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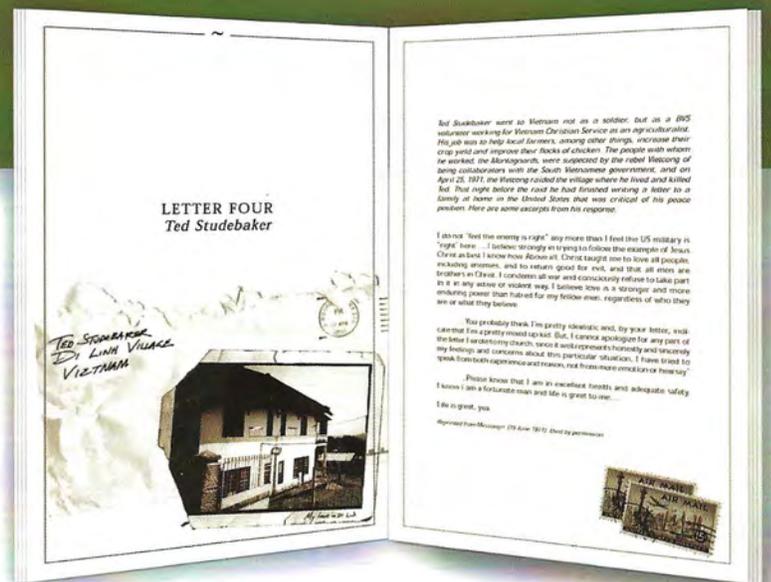
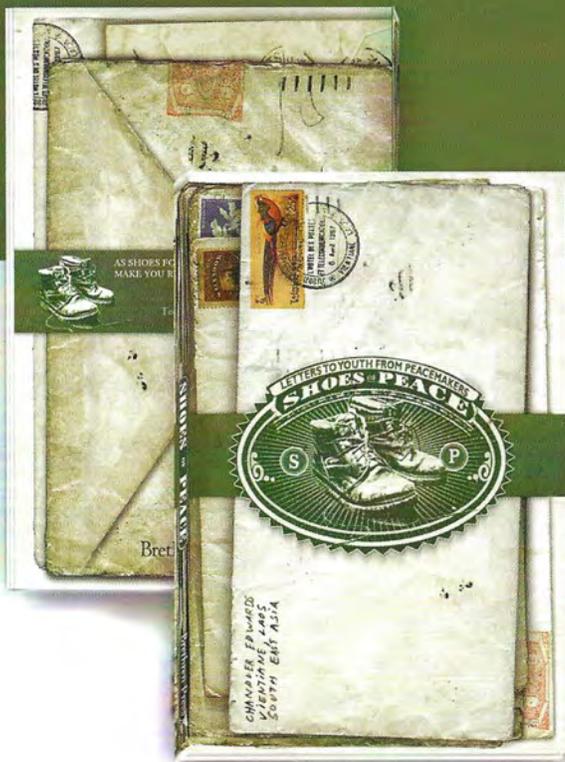
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Church of the Brethren

MESSENGER

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Janis Pyle

Wilson Nova

ON THE COVER

The radiance of these young girls at the Los Toros church captures the spirit of la Iglesia de los Hermanos (Church of the Brethren) in the Dominican Republic. The high proportion of members under the age of 20 gives the church an energetic and forward-looking character. As does a young leader, Wilson Nova, 26, who was elected moderator at the annual Dominican "conferencia" in February for the 24 churches/preaching points and 1,200 members.

"The Dominican church is alive and growing," he said, citing the more than 40 people baptized in the past year and the many others in preparation classes for baptism. He is excited that the church has set a goal of establishing 25 more churches in 10 years. Cover photo is by Janis Pyle.

- 10 How we do mission and why**
Mervin Keeney, executive director of Global Mission Partnerships, sets the theme for this special cluster of articles in conjunction with the World Mission Offering emphasis. A New Testament passage came alive when a Nigerian came to visit in Illinois.
- 12 The Dominican spirit**
Mission work in the Dominican Republic is thriving, with 24 Dominican Brethren churches, the work of the Brethren Mission House, and a new microloan enterprise. Janis Pyle, coordinator for mission connections, Global Mission Partnerships, traveled there to update MESSENGER readers on projects and progress.
- 14 Living color**
"Living letters of love," a special color section, shows the vibrant work of mission in the Dominican Republic.
- 20 Making microloans work**
Jeff and Peggy Boshart work through the Church of the Brethren to offer small loans to support entrepreneurs in the Dominican Republic. The caring relationships they've formed are key to the program's success.
- 24 Brethren World Assembly**
Mission was the theme of the recent gathering of six major Brethren groups. Participants learned that together they have played a large role in spreading the word around the world.

DEPARTMENTS

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Logging some seven thousand miles this summer has provided plenty of experience with road signs. Areas frequented by tourists, such as interstate highways and sightseeing locations, are well-marked with signs that are easy to understand and tell you everything you need to know in order to navigate.

But ordinary cities and towns that aren't geared toward tourism are another matter. Signs in some of those places are a haphazard mix of sizes and colors, sometimes hidden by trees and detour markers. New exits aren't incorporated into the big signs that tell you what's coming up. Buildings are incognito.

Likewise, the locals don't always know how to give directions to someone who isn't local. Instead, the directions go something like these real-life conundrums:

"It's near the high school. What? You don't know where the high school is?"

"You can't miss the library. It's right where the old one used to be."

"Do you know how to wind your way around to Main Street? No? Well, wind your way around to Main Street. . . ."

Soon it becomes apparent that you don't have to travel far away to have a cross-cultural experience. You can feel like a foreigner in the next town over.

And the social environment can be just as daunting as the geographic one: The memo for a retreat reads, "The hospitality room will be the same place as last year." Orientation materials for the new school invite me to join an organization, but don't say what the organization is for. I know I don't belong when a group leader says, "Now we'll sing a song we all know," and then launches into a song unfamiliar to me.

All of this would be okay if we didn't expect anybody new.

But if we're interested in tourists and other folks who aren't just like us, we may need to rethink our vocabulary. If we're thinking about evangelism, we may need to overhaul the signs.

If we want our churches to feel as comfortable as home, maybe we need to start by thinking of those who aren't at home.

Wendy McFadden

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The toddler gym, where young families connect to church

by Dick Benner

As a young mother taking leave of a successful career to raise her two-year-old, Gail knew she had to get out of the house or go slowly crazy in the wonderful, fuzzy world of child-rearing.

So she signed up for the newly announced Toddler Gym by the Lititz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren and discovered a whole new world of mothers and some dads, some grandmothers, even nannies with the same need to connect with others in the same situation.

Gail wasn't necessarily irreligious; she had just neglected that part of her life pursuing an investment career and marriage. She was surprised to learn that at this particular outward-looking church, she was suddenly able to chat for an hour every Thursday morning with other moms, while playing with their children and participating in "circle time"—doing finger plays, learning new children's choruses, and listening to Bible stories.

Networking with peers just happened. Naturally.

"Yes, this is an intentional outreach program," says Pam Reist, pastor of Christian nurture at Lititz church, "but primarily we view it as a service to the community. Out of this ministry has come a new Sunday school class for young families, only 10 of which are from the church."

Pam and her church, among others such as the nearby Mellingers Mennonite, are learning what Stuart Murray, the British church planter, has termed giving birth to new forms of church life that will once again make them exciting centers of the community.

A Toddler Gym is a simple concept. "It takes little additional staff," says Reist. "In addition to setup and cleanup crews, several volunteer assistants helped me with the enrollment and with the snacks, but other than that, it takes only one person to provide and lead all of the children's activities."

A group of young moms from the church planned for and purchased the toys and equipment for the gym. Funds for purchasing these items were available through a memorial fund.

Toddler Gym, which meets weekly from October through April, is not expensive to run and can utilize the facilities already there and takes no specialized trained person other than Pam, who is already on staff. It recognizes the need of young families to make natural connections in the community and to network with others in similar circumstances.

And it works! A total of 120 families are now enrolled with the program underway for only a year. Gail is so excited about it that she reported to Pam recently that some of the mothers are continuing to meet during the summer at the nearby Lititz Spring Park.

Mennonites and Church of the Brethren congregations are facing diminishing numbers.

Puzzled by an unprecedented exodus, we sometimes react in two extremes—either we devise grandiose strategies for growing churches in pockets of unchurched locations or we become immobilized with the dilemma and retrench.

Notice that the 600-member Lititz Church of the Brethren didn't go across town to begin a new church. They didn't

Alan (top) and Ian (bottom) play on giant caterpillar.



Tyler enjoys Hat Day at Toddler Gym.

form a study committee to consider new and wondrous ways of evangelism.

They took a good look at a community need (housebound mothers with preschoolers), matched their staff and facility resources, and went to work. "We had no idea there would be this response," says Pam with a certain spontaneous humility.

To its amazement, Lititz Church of the Brethren has become a "new church" serendipitously. It has shown what Murray says is necessary for the postmodern church: "(New) churches are needed, not only to bring the Christian community closer to where people are geographically, but closer to where they are culturally, sociologically, and spiritually."

Pam hopes to add numbers to the congregation through the Toddler Gym. "But that's a longer process," she says. Meanwhile she takes great joy in hearing mothers report that their toddlers want to sing "Deep and Wide" at bedtime.

Dick Benner, writer, teacher, and publisher, is a former member of the Everett (Pa.) Church of the Brethren. He now resides in Harrisonburg, Va. He can be reached at his web site: www.churchoutreach.com.



Pam Reist.

Seminary honors Morgan for decades of service

Dorla Morgan, a member of Mack Memorial Church of the Brethren, Dayton, Ohio, was recognized this spring for three decades of service to United Theological Seminary, a United Methodist graduate school in Dayton, Ohio. She has worked in admissions and development, and has also served as editor of the alumni magazine.

At a May 6 banquet, Gary Olin, president of the Alumni/ae Association, named Dorla an honorary alumna of the seminary in recognition of her retirement, her many years of service, and her relationship with alumni/ae. "Dorla modeled a servant ministry that is a reflection of the Lord Jesus Christ in our midst," he said.

Olin also read from a letter sent by John C. Wagner, retired director of admissions and professor of church administration. He wrote: "You have always been a learner, but you have also been a teacher by work, word, and example of what it means to be a follower of Jesus in the midst of the requirements and complexities of theological education."

Dorla also shares her gifts with the Southern Ohio district and her local congregation. Throughout her 37 years of membership at Mack Memorial, she has served in various leadership roles. She is currently on the leadership team,



Dorla Morgan receives recognition from G. Edwin Zeiders, president of United Theological Seminary.

serves as minister of music, and church clerk. She is the mother of four grown daughters and has six grandchildren. Her oldest daughter, Gail M. Habecker, is a member of the board of directors for Brethren Benefit Trust and her youngest daughter, Gay E. Mercer, is a licensed minister.

—Julie M. Hostetter

MILESTONES

West Charleston looks back 100 years

The West Charleston Church of the Brethren, Tipp City, Ohio, will be celebrating 100 years of service and worship in the community, Sept. 12-14.

The congregation has invited all to join in "Looking Back 100 Years."

West Charleston Church of the Brethren began as the Hickory Grove congregation of Miami County in 1830. The church house was built in 1854. That building was abandoned and the present West Charleston church was built in 1903. On March 10, 1917, the congregation changed its name from Hickory Grove to West Charleston.

Jacob Coppock served the church as elder from 1905 to 1924. J. C. Flora served as the first full-time pastor and as elder for 24 years. Mary and Ivan Eikenberry served from 1941 until September of 1944 when they were called to serve as missionaries in Nigeria.

Under the leadership of pastor George Wright, an educational wing was built. Wright had planned to retire but unfortunately he died before the dedication in November 1965.

Burton H. Wolf is the present pastor.

—Glena Buchholtz and Barb Siney

Oakton plans centennial celebration

A series of events are planned for Sept. 28 to celebrate the centennial of the founding of Oakton (Va.) Church of the Brethren in 1903. Following the regular service at 11 a.m. on Sunday, a carry-in meal will be provided followed by a short drama focused on the history of the congregation.

The congregation sent two of its members to the foreign mission field: Minor Myers, who served several years of mission work in China, and Earl Flohr, who served a term in Africa. In recent years, Carol and Wayne Spangler continued this mission

emphasis as they served with a Brethren mission in Nigeria.

Former pastors of the church, former members, and friends of the congregation are invited. Contact the church at 703-281-4411 or OaktonCOB@aol.com. Directions to the church are provided at www.oaktonbrethren.org.

—Vern Wingert

Kentucky church marks 60 years

The Flat Creek Church of the Brethren, near Manchester, Ky., marks its 60th anniversary with a celebration September 21.

Plans include morning worship with Mark Flory Steury, Southern Ohio district executive, as guest speaker and special music by Tim and Ruth Walker. After a carry-in meal there will be an a 2 p.m. service and sharing of memories.

All are invited. For information call Dwayne Yost at 606-598-5765.

Remembered



Robert N. Durnbaugh, 67, of Elgin, Ill., died July 17. He was a member of the General Board staff from 1979 until 1991. He worked with Brethren Press, initially as the manager of sales and later as general manager and publisher. He was a member of the Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren.

After retiring from publishing he became executive director of the Elgin Choral Union. He served on the Elgin Cultural Arts Commission and the board of directors of the Elgin Youth Symphony, and he was a member of the Illinois Arts Council. A musician friend described him in the *Chicago Tribune* as "a tireless supporter and fan of music."

Both as musician and publisher, he was instrumental in production of *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, published in 1992. He was a member of Hymnal Council and the publishers committee from 1984 to 1992, and devoted many hours to the success of the hymnal project. More recently he was active in the new Church of the Brethren group Voices for an Open Spirit. Durnbaugh had staffed the group's hospitality suite during Annual Conference in Boise, Idaho in early July.



Wilbur R. Hoover, 85, of McPherson, Kan., died July 17. He was born in Roaring Spring, Pa., Sept. 7, 1917. A minister and district executive in the Church of the Brethren for more than 50 years, he

graduated from the University of Cincinnati with a bachelor's degree in chemistry in 1941 before being called to the ministry by his local church. He attended Bethany Theological Seminary where he graduated magna cum laude with a master's of divinity degree in 1949.

He served as pastor to Church of the Brethren congregations in Afton and Enders, Neb.; Rocky Ford, Colo.; and Warrensburg, Mo. While at Warrensburg, he also served as part-time field associate for the Tri-District Missouri District. Later he served as district executive for the Western Plains District.

After retirement, Hoover also served as

interim executive of the Northern Plains District in Ankeny, Iowa, and as chaplain of the Cedars retirement center in McPherson.

Over the years Hoover held a number of positions with the denomination, including membership on the General Board and as an officer of the Council of District Executives. He was a trustee of Bethany Theological Seminary, McPherson College, and the Cedars. He was active in ecumenical endeavors, including the Colorado Migrant Ministry and the Councils of Churches of Missouri and Colorado. He served as president of the Kansas Ecumenical Ministries.



Retired Manchester College professor **Paul W. Keller** died July 6. The scholar, well-known and widely respected for his knowledge, writings, and lectures about conflict resolution and interpersonal

and small group communication, was 90.

Keller was the father of the conflict resolution element of Manchester College's peace studies program. He was a much

sought-after expert in conflict resolution and interpersonal communication, even long into retirement. He co-authored one of the first books on interpersonal communication, *Monologue to Dialogue: An Exploration of Interpersonal Communication* (Prentice Hall 1973, second edition 1979).

He joined the faculty of Manchester College in 1948, teaching speech communications. He became the college's primary faculty for courses in interpersonal and intergroup conflict resolution. After retirement in 1982, he continued to teach part-time and to contribute to the college, and also taught at two other colleges and remained active in his academic reading until his death.

Paul Keller was a member of the Manchester Church of the Brethren, and taught adult Sunday school for almost 50 years. He served as chair of the board of trustees of Bethany Theological Seminary, and helped found the Manchester Shepherd's Center and served for several years on the National Board of the Shepherd's Centers of America.

Check Your Perspectives... Give one of these new essays a read!

• **To Judge or Not to Judge** by *Timothy Harvey*

How can we judge without being judgmental? With careful study of key scripture passages, Tim Harvey offers practical advice on the spirit and manner in which discipline can be reclaimed in the church today.

• **Saving the Church** by *Jonathan Hunter*

Jonathan Hunter says new life for the church of Jesus Christ can come about only as the body of Christ is willing to lose its life. His thoughtful proddings will challenge readers to think in new ways about church revitalization.

• **Fundamentalism** by *Graydon Snyder*

The forces of fundamentalism have rocked politics and religion in the twenty-first century on both the radical right and the radical left. Graydon Snyder explains the phenomenon and why Brethren theology and fundamentalism don't mix.



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Bethany consultation explores "vital practices"

"What are vital Brethren practices? How can these practices bring vitality to ministry with youth and young adults?"

Those questions were addressed by teachers and church leaders who gathered for a consultation at Bethany Theological Seminary July 22-24. The group focused mainly on baptism, but also discussed love feast, anointing, prayer, Bible study, congregational singing, peacemaking, volunteer service, and simple living.

The consultation was sponsored by the seminary's Institute for Ministry with Youth and Young Adults. Russell Haitch, director of the Institute and assistant professor of Christian education, says he hopes to involve congregations in this conversation about Brethren practices.

"We want to learn from people in churches what these practices mean to them," Haitch says, "especially what they could or should be for youth and young adults."

Haitch added that the Institute plans to investigate how these church practices have "hidden power to critique and transform culture."

Other participants in the consultation included Susan Boyer, pastor of La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren; Chris Douglas, director of Youth/Young Adult Ministries for the General Board; Rhonda Pittman Gingrich, director of Resource Center for Churches in Minneapolis; Stephen Reid, academic dean of Bethany; Jonathan Shively, coordinator of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership; Becky Ullom, coordinator for National Young Adult Conference for the General Board; and Dave Witkovsky, campus minister of Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pa.



Dan McFadden

BVS Unit 254 gets down to work

Following their May 28-June 17 orientation in Putney, Vt., members of Brethren Volunteer Service Unit 254 headed to assignments across the country and beyond. Volunteers, their hometowns, and their placements are as follows: Back row: Karen Roberts (BVS staff), Paul Grout (BVS staff). Middle row: Genelle Wine (BVS staff), Anna Pomazal of Dixon, Ill., to Holy Family Services in Weslaco, Texas; Sue Albright of Huntingdon, Pa., to CooperRiis in Mill Spring, N.C.; Amy Adkins of Middlebury, Ind.; Shalon Atwood (BVS staff); Elizabeth Waas Smith of Pinckney, Mich., to Camp Myrtlewood in Myrtle Point, Ore.; Matt Rucker of Elgin, Ill., to Camp Bethel in Fincastle, Va.; Christopher VanderReyden of Syracuse, Ind., to Camp Harmony in Hooversville, Pa. Front row: Cindy Laprade of Rocky Mount, Va., to Youth and Young Adult Ministries in Elgin, Ill.; Mary Beliveau of Towson, Md., to Brethren Historical Library and Archives in Elgin, Ill.; Callie Surber of Phoenix, Ariz., to EYN Comprehensive Secondary School in Mubi, Nigeria; Melody Cline of Middletown, Del., to Oakland Catholic Worker House in Oakland, Calif.

BBT's Thomas elected chair of Corporate Responsibility board

Will Thomas, director of Foundation Operations for Brethren Benefit Trust, has been elected to a one-year term as chair of the governing board of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR). Thomas' election came during ICCR's annual general meeting held June 10-12 in Orange, Calif.

Thomas has been a member of the BBT staff since 1999 and was initially elected to a three-year term on the ICCR board in 2002.

ICCR consists of 275 faith-based institutional investors, with a combined portfolio estimated at \$110 billion. The group sponsors shareholder resolutions, meets with corporate management, screens investments, and uses other avenues to urge corporations to be more socially responsible. The Church of the Brethren has been involved with ICCR for nearly three decades.

As chair, Thomas will set the agenda for board meetings, organize the board's response to significant issues, and work with ICCR's executive director on board issues and new opportunities.

General Board faces troubling financial news

The Church of the Brethren General Board met July 5 in Boise, immediately prior to Annual Conference.

Much of the business focused on financial information, looking at the past year, the current situation, and future projections. The news was troubling, with a total loss of \$2.5 million in the General Board's net worth in 2002, due to a sharp decline in investments, a continuing gradual decline in congregational giving, and rising costs.

The 2003 General Ministries budget, which supports most of the agency's ongoing programs, has already been reduced by \$384,000 via staff cuts and other reductions. An ever smaller balanced budget was brought for 2004, but only via a \$194,000 "patch" from one-time designated funds.

With that patch in place, board members approved a \$5,226,000 budget parameter for the General Ministries fund for 2004, not including self-funding pro-

grams such as Brethren Press and Emergency Response. Board chair Warren Eshbach said there "must be new creative options" for the future as deficits totaling more than \$750,000 were projected for 2005 and 2006.

Several ministry areas gave updates on new initiatives and special events, and citations were given to General Board members who finished their five-year term and to departing staff members David Radcliff, Russ Matteson, and Howard Royer. Retiring general secretary Judy Mills Reimer was honored with a slide presentation showing highlights from her five years as head of the denomination's main program and administrative arm.

In a reorganizational meeting two days later, board members called Donna Shumate of Southeastern District as chair for the coming year and Glenn Mitchell of Middle Pennsylvania as vice chair. Others called to the executive committee were J.D. Glick, Carol Kussart, Doug Price, and David Sollenberger.

District executives express concern over "fragmentation"

The Council of District Executives during its meeting at Annual Conference adopted a "statement of concern" over the increasing fragmentation seen in the denomination. It notes the "development of various divisive trends and issues."

The statement lists four signs of this fragmentation, including an increased sense of mistrust toward Brethren structures and institutions, a proliferation of special-interest groups, a tendency to view meetings of the church like Annual Conference as an "arena for the advancement of particular agendas," and the lack of a common vision and purpose.

It suggests that a common vision and shared identity need to be rebuilt. "We believe this is the call of God to our generation, to reaffirm our identity as members of the Church of the Brethren in particular and as Christians in general."

As a means toward reaching this goal, the council is proposing that a consultation on ecclesiology be held, to closely discuss and examine what it means to be the church. The statement expresses the hope that other agencies and groups will join the council in sponsoring the event and fostering an "extensive conversation" on the issues facing the church.

"This consultation is a first step toward a new and common understanding within the church concerning who, whose, and what we are." Planning for the consultation will be occurring over the coming year.



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Dynamics of Christian Belief



The Dogmatic Imagination *The Dynamics of Christian Belief*

Can members of our churches today speak intelligently on divine will, the sacraments, or the Trinity? Or has the modern and post-modern church largely forgotten its creeds? And does it even matter? Theologian **A. James Reimer** believes that it does matter, and that the church ignores these discussions at its own peril. In short, engaging essays, Reimer approaches the dogmas of Christian faith with humor, insight, and imagination. Here basics such as heaven, hell, prayer, and judgment are explained with historical insight and contemporary application. Anabaptist Mennonite priorities emerge but with appreciation for the church's wider historical context and traditions.

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UPCOMINGEVENTS

Sept. 5-7 "Open Mind, Open Heart" discernment event for those considering ministry as a second career, Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind.; Missouri-Arkansas District Conference, Windermere Conference Center, Roach, Mo.

Sept. 7-8 Mission and Ministries Planning Council meeting and mission conversations, Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md.

Sept. 12-13 South/Central Indiana District Conference, Camp Alexander Mack, Milford, Ind.

Sept. 14 Bethany Emphasis Sunday

Sept. 19-20 Northern Indiana District Conference, Elkhart County Fairgrounds, Goshen, Ind.; **Southern Pennsylvania District Conference**, Chambersburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren; **West Marva District Conference**, Moorefield (W.Va.) Church of the Brethren

Sept. 19-21 Pacific Southwest District Conference, Community Brethren Church, Fresno, Calif.

Sept. 26-27 Association of Brethren Caregivers board meetings, Elgin, Ill.; Atlantic Northeast District and Southern Pennsylvania District Disaster Relief Auction, Lebanon (Pa.) Area Fairgrounds; On Earth Peace board meeting, Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md.

Sept. 26-28 National Youth Cabinet meeting, Elgin, Ill.

Sept. 28-Oct. 17 Brethren Volunteer Service Unit 257 orientation, Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md.



Wait Wlitschek

From left, Laura Sweitzer, Erica Schatz, and Mandy Wampler teach a song about a hungry and tired moose during a stop at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill. The three comprised this year's Youth Peace Travel Team, which carried out peace education activities at camps through the Midwest and at Annual Conference.

Song & Story Fest focuses on peace

About 160 people—including 27 youth and 13 children—gathered at Idaho's Camp Wilbur Stover June 29 to July 5 for the seventh annual Song & Story Fest, titled "Weaving Peace Together."

This week-long family camp featured well-known Brethren folk musicians and storytellers and asked, "How can we more effectively weave peace into our lives and in our communities?" Morning gatherings, workshops, and campfires focused on daily themes like "Learning: To Listen With an Open Heart," and "To Walk With Those Who Suffer."

On Earth Peace joined as a co-sponsor of the fest this year, and OEP staff members Bob Gross, Matt Guynn, Rachel Peterson, Barb Saylor, and Kim Stuckey led workshops on methods of peacemaking.

Musicians Bill and Jacob Jolliff, Shawn Kirchner, Peg Lehman, Jan and John Long, and Mike Stern led the group in singing and shared their songs in nightly concerts in the camp's worship center. Storytellers Debbie Eisenbise, Rocci Hildum, Jonathan Hunter, Jim Lehman, and Sue Overman brought their own and others' experiences to life around the campfire, in the morning gatherings, and in afternoon "story swaps."

Folk dances on the opening and closing evenings and a "potpourri" talent night rounded out the events of the week. Afternoons were free for recreation such as playing in the creek, swimming in the local hot springs, and hiking in the mountains.

Next year's Song & Story Fest is scheduled for June 27 to July 3, 2004, immediately prior to Annual Conference in Charleston, W.Va. It will be hosted by Shepherd's Spring Outdoor Ministries Center near Sharpsburg, Md.

Personnel moves

• **Vernon L. King** of Newton, Kan., has been named president/CEO of The Brethren Home Community in New Oxford, Pa., effective Sept. 1. King, who grew up in central Kansas, has 17 years of experience in the continuing care retirement industry and currently serves as CEO of Mennonite Manor in South Hutchinson, Kan. He has been with Mennonite Manor for six years.

• Bethany Theological Seminary has announced the appointment of **Leland W. Flora** and **Amy S. Gall Ritchie** to its Office of Student and Business Services, to the positions of director of student development and director of admissions, respectively.

Gall Ritchie has served as pastor of Florence Church of the Brethren in Constantine, Mich., the past 12 years. She co-pastored with her husband, Kurt, for the first 10 years and was part-time solo pastor the past two, combining her pastoral work with employment by the Constantine Township Library. She and her family moved to Richmond, Ind., in early August as she began the new position.

Flora has spent his career as an educator in Prince William County Public Schools of Manassas, Va. He has been a teacher and assistant principal and for 27 years was personnel supervisor for the county, administering the employment process for 2,500 positions. Since retiring in 1998, Flora has continued to work as a consultant.

While working in Manassas, he attended Manassas Church of the Brethren and chaired the church board for 19 years. He began the new position in



early August, working from his home in Hardy, Va.

• **Richard Hanley** resigned as district executive for Southern Plains District effective July 31. He had served in the position since 1999. He had previously also served adjacent Western Plains District as district executive in a joint arrangement until last year.

Hanley has taken a position as director of Faith in Action, a program of Inter-Faith Ministries based in Wichita, Kan. He and his family plan to continue living in McPherson, Kan.

• **Joan Lowry** has been called to serve as district administrative secretary for Southern Plains District effective Aug. 1. This is a one-year interim position while the district board considers a new board structure and future staffing needs.

Lowry and her husband, Jim, have served the district as co-pastors of two congregations and as managers for Camp Spring Lake. She has served on the district board and as moderator of the district.

National Young Adult Conference now has online site available

The website for National Young Adult Conference 2004 made its online debut in late July. Visitors to www.nyac2004.org can find information about accommodations, programming, speakers, cost, travel arrangements, and more.

To request additional NYAC promotional material, contact Becky Ullom in the General Board's Youth/Young Adult office at 800-323-8039, ext. 286, or bullom_gb@brethren.org. NYAC is scheduled for June 14-18, 2004, in Winter Park, Colo.

1. Iraq. Church World Service announced in July that it was shipping \$1.2 million in donated medical supplies to Iraq, to be used in local hospitals and medical facilities. The supplies include surgical kits and sterile surgical components, addressing one of the highest priorities in Iraq. Service Ministries staff at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., loaded four 40-foot containers of the supplies for shipment on behalf of Church World Service. Later in July, CWS sent another \$115,000 for three new projects to be implemented through local partners. The General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund has been among those supporting the massive effort.

2. Mars Hill, N.C. District conference season officially began the last weekend of July as Southeastern District gathered for its meeting at Mars Hill College in the Smoky Mountains. The three Plains-region districts followed with conferences the first weekend of August. District conference season ends when Virlina District meets Nov. 14-15.

3. Boise, Idaho. Staff of Church of the Brethren Emergency Response/Service Ministries and American Red Cross Blood Services, Lewis and Clark Region, called the blood drive at this year's Annual Conference "a huge success." A total of 208 people registered to donate, exceeding the goal of 200; of these, 14 were first-time donors. The drive collected 176 pints of blood.

4. Israel/Palestine. The third group in the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme began serving in Palestine and Israel in July. The six-member team comes from several European countries and served through mid-August. The US National Council of Churches, meanwhile, issued a "Plea for Nonviolence in the Middle East," calling on the people of the Middle East "to take this moment to make peace a reality for themselves."

5. Liberia. An allocation of \$10,000 from the General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund will support a Church World Service (CWS) appeal for humanitarian aid to Liberia. The grant will help to cover the cost of an air shipment containing canned meat, blankets, health kits, and Interchurch Medical Assistance clinic boxes. It is the second grant made from the fund for Liberia relief efforts. The National Council of Churches and World Council of Churches both called for the presence of peacekeepers and for assistance in bringing an end to the long-running conflict.

6. Roanoke, Va. A July 31 *Roanoke Times* article featured Matt Rucker and his role as a Brethren Volunteer Service worker at nearby Camp Bethel. Rucker, a member of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren, Elgin, Ill., began his service at Bethel on June 18. "It seemed like God was calling me to do this," Rucker said in the article. "I'm learning what I really need."

7. New Windsor, Md. Every three years since 1978, members of Emmaus Lutheran Church in Cuxhaven, Germany, have sent youth from their church to Virginia or have hosted youth from the Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren in an exchange program. This year, as part of the exchange, 19 German youth and advisors and seven members of Bridgewater spent three days at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., for a volunteer/learning experience.

8. Winnipeg, Manitoba. The top bishop in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was elected president of the Lutheran World Federation at the LWF's meeting in Winnipeg on July 26, according to Religion News Service. The Rev. Mark Hanson was elected to a six-year term. Hanson, who will remain as head of the 5.1 million-member ELCA, was elected on the first ballot in a 267-111 vote.

The power of MISSION

From Nigeria, a 'living letter' returns

by Mervin Keeney

You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all; and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts (2 Cor. 3:2,3).

The man on the line said he was "a member of EYN" (the Nigerian Church of the Brethren), and told me his name—a name that I could not have repeated. He wanted to come to Elgin to meet me and to see the church headquarters. He was studying in downstate Illinois, and had a break that permitted the time to travel. We set a time. I gave directions. Nothing out of the ordinary.

But the visit of this Nigerian was anything but ordinary. Tiwudu Magaji Shalli was a delightful young man of 31. Even in his eagerness, he could not seem to absorb all that he was seeing. With considerable excitement, he shared his long-held dream to come "to see the place from where missionaries had been sent to his homeland to bring Christ to his people," and most importantly, to his own parents. Through their lives and witness, he too found Christ and was baptized in 1989.

He had come to Elgin to see the place, to voice thanksgiving, and to fulfill the commitment he had made to his parents. He viewed our national office as the heart of the church, in one sense a place where his life had begun, and he needed to make connection with this core of his identity. He wanted to honor, and make physical contact with, the mother church which had been so powerful in shaping his life.

Tiwudu had carried a letter of introduction from then-president of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN), Rev. Toma H. Ragnjiya, stating that he was a "dedicated member of EYN." His parents, Magaji and Maryamu, the letter contin-

ued, were graduates of Waka Teachers College and active members of Uba No. 2 congregation, just north of EYN headquarters. His father farms near Wamdeo and his mother teaches school at Uba. When departing for the United States to study, Tiwudu had promised his father that he would visit the church offices and convey his gratitude, but also to make physical connection with the human origins of their faith. His visit had the feel of pilgrimages US Christians make to the Holy Land.

Entering a flying school as a foreign student after 9/11 had been difficult, he said, especially for someone from a Muslim area of Africa. But his deep roots in the Nigerian church could be substantiated and he was able to obtain a student visa. Tiwudu saw his flight training as a means to a lucrative career to support his parents and enable him to strongly support EYN. He plans to continue being an active lay member of EYN when he completes his training at the end of the year and returns to Nigeria.

Generations of Church of the Brethren missionaries in Nigeria since 1923 had brought Christ to his tribe, the Margi people. The Waka schools near Biu, begun by Church of the Brethren Mission in 1952, provided his parents with superior education that has uplifted them throughout their lives and shaped the lives of following generations. Tiwudu saw his own life in the context of this heritage and was immensely grateful.

Those of us who met Tiwudu were amazed by the energy of his faith, and also how the relationship between our peoples and churches was so alive for him. His sense of close linkage to, and deep appreciation for, the long line of mission workers who had been a part of the work in Nigeria reflected the spiritual relationship that sometimes forms between the bearer of the gospel message and those who receive Christ through that witness. Some have called this an



Tiwudu Magaji Shalli during his visit to the General Offices.

“apostolic bond.” In Tiwudu’s life, this special bond has been felt even generations after the witness.

This sense of special relationship, formed through the initial sharing of faith and then by living and ministering side-by-side, is widespread among the members of the Nigerian church. Christian fellowship is highly valued within the Nigerian church. This spiritual and social bond reinforces a sense of oneness and unity, being the Body of Christ, in a context of multiple tribes. Visitors to Nigeria are often amazed at the hospitality and warmth Nigerians express toward visitors from the US church, almost as though each of us were a long-lost relative. Nigerians remind us that the word “yan’uwa” in the Hausa version of their church name implies “closest of kin.” Our kinship in Christ with the Nigerian church is one of the blessings of decades of mission work together and has an enduring character. Former President Toma has often talked of this spiritual linkage between the Nigerian and US churches as continuing “until Christ comes.”

Since his visit with us, Tiwudu has sent home photos of the General Offices and told his parents about the time at the church office. He received back excited and thankful words. For this family, connection with tangible roots of their faith heritage has been completed.

The apostle Paul’s letters to the emerging church of the first century fill much of the New Testament. He used the written word to shower the new churches with encouragement, to correct their behavior, and to defend himself against critics. But even this active writer of letters reminded the believers at Corinth (2 Corinthians 3:3) that letters of ink, or even of stone (hinting at Mosaic law), are inadequate. Instead of these tangible forms, they are to be “living

“The sacred message is carried in fallible, human form. Yet, the Word has impact beyond our human capacity.”

letters” for Christ, so that others might read the love of God written in their hearts. The message had been conveyed by Paul in human form, but the handwriting in their hearts was God’s.

While we know that God can work directly within human hearts, special individuals often have been instrumental in helping us to recognize Christ in our lives—a parent, a special teacher, a pastor, a friend—someone who is a living letter for us. Paul’s words remind us that when we claim Christ in our lives, we too are invited to be living letters, bearers of Christ to those around us.

Today’s evangelists, church planters, and mission workers in the Dominican Republic, Sudan, and Brazil, as well as Nigeria, bear Christ’s message of love to others through the wondrous gifts and accompanying weaknesses of the human being. The sacred message is carried in fallible, human form. Yet, the Word has impact beyond our human capacity.

The mission effort in Nigeria had to be built “from the ground up” in a very isolated area of Africa, among a people who were animist or Muslim, and among peoples without written language. Stories of early mission events convey that colonial and tribal rulers fully expected the early missionaries to die or become discouraged and leave. It was a formidable challenge that would have been impossible without God’s empowering.

Literally hundreds of mission staff have served in Nigeria during the 80 years of mission and partnership, and others have participated in the annual workcamps since 1985. Tiwudu’s life and faith indicate that many who had been sent to live and work among his people, most of whom he had never met, have been effective living letters of witness to Christ. He was voicing the heartfelt feelings of gratitude of many Nigerian sisters and brothers who would not have opportunity to make this trip themselves.

What a testimony to Christ through generations of Church of the Brethren mission staff— living letters to Nigeria! And now, through their witness, Tiwudu has become a return living letter of faith to us. **AM**

Mervin Keeney heads the mission, service, and witness cluster of General Board ministries as executive director for Global Mission Partnerships.



The church alive

"The Dominican Republic, more than any other recent General Board mission field, has energized and excited the US church," attests Merv Keeney, executive director of Global Mission Partnerships. "The reasons are many," he states, and lists "the beauty of the island nation in the Caribbean, the proximity of the country to us, the natural warmth of the people, and the spirit-filled way people live their faith."

Captivating is a word that describes the Dominican Republic, current population about 8.7 million, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti. Since 1979, when Puerto Rican Brethren members hurried over there to help after Hurricane David, rich relationships with the people have exploded into the three major current efforts: 1) the nurture of 24 Dominican Brethren churches/preaching points, known as la Iglesia de los Hermanos, and the training of church leaders, 2) the Brethren

Mission House, and 3) the new microloan enterprise (see color insert, page 15, and article, page 20).

Oversight of these mission areas and hosting of visitors is the work of the new mission co-coordinators in the Dominican Republic, Irv and Nancy Heishman. They moved to Santo Domingo, the capital, in June. With their children Timothy, 13, and Jenny, 10, the Heishmans left behind their co-pastorate at First Church of the Brethren in Harrisburg, Pa., to walk with Dominican church leaders and help them shape and guide the church.

Even while immersing themselves in Spanish language and cultural study, they got their feet wet early serving as hosts for a workcamp, assisting Jeff and Peggy Boshart and Daniel DeOleo, the directors. In late July, 24 youth and 5 adults from the Oakland Church of the Brethren, Bradford, Ohio, came down for a week-long workcamp. Nancy said, "The group painted a number of churches here, experienced



Left and second from left, footwashing is reverently practiced in the San Juan congregation. Pastor Miguel Ogando hugs a member of the San Juan congregation following footwashing.

Middle, the Brethren Mission House in Azua. Peggy Boshart, left, and Merv Keeney, get a tour of the complex from houseparent Barbara Eby.

Right, Earl and Barbara Eby have been houseparents at the Brethren Mission House since its founding in 2000.

Catch the Dominican spirit!

Article and photos by Janis Pyle

Dominican worship, enjoyed a day snorkeling at a beautiful beach with marvelous coral formations in the Caribbean, and visited the old colonial zone in Santo Domingo. Some of them even got to see the president of the Dominican Republic, Hipolito Mejía, who 'just happened' to be in the hardware store where they were buying paint!"

Jon Keller, youth director of the Oakland church, said that the word he heard the youth say most often was 'awesome.' He said, "The youth were surprised by the depth of friendships they formed in a short period of time despite the language barrier. The experience opened their eyes to the wealth US youth take for granted."

Irv Heishman emphasized that American and Dominican youth worked side by side on projects. "Workcamps are an excellent introduction to the long-term ministry work here, such as the work of the Brethren Mission House," he said.

Brethren Mission House

An English language ministry with the Dominican church began in 2000 when a number of factors came together. Dominican leaders saw value in more members learning English for employment. Also, more Dominicans learning English and more Americans learning Spanish would deepen ties between our two churches. The Brethren Revival Fellowship was seeking ways for more young people to engage in mission. These interests were brought together in the formation of a Brethren Mission House at Azua, jointly funded by the BRF and the General Board.

Fully staffed, the effort includes houseparents, a teacher-trainer and five teachers, all living in a complex of two painted cement block houses at Azua. The teachers, who are sent through the combined efforts of Brethren Volunteer Service and Global

Fighting HIV/AIDS: A race against time

The name Dr. Hilcias Ricardo is well-known to mission advocates. For several years her community-based rural health clinic ministry to Haitian immigrants in the town of Sabana Grande de Boya has been well supported by Iglesias de los Hermanos as well as by US church members and districts.

An update on her work is also an alert about an impending crisis. She still provides some primary care, but her focus has become the prevention of HIV/AIDS and STD (sexually transmitted diseases). The isolated rural region of Monte Plata around Sabana Grande de Boya was recently identified as the area with the highest incidence of AIDS in the country.

"As many as 8 out of 10 seriously ill patients that I see are probably HIV positive," she said. "If AIDS gets worse here, it will be bad for the entire society, because there will be orphaned children. Infected people are weak and can't work, thus cannot provide for their families. Other diseases that were almost eradicated, like tuberculosis, will come back, because the bodies of AIDS sufferers can't fight the disease."

Prevention is so important because she has almost no access to AIDS treatment medicines. She travels by motorcycle and horseback to reach people where they live. She trains health promoters, chosen by their communities, to help her educate teachers and students about how AIDS is transmitted.

The seriousness of the situation in the region is brought home by youth who perform at schools and community gatherings where they are invited. They use stories about kids who have gotten AIDS and died, using scary masks and costumes to represent the disease. "The dramas are a great program. The masks and stories really make people listen. The kids get out and use their talents to promote a good message," Dr. Ricardo said.

A member of the Peniel congregation in Santo Domingo, Dr. Ricardo believes that it is also important to share the hope that AIDS victims can have through Jesus Christ in such a desperate situation. Peggy Boshart, who recently traveled with Dr. Ricardo for a week, said: "She has a servant's heart and a great rapport with people. She lives humbly with humble people." —Janis Pyle with Peggy Boshart, translator



Dr. Hilcias Ricardo educates about AIDS transmission near Sabana Grande de Boya.

Mission Partnerships, go out by public transport to cities and towns and teach English classes in the church buildings. Current teachers are Crystal Miller of Chambersburg, Pa., and Karen Miller of Mooreland, Ind. Three more teachers and a trainer are needed.

Daniel Greenawalt of Harrisonburg, Va., a teacher since the program began, finishes his term of service in September. He estimates that he has taught 100 students. He said, "Because the classes in the churches have been open to the community at large, they are a tool for evangelism. Through exposure to Christians and church events, community students begin to consider Christianity. Some even make commitments. During the course of my class in Magueyal, several students have accepted Christ."

He will greatly miss his classes and the kindness of the Dominican people. "I feel that God has used me through the Brethren Mission House to help persons grow in knowledge as well as faith," he said. "I have several students who want to study languages for a career. The classes helped them find their life focus. It is amazing to see the amount of dedication they have put into their studies. The results are miraculous."

Houseparents Earl and Barbara Eby maintain the household, disburse finances, and keep records. "We provide emotional, spiritual, and physical sanctuary for the rest of the team after long days of travel and teaching," said Barbara. Their family, including Christopher, 14, and Bryan, 12, will return to their home in Pennsylvania in September.

—continued on page 19



David Sollenberger

The whole family will be involved as the Heishmans serve in their role of mission co-coordinators in the Dominican Republic. From left: Jenny, Nancy, Timothy, and Irvin.



Living Letters of Love



Community development in the Dominican Republic
led by Jeff and Peggy Boshart

Enabling self sufficiency with micro



Story and photos by Janis Pyle

Jeff and Peggy Boshart embody the Apostle Paul's call to be "living letters of Christ's love" (2 Corinthians 3:3) as they live and work among the communities of la Iglesia de los Hermanos (Church of the Brethren) in the Dominican Republic. While keeping faith and relationships at the center of their work, these General Board staff have carefully initiated a community-based microloan ministry. The effort of these trained agriculturalists builds on Dominican industriousness to gain greater self-sufficiency.

The continuing loan fund has already channeled loans totaling more than \$35,000 to 170 families in 10 communities. Families, villages, and the Dominican church are becoming stronger as small enterprises generate funds for school fees, health care, and better nutrition. Already the Bosharts have accomplished a great deal in terms of economic progress, but they would be the first to say that their "living letter" witness to Christ is the most important contribution they make.



Upper left, Efrain Rubio explains to Jeff Boshart how he bought new tools with his microloan to expand his motorcycle repair business, which is thriving in the mountainous community of Villa Nizao. At left, a married couple from San Luis, Daniel Beltre and Elena Bueno (the loan recipient), discuss food items added to their store with their microloan. The name of the store translates "Brethren Cafeteria."

loans



María Elena Noel, second from right, shows Jeff and Peggy the beach towels added to her front porch store in San Luis as a result of her microloan. At left is Anastasia Buena, moderator-elect of la Iglesia de los Hermanos.

Deisi Ramirez tells Jeff and Peggy how she used her loan money to purchase creams, shampoos, and hair gels to sell in her store and use for her beauty salon in Tabara Abaja.



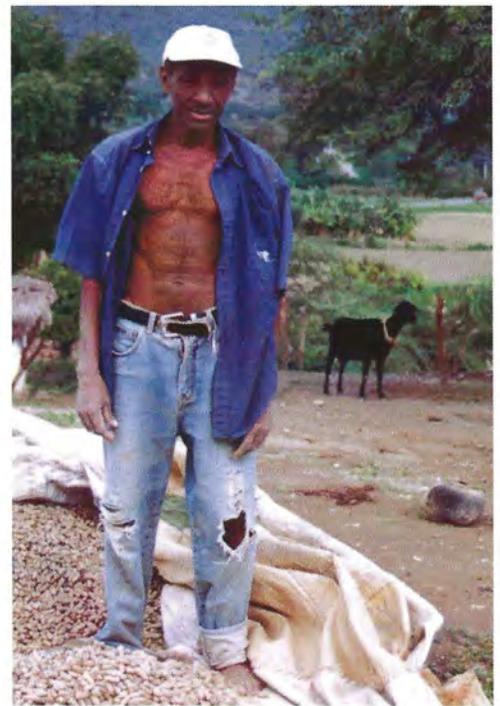
Portraits of changed lives



Each microloan recipient represents a family now more stable because of the extra income generated by a microloan.

“Connected with the Dominican church’s love for evangelism, for presenting the gospel verbally, the loan program makes a powerful witness in local communities,” the Bosharts state.

Below, a local farmer from the Bastidas congregation decided to embark on a new adventure with his microloan, raising peanuts. Bottom left, Martina Mateo Rosario from Magueyal expanded her inventory of household goods.



Yaquelin Garcia of San Luis, above, purchased a large quantity of fabric to sew curtains and garments. Adriano Sanchez, top right, rented a new field and hired its planting to grow an expanded crop of okra. He has committed a portion of this production to the church. Magali Martes, center, a butcher from Tabara Abaja, was able to expand her livestock with a mother pig. One of the piglets is intended as a tithe for her pastor.

We invite you to support this ministry of the Church of the Brethren General Board through gifts to the Global Food Crisis Fund, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, Illinois 60120. For additional information or extra copies of this update, please contact Janis Pyle, Coordinator for Mission Connections, Global Mission Partnerships at 800-323-8039, ext. 227.



"I wish I could bring back the mature structure of your Annual Conference to ours, and I wish I could transfer the Dominican spirit to the US church."

—Wilson Nova



Danilo Jiménez, left, pastor of the Magueyal church, and Merv Keeney appreciate the longstanding US and Dominican church partnership.



Guillermo Encarnación visits the San Luis church.

They will be followed by Laura and Ronald Brinton and their children Benjamin, 15, Meghan, 12, and Anna, 10, from Red Lion, Pa.

In summing up their tenure, Barbara said, "It is always inspiring for us to see God's spirit working in every part of the world. It is good to know that Christ is not limited by culture or climate or language."

A growing church

A spirit of growth and self-sufficiency pervades the Dominican church. More than 40 people were baptized in the past year, and many others are in preparation classes for baptism. Current Church of the Brethren membership in the Dominican Republic stands at about 1,200. That means hard work for Guillermo Encarnación, coordinator for theological education for the General Board, who oversees the training of pastoral leadership for the Dominican Brethren church. "The Dominican church has set a goal of establishing 25 more churches in 10 years," he said.

The five-year program he helped establish has 34 students enrolled, four of whom are already licensed pastors. Emphasis is placed, he said, on Brethren history and practices, such as love feast and foot-washing. Because many of the students are also in universities, the format is flexible. "Students read

books and do homework. Every month, a national tutor, Elías DeOleo, meets with them," Encarnación said. Over the course of a year, four workshops are held. For example, a recent popular workshop titled "A Time of Harvest" was about evangelistic opportunities. He added: "Every year there is a theological conference. The most recent one was on pastoral counseling, and in 2004 it will be on 'The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church.'"

One of the theological students also happens to be this year's moderator, Wilson Nova, 26, elected at the annual "conferencia" of la Iglesia de los Hermanos in February. Encarnación accompanied Nova at the US church's Annual Conference in Boise, Idaho, in July. Nova said, as translated by Encarnación, that each church has things to give and receive from each other. "I wish I could bring back the mature structure of your Annual Conference to ours, and I wish I could transfer the Dominican spirit to the US church," he concluded.

To financially support (or join!) the General Board's missions in the Dominican Republic, contact Global Mission Partnerships at 800-323-8039. 

Janis Pyle is coordinator for mission connections, Global Mission Partnerships, for the General Board.

At home in the Do

Jeff and Peggy Boshart: "To live as

Article and photos by Janis Pyle



Jeff and Peggy Boshart have transformed a cement block house into a colorful, tropical home.

In two short years, Jeff and Peggy Boshart, community development staff for the General Board, have quietly made a name and a home for themselves in the Dominican Republic.

"Hola, Peggy! Hola, Jeff!" the Dominicans shout and wave to them, even as they are hanging on tight in the back of a flatbed truck going 60 mph on a hilly backroad of this underdeveloped island nation in the Caribbean.

They flash their trademark smiles and find a way to wave back. Always on the road and forever dust-covered, they nurture the microloan community development ministry that they developed through la Iglesia de los Hermanos, the Church of the Brethren in the Dominican Republic. By mid-2003, their microloan project, supported by the Global Food Crisis Fund, had distributed \$35,000 to 170 persons in 10 communities.

Each loan, they point out, represents a family transformed through a business project. On a recent trip, they:

- advised Adriano Sánchez of Magueyal about soil conservation practices for his okra field,
- gave María Elena Noel of San Luis pointers for marketing the new inventory of beach towels in her front-porch store, and
- praised Efraín Rubio of Villa Nizao for his ingenuity in purchasing new tools for his motorcycle business at the base of a mountain.

Trained agriculturalists, the Bosharts thoroughly researched many microloan programs and began theirs with the intention that it might, if successful, serve as a model program for other groups.

Dominican Republic

those we serve”

Reducing their philosophies to the core, Peggy said they live by four tenets: “nurturing Dominican leadership, living the local culture, sharing relevant knowledge, and developing lasting friendships.” They give equal weight to each.

Enabling self-sufficiency

“Former missionaries on the island had given many handouts, ranging from food and clothing to money and jobs. One person defined a ‘good missionary’ as someone who gives out a lot of things,” Peggy said. “We decided that we would avoid setting such a precedent.

“Our work here began in 2001 in response to Dominican church leaders who identified the need for persons to become more self-sufficient and to stop the vicious loan cycle of 20 percent interest-loans,” she said. The leaders were also aware, she said, that self-sufficient people are better able to undergird their local churches through tithes and offerings.

They developed a process that insured ownership of the microloan program. “We spent a whole year listening to church leaders and members, forming a Community Development Committee (CDC) of 14 members,” said Jeff.

“We visited projects run by other Christian community development organizations—including Heifer International, the Christian Reformed Church, and the Dominican arm of Church World Service—with the CDC members, and then listened again to the church members,” he said.

“Men, women, and children dreamed about what their communities might look like by drawing on large poster-sized papers taped to walls,” Peggy remembered, marveling that many of those dreams have come true. “Their sketches included cows, nice school buildings, medicine bottles, baseball fields and basketball courts, computers, musical instruments, swing sets, and tall trees.”

In June of 2002, the CDC decided to offer loans of US\$200 at 6 per cent annual interest, with loans to be paid back to the CDC and all funds funneled through la Iglesia de los Hermanos. Loan recipients would be held accountable to one another for repay-



Peggy interviews a hairdresser for a videotape about the microloan project. Carlita Heredia was proud that she could expand her small business.



Always on the go, at a restaurant table Jeff and Peggy plan the next stop in a series of visits to microloan recipients.

ment; they would also meet regularly for prayer and Bible study.

"The insights into Dominican culture offered by the CDC have enabled our work to progress at a rate beyond our expectations. They are shouldering more and more of the load as time goes along," Peggy said. "Our plan from the beginning has been to work ourselves out of the job."

Making the desert bloom

To best lead the program, they chose to settle in Tabara Abajo, centrally located in an arid region 150 kilometers from the capital of Santo Domingo and within 1 1/2 hours of most of the rural Dominican Brethren churches.

"We believe that part of our task is to live as those we serve," Jeff said. Toward that end, they did intensive language study in Santo Domingo to be able to communicate meaningfully with the Dominicans. "We would sit with our tutor in a small room for 3 hours a day and be forced to speak Spanish. We really felt sorry for our teachers, but we hope they will be blessed some day for their patience," he said.

Their newly-minted Spanish came in handy as they bought supplies and hired work done on an unfinished block house. The yard was fenced from marauding chickens and goats. They now have their own turquoise- and cream-colored tropical retreat.

"Our landlord had already planted plantains, papayas, key limes, and coconuts in the back yard. It has been a joy to plant orange, grapefruit, tamarind, mango, and avocado trees as well as combination flower and vegetable gardens," Jeff said. (Peggy revealed that it is Jeff who has perfected the recipe for papaya smoothies that so many visitors, including this writer, have enjoyed for breakfast in their home.)

Giving back The story of Tatika

One of the 170 microloan recipients is Jeff and Peggy Boshart's neighbor, a woman named Tatika. She routinely pops in on the busy couple to hand them a steaming dish of red beans and rice and then scurries back to her catering. She has the most successful business in town.

Peggy said Tatika, the mother of five children, used to ask for money from them. "Shortly after we moved into our house, she came to us looking for money to send her teen-aged daughters to school," Peggy said. "I kindly explained that we would be happy to talk to the

pastor about her situation but would not hand out money from our house. She said she understood and left."

When Tatika heard about the loan program, she was interested, Peggy said. "We were glad to hear that she was approved by the local church board to receive a loan. She initially requested a loan to fix her husband's motorcycle, but the Community Development Committee decided that the loan must go for a business. So she decided to do something herself and started cooking."

"We are happy to report," Jeff said, "that Tatika was the first person in our town to pay back her loan. Her business is selling breakfasts to passersby and taxi drivers as they wait at the local bus stop. After three months, she paid over

half of her 4,000-peso loan (US\$200). After five months, she had paid it all.

"Tatika works extremely hard. She gets up before dawn to make final preparations on the day's food. Now we are helping her think through what she will do with her second loan of 5,500 pesos (US\$250)," he said. "She is considering new cookware and having someone make a nice new table and chairs for customers to use. It's fun to watch someone change from a person with no ideas and little hope, into someone who contemplates the future and is learning to dream bigger dreams," he said.

"The person who asked for help from us now helps us out," he said.

—Janis Pyle

He said that Naked Neck chickens (so named as they have no feathers on their necks) have formed the core of the home flock that provides them and their neighbors with plenty of eggs.

He tells this story: "One day, we were visited by a man from Taiwan who owns farmland about 10 kilometers from here. A Dominican friend told him about our birds and he was very keen to purchase some to add to his flock. We learned that he was a partner in an organic mango exporting business and asked him if we could trade chickens for mangos. We have found that money often changes a relationship in ways that other material goods or services do not."

'Don't eat the laying hens'

Imparting knowledge is crucial to success of the microloan projects, particularly the agricultural ones, the Bosharts agree. When they first came, their advice was as simple as "Don't eat the laying hens." Now they use their marketing and agriculture training to the fullest.

It is fitting that Peggy and Jeff met while working for a non-denominational Christian organization that provides training and resources in tropical agriculture—ECHO, Inc., of N. Fort Myers, Fla. They served two terms of service with ECHO in Haiti, including a two-year stint with a microloan program. Jeff grew up in Lebanon, Pa., and Peggy on a farm in Fort Atkinson, Wis. Both received undergraduate degrees in biology, Jeff from Juniata College in Pennsylvania and Peggy from Wheaton College in Illinois. Both have masters of professional studies degrees in agriculture from Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.

They particularly enjoy visiting the village of Villa Nizao in the southwestern part of the country. This region of almost rainforest stands in stark contrast to the desert landscape of most of the southern part of the country. Although the area looks lush, many of the villagers live in poverty. On a recent visit to loan recipients, the villagers gave the Bosharts a precious breadfruit, a true gift. A part of the gift was the carrying of their 20-pound fruit down a steep mountain.

Putting people first

"Taking time to sit and talk or do things with committee members outside of work has made a huge difference in the effectiveness of our work,"

Peggy said. "Building lasting relationships is something we believe in.

"People are very important to us. We allow them to make mistakes, then we learn together how to correct the errors. We have had pastors and other church leaders misuse designated funds," she said.

We need worship to refresh and renew, Jeff said. "We go two or three times a week to a Dominican church service." They pray for the loan recipients. He said, "We often remind ourselves that this is not our project. If good comes from this, it is because God is at work. If the Holy Spirit is moving, and you get behind the movement which is washing over you like a wave, then there is no failure, only riding the wave to the best of your ability."

Time for themselves

Peggy said that when they can get away, they head to a secluded site on a nearby beach for a morning of birdwatching, to be capped off by a plunge into the calm waters of the Caribbean. "Scooter, our dog, of course, must come on these trips as well." In such rare moments by themselves, they take time to reflect on their life and love, she said.

"We started a conversation one evening over supper at an agricultural mission conference in 1994," she said.

"And nine years later, the conversation still hasn't ended," Jeff said.

That they began their conversation is a blessing to the global church. ❧

Janis Pyle is coordinator for mission connections, Global Mission Partnerships, for the General Board.



María Elena Noel of San Luis talks over business expansion plans with Jeff Boshart.

Brethren around the world

At the Brethren World Assembly, six Brethren de



BHL/Ashland Theological Seminary Library

The Brethren Church is one of numerous groups that has established missions around the globe. In the early 1900s the church opened a mission program in what is now Central Africa Republic that is still successful today. Here a party of missionaries, circa 1919, in Brazzaville, French Equatorial Africa, await permission to enter the area that is now Central Africa Republic.

Brethren alphabet soup can be confusing enough, what with BSC, HPI, BTS, BBT, OPEA, AC, GB, VBS, and ABC, just to name a few!

But at the Brethren World Assembly, held July 23-26 at Grace College in Winona Lake, Ind., there were even more combinations floating in the soup—COB, BC, CGBC, OGBBC, EYN, DBC, and FGB. Still, no matter how you stirred the broth, throughout the course of the meeting the letters MT 25 kept floating up. They stand for Matthew 25, of

course, the scripture that inspires mission and service work in all the churches: “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Matt. 25:40). The six major Brethren groups, along with some representatives of international Brethren from South America, Africa, and Asia, gathered together to sort out what they do in the way of global mission and service, and why. “Brethren Presence Around the World” was the theme.

he world

ominations showcase mission and service

by Frank Ramirez

The meeting was sponsored by Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., and is the third assembly, with such meetings occurring at intervals of roughly five years. Board members from the Church of the Brethren, Brethren Church, Fellowship of Grace Brethren, Dunkard Brethren, Old German Baptist Brethren Church, and Fellowship of Conservative Grace Brethren International plan the event together.

So how many Brethren are there in the world? Just who are they? And how did they get there? Bill Eberly of North Manchester, Ind., and editor of the monograph series of the encyclopedia, claimed there are at least 18 different denominations, including two different horse and buggy groups, tracing themselves back to a baptism in Germany in 1708.

“The Brethren are represented by 3,400 local congregations in 23 nations around the world with more than 600,000 members,” he said as the meeting started. By meeting’s end, as representatives of the group shared stories of new missionary activity, it was clear that the estimate would have to be raised by upwards of 200,000.

Over the course of the four-day meeting it was obvious that there are many similarities between the several groups, as well as some glaring differences. With regards to the story of missions, at least, there was much to share, as all listened with respect and interest to what other members of the Brethren family are doing.

A. Ferne Baldwin, a former Church of the Brethren missionary to Nigeria, opened the conference with a talk on “Historical Roots of Church of the Brethren Missions.” She recounted how D.L. Miller traveled the world in the late nineteenth century and brought back “magic lantern” slides that inspired Brethren to go to India, China, and Africa on missions.

There was some opposition at first, because

Brethren at that time opposed the paid ministry and church organization, and missions required the support of missionaries and mission boards to organize the work. However, these objections were overcome. Today the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria is larger than the church in the United States.

Over the course of the meeting it was learned that the same is true for The Brethren Church and the Fellowship of Grace Brethren. The number of Brethren in the world is much larger than those within the borders of the United States.

Ronald T. Clutter, professor of biblical studies and theology at Trinity Theological Seminary in Newbury, Ind., began telling the assembly the story of “Progressive” Brethren Missions, which is shared by three of the denominations. After the three-way



Tom Crago, interim Nigeria mission co-coordinator, Global Mission Partnerships, shares with assembly participants the results of a wide-ranging statistical survey of *Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria* (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) congregations. Total EYN membership is nearing 150,000—larger than the US church—with an average weekly worship attendance of more than 133,500.

Walt Wiltschek



Delivering a passionate message at an evening worship service, Marcos Inhauser, national director for Brazil, Global Mission Partnerships, called on Brethren to unite in Jesus Christ.

split of the Brethren of 1881-83 between Old Orders, the Progressives, and the Conservatives, there was a great desire to start missions, but it wasn't until 1900 at Winona Lake when some Progressives—a group begun by Henry Holsinger—met beneath a tree and started what became the true mission board.

Under the leadership of Henry C. Cassel, a long-term mission project was begun in Argentina in 1909 that has led to great success for both Brethren and Grace Brethren. But through the initiative of one person, James Gribble, a mission program was opened in 1918 in what became the Central Africa Republic that is still successful today.

Dale R. Stoffer, the academic dean and professor of historical theology of Ashland Theological Seminary in Ohio, spoke about Brethren Church-sponsored denominations and congregations outside the United States. In some cases, international students who had attended the seminary were inspired to return to their home countries to found missions, including thriving ministries in India and Malaysia. Efforts in Columbia, Paraguay, and Peru, some of which were begun by Argentine Brethren, were recounted, as well as a radio ministry in Mexico which reaches over 100 million worldwide.

Stoffer recounted as well that in Nigeria the Brethren Church chose to cooperate with already existing Church of the Brethren ministries. Not only were there Brethren Church workers sent to Nigeria to work through EYN, or Church of the Brethren in Nigeria, but some members of the EYN were educated in Ashland.

Harriet Finney, of North Manchester, Ind., and the 2003 moderator of the Church of the Brethren, recounted recent trips to the Dominican Republic and Brazil to visit new congregations, and said, "I am grateful that our unity in the body of Christ does

not depend on us. It does not depend on speaking the same language, coming from the same culture. Our unity in Christ Jesus depends on the one who is the head of the church, the one in whose name we gather, and I am grateful that that is the unity which we seek together."

Merv Keeney, the executive director of Global Mission Partnerships for the Church of the Brethren, pointed out that while the membership of the Nigerian Church of the Brethren is 148,771 against 133,844 for the United States church, attendance in Nigeria is nearly double. This tremendous increase occurred after the American church released the Nigerian church and encouraged its independence.

Grace Brethren and Brethren Church congregations outside the United States are also independent. In many cases, small churches grow so fast that they quickly commission members to travel outside their own borders to start new congregations that do not require buildings or paid pastors, only fervor. The problem, all three denominations agreed, is helping to train leadership for these rapidly growing churches. David Guiles, director of Grace Brethren International Missions, described the new models and said one difficulty comes from being spread too wide and too thin.

A new seminary, opened in South America, provides many leaders for the Latin America missions, he said, and much of the work is done by folks who have little money by US standards. Guiles said it had never occurred to him that the warning of Jesus, "Woe to you who are rich," might apply to him, but reminded his audience that anyone who earns minimum wage is among the top five percent in wealth in the world.

Guiles emphasized the role of service to the world played by all missions. In some countries, especially nations where conversion to Christianity can lead to loss of social services and employment, missionaries create jobs as well as converts.

In all the mission stories told by the Brethren, women played a large role. Even though of all the denominations represented only the Church of the Brethren ordains women to the ministry, most of the groups told stories of women, single and married, who found great fulfillment in ministry through mis-

“Our unity in Christ Jesus depends on the one who is the head of the church, the one in whose name we gather, and I am grateful that that is the unity which we seek together.”

—Harriet Finney

sions. By contrast, John E. Bryant of the twelve-year-old denomination known as Conservative Grace Brethren International described a strong congregational structure that called out men to the ministry of church planting both domestically and internationally, and precluded individual initiatives by women. Currently the denomination’s mission efforts have been modest, though they look forward to progress in the future.

Kenneth M. Shaffer, Jr., archivist of the Church of the Brethren, presented a paper describing the role of his church in service projects around the world. He began by quoting significant portions of Matthew 25, emphasizing God’s call to serve the hungry, the sick, the poor, and those in prison, and then spoke of ways the BSC, known variously as Brethren Service Committee or Brethren Service Commission, sought during the years after World War II to live out the words of Jesus.

His topics included the founding of Heifer Project International, the Brethren Service Commission’s role in the reconstruction of Europe, the pivotal position of the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., to channel both physical and human resources in and out of the United States, the seminal role played by the denomination partnering with others in the foundation of Church World Service and CROP, and the model provided by Brethren Volunteer Service when the Peace Corps was founded.

And in a report rich with sainted names, one in particular kept appearing, that of M. R. Zigler, whose passion for peace and service in the name of the gospel was integral in the founding of projects in cooperation with or despite Brethren channels.

In a panel discussion, representatives from the six major Brethren denominations shared their current service projects. Christopher Bowman, current Church of the Brethren moderator, who chaired the discussion, said, “We are born with the DNA of Matthew 25 in our genes. We can’t seem to imagine giving the good news without giving the good works.”

Included in that panel were Paul Stump of the Dunkard Brethren and Marcus Brubaker of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church, who recounted their branches’ stories of service and mission.

The conference included worship each evening, and a Saturday visit to Arnold’s Grove, near New Paris, Ind., where the Brethren experienced one of

their splits, as well as Camp Mack, where murals depict Brethren history. Brethren shared meals together as well, and while eating, or visiting during breaks, and while hearing presentations, Brethren listened respectfully, whether or not they agreed with the views shared. Not everyone got the answers they wanted, and no one fit into a comfortable box.

The Brethren Encyclopedia was the direct result of the aforementioned M.R. Zigler. Thirty years ago he gathered representatives from all the Brethren groups to the Dunker House in Linville Creek, Va., in part because he wouldn’t have it any other way. That meeting has led to a forum that makes it safe for Brethren to come together, despite their differences, and perhaps provides a model for all who would come together in peace, and without conflict.



Matt Wylischak

Paul Stump of the Dunkard Brethren Church and Brethren Volunteer Service director Dan McFadden were among the denominational representatives serving on a panel about Brethren service and outreach work.

The strongest and most lasting image from Brethren World Assembly came from Marcos Inhauser, national director for Brazil, Global Mission Partnerships, as he described the way all Brethren engage in missions. Just as a bird requires two wings to fly, so the church needs both the Great Commission from Jesus in Matthew 28, and the service required by Jesus in Matthew 25. Inhauser said a bird cannot fly with one wing, and the church needs “devotion and the deeds.” That probably says it all when it comes to all the Brethren, whatever their stripe! **WU**

Frank Ramirez is pastor of the Everett (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.

LETTERS



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Reflections on Annual Conference

Something special happened in Boise. Other conferencegoers may share a different perspective about the Church of the Brethren as seen through the lens of Annual Conference. Yet, from the perspective of Moderator and Moderator-elect, we lift three affirmations.

It appeared to us that many conferencegoers came to Boise weary of the contentiousness and distrust which has too often marked our deliberations in recent years. There appears to be a growing desire for unity—a unity which goes beyond what we can ever achieve by standing in lines at the microphones or in eloquent speechmaking.

There is a desire to see the unity for which Jesus prayed in John 17:11 and the "one body" to which we are called when we "let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts" (Col. 3:15). We believe the church is yearning for the dramatic, spirit-led unity of the Jerusalem conference of Acts 15. Rather than seek a uniformity in which we

must all find agreement on all issues, we witnessed a delegate body which was seeking a unity empowered by giving up our status-seeking and power-bearing.

Secondly, among the officers of Annual Conference this year we appreciated a real sense of working as a team. Each of us encouraged and supported one another. As we accepted the gifts and skills for leadership which each of the officers had to offer, we were able to provide more effective leadership to the conference as a whole.

Through countless hours of meetings, conference calls, and prayer, we found ourselves sincerely thanking God for each other. We grew to like each other as we worked together on behalf of the body.

Finally, we believe that the "Call to Prayer" passed by Annual Conference delegates in 2002 had a profound and positive impact on this year's Big Meeting. The "Call to Prayer" helped to provide a framework for our praying for one another and for the Church of the Brethren throughout the year.

Praying in small groups during the conference, hearing testimonies about the effectiveness of prayer, reading stories of Brethren at prayer, viewing the pictures of prayer drawn by our children, and hearing from hundreds of Brethren who were holding the conference in prayer . . . these were all manifestations of our "praying without ceasing" in Jesus' name. Our Conference worship services deepened this sense that Boise was hosting a "prayer-empowered gathering."

This response of prayer from around the denomination, we believe, opened the possibility for a spirit of respect and caring among us. Prayer enables most of us to speak with conviction about our beliefs while also treating one another with love as sisters and brothers.

As we reflect about the conference, we are led to lift words of gratitude. We are thankful for the spirit of the delegates and guests at the conference, for the relationship we enjoyed as officers this year, and for the circle of prayer which bathed these meetings with humble petitions and love-affirming promises.

We thank God that something special happened in Boise.

Harriet Finney and Christopher Bowman 2003
Annual Conference Moderator and Moderator-Elect

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FALL 2003 TOURS

FALL FOLIAGE TOUR in NEW ENGLAND
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GERMANY and SWITZERLAND (October 9-23)
CHRISTMAS SERVICE TOUR to PENNSYLVANIA
(November 29 - December 4)

2004 TOURS

SERVICE TOUR to SUNNY JAMAICA
(January 23 - February 1)
VIETNAM (February 4-21)
AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (February 6-26)
MEXICO (March 5-13)
PARAGUAY, BOLIVIA and PERU
(March 23 - April 8)
SEVEN CHURCHES of REVELATION (May 28 - June 8)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 9-21)
EUROPEAN ANABAPTIST HERITAGE (June 9-23)
ENGLAND and SCOTLAND for
GRANDPARENTS and GRANDCHILDREN
(June 23 - July 5)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE (July 6-22)
From PRAGUE to GDANSK (July 22 - August 1)

CANADIAN MARITIME PROVINCES (August 7-16)
SWISS GLACIER EXPRESS (August 9-24)
IRELAND (September 3-14)
SWISS-VOLHYNIAN MENNONITE HERITAGE
(September 15-29)
LANDS of the BIBLE (September)



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A word of caution

It is no surprise that gay-bashing denominations are becoming more vocal and powerful when moderate churches like our own deal at Annual Conference with the Michigan query on homosexuality in the pulpit by sending it to the Annual Conference Council for more study. A word of caution: While we're "Studyin' about the good ol' way," we might do well to pay attention to the words of the poet W. H. Auden, who wrote of how complacent we can become about God's fearsome last judgment on us all, including the church:

Accustomed to religious dread
It never crossed our minds He meant
Exactly what He said.

Edward Huber
Philadelphia, Pa.

Corporate takeover

I have great concern for the direction our country is heading. Supposedly we used to have a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." It is obvious that we now have a government of the corporations, by the corporations, and for the corporations, leading us into empire to rule the world. There is nothing democratic or Christian in this trend.

Delbert Blickenstaff
Greenville, Ohio

The flag and God

I am a firm believer in the flag. I respect it very much. I think too many people worship the flag instead of God. They want to take God out of everything. Then they want God to bless America.

Patricia Haffner
Geneva, Ind.

Fragmenting the light

This is in response to the Council of District Executives during its meeting at Annual Conference adopting a "statement of concern" over the increasing fragmentation seen in the denomination. It notes the "development of various divisive trends and issues."

In recent years when the Church of the



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Brethren drifted away from the unified budget, and some of the service agencies became "orphans" responsible for raising their own funds, I felt it was regressive to move away from the concept of Christian stewardship. Consequently individuals and congregations lost the vision of a unified witness by the church.

Decisions on how much to allocate to various programs were made without any clear understanding of how each program relates to the whole body or to each other. General Board, Christian Peacemakers, Caregivers, On Earth Peace (and others?) all sent solicitation letters, in a sense competing with one another and in style resembling a plethora of other non-church-related requests jamming our mailboxes. They even mimic secular organizations and government bureaucracies by identifying themselves with initials such as COB, GB, CPT, ABC, OEP, etc.

I believe we need to ask if the Church of the Brethren is a reflection of our fragmented world, or are we bearers of the light to a world lost in darkness? Are we conformed to the world, or fully engaged in transforming the world through Jesus of the new covenant?

Dean Farringer
Denver, Colo.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Pinecrest Community seeks CEO. Pinecrest Community, a Church of the Brethren retirement center in Mount Morris, Ill., seeks a visionary CEO. Pinecrest, founded in 1891, has over 200 residents. Pinecrest provides independent living, total health care, and a special care Alzheimer's and dementia center.

The Board of Directors is looking for a person with home administration credentials and appreciation for Church of the Brethren heritage/faith. The person will have experience and skills in strategic planning, fund development, marketing, public relations, and innovative program development. An NHA is preferred. Resumes will be accepted until Oct. 15, 2003.

Send inquiries to Ralph McFadden, Fellowship of Brethren Homes, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120. Phone 847-742-5100, ext. 305. E-mail Rmcfadden_abc@brethren.org. Fax 847-742-5160.

Cruise/tour to Greece and Turkey. "Walking in the Footsteps of Paul" March 2-12, 2004. Hosted by Brethren couple with over 16 years experience as professional travel agents. Three nights in Athens and six nights aboard Royal Olympic Cruise Line's the Triton. The Bible comes alive with beautiful ports-of-call.

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New Members

Beacon Heights, Fort Wayne, Ind.: Melissa Bennett, Dean Johnson
Bear Creek, Dayton, Ohio: John Stewart, Vanessa Howe
Bethany, Greenwood, Del.: Rebecca Dodd, Gabriel Dodd, Paul Dodd, Phyllis Dodd, Stacey Layton, Mike Felin, Bethany Redman, Amanda Slater, Rebecca Maczis, Matthew Slater, Matt Myer, Daniel Myer
Blissville, Plymouth, Ind.: Ivan Singleton, Blaine Mikel, Velma Phenix, Fred Church, Beverly Church, Janelle Olejniczak, Clinton Cyr, Isabella Talaga, Sara Traversa
Columbia United Christian, Columbia, Md.: Nikki Nicholson, Janna Kammiga, Sylvia Burch, Sheri Cox
Coventry, Pottstown, Pa: Aaron Batdorf, Matthew High
Dayton, Va.: John Dotson-Broner, Barbara Dotson-Broner, Daniel Fleishman, Nora Stoutamyre, Walter Knox, Linda Knox, Priscilla Little, Nancy Still
Dixon, Ill.: David Pickering, Beverly Pickering
Elizabethtown, Pa.: Kim Horning, Alex Horning, Dustin Horning, Kathy Horning, Don Muston, Marilyn Muston, Suzanne Martin
Florin, Mount Joy, Pa.: Monica Mumma, Rick W. Stence, Kathy Jo Stence, Nancy Wilson
Frederick, Md.: Patty Martinez, Allen Robertson, Mary Lou Robertson, Sandra Rundles, Tracy Widmyer, Diane Lewis, Kay Huffer, Clark Evans, Lauren Evans, Josephine Rizzo
Gortner Union, Oakland, Md.: Holly Sauder, Anna Keefer, Joshua Keefer, Naomi Keefer
Harmony, Myersville, Md.: Robin Baulch Loy, Lori Geisler Sigler, Dana Conners Summers
Harrisburg, Pa.: Daryn Bullock, Betty Ann Barnes, Eleanor Strack, Lisa Keller, Elaine Neidigh
Hickory Grove, Dunkirk, Ind.: Chad Chowning
Lincolnshire, Fort Wayne, Ind.: Mary Ashworth, Heather Grady, Nick Kowalenko, John Pollick, Cindi Pollick, Paul Pollick, Ricky Ritter, Jessica Smithson, Stephanie Zent
Marsh Creek, Gettysburg, Pa.: William L. Little, Robin L. Little, Amanda Bailey, Michaela Bailey, Gem Jay, Brittany Jay, Lisa Henry

Mechanic Grove, Quarryville, Pa.: Elaine Keen, Jeffrey Wilkinson
New Paris, Ind.: Rex Eisenhour, Laura Norris, Mearlene Reynolds
Painesville, Ohio: Marie McConnell, Mazie Reno, Edith Richards, Annette Wisen, Gary Dodd, Denise Bayus, Frances Bayus, Al Hughes, Gaylee Hughes, Patrick Hughes
Peach Blossom, Easton, Md.: Christopher B. Fox, Matthew Faulkner
Pittsburgh, Pa.: Tina Camy, Jill Foster
Plumcreek, Shelocta, Pa.: Donna Price
Prince of Peace, Dayton, Ohio: Donna Gabbard, Rex Gabbard, Amy Gabbard
Ridge, Shippensburg, Pa.: Harry Taylor, Debbie Laughman, Angie Washinger
Roanoke, La.: Joe Peoples, Ramona Peoples, Chelsey Crochet, Madison Barnes
Spring Run, McVeytown, Pa.: Dan Dunmire, Suzanne Dunmire, Greg Dunmire, Darcie Dunmire, Levi Bilger, Katie Mumper, Rachel Wilson, Brittany Harshbarger, Alex Wray, Sierra Chesney
Stevens Hill Community, Elizabethtown, Pa.: Dan Bryan, Ryan Mohn, Tori Robertson, Lonnie Sauder, Stephanie Schmidt, Alyta Stum, Miriam Stum, Gloria Sumpter
Stone, Huntingdon, Pa.: Andrew Deike, Sarah Deike, Luke Fultz, Ashlee Fultz, Laban Wenger, Fiona Grugan, Chris Porcella, Joel Rhodes
Syracuse, Ind.: Sue Gilbert, Jimmie Gilbert, Ashley Davis, Stephanie Davis, Ashley Lemberg, Paul Warrick
Troy, Ohio: Rosie Combs, Berma Green
Tucson, Ariz.: Italia Barone, Arletta Bernabei
Wilmington, Del.: Jennifer Shotzberger
Woodbury, Pa.: Taylor Crawford, Chelsey Donaldson, Chaydie Donaldson, Jessica Kensingler, Megan Ritchey, David Donaldson, Lisa Donaldson, Kelsey Barton, Kristan Koontz,

Wedding Anniversaries

Arbogast, Don and Mary, Dayton, Va., 50
Bishop, Lavon and Alice, Defiance, Ohio, 50
Bower, George and Ida, Glen Burnie, Md., 65
Croushorn, Dale and Mary Alice, Dayton, Va., 50
Fishbauger, Harvey and Marlene, Harmony, Minn., 50
Ford, Orville and Naomi, Bel Air, Md., 60
Goss, Richard and Kathryn, Mechanicsburg, Pa., 50
Mason, Floyd and Catherine, Bridgewater, Va., 60
Mensink, John and Beverly, Preston, Minn., 50

Millar, Glenn and Helen, New Oxford, Pa., 65
Morris, Wellman and Madeline, Earlsyville, Va., 50
Nedrow, Sam and June, Mechanicsburg, Pa., 50
Necher, Dean and Betty, Bridgewater, Va., 50
Oltman, Berwyn and Kathryn, Ocoee, Fla., 50
Raffle, Walter and Gerry, Uniontown, Pa., 50
Sifrit, Robert and Mina Mae, McPherson, Kan., 50
Stein, Robert and Betty, Uniontown, Pa., 55
Terrell, Homer and Monabelle, Sebring, Fla., 60
Tucker, Jim and Rachel, Nova, Ohio, 55
Ulrich, Dale and Claire, Bridgewater, Va., 50
Wine, J. Floyd and Ruth A., Winchester, Va., 60
Witter, Merle and Doris, Chambersburg, Pa., 50
Zigler, Carl H. and Madaline, Bridgewater, Va., 60

Deaths

Angle, Maurice, 71, Elgin, Ill., June 7
Bachand, Robin, 42, Easton, Md., Nov. 3
Baker, Charles W., 85, Modesto, Calif., June 23
Barnhart, Helen, 86, Toledo, Ohio, July 8
Baum, Miriam, 91, Palmyra, Pa., June 19
Bechtel, Mary, 71, Mount Joy, Pa., July 1
Benedict, Naomi, 73, Sebring, Fla., July 3
Bloom, Louis D., 82, Martinsburg, Pa., July 4
Blough, Ira B., Jr., 79, Chambersburg, Pa., May 24
Bowers, Lloyd, 84, Johnstown, Pa., June 5
Bracken, William, 65, Johnstown, Pa., June 10
Broadwater, Marjorie, 78, Spring Valley, Minn., Dec. 9
Brubaker, Marian Moomaw, 83, La Verne, Calif., Oct. 27
Cannon, Velma, 97, Dexter, Mo., May 3
Cervantes, Rachel L., 20, Dixon, Ill., July 4
Chomowycz, Katherina, 89, La Verne, Calif., March 13
Cline, Olivia A., 57, Harrisonburg, Va., July 24
Conner, Jacob K., Jr., 83, Manassas, Va., June 11
Cooper, Eldon Fotch, 80, Hinton, Va., March 15
Copenhaver, Verma, 92, Manheim, Pa., July 6
Culp, Thelma, 82, Goshen, Ind., May 29
Detwiler, Harriet, 89, Hollidaysburg, Pa., June 26
Dort, Lucille, 75, Jacksonville, Fla., April 14
Dubble, Anna Mary, 80, Lancaster, Pa., July 23
Durnbaugh, Robert N., 67, Elgin, Ill., July 17
Etzler, Mildred R., 87, Frederick, Md., July 11
Ewalt, Clinton, 83, Harmony,

Minn., March 17
Fisher, C. Kenneth, 80, Flat Rock, Ill., June 22
Fouts, Audria, 79, Sebring, Fla., July 6
Fry, Helen McKimmy, 81, Beaverton, Mich., June 17
Gahagan, Mary Belle, 80, Chambersburg, Pa., May 4
Gearhart, Vernon, 85, Belleville, Pa., Feb. 7
Gillin, Ralph, 79, Johnstown, Pa., June 12
Greer, Donald, 81, North Manchester, Ind., Dec. 20
Grossnickle, Phyllis, 87, North Manchester, Ind., May 11
Grote, Pauline J., 93, New Oxford, Pa., June 20
Harman, Grant T., 74, Jersey Shore, Pa., July 11
Harper, Sylva, 95, Harmon, W.Va., June 30
Hazelwood, Virginia, 81, Fort Wayne, Ind., July 4
Heidlebaugh, Beulah, 76, Hellam, Pa., April 7
Heinzman, Miriam, 79, Arcadia, Ind., June 24
Hoffman, Charles, 80, Huntingdon, Pa., March 13
Hoover, Ray A., 86, Spring Grove, Pa., June 14
Hoover, Wilbur R., 85, McPherson, Kan., July 17
Hull, Anna K., 96, New Oxford, Pa., June 20
Imler, Charlotte, 66, Woodbury, Pa., March 11
Jenkins, Mabel F., 97, Jacksonville, Fla., July 8
Johnson, Fern, 79, Nappanee, Ind., June 7
Johnson, Frank, 67, La Verne, Calif., Nov. 13
Jones, Duane Grove, 58, Chatham, Ill., July 11
Keener, Spencer, 50, Ashland, Ohio, July 5
Kensingler, Donald, 71, Woodbury, Pa., May 1
Kesselring, Charles, 86, Sebring, Fla., June 25
Kilmer, Dorothea, 86, Syracuse, Ind., May 3
Kinzie, Galen W., 92, North Manchester, Ind., June 27
Kinzie, Pauline Garst, 94, Bridgewater, Va., July 4
Kreider, Shirley, 62, Quarryville, Pa., June 8
Lefever, John, 52, Annville, Pa., June 28
McGolerick, Jack, 79, New Market, Md., July 9
McKinley, Marilyn Shock, 64, Dayton, Ohio, July 1
Miller, Albert H., 104, New Oxford, Pa., June 5
Miller, Alice, 83, Bridgewater, Va., June 21
Miller, Samuel, 90, Frederick, Md., July 3
Moore, Genevieve, 95, Nampa, Idaho, May 9
Moranduzzo, Lewis, 89, Davidsville, Pa., June 29
Owens, Dorothy, 89, Johnstown, Pa., July 21
Racop, Paul, 62, Knox, Ind., June 16
Raffensperger, Elizabeth, 102, Lancaster, Pa., July 7
Reese, Florence, 71, Mechanicsburg, Pa., June 27

Reuter, Lois, 88, Milford, Ind., July 9
Robb, Vera, 79, Huntingdon, Pa., Jan. 28
Robins, Richard, 79, Fort Wayne, Ind., April 1
Schrock, Opal, 89, Rochester, Minn., Dec. 25
Shafer, Alice, 82, Frederick, Md., July 8
Shank, Elery, 90, Polo, Ill., July 24
Sheckells, Mabel, 84, Frederick, Md., June 1
Snyder, Eldridge B., 90, Chambersburg, Pa., May 29
Stewart, John, Jr., 63, Ashland, Ohio, July 12
Stiffler, Margaret R., 85, Martinsburg, Pa., June 27
Stites, Margaret G., 94, Bluffton, Ohio, June 23
Tenley, Edna Hoffman, 92, Quincy, Pa., July 3
Theis, Janet L., 65, Ashland, Ohio, July 9
Thomas, David Carl, 84, Davidsville, Pa., July 1
Toms, Elizabeth Wingert, 85, Quincy, Pa., July 20
Trostle, Melvin A., 85, Adams County, Pa., July 9
Wagoner, Terry, 54, North Webster, Ind., Aug. 14, 2002
Waltman, Nettie, 71, Quarryville, Pa., June 8
Workman, Mable, 93, North Manchester, Ind., June 27
Wright, Gene, 82, Troy, Ohio, July 20
Zook, Pearl, 93, North Manchester, Ind., April 1

Licensings

Christ, Matthew Shane, S. Pa. Dist. (Buffalo Valley, Millflinburg, Pa.), June 22
Gresh, Gieta M., W. Pa. Dist. (Rummel, Windber, Pa.), June 15
Mader, Ruby, W. Pa. Dist. (Rummel, Windber, Pa.), June 15
Meyers, Alan J., S. Pa. Dist. (Chambersburg, Pa.), June 22

Placements

Bell, David Wayne, from pastor, Maple Grove, New Paris, Ind., to pastor, Green Tree, Oaks, Pa., July 1
Ebersole, Ralph Z., director of witness, Atlantic Northeast District, April 15
Glick, J. D., from interim to pastor, Sunrise Fellowship, Harrisonburg, Va., July 1
Jones, Phillip Lynn, director of Brethren Witness and Washington Office, Washington, D.C., July 21
Kaltenbaugh, Peter Charles, Jr., from pastor, Hartville, Ohio, to pastor, Meyersdale, Pa., June 23
Martin, Aaron L., Jr., director of church development, Atlantic Northeast District, March 1
Sarver, Randy, pastor, Hurricane Creek, Smithboro, Ill., July 6
Stouffer, Darlene Witter, minister of pastoral care, Chambersburg, Pa., July 14



Are you stickin'?

Anyone who has watched a family leave a church that baptized them, married them, buried their parents, has pondered the question of loyalty. Those who have witnessed a marriage break apart or friends stop speaking have silently questioned what broke the bond. Under the same circumstances, would we break, or remain loyal? Our loyalty to a sports hero or team may endure losses but is tested by cheating or sexual misconduct. We buy the same laundry detergent our mother used until the price goes up once again.

Loyalty isn't true until it's tested. Through thick and thin, we say, in season and out of season. For better or for worse, in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, so long as we both shall live. It is this "no matter what" nature that makes loyalty so attractively tough in the abstract but often disturbingly weak in the execution. We who nurture small churches know that when the going gets tough, only the tough keep coming. Yet none of us are blindly loyal. We're faithful to those who have been faithful to us. We stand by those who stood by us.

Brethren bring a special perspective to loyalty. How do we decide to what and to whom we pledge our allegiance? Most dictionary definitions associate loyalty first with faithfulness to one's country, nation, or government. President Bush designated May 1 this year as Loyalty Day with stirring words: "Our citizens are bound by ideals that represent the hope of all mankind: that all men are created equal, endowed with unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. On Loyalty Day, we reaffirm our allegiance to our country and resolve to uphold the vision of our forefathers." For Brethren, of course, the loyalty to country or nation takes second place to loyalty to God, and is tempered by the belief that all peoples and nations are equally precious to God. "This is my home, the country where my heart is," goes the song. "Here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine./ But other hearts in other lands are beating/ With hopes and dreams as true and high as mine."

God comes first for us largely because of God's faithfulness to us, as scripture reminds us again and again. "Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who maintains covenant loyalty with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations" (Deut. 7:9). Through all their unfaithfulness God stood by the Israelites, demonstrating often that God's love and mercy did not depend on reciprocation. In the New Testament when Peter turned on his friend not once but three times, Jesus took it all in stride, and still used Peter to

build his church. We love him who first loved us.

Translating our love for God into loyalty to friends, family, and church is often difficult. We can look to the world of politics for examples. The political consultant James Carville became so well known for his loyalty to former president Bill Clinton that he wrote a book about it. In it he explains that back in 1991 Clinton had pulled Carville out of a crowd of political advisers to manage his presidential campaign, giving Carville his first big professional chance. So when Clinton got in trouble over sexual indiscretions in 1998, it came naturally to Carville to stick with him and defend him against his many critics. "So I did what I had to do," Carville writes. "I really don't apologize for it. I think the president is a good man who did a bad thing and he's entitled to a defense. And what he had done for me was give me my opportunity of a lifetime and become my friend. I had to stick with my friend." Carville's title for his book about loyalty: *Stickin'*.

Shown in its best light, the problematic name of our denomination is about loyalty to one another in imitation of God's loyalty to us. Louis D. Simmons of Gray, Tenn., has passed along a 1961 pamphlet called *Ideals of the Church of the Brethren*, by D. W. Kurtz. There is wisdom here for those who can excuse the non-inclusive language of the day. In a section called "Brotherhood," Kurtz writes, "The Brethren kept together what Christ put together—love to God and love to man. The love feast of the church symbolizes in perfect fashion this fundamental truth. One cannot get into harmony with God unless he has brotherly relations with men." As such, Kurtz writes, our church is about relationships with each other in real life, which often gets messy. "The founders of the church of the Brethren clearly saw the barrenness of the religion of mere creeds, and their spiritual discernment gave them the true meaning of religion. Religion is life; it is the life of God in the heart of man and the life of man in harmony with God. It is life—it is the spirit of Christ in the soul, so that we can say with Paul, 'It is no longer I that live, Christ liveth in me.' The Church of the Brethren is right, it is absolutely right, in its view of religion as faith, loyalty, harmony with Christ."

What that says to me is that Brethren means stickin'. Stickin' through thick and thin. Stickin' up for each other. Stickin' around. Stickin' with Jesus. I'm stickin'. Are you? For the spirit of Christ in the soul, let's stick together.—FLETCHER FARRAR

The pamphlet by D.W. Kurtz, *Ideals of the Church of the Brethren*, is available from Brethren Press.

We who nurture small churches know that when the going gets tough, only the tough keep coming. Yet none of us are blindly loyal.

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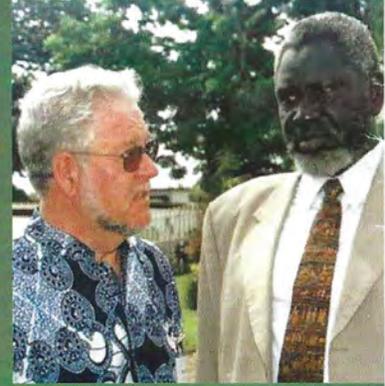


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Top row, l. to r.: Marcos and Suely Inhauser in Brazil; Peggy and Jeff Boshart (to the right) with microloan recipients in the Dominican Republic; Merlyn Kettering and Haruun Ruun in Sudan. Lower row, Nancy and Irvin Heishman in the Dominican Republic; Janet and John Tubbs in Nigeria; Julie Kult and Tony Banout (at left) with friends in Guatemala.