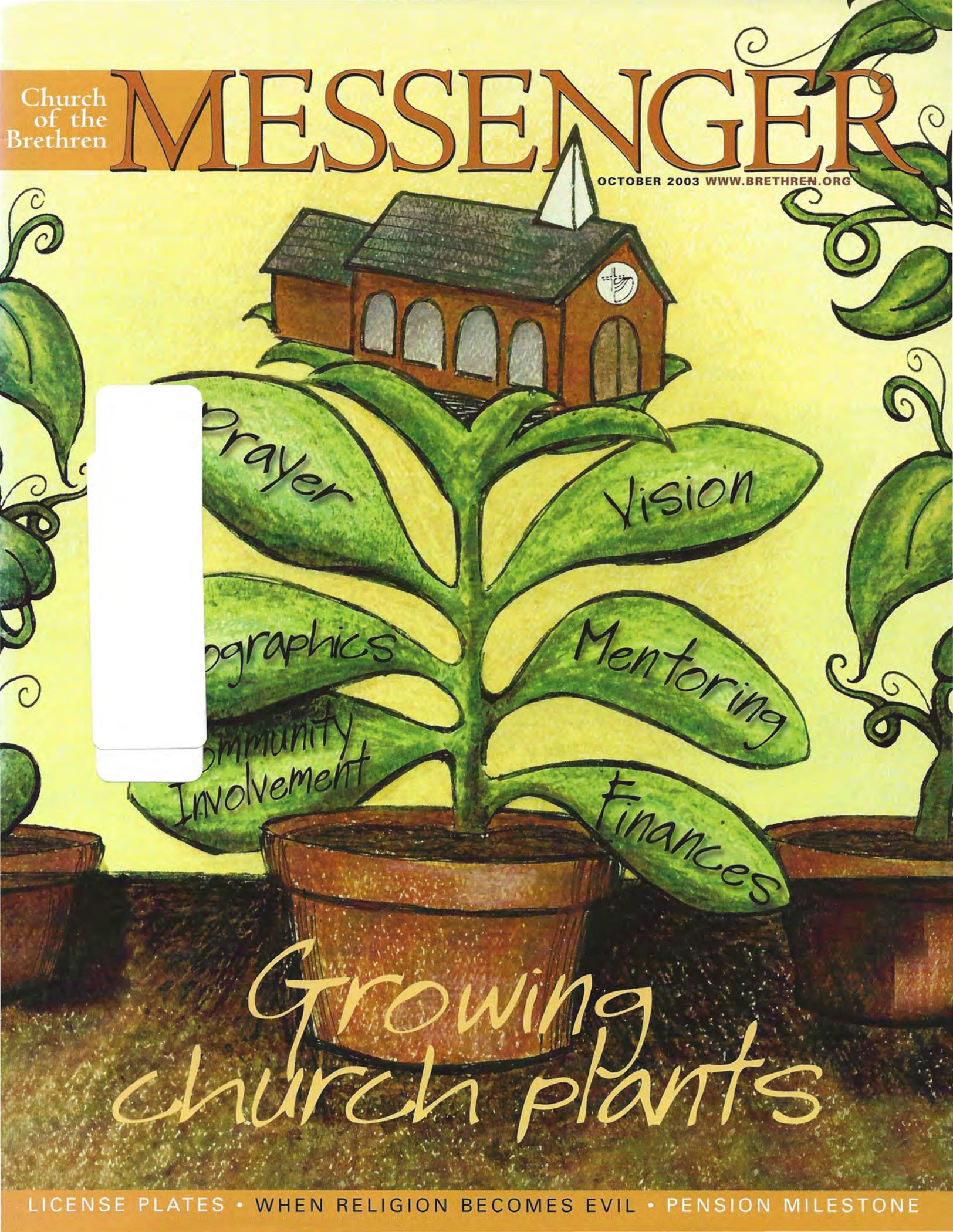


Church  
of the  
Brethren

# MESSENGER

OCTOBER 2003 WWW.BRETHREN.ORG



Prayer

Vision

ographics

Mentoring

Community  
Involvement

Finances

Growing  
church plants



# Where are you when help is needed?

When you give  
to Emergency  
Disaster Fund,  
You are there!

Canned meat, school kits, health kits, blankets and gently used computers were shipped to Angola from the Brethren Service Center. Multiple grants totaling \$89,500 from the Emergency Disaster Fund are supporting widespread disaster response efforts in southern Africa.

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**Emergency Response/  
Service Ministries**



New Windsor, Maryland

A father helps feed his malnourished daughter  
in a therapeutic feeding center in Luena.  
The displacement of four million people in  
Angola has left many on the edge of survival.

*photo by Paul Jeffrey/ACT*

Church of the Brethren **MESSENGER**

Editor: Fletcher Farrar Publisher: Wendy McFadden News: Walt Wiltschek Subscriptions: Diane Stroyeck Design: Cedar House Group



Walt Wiltschek



**10 Church plants taking root**

Here are profiles of five new Church of the Brethren congregations, how they were planted, and how they grew. Readers will see there is no one correct way to plant a church, but these success stories may inspire others to do more planting.



Nevin Dulabaum

**16 License ministers**

Across the country, Church of the Brethren members are finding creative ways to spell out their faith and their church affiliation on their license plates.

**18 When religion becomes evil**

An interview with Prof. Charles Kimball on the phenomenon of religion turning its powerful force to destructive ends. The perspective not only makes sense of current events, it presents danger signals to avoid in our own religion.

**22 Pensions mark a milestone**

It was 60 years ago that Annual Conference approved the Church of the Brethren pension plan. Today more than 1,100 retired ministers and church employees receive a monthly benefit from the plan.

**24 Concerns about The Patriot Act**

In this commentary article, Phil Jones, the new director of the Brethren Witness and Washington Office, explains why the church should be concerned about a new law meant to fight terrorism.

**ONTHECOVER**

The thriving "church plant" on the cover has its leaves labeled with some of the important factors that help determine whether a new church takes root and survives or, like some, withers and dies. But though elements like "prayer," "vision," "community involvement," and "finances" are important, none of these factors alone determines whether a new church lives or dies. Leaders in the field of new church development say there is no guaranteed formula for success.

So our cover story this month by Walt Wiltschek is not a "how-to" article. Rather it profiles five new Church of the Brethren congregations, each planted under different circumstances, that show signs of thriving. Taken together they present a garden of hope for a denomination yearning to grow.

The cover illustration is by Debbie Noffsinger of DN Design, Union Bridge, Md.

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## FROM THE PUBLISHER



**P**erhaps because I am a visual learner, I am always seeing other people in the new folks I meet. Who does that pleasant-looking woman look like? Ah, yes, like the sixth-grade schoolteacher. She doesn't really look that much like her; it's just that her eyes smile the same way. The man over there looks as if he could be a brother to someone I know in Cleveland. Maybe it's the hair and cheekbones. The distinguished-looking, gray-haired man—well, I never do figure out who he looks like.

With lots of travel this past month, my imagination has been working overtime. Usually there's a flash of familiarity, and then I spend minutes, or hours, trying to figure out who the person resembles. It's like trying to grasp quicksilver.

The similarities must be subtle. When I point them out to friends, they often don't see them. But the associations come so frequently when I am in crowds of new people that it's like walking through a volume of "separated at birth" photos. It's jarring, however, when the twin-like strangers don't sound or act like the individuals they resemble.

Maybe the real similarities extend beyond noses and eyes. What if we spent more time imagining what we have in common? What if we were fascinated by the differences? What if we were to discover that God is actually more interested in how we reach outside our homogeneous communities than in how we get along inside them? Most days we're so focused on where we want to go that anyone who gets in our way perturbs us.

Between songs a performer tells this story: While driving in a crowded city with her young son, she got increasingly annoyed by all the congestion and their slow progress. Finally the little boy asked her why she was so upset.

"I'm frustrated with all this traffic," she said.

"But Mommy," he replied, "we're traffic too."

*Wendy McFadden*

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Peggy Reiff Miller



Six yurts, round wooden huts of Mongolian design, make up the village. Each yurt has been named for a Church of the Brethren missionary couple representing various mission fields: Wilbur and Mary Stover (India), Adam and Alice Ebey (India), Franklin and Anna Crumpacker (China), Ira and Mabel Moomaw (India), Homer and Marguerite Burke (Nigeria and Puerto Rico), and J. Benton and Ruby Rhoades (Ecuador). "These yurts recognize another group of outstanding leaders in the church whose lives have touched Camp Mack in one way or another," said Rex Miller, the camp's executive director.

In her dedication address, former Nigerian missionary Ferne Baldwin spoke of how we almost didn't have missions in the Church of the Brethren. Besides the belief of many Brethren that the Great Commission was for the Apostles and not for us, there was great reluctance to pay support for missionaries when pastors were free ministers. The turning point was the development of Church of the Brethren colleges and publications, through which many Brethren began to learn that other denominations were doing mission work around the world.

The sharing of stories about foreign missions in the 1890s and following decades built an excitement that led many Brethren to devote years of their lives to the mission field. In the same way, it is the hope of the Indiana camp board that through the stories of Mission Village a new generation of leaders will catch the vision. "By lifting up the ministries of these six missionary couples, Church of the Brethren missions move from being a historical fact, as depicted in the murals in Quinter-Miller Auditorium, to being a living force in people's lives," said Miller, "to the extent that individuals may be inspired to enter into service to others as volunteers or to make vocational choices that continue the work of Jesus."

More pictures of the dedication can be seen at [www.campmack.org](http://www.campmack.org)—Peggy Reiff Miller

*Ferne Baldwin, a former Nigeria missionary, described the early opposition to missionaries in the Church of the Brethren.*

## Camp Mack dedicates Mission Village

In his book *The Story of Camp Alexander Mack*, L. W. Shultz refers to the camp as "a project in church history." Its very name, its many buildings and structures named after outstanding leaders in the Church of the Brethren, and its historical murals all give credence to this designation. On Sept. 13, under warm end-of-summer sunshine, a group of Camp Mack friends and missionary descendants gathered to continue this project in church history through the dedication of Mission Village.

## Arlington celebrates 50th anniversary

"Remembering, Rejoicing, Responding Anew" was the theme of the Arlington (Va.) Church of the Brethren celebration of its 50th anniversary. Phil

Stone, president of Bridgewater College, delivered a message based on the parable of the mustard seed. Choral and instrumental music (including three choirs, and solos by a vocalist, cello duo, trumpeter, and flutist) reflected the congre-

gation's love of music. Other events included a skit, a hymn sing, planting a dogwood tree, a celebratory dinner, and the presentation of a \$5,000 check to Heifer International. More than 200 people attended.—Roseann Harwood, pastor

## “CrossRoads” Heritage Center dedicated

The Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center board of directors held a dedication service for the center’s 10-acre campus on Sept. 7 in Harrisonburg, Va.

Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren pastor Robert Alley, who serves as the board’s president, was the dedicatory speaker. The event included a hymn sing of Brethren and Mennonite favorites, and a tour of the hilltop site.

Plans for the “CrossRoads” project on the site include a reception center, an 1829 Mennonite log house, a summer kitchen, a vintage Shenandoah Valley barn, the existing 1854 Burkholder-Myers House, a one-room schoolhouse, and a meeting-house. The interpretive center will aim to “bring to life the history of the Brethren and Mennonites” through storytelling and examination of contemporary issues.

It will be the first Brethren interpretive center in the United States and the first religious center in the Shenandoah Valley, according to the center’s board. Plans include educational activities for school groups, church and community groups, and tourists, along with periodic special programs and presentations.

So as soon as she retired, she began working on her goal. She calculated that if she worked as a school volunteer from November through the end of March for two days a week it would take 10 years to equal two years of full-time service. This year she reached her goal.

Pat says the kids in school like working with a volunteer. “They love it,” she told the *Republican-Leader* newspaper. “They get instant feedback. It helps them feel positive about themselves.”

## Pottstown hosts “National Night Out”

More than 200 neighborhood residents crowded onto the parking lot of First Church of the Brethren, Pottstown, Pa., on Aug. 5. That evening neighborhoods across the nation were gathering the same way, for “National Night Out.” The purpose is to fight crime by banding together to “take back the streets” for the law-abiding residents.

“This is a really positive thing for the town,” said Douglas Gehr, the pastor of the Pottstown church. “I’m glad they were able to pull it off.”

The event featured free food and fun, with visits from police cars and firetrucks. But it was also about reminding people what it means to live in a neighborhood.

“Events like this prove that Pottstown is a town with a lot of heart, and with neighbors who still care about each other,” a longtime resident told the local newspaper.



## A quilt for Camp Eder

The quilters of the Waynesboro (Pa.) Church of the Brethren made a quilt featuring familiar Camp Eder symbols and scenes, to be auctioned Oct. 18 at the 25th Fall Festival at the camp, at Fairfield, Pa. The quilt features the covered wagon in which some campers sleep, the log holding the Bible, and the camp mascot Moose holding a guitar. Those who helped on the project are Pauline Meyers, Jean Carson, Lillian Good, Mary Miller, Delores Brewer, Cherry Snyder, and Debbie Smith.

## Fulfilling a lifetime goal—to be a volunteer

Pat Heusinkveld retired from teaching in 1993 after 31 years in the elementary school classroom. Retirement gave her the chance to pursue a life goal—working as a classroom volunteer.

Pat, of Preston, Minn., and a member of the Root River Church of the Brethren, grew up during the World War II era, and remembers being impressed with the young conscientious objectors who volunteered for alternative service during and after the war. She wanted to volunteer also, but at that time was unable to fit a two-year term of service into her life.



David Radcliff

## Group visits Honduras on learning tour

Twenty Brethren traveled to the Central American country of Honduras for a 10-day learning tour in early August. Participants, including 11 youth, came from 8 districts. The group traveled to a small community in the south of the country where they assisted in construction of a health clinic and received orientation to the overall social and economic situation from their host, the Christian Commission for Development. The group also visited villages assisted by Brethren development aid and toured Mayan Ruins at Copan. The leader for the experience was David Radcliff of New Community Project. Construction foreman for the group was Jim Dodd of Midland, Va., making his 10th trip to Honduras.

*More than half of the participants in the Honduras delegation were youth. Alyssa Ernst and Colleen Hamilton from Michigan District are shown here with a young friend in the community of San Jose after a day's work.*

## A cookbook mixes food and history

A hands-on lesson in Brethren history, heritage, and culture left a large gathering at the Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren hungry for more. Billed as "Inglewood Cook Book Night," part of the congregation's 125th anniversary celebration, commemorated the success the cookbook had achieved since it was first printed in 1901 by the Brethren Publishing House.

Enthusiastic cooks converted century-old recipes to modern cooking appliances and ingredients. Substitutes were found for "lard," "grease," and "suet" or such rural delicacies as "morning milk" or "huckleberries."

The warm glow of antique oil lamps at every table welcomed diners to the

social hall, where an assortment of nearly 75 prepared meats, vegetables, casseroles, salads, and desserts filled the tables. Dishes ranged from meatloaf and baked apples to pap soup and smear case.

Peggy McIntyre and Joyce Miller, directors of the celebration, related the history of the cookbook and its long and successful publishing runs. The event honored Grace Hollen, a member at Bridgewater, who helped to compile the *Granddaughter's Inglewood Cookbook*. A former home economics teacher, Grace is the only living member who helped with this edition.

—Miriam Smith



*Grace Lineweaver Hollen helped to compile the Granddaughter's Inglewood Cookbook.*

## Caring Ministries Assembly considers "Healing Out of Silence"

More than 250 Brethren gathered at Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren Aug. 14-16 to focus on "Healing Out of Silence," the theme of this year's Caring Ministries Assembly.

The biennial event is sponsored by the Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC). Staff and volunteers from ABC, the Church of the Brethren General Board, and On Earth Peace

planned the event for pastors, deacons, chaplains, and lay caregivers, focusing on spiritual growth and practical help with caregiving issues.

The three assembly worship services featured speakers Marjorie Thompson, Tilden Edwards, and Deforia Lane, each using a different congregational activity to symbolize God's healing spirit and grace. Carol

Scheppard, associate professor of philosophy and religion at Bridgewater College, led energetic morning Bible studies of the prophets Amos and Jeremiah, exploring how people of faith approach life's problems.



Eddie Edmunds

Presenter Marjorie Thompson speaks with Louie Shafer, of Mt. Jackson, Va., following the opening worship.



Each afternoon, workshops were held on a variety of caregiving topics. Marlene Kropf, executive director of congregational life for Mennonite Church USA, led four workshops in addition to coordinating the worship experiences. Other leadership for the 39 workshops came from Brethren agencies and professionals or lay people involved in caregiving ministry. Between workshop sessions, an intentional time of silence was observed to give participants time for reflection or rest.

Twenty chaplains participated in a chaplains' track, which featured two luncheons and highlighted workshops of special significance for chaplains. Following the assembly, 14 people participated in a Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership seminar on "Pastoral Care in Times of Crisis" led by Nancy Faus and Tom Mullen.

## Annual Conference Council gives its answer to Michigan query

Following up on an action of this year's Annual Conference in Boise, Idaho, the Annual Conference Council on Aug. 15 delivered an answer to the "Query for Clarification of Confusion" sent by Michigan District.

Delegates in Boise adopted Standing Committee's recommendation for the query, which dealt with the 2002 Conference action on the licensing and ordination of homosexuals. The recommendation stated that the "concerns and questions contained in the query be

received and that the Annual Conference Council be asked to answer these matters."

Council chair Earl Ziegler and 2004 Annual Conference moderator Chris Bowman gave the answer in person to Michigan District conference. The Council's letter was read to delegates and others attending, followed by a question-and-answer period.

The response of the Council, whose responsibilities include interpreting Annual Conference actions, said that the 2002 Conference action "does not contradict polity in the credentialing of persons to ministry in the Church of the Brethren." That action, it said, "means that no one

known to be engaging in homosexual practices will be licensed or ordained in the Church of the Brethren."

Michigan District made history, and created controversy, in June 2002 by ordaining an openly gay man. Ongoing discussion resulting from that ordination and the subsequent 2002 Annual Conference decision led the district to draft this year's query.

Other questions and concerns raised in the query are "of either a theological or structural nature," the letter said, and require "further discussion within the district and the entire denomination." The Council said it would "encourage and lead" such discussions.



Eddie Edmonds

Time for prayer and reflection was woven into worship, workshops, and other parts of the Caring Ministries Assembly.

### Patton challenges ministers to take a fresh approach

Jeffrey Patton of Easum Bandy Associates served as keynote speaker for this year's Ministers' Association of the Church of the Brethren seminar, held July 9-10 in Boise, Idaho. The Ministers'



Beyond the box: Jeffrey Patton challenges the Ministers' Association to think in new ways.

## BRETHRENSPEAK

"We are going to be restless until we realize finally the one place of rest is in God, not just as a concept but as a living reality."

—Shalem Institute founder Tilden Edwards, speaking at Caring Ministries Assembly

Association annually sponsors the post-Annual Conference seminar, at which ministers can receive training from a noted speaker on ministry-related issues.

Easum Bandy, according to its website, is an organization whose goals are to help leaders "organize priorities, identify goals, innovate new strategies, and motivate congregations to address the spiritually yearning, institutionally alienated seekers of today."

Patton—a late replacement after original speaker David Loughery, also of Easum Bandy, had to withdraw—challenged the denomination's ministers to look at ministry in a new way. He shared insights gained from his own years of pastoral ministry and said that today's culture is vastly different than previous cultures.

Effective ministers, he said, are those who will find new ways to share the love and the good news of Christ. They must learn to think "beyond the box"—taking approaches to ministry that are radically different for this postmodern culture.

The church has been called by Christ to grow, to spread, and to increase, he said. To do this, the church must minister in fresh ways that have never been used or thought of before.

### DeVries will be keynoter for Youth Ministry Workshop

Mark DeVries, a widely read author and a pastor for youth and family ministries, will be the keynote speaker for this year's Youth Ministry Workshop, sponsored by the General Board's Youth/Young Adult Ministries office.

DeVries, who also served as a keynoter for the workshop in 1997, will speak on "Family-Based Youth Ministry"—the title of one of the five books he has written. He has been on the staff of First Presbyterian Church in Nashville, Tenn., for 17 years.

The event will be held Nov. 1, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. Cost is \$15 and should be mailed with registration form by Oct. 15 to Chris Douglas, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120. Registration forms can be found in the September *Source* packet or at [www.brethren.org/mrkconf.html](http://www.brethren.org/mrkconf.html).

### New newsletter will feature General Board events, stories

As the *Agenda* newsletter for church leaders wraps up its decades-long run with the October issue, following the retirement of Interpretation director Howard Royer, a new publication will debut to keep congregations informed about General Board activities.

*Tapestry* will kick off its own run in October, arriving in the *Source* mailing to congregations. The single-sheet newsletter will highlight feature stories, coming events, prayer items, resources, and other pieces from the General Board. *Source* is sent to about 1,450 pastors and other church leaders.

*Tapestry* will be published 10 times a year by the new Brethren Identity office and will be inserted in each *Source* mailing. Congregations and districts will be encouraged to make copies for insertion in newsletters or for distribution in other ways. The newsletter will also be available online, at [www.brethren.org/genbd/identity](http://www.brethren.org/genbd/identity).

## UPCOMINGEVENTS

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

**Oct. 10-11 Atlantic Northeast District Conference**, Elizabethtown (Pa.) College; Atlantic Southeast District Conference, Camp Ithiel, Gotha, Fla.; Mid-Atlantic District Conference, Hagerstown (Md.) Church of the Brethren; Southern Ohio District Conference, Happy Corner Church of the Brethren, Clayton, Ohio

**Oct. 11-12 Middle Pennsylvania District Conference**, Maitland Church of the Brethren, Lewistown, Pa.

**Oct. 12 General Board World Mission Offering** emphasis

**Oct. 15-17 National Evangelism Workshop**, Charlotte, N.C.

**Oct. 16-24 Peace with Justice Week**

**Oct. 18 Western Pennsylvania District Conference**, Greensburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren

**Oct. 18-21 General Board meetings**, Church of the Brethren General Offices, Elgin, Ill.

**Oct. 24-25 Idaho District Conference**, Fruitland (Idaho) Church of the Brethren

**Oct. 24-26 Bethany Theological Seminary** board meetings, Richmond, Ind.; Illinois/Wisconsin District Conference, Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren, Elgin, Ill.

**Nov. 1 Youth Ministry Workshop**, Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md.

**Nov. 2 Junior High Sunday**

## Outdoor Ministries to sponsor group dynamics workshop

The Church of the Brethren Outdoor Ministries Association (OMA) will hold its national conference Nov. 14-16 at Camp Blue Diamond near Petersburg, Pa.

Yohann Anderson, founder of "Songs and Creations," will be the guest speaker on the

theme of "People-Friendly Group Dynamics." Church leaders, educators, youth, camp leaders, and others interested are invited to attend. Cost is \$80 for full Friday to Sunday registration, \$45 for Saturday only, when Anderson will be presenting (\$90 and \$50 after Oct. 15). For more information or a flier contact Camp Blue Diamond at 814-667-2355 or bludia@penn.com.

Dan McFadden



## BVS Unit 255 heads for work assignments

After their July 27-Aug. 15 orientation in New Windsor, Md., Brethren Volunteer Service Unit 255 traveled to their work assignments. Volunteers, their homes, and their placements are listed here.

*Front row:* Erin Karn from Medway, Ohio, to Casa de Esperanza de los Niños in Houston, Tex.; Ellen Thilo from Elizabethtown, Pa., to La Puente Home in Alamosa, Colo.; Amelia Sumpter from Goshen, Ind., to Tri-City Homeless Coalition in Fremont, Calif.; Heather Dean from Washington, D.C., to Copal AA in Guatemala; Brenda Simler from Freeport, Ill., to La Puente Home in Alamosa, Colo.

*Second row:* Jessica Winkleman from Monroe, Iowa, to Sports4Kids in Oakland, Calif.; Erin Azar from Washington, D.C., to ASONOG in Copan, Honduras.

*Third row:* Anna Emrick from Mason, Mich., to District IV Human Resource in Havre, Mont.; Sarah Jones from North Platte, Neb., to Jubilee Network in Washington, D.C., and CEPA in Slovakia; Shalon Atwood (staff); Nancy Steedle from Lititz, Pa., to ZME Women's Development in Mubi, Nigeria; Kirsten Crosby from Lancaster, Pa., to Step 2 in Reno, Nev.

*Back row:* Karen Roberts (staff); Elizabeth Rhodes from England to Pesticide Action Network in San Francisco, Calif.; Adam Hass from Elkton, Va. to Brethren Nutrition Program in Washington, D.C.; Tome Micin from Germany to Pesticide Action Network in San Francisco, Calif.; Florian Wallenwein from Germany to Camp Stevens in Julian, Calif.



OMA's annual directors' and managers retreat will follow Nov. 16-21, also at Camp Blue Diamond. The schedule will include workshops, singing led by Joseph Helfrich, and a learning trip to Juniata College.

**Disaster Child Care workers serve in two unique settings**

Volunteers in the Church of the Brethren General Board's Disaster Child Care program, who typically respond in the wake of natural disasters, had two unique service experiences in August.

On Aug. 9, five DCC volunteers from Church of the Brethren congregations in Indiana—Homer and Rosetta Fry, Phyllis Davis, Jean Ann Replogle, and Fredette Cash—participated in a community-wide Flood Recovery Fair, held at a Lowe's store in Kokomo. Disaster Child Care recruited the group at the invitation of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide care to children of families who attended the fair.

The event, sponsored by FEMA, Indiana Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (INVOAD), and Lowe's, offered a variety of educational opportunities. Building specialists qualified to address flood recovery issues led clinics on repair and mitigation techniques.

Then, in mid-August, DCC was invited to partner with Lutheran Disaster Response and North Border Interfaith Coalition to provide care to young children in a camp setting. DCC volunteers Julie Sword of Illinois and Phyllis Davis of Indiana served as camp counselors for Camp Noah, located at Messiah Lutheran Church in Roseau, Minn.

The Christian-based program helps continue the emotional/spiritual healing and closure process for children (grades K-6) affected by disaster. It combines recovery support for children with recreation to form "a unique, spiritually uplifting, and healing experience." A typical week of Camp Noah takes place in the disaster-affected community, provided that the space is safe, and—if affected—has recovered enough to provide a refreshing and welcoming environment.

**1. India.** A \$7,500 allocation from the General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund will send assistance to northeastern India, where monsoon-induced flooding this summer displaced more than 4.5 million people. The funds will be used for distribution of emergency supplies, clothing, and construction of flood shelters in the most vulnerable areas.

**2. China.** Another \$7,500 grant from the Emergency Disaster Fund will go to southern China, where devastating floods have displaced millions of people. Many were forced into makeshift shelters and were suffering from disease and exposure. Future food shortages are also predicted due to crop destruction. The funds will be used for distribution of food and medicine, construction of homes and schools, and for agricultural infrastructure.

**3. Sudan.** A Church of the Brethren Faith and Advocacy delegation traveled to southern Sudan Aug. 22 to Sept. 6. Phil and Louise Baldwin Rieman, pastors of Northview Church of the Brethren in Indianapolis and former Sudan mission staff with the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC), served as leaders for the group, which included five other Brethren. The trip was sponsored by the General Board's Global Mission Partnerships office.

**4. Colorado.** The Western Plains District conference, meeting at the University of Southern Colorado in August, voted to disorganize and close three of the district's congregations: Fredonia (Kan.), Rocky Ford (Colo.), and Verdigris (Emporia, Kan.). Youth at the conference built a playhouse under the supervision of the district disaster coordinator and helpers. It was sold at a Saturday evening auction.

**5. Washington, D.C.** The Church of the Brethren Washington Office hosted Grace Mishler, a mis-

sion worker in Vietnam partially supported by General Board Global Mission Partnerships, in August. Accompanied by Brethren Volunteer Service legislative associates Bryan Hissong and Emily Lipp, she explained her work to congressional staff and leaders at the Library of Congress, the National Organization on Disability, and the National Institute on Disability & Rehabilitation Research. Mishler serves as a teacher/social worker at National Vietnam University in Ho Chi Minh City.

**6. Germany.** The Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren this summer continued a long-running exchange with a sister church in Germany. 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 congregation. 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.

**7. Colombia.** The South American nation's Protestant churches continue to experience persecution in what Colombian church leaders call an intensification of the nation's nearly 40-year-old civil war with leftist rebels, according to Religion News Service. As part of the recent escalation, 38 Protestant pastors, church leaders, or church members were assassinated in the first six months of this year, a new report said.

**8. Union, Ohio.** The Midwest Peacemakers Conference 2003 took place Aug. 16 with Church of the Brethren member Art Gish of Christian Peacemaker Teams among the featured speakers. Others presenting were Ohio State University political science professor emeritus Chad Alger and Every Church a Peace Church regional coordinator Rick Judy.



# TAKING

Vibrant church plants bring new life to the

In a 1984 statement on denominational growth, the Church of the Brethren General Board heralded the importance of planting new congregations.

"The development and growth of new churches is an important part of a denominational strategy for renewal and growth," the document said. "The church requires the creation of new congregations as a vital source of new life, additional resources, and a fresh vision for the larger body."

In the years following the statement, the denomination's track record in that area was spotty at best. While a few new congregations thrived, many others started and soon closed. Large amounts of cash and energy were drained, and frustration grew. Some began to think Brethren had a black thumb when it came to planting churches.

Over the past decade, however, some new approaches and renewed vision have led to more church plants taking root and flourishing. According to General Board records, at least 25 new congregations (some by splits or combinations of existing congregations) have begun in the past seven years and continue today.

Certainly, there are still some planting efforts that have not made it. Mennonite church planting guru Jeff Wright of the Center for Anabaptist Leadership says that's natural. There are "no three easy steps" to church planting, he says, and a percentage—often up to half—will minister for a time and then fade away.

But planting new congregations out of "a God-inspired vision" is an imperative for the church, according to Wright, who has led several events for Church of the Brethren church planters. "If you're only plant-

ing one church every three to five years, I have serious doubt that you're being faithful to the call of God," he told one group.

With that in mind, following are five stories of those who heard the call and found fertile ground for new expressions of the Church of the Brethren. While far from an exhaustive list, it paints a picture of Christ at work in a number of geographical areas, ethnic contexts, and worship styles. Together, they represent a celebration of new life.

## **Lake View Christian Fellowship, East Berlin, Pa. (Southern Pennsylvania District)**

Bermudian Church of the Brethren pastor Larry Dentler thinks every congregation in the denomination can plant a church the way his congregation did.

When Dentler and his family moved to the 950-home Lake Meade development—about 7 miles from Bermudian—they found a variety of activities offered, but no place of worship in the gated community. Dentler told his wife, Cathy, "There's just a church waiting to happen here."

Bermudian, in East Berlin, Pa., had been considering the startup of a second service anyhow, so Dentler figured why not offer it at another site? Seven families who were currently attending Bermudian lived at Lake Meade, too, and they liked the idea.

Dentler pitched the possibility to the Bermudian board and to the Lake Meade community board, and both felt it was worth a try. Bermudian figured the new plant could be self-supporting within five years. With only rental costs at the Lake Meade community center to pay, the startup costs would be minimal.

Following a seven-week blitz of mass

# ROOT

Church of the Brethren

by Walt Wiltschek

mailings and phone calls, 79 people attended the first Sunday worship service at Lake Meade in June 1997.

Dentler pastored both Bermudian and the new start in the initial years, then Lake View called college student Kenneth Stewart—who had felt a call to ministry—as part-time minister of visitation in 1999. When Stewart graduated in 2002, he became full-time pastor for Lake View.

“In retrospect, I did not expect to be called to minister at Lake View, but each day I’m reminded that there is no better place for me,” Stewart says. “I consider it nothing but a joy to have the opportunity to grow in my ministerial experience along with this new church plant.”

Lake View has grown to 60 members, with about 70 people attending each week. Stewart also leads a Sunday evening youth program in the Lake Meade fellowship hall that attracts another 12 to 20 teenagers, many of whom don’t come Sunday morning.

Dentler says one of the most exciting things about Lake View is that the vast majority of those attending were either completely unchurched previously or had left their churches for various reasons. He thinks the informal setting and style make the service more comfortable for those with little church background.

“We continue to strive to be people that bring Christ Jesus the Savior to people who do not yet know him,” Stewart says.

Stewart says the fellowship has drawn from nearly all demographics, from young families with children to empty-nesters and senior citizens. A blended worship style mixes traditional hymns and praise music and has other variations in content. He says the group has come to treasure the love feast and communion.



As a bonus, Bermudian has also grown since starting the Lake View ministry. Some of the new families had visited Lake View but wanted a more traditional church experience, so they tried Bermudian and ended up staying. Of the original seven Lake Meade families, four stayed at Bermudian, and three are now at Lake View. The two congregations still periodically do some activities together.

“The Lord has provided wonderfully,” Dentler says. “The Great Commission says go out where the people are. Do a second service off-campus, and then just see. Let the Lord show where he’s going to take it.”

*Bermudian Church of the Brethren pastor Larry Dentler preached at this summer’s Annual Conference in Boise, Idaho. Dentler says he loves to talk about the Lake View fellowship that Bermudian planted six years ago.*

# TAKING ROOT



## **Cincinnati Church of the Brethren, Cincinnati, Ohio (Southern Ohio District)**

When Annual Conference came to Cincinnati in 1987, there was no Church of the Brethren congregation there. By the time Conference came back in 1996, though, a fellowship had been born in Ohio's third-largest city.

It started in 1995, when some Brethren in the area began to meet. Services are held at Brecon United Methodist Church, with the Brethren using the fellowship hall while the Methodists worship in the sanctuary. The Brethren group also has a separate entrance with a Church of the Brethren sign outside.

Roger Crusier, a member of the congregation's ministry team along with Ben Walters and Steve Brady, says the space arrangement has worked out well.

"As a result of this relationship, we don't have the typical building maintenance expenses," Crusier says. "Nor are we concerned about adding equipment or furniture." He jokes that the biggest construction decision currently is the size and wording for a permanent sign that will be

placed outside the Methodist church.

The lack of property costs has also enabled the congregation (it received full congregational status last fall) to operate in the black while paying the pastoral team and emphasizing outreach to the district, camp, and other ministries. It has also had a close relationship as a "teach-

ing church" with Bethany Theological Seminary.

Crusier said Sunday attendance usually ranges from 25 to 50, but the congregation has intentionally decided "not to worry about numbers in the pews."

"We think that will take care of itself, and

propose to focus on our enjoyment of communion with the Lord through the Holy Spirit," Crusier says. "Having changed our attitude has removed much of the tension around filling out our numbers."

An interesting twist, he notes, is that the culturally diverse congregation has as many children as adults in worship, and is adding children faster than adults. Music plays a key role in the service, and times for sharing and "passing the peace" are also central.

Another development that has worked well for the congregation is having the three-person ministry team. Crusier says it has offered "a nice spectrum of theology" while allowing opportunities for sharing the load and having time off. The team meets monthly for prayer and fellowship over dinner.

"Each of us brings to the table a different set of experiences from which we share," Crusier says. "(The congregation) seems to enjoy the fact that each of us could preach from the same scripture, and it would sound like three completely different sermons."

He says the congregation remains open "to all comers" and focuses on addressing needs and inequalities in the community and in the world. "Our hope is to share the love of God, through Jesus Christ, to as many folks who will hear the message. We think living that love is essential to our well-being."

## **Living Faith Fellowship, Concord, N.C. (Virginia District)**

Brethren are few and far between in the southern reaches of North Carolina, down in the land of tobacco and auto racing near Charlotte.

A beacon of Brethren-ness now shines in the city of Concord, however, as part of Virginia District's strong church planting emphasis. Virginia's district executive David Shumate says that work "has created great excitement within the district and inspired hope for the future of the church."

The Concord project began after two families who traveled from Concord to attend the Collinsville (Va.) congregation expressed an interest in seeing a church in their home area. A steering committee



*Ben Walters, at left; Roger Crusier, and Steve Brady meet regularly as the ministry team for Cincinnati Church of the Brethren, including this summer picnic with their families.*



*Oregon/Washington District executive Steve Gregory does some symbolic planting at a 2002 church planting training event at Bethany Theological Seminary.*

“No one could ask for a better group of people to work with,” Phillips says. He calls the spirit of the group one of “hope and expectancy.”

“The church is made up of individuals who are growing in their faith, and they demonstrate this in conversation and action,” he says.

Highlights include a deep focus on prayer, significant member involvement in worship, an annual Vacation Bible School that has reached out well to the community, and an active youth group. The church has already licensed one of its members to the ministry and sent Brethren Volunteer Service workers to a project in Japan.

A major challenge now, Phillips says, is how to “market the Church of the Brethren” in a community that has never heard of it.

“I am convinced that we have a message and a ‘way of life’ that this community needs,” Phillips says. “I am persuaded the Anabaptist/Pietist way needs to be shared with others in such a way that . . . they see us as men and women determined to follow Christ all the way.”

**Open Circle Church, Burnsville, Minn. (Northern Plains District)**

Jay Steele never planned to be a church planter, or to live in Minnesota. God, however, had other plans.

The vision for a church plant in the Twin Cities area of Minneapolis and St. Paul arose from the Northern Plains District. A congregation was planted there in the Golden Valley area in the 1960s, but it closed in the following decade. The money from the sale of the building was put in a fund for future church planting.

began meeting in February 1996, and requested an adjustment in district boundaries with Southeastern so that Virgina could plant there.

A list of names was gathered, and those who might be interested were invited to a social event in Concord the following April. About 45 people came, including 19 Brethren.

That led to biweekly worship services beginning in May. Only about a dozen attended regularly at first, but by the following year average attendance had grown to 32. Weekly services began in 1997.

After being “kicked out” of the store where they were meeting when their lease expired in 2000, according to a history by charter member Frances Beam, the group scrambled to find a meeting place. A warehouse served as temporary quarters for two months until a church building came up for sale, and the district took “a leap of faith” and bought it for \$650,000.

Bobby Phillips, who became the fellowship’s second pastor in 1999, had planned to retire but Shumate convinced him to shepherd the Concord plant. He didn’t expect to pastor a new start, and he admits, “It is a real challenge to work on developing a new church.” But he’s found it a rich and rewarding experience.



*The Open Circle congregation lives out the message of "Thinking Encouraged. Diversity Welcomed." displayed on its entry sign in a residential neighborhood of the Twin Cities' suburbs.*

# TAKING ROOT



There was some controversy in the district over trying another Twin Cities project, but by the early 1990s a profile for a church planter was circulated. They found few people interested.

Enter Jay Steele, a Pennsylvania native who was pastoring in Northern Ohio at the time. Carl Myers, then interim district executive for Northern Plains, called Steele about a pastoral opening in rural Iowa. Steele said no, that he felt called to an urban/suburban setting. Then Myers played his trump card—what about the Twin Cities?

Steele again said no, that he wasn't interested in church planting, but Myers sent the profile anyhow, and Steele became intrigued. Even after a visit in the sub-zero Twin Cities winter, he agreed to accept the call.

He and his family moved to Minnesota after Easter 1993 and spent the next year building a core group, launching in the south suburb of Burnsville in the spring of 1994. Steele jokes that the project "violated every church planting rule you can think of." "We started too soon, too small, and not in a good location," he says.

The first meeting place, in fact, was in a funeral home—an ironic birthing place for a source of new life. It remained there for two years until a new owner took over the funeral home, and the fellowship decided to buy a church build-

ing that was for sale.

In retrospect, Steele says he wishes the church hadn't made the property purchase, as it is off the beaten path and quickly becoming too small. Open Circle has grown to about 60 active families with a large youth program.

Worship is typically informal, with contemporary music, drama, and a strong emphasis—as the name implies—to being open to all people.

"People who visit say the worship style may be different, but it's still Brethren," Steele says. "The simple life, peace, community—I believe those core Brethren values are what people are looking for, the way of living that was modeled by Jesus."

The congregation started its Center for Progressive Christianity last year, offering classes and workshops "that revolve around reading the Bible from a progressive perspective," according to Steele, with an emphasis on teaching tolerance and understanding of other views. Advertising the center's programs on Minnesota Public Radio has brought a wave of inquiries and visits, with an accompanying surge in growth.

"We are just now beginning to hit our stride in terms of knowing who we are and where we want to be," Steele says of the congregation. "We have a strong leadership group in place, and we're finding ways to reach people who want to hear our message. I see ourselves growing quite a bit and becoming an increasingly visible presence."



Former Good Shepherd (Blacksburg, Va.) pastor Marianne Pittman joins in prayer with Living Faith Fellowship pastor Bobby Phillips of North Carolina during a church planting training event in Phoenix earlier this year.

## How do you plant a church?

Sponsored by the Church of the Brethren General Board, a New Church Development Committee is

attempting to provide support for the denomination's church planting efforts.

The eight-member, geographically diverse group has put its focus on providing training and assessment for church planters, developing coaching models, and establishing guidelines for grants. Committee member David Shumate this year is working on writing a church planters' handbook. A new church planting video by David Sollenberger,

titled "Called, Formed, Sent," will be ready for complimentary distribution to districts this fall, with additional copies available for purchase through Brethren Press.

Jay Steele of Burnsville, Minn., the committee's facilitator, says the committee feels church planting must happen through districts—who know the local territory better—but that a strong need exists for training and a support network, which the denomination can provide.

Several training events have already been offered, through both Bethany Theological Seminary and its Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership and through Ashland Theological Seminary in Ohio, which has a

## **Iglesia de Cristo Genesis, Los Angeles, Calif. (Pacific Southwest District)**

Iglesia de Cristo Genesis came into the denomination via a non-traditional route, but the Imperial Heights Church of the Brethren is certainly glad it's there.

It all began a few years ago when the members of Imperial Heights—a primarily black congregation—wanted to make better use of their building, located south of downtown L.A. An arrangement with one group fell through, so they continued looking for a cross-cultural group to share the facility.

That search led them to pastor Nick Corral, who had begun a small, Spanish-speaking house church in 1993. As the group grew, it was seeking a new home, making the situation a perfect fit.

Imperial Heights associate pastor Belita Mitchell—recently called as pastor of Harrisburg (Pa.) First—says the relationship was “cordial and very superficial for the first few years.” As Mitchell and Corral built a relationship, though, they began to seek ways to work cooperatively, including some shared worship experiences.

The first of those occurred with a Holy Week love feast. Corral took about eight of the more mature Christians from his congregation and walked them through the scriptures explaining the love feast before joining Imperial Heights for the service.

“Everyone present felt blessed by their courage and God’s grace,” Mitchell says.

“We were able to experience cross-culturally the universal truths of God’s love.”

Corral said his members were deeply impressed, too, and expressed appreciation for the way they had seen Imperial Heights’ members live out their faith over the years.

Over the next 18 months, the two groups created more opportunities for interaction while Mitchell and Corral discussed the possibility of Corral’s congregation joining the Church of the Brethren. His congregation confirmed it wished to move that direction in the spring of 1998, and a relationship process began with Pacific Southwest District, with Imperial Heights as the sponsor.

Imperial Heights offered lessons in Brethren history, tradition, polity, structure, and service, and “the rest, as they say, is history,” Mitchell says. Iglesia de Cristo Genesis was formally recognized as a congregation at the 2000 Pacific Southwest District conference, and Corral became

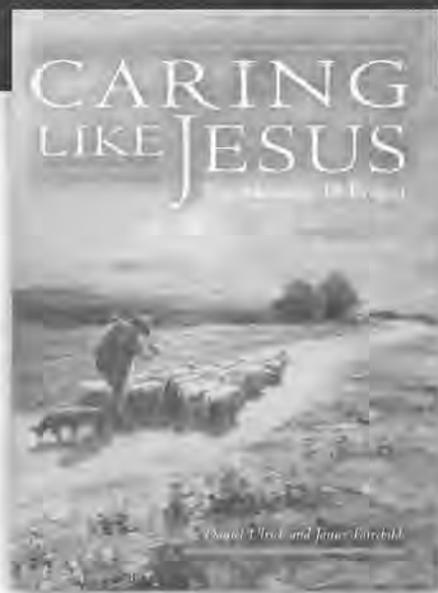
ordained in the denomination in 2002.

“What a wonderful experience it has been to walk alongside this humble man of God and his loving congregation,” Mitchell says. “I feel honored to count Pastor Nick and Iglesia de Cristo Genesis as a part of my Christian family.”

The congregation, now about 60 members, has been a regular participant in district conferences and Annual Conference and has shown a continued hunger to learn about the denomination. Corral said the ties with Imperial Heights remain strong as well.

“I believe we have a great relationship, especially when we combine both of our cultures and come as one,” says Corral, who has a dream of planting a Church of the Brethren congregation in Tijuana, Mexico. “We are united in one, same Spirit, so we can praise the Lord as one body.”

Walt Wiltschek is director of Brethren Identity for the Church of the Brethren General Board.



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well-developed church planting program. In addition, a seminar to teach people how to coach new church planters was held this past January near Phoenix.

Faculty from Ashland and staff from the Los Angeles-based Center for Anabaptist Leadership, directed by Jeff Wright, have led most of the training sessions. The next training is scheduled for May 17-21, 2004, at Bethany’s campus in Richmond, Ind. Wright, Bob Logan of Coach Net Inc., Bethany dean Steve Reid, and Brethren church planters will provide leadership.

New church development training and resources are funded by the General Board’s Emerging Global Mission Fund.



Some drivers proclaim their church affiliation in creative ways



# R U BRET

Clockwise from lower left: Brethren display their historical roots in Virginia, their alma mater in Indiana, give a plug for Brethren Volunteer Service and for their church in Illinois, make a call for peace in Arizona, and announce themselves as a retired Brethren in Virginia.

Brethren as a whole tend to be a humble bunch. We don't typically like to talk about ourselves or make a show. There are some folks, however, who wear their Brethren-ness on their sleeve. A few go so far as to wear it on their car. Scout around carefully at Brethren events, and you might see a unique license plate among the common letters and digits.

Spot a "DUNKARD" among the bumpers? It probably belongs to Virgina District executive Dave Shumate, a history buff as well as a dedicated Brethren. See a "BVS MOM" glinting in the sunshine? Chances are it goes with Kim Bickler, an assistant in the Brethren Volunteer Service office and a fearless guardian of the far-from-home volun-

teers in her care. You might find messages of peace, plates proclaiming a Brethren college, or various plays on the Brethren name.

R. Jan Thompson, a former General Board staff and board member, and his wife, Roma Jo, have three unique plates for their vehicles.

The Thompsons saw a Pennsylvania car with "BAN WAR" plates while on a drive one day (it belonged to a Mennonite), and when they returned home to Maryland they ordered a plate with the same saying. When they later moved to Arizona, they got it there, too.

"SHALOM" wasn't available for their second car, so they ordered "PAZ SI" ("Peace Yes" in Spanish) instead. Their RV later received "2 4 PAX"



Timothy Russell/StockXchange



Lynsey Addario/Corbis



# When religio

## An interview with Charles Kimball

*Charles Kimball is a religion professor at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C. An ordained Baptist minister, he's worked for the National Council of Churches. He has also worked with Congress, the White House, and the State Department for more than 20 years—and made 35 visits to the Middle East.*

*But these days he crisscrosses the country via car and plane, newspaper columns and airwaves. It started Sept. 11, 2001, when reporters called Kimball, who specialized in Islamic studies when earning a doctorate at Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., to help interpret the attack. Demand for him has only increased since the 2002 publication of his book *When Religion Becomes Evil* (HarperSanFrancisco).*

*Wherever he goes, Kimball teaches about the havoc that is let loose when religion becomes corrupted. He preaches about the need for people to repent of their ignorance about their religion and that of others, and also to bear witness to the good news of their faith. Kimball was interviewed in April.*

**Q:** You've studied and taught comparative religion for decades. Many in the so-called secular world would consider it a specialized, even obscure, academic field. But so much that's happened since Sept. 11 shows the folly of that assessment.

**Kimball:** I was as horrified as everyone else on Sept. 11. But I know that across the traditions and through the centuries many other horrors have been done in the name of religion. It's the most powerful and pervasive force in human society, bringing out the best and worst in people. There are 1.3 billion Muslims in the world. Nineteen people hijacked those planes. There is little leverage over people willing to die for their belief. The questions for us now are: What in the world is going on and what do we need to do if we want to live very far into the 21st century?

We need, for example, to know enough about Islam to put Sept. 11 into perspective, to see what is the most extreme and not extrapo-

Mark Peterson/ Corbis



# n becomes evil

by Kathleen Kastilahn

late that to the whole faith. We have ideas, images, and prejudices—many of which we don't even know we have. We have to learn, and we have to unlearn.

When evangelist Jerry Falwell goes on "60 Minutes" and calls Muhammad a terrorist, we forget about it the next day. But that statement fans the flames of extremists in the Islamic world: "See Christians attack the prophet!"

**Q:** Let's start at the beginning, with the role of religion in human life.

**Kimball:** Religions "work" in similar ways to address the major issues of life: creation, the birth-to-death life cycle, and the relationship of the individual and the community. Ritual life gives meaning that transcends the physical life. It's in the content of religions' truth claims that we find real differences among the major traditions—Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, and Buddhist. Very different world-

views and ultimate goals. We need to study these respectfully and make value judgments in the context of accurate understanding.

**Q:** Religions also have in common—the point of your book—the susceptibility to corruption, even by the most sincere believers. What are these? How do they lead to evil?

**Kimball:** There's a pattern of behavior across the traditions that constitutes corrupted vs. authentic religion. The five signs of corruption are: absolute truth claims, blind obedience, establishing the ideal time, the end justifies any means, and declaring holy war.

Absolute truth claims are made with rigidity and certainty. Whenever anyone claims to know what God wants for him or her and for everybody else, it's a recipe for disaster. Usually abuse of sacred texts is involved—to find out what God wants me to do. Suicide bombers are one example of the evil that comes from

this, as their leaders frame others as “infidels.” Some Christians say the God of Islam isn’t the God of the Bible—and they write off all Muslims. That’s somewhere between ignorant and disingenuous. Why is this an important point? Because they try to discredit a whole religion.

Is there absolute truth? I believe there is. And I also believe that it rests with God. A good dose of humility is important for all of us when we talk about truth from God.

**Q:** This first corruption of a religious belief seems to be a source of conflicts raging today, particularly between Christians and Muslims.

Many horrors have been done in the name of religion. It's the most powerful and pervasive force in human society, bringing out the best and worst in people.



**Kimball:** Christians, at 1.8 billion, and Muslims, at 1.3 billion, make up 40 percent of the world’s population. They’re both geographically diverse and the only two religions which, at heart, are evangelical. Islam early on was perceived as a threat by Christianity. Within 100 years after Muhammad (632 C.E.), it spread from Arabia west to Spain and east to India. It’s the only religion that ever threatened to overcome Christianity, and its danger is woven into literature with the most negative images possible.

Today there’s a shaky political situation within many Muslim countries and also a great resurgence of the desire for Islam to again be a great civilization system. Since the Crusades, many Muslims have lived in the shadow of European colonialism. There is a long memory. My fear is the perception that the United States is on a 21st century crusade.

Relief efforts in Iraq by Christian groups “hostile” to Islam could be catastrophic. As Christians we can provide help in Iraq with no strings attached. That’s called bearing witness to our faith, and it’s not an option not to do so. Our responsibility isn’t to convert but it is to bear witness.

**Q:** What are the other points of corruption?

**Kimball:** Blind obedience is the pattern of cults with charismatic leaders who lead followers into oblivion. But you see this dynamic in the local church, when too much power falls into too few hands. It’s most frightening in TV ministries from preachers who

absolutely know what’s true because “God spoke to me.” And there are people passively listening. Healthy religion encourages people to think for themselves.

Pursuing an ideal time, some groups feel certain they know when God’s future should happen. Every tradition presupposes that something is wrong, that human beings are off the track, and that the faithful should be working for a hopeful future of justice and peace. But those fixated on ideal time say, “Why work for peace when the end time is coming?” So the Sermon on the Mount falls on the deaf ears of those Christians who believe this.

When the end justifies any means, particular goals become elevated. That’s at the core of the sexual misconduct struggle in the Roman Catholic Church: The leaders’ goal of protecting the institution of the church and all its good ministries made it acceptable to tolerate pedophiles among the clergy. We were on the brink of nuclear war last year over a struggle in India when Hindu nationalists leveled a 500-year-old mosque to reclaim what they considered their sacred space. The status of Jerusalem is wisely saved for last in negotiations for Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. Sacred space is very important as a means to religious life, but when it takes on a life of its own and becomes the goal—the end—there’s trouble.

Declaring holy war is a self-righteous march toward destruction. More wars have been waged, more people killed, and more evil perpetuated in the name of religion than by any other institutional force. It continues today. It’s always explosive. We’ve moved beyond the point in human history where we should even be talking about war cloaked in divine mission. When you hear that, that’s your warning. There are circumstances, like Sept. 11, when it’s necessary to make a response. But make it on its own merits and don’t lay it at the feet of God.

**Q:** Every day, it seems, we see and read about these warning signs of corruption in religion—from all over the world.

**Kimball:** It goes with the tremendous diversity. Particularly among Christians and Muslims, there’s evidence of all the warning signs. That’s just indicative of multiple things happening all the time.

**Q:** It’s awfully easy to feel overwhelmed and powerless—even cynical. Where do we start to counteract the impact of these corruptions?

**Kimball:** There’s no magic. But I’m convinced there are things we can and must do

to create a more hopeful future.

Study of world religions should be required for all students, not just religion majors. It's practical. It's essential if we hope to understand better our world, our global village. We have to commit ourselves to continuing education—within our congregations, our larger religious bodies, our communities. We have to come to a much more self-critical awareness of our religious tradition. We have to ask, "What does it mean to be a person of faith with commitment and integrity?" Can we answer, "Surely God is greater than my experience of God." As Christians, we get our understanding of neighbor from Jesus, in his telling of the Good Samaritan, to include the whole human family.

We must work on building community. Work together, people from a church and a mosque, to build a Habitat house or on another issue we all consider important. It's putting a face on one another.

We in the United States must take our citizenship seriously. Our government is the most powerful in the world. We have the opportunity to help shape policy. It's not easy, but it is our responsibility. When our government acts, it acts in our name. And the impact of US policies is felt around the world. We have a responsibility for what is done in our name.

Speak up. Challenge fear and ignorance—with friends and family members, in our churches, in letters to the newspaper. We have to follow our religious tradition with depth, commitment, integrity. For Christians, remember that Jesus didn't say, "Follow me and everything will be fine." We must never underestimate our efforts, what God can do through them.

**Q:** Can work within our country, within our faith, have a real impact on the rest of the world?

**Kimball:** We've learned again that the behavior of even a few can change the world and that religion can animate them. Today's problems within Muslim communities around the world are extremely important. They're complicated because many people are not free to speak, they're persecuted or marginalized.

Interfaith dialog requires honesty and candor. The problems go both directions. We must realize that calling Muhammad a terrorist plays right into the hand of extremists. We must become more attentive and alert to all things within religion that lead to violence, destruction, even evil. We must live out our lives in the best of our faith. **W**

Kathleen Kastilahn is section editor of *The Lutheran*, the magazine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This article is reprinted with permission from *The Lutheran*. A study guide is available at [www.thelutheran.org/study/evil.html](http://www.thelutheran.org/study/evil.html).

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# Protecting the future with

*A 60-year history of helping* by Nancy Miner



*The pension plan was approved by delegates at the 1943 Annual Conference in McPherson, Kan.*

**The definition of “foresight” includes “care in providing for the future; prudence.”** That describes the vision church leaders had when Annual Conference delegates voted 60 years ago to establish a retirement plan for ministers and missionaries. Because of that foresight, today more than 1,100 retired ministers and lay employees of the Church of the Brethren and its related agencies enjoy the benefit of a monthly annuity, while more than 2,500 active employees anticipate their own retirement with a sense of security.

The retirement needs of ministers were not always seen as the responsibility of the church. Early Brethren churches participated in the free ministry, where ministers earned their income through farming or other trades and provided for their own retirement needs. In the late 19th century, more and more churches moved to salaried ministry. Recognizing a responsibility to these pastors, a movement began in 1896 to assist missionaries and ministers who had no

other sufficient means of support in their retirement. In 1904 Annual Conference took further action with the establishment of the Ministerial and Missionary Relief Fund—known today as the Church Workers Assistance Plan.

With the founding of Bethany Seminary in 1905, formal education for pastors became more common. Young men often entered the pastorate with substantial educational debts. Yet pastors were paid only a small salary, sometimes served more than one congregation, and often lived in church-owned parsonages. Upon retirement, many pastors still found themselves without the financial assets most church members were able to acquire during their working years.

For several decades the Ministerial and Missionary Relief Fund continued to help ministers and missionaries at retirement. However, a study in the early 1940s showed that the fund was not adequate to meet their needs. As a result, a contributory pension plan was presented to the 1942 Annual Conference in Asheville, N.C. The plan was studied for one year and was approved at Annual Conference in McPherson, Kan., in June 1943. An executive committee was formed, composed of Leland S. Brubaker, M.R. Zigler, Clyde M. Culp, Harl L. Russell, and H.L. Hartsough. The Ministerial and Missionary Pension Plan was inaugurated on Sept. 1, 1943.

The cost of administering the plan the first year was \$1,868.75, which included salaries, office supplies, postage, and legal services. The plan employed only one full-time staff member, Helen Flory, for the first 31 years. Other significant staff members—including administrators and treasurers—divided their time between the plan and other denominational ministries.

During the first year, 251 ministers and 51

# pensions

Nevin Dulabaum



ees, with further support given by additional BBT employees.

The assets of the pension plan are held as a separate trust created in 1981 and revised in 1989. Investment guidelines established in 1978 and revised periodically ensure that the funds of the trust are invested responsibly to fulfill the fiduciary obligation and uphold the social and ethical values of the Church of the Brethren. In 1986 investments were moved from book value to market value accounting, giving members a choice of three funds in which to invest. As a result of the stock market boom of the 1990s, long-serving employees who chose to retire during those years now enjoy an income level that helps to support a comfortable lifestyle. The recent addition of a Community Development Investment Fund gives current members five investment funds from which to choose.

Sixty years of history have shaped the pension plan as it strives to anticipate and meet the needs of its members. As the Brethren Pension Plan celebrates the past, it continues to look to the future with the Brethren Benefit Trust board and staff hoping to share the foresight of their predecessors in providing for the future of church employees. **24**

Nancy Miner is managing editor of Brethren Benefit Trust and is a member of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren, Elgin, Ill.

*More than 160 retirees and a few active members at the 2002 National Older Adult Conference blew noisemakers to celebrate the pension plan's birthday.*

Nevin Dulabaum



*Brethren Benefit Trust staff members Peggy Bruell, Marilyn Ziegler, and Don Fecher administer the pension plan today.*

missionaries enrolled. Members contributed 4 percent of their salaries, plus a 15 percent addition where free rent of a home was provided. The congregation or other salary-paying organization also contributed 4 percent of the salary of the member.

Members of the General Mission Board—later the General Brotherhood Board and now the General Board—also served as members of the pension board for the first 45 years. In 1980 the work of the pension board grew to include group life, hospital, and surgical insurance coverage. Due to steady increase in volume and complexity of the work of the board, Annual Conference in 1986 authorized the formation of a separately elected board to be composed of members with expertise in the areas of benefits, insurance, accounting, law, investments, personnel administration, or health care. In 1987 Annual Conference approved the organization of the Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT). The new 12-member board met for the first time in 1988 and observed its 15th anniversary on July 2.

Today the Brethren Pension Plan serves pastors and employees of congregations and districts, the Annual Conference agencies, Brethren retirement homes, and other eligible Brethren employers. Members contribute up to 7.5 percent of their salaries, while employers contribute up to 12 percent. Additional voluntary contributions are also accepted as tax laws allow. Total active membership is 1,836, with an additional 965 former employees maintaining active accounts. Each month approximately \$750,000 is distributed among more than 1,100 annuitants. Through Feb. 28 the pension plan's total net assets were \$207 million. The pension plan has three full-time employ-

# Legal trouble

by Phil Jones

Why the church should be concerned about the Patriot Act

On Oct. 26, 2001, just six weeks after the Sept. 11 attacks, a 342-page law was passed by Congress. The stated purpose of the Patriot Act was to improve intelligence-gathering efforts between federal, state, and local law enforcement in order to prevent further terrorist acts. The full title is the "Provide Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (PATRIOT) Act" of 2001.

Among its provisions are the following:

- Expands the definition of terrorism to include "domestic terrorism," which could subject political organizations to surveillance, wiretapping, and criminal action.
- Expands the authority of law enforcement to conduct secret searches, meaning a home could be searched without the occupant being informed for up to 90 days.
- Gives law enforcement the power to conduct phone and internet surveillance, and to access medical, financial, and student records with minimal judicial oversight.
- Allows government agents to obtain library circulation records, bookstore sales records or research database records, without having to show probable cause that the records are related to a crime.
- Allows FBI agents to investigate American citizens for criminal matters without charges and without probable cause if they say it is for "intelligence purposes."
- Allows non-Americans to be jailed on suspicion of terrorism, without charges and without legal counsel, indefinitely in six-month increments without meaningful judicial review of their cases.
- Allows the government to monitor



communications between federal detainees and their attorneys, removing the right to attorney/client privilege.

- Allows the government to deny non-citizens readmission to the United States based on speech.

Wide debate has ensued since the enactment of this legislation that many see as a direct assault on constitutional rights. From freedom of religion, speech, and assembly, to unreasonable search and seizure, to the restriction of due process, many find reason to contest the validity of such restrictions as afforded by the first, fourth, fifth, and fourteenth amendments.

Amid such wide and well documented debate, why write about it here? How does this sweeping legislation aimed at the reduction of terrorism affect the church?

On Sept. 10 this year the Bush admin-

istration announced an increased effort to implement and enforce this act. On the eve of the second anniversary to remember the events of 9/11, we heard strong rhetoric of revenge and retaliation. At a time when there should be searching for healing, the nation instead continues on a path of reactive power and strength. This proposal for intensified monitoring and increased surveillance is unsettling.

Our church has long supported the human rights and freedoms of expression that are allowed to all people, and it has consistently opposed human rights repression. In our Annual Conference statement of 1986, "Making the Connection," we are reminded: "We experience a relatedness in life; the personal and world events that cover our existence are as a 'tunic without seam, woven from top to bottom' (John 19:23). We find it crucial to be

## Brethren Witness and Washington Office programs join as one

The General Board has joined the Brethren Witness and Washington Office into one program with offices located in Washington, D.C. Phil Jones, director, invites member involvement and comments on program priorities.

The office will continue Faith Expeditions, along with the Christian Citizenship Seminar, advocacy work on Capitol Hill, and related ministries. The staff of the Brethren Witness/Washington office is available to districts and congregations for leadership on peace and justice issues, legislative concerns, and related topics. Contact [pjones\\_gb@brethren.org](mailto:pjones_gb@brethren.org) or phone the office at 202-546-3202.

Connie Mayers



The staff of the Washington/Witness Office is Phil Jones, director, and legislative associates Bryan Hissong and Amy Adkins.

aware of relatedness, domestic and international. If we are to understand and address the most critical problems of our time, we must see the underlying, connecting causes of these problems.

"We must see that our security is related to the security of others. True security lies not with repression of our people or intervention in other nations. The forces that lead to intelligence abuses in this country are the same forces that lead to military actions abroad, both covert and overt. They are connected."

In the announced escalation of the Patriot Act (often referred to as "Patriot Act II" or "The Domestic Security Enhancement Act") there are serious implications for the Church of the Brethren and its call to be a "Living Peace Church," adopted at this year's Annual Conference in Boise, Idaho. It includes the statement, "We are called to love our enemies (Matt. 4:43-48) and to follow Jesus' examples of building bridges across lines of race, class, and creed (John 4). We confess that we struggle with finding a balance between the claims of citizenship and our kinship with all people."

The resolution goes on to state that, "for the early Brethren, counting the cost of following Jesus meant taking the path of nonresistance, risking their reputation, their wealth, even their lives for their commitment" (Matt. 10:37-39).

The Patriot Act, and its broader mandate, seriously undermines our ability to build bridges and find the balance between citizenship and kinship. Acts of nonresistance, nonviolence, and civil disobedience have all been labeled under the present or pending Patriot Acts as

possible expressions of domestic terrorism. Such actions, such expressions of solidarity and justice for all people as understood by our commitment to the teachings of Christ, could thus lead to loss of citizenship as allowed under the new "Patriot" mandates.

Also proposed as part of the broader

## Is our answer to terrorist attacks one of heightened aggression and retribution, or one that searches for understanding and reconciliation?

mandate against terrorism is an increase in the number of offenses for which the death penalty could be carried out as punishment. The Church of the Brethren clearly decries capital punishment as wrong. With the expansion of possible uses of the death penalty, we as a church must reiterate our opposition.

From the 1987 Annual Conference statement on "The Death Penalty" we read: "The death penalty only continues the spiral of violence. Jesus said, 'You have heard it said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also' (Matt. 5:38-39). Do we not believe this to be true? The only real way to deter further violence is to cease our claim to a life for a life, to recognize that life and death decisions belong to God, and to seek mercy and redemption of God's lost children. Our mission is still to seek and save. Not to seek and destroy."

We are a historic peace church. Our roots run deep. We are a people of

Christ. Within our faith we are called to serve and to witness. With this history the Patriot Act clearly draws us into the debate. The debate is not primarily with the political structure, though our Witness/Washington Office feels the church and its membership has this calling as well. Our questioning and chal-

lenging comes from being chosen to be peacemakers as called by Christ.

Do limitations on basic rights, secrecy within government, and mistrust and demonization of others different from us lead to peace and justice for all? Is our answer to terrorist attacks one of heightened aggression and retribution, or one that searches for understanding and reconciliation? We must decide, and act.

The challenges of our political society and our moral struggles are not new. Our history of faith and personal commitment is strong. Perhaps new to our generation will be our commitment to the challenge. Indeed the debate is necessary, and now is the time to join it, if we are to be a living peace church of today.

Phil Jones began in July as director of the Brethren Witness and Washington Office. He brings a background of pastoral ministry combined with years of peace and social justice work. Most recently Phil has worked as a consultant for Moratorium Now, an advocate group for People of Faith Against the Death Penalty. He is a 1992 graduate of Bethany Seminary and has served pastorates in Florida, Fla., and in a new church development project in Durham, N.C.

Ed Jackson



*O happy day! Holly Petty, left, and Derek Zech, second from right, are baptized by pastors Bev Weaver and Chris Warren. The baptism was in a rain-swollen stream on the farm of Ed and Judy Jackson at Pendleton, Ind.*

# You're quite welcome! by Duane Grady

**The phrase, "Continuing the work of Jesus. . ."** suggests that our faith will cause us to be active and there will be a visible dimension to our discipleship. I am a Christian because I believe that in the life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus we are able to understand who God is and how God acts. I belong to the Church of the Brethren because we offer to the world a visual image of who Jesus is and how Jesus acts.

Recently, I was privileged to witness a living example of what Jesus would do. A congregation I know well has been struggling over issues of behavior on Sunday mornings. After 40 years of decline, both in size of membership and spirit, the church has made some bold steps for renewal. One decision was to call a youth pastor who is especially gifted in ministering to young people on the margins of school and society. Many of these youth live in troubled homes, many have no prior church experience, and all are wrestling with life issues such as who they are and where they fit in the world. This is the kind of ministry Jesus would encourage.

The youth pastor is doing a masterful job and the church has seen significant growth in the number of youth and young adults attending worship. Not everyone is pleased. There is universal agreement that church growth is good. Tension arises over issues of dress and behavior in the sanctuary. Many of the youth are first-time church attenders and they have irritated some longtime members by bringing drinks into the sanctuary and by wearing hats.

The church struggles with these issues. Their wrangling teaches us that the process

of church renewal is hard and dangerous work. Paul's words in Ephesians 6:12 are true—we are up against powers and principalities. At the heart of the church's struggle is moving from a mood of maintenance into a mode of mission. Hampering progress is the church's history of being a family system where everyone was known by or related to someone else. Such connectedness thrives on tacit understandings that are passed from generation to generation. But, here, like most places, the next generation moved away. So the church struggles to know how to be a community of strangers bound together only by a commitment to following Jesus.

There are tensions in the church because some people care more about

## **Following the sermon something happened. God showed up to inspire an act of following Jesus that was lifted up for all to see.**

"proper" behavior than they do about growth and faith commitments. Others are excited about the potential for growth and can put issues regarding dress and behavior on the back burner. Still others think all of it is irrelevant and immaterial.

We are not alone in this struggle. Most of the New Testament speaks about these issues. The biblical story offers us clues and guidance for the living of these days. The congregation has begun a five-week study of Matthew 18:15-20 to improve its ability to talk to and not about one another. This period of intentional focus began with a sermon on taming the tongue from James 3.

Following the sermon something happened that will be hard for all who wit-

nessed it to ignore or forget, something of biblical magnitude. God showed up to inspire an act of following Jesus that was lifted up for all to see and understand.

On this Sunday, two youth were going to be baptized. Several of their friends came to worship and the youth sat prominently near the front of the sanctuary. From their position, it was easy for those in the back to notice the youth wearing hats. Food and drink had also been brought into the sanctuary.

The sermon stressed the importance of holding back critical comments, especially if these words might hinder the development of faith in people's lives. The message ended with these words:

"There is a tremendous difference between saying, 'Welcome to our church. I am truly glad you are here,' versus saying, 'I wonder who they are and why they are here.' The difference is as wide as the gap between the gates of hell and the kingdom of God."

During the hymn that followed the sermon, two men who are known for living their faith put down their hymnals, left their pew, and walked across the front of the sanctuary to greet each of the youth. Warm embraces led to tears flowing.

I can think of no better testimony to Romans 14-15, especially Romans 15:7, "Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you." I can think of no better example of what it means to continue the work of Jesus. Thanks be to God for this gift of seeing the kingdom of God draw near. **DU**

Duane Grady serves as a member of the Congregational Life Team for the General Board and is on the ministry team at the Anderson (Ind.) Church of the Brethren.

**"Over the past 40 years, I can remember no other time that Annual Conference has explicitly moved to enforce its will on congregations or districts that are calling persons to ministry."**

**Annual Conference should use no force**

I write to share the deep pain that many of us feel because of the 2002 Conference's action to forbid the licensing or ordination of persons "engaging in homosexual practices."

Over the past 40 years, I can remember no other time that Annual Conference has explicitly moved to enforce its will on congregations or districts that are calling persons to ministry in good faith and surrounded by prayer. That action is a significant deviation from accepted Brethren

belief and practice.

For example, no churches have been forced to ordain women, support the World Council of Churches, use the Revised Standard Version, or anything else they are conscientiously opposed to doing. Congregations and districts that support US war-making have not been directed to stop, nor have pastors been refused recognition of their ordinations on this issue.

I am an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren, but no one has asked me if I drink alcoholic beverages, engage in extra-marital sex, gamble, or any of a number of behaviors which are also con-

demned by Annual Conference statements.

I'm glad that we don't force everyone to toe the line. I don't believe that Annual Conference positions should be forced upon an unwilling member or minister. And neither does Annual Conference. The 1996 Annual Conference statement on Ethics In Ministry Relations (Code of Ethics for Ministers, item "D") says, "We will exercise lifestyles consistent with the teachings of Christ, giving serious attention to relevant Annual Conference statements."

In the debate that year, stricter language (like "obey" or "follow") was removed in favor of the more accepting "give serious attention to." That was a wise decision, permitting adoption of a position but allowing for conscientious dissent.

But the 2002 Conference acted in contradiction to the statement on Ethics In Ministry Relations, singling out whether a person "engages in homosexual practices" as the only behavior (besides professional misconduct) that would disqualify

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## LETTERS

“ Focusing on God accompanying me seems to imply that faith depends on what I’m doing rather than what I so graciously am being given by a loving and gracious God. ”

a person for ministry. It also attempts to force a significant minority of us to do something which we cannot in Christian conscience do, namely, base a decision on someone’s fitness for ministry solely on their sexual practices.

As one speaker at Conference this year observed, “Unity does not require uniformity.” Surely we recognize this as Brethren, given our obvious diversity and our desire to continue working and witnessing together. Don’t we?

**Ken Kline Smeltzer**  
Boalsburg, Pa.

gracious God.

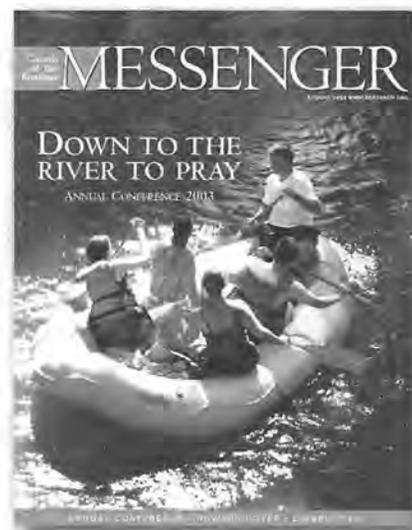
So now that I’ve scratched, I realize I’ve focused on me, which is why I “itched” in the first place!

**Mike Morrow**  
Anville, Pa.

### Itching to walk with Jesus

I promised myself I wasn’t going to write, but after the wonderful writeup on Annual Conference in the August MESSANGER, I confess my flesh is weak. I, too, enjoyed the Live Report titled, “A Journey of Hope.” During those meaningful moments, however, I also developed a disquieting theological “itch.” Let me scratch just a little.

The song that “wove its way throughout the presentation,” titled “I Want Jesus to Walk with Me” was an enjoyable piece of music. But for me, it also was theologically “itchy.” In our area of the country we would say it caused me to “rutch.” One reason is that it too easily turns the focus of praise on us, instead of God who is the real subject of our worship. Is it Jesus walking with me (a singularly individualistic and arguably narcissistic thought) or is it my walking with Jesus that lets God be the subject of my life and worship? Focusing on God accompanying me seems to imply that faith depends on what I’m doing rather than what I so graciously am being given by a loving and



### Pray, but wear a PFD

On the cover of your August MESSANGER, two folk out of five are wearing personal flotation devices (PFDs). Three in the raft are not.

It matters not how deep or shallow that water is. A bonk on the head and out of that boat could give your paddlers a serious injury or drowning.

Looks like that guy in the white shirt (I’m assuming he is the responsible adult) should never have taken those kids out on the water without reviewing water safety practices—and insisting on practicing them.

**Sabra Staley**  
Staff “Grandma” at Camp Brethren Woods  
Arlington, Va.

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### This is not Romans 1

The ungrateful, unmerciful haters of God Paul is talking about in Romans 1 simply and absolutely are not the lesbians and gays I know. Certainly Paul would be appalled by how some Christians misapply what he wrote in Romans 1.

For me not to stand with my Christian lesbian and gay sisters and brothers would be like Peter denying what God was doing in the home of Cornelius. For those who think I am erring on the side of grace and compassion I am asking you to show me scriptures where Jesus corrected or rebuked his disciples for showing too much grace and compassion.

I want to continue to study the Scriptures in order to rightly understand and apply the word of truth in the spirit and light of Christ.

**Roger Eberly**  
Milford, Ind.

### Not normal but unique

I enjoyed Kenneth L. Gible's article, "We're all disabled" [August]. Probably our true friends are the only ones we talk to about our disabilities or physical attributes. That's because we want to be considered "normal."

Maybe there are many more like ourselves out there, holding back so they, too, can be "normal." So I should not say I have disabilities, but I am unique in many different ways. Everyone is unique. I am unique in the eyes of God and I want to see that uniqueness of others like God sees mine.

**Gene Mascioli**  
Harrisburg, Pa.

### Don't send me slick

I strongly agree with Dean Farringer's letter [September] regarding competitive fundraising tactics of some organizations within the denomination. I highly resent the slick, expensive, impersonal style of these mailings, to say nothing of the dollars they must cost! These groups want my dollars, while our gen-

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“It’s nice that we do small well. But Jesus’ 12 disciples didn’t stay where they were and watch one another die off. They went out and planted.”

eral fund runs in the red.

What’s wrong with this picture? I have requested that my name be removed from those mailing lists. If enough of us do so, perhaps our unified vision will return.

**Tamra Houser**  
Middlebury, Ind.

### The other side of small

Yes, we do *small* very well, but, if we don’t attempt to grow, I’m afraid we’ll disappear. [See “Celebrate the faithful remnant,” July.] I’ve watched with sadness while my

parents’ hometown church (McLouth, Kan.) closed, my husband’s hometown church (Fruita, Colo.) closed, and my father-in-law’s hometown church closed (Leeton, Mo.). Even the little Columbia (Mo.) Fellowship of which I’ve been a part shrank from a sustainable 30 or so to 3.

Part of our problem has to be demographics. Perhaps by the 1940s, less than half the country’s population lived on farms, and Brethren were mostly farmers. The farms and small towns sent their young people off to Brethren colleges, and those young people often didn’t return to their rural roots but settled

in cities—cities where often there was no Brethren church available, so they moved on to other denominations. My sister settled in a suburb of Atlanta, Ga.—the last I heard there was no Church of the Brethren there. A brother has settled near Blythe, Calif. No Church of the Brethren there.

If there were other Brethren there, they might not be easy to find. I can find names in my McPherson alumni directory of folks who might well be Brethren, but if there are folks here from Manchester or Bridgewater or Juniata or La Verne or E-town or even Ashland, I have no way of knowing they are here. Too bad there isn’t some kind of “Brethren-at-large” membership list for those of us who don’t live close to an existing Brethren congregation.

In the old days, when families pulled up stakes and moved out to the frontier, they took their church with them. In fact, they

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**Wanted: Part-time music director.** Hagerstown Church of the Brethren seeks qualified organist to play one Sunday service and some special services and to direct several choirs including hand bells. Salary negotiable. Send resume to 15 S. Mulberry St., Hagerstown, MD 21740; phone 301-733-3565.

**Bloomington, Ill., church start.** I am part of a small group of people trying to establish a new Church of the Brethren in the Bloomington/Normal, Ill., area. We would appreciate receiving the name and address/phone of any potentially interested person (especially if of Brethren/Anabaptist background) whose zip code begins with 617. Contact Paul Kohler, 572 CR 2400 N. Dewey, IL 61840; 217-493-3189 (voice), 217-359-0055 (fax); e-mail: [Paul@KCSSYS.COM](mailto:Paul@KCSSYS.COM).

**Widow would like to hear** from a Brethren widow who would like to share my home with me. Lady must be able to drive. Call 219-785-2860 or write to 5701 S. US 421, Westville IN 46391.

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probably moved with folks they knew through church. Nowadays, when each family moves alone, can't the Church of the Brethren use a little technology and help us find more Brethren when we get there? Can't we somehow remain part of the greater church and its people? Maybe we can find some like-minded folks and

start a fellowship.

It's nice that we do small well. But Jesus' 12 disciples didn't stay where they were and watch one another die off. They went out and planted. The old circuit-riding Brethren preachers didn't just stay in their own neighborhoods, and they didn't limit their efforts on behalf of the church

to just Sundays.

I don't know the answers for the Church of the Brethren, but we need to do something different, or we will, like Columbia Fellowship, reach a point of no return.

Jan Tompkins  
Columbia, Mo.

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

## New Members

**Akron, Ohio:** First: Vickie Johnson  
**Arcadia, Ind.:** Jan McCord, Warren Mosbaugh, Georgeanna Mosbaugh, Robert Hook, Teresa Hook, Aaron Hook, Adam Hook, Aubrey Young  
**Baugo, Wakarusa, Ind.:** Lowell LaMar Hunsberger, Sharon Lou Hunsberger, Christina Lou Hunsberger  
**Bradford, Ohio:** Susan Bowman, Kenneth Harshbarger, William Mills, Jordan Hackett, Debbie Harshbarger, Josh Kosier, Cody Mills, Phil Kosier, Nicki Mead, Bill Barger, Betsey Barger, Levi Kenworthy, Chelsea Sargent, Elizabeth Huff, Morgan Brunk, Michael Bowman  
**Columbia City, Ind.:** Brian Ball, Shellie Ball, Greg Ball, Megan Davis, Jim Broni, Chris Broni  
**Genesis, Putney, Vt.:** Asaph Murfin, Hanifah Murfin  
**Jones Chapel, Martinsville, Va.:** Matthew Coleman  
**Lone Star, Lawrence, Kan.:** Nan Hill, Jeanne Torneden, Steve Klinedinst, Tami Klinedinst, Anna Fernandez, Melissa Fernandez, Fabian Fernandez  
**Memorial, Martinsburg, Pa.:** Jacob Bowman, Melissa Bowman, Stefanie Hinton, Kristen Hood, Virginia McCready, Megan Saltsgiver, Molly Saltsgiver  
**Monte Vista, Callaway, Va.:** Kenneth Buckner, Carla Buckner  
**North Liberty, Ind.:** Katie Harness  
**Osceola, Mo.:** John Neale, Stacy Neale, Willa Gregg, Darla Doody  
**Polo, Ill.:** James Rinehart, Carol Fike, Cory Stauffer  
**Prairie City, Iowa:** David Peter, Jenna Kane, Sue Cox  
**Smith Mountain Lake Community, Wirtz, Va.:** Hollie Stansbury

## Anniversaries

**Baile, Glen and Betty,** Warrensburg, Mo., 55  
**Bowermaster, Edwin and Patricia,** New Holland, Pa., 50  
**Boyer, Robert and Anna Mae,** Sheloceta, Pa., 50  
**Brubaker, Emory and Zeldia,** Rocky Mount, Va., 50  
**Cunningham, John and Annabel,** Polo, Ill., 70  
**Curie, Maurice and Geraldine,** Orrville, Ohio, 50  
**Dare, Laurence and Caryl,** Canton, Ill., 65  
**Dickensheets, Walter and Evelyn,** Hanover, Pa., 55  
**Erismann, Ethmer and Kathryn,** Warrensburg, Mo., 55  
**Fishburn, Alvin and Angie,** Lawrence, Kan., 50  
**George, David and Betty,** Citrus Springs, Fla., 55  
**Groff, Paul and Barbara,** Finksburg, Md., 50  
**Hackett, Galen and Connie,** Bradford, Ohio, 50  
**Heath, Bob and Shirley,** Polo, Ill., 50  
**Jacoby, Paul and Anna,** Harleysville, Pa., 55  
**Kecner, Harlan and Shirley,** Lancaster, Pa., 50  
**Kline, Harvey and Ruth,** New Oxford, Pa., 60  
**Kuhn, Richard and Catherine,** Hanover, Pa., 55  
**Lichty, Quinter and Alice,** Waterloo, Iowa, 55  
**Loose, John and Beulah,** Martinsburg, Pa., 65  
**Lumsden, Clarence and Barbara,** Mount Morris, Ill., 50  
**Miller, Ralph W. and Bonnie,** Harrisonburg, Va., 60  
**Reynolds, Orla and Caroline,** Kansas City, Kan., 55  
**Sesser, Joe and Helen,** Modesto, Calif., 60  
**Whaley, Bob and Ruth,** Lakeville, Ind., 50  
**Ziegler, Elam and Kathryn,** Bethel, Pa., 50

**Deaths**

**Base, Alene,** 79, Akron, Ohio, July 10  
**Billar, Lewis Franklin,** 54, Broadway, Va., Aug. 4  
**Bleam, Catherine,** 91, Quakertown, Pa., July 11  
**Bowman, Rayford N.,** 93, Callaway, Va., July 25  
**Buffenmyer, James Quinter,** 83, Lombard, Ill., July 25  
**Burton, Beverly June Shilling,** 73, Roanoke, Va., July 24  
**Byerly, Mary Catherine Myers,** 93, Mount Solon, Va., Aug. 10  
**Caplinger, C. Elaine,** 82, Dayton, Va., June 18  
**Cline, Olivia Ann Laymon,** 57, Harrisonburg, Va., July 24  
**Clugh, William I.,** 78, Mifflintown, Pa., May 13  
**Conner, Catherine Helsley,** 75, Woodstock, Va., Aug. 13  
**Cool, Anna Olivia,** 96, Coral Gables, Fla., Aug. 2  
**Cornelius, Daniel R.,** 60, Kansas City, Kan., July 8  
**Cupp, Ruby Claudine Roadcap,** 75, Mount Sidney, Va., July 4  
**Dare, William E.,** 55, Elmwood, Ill., Jan. 17  
**Doseck, Edith,** 86, Bradford, Ohio, March 1  
**Dowrick, Pauline,** 90, Martinsburg, Pa., May 18  
**Eagle, Helen,** 85, Ashland, Ohio, July 26  
**England, Lois E.,** 85, Bedford, Pa., July 14  
**Fern, Guy S.,** 83, Williamsburg, Pa., July 19  
**Fike, Harold L.,** 74, Peace Valley, Mo., July 14  
**Foor, Margaret Elizabeth,** 85, Everett, Pa., June 15  
**French, Dennis,** 50, Kalamazoo, Mich., Aug. 6  
**Gentry, Baylor Amos,** 82, Hinton, Va., Aug. 5  
**Grove, Esther B.,** 96, Martinsburg, Pa., May 29  
**Guyer, Hazel Virginia,** 89, Dayton, Va., June 11  
**Harbaugh, Samuel Forrest,** 83, Waterloo, Iowa, July 25  
**Harris, Ethel S.,** 94, Woodstock, Ill., Aug. 7  
**Hill, Harry Nelson,** 78, Harrisonburg, Va., June 20  
**Hodge, Martha L.,** 82, Edinburg, Va., June 30  
**Johnson, Bertha Virginia Simmons,** 81, Staunton, Va., July 4  
**Jones, Wayne Eugene,** 50, Mount Jackson, Va., July 28  
**Kniesly, Vaughn,** 91, Bradford, Ohio, July 30  
**Knupp, Irene Alice Gochenour,** 76, Broadway, Va., Aug. 10  
**Lambert, June Kisamore,** 87, Bridgewater, Va., Aug. 4  
**Landis, Lucile,** 82, Bradford, Ohio, March 25  
**Leggett, Katie Virginia,** 86, Stanley, Va., June 21  
**Little, Mary L.,** 95, Baldwin City, Kan., July 9  
**Livingston, Elmira,** 92, Johnstown, Pa., Aug. 15  
**McCaslin, Bobby Dean,** 68, Pittsburg, Mo., June 22  
**Mercer, Dorothea,** 72, Covington, Ohio, Jan. 30  
**Miller, Virgil L.,** 84, Winchester, Va., July 28  
**Mitchell, Andrew Morris,** 87, Harrisonburg, Va., Aug. 11  
**Moyers, Weldon Kline,** 80, Broadway, Va., July 7  
**Myers, Frances Sharpes,** 98, Harrisonburg, Va., June 12  
**Ours, Janie Elizabeth,** 90, Dorcas, W.Va., July 3  
**Owen, Ruth Curry,** 90, Harrisonburg, Va., Aug. 10  
**Piell, Dorothy M.,** 78, Friedens, Pa., July 25  
**Pittman, Faye L.,** 75, Everett, Pa., June 28  
**Ratliff, Betty Louise,** 74, Everett, Pa., June 24  
**Ratliff, J. Arthur,** 84, Harrisonburg, Va., July 6  
**Rex, Jackson A.,** 79, Columbia City, Ind., June 29  
**Richard, Terry Lee, Sr.,** 66, Mount Jackson, Va., Aug. 11  
**Rodgers, Lillian Raynes,** 86, Grottoes, Va., Aug. 3  
**Sandridge, Ida,** 86, Grottoes, Va., Aug. 4  
**Sheets, Carolyn Catherine** Ralston, 62, Bridgewater, Va., July 29  
**Shelor, Ila A.,** 87, Modesto, Calif., Aug. 6  
**Shifflett, David Charles, Sr.,** 69, Harrisonburg, Va., Aug. 2  
**Shoemaker, Richard Lee,** 62, Broadway, Va., Aug. 1  
**Simmons, Rambert Lee, Sr.,** 79, Fredericksburg, Va., July 7  
**Sink, Cleveland C.,** 88, Roanoke, Va., May 14  
**Sions, Harold A.,** 76, Harrisonburg, Va., July 1  
**Sofranko, Betty,** 79, Uniontown, Pa., July 9  
**Stone, Barbara Carter,** 76, Bassett, Va., July 29  
**Stuckey, Stanley,** 70, Orrville, Ohio, Aug. 6  
**Swick, Ruth Vernon,** 81, Petersburg, W.Va., July 19  
**Tallion, Keith J.,** 41, Windber, Pa., June 22  
**Teter, Stella Adelia,** 99, Santa Ana, Calif., April 30  
**Thompson, Lorraine Kessler,** 82, Roanoke, Va., July 29  
**Thorne, Daisy Virginia,** 85, Petersburg, W.Va., June 27  
**Truex, Lester E.,** 84, New Carlisle, Ind., Aug. 3  
**Turner, Otho,** 91, Petersburg, W.Va., July 12  
**Wampler, Gary Wayne,** 50, Grottoes, Va., Aug. 8  
**Wilt, Mary Elizabeth,** 81, Everett, Pa., May 30  
**Works, Bernard,** 47, Uniontown, Pa., July 25  
**Wratchford, Barbara Ann** Fitzwater, 68, Moorefield, W.Va., Aug. 2  
**Wratchford, George Allen,** 75, Moorefield, W.Va., July 31  
**Wright, Blanche Elizabeth,** 91, Bridgewater, Va., Aug. 1  
**Young, Edith I.,** 82, Medina, Ohio, July 27

## TURNING POINTS

**Livingston, Elmira,** 92, Johnstown, Pa., Aug. 15  
**McCaslin, Bobby Dean,** 68, Pittsburg, Mo., June 22  
**Mercer, Dorothea,** 72, Covington, Ohio, Jan. 30  
**Miller, Virgil L.,** 84, Winchester, Va., July 28  
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**Wratchford, Barbara Ann** Fitzwater, 68, Moorefield, W.Va., Aug. 2  
**Wratchford, George Allen,** 75, Moorefield, W.Va., July 31  
**Wright, Blanche Elizabeth,** 91, Bridgewater, Va., Aug. 1  
**Young, Edith I.,** 82, Medina, Ohio, July 27

## Licensings

**Carmody, Michael Wayne,** Southeastern Dist. (Bristol, Tenn.), June 22  
**Gower, Terry E.,** W. Marva Dist. (Valley River, Junior, W. Va.), July 15  
**Keath, Frank W., Jr.,** S. Pa. Dist. (Chambersburg, Pa.), June 22  
**Kulp, Tina,** Atl. N.E. Dist. (East Fairview, Manheim, Pa.), June 22  
**Striebig, Douglas Terry,** S. Pa. Dist. (New Fairview, York, Pa.), Aug. 10  
**Sweigart, Jeffrey,** Atl. N.E. Dist. (East Cocalico, Reamstown, Pa.), July 20

## Ordinations

**Bueher, Samuel James,** Atl. N.E. Dist. (Heidelberg, Reistville, Pa.), Aug. 17  
**King, Janice Glass,** Atl. N.E. Dist. (Ridgeway, Harrisburg, Pa.), June 22

## Placements

**Carmody, Michael Wayne,** pastor, Bristol, Tenn., June 22  
**Dillon, Bruce,** pastor of music and worship, Eaton, Ohio, July 15  
**Matteson, Erin A.,** from pastor, Faith, Batavia, Ill., to co-pastor, Modesto, Calif., Aug. 18  
**Matteson, Russell L.,** from Brethren Press marketing and sales director, Elgin, Ill., to co-pastor, Modesto, Calif., Aug. 18  
**Replogle, Shawn Flory,** co-pastor, McPherson, Kan., Aug. 15  
**Sherck, Ronald G.,** pastor, Greenville, Ohio, May 11  
**Stoughly, Julianne Bowser,** pastor, Luray, Va., Aug. 1



## Beyond fundraising

**I find myself on a number of fundraising committees these days**—for the district, for a neighborhood organizing group, for a housing group. I volunteer for these assignments because I want others to experience the joy there is in giving to good causes. Also I have a sense that there is plenty of money “out there;” our task is just to move it “in here.” And I know that if we align our mission with God’s will, “by the power at work within us God is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine” (Eph. 3:20).

But I’m not very good at it. I hate asking people for money. The few times I’ve asked for contributions outright I’ve been turned down flat out. A telethon I volunteered for taught me that acquaintances I thought were generous aren’t. I wrote a grant application but it was rejected because I turned it in late. Another grantor keeps asking for more “documentation,” and I have little patience for paperwork. Experienced fundraisers say it’s important to have a clear mission statement, but I can’t stand working on mission statements. If I were you I wouldn’t pick me for your committee.

Yet gathering resources for building God’s kingdom is holy work, so I keep trying to learn. Jesus fed the 5,000 to teach us how. The episode in John 6 starts out like a typical church meeting, with Jesus making a problem out of something that should be a cause for rejoicing, the large crowd that had followed him onto the hillside. He must have had a twinkle in his eye when he asked Philip, “Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” Wouldn’t it be just like us to draw a crowd of 5,000 to church and worry that all the grocery stores are closed? Then, like a good church board member, Philip chimes in to worry about how much all that bread would cost. Then there’s always somebody on the committee who comes up with an idea that’ll never work. This role falls to Andrew, who says, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish.”

The situation seemed hopeless. That’s when Jesus does his best work. When he had given thanks for the food, he distributed the loaves and fish to the people on the hillside. Not only was it enough, there were leftovers. This teaches me that it’s okay to try something that’ll never work, that miracles happen, and that if Jesus is with us we’re going to be all right.

Fundraising is not a science. “In religious circles we find today a fierce and almost violent planning and programming,” writes Douglas V. Steere in *Dimensions of Prayer*, “a sense that without ceaseless activity nothing will ever be accomplished. How

seldom it occurs to us that God has to undo and to do all over again so much of what we in our willfulness have pushed through in God’s name. How little there is in us of the silent strength in which the secret works of God really take place! How ready we are to speak, how loath to listen, to sense the further dimension of what it is that we confront.”

We must try our best to align our cause with God’s will. “All we can do to God is submit to his will,” writes Brother Abraham of St. Gregory’s Abbey, “and that scares us, because we are afraid that God might do something that makes us uncomfortable. God’s will is love—letting people and things grow into their own beautiful selves. And we don’t like that because we would rather try to make things fit into our desired conception of what they should be. So we fight against God and fight against grace, making life hard for ourselves and those around us, rather than joyfully living in the beautiful world that God has given us. How can we ever believe that God has better things in store for us when we cooperate with grace and live in love than when we try to wrest control away from him in order to make things and people behave the way we think best? We must allow God to rule our lives, no matter how bothersome it seems sometimes.”

Through prayer and careful listening we do our best to ensure that the cause we are promoting is what God really wants us to do. That is at least half of the task. The rest has to do with cultivating relationships with people, in obedience to the command to love one another. The success of a cause depends on the strength of relationships. If all concerned are of one accord, or reasonably close, then the venture will go forward.

This doesn’t mean the traditional techniques of fundraising aren’t important—far from it. We should go ahead with our planning meetings, silent auctions, appeal letters, and grant applications. But the meetings, wordsmithing, and events must be seen as ways to cultivate relationships. All the while we must let people know how important they are to the success of our cause, and spend extra time after the meeting with those who oppose us, or who aren’t quite with us yet. The miracle of the loaves and fish happened when 5,000 people on a hillside joined their hearts in common cause.

If we are together with God and together with each other, then the funds will follow. In budget and fundraising meetings someone often says, “Let’s be realistic here,” meaning we can’t get the job done. To that we might answer, “No, let’s be real here,” meaning we can.—FLETCHER FARRAR

“I hate asking people for money. The few times I’ve asked for contributions outright I’ve been turned down flat out.”

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Mary Boyd, Pastor



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Jacksonville, FL 32205  
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Herbert Weaver, Pastor



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Gotha, FL 34734  
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Merle Crouse, Pastor



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Terry Hatfield, Pastor



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John Tubbs, Pastor



**SEBRING**  
Sebring Church of the Brethren  
700 S. Pine Street  
Sebring, FL 33870  
(863) 385-1597  
Cecil Hess, Pastor



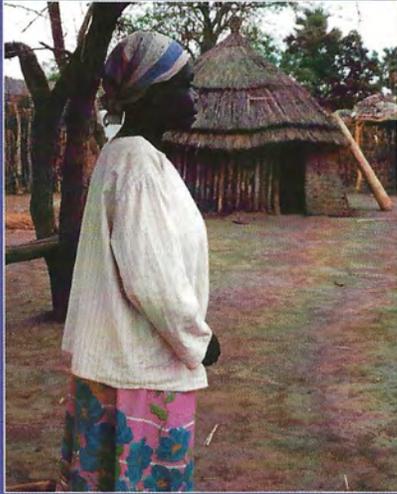
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Christ the Servant Church of the Brethren  
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Ron Reese, Head Pastor



**BRADENTON**  
Good Shepherd Church of the Brethren  
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Don E. White, Pastor

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