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of the  
Brethren

# MESSENGER

DECEMBER 2004 WWW.BRETHREN.ORG



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Church  
of the  
Brethren

# MESSENGER

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## ONTHECOVER

Christmas is traditionally known as a season of giving, and particularly remembering the gift of God's Son to the world. The spirit of giving, however, can't be forgotten after the Christmas season ends. This month's cover package looks at Heifer International, which has been sending much needed, life-giving gifts around the world for six decades and counting.

*Pictured here is the the Hruschka family receiving "Miss Hope," the 3000th heifer sent to post-war Germany. Cattle attendants I.E. Hammond and Lowell Longenecker, right, give their best wishes.*

File photo / Courtesy of BHLA



## 8 Moo in our midst: Heifer Project turns 60

What is today Heifer International began with humble roots and the big dream of Dan West. It started out with Indiana farmers putting together a shipment of heifers to Puerto Rico. Sixty years later, Heifer's reach spans the globe, with a sizeable budget, significant accolades, and a gleaming new headquarters under construction in Little Rock, Ark. In a sidebar piece, Donald Durnbaugh reviews the anniversary video/DVD titled "Dan West: Peacemaker."

## 14 What are we doing when we pray?

We know that prayer is a central part of the Christian faith, but what are we really doing when we take time to pray? Ken Gibble looks at this question and some of the dynamics that go into the act of prayer.

## 16 Advent's great expectations

This year's General Board Christmas Advent Offering has as its theme, "Great Expectations," based on the prophecies of Jesus' birth from Micah 5. Articles by Sandy Bosserman and Angie Lahman Yoder examine the fulfillment of God's promises, and what it means to live in expectation.

## 19 Letting the Bible speak to you

MESSENGER in January begins a five-year series that will travel through the Bible book by book, with the hopes of opening doors to spend more time in God's Word. What are the benefits of engaging in this type of study? And how do we receive the message that the Scriptures offer?

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**L**eo Tolstoy tells the tale of a cobbler who hears that Jesus will be visiting him the next day. All day long the man prepares and watches for the special guest. While he waits, he encounters a succession of three people in need, each of whom he helps. But he never sees Jesus.

Finally, at the end of the day he learns that his Savior did indeed visit. In fact, Jesus visited the cobbler three times.

As Brethren anticipate our chance to be the featured denomination on CBS this Christmas Eve, many are preparing for company. Some congregations are using this unusual opportunity to make their communities aware of the Church of the Brethren. They are placing ads in newspapers, making sure their answering machines have welcoming messages, and generally preparing for visitors. In short, they are making the kinds of preparations that any church would make when its members are seeking guests and want them to feel welcome.



WENDY McFADDEN  
Publisher

The televised service itself is created to be hospitable. This is essential, since those who stop by will be holding a remote control and will pause just long enough to see whether this show is worth watching. These viewers will be a diverse group—some of them faithful believers just home from their own Christmas Eve services, some of them far away from any experience of church, some of them simply looking for David Letterman, some of them trapped in a hospital bed, some of them alienated from God. Our task is to create for television a service that offers a meaningful, even profound, presentation of the Christmas story in a manner that captures viewers of all sorts within the first 30 seconds, and holds their attention for another 59 minutes. After they put down the remote, we pray that God will use our words and music to help them enter the light of life and be confronted by the Incarnation.

What if none of these two and half million viewers are motivated to look us up the day after Christmas? That doesn't matter. After all, there are millions of people surrounding our congregations every day. If all of us spend Advent brushing up on our hospitality and preparing for flesh-and-blood visitors, we will have made good use of our 60 minutes of fame.

A national audience for the Brethren is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. But the opportunity to welcome the Guest? We have that every day.

*Wendy McFadden*

Note: A special short-term website, [www.enterchristmas.org](http://www.enterchristmas.org), has been set up for those who want to learn more after seeing the Christmas Eve service. In addition to including information about the service, it will help visitors learn more about the Brethren and find the nearest congregation. Congregations may reference this website in press releases and other publicity. Visit [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org) for more ideas on preparing for company.

## How to reach us

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A free study guide for each issue of MESSENGER is available on the site; go to keyword "MESSENGER" and click on the study guide link.

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**AROUND THE DENOMINATION**

*Updates and highlights from the Church of the Brethren districts*

**Atlantic Northeast:** An ice cream social marked the 35th district conference since a 1970 merger created the current boundaries. This year's conference also included adopting a \$709,835 budget for 2005.

**Atlantic Southeast:** Highlighting district conference business in October was the acceptance of "La Casa del Amigo" as a new church fellowship in Arecibo, Puerto Rico.

**Idaho:** The district's youth conference took place Oct. 22-23 in Twin Falls, with a weekend of praise and worship, games, Bible study, and swimming. Speakers included moderator Jim Hardenbrook and general secretary Stan Noffsinger.

**Illinois/Wisconsin:** The Milledgeville (Dutchtown) congregation sponsored a silent auction at district conference that raised more than \$1,000 for the district. Delegates at the conference approved a new leadership team structure for the district.

**Michigan:** A district conference auction brought in nearly \$1,500 for the Women's Development Center in Jos, Nigeria, a project of the Church of the Brethren in that nation.

**Mid-Atlantic:** District conference in October included a preaching workshop and address by professor Fred Craddock, a coffeehouse sponsored by the district peace and justice committee, and a creative camp report. About 300 people attended business sessions.

**Middle Pennsylvania:** The district's heritage fair marked its silver anniversary this year. Proceeds go to Camp Blue Diamond, workcamp scholarships, Juniata College, and other programs.

**Missouri/Arkansas:** Volunteers from ages 12 to 80 completed a roofing project at the Good Shepherd congregation in Springfield, Mo., on Sept. 29 after two weekends of work.

**Northern Indiana:** District conference delegates approved a budget for \$175,000 for 2005, approved constitution/bylaw changes, and called Mike Kauffman as moderator-elect.

**Northern Ohio:** Popular Brethren folksinger Joseph Helfrich performed a pair of concerts this fall, Oct. 31 at the Mohican congregation in West Salem, and Nov. 7 at Poplar Ridge in Defiance.

**Northern Plains:** Tara Beck Brunk recently announced her resignation as program director for Camp Pine Lake. A search for a new program director is under way.

**Oregon/Washington:** Live and silent auctions at this year's district conference raised a combined \$2,370-plus for district ministries and outreach.

**Pacific Southwest:** The Bakersfield (Calif.) congregation is moving forward with a project to bring books and stories to those under-served by the county library system with a Reading Mobile.

**Shenandoah:** Brethren Woods planned to hold its first Alternative Christmas Fair on Nov. 28, featuring crafts, games, Christmas stories, and entertainment, along with many alternative gift options.

**South/Central Indiana:** The Northview congregation in Indianapolis held a benefit concert for Global Women's Project Oct. 15 featuring several individuals and groups performing.

**Southeastern:** A minister/spouse fellowship event for the district took place at the John Reed Homestead Community on Sept. 17. Jackson Park youth pastor Jeremy Dykes was the speaker.

**Southern Ohio:** David Eller gave a presentation on "The 'Lost' Brethren of the Early 19th Century" Nov. 5 in Brookville. The district's Brethren Heritage Center sponsored the event.

**Southern Pennsylvania:** Children's Aid Society, a district agency, held a benefit dinner and auction Nov. 6 at the West York church. Proceeds were to help retire debt at the New Oxford, Pa., center, one of three that provides family services.

**Southern Plains:** The Enid (Okla.) congregation announced that it has decided to close. A new Brethren church plant, Family Faith Fellowship, has agreed to rent the property and held a dedication on Oct. 10.

**Virginia:** Eleanor and Gerald Roller led a "Growth for Our Marriage" enrichment weekend Oct. 22-24 at Camp Bethel. The Rollers have 28 years of experience in leading such events.

**West Marva:** A free "Call to Ministry" Banquet sponsored by the district ministry commission encouraged pastors to bring along youth who might be interested in considering the set-apart ministry, and invited others looking at bi-vocational ministry. It took place Nov. 5 in Cumberland, Md.

**Western Pennsylvania:** The district witness commission sponsored a work day Oct. 23 at Pittsburgh Church of the Brethren to assist with cleaning, carpentry, and masonry work.

**Western Plains:** A cross-cultural music tour coordinated by the General Board's Congregational Life Teams included a stop at the First Central congregation in Kansas City before heading to Northern Plains.

Wes Richard



*For most churches, a sign out front provides adequate identification, but not for one church in Northern Ohio District. When the city of Lima announced plans to extend the Ottawa River Walkway across the back yard of Elm Street Church of the Brethren, the congregation decided to view the project as a witness opportunity by placing a sign on the back wall of the church. They contracted with a professional signmaker living in the neighborhood who, it turned out, used to attend Sunday school there as a child. Now bikers, hikers, and teenagers on their way to high school just have to look up to find out what that building is for. Next project: a meditation bench along the walkway.*



*Ken Heatwole of the West Richmond congregation assists a young Haitian patient at a clinic.*

## Virginia Brethren take medical aid to Haiti

After 20 months of inspiration, visioning, prayers, and planning, a medical team led by members of West Richmond (Va.) Church of the Brethren served in the Haiti community of Cite Soleil—a severely impoverished part of the capital city of Port-au-Prince in September.

From Sept. 17-25, Midwives For Haiti held its first educational classes focusing on good health for pregnancy,

delivery, women, and infants. This team experienced in Haiti medical mission outreach also ran general medical clinics. Included on this team were West Richmond members Nadene Brunk (a nurse practitioner/midwife), Ken Heatwole (a family practice physician), and Kathy Miller (a school teacher and triage staff).

Future plans for Midwives For Haiti include clinics staffed monthly by midwives from around the country, opportunities for other health care

providers, and establishing a birthing center.

*Editor's note:* The Church of the Brethren General Board at its October meeting approved new mission work in Haiti to be coordinated through the Global Mission Partnerships office (see story, p. 22).

## Surprise leaves retiree rolling in the dough

At a local auction a few months ago, McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren member Eugene Lichty happened to raise his hand at the wrong time. As a result, he became the owner of a DAK bread-baking machine.

"Only two problems," he says. "First, my wife informed me that I would have to be the operator. Second, the manual that should have accompanied it was lost!"

By getting on the Internet, however, plus a bit of trial and error and advice from others with more experience, Lichty says he succeeded in baking very edible bread. "In fact, I am now ready for loaf number 68," he says.

In addition to eating the homemade bread, he has been

sharing loaves with others in The Cedars retirement village.

"They tell us we should venture out to learn new things at our age," Lichty says. "That is one which I would not have predicted 40 years ago!"—from

**BBT Retiree News**

## Illinois church vigils remember lives lost

In January 2003, the small, rural Franklin Grove (Ill.) Church of the Brethren began holding monthly peace vigils in an attempt to bring people together to pray for peace in Iraq.

During the course of the vigils, the group planted a peace garden in front of the church. They ended the vigils in November 2003 with the dedication of a peace pole. As the number of dead soldiers and Iraqis continued to rise, though, the group decided to bring the issue to the forefront again.



*Ken Heatwole, Nadene Brunk, and Kathy Miller, far right, of the West Richmond congregation, sit with Thaina Monestime, a Haitian child sponsored by the church.*



*More than a thousand luminaries lined the area by Franklin Grove Church of the Brethren in memory of those killed in Iraq.*



Chelsea Caldwell of Anderson, Ind., received a pile of donations after deciding to use her birthday to help a local animal shelter.

## Indiana girl's birthday really goes to the dogs

What does a 13-year-old girl ask to receive on her birthday? Many request movies, music, clothes, or other such luxuries.

Not true, however, for Chelsea Caldwell of Anderson (Ind.) Church of the Brethren. When asked what she wanted for her birthday, Chelsea provided a list of necessary supplies for a local animal shelter. She has always grown up around animals and hopes to one day be a veterinarian, so it seemed logical to request items such as kitty litter and dog food for her birthday.

Her friends and family honored her request with great enthusiasm. In all, she received upwards of 560 pounds of dog food, along with other items such as leashes, collars, cat food, and dog and cat treats. After the party was over, Chelsea took the items to the animal shelter and received a gift certificate for her generous donation.—Megan Wenger

On Oct. 17, a group of approximately 65 people lit 1,101 luminaries—one for each soldier killed in Iraq. Participants were given a slip of paper with the soldier's name, age, and cause of death and were encouraged to read the information, say a silent prayer, and light a candle. Many people said they were amazed at the number of soldiers who died in accidents unrelated to the fighting.

The 1,101 luminaries stayed lit for two hours while participants listened to quiet music and reflected on the significant loss of life. The candlelight vigil was an impressive, though sobering, reminder of the number of lives that have been lost. Carol Novak, the organizer of the event, said, "We wanted everyone to have a visual reminder of the tremendous loss that is a result of war."—Carol Novak

## La Verne benefit concert features Kirchner's work

The work of La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren member Shawn Kirchner was featured on Oct. 24 when the 50-member La Verne sanctuary choir presented a benefit choral concert.

Proceeds from the concert were to be placed in a special "Fund for Healing and Rebuilding" to assist victims of the devastating 2003 California wildfires, including several La Verne members and others in the region. Choir director Susan Winckler conducted for the concert, with Kirchner accompanying on piano and organ.

The program included several recently published choral anthems composed by Kirchner, including "Rain Come Down" and excerpts from a Mass that he is in the process of composing.

## LANDMARKS & LAURELS

- **Wiley (Colo.) Church of the Brethren** recently celebrated its 100th anniversary with a weekend full of events, including a potluck, hymn sing, worship services, and history lessons.

- **Maple Grove Church of the Brethren**, New Paris, Ind., marked its 150th anniversary with a weekend of events Oct. 23-24. The celebration included a hog roast, a video about the congregation, a musical program, an ice cream social, a bonfire, and worship. Maple Grove's building is the oldest still being used in Northern Indiana District.

- On Oct. 6, Virlina District's **Camp Bethel** paid off the last of the indebtedness for its 2001 purchase of the large Trailblazer II property that greatly extended the camp's boundaries. Nearly 700 pledges allowed the \$600,000 purchase price to be covered. A dedication service is scheduled for April 30.

- **June Mank**, a long-time member of Champaign (Ill.) Church of the Brethren who died in 2003, will become the first Champaign city official to be honored with a street name designation. The city's Paula Drive was to be designated "Honorary June Mank Way" this fall.

- Nampa (Idaho) Church of the Brethren member **Byron Yankey** was honored at a White House reception on Oct. 14 after being named National Distinguished Principal from Idaho by the Idaho Association of Elementary School Principals. Yankey is principal of Meridian Elementary School.

- Happy 100th birthday to **Marie Harkness**, a member of McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren. Harkness planned to celebrate the centennial on Dec. 7.

- Former Bethany Theological Seminary faculty member **Donald E. Miller** has been named to Talbot School of Theology's web-based database of Christian Educators of the 20th Century. The database ([www.biola.edu/ceacademic/index.cfm](http://www.biola.edu/ceacademic/index.cfm)) provides information about people who shaped the field of Christian education in North America during the last century. It is expected to contain about 175 entries when finished. Miller's entry was written by Brethren historian Donald Durnbaugh.

- A feature section front-page spread in the *Daily News-Record* of Harrisonburg, Va., featured the **Mathias (W.Va.) Church of the Brethren Women's Fellowship** comforter project. The group has been making tied comforters since at least 1954 and donating them to charities or disaster relief or, more recently, selling them to raise funds for church and community projects. Jean Snyder, Audrey Fitzwater, Marjean Hughey, and Edith Tusing currently head up the project.

- **Charles E. Cable**, president and CEO of Brethren Hillcrest Homes, La Verne, Calif., received a Meritorious Service Award from the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging for his commitment to excellence and compassionate care. The award was presented at AAHSA's annual meeting Oct. 25-28 in Nashville, Tenn.

## God's gift list at Christmas

**T**he idea of giving gifts at Christmas started with God. It started when "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16). In 2 Corinthians 9:15 it says, "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" This gift was in the form of a person, a baby who would grow up as the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.



JAMES F. MYER

From my childhood I recall my grandpa, Reuben Myer, a minister in the Middle Creek Church of the Brethren, coming around at Christmas time and giving us an orange and a small box of chocolate candy. I remember this not as a high-cost gift, but as a memory that had special meaning. Do we understand the meaning behind the first Christmas gift?

The scriptures record the coming of the wise men from the East some time after Jesus was born. In Matthew 2:11, their visit is described: "On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh." God's

**By giving a gift like gold we can declare, "King of my life, I crown thee now." By giving a gift like frankincense we can express, "Jesus, I worship you, I adore you, I love you." By giving a gift like myrrh we can testify that Christ has redeemed us by his death.**

star had guided them to the child. There was also some divinely appointed meaning behind the selection of the gifts.

### Gold—A tribute to a King

They did not give a toy for a baby, but a treasure for a King. Actually, when the wise men came, Jesus was no longer a baby in a manger. He was a young child in a house.

The wise men had asked early on, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?" (Matt. 2:2). Gold is considered a precious metal. In the Bible it is first mentioned in Genesis 2:11, and the last reference is in Revelations 21:21. It is precious because it is scarce. Remember how people flocked to California in 1849 during the Gold Rush. Ancient Egyptians knew how to hammer gold into such thin leaves that it took 367,000 leaves to make a pile 1 inch high.

The first gift at Christmas was not a leftover item but a very valuable possession. This gift was an early indication that Jesus was destined to be a King.

### Frankincense—The worship of God

This was one of the primary spices in the burning of incense (Exod. 30:34). It was not for ordinary or private use. The rising odor from the incense was a symbol of the human spirit that rises in worship and adoration of God.

The wise men may not have had a good body odor after traveling a few hundred miles across the Syrian desert sand from Babylon, but their spirits were sweet with devotion. One can sense the character of their worship. It included devotion, believing faith, self-sacrifice, intelligence, and obedience. Let us be sure that we give the gift of worship in our celebration of Christmas.

### Myrrh—Faith in a suffering Savior

Myrrh was a spice used to anoint the dead. On the cross it was mingled with wine and offered to Jesus as an anesthetic (Mark 15:23). Jesus was offered myrrh at both ends of his earthly life. It shows that the purpose of Christ was not completely fulfilled in his being a baby: He came to die.

The religion of Jesus Christ is not a pure celebration of joy. There is suffering, sorrow, pain, and death. Near the end of Jesus' earthly life, Mary of Bethany came to anoint him with very costly, sweet-smelling nard. Judas Iscariot objected, but Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial" (John 12:7).

What gifts do we bring to Jesus today? Would we feel comfortable traveling with the wise men and sharing their gifts? Might we have suggested that we exchange names and give the gifts to ourselves? By giving a gift like gold we can declare, "King of my life, I crown thee now." By giving a gift like frankincense we can express, "Jesus, I worship you, I adore you, I love you." By giving a gift like myrrh we can testify that Christ has redeemed us by his death. These will be valuable gifts that have meaning long after the tinsel and wrappings have lost their glitter.

Our world does a multi-billion dollar commercialized version of Christmas celebrations every year. May we not lose sight of the first gift list at Christmas!



James F. Myer lives in Lititz, Pa., and is a minister at White Oak Church of the Brethren in Manheim.

QUOTE WORTHY

“In a culture that values novelty and innovation, what is remarkable about Christmas is that it is the one time of the year when worshippers who otherwise prefer new music often want to sing old songs.”

—John Witvliet, director of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, author of a book on historical Christmas sermons

“I’ve always called advertising ‘fertilizer’—it only can fertilize a larger effort to evangelize. Now I think it’s Miracle-Gro.”

—the Rev. Eric C. Shafer, director of communications for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, on the current boom in religious advertising led by mainline denominations. Shafer was quoted in a *Washington Post* article.

“They came not sure whether they were a peace church and left saying, ‘We’re a peace church!’ That was a transformation that was unbelievable.”

—Mervin Keeney, director of the General Board’s Global Mission Partnerships, on the Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) participation in the “Watu Wa Amani” Historic Peace Churches conference in Africa

“I have a hard time trusting someone I can’t develop a good relationship with. A flag goes up if I don’t know where a guy’s heart is. If I can’t judge his commitment, I can’t trust him.”

—Dick Vermeil, coach of the NFL’s Kansas City Chiefs, on the importance of relationships on a team

“Budgets are acts of faith, because income is not guaranteed. Budgets are the practical side of implementing mission.”

—General Board treasurer Judy Keyser, in presenting the agency’s budget for 2005

“To Santino (Chnor) and Peter (Dut), America is a nation where no one cares to intimately understand you, where there’s sympathy but no meaningful help.”

—Chicago Tribune writer Allison Benedict, writing about the independent documentary film *Lost Boys of Sudan*

“Most of the things I hear us complaining about are not even close to suffering.”

—Annual Conference moderator Jim Hardenbrook, urging the church to “stop whining” over relatively small difficulties

“I’ve never been at an event in the church where there is so much laughter and joy as at that event.”

—Duane Grady of the General Board Congregational Life Teams, describing the 2004 Cross-Cultural Ministries Consultation held in Puerto Rico

CULTUREVIEW

• **The Other Side**, a nondenominational peace and justice-focused magazine based in Philadelphia, has announced that it is ceasing publication after four decades due to significant financial debts.

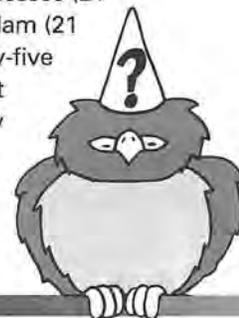
• **The Salvation Army** returned to the top of the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*’s list of the nation’s 400 most successful fund-raising organizations this year, the newspaper reported, after dropping to No. 2 in 2003. The rest of the top five: 2. American Cancer Society. 3. Gifts in Kind International. 4. YMCA. 5. Lutheran Services in America. (RNS)

• Three years after the Sept. 11 attacks unleashed a wave of **charitable donations**, a new poll shows that Americans continue to have questions about how charities spend their resources. The survey, by the Brookings Institution’s Center for Public Service, found that just 15 percent of Americans have a “great deal” of confidence in charitable organizations, down from 18 percent last October. Overall, 65 percent of the 1,417 people surveyed have confidence in charities,

while 31 percent have doubts. That figure is up slightly from 62 percent last January. (RNS)

• A new national television show, **Faith Under Fire**, began broadcasting in October on PAX-TV, airing Saturdays at 10 p.m. Eastern and Pacific, 9 p.m. Central and Mountain. Details on the show are at [www.faithunderfire.com](http://www.faithunderfire.com). The show, hosted by Lee Stroble, aims to have “guests from all over the spiritual spectrum debating today’s hottest moral, spiritual, and faith issues.”

• Most Protestant ministers expressed little familiarity with the **key beliefs of a number of non-Protestant religious groups**, a survey by Ellison Research has found. The faith perspectives most likely to be “extremely familiar” to Protestant clergy were Roman Catholicism (41 percent), Judaism (33 percent), Mormonism (21 percent), Jehovah’s Witnesses (21 percent) and Islam (21 percent). Eighty-five percent were at least “relatively familiar” with Catholicism. (RNS)



JUST FOR FUN: SCRAMBLE

• **TIS THE SEASON** Singing is always a significant part of the celebration during the weeks of Advent. Unscramble the names of these carols, hymns, and songs that are typically associated with the Christmas season. Answers are printed below:

- |                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| LENTIS GHINT                | GLINJE SLEBL                   |
| YAWA NI A RAGMEN            | THAW LICHD SI SITH             |
| VEEWLT SADY FO MATRISSCH    | ETH STRIF LONE                 |
| AKHR HET LEADHR GLEANS SIGN | O OCME LAL EY IFFLATHIU        |
| OJY OT HTE DROWL            | DOGO STAINRICH NERFSID ICEEROJ |
| EW REETH SNIKG              | DGO STER EY RYEMR MEEGLENTN    |

**Answers:** Silent Night; Away in a Manger; Twelve Days of Christmas; Hark the Herald Angels Sing; Joy to the World; We Three Kings; Jingle Bells; What Child Is This; The First Noel; O Come All Ye Faithful; Good Christian Friends, Rejoice; God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

# Moo in our midst

by Walt Wiltschek

Six decades later, the gift of Heifer Project keeps on giving and giving and giving

**F**orget those naysayers who say, "Don't have a cow." Go ahead, have a cow! Really, it's OK. That's the message that Heifer Project—now Heifer International—has been telling people for six decades now.

What began as a dream of Church of the Brethren member Dan West is now a worldwide enterprise. The idea of providing animals to address world hunger grew out of West's Indiana roots with the help of congregations there. The first Hoosier heifers set sail for Puerto Rico in 1944; livestock shipments to war-ravaged Europe and China soon followed.

After that start, Heifer never slowed down. The shipments quickly broadened to include other livestock, like pigs and chickens. Today, 30 kinds of animals from alpacas and bees to silkworms and yaks make their way around the world. Heifer estimates its projects have directly touched about 5 million families in more than 125 countries since its work first began.

In the last 10 to 15 years, Heifer's growth has been exponential. Jan West Schrock, daughter of Dan West and now a consultant to Heifer, says the organization is eight times the size it was just a decade ago. The number of

donors to Heifer International grew from 6,000 in 1989 to more than 250,000 in 2002, fueling a blossoming budget in excess of \$50 million. About 525 projects in 58 countries (including projects in the United States) were active in 2004.

*A couple in Armenia proudly shows new chickens received through one of Heifer's many regional projects around the world.*

"We're a 60-year-old organization, but it's only in the last decade we've really been able to tell the story to the public," director of marketing Mike Matchett said in an article by the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. "We're slowly but surely developing momentum."

All that work arises from a bustling main office in Little Rock, Ark., where a gleaming new world headquarters building is under construction on the banks of the Arkansas River, next door to the new Clinton Presidential Library. A 15-acre "global village" will be added to the site in future years.



File photo / Courtesy of BHLA

*After 60 years, Dan West's dream has grown into a worldwide enterprise.*



Anahit Ghazanchyan / Heifer International

File photo / Courtesy of BHLA



*Cattle owner Earl Miller, left, and local Heifers for Relief campaign drive chairman Boston Hunt corral two of the calves gathered for the relief effort in Washington state in the 1940s.*

All in all, it's a rather breathtaking Brethren legacy. A long line of people sang the praises of Heifer this fall as the organization marked 60 years since that first heifer shipment with an Oct. 20-23 celebration in Little Rock. More than 1,000 people attended. Speakers ranged from Heifer staff in regions around the globe to top academic minds to celebrities like Ted Danson, Mary Steenburgen, and retired Gen. Wesley Clark.

As Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee said in his greeting to conference participants, "Holy cow!"

• • •

### **Brethren bonds**

For all of Heifer's success, the organization hasn't forgotten its Brethren roots. Schrock and her brother, Phil West, were among the keynote speakers at the event, telling a large crowd about their father's beliefs and witness. Heifer International president Jo Luck told the audience enthusiastically that "Dan West's legacy lives on today." And several Heifer-related resources published by Brethren Press were sold at the event and highlighted by speakers.

Schrock says she keeps urging Heifer to "partner, partner, partner" with the Brethren and with other church organizations since, "Churches are already doing so many great things" in this area. "We don't have to re-create ways to fight hunger," she says.

At the same time, she says she laments what feels like increased separation between the Church of the Brethren and Heifer. Many congregations have remained engaged, she says, but ties at higher levels have grown apart. "How do we rebuild the relationship again?" she wonders.

There have been signs of new connection in the past year. When Heifer International reorganized its board and reduced the number of seats allotted to denominational representatives, the Church of the Brethren was given a permanent board seat while other denominations will have a seat on a rotating basis [see sidebar, "Brethren on the board"]. Kathleen Campanella, the Church of the Brethren representative to the board, was instrumental in securing that recognition.

And this past spring, the General Board's Global Food Crisis Fund allotted \$60,000 in aid to Heifer-related projects in Albania, Armenia, and Zimbabwe. The largest of the grants, for \$30,000,

is helping to fund a "guns-for-cows" program in Albania, in which residents can trade weapons for pregnant livestock, helping to rebuild lives following a time of national upheaval.

Dr. Anahit Ghazanchyan, Heifer's country director for Armenia, expressed deep gratitude for the \$10,000 grant that came to her project, which is assisting orphaned teenagers. She prepared a certificate of appreciation for the denomination's generosity.

Jo Luck also sent her thanks to the General Board, saying in a letter that, "It would be impossible to measure the dedication and giving from the Church of the Brethren over the decades. The Church of the Brethren, understanding the mandate to care for those less fortunate than themselves, whether in one's neighborhood or throughout the world, is a model for communities of faith in our culture.

"The biggest gift given by the Church of the Brethren," she noted, however, "was the founding of Heifer International six decades ago!"



### **The Conrad Hilton prize**

The 2004 Conrad Hilton Humanitarian Prize, which, at \$1 million, is the world's largest humanitarian award, was presented to Heifer International at a ceremony on Oct. 28 in New York. Kathleen Campanella, the Church of the Brethren's representative to the Heifer board, represented the denomination at the event.

Heifer, among the oldest United States humanitarian agencies, is the first US-based organization to receive the Hilton Prize since 1997. The presentation occurred during the Hilton humanitarian conference, which annually focuses on current global challenges facing those delivering aid.

In announcing the international jury's selection, Steven Hilton said, "Heifer International's success proves that it's often simple ideas that are the best. Providing poor families with cows and other livestock, along with agricultural training, helps people become self-sustaining. Ideas on how to help the poor in our world come and go, but Heifer has produced a model that has endured for 60 years."

## Local connections

While Heifer International is an independent organization today, many Church of the Brethren congregations retain close connections with Heifer's work. A few examples:

- At this year's **Missouri/Arkansas District** conference, New Beginnings congregation members Ethmer and Kathryn Erisman presented a gift of \$5,000 to enable the district to fill an "Ark" of Heifer animal donations. The gift coincided with Ethmer Erisman's celebration of 60 years of ordained ministry in the denomination.

- **Middle Pennsylvania** District's Living Peace Church Team sponsored a "Run/Walk 4 Peace" this past spring. Forty-four participants raised more than \$1,050 for Heifer International, with Jim Ake of Huntingdon, Pa., leading the way in dollars pledged.

- Children and youth at **Defiance (Ohio) Church of the Brethren** added quarters to a Heifer Project "silo" each Sunday this year. Through the end of September, they had filled four of the silos with quarters for Heifer.

- At **Camp Blue Diamond** in Petersburg, Pa., a Fiberglas cow that camp leaders found dumped in the woods became a camp mascot named "Bessie" for the summer. The Morrisons Cove (Pa.) Herald reported that the "unplanned" mascot became the inspiration for children and their parents to donate more than \$1,000 to Heifer International for the camp's summer offering. Police eventually found the owner of the cow, which had been stolen, and Bessie was returned to the grateful Schneider Dairy of Williamsport at the end of the summer.

(Tom Yingling and Gwen Layman contributed to this report.)



Gwen Layman

## Passing on the gift

The real spark of Dan West's original vision and Heifer International's continuing work today, most will say, is the ongoing nature of the gift. Heifer doesn't give handouts but rather pass-alongs. Recipients of a livestock gift are expected to pass on offspring to needy neighbors, thus being empowered to be part of the solution.

The panel that selected Heifer International for this year's \$1 million Conrad Hilton Humanitarian Prize (see sidebar) pointed to this dynamic as a key.

"The thing that stood out for me is that it is a self-perpetuating gift," Eric Hilton, director of the Hilton foundation, said in an interview with the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. "It does go to the poorest of the poor. What the people basically learn from that gift is phenomenal."

Lester Brown, a noted author and president of the Earth Policy Institute, praised that foresight in a keynote message that focused on world food supplies and prices as a key global issue.

"The genius of Heifer, I think, is the chain effect, the obligation of passing on some of the offspring to others in need," Brown said. "Heifer's greatest legacy is helping people discover the satisfaction of helping other people."

Representatives from Heifer's various project areas on five continents told story after story of success using this model. At some projects, descendants of the original animals provid-

Children and youth at Defiance Church of the Brethren in Ohio donate quarters for a Heifer International "silo."

File photo / Courtesy of BHILA



Dan West speaking at a dedication prior to shipping 11 heifers to South America from Dayton Municipal Airport in 1949.

## A brief timeline

**1937:** Dan West develops the "Not a cup, but a cow" concept as a relief worker distributing milk in the Spanish Civil War

**1939:** Church of the Brethren congregations in Indiana found "Heifers for Relief"

**1944:** Heifer makes its first shipment of dairy animals, to Puerto Rico

**1945:** A shipment of 550 dairy cows goes to China

**1948:** Heifer makes its first shipment of pigs, to Ecuador

**1953:** Heifer Project Inc. is formally established as an independent nonprofit corporation

**1957:** The 3,000th heifer is shipped to Germany

(Adapted from "A History of Service Around the World," Heifer International 2003 Project Profiles)



Meeting in Little Rock are, from left, Heifer International president Jo Luck; Jan West Schrock, daughter of Heifer founder Dan West and now a consultant to the organization; and Kathleen Campanella, communications director for the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., and the Church of the Brethren's representative on the Heifer International board of directors.

## Brethren on the board

Heifer International can trace its beginnings to an initiative of Church of the Brethren congregations in Indiana, Heifers for Relief, spearheaded by Dan West. Through the years, it has grown from a Church of the Brethren program to an independent, nonprofit organization. The Church of the Brethren has continued to have an important role as one of several denominations—called “covenant agencies”—represented on Heifer’s board of directors.

In March 2004, the board accepted a report that recommended reducing the size of the board from 30 to 19, including a reduction of the number of denominational representatives from 13 to five. In recognition of Heifer International’s roots, the Church of the Brethren will hold a permanent board seat; the other four denominational board seats will be filled on a rotating basis. At the October 2004 board meeting, the bylaws were changed and a resolution was passed implementing this recommendation.

The Church of the Brethren has an important leadership role with Heifer International as it continues its important work of feeding the hungry and caring for the Earth. A simple idea that came from Dan West and was nurtured by Brethren congregations has grown into a large organization with an exponentially growing budget and expanding programs 60 years after its founding. The Church of the Brethren’s vision and leadership continues to make a difference in the world.—**Kathleen Campanella**

ed are continuing to aid communities generations later.

Arkansas Gov. Huckabee, in his address at the anniversary conference, praised this aspect.

“From those cows that were first contributed by Dan West, millions of hungry people around the world have been fed,” Huckabee said. “Those were holy cows! . . . The greatest thing we can do, having been recipients of God’s grace, is to give it to others.”

. . .

## Building on the ‘Cornerstones’

“Passing on the Gift” is one of 12 “Cornerstones for Just and Sustainable Development” that serve as a mantra and guiding force for Heifer’s work. Jo Luck made the articulation and emphasis of the cornerstones a priority after she joined the organization in 1989. Staff around the world helped to identify these key values, eventually whittled down to a final list.

The other 11 include accountability, sustainability and self-reliance, gender and family focus, training and education, and spirituality. (The full list, with explanations, can be found at [www.heifer.org/Our\\_Work/Our\\_Approach/Cornerstones.shtml](http://www.heifer.org/Our_Work/Our_Approach/Cornerstones.shtml).)

File photo / Courtesy of BHLA



Dan West during a world trip in the 1960s.

Members of the Green Bananas Drum Circle open a session at Heifer's 60th anniversary conference, part of a strong international flavor at the event.



Wait Wiltischak

**1967:** Heifer celebrates shipment of 1,000,000th chick, to Egypt

**1971:** World headquarters moves to Little Rock, Ark., and Heifer Ranch is purchased in Perryville

**1973:** Name changed to Heifer Project International

**1986:** President Reagan gives volunteerism award to Heifer

**1990:** President Bush gives Heifer the Presidential End Hunger Award

**1994:** Heifer celebrates its 50th anniversary

**2001:** Name change to Heifer International

**2004:** Heifer receives Conrad Hilton Humanitarian Award, marks 60th anniversary

An artist's rendering shows the site of the new Heifer International world headquarters complex, currently under construction in Little Rock, Ark.



Together, they point to the fact that Heifer's work is much broader than simply sending animals to far-off places. The organization has become active in education and advocacy work in areas such as globalization, environmental issues, and sustainable development.

"So often, people just think of Heifer as cute little animals," said Jason Bergmann, a Heifer area representative based in Minnesota, "but the animal is just the hoof that gets us in the door. The real benefit of Heifer is community development."

Dr. Desmond Jolly, an agricultural economist and keynote speaker at a pre-conference symposium on "Small Farmers in a Global Economy," noted that using animals as the vehicle for relief and peace-building struck a powerful nerve.

"Animals have long been central to humanity," he said. "Animals resonate in a profoundly psychic way with human beings." He called Heifer an organization that "follows up with decisive, appropriate, and concerted action."

• • •

There seems to be no doubt: The world is embracing Heifer International. It was featured on NBC's drama *The West Wing* last year, and Oprah Winfrey plugs the organization on her show. Stars from Susan Sarandon to Ted Danson to Walter Cronkite sing Heifer's praises. A series of US presidents from Jimmy Carter on have honored Heifer and/or visited its projects.

In some ways, that may be hard to swallow for a small denomination that usually labors out of the spotlight and has only fleeting brushes with celebrity. But as Ronald Reagan

once said, "There is no limit to what we can accomplish when we don't care who gets the credit."

It seems especially appropriate when it's an organization like Heifer International: As with the ministry of Heifer itself, the real genius comes in giving the offspring to a world in need. Brethren have an offspring to be (humbly) proud of, and it's an organization that still cherishes its Brethren connection.

What would Dan West think of all that Heifer has become? Jan West Schrock addressed that question in her presentation at the anniversary conference. She thinks her father would be pleased, very pleased, with what he saw.

"I believe," she said, "that Heifer has become everything, and more, that he had imagined."

Holy cow. 

Walt Wiltschek is editor of MESSENGER and attended the Heifer International 60th anniversary conference in Little Rock in October.

## RESOURCES

### Books:

- Perhaps the most famous Brethren Press title of all time is *Faith the Cow*, which tells the story of Heifer Project's origins and the original heifer, named Faith. Originally published in 1995, the book went into its sixth printing in 2003, when it passed the 15,000-copy level in sales. The book, written by Susan Bame Hoover and illustrated by Maggie Sykora, received both the Angel Award and a Franklin Award. Price is \$16.

- *Passing on the Gift: The Story of Dan West*, by Glee Yoder, is a biography of the Heifer founder who died in 1971. Also published by Brethren Press in 1995, it retails for \$8.95. A part of the story is quoted in a chapter of *Preaching in a Tavern*, by Kenneth Morse. Morse uses the excerpt to give personal insights into the "Four

Horsemen" who traveled to Brethren camps, including Dan West.

- *Beatrice's Goat*, published by Atheneum Books, is available through Brethren Press. It tells the story of a young girl in Uganda who becomes the recipient of a Heifer goat and thus can fulfill her dream of going to school. The book, published in 2001, was written by Page McBrier and illustrated by Lori Lohstoeter. Cost is \$16.

To order the above titles, go to [www.BrethrenPress.com](http://www.BrethrenPress.com) or call 800-441-3712.

**Monologue:** A monologue telling Dan West's story and the story of Heifer's beginnings was written this year by West's daughter Jan West Schrock and John Haman, an actor and award-winning playwright, with input from Church of the Brethren staff.

It was first performed at an anniver-

sary event held this past summer in Indiana. Church of the Brethren member Brian Kruschwitz, a former Brethren Volunteer Service worker and member of the On Earth Peace "Journey of Young Adults" (JOYA) team, performed the piece there and at several other congregations in the Goshen area.

The monologue can be read as a letter or given as a drama in worship services or other church gatherings. Go to [www.Brethren.org/genbd/BP/LivingWaters](http://www.Brethren.org/genbd/BP/LivingWaters) (click on "Drama"), where the monologue is offered free of charge for congregational use through Brethren Press's Living Waters Online.

### Websites:

Heifer International: [www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org)  
Church of the Brethren Global Food Crisis Fund: [www.brethren.org/genbd/global\\_mission/gfcf.htm](http://www.brethren.org/genbd/global_mission/gfcf.htm)

# “Dan West: Peacemaker”: The power of vision

New video/DVD is valuable resource for Brethren and others

by Donald F. Durnbaugh

In “Dan West: Peacemaker,” indefatigable Brethren videographer David Sollenberger has provided an excellent biographical survey of one of the best known and best loved personalities among Brethren of the 20th century, the visionary church leader and peace activist Dan West (1893-1971).

This 30-minute video/DVD includes striking clips and still photography from a wide-ranging variety of sources, from historical archives, television stations, development agencies, and personal collections. Though basing its specific story line on the creation, enlargement, and current worldwide reach of Heifer International, the broader purpose of the video is to demonstrate and explicate the grounding of Dan West’s life and influence in his commitment to peace.

The story gains much of its power and spirit from informative interviews with a wide number of West’s colleagues and with younger people inspired by his life and witness. Colleagues include M.R. Zigler, Thurl Metzger, and Olden Mitchell; chief among the younger group are his son, Phil West, and his daughter Jan West Schrock. Their candid recollections of the challenges and tutelage of their father present eloquent and moving testimony to the ways in which he inculcated his convictions about peace, integrity, and the simple life. Phil West’s conclusion that “Heifers put flesh on the bones of peace” because the project was real, vital, and dynamic is a concise encapsulation of the spirit of the entire presentation.

Several of those interviewed, especially Manchester College professor Paul Keller, explained how Dan West’s

pursuit of the simple life could be demanding for those associated with him. On a three-day train trip they took from Chicago to Florida, West refused to use the services of the dining car, insisting instead that they depend on snacks of crackers, cheese, and some milk grabbed at brief stops at stations along the way. West’s personal discipline not to accept cake when there were those who did not have bread could be awkward for those attempting to be gracious hostesses to him as one of their guests.

The Heifer Project vision came about in the course of Dan West’s work with the American Friends Service Committee in Spain during the bitter Civil War of the 1930s. Little-known photos from this period, showing West with Spanish children, are among the most moving of the images included. When he returned to his home area of rural northern Indiana, and recounted the stark need of the civilian population, especially of the children, his farming neighbors responded generously.

Claire Stine, then a youth who cared for the first donated heifer, named Faith, recalls the modest beginnings of the program that now reaches thousands of families in 100-plus nations on many continents. The video emphasizes a foundational element of the entire project, one on which Dan West insisted, that recipients of donated animals must agree to “pass on the gift” of offspring to other needy families. This not only greatly increased the outreach of Heifer Project, but also served to strengthen the self-respect of recipients as they were themselves able to help others. Called “a chain reaction of love,” it has, in numerous settings, persisted over many generations of animals.

The video project began through the initiative of Florence Crago, using the Glen Crago Memorial fund for her late husband. Glen Crago had been influenced at Manchester by the peace studies program first suggested by Dan West and then created in 1948 by Gladdys Muir. Florence Crago served as executive producer for the taping, which, as it expanded, found further funding from the General Board of the Church of the Brethren, from Manchester College, and especially from Heifer International.

“Dan West: Peacemaker” should be widely used in congregations, schools, service organizations, and community groups as an informative and inspirational witness to the extensive impact one dedicated and creative individual can have upon the broader society. 

Don Durnbaugh is a historian and former Bethany Theological Seminary faculty member. He currently serves as archivist at Juniata College and lives in James Creek, Pa.



## TO ORDER:

“Dan West: Peacemaker,” which had its debut screening at the 2004 Annual Conference, is available from Brethren Press for \$15 plus postage and handling. Call 800-441-3712.

# What are we doing when we pray?

Wishing, conversing, trusting are part of the 'holy mystery'

by Ken Gible

W

hat are we doing when we pray? Many things. Prayer is one of those subjects that has been studied and discussed and written about until you'd think that everything that could be said about prayer has already been said. Maybe it has.

And yet there is so much about prayer we still don't know, so much you and I still can learn. Maybe the place to begin is with a definition. What is prayer? My dictionary defines prayer this way: "a reverent petition made to a deity." Like all definitions of prayer, that definition is inadequate. It's a very general definition, but even so it leaves out the kind of prayer that is simply saying "thank you." It doesn't include the prayers that don't ask for anything but simply are a silent, hopeful waiting.

There are countless definitions of prayer, each of them providing but one piece of the gigantic puzzle. Praying—prayer—is essentially a holy mystery. There are no experts on prayer. Certainly I'm no expert. Like everyone else, I am a learner, still trying to pray, to pray better than I have, knowing that I sometimes do it well, sometimes poorly, sometimes not at all.

**This unconditional love means that in our prayers we can be totally honest with God. We can be free to pour out our disappointment, our anger and bitterness.**

I believe the essential thing for us is to *want* to pray. I think that's what God wants from us: a desire to pray. Luke's Gospel records that Jesus had been praying, and when he finished praying, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1). From those words we cannot tell if this request was a deep longing, a soul's sincere desire for a relationship with God, or if it was one of Jesus' disciples simply wanting to know something that John's disciples apparently knew. But we do get a clue when the text tells us that the disciples of Jesus often saw their Lord at prayer. They knew he drew strength from prayer. So what a natural thing for them to say, "Lord, teach us to pray."

And Jesus did teach them. He gave them a prayer we still call "The Lord's Prayer." He taught them that persistence is important. He taught them to pray with confidence in God, who, like a loving father, will give his children all they need—not all that they want, mind you, but all they need.

So, then, most of us want to pray. And, like the disciples, we do pray. To go back to my original question,

though, what exactly is it we are doing when we pray? As I also said at the beginning, people are doing many things when they pray.

The first thing they are doing is wishing. I know that doesn't sound very spiritual, and yet wishing is often the starting place for prayer. I wish my life would be in better shape than it is, so I pray for strength and for guidance, for mercy and forgiveness, for comfort, for good health, for a countless number of things I long to have. Beyond such things, I wish that my loved ones and friends would have what they need to make their lives more fulfilled, more blessed. So I pray for them. And I wish the world were a better place, so I pray for the poor, the oppressed, the discouraged. I pray for an end to hostility and war. I pray for peace.

Now it's true that you can wish for something without praying for it. But most prayers begin with wishing. The Lord's Prayer contains some wishing—wishing for God's kingdom to come, God's will to be done on Earth as it is in heaven, wishing for daily bread, wishing that our sins might be forgiven, wishing that we will be delivered from evil.

Prayer begins with wishing, but it moves quickly to the second thing prayer consists of: conversation. Conversation implies at least two parties.

Yes, we all talk to ourselves sometimes, but real conversation means there will be someone else to talk with.

Conversation is pretty much a lost art in our time. We don't get much training in it. Schools teach lots of good things, but they don't teach how to converse. Good conversation is a two-way street. Surely you know people who can't talk about much of anything but themselves: their job, their kids, their vacation, their aches and pains.

Conversation implies listening, not just talking. It means paying close attention. The literal meaning of the word "converse" is "to live with." To converse means to attend fully to the other person.

Conversation between friends is a special blessing. Friends tell one another their joys and their sorrows. They are bonded to each other in affection and respect. They are not indifferent to each other. Their conversation isn't afraid of pauses. They listen with their ears but also with their hearts.

All this has relevance to prayer. Prayer is a very intimate conversation with the One who, among other things, is



our friend. It's no accident that one of the favorite hymns of so many people is "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." There's something so reassuring about that image. When friends are together, they talk to one another. Their conversation doesn't have to fill every moment with words. Prayer involves listening as well as speaking. Jesus advised going to a quiet place to pray. "Whenever you pray," he said, "go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you" (Matt. 6:6).

As I was thinking about this idea of prayer as conversation, it occurred to me that one part of the conversation has been lacking in my prayer life. I'm pretty good at telling God about me: my worries, my concerns, my fears. And that's fine, because God invites us to do that. Scripture says, "Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7). But one thing has been notably absent from this conversation. I've never said to my divine friend, "How are you doing?"

No doubt that strikes you as rather strange—to ask such a question of the Ruler of the Universe. And yet when I read the Bible, it's very clear that the Holy One expresses feelings we can only call human emotions: anger, compassion, joy, sorrow. If we are created in the image of God, then that means we share those emotions with God. There are things that break God's heart: to see the beautiful world God created fouled and polluted, to see little children suffering from malnutrition or abuse, to see men and women, who should live together as brothers and sisters, hating each other, hurting each other, killing each other. And when you and I are hurting, God hurts with us and for us. And there are also things that bring joy to God's heart, like kindness, caring, beauty.

Why is it the Gospels never record anyone saying to Jesus: "Lord, how are you doing? What does it feel like to be constantly attending to the needs of others—healing, blessing, teaching?" Maybe some people did ask that, and the Gospels failed to mention it. We do know that Mary and Martha and Lazarus welcomed him as a house guest. But there's only one mention of anyone even thanking Jesus. It was a Samaritan healed of leprosy. The other nine men who were healed on that occasion never even bothered to express their gratitude to the healer.

So in my prayers, why haven't I been asking God, "How are you doing? What is making you joyful these days? What is breaking your heart?" Maybe I've never done that because no one ever told me I could or should. Maybe I've

never done it because I'm a lousy conversationalist with the Holy One. All I want to talk about is myself. When it comes to prayer, I have a lot to learn about listening.

Prayer, then, begins with wishing, and it moves to conversation. Underlying both the wishing and the conversation is another thing we are doing when we pray: trusting. When we come to God in prayer, we can do so in absolute trust. We know beyond a shadow of a doubt that we are loved unconditionally. To be loved unconditionally is the greatest gift anyone can ever receive. It means that nothing we do or fail to do, nothing we say or think, can make God stop loving us. If that isn't a blessed assurance, I don't know what is.

This unconditional love means that in our prayers we can be totally honest with God. We can be free to pour out our disappointment, our anger and bitterness, even when it is directed at the One to whom we are praying. God can handle our rage. God welcomes our tears, as well as our prayers of gratitude. And even when we can't express ourselves in words in our praying, the Spirit of God does it for us. As the apostle Paul wrote in Romans:

"The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words" (Rom. 8:26).

Or as Eugene Peterson translates those words: "[the Spirit] does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans. He knows us far better than we know ourselves ..." (Rom. 8:26b-27a, *The Message*).

Reflecting on those verses, Bible scholar Walter Wink, in his book *Engaging the Powers*, has written that we tend to think of prayer as something we do. But it's not. Rather, we learn to pray by "simply listening to the prayer already being prayed in us. We are able to pray only because God is always, incessantly, praying in us."

We can trust God to pray with us and in us and for us and through us. When I think of prayer this way, I'm set free from feeling guilty about not praying rightly or not praying enough.

What are we doing when we pray? We are carrying our wishes into conversation with God, trusting that the One we converse with is praying with us.

That's what we're doing when we pray. And that's just for starters. ❧

Ken Gibble lives in Greencastle, Pa., and is an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren.



# Advent's great expectations

**Christ's call can be difficult and unpredictable,  
but it's filled with promise**

by Sandy Bosserman

*"But you, Bethlehem . . . out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel whose origins are from of old, from ancient days. . . . He will stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he will be their peace" Micah 5:2, 4 (NRSV) 5 (NIV).*

**I**t was May 1970. I remember standing on the green lawn of Southwest Missouri State University to memorialize the students killed and injured during an altercation between the National Guard and anti-Vietnam War protesters, hundreds of miles away at Kent State.

The handful present bunched together against the chill of the times. Questioning the authority of the Guard, or any other authority for that matter, was not common practice at Southwest Missouri, hardly a bastion of cultural dissent or radical change. The half-hour event was well attended by administration, faculty, and campus security, and I remember silently observing the professor with the spiral book who logged more names of students present than notes from the speaker's lament.

There they stood, the leaders of the "flock," with wringing hands and shaken sensibilities, taking down names of backwoods kids like me, from Bible-belt communities, lest a memorial service lead to an outbreak of subversive activity. "I sure hate to see this stuff get started here," one commented. Fear and threat were the greatest expectations they could envision from stu-

dents who wondered about this war and the toxic combination of live ammunition and young people on their way to class.

Graduating that spring, and moving into two decades of teaching, I came to see the reasoning articulated by the observers of the memorial service. It would have been far easier to control a classroom if families taught children that the Prince of Peace dwelled in the recesses of the human heart primarily for the purpose of keeping law and order—easier, but void of either great expectation or true strength and majesty.

Instead, those kindergartners, along with the three children born into our own household, tested and tried that philosophy at every twist and turn, demanding another look, a broader perspective, a more compassionate approach, a better "feeding." Many Advent seasons later, it is a joy to live in greater expectation of the table God will prepare for us, rather than in the predictability of any traditional holiday feast.

Jesus, the One who is our peace, did not shirk in serving up great expectations. Religious leaders who misapplied the law, misappropriated the

money, or misused the power of their position were dished out a full helping: "Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matt. 3:10).

Followers relying on old permissions for settling the score found loving their enemies was the least they could do (Matt. 5:43-45). Folks in the inner circle who had the common sense to hear their own stomachs growling learned they could and would feed thousands with a child's portion and still be eating leftovers (John 6). Those at the margin and beyond, never invited to supper, found themselves ushered to the head table (Luke 14). Disciples, some still shaky about the reality of the resurrection, probably on the brink of returning to jobs that had reliably put food on the tables before, were called further from home and hearth than ever: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mark 16:14-15).

No wonder many still cringe when "all that stuff" Jesus started moves into their own nooks, neighborhoods, and nations. The great expectations of Jesus, the very things that make for Christ's peace, are not always easy to swallow. We want so badly for his expectations to more closely match our own, to be reasonable and realistic, translated in catchy phrases and cute melodies.

I once heard a beginner's Sunday school class singing with gusto: "You'd better watch out, you'd better not cry, you'd better not pout, I'm tellin' you why, Jesus Christ is coming to town." Some

well-meaning adult no doubt noted that the number of syllables in "Santa Claus" and "Jesus Christ" were identical, and reasoned it a simple way to put Christ back in Christmas. But we'd be hard put to look Micah in the eye while singing that chorus, at any age. On the continuum of expectations, it is far too small to pass along to the next generation of believers.

The One who is our peace invites the beginner's class (and all the rest of us) to come to the

**The great expectations of Jesus, the very things that make for Christ's peace, are not always easy to swallow. We want so badly for his expectations to more closely match our own, to be reasonable and realistic, translated in catchy phrases and cute melodies.**

table as we are, fragile and easily threatened, pouty and arrogant, teary-eyed and lonely. He stands with us to feed us in the strength of the Lord, releasing us from fear and sin, broadening our expectations that perfect love will cast out fear and good will triumph over evil.

We do not wring our hands amid uncertainty or feel that the feast is wasted. Instead, we humbly practice Christ's peace until that day Micah prophesied, when "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. . . . We will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever." **W**

Sandy Bosserman is district executive minister for Missouri/Arkansas District. She lives in Peace Valley, Mo.

## **CHRISTMAS ADVENT OFFERING**

This year's General Board Christmas Advent Offering has as its theme "Great Expectations," based on Micah 5. Many congregations will observe the offering on Dec. 12, but the theme lends itself to any Sunday in Advent.

General Board Funding staff Ken Neher and Carol Bowman and Identity and Relations director Becky Ullom developed this year's theme materials, with the help of several volunteer writers. A sheet of worship resources in both English and Spanish was sent to congregations along with order forms for envelopes,

bulletin inserts, and other materials. The worship resources include calls to worship, prayers, litanies, and a story.

Some of the materials were also planned to be made available online. Check the Funding website at [www.brethren.org/genbd/funding](http://www.brethren.org/genbd/funding). For questions, contact the Funding office at 800-323-8039.



# Great expectations

## We are bearers of Christ's peace

by Angie Lahman Yoder

**O**ur daughter, Elena, turned 1 year old in September. At this young age, she is already the focus of her parents' expectations.

She has games that teach her phonics and letter recognition. She has dolls to teach her the value of good care. She has books that teach moral lessons about life and relationships. She has play sets intended to stimulate her imagination. She has clothes that display emblems of her parents' alma maters—in the hope that someday she, too, might choose these institutions. She has DVDs with classical music to encourage creative development and learning.

And, to be really honest, she doesn't even have all of the "stuff" that is marketed to her age group in the toy store!

Sometimes we're concerned that we expect too much out of Elena, that our expectations are too great. If we force too many of these expectations on her now, what will happen in the rest of her life?

**We have great expectations that Jesus will bring peace to the world, but we can't expect Jesus to do this job alone. We are his disciples, and we are to reach out to others**

Imagine Jesus' parents, Mary and Joseph, sharing this same concern as new parents—except they weren't the only ones with such great expectations. Micah writes, as rendered in *The Message*, "And the people will have a good and safe home, for the whole world will hold him in respect—Peacemaker of the world!" The world's peace, the world's safety rested in his hands alone.

Particularly since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, many people have been seeking Someone to be the peacemaker of the world. Some of these people have gone back to church to find Jesus, but many have not.

In a 2002 study, Barna Research found that, "Surprisingly few people said the terrorist attacks have had any impact on their religious faith. Only 12 percent admit to such an impact. Women are twice as likely as men to suggest there has been any change in their personal faith (16 percent of women compared to just 7 percent of men)." This analysis also confirms that while

church attendance spiked the first few weeks after Sept. 11, it had returned to normal by November.

Mainstream society concocts a peace that is false: pre-emptive military action, heavy consumerism, overwhelming schedules, massive—and often times misleading—advertising. We have great expectations that Jesus will bring peace to the world, but we can't expect Jesus to do this job alone. We are his disciples, and we are to reach out to others (as instructed in Matthew 28).

As those who have found our hope and peace in Jesus Christ, we are called to speak his peace to all we meet. In one of Jesus' final lessons he said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27). If Jesus is truly "our peace," then we must proclaim this truth from the very core of our beings.

In my first year of teaching, I learned that kids will reach your highest expectation. So if I expected a lot, that would motivate the students to do well. If my expectation was too low, however, then their motivation would also be low, and they wouldn't necessarily try to exceed the benchmark.

Our parental expectations are great: We want Elena to change the world, just as any new parent hopes his or her child will make a positive difference in the future. And we trust that, without negative force or coercion, Elena will reach our highest expectations.

So is there such a thing as expectations that are too great or unreasonable? Not in God's eyes. It was right for Mary and Joseph, for all of us, to have such grand expectations of Jesus, but we must be willing to live out his teachings in our own lives. Our celebration of Jesus' birth may be coming soon, but the great expectation of his peace already exists with us. Expect it. Accept it. Share it.

Angie Lahman Yoder is a teacher and a member of the Church of the Brethren General Board. She lives in Peoria, Ariz.



## Letting the Bible speak to you by Warren Groff

*Old Testament and New Testament are both integral, linked by Jesus Christ*

Alexander Mack and the early Brethren believed devoutly that Bible study constitutes an important discipline or practice of the church, and of each person seeking to be a faithful “follower after Jesus.”

Joining together in the reading of the Bible was also deemed important while prayerfully remaining open to the Spirit’s guidance and instruction. So the study of the Bible book by book, aided by the upcoming MESSENGER series (see sidebar), is truly a grace-filled opportunity to let the Bible speak in fresh and life-changing ways.

The invitation is to enter a “strange new world” where our familiar ways of thinking and responding are often challenged. We readily assume that we are the primary actors in studying and reflecting, only to discover the ground shifting from under us. It is God who is on center stage.

We will be tempted to think that the primary accent running throughout the unfolding account is the sinful rebellion of the participants. But, again, surprise awaits us. Even more primary is the theme of God’s unfailing commitment toward humanity in spite of the ever-present waywardness.

The opportunity is to study the Bible as a whole and to note the interconnec-

tions between the major sections. Brethren traditionally have highlighted the “New Testament as Our Rule of Faith and Practice,” as in the recent Annual Conference paper. But from the beginning the Old Testament was cherished as integral to the Bible. Alexander Mack, in his work *Rights and Ordinances*, quotes generously from it. This series invites us to strengthen relational ties with key participants and happenings from Genesis to Revelation.

The challenge is to let the Bible speak on its own terms. This may well prove to

often broke, he would remind us in cryptic and memorable terms that we are obligated to let the Bible address us from within its own perspectives on a variety of matters, particularly the place and nature of historical understanding in relation to life and faith.

The focus is on Jesus Christ. He is the center point that links what came before with what comes after. He is like that enlightening sentence or paragraph that disperses confusion and clarifies both what preceded and what comes after when reading a demanding book.

**The study of the Bible book by book is truly a grace-filled opportunity to let the Bible speak in fresh and life-changing ways.**

be difficult, for it is tempting to impose our own contemporary ways of thinking.

That danger was made clear to me very early in my seminary studies. Bethany faculty member Floyd E. Mallott is gratefully remembered by former students who were privileged to study the Old Testament under his guidance. In the midst of vigorous disagreements on some text being studied, he would stride to the board. Then, while writing so firmly that his chalk

The New Testament portion of the Bible speaks quite clearly to this, often with the use of a literary form where some things have a meaning in and of themselves, while also pointing to related meanings. They serve as *figura* (“anticipations”) of that which is *figured* (their fulfillment).

For example, read “Mary’s Song of Praise” (Luke 1:46-55) and note the carefully formed allusions to earlier passages (Ps. 34:2-3 and 138:6; Is. 7:14, 9:6-7, 40:10, and 53:1-12). Listen as the Bible speaks about this Jesus who was foreseen so devotedly by Mary during her visit with Elizabeth. Walk with him as he teaches, gathers around him a group of disciples, attracts crowds, and evokes the hostilities of the authorities that result in his crucifixion, death, and resurrection.

And rejoice with all his faithful followers that he was revealed to be the One who unites *anticipated* and *fulfilled* reality, even as had been foretold. As we proceed in our study of the Bible, guided by the ever-present and gracious Spirit, may we be renewed in our efforts faithfully to “Continue the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together.”

### A JOURNEY THROUGH THE WORD

Brethren often speak of spending time in the Scriptures and of discerning together how God is speaking to us through God’s Word. Survey after survey, however, suggests that most Americans do very little Bible reading on their own, and most know little beyond the major stories.

In an effort to provide an avenue for stretching our faith and deepening our spiritual life, MESSENGER in the January issue will begin a “Journey through the Word.” Each month, from January 2005 through December 2009, the magazine will provide a brief overview of a different book (or books) of the Bible. We will begin with Genesis and continue straight through to Revelation.

More than a dozen writers—including seminary and college professors, pastors, and others—have generously agreed to be part of this project. Bethany Theological Seminary president Gene Roop kicks off the series by looking at Genesis, a book in which he has done significant study.

This series is offered not as an end, but as a means to encourage readers into further Bible study and greater biblical literacy. By spending more time in the Word, we pray that we find God’s Spirit working in fresh and renewing ways among us.—**Walt Wiltschek**

Warren Groff, former president of Bethany Theological Seminary, lives in Bartlett, Ill. He is a member of York Center Church of the Brethren in Lombard.

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Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

*A praise team leads Sunday worship for the General Board. Board member Angie Lahman Yoder led singing with board member Jaime Diaz on electric guitar and Bethany Theological Seminary professor Tara Hornbacker on drums. Other music contributors included David Sollenberger, who played guitar and served as worship leader, and Brethren Academy director Jonathan Shively on piano.*

## UPCOMINGEVENTS

### 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 Advent Offering**

**Dec. 24 Christmas Eve service on CBS**

**Jan. 18-25 Prayer for Christian Unity week**

## General Board approves mission in Haiti, forms property committee

The General Board approved denominational mission in Haiti; announced a stewardship of property committee to study use of General Board properties and buildings in Elgin, Ill. and New Windsor, Md.; approved a budget for 2005; and approved a shift in relationship with the American Baptist Churches USA, as it met in Elgin, Oct. 15-18.

The theme for worship and business was taken from the 2004 annual report: "Bound Together, Finely Woven." Chair Donna Shumate led the meetings. Ken Hunn, executive director of the Brethren Church (Ashland), brought the Sunday morning message.

Doug Diamond, General Board representative to the Mission and Ministries Planning Council (MMPC), introduced the proposal for mission in Haiti. "I have the call of introducing Christ to those around me," he said. The proposal from MMPC is the fruit of lengthy exploration with Church of the Brethren districts, congregations, and individuals already at work on the Caribbean island shared with the Dominican Republic.

Two fellowships reportedly have been planted in Haiti, said Merv Keeney, executive director of Global Mission Partnerships—a development MMPC learned of in conversation with two districts and with Haitian Brethren congregations and leaders in the US and the Dominican

Republic. Other Brethren efforts in Haiti have included wells programs, health ministries, short-term mission trips, and workcamps, he said.

The denominational mission in Haiti will be a new model for the church, Keeney told the board, and will be "Haitian-led."

"This brings two parts of our church joining together in mission to a third place," he said, outlining a plan for Haitian Brethren leaders from the US and the DR to lead the mission. The proposal was approved after board members and others asked questions about staffing and budget for the mission, and after the board spent a few moments in silence and prayer.

An initial announcement of a six-member stewardship of property committee, an ad hoc committee appointed by the executive committee, was met by calls to diversify the committee to include women, ethnic minorities, and western Brethren. Later in the meeting, a special session was held to process the concerns. Shumate announced that two more members would be added and called for suggestions of names.

The executive committee later announced the final make-up of the committee as: D. Miller Davis, Mid-Atlantic District; Fletcher Farrar, Illinois/Wisconsin; Dale Roth, Middle Pennsylvania; Ivan Patterson, Southern Ohio; Wanda Haynes, Oregon/Washington; Dale Grossbach, Missouri/Arkansas; Marianne Rhoades Pittman, Virginia; and David Sollenberger, Atlantic

Northeast (board representative). The group will hold its first meeting by January 2005 and give a final report in March 2006.

A 2005 budget for the board's core ministries totaled \$5,376,410. The parameter originally set for 2005 represented a \$199,000 reduction; the final budget as approved has a reduction of \$248,000. Two vacant staff positions in Congregational Life Ministries and Information Services will not be filled. The board also approved budgets for several self-funded units, most of which have zero-based budgets.

Ken Neher, director of funding and donor development, said overall giving to the ministries of the board was up 23 percent from a year earlier. A dip of 1.3 percent in congregational giving to the board's core ministries was balanced by a gain in individual giving. "By far the largest increase in unrestricted income was in our bequest gift category," Neher said, "where estate settlements have rebounded from two years of very little activity."

The board approved a recommendation from the Committee on Interchurch Relations (CIR), which made a two-year study of the "observer/consultant" relationship with American Baptist Churches USA. Brandy Fix, CIR member and pastor of Wabash (Ind.) Church of the Brethren, brought the recommendation that the relationship continue "because we find that it is of great value." But in a move to more meaningfully relate with the American

Baptists, CIR recommended that the position of observer/consultant be shifted from the board to CIR. The American Baptists are considering a similar shift in their structure, she said.

In other business, the board appointed Dale Minnich and Ken Wenger to its Audit and Investment Committee and approved polity revisions to be considered by the 2005 Annual Conference. A variety of small revisions were approved, mostly to bring polity up to date.

A change in the nomination process for board members also was made, initiated by staff who discovered a "mathematical glitch" that will create an extra vacancy of a district representative every eight years beginning in 2005. The board approved a proposal brought by Annual Conference secretary Fred Swartz to fill the vacancy with an "at-large" district representative nominated by the board. The nomination will be submitted to Annual Conference for its approval.



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

*The General Board's fall meetings closed with prayer in small groups. Here, Brethren Witness/Washington Office director Phil Jones, left, prays with Annual Conference moderator Jim Hardenbrook.*

## Church of the Brethren provides 2004 CBS Christmas Eve special

The Church of the Brethren is providing the Christmas Eve service for national telecast on CBS. The program will air 11:35 p.m.-12:35 a.m. EST Dec. 24, during the slot normally occupied by The Tonight Show with David Letterman.

CBS invites a different denomination to provide its Christmas Eve special each year. This year, National Council of Churches staff suggested the Church of the Brethren. "This is a rare opportunity, and we are honored by the invitation," said Stan Noffsinger, general secretary of the General Board.

With the theme "Enter the Light of Life," the service will focus on the story of Jesus' birth told in Luke 2. Viewers will be invited to enter into Christmas and to find the light of Christ through scripture, hymns, a sermon, and a variety of classic

Christmas music and contemporary pieces performed by an array of musicians including the 51-member choir of Juniata College. Christopher Bowman, pastor of Oakton Church of the Brethren, Vienna, Va., will deliver the message.

The service was taped Nov. 23 at Bethany Theological Seminary's Nicarry Chapel in Richmond, Ind., and was produced by the General Board. Most CBS affiliates will air the service; CBS estimates viewership in the millions.

The planning committee included Bowman; music coordinator Shawn Kirchner, minister of music at La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren and a professional musician with the Los Angeles Master Chorale; worship consultant Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm, assistant professor of min-

istry studies at Bethany; Noffsinger and Del Keeney, executive director of the board's Congregational Life Ministries, as consultants; and executive producer Wendy McFadden, publisher of Brethren Press.

The service also will be available on DVD and videotape through Brethren Press, beginning Dec. 27. Orders may be placed

now at [www.brethrenpress.com](http://www.brethrenpress.com), or call 800-441-3712. The DVD will include a "behind-the-scenes" documentary of the making of the service by Brethren videographer David Sollenberger. For more information see the Christmas Eve pages at [www.enterchristmas.org](http://www.enterchristmas.org), where worship resources used in the broadcast as well as graphics and suggestions for congregations to promote the service are available.



# INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT: WORLD HUNGER

Time, talent, and treasure are core elements of Christian stewardship. Brethren also regard care of the land and environment as essential stewardship. Now a call to be stewards of God's possibilities is being sounded, with the vision of adequate food for the world's 800 million hungry. The vision stems from a Bible filled with injunctions to feed the hungry and lift the burdens of the poor.

One way rural and urban churches can respond to this call is by participating in a "growing project," an effort that marshals congregational and community resources to help developing countries establish food security systems of their own. Crops grown in US communities become not a relief measure, but, through the Foods Resource Bank, a catalyst for the poor to know the dignity and pride of feeding themselves.

This year 154 growing projects in 14 states cultivated 5,100 acres, up remarkably from the 10 growing projects and 360 acres that marked the debut of Foods Resource Bank growing projects five years ago.

Ivester Church of the Brethren in Iowa is one of nine churches from the Conrad, Grundy Center, and Marshalltown communities that were partners in a 154-acre corn-growing project this year. Dubbed "A-maize-ing Grace," the effort drew the added support of two dozen area civic and business interests. Proceeds from the harvest will undergird agriculture in 12 villages in Madagascar, enabling the purchase of seeds and livestock, planting of trees, building of storage bins, expansion of markets, and programs of nutrition and sanitation. With funds matched by the Foods Resource Bank through a grant from US AID, the growing project will send more than \$100,000 to Madagascar by year's end.



Corn is harvested from the growing project in Iowa.

Howard Royer

Lois Kruse, who with the congregation's witness commission piloted Ivester's efforts, sees the venture as a milestone in churches working together. "We found there is something we can do about world hunger, effecting long-term help, not just a handout," she said. "And we received wonderful cooperation from the farmers in doing what they are so very good at—planting and harvesting."

In two separate fundraising efforts, the congregation presented a peace concert and dinner, then ran a food booth at an annual mass bicycle ride across Iowa. The ventures netted nearly \$2,000 for the Foods Resource Bank project.

Introduced to the Church of the Brethren this year through the General Board's Global Food Crisis Fund (GFCF), the Foods Resource Bank is a Christian response to world hunger modeled after the very successful Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The Foods Resource Bank builds on the unique strengths of donors and recipients.

The GFCF is awarding ten \$1,000 grants to Church of the Brethren congregations or groups to help cover start-up expenses of growing projects next year. For more information call 800-323-8039 ext. 264 or visit [www.brethren.org/genbd/global-mission/gfcf.html](http://www.brethren.org/genbd/global-mission/gfcf.html).

"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet," Frederick Buechner wrote. Growing projects become the place where America's productive agricultural enterprise and the world's hungry people meet.—Howard Royer

## Recent grants from the General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund

- \$20,000 to Church World Service for emergency aid following hurricanes and flooding
- \$10,000 for aid in the wake of hurricanes in the Caribbean
- \$8,000 for recovery from devastating floods in Bangladesh
- \$7,000 to help recovery from flooding in the Dominican Republic and Haiti

## Recent grants from the General Board's Global Food Crisis Fund

- \$10,000 to support Blessed Bakhita Primary Girls School in southern Sudan



Howard Royer

Ivester Church of the Brethren in Iowa was one of nine churches that partnered in a corn-growing project dubbed "A-maize-ing Grace." The project contributed more than \$100,000 to help Madagascar develop food security systems of its own through the Foods Resource Bank.

## Annual Conference theme, plans for 2005 announced

"Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus," based on Heb. 12:1-4, is the theme for Annual Conference in Peoria, Ill., July 2-6, 2005. The Program and Arrangements Committee and Worship Committee met in Elgin, Ill., Aug. 26-27 and Sept. 26-28 respectively, to choose preachers, worship leaders, Bible study leaders, and themes and scriptures.

"The Church has always been in need of a call to remember Jesus," moderator Jim Hardenbrook wrote about the theme.

"The book of Hebrews calls a group of Christians to reconsider Jesus. In the midst of their persecution and questions the writer asks them to take another look at Jesus; to consider him. I'm convinced such an exercise would be good for us."

Rosanna Eller McFadden, professional calligrapher and a member of the committee, designed the logo using the theme words.

Hardenbrook will preach Saturday with moderator-elect Ron Beachley leading worship. Galen Hackman, pastor of Ephrata (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, will preach Sunday with Frances Townsend, pastor of Onekama (Mich.) Church of the Brethren, as worship leader. Sandy Bosserman, executive of Missouri/Arkansas District, will preach Monday with worship leader Thomas Dowdy Jr., pastor of Imperial Heights Church of the Brethren, Los Angeles. Gerald and Rebecca Crouse, on the pastoral team at New Beginnings Church of the Brethren, Warrensburg, Mo., will lead worship Tuesday with a preacher to be announced. Chris Douglas, General Board director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, will speak Wednesday with a worship team of Matt Guynn, On Earth

Peace program coordinator for Peace Witness; Cindy Laprade and Beth Rhodes, coordinators of youth and young adult workcamps; and Nate Polzin, licensed minister from Mount Pleasant, Mich.

McFadden will serve as worship coordinator. Beth and Keith Hollenberg, a pastor at York (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren, will coordinate music with Marilyn Mason as organist, Rich Brode on piano/keyboard, and Joan Fyock

Norris directing the choir. Bible study leaders will be Bob Neff, Old Testament scholar; Ruben DeOleo, director of Hispanic Ministry for Atlantic Northeast District; Levi Ziegler, ordained minister from

Manheim, Pa.; and Pearl Rohrer, Bethany Theological Seminary student. Debbie Eisenbise, pastor of Skyridge Church of the Brethren, Kalamazoo, Mich., will lead theological studies.

## Personnel moves

**Ralph McFadden** will retire Dec. 31 from the Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC) as director of the Fellowship of Brethren Homes, a position he has held since 2001.

McFadden has worked to strengthen the relationship between Brethren retirement centers and districts and congregations, increased the homes' presence at Annual Conference, and led development of a paper on uncompensated care in Brethren retirement centers.

He has served in the Church of the Brethren as a pastor, a district executive, and executive for the Parish Ministries Commission of the General Board. McFadden also has been chaplain and bereavement counselor at Hospice of Metro Denver, Colo. He is a member of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren, Elgin, Ill.



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## 'Star Wars' empire strikes a chord

**W**hen I first saw *Star Wars* not long after it opened in 1977, I had begun serving as summer pastor at Modesto Church of the Brethren in California. Since the film's creator, George Lucas, was a Modesto native, some in the congregation remembered him as a nice but slightly geeky kid.



FRANK RAMIREZ

I was mildly skeptical before I saw the film. I was a great fan of the literature of science fiction, but I found most sci fi movies tedious, threadbare, or full of bad science and/or bad acting. Less than a minute into the film, however, I realized I was having trouble catching my breath. Overwhelmed by emotion

at a tale larger than life, yet set in a world I knew better than my own, I became an instant and lifelong fan.

It's an enthusiasm I've shared with my children. They're all adults now, but there's a big box of battered *Star Wars* toys (none of them preserved pristine in their wrappers, thank heavens) that we still go through when they're home.

I suppose there are those who might wonder why a Brethren pastor and writer would take time to recommend a series of movies with the word "Wars" in the title, but to

**The series' worst villain is changed, transformed, saved. His eternal destiny is altered, because someone believed enough in him to try.**

my mind few films have had a more beneficial effect on our society than the *Star Wars* series. The first three films (oddly enough numbered IV, V, and VI, because of where they fall in the overall sequence) have been released in DVD format for the first time, so this is probably a good time to consider what these movies mean.

I remember that many movies, prior to the 1977 release of the first *Star Wars* film, inevitably resulted in either a pointed or pointless death for the hero, often self-inflicted. The heroes were typically anti-heroes who didn't really oppose society, and offered no real solution to society's problems, but simply went on a series of pointless adventures that ended in a rather pointless death. Good? Evil? All relative. Life? Not worth living. Faith? Dead issue. Nothing and nobody can change.

*Star Wars* changed a number of things, including the way movies are made, packaged, marketed, and merchandized, but what Lucas really did was create an enduring myth in which faith, hope, and love abide. There is such a thing as good, and it is defined not by circumstances but by something outside the creation.

The future, instead of being a place where anything human will inevitably be crushed, turns out to be a fun place. It's dangerous, threatening, and subject to those forces that desire to crush freedom and initiative, but also the sort of future where those forces will be defeated. Count on it. The films also reminded us that we weren't necessarily born to lose.

In Greek mythology a prophecy said that the infant Oedipus would grow up to kill his father and marry his mother. Despite the best efforts of his parents to prevent that horror from occurring, it did. That's how many people view fate—you can't fight it. What will be, will be. In the *Star Wars* saga the hero, Luke Skywalker, nearly kills a man who turns out to be his father and could have married a woman who turns out to be his sister. The reason he does not is because despite the forces of fate and destiny, people can make decisions that will change their course and avert true disaster.

And, finally, there is salvation in the original trilogy. The series' worst villain is changed, transformed, saved. His eternal destiny is altered, because someone believed enough in him to try. Over the years Lucas has tinkered with the films, adding special effects as funds and means became available, as well as restoring cut scenes. Along with the obligatory documentaries, these are all part of the bells and whistles that come with a remake on DVD, and they are fun. If I

have any criticism of the DVDs it is that Lucas should have included the original theatrical versions as well, which is usually the case for these boxed sets. But really, who cares?

The theology of the film is simple, even simplistic. So is the storyline and dialogue at times. But this is myth, not history. And yeah, it's full of war, but then so is the Old Testament. There's also self-sacrifice, altruism, idealism, and faith in something larger than our lives.

The opening credits tell us that this saga takes place "A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away." There was no Jesus then. There is now. Thank heavens for that, too. 

Frank Ramirez is pastor of Everett (Pa.) Church of the Brethren and a member of the Church of the Brethren General Board.

**ABOUT THE MOVIES:** *Star Wars* (1977), *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), and *Return of the Jedi* (1983) were the first three films released in the *Star Wars* series. Two more (Episodes I and II) have been released since then, and Episode III, *Revenge of the Sith*, is due out in May 2005. All have been rated PG.

**ABOUT THE DVD:** The four-disc set (with one disc of documentary and "bonus coverage") was released on Sept. 21. It retails for \$69.88. The release earned a 4-star "excellent" rating from *TV Guide* for the movies, 3 stars (good) for the extras.



## ONCAMPUS

### Bridgewater College (Bridgewater, Va.)

Bridgewater's football team, a Division III powerhouse in recent years, was rolling again this fall. The Eagles finished the regular season 8-2 overall and 6-0 in the Old Dominion Athletic Conference. Bridgewater was to begin play in the NCAA Division III playoffs Nov. 20.

### Elizabethtown College (Elizabethtown, Pa.)

Recent presentations at the college included Young Center senior fellow Donald Kraybill, a member of Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren, on "The Amish and the State" and Bethany Theological Seminary faculty member Jeff Bach on his book "Voices of the Turtledoves: The Sacred World of Ephrata," about the Ephrata Cloister.

### Juniata College (Huntingdon, Pa.)

Every Sunday at 10 a.m. a group of Juniata students gathers in the lobby of Ellis College Center to participate in "Church Search," a program run by college upperclassmen to help freshman students find a church in the area. "It's a great way to give freshmen an opportunity to see what local churches have to offer," sophomore Jon Hoey said.

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

La Verne's College of Business and Public Management has created the Center for Strategic Thinking. It is the area's first resource of its kind specifically dedicated to working with companies, business and community leaders on a strategic level. Under the direction of Dennis Laurie, the center will serve businesses, municipal governments, and non-profit organizations.

### Manchester College (North Manchester, Ind.)

The college has tripled its "Connections" scholarship to \$3,000 for new Church of the Brethren students entering in fall 2005. Brethren students will receive the award on top of other financial aid for which they qualify, up to full tuition.

### McPherson College (McPherson, Kan.)

At the annual Honors Convocation during homecoming weekend, Dr. Susan Taylor, college librarian and a former moderator of McPherson Church of the Brethren, was recognized as Tenured Professor of the Year. Roger Stout, assistant professor of technology, was recognized as Non-Tenured Professor of the Year.



**Brethren Volunteer Service and Outdoor Ministries Association** again engaged in a partnership this past year as four young adults spent their BVS terms helping at one of the denomination's camps. In the front row is Elizabeth Waas Smith, who worked at Camp Myrtlewood in Oregon. In the back row are Josef Harle, Camp Ithiel, Florida; Thomas Burnell, Brethren Woods, Virginia; and Matt Rucker, Camp Bethel, Virginia.

## Bits and pieces

- Skippack Church of the Brethren (Collegeville, Pa.), with the support of On Earth Peace, hosted its **5th annual peace retreat** Sept. 17-19. More than 65 Church of the Brethren youth and advisors attended despite bad weather in the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan. Rick Polhamus of Christian Peacemaker Teams and Skippack pastor Larry O'Neill led sessions on the theme "Speak Peace." The retreat also included a time of silence, a campfire, and morning worship with the Skippack congregation.
  - Of the 78 students doing graduate-level work through **Bethany Theological Seminary** this year, 29 are alumni of one of the Brethren colleges. Thirteen come from Manchester; nine from Bridgewater; six from Elizabethtown; and one from McPherson.
  - The Chicago-based CBS show **Different Drummers** featured the General Board's youth and young adult workcamp program with coordinators Cindy Laprade and Beth Rhodes. Agata Zalewski, a youth workcamp participant from York Center Church of the Brethren, Lombard, Ill., was interviewed as were several other Brethren members in the audience including youth and advisors from Chicago-area congregations. The show aired Oct. 23 at 5 a.m.
  - Greensburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren hosted a concert by the **Western Pennsylvania District Youth Choir** Nov. 6. The 15-member choir performed original compositions by director Paul Longwell. The group was doing a weekend tour of congregations in the district.
  - On or near Feb. 6, young people from more than 15,000 congregations, schools, and other organizations are expected to raise over \$5 million through the annual **Souper Bowl of Caring**. Last year, the project raised more than \$4.26 million to help the hungry. Each participating group donates their collection directly to the charity of choice. In the Church of the Brethren for example, groups may send funds to the Global Food Crisis Fund.
  - Teens are far more likely to seek out their friends for **help with ethical decisions** than to ask a member of the clergy, according to a Harris Interactive poll of 624 students conducted for business education organization Junior Achievement and accounting firm Deloitte & Touche. Eighty-three percent of teens said they would turn to their friends for help in making such choices, followed by their parents (68 percent), teachers (27 percent), the Internet (24 percent), and clergy (14 percent). (RNS)

**We are not powerless in this “fight against terrorism.” We have the most powerful defense available. We only need to add a few sincere words to our prayers.**

## ‘Pray for our enemies’

We are not powerless in this “fight against terrorism.” We have the most powerful defense available. We only need to add a few sincere words to our prayers.

In Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, we are

told to “pray for our enemies” (Matt. 5:44). We need to remember: Don’t tell God what to do about the situation, but simply add these few words when we talk to him.

**Doris Jenkins**  
Woodbine, Md.

## Article offered enlightenment

In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians (4:15), he admonishes us to “...speak the truth in love,” and it is in that spirit that I write in response to Brother Rummel’s letter in the September MESSENGER regarding the article on global warming by David Radcliff [July 2004].

Measuring the temperature of the Earth is a complex task, but the scientific evidence from a variety of measurement methods (such as the shrinkage of glaciers worldwide) clearly indicates that our average global temperature has been increasing over the past 200 years. Global temperature changes historically correlate to atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide, the major greenhouse gas. The reality of global warming is not really in question since it can be measured, just like using a thermometer to determine the temperature of a cup of coffee.

The major disagreements in the scientific community are over the effects and extent of changes that will result from global warming. This has allowed some government and business leaders to delay taking measures that they believe could have adverse impacts on national economies. The Kyoto Accords’ exemption of China has also made political action difficult for the more developed nations to accept.

Brother Rummel is correct in that volcanoes can contribute to temporary global cooling by dispersing large amounts of dust and dirt in the atmosphere to

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shade us from the sun's rays, but the effect disappears when the air is cleansed by rain and/or snow. Volcanoes also produce large amounts of carbon dioxide when they erupt, so their longer-lasting effect is to increase global temperatures.

Most importantly, Brother Radcliff's article has faithfully followed this magazine's tradition of being a "messenger of religious faith and action." since the source of these global climate changes have been conclusively shown (again by multiple methods) to be the result of human behaviors.

Supporting our current lifestyles requires huge amounts of resources, including energy, that are not uniformly shared by all of the world's peoples. The more developed nations have 20 percent of the world's people but consume 88 percent of its resources and produce 75 percent of its waste. The United States has less than 5 percent of the world's population but produces 25 percent of its carbon dioxide.

When I was studying environmental science, one of my most surprising discoveries was finding that environmental issues cannot be dealt with separately from those of peace and justice, individual freedoms, and religious/philosophical beliefs. They are all woven together in the real world. The lesson we must learn is that our actions have consequences. Is this not in keeping with the teachings of our Brethren faith?

I appreciate Brother Radcliff's enlightening article and his challenge for us to live in harmony with God's Earth and its people.

**Don Miller**  
Alleman, Iowa

### Don't forget Brazil roots

There would be no Igreja da Irmandade (Church of the Brethren) in Brazil today, were it not for the spiritual gifts and efforts of Onaldo Alves Pereira. He and I spent years in the 1980s planting and nurturing seeds of faith in that country.

To suggest, in the October MESSENGER ["Sweet dreams: Vision for new mission in Brazil"], that current church plantings led by Marcos and Suely Inhauser are the "initial" efforts is to rewrite history.

**Stephen Newcomer**  
West Hollywood, Calif.

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**This is a shallow, unbiblical, un-Christlike concept of love. Jesus, in his love, always confronted sinful actions with the exhortation to stop. Maybe it is time for us as a denomination to start doing the same thing!**

### Time to say 'No'

Isn't it time to say "No" to the promotion of the same-sex lifestyle? It seems strange to me that after passing the 1983 (Annual Conference) paper "Human Sexuality from a Christian Perspective," in which the denomination states that from our understanding of scripture homosexual and lesbian lifestyles are unacceptable, that there is still so much promotion of this lifestyle.

There are calls for booths at Annual Conference [September 2004 Letters]. Some pastors want to "affirm" these relationships. Some congregations want to license and ordain homosexuals to the ministry. When did this sin become accept-

able? Those who promote this refer to, "We are to be in dialogue." For what purpose? To eventually make it acceptable?

The promotion is based on the reasoning, "Let's love those with whom we disagree." We can love those with whom we disagree without giving approval to their actions. Are we never going to make a clear statement that this lifestyle is sinful?

When Jesus was confronted with the woman taken in adultery, without condemning her he made a clear statement that her actions were sinful. His exhortation to her was, "I do not condemn you. Now go and change your lifestyle, and do not sin any more." It seems we don't want to say this clearly. Instead it seems

like we are saying, "It's okay. Your lifestyle is acceptable to us, so you can continue with our blessing."

This is a shallow, unbiblical, un-Christlike concept of love. Jesus, in his love, always confronted sinful actions with the exhortation to stop. Maybe it is time for us as a denomination to start doing the same thing!

**Glenn Hassinger**  
Myerstown, Pa.

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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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RUSSIA and UKRAINE (July 29 - August 12)

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## New Members

**Arlington, Va.:** Dori Byron  
**Columbia City, Ind.:** Samuel Norris, Esther Norris  
**Community, Twin Falls, Idaho:** Dan Detrow, Mistie Kestie, Gretchen Krasznavolygi, Marilyn Lancaster, Alyssa Mauldin, Mark Bausman, Kathryn Bausman, David Humphrey, Dee Humphrey, Rose Mauldin  
**Denton, Md.:** Joseph Lezotte, Dylan Taillie, Calvin George  
**Dupont, Ohio:** Pam Fee, Chuckie Chastain, Ashley Chastain  
**Goshen City, Goshen, Ind.:** Kirby Eysol, Lores Steury, Martha Steury, Lana Cole, Val Knickrehm, Mary Krause, Peggy Bontrager  
**Lampeter, Pa.:** Stephen Capoferri, Wendy Capoferri, Joseph Johnson, III, Shelley Johnson, Benjamin Creighton, Ryan Hallman, Lisa Kauffman, Kassy Keener, Ashley Lutz, Abram Mellinger, Dustin Venerick  
**Lansing, Mich.:** Judi Suess, Kierin Kerbawy-Braddick  
**Living Faith Fellowship, Concord, N.C.:** Eric Hannaway, Paula Hannaway, Greg Medlin, Rachel Wilson, Melissa Wilson  
**Long Green Valley, Glen Arm, Md.:** Eric Hurst  
**Maple Grove, Ashland, Ohio:** Sarah Bishop, April Barr, Brian Baughman, Deana Baughman, Daniel T. Loucka, Feieta Perez, Randal Recker, Jennifer Recker, Emmie Vance, Terry Vaught, Sherry Vaught, Dorothy Long  
**Marsh Creek, Gettysburg, Pa.:** Stanley Gish, Perla Gish, Lee Ellsworth, Bettina Ellsworth, Cindy Henry, Vanessa Henry, Venus Henry, Joyce M. Alfree  
**New Carlisle, Ohio:** Netasha Otto, Debra Lynne Meade, Michael Alan Meade, Charles Leroy Shaneyfelt, Matthew Benton Miller  
**Red Oak Grove, Floyd, Va.:** Fred Quesenberry, Lorene Quesenberry  
**Richmond, Ind.:** Kurt Ritchie,

Sandy Taylor, Jonathan Ulrich, Turner Ritchie, Derek Heaton, Emma Rohrer  
**Rock Run, Goshen, Ind.:** Caleb Kragt, Joni Miller, Robert Miller, Emily Waits  
**Rocky Mount, First, Rocky Mount, Va.:** Del Fletcher, Kathy Fletcher, Steven Smith, Carrie Ingle Smith, Jeff Scruggs, Lucinda Scruggs, Ben Minnix, Taylor Brabson, Tommy Culp, Randall Harrison  
**Rossville, Ind.:** Rob Lawrence, Jodelle Lawrence, Sheila Oliver  
**Spring Creek, Hershey, Pa.:** Monica Breon, Robert Etter, Brenda Etter, Beth Heister, Janice Heister, Ashlie Washington-Derk  
**Stevens Hill Community, Elizabethtown, Pa.:** Norma Klugh, Barbara Gestewitz, Brent Keller  
**Trotwood, Ohio:** Jennifer Huddleson  
**Turkey Creek, Nappanee, Ind.:** Shanna Krull  
**Water Street, Kent, Ohio:** Carla Gillespie  
**Woodbury, Pa.:** Walter Wertz, Lois Wertz, Irvin Guyer, Arletha Guyer, Kelsi Hite, Jonathan Tenalio, John Hill  
**White Oak, Manheim, Pa.:** Sarah Brubaker, Kierra Metzler, Melodie Hagens, Delton Sensenig, Cheryl Burkholder  
**Winter Park, Fla.:** Glen Lyons, Michelle Lyons, Roy Harris, Teresa Harris, David Harris, Donna Everly, Dan Anderson, Michael Heavener, Patti Heavener, Sam Knieriem, Dorothy Knieriem

## Wedding Anniversaries

**Bohrer, Wendell and Joan, Sebring, Fla., 55**  
**Bomberger, Harold and Betty, Palmyra, Pa., 60**  
**Brewer, Robert and Dorothy, Clemmons, N.C., 65**  
**Burkett, Paul and Carol, Columbia City, Ind., 50**  
**Davis, Darrel and Betty, Mount Morris, Ill., 55**  
**Frey, Vernon and Berdine, Sebring, Fla., 60**  
**Hamilton, Dave and Velma, Virden, Ill., 76**  
**Hammaker, Loy and Eva, Winston-Salem, N.C., 50**  
**Holland, Paul and Catherine, Rocky Mount, Va., 50**  
**Kintner, George and Virginia, Adrian, Mich., 60**

**Lyall, George and Betty, Sebring, Fla., 55**  
**Manier, Jake and Rachel, Stanley, Wis., 65**  
**Overholser, Willard and Leora, Sebring, Fla., 55**  
**Reed, George and Patty, Winston-Salem, N.C., 50**  
**Rhoads, Paul and Ruthann, Frostproof, Fla., 50**  
**Robertson, John and Jane, Winston-Salem, N.C., 60**  
**Shelton, Cletus and Norma, Winston-Salem, N.C., 50**  
**Sipes, Ralph and Frances, Sebring, Fla., 55**  
**Sollenberger, Ray and Elaine, Everett, Pa., 50**  
**Stutzman, Charles and Irma, Adrian, Mich., 60**  
**Teach, Kenneth and Virginia, Springfield, Ohio, 50**  
**Watkins, Lawrence and Ruth, New Paris, Ind., 65**  
**Wenger, Roy and Helen, Sebring, Fla., 55**  
**Whitmer, David and Estelle, Sebring, Fla., 50**  
**Wiseman, Gene and Reba, Harrisonburg, Va., 55**  
**Zimmerman, Charles and Dottie, Sebring, Fla., 60**

## Deaths

**Bain, Myrtle, 95, Dixon, Ill., Oct. 1**  
**Balsbaugh, Gerald E., 81, Harrisburg, Pa., Sept. 29**  
**Baughner, Harry E., 81, New Oxford, Pa., Sept. 9**  
**Bender, Robert, 69, Springfield, Ohio, Sept. 16**  
**Blough, Dorothy, 79, Goshen, Ind., July 27**  
**Bollinger, Mark, 77, Lititz, Pa., June 25**  
**Bosserman, Rhoda Mae, 88, Gettysburg, Pa., Sept. 14**  
**Brown, Emma, 91, Staunton, Va., July 19**  
**Brown, Jerry, 63, Mesa, Ariz., Sept. 15**  
**Brown, Mary, 72, Oakwood, Ohio, Oct. 10**  
**Burgard, Glenn, 85, Lancaster, Pa., Aug. 22**  
**Burner, Ruby, 96, Dixon, Ill., Oct. 5**  
**Carpenter, Donald, 76, Goshen, Ind., Aug. 29**  
**Cosner, E. Lucille, 95, Salida, Calif., Oct. 8**  
**Edwards, Gail B., 82, Everett, Pa., Aug. 27**  
**Eshleman, Helen, 75, Manheim, Pa., Sept. 8**  
**Fleishman, Dewey, 105, Bridgewater, Va., Sept. 27**  
**Frederick, George Burton, 84,**

**Goshen, Ind., Oct. 4**  
**Garrett, April Lynn Zimmerman, 35, Smithsburg, Md., Aug. 26**  
**Geyer, Dorothy L., 87, Nappanee, Ind., Oct. 6**  
**Ginder, James W., 67, Mount Joy, Pa., Sept. 10**  
**Gottshall, Gilbert Booz, 72, Surfside, Fla., Aug. 24**  
**Greiner, Edna, 89, North Manchester, Ind., Sept. 30**  
**Hawk, William J., Jr., 71, Sheloceta, Pa., Sept. 16**  
**Hevener, Gaynelle, 92, Lititz, Pa., July 11**  
**Holsinger, Helen, 79, Denton, Md., Dec. 6, 2003**  
**Hoover, Beverly, 74, New Castle, Ind., Aug. 10**  
**Hunt, Doris C., 71, Denton, Md., July 18**  
**Kiracofe, Calvin R., 86, Bluffton, Ohio, Oct. 5**  
**Lehman, Phebe, 93, Sebring, Fla., Sept. 16**  
**Lennon, Larry, 64, Glen Campbell, Pa., Sept. 21**  
**Longenecker, Carl M., 83, Reading, Pa., Oct. 5**  
**Miller, Agnes, 64, Luckey, Ohio, Sept. 26**  
**Miller, Henry Edward, 97, New Oxford, Pa., Sept. 25**  
**Mishler, Howard, 89, Goshen, Ind., July 26**  
**Nedrow, Samuel, 71, Mechanicsburg, Pa., Sept. 16**  
**Over, Richard, 78, Sebring, Fla., July 11**  
**Paul, Annis Jane, 99, Mount Morris, Ill., Sept. 18**  
**Pittman, Anna Louise, 81, Everett, Pa., June 16**  
**Platt, Marshall B., 82, Evansdale, Iowa, Sept. 9**  
**Shaw, Lena, 78, Martinsburg, Pa., Sept. 16**  
**Shipman, Lois Wagner, 86, Cerro Gordo, Ill., Jan. 15**  
**Shive, Sarah A. (Sally), 88, York, Pa., Sept. 12**  
**Smith, Irene Brehm, 89, Rockville, Md., Sept. 7**  
**Sprinkle, Maxine, 71, Polk, Ohio, Oct. 9**  
**Stanford, Nina, 80, New Carlisle, Ohio, Sept. 20**  
**Stong, Audrey, 85, Ankeny, Iowa, Sept. 23**  
**Stubbs, Fidelia Frantz Yoder, 100, Albuquerque, N.M., Sept. 15**  
**Talkington, Mildred, 80, Girard, Ill., Oct. 2**  
**Tracey, G. Elizabeth (Betty), 80, Timonium, Md., Sept. 17**  
**Umbel, Wayne Wendell, 52, Harrisonburg, Va., Sept. 17**  
**Wagner, Ruth F., 89, Ephrata, Pa., Oct. 4**  
**Wantz, Roger, Jr., 40, Manheim,**

**Pa., Sept. 25**  
**Ward, Myrtle, J., 92, Sebring, Fla., Aug. 26**  
**Yingst, Kenneth, 87, Dayton, Ohio, Sept. 25**

## Licensings

**Davis, Denzil, W. Marva Dist. (Tearcoat, Augusta, W.Va.), Oct. 3**  
**Frazer, Jason William, Mo./Ark. Dist. (Bethany, Norborne, Mo.), Sept. 19**  
**Lenker, Charles Allen, S. Ohio Dist. (Pittsburg, Arcanum, Ohio), April 4**  
**Nunn, Trevor, N. Plains Dist. (Panora, Iowa), Sept. 12**  
**Pippin, Louise, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Elizabethtown, Pa.), Sept. 5**  
**Sanders, Jennifer, W. Marva Dist. (Bear Creek, Accident, Md.), Sept. 19**  
**Stence, Rick W., Atl. N.E. Dist. (Florin, Mount Joy, Pa.), Sept. 26**

## Ordinations

**Clark, Randy, W. Marva Dist. (Wiley Ford, W.Va.), Sept. 19**  
**Oskin, Deborah Lee, S. Ohio Dist. (New Covenant, Columbus, Ohio), Aug. 29**  
**Wilson, Hannah D., Mid. Pa. Dist. (University Baptist & Brethren, State College, Pa.), June 20**

## Placements

**Abbitt, Collin (Mac), from interim to pastor, Owl Creek, Bellville, Ohio, Oct. 4**  
**Adams, Philip L., pastor, Independence, Kan., Oct. 1**  
**Frazer, Jason William, pastor, Bethany, Norborne, Mo., Sept. 19**  
**Godfrey, Mark D., pastor, Nokesville, Va., Oct. 15**  
**Kieffaber, Dean, from interim to pastor, Glendora, Calif., Sept. 19**  
**Messler, Brian P., from associate pastor, Happy Corner, Clayton, Ohio, to associate pastor, Frederick, Md., Aug. 30**  
**Morris, Tim, pastor, Eden Valley, Saint John, Kan., Oct. 10**  
**Nutting, Homer L., Jr., from interim to pastor, Sharpsburg, Md., Sept. 14**  
**Richard, Thomas, pastor, Fairview, Cordova, Md., Sept. 12**

## Miracle on Neil Street

**E**ach spring and fall, our youth in Illinois-Wisconsin travel to one of the district's churches for a retreat. The destination this past spring was Champaign, Ill.

We stayed at the Champaign congregation, which—like many churches—has experienced changing demographics in its community. It is located on the north side of this university city, and its neighborhood over the years has shifted to a poorer, primarily black population.



WALT WILTSCHKEK  
MESSENGER Editor

During recreation time Saturday afternoon, some of the group headed across the street to a city park. Before long, we had a frisbee circle going, tossing a few discs back and forth. Several curious children and youth from the neighborhood watched us from nearby, but none came any closer.

Then, in a spark of apparent divine inspiration, one of our

Brethren youth—I'll call him Leland, since that was his name—had an idea. "Hey," Leland said. "How about playing some kickball?"

I don't think I had played kickball since I was 10. I certainly would never have thought of it as an option. But all you really need is a big rubber ball and something to use as bases, plus there was an empty softball field just beyond where we were throwing the frisbees. "Sure," we agreed. "Why not?"

We shifted our recreating to the newly christened kickball field, and it was there that a small miracle occurred on Neil Street. One of the neighborhood kids popped around the fence

and asked if he could play. Some of our Brethren youth saw others from the neighborhood making their way over and invited them to join the game as well.

Before long, more than half a dozen of the local kids had joined in. We tried to learn all their names as we shared ours. They would laugh if someone stumbled as they tried to put the ball in play, and they smiled and traded high-fives when someone scored a run.

For an hour or so that Saturday afternoon, our two groups became one. The lines of black and white, local and out-of-towner, Brethren and non-Brethren all disappeared. When we opened our circle and spread out into the field, something happened that allowed community to occur.

Still amazed, I asked Leland, "How did you know?" Where had he gotten the inspiration that we needed to change our game and our group dynamics? Leland just smiled and shrugged as he said, "Hey, everyone loves kickball."

One of my General Board colleagues recently noted that a major concern for churches today is that people are hungering for relationship. They want someone to listen to their stories. Too many congregations, he says, have wonderful service and justice ministries but never use them as a bridge to welcome people into the church. Churches remain detached from their neighborhoods. Real personal engagement never occurs, so the connections that allow for faith to be shared are never built.

We want to help people "out there," but it can be harder when they come on our turf. It's natural that we come to like our congregations as they are. The feeling of family and the value of tradition are important to Brethren. Change is difficult, and so our circles often stay fairly closed.

We know that Jesus has called us to make disciples. And most people say they want their congregations to grow. Study after study reports that the most effective evangelism happens when church members invite friends. We know all this, but doing it in practice is harder. As Jeff Woods of American Baptist Churches USA says in his essay *New Tasks for the New Congregation*, "Building relationships works; we sim-

**Where had he gotten the inspiration that we needed to change our game and our group dynamics? Leland just smiled and shrugged as he said, "Hey, everyone loves kickball."**

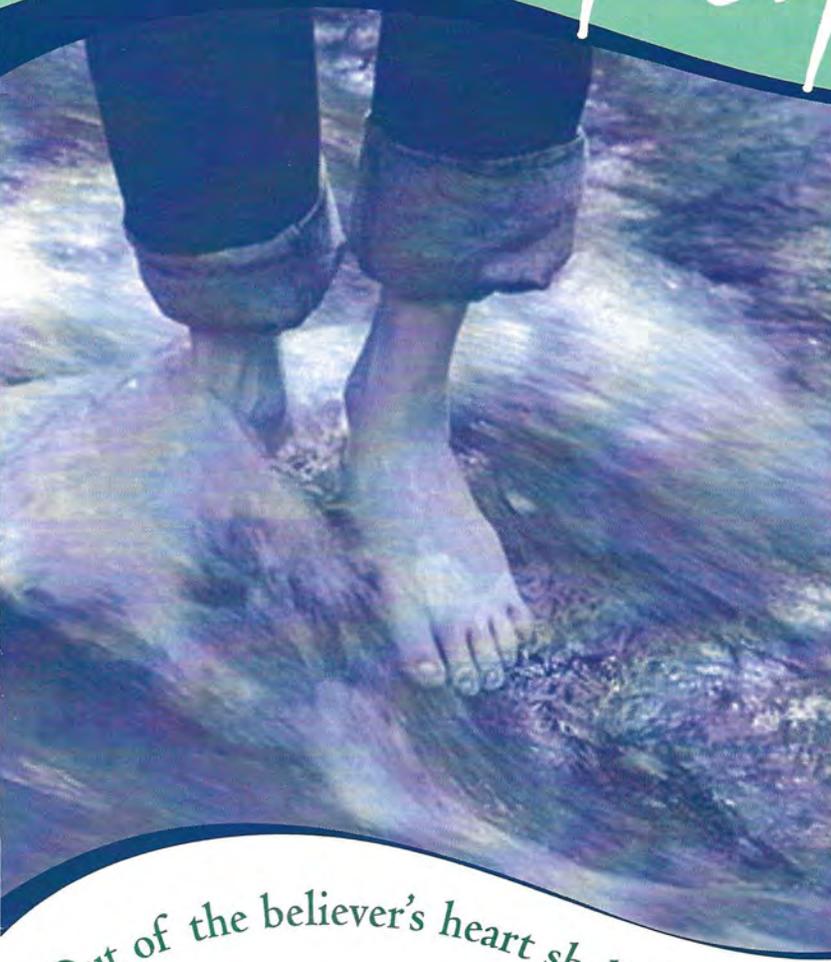
ply need to go about it with more intentionality."

Our group left Champaign the next day, but I held a hope that those neighborhood kids would remember the youth who came from the church across the street and played kickball with them. One of the pastors at Champaign said the congregation is hosting a multicultural children's program for the neighborhood, and it's already bearing fruit.

At Christmas, we remember a baby who came to Earth, opening the doors to experience God in a new, very personal way. We can offer that personal relationship with Christ, and our own friendship, to today's often lonely world. How do we know it's a gift people want? Hey, everyone loves to be loved.—Ed.

**COMING NEXT MONTH:** Ethnic leadership in the Church of the Brethren, "Strangers No More," reading the "other" gospels, a look at Genesis, book review, and more.

# Rivers of Life



Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water, John 7:38



Church of the Brethren  
Youth & Young Adult Ministries

## 2005 National Workcamps

Registrations will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis starting December 1, 2004.

Participants must register on the workcamp web page at [www.brethren.org/genbd/yya/workcamps/index.htm](http://www.brethren.org/genbd/yya/workcamps/index.htm).

A \$100 non-refundable deposit is due at the time of registration and the full balance of the registration fee is due by April 1, 2005.

2005 Workcamp Coordinators are Cindy Laprade, Beth Rhodes, and Steve Van Houten. If you have any questions, please contact the Workcamp Office at 800-323-8039 or [cobyouth\\_gb@brethren.org](mailto:cobyouth_gb@brethren.org).



### Senior High

- Alaska - June 12-20
- Castañer, Puerto Rico - June 13-20
- Lybrook, New Mexico (BRF) - June 18-27
- Walk Across America (Illinois) - June 27-July 2
- St. Croix, Virgin Islands - July 11-17
- Phoenix, Arizona - July 11-17
- Los Angeles, California - July 11-17
- Camp Myrtlewood, Oregon - July 18-24
- St. Croix, Virgin Islands - July 18-24
- Crossnore, North Carolina - July 18-24
- Tijuana, Mexico - July 25-31
- N. Fort Myers, Florida - July 25-31
- Pine Ridge, South Dakota - August 1-7
- Gould Farm, Massachusetts - August 1-7
- Mendenhall, Mississippi - August 1-7
- Keyser, West Virginia - August 8-14

### Junior High

- Harrisburg, Pennsylvania - June 15-19
- Ashland, Ohio - June 22-26
- Inspiration Center, Wisconsin - June 26-July 1
- Innisfree Village, Virginia - June 27-July 1
- New Windsor, Maryland - July 18-22
- Chicago, Illinois - July 20-24
- Indianapolis, Indiana - July 27-31
- Koinonia Partners, Georgia - August 3-7

### Young Adult

- Disaster Response (Location TBA) - May 29-June 4
- Brazil - June 1-10
- Guatemala - June 1-10



The Church of the Brethren and CBS invite you to

# *Enter the Light of Life*

The CBS network has invited the Church of the Brethren to provide this year's nationally telecast Christmas Eve service. The program will be filmed at Bethany Theological Seminary, and be produced by the Church of the Brethren General Board.

This very special service will feature music from throughout the denomination. Chris Bowman, pastor of Oakton Church of the Brethren, will deliver the message. Music will be coordinated by Shawn Kirchner, minister of music at La Verne Church of the Brethren.

Your congregation can use this unique opportunity to introduce the Church of the Brethren to your community. For press releases and other ideas on how to connect this project and your congregation, visit [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org).

