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of the
Brethren

MESSENGER

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Pray
Luke 11:1



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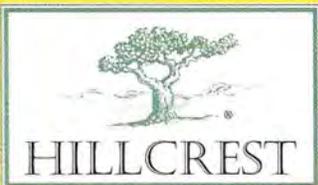


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Church of the Brethren

MESSENGER

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Walt Wiltschek

ONTHECOVER

Even persons who have led workshops and written primers on prayer may consider themselves novices in the way of prayer. Richard J. Foster is one of those persons. In the preface to *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*, Foster asks, "Who can ever master something in which the main object is to be mastered?"

To master prayer is one thing; to practice prayer is something else. Resonating with the Annual Conference Call to Prayer, 16 Brethren in this issue share intimate moments from their own practice of prayer. Their accounts are part of a larger collection of "Brethren at Prayer" reflections that grew out of the work of a prayer committee comprising representatives of five agencies and Annual Conference. More prayer essays from this collection can be found on the web at www.brethren.org/ac/CalltoPrayer/. Others may be recounted at the forthcoming Annual Conference in Boise. It is hoped that these might spark similar sharing in a thousand churches and a hundred thousand homes.

Though a humble offering, "Brethren at Prayer" speaks of communion, of Christ, and of community, giving voice to that deep longing experienced by disciples in every age, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

The cover image is a 1977 egg tempera painting titled "Girl Praying" by the American representational artist George Tooker. It is used with permission of the artist. Tooker, now 83 and living in Hartland, Vt., has contributed a large body of work over the past 50 years. One commentator writes that Tooker's work "focuses on inner, meditative, and, ultimately, spiritual issues. His subjects have a luminous, almost spectral intensity." Tooker is a devout Christian. Another of his works, "Embrace of Peace," appeared in the April 2001 MESSENGER anniversary issue.

10 Crossing cultures

The fifth annual meeting of the Cross-Cultural Consultation brought together Brethren of diverse languages and cultures, eager for the denomination to open more doors faster.

12 Brethren at prayer

Here are 16 of the many essays submitted in response to the invitation by MESSENGER and the moderator to write about individual prayer experiences.

22 Back to India

With the General Board's recommendation on India scheduled for consideration at Annual Conference, the board's study committee reports on its January delegation to India, and continuing efforts to reconcile two churches that originated from Brethren mission work.

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J.D. Glick

DEPARTMENTS

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FROM THE PUBLISHER



One day, when I was a child, our car stalled. My mother tried several times to start the engine, but it only made that awful sound that engines make when they're not planning to take you anywhere. After a while I became anxious, and finally I sent a small, silent prayer heavenward. Incredibly, with the very next turn of the key the engine sputtered to life.

Had my prayer fixed the car? I felt awkward telling anyone what had happened, but was amazed enough that I wrote about the experience in my diary.

One of the reasons I felt uncomfortable talking about the experience was that I didn't want to regard God as a magician, who busied himself with removing the inconveniences in my life. Wasn't the car incident a coincidence? I wondered. Isn't it unreasonable to think God pays any attention to such trivial matters? Shouldn't prayer address grander issues, such as war, poverty, and life-threatening illness? More importantly, what about all those prayers that don't seem to be answered?

I'm still no expert at prayer, and I still don't know how to distinguish between coincidence and answered prayer. I still wonder why we're more likely to say, "God really does answer prayer," when the answer is yes.

But I believe that God does answer prayer, and that we don't have to understand prayer to practice it. Somehow God does care about every part of our lives, welcoming our mixture of the important and the mundane. God meets us where we are, even when our uncertainties make us reluctant to talk about prayer, whether from fear of not doing it right, fear of what other people will think, or fear of exposing an intimate part of our being.

Or is it only that we need an invitation? As the stories sent to MESSENGER attest, personal experiences with prayer are plentiful and profound. We may not fully understand the experience, but we know when we have had an encounter with God.

The Scriptures tell us to pray without ceasing. Perhaps that means we should live every moment in communion with God so that we are always looking for the miracle, always listening for the Spirit. Instead of attributing less to answered prayer, perhaps we should attribute more.

Wendy McFadden

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Walt Willschek



Claude Hess, left, and Stan Noffsinger, executive director of Brethren Service Center, pack a nostalgic box of Food for Peace.

Peace links across the years

One Brethren family's post-World War II act of love is still bearing fruit.

Abraham Hess, then a free minister at Conestoga Church of the Brethren in Leola, Pa., and his wife, Ruth, became involved with the denomination's Food for Peace program that was sending care packages to Germany and Poland after the war. The packages came from across the US and were sent through the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md.

Their son, Claude, now 78, remembers the package sent by his family—and the thank-you letter they received in return from the Zehender family of Germany. That began a relationship that has spanned the decades, with members of each family making trips across the Atlantic to visit the other.

With the patriarch of the German family, Carl Zehender, celebrating his 100th birthday last month, Claude thought of the perfect way to mark the milestone.

"We were brainstorming, and I said, 'I have an idea,'" Claude Hess said, recalling a family discussion. "Let's contact New Windsor and see if they would package a replica care package in honor of him being 100 years old." His daughter, Linda, told him, "You know, that's the best thing we could do."

So while some of the contents were a bit different (though still containing many favorites from Lancaster County, Pa.), the Hess family again packed a cardboard box to send to Germany. Claude personally brought it to the Brethren Service Center for shipping, and the box went out in mid-March.

"None of us know when we get involved in a small project what the links will be for years to come," Brethren Service Center executive director Stan Noffsinger said. "It's neat what happens when we respond to 'the enemy.' Everything we do in Jesus Christ can build bridges of peace."

Prisoner gets her life back

A powerful story shared at the 2001 Annual Conference in Baltimore has taken a positive turn.

Donna Shumate, the current General Board vice chair and a North Carolina attorney, told those at Conference about a client she had represented. The client, Melanie Anderson, was convicted and ended up on North Carolina's Death Row. [See "Glorifying God from death row," MESSENGER, September 2001.]

After North Carolina recently passed legislation saying that the state would no longer execute the mentally retarded, Anderson then filed a "Motion for Appropriate Relief," asking that the death sentence be overturned. The Wilkes County court granted the motion, taking Anderson off Death Row.

"She is singing God's praises for answering the many prayers that have been made on her behalf," Shumate reported. "She wanted me to thank you all for supporting her cause. . . . God still answers prayers!"

Honored for 55 years of ministry

On Jan. 26, Mountain Grove Church of the Brethren of Fulks Run, Va., presented Max Fisher and his wife, AnnaBelle, with a plaque for his 55 years of service, devotion, and dedication to the Lord and to the ministry.

In 1953 Max began as a full-time pastor at Mountain Grove, preaching there on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, Crab Run on the first and third Sundays, and Dry River School House on each fifth Sunday.

Max continues to fill the pulpit as needed, wherever he is needed.





Hundred Harmonica Band playing at Camp Blue Diamond, September 2002.

All harmonicas welcome in this band of fun

The joy of playing music, the joy of sharing, the joy of the Lord. That's what Hundred Harmonica Band is all about. Begun in January 2000 at Spring Run Church of the Brethren, McVeytown, Pa., by Jerry Lee Miller, pastor of Spring Run, the band now has active members from four Church of the Brethren congregations as well as members from several other denominations. The harmonica players range in age from 8 to 88 and most never played the harmonica until they joined the band. So far the most who have performed in public together has been 40, with an average of 25 for various performances at District Conference, nursing homes, banquets, church services, and other events.

It's been great fun for everyone and we're always eager to have new folks join us," says Miller. "Reading music isn't required because we have our own system. Contact Jerry Lee Miller at Jerrym5550@aol.com to schedule the band, to join it, or to learn how you can begin a band in your congregation.

The musical Detricks make the news

"This family makes music," reads the headline in the *York Dispatch* of York, Pa. Members of the Detrick family of Seven Valleys, Pa., "are becoming headliners in central Pennsylvania," the article says.

The musical newsmakers include Joe Detrick, Southern Pennsylvania district executive since 1998, who plays guitar, banjo, and dulcimer, and his wife Venona, a professional violinist. Matthew, 22, Chris, 19, and Ben, 16, are classical violinists, each having begun violin at the age of three.

They are all members of the Codorus Church of the Brethren, Loganville, Pa., where Joe was pastor from 1988 to 1998.

They performed as a family throughout the boys' growing-up years. Now that the two oldest are in college, the remaining three do some musical programs together, and Venona and Ben often play together in duets and string quartets. "I take my guitar with me when I visit churches and, when asked, I preach and sing a special number or two," Joe says.

Matthew was recently graduated from Rice University, Houston, Texas, with a major in violin performance.

Chris was a sophomore this year at the University of Missouri, Columbia, majoring in photojournalism.

Ben completed his sophomore year in high school. He and his mother are members of the York Symphony Orchestra, and last year he performed with a quartet on National Public Radio.





Don Vermilyea crosses the 5,000-mile mark on his "Walk Across America."

"Walk Across America" crosses major milestone

Don Vermilyea crossed the 5,000-mile mark in his "Walk Across America: Peacefully, Simply, Together" marathon as he made his way through northern New Mexico in late April.

A Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) worker jointly sponsored by BVS and the Brethren Witness office, Vermilyea is on a mission to visit every Church of the Brethren congregation that will host him. At each stop, he shares his vision of Christians living peacefully with God's Earth and working for peace locally and globally.

Vermilyea has traveled through Arizona, California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico since beginning his journey in February 2002. His travels through districts are often arranged by the respective Decade to Overcome Violence district coordinators. So far, he has been hosted by more than 50 congregations.

"This has been well worth it. The people I have met have been just incredible, and the scenery out here is amazing," he reported from a pay phone in southern Colorado.

Vermilyea plans to continue the trek through Western Plains District in the coming months. He will make a side trip—by car—to be the featured speaker at the annual Un-Luncheon at this summer's Annual Conference in Boise, Idaho. His journey can be followed at www.brethren.org/genbd/witness/Walk.html.

A witness to three centuries

Not many can claim to have lived the entire 20th century, and fewer yet can claim to have touched down in three centuries. Depending on which record you believe, Dewey Fleishman was born in either 1899 or 1900. The first seems more credible. He was born on a farm in Lindside, W.Va., the youngest of seven children. It was the work on this farm that shaped his life values. His full life is documented in his recently published memoirs, *A Witness to Three Centuries*, available through Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren.

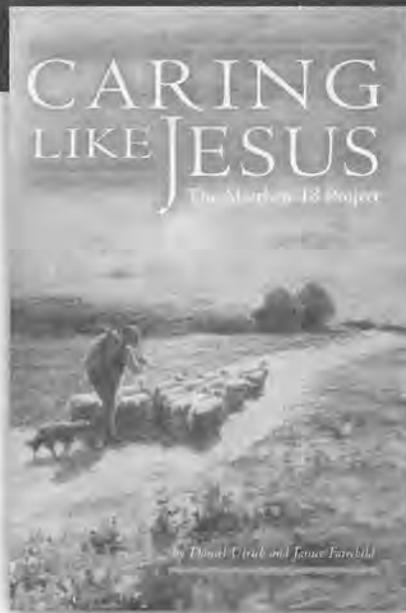


Dewey Fleishman

The years 1915 to 1920 were sad for Dewey; death claimed four members of his immediate family, including both parents and two sisters. Determined to see what else the world had to offer, he enrolled in Daleville College. There he met Dessie Myers, who became his wife in 1921. While raising a family of three, and teaching school in Briery Branch, Va., he decided to attend Bethany Seminary and pursue the ministry.

In various pastorates he experienced the Dust Bowl in Oklahoma, tornadoes in Iowa, and hurricanes in Florida. None compared to the devastation of losing his wife in 1938 to a mysterious illness. However, faith helped him move on in God's work.

While conducting a revival in Virginia, he met Grace Glick. In 1940 they married and together reared three more children and held numerous pastorates. After trying several times to retire, he preached his last sermon at age 95. His life is the real sermon, one of faith and dedication to God and family. With the help of his wife, Grace, Dewey still arises each morning looking forward to another day.—Joyce DeBolt Miller



How would our churches be different if we learned to care for others like Jesus cares for us? Daniel Ulrich and Janice Fairchild offer a helpful guide that shows us what it means to practice "Jesuscare" as taught in Matthew 18. Bible study, real life examples, and exercises invite you to practice these values and become a part of the caring community of believers that Jesus desires. **New from Brethren Press. \$9.95 plus shipping and handling**


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BRETHRENSPEAK

“God created us as a family. We just have to learn to live like one!”

—General Board Anti-Racism
Training team member Barbara
Cuffie of Maryland



Brethren Volunteer Service Unit 253, the annual older adult unit, held orientation March 31 to April 11 in New Windsor, Md. Participants and project assignments are, front row: Larry Petry (unit co-coordinator); Dean Bade of Toledo, Ohio; Joel Eikenberry of North Manchester, Ind., to World Friendship Center, Hiroshima, Japan; Karen Roberts (BVS staff). Back row: Alice Petry (unit co-coordinator); Bev Eikenberry of North Manchester, Ind., to World Friendship Center, Hiroshima, Japan; Thelma Keeling of Bakersfield, Calif., to The Palms of Sebring, Fla.; David Webster of Roanoke, Va., to CooperRiis in Mill Spring, N.C.; Peter Andros of Tucson, Ariz., to Westside Food Bank, Surprise, Ariz.

On Earth Peace responds to war on terrorism

The On Earth Peace board of directors and staff met April 4-5 in New Windsor, Md. Using the theme “For the Healing of the Nations,” the group took time for silence and prayer in the midst of worship and business. The board, led by chair Bev Weaver, continued its use of the “formal consensus” process for discussion and decision-making.

In a time of open worship and silence, the board considered On Earth Peace’s responses to the war in Iraq and the continued “war on terrorism.” As concerns were raised about the prospect of the US military controlling all rebuilding and humanitarian aid to Iraq, an action item was affirmed to provide support to Church of the Brethren Emergency Response/Service Ministries as it works with this issue. The board and staff agreed to join in prayer at noon local time on Wednesdays, and those who choose will also fast from their noon meal on Wednesday. Others in the church were invited to join in this prayer and fast-

ing, which will continue until the board reconvenes in September.

The Personnel Committee presented a proposal, approved by the board, allowing staff members to reduce their salary level voluntarily and designate the amount deducted for specific types of expenses. It is designed as a method of “lowering the amount of taxes paid for war.” This option will be available to all On Earth Peace staff beginning with the 2004 budget, pending legal review by tax consultants.

The financial report showed expense projections “right on target.” On the income side, congregational giving and program income were above budget, while individual giving was below budget.

The “Call for a Living Peace Church” resolution, co-sponsored by On Earth Peace and the General Board and being sent to this summer’s Annual Conference, was reviewed and discussed. Staff are also working on a simple statement that would reaffirm the Church of the Brethren commitment to conscientious objection.

The Advancement Committee presented a working document titled “Roots and

Branches—the next stage in developing On Earth Peace.” The document focuses on the need to develop both present program areas and new programs, and provides ideas for staffing and finances that will allow these goals to be met. After active discussion and prayer there was consensus to move ahead with the proposal in its basic shape, scope, and direction.

Staff member Matt Guynn led board and staff in a learning exercise on “the mainstream and the margins” of On Earth Peace’s identity and organizational life. Participants recognized many groups/characteristics currently marginalized in On Earth Peace’s work (such as people of color and those with urban experiences) and explored first steps to bring those groups into the organization’s life.

The board affirmed the staff’s proposal to work with Philadelphia-based anti-racism consultant Antje Mattheus to examine institutional racism within On Earth Peace and identify potential changes in program offerings and organizational culture.

Walt Witschek



About 100 Church of the Brethren youth gathered at Manchester College in April for the regional youth conference, "Called By a New Name."

Bethany board calls new leaders, passes budget

The Bethany Theological Seminary Board of Trustees held its semi-annual meeting March 28-30 in Richmond, Ind., discussing finances, reorganizing its leadership, and affirming the appointment of Steve Reid as academic dean beginning July 1. The board called John Gingrich of Claremont, Calif., as chair for the coming year; Anne Reid of Roanoke, Va., as vice chair; and Ed Poling of Hagerstown, Md., as secretary.

The Investment Committee reported that new deposits as a result of the Fountain Square development on the former seminary property in Oak Brook, Ill., and the current capital campaign have offset the losses experienced in the current economic climate. The Finance and Business Affairs Committee brought a balanced 2003-2004 budget of just over \$2 million, which the board approved.

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee reported results of a survey that invited 1996-1999 master of divinity graduates to assess the effectiveness of the program in developing basic competencies for ministry as outlined in program objectives. The participants gave the highest ratings to the objectives of "grounding in Brethren heritage" and "development of a vision for ministry." Currently, 87 percent of the graduate school student body are Church of the Brethren members.

The Institutional Advancement Committee noted that a committee of volunteers is planning activities relating to Bethany's centennial in 2004-2005, and that Bethany's capital campaign "Inspired by the Spirit—Educating for Ministry" continues with good response. The congregational phase of the campaign will begin at the 2003 Annual Conference.

Bethany faculty member Dan Ulrich gave a presentation titled "The Apostle Paul as a Distance Educator," and discussed aspects of Paul's ministry that may be relevant for Bethany as the seminary continues to develop its distributed education program.

Midwest youth meet for Regional Youth Conference

Picking up on an emphasis from last summer's National Youth Conference, the 2003 Regional Youth Conference at Manchester College explored vocation with the theme "Called By a New Name." About 100 Midwestern senior high youth and advisors attended the April 25-27 event on the North Manchester, Ind., campus.

In Friday evening's opening service, Richmond (Ind.) pastor Kelly Burk talked about her unexpected call to pastoral ministry and said she considered that "shift in direction one of the greatest gifts of my life." Rachel Gross shared about her calling to simple living and the Death Row Support Project Saturday morning, and five Manchester students talked that evening about the various stages in their faith journeys.

On Sunday, Brethren Witness director David Radcliff challenged the group to listen for God's voice in new ways. He showed slides of people around the world who have been part of his own journey. "Just outside our window another world awaits, and God's telling you to open the blinds," said Radcliff, who also held a talkback session on peace and justice issues with youth Saturday evening.

Other highlights of the conference included a concert by Brethren folksinger

Joseph Helfrich, a Friday night square dance, an assortment of workshops, reflection groups for deeper exploration of God's call, and the opportunity to join in the college's Peace Week activities.

Youth cabinet sets theme, calls youth to prayer focus

The Church of the Brethren National Youth Cabinet set a theme for 2004 and developed some new initiatives as it met April 4-6 in Elgin, Ill. The cabinet chose "Seeking, Thirsting, Longing," based on Psalm 63:1, as the senior high youth theme for 2004. A theme packet with worship resources, Bible studies, and other materials will be prepared this fall.

As a response to the Annual Conference "Call to Prayer," the group also decided to designate a National Youth Day of Prayer for Sept. 28. Brethren youth groups will be encouraged to find intentional ways of being in prayer for the church and the world on that day. The cabinet plans to provide a list of suggestions and prayer resources for the observance.

General Board Youth/Young Adult Ministry director Chris Douglas convenes and staffs the cabinet, and Jon Keller of Gettysburg, Ohio, serves as adult advisor. Youth members are Caitlin Haynes, Adam Messner, Jennifer Quijano, Hannah Serfling, and Matt Witkovsky.

UPCOMINGEVENTS

Jun. 15-21 Brooklyn (N.Y.) senior high youth workcamp

Jun. 16-22 Koinonia Partners senior high youth workcamp, Americus, Ga.

Jun. 16-23 San Juan (P.R.) senior high youth workcamp

Jun. 16-25 Brethren Witness Faith Expedition to Guatemala

Jun. 18-22 Richmond (Va.) junior high youth workcamp

Jun. 20-23 Eco-Justice Working Group of the National Council of Churches environmental conference, Seattle

Jun. 23-29 Germantown senior high youth workcamp, Philadelphia

Jun. 23-30 Castañer (P.R.) senior high youth workcamp

Jun. 24-28 Harrisburg (Pa.) junior high youth workcamp

Jun. 29-Jul. 5 Baltimore (Md.) senior high youth workcamp

Jun. 29-Jul. 5 Denver (Colo.) senior high youth workcamp

Jun. 29-Jul. 5 Song & Story Fest/Weaving Peace event, Camp Wilbur Stover, Nampa, Idaho

Jun. 30-Jul. 4 Inspiration Center junior high youth workcamp, Lake Geneva, Wis.

Jul. 4-5 General Board meeting, Boise, Idaho

Jul. 5-9 Annual Conference, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho



The 2003 Bethany Theological Seminary graduating class includes, front row, left to right, Linda Lewis, Patricia Ronk, Cara McCallister, Barbra Davis. Back row: Robert Tyndall, Craig Gandy, Ronald Wenzel, Jesse Johnson, Matthew Guynn, Benjamin Walters. Not pictured: Steven Stoller.

Bethany Seminary celebrates 98th commencement

On May 10 Bethany Theological Seminary celebrated its 98th commencement.

Richard B. Gardner, academic dean and professor of New Testament studies, spoke at the conferring of degrees ceremony on the topic "Teachers of the Church," based on Matthew 5:17-48. Scott Holland, associate professor of peace studies and cross-cultural studies, spoke at the afternoon worship service on "The Prophet's Vision, The Poet's Voice, The Preacher's Gift" based on Isaiah 65:17-25.

Six students received master of divinity degrees. Four students received master of arts in theology degrees and one received a certificate in theological studies.

Those who received degrees, and their home congregations, are:

Master of divinity, peace studies empha-

sis: Barbra S. Davis, Ankeny (Iowa) Church of the Brethren.

Master of divinity: Jesse Johnson, Mechanic Grove Church of the Brethren, Quarryville, Pa.; Linda Michelle Lewis, Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren, Kettering, Ohio; Cara A. McCallister, Beaver Creek (Ohio) Church of the Brethren; Robert Tyndall, Four Mile Church of the Brethren, Liberty, Ind.; Benjamin C. Walters, Cincinnati (Ohio) Church of the Brethren.

Master of arts in theology: Craig L. Gandy, Woodgrove Church of the Brethren, Hastings, Mich.; Matthew R. Guynn, Richmond (Ind.) Church of the Brethren; Patricia Ronk, Oak Grove Church of the Brethren, Roanoke, Va.; Steven Stoller, First Presbyterian Church, Richmond, Ind.

Certificate in theological studies: Ronald L. Wenzel, Bear Creek Church of the Brethren, Dayton, Ohio.

Ministry Summer Service prepares for record group

Ministry Summer Service, in its eighth year, will have a record number of interns participating this summer. Seventeen young adults are expected to be part of the program, which emphasizes leadership development and the exploration of possible calls to ministry.

General Board Youth/Young Adult Ministry director Chris Douglas, who coordinates the MSS program along with Ministry office director Mary Jo Flory-Steury, said the previous high was 16, set last summer. The 2003 group is holding orientation May 31 to June 6 at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind. Interns follow orientation by serving for nine weeks in a ministry setting, working alongside a mentor.

This year's group—about two-thirds female—will be placed at a variety of sites. Two will serve as youth workcamp assistants; two on the Youth Peace Travel Team; one each in the Church of the Brethren Washington Office and Camp Blue Diamond; one in a joint project between the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., and the Union Bridge (Md.) Church of the Brethren; and the others in congregations in six states and Washington, D.C.

Personnel moves

• **John and Janet Tubbs**, the General Board's mission coordinators in Nigeria, have announced their retirement effective in mid-2003. They have served the Nigeria mission through the General Board's Global Mission Partnerships office for eight years.

• **Greg Davidson Laszakovits** in April announced his resignation as coordinator of the Church of the Brethren Washington Office. He plans to conclude his service in Washington, D.C., by July 26. Laszakovits has been serving in the role since April 2000.

• The Pacific Southwest District board called **Bryan Boyer** as the new executive minister of the district, effective May 1. Boyer has most recently worked in private practice as a professional counselor and as a part-time teacher at Azusa Pacific University. He and his family live in Claremont, Calif.

• **Steve Frazier** of Fredericksburg, Va., was called as executive director of Camp Eder in Southern Pennsylvania District effective April 21. Frazier is a licensed minister and a member of the Hollywood Church of the Brethren, Fredericksburg, Va.. He directed youth camp programs at Camp Mardela in Denton, Md., the past eight years.

• **S. Joan Hershey**, director of New Life Ministries since its inception in 1997, announced her resignation effective April 1. Succeeding her as director of the evangelism-focused organization, which came about as an outgrowth of The Andrew Center, a former ministry of the Church of the Brethren, is **Kristen Leverton Helbert**. Helbert is a staff member of Christian Community, a long-standing New Life Ministries program partner responsible for many New Life resources. With Helbert's appointment, operations and management for New Life Ministries will be transferred to Christian Community, based in Fort Wayne, Ind. Hershey will continue her relationship with NLM by joining the organization's board.



1. Nigeria. The 56th "majalisa," or annual assembly, of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria-EYN (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) met March 26-29 at Kulp Bible College, Kwarhi, Adamawa State. The topic was "The Role of the Church in Nigeria Today," with guest speaker James Zoaka, pastor at the Jalingo #1 congregation in Taraba State. Filibus Gwama was elected president, effective May 1. General Board Nigeria mission coordinators John and Janet Tubbs represented the US church.

2. Lybrook, N.M. The Tok'ahookaadi Church of the Brethren and its associated Lybrook (N.M.) Mission will hold a 50th anniversary celebration July 24-27. Numerous Brethren have participated in the ongoing mission efforts with the surrounding Native American community at the site.

3. North Korea. General Board Global Mission Partnerships executive director Merv Keeney chaired an April National Council of Churches/Church World Service consultation held in Chicago to address the current Korea crisis. The group began plans for a mid-June consultation in Washington, D.C., that will bring together church leaders of North Korea and South Korea, and for a visit to the two nations by a US ecumenical delegation later this year.

4. Iraq. Two more shipments of relief aid arrived in Iraq this spring through Church World Service's "All Our Children" campaign. More than 11 million metric tons of soap and laundry detergent were delivered in Baghdad on March 31, and a three-ton shipment of blankets, wheelchairs, and other medical supplies entered Iraq on April 11. The campaign is a \$1 million, multi-agency effort to meet severe needs. Church of the Brethren involvement is through the General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund, which sent \$25,000 towards the effort.

5. El Salvador. The General Board's Global Food Crisis Fund has sent \$33,000 to assist the ministry of Emmanuel Baptist Church in the capital city of San Salvador. Emmanuel Baptist is a longtime Church of the Brethren partner that carries out development work among the poorest members of rural communities in the Central American nation. The funds will help facilitate work in agricultural development and community organization.

6. Pineville, W.Va. Emergency Response/Service Ministries completed its disaster relief project work in Pineville in May, following a lengthy response with the area's Long-Term Flood Recovery Committee. Some work this spring was also carried out in partnership with Habitat for Humanity.

7. Richmond, Ind. About 125 people joined in the "Organizing for Peace: Arts, Activism, and Spirituality" event held March 13-16 at Bethany Theological Seminary and Earlham School of Religion. Students from five Brethren colleges and church members from as far as the Pacific Southwest, Middle Pennsylvania, and Mid-Atlantic districts attended the gathering, which emphasized skill-building in active nonviolence, creating art, and sharing.

8. Dominican Republic. For the second year in a row, the General Board's Global Food Crisis Fund will support the work of development specialist and Church of the Brethren members Peggy and Jeff Boshart in the Dominican Republic. The 2003 grant is for \$80,000, making it one of the fund's largest commitments. The grant provides support for the Bosharts as well as a loan pool for a micro-credit project the couple has initiated.

Praising God—in any language

A host of languages and a variety of music styles joined in worship of the same God as Brethren from across the US and Puerto Rico met near Orlando, Fla., April 24-27.

More than 70 people attended at least part of the annual Cross-Cultural Consultation, making it the largest gathering in the five-year history of the event—planned by the Cross-Cultural

Ministries Team with support from the General Board's Congregational Life Ministries office.

The theme this year was "Tuning in to the Heartbeat of God," based on Isaiah 60:1-5. Most events were held at Camp Ithiel in Gotha, with groups attending Orlando-area congregations Sunday.

"It is truly a blessing to be here tonight," Congregational Life Team member Duane Grady said at the opening gathering. "We are the church."

Energetic and passionate worship and music permeated the consultation, with participants joyfully praising Jesus Christ and sharing the things on their hearts. Prayer times, presentations, discussion, Bible study, and informal fellowship—some over meals prepared by the Orlando Haitian

fellowship and the Rios de Agua Viva congregation, also of Orlando—filled the rest of the loose schedule.

Following one worship time, participant Sonia Griffith of the First Central congregation in Kansas City, Kan., said the consultation "is new life for me. It really is."

Three people from the Haitian fellowship were baptized in the camp's pool during the weekend, and bread and cup communion and a time of anointing highlighted other worship times. A blessing and sending was given for Irvin Heishman of Harrisburg, Pa., as he and his wife, Nancy, prepared to become mission coordinators in the Dominican Republic this summer.

In a panel discussion on the current condition of cross-cultural relations within the denomination, General Board member Merle Crouse said: "The Brethren are moving, but they're not moving very fast. This gathering is an example of what's happening!" He noted that more than half of the people in Atlantic Southeast District now regularly worship in a language other than English.

Another panelist, 2003 Annual Conference moderator Harriet Finney said, "I think most people in the Church of the Brethren would like us to be a multicultural church, but most people also don't know what that means." She said such a transformation would require flexibility and change—characteristics the church often resists.

Reflecting on trips to Mexico and Brazil in the past year, she added, "We come from different perspectives, but we can teach one another if we're open to learn."

James Washington, pastor of Faith Center Fellowship in Whitehouse, Texas, and a member of the General Board-appointed Anti-Racism Team, challenged the denomination to work



Michaela Camps of the Miami First congregation performs a solo during worship.

Large group gathers in Florida for 2003 Cross-Cultural meeting

Article and photos by Walt Wiltschek

more intentionally at those relationships. "We need to take time to build the whole building," rather than just putting up a facade of cooperation and respect, he said.

Participants worked on a possible query for Annual Conference, questioning what barriers remain for cross-cultural ministry to flourish in the Church of the Brethren. It is expected to be introduced in congregations, who could then carry it through the usual district process. Plans and ideas for other future events by the group were also discussed.

Simultaneously translating between English, Spanish, and Creole during the event provided some challenges and occasional laughs, but the group worked through them. After one extended period of praise and singing, music leader Gilbert Romero of Los Angeles said, "There is one language we can all say together. 'Hallelujah!'" 



Marisel Olivencia, left, of the Harrisburg (Pa.) First congregation joins Mercedes Carrasco and Lydia Gonzalez of the Nuevo Amanecer fellowship, Bethlehem, Pa., for a spirited song.



Participants in the 2003 Cross-Cultural Consultation gather for a group photo under the trees of Camp Ithiel in Gotha, Fla.



Brethren at prayer

Brethren share stories of their experiences of God through prayer

Following last year's approval by Annual Conference of the query "A Call to Prayer," Moderator Harriet Finney asked for a year-long emphasis on the importance of prayer to Brethren and the church. As part of that emphasis, she and MESSENGER invited members to share stories of their prayer experiences for publication prior to Annual Conference. The invitation struck a chord with Brethren, resulting in many submissions. They are, on the one hand, stories of "ordinary" miracles, the kind people of prayer sometimes take for granted. They are also, at once, fascinating accounts of how the great God of the universe entered lives and history to answer simple pleas for help, healing, and guidance. We have selected 16 of the stories for publication in this special emphasis on prayer. Others may be read on the web at www.brethren.org/ac/CalltoPrayer/.



Tears for Jesus

by **Harriet Finney**

Prayer meetings in the little country church that we attended when I was a young child were always held on Wednesday evening. Persons of all ages were welcome to gather at members' homes for Bible study and prayer. We children were reminded to "play quietly" during the Bible study, but when the time came for prayer we were expected to join the adults kneeling by the chairs and couches in the living room.

I remember especially two sisters who were always present at prayer meeting, and whom everyone in the church called Aunt Kate and Aunt Jane. These two women, simple, hard-working farm wives, with little formal education, had, nonetheless, taught themselves to read the Bible. And they knew how to pray. Their prayers were heartfelt and fervent—words of thanksgiving; prayers of supplication for family, neighbor, rain for the crops, the church, and friends; prayers for healing and comfort, for forgiveness and mercy, for all the needs of life large and small.

As a little girl attending those prayer meetings, I heard Aunt Jane and Aunt Kate pray, and I saw the tears which usually accompanied those prayers. I didn't understand, so I asked my mother, "Why? Why do they cry when they pray?" Her answer, "Because they love Jesus," did not help me understand. I only knew that praying did not make me want to cry.

It is only as an adult that I have begun to understand those tears, which must have reflected the deep yearning of their hearts, the disappointments and grief of their lives, their gratitude to God for being their strength through those days and years, and the joy of knowing Jesus Christ.

I am grateful for Aunt Kate and Aunt Jane, and many others like them who teach us, by their praying, how to pray from the heart.

Harriet Finney of North Manchester, Ind., is a member of Eel River Community Church of the Brethren and is 2003 Annual Conference moderator.

I prayed to die

by **Twyla D. Rowe**

The door was locked. My room was pitch black like the darkness of the night . . . and the darkness of my heart. Little girls should be imaginative, carefree, and giggly. But I was not like most little girls. I lived alone in a world of confusion and fear.

Sexual abuse by an acquaintance robbed me of the innocence of childhood. "Be silent," he said, "tell no one." So as far as I was aware, no one knew about the terror I faced regularly.

However, I did not remain completely silent. I knew I had one friend to whom I could tell everything. Many nights, while everyone else in the house watched television or read books, I sat by the window in the darkness of my room and looked out at the stars in the sky.

I pictured Jesus holding me while I cried. Surely Jesus knew my fear and pain. Surely he understood. As tears rolled down my cheeks, I felt his love pour over me, but I wanted more. I wanted to actually feel his physical touch. I wanted it more than anything. So I prayed . . . I prayed with all of my heart that I would die. I prayed this many, many times. But it seemed that God never answered this prayer.

Those are painful nights to remember. They are also encouraging nights to remember. God did not end my life. Nor did God end the violence occurring in my life. But I realize now after many years that God did answer my prayers. Instead of helping a little girl escape, God gave her courage to live.

Prayer was the avenue through which tears flowed freely and the maddening silence was broken. It was a place where a vision of love was born and nurtured. Through prayer God touched my lost innocence. Without my awareness or understanding, God gave me the courage and hope I needed to survive and grow into the person that he created me to be . . . a child to serve and share his love with others.

Twyla D. Rowe is minister of Christian nurture, Westminster (Md.) Church of the Brethren.

More on prayer: For an extensive collection of Church of the Brethren resources on prayer, see "On Prayer," from the *In Our Midst* series published by the General Board. Order from Brethren Press, 800-441-3712.



Brethren Historical Library and Archives

Brethren kneeling in prayer at the 1881 Annual Meeting held at Ashland, Ohio.

Why the wind stopped

by **Gil Crosby**

The prayer of children is unencumbered with theology, doubt, or rationalization. They pray with the innocence Jesus recognized when he said, "You must be as little children." Children are taught to pray because Jesus is listening and that is good enough for them.

When I was 10 years old, my family moved from the country and a little house made from a one-room school to a big, old Victorian house in town that had nine-foot ceilings and enough bedrooms that I had one to myself. This old house creaked and shuddered with every breath of wind that came its way. Over time you got used to the way the house "talked" to you.

One night, however, the wind howled and blew like the hounds of hell were baying at my window. I lay in my bed, covers to my chin, eyes wide open, wondering how long it would be before this old house gave up and collapsed. There seemed to be no concern from my parents' room but I was terrified.

I slowly got out from under the covers, fell to my knees, and prayed to Jesus to stop the wind, that I was frightened and feared for my family. Before I could get back in bed and cover up, the wind stopped dead! I said, "Thank you Jesus," and fell into a peaceful sleep.

I didn't think anything about it until I went to school the next day and several of the other kids said, "Hey, did you hear the wind howling last night? And then it stopped. We all thought it was the lull before it got worse. But it never started again." I didn't say anything to them at the time but I knew: God had answered my prayer.

Gil Crosby is a member of First Church of the Brethren, Peoria, Ill.



Headaches and the shakes

by **Judy Wright**

For almost two years I suffered from headaches. I prayed every day for relief. Some weeks I would have only one headache and some weeks I would have one every day. I did not know what caused them or how to prevent them.

In July 2002 I was planning to go to National Youth Conference in Colorado with my son and his youth group. While I was very excited about the trip, I worried my headaches would interfere. I prayed for a pain-free trip.

The first night of NYC I had to leave the worship service and go back to my room due to a headache. I prayed that God would help me to enjoy and participate in activities the rest of the week. Wednesday and Thursday were good days. On Thursday evening Paul Grout gave a very moving message on how we should “shake in the presence of God.” I thought about this the next couple of days. I continued to pray.

At the close of worship on Saturday evening there was an anointing service. I had seen this many times but had never taken part. There were anointers stationed around the arena, and I went to a line. I had an overwhelming feeling that something great was about to happen to me. I could hardly wait my turn. By the time I reached the anointer I was literally “shaking in the presence of God.” I knew that my prayers were being answered at that moment. The cross and circle were made on my forehead and I knew without question my headaches were gone.

It has been seven months since that service and I have remained headache-free. I thank God every day for hearing and answering my prayers. A miracle took place within me that night.

Judy Wright is a member of the Covington (Ohio) Church of the Brethren.

God speaks Spanish

by **Kristina Polega**

About a year ago I received a call from a friend at church who knew I was looking for a full-time job. He told me there were a couple openings where he worked. He said that if I took a job there it would be an entry-level factory position, and that I'd be working with a lot of Hispanics.

Even though I'd majored in Spanish at Manchester College for three years, spent a semester in Ecuador through the Brethren Colleges Abroad program, and had jobs in the past that required a lot of physical activity, I wasn't sure I wanted this job. I thought that my Spanish was too rusty to communicate effectively with my would-be co-workers, and that I was too out of shape for any job that required some physical exertion.

However, knowing I couldn't afford to be without work much longer, I took my situation to God in prayer the night before I was to apply. I told God I wasn't sure I wanted this job, but would take it if I felt he wanted me to. The next day I accepted the position because I felt God had said yes, he wanted me to be there.

At the time I figured God was simply providing me the financial stability I needed, but soon learned he had an even greater purpose in mind. Not only has my Spanish improved, but I've also served many of the Hispanics there by interpreting or translating for them around town. I've felt truly blessed to be able to help my friends open banking accounts, get their vehicles fixed, obtain documents at the license branch, pay their property taxes, talk with a school principal about a child being bullied, go to the hospital to interpret at the emergency room, and more!

Beyond that, simply talking with my Hispanic friends at work has provided me with insight and understanding about many things they face that I take for granted. I've started sharing these with my congregation through our monthly newsletter.

Kristina Polega, a member of the Goshen City congregation, Goshen, Ind., hopes to go back to college next year after a 10-year break.

Cornflakes for Christ

by Joyce Bohn

Seventeen years ago a Prayer Breakfast Group, which is still very active today, was formed at the Lancaster (Pa.) Church of the Brethren. It was the brainchild of David Hosler who is still our discussion leader. "Woody" Herr, now deceased, told David, "I will make the coffee if you lead the discussion."

Our average attendance at 6:45 a.m. each Wednesday morning is 25 people, some of whom are charter members. We meet for fellowship, snack, discussion of a topic, and a period of prayer for joys and concerns.

For quite a few years, we did not notify people we were praying for them. Then we had a card designed that would allow all of us who were at that prayer breakfast to sign our names and send it to the recipient of our prayers. A great blessing has come to those who have received cards and to the group also.

One time we sent a card of prayer encouragement and support to our building committee chairperson, Dr. David Fuchs. Unknown to the group, Dr. Fuchs had almost decided to throw in the towel as chairman because there were so many obstacles and disagreements within the church over the building plan. When he received our prayer card, Dr. Fuchs took new courage and continued to lead us to a successful finish for our remodeling.

Our cards have made their way into foreign countries, government offices, churches, and many homes. Hearts that have been torn by tragedy, sickness, death, or loss of employment, as well as the celebration of many kinds of joys—weddings, births, healing, baptisms, graduations, and promotions—have been remembered. Numerous thank you notes have been sent from people who tell us how much they have been encouraged and supported by knowing that we were praying for them.

Joyce Bohn, a 29-year member of the Lancaster Church of the Brethren, is retired and works as a volunteer for the church, the Atlantic Northeast District, hospice, and Brethren Village.

Profound ways and simple

by Ruth Lyons

Each morning I go to my prayer center, light a candle beside the Peace Pole, and then sit in receptive silence. Sometimes, however, my mind chatter prevents silence, as it did one recent morning. I said aloud, "God, I have so many things on my mind to do. Which shall I do today?" At length God said, "Go to the library and get some books on the Christian mystics and then cross the street to the Children's Hospital Thrift Store." What? "But God, what about my to-do list?" God said, "Go."

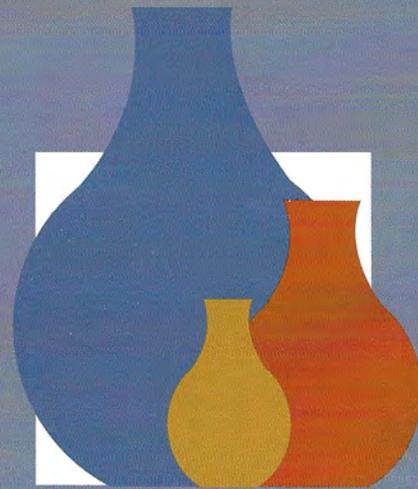
I walked the half mile to the library, got books on the mystics, and crossed to the Children's Thrift Store. There out front was a charming little bench shaped like a violin. I thought this could serve nicely as an end table, which I had been wanting for the living room. The price was right. Four dollars. I told the saleslady I was interested but would have to come back later with the car. They could hold it for me, the saleslady offered. "No," I replied, "if I am to have it, it will still be here."

When I returned, the bench was still there. I took it inside to pay for it. Another customer commented, "I was looking at that bench and almost bought it." I smiled. "Do you know why you didn't?" She looked puzzled. "Because I was supposed to have it." We all laughed.

I brought it home, then sanded and stained it. It now sits by my easy chair and holds a Bible, MESSENGER, and Evelyn Underhill's books: *Mysticism* and *The Spiritual Life*. I caress that lovely little primitive piece and am reminded of the importance of sitting in silent receptiveness before God. God comes in both profound ways and simple, but not trivial, ways. And for that I praise him.

I am trying to adjust to life without Ed, my husband of 40 years, since his death in February 2002. God is gracious in showing me the way.

Ruth Lyons of Kent, Wash., is a member of Covington Community Church of the Brethren.



Servants *of* Jesus Christ

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
who . . . emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. Phil. 2:5-7

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
who ...emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. Phil. 2:5-7



Seeking the mind of Christ is the touchstone of the Church of the Brethren. It is a priority for the General Board as it strives to be faithful

to the call of God and the church. Our entering into prayer, Bible study, and discernment together is crucial if we are to understand what it means to represent the resurrected Christ in the world.

In recounting the work we did together in 2002, this report lifts out key aspects of the General Board's newly adopted vision and mission statements. These statements, along with a list of the core

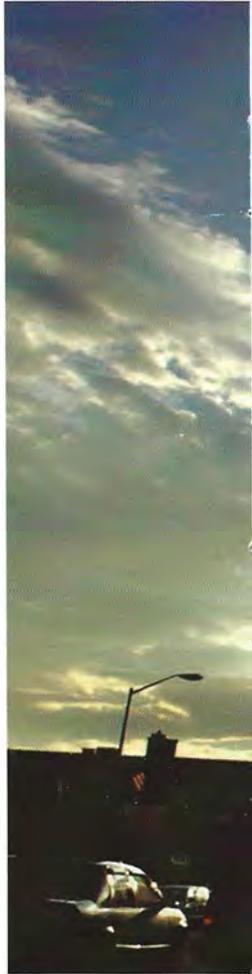
values that undergird our work, appear in their entirety on the back cover.

As 2002 experienced an economic downturn and domestic and global eruptions, the church was challenged on every front. For the General Board, the focus on vision, mission, and values helped give direction to difficult decision-making.

The Christ Jesus who emptied him-

self and took the form of the servant is a cherished image for Brethren. Elements of humility and greatness, giving and receiving, emptying and replenishing are rhythms of faith that mark our past and draw us into the future.

Thank you for being servants of Jesus Christ with us, for enabling the work we do together, and, foremost, for ever seeking the mind of Christ.



Judy Mills Reimer

Judy Mills Reimer
General Secretary

Mission: The General Board envisions a dynamic Church of the Brethren

doing the work of Jesus





Lift high the banner of Christ, the symbols of peace, the message of hope: This is the call to the Church of the Brethren in tumultuous times. At left, 12-year-old Agi Bouwmeester communicates not with words but images she and her family created for a peace vigil in Illinois' Fox Valley. The work of Jesus in the world cries out for bold discipleship.

Photos, p. 2, Walt Wiltschek; p. 3, Robert Barcroft/Kane County Chronicle.

s in the world



A map poster of Church of the Brethren ministries around the world was distributed throughout the church in *Messenger* and *Source*.

A \$100,000 check for southern Africa famine response was presented to Church World Service from the

Emergency Disaster Fund and Global Food Crisis Fund.

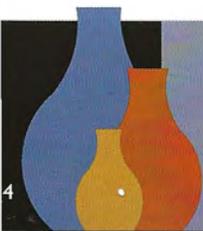
Over 1,400 hours of service were given in 2002 by day and resident volunteers and work groups to projects and ministries at the Brethren Service Center at New Windsor, Md.

A worship team of 10 young adults from the church in the Dominican Republic visited Annual Conference, National Youth Conference, and



Mission: The General Board is called by the Church of the Brethren

to extend the church's



...I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide. John 15:16

congregations and districts. On the team was Rudolpho Agramonte (at left) from the Los Toros congregation.

Call to Share, a One Great Hour of Sharing video on ministries of compassion in India, Honduras, Africa, and North Carolina, was sent to each local church by the General Board.

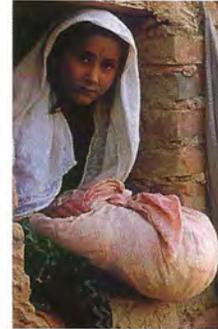
Partnerships with Misión Cristiana in Nicaragua, a network of sister churches in Central

America, and the Council of Churches in Cuba, were revitalized through renewed contacts. Among visitors Judy Mills Reimer (below, right) greeted in Elgin were Reinerio Arce, president of the Cuban Council of Churches, and his wife, Patricia Ares Muzio.



Clinic box supplies were gathered at National Youth Conference for Interchurch Medical Assistance. Donors filled 320 kits and gave \$32,800 to offset costs. The boxes were sent to the Congo, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic.

Grants totaling \$338,875 from the Emergency Disaster Fund enabled recovery work in 14 countries abroad and in 15 communities in the US. Global Food Crisis Fund grants of



\$390,000 supported hunger projects in nine countries. Together the two funds contributed \$100,000 for recovery work with such Afghanistan refugees as 13-year-old Farida Gul, above.

A first-ever meeting of church leaders from Nigeria, the Dominican Republic,

and Brazil was hosted by Global Mission Partnerships at the Elgin offices. The leaders were guests at Annual Conference.

Service Ministries staff at the Brethren Service Center facilitated 2,200 shipments of materials and medicines in 2002. Valued at \$27 million, the shipments were dispatched to 57 countries and 39 states in the US.

Photos, from left, p. 4, Janis Pyle, Chris Detrick; p. 5, Walt Wiltschek, Paul Jeffrey/ACT.

witness around the world

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God. Eph. 3:19



In testing the call to ministry, 16 young adults participated in Ministry Summer Service in 2002, working with mentors in congregations and agencies for nine weeks. The interns included Beth Gunzel, above.

To grow the church abroad and to assist new church devel-

opment at home, an Emerging Global Mission Fund has been established. Gifts in 2002 totaled \$72,400.

Overnight guests hosted by the New Windsor Conference Center last year numbered over 10,000. New were two senior groups, Elderhostel and Primetimers, both of whom are returning in 2003.

Messenger in its coverage of the trapped coal miners in Pennsylvania quoted Brethren at the

center of the ordeal, "Don't ever underestimate the importance of your church family." Sue and John Unger, below, are among Brethren whose story *Messenger* told.



The names of 1,060 congregations and fellowships were rotated above a simulat-

ed church entrance at the General Board exhibit at the Louisville Annual Conference, signifying the central role congregations carry in the work of the General Board.

Devotional guides written for Advent by Lani Wright and for Lent by Frank Ramirez were resources introduced by Brethren Press for daily home use.

For five years, an annual Cross-Cultural Consultation has brought



together Brethren from a host of ethnic backgrounds. Among leaders of the group are Gilbert Romero and Irvin Heishman, above.

Song selections published in the second year of the Hymnal Supplement Series were on the topics of Gathering and Sending, Rituals

and Ordinances, and Affirming Faith.

High school youth from 441 congregations gathered for six days in July at Colorado State University for the quadrennial National Youth Conference. The theme for the 4,100 registrants was "For Such a Time as This." At right are NYCers Lorin Neuman-Lee, Zack Hurst, Erin McCourt, and Alicia Schoen.

Photos, pp. 6 & 7, Walt Wiltschek, except second from left Tim Dillon/USA Today.

Mission: The General Board is called by the Church of the Brethren

to create joyful commu



unities of faith

No one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. | Cor. 3:11



Two training events on new church development were facilitated by the Brethren Academy. The events engaged 120 leaders from 21 districts. General Board member Angela Lahman Yoder, above, was among the worship leaders.

Evangelism conferences in Louisville

and Philadelphia drew nearly 100 Brethren. The ecumenical gatherings were planned by Evangelism Connections, of which the Church of the Brethren is a part. Jeff Glass and Stan Dueck were among the workshop presenters.

ART, Anti-Racism Team, is a group trained to lead local and district workshops. Team members are Barbara Cuffie, Torin Eikler, Sharon Reich, Valentina Satvedi, and James Washington.

Research compiled by Tom and Janet Crago in Nigeria provides a first-ever count on Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria: 396 congregations, 601 preaching points, 150,000 members. Conducting baptism below are John Tubbs and Jabani Adzibiya.



Spiritual formation, aimed at deepening the level of commitment to Jesus Christ, is a special emphasis of the Youth/Young Adult Ministry. A first-ever Sabbath Retreat was conducted for 24 youth pastors.

Discipleship as a new two-year focus for Middle Pennsylvania churches centers on worship, stewardship, community, and evangelism. Developed by the district and Congregational Life Team coordinator

Jan Kensing, the process upon evaluation is to be offered more widely.

A different kind of Young Adult Conference was convened in 2002 under the theme "Finding God in the City." Meeting in Chicago over Memorial Day weekend, the 40 participants experienced firsthand ministries of the church in an urban setting.

Brethren Press is working to secure funding for the development of a new curriculum for

Mission: The General Board is called by the Church of the Brethren

to proclaim the good news





children. Since former publishing partners are no longer available, Brethren Press is preparing to move ahead independently.

A culture of calling, in which gifted people of faith choose the vocation of ministry for Christ and the church, is an emphasis of the Office of Ministry. An Annual Conference goal is to call 100 new ministers a year for five years.

In Brazil, training events for leaders of the five fellow-



ships of *Igreja de Irmandade* were conducted by Jim Myer, Harriet Finney and Marcos Inhauser, centering on Brethren identity. Inhauser, shown above, is national director of the church in Brazil.

Photos, from left, p. 8, Walt Wiltschek, Janet Tubbs; p. 9, Chris Detrick, Merv Keeney.

ews of Jesus Christ

In the placement of 77 new workers in 2002, Brethren Volunteer Service reached the highest number of assignments since 1994. All told, 106 volunteers were in the field, 36 of whom were overseas.

Canned chicken processed by Brethren in the Mid-Atlantic and Southern Pennsylvania districts along with other aid shipments to Angola prompted the country's ambassador in Washington to accord special

recognition to the Brethren Service Center.

"Speakpeace," a logo sparked by Psalm 85:8 and used with the General Board's Christmas Offering, appeared not only on printed matter but on T-shirts. The message on the back added: "Praypeace. Singpeace. Makepeace. Livepeace."



Church of the Brethren

Peace conferences that bring long-time tribal and political foes face-to-face in grassroot settings continue to spread across southern Sudan, sparked by the New Sudan Council of Churches. At right, Dinka chief Madut Aquier embraces Nuer chief Isaac Magok Gatluak.

Haruun Ruun, general secretary of the New Sudan Council of Churches, was accorded international recognition for his role in the grassroots peace movement in Sudan.



Mission: The General Board is called by the Church of the Brethren

to be instruments of re



All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. 2 Cor. 5:18



New books from Brethren Press on reconciliation and peace are *Caring Like Jesus: The Matthew 18 Project* by Daniel Ulrich and Janice Fairchild, and *Shoes of Peace: Letters to Youth from Peacemakers* by some 40 contributors.

DOV, the Decade to Overcome Violence, has established a network of district contacts—DOV 23—and enlisted an initial 125 congregations in peace and justice initiatives. The emphasis is a joint effort of Brethren

Witness and On Earth Peace.

Iraqi life as portrayed in 1,500 paintings by artists in Baghdad were distributed by the General Board at Annual Conference and National Youth Conference, inviting prayers and advocacy for Iraq. A “Write for Life” campaign, lifting up the plight



of leukemia victim Noara Ibrahim, 12, and all Iraqi children, urged an end to sanctions.

BVS presence in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland has engaged 100 volunteers. The 30th anniversary was celebrated in Belfast in September.

A pastoral letter from the General Board chair and general secretary on the then impending Iraqi crisis was hand-delivered to every member of Congress by Washington Office staff.

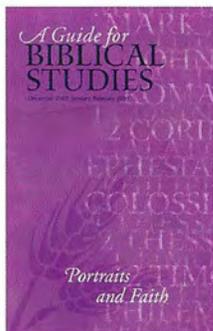


A new facet of the church’s work in the Dominican Republic is community development led by Jeff and Peggy Boshart. The effort promotes health and self-sufficiency. Above, the Bosharts with loan recipient Daniel Beltre.

Graphic, p. 10, Cedar House Group; photos, from left, Michel duCille/Washington Post, David Radcliff, Janis Pyle.

Newly formed is an advisory committee to assist small membership and rural congregations. Jim Kinsey is providing staff support.

A new design marks the oldest and most widely circulated curriculum from Brethren Press, *A Guide for Biblical Studies*. For the third



year a large-print edition is available.

Brethren Academy has 86 students enrolled in Training for Ministry (TRIM) and 15 congregations in Education for a Shared Ministry (EFSM). New courses approach ministry from a cross-cultural perspective. Jonathan Shively, at right, coordinates the shared General Board-Bethany Seminary program.

Disaster Response volunteers, 655 in number, contributed 4,150 days of labor at



Mission: The General Board is called by the Church of the Brethren

to care for the whole family



... to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. Eph. 4:12

seven disaster recovery sites in 2002.

www.brethren.org, the denominational website, receives more than 2,000 visits a day. A joint enterprise of seven agencies, the site is administered by Walt Wiltschek, director of news services for the General Board.

Ten essays on issues Christians face today have been published in the Brethren Press Perspectives series. The essays are grist for personal reflection and group discussion.



Training in Natural Church Development and Growing Healthy Congregations are among topics offered districts and local churches by the staff of Congregational Life Teams. Above, team members are from the front, l. to r., Carol Bowman, Duane Grady,

Carol Yeazell, Julie Hostetter, Steve Gregory, Beth Sollenberger Morpew, Jan Kensinger, Stan Dueck, Jim Kinsey, and Jeff Glass.

Eight workshops that trained 133 Disaster Child Care volunteers were conducted in eight states. Two Child Care in Aviation Incident Response (CAIR) workshops provided advanced training for 44 volunteers.

Walking from congregation to congregation is Don Vermilyea, who under auspices

of Brethren Witness and Brethren Volunteer Service will visit as many Brethren churches as possible in a Walk Across America. In the first 14 months he logged nearly 5,000 miles contacting 50 churches in seven states.

Hurricane Floyd recovery projects in North Carolina over



2 1/2 years enlisted 1,939 Disaster Response volunteers. Pictured are Jerry Iseminger and David Nicodemus.

An SOS project (Stewards of Sacred Space) is being mounted by Brethren Witness. A study guide, *To Till and To Keep*, has been issued electronically and a network of Creation Stewardship Advocates is in formation.

Youth workcamps will return to a full roster in 2003, after a 2002 reduction



due to National Youth Conference. Upwards of 600 participants were slated for the 25 workcamps planned by Youth/Young Adult Ministry. Above is a scene from a workcamp at a children's home in St. Croix.

Design of A Guide for Biblical Studies, Gwen Stamm. Photos, from the left, Walt Wiltschek (first two), Jane Yount, Luke Croushorn.



The year 2002 was not an easy one financially for many organizations, including the General Board. While congregational giving to the General Ministries Fund was down 1.2 percent, the larger problem was seriously reduced earnings from investments. The result was a deficit of \$717,450, the first in six years.

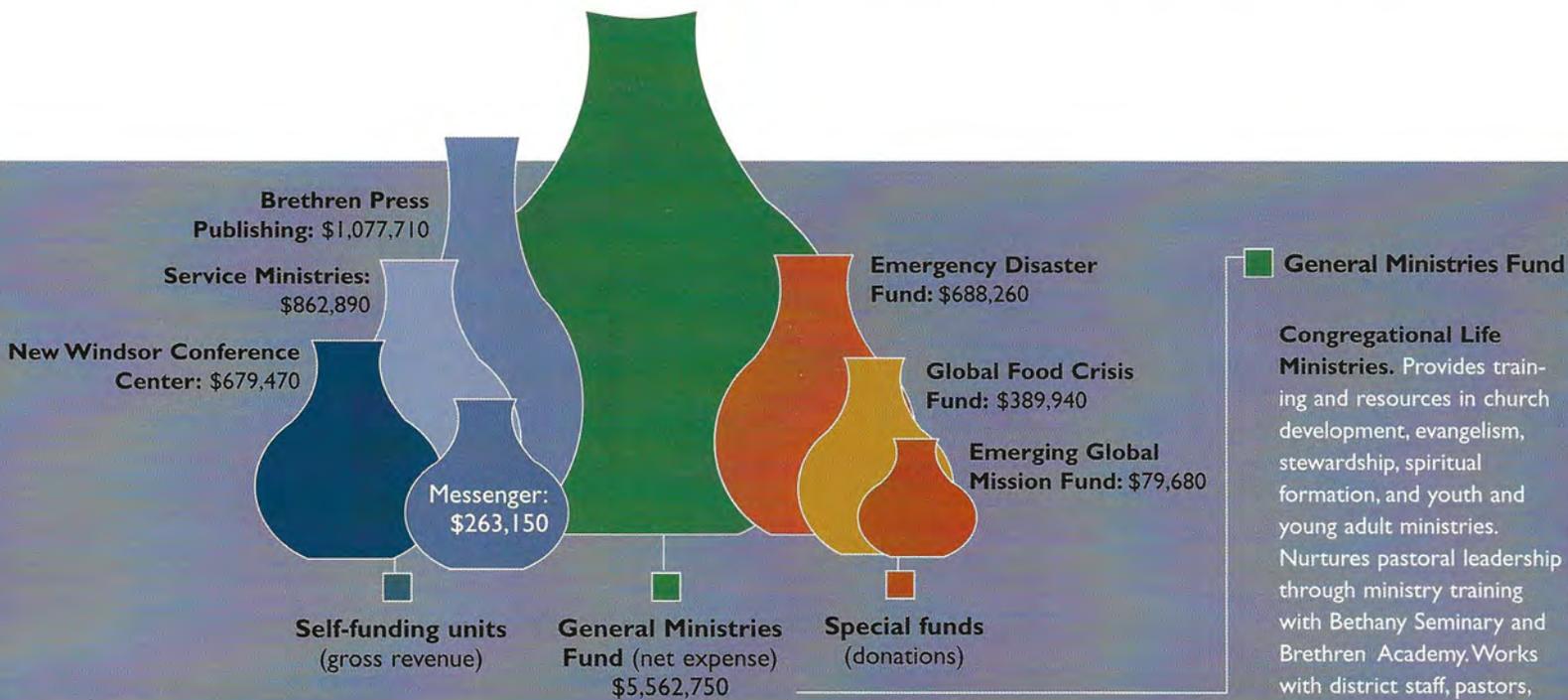
Income was also down for the board's three special funds: Emergency Disaster, Global Food Crisis, and Emerging Global Mission.

General Ministries, the board's main operating fund, is supported primarily by gifts from congregations and individuals. Support from congregations remains the largest

income category, at \$3,267,460. Individual giving, though slightly lower than last year, totaled \$713,650, well above expectations. Income from bequests was \$417,260, under budget by \$182,740.

Earnings from investments, endowments, and funds such as the bequest quasi-endowment make up the next largest cate-

gory of income for General Ministries. The principal in these funds is intended to anchor future ministries by providing a growing source of income. However, the shaky investment environment not only has reduced those earnings, but has resulted in lower balances on which to earn interest in 2003 and beyond.



2002 year in review

We have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. 2 Cor. 4:7

The picture for self-funding ministries—primarily those that offer goods or services for sale—was mixed. The New Windsor Conference Center experienced fewer bookings but was able to end with \$20,530 income over expense. *Messenger* magazine posted \$2,800 in income over expense.

Emergency Response, funded by donations to the Emergency Disaster Fund, spent \$777,150. Service Ministries lost \$68,580 because of



reduced use of the warehouse facility. Brethren Press sustained a deficit of \$41,560, primarily due to a decline in curriculum sales.

In response to the 2002 deficit, the General Board revised its 2003 budget parameter downward by \$384,000 and is monitoring closely



the implications for 2004. Because the cost of people doing ministry increases each year and giving has declined rather than keeping pace,

the problem will compound each year unless additional changes are made.

Challenging as it has been to keep the board's financial foundation strong, we are nevertheless heartened by the church's sustaining prayers and by the financial support of 954 congregations and countless individuals who have given to one or

more of the General Board's funds this past year.

Earthen vessels that we all are, together we are privileged to carry the treasure to a world that longs for the good news of Jesus Christ.

Photos, p. 14, Miguel Alicea at Cross-Cultural Consultation (Walt Wiltschek photo); p. 15, lower, Disaster Child Care recipient, Houma, La. (Patricia Black photo), and upper, Louisville, Ky., soup kitchen volunteer Jim Hartman (Eric Miller photo).

Global Mission Partnerships. Guides international church planting, development, leadership training, and theological education. Enlists Brethren in study and action on peace, justice, and environmental concerns. Manages Global Food Crisis Fund and Washington Office. Recruits and places volunteers in projects focusing on peace, justice, human need, and the environment. **\$1,185,170**

Brethren Press Communications. Fosters identity, unity, and vision. Publishes *Messenger* (which has separate budget), *Agenda*, *Source*, *Newsline*, *Living Word* bulletins and website. Interprets program, conducts news service. **\$312,630**

Treasurer/Centralized Resources. Handles finances of General Board and Annual Conference. Manages and maintains technology, archives, and Elgin facilities. Covers costs of telephone, technology, postage, support services for all program areas. Offers financial resource counseling on stewardship and estate planning. **\$1,912,400**

Brethren Service Center. Hosts local, national, and global service ministries; operates conference center; provides public information; maintains buildings and grounds. Costs are covered largely by self-funding programs of the center. General Ministries Fund portion: **\$31,750**

General Secretary. Administers work of the General Board and serves as spiritual guidepost for staff and General Board ministries. Oversees human resources. Heads ecumenical representation. **\$667,210**

Detailed financial information is available in the General Board auditors report.

Our calling



Vision The General Board envisions a dynamic Church of the Brethren doing the work of Jesus in the world.

Mission The General Board is called by the Church of the Brethren to extend the church's witness around the world. It leads out in God's mission, serving as a bridge between the local and the global, and creating opportunities that transform lives.

The General Board supports congregations in their task to create joyful communities of faith that proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, cultivate discipleship, respond to human need, make for peace, and bring about reconciliation and justice.

Fulfilling the Annual Conference charge to be the administrative authority of the church, the General Board cares for the whole fabric of the community, building relationships and strengthening identity.

Core Values

Christ-centeredness: To be Christlike in manner and in mission.

Servant leadership: To serve the Church of the Brethren with both humility and boldness.

Discernment: To seek the leading of the Holy Spirit through prayer and scripture.

Community: To reflect God's wholeness by cultivating relationships and building up the Body of Christ.

Stewardship: To care for the resources of the Church of the Brethren and to model stewardship of all God's gifts.

Simplicity: To focus our tasks and lighten our demands on the world's resources.

Hospitality: To follow Jesus' example of respecting all people and inviting them into his fellowship.

Peacemaking: To be instruments of reconciliation and justice.



Church of the Brethren General Board

1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, Illinois 60120 800-323-8039



Tijuana troubled

by **Terry Shumaker**

Maria (not her real name) wonders as she works her way toward the landfill of Tijuana, Mexico, “Will I recycle enough to make at least 400 pesos (\$4 US) today?” Her daughter’s piercing comment of last night about how embarrassed she is to have a “landfill person” for a mother makes the walk to work even harder.

The day’s work of digging in the garbage is draining and competitive, with so many digging for the best items to recycle. On a hilltop made from covered rubbish, a band of people is attracting a crowd. Maria climbs through the piles and joins the line in anticipation. It is a group extending greetings, offering handshakes, even hugs, food, and, surprisingly, a time for prayer. Maria has a passing thought, “Will someone really pray in this place and hear a mother’s pain about a daughter’s embarrassment?” Maria is greeted in a voice full of compassion and in broken Spanish asking for her prayer request. Maria shares from her heart in the midst of all that makes this an unlikely place of prayer.

The answer to Maria’s prayer request may not be immediately evident or known, but she was heard by God and one of God’s people. It was a good day at work in the landfill. Being heard was an answer to a prayer. Maria responds with an “amen” and in broken English, “God bless you.”

Terry Shumaker works with Compañeros en Ministerio, an affiliated ministry of the Church of the Brethren doing ministry in Tijuana, Mexico.

Chained and surrounded

by **Millie Baker**

Over a year ago an influential man in our congregation suggested that my pastoral prayer was “too long,” that perhaps the people would like shorter prayers better. This was a major concern for me, believing prayer is our direct communication with God. I began to pray about the situation, looking for guidance.

I began a series of messages on prayer, hoping to guide people to a fuller understanding and celebration of prayer. In the preparation of the messages, the importance of making the church a house of prayer was the prevailing insight I was gaining. The image of a literal prayer chain surrounding the sanctuary in prayer came to mind, similar to a child’s paper chain on a Christmas tree. It would be a prayer chain, with each link being a slip with a prayer of concern, joy or praise on it—exciting! When I introduced the idea to the congregation, several bought into it immediately.

And so the project began, with the challenge of seeing how long it would take us to “surround the sanctuary in prayer.” At prayer time and Bible study/prayer meeting, each prayer concern or joy was written on a slip of paper, prayed for in congregational prayer, and then later was added to the chain. My image had been for a paper chain to go straight around the walls, but when the young people began to hang it, they hung it looping, like on a Christmas tree. Inside, I smiled, wondering how long it would take now and, God forgive me, how far it would get before the effort lost interest.

Well, it did not lose interest. The chain began to grow, and then at Annual Conference, the query on prayer was passed. As I made the Conference report, some people became very excited; we had already done just that. By now the chain was nearly around the sanctuary. No one wanted to stop, and as the circle was completed, a new one began.

This small community of faith is now known for its prayer ministry. Visitors are often found looking for their names, as they have previously been told, “We are praying for you.” Family members, friends, and people in the community have asked members to be added to our prayer chain.

The chain is nearly around the church for the second time. We do not have any plan to stop; the interest is still there. The sanctuary is surrounded in prayer, literally and spiritually.

Millie Baker is pastor of Diehl’s Crossroads Church of the Brethren, Curryville, Pa.

Strangers no more

by **Doug Reichenbach**

While in prayer in July 1994, I heard these words: "Behold, I have prepared for you an open door that no one can shut . . . somewhere out there. Test the waters." I subsequently left my pastorate in another denomination and opened myself to pastoral ministry within the Church of the Brethren.

Meanwhile, a Church of the Brethren congregation "somewhere out there" (Freeport, Mich.) had an "open door that no one could shut." Together we decided to "test the waters." In July 1995 I began an interim pastorate at Hope Church of the Brethren, leaving behind my wife for a season so that she could continue pursuing her own vocational calling. This was a time of discernment, both for the Hope congregation and for us.

That fall, a key ingredient was added to the discernment mix: we became aware of two little children who were being put up for adoption. My wife and I again decided to "test the waters" by offering ourselves as adoptive parents. On Christmas Eve 1995, while in prayer—outdoors, under the stars in rural Michigan—as I was trying to get in sync with God's long-term desires for me/us pastorally/personally, I heard the word: "Wait until a decision is made in regard to the adoption, and then you will know what to do." Within weeks, we were chosen as adoptive parents. Again it was like "an open door that no one could shut." Then I knew the value of remaining at Hope. The congregation offered to "adopt" me and my family, and we moved to Hope in February 1996. We formally adopted the children that fall.

Soon after the adoption, the older child—not fully understanding what "adoption" meant, but knowing the importance of belonging—proudly announced, "We're no longer adopted! Now we're Reichenbachs!" That has a nice ring for me, too. Today, I proudly announce, "I'm no longer adopted. Now I'm Church of the Brethren!" I've found a spiritual home.

Doug Reichenbach is pastor of Hope Church of the Brethren, Freeport, Mich.

God's big house

by **Carolyn Dixon**

My children had all graduated from college and found employment in other states. While my job as a physical therapist for children with multiple disabilities was satisfying, my empty nest left a void in my heart. My house no longer felt like a home. I prayed, "Lord, this house is not mine alone. It really belongs to you. Now, what shall we do with 'our' house?"

The answer was not long in coming. Foreign students from Western Michigan University were frequent visitors to my church, Skyridge Church of the Brethren in Kalamazoo, Mich. This was due in large part to Martha and Troy Anderegg, who served as hosts for foreign students. Somehow, they always persuaded their students to come to church with them.

Soon after my prayer, one of the students asked if she could stay in one of my spare rooms for a few months after her graduation. I agreed, and the ball started rolling. She brought another student, who brought another, and so on. I treated these students like my own children, as I helped them with English, dressed them for winter, bought bicycles at garage sales, enjoyed their cooking, welcomed their families to Kalamazoo, and once even paid tuition for a senior who would not have graduated due to a lack of funds. My home became their home.

Meanwhile, Skyridge Church of the Brethren established our Ezekiel Fund, which has assisted many people, including an African student and a political refugee who would have been deported without our help to pay legal fees. We asked them to repay us only by helping someone else in the future.

My joys have been many, including the pleasure of seeing two students baptized into the Christian faith while living at my home. My heart is full of gratitude that the "adopted" students who have stayed in Michigan and their spouses have become my extended family. Their children are now my grandchildren. I am so very thankful that God knew exactly what to do with "our" house.

Carolyn Dixon of Kalamazoo, Mich., is a member of Skyridge Church of the Brethren.

Russian passports

by *Donna Nunn*

We prayed earnestly for 10 years to bring a child into our home. Prayers were finally answered when God led us to an adoption agency in 1993. Older children were available to be adopted in Russia immediately. We were excited, then hopes were dashed when my husband, Wilkie, lost his job. Partial criteria to adopt was that the head of our household had to be employed.

For six months we never gave up praying. God had brought us this far; he would not abandon us now. After six long months, my husband found a job, and we were presented with the pictures of two sisters—Elena and Tamara, seven and three. Frightened at the thought of two children instead of one, but after weeks of praying, we woke up one day with peace of mind that said, “These children are waiting for you. Go and get them.”

We left Dec. 6 for Moscow, and met the girls the next day in the children’s home. But joy became fear again when our coordinator said she could not obtain the Russian passports for the girls, and we could not leave Russia without them. We were scheduled to leave on Dec. 23; we wanted to be home with our new daughters for Christmas. We asked our social worker at the adoption agency in the US to relay the message to my family that we earnestly needed prayer from our congregation.

The next day when our coordinator came to us with the news that she could get the passports, we went to the US embassy in Moscow. She said, “I have a friend who assisted me in getting the passports.” My reply to her was, “We know how those passports were granted. It was the Lord who brought us here and prayer delivered the passports.”

We left on our scheduled flight the next day and on Christmas Eve brought home the two best Christmas packages that anyone could ever receive. God truly does answer prayer.

Donna Nunn of Frederick, Md., is director of music, administrative assistant, and lifetime member at the Bush Creek Church of the Brethren, Monrovia, Md.



All our children

by Barb Saylor

It had been a long trip from Denver to Baltimore with many delays along the way. When I finally did arrive into Baltimore it was well after midnight. As I waited for my luggage, the air conditioning appeared not to be working and the Maryland summer heat and humidity were heavy despite the fact that it was late at night. In the midst of the long wait, I noticed a baby crying. When I looked in the direction of the crying, I saw a baby trying to get out of a stroller. The young father made no attempt to console the baby and instead pushed him back into the stroller.

This sight upset me. But what could I do? There were many persons around me murmuring and staring at the father and the baby. I did what I do often in a busy place: I closed my eyes trying to center myself so that I could shut out the crying, the murmuring, the heat, the busyness. I was surprised at what happened next.

As I stood there with my eyes closed, my feet started moving. My eyes sprang open as my feet were headed in the direction of the baby. I knelt beside him and tried to play with him. As I met his big brown eyes with tears streaming down, he began reaching for me. Before I knew it, I had asked the father the baby's name and whether I could hold him. This was not something I usually do. But something was guiding me.

As I picked Gabriel up, I could tell from his sweaty ringlets of hair and his soggy diaper that he had also had a long day. He nestled into my neck and shoulder, clinging to me. As I stood there with Gabriel and his father, I looked around and noticed that the murmuring around us had ceased, but people were still staring. I found myself no longer upset with Gabriel's father. I was upset with the people around me. What kind of a society are we that we stand around and stare and make judgments rather than lending a helping hand?

It made me think of a prayer by Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund: "O God, we pray for our children and family members and for our neighbors' children. Help us God to remember that all your people are our neighbors and all their children are our own."

I don't want to paint myself as a saint. I've been on the other side holding back, staring, making judgments many times. But I'm thankful for God's leading this time. I'm thankful that I had the chance to meet Gabriel and experience his brown eyes, his curly hair, his sweaty, sour smell. Gabriel helped me realize that it's the children who keep me working for peace and who provide the hope needed for me to continue this work.

Barb Saylor of Westminster, Md., is co-director of On Earth Peace.

Praying the district

by J. Melvin Fike

The Polo (Ill.) Church of the Brethren was challenged by our Call to Prayer query at Annual Conference. We decided to pray very intentionally for one congregation in our district each week. We send them a letter the week prior so that they are aware of it. We also include the district camps, the district homes, and Annual and District Conference.

Our letter says in part: "We believe strongly in the power of prayer and have seen many times that our prayers have been answered. We have also come to be aware of some of the struggles that the district and some of the churches and organizations in the district are dealing with. We have decided that the best way we can assist in this is through prayer. We have chosen to be in prayer for your church this Sunday. We do sincerely hope that you will feel our love, our prayers, and support in a special way on this day."

This has helped us to feel more connected as a part of our district. We have also been surprised by the positive responses we have gotten in return. It has helped some of our people to feel more in touch with the district, and they have enjoyed locating the church of the week on the map.

J. Melvin Fike is pastor of the Polo (Ill.) Church of the Brethren.



When Jesse spoke

by *Joyce Petry*

My visit to Jesse in the nursing home that day had been a less than inspiring experience. The conversation was largely one-sided, as Jesse gave little indication he was even aware I was in the room with him. Watching this dear man slowly deteriorate over a period of several months had been a painful experience, and now I felt inadequate to provide Jesse with any meaningful pastoral care as he sat there with little else but death to anticipate.

After talking for some time (to myself, it seemed), I finally reached over and took Jesse's hands in my own and said, "Let's have a word of prayer before I go. Okay, Jesse?" I bowed my head and closed my eyes, and just as I was prepared to begin my prayer, Jesse suddenly began to speak. As we sat there holding hands, Jesse offered up a lovely, heartfelt prayer of praise and thanksgiving to the God he had known and walked with for so many years.

I was stunned—and blessed! The quiet little man in the wheelchair ministered to his pastor that day. And I was reminded that appearances often don't count for much. We humans are woefully inadequate when it comes to discerning what is happening in the heart of another.

In the years since my visit with Jesse that day, I have found that nursing home residents and hospital patients often respond to prayer when nothing else seems to reach them. As Tennyson said, "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

Joyce Petry is pastor of the Antelope Park Church of the Brethren, Lincoln, Neb.

I didn't like Christians

by *Rachel Anderson*

I was not raised in a Brethren household. I wasn't raised in a Christian house either. Due to negative experiences with a church, my parents decided to wash their hands of the whole "church" business before I was born.

My sister and I were very happy to sleep in on Sundays. We were free to do what we liked, unlike those pathetic saps who had to wake up early, dress up in uncomfortable clothes, sit in a hard pew, and be silent. When I asked the Christian kids why they went to church under such horrible conditions, they mostly said that God or Jesus wanted them to go. When I asked why, most could not verbalize an answer. I couldn't understand why people would torture themselves for no apparent reason. When I heard people identify themselves as "Christian," I would equate that word with "stupidity."

I am not sure when that began to change. There were many small instances when I caught a glimmer of Christianity, real Christianity: a joy that came from certain people that I could not understand, the beauty even of the mundane, the hope that people felt, which I was lacking. Questions began entering my mind that I needed answers for: Why am I here? What is the point to everything? Why is there pain everywhere? Where do people find happiness?

And an answer came: a prayer. A prayer came to me as a 13-year-old—a girl who didn't like Christians—after reading the Gospels. I have expanded the prayer since then, but this was the essence:

Thank you, Lord, for all that you have given us: for the roof over our heads, the food on our table, and the love in my family and heart.

Lord, please bless my mother, father, sister, and all my family. Please also be with those who suffer, and help them through their pain.

Please give all of us the qualities that we need—courage, patience, kindness, humility—to be better people and better servants for you.

Please forgive us our sins, and help us to forgive those who sin against us, even though it is hard.

And Lord, please help each of us to love one another, as you have loved us. Thank you God for giving us Jesus, and I love you. Amen. ❧

Rachel Peterson, 22, is in Brethren Volunteer Service, working for On Earth Peace in New Windsor, Md. She is a member of New Carlisle (Ohio) Church of the Brethren.

J.D. Glick



Valsad (Bulsar) was organized in 1899 as the first congregation of the Church of the Brethren in India. Its building, completed in 1909, is now used by both Brethren and CNI congregations.

Building relationships in

INDIA

J.D. Glick



Worship among the Brethren at Champavadi includes singing with drums and tambourines. Women and men sit on separate sides of the sanctuary.

The General Board's recommendation on India before the 2002 Annual Conference was tabled for lack of time. Here, study committee members report on the January-February visit to India by two members, and the return of this item to the Conference floor. The Conference officers have determined that this matter should return as new business.

The General Board study committee includes Ernest Thakor of Naperville, Ill., a real estate salesperson and a member of the Indian community in America, who has lived in the US since childhood and has extended family in both churches in India; J.D. Glick of Bridgewater, Va., a pastor and General Board member; Wendell Flory of Bridgewater, Va., a former India missionary and retired pastor; and Merv Keeney, of Elgin, Ill., executive director for Global Mission Partnerships.

“ In both churches the spirit of Christ is alive in their worship, fellowship, and service to their communities. Each is carrying on the work of Christ in a very difficult political climate in which Christians are a distinct minority.”

US delegation reports on its latest trip prior to Annual Conference action

What was the purpose of this trip?

Merv: The trip was initially planned around our continuing reconciliation efforts between the Church of North India (CNI) and the India Brethren (see “Reconciliation work continues,” p. 25), and evolved to include a study committee updating dimension.

J.D.: As a newly appointed member of the India study committee, I found it very helpful to have a firsthand opportunity to meet persons from both churches in India. Being able to hear them express their positions and see the work of the churches has been helpful in understanding the issues involved.

Ernie: The visit also provided an opportunity to explain why a decision has not yet been made after some years of study. It was important to show both churches that we are committed to building a relationship with them.

Where did the delegation go? Who did you meet?

Ernie: We spent about two weeks traveling among the



The US delegation in front of Wilbur Stover Bungalow in Bulsar, from left; J.D. Glick, Rachel Gross, Bob Gross, Ernie Thakor.



The CNI congregation at Khergam expressed pride in their renovations of the old mission building, completed in 1934, and voiced concern about other trust properties.

churches. The first week, in southern Gujarat State, we spent three days traveling with Bishop V.K. Malaviya and Shirish Christian and visited members of the CNI

churches. The next three days we visited Brethren congregations and were accompanied by Darryl Sankey, Rev. Kantibhai Tundell, and Rev. Ashok Solankey. At all of our stops we were warmly welcomed with flowers and garlands. We briefly met with members of each congregation, heard their concerns, and responded to their questions. The visits with both churches concluded with their executive committee. From Gujarat we traveled to Delhi and spent one afternoon in talks with CNI General Secretary V.S. Lal. After Delhi, Bob Gross met with Bishop Malaviya and I spent some time with the Brethren in Valsad. We had both agreed to make one more attempt to encourage both sides to show some good will towards the other.

What key observations do you bring back?

J.D.: While neither church seemed interested in talking with the other, I felt warmly received by both. Hospitality was extended to the delegation as we ate in their homes, traveled in their cars, and worshiped in their churches. In southern Gujarat, both CNI and Brethren members claim to be the “spiritual descendants” of the missionaries the US church sent to India.

Ernie: Both sides expect the US church to solve their problems for them. The CNI wants the US church to encourage the Indian Brethren to become a part of the CNI again. This is the only acceptable solution for CNI. The India Brethren clearly stated that they will never join the CNI even if they lost all the court cases and the US church refuses to accept them. The only solution acceptable to the Brethren is their acceptance as an inde-

pendent church. These positions prevent either side from showing goodwill towards the other. Both sides expressed some dissatisfaction with the US church because in three years we have “failed to achieve anything.”

In what ways was Christ evident within either church?

J.D.: In both churches the spirit of Christ is alive in their worship, fellowship, and service to their communities. Each is carrying on the work of Christ in a very difficult political climate in which Christians are a distinct minority. Christians are less than three percent of the national population, and less than half of one percent in Gujarat State.

Ernie: Both churches have strong witness programs where resources are used to reach out and assist those who are in need. It is interesting to see how weddings, funerals, and illness bring members from both sides together.

What progress did you observe, if any, since your last visit?

Ernie: In a difficult situation such as this it is hard to measure progress, but the opportunity to visit and exchange views is progress in itself. One real difference since the two previous visits was that the anger seems to have diminished. The exchange of information was much more cordial.

J.D.: The delegation returned from India believing we had heard from both churches an acceptance of the General Board’s recommendation to Annual Conference that the US church have a “relationship” with both churches. While both indicated this was not what they would prefer, they were willing to accept it. We felt this was progress. Since returning, we have heard from CNI that we had not understood them correctly, and that they are maintaining their position that the only solution is for the Brethren who left CNI to return. We do not understand this seeming change in position.

What hopes and dreams do you have for this situation?

Wendell: As one who has lived and served in India, I am deeply pained that, after all these years, this fight continues. We pray

A group from the CNI congregation gathers on the steps of the Khergam church.



for both sides, we serve with both sides, seeking God and the love of God for both.

Ernie: I would like to see the US church have the courage to redefine its relations with the churches in India. The parent-child relationship that was present when the union was formed isn't appropriate today. We need to relate to our brothers and sisters from both sides as equals.

Merv: My hope would be that the members of the two churches might find sufficient unity in Christ to do ministry together in their neighboring communities. There are extensive needs that beg for the church's response. Joining together in mission can bring healing and unity.

What else has been done since last year?

Merv: Seeking to respond to the call for more information, the committee produced study materials that were mailed to all congregations in March.

What is the core of the recommendation?

J.D.: After 25 years of separation, which have included battles in the courts over property and what both sides perceive to be "harassment," it is unlikely that the two churches will be reunited. We need to accept this reality and stop holding on to an old dream. Our most positive witness as US Brethren is to have a

relationship with both in which we affirm and support their ministries.

Ernie: How would Jesus respond to this request for relationship? Would he deny someone who wants to be a part of our faith community? The greatest tragedy in all of this is that Jesus gives us a choice, yet we are unable to let others choose. The India Brethren, along with members from other denominations, have discovered that the union wasn't for them. We need to accept the fact that what we wanted in India did not happen. We need to move forward with this recommendation and let both sides know that we desire a relationship with both churches in India.

Wendell: We need to accept both churches.

Merv: We believe that the US church should no longer be a part of the institutional "shunning" of the India Brethren who found the union to result in an unacceptable loss of identity, faith, and heritage that they held dear. Instead, the recommendation calls for building relationship and reconnecting this group with the US church and the wider body of Christ in the world. The proposed direction is about seeking unity in Christ when human-built structures falter. 

See also the study committee's report in June 2002 MESSENGER, "New relationships with India churches."

Reconciliation work continues

by Bob Gross

This winter my wife, Rachel, and I traveled to India, where I continued reconciliation efforts with the Church of North India (CNI) and the Brethren there. During the first part of the trip we accompanied J.D. Glick and Ernie Thakor as they visited with CNI and the Brethren. I focused on the reconciliation work during the remainder of the time there.

The situation remains highly polarized; each side feels a great deal of mistrust toward the other. Property issues continue to be important to both, and these are being addressed in the court system, which tends to be slow and unsatisfactory.

In May of 2001, in my last visit to India, leaders of both churches agreed to meet together in October of that year, but unforeseen obstacles prevented my return to India until this year. In the meantime the situation had deteriorated so that we were not able to bring the two churches together at this time.

As an alternative to the hoped-for joint meeting, I urged the leaders of each church to consider some positive step they could make that might improve the situation and the relationship between them.

During the last few visits to India I have enlisted the aid of Darryl Sankey of the Brethren and Rachel Din of CNI to help facilitate interactions with each side and continue the process in my absence. In the coming months these co-mediators will be in

communication with each other to minimize the spread of misinformation and rumor on either side. In addition, they will urge their respective churches to act in constructive ways that can reduce tensions.

At one point I suggested that it might be better for the parties in India to work with an Indian mediator who could bring cultural understanding and language. This suggestion has met with mixed reactions in the churches there, and my co-mediators believe that it would delay the process to work with a new person who is not known to the two churches and who would not know the background. If the two churches agree to meet together, and ask my help, I will be glad to return to India to facilitate such a meeting.

I am grateful to the leaders of the Church of North India and those of the Brethren in India for their kind hospitality and the time they have taken to meet with me. Please pray for them, and also for Rachel Din and Darryl Sankey, who are giving of their time so generously. I appreciate the support that the General Board and mission staff have given to this continuing effort to seek a better relationship among these churches that are the fruits of Church of the Brethren mission work in India.

Bob Gross of North Manchester, Ind., has been retained by the General Board's Global Mission Partnerships office since 1999 to lead the reconciliation effort between these two groups in India. Bob is well-known for his mediation work with the Ministry of Reconciliation. He and Rachel had previously served in India in 1988.

Love enemies and friends

The editorial in the April issue of the MESSENGER is one of the best I ever read, and appropriate at this time. I read it first, and a few days later I read the letter to the editor by David Leckrone. A contrast.

David wrote that in college he gained a knowledge of history and theology to discover that the church is ignorant of history and biblically incorrect. There are thousands of years of history. I wonder which phase, aspect, or period he knows. As to whether the church is biblically incorrect, I wonder what he reads. The Old Testament has records of war and violence. Jesus Christ brought forward a new approach to living together, even to the point of loving your enemies. And that's a tough act to perform. To live as a pacifist is harsh discipline. David wrote that the Church of the Brethren is giving comfort and aid to our enemies. That's what Jesus prescribed.



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But let's not hate and abuse our friends. We need each other.

Wilmer Brandt
Marshfield, Vt.

A veteran for peace

This is in response to a letter from David Leckrone, which appeared in the April MESSENGER. David had not read the MESSENGER for several decades and saw few changes in the last 35 years. I read my MESSENGER every month and am really happy with its layout and the way it addresses today's issues.

I was not raised in a Church of the Brethren family but joined the church by choice 26 years ago. I was raised in a church where the priest advocated many Sundays each year for its members to join the military to protect our freedom. Consequently, I became a Vietnam war veteran. From my years in the US military, I have learned a few things:

- Every person in the Church of the Brethren does not agree with the church's stand on pacifism. But the Church of the Brethren's elected leaders, through many prayerful sessions, have presented their carefully researched thoughts about the destruction of war that is in direct opposition to God's plan for his creation to live in peace.

- A lot of the Church of the Brethren's financial resources have not gone in the direction of convincing the members that living in peace is the ultimate purpose for his creation. Individual members of the church have simply put themselves in many positions worldwide to work for peace.

- Any effort to work towards peace in any setting is better than no effort.

- Dialog is one of most effective means of problem solving. In war people get killed, military and civilians on both sides. Property and resources are destroyed. Communities become unstable and are lost. New regimes often bring even more horrible conditions. The US government has a tendency to use military force in many situations that could have been solved through peaceful means.

Having gone through the 1960s in the US Air Force, I often question many uses of force by our government and other for-

eign governments. As a member of the Church of the Brethren, I feel it is imperative that the church should continue to stand for the peaceful resolution of conflicts in our world. If we could have taken the economic cost of the Vietnam War and invested it in economic development throughout the world, how much more of a powerful nation would the United States now be?

John Ulery
Greenwood, Ind.

Learn to know us

I read the April issue from cover to cover, as I usually do. I especially enjoy the Editorial and From the Publisher. Also the Letters section usually has a few special insights or questions that call for study and discussion. But one letter in the April issue, the last one, made me sad. We as a church have evidently failed a former member. Now it is evident that he knows neither the Church of the Brethren nor Jesus Christ. I am confident that when he learns to know us he will love us—and make it easier for us to love him too.

Olden Mitchell
North Manchester, Ind.

Damascus Road

Thank you for printing the letter by David Leckrone. I see great promise in him. No one could write with such intensity and vitriol if he weren't deeply possessed by the values he denounces.

My prayers are with him as he travels his Damascus Road. He has been struggling hard to let go of God. But God isn't letting go of him.

Jim Martin
Palmyra, Pa.

When Jesus dropped by

I have pondered long about writing a letter about the article "When Jesus dropped by," by Daniel M. Petry, in the January/February issue. I wanted to tell you what a stirring article it is and what meaning it must have for anyone who reads it. I have read and reread it many times, and wondered how I would react if

Jesus dropped by my house, and when I asked him "Do I know you?," how I would feel when he answered, "Not well."

Pastor Petry really and truly knew how most of us would respond. It makes me sad to think that this might have been the way I would respond, too.

Jean A. Maxon
Sebring, Fla.

Any way you slice it

The MESSENGER is like an excellent sandwich. The editorials at both ends by Wendy McFadden and Fletcher Farrar are the artisan bread, and all the items in between are the gourmet ingredients. This sandwich provides the nourishment to grow and serve, and to keep in touch with the Brotherhood.

George G. Hess
Xenia, Ohio

War gives us meaning

I congratulate you on your lucid, beautifully written editorial, "War gives us meaning," in the April issue. It is encouraging to encounter thoughtfulness and level-headedness in a time of turmoil, when others seem to have lost their moral compass.

Wendell P. Glick
Professor emeritus, University of Minnesota
Duluth, Minn.

Stover grandson on India

My name is Ken Royer, and I am the grandson of Wilbur and Mary Stover, pioneer missionaries with the Church of the Brethren to India. Their daughter Helen is my mother.

Our connection to the Church of the Brethren is through the Lindsay (Calif.) church, though we live in Fresno. Mary and I have been involved in missions for 34 years, counseling and consulting with missionaries and agencies.

It was Mary's and my privilege to visit India in 1997, including the ministry in the Gujarat area where my grandparents had started the work and ministered for 25 years. What a blessing to be with these dear folks, and to sense how God has

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multiplied the work from very humble beginnings more than 100 years ago.

Admittedly, my knowledge of both sides of the conflict in India is only surface level. However, I simply recommend that decisions be made which can permit both sides of the conflict to prosper, and to carry out their forms of worship which they love and which are edifying to them as they understand God's Word.

I recommend that the India Church of the Brethren be given the blessing from the US church to continue to serve God according to his leading. If the union with the Church of North India is burdensome to them, such a union becomes counter-productive. It seems much better to me for the Brethren to have freedom to express their worship to God and love for each other, to grow spiritually, to win others to the Savior, not burdened by an unwise unification.

Ken Royer
Modesto, Calif.

Tale of two churches

This is the tale of two churches and how they differ. The first church is mission mind-

ed, and its priority is to seek lost sheep. The Great Commission is evident in its structure, mission, and vision. It conceived a way to plant sister churches on a shoestring—and experienced a 90 percent success rate. This church moved from a large financial debt to a healthy financial future.

This church values its history, but builds for the future. Programs and plans evidence unity, purpose, and innovation.

The second church is mired in a proliferation of committees, boards, interest groups, and constituencies. It worries more over what name it should be called than about reaching lost souls. Divisions over flags in the sanctuary and same-sex covenant services weaken it. It longs more for the leaders of yesterday than the visionaries of tomorrow.

This church faces a negative financial picture and staff and program cutbacks—once again—and is declining in numbers. Its heart is in the right place, but its practices undercut its effectiveness.

These "churches" are, of course, not congregations, but denominations. The first is the Baptist General Conference, based in Arlington Heights, Ill. Having less

than 100,000 members and 900-plus congregations, this group has the goal of planting 205 missionaries and 442 new congregations by 2005.

The fundamental focus of the BGC has been reshaped to develop a network of leaders and leadership teams serving together to mobilize and multiply vital, reproducing churches. Strategy and purpose and intentionality underscore its work.

The second denomination is 15 miles west on Interstate 90, the Church of the Brethren, headquartered in Elgin. They have the larger membership, 134,000 and 1,050 congregations, but the membership has not shown a net gain since 1974. Talking about church planting takes the place of doing it. US evangelization is at a third level of interest at best.

The Baptists have created an atmosphere for change, while the Brethren hold on to the concept of being "a peculiar people" as a badge of honor. The Baptists have learned to multiply congregations and reproduce leaders, and, incredibly, have helped two churches outside the denomination for every new church start within the BGC. The Brethren suggest that

MESSENGER DINNER

Sunday, July 6, 5 p.m.

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Miner Miracle Rescued to share their faith

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.



MESSENGER
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evangelism is "not in our DNA."

Denominations exist, a wag once said, to preserve pension plans and real estate. In reality they have a much stronger role to play in producing and reproducing healthy congregations, and that is to protect the purity of the faith and proclaim the Word.

Brethren have done well on the former, but have stumbled badly on the latter. The Church of the Brethren is at a troublesome and problematic time in its history. Brethren have much to say to the world, but have not found their voice to share the needed message they do bring.

Ronald E. Keener
Gilbert, Ariz.

Love one another

I appreciated the letter "What is truth?" which appeared in the March issue, but I was surprised by the writer's assertion that "scripture never commands us to be tolerant. . . ." To the contrary, by my reading, the epistles are full of exhortations to be respectful, affirming, and forgiving of one another. We are called to be humble and to build each other up. In fact, just looking for the phrase "one another," I find at least 26 places in the epistles where supportive behavior is encouraged.

This is important, because as a non-creedal church which takes the entire New Testament as its rule of faith and practice, we are bound to have considerable diversity among us. As a result, it is crucial that we take to heart the extensive guidelines for behavior in the faith community that we find in the New Testament, especially the command of Christ to love one another. As we do so, we will discover that a tolerant spirit is essential to our obedience. As stated in the 1979 Annual Conference paper on Biblical Inspiration and Authority, "there needs to be an appreciation for diversity and a spirit among us of humility and openness to learn from one another."

To have a tolerant spirit does not mean that we must accept the views of those with whom we disagree; to the contrary, we are called to be in expectant dialog with one another as we seek the mind of Christ. It does mean, however, that we will approach our life together in the church with a humble spirit, resolving to be good

Ever Tried "Greasy Spooning"?

"When people on the streets ask me for money I often offer to buy them something to eat at the nearest 'greasy spoon' in exchange for them telling me about their lives."

— Jonathan Hunter



Brethren storyteller Jonathan Hunter will share the caregiving wisdom he's gained from years of "Greasy Spooning." Hunter will be the featured keynote for the *Association of Brethren Caregivers Recognition Dinner* at the Boise Annual Conference. A former Church of the Brethren pastor, Hunter serves as program officer with the Corporation for Supportive Housing, an organization seeking to end long-term homelessness.

At the dinner the agency will honor Jean Keith and the Hillcrest-Afflerbaugh Project with caregiving awards. Richard Bowman, president of Fahrney-Keedy Memorial Home, and Judith Wallace, retired president of The Brethren Home Community, also will be recognized for their careers of service.

ABC's Recognition Dinner will be July 5, 5 p.m., at the Boise State University Student Union, Hatch Conference Room. Tickets are \$20 a person and should be purchased prior to Annual Conference. Visit www.brethren.org/ac/Boise/2003packet/packet.htm for the meal event order form.



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listeners in order that we might better understand the views of others, acknowledging that none of us has a monopoly on truth, and being willing to put aside differences in order to work with others to bear fruit in the name of Jesus.

After 15 years as a member of our denomination, I am convinced that God still wants the Church of the Brethren around, and in fact has much important work yet in store for us, but unless we understand and accept that we are called to live in harmony with one another—yes, to tolerate one another—our future may be short-lived indeed.

Jeffrey D. Scott
Westminster, Md.

Glorious spectrum

Our God is too small when we limit the authority of scripture to one viewpoint along the theological spectrum. Jesus had an authority not like the scribes who could point to the Scriptures and quote other

experts on them. As the early Brethren studied the Scriptures they wanted to get closer to that authority of Jesus. They wanted to be open to the Spirit, to one another, and always open for more light since they were aware of their own limitations. Can we be humble and faithful to some of the best of our heritage?

Our Western culture tends to see so much in terms of either/or categories. If someone believes something one way, and another believes something differently, then one of them has to be wrong.

Eastern cultures, out of which the Scriptures have come to us, have much more room for both/and perspectives.

My hunch is that when we humbly remember we know only in part, and come to respect more of the truth from others who are different from us, then we will come closer to the Glorious Spectrum of light and truth that is bigger than what any one of us understands, and points us to God who is much bigger than all of us together understand.

Roger Eberly
Milford, Ind.

CLASSIFIED ADS

The Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center, Harrisonburg, Va., invites applications for the full-time position of Executive Director. Responsibilities include: interpret the vision of the Center to churches and community; oversee the staff of the Center, including recruitment and training; facilitate the work of the various committees of the Center; oversee and coordinate the development of the Center's programs, oversee and participate in fund-raising; envision and guide strategic planning, including site and program development; and prepare and oversee annual operating and capital budgets. The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors. Applicants must be committed to Anabaptist and Pietist traditions and principles and have acquaintance with Brethren and Mennonites of the Shenandoah Valley, must have management and human relations skills, and must be committed to the vision of the Heritage Center with a desire to communicate it. Send letter of application and resume to Cal Redekop, chair, Search Committee, Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center, 1675-D, Virginia Ave., Harrisonburg, VA 22802. Review of applications will begin June 1, 2003.

Fahrney-Keedy Memorial Home of Hagerstown, Md., is seeking applicants for the position of CEO/President. Fahrney-Keedy, a retirement center with independent living homes, assisted living units, and skilled nursing care, is a CCRC facility providing quality care for over 200 persons. The Home is located in the beautiful historic rolling hills of Maryland, close to Antietam and Harpers Ferry.

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New Members

Ambler, Pa.: Kelly Barber, Stephanie Smith, Mike Nicolazzo, Karin Borgmann-Winter

Camp Creek, Etna Green, Ind.: David Chupp

Chicago, Ill., First: Samara Zwick

Crest Manor, South Bend, Ind.: Diane Swiatkowski, Shaun Swiatkowski, Vera Johansen, Roger Hibschan, Lucas Fritz, Robert Gruber, Tina Gruber

Denton, Md.: Patricia Mae Crandall, Brian C. Hildebrand, Nancy S. Hildebrand, Renee Bennett Dodd, Bryan Gadow, Kimberly Bramble Gadow, Geoff Birky, William Collison, Zelig Mae Collison, Joshua Collison

Dixon, Ill.: Kelsey Wiseman, Emily Wiseman, Lois Dishman, Barbara J. Graff

Elizabethtown, Pa.: Richard Hoffer, Samuel Hockley, Alex Reinhold, Christin Helwig, Harrison Rhodes, Kirsten Hayes

Eversole, New Lebanon, Ohio: Rick Izor, Connie Izor, B. J. Izor, Mike Faulconer, Marilyn Faulconer, Michelle Faulconer, Warren Marconett, Cathy Marconett, Jesse Marconett, Susan Green, Ralph Curliss

Fellowship, Martinsburg, W.Va.: Beth Chapman

Heidelberg, Myerstown, Pa.: Natalie Patches, Desiree Martin, Judah Martin, Caleb Martin

La Place, Ill.: Pat Riley, Jennifer Riley, Andrea Dinterman, Jacob Van Matre

Long Green Valley, Glen Arm, Md.: Jeannie Newby, Mandy Georgieff

Lorida, Fla.: Gene Knicyly, Anna Knicyly, Gingie Cummins

Maple Spring, Hollsopple, Pa.: Stephanie Callihan, Abby Cooper, Ford Cooper, Shannon Long, Janie Seganos, Tammy Swetz, Cody Todaro

Middle Creek, Lititz, Pa.: Eli Saenz, Daniel Black, Kara Eberly, Jessenia Saylor, Jared Good, Amy Martin, Sheldon Myer, Matthew Cassel, Timothy Cassel, Jason Martin, Wesley Martin, Sandi Anna

Martin, Robert Book, Melodee Book, Jon Wenger, Melisa Wenger, Kaylene Brubaker

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Modesto, Calif.: Doug Harty, Fran Harty, Amber Dreiling, Brittany Dreiling, T. J. Miller, Mary Baker, Esther Bailey, Elsie Kesler

Mountain Grove, Fulks Run, Va.: Tiffany Shiftet, Tracey Thompson, Kim Custer, Alvin Fulk, Willard Dove

Myersville, Md.: Jody Brandenburg, David Brandenburg, Obed Brandenburg

Nappanee, Ind.: Chad Schmucker, Tony Dausman, Nathan Dausman

New Covenant, Gotha, Fla.: Marilyn Reading Polson

Oak Grove, Roanoke, Va.: William Kinzie, Elizabeth Kinzie, Ray Hash, Susan A. Simmons, William Stovall, Bridget Stovall, Emily Nelson

Olathe, Kan.: Helen Cunningham

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Ridge, Shippensburg, Pa.: Chester Thomas, Thomas Barrick, Bonnie Barrick, Ruth Lape, Richard Guyer, Christine Guyer, Karen McCoy, Bruce Lemmon, Jr., Adam Hitchcock, Sherrie Calaman, Nicole Calaman, Gerald Johnson, Thomas Graham, Linda Graham, Ralph Wadel, Elizabeth Wadel

Roanoke, La.: Dorothy Dyan

Saint Petersburg, Fla.: Jo Ann Flynn, Linda Spearman

Wedding Anniversaries

Andrew, Max and Dorothy, Buckland, Ohio, 55

Appleby, Theodore and

Georgetta, Harrisburg, Pa., 55

Bahr, Charles and Jessie, Copemish, Mich., 50

Barkley, Meredith and Minnie, Davidsville, Pa., 60

Benner, Robert and Mary Lou, Roaring Spring, Pa., 50

Burkholder, Clyde and Anna Ruth, Mountville, Pa., 50

Campbell, Glenn and Betty, North Manchester, Ind., 55

Eckenrod, Foster and Ella, Washington Boro, Pa., 50

Gibson, Gene and Joan, Medina, Ohio, 50

Hollinger, Paul and Doris, Stuarts Draft, Va., 60

Hursh, Donald and Elberta, Elizabethtown, Pa., 55

Keim, Charles and Ruth, Davidsville, Pa., 60

Kurtz, John and Loretta, Lititz, Pa., 50

Malette, Arthur and Gladys, Sault Sainte Marie, Mich., 60

McCoy, Ed and Doloris, Altoona, Pa., 55

Morris, Elzie and Carrie, Grottoes, Va., 60

Nissley, Harold and Erma, Palmyra, Pa., 55

Peterman, Kenneth and Louise, Harrisburg, Pa., 55

Picking, Melvin and Mary, Mechanicsburg, Pa., 55

Roop, James and Ruth, Goshen Ind., 65

Snyder, Graydon and Lois, Chicago, Ill., 50

Steele, David and Shirley, Lorida, Fla., 50

Wilson, Warren and Patricia, Brookville, Ohio, 55

Deaths

Aby, Donald M., 86, Newville, Pa., March 4

Andrews, Mary, 82, Dixon, Ill., March 25

Arey, Truman Wine, 57, Headwaters, Va., March 9

Auker, Kathryn, 79, Ephrata, Pa., Feb. 14

Baughner, Helen L., 80, Hanover, Pa., April 4

Beahm, Aliene Nolley, 75, Nokesville, Va., Jan. 27

Bittinger, Irene Frantz, 97, McPherson, Kan., April 11

Bock, Frances G., 89, Newburg, Pa., March 8

Booz, Charles C., 84, York, Pa., March 29

Breneman, Grace, 93, Lancaster, Pa., March 7

Brubaker, Amy, 91, Lancaster, Pa., Aug. 30

Bush, Warren R., 91, Martinsburg, Pa., April 9

Clift, Ray Judd, 77, Frederick, Md., March 19

Cline, Wendell Ivan, 85, Pineville,

Va., March 3

Cober, Paul H., 84, New Oxford, Pa., March 23

Cooper, Eldon Fotch, 80, Hinton, Va., March 15

Davis, Ruth, 94, Lovington, Ill., March 31

Detterline, Charles Melvin, 68, New Enterprise, Pa., March 11

Diehl, Richard, 66, York, Pa., Jan. 24

Dofner, Myrtle M., 80, Council Bluffs, Iowa, April 20

Dove, Nellie Dale, 97, Harrisonburg, Va., March 15

Drockelman, Sue, 60, Indianapolis, Ind., Dec. 31

Enders, J. Frank, 91, Mountville, Pa., Feb. 19

Flora, Lottie, 81, Rocky Mount, Va., March 3

Flory, Martha H., 79, Harrisonburg, Va., March 11

Fyock, Gaynelle, 79, Clymer, Pa., March 26

Graybill, David M., 58, Lititz, Pa., Sept. 12

Hatcher, Lando W., 77, Elkwood, Va., July 17, 2002

Helmick, Vivian Bessie, 67, Moorefield, W.Va., March 14

Herbaugh, Jacqueline Amelia Dysart, 78, Woodstock, Va., March 16

Hershberger, J. R., 85, Goshen, Ind., April 1

Hoover, Donald E., 72, York, Pa., March 30

Keyser, Kathryn, 81, Saint Petersburg, Fla., Feb. 22

King, Fern, 64, Stevens, Pa., Oct. 28

Kistler, Mildred, 77, Shippensburg, Pa., April 7

Klotz, Gladys B., 88, Lacey, Wash., April 1

Lehigh, Ruth, 90, Lancaster, Pa., Feb. 14

Lowman, Estelle, 88, Dixonville, Pa., Nov. 2

Mongold, Darlan Denny, 65, Mathias, W.Va., Feb. 27

Mongold, Fannie Marie, 93, Timberville, Va., March 8

Murphy, Rachel Anna Driver, 93, Bridgewater, Va., March 16

Nolt, Emily Renae, infant, Lititz, Pa., June 30, 2002

Ober, Donald E., 72, Lititz, Pa., July 16, 2002

Paddock, Evelyn, 83, Grain Valley, Mo., March 15

Patrick, Esther Beryl, 96, Annville, Pa., April 12

Pringle, Mable Watkins, 89, Goshen, Ohio, March 24

Reinhold, Ann, 55, Denton, Md., Oct. 3

Rhoads, Paul E., 74, Palmyra, Pa., April 3

Sanford, Fred H., 78, Dixon, Ill., April 15

Savage, Ellis B., 90, Pottstown, Pa., April 24

Schmucker, Ray, 67, Middlebury, Ind., Oct. 13

Shank, Genevieve, 77, Indiana, Pa., Feb. 16

Shank, Walter, 81, Sebring, Fla., Dec. 21

Shifflett, Frances Lucille, 84, Dayton, Va., March 24

Shope, Jordan K., 11, Loysburg, Pa., March 23

Shumaker, Margaret Lucille Fulk, 82, Harrisonburg, Va., March 24

Sink, Margaret S., 89, Clarksville, Ind., Jan. 17

Speece, Katherine, 78, Reading, Pa., March 6

Spitzer, Ida Florence, 89, Harrisonburg, Va., March 6

Summers, Robert Lee, Sr., 85, Harrisonburg, Va., March 8

Tracey, Richard, 82, Timonium, Md., March 17

Watkins, Howard, 92, Pleasant Plain, Ohio, April 3

Weldy, Shirley, 71, Middlebury, Ind., Dec. 16

White, Caroline Anna, 88, Bridgewater, Va., March 13

Wyant, Edna Virginia, 85, Elkton, Va., March 17

Licensings

Britt, Nancy Yancey, Virgina Dist. (Mount Bethel, Eagle Rock, Va.), March 30

Laprade, Cindy Ellen, Virgina Dist. (Antioch, Rocky Mount, Va.), March 23

Miller, Robert P., N. Ind. Dist. (Osceola, Ind.), Jan. 5

Reish, Todd K., S/C Ind. Dist. (Richmond, Ind.), April 6

Yoder, Tim, N. Ind. Dist. (Goshen City, Goshen, Ind.), Feb. 9

West, Stephen H., Virgina Dist. (New Vision Church of the Carolinas, Sunset Beach, N.C.), April 6

Ordinations

Ewert, Robert C., S/C Ind. Dist. (Union Grove, Muncie, Ind.), March 16

Horning, Glenn, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Gardiner Road, Wales, Maine), March 30

Hosler, Randy, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Chiques, Manheim, Pa.), March 16

Placements

Miller, David L., from pastor, Carson Valley, Duncansville, Pa., to pastor, Mohrsville, Pa., April 23



Sidewalk theology

“But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will find your welfare” (Jer. 29:7).

Picture this. You step outside your front door and walk a few blocks to your church downtown, pausing once to ask Mrs. Brown on her porch how she’s doing since her surgery, and another time with a young mother pushing a stroller to marvel about how fast the baby is growing. You find the pastor in her study and together you decide to have your meeting in the coffee shop down the street. As you stroll the sidewalk you admire the solid architecture of the Carnegie Library, recently restored. At the restaurant you and the pastor exchange greetings with one of the local politicians and some friends from other churches before getting down to the church business at hand. As you walk back to the church you see a line forming at the local unemployment office, a reminder that not all is well in your town. You and the pastor decide to remind the church to pray for those who have lost their jobs.

What’s wrong with this picture? Nothing except that it is so rare as to be a collector’s item. Who among us walks to church, or even could if we wanted to? More than likely we live in a subdivision with houses all alike far from downtown, and the church is out on another edge of town near the Wal-Mart. Old architecture, if there is any left, is something we admire from a distance as we speed by in our cars. The unemployment line, like the homeless shelter, is someplace we might visit on a mission trip, but not a place we would happen by. Sidewalks and coffee shops as public spaces for chance encounters with strangers and friends are disappearing from our lives.

A movement called New Urbanism is emerging to analyze what we’ve lost as a culture by moving to the homogeneous suburbs, abandoning the central core of our towns while surrounding ourselves with franchise restaurants and stores in ugly box buildings. The New Urbanists long for a sense of community in our communities, beauty in our buildings, and connections with our past.

Now a Christian author attempts to show that God wants better cities and buildings too. In *Sidewalks in the Kingdom: New Urbanism and the Christian Faith*, Eric O. Jacobsen laments that to most Christians urban planning seems mildly interesting, but certainly not vital to faith. Christians have tended to treat the city as a problem to be solved, an evil to be conquered, a mission field, but certainly not a place of joy and salvation for our souls. Because we place no theological value on central cities and traditional

neighborhoods, we allow the culture to lure our churches to the edges of town. This is the culture of the automobile, which makes it unimportant that the church be near where its members live. And it is the American culture in general, which values individualism, independence, and freedom.

Though Jesus values individuals, he is less interested in individual rights and privileges than submitting to the will of God. Independence, which fuels our love affair with the automobile, is an American value while interdependence is a biblical value. “The body does not consist of one member but of many,” Paul writes (1 Cor. 12:14). The kind of freedom Americans seek is escapism, leaving problems behind by moving on to new frontiers. The kind of freedom God advocates is liberation from oppression. “If we are inconvenienced or annoyed by living, working, and playing in the company of our fellow human beings,” Jacobsen writes, “perhaps we need liberation from our selfishness and our willfulness rather than a massive home on a two-acre lot.”

In the Old Testament God dwells in specific places—the Promised Land, in Jerusalem, and in the temple. Then Jesus freed God’s people from geography, offering salvation to all people, who may worship anywhere. Because of our freedom, we Christians tend to disparage our towns and buildings as unimportant. Yet Jacobsen reminds that God has other reasons for us to value our cities and work for their improvement. “Cities force us to live, work, and play near people to whom we may need to show love, gentleness, and kindness,” he writes. Civic engagement builds relationships that become not only opportunities for witness, but invitations to learn and grow ourselves. And now that Christians have come to see stewardship of the natural environment as part of their duty to God, they are beginning to accept stewardship of the built environment as a responsibility of discipleship as well.

If you are contemplating an escape to the suburbs, or if your church wants to move to the edge of town for more parking, read *Sidewalks in the Kingdom* first. If you’re lucky enough to be in a neighborhood or downtown, walk around it, admire the old buildings, enjoy meeting some strangers and discovering opportunities for ministry. In the Bible God always led his people back to communion with himself in the city, and he will again. In Revelation we are told that after the first earth has passed away we will see “the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.”—FLETCHER FARRAR

Sidewalks in the Kingdom: New Urbanism and the Christian Faith is available from Brethren Press at 800-441-3712 or www.brethrenpress.com.

“Perhaps we need liberation from our selfishness and our willfulness rather than a massive home on a two-acre lot.”

—Eric O. Jacobsen

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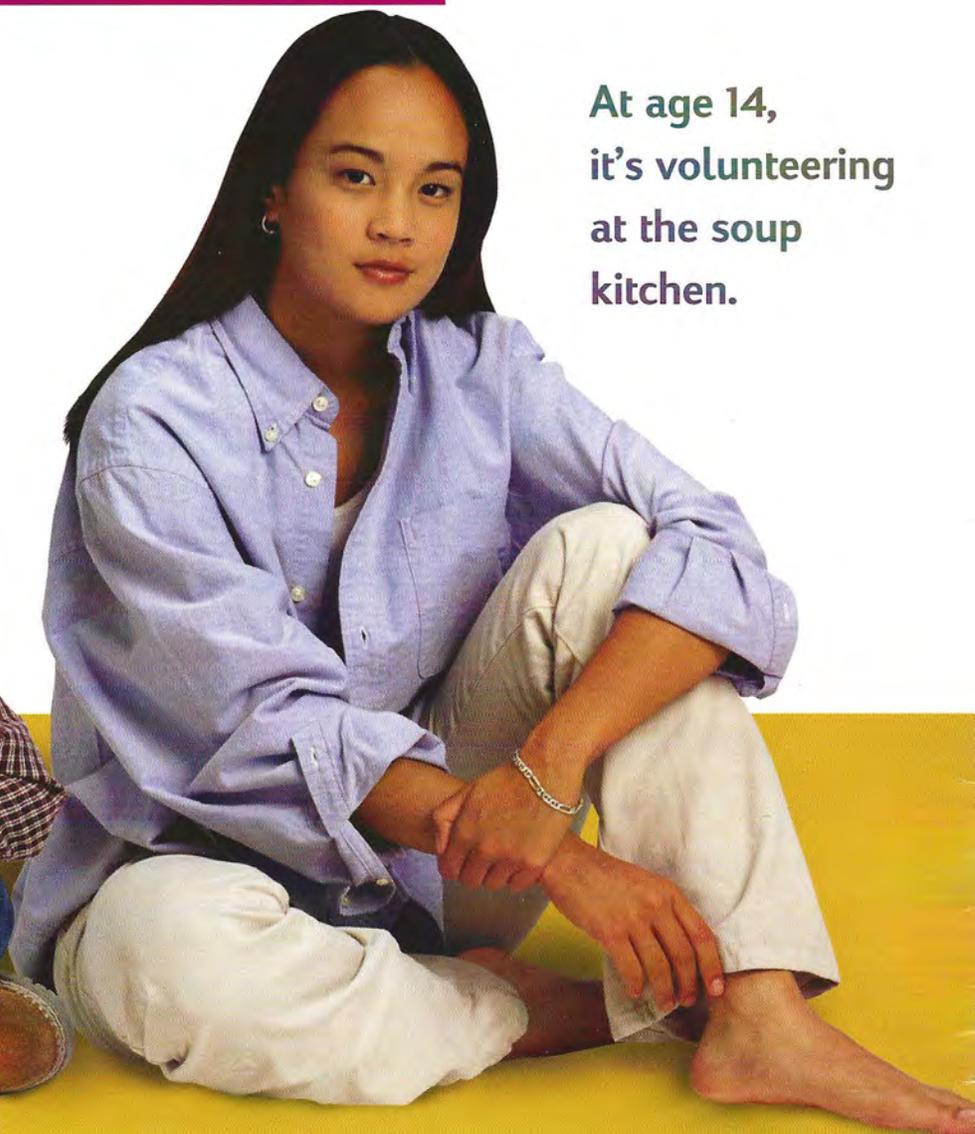
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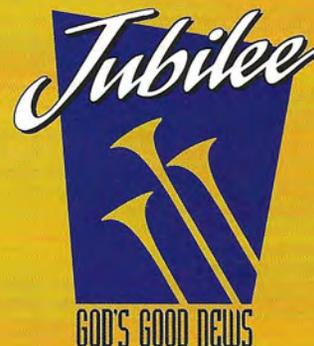
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