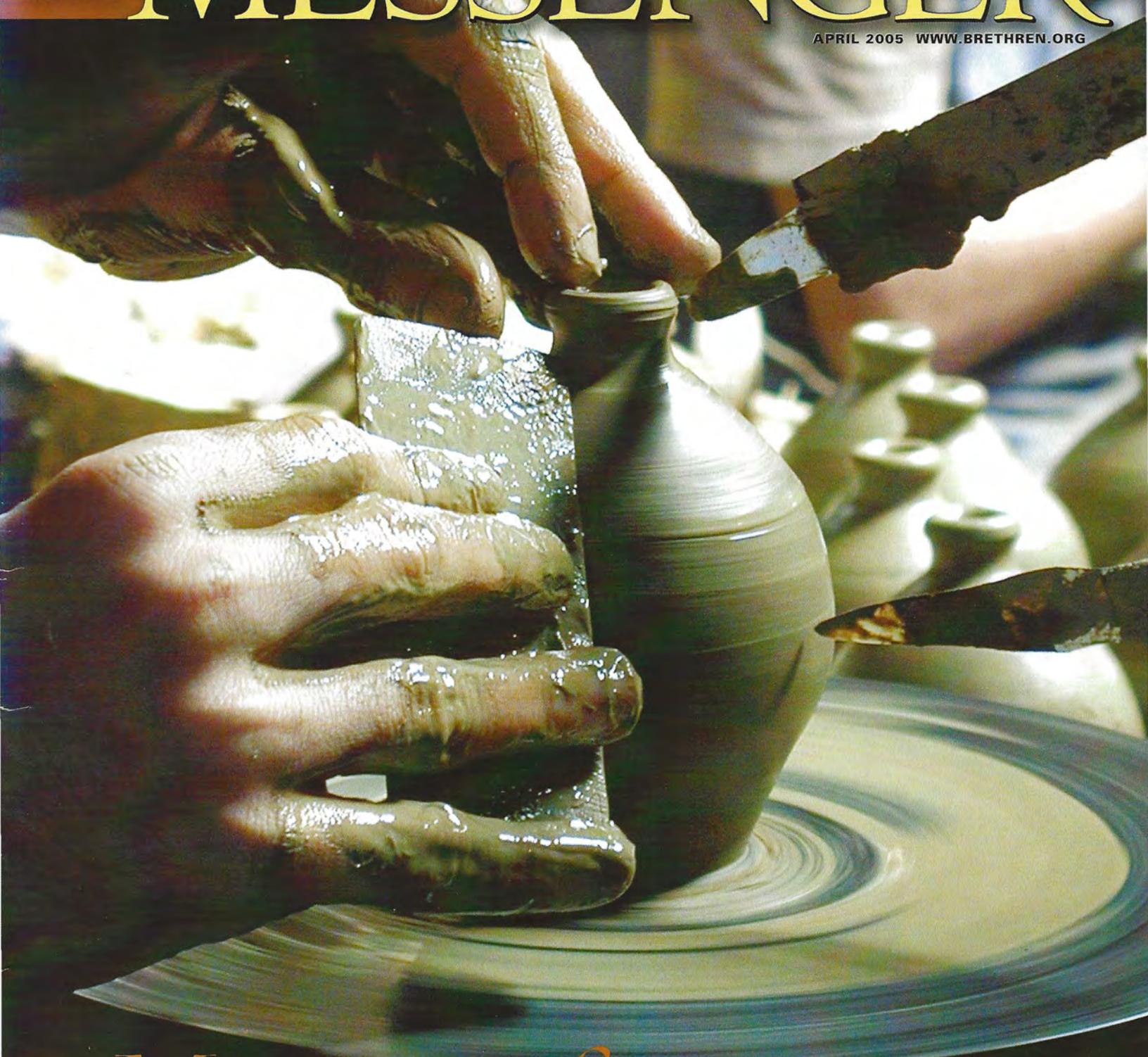


Church  
of the  
Brethren

# MESSENGER

APRIL 2005 [WWW.BRETHREN.ORG](http://WWW.BRETHREN.ORG)



## *Ministry formation*

Shaping a response to God's call

THEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF VOCATION • THE BOOK OF NUMBERS • A REVIEW OF RAY

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Church  
of the  
Brethren

# MESSENGER

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

**ON THE COVER**

Many factors go into a calling to ministry, whether it's ordained ministry in the church or intentionally serving God in another vocation. A special package this month looks at that shaping process and the ways the church is seeking to help people along the journey. The cover image echoes the words of Isaiah 64:8: "We are the clay, and you (Lord) are the potter. We are all formed by your hand." (NLT)

**8 Aiding and abetting God's call**

What does it mean to be a "teaching church"? Wally Landes, senior pastor of Palmyra (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, says it's the only kind of church he wants to serve in—one in which people can discern and learn as they explore callings to ministry. In a sidebar, Dennis Lohr highlights Palmyra's experience with a string of summer interns, through Ministry Summer Service and other programs.

**12 MSS: A firm foundation for future ministry**

Ministry Summer Service, a General Board program designed to help college students better understand and experience ministry in the church setting, marks its 10th summer this year. Four of the 100-plus young adults who have participated reflect on what they learned through their internships.

**14 TEV: 'A time of stretching and discovery'**

Lilly Endowment Inc. launched the Program for the Theological Exploration of Vocation (TEV) in 1999 to "identify and nurture a new generation of highly talented and religiously committed leaders for church and society." The Brethren colleges took up the challenge to help students consider the intersection of faith and vocation; now, some of those students share how it changed their lives.

**17 Ministry formation that really sings**

The denomination's seminary plays a key link in the journey from calling to service for many. Tara Hornbacker, whose work includes Bethany's ministry formation emphasis, explains some of the ways that the curriculum approaches this need through academics and hands-on practice.

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**18 The importance of 'the call'**

Fred Bernhard says the act of calling people to ministry has had a profound impact on his life. He also believes that it will have a profound impact on the church's future, and it is a "collective responsibility" of all congregations to respond by identifying members' gifts.

**20 Numbers: The book of the march**

The book of Numbers chronicles a difficult chapter for the Israelites, one of wandering in the desert for decades. Harold S. Martin looks at God's action in leading and sustaining the people, as well as delivering judgment when they erred into disobedience.

# FROM THE PUBLISHER

**H**ere on the eve of the denomination's 300th anniversary, it may seem questionable to note a mere 10th anniversary. But in today's crowded marketplace of brands and slogans that come and go, it's worth observing that 10 years ago the Church of the Brethren received a set of identity words that have taken root and flourished.



WENDY MCFADDEN  
Publisher

Actually, it was in 1994 that the words "Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together." were introduced at an Annual Conference insight session. The words caught on so quickly that congregations wanted to begin using them before the General Board even had a chance to approve them in October. Would that every big idea from Elgin could be launched so easily!

Over the spring of 1995, staff prepared a host of materials to help congregations make use of the words. Their wide use today testifies to the way they have given a voice to Brethren of many stripes.

One of the many ideas that spring was to invite Brethren poet (and former MESSENGER editor) Ken Morse to write a hymn based on the identity line. Though he never accomplished the task (he was busy writing *Preaching in a Tavern* for Brethren Press), he wrote of his interest. In a letter to Howard Royer, he praised the companion line "Another way of living" as capturing something fundamental about Brethren—that our religion is a way of life. Referring to his book project, he commented, "Many of the stories illustrate the way in which Brethren offered an alternative or another way of living in response to the society in which they were making their witness."

Then he sketched out a possible ad series on "another, better way of living." (Interestingly, in that letter Ken also proposed a new name for our church: the Church of Christ the Servant.)

The writer behind the new identity words was gentle, soft-spoken Ginger Pyron, editor at Communicorp (now Crane MetaMarketing). She was part of a small team who traveled across the denomination listening to Brethren talk about their faith and their church. (Communicorp's report is still available from Brethren Press, which published it as *Reflections on Brethren Image and Identity*.) All the words were ones that surfaced in these conversations.

In a postscript to the report, Ginger told a group at the 1995 Annual Conference: "This year, the Brethren have some new words. But the words have power and meaning only as they take shape in the Brethren themselves, who are the words' fruition and witness.... In his first chapter, verse 14, John tells us that through Jesus, God's word became flesh. Through the Brethren, a similar transformation occurs: Mere words become animals, food, clothes, medicine, quilts, houses. And once the word of God was made flesh in Jesus—just as the words of ideas and goals have been made real, immediate, and living in the everyday work of the Brethren—then, as John says, 'The word dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.'"

A large, flowing cursive signature of the author's name, "Wendy McFadden", written in black ink.

## 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:** Mechanic Grove Church of the Brethren (Quarryville, Pa.) on March 14 hosted a Heifer International forum and fund-raising banquet featuring speaker Beatrice Biira of Uganda.

**Atlantic Southeast:** Spiritual Life Emphasis, formerly known as Sebring (Fla.) Church of the Brethren's Annual Bible Conference, took place Feb. 6-9 in Sebring. Bob Kettering of Lititz, Pa., spoke at the event.

**Idaho:** Mountain View Church of the Brethren (Boise) held a "tsunami fair" on Feb. 12, with tables of information from Habitat for Humanity, Church World Service/CROP, Heifer International, and other organizations. The event, including a silent auction and garage sale, raised more than \$2,000.

**Illinois/Wisconsin:** A query study team has been appointed to study a query on homosexuality brought to last fall's district conference by 10 congregations. Kevin Kessler is chairing the team.

**Michigan:** The Marilla congregation held a "hunger banquet" on Feb. 20 to help those attending address real-life hunger issues. Diners could get a full chicken dinner or just a plate of rice.

**Mid-Atlantic:** The 2005 School of Christian Growth took place in February in northern Virginia. A variety of speakers led sessions on "Building Bridges of Peace."

**Middle Pennsylvania:** Camp Blue Diamond (Petersburg, Pa.) held its annual dinners April 8-10 with a "Southern hospitality" theme. Summit City Dixieland Band and ventriloquist Steve Engle provided entertainment.

**Missouri/Arkansas:** Messiah Church of the Brethren is helping to reactivate "Metro-Parish," a coalition of Brethren congregations in the Kansas City area. A brainstorming session took place at Messiah in February.

**Northern Indiana:** The district women's fellowship spring rally will take place April 16 at West Goshen Church of the Brethren, with Adelle Campbell Dickie speaking on "The Comforter."

**Northern Ohio:** The Christian education commission on March 19 sponsored a Vacation Bible School materials swap meet

at Chippewa Church of the Brethren in Creston.

**Northern Plains:** Ecumenical Ministries of Iowa, the state's council of churches, decided to cease operations in March due to a lack of resources. A transition team is looking at new ways to carry out ecumenical work.

**Oregon/Washington:** The Christian education and witness commission has completed a final draft of a district "Foundational Principles and Mission" statement that the district board is now reviewing.

**Pacific Southwest:** The district board held its retreat Jan. 14-16 at Luther Glen Retreat Center, working on initiatives related to leadership training, congregational renewal, and church planting. Rene and Olga Quintanilla are launching a new church plant through the Fresno church.

**Shenandoah:** Stops on the Bridgewater (Va.) College's 45-voice Concert Choir spring tour included performances at the Charlottesville (Va.), Waynesboro (Va.), and Bridgewater congregations.

**South/Central Indiana:** A "Christian Education for Today" event took place March 5 at Manchester Church of the Brethren. It included worship and a wide selection of learning sessions.

**Southeastern:** The district board in March approved Doug Diamond, new pastor of the Peak Creek congregation (Laurel Springs, N.C.), to serve as a volunteer coordinator for district youth and young adults ministry.

**Southern Ohio:** A pair of dinners took place March 11-12 at Potsdam and Donnels Creek (North Hampton) to give thanks for all those who have supported the district budget and take an offering for ongoing district ministries.

**Southern Pennsylvania:** A first annual district Missions Dinner took place March 5 at Chambersburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren with Dominican Republic mission co-coordinator Irvin Heishman as keynote speaker.



*Yasmeen Malik turned 8 on Dec. 27, a day after she saw the tsunami disaster on television. She wanted to do something to help, so instead of birthday presents she asked for donations she could put toward Heifer International. She also sent letters to friends and relatives. On March 4, Yasmeen, who lives in Wernersville, Pa., presented to her grandfather David Farmer, church board chair for Stevens Hill Community Church of the Brethren, a check for \$720 to be used to purchase a heifer.*

**Southern Plains:** The winter district board meeting and rally took place Feb. 18-19 in Lake Charles, La. Chair Russell Betz led the gathering with the theme, "Take the little and make it much."

**Virlina:** Tim Emmons, a member of the Antioch congregation (Rocky Mount, Va.) and a student in Virlina's Christian Growth Institute, began March 1 as director of youth and youth adult ministry for the district. The new staff position was created this year by the commission on nurture.

**West Marva:** The 27th annual District Song Fest will be April 24 at Moorefield (W.Va.) Church of the Brethren. It includes numerous church choirs, instrumentalists, vocalists, and congregational singing.

**Western Pennsylvania:** The church life and growth team is sponsoring an April 1-2 workshop on "Leading Your Church Through Change, and Living to Tell About It" April 1-2 in Johnstown. Dan Southerland of Church Transitions Inc. provided leadership.

**Western Plains:** The Topeka (Kan.) congregation voted in January to call itself instead Rochester Community Church of the Brethren, reclaiming its original name from the 1950s.

*Do you have district or congregational stories that might be of interest to MESSENGER? Send them to MESSENGER, c/o In Touch, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60131.*



**Tsunami Relief:** Numerous congregations and Brethren organizations continued relief efforts for the South Asia tsunami in the first few months of 2005. Above, children at Trotwood (Ohio) Church of the Brethren gather some of the 130-plus Gift of the Heart health kits they assembled in Sunday school classes. They also put together a "prayer tree" for victims and urged the congregation to donate funds. Below, members of Oakland Church of the Brethren (Gettysburg, Ohio) gathered after worship to assemble nearly 1,050 health kits, in an effort also encouraged by the congregation's children. For a roundup of some other ways Brethren have responded to the tsunami, visit [www.brethren.org/genbd/newsline/2005/mar0305.htm](http://www.brethren.org/genbd/newsline/2005/mar0305.htm).

Becky Maurer



## 'Hopeful Prairie' show blooms for Habitat

Hope Church of the Brethren (Freeport, Mich.) members on Feb. 12 combined their talents to produce a radio-style show called "Love Blooms on Hopeful Prairie," in the vein of Garrison Keillor's "Prairie Home Companion." It was done as a benefit for Habitat for Humanity, raising nearly \$900.

Hope member Jim Kinsey, who is also a General Board Congregational Life Teams staff member, organized the show to celebrate the area served by the church, according to a front-page article in *Lakewood News*. The script Kinsey wrote for the show centered on a Valentine's Day theme, with a series of vignettes highlighting life and values among Brethren and other groups in the region.

Music accompanying the show included a string quartet, piano, a vocal duet, and sing-alongs by the audience.

"Building good homes for worthy neighbors is a concrete way to show our love," Kinsey said at the show's end. "Every nail pounded, every stroke of the paintbrush shows the world that we are lovers first and foremost. God loves us! We show that we know God loves us when we love one another."

Charles Bennett



Steve Frazier, executive director of Camp Eder, receives a "Discovering the Miracles" check for \$23,485.98 from Gettysburg Church of the Brethren representatives Michael, Jessica, and Chelsea Taylor. Mack the Moose, camp mascot, joyfully watches the exchange.

## Gettysburg's efforts assist camp 'miracles'

Gettysburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren in February wrapped up a one-year project in support of Camp Eder's "Discovering the Miracles" capital campaign. Three representatives from the congregation presented camp director Steve Frazier with a check for \$23,485.98.

In all, Gettysburg's raised \$27,485.98 for Camp Eder, the Church of the Brethren camp for Southern Pennsylvania District. Numerous special projects were well supported, combined with generous contributions to the Church's annual "CAN" project.—**Charles Bennett**

## A spoonful of kindness: auction aids missions

Spoons rescued from a 1944 fire were auctioned at a "Spoon Dinner" Jan. 30 by Fairview Church of the Brethren (Unionville, Iowa) to raise money for the church and for Brethren mission work. The spoons, imprinted with the word "Brethren," were among the few items pulled out of the congregation's first church building when it burned down.

Last summer the Ladies Aid group found the spoons stored away and wondered what to do with them, Fairview member Diane Mason said. The women decided "to use something old to benefit the current mission of the church," she said.

Thirty-six people attended the dinner, and \$1,149 was raised from the auction of the spoons and a few other items. A tithe of the proceeds was sent to Church of the Brethren missions. Each person who bought a spoon received a his-

tory of the Fairview church and the story of the spoons' rescue.—**Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford**

## Harrisburg First Brethren lead prayers for peace

Pastor Belita Mitchell of Harrisburg (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren helped to lead candlelight prayer vigils each Tuesday during February and March to pray for peace in the city's Allison Hill neighborhood. Many other local congregations and faith-based organizations also participated in the vigils, organized as a community response to several shootings in the neighborhood.

The *Patriot-News* did a feature on the effort on Feb. 21, noting that support for the vigils has been growing.

"I thought a couple people would join us, but there's been a big response," New Hope Community Church pastor Jason Rissler told the newspaper. "Last week there were 62." (Gerald W. Rhoades contributed to this report.)

## REMEMBERED

### Don Snider

Don Snider, 89, died Feb. 1 at his home at Timbercrest Church of the Brethren Home in North Manchester, Ind. Interspersed with several pastoral placements in Illinois and Pennsylvania, Snider served as national youth director for the Church of the Brethren from 1944 to 1951, directed Brethren Service post-World War II relief and rehabilitation work in Germany from 1951 to 1954, and directed Brethren Volunteer Service from 1961 to 1969.

He was a regional secretary in Middle Pennsylvania District from 1942 to 1944, interpreting Brethren Service and serving as recruitment staff for his alma mater of Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pa., his alma mater. Snider also held a degree from Bethany Theological Seminary.

Snider was a leader in the peace witness of the denomination, was a draft counselor for youth, and was vocal in opposition to the law instituted in 1980 requiring young men to register for Selective Service. He also worked to resettle Vietnamese refugees in the US, and led numerous youth camps.

A memorial service was held at Manchester Church of the Brethren Feb. 12.

### Florence (Flossie) Miller Royer

Longtime Church of the Brethren mission worker Florence (Flossie) Miller Royer died Feb. 25 in Fort Wayne, Ind. She and her husband, Ralph, served in Niger and Nigeria for 35 years.

Royer began her mission work in Nigeria in 1951 as a nurse in the mission-run leprosarium. She received her nursing degree from Swedish Covenant Hospital's school and later served in other hospitals and dispensaries. She also served as a houseparent at Hillcrest School in Jos, Nigeria, aided community development work in Niger, and served with Church World Service in Liberia.

The Royers have been active in Eel River Community Church of the Brethren, Silver Lake, Ind., where a memorial service was held March 4.

## LANDMARKS & LAURELS

• **Mutual Aid Association**, which provides insurance for Church of the Brethren congregations, members, and others, is celebrating its 120th year of service in 2005. It was formed in spring 1885 as the Mutual Aid Society of Northeastern Kansas and grew over the years. The home office today is in Abilene, Kan., emphasizing property insurance coverage for homes, farms, and small businesses, along with other insurance needs. A "birthday party" is planned for this summer's Annual Conference in Peoria, Ill.

• **Naperville (Ill.) Church of the Brethren** plans to celebrate its 150th anniversary with a series of events July 1-3.

• The **Creekside Church of the Brethren** (Elkhart, Ind.) children's choir and director Angi Marcin came in second at the Concord Mall Caroling Festival. They also raised \$795 for Church Community Services as part of the project.

• **Little Pine Church of the Brethren** (Goshen, Ind.) on Jan. 9 dedicated a new mural for its sanctuary. It shows Jesus seated with the little children as described in Mark 10. Carla Cottey, daughter of church board chair Mary Ellen Bechtel, painted the mural. Two more are planned.

• **Mary Blocher Smeltzer** of La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren was one of more than 200 teachers honored by the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles Feb. 5. The group taught Japanese American students in internment camps during World War II. They were honored for "extraordinary actions (that) touched and transformed a generation of Japanese Americans," the *Los Angeles Times* reported.

## DISCOVERING THE WORLD FOR 35 YEARS

### 2005 TOURS

SPECTACULAR SCANDINAVIA and its FJORDS  
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SMALL TOWN THEATRES and COUNTRY GARDENS  
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EXPERIENCING the BIBLE in ISRAEL (August 17-27)

EUROPEAN FALL HARVEST (Sept. 22 - Oct. 6)

EGYPT with MEDA (October 9-21)

FOLLOWING JESUS in ISRAEL (October 19-31)

In the FOOTSTEPS of the APOSTLE PAUL  
(November 6-22)

### 2006 TOURS

EXPERIENCING JAMAICA, its CULTURE  
and PEOPLE (January 13-20)

SERVICE TOUR in SUNNY JAMAICA (February 3-10)

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (February 3-23)

VIETNAM (February 8-25)

MEXICO (March 10-18)

PARAGUAY, BOLIVIA and PERU (March 21 - April 6)

ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7-19)

WEST PRUSSIAN MENNONITE HERITAGE  
(June 25 - July 5)

ENGLAND and SCOTLAND (June 28 - July 10)

EUROPEAN HERITAGE (July 5-20)

CANADIAN MARITIME PROVINCES (August 5-14)

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USA

## Following Christ is a call to transformation

**I**n January, my wife and I, along with our 2-year-old son, entered Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) with plans to work in a shelter for homeless families and individuals near Elkton, Md. When we announced our plans last fall, we were often asked: Why are you doing it?

It's a good question. We loved living in Roanoke, Va., where we had good friends, a supportive congregation, a comfortable life. These are good reasons to stay put, but for Carol Lena and myself the reasons to step out of our familiar lives and answer a new call from God were growing more compelling.

This new chapter of our life began Sept. 11, 2001. The days following Sept. 11 were for me a mixture of shock, disbelief, and fear. Our world was changing before us, but what did that change mean? Even more, what did it mean for us to be followers of Jesus at this precise time?

Before entering BVS I served two Church of the Brethren congregations for a total of 15 years. Most of that experience took place against a backdrop of relative social predictability. Sept. 11 was different for American churches. For a time, worship and preaching were occasions of trepidation and awe, crackling with intensity, especially for pastors. This intensity could not last, but the opportunity was there to begin leading people toward a deeper, more transformative faith.

In my experience this did not happen. Why? Because the churches were unskilled and fearful. We were unskilled at practicing the kind of faith that is self-consciously distinct from much of the everyday life surrounding us. Brethren have traditionally addressed this practice of distinctiveness by using words like nonconformity and discipleship. After Sept. 11, many of us began to realize how little our faith was distinguished from others. We were deeply committed to the way things were in our country—to work and family patterns, shopping habits, even retirement plans; in short, we were practicing the American dream, not the kingdom of God.

I found myself identifying with young adults in my congregation who said they were actually considering joining the Army. They wanted to do something to help, to defend their country, to make a commitment that went beyond their own personal well-being and comfort. I respected their struggle. What I regretted was that the church—my church—had nothing to offer them that they could take seriously in the situation. Brethren history, and the history of the church, is



DAVID R. MILLER

full of examples of faith that rise above expediency and mere expedient, but churches are like football coaches these days—they can't live on their laurels. What did the church offer today beyond conventional responses to terror? What did we offer that was transforming, not conforming?

Throughout this time, the drumbeat of war continued. I could see its effects on TV, read about it in the paper, argue about it across this thing in our country called the liberal-conservative divide, but it didn't seem to touch my life.

Carol Lena and I struggled with this quality of the war's abstraction in our lives. We felt the government was doing everything in its power to downplay the reality of war, that its true costs were being withheld from citizens. All that was being asked of us was that we support the soldiers. And I found that my respect for them increased; that my heart went out to them even as I was more and more disagreeing with what they were doing and why they were doing it.

During this time my ability to pastor effectively diminished. At one point Carol Lena and I explored the possibility of changing churches, but the deeper we moved into that process the clearer it became that simply changing congregations wasn't the answer.

In a real sense Christ was calling us toward a renewed struggle to embrace the new humanity described by the apostle Paul in Ephesians 2. It was not spirituality or peace of heart we desired so much as transformed lives. The Gospels are not abstract. In the story they tell, people go after Jesus. They follow. They are healed, saved, changed.

When it became clear to us that entering volunteer service for a time was our call, we applied to BVS with a focus to work with homeless families and individuals. We are not sure what the future holds. After I resigned my

pastorate and we signed the contract to sell our house, we found out Carol Lena was pregnant. That made finding a volunteer assignment even more difficult: for some reason volunteers with a 2-year-old child and another on the way

are not in high demand at homeless shelters! Yet a way was found.

Wendell Berry wrote an essay in the early '70s, reflecting that we do not really experience hope in the ends we seek but in the means we live and practice toward those ends. I think the church, and I myself, have come to hope too much in the ends—the good and successful result—and thus we have lost this sense of hope found in practicing means worthy of the ends we have been promised. If we are to be a people of peace, then the means of that peace—loving the enemy, forgiving those who sin against us, refusing to cultivate hatred—are where we will learn what hope really is. And it's where we will discover what it means to be the people God is asking us to be. **M**

David R. Miller, now serving at Meeting Ground in Elkton, Md., is former pastor of Roanoke (Va.) First Church of the Brethren.

## QUOTEWORTHY

**"God showed me that it isn't about how much construction experience or knowledge you have but instead a willing and obedient heart that really mattered. And since that day, I have absolutely loved every minute."**

—Kevin Dibert, a Brethren Volunteer Service worker with Church of the Brethren Emergency Response, sharing in "Bridges" newsletter about the first days in his new assignment

**"If you look in the Bible for what separated a lot of people from God, it was greed or selfishness."**

—Rebekah Basinger, director of congregational relations for the Brethren in Christ Church, in *Visitor* magazine

**"People want their pastor at their beck and call. People want this, people want that. But what I don't hear people saying to their pastor is, 'We're really concerned about your health.'"**

—Lisa Thomas, parish nurse at the United Church of Christ Church House in Cleveland, Ohio, quoted in an article in *United Church News*

**"Whatever the causes, right now we're an easy target for those with ripe tomatoes and a low attention span. If we want a higher media profile and a more accurate one, we need to learn how to state our identity clearly and communicate it widely."**

—Muriel Duncan, editor of the United Church of Canada's *The Observer* magazine, writing on the challenges of media coverage for the church

**"For the most part, they're young kids newly away from home, seeing things home never prepared them to see, feeling things they weren't ready to feel. They're dealing with the same things kids deal with when they go to college, but they are facing the possibility of getting killed."**

—Long-time Navy chaplain Father Lawrence Johnson, commenting in *WordOne* newsletter about young people serving in the military

**"Balancing the budget is like going to heaven. Everybody wants to do it, but nobody wants to do what you have to do to get there."**

—former US Sen. Phil Gramm, originally shared in a 1992 Republican National Convention speech

**"No one can read Scripture and deny that caring for creation is part of what God has asked us to do."**

—Dr. Ann K. Riggs, National Council of Churches associate general secretary for Faith & Order, commenting on a new NCC-sponsored statement titled "God's Earth is Sacred"

## CULTUREVIEW

• A March 1 US Supreme Court decision **banned execution of juvenile offenders**, a significant victory for death penalty opponents. The 5-4 decision in *Roper v. Simmons* will remove from death row about 70 individuals convicted of murders committed before they turned 18. Prosecutors will also be prevented from seeking the death penalty for future cases of juvenile capital crime. (RNS)

• If you could make a **15-minute cell phone call to a famous figure**, who would you choose? A Harris Interactive Poll asked people to pick one name from a list of 10 that included music and movie stars, politicians, business leaders, and religious figures. Sixty percent of those surveyed chose God. Four percent chose Bill Gates.

• Ecumenical groups are calling attention to the **90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide** on April 24. On that date in 1915, 1.5 million Armenian Christians in Ottoman

Turkey died and nearly the entire Armenian population was deported. The National Council of Churches and World Council of Churches both passed statements related to the occasion, particularly asking for official recognition of the genocide and making April 24 a "day of memory." Response in the aftermath of that genocide was the first major relief effort for the Church of the Brethren.

• *Proverbs* is the latest title available in the **Believers Church Bible Commentary series**, published by Herald Press. The book, written by John W. Miller, may be ordered from Brethren Press for \$24.99 plus shipping and handling; call 800-441-3712. It is the 19th volume in the commentary series, a cooperative venture of Anabaptist denominations and other groups.



## JUST FOR FUN: MAKE A MATCH

**YOU CALLED?** Match the biblical story of calling on the left with the quote related to the response to that call on the right (answers below):

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 1. Moses     | a. "Speak, for your servant is listening."                                |
| 2. Jonah     | b. "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child."                       |
| 3. Mary      | c. "Here am I. Send me!"  |
| 4. Andrew    | d. "Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."       |
| 5. Gideon    | e. "Let me kiss my mother and father good-by, and then I will come . . ." |
| 6. Elisha    | f. "O Lord, please send someone else to do it."                           |
| 7. Paul      | g. "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said."           |
| 8. Samuel    | h. "Give me a sign that it is really you talking to me."                  |
| 9. Zechariah | i. "We have found the Messiah."   |
| 10. Isaiah   | j. "I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you."  |
| 11. Jesus    | k. "Who are you, Lord?"   |
| 12. Jeremiah | l. "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man . . ."                     |

### ANSWERS:

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# Aiding and abetting God's call

by Wally Landes

'Teaching churches' play critical role in discernment

**O**n-the-job training has always made perfect sense to me. Perhaps I came to that opinion because of my own years of formation.

Start with my hometown of Waynesboro, Va. It is a city of many distinctions, most notably that it was the birthplace of distributive education. Waynesboro High School was the first to allow students to attend school for a partial day, then head out to work in area business and industry settings where they continued their secondary education in an on-the-job, hands-on learning environment.

Or consider my undergraduate experience as a philosophy and religion student at Bridgewater (Va.) College. There, for three summers, I took part in the "Earn and Serve" program. I worked a regular, secular job to earn income for school, and volunteered roughly 20 hours of service each week for the congregation that hosted and provided housing for me.

Later, my three years of seminary education were enhanced by working in a nearby Presbyterian congregation where I served as director of Christian education and youth minister. The linkage between education and the workplace was essential for me, and has proven indispensable for countless persons moving into trades, careers, and professions.

While serving as a pastor near Frederick, Md., my preferred hospital was Johns Hopkins. Why? Because it was a teaching hospital. Now that I live and work near Hershey, Pa., my hospital of choice is Hershey Medical Center. By now you know why. Institutions where education is part of the ongoing mission have

inspiring, cutting-edge vitality that is exciting for insiders and attractive to outsiders. One thing that keeps me focused and fascinated as I begin my 20th year of service to Palmyra Church of the Brethren is the fact that I serve a "teaching church."

Ever since the Brethren moved from the "free" (bi-vocational) ministry toward the standard of trained, professional ministry, on-the-job training has been a part of our life as Brethren. Over the years, certain congregations within our denomination actively participated in hosting ministry interns, whether for a summer, a semester, or an entire year.

Some colleges sponsored Summer Service Scholarship programs that allowed the prospective ministerial student to engage in full-time church work for a summer, while offering a carrot on the stick: a substantial scholarship awaited his or her return to campus. While there were other models, each program had its merits and touched the lives of many Brethren exploring Christian vocations or preparing for formal ministry training.

The most recent innovation in ministry formation among Brethren has been the Ministry Summer Service (MSS) venture, now in its 10th year. So far, MSS has blessed 110 college students who received significant training prior to engaging in a summer-long ministry experience. The program, originally designed and administered by General Board staff persons Chris Douglas and Allen Hansell, is built upon a rich combination of field experience, personal reflection, and spiritual discipline, all under the supervision of seasoned pastoral mentors.

Reviewing Brethren history, it is clear that certain congregations

## MSS at a glance

Jointly sponsored by the General Board's Office of Ministry and Youth/Young Adult Ministries, Ministry Summer Service (MSS) is an opportunity for college-aged students to explore their sense of call to some form of professional ministry. While the TEV program (see page 14) offers students from Brethren colleges the opportunity to explore God's call in any vocation, MSS invites students from any college to examine a call to vocations within the church.

The program begins with a week-long orientation; then students are placed in a ministry setting alongside an experienced mentor for the

next nine weeks. Most interns are placed in congregations; some, however, serve in Brethren camps, at district offices, or with denominational programs. Each receives a \$2,500 scholarship in return for his or her service.

Over the past nine years, 110 young adult interns have done placements through MSS. Plans for the program's 10th summer are under way, with the orientation week scheduled for June 5-9 in Richmond, Ind.

Applications for this year's program have closed; for information on opportunities in 2006, call the Youth/Young Adult Ministry office at 800-323-8039 or visit [www.brethren.org/genbd/yya/mss.htm](http://www.brethren.org/genbd/yya/mss.htm).

## Resources for congregations

A study guide on the topic of ministerial leadership, including a session specifically on calling, is available via an "In Our Midst" resource packet, at [www.brethren.org/genbd/ministry/InOurMidst.htm](http://www.brethren.org/genbd/ministry/InOurMidst.htm). The calling session has ideas for congregations, biblical texts to explore, a description of the calling process, and further questions to consider.

A more formal description of the calling process for professional ministry can be found in the Annual Conference paper on Ministerial Leadership, at [www.brethren.org/genbd/ministry/paper.htm](http://www.brethren.org/genbd/ministry/paper.htm).



*Kerri Horst from Northern Ohio District talks with General Board Ministry director Mary Jo Flory-Steury during an MSS orientation.*

Reviewing Brethren history, it is clear that certain congregations came to see themselves as part of that ministry formation process. Essential to this work has been churches whose self-understanding includes a ministry of assisting young men and women in their formation as ministers, servants, and church leaders. Part of that self-understanding, too, is that these congregations are in a position to give and not just receive. Interns primarily come to learn and discern their gifts in a community of faith; the focus is more on formation and less on accomplishment.

I recall my seminary years, the mid-'70s, when congregations such as East Chippewa in Northern Ohio District saw a succession of Bethany Theological Seminary students.

Williamson Road in Roanoke, Va., hosted Ken Bomberger. My home congregation in Virginia hosted John David Bowman and Carl Bachman.

While at Hagerstown, Md., pastor DeWitt Miller and associate John Gosnell mentored students such as Carl Myers, Ron Morgan, Ralph Moyer, and Don Jordan. The church I now serve, Palmyra, hosted interns who went on to establish themselves as church leaders: Dean Frantz, Walt Bowman, Joe Long, and Gerry Greiner. Meanwhile, York (Pa.) First was hosting Curtis Coffman, and Willard Dulabaum interned at Waynesboro, Pa.

Between 1964 and 1974, while pastor at the York Center congregation in Illinois, Dean Miller was mentor to a number of students from nearby Bethany Seminary. Between 1975 and 1985, he served at Hagerstown (Md.), which hosted Robin Risser Mundey and Mary Jessup as interns. When he moved to Christ Church of the Brethren in Carol Stream, Ill., he supervised Dave and Kathy Leiter, Dale and Christy Dowdy, and Martha Beahm. The list could go on. In each circumstance,

students—rotating through congregations—picked up valuable experience, self-confidence, and sustaining faith in God's call.

I look at key leaders within our denomination and try to imagine where we would be had these congregations not seen themselves in the business of aiding the calling and abetting the formation of such people.

For the students, serving a teaching church was often a clarifying process in the larger work of discerning one's call to ministry. Some concluded that congregational ministry was not for

them. Others realized they were drawn to associate minister roles, disdaining the administrative function, pastoral care load, or preaching responsibilities of the senior pastor role. Still others found their ministry niche in Christian education or music.

Almost uniformly, students returned to seminary classes with both heightened interest and not a little disillusionment (read "reality check"). Some hit the books with more pressing questions to be answered or with greater confusion to be resolved. Virtually all came back having matured in various ways.

Without such teaching churches, none of this would have happened. More such teaching churches are needed now in order to meet the increasing demand for trained, prepared leadership.

At Palmyra, we claim the process of calling and preparing ministers as a part of our mission. We enjoy the process, celebrate the outcomes, and relish the chance to welcome the next intern. As long as I am in active ministry, I hope I can serve in a teaching church. Even in retirement, I want to be part of a church that is actively, passionately engaged in ministry formation.

The apostle Paul asks in Romans 10:14, "How are people to believe in Christ without hearing the good news? And how are people to hear without a preacher? And how will there be preachers unless they are sent?" Teaching churches are part of the answer to the perennial question, "Where will ministers come from?"

What is your congregation willing to do to assist in forming the next generation of ministers? Can you see your fellowship as part of the growing cadre of self-identified teaching churches? Perhaps more pointedly, is your congregation willing to deal with the consequences of not helping persons prepare for ministry? **M**

Wally Landes is senior pastor of Palmyra (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.

# What we did on our summer vacation

by Dennis Lohr

*Michaela Camps of Miami, Fla., is one of a long list of interns who have served at Palmyra (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.*



Walt Wiltschek

**P**almyra Church of the Brethren, where I serve as pastor of Christian nurture, has a long history of calling and preparing persons for church vocations.

My predecessor, Rhonda Pittman Gingrich, developed a summer internship position to give people within the congregation a chance to work in a ministry setting. The congregation's first summer intern was Lori Walmer, a middle school mathematics teacher who demonstrated particular gifts and interest in the ministry of Christian education. These summer experiences provided Lori with an opportunity to sort out God's calling in her life.

In 1996 Chris Douglas and Al Hansell collaborated to develop Ministry Summer Service (MSS), a General Board program designed to place interested college students into ministry positions in willing congregations. Palmyra has been one of these willing congregations, hosting six MSS interns (and one seminary intern) to date. We have also developed our own high school summer intern program, giving similar opportunities to our high school students who demonstrate interest and gifts

## TEACHING SITES

Congregations and other ministry settings that have hosted Ministry Summer Service interns since the program began in 1996:

### Congregations

Akron-Springfield (Ohio); Annville (Pa.); Antioch (Rocky Mount, Va.); Bella Vista (Los Angeles); Bethany (New Paris, Ind.); Boulder Hill Neighborhood (Montgomery, Ill.); Bremen (Ind.); Bridgewater (Va.); Briery Branch (Dayton, Va.); Carlisle (Pa.); Chambersburg (Pa.); Chicago (Ill.) First; Circle of Peace (Peoria, Ariz.); Community (Hutchinson, Kan.); Conestoga (Leola, Pa.); Crest Manor (South Bend, Ind.); Easton (Md.) Peach Blossom; Ellisforde/Whitestone (Tonasket, Wash.);

Elizabethtown (Pa.); Franklin Grove (Ill.); Fraternity (Winston-Salem, N.C.); Germantown (Philadelphia); Happy Corner (Clayton, Ohio); Harrisburg (Pa.) First; Indian Creek (Harleysville, Pa.); Jennersville (West Grove, Pa.); Lancaster (Pa.); Linville Creek (Broadway, Va.); Madison Avenue (York, Pa.); Manassas (Va.); Manchester (North Manchester, Ind.); McPherson (Kan.); Modesto (Calif.); Montezuma (Dayton, Va.); Moorefield (W.Va.); Mount Pleasant (North Canton, Ohio); Mountville (Pa.); Nampa (Idaho); Northern Colorado (Windsor, Colo.); Oakton (Va.); Open Circle (Burnsville, Minn.); Palmyra (Pa.); Peace Valley (Mo.); Richmond (Ind.); San Diego (Calif.); Tire Hill (Pa.); Washington (D.C.) City; West Richmond (Va.); Westminster (Md.);

Williamson Road (Roanoke, Va.); Wilmington (Del.); York Center (Lombard, Ill.).

### Other placements

Brethren Historical Library & Archives (Elgin, Ill.); Brethren Press (Elgin, Ill.); Brethren Service Center (New Windsor, Md.); Brethren Witness/Washington (D.C.) Office; Camp Bethel (Fincastle, Va.); Camp Blue Diamond (Petersburg, Pa.); Camp Swatara (Bethel, Pa.); Compañeros en Ministerio (Tijuana, Mexico); Congregational Life Ministries (Elgin, Ill.); Inspiration Hills (Burbank, Ohio); Peter Becker Community (Harleysville, Pa.); Shenandoah District Office (Va.); Virlina District Office (Va.); Woodland Altars (Peebles, Ohio); Youth Peace Travel Team; Youth/Young Adult Ministry Office workcamps (Elgin, Ill.).

**The optimal setting is a congregation that is warm, welcoming, graceful, affirming, and excited about the work God is guiding them to do. Such an environment offers a great opportunity for an intern to explore God's call in his or her own life.**

in church vocations.

The primary goal in hosting a summer intern is to provide the student with an experience that lets them "try on" and evaluate various ministry options. Although the congregation may have specific tasks it hopes the intern will take responsibility for, the relationship must be intern-focused.

The goal must not be "to get some additional help for the pastor." In fact, if the pastor takes the mentoring role seriously, it will certainly require additional time, energy, and responsibility. The congregation should be made aware of this from the start. This is not to say that the benefits only flow in one direction. Interns bring a lot of energy, talent, fresh perspective, and commitment to the congregations they serve. Our church has had a summer intern program for more than a decade. Each experience has been enriching for both the interns and the congregation.

As with all people, interns come with a faith formation history. They are on a journey. They come from congregations that have nurtured them and encouraged them to think about ministry as a vocation. We give thanks for those who have walked with them thus far in the journey, and we are grateful for our chance to accompany them during their present moment of service and exploration.

It is essential at the outset to spend time getting to know each other by sharing faith stories, naming interests and talents, discussing expectations and fears, and strategizing about the time together. These conversations should continue on a regular basis throughout the internship. Frequent opportunities to ask questions, share insights, debrief experiences, share in prayer and devotions, and engage in theological reflection are essential. Making these goals a priority will enrich the experience for the intern, the mentor, and the congregation.

We try to offer a broad range of practical ministry experiences to each intern, with the goal of giving the student a taste of the many forms of ministry available. Within the congregational setting, that can include preaching, worship leading, visitation, teaching, working with specific

age-group ministries, attending meetings, etc.

We also work to set up experiences outside the congregation, such as spending a week at camp or visiting the district office. We will help the intern arrange opportunities to shadow chaplains at a hospital, nursing home, or prison, if that is an interest. Perhaps the intern has particular interest or experience in a ministry area that we are not familiar with, in which case we may become the students while the intern teaches us. This past summer we were working on a production of *Godspell*, and our intern contributed her valuable talents as a choreographer.

The one caution when brainstorming a possible "to-do list" is to help the intern consider the time and energy commitments each choice involves and to plan a manageable schedule. Everything cannot be accomplished in one summer. Besides, practicing good time management—which includes planning time for rest and self-care—is an essential ministry survival skill.

It is very important for the congregation to provide a safe experience for the intern. Congregations who are in conflict or believe having an intern will help them solve some problems do not make for a positive experience. The wisdom behind our congregational and pastoral ethics standards should be reviewed and understood by all persons involved. The intern should not be put in situations that are beyond their abilities, make them vulnerable, or risk embarrassment.

The optimal setting is a congregation that is warm, welcoming, graceful, affirming, and excited about the work God is guiding them to do. Such an environment offers a great opportunity for an intern to explore God's call in his or her own life.

We at Palmyra express our gratitude to Jess Baker, Meg Bortner, Michaela Camps (who is returning this summer), John Eshleman, Jennifer (Hawk) Flora, Jesse Johnson, Julie Ann Ott, Jamie Risser, Erin Smith, and Lori Walmer. They have been our interns, and we are richer for it. We are thankful they spent their "summer vacation" with us. 

Dennis Lohr is pastor of Christian nurture at Palmyra (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.

# A firm foundation for future ministry

Through Ministry Summer Service, young adults test their calling

by Beth Gunzel

I

**In 1 Corinthians 12, the apostle Paul could not have been clearer about the importance of identifying, developing, and using our spiritual gifts for the benefit of others.** He writes in verse 7: "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."

He goes on to say that this manifestation takes different shapes in the lives of different people, but each is equally valuable in God's eyes. Through God's love and grace our personalities, talents, abilities, and even weaknesses have the potential to become channels for carrying out God's will on Earth. And because this is such a great and sometimes even frightening responsibility, requiring surrender, commitment, and perseverance, it is essential that we find spaces on this journey to discern the particular ways God longs to use us.

Three years ago when I sent in my Ministry Summer Service (MSS) application I was searching for such a space. At that time, I was finishing my undergraduate degree in social work and preparing to begin a master's degree in international com-

munity development the fall immediately after graduation.

I felt God was nudging me to shift from merely preparing for a career in service to preparing for a life of service. I decided that MSS seemed like the appropriate program to merge my concern for social welfare with my commitment to Christ.

On the application I expressed my interest in a church that was involved in community outreach, building cross-cultural relationships, and sensitive to my intense fear of having to write and deliver a sermon. When I was notified that I would

Walt Wiltschek

Bruce Rosenberger, left, goes over plans with Emily O'Donnell for her Ministry Summer Service internship at Woodland Altars in Ohio.



## Others share reflections from their MSS experiences

### The challenge of ministering

During my third week of Ministry Summer Service, I got a powerful lesson in what it means to minister to strangers on behalf of Jesus.

The call came over the hospital loudspeaker: "Medical Alert. 3 West." I answered the call because I was the only chaplain in the hospital and because I thought someone might be dying. It turned out that someone was.

I got there before the family. Nurses were crowded in. The doctor ran past me. The alert had been called for an old woman, and I saw her middle-aged son run past. I almost followed him into his mother's room, but there were so many people in

there already that I just stayed in the hall.

I waited, and I was beginning to think that God had called me to 3 West to minister to other patients, or perhaps for no discernible reason at all. But just as I began walking to another patient's room, a nurse called me back. "Chaplain," she said, "he's ready for you."

I followed the nurse's directions into a quiet hospital room, and found a son standing next to his dead mother. We talked for a while, and I asked him if I could pray with him, and we prayed. I felt horrible about the prayer; it seemed incredibly awkward and totally unworthy of the situation. I honestly hoped the man wasn't listening.

The man may have been disappointed that I was so young and inexperienced, or he may just have been in shock. But he said "thank you," and I said that he could

call the chaplains' office anytime, and I left. God alone knows what effect, if any, my words had for that grieving man. And that's all right with me.—Jim Stokes-Buckles

### A deeper sense of call

When you embark on a summer-long journey in the ministry it is hard to know what to expect. I certainly did not.

My experience in Ministry Summer Service was not just eye-opening; it was worldview-widening, self-awareness-raising, and faith-strengthening. I had expected to see the church from a different point of view. I expected to explore my gifts in different ministry settings. I even expect-

*Katie Best, left, and Alice Martin-Adkins work on a list of goals for a Ministry Summer Service experience at Washington (D.C.) City Church of the Brethren.*



be sent to Harrisburg (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren, a congregation that was all these things and so much more, I felt confirmed in my decision to apply.

Now, I could literally write a book about my experiences that summer: how I wrote and delivered my first sermon, how I worked in the neighborhood thrift store, or how I learned the deeper meanings of kindness, generosity, and friendship from the examples of church and community members.

I would certainly dedicate a chapter to my mentor, Nancy Heishman, who dedicated 10 weeks to nourish my spiritual and professional development, to read scripture and pray with me, and to help me recognize my strengths and weaknesses. I am grateful she used her gifts, experience, and wisdom to challenge me to be more mature and better prepared for my future.

Furthermore, Ministry Summer Service took my desire to confront issues such as inequitable development, poverty, and racism and taught me creative ways to do so within the context of my faith. It helped me realize that there does not have

to be a separation between our spiritual lives, personal lives, and professional lives.

That realization three years ago has served as a firm foundation in my current work. In September 2004, I arrived in the Dominican Republic to work with Global Mission Partnerships and alongside the local Dominican Brethren church (Iglesia de los Hermanos) on their micro-loans community development project.

The work of addressing the social, economic, and spiritual needs of 18 different communities in a country that has endured political oppression, poverty, and social divisions based on class, color, and creed is challenging. It has often led me to pause and think about how grateful I am to have had the opportunity to be a Ministry Summer Service intern, for it provided me with the insight, skills, and passion to accompany me on this newest journey. 

Beth Gunzel is a member of York Center Church of the Brethren, Lombard, Ill. She is currently serving with the General Board's Global Mission Partnerships office as consultant to the micro-loan community development program in the Dominican Republic.

ed to make new friends. My expectations were met, but that was just the beginning.

I participated in Ministry Summer Service for two summers on two different projects: one at Manassas (Va.) Church of the Brethren and one with Brethren Press in Elgin, Ill. I was able to do anything from planning worship and preaching to working in the bookstore at Annual Conference.

What I gained but did not expect was a deeper sense of my own person and calling in life, not just in the ministry. I also had the opportunity to be a part of a faith community in a way I had never been before, a community that is still supporting and inspiring me. I worked in a setting that later afforded me the opportunity to be a workcamp coordinator in the General Board Youth/Young Adult Ministry Office. Finally, I have two mentors who remain

involved in my life, nurturing and caring for me as I continue to grow.

For me, the summers I spent in MSS were certainly life-changing, but it is the way those experiences continue to impact my life and my work even now that make MSS one of the best things I have ever done.—**Cindy Laprade**

#### **Blessed and challenged**

I was blessed to be at Inspiration Hills (the Northern Ohio District camp) this past summer as the staff chaplain. My position was created to care for the spiritual well-being of each staff member. I led them in Bible study, scripture memorization, and attempted to dialogue frequently with each staff member. I also made sure the staff was being prayed for regularly, and, at the beginning of each week, several of

us prayed for the incoming campers.

I learned several things from this experience. First, it was easy to get caught up in the business of camp life, like Martha, while forgetting what was necessary, sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to him, like Mary (Luke 10:38-42).

Through an impromptu Bible study, I also learned an incredibly valuable lesson. My perception of who God is was challenged by how God has chosen to reveal himself through his Word. It was tough giving up what I had mistakenly believed, but it was necessary. If I am not willing to sacrifice all my selfishness and pride in order to embrace all of who God is, I am not worthy to be a follower of Christ (Matt. 10:38; 16:24). I gained a lot of wisdom through this experience. What an awesome God we serve!—**Ben Alger**

# A time of stretching and discovery

by Jill Kline

## Theological Exploration of Vocation programs offer students opportunities to grow

I participated in the Theological Exploration of Vocation (TEV) program during the summer of 2003, when I spent 10 weeks in Havre, Mont., at a social service agency called Human Resource Development Council (HRDC).

Havre is a small town and very close to a Native American reservation, so that about half of our clients were Native American. I had previously known very little about living in a small town and even less about the reality of Native American culture.

I served in multiple capacities that summer, including helping at the food bank, coordinating a mentoring program for children, and serving as a domestic violence advocate and shelter manager. It was an eye-opening summer, as I observed first-hand the cycle of poverty I'd read about in my sociology textbooks and some of the effects that living in impoverished conditions had on the families I was serving.

The most meaningful part of the summer for me was spending time with the women in the shelter and their children; it was an honor to know that they trusted me with their struggles and fears and to be able to encourage them at such a vulnerable point in their lives.

The summer was a time of stretching and discovery not only for me; other college students who participated in the TEV program have also been challenged by new experiences. I interviewed five students about their TEV summer service, and they

all discovered that being outside of their comfort zones affected how they view the interplay of faith, vocation, self, and service.

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**Jeremy Weber** (*Stone Church of the Brethren, Huntingdon, Pa.*), senior international political economy major at Juniata College, summer service in Montana at HRDC

A very goal-oriented person, Jeremy says he had to learn flexibility during his time in Havre. "Thrown into a new situation, not sure of where I was going, I had to be open," says Jeremy, who has discovered his newfound flexibility to be a very positive thing.

In the past, Jeremy notes, his goals sometimes became confining, as he focused on his own will while closing himself off to God's.

**Jonathan Stauffer** (*Polo, Ill., Church of the Brethren*), junior physics major at Manchester College, summer service at Camp Myrtlewood in Oregon

At Camp Myrtlewood, the Church of the Brethren's Oregon/Washington District camp, Jon found the time and space to truly listen to himself, to journal, and to spend time in nature. In that setting, his faith grew more personal and more his own.

Jon says he became more comfortable with himself that summer, while simultaneously being exposed to new ideas and ways of living. "I learned the importance of dialogue and was

### The wide reach of TEV

The Program for the Theological Exploration of Vocation (TEV) is an initiative sponsored by a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. The initiative was launched in 1999, and Manchester College was invited to be a part of this innovative program. The goal of TEV is to "identify and nurture a new generation of highly talented and religiously committed leaders for church and society."

As part of a small denomination with a

group of educational institutions that already had an established consortium (via the Church of the Brethren Collaboration on Admissions), Manchester invited the other Church of the Brethren schools to participate in the TEV programs. As the grant took shape, other denominational programs, such as the General Board Youth/Young Adult Ministry Office and Brethren Volunteer Service, joined the collaboration.

The result has been an array of opportunities for both youth and young adults

to consider their faith as they ponder their future work. From Bethany Theological Seminary's "Exploring Your Call" program for high school youth, to Vocations Day at the 2002 National Youth Conference, to a college-based summer service program modeled after the General Board's Ministry Summer Service program (and using many Brethren Volunteer Service projects for placements), thousands of Church of the Brethren young people have been touched by TEV.—Jill Kline



*Participants from last summer's Theological Exploration of Vocation program gather during a group retreat.*

able to listen to people with other points of view, while also gaining a clearer sense of my own ideas," Jon says.

**Charity Boyd** (Beavercreek, Ohio, Church of the Brethren), junior liberal studies major at Bridgewater College, summer service at Friendship Daycare Center in Hutchinson, Kan.

Charity was excited by the opportunity to spend her summer serving, something she had always been interested in doing but hadn't had much chance to do. Living on the Brethren Volunteer Service stipend for the summer, Charity learned what it means to live simply and has become more conscious of her own patterns of consumption and of the materialistic culture around her.

"It was my first time on my own, so I really learned to listen more closely to what God has in mind for my life," says Charity, who had her own apartment for the summer. She found a lot of comfort in the close relationships she had with the church community affiliated with Friendship Daycare. Charity is now sure that she would like to work with and teach children.

**Mary Romig** (Parker Ford, Pa., Church of the Brethren), senior social work major at Elizabethtown College, summer service at Bering Omega Community Services in Houston

Bering Omega has three parts: a hospice, a daycare, and a dental clinic, and Mary spent time volunteering in each. She found herself in a very unfamiliar place, cut off from familiar relationships.

Mary was confronted with many new ideas and often felt stigmatized because of her faith. She quickly learned to think for herself, and to distinguish her own faith convictions from what she had previously believed simply because she had been told to.

"I had to justify my own beliefs to myself and to others," she says. It was a challenge, but by the end of the summer, Mary was more comfortable with and sure about her faith.

The experience also left Mary more open to service and

willing to do what was needed of her. She never thought she would work with an AIDS population, but she found herself less afraid and more open to new experiences and people. Her summer experience strengthened her desire to do social work and to work closely with her clients.

**Heidi Bailey** (Oakland Church of the Brethren, Gettysburg, Ohio), senior philosophy and religion major at McPherson College, summer service at Friendship House in Wilmington, Del.

Heidi says it was hard to witness the life struggles of the clients she was serving at Friendship House, a women's day

## **Students who enter the TEV program rarely emerge unchanged. Summer service experiences and Imagination Grants foster significant reflection for students about who they are and about their ideas of faith, vocation, and service.**

center. She was touched and inspired, though, by the loving and compassionate women she worked alongside.

Before entering TEV, Heidi hadn't been presented with the idea of vocation, and she found both the orientation and debriefing particularly helpful to her as she considered her future.

"I wouldn't want to be at a job just for a paycheck, and my experiences this summer made me realize that," she says.

\* \* \*

### **The power of Imagination**

The TEV program encourages students to share their stories and to continue to process their experiences. One way students can do further exploration is via TEV's Imagination Grants.

I was fortunate to receive a grant to travel to Jamshedpur, India, last January to do research for the state of Jharkhand's health project. In applying for the Imagination Grant, students are encouraged to go somewhere where they are the only person like themselves. In India, aside from one day trip to Calcutta, I did not see

# Ministry formation

any other white skin. I was sometimes painfully aware of my difference and of the privilege it represented to the people there.

Completely out of my comfort zone, I was forced to be open and to trust myself and the world around me in a way I never had before. What I learned from the experience was incredible, as I found commonalities between myself and the people in a culture as different from my own as I could imagine.

Both Jeremy and Jon also received Imagination Grants following their summer service experiences. Jeremy's grant took him to Tarapoto, Peru, last summer, where he volunteered for Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA).

Jeremy spent his time translating and improving an agricultural software system, making it more user-friendly. While there, Jeremy realized that service is a two-way street. To be truly in service, he believes we must work with those we are serving, as they have just as much to offer us as we have to offer them in meeting a need together.

As a senior, Jeremy says the biggest question TEV has left him with as he considers his future is: "Where can I make the biggest difference?"

Jon spent May 2004 in China as part of a program designed to give students an international view of the ways engineering can make a positive impact on the world.

He found himself reflecting on the idea of vocation and how his passions might be channeled in order to better serve others.

Jon was particularly disturbed by the

economic injustice he witnessed in the four Chinese cities he visited, shocked to see skyscrapers existing alongside shacks. Witnessing this stratification first-hand strengthened his desire to work for social and economic justice, and the Imagination Grant offered the time and resources to explore what that means for him in the field of engineering.

• • •

## Space and encouragement

Students who enter the TEV program rarely emerge unchanged. Summer service experiences and Imagination Grants foster significant reflection for students about who they are and about their ideas of faith, vocation, and service. TEV provides space and encouragement needed for students to better understand themselves and to more fully explore their potential.

Each TEV participant is stretched in new ways, living and working in unfamiliar places where he or she learns to connect with self and God on a deeper level. I know I am still discovering the many imprints left on my life by my TEV experiences. ■

Jill Kline graduated from Manchester College last spring with a bachelor's degree in sociology. A member of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren, she lives in Elgin, Ill., where she is substitute teaching in bilingual classrooms.



Jesse Reid

## A 'conversation' on vocation

In a culminating event for the Theological Exploration of Vocation (TEV) program, about 70 Church of the Brethren college administrators, college chaplains, denominational staff members, pastors, and others met Feb. 10-12 at Manchester College (North Manchester, Ind.) for a "Church-College Conversation" centering on issues of faith, leadership, and vocation.

Campus chaplain Jim Chinworth said the time was intended "to create a space where we can listen, not just to each other, but to the holy and sacred."

The group was joined for the second half of the meeting by more than 20 college students who have been part of Ministry Summer Service (MSS) or TEV programs, both designed to help young adults explore Christian dimensions of vocation. Those students then stayed on for an additional day and a half for a student leadership conference.

Margee Iddings of Rising Phoenix

Retreat Center in Maryland led several worship times for the event, weaving in biblical background on leadership and vocation. Two worship times included listening circles in which participants shared their own stories of call and examined the challenges and joys of those callings.

In another session, Rhonda Pittman Gingrich-a member of Open Circle Church of the Brethren in Burnsville, Minn., and an ordained minister-shared her personal journey that led to ordination. Del Keeney, executive director of Congregational Life Ministries for the Church of the Brethren General Board, followed with an overview of Brethren heritage and tradition related to calling.

David White of Emory University's Candler School of Theology led a session of "creative play," in which participants created living sculptures to illustrate their perceptions of the church-college relationship. White and General Board Youth/Young Adult Ministry director Chris Douglas also teamed up to share some learnings and "best practices" from the MSS and TEV programs. TEV has placed 91 college students over the past four summers, many in Brethren Volunteer Service projects. This coming summer is TEV's last one funded by the special Lilly grant.

For more details on TEV, visit [www.lillyendowment.org/religion\\_ptev.html](http://www.lillyendowment.org/religion_ptev.html).—Walt Wiltschek

# Ministry formation that really sings

by Tara Hornbacker

## Seminary seeks to blend academic work, experience in students' training

*"To prepare people for Christian ministry, and to educate those called as witnesses to the gospel of Jesus Christ in the cities and communities of the world."*—from Bethany Theological Seminary mission statement

**E**very once in a while, someone asks, "What's it like at Bethany these days?" or "Should I come to Bethany?" or even more pointedly, "Why should I go to Bethany?" The tone of the questions varies, but the inquiries are sincere. What is the seminary's part in ministry formation? My response is: "How can I keep from singing?"

Our part in ministry formation, like our hymnody, is a place of harmony—not a single note, but a community of conversation. A student coming to Bethany may participate in a number of programs, each formatted to prepare them for Christian ministry in the 21st century. From the Brethren Academy to the Institute for Youth and Young Adults, some educational areas are done in partnership with the General Board, while housed on our campus in Richmond, Ind. Ministry formation is central to the curriculum and comprises the core sequence of courses at the seminary for master of divinity (M.Div.) students.

The most popular hymn in the first semester of any given year is "Here I am, Lord." Our students engage in graduate study as a response to the call of God upon their lives. In the first year, students are enrolled in Exegeting the Call and Culture of Ministry, a year-long course that explores both the call and identity of the minister and the cultural context in which specific ministries take place.

In addition to class attendance, students are required to participate in a spiritual formation group that meets weekly in conjunction with the course. We are convinced that our students come to us with the deep desire to be shaped and formed as persons of prayer in the practice of ministry. Students learn and practice the spiritual disciplines of Bible study, group discernment, and prayer in the spiritual formation group while practicing discernment and principles of missional church leadership in class time.

Students progress to their ministry formation placements (formerly known as field education placements) during their second year. In Ministry Formation I & II, students participate in a nine-month, part-time ministry placement while attending classes. These supervised ministry settings, in congregations or

other ministry settings, provide the basis for theological reflection in small groups through an action/reflection model.

Students create a learning/serving contract that includes four learning goals: two skill-based goals, a spiritual growth goal centered in one of the Christian spiritual disciplines, and a self-care goal. Each year the student integrates the learnings in other course work with the practice of ministry, while intentionally addressing his/her own spiritual growth as a ministering person. As the students reflect on their ministry through worshipfully formatted case studies, scriptures and hymns surface in discussion. Recently a student brought forward "I Love to Tell the Story" after visiting an older church member who loved to tell stories, as one might imagine!

Another favorite begins to emerge in chapel when students return from their summer's work in Ministry Formation Elective: "How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord." This elective can be a 10-week, full-time summer ministry, a unit of clinical pastoral education, a chaplaincy unit, an extended ministry experience, or another kind of ministry formation option that layers spiritual formation, discerning leadership, and practical ministry skill development.

Students attend to the movement of the Holy Spirit in their lives and in the lives of those with whom they minister, reflecting on their ministry: Where is God in all this? We ask this crucial question so often, an example of Brethren shorthand develops: WIGIAT? These practical ministry opportunities work toward clarifying gifts and calling for ministry through actual experience.

In the senior year, students enroll in M.Div. Review, and strains of "Praise, I Will Praise You, Lord," begin wafting down the hallways. Students are required to synthesize and reflect upon all their cumulative course work and ministry formation placements. They produce a portfolio of their seminary course work and present it for review by a faculty committee.

How is the seminary a part of ministry formation in the denomination? Close your eyes. Imagine you are in Nicarry Chapel on the Richmond campus. "Move In Our Midst" is ringing out in unadorned voices blending together. Staff and faculty join with students from around the world and across the street in sweet harmony, as we are sent out into the cities and communities of the world to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. And upon occasion, there might be guitars and congas in the postlude! 

Tara Hornbacker is assistant professor of Ministry Formation at Bethany Theological Seminary. She lives in New Paris, Ohio.

# The importance 'the <sup>of</sup>call'

Congregations need to make calling out leaders a priority

by Fred Bernhard

**G**od's call comes to us in many ways. In the Church of the Brethren, we understand the call to be both an outer and an inner experience.

My own inner call was a stirring within that began at age 5. It probably had something to do with the fact that my father was elected to the ministry after he had begun preaching a few years earlier. I remember preaching to the living room chairs at a very early age. At age 16 those same inner stirrings recurred, and I could not ignore them. When I finally told my parents, they, like Eli the priest, told me to listen and answer God's call.

During the 19th year of my life, the outer call came from my home congregation to the non-salaried, set-apart ministry of the church. I, along with six others, took turns sharing the preaching and a few pastoral tasks.

The discernment process of that outer call was confirmed in those early years through an additional year of relicensing and

The Ministerial Leadership paper adopted by the 1999 Annual Conference ([www.brethren.org/genbd/ministry/paper.htm](http://www.brethren.org/genbd/ministry/paper.htm)) lists approved educational training programs for ordination, including seminary training and those offered by the Brethren Academy. These programs are designed to meet the needs of those called to ministry and the churches they will serve.

What many 21st-century Church of the Brethren congregations need are either non-salaried or part-time, bi-vocational pastors. This isn't a new idea for us. Throughout much of our earlier history we were served by bi-vocational ministers. My father was a farmer-preacher for much of his life.

Recently I learned of a congregation that is served by five seminary-trained, bi-vocational or retired ministers (See November 2004 MESSENGER). Each person's ministry is designed around his or her God-given gifts. This is an example of a congregation able to think outside the box as it maximizes the human resources within its fellowship.

As I came to the time of my retirement from pastoral ministry it became increasingly clear to me that the current shortage of "called-out ministers"

was our collective responsibility. Accepting a part-time position as an advancement associate with Bethany is my personal acceptance of this responsibility. I am delighted to have the opportunity to preach in and encourage local congregations to see the importance of calling people gifted for ministerial/pastoral leadership. The degree to which congregations continue to call will be the degree to which God will grant the Church of the Brethren a vital, significant future.

We must "lay our hands on" people and equip them educationally for ministry in this generation of Christ's church. It's a matter of life or death for Brethren. **M**

**The degree to which congregations continue to call will be the degree to which God will grant the Church of the Brethren a vital, significant future.**

then ordination to the set-apart ministry of the church. Each of these steps necessitated a congregational vote by my home congregation. The confirmation of that outer call came again each time a subsequent congregation called me to be its pastor.

I strongly believe that the future of our beloved church will be determined as local congregations intentionally encourage persons to consider ministerial leadership. We Brethren cannot expect others to do the calling for us. The Holy Spirit has equipped each congregation with the ability to call.

In recent years, Oakland Church of the Brethren (from which I retired as pastor and where I now continue to hold my membership) has called eight people to ministerial leadership. In addition, they have helped train six others through tuition grants to Bethany Theological Seminary. These people are currently providing ministerial leadership at Oakland and other congregations across the nation.

Fred Bernhard is a former Annual Conference moderator and retired pastor of Oakland Church of the Brethren in Southern Ohio District. He is currently part-time staff for Bethany Theological Seminary and for Christian Community Inc., which produces congregational resources. He lives in Arcanum, Ohio.

# There Is A Camp For You!



## Where Will You Be This Summer?

### *Church of the Brethren Camps*

are all special and unique. However, we have the same purpose: to provide opportunities in the natural setting for all people to grow closer to Jesus Christ. Come join us this summer!



### Outdoor Ministries Association – Church of the Brethren Member Camps' Contact Information:

Brethren Woods, VA (540) 269-2741	Camp Harmony, PA (814) 798-5885	Camp Peaceful Pines, CA (209) 523-9490	Camp Brethren Heights, MI (231) 867-3618
Camp Alexander Mack, IN (574) 658-4831	Inspiration Hills, OH (419) 846-3010	Camp Placid, TN (423) 323-8844	Camp Emmaus, IL (815) 734-4027
Camp Bethel, VA (540) 992-2940	Ithiel Camp & Retreat Center, FL (407) 293-3481	Shepherd's Spring, MD (301) 223-8193	Camp Pine Lake, IA (641) 939-533
Camp Blue Diamond, PA (814) 667-2355	Camp Koinonia, WA (509) 674-5767	Camp Swatara, PA (717) 933-8510	
Camp Eder, PA (717) 642-8256	Camp Mardela, MD (410) 479-2861	Woodland Altars, OH (937) 588-4411	
Camp Galilee, WV (301) 245-4119	Camp Myrtlewood, OR (541) 572-5307	Website links are available through <a href="http://www.cob-net.org/camp.htm">www.cob-net.org/camp.htm</a>	

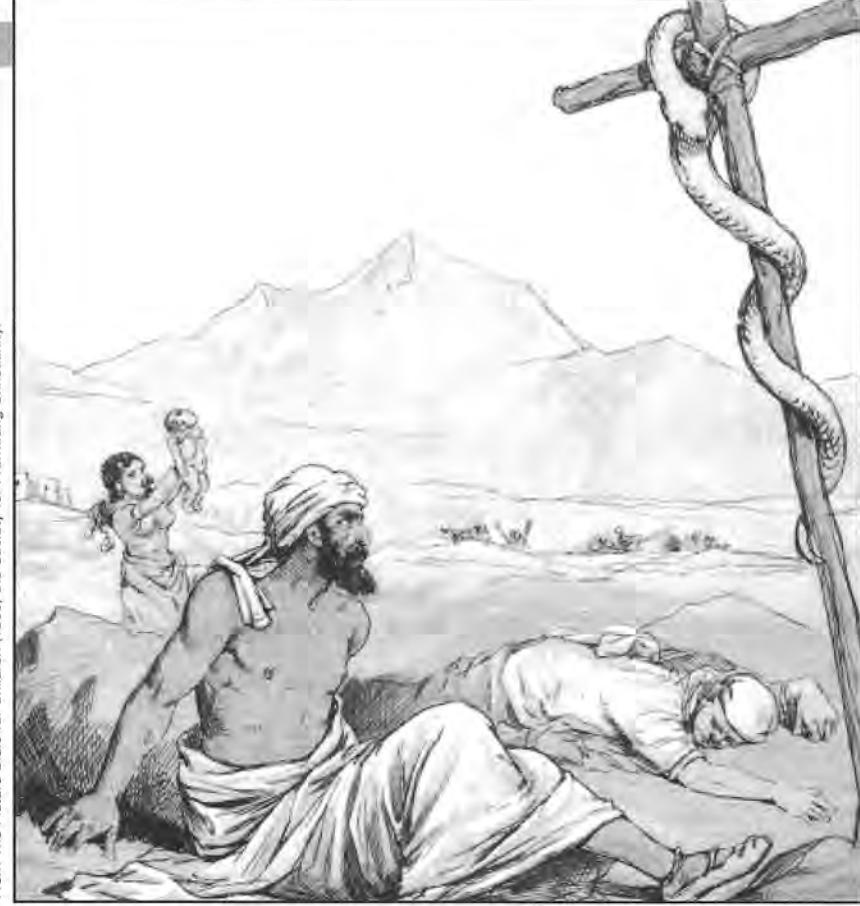
# Numbers: *The book of the march*

**T**he book of Numbers opens at Sinai, about one year after the exodus from Egypt. After the Israelites had been delivered from bondage in Egypt (described in Exodus) and were taught worship through sacrifices and offerings (portrayed in Leviticus), they were to set out for the land of Canaan. In Numbers 10, the cloud moved, and the people followed, moving in stages from Sinai toward the land of Canaan (10:11-12).

Numbers 13 and 14 relate the experience of sending out 12 men to look over the land of promise, and God's response to Israel's lack of trust. The people arrived at the southern border of Canaan, and from this point scouts were sent out to investigate the land. When the spies returned, most of them admitted that the land of Canaan was a good land, but their faith was undermined by the sight of giants and walled cities.

The people sided with the 10 spies who were scared, and the result of their unbelief was 38 years of wandering in the desert, until all who were over 19

From The Picture Bible for Children (1900, the Society for Promoting Christianity)



by Harold S. Martin

years of age (except Joshua and Caleb) had died (14:29-30). The people marked time, moving from place to place on the desert. Numbers tells the experiences of the Israelites during the years of wandering in the desert.

Moses wrote down the movements of the people (33:2). It is the sad story of repeated murmurings against God, and of the punishments that followed. Numbers 33 is a concise diary of the years of wandering. There is no attempt to give a complete and continuous narrative of the wilderness march. The 40 years is calculated from the time of the exodus to the first Passover in Canaan (recorded in Joshua 5:10-12).

The book is named Numbers because it tells about two numberings of the people, first in chapter 1, and again in chapter 26. God commanded the numbering (Num. 1:2), but on another occasion, David sinned when he numbered the people (2 Sam. 24:1-4). David hoped to win battles by putting confidence in sheer numbers. Moses was to number the people at the begin-

ning and the end of the journeying, to show future generations how mighty a miracle God performed in preserving the people through the awful desert.

A general outline of the book of Numbers can be given in four parts:

1. **The organization of Israel** (1:1-10:36)
2. **Experiences on the journey** (11:1-25:18)
3. **Looking forward to the promised land** (26:1-33:49)
4. **Preparations for entrance into Canaan** (33:50-36:13)

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Numbers is rich in types of spiritual truth. Numbers 21 tells about the bronze serpent—a picture of our Savior (Jesus Christ) lifted up on the cross (John 12:32-33). Jesus alludes to the fact that he would be lifted up on a cross just as the serpent in the wilderness was lifted up on a pole. If



**Numbers is rich in types of spiritual truth. Numbers 21 tells about the bronze serpent—a picture of our Savior (Jesus Christ) lifted up on the cross. Jesus alludes to the fact that he would be lifted up on a cross just as the serpent in the wilderness was lifted up on a pole.**

Israelites who were bitten by a snake looked at the bronze serpent, they lived. If not, they died. Likewise, Jesus teaches that all who look to him with an obedient faith will have eternal life (John 3:14-15).

Numbers describes how God leads, guides, disciplines, delivers, sustains, and protects the people. When they were disobedient, God rewarded them with judgment. When they repented, God pardoned and restored them.

In many ways Numbers makes sad reading, since much of Israel's suffering was a direct outcome of the peo-

ple's murmuring and disobedience. We could say that Numbers is a record of human failure as it stands in contrast to divine faithfulness. The general thought is that God is in control in spite of Israel's idolatry and immoral behavior. **W**

Harold S. Martin is an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren and editor of Brethren Revival Fellowship's *BRF Witness* newsletter. He lives in Lititz, Pa.

*MESSENGER's "Journey through the Word" series will provide a brief overview of a different book (or books) of the Bible each month through December 2009. Coming in May: Deuteronomy, by Dawn Wilhelm.*

## **THE TASK OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION**

In the November/December 2004 issue of *BRF Witness*, Harold S. Martin offered five basic principles that can help those studying the Scriptures to "interpret carefully":

- 1. Try to discover what the words mean.**
- 2. Interpret the passage in light of the context.**
- 3. Examine carefully all scriptures that relate to a passage.**
- 4. Try to learn the meaning of a phrase in the original language.**
- 5. Determine the literary nature of the passage to be studied.**

## **NUMBERS: A CLOSER LOOK**

**When written:** About 1400 B.C.

**Famous stories:** Sending out the spies, Moses' sin of striking the rock, the bronze serpent, Balaam hired to curse Israel

**Well-known verses:** "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace" (6:24-26).

**Other notes:** There were 12 spies. Most Bible readers know the names of the two courageous men who wanted to go up to Canaan immediately; very few know the names of the 10 who were fearful. All the spies are named in Numbers 13, but we do not remember the names of the 10 who doubted the Lord's help. That says something about the power of influence.

## General Board finances finish strongly for 2004

The past year was a very positive one for the Core Ministries Fund of the General Board, treasurer Judy Keyser reported. The fund provides for most ministries of the board and depends heavily on congregational and individual giving. "This type of outcome certainly relieves a bit of pressure and gives us some reprieve," Keyser said.

An increase in congregational giving over budget and over 2003 was a welcome turnaround. Congregational giving had shown a downward trend in recent years, but in 2004 gifts to the fund from congregations increased to \$3,324,300, and gifts from individuals rose slightly to \$654,200.

Keyser also noted that, for the first time in several years, bequest income met and exceeded the budgeted amount. Investment returns were remarkably higher than expected as well, she said.

Those factors, plus careful management of expen-



Chery Brumbaugh-Cayford

*The work of the General Board's financial team, among other staff groupings, was highlighted when board members and staff met in informal small groups during the board's meeting this past fall.*

ditures, resulted in income over expense totaling \$414,200. Some of that surplus was set aside to strengthen ongoing ministries and to expand some special projects for 2005, resulting in a final net income of \$192,200.

Because of the positive year-end report, the board did not need to use \$215,000 set aside to cover projected shortfalls in 2004. The money had been redirected from funds the board had designated for other projects in past years.

Keyser said the General Board has taken additional steps to provide better long-term stability for the Core Ministries Fund. All estate gifts will now go directly into the board's bequest quasi-endowment, and income budgeted from bequests will be a percentage of a five-year average of that bequest quasi-endowment. A higher percentage of the quasi-endowment will be used this year in order to have fewer budget

reductions during the bookkeeping transition.

"This will even out income from year to year without depleting the bequest quasi-endowment," she said. Since investment income has also been volatile over the last several years, similar actions were taken with the General Board's Endowment Fund and other special funds.

The General Board also operates several self-funding ministries that receive income through the sale of goods and services. While MESSENGER magazine finished the year with income over expense of \$2,800, the other three self-funding units experienced losses: \$47,200 for Brethren Press, \$67,500 for the New Windsor (Md.) Conference Center, and \$68,900 for Service Ministries. Keyser said that lower net assets in some self-funding ministries is a long-term concern, but "each is developing plans to work at sustaining income."

The board manages three special-purpose funds made possible by gifts from donors: Emergency Disaster Fund grants totaled \$474,200 in 2004, Global Food Crisis Fund grants totaled \$326,000, and the Emerging Global Mission Fund spent \$121,400. Complete audited financial information on these funds will be available in June when the General Board audit report is published.

Despite positive results for 2004 and the actions to stabilize income, expenses continue to outpace anticipated income, Keyser said. General Board budgets for 2005 were reduced by \$248,210.

## Muslim Peacemaker Team trained by CPT in Iraq

Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) conducted a five-day training Jan. 22-26 for Muslim peacemakers at the request of a human rights organization in Karbala, Iraq. Four CPT volunteers, including Church of the Brethren members Peggy Gish and Cliff Kindy, conducted the training at the office of the human rights organization. CPT is an initiative of the historic peace churches—Church of the Brethren, Mennonites, and Quakers—with support and membership from a range of Catholic and Protestant denominations.

Some of the topics covered in the training included stories of nonviolent peacemaking, the power of nonviolence, the spirituality of nonviolence, and planning for public action, CPT reported in a release. The trainers also covered various "smaller" topics including trauma and self-care, working with media, and human rights documentation.

In response to stories and exploration of the power of nonviolence, participants asked, "How did that work?" and "Can we do that here?" the release said. The group also explored the roots of nonviolence in the Muslim tradition and told the CPTers that Islam has a firm tradition of nonviolence rooted in the teachings

of the Qu'ran and the prophet Mohammed.

"In the course of the training, participants shared stories of suffering and trauma they experienced under Saddam Hussein and during the wars in which Iraq has participated, including the most recent war with the US and the subsequent occupation," CPT said. "Trainees said they feel compelled to use their suffering for peace-making instead of avenging wrongs done to them."

Muslim peacemakers and CPT are planning for future trainings in other venues around Karbala, according to CPT. Possibilities include training at a university in Karbala and in the surrounding cities of Najaf and Hilla. For more information, see [www.cpt.org](http://www.cpt.org).

## BBT board looks at budget, planned giving program

In addition to working to ensure the long-term health of the Brethren Medical Plan (see February 2005 MESSENGER, p. 23, "BBT makes new requirement to save Brethren Medical Plan"), the Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT) board at its meeting in Middlebury, Ind., Nov. 19-20 supported a program to help church agencies develop planned giving, approved a 2005 budget, studied the use of "soft dollars," reviewed investment strategy for the Retirement Benefits Fund, and looked at the possibility of creating a "stable-value" fund.

The Investment Committee studied the use of "soft dollars" to pay for certain investment research costs. Soft dollars are generated when an investor directs that purchases and sales of securities be handled by a specific broker. The broker then rebates a portion of his or her commission on the sales to be used by the investor to purchase research. Although widespread, the practice has received negative attention primarily because of the potential for conflicts of interest. The Investment Committee declined to accept soft dollars on BBT accounts and will request more complete reporting from investment managers on how they use soft dollars.

The Investment Committee also reviewed investment strategy for the Retirement Benefits Fund. Assets in the fund are the source of payments for

Christian Peacemaker Teams



Brethren Pension Plan retirees. With many experts predicting several years of below-average returns, the committee decided to review current allocations.

In response to requests from Brethren Pension Plan members and asset management clients, the Investment Committee addressed the possibility of creating a "stable-value" fund. By investing in a socially responsible mix of short-term securities, such a fund would be able to generate positive returns under most market conditions. Although returns would be small, they would be unlikely to be negative in any given month. A stable-value fund would benefit those nearing retirement who could use a stable-value investment to "park" pension contributions and earnings up to six months before retirement, thus locking in a minimum level for their monthly annuity. Asset management clients would use a stable-value fund to protect funds that will be used in a relatively short period.

In other business the board approved a 2005 budget with expenditures of \$2,790,000; approved the recommended 100-percent housing allowance limit for pastors receiving pension annuities and disability benefits; authorized grants from the Supplemental Income Fund for Equitable Annuitants assets to former members of the equitable plan; and elected to explore the actions required for BBT to fulfill the spirit of the 2002 Sarbanes-Oxley Act placing stringent requirements on financial activities of publicly traded companies. While

*Continued on page 25*

*Trainees took part in a "hassle line" role play of nonviolent tactics during interactions with police or military as part of a training for a Muslim Peacemaker Team in Iraq. The training was conducted by Christian Peacemaker Teams in January.*

## Annual Conference office announces 2005 ballot

The Annual Conference office has announced the ballot that delegates will consider during this year's gathering, July 2-6 in Peoria, Ill. The Nominating Committee of Standing Committee developed a full slate of candidates in January. Standing Committee then voted to create the ballot that will be presented to Conference delegates. Nominees on the ballot, by position, are:

**Moderator-elect:** Ruthann Knechel Johansen, Belita D. Mitchell

**Annual Conference Council:** Earle Fike Jr., James F. Myer

**Program and Arrangements Committee:** Sonja Pauline Griffith, Kristi A. Kellerman

**Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee:** Jill I. Loomis, David Shoup

**Review and Evaluation Committee:** Dale W. Brown, Wanda Will Button, Michaela Camps, Rebecca Baile Crouse, Craig L. Gandy, Paul Hoffman, Brian Mackie, James Edward Martinez, Janet Ober, Orlando Redekopp

**Association of Brethren Caregivers**

**board:** Brian S. Black, Tammy (Craig) Kiser, Patrick R. Liley, Heather L. Neff

**Bethany Theological Seminary Trustee—Ministry:** John David Bowman, Craig Alan Myers

**Bethany Theological Seminary Trustee—Laity:** Ted Flory, Mary Patterson Wysong

**Brethren Benefit Trust board:** Sally A. Brubaker, Carol Ann Jackson Greenwood

**On Earth Peace Assembly board:** Janice Dull Eller, Sarah Quinter Malone

**Committee on Interchurch Relations:** Illexene Alphonse, Rene Quintanilla

## INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT:

# INTERCHURCH MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

Nearly 50 years ago, US church denominations searching for ways to help their brethren overseas stumbled upon a valuable resource of surplus medicines and supplies through US pharmaceutical companies. The church relief agencies needed a system to handle procurement, storage, and shipping so they joined together and formed Interchurch Medical Assistance (IMA). The Church of the Brethren was a critical partner, since the Brethren Service Center warehouse facility in New Windsor, Md., was an ideal place from which to ship products worldwide.



Kathleen Campanella

**Members of Bonds Meadow Rotary Club of Westminster, Md.,** on Jan. 25 toured the Brethren Service Center warehouse, where medical supplies valued at more than \$70,000 awaited shipment to Tanzania—part of a four-year, \$325,000 project launched by the club in 2001. Jan Flora and Don Rowe, members of the club, are also members of Westminster Church of the Brethren.

The early morning tour and breakfast were coordinated by IMA, which supported the club's project being implemented with Rotary Clubs in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Rotary International. Two hospitals in the Kilosa Region of Tanzania will benefit from the donated materials.

In addition to the ongoing Tanzania project, the Bonds Meadow club has responded to the tsunami disaster in South Asia by contributing more than \$2,200 for IMA's emergency assistance there. The gift will fund six IMA Medicine Boxes valued at more than \$18,000 and provide enough medicine and medical supplies to treat approximately 6,000 adults and children.—Kathleen Campanella

In 1981, IMA's staff of five occupied a small suite of offices in the Blue Ridge building on the Brethren Service Center campus. Today, the entire lower level of Old Main, with eight more offices being added on the next level, provides space for a staff of 28.

Expansion in New Windsor is matched by expansion overseas. Represented in Tanzania for the past seven years by a single overseas staff member, by mid-2005 IMA will employ an estimated 16 overseas personnel and work from two offices in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's capital. In 1995 IMA joined other international humanitarian organizations in helping the Tanzania Ministry of Health implement a nationwide program to control the parasitic disease onchocerciasis (river blindness), and IMA's first resident representative was hired to coordinate activities in the country.

Today, IMA is involved in eight health-related programs in the region, from control of parasitic diseases to treatment for those living

with HIV/AIDS. IMA will manage programs in Tanzania and regional projects in the neighboring countries of Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia. The annual program budget has soared from approximately \$50,000 per year to several million dollars, creating the need for financial personnel in the Tanzania offices. Coordination with several offices in the Ministry of Health, corporate partners, and more than a dozen other local and international nongovernmental groups has created a need for administrative staff and program managers.

In many developing countries, church-based health services provide 30 to 50 percent of health care for entire populations. Churches frequently form ecumenical alliances, such as the Christian Health Association of Malawi or the Association of Christian Health Institutions of Haiti. IMA also is working with Christian health associations to set up systems for procuring medical products in quantity at reduced prices, accessing products available through pharmaceutical donation programs, and designing safe storage and distribution systems that ensure medicine and supplies move from the country's entry point to the most remote health clinic in the most distant village.

In addition to physical growth, IMA introduced disease intervention programs in 1995, and those have become a major focus. To support this expansion, IMA's annual income has jumped during the last five years from an average of \$20 million to more than \$97 million in fiscal year 2004.

To a small degree, IMA continues to process donated medical products, as its estimated \$2 million in tsunami relief reveals. But surplus drugs from pharmaceutical companies have dwindled in the age of computerized production systems. Today's donation programs are designed to address global health problems by

intentionally producing and donating large quantities of individual drugs to treat specific diseases.—Vickie Johnson is communications manager for Interchurch Medical Assistance at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md.

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

- \$19,500 to a Brethren Disaster Response rebuilding project in Hallam, Neb.
- \$17,500 to ship 22,000 pounds of chicken canned by Mid-Atlantic and Southern Pennsylvania districts, and Gift of the Heart Health Kits and Layette Kits to southern Sudan
- \$10,000 to Church World Service work in the Caribbean following the hurricanes of 2004

*Will Thomas discusses BBT's socially responsible investing initiatives during BBT's 2004 fall board meetings in Middlebury, Ind.*



Natalie Delpaura

#### *Continued from page 23*

BBT is not subject to the act's provisions, the board expressed its desire to hold BBT's activities to the highest possible standards.

The board also received reports from the Brethren Foundation and the Church of the Brethren Credit Union. The foundation currently manages approximately \$117 million, most of which represents asset management funds on deposit from about 200 congregations and other church agencies. The foundation also is responsible for numerous charitable trusts and charitable gift annuities. Dennis Kingery, director of Credit Union Operations, reported that the credit union is merging its existing internal controls with those already in place for BBT, and is exploring the possibility of offering members online access to their accounts.

The BBT board next meets April 16-17 in Elgin, Ill. For more information see BBT's website [www.brethrenbenefittrust.org](http://www.brethrenbenefittrust.org).

#### Personnel moves

- **Kim Stuckey Hissong**, program coordinator for Peacemaker Formation at On Earth Peace, has announced her resignation effective Aug. 24. She has worked with On Earth Peace since Oct. 2001. Hissong plans to pursue a master's degree in social work.

- **Julie M. Hostetter**, coordinator of the General Board's Area 3 (Southeast) Congregational Life Team since December 1997, announced her resignation effective April 30. She has accepted a call to become academic coordinator for United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, beginning May 1. Hostetter received her master of divinity degree from the school in 1982 and after graduation served on the administrative staff for 5½ years.

- **Grace Mishler** completed a four-year term of service in Vietnam on Feb. 28, jointly sponsored by the General Board and Eastern Mennonite Missions. While serving at National Vietnam University, she networked and empowered people with disabilities and developed a course titled "Social Awareness of Persons with Disabilities." Mishler is available to share her experiences in Vietnam with congregations and other groups. Contact Janis Pyle, coordinator for Mission Connections, at 800-323-8039 ext. 227.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

**April 1-3 Bethany Theological Seminary board meeting**, Richmond, Ind.

**April 1-3 Mission Alive 2005**, Goshen, Ind.

**April 5-8 "Building Healthy Congregations" Ministry of Reconciliation workshop**, New Windsor, Md.

**April 8-10 "Hebrews 12:28—Brimming With Worship" event**, Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind.

**April 8-10 Roundtable Regional Youth Conference**, Bridgewater (Va.) College

**April 14-16 On Earth Peace board meeting**, New Windsor, Md.

**April 16-17 Brethren Benefit Trust board meeting**, Elgin, Ill.

**April 16-17 Regional Youth Conference**, Manchester College, North Manchester, Ind.

**April 17-29 Brethren Volunteer Service Older Adult Unit 264**, New Windsor, Md.

**April 21-23 Fellowship of Brethren Homes Annual Forum**, North Manchester, Ind.

**April 21-24 Cross-Cultural Consultation**, Richmond, Ind.

**April 23-28 Youth Christian Citizenship Seminar**, New York/Washington, D.C.

**April 24-26 Cross-Cultural Leadership Training Roundtable**, Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind.

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## Ray: Transformation of a flawed hero

**W**hen I was a kid I loved the story of King David. Why not? Young boy is singled out by God and anointed to be king, wrote a hit song (the 23rd Psalm) while protecting the sheep from lions, killed a giant with a slingshot, became a national hero, fended off King Saul's attempts to kill him while magnanimously refusing to return the favor when opportunity arose. He eventually united two kingdoms into one and ruled over a golden age as King of Israel!

Of course, once I began to read the Bible for myself all those human elements entered: Bathsheba and Uriah, turning his back on formerly favored advisors, that tremendously dysfunctional unblended family that led to wars killing hundreds of innocents, the deathbed instructions to his son Solomon to kill the people he'd sworn to protect, and the ghastly death of the son he shared with Bathsheba because of his sins.

The David I encountered as an adult was quite different than the boy king I knew as a child, but you know what? The story was still glorious. If David knew how to sin, he also knew how to accept forgiveness, and moreover, to live forgiven. The man responsible for the death of another



FRANK RAMIREZ

If we're going to have heroes, biblical or otherwise, we're stuck with them as sinful humans. No exceptions except Jesus.

er when the ark of the covenant nearly fell (David had paid no attention to the owner's manual) danced his way into Jerusalem with such abandon that one of his wives ridiculed him. David's response? "I will dance."

If we're going to have heroes, biblical or otherwise, we're stuck with them as sinful humans. No exceptions except Jesus.

The movie *Ray*, based on the life of singer Ray Charles, shows us a giant with many of the same flaws as King David. There is adultery, the death of an innocent child, the anger if not of a king then of a society that has kept blacks in servitude, trusted advisors who are shelved, and a neglectful father who fosters dysfunction.

### ABOUT THE MOVIE

**Rating:** PG-13

**Length:** 2 hours, 33 minutes

**Release:** Originally released in October 2004; the movie is now available on DVD (\$19.98) and VHS (\$15.98).

**Notable:** Jamie Foxx won both the Academy and Golden Globe awards for best actor for his portrayal of Ray Charles. The movie also won the "Achievement in Sound Mixing" Oscar.

**What others are saying:** "Ray Charles was quite a man; this movie not only knows it, but understands it." (Roger Ebert, *Chicago Sun-Times*); "It's on the corny side, but just try keeping a dry eye." (Lou Lumenick, *New York Post*).

But there's also a lot of glory, and in the end transformation.

This movie features a magnificent performance by Jamie Foxx in the title role, rich cinematography, and an accurate depiction of the world inhabited by African-Americans through much of the 20th century.

I love the music of Ray Charles. He was one of the talented artists who helped bridge the gap between the two Americas, the black one and the boring one. He pieced together musical traditions and helped us recognize that the labels we apply to each other are meaningless once we remove the hate from our hearts. And besides, you can't hear "Hit the Road, Jack," without humming it yourself for a day and a half afterwards.

His story as presented in the film reminds us also that we can't escape the past until we confront it, and that there is forgiveness waiting for us when we finally grant ourselves permission to forgive ourselves.

A good friend of mine (who has since gone on to her reward) told me how when she was a child she always hid when the Brethren deacons came to pay their annual visit. That's because she had come to believe two opposite things about them. First she was told that deacons were perfect, and she didn't want to be around perfect people because she knew she wouldn't measure up. On the other hand she lived with these perfect deacons from church and she knew good

and well, even as a child, that there was nothing perfect about them. They were as flawed as everyone else. And for that reason, because of their pretension, she didn't want to be around them either.

You and I need heroes, but we're going to have to accept them as flawed human beings capable of transformation, just as if we want to go to church we're going to have to recognize that the body of Christ is full of flawed people, and we're full of flaws ourselves.

C.S. Lewis once said the difference between improvement and transformation is the difference between teaching a horse to jump over higher and higher barriers and giving the horse wings. In *Ray* we see how one person earned his wings. I'd like a pair myself. **W**

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



**ON CAMPUS****Bridgewater College (Bridgewater, Va.)**

Three seniors who are members of the Church of the Brethren were selected for inclusion in the 2005 edition of Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges. Douglas Balmer of Manheim, Pa.; Jonathan Emmons of Rocky Mount, Va.; and Anne Elizabeth Yust of Union Bridge, Md., were cited for academic achievement, community service, and leadership activities.

**Elizabethtown College (Elizabethtown, Pa.)**

A talk on how Colonial and Early-Republic Pennsylvania provided fertile ground for the growth of Pietistic groups took place March 15 at the school's Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies. James L. Schwenk, associate professor of church history at Evangelical School of Theology in Myerstown and current Fellow at the Young Center, presented the lecture.

**Juniata College (Huntingdon, Pa.)**

Juniata marked its role in the civil rights movement by hosting a March 20 reunion of students and faculty from the college who left campus in 1965 to offer service in voter registration and other efforts in the South. The event was called "Living Testimony: Civil Rights Reunion and Renewal."

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

La Verne student-athletes and Leopard inter-collegiate athletics were featured on "NCAA On Campus," a monthly, 30-minute look at the college sports scene on Fox Sports Net. The La Verne segment was broadcast Feb. 14 and Feb. 26. Show host Patrick O'Neal played basketball for La Verne during the late 1980s.

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

Neighbors and members of the Manchester College community donated \$9,631 for tsunami disaster relief in a one-month effort coordinated by the college. The money was forwarded to the Church of the Brethren Emergency Disaster Fund. Nearly \$3,000 came from local company Dexter Axle, which matched donations from its employees.

**McPherson College (McPherson, Kan.)**

Representatives from McPherson's auto restoration program in late January attended the 34th annual Barrett-Jackson Auction, where one of the nearly 1,300 auction vehicles was a 1969 Chevrolet Corvette Stingray Convertible donated by Ron Pratte and sold to benefit the college. The car sold for \$38,000, which will be used to help fund capital enhancements at Templeton Hall.

**YAC takes shape for May**

Plans are coming together for this year's Young Adult Conference (YAC), scheduled for May 27-29 at Camp Woodland Altars in Southern Ohio District.

Using the theme "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds," from Hebrews 10:24, speakers Kurt Borgmann, Cliff Kindy, and Margo Miller will focus three worship times during the weekend. A fourth worship time will explore the theme via drama and multimedia.

Shawn Kirchner and Joseph Helfrich will be music leaders; General Board Identity and Relations director Becky Ullom and MESSENGER editor Walt Wiltschek are serving as worship coordinators.

The conference is being built around worship this year rather than having a single keynote speaker. Young adults affirmed this approach at last year's National Young Adult Conference in Colorado. Numerous workshops, called "padares," and small-group reflection and discussion will also be part of the schedule.

YAC is planned by the denomination's Young Adult Steering Committee, working with the General Board Youth/Young Adult Ministry office.

**Bits and pieces**

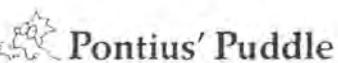
- **May 1 is designated as Youth Sunday** in the Church of the Brethren. Congregations are especially encouraged to make youth a central part of the worship service that day, as well as lifting up their role in the ongoing life of the church. This year's theme is "Seeing God," based on 1 John 4. A variety of resources are available from the General Board Youth/Young Adult Ministry office at [www.brethren.org/genbd/yya/YouthSundayS.htm](http://www.brethren.org/genbd/yya/YouthSundayS.htm).

- On Earth Peace is giving a copy of **Dale Brown's book Biblical Pacifism** to each ministry student and minister-in-training in the Church of the Brethren out of a concern for pastoral leadership well-grounded in the scriptural basis of the teachings of the church. OEP is donating copies of the book to students at Bethany Theological Seminary and its Susquehanna Valley Satellite, and all participants in the non-degree ministry training programs TRIM and ACTS. In addition, the book will be available to students in district-based ministry training programs. The gift is made possible by a donation from OEP supporters.



*About 35 senior high youth from Northern Indiana District gathered for a winter retreat Feb. 25-27 at Middlebury (Ind.) Church of the Brethren. Sessions focused on "Faith Development in the 21st Century," looking at ways that media can inform faith rather than distract from it. The weekend also included free time at the Goshen College Recreation Center, games, and worship. Above, Spencer Short and Logan Short of Middlebury lead an evening worship time.*





**Correction:** The location of Hiner Church of the Brethren was misidentified in a March "In Touch" item. While pastor Garold Senger Jr. does live in Mt. Sidney, the church is many miles away near McDowell, Va. Senger makes the lengthy trek each week.

## But do they subscribe?

I am deeply grateful for the excellent article in the February MESSENGER on "Welcome to Floyd, Most Brethren County in the USA." I served as summer pastor of five of the 12 churches in the 1930s during my college and seminary years: Burks Fork, Parkway (then Stuart), Topeco, Laurel Branch, and Fairview.

My father at age 21 was baptized at the

Pleasant Hill church (recently closed), the first in his family to become Brethren. A year later he was called to be a minister.

But I also have a deep concern. According to the 2004 Church of the Brethren Yearbook, not one of those 12 pastors and not one of those 1,447 members will get to see this delightful story of their churches and their county—not one MESSENGER subscriber in any of the listed churches. If only they could know what they are missing, in this special issue, and in every issue of our inspiring and challenging MESSENGER!

Olden Mitchell  
North Manchester, Ind.

## Where do most Brethren live?

I read with interest the articles entitled "Welcome to Floyd, Most Brethren County in the USA," in the February 2005 issue of MESSENGER.

If Floyd County, Va., is the most Brethren county in the USA, what would be the county in the USA with the most Brethren? This subject may also be of interest for all of us to know in an article of a future issue of MESSENGER.

Jay V. Wenger  
Akron, Pa.

## Christ teaches inclusion

I agree with Marvin Blough in his letter in the February issue of MESSENGER regarding the persecution of homosexuals, but from a different perspective. As teacher, school administrator, and university professor, I have found that homosexuals exist everywhere in society, our institutions, and even in churches. During most of my professional career, I was in a position where I could very easily have discriminated against them or denied them advancement. It never occurred to me that I should do other than respect them as fellow human beings, because of what I learned in the Brethren church.

From my Sunday school days I remember something being said about God is love. I took this to mean that love is offered by God without qualifications. There was a picture that hung on the Sunday school wall showing Christ surrounded by children of all races. It was a plea that no one was to be excluded. The preacher talked at times about how Christ turned his back on the Pharisees and ministered to the poor and alienated instead. Isn't it rather ironic that what I learned in my Brethren church is acceptable out in the world but not in the church where I learned it?

Don Wickert  
La Verne, Calif.

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

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

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

**He is not like other heroes!**

# The Meanest Man in Patrick County

## and Other Unlikely Brethren Heroes

Cain Lackey, Anne Rowland, Harold LeFever may not be as well known as John Kline or Dan West, but they are heroes too.

Frank Ramirez recounts twenty-two stories of believers from 300 years of Brethren history. They didn't see themselves as heroes. They just answered God's call.

*Isn't it time for you to be a hero too?*



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**God helps us overcome urges**

To compare the Church of the Brethren statement on homosexuality with 17th-century Catholicism [February 2005 Letters] and therefore conclude that the church is wrong and willing to destroy lives because its own eyes and minds are shut misses the fundamental call of Christianity, which is to be transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:1-39). Whether or not the inner desire is genetically or environmentally influenced, the resulting behavior is still wrong.

I cannot say, "I was born this way, so therefore the acting out of my desires must be acceptable to God." As a direct consequence of the disobedience in the Garden of Eden, the Bible makes it clear that I was born with many tendencies that lead me to sin, not the least of which is my desire for self-gratification. When I accepted Christ as my Savior, I surrendered my entire being, including my genetic make-up, my wounds inflicted on me by others, and the responsibility for the choices I have made in the past and will make in the future.

Seeking after righteousness conflicts with many of my own desires and urges, and yet that

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# Looking for Leadership?

The Association of Brethren Caregivers staff and volunteers can provide leadership on several topics to congregations and districts for conferences, training events and retreats. Workshop topics include:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Called to Care — Beginning a Ministry for People Living with Mental Illness</li> <li>■ Coping with Fear</li> <li>■ Deacon Spirituality</li> <li>■ Establishing an Older Adult Ministry in Your Congregation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Forgiveness</li> <li>■ Introduction to Deacon Ministry</li> <li>■ Love Feast</li> <li>■ The Age Wave Workshop</li> <li>■ The Burden of Uncompensated Care</li> <li>■ The Church and Child Abuse</li> </ul> |
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*To explore leadership possibilities for a training event in your area, call the ABC office at (800) 323-8039.*



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is exactly what God demands. The message is obvious: "Deny yourself, take up the cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). While I can sympathize with those for whom the path to holiness may be more difficult than it is for others, through no fault of their own, the ferocity of the struggle does not become an excuse to ignore scriptural teaching and accept immoral behavior.

I do not speak as someone who considers himself having attained Christian perfection. We are all sinners saved by grace, and our particular arena of carnality does not define our level of worth. All sin represents disobedience to God's will; for example, the sin of gossip is just as destructive as the sin of homosexual behavior, and they are equally condemned. I have found that the journey

towards holiness is an ongoing spiritual battle, and progress is made only when I acknowledge what is unacceptable in my attitudes and in my behavior.

As a church, our understanding of sin will not be found in the laboratories of modern-day science or in the pages of freshly written scientific journals. Radical pietism and Anabaptism both emerged from the intense study of scripture and the passionate desire to be obedient to scriptural teaching. Now, 300 years later, we would do well to reaffirm the beliefs of our founding fathers (and mothers) and state unequivocally that the Bible still stands as our foundational source for truth, wisdom, and understanding.

**Tom Zuercher**  
Ashland, Ohio

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**Now Available: The Knot Hole Two**, second collection of poems and true-life stories by Rhett Petcher and Dorothy Petcher Quimby. Cost is \$10.00. For ordering information please contact Carolyn Petcher Wiles, 10308 Four Points Rd, Emmitsburg, MD 21727 or e-mail [wilesrc@erols.com](mailto:wilesrc@erols.com).

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE** Travel with us on air-conditioned coach to Peoria, IL, July 1-7, 2005. Pick-ups at Elizabethtown and selected sites along PA Turnpike and I-70. Trip includes room while at Conference. Please contact J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022 or [kreiderk@etown.edu](mailto:kreiderk@etown.edu)

**PANAMA CANAL** Cruise one of the man-made wonders of the world, and enjoy the tropical flowers, birds, and exotic wildlife of the jungle, November 11-21, 2005. Also visit Costa Rica, Aruba, and Curacao. For information please contact J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022 or [kreiderk@etown.edu](mailto:kreiderk@etown.edu).

**On Earth Peace**, the peace and reconciliation arm of the Church of the Brethren, seeks a Program Coordinator to oversee its peace education program. This includes planning, staffing, and leading educational events for all ages, particularly youth and young adults; coordinating peace education resources; interpreting On Earth Peace programs; and other responsibilities. Requires commitment to Christian peacemaking, experience with educational programming, strong communication skills and organizational ability, self-motivation. Send letter and resume with 3-4 references to On Earth Peace, PO Box 188, New Windsor, MD 21776, or fax to 410-635-8707. Application deadline April 30. Position available August 1, 2005. Call 410-635-8704 or e-mail [oepa\\_oepa@brethren.org](mailto:oepa_oepa@brethren.org) for more information, including complete position description and announcement.

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

**Furnished, historic Florida home for rent** in small, quiet, rural Central Florida town of Arcadia (less than an hour's drive from Sarasota and Gulf beaches). Spacious, two bedroom, one bathroom with washer, dryer, dishwasher, and fireplace. New central air conditioning and heat. Former home of the founder of Arcadia Church of the Brethren and located across the street from the church, close to shopping and antique stores. \$800 per month. Call 703-472-9724.

**Unfurnished historic Florida home for rent** in small, quiet, rural Central Florida town of Arcadia (less than an hour's drive from Sarasota and Gulf beaches). Two bedrooms, one bathroom, fireplace. Located one block from Arcadia Church of the Brethren and built as part of the original Brethren community in town. Near shopping and antique stores. \$625 per month. Call 703-472-9724.

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

## New Members

**Bakersfield**, Calif.: Hoyt Griffith, Bonnie Bockover

**Bethlehem**, Boones Mill, Va.: Mary Jo Bowman

**Community of Joy**, Salisbury, Md.: Emma Hutchison, Hannah See, Kevin Brown, Christopher Potvin

**Donnels Creek**, Springfield, Ohio: Alex Snyder

**Grottoes**, Va.: Rolland Rodgers, Lisa Rodgers, Josh Rodgers, Tabitha Rodgers

**Harrisonburg, First**,

Harrisonburg, Va.: Sue Garst, Beth Cash, Curtis Cash, Philip Mason, Brenda Fox, Greg Miller, Mary Huffer, Alice Reichard, Linda Nipe, Nancy Hackman, Tom McGloin, Brenda McGloo, Dana Boontarue, Celia Guggenheim, Louise Vakil, Temi Vakil, Harold Landis, Helen Landis, Paul Quintrell, Ruby Quintrell, Cathy Grogg, Philip T. Spickler, Katrina Spickler, Michael Weldon, Sarah Zimmer, Cris Armstrong, Trey Foster, Ross Foster, Aaron Garber, Kaitlyn Hassler, Wesley Mowbray, Lauren Young, Bob O'Hearn, Joan O'Hearn, Preston Knight, Preston Grogg

**Hollins Road**, Roanoke, Va.: Charles Martin, Sammy Lane, Madora Lane, Teresa Keene, Teresa Thornton, Mildred Light, James Lafon, Marchetta Lafon

**La Verne**, Calif.: Kari Redman, Jim Northcutt, Elissa Salas, Karen Rogers, Scott Gleeson-Blue, Jen Gleeson-Blue

**Logansport**, Ind.: Kimberli Edwards, Missy Sturdvant, Marcia Garrett, Bethani Sadler, Sheila Swartzel, Logan Robinson, Carri McCuan, Donna Nelson, Norwood Hall, Peggy Hall, Lois Keeler, Stacy Nichols-Byl, Joni Chambers, Ray Woodall, Laura Woodall, Kevin Coffin, Michelle Norton

**Manor**, Boonsboro, Md.: Monica Neff, Betty Otto, Amy Zepp

**Maple Spring**, Eglon, W.Va.: Greg McKaskey, Jonathan Jenkins, Lonnie Jenkins, Trevor Spaid, Kenny Johnston, Michael Johnston, Charles Gordon, Louise Gordon, Stacey Whitehair, Jamie Gordon, Andrew Fike, Kris Hardesty, Christine Hardesty, Jessica Strawser

**McPherson**, Kan.: Florence Crago

**Mohican**, West Salem, Ohio:

Doug Hottel, Holly Hottel, Brad Hottel, Alison Bartholomew, Carla Clark

**Mount Morris**, Ill.: Alan McLearn-Montz, Brenda McLearn-Montz, Amanda McLearn-Montz, Nelson Miller

**Myersville**, Md.: Krista Dray

**Northern Colorado**, Windsor, Colo.: Michelle Bernhardt, Buffie Meins Elliott, Judy LeClerc Gump, Morris Gump, Nelle LeClerc, John Rydell, Dawn Smith

**Petersburg Memorial**, Petersburg, W.Va.: Grant Basagic, Leanna Crawford, Tina Crawford, Ralph (Bill) Fitzwater, Janet Fitzwater, Jacqueline Hedrick, Jamie Johnston, Anna Kuzniar, Larry Layton, Brandi Myers, Tammy Shirk

**Pleasant View**, Fayetteville, W.Va.: Helen Lewis

**Plymouth**, Ind.: John Ferguson, Elaine Ferguson, Kylie Brown, Cody Bucher, Sam Cole, Morgan Gay, Kalyn Hirsch, Andrew Kurtz, Lottie Cripe

**Somerset**, Pa.: Alice Wade

**Stover Memorial**, Des Moines, Iowa: Al Champ

**Syracuse**, Ind.: Guy Biddle, Christina Biddle, Connor Biddle, Larry Hunter, Brenda Hunter, Dusty Stutsman, Chelsea Stutsman, Jonathon Snell

**Thurmont**, Md.: Doris Hensley, Allen Brown, Claudette Brown, Mary Hann, Jim Small, Chryle Allen, Fred Speilman, Fran Speilman, Charlotte Thompson, Rachelle McGowan

**Trinity**, Sabetha, Kan.: Randy Moravec, Kevin Moravec, Lauren Moravec, Sandon Wittwer, Lindsay Moravec Wittwer

**Union Center**, Nappanee, Ind.: Morgan Olson, Larry Fourman

**Vinton**, Va.: Robin Hartsel, Tiffany Ocorr, Rachael Ocorr, Sierra LaPrad, Braden Crouch, Elizabeth Clements, Raymond Cundiff, Temple Arbogast, Wayne Maxey, James Graybill, Kim Haranzo, Bryce Diffenderfer, Richard Chambers, Shannon

Chambers, Paul Byrd, Eric Byrd, Terra Byrd, Gary Fix, Daniel Henegar, Pat Cooper, David Conner, Pam Conner

**West Green Tree**, Elizabethtown, Pa.: Trisha Williams, Jennifer Shissler, Allen Shissler, Laura Hollinger, Julie Ramsey, Greg Ramsey, Mike Gibney, Kris Gibney, Warren Bender, Cindy Drawbaugh, Jason Miller, Jennifer Snyder, Louene Zercher

**West Milton**, Ohio: Kendra Bowen, Wayne Wenrick, Daniel Fryman

## Anniversaries

**Ayers**, Bobby and Phyllis, Roanoke, Va., 50

**Detwiler**, Willis and Rosa, Bedford, Pa., 70

**Flickinger**, Glenn and Evelyn, Wakarusa, Ind., 60

**Flory**, Raymond and Carolina, Lawrence, Kan., 50

**Frantz**, Byron and Eula, Windsor, Colo., 55

**Garl**, Harley and Betty, Nappanee, Ind., 55

**Garver**, Paul and Maxine, Cerro Gordo, Ill., 65

**Hefner**, Charles and Geraldine, Moorefield, W.Va., 50

**Hiller**, John and Martha Jane, McCune, Kan., 50

**Huffman**, Earson and Lois, Roanoke, Va., 72

**Johnston**, Lynn and Jane, West Milton, Ohio, 50

**Ledford**, Gary and Betty, Cherokee, Kan., 55

**McDaniel**, Willard and Jewel, Raymond, Calif., 65

**Metz**, Allen and Betty, Roanoke, Va., 50

**Reisinger**, Ernest and Alma, Manheim, Pa., 50

**Saylor**, Stewart and Dorothy, Friedens, Pa., 60

**Schick**, Don and Marjorie Ann, Lawrence, Kan., 50

**Schlagenhauf**, Jim and Coleen, Sugarcreek, Ohio, 50

**Sheets**, Amos and Virginia, Nappanee, Ind., 60

**Swank**, Harry and Viola, Sebring, Fla., 55

**Winters**, Claude W. and Jean Miller, Eglon, W.Va., 60

## Deaths

**Albright**, William P., 80, Bridgewater, Va., Jan. 22

**Altland**, George W., 98, New Oxford, Pa., Jan. 21

**Bateman**, Willis S., 87, Roanoke, Va., Jan. 11

**Berkebile**, Ronald, 77, Glendale, Ariz., Feb. 1

**Blickenstaff**, Betty R., 90, La Verne, Calif., Sept. 31

**Botdorf**, Lois, 70, Ashland, Ohio, Jan. 8

**Bowers**, Martha Jean, 86, Troy, Ohio, Jan. 18

**Brandt**, Marian, 76, Lebanon, Pa., Jan. 31

**Brant**, George H., 75, Glenville, Pa., Feb. 1

**Brown**, Martha Lois, 84, Martinsburg, Pa., Jan. 5

**Brubaker**, Edward L., 79, Elgin, Ill., Feb. 1

**Bucher**, Katie M., 96, New Oxford, Pa., Aug. 14

**Bush**, John H., Sr., 82, Martinsburg, Pa., Sept. 17

**Caplinger**, Stanley L., 85, Manheim, Pa., Jan. 31

**Carbaugh**, Helen, 91, Gettysburg, Pa., Dec. 10

**Clark**, Cathrine, 88, Hershey, Pa., Jan. 19

**Cox**, Monte R., 73, Sunset Beach, N.C., Dec. 5

**Custer**, Pauline, 89, Somerset, Pa., Nov. 12

**Daugherty**, Evelyn, 80, York, Pa., Jan. 25

**Davidson**, Doris Jean, 78, Grundy Center, Iowa, Dec. 17

**Davis**, Violet Bowen, 87, Roanoke, Va., Sept. 25

**Deffenbaugh**, Rosella, 92, Johnstown, Pa., Jan. 13

**Denlinger**, Floyd, 99, La Verne, Calif., Nov. 2

**Draper**, Arlene J., 67, Grundy Center, Iowa, Oct. 17

**Dull**, Gwen, 92, La Verne, Calif., Sept. 20

**Dumire**, Betty Jean, 76, Horse Shoe Run, W.Va., Nov. 8

**Ebersole**, Helen, 87, La Verne, Calif., Nov. 14

**Edeburn**, Elwood, 83, Eglon, W.Va., May 5

**Eichman**, Elenore, 84, Oregon, Ohio, Feb. 4

**Fitzwater**, Russell William, 86, Moorefield, W.Va., Dec. 17

**Forney**, Willard E., 82, Modesto, Calif., Jan. 6

**Fuhrman**, Rozella, 84, York, Pa., July 27

**Gall**, John Ervin, 74, Milford, Ind., Jan. 22

**Gnagy**, Erma Henline, 68, Terra Alta, W.Va., Dec. 19

**Miller**, C. Muriel, 98, Gettysburg, Pa., Dec. 26

**Miller**, D. Vernon, 82, Stahlstown, Pa., Jan. 14

**Miller**, Dorothy D., 92, Pittsburgh, Pa., Sept. 7

**Miller**, Dorothy J., 93, Waterloo, Iowa, Dec. 17

**Miller**, E. Grace, 88, New Oxford, Pa., Jan. 7

**Miller**, Esther L., 77, York, Pa., Jan. 29

**Miller**, Mabel E., 87, Boonsboro, Md., Jan. 4

**Miller**, Robert H., 68, Hanover, Pa., Jan. 17

**Mishler**, Elma, 86, Nappanee, Ind., Nov. 12

**Moneyheffer**, Harvey, 82, Nappanee, Ind., Jan. 18

**Progin**, Naomi, 85, Lebanon, Pa., Jan. 7

**Root**, Ada Faye, 87, La Verne, Calif., Aug. 31

**Ruthrauff**, Esther A., 104, Gainesville, Mo., Nov. 13

**Saylor**, Ruth, 86, Friedens, Pa., Oct. 31

**Shenberger**, Nellie, 90, Ashland, Ohio, Jan. 19

**Sherrod**, Frances S., 89, Lombard, Ill., Jan. 16

**Shively**, Henry Hobson, 83, Vinton, Va., Dec. 20

**Shively**, Lila Gertrude Clark, 82, Vinton, Va., Nov. 5

**Shives**, Mildred Catherine, 86, Hagerstown, Md., Jan. 31

**Shutt**, Edith, 95, Sugarcreek, Ohio, Dec. 1

**Simmers**, Mary K., 97, Hershey, Pa., Nov. 8

**Pa.**, Jan. 21

**Sions**, Dollye Miller, 97, Moorefield, W.Va., Dec. 28

**Starkey**, Virginia, 92, Bridgewater, Va., Jan. 13

**Thomas**, Lois M., 99, Apple Valley, Calif., July 6

**Vanderburg**, Maxine, 84, La Verne, Calif., Aug. 21

**Wagner**, William L., 84, Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 18

**Weybright**, Elsie Gall, 95, Goshen, Ind., Dec. 7

**Whaley**, Robert, 75, Lakeville, Ind., Jan. 15

**Woody**, Vada, 91, Peace Valley, Mo., Dec. 13

**Worley**, Donald Justice, 77, Roanoke, Va., Feb. 25, 2004

**Yerkey**, Berma B., 66, Maysville, W.Va., Jan. 15

**Ziegler**, David, 56, Altoona, Pa., Jan. 17

## Licensings

**Banaszak**, Linda Sue, M. Pa., Dist. (Clover Creek, Fredericksburg, Pa.), Dec. 5

**Fullen**, Daniel L., S. Ohio Dist. (Circleville, Ohio), Nov. 7

**Knechel**, Tracy, S. Ohio Dist. (Mack Memorial, Dayton, Ohio), Jan. 25

**Miller**, Todd, S/C Ind. Dist. (Richmond, Ind.), Jan. 9

**Scharmer**, Daniel, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Lancaster, Pa.), Feb. 15

**Ulrich**, Paula, S/C Ind. Dist. (Richmond, Ind.), Jan. 9

## Ordinations

**Crenshaw**, Tobin, N. Ohio Dist. (Hartville, Ohio), Feb. 13

**Myer**, Nathan, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Chiques, Manheim, Pa.), Feb. 6

## Placements

**Dell**, Phillip, pastor, Harris Creek, Bradford, Ohio, Nov. 1

**Derr**, Amelia J., Christian education pastor, Indiana, Pa., Jan. 1

**Diamond**, Douglas M., pastor, Peak Creek, Laurel Springs, N.C., Feb. 1

**Fullen**, Daniel L., pastor, Circleville, Ohio, July 1

**Hazen**, Lisa L., from pastor, Beavercreek, Ohio, to pastor, Wichita, First, Wichita, Kan., Jan. 16

**Hunsberger**, C. Henry, associate pastor, Welsh Run, Mercersburg, Pa., Nov. 8

**Johnson**, Reba B., associate pastor, Indiana, Pa., Jan. 1

**King**, Janice Glass, chaplain, The Village at Morrisons Cove, Martinsburg, Pa., Feb. 1

**Knechel**, Tracy, pastor, Mack Memorial, Dayton, Ohio, Jan. 2

**Rieman**, Kenneth M., pastor, Olympic View, Seattle, Wash., Jan. 15

**Spangler**, Clarence William, pastor, Welsh Run, Mercersburg, Pa., Nov. 8

## The bad news bearers

**O**f all the news stories we run each year, one seems to consistently draw the most negative responses. It's the annual story updating membership figures in the denomination, compiled by analyzing figures that congregations report to the Church of the Brethren *Yearbook*.

For some years now, that story has reported a decline. In fact, the last year in which membership in the Church of the Brethren showed a net increase was 1974, and

some attribute that to a statistical fluke in the way records were kept. The overall downward trend stretches well into the 1960s.

These reports draw the fire of critics (including some colleagues) who say we shouldn't be reporting bad news like this, that it's depressing and casts the denomination in a negative light. The response they typically receive is that as communicators, it's our job to paint the big picture. We have

no right to trumpet our successes if we're not also willing to acknowledge our shortcomings.

Nobody likes to be the bearer of bad news, and that includes most journalists I know. Fewer still like to receive bad news that involves them.

When it comes to the reports of declining church membership, though, we're not alone. Most US mainline denominations have been experiencing long downward trends. At the same time, some independent churches, megachurches, ethnic churches, and other groups are growing.

Some say that numbers are not an indicator of a church's faithfulness, and that's true. Sometimes living out God's call doesn't translate into popularity. When more people are leaving a church than joining it over an extended period, however, it does cause one to ask whether that church is meeting the needs of its time, and/or whether it is getting out its message.

One of those churches that is growing, exponentially, is the Ekklesiayar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria). In a December 2003 letter from that country, Brethren mission workers Tom and Janet Crago shared the following among their reflections on



WALT WILTSCHEK  
MESSENGER Editor

the Nigerian church:

"One of our Nigerian friends who is studying the history of church growth in Africa observed recently that the African church is like a very big lake—a mile wide, but only inches deep! Her point was that the church in the USA shouldn't be so concerned about how wide our lake is (it keeps shrinking) because she believes that our lake is very deep."

"We would ask of you: Is it really deep? Have we forgotten what our ancestors endured as they tempered the strength of their convictions—and their belief in the redeeming and sustaining power of Christ—during the great migrations to America in search of religious freedom? Surely our forebears' lake was deep! We suspect that the Christian church in Nigeria may be far deeper than they give themselves credit for!"

Among the movies in theaters this past winter has been the latest movie release by Pixar (producer of films like *Finding Nemo* and *Toy Story*). Titled *The Incredibles*, it is a story about superheroes forbidden from using their superpowers as the world strives for normalcy. The central character, Mr. Incredible, yearns for the day when he can again use his gifts to help humanity.

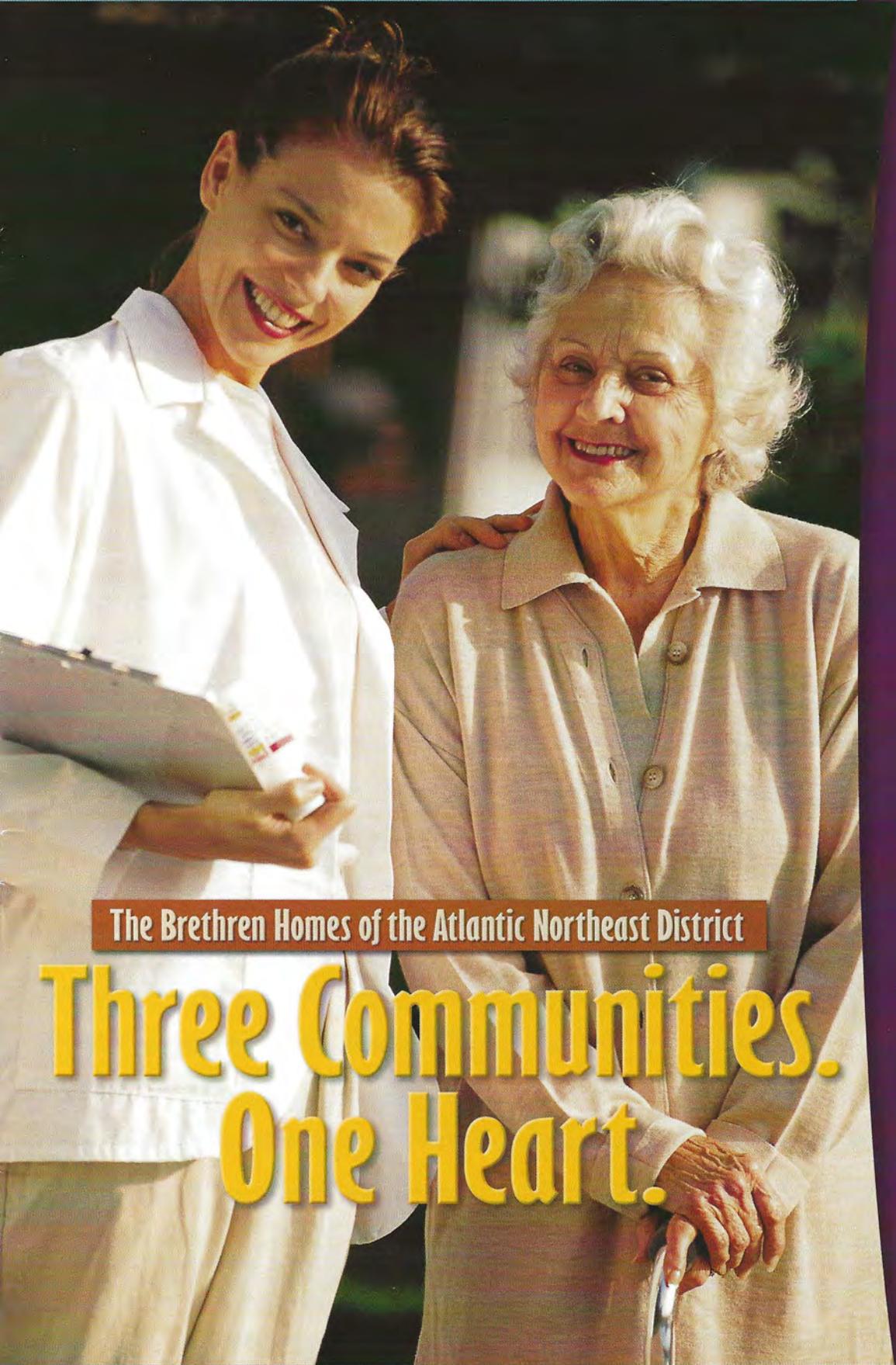
He slips up one day, and a neighborhood kid sees him showing off his super-strength. Later, the same boy is riding by the Incredibles' home on his bike, and he stops at the end of the driveway. When Mr. Incredible asks the boy why he's sitting there, the youngster shrugs and answers, "Waiting for something amazing to happen, I guess."

**As Christians, something amazing has happened. We just celebrated that in the triumph of Jesus' resurrection at Easter. I sense something amazing may be newly ready to happen among Brethren, too.**

As Christians, something amazing *has* happened. We just celebrated that in the triumph of Jesus' resurrection at Easter. I sense something amazing may be newly ready to happen among Brethren, too, if some promising young shoots now poking their head above ground are allowed to grow.

At the same time, the rest of us can't be content simply waiting. We must be doing, too—deepening our lake and telling the world about amazing grace. If we do a better job sharing the Good News, perhaps we'll have less bad news to bear.—Ed. **M**

**COMING NEXT MONTH:** Faith and laughter, seagoing cowboys, the precarious resource of water, "Do clothes make the worshiper?", delving into Deuteronomy, and more.



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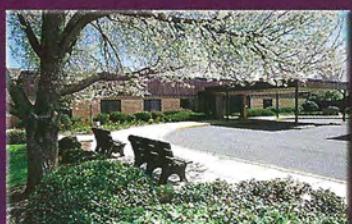
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# Annual Conference

## July 2-6, 2005 in Peoria, Illinois

### Annual Conference Preachers

Saturday evening .....	Moderator, Jim Hardenbrook <i>Pastor of Nampa Church of the Brethren</i>
Sunday morning .....	Galen Hackman <i>Pastor of Ephrata Church of the Brethren</i>
Monday evening .....	Sandy Bosserman <i>District Executive of Missouri and Arkansas District</i>
Tuesday evening .....	Anastacia Bueno Beltre <i>Dominican Republic</i>
Wednesday morning .....	Chris Douglas <i>Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry</i>



### Alive '05

Multimedia presentation on the ministries of the church.  
**Sunday afternoon**

"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfector of our faith" —*Hebrews 12:2*

To pre-register online or get more information about Annual Conference, visit [www.brethren.org/ac](http://www.brethren.org/ac)

219th Annual Conference