New York/Washington, D.C. Contact the Brethren Witness office or Washington Office for more information (800-323-

8039; 202-546-3202).

Leaders are available for spiritual renewal events or workshops related to peace and justice. Contact David Radcliff (800-323-8039, ext. 229).

A Church Leader’s Packet on Conscientious Objection is available on request from the Brethren Witness office.

Copies of the General Board’s “Resolution on Sept. 11, 2001 and its Aftermath” are available on request (800-323-8039, ext. 228).

peacemaking. It is in some ways counter-intuitive, calling on spiritual resources to combat temporal challenges. It confounds the accepted wisdom of looking out for oneself and one's own. Peacemaking casts aside stereotypes that neatly describe our world. Peacemaking strangely links one's own capacity for sinfulness with that of those whom others have clearly cast as evil, thus placing us on the same divine continuum as the likes of them.

But Christian peacemaking holds within it the seeds of a better and brighter day. What the seeds require is the water of lives lived in the light of the gospel. God,  then, will give the growth.

David Radcliff is director of Brethren Witness for the Church of the Brethren General Board.

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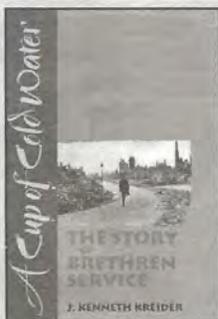
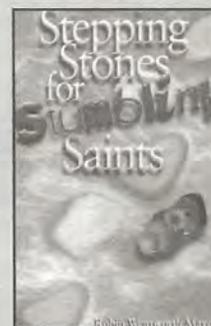
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CHRISTMAS IN

After four nights of US bombing, the author discovers a



Mel Lehman

by Mel Lehman

Three years ago I spent Christmas in Baghdad, Iraq. I had been to Iraq twice before in the course of my work as a communications staff person for Church World Service of the National Council of Churches. I had been so shocked by the desperate humanitarian conditions I saw there—the lack of food and medicines, the thin faces of malnourished children, the raw sewage on the street—that I quit my 20-year career at Church World Service and went to Iraq for several months to write a book about the situation there.

I arrived during the first week of December 1998, and unpacked my suitcases in the Al Fanar hotel overlooking the Tigris River. I was just settling in to work on my book when American bombs began exploding outside my hotel just past midnight on Dec. 17. For the first few minutes I lay on my bed in a state of denial, almost not believing what was happening to me.

The lights in my room suddenly went off and then just as suddenly came back on. Then the phone rang. It was Hassan, the night front desk

clerk. “Mr. Mel,” he said, “come down to the bomb shelter!” I grabbed my American passport and, with bombs crashing louder and louder all around me, I ran down the stairs to the basement. It was a phone call that I later realized could well have saved my life. I quickly learned that when bombs are falling around you the very first thing you want to do is get away from the windows because the flying glass can kill you.

I spent the next five hours until dawn in the basement with several Iraqis and one European. I prayed and prayed and prayed. I was terrified, but somehow I survived.

After four nights of bombing, the news came that the bombing had ended. It was Sunday, so I decided to go to church. Church in this case for me as a Christian of Mennonite heritage was the Evangelical Church of Baghdad, the largest congregation of the small Protestant community in Iraq.

I arrived in late afternoon, before the evening service, and found a small group of men already there. Over coffee and a few cookies, they explained with pride that their church had been founded by American Pres-

byterians in 1865.

A few days later, on Christmas Day, I returned. The sanctuary was packed full—a good 300 to 400 people, I’d estimate. I was escorted all the way to the front, directly facing the children’s choir, and I was treated to some wonderful singing from them. The kids were great, all dressed up in their long white robes with splashy red bows tied around their necks, and they sang their little hearts out. “Alleluia” never sounded better to me that it did that morning.

Next the congregation sang. The first several hymns had Arabic melodies and words but then they sang “Joy to the World.” The words were in Arabic, but there was no mistaking Lowell Mason’s majestic tune. I did my best to sing along in English, but it was a little difficult, what with the catch that was in my throat. I’m unexpectedly home for the holidays after all, I thought to myself: home at the Evangelical Church of Baghdad.

There are just under a million Christians in Iraq, primarily Chaldean Catholics, and along with services in the churches Christmas usually receives some public recognition

BAGHDAD

Christmas tree with a haunting message

there. But that year because of “the situation,” it was explained to me, public celebrations of Christmas would be avoided.

Thus it came as a great surprise and indeed joy for me a few days after Christmas to see a large tree—unmistakably a Christmas tree—in the middle of the boulevard as I was driving along the Tigris River in a taxi. “So Christmas hasn’t been entirely forgotten here after all!” I said.

Sadly, my companions explained to me that the tree I was seeing was not a usual Christmas tree. The decorations were pieces of cardboard cut out in the shape of bulbs and on each one was written the name of an Iraqi child who had died because of US-imposed eco-

nomie sanctions against Iraq. The trees had been put up in front of each of the several United Nations offices in Baghdad. The Iraqis had chosen this Christian symbol to try to get a message through to the “Christian” West.

We stopped at one of the trees and walked over to it. There, covering it, were little pieces of cardboard decorations. It struck me that they looked more like upside-down teardrops than bulbs. My companion translated what was written on one of them and it seemed appropriate for me to take it. I’ve brought it all the way back home with me to New York City and it is here next to my computer as I write. On the one side is written: Rishanah Hamed Abadi, 15 months, 1995. On

the other side is this: Mohammed Zeidan Khalifah, 2 days, 1994.

Of course even one name on that tree was too many, but if all the names of the Iraqi children who died because of the sanctions were placed on that tree, it would have collapsed. UNICEF puts that number at half a million and the Iraqis put it at 1.3 million.

This Christmas I pray that our country will lift the economic sanctions on Iraq and that the Iraqis will no longer need to add the names of their children to that tree. 

Mel Lehman plans to lead a Church of the Brethren delegation to Iraq this month. He is writing a book about the impact of economic sanctions on Iraq, which he has visited five times over the past five years. He lives in New York City.

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The challenge and hope of Prophetic preaching

by Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm

In the aftermath of Sept. 11 and the escalation of violence at home and abroad, many of us struggle to know what it means to be a Christian at this time. And what does it mean for us to give voice to our faith and our fears, our hopes and our questions?

For some congregations, challenges have come in the form of renewed debates about the presence and meaning of the flag in the sanctuary. For others, the challenge comes in our anxious counting of those who support military actions on the part of our government and those who advocate for alternative means of resolution to conflict and terrorism. And still others among us experience tension surrounding diverse interpretations of scripture as they apply to any number of divisive issues that challenge the church today.

Knowing that we do not have all the answers to the complex challenges facing us, we still long to give voice to the gospel of Jesus Christ in ways that engage the best of our tradition and call forth the creative energy and commitments of our members. As persons who recognize God's reconciling intention for all the world in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we hope not only to be pastoral in our concern

for others but also to be prophetic in witnessing to God's peace, justice, and hope.

In serving as a pastor for 12 years and then teaching a course at Bethany on "Prophetic Voices in Preaching," I have come to appreciate that if the pastoral and prophetic ministry of Jesus Christ is to form the basis for our practice of ministry, then to be pastoral is also to be prophetic.

There is a pattern of prophetic urgency within the gospel that demands our attention, calling us away from destructive recourse to violence and toward the constructive and creative possibilities for peace. Just as Martin Luther King, Jr., held up a vision of the beloved community as the fellowship of God practicing the power of God's love amid a world of hate, and just as Moderator Paul Grout has urged us to remember that the kingdom of God is thriving even if the church is not, we must remember that the power and possibilities of

the gospel have yet to be realized and long to be proclaimed. For those of us who would give voice to God's Word in the world, the following definition of prophetic preaching may give focus to our concern:

In accordance with the prophetic tradition of Israel and the ministry of Jesus Christ, prophetic preaching may be understood as divinely inspired speech that proclaims God's Word from within the Christian tradition against all that threatens God's reconciling intention for humanity and for all that develops and sustains a vital and necessary ministry of compassion to neighbors near and far.

Because prophetic preaching is not exclusively concerned with moral exhortation nor are the biblical prophets concerned exclusively with predictions regarding future events, to speak prophetically is to set past, present, and future concerns within the framework of God's promises and the reign of God realized in Jesus Christ.

We seek to speak pastorally and prophetically amid the challenges of this particular time and to do so in ways that engage God's Word with the critical struggles of the world. To help with this I have reworked several goals for public issues preaching developed in lectures given by Dr. Alyce McKenzie of Perkins School of Theology, Dallas, Texas. I offer both pastors and other church leaders these four considerations and several questions to guide the preparation of your sermons:

Education

What is the educational purpose of this sermon? How may this sermon reflect an informed understanding of the dynamics underlying a particular issue or concern? Although an important part of the educational function of the sermon is to offer questions and insights prompted by our reading of selected scripture texts, what other questions and concerns need to be voiced by the preacher?

Of the many ways that one may help educate the congregation in its awareness and appreciation of the complex dynamics at work in this particular concern (providing information and/or statistics, referring to authoritative and diverse sources, offering specific examples or anecdotes, etc.), which of these may best contribute to the hearers' understanding of this specific public and social concern? Are various aspects of a concern raised so that not just one side, but other perspectives as well, are fairly represented?

Implication

Does the sermon implicate the hearers so that they may come to some new awareness of their own involvement in the concerns being raised? Does the

sermon facilitate the hearers' awareness that this concern is also their concern? More than offer critique of the hearers or others, does the sermon urge the congregation to identify with the struggles and issues raised by the preacher so that they may more fully engage in critical and honest self-reflection as individuals and as a community of faith?

Divine promise

How does this sermon proclaim the good news of God's past, present, and future reign in such a way as to instill hope in the midst of this challenging time or circumstance? What resources of faith (scripture, church tradition and practices, teaching and experience) does this message draw upon to help God's people to participate in the transforming mission of the church? Are God's power, presence, and purposes identified as possible sources of inspiration and energy? Are God's promises remembered and God's reign anticipated? Beyond all human resources, what divine help and strength is offered to us through the biblical witness and the Christian tradition?

Human response-ability

Does this sermon offer the hearers opportunity for response in relation to the issue? If the foremost concern of the gospel is to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength and our neighbors as ourselves, what kind of response is being cultivated by this particular message: emotional, spiritual, intellectual, or enacted? What creative options might be explored beyond the service of worship? Which possibilities for personal and corporate transformation are named in this message? How does this sermon encourage or urge individual and corporate response to the concerns raised?

As we seek to educate, implicate, inspire hope, and encourage others to respond to God's Word in the world, we may begin to give voice to the prophetic concerns of the gospel. As members not only of a historic peace church but also of a living peace church, we are challenged to speak the truth in love as we have not dared to do so before: to give voice to the prophetic urgency of the gospel's call to love God and neighbor even as God in Christ has loved and continues to love us all. May the Spirit empower your ministry with love, patience, courage, and compassion. 

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The most critical spiritual issue

Look in your wallet for the key to your heart

by Kenneth L. Gible

Yes, that's right—money is a spiritual issue. I know that's not what most people think. Most people apply the word "spiritual" to things like prayer, meditation, worship, and reading the Bible. Some would stretch the definition of "spiritual" to include things like art, music, love, and peace. But very few people think of money as a spiritual issue. Let me explain what I mean when I say that the power of money is the most critical spiritual issue of our day.

I begin with a simple fact—that Jesus addressed the issue of money and wealth more than any other single subject. He talked about money more than he talked about prayer or worship or any of the things we usually think of as "spiritual."

For Jesus, money, or wealth, was the foremost spiritual issue. He understood better than anyone before or since what money can do to the human soul. He said things like: "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:23). He said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God" (Matt. 19:24). He said, "No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth" (Matt. 6:24).

Now, what I find so striking about Jesus' concern about wealth is that most of the people who were drawn to him were poor people. He said of himself, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. . . ." To the poor! Isn't it interesting,

strange even, that our Lord would spend so much time talking about wealth to poor people?

Just as people do in our day, the people who lived in the time of Jesus thought that having more was the answer to their problems. If I just had more money, everything would be fine. The people who listened to Jesus believed that being wealthy was a sign of God's favor. If you had money, they thought, that was proof that God was rewarding you for being a good person.

Jesus blasted that cherished notion to smithereens. Being wealthy doesn't mean God thinks you're somebody special. Being wealthy is, in fact, a serious responsibility, fraught with great spiritual danger. "What shall it profit you," Jesus asked, "to gain the whole world and lose your own soul?" (Mark 6:36).

Good question. And if that question had relevance to the poor of Jesus' day, it has much more relevance to us who live in a consumer society. For we are not the poor. We are the wealthy.

Surely you know that, compared to the vast majority of the world's population, we North Americans are people of tremendous financial advantage. I came across a chart that listed five categories of wealth, or lack thereof, in the world today.

- The first category, "the poorest of the poor," are those with no family, job, housing, health care, or even a place to die.

- The second category is the "ordinary poor." They have limited access to income assistance, housing, food, and health care.

- The third category, "ordinary wealthy," means people with access to jobs, housing, food, health care, and transportation.

- Next comes the "wealthiest of the wealthy." That





Jesus talked about money more than he talked about prayer or worship or any of the things we usually think of as “spiritual.”

means people with more than sufficient income, housing, investments, and possessions.

• The fifth category is the “ultra-wealthy,” the billionaires (from *Ministry of Money*, August 1998).

I’m not in that last category. But, like many readers of this magazine, I do find myself in that “wealthiest of the wealthy” category. I have “more than sufficient money” for my needs.

What spiritual dangers do we face?

We face the danger of serving money rather than God. We face the grave danger of finding ourselves outside the kingdom of God. We face the terrifying danger of losing our souls. I say it is a terrifying danger, but most of us are not terrified about it. In fact, we’re not even worried about it.

We should be. We should have our guard up against the seductive powers of darkness that we encounter every day. It’s as close as your TV screen—the home shopping networks, the commercials for new cars, new trucks, new SUV’s—sport utility vehicles (what a diabolically clever deception that name is). An ad for Chrysler’s Town and Country SUV has the gall to use as a headline, “It blurs the need between needs and wants.” Let that one sink in, if you dare.

Seduction? Look for it in the articles and ads that you see in personal finance magazines and on the Internet. Here are a few I’ve seen recently: “How to Build a Bigger Nest Egg,” “How to Rob a Bank” (not to be taken literally, of course), “The Good Life Is Closer Than You Think,” “Grow Rich!”

So “now what?” you may be wondering after hearing what Jesus has to say about wealth. “Am I supposed to feel guilty about having what I have, about being a wealthy person?”

No. I don’t think Jesus laid guilt trips on people. He did call people to repentance, which is something quite

different. I believe Jesus said what he did about wealth because he wanted people to be free of its death grip on their lives and because he wanted the blessings of life—health, well-being, prosperity, the shalom of God—to be enjoyed by everyone.

So let’s do what Jesus wants us to do. Let’s be on guard against the enticing voices that lure us into wanting more, into thinking that having more is the good life. That’s a start.

Then sit down sometime soon and take a look at what you have, what you spend your money on, what you save and why you are saving, and what you share of your resources with those less fortunate. Ask yourself honestly: “What does my attitude toward money say about my priorities? What do the material possessions I treasure say about where my heart is?” Remember the words of our Lord: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Luke 12:34).

The story is told of a woman who had a dream while traveling in India. The dream told her to ask a beggar for a gift. The woman found an old man in the street who reached into his sack at her request and pulled out a diamond bigger than a golf ball. “This is all I have,” he said, “so this must be the gift.” Sputtering, the woman asked the beggar if he knew what he was doing. “Yes, of course,” he said. “I found it in the swamp just outside the city.” The woman thanked the beggar for his gift and went to the swamp to meditate until the evening. Then she returned to the beggar and handed him his jewel. “Instead of the diamond,” she said, “could you please teach me the wisdom that let you give me this gift?”

May God teach me and you that same wisdom.



Kenneth L. Gible, recently retired as a full-time pastor, lives in Greencastle, Pa.

Charlie Brown meets Baby Jesus

by Jean C. Myers

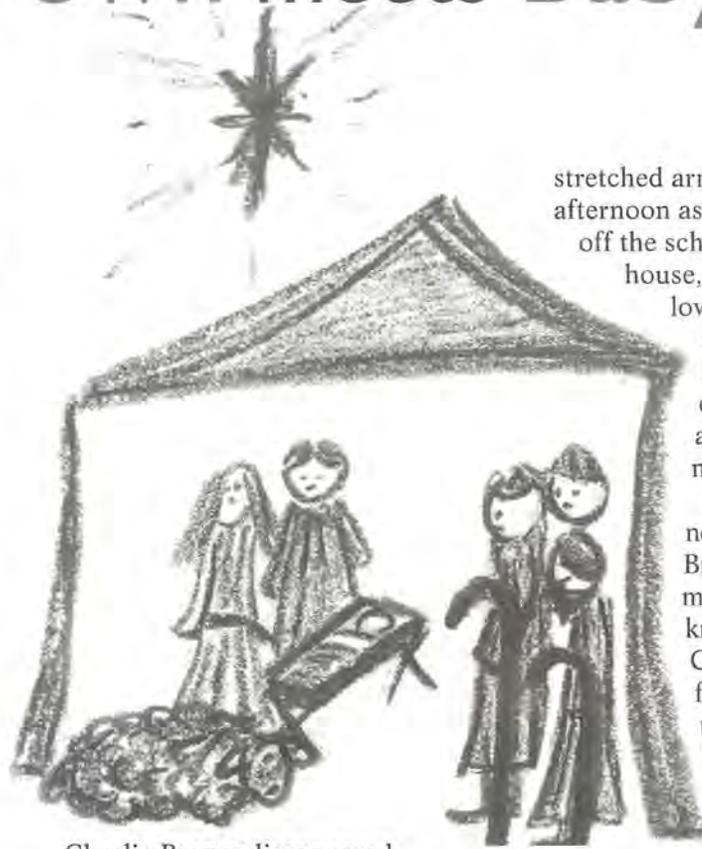
For years I had carefully placed the little plastic nativity under the Christmas tree. It had been purchased along with our other meager decorations the first Christmas we were married, back in 1962. My husband was finishing his fourth and last year at college and money was tight. Each year as Christmas approached, I looked longingly at the beautiful wood and ceramic creches, wondering when there would be enough extra money to purchase one.

Finally the day arrived. Our sons were 11 and 14 and we had recently moved into our newly built house. I watched the after-Christmas sales and there it was — nothing elaborate, not a large creche, but it was wood and ceramic with 50 percent off the original price. We made our way to the local department store with all the other after-Christmas bargain shoppers, purchased the creche, and carefully packed it away until the following Christmas.

Several weeks before Christmas the box was brought up from the basement and the creche was given a place of honor in the center hall. Each time I went from one part of the house to another, I could enjoy my treasured gift. An angel perched on the top watched over Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus. Jesus lay in the manger with outstretched arms, surrounded by wise men, shepherds, and animals.

One day as I hurried by the creche, something caught my eye. I stopped to look and there beside the manger, looking down at the baby Jesus, was a rubber figure of Charlie Brown.

Charlie Brown! Charlie Brown from the beloved Peanut cartoon series. I was quick, much too quick, to question the boys and say, "Get that thing out of my creche." I knew instantly our youngest son, Mark, had been the culprit as he looked at me with his boyish grin.



Charlie Brown disappeared. Christmas was over and the wood stable with the ceramic figures was lovingly packed away for another year.

As Christmas approached the following year, the creche was again placed in its place of honor. It was the first thing holiday guests saw as they entered the front door. It was the last thing we saw each night as we turned off the lights and headed up the stairs to bed.

Several days before Christmas as I passed the creche, I was again surprised. There looking down at the baby Jesus was not only Charlie Brown but on the other side of the manger stood another little rubber figure. Linus! Linus, blanket and all, stood looking into the outstretched arms of baby Jesus.

For some strange reason as I stood looking at the little rubber figures, I was not upset as I had been the previous year. Maybe ... the creche didn't belong to me alone. Maybe ... Mark with his childish prank was showing he loved it as much as I did. Maybe ... a young boy was mature beyond his years knowing the baby with his out-

stretched arms was for everyone. That afternoon as I watched my children get off the schoolbus and head for the house, my heart was filled with love for them. I know I was smiling when I mentioned that Charlie Brown had once again mysteriously appeared in the creche and now Linus had joined him.

As the years went by, I never knew when Charlie Brown and Linus would make their mysterious arrival known. But Christmas after Christmas they would be found looking down into the outstretched arms of baby Jesus.

Mark left for college, but each Christmas break Charlie Brown and Linus came home for Christmas break as well.

Then came marriage and the move away from home. Still Charlie Brown and Linus continued to find their way into the creche each Christmas.

This Christmas I stood back with tears in my eyes as Mark bent over the creche with his little daughter, Savannah, helping her quietly and carefully place Charlie Brown and Linus beside the baby Jesus when they thought I wasn't looking.

As the creche was carefully packed away after Christmas, in its now torn tissue paper and aging box, I smiled to myself, secure in the thought that the tradition of Charlie Brown and Linus would continue. And secure in the knowledge that through those outstretched arms of the Christ child, God has welcomed us all to the manger.



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The other side of the “only way”

by Allen Hansell

“Jesus is ‘the stone you masons threw out, which is now the cornerstone.’ Salvation comes no other way; no other name has been or will be given to us by which we can be saved, only this one” (Acts 4:11-12, Eugene Peterson).

Peter had been arrested and this is part of his defense speech. The same words about the cornerstone are found in Psalm 118:22: “The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.”

The builders, in Peter’s mind, are the rulers, elders, scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees listening to his voice. Interpreting Psalm 118, Peter offers that Jesus was the rejected stone, and that God has replaced the flawed, less than perfect, cornerstone with this perfect cornerstone. There is no other way. This “no other way,” or “no other name by which one is saved” is also found in John 14:6.

Jesus is the chief cornerstone of our faith. We know that. Our proclamation of that faith, however, can be based on a negative; the “only way” language can negate the gospel of love upon which we stand.

Anyone who witnessed the many religious services following the events of Sept. 11 heard words of comfort from leaders of several world religions. I watched the service in Yankee Stadium on TV, and marveled at the gracious words from Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and others. Each of those great world religions claims to be the way to truth, life, peace, and healing. How can each one claim to be the way to God, even the only way?

Should we embrace a kind of universalism which says that each is right, so pick the one you want? Or, can we, should we, with confidence and conviction, proclaim Peter’s message in Acts 4:12: “There is salvation in no one else”?

As disciples of Christ Jesus, I believe that we must boldly proclaim, by word and deed, this scripture in Acts 4 and in John 14. Otherwise we fall into an anemic universalism where people choose the religion that most nearly fits their needs.

However, this Christian confession of faith in no way gives anyone the liberty to trash other world religions. I took a class on world religions at Bridgewater College in 1962, taught by William Beahm, after he retired as Bethany’s dean. He told our class that followers of Christ should not confess the unique lordship of Christ by dismissing, ridiculing, rejecting, or harming others who claim eternal truth. They are sisters and brothers in the human race, created by God, and we owe them more than tolerance. We must treat others with respect and love, and grant them the right to claim their own beliefs.

Ours, Beahm said, is a positive faith that proclaims Christ as the best revelation of God on earth, and we must pro-

claim that with conviction, always seeking to win others to Christ. Our Muslim brothers and sisters have a right to proclaim their beliefs, and to seek to convert the world to Islam. Together we stand before God, who will do the judging.

Followers of Christ do not testify to their own unique call by labeling others with terms meant to make them feel inferior. Once we start down that road, it is but a short distance to the place where those who are different are labeled the enemy. Many travel that road, claiming a righteous hatred in the name of the God of love. Once the label goes on, actions soon follow.

In our post-Sept. 11 world, it is urgent that the devotees of the great world religions take the time needed to get to know each other, and to pray with and for each other and for all of the nations of the world.

The same scripture, stating that Jesus is the only way to the kingdom, can be used to talk about us as Brethren as well. Just as that confession of faith sometimes leads people to trash other world religions, people can be quite rejecting and hurtful when they are absolutely sure that their understanding of Christ is the correct one, and those with different understandings are less faithful.

The Church of the Brethren has a strong propensity for being at war with itself. This denomination denounces war as sin and does not believe in using weapons that harm and kill the physical body. But we sometimes wage wars of words that hurt and destroy the spirit.

I started my ministry when our beloved denomination was being torn apart over civil rights struggles and the Vietnam war. In the 1990s, we were at war with ourselves over evangelism, and that struggle continues. When we approach the subject of evangelism, we need to avoid sweeping generalizations. Some say the church is doing just fine, and we don’t need to change. That undermines integrity, for we know that all is not well. On the other hand, those who pronounce the church apostate, saying that our leaders and congregations have little interest in evangelism, they discourage those who are faithful to Christ.

The Church of the Brethren is a good church. We have many dedicated and caring people. If our commitment is to Christ, we will encourage each other and find room for everyone to live out their faith.

We are not all alike. We have differing methodologies. But we can be one in Christ. Let’s stop the war with each other. We believe in a God of love. Christ Jesus is our example. The Christian faith gives no one the right to harm another—not with bullets, not with harsh, discouraging, and rejecting words. 

Allen Hansell delivered these remarks to the General Board in October on the occasion of his retirement. His 40 years in ministry included 23 as pastor, 8 years as district executive, and 4 years as director of ministry for the General Board.

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LETTERS

Compliments from California

The October issue of MESSENGER was one of the best in my memory. Reading it from cover to cover gave me a spiritual lift at this time of sadness when the business and military centers of our country have been attacked with so many people killed, and when an eye for an eye seems to be our nation's response.

The news section was a ray of hope when most of the daily news is bad news. Wendy McFadden's late-breaking publisher's note lamenting the tragedy she saw in New York was realistic and timely. Walt Wiltschek's feature article on worship seemed to balance well the old and the new. It reminded us that change is possible in the church.

The "Voices of young servants" at work on three continents including our own country spoke to us about mission in a new key. The letters to the editor helped put me in touch once more with the faith family that we call "Brethren."

Fletcher, I salute you for your editor-

ial courage in critiquing the power broker role that the General Board has taken in the struggle for property and power in India. Thanks.

Benton Rhoades
Claremont, Calif.

Flag doesn't belong in worship

I believe it is never appropriate to have a United States flag in worship. The church is the Body of Christ. The "God-with-us" we know in Jesus Christ is a universal God. When we gather for worship we are a segment of the Body of Christ that stretches around the globe. The Body of Christ is never aligned with partiality to any human-made geographic location. God does not "bless America" above any other of God's children. The citizenship of a Christian is always to the universal Body of Christ and only secondarily to the country in which one resides. My love of country is always subordinate to allegiance to Christ.

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Flags are powerful symbols. I can observe the US flag and feel appreciation and pride. We have the blessing of the democratic process, freedom of expression, and economic abundance. However, our economic abundance thrives, in part, through exploitation of global resources and on the shoulders of persons receiving slave wages in far-off countries. Our nation's political and economic self-interest has sometimes thwarted the democratic process in other countries. Therefore, the US flag is also a symbol of exploitation and oppression.

Our Anabaptist ancestors would be appalled at the presence of flags in our sanctuaries. We must not capitulate to this accommodation to culture. We must be "in the world but not of it." Our nation is currently in a nationalistic and militaristic fervor. Brethren walk a different path. We witness to our country; we don't idolize it. The symbols for our worship include the Bible, the cross, the

basin and towel, and the Brethren Service Cup. The flag in worship is idolatry.

Ralph Detrick
Elizabethtown, Pa.

Combine old and new music

I visited a church which sang all praise songs and no hymns. [See "Worship sings a new tune," October.] It was sad to think the old hymns might be forgotten. I prayed and asked God why would he allow this to happen? God reminded me of all the years we have sung the hymns without really looking at or understanding the words, taking them for granted. One day someone will discover the words of one of the great hymns like "How great thou art." And our awesome God will make the old new again.

My church combines the new with the old, and I enjoy the beautiful music and the meaningful words. Worship can be experienced in any style.

Diane Hall
Shippensburg, Pa.

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New members

Agape, Fort Wayne, Ind.: Bea Williams-Tevis
Ankeny, Iowa: Michael Huffaker, Laura Huffaker
Ashland Dickey, Ashland, Ohio: Kendra Martin, Harold Swain, Julia Swain
Beaver Creek, Hagerstown, Md.: Warren Frusher, Marie Dionne, Diana Socks, Connie Clever, Elizabeth Clever, Billie Clever, Bobby Miller, Caleb Pryor
Beaver Creek, Knoxville, Tenn.: Brittany Kelly, Nicholas Kelly
Beech Run, Mapleton Depot, Pa.: Jennifer Chilcote, Tina Unger, Harry Unger, Michael Unger Bethany, New Paris, Ind.: Katelyn Gall, Michael Yontz, Trevor Conrad
Bethel, Carleton, Neb.: Jessica Dowdy, Andrea Schweitzer, Rebecca Dornbierer
Blue Ridge, Va.: Roy Heinlen, Candy Heinlen
Bridgewater, Va.: Allen Clague, Naoma Clague
Broadfording, Hagerstown, Md.: Sandra Ebbs, Rick Martin, Charlene Martin, Preston Sellers, Stephanie Sellers
Florin, Mount Joy, Pa.: Deb Detwiler, Garry Kline, Susan Strickler, James Heisey
Good Samaritan, Brandon, Fla.: Joe Dixon, Michael Gilley, Harry Hutchinson
Hollins Road, Roanoke, Va.: Michele Bailey, Autumn Booth, Stephanie Johnson, Nathan McKimmy, George Fulk, Maxine Fulk, Horace Light, Doris Light, Ruth Owens, Betty Dillon
Lampeter, Pa.: Christina Freeman, Erin Frank, Lauren Frank, Jessie Frank, Jared French, Bradley Lutz, Michael Myers, Stacey Myers
Lick Creek, Bryan, Ohio: David Miller, Charlene Miller
Lititz, Pa.: Brandie Fortney, Jennifer Fortney, Jean L. Price, Jonathan Price, Charles Blymier, Edna Blymier, Harold Bowman, Kay Bowman, Ed Cunliffe, Lisa Cunliffe, George H. Miller, Jr., Norma Miller, Betty Longenecker, Bryan Bingeman, Tonya Burton, Joie Garner, Lauren Garrett, Kent Gerdes, Michael Hess, Kahlie Long, Darcy McDonald, Nick Manley, Taylor Rice, Peter Shenk, Grant Weaver
Long Green Valley, Glen Arm, Md.: Caitlin Haynes, Heather Smith
Marilla, Copemish, Mich.: Dawn Dallas
Marsh Creek, Gettysburg, Pa.: Edward Ellis, Dennis Dean, Duane Kanagy, Beth Kanagy, Stephen Russ, Jane Russ, Doris Harman

Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Lois Crimmel, Dennis Ertter, Mary Ertter, Barbara Hopkins, William Hall, Barbara Hall
Monte Vista, Callaway, Va.: Kyle Andrew Hodges
Montezuma, Dayton, Va.: Dennis Hill, Judy Hill, Katie Jackson, Dan King, Augusta Reel, Craig Sease, Jill Sease, Zach Sease, Derek Shickel, Lisa Shickel, Marshall Smiley, Brian Weaver, Keith Weaver, Laura Weaver, Sharon Weaver
Sebring, Fla.: Kimble McCay, Marilyn McCay, Patricia Szlosek, Winifred Williams, Alisha Daugherty, Danielle Ledet, Allison Ledet, Melissa Hollenberg, Stephanie Hollenberg, Daniel Wilson, Josue Wilson, Seth Ziegler, Tricia Ziegler, Judy Glode, Joel Haag, Barbara Haag, Richard Housekeeper, Joan Locke, Paul Becker, Kathryn Bontrager Becker, Edith Child, Robert Cox, Janet Cox, Willis Fouts, Audria Fouts, Ronnie Daugherty
Stevens Hill Community, Elizabethtown, Pa.: Mike Buller, Kristen Buller, Elizabeth Ann Fritz, Ryan Shenk, Melvin Ressler, Tiera Ressler, Earl Grimm
Syracuse, Ind.: Chas Amadeo, Tim Lemberg
Troy, Ohio: Thomas Reed, Betsy Weaver
Union Center, Nappanee, Ind.: Corey Hepler, Barb Miller, Kathleen Rice, Dale Deter, Joy Johnson, Lonnie Bope, Laura Everest, Austen Burkholder, Jeremy Steffen, Heather Knotts, Justin Smith, Keith Carter, Stacey Carter
West Green Tree, Lancaster, Pa.: Charles Riggelman, Charlotte Riggelman, Julie Zubris, Phyllis Hamme
Woodbury, Pa.: Bradley Ritchey, Karl Williams
York Center, Lombard, Ill.: Linda Raue, Alan Boleyn, Justine Boleyn, Elvia Steiner, David Steiner

Wedding anniversaries

Burger, Vernon and Beulah, Centerville, Iowa, 65
Burkholder, Paul S. and Mary Lou, Gettysburg, Pa., 50
Craighead, Sherman and Carmen, Callaway, Va., 60
Diller, Carl and Ann, Lancaster, Pa., 50
Fike, J. Rogers and Elizabeth, Oakland, Md., Nov. 20
Franklin, Lawrence and Helen, Blue Ridge, Va., 50
Hamilton, David and Velma, Virden, Ill., 73
Kintner, Emery and Molly, Albion, Ind., 50
Litten, Norman and Janet, Hagerstown, Md., 50
Millhimes, Charles and Ruth, Gettysburg, Pa., 50
Over, Richard and Mary (Libby), Sebring, Fla., 55
Poling, Newton and Virginia, Hagerstown, Md., 60
Smith, Harvey and Hazel,

Nokesville, Va., 65
Wray, Luther and Kathleen, Callaway, Va., 60
Wright, Purdy and Minnie, Utica, Minn., 60
Zuck, Glen and Frances, Hagerstown, Va., 60

Deaths

Allen, Leo G., 80, Glendale, Ore., Sept. 23
Anderson, Vergil, 76, Rocky Mount, Va., Sept. 5
Angle, Stafford, 77, Rocky Mount, Va., March 27
Ausherman, Theodore L., 93, New Oxford, Pa., Sept. 23
Barb, Franklin, 72, Bridgewater, Va., Sept. 11
Battaglia, Kathryn, 91, Troutville, Va., Sept. 26
Beaver, Betty Lou, 72, Hagerstown, Md., March 30
Blough, Edgar, 89, Waterloo, Iowa, Sept. 16
Boitnott, Hilda, 83, Boones Mill, Va., June 6
Bonner, Lectie Pennington, 94, Egton, W. Va., Aug. 29
Bowman, Grace H., 88, Callaway, Va., July 26
Bowman, Paul S., 85, New Castle, Ind., Aug. 2
Chadwell, Marie, 88, Sebring, Fla., Sept. 20
Chandler, Kenneth Eugene, 66, Ashland, Ohio, Aug. 26
Clouse, Roy, 66, Woodbury, Pa., Sept. 11
Coffman, Alfreda Elizabeth, 97, Hagerstown, Md., Dec. 24, 2000
Cooper, Carol, 60, Las Vegas, Nev., Sept. 12
Davis, Margaret, 95, Troy, Ohio, Oct. 4
Deibert, Ethel Lehman, 98, Hagerstown, Md., April 7
Dick, Jean, 87, Johnstown, Pa., Sept. 29
Dickinson, Bessie, 91, Bryan, Ohio, Sept. 6
Dillon, Janet, 70, Rocky Mount, Va., April 18
Dowdy, Mary Ann, 70, Syracuse, Ind., Aug. 18
Durbin, Joseph S., 89, Hagerstown, Md., Jan. 7
Durling, Mabel Cosy, 97, Hagerstown, Md., March 1
Faust, Chester C., 74, Chambersburg, Pa., July 15
Feierstein, Marian, 77, Troy, Ohio, Sept. 12
Firestone, J. Bennett, 86, Troutville, Va., Oct. 15
Flora, Bentley, 83, Boones Mill, Va., Sept. 20
Frazier, Embert C., 91, New Enterprise, Pa., Sept. 3
Gilbert, Lois, 79, Milford, Ind., Aug. 21
Gillespie, Selena, 85, Akron, Ind., Sept. 14
Gilliam, Hal, 85, Tipp City, Ohio, Oct. 5
Good, J. Vernon, 85, Lancaster, Pa., Oct. 19
Grove, Rachel, 85, Chambersburg, Pa., Oct. 13
Guthrie-Wampler, Mabel, 85, New Oxford, Pa., Sept. 23
Hancock, Walter Posey, 80, Bassett, Va., May 25
Heckert, Bessie L., 94, Egton, W. Va., Aug. 22
Higgs, Rachel E., 84, Hagers-

town, Md., Jan. 20
Hiller, Rachel Pauline, 95, Hagerstown, Md., Aug. 23
Hodges, George, 79, Troutville, Va., March 27
Horner, Evelyn (Mae), 83, Brook Park, Ohio, July 15
Horner, Leroy (Pete), 86, Brook Park, Ohio, Sept. 15
Huddleston, Wesley, 76, Roanoke, Va., Sept. 30
Huffman, Violet, 91, Troutville, Va., Feb. 6
Ikenberry, Fred, 81, Bridgewater, Va., Sept. 16
Keplinger, Grace Elenora, 101, Hagerstown, Md., July 5
Kinard, Edwin D., 66, Dalls-town, Pa., Sept. 20
Latschaw, Betty Keller Miller, 76, Dalls-town, Pa., Aug. 25
Middlekauff, Mary Ann, 54, Hagerstown, Md., Jan. 27
Miller, Earl Edward, 63, Bealeton, Va., Aug. 16
Miller, Eliza, 94, New Lebanon, Ohio, Oct. 4
Miller, Helen (Ruth), 82, Cloverdale, Ohio, Oct. 6
Miller, Loren, 79, Warsaw, Ind., Aug. 21
Miller, Virginia A., 99, Bridgewater, Va., Sept. 4
Moneyheffer, Annamae, 77, Nappanee, Ind., May 23
Monninger, George, 90, Funkstown, Md., Aug. 28
Myers, Howard G., III, 53, Seven Valleys, Pa., Sept. 18
Naff, Nanny Kate (Teeney), 81, Boones Mill, Va., Aug. 31
Newkirk, John Denton, 92, Hagerstown, Md., May 31
Ocker, Helen Regina, 89, Hagerstown, Md., Nov. 1, 2000
Pletcher, Ordo M., 92, Shippenburg, Pa., Sept. 10
Siler, Barbara Kay, 37, Ashland, Ohio, Sept. 20
Smith, Galen J., 92, La Verne, Calif., Dec. 17, 2000
Snider, Dan, 96, Wakarusa, Ind., March 21
Spitzer, Carroll Francis, 84, Hagerstown, Md., April 12
Staiger, Mary, 90, Carlisle, Pa., Aug. 30
Stein, Larry, 57, Atglen, Pa., Sept. 13
Sterling, Ruth B., 86, Hagerstown, Md., Nov. 27, 2000
Studebaker, Phyllis, 49, Springfield, Ohio, Sept. 29
Stump, Miriam, 91, Wakarusa, Ind., June 25
Sturtz, Dorothy, 81, Waterloo, Iowa, Sept. 6
Thumma, Alvin Frederick, 67, Hagerstown, Md., May 8, 2000
Timmons, Myrtle, 102, Prairie City, Iowa, Sept. 14
Ulbricht, Dorothy, 78, North Liberty, Ind., Sept. 21
Weaver, E. Paul, 89, Everett, Pa., Oct. 14
Webb, Mary Grace, 79, McPherson, Kan., Sept. 19
Wolff, Ionella, 84, La Verne, Calif., Dec. 27, 1999
Zigler, Wilma, 81, Bryan, Ohio, Aug. 26
Zimmerman, Mabel W., 85, Hagerstown, Md., Oct. 24, 2000
Zimmerman, Viola, 90, Johnstown, Pa., Sept. 24

Licensings

Bretzinger, James E., Buffalo, Monticello, Ind., Sept. 23
Denlinger, Duane E., Eversole, New Lebanon, Ohio, Aug. 12
Derr, Amelia, Indiana, Pa., Sept. 16
Gingerich, Kim Elaine, Madison Avenue, York, Pa., Sept. 23
Horning, Glenn, Gardiner Road Fellowship, Wales, Maine, Feb. 25, 1997
Ludwick, Josiah, Lebanon, Pa., Sept. 23
Major, Scott, Coventry, Pottstown, Pa., June 24
Miller, Glenn Neil, Pleasant Hill, Spring Grove, Pa., Sept. 23
Mummert, Ray Glenn, Pleasant Hill, Spring Grove, Pa., Sept. 23
Osterbuhr, Douglas, Sheldon, Iowa, Oct. 14
Shirk, Paul David, Pleasant Hill, Spring Grove, Pa., Sept. 23
Troxell, Ernie, West Alexandria, Ohio, Sept. 23
Weaver, Galen, Blue Ball, Pa., Jan. 28

Ordinations

Baker, Daniel, Oak Dale, Scherr, W. Va., Sept. 16
Brunk, James, Bradford, Ohio, Sept. 30
Longanecker, Kevin, Water Street, Kent, Ohio, Oct. 14
Miller, Douglas M., West York, York, Pa., Sept. 30
Murphy, Granville, New Hope, Seymour, Ind., Sept. 30
Van Voorhis, Laura, Northview, Indianapolis, Ind., Sept. 16

Pastoral placements

Anspaugh, Eric C., from pastor, Cincinnati, Ohio, to pastor, Florin, Mount Joy, Pa., Oct. 1
Bretzinger, James F., pastor, Buffalo, Ind., Sept. 23
Caldwell, Rodney R., from pastor, Ankeny, Iowa, to pastor, Yellow Creek, Pearl City, Ill., Oct. 1
Crull, Walter, from pastor, Fairview, Mount Clinton, Harrisonburg, Va., to pastor, Garbers, Harrisonburg, Va., Oct. 8
Eller, Mark E., director of outdoor ministries, Camp Placid, Blountville, Tenn., Oct. 22
Elmore, Kendal W., from pastor, Midland, Va., to pastor, Pittsburgh, Pa., Oct. 1
Good, Nancy D., pastor, Middlecreek, Rockwood, Pa., Oct. 1
Reece, Kathy, from interim pastor to pastor, Dallas Center, Iowa, Aug. 1
Rhodes, Donna McKee, from pastor of Christian nurture, Stone, Huntingdon, Pa., to director of academy training, Bethany Theological Seminary, Susquehanna Valley Satellite, Elizabethtown, Pa., Oct. 1



The weight of glory

So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal (2 Cor. 4:16,17).

Usually when everybody else is thinking outside the box, I prefer to stay inside and tell the others what it's like. The box has served us well in the past, thank you, and it can do so in the future. When I hear arguments for the benefits of risk, I say, "You first"; when I hear chaos called creative, I cringe. I like my budgets balanced, my plans long-range, my ducks in a row, my wisdom conventional. For the most part.

I was trained as a skeptic in journalism school, where we were taught, "If your mother says she loves you, check it out." After years of practice, I can smell a hare-brained scheme a mile away. I can spot a politician's selfish motives from even farther. My slogan, "That'll never work," has served me well; most ideas don't work, so I'm often right. If Peter had only asked me for advice before he set out to walk on water, I could have kept him dry.

But when I see boarded-up old houses in my neighborhood I lose all sense of the "real world." I can't see problems, only possibilities. Where others see decay, I see new life on the way. Over the years I have helped change enough slum buildings into nice affordable homes that I know it is not only possible, it is blessed work. We are trying not only to rebuild houses, but to revitalize a neighborhood. We want to rehab lives, and make neighbor into a verb again.

One of the fun parts is watching skeptics shake their heads and tell us all the reasons what we're doing will never work. It's uneconomical! And even if you do make it into a nice house, will anybody want to live in this neighborhood? It's also fun to hear those who have caught the vision. On the first inspection of our most recent acquisition, my wife stepped carefully from room to musty room, past cracked plaster and broken windows, around long-abandoned appliances to where the kitchen cabinets were falling off the wall. "What a great place!" she exclaimed. "This is a wonderful house."

So how do I reconcile my hard-nosed inside-the-box self with the one who looks at squalor and sees a neighborhood of hope and beauty? I sup-

pose theologian Walter Brueggemann would say my balanced-budget mentality comes from an "ideology of scarcity." It says there's a limit to resources and not enough for everybody, so hold on to what you have, hoard it even, so it will be there if you need it, even if others must do without. I prefer to call it "fiscal prudence," but I think we're talking about the same thing.

The Bible tells us God, on the other hand, operates from an ideology of abundance: There is enough to go around, so long as each of us takes only what we need. If nobody hoards, there will even be more than enough left over. Because there is plenty, God is generous, raining manna from heaven. Brueggemann writes: "Filled with God's generosity, Jesus went around to people suffering from scarcity—of health, of acceptance, of power, of understanding—and replaced it with a gift of abundance. Jesus is constantly alert to any mismatch between the generosity of God and the needs of the people."

That's what Jesus was doing in Mark 8 when he looked out over the crowd of 4,000 and said to the disciples, "They have nothing to eat." The disciples could guess what he was thinking, and answered, "How can one feed these people with bread here in the desert?" It was their way of saying the budget isn't balanced. That'll never work. But with seven loaves and a few small fish the people were fed and there were plenty of leftovers.

Such miracles don't happen all the time. The disciples knew that usually when there wasn't enough food people went hungry. But sometimes in the presence of Jesus they could feel the "weight of glory" coming down, as Paul describes it in 2 Corinthians. Perhaps they could sense when Jesus was about to perform another miracle of generosity. After all, in Mark 6 he had just fed the 5,000 with five loaves and two fish; why not feed 4,000 with seven loaves and more fish? At least it's worth a try.

This tells me not to give up my common sense and the budget-balancing skills of my outer nature, but also to cultivate my inner nature and its uncommon sense that God is about to do something. The more miracles I see, the more I can see them coming. I must learn to look more often at what cannot be seen. I need to retrain to be a journalist of God's abundance, explaining not so much why something won't work but how it might. When I sense an idea carries the weight of glory, I will tell the skeptical old reporter in me to just get out of the way. Another miracle is about to happen. —FLETCHER FARRAR

"One of the fun parts is watching skeptics shake their heads and tell us all the reasons what we're doing will never work."

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