

Let me hear
what God
the Lord
will speak,
for he will
speak
peace
to his people, to his faithful,
to those who turn to him
in their hearts.

Psalm 85:8

Arise,
shine;
for your
light
has come,
and the
glory
of the
Lord
has risen
upon you.

— Isaiah 60:1



T

he birth of Jesus illuminates the world with new light. His coming brings us into new relationships and new realities. Young people of our church are energized. Afghan students receive school kits. Northern Ireland neighborhoods come to know reconciliation. Lives in the Dominican Republic are transformed. Together we witness to the righteousness, the wisdom, and the peace Jesus came to bring.

This Christmas, let us revel in the joy that God is among us. Let us sing "Gloria!" with the angels on high. Let us arise, shine, and let the world know our Light has come.



Church of the Brethren General Board

Gloria! Arise, Shine

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Church
of the
Brethren

MESSENGER

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ONTHECOVER

For many Brethren, Psalm 85 is a familiar and beloved scripture. "Revive us again," a phrase from v. 6, was the theme of Annual Conference in 2001. The latter half of the passage, vv. 8-13, is commonly regarded as a psalm for Advent.

"Speak peace," this year's Christmas Offering theme, is drawn from v. 8, rendered on this month's cover in typography and design by Debbie Noffsinger, a graphic artist in Union Bridge, Md. The image is a combination of colored handmade paper and a paper sculpture impression made by pressing paper fibers into a glass mold.

The cover introduces this month's cluster of articles on the theme of peace, in support of the Christmas Offering emphasis.



Kim Chaffin

Next issue: The next issue of Messenger is the once-a-year two-month edition. This January/February issue is scheduled to arrive in February.

10 Peace is not domination

In the opening essay for this month's cluster of articles on peace, Brethren Witness director David Radcliff cautions us as Americans prone to control: "Remember we are not God."

12 Decade to Overcome Violence

Under the broad umbrella of DOV, the plan is for each church to do what it can to promote peace in God's world. Here are reports on how five Church of the Brethren congregations are doing their part.

16 Peace in the denomination

The Church of the Brethren is rare for its conviction that "all war is sin." Why do we believe this, and what do we do about it? Explained here is the special way Brethren approach overcoming evil with good.

18 Peace in the congregation

Peace at home is sometimes the most difficult kind. Jim Kinsey, Congregation Life Team staff member, tells what Hopeful Valley church did when its life became troubled by discord.

20 Peace in the person

In this meditation on Psalm 85, former moderator Paul Grout urges Brethren to seek peace through our lifestyles, not just as a political agenda. "Peace is a byproduct of devotion to Jesus Christ," he writes.

22 If it takes all night

A Christmas poem by James Benedict will lift your spirit to sing, "Glory to God in the highest."

26 China missionary

A remembrance of Mary Gauntz Cumming, a Church of the Brethren missionary in China when Japanese soldiers overtook Ping Ting in 1937.

DEPARTMENTS

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FROM THE PUBLISHER



A sign in a popular discount store had a new twist on an old idea. It announced how many Saturdays remained before Christmas. It was barely November, but the number on the sign looked alarmingly small because it was in single digits. Someone had figured out how to make us feel even more stressed about the holidays, more likely to shift our shopping into high gear. Time was running out.

In my favorite entry in *Prepare*, a new Advent devotional booklet from Brethren Press, Lani Wright compares time to manna, the food the Lord provided to the Israelites when they began complaining about how much better life had been when they were slaves in Egypt. Many of us wish for more time, especially as we enter the holiday season, when expectations are at a fever pitch. Other people have too much time, and see the hours stretching endlessly ahead, with little to break the monotony. But all of us are bound by time, rarely content with the amount we have.

In Lani's paraphrase of Exodus 16, the Lord provides just enough time each day. Those who fear they do not have enough time find that they are satisfied. Those who try to hoard extra find that it spoils and is unusable the next day. And the day before the sabbath, all are allowed to gather enough for two days so that they do not need to labor on God's holy day.

While the stores count Saturdays before Christmas, those of us focused on Jesus count sabbaths. We have only four sabbaths in which to prepare for the arrival of the Christ child. Is that enough time? Of course, because the Lord will provide. And in the fullness of time, we will be delivered from the wilderness. In the fullness of time, we will gather at the manger to worship the Savior.

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Gardener of the govs

Most midwestern gardens had long since faded with summer drought and heat. But with cooler fall temperatures and some rain, the grounds of the governor's mansion in Springfield, Ill., came alive with reds, purples, yellows, and whites. "It's almost more beautiful than spring," said Tom Martin, who has presided over these grounds as the governor's official gardener for the past 18 years.

Martin, a six-year member of First Church of the Brethren, Springfield, recently conducted a tour of the mansion grounds for the Brethren Press staff visiting from Elgin, Ill. With the exception of the tallest trees, nearly all the plants on this downtown city block were planted during his tenure, including many now-large trees. This has been a labor of love, and faith.

"You have to have faith to be a gardener," quips Martin, who year after year coaxas beautiful plants from the ground despite the Midwest's hot summers and severe winters. He works to be a responsible steward of the land, using a minimum of pesticides, reusing leaves as mulch, and composting plant materials. He also practices stewardship of the state's financial resources, bringing to the mansion plants from his home garden and growing some flowers from seed.

In his work Martin deals with people from all walks of life, from governors—he's worked for three so far—to the prison inmates who are employed to work on the grounds. Though it wasn't his idea to use prison labor for the garden, he decided to make the best of the situation. Now he

Fletcher Farrar



Tom Martin, right, in the governor's mansion garden with Illinois' First Lady Lura Lynn Ryan.

makes a ministry of teaching good work habits and garden skills to the two prisoners who help him.

Governors, and their wives, sometimes present more of a challenge, especially when they're new and before he's had a chance to earn their trust. Once when Martin was using a chainsaw on an overgrown tree, the First Lady sent the butler from the mansion to investigate, but after an explanation all was well. Some governors take more interest in the garden than others, and some entertain more, giving

more opportunities for the garden to be seen and enjoyed.

Martin says his enthusiasm for gardening has grown with each passing year, and with experience his style has gotten "wilder and bolder." He'll soon get a chance to test his Brethren-enhanced people skills again, as the Illinois governor's mansion gets a new occupant in January. Chicagoan Rod Blagojevich, elected in November, will be the first Democrat he has gardened for, adding just a little more uncertainty to Martin's world of politics and plants.—Fletcher Farrar

Trooper finds trouble when teens take Tom to town

Janitor Marian Kniss came upon an unwelcome visitor at Chiques Church of the Brethren, Manheim, Pa. There in the sanctuary on a July Wednesday afternoon was a 40-pound

domesticated wild turkey. She summoned others to help.

"We took two chairs and played lion tamer and chased him out the door," said Vernon Kniss, also a janitor. Later Becker Ginder lassoed the bird's leg and tied him to a tree.

The turkey had soiled the carpet in a few places, but

nothing was stolen or broken. State Trooper Timothy Fetzger investigated the scene. "This is a first for me. I can tell you that," he said.

Three teens who do not attend Chiques church but are familiar with the building confessed to putting the bird in the sanctuary as a prank. The teens

and their fathers returned the turkey to its owner and apologized to the church. Church moderator Ron Strickler did not press charges, though police charged the teens with criminal mischief. It was expected they would be placed on probation and required to do community service.—Don Fitzkee



Ed Kerschensteiner

“What would you do if you heard a baby cry and you had a chance? You just do it.”

Idaho pastor rescues baby from fire

Ed Kerschensteiner, pastor of the Boise Valley Church of the Brethren in Meridian, Idaho, never set out to be a hero. It just turned out that way.

Kerschensteiner and his wife, Mary Lou, were asleep in their home when a neighbor's child rang their doorbell in the early morning hours of Oct. 5. The child begged for help, as her house was on fire and her mother and young siblings were still inside.

Kerschensteiner, 71, and another neighbor rushed to the scene. He had promised his wife he wouldn't run into the burning house, but when he arrived there, Kerschensteiner heard the sound of an infant trapped inside.

“I was doing what had to be done,” Kerschensteiner said. “As I told the newspaper, ‘What would you do if you heard a baby cry and you had a chance?’ You just do it.”

He kicked in a door at the back of the house near the bedroom, and felt his way through

the smoke until he reached the bed. On his second blind sweep across the bed, he felt the 3-week-old baby and pulled it into his arms.

“Smoke came rolling out,” Kerschensteiner recalled. “You couldn't see a thing. I knew there was a risk to enter a house that was burning, but it was a short distance to the bed.”

The infant needed oxygen but survived. Another small child from the family was also located unharmed, but the mother, Angie Abdullah, was found dead in another room of the house. Police later determined that she had been killed before the fire began and charged her husband, Azad, with the murder in a domestic dispute, according to *The Idaho Statesman*. That charge ended speculation that it might have been a hate crime against the Muslim family.

Whatever the circumstances, Kerschensteiner was just glad for the opportunity to help make a bad situation a little better.

“I think the Lord brought that about,” he said. “I was happy I was where I could respond.” —Walt Wiltzschek

Pipe Creek marks 150th anniversary

On Sept. 8 Pipe Creek Church of the Brethren, Peru, Ind., celebrated 150 years of faithful ministry.

Their guest speaker for morning worship was Jeff Bach, professor of Brethren and historical studies at Bethany Theological Seminary. The day-long celebration included special music, reminiscing, and a plethora of

pictures of events and people, from founder Samuel Murray to current pastor Leslie Cooper. Ron Finney, district minister, provided a closing summary.

Copies of the 60-page updated history of the church can be obtained by writing to the church at 4483 W 400 S, Peru, IN 46970. A donation of \$5 will cover printing and postage costs.

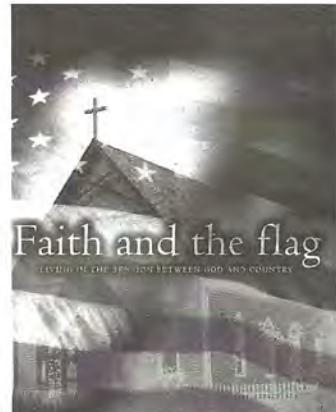
—Leslie E. Cooper, Jr.

Update: Mack Memorial's flag conflict resolution

The Mack Memorial Church of the Brethren, Dayton, Ohio—featured in the April MESSENGER for its process to resolve conflict over displaying the American flag in church—has approved a resolution of the matter.

During a gathering after worship Sept. 15 those present unanimously approved a proposal presented by the church's Symbols Team. The five-point resolution provided for, among other things, allowing the purchase of a US flag and a world flag, which would be displayed together in the fellowship hall, except when there is a baptism or love feast there. A request to display the flags in the sanctuary would need to go through the Worship Team.

Because of division over the flag issue, the congregation had postponed its love feast last fall. But, after working to resolve the conflict, love feast was held as usual on Maundy Thursday. “It was a good healing space for all who attended,” reports Liz Bidgood Enders, co-pastor.



Mitchell marks 70 years as a pastor

Olden Mitchell, of North Manchester, Ind., this year is celebrating 70 years of service as a pastor. He was called to the ministry and ordained in 1932. He served 15 congregations as summer pastor during college and seminary and as part-time pastor while teaching school. He served six congregations as a regular full-time pastor. Since his retirement 25 years ago, Mitchell has served 15 congregations as an interim pastor. During his ministry career he also served as a district executive.

During a June celebration Floyd Mitchell, Olden's younger brother and a longtime pastor, shared the story of the Mitchell family of preachers, beginning with their grandfather, and their father, a farmer-preacher, who was happy to see three of his four sons become pastors. Floyd said the fourth son, when asked why he was not a preacher, replied, "Somebody's got to work in this family."

Olden Mitchell said he is looking forward to a few more years of pastoral ministry. "If the Apostles Peter and Paul did not retire and take it easy at age 65, why should I?"

The end of one era, beginning of a new

After Roger Cruser retired this summer following 25 years as executive director of Camp Woodland Altars, Peebles, Ohio, he offered this reflection in the Southern Ohio District newsletter:

As I left camp, I had a helium balloon that was given to me by the staff. No one else was around so I stopped at the entrance to release the balloon. It signified for me a release of my commitment and the freedom of Woodland Altars to now go its own way. It seemed a poignant moment. I prayed that the camp would continue to provide outdoor ministry to people for many years to come.

Oddly, as I was completing my prayer and watching the balloon disappear in the sky, a car pulled in to



Roger Cruser

Kristin Floyd

the entrance. A lady leaned out the window and said, "Excuse me but I am just arriving for the first time. Could you tell me where I should go?" I walked over to her and said, "Hi, my name is Roger, and I'm leaving for the last time after 25 years. I'll be glad to tell you how to get where you need to be." It was a touching moment as we both looked at each other and knew that we may never see each other again but we shared a single moment at Woodland Altars that, for me at least, would be indelibly marked on my memory.—Roger S. Cruser

REMEMBERED

Claire Andrews Bowman, 89, died July 16 in La Verne, Calif. She was a school-teacher in Polk County, N.C., when she married Loren Bowman in 1935 and the couple headed to Bethany Seminary a year later. For 20 years she added a spark to the life of four congregations from Virginia to California. In 1958 the Bowmans moved to Elgin, Ill., where Claire gave support to Loren in his work on the denominational staff and as general secretary from 1968 to 1977. At Hillcrest since 1979, Claire was active in a book club and in activities at La Verne Church of the Brethren.

• **Marie I. Hamilton** died Sept. 5 in Richmond, Ind., at the age of 101. She had lived in Sebring, Fla., from 1977 until this year. She graduated from Manchester College in 1923. During the Depression she and her husband, Stanley, under the auspices of the American Friends Service Committee, did relief work with coal miners and steel-workers and their families in Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. In 1940 they moved to Richmond, Ind., as co-directors of Quaker Hill, a hostel for European refugees during World War II. She was executive secretary of the Richmond YWCA for 17 years

until her retirement in 1961. • **Mervin A. Cripe**, 83, died Sept. 5. A memorial service was held in Timbercrest Chapel, North Manchester, Ind. He graduated from Bridgewater College and from Bethany Theological Seminary. He was pastor of the Swan Creek church, Delta, Ohio, 1950-54; pastor of Eel River, Silver Lake, Ind., 1954-61; and Brook Park, Ohio, 1961-81. After retirement in 1981 he served as interim pastor in 14 churches.

• **Elton "Miller" Peterman**, 93, died Sept. 3 in Harrisburg, Pa., where he was a member of Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren. Long before

white America embraced integration, Peterman brought white and black children together on a Harrisburg schoolyard for games and crafts each summer in the early 1940s. He took his vacation from Bell Telephone, where he worked as a planning engineer, to run the summer camps. A farm boy who became a social radical, Peterman opposed war and admired Mahatma Gandhi's example of nonviolent resistance. Though his fire and passion mellowed in his later years, his resolve never wavered. He remained dedicated to the Church of the Brethren.

General Board prepares for significant decisions in 2003

The Church of the Brethren General Board met Oct. 12-15 in Elgin, Ill., setting the table for a key meeting in March. When the board meets in New Windsor, Md., March 8-11 it is expected to approve a new comprehensive plan for the organization and call a new general secretary. Board members spent significant time on both processes in October.

Providing an uncertain backdrop for the discussions was the General Board's financial picture. Staff reported an operating deficit of nearly \$800,000 through September, due in large part to significant drops in investment and bequest income. Giving to all three of the board's main special-purpose funds was down as well.

The board did approve, with some abstentions, a \$5,655,000 General Programs budget for 2003, not including self-funded programs. Some budget reductions and a \$81,000 "patch" of one-time funds were needed to make ends meet, assuming income bounces back next year.

In light of those figures, the board turned to a "Reduced Resources Program Scenario" in constructing its comprehensive plan. Board members identified a need to work at the problem creatively and systemically while proceeding in faith.

Chair Warren Eshbach of Thomasville, Pa., led the board through numerous other business, including the following:

- The board unanimously approved a new statement against the threat of war on Iraq. The full text, in English and Spanish, is at www.brethren.org/genbd/GBResolutions/2002Iraq.html.

- The board heard an update on the general secretary search process as it met in closed session for about two hours. Mennonite consultant Kirk Stiffney is working with the search committee, chaired by Stafford Frederick.

- Board members unanimously approved expenditures of up to \$1.4 million for a new roof on the General Offices building in Elgin, replacing one installed in 1981. The cost will be paid from the Land, Buildings, and Equipment Fund, with work to be completed in summer 2003.

Budget concerns. General secretary Judy Mills Reimer, right, reviews disappointing financial reports with Judy Keyser, treasurer, during October General Board meetings.

- Global Mission Partnerships director Merv Keeney said the board plans to request that its India recommendation to Annual Conference be taken off the table for 2003 and added to the agenda. A study packet is being prepared.

- Board members, staff, and visitors signed up for periods throughout the meetings when they would hold the proceedings and the denomination in focused prayer. Staff also reported that a five-person, inter-agency committee had been formed to provide resources and ideas in response to the Conference query on "A Call to Prayer." Worship and devotions wove throughout the meetings with the theme "The love of Christ urges us on...."



BRETHRENSPEAK

"Every problem is a new opportunity, and we have a lot of opportunities!"

— General Board treasurer Judy Keyser, reporting on the agency's financial situation in October



As a tribute to departing BVS orientation coordinator Sue Grubb, some current BVS volunteers sang "Sue, the BVSer," to the tune of "Puff, the Magic Dragon." Pictured are, from left, Genelle Wine on the guitar, Dan Royer, Laura Kreider, Jaime Eller, and Emily Tulli. These are among the 338 volunteers with whom Sue worked during her tenure.

Annual Conference names 2003 worship, Bible study presenters

The Annual Conference Worship Committee met in Elgin, Ill., this fall and selected preachers, worship leaders, Bible study leaders, and musicians for next summer's Annual Conference in Boise, Idaho.

Moderator Harriet Finney will give the message at Saturday's opening worship service, with moderator-elect Chris Bowman serving as worship leader. Sunday morning, Steve Reid of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary will speak, with Jan Fairchild of Eugene, Ore., as worship leader.

Dan Ulrich of Bethany Theological Seminary will preach on Monday; Bonnie Kline Smeltzer, pastor of the University Baptist-Brethren Church in State College, Pa., on Tuesday; and Larry Dentler, pastor of the Bermudian Church of the Brethren, East Berlin, Pa., on Wednesday. Worship leaders will be Ruth Yoder of Nappanee, Ind.; Jim Hardenbrook of Nampa, Idaho; and Matthew Fike of Weyers Cave, Va., respectively.

Shawn Kirchner of La Verne, Calif., will serve as music coordinator, and Pat Koehler of Nyssa, Ore., as choir director. Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee member Andrew Wright is worship coordinator this year.

Sam Detwiler of Wenatchee, Wash., and Ruben Deoleo of Lancaster, Pa., will lead evening Bible study sessions, with Deoleo's

in Spanish. Morning Bible study leaders will be Wendell Bohrer of Sebring, Fla.; Ray Hileman of Ligonier, Pa.; and Bethany Theological Seminary professor Dena Pence Frantz of Richmond, Ind.

Conference officers are also reminding Brethren of the call to emphasize prayer in the life of the church this year in response to the 2002 "Call to Prayer" query. Annual Conference meets at Boise State University July 5-9, 2003.

ABC board looks at focus areas, finances

The Association of Brethren Caregivers board completed the next phase in its vision and planning process by approving an interpretation of four areas of strategic focus—advocacy, empowerment, relationship, and stewardship—during its fall meetings, held Sept. 27-29 at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill. Staff set the four areas of strategic focus in the context of fostering community, and interpreted the interconnected nature of the four areas.

The board received the 2003 operating budget of \$592,560, which includes a deficit of \$98,720. The board instructed ABC staff to present a revised budget to the Finance Committee and Executive Committee for consideration and adoption before year's end.

The board also heard a report on the agency's year-to-date budget, which shows gift income from all sources similar to that of 2001.

Board members took action allowing ABC to use its reserves to provide adequate cash flow for 2003 and authorized executive director Steve Mason to borrow from the agency's unrestricted quasi-endowment funds as a means of continuing programs in 2003.

The ABC board also: elected Heather Neff of Huntingdon, Pa., and Gene Yeazell of Arden, N.C., to serve on the board beginning Jan. 1; revisited an action item from 1998, which called for the board to reevaluate the agency's name, but decided against a name change at this time; noted new priorities coming from the Annual Conference "Call to Prayer" statement; and called James Tomlinson to serve as treasurer beginning Jan. 1.

In a skit during General Board meetings, Steve Gregory, a Congregational Life Team member, was a demon complaining that Congregational Life Teams are thwarting his evil plans to corrupt the Church of the Brethren.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec. 4-6 Ecumenical Stewardship Center winter conference, "Embracing Accountability: Avoiding Ecclesiastical Enrons," Marco Island, Fla.

Dec. 5-19 Brethren Witness Faith Expedition to Nicaragua

Dec. 8 Christmas offering emphasis

Jan. 12-14 Evangelism Connections ecumenical event for middle judicatory staff and other leaders, Houston, Texas

Jan. 16-18 New Church Development Coaches' Network Training, Phoenix, Ariz.

Jan. 18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Jan. 19-Feb. 3 Brethren Volunteer Service Unit 252 orientation, Gotha, Fla.

Jan. 30-Feb. 3 InterAgency Forum, Mission and Ministries Planning Council, and Council of District Executives meetings, Daytona Beach Fla.

Interchurch Relations plans for Conference, seeks nominations

The Committee on Interchurch Relations (CIR) held its fall meetings Sept. 27-29 in Elgin, Ill., bringing together the three members appointed by the General Board and three appointed by Annual Conference, along with general secretary Judy Mills Reimer, who serves as staff.

The committee updated its mission statement, reviewed its core areas of responsibility, and made plans for its activities at the 2003 Annual Conference. Manassas (Va.) pastor Jeff Carter, who will be spending part of his sabbatical at World Council of Churches headquarters in Switzerland, will lead CIR's insight session at Conference.

CIR will also again host the Ecumenical Luncheon at Annual Conference, presenting an Ecumenical Recognition/Award to a congregation working to overcome violence. Nominations should be sent by March 15 to Committee on Interchurch Relations, Church of the Brethren General Offices, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120 or jkobel_gb@brethren.org.

Those submitting nominations should include their name and the reason for the nomination; the name, address, and district of the congregation being nominated; and a

summary of the nominee's activities and programs to overcome violence.

CIR members also drafted a statement reflecting interfaith dynamics of the current Iraq situation and war on terrorism. The committee will next meet in spring 2003, by conference call.

On Earth Peace considers query on peace church

The On Earth Peace board of directors and staff met Sept. 20-21 in New Windsor, Md., led by chair Bev Weaver. With images drawn from the book of Ruth, the theme "Strength for the Journey" provided a focus as each session opened with worship.

The 2002-2003 Executive Committee was organized with Weaver as chair; David Jehnsen, vice chair; Lauree Hersch Meyer, secretary; Charles Kwon, treasurer; and Ken Frantz and Tom Leard Longenecker, at-large.

The financial update indicated both income and expenses were below budget. However, the agency finished the fiscal year—which ended Sept. 30—with a positive balance. The board approved a \$345,000 budget for 2002-2003.

A possible Annual Conference query was discussed, regarding a call to faithfulness as a peace church and the question of what it

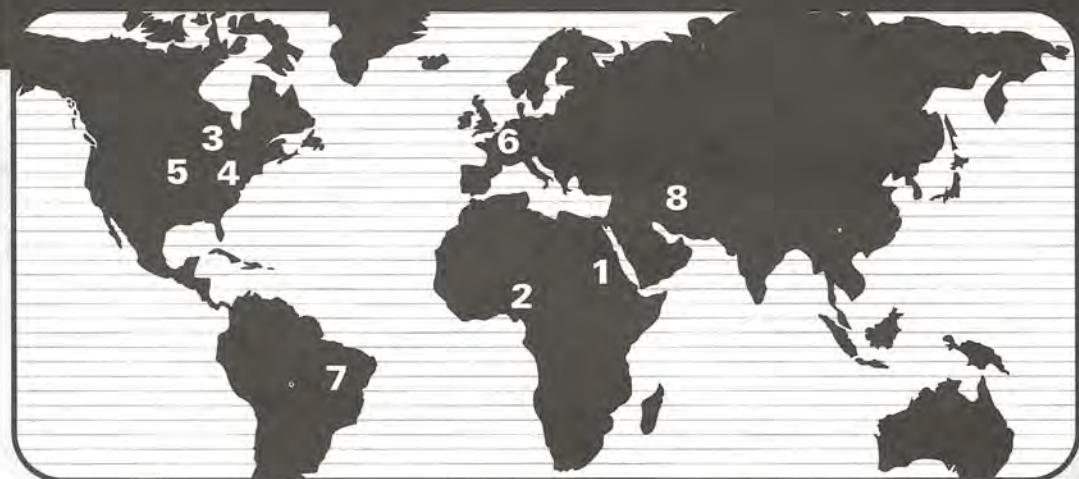
The Idaho District Conference Oct. 25-26 at the Nampa (Idaho) Church of the Brethren

was one of many district conferences held this fall. Sue Daniel of the Fruitland congregation served as moderator, leading 21 delegates representing all six district congregations through the agenda. Delegates approved a budget of \$10,529 with the added faith-commitment that 10 percent of all income to the district would be tithed to denominational ministries in Sudan—which the district previously adopted as an emphasis—beginning in 2003. Delegates also affirmed the Annual Conference decision related to the ordination and licensing of homosexual persons, affirmed the General Board's recent statement against a possible war on Iraq, and called Boise Valley pastor Ed Kerschensteiner as moderator-elect. In this photo, host pastor Jim Hardenbrook of the Nampa congregation and Steve McPherson, a member at Boise Valley church, lead worship with song.

Walt Wirsche



WORLDWATCH



means to be a "living peace church" in this day. A working group of board, non-board, and staff was proposed to carry out this effort.

Staff reported progress in seeking an anti-racism initiative to help On Earth Peace work against racism in the agency's program and organizational life. The board affirmed this direction with encouragement for staff to continue this approach. A small group also gathered to develop ideas for non-Anglo curricula to be incorporated into On Earth Peace programs.

The board affirmed the appointment of David Jehnsen as an On Earth Peace representative to the Christian Peacemaker Teams steering committee.

One hundred Brethren congregations join Decade to Overcome Violence

The number of Church of the Brethren congregations committing to the worldwide Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) reached 100 this fall when Middlebury (Ind.) sent in a congregational commitment form.

District DOV representatives and DOV program assistant Laura Kreider have made congregational commitments to the Decade an ongoing priority. (See article page 12.) Congregations that join receive an introductory packet, invitations to training events, and continuing resources. A list of congregations that have made commitments and district representatives is at www.brethren.org/dov.

The DOV movement was initiated by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and endorsed by delegates at the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference in 2000. Activities during the past year have included a training weekend at New Windsor, Md., in December 2001 and events at the 2002 Annual Conference, including a visit by German Mennonite Fernando Enns, who initially proposed the idea for the Decade to the WCC.

The General Board's Brethren Witness office and On Earth Peace have been collaborating to oversee DOV involvement within the denomination.

1. Sudan The Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army on Oct. 15 agreed to a "Memo of Understanding" that opens the way for peace negotiations to resume between the warring parties. The agreement includes an allowance for "unimpeded humanitarian access to all areas and for people in need." Washington Office director Greg Davidson Laszakovits called it a "great step forward for Sudan" while noting that much work remains to be done.

2. Nigeria. Church of the Brethren General Board mission workers Tom and Janet Crago are making themselves available to US congregations for mission interpretation on weekends from Jan. 15 to March 30. The Cragos, whose home is in Colorado Springs, Colo., are serving as administrative consultants with the Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) near Mubi.

3. Chicago. Christian Peacemaker Teams on Oct. 1 officially opened its new offices adjacent to the Douglas Park Church of the Brethren in Chicago. More than 200 volunteers helped to rehabilitate a dilapidated building in a project that began in September 2001. Five staff members will work in the building.

4. Indiana. The Christ Our Shepherd Church of the Brethren in Greenwood, near Indianapolis, had about \$25,000 of damage done to its roof when a tornado roared through the area in late September. Insurance adjusters approved replacement of the roof before winter hit. Pastor Wayne Grumblung said the support, especially from other churches in the district, has been outstanding. "We've been pretty well blessed by the response we've gotten," he said.

5. McPherson, Kan. McPherson College this fall completed its "Enhancing the Legacy" capital campaign, just topping its goal of \$23.5 million. A special recognition banquet for donors and volunteers was held Oct. 11 at the college. The campus has added six new buildings and remodeled another over the past five years. A new partnership with the community will bring about the expansion and remodeling of the college's athletic facilities over the next year.

6. Europe. This fall's large Brethren Volunteer Service Unit 251 produced the largest group of volunteers heading to European projects in recent years. Of the 31 volunteers in the orientation unit, nine went to international projects—seven of those in Europe. The projects are in Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Germany, and the Republic of Ireland.

7. Brazil. The World Council of Churches Central Committee has decided that the Ninth WCC Assembly will be held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2006. Delegates made the decision by paper ballot after a recommending committee split three ways on possible venues. The WCC has never held an assembly in Latin America.

8. Afghanistan. Church World Service (CWS) and its local Afghan partner, Norwegian Project Office (NPO), are helping 40 families in the area north of Kabul reconstruct their homes. It is part of an overall project to provide housing to some 1,500 families in the Shomali Valley. "The two things I most admire about the Afghan people," CWS Pakistan/Afghanistan director Marvin Perez says, "are their resilience and their capacity to bounce back."



Remember we are not alone

Peace means resisting the urge to dominate

by David Radcliff

It can't be easy being God these days. Of course it's never been a job for the fainthearted. But today it must be even more frustrating. As usual, the problem is centered on humankind. And as has often been the case since time began, at issue is the bothersome human tendency to want to assume godlike control over this world and its people.

As we enter the third millennium, this human desire to control is finding expression in a variety of ways. Military planners openly talk about "full-spectrum dominance," including plans to control the skies above our heads as a way of maintaining mastery over all adversaries. Can it bode well for the health of the community of nations for one nation to want to assume this kind of dominance?

In regard to God's creation, it is said that humans now manipulate or in some way affect 75 percent of the earth's productive capacity. Are we up to such responsibility? Seas depopulated of fish, shrinking forests, and species vanishing at rates unseen in millions of years would seem to suggest otherwise.

In economic relations, a few in the world have assumed much control over the lives of many others. Whether by virtue of economic embargoes that strangle entire nations or monetary policies that mandate open markets—often to the detriment of small farmers—the lives of countless poor people are affected by decisions made a world away. Do we have the wisdom and compassion to fashion economic systems that are fair to all and not just beneficial to some? An unprecedented and widening gap between the world's rich and poor should make us wonder.

Perhaps most bothersome to God—and to us—are the current efforts of our own nation to develop and threaten to use military power. No one would dispute that United States weaponry is unrivaled. Since the US spends as much on its military as all other nations combined spend on theirs, it should be. In addi-

tion, this nation has of late proclaimed to the rest of the world that it will not tolerate threats to its national security or even competitors to its global military dominance. The government has warned that it reserves the right to preemptively remove such threats. Currently, this language has been directed against Iraq, but what if China, or Russia—or even France—begin to act in ways that challenge US supremacy?

The government has also shown a distaste and often disregard for international cooperation. From US unwillingness to sign international agreements on landmines, nuclear weapons, climate change, slavery, and the rights of children and women, to its disregard for the opinions of other nations in matters of global political and military import, the country has assumed a "my way or the highway" approach.

These attitudes and actions will not serve us well in the years ahead. For one thing, peace cannot long be maintained by the barrel of a gun or in the absence of justice. Until all feel that they have a decent chance at a decent life, and that there is no one group presuming to stand above all the others, none of us will really be secure. And we know that bullies eventually have their day. As the events of Sept. 11, 2001, demonstrated, there are ways for even relatively powerless foes to strike painful blows.

A greater motive than fear for taking a different approach to our world could be an awareness that no one nation or people can possibly possess all the truth or be the only group capable of determining what is fair in

"Please send us medicine," pleads an Iraqi mother whose son has leukemia. Following the visit of a General Board delegation to Iraq at Christmas, Brethren Witness mounted a "Write for Life" campaign to end sanctions against Iraq.

We live in a challenging time. We fear for our safety. We hear of impending ecological demise. Economic uncertainties lurk by our doorsteps. One response to the insecurities of a time like this can easily be to seek further dominance of our world as a way of attempting to make it more secure. Is there another way?

t God

human relations. We need the input of others—whether in a local congregation or in an international forum—to find our way toward that better day that we all seek.

And more than this, we need to recognize our place before God. There has always been the temptation for human beings to seek to preempt God's place in our lives. This is the meaning of the story of the Tower of Babel. Humans sought not only to make a tower with its top in the heavens, but to "make a name" for themselves—in effect, honoring their name more than that Name above all names. God put an end to their folly, noting that if they were to continue in the direction they were headed, soon nothing that they proposed to do would be impossible for them.

So, what's wrong with that? Didn't God give us these minds and these abilities? Yes, God did. But God has also been clear from the beginning that without wisdom, our wonderful abilities can easily become deadly liabilities. Unless tempered by respect for the Creator and for the rest of God's creation, our God-given role of dominion can disintegrate into a

God-usurping role of domination. And in the end, this is the road that leads to perdition.

A time like this can be challenging for Christians living in the midst of a dominant society. We reap material benefits from the same economic and military policies that give us pause. Yet we are the ones called to take another path in this world, and to show others the way.

In previous eras, Brethren have drawn on their faith and their love of their neighbors to take this other path, opposing efforts to dominate others. We have given sacrificially to assist others in economic development, and worked for laws that guarantee them a fair chance. We have sought to simplify our lives, recognizing

this as an ecological and spiritual imperative. Many of us have refused to go to war, seeing such activity as contrary to Jesus' teachings and as no real solution to the problems facing the human family. In our own time, when the power to dominate is

in our hands as never before, there is an even greater imperative to reinvite God to be present in our world. It is only by turning to God's higher power that we are reminded that we are not a power unto ourselves. It is only by inviting the counsel of the One who watches over all people everywhere with equal care that we are challenged to seek not our own good alone, but the good of all.

We live in a challenging time. We fear for our safety. We hear of impending ecological demise. Economic uncertainties lurk by our doorsteps. One response to the insecurities of a time like this can easily be to seek further dominance of our world as a way of attempting to make it more secure. Is there another way?

In this Christmas season we have a vivid example of God's plan for bringing us the peace and security we all seek. The plan begins to unfold in that humble stable where the God of the universe made entrance into the human family. The task ahead of this child would be daunting—to secure peace and security, salvation and hope for the human family. The means he would eventually employ to achieve these ends would be filled with unconventional wisdom—choosing avenues of humility and service, challenging social systems of domination, and seeking the well-being of all.

If we believe that God was onto something here, and that there is something about this birth and subsequent life that bears noting—even emulating—let us begin our journey toward this new day. Our own lives, and those of our neighbors, will undoubtedly be blessed. And we can imagine our God finally enjoying a day on the job. **M**



David Radcliff

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



Being a part of the Decade to Overcome Violence has given us some measure of hope that one day congregations will begin to acknowledge and respond to the abuse that is happening in their midst.

—Anne Palmer, congregational representative for Live Oak (Calif.) Church of the Brethren

Overcoming violence, Congregations respond with creativity and appreciation

by Laura Kreider

By design, there isn't a set formula for congregations to become involved in the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV). An essential part of this worldwide Christian movement is to invite participants to become involved according to their own gifts, interests, and feelings about what kind of peace witness is needed in their communities and world, or what kind of peace education is needed among their own members. In the Church of the Brethren, the coordinators—On Earth Peace and the General Board's Brethren Witness office—have offered a broad framework for involvement.

Congregations are invited to make a commitment to take part in the Decade. A participant's manual (the DOVPak) is provided for those making a commitment; it includes background on the Decade, worship and study resources, and a list of long-term and short-term action ideas. The coordinators also offer to provide leadership in local and regional settings if this is requested.

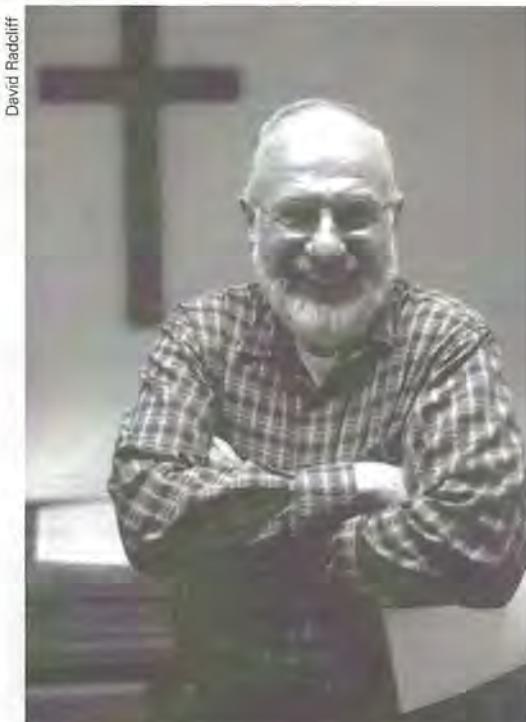
Another key element is the role of district

DOV representatives in each of the 23 districts (the "DOV23"). These persons, sometimes working with a committee, promote and resource the Decade among congregations in their area. In general, however, the ball is squarely in the court of congregations to plan and carry out their own peacemaking commitments. To date, just over 100 congregations from coast to coast have made a commitment to the Decade, and are taking part in a wide variety of ways.

What follows are vignettes of some of the ways in which Brethren have chosen to live out the Decade to Overcome Violence in their own congregations, communities, and world. Let us be enriched by the many means of making peace represented here, and perhaps inspired to use these models as springboards for our own involvement.

Annville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren

This past summer, the Annville Church of the Brethren launched its DOV involvement through a Summer Quarter Unified Series open to all ages. The sessions were held during the Sunday school hour, and covered a wide variety of peace-related topics. Retired seminary professor, author, and activist Dale Brown kicked off the series with a talk about why Christians need to be involved in peace and justice issues. The following Sunday, Laura Kreider, DOV program assistant, provided background information about the DOV and shared sto-



On the summer series organized by Dick Blouch (pictured here) of the Annville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, pastor Mike Morrow says: "It was a natural outgrowth of Dick's concern that the Brethren continue to make a strong peace witness in the face of increasing hostility and mounting tensions at home and around the world."

one church at a time

Participation in the Decade to Overcome Violence

The youth group at Jackson Park got behind the Violent Toy Turn-In, soliciting toys and games from the congregation and local businesses. Children in the congregation's Youth Club, many of whom are from the community, willingly exchanged their violent toys and games.

ries from other congregations.

Other sessions hit on the subjects of global warming, sexual assault, nonviolence, and active peacemaking. The series was well received by the congregation, whose attitudes about peace issues stretch across the continuum. Many have said they've come to a newer and deeper understanding of what it means to live peaceably with their sisters and brothers.

Jackson Park Church of the Brethren, Jonesborough, Tenn.

Thanks to members with special concern for peace and justice issues, the Jackson Park congregation has long had an awareness of peace-related concerns in the world and within the Church of the Brethren. From time to time the congregation became involved in making a stronger peace witness, but there have also been times of frustration at a lack of consistent focus on these issues. Jackson Park members felt they didn't always have the support or encouragement that was needed to be consistent peace advocates. So the opportunity to become involved in the Decade to Overcome Violence was appreciated, as it represented values that were already a part of the congregation and it provided support, resources, and connections with like-minded people.

Through its participation, the congregation has gained greater insight into some of the issues and has gotten more involved, so



Kim Chaffin

that now there is a more unified momentum rather than a piecemeal witness. It has also rooted the congregation more deeply in the peace heritage of the church. Members of the congregation say there is still some disagreement regarding how to make a witness for peace in our world, but now there is greater dialog and greater understanding. DOV has breathed new life into the peace witness at Jackson Park.

Waynesboro (Pa.) Church of the Brethren

The Decade to Overcome Violence has made an overwhelming difference in the life of the Waynesboro congregation.

For many years, individuals have worked to remind the larger congregation that the Church of the Brethren is a church with a peace witness in today's world, and not just

What a joy it is to claim the promise of the Prince of Peace with other communities of faith and to know that a foundation of the gospel to love our enemies and our neighbors as ourselves informs all of our spirits and theologies.

—Illana Naylor, district representative for Mid-Atlantic, referring to the Manassas (Va.) Church of the Brethren



Overcoming violence, one



The Waynesboro, Pa., Peace Education Committee of Mary Muck, Lois Mentzer, Marty Angle, Becca Angle, and Brian Angle, facilitator (missing is Doris Large). "I can't understand how Christians can sing 'Peace on Earth' during Christmas and not be concerned about working for peace," says Mary.

it became an opportunity to talk about peace and to live out their faith through more education and action.

The congregation was particularly moved by its recent Domestic Violence Sunday, which was intended to be an educational time but turned out to be much more than that. Some members were brought to tears by what they learned and made a number of positive comments about the hope for more events like this in the future.

Brethren Witness director David Radcliff also spoke at Waynesboro in September and was said to be a key factor in Waynesboro's journey to answer the call to be a living peace church. The way in which the Decade is playing out in this congregation is beyond what anyone had hoped for. The congregation plans to continue to learn and grow in its understanding of what it means to work toward overcoming violence.

Uniontown (Pa.) Church of the Brethren

To the Uniontown congregation, the Decade has led to this realization: if the Church of the Brethren professes pacifism, then it is essential that the "acceptance" of violence in our coun-

try be "unacceptable" to us.

The Decade has helped the congregation better understand and begin to live out Jesus' teachings and his example of not condoning violence in any form or situation. Uniontown's dedication to the DOV has prompted the congregation to engage in more open dialog about how to deal with the acceptance of violence in our society.

Discussions have arisen on topics such as violence in the media, especially as it relates to the movies and video games that children are viewing and playing. As a result, the congregation is being provided with information about ratings of violence in movies, video games, and toys.

Uniontown held a Peace Month in June to encourage the congregation to be more

Amy DeFazio holds a newspaper article featuring children of the Uniontown, Pa., congregation during their project of reading peace books. The books were used during last June's Peace Emphasis Month for Sunday School and children's worship, as well as for individual reading.



church at a time

aware of peace efforts around the world. The Decade will also be featured in each monthly newsletter. This is intended to keep the many facets of violence at the forefront of people's minds and to prevent complacency.

Olympic View Church of the Brethren, Seattle, Wash.

For the Olympic View congregation, the DOV has encouraged a peaceful voice already existing within the congregation. The congregation had long had members committed to peacemaking, but never a formal outlet within the congregation to express these interests. Due to its commitment to the DOV—as well as current events—there have been more sermons devoted to peacemaking, and more connections to peacemaking alliances in Seattle and within the greater Seattle Council of Churches. More people within the church are incorporating peacemaking as part of their lives and are voicing their stand for peace and justice.

According to congregation member and district DOV representative Jeannesse Rodeffer, "It's been like watching a tree blossoming in the spring ... it's phenomenal!"

The congregation has joined with other peacemaking coalitions, churches, and organizations in expressing its peace concerns. The church newsletter provides a listing of all the peacemaking meetings around Seattle. Members are discovering what it means to be a peacemaker through Bible study, discussion, prayer, and experiences.

Community members formerly associated with the military have been drawn to the church through many facets of its ministry

Don Vermilyea



and particularly its peace commitments. While some came out of curiosity, they have now found a kind of solace there.

Some have become among the greatest supporters and voices of the DOV and peace and justice in the church body.

The congregation's involvement in the Decade has been important in helping Olympic View to step ahead on already existing peace commitments. It has provided outlets for members committed to peace to express themselves. It has opened the door to ecumenical involvements and to new members. And it has challenged the rationale for the hateful acts of violence that fill our society. In short, it has helped Olympic View fulfill God's call to be peacemakers.

Laura Kreider, a member of the Annville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, is a BVSer serving in her second year as program assistant for the Decade to Overcome Violence. She is based in Washington, D.C., working out of the Church of the Brethren Washington Office.

One DOV activity for the Olympic View congregation was to host Don Vermilyea on his Walk Across America. "I was very impressed with the way the congregation works with refugee resettlement," said Don after his visit. "And they seem to extend this same hospitality to people in their own community."



Why are we this way

Our denomination's practical approach

by David Radcliff

In a recent phone conversation with a reporter, I was being pressed to explain the peace testimony of our church. "Why did your church come to this position on war?" she asked. "What does the Church of the Brethren have to say about the situation with Iraq? How is your denomination viewed by others in the church or in the community, given your strong peace stand?" For more than an hour she probed, her questions seeming to arise out of genuine interest rather than wanting to critique what to many is a far-out way of thinking.

Why are we this way? When so few others in the church have come to these same conclusions, how is it that we've ended up here—"here" being the oft-affirmed statement that "all war is sin."

I've appreciated Brethren historian Donald Durnbaugh's analysis of how our church came to be a "peace church." Durnbaugh credits several factors. One is historical—our church came into existence in the aftermath of the Thirty Years War, a conflict that devastated much of their part of the world. Thus the early believers had personal experience of the ravages of war.

A second influence was the writings of early church historians who revealed that the first Christians were not to be found in the armies of the day. Brethren leaders felt that if not fighting was good enough for those closest to Jesus' own time, then it was good enough for us. I call this the influence of our Christian heritage.

A third "H" in this trilogy is our hermeneutic—or the way the Brethren have interpreted scripture. We have been brash enough to take Jesus at his word when he called us to love our enemies. We've sought to heed Paul's admonition to "overcome evil with good." Others in the Christian community have found their way around a direct interpretation of these texts—our forebears, and Brethren since that time,

have faced them head-on.

It is this unique combination of personal and theological motivation that continues to inform and even inspire Brethren peace efforts.

Our approach to Jesus' teachings may seem simplistic to some. Is the path of non-resistance and loving our enemies a viable approach in a world shared by extremists and shocked by ethnic cleansing? Can something as despicable as "evil" be overcome by good deeds and by compassionate responses? Our current government certainly doesn't seem to think so.

And yet, looking back on the 20th century, we can see where the other, more "realistic" and politically sophisticated approach has gotten us. That great century of progress also left 145 million war dead in its wake—95 percent of all the people ever killed in war. Trillions of dollars were spent on developing weapons that could have spelled the end of humankind. And the hatred and greed that fueled our conflicts have certainly not been thwarted by military means.

So perhaps our approach isn't as naive as some make it out to be. Maybe it makes at least as much sense as the other paths we have chosen instead. And while few other denominations completely share our view, they continue to look to us to provide this unique—and uniquely needed—perspective.

Our experience-centered approach has also continued with us in our quest for peace. For instance, in dealing with our nation's conflict with Iraq, Brethren have lifted up the suffering of Iraqi people at the hands of 11 years of economic sanctions. Following a delegation to Iraq last December, a "Write for Life" campaign was launched that has seen the participation of more than 100 congregations and the sending of 12,000 postcards to our president. In this and other situations, we have wanted to factor in the human cost of whatever war or economic policy or political alliance is being carried out.

Our approach to Jesus' teachings may seem simplistic to some. Is the path of nonresistance and loving our enemies a viable approach in a world shared by extremists and shocked by ethnic cleansing? Can something as despicable as 'evil' be overcome by good deeds and by compassionate responses?

about peace?

And we've continued to let these experiences affect us as well. I remember a story told by longtime practical peacemaker Clyde Weaver. Now deceased, Clyde was a former Brethren Press marketing director and was active in New Call to Peacemaking. As part of his peacemaking ministry, Clyde was instrumental in bringing a Christian choir from the Soviet Union to the United States in the late 1980s. Members of the choir stayed in Brethren homes when they visited congregations to perform.

As the Soviet group was preparing to depart one community, a Brethren man who had hosted a Russian choir member pulled Clyde aside. "Before meeting these people, I had an image of them as cruel and heartless enemies. But now," he went on, tears streaming down his face, "I know they're people just like us."

We hope to continue in this vein of practical, personal peacemaking based on the teachings and example of Christ. More than 100 Brethren Volunteer Service workers are at any moment involved in peacemaking ministries at far-flung locations around the country and around the world. Faith Expeditions take Brethren into the lives of people at home and abroad who are caught in the midst of conflict. There we learn about their situation, offer them our support, and we return home to advocate on their behalf.

The Global Mission Partnerships office supports BVSers in critical peacemaking locations, and has given vital support to peace initiatives in war-torn Sudan. Another approach to working at the long-term causes of conflict is that of the Global Food Crisis Fund, working for economic justice and the restoration of human dignity to countless people around the world each year.

Differing agencies in the denomination sponsor the Youth Peace Travel Team, Urban Peace Tour, the Conflict Transformation program, and the new ART Project (anti-racism training), all of which place skilled peace-

makers and justice workers in Brethren camps and congregations. Special conferences and the annual Christian Citizenship Seminar bring Brethren together around peace themes. Here again it is the personal encounter and with it the opportunities for faith sharing and dialog that can move us toward greater interest in and commitment to Christ's gospel of peace.

High on the list of priorities of the Church of the Brethren Washington Office are issues related to peace in our world and justice for the world's people. The office seeks out those pieces of legislation that are of highest concern to our membership and that will benefit most from our peace church perspective, and the staff then mobilizes constituents to engage their representatives.

A wide array of printed and online resources encourage youth and adults to reflect on Christ's call in the midst of a war-prone world. The pocket-sized *Peace Book* has found its way into the hands of more than 5,000 youth in the past four years; more than 1,000 copies of the post-9/11 adult study resource *Waging Peace* have been requested by Brethren across the nation. Brethren Press offers curriculum and study materials to bolster peace education in congregations.

And now we see the Church of the Brethren in many ways setting the pace in the worldwide Decade to Overcome Violence. This is quite fitting. We may not be the biggest kid on the block, but our size belies our vigor in striving to follow Christ's call to peacemaking in today's world.

In a world fraught with war and the rumors of war, this vigor is needed today as much as ever. In the spirit of the early church, in the footsteps of own ancestors, after the manner and teachings of Christ, may we continue to offer our witness vigorously, for the glory of God and our neighbors' good. **M**

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





Peace in the congregation

A visit to Hopeful Valley, where "peacefully"

by James L. Kinsey

We live in a stressed and conflicted world. Wars and rumors of war damage all of our institutions. Strife and struggles visit most congregations from time to time. "Continuing the work of Jesus," our wonderful tagline, is slowed and stopped when "peacefully" does not exist in congregational life. "Simply" gets complicated when relationships are torn asunder by conflict. "Together" seems like a nostalgic moment long ago. When peace is missing from our violent world, it can also be missing in the church we love.

"Peacefully" does not mean absence of disagreement. "Peacefully" means creatively working through differences where all parties grow in the faith and move into new insights and ministries. Just as "peacefully" stands first in the line of modifiers in our Church of the Brethren tagline, so does "peacefully" come first in importance for being a people of God.

Healthy congregations know that there will be differences in opinion and behaviors. Healthy congregations know that we must honor those differences so that they bless us and do not curse us. It is in the tension of those differences that we grow in the faith. It is in the tension of love-filled conversations over differences that brings growth, creates ministry, focuses mission, and nurtures the generations yet to come into the family. It is within those tensions that we all find healing and caring.

Let's look at a composite picture of a congregation where "peacefully" has been absent. We will call our congregation Hopeful Valley. It is part of Middle American District. John and Grace Love are the district staff, challenged to work along with James Abundant, the area Congregational Life Team member, on this troubled congregation.

For generations Hopeful Valley has had internal fights, mainly between the two

prominent families. As one reads the history, it is easy to see the presence of squabbles recorded in most church business meeting minutes. When asked, most parties felt that the squabbles were a "needed corrective" for the sake of "errors in the thinking and actions" of certain members of the congregation. These differences defined each family grouping. One could hear a statement on almost any topic and know what family member said it. Even people in the community around the church could give the same assessment.

There had been a numerical decline in attendance and membership. The squabbles grew. Blaming abounded. Peripheral families left to join other congregations. The church budget could not be met. Anger replaced the former polite friendliness as one entered the sanctuary. The blaming sides became deeply entrenched. Laughter and general conversation were rarely heard.

Serial consultants were sent by the district to address the troubles. Assessment tools were provided. All correctly revealed what was wrong, although the assessment results did not correct the situation. They only added fuel to the squabbles. Fault-finding took a harsher tack. Even the pastor pointed fingers.

Members of the congregation formed triangles, where people talk about people to others but never to those people directly. Ask anyone from the Middle American District about Hopeful Valley and you would hear one side of the squabble recounted. The district had been triangulated into the mess. Even the results of the consultants' analysis would be told as seen through the eyes of one family or the other.

As strange as the situation was, an even stranger calm came when the issue of war in Iraq arose. The congregation, made of former conscientious objectors and political

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means creative and loving congregational life

peace activists, became galvanized into one, as petitions and witness actions were discussed.

On the heels of this moment of calm, one member suggested that the congregation become an "open and affirming congregation." Instantaneously, irate statements were made that impugned the motives of the person making the suggestion. The moment of peace was broken. The battle again raged.

Then a consultant asked, "Do you want to find healing for your deadly struggles?" The second question was equally powerful, "What are the payoffs for continuing the present conflicted congregational life?"

Hopeful Valley replied: "We want healing. Fighting keeps us from learning to listen to and love one another. Fighting keeps us from being a blessing to each other and to the neighborhood in which we live."

This profound answer led to a consultant who came to help the congregation write a "Covenant of Love." The covenant was a healing balm. Members wrote their promises to live in a healing, forgiving, and peaceful relationship.

The Covenant of Love was stated as follows: "We, the Hopeful Valley Church of the Brethren, promise to love one another for richer, for poorer. We will use the principles of Matthew 18 to solve our differences. We will teach its usage to our children and all who come through our doors. We commission the deacons to hold us accountable to this witnessed covenant."

A celebration was held to praise God for the new lease on life that the covenant created. It was printed, framed, and put on the church wall for all to see. It also gave a clear message to newcomers: "Here is how we live together as we 'continue the work of Jesus.'"

The Covenant of Love led to a consultant who helped the congregation to list its "assets"—all gifts, all the good things present in the people who were members, and in the community around them. The list included

potential gifts and assets not yet developed. At the conclusion of the listing process, the group looked at how these assets could be used in ministry to one another, to the neighborhood, and to the world.

A consultant worked with the membership over a six-month period to generate a mission and ministry focus statement. It demonstrated which behaviors were good and appropriate and those that were not helpful to the mission and ministry the body had selected.

The Hopeful Valley congregation chose to be a "welcoming and listening" congregation, focusing on an invitational ministry. Members created a list of what it means to be welcoming and listening. Members practiced welcoming and listening on each other so they could use the technique with newcomers. Hostile triangling was identified as a breach of the Covenant of Love. All who were not listening, who did not focus on welcoming others, were ministered to by the deacons.

The creation of the Covenant of Love and a mission and ministry focus has created a new culture of faith and action within the membership. Hopeful Valley now has a foundation to help it live up to its name. The congregation also knows that what has been a decades-old problem will not be solved through statements and mission/purpose exercises. It will take a spiritual renewal of the very soul of the congregation. This renewal must include the choice to be about "continuing the work of Jesus." When it is a heartfelt choice, it will be done "peacefully, simply, together." **M**

James L. Kinsey, of Lake Odessa, Mich., is a Congregational Life Team representative in Area 2 for the Church of the Brethren General Board.





Peace perspective

A meditation on Psalm 85

by Paul Grout

"Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for God will speak peace to God's people, to God's faithful, to those who turn to God in their hearts (Psa. 85:8).

Do you sometimes feel enslaved by your attachments, the pace of life, a lack of purpose? Do you have a sense that something is wrong within our society, our schools, our government, our churches, our homes?

Are there things you do to cover over the way you feel that aren't in the long run helpful, that don't seem quite right, that don't bring about the peace you hunger for?

Perhaps the writer of Psalm 85 lived in a similar time.

The first section of the Psalm looks back on a time when God restored the nation from its captivity, forgave sin, and turned from wrath.

Within the second part of Psalm 85 there is a recognition that something has been lost. There is again a need for restoration from captivity. God is called upon to "revive us again" (vs. 6a).

The third and final section (vs. 8-13) lifts up God's willingness to bring peace while acknowledging that peace is dependent upon the people's rejection of a course leading to folly (vs. 8). A condition of peace will flourish when righteousness is present. Such a condition is not only about the absence of conflict and war, it is personal, relational, so intimate and healing that it will be as if peace and righteousness are embracing in a kiss (vs. 10).

Within the Church of the Brethren we refer to ourselves as a "peace church." We see ourselves in this way because of what we believe about God and God's way of peace supremely revealed in Jesus Christ. But it is not what we believe about peace that provides peace. Peace is not primarily about a system of belief, it is not about who we are (a peace church), but whose we are.

"But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace" (Eph. 2:13-14a).

I am thankful that we are a peace church. There are perspectives that we speak to that many other denominations avoid.

I grow increasingly concerned, however, that we speak so freely to some issues related to peace and are silent on others. Has our peace perspective come to be more influenced by systematized political agendas than upon our relationship to God in Jesus Christ? Is it possible that a narrowing political focus on peace is blocking us from living in the peace that God offers?

Our nation makes statements about the wrongs perpetrated by other nations. When our nation identifies an "axis of evil," it too easily perceives itself as good. Statements about the evil of others too often blind us to our own sin.

Does our church's focus on particular aspects of peace blind us to our own participation in violence? Our unsated devouring lifestyles demand a high degree of violence to keep a hungry world at bay. If it comes to a choice between radically changing our lifestyle or the destruction of a country thousands of miles away, how many of us would really opt for peace? We have grown quite comfortable with our enslavement to the values and principles of a nation that feeds us well while it devours us body, mind, and soul.

The church has become a compliant partner in a society that seeks to control all aspects of life and death. Millions of unborn babies are slaughtered to preserve the lifestyles we choose. Politics aside, why is the peace church so silent in the midst of this carnage?

To a large degree we accept the poisoning of our air, our land, our water, our own bodies, in order to maintain the consumptive lifestyles we have grown accustomed to.

I grow increasingly concerned that we speak so freely to some issues related to peace and are silent on others. Has our peace perspective come to be more influenced by systematized political agendas than upon our relationship to God in Jesus Christ?

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Divorce and remarriage tear apart families, damaging children for a lifetime at the same rate of frequency within the "peace church" as within society as a whole.

The cry for the death penalty grows louder as the nation slides deeper into the depths of fear. Medically assisted suicide gains greater acceptance and the society appears to be growing closer to an acceptance of euthanasia. It should come as no surprise that Pope John Paul calls ours the "culture of death."

"God will speak peace to God's people; to God's godly ones; but let them not turn back to folly" (Psa. 85:8b).

Because we have been swept away by the pace, values, and morality of our society, our bodies, minds, and spirits have become enslaved and damaged beyond our comprehension.

Healing will not just happen.

Lovingkindness and truth must meet together (vs. 10a), righteousness and peace must kiss each other (vs. 10b). Peace is a byproduct of devotion to Jesus Christ brought about through the work and fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Within North American society, even those who call themselves Christian, even those who call themselves Brethren, need to be taught how to leave their slavery to a system behind, how to enter into the depths of Jesus Christ, how to open themselves to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, how to pray, how to fast, how to worship, how to be fully alive, how to experience and witness to the peace of God.

"Lord, you were favorable to your land, you restored the captivity of Jacob" (Psa. 85:1). **M**

Paul Grout, a Church of the Brethren pastor, lives in Putney, Vt.

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caring ministries of the Church of the Brethren

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A CHRISTMAS
REFLECTION ON
ISAIAH 40:1-11

If it takes all night.

by James Benedict

James Benedict is pastor of the Union Bridge (Md.) Church of the Brethren.

Once upon a time (a long time ago, it seems),
my life at this time of year was mostly
long stretches in the library
and late nights at the typewriter,
putting down facts and opinions and footnotes,
eight to ten pages, double-spaced,
and due no later than December 15.

It was nothing then
for me to roll out of bed at seven,
hit the books by eight,
and be at it all day and all night,
until it was done;
signed, sealed, and slid under the professor's office door
just as the sun came up.

But those days, as I said before, are long gone.
Now I'm lucky if I don't doze off and miss the weather on the late news,
and sometimes even who-done-it,
at the end of "Law and Order."

I know, I know—it's the difference
between twenty-two and forty-two,
and a sign of things to come, I'm sure,
A small sign, nothing dramatic;
in fact, if I had to, (really had to)
I might still be able to pull it off yet—
but, I don't have to . . . and I certainly don't want to.

Yes, it's a sign, however small,
of the inevitable decline.
It points in the direction
of the destination
that awaits us all.

The prophet's words say it as well as any:
"All flesh is grass,
And all its beauty is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, and the flower fades. . . ."

That's the human condition in a nutshell.
We are all shooting stars;
some burn a little brighter,
some burn a little longer,
but every one, sooner or later,
fades away
and is swallowed up by the darkness.
Not a one can sustain its light forever.

It's a sobering thought:
hardly suited to the festive spirit of the season, one would think.
But think again.
It was in the middle of a long dark night
that angels once appeared
to simple shepherds
on a lonely hillside
to proclaim good news.

And so, I too (with the help of the prophet)
would proclaim the good news:
There is One whose power is never diminished.
There is a Light that never goes out.
There is a Source of light,
the Creator of the sun
and every other star that has ever shone,
whose purposes never change.

The prophet proclaimed,

"All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers and the flower fades

But that is not all.

No, that is not all:

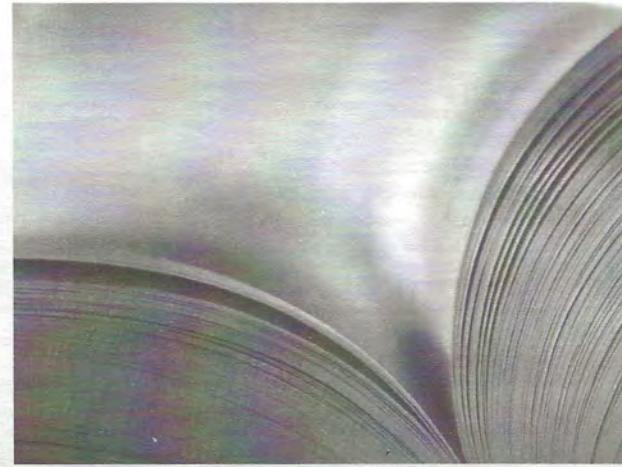
"The grass withers and the flower fades . . .
but the word of our God will stand forever!"

A thousand years may pass,
or a thousand thousand,

and God will not have given up
on you and me.

God, you see,

is stubborn in His graciousness.
He who existed before time
has all the time in the world
to will, and
to wait for, and
to work for
our salvation.



That's what the prophet told his brothers

and cousins and neighbors and friends
stuck in a land not their own,
imagining that they had been forgotten.

They had pretty well arrived at the conclusion

that God had given up—packed up His gear and moved on.

They figured they had worn out His patience,
and He was done
with them

and maybe the whole "chosen people" business.

Maybe he'd decided that He had gotten them out of one scrape too many,
just to have them be ungrateful.

So He'd hung an "Out of Business" sign,
walked off into the sunset,
and was never coming back.

That's what some of them figured.

But it wasn't so, said the prophet.

We humans—we get worn out and give up.

We reach the point where we can't go on.

And there comes a moment in most of our lives
when we realize that we will never accomplish
all we've dared to dream,
and quit trying.

But it's not like that for God.

God never runs out of time.

God never loses interest.

God never grows too tired.

God never quits.

So as the angels once said to the shepherds

"Fear not."

For when your light is growing dim,
and the darkness ushers in the night,
the One who neither slumbers nor sleeps
will watch where you lie down.
And before the final morning breaks,
He will see that you are roused
to greet the dawn
with all His saints.

Glory to God in the highest.

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REMEMBERED

A China missionary's full life

MARY GAUNTZ CUMMING: 1908-2002

by Sheila Brown

The Chinese city of Ping Ting in Shansi province, was bombed on October 12, 1937 and Mary Gauntz, missionary, found herself in a war. City gates and massive walls, afforded sanctuary for thousands of refugees. Many women and children found safety in the Church of the Brethren school compound, which had been a presence in the region for 30 years.

However, Mary and her companion, Myrtle Ingram, were outside the city in the hospital compound that was also overflowing with displaced persons. When Japanese soldiers took the city, the misery continued. Assisted by Chinese Christians, Mary filled her days with bringing the sick and wounded into the hospital, escorting people safely into the city, and locating and carrying back food for frightened and hungry victims of hatred. Some nights were spent sleeping behind doors that were nailed shut for safety. She dared not ask to bury the bodies by the road or question the authority of soldiers roaming the compound. As time permitted, she did some teaching.

She endured the tragic loss of dear friends, Alva and Mary Lou Harsh, who "disappeared" from their home, 30 miles away in Shou Young. Cut off from the outside world, she was sustained by the power of prayer, faithful mission colleagues, and reading old letters and *Gospel Messenger*.

Mary grew up in Myersdale, Pa. She lived her life focusing on church activities and her family. After graduating from Juniata College in 1929, she taught, organized high school libraries, and

received her license to preach. In 1936, she journeyed to China to share the gospel message. Two years later Mary married Dr. Wilfred T. Cumming of the Church of Scotland and moved to Manchuria to support him in his medical work. Fleeing from China to the United States in 1941, with a baby and a toddler, she waited 10 anxious months for Wilfred to cross the Pacific safely. Trapped by war, they lived in Canada. When missions in China were closed due to the Communist revolution, they served in India and Pakistan until 1952. Eventually a move to Alberta, Canada, in 1973 saw them continue as active leaders in church communities in Three Hills and Calgary. Happily they were once more connected with the former Canadian Church of the Brethren communities in Irricana and Arrowood.

Mary Cumming died in February at the age of 93, ever thankful for her Heavenly Father's continuing love and care. **W**

Sheila Brown, daughter of Mary Cumming, is a teacher in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Anyone wishing to contact Mary's family could e-mail through her son, Gordon Cumming, at cummingg@shaw.ca.



circa 1935



1990

"The most disturbing part is that fracture is so near and the voices of reason that we have always counted on are all captive to issues rather than desiring at all cost the unity of the Body and our dependence on the Holy Spirit through the delegate body of Annual Conference."

Our final authority on practice and doctrine

In 1741, Count Zinzendorf made visits to the German sects, trying to form a religious union of all Protestant, German-speaking believers. Brethren feared this might be an attempt to restore old church patterns complete with infant baptism. In 1742, a strong leader of the Brethren at that time, Martin Urner Sr., called the geographically scattered Brethren together at his home, a log house near Coventry, Pa., for the first Big Meeting. This meeting became an annual event. The Annual Conferences came to so accurately discern the mind of the Brethren and what they felt was the will of God, that in time, these Annual Conferences came to

be regarded as the church's "final authority on matters of practice and doctrine."

In 1955, Annual Conference voted to discontinue the office of elder. Following the decision, a group of denominational leaders visited the elders of Eastern Pennsylvania. They said, "We know how important the office of elder has been to you. If you want to quietly continue having elders, it is all right." The elders replied, "No, we follow Annual Conference." Kermit Eby one time said, "Three things hold the Church together: Annual Conference, MESSENGER, and the seminary."

I was saddened at the news accounts in the October MESSENGER, on page 8, of two strong districts (South/Central Indiana and Michigan) considering responses to



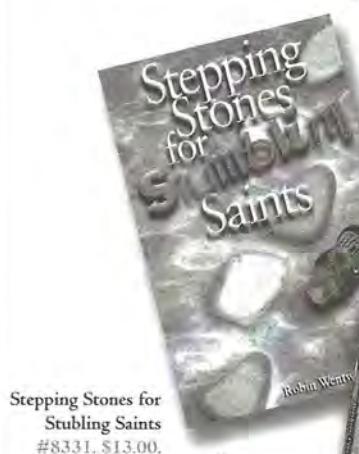
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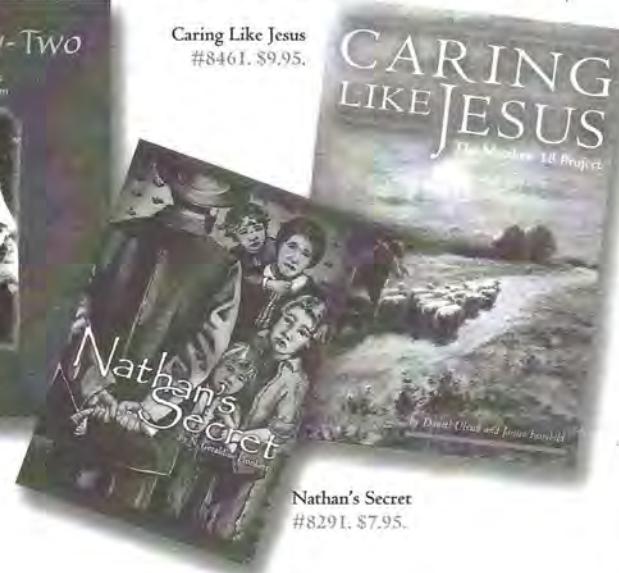
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Annual Conference decisions last summer. When Annual Conference makes decisions with which I disagree, I know I need to sit myself down and get myself in line with the church.

If we each go our separate ways, the church will be torn apart. A friend whose judgments I value wrote: "The most disturbing part is that fracture is so near and the voices of reason that we have always counted on are all captive to issues rather than desiring at all cost the unity of the Body and our dependence on the Holy Spirit through the delegate body of Annual Conference. . . . No one seems to be casting a vision (for the church) which captures all the fragmented parts. Someone must cast a new vision."

Wayne Zunkel

Elizabethtown, Pa.

prised, yet was still deeply disappointed, by the Annual Conference decision to blatantly bar gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals from the ordained ministry. At a time in our national history when we are painfully aware of the violence and harm that human misunderstanding, ignorance, and fear can create, the Annual Conference decision only exacerbates these hurtful trends towards brokenness.

The decision to target a particular group for discriminatory reasons is disturbing in a denomination that has experienced the moral destructiveness of persecution. Those who value the integrity of the query process and its democratic rootedness should be troubled by the spirit and process by which the query reached the Annual Conference floor.

Most importantly, the loss of gifted lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals, as well as those who cannot in good conscience minister within a denomination that supports such discriminatory practices, diminishes the overall life and spiritual depth

of the church. Indeed, the denomination's credibility as it speaks about welcome and a respect for human diversity has become severely compromised.

The Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns and its constituents will continue our work of advocacy and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals. We rejoice in the prophetic voice being raised by many courageous individuals, congregations, and districts, and trust that justice will one day prevail. Toward that end, we invite others to join us as we envision and live into a more humane and welcoming church.

Joyce Stoltzfus, Doug Basinger, Victor Fast, Zandra

Wagoner, Carol Wise, Gloria Nafziger (staff)

Justice and Community Committee,

Brethren Mennonite Council

Minneapolis, Minn.

Discriminatory practice

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\$6 an hour is a crime

I am unclear as to the point the August editorial was making, but to me the "crime" is that a Church of the Brethren institution was paying a six-year award-winning employee \$6 an hour. No wonder she took meat she thought was going to be thrown out—I doubt it was for her dogs. It's hard to feed a family on \$6 an hour.

Sandy Kussart Zinn
Fountain Hills, Ariz.

Humane foreign policy

Virginia Wiles' essay, "God's infinite justice," with which I agreed, motivated me to write regarding what should be the priorities of United States and United Nations foreign policy.

A significant amount of foreign policy resources should be dedicated to mediating national and international disputes. There are usually about 50 wars and violent disputes in progress at any one time. The US and UN should attempt to mediate these and provide troops to preserve truces.

Because millions of people are starving and dying of diseases, the US and UN should provide food, shelter, clothing, medicine, and birth control to nations in need of them.

The US needs to negotiate with other

nations low tariffs with as much reciprocity as possible. The US government should support American business enterprises around the world, but also be a regulatory force to see that the US business community treats other nations in a just and humane manner.

The US and UN should use their law enforcement capabilities to prevent the killing of people and destruction of property. This should be done without violating the civil liberties of the world's individuals.

If these policies are pursued vigorously there should be less need for military action either before or after attacks on the US or other nations.

Kenneth R. Walker

Professor of History, emeritus, Arkansas Tech University
Colonel, USAF Retired, Russellville, Ark.

Give peace a chance

"Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:17-21).

It is with difficulty that I write this letter. I am concerned—no I am fearful—of what seems to be taking place in our country today. I support the military and the police in their defense against those who seek to uproot a just and fair society. I applaud their efforts to seek out and bring to justice the perpetrators of the heinous acts of Sept. 11. Though I believe the desecration of Afghanistan was a bit of "overkill," those who are responsible for the atrocities in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington D.C., need to face the consequences of their actions. Having said this, I am uneasy of what this country is heading for if we allow our president the freedom to decide on a unilateral attack on Iraq. This "first-strike" mentality seems so contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ. It is one thing to defend one's homeland; it is quite another to plan and order a pre-emptive strike on any coun-

try no matter how evil it may appear. The loss of innocent lives on both sides is enough reason for us to be extremely careful in our fervor to destroy a nation. I am convinced that you cannot solve the problems of this world with the use of violence. Violence perpetuates violence. Terrorism is a direct result of this kind of thinking.

It is with difficulty that I write this article because I know, too, that I am swimming against the stream of current thought. And the only reason I do so now is a conviction within my faith and practice that shouts to me to declare what I believe is a central message of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God" (Matt. 5:9) is just one of many statements made by Jesus concerning how we are to act toward one another. I pray that we look to the teachings of Jesus and see if they fit into the realm of possibilities regarding our country's foreign policies. Perhaps we need to consider giving peace a chance.

We should recall these prophetic words: "Beware the leader who bangs the drums of war in order to whip the citizenry into a patriotic fervor, for patriotism is indeed a double-edged sword. It both emboldens the blood, just as it narrows the mind. And when the drums of war have reached a fever pitch and the blood boils with hate and the mind has closed, the leader will have no need in seizing the rights of the citizenry. Rather, the citizenry, infused with fear and blinded by patriotism, will offer up all of their rights unto the leader and gladly so. How do I know? For this is what I have done. And I am Caesar."—from *Julius Caesar*, William Shakespeare.

David A. Whitten

Pastor, Moscow Church of the Brethren
Mt. Solon, Va.

Jesus was a radical

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LETTERS

abuse, discrimination against women and minorities, etc.? Jesus' love for the sanctity of life would have a definite answer—a radical change from our meek mediocrity. Could we change our name to the Church of the Radical Jesus? Where would we find radical leadership? Would you dare to be a radical member? Would I?

Ronald Gordley
Lancaster, Pa.

Scriptures to be followed

John Coleman's letter, September issue, expresses his concern about the Brethren "belief that only some of the scriptures are to be followed." It is my observation that many of the Brethren who are not in favor of automatically consigning to hell the gay and abortionists, are not saying these positions are okay, but that they should not be singled out from the many

other items listed in Romans 1:29-32.

The Brethren have drastically changed their position on many items over the years—lightning rods, musical instruments in church, carpets, and even linoleum in our homes.

Most church members have their favorite scriptures. In so choosing certain ones, aren't we all doing what John is concerned about?

Phil Zinn
Bridgewater, Va.

Concerns about the Trinity

Regarding the September articles on the Christian Churches Together ecumenical movement, I find it sad that the movement is not ecumenical enough to welcome sincere Christians who believe the doctrine of the Trinity is unscriptural.

In the 16th century, Michael Servetus was

burned at the stake at the insistence of John Calvin for denying the doctrine of the Trinity, while among the Anabaptists, Adam Pastor was excommunicated by Menno Simons for denying the same doctrine.

It's also interesting that Quaker William Penn was imprisoned in the Tower of London from 1668 to 1669 for writing an anti-Trinitarian tract called "The Sandy Foundation Shaken." All these opponents of Trinitarian dogma used primarily scriptural arguments.

To me Brethren involvement in such a movement contradicts "no creed but the New Testament," which I always thought was supposed to signify that Brethren did not believe in imposing debatable doctrines like the Trinity on all of its members. I hope the church reconsiders its support for this movement.

Jerry C. Stanaway
Lombard, Ill.

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Elizabethtown with pick-ups along Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana turnpikes. Visit Elgin headquarters. After Conference one bus goes to Alaska via Inside Passage, Juneau, Anchorage, Mt. McKinley, and Fairbanks. Return via Alaska Highway through Yukon, Whitehorse; also Jasper and Banff parks in Canadian Rockies; Yellowstone and Mt. Rushmore. Our other bus returns home after Conference via Yellowstone and Mt. Rushmore. June 30—July 14. For additional information please write to J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Rd., Elizabethtown, PA 17022 or kreiderk@etown.edu.

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 rdwboh@strato.net.

Spread the Word! Use Messenger classifieds to let people know what's going on. \$65 purchases a single issue insertion of up to 80 words. 50 cents a word beyond 80 words. Frequency discounts are available. Submit ads via fax: 847-742-1407, e-mail: messengerads_gb@brethren.org or letter: Messenger Classifieds, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin IL 60120. Deadline is first of month prior to month of publication. Advertise today!

TURNING POINTS

This month's Turning Points include all listings received prior to October 31 and not previously published. Please send information to be included to Jean Clements, 1451 Dundee Ave, Elgin, IL 60120; 800 525-8059 ext. 206; clements_gb@brethren.org. Information must be complete in order to be published.

New Members

Ashland City, Ashland, Ohio: Barbara Mize, Nicky Strickler
Columbia City, Ind.: Dale Deter, Justin Hearld, Kaitlyn Hearld, Rhonda Musser, Michelle Musser, Amanda Musser, Phil Pfeiffer
Coventry, Pottstown, Pa.: Kimberly Wykes, David Wykes, Austin Deputy, Karen Evans
Ephrata, Pa.: Galen Hackman, Doris Hackman, Judy Herr, Richard Hershey, April Hershey, Christine Pinkerton
Florin, Mount Joy, Pa.: Dave Stern, Kerri Stern, Dan Price, Kaye Mede, Marc Kreider, Jodi Butterfoss

Frederick, Md.: Warren Duke, Rachelle Duke, Lee Duke, Jessica Ayton, Cyndy Ponce, Stan Ponce, Jackie Geib, Jessica Fachtler, Jennifer Reed, Bill Reed, Patty Ellison-Potter, Robert Ellison-Potter, Carol DeBord, Mark DeBord

Geiger, Friedens, Pa.: Beth Gardner

Good Shepherd, Springfield, Mo.: Andree Lucore, Jim Johnson, Thad Wilson, Kristen Wilson

Heidelberg, Reistville, Pa.: Elizabeth Spang, Michelle Eberly, Roshanna Alspaugh

Hostetter, Meyersdale, Pa.: Richard Schurg

Independence, Kan.: Gregg Alan Doub, James Clay Price, William Andrew Tryon

Lampeter, Pa.: Paul Allen

Liberty Mills, Ind.: David Mittling, Jill Coker, Lori Conley, James Conley, Diana Wood, Amy Gore, Illean Stores, Betty Sickafus, Gina Emrick, Lauren Baxter

Marilla, Copemish, Mich.: Cassandra Tapley

Monte Vista, Callaway, Va.: Matthew Taylor, Jessica Clingenpeel, Mattie Hartman

New Paris, Ind.: Doreen Staines, John Thomas, Sue Thomas, Cory Arnold, April Hernley, John Bollinger, Jolene Bollinger, Vernon Yoder, Jackey Yoder, Scott Slabaugh, Krista Jones, Lynne Houston

Palmyra, Pa.: Nancy Smith, Bernard Smith

Pleasant Hill, Johnstown, Pa.: Jocelyn Lonsinger, Kristin

MacEwan
Poplar Ridge, Defiance, Ohio: Gary Dunlap, Brenda Dunlap, Michelle Russell, Max Sharp
Reading, Homeworth, Ohio: Jane Sanor, Eric Austin, Natalie Krug
Ridge, Shippensburg, Pa.: Glenn Wingert, Helen Wingert, Michael Spohrer, Rushelle Spohrer, Kenneth Baer, Lisa Baer, Timothy Eyer, Sheila Eyer, Justin Sattazahn, Judy Timmons
Ridgeway Community, Harrisburg, Pa.: Crissy Stoshack, Joe Stoshack
Spring Creek, Hershey, Pa.: Jon Moyer, Lisa Moyer
Weltz, Smithsburg, Md.: Brennan Garrett, April Garrett
Woodbury, Pa.: Kevin Gable, Lori Gable
Zion Hill, Columbiana, Ohio: Denise Tancer, Pat McCoy, David Hastings, Edward Todd, Mary Jane Todd, Jeremy Vignon, Jill Neiheisel, Brandon Conkle, Casey Murray Conkle, Ellie Kornbau, Loren Deeter, Sandie Deeter, Becky Hastings

Wedding Anniversaries

Buchanan, David and Audrey, Boonsboro, Md., 55
Bucher, Gordon and Darlene, North Manchester, Ind., 55
Burkhart, Dale and Oline, Cando, N.D., 60
Evans, Clarence and Rhelma, Sheldon, Iowa, 60
Fry, Homer and Rosetta, North Manchester, Ind., 50
Gerdes, Robert and Mary Lea, Rockford, Ill., 55
Gibbel, H. Lewis and Louise, Harrisburg, Pa., 55
Harbaugh, Merlin and Melba, Waterloo, Iowa, 55
Heisey, Paul and Dorothy, Schaefferstown, Pa., 55
Hoover, Wilbur and Miriam, McPherson, Kan., 60
Johns, Laurence E. and Patsy, Hagerstown, Md., 50
Lavy, Daniel and Wilma, Uniontown, Ohio, 55
Lefevre, Lester and Shirley, Lancaster, Pa., 50
Lewallen, Delbert and Beverly, Cando, N.D., 55
Lewis, Richard and Doris, Harrisburg, Pa., 50
Litten, Norman and Janet, Hagerstown, Md., 50
Little, Ivan and Norma, Shawnee Mission, Kan., 50
Miller, Ray and Virginia, Cedar Falls, Iowa, 60
Moon, Walter and Evaline, Friedens, Pa., 65
Rhodes, Carl and Veda, Bridgewater, Va., 65
Richwine, Albert and Jane, Harrisburg, Pa., 55

Schumacher, William and Bernice, Hartville, Ohio, 60
Shives, Roy and Mildred, Hagerstown, Md., 60
Thawley, Stanley and Freda, Boonsboro, Md., 50
Walbridge, Gilbert and Marjorie, Easton, Md., 60
Wallace, Gene and Jo, Des Moines, Iowa, 50

Deaths

Bailey, John Garland, 100, Winter Park, Fla., June 11
Barnhart, Clarence, 85, Churubusco, Ind., June 2
Beery, Susan M., 61, Huntington, Ind., Oct. 17
Benya, Myra, 99, Pompano Beach, Fla., Sept. 26
Bowman, Ruth C., 95, Bridgewater, Va., Aug. 26
Caruso, Florence G., 84, Shippensburg, Pa., July 25
Carrea, Betty Samuels, 73, Denver, Pa., July 29
Carroll, Josephine E., 92, Osceola, Mo., Aug. 5
Christenson, Erma, 87, Hartley, Iowa, Sept. 15
Coil, Ruth, 80, Ephrata, Pa., Sept. 2
Cover, Lee A., 59, Newburg, Pa., Aug. 5
Coy, Miriam, 85, Salem, Ohio, June 19
Craig, James, Jr., 65, New Market, Md., Aug. 30
Craighead, Ralph, 85, Callaway, Va., June 25
Crummett, Vilmer D., 83, Bridgewater, Va., Sept. 14
Davis, Joe, 59, Defiance, Ohio, Sept. 21
Dix, Heather Lea, 35, Paulding, Ohio, Oct. 5
Driver, Sarah Jane, 99, Bluffton, Ohio, Sept. 20
Early, L. Everett, 83, Lima, Ohio, Oct. 12
Eastes, Bill, 55, Pleasant Lake, Ind., Sept. 30
Elliott, Ruth May, 77, Pottstown, Pa., Oct. 19
Evans, Grace M., 80, Hartville, Ohio, Sept. 4
Fisher, Julie, 43, Ashland, Ohio, June 11
Glass, Robert Glenn, 80, Modesto, Calif., Oct. 25
Good, Barbara, 94, Ephrata, Pa., Sept. 5
Griffith, Marilyn J., 48, Goshen, Ind., Aug. 6
Hamilton, Marie Ikenberry, 101, Richmond, Ind., Sept. 5
Harper, Robert, 89, Frederick, Md., Aug. 12
Harrison, Carl, 91, Johnstown, Pa., Aug. 20
Hay, Esther M., 97, Somerset, Pa., Aug. 14
Heiks, Forest Earl, 74, Ashland, Ohio, Sept. 3
Hemp, Cleo, 94, Walkersville, Md., July 16
Hoover, Gerald R., 55, Harrisburg, Pa., Oct. 13
Howes, Roy, 89, Kaleva, Mich., May 27
Hummel, Lester, 85, Goshen, Ind., June 1
James, Maude, 100, Frederick, Md., July 2
Kaiser, Elsie, 101, Waterloo, Iowa, Sept. 14
Lam, Effie, 95, Bridgewater, Va., June 24
Lloyd, Alice Moses, 82, Pottstown, Pa., Oct. 25
Marsh, Eugene H., 70, Westernport, Md., Feb. 28
Mitchell, Mary, 85, Bridgewater, Va., Aug. 26
Murphy, Elsie F., 93, Seymour, Ind., Sept. 21
Nicol, Marvin, 66, Waterloo, Iowa, July 28
Nye, Harold J., 74, New Oxford, Pa., Sept. 30
Over, Robert, 93, Roaring Spring, Pa., Sept. 4
Pentz, Esther R., 93, Spring Garden Township, Pa., Aug. 31
Perdew, Ethel, 88, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 29
Raffensberger, Esther M., 83, New Oxford, Pa., Sept. 23
Ramser, Robert, 55, New Waterford, Ohio, March 24
Reploge, Frances E., 88, Goshen, Ind., July 20
Ritchie, Robert C., 60, Timberville, Va., Sept. 28
Selders, Ezra T., 94, Newark, Del., Oct. 18
Shaffer, Harry, 93, Wichita, Kan., Sept. 20
Shaffer, Lewis, 79, Friedens, Pa., July 2
Shaver, Jason, 87, Palmyra, Pa., Sept. 22
Sheeks, Florence, 92, Continental, Ohio, Oct. 9
Sherman, G. Russell, 85, Columbia City, Ind., July 27
Short, Mary, 36, Bassett, Va., Aug. 15
Stanley, Alfred, 86, Roanoke, Va., Aug. 2
Stevens, William, 81, Middletown, Md., Aug. 26
Taylor, Mary Jane, 91, Ashland, Ohio, June 17
Teeter, Kenneth, Jr., 69, Johnstown, Pa., July 19
Tessmer, Regena, 81, Hartville, Ohio, Oct. 7
Umbarger, William, 84, Hummelstown, Pa., Oct. 5
Weaverling, Mary Belle, 86, Johnstown, Pa., July 31
Welch, Howard, 80, Cando, N.D., Sept. 11
White, Lane Thomas, died at birth, Frederick, Md., Aug. 28
Wisler, Myrtle M., 98, Cando, N.D., Oct. 1
Yagel, Thomas, 55, Harrisburg, Pa., Oct. 12, 2001
Yerty, Margaret, 84, Roaring Spring, Pa., Sept. 9
Zuck, Ruth H., 89, Lenexa, Kan., Sept. 26

Licensings

Bowyer, Mark A., N. Ohio Dist. (Maple Grove, Ashland, Ohio), Sept. 22
Campbell, Christina Lee, Mich. Dist. (Onekama, Mich.), April 28
Doering, Timothy, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Parker Ford, Pa.), Sept. 22
Dykes, Jeremy Harrison, Southeastern Dist. (Jackson Park, Jonesborough, Tenn.), June 9

Ordinations

Baker, Mildred F., Mid. Pa. Dist. (Diehl's Crossroads, Curryville, Pa.), Sept. 22
Bennett, Melissa, N. Plains Dist. (Prairie City, Iowa), Aug. 31
Denlinger, Daniel L., S. Ohio Dist. (Eaton, Ohio), Sept. 29
Porter, Edward Ivan, Mich. Dist., Sept. 22
Speicher, Jill K., Atl. N.E. Dist. (Reading, Pa.), May 5

Placements

Berkebile, Wesley J., from interim to pastor, Center Hill, Kittanning, Pa., Oct. 1
Cullers, Harold G., pastor, Memorial Petersburg, W.Va., Oct. 1
Dolan, Kenneth, from pastor, Tearcoat, Augusta, W.Va., to pastor, Greenmount, Harrisonburg, Va., Oct. 1
Dowdy, Thomas Matthew, Jr., pastor, Imperial Heights, Los Angeles, Calif., Sept. 1
Fogle, Larry W., from associate pastor, Frederick, Md., to Annual Conference executive director, Elgin, Ill., Oct. 14
Johnson, Kathy L., from pastor to team pastor, Dallas Center, Iowa, Oct. 20
Johnson, Randy, team pastor, Dallas Center, Iowa, Oct. 20
McCoy, Robert E., from interim to pastor, Stone, Buena Vista, Va., Oct. 1
Rentschler, Lawrence Lee, pastor, Pine Grove, Oakland, Md., Oct. 1
Steneck, Rick, associate pastor, Florin, Mount Joy, Pa., Oct. 1
Stewart, Kenneth A., from associate to pastor, Lake View Christian Fellowship, East Berlin, Pa., June 1
Webb, Dennis, from interim to pastor, Naperville, Ill., Oct. 13
Westfall, Randall, pastor, West Manchester, Ind., Oct. 13
Zuercher, Thomas L., from district executive, Northern Ohio, to pastor, Ashland, Dickey, Ashland, Ohio, Oct. 6



Looking for Lincoln

Living in Abraham Lincoln's hometown, I have formed a sort of friendship with Springfield's favorite son. My office is two blocks from Lincoln's home, "the only home he ever owned" as we tell the tourists, and I enjoy retracing the steps he may have taken from his home to his law office downtown. Lincoln biographies come alive to me when I can picture the places things happened. The National Park Service has built board sidewalks in the Lincoln Home area. When I walk those boards I picture the time Lincoln was pulling one of his boys in a wagon. Lost in thought, he pulled the wagon over a missing plank and the child fell off. Oblivious, he went on with his head bent down, pulling the empty wagon through the neighborhood.

To celebrate the dedication of the new Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, our town is sponsoring a series of Lincoln programs and reenactments of 1850s Springfield, called "Looking for Lincoln." It strikes me that many of us in this nation and around the world are looking for Lincoln in various ways. We're looking for the clear national purpose that he seemed to have, and for the moral compass that seemed to guide him. What was it that made his greatness?

I passed up the programs with women in hoop skirts demonstrating 19th century crafts and drove to the Oakland Cemetery in Petersburg, 20 miles from my home. On a crisp bright fall day I stood alone at the grave of Ann Rutledge, who some say was just a friend of Lincoln's in New Salem, but who others describe as "the only woman Lincoln ever loved." Some modern historians have lent credence to Lincoln's love for her and her influence on his life. From the gravestone behind an iron fence I see that she was only 22 when she died in 1835. On the stone also are the words from Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology* that made her immortal. "Out of me unworthy and unknown/The vibrations of deathless music;/ With malice toward none, with charity for all."/ Out of me the forgiveness of millions toward millions,/ Shining with justice and truth." From the influence of people like Ann Rutledge, and Lincoln's stepmother Nancy Hanks Lincoln, "a deathless beauty was brought forth in the November of Abraham Lincoln's soul," writes Kent Gramm in *November: Lincoln's Elegy at Gettysburg*.

I also went looking for Lincoln in the pages of Brethren history, where the stories of Lincoln's baptism are more legend than Ann Rutledge ever was. Still, it's delightful to read this account from *Pleasant Hill*, Ethel Weddle's 1956 history of Brethren in central Illinois: "There are those who will rise up and declare that Abraham Lincoln was baptized in the Sangamon River one secret, sacred night by the Dunker elder, Isaac

Billheimer of Rossville, Indiana, shortly before the first inauguration. It will be said that Elder Billheimer solemnly gave his word to keep the rite a secret through the years in which Abraham Lincoln was to be in the White House. Also it will be maintained that Mr. Lincoln as solemnly promised to practice and observe all of the plain and peaceful teachings of the Brethren when he had finished his work at Washington."

Next I went looking for Lincoln at the Great Western Depot, where, as part of the town's festivities, a Lincoln impersonator would reenact "Lincoln's Farewell to Springfield." Though Lincoln was never a member of any church, his religious faith grew after the death of his son Eddie and then crystallized after his election as president. It had been raining at 7:30 a.m. on Feb. 11, 1861, as he prepared to leave Springfield for the last time, so some in our crowd raised umbrellas to be authentic. The actor displayed the emotion in Lincoln's impromptu remarks, as he said he was facing a task "greater than that which rested upon Washington." He continued: "Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail. Trusting in Him, who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commanding you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell."

Finally, I went looking for Lincoln at First Presbyterian Church here, where Mary Lincoln was a member and Abraham attended occasionally. Lincoln scholar Ronald D. Rietveld of California State University at Fullerton, was there to lecture on "Lincoln's Bible." Especially during his presidency, Lincoln read his Bible diligently, especially the Psalms and Job. He spoke and wrote often of wanting to do God's will, though finding it sometimes unknowable. "We must work earnestly in the best light He gives us," Lincoln wrote to a Quaker woman in 1864, "trusting that so working still conduces to the great ends He ordains."

It was from Jesus' teachings to judge not, to love your neighbor, and to love your enemies, that Lincoln took his inspiration for the Second Inaugural Address, delivered the month before his death. Frederick Douglass called it a sermon: "With malice toward none, with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations." —FLETCHER FARRAR

"We must work earnestly in the best light He gives us," Lincoln wrote to a Quaker woman in 1864, "trusting that so working still conduces to the great ends He ordains."



2003 National Workcamps

*"When the Lord
saw that he had turned aside to see,
God called to him out of the bush,
"Moses, Moses," And he said "Here I am."*

*Then He said "come no closer!
Remove the sandals from your feet,
for the place on which you are
standing is holy."*

Exodus 3:4-5



Junior High

Richmond, Virginia > June 18-22
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania > June 24-28
Inspiration Center, Wisconsin > June 30-July 4
New Windsor, Maryland > July 14-18
Indianapolis, Indiana > July 23-27
Dayton, Ohio > July 30- August 3

Young Adult

Ecuador > May 30-June 8
Coleraine, Northern Ireland > May 31- June 9

Senior High

Brooklyn, New York (BRF) > June 15-21
Koinonia Partners, Georgia > June 16-22
San Juan, Puerto Rico > June 16-23
Germantown, Pennsylvania > June 23-29
Castañer, Puerto Rico > June 23-30
Baltimore, Maryland > June 29-July 5
Denver, Colorado > June 29- July 5
Chicago, Illinois > July 14-20
N. Fort Myers, Florida > July 14-20
Jamaica > July 21-28
Camp Myrtlewood, Oregon > July 21-27
Crossnore, North Carolina > July 28- August 3
Tijuana, Mexico > July 28-August 3
Pine Ridge, South Dakota > August 3-9, August 10-16
Putney, Vermont > August 4-10
Keyser, West Virginia > August 4-10
Gould Farm, Massachusetts > August 11-17

Registrations will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis starting December 1, 2002. Participants must register on the workcamp web page at www.brethren.org/genbd/yya/workcamps. A \$50 non-refundable deposit is due at the time of registration and the full balance of the registration fee is due by April 1, 2003.

If you have any questions or would like a brochure,
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*Take off your shoes...
You're standing
on holy ground*



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Church of the Brethren and cross logo are embroidered on left chest. Pullover features a double-zippered front pouch pocket, zipper front, and a stay warm elasticized hem. Made from 100% polyester. **Colors** - red with beige embroidery, yellow with Carolina blue and navy embroidery, and purple with yellow and navy embroidery.

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Classic, 100% cotton long-sleeved tee with *Church of the Brethren* across chest and stylized cross logo between shoulder blades on shirt back. Perfect for winter or any cool day. **Colors** - red shirt with navy print, navy shirt with white print, and grey shirt with black print. **Sizes** - S, M, L, XL, XXL. **\$15.00.**



Logo Tee

This tee helps you make the statement that you are Church of the Brethren. Short sleeve shirt from 100% cotton features denominational name and cross logo on left chest. **Colors** - black with white and Carolina blue print, yellow with navy and Carolina blue print, grey with Carolina blue and white print, and light blue with Carolina blue and white print. **Sizes** - S, M, L, XL, XXL. **\$12.50.**



Speak Peace Long Sleeve Tee

Do justice. Speak peace. Wear shirt. This white, long sleeve tee is made from 100% cotton and features Speak Peace dove on the front, and Speak Peace logo and inspirational words pray peace, sing peace, make peace, live peace on shirt back. **Sizes** - S, M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL. **\$16.00.**



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