

Church
of the
Brethren

MESSENGER

JUNE 2004 WWW.BRETHREN.ORG



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LOVING GOD
& NEIGHBOR

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June 12, 2004

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August 13, 2004

Brethren Service Center
New Windsor, Maryland

August 14, 2004

Bridgewater Church of the Brethren
Bridgewater, Virginia

Plains Region

November 12, 2004

First Central Church of the Brethren
Kansas City, Kansas

November 13, 2004

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Saturday

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Saturday evening

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“... publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works” (Psa. 26:7b KJV).

Church of the Brethren

MESSENGER

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ONTHECOVER

“Loving God and Neighbor”: This theme, selected by Annual Conference moderator Christopher Bowman and the 2004 Annual Conference Program & Arrangements Committee (and displayed on a cup that Bowman created), addresses the two streams of love that Jesus joined in the “greatest commandment.” Cover photo is by Angie Mountain.

8 Brethren to the core

You could say Annual Conference moderator Chris Bowman is a tree-hugger. A family tree-hugger, that is. Bowman openly embraces his Brethren family, and hopes others do the same. In this profile by Angie Mountain, Bowman talks about what it means to be a family, what he’s learned from his travels around the church, and what things are worth spending one’s life on.

10 Doing the Charleston

The capital of wild, wonderful West Virginia is waiting with open arms for the Church of the Brethren. As Annual Conference prepares to travel to the banks of the Kanawha River in July, this Conference preview gives some ideas of what to expect.

14 They keep us in stitches

Thirty years ago, the Association for the Arts in the Church of the Brethren began what would become an enduring tradition: the Annual Conference quilt auction. Rachel Brown, “the quilt lady,” talks about the history of the auction and the impact it has had.



16 Reading, writing, and rebuilding

Half a world away, violence and destruction are everyday realities in Iraq. The Church of the Brethren is among those helping to bring some healing to that country, joining with partners to reconstruct a Baghdad school and allow children to learn again.

18 No easy answers for Middle East

This year’s youth Christian Citizenship Seminar delved into the difficult issues surrounding the Israel-Palestinian conflict. A host of speakers shared insights on the history, the current tensions, and the separation barrier being built. One overarching message came through: “That somehow there be peace.”

Cliff Kindy



DEPARTMENTS

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A relative of mine, I am told, had the dream of flying. When he was drafted into World War II, he ended up taking part in bombing missions over Europe. After returning home, he told his brother that he couldn't even speak of what he had witnessed.



WENDY McFADDEN
Publisher

He never flew in an airplane again.

Fighting in a war is a job like few others. To do this job, people must be taught to see the other as the enemy. The world must become black and white, divided into us and them. Ordinary people are trained in the mechanics of killing. And then we expect them to return home unchanged.

The soldiers charged with abuse of Iraqi prisoners have been described by family and friends as some of the nicest people you could know. Nevertheless, the first responses by people in leadership blamed a few bad apples. We have heard this explanation many times: A few bad apples emerge out of a normal high school to cruelly haze their friends. A few bad apples engage in police brutality against African-Americans. A few bad apples are responsible for shocking cases of corporate greed and mismanagement. From the excuses we read, it seems that most of the bad things in the world are aberrations caused by a few bad apples.

New York Times reporter John Schwartz reminds us (May 6, 2004) of a 1971 study at Stanford University in which 24 students were randomly assigned to be prison guards or prisoners for two weeks. "Within days, the 'guards' had become swaggering and sadistic, to the point of placing bags over the prisoners' heads, forcing them to strip naked and encouraging them to perform sexual acts." At Stanford and in Iraq, says Philip Zimbardo, a leader of the study, "It's not that we put bad apples in a good barrel. We put good apples in a bad barrel. The barrel corrupts anything that it touches."

War is a bad barrel. That has been the conviction of the Church of the Brethren since its beginning in 1708. For centuries, the Brethren have believed that war is inconsistent with the teachings of Jesus. In recent years, the Brethren have protested the inhumane tactics taught at the School of the Americas. For the past year, Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) has spoken out about abusive treatment of prisoners in Iraq.

This sort of message isn't very popular, whether it comes from a bunch of Christian pacifists or from the Red Cross. Only when someone sent photos to the worldwide media did the US focus all its attention on the problem in a prison in Iraq. Only then were the activities condemned as un-American. Ironically, the photos have galvanized public opinion in the US in a way that words and body counts could not.

Can anything good come of this sorry chapter in our national life? Certainly it will reduce the abuse of prisoners in Iraq, at least for a while. It might cause us to take more seriously the other allegations of abuse that are raised on a regular basis by humanitarian and faith-based organizations. More important, it might cause Americans to ask why we are so outraged by humiliating treatment of prisoners—but not by the deaths of thousands who did not live long enough to become prisoners.

Bad apples? Every one of us has the potential to be one. That is the human condition. But every one of us can refuse to accept the bad barrel. That is the calling of Christ.

Wendy McFadden

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AROUND THE DENOMINATION

Updates and highlights from the Church of the Brethren districts

Atlantic Northeast: About 75 people attended the "Ministry R&R" event sponsored by the district's Spiritual Renewal Team on April 27. General secretary Stan Noffsinger, moderator-elect Jim Hardenbrook, and district executive Craig Smith led an exploration of "Vision, Identity, and Ministry."

Atlantic Southeast: More than 50 people from five congregations attended the Second Re-Encounter Congress of the Churches of the Brethren March 22 in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, for a day of worship and sharing.

Idaho: The district's Christian Education Commission is making small scholarships available for any youth from the district who choose to attend a Brethren college.

Illinois/Wisconsin: The district over the past year rallied around Polo (Ill.) pastor Mel Fike, who was suffering severe physical ailments and required special treatment, with fundraisers and prayer. Fike passed away on May 11. Joyce Person is serving as interim pastor.

Michigan: About 50 people met at the Marilla congregation in Copemish March 27 for a renewal of a "sectional fellowship" in the northwestern part of the district. Members from four congregations attended for a meal and program of worship and music.

Mid-Atlantic: Four Washington, D.C.-area congregations joined together to sponsor a free Juniata College choir concert April 17 at the University Park Church of the Brethren (Hyattsville, Md.).

Middle Pennsylvania: Several district groups teamed up to present a Net Results workshop called "Stewardship Adventures: Increasing the Harvest 15 Percent to 30 Percent Annually" April 24 at Hollidaysburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren. Eugene Grimm provided leadership.

Missouri/Arkansas: The District Witness Commission and district disaster coordinators Jim and Pat Dennison organized a district work day at the Messiah congregation (Kansas City, Mo.) on May 15.

Northern Indiana: A new initiative announced at the 2003 district conference has taken shape as the Assessment and Coaching Team, available to assist congregations in discerning their strengths and areas for improvement.

Northern Ohio: The District Peace Task Team presented "Snapshots of a Living Peace Church," with leadership by Russ Veal, Leslie Lake, and Barb Saylor, May 7-8 at Inspiration Hills.

Northern Plains: The district board agreed to pay off the loan used by the Open Circle congregation (Burnsville, Minn.) for its start-up and building purchase. The congregation had been struggling to pay interest on the loan, and will now instead repay the district at 0 percent interest.

Oregon/Washington: Camp Koinonia (Cle Elum, Wash.) will receive some much-needed improvements to its entry road after the county approved the camp's proposal following a lengthy process.

Pacific Southwest: The Papago Buttes congregation in Scottsdale, Ariz.—currently meeting in temporary quarters—is moving forward with construction of a new building that will be energy efficient and fully accessible. Updates are being posted at www.pbcob.org.

Shenandoah: A series of "Enriching Worship Music" events took place April 16-18 at locations around the district. Shawn Kirchner provided leadership.

South/Central Indiana: A "Church Health and Vitality" workshop and steak supper was held May 6 at Anderson (Ind.) Church of the Brethren to introduce district congregations to the Natural Church Development process.

Southeastern: The district board called Raul and Lidia Gonzalez to begin a Hispanic church plant in the Hendersonville, N.C., area. Called HIS Way Church of the Brethren, the plant had seven people attend an initial worship service. A benefit dinner for the project was held April 17 in Tennessee.

Southern Ohio: The district held its fourth Church of the Brethren Disaster Response Auction May 22 at Preble County Fairgrounds in Eaton. The growing auction raised more than \$15,000 in 2003.

Southern Pennsylvania: Two district ministries held big events in May: Camp Eder's annual Children's Benefit Golf Tournament took place May 8 in Fairfield, Pa., while The Brethren Home Community's fourth annual 5K race was May 1 in New Oxford.

Southern Plains: The district board at its spring meeting approved a new church mission project in Enid, Okla. Carol and Nina Coulter began the work in April and planned to attend a new church planting training event at Bethany Theological Seminary in May.

Virginia: The district's active church planting work continues, as efforts are now under way to form a new fellowship in the area of Guilford County, N.C., near Greensboro. The district is building a list of Brethren and others in the area who may be interested in attending an initial gathering.

West Marva: Tearcoat Church of the Brethren, Augusta, W.Va., hosted a Level I Disaster Child Care Training Workshop April 16-17 with nine people participating. Leaders included Lydia Walker of nearby Berkeley Springs.

Western Pennsylvania: The district Church Life and Growth Team planned "Rekindle Our Hearts" renewal events May 23 at the Maple Spring (Hollisopple, Pa.), Indiana (Pa.), and Mount Joy (Mount Pleasant, Pa.) congregations.

Western Plains: The district offered a workshop titled "When Saints Become Sad: Considering Depression and the Church's Response" at the Topeka (Kan.) congregation in May and planned to present it again June 5 at Prince of Peace near Denver, Colo.



The Southern Plains District board held a blessing for pastoral couple Carol and Nina Coulter in April, after it called them to a new church plant project in Oklahoma.

Sharing fellowship and work in Lone Star State

The Church of the Brethren at Falfurrias, Texas, shared some good Brethren hospitality, excellent south Texas food, and a sense of mission with a work group from Church of the Brethren congregations in Kansas and Nebraska during a week in February. The sharing extended to Sunday school and worship on Sunday morning.

Later in the week, under the supervision of co-pastor Stanley Bittinger, the group of 23 spent a work day painting the Falfurrias church, doing some repair projects, refurbishing the church sign, cement work, a number of plumbing projects, and some general cleanup.

The group also spent four days building a cement-block house for a family of eight in Reynosa, Mexico. The work was done through a program called Hands of Service for the Lord headed by Arnold and Virginia Lein, members of the Stanley Church of the Brethren

in Wisconsin. Included in the program was a Bible school, visits to a school and health clinic, and sharing with the family and the community. The last day in Mexico, the group participated in a dedication of the house, enjoyed a Mexican meal, and joined in an area church service featuring some excellent music.

Participants came from the McPherson, Quinter, and Hutchinson congregations in Kansas and the Enders congregation in Nebraska.

—David Fruth

Dranesville event looks at media violence

At the unlikely intersection between peace churches and the United States Marine Corps stands Lt. Col. Dave Grossman. When questioned why he is asked to speak to military groups one week and a Brethren congregation the next, he responds, "You tell the truth."

With folding chairs in the



The Annville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren shared its traditional love feast with neighboring Annville United Methodist Church on Maundy Thursday this year, bringing together about 150 people from the two congregations. Annville interim pastor David Eller said more Brethren than Methodists were present, but it was a very meaningful event. "This is a wonderful thing. It's really a unity celebration," Eller told the Lebanon (Pa.) Daily News. Eller, left, and Methodist pastor Cliff Flick, breaking bread together above, led the service.

aisles to handle the extra people, Dranesville Church of the Brethren (Herndon, Va.) hosted Grossman this winter to share his message on the negative effects of media violence on children.

Using the school shooting tragedies of Jonesboro and Columbine as examples, Grossman showed the correlation between violent media and the ability to kill. In order to practice what he preaches,

David Fruth



A work group from Western Plains District in February made a long trip to Falfurrias, Texas, one of the southernmost Church of the Brethren congregations in the United States. Below and left, volunteers help with repairs and cleanup at the church building.

David Fruth



LANDMARKS & LAURELS

Grossman forgoes a flashy multimedia presentation and relies on his words and a handful of transparencies.

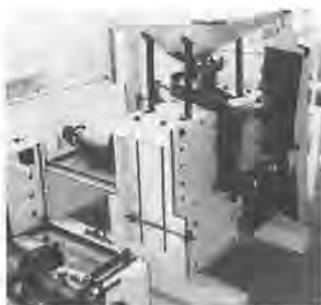
"Reading is like jogging for the brain," Grossman said, while describing how violent images bypass the brain's processing centers. With study after study, Grossman supported his message that media violence is not healthy. When children spend hours a day shooting and killing people in realistic video games, they begin to love violence, he said.

Grossman also provided hope, however. He said that the time to wean a person off of their addiction to violent media is a mere two weeks. He also noted that none of the Jonesboro or Columbine killers were involved in social events or active in their youth groups. After his talk at Dranesville, several video games found their way into the garbage, and the entire congregation took a closer look at their children's free-time activities.—**Jake Weyant**

Persistent efforts yield a harvest for Tajikistan

Glen Hofecker, a member of Smith Creek Church of the Brethren in Franklin, W.Va., helped to make a major impact in central Asia. Hofecker's son, Brick, returned to the US after a three-year relief work assignment in Tajikistan with news of a small village that had lost its mill in an earthquake. The village depended on the mill to make flour.

Hofecker, who had previously owned two grist mills,



A run of the mill project? Not for Glen Hofecker. The West Virginia Brethren prepared these portable mills and several others to meet a need in central Asia.

tracked down four rebuilt portable grist mills in North Carolina and got the Ladies Aid group of his congregation, the Shenandoah District's Disaster Response Rubbermaid Committee, and other friends and church members to provide the funds needed to purchase them. He found another grist mill for sale in West Virginia, which he bought and restored, and also located a small water turbine, which a friend overhauled.

All those supplies, along with 200 bushels of wheat, were ultimately brought together in a large container, received government approval, and were sent to Tajikistan. They arrived just before the nation's severe winter.

• Happy 100th birthday! **Dorothy Brubaker Fahs Burris** of Virden (Ill.) Church of the Brethren, turned 100 years old on Nov. 7. **Agnes Trent Mader** of St. Michael, Pa., a member of the Maple Grove Church of the Brethren, Salix, Pa., celebrated her 100th on Feb. 27.

• **Peace Valley (Mo.) Church of the Brethren** celebrated its 100th anniversary on May 2 with a worship service, carry-in meal, and an afternoon of memory-sharing, music, and a balloon release.

• The **South Waterloo (Iowa) congregation** is nearing completing of its new Family Life Center, including gym space, offices, classrooms, and elevator access for the original structure.

• **Beech Grove Church of the Brethren**, Pendleton, Ind., moved into a new home this spring, holding its first service in the new church building on May 2. An open house and dedication took place May 23.

• **Sue Wagner Fields**, a Church of the Brethren member from Bernville, Pa., has been selected to serve on an advisory group for a new, education-oriented "More-With-Less"-style cookbook being developed by Mennonite Central Committee and Herald Press. Fields says recipes from Brethren will be welcome; submissions can be made at www.morewithless.org.

• **Ross Bair**, a Church of the Brethren member from Westminster, Md., ran the Boston Marathon on April 19, finishing in 3:42.30 in the 80-plus degree heat. That put him in 3,071st place in a field of nearly 18,000 runners.

• **Amber Orndorff**, a member of Gettysburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, was the D&E Jazzed Star of the Week for WGAL-TV Channel 8 in February. The award highlights 7th- to 12th-grade students in the area for their achievements and contributions to their communities. Amber has volunteered at The Brethren Home Community in New Oxford, Pa., and represented Adams County Special Olympics at a bowling sectional tournament in March.

REMEMBERED: Helen Constable

Helen Constable, former associate district executive for Western Pennsylvania and a former General Board volunteer, died April 18 in West Chester, Pa. She was 76.

Constable served the district for 27 years beginning as administrative assistant for the district office. She served as associate district executive for 14 years, with a focus on Christian education. Her work included planning and leading district meetings and workshops for congregations, and working with the district's age- and interest-group planning committees. She retired in 1992.

Along with her work for the district, she was actively involved in Education and other programs related to nurture, and served the Council of District Executives as treasurer and on its executive committee. She was licensed to the ministry in 1987 by Tire Hill (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.

After her retirement, Constable served two and a half years, 1993-95, as volunteer coordinator for congregational resourcing for the General Board's Parish Ministries Commission and Brethren Press' then-new Jubilee curriculum. She helped introduce the curriculum to the districts, organized teacher training for district representatives, and tracked sales when the curriculum was first launched. "In her quiet and humble way, she was a powerhouse," remembered Brethren Press publisher Wendy McFadden. One of Constable's years as a program volunteer was spent with her husband, Jim, at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill.—**Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford**



Churches can be unintentionally un-welcoming

I grew up immersed in the Church of the Brethren. I thrived on my involvement in local, district, and denominational activities. I studied religion in college and theology in graduate school.

But in my early and mid-20s, something changed for me. Instead of experiencing God through community, I now struggled to experience God in spite of community. Where I used to find comfort, inspiration, and motivation I now glimpsed hypocrisy, sexism, and power struggles. I felt deeply disappointed in the inherent brokenness of the church as body of Christ.



AUDREY OSBORNE MAZUR

Call it the typical spiritual angst of young adulthood, but when I was in its throes it was extremely

personal. The struggle to maintain both my faith and my connections to the church left me angry, disheartened and spiritually "stuck." I eventually found it necessary to leave the church in hopes of recovering equilibrium and perspective.

While I gained both, spiritual peace eluded me. Apart from the church I mourned my separation. Within the church I seethed against its imperfections. Trying to reconcile myself to the church I periodically gathered my courage and attended worship services. I visited Brethren and non-Brethren congregations. I

Churches wanted desperately to attract new members but tragically tried to do so in ways that alienated me further. For example, in every church people spoke at length about the congregation's desire to attract "Young Families with Children." Members would glowingly report on the new activities or pastor or Sunday school wing they were adding in hopes of drawing this group. However, I was not a "Young Family with Children." No one said, "All life stages—married, single, divorced, or widowed, parenting or not, young or middle or older ages—are important to the life of this community." Churches inadvertently excluded those outside their target group in their single-minded effort to attract one type of member.

In a similar effort, most of the churches I visited were in the process of starting contemporary worship services. It appeared that churches began these services not because existing members genuinely desired a new way of worship but because the church hoped to bring in large numbers of new members. These services often exchanged a faith community's distinctive message for a more non-denominational form of "pop" theology.

I knew where to find a non-denominational church if that was what I wanted. It was not. When I visited a Brethren church, I sought a Brethren perspective. When I visited the Methodists, I wanted a Methodist perspective. Brethren just might draw more people by

becoming more distinctly Brethren rather than more generally non-denominational.

Most churches said they welcomed new members while simultaneously making it very clear that they did not welcome real change. Real change means new ideas, new ways of doing things, and new voices sharing in decisions. Inviting new

Real change means new ideas, new ways of doing things, and new voices sharing in decisions. Inviting new people invites change. Some changes should be avoided. Other kinds of change challenge. . . . Welcoming these kinds of changes creates an authentically inviting space.

people invited change. Some changes should be avoided because they threaten a church's identity and theology, as do changes to the essence of worship or the theological content of hymns. Other kinds of change challenge the power structure of churches—questioning whose ideas are the "right" ones, whose way of doing things is acceptable, whose voice deserves to be heard. Welcoming these kinds of changes creates an authentically inviting space into which new people can enter and stay. **AM**

returned several times to each church, knowing that finding a church home takes time and patience. My frustration grew as I found each place to be unintentionally un-welcoming.

And I really wanted to be there! I wondered how someone who did not have a lifetime of primarily positive church experiences behind them could possibly be expected to persevere against the inhospitality offered by most churches. As I went from place to place hoping to find a church that was "different," I came to realize that most churches were making the same mistakes—it did not matter what town I was in or the denomination I attended.

people invites change. Some changes should be avoided because they threaten a church's identity and theology, as do changes to the essence of worship or the theological content of hymns. Other kinds of change challenge the power structure of churches—questioning whose ideas are the "right" ones, whose way of doing things is acceptable, whose voice deserves to be heard. Welcoming these kinds of changes creates an authentically inviting space into which new people can enter and stay. **AM**

Audrey Osborne Mazur, now married and a mother, lives in Hanover, Pa. She has returned to the church as a member of Black Rock Church of the Brethren in Glenville.

QUOTE WORTHY

“Until our cries for peace are heard and answered, our cries for food will never end.”

—The Rev. Dr. Haruun Ruun, New Sudan Council of Churches executive secretary, speaking in a Church World Service release about the humanitarian crisis amid ongoing civil war in his home country

“Anabaptists have a wonderful peace theology, but a terrible conflict theology.”

—Mennonite scholar and conflict resolution expert John Paul Lederach, on the Anabaptist tendency to avoid conflict (cited by trainers in the Seminars on Trauma Awareness and Recovery program)

“If we can accept that everyone on this earth, regardless of color, creed, language, or ethnicity is fully human—and, as such, fully worthy of our interest, sympathy, and acceptance—we will have taken a giant step forward from dehumanization and toward a stronger sense of global kinship.”

—United Nations secretary general Kofi Annan, in his call for a worldwide minute of silence to observe the 10th anniversary of genocide in Rwanda

“The medium for today is TV. You don’t exist if you’re not on TV.”

—Ron Buford, coordinator of a major new advertising campaign for the United Church of Christ

“I’ve learned the value of laughter. I had heard before I came here that the Irish, and the Northern Irish in particular, know how to enjoy life. It’s true.”

—Abbie Miller, a Brethren Volunteer Service worker at Kilcranny House in Coleraine, Northern Ireland

“I’m longing to see a renewed spiritual thirst in the Church of the Brethren. I’m challenging you to start this.”

—Colleen Hamilton, a senior high youth from Hope Church of the Brethren, Constantine, Mich., speaking to this year’s Regional Youth Conference at Manchester College

“Although it has been a difficult year overall for Haitians, the church is one place where Haitians and Dominicans can dwell together in unity.”

—Guillermo Encarnación, a Church of the Brethren pastor in Atlantic Northeast District and director of theological education in the Dominican Republic

“Music has a powerful ability to bring people together.”

—Entertainer Billy Jonas of Asheville, N.C., during a concert at McPherson (Kan.) College

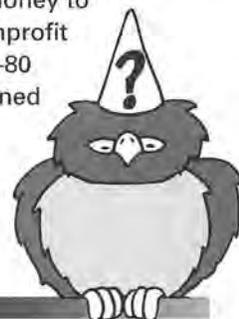
CULTUREVIEW

• **The National Council of Churches’ 2004 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches** shows a fourth Pentecostal denomination joining the list of the top 25 largest churches in the US, reflecting a continued increase in numbers of adherents to Pentecostal traditions. The Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.), with 944,857 members, newly ranked 25th, joins the Church of God in Christ (ranked 4th), the Assemblies of God (10th), and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World Inc. (tied for 16th). Leading any other single US church is the Catholic Church, reporting 66,407,105 adherents, followed by the Southern Baptist Convention (16,247,736) and the United Methodist Church (8,251,042). American Baptist Churches in the USA (19th, up from 20th last year) reported a substantial 2.87-percent increase. This growth rate, nearly 3 percent, exceeds that of any other Protestant church reporting.

• **About 64 percent of online Americans** use the Internet for faith-related reasons,

according to a new Pew Internet & American Life Project survey conducted by University of Colorado at Boulder professors Stewart Hoover and Lynn Schofield Clark. Thirty-eight percent of the nation’s 128 million Internet users have sent and received e-mail with spiritual content, and 17 percent have looked for information about where they could attend religious services.

• **The average amount of money given to nonprofits**—including churches and other houses of worship—rose significantly in 2003, the Barna Group reported. Donations to nonprofit groups increased from a mean of \$991 in 2002 to \$1,079 in 2003, an 8 percent increase. While the amount of donations rose, the percentage of all households who donated money to at least one nonprofit group in 2003—80 percent—remained consistent with the previous two years. (RNS)



JUST FOR FUN: WORD SEARCH

ANNUAL CONFERENCE Find these 12 words associated with Annual Conference in this month’s puzzle. Answers can be horizontal, vertical, diagonal, and backwards.

- business
- Charleston
- Conference
- delegates
- exhibits
- hotels
- ice cream
- microphone
- moderator
- neighbor
- registration
- worship

N	N	S	A	C	L	C	B	A	I	T
O	O	E	N	E	D	U	H	N	C	B
I	C	T	I	O	S	M	D	I	E	E
T	P	A	S	I	H	O	E	S	C	X
A	I	G	N	E	E	D	L	N	R	H
R	H	E	B	C	L	E	E	T	E	I
T	S	L	S	E	T	R	S	I	A	B
S	R	E	H	O	E	A	A	N	M	I
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G	W	L	N	U	E	O	E	O	C	S
E	N	O	H	P	O	R	C	I	M	N
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Brethren to the core

Moderator Chris Bowman feels a passion fo

Finding someone more steeped in Brethren tradition than Christopher Bowman to serve as Annual Conference moderator would be a daunting task.

Despite his ability to trace his heritage in the denomination through 10 generations stretching back to the decades prior to the Civil War, it is not Bowman's historical connection to the church that makes him so innately Brethren. Rather, it is his intense commitment to the body, along with his conviction that the Church of the Brethren has a relevant message for today's world, that makes it impossible to imagine him as anything but Brethren.

The son of Robert and Martha (Yoder) Bowman, he was born the first of four children in Easton, Md., while his father was pastor of Peach Blossom Church of the Brethren. Bowman's grandfather Clarence, great-grandfather Joseph, and great-great-grandfather Isaac also served as ministers in the church, and Isaac's father was a deacon.

Genealogy alone does not account for his dedication to the church, however. Not all of the Bowman siblings remained members of the Church of the Brethren. His brother Jonathan is active in a

attention; we know that some folks need the back row.

"It's important to have places where people who aren't front-row sitters or people who aren't, you know, 'toeing the line,' can still be in the church. For me, that was a formative lesson early."

That lesson of inclusion has remained with him and filters through his opinions about many of the issues facing the denomination—particularly those that threaten to create rifts within the church.

"I've heard a couple people say we should just split the church," he said. "You know, this side go over here, and this side go over there. I don't believe in no-fault divorce."

"I think in leadership right now, one of the things that is most important for us to be heard saying is that the church isn't a whole bunch of little churches. We're one body. Just like you try to get a whole family together. You might get some folks in there that you don't really agree with, but that's still the family."

"We can get angry with each other, but we're in it for the long haul. We made a commitment to stay together. And even as painful as it can be sometimes, I think the blessing outweighs the pain."

In his duties and travels as moderator, Bowman has found many blessings along the way. Speaking at the end of district conference season, he continued to be amazed at the depth of support he has received and the tangible evidence that people are really working to support the church, as well. He witnessed carloads of people driving eight hours or more in some of the more far-flung districts to attend conference.

Serving as a team pastor along with Dave Steele at Memorial Church of the Brethren in Martinsburg, Pa., Bowman is accustomed to the Middle Pennsylvania District, where most congregations are within a 90-minute drive of district events. Attending 12 district conferences over this past year, he was reminded how deep that commitment to the church can be.

"Driving miles and miles, rebuilding homes, going through church minutes—people are putting effort into being the best the church can be. And even folks who say they've been hurt by the church, they still come back and want to make the church better. For the most part, they don't just cut their losses and run. They feel somehow we're a family that belongs together. They try to work it out. And that is a really neat feeling."

Bowman receives cards from denomination members letting him know they are praying for him, and he has a small support group that meets at his church and helps him keep his focus. Though a term as moderator-elect and moderator is two years of hard work, he has

"There are certain things that are worth spending life on. The church is one of them."

Mennonite congregation, and his sister Molly in a Presbyterian one. His youngest brother, J.D., is still a student at Kent State University.

So what has kept Bowman, who admits going through the usual teen-aged reluctance to even attend church while his father was a pastor in Ephrata, Pa., active within the denomination of his ancestors?

One of the earliest influences came from that church in Ephrata, which understood the struggle its pastor's son was experiencing over church attendance and found a way for him to participate anyway. Bowman was permitted to work in the sound room for the church's radio broadcast.

"I didn't realize I was in church every Sunday," he said, "but I was. They found a way for me to be rebellious, but in. That's probably a lesson that I've found to be very helpful to the Church of the Brethren. The church tries to find ways for a variety of people to be in the circle of the church. We don't rope off the balcony because people like to sit back there and kind of halfway pay



the church family By Angie Mountain

Merv Keeney



Annual Conference moderator Chris Bowman, right, exchanged greetings with church leaders in India when he traveled there as part of a delegation in early 2004.

found the experience more uplifting than depleting.

When he accepted the nomination at the 2002 Annual Conference in Louisville, Ky., there were those who expressed concern about the workload and the effect it might have on his health. Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis several years ago, Bowman has been told by his neurologist that stress may exacerbate the symptoms of the disease.

But though he makes an effort to take care of himself physically and get the rest he needs, he makes no secret of his determination to live life on his own terms.

"There are some things worth spending your life on," he explained. "If (a flare-up) happens, then it will happen. I pray that it doesn't happen. But I did sit down and think this might be part of the cost. And it was a conscious decision, 'If it is, that's okay.'"

"I could have an exacerbation of my MS when I'm doing nothing. That's just the way my disease is. In fact, that's the way life is. We just forget that we could die tomorrow, or we could be bedfast tomorrow.

We're actually spending our life. We're not saving it, we're spending it. And there are certain things that are worth spending life on. The church is one of them."

THE 2004 MODERATOR

Name: Christopher Bowman

Age: 42

Home: Curryville, Pa.

Congregation: Memorial Church of the Brethren, Martinsburg, Pa.

Education: Manchester College (B.S.), Bethany Theological Seminary (M.Div.), San Francisco Theological Seminary (D.Min.)

Family: Wife, Sherry; children, Melissa and Jacob

Occupation: Pastor

Bowman has spent much of his life on the church. After four childhood years in Maryland, he went to Nigeria for three years with his parents. When the Biafra War broke out in 1965, they stopped in Scotland for Bob Bowman to study at St. Mary's before heading to Barren Ridge Church of the Brethren outside Bridgewater, Va.

Three years in Virginia, where Bowman was baptized by his father, were followed by five in Ephrata before his father took an editorial position in Elgin, Ill.

Bowman was there two years before leaving for four years at Manchester College, where he met his wife, Sherry (Clark), and three more at Bethany Theological Seminary. Following his ordination in 1987, he spent almost eight years as pastor at Peoria Church of the Brethren in Illinois.

"First churches are so gentle on their pastors," he remembered. "I mean, they were so good to us. I look back, I'm almost embarrassed now at my attempt at ministry there, but the church grew quite a bit and moved to a new building while I was at Peoria. I enjoyed that time in my life."

His children, 13-year-old twins Melissa and Jacob, were born during those years. The family moved to Martinsburg nine years ago—the longest he has lived in one place.

He says Memorial "is just an exceptional congrega-



Angie Mountain

Chris Bowman, center, greets members of his congregation after Sunday morning worship at Martinsburg (Pa.) Memorial Church of the Brethren.

tion to serve at. They've been very supportive of us during my work on the General Board, the redesign committee, teaching for the Susquehanna Valley Satellite and the Brethren Academy, and my work as moderator-elect and moderator.

"Pastor Dave has been, really, so enthusiastic. It's given me the freedom to accept more invitations than I would have otherwise. I could not have done this this way if I was a solo pastor. It would not have been possible."

Bowman served on the General Board from 1993 to 1998, and as chair the last two years. He was also chair for the General Board redesign steering committee from 1995 to 1997. While a pastor in Peoria, he spent three years as clerk for the Illinois/Wisconsin District and was president of the Church of the Brethren Ministers' Association.

He has cut down on his teaching assignments since accepting the call to be moderator and resigned his place on the board of the Nason Hospital Foundation, but he has found some time to pursue a new hobby.

WHAT DOES A MODERATOR DO?

The Annual Conference moderator is the highest elected position in the Church of the Brethren. It is a two-year term, with the first year spent as moderator-elect and the second as moderator. The moderator can be male or female, ordained or lay.

The moderator, moderator-elect, and Annual Conference secretary receive and process the business of Conference, establish and manage agendas for the Conference and related committee meetings, represent the Conference at district meetings and other appropriate settings, and respond to concerns of denominational members regarding actions and activities of Conference. The moderator tends to carry a heavy travel schedule, visiting many congregations and other events.

Doing the Charleston

By Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

Charleston, W.Va., will host the 218th Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren, to be held Saturday through Wednesday, July 3-7.

Delegates from Church of the Brethren congregations in the US and Puerto Rico will attend, but Conference is not just for delegates. A plethora of activities, insight sessions, Bible studies, concerts, exhibits, age-group programs, and meal events will entice and interest any Church of the Brethren member or friend, as well as family members of all ages. Taking advantage of Annual Conference's new online registration at www.brethren.org/ac, 1,704 people already had pre-registered as of the end of April.

Leading the meeting will be Conference moderator

Courtesy of Charleston Convention and Visitors Bureau





While on sabbatical, Bowman took an interest in pottery that has led to him digging his own clay locally and building his own wheel and a kiln in his backyard. One of the pots Bowman made and keeps in his office at Memorial is glazed with a painting of the Annual Conference logo, a modernized version of the Alexander Mack logo designed by Rosanna McFadden. The logo accompanies the theme selected by Bowman, "Loving God and Neighbor—Heart, Soul, Mind, Strength."

Scholars in Jesus' time struggled with this question of the greatest commandment and which of the two, love of God or love of neighbor, was more important. Jesus puts them together, and Bowman wants that to be the message the church hears right now.

"The Brethren have the pietist and the Anabaptist joining at the hip," he said. "Well, that's what this commandment is. You have the pietist sense of loving God and the Anabaptist sense of loving neighbor. These two are merged together in this greatest commandment. And it just felt to me that this was a renewing of the call."

Bowman anticipates that the 2004 Annual Conference will not go off perfectly, but he does have goals for his time in West Virginia. As moderator, he looks not to set or advance an agenda, but to allow others within the denomination to explore issues with respect and understanding.

His entire family, including his wife, children, parents, and siblings, will be at Conference to support him, though they already suspect he'll be just fine.

"He's got a very good head on his shoulders," Bob Bowman said. "I think he could bring some gifts to it. I have seen Chris operate in some very difficult situa-

tions, and I have the utmost confidence in his ability. If he asked for my advice, I'd tell him, 'You already know what to do. And just remember that we love you.'"

And no matter the outcome of business matters and reports in Charleston, something Bowman learned during his sabbatical trip to Nigeria will serve him in good stead. In Nigeria, the night was good if you are alive in the morning. The goodness of the day has already been done, no matter how productive we are, because we can come into the day with thanksgiving and praise.

Depending on legislation won't solve the church's problems, Bowman said. The solutions are going to come from building relationships, and from discovering the true passion of the Church of the Brethren, the message God wants this body of believers to bring to the world.

And that, in the moderator's words, is exciting. It is cause for thanksgiving and praise. And if you believe him, the goodness of those days in Charleston will surely be done. **W**

Angie Mountain lives in Ambler, Pa., and is a member of Ambler Church of the Brethren. Her husband, Shawn, is a former member of the Martinsburg Memorial congregation.



Chris Detrick

Harriet Finney and Chris Bowman, then moderator-elect, tooted their own horns as part of the Brethren Benefit Trust Pension Plan anniversary celebration at the 2003 Annual Conference in Idaho.

Wild, wonderful West Virginia prepares to welcome Annual Conference

Christopher Bowman, pastor of Martinsburg (Pa.) Memorial Church of the Brethren; moderator-elect Jim Hardenbrook, pastor of the Nampa (Idaho) congregation; and Conference secretary Fred W. Swartz, of Bridgewater, Va. Lerry Fogle serves as executive director of Annual Conference.

The Charleston Coliseum will host worship services and business sessions; exhibits will be set up in the adjacent Charleston Civic Center, and the Marriott Town Center will serve as the main Conference hotel. On-site registration—for those who have not pre-registered—will open at 3 p.m. Friday, July 2, on level 2 of the Civic Center lobby. Parking will be \$3 a day at the Civic Center.

Setting: Charleston will set Brethren discussions of potentially controversial issues—such as the denominational name and congregational disagreements with Annual Conference—in an area of natural beauty, rocky peaks, winding rivers, and forested mountains, as well as coal mines and industry.

It's also an area that has seen its share of Brethren history, according to David Shumate, executive minister for Virlina District. Southern West Virginia is home for Shumate, who grew up at Crab Orchard (W.Va.) Church of the Brethren. Shumate's ancestors helped found the congregation before the Civil War. Crab Orchard and Pleasant View Church of the Brethren in Fayetteville, located more than 50 miles



The Charleston Town Center is a three-story mall with more than 130 stores and restaurants, located across from the Charleston Civic Center.

southeast, are the congregations closest to the city, according to district staff.

A Charleston congregation founded in 1885 was closed around 1916. The last time a Church of the Brethren congregation was located in Charleston was during World War II, Shumate said. A number of Brethren lived in the Charleston area at that time and formed a fellowship for once-a-month services held at the YMCA.

Speaking as a native son, Shumate encouraged Brethren from other parts of the country to forget any “hillbilly” preconceptions of Appalachia. “Charleston is the center of politics” in West Virginia, he said, “but once you get out away from there, especially as you go south and east, you get into Appalachia.” It’s an area of great beauty and friendly people, said both Shumate and Stephen Abe, West Marva district executive, who added his encouragement to Brethren coming to West Virginia. “I think the Brethren will find the people very welcoming and warm,” Abe said. “I would invite people to take time to travel through the state. There’s a lot of beauty there.”

West Virginia is home to 80 Church of the Brethren congregations and meeting points in four districts: Mid-Atlantic, Shenandoah, Virlina, and West Marva. Although West Marva has the most churches in West Virginia, they are in the northern part of the state. Virlina includes southern West Virginia and the area around Charleston.

Theme: “Loving God and Neighbor with All Our Heart, Soul, Mind, Strength,” the Conference theme, is taken from Mark 12:28ff, where Jesus responds to the question, “What is the greatest commandment?” In choosing the theme, Conference planners focused on how, “with Jesus . . . the two streams of love were joined”—love for God and love for neighbor. The theme also is a call for renewed response and commitment to the old Brethren motto, “For the glory of God and our neighbor’s good.” The Conference logo design and banner were created by Rosanna Eller McFadden of Goshen, Ind.

Business: Delegates will discuss three items of unfinished business:

“The Duties and Relationship of Moderators to the Church of the Brethren Organizational Structure” was originally a query to Conference in 2002, when it was referred to the Annual Conference Council. The council’s response, brought to Conference in 2003, was referred back to the council for further work last year. The paper being brought this year offers guidelines for functions and qualifications of local church moderators.

A query on the denominational name of the Church of the Brethren was adopted by the 2002 Conference, which named a study committee. The committee facilitated conversations about the name across the denomination and brought a progress report in 2003. This year the committee is bringing a recommendation that reviews the history of the name, reports findings from the dialogue process, and makes recommendations for revision of Annual Conference statements regarding controversial issues.

A study committee will bring a report on a “Query on Congregational Disagreements with Annual Conference Decisions,” accepted by Conference in 2003. The paper answers the question of “how congregations can disagree with Annual Conference decisions yet remain, as much as possible, in unbroken fellowship with their sister congregations, including how district boards should respond in these situations,” by offering biblical insights, historical perspective, a look at the situation that led to the query, observations of the committee, resources, and a bibliography. The paper outlines broad parameters for processes to deal with such disagreements, rather than suggesting new denominational polity, and gives guidelines and encouragement to congregations and districts to put such processes in place.

Three items of new business coming to Conference are a query on “Doing Church Business” from Northern Indiana District; a query on “Becoming a Multi-Ethnic Church” from Atlantic Southeast; and a query on “The Need for Cross-Cultural Ministries” from Oregon/Washington.

New this year will be camera coverage of business, broadcast on large screens during sessions.

Worship: The highlight of this year’s Conference will be “great worship services,” according to Lerry Fogle. The opening worship will feature Bowman speaking on the Conference theme, “Loving God and Neighbor.” Jim Hardenbrook will be worship leader.

Sunday morning’s service will focus on “God Is a



Living God," with speaker Dena Pence Frantz, professor of theological studies at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind. Speaking at Monday worship will be James Washington, pastor of Faith Center Fellowship, Whitehouse, Texas, on the theme "Lovingly Living Together." Tuesday's service will feature Tim Button-Harrison, pastor of Ivester Church of the Brethren, Grundy Center, Iowa, on "Lessons from the Love Feast."

Wednesday morning, the concluding Conference worship service will include a service of installation for the new moderator and moderator-elect and a message by Andrew Murray, director of the Baker Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies at Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pa. He will address the question, "Are We There Yet?"

Judy Epps is worship coordinator for the Conference.

Schedule: Among the variety of events and activities, some unique opportunities are planned for Charleston.

A conversation hour with the Annual Conference Council, 9-10 p.m. July 4, will be open to all as part of the council's response to an assignment from the 2003 Conference. "The council calls this 'an initial conversation to facilitate discussion around the broad questions in the (Michigan) query to clarify confusion, specifically those of a theological and structural nature,'" according to Swartz. The query asked for clarification of a 2002 Conference action on licensing and ordination of ministers who are homosexual.

Anniversary celebrations will abound in Charleston, with Bethany Theological Seminary kicking off celebration of its 100th and other Brethren organizations celebrating 30 years, including On Earth Peace (OEP) and Women's Caucus. In addition, the Annual Conference quilt auction sponsored by the Association of the Arts in the Church of the Brethren is in its 30th year; and OEP is celebrating the 10th anniversary of JOYA (Journey of Young Adults) with a reunion of the original JOYA team.

For more information about Conference, contact the Annual Conference office, 800-323-8039, or visit www.brethren.org/ac. To contact the Annual Conference office while Conference is in session July 3-7, call 304-357-7435 or 304-357-7436. ☞

Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford is director of news services for the Church of the Brethren General Board.

CHARLESTON AT A GLANCE

Population: 53,000

History: Charleston is the state capital of West Virginia, which was created by presidential proclamation as a frontier border state in 1863, during the Civil War. The city did not always enjoy the status of state capital, which was moved back and forth between Wheeling, the original site, and Charleston, where the state government eventually settled for good in 1885. The impressive capitol dome was built during the Depression using private donations.



Transportation: Charleston's primary airport is Yeager Regional Airport. Interstates 64, 77, and 79 intersect in Charleston, making the city easy to access by road from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, Kentucky, and Virginia. Also, Charleston has direct service on Amtrak from Chicago and Indianapolis coming east, and from Washington, Charlottesville, and Staunton coming west.

Time zone: Eastern

Average high temperature in July: 85 degrees

Main attractions: The Capitol Complex features the State Capitol—topped by a 23-karat, gold leaf-covered dome higher than that of the US Capitol in Washington, D.C.; the Cultural Center, West Virginia museum, governor's mansion, and Clay Center for Arts and Sciences for children and adults. On Sunday evenings the center's Mountain Stage features eclectic live concerts recorded by West Virginia Public Radio and carried nationwide by PBS. Other evening concerts are given at the amphitheater in Haddad Riverfront Park, site of Charleston's July 4 celebration. One of the largest indoor shopping centers in the US is located next to the Civic Center, the Charleston Town Center Mall. Historic sites and parks include the prehistoric Adena Indian Mound; Daniel Boone Park (Boone lived in the Kanawha Valley 1786-1797), where stern-wheeler river cruises are offered; the Cabin Creek Quilts Cooperative that has made quilts for three US presidents; and historic Malden featuring the African-Zion Baptist Church built in 1865 and a Women's Park with a reproduction of Booker T. Washington's childhood home. Surrounding mountains and rivers offer opportunities for outdoor activities including river tours on the sternwheeler *P.A. Denny*; hiking, horseback riding, swimming, fishing, and camping in nearby Kanawha State Forest; and whitewater rafting.

Major newspapers: The *Charleston Gazette* and *Charleston Daily Mail*

Major sports teams: The Charleston Alley Cats, Class A affiliate of the Toronto Blue Jays, play at Watt Powell Park.

For more information about Charleston and its attractions, contact the Charleston Convention and Visitors Bureau at 800-733-5469 or visit www.charlestonwv.com.

They keep us in stitch

By Rachel Brown

For 30 years, the AACB quilt auction has dra

The year was 1974. Annual Conference had come to Roanoke, Va. As the wife of a young pastor and mother of two little girls, I had not attended Conference in many years. Having Conference within a half-hour of our rural home gave me a chance to spend some time on site. I had registered 4-year-old Dara Lynn in children's activities, and with 1-year-old Kay in her stroller I wandered through the exhibit areas around the Civic Center.

Somewhere among the exhibits, I came on a scene that would be a part of the Annual Conference experience for the next 30 years. A quilt frame was set up in part of an art exhibit sponsored by a fledgling Association for the Arts in the Church of the Brethren

Chris Detrick

Another quilt moves toward completion as several volunteers work on it at the 2003 Annual Conference.



(AACB). A petite, gray-haired woman hovered over the quilters gathered around the frame. The quilt in the frame, pieced in shades of blue and white, had an appliquéd center that interpreted the Conference theme, "Let the Word Become Flesh," with silhouettes of people in a circle, standing tall, with hands raised in praise.

As I stood and watched the quilters, the little woman invited me to sit and "add a few stitches" to the quilt. I found a corner where I could quilt with my left hand at the far side of the quilt, and pulled the stroller close beside me. As Kay napped, I carefully, and rather slowly, added my stitches to the quilt.

As the years have passed, this scene has been repeated over and over and over again. A young mother, and new quilter, is encouraged by more seasoned quilters around the frames. A pastor stops by to put a few stitches in the block that his congregation has sent. Helping hands thread a needle, and fingers awkwardly stab stitch a few stitches into the quilt. Gentle conversation and stories shared for all to hear with delight or loving concern surround each quilt.

Thirty years later, I am "the quilt lady," not so petite and not yet gray-haired, who hovers over the quilt project at each Annual Conference. I am the third quilt coordinator. That first quilt lady was Grace Steiner. She faithfully and diligently coordinated the project until 1983, when Rachel Weybright joined AACB and continued the tradition. My tenure as coordinator of quilting began in 1989.

Every year, each congregation in the denomination is invited to send a quilt block to AACB to be used in the Annual Conference quilts. The quilt coordinator catalogs the blocks as they arrive, and then, with the help of several volunteers, assembles three quilts, several wall hangings, and a special wall hanging that is presented to the Annual Conference moderator. The center of each quilt depicts the Conference logo and theme. Over the years, as many as 345 congregations have been represented in the quilts. In recent years, about 200 congregations have sent in blocks for three smaller quilts and several wall hangings.

In the beginning, the quilts were sewn together and quilted at Annual Conference. I can remember many times when, as the first quilt was being auctioned, women were feverishly finishing the bindings on the last quilts taken out of the frames. More recently, as time at Conference has been shortened, the quilts are

Auctioneer Wilbur Hosler works the crowd for the highest bid at another round of the popular AACB Annual Conference quilt auction held last year.



own crowds and helped to fight hunger

now assembled before they arrive at the Conference site. The quilts are stretched into frames as soon as the AACB exhibit space is set on the day before Conference begins, ready for quilters as early as Friday afternoon.

The first quilt auctioned in 1974 helped provide needed financing for AACB, as well as a gift to the denomination's SHARE program, which then distributed aid to various social service projects. The quilt was purchased for \$1,129 by Everett Kreider, who—as the history of our quilting progressed—would be a supportive, enthusiastic auctioneer, purchasing several more quilts over the years.

That first purchase began a tradition of working for the highest bid, watching with excitement as each quilt is sold. Added excitement comes when a quilt is purchased and immediately donated back to be sold again. From its very beginning, the primary purpose of the quilt auction has been to provide funds for projects that feed hungry people. Coordinators for AACB work hard and conscientiously to keep expenses at a minimum so that as much money as possible can be sent to alleviate hunger around the world.

In the 30 years of the auction, a total of \$269,769 has been donated to hunger projects worldwide. Projects funded have included soup kitchens and food pantries in the US; food for children who live in the trash dumps of Tijuana, Mexico; garden projects in Haiti; nutrition programs in Mulukuku, Nicaragua; chickens for communities in Honduras; a well project in Sudan; Trees for Life; CROP; and community projects for feeding hungry children and adults in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.

During the mid-1980s, funds sent to Heifer Project International were matched by a benefactor and AACB supporter, allowing us to double our contribution those years. Most recently funds have been donated to

The Nutrition Program at Washington (D.C.) City Church of the Brethren soup kitchen as well as to hunger relief projects in Iraq and Afghanistan through the Church of the Brethren General Board Global Food Crisis Fund.

Fast-forward to quilting at Annual Conference in more recent years: As the business session begins to wind down on Wednesday, a stage is set up in an area close to the AACB exhibit. Several finished quilts and wall hangings are displayed for all to see. Conferencegoers check the card file to find out where the block from their congregation can be found in the quilts. Steady fingers continue to quilt. The last quilts in the frames have been rolled to the center—almost, but not yet, finished. Sewing machines stand ready to stitch on the binding as soon as the last quilt comes out of the frame. Volunteers are ready, needles in hands, to complete the hand-stitching on the bindings.

As business ends, the crowd gathers to see the finished quilts hanging, and to experience the excitement of the auction. The quilts hang in all of their beauty. They represent many hands and countless hours of sewing and quilting over an incredibly short amount of time. They represent a most unique quilt project, unlike any other I have ever known.

Volunteer auctioneer Wilbur Hosler brings the crowd's attention to the task at hand. The first of the quilts to be auctioned is presented, highlighting some of the congregations represented in the quilt. The air is heavy with anticipation. How much will these special treasures bring this year? In less than an hour, the auction will be over. Another year of quilting completed, and maybe—as history has shown—as much as \$22,000 can be given to help feed the hungry of the world. And, possibly, even more. 

ABOUT AACB

The Association for the Arts in the Church of the Brethren, an independent group within the denomination, began “with informal conversations at the 1971 St. Petersburg, Fla., Annual Conference,” according to *The Brethren Encyclopedia*. “It seeks to link artists, to stimulate creative expression, to enhance congregational and Conference worship, and to help the arts become a more effective ministry in the life of the church.”

AACB will again sponsor a quilt auction at this year's Annual Conference in Charleston, W.Va. It is scheduled for approximately 4:45 p.m. Tuesday, July 6, following the afternoon business session.

Chris Detrick



Rachel W.N. Brown is chair of AACB and the Annual Conference quilt coordinator. She is a member of Lebanon Church of the Brethren, Mt. Sidney, Va., and owner of Rachel's Quilt Patch in Staunton.

Reading, writ

The Church of the Brethren help

It was Dec. 6, 2003, and tensions in Iraq continued to run high. The official war was over, but violence and hunger still plagued the lives of the Iraqi people.

Cliff Kindy, a member of the Church of the Brethren from North Manchester, Ind., was in the midst of it, on assignment as part of a Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) delegation ministering to the people of Iraq. On this day, though, he took time off from his CPT

responsibilities to make a special trip to the Al Khuraish School, located in Baghdad's Khadamiya District.

The school was just a shell at that point. Rebuilding of Al Khuraish had started just two days before. The desire to help rebuild the lives of Iraqi children, though, had started a year earlier—before the war began—when it was learned that many Iraqi schools desperately needed repairs and supplies because of years of sanctions.

The Church of the Brethren had backed this early effort, approving a \$10,000 Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) grant in December 2002 to repair and resupply a school in Iraq. The grant was not immediately put to use because of the start of the war, but now, a year later, it was aiding the rebuilding of Al Khuraish. Two more EDF grants brought the total donation to \$86,000.

The Al Khuraish School was actually a prison 100 years ago, when the Ottoman Empire ruled the region. Prior to the war the ongoing sanctions resulted in a different kind of virtual imprisonment, with no supplies or money for schools. Eventually the school had to close.

Now Al Khuraish is a hub of activity again, serving 500 primary students in the morning and 100 boys and 26 girls ages 8 to 15 in an afternoon secondary school. It is the first of these special schools with secondary vocational training to be rebuilt in all of Iraq.

The rehabilitation began underground, by cleaning out the sewage lines and replacing them as needed. Then toilets were changed, the water supply was improved, roofs were repaired, windows and doors were repaired or replaced, and new electrical fixtures were installed. A beautiful paint job added color and a sense of excitement that the project was nearing completion. All the work was completed by local Iraqi workers who desperately needed jobs.

The grants also provided classrooms with much needed supplies and furniture, including desks, chairs, maps, dictionaries, science equipment, and school kits. A copy machine and computer were purchased for the office, and the children were supplied with winter clothing.

Three months after Kindy's visit, on March 11, 2004, the completion of this school's major rehabilitation was celebrated with a grand re-opening.

Important partnerships enabled this rehabilitation to happen. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)

Architects for People in Need



Hussein, a happy and energetic shoeshine boy from Baghdad (above, receiving a school kit) was the inspiration that led aid workers to the Al Khuraish school. He had a strong impact on relief work because he seemed so bright and capable, but was not able to count in his native language of Arabic. Hussein is 13 years old and has only two years of school; school was left behind when his father abandoned the family. While his mother stayed home to care for the family, both Hussein and his brother had to work as shoeshine boys to bring home food. Hussein hopes to become a TV mechanic, a dream that might be realized with Al Khuraish School reopened. —**Architects for People in Need**



Bound Together
Finely Woven



Bound together in Christ

*“(Christ) is before
all things, and in
him all things hold
together.”
Col. 1:17 (RSV)*

Bound Together. Finely Woven. This year’s General Board theme, inspired by a Ken Medema song, picks up on an element of the agency’s mission statement adopted in 2002: caring for the whole fabric of the Church of the Brethren community.

In building relationships, strengthening identity, resourcing congregations, and facilitating communication and conversation, the work of the General Board is about connection. Ties are built with partner agencies and institutions, with members in districts from coast to

coast, and with people in mission areas overseas, all of whom hunger for God’s Word.

Phil Grout



Old Main dominates the Brethren Service Center campus in New Windsor, Md.

As a new general secretary assumed duties last July, the General Board made such con-

nections a priority. The months since then have been filled with visits to districts, congregations, colleges, camps, and other locations near and far. The stories and testimonies of faith heard on these visits bring inspiration for today and hope for the future.

Admittedly, it hasn’t all been easy. The fabric of the General Board was tested in 2003, a year of challenges and transition. Judy Mills Reimer retired after five years of servant leadership as general secretary. Budgetary challenges generated by income falling short of expecta-

Did you know?

More than 140 women and men carry out General Board ministries as staff and volunteers.

Christ-centeredness

To be Christlike in manner and in mission.



The Church of the Brethren General Offices, Elgin, Ill.

tions and sharply rising health care costs necessitated staff reductions. Our self-funding programs also struggled during this period of economic difficulty.

Our treasurer, Judy Keyser, described the fabric of our agency's finances as "stretched" and "patched" in a few places, but overall healthy and holding

together. Ending the year with adequate resources to cover expenses was due to continued generosity of congregations and individuals who supported the General Board with their gifts, a rebound in investment income, and staff who were good stewards of the board's resources throughout the year.

Please be in prayer for

the General Board employees, volunteers, and board members in the year ahead. Despite the diversity in the church and the challenges we face, it is ultimately Christ who binds us together. As the writer of the hymn says, "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love."

The pages that follow provide some glimpses of the broad spectrum of General Board activity in 2003. With God's help and your prayers, those who carry out the work of the General Board will continue to be engaged in vibrant and dynamic

Keith Hollenberg



Stan Noffsinger is consecrated to leadership at Annual Conference.

Christian ministry and service. Together, we can weave a cloth that has endurance, strength, usefulness, and beauty.

Stanley J. Noffsinger
General Secretary



Bound together in acts of

*“... but through
love be servants of
one another.”
Gal. 5:13b (RSV)*

• Brethren responded to a host of natural disasters with financial and material aid as well as volunteer hours. Major responses included cleanup and recovery efforts following Hurricane Isabel in September and a wave of severe tornadoes in the spring, plus rebuild-

ing projects in Wisconsin, Mississippi, Illinois, and elsewhere. A Church of the Brethren Disaster Child Care project responded to rampant wildfires in southern California in the fall, with 26 volunteers making contact with nearly 500 children during the 19-day response.

• Thirty-five grants were made from the General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund, totaling nearly half a million dollars. The aid supported relief work through Church World Service and other

Walt Wiltschek



Anna Grady scrapes paint at a youth workcamp in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

organizations across the United States and in all corners of the world.

• The 2003 youth/young adult workcamp season ran from June through August with more than 500 youth, youth advi-

Lorna Grow



Disaster Child Care responds following tornadoes in Kansas.

Did you know?

In 2003, 500 volunteers gave nearly 3,000 workdays (more than 23,500 hours) to disaster relief projects in five locations.

service

CORE VALUE

Servant leadership

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

sors, and young adults participating in 26 work-camps across the US, in the Caribbean, and in Northern Ireland and Ecuador.

- Brethren Volunteer Service began the year with one of the largest winter units in recent history and continued with strong enrollment throughout the year. Several orientations were held in unique locations and formats, including emphases on spiritual growth and simple living. A total of 76 volunteers were placed in 2003, with 104 volun-

teers in all serving by year's end in the US, Europe, Central America, and elsewhere.

Walt Wiltschek



Brethren Volunteer Service has a strong presence in San Antonio, Texas.

- Service Ministries staff in New Windsor, Md., processed 2,431

Chris Herlinger/CWS



Church World Service director Rick Augsburger, right, talks with earthquake survivor in Bam, Iran.

shipments—valued at about \$16 million—to 45 states and 59 countries. Volunteer groups donated thousands of additional hours of service to these efforts.

- Ten Brethren traveled to Nigeria on an annual workcamp sponsored by the Global Mission Partnerships office. The group continued construction of a classroom at the Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN) Comprehensive Secondary School near Mubi.

Roy Winter



Grossnickle Church of the Brethren volunteers pack medical supplies for Iraq.

- Ninety people were trained at seven Level 1 Volunteer Disaster Child Care Training Workshops in 2003, at sites in six states. Another two dozen people attended a training session for those who wish to be trainers.



Bound together through G

“Always keep yourselves united in the Holy Spirit, and bind yourselves together with peace.”
Eph. 4:3 (NLT)

• The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, a ministry training partnership of the Church of the Brethren General Board and Bethany Theological Seminary, was selected in November to receive a grant of \$2 million from the Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment Inc. to participate in a national program called “Sustaining Pastoral Excellence.”



**Brethren Academy
for Ministerial
Leadership**

• Sixteen interns, matching the record high set in 2002, were present for the 2003 Ministry Summer Service orientation in Richmond, Ind. The annual program, sponsored by the General Board’s Youth/Young Adult and Ministry offices, allows young adults to consider ministry options by placing them in ministry settings with a mentor for the summer.

• The National Youth Cabinet declared a denomination-wide Youth Day of Prayer for Sept. 28, asking youth across the Church of the Brethren to join together in prayer in creative ways. The initiative came in response to the “Call to Prayer” query passed by the 2002 Annual Conference. *Messenger* also ran a series of personal prayer reflections in response to this call.

• Brethren Volunteer Service worker Don

Walt Wiltschek

Young adults share ideas, musical talents at Young Adult Conference.



God's Spirit

CORE VALUE

Discernment

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



Don Vermilyea makes another stop on his Walk in Iowa.

Vermilyea continued his "Walk Across America," trekking across the Rockies and the Plains in his quest to visit every Church of the Brethren congregation that will host him and to share the work of Jesus Christ. By year's end he had crossed the 8,000-mile

point in his journey as he reached Nebraska.

- Mark DeVries served as keynote speaker for a Youth Ministry Workshop on "Family-Based Youth Ministry" held in New Windsor, Md. Nearly 50 people attended.

- The Mission and Ministries Planning

Council continues to meet several times a year, discerning God's will regarding proposals for new mission. New connections were made during mission conversations in New Windsor, Md., in September, and work began on a major denominational missions conference for 2005 with the appointment of a planning committee.

- Brethren Press published three new titles in its "Perspectives" essay

Walt Wiltschek



Young adult Katie Best, mentor Alice Martin-Adkins prepare for a Ministry Summer Service experience.

Did you know?

About 55 people are part of a Church of the Brethren Network of Spiritual Directors, supported by the General Board.



Bound together as one family

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.”

1 John 1:7a (RSV)

- New leadership was called for major Brethren mission areas, with Irv and Nancy Heishman beginning as coordinators in the Dominican Republic, Greg and Karin Davidson Laszakovits called as representatives for Brazil, and Bob Krouse scheduled to start in Nigeria in summer 2004.

- The Iglesia de los Hermanos (Church of the Brethren) in the Dominican Republic con-

tinues to grow, with two preaching points—Boca Chica and Sabana Torsa—given congregational status at the church’s annual *conferencia* in 2003 and two other worshipping communities in Peniel and La Caya formally recognized as preaching points.

- More than 70 people gathered in Gotha, Fla., to attend the denomination’s annual Cross-Cultural Consultation, making it the largest gathering in the five-year

history of the energetic and multilingual event.

- The New Windsor (Md.) Conference Center welcomed 389 overnight conference groups in 2003, for a total of more than 9,400 guest nights, plus 93 day meetings and 32 banquets.

- Two dozen Church of the Brethren pastors, district executives, and new church development committee members gathered in Phoenix for a seminar on coaching church planters, part of an ongoing drive to provide training and resources in

Pastor Matthew Adbullahi Gali translates as John Tubbs brings greetings to a church in Nigeria.

Janet Tubbs



Family

CORE VALUE

Hospitality

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

Chris Detrick



Barbara Daté and Richard Kyerematen cross cultures.

church planting. Another 14 people participated in a church planter/district personnel assessment held at Ashland (Ohio) Theological Seminary.

• The Brethren Service Center welcomed 166 tour groups totaling more than 2,800 people in 2003, with visitors

coming from congregations, volunteer work groups, schools, community groups, and other organizations.

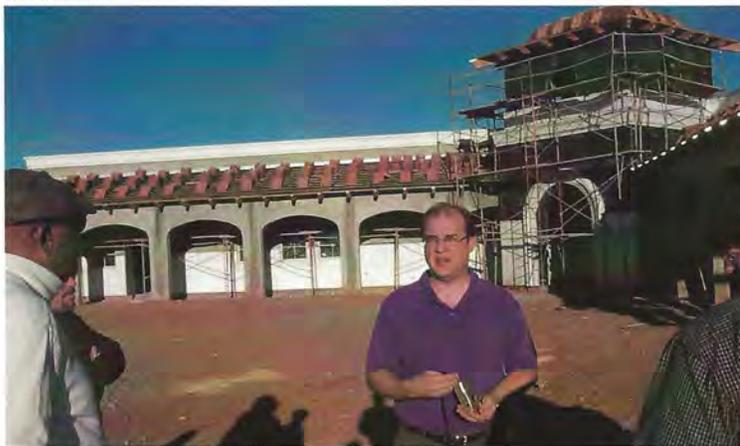
• Numerous General Board staff participated in the Brethren World Assembly, sponsored by Brethren Encyclopedia Inc. and held in Winona Lake, Ind. About 100 people registered for the event, the third time such an assembly has been held. All six major denominations tracing

Walt Wiltschek



Brethren pray at a 2003 church planting conference.

Walt Wiltschek



Pastor Ron Faus shows visitors his congregation's new building in Peoria, Ariz. during a new church planting event.

their roots to Alexander Mack's 1708 movement were represented.

• The Committee on Interchurch Relations, a joint General Board-Annual Conference committee,

continued its work of promoting ecumenical understanding and participation on the local and denominational level. It presented its 2003 Ecumenical Award to the Easton (Md.) Church of the Brethren.

Did you know?

Membership in the Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria), at nearly 150,000 members in 2003, now outnumbers US membership.



Bound together in commu

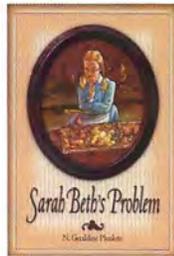
“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
Mark 12:31b (RSV)

• The Brethren Press children’s book *Faith the Cow*, originally published in 1995 to tell the story of the origins of Heifer Project, passed

the 15,000-copy level in sales in 2003 and went to press for its sixth printing.

Brethren Press

also published a new children’s book, *Sarah Beth’s Problem*, and a revised edition of *Biblical Pacifism*.



Walt Wiltschek

Palmyra (Pa.) youth praise God during worship at the 2003 Christian Citizenship Seminar.



• One hundred senior high youth and advisors took part in the 2003 national Christian Citizenship Seminar held in New York and Washington, D.C., exploring issues of globalization.

• Congregational Life Teams staff worked with a Small Membership/Rural Church Leadership Team to address issues those smaller congregations are facing and to provide resources. A series of district, regional, and larger confer-

Audrey DeCoursey



Beth Sollenberger-Morpheus creatively teaches stewardship education.

ences is being planned for coming years.

• Plans for a new Brethren Press children’s curriculum to succeed

nity

CORE VALUE

Community

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

the popular "Jubilee: God's Good News" moved forward, boosted when the Mennonite Publishing Network agreed to join the effort as a cooperative publisher. Plans call for the new curriculum to be launched in fall 2006.

- About 75 of the denomination's young adults gathered at Camp Eder in Fairfield, Pa., over Memorial Day weekend for the 2003 Church of the Brethren Young Adult Conference.

Young adult pastor Shawn Flory Replogle served as keynote speaker, looking at the theme "Being Brethren in Today's Culture."

- The denominational website www.brethren.org, a multi-agency partnership administered by the General Board, maintained its growth, drawing more than 2,500 visi-

tors per day by year's end. A new portal to the site, anotherwayofliving.org, provides easier access for those unfamiliar with the church.

- The Communications office distributed 30 issues of *Newsline* during 2003, helping Brethren stay connected with happenings in the church. A new news

Walt Wiltschek



A Small Membership/Rural Church Leadership Team launches a new focus.

sheet, *Tapestry*, debuted in the fall to take the place of *Agenda*.

Messenger published 11 issues, drawing on the talents of 52 feature writers, and won two awards at the annual Associated Church Press convention.

Walt Wiltschek



General Board members Vickie Whitacre Samland, Jeff Neumann-Lee share ideas.

Did you know?

Brethren Press sold 5,699 copies of its Lenten devotional booklet and 8,787 Advent devotionals in 2003.



Bound together despite di

*“Behold, how good
and how pleasant it is
for brethren to dwell
together in unity!”
Ps. 133:1 (NKJV)*

• Brethren were closely engaged with developments in Iraq, first issuing statements, joining in ecumenical conversations, and participating in protests and educational events in the days leading up to the war, and later sending aid to the devastated nation and helping to rebuild a Baghdad school.

• Dr. Haruun Ruun, supported in his work as

executive secretary of the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) by the General Board’s Global Mission Partnerships office, was honored with the Raoul Wallenberg Humanitarian Award in a November ceremony in Philadelphia. Haruun received the award from Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden.

• General Board Global Mission Partnerships executive director Merv Keeney joined National Council of Churches (NCC) general secretary Bob Edgar, Church World Service (CWS) executive director John L. McCullough, and others in a delega-



Dr. Haruun Ruun received a prestigious award in 2003.

tion to North Korea and South Korea in mid-November, capping a year-long effort by the NCC and CWS to address political tensions and severe humanitarian needs on the Korean Peninsula. The General Board’s Global Food Crisis Fund has been a long-standing partner in delivering



Merv Keeney, left, joins other church leaders on a delegation to North Korea.

Did you know?

Brethren Volunteer Service workers served in 20 US states and 15 foreign countries in 2003.

ferences

CORE VALUE

Peacemaking

To be instruments of reconciliation and justice.

aid to famine-stricken North Korea.

- On Earth Peace and the General Board co-sponsored a Call for a Living Peace Church, looking for practical ways to live out the denomination's peace position.

Annual Conference delegates strongly endorsed the resolution, and the agencies are now moving forward with additional ideas, plans, and resources.

- The General Board and On Earth Peace are

also collaborating on the Decade to Overcome Violence, and offered a training workshop for 48 district and congregational representatives in December. Peace workers Bernard Lafayette Jr. and David Jehnsen gave keynote messages for the event, titled "Overcome Evil with Good."

- Seven Brethren, including Brethren Witness/Washington Office director Phil Jones, traveled to Sudan in late summer as part of a Global Mission Partnerships Faith & Advocacy delegation led by Phil and Louie Baldwin Rieman.

- The 2003 Youth

Cliff Kindy



Brethren dollars helped to rebuild the Al Khuraish School in Iraq.

Peace Travel Team of Laura Sweitzer, Erica Schatz, and Mandy Wampler traveled to Church of the Brethren camps in the Midwest and to Annual Conference, the 13th year a team has been sent out to do peace education. Several General Board offices partner with other agencies and organizations to support the team.

Bryan Hisson



Brethren Witness/Washington Office director Phil Jones takes part in a rally in Washington.



Bound together Finely wo

“There are different kinds of service in the church, but it is the same Lord we are serving.”
1 Cor. 12:5

The General Board’s financial situation returned to some stability in 2003 after unusually large losses the previous year, and after three years of investment losses.

Programs supported by the General Ministries Fund, the General

Board’s main operating fund, still went through major struggles in 2003. Special fund-raising efforts were added, budgets were under-spent by \$163,420, and staff reductions and realignments provided significant additional savings for 2003 and into 2004. These steps, along with a major upturn in the stock market and careful planning, lifted net income to \$77,850 for the year.

Of the four self-fund-

ing ministries of the General Board, only one—*Messenger* magazine—ended the year with net income. *Messenger* finished \$10,940 in the black.

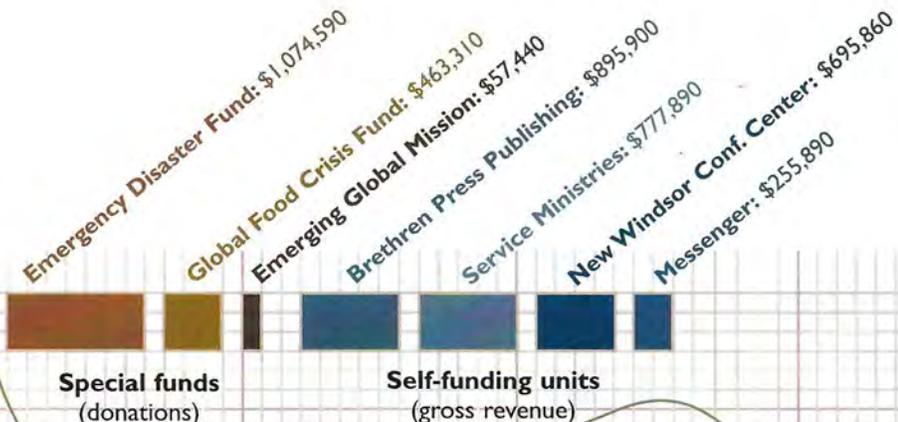
Service Ministries finished with a small deficit of \$1,110, while the New Windsor (Md.) Conference Center and Brethren Press showed larger losses (\$82,940 and \$49,090, respectively) as the economy remained tepid. The conference center saw fewer overnight guests,

Walt Wiltschek



General Board member Jay Carter greets Congregational Life Teams staff Carol Yeazell after worship.

General Ministries Fund (net expense)
\$5,105,580



ven

CORE VALUE

Stewardship

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



Amy Hiebert

Ken Shaffer preserves denominational history in the archives.

while Brethren Press curriculum sales continued to slow. Plans for a new children's curriculum are under way.

Three special-purpose funds support ministries through donor gifts.

Donations to the Emergency Disaster Fund made possible \$1,074,590 for Emergency Response efforts. Gifts to the Global Food Crisis Fund and the Emerging Global Missions Fund provided \$463,310 and \$57,440, respectively.

The unexpected improvement for General Ministries, driven by the investment gains, stabilized the board's finances and gave it an opportunity to rebuild and strengthen its foundation as it headed into 2004. The board did not need to use \$81,000 that had been approved for direction from other priorities in a revised 2003 budget. This was particularly welcome news since 2003 marked the

first time ongoing ministries were "patched" with one-time monies.

A slow decline in giving remains a concern, however. Ministry indeed succeeds only through being "bound together," as the General Ministries Fund is undergirded largely by gifts from congregations and individuals. Support of \$3,218,110 was received from more than 900 congregations in 2003, 1.2 percent lower than in 2002, and

\$648,610 was received from individuals, 9.2 percent lower than 2002. Special partnerships provided an additional \$395,210 for increased ministries.

General Board staff are closely monitoring a 2004 budget that was also balanced with \$276,000 in one-time monies. Treasurer Judy Keyser says living within the means of the board's income by 2005 remains a top priority. While the fabric of the General

Board's finances has been stretched, Keyser notes that the agency remains solid financially, and has no external debt.

We remain open to God's work of weaving a new pattern within us, while the cords of Christ's love connect us as we serve the church together.

General Ministries Fund

Congregational Life Ministries. Provides training and resources in church development, evangelism, stewardship, spiritual formation, and youth and young adult ministries. Nurtures pastoral leadership through ministry training with Bethany Seminary and Brethren Academy. Works with district staff and pastors. **\$1,221,920**

Global Mission Partnerships. Guides international church planting, development, leadership training, and theological education. Enlists Brethren in study and action on peace, justice, and environmental concerns. Manages Global Food Crisis Fund and Brethren Witness/Washington Office. Orients and places volunteers in projects focusing on peace, justice, human need, and the environment. **\$1,192,040**

Brethren Press Communications. Fosters identity, unity, and vision. Publishes *Messenger* (which has separate budget), *Tapestry*, *Source*, *Newsline*, and website. Interprets program, conducts news service. **\$228,760**

Treasurer/Centralized Resources. Handles finances of General Board and Annual Conference. Manages and maintains technology, archives, and Elgin facilities. Covers costs of telephone, technology, postage, support services for all program areas. Offers financial resource counseling on stewardship and estate planning. **\$1,813,160**

Brethren Service Center. Hosts local, national, and global service ministries; operates conference center; provides public information; maintains buildings and grounds. Costs are covered largely by self-funding programs of the center. General Ministries Fund portion: **\$13,640**

General Secretary. Administers work of the General Board and serves as spiritual guidepost for staff and General Board ministries. Oversees human resources. Heads ecumenical representation. **\$636,060**

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

Vision

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

Mission

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

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

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



Church of the Brethren General Board

1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, Illinois 60120 • www.brethren.org/genbd/ • 800-323-8039

ing, & rebuilding

By Roy Winter

How an Iraqi school get a new start

staff member Kevin King first brought this need to the attention of Church of the Brethren Emergency Response/Service Ministries staff, and made a powerful presentation at the October 2003 General Board meeting. And with Church of the Brethren funding, Architects for People in Need—a not-for-profit organization working in Iraq—was able to facilitate the rehabilitation. This three-way partnership allowed quality work to be done quickly, while also helping the local economy by providing jobs.

School rebuilding has not been the only focus of the Emergency Disaster Fund in Iraq. Since December 2002, seven EDF grants have provided \$163,000 in aid. This included emergency drinking water and humanitarian assistance, but the majority of these funds have been focused on the needs of children. In addition to building a school, Brethren gifts are keeping children fed and providing medical supplies to treat their health needs. Brethren are bringing hope. ❧

Roy Winter is executive director of the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., and manager of the Emergency Disaster Fund for the Church of the Brethren General Board. Cliff Kindy contributed to this report.

Abdul Amir Al Ta'ee has been headmaster of Al Khuraish School for 29 years. He has shown vision and commitment to the school and children in his community. When his budget was cut during the sanctions on Iraq and he

Cliff Kindy



had to lay off janitors, he did the cleaning. When cuts again invaded the school and teachers had to be let go, he took on the teaching. When further budgetary cuts threatened the operation of the school, he and his family sold their house and moved into the school. He and his sons were the guards who prevented the looting that struck many public buildings across the city. Amir is key to the new life of the Al Khuraish School, and an example of the persistence and courage of Iraqis

who will rebuild a country devastated by war, sanctions, and ongoing violence. —Cliff Kindy

How to help

The entire school reconstruction effort was accomplished through the generosity of Church of the Brethren members via the General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund. Many indi-

viduals, congregations, and disaster relief auctions support this ministry, which made nearly \$450,000 in grants in 2003. EDF administrator Roy Winter says the gifts "are providing an important Brethren witness in the world."

Contributions to the fund can be sent to Emergency Disaster Fund,

Cliff Kindy

Church of the Brethren General Board, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

Al Khuraish School in Iraq is being reconstructed through the Emergency Disaster Fund.

Launching a letter project

As part of the denomination's response in rebuilding and standing in support of the war-torn regions of Iraq, the Brethren Witness/Washington Office will be promoting at the Charleston, W.Va., Annual Conference a letter-writing campaign for Iraqi school children. Brethren children, youth, families, and congregations will be encouraged to participate in this program, which will assist in developing "long-distance" relationships of solidarity with children and families of the Al Khuraish school region. Visit the General Board exhibit area at Annual Conference for complete information, or contact the Brethren Witness/Washington Office at 800-785-3246.



No easy answers

Youth seminar explores compl

Bruce Aft, a Jewish rabbi in the Washington, D.C., area, didn't pretend to have any easy answers to the ongoing Middle East conflict between Israel and Palestinians.

In fact, he said there aren't any.

"If you lay all the blame at the feet of the Israelis, you've missed the point. If you lay all the blame at the feet of the Palestinians you've missed the point," Aft told this year's Church of the Brethren Christian Citizenship Seminar (CCS) for senior high youth. "The key perspective . . . is that somehow there be peace there."

Speaker after speaker talked about the atrocities and complexities of the decades-old struggle with ancient roots. Discussions addressed the "separation barrier"

being built around Palestinian territories, the ongoing violence in the region, and the need for mutual understanding and respect. The majority of the CCS speakers represented the Palestinian perspective, which organizers noted is less often heard in the US media.

Among those speakers was Rick Polhamus, a Church of the Brethren member from Ohio and a long-time member of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT). As part of his work with CPT, which regularly sends teams into the world's hot spots for nonviolent intervention and as "a ministry of presence," Polhamus has spent several lengthy stretches living in the West Bank.

Polhamus traced some of the history of the conflict, and talked about the ripple effects that events happening on that side of the world have in the US, and vice versa. He, too, noted "there are no easy answers to these things, really," but said that shouldn't stop youth or others from working at change.



Wait Wiltschek

Bruce Aft, a Jewish rabbi, speaks to CCS participants.

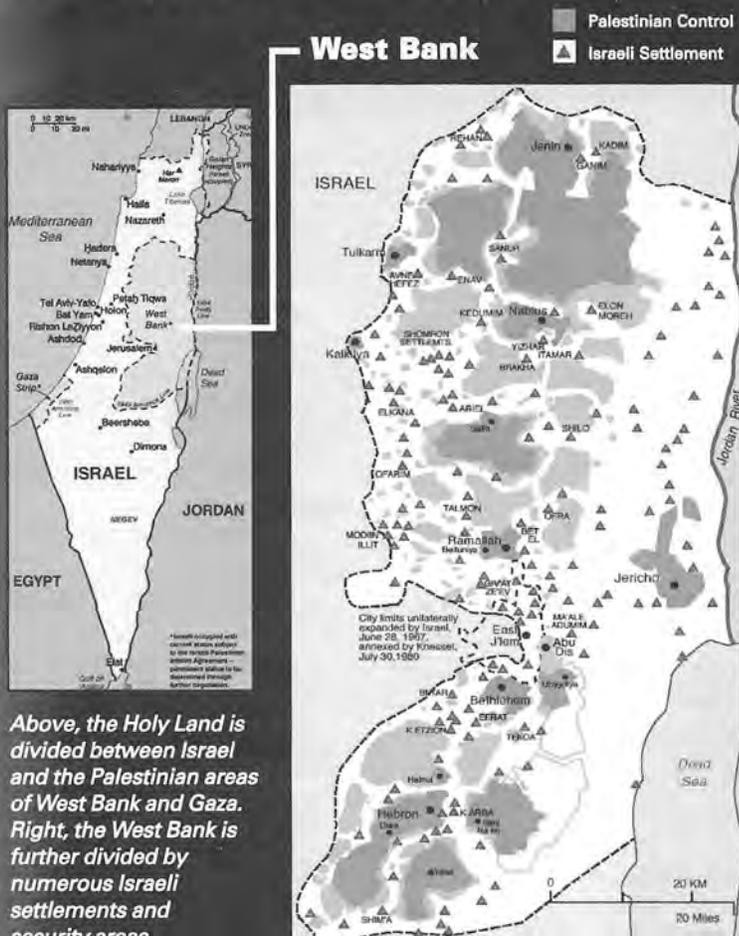
"You have to look beyond the insane behavior and find the human there," Polhamus said, describing some of his occasionally tense interactions in the West Bank. "It's when we get back to being human . . . that we can transform things."

Other speakers shared additional stories to lift up that human element. United Nations relief worker Joseph Donnelly and Brian Avery of International Solidarity Movement (ISM) both talked about ISM volunteer Rachel Corrie of Seattle, who was crushed by a bulldozer while trying to prevent destruction of a Palestinian residence in the West Bank. Avery himself was shot in the face during similar action.

"At times it's devastating, but we have hope beyond hope," Donnelly said. "It's painful, but the hope is that it must get better sooner or later—hopefully sooner than later."

A group called "From Along the Road" presented some of the raw emotions of the Palestinian people, using unvarnished songs, stories, and multimedia to express the anger and fear they have seen and experienced in the region.

A divided land



Above, the Holy Land is divided between Israel and the Palestinian areas of West Bank and Gaza. Right, the West Bank is further divided by numerous Israeli settlements and security areas.

West Bank map by Jan de Jong, Foundation for Middle East Peace.

Churches for Middle East

By Walt Wiltschek

Complexities of Israel-Palestinian conflict

National Council of Churches general secretary Bob Edgar spent an hour with the CCS group in New York, talking about political advocacy in general terms and sharing reflections from his own travels to the Middle East. He charged that the US sets "a terrible example for the rest of the world" in dealing with violence and conflict. "Let's set a better example here," he said.

In Washington, Churches for Middle East Peace media director Jim Wetekam paid particular attention to the controversial barrier being built by Israel. Wetekam said key issues include whether the barrier is being built on land internationally recognized as belonging to Israel, and the damage being done to Palestinian farms and orchards and thus to their economy, "making the possibility of a viable Palestinian state almost impossible."

Wetekam said that while both the Israelis and Palestinians have a legitimate right to security, the barrier is not a long-term solution. "If Israel really wants security, they'll never be able ultimately to find it in a wall," he said.

The World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation are among those that have denounced the barrier as a violation of human rights. The Lutheran statement called it "an obstacle to a just peace."

Aft agreed, saying that "When there's a fence between us, it's going to be hard to talk to each other." He said most Israelis would acknowledge there should be two separate states, but getting there is far more difficult.

"The tensions are probably as high now as they've ever

been," the rabbi said. "What you have to hope for now is that cooler heads will prevail. Dialogue or violence—those are the choices the world has right now."

The youth at the seminar expressed appreciation for the chance to hear the various perspectives.

"Coming to something like this, you see the other side of the issues," Reid Merryman of South Bend, Ind., said. "We're sheltered from a lot by the media and our textbooks. Things like this help us see the full picture."

"It exposes you to so much," Anna Smith of Bourbon, Ind., added. "It makes you more aware of the world around you."

Brethren Witness/Washington Office director Phil Jones summed up the overwhelming flow of information near the end of the week, urging all the participants to keep learning.

"Truth takes and holds so many different shapes," Jones said. "We've heard a lot of hard things these past few days, a lot of stories. I hope they broaden your perspective and help you understand there's a huge world out there that demands our attention." ❧

Walt Wiltschek is editor of MESSENGER and attended this year's Christian Citizenship Seminar.



Walt Wiltschek

Youth and advisors met in small groups several times during the CCS week to process the information they were receiving.

Learn more

ABOUT CCS

Christian Citizenship Seminar, sponsored by the Church of the Brethren General Board's Youth/Young Adult Ministries office and Brethren Witness/Washington Office, is offered for senior high youth and advisors. It is held annually except for National Youth Conference years (which falls next in 2006); about 100 people typically attend.

The six-day seminar begins in New York, tapping speakers and resources available in that area and including a

United Nations tour. The venue switches mid-week to Washington, D.C., where participants hear other speakers and visit congressional representatives. Ample free time also allows an opportunity to explore the two urban centers.

Palmyra (Pa.) Church of the Brethren pastor of Christian nurture Dennis Lohr, who regularly brings a group to CCS, called the seminar "a real leadership formation event for the youth of our denomination."

Dates and a theme have already been set for the 2005 seminar. It will begin April 23 in New York and end April 28 in Washington. Organizers

have decided on the topic of conscientious objection to war as the focus for the event. Details are posted at www.brethren.org/genbd/yya/CCS.htm as they become available.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE MIDDLE EAST

The Church of the Brethren Annual Conference has made numerous statements on the Middle East, Jerusalem, and the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Some can be viewed at www.brethren.org/ac/ac_statements/. The Churches for Middle East Peace website is at www.cmep.org/.

Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford



Gwen Gustafson-Zook, left, a representative of Mennonite Church USA; Pam Reist, pastor of Christian nurture at Lititz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren; and Julie Hostetter, Area 3 Congregational Life Team coordinator for the Church of the Brethren General Board, were among those participating in an April advisory group for a new curriculum.

"Gather 'Round" chosen as name for new curriculum

"Gather 'Round: Hearing and Sharing God's Good News," was chosen as the name for a new Brethren and Mennonite Sunday school curriculum by an advisory group that met April 14-17 in Elgin, Ill. The group discussed goals for the curriculum as well as theological and educational foundations, a theme scripture, Bible outlines, print pieces, printing technology, electronic media, and marketing.

The name implies "wholeness and heart," said Gwen Gustafson-Zook, a representative of Mennonite Church USA. The group envisioned the name as a call to Christians to gather around the Word, around the table of the Lord, at church and at home, and around the world in service and evangelism. The name also calls up images of Jesus gathering the children to him.

The curriculum is a cooperative venture of the Church of the Brethren, Mennonite Church Canada, and Mennonite Church USA through Brethren Press and Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN, formerly Mennonite Publishing House). Plans call for Gather 'Round to be available in the fall 2006 as a successor to the highly successful curriculum "Jubilee: God's Good News." The last quarter of Jubilee will be available in summer 2006.

Anna Speicher, project director, emphasized that Gather 'Round will not simply be a reworking of

Jubilee but will build on Jubilee's strong points. Foundational to both curricula is "respect for children as people already in relationship with God," Speicher said. The new curriculum will build on Jubilee's strengths of familiarizing children with basic Bible stories and making Sunday school a "time for learning the habits of worship, including ritual, silence, and prayer," she added.

New elements will include strengthening the partnership between church and home, embedding more teacher training in lesson plans, and increasing the serviceability of the curriculum. Also new is the way in which Bible texts are used, with the age groups all studying the same scriptures each week. This creates the opportunity for a significant new feature of Gather 'Round: a class for parents and others who care for children. The class, which may be offered for Sunday school, Bible study, or as a support group, will provide tips for talking about faith and scripture with children and opportunities for parents to grow spiritually. To her knowledge no other publisher is producing such a complete resource for parents, Speicher said.

Adults who care for children are one of six age groups to be served by the curriculum. The others are early childhood, primary, middler, junior high, and a multi-age group that could include children of all ages and adults. Multi-age lessons "will help small congregations who don't have capacity for different age groupings" as well as respond to increasing interest in intergenerational learning opportunities, Speicher said.

Speicher is recruiting Brethren and Mennonite scholars to write biblical backgrounds for the lessons. She reports that Old Testament scholar and former Church of the Brethren general secretary Robert W. Neff has agreed to write the Bible backgrounds for the first quarter on the book of Genesis. "We will also be asking our lesson writers to emphasize Brethren and Mennonite values of peace and justice, discipleship, community, and simple living," she said, adding that the publishers expect to be able to sell the curriculum to other like-minded churches with similar values. To make the curriculum more responsive to user feedback and changing needs, lesson plans will be written new every year rather than in a repeated three-year cycle.

The 15-member advisory group included Church of the Brethren representatives Wendy McFadden and Jewel McNary of Brethren Press, Julie Hostetter and Del Keeney of the General Board's Congregational Life Ministries, Association of Brethren Caregivers executive director Kathy Reid, and Pam Reist, pastor of Christian nurture at Lititz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.

For more information, contact Anna Speicher at 800-323-8039 or aspeicher_gb@brethren.org.

ABC board examines ideas for future directions

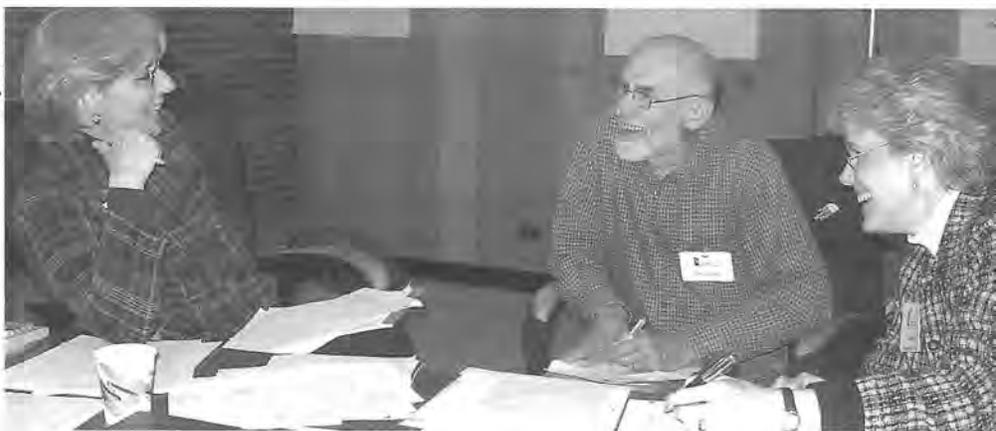
The organization's strategic plan and realities of providing quality ministry were talking points at the Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC) Board meetings March 19-21 in Elgin, Ill. Kathy Reid, ABC's new executive director, led the board through a process evaluating ABC's programs and providing a forum to suggest future directions for the agency.

Two study papers from the Fellowship of Brethren Homes exploring the issue of uncompensated care were presented by ABC staff member Ralph McFadden. For most Brethren-affiliated retirement centers, the issue affects their ability to provide care to residents who no longer have the financial resources—including private insurance, Medicaid, and Medicare—to pay for their own care. A 2003 survey of 18 Brethren homes revealed that the combined financial loss of uncompensated care amounted to \$14,393,615. The board suggested that the group work with districts and congregations on the Christian ethics surrounding the ministry provided by the homes, and the need for better financial planning for older adult years.

This was the first meeting for Reid and new board members John Katonah of Evanston, Ill.; David Fouts, Mayesville, W.Va.; and Vernne Greiner, Mechanicsburg, Pa. Another first was the attendance of Chris Bowman, Annual Conference moderator. "It is significant that ABC board members were able to discuss the state of the denomination with the Annual Conference moderator," Reid said. "The ABC board believes that collaboration within the church and its agencies will benefit us all."

In other business, the board approved individuals and organizations to receive awards at ABC's Annual Recognition Dinner at the 2004 Annual Conference; learned about ABC staff leading workshops on deacon and older adult ministries this spring in Atlantic Northeast, Michigan, Southern Ohio, and Western Plains districts; heard staff reports on activities for chaplains, disabilities, Brethren-affiliated homes, and

Mary Dulabaum



the creation of a series of workshops about coping with fear; received a report from the Finance Committee; and created a Sustainability Committee to craft and implement a funds development strategy. The committee will be chaired by Wally Landes, board chair-elect.

Sue Moore, left, chair of the Association of Brethren Caregivers board, chatted with board members David Fouts and Kathy Ramsey Melhorn during an icebreaker at the group's meeting March 19-21 in Elgin, Ill.

Annual Conference Council prepares for 2004 Conference

The Annual Conference Council met March 16-17 in Elgin, Ill., discussing a conversation hour to take place at the 2004 Annual Conference and business items for the conference.

Lerry Fogle, executive director of Annual Conference, and Chris Bowman, Conference moderator, reported on preparations for the 2004 event. The group discussed the structure and framework for a conversation hour with the council related to a Michigan District query on homosexuality issues (see the Annual Conference preview in this issue).

The council also discussed a revised mandate for the next Review and Evaluation Committee, to be presented to Standing Committee this year. It calls for review and evaluation of total denominational structure and program. Previous mandates for Review and Evaluation committees, which were initiated in 1968 and scheduled to occur in regular 10-year cycles, were to review only the

Mary Dulabaum



The Association of Brethren Caregivers board met in Elgin, Ill., March 19-21. Members of the board are (left to right): chair Sue Moore, Brian Black, Vernne Greiner, David Fouts, Diane Harden, John Wenger, Kathy Melhorn, Connie Burk Davis, Wally Landes, Allegra Hess, John Katonah, and Eddie Edmonds. Not pictured: Gayle Hunter Sheller and Heather Neff.

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 1-5 Brethren Volunteer Service in-service retreat, Newark, Ill.

June 4-5 Church of the Brethren Puerto Rico assembly, Yahuecas, P.R.

June 5-11 Ministry Summer Service orientation, Richmond, Ind.

June 14-18 National Young Adult Conference, Winter Park, Colo.

June 14-20 Senior high workcamp, Castañer, P.R.

June 14-20 Senior high workcamp, St. Croix, Virgin Islands

June 16-20 Junior high workcamp, Richmond, Va.

June 19-27 Senior high workcamp, Dominican Republic

June 20-30 Brethren Revival Fellowship senior high workcamp, Dominican Republic

June 23-26 North American Stewardship Conference, Toronto, Canada

June 23-27 Junior high workcamp, Harrisburg, Pa.

June 24-28 Youth "Exploring Your Call" event, Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind.

June 27-July 2 Junior high workcamp, Inspiration Center, Wis.

June 28-July 2 Junior high workcamp, Innisfree Village, Va.

July 2-3 Ministers' Association conference, Charleston, W.Va.

July 3 General Board meeting, Charleston, W.Va.

July 3-7 Annual Conference, Charleston, W.Va.

General Board. The next cycle begins in 2005.

In Conference-related business, the council adopted a policy for filling unexpired terms in Conference-elected positions, looked at progress in assembling and publishing an updated manual of organization and polity, and set next steps in an ongoing strategic planning process for Annual Conference. The council plans to introduce a statement of purpose, a vision statement, and a list of core values to Standing Committee this year.

In other business, the council will pursue the possibility of having a consultation with the Council of District Executives and the General Board's Office of Ministry to evaluate policies and procedures used in calling and credentialing ministers; received a report from the Inter-Agency Forum and noted with appreciation a concerted tone of cooperation and coordination among Church of the Brethren agencies and executives; responded to letters appealing Conference actions or policies of the Program and Arrangements Committee; and heard a report from Bowman on his recent trip to India.

It was the final regular meeting for two of the council's original members: Sandy Bosserman, the elected district executive on the council, and Harriet Finney, the 2003 Conference moderator. Finney's position spanned her three years as moderator-elect, moderator, and immediate past moderator. Bosserman, district executive for Missouri/Arkansas, is resigning with a year remaining on her term, citing increased family and district responsibilities. Conference delegates will name her successor.

Janis Pyle



Anastasia Buena, the first woman moderator of the Church of the Brethren in the Dominican Republic, will preside at the 14th conferencia in 2005. This summer she will bring greetings from the Dominican church to Annual Conference in Charleston, W.Va., and will give an insight session on "Women in the Dominican Church: A Dominican Leader Shares a Woman's Perspective of the Church."

More than 500 attend Dominican conferencia

Record attendance was a highlight of the 13th Annual Conferencia of Iglesia de Los Hermanos (Church of the Brethren in the Dominican Republic) held Feb. 19-22 in Santo Domingo. Twenty of the church's 24 congregations or preaching points sent delegates, and more than 500 people attended. The theme, "Renewed in the Same Spirit," came from Romans 12:2.

Moderator Wilson Nova welcomed visitors from congregations in Puerto Rico and guest preachers Ruben DeOleo and Guillermo Encarnación from Atlantic Northeast District. Encarnación, director of theological education in the Dominican Republic, said, "Although it has been a difficult year overall for Haitians, the church is one place where Haitians and Dominicans can dwell together in unity." He pointed out that the new moderator, Anastasia Buena, and Ernesto Mereciel, moderator-elect and pastor of the Mendoza congregation (the largest in the conference), are both of Haitian descent. Nova, pastor of the Bonao church plant, was elected as the new president of the board.

In business items, delegates approved a redesigned medical ministry that envisions doctors traveling from a central location to hold holistic faith-centered medical and health education clinics organized by churches; approved guidelines for congregations considering building projects; and approved a budget including an increase to help churches with pastors' salaries.

Bethany board looks at finances, centennial

The Bethany Theological Seminary board of trustees heard an update on Bethany's financial campaign as it gathered for its semi-annual meeting March 26-28 in Richmond, Ind. Other highlights included reports on plans for the seminary centennial in 2004-2005 and news of a faculty member's invitation to speak at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

Gifts and pledges for the financial campaign total more than \$12.3 million to date, according to a release from the seminary. The congregational phase of the campaign was launched at the 2003 Annual Conference. Congregational visits will take place in 11 districts this year, with nearly 125 volunteers providing leadership for the visits. Special presentations will be made at the 2004 district conferences of the remaining districts.

In other reports, board committees heard



2. Albania. Residents of Albania are participating in a Heifer International-supported "guns for cows" program, receiving a pregnant cow for every two or three guns surrendered in a quest for disarmament. The Church of the Brethren's Global Food Crisis Fund is supporting long-time partner Heifer in the work.

about events for the centennial, with activities to begin at the 2004 Annual Conference, and plans for the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence grant received by the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership from Lilly Endowment Inc. Linda and Glenn Timmons will coordinate the Pastoral Excellence program, which will provide pastors with two tracks for continuing education: Advanced Foundations of Church Leadership and the Vital Pastor program.

The board's Academic Affairs Committee received news that Scott Holland, associate professor of Peace Studies and Cross-Cultural Studies, has been invited to address the National Press Club this summer. He will speak on the "Watu Kwa Amani: People of Peace" conference Aug. 8-14 in Nairobi, Kenya, one of a series of Historic Peace Church conferences that are part of the World Council of Churches' Decade to Overcome Violence. Bethany's Baker Trust Fund is a major sponsor of the conference. Other agenda items included an advisory committee for "Connections," the seminary's distributed education program, and a self-study process by the school's teaching and administrative faculty as part of an accreditation review in 2006.

In other action, the board approved a budget of \$2,067,280 for 2004-2005—a 3-percent increase from the previous year—and chose officers for 2004-2005. Anne Reid of Roanoke, Va., will serve as chair; Raymond M. Donadio, Jr., Greenville, Ohio, as vice chair; Ed Poling, Hagerstown, Md., as secretary; Carol Scheppard, Mount Crawford, Va., as chair for Academic Affairs; Ron Wyrick, Harrisonburg, Va., chair for Institutional Advancement; and Jim Dodson, Lexington, Ky., chair for Student and Business Affairs.

The board also celebrated the appointment of Nadine Pence Frantz as full professor of theological studies, honored Theresa C. Eshbach's service as executive director of Institutional Advancement, and expressed appreciation to members concluding their terms of service.

1. Sudan. Grants from the General Board's Global Food Crisis Fund (GFCF) will be directed at food needs via the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC), based in the south of the country. Nyal, an area that has suffered the most from an ongoing civil war, according to Ross Kane of the NSCC, will benefit from \$12,400 to fully fund a women's gardening and tailoring project. A grant of \$8,500 for a women's bakery in Rumbek County—home to a cluster of international relief and rehabilitation programs and an influx of internally displaced people—will generate income to meet the needs of families and send children to school. In Yei County, \$12,000 will help build grinding mills to alleviate the burden on women grinding grain and to generate income for churches suffering from abject poverty caused by the war. The income from the mills will be used for evangelism.

2. Albania. The Global Food Crisis Fund has allocated grants to projects supported by Heifer International in recognition of the organization's 60th anniversary and the role the Church of the Brethren played in its formation and continues today. In Albania, \$30,000 will support a "guns for cows" program providing a pregnant cow for every two or three guns surrendered. The program is a pilot effort begun by the United Nations Disarming Program after 1997, when Albanians took more than 500,000 weapons from military depots during a time of national upheaval.

3. Zimbabwe. A second Heifer-related GFCF grant will give \$20,000 to improve nutrition and income of people affected by the AIDS pandemic. Heifer works with community-based groups to distribute heifers, bulls, goats, chickens, and rab-

bits in a densely populated farming area where the number of AIDS cases is the highest in the nation. The funds also will provide training in livestock handling, financial management, and child care.

4. Armenia. A third Heifer-related grant of \$10,000 goes to the Aigabetz "Sunrise" Project for teenage and adult orphans. With a sizeable orphan population, Armenia is experiencing a rising tide of crime and prostitution among its youth, according to GFCF manager Howard Royer. The Aigabetz program aids recipients' constructive release from the trauma of childhood in an orphanage and helps develop self-sufficiency by enabling them to become entrepreneurs. Each teenage orphan or orphan couple is equipped with a small tract of irrigable land, modest living space, livestock, vocational training, and seed money. The grant was approved shortly after the 89th anniversary of the 1915 Armenia genocide. Royer noted that Armenia was the recipient of the first international relief effort by the Church of the Brethren in 1918 to 1921, when Brethren contributed about \$267,000.

5. Iran. A grant of \$20,000 from the General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) will give additional support to earthquake recovery in the city of Bam. Responding to a Church World Service appeal, the EDF grant will fund psycho-social assistance to the needy—especially children—as well as prefabricated housing and earthquake-resistant housing for families outside the city. A devastating earthquake on Dec. 26 killed an estimated 42,000 people, injured another 30,000, left 1,800 children orphaned, and destroyed more than two-thirds of the buildings.

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Messenger earns awards for event coverage, design

MESSENGER received two "Best of the Christian Press" awards at the Associated Church Press convention April 20 in Toronto, Canada, in the categories of convention/meeting coverage and design.

A first-place "award of excellence" for convention coverage went to then-editor Fletcher Farrar, author Walt Wiltschek, and others for the Annual Conference preview in the May 2003 issue, and for coverage of the conference in the August issue. The preview package was described by judges as "a feature story that helped get beyond the predictable. It was enticing and genuine and set a pace for the rest of the coverage."

In the category of design, MESSENGER received a second-place "award of merit" for the October 2003 issue designed by Paul Stocksdale of The Concept Mill



(formerly Cedar House Design). Debbie Noffsinger of Union Bridge, Md., designed the cover for that issue.

Personnel moves

Genelle Wine, of Imperial, Neb., has accepted the position of coordinator of orientation for Brethren Volunteer Service. Currently living and studying in Germany, she previously served two years as a BVS volunteer, one of those years as assistant to the director of BVS.

Wine is a graduate of McPherson (Kan.) College and is completing an intensive German language study program at Multi Lingua in Bayreuth, Germany, while she works as an au-pair with a German family. She also was a participant in Up with People in 1998-1999 and has served as a houseparent in a BVS project, Casa de Esperanza de los Niños in Houston, Texas. She is a member of Enders (Neb.) Church of the Brethren.

Wine will begin her work with the General Board in August and will be based at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill.

Find Shelter from the Storm

Wendy Miller will explore caregivers need for spiritual shelter from emotional storms at the Association of Brethren Caregivers Annual Recognition Dinner.



Caregivers often are affected spiritually and emotionally when they listen to stories of traumatic and tumultuous experiences from those for whom they care. Wendy Miller, campus pastor of Eastern Mennonite University, will describe how God shelters caregivers from these emotional storms, restoring and renewing their inner peace.

At the dinner the agency will honor Joyce Person, RN, and the Lansing (Mich.) Church of the Brethren with caregiving awards. Vernon Showalter, the late Cathy Snell and LeRoy Weddle, also will be recognized for their careers of service at Brethren retirement communities.

ABC's Recognition Dinner will be held July 3, 5 p.m., at the Marriott Town Center Hotel during the Charleston (W.Va.) Annual Conference. Tickets are \$20 a person and should be purchased prior to conference.



**Association of
 Brethren Caregivers**

(847) 742-5100 www.brethren.org/abc/

Other ABC Meal Events at Annual Conference

Brethren Chaplains Network Breakfast

— Monday, July 5, 7 a.m.
 Presenter Ken Gible will explore "Loving the Neighbor: The Problem and Opportunity of Religious Pluralism."

Denominational Deacon Luncheon

— Monday, July 5, Noon
 Robert Neff will discuss deacons roles in the spiritual development of older adults.

Church and Persons with Disabilities Network Luncheon

— Monday, July 5, Noon
 Carol and Gene Yeazell will tell how their faith was impacted when their adult child became ill, returned home and needed significant care for 10 years.

ONCAMPUS



Bridgewater College (Bridgewater, Va.)

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) president Dr. Myles Brand delivered the commencement address May 16, when more than 275 seniors were scheduled to receive their degrees. Frederick (Md.) Church of the Brethren senior pastor Paul Munday, father of one of the graduating seniors, delivered the baccalaureate address that morning.



Elizabethtown College (Elizabethtown, Pa.)

Nathan D. Baxter, former dean of the Washington (D.C.) National Cathedral and rector of Saint James Episcopal Church in Lancaster, Pa., spoke at Elizabethtown's 101st commencement exercises on May 22. More than 400 students were expected to earn their degrees during the ceremony.



Juniata College (Huntingdon, Pa.)

The first annual Juniata Valley History Conference took place April 30 to May 1 in Burnham, Pa. The conference was sponsored by Currents of the Juniata Valley, a local history project initiated by Juniata College and the Westsylvania Heritage Corporation. The conference honored the 250th anniversary of the Treaty of Albany, a 1754 agreement that ceded the Indian territory of the Juniata Valley.



University of La Verne (La Verne, Calif.)

"Environment and Community in Los Angeles," the second in a series of interdisciplinary conferences exploring community in Los Angeles, was hosted by La Verne's International Studies Institute May 1 to offer research and views on built and physical environments found throughout greater Los Angeles. Among those participating were La Verne faculty Kenneth Marcus and Al Clark.



Manchester College (North Manchester, Ind.)

Manchester is in the midst of fund-raising for a new, larger college union building. It currently has about half of the \$6.5 million goal needed to begin construction. As with previous projects, the college will not break ground on the new college union until the money is in hand. Manchester already broke ground for a \$17 million Science Center in November and a \$1.2 million recital hall in March.



McPherson College (McPherson, Kan.)

McPherson held its fifth annual C.A.R.S. (College Automotive Restoration Students) Show on May 1, showcasing its unique accredited auto restoration program. The car display included a 1929 Rolls Royce Phantom I as the featured vehicle. Trophies were given to the top 20 entries.

McPherson conference keeps things 'simple'

Nearly 50 people met on the campus of McPherson (Kan.) College April 2-4 for a Regional Youth Conference that spans an area from Colorado to Missouri and from the Canadian border to Mexico. It was a new time of year for the event, previously held during the winter.

Matt Guynn of On Earth Peace and Lee Krähenbühl of Manchester College provided keynote leadership for this year's conference, focusing on the theme of "Simply." Guynn used times of meditative "centering prayers" as a focus point, while also challenging youth to look at priorities, the US culture of consumerism, and the need to turn toward God.

"'Simply' is about understanding where our priorities are and letting things fall away and reorganize themselves," Guynn said. "It's about a lifetime of turning. It's not just a single, one-time decision."

Krähenbühl added some reflections and also led singing through the weekend, culminating with the group providing special music for McPherson Church of the Brethren's Sunday worship service.

MESSANGER editor Walt Wiltschek led an all-group session on media messages, and a series of smaller breakout sessions explored topics including thinking about ministry, conscientious objection, and various aspects of simple living.

Billy Jonas of Asheville, N.C., gave a unique Saturday-evening concert, using an assortment of unusual percussion instruments and heavily involving the audience in being "part of the band."

The weekend, organized by McPherson staff Tracy Stoddart, Kenny Manhamo, and LaMonte Rothrock, also included a McPherson admissions presentation, free time in the campus' Sport Center, and a scavenger hunt and other small-group activities.

Walt Wiltschek



Jason Holderread and Scarlet Van Deventer of Oklahoma and Stephen Baile Crouse of Missouri work at a rope puzzle during small-group activities.

Roundtable weekend marks its 60th year

Nearly 265 youth and advisors gathered at Bridgewater College March 26-28 for Roundtable, the annual southeastern Regional Youth Conference.

Roundtable 2004 was led by keynote speaker Jeff Carter, pastor of Manassas (Va.) Church of the Brethren, and entertainer Joseph Helfrich, a well-known Church of the Brethren musician. Participants were offered opportunities to explore the weekend's theme: "The Next Chapter. . . A Future with Hope."

Roundtable, planned by an Interdistrict Youth Cabinet, has undergone some significant changes in recent years. For the second year, Roundtable included a Friday night concert, which featured Helfrich. Small groups, providing opportunities for meeting new people and processing the keynote speaker's message, were also implemented again after great success in 2003.

Roundtable began in 1944 and—with the exception of 1945—has been held annually at Bridgewater, making Roundtable 2004 the 60th occurrence of the event. —Jonathan Emmons

Beth Eiler



Port William tales embrace small-town life

Imagine a land of small- to medium-sized farms with families who have farmed there for generations.

They surround a small village with two general stores, a blacksmith shop, later a mechanic's garage, a drugstore, a school, a church, a graveyard, and a barber-shop. The people have known each other and each other's business all their lives, as did their parents and grandparents.



JAMES H. LEHMAN

Many readers of *Messenger* grew up in just such a place. And if we did not, our parents and certainly our grandparents did. This is the world that poet, essayist, and novelist Wendell Berry writes about—and preserves—in his

cycle of stories about the "Port William membership."

Port William is a town near the Kentucky River, not far from where that river flows into the Ohio. Berry has written these stories over more than 30 years, and they follow life from 1888 to 2000. They have been published in collec-

Berry has the rare ability to understand and value both the responsible ones, who till the fields with care and attention, and the wayward ones who appear in almost every family and bring humor and heartbreak.

tions, several short novels, and two long ones. Recently all the short stories have been gathered chronologically in a volume titled *That Distant Land*. It is this book I am reviewing, but I am writing about the whole Port William world.

One of the pleasures of Berry is that his characters keep reappearing in each other's stories. For instance a young man named Sam Hanks, who is an interested observer of the eccentricities of Ptolemy Proudfoot in stories of the early 1900s, appears later as a middle-aged character with his own eccentricities in stories about the town barber Jayber Crow. These reappearances give the sense that the Port William world is larger than the stories.

Berry has the rare ability to understand and value both the responsible ones, who till the fields with care and attention, and the wayward ones who appear in almost every family and bring humor and heartbreak. Many of the steadfast ones are mercifully free of hypocrisy, and some of the errant ones have a deep love for this place

where they don't always fit. So instead of this persistent idea in American fiction that the local community is a place that prevents people from realizing their full truth and potential, Berry's idea is that small towns and well-tended fields are the very places where people can flourish and find their deepest selves.

Mat Feltner is one of these good ones—quietly wise, constant, canny in business, careful in the cultivation of his fields. We see him in many stories: as a little boy, as a young man, as a middle-aged man grieving his son who is missing in action in World War II, as an old man walking his fields with the dreams and satisfactions of one who has lived his life well. Feltner is the father-in-law of Wheeler Catlett, a farm boy who studies law and comes back as attorney to generations of farmers, helping protect them against absentee landowners and encroaching mechanization. Feltner is the husband of Margaret, the father of Bess, and the father-in-law of Hannah, strong, interesting women, and the grandfather of Andy Catlett, Berry's alter ego.

Burley Coulter, Mat Feltner's lifelong friend, is a wayward one, who roams the woods at night with his dogs, who never marries but has a son out of wedlock whom he quietly looks after, and who gradually develops into one of the stalwarts as he ages and finds a place for himself.

Behind all the stories is Berry's lament that the small family farm has disappeared. With it has gone a connection to the earth that we don't even know we have lost amid the glitter and appeal of our materialistic and technological culture. In losing this connection with one another and the earth we have lost our connection with ourselves. This sounds like mere nostalgia. I admit the stories stir in me a yearning for the world I grew up in, but more than that they make me think about how we can find the connections of the Port William membership today in the cities, subdivisions, and diminished rural places where we live.

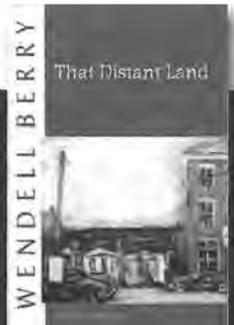
Berry has the true storyteller's unwillingness to preach, but hidden in his stories and novels is his conviction that it is God's intention that we live in these connections. Begin with *That Distant Land*, and meet Berry's characters. I expect you then will want to read the other books to meet the rest of the Port William membership. 

James Lehman is owner of Brotherstone Publishers, an author, and a member of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren, Elgin, Ill.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Wendell Berry, *That Distant Land*. Washington, D.C.: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004, 440 pages, hardcover, \$26, with map and genealogical chart.

The novels that continue the story of the Port William membership are *Hannah Coulter*, *Jayber Crow*, *The Memory of Old Jack*, *Nathan Coulter*, *A Place on Earth*, *Remembering*, and *A World Lost*. In addition to these works of fiction, Berry has published many collections of essays and poems. His book of poems titled *A Timbered Choir: The Sabbath Poem 1979-98* might be of particular interest to Brethren. The book can be ordered via Brethren Press, at 800-441-3712.





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It was quite remarkable, for Hollywood or any other film producer, in emphasizing nonviolent, self-sacrificing, redemptive love as God's way to combat evil in the world. "Jesus of Nazareth, the Prince of Peace," came forth in startling clarity!

The opinions expressed in "Letters" are not necessarily those of MESSENGER. Readers should receive them in the same way as when differing views are expressed in face-to-face conversation.

Letters should be brief, clear, and respectful of the opinions of others, with strong differences handled in the spirit of Matthew 18. Preference is given to letters that respond directly to items in MESSENGER. Anonymous letters will not be considered.

Send letters to MESSENGER, Attn: Letters, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120 or messenger@brethren.org. Please include hometown and phone number.

The cross was necessary

I think the letter writer ["Passion: Once Was Enough" by Ron Martin-Adkins, May letters] needs to reconsider his theology. He stated Jesus' death on the cross was not necessary.

The Bible says there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood. The cross was absolutely necessary. The prodigal son was being welcomed back into a family he already belonged to. Until you are born again, you are not in God's family. His statement is preaching another Jesus which Paul warned against. It is eternally important to get this correct.

Larry Lutz
Vandalia, Ohio

'Passion' teaches peace, not violence

Did Dr. Thistlethwaite of the Chicago Theological Seminary view the same version of "The Passion of the Christ" as I? ["The Passion of the Christ: A Powerful Portrayal" sidebar, "What Others Are Saying," April 2004 media review]

Rather than an "action hero," Jesus is por-

trayed as the soul-wracked (in Gethsemane) and nearly butchered suffering servant of his God. He eschews all violent reaction and glory-seeking on his own part. He resists a final temptation from the devil. He forgives faithless followers, a common criminal, and his sadistic torturers. And in this next-to-the-last episode of his earthly life, he exemplifies the *agape* love of God for all humanity.

This "war movie," as Dr. Thistlethwaite calls it, was one of the most cogent arguments against Christ-followers participating in warfare one is likely to encounter. It was quite remarkable, for Hollywood or any other film producer, in emphasizing nonviolent, self-sacrificing, redemptive love as God's way to combat evil in the world.

"Jesus of Nazareth, the Prince of Peace," came forth in startling clarity!

David S. Coffman
Nipomo, Calif.

Hmmm, let's see... Compared to the world's poorest people, we have 100 times more wealth, 40 times bigger houses, and we'll spend 4 times more on diet products this year than our nation will give in development aid to the world's 1 billion hungry people. I wonder what the Lord expects of me...? *



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*Micah 6:6-8; Isaiah 58; Amos 5:18-24; Matthew 23:23

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For information on how to apply, please contact Anna Speicher, Project Director, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120. Telephone: 847-742-5100, ext. 209. E-mail: aspeicher_gb@brethren.org.

Application deadline: June 15, 2004.



Brethren Press®

Will moviegoers embrace nonviolence?

Today we are sending a check to On Earth Peace for the price of two tickets to see the "Passion" movie. We have been vacillating about seeing this for a while but don't think it is a good investment.

Hopefully many of those attending will be challenged spiritually. On the other hand, listening to the multiple reports of gross violence suffered by Jesus in the film, he did not change his reaction to those who hammered the nails. They were forgiven. Therefore we can expect a huge swelling of compassion for our enemies, great advocates for peace from the millions who saw this film. Surely we are commanded to follow his example; isn't that what he taught us?

Currently many Christians support a war where we were not attacked, only believing there was a suspicion of such. How is this understood by others who do not ascribe to the faith and teachings of Christ? A mystery! Perhaps Mel Gibson will support non-violent means with this huge return of money. We'll see.

Sara and David Wilson
Camp Hill, Pa.

Gifts really do keep on giving

It was a wonderful surprise to read Carol Yeazell's article in the April MESSENGER detailing the leadership development made possible by the bequest from my parents, John and Hilda Middlekauff. I know how thrilled they would have been to see the way in which their legacy was being used to train others to continue the vital work of ministry.

My father was encouraged to consider going into the ministry by six people from his home congregation in Hagerstown, Md. Not only was it during the Depression, but the group knew that his widowed mother lacked resources to send him to college. They gave him financial support while he attended Juniata, asking only that he help some other needy student in the future if he decided that the ministry wasn't his calling.

Although salaries were never very large (their first church paid \$50 a month!), throughout their 42 years of partnership in full-time pastoring, my parents' dedication to serving the church included tithing—and careful budgeting so that there was always a little something going into savings. Thanks to a good friend who worried about retire-

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(July 27 - August 2)

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ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (September 1-13)

IRELAND (September 3-14)

SWISS-VOLHYNIAN MENNONITE HERITAGE
(September 15-29)

LANDS of the BIBLE (September 17-30)

CHINA (October 3-19)

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ment on a small pension and offered his investment expertise—and the unprecedented growth of the stock market in the 1990s—those small savings over a lifetime resulted in a substantial estate by the time of my father's death.

Knowing well my parents' concern for stewardship, it is a real joy to know their bequests are continuing and expanding their lifetime of joint ministry. And the gifts of that original Hagerstown group are still being passed on!

Sylvia Middlekauff Hess
Xenia, Ohio

Vermilyea is modern-day prophet

Don Vermilyea, who is "Walking Across America" for Jesus ["Walk Across America passes 7,000 miles," Nov. 2003], is truly a modern-day Church of the Brethren prophet.

His walk and sharing truly exemplify our denominational motto, "Continuing the work of Jesus. Simply. Peacefully. Together." He is a humble, simple-living man as he walks many miles most days and then provides a message of Christ's love and God's goodness to the churches. He also brings the witness of peace and justice that he shares with congregations.

His message is renewing and enriching.

His goal of getting to every church in the denomination is commendable. I have had the privilege of spending time with him as he has been in my home and church. He is a very inspiring man.

Let us be in prayer that his wonderful mission will be successful and renewing for the church as he brings the message of Christ's presence and God's love to our congregations.

John L. Huffaker
North Liberty, Iowa

Editor's note: Updates on the Walk Across America, sponsored by Brethren Volunteer Service and the Brethren Witness/Washington Office of the General Board, can be found at www.brethren.org/genbd/witness/Walk.html.

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SEAGOING COWBOY INFO WANTED: Want photocopies of diaries of seagoing cowboys from 1945-1947 and/or phone or personal interviews with cowboys. Phone 574-658-4147 or write to Peggy Reiff Miller, PO Box 117, Milford IN 46542-0117. Will cover expenses of photocopying, postage, and phone calls. Will be at Annual Conference.

Pastor sought. Active congregation in Garden City, Kansas, is seeking a full-time pastor. We desire a vivacious, enthusiastic, spirit-filled pastor, willing to work in the community, help the church grow, and share God's message. The pastoral candidate should be ordained and be willing to have his ordination recognized by the Church of the Brethren. Housing is available. Interested applicants should contact: Curtis Sauer, 620-276-8829. Garden City Church of the Brethren, 505 N. 8th St., PO Box 814, Garden City, KS 67846.

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Want to volunteer in a bookstore? Brethren Press is looking for volunteers to assist in set-up, operation, and tear-down of the Annual Conference bookstore in Charleston. If you have interest and time to volunteer, contact Jean Clements at 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120 or jclements_gb@brethren.org.

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

New Members

Antelope Park, Lincoln, Neb.: Sokchoeun Eath
Big Swatara, Paxton, Harrisburg, Pa.: Ruth E. Dechert, Bonnie Gornick, Donna Whritenour, Vicki Whritenour, Brenda Chubb, Romaine Hepner, Ruthann Hepner
Cabool, Mo.: Nathan Betz, Pam Betz, Randy Leach
Coventry, Pottstown, Pa.: Jeannette Patton, Richard R. Ranieri, James A. Viola
Dixon, Ill.: Lois Livengood, Leila Johnson
Dundalk, Baltimore, Md.: Lauren Magnuson, George Burleson, Diane Burleson
Dupont, Ohio: Marilyn Brinkman, Nick Doster, Bruce Craft, Edna Craft, Vernon Prowant, Sara Deken, Scott Deken, Elliott Kosch, Philip Hemenway
East Chippewa, Orrville, Ohio: Harriet Stuckey, Matthew Sisouphanh, Amanda Boreman, Stephanie Hochstetler, Brianna Hochstetler, Paul Kelbly, Heather Carmany, Amy Lake, Pearl Lance, Greg Lance, Lyle Schrock, Marilyn Schrock, Edna Miller, Dan Steiner, Denise Steiner
Florin, Mount Joy, Pa.: Emily Snyder, Nathan Snyder
Fruitland, Idaho: John Cleveland, Denise Cleveland, Tyson Cleveland, Morgan Van Hoy, Stephanie Morris, Jeremy Weeks, Wendy Weeks, Amber Weeks, Amber Heyne
Greenville, Ohio: Norman Drew, Carolyn Denlinger, Nancy Jackson
Kokomo, Ind.: Samuel Beckom, Evan Bush, Cheryl Denniston, Lindsay Floyd
LaPlace, Ill.: Holly VanMatre, Samuel Dinterman, Kaylan Riley, Haley Jones, Cindy Rambo, Bob Chalifoux, Diane Chalifoux, Jimmy VanMatre, Donna VanMatre, Heather VanMatre, Dortha Cunningham, Sean Roan, Bertha Roan, Rebecca Hodge
Lebanon, Mount Sidney, Va.: Sharon Garber, Wayne Garber, Misty Turner, Jeff Turner
Manassas, Va.: Donna Leahy, Christian Saunders, Kim Saunders

Middlebury, Ind.: Scott Anglemyer, Evelyn Anglemyer, Leah Schrock, Don Muhlneckel
Monte Vista, Callaway, Va.: Norma J. Beckner, Pearl Smallwood
Moorefield, W.Va.: Kay Hagert, Pete Hagert, Hugh Currey, Maxine Currey, Matthew Crites, Cathy Crites, Elson See, Renee See, Delma Mongold
Nettle Creek, Hagerstown, Ind.: Jacob Hall, Allen Bullock
New Paris, Ind.: David McFarren, Sally McFarren
Ninth Street, Roanoke, Va.: Christie Milliron, Benjamin Wilson
North Liberty, Ind.: Charles Mann, David Schortgen
Oak Grove, Roanoke, Va.: Mel Purcell, Drew Purcell, Bobbi Myers, Gayl Bulach
Osceola, Mo.: Carol Novak
Plumcreek, Shelocta, Pa.: David Houllian, Michael Houllian, Crista Reefer, Michael Reefer, Darlene Padgett, Carl Kimmel, Darlene Kimmel, David Kimmel
Reading, Homeworth, Ohio: Don Hoffman, Marge Hoffman, Jennifer Bonar, Jason Kamp, Jessica Smallwood, Bryann Blickensderfer, Heather Gott
Saint Petersburg, Fla.: Rachel Finnerty, Cody Shanahan, Pat Whitaker, Leroy Whitaker
Spring Creek, Hershey, Pa.: Helen Cave, Gerald Heister, Beverly Heister, Joyce Madeira
Westminster, Md.: Jeff Scott, Susie Scott, Kaitlyn Johnson, Jesse Winter, Cassie Forman, Cameron Ripley, Santos Morales
Winter Park, Fla.: Larry Aubrey, Jane Aubrey, Geoff McNeill, Marguerite McNeill
Wolgamuth, Dillsburg, Pa.: Cindy Leedy, John Leedy, Dan Felix, Joyce Felix

Wedding Anniversaries

Craig, Robert and Opal, Blue Ridge, Va., 50
Hess, Milton and Luetta, Elizabethtown, Pa., 50
McInnis, Russell and Roberta, Virden, Ill., 50
Plank, Everett and Bunah, Klamath Falls, Ore., 60
Rankin, James and Shirley, Warrenton, Va., 50
Sauder, Lewis and Dorothy, Manheim, Pa., 60
Shoemaker, Tom and Ann, Waynesboro, Va., 50
Spangler, Wayne and Carol, Vienna, Va., 50

Stroup, Harry and Julia, Steelton, Pa., 50
Summers, Grayson and Helen, Middletown, Md., 70
Widmer, Joe and Marlene, Sterling, Ohio, 50

Deaths

Alvey, William Moroni, 81, Williamsport, Md., March 22
Baker, Emerson, 90, Greenville, Ohio, Dec. 24
Bowman, W. Forrest, 87, Boones Mill, Va., March 24
Bright, Emmert, 90, Greenville, Ohio, Nov. 27
Cowen, Debra J., 48, Ashland, Ohio, March 20
Cox, Eric, 49, Middlebury, Ind., Dec. 19
Craighead, Ruth Ann, 65, Goodview, Va., March 21
Dixon, Guy Paul, 71, Hagerstown, Md., March 26
Driver, Jackie Lee, 68, Broadway, Va., April 1
Fawley, Ralph Dean, 83, Sangerville, Va., March 31
Filbrun, Perry Mohler, 90, Troy, Ohio, March 27
Garner, May C., 94, Archbold, Ohio, Feb. 24
Glover, Mary Lydia, 103, Nampa, Idaho, March 12
Gochenour, Hazel, 87, Rossville, Ind., March 24
Gosnell, Helen, 77, Englewood, Ohio, Jan. 25
Greene, Frances Virginia, 100, Staunton, Va., March 27
Griffin, Kathleen A., 88, Bridgewater, Va., March 6
Groff, Sally, 90, Greenville, Ohio, Jan. 9
Grumbine, Dorothy E., 85, Hagerstown, Md., Dec. 18
Hodge, Joseph, 77, LaPlace, Ill., March 15
Hook, Fay Sandy, 85, Waynesboro, Va., March 17
Hottel, William Douglas, 76, Hagerstown, Md., Feb. 7
Huff, Edith, 81, Norton, Kan., Dec. 17
Hunsberger, Sharon Lou, 66, Wakarusa, Ind., Feb. 25
Jackson, Marvin, 86, Norton, Kan., Feb. 28
Johnson, Cleo, 89, Martinsburg, Pa., March 1
Johnson, Rhoene Zimmerman, 76, Hampton, Va., March 7
Keenen, Eunice E., 99, West Liberty, Ohio, Feb. 27
Kline, Beverly W., 68, Baltimore, Md., Sept. 19
Kulp, Ruth A., 79, Pottstown, Pa., March 15
Lewis, Thelma, 75, Linthicum, Md., March 10
Liskey, Wilmer P., 89, Harrisonburg, Va., April 1
Markley, Rowena, 86, North Manchester, Ind., March 16
Martin, Joyce E., 58, Kokomo,

Ind., Feb. 2
Mathias, Grace Velma Halterman, 85, Mathias, W.Va., March 18
McKee, Rolland Leroy, 85, Portland, Ore., Feb. 15
Michael, Thomas Ami, 86, Mount Solon, Va., April 5
Miller, Della, 93, Ligonier, Ind., June 25, 2003
Mongold, Ernest L., Sr., 86, New Market, Va., March 17
Morris, Minnie Elizabeth, 72, Grottoes, Va., March 9
Moyers, Allen Samuel, 87, Harrisonburg, Va., March 26
Newcomer, Evelyn, 70, Nappanee, Ind., March 28
Nicholas, Carlyle, 87, Bridgewater, Va., Jan. 24
O'Leary, Thelma, 84, Marlton, N.J., Dec. 30
Overholzer, Robert T., 78, Pottstown, Pa., Feb. 12
Petersen, Eldo G., 95, Waterloo, Iowa, March 29
Plank, Pearl S., 94, Gettysburg, Pa., March 24
Ramirez, Octavio Martha, 55, Mount Jackson, Va., March 15
Reber, Carl F., 87, Harleysville, Pa., Nov. 14
Rhodes, Carl E., Sr., 90, Bridgewater, Va., Feb. 8
Rickard, Lois C., 73, Luray, Va., March 20
Rosenberger, Ida Rae, 93, Greenville, Ohio, Nov. 12
Rudy, Charles B., Jr., 69, Wardensville, W.Va., March 19
Rule, Junior W., 82, North Manchester, Ind., April 6
Rummel, Glenn I., 99, Greenville, Ohio, March 20
Secrist, Nellie Alice Turner, 83, Broadway, Va., March 24
Sessler, Grisilde Constans, 76, Portland, Ore., Jan. 17
Shipe, Christopher Joseph, Jr., 85, Maurertown, Va., April 3
Showman, Nevin Eugene, Sr., 76, Edinburg, Va., March 25
Slabaugh, Glenn, 94, La Grande, Ore., Dec. 11
Smith, Bill Owen, 72, Cabool, Mo., March 24
Stauffer, Graybill, 88, Mount Joy, Pa., March 10
Summers, Eleanora Jeanette, 86, Broadway, Va., April 6
Tharrington, Charles, 77, Greenleaf, Idaho, April 12
Tusing, Pauline Lantz, 79, Timberville, Va., March 15
Ulrich, Esther D., 96, Wenatchee, Wash., March 12
Valencourt, J. Roy, 76, Goshen, Ind., March 20
VanDyke, Wilbur J., 64, Lincoln, Neb., March 2
Warner, Freda M., 88, Mount Solon, Va., April 7
Westfall, Connie, 47, Greenville, Ohio, Feb. 19
Wine, Mary Virginia Spitzer, 90, Broadway, Va., March 15
Wood, Clyde, 95, Roanoke, Va.,

March 11
Wyant, Nellie Marie, 79, Topeka, Kan., March 20
Zirk, Lillian Frances Bazzle, 88, Harrisonburg, Va., March 9

Licensings

Combs, Robert, W. Marva Dist. (Tearcoat, Augusta, W.Va.), Feb. 29
Garman, Matthew S., Atl. S.E. Dist. (Jacksonville, Fla.), Jan. 25
Griffith, Terrilynn, S. Ohio Dist. (Mack Memorial, Dayton, Ohio), Jan. 11
Hott, Gerald, W. Marva Dist. (Tearcoat, Augusta, W.Va.), Feb. 29
Lutz, Larry, S. Ohio Dist. (Good Shepherd, Tipp City, Ohio), Jan. 25
Neff, Karen, Atl. S.E. Dist. (New Covenant, Gotha, Fla.), Feb. 15
Schrock, Carolyn Ann Pieratt, Mo./Ark. Dist. (Cabool, Mo.), March 28
Shaffer, Debra, W. Marva Dist. (Tearcoat, Augusta, W.Va.), Feb. 29
Smith, William R., S. Ohio Dist. (Donnels Creek, North Hampton, Ohio), Feb. 15

Ordinations

Bunch, Christopher J., S/C Ind. Dist. (Roann, Ind.), March 20
Campbell, Melvin L., Pac. S.W. Dist. (Paradise, Calif.), March 28
Kelly, James L., S. Plains Dist. (Clovis, N.M.), March 28
Spence, Ryan C., S/C Ind. Dist. (Living Faith, Flora, Ind.), March 28

Placements

Alicea, Miguel, pastor, Rio Prieto, Iglesia de Los Hermanos, Castañer, P.R., April 16
Detrick, Mary Cline, pastor, Daleville, Va., April 1
Durst, Mark A., from pastor, Georges Creek, Lonaconing, Md., to pastor, Laughlin, Grantsville, Md., Feb. 1
Leininger, Verne H., from interim to pastor, Wawaka, Ind., April 1
Perez-Borges, Hector E., pastor, Iglesia de Los Hermanos Cristo El Señor, Vega Baja, P.R., March 1
Rivera, Norma Medina Aviles, pastor, Yahuecas Cristo Nuestra Paz, Castañer, P.R., Jan. 31
Yeager-Stiver, Richard, from pastor, Loon Creek, Huntington, Ind., to pastor, Marion, Ohio, Feb. 14

Ballgames with Paul

Graduation season has rolled around again. It's a time when many students celebrate getting away from teachers, but this year I'm mourning the loss of one of the greatest teachers I've known.

The call came in the middle of a work day last month, relaying the news that Paul had finally succumbed to cancer. He went quickly in the final few weeks after an unexpected recurrence. I was immediately hit with the hollow feeling that accompanies losing a loved one, thinking of things left unsaid.



WALT WILTSCHKEK
MESSENGER Editor

You see, I never had Paul for an academic class. What he taught me about was life. A retired Brethren pastor in Maryland, he took me under his wing when I took my first full-time pastoral position fresh out of seminary. He showed me what it really meant to be a minister.

I'll remember Paul most for baseball. He would often take me to Orioles games in Baltimore, especially relishing the times when he could get the "great seats" right next to the Orioles dugout from one of his friends.

We would talk a lot about baseball, and whether his Orioles or my Minnesota Twins would do better that year, but in between he shared amazing nuggets of wisdom. For Paul, every simple incident of life provided fodder for a sermon, and every person he met was a relationship waiting to happen.

He knew all the staff at the Burger King where he'd go for lunch, the ushers who cleaned his seat at the ballpark, the desk clerks at the hotel where he stayed while doing interim pastoral work in Hagerstown, and a whole cast of others. He talked freely and easily with all of them.

Paul taught me about the importance of having balance in life; of making "pre-planned decisions" that would help one keep a level head in times of stress or crisis; of treasuring connections with family and friends; and of realizing that everyone and everything has a story.

I write this not as a tribute to Paul, but as a testament to all those who have been and are teachers and mentors for us. Some say that only weak people need mentors; I disagree. Real strength comes in understanding we have much to learn and in seeking those who can help us do so.

The best mentors—and perhaps all true mentors—do not set out to mentor someone. Instead, like the Old World master craftsmen who would take on apprentices, they are sought out for their insights and skills, and then willingly share what they have to give. For those who do, and I expect we all know some, we owe them a debt of deep gratitude and appreciation.

Such mentoring relationships are at the heart of the Church of the Brethren Ministry Summer Service experience (which starts again this month), pairing young adults interested in ministry with veteran pastors for nine weeks. It has become one of the denomination's best leadership development programs. Likewise, some congregations set up mentoring programs between youth and adults, tapping the rich possibilities of intergenerational relationship that the church can offer.

In the wonderful book *Tuesdays with Morrie*, author Mitch Albom describes reuniting with one of his mentors, an old college professor, as that professor nears the end of life with a terminal illness.

Albom reflects on all the lessons he learned from Morrie and says this: "Have you ever really had a teacher? One who saw you as a raw but precious thing, a jewel that, with wisdom, could be polished to a proud shine? If you are lucky enough to find your way to such teachers, you will always find your way back. Sometimes it is only in your head. Sometimes it is right alongside their beds."

Paul never tried to make me like him, although that wouldn't have been a bad thing. Instead he embraced

For Paul, every simple incident of life provided fodder for a sermon, and every person he met was a relationship waiting to happen.

me for who I was and showed me how to make the most of my gifts. That's mentoring.

It seemed appropriate that the evening after I learned of Paul's death I was covering a high school baseball game for the local paper. I looked at the empty bleacher seat next to me and wondered what bits of wisdom Paul might have shared had he been there.

Paul, I expect you now have great seats for any game you want to see. Save me some peanuts. And save me some stories. I still have more to learn.—Ed.

COMING NEXT MONTH: Teaching children about peace; socially responsible investing; global warming; a look at India relationships; reflections on church renewal; and much more.

*Brethren colleges are friendly, supportive learning communities ...
... faculty get to know their students and are advisers and mentors to them
throughout the learning process.*



“MENTORING/Personal Attention”

Dr. Rick Tyler never imagined his enrollment at McPherson College in the early 1970s would eventually lead to his employment as professor of speech and theatre, a major that didn't even exist his freshman year. He joined the efforts of a group of determined underclassmen and that led to the establishment of an academic major and a wealth of opportunities for all students.

As a faculty member for more than 25 years, Tyler has developed and nurtured a theatre program that is considered to be one of the best in the state of Kansas among small, liberal arts colleges.

Producing six shows a year, theatre majors and non-majors alike are exposed to scripts ranging from light musical comedy to classics to pertinent social drama. The substantially equipped scene shop, costume shop, makeup areas, and dressing rooms provide modern facilities for technical and professional development. Students also assist with dinner theatre preparations in an industrial kitchen, serving over 225 theatre patrons each production.

“Students who participate in the theatre program at McPherson College are successful no matter what career they pursue,” says Tyler. While experiencing all facets of the theatre, students develop what Tyler refers to as “survival skills.” They learn how to work with each other. They learn how to communicate. They attempt tasks never tried before.

While encouraging students to explore throughout the entire learning process, Tyler demonstrates a mentorship that he himself experienced as a student. He becomes involved with the lives of his students in and outside the classroom, always encouraging them to strive for the extraordinary educational experience.



Dr. Rick Tyler '74
McPherson, Kansas

*Tyler demonstrates
a mentorship that he
himself experienced
as a student.*

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