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Brethren

# MESSENGER

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LUKE 20:36



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Anna Mow

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Church of the Brethren

# MESSENGER

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David Radcliff

## ONTHECOVER

Artist for this month's cover is Gwen Stamm, a Mennonite from Scottdale, Pa. After growing up with five siblings on a turkey farm near Archbold, Ohio, she majored in art at Hesston (Kan.) College and Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. After working as a graphic designer at Goshen College, she moved to Scottdale, where she worked as a designer for 18 years, until February 2002. She set up a freelance business in her home in design, illustration, and calligraphy.

In recent years she has worked with Brethren Press on several design projects, including *The Story Behind the Touch of the Master's Hand*, *The Love Feast*, *A Guide for Biblical Studies*, and *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (published jointly with the Mennonite Church).

The cover art depicting an Easter lily is rendered in colored pencil, and the calligraphy in gouache. "I try to create art in a way that may use familiar symbols, yet suggest a fresh or different perspective," Gwen writes. "I like the organic quality of hand-lettering, which goes well with nature motifs. In this art, the calligraphy waves gently, as do the leaves in the background, implying movement. For me, the lily as an Easter symbol represents both the bursting forth of new life and an invitation for each of us to take courage and choose to emerge from the 'tomb' to new life."

## 10 Feeding the hungry

So why can't people who need food just be given food? There's more to it than that. Understanding the complexities surrounding world hunger—explained here by David Radcliff, manager of the Global Food Crisis Fund—is a first step toward helping the needy to become self-sufficient.

## 14 Districts' dilemmas

Facing problems from ethics cases to pulpit vacancies, from dollar shortfalls to property disputes, the 23 Church of the Brethren districts are on the front lines of modern ministry. Despite the difficulties, district executive ministers say they find joys in their jobs.

## 20 Civil War Battle of Dranesville

Each December, members of the Dranesville Church of the Brethren, Herndon, Va., remember the Civil War soldiers who died where the church now stands. The service of remembrance points to peace as a better way to resolve differences.

## 22 Easter meditation

When war looms at Eastertime, it is worth remembering that the crucifixion was a terrorist act. The resurrection, however, erased the disciples' fears and gave them courage to heal the world.

## 24 The Family Circus

For 43 years, Bil Keane has been drawing the cartoon panel beloved as "The Family Circus." Its sweet humor and childlike faith provide an "oasis of comfort" in a troubled world.

## DEPARTMENTS

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## FROM THE PUBLISHER

**A** new bumper sticker being distributed by On Earth Peace reads, "When Jesus said, 'Love your enemies,' I think he probably meant don't kill them." The words, simultaneously gentle and powerful, come from a song by Linda K. Williams, a member of First Church of the Brethren in San Diego.

For some, the enemy is Saddam Hussein or Osama bin Laden—maybe even France. For some, the enemy is George Bush. At other times in our nation's history, the enemy has been North Vietnam, the Soviet Union, Germany, Japan, England. . . . In the movie *Gods and Generals* (for which Church of the Brethren member Dennis Frye is a consultant and associate producer), Union and Confederate officers alike thank God for his blessing and ask him to help them kill the enemy.

When Christians read the Bible, we always decide which parts to take literally. For example, only a few—the Brethren included—take literally Jesus' instructions to wash feet.

But loving one's enemy is one of those instructions that most Christians say they do take literally . . . that is, until a real enemy shows up. Then we come up with all kinds of excuses: It's not practical. It doesn't work in the real world. We have to protect ourselves.

Just days after the Sept. 11 attacks, one of the youth in my Sunday school class showed a copy of the sign she had posted on her locker. It pictured an American flag with the word "forgive." The message seemed startling, even in Sunday school. I'd had many thoughts in those few tumultuous days, but I must admit that forgiveness had not been one of them. However, this teenager had grown up in the church, heard the teachings of Jesus, and applied them literally.

There are plenty of reasons to oppose a war on Iraq—political, moral, humanitarian, practical. But the real reason Brethren oppose war—this one or any other one—is that war seems incompatible with the teachings of Jesus.

This may appear foolish and naive, but that's okay. That's how the disciples regarded the women when they rushed back from the empty tomb.

*Wendy McFadden*

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## BVS unit goes to work after Florida orientation

Brethren Volunteer Service Unit 252 received orientation Jan. 19 - Feb. 7, 2003, at Camp Ithiel in Gotha, Fla. It was one of the largest winter units in recent history, with a higher-than-usual percentage of people who were unfamiliar with the Church of the Brethren prior to deciding to enter BVS. A highlight of the orientation was a long weekend spent in Miami with the Eglise des Freres Haitiens congregation, where volunteers helped to paint the church. The volunteers have been assigned to projects around the nation and the world.

Front row: Shoko Murakami of Japan, to School of the Americas Watch in Washington, D.C.; Brittany Atwood of Waterloo, Iowa, to Trees For Life in Wichita, Kan.; Anne Kitchin of Fife Lake, Mich., to Su Casa Catholic Worker House in Chicago, Ill.; Nancy Lord of Ellicott City, Md., to Bridgeway in Lakewood, Colo.; Heidi Schnorbus of Germany, to Pesticide Action Network in San Francisco, Calif.

Middle row: Christina Yulo of Avon, Conn., to Camp Courageous in Monticello, Iowa; Rachel Peterson of New Carlisle, Ohio, to On Earth Peace in New Windsor, Md.; Shalon Atwood (BVS staff); Cathy Serra of Parchment, Mich., to Gould Farm in Monterey, Mass.; Tara VanEtten of Pittsgrove, N.J., to Samaritan House in Atlanta, Ga.; Jonas Hoffmann of Germany, to Tri-City Homeless Coalition in Fremont, Calif.

Back row: Jim Batterton of Monmouth, Ill., to Catholic Worker House in San Antonio, Tex.; Micah Schonberg of Waterbury, Vt., to Brethren Nutrition Program in Washington, D.C.; Dorothy Haner (BVS staff); Henry Okamoto of Dayton, Ohio, to Tri-City Homeless Coalition in Fremont, Calif.; Karen Roberts (BVS staff); Emerson Vargas-Phillips of Daly City, Calif., to District 4 Human Resources in Havre, Mont.; Drew Martin-Adkins of Washington D.C.; Daniel Yen of Cincinnati, Ohio, to Meeting Ground in Elkton, Md.; Julie Lombard of Port Orchard, Wash., to Mechanic Grove Christian Day Care; Gary Lui of Fremont, Calif., to Trees For Life in Wichita, Kan.

## Let the children lead us!

"God's Good Gifts" was the theme for activities for primary-age children at the Idaho District Conference last fall. The focus was an excellent way to address concerns of General Board stewardship staff—that we need to pay closer attention to what our children are learning about Christian stewardship and abundant living.

"The earth is the Lord's . . . and everything in it," the group read from Psalm 24:1. Then, they made a list of all the things on earth that God has provided and trusted to us. Guided by the colors of the rainbow, the children created a large collage to illustrate their ideas, then wrote a litany of thanksgiving.

In the afternoon, they named ways they can respond to God's gifts. To care for the environment, they walked the premises of the church and picked up trash to be recycled or properly discarded. Finally, each child was given a gift of 100 pennies. While they cleaned this new wealth with vinegar and salt, they were taught simple Old Testament concepts of tithes and offerings. (A quick math lesson helped them find 10 percent of 100.) "These pennies are a gift to you," they were told. "What part will you give to God to share with others?"

Their faces glowed at the abundance of these 100 small gifts, and each happily made a giving decision. Their gathered gifts were offered during the closing worship. Imagine the district's surprise and delight to discover that, together, the children gave about 17 percent of their "income" to God. (Most recent available statistics indicate that Church of the Brethren members give about 2.2 percent of their income to the church.)

Let the little children lead us!

—Carol Bowman of Wenatchee, Wash., is stewardship development counselor and a Congregational Life Team member on the General Board staff.

## Project WARM brings a cord of help to needy

Some 100 Church of the Brethren volunteers from 10 congregations in the Roanoke, Va., area cut and delivered free firewood to the needy from November to March.

Project WARM director Marc Wilson, a member of Roanoke's Oak Grove congregation, started the project in Roanoke six years ago. Since then crews have delivered 1,600 loads of wood. The project depends on donated supplies and volunteer labor. Wilson's son Jonathon, seven years old, is a regular volunteer.

Volunteers say a benefit is getting to know the people who make up the 50 to 60 households in the program, all of whom are facing physical or financial hardship. A November article in the *Roanoke Times* emphasized the camaraderie and joking among the volunteers.

"Ask what type of wood is available, and someone will answer, 'Firewood!'" the article says.

Another volunteer is quoted: "Burns better than snowballs!"

## Woodland celebrates 150 years

The Woodland Church of the Brethren, near Astoria, Ill., celebrated its 150th anniversary Nov. 17 with a special service that drew a large attendance.

The morning message was delivered by Vicki Matheny, the 2003 moderator for the District of Illinois and Wisconsin. It was followed by a potluck meal.

An informal afternoon session included singing old hymns, sharing memories, and reading letters from former pastors. There was a display of old clothes, Bibles, hymnbooks, love feast items, and old photographs.

Those present included five direct descendants of the original seven people who started the church. Vernon Dean is the present pastor.

—Violet L. Wickert



"Special People... Special Needs" was the topic for a panel discussion at Black Rock church.

## Drexel Hill organist honored

Drexel Hill (Pa.) Church of the Brethren honored Mary Elaine Bendinelli for 40 years of music ministry as church organist. During the morning service pastor Ray Hanna read a congratulatory letter from Craig Smith, district executive, along with gifts and flowers. A special luncheon followed the morning service.

—Joyce R. Fowler

## Trying to include those with special needs

On Nov. 2, Black Rock Church of the Brethren, Glenville, Pa., held a presentation and discussion workshop: "Special People... Special Needs... Becoming the Family of God Where All People are Included and Involved."

Dee Hertzog, Christian education commission chair, presented thoughts about "an elephant in the church" (persons with special needs). All churches have one. Some "elephants" are more notice-

able than others. It is when we first acknowledge the presence of the "elephant" that we begin to include all God's children into the Body of Christ, not dwelling on their disabilities, but discovering and utilizing their God-given gifts and abilities.

Terry Stickles, a Black Rock member and mother of a "special needs" child, shared her experiences. She then led the group in a discussion about what inclusion is and what it is not.

Pat Challenger, a special education teacher, emphasized how important it is for good communication about a child's disabilities between parents and teachers, including Sunday school teachers.

A third panelist, Deb Allison, shared what Black Rock has accomplished in the area of "special needs" awareness and ministry, concluding in a discussion of "Where do we (Black Rock) go from here?"

Rozenna Hartman, a school district official, encouraged the audience not to forget those who suffer from mental illness, as well as their families.

—Suzanne Werner

## Shenandoah studies the many faces of stewardship

Creative and innovative ideas are part of Shenandoah District's year-long stewardship emphasis called "Growing Healthy Giving Churches." The emphasis is one of rebuilding the giving base of every church and creating a new generation of generous stewards of God's gifts, creation, time, and resources.

The winter quarter emphasis was on helping members to recognize the spiritual gifts they might use in Christ's service. "Spiritual gifts discernment" workshops were held at 5 churches, attended by 180 people from more than 30 congregations. A resource packet for each congregation included a locally produced CD of stewardship-related hymns, and instruction for children on sign language for "This Little Light of Mine."

The spring emphasis on being stewards of God's creation will feature environmental work projects across the district and an evening fellowship meal with guest speakers Brethren Witness director David Radcliff and Carol Lena Miller, environmental activist from the Roanoke First congregation. The summer emphasis on stewardship of time will feature a play, *Hey Buddy, Can You Lend Me Some Time?*, written by Lee Kinsey, to be performed as dinner theater at the Staunton (Va.) church. The fall focus will include a pastor's seminar on stewardship and preaching, and a Saturday workshop for families on financial planning.

A video entitled *Cultivating Generous Stewards* was produced by Larry Glick in consultation with David Sollenberger, with interpretive segments for each quarter's emphasis. Congregations in the district will receive quarterly packets of worship and interpretive resources for the year-long emphasis.

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MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE (August - 6 Tours)

FALL FOLIAGE TOUR in NEW ENGLAND  
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## BRETHRENSPEAK

"The wonder of worship is that it signs—it points to God, to the future, to God in Christ. . . ."

—Martin Marty

### Webber, Marty share worship wisdom with Anabaptist Evangelism Council

Two leading theologians explored the dynamics of worship in today's churches as 138 people gathered for this year's Anabaptist Evangelism Council held Feb. 14-16 in Chicago.

Robert Webber, a longtime Wheaton (Ill.) College professor who now teaches at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in nearby Lombard, was the featured speaker for the weekend, while prolific writer and lecturer Martin Marty gave an opening-night keynote address.

The event, sponsored by New Life Ministries and held in conjunction with a Council of International Anabaptist Ministries (CIM) meeting, had as its theme "New Worship Forms for a New Millennium." Both men, and especially Webber, looked to the scriptural and historical roots of the church as a primary source for those new forms.

Webber said the first three centuries of the early church are an important source for inspiration as young adults and others seek worship that is more authentic, deep, and participatory. He suggests combining that heritage with the more experiential aspects of contempo-

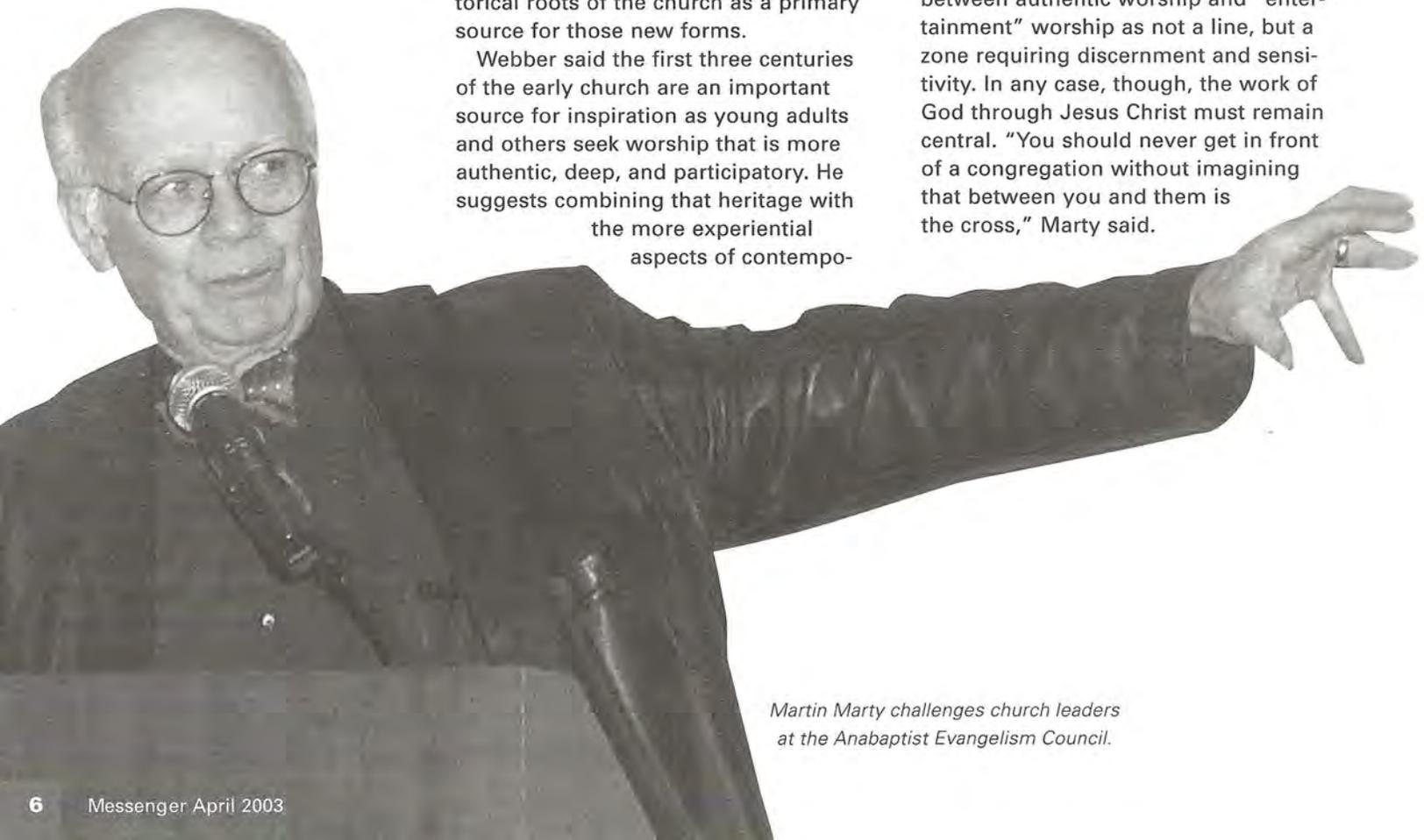
rary worship, "converging" the best of both traditions into what he calls an "ancient-future" approach.

He also advocates recapturing a sense of mystery and awe in churches' worship life through rituals and symbols, directing energy toward the growing movement of smaller house churches and neighborhood churches, and being counter-cultural—shaping the world instead of the other way around. The Anabaptist churches, he says, are primed to meet those needs.

Earlier, Marty voiced his wish to let God have a voice in planning worship, allowing room for silence and keeping the focus on praising and experiencing God.

"The wonder of worship is that it signs—it points to God, to the future, to God in Christ," Marty told the group. "We don't produce God; we offer."

Marty described the distinction between authentic worship and "entertainment" worship as not a line, but a zone requiring discernment and sensitivity. In any case, though, the work of God through Jesus Christ must remain central. "You should never get in front of a congregation without imagining that between you and them is the cross," Marty said.



*Martin Marty challenges church leaders at the Anabaptist Evangelism Council.*

## Annual Conference committee seeks conversation on denomination's name

The Annual Conference study committee seeking to foster conversation on the denomination's name has begun its work.

The committee came out of the 2002 Annual Conference in Louisville, which handled two queries on Denominational Name as items of new business. The delegate body adopted a recommendation from Standing Committee that a "study committee of five be elected by Annual Conference to respond to the queries on denominational name by promoting a denomination-wide dialog and report its progress (back to Annual Conference)."

The committee held its first meeting in mid-January at Manassas (Va.) Church of the Brethren. "In keeping with Annual Conference direction, we desire to foster a spirit of dialog, promoting understanding rather than debate," the committee said in a report. "Through a number of means, we hope to explore over the next year the varying understandings of the denominational name."

In coming months, information will be available on the Annual Conference website at [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org), and a forum will be held Saturday evening at the 2003 Annual Conference in Boise, Idaho, using a framework for discussion designed by the committee. The committee is also preparing questionnaires and discussion questions to be sent to pastors, congregations, and related church agencies.

Manassas pastor Jeff Carter is serving as chair of the committee. Other members are Alberto Gonzalez, Shirley Spire, Shawn Kirchner, and Ben Barlow.

## Christian Churches Together enters "Phase One"

The Christian Churches Together in the USA (CCT) movement is taking further steps forward, with the Church of the Brethren among those helping to lead the way.

General secretary Judy Mills Reimer of the Church of the Brethren General Board represented the denomination as a group of nearly 60 people met Jan. 27-29 at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. Reimer has been serving as a

member of the steering committee for CCT, which has as its purpose statement, "To enable churches and organizations to grow closer together in Christ in order to strengthen our Christian witness in the world."

"We know we can be a stronger witness if we walk together," said Reimer, who led the opening worship for the event. Participants and observers at the January meeting came from 30 denominations and church organizations that spanned the theological spectrum in what Reimer called "the broadest

## YOUTHBEAT

### Youth cabinet, peace team announced

The General Board's Youth/Young Adult Ministries office has announced the National Youth Cabinet for 2003-2004. Serving on the cabinet will be Adam Messner of Pottstown, Pa.; Matt Witkovsky of Huntingdon, Pa.; Jennifer Quijano of Brooklyn, N.Y.; Hannah Serfling of Preston, Minn.; and Caitlin Haynes of Glen Arm, Md.

Jon Keller of the Oakland Church of the Brethren, Gettysburg, Ohio, will serve as adult advisor along with Youth/Young Adult Ministries coordinator Chris Douglas. The group was expected to have its first meeting at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill., in April.

The 13th annual Youth Peace Travel Team, meanwhile, will have four members. Composing the team for 2003 are Laura Stone of Kokomo (Ind.) Church of the Brethren; Mandy Wampler of the Annville (Pa.) congregation; Erica Schatz of South Bay Community (Redondo Beach, Calif.); and Laura Sweitzer of Cedar Lake (Auburn, Ind.).

The foursome will spend the summer doing peace education at Church of the Brethren camps, primarily in the Midwest. The Youth Peace Travel Team is a jointly sponsored enterprise of On Earth Peace, Outdoor Ministries Association, and the General Board's Brethren Witness office, Washington Office, and Brethren Volunteer Service.

alliance of Christians ever formed."

After an intentional process of discussion and discernment, the group decided to move forward with "Phase One" of the fledgling effort, which had just two previous, smaller meetings.

This first phase invites churches and Christian organizations to formally join CCT. When at least 25 churches and organizations have joined, adequately representing the five "families" of faith perspectives—Evangelical/Pentecostal, Historic Protestant, Historic

Racial/Ethnic, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic—CCT will move into a second phase of more formal organization.

Reimer said the Church of the Brethren's ecumenical officers will approach the officers of Annual Conference to consult on the best process for denominational delegates to consider formally joining CCT, either at the 2003 or 2004 Conference. She expressed optimism that the CCT process might also help to bridge differences in the Church of the Brethren and "bring all the voices together."

## UPCOMINGEVENTS

**Apr. 4-5 Level 1 Disaster Child Care Training Workshop**, West Point, Neb.

**Apr. 4-5 On Earth Peace board meeting**, New Windsor (Md.) Conference Center

**Apr. 5 Southern Ohio District Emergency Response/Service Ministries Auction**, Oakland Church of the Brethren, Gettysburg, Ohio

**Apr. 11-12 Level 1 Disaster Child Care Training Workshop**, Salkum, Wash.

**Apr. 24-27 Cross-Cultural Consultation**, Camp Ithiel and area congregations, Orlando, Fla.

**Apr. 25-27 Brethren/Mennonite Council "Connecting Families" weekend**, Antiochian Village, Ligonier, Pa.

**Apr. 25-27 Regional Youth Conference**, Manchester College, North Manchester, Ind.

**Apr. 26-27 Brethren Benefit Trust board meeting**, Elgin, Ill.

**May 1 National Day of Prayer**

**May 3 Mid-Atlantic District Disaster Relief Auction**, Westminster (Md.) Agricultural Center

**May 3-8 Christian Citizenship Seminar** for senior high youth, New York and Washington, D.C.

**May 4 National Youth Sunday**

**May 4-9 Disaster Project Directors workshop and hands-on training**, Camp Harmony, Hooversville, Pa.

**May 4-11 Family Life Week**

## Annual Conference announces candidates

Two ordained ministers top this year's Annual Conference Standing Committee ballot as candidates for moderator-elect, the denomination's top elected position.

Delegates at the 2003 Conference in Boise, Idaho, to be held July 5-9, will vote for either Jim Hardenbrook, pastor of Nampa (Idaho) Church of the Brethren, or Carol Spicher Waggy, interim pastor of the Rock Run congregation in Goshen, Ind.

Hardenbrook also is chaplain for the Idaho House of Representatives and has served on Standing Committee. Waggy has been involved with the *Compañeros en Ministerio* program of Tijuana, Mexico, and is the current Northern Indiana District moderator.

Candidates for other positions are as follows:

- Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee: Rosanna Eller McFadden of Goshen, Ind.,

and Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm of Richmond, Ind.;

- On Earth Peace Assembly board: Kimberly Noelle Rhudy Chaffin of Jonesborough, Tenn., and John L. Huffaker of North Liberty, Iowa;

- Brethren Benefit Trust board: Eric P. Kabler of Ebsenburg, Pa., and Dale E. Minnich of Moundridge, Kan.;
- Association of Brethren Caregivers board (delegates will vote for two): Eddie Edmonds of Martinsburg, W.Va.; David Fouts of Maysville, W.Va.; Vernne W. Greiner of Mechanicsburg, Pa.; and John Earl Wenger of Anderson, Ind.;

- Bethany Theological Seminary board, representing the ministry: Phill Carlos Archbold of York, Pa., and Susan Stern Boyer of Claremont, Calif.;
- Bethany Theological Seminary board, representing the laity: Esther Boleyn of Cumberland, Md.; and Raymond M. Donadio Jr. of Greenville, Ohio;

- Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory

Committee, representing the laity: Linda Frey Barkdoll of Hagerstown, Md., and Shirley Bowman Jamison of Callaway, Va.

- Committee on Interchurch Relations: Steve Derek Brady of Lebanon, Ohio, and Brandy Fix of Wabash, Ind.;

- Representative to the World Council of Churches (delegates will vote for two; candidate with most votes is the representative, candidate with second-most is the alternate): Jeff Carter of Manassas, Va.; Elizabeth L. Bidgood Enders of Dayton, Ohio; Carolyn Pieratt Schrock of Mountain Grove, Mo.; and Sarah Leatherman Young of Littleton, Colo.

- Representative to the National Council of Churches (delegates will vote for three): Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford of Windsor, Colo.; Nelda Rhoades Clarke of Crystal, Minn.; Esther Mohler Ho of Hayward, Calif.; Jennie E. Ramirez of Everett, Pa.; Marianne Miller Speicher of North Lima, Ohio; and David

## Atlantic Northeast names new district ministry team

Atlantic Northeast District has announced a new staffing configuration and personnel as it seeks to meet the ministries of the district, the denomination's largest. Four people were called to new part-time positions on Feb. 8 by the district board and will relate to the various board commissions:

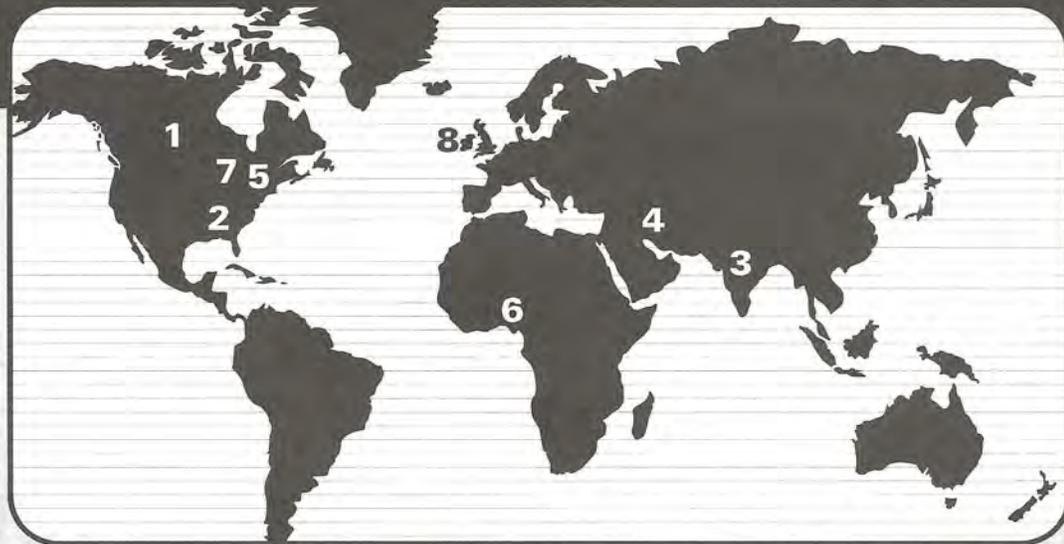
- Beverly Anspaugh, a member of Florin (Pa.) Church of the Brethren and former chair of the Southern Ohio District nurture commission, began April 1 as director of leadership development.

- Aaron Martin, an ordained minister and member of the Mount Wilson congregation in Lebanon, Pa., became director of church development March 1. Martin is a retired accountant and has served as project manager of endowment and capital campaigns related to church planting.

- Sarah Young, a member of the Ephrata (Pa.) congregation, is serving as director of youth and young adult ministry. She began in a limited capacity March 1 and will increase her hours after ending her current work in teaching June 1.

- Kay Weaver, a member of the Lampeter (Pa.) congregation and a former district stewardship commission member, will be director of stewardship beginning this spring. She has assisted with fund-raising efforts for several district organizations.

A director of witness was still being sought to give leadership to the district's witness and evangelism commission.



Whitten of New Hope, Va. Delegates will also be asked to affirm three General Board candidates called by their respective districts (Southern Plains, South/Central Indiana, and Virginia) and one appointed by the General Board under new Process for Calling Denominational Leadership polity approved at the 2001 Annual Conference.

**Pastors begins Advanced Foundations program**

Eight pastors from around the country gathered in Richmond, Ind., Jan. 7-10 to begin a two-year process of leadership development. This first group of pastors in the Advanced Foundations of Church Leadership process spent the four days exploring aspects of spiritual fitness under the guidance of Bethany Theological Seminary professor Tara Hornbacker.

The gathering also included work with self-assessment tools, case study formulation, and online learning training. Central to the overall experience were worship and prayer. Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership coordinator Jonathan Shively said that deep reflection, active learning, and a lot of joyful laughter characterized the sessions.

Participants in this initial "cohort group" are Dan Poole, Covington (Ohio); Lisa Hazen, Beaver Creek (Ohio); Thomas Hanks, Fraternity (Winston-Salem, N.C.); David W. Miller, West Richmond (Va.); Jim Davis, North Winona (Warsaw, Ind.); Ken Gresh, Rummel (Windber, Pa.); Kelly Burk, Richmond (Ind.); and Jerry Lee Miller, Spring Run (McVeytown, Pa.).

Advanced Foundations is offered through the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, a joint partnership of Bethany and the Church of the Brethren General Board.

**1. Canada.** A \$10,000 allocation from the General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund will assist Canadian Child Care Nonprofit Society—a sister organization of Church of the Brethren Emergency Response/Service Ministries—with training events for disaster child care in Canada. The funds will be used to support operational costs in building a larger volunteer base.

**2. Mississippi.** The Emergency Response/Service Ministries (ER/SM) office planned to begin a new disaster relief project in the city of Columbus in March. The area was hard-hit by a tornado outbreak on Nov. 10. A \$10,000 Emergency Disaster Fund grant will aid the costs of starting the project, which will focus on rebuilding homes.

**3. India.** Two years after the last visit, representatives of the General Board's study committee on India relations traveled to the Asian nation in late January to hear progress of talks among Brethren groups in Gujarat State and the Church of North India (CNI), which continue to wrestle over issues surrounding the former group's separation from CNI. Board member J.D. Glick of Harrisonburg, Va., and Ernest Thakor of Naperville, Ill., represented the committee on this visit. Bob Gross of North Manchester, Ind., also traveled with the group as he continued his reconciliation role.

**4. Iraq.** About 125 Church of the Brethren members were among a large group of protesters Jan. 18 in Washington, D.C., supporting a peaceful resolution to the Iraq crisis. The Church of the Brethren Washington Office—which issued a February "action alert" for Brethren to contact their representatives and express opposition to war on Iraq—organized a meeting point for all the Brethren and led the groups to the rally on

the Capitol lawn. Brethren also participated in a number of the massive worldwide rallies held Feb. 15 in the US and Europe.

**5. Virginia/West Virginia.** The Emergency Disaster Fund has made an additional \$15,000 grant to aid ongoing flood recovery work in the region, particularly helping to facilitate current Church of the Brethren disaster relief work in Pineville, W.Va.

**6. Nigeria.** Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) president Toma Ragnjiya was among 13 denominational heads from northern and central Nigeria who visited with Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo on Jan. 23. The group prayed with Obasanjo and presented concerns over religious and ethnic conflicts, expressed opposition to a Nigerian Interreligious Affairs Committee that they say would blur lines of church and state, and requested the president's intervention in the increase of resident permit fees.

**7. Ohio.** Southern Ohio District planned to hold its first Church of the Brethren Emergency Response/Service Ministries auction on April 5 at the Oakland Church of the Brethren, Gettysburg, Ohio. Proceeds will go to ER/SM to support disaster relief efforts. It will be the first of five disaster auctions scheduled around the country in 2003.

**8. England.** Wendi Hutchinson, director of Church Relations at Manchester College and a part-time student at Bethany Theological Seminary, was among 75 people from 12 countries participating in the Jan. 7-10 conference of the International Association for the Study of Youth Ministry held at Mansfield College of Oxford University.

# It takes more than food to feed the hungry

Even teaching someone to fish doesn't get the job done

by David Radcliff



David Radcliff

*These children in the Honduran village of Las Mercedes are the lucky ones: Over 100 million of the world's primary age school children are not in school. Even their luck may soon run out, however, as 95 percent of the children in this community will not go on to secondary school for lack of necessary funds. For \$6 billion—less than our nation spends on its military every week—the United Nations says that every child in the world not in school could be.*

Feeding the hungry. Seems like it should be a simple proposition. We hear that more than enough food is produced in the world to feed everyone, so why can't people who don't have food be given food—or be helped to produce their own food? Wouldn't that take care of it? Unfortunately, there are often other obstacles that must also be addressed if the 800 million malnourished people in the world are to have what they need to survive and thrive.

In some cases, addressing needs is straightforward. Where there has been a short-term event of some kind to interrupt food production, food supplies can be sent in to meet the shortages. And where people have ample land to produce food, but lack tools, skills or other inputs, these can also be provided. Brethren programs such as the Emergency Disaster Fund and Global Food Crisis Fund regularly work to feed the hungry in these ways. The recent \$100,000 grant by these two funds to southern Africa was an example of such aid.

Such assistance to those in immediate need is very much in keeping with the teachings and ministry of Jesus himself. Many were the times when a hungry crowd or a person in need of some other kind of aid caught Jesus' eye and benefited from his compassion. And in the Brethren-beloved parable of the Last Judgment in Matthew 25, the nations are held accountable on the basis of their response to the needs of their marginalized neighbors.

But even in a situation like that in southern Africa, the causes of the crisis reflect a complex combination of factors. Likewise, the long-term solution will demand more than shipments of food aid. An ironic combination of drought and flooding are the immediate cause of the current famine that threatened some 13 million people in Malawi, Zimbabwe, and elsewhere. Scientists say that such weather events have already become more frequent and more severe due to global warming—and this phenomenon will worsen in coming decades.

David Redcliff



*Thirty percent of those receiving food assistance in the United States hold full-time employment. These days, having a job does little to guarantee a decent life.*

In addition, the rapidly growing HIV/AIDS epidemic has resulted in a weakened and reduced labor force in sub-Saharan Africa. Malawi, one of the countries assisted by our grant, is one of the 15 poorest countries in the world and one of Africa's more densely populated countries, with 9.8 million people. The population growth rate has recently slowed dramatically, however, as life expectancy has fallen from 44 to 39 in just 10 years due to the AIDS epidemic. Almost 1 in 10 citizens are infected with HIV, but the statistics are even worse if you are between 15 and 49, as 16 percent of people in this age bracket have HIV. Health professionals warn that the true figures are even higher. This creates a double-whammy related to food production, as not only are the ill unable to farm, but their caregivers are unable to farm as well.

Add to this the increasing toll taken by malaria in the region; the disease kills over 100,000 children in this part of Africa every year, and weakens the general population. All this further strains the ability of families to feed themselves.

Let's not forget politics. Political decisions in several of the affected countries of southern Africa have reduced those countries' production of food, and



David Raddiff

*Slash and burn at work: This recently cut-over hillside will soon be planted in crops. When farming has worn out the shallow soil, the eroded hillside will hold one-fifth as much rainfall as it did in its tree-covered past. Such deforestation even affects weather patterns, as less moisture is recycled into the atmosphere and less rain results. But when it does rain, it pours—the soil-saturated water rushing to the valley below to siltify streams and perhaps bring downstream flooding.*

import restrictions on controversial genetically modified cereal have affected relief efforts.

Then there is simple poverty. Rich people don't go hungry. Poor people often do. This part of Africa is one of the poorest areas in the world, with per capita incomes of under \$300 being common. Yet these governments are saddled with external debt, needing to pay out money to international lenders that is badly needed in their own countries for education, economic development, and health care.

Other obstacles to meeting nutritional needs crop up in various parts of the world. In Central America, there is little opportunity for employment for rural families, so they must have land to grow crops for food and income. Yet cropland is in short supply, held by a small percentage of the population or by multinational corporations. Consequently, people struggle to eek out a living on steep hillsides, or they cut down remaining tropical forests in desperation.

Elsewhere, the lack of easily passable roads severely inhibits economic activity. Or it may be that

conflict causes such displacement of communities that crops cannot be planted with any certainty that residents will be around for the harvest. Closer to home, nearly a third of the people in the United States calling at food pantries hold full-time jobs—jobs not paying enough to house and feed a family.

The status of women is also being recognized as a key to a well-fed population. Development experts generally agree that women—if given the chance—will more often than men make choices which directly benefit the health of their children. Do women have economic opportunities in a society? Are they allowed access to education? Can they meet together and create projects to benefit their families? If the answer is no, then this will be one more obstacle to adequate nutrition.

#### **Give a man a fish . . . .**

Many of us have heard the adage, "Give a man a fish, and feed him for today; teach a man to fish, and feed him for a lifetime." In essence, this phrase captures the traditional Christian ministries of charity (providing the fish) and development (teaching fishing skills). What this slogan does not include—and without which even the fanciest fishing tackle or the biggest tractor in Iowa is not adequate—are two more elements.

The first is justice, or everyone having the opportunity to become what God intended them to be. In the fish story, this would be to make sure a person not only knows how to fish, but that there is a place by the stream where this new skill can be utilized. Teaching Guatemalan farmers sustainable agriculture practices when they lack land to grow crops is an exercise in futility. Giving a young woman an education and then keeping her from putting her learning into practice to earn money or explore a career is likewise inappropriate. Telling the poor of the world to work harder while placing tariffs on the products they produce is unfair. Underpaying them for their efforts—like many coffee farmers who now find themselves paid as little as 12 cents a pound for their trouble—is downright cruel.

Legal and commercial systems must be in place that guarantee a fair shake—a place by the stream—to people who have sacrificed much to learn to fish, and now simply want to practice their new-found

skill. And people need to be valued as human beings created in God's image, regardless of skin color, gender, or national or ethnic background.

Jesus railed against stereotypes that put some of God's children lower than others on the ladder of opportunity. More than once he astounded onlookers by his respectful treatment of women as fully human, thus equal to men. Other times he sought to bestow dignity on Samaritans, the infirm, or those of ill-repute of one persuasion or another. He sought to debunk any humanly constructed social system that kept some from experiencing the full life that God intends.

The final element needed to ensure that there'll be good fishing is that of a healthy ecosystem. Even a prime place by the stream wouldn't have helped Honduran families recently when a mining operation released deadly chemicals into the water, decimating the fish population they depended on for food. Farmers in the US Midwest won't be blessed with bumper crops despite their best efforts if global warming shifts weather patterns and alters rainfall. The oyster catch in the Chesapeake Bay won't rebound until runoff from farms and manicured lawns is severely curtailed along tributaries to this once-bountiful body of water.

This reminds us of the original garden into which God set the first humans. It was God's intention that this verdant glade would serve the humans by providing food and water; they, in turn, would care for and protect it. This godly symbiosis is strained in our time as humans disregard their role as caretakers of this garden—certainly to their own peril.

So, feeding the hungry is more than well-intentioned efforts to send food or development aid to the current crisis point. These are important, but must be accompanied by efforts to guarantee people opportunities for self-development, participation in decision-making on the local and national level, and a healthy environment. In other words, people need the chance to become what God intended them to become—respected, valued for their gifts, and nestled within God's good creation.

Our church works at putting together the many pieces of this puzzle in its ministries of immediate aid, legislative advocacy, global education, and



David Radcliff

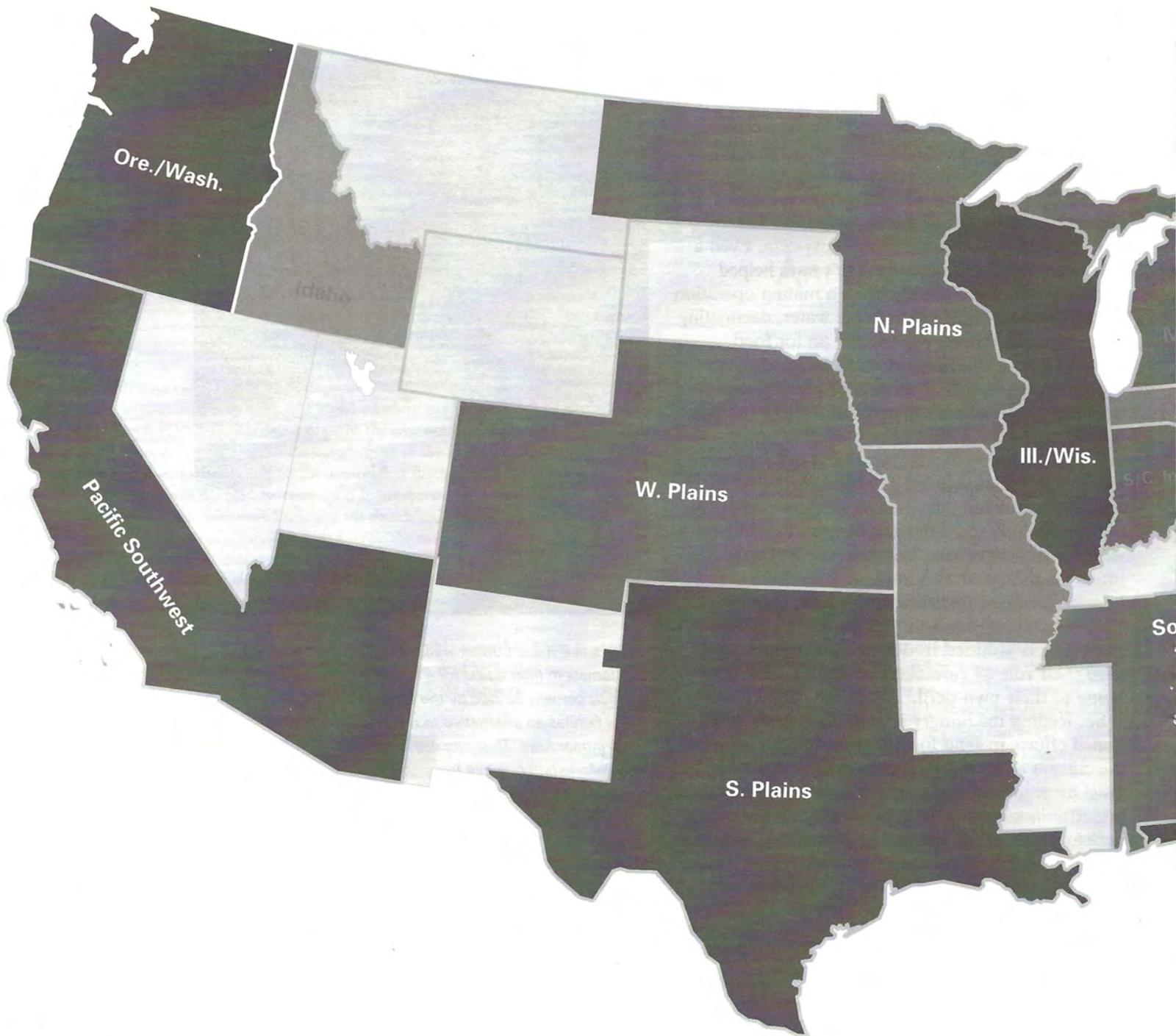
*BVSers like Robert Stiles walk alongside the people of Guatemala in their quest for a better life. The adobe stove project, partially funded by the Global Food Crisis Fund, gives families an alternative to the practice of cooking over open indoor fires. This cuts down on respiratory disease and deforestation, while freeing women from the hours-a-day chore of gathering wood.*

efforts to restore and respect human dignity and God's earth. Our hope can be that such efforts will bear the fruit of an abundant catch by those who fish by life's stream. ❧

David Radcliff is director of Brethren Witness for the Church of the Brethren General Board and manager of the Global Food Crisis Fund.

# District ministry

Though districts face growing concerns, there



# gets even harder

are also joys on the front lines

by Walt Wiltschek



**S**ome years ago, Kermit the Frog sang that it wasn't easy being green. Had Kermit tried his hand (or webbed appendage) at being a district executive minister, being green might not have looked so bad.

In an era theologians describe as one of "changing paradigms" in the church, the few dozen men and women who guide the denomination's 23 districts face growing challenges: maintaining cohesion in areas that are spread out over wide geographical areas or theological spectrums, addressing a shortage in pastoral leadership for congregations, working collegially with an increasingly complex network of church agencies and organizations, and much more.

Ken Holderread, who retired as Illinois-Wisconsin District executive in 1998 but is now serving with his wife, Elsie, as interim leadership for Western Plains District, says the job has become harder in the time he's been away.

"One of the things that shocked me coming back in is the legal ramifications of the call and how much more complex the job is," Holderread says, referring to issues such as ministerial ethics

“What leadership do we want? Who has the gifts we need? ...It feels like we’re needing to redefine who we are and how we operate, to be who we’re called to be.”



Ron Finney

*Atlantic Northeast District executive Craig Smith, left, has a conversation with one of his district's pastors, Bob Krouse of the Cornerstone congregation in Lebanon, Pa., during a meeting at Germantown, Pa.*

and property that executives need to negotiate. “It has become quite a bit more complicated than it was.”

Several districts have had to work through ethics cases in the past few years, and at least a few districts have faced lawsuits over property. Since districts hold ordinations for ministers, the districts, like any organization, are subject to laws governing employee conduct. Southern Pennsylvania executive Joe Detrick says executives must now “look through the lenses of legal liability foremost.”

On the placement front, there are about three times more congregations searching for pastors than there are pastoral profiles in the denomination’s placement system, according to recent numbers from the General Board’s Ministry office. That forces executives, who oversee placement, to locate interim pastors or find creative solutions for congregations—especially smaller ones—that can go years without a pastor.

Financial shortfalls are now compounding difficulties and causing some districts to reevaluate their ministries. Shenandoah executive Jim Miller says competitiveness has increased at all levels of the denomination, creating an atmosphere where “survival goes to the glossy and not to the needy.” The

unequal burdens of smaller and larger districts and other organizations are not shared across the board as they once were when the denomination was more centralized, he says.

Northern Plains was among those hardest hit this past year. The district had to reduce executive Connie Burkholder from full time to three-quarters time as money ran tight. About half a dozen other small districts are already served by part-time executive leadership, and others may face such decisions soon.

“It forces us to look at larger issues,” says Burkholder, who has been in the role since 1997. “What leadership do we want? Who has the gifts we need? Does the district executive need to give all that leadership? What are the essentials in a district executive? It feels like we’re needing to redefine who we are and how we operate, to be who we’re called to be.”

Most of the current executives have been in their role for less than 10 years, and many of them for less than five. General Board District Ministries coordinator Nancy Knepper has found herself working with a long list of district search committees as leadership turns over. Two districts had openings as of early March.

Districts have been reconfiguring personnel at the district board level as well, in the wake of the new Annual Conference paper on structure and other factors. A number of district conferences this past summer and fall included a reorganization of boards and commissions into new designs, usually with fewer people and levels of organization. A few districts are examining more substantial restructuring.

Mid-Atlantic District adopted a new constitution and bylaws at its meeting in October, moving the district from a 35-member district board to a 13-member district leadership team. Like many districts, it also shifted from elections to a calling process that brings a “slate” for delegates to affirm.

“We saw that as a way to simplify a bureaucracy and lessen suspicion that we are a business and not a church,” Mid-Atlantic executive Don Booz says of the new design. It was also accompanied by the adoption of a new mission statement and core values, which Booz hopes will “get everyone on the same page.”

That can be difficult in a time when institutions are often viewed with distrust. Illinois-Wisconsin executive Jim Yaussy Albright says congregations today “have all kinds of pressure to become more solitary and isolated.”

“I think the purpose of the district is primarily to create community among congregations,” Yaussy Albright says. “We’ve often forgotten that. That’s a bedrock of any kind of denominational understanding of a united church. That’s crucial.”

Those ties have been tested in the past year and a half as some districts have experienced deep divisions over controversial issues within their boundaries. The South/Central Indiana District conference passed a query on to Annual Conference asking how congregations can disagree with Annual Conference decisions and “yet remain, as much as possible, in unbroken fellowship with their sister congregations.”

The executives gathered at this year’s February meetings of the Council of District Executives (the group decided to officially stop using the acronym “CODE” last year) pointed to a lack of vision and direction in the church as the root cause of many of the other, more immediate symptoms.

“At heart it’s a crisis of vision,” Yaussy Albright says of the financial crunch and difficulties in his own district. “I think all the rest of it is connected to that. At the heart of that is trying to get away from maintenance to a vision of a missional church. Our hunch is, our prayer is, that when we can get a clear



*Illinois-Wisconsin District executive Jim Yaussy Albright leads a session on personality styles at a Ministry Summer Service orientation.*

sense of that, the financial issues will take care of themselves.”

Middle Pennsylvania executive Randy Yoder agreed, saying the Church of the Brethren was “being defined by decline.”

“Part of the challenge for us is to be together in a

## Where did districts come from?

The roots of district organization in the Church of the Brethren reach back into the mid-19th century. According to the *Brethren Encyclopedia*, conditional approval to form districts “of five, six, or more adjoining churches” came from the 1856 Annual Meeting in hopes of allowing some business and concerns to be resolved at more local levels.

That direction received final approval 10 years later, and a district structure has existed since (although the encyclope-

dia notes that there was an unsuccessful attempt at the 1871 Annual Meeting to “dispense with district meetings”).

Annual Conference added another organizational layer in 1927, setting up five regions—based on areas served by the Church of the Brethren colleges—to facilitate denominational work and district connections. The structure was further formalized in the 1940s, with executives assigned to each region and cosponsored by the General Board and the

respective districts.

“That seemed to work out quite well, to the point that some of the larger districts began to feel they would like to have their own district administrative office supported by a district executive,” says Don Rowe, a former regional executive and now a member of Westminster (Md.) Church of the Brethren.

But while some districts were large, others, especially in the West, were not. Kansas alone had four districts. These small administrative

units proved impractical, Rowe says, so he and some of his colleagues took to Annual Conference a query asking for a study of denominational organization. Conference approved that study in 1958, and decided in 1960 to gradually end the regions.

A Continuing Committee on District and Regional Organization and Realignment appointed in 1961 oversaw the recommended move from the 48 US districts existing at that

—continued next page



Walt Wiltschek

*Virlina District executive David Shumate leads a session at a 2002 church planting event.*

redefining of the church,” Yoder says. “How does the Church of the Brethren fit the time in which we live? We need to meet together around scripture, dialog, and find a new sense of who God’s calling us to be in this time, then restructure out of (that) reality.”

The executives say some shifts are already evident. Congregations are increasingly turning to districts to obtain resources. Council of District Executives chair Herman Kauffman of Northern Indiana says that while some districts have found General Board Congregational Life Teams helpful in meeting that need, “the first place congregations turn is to districts.”

Similarly, Virlina executive David Shumate says that mission initiatives—part of the early thrust behind forming districts—are again an important part of district work. “We’re mission directors in a

—Districts, continued

time to 18, permitting more uniformly professional district leadership. Rowe had become director of field ministries by that time and was given the responsibility of working with districts and others to oversee that process.

“The merger of districts was a big decision for the General Board and the Annual Conference,” Rowe recalls. “That was a major kind of administrative change. It’s how the districts began to take on a lot more authority and responsibility.

“Some of those small districts thought they lost an arm and a leg,” he adds. “It finally got worked out, though we didn’t quite get down to 18.”

Indeed, the denomination has 23 districts today. Some, primarily in the Northeast and Midwest, can be driven from

end to end in a few hours, while others span many thousands of square miles and numerous states. The last merger was of the two districts in Missouri and Arkansas in 1991.

Rowe—who himself served as Mid-Atlantic District executive in the 1970s and ’80s—acknowledges that some districts had to be “strung out” geographically in order to generate enough funding from the supporting congregations to finance staff and offices. While technology has helped, he says, it can still be difficult for a district executive to cover all that territory and responsibility. Some districts have tapped others to assist the executive with specific tasks.

Pacific Southwest, for example, is currently using regional

coordinators to assist its interim district executive, while Atlantic Northeast recently called a team of part-time specialists to work in a new staff configuration with district executive Craig Smith and relate to district commissions.

Districts vary significantly in the number of congregations within their boundaries, as well, from six in Idaho District to more than 100 in Shenandoah. District membership ranged from 709 in Idaho at the end of 2001, according to the Church of the Brethren Yearbook, to well over 15,000 in Atlantic Northeast.

The Council of District Executives came into being in 1970 as a means of building identity and relationships across these varied districts, according to a history of the

council compiled by Shenandoah executive Jim Miller. Other goals include facilitating communication, collaborating on projects, exchanging ideas, and developing consistent standards and expectations.

The face of those serving in the role has changed over the years, with many more women now around the table (seven are currently serving as district executives or co-executives, and several others as associate district executives), and more people in associate positions.

In a 1982 *Brethren Life and Thought* article, Rowe concludes, “There is no question but that the district executive position has come to a place of status and maturity in the life of the church.”

—Walt Wiltschek

certain way,” he says. “That’s certainly part of the district role.”

While dynamics vary from one district to the next, and day-to-day priorities may be different in Oregon than in Ohio, the executives say they find much value in coming together and sharing about their common work. The council—begun in 1970 and more formally organized two years later—typically holds two regular meetings per year, plus a professional growth event.

The agenda includes updates from liaisons to various Church of the Brethren bodies, updates on council finances and plans for upcoming joint activities, conversations with denominational agency representatives, discussion around common issues of concern, worship and devotions, and ample time for connection and networking.

“We started out not even wanting to be a group,” says Earl Traugher, now in his second stint as part-time Idaho executive. “It was a more informal kind of thing. We resisted organizing as a group, but we found we couldn’t exist without it.”

Annual Conference in 2001 took action to extend formal recognition to the Council of District Executives as an “organization within the denomination” where “mutual ministry discussion” could occur. Executives say they’re still uncertain what that recognition really means, or if it’s useful since the body has typically held more “informal power” as an advisory group.

Regardless, they say districts still hold a central and crucial role in the denomination.

“Districts have some serious power,” Shumate says. “They can recognize who is or who isn’t a congregation, and who is or who isn’t set apart as a minister. Districts have a pretty serious gatekeeping role. . . . As the church becomes regionally focused, it’s a pretty important body to be a part of.”

That makes the council’s role increasingly central, too, he says. With multiple Annual Conference agencies now existing, the collaboration of district leaders is needed to work at unified programming and outreach and “take it home.”

The executives agree that those opportunities for guidance as a joint body and for ministry individually, within their respective districts, make the job worthwhile despite the challenges.

Connie Burkholder talks of the joy of conducting



District banners stand on display at the 2001 Annual Conference.

an ordination service and seeing someone’s gifts and spirit grow, even as there are “days I get in my car when I think I will never not be tired.”

Shumate lifts up the “cloud of witnesses” in Virlina upon whose work and commitment he builds. Don Booz speaks of his desire to see everyone in Mid-Atlantic “sit at the table.” Southern Ohio executive Mark Flory Steury calls the chance to work with congregations and help them find a pastor “a holy moment.”

“I’m still struggling with the paradox of this work,” says Jim Yaussy Albright, in his fourth year as a district executive. “On one hand it’s an impossible job description. On the other, districts really are on the edge, and it’s where the new kingdom is really being formed.

“One day it’s wonderful, and the next day I don’t want to be there. It’s a vulnerable place, but a place where there’s a lot of energy, and where God’s spirit is really strong.” ❗

Walt Wiltschek is director of news services for the General Board. He drew the rough assignment of traveling to Daytona Beach in February, meeting with the Council of District Executives during their winter meetings to glean their insights on the issues they face.



# A peace church

Annual service commemo

## In 1994, Dranesville Church of the Brethren member John

Waggoner was scouting around the abandoned cornfield next to the little church in Herndon, Va. At the time he thought the area would be a good spot for planting pumpkins for the church kids to harvest in the fall, or maybe some juicy tomatoes for all those potluck dinners that Brethren like so much.

While walking across the field, he came upon an unexpected find: a Confederate musket ball. Waggoner knew that the church and the cornfield were near the site of the Battle of Dranesville. Markers on the nearby roads proclaimed the history of the battle that had taken place on Dec. 20, 1861. But until that heavy bullet weighed down his hand, he had never felt the history as a reality, nor had the irony struck him until that day. The old peace church, built in 1913, stood exactly where men had died in battle.

Waggoner, a history buff, decided two things that day: He wanted to know more about the men who had lost their lives in the battle. And he wanted his church to know more also, and perhaps to somehow mark the Battle of

Dranesville with the Church of the Brethren's peace stance. After all, the old Dunker Meeting House in Antietam, Md., has stood for years as a monument to peace [see "Lessons from the Dunker meetinghouse," Jan./Feb. issue]. Could the little church in Herndon also make a strong statement for peace on a former battleground? And could it happen in an area where Civil War reenactments were popular? Where Mosby's Raid was celebrated yearly on the steps of the Herndon Town Hall?

Waggoner and then-pastor Al Huston went to the Fairfax Library in Fairfax, Va., to research the battle. They found firsthand reports from the official records, old newspaper clippings, and letters about the battle.

The Battle of Dranesville started on Dec. 20, 1861, as Confederate troops under J.E.B. Stuart began looking for winter forage for their horses. At the same time, Union troops under B.G. Ord set out looking for the same thing. Stuart figured that the farmers in the town—where nearly all the residents had voted for secession—would give gladly to the cause. Ord, knowing this, aimed to get to the forage before the Confederates did. Shortly before noon on that day, Ord's 5,000 men met Stuart's 2,500. The skirmish that began outside of Dranesville soon became a battle near the present site of the Church of the Brethren.

A reporter from *Harper's Weekly* described the battle as "one incessant firing." Green Confederate troops fired at each other in the confusion of battle, and unusually accurate Union cannon fire blasted into Stuart's artillery, killing six, three by decapitation. After three hours Stuart took his hay wagons and retreated to nearby Frying Pan Meeting House, several miles from the battle, and claimed victory. But it was clear that the Confederate forces took far greater casualties: 43 dead, 150 wounded. The North hailed the battle as a great Union victory.

During the Civil War most Brethren refused to fight, prompting General Stonewall Jackson to say of them, "There lives a people in the valley of Virginia that are not hard to bring to the army...nor is it hard to have them



Dranesville Church of the Brethren, Herndon, Va.



*This illustration from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, Jan. 11, 1862, shows the Battle of Dranesville from the Union line. The site of the cannons in the picture is where the current church building stands.*

# remembers its Civil War battle

honors the Battle of Dranesville, fought over forage for horses

by Yvonne Surette

take aim, but it is impossible to have them take correct aim. I think it is better to leave them at their homes. . . .”

The Civil War in America forced an official debate at the national level regarding the treatment of conscientious objectors during conscription. An 1862 federal law allowed the individual states to determine who could be exempted; most northern states exempted conscientious objectors if they paid a fee. An 1863 law transferred the power to deal with COs from the states to the federal government. Still, the only way for them to be exempted was to hire a substitute or

pay a fee. Finally, in February 1864 Congress ruled that pacifists—those whose religion declared a clear opposition to war—could be drafted, but assured them of noncombat assignments. Pacifists were also given the option of paying \$300 for the relief of sick and wounded soldiers.

Things were much more difficult for conscientious objectors in the South, according to Rufus Bowman in his book, *The Church of the Brethren and War*.

Fifty years after the Dranesville battle, members of the Church of the Brethren built a new church—right on the spot where General Ord placed his cannons on Dec. 20, 1861. And since 1995, the current members have held an annual peace service on the anniversary of the battle. Though the readings and the music (usually “Amazing Grace” and “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day”) vary from year to year, one aspect of the service never changes: The evening service takes place by candlelight. The candles represent the soldiers who fell in battle at Dranesville, and, as each of their names is called, the candles are snuffed slowly, one by one. A moment of total darkness is followed by the lighting of the Christ Candle, and the words of the pastor explaining that only One Light will carry mankind out of darkness; peace will come to us when we follow Jesus’ example of pacifism and love.

Dranesville’s peace service has grown each year, attracting people from all over the Washington, D.C., area. In 2000, the *Washington Post* featured the service in its religion section. On Dec. 15, 2002, at the seventh annual—and most moving service—Pastor John Weyant’s message included a history of the Brethren peace stance, and members of the congregation read passages from the letters of Civil War soldiers, including the one from Tally Simpson to his sister in 1862. 

Yvonne Surette, a member of the Dranesville Church of the Brethren, teaches English at George Mason University. She is married to John Waggoner.

Dec. 25, 1862

*My dear Sister This is Christmas Day.*

*This day, one year ago, how many thousand families, gay and joyous, celebrating Merry Christmas, but today are clad in the deepest mourning in memory to some lost and loved member of their circle. If all the dead (those killed since the war began) could be heaped in one pile and all the wounded be gathered together in one group, the pale faces of the dead and the groans of the wounded would send such a thrill of horror through the hearts of the originators of this war that their very souls would rack with such pain that they would prefer being dead and in torment than to stand before God with such terrible crimes blackening their characters. Add to this the cries and wailings of the mourners—mothers and fathers weeping for their sons, sisters for their brothers, wives for their husbands, and daughters for their fathers—[and] how deep would be the convictions of their consciences.*

From Confederate soldier Tally Simpson to his sister



# A N E A S T E R W A R R E S U

*Read Isaiah 43:18-25 and Mark 2:1-12.*

Not only on Easter but each Sunday we give thanks for the resurrection. Resurrection invokes life, while it reminds us of Jesus' death on a cross. Crucifixion was terrorism. The Romans crucified people to instill fear in the public.

Jesus' disciples were afraid. As he was crucified his disciples ran and hid. They did just what the Romans wanted them to do. The goal of terrorism is to get certain political results. Frightened people are easier to govern.

For the disciples, the resurrection swept away that fear. When they saw the risen Jesus, fear no longer controlled them. The resurrection transformed their understanding of God as it changed the meaning of life.

As in that first church, the resurrection empowers our faith today. Why, then, do we often forget this power? Why is it that when we deal with issues like war, that we talk and act as though the resurrection doesn't relate? Instead we allow other standards of value to determine how we act—standards like self-defense, realism, and self-interest. But does giving thanks for the resurrection of Christ change our approach to war? I believe it must.

Resurrection points without flinching back at the crucifixion, and war is often a kind of crucifixion. War is frequently justified as an act of self-defense, or as a police action designed to stop a hateful tyrant. People speak of waging war for moral purposes—to defend liberty, justice, human dignity. The result of war is usually much different than its lofty goals. The burden of suffering does not fall on the guilty alone; instead the innocent suffer.

War destroys community. It creates famine, disease, and homelessness. Writer

M E D I T A T I O N

# AND RESURRECTION

by David R. Miller

Lee Griffith points out, "Eighty percent of those killed during WWI were soldiers. During WWII, half of the casualties were civilian and half military. Today, almost 90 percent of all deaths in war are civilian." The amount of death war generates likewise numbs us to its horror. Joseph Stalin said this: A single death is a tragedy, a million deaths is a statistic.

Today, Christians are called to witness against any form of crucifixion. The church must remember the moral calculus that helped condemn Jesus. He was tried by proper authority and slain by legitimate force. Even the high priest reasoned that it was better for one man to be sacrificed than for a whole nation to be destroyed (John 11:50). Moral legitimacy alone is not a good enough reason for war.

Second, the resurrection shows that God has done a new thing. The prophet Isaiah addressed a people without hope taken captive to a foreign land. How could they teach their children about God when the gifts of God, the promised land and the temple, were lost? Yet Isaiah speaks to them: Don't keep your eyes on what you've lost. God is about to do something new. Here it comes. Don't you see it?

What do we see? Two forms of despair must be addressed. One is the despair of defeat that would come if enemies were to pulverize us to the point that we could no longer see through to a better place. The other is a despair of riches and strength: Expectations of what God is doing are low because in our arrogance we are not looking for God.

The North American church lives like a people who do not believe the resurrection has happened. Our confidence is in

what we can do for ourselves. We live in a country that spends nearly \$400 billion a year on "defense." Devoting those resources to militarism means that our nation believes that preparing for war is the solution to the problems we face abroad.

Because Christians confess that both life and death belong to God, our attitudes about both must be transformed. God's new thing in the resurrection was

before the people: healing and forgiveness. It is what they can see, the healing, that will be a sign of the reality of the second thing which they cannot see, the forgiveness. What is seen testifies to what is unseen.

The church's witness of the resurrection is to be like that. We are a visible sign in the world of what God is doing. When we work for the reconciliation of enemies, when we place the lives of our enemies above our own lives, then some will see in

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not to make the world a friendlier place, nor to make human beings more virtuous. Rather, the resurrection confirmed God's persistent will to create the new kingdom inaugurated by Jesus' ministry. New Testament writers are alert to this new political reality: "Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people" (1 Pet. 2:10).

Will we be that people, God's people, rather than the heavily nationalized people that we are now?

Finally, the resurrection is a sign of how God is redeeming the world. In Mark 2, several people carry a man with paralysis to Jesus on a pallet. Jesus' first response is to see the faith of the man's friends. Next he forgives the sick man's sins. People present object loudly: Only God can forgive!

Jesus responds by lifting up two issues

us a witness of Christ's resurrection. Some will see that in God life and love are stronger than death. Many fewer will see it or believe it if the church continues to crouch behind the US weapons arsenal—the biggest stockpile of weapons of massive destruction in the world.

Because of the resurrection, the church today should be a place without fear. Yes, terrorism frightens us. We worry for ourselves, for the people we love, for others. The question for the church is: Will we act in such a way that will allow that fear to separate us from the love of God? As the faith of the paralyzed man's friends saved him, so may our confidence in the resurrection help heal the world. ■

David R. Miller is pastor of First Church of the Brethren, Roanoke, Va. He and his wife, Carol Lena, are parents of a son, Jonas Racy Miller, born Jan 17.

# The fun-filled faith of

## This beloved cartoon family may not

by Kathi Wolfe

“When we say  
grace, do we  
look up at  
heaven or down  
at the food?”

RELIGION NEWS SERVICE—It’s so retro that you may not want your hip friends to know you read it. But it’s an oasis of comfort as war with Iraq looms and anxiety over terrorism increases. It is “The Family Circus,” a comic strip that appears daily in more than 1,500 newspapers in the United States and throughout the world.

The panel revolves around a “typical” American family: Daddy, Mommy, their four children (Billy, 7, Dolly, 5, Jeffy, 3, and PJ, 18 months), their dogs Barfy and Sam, and their cat Kittycat. This family is no more “typical” than the Cleavers in

“Leave It to Beaver.” Yet, despite the dysfunction found in many families and the irony that permeates the culture in the age of “The Simpsons,” readers love the “Family Circus” gang today as much as they did when the strip began more than 40 years ago.

The “Family Circus” strip inhabits a small corner of American culture that hasn’t been infiltrated by cynicism, says Robert Thompson, professor of media and popular culture at Syracuse University. “Jerry Springer shows you the dark side of the American family. ‘The Family Circus’ shows you the optimistic side. Most families live between the two.”

The characters in “The Family Circus” are “absolutely like members of your family,” says Mike Peters, creator of the comic strip “Mother Goose & Grimm.” “Everyone knows the kids, the mom and dad. You’re charmed by looking at the world through the kids’ eyes.” Only a handful of strips are so integral a part of the fabric of America, Peters says.

Bil Keane, 80, has been the creator of the strip since “FC” first appeared in just 19 papers 43 years ago. The inspiration for “The Family Circus” came from his own life, Keane said in a telephone interview from his home in Paradise Valley, Ariz. Keane and his wife, Thelma, have five children. Daddy in the strip, like Keane, is a cartoonist.

The religious themes expressed in “FC” grow out of his family’s experiences,



*Bil Keane, creator of “The Family Circus”*

# 'The Family Circus'

be Brethren, but they're just like us

Keane says. The children in the strip express "the religious questions that I had as a child or that other children have." Jeffy, saying the Lord's Prayer, prays, "Our Father who art in heaven, how did you know my name?" Billy wants to know, "When we say grace, do we look up at heaven or down at the food?" Dolly wonders, "When people get to heaven, are they allowed to hug God?"

Religion in the strip is expressed subtly. "It's not done to convert you in airports," Thompson says. "There's a subtlety to the message. It's not Jehovah's Witnesses. It says we should be nice to each other."

When "The Family Circus" does bring in a Christian theme, such as Christmas, he adds, "it's to give it (the strip) density—window dressing. Like what the 'Goldbergs' (the radio, TV and comic strip) did with the characters being Jewish."

Yet faith in "The Family Circus" isn't vacuous. Without being preachy, it delivers a message. When Dolly asks, "Is God white, black, brown, yellow or red?" Mommy simply answers, "Yes."

"It helps to bring in a religious message only occasionally. Or my editor would say he's not buying a religious strip," Keane says. "It makes it more special that way."

Keane was born in 1922 in Philadelphia and grew up there. Religion and drawing have been integral to his life since his childhood. "Religion was a part of our home life when I was growing up. I attended Catholic school. It was a good education—for the spiritual end, as well as for its discipline," Keane says.

THE FAMILY CIRCUS,

By Bil Keane



2-25  
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"Our Father, who art in heaven,  
how did You know  
my name?"

Humor has always been an element of his faith. "Laughter was a part of the church services I attended as a child," recalls Keane, a Catholic. Jesus must have had a sense of humor, Keane says. "Churches have made God and Christ on Earth seem solemn. Very seldom do you see a picture of Christ laughing or smiling." But that's not the way Jesus was, Keane says.

"I like to think of him as a guy who got people to listen to him by leaving them laughing and chuckling with one another."

Keane never formally studied art. In sixth grade, he drew caricatures of the other students and of the teacher, Sister Anne. "She was a great teacher," he says. "Instead of chastising me for drawing her

"When people  
get to heaven,  
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to hug God?"

"Since the Sept. 11 attacks, I've received mail from readers who are gratified that there is something in the comic pages that devotes some space to the influence of religion and God."

in a not too flattering way, she encouraged me." When he left her class, Keane adds, "Sister Anne said, 'I hope someday to see you drawing cartoons.'"

He taught himself to draw while he was a student at Northeast Catholic High School—drawing cartoons for the school newspaper. In the late 1930s, Keane and his friends produced a satirical magazine, *The Saturday Evening Toast*.

He stayed up nights copying the cartoons of his idols—*New Yorker* cartoonists Peter Arno, George Price, Robert Day, and Whitney Darrow. "I learned by doing cartoons what was right and what was wrong," he says. At this time Keane dropped the second "l" in his first name, Bill. "I did this to be distinctive."

His first job after high school was as a messenger for the (now defunct) *Philadelphia Bulletin*. Keane served in the Navy from 1942 to 1945, drawing for *Yank* magazine and creating the "At Ease With the Japanese" feature for *Pacific Stars and Stripes*.

After World War II, he returned to the *Bulletin*. He drew cartoons for the paper and created a Quaker character based on William Penn for "Silly Philly," a Sunday comic strip for the *Bulletin*. In 1948 Keane married Thelma

Carne, an Australian whom he met during the war. The couple lived in Roslyn, Pa., for 10 years before moving to Arizona in 1959.

From 1954 to 1972, Keane drew "Channel Chuckles," a TV humor cartoon that was distributed nationally. He also drew cartoons on a freelance basis for magazines. The income enabled Keane to leave the *Bulletin* and work from home. He launched "The Family Circus" in February 1960.

Since the Sept. 11 attacks, Keane has received mail from readers "who are gratified that there is something in the comic pages that devotes some space to the influence of religion and God." It gives people hope that things can be the way they used to be, he adds. "No one has an explanation for the attacks. But most people believe that guidance from above will help to beat terrorism."

He jokes that he has no plans to retire other than to go to bed at night. But he knows he won't be able to do "The Family Circus" forever. When Keane steps down from "FC," his son Jeff will take over the strip. To prepare for this passing of the torch, Jeff does the drawings in ink after Keane provides the ideas and draws the panels in pencil. "He's warming up in the bullpen. He's doing a beautiful job," Keane says. 

## MESSENGER DINNER

Sunday, July 6, 5 p.m.

Featuring John and Sue Unger



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John Unger was one of the nine Pennsylvania coal miners trapped underground for three days last July while his wife, Sue, provided a voice of serenity to worried families and friends. After the dramatic rescue, carried live on TV, they have met with President Bush, been the subject of a TV movie and guests on the Oprah show, and have told their story in a bestselling book. Members of the Maple Spring Church of the Brethren and featured in the November Messenger, they come to Conference to share their story of gratitude for answered prayer.



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# LETTERS

“God, give me a compassion big enough to minister to others without embarrassing them, and large enough to be ministered to without being embarrassed.”

## Name committee wants discussion

The 2002 Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren, meeting in Louisville, Ky., had two queries on the denominational name as items of new business. The delegate body adopted a recommendation from Standing Committee that a “study committee of five be elected by Annual Conference to respond to the queries on denominational name by promoting a denomination-wide dialog and report its progress [back to Annual Conference].”

Our first committee meeting took place in mid-January at the Manassas (Va.) Church of the Brethren, where we began discussing ways to carry out our charge. In keeping with Annual Conference direction, we desire to foster a spirit of dialog, promoting understanding rather than debate. Through a number of means, we hope to explore over the next year the varying understandings of the denominational name.

In the coming months, information will be available on the Annual Conference website ([www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org)). We also plan to initiate conversations at upcoming conferences, and we are preparing questionnaires and discussion questions to be sent to pastors, congregations, and related church agencies. We invite participation from all church members in these efforts and we appreciate prayers as we carry out our responsibilities.

### Church of the Brethren Denominational Name Study Committee

Jeff Carter, chair, Alberto Gonzalez  
Shirley Spire, Shawn Kirchner, Ben Barlow

## More about Brethren (Mich.)

Thank you for the January/February article on Brethren, Mich. My grandfather, Charles Ferror was the Brethren minister in Greenville, Ohio, when my grandmother died of “consumption” (tuberculosis). My grandfather left the church and would not even attend for a number of years. Eventually, someone came from

Elgin and did a little matchmaking and set up my grandfather with a lady who was at seminary with her husband when grandpa was there. Ardeth Conover was a widow now with a son Kenneth the same age as my dad, Joseph.

The whole family, including my dad’s older sister Margaret and younger brother John, set off in a used Model T Ford sedan two weeks later for Brethren, Mich. I always liked to be able to say that my grandfather was the Brethren minister at the Brethren Church on Brethren Street in Brethren, Mich.!

Stopping at every stream to add water to the radiator, the trip took 3 days and they arrived in Brethren—the year was 1925. Brethren had three gas stations, two grocery stores, one hardware and fishing

“If your enemy is hungry. . .” *Romans 12:20*



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tackle store, a small cream station, and a two-story brick school for 12 grades. My father's family was met by many members of the town who helped to unload the box-car full of furniture that was waiting for them on a railroad siding. Women brought food and helped them move in and feel welcome. My father's family soon settled in to Michigan and since this was the Depression, they supplemented their

income with milk cows, gardens, fishing and anything else they could do.

After a couple of years, Grandpa also contracted to preach at Harlan and Marilla—two other small churches 15 to 20 miles northeast of Brethren. In 1932 my dad, my Uncle Ken, and my Uncle Harold Fredricks (who would later marry my Aunt Margaret) were on the Dickson's High School famous "Big Red" champion bas-

ketball team that went all the way to the state tournament.

My father and Aunt Margaret attended Manchester College for a year or two before M. R. Zigler came to Grandpa in 1937 and told him that he was needed for the church in San Diego. They auctioned most everything they owned and bought a 1936 Ford stake-rack truck from Warren Danner and set out for California. Grandpa finished his service calling there and all the family stayed in San Diego. They are all gone now except for my Aunt Margaret, who just turned 90 last fall, but I have all of my father's Brethren, Mich., stories written down as a wonderful memory of his interesting childhood.

In 1969, my father, mother and I travelled to Greenville and Brethren. We stayed at the Sportsman Lodge and went rowing on Lake Eleanor. We were also able to visit with Gladys Grossnickle. It was a wonderful trip. Brethren, Mich., will always have fond memories for me and our family.

**Carol Scott**  
Upland, Calif.



**June 29 - July 5, 2003**

Come early to Annual Conference to the seventh annual **Song & Story Fest at Camp Wilbur Stover, New Meadows, Idaho.** This unique family camp features Brethren musicians, storytellers, and peacemakers under the big blue sky of western Idaho!

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### Ritual reflections

It is love feast time in the First Church of the Brethren of Peoria, Ill., where we worked out our faith for the past three years prior to our move to Syracuse, N.Y. I was talking with my husband about the feetwashing piece of the ritual and I commented that I would be embarrassed if we were there now to participate. Both of my feet are in various stages of purples and yellows, blacks and blues. The injury is a result of a fall down stairs while carrying my one-year-old son at his blessing. I could not imagine baring them to anyone, even in the same-sex circle in which this intimate tradition occurs. My husband was in a different place: "Yeah, that would be painful for you." He has watched me agonize as I walk with the aid of crutches and as I touch my feet and grimace or move wrong and wince. It would hurt to have someone else handle my feet, even in a spiritual cleansing.

Was Christ pained when he washed the disciples' feet? Or am I projecting my human feelings and characteristics onto the Savior again as I am prone to do? Why I want to limit God and make Him man-like is beyond me, especially to see Him like me. I

know myself and I am fallible and I want someone so beyond me in control of my healing and my vulnerabilities. Was Christ embarrassed or just the disciples as he donned the towel and they disrobed? Was there an odor or is that a modern olfactory phenomenon? I am prone to project today's dilemmas on first century followers as well.

Jesus' intention was a practical lesson on service. Sometimes I find it is so much easier to serve than to be served. "No, Lord, let us wash your feet," the disciples cried 2,000 years ago, and today my cry echoes theirs: "No, Lord, let me help others with their pain without having to expose my own."

"God, give me a compassion big enough to minister to others without embarrassing them, and large enough to be ministered to without being embarrassed. Pride is a terrible sin. Thank you for your example and the privilege of following your faith journey."

**Kimberlee M. Garver**  
Manlius, N.Y.

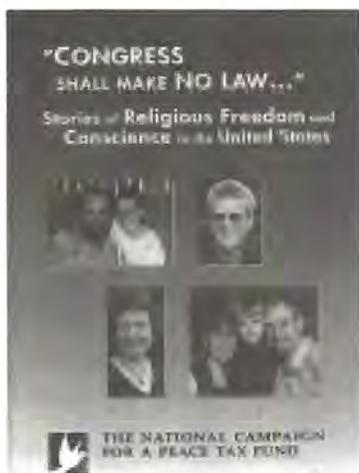
### Don't get old

If you live in a retirement community as I do where there are dozens of residents who have passed their 90th birthday, you are well aware that reaching that milepost does not make you a member of any very exclusive club. Even if you have arrived there in good health with a clear mind and easy mobility, you still have plenty of company. Of course, you have far outlived your statistical life expectancy, so maybe it is as much a time for giving thanks as for celebration.

At 90 there may not be many new avenues or opportunities in front of us, but at 65 they abound. There is more time for hobbies, for travel, and for volunteering, to name a few. Many have found some of the richest and most rewarding experiences of a lifetime in volunteering.

When I was in my late 70s I went to visit a friend who was 10 years older than I. The first thing he said to me was, "Don't get old." He may have been having some trouble accepting some of the limitations that come with added years. For example, you can put as much of your energy into your golf swing at 80 as you did at 60, but that little white ball just refuses to go as far. I can see no reason to let the resulting higher scores rob you of your enjoyment of the game.

## Troubled About Paying for War? *Want alternative service for your drafted dollars?*



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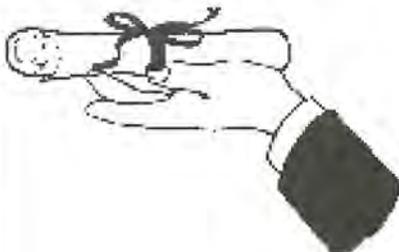
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It may be that if we immerse ourselves in hobbies, volunteering, and caring about the well-being of those around us we will discover that we don't have time to "get old."

**Bob Beery**  
North Manchester, Ind.

### MESSENGER brings back memories

For the first time in many years I read a copy of the MESSENGER (November). My mother-in-law, lifetime member of Peters Creek Church of the Brethren in Roanoke, Va., recently moved in with us and her mail is redirected. What impacted me was the "sameness" of your magazine. Substitute Vietnam for Iraq and hippy for

homosexual and it could have run off the same press 35 years ago.

My generational family is Church of the Brethren, hailing from and living in Brethren, Mich. My father, Elmer, and several of his brothers were ministers in the Church of the Brethren. I graduated from Manchester College, met my wife there, and maintain friendships with my classmates. The November issue mentioned several personal memories—Beacon Heights in Fort Wayne, Elgin, BVS, New Windsor, and of course Manchester College and the Manchester church.

It also opened the angst I have with the denomination. Your editorial hits it right on the head. The Church of the Brethren

### CLASSIFIED ADS

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**Want to volunteer in a bookstore?** Brethren Press is looking for volunteers to assist in set-up, operation, and tear-down of the Annual Conference Bookstore in Boise. If you have interest and time to volunteer, contact Nancy Klemm by April 30 at 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120 or [nklemm\\_gb@brethren.org](mailto:nklemm_gb@brethren.org).

**Saint Judas Passion on CD**—Brethren composer/ventriloquist Steve Engle has released two new CDs. (1) The original SAINT JUDAS PASSION LP digitally enhanced and remastered with an added number and additional instrumentation. 79:47 minutes of music. (2) NEAT SONGS #1. by Steve's DUSTY & CO. PUPPETS. 11 songs—5 just for fun and 6 with painless messages—especially for children from 1 to 105! LISTEN ON-LINE, read reviews and purchase at [www.cdbaby.com/sengle](http://www.cdbaby.com/sengle). Or check/money order direct from: Steve Engle, RR1, Box 49, Alexandria, PA 16611-9606. \$14.95 + \$3 S/H. PA residents add 6% sales tax.

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is arrogant. Most distressing for me, as several of the published letters pointed out, the church is so wrong! Other letters repeated the same old mindless Brethren line of "dialog" and "peacemaking," which continue to be code words for appeasement and biblical ignorance.

If you really read your Bible, the peace platform is bogus. The ideal of pacifism, while a worthy goal, is just that, an ideal, not Jesus. The Brethren have never

understood Jesus or peace! The church's position on the environment is unsupported. Stances on social justice contain no justice and have no answers, only perpetuate the poverty the church self-righteously lays at the feet of this nation.

I entered Manchester a pacifist. I came out (1970) educated, with both a degree in history and theological knowledge that this church is biblically incorrect, ignorant of history, and led by the incipient. The

only ones in denial are in Elgin's pseudo-intellectual ivory towers. You give aid and comfort to our enemies, you are ashamed of the flag, and you consistently damn this country. You parade Jesus around as your personal puppy but could not and, even more tragic, would not even recognize the biblical Jesus. Your church is hypocritical at its base, a disgrace to Jesus' ministry, and to America.

**David E. Leckrone**  
Woodbridge, Va.

## TURNING POINTS

Please send information to be included in Turning Points to Jean Clements, 1451 Dundee Ave, Elgin, IL 60120; 800 323-8039 ext. 206; jcllements\_gb@brethren.org. Information must be complete in order to be published. Information older than one year cannot be published.

### New Members

**Bear Creek**, Dayton, Ohio: Terry Howe  
**Brookville**, Ohio: Tim Osswald, Eric Wilcox, Brian Watt, Amy Watt  
**Champaign**, Ill.: Mabelle Kohler  
**Downsville**, Williamsport, Md.: Ruth Litten, Roland Litten  
**East Chippewa**, Orrville, Ohio: Dale Rice, Cindy Rice  
**Faith Community of the Brethren Home**, New Oxford, Pa.: Frank Shaffer, Alma Shaffer, Clair Hewitt, Nancy Hewitt, Ruth Jewell  
**Geiger**, Friedens, Pa.: Dawna George, Chleora Geiser, John Zehner, Winona Zehner, Bonnie Hutzel, Elizabeth Pearl Foust, Charles Spangler, Beth Gardner  
**Glendora**, Calif.: Karen Sturkie, J. D. Sturkie, Brian Sturkie  
**Grossnickle**, Myersville, Md.: Kelsey Nicole Brandenburg, Krista Elizabeth Bussard, Kimberly Anne Kline, Carrie Ann Spade, Randy Lee Harshman, Raymond Poulin, Ruby Poulin  
**Lower Deer Creek**, Camden, Ind.: Tim Peters, Teresa Peters, Chuck Remillet, Cheryl Remillet, Cindy Dunk, Emily Dunk  
**Maple Grove**, Ashland, Ohio: Doug Reynolds, Linda Reynolds  
**Mechanic Grove**, Quarryville, Pa.: Allie Graver, Marla Hart, Breanna Kreider, KyAnn Wisse, Danielle Wisse  
**Monitor**, McPherson, Kan.: Doug Burkholder, Mary Burkholder  
**Osage**, McCune, Kan.: David Wallace, Jamie Alexander  
**Roanoke**, First, Roanoke, Va.: Michael Dowdy, Keith Smith,

Darron Smith, Diana Smith, Nicole Fowler, Pam Alwine, Katie Dowdy  
**Rocky Mount**, Va.: John Wray, Elsie Wray, Trevor Via, Shirley Forry, Dwayne Robertson, Virginia Arthur  
**Sebring**, Fla.: Eleanor Alspach, Elizabeth Batts, Robert Benedict, Naomi Benedict, Wendell Bohrer, Joan Bohrer, Terry Gilbert, Lois Gilbert, Earl Joseph, Doritha Joseph, Paul Larimer, Margaret Larimer, Mary Shivers, David Whitmer, Estella Whitmer  
**Skyridge**, Kalamazoo, Mich.: Daniel Gross  
**Stone**, Huntingdon, Pa.: Ed Wallace, JoAnn Wallace  
**Troutville**, Va.: Carl Morris, Grace Morris, Darin Stultz, Nancy Markham, Don Divers, Barbara Divers, Julie Houston, Wayne Gray, Donna Gray, Bobbi Jo Hall, Anessa Hubbard, Becky Vassar  
**Union Center**, Nappanee, Ind.: Gene Hollenberg, Pam Hollenberg, Katie Hollenberg  
**Wenatchee**, Wash.: Crystal Carlson, Donna Gutierrez, Betty Merriman, Erica Swanson  
**Wilmington**, Del.: Clyde Nafzinger

### Wedding Anniversaries

**Anderson**, Cliff and Marie, Orrville, Ohio, 50  
**Bronce**, Howard and Janet, Uniontown, Pa., 50  
**Carter**, John and Phyllis, Goshen, Ind., 55  
**Clem**, Dale and Jo Ann, Nappanee, Ind., 50  
**Cochran**, Grayson and Elsie, Boonesboro, Md., 60  
**Diehl**, Robert and Charlotte, Uniontown, Pa., 55  
**Duke**, Russel and Lois, Phillipsburg, Ohio, 65  
**Fraze**, Willard and Betty, Uniontown, Pa., 50  
**Johnson**, Charles and Martha Sue, Reading, Pa., 50  
**Kauffman**, Floyd and Thelma, Goshen, Ind. 55  
**Knepper**, Royal and Faye,

Markleton, Pa., 50  
**Long**, Lawrence and Hazel, Williamsport, Md., 60  
**McDowell**, E. Floyd and Lois, Huntingdon, Pa., 50  
**Miller**, Howard and Lena, Westminster, Md., 50  
**Moyers**, Charles Ray and Dorothy, Bruceton Mills, W.Va., 50  
**Nichols**, Walter and Doris, Boones Mill, Va., 50  
**Robinson**, Donald and Eleanor, Wyomissing, Pa., 50  
**Stauffer**, John and Bessie, Trotwood, Ohio, 60  
**Sumey**, Clyde and Sara, Uniontown, Pa., 75  
**Sunday**, Robert and Jean, Everett, Pa., 50  
**Thompson**, James and Virginia, Johnstown, Pa., 60  
**Wagoner**, Robert and Shirley, Huntingdon, Pa., 50  
**Watring**, Glenn and Billie, Ashland, Ohio, 65

### Deaths

**Adkins**, James E., 36, Lititz, Pa., Jan. 31  
**Bashore**, Laura, 91, Bethel, Pa., Feb. 3  
**Blank**, James, 58, Myersville, Md., April 20, 2002  
**Blickenstaff**, Harry G., 92, Myersville, Md., Sept. 9  
**Blough**, Milo, 79, Everett, Pa., Jan. 19  
**Boles**, Mary Edith, 87, Olathe, Kan., Jan. 25  
**Bowser**, Violet J., 79, Windber, Pa., Jan. 26  
**Brandt**, Jeanne, 79, Palmyra, Pa., Jan. 29  
**Brandt**, Nina, 77, Cando, N.D., Jan. 1  
**Branan**, Lester, 60, Sheloceta, Pa., Sept. 23  
**Chase**, Ted, 86, Defiance, Ohio, Jan. 31  
**Dively**, Mildred, 92, Friedens, Pa., Jan. 22  
**Fasnacht**, Carol, 63, Brookville, Ohio, Oct. 21  
**Fisher**, Evelyn, 85, Johnstown, Pa., Jan. 30  
**Flinchbaugh**, Cora, 90, Lebanon, Pa., Jan. 26  
**Freed**, Florence Thompson, 98,

North Manchester, Ind., Jan. 22  
**Freidhoff**, Edythe, 90, Windber, Pa., Nov. 7  
**Grossnickle**, Iona, 82, Myersville, Md., May 29  
**Hackman**, Joseph H., 72, Oreland, Pa., Feb. 10  
**Harbaugh**, James, 78, Huntingdon, Pa., Nov. 27  
**Helser**, Evelyn, 94, Thornville, Ohio, Dec. 29  
**Hershey**, Ruth Elizabeth, 85, Springettsbury Township, Pa., Jan. 31  
**Hesse**, Richard J., 83, Oakland, Md., Jan. 18  
**Hoffer**, Victor, 94, Palmyra, Pa., Oct. 18  
**Kimmel**, Nita Mae, 85, Sheloceta, Pa., Dec. 22  
**Kiracofe**, Howard E., 92, Mount Vernon, Ohio, Jan. 5  
**Kline**, Allen B., 75, Lebanon, Pa., June 20  
**Kuckenbrod**, Earl, 82, Johnstown, Pa., Dec. 17  
**Lacher**, Joe, 86, Linthicum, Md., Sept. 20  
**Lantis**, Florence, 95, Wakarusa, Ind., Nov. 17  
**Liggett**, Enid, 70, North Liberty, Ind., Feb. 3  
**Mank**, June, 79, Champaign, Ill., Feb. 15  
**Mauger**, Loel "Sue", 71, Pottstown, Pa., Feb. 1  
**Metzler**, Marion, 76, Topeka, Kan., Jan. 29  
**Miles**, Grace, 96, Leonard, Mo., Jan. 22  
**Miller**, Dennis, 57, Annville, Pa., Jan. 16  
**Miller**, Floyd, 75, Johnstown, Pa., Feb. 1  
**Miller**, Grace I., 87, New Oxford, Pa., Dec. 28  
**Miller**, Marion, 86, Sebring, Fla., Nov. 25  
**Miller**, Ray, 80, Nappanee, Ind., Jan. 10  
**Miller**, Ray J., 81, Cedar Falls, Iowa, Jan. 30  
**Nelson**, Mary, 85, McPherson, Kan., Feb. 7  
**Noffsinger**, Carl, 87, Dayton, Ohio, Feb. 2  
**Price**, Robert, 67, Cando, N.D., Jan. 6  
**Rasp**, Erwin, 84, Omaha, Neb., Jan. 1  
**Replogle**, Jean Kathryn, 77,

Hollidaysburg, Pa., Feb. 6  
**Rosenberger**, Linda Kimmel, 51, Sheloceta, Pa., Feb. 22, 2002  
**Rube**, Sue K. Bucher, 61, Pluederhausen, Germany, Jan. 21  
**Shriver**, Cletus, 80, Martinsburg, Pa., Jan. 11  
**Snyder**, Galen, 96, Roaring Spring, Pa., Jan. 11  
**Spahr**, Thelma, 86, Palmyra, Pa., Dec. 27  
**Stiffler**, John, 86, Everett, Pa., Jan. 5  
**Thakor**, Justin, 62, Naperville, Ill., Dec. 5  
**Weaverling**, Grace, 87, Ravenna, Ohio, Dec. 17  
**Williams**, Clara, 96, Imperial, Neb., Jan. 27  
**Woodward**, Marguerite McCain, 81, Blue Bell, Pa., Feb. 9  
**Yoder**, Wavy, 75, Nappanee, Ind., Sept. 22

### Licensings

**Brown**, Craig, S. Ohio Dist. (Potsdam, Ohio), Nov. 24  
**Yarnall**, Karen J., Mid. Pa. Dist. (Memorial, Martinsburg, Pa.), Jan. 26

### Ordinations

**Veal**, Kathleen, N. Ohio Dist. (Eden, Canton, Ohio), Jan. 19  
**Young**, Frank P., W. Pa. Dist. (Tire Hill, Pa.), Feb. 9

### Placements

**Ballinger**, John, from pastor, Maple Grove, Ashland, Ohio, to district executive, Northern Ohio District, Ashland, Ohio, Feb. 1  
**Hughes**, James Robert, minister of visitation, Moorefield, W.Va., Feb. 23  
**Pugh**, Edward J., from associate to pastor, Lower Miami, Dayton, Ohio, Dec. 1  
**Thacker**, Robert M., from pastor, Greencastle, Pa. to pastor, Lakewood, Millbury, Ohio, Feb. 1



## War gives us meaning

**“If anyone knows why religion, which espouses kindness, is stained with so much gore, I wish you’d explain it to me,”** writes James A. Haught, editor of *The Charleston Gazette* in West Virginia. He recited a litany of “holy” wars. “Muslims and Christians kill each other daily in Sudan. Hindu Tamils and Buddhist Sinhalese kill each other in Sri Lanka. Catholics and Protestants still kill each other in Northern Ireland. The tragic civil war that shattered Yugoslavia in the 1990s was between Orthodox Christian Serbs, Catholic Croats, and Muslim Bosnians and Kosovars.”

We usually exempt ourselves from the list of those who fight holy wars, though much of the world would view a US war against Iraq as Christians against Muslims. US politicians usually are careful in the way they employ religious rhetoric to justify wars, but they make the connection nevertheless. “The terrorists hate the fact that we can worship Almighty God the way we see fit,” President Bush told a meeting of religious broadcasters, adding that the United States was called to bring God’s gift of liberty to “every human being in the world.” Nobody fights for land or oil; all wars are wrapped in noble purposes like justice and freedom, causes that God would support.

Of course the wars of recent history—in Bosnia, Northern Ireland, Sudan, Iraq—are not holy wars. They are wholly wars. They forget their noble purpose soon after the killing begins. The peace and freedom they set out to find gets lost in the gun-smoke. Every nation that goes to war thinks it is going there for the best of reasons. But those who employ violence for power inevitably lose their morality in the heat of battle. William James remarked on this in 1899: “We had supposed ourselves. . . a better nation morally than the rest, safe at home, and without the old savage ambition, destined to exert great international influence by throwing in our ‘moral weight,’ etc. Dreams! Human nature is everywhere the same; and at the least temptation, all the military passions rise, and sweep everything before them.”

War becomes its own religion. On the homefront, war brings people together in a common cause. It becomes everyone’s top priority, rather than leaving some to give their first concern to education while others worry about health care. It gives mediocre politicians a cause they can understand for a change. And the evening news is no longer humdrum. On the battlefield, war brings an adrenaline rush, the excitement of speed and power, the intoxication of

violence. Those who have been in combat remember its thrill for a lifetime. Even reporters who encounter danger come back to it again and again. “We believe in the nobility and self-sacrifice demanded by war,” writes *New York Times* correspondent Chris Hedges, who has reported from the battlefields of many wars over the past 20 years. “We discover in the communal struggle a shared sense of meaning and purpose, a cause. War fills our spiritual void.” Just how much war becomes like a god is told in the title of Hedges’ book: *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*.

It is a false god, though few at home get to see its real nature up close like this war correspondent does. He sees governments routinely lying to their own people. He sees common morality fade away in war zones, while drugs, sexual promiscuity, and all forms of hedonism take over. But mostly he sees the killing, the death, and the heartbreak.

He tells so many stories of the death he has seen that, while each is touching and tragic, together they bring on some of the numbness felt by soldiers who see death every day. He describes driving down the highway from Kuwait City after its liberation in the last Gulf War, seeing seven miles of burned-out trucks and tanks that had been strafed by American F-16s. Many had the charred remains of Iraqi soldiers inside and the air carried the stench of rotting bodies.

A Muslim soldier he knew was in a street battle in Sarajevo. The soldier heard a door swing open and fired his assault rifle at the noise. “A 12-year-old girl dropped dead. He saw in the body of the unknown girl lying prostrate in front of him the image of his own 12-year-old daughter. He broke down. He was lost for the rest of the war, shuttered inside his apartment, nervous, morose, and broken. This experience is far more typical of warfare than the Rambo heroics we are fed by the state and the entertainment industry.”

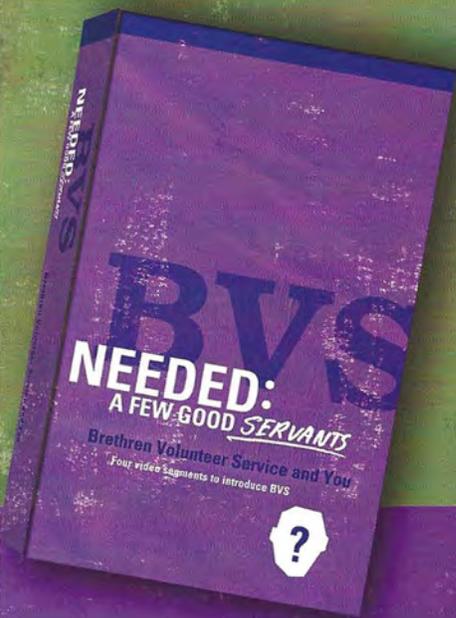
This hardened war correspondent concludes that, while war gives us meaning, it does not provide happiness. While happiness without meaning is sterile, love is the force that brings them together. “Love alone fuses happiness and meaning,” he writes. Love often loses out temporarily to violence and ruthlessness, but it keeps us human. “Love, in its mystery, has its own power. It alone gives us meaning that endures.”

It becomes more urgent now for God’s people to carry the message that war is a false god, that love gives us meaning, and that peace is the way to peace.—FLETCHER FARRAR

“It becomes more urgent now for God’s people to carry the message that war is a false god, that love gives us meaning, and that peace is the way to peace.”

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UNIT 255 : JULY 27 - AUG 15, 2003  
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UNIT 256 (BRF) : AUG. 17-27, 2003  
BETHEL, PENNSYLVANIA

UNIT 257 : SEPT. 28 - OCT 17, 2003  
NORTH MANCHESTER, INDIANA

UNIT 258 : JAN. 18 - FEB. 6, 2004  
GOTHA, FLORIDA

UNIT 259 : APRIL 26 - MAY 7, 2004  
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# 217th Annual Conference

Boise, Idaho July 5-9, 2003



Photo courtesy of the Boise Convention and Visitor's Bureau

## Annual Conference Preachers

### Saturday evening

Moderator, Harriet Finney,  
District Executive, S/C Indiana

### Sunday morning

Steve Reid, Professor of Hebrew and Old  
Testament Literature and Theology, Austin  
Presbyterian Theological Seminary

### Monday evening

Dan Ulrich, Associate Dean and Director  
of Distributed Education, Bethany  
Theological Seminary

### Tuesday evening

Bonnie Kline Smeltzer, Pastor, University  
Baptist and Brethren Church

### Wednesday morning

Larry Dentler, Pastor, Bermudian  
Church of the Brethren

*“Whatever you do, in word  
or deed, do everything in  
the name of the Lord Jesus,  
giving thanks to God the  
Father through Him.”*

*Colossians 3:17*

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reservations visit our web site:

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Brethren Ministries Live  
“A Journey of Hope”  
*Sunday afternoon*

A multimedia presentation of ministry and  
mission from the five agencies reportable to  
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