

Church  
of the  
Brethren

# MESSENGER

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



## Absurdly happy

A visit with moderator Jim Hardenbrook

ANNUAL CONFERENCE PREVIEW • MISSION ALIVE • BOOK OF JOSHUA

# Homecoming

## Centennial Closing Celebration

September 30 - October 2  
at Bethany's Richmond Campus

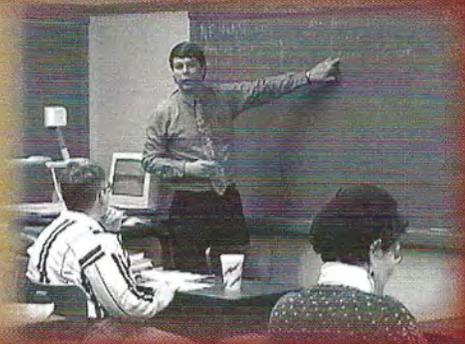
### Featuring:

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America's newest full-time men's vocal ensemble makes its home in Minneapolis, Minnesota. CANTUS' broad repertoire, brilliant sound, innovative programming and heart-felt singing have garnered the highest praise from critics and audiences alike.

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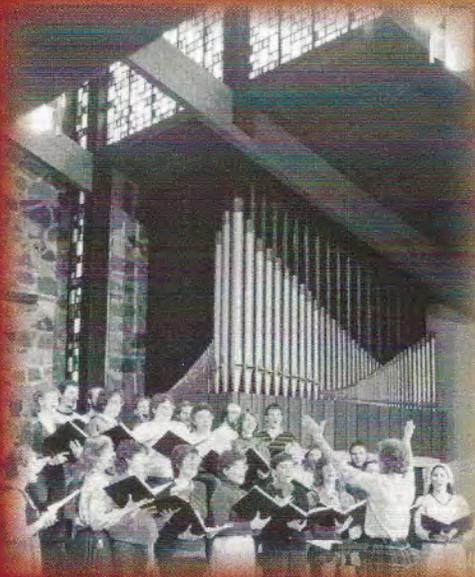


### Bus Tour September 27-30

Originating in York, Pennsylvania with pick up points along the way, the tour will visit Bethany's Richmond campus and the Seminary's former locations in the Chicago area. The tour will return to Richmond for the Centennial Closing Celebration. CEU credits are available. **Tour Registration deadline is July 27.**

### Alumni/ae Concert

Bethany graduates share their talents



### And more . . .

- Faculty and Alumni/ae Book Display
- Opening Convocation
- Picnic Fellowship Lunch
- Recognition Banquet
- Centennial Book and Merchandise Sales
- Closing Worship Service

Homecoming information and registration forms will be mailed in June to Bethany alumni/ae and friends.

Not on Bethany's mailing list, or have questions? Call Bethany's Public Relations Office at 800-287-8822 or E-mail [BethanySem@aol.com](mailto:BethanySem@aol.com).

Visit [www.bethanyseminary.edu](http://www.bethanyseminary.edu) for a complete list of Bethany Centennial events.

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celebrate  
with us!*

A Pilgrimage  
of Faith...

a Future  
with Hope

BETHANY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
CENTENNIAL 1905-2005

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

Church  
of the  
Brethren

# MESSENGER

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Janis Pyle

## ONTHECOVER

It's not unusual to see a big smile break out on Jim Hardenbrook's face, as it did during this Faith Expedition trip to Sudan in 2002. Even during the hectic schedule of an Annual Conference moderator, Hardenbrook has continued smiling. In the words of Dan West, he truly is "absurdly happy." Cover photo taken by Janis Pyle.

## 8 Absurdly happy: Moderator Jim Hardenbrook

Ask Jim Hardenbrook, "How are you?" and he'll often reply, "Blessed. I'm blessed." It's not a trite response; he means it. He feels blessed to be a follower of Christ and a servant of the church, and his passion for that ministry shows. MESSENGER visited him at his Idaho home in January to see a slice in the life of this year's moderator.

## 12 Westward Ho! A preview of Peoria

Annual Conference heads to Illinois this summer. So, will it play in Peoria? Find out the origin of this phrase as well as some of the highlights planned for the July 2-6 Conference as news director Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford provides an overview of business, worship, and more.



## 14 Brethren and universalism: A forgotten schism?

A MESSENGER book review on a universalism theme a few months ago sparked several letters and questions. That's not new; controversy on this topic has been with the church for centuries. Historian David B. Eller revisits a chapter of Brethren history, centered in Illinois, that explains how Brethren ended up going a different route than the Universalists.

## 18 Joshua: Book of conquest in Canaan

Following the five books of the Pentateuch, the Israelites find themselves on the brink of the Promised Land. It's a bloody period in biblical life, prompting James F. Myer to ask, "How do you reconcile God's desire for peace with a book in the Bible about military conquest?"

## 20 Mission Alive: 'Wow! God is here!'

Former mission worker Jerry Crouse went into this year's Mission Alive 2005 conference with some mixed emotions. He emerged grateful to experience some facets of Jesus Christ at work in the world. A sidebar gives a few highlights of the event and background on how it came together.

## DEPARTMENTS

- 2 From the Publisher
- 3 In Touch
- 6 Reflections
- 7 The Buzz
- 21 News
- 26 Media Review
- 27 Youth Life
- 28 Letters
- 31 Turning Points
- 32 Editorial

**I** recently became acquainted with Abe Martin, a cartoon character who inhabited the hills of Brown County, Ind., during the early 1900s (and who just celebrated his 100th “birthday”). Over some 25 years, his rustic



WENDY McFADDEN  
Publisher

observations caught the fancy of people across the country. One of my favorites goes something like this: There’s nothing wrong with people wanting to tell you everything they know, if they’d just stop there.

As the sea of information grows ever more vast, one might think people would be more cautious with advice. But there seems to be no shortage of experts ready to tell us what to believe, whether it has to do with foreign policy or the brand of lightbulb that will make us look younger.

In the midst of this information overload, there are many voices claiming to speak for God. Ironically, in a world that some decry as too secular, the language of faith has become quite popular. That could be a good thing. But popularity and piety should be eyed critically if they are too friendly with each other.

Moreover, when any of us are tempted to speak definitively for God, perhaps we should pause for a moment and allow the Almighty to put us in our place: “Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind: ‘Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? . . . I will question you, and you shall declare to me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding’” (Job 38:1-4).

I could say more but, heeding Abe Martin, I’ll just stop there.

*Wendy McFadden*

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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:** A lay ministry forum was held in two parts of the district April 30 and May 1. The sessions included worship, personal stories, sharing from district executive Craig Smith, and networking opportunities.

**Atlantic Southeast:** "A Very, Very Short Course on Evangelism" was offered for six weeks in April and May by Saint Petersburg (Fla.) First Church of the Brethren.

**Idaho:** Martin Gauby has been leading a study of the book "Reclaiming the Great Commission" for pastors in the district this spring.

**Illinois/Wisconsin:** Kreston Lipscomb, pastor of Springfield (Ill.) First Church of the Brethren, was one of six religious leaders who took part in the dedication service for the new Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in April.

**Michigan:** New Life Christian Fellowship, in Mount Pleasant, hosted a "Meet the Moderator" night with Annual Conference moderator Jim Hardenbrook on May 14 to preview Conference.

**Mid-Atlantic:** On Earth Peace presented the program for the spring middle school lock-in held April 29-30 at Frederick (Md.) Church of the Brethren.

**Middle Pennsylvania:** The district's Congregational Development Team offered a "Congregations Alive '05: To Empower, Nourish, and Renew Congregations" event on April 16 in Martinsburg, Pa.

**Missouri/Arkansas:** The Missouri/Arkansas District conference, billed as a "district family reunion," will be the first in the denomination this year. It will be held July 23-25 in Bolivar, Mo.

**Northern Indiana:** Camp Alexander Mack, Milford, Ind., held its 80th anniversary worship May 1. Manchester College president Jo Young Switzer was the keynote speaker.

**Northern Ohio:** District disaster volunteers held a networking event April 29-30 at Inspiration Hills near Burbank. The group also helped the camp prepare for the summer season.

*Polio (Ill.) Church of the Brethren (seen here in a 1938 photo) is celebrating its 100th anniversary in grand style. It kicked off the festivities on New Year's Eve, with other events continuing through the year. The main anniversary weekend will be Sept. 24-25, with Frank Ramirez giving the keynote message on Sunday morning.*

**Northern Plains:** The district board approved a recommendation for an early district conference next year. The 2006 event will be held immediately following Annual Conference in Des Moines.

**Oregon/Washington:** Congregational Life Teams staff led a series of workshops titled "Imagine," focusing on revitalization of congregations, in Portland, Ore., and Wenatchee, Wash., in mid-May.

**Pacific Southwest:** The 2005 spring event focused on "Calling, Training, and Equipping Leaders." The day of speakers and workshops was held in May in Scottsdale, Ariz., and Sacramento, Calif.

**Shenandoah:** District executive Jim Miller and associate executive Joan Daggett were hit by a truck and their car thrown across the road on Interstate 81 as they returned home from a meeting in April. Both came through the accident with only a few bruises and scrapes.

**South/Central Indiana:** Pastors and chaplains gathered April 27 at Anderson (Ind.) Church of the Brethren for a support/sharing gathering hosted by district minister Allen Kahler.

**Southeastern:** The district board has approved the beginning of a new Bible study-centered project in Marion, N.C. James and Beverly Huskins are coordinating the outreach effort.

**Southern Ohio:** Gene Karn has been called as director of outdoor ministries for the district, focusing on summer camps at Woodland Altars and other programs. He took over leadership in mid-May.

Courtesy of Brethren Historical Library and Archives



**Southern Pennsylvania:** An Annual Conference briefing and delegate workshop is planned for June 12 at Carlisle (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.

**Southern Plains:** Work days were held April 29-30 at Spring Lake Retreat and Camp Center near Cordell, Okla., to get it ready for the summer season.

**Virginia:** A re-dedication service for Camp Bethel was held April 30, celebrating retirement of the debt on the Trailblazer II land purchase. Annual Conference secretary Fred Swartz was keynote speaker. The day also included wagon rides, guided hikes, a gift show, a historical tour, and slide show.

**West Marva:** A district Bible study on May 1 focused on "Life's Spiritual Decisions"; it was led in small groups facilitated by Harold Garber. A district youth Bible study was held April 23.

**Western Pennsylvania:** District minister Ron Beachley spoke at this year's women's fellowship spring rally at Center Hill Church of the Brethren. His theme was "Learning Humility."

**Western Plains:** The Cedars, a Church of the Brethren retirement center in McPherson, Kan., won a 2005 Clinical Care Award from the Kansas Association of Homes for the Aging.

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

## Oh, baby! Snake Spring is fruitful and multiplies

There's nothing wrong with the drinking water in Snake Spring Valley. In fact, things have been growing quite well—especially at the church on Lower Valley Road in Everett, Pa.

Since March 2003, Snake Spring Valley Church of the Brethren has welcomed a dozen new babies into its congregation. Even more amazing is that 11 of the babies are boys, and two more boys were expected in late spring and early summer this year.

"When we see these little ones, or hear the sounds of a baby's coo, laughter, or even crying during worship, we see new beginnings and new life for our congregation," pastor Janet Sell says.

Deacon chair Barry Snyder agrees. "It's an exciting time for our little country church!" he says. Snyder, who is the grandfather of two of the boys, adds that he doesn't mind the extra noise. "I don't mind at all hearing the babies during the worship service. I've been in churches where there's been no one under 40 or 50. It may be a quiet service, but I feel those churches are missing something."

While the church family is thrilled at the prospect of many children, they are beginning to think about its impact on the congregation in five, 10, or even 15 years in the future. Simply imagining a lively Sunday school classroom of fidgety



Wes Richard

Four stone-gathering boys—Jimmy, D.K., Noah, and Ian—pause long enough for a photo during Elm Street's Service Ministry Day.

toddlers or the thought of an on-the-go youth group of energetic teen boys has the congregation preparing.

The congregation has begun an in-depth visioning process to explore the strengths, needs, and desired programming or services the church wishes to provide in coming years. They will be looking at the use of the building and classrooms, and other long-term goals.

But for now, Pastor Janet just smiles and shakes her head, still in disbelief when surrounded by the babies. "I have hope," she says, laughing, "that when these new parents start round number two in a year or so, there will be some little girls to join us."

—Della Watters

*She has her hands full: Pastor Janet Sell spends quality time with Ethan and Travis Dibert, twin sons of Ron Jr. and Jen Dibert.*

*The twins are part of a parade of babies that have come to Snake Spring Valley recently.*

## Service Ministry Day draws big response

More than half of the congregation showed up for Service Ministry Day at Elm Street Church of the Brethren in Lima, Ohio, one Saturday in March.

The church board designated the day as a way to fulfill the congregation's fifth purpose: demonstrating God's love through ministry beyond our church family. Beginning at 10:30, workers divided into several teams. One group picked up broken branches left from January's ice storm in two backyards of elderly people. A team of youth distributed light bulbs in a nearby neighborhood to remind recipients that Jesus is the light of the world. A trio of women took a prayer walk in the blocks close to the church. "We need to pray for this neighborhood," one said later.

Some who stayed behind prepared lunch while others sorted used clothing. Still others gave the building a spring cleaning while another group cleaned up outside and installed a chain-link fence. Rain later forced postponement of the planned delivery of doorknob bags of Easter announcements, but small children got their Easter egg hunt—inside the building.

Pleased at the response to the day's efforts, one board member said, "I've never seen so many people show up for work!" —Wes Richard



Della Watters

## LANDMARKS & LAURELS

### Tickling the ivories for nearly 75 years

Lenore Reiner, who celebrated her 87th birthday on May 30, has been a member of Richland Church of the Brethren in Mansfield, Ohio, all her life (her first time attending was in diapers). For most of that time, she has also been making music for the congregation's worship.

She began playing the piano for the church at age 12 and only recently retired from that responsibility. She does still fill in on occasion, but now states she most enjoys being able to sit and listen from the pew after playing for those 75 years.

Reiner is still a deacon, was a Sunday School teacher and church historian for



*Lenore Reiner began playing piano at Richland Church of the Brethren when she was 12. After 75 years at the keyboard, she's happy to listen to others play now.*

many years, and has even served in the pulpit, sharing many memories of church history. She recalls the days when she was unable to sit with her father, as women and men were on separate sides of the sanctuary in her early years.

She played at the majority of weddings over the past three-quarters of a century and is a regular attendee at Sunday school and church, love feast, and church dinners. She delights in making newcomers feel welcome, and her spirit is loving. She is a treasure for the Richland congregation.—Ginny Herbert

• Several California congregations are celebrating centennials this year. **Cornerstone Community Church of the Brethren**, in Reedley, and the **Pasadena** congregation each marked 100 years on May 15 with worship and times of sharing. **Empire Church of the Brethren** will celebrate Nov. 19-20 with a "Meet and Greet" and potluck dinner Saturday evening and a special service the next morning. Former pastors and members are being invited to attend. In addition, the **Bakersfield Community** congregation marks 75 years in 2005. A banquet was held May 7, and an anniversary celebration is planned for Oct. 22-23 with speaker Bryan Boyer.

• **Saint Joseph (Mo.) Church of the Brethren** marked its 100th anniversary on May 22 with a special morning worship service followed by a cookout.

• **Montezuma Church of the Brethren**, Dayton, Va., broke ground for a \$977,000 addition this spring. It will include a larger entry area, more classrooms, and an elevator.

• **Lititz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren** dedicated its newly renovated and expanded building on April 10. The \$3.7-million project included six new classrooms, the renovation of the gym into a family life center, a contemporary worship space, a peace garden, a prayer room, a new library, and other upgrades. Phill Carlos Archbold spoke at the dedication service. The *Lancaster New Era* did a major feature on the event.

### Florin members add new feature to D.R. assembly

Eight members of Florin Church of the Brethren, Mount Joy, Pa., experienced a profound spiritual bonding with children and adults during a week long visit to the 14th Annual Assembly (Asamblea Anual) of Brethren in the Dominican Republic.

The assembly was held at a Nazarene church campground from Feb. 18 to 20. Even though the facilities were spacious, another nearby camp was required to lodge all the attendees.

The invitation to provide childcare for infants and crafts and games for the remainder of the children was embraced with gusto and expectation by the Florin members. Pastor Eric Anspaugh commented that it was a great week. The high-

light was relating to the children who quickly attached themselves to the new visitors.

The Florin group was the first one to provide any organized children's activity during the business sessions. The immediate response from the Dominican brothers and sisters was positive. Now the Dominican board is evaluating all aspects of the conference to determine if they want to continue a similar program for the 2006 conference.

Carol Yeazell, General Board Area 3 (Southeast) Congregational Life Team Staff assisted Dominican mission coordinators Irv and Nancy Heishman in working with the Florin group, and during the assembly she led Bible studies for youth and young adults.



#### Sept. 8-11, 2005 — Indianapolis, Indiana

Members and friends of the Church of the Brethren, Mennonite Church USA and The Society of Friends are warmly invited to take part in an energizing, multi-faceted, intergenerational gathering, designed to provide opportunities to build mentoring relationships and explore practical and intellectual approaches to peace and peacemaking.

Contributing organizations include the Plowshares Peace Studies Collaborative of Earlham, Goshen and Manchester Colleges, Every Church a Peace Church, Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes, Mennonite Church USA Peace Advocates, On Earth Peace Assembly, Quaker House-Fayetteville/FL, Bragg, N.C., and Christian Peacemaker Teams.

#### Conference goals:

- To feed the soul of the peacemaker by providing practical resources.
- To energize the peacemaker through workshops and dynamic, biblical worship
- To build up the communities of peacemakers by providing a place to share stories and to create networks
- To help us better understand the current powers and principalities and build affinity networks in the struggle to change them
- To address issues of peace and justice and how to maintain a healthy peace witness and community

#### Topics and themes:

- Thoughts and preparation for long-term work
- History of the Peace Churches and Peace movements
- Alliances, long term assets and energy
- Healthy peacemaking communities based in knowledge, connections and relationships
- New realities and perspectives
- The work of principalities and powers
- Consumerism
- Media

Information about the conference is available online at:

[www.plowsharesproject.org/php/HistoricPeaceChurchConference.php](http://www.plowsharesproject.org/php/HistoricPeaceChurchConference.php)

## Who is today's Good Samaritan?

**I**'ve often wondered why we make such a big deal over the story of the Good Samaritan. Everybody knows we should give first aid to somebody in case of an emergency. This had long been a part of the Hebrew traditions, and it is fully part of our modern lifestyle.

Then I began to wonder if there was something in the story that we were missing. How would we have received the story if we were among the crowd hearing that story for the first time, direct from the lips of Jesus? Remember, we were Jews, as were all the people to whom Jesus preached. Hear the story:



WILLIAM R. EBERLY

There was once a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. (*Oh, I know that road well.*) On the way he was attacked by robbers. (*Yeah, I'd never go that way alone, especially at night.*) They took his clothes, beat him up, and went off leaving him half-dead. (*Poor guy.*)

Luckily, a priest was on his way down the same road, but when he saw him, he angled across to the other side. (*So what else is new?*) Then a Levite religious man showed up; he also avoided the injured man. (*They always do.*)

A Samaritan traveling the same road . . . (*Excuse me, Lord; did you say 'Samaritan'?*) Yes, a Samaritan traveling the road came on him. When he saw the man's condition, his heart went out to him. He gave him first aid, disinfecting and bandaging his wounds. (*But, Lord, don't you know what kind of a person a Samaritan is? Would you want one of them to touch you?*)

**Paul warned that we should not think too highly of ourselves, but we do. We want to feel that we are better, more favored, more privileged than some others we know. Whether this is simply an inner feeling or expressed in outward actions, it is wrong.**

I can imagine Jesus saying (or at least thinking), "Yes, I know how you feel toward the Samaritans. You shouldn't have that kind of attitude. The Samaritans are part of God's family, too."

For a long time, the Jews had hated the Samaritans. To a Jew, Samaritans were the lowest of the lowest class of people. They despised the Samaritans. To hear Jesus make a Samaritan the hero of a story was unthinkable. It

was a shock to hear that a Samaritan could do anything good. It was blasphemous to hear that God would choose a Samaritan to be an agent of his will.

All too often, we need some bad examples to demonstrate how good we are. At least secretly, we measure our own goodness by the badness of others. You remember the Pharisee who in his prayer itemized his good deeds for God (as if God didn't already know) and then rejoiced that he was not as bad as other people, especially the publican.

Paul warned that we should not think too highly of ourselves, but we do. We want to feel that we are better, more favored, more privileged than some others we know. Whether this is simply an inner feeling or expressed in outward actions, it is wrong.

Consider the black man or woman. The writers of the Constitution did not include the slaves when they wrote that all men are created equal, because black people were not quite "real people." They did not count. Black people were quickly killed (lynched) at the mere mention of a criminal charge. We hope we have gotten over those feelings of prejudice and discrimination against blacks, but I am not sure.

At one time in our history, Native Americans (the American Indians) were not accepted as equals. An Army general once said, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian." The treatment of Native Americans has been deplorable. I hope we have gotten over that, but have we?

For some, the Jews have been the hated and despised ones. We all remember how Hitler ordered the imprisonment and killing of 6 million Jews. Of course, we wouldn't do anything like that today.

Historically, there have been times when we have directed our prejudices toward Germans, Japanese, the Salem witches, poor people, alcoholics, single mothers, homosexuals, and . . . you name it. And like the Pharisee, it is often religious people

who seem the most self-righteous when comparing themselves with one or more of these marginalized groups.

Imagine Jesus telling this story today, in your community, in your church. Who will Jesus choose as the hero of the story? Who will be *your* Samaritan? 

William R. Eberly is a retired Manchester College biology professor and a former Annual Conference moderator. He lives in North Manchester, Ind.

QUOTE WORTHY

“Some people think you have to wait for a booming voice from the sky, but God calls you every day, every time you open the newspaper and read about suffering.”

—Craig Kielburger, chair of the “Free the Children” international children’s rights advocacy organization, quoted in *United Church News*

“I think I was a minority. And that was exciting.”

—Nelda Rhodes Clarke, Church of the Brethren Representative to the National Council of Churches of Christ, commenting on the ethnic diversity among delegates to the NCC General Assembly

“Whether conscription is imminent or in the distant future, we know that God calls us to lives of joyful and sacrificial service in the way of Christ. . . . To teach peace only when a draft seems imminent is a failure to live out the full meaning of Christ’s ministry of reconciliation.”

—from a statement by members of the Council of Moderators and Secretaries in attendance at the March 2005 Consultation on Alternative Service

“In an environment where mutual acceptance and understanding have ceased to exist, people begin to feel animosity toward different ideologies or races without knowing what the other party really represents or believes.”

—Muslim author Harun Yahya

“Even with good reasons, the time and expense for a one-week convention can be formidable. But think of it as a vacation spent going to church. For six days, we will worship, eat, learn, and discern together.”

—Everett J. Thomas, editor of *The Mennonite*, writing in the magazine this past winter about Mennonite Church USA’s biennial gathering.

“It’s not only the cry of the poor we must listen to but also the cry of the earth. The earth and human beings are both threatened. We must do something to change the situation—there won’t be a Noah’s Ark to save only some of us.”

—Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff, one of the founders of liberation theology, in an interview with the World Council of Churches

CULTUREVIEW

• Churches that endorsed a **boycott against Taco Bell** declared victory after the fast-food giant on March 8 agreed to a penny-per-pound increase in wages for migrant tomato pickers of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in Florida. The National Council of Churches was among those organizing the boycott.

• Today’s **college students show a very high level of interest and involvement in spirituality and religion**, according to a fall 2004 study by UCLA’s Higher Education Research Institute. The survey of more than 112,000 college freshmen found that 80 percent are interested in spirituality, 81 percent attend religious services, 79 percent believe in God, and 69 percent pray.

• A **web service dedicated to Christian music downloads** debuted in April at [www.songtouch.com](http://www.songtouch.com). It was put together by the same group who founded Christian Copyright

Licensing International (CCLI) for music licensing.

• A **national survey of US doctors** found that a slim majority say they have seen treatment results in patients that they would consider to be miracles. Fifty-five percent of doctors said they would describe some results that way, compared to 45 percent who did not, according to a survey by the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. (RNS)

• **Canada may be in for a dramatic shift** in its religious composition over the next dozen years, with the number of Muslims expected to skyrocket. By the time it reaches its 150th birthday in 2017, Canada will see its Muslim population increase by 160 percent and the number of Hindus rise by 90 percent, according to projections released March 30 by the Association for Canadian Studies. (RNS)



JUST FOR FUN: WORD FIND

**THE BIG MEETING** Several stories in this month’s issue profile the upcoming Church of the Brethren Annual Conference in Peoria, Ill. In the puzzle below, find these 11 terms related to Annual Conference. Answers can be horizontal, vertical, diagonal, and backwards:

moderator	A P I H S R O W M I J Q
business	V I I C C R E M P O S S
elections	E L E C T I O N S T K M
reports	L B M I E N D G R R V A
gavel	T U A F L F R O Y E H E
delegate	J S E M L E P F T T F R
insight	S I T O E E V H V A W C
meal event	Y N O L R A G A O G B E
tellers	K E N V S I X A G E B C
worship	R S E G S Y T E R L A I
ice cream	V S T N E V E L A E M P
	P X I R O T A R E D O M

# Absurdly happy

Moderator Jim Hardenbrook loves serving God and the church

by Walt Wiltschek

**N**ampa Church of the Brethren is abuzz with activity this particular morning in January. Jim Hardenbrook, pastor of the Idaho congregation for more than a decade, is preparing for a full day.

"He's a busy man," the greeter says, watching Hardenbrook talk with some church members on the way to his office. "Very busy."

As if to prove the greeter's point, the bulletin produced by Brethren Press for this morning has a picture of Hardenbrook on the cover.

He's sitting somewhere in rural Sudan—a part of the world that has become a passion for him—talking with a Sudanese Christian.

**"... absolutely fearless, absurdly happy, always in trouble"**

—Jim Hardenbrook's favorite Dan West quote.

On the docket at church this morning are a pair of worship services, Sunday school, a potluck meal, and a blessing for the congregation's new cooler. Yes, that's right: a walk-in cooler.

"I don't know quite how to do that," Hardenbrook jokes as he announces the event at the first service. "You might want to show up about 12:30 and see what I come up with!"

A few hours, two sermons, and a full plate of good food later, he comes up with a fine prayer to dedicate the cooler, thanking all the volunteers who made it happen.

All in a day's work for a pastor, but that's just the beginning for Hardenbrook. He has also served as chaplain for the Idaho State House in Boise for nine years, following two years as Senate chaplain. He works with a community organization called Healthy Families Nampa to encourage a strong home environment and responsible parenting. He even officiates high school football games.

And on top of all that, for nearly two years now he has been serving first as moderator-elect and now as moderator for the Church of the Brethren. Hardenbrook will be in the center chair next month in Peoria, Ill., when the gavel comes down for the 2005 Annual Conference.

*Why is this man smiling? Jim Hardenbrook's passion for ministry comes through in his storytelling, as it did when he spoke at McPherson's Regional Youth Conference a few years ago.*





Walt Wiltischek

*A man of many talents: Jim Hardenbrook, left, leads music with Steve McPherson at an Idaho District conference.*

It seems like quite a load for anyone to carry, but Hardenbrook bustles through it all with brisk energy, and he's constantly flashing his bright smile. He's happy.

Why not? He likes to quote a line originally delivered by Dan West in 1958. West said those who follow Christ should be "absolutely fearless, absurdly happy, always in trouble." Filled with the joy of serving Jesus Christ, Jim Hardenbrook is one absurdly happy man.

• • •

Hardenbrook may be less known to some Brethren than many previous moderators. He has been part of the Church of the Brethren for less than 15 years after growing up in and later pastoring in the Independent Christian Church. It gives him something of an "outsider's" perspective in an insider's role, allowing him to step back and look at the church with a different eye.

At a meeting this past year, he recalled being pulled aside by a Brethren member who wanted a photo with him. "You're the first moderator I haven't known personally in 50 years!" this Brethren told Hardenbrook.

Hardenbrook doesn't come from a heavily populated Brethren region, either. He's a lifetime resident of the great Northwest, and it's a big part of him. He was born in Oregon, later lived in Idaho, graduated from high school in Washington, and went to college in Seattle.

He had thought about studying law at one point, but the encouragement of people in his local church and the example of his father, Don, who became a pastor when Jim was in junior high, convinced him that he was being called to ministry. He fondly remembers one woman who sent him a letter and a dollar bill each month, noting that she was praying for him.

Hardenbrook did pastorates at several churches in Oregon and Washington before he and his wife, Pam, and three children moved back to Idaho in 1986. He was working with a refugee resettlement program there when a friend asked if he was available for pulpity supply. Hardenbrook agreed, and that preaching opportunity turned out to be Nampa Church of the Brethren.

**"The more I found out, the more I felt this was where I needed to be," Hardenbrook says. "This was the expression of Christian faith I was looking for."**

His impression of the congregation was "a discouraged, talented bunch with amazing potential," so when they asked if he would consider becoming their part-time interim pastor, he agreed. The rest is history, as the interim label gradually melted away.

"I eventually noticed in the bulletin that the search committee wasn't meeting as often," Hardenbrook says with a laugh. He officially became the full-time pastor in 1994. "It was good timing for them and for me," he adds. "I'm really indebted to this congregation for trusting me and shepherding me."

Winston Goering, former mayor of Nampa, chaired that search committee. He says he knew they had found the right person the first time he heard Hardenbrook speak.

"He is one of those guys who can make an inspiration out of just about anything," Goering says. "He has a God-given gift of communication, and he gets his point across. I can't say enough good things about him. He is one rare person."

The transition of coming from one denomination to another



Walt Wiltischek

*Moderator Jim Hardenbrook visits with former Brethren Volunteer Service worker Tim Showalter, left, and Theo Sither of the Center on Conscience & War during the Anabaptist Consultation on Alternative Service.*

didn't prove a problem, either, as it does for some pastors who make that shift. Goering says Hardenbrook "accepted and took on" the "quirks" of the Church of the Brethren.

Indeed, ever since the beginning of the relationship, Hardenbrook has displayed a voracious appetite for Brethren history and has treasured learning about

Brethren beliefs and practices. He quickly embraced his new church family and came to appreciate what they stood for.

"The more I found out, the more I felt this was where I needed to be," Hardenbrook says. "This was the expression of Christian faith I was looking for."

And while he loves history, his love for the congregation he serves today is also readily apparent.

"I'm so proud of you all," he tells the church as worship begins. "You're good folks." He often speaks of his pride for the people of Nampa, and especially the way they have stepped up while his duties as moderator have kept him on the road, sometimes for weeks at a time.

"I really love this job of being a pastor," he adds later in an interview. "I can't think of another job more rewarding and such a blessing. If there's anything that's hurt this year, it's missing some of those opportunities to be with my people."

The congregation has responded with good humor to his absence. In the Nampa narthex is a board bearing a map and the words "Where in the world are Jim and Pam?" A pair of paper cutouts show the couple's current location.

Don Hardenbrook, who is also a member of the pastoral staff at Nampa and has helped fill in during Jim's travels, confides that even the children miss Jim when

*Jim Hardenbrook, kneeling at center, and his wife, Pam, at right, take part in a consecration of Annual Conference officers in 2003 in Boise.*

## PRAYERS FOR THE PEOPLE

O Lord,

In the last days or hours of this session I pray that you would give each of us the vision to see the difference between mountains and molehills. Clear our minds so that what is truly important might be separated from that which is trivial. Bring the emotional discipline necessary to fight the temptation to take things personally. Help us all see the difference between what must be done now and what should wait.

Looking back on a year of war and occupation we are reminded of our need for your divine guidance.

Lord, life is so good. Forgive us and change us when we fail to see how wonderful it truly is.

In the name of the One who came to give abundant life I pray these things,

Amen.

(Prayer given by Jim Hardenbrook in his role as chaplain of the Idaho State House on March 19, 2004, at the end of the 2004 legislative session.)

he's gone. "The kids love him," Don Hardenbrook says of his son. "They come up and sit on his lap and hug him, and they'll show him their new shoes or socks. They just love him."

• • •

About 30 minutes off to the east, in the capital of Boise, Jim Hardenbrook has won the admiration of a very different group. Under the Capitol dome, he has been caring for the spiritual needs of Idaho legislators and opening their sessions with prayer for more than a decade now.

Like his current pastorate, this chaplaincy assignment arose when a friend asked him if he would consider coming to the Capitol sometime to offer prayer before a legislative session. Hardenbrook agreed, and before he knew it he had an application to become the regular Senate chaplain.

Don Hardenbrook is the Senate chaplain now in a father-son tag team, while Jim has been the House chaplain for nine-plus years. He took off from the duties



Walt Willischek

### THE MODERATOR AT A GLANCE

**Name:** Jim Hardenbrook (His legal first name is actually just "Jim.")

**Age:** 53 (He will have a birthday just after Annual Conference.)

**Family:** Wife, Pam ("I never met a better partner in ministry than she is for me," Jim says.); two sons who both live in Alaska; one daughter in Roanoke, Va.; one miniature schnauzer, Sadie.

**Home:** Caldwell, Idaho (They moved there in 1986 and built their current home in 1990.)

**Congregation:** Nampa (Idaho) Church of the Brethren

**Occupation:** Pastor; also serves as chaplain for Idaho State House.



Chris Detrick





Janis Pyle

*The Church of the Brethren's work in Sudan has become a major focus for Jim Hardenbrook, who traveled there with a Brethren group in 2003.*

this year except for giving the prayer at the session-opening State of the State address, but the House has promised to hold the spot open for him until he can return. Legislators are taking turns offering the prayers this year.

"I think the world of this guy," Speaker of the House Bruce Newcomb says. "Jim has always seemed to know what's going on and how people are feeling. The scriptures he shares are always apropos to the day, as well as his prayers. . . . I've never seen anyone who had his hand on the pulse of this place like Jim has."

In spite of a very religiously diverse group in the House, Newcomb says he has "never heard one complaint, ever" about Hardenbrook's services.

"If I have ever felt the hand of God in this place, it's here when Jim is chaplain," adds Newcomb, who has been in the House for more than 20 years. "What a chaplain says has a way to defuse things and bring us back to what's really important. While he's gone, it won't be the good, pure water we're used to."

As Hardenbrook enters the chamber, House members quickly come over to greet him. "It's so good to see you!" one says. "I don't know how we could open a session without you!" "You always know what we need, and when," another says.

Hardenbrook flashes his broad smile and thanks them all.

"This body has a sense that there's more to it than just votes," he says.

. . .

Hardenbrook signs off most e-mails with the admonition, "Be not afraid"—an appropriate echo of West's call to be absolutely fearless. Hardenbrook has been true to those words, not afraid to challenge Brethren during his travels this year.

Part of what drew him to the denomination is what he observed in learning about the early Brethren: "They took the Bible so seriously and took Jesus so seriously, it forced them to rearrange the way they thought and the way they lived," he says. "Probably what we need to do today is take the Bible and Jesus seriously enough to rearrange the way we think and live!"

That view reflects itself in this year's Annual Conference theme, "Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus," and in Hardenbrook's call for all Brethren to read a Gospel a month during the year.

He says Brethren need to pause and see who the church is today and what it believes, and to take stock of the many "treasures" they possess, from the grace of God to a rich and deep heritage.

"One of the things I think this denomination is in need of is an understanding of what a privilege it is to be trusted by God and filled by God's Spirit. We are deeply loved by God," he says. "We ought to sparkle because of that. We ought to have goofy grins on our faces."

So if you see Jim Hardenbrook walking around the arena at Peoria this summer, look for the goofy grin. He loves serving the Church of the Brethren and is filled with joy to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Simply put, he's happy—absurdly happy. ❧

Walt Wiltschek is editor of MESSENGER. He spent four days with Jim Hardenbrook in Idaho this past January.

Jeff Glass



## HOW THE WEST WAS WONDERFUL

Jim Hardenbrook is the first Idaho Brethren to be called as moderator of the denomination, and is believed to be the first who is a native of anywhere west of the Rockies.

That has brought a taste of the "frontier spirit" into his service.

"When you can see a long way like you can in Idaho, I think you have a broader vision," Hardenbrook says with a smile. "You stand on a mountain, look out, and say, 'Yeah, we can do that!'"

It has also turned a spotlight on Idaho, the denomination's smallest district with only six congregations and about 630 total members. The Nampa congregation (pictured above), which Hardenbrook pastors, is the largest, with a membership of about 300.

Ed Kerschensteiner, the district minister and pastor of the Boise Valley congregation, says Idaho has rallied behind Hardenbrook during his period of service to the denomination.

"I think there's a feeling of pride that someone from a small district like this has been called to such a position," Kerschensteiner says. "I think he has represented us very well."

Kerschensteiner says the district has also benefited by having Hardenbrook come back from his various travels and share things he has learned elsewhere around the church. "He doesn't hesitate to fire us up a little bit," Kerschensteiner says.

And lest anyone who reads the main feature think that Jim Hardenbrook is all work all the time, he has a beloved hobby that's very appropriate to the West, too: He is an avid fly fisherman. On the wall of his church office is his father's rod and grandmother's creel.

His response: "It's to remind me I need to fish once in a while."

# Midwest Ho! Annual Conference 2005: A preview of Peoria

by Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

**P**eoría, Ill., will host the 219th recorded Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren, Saturday through Wednesday, July 2-6. Main events will be held in the Peoria Civic Center and its Carver Arena.

Delegates from Church of the Brethren congregations in the US and Puerto Rico will gather in Peoria to carry out the denominational business of the year. Other Brethren will be in Peoria not for business, but for pleasure—the pleasure of Christian fellowship and friendship on a larger scale than is available in most congregations and districts. Others will attend for spiritual growth and professional growth and to learn about the latest developments in the denomination.

Registration costs \$85 for non-delegates. Children under 12 are free, and discounts are available for ages 12-21 and one-day and weekend registrations. There is no charge to attend worship services only. Registration is available online at [www.brethren.org/ac](http://www.brethren.org/ac). For detailed schedule information, see the Annual Conference Information Packet on the website; it also has been mailed on CD to each Church of the Brethren congregation.

## Leadership

Jim Hardenbrook, 2005 Annual Conference moderator and pastor of Nampa (Idaho) Church of the Brethren, will lead the Conference along with moderator-elect Ronald D. Beachley, executive minister of Western Pennsylvania District, and secretary Fred Swartz of Bridgewater, Va.

Also on the planning team are executive director Lerry Fogle and the Program and Arrangements Committee of Judy Epps, Rosanna Eller McFadden, Joanna Wave Willoughby, and treasurer Judy Keyser.

## Theme

“Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus” comes from Hebrews 12:1-4. “The church has always been in need of a call to remember Jesus,” Hardenbrook wrote in a theme statement. “People not only want to know what Jesus would ‘do.’ They want to know what he ‘did,’ and they want him to show them how to live.”

## Worship

Conference will open with worship on Saturday, July 2, at 7:15 p.m. Hardenbrook will preach on “I Love to Tell the Story,” and Beachley will lead worship.

• Sunday morning worship will begin at 10:20 a.m. Galen Hackman will speak on “By Faith . . . Experiencing the Smile of God,” with worship leader Frances Townsend. An organ recital and hymn sing will precede worship at 9 a.m.

• On Monday, worship will begin at 7:20 p.m. Sandy Bosserman will preach on “Duties, Devils, and Distractions,” and Thomas Dowdy will lead worship.

• On Tuesday, worship will begin at 7:10 p.m. with Anastacia Bueno Beltre giving the message in Spanish with English translation. Beltre is past moderator of the Church of the Brethren in the Dominican Republic. Worship leaders are Gerald and Rebecca Baile Crouse.

• Closing worship will begin at 10:15 a.m. Wednesday, with a young adult worship leadership team of Cindy Laprade, Beth Rhodes, Nate Polzin, and Matt Guynn. Chris Douglas will speak on “Abundant Life, Discipleship, Don’t Lose Heart.”

## Business

Business sessions will be light, with only a few new business items scheduled. In unfinished business, two study committees plan to ask for extensions and will bring interim reports.

The three new business items are changes to General Board bylaws, an update of Annual Conference polity, and a New Mandate for the Review and Evaluation Committee, which will be appointed to conduct a regularly scheduled review and evaluation of denominational ministries.

An information and discussion session on the Brethren Medical Plan, which has instituted a new requirement for district participation (see February MESSENGER, page 23), will be held Tuesday morning. Delegates also will vote on the ballot (see April MESSENGER, page 23) and receive reports.

New this year is “Alive ’05,” a multimedia presentation Sunday at 2:35 p.m. In recent years a “live report” was produced jointly by the Conference agencies and the Program and Arrangements Committee. “This year, we are doing something totally different,” Fogle said. “Alive ’05” will be “a presentation of what God is doing in the life of the Church of the Brethren. The focus will be on districts, congregations, even specific members in the church.” A committee appointed by Program and Arrangements is developing the presentation, with agency representatives as consultants. Each agency will give its own live report at another time in the Conference.

Standing Committee, a gathering of district delegates, will meet before the Conference. In addition to its annual task of previewing Conference business items, the committee will review the the proposed new Annual Conference strategic planning process, consult with the Conference agencies and district executives, counsel with the moderator, and receive reports. The General Board and the Council of District Executives also will meet before Conference.





### Church setting

Peoria Church of the Brethren is located at 4714 N. Sheridan Rd. The congregation, pastored by Dana McNeil, was organized in 1945 and has an average worship attendance of 84.

Nearby churches in the "Peoria section" of Illinois/Wisconsin District are Astoria, Canton, Oak Grove in Lowpoint, Panther Creek near Roanoke, and Woodland in Astoria.

The Peoria congregation is heavily involved in preparations for Annual Conference, providing help with onsite organizing, hosting some children's activities, and ushering for the Sunday morning service, among other things.

Congregation members also have facilitated a junior high service project at Garfield Elementary School in southern Peoria. The congregation has a relationship with the school, where congregation members go to read to children and do service projects.

### Special events

A Hall of Faith of poems, prose, photographs, and drawings representing the "cloud of witnesses" who have influenced Church of the Brethren faith and life will be on display, sponsored by the Association for the Arts in the Church of the Brethren (AACB) and the Program and Arrangements Committee. Submissions will be collected at the AACB booth.

The Ministers' Association will hold its annual meeting in Peoria July 1-2, on "Sustaining the Life and Ministry of God's Servants." Speaker Wendy Miller is assistant professor of Spiritual Formation at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. Continuing

education units and child care are available.

Bethany Theological Seminary will celebrate its centennial with a Bethany alumni choir, a luncheon, and an insight session. Centennial open house events will be held at the campus in Richmond, Ind., before and after Conference. Visitors are invited to drop in from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. July 1 or 7.

Don Vermilyea, a Brethren Volunteer Service worker on a "Walk Across America," plans to arrive at Annual Conference this year on foot, accompanied by a workcamp group that will walk with him for a week before the Conference. Vermilyea has traveled about 15,000 miles to date, with a goal of walking to each Church of the Brethren congregation.

Among the large variety of insight sessions and meal events, an "evangelism track" will offer continuing education units,

### Special services

Services available in Peoria include complimentary bus shuttles to and from the Conference hotels and free parking at the civic center.

Closed captioning will be used in worship services and business sessions for the first time. The closed captioning will be projected onto the large screens that display live video coverage.

Other services for those with disabilities are personal assistance via a "buddy system" provided by the Association of Brethren Caregivers, and motorized scooters that can be reserved for the week. 

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

## PEORIA AT A GLANCE

**Population:** Nearly 350,000 in the greater metropolitan area.

**Transportation:** The main interstate into Peoria is I-74. The closest airport is Greater Peoria Regional Airport (PIA). Amtrak provides passenger rail service to Peoria.

**Time zone:** Central

**Average high temperature in July:** 86 degrees

**History:** Set along the Illinois River, the Peoria area was called "pimiteoui" or "fat lake" by Native Americans and French traders because of the richness of the river valley. Peoria was the first European settlement in Illinois. The question, "Will it play in Peoria?" origi-

nated in the town's vaudeville era of the 1920s, when Peoria was a test audience for new live acts and stage shows because it was viewed as the "typical" American town.

**Business:** Peoria hosts the world headquarters of Caterpillar Inc., major manufacturer of engines and earth-moving equipment. Several Caterpillar plants are located in the area, with one of the largest in East Peoria.

**Attractions and events:** Wildlife Prairie State Park; the *Spirit of Peoria* paddlewheeler; the Shoppes at Grand Prairie; Saturday morning open-air shopping at the RiverFront Market; Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences with a Children's Discovery Center, Planetarium, and Illinois Folk Art

Gallery; the African American Museum Hall of Fame; and the two-and-a-half mile Grand View Drive with its river valley vista, described as "the world's most beautiful drive" by President Teddy Roosevelt in 1910. On July 3, a Fireworks Spectacular will be held at Glen Oak Park Amphitheater beginning at 4 p.m., with a picnic in the park, band concert, and fireworks. On July 4, "Sky Concert '05" celebration and fireworks will begin downtown at 5 p.m.

**Newspapers:** *The Journal Star*, *Peoria Times-Observer*

**Sports:** The Peoria Chiefs play baseball at O'Brien Field.

For more information contact the Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau at 800-747-0302 or visit [www.peoria.org](http://www.peoria.org).

# Brethren and universalism: A forgotten schism?

by David B. Eller

**L**ess than 100 miles to the southwest of Peoria, Ill., where Annual Conference meets this summer, is the site of a pioneer congregation long lost from Brethren tradition.

The word “lost” may be too strong, because it implies that the church in question was actually part of Brethren westward migration—which in the great heartland of central Illinois dates from the 1830s. The church in question, New Salem, located in Pike County, does not appear in the written annals or oral tradition of Brethren settlement of the region.

The clear link between New Salem and the Brethren is that George Wolfe II (d.1865), pioneer Dunker preacher in Illinois, is honored as one of the congregation’s founding ministers. In origin, the New Salem church was a “union” church, that is, preachers from various traditions shared a pulpit in homes or barns in a given community on alternating Sundays. Eventually, a meetinghouse would be built, typically when one denomination became dominant. At New Salem, Universalists erected the meetinghouse in 1854. It is likely that Wolfe, who lived at Liberty, only 15 miles northwest, preached here from the early 1840s until the early 1860s.

The story of George Wolfe II and the “far-western” Brethren in Illinois and elsewhere has been frequently told, particularly their differences with eastern Brethren over the manner of observing the love feast. Wolfe and other western Brethren of his era are also remembered as preachers of universal restoration, the “larger hope” in the eventual restoration of all souls to God. However, Wolfe’s fellowship and relationship with the Universalist Church, and indeed of other Brethren with the Universalist movement in America, is not fully understood.

This story begins with the radical Pietist movement of 17th- and 18th-century Germany, out of which the Brethren emerged as a distinct body. Alexander Mack, the first minister; his spiritual mentor, Hochman von Hochenau; and others held this doctrine, known as *Wiederbringung*. This belief was not widely taught, and it was not a test of fellowship. Rather it was viewed as a doctrine for mature Christians fully committed on their path of discipleship and obedience. In colonial America it is clear that the restoration doctrine was prominent in the mother congregation at Germantown, Pa., for several decades.

In addition to radical Pietism, another stream of universalism developed in England as a rejection of Calvinism (Puritan orthodoxy). The origins of the Universalist denomination in America may be traced to John Murray, an English immigrant, who founded the first congregation in 1779 at



Elder George Wolfe II, a significant figure among the early Brethren in Illinois, encountered some controversy over the doctrine of universal restoration.

Gloucester, Mass. New England became a fertile field for this movement in the early 19th century.

While regional associations of Universalist congregations had developed earlier, a national convention was not organized until 1833. Hoseau Ballou, a popular preacher, writer, and teacher, became the leading theologian of this movement during this era. Ballou, however, denied the trinity, miracles, the substitutionary (blood sacrifice) view of the atonement, as well as the existence of hell or a literal devil. In doing so, he moved Universalists away from simple restorationism and closer to the theological worldview of the Unitarians.

By the time the national convention was organized, the Universalist Church had all the trappings of an American denomination with various publications, boards, schools, and traveling ministers who promoted their tenets. The Universalist Church merged in 1962 with the Unitarians, to become today's Unitarian Universalist Association.

Brethren involvement with the Universalist Church in the early 19th century took place outside of New England, primarily in the deep South and Midwest, but the story is also lacking in detail. It was much like a schism, in that over time several Brethren congregations and ministers ended up as part of the Universalist Church. On the other hand, there is no one event, or personality, that was the decisive factor in this transformation of religious loyalties.

And it was a one-way street. Only one former Universalist minister, Timothy Banger in Philadelphia, joined the ranks of the Dunkers from the Universalists during this same period.

The restoration doctrine did not survive among Brethren in the emerging "Pennsylvania Dutch" culture of southeast Pennsylvania in the late 1700s, but it did continue as the Brethren moved south into the Carolinas, beginning as early as the 1740s. Later writers would trace it from Germantown, through Daniel Leatherman of Maryland, to David Martin (d. 1794) of Newberry County, S.C.

To make the story even more clouded, there is the strange case of "John H.," a young minister in western North Carolina where several colonial-era congregations had also emerged.

John H. denied the literal existence of hell or the devil, and maintained that he could commit sin and still go to heaven—views predating some of Ballou's universalist theology. The Annual Meeting dealt with reports of John H.'s teachings on three separate occasions between 1794 and 1800. His preaching was viewed as going beyond Pietist restorationism, and the result was that he and his followers were expelled.

Some Brethren in the Carolinas may then have joined the Baptists or other groups. Others, perhaps unaware of Annual

**The story of George Wolfe II and the "far-western" Brethren in Illinois and elsewhere has been frequently told, particularly their differences with eastern Brethren over the manner of observing the love feast. Wolfe and other western Brethren of his era are also remembered as preachers of universal restoration, the "larger hope" in the eventual restoration of all souls to God.**

Meeting's decision or unconcerned with it, continued their local church life and practices much as before. Yet, for others, the expulsion of John H. was undoubtedly a factor in the decision to head west. Several Brethren families from the Carolinas relocated into western Tennessee, central and western Kentucky, southern Indiana, and southeast Missouri between 1790 and 1810. They continued Brethren ordinances such as baptism and love feast, but were completely cut off from the main body of the church.

Looking back, it seems the real drive behind Brethren universalism in the South was not "John H.," who is very difficult to locate in public records, but David Martin. At least four Universalist congregations (some writers suggest seven or eight) with roots dating back to the colonial era emerged in South Carolina. These were located in Newberry, Fairfield, and Saluda counties. In addition to Martin, Giles Chapman, Andrew Feaster, Joseph Summers, and Elijah Lynch are all remembered as Brethren preachers of universal salvation. The last of these, Lynch (d. 1842), long isolated from Brethren loyal to the Annual Meeting, is remembered for taking the Brethren into the Universalist fold in the 1830s.

One of the earliest Brethren communities to develop across the mountains in western Kentucky was located on Drakes Creek, in what is now Warren and Allen counties, along the



*The Elder George Wolfe II home, located near Liberty in Adams County, Illinois.*

Tennessee line. Its founding preachers were John Hendricks and Gasper Rowland, both from western North Carolina. Organized about 1800, it produced a statement of its beliefs that included universal restoration. Hendricks, who may well be the John H. in Annual Meeting records, had lived for a time in South Carolina near Martin. It was Hendricks who ministered to a Brethren community in nearby Muhlenberg County, who baptized a young George Wolfe II in Illinois (in the wake of the Great New Madrid earthquake of 1811), and organized a congregation in western Cape Girardeau County, Mo., all before his death in 1814.

One of Hendricks' associates on Drakes Creek was William Lowe. Lowe, from South Carolina and then Tennessee before settling near Hendricks, joined the Brethren under the influence of Martin. He is remembered in Kentucky for his itinerant ministry in Christian County, to the west of Drakes Creek, where he founded what became the Consolation Universalist Church in 1819. Other western Brethren preachers of universal restoration

## A BRETHREN CONNECTION

An essay in the Brethren Press "Perspectives" series, titled *Universal Restoration*, looks at this doctrine held by some of the early Brethren and others during the denomination's history. In this 32-page booklet, Frank Ramirez examines this belief of all people being redeemed at the final judgment, using both scriptural and historical roots. The booklet includes study questions and a bibliography. To order this or other Perspectives titles, call Brethren Press at 800-441-3712.

1839 and was allowed to preach. He noted that "their faith is the same as ours." In addition to conversations with Wolfe, James Hendricks, and Gibson, Gurley also visited the Missouri Dunker congregation. Wolfe wrote later in life that he was approached about joining the Universalist Church, but refused.

Other religious pressures were mounting on the western Brethren as well. The arrival of the Mormons (Latter-Day Saints) in the early 1840s, and their settlement at Nauvoo—

included Joseph Rowland; Isham Gibson, from Tennessee and later of central Illinois (Sugar Creek); James Hendricks of Cape Girardeau County, Mo. (Whitewater Creek); Charles Daughterly of Union County, Ill.; and Wolfe.

By the late 1850s, the Universalist Church was making significant gains in the western states, with Cincinnati as its publishing center. John Addison Gurley, editor of *Star of the West*, attended a Brethren love feast in Adams County, Ill., in

virtually at Wolfe's back door—caused concerns because some Brethren were swept into that movement. Then too, eastern Brethren from Indiana and Ohio, loyal to the Annual Meeting, were moving into central and northern Illinois prairie lands in the early 1840s.

Essentially, Wolfe and a few others worked out a cautious relationship with a committee representing the Annual Meeting in 1859. Wolfe's group agreed to reject the "no hell" theology of the Universalists, but they would continue to preach the Brethren restorationism. On the more thorny problem of the "correct" observance of love feast, the western group could continue their traditions when they communed among themselves (single-mode footwashing), but not if eastern Brethren were present.

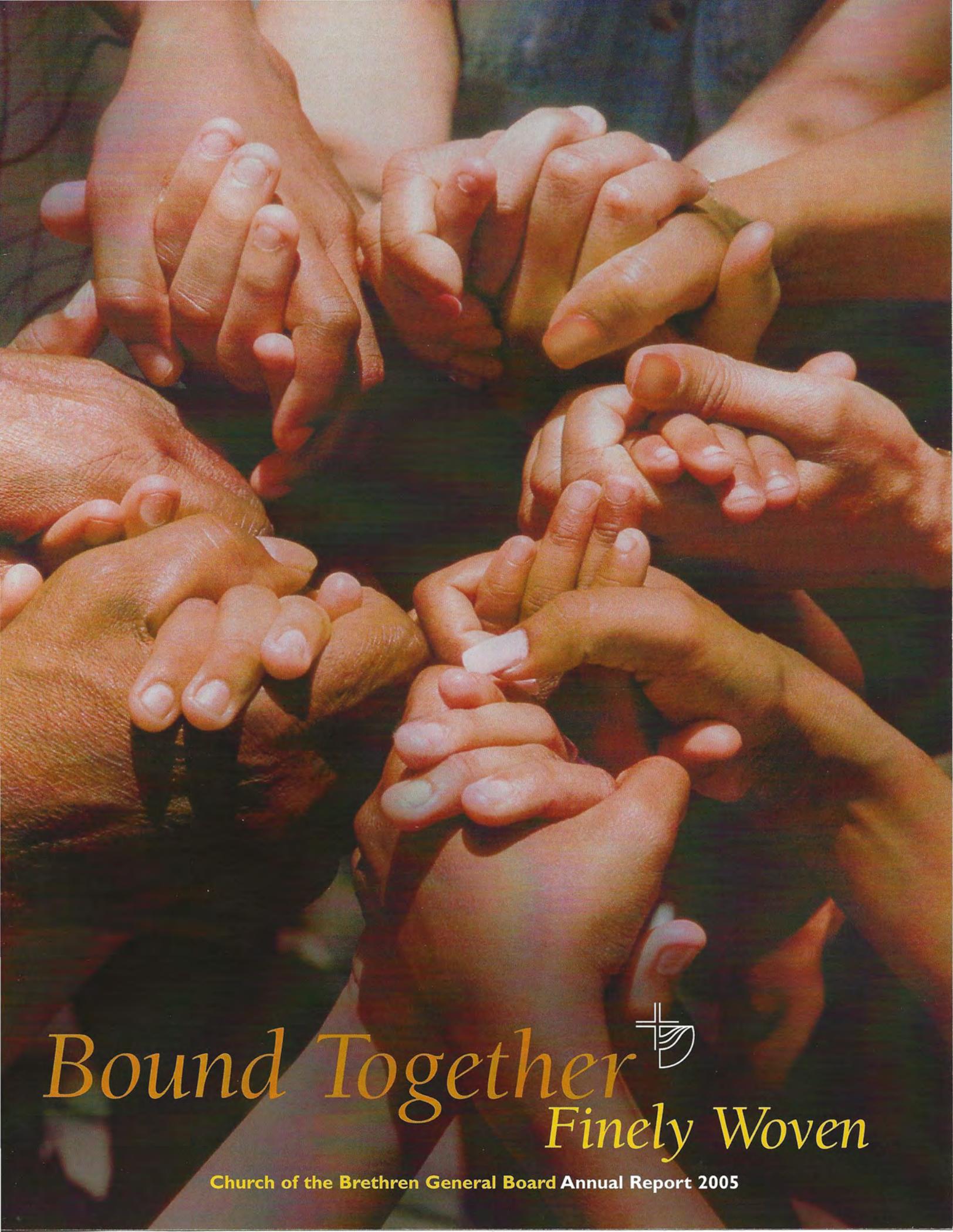
This compromise fell apart almost immediately after Wolfe II's death in 1865. The Whitewater, Mo., congregation was part of the Universalist Church by 1859; the last regularly installed Brethren preacher here, Andrew Miller (d. 1912), has on his tombstone, "Universalist Minister." Various members of the Wigle family, pioneers with Wolfe in Kentucky and Illinois, also clung to universalism.

David Wigle, from Pike County, was active as a Universalist preacher in Missouri and Illinois in the 1850s. The Jacob Wigle family moved to Oregon in 1856 and were part of the first infant Brethren congregation there, centered in the Willamette Valley. However, controversy over preaching universal salvation nearly destroyed the tiny group. Ultimately, the Wigles withdrew and became part of the first Universalist organization in Oregon in the 1860s. A son, Abraham J. Wigle, was ordained into the ministry in 1871 and became the state's first Universalist Sunday school director.

Back in the Midwest, Annual Meeting grew increasingly restless over anyone openly teaching universalism. Two western Brethren preachers in western Missouri, Francis A. Hendricks and Isham Gibson, were expelled by elders from the Annual Meeting in 1872. Among the reasons given was their fondness for "preaching the restitution." These disgruntled leaders then helped to create a new Brethren dissenting group, the Congregational Brethren, that same year. In 1875 the Annual Meeting forbade ministers from preaching or even debating final restoration.

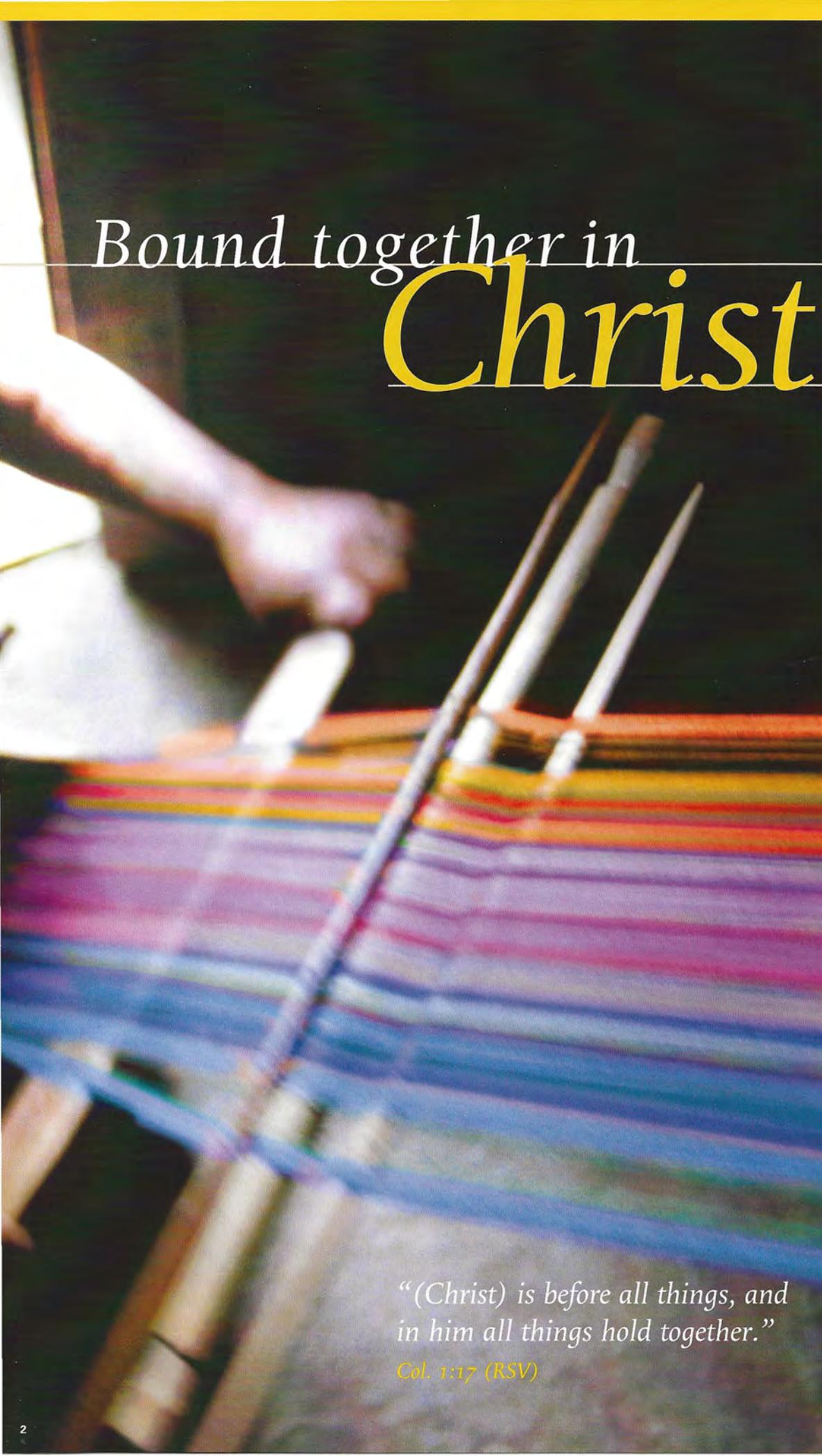
The Universalist congregation at New Salem, long inactive, was never Brethren in terms of distinctive Dunker ordinances such as trine-immersion baptism or observing the love feast. Yet its existence is a reminder of a forgotten past and how influential early Brethren were in pioneer Illinois. More importantly, it is a testimony to how a little-known Brethren belief became part of the story of a larger and separate denominational tradition, the Unitarian Universalists. ■

David B. Eller is director of Elizabethtown (Pa.) College's Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies and an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren.



*Bound Together*   
*Finely Woven*

**Church of the Brethren General Board Annual Report 2005**

A close-up photograph of a person's hands weaving on a loom. The threads are vibrant and multi-colored, including shades of blue, purple, red, orange, and yellow. The background is dark, making the colorful threads stand out. The text "Bound together in Christ" is overlaid on the top half of the image.

# Bound together in Christ

Dear sisters and brothers:

What a year! During 2004 and the early part of 2005, the General Board has responded to multiple out-of-the-ordinary opportunities to share the good news of Jesus Christ: producing a Christmas Eve service broadcast on CBS, channeling massive outpourings of giving to tsunami victims, hosting a significant consultation on alternative service, and holding a national mission conference. The call to serve God has taken the Church of the Brethren into millions of homes and around the world.

These unique events, whose urgency called forth extra energy and resources, involved many General Board

*“(Christ) is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”*

*Col. 1:17 (RSV)*

*General secretary Stan Noffsinger brings greetings to the Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria (EYN – the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria.*



Orla Clinton, Church of Sweden/ACT

*A doctor with Church World Service helps victims of the tsunami.*

CORE VALUE

## Christ-centeredness

To be Christlike in manner and in mission.

staff; most of what we do, however, is lower-profile. On a daily basis, we provide resources to congregations, grow churches, organize service opportunities, and witness for peace.

As we minister with congregations, districts, and ecumenical organizations, our tasks are like those of a weaver at a loom, adjusting the tension of the fibers to provide a rich cloth that has

strength, endurance, and functionality.

In my work as general secretary, I have seen firsthand how rich this fabric is. Not only have my travels taken me across this country, but I have also been privileged to visit our sisters and brothers in Nigeria and those in the Dominican Republic.

Throughout these journeys I was blessed with vibrant worship, spiritually moving

music, and by people's commitment to God.

It was a joy to end the year with financial strength. Generous gifts from congregations and individuals helped make it possible for the General Board to carry out many ministries.

The following pages provide glimpses of the broad spectrum of activity in 2004. In ways both large and small, the General Board weaves together a rich tapestry of ministries on behalf of the whole Church of the Brethren. Let us celebrate the Spirit that binds us together as one people!

*Stanley J. Noffsinger*  
General Secretary



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

*General secretary Stan Noffsinger talks to Andrew Duffey at the Anabaptist Consultation on Alternative Service.*



Merv Keeney

### Did you know?

A committee began meeting in 2004 to study the use of General Board property at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., and at the General Offices, in Elgin, Ill. The Stewardship of Properties committee will share its evaluation and offer recommendations to the board in 2006.



*Bound together in acts of*  
**service**

- Within the first month after the tsunami in southern Asia, the Brethren Service Center had received an unprecedented 81,986 pounds of relief materials (health kits, school kits, blankets, etc.), and Brethren had given over \$450,000 to the Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) —roughly 51 times greater than comparable giving in January of 2004. Grants from the EDF are helping send emergency shipments of material supplies by Church World Service to tsunami victims in at least three of the hardest-hit areas of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and India.
- Total EDF grants in 2004 equaled \$536,535, helping survivors of natural disasters and violence rebuild their lives and receive medicine, emergency food, shelter, and fresh water.

*“ . . . but through love be servants of one another.”*

*Gal. 5:13b (RSV)*



Patricia Black

*Nancy Link and two girls make Play-Doh creations in the Kissimmee, Fla., Disaster Child Care center in the aftermath of hurricanes.*

CORE VALUE

## Servant leadership

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

camp season, almost 550 youth, youth advisors, and young adults put their faith into action and opened their lives to change by participating in 23 camps, ranging from the inner city of Los Angeles to the rural Appalachian Mountains to the Dominican Republic.

- Service Ministries staff processed and sent 2,134 shipments of clothing, blankets, health kits, school kits, baby

kits, and medical supplies to sites in the US and to 47 countries world-wide. These shipments were valued at more than \$20 million.

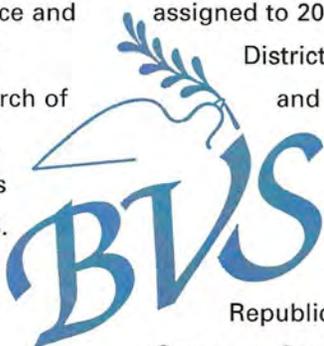
- A total of 169 Disaster Child Care volunteers made contact with over 3,000 children, while responding to a dozen natural or human-caused disasters. Serving 3,052 work days, the value of this donated care is over \$210,000.

Through partnerships with Church World Service and Interchurch Medical Assistance, the Church of the Brethren was at work in 18 countries as well as in the US.

- At year-end, BVS was supporting 111 volunteers in the field, 33 of them in interna-

tional sites. Volunteers were assigned to 20 states and the District of Columbia, and the following countries: Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Japan, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Serbia, Montenegro, and Slovakia.

- During the summer work-



Russell Betz



*Volunteers from Southern Plains District help repair hail-damaged Antelope Valley Church of the Brethren.*

Beth Rhodes



*Miles Smith of Bakersville, N.C., assists at a Washington D.C. food bank during a workcamp.*

### Did you know?

The Brethren Service Center celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2004. Established in 1944 as a collection point for material resources destined for war-torn Europe and as a place for people to enter into US citizenship, the center currently houses the Emergency Response and Service Ministries of the board.

# Bound together through God's spirit

- Seventeen interns, topping the previous record high of 16, served in congregations and church agencies as a part of Ministry Summer Service, a 10-week college level vocational exploration program. Each had a mentor who worked to include a variety of ministry opportunities throughout the summer and to help the students discern the possibility of God's call to set-apart ministry for them.

- Brethren Press's series of seasonal devotion-

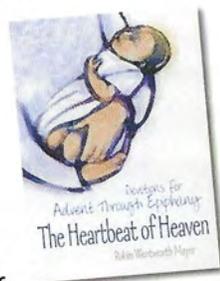
als continued with

*Journey to Jerusalem,*

by Kenneth Gibble, and

*Heartbeat of*

*Heaven,* by Robin Wentworth



*“Always keep yourselves united in the Holy Spirit, and bind yourselves together with peace.”*

*Eph. 4:3 (NLT)*

*From left, Ministry Summer Service interns Lee Smith, Seth Flory, Jeff McAvoy, and Meagan Harlow participate in an evening worship time.*



Walt Wiltschek

Brazil national co-director Marcos Inhauser performs an anointing at a gathering of Brazilian Brethren.

CORE VALUE

## Discernment

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

### Network of Spiritual

Directors, now numbering more than 60, is one expression of the desire to help the church grow "to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). The network met for the third year in a retreat at Shepherd's Spring in Mid-Atlantic District.

Chris Derrick



From left, Matt Ayers, Christine Sheller, and Matt Tobias pray during worship at National Young Adult Conference.

Mayer. Gibble also wrote *Nonconformity*, the latest in the *Perspectives* essay series.

• At Deep Roots, Strong Wings: A Church Planting Training Event, held in May at Bethany Seminary, close to 90 Brethren engaged in worship, study, and conversation about the challenges and opportunities of planting churches.

• Clergy ethics training workshops were held in more than six districts, including

an additional session for Bethany students.

• Members of the first group of Advanced Foundations of Church Leadership celebrated the conclusion of their work in November.

Eight pastors from around the denomination increased their ministerial effectiveness and strengthened their vitality in ministry through this process. The second group of 11 pastors began in January 2005.

• The Church of the Brethren



**Brethren Academy  
for Ministerial  
Leadership**



### Did you know?

Forty-three individuals (12 women and 31 men) were ordained and 90 individuals (62 men, 28 women) were licensed to the ministry in 2004.



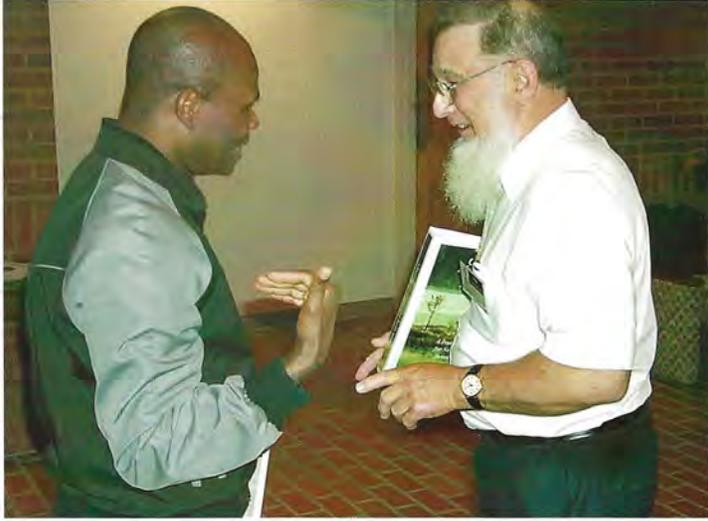
Bound together as  
*one family*

- The theological education program of Iglesia de los Hermanos (Church of the Brethren) in the Dominican Republic graduated 23 people from the four-year pastoral training program. Beth Gunzel began oversight of the community development ministry as Peggy and Jeff Boshart completed their service. Workcamps and exchanges with congregations and districts continue to be an important aspect of the Dominican mission effort.
- General secretary Stan Noffsinger journeyed to Nigeria, and enjoyed opportunities for preaching and celebration.
- Global Mission Partnerships staff explored the possibility of a

*Volunteer Nancy Steedle visits with Nigerian women at the Women's Development Center of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN – the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria). The center offers courses in sewing, knitting, literacy, and typing.*

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

*1 John 1:7a (RSV)*



Miami Haitian pastor Ludovic St. Fleur, left, and Roy Fahnestock of St. Thomas, Pa., visit at a church planting event.

church plant in Haiti. The project had been underway since 2003, and upon hearing the commitment from Haitians, both those in the United States and in the Dominican Republic, the General Board approved and blessed the new mission effort. In a new model of mission, the Haitians themselves will lead this venture. This is also the first time that Brethren in two countries have joined to do mission in a third nation.

- In Brazil, the development of a theological education program was a source of faith formation and energy for many people. There also were challenges during the year, however. After a period of struggle and decline, the congregation at Jundiá was closed, and more emphasis was given to the emerging congregation about 20 kilometers away at Campo Limpo.
- The Brethren Service Center

CORE VALUE

## Hospitality

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

welcomed 153 tours groups totaling 2,180 people from churches, volunteer work groups, ecumenical organizations, schools and colleges, mission groups and community leaders. Service learning opportunities were provided for middle school, high school, and college students.

- The New Windsor Conference Center experienced a 12-percent increase in meals served and a 17-percent increase in overnight guests, which translates to 47,518 meals served and 10,991 guest nights provided.
- Mission Alive 2005, a national missions conference, was



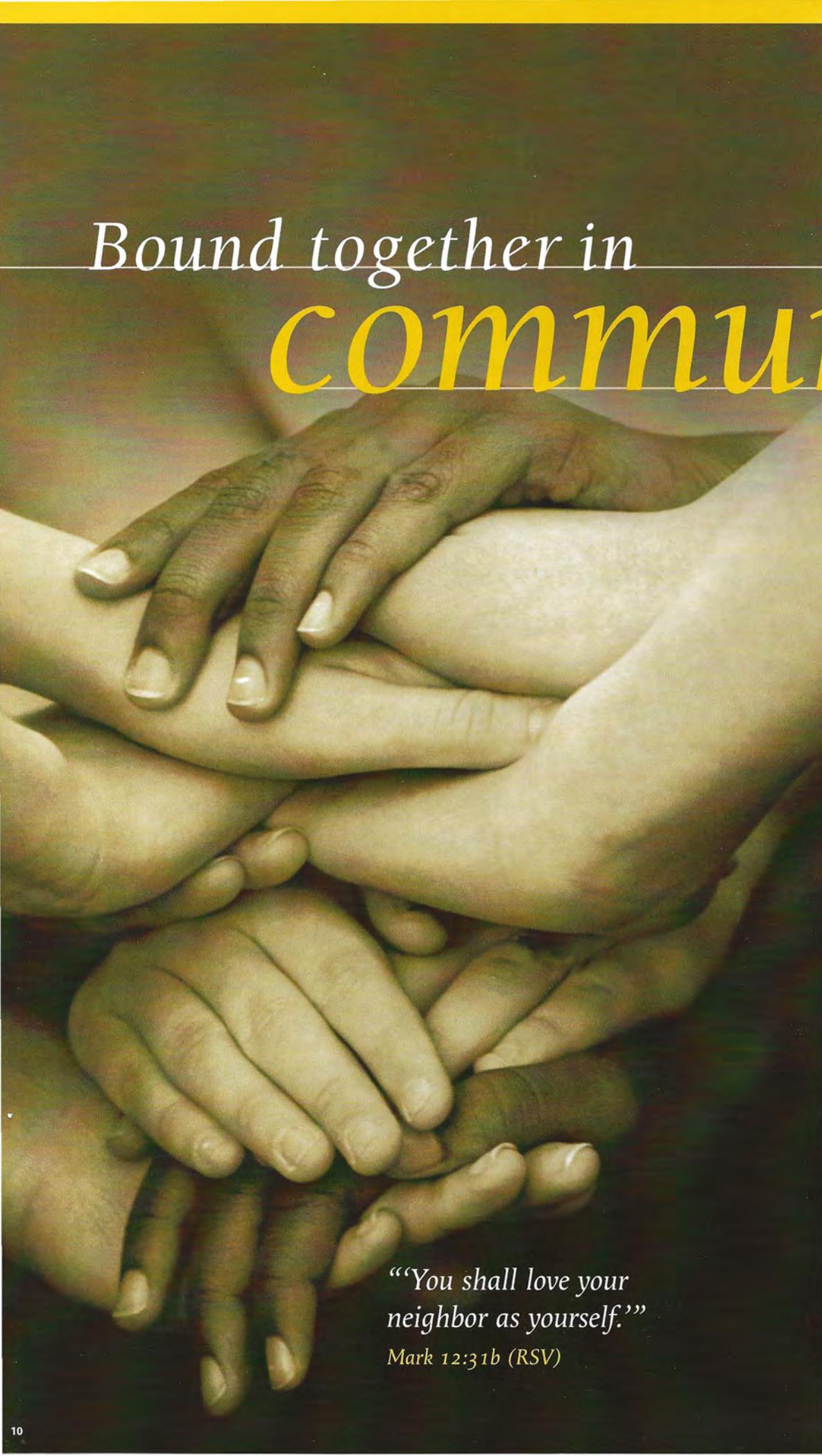
Brazil national co-director Suely Inhauser teaches a class of Sunday school children in Brazil.

held at Goshen, Ind., in April. Conference planners hoped to energize and equip Brethren to faithfully share Christ's love with the world. Keynote speakers included Nathan Showalter, Grace Holland, Art McPhee, and Jim Hardenbrook.



**Did you know?**

On Jan. 4, 2005, 35 tons of supplies were sent to tsunami victims, including 5,000 blankets; 42,875 health kits; and 87 medicine boxes. The total amount of this aid, sent from the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., was valued at over \$843,000.



Bound together in

# community

• The Christmas Eve service, broadcast on national television at the request of CBS and produced by the General Board, was a rare opportunity for the denomination to open the Church of the Brethren community to the whole nation. The aim was not simply to televise one congregation's service, but to create an experience that would engage viewers, offer an inspiring Christmas message of both spoken word and music, and speak with an authentic Brethren voice. Responses of gratitude for the service came from Brethren, former Brethren, and non-Brethren, as well as professional colleagues involved in broadcast communications. Many wrote of the service's simplicity, intimacy,

*Barth Phobee discusses a Bible passage in a small group at National Young Adult Conference.*

*“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”*

*Mark 12:31b (RSV)*

## Community

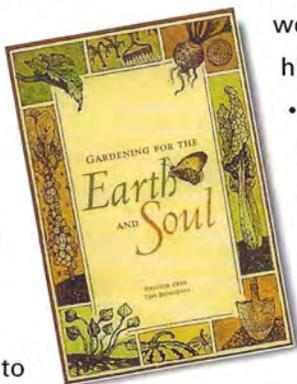
To reflect God's wholeness by cultivating relationships and building up the Body of Christ.

and welcoming nature.

- National Young Adult Conference attracted more than 250 participants to a week of fellowship and worship. The theme, taken from Jeremiah 6:16, "Stand at the Crossroads and Look...", gave participants a variety of ways to discern God's call in their lives. Many young adults testified how important it was for them to gather with other Brethren young

people and renew their commitment to the church. Worship services that included footwashing, anointing, and communion were described as highlights.

- *Gardening for the Earth and Soul*, by Heather Dean and Tom Benevento, and *The Meanest Man in Patrick County*, by Frank Ramirez, were new book titles in 2004 from Brethren Press.
- The communications office distributed over 30 issues of Newsline during 2004, help-



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

Over 200 people took part in the Christmas Eve service, including musicians, readers, hospitality providers, logistical support providers, and many others.

ing Brethren stay connected with happenings in the church. *Tapestry*, providing monthly snippets about General Board ministries, continues to be distributed through the *Source* packet. *Messenger* published 11 issues, drawing on the talents of 85 feature and column writers.

- A team of six writers completed writing the first quar-

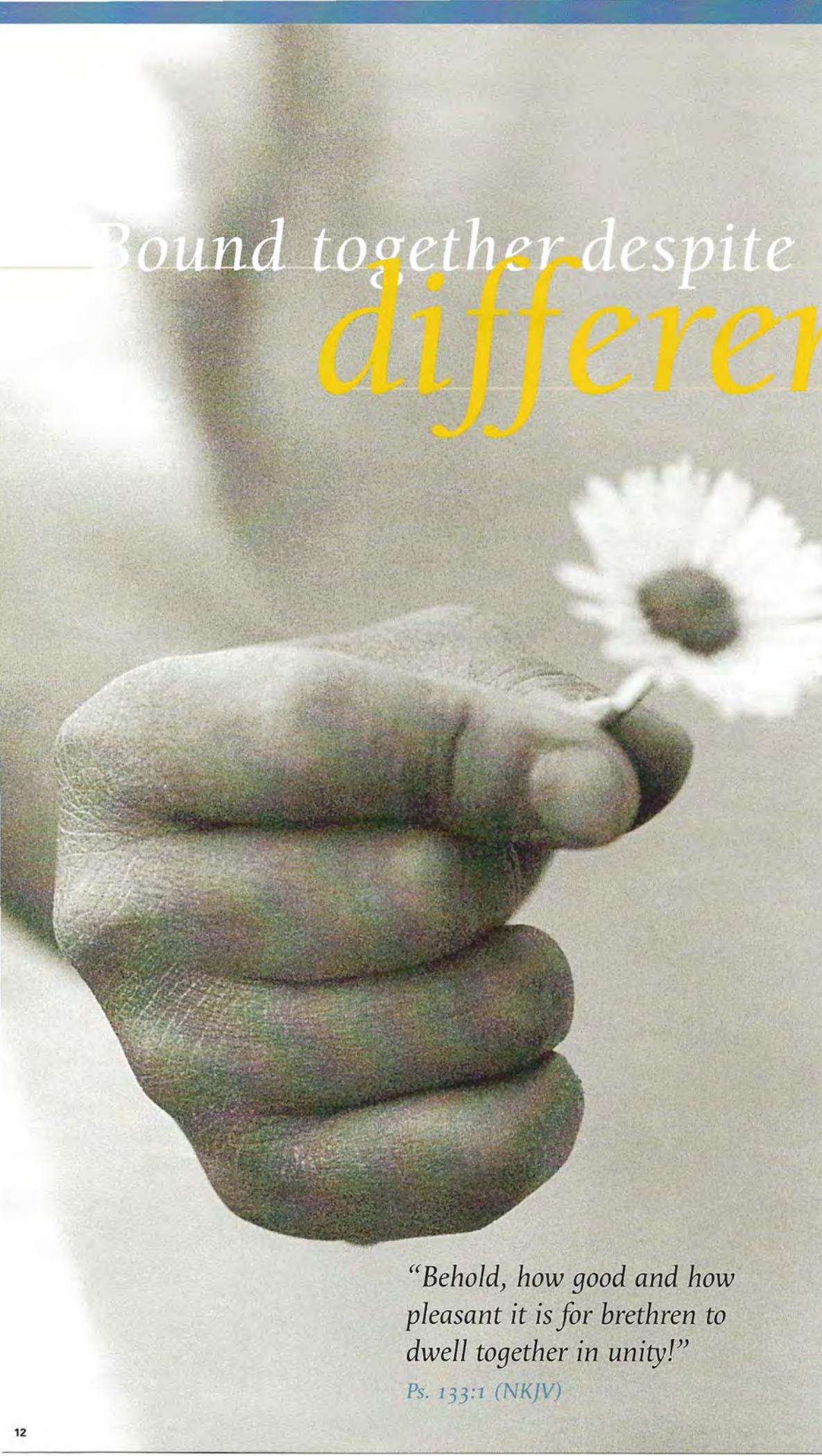
ter of the new curriculum, which will launch in 2006. *Gather 'Round* is being jointly produced by the Church of the Brethren, Mennonite Church USA, and Mennonite Church Canada. Because all ages will focus on the same Bible story each Sunday, parents will be able to engage in their own study, strengthening the connection between family and congregation.



Chris Detrick

### Did you know?

The denominational website, [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org), saw a 50-percent increase in activity immediately following the airing of the Christmas Eve service. Most frequently visited pages were those telling about the Church of the Brethren.



Bound together despite  
*differences*

- Decades-long General Board partnerships with both the Khartoum-based Sudan Council of Churches and the Nairobi-based New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) continued to enable peace-making opportunities, response to human need, and support of indigenous churches in Sudan. As the long years of civil war in southern Sudan moved toward a peace agreement, violence against the peoples in the western Darfur region intensified and was labeled genocide by the international community.
- Following the action of the Annual Conference in 2003 encouraging relationship with

*The Global Food Crisis Fund supported Heifer International's "guns for cows" program in Albania. Albanians received a pregnant cow for guns surrendered.*

*"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"*

*Ps. 133:1 (NKJV)*



Past moderator Chris Bowman, kneeling, takes part in a love feast footwashing service at the Champawadi church in India.

CORE VALUE

## Peacemaking

To be instruments of reconciliation and justice.

churches to consider their responses individually and collectively in the event of a military draft. In addition to Brethren, Mennonites, and Friends, representatives came from the Bruderhof and the Beachy Amish.

- Tom Benevento, Latin America/Carribbean specialist, headed a 12-person Faith Expedition to Guatemala, partnering Global Mission Partnerships with the Brethren Witness/Washington Office. Faith Expeditions are designed to visit and work with global neighbors to increase understanding, to share faith, and to seek justice and peace.

Carolyn DeCoursey

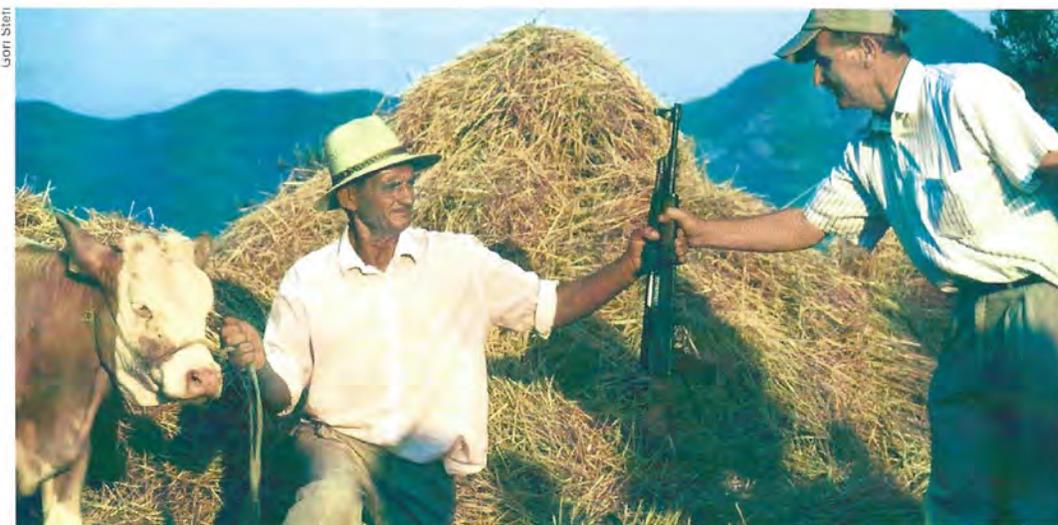


Young people from the York Center congregation stand with their completed creation – 1,000 folded paper cranes. The class was inspired by the story of Sadako, a Japanese girl who developed leukemia after the atomic bomb was dropped.

both churches containing Brethren roots, a visit was made to the India churches by moderator Christopher Bowman; Bob Gross, mediation consultant; and Merv Keeney. The delegation visited with the Church of North India (CNI), at New Delhi, and the India Brethren, in the Ankleshwar, Vyara, and Valsad areas. The Brethren celebrated the ground-breaking for the new high school at Valsad, a long-desired rebuilding on the same land as the early 20th-century structure it replaces. While

relationships between the two India churches remain strained and court cases continue, possible joint projects to enable greater exchange of ideas and to nurture deeper relationships between the India churches and the US church were discussed.

- In March 2005, the Church of the Brethren hosted the Anabaptist Consultation on Alternative Service, attended by representatives from various Mennonite, Brethren and Friends groups. The consultation provided an opportunity for historic peace



### Did you know?

One hundred youth and advisors studied conflict in the Middle East at Christian Citizenship Seminar 2004 by focusing on issues surrounding the "Road Map to Peace." Participants spent time in both Washington D.C. and New York City.

# Bound together finely woven

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

1 Cor. 12:5

The past year was a very positive one for the Core Ministries Fund, the fund that provides for most ministries of the General Board.

Ministry indeed succeeds only through being “bound together,” as the Core Ministries Fund is undergirded largely by gifts from congregations and individuals. In 2004, gifts from congregations to this fund increased to

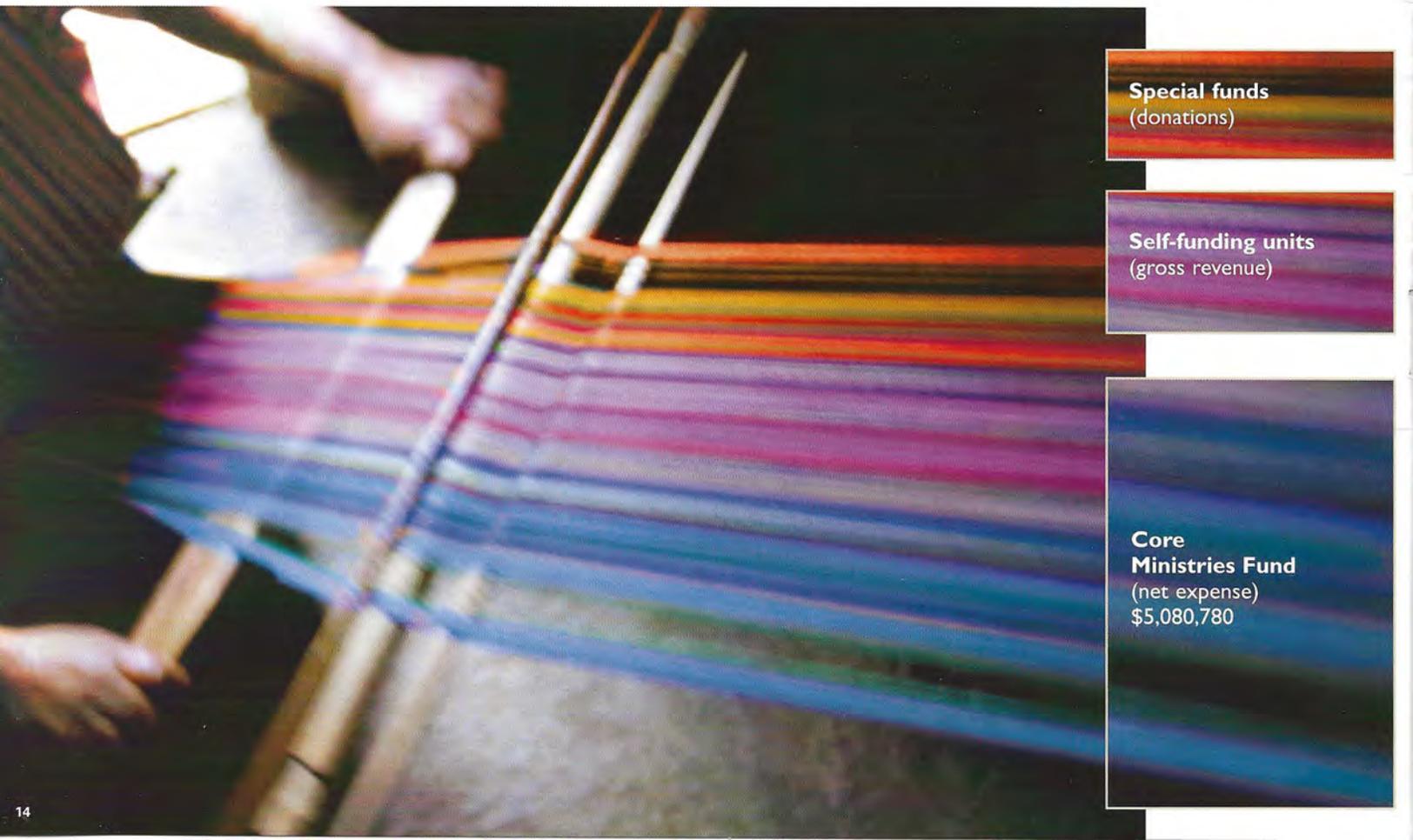
\$3,324,300, and gifts from individuals rose slightly to \$654,200. The General Board appreciates this strong support and trust in its ministries.

Of the four self-funding ministries of the General Board, only one – *Messenger* magazine – ended the year with net income. *Messenger* finished \$2,800 in the black.

Service Ministries finished with a deficit of \$68,900,

while Brethren Press sustained a loss of \$47,200 and the New Windsor (Md.) Conference Center sustained a loss of \$67,500. Lower net assets in some of the self-funding ministries is a long-term concern, and each is developing plans to work at sustaining income.

Three special-purpose funds support ministries through donor gifts.



**Special funds**  
(donations)

**Self-funding units**  
(gross revenue)

**Core Ministries Fund**  
(net expense)  
\$5,080,780

## Stewardship

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

Donations to the Emergency Disaster Fund made possible \$494,200 for Emergency Response efforts. Gifts to the Global Food Crisis Fund and the Emerging Global Missions Fund provided \$425,000 and \$121,400, respectively.

The board is also grateful for those individuals who provide generously through their estates. For the first

time in several years, bequest income met and exceeded the budgeted amount. Investment returns were also remarkably higher than expected. These factors, plus careful management of expenses by staff, resulted in income over expense totaling \$414,600. This enabled the Board to strengthen the financial foundation for ongoing ministries and to expand

selected one-time ministries for 2005, resulting in a final net income of \$192,200.

Because of this positive year-end, the board did not need to use \$215,000 that had been set aside to cover projected shortfalls in 2004.

Despite the positive results for 2004 and the actions to stabilize income, expenses continue to outpace anticipated income. Budgets for 2005

were reduced by \$248,210.

While the fabric of the General Board's finances has been stretched, treasurer Judy Keyser notes that the agency remains solid financially, and has no external debt.

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

**Emergency Disaster Fund:** \$838,040

**Global Food Crisis Fund:** \$290,820

**Emerging Global Mission:** \$42,790

**Brethren Press Publishing:** \$862,300

**New Windsor Conf. Center:** \$778,860

**Service Ministries:** \$711,160

**Messenger:** \$252,690



**Congregational Life Ministries.** Provides training and resources in church development, evangelism, stewardship, spiritual formation, and youth and young adult ministries. Nurtures pastoral leadership through ministry training with Bethany Seminary and Brethren Academy. Works with district staff and pastors. **\$1,103,980**

**Global Mission Partnerships.** Guides international church planting, development, leadership training, and theological education. Enlists Brethren in study and action on peace, justice, and environmental concerns. Manages Global Food Crisis Fund and Brethren Witness/Washington Office. Orients and places volunteers in projects focusing on peace, justice, human need, and the environment. **\$1,185,240**

**Brethren Press Communications.** Fosters identity, unity, and vision. Publishes *Messenger* (which has separate budget), *Tapestry*, *Source*, *Newsline*, and website. Interprets program, conducts news service. **\$276,670**

**Treasurer/Centralized Resources.** Handles finances of General Board and Annual Conference. Manages and maintains technology, archives, and Elgin facilities. Covers costs of telephone, technology, postage, support services for all program areas. Offers financial resource counseling on stewardship and estate planning. **\$1,854,320**

**Brethren Service Center.** Hosts local, national, and global service ministries; operates conference center; provides public information; maintains buildings and grounds. Costs are covered largely by self-funding programs of the center. General Ministries Fund portion: **\$13,960**

**General Secretary.** Administers work of the General Board and serves as spiritual guidepost for staff and General Board ministries. Oversees human resources. Heads ecumenical representation. **\$646,610**

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



## *Vision*

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

## *Mission*

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

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

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



**Church of the Brethren General Board**

1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, Illinois 60120 • [www.brethren.org/genbd/](http://www.brethren.org/genbd/) • 800-323-8039

## BRETHREN IN ILLINOIS

Brethren have been in Illinois for nearly 200 years. The Illinois/Wisconsin District today includes 44 congregations, fellowships, and projects (all but one of those in Illinois) with just under 4,000 members. The last time Annual Conference took place in the district was in 1999 in Milwaukee; the last Conference held in Illinois was in 1984, at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

*The Brethren Encyclopedia*, in an article by Dennis D. Martin, includes the following history of Brethren in the Land of Lincoln:

"Brethren first entered Illinois Territory as part of the general westward migration from Kentucky and Tennessee. In 1808-1809 George Wolfe II and his brother Jacob entered what later became Union County at the extreme southern tip of Illinois. The first Brethren congregation was organized there in the

wake of the New Madrid earthquakes, 1811-1812, before Illinois became a state in 1818.

George Wolfe later moved to Adams County in west-central Illinois, where the Liberty (Mill Creek) congregation was organized in 1831. Wolfe traveled widely and helped organize congregations in neighboring areas of Illinois and Iowa and in Sangamon, Morgan, and Macoupin counties in southern Illinois, where the Sugar Creek (later Pleasant Hill, Virden, Girard) congregation was organized in June 1830. . . .

A second wave of Brethren immigration began in the late 1830s and 1840s. Brethren from eastern states settled in Fulton County in west-central Illinois (Coal Creek, or Canton, congregation, organized 1845) and especially in the area northwest of the Rock River in Ogle (1836), Carroll (1839), Stephenson, and Jo Daviess counties of northern Illinois. The first congregation in northern Illinois was organized at Arnold's Grove in 1842 under the leadership of Henry Strickler. . . . Brethren membership in Illinois in 1880 was about 4,400.

During the late 19th century the Northern Illinois district became prominent in the denomination because of a concentration of Brethren publishing ventures located successively at Lanark, Mount Morris, and Elgin; because of the district's early efforts at foreign missions (Danish mission); and because of the impact of Mount Morris College and Bethany Bible School (later Bethany Theological Seminary). The general offices for what became the Church of the Brethren developed at Elgin after 1899. In 1980 a single Illinois and Wisconsin District included 42 Illinois congregations numbering 5,904 members. The district supported two camps, Camp Emmaus and Camp Emmanuel.

Although Brethren presence has not been as strong numerically in Illinois as in a number of other states, the state's central location and the vitality of its centers of Brethren activity have left a lasting mark on Brethren history." 

For more information on *The Brethren Encyclopedia*, visit [www.brethrenencyclopedia.org](http://www.brethrenencyclopedia.org). The first three volumes are available for purchase through Brethren Press; call 800-441-3712.



### BRETHREN IN THE LAND OF LINCOLN

It has been alleged by some that Abraham Lincoln was baptized secretly by a Dunker elder in the Sangamon River near Springfield. Facts to back this up have proven difficult to find, however.





The Battle of Jericho, (The Picture Bible for Children, 1900, the Society for Promoting Christianity)

# Joshua:

## *Book of conquest in Canaan*

**T**he book of Joshua bears the name of the one whom God has chosen to lead Israel into the promised land of Canaan. Joshua begins where Deuteronomy ends, with Israel still camped on the east side of the Jordan River. This culminated a dark, 40-year period of wilderness wanderings marked by sin and unbelief, and included, at the end, the death of and burial of Moses.

Joshua was well qualified to succeed Moses and lead the children of Israel into the promised land. When Moses

laid his hands on Joshua, it was said that Joshua was a man “in whom is the spirit” (Num. 27:18). As a youth, he lived through the realities of slavery in Egypt, but he also witnessed the supernatural deliverance and escape when the waters of the sea parted.

It was he alone who accompanied Moses up Mount Sinai to receive the holy tablets (Exodus 24:13-14). He and Caleb were the only two, of the 12 spies, who came back with a positive report to urge Israel to take the land (Num. 14:26-34); the other 10 had a

defeatist attitude. Although not specifically stated, it likely was Joshua who wrote most of the book, with a later editor adding the details concerning Joshua’s death (Joshua 24:26-33).

### Outline

This book rather simply can be divided into three parts:

1. Joshua leads Israel across the Jordan and into Canaan (ch. 1-5).
2. God empowers Israel to conquer the land (ch. 6-12).
3. The land is divided to the various tribes and concludes with the farewell and death of Joshua (ch. 13-24).

Two important verses book-end Joshua.

First, in Joshua 1:8: “This book of the Law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful.”

And in Joshua 24:15: “Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the river or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are liv-

### Chapter highlights

**Ch. 1:** The leadership of Israel is transferred from Moses to Joshua, and the command is given to proceed across the Jordan and be courageous in conquering the land.

**Ch. 2:** Two spies are protected by Rahab the harlot.

**Ch. 3-4:** The miracle of crossing the Jordan is recorded and a stone memorial is erected.

**Ch. 5:** The new generation of Israelites is circumcised, and Joshua has a “holy ground” experience.

**Ch. 6:** Jericho is conquered as Israel marches around the city a total of 13 times. Warnings are given about taking plunder.

**Ch. 7-8:** The initial defeat at Ai; Achan’s confession and Israel’s ultimate victory.

**Ch. 9-10:** The deception

by the Gibeonites, and the sun stands still.

**Ch. 11-12:** The final part of the conquest and the defeat of the 31 kings.

**Ch. 13-19:** New boundaries are established in Canaan for the Israelite tribes.

**Ch. 20-22:** Cities of refuge (for accidental slayers) are determined.

**Ch. 23-24:** Joshua’s farewell and death recorded.



**How do you reconcile God's desire for peace with a book in the Bible about military conquest? It is not uncommon for those with an understanding of New Testament peace principles to be deeply troubled with the role that warfare plays in some Old Testament accounts of God's dealing with his people, such as in the book of Joshua.**

by James F. Myer

ing; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

**Digging for answers**

How do you reconcile God's desire for peace with a book in the Bible about military conquest?

It is not uncommon for those with an understanding of New Testament peace principles to be deeply troubled with the role that warfare plays in some Old Testament accounts of God's dealing with his people, such as in the book of Joshua.

We can be helped by knowing that in Matthew 5 Jesus said six times, "It has been said . . . but I say to you." This was clearly Christ's way of recognizing that there were pre-Christian concepts

that he was expanding in the new dispensation. We should never bypass Christ or his teachings to embrace an Old Testament concept of warfare as a proper ethical practice for today.

While God teaches us to be nonresistant in the era of grace (Matt. 5:38-47), it needs to be understood that God is not nonresistant—God is sovereign. And whatever God does is always right.

It is God who owns the whole world, and it is God who in Joshua wanted to reclaim a portion of the earth from the powers of this world that had claimed it for themselves through false claims and adherence to false gods. The land of Canaan had been promised to God's people (Gen. 12:4-7). It is good to know that the

God of the second Joshua (Jesus—his name is the Greek/Latin translation of the Hebrew for "Joshua") is the God of the first Joshua also. Joshua is the way it was; Jesus is the way it is now.

In our understanding of the whole Bible, we are to move up through the "adolescence" of warfare in the Old Testament to the "adulthood" of peacemaking in the New Testament. Jesus Christ is the standard for us today. Jesus is our Joshua! **W**

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

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 July/August: Judges, by Graydon Snyder.

**JOSHUA: A CLOSER LOOK**

**When written:** The events described occurred approximately 1400-1300 BC According to bible.org, "There is much evidence to support that the book of Joshua was written by an author (authors) who lived during or near to the time when the events occurred" due to its "eyewitness quality."

**Famous stories:** Crossing the Jordan River; Rahab sheltering the spies and helping them escape; marching around the walls of Jericho; the sun stands still.

**Well-known verses:** "This book of the Law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night. . . ." (Joshua 1:8); ". . . as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15).

**Other notes:** Following the Torah (Law), Joshua begins the section of the Old Testament known as the historical books or "the writings." . . . Rahab is later cited in Hebrews as an example of living by faith for her efforts in helping the Israelite spies.

# Mission Alive: 'Wow! God is here!'

by Jerry Crouse

At 4:30 a.m. on Friday, April 1, I nosed the car down our dark driveway. Arriving at the highway, I had mixed feelings as I turned east into the 1 1/2-hour trip toward Goshen, Ind., and the Mission Alive 2005 conference.

I felt excitement for the prospect of visiting with missionary friends. I also felt pessimistic that this might be a weekend with a lot of talk, ultimately producing little spiritual renewal for the church in crisis.

appropriate to a people facing spiritual extinction.

But whatever our pre-conference expectations were, we Mission Alive participants received God's blessings in abundance! Through the two days of worship, fellowship, teaching, and dialogue among sisters and brothers from 21 districts and Brazil, God led me to leave my mixed emotions on the altar and claim afresh the hope of Jesus Christ.

To be with Jesus brought me hope. Not just two or three but several hundred of us had gathered in Jesus' name. His Spirit was present in our midst as he promised it would be.

To hear again the truth of God's Word set me free from my pessimism. As brother Art McPhee reminded us, "Truth for us is a person, not a proposition. Our truth is the living Lord! He has called us to be sent. Just as God sent Jesus, now Jesus sends the church on an errand to the world."

God's Spirit reminded us, through the words of Annual Conference moderator Jim Hardenbrook, that the errand Jesus sends us on "is to truly see people around us, to go to them, and to love them." What greater gift of my love can I offer to God's beloved children around me than to introduce them to the One who gives me life and hope?

We're midway through Illinois now with five hours to go until I pull into the darkened lane I left 2 1/2 days ago. As we got into the car to begin this journey home, my feelings were expressed in the words spoken by one of our sisters in Christ. Beth Protiva, age 19, from the Peace Valley, Mo., congregation said, "I wasn't sure what to expect. Wow! God is here! This is exciting!"

Jerry Crouse is a member of the pastoral team at New Beginnings Church of the Brethren, Warrensburg, Mo., and former General Board mission coordinator in the Dominican Republic.



Janis Pyle

Brethren Volunteer Service worker Amy Adkins visits with general secretary Stan Noffsinger at Mission Alive.

Pre-conference publicity indicated leadership exclusively of northern European cultural heritage. Glaringly absent from the keynote speaker lineup were Nigerian church leaders, participants in some of God's most dramatic and public mission miracles in recent Brethren history. The promised ice cream socials threatened just another celebration of the status quo instead of the repentance and fasting more

Former mission worker Ralph Royer served in Africa for more than three decades.



Janis Pyle

## A new focus on mission?

The story of Mission Alive 2005 began with a grassroots call.

"Threads of interest in a mission gathering originated from a number of sources, including mission-minded congregations and districts," said Merv Keeney, executive director of Global Mission Partnerships for the General Board.

"These voices were heard most clearly in mission conversations

hosted over the last few years by the Mission and Ministries Planning Council (MMPC)."

Encouragement to go forward with a national mission conference came from the September 2003 meeting of MMPC (which includes Annual Conference officers as well as district and General Board representatives). Keeney was asked to form a steering committee and to carry a coordinating role.

Mission Alive 2005 was the result of a year and a half of work. In Goshen, Ind., April 1-3, more than 320 people heard four keynote speakers and were offered a choice of 22 workshops,

with topics ranging from "Mission as Accompaniment" to "Missionary or Mercenary?"

"The General Board was the lead sponsor, but the committee emphasized widespread participation in service or funding from individuals, congregations, and denominational groupings," Keeney said.

Evaluations encouraged a regular schedule of such mission conferences, and general secretary Stan Noffsinger said the success of the conference indicated that it responded to a need. "Mission Alive 2005 is only the beginning of rekindled emphasis on mission in the Church of the Brethren," he said.—Janis Pyle



*"Church of the Brethren? But you're a sister," remarked Pope John Paul II when he met Church of the Brethren ecumenical officer Melanie May at the Vatican in April 1989, during a visit of representatives of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC). May chaired the NCC's Commission on Faith and Order at the time. The event was the second-ever visit of an NCC delegation to the Vatican, and illustrated Pope John Paul II's interest in ecumenical relationships. This photo originally appeared in the July 1989 issue of MESSENGER.*

## Brethren leaders mourn death of Pope John Paul II

Church of the Brethren leaders joined Christians and others worldwide in mourning the death of Pope John Paul II and expressing condolence to the Roman Catholic community.

"We mourn the loss of this servant of Christ," said a letter to Roman Catholic leaders in the US and at the Vatican, signed by Annual Conference moderator Jim Hardenbrook and the general secretary of the General Board, Stan Noffsinger. "His light and life will be missed."

Quoting from 1 Peter 1:3, the letter expressed appreciation for the many ministries of Pope John Paul II and celebrated the contributions he made to the ecumenical movement. The Brethren leaders prayed that others will be inspired by his work for peace and justice.

## New resources created in effort to save Brethren Medical Plan

Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT) is making new resources available as part of its effort to save the Brethren Medical Plan. The plan is for Church of the Brethren pastors and church employees, district employees, and employees of Annual Conference agencies, affiliated agencies and institutions, and their families. A video addressing questions about the plan, a PowerPoint presentation on the plan's history, information about Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), and information about all Brethren Insurance Plans are being made available free of charge.

The video explains the benefits of guaranteed group insurance coverage and ramifications for pastors and church employees if a district does not meet the new 75 percent participation goal to continue in the plan.

The Brethren Medical Plan is in a "death spiral," a downward, cyclical phenomenon caused by decreased membership and the erosion of a good spread of risk, increased health care costs, and increased premiums. BBT has reinstated a requirement of 75-percent participation among eligible congregations in each district for districts to continue in the plan. If a district does not have commitments from its congregations by Aug. 31, 2006, to meet that goal, all church employees in the district will become ineligible for the plan on Jan. 1, 2007. BBT states that the 75-percent requirement was part of the Brethren Medical Plan when it began in the 1950s, but "fell by the wayside" in the early 1980s.

BBT has begun training advocates to work in each district to promote the plan with congregations and church leaders. The advocates will use the video to help rebuild participation. As of mid-March, 12 of the denomination's 23 districts had named advocates.

In addition, a Brethren Medical Plan Advisory Panel has been formed to create a high-deductible medical plan design using HSAs. The panel includes one person each from the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee (an Annual Conference committee), the Council of District Executives, the Ministers' Association, Annual Conference agencies, and BBT staff. The panel held its first meeting March 31. HSAs, which must be used in conjunction with a high-deductible plan, are "a way to set aside money for medical, dental, and vision care expenses not paid by an insurance plan or a flexible spending account," BBT said. The Brethren Medical Plan will begin implementing HSAs Jan. 1, 2006.

The Brethren Medical Plan will be a major topic of discussion at Annual Conference in Peoria, Ill., in July. To order the video in DVD or VHS format, or to receive any other resource mentioned, call 800-746-1505 ext. 374 or e-mail [lpatt\\_bbt@brethren.org](mailto:lpatt_bbt@brethren.org).



Mary Dulabaum

Members of the Association of Brethren Caregivers board who attended the agency's spring meetings are: (front) Diane Harden, Allegra Hess, John Wenger, chair Sue Moore, Vernne Greiner, and Gayle Hunter Sheller; (back) vice chair Wally Landes, Eddie Edmonds, Kathy Ramsey Melhorn, John Katonah, David Fouts, Chris Widman, and Dan McRoberts. Board members not shown are Heather Neff and Brian Black. The board posed before the banner that hung during the last National Older Adult Conference.

### ABC board focuses on wellness, plans 'Lighten Up, Brethren!'

The Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC) board learned of a newly revamped Wellness Ministry during meetings March 18-19 in Elgin, Ill. The Wellness Ministry's seven-member committee met a day prior to the board to develop a new mission statement and activities for the coming year.

The ministry hopes to challenge Brethren to adopt healthy living behaviors by focusing on "metabolic syndrome"—obesity, hypertension, glucose intolerance, and high cholesterol. These medical conditions, while affected by genetics, can be reduced by lifestyle

changes. To raise awareness about the consequences of the syndrome, ABC will provide information under a campaign titled "Lighten Up, Brethren!"

Other goals for the ministry include engaging the church in the current public debate about health-care delivery, access, finance reform, and stewardship of health-care resources. The ministry also will promote simple living, "which is healthy and spiritually centered living," said Kathy Reid, ABC's executive director and staff liaison for the ministry.

Vernne Greiner, ABC board and Wellness Ministry member, committed to losing 10 pounds before the board's next meeting in September and challenged the board to embrace the campaign by

### Association of Brethren Caregivers posts variety of end-of-life resources

The Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC) posted several end-of-life resources on its website this spring, prompted by the widespread media coverage of the deaths of Terri Schiavo and Pope John Paul II. The two deaths spurred many in the church to think about end-of-life issues, ABC said.

ABC affirmed the Annual Conference statement that "spiritual growth can come from facing suffering and death honestly." The agency hopes that the resources it provides will help individuals consider their own end of life, and that of their loved ones, from a biblical and Brethren understanding.

"Within a week's time, the nation and

members of the Church of the Brethren have witnessed two very different experiences of death," ABC said. Pope John Paul II's death came after a long life of service as leader of the Roman Catholic Church and years of deteriorating health. Schiavo, a Florida woman who had been declared in a "vegetative state," died after her feeding tube was removed by court order, and after years of legal battles between her husband and parents regarding her condition and care. "Schiavo's and Pope John Paul II's deaths have spurred families and friends to begin talking with one another about their wishes and plans at their end of life," ABC said.

Resources offered at [www.brethren.org/abc/](http://www.brethren.org/abc/) include "Facing the Gray Areas in Dying" by Guy Wampler; articles from ABC's magazine *Caregiving*;

an end-of-life preparations worksheet; a link to a hospice website providing help in creating advance directives; worship resources and related scriptures; a resource list for adults and children; and a link to the 1996 Annual Conference End-of-Life Decision-Making Statement, which affirms, "We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord" (Romans 14:7-8).

Other end-of-life resources produced by ABC and sold through Brethren Press are five study guides written by Grady Snyder (to order, call 800-441-3712). Articles about end-of-life issues also appeared in the Winter 2000 issue of *Caregiving*, which was devoted to the topic (order from Mary Dulabaum at 800-323-8039 ext. 304).

doing the same. Seven other board members accepted the challenge.

In other business, the board approved a new structure for peace church work in health and senior care as an outgrowth of Peace Church Management, a nonprofit corporation created by ABC, Friends Services for the Aging, and Mennonite Health Services Alliance.

### **Disaster fund gives \$180,000 to aid tsunami relief efforts**

Two grants from the General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) totaling \$180,000 continue Brethren support of relief efforts in southern Asia following the Dec. 26 tsunami. Including these grants, the EDF has given \$360,000 toward the tsunami work as of mid-April.

A grant of \$150,000 supports Church World Service work in southern Asia. The money will provide emergency food, medical support, drinking water, and shelter, along with mental health interventions and income-generating programs.

Another \$30,000 grant goes to the General Board's Service Ministries. As a result of the tsunami, the program based at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., has received 330,000 pounds of Gift of the Heart kits and more than 327,000 pounds of aid. The funds will help cover additional staff and volunteer expenses needed for this large response.

Giving to the EDF in 2005 has now topped \$1 million, totaling \$1,112,878 as of April 13.

### **Susquehanna Valley center's board approves incorporation**

The governing board of the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center—formerly the Susquehanna Valley Satellite—approved articles of incorporation at its April 6 meeting. The action completed a nine-month process of changing the name and structure of the center, affiliated with Bethany Theological Seminary. The center now meets Department of Education requirements for Pennsylvania, the state in which it is located, Bethany director of public relations Marcia L. Shetler reported.

The process brings the center's structure in line with its governance and strengthens the ties with the seminary, said Ed Poling, a member of Bethany's board of trustees and representative to the center's board. To meet the requirements of the Pennsylvania Department of Higher Education, the seminary is required to approve and accredit all graduate-level courses offered by the center. Certificate-level courses must be endorsed by the Brethren Academy for

Ministerial Leadership, a joint program of the seminary and the General Board. Bethany president Eugene Roop represented the center to the Department of Education in the approval process.

Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center is located on the campus of Elizabethtown (Pa.) College. Along with the seminary, five Church of the Brethren districts in the Northeast are partners in its operation. Warren Eshbach serves as the center's dean, Donna Rhodes as dean of Certificate and Continuing Education Programs, and Mary Schiavoni as program coordinator and registrar. Bob Neff is chair of the center's governing board.

### **Office encourages youth to start conscientious objector files**

Resources related to conscientious objection are available from the General Board's Brethren Witness/Washington Office, including the maintenance of personal conscientious objector files. The office maintains files for youth and young adult men and women who choose to document their conscientious objection to war and violence.

Such personal files are the only means for conscientious objectors to register their beliefs, as the Selective Service System does not keep records of conscientious objectors and does not acknowledge statements of conscientious objection when young men register at age 18. In the event of a military draft, having such a file in place from an early age may help a young man or woman prove a long-standing faith basis for his or her convictions.

Forms and instructions for the files are included in a Conscientious Objector Packet available from the office. Call 800-785-3246 or download the packet from the Conscientious Objection link at [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org) (keyword: Brethren Witness/Washington Office). Congregations and youth groups are encouraged to use the packet.

Brethren may request office staff to lead congregational or district conscientious objection workshops as well. Office director Phil Jones also is a board member of the Center on Conscience and War (CCW—formerly NISBCO), and can assist in making available materials, resources, and staff leadership from that organization.

Other upcoming events on conscientious objection include an insight session and the "Un-Luncheon" at this year's Annual Conference. The Un-Luncheon will feature CCW program director Bill Galvin.

The Brethren Witness/Washington Office also is organizing a pool of district support people and legal counselors to be available to conscientious objectors in the event of a draft. To participate in this program, call the office at 800-785-3246 or visit [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org).

## **UPCOMINGEVENTS**

**June 3-4 Puerto Rico annual assembly**, Vega Baja, P.R.

**June 5 Brethren Press summer curriculum** quarter begins

**June 12 Summer youth workcamps** begin

**June 28-July 1 Bethany Theological Seminary heritage bus tour**

**June 30-July 2 Council of District Executives summer meeting**, Peoria, Ill.

**July 2 Church of the Brethren Credit Union annual members meeting**, Peoria, Ill.

**July 2 General Board meeting**, Peoria, Ill.

**July 2-6 Annual Conference**, Peoria, Ill.

**July 5 Brethren Benefit Trust board meeting**, Peoria, Ill.

**July 8-12 Heartland Song and Story Fest**, North Manchester, Ind.

**July 22-24 Missouri/Arkansas District conference**, Bolivar, Mo.

**July 24-Aug. 12 Brethren Volunteer Service Unit 265**, New Windsor, Md.

**July 29-30 Southern Plains District conference**, Cushing, Okla.

**July 29-31 Northern Ohio District conference**, Ashland, Ohio

**July 29-31 Southeastern District conference**, Mars Hill, N.C.

# DECADE TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE

Nearing its midpoint, the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) is being embraced around the globe.

The Decade, envisioned to harness the insights and potential of churches for reconciliation and peace, was launched in 2001 by the World Council of Churches (WCC), of which the Church of the Brethren is a member. It has spotlighted a different part of the world each year. In 2004 the focus was the United States. This year, it is Asia.

Wherever the focus goes, those involved say they are finding enthusiasm and momentum for the effort. "The more people and churches find out about it, the more excited they get," says Bernice Powell Jackson, WCC president from the North American region and a DOV spokesperson during last year's US

emphasis. "When people realize they're part of a whole world of Christians working and praying for this, they become very empowered," she says.

The Decade's popularity may be due in part to the fact that it is not a WCC program as such, but rather a central conduit through which to join the many peacemaking activities churches already have been pursuing and new ones that have begun.

Fernando Enns, WCC Central Committee member and Mennonite theologian from Germany, says this

approach is consistent with the original vision for the DOV. Enns brought the motion that began the Decade during the final stages of the WCC Eighth Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1998. "We dreamed of starting a movement of churches in fellowship to overcome violence," he says.

In 2004, the DOV gave special attention to the US with the theme "The Power and Promise of Peace." Now the spotlight shifts to Asia, where Ahn Jae Woong, general secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), says the DOV will be very useful to the people of his region and "an opportunity to revitalize Asian wisdom on living together." Peacemaking resources have been distributed, and the theme of the March 31-April 6 CCA 12th General Assembly in Thailand emphasized the DOV: "Building Communities of Peace for All."

The DOV focus on Asia was launched with international guests acting as "living letters," speaking of their work and experiences in overcoming violence. There will be two Asia-wide DOV events during the year, one in July bringing together scholars under the focus theme, and a larger consultation later in the year.



Bernice Powell Jackson, left, World Council of Churches (WCC) president from the North American region, and Hans Ulrich Gerber, Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) coordinator for the WCC, share updates and reflections on the DOV during a press conference in Geneva, Switzerland, in February.

Plans for further steps are taking shape. Enns says a major DOV midterm conference for Germany is in the works, while the Historic Peace Churches—who already have held two gatherings in Switzerland and Kenya—are planning a third event, perhaps in Asia. DOV-related activities also were planned for the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Athens in May, and a midterm celebration will occur at the WCC Ninth Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in February 2006.

The greatest task now for the Decade is bringing other churches into the movement. "Among the WCC member churches, the Decade is very much embraced," says Angelique Walker-Smith of the National Baptist Convention USA Inc., one of the historic black churches. "They may already have been involved in peacemaking, but this has given them new energy to mobilize," and to work together instead of separately. "But there are so many others, and this is where the challenge comes in," she adds. "How do we bridge that for them to be at the table?"—Walt Wiltschek

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

- \$25,000 to Action by Churches Together International (ACT) for repatriation, relief, and rehabilitation for displaced families returning to southern Sudan
- \$10,000 to ACT for relief work in China following snowstorms and accompanying avalanches, landslides, and mudslides
- \$10,000 to Compañeros en Ministerio to help rebuild more than 150 homes destroyed by mudslides in Tijuana, Mexico
- \$7,500 to No More Deaths, an Arizona-based multifaith coalition supplying food, water, and medical assistance to migrants crossing the Arizona desert. The grant has the support of Church of the Brethren congregations in Arizona.

## On Earth Peace is recruiting for Peace Retreat Leadership Team

On Earth Peace has formed a volunteer Peace Retreat Leadership Team to help increase the number of retreats and workshops it is able to offer, reported Kim Stuckey Hissong, program coordinator of Peacemaker Formation. The new team will expand and energize the existing retreat program. Team members will be available to provide leadership for youth retreats, workshops, and worship experiences for congregations, districts, camps, denominational gatherings, and other groups.

Plans call for slowly expanding the number of team members, making sure that program staff can adequately support the network, Hissong said. Retreats provided by the team will be based on an interactive, experiential model that challenges youth to consider Christian peacemaking in the context of faith and the world. Retreat sessions will draw on the Brethren heritage of peacemaking and bring scripture alive to examine how Christ calls believers to live today.

The team gathered for an initial planning meeting at the New Windsor (Md.) Conference Center in late February. Current team members are Carrie Eikler of Richmond, Ind.; Debbie Eisenbise of



Carrie Eikler and Debbie Eisenbise, members of On Earth Peace's new Peace Retreat Leadership Team, take part in a training experience. The team will help On Earth Peace provide leadership for youth retreats, workshops, and worship experiences for congregations, districts, camps, denominational gatherings, and other groups.

Kalamazoo, Mich.; Dena Lee of Kent, Ohio; and Rick Polhamus of Fletcher, Ohio. To schedule a retreat, or if you are interested in serving on the Peace Retreat Leadership Team, call Kim Stuckey Hissong at 410-635-8706 or e-mail [kstuckey\\_oepa@brethren.org](mailto:kstuckey_oepa@brethren.org).

## Balcony People — Hidden in Plain Sight

*Tom Mullen will tell stories at the Association of Brethren Caregivers Annual Recognition Dinner of how balcony people make a difference in others' lives.*



Balcony people are the individuals in our lives who exert good and gracious influences. We turn to them for counsel, inspiration and living example. They show us ways of doing good, helping others and nurturing faith. Balcony people are all around us, yet hidden in plain sight. Mullen, a retired professor from Earlham School of Religion, Richmond, Ind., will tell stories of how balcony people make a difference in many lives.

At the dinner the agency will honor Phyllis Harvey of Modesto, Calif.; Carl and Doreen Myers of Elgin, Ill.; Micah Stapleton of New Enterprise, Pa.; and the Black Rock Church of the Brethren, Glenville, Pa., with caregiving awards.

*ABC's Recognition Dinner will be held July 2, 5 p.m., at the Hotel Pèrè Marquette, LaSalle Room, during the Peoria (Ill.) Annual Conference. Tickets are \$20 a person and should be purchased prior to conference.*



**Association of  
Brethren Caregivers**

(847) 742-5100 [www.brethren.org/abc/](http://www.brethren.org/abc/)

## Other ABC Meal Events at Annual Conference

### Denominational Deacon Luncheon

*"If We Can Love" — Monday, July 4,  
Noon, Civic Center, Theater Lobby*

Bryan Harness, director of Pastoral Care at Prairie View, Wichita, Kan., will discuss how the church can provide help and hope to families living with mental illness.

### Church and Persons with Disabilities Network Breakfast

*"Marginal or Mainstream? Bringing  
the Disabled to the Center of the  
Church Experience" — Tuesday, July 5,  
7 a.m., Civic Center, Room 202*

Hillcrest Homes Chaplain Myrna Wheeler will talk about what churches can do to meet the needs of older adults in the denomination who face special challenges.

## The Aviator: Dreams and nightmares

**W**hen I was a kid, rumors about the reclusive billionaire Howard Hughes were rampant. It was said he was a man who lived in isolation, afraid of germs, emptying one tissue box after another, while running a vast financial empire by phone. He was supposed to be thin to the point of emaciation, near death, yet somehow immortal as well. He was perhaps the richest man in the world, yet by all accounts he seemed incapable of enjoying that wealth.



FRANK RAMIREZ

Not too long before his death he made a radio "appearance," answering journalists' questions by phone and denying all the rumors. Yet it turned out that just about everything we'd heard was true.

The death of Howard Hughes revealed the full extent of his obsessions with cleanliness and isolation. Hughes seemed to provide a bitter answer to the scriptural question, "For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?" (Mark 8:36). That answer, of course, is nothing.

It was only later that my generation came to hear about the things our parents already knew—that Hughes was more than just a sad eccentric. Earlier in life he had been a pioneer in both the film and aviation industries, blazing new trails in commercial and military aviation.

Now that story is told in *The Aviator*. It is one of those films that suits me exactly. In telling one person's story, the filmmaker also seeks to bring to life an entire era. Bold, colorful, even garish, this film wrenches the figures out of familiar black-and-white photographs and breathes life back into their age. There is a seamless integration of sight and sound so masterful that one scarcely realizes how magical it all is.

And so we follow the life of a man whose inherited wealth allowed him to accomplish everything he desired, a man whose vision was larger than those around him, who could see possibilities in both film and aviation that were untapped and who somehow managed to draw the best out of talented associates. But we also trace how difficult it is for individuals to outrun the paranoia and toxic patterning that can be bequeathed by parents—in this case a partially justified fear of germs and sickness that ends up crippling and finally imprisoning this brilliant man.

Leonardo DiCaprio's portrayal of this tortured soul is

memorable. His sympathetic portrayal of a Howard Hughes who fought his addiction for privacy and isolation haunts me still. Cate Blanchett's performance as Katharine Hepburn is startling and rings true. The scenes involving flight are nothing short of breathtaking. Indeed, I was not able to get the images of this film out of my mind for several days, a sure sign that there is depth to this movie.

Howard Hughes in the end was unable to touch or be touched. Contrast that with Jesus, whose ministry led him to touch those who were untouchable: the diseased, the sin-sick, the lost, the outcasts. In that touch, he brought healing.

One of the centerpieces of our own Brethren heritage invites touch. I am speaking, of course, about the feet-washing incorporated in our communion service. It strikes the world as odd and unhygienic at best, sectarian and even bizarre at worst. But it's part of a faith that calls us into community, as we deal with our diversity and our imperfections through openness and the willingness to touch and be touched.

Whether it's Brethren Volunteer Service, advocating for outcasts, or accompanying Guatemalans through the halls of justice, we have to be there, in the midst of germs, contagions, hate, fear, and despair, touching and being touched, in order to walk like Jesus. We are willing to lose the world and the world's regard so that we might embrace the cross and the crown.

The movie suggests that many of Hughes' difficulties stemmed from his mother's fears and prejudices. By contrast, the old Brethren emphasized family devotions as a key to instilling the correct attitudes toward God, humanity, and our relationship with each other and the world.

Howard Hughes was a man who was rich beyond dreams, yet he became snared in his own illusions as his attempts to love only pushed him farther away from touch and redemption. Jesus was beyond dreams; he was reality itself, and his touch

destroyed all illusions as he demonstrated the depth of God's love for all humanity. What indeed will it profit us to gain the whole world if we lose . . . ?

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

### ABOUT THE MOVIE

**Release:** This biopic, covering a time period from the 1920s to 1940s, came to theaters in December 2004; it was released on DVD and video on May 24.

**Director:** Martin Scorsese

**Rating:** PG-13 **Length:** 2 hours, 48 minutes

**Awards:** The film received 11 Oscar nominations and won five, including "Best Supporting Actress"; it received the Golden Globe "Best Picture" award.



## ONCAMPUS



### **Bridgewater College** (Bridgewater, Va.)

Church of the Brethren members William R. Johnson of Harrisonburg, Va., and Ed and Louise Bowman Callahan of Bridgewater were among six alumni honored April 15-16 during Alumni Weekend. Each received a 2005 Ripples Society Medal; the organization is made up of alumni who graduated from Bridgewater 50 or more years ago.



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

For the first time in its 106-year history, Elizabethtown awarded master's degrees this spring during commencement exercises. Twenty-five students received a master's of science in occupational therapy, a program founded in 1973 by former faculty member Doris Gordon. Gordon received an honorary doctorate during the May 21 ceremonies.



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

Yolanda King, eldest daughter of Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King, received an honorary doctor of humane letters degree and delivered the commencement address, "Living the Dream" May 14 during Juniata's 127th commencement ceremony.



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

The school commemorated the initial phase of renovation for its landmark "Super Tents" building on April 12 with a Renovation Celebration event. It is the first stage of a \$20 million Campus Center project. The Super Tents, completed in 1973, were the first permanent tensioned membrane structure in the world. "There's nothing else quite like the Super Tents. Never has been, and I suspect there never will be," university president Steve Morgan said.



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

Manchester awarded former president Parker G. Marden and his wife, Ann, with its highest honor for philanthropy on April 18. Five students also received the Certificate of Responsible Philanthropy: seniors Patricia Gentry of Swayzee, Ind., and Wendy Matheny of Peoria, Ill.; and juniors Meagan Harlow of Clayton, Ohio; Sarah Reed of Mishawaka, Ind., and Tiffany Maple of Greentown, Ind.



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

Among those recognized at McPherson's annual Employee Recognition Banquet this spring were Karlene Tyler, registrar and associate academic dean, for 30 years of service; and Steven Gustafson, professor of music; David O'Dell, professor of accounting; and Janis Ward, college operator and office assistant, each for 25 years of service.



Walt Wlitschek

*Lindsay Garber of Elgin, Ill., and Sam Wysong of Fort Wayne, Ind., meet up during get-acquainted games at Manchester's Regional Youth Conference.*

## **Regional conferences explore national youth theme**

Eighty-five senior high youth and advisors met on the campus of **Manchester College** (North Manchester, Ind.) April 16-17 for the Midwest's Regional Youth Conference.

On Earth Peace staff member Matt Guynn served as keynote speaker for the weekend, leading three sessions on the national youth theme, "Seeing God." Joseph Helfrich and Brett Clark provided music leadership. Guynn focused on ways one moves from blindness to sight, handing out symbolic blindfolds that youth carried with them during the conference. "What are those forms of blindness you're ready to release so that you can see God more clearly?" Guynn asked the group.

Participants could choose from a variety of workshops Saturday afternoon, followed by time to enjoy campus "Peace Week" activities or other recreation options. Several members of the band Mutual Kumquat gave a concert Saturday night.

- More than 70 youth and advisors gathered on the campus of **McPherson (Kan.) College** March 4-6 to explore the theme "Seeing God." Steve Van Houten and Becky Ullom were the keynote speakers for the weekend, while Seth Hendricks and Michael Good provided musical leadership.

Throughout the weekend, participants were challenged to expand their understanding of God. Youth collected items that reminded them of God and kept the items in an ever-expanding "God Box." On Sunday morning, youth led worship at McPherson Church of the Brethren, offering the perspective that God is greater than the sum total of all our individual and collective images.

## **Peace Travel Team prepares for action**

The Youth Peace Travel Team 2005 is ready to hit the road. Selected for the 2005 team are Nicole Fowler, Roanoke (Va.) First Church of the Brethren; Rachel McFadden, Manchester Church of the Brethren, North Manchester, Ind.; Ben Bear, Nokesville (Va.) Church of the Brethren; and Ben Ritchey Martin, Grossnickle Church of the Brethren, Myersville, Md.

This young adult team begins its work with Ministry Summer Service orientation June 5-9 at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind., then spends the summer traveling to Church of the Brethren camps in the East and Midwest to lead peace education for youth. The team is sponsored annually by Outdoor Ministries Association, On Earth Peace, and the General Board's Brethren Witness/Washington Office, Brethren Volunteer Service, and Youth/Young Adult Ministry.

## Pontius' Puddle



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### Don't condemn differing views

In his April letter "God helps us overcome urges," Tom Zuercher has made a claim that some of us think is wrong in the Kingdom of God's gracious love.

He assumes that if two individuals of the same sex commit their lives to one another in love, this is automatically immoral and that these sinners should be condemned to a life of barren, sexless, childless loneliness. Sure doesn't sound to me like what Jesus taught.

There are those of us who proclaim Jesus as our Savior and read the Bible diligently, who believe the Holy Spirit is addressing the world in a new way which frees our repressed gay sisters and broth-

### 2005 Annual Conference Ecumenical Luncheon Tuesday, July 5

Becky Ullom  
General Board's  
director of Identity  
and Relations



Across  
Denominational Lines:  
Connecting with Youth  
and Young Adults

Becky will share her vision of how ecumenical relations can shape the future of the church. She will also relate her experience as a young adult participant at the National Council of Churches General Assembly.

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- Special entertainment
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ers to live full, satisfying lives in His service. I pray, Brother Zuercher, that you will resist the urge to condemn us for having a faith which differs from yours.

**Edward Huber**  
Philadelphia, Pa.

### Issue has caused division

I was very happy to read in the Around the Denomination section that you reported about the query on homosexuality in the Illinois/Wisconsin District; but I was very saddened that more was not reported about this issue that is tearing at the heart of our denomination.

As pastor and member of one of the 10 churches that sponsored the query, it is very important for the members in our denomination to know that a number of leaders in our district are for the ordination and licensing of homosexuals and have not disciplined a pastor who has been doing marriage-like ceremonies.

This issue has caused quite a stir and great division. Due to the unbiblical stands and the open opposition to previous Annual Conference statements on the issue of homosexuality by some leaders, many people have grave reservations about being members of the Church of the Brethren.

**Gary L. Schultz**  
Astoria, Ill.

### How to be better witnesses?

I read your editorial about "bad news bearers" (April 2005). I find that it is easy to complain and find fault. Finger-pointing does not require a change in me, but expects a change in others. It even gives a feeling of righteousness, in spite of it being self-righteousness. The fruit of negativism is not joy, but sadness. The result is not motivation, but depression.

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

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

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

The Brethren Press Breakfast presents...

# Another Way of Believing

Bob Neff interviews Dale Brown

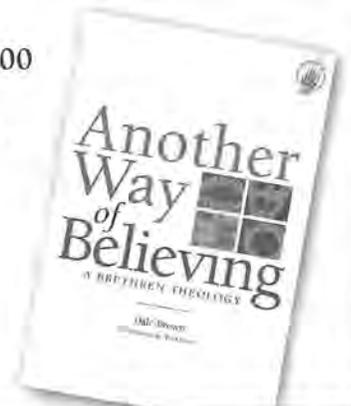
Annual Conference at Peoria  
Monday, July 4th - 7:00 AM

Hotel Pere Marquette, Marquette North Ballroom

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Dale W. Brown is the author of *Another Way of Believing: A Brethren Theology*, available July 2005 from Brethren Press.

Robert W. Neff is the author of the forthcoming *Covenant Bible Studies* book *Voices in the Book of Job* from Brethren Press.



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FOLLOWING JESUS in ISRAEL (October 19-31)

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

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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)  
SEVEN CHURCHES of REVELATION (Sept. 15-26)  
IRELAND (September 22 - October 3)  
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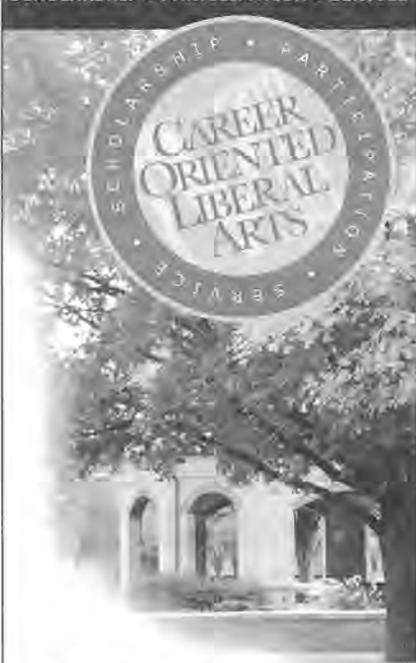
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When church members leave us, we have a feeling of rejection. This is not unique. It has happened before. Jesus felt rejected on the cross, causing him to say, "My God, why have you forsaken me?"

I have wondered what caused the downward trend. Is it because we are ashamed of our identity? Have we lost our appeal because we have become so ecumenical that we are just like everyone else? Must we emphasize our uniqueness and prove every doctrine from the Bible? Must we consider everyone who doesn't preach every Bible truth as a false prophet? Will people accept our message if we draw "a line in the sand" and challenge them to be on one side or the other? Our greatest growth seems to have been when we were a "peculiar people." Or was it because we joined with the neighbors to do the threshing?

I have wondered what can be done to reverse the downward trend. Maybe we could place short messages on the commercial radio stations. Maybe we could write short articles and place them in the

newspaper or write letters to the editor. Maybe we should wear a shirt with "Church of the Brethren" written on it when we do volunteer work. Maybe we could place a sign in front of our house and say, "Become part of the family at the Church of the Brethren."

I agree with you. If we share the Good News, then we won't have bad news to spread. Can we be united? Will people hear? God can separate the sheep from the goats. If we can't get people's attention, God will. He can remove our wealth, that other god. So, maybe we can do little in the US until believers are persecuted and we lose our prosperity. Meanwhile, nothing has annulled the Great Commission.

**Benjamin Haldeman**  
Greencastle, Pa.

**Correction:** The sidebar titled "The wide reach of TEV" on page 14 of the April issue was written by Wendi Hutchinson, director of church relations for Manchester College.

### CLASSIFIED ADS

**The Mount Morris Church of the Brethren**, a community of faith located in northwest Illinois, is seeking a full-time pastor. Our congregation has a strong history and a large, well-equipped facility; not typically rural, but in a small town known for printing, publishing, and as a retirement center. We desire a spirit-led pastor who will work with our congregation to fulfill our mission: "In the compassionate spirit of Jesus, we welcome everyone as we seek to strengthen faith, serve our neighbors near and far, and work for peace and justice." Interested applicants should contact Sylvia Saunders, 815-734-6435; e-mail: [saunders@essex1.com](mailto:saunders@essex1.com); or Mount Morris Church of the Brethren, 409 W. Brayton Rd., PO Box 2055, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

**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.

**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).

**PERU, ECUADOR, GALAPAGOS ISLANDS** Plan ahead for June 2006 tour to Machu Picchu, the fabled "lost city of the Incas," Lima, Quito, and the colorful Indian markets of equatorial South America. Cruise to the enchanted Galapagos Islands, including Darwin Bay, to view exotic birds and wildlife, including blue-footed boobies, waved albatross, sea lions, iguanas, sea turtles, and the magnificent frigate bird. For information, please write to J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022 or [kreiderk@etown.edu](mailto:kreiderk@etown.edu).

**Want to volunteer in a bookstore?** Brethren Press is looking for volunteers to assist in set-up, operation, and tear-down of the Annual Conference bookstore in Peoria. If you have interest and time to volunteer, contact Jean Clements at 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120 or [jclements\\_gb@brethren.org](mailto:jclements_gb@brethren.org).

**Consignment sales at Annual Conference.** Brethren Press makes space available at Annual Conference for individuals and groups to sell items to Conference attendees on a consignment basis. For information on consignment sales and space availability, contact Brethren Press Consignments, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694 or [kstocking\\_gb@brethren.org](mailto:kstocking_gb@brethren.org).

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

## New Members

**Arcadia, Ind.:** Bob Leeman, Rex McKinney, Robin McKinney, Ross McKinney, Austin McKinney, Trent McKinney, Jay McKinney

**Bear Creek, Dayton, Ohio:** David Beebe, Leslie Beebe, Lisa Hawkins, Chris Vecchi

**Beaver Creek, Hagerstown, Md.:** Tanner Minnick

**Bethany, New Paris, Ind.:** Tiffany Emmons, Patricia Gall, Richard Lechlitrer, Missy Fletcher, Christa May, Joshua E. Moreland, Rachel Moreland, Brandt Walcott, Jonathan Warstler

**Brownsville, Md.:** Mike Carey, Donna Carey, Wayne DeMory, Tracey DeMory, Margaret Darr

**Central, Roanoke, Va.:** Frederick Porter, David Jamison, Katherine Smith, Robert Smith, Andrew Wilson

**Charlottesville, Va.:** Geraldine Sanders

**Chicago First, Chicago, Ill.:** Cheryl Harris, Felisha Carson

**Columbia United Christian, Columbia, Md.:** Ray Bird, Jon Jacobs, Susanne Mann, Lauren Oviatt, Matt Skillman, Steve Kramer, Lise Mendel, Kelly Summe

**Conestoga, Leola, Pa.:** Sharon Pinkus, John Pinkus

**Defiance, Ohio:** Pat Haase, Rick Foster

**Dixon, Ill.:** Marlin Misner, Donna Misner, Rose Saijenga

**Douglas Park, Chicago, Ill.:** Richard Brode

**Drexel Hill, Pa.:** Karrie Foley

**Dupont, Ohio:** A. J. Butler, Erik Jones, Penny Drew

**Everett, Pa.:** Dennis Foor, LuAnn Foor

**Eversole, New Lebanon, Ohio:** Matthew Howard

**Florin, Mount Joy, Pa.:** Roy Barr, Elizabeth Nichols, Cory Dohner, Chris Becker

**Frederick, Md.:** Paula Prak, Sampach Prak, Peter Uy, Teang Sy, Wannrith Kong, Pat Caywood, Dan Caywood, Kendle Roberts, Linda Zangardi, Fatima Ismail, Kristan Nonemaker, Jennifer Nonemaker, Keisha Olson, John McBride, Peter Hall, Sande Hall, Dan Ripley, Becky Lambie, Jason Lambie, Sharon Widger, James Bensinger, Estela Bensinger, Julian Choe, Karen Choe, Jeremiah Kelly, Tatiana Burrier, Catherine Brooks, Butch Reinhold, Beth Reinhold, Brian Messler,

Annette Friel, Steve Biron, Carol Biron, Don Barber, Rich Barnard, Connie Barnard, Nikki Owens, Ken Baker, Sunny Baker, Ashley Lawson

**Freeport, Ill.:** Carl Reuter, Robert White, Amber White, William Graf, Carena Graf

**Geiger, Friedens, Pa.:** Jacob Gardner, Kerran Shaulis, Wayne Shaulis, Patricia Shaulis

**Grossnickle, Myersville, Md.:** Allison Bailey Bussard, Elyssa Kate Bussard, Nicole Michelle Frushour, Lindsay Autumn Harne, Ryan Patrick Harshman

**Hagerstown, Md.:** Misty Dawn Seaton, Alexa Jo Jessop, Nora Lee Gingrich, Ronald Lee Embly, Jr., Mallory Ilene Crossland, Caitlin Marie Hutzler, Matthew Adam Clipp, Andrew Bryan Farnen

**Harrisburg, First, Harrisburg, Pa.:** Sharon Hunn, Kenneth Horst, Sr., Josiah Ludwick, Julia Newsome, Christine Wilson, Malcom Wertz, Sr.

**Highland Avenue, Elgin, Ill.:** Phil Smith, Becky Ullom

**Lirio de los Valles, Lebanon, Pa.:** Ramona Figueroa

**Maple Grove, New Paris, Ind.:** Rex Marquart, Carol Marquart, Seth Hartsough, Cissy Hartsough, Todd Mikel, Dawn Mikel, Ryan Stuckman, Julie Stuckman

**Marsh Creek, Gettysburg, Pa.:** Ralph Beamer, Carol Beamer

**McPherson, Kan.:** Evan Clary, Kristen Hoffman, Courtney Irwin, JJ Krebbiel, Paul Masterson, Nolan Howell

**Mechanicsburg, Pa.:** Aleshia Hock, Nicole Williamon, Betty Koble, Ann Reisinger, Paul Reisinger, Dory Novotny

**Middlebury, Ind.:** Christina Adkins, Britta Copeland, Penny DeWilde, R. J. Etter, Tia Etter, Keleigh Weaver, Nathan Freeze, Tessa Pauls, Wayne Andrews, Ryan Roebuck, Megan Tice, Richard Yoder, Samantha Baker, Shannon Baker, Pollyanna Bontrager, John Carter, Phyllis Carter, Douglas Doster, Sara Doster, Andy Eickholt, Norm Floria, Amy Floria, Don Hartman, Tiffany Hartman, John Kauffman, Tiffany Kauffman, Dick Miller, Becky Miller, Vern Neff, Sherie Neff, Doug Troyer, Kristi Troyer, Randy VanOrman, John Veenstra, Sharon Veenstra, Andrew Helfrich

**Mill Creek, Port Republic, Va.:** Hannah Fletcher Coppage, Allison Rebecca Echard, Priscilla Justine Halterman, William Benjamin Jarrels, III, Christopher Charles Hill, Nathan Edward Kelley, Jeffrey Allen McCauley, Chad Matthew Morris, Brice Nathaniel Nelson, Brielle Nicole Nelson, Jacob Carl

Sheets, Abbie Noel Wright, Brian Kelley, Cindy Southerly-Morgan, Dan Morgan

**Mohrsville, Pa.:** Alexander Resh, Jacob Resh, Victoria Resh, Wayne Resh, Avery Yoder, Jacob Yoder, John Miller, Sharon Miller, Dennis Bausher, Matthew Werley, Harold Risser

**Monroeville, Pa.:** Kyle Brewer, Keith Hernley, Kevin Hernley, Jason Rickard, Heather Koba, Shaffer Nicholas

**Monte Vista, Callaway, Va.:** Katie Elizabeth Furrow, Thomas Wray

**Mountain View, Bunker Hill, W.Va.:** Lisa Lloyd, Wesley Bennett, Beverly Bennett, Michael Bennett, Matthew Bennett, Scott Bennett, Shanda Malone, Wendy Murray, Brandon Fries, Christopher Flowers

**Mountville, Pa.:** Caitlin Berrier, Amy Boshnaugle, Jesse Thomas, Andrew Weitzal, Olive Kline, Bob Kline

**Nampa, Idaho:** Roma Blinn, Jim Schmidt, Gary Ackerman, Diane Ackerman, Joel D. Tubbs, Jack Laing, Florence Laing, Gerry Egli, Lyle Egli, Edith Gauby, Martin Gauby, Nancy Woodward, Imogene Ogle, LeLand Ogle, Bill Rust, Joyce Rust, Miles Lowber, Trish Lowber, Fred Sotin, Blanche Jones, Wendell Bledsoe, Ruth Collins, Susan Laing, Teri Smit, Ruth Hopkins

**Nappanee, Ind.:** Bruce Earl, Ann Earl

**Nettle Creek, Hagerstown, Ind.:** Howard Davis, Geneva Davis, Joy Klein, Barry Nicholson, Laura Nicholson, Heather Nicholson

**New Enterprise, Pa.:** James Refiner, Tanner Brunner, Allison Koontz, Daniel Sollenberger, Nolan Sollenberger

**Northview, Indianapolis, Ind.:** David Frantz, Nina Evans, Jan Rhoades

**Oakton, Va.:** Chris Bowman, Sherry Bowman, Melissa Bowman, Jacob Bowman, Missy Burket, Leslie Connolly, Tim Eads, Mary Eads, Trish Fratarangelo, June Gonzalez, Michelle Michael, Edna Skiados

**Olathe, Kan.:** Lisa Reinoehl

**Papago Buttes, Scottsdale, Ariz.:** Robert L. Varnam, Karen Varnam, R. Jan Thompson, Roma Jo Thompson, Jean Brown, Walter Bosley, Emily Bosley, Everett Deidiker

**Pine Creek, North Liberty, Ind.:** Max Beasley, Sue Beasley, Stan Schlemmer, Mary Schlemmer, Peter Cook, Sally Cook, Nancy Dolph, Rick Klinedinst

**Pitsburg, Arcanum, Ohio:** Molly Dues, Brett Dues, Tyowen Pyles

**Prairie City, Iowa:** Lucas Kain, Kelsey Kain, Bret Wiggins, Chauncy Wiggins, David

Beyer, Linda Beyer, Danny Beyer, Bryan Beyer

**Reading, Homeworth, Ohio:** Ronald Curfman, Carl DeLion, Reba Pettitt

**Rummel, Windber, Pa.:** Melinda Reininger

**Saint Petersburg, Fla.:** Joel Bandy, Doris Brennan, Dorothy Crocker, George Harris, Homer Patrick, Ruth Pauls, Suzanne Patrick, Bonnie Spittler, David Spittler

**Saunders Grove, Moneta, Va.:** David Friend, Rochelle Friend, Kinny Arnette, Brenda Arnette, Marvin Lipscomb, Dorothy Dellis

**Skyridge, Kalamazoo, Mich.:** Evelyn Dake, Tracy Meyer, Cindy Gippert, Rick Gippert, Sean Porter

**Spring Run, McVeytown, Pa.:** Steve Hoy, Pam Hoy, Melissa McKee, Jon McKee, Kenzie Dunmire, Damon Miller, Brandy Chesney, Karen Swigart, Bertha Harshbarger, Katie Baker, Amy Smith

**Swatara Hill, Middletown, Pa.:** Martha Aldinger Wess, Miriam Messick Aldinger, Ashley Marie Brown, Andrea Crater, Jessica Crater, Susan Lynn Hoyt, Robert Stoak

**Trinity, Sidney, Ohio:** Annette Smith, Karen Ransbottom, Brittany Strunk, Ashley McCune, Denise McCune, Mary McKibben, Norbert Voisard, Robert Driskell, Diane Mortemore

**Union Center, Nappanee, Ind.:** Ann Fourman

**Uniontown, Pa.:** Gary D. Baer, Betty Allison, Stacey Lynn Knox, Glenn W. Lyons, Richard Diehl, Connie Diehl

**Welsh Run, Mercersburg, Pa.:** Jodi Clever, Preston Clever, Jr., Sarah Gordon, Frank Divilbiss, Helen Divilbiss, Courtney Martin, Heather Faust, Anna Piper

**Wenatchee, Wash.:** Cherie Coates, Rachel Davis, Vern Stocker

**West Charleston, Tipp City, Ohio:** Katie McLin, Steve Snyder

**Wilmington, Del.:** Kaitlyn Fisher, Charles Hackett, George Hackett

**York Center, Lombard, Ill.:** Bill Christiansen, Lisa Hirschmugl, Ken Stein

Hopewell, Va., 50

**Lohr, Joseph and Shirley,** Windber, Pa., 50

**Mauck, Robert and Beverly,** Middlebury, Ind., 50

**Montel, Ernest and Enid,** Vandalia, Ohio, 60

**Pryor, Edgar and Betty,** Hagerstown, Md., 50

**Reynolds, Fred and Dee, Madrid,** Iowa, 55

**Riddinger, Warren and Marjorie,** Calabash, N.C., 50

**Shelly, Harlan and Betty,** Manheim, Pa., 55

**Snider, Dana and Nelda,** Middlebury, Ind., 50

**Stauffer, Guy and Ruth,** Bradenton, Fla., 60

**Veno, Francis and Lorraine,** Uniontown, Pa., 55

**Wiles, Russell and Betty, Wirtz,** Va., 60

## Deaths

**Abrech, Norman, Sr.,** 84, Frederick, Md., Jan. 9

**Akerman, Audrey,** 65, Frederick, Md., Nov. 9

**Baer, Edgar Bywaters,** 81, Hagerstown, Md., March 29

**Bailey, Milford B.,** 90, Front Royal, Va., Feb. 7

**Baker, Margaret,** 86, Adamstown, Md., Oct. 28

**Ballard, Helen,** 85, Mount Morris, Ill., April 1

**Barnhart, Clarence M.,** 92, Roanoke, Va., March 16

**Bayton, Edna,** 87, Boonsboro, Md., April 1

**Beahm, Julia Clara,** 74, Luray, Va., Dec. 22

**Beard, Violet,** 85, Imperial, Neb., March 12

**Betts, Virginia,** 84, Frederick, Md., March 9

**Bouse, Wayne,** 89, Silver Lake, Ind., March 1

**Biddinger, Paul,** 83, Frederick, Md., July 4, 2004

**Bowen, Aubrey Green, Jr.,** 69, Front Royal, Va., Jan. 29

**Bowman, Paul Franklin,** 61, Harrisonburg, Va., Feb. 20

**Brashear, Paul,** 79, Monrovia, Md., April 4

**Bricker, Irvin D.,** 75, Glen Rock, Pa., Dec. 6

**Moore, Mary E.,** 85, Chicago, Ill., Jan. 20

**Myers, Ruth G.,** 83, York County, Pa., March 5

**Neff, Nancy Jean,** 68, Strasburg, Va., Dec. 15

**Nelson, Donna,** 84, Logansport, Ind., Sept. 12

**Nininger, Ruth,** 95, Roanoke, Va., April 1

**Parr, Jeannie,** 60, Clarksburg, Md., Dec. 10

**Pluck, Lawrence Frances, Jr.,** 77, Drexel Hill, Pa., March 26

**Puffenbarger, James Berton, Sr.,** 85, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 20

**Pullen, Alice Maggie,** 101, Luray, Va., Jan. 8

## Anniversaries

**Charls, Cecil and Margaret,** Prairie City, Iowa, 60

**Cripe, Carmon and Margaret,** Middlebury, Ind., 50

**Gray, John and Mary, Wirtz, Va.,** 55

**Keiser, Walter and Agnes,** Bayamon, Puerto Rico, 70

**Kulp, Bob and Anna Mae,** Manheim, Pa., 55

**Lassiter, James and Alice,**

## Smoke signals

**F**or a few days in mid-April, the plaza outside St. Peter's Basilica in Rome was a very confusing place.

Each time smoke went up from the Vatican chimney—signifying a vote by the cardinals meeting to select a new pope—the crowds gathered outside had to scrutinize it carefully. Was it white? Was it black?

On the day the new pope was actually elected, even the media were stymied in deciphering the vapors.



WALT WILTSCHKEK  
MESSENGER Editor

One commentator thought it looked white. Another believed it was more of a gray. A Vatican radio station said it was black smoke. Another Rome station declared it was white.

Chemicals have been added to the smoke since sometime in the 20th century, in an effort to strengthen the color, but that apparently has still not done the trick. Bells were now supposed to confirm white smoke, but the

first bell that rang turned out to be just the one marking the hour. That added to the uncertainty until the full pealing of bells came some minutes later.

Even in the Holy See, it seems, discernment can be a tricky task.

We are entering a season in which Brethren (who don't generally send up smoke) will be called

upon to make a number of decisions. First, delegates at Annual Conference in Peoria will elect various denominational officers and board members and vote on other issues. Then a series of district conferences follow. Various agency board meetings occur through the summer and fall months.

The term "discernment" often comes up in such settings. In conventional dictionary usage it means detecting something with one's senses, or mentally grasping something previously hidden from view. In the church, it typically is set in the context of seeking the mind of Christ in a particular situation.

Writer and spiritual director Rosemary Dougherty once defined discernment as: "A process of aligning ourselves with God's desire, God's will; coming to notice when we have gotten out of alignment. The

wheel of the heart veers more toward the right or left rather than being dead-centered on God. Discernment is the process of noticing when that happens."

It's easy for that wheel to veer. Twice recently—once in a letter to MESSENGER and once during a congregation's sharing time in worship—I encountered people asking others to pray for a very specific outcome in highly political and controversial situations. When our prayers dictate the results, we are losing our center. "Thy will be done" quickly slides into "My will be done."

It reminds me of an experience at a camp last summer, where some elementary school-age campers began a chant: "We love Jesus, yes we do. We love Jesus, how 'bout you?" They were calling to a group of campers from another cabin, and that group echoed them with the same chant.

This went back and forth a few times, until somewhere along the line it turned into a competition. The chant morphed into: "We love Jesus, yes we do. We love Jesus more than you."

Adults at church conferences don't regularly yell rhymes back and forth in pep-rally fashion, but the spirit of that second version of the chant all too frequently finds its way into decision-making. It becomes

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not a matter of seeking God's will in community, but a matter of winning. Whom does Jesus love more?

In some circles, gifts discernment has become a key part of the calling process for church positions—to the point that if a person with the right gifts can't be found or doesn't agree to serve, the position is left open. Rather than simply filling slots or rushing to a decision, things are allowed to happen in God's timing.

There may be wisdom in that model for other decision-making settings in the church. Rather than pushing votes through in order to get something done or to settle who is "right" and who's "wrong," perhaps we should be spending more time in prayer and scripture, checking our spiritual centering.

Then, when the smoke clears, we may be able to more clearly see the way of Christ together.—Ed. 

**COMING NEXT MONTH:** The state of outdoor ministry, youth essay contest winners, reflections from the moderator, a look at "Judges," Christian Citizenship Seminar, book review, and more.



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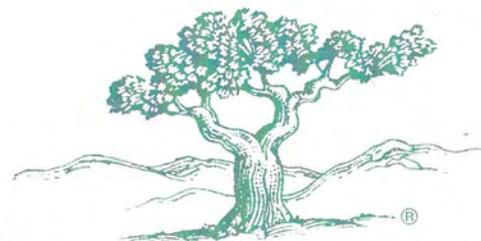
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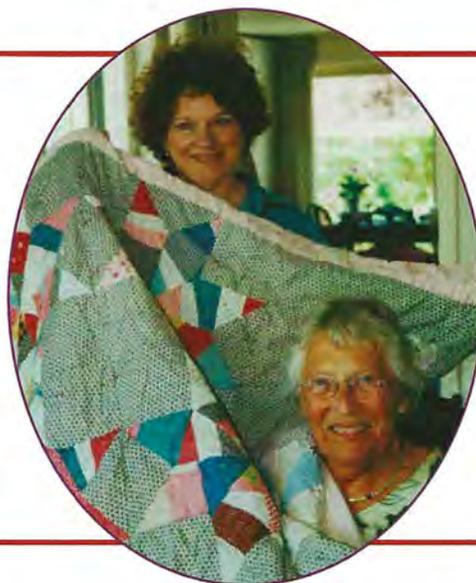
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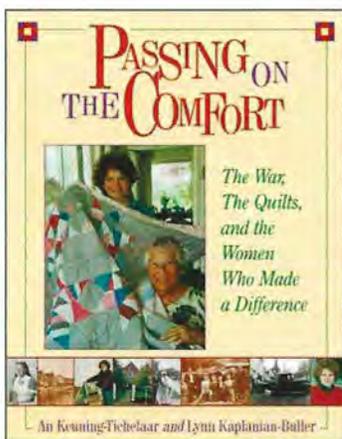
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*The War, the Quilts, and the Women Who Made a Difference*



## The book —



Two women find each other in Holland, brought together improbably by a set of worn quilts, made by groups of women half-a-world-away who simply used what they had.

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- Then there is Lynn, 20-some years later, discovering the quilts and searching for their stories.

This book is a patchwork of stories of women helping others, passing on the comfort.

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<b>May</b>	Ontario
<b>June</b>	Saskatchewan
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