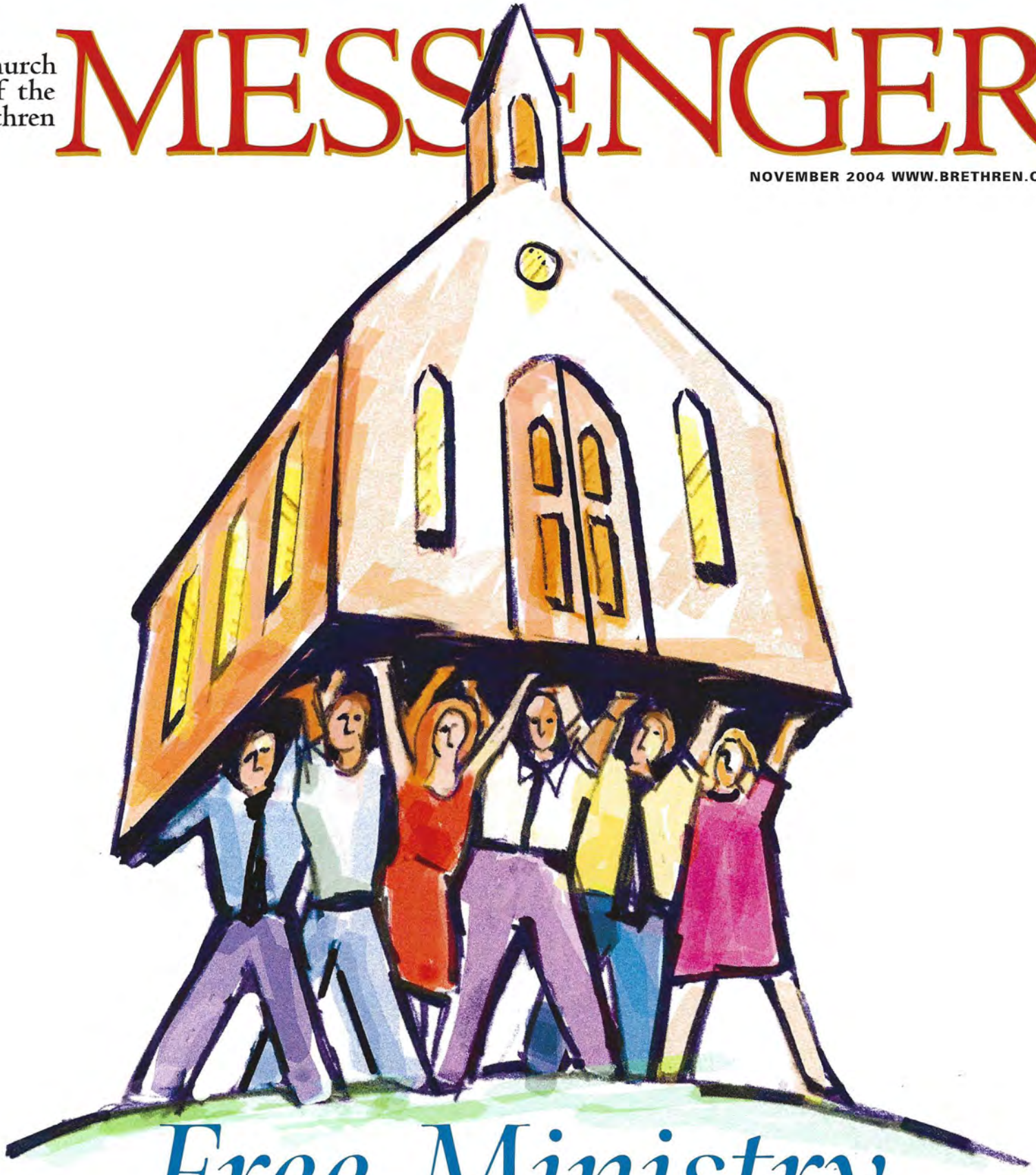
Church of the Brethren
MESSENGER
NOVEMBER 2004 WWW.BRETHREN.ORG



Free Ministry

Revisiting a model in which pastoral leadership is a true team effort

BETHANY'S CENTENNIAL • MCPHERSON BOUNCES BACK • THE GIFTS OF OLDER ADULTS

Rebuilding a Future . . . For Hurricane Survivors

Florida hurricane home,
Photo by Disaster News Network
http://www.disasternews.net

Disaster response volunteers rebuild a house that was destroyed by Hurricane Isabel in Poquoson, Virginia. A tornado recovery project is also ongoing in Hallam, Nebraska. Photo by Teresa Rodeffer.

Bettye Warren cares for children following Hurricane Charley in Florida
Photo by Patricia Black

Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne have devastated the southern United States and Caribbean with flooding reaching into the northeast.

Hundreds of lives have been lost and thousands of homes destroyed.

We are responding:

- Disaster Child Care volunteers have cared for more than a thousand children in Florida.
- Disaster Response is establishing a home rebuilding project in Florida.
- Service Ministries has shipped relief supplies to survivors in the United States and Caribbean islands.

Your Help is Desperately Needed

Please Support the Church of the Brethren Hurricane response by giving to the Emergency Disaster Fund

Emergency Disaster Fund
Church of the Brethren General Board
1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694
www.brethrendisasterresponse.org 1-800-451-4407

Lives are being rebuilt
Hope is being found.
Thank You.

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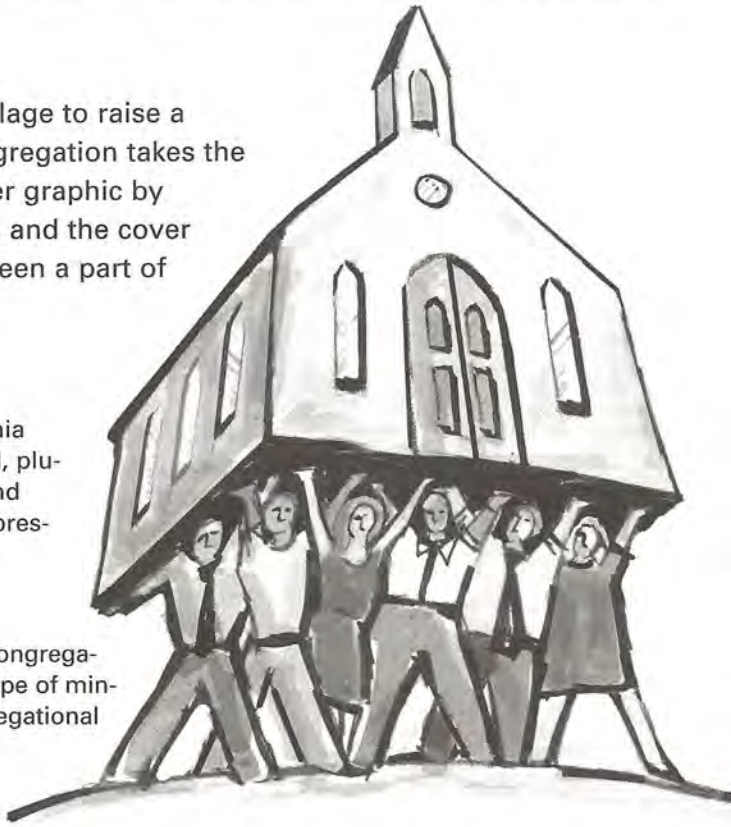
". . . publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works" (Psa. 26:7b KJV).

Church of the Brethren
MESSENGER

Editor: **Walt Wiltschek** Associate Editor/News: **Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford** Publisher: **Wendy McFadden** Subscriptions: **Diane Stroyeck** Design: **The Concept Mill**

ONTHECOVER

According to the old African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child." Likewise, carrying out the ministry of a congregation takes the contributions of all its members. This month's cover graphic by Paul Stocksdale illustrates this model of teamwork, and the cover article looks at a form of such teamwork that has been a part of the Brethren tradition: free ministry.



8 The return of 'free ministry'?
Don Fitzkee, himself a "free minister" in a Pennsylvania congregation, explores the nature of this non-salaried, plural form of pastoral leadership. He weighs the pros and cons that free ministry offers, looking at its past and present—and its possibilities for the future.

12 Pastoral ministry for a new age
Employing a full-time pastor is not realistic for many congregations, and for some it may not be the right fit for the type of ministry desired. Jim Kinsey of the General Board's Congregational Life Teams staff says there are abundant leadership options for congregations with imagination.

14 Bethany prepares for a party
A 100th birthday is a major milestone. Willard Scott may not announce this one on NBC, but Bethany Theological Seminary is celebrating its centennial in style this year. Events kicked off at this past summer's Annual Conference, and the party continues throughout the coming year, leading up to a grand finale next fall.

Eddie Edmonds

16 McPherson bounces back
A few years ago, McPherson College saw its enrollment numbers dropping below 350 and morale slipping nearly as quickly. It's a different picture today, with changing attitudes and reason for hope.

18 Finding new life in retirement
"So, what are you doing now that you've retired?" Ask that question to participants at this year's National Older Adult Conference, and most won't say, "Just taking it easy." Mary Cline Detrick lifts up some of the stories of retirees who have found life's mother lode in the golden years.

DEPARTMENTS

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

"**Think of all the starving children in (fill in the blank),**" **says the parent.** "Fine," replies the obstinate child, picking at a plate of food. "Then pack it up and send it to them."

Most of us have been on one side or the other of that exchange. The conversation isn't really about charity, of course. It's mostly about getting some cooperation, though it's also a little bit about gratitude.

WENDY McFADDEN
Publisher

But it raises an interesting question. Would we be more generous if giving were as easy as that? What if the opportunities to support the church's mission were as relentless as the opportunities to buy?

On the menu at McDonald's would be a Sunday school student book. More nourishing than a Happy Meal.

Next to the gas pump you could swipe your credit card to pay for a workshop on being a healthy church. Takes you farther than a full tank of gas.

Between winter boots and dress pumps you could find shoes of peace. They always fit, and they never wear out.

In the showroom sits a late-model church plant. Goes from zero to 60 in two years.

There'd be big-ticket items, like a conference for young adults or relief in southern Africa. There'd also be a slew of modest items that anyone could afford, like light bulbs and paper. Every day people would give, some making large, carefully thought-out contributions and others making impulse gifts just because something caught their fancy. Some people would go giving as a stress-reliever. Others would stroll past windows, sizing up the giving opportunities in order to return another day to make the actual gift.

It would be another way of giving. What if for every unneeded purchase we gave an equal amount to God? What if we actually funded every good idea called for by Annual Conference? What if everyone in the whole church took literally the biblical command to tithe? Just imagine: Your congregation could stop worrying about meeting the budget and focus instead on fulfilling its mission. Your district could strengthen the witness of the Brethren in your part of the world. Your General Board could restore the millions of dollars cut over the last decade, and then figure out new places to be in ministry.

If that sounds unrealistic, here's a more modest proposal: If every member of the Church of the Brethren sacrificed just one fast food kid's meal or one Starbucks latte, the combined savings would total close to $400,000, enough to put the General Board on solid footing for the next year. Enough to strengthen ministries across the country and around the world.

As we push our shopping carts down the aisles, somewhere between the Halloween candy and the Christmas decorations let's pause for Thanksgiving. Let's give a gift of gratitude.

Wendy McFadden

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AROUND THE DENOMINATION

Updates and highlights from the Church of the Brethren districts

Atlantic Northeast: The annual Enrichment and Training Conference is scheduled for Nov. 13 at Ephrata (Pa.), with Frank Ramirez providing the keynote address on "A Comedy of Angels."

Atlantic Southeast: The district is working to organize a nonviolence witness team to analyze issues such as capital punishment and teen violence and to assist district churches in witnessing for nonviolence.

Idaho: The Nampa congregation raised more than $5,300 for Sudan mission work through a Vacation Bible School project and a matching gift from an adult Sunday school class. The denomination's work in Sudan has been a major focus for the district.

Illinois/Wisconsin: The New Church Development Board has signed on with Percept and Coachnet to provide new resources in demographic information and training for church planters.

Michigan: Camp Brethren Heights reported a summer attendance of 106 campers, who gave a $952 offering for a girls' school in Sudan; a work weekend was held at the camp Sept. 17-18.

Mid-Atlantic: The calling and credentialing ministry team is inviting district pastors and ministers to a 24-hour retreat on spiritual guidance and direction Nov. 14-15 at Shepherd's Spring Outdoor Ministries Center. Glenn Mitchell is leading the retreat.

Middle Pennsylvania: The 2004 Heritage Fair took place Sept. 25 at Camp Blue Diamond. The day included live music, food, arts and crafts displays and sales, and an auction. Proceeds benefit various local and national ministries.

Missouri/Arkansas: Stewards commission members are planning to visit all congregations to hear what the district can better do to serve congregational needs and to explain district ministries.

Northern Indiana: At district conference in September, the district board presented its Volunteer of the Year award to John and Beth Steinberg for more than two decades of service as district disaster response coordinators.

Northern Ohio: The district board has approved beginning a Brethren Volunteer Service project focused on evangelism. Emphasis areas will be youth, community outreach, and camp ministry.

Northern Plains: More than 200 registered for district conference in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Delegates approved a budget of $116,799; attendees also gave 46 units of blood for a witness commission-sponsored blood drive.

Oregon/Washington: District volunteers are helping to rebuild a Snohomish County (Wash.) home demolished by flooding last fall and about 15 others in Mt. Vernon as part of an interfaith project.

Pacific Southwest: Twelve Brethren from the district traveled to a Mennonite Disaster Service center near Julian, Calif., in August to volunteer their time at a wildfire cleanup/recovery project.

Shenandoah: The new Sunrise congregation in Harrisonburg, Va., has agreed to buy a Baptist church property for $700,000 contingent upon a successful capital campaign.

South/Central Indiana: An annual seminar for pastors took place Oct. 20 at Timbercrest Community in North Manchester. Phyllis Carter led the event on the theme of spiritual direction.

Southeastern: A dedication service for the HIS Way Fellowship church plant, including the installation of Raul and Lidia Gonzalez as co-pastors and receiving charter members, took place Oct. 24.

Southern Ohio: A 20-block quilt of Christian symbols was auctioned at district conference in October. Doris Stebbins pieced the quilt, Lois Duke hand-embroidered it, and women from the Salem congregation quilted it.

Southern Pennsylvania: The old Miller Meetinghouse was officially dedicated at its new site at Camp Eder during the camp's Fall Festival on Oct. 16. The meetinghouse, moved piece by piece from its previous location, will now be the focal point for Brethren history activities at the camp.

Southern Plains: The district has officially closed the Waka congregation in Texas, though it expressed hope that the facility might open again with a new project. There are four other Texas congregations.

Virlina: The annual World Hunger Auction, held under threatening skies Aug. 14 at the Antioch congregation in Rocky Mount, Va., raised $26,000 for local and global hunger relief projects.

West Marva: October included a deacon workshop led by Fred Swartz at the Danville congregation (Rawlings, Md.), and a Healthy Congregation Workshop led by Paul Dietz at Wiley Ford (W.Va.).

Western Pennsylvania: The stewards commission this fall kicked off a challenge titled "Woven Together in Love" that emphasizes service, spiritual commitment, and financial giving.

Western Plains: Both Camp Mount Hermon and Camp Colorado reported modest increases in camper attendance this past summer compared to the previous year, with 85 and 121, respectively.

Do you have district or congregational stories that might be of interest to MESSENGER? Send them to MESSENGER, c/o In Touch, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

Walt Wiltschek

Wawaka (Ind.) Church of the Brethren celebrated its 150th anniversary on Sept. 12. A balloon launch was among numerous activities held to mark the occasion.

Anne Kirchner

Jesus' disciples, as portrayed by members of McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren, prepare for their journey to Atlanta during a summer production of "Cotton Patch Gospel."

McPherson members put on 'Cotton Patch'

More than 40 members of McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren combined their talents to put on a musical production of a "Cotton Patch Gospel" this summer. Shane Kirchner served as director.

The musical, based on an interpretation of the Gospels of Matthew and John written by Clarence Jordan, is set in modern-day Georgia. It incorporates bluegrass music, humor, and storytelling. Performances were arranged for the local community and Western Plains District Conference.

It takes a district to paint a church

By 7 a.m. on Saturday morning, Aug. 28, there was much activity around Antelope Valley Church of the Brethren in Billings, Okla. Some people were in the kitchen preparing a delicious breakfast; others were outside setting up ladders and scaffolding, mixing paint, and taping around the trim. Some volunteers from elsewhere in Southern Plains District had even driven up the night before.

After breakfast, Carol and Nina Coulter of the Enid congregation led a brief devotion, and then about 50 people—from age 8 to senior citizens—set to work on painting the church and parsonage. By late afternoon, both had been freshly painted.

The work was needed because of a June hailstorm that caused significant damage to the church. Thanks to Brethren who still practice helping one another in the love of Jesus, the sun once again glistens off the clean, shiny, little white church in the valley.—**Russell Betz**

Russell Betz

Volunteers from Southern Plains District help hail-damaged Antelope Valley Church of the Brethren become gleaming white again.

In Illinois, some things (thankfully) never change

In the monthly meeting of the Nineties Club at Timbercrest Retirement Community (North Manchester, Ind.), we had six students from nearby Manchester College as our guests.

One student said she was from Illinois, from the Yellow Creek Church of the Brethren in Pearl City. I told her, "I well remember that church from my work as district executive in Illinois and Wisconsin about 50 years ago. One clear memory: They had not had any inactive, non-participating members in more than 20 years."

I was surprised at her immediate response: "It's still that way." I then shared the statement I received long ago when I asked how they did it, how they kept every member active across many years. They always said, "We love one another." Again the student said, "It's still that way!"

—**Olden D. Mitchell**

Elizabethtown honors members by the decade

From November 2003 through June 2004, Elizabethtown (Pa.) Church of the Brethren carried out a unique project. Each month, the congregation celebrated the membership of those who had joined the church during a certain decade, from 1919 on.

The membership committee and stewardship education committee jointly sponsored the project. Each month, committee members either visited people personally or sent them a letter inviting them to be present the morning of the celebration and rededication.

Photos of the people being honored each month were posted on bulletin boards in the church, and during the

Rebecca Maurer

Oakland Church of the Brethren, *located near Gettysburg, Ohio, provided volunteers to begin the latest Habitat for Humanity project in Darke County. Above, Oakland members Kent Myers, Dennis Etter, Jon Keller, Darrell Shade, and John Blocher take a well deserved break at the end of the first day of construction. Several other area congregations, including Castine Church of the Brethren, were also planning to send volunteers.*

service those being honored sat together at the front of the sanctuary. At the scheduled time, those members stood for a time of recognition, appreciation, and rededication of their baptismal vows. Each then received a carnation, and a reception took place after the service.

The decades from 1919 to 1939 were combined for the first month, and 17 members were honored. The recognitions progressed through the years over the following months, ending with a celebration of members who had joined from 2000 to 2004.—**Jean Moyer**

Huntsdale tries a new way to do worship

Responding to a growing need for alternative worship services, Huntsdale Church of the Brethren (near Carlisle, Pa.) began holding a Thursday evening service through the summer, according to a July 2 report in *The (Carlisle) Sentinel* by Kate Ingle-Rosario.

Jan Custer, who has been pastor at Huntsdale for 11 years, said she noticed a decline in Sunday service attendance each summer.

"Many people work nights and weekends. Some are away on vacation. Some go camping frequently as a family on weekends," Custer told *The Sentinel*. "These people still wanted to attend a weekly service at their place of worship." She found that for some, "Sundays just don't fit."

The eight-week experiment began July 1 and continued through August. A weekly theme was designed to incorporate all five senses. The informal service included moving the pulpit to the middle of the church, using non-traditional music, and more meditative, reflective sermons with dialogue. Every third Thursday, the service moved outdoors.

Near the end of the summer, Custer reported that the services had "gotten off to a good start." Attendance averaged 20 to 40 per week. Custer said about one-third of those attending were people who regularly worship on Sunday mornings, one-third belonged to the church but never attend Sunday morning worship, and one-third were community members who hadn't worshiped at Huntsdale previously.

LANDMARKS & LAURELS

• **Pine Creek Church of the Brethren**, North Liberty, Ind., celebrated 150 years of ministry Aug. 28-29. The day's activities included a blacksmithing demonstration and a beard judging contest, presentations on Amish and German Baptist Brethren history and worship styles, and a hog roast. Sunday featured an old-fashioned service with lined hymns and men and women seated separately.

• **Beaverton (Mich.) Church of the Brethren** celebrated 100 years Sept. 11-12 with a supper, games, skits, and a "hootenanny," on Saturday, followed by worship, a potluck, and a centennial cake on Sunday.

• **Wenatchee (Wash.) Brethren-Baptist Church** celebrated its 75th anniversary on Oct. 10. Guest speaker for the day was Andy Murray, executive director of the Baker Institute for Peace at Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pa. A banquet followed the morning worship service, with a program including special music and greetings from special guests.

• **Columbia Furnace Church of the Brethren**, Edinburg, Va., dedicated a new church building Aug. 1. The congregation invited the public for a celebration that included an open house, hot air balloon rides, and plentiful food.

• **Potsdam (Ohio) Church of the Brethren** marked two major events in its congregational life this summer. Potsdam dedicated an addition to its church building, and pastor Bob Kurtz celebrated 25 years of service with the congregation, the longest current continuous term in Southern Ohio District.

• **Clay Myers-Bowman**, executive director of the American Red Cross' Flint Hills Chapter in Manhattan, Kan., was named 2004 Chapter Manager of the Year for the organization's Midwest/North Central Region. The Midwest Region covers 13 states. Myers-Bowman, a Manchester College graduate and former MESSENGER intern, is currently attending a Mennonite fellowship while living in an area where there are no Brethren congregations.

• Pinecrest Village resident **Agnes Worthen** of Mount Morris was among volunteers honored by the United Way of the Rock River Valley, Rockford, Ill., this year. Worthen, 93, has been volunteering at Pinecrest since 1980. A Brethren Volunteer Service alumna, she has also volunteered in recent years with the local hospice and has been a Salvation Army bell-ringer.

• **Stephen Simons**, a member of Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren, South Bend, Ind., worked in Athens, Greece, as a physician for the US Olympic team. He was stationed at the boxing and track and field venues during the Games. Simons, a specialist on foot problems, works at an orthopedic sports clinic in South Bend and teaches at a medical school.

• **The Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago** was awarded the 2004 "Blessed Are the Peacemakers" award, the highest award given by the trustees of Chicago Theological Union. This interfaith council focuses on peace and justice issues, public housing, health, and education, urban crime and violence, and racial conflict. The award was presented to the council and its individual members who represent 4 million members in their combined faith communities in the Chicago area. Larry Ulrich of Lombard, Ill., represents the Church of the Brethren Illinois-Wisconsin District on the council.

Misplacing our core values

Nearly two years ago I was preparing to speak at the 2003 Church of the Brethren Young Adult Conference (YAC) on the topic "What does it mean to be Brethren in the 21st century?" At the outset I had been excited, full of enthusiasm to wrestle with denominational identity in an ever-changing culture.

SHAWN FLORY REPLOGLE

Excitement and enthusiasm quickly turned to self-doubt. Who was I to talk about the meaning of being Brethren today? Wanting to carry a broader view than my own into YAC, I turned to others for insight, prayer, and direction.

I sent 150 letters to people around the denomination: General Board and Standing Committee members, denominational staff, district executives, leadership of the main denominational agencies, and leadership of other Brethren-related organizations. I sent them to an ethnically diverse mix of men and women, young and old, East and West Coast and folks who live in between. With no strings attached, no clues as to how they "should" answer, I asked them simply this: "What does it mean to be Brethren in the 21st century?"

I received 70 letters back, and there was a common thread throughout. Though not expressly stated, the themes of "Peacefully. Simply. Together." appeared with amazing regularity. It was clear that, for many respondents, this "tagline" represented the core values of who Brethren are.

I have become increasingly uncomfortable with the idea that "Peacefully. Simply. Together." gives voice to those things that makes us "Brethren." It feels incomplete and hollow. In our current denominational state this tagline feels inaccurate at best and hypocritical at worst. It is a statement of what we'd like to be, but no longer very closely resembles who we actually are.

Together. The word "together" is supposed to emphasize our dependence on community, and in particular the community of faith: congregations, districts, and denomination. It alludes to a recognizable unity between and among these various entities. I haven't been able to attend Annual Conference the past two years, but I can't avoid hearing about contentious debates that mirror similar schisms in contemporary culture. I think the Church of the Brethren is no more together than the culture in which we find ourselves. We are fragmented, at the breaking point.

Simply. We are not the same people our spiritual ancestors were. Few early Brethren had much wealth. Plain dress was not only a way of keeping unity among people, but a real reflection of the poverty the earliest Brethren faced. Today, most Brethren can hardly count themselves among the poor. Members of the church—in general—are largely middle class, if not upper-middle class. We like to think of ourselves as simple, but our comparative wealth betrays us.

Peacefully. When I was in seminary, I did a very unscientific study of Brethren youth groups and their awareness of the denomination's longstanding position that "All war is sin." Of the several hundred responses I received, only 33 percent had ever heard of the Church of the Brethren's historic peace stance. And only a third of *that* 33 percent actually agreed with the peace stance, or about 11 percent overall. That makes our peace stance historical rather than historic, as in just another piece of history.

If none of the values named in our own tagline reflect who we actually are any more, then there is clearly some sort of disconnect. We have lost our understanding of how peace, simplicity, and togetherness stem from the work of Jesus that, at one time, our denomination took so seriously. As a denomination, the more we identified ourselves with the values of peace, simplicity, and togetherness, the less we identified ourselves with the Jesus who helped move us toward those values.

We came to believe that peace, simplicity, and togetherness were our core values when they were really only the effects of our true core values.

We didn't make a conscious choice to do that, of course. It's just that the cause became more important than the reason for the cause. We came to believe that peace, simplicity, and togetherness were our core values when they were really only the *effects* of our true core values.

What are those true values? First, we have **no creed but the New Testament**. We have to be disciplined enough to take the whole New Testament story as we read scripture. In so doing, we are more likely to discover God's will and not just our agendas.

Second, we **look to Jesus for direction** in the manner of our living. As we read the New Testament, Jesus is our guide. Everything we read gets filtered through his lens.

Third, we believe in **no force in religion**. This value rightly acknowledges that forced faith is not faith at all. Faith is composed of those ideas incorporated in the heart, and that can never be forced.

The values of "Peacefully. Simply. Together." are important parts of who we are as Brethren. We must remember, though, that they are not our core values, only a few ways in which our core values have been manifested. We must remember our *true* core values and filter everything we do through these. We also must remember how our tagline evolved from these values, and find new ways to pass this "radical obedience" faith to a new generation.

Shawn Flory Replogle is co-pastor of McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren and campus pastor for McPherson College.

QUOTEWORTHY

"One part of me wants to praise God for this kind of deliverance. The better part of me tugs at my conscience and asks me to humbly hold the many hurting ones all the closer. From one vantage point, it is very clear that someone else suffered in my place. That indeed is the New Testament message of the grace that we all proclaim."

—Church of the Brethren Disaster Response volunteer Glenn Kinsel, reflecting after his mobile home in St. Petersburg, Fla., was spared hurricane damage while other areas were hit

"Wal-Mart does not have greeters at the door because the management is theologically committed to a culture of hospitality. They have them because they have figured out that people who feel welcome come back more often and spend more. I'd like to see us do at least as well as Wal-Mart in the hospitality department."

—Kristeen Bruun, a member of Gesu (Jesuit) parish in Milwaukee, writing in the Sept. 20 issue of *America* magazine about the need for Catholic churches to be more welcoming to visitors (RNS)

"Jesus did not command us to never disagree with each other. But he did command us to reach out and would likely be upset with us whenever our disagreements with each other took precedence over our sharing of the gospel."

—Bishop Hee-Soo Jung of the United Church of Christ Northern Illinois Conference, writing in the conference's *The Reporter* newspaper

"We lose touch with the soul when we build a wall to protect our sense of self against the threats of the world. Ironically, as we try to conceal our selfhood from the world, we eventually find it hidden from our own view as well."

—Quaker author Parker J. Palmer, talking about the themes of his new book, *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life*

"No thinking and feeling person can be indifferent to the magnitude of the crisis in the Sudan."

—Dr. Carole Burnett, professor of ancient and medieval Christianity at the Ecumenical Institute of Theology in Baltimore, after being arrested during a protest in front of the Sudanese Embassy in Washington, D.C.

CULTUREVIEW

• **Nearly four of 10 Americans** (39 percent) say they have a favorable impression of Islam, while about as many (37 percent) say they have an unfavorable view, according to a new poll conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life and the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. The balance of opinion has not changed substantially in the past year. White evangelical Protestants had a much more negative view of Islam than white Catholics, mainline Protestants, or secular Americans.

• **The DVD/VHS version of Mel Gibson's** "The Passion of the Christ" sold 4.1 million copies when it hit the shelves on Aug. 31, a record for an R-rated film. The controversial film about the death of Jesus has made more than $370 million since its box office debut in February, making it the year's No. 2 most popular movie, behind "Shrek 2" (RNS).

• **About half of Americans** consider freedom of religion to be a top legal guarantee but a similar percentage think separation of church and state has become too severe or is not necessary in this country, a new survey by the Council for America's First Freedom indicates. Asked which legal guarantee other than freedom of speech is most important, 52 percent of Americans cited freedom of religion, 19 percent chose freedom of the press, and 16 percent said the right to bear arms (RNS).

• **The Associated Press** reports that the number of Americans who live in poverty increased by 1.3 million in 2003, according to US Census Bureau figures. In all, about 12.5 percent of the US population lives below the poverty line.

• **A survey** by the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA) reported in *ENI Bulletin* says that religious commitment is strongest among students majoring in fine arts (62 percent), education (59 percent), and humanities (57 percent); it was lowest for majors in biological science (43 percent), history or political science (41 percent), and sociology (37 percent).

JUST FOR FUN: MAKE A MATCH

Match the **uniquely named Church of the Brethren congregation** on the left with the district in which it is located, listed on the right. Each district is used only once. Answers are printed below:

1. Windfall	a. Southeastern
2. Outlook	b. Mid-Atlantic
3. Frogville Fellowship	c. Illinois/Wisconsin
4. Dry Run	d. South/Central Indiana
5. Deepwater	e. Western Plains
6. French Broad	f. Oregon/Washington
7. Lake Breeze	g. Michigan
8. Hurricane Creek	h. Atlantic Northeast
9. Flower Hill	i. Southern Plains
10. Sunfield	j. Missouri/Arkansas
11. Tokahookaadi	k. Southern Pennsylvania
12. Blue Ball	l. Northern Ohio

ANSWERS: 1-d. Windfall, Ind.; 2-f. Outlook, Wash.; 3-i. Frogville, Okla.; 4-k. Dry Run, Pa.; 5-j. Deepwater, Mo.; 6-a. White Pine, Tenn.; 7-l. Sheffield Lake, Ohio; 8-c. Smithboro, Ill.; 9-b. Gaithersburg, Md.; 10-g. Sunfield, Mich.; 11-e. Lybrook, N.M.; 12-h. Blue Ball, Pa.

The return of 'free ministry'

Some congregations are revisiting non-salaried team ministry as a viable option

by Donald R. Fitzkee

When Community Church of the Brethren in Hutchinson, Kan., lost its full-time, salaried pastor in July 1997, the congregation took a bold step: They decided not to hire another one.

Marlo Oltman, one of the non-salaried ministers now serving the congregation, recalls that initially the church began a search process for a new pastor. "Of course," he says, "there weren't many people out there to search for."

During the search, Oltman invited Glen Faus, a free minister from the Chiques congregation near Manheim, Pa., to fill the pulpit on a Sunday when he was in the area and to discuss how Chiques, a "free-ministry" congregation, did ministry. A seed was planted that day, and Community eventually decided they had leadership within the church to care for their pastoral needs. The turning point came in June 1998, when they voted to end the pastoral search committee and sell the parsonage.

Eventually, three men from the congregation—Oltman, a retired teacher; and two younger Brethren, Judd Hornbaker and Randy Beeghly—received training through the denomination's Education for a Shared Ministry program. Former McPherson (Kan.) College president Paul Hoffman also joined the team, and in 2000 another retired teacher, Ed Switzer, took primary responsibility for visiting and caregiving. Time pressures later led one minister to step down, leaving a team of four non-salaried ministers.

Now six years into their experiment with free ministry at Community, "We've been blessed," Oltman says, "and it's worked well for us."

Free ministry, or non-salaried, plural ministry (see sidebar, "What Is Free Ministry?"), was once universally practiced in

the Church of the Brethren. Gradually, during the latter years of the 19th century and first half of the 20th, congregations transitioned from teams of "free ministers" to salaried professionals trained and called from outside the congregation (see sidebar, "A Short History"). By the 1960s it was generally assumed that it was only a matter of time until everyone would embrace this "new and improved" model of ministry. Forty years later, some still haven't.

In Southern Pennsylvania District, according to district executive Joe Detrick, nearly a quarter (11) of the district's 46 congregations are traditional free-ministry churches. Welsh Run, another congregation located in southern Pennsylvania but affiliated with Mid-Atlantic District, also is served by this model.

In neighboring Atlantic Northeast District, six out of about 70 congregations and fellowships continue the free ministry. Among them, White Oak, Middle Creek, and Chiques report the three highest Sunday school attendance figures and three of the four highest worship attendance figures in the district's 2004 directory.

A few other congregations, such as Pocahontas in West Virginia and three churches planted by the Brethren Revival Fellowship in Maine beginning in the 1980s—Brunswick, Gardiner Road, and Lewiston—also practice a plural, non-salaried ministry. The New Beginnings congregation in Warrensburg, Mo., is newly experimenting with a free-ministry style, with a five-member team receiving only a small stipend to provide pastoral ministry. Former Dominican Republic mission workers Jerry and Becky Baile Crouse were called to the team this past summer along with Jim Tomlonson, John Thomas, and Ethmer Erisman. Becky Baile Crouse's presence likely makes this team the first to include both men and women in a free-ministry setting.

New Beginnings Church of the Brethren in Missouri is newly experimenting with a pastoral team receiving only a small stipend. Team members are, front row from left, Ethmer Erisman, Jerry Baile Crouse, Becky Baile Crouse, John Thomas, and Jim Tomlonson. Sandy Bosserman, district minister for Missouri/Arkansas, stands behind them.

Once considered an outdated relic by many, free ministry now is being re-examined in light of the ongoing ministerial shortage in the Church of the Brethren. (Like skinny neckties, if you hold

What Is free ministry?

Because of the heavy toll it can exact on ministers torn between the demands of church, work, and family, some say that "free ministry" is a misnomer. The "free" in free ministry refers to the fact that ministry is given without charge. The 1998 Annual Conference "Statement on Polity for Free Ministry" uses the more descriptive term "plural, non-salaried ministry." In general, this style of ministry includes three defining characteristics:

• **Leadership is plural.** Pastoral responsibilities are shared by more than one ordained minister. Typically, one minister is chosen to be moderator or elder-in-charge, a position that combines many of the functions shared by pastors, moderators, and board chairs in other congregations. In recent years, some free-ministry congregations have worked to recognize differing gifts within the team and divide leadership responsibilities more evenly to lighten the load on the moderator.

• **Ministers do not receive set salaries.** While many free-ministry congregations give generous love offerings or reimburse ministers for expenses, the expectation is that ministers will earn their living from another source.

• **Leadership is called from within the congregation to serve for life.** Typically ministers and deacons are called by plurality vote through open elections without prior nominations. For all practical purposes, the one called enters council meeting as a lay person and departs as a minister, and often begins serving shortly after being called. Occasionally such a call comes "out of the blue," but more often the church extends an outward call to one who already has sensed an inner call to ministry. The 1998 Conference statement clarifies the procedure for training, licensing, and ordaining ministers called in this manner.

Courtesy of BHLA

on to some things long enough, they come back into style.) Oltman has met with several churches in Western Plains District and elsewhere to explain how their congregation has made the transition to a non-salaried model. "I think we're seeing in our district," he says, "that (non-salaried ministry) is going to have to be the way for some of our churches to continue."

Recognizing that free ministry may have something to offer the church, the 1998 Annual Conference approved a statement on "Polity for Free Ministry." The statement notes: "Perhaps by looking honestly at its benefits as well as its shortcomings, we can gain insight into an alternative form of ministry which could offer some solutions to the acknowledged leadership crisis in the Church of the Brethren and at the same time assist those congregations not able to afford a full-time salaried minister." (The full statement is at www.brethren.org/ac/ac_statements/98FreeMinistry.htm.)

Jim Myer of the White Oak congregation (Manheim, Pa.), is the most recent free minister to serve as moderator of Annual Conference, in 1985.

Those who serve on plural, non-salaried ministry teams are well aware of the benefits and shortcomings of free ministry. In a denomination with a ministerial shortage, the free-ministry churches' ability to call out leaders is an obvious strength.

"Free-ministry churches are looking at gifts discernment from the bottom up," Detrick observes. "It's just part of who they are. There's always a supply of leadership that's emerging."

Not only is the church constantly identifying leaders; when the church calls, members usually accept. That respect for the call of the church is evident in a strong laity that shares in the church's ministry. In the Chiques congregation, for example, members are not asked whether they will serve in some positions. The nominating committee places qualified people on a ballot, the council meeting votes, and members are informed they have been called to serve. Most say yes.

In addition to a strong sense of call and an active laity, free-ministry churches benefit from a diversity of gifts, viewpoints, and preaching styles within the ministry team. With several ministers sharing the pulpit, there is usually something for everyone—at least some of the time. And as ministers learn "on the job," they can be mentored and supported by others on the team.

Stability and consistency are added strengths. Instead of a congregation having to adjust to a new pastor every few years, in free ministry one generation of leadership gradually gives way to the next.

"They don't have the trauma that these other churches go through when a pastor leaves," points out Harold Martin, a longtime free minister in the Pleasant Hill congregation near Spring Grove, Pa. No search committees. No interim pastors. No jarring pastoral transitions. And as ministers serve over a lifetime in the same church—often the church they grew up in—they identify with their congregation and are in a strong position to provide pastoral care.

A final, obvious advantage is that free ministry frees resources for outreach. Not saddled with the costs of a pastoral program—a significant portion of most church budgets—congregations can dedicate a larger percentage of their resources to outreach.

Of course, free ministry has disadvantages, as well. Since they often are called to serve later in life when they have families to support, seminary is not an option for most free ministers. Instead, they follow less rigorous training options, such as a Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership program or district-sponsored reading courses.

While some free ministers are as capable as salaried pastors, Martin notes, "If you have four or five free ministers, you may have one or two that don't have as much ability." Sometimes

The free ministry team of Middle Creek Church of the Brethren includes front row, J. Eric Brubaker, Wilbur Rohrer, Paul Brubaker, and Ivan Lutz (emeritus); back row, Brian Black, Jere Cassel, Roy Pfaltzgraff (emeritus), Virgil Kover (emeritus), and John Hess.

Upper Conewago Church of the Brethren in Abbottstown, Pa. (shown here in a historical photo from the Brethren Historical Library and Archives), is one of 11 Southern Pennsylvania District congregations using the free ministry model.

lack of giftedness or training in areas such as counseling is partially compensated by the close relationships free ministers have with their parishioners. And ministers who are not gifted speakers can "preach" effectively by the manner of their living and faithful service to the church.

Free ministers often are less available for pastoral care, as well. While the free minister is busy at a day job, the salaried pastor is freer to visit, sit with families while loved ones undergo surgery, or support young people of the congregation by attending school activities and events. Active deacons in many free-ministry congregations help offset this deficiency, but it is a deficiency nonetheless.

This time crunch also affects the amount of programming a free-ministry church can offer. Generally, churches with salaried staff are able to offer more specialized ministries. Instead of programs, the drawing card for many free-ministry churches is close fellowship and a caring community.

While stability is a strong point of the free ministry, stagnancy is a potential weakness. With authority concentrated in the hands of lifetime ministers and deacons, change comes too slowly for some. A related problem is determining when a lifetime calling ends. Some ministers who once served a congregation well continue to serve long past their prime. Some churches mandate a retirement age for all so some don't have to be told when to quit.

Despite the limitations of the free ministry, this model may be a viable alternative for churches today. Not everyone agrees, though, on how easily a church accustomed to a paid professional can adjust to a non-salaried model.

Detrick, in Southern Pennsylvania, thinks the free ministry culture is distinctive enough that it may take one to start one. This fall, two church plants started by free-ministry churches did receive fellowship status—New Beginnings Christian Fellowship in Atlantic Northeast District and Trinity in Southern Pennsylvania.

Martin believes it's possible for other churches to convert to the free ministry, but he doesn't have examples to point to. While he knows of a few places where it was attempted, it did not continue.

Oltman obviously thinks it's possible. His church has done it—although the true test will be whether future leaders respond to the church's call when he and others step aside. And he has talked with other churches he believes could do it, too.

"Several churches we visited had the people," he says. "It comes down to whether they'll make the commitment to do it."

Don Fitzkee is a free minister in Chiques Church of the Brethren near Manheim, Pa.

Free ministry: a short history

Free ministry was the universal leadership pattern in the Church of the Brethren for more than 150 years, and the dominant model well into the 20th century.

As a body that sought to imitate the early church, Brethren observed that plural leadership was the norm in the New Testament. (See Acts 14:23 and 19:7, Phil. 1:1, 1 Th. 5:12, and Titus 1:5.) And while the Apostle Paul defended the right of a minister to receive support from the church, he himself did not exercise that right (1 Cor. 9).

While Brethren found no biblical evidence of preachers receiving salaries, they did find "hireling" shepherds compared with the Good Shepherd (John 10), which seemed to them an apt metaphor for paid preachers and dedicated free ministers.

Annual Conference declared in 1861: "Resolved that we are opposed to a treasury for the exclusive benefit of the ministry, but that every church should encourage their ministers to be active in their calling and also to support them in all cases of necessity." An 1890 Conference action stated flatly, "We think it wrong for churches to give, and brethren to receive, a stipulated amount for preaching."

These actions no doubt were in response to congregations that had begun to pay their preachers. The Philadelphia First Church had been rumored to be paying ministers as early as the 1860s. Tobias T. Myers became the denomination's first official salaried pastor at Philadelphia in 1891. A 1912 Annual Conference ministry report gave *de facto* approval to such arrangements.

Growing interest in overseas and urban missions was a key factor fueling the change toward a professional ministry. Brethren traditionally had formed new congregations by dividing the leaders and members of existing congregations, but to reach out in new areas and new cultures, it was believed, a trained and salaried ministry was needed.

Another important factor contributing to the demise of the free ministry in some congregations was that able people with other career plans refused the church's call to ministry when it came. As the number of free ministers dwindled, some congregations had little choice but to hire a pastor to care for the church.

Generally the switch to salaried, professional ministry took place first in urban areas, then in small towns, and later in rural areas, with most congregations changing by the 1960s.

Pastoral ministry for a new age

Congregations with imagination can find abundant leadership options

by Jim Kinsey

One of the chief functions of every congregation is to provide pastoral ministry. Those words, "pastoral ministry," usually cause thoughts to jump to "a pastor" who gives us that ministry.

Let's think, though, about pastoral ministry as a necessary function of the *whole* congregation. That ministry cares for the personal needs of the congregation (chaplain function); trains the congregation's members for ministry (discipleship function); and creates a center for faithful living in the midst of the world with all its global issues (prophetic function). When all these functions are working together, the congregation will be alive and faithful as the Body of Christ.

How the congregation provides pastoral ministry is limited only by an inadequate imagination. The congregation tends to want to define itself by how others do pastoral ministry, or by what it thinks God will think if it does not have "its own" employed pastor. But there are *no* limits on how that pastoral ministry is created and conducted. The New Testament is full of models of pastoral ministry we do not use—or styles we have rejected.

Congregations are free to design styles of pastoral ministry not used by others. Through prayer, and a careful listening to God's answer, any congregation can design a system of pastoral ministry that is rich and leads the congregation into a holy future. That "holy future" is a promise that every congregation wants.

All pastoral ministry styles and forms should be carefully designed with the aid of the district executive and district ministry commission. This ensures training for that ministry, and support for those who answer the call. It also allows for

accountability from both the ones doing the pastoral ministry and the congregation that issued the call.

Further networking, especially using the General Board's Office of Ministry and the Council of District Executives, can open doors to options not presently imagined. This network can also help with evaluation of the various options. Every option, from a solo pastor to non-salaried team ministry and so on, has its positives and negatives; it's good to think those through before launching into any new form of ministry.

The following are but a small sampling of possibilities for providing pastoral ministry. Congregations around the country have worked on these and found them faithful and full of potential. They have been gleaned from work done by Presbyterians, United Methodists, American Baptists, and others. Many have elements of the Church of the Brethren "free ministry" tradition (see pp. 8-11):

A. Solo pastor, full- or part-time (not retired). This style, though fraught with financial issues, provides a central person who can lead the congregation into the future. This style offers full services to both the membership and the community that surrounds the congregation.

B. Solo or team pastorate yoked with a neighboring congregation (full- or part-time). This style covers some of the financial concerns that having a solo pastor may create. This style provides full services to all congregations in the "yoke" (two or more congregations in the same area sharing a pastor). It can also allow a full-time salary and support of the pastor's family to be offered by people looking for vigorous pastoral leadership.

C. Ecumenical solo/team pastorate (shared leadership with a sister denomination(s)). The benefits are the same as the previous model. About two dozen Church of the Brethren congregations are in such affiliated arrangements. This style carries several stressors due to working with multiple denominational structures and belief systems. Again, it can provide the pastor's family with good financial support.

D. Designated pastor (part-time) working in a ministry team (may be retired). In this style, multiple people who may or may not be remunerated work under the leadership of a part-time paid pastor. This "designated pastor" may or may not be called from within the congregation. This person represents the congregation in district and ecumenical gatherings. The designated pastor may earn additional financial support through other employment. This style has parallels to free ministry. Each person on the team has a designated area of responsibility for the whole ministry of the congregation, discerned through the use of God-given gifts.

E. Ministry team from within the congregation. This style calls numerous people who provide the full range of services and training for the life of the congregation. Gifts discernment is key to the success of this style of ministry leadership. There may be no remuneration or a small amount for those on the team. Expenses incurred through this ministry style will be covered by the congregational budget. This is a style, again, akin to the free ministry.

F. Area minister (may be retired). This style looks like the Church of the Brethren "eldership" style of yesteryear. This person may oversee an area that is as large as a district section. He or she provides training and supervision for ministry teams of the numerous small-membership congregations in that area. The area minister will do some preaching and teaching in all congregations on a scheduled basis. This style helps to sustain Brethren witness in areas that are dwindling due to loss of membership or demographic decline. The members will feel enriched and encouraged to remain faithful even with diminished membership. This style has potential for growth evangelism and new church planting. It follows early church styles of providing leadership and encouragement.

Through prayer, and a careful listening to God's answer, any congregation can design a system of pastoral ministry that is rich and leads the congregation into a holy future.

G. Cooperative/ecumenical/village-wide ministry. This is a joint endeavor between congregations in a small area such as a village or township where declining demographics have left all without resources to flourish. Providing pastoral ministry may take the shape of any of the above styles of leadership. Working together creates a joint approach to ministry where each congregation's gifts can be coordinated to cover all ministry needs and challenges in the neighborhood. This style can be used when an area has become economically defeated and wants to reinvent and revitalize itself.

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These are but a few possibilities. Congregations can create new ones that are not yet on anyone's list.

Whatever is chosen, create that form in cooperation with the district structure. Use all the training and support systems that the Church of the Brethren offers. If no training and support system now exists in the district's and the General Board's Office of Ministry structure, create them in prayer and faithfulness. Aim for faithful congregational excellence, a solid biblical mission, and healthy/healing ministries.

Jim Kinsey is a member of the Church of the Brethren General Board's Congregational Life Team for Area 2 (Midwest) and Area 4 (Plains). He lives in Lake Odessa, Mich.

Bethany prepares for a party

The seminary is planning a full slate of activities to celebrate its centennial

by Marcia Shetler

In 1901, A.C. Wieand and E.B. Hoff stood on a hill side in the Middle East overlooking the village home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus and pondered establishing Bethany Bible School. Did they dare to dream that their vision would continue for 100 years?

This year, Bethany Theological Seminary celebrates a centennial of ministry that officially began October 3, 1905, when 12 students—11 in the training school and one in the seminary—began their education on Hastings Street in Chicago.

Stay tuned

Bethany is inviting everyone to join the centennial celebration, whether on campus or in the pew, at Annual Conference or on a bus, reading a book or listening to a concert. Go to www.bethanyseminary.edu/centennialmain.htm for updates, or call the public relations office at 800-287-8822 ext. 1823.

Thousands of people have been touched by Bethany's ministry, and a variety of phrases may conjure up memories: students studying, the Bible Training School, jail ministry, chapel windows, newborn babies, field education, Mack Hall, commencements, books written by faculty, sermons given, mission work. The seminary's centennial celebration is planned as an opportunity to remember these past connections with Bethany and to celebrate future possibilities.

In this spirit, the centennial committee, chaired by Earle and Jean Fike, chose "A Celebration of Faith—A Future with Hope" as the centennial theme. A timeline of centennial activities has been developed, offering opportunities for alumni/ae, friends, congregations, young and old, Brethren and non-Brethren to join in the celebration.

Kickoff

The centennial kickoff at the 2004 Annual Conference reflected the theme with activities that celebrated Bethany's past and looked to the future.

The Brethren Journal Association sponsored an insight session, titled "Bethany Remembered," that featured humorous reminiscences from alumni/ae Don Miller, Frank Ramirez, Kathy Reid, Ken Shaffer, and Grady Snyder; stories from students and faculty in attendance; and much laughter. Russell Haitch, assistant professor of Christian education and director of the Institute for Ministry With Youth and Young Adults, led an insight session on the Institute's "Brethren Practices Project," which is exploring how vital Brethren practices such as love feast, anointing, peacemaking and simple living can bring vitality to ministry with youth and young adults.

In the exhibit hall, Brethren Press offered for sale approximately 40 books authored by Bethany faculty and alumni/ae, and a centennial autograph book at the Bethany exhibit allowed people to pen their memories and greetings. The book has been traveling to all district conferences and to National Older Adult Conference over the summer and fall. Individuals also participated in a simulated online discussion at the exhibit, similar to what current students in online classes experience.

On the road

This summer, Church of the Brethren congregations received a congregational connections form inviting them to describe how Bethany's ministry has been a part of their history. These forms are to be returned to the seminary by Aug. 15, 2005, and will be bound into a permanent record.

Two centennial bus tours are planned in 2005, which will visit all of Bethany's past and present campus sites. The first tour,

Bethany file photo

Students pose for the first official Bethany class photo, taken in 1907.

Oak Brook: *Students, faculty, and friends fill the Bethany campus chapel in Oak Brook, Ill., for the 1968 graduation ceremonies.*

June 28-July 1, is immediately prior to Annual Conference, and participants may continue on the bus to Conference in Peoria, Ill. The second, Sept. 27-30, precedes the final centennial event, a homecoming weekend on Bethany's current Richmond, Ind., campus. Glenn and Linda Timmons are hosts for the June tour, and Carl and Doreen Myers for the September tour. Jay Crist will be the bus driver for both tours. Information/registration brochures are available online in PDF format at www.bethanyseminary.edu or by calling Bethany, 800-287-8822.

At the 2005 Annual Conference, Bethany centennial activities will include a time of celebration as part of the business agenda, the debut of a commissioned hymn and a centennial quilt, and a special historical exhibit. The Living Word Series bulletins will commemorate the centennial on Sept. 11, 2005, designated as Bethany Sunday for that year.

On campus

A collection of books authored by Bethany faculty and alumni/ae is being displayed on the Richmond campus beginning this fall. Dr. Walter Brueggemann, professor emeritus of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary, will present a series of three lectures for the 2004 Founders Lecture Series Nov. 11-12.

Then, April 8-10, the seminary's Rosenberger Recital Series Endowment and the Stephen I. Katonah Endowment for Faith and the Arts will co-sponsor "Hebrews 12:28—Brimming With Worship," a conference celebrating music and the arts in worship. Sally Morganthaler, founder of Sacramentis.com; James Abbington, professor of music in the department of fine arts at Morgan State University, Baltimore; and Nadine Pence Frantz, professor of theological studies at Bethany, will be keynote speakers, and a variety of workshops and worship experiences are planned.

From June to October 2005, the seminary will house a display featuring alumni/ae artists. Those traveling to Peoria for the 2005 Annual Conference are invited to visit the Richmond campus for an "open house" just prior to and immediately following Conference.

Closing celebration

The Bethany centennial homecoming weekend Sept. 30-Oct. 2, 2005, will be the celebration's grand finale. The event will begin with a Friday evening concert featuring Bethany alumni/ae. Saturday activities include an opening convocation, mini-classes taught by present and former Bethany professors, a picnic lunch, a recognition banquet, and an evening concert by CANTUS—a professional male vocal ensemble founded in 1995 at St. Olaf College in Minnesota. A Sunday morning worship service will conclude the weekend, with current Bethany president Eugene F. Roop preaching. Registration brochures for homecoming weekend will be available beginning in January.

Marcia Shetler

Richmond: *Students enjoy the spacious layout of Bethany's current Richmond, Ind., campus building*

Keepsakes

The Earlham College bookstore in Richmond is headquarters for centennial keepsakes, including clothing, mugs, and gift items. Visit www.earlhambookstore.com to view items and place online orders, or call 765-983-1310 for phone orders.

The 2005 Annual Conference will offer another chance to purchase books authored by Bethany faculty and alumni/ae at the Brethren Press exhibit. The current issue of *Brethren Life and Thought* includes perspectives by 26 authors on the seminary's mission, educational style, and legacy. Details are at www.brethren.org/bethany/BLT.htm.

An official centennial history book has a projected publication date of July 2005. A collection of vignettes submitted by alumni/ae about life at Bethany across the years is being compiled. And a children's book about Anna Mow titled *The Something Else Lady* will be available in time for Christmas 2004. The book, written by Earle Fike and illustrated by 8-year-old Yolanda Wegner, great-granddaughter of Anna Mow, tells the story of one of the Church of the Brethren's best-loved leaders.

Marcia Shetler is director of public relations for Bethany Theological Seminary.

Planning and personnel

Centennial planning began in 1999 when a steering committee was formed, including representation from Bethany alumni/ae, friends, staff, and the board of trustees.

The steering committee appointed Earle and Jean Fike as co-chairs of a centennial committee and chairs of four sub-committees were named: Fred Swartz joined Earle Fike on the publications and communications committee; Don Miller and Grady Snyder, academic committee; David Steele and Barb Sayler, arts committee; and Jay and June Gibble, program committee.

Other members of the centennial committee are Michelle Grimm and Tim Binkley, alumni/ae representatives, and Janice Ruhl, board of trustees representative.

Tracy Stoddart

D.J. Townsend and Nathan Deel stroll through the campus after class.

McPherson bounces back

Enrollment at the Kansas college is up, and attitudes are changing

by Elissa Hoffert

Walking on McPherson College's central Kansas campus as a freshman, Nathan Porter of Quinter, Kan., thought it was missing something. Lights lined the sidewalks. The flowerbeds overflowed with purples and reds. Benches, close to each building's doorway, provided adequate seating for those passing time between classes and after meals. Perhaps it had something to do with those benches.

The benches were wooden, but they were not splintery. They were sturdy, but they were comfortable. People had etched initials, names, and years into them. Wait! That's what was missing—people to use them.

"When I was a freshman, I never really ran into people," Porter says.

In the fall of 2001, Porter's freshman year, McPherson found itself in an interesting situation. After its five-year "Enhancing the Legacy" campaign, facilities were in tremendous shape. Six buildings were added to the campus through the course of the campaign.

Bittinger and Morrison, co-ed residence halls, and the Furnas Center, which houses maintenance staff, were added first. Then Mingenback Theater, a black-box theater, came on the scene in the fall of 1999, followed shortly by Hess Fine Arts Center in spring 2000. And in fall 2001, Melhorn Science Hall completed the project. Plans for Harnly Gardens and a massive overhaul to the Sport Center would soon be in the works. With so much physical growth, it was hard to believe that student population and morale were on a steady decline.

"People weren't too thrilled to be here," Porter says.

One could only speculate on the real reason for dissatisfaction. It could have been feelings of resentment from losing 10 faculty members in the spring of 2000 or animosity after soccer programs were cut in the fall of that same year. A president was gone, and an interim president installed. And, as always, people were complaining about the food.

Then, metamorphosis. Change. Rearranging priorities. Tweaking the focus.

Three years later, McPherson finds itself enjoying growth. Porter notices that the campus is livelier; people go to activities, and they seem excited to be there.

To what does Porter attribute this positive change? He can't say. More people? New professors? New president? New facilities? He isn't sure exactly how it happened, but he's sure that it did, and campus improved because of it.

Lois Davidson, a senior from Mount Ida, Kan., also sees a difference. "It's getting bigger," she says.

Although she still worries whether the new people will stay, Davidson feels that the people in charge really listen. She's seen a change in the food service and advertising, and in the renovation of residence halls. She also feels that extending the visitation hours to 9 a.m. through 1 a.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 2 a.m. on weekends accommodates students.

LaMonte Rothrock, dean of students, affirms Davidson's observation.

"We've listened to students' needs and wants, and we've answered those," he says.

Rothrock was instrumental in changing the food service this year, a change well received by students and community members. But it wasn't the food that brought new students to campus and talked returning students into sticking around for graduation.

"Instead of looking at who was leaving, we looked at who was graduating," Rothrock says.

Rothrock says they had to examine the way recruiting was done. The

HIGHER EDUCATION

McPherson is one of six colleges affiliated with the Church of the Brethren. The others are Elizabethtown (Pa.); Juniata, Huntingdon, Pa.; Bridgewater (Va.); Manchester, North Manchester, Ind.; and the University of La Verne (Calif.).

The colleges work together on Brethren student recruitment through the Church of the Brethren Collaboration on Admissions (CoBCOA). International study programs are offered via Brethren Colleges Abroad, based on the Elizabethtown campus.

examination inspired revision of written pieces that promoted the college, marketing, other print materials, and website improvements.

Change became contagious.

Scholarship opportunities for journalism, fine arts, theater, and presidential scholars enticed prospective students. Activities like cosmic bowling, outdoor movies, mud volleyball, and Bingo night were implemented to keep current students active.

The auto restoration program, for which McPherson is nationally known, joined in the changing trend. Rather than offering associate degrees, the department decided to offer only four-year degrees. Now, auto restoration is the largest major on campus.

"Employers are looking for students who are staying four years," Rothrock says.

In fact, all programs started looking at what employers wanted under interim president Neil Thorburn, when McPherson found its niche as a career-oriented liberal arts college.

When Ron Hovis, a 1977 graduate, took over as president in spring 2003, he continued the college's focus on its mission, "To develop whole persons through scholarship, participation, and service." He also encouraged the career-oriented liberal arts experience. Hovis notes that more than 90 percent of 2004 graduates experienced an internship connected with their studies.

The idea of career orientation inspired programs like art to develop curricula around preparing students for the working world. Faculty developed a curriculum focusing on art education and graphic design, according to Hovis, and as a result, a major that once had fewer than 10 students now has about 20.

The growth went beyond specific programs. Enrollment that had been stuck at 341 in 2002-2003 grew to 386 in 2003-2004. And this year, McPherson's enrollment has jumped to 424—a increase of nearly 25 percent in two years.

Retention continues to increase, too. Seventy-one percent of last year's freshmen are back, making it the best year for freshmen retention since 1991. Overall, McPherson kept about 78 percent of its students from last year, which hadn't been done since 1996.

"This is clearly a sign of turnaround," Hovis says.

Both Hovis and Rothrock say that McPherson also made an effort to target Church of the Brethren students in a more deliberate way. Admissions started contacting prospective students as high school sophomores instead of juniors. Regional Youth Conference enhancements were made to connect students to the school. And the campus ministry position was redesigned and split among three people: putting Shawn Flory Replogle in charge of ministry, Tracy Stoddart in charge of service, and Kelly Johnson in charge of personal counseling.

Again, something worked, because this year 54 Church of the Brethren students—who make up 13 percent of the student population—have made their way to McPherson. Rothrock says this statistic places McPherson in the lead among Brethren colleges as far as percentage of Brethren students. This is also the largest percentage of Brethren students McPherson has seen since 2000, according to Hovis.

Tracy Stoddart

Left to right, Travis Walker, Abby Suiter, Matt Hoffman, Seth Schoming, and Alicia Schoen play games in the new student union lounge.

And soccer? It's back, and it's just one more thing attracting students. Hovis says that other athletic programs have increased their retention, as well. This year's football team boasts 16 seniors and 16 juniors on a squad of 80.

Student athletes like Kate Deputy of Hot Sulphur Springs, Colo., want to come to McPherson to play sports. When Deputy walked onto McPherson's campus this year as a freshman, the campus she experienced was far different from the one Nathan Porter remembers seeing just three years ago.

Deputy feels the activities provided make McPherson "a really good environment." Soccer is keeping her happy, and she also likes the class sizes.

"All my professors know me by name," Deputy said. "I'm really starting to feel comfortable."

That's a good sign, because it was the comfort factor that kept Porter and Lois Davidson at McPherson for all four years.

Someone walking onto McPherson's campus today might not notice the addition of Harnly Gardens or the spruced-up track and football field, but they would notice the people—out and about, getting to know each other, and keeping McPherson College growing.

Elissa Hoffert teaches freshman English, journalism, and newspaper at McPherson (Kan.) High School. She is a 2003 graduate of McPherson College and attends McPherson Church of the Brethren with her husband, Wes.

Eddie Edmonds

Finding new retire

National Older Adult Conference

"What are you doing, now that you've retired?"

That is probably the most asked question of retirees, and more so since new retirees tend to be younger, healthier, more financially stable, living longer than previous generations. If you're expecting a rather traditional answer of "Oh, not much. Just takin' it easy....", then you haven't been talking to sisters and brothers who attended this year's National Older Adult Conference (NOAC)!

A random selection of people—some of whom I had never met before posing the question—excitedly began to talk of a wide variety of involvements, projects, and ventures with smiles and body language that revealed delight and intensity of purpose that made me want to hear more.

•••

Alberta Grosbach of Enders, Neb., was always active in her home congregation. She's served as treasurer since 1988, continuing the work her husband had done for 33 years before his death. She also was cook and crafts leader for 13 summers at Camp Colorado and has been a trustee for McPherson (Kan.) College for 23 years.

Since retirement, she continues her trustee work for McPherson and is now active in two foundations; the Imperial (Neb.) Grade School Foundation, which sponsors science and arts camps for students in grades 1-8, and the Wheat Growers Trust, which awards scholarships to young people for advanced training in agriculture.

"It's amazing how busy and involved you can be." she laughed. A friend chimed in with "Alberta also keeps the lawn watered at church." "And, oh yes," Alberta added, "I'm treasurer of our church women's group."

Don Link of Mount Sidney, Va., talked about having a "fairly long list" of things he looked forward to doing when he retired. Ten years after retirement, however, "few of these have been accomplished, but

It's not a stretch to say that NOAC participants could join a wide variety of activities. Here, Karen Carter of Daleville, Va., tries a tai chi class.

life in ment

by Mary Cline Detrick

attendees say the years really are golden

Nevin Dulabaum

John Barr of Bridgewater, Va., provided organ accompaniment for a packed house at National Older Adult Conference.

the surprising thing is that what has occurred has far exceeded what I had planned to do."

Shortly after retirement he "inherited" the task of completing the family genealogy (*The Wine Family in America, Sec. IV*), which took him six years and "had nothing to do with my plans for retirement." Though it was one of the most demanding projects he had ever undertaken, it was also one of the most rewarding.

"It vastly increased the number of my friends and continues to bring blessings on a regular basis," he said. He and his wife, Nancy, spent a summer in volunteer service at Lybrook, N.M., where they lived on a Navajo reservation and developed many friendships. They continue to travel to and live in the area from time to time to visit those friends and to be with their son and his family.

Later they were able to return to Nigeria, where they had worked previously, as part of a workcamp. They made new friends and reconnected with many former students from 30 years before. Though health conditions cause Don's future to be uncertain, he said he has felt so blessed in these first 10 years of retirement that he is confident God will be there for him in the future.

Nancy Trout of Bridgewater, Va., spent her employed years as a home economist and teacher. When she retired, she wanted "to divide my time between things that would make a difference, not only for me, but for others as well." As Bridgewater Church of the Brethren had always been an important part of her life, she accepted an invitation to teach Sunday school, became a member of the board, and then served as moderator, which she found "fulfilling and satisfying."

NOAC 2004: A time of renewal

They couldn't let the young adults have *all* the fun.

Three months after the Church of the Brethren National Young Adult Conference in Colorado, the denomination's older adults (officially defined as those age 50 and over) had their turn in Lake Junaluska, N.C. The 2004 National Older Adult Conference, sponsored biennially by the Association of Brethren Caregivers, drew more than 1,100 people from 22 of the 23 districts to the Smoky Mountains Sept. 6-10.

As in the six previous NOAC events, worship formed a central part of the gathering. Kurt Borgmann and Deanna Brown opened and closed the week, respectively, with powerful sermons, while Tom Mullen's humorous reflections and a celebratory hymn sing highlighted midweek services. Messages focused on the theme, "Be Renewed Day by Day," based on a passage from 2 Corinthians 4. Bethany Theological Seminary dean Steve Reid led additional morning Bible studies from the Psalms.

Main morning sessions featured Tex Sample on cultural and generational changes, Deforia Lane on her music therapy work, and Pamela Brubaker on globalization issues. Lane and Brubaker shared further during afternoon "interest group" workshops, as did a host of others. Several dozen such options were offered during the week. Sessions led by David Waas on contemporary global/political issues proved especially popular.

Sample, meanwhile, stayed busy by leading parts of a multi-day seminar on older adult ministry offered concurrently with NOAC. The training was held for pastors, chaplains, and others interested in the church's role in this area.

Outside of worship and learning, NOAC participants had opportunities to do crafts, attend concerts, do service projects, play in a golf tournament, join in other sports, eat plenty of ice cream, or even take a shopping trip to nearby Cherokee. The week's latter half proved better for outdoor activities than the first half, which was drenched by the remnants of Hurricane Frances. ABC executive director Kathy Reid drew big cheers when she announced on Wednesday that sunshine might finally be in the forecast.

The wacky "NOAC News" team of Dave Sollenberger, Larry Glick, and Chris Stover-Brown again added lots of laughs to the week with daily "reports" from the conference. Segments included "cedar shingle darts" tongue-twister contents, fruit dropped off a balcony, weather updates, and a romp through the Brethren Press bookstore.

This was the seventh edition of NOAC, which was first held in 1992. Several dozen people have made it to all seven. The eighth NOAC is already on the schedule, Sept. 4-8, 2006, back at Lake Junaluska.—**Walt Wiltschek**

She also wanted to give back to her local community and the town of Bridgewater, because she felt they had been so good for her and her family. So, since her retirement, she ran for and was elected to the town council and served on the planning commission and on the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Social Services Advisory Board, which "opened my eyes to the many occasions where volunteers were needed."

As a result, she volunteers with the Rotary Club, the Bridgewater Home Auxiliary, as well in as her local congregation. Nancy related that, "Time is never heavy on my hands. Life is good, and 'retirement' is wonderful."

Helen and Don Rummel of the East Fairview congregation (Manheim, Pa.) are still active in small-group leadership and as part of a ministerial leadership team of 10. Don, a retired pastor, finds himself continuing his "wide variety of interests, but just have more time for them now . . . without worrying about what else is not getting done," as he often did when he was working full-time.

"I still love to do pastoral work—in fact, I have two weddings coming up—and I'll enjoy them more because I can choose to do them or not," he said. "But I no longer have a driving need to do pastoral work every day, or be in leadership positions. I'm just enjoying my freedom."

He's always had an interest in music, so after retirement he bought a used two-manual organ and spends more time playing it than before. "It's my healthy therapy." he said, laughing, "I'm getting better, but it's for my enjoyment only. . . . I'm not looking to give any concerts."

Don and Helen both enjoy gardening and working in their lawn. Retirement enables them to do it more leisurely, which increases their enjoyment.

Helen added that "I've always been a great canner, putting up about 100 quarts of tomato juice," but this year the tomato crops were not as good, so she's frozen 40 containers of stuffed peppers instead.

She has always hung her laundry outside, all year round, and she related with excitement how it is her "soul food" to smell the fresh breeze in their clothes and linens. Retirement gives her more time to linger and enjoy it. They also travel more now, visiting their daughters in Maryland, Vermont, and New York, and sometimes keeping their "grand-dogs," which, she said with a laugh, are "so well trained they're better behaved than children."

It's true: Retirement does give a freedom for use of time and resources. Some choose to use this time to fulfill dreams that could not be realized during their regular "working" years. That, too, is a gift of retirement—-an opportunity to assess one's life, and be even more open to prodding and callings that were unable to be pursued previously for a variety of reasons.

Too often, society's image of retirement is disengagement: from the wider world, from schedule demands, from doing anything one doesn't want to do. It's rather "me"-focused; high on pleasure, low on thinking about or helping others.

Mary Dulabaum

Paul Hersch of La Verne, Calif., left, and Stan Price of Laguna Beach, Calif., enjoy some evening ice cream at NOAC.

Thankfully, we haven't been washing each other's feet all these years for nothing. Many Brethren are enjoying retirement with balance, using the freedom to travel, for example, but often for a purpose beyond sightseeing, such as building relationships, nurturing family and friends, learning of new places and increasing awareness of others, serving in workcamps or with disaster relief.

Brethren are writing books they never had time to write, exploring issues and leading study and political action groups, beginning second marriages and finding personal and spiritual healing. Some are raising grandchildren just when they thought their hands-on parenting days were done, but circumstances and love require literally "going the second mile" in parenting. Several in their 90s continue to welcome and entertain refugees, and correspond with global friends. Another man in his 90s is exploring new areas of scientific thought in a field much different than his former profession, and loving every minute.

SHARING STORIES

The Association of Brethren Caregivers has published some of the many stories of retirees it has collected on the ABC website. Visit www.brethren.org/abc/oam, under the "Life as an Older Adult" series.

ABC invites other Brethren retirees to send their stories, as well. Send via e-mail to abc@brethren.org, or by regular mail to Association of Brethren Caregivers, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

The Association of Brethren Caregivers' Older Adult Cabinet has collected many other stories of retirees (see breakout). Many reflect Eugene Peterson's translation of Proverbs 16:1 in *The Message*: "Mortals make elaborate plans, but God has the last word."

That "last word" is not oppressive, but grace-filled, as reflected in the delight and surprise that so many express when they realize they're doing things they never dreamed they would be doing in retirement. And, in doing these things, they've found purpose, meaning, and a passion for life that they hardly knew was possible.

Mary Cline Detrick is pastor of Daleville (Va.) Church of the Brethren after enjoying two years of retirement herself. She attended this year's National Older Adult Conference in September.

Annual Conference Council follows up on 2004 actions

The Annual Conference Council, meeting Aug. 28 in Elgin, Ill., welcomed two new members, took next steps with regard to actions of the 2004 Conference, and reviewed minutes of a conversation held at the Conference on the 2003 "Query of Clarification of Confusion," according to a report by Conference secretary Fred Swartz.

New members are Ronald D. Beachley, moderator-elect and executive minister for Western Pennsylvania District; and Joan Daggett, associate executive minister for Shenandoah District. Continuing members are chair Earl K. Ziegler, a past moderator; Jim Hardenbrook, 2005 moderator; Christopher Bowman, immediate past moderator; Swartz; and Lerry Fogle, executive director.

The council discussed next steps with regard to two study committees named by the 2004 Conference. Both the "Doing Church Business" committee—composed of Joe Detrick, Matt Guynn, Verdena Lee, Dale Posthumus, and Dave Shetler—and the Multi-Ethnic/Cross-Cultural committee—Darla Kay Bowman Deardorff, Nadine Monn, Ruben DeOleo, Neemita Pandya, Gilbert Romero, and Asha Solanky—planned fall meetings. Fogle announced that the latter committee elected Thomas Dowdy, pastor of Imperial Heights Church of the Brethren, Los Angeles, as the African-American member of the group at the direction of Annual Conference.

The Committee on Interchurch Relations was to be asked to help name the member of the Multi-Ethnic/Cross-Cultural study committee who will be ex-officio from the American Baptist Churches USA. The council also decided to seek the assistance of General Board Congregational Life Team staff who serve as liaisons to the Cross-Cultural Ministries Team to develop a form for use by agencies, districts, and congregations in assessing their ethnic ministries and relationships.

A new committee to update the 1988 Conference statement "A Structural Framework for Dealing with Strongly Controversial Issues" will be

continued on next page

The Annual Conference Council recorded the following with regard to the July 4 conversation in Charleston, W.Va., about the "Query of Clarification of Confusion":

"The council's good intention in holding this meeting was to hear the ideas, suggestions, and concerns of persons across the denomination in an effort to gather as much information and assistance as possible toward answering the questions about ministry raised in the 2003 query, 'Clarification of Confusion.' From comments made by persons in attendance at the meeting, and from communications received by the council since Conference, it is evident to the council that the word 'conversation' in the session title conveyed a meaning other than that intended by the council. Questions were asked of the council, both in the query and in the Charleston meeting, that its members feel inadequate to answer without having dialogue with the denomination. The council sees as its task the responsibility to see that these questions are answered, but does not feel that its members alone have the definitive answers. So the council is endeavoring to take steps to see that the questions are addressed.

"Questions identified as needing answers include the following: What are the denominational requirements or qualifications for calling and maintaining persons in ministry? Is the church consistent in its 'list' and perceptions of the gifts and qualifications of ministers? What is the nature and parameters of the authority given districts in the calling, licensing, ordaining, and disciplining of ministers? What is the Brethren understanding of the relationship of baptism to the set-apart ministry? What mechanisms, processes, assumptions can be established to provide for creative dialogue on issues on which Brethren strongly disagree?

"The council noted that the General Board Office of Ministry has agreed to review the denominational policies on ministry. The council also continues to seek a dialogue with the Council of District Executives concerning the questions raised by the query 'Clarification of Confusion.' The council continues to give attention to this item in its meetings, noting progress and information gathered. Finally, the council has reported its work to Standing Committee and it continues to keep the District of Michigan apprised of its progress toward responding to the questions of the query."

Jesse Reid

Annual Conference Council chair Earl Ziegler addresses a full house during a "conversation" on the "Clarification of Confusion" query held in July in Charleston, W.Va.

UPCOMINGEVENTS

Nov. 4-7 **Business as a Calling Conference**, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Nov. 5-6 **Shenandoah District conference**, Bridgewater, Va.

Nov. 5-7 **Illinois and Wisconsin District conference**, Dixon, Ill.

Nov. 7 **National Junior High Sunday**

Nov. 9-11 **National Council of Churches of Christ General Assembly**, St. Louis, Mo.

Nov. 12-13 **Virlina District conference,** Roanoke, Va.

Nov. 13 **Called to Teach!** New Creek, W.Va.

Nov. 14 **National Donor Sabbath**

Nov. 14-18 **Outdoor Ministries Association directors and managers retreat**, Fincastle, Va.

Nov. 19-20 **Brethren Benefit Trust Board Meeting**

Dec. 1 **World AIDS Day**

Dec. 1-3 **Ecumenical Stewardship Center leadership seminar**, St. Petersburg, Fla.

Dec. 5 **Brethren Press winter curriculum quarter begins**

Dec. 12 **General Board Christmas Offering**

named by the council following recommendations from the denominational name study committee that reported in 2004. The new three-member committee will consist of a member of the council, a member of the study committee, and a person with skills in conflict resolution.

The papers "Functions and Qualifications of the Local Church Moderator" and "Resolution on Iraq" were to be posted on the Conference website at www.brethren.org. The paper on moderators will be sent to districts with the request that it be reproduced for congregations. The council also will remind districts of the paper on "Congregational Disagreement with Annual Conference Decisions" as a resource.

Swartz reported that the council "carefully read the recorded minutes of the 'conversation' sponsored by the council, held during Annual Conference on July 4, 2004." The conversation was held on the "Query of Clarification of Confusion," which referred to the response of the 2002 Conference to the query "Licensing/Ordination of Homosexual Persons to the Ministry in the Church of the Brethren." The conversation also covered theological and ministry-related issues.

A complete summary of the council's meeting can be obtained from the Annual Conference office, 800-323-8039 or annualconference@brethren.org. For the "Query of Clarification of Confusion" and the council's response, go to the Annual Conference pages at www.brethren.org and click on Conference Statements.

Organizers announce plans for 'Mission Alive 2005'

Mission Alive 2005, a national Church of the Brethren missions conference, is being planned as a missions challenge to the entire denomination, according to a letter from the steering committee. The event will be held April 1-3 in Goshen, Ind.

The letter, sent to pastors and witness chairs in late summer, expressed the hope that at least one representative will attend from each congregation. Congregations were encouraged to plan for travel, housing, and registration costs in their 2005 budgets.

Speakers and topics for keynote sessions are Nathan Showalter, Mennonite leader and missiologist in Shanghai, China, on "The biblical face of mission: Guidance from scripture"; Grace Holland, a Brethren in Christ mission specialist, on "Changing faces of mission: Learnings from mission experience"; Art McPhee, professor of missions at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, on "New faces of mission: Emerging models of mission"; and Annual Conference moderator Jim Hardenbrook on "Set your face . . . toward mission: Accepting the challenge, and going forth to serve!"

Other conference features will include a panel discussion with Church of the Brethren leaders, worship services, workshops, and missionary reunions. Registration opens Dec. 1 at www.brethren.org.

Cross-Cultural Consultation will take place in Indiana

The Church of the Brethren's next Cross-Cultural Consultation and celebration will be held April 21-24 in Richmond, Ind. A preliminary schedule for the meeting begins with worship at Richmond Church of the Brethren the evening of April 21, said organizer Duane Grady, Congregational Life Team staff of the General Board.

April 22 will be spent at Bethany Theological Seminary interacting with students and faculty and in conversation with the Multi-Ethnic/Cross-Cultural study committee. Participants will worship with the community at Bethany and adjacent Earlham School of Religion. Stephen Reid, Bethany's academic dean, will preach.

On April 23, Fumitaka Matsuoka, former academic dean at Bethany, will address the meeting, and there will be time for sharing with the Cross-Cultural Steering Committee. Congregations in Indiana and Ohio will be invited to an evening worship service, which will feature the choir of Harrisburg (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren. The consultation will end with a 9:30 a.m. service at the Richmond church on April 24.

For more information, call 800-505-1596 or e-mail dgrady_gb@brethren.org.

INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT: EUROPE

Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) is placing eight new volunteers in European projects this fall, bringing the total number serving in Europe to 18—the largest group in several years. The General Board program has 12 volunteers in western Europe, six in eastern Europe, and a staff coordinator based in Geneva, Switzerland. The program has been in place since the late 1940s, when it was started by the Brethren Service Commission.

The increase in numbers reflects hard work by staff to reduce the impact of 2003 budget reductions and a cutback in staff time, according to leaders of the program. BVS director Dan McFadden notes that last year the program coordinator position was reduced to half-time from full-time, and the budget was reduced with some funds transferred to support placements in Central America.

"Refocused efforts have yielded a smaller but significant continuing BVS presence in Europe," says Merv Keeney, executive director of Global Mission Partnerships. He added that "at the present half-time staffing level, 18 volunteers is full capacity—maybe more than full. And we celebrate this."

McFadden credits Brethren Service Europe coordinator Kristin Flory for her hard work to place volunteers in projects that can take on more of the cost. "She is working as hard as she can to get as many volunteers there as possible by having the projects pick up more of the costs of hosting a volunteer," he says. Flory notes, though, that she is "going to 'close' some projects unfortunately that can't afford to pay for a BVSer. There are still a few that desperately need volunteers," she adds, "but I can't take on many more now."

Prospective volunteers also are expressing a new interest in Europe, McFadden says. "A few years ago we experienced less volunteer interest in European projects," he says. Now, "We've had to turn away volunteers." Flory speculates that a tough economy and the political climate in the US, along with a loss of jobs, has led to more people being open to volunteer positions.

Kristin Flory

BVSers in Northern Ireland and Ireland met for a regional retreat this past spring.

"BVSers are highly desired because of their high motivation and fresh-out-of-college or life-experience skills, and above all their neutrality in post-conflict situations," Flory says, emphasizing that the work has more of an effect on the volunteers themselves than on European society. That's the way it ought to be, she says. "The question is not how BVS has impacted Europe, but how BVSers are impacted by serving here. In the long term, the volunteers always receive more than they can imagine giving. For me it's just as important for them to return to the US and use the gifts they have been given here—new perspectives on living and working together, new perspectives on conflict solving and being in community, new ideas about saving the planet—to try to change things at home."

Flory mentions the experience of a volunteer who lives and works at a L'Arche community alongside people with developmental disabilities. In a report to Flory, the volunteer wrote about a community member frightened of being excluded and considered different. "Encouraging her gently but firmly that she is capable of doing a lot for herself and can live in a place of liberation instead of a burden, I learn how to let go of my own fear of inadequacy and walk confidently in the knowledge of my own worth as a human person," the volunteer wrote. "By asking the God of wisdom, understanding, and mercy to show me how to speak to her and the other members in the house, I learn how to listen to God through them."

The largest group of BVS volunteers in Europe is working in Northern Ireland and Ireland at projects with a focus on reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants, and at the Christian-based L'Arche communities. In other countries of western Europe, volunteers work at peace organizations, a policy advocacy organization, and a community that houses refugees. In eastern Europe, volunteers work at a faith-based international student organization, environmental advocacy organizations, and three peace projects in the Balkan states of the former Yugoslavia.

The work in the Balkans takes place in what the BVS project book describes as "a polarized, nationalist, post-war environment." This poses challenges to volunteers, as do the first-time experiences many have living in intentional communities. "It's a challenge to come to a new place and learn that things are 'not wrong, just different,' " Flory said. "And, of course, it's a challenge sometimes to be identified as a US citizen in today's world."

Recent grants from the General Board's

Emergency Disaster Fund

- $15,000 to support Disaster Child Care, fund clean up efforts, and to help establish a rebuilding project in Florida following hurricanes

Recent grants from the General Board's

Global Food Crisis Fund

- $40,000 to Church World Service's campaign to address the root causes of poverty and hunger in Africa
- $10,000 as ten $1,000 grants to Church of the Brethren congregations or groups to start growing projects with the Foods Resource Bank

Hurricane relief efforts continue in Florida

"Hurricane Charley, Frances, and now Ivan. Things are happening so fast it's hard for me to give you an accurate and complete report on the current situation," wrote Helen Stonesifer in a Sept. 14 update. She coordinates Disaster Child Care for the General Board.

Brethren Volunteer Service Unit 260 held orientation at the Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md., July 25-Aug. 13. Volunteers, hometowns or churches, and project assignments are as follows:

First row: Robyn Holl, University Park Church of the Brethren, Hyattsville, Md., to Mladi Most, Bosnia-Herzegovina; Neemita Pandya, Naperville (Ill.) Church of the Brethren, to Tri-City Homeless Coalition, Fremont, Calif.; Allison Bryan, Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren, Fort Wayne, Ind., to Peace and Reconciliation Group, Northern Ireland; Jenn Morris, North Manchester, Ind., to Tri-City Homeless Coalition, Fremont, Calif.; Amy Robandt, Salt Lake City, to Gould Farm, Monterey, Mass.; Natalie Hershberger, Roaring Spring (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren, to Camp Stevens, Julian, Calif.; Gayle McMenamy, Chicago, to Brother David Darst Center, Chicago; Lauren Eby, York Center Church of the Brethren, Lombard, Ill., to Mladi Most, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Second row: Catherine Detweiler, Salem, Va., to Brethren Nutrition Program, Washington, D.C.; Kat Beirne, Davis, Calif., to San Antonio (Texas) Catholic Worker House; Sarah Mertz, Omaha, Neb., to School Of Americas Watch, Washington, D.C.; Pascale Reinke, Ahnatal, Germany, to Casa de Esperanza de los Ninos, Houston; Katie Yoder, Goshen, Ind., to International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Germany; Sarah Huffman, Mill Creek Church of the Brethren, Port Republic, Va., to Center for Environmental Public Advocacy, Slovakia; Tim Verni-Lau, Rockford, Ill., to Samaritan House, Atlanta; Matt Clemens, Harrisonburg, Va., to Brot und Rosen, Hamburg, Germany.

Third row: Samuel Bowman, BVS staff; Ryan Henry, York (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren, to Hopewell Inn, Mesopotamia, Ohio; Matthew Bahn, Codorus Church of the Brethren, Loganville, Pa., to Greenhill YMCA, Northern Ireland; Adrian Lubkowitz, Egelsbach, Germany, to Tri-City Homeless Coalition, Fremont, Calif.; George Stiff, Dallas, Texas, to the Center for Ecology and Energy, Bosnia-Herzegovina; Martin Bleisteiner, Frankfurt, Germany, to Oakland (Calif.) Catholic Worker House; Matt Whitten, Moscow Church of the Brethren, Mount Solon, Va., to Brethren Witness/Washington (D.C.) Office; Stephan Pickl, Munich, Germany, to CentrePeace, Bellefonte, Pa.; Genelle Wine, BVS staff. *Not pictured:* Rachel Bell, Columbia City, Ind.

For more information on BVS, visit www.brethrenvolunteerservice.org.

As Hurricane Ivan was expected to hit western Florida, two teams of child-care volunteers were evacuated for a second time. Earlier, Hurricane Frances had caused the evacuation of three of four child-care teams at work in Florida following Hurricane Charley. Volunteers had returned to work in Kissimmee, Orlando, Englewood, and Wauchula by Sept. 8.

The volunteers continued to serve in Florida through late September as a result of the numerous children affected by the devastation. Service centers in Englewood and Wauchula closed on Sept. 29, but centers in Orlando and Kissimmee continued to operate. Through Sept. 22, 37 child-care volunteers had made contact with more than 1,080 children.

Disaster Child Care also received a special request to send certified volunteers, with a background in counseling, to First Presbyterian Church/School in Port Charlotte. Patricia Ronk and Karen Richardson from Oak Grove Church of the Brethren, Roanoke, Va., were scheduled to fill that role. Their agenda included debriefing sessions with teachers and carefully chosen therapeutic play activities designed to provide emotional support to the 75 middle school children who attend there.

The General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund allocated $15,000 to support child-care projects, fund clean-up, and help establish a rebuilding project. The Disaster Response office planned to send Larry Williams, a disaster project director from Frederick, Md., to Florida to evaluate areas of need for a rebuilding project. He was to work with Atlantic Southeast District disaster response coordinator John Mueller to determine project sites and volunteer housing options, and to meet with other disaster programs, reported Emergency Response director Roy Winter.

Winter's office issued guidelines for those wanting to donate relief materials. "It is vitally important that people wishing to donate material goods go through the proper channels and donate only those items that are specifically requested by authorized relief agencies," disaster response coordinator Jane Yount said. She asked those wanting to donate to Florida to see www.volunteerflorida.org or call 800-FLHELP-1. Donations will go to a partnership of disaster relief organizations and the Tampa Fair authority, to be distributed to local relief agencies for those in need. Another option for material donations is Gift of the Heart kits, particularly Emergency Clean-up Buckets and Health Kits, Yount said. For more information visit www.churchworldservice.org/kits.

ONCAMPUS

Bridgewater College *(Bridgewater, Va.)*

Unofficial numbers for Bridgewater's fall enrollment for the 2004-2005 academic year totaled about 1,520 students, which would be another record for the school. Bridgewater president Phillip Stone welcomed them to campus in a convocation speech Aug. 31, encouraging them to "make academics your central focus."

Elizabethtown College *(Elizabethtown, Pa.)*

Elizabethtown remains the No. 2 comprehensive college in the North, according to the 2005 US News and World Report "America's Best Colleges" rankings. This is the 11th consecutive year Elizabethtown has been ranked as one of the top colleges in this category.

Juniata College *(Huntingdon, Pa.)*

Juniata's board of trustees appointed two new members to begin the 2004-2005 academic year. The new trustees began their service Sept. 1 and will serve through August 2007. They are William P. Hayes, chairman, president, and CEO of Kish Bancorp Inc., of State College, Pa.; and John Kuriyan, a professor of molecular and cell biology at the University of California, Berkeley, of Berkeley, Calif.

University of La Verne *(La Verne, Calif.)*

The formal grand opening celebration for La Verne's new High Desert Campus in Victorville, Calif., took place Sept. 16. The event, co-hosted by the Victorville Chamber of Commerce, included a ribbon-cutting ceremony and an open house.

Manchester College *(North Manchester, Ind.)*

Manchester celebrated its 100-year history of athletics Sept. 22 with a reunion of hundreds of its past and present student athletes and coaches, including basketball icon Steve Alford and National Medal of Science winner Dr. Gene Likens, who also played professional baseball.

McPherson College *(McPherson, Kan.)*

McPherson on Oct. 8 honored three graduates as recipients of the Young Alumni Award for 2004. The award recognizes significant achievements of McPherson alumni who graduated within the past 25 years. Honorees were Craig E. Holman '79, a financial advisor; Brad Elliott '89, president/CEO of Equity Bank in Andover, Kan.; and Barbara Sayler '89, co-executive director of On Earth Peace.

ANNOUNCING
the 2005 MESSENGER Youth Essay Contest

What do you like best about the Church of the Brethren? If you're age 13-18, we invite you to tell us in 300 words or less.

Up to five entries, chosen by a panel of MESSENGER staff, will be published in the July/August 2005 issue. The writer of the top entry will be invited to share his or her essay at the 2005 MESSENGER dinner at Annual Conference in Peoria, Ill.

All entries are due to the MESSENGER office by March 31, 2005. They can be sent via e-mail to messenger@brethren.org or by regular mail to MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120. Please include your name, address, phone number, e-mail (if applicable), and home congregation.

Questions? Send an e-mail to the address above, or call 800-323-8039 ext. 263.

Bits and pieces

• The General Board Youth/Young Adult Ministry office and its Young Adult Steering Committee have announced "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds . . ." from Heb. 10:24 as the theme for the **2005 Young Adult Conference**, to be held May 27-29 at Woodland Altars near Peebles, Ohio. The conference will center around four times of worship, along with workshops and small-group discussion. . . . A **wrap-up video of the 2004 National Young Adult Conference** is available. The video runs about 20 minutes and gives viewers "a taste of the NYAC spirit," according to Becky Ullom, who served as NYAC coordinator. To order, contact David Sollenberger at lsvideo@comcast.net. A DVD or VHS tape costs $15.

• National Study of Youth and Religion researchers found, in a survey of more that 3,000 US teens ages 13-17, that teens **report watching an average of nearly 16 hours of TV per week** (not including watching movies on video or DVD). There are substantial differences between teens from different religious traditions. Teens affiliated with black Protestant denominations watch an average of nearly 23 hours of TV per week—more than teens from other religious traditions and teens who are not religious. Conversely, Mormon teens average less than 11 hours of television per week—much less than most other teens.

Walt Wiltschek

Outdoor ministry:

Several thousand children and youth attended one of the 31 Church of the Brethren camps and outdoor ministry centers this past summer. Camp Swatara (Bethel, Pa.) alone had nearly 800, more than 500 of those from the Church of the Brethren. From left, Sam Dodd, Glenn Matthews, Lauren Baker, Mary Dawson, and Kimberly Jarrell enjoy a game of "carpet pool" at Camp Mardela in Denton, Md. Many directors and managers from the Brethren camps will meet for an Outdoor Ministries Association retreat this month at Camp Bethel near Fincastle, Va.

A song of painful thanksgiving

It's Mother's Day 2004, with a western Oregon sun break. Green, budding things are dampened from rain a few hours ago. I've been given a rare Sunday off from the liturgical dash (four worship services in as many hours) at Oregon State Hospital.

LANI WRIGHT

I choose to spend those hours away from the prison mental hospital in a stone mausoleum. It's a special gathering for the exquisite acoustical cacophony that is the music of Sacred Harp. Though we always first sing the names of the shaped notes, the texts are particularly *a propos* to this cemetery setting: "Never to return, never, never, never to return," "Fly fearless through death's iron gate," "Fight on, my soul, till death shall bring thee to thy God," "I have but one more river to cross, and then I'll be at rest"—18th and 19th century texts that lean away from the heartbreak of hardscrabble living and yearn toward paradise, but are unafraid to sing death in the face.

I write this to introduce an early 21st-century hymn in the Brethren Press *Hymnal Supplement* series that also faces death, and simultaneously thanks God for life. We've been working on the supplement series for a number of years now, and we're heading down the home stretch with the ninth booklet about to head for typesetting. There will be 10 booklets in all, each with 16 pages of hymns and spoken resources.

Within two days Rusty had written three stanzas that the Fauses read that Thanksgiving when they gathered as a family.

One of the intriguing "satellite" projects that came out of the 1992 hymnal was *Hymnal Companion:* a compendium of author and composer biographies, and anecdotes about the hymns themselves. However, there is no room on the pages of the supplement booklets to include biographical sketches and anecdotal sidebars. So here is a "serial" version of *Hymnal Companion* for selected supplement series songs. Since this is November, I have chosen a hymn by a Church of the Brethren author, born out of painful thanksgiving, in the Thanksgiving season.

. . .

Hymnal Supplement #1076, "I am thankful";
Tune: CRONMILLER; Text: Robert E. Faus (1934-2001) and Rusty Edwards (1955-), st. 1-3 2000, st. 4, 2001;
Music: Howard M. "Rusty" Edwards (1955-), 1989.

Bob Faus, longtime Brethren minister who served many years on the General Board staff as a "minister's minister," and unofficial staff comedian, was getting ready for a stem cell transplant and suffering through very potent chemotherapy. Knowing that Bob's transplant was to take place around Christmas, and that his family was to gather at Thanksgiving, Rusty Edwards, a family friend and composer, asked Bob to write down some things he was thankful for as Thanksgiving approached.

Bob procrastinated, so several days before Thanksgiving Rusty graciously let him off the hook. "Do you not want to do it?" That got Bob writing. Rusty, who became friends with Nancy and her family through the Hymn Society of the United States and Canada, writes, "I received a beautiful reply with many great thoughts, but one thing jumped off the page. Bob had written that he was thankful for the 'accompaniment of God.' I knew instantly that this phrase must be sung more than once, and it became the refrain for the hymn."

Within two days Rusty had written three stanzas that the Fauses read that Thanksgiving when they gathered as a family. Then, about two weeks before Bob died, when hospice was the final order, Bob and his wife, Nancy, made the long, painful, and final trip from the hospital in Indianapolis to their home in Richmond, Ind. Nancy asked him, "What are you thankful for now?" She sent his answer to Rusty for a fourth and final stanza. The capitalization of LIFE in the third line denotes the transition from earthly life to eternal life. Rusty came from his home in Atlanta to sing it at Bob's memorial service at Bethany Seminary, then drove through the night to preach at his home church. It has become a touchstone hymn for people in the midst of crisis, and was a theme at the 2004 Church of the Brethren National Older Adult Conference.

Rusty set it to a tune he had composed in 1986 for Herbert Brokering's text "Lord of Feasting and of Hunger." It is named for Vernon Cronmiller, at that time director of the World Hunger Appeal.

Lani Wright lives in Cottage Grove, Ore., and is a member of Springfield Church of the Brethren. She has assisted with several Brethren Press hymnal-related projects.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER: Howard M. "Rusty" Edwards (b. 1955, Dixon, Ill.), received a B.M.E. from the University of Nebraska. He earned a Master of Divinity from Luther Seminary and was ordained in 1985. He received a D. Min. from the Graduate Theological Foundation at Notre Dame. Currently pastor at Christ Lutheran Church in Marietta, Ga., he has published more than 60 works, including anthems, hymns, and hymn tunes. Abingdon Press has just released his fourth book of hymns, *Each Breath, Every Heartbeat* (2004).

For more information on the Hymnal Supplement, contact Brethren Press at 800-441-3712.

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.*

Isn't it time for a change?

In Jesus we are given a promise of new life, abundant life, of full life! Jesus embodied this life to show us the very heart of God, which is love. So we are called to live this same embodiment of God's love. Isn't it time that we move from our narrow understandings of life in God to embrace the new truths that we see in Jesus?

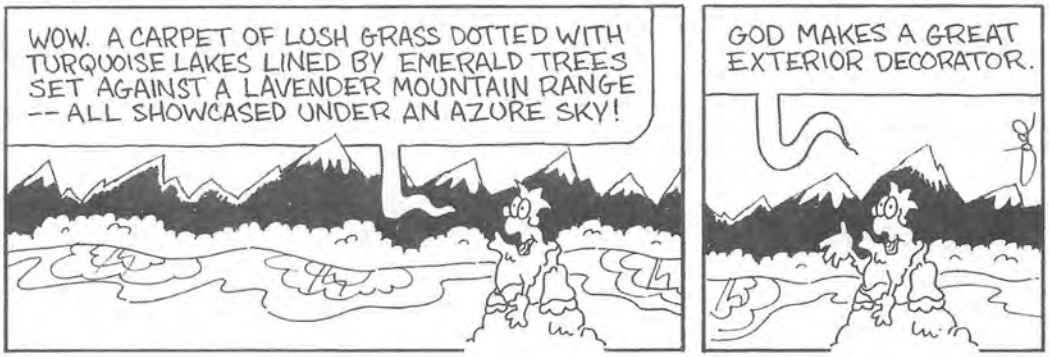
I believe there is a hunger for unity of spirit and purpose among the Brethren. Isn't it time for us to move together in addressing those issues that divide us into liberal-conservative camps and stand on the common ground of our faith? Instead of using our own position, whether it's based on tradition or biblical interpretation, as a dividing wedge, isn't it time to move to the place where we can stand together in Jesus Christ and give witness to the Christ in our midst? This is the time for us to reconnect with our faith; this is the time to stop using scripture as a club to subdue and convince those who differ with us that we are right.

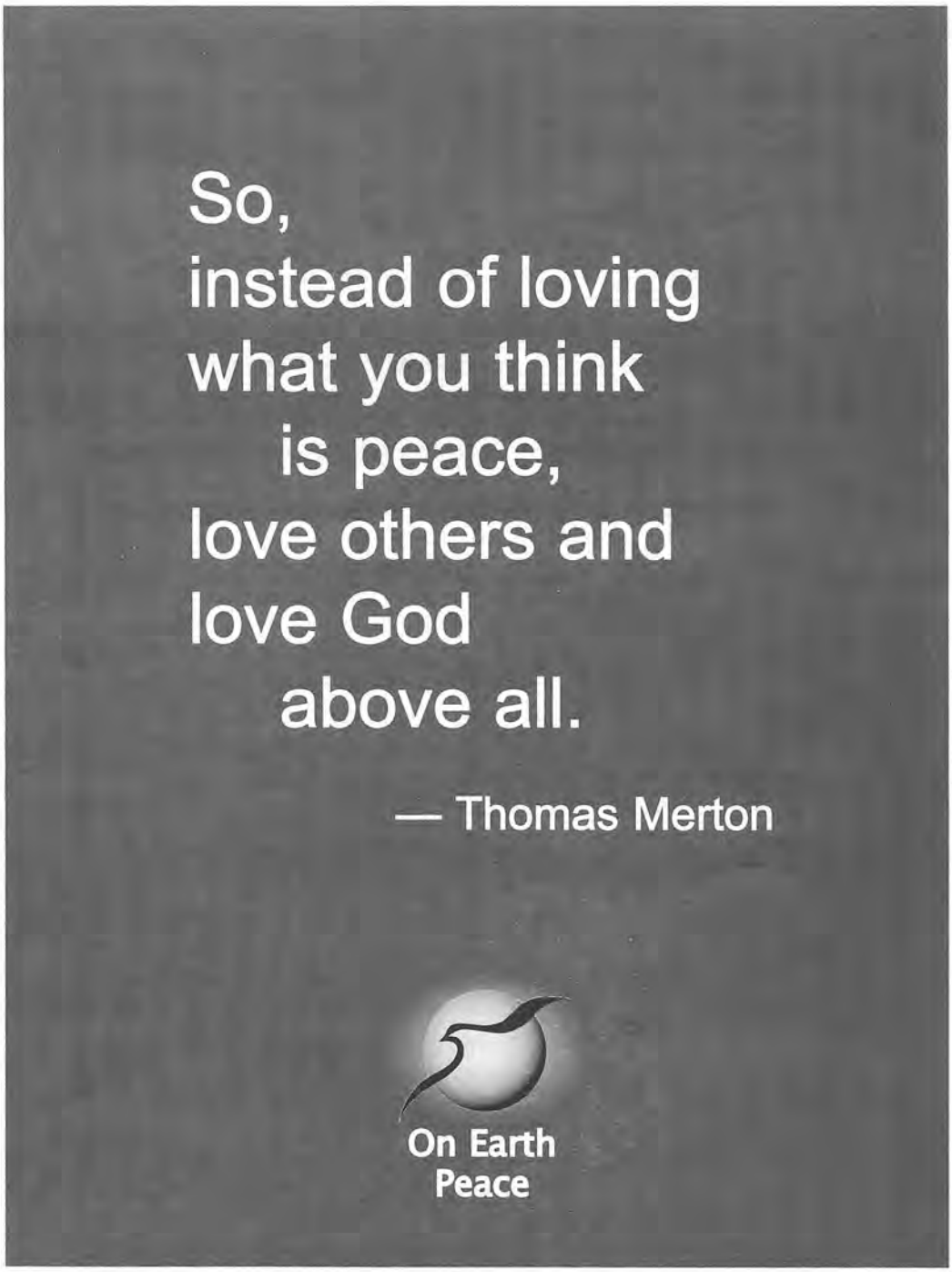
We need leadership today that provides a compelling commitment to build bridges of understanding and acceptance, even though we differ with each other, so that we can provide a positive witness to our world that the kingdom and reign of Christ is the dominant reality of our faith. I believe Brethren do best when they are challenged, and working together simply and peacefully in Jesus Christ.

Isn't it time for us to knock down the walls that we have created because of fear, mistrust, and suspicion toward those who stand at a different place lest we fall from grace? I appeal to you sisters and brothers by the mercies of God that we call forth our talents and gifts in the love of God that we know in Jesus Christ, and give faithful witness to the living presence of Jesus.

Charles J. Whitacre
McPherson, Kan.

Pontius' Puddle





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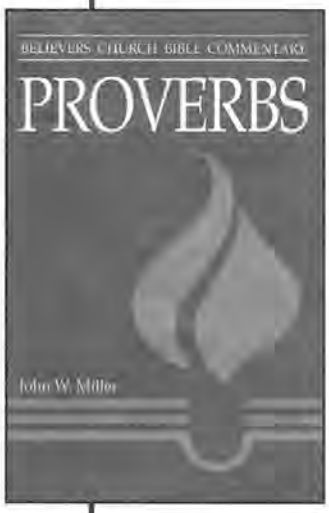

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John W. Miller

This 19th volume in the Believers Church Bible Commentary series is unique for its detailed uncovering of evidence for two editions of Proverbs, a first in the time of Solomon and a second in support of King Hezekiah's historic religious reforms. In this light heretofore puzzling features of the book's design, purpose and message are clarified and the book's relevance for its time and ours is greatly enhanced.

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Peaceful persuasion, not power

Back in the 1980s, with the Cold War and the arms race raging, television depicted the devastating consequences of a nuclear war in the show, "The Day After." To those who thought the only alternative to such destruction was submission to the Soviet empire, the TV series "Amerika" reasonably accurately depicted the stagnant oppression of an unfree Communist society.

What actually happened in 1989, however, was that the leaders of the Communist societies themselves decided that freedom and democracy were preferable to continuing Communism, and this change came without a war, from the people themselves.

I served from 1983 to 1986 in Brethren Volunteer Service [See this month's International Spotlight, p. 23] in our Polish agricultural exchange program, which brought young teachers behind the Iron Curtain to teach English and brought research workers to our side of the Iron Curtain to study advanced agricultural methods and to work and bring dollars back home.

Thanks to such contacts, and the world awareness and the open expression of free ideas which they foster, even the people I met who were members of the Communist party usually did not believe in the Communist ideology. It is no accident that Poland was the first nation where (in the summer of 1989, before the Berlin Wall opened) power was shared with non-Communists.

I'd like to thank BVS for maintaining this program through all the tensions of the Cold War and remind Brethren that not only is peaceful persuasion the only method advocated by Jesus for overcoming problems, whether personal moral sins or oppressive power structures, but it is the only method which truly works, as opposed to the legalistic methods of the Pharisees or the "our army will dominate you" methods of the Caesars of Jesus' day.

Remember this when some politicians seek now to cloak their appeals on a "Christianity" based on force.

Richard Paul Moyer
Ephrata, Pa.

Truth is hard to hear

When I was growing up there were two magazines that monthly garnished our coffee table. They were *Life* and *National Geographic*. As kids we thought these were great magazines with their abundance of photographs and brief texts. We learned to know the world through the eyes of their photojournalists.

Our children, too, have been raised with a yearly subscription to *National Geographic*. It is

a magazine that is respected throughout the world for its terrific photography and journalism. In a ceremony at the White House this past June, George W. Bush awarded the National Geographic Society's Chairman of the Board the country's highest civilian award, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

And so it is with alarm that our family received September's edition of *National Geographic* with these words from editor Bill Allen. "After a decade as Editor in Chief, I have a pretty good idea which articles will provoke a lot of angry letters. Whenever we publish stories that challenge widely held beliefs, some readers get mad.... Well, we're about to do it again."

Following this introduction Allen introduces the series of articles that follow. All have to do with the global warming trend that the Earth has been experiencing and the contribution to it by human behavior ["Hot Enough for Ya?," July 2004]. He ends his editorial by saying, ". . . we are going to take you all over the world to show you the hard truth as scientists see it. I can live with some canceled memberships. I'd have a harder time looking at myself in the mirror if I didn't bring you the biggest story in geography today."

The bottom line in this series of articles is that humanity's use of fossil fuels has largely precipitated the climatic changes that are occurring all over the world. It is without question that the Earth is in a warming period. The question is: Are we human inhabitants major contributors to this trend? The answer coming from *National Geographic* is, yes, we are in a large part responsible for the climate's rapid change.

As responsible citizens, not only of the United States (which uses the greatest amount of fossil fuels), but of the Earth, it is high time that we assess the damages being done and take corrective steps to minimize the rapid changes occurring in our climate. We are not responsible citizens if we wait to have governments mandate limits on the use of fossil fuels and the pollution they cause. Governments seem to be in continual denial of it. We need to practice some restraint in the amount of fossil fuels we individually use.

I encourage each of us to consider our personal lifestyle and how it impacts our environment. There are many, many resources available that focus on becoming less dependent on fossil fuels. The gasoline, fuel oil, and electricity that we use, for the most part, come from the fossil fuels: coal and petroleum. Never has the bumper sticker phrase, "Live simply, that others may simply live" been truer. It may be more pertinent today, however, to change it to read, "Live simply, so that you may simply live!"

David Whitten
Mount Solon, Va.

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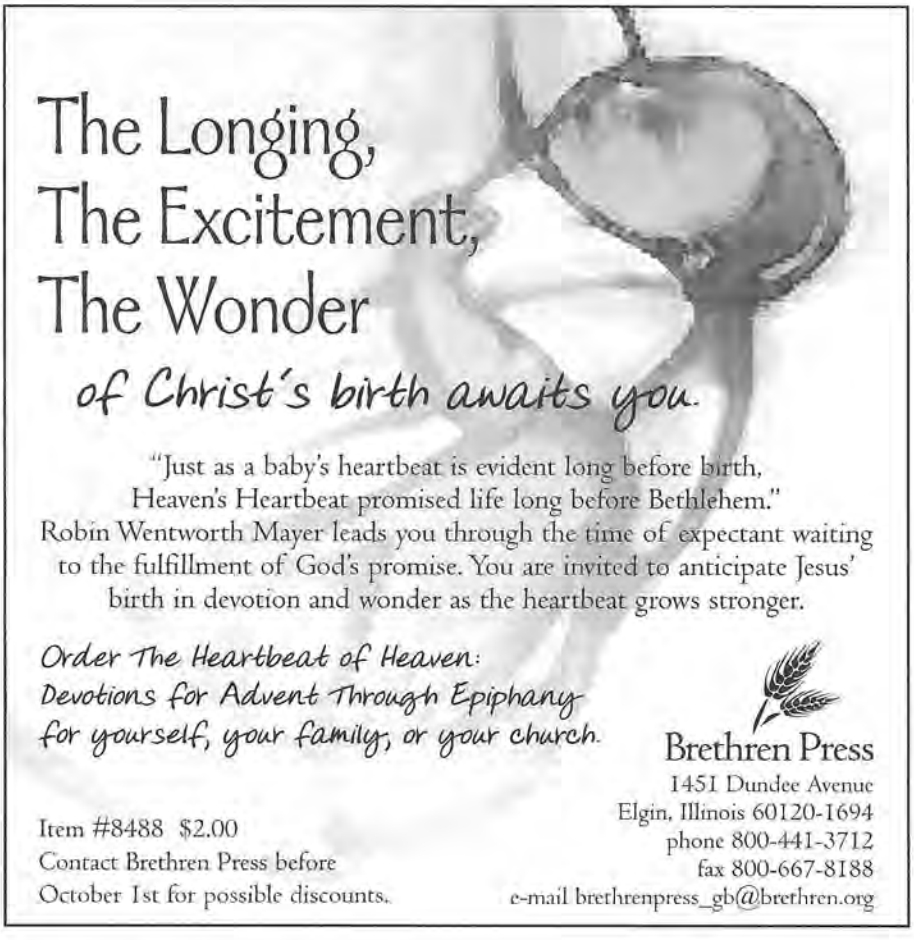

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"THE GUYS" are releasing their first CD. Remember the haunting rendition of "Prayer of the Children" during the live report at Charleston WV Annual Conference? It is now available on CD along with 12 other songs, ranging from hymns to spirituals. The artistry of "The Guys" is evident in their tight a cappella harmonies throughout the CD. To order, send check or money order for $14.99 + $3.00 shipping and handling to: THE GUYS, 38W617 Brindlewood Ln Elgin, IL 60123

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Worship with us in Northern Virginia. Do you know of someone living in, moving to, or visiting the Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C.? The people of the Oakton Church of the Brethren warmly invite everyone to join us Sunday mornings for church school at 9:45 a.m. and worship at 11:00 a.m. Contact the church office at 703-281-4411, e-mail oaktoncob@aol.com, or visit the church website at www.oaktonbrethren.org for more information.

Have you placed your winter Sunday school curriculum order yet? This is the time to place your winter order for Jubilee, BibleQuest, Guide for Biblical Studies, or other Sunday school curriculum. Please call Brethren Press at 800-441-3712 if you have any questions or would like an order form. Order forms are also available online at www.brethren.org/genbd/bp/curriculum.html.

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

New Members

Arlington, Va.: Joshua Muntain, Montgomery McCarthy, August McCarthy, Chelsea McCarthy, Amy Ziehm, Stephen Ziehm, Chantel Fletcher, Lincoln Cory, Paul Rothwell, Elaine Rothwell, Larry Harms, Chris Hannah, Cheryl Hannah, Anna Dettra, Job Diarra, Suzanne Diarra
Beaverton, Mich.: Judy Wolfgang
Blue Ridge, Va.: David Brunk, Judy Brunk, John Brunk, Paul Gardner, Liz Gardner
Cerro Gordo, Ill.: Samuel Brandenburg, Lucas Martina, Hannah St. Pierre, Jessica St. Pierre, John Six, Tycen West
Dupont, Ohio: Eve Newlands
Fairview, Cordova, Md.: Paula Bayliss, Adam Fluharty, Amy Hutchison, Susie Hutchison, Tracy Love, Ashley Marvel, Brittany Marvel, Connie McNeal, Josh McNeal, Jeannette Miller, Robert Miller, Kiersten Mueller
Free Spring, Mifflintown, Pa.: Nancy Leach, Rita Hengst, Becky Hengst
Gortner Union, Oakland, Md.: Mickey Chapman, Terry Chapman, Annette Chapman
Grossnickle, Myersville, Md.: Brooke Delauter, Clay Delauter, Dan Hughes, Pattie Hughes, Jared Wastler, Rhonda Wastler, Paul Jouannet
Hagerstown, Md.: Clarence Cramer, Nora Cramer
Hollins Road, Roanoke, Va.: David Easterling, Peggy Easterling, Harold Landis, Helen Johnson Landis, Freida Gross, Kimberly Martin, Dorothy Bryant, Edna Ratliff
Lima, Ohio: Janice Shaner, Randy Pugin, Melba Schmenk, Marilyn Cox
Locust Grove, Mount Airy, Md.: Brian Burall, Glenn Potts, Breana Burall, Suzette Englar
McPherson, Kan.: Gregg Stockstill, Judy Stockstill, Katie Stockstill, Abbey Stockstill
Midland, Va.: Kylee Ferguson, Matthew Ferguson
Moorefield, W.Va.: Paul See
Mountain Grove, Fulks Run, Va.: Gabrielle Taylor, Drew Easter, George "Kyle" Vanorden, Samantha Wenger, Joshua Barkley, Morgan Custer
New Covenant, Chester, Va.: Barbara Steadman, Sheri J. Byrd, Adrienna Edwards, June S. Horne
Philadelphia, First, Wyndmoor, Pa.: Drason Michael Reese
Reading, First, Wyomissing, Pa.: Emily Dotter

Anniversaries

Bridenbaugh, Ed and Betty, Martinsburg, Pa., 55
Delabarre, Norm and Rose, Wenatchee, Wash., 60
Guyer, C. Albert and Hazel B., Waynesboro, Pa., 55
Haas, Richard and Roselyn (Joy), Union, Ohio, 50
Hershberger, Charles and Deloris, Martinsburg, Pa., 55
Hinish, Joe and Elsie, Martinsburg, Pa., 50
Hornberger, Arthur and Joan, Reading, Pa., 50
King, Don (Skip) and Marlene, Clymer, Pa., 50
Kreiner, Dale and Mildred, Elizabethtown, Pa., 60
Mullikin, Ivon (Larry) and Jacqueline, Cordova, Md., 50
Rollo, Earl and Elenora, Pemberville, Ohio, 65
Stroup, Atlee and Twyla, Wooster, Ohio, 60
Yoder, Gordon and Glee, Willow Street, Pa., 65
Zinn, Philip and Margaret, Bridgewater, Va., 65
Zook, Ray and Betty, Martinsburg, Pa., 55

Deaths

Adams, Richard H., 73, Lititz, Pa., Jan. 12
Albright, Cora B., 84, Everett, Pa., Aug. 30
Alwine, Kay, 78, Roanoke, Va., July 24
Armbruster, Eleanor, P., 80, Tampa, Fla., Aug. 18
Aughey, Pauline, 80, Mifflintown, Pa., Aug. 11
Berkenbosch, Georgia, 72, Prairie City, Iowa, June 6
Bonham, Charles R. "Dick", 95, North Liberty, Ind., April 21
Boyd, Darvin, 62, Akron, Pa., Jan. 31
Boyer, Ruth, 80, Johnstown, Pa., Aug. 29
Brown, Joyce, 69, Brookville, Ohio, Oct. 5, 2003
Brubaker, Mark, 83, Lancaster, Pa., April 22
Brumbaugh, Virginia F., 88, Martinsburg, Pa., Feb. 3
Burket, Ross, 92, Roaring Spring, Pa., Sept. 1
Burkholder, Vera, 94, Ephrata, Pa., Oct. 20, 2003
Butterbaugh, David, 44, Owingsville, Ky., Aug. 2
Campbell, David Lee, Sr., 61, Luray, Va., June 16
Carper, Harold A., 71, Linville, Va., June 13
Carroll, Garnett Lee, 50, Roanoke, Va., June 1
Carty, Walter Jasper, 77, Pulaski, Va., June 11
Chandler, Vashti, 91, Christiansburg, Va., July 24
Click, Wilmer Glen, 86, Dayton, Va., July 16
Cluts, Elsie, 89, Dixon, Ill., Aug. 18
Cole, Evelyn, 92, Johnstown, Pa., Aug. 14
Comer, Emily Gochenour, 79, Stephens City, Va., July 30
Cornbower, Lillie, 89, Hanover, Pa., May 2
Cotterman, Alice I., 71, Salix, Pa., Aug. 27
Crills, Verna, 70, Ephrata, Pa., Jan. 25
Crowe, Merle, 98, Logansport, Ind., May 18
Dadisman, Virginia, 102, New Lebanon, Ohio, Feb. 6
Davidson, Gordon, 58, Roanoke, Va., July 15
Diediker, Lois, 81, Parsons, Kan., May 29
Dovel, Ruby Allene, 77, Stanley, Va., Aug. 2
Driver, Milton L., 99, Bluffton, Ohio, Sept. 7
Durr, Clara Gay, 92, Oakland, Md., Sept. 4
Eby, Ethel, 93, Cordova, Md., June 28
Erbaugh, Lawrence "Mike", 92, Greenville, Ohio, Sept. 5, 2003
Fifer, Joseph B., 98, Leonard, Mo., Aug. 4
Figgers, Frank H., Sr., 92, Buena Vista, Va., Aug. 29
Fink, Ethel M., 94, York, Pa., Sept. 4
Folk, Glenn A., 80, South Bend, Ind., July 19
Fox, Lola M., 87, New Oxford, Pa., Sept. 6
Frantz, Caleb Hoffer, 89, Bethel, Pa., Sept. 1
Frei, Doris, 76, Myerstown, Pa., Aug. 19
Grimes, Hannah M., 94, Martinsburg, Pa., Jan. 7
Grossnickle, Gene Wade, 64, Middletown, Md., June 14
Harley, Florence, 80, Ephrata, Pa., March 3
Hartman, Augusta H., 101, Deshler, Ohio, Aug. 11
Hefner, Robert, 76, Moorefield, W.Va., Aug. 10
Heisey, Anna Jane S., 81, Palmyra, Pa., April 1
Hiestand, John G., 99, Lancaster, Pa., June 2
Hoffert, Allen, 67, Ephrata, Pa., March 14
Hoffman, Elizabeth C., 72, Brightwood, Va., Dec. 27
Hoffman, Elzia, 80, Moatsville, W.Va., March 28
Johnson, Homer A., 77, Woodstock, Va., June 30
Johnson, Mary Alice, 87, Nokesville, Va., April 14
Johnston, Wilma, 91, Lima, Ohio, July 21
Jones, Thelma M., 93, Springfield, Mo., Aug. 6
Kagarise, Joseph, 67, Woodbury, Pa., Aug. 15
Keiser, Ron, 66, Nappanee, Ind., March 22
Keller, James L., 86, Ephrata, Pa., Nov. 15, 2003
Kisamore, Roy Richard, 83, Mount Crawford, Va., July 21
Kirk, Willie Baker, 80, Roanoke, Va., Aug. 21
Kohne, Foster Lee, 78, Woodstock, Va., July 19
Kurfis, Lyle D., 84, Pemberville, Ohio, Aug. 26
Laprad, Edna K., 89, Rossville, Ind., June 25
Leatherman, Jennetta K., 86, Myersville, Md., July 11
Lee, Hallie Mae Thornhill, 91, Fincastle, Va., June 13
Leese, Minnie, 70, New Oxford, Pa., March 4
Looney, Beulah M., 80, Roanoke, Va., March 5
Lohr, Richard S., 61, Washington, Pa., July 25
McLauchlin, Bruce D., Sr., 82, Hopewell, Va., April 27
Manikus, Georgine, 79, Hopewell, Va., July 25
Mathias, Carolyn C., 58, Harrisonburg, Va., June 18
Matthews, Lester, 82, Ephrata, Pa., Oct. 13, 2003
Miller, Evelyn, 89, Champion, Pa., May 31
Miller, Helen Ruth, 82, Champion, Pa., July 3
Moyer, Dale, 109, Alvordton, Ohio, July 17
Mundis, Robert K., 83, Cross Keys, Pa., Sept. 3
Neff, Hazel Martin, 91, Lancaster, Pa., Oct. 10, 2003
Nelson, Percy, 86, Bryan, Ohio, July 14
Oehs, Bill, 73, Lancaster, Pa., April 9
Oessenich, Frank, 70, Altoona, Pa., July 1
Poling, Robert H., 74, Moatsville, W.Va., March 5
Rinker, Ruth C. Grove, 78, Toms Brook, Va., June 29
Roberts, Vera, 93, Brookville, Ohio, Aug. 3
Root, Shirley J., 57, Hagerstown, Ind., July 15
Rosato, Geraldine, 83, Virden, Ill., July 19
Rush, Darlene Virginia Heishman, 62, Edinburg, Va., June 27
Schroyer, Irene Gertrude, 83, Hagerstown, Md., Jan. 30
Shockey, John E., 97, Hagerstown, Md., Aug. 4
Simmons, Claude Reynolds, Jr., 84, Harrisonburg, Va., Aug. 18
Smith, Joyce S. "Bud", 90, Greencastle, Ind., June 22
Snodderly, H. Glenn, 96, Lititz, Pa., March 19
Stoots, James, 78, Troutville, Va., Aug. 9
Stotler, Jane, 81, Chambersburg, Pa., July 26
Stutzman, Wayne E., 76, Somerset, Pa., Aug. 26
Truex, Edna, 85, New Carlisle, Ind., Aug. 13
Vindish-Vickroy, Betty, 87, Johnstown, Pa., Aug. 17
Weller, Roger, 71, Cloverdale, Ohio, Sept. 5
Zeller, Margaret C., 84, Hagerstown, Md., Aug. 13

Licensings

Berkebile, James A., W. Pa. Dist. (Center Hill, Kittanning, Pa.), Aug. 15
Byers, Jason Logan, S/C Ind. Dist. (Logansport, Ind.), Aug. 22
Coleman, Ronald D., Virlina Dist. (Henry Fork, Rocky Mount, Va.), July 11
Davis, Steven D., W. Pa. Dist. (Farmington Bethel, Farmington, Pa.), Aug. 22
Ehret, Victoria Louise, Atl. S.E. Dist. (Saint Petersburg, Fla.), Aug. 22
Fourman, Ann, N. Ind. Dist. (Crest Manor, South Bend, Ind.), July 18
Gallimore, Mary Elaine, Virlina Dist. (Pleasant Valley, Floyd, Va.), June 13
Gallimore, Michael Lane, Virlina Dist. (Pleasant Valley, Floyd, Va.), June 13
Johnson, David Edward, S/C Ind. Dist. (Logansport, Ind.), Aug. 22
Muthler, Mark H., Mid. Pa. Dist. (Koontz, New Enterprise, Pa.), Aug. 29
Muthler, Patricia Ann, Mid. Pa. Dist. (Koontz, New Enterprise, Pa.), Aug. 29
Neff, John, Shen. Dist. (Harrisonburg, First, Harrisonburg, Va.), July 25
Smith, Eugene Christie, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Midway, Lebanon, Pa.), May 30
Snyder, Paul R., Mid. Pa. Dist. (Waterside, Pa.), Aug. 29
Whitmore, Kevin Bruce, S/C Ind. Dist. (Bethel Center, Hartford City, Ind.), Aug. 29

Ordinations

Bailey, Olin, Shen. Dist. (Stony Creek, Basye, Va.), July 12
McNeil, Dana, Ill./Wis. Dist. (Peoria, Ill.), June 20
Sales, Jerry M., Ill./Wis. Dist. (Franklin Grove, Ill.), Feb. 22
Shafer, Louie, Shen. Dist. (Stony Creek, Basye, Va.), July 10
Smith, Sam, N. Ind. Dist. (English Prairie, Howe, Ind.), Aug. 22
Vaughn, Timothy L., S. Pa. Dist. (Ridge, Shippensburg, Pa.), Aug. 29
Weaver, Sheri Jones, Shen. Dist. (Lebanon, Mount Sidney, Va.), Aug. 22

Placements

Bidgood-Enders, Liz, from pastor, Mack Memorial, Dayton, Ohio, to pastor of spiritual nurture, Manchester, North Manchester, Ind., Sept. 1
Fourman, Larry D., from pastor, Crest Manor, South Bend, Ind., to associate pastor, Union Center, Nappanee, Ind., Sept. 1
Gonzalez, Lidia, from co-pastor, Nuevo Amanacer Fellowship, Bethlehem, Pa., to co-pastor, HIS Way Fellowship, Hendersonville, N.C., July 31
Gonzalez, Raul, from co-pastor, Nuevo Amanacer Fellowship, Bethlehem, Pa., to co-pastor, HIS Way Fellowship, Hendersonville, N.C., July 31
Helser, David, pastor, Olivet, Thornville, Ohio, July 1
Kahler, Allen R., from pastor, Marion, Ind., to district executive, South/Central Indiana District, North Manchester, Ind., Sept. 1
McNeil, Dana, pastor, Peoria, Ill., July 15
Nunn, Trevor, from interim to pastor, Panora, Iowa, Sept. 12
Pinckney, Ron, pastor, Hillcrest Baptist & Brethren, Fredericksburg, Iowa, May 15
Runkle, Bradley Allen, pastor, Carson Valley, Duncansville, Pa., Sept. 1
Sales, Jerry M., pastor, Franklin Grove, Ill., Jan. 1
Smalls, Rodney D., pastor, First, Baltimore, Md., Aug. 30
Stanford, Glenn R., pastor, Waterford, Calif., Feb. 1
Wegman, Thomas V., from interim to pastor, Cherry Grove, Grantsville, Md., Aug. 1
Wetzel, Eric, pastor, Mount Olivet, Timberville, Va., Sept. 1
Whitmore, Kevin Bruce, pastor, Bethel Center, Hartford City, Ind., May 16
Wunderlich, A. Mervyn, Jr., chaplain, The Brethren Home Community, New Oxford, Pa., July 12
Yoder, Leon R., from pastor, Broadfording, Hagerstown, Md., to pastor, Greencastle, Pa., Aug. 16

Politics and polarization

Back in 1968, the United States was torn over a war halfway around the world, and public opinion was sharply divided. Richard Nixon was running for president that year and faced the dilemma of forging a constituency out of the nation's many diverse groups.

A 1971 journal article by Andrew King and Floyd Douglas Anderson examined the process of creating this "silent majority," accomplished through what they called "the rhetoric of polarization." They say it took another year after Nixon was elected to build his power base—built by uniting people around a common enemy, in this case the opponents of the Vietnam War.

WALT WILTSCHEK
Messenger Editor

The result: A fragmented nation became highly polarized. The authors defined this act of polarization as "a process by which an extremely diversified public is coalesced into two or more highly contrasting, mutually exclusive groups sharing a high degree of internal solidarity" in some key belief(s).

The tactics to bring about this aim, they said, included building an "us-versus-them" mentality, belittling those who disagreed with Nixon's positions, and creating stereotypes and distrust. Vice president Spiro T. Agnew became the lead attack dog, calling foes of the administration "nattering nabobs of negativism," "pusillanimous pussyfooters," and other such colorful putdowns.

A whirlwind of charges and countercharges ensued, adding to what the authors called "a Babel of strident voices."

Sound familiar? Political pundits and analysts said the 2000 presidential election atmosphere was one of the most polarized the nation had seen in years. The 2004 election has had a similar feel, and the rhetoric from both sides has been strident, to put it mildly, once again. Charges and countercharges, playing on fears, attack ads, putdowns—it's not much of a model to follow, no matter which side one supports.

Unfortunately, the church seems to be following this model all too well. News reports have included all manner of biting quotes from church leaders who disagree with some person or group.

The Church of the Brethren has been playing the game pretty well, too. A variety of list servers, online journals, newsletters, and speeches seem to exhibit a growing tendency to attack and belittle rather than seeking to discern prayerfully in community. One or two issues may be driving the current war of words, but it's eventually about attitude and relationship.

We risk becoming a polarized church, if we're not there already. King and Anderson say an aim of polarization is to "move persons out of the ranks of the uncommitted and force them to make a conscious choice between one of the two competing groups." If a sense of unity around Jesus Christ cannot bring the ends closer together, the church's wide middle spectrum will be stretched painfully.

In a single day at the Messenger offices recently, we received a letter from a conservative Brethren demanding that we not print anything representing liberal viewpoints, while a progressive caller was upset that we published a letter representing a conservative perspective.

Both were told the same thing: Messenger is a meeting place for the church, where all its voices should be heard and weighed. Former Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, in describing the United States as a "marketplace of ideas," observed "that it is hazardous to discourage thought, hope, and imagination; that fear breeds repression; that repression breeds hate."

One might hope the church at large can hear one another out as fellow Christians, testing things with patience in the light of scripture so that we don't breed hate. It's OK to disagree, but not to shout. Prayer, not politics, should drive the church.

One might hope the church at large can hear one another out as fellow Christians, testing things with patience in the light of scripture so that we don't breed hate. It's OK to disagree, but not to shout. Prayer, not politics, should drive the church.

Another former president, Abraham Lincoln, once said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." Is our house, like that of the foolish man in Jesus' parable, at risk of collapsing on the sand? Or will we build wisely? Let's pray it's the latter, and leave the "nattering nabobs" to others.—Ed.

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Great Expectations

"...and he will be their peace"
Micah 5:5

CHRISTMAS ADVENT OFFERING

Sunday, December 12, 2004

Proclaiming peace to all in Jesus' name through the peace-bringing ministries of the Church of the Brethren General Board