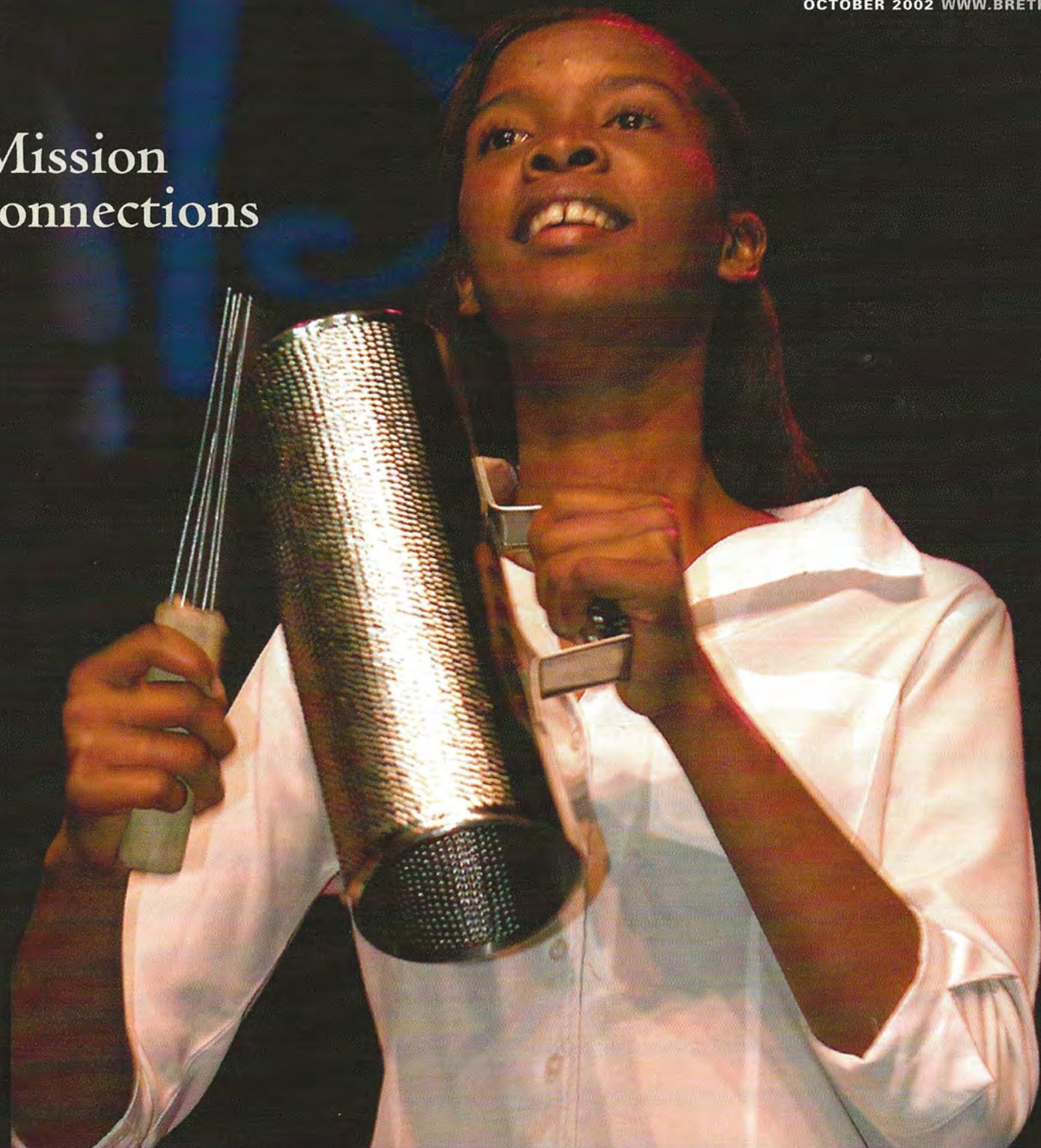


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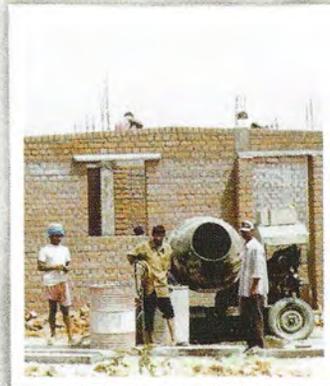
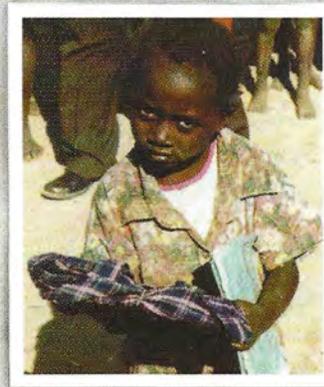
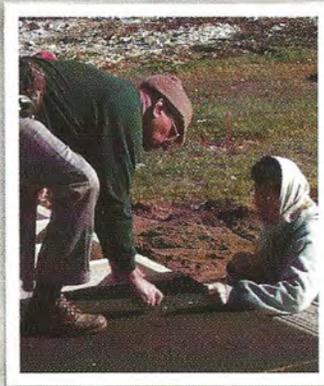
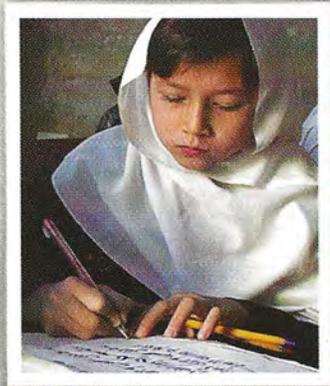
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Mission
connections



Where do we serve?: A pull-out map of General Board Ministries

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top row, l. to r.: Afghan school girl (photo by CWS); Disaster Response in Siren, WI; Disaster Child Care in New York City, NY
middle row, l. to r.: Disaster Child Care in Houston, TX; Disaster Response in Wilson, N.C.; Angolan boy (photo by SHAREcircle)
bottom row, l. to r.: Gujarat, India (photo by CASA); Material Resource kits; CAIR Teams leave for New York City, NY

ONTHECOVER

Wichi Lamu, guira rhythm instrument in hand, teaches a Spanish chorus entitled "Enviado Soy de Dios" ("I am Sent By God") at National Youth Conference. She is a member of the Dominican Republic worship team, which visited the United States from June 27 through Aug. 1. The hosting of the worship team by the Southern Pennsylvania District is an example of the deep and broad connections between Church of the Brethren global mission efforts and congregations and districts. Lamu is from the Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren in San Luis, one of five Haitian-background Dominican churches. The photo is by Chris Detrick.

David Radcliff

**10 Joining God's mission**

Leading off a cluster of articles in support of the October World Mission Offering emphasis, director of Global Mission Partnerships Merv Keeney reflects out of his 20 years of staff experience on how and why the Church of the Brethren engages in mission.

14 Mission where?

Following page 14 is a special lift-out map titled, "Where in the world is the Church of the Brethren?" illustrating the places and ways the denomination is in mission around the globe. This deserves a place on your church bulletin board.

16 Mission connections

There are three main ways to become involved in global mission, writes Janis Pyle, coordinator for mission connections. Go. Give. And pray. The important thing is to find what's right for you.

20 Better mission trips

Short-term mission trips can change lives for Christ on both sides of the exchange if they're planned carefully and done in the right spirit. Without preparation and humility, however, they can do more harm than good. Walt Wiltschek explains what makes the difference.

24 A loving look back at NYC

Jim Yaussy Albright went to National Youth Conference reluctantly, as an adult advisor. But he was invigorated by the experience, and now has ideas for making Annual Conference more like NYC, and for making every Sunday a Youth Day at every church.

DEPARTMENTS

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FROM THE PUBLISHER



A nearby second-hand shop organizes its clothes by color. That makes it easy when you're searching for khaki shorts for workcamp or black pants for junior high band. Kids' snow pants, on the other hand, might be anywhere: in with the black pants, at the end of the children's clothing, or against the back wall with the overalls. It's a system that must require little training to maintain.

No system of organization is perfect. Do you line up your books alphabetically, by author's nationality, by genre, by era? Or by size? One essayist, for fun, bases the order of her books on which authors would have liked each other, making sure incompatible types aren't forced to squeeze up against each other on the bookshelves.

I do a little of everything. Russian literature sits together regardless of the time period. American literature is roughly chronological. Big anthologies are on the same shelf by virtue of size, not content. Bibles are together whether they're large hardcover editions or pocket New Testaments. Children's hardcover picture books are in one place, but paperback books by the same author might be on a different shelf. Everything by C. S. Lewis is together, whether it's Christian apologetics or children's fantasy. And he's beside George McDonald because, well, Lewis liked McDonald (see guideline above).

The system is subjective—more impressionistic than scientific.

I categorize people too, unfortunately. There are plenty of labels available, and it's easy to stick them on. Like just about everyone else, I group by appearance, political persuasion, economic class, choice of vocabulary, theological conviction. . . . Once I have people pegged, I'm surprised when they act in some way contrary to the label.

But I'm brought up short when I remember that Jesus ignored the labels of the day. He didn't worry about who was seated next to whom and whether everybody was compatible.

What troubles me is that he reserved his harshest words for the people who thought they were good church folk. That gives me lots to think about.

Wendy McFadden

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Construction volunteer Ricardo Ramirez (left) with his new transportation in Tijuana. It was donated by Harold Finney (below), who no longer needed the truck.



Indiana pickup goes to Mexico, where it's needed

During the fall season of 2000, Ron and Harriet Finney, co-district ministers of South/Central Indiana District, spent three weeks exploring and studying cross-cultural ministries in southern California and Mexico. As part of that experience, they visited the mission work of *Compañeros en Ministerio* (Partners in Ministry), in Tijuana, Mexico. There they met a volunteer construction coordinator, Ricardo Ramirez, whose job it was to make sure building supplies were available when work teams arrived to build a house. Although he was good at what he did, he did not have adequate transportation, according to Ron Finney.

Ron recalled that his father, Harold Finney, no longer needed his 1985 pickup truck. So the Finneys arranged for the truck to be donated to *Compañeros*, which has been recognized as a Church of the Brethren mission through the Mission and Ministries Planning Council. *Compañeros* then made the truck available to Ricardo.

"The truck not only helps the mission work," Ron says, "but also enabled Ricardo Ramirez to get a better job. A simple gift has been multiplied many times over."

"Growing Faithful Disciples" to begin

Attempting to avoid adding to the 80 percent of churches in North America experiencing "survival mentality"—losing their sense of purpose and pouring all their energy into survival and little else—the Church of the Brethren's Middle Pennsylvania District is inviting its congregations into a process called "Growing Faithful Disciples."

The initiative comes out of the 2001 district conference, when delegates called for congregations to expand their vision and heart for a discipleship lifestyle. The result is a two-year process emphasizing four elements of discipleship: worship, community, stewardship of God's loving grace, and mission/outreach. It will include biblical/theological, personal development, and congregational development components.

"In a time when the

church needs to go back to the roots of who it is and what it is called out to be, Growing Faithful Disciples seems appropriate," says Middle Pennsylvania District executive Randall Yoder.

Assembled in partnership with the General Board's Area 1 (Northeast) Congregational Life Team, the process will include study materials, leadership development materials, and activities for "living and practicing a discipleship life and ministry." It will be formally launched at this year's district conference, Oct. 18-19.

Growing Faithful Disciples will be tested in Middle Pennsylvania before being offered elsewhere. "We have high hopes that this process will be useful to many other districts in the next year or two," Area 1 coordinator Jan Kensinger says. Ten congregations have already reviewed the materials and given positive feedback.—Danielle Hart

California church marks a century

"In praise to our God as we celebrate His faithfulness through 100 years."—Laton Community Church of the Brethren.

These words are on a plaque presented to the congregation Sept. 15. Laton, Calif., is near Fresno.

Surrounded by corn, cotton, cows, and alfalfa, Laton is the oldest congregation north of the Los Angeles area. The congregation was started in 1902 by a colonist train from Belleville, Kan. Farmers from the Belleville congregation were enticed to come here by the promise of good, cheap farmland. When they arrived, they had to reclaim swampy land in order to farm.

As a rural, farming congregation, it has never been very large. Throughout the years, it has averaged around 40 in worship attendance. The members have always been supportive of the missions of the larger church. During the mid-1980s, some of the farmers sent cows during the government dairy buyout program to Heifer Project. Also, they secured donations of hay from area farmers and sent truckloads to the Heifer Project Ranch near Modesto.

The congregation still meets in its original sanctuary, built debt-free in 1903. In 1987, the congregation built a new parsonage. Its \$40,000 mortgage was paid off in one year.

Fifteen years ago, two of the original members were videotaped telling the story of the congregation's beginnings.

Pastor Eugene Gerbrandt

was excited about the centennial celebration. The morning service featured three former pastors. During the afternoon, participants shared memories as all worshiped and gave thanks to God for His faithfulness!—Jeff Glass

Offering Christ's love for 100 years

On Oct. 5-6 the Pittsburgh (Pa.) Church of the Brethren is celebrating 100 years of ministry as an organized congregation in the Church of the Brethren.

The two-day celebration will include fellowship time for renewing acquaintances and browsing historical exhibits. There will also be meal events, worship services, and a 7 p.m. Saturday love feast, which is to be conducted by Ron Beachley, Western Pennsylvania district minister.

H. Lawrence Rice, of Roanoke, Va., who was pastor of the church when the 50-year anniversary was celebrated, is scheduled to preach at the 2:30 p.m. Saturday worship time when the heritage of the past is the focus. Hymns that were sung 100 years ago are planned for inclusion in the worship time.

Harold E. Sonafrank, of Pilot Mountain, N.C., is scheduled to preach Sunday morning as worshipers focus on the congregation's calling and mission into the future. A general theme, which is a variation on the church's mission statement, is "Offering Christ's Love In Our City and Beyond, Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow." For further information, contact the church office at 412-421-6000.



Two heritage centers preserve Brethren history

The Church of the Brethren took its first steps in the Eder River valley of Germany. Three centuries later, a pair of heritage centers are being built in other valleys in an effort to preserve that history.

"Crossroads" will be built in the Shenandoah Valley near Harrisonburg, Va., where Mennonites and Brethren have lived for more than two centuries. And in the Miami Valley of Ohio, also home to many Brethren, the Brethren Heritage Center is taking shape.

Crossroads will be a joint Brethren-Mennonite project, the result of years of praying and planning. The interactive center—targeted to be fully open in 2008—will explain the common faith values of the denominations and their history during the Civil War, when numerous battles took place in the region. It will strive to "share and celebrate the story of Jesus Christ as it has been reflected in the lives of the Mennonites and Brethren in the Shenandoah Valley."

Self-guided driving tours through the valley, called "Journeys of Faith and Conscience," will be among the featured offerings. It will take visitors to a number of sites in the area, including an 1804 grist mill that the center is seeking to make fully operational again.

Paul Roth, vice president of the Crossroads board of directors and pastor of the Linville Creek Church of the Brethren in Broadway, Va., said that the center has now bought 10 acres from a Brethren family. An 1854 Mennonite-built house that was donated to the project was moved to a ridge on the site during the summer. A barn and meeting house will also be part of the site.



Laton Community Church of the Brethren



Moving history. This 1854 home of Mennonite Bishop Martin Burkholder was moved this summer to its new site near Harrisonburg, Va., as a part of Crossroads.

"It will be quite a thing when it's finished," Roth said. Fundraising has also begun. A specially commissioned play on an Anabaptist family's struggles during the Civil War, titled "Jordan's Stormy Banks," was presented in six sold-out performances in Harrisonburg. An additional \$50,000 gift was also recently received. And on Sept. 21, the Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren hosted a dinner and address by Bridgewater College president Phil Stone titled "Transforming History into Legacy," introducing and discussing the project.

The Brethren Heritage Center, meanwhile, to be located in Brookville, Ohio, will preserve the historical and current information of the eight Brethren denominations that trace their origins to Germany in 1708. It will have a special section for each denomination's history, and a general section common to all Brethren denominations.

"It is a unique venture with all the different Brethren working together on a project," said Mark Flory-Steury, district executive for Southern Ohio.

The center will provide a place for all Brethren denominations to deposit or locate materials and will serve as an archival center for those wishing to do research. Materials from the district's heritage center have already been moved to a temporary site where the new center is expected to open this winter. A member of the Dunkard Brethren has donated land two miles away from the temporary location, and the permanent center will be built there in the future.

The Sider Institute's Second Annual
**Undergraduate Competition for
 Research Papers on Anabaptist Topics**

The Sider Institute for Anabaptist, Pietist and Wesleyan Studies at Messiah College announces its second annual undergraduate research paper competition in Anabaptist studies. Current undergraduates as well as recent college or university graduates are invited to submit research papers addressing contemporary or historical Anabaptist topics in any academic discipline.

Awards: First place \$500; Second place \$300; Third place \$200

Eligibility: Papers must have been written by undergraduates during the 2001-2002 or 2002-2003 academic years. Persons who graduated from college or university in 2002 are eligible to submit papers they wrote as undergraduates.

Deadline: January 10, 2003

Guidelines: 1. Papers should address an Anabaptist-related subject (contemporary or historical), show evidence of thorough research, and demonstrate original thinking. Disciplinary possibilities include history, theology, sociology, political science, philosophy, literature, etc. 2. Length: 3,500-5,000 words. 3. Questions and submissions should be directed to Donald B. Kraybill, The Sider Institute, P.O. Box 4033, Messiah College, Grantham, PA 17027. Call (717) 766-5376 or e-mail dkraybil@messiah.edu.

Consult the Sider Institute's website www.messiah.edu/siderinstitute for more details and copies of previous papers. *Award winners will be announced in March 2003.*



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BRETHRENSPEAK

"What a joy it is to serve the church. The sense of call from God has never dampened along the journey."

—Judy Mills Reimer

Church of the Brethren General Board general secretary Judy Mills Reimer, announcing her retirement

Theme chosen for 2003 Conference in Boise

Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee has selected "In Jesus' Name" as the theme for the 2003 Annual Conference to be held in Boise, Idaho, with a theme text of Colossians 3:17. Harriet Finney, district co-executive for South/Central Indiana, will serve as moderator for the July 5-9 meeting.

"The question arises," says

a statement on the theme, "as we worship God with others whose language or ethnic origin, whose style of music or worship, whose political or theological understandings may differ from our own, how can we become one body? What unites us when we sound and look and act so differently from one another?"

The answer, according to the theme statement: "We are united in Jesus' name." It notes, however, that this is

not an "easy" unity accomplished by merely ignoring differences.

"Our challenge throughout this next year," the theme statement concludes, "is to experience and to know Jesus more deeply through study of the scriptures, through worship and the singing of hymns and songs, through prayer, through fellowship with one another in Jesus' name, and through 'continuing the work of Jesus... peacefully, simply, together.'"

General secretary will retire in 2003

Judy Mills Reimer has announced her retirement as general secretary of the Church of the Brethren General Board, effective at the end of her five-year contract in July 2003.

Reimer said the decision to end her journey with the General Board came after much prayer, discernment, and consultation with a spiritual director and administrative coach. She told the General Board's executive committee and staff Leadership Team in August that her time in the position has been "a calling that I love, that has energized me, that has fed me spiritually, that has challenged and stretched me in ways that I never would have dreamed."

Reimer became executive director in 1998 (changed to "general secretary" in 2001) with the charge to implement the new design of the General Board as the agency's principal administrator. Over the past four years, Reimer has maintained a balanced budget, represented the denomination in many ecumenical settings, coordinated work of the agency's various offices, and begun a comprehensive planning process slated to conclude by March 2003.

"What a joy it is to serve the church," Reimer said. "The sense of call from God has never dampened along the journey. . . . I have been happy that my life experience and skills were called out by the church in this capacity. It's a thrill to serve the church and feel at the same time that you're serving the call to be a disciple of Jesus Christ."

Reimer says she hopes to spend more time with her family and to enjoy her home near Roanoke, Va., along with other retirement projects.

A nine-person search committee consisting of the General Board's executive committee and three others will carry out the process of calling a new general secretary, using the evolving comprehensive plan. The group planned to hold its initial meeting Sept. 27-28 in New Windsor, Md.





Carl Hartman

The Brethren Volunteer Service 249th orientation unit was held July 14 to Aug. 3 in Sedalia, Colo. The participants and their work assignments are: Row 1: Gavin Young, Blacksburg, Va., to Community Mediation Center, Harrisonburg, Va.; Rebecca Martin, Lititz, Pa., to Tri-City Homeless Coalition, Fremont, Calif.; Kara Guzetti, Mantua, N.J., to Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament/Christian CND,

London, England; Sue Grubb (staff). Row 2: Shawn Allen, Corpus Christi, Texas, to Comfort House, McAllen, Texas; Emily Tulli, Mechanicsville, Va., to Church of the Brethren Washington (D.C.) Office; Hannes Kunstmann, Friedrichsthal, Germany, to Tri-City Homeless Coalition, Fremont, Calif.; Bryan Hissong, Dayton, Ohio, to Church of the Brethren Washington (D.C.) Office; Elisa Wolf, Lititz, Pa., to Human Resources Development

Council, Havre, Mont.; Kelly Degnan, Charlotte, N.C., to Quaker Cottage, Belfast, Northern Ireland; Daniel Buecker (staff); Henry Elsea, Grantsville, Md., to Community Mediation Center, Harrisonburg, Va.; Derick Bandy, New Bedford, Mass. Row 3: Melanie Hitchcock, Wichita, Kan., to International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Alkmaar, Netherlands; Mario Bindrim, Meiningen, Germany, to Bering

Omega Community Services, Houston, Texas; Ligeia Smith, Windsor Locks, Conn., to Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste, Berlin, Germany; Becky Tuttle, Quinter, Kan., to Community Family Life Services, Washington, D.C.; Manuel Buschmann, Beverstedt, Germany, to Café 458, Atlanta; and Bernd Grötrupp, Isterberg, Germany, to Su Casa Catholic Worker Community, Chicago.

BCA marks four decades of international exchange

Brethren Colleges Abroad officially marked its 40th anniversary Aug. 16, completing four decades of international study exchanges. BCA began with a single program in Marburg, Germany, and has grown to encompass 11 sites in 10 nations.

"The success of BCA over 40 years is due to the commitment of the colleges with historic ties to the Church of the Brethren and the dozens of other institutions of higher education in the US and the world that understood the importance of training young people to be global citizens," BCA president Karen Jenkins wrote in an anniversary letter.

BCA spent the past summer moving its headquarters from North Manchester, Ind., to the campus of Elizabethtown (Pa.) College. A formal



celebration of the anniversary was expected to be held this fall.

The organization is already making big plans for the upcoming years. As part of a new emphasis on peace and justice, BCA will offer programs in Belgium, Hungary, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Wales, and Australia beginning in September 2003. All will be taught in English. An international seminar for faculty and administrators will also be offered in Havana, Cuba, in January 2003, and a summer program for students will be held there later in 2003.

Summer workcamps again enjoy strong participation

Nearly 200 people participated at seven sites during the 2002 Church of the Brethren youth workcamp season. Fewer of the workcamps, sponsored by the General Board's Youth/Young Adult Ministry office, were held in 2002 due to National Youth Conference. The workcamps began in June and ran through Aug. 10.

Atlantic Northeast District, the denomination's largest, also had the most workcamp participants this year, with 38. It was followed by Mid-Atlantic, with 30, and Shenandoah, with 18. Sixteen districts had at least one participant. Congregations sending the most participants were the Akron (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, which sent 14, and University Baptist & Brethren Church in State College, Pa., which sent 12.

UPCOMINGEVENTS

Oct. 4-6 Pacific Southwest District Conference, La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren

Oct. 11-12 Atlantic Northeast District Conference, Leffler Chapel, Elizabethtown (Pa.) College; **Atlantic Southeast District Conference**, Community Church of the Brethren, Orlando, Fla.; **Mid-Atlantic District Conference**, Manassas (Va.) Church of the Brethren; **Southern Ohio District Conference**, Eaton (Ohio) Church of the Brethren

Oct. 11-14 2002 BMC Convention, "A Family Portrait: Redefining Tradition." Wisdom House Retreat Center, Litchfield, Conn.

Oct. 12-15 General Board meetings, Elgin, Ill.

Oct. 13 World Mission Sunday offering emphasis

Oct. 18-19 Middle Pennsylvania District Conference, Woodbury (Pa.) Church of the Brethren

Oct. 19 Western Pennsylvania District Conference, Conemaugh Church of the Brethren, Johnstown, Pa.

Oct. 24-27 "Preaching and Praying for Peace: A Revival of the Spirit" retreat, Camp Swatara, Bethel, Pa.

Oct. 25-26 Idaho District Conference, Nampa (Idaho) Church of the Brethren

Oct. 25-27 Bethany Theological Seminary board meetings, Richmond, Ind.

Oct. 27 Deacon Training Event for Western Pennsylvania District

South/Central Indiana District acts on Manchester decision

The South/Central Indiana District board has taken several steps in response to a fall 2001 decision by the Manchester Church of the Brethren (North Manchester, Ind.) to permit same-sex covenant services.

The district had been wrestling with the decision over the winter and spring, with many other congregations expressing concern and disagreement. In July the district board passed three items related to the Manchester situation, two of which required further action.

A "Resolution Regarding Restoration of the Relationship of the Manchester Church of the Brethren and the South/Central Indiana District" cites Annual Conference statements that speak against same-sex covenants and notes that Manchester's decision has "increasingly strained" the "connectional bonds" between Manchester and other churches in the district.

It creates a District Advisory Board that will serve from Oct. 1, 2002, through Sept. 30, 2004, including three people from Manchester and three from outside the congregation, along with a non-Brethren facilitator. The advisory board will work to reduce the risk of "fractured relationships" and begin healing, give counsel to the district board and Manchester's executive board for improving communications, provide a "connectional presence" with Manchester, and help to identify the "issues which have caused division" and name possible solutions. Manchester said it welcomed the additional conversation.

Two other items passed by the district board went on to the South/Central Indiana District conference, held Sept. 13-14 in Anderson, Ind.

After some debate, delegates accepted a "Query on Congregational Disagreement with Annual Conference Decisions." The query raises questions about the larger issue of conscience and scriptural interpretation among Brethren. It asks the 2003 Annual Conference to appoint a study committee that would "offer guidance on how congregations can disagree with Annual Conference decisions yet remain, as much as possible, in unbroken fellow-

ship with their sister congregations, including how district boards should respond in these situations."

The other business item, "Intra-District Consequences for Congregations Performing Same-Sex Covenant Ceremonies," was for district conference action only and required a two-thirds majority as a polity change. With some abstentions, it narrowly fell short of passing.

It would have required congregations that knowingly conduct same-sex covenant services to forfeit any leadership within the district for three years, barring all members of that congregation from serving on the district board or in any of its appointed offices, or from representing the district on General Board or Standing Committee.

As of late September, Manchester had not conducted any same-sex covenant services.

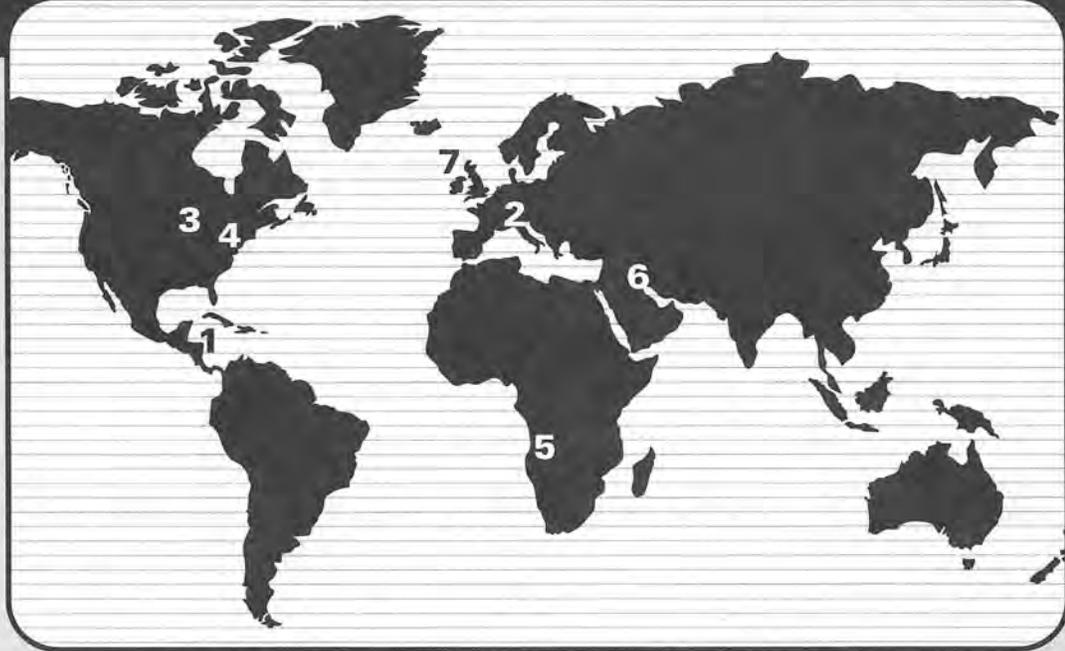
Michigan District raises new questions

The Michigan District conference was held Aug. 15-17 in Hastings, Mich., with some tension in the wake of the district board's decision to ordain Matthew Smucker, who is openly gay, early in the summer, and the subsequent Annual Conference action to not recognize the licensing or ordination of homosexual persons.

A concerned group within the district brought a petition to the conference, asking for affirmation of the Annual Conference statement and directing the district board to not license or ordain anyone who is homosexual and to discontinue any such existing licenses or ordinations. After lengthy discussion, delegates narrowly voted (42-37-1) to suspend action on the item until the 2003 district conference.

Delegates then considered a "Query for Clarification of Confusion" brought by the district board. The query, which was passed on to Annual Conference, asks for clarification on several points, including whether or not the 2002 action is polity or just a suggestion, consistency with the 1983 Human Sexuality paper, implications for district boards and ministry commissions, and other "ambiguous" language in the statement.

The 2002 Church of the Brethren district



conference season officially kicked off July 25-27 when Southern Plains held its meeting at the Big Creek Church of the Brethren in Cushing, Okla. Six other conferences were held in August, five were slated in September, eight are occurring in October, and three more fall in November, ending with Virlina's gathering Nov. 8-9 in Roanoke, Va.

New Academy program will explore leadership

A new program sponsored by the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership will invite pastors interested in earning continuing education credit to participate in an intensive process of leadership development called Advanced Foundations of Church Leadership.

Advanced Foundations will be a two-year, cohort-based experience designed to deepen the leadership capacity of pastors and church leaders. A sequence of eight four-day retreats will allow the group of 15 selected pastors/leaders to explore multiple aspects of leadership including the whole health of the leader (spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, relational); develop a working knowledge of various leadership paradigms; cultivate particular skills for leadership; and seek to apply those learnings in their congregations.

Leadership will include Bethany Theological Seminary faculty and staff, Brethren Academy staff, and additional leadership from a variety of sources. Advanced Foundations will not supply easy answers, according to Brethren Academy coordinator Jonathan Shively, but will equip participants "to act constructively in complex situations calling for their leadership."

Church leaders not serving in a pastoral role are also being welcomed to apply.

The first retreat in the new program will be held Jan. 7-10. Further details are available from the Brethren Academy, at academy@bethanyseminary.edu or 800-287-8822.

1. Honduras. A grant from the General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund sent \$3,000 to assist the Christian Commission on Development (CCD) in its continuing relief work in Honduras since Hurricane Mitch. The funds will help to provide construction materials to the communities of Nuevo Porvenir and Tablonos Arriba.

2. Geneva, Switzerland. Becky Ullom of Wiley, Colo., who recently completed a Brethren Volunteer Service term as coordinator of the 2002 National Youth Conference, served as a steward for the World Council of Churches Central Committee summer meetings. About 40 young adult stewards from around the world participated in the Aug. 15-Sept. 5 program.

3. Chicago. Church of the Brethren members Cliff Kindy and Rick Polhamus took part in a Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) 170-mile walk from Chicago to Peoria, Ill., in July, marching from Boeing headquarters to Caterpillar's main office to protest that the equipment manufactured by those companies is "being used to kill children," according to Kindy.

4. Washington, D.C. Dale Brown of Elizabethtown, Pa., and Kim McDowell of Hyattsville, Md., represented the Church of the Brethren in an international consultation Aug. 5-6 on "Beyond September 11: Implications for US Churches and the World." Sponsored by the World Council of

Churches, the consultation was convened to invite a broad spectrum of Christians from US and global churches to reflect together on the role churches have played in response to Sept. 11.

5. Angola. A container bearing 553 cartons of canned chicken produced by the Southern Pennsylvania and Mid-Atlantic districts left the Brethren Service Center warehouse in New Windsor, Md., Aug. 13 headed for Angola's Bie' Province in continuing support of internally displaced people. The shipment also held five large cartons of used computer hardware donated at the request of partner agency ShareCircle for its Angola staff, continuing a stream of relief being sent from the center and its partners to the African nation.

6. Iraq. The Brethren Witness office in August encouraged Brethren to send petitions to President George W. Bush, asking him to stem the increasing talk of war against Iraq. A video of the General Board's December delegation to Iraq and paintings done by Iraqi artists were also offered as resources to those supporting the anti-war effort.

7. Northern Ireland. A reunion and "thank-you event" for those who served in Northern Ireland through Brethren Volunteer Service since projects began there 30 years ago, and for the projects and people who have hosted them, was organized by the BVS Europe office and held Sept. 6 in Belfast.

Joining God's mission

by Mervin Keeney

A reflection on why and how we do mission

It was a time of devastating famine and life-threatening hunger. As a part of our health work among Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees, we were distrib-

The core message of Christian faith calls us to participate in God's mission to the world.

uting cans of beef that had been lovingly donated and shipped to this area of need. The words "Given in the name of Jesus Christ" on the can label reflected the good will and faith of sisters and brothers who had labored over bloody carcasses and hot stoves. The refugees were curious about the label. When

we told them what it said, many refused the meat even though they and their children desperately needed the protein. Was it fear, or suspicion, in their eyes? We knew that most of these refugees were Muslims, but we were stunned at the response. The obvious quick fix, removing the label, did not solve the dilemma.

Although this event happened in the mid-1980s in eastern Sudan, the events of Sept. 11 have caused me to reflect, again, on this bump in the road of mission. For me, this mission experience has a parable-like character that provokes reflection even today.

The church bases its center and mission in the life and teachings of Christ. "What is the greatest com-

mandment?" the legal scholar asked. Jesus answered, "Love God wholeheartedly, and love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:37). Jesus linked the vertical and horizontal dimensions—love of God and love for those around us. As we read later passages speaking to *who is my neighbor* and *as you have done it to the least of these*, we gain clearer understanding of what Jesus meant. Christ's call is to new relationship with God and those around us.

From our earliest beginnings, the Brethren movement sought to recreate the early Christian community and live among our neighbors based on these words of Christ and the New Testament. In the colonial days we used a para-



The Church of the Brethren supports the Women's Development Center at EYN Headquarters near Mubi, Nigeria. Godiya Philemon, foreground, assistant director for the center, helps Nigerian women to knit, a skill that will help them be self-supporting.

in the Church of the Brethren

phrase of this Matthew text, "For the glory of God and my neighbor's good," to define our identity and mission. I like to think of it as the first Brethren identity line.

Christ's words clarifying the heart of his message speak not only to the meaning of faithful discipleship, but direct us to serve, feed, clothe, and share God's love with others in word and action. We see that mission is not an add-on to a faithful life, if we have the time or money. Mission is rooted at the center of our faith. The core message of Christian faith calls us to participate in God's mission to the world.

What does mission look like today in the Church of the Brethren? As Christians, we seek to base our efforts in the words and

actions of Jesus. Christ-centered mission, seeking to be in mission in Christ's way, prompts concern for both people's human well-being and their spiritual wholeness.

Since Christ's message interweaves the spiritual and physical, our mission efforts seek to be holistic and multifaceted. Early India and Nigeria missions sought to assist street orphans and establish schools and health ministries alongside preaching and evangelism efforts. Ministries in Nigeria included a wells and health program as well as training of pastors at Kulp Bible College. And today in the Dominican Republic, our mission efforts include community development work to help grow the local economy and enable persons

to feed themselves alongside efforts to equip Dominican pastors for ministry and church growth.

Having sought first to be faithful to Christ, denominational mission efforts have been empowered by God beyond anything we could have envisioned or anticipated. Brethren initiatives like Heifer Project have grown beyond their Brethren roots and have gained broader support and existence in the wider Christian community. In Nigeria, the Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria—EYN (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) is known for its evangelistic outreach, and has grown larger than the church in America. The belief that God will continue to work through us, and empower us when we are faithful,



Courtesy India Brethren

Merv Keeney's welcome at the Champavadi high school operated by the India Brethren included the traditional garlands of flowers. His efforts to bring reconciliation between the India Brethren and the Church of North India, and the request of the India Brethren to be recognized, prompted several visits among the churches in India.

might be seen in the ambitious move in 2001 to work with Brazilians to start the Church of the Brethren in that nation.

Just as Christ was incarnated in human form, mission is embodied. People must be willing to physically go to serve in the congregational soup kitchen or the international

annual assembly of the Nigerian church in April, declaring that, "Love is in the feet." Paul's travel to Nigeria and his presence among them conveyed God's love in a tangible, authentic way.

Our style of mission has been characterized with words like partnership, mutuality, solidarity, and accompaniment. Rather than seeking to build empires or be in control, Brethren mission history has been full of giving ourselves away for the gospel. There are numerous examples of Brethren involvements without seeking recognition, by inviting ecumenical or local persons to assume leadership, and by encouraging congregations arising from mission efforts in Ecuador and India to form united national churches. Recent mission efforts like Brazil began in partnership with local church leaders, reflecting

mutual respect and trust.

For Brethren, mission is also characterized by a spirit of openness and cooperation. At our best, Brethren are rooted in our heritage, yet not bound by it. While we deeply hold our beliefs and commitments, our humble awareness that we do not have all the truth leads us to work together with other Christians and to be open to work with others who might have differing theological stances or practices. This open approach is an important factor on the mission field, where there is more ecumenical cooperation than in our communities in the United States.

An attitude of learning also seeks to draw upon gains from the wider Christian mission movement and not reinvent the wheel. Our willingness to learn from others while being open to new leadings of the Spirit keeps us growing in mission. The mission of the church is not a finished business, not a completed act, but a continuing call.

As the head of denominational mission efforts, I would name a few mission challenges. First, there are too few persons willing to say, like Isaiah, "Here am I, send me." Although the church does not ask for a lifetime commitment for overseas mission service as it once

The mission of the church is not a finished business, not a completed act, but a continuing call!

mission effort of the denomination. This reality moves mission from the symbolic to the tangible—from lofty phrases in the pew to the risk of malaria and diarrhea. Toma Ragnjiya, president of EYN, expressed appreciation for moderator Paul Grout's presence at the

did, too few of our members are willing to offer two, four, or even six years of mission service. We have accepted that all baptized believers in the church are ministers, even if we are still learning to fully live that reality. Since the call to participate in God's mission is at the core of the gospel message, are not all baptized believers also called to be missionaries?

Another challenge arises from shifts toward increased short-term mission involvements (see "Better mission trips" on page 20). As fewer long-term mission staff are serving and an increasing amount of short-term visits and workcamps are sponsored, we run the risk of losing depth of mission engagement, resulting in "mission lite." While trips serve as an entry point or connection to mission, by themselves these short-term involvements may be superficial and may play into US

consumerism. All of us have met persons who became "experts" from six days in Central America. Short-term mission can become merely "consumption" of an exotic location made possible by economic disparities. Adequate preparation, experi-

enced and culturally grounded leadership, and connection to deeper and more lasting mission relationships are key to ensuring that short-term events build God's mission.

Long-term mission staff grounded in language and culture not only



Church World Service



Church of the Brethren mission joins the wider Christian community, extending our reach around the world, including to these Afghani girls, through Church World Service.

Marcos Inhauser, left, national director for the Church of the Brethren in Brazil, prays over the communion elements at the inaugural worship service for the first Church of the Brethren congregation established in Brazil. Igreja da Irmandade was established on May 20, 2001, in Campinas.



David Sollenberger

Two Nuer in southern Sudan eagerly receive the first Bible in their own language after nearly a decade of translation work. Many US members found this mission project to be meaningful, too.

The faithful, effective mission activities of the next generation will emerge from our direct mission involvement today and reflection on that work in the light of God's spirit.

do the less glamorous but essential work of forming new communities of faith and calling and preparing persons for leadership, they develop the continuing relationships with indigenous leadership that are essential for true partnership. Our long-term relationships with Christians and churches are vital as a platform for short-term engagements, by helping to inform and add integrity to brief visits.

Over the years our members have debated the balance, or emphasis, of service and missions. This debate sidetracks us from

doing either with energy. If we recognize, with the writer of Ephesians 4:11, that *some are called to be teachers and others called to be evangelists*, it is not surprising that some of us are more drawn to one aspect of mission than another. I would encourage us to engage in mission where we feel called, and to put heart and energy into that aspect of God's mission. We need not convince everyone else that our calling to feed the hungry, or to evangelize, is the most important.

If mission is rooted at the core of

our faith and energized by God's spirit at work among us, we are prompted to act. The gospel directive for mission is bold, like the athletic commercial—"Just do it!" Some have felt this imperative gives permission to do whatever they want, without preparation or guidance. We need to take seriously the strong call, yet shape our efforts by building on the mission experience and wisdom both within our denomination and among the wider Christian community in the world.

As we look to the future, there are both questions and challenges before us. People need and want connection with mission beyond their check in the offering plate. They rightly observe that participating in God's mission has transforming and renewing effects. We are only beginning to find ways to enable this desired participation by a larger portion of our membership, so that both those who can go and those who remain in the community can be transformed by involvement in the mission of the church.

The most recent denominational mission philosophy statement (1989) called congregations to see their community as a prime mission field. Some congregations have taken up the challenge by responding to homelessness or by starting new fellowships of believers. How can we encourage and lift up each other as congregations, and as a denomination, so the work will be lighter and we can share the learn-

ings and joys?

We are beginning to see ourselves as a global church. The international churches were more visible at our Annual Conference and National Youth Conference this year. What changes in our sense of identity arise from seeing the Church of the Brethren with a different face? Who are we now?

Our church will need to change to meet the 21st century. Older models of mission are giving way to the new. Emerging technologies open new doors. While faithfully doing as much mission as God

empowers us to do, let us encourage a healthy dialog about *how* we do mission as a denomination, both in our communities and around the world. The faithful, effective mission activities of the next generation will emerge from our direct mission involvement today and reflection on that work in the light of God's spirit.

If you have been pondering the meaning of the canned beef story, great! Much like Jesus' parables, this story both reveals and hides. We may need to struggle to find its meaning for us in a post-9/11

world. The questions invite us to join God's mission and find next steps for faithful response. 

Merv Keeney has served the General Board in various mission-related assignments for more than 20 years. Positions he has held include coordinator for Brethren Volunteer Service and mission staff recruitment; overseas mission staff—medical administrator for Eastern Sudan Relief Program, Sudan Council of Churches; and representative for Africa and the Middle East. Currently, he is director for Global Mission Partnerships, heading the cluster of General Board ministries in mission, service, and witness. Keeney is also the denominational representative for Church World Service and the National Council of Churches of Christ. In August, he participated in the CWS team to the Middle East region as a component of its global partnership study.

Inspire hearts for mission with these resources

Inspire mission discussion in your family, youth group, adult class, or congregation with the piece "What Will God Raise Out of the Ashes?" The four-color brochure describes the impact of the US Church of the Brethren's \$18,000 love offering on the Kano EYN (Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria—Church of the Brethren in Nigeria).

Impressed by the faithfulness of the Kano congregation, which has endured the burning down of its building twice from Muslim rioting in the 1990s and again last year, the US church has reached out in support and sympathy. In October 2001, six members of the church were killed.

The brochure details the presentation of the love gift by a US delegation in April. On that occasion, the Rev. Matthew Abdulahi, pastor of the Kano

church, said, "We are very grateful for the effort made to come visit us and the spirit of love and sympathy shown to us. The money will be used to help purchase a safer site to rebuild the church." EYN and the US Church of the Brethren have been in partnership for almost 80 years.

Also available is a poster from the July 2002 MESSENGER highlighting mission workers in Nigeria.

To order either item in quantity, contact Janis Pyle, coordinator for mission connections for the General Board, at 800-323-8039, ext. 227.

Other available resources include:

Map. A copy of the map in this issue, "Where in the world is the Church of the Brethren?" will be sent to each church through the

Source packet. Additional copies are available from the Funding and Global Mission Partnerships offices.

Article. "Sudan: Hungry for Peace" is the latest in the *Facts Have Faces* series from Church World Service. The six-page pictorial treatment gives background on the conflict, describes how oil fuels the violence, cites glimmers of hope, and lists resources. To order bulk copies at 20 cents each (prepaid) contact CWS, P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515 (800-297-1516).

Videos. *When Freedom? Sudan in Captivity* (22 min.) puts in context the decades of repression and suffering of the Sudanese people. \$19.95 from Brethren Press.

New Sudan Council of Churches: All God's People (20

min.) interprets the work of the council and its member churches in southern Sudan. David Sollenberger is the producer. \$9.95 from Brethren Press.

Iraq: Behind "Enemy" Lines (16 min) reports on the December 2001 visit by a Church of the Brethren delegation to religious groups, health officials, and social agencies in Iraq. For a free copy, contact the Brethren Witness office.

Brethren Volunteer Service (35 min.). To be released this fall is a composite video featuring general coverage of BVS projects, a youth recruitment spot, a report on training and placements for older adult volunteers, and the 50th anniversary of BVS. Contact the BVS office.

Doing global mission with a dancing heart

by Janis Pyle

There are many ways to connect. Find what's

A story comes to mind when I hear the question: “How do I find the right global mission connection for me (or for my family, congregation, or district)?”

Strangely enough, though the story is about finding the right pair of shoes, it also holds the key questions to finding the perfect fit for a mission commitment.

During free time in June before Annual Conference in Louisville, Ky., I asked Kwanye Ragnjiya, whose husband, Toma, is president of EYN (Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria—Church of the Brethren in Nigeria), what she would really like to do while in the United States. Go shoe shopping was the immediate answer. At a Payless Shoe Store, she first used standard criteria in making her decisions:

Are they my size? Are they my style? Do they fit?

But before she made a purchase, she gave the pairs one more test. She tried dancing, moving, swinging, and swaying in them—right there in the store. Could she move with them? Could they move with her? “I have to dance them,” she said simply. Her shoes had to be more than comfortable; they had to make her want to dance.

There are three main ways to become involved in global mission through the Church of the Brethren General Board—actually going to another country, giving your money or material resources, or praying for a specific mission family or project. As you ponder the nature and level of your involvement, you might ask your-

self these test questions: What calling can I undertake with deep conviction and great joy? What country, project, or program draws me in and makes me want to dance?

Go. Opportunities abound to make a difference by doing service projects and sharing your faith in other countries. Commit a time of service in mission:

- Consider, first and foremost, long-term assignments. People who learn language and culture in multi-year service are the heart of the General Board’s global ministries. Keep apprised of current openings through the Global Mission Partnerships office or the Human Resources office. Although some positions require a bachelor’s or seminary degree, others rely heavily



Mimi Copp Pukuma still treasures the memories from teaching at the EYN Secondary School near Mubi, Nigeria.

right for you.

on life experience. Patty and John Crumley and children from Polo, Ill., make their home in Jos, Nigeria. Patty, a music teacher at Hillcrest School there, found the ad for her position in MESSENGER. It was in this magazine that she read the description of her ideal job. She fell so in love with the particulars of the work that she pursued the opportunity even after she realized it was in another country.

- Apply to Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS), where there are ample opportunities to serve abroad as well as in the United States. International projects call for a two-year commitment. Volunteers are currently doing projects that further peace and justice in countries such as France, Germany, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom,

Japan, Honduras, Guatemala, and Northern Ireland. BVS assignments are often life-changing experiences. For example, Mimi Copp Pukuma, Philadelphia, Pa., met her future husband while on assignment teaching at the EYN Secondary School in Mubi, Nigeria. She was there from 1998 to 2000. She said, "Teaching gave me the chance for cultural exchange. By actually living in another culture and nurturing understanding, true peacemaking can occur." Outside of the school setting, there were many things that she will never forget. She remembers "the beautiful colored cloth, the dancing, the singing, the drumming, the little children running up and saying 'heel-loo,' and the spectacular scenery." She added, "The Nigerian people were so very open

and sharing. As soon as you entered someone's home, you were treated as a friend but also as an honored guest."

- Be part of Faith Expeditions or a Nigeria workcamp. In February, Jim Hardenbrook, pastor of the Nampa (Idaho) Church of the

Opportunities abound to make a difference by doing service projects and sharing your faith in other countries.

Brethren, went on a two-week expedition to southern (sometimes called New) Sudan to learn more about the war-torn country and to stand in solidarity with the people.



On a recent Faith Expedition, Jim Hardenbrook preached at an English language service at the All Saints Cathedral in Maridi in southern Sudan.

He said of this experience: "The Sudan Faith Expedition put me in contact with Christians who are directly dependent on God. When they pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' it is not symbolic. It is real. These people, in spite of all they endure, have decided that

Finally, choose your mission involvements carefully; be moved by the spirit of opportunity rather than duty.

Jesus Christ is the foundation upon which they will build their lives. I saw what it means to trust God, and I was significantly transformed by the encounter. There are ways the Church of the Brethren can be of service to the church in New Sudan, but the people there need to

teach us how to trust God. In this realm, they are the experts." With Hardenbrook's encouragement, in October 2001 the Idaho District made a decade-long commitment to the people of New Sudan.

- Participate in the denomination's disaster response ministries. Take training to care for children at natural disaster or aviation incident locations through the Disaster Child Care program. Repair and rebuild homes, no matter what your skill level, through the Disaster Response program. Or develop a fund-raising project for the Emergency Disaster Fund, which provides the support needed for volunteers to respond to disasters in the US and abroad. Becoming involved in disaster response often places people at the site of events in national or international news.

Gwen Brumbaugh Keeney of Elgin, Ill., a nurse/educator, still keeps a small teddy bear as a comfort and as a reminder of her involvement in Disaster Child Care at Ground Zero last September.

Give. Both money and material items are needed:

- Support new church planting mission by a gift to the Emerging Global Mission Fund. Begun in 2001, the fund is supporting the church planting efforts in Brazil led by Marcos Inhauser. Five new congregations have been spawned there from generous member support.

- Use the World Mission Offering

emphasis materials in this issue. Post the world map on your home bulletin board and encourage your church leaders to also use it. Whether or not your congregation participates in the offering, the materials are valuable resources about the church's mission in the world.

- Participate in a relief package project to engage members of all ages. Packing school kits and other aid packages involves a wider segment of the congregation and offers a memorable and tangible sense of connection with the recipients.

- Revive the 2¢-a-Meal campaign in your family. Keep track of meals that you eat and set aside 2 cents for each one; give that amount regularly to the Global Food Crisis Fund.

Pray. As important as going and giving is a commitment to prayer for General Board mission projects. Some ideas for you:

- Focus on a mission worker or mission field for a year—Nigeria, Sudan, Dominican Republic, Brazil, or Vietnam. Pray for that person or persons, send greeting cards at their birthdays and holidays, read their mission newsletters, and support the mission financially. Janet Tubbs, co-mission coordinator in Nigeria, raised an important point: "Even if you cannot send money, please pray. Prayer does make a difference, especially when you are in a land where there are many diseases and dangers."



Kwanye Ragnjiya, shown speaking to the Church of the Brethren General Board in Elgin, is a teacher in Nigeria. She is also actively involved in women's fellowship groups.

A unique opportunity has opened up for people in the Church of the Brethren to be part of a prayer/financial support group for Grace Mishler of New Paris, Ind., a mission worker in Vietnam. Her healing ministry of presence in Vietnam as a social worker/teacher is jointly sponsored by the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and our denomination. Alice Archer, pastor of the Mt. Pleasant Church of the Brethren, Bourbon, Ind., is leading the effort to undergird Mishler's work developing a practicum course on "Social Awareness of People with Disabilities" for third-year sociology students at National Vietnam University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Ho Chi Minh City.

- To help your prayer have focus and depth, learn about the various forms of mission work: church planting, sister church partnerships, and BVS programs.

- Encourage your church leaders to add a one-month segment on mission to your church school program each year and to invite missionaries and BVS workers to

come and share their stories. Many successful mission events have been initiated by parishioners.

- Request mission materials available for study from the office of Global Mission Partnerships.
- Encourage the youth in your family or in your church youth group to go on a workcamp to another country. Or, if that is not possible, suggest that they begin a correspondence relationship with a volunteer in BVS or mission worker; they will learn about what the volunteers are doing and the challenges they face. Create opportunities for the youth to share with the congregation what they are learning.

Finally, choose your mission involvements carefully; be moved by the spirit of opportunity rather than duty. Ask yourself the question that will help you sustain long-term commitment: Where can I connect with a spirit of joy, peace, and, of course, a dancing heart? 

Janis Pyle is coordinator for mission connections, Global Mission Partnerships, for the General Board. Contact her at 800-323-8039, ext. 227.



Patty Crumley, a music teacher, found her perfect job—in Jos, Nigeria—from a MESSENGER ad.

Better mission trips

by Walt Wiltschek

Overcoming the shortcomings of short-term mission

David Radcliff



How many church work groups does it take to have an impact on foreign culture? Possibly just one. The bigger question, though: What kind of impact will it be?

These volunteer work groups or “short-term mission trips,” as they’re often known, have been both the blessing and the bane of area mission coordinators and mission executives. Done well, they can have rich benefits for both those who travel to the land and those who live there. Done poorly, they can have harmful repercussions of dependency and parochialism.

Most trend-watchers expect such trips, like restricted giving to special mission projects, are here to stay. People are increasingly seeking hands-on involvement and con-

nection with church mission beyond having visiting missionaries come to their congregations.

That leaves denominational staff and organizers of such trips with the challenge of channeling this interest and energy constructively, helping the short-term augment the long-term. In the Church of the Brethren, these efforts have taken the shape of denominationally sponsored opportunities like Faith Expeditions, workcamps to Nigeria, and youth and young adult summer workcamps, as well as many congregation- and district-sponsored trips.

So, what makes such trips good and constructive ones? Following are some suggestions from those who have been through the process:

Welcome! Susan Chapman, left, and Nan Erbaugh, center—participants in a recent Faith Expedition—are greeted by a parishioner at the All Saints Cathedral at Maridi in southern Sudan. The US group learned firsthand the plight of the people in a war-torn land.



At a workcamp in the Dominican Republic, Kendra Zimmerman of Myerstown, Pa., not only worked in but learned about another culture.

Examine motives.

Why do you want to go? At their worst, short-term mission trips have sometimes been called “religious tourism,” with Americans spending money that could be used to provide real help simply to fly to an exotic locale and see poor people firsthand. At their best, the trips convey partnership, caring, and the love of Christ.

In a December 2001 article in *The Christian Century*, international photographer Paul Jeffrey writes that “North Americans often come seeking the emotional rewards of hands-on involvement rather than a way to make an investment in long-term empowerment.”

Many in the field suggest that the emphasis should be less on helping and more on learning, encouraging those who come to visit to evaluate their own attitudes, biases, and assumptions.

“These experiences, whether giving money or giving one’s sweat

and time, can be quite self-congratulatory,” cautions David Radcliff, director of Brethren Witness for the General Board. “We can take too much satisfaction in helping ‘those poor people,’ whoever they are. . . . Think about your motives. Are you going to change others, or are you open to how God may be seeking to change you by this experience?”

Plan wisely.

General Board Global Mission Partnerships director Merv Keeney says problems can often arise when a congregation “sees a church down the street doing something, and they say, ‘Oh! Let’s do that!’”

With the best of intentions, such groups can charge in to a country and end up causing problems by distributing resources inequitably, ignoring systems already in place, visiting the same communities too often, and not understanding the range of dynamics in a given region.

Only organizations that have a history in the country, people working in the region, and partnerships with local agencies can provide that framework, according to church leaders.

“It’s so important to work with an umbrella organization that has the bigger picture,” Radcliff says. “When thinking of a trip, it is very important to seek the guidance of local organizations that we trust and who share our values.”

The General Board last fall hired Janis Pyle as coordinator of mission connections, in part to help congregations and others obtain this guidance and background. Pyle affirms that in her work so far she has found that Brethren “want to feel connected. They want a concrete result or interaction,” meeting the “real people” behind the news stories.

The Global Mission Partnerships office stands ready to assist with “our on-the-ground people and resources (congregations) can plug

into and use,” says Keeney. “We’re open to work with them and lend the expertise of our missionaries and long-term relationships.”

Learn the culture.

Nothing frustrates local mission coordinators more than groups who arrive on a short-term trip without having read any advance materials sent to them. Missionaries—most of whom spend many hours preparing for a group’s visit—tell

Van Engen wrote in *The Other Side* magazine. “Read as much as you can about the people and culture. Find out what some of the problems are. . . . Show respect for people by knowing something about their lives before you arrive.”

Jim Myer, director of Brethren Revival Fellowship’s Brethren Mission Fund and leader of numerous mission trips, says that a series of letters are sent out to participants in advance of their trips, giving

tural issues, language, history and economic background, and other topics. Radcliff has prepared a list of “The 13 R’s,” such as remaining with the group, rejecting the temptation to give gifts, and recalling the example of Jesus, to guide those traveling to other cultures.

“Just because we can travel to a place . . . and even though we come from a more technologically advanced society, we still know precious little about their culture and local politics,” Radcliff says.

Respect the hosts.

This follows naturally from the previous point, as preparation beforehand will facilitate respectful interaction once groups are at the site. Most groups don’t set out seeking to have detrimental effects, but it can happen nonetheless.

“Because short-term groups often want to solve problems quickly, they can make third-world Christians feel incapable of doing things on their own,” Van Engen writes.

“Outside groups can unintentionally destroy a community’s cohesion and sense of empowerment.”

This can be particularly true when financial gifts are involved, as gifts immediately create an imbalance of power. Mission staff say donations are almost always best distributed through larger funds and/or local agencies, who can distribute the resources evenly and where they are most needed.

What people of developing countries do need from short-term groups, according to Van Engen, are “more humble people who are open and willing to share in their lives and struggles” rather than people who come with all the answers. Radcliff terms it “relationships based more on mutuality and a recognition of what both sides bring to the friendship.”



In Reynosa, Mexico, Church of the Brethren workcampers Eric Bohannon of Dayton, Ohio; Leah Eshelman of Lititz, Pa.; and Lindsay Tennis of Lititz, Pa., had an opportunity to explore God's calling on their lives.

stories of those who have come with no knowledge of the language, no understanding of the culture, and no real inclination to learn.

When that occurs, any deep value of the trip is likely doomed from the start.

“Preparing for your trip means more than packing your suitcase and getting your shots,” Jo Ann

information about living conditions, things to take, and what life will be like on the project. A get-together featuring a meal typical of one served in the destination country is scheduled several weeks before the trip to provide additional education.

Likewise, Global Mission Partnerships trip participants receive information on cross-cul-



Bootwashing

One cloudy summer day, a few of our men poured a sidewalk and extended the loading/unloading area outside of the entrance to our new education wing. I wasn't really dressed for concrete work, but I did have my yellow rubber boots at church, so I pulled them on and tried to help.

It has been a while since I helped to pour concrete, so I was clumsy and sloppy, splashing concrete on myself and on others—mostly on others. Ed, our concrete expert, pleaded with great restraint, "Please don't do that."

Since I was one of two with rubber boots, Ed suggested that I could stand right in the unfinished concrete where I could better push and pull the excess into place as Dean and Ed leveled it off.

I didn't quite "get" Ed's meaning, or I wasn't thinking, and I walked right through a section that they had already leveled off. With a hint of humor, someone chided, "Not in the finished cement!" Ed filled in the holes I had made and smoothed them off. Everyone kept working with good humor—or they kept their irritation to themselves.

We pushed and pulled the concrete into place, leveled it off and floated it smooth as it began to rain. We cleaned up the tools that we were finished using as we waited for the rain to stop and the concrete to set up. Henry brought out sodas for all the workers.

I went to wash the cement off of my yellow boots. Dean hurried over and said, "You don't want to splash that stuff on your good clothes. Let me do that." It was true that I hoped to stay clean enough for a meeting that night, so I stood back and let Dean wash the cement off of my boots.

And I thought, as I watched him, of Jesus at his last supper with his disciples, loving them despite their mortal clumsiness, their thoughtlessness, their shortcomings, and their sins.

As Dean knelt there washing my boots, I thought of Jesus kneeling to wash his disciples' feet, and afterwards urging them, "If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (John 13:14-15).

Thank God for the way Christ loves and cares, sustains, supports, and ministers to us through our sisters and brothers in the faith. —Tim Sollenberger Morphew

Tim Sollenberger Morphew is pastor of Bethany Church of the Brethren, New Paris, Ind.



Workcampers Cortney Hudak, left, and Jan Havemann, both of Lititz, Pa., get acquainted with Alejandra Gonzales, second from left, and a friend in Reynosa, Mexico.

Group members who take the time to learn and share often find they receive much more than they give. In settings where people seemingly have very little, groups often find people who have a great deal of richness in their faith.

Jeffrey, in his writing, relates the thoughts of Honduran peasant leader Toribio Dubon, who expressed gratitude for a group that finally came down in the spirit of being equals. Dubon summed up the experience by saying, "We felt blessed by their presence beside us."

Follow up with action.

As with many spiritually powerful experiences, the challenge lies in keeping that spirit going once participants return home. Jeffrey calls it converting "emotional experience into action."

Part of that lies in continuing learning and education. Van Engen says that "too often the students return home simply counting the blessings they have as North Americans, having gained little insight into the causes of poverty and what can be done to alleviate them." She notes that becoming "involved as a global Christian" should follow such trips.

Radcliff says he tries to create such opportunities for Faith Expedition travelers, connecting them to related points of denominational mission such as the Global Food Crisis Fund or other General Board ministries

and providing additional interpretive materials. He also urges them to express their views to their congressional representatives, and to share their stories with their own congregations and others in the area.

For Myer, short-term trips offer a chance for people—especially youth and young adults—to explore God's calling in their lives. They "let people try a short experience before entering into a more extensive mission endeavor," he says.

Supporting the underlying structures that enable such trips is key as well, according to Keeney. Such programs could not exist, he says, without the less glamorous administration and support—"the core operation"—that a larger agency or organization supplies.

"When we do short-term things," Keeney says, "they are resting on and relying on long-term relationships and involvements. That's essential."

Short-term trips require that underpinning, they require expense, they require time and energy, and they require an openness to learn and grow. In short, they require a great deal of effort both on this end and in the country visited.

As Van Engen sums up, however, "Short-term missions can be worth every penny if they mark the beginning of a long-term relationship." 

Walt Wiltschek is manager of news services for the General Board.

Looking back on NYC

With suggestions on how to keep the spirit alive

by Jim Yaussy Albright

It was a privilege to be at National Youth Conference last month. To be honest, I wasn't looking forward to the trip. I had already been away from home quite a bit, and as a

I became aware as I watched those NYC celebrations of how removed it all felt from the "real church."

district advisor I wasn't sure what my responsibilities would be. But with the very good help of the other district advisors, Aaron and Heidi Gerdes, a great group of Illinois/Wisconsin youth, and dedicated advisors from our various congregations, our trip to Colorado and back went very smoothly. And the experience of NYC itself turned out to be just what I needed.

It was energizing. In fact, the overwhelming impression I got at NYC was of energy. I could feel it everywhere, but it was most visible in the worship experiences. We had

worship two times every day, morning and evening. These weren't "sit still and be quiet" worship services, although there were moments that called for that. No, worship was the opportunity to celebrate the new community you found yourself in, to be enthusiastic about the new thing God is doing, to feel awed and empowered by Christ's call on your life—on your own personal life!—and to be passionate and very serious about the opportunities for service and ministry that can truly change the world. And to do it all LOUDLY! And to put your whole self into it.

It was difficult not to contrast my experience at NYC with Annual Conference. To be fair, Annual Conference is on a yearly schedule designed to maintain the flow for the long haul, and NYC has four years to gear up for a once-in-a-lifetime Happening. And, to be fair, NYC doesn't have to bear the responsibility of getting the business of the church done in a timely manner, which often leads to a sense of frustration and anxiety, if not contentiousness, at Annual Conference. But for me, after NYC, that raises

the question: What is the real business of the church?

I wish we could transfer some of that NYC spirit and energy and optimism to Annual Conference. We might start with something small, like the "Preach It" wave, an NYC tradition. Let's say the preacher's name is Paul. The hall is divided into three sections, and at a signal they do the wave through all three sections, with each section shouting in turn at the top of their lungs, "PREACH...IT...PAUL!!!" That alone could have a positive effect on Annual Conference.

The old saw has it that the youth are "the future of the church." That's wrong. The truth is that the youth are a vital part of the church now. We are beginning to understand that but we are still denying ourselves great spiritual energy by denying our youth a real, vital place in the church. Some might argue that NYC is their place. And that's just it. Are we trying to keep them "in their place"? I became aware as I watched those NYC celebrations of how removed it all felt from the "real church." I don't mean it was irrelevant to the church; quite the contrary. In fact, I believe it was



Youth at NYC tap into energy of Brethren band Wake-Up Call's evening concert.

more relevant than much of what we experience in our congregations. And I don't mean that the youth don't know the reality of the churches they are a part of; they most assuredly do. What I mean is that I had the sense that this one time, once every four years, in a controlled environment, is the only time that youth have permission to really let go, be themselves, and express their own unfettered spirituality.

I don't think that was ever any-

one's intent, but I wonder if our attitudes haven't made it so nevertheless. The organizers of NYC are well aware of this, I think, and time was spent as the week wore down to help the youth get ready for the return to the real world back home, a world that might not understand what they had experienced, and might even try to turn down the level of energy and enthusiasm that they bring home with them. Yes, so it has always been, even when I

came home from NYC in 1966.

But this is a new day, and a different church. The church is now struggling to become new to meet the new day, and we need our youth now more than ever. The irony is that we are losing them more than ever before. That's a tragedy, not so much for the young people—they will find Christ and his followers in the world if not in our churches—but for us.

Here are some suggestions:

DIVERSIFICATION

Is your church on a well-balanced diet?

Having a diversified investment strategy may help your congregation stay healthy and strong through varying market conditions. Getting the information you need about

different investment options that will provide the income you need today and the growth you need for tomorrow is critical to making good stewardship decisions about your church's financial resources.

To learn more about the value of long-term planning and diversification for your church investments, request your free *Asset Management for Congregations* video for use by your stewardship or investment committee. Call toll-free 888-311-6530, or return the reply card above.



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- If you haven't given time to your youth yet to share an NYC report, please do. And consider giving them an entire Sunday morning worship service, rather than 10 minutes between the sharing time and the offering. Consider also building in time for people to ask questions of the youth who were there, about NYC itself, but more importantly, about how NYC changed their lives.

- If your congregation didn't send youth to NYC, consider inviting the youth from another congregation to come give their report at your church. You need to know what happened, and if there are any youth at all in your congregation, they need to know, too.

- If you don't have a regular Youth Sunday each year, consider planning for one. And then consider this: how about a quarterly Youth Sunday? How about monthly? How about a regular Youth Break in

your worship service for youth to bring to you their ideas and experiences, their needs, and their hopes and dreams for the church?

- Many churches have a hard time maintaining a regular youth group when numbers dwindle. Consider a cooperative youth group that combines the youth—and adult leadership and financial resources—from several congregations in a region.

- Take a youth to lunch. Or several. Simply get to know the youth of the church on an individual basis. It's a ministry that works both ways.

- Finally, take an active interest in your district youth program. Invite your district youth cabinet to your congregation to share what's happening in the district. Or offer to host a meeting, or even a youth retreat. Get to know your district youth advisors. Volunteer to be a camp counselor, or an

adult advisor. My personal advice is to begin now to plan to be one of the advisors from our district that will have the great fortune to go to NYC 2006.

I have heard congregations say, "we don't have any youth." Most times it was a real lament, an expression of loss. Well, here's the good news for every congregation: You have at least 4,000 youth—and those are just the ones who were able to go to NYC! Our youth do not belong to individual congregations. They are a gift of God to all of us and to the whole church. I urge you to find ways to bring them more and more into the life of your congregation. And I urge you to let them show you more and more how to enter into that place of energy, enthusiasm, hope, and life that is Christ's ever-new, ever-young Church. **AM**

Jim Yaussy Albright is district minister for the District of Illinois and Wisconsin.

BRETHRENING

The dilemma

I sat fidgeting in my seat as the meeting lumbered on. Details regarding important decisions, implications which needed in-depth discussion, videos to view which were helpful and informative—all were necessary aspects of this business session. But this meeting, which typically ended much earlier, had continued beyond my anticipation and I was in a dilemma.

Earlier that afternoon I had pulled away from my screaming four-year-old, hopped into my car, and driven off. Throughout this busy month he had frequently watched me leave and it hadn't mattered much to him. However, today he had had enough. Too many times he'd heard "goodbye" and "I'll be home later." Too many "I love you but I have to go's" left him frustrated in the care of another.

And so I made a promise as I pulled away—one which I probably shouldn't have made, but one which was made nonetheless. "I'll be home in time to eat pie with you and put you to bed." These words were spoken as a means to soften the blow—that I truly did need to go—but I still cared about his world.

Now as I shifted in my seat looking once again at my watch, I realized that time was of the essence. It had taken longer to get here than I'd planned. Bedtime was nearing and it was

impossible to complete the remaining agenda before this little one needed to settle down for the night. Should I remain at the meeting for its duration like everyone else who had plenty to do later that evening? Or should I leave early, keeping my promise of pie before bed?

As I continued to listen to the reports, affirmations, and discussion, it dawned on me that my primary job *today* was to be a parent. My integrity was on the line. Life is precious and my presence in the final minutes of a meeting would mean nothing to a little boy.

And so I picked up my notebook and left, opting for pie and smiles. Instead of adult conversation and reflection on previous decisions, there was laughter, whipped cream, and bedtime stories. Instead of milling with the educated, there were precious hugs and kisses. My decision was the only one I could truly make.—Yvonne Riege

This was written in 1997 after a Southern Ohio District Board meeting.

Yvonne Riege is pastor for congregational development at the Goshen City Church of the Brethren, Goshen, Ind. She is the mother of two boys, now ages 12 and 9, and wife of Mark Riege, pastor of the Camp Creek Church of the Brethren, Etna Green, Ind. They reside between the two churches (near Wakarusa, Ind.) and enjoy the fellowship and community being a part of two congregations.

The Bible is Full of Stories About Traditional Families



Photo from the Brethren Historical Library and Archives collection.

Joseph and His Brothers

Family Power/Abuse

Ruth and Naomi

Single Parenting/Ethnically Diverse Family

Jacob and Esau

Sibling Rivalry/Parental Favorites

David and Bathsheba

Integrity/Fidelity

The Truth Is Every Family Experiences Some Difficulties

A new workshop from Family Life Ministry uses stories from the Bible to frame the problems facing today's families and suggests ways the church can reach out and be supportive. For information about this workshop, contact Family Life Ministry, a ministry of the Association of Brethren Caregivers.



Association of Brethren Caregivers

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EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP POSITION

General Secretary:

The General Board of the Church of the Brethren is seeking a full time executive to serve as General Secretary. Through leadership of staff, this individual will provide guidance to key ministries including congregational life, publishing and communications, global partnerships, service and administrative operations and ecumenical relations. Headquartered in Elgin, IL, a suburb of Chicago, the organization also operates the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, MD and has offices in Washington, DC and Geneva Switzerland.

The ideal candidate will demonstrate an ability to

- model spiritual depth and maturity
- communicate and implement a vision
- structure and lead a complex organization
- integrate fiscal responsibility with an organization's mission
- listen to and speak with diverse constituencies
- seek wholeness and restoration in all relationships
- develop collegial relationships with other denominational/district agencies

Minimum candidate requirements are: a Christian committed to the Church of the Brethren faith, a Bachelor's degree with advanced degree or equivalent experience preferred, and significant experience in working with a board of directors.

Send inquiries to: Kirk Stiffney, General Board Search Consultant, c/o Mennonite Health Services, 234 S. Main St., Suite A, Goshen, IN 46526, fax: 574-534-3254 or e-mail: kirkstiffney@aol.com

Does Jesus want a war?

Does Jesus want a war, an expanded US war against Iraq? Would Jesus want this quick boost to the US war economy? Or, does he desire a war to keep a political party in power through the midterm elections? Is Jesus seeking revenge for the attacks on the World Trade Center? Is this the Jesus we follow?

Sure, we "historic peace churches" have sent delegations to Iraq to make human contact with "the enemy." We have sent relief supplies to assist a nation devastated by the Gulf War and 12 years of sanctions. We have even gone in with an offer of world class mediators before the 1990 war against Iraq.

Does Jesus want us to stop the war? Are we here "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14)? We could prevent another half million Iraqi children from dying. Our efforts would keep 200,000 US ground troops from being wasted. It is easy to start a war. It is time for the peace churches to help stop a war.

What would it take? What if our prayers for peace grew feet? What if every denomination, every district and

"We have an exciting history and missions. We don't need to hide from our heritage as the Church of the Brethren. We need to shout it from the rooftops."

conference, every congregation and meeting said a visible "No!" to the war, in the name of Jesus? What if every follower of the Prince of Peace would stop paying the federal excise tax on the telephone bill until the war is called off? What if we (especially grandmas and grandpas) would travel to Iraq before the bombers fly to be a



"Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ"

13 million people are at risk of starvation in the southern African nations of Malawi, Mozambique, Lesotho, and Zimbabwe. While the world's attention is elsewhere, the Church of the Brethren is responding, pledging \$100,000 for immediate relief and long-term aid through the Global Food Crisis Fund and the Emergency Disaster Fund.

Help bear their burden:

- \$1.14 provides a daily supply of fortified porridge for a child
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creative barrier to war?

For more information, contact Christian Peacemaker Teams at cpt3@igc.org or 312-455-1199.

Cliff Kindy
North Manchester, Ind.

Voices crying in our midst

Some of the roots of my call go back to a tragic event when I helplessly watched as a gravel truck ran over my little brother—crushing him to death. I had similar agonizing feelings at Annual Conference as the process unfolded related to the ordination of homosexuals in the Church of the Brethren. Is it too late now as when the truck driver finally took me seriously that he had run over my little brother? He did not know what he was doing.

Before opening the floor for discussion the moderator instructed us not to make amendments for the first 20 minutes. Since I wanted to make an amendment I waited about 10 seconds before I got in line at a mike. Whether it was restrictions from Robert's Rules of Order or whatever the reasons, I was still standing in line when discussion was stopped and thus I was not allowed to say even one word. . . and I'm sure others felt just as frustrated.

Why couldn't any of us see and have had the courage to call for God's Point of Order?

As we approach the issue, some try to draw us into old thinking and tensions of conservative versus liberal. However in such smokescreens we fail to see that there are Christian homosexuals from across the theological spectrum who are in committed relationships. As a conservative, evangelical, charismatic Christian with lifelong Brethren roots, I have come to appreciate a number of these precious sisters and brothers.

I was deeply disturbed by Standing Committee's recommendation that was passed by Annual Conference. Though there was recognition that we are not of one mind at this time, how can it be not hypocritical to allow for only one position? I wanted us to be truer to where we are and to make more "room at the table" by adding an amendment that would have been included at the end of the recommendation that passed.

My amendment: "Nevertheless, we recognize that this issue will not be

resolved by legislative vote because weightier matters are involved, like justice and conscience, mercy and caring, faith and calling, and remembering that each of us knows only in part. Therefore we will make room for, and be respectful of, those individuals, congregations, and districts who hold a minority position."

To bring home to us the need to make more room at the table, could it be that God in his infinite wisdom and her love for variety continues to call Samaritans, Gentiles, and others different from us, and has strategically placed in many extended family systems a homosexual or two?

Roger Eberly
Milford, Ind.

The problem is not the name

I just read Wendy McFadden's July "From the publisher" column regarding the denominational name. My sentiments have been more on the side of change than not. Our pews are not full and our membership is slowly dwindling away in our church and the church at large.

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**way
of
peace?**

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In the FOOTSTEPS of the APOSTLE PAUL (May 30 - June 15)

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ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 11-23)

CHINA (June 15 - July 1)

MAJESTIC CANADIAN ROCKIES (July 7-20)

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#4 - TANZANIA and KENYA (August 1-19)

#5 - ZIMBABWE (August 1-19)

#6 - ZAMBIA and ZIMBABWE (July 31 - August 19)

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In our town are two rapidly growing churches, one Mennonite and the other more fundamentalist oriented. Why are two churches at opposite ends of the faith spectrum so successful? Both are successful because of a small, hardworking core of dedicated people and pastors who expend energy and commitment to make it work. A friend is a Sunday school teacher at one of the churches and they have difficulty finding teachers in their large congregation the same as we do in our small congregation. Outside the working core it becomes difficult to attract commitment.

In his book *Beyond the Worship Wars: Building Vital and Faithful Worship*, Thomas Long says there are nine characteristics of the vital church. They are mystery, hospitality, drama, music, space, mission, order, "end service with joy," and a strong, charismatic pastor. I believe the last is the most important.

Why don't people know of M.R. Zigler, Anna Mow, and Dan West? Maybe it's because we haven't told people who we

The opinions expressed in Letters are not necessarily those of the magazine. Readers should receive them in the same spirit with which differing opinions are expressed in face-to-face conversations.

Letters should be brief, concise, and respectful of the opinions of others. Preference is given to letters that respond directly to items read in the magazine.

We are willing to withhold the name of a writer only when, in our editorial judgment, it is warranted. We will not consider any letter that comes to us unsigned. Whether or not we print the letter, the writer's name is kept in strictest confidence.

Address letters to Messenger editor, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

Travel with a purpose—(Bohrer Tours, Sebring, Fla.) SOUTH PACIFIC EXPLORER, May 5-21, 2003, visiting New Zealand and Australia. Special places of interest—Queenstown, Christchurch, Melbourne, Sidney, Canberra, Cairns, The Great Barrier Reef Excursion. For information contact Bohrer Tours, Wendell and Joan Bohrer, 3651 US Highway 27 S. #62, Sebring, FL 33870; tel/fax 863-382-9371, cell 863-201-3847; e-mail rdw-boh@strato.net.

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are. Where is our witness of our church and beliefs? We have an exciting history and missions. We don't need to hide from our heritage as the Church of the Brethren. We need to shout it from the rooftops. We had one pastor at our church say, "You guys are the best kept secret in town." Nobody is going to toot our horn for us.

It's not the name that is keeping our secret. It's us.

Gilbert M. Crosby
East Peoria, Ill.

Pharisees still rule

The vote at Annual Conference to deny ordination to a man because he has a male sexual partner, is to be stuck in a first-century time warp where the Pharisees excluded from the community of God's chosen people anyone who committed adultery. The raw conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees was focused in the rather odd retort of Jesus to their rigid interpretation of the Commandment. "Even to lust after a woman," he said, "is to commit adultery," an observation later reinforced by St. Paul who gave an even odder spin to the Ten Commandments when he said the reason God gave them to us was not to show us how to be good, but to show us that none of us *can* be good, no matter how hard we try. You can look it up in Romans.

If we say a particular kind of sexual activity always has been, still is, and forever will be wronged wrong, wrong, then the Pharisees still rule after 20 centuries. The

primary question that should have been addressed at Conference was not what this man does between the sheets, but "Is he passionately committed to serve Christ in a suffering world?"

Edward Huber
Ambler, Pa.

Let districts decide

Is it possible that both Standing Committee and Annual Conference exceeded their areas of responsibility at this year's Conference?

Church of the Brethren polity gives the responsibility and the authority for the calling, licensing, and ordaining of ministers not to the delegates of Annual Conference but, rather, to districts.

Clyde R. Shallenberger
Baltimore, Md.

Are we plain complacent?

As a longtime reader of MESSENGER, I have been increasingly concerned about the diminishing membership of the Church of the Brethren.

The "New members" and "Deaths" columns in Turning Points are my focus as I peruse each issue. I am always a bit depressed by the wide difference between the two. It seems that white hair and the discontinuance of some congregations characterize the Church of the Brethren today.

Traditionally we have been plain people, living in peace with humanity, and in tune with the infinite. Could it be that we have settled into a reserved complacency that forestalls further expansion into today's society? Should we become a bit bolder, more aggressive, in taking the story of the church to its potential constituency?

We might consider concentrating our evangelism on the major US cities, even at the cost of reducing some of our international support. We are dependent upon our US resources to sustain our activities abroad.

I am a Brethren by neither heritage nor marriage. I am a member because of the great philosophy and history the church has endowed upon its people. I wish it to grow so that others might share these blessings.

Clarence Mitchell
Mount Morris, Ill.

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This month's Turning Points include all listings received prior to August 30 and not previously published. Please send information to be included to Jean Clements, 1451 Dundee Ave, Elgin, IL 60120; 800 323-8039 ext. 206; jcllements_gb@brethren.org. Information must be complete in order to be published.

New Members

Akron First, Akron, Ohio: Debbie Baglia, Charles Clinebell, Linda Clinebell, Bethany Fuller, Karen Fuller, Kerrie Fuller, Duane Carder, Bonnie Carder, Ken Allen, Wilda Allen, Nick Brown
Brookville, Ohio: Josh Barillas, Beth Caylor, Paul Denlinger, Michael Foley, Ed Lamb, Reba Leonard, Christina Schrodi, Cindy Steck, Walter Anthony, Linda McCullah, Vickie Williams
Detroit First, Harper Woods, Mich.: Anita Smith, Eric Smith
Dupont, Ohio: Christine Kaufman, Amanda Richardson, Courtne Billingsley, Sarah Yacyshun, Dmitry Billingsley, Mark Geckle
Fellowship, Martinsburg, W.Va.: Cookie Davis, Courtney Durst, Heather Riley, Christian Strickler, Daniel Koontz
First Central, Kansas City, Kan.: Caroline Witkopp, Paul Cesare, Jennifer Cesare
Good Shepherd, Tipp City, Ohio: Terri Stiver, Jeffrey Stiver, Herbert Stiver, Jerrica Julian
Huntsdale, Carlisle, Pa.: Heidi Brough, Kamm Brough, Summer Brough, Ben Hagenbuch, Diane Leiby, Michelle Seagraves, Karen Williams
Locust Grove, Johnstown, Pa.: DeeDee Bailey, James Burkett, Tonya Burkett, Ted Carpenter, Kristen Emigh, Emery Goughnour, Jeff Konicky, Amanda McVicker, Esther Patsch, Philip Patsch, Norman VanMale
Maple Grove, New Paris, Ind.: Britney Cripe, Courtney Cripe, Coty Garris, Charlotte Stilwell, Quinton Stilwell, Colton Yoder, Jali Yoder
McPherson, Kan.: Bob Johnson, Kelli Johnson
Mountain View, Bunker Hill, W.Va.: Jason Armistead, Arved Davis, Connie Dehaven, Renee Dugan, Scott Dugan, Robert Gray, Ruth Gray,

Andrew Haines, R. J. Harrell, Reyanne Harrell, Tracey Hess, Debbie Jolliff, Jeanette Stup, Cherae Vorous, Ciara Vorous, David Vorous, Robin Vorous, Jerry Whetstone, Rebecca Whetstone
Nampa, Idaho: Nicholas McKellip
Parsons, Kan.: Tony King, Teresa King, Joshua King, Rachel King, Johnathan Goodyear
Pittsburgh, Pa.: Norbert Gelman, Mona Green, Gregg Green
Poplar Ridge, Defiance, Ohio: Judy Lymanstall, Steven Lymanstall
Rockhill, Rockhill Furnace, Pa.: Jennifer Holden, Amanda Hockenberry, Rebecca Farine, Mary Singer, Jean Bilger, Bobbi Beers, Ralph Singer, Sr., Nikki Strauser
Smith Mountain Lake Community, Wirtz, Va.: Kathy Jones
Topeka, Kan.: Reesa Darby, Mark Kimmel
Union Center, Nappanee, Ind.: Vanessa Bope, Kenton Thornton, Samantha Thornton, John Gardner, Sandra Gardner, Eldon Krider, Margo Krider
Wenatchee, Wash.: Bruce Bishop
Westminster, Md.: Elizabeth Marian Pentz, Ralph Dull, Phyllis Dull
Wilmington, Del.: Regina Richards

Wedding Anniversaries

Allison, Charles and LaRue, Johnstown, Pa., 50
Ballinger, LaMar and Mary Faith, Nampa, Idaho, 60
Beam, Royce and Phyllis, McPherson, Kan., 50
Best, Sheldon and Genevieve, Rockford, Ill., 65
Cocanour, Galen and Dorothy, Ashland, Ohio, 55
Cook, Harold and Henrietta, Brookville, Ohio, 50
Crist, D. A. and Carole, Quinter, Kan., 50
Diediker, Cliff and Lois, Parsons, Kan., 60
Engle, Roy and Helen, Berlin, Pa., 50
Gearhart, Lee and Betty, Akron, Ind., 50
Hamsher, Eugene and Nadine, Parsons, Kan., 65
Hawbaker, Raymond and June, Chambersburg, Pa., 50
Heckler, Donald and Cecelia, Windber, Pa., 50
Hobel, Jerald and Joice,

Rockford, Ill., 50
Hodson, Harold and Alberta, Germantown, Ohio, 65
Hoffman, Bill and Janet, Windber, Pa., 50
Jewell, Paul and Fern, Olathe, Kan., 55
Jones, Lloyd and Bernice, Girard, Ill., 60
Kensinger, Donald and Jean, Woodbury, Pa., 50
Lawrence, Dale and Maxine, Nampa, Idaho, 65
Lightner, Byron and Eva, Troy, Ohio, 60
Little, Ivan and Norma, Shawnee, Kan., 50
Longnecker, Dale and Maxine, Rockford, Ill., 55
McAvoy, James and Nancy, Yuba City, Calif., 50
Miller, Bryce and Frances, Topeka, Kan., 50
Neher, Gerald and Lois, Anna, Ill., 50
Newcomer, John and Helen, Rockford, Ill., 55
Palmer, Carl and Lillie Mae, Glen Arm, Md., 50
Porter, Irwin and Betty Ann, Quinter, Kan., 50
Royer, William and Gene, Westminster, Md., 60
St. John, Darrell and Helen, Pennville, Ind., 50
Statler, Bruce and Shirley, Windber, Pa., 50
Wong, Seek & Sue, Rockford, Ill., 55

Deaths

Bashore, Emma H., 92, Fredericksburg, Pa., Aug. 2
Bechler, Orville E., 86, Boulder, Colo., July 18
Bell, Edith, 78, Fayetteville, W.Va., May 9
Bittinger, Hazel, 90, Stow, Ohio, July 16
Blickenstaff, LeRoy, 72, Nampa, Idaho, July 1
Blough, Leonard P., 78, Harrison City, Pa., June 15
Bowman, Claire Andrews, 89, La Verne, Calif., July 16
Bowman, Edna, 76, Boones Mill, Va., Dec. 1, 2001
Bradley, Dorothy, 88, Wichita, Kan., June 17
Burrow, Bette, 78, Wichita, Kan., July 29
Carter, Zelma, 85, Parsons, Kan., June 29
Collins, Carol, 63, Tallmadge, Ohio, May 3
Davis, Don, 66, Brookville, Ohio, April 24
Davis, Jim, 82, Wichita, Kan., March 15
Donley, Naomi, 70, Kingman, Kan., May 10
Early, Walter H., Jr., 79,

Harrisonburg, Va., July 24
Emley, Harvey, 100, La Verne, Calif., April 26
Ferrell, Ruth, 91, La Verne, Calif., Feb. 17
Fields, Fayette, 89, Wichita, Kan., March 20
Fox, Wilma, 79, Wichita, Kan., Feb. 16
Frantz, Hazel, 94, La Verne, Calif., June 18
Gainer, Ora, 94, Lancaster, Pa., Aug. 1
Garber, Lucille, 84, Brookville, Ohio, April 15
Grimm, Bertha, 91, Hummelstown, Pa., June 29
Haas, Erma, 80, Wilmington, Del., July 14
Hershberger, Wilbert, 95, Davidsville, Pa., July 6
Hochstein, Grace, 88, Akron, Ohio, Aug. 5, 2001
Hoffman, Royce N., 72, Brightwood, Va., Jan. 14
Holloway, Carlyle, 83, Akron, Ind., July 11
Howard, Truman, 69, Dupont, Ohio, Aug. 3
Jackson, Oliver, 85, Mechanicsburg, Pa., July 13
Jenkins, Earl, 94, Brookville, Ohio, March 24
Keene, Laura, 106, Lacey Springs, Va., March 1
Kitzmiller, Amy, 84, Rockford, Ill., July 3
Long, Marie, 94, Akron, Ind., April 14
McCarthy, Ella, 89, Huxley, Iowa, April 23
Merletti, Lena Ciotti, 95, Pittsburgh, Pa., May 2
Miller, Kathy, 43, Nappanee, Ind., April 28
Miller, Maxine, 70, Rockwall, Texas, April 2
Myers, Chester N., 80, Chambersburg, Pa., June 11
Myers, Nelson D., 81, Broadway, Va., July 12
Neverman, Gladys, 94, La Verne, Calif., March 9
Nguen, Lynn M., 22, Chambersburg, Pa., April 10
Ott, Alice, 99, La Verne, Calif., May 21
Persons, Helen, 79, Omaha, Neb., July 12
Price, Elizabeth, 88, Nappanee, Ind., May 14
Ritchie, Julius, 91, Harrisonburg, Va., June 3
Rodeffer, William Howard, 89, McGeheysville, Va., July 24
Rupel, LaVon W., 71, Stockton, Calif., July 20
Rupel, Myrl, 73, Riverside, Calif., Feb. 6
Shaffer, Helen, 70, Wichita, Kan., March 7
Smith, Homer E., 78, Martinsburg, Pa., March 17
Stauffer, Anna Martha, 83,

Mount Joy, Pa., June 13
Steerman, Emma W., 87, Chambersburg, Pa., April 3
Stiffler, N. Elwood, 86, Martinsburg, Pa., July 21
Stoner, Jacob, 96, Grantham, Pa., Aug. 4
Thomas, Harry, 91, La Verne, Calif., May 22
Turner, Hilda A., 89, Broadway, Va., July 25
Vanderburg, Ray, 83, La Verne, Calif., June 29
Van Voorhis, Donald, 75, Claremont, Calif., March 19
Warner, Betty, 81, Akron, Ohio, March 4
Wegner, Emma, 90, Englewood, Fla., July 3
Whitebread, Jeanette, 80, Rockford, Ill., Jan. 16
Wolf, Hazel Geraldine, 76, Rockford, Ill., July 27
Yost, Francis, 74, New Lebanon, Ohio, Aug. 18

Licensings

Biddle, Guy Charles, West Goshen, Goshen, Ind., June 9
D'Oleo, Daniel, Alpha & Omega, Lancaster, Pa., July 7
Fry-Miller, Carrie, Beacon Heights, Fort Wayne, Ind., July 28
Krieg, Lisa, Lititz, Pa., June 16
McCallister, Cara Austin, Greenville, Ohio, May 19
Menker, Delores Catherine, Oak Park, Oakland, Md., July 28
Troutt, Dorsey Dewayne, Pleasant Valley, Floyd, Va., July 7
Wenger, David, White Oak, Manheim, Pa., June 16

Ordinations

Bishop, Granville Lee, Hiwassee, Va., July 14
Gandy, Katherine M., Modesto, Calif., Aug. 4

Placements

Betz, Russell W., from pastor, Waterford, Calif., to pastor, Antelope Valley, Billings, Okla., July 1
Eikenberry, James O., pastor, Wilmington, Del., Aug. 1
Garrison, Dennis W., associate pastor, Spring Creek, Hershey, Pa., Aug. 1
Hoover, Christine and Donald J., team pastors, Woodberry, Baltimore, Md., Aug. 1
Zumbrun, Melvin J., from pastor, Allison Prairie, Pinkstaff, Ill., to pastor, Salamonie, Warren, Ind., Aug. 1



We hope for hope

And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three. And the most interesting but most neglected is hope.

As Christians we know faith pretty well. And we can do love. But few of us are good at hope. We equate it with wishing. When I say I hope you get well I mean there's a better than fifty-fifty chance, and I don't have any control over your situation anyway. We make hope wimpy. We say hopefully this will happen and hopefully that, combining bad grammar with weak theology. Hope is called "the elusive virtue" in *The Good Life*, by Peter Gomes, the Harvard chaplain.

Real hope comes from faith in God's promises of future good, of heaven, of salvation, of glory. We are promised "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4). We are promised "good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven" (1 Pet. 1:10). The promises are so good, writes Peter, they are "things into which angels long to look!"

There are promises of ultimate justice. "Every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Isa. 40:4,5).

To show how hope works, Gomes quotes the Baltimore Catechism: "Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit."

To live in hope is to live as though we really believe those promises, and to live in service of that future good. To "live now that which we seek" is how Gomes puts it. It is to "live into" the future good. God tells us to go for it. "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people," we are told. "Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people" (1 Pet. 2:9,10).

We don't act like God's people. We act as though we're unsure whether those are God's promises or just people's poems. So we live timidly, hesitantly, limiting the size of our dreams and keeping our ideas to ourselves. Instead of living as though Jesus is coming, we act as though he's been and gone for good.

Speaking of hopeless, politicians are even worse than Christians. We have given up hope in politicians because they have given up hope. This year nearly all of them are playing it safe. There is no talk about the

great issues of the day like war or race. Instead they trot out the last campaign's ads about prescription drugs for seniors. When was the last time a politician inspired us with a vision of a better world?

But one need only visit the "envisioning" workshops of some churches to see that politicians have no corner on playing it safe. Group-process visioning and missioning sometimes comes up with statements that are timid and bland. Most church members are afraid to propose anything radical, but if anybody were to have a bold idea it would be shot down by somebody else and discarded in search of consensus. Even if an energetic vision/mission somehow survives the process and sends spirits soaring, it can quickly be hijacked by fear. I visited one church that began a planning process enthusiastically, only to shift halfway through to a focus on budget "reality." That's not planning; that's panic.

It's ironic that the best breeding ground for hope is despair. Just when it seems that all hope is lost, hope is found. In our churches when things are going okay we think they'll get better if we try harder. It's only when we're nearly sunk that we put our hope in Christ. We ask individuals to "make a decision for Christ." Churches too can make a decision for Christ, a decision for hope. Here's the reality: Jesus is coming. We'd better get ready.

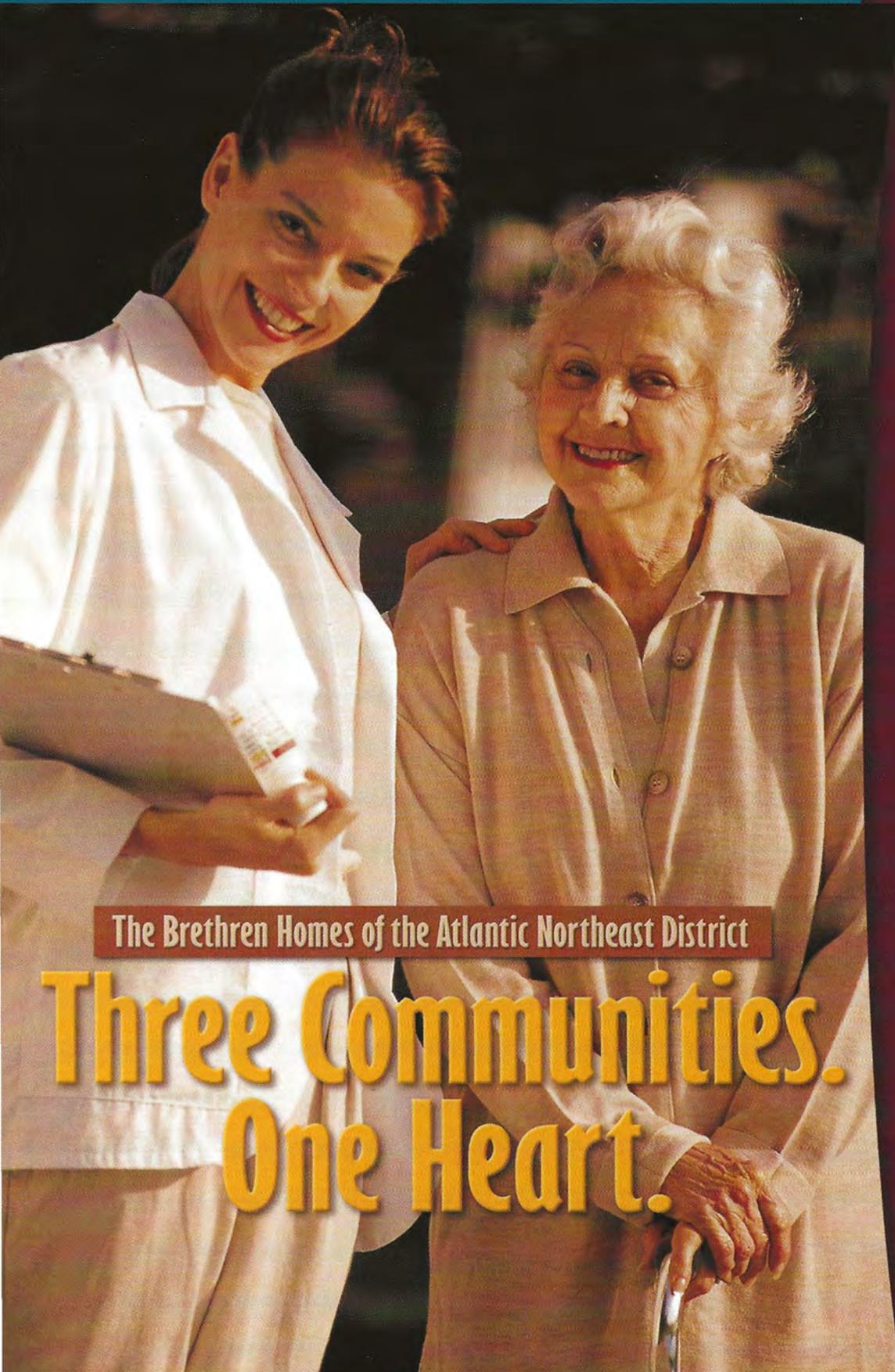
It's known as the "Negro national anthem," but the song of hope James Weldon Johnson wrote with his brother Rosamond is in our hymnal (No. 579) and available to all. It exemplifies the way we energize our current struggles with the vision of future good:

*Lift every voice and sing,
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty.
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.*

*Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has
taught us.
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has
brought us.
Facing the rising sun
Of our new day begun,
Let us march on
Till victory is won.*

—FLETCHER FARRAR

"The best breeding ground for hope is despair. Just when it seems that all hope is lost, hope is found."



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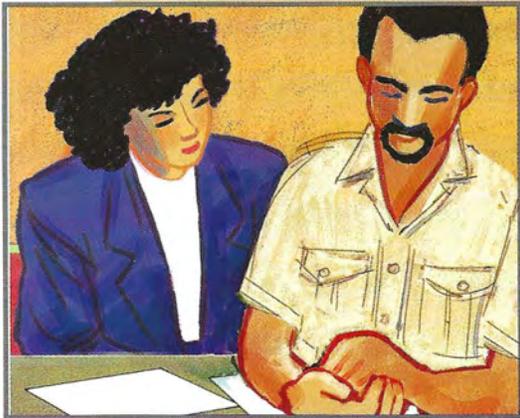
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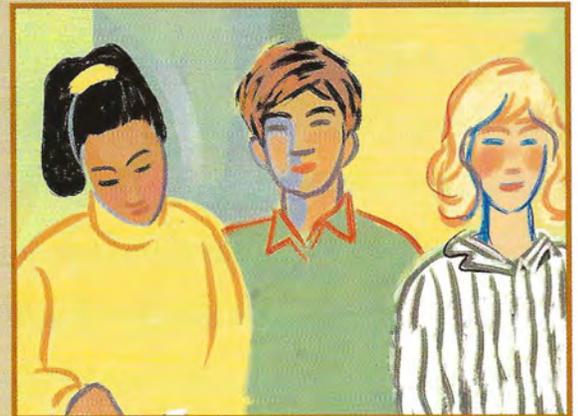
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They sold a property and donated \$10,000 of the proceeds to the Global Food Crisis Fund. Then they pledged to give another \$10,000 this year by cutting back their lifestyle.

They had a good time at the youth lock-in at their church, and raised \$450 for their hungry neighbors.



She was on a limited income and wished she could do more. The envelope contained two crumpled dollar bills and a personal note.



All of us can do something. Find a way to do what you can for our hungry neighbors.

Global Food Crisis Fund

Church of the Brethren General Board
1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120

800.323.8039

or witness_gb@brethren.org

