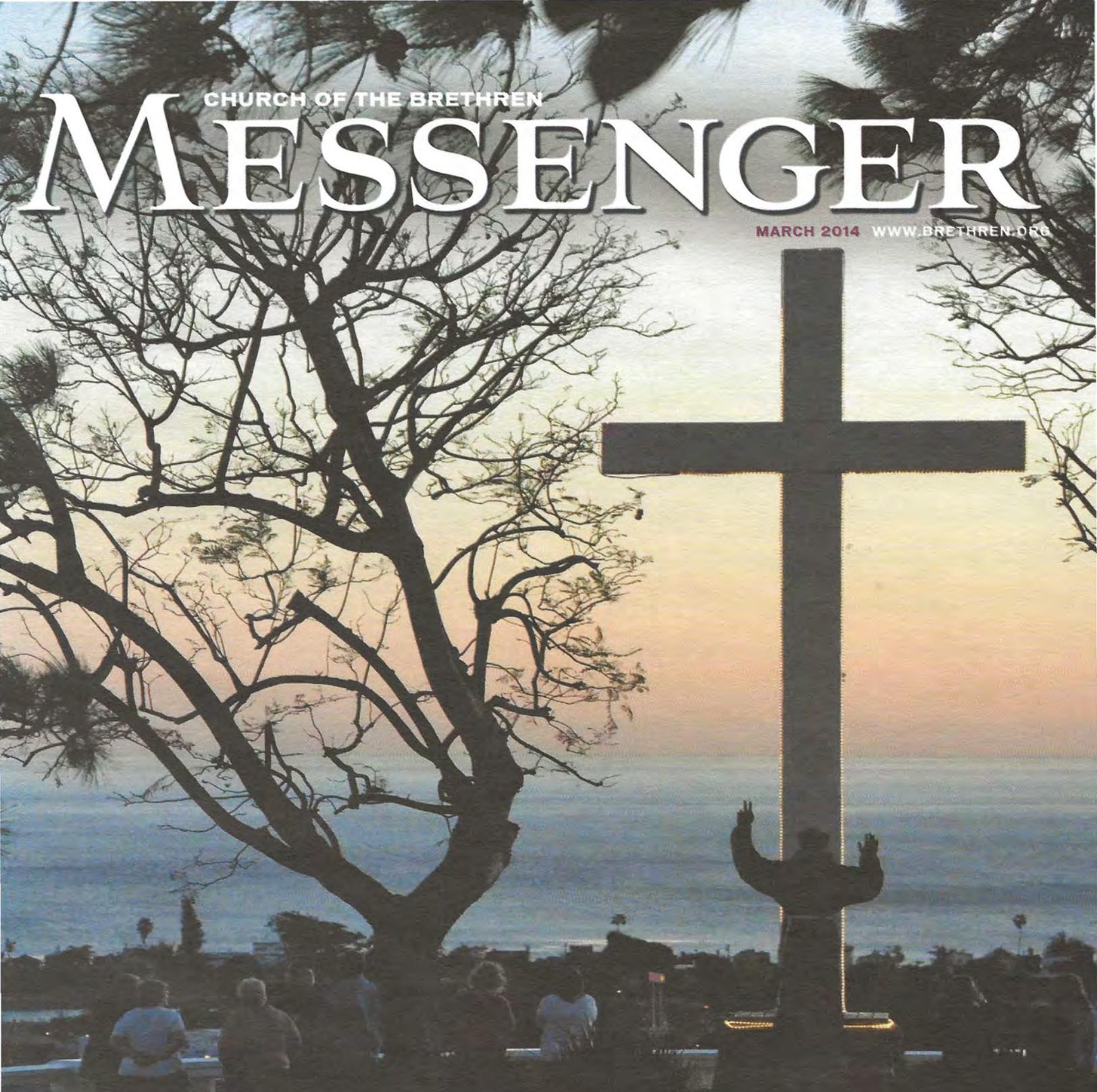


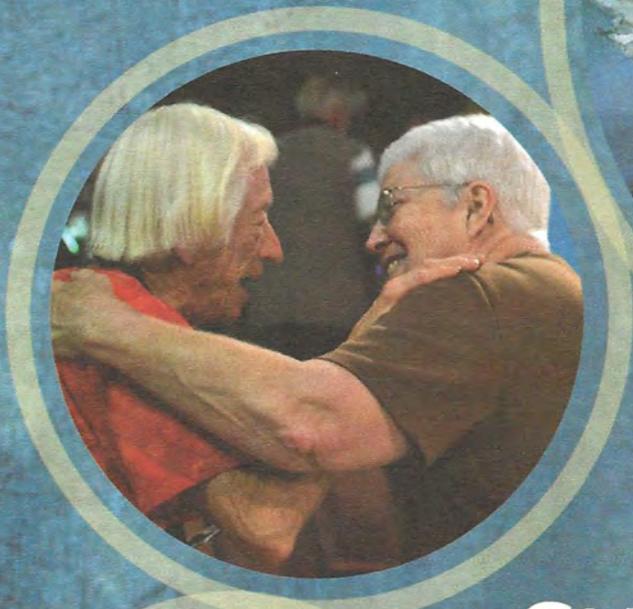
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

MESSENGER

MARCH 2014 WWW.BRETHREN.ORG



WOMEN IN MINISTRY
CHECKING
THE CLIMATE



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CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN MESSENGER

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Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford



Randy Miller

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8 Checking the climate—women in ministry

At the Clergy Women's Retreat, held in January in Malibu, Calif., Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford spoke with several clergywomen about the current climate for women in ministry in the Church of the Brethren. They expressed their gratitude for previous women leaders, and also their concerns for women across the denomination today. Accompanying the conversation is an overview of the path to women's ordination in the Church of the Brethren.

14 The centennial of a Brethren poet

William Stafford, one of America's most celebrated poets, would have turned 100 in January. But, in Brethren circles anyway, the 20th Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress was known not just for his poetry, but also as a fellow churchman and a conscientious objector. His first book, *Down In My Heart*—in which he shares about his CO experiences during World War II—was first published by Brethren Press in 1948.

16 Cleared for take-off—together

In his travels thus far as Bethany Seminary's new president, Jeff Carter has encountered anew the vast differences in the Church of the Brethren—from Kansas to California, and from Minnesota to Arizona. But he also has noted a common thread that binds us together. "In spite of our differences, we are rooted in a common heritage. Together we gather around scripture, and together we discern the mind of Christ."

18 The irritating call to love one another

MESSENGER welcomes Tim Harvey as he kicks off a new series of Bible studies for our magazine. The former Annual Conference moderator and pastor of the Central Church of the Brethren in Roanoke, Va., calls readers of this first installment to engage in courageous discipleship, which, he says, sometimes means "just putting up with the person sitting on the pew across from us."

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One of the shortcomings of the English language is our lack of a plural “you.” There used to be a difference (take a look at the King James Version of the Bible), but now “you” is both singular and plural.

Of course, this is not an insurmountable problem. There are various solutions depending on where you live: “y’all,” “youse,” “y’uns,” “you guys.” For extra emphasis, you can employ intensifiers such as “all y’all” or “y’uns all.”



WENDY MCFADDEN
PUBLISHER

This works pretty well in conversation, where we generally are able to make ourselves understood. But it can be less clear in formal, written language. And perhaps the place we miss the boat the most is in reading the Bible. As a nation of rugged individualists, we Americans can quickly assume that every writer in the Bible is writing just to, well, me.

That’s not true. In fact, much of the New Testament is written to the church, that is, to *you plural*. When we are tempted to privatize the Word of God, it is good to examine the pronouns and interpret it in community.

For example, when Paul writes, “But if Christ is in you” (Rom. 8:10), he’s talking to the group.

Blogger John Dyer discovered that “there are at least 4,720 verses (2,698 in the Hebrew Bible and 2,022 in the Greek) with *you plural* translated as English ‘you’ which could lead a reader to think it is directed at him or her personally rather than the Church as a community.” To correct the misperceptions that can arise if we’re not paying attention (and also for fun), he’s created a plug-in that converts your online Bible reading to the “Texas/Southern version.”

Here’s how 1 Corinthians 3:16 sounds: “Do y’all not know that y’all are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in y’all? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what y’all are.”

He offers other options, such as the US version: “Work out your guys’s salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you guys, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12-14).

“To me, it’s a very different Bible,” Dyer observes, “and one that tells us something important about the the body of Christ.”

Searching the Scriptures in community is deep in our Brethren bones, so this makes sense. At least it does to me. To youse too?

Wendy McFadden

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Congregation Close-Up

Congregation challenged to get healthy together

Last May, some 40 people at Mt. Hermon Church of the Brethren in Bassett, Va., signed on for the Healthy Initiative Challenge, which was brought to the church by the WorldChangers Young Adult Sunday School class. The challenge: to form teams and, as a team, lose the highest percentage of weight. There would also be an additional prize for the person who walked the most miles. The goal was to encourage a more active lifestyle and increased health for the congregation as a whole.

Each of the seven teams went about the challenge in a different way. Some groups got together to exercise. Others helped with monitoring food choices.

The final weigh-in was in early July. More than 405 pounds were lost by the participants. The top three individuals lost almost 10 percent of their starting weight. Total miles walked was 1,636. Jerry Wirt won the prize for the most individual miles walked, at 361.

Part two of Healthy Initiative is ongoing. Starting in September, participants began meeting with a nutritionist every six-to-eight weeks for a healthy meal and information regarding food choices and healthful living.

by the numbers

2019

Year that Annual Conference will return to San Diego—in case you missed those beaches and palm trees when it was last held there in 2009!

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

Honored for service and peace witness

The headline to one of the stories about her put it bluntly: “Lois Clark gets things done.” It was one of several news features published in the South Bend, Ind., area in January about Clark receiving the 2013 F. Jay Nimitz Exemplary Public Service award in January. The award called attention to a lifetime of contributions to peace and human rights.

Her roots in such causes go deep—she claims they’re in her genes. The first of 10 children of a Church of the Brethren preacher and his wife, she was born in her grandmother’s home in West Virginia. She says she has 92 preachers in her current family and ancestry, and so, she explains, service and a concern for peace and

justice came naturally.

She moved to North Liberty, Ind., in 1940 at age 18, when her father became preacher at Pine Creek Church of the Brethren. Not long after the move, she met her future husband, Bob, to whom she was married for 68 years.

Those early concerns for service and justice manifested themselves in many ways over the years. She introduced the United Nations International Peace Day to South Bend in 2007. And she has served on boards for the League of Women Voters and the Martin Luther King Jr. Foundation. She also served as Decade to Overcome Violence organizer for the Northern Indiana District of the Church of the Brethren.

“We are here to prepare the road for our children,” she said in one article. “Not to do things for them, but to free them up to do a better job than we’re doing.”

At the ceremony in which she received the honor, South Bend mayor Pete Buttigieg said, “She advocates for peace and human rights. She has made an incalculable impact with her commitment to our youngest and most vulnerable citizens.” He noted that for nearly four decades, Clark served as parent and community involvement coordinator for Head Start. She also mentors teens at Ardmore Church of Christ.

“When I was growing up, my mother taught me always to try to leave something a little better than you found it,” she said.

Lois Clark, of South Bend, was honored with the F. Jay Nimitz Award for public service. Mayor Pete Buttigieg presented the award.



Serving others

Free meals at Nappanee Church of the Brethren

Dozens of people came out to Nappanee (Ind.) Church of the Brethren recently and received a free meal. The inaugural event was presented with help from workers at Elkhart’s only homeless shelter, Faith Mission, who made all of the food for the community supper.

Byrl Shaver, pastor of the Nappanee church, says, “This is really just a free community walk-in meal. It doesn’t matter what your economic position is in the community; anyone can come and take these meals.”

The church plans to hold a free community meal every Monday and Thursday evening for now, but they hope to eventually make it a five-day-a-week program.



Remembered

Allen C. Deeter, 82, of North Manchester, Ind., a former administrator of Brethren Colleges Abroad for 24 years and professor of religion and philosophy at Manchester College (now Manchester University) for 40 years, passed away Dec. 20 at Timbercrest Healthcare Center. He also had directed the Peace Studies program at Manchester College. He was born in Dayton, Ohio, on March 8, 1931, to Raymond and Flora (Petry) Deeter. On Aug. 31, 1952, he married Joan George. He earned a bachelor's degree from Manchester College, where he was one of the first peace studies



majors to graduate from the program. He also earned degrees from Bethany Theological Seminary and Princeton University and did post-graduate work at Harvard University and Phillips University, Marburg, Germany. He was the recipient of the Manchester College Alumni Honor Award, received on honorary doctorate from Bridgewater (Va.) College, and authored two books, *Heirs of a Promise* and *Toyohiko Kagawa*. He is survived by his wife, Joan George Deeter.

Marlin Paul Krall, 79, of Cerro Gordo, Ill., died on Jan. 14 at Memorial Hospital in Springfield, Ill. He was a member of Cerro Gordo Church of the Brethren for 64 years where he served as a deacon, usher, and served on various boards. He also served in Brethren Volunteer Service for two years where he drove a semi to pick up relief clothing.

Marianne M. Speicher, 84, passed away at her home on Jan. 4. She was a longtime member of Woodworth Church of the Brethren in Youngstown, Ohio, where she was organist and choir director. She met her husband, Richard D. Speicher, while boarding at the Church of the Brethren Bethany Biblical Seminary, and married on March 15, 1952. In 1960, the couple accepted Richard's call to pastor Woodworth Church of the Brethren, and they made their home in Youngstown. From 2004 to 2007 she was a Brethren delegate to the National Council of Churches of Christ governing board. Richard Speicher passed away Dec. 22, 2009. Her daughter, Anna, of Elgin, Ill., had until recently directed the Gather 'Round curriculum for the Church of the Brethren and Mennonite Churches.

LANDMARKS *and laurels*

➔ **Rick Polhamus** of Pleasant Hill (Ohio) Church of the Brethren was honored for his work with Christian Peacemaker Teams and On Earth Peace on Jan. 18, during the Nobel Peace Prize Luncheon of the Dayton International Peace Museum. He received a Peace Hero Award from the peace museum, which was founded by Ralph and Christine Dull of Lower Miami Church of the Brethren.

➔ **Oak Grove Church of the Brethren** in Rocky Mount, Va., held a "Note-Burning Service" on Sunday, Dec. 15, 2013. Virgina District reports that "the church built a 52-foot by 60-foot fellowship addition including a baptismal pool, fellowship area, kitchen and serving area, and restrooms in 2008 at a cost of approximately \$190,000, leaving a debt of \$125,000. The balance of the debt was paid off in October 2013."

➔ **Imperial Heights Community Church of the Brethren** in Los Angeles received this year's Energy Efficiency Participation Award from Edison International. "By replacing more than 80 incandescent lamps and fixtures with energy-efficient linear fluorescents, the church was able to reduce its energy consumption and lower its energy bills," said a release.

➔ **Camp Harmony**, a camp of Western Pennsylvania District of the Church of the Brethren in Hooversville, Pa., celebrates its 90th anniversary in 2014. Celebrations begin the weekend of May 30-31 and June 1. Associate camp director Barron Deffenbaugh said area businesses have been invited to attend May 30 for a "meet and greet" with the swimming pool and high and low ropes courses open. There will be an open house for the community on May 31 with the swimming pool, hiking, GPS, and climbing tower available. On June 1 a fellowship celebration will feature a chicken barbecue beginning at 12:30 p.m., recreation and sharing times for church and community members, praise bands, choirs, individual singers, Christian comedy, and worship at 6:30 p.m. with singing and a campfire. Deffenbaugh said the camp will offer a series of "one-day escapes" during the spring, summer, and fall.

➔ Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) worker **Michael Himlie** was interviewed by the *News-Record* of Marshall, Iowa, while he was home for the holidays. A member of Root River Church of the Brethren, and having studied at McPherson (Kan.) College, he is described by the reporter as wearing "a simple necklace carrying the symbol for the Church of the Brethren. The cross of Jesus Christ and a wave of water on the symbol represents Himlie's faith and his desire to serve others." Himlie is spending his BVS term serving at disaster rebuilding sites working with Brethren Disaster Ministries.

The lesson of the Malibu tile

Serra Retreat Center in Malibu, Calif., where Brethren clergy women met for their 2014 retreat, is decorated with the most wonderful tiles. They are set in walls and floors and railings and garden paths.



CHERYL
BRUMBAUGH-CAYFORD

The tiles were saved after the Malibu Potteries tile factory burned in 1931. According to a history of Serra, 9,000 boxes of tile were salvaged and stored away. They were put back into use when the Franciscans purchased the abandoned Rindge family mansion, and the building was completed as a retreat center. In 1970 another fire destroyed the building and tiles were once again retrieved and salvaged. Now they add color and beauty to a rebuilt center.

In some places tiles are formally placed, and showcased with care. In others, like one of the garden paths, pieces of broken tile are strewn in a kind of crazy quilt, no less beautiful than their formally placed kin.

Retreat leader Melissa Wiginton commented that she loves the values of the Church of the Brethren and asked, What are the God-given gifts or values that Brethren caretake?

the corner of the quilt on the guest bed that helps welcome visitors to your home.

Women don't do this only through quilting. How many pairs of jeans, rendered unwearable by holes in the knees or stains on the hems, have shown up the next summer as shorts? How many yogurt cartons are washed and show up later in the fridge holding leftovers?

My husband, who is a handyman, practices a hermeneutic of retrieval. He saves old pieces of wood and parts of machines and household hardware, in case he can re-use them. A set of hinges on an old door that he replaced for a client, for example, may reappear where needed to put a sagging door back in place, right and true.

It's going to take women and men working together to caretake the gifts entrusted to our church. When Melissa asked what gifts God has given Brethren, the group of clergywomen responded by naming peace, service, community, simplicity, women in ministry, humility, continuing the work of Jesus.

I wonder, what other gifts should be added to this list? And what will the Brethren gifts look like after they are retrieved and made into something new in the future? Will the Brethren values be beautifully formalized? Or strewn about with abandon to become a spiritual version of a crazy quilt? Will

Our calling may be to make sure these gifts from God to the Church of the Brethren are *retrieved from the past* and made available in the future.



She named this caretaking of God's gifts a "hermeneutic of retrieval," meaning that our calling may be to make sure these gifts from God to the Church of the Brethren are retrieved from the past and made available in the future.

Women have been using a hermeneutic of retrieval for a long time. The classic example, of course, is quilting. For generations, women have retrieved bits of cloth that are still good, cutting them out of old clothes that are no longer wearable, to sew together into something new and useful and beautiful. A bit of that old summer dress that you loved so much you wore it out, is salvaged from the rag pile to grace

future generations see them set in the philosophical walls and spiritual foundations of the worldwide Christian movement?

None of that can we know. Our present job is to take care of our church's gifts. We must pick out the bits of beauty and usefulness in the old cloth, and keep them for the new quilt to piece tomorrow. We must keep an eye out for the old set of hinges that will polish up beautifully, to put the door to the future in place, right and true. **||**

Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford is director of News Services for the Church of the Brethren and an ordained minister. This reflection is from one of her blog posts during the Clergy Women's Retreat.

“You can’t go through life being so unyielding; you got to forgive.”

—Phylomena Lee, whose story is the basis for the Oscar-nominated film *Phylomena*, on whether she’s angry with the Catholic Church, after meeting Pope Francis

“What moved me was not so much that I was anointing him. It was him being willing to accept that from my hand—to ask me, as a woman in ministry, to do that.”

—Anne Robertson, director of the Massachusetts Bible Society and a United Methodist minister, who was asked by Boston cardinal Sean O’Malley to anoint him with water during an ecumenical baptism rite

“Religiosity in the US is in the midst of what might be called ‘The Great Decline.’ Over the past 15 years, the drop in religiosity has been twice as great as the decline of the 1960s and 1970s.”

—Tobin Grant, political science professor at Southern Illinois University

“We are the community gathering place. I’ll often have a pastor sitting next to an atheist talking about all sorts of things, which isn’t something that can happen in a conventional church setting.”

—Scott Sullivan, alumnus of evangelical Calvin College and owner of the Greenbush Brewing Company in Sawyer, Mich., on the wide-ranging conversations that occur at his establishment

cultureview

► **A circle of evangelical Christian leaders** has set up a new campaign to emphasize that all people—gay, liberal, unbeliever, undocumented or otherwise—reflect the image of God. The founders of Imago Dei include Focus on the Family president Jim Daly, film producers Roma Downey and Mark Burnett, Liberty Law School dean Mat Staver, and evangelist James Robison. Leading the cause is pastor Samuel Rodriguez, president of the large National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference. “If we had the image of God in mind for every human being, we could change the world,” he said. “I want Christians to be known not for what we oppose but for what we propose.”

► **“Human conflict may well be inevitable in our world,** but war and violence are not,” said Bartholomew, ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople, addressing the 17th Eurasian Economic Summit held February 4-6 in Istanbul, Turkey. “If our

age will be remembered at all, it may be remembered for those who dedicated themselves to the cause of peace. As faith communities and religious leaders, we are obliged constantly to remind people about the obligation and responsibility to choose peace through dialogue.”

► **A Denver congregation of Mennonites licensed the first lesbian in a committed same-sex relationship,** the first step toward ordination. Theda Good’s licensure on Feb. 2 was celebrated by some Mennonite Church USA clergy and greeted with dismay by others. Good was licensed for ministry as pastor of nurture and fellowship at First Mennonite Church of Denver, where she is currently on the staff. Originally from Lancaster, Pa., Good is a graduate of Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va. Whether the Colorado-based conference, or region, of Mennonites will approve Good’s ordination isn’t clear.

Heard 'round the world

“The South Sudanese Church is an example to us all in its consistent speaking with one voice for peace, for unity, and to an ending of the violence so horrifically perpetrated against so many people.”

—Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, during his visit in January to South Sudan

“It provided me with a platform to deal with the two things that formed my lifetime: the bigotry which almost destroyed me, and the human love and compassion which saved me.”

—Abraham Foxman, Holocaust survivor, and national director of the Anti-Defamation League, speaking about the Jewish organization that he will retire from in 2015 after leading it for 27 years

WOMEN IN MINISTRY

CHECKING THE CLIMATE

by Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

At the Clergy Women's Retreat and in follow-up interviews, director of News Services Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford spoke to a selection of clergywomen about the current climate for women in ministry in the Church of the Brethren. The interviews were done separately, and the women interviewed serve in a variety of positions and capacities in different locations across the country. Yet they spoke of similar experiences, the feeling of being blessed in their congregations and communities, their gratitude for women leaders of the past who blazed the way, and their concerns for the overall climate for women across the denomination.

*The women interviewed for this piece included **Mary Jo Flory-Steuery**, associate general secretary of the Church of the Brethren and executive director of the Office of Ministry; **Elizabeth Bidgood Enders**, pastor of Ridgeway Community Church of the Brethren in Harrisburg, Pa., in Atlantic Northeast District; **Rhonda Pittman Gingrich**, an ordained minister who attends Open Circle Church of the Brethren in Burnsville, Minn., chair of the district board and one of the newly called "cluster ministers" in Northern Plains District; **Barbara Wise Lewczak**, pastor of Stover Memorial Church of the*

*Brethren in Des Moines, Iowa, and moderator-elect for Northern Plains District, as well as program director at Camp Pine Lake; **Erin Matteson**, who pastors Modesto (Calif.) Church of the Brethren with her husband, Russ, and is the 2014 moderator for Pacific Southwest District; **Anne Mitchell**, associate pastor at Lighthouse Church of the Brethren in Boones Mill, Va., who serves in Virgina District as chair of the Renacer Steering Committee and vice chair for the New Church Development Committee.*

Q: What is your experience of being a woman in ministry in your setting?

Matteson: In our district, the climate is very good for women. There's just a supportive environment. We have several women who are pastors and in ministry, and it's a good space.

Mitchell: When I changed over to the Church of the Brethren I was surprised to find that there had been some conflict about women in ministry. But since being there I haven't experienced





Cheryl Brumbaugh-Coyford



rejection per se. I do sense sometimes male pastors may feel like women should not be in positions of leadership such as a pastorate. It's not blatant, you just kind of get that little feeling. I have experienced some degree of rejection from male pastors in other denominations.

I fought that battle and got past that. I'm here to stay, you know? When I step down from ministry it's going to be because that's what God says to do.

Flory-Steury: I've really not encountered a question of me in this role. And you know, I've puzzled over that. Is an administrative ministerial role perceived differently than a pastoral ministry role? I don't know.

Bidgood Enders: I feel incredibly blessed and overwhelmingly affirmed. I'm also aware that part of the acceptance and welcome that I've received and feel has come from strong women leadership that has preceded me. So I didn't feel like I had to be a trailblazer. It was a very strong call, that's my immediate context.

The district is another matter. It doesn't have an overwhelming number of women, especially women who are in solo pastorates or as senior pastor. I don't always feel there is a great district-wide connection or support.

Pittman Gingrich: My experiences have been very different than many women, in that I grew up in a congregation that was pastored by a woman. When I was serving in pastoral ministry I was in a congregation that, prior to my arrival, had an ordained woman on staff for 20 years. So I've never had to break through the barriers that some women have had to break through in terms of overcoming a perception that women can't be ministers.

I'm lucky to be serving in Northern Plains District where

women are widely accepted in ministry and in leadership. Right now the moderator, the moderator-elect, and the board chair are all women. Three of our four commissions are chaired by women and one is co-chaired by a woman and a man. Our treasurer is a woman. And half of our cluster ministers are women—in fact I think six of the ten are women.

Lewczak: In Northern Plains District we are very blessed, mostly with a district executive who has a passion for inclusiveness of all those who have the gifts for ministry. In Northern Plains, 50 percent of our pastors are women. I served as chairperson of the Ministry Commission and, because of that, was on the executive committee during some times when we were trying to be in discernment how to be a better district, how to be about God's work where we're planted in the most faithful way we can.

That being said, it does not mean there are not people who really would rather have a man. It is almost like some small congregations are settling, because they can't attract a younger man with a family. So even though we have lots of opportunity for women, and we've seen successful women in ministry—loving, nurturing, teaching, strong pastoral skills, strong preaching skills, strong leadership skills—it's still there, that vision of old.

Q: What do you think accounts for the open atmosphere in Northern Plains District?

Pittman Gingrich: Our district executive, Tim Button-Harrison, has played a role. He is very affirming and encouraging of women and he also is very proactive in seeking out pastors for congregations that have openings. But we also have a long history of strong women in the district, when you compare that to the denominational trend.

Lewczak: We've gone through some really tough times as a district. You know, I think back to the first board meeting I went to, we did such good, intentional work. We've had really great, strong leadership that is really intentional about all voices being heard.

Q: What is the environment for women in ministry across the denomination?

Flory-Steury: Of our pastors, about 18 to 19 percent are women. That includes any pastoral role in a congregation. The growth has been slow, but it's steady. We don't change overnight, and it takes time and attention, and encouragement. Would I like it to be more? Sure.

There are doors that continue to not be open in different parts of our denomination, and I think that's predominantly based on scriptural interpretation. For individuals who have no experience with women in ministry, have not seen it, maybe think a woman can't do it, I simply have said, "Just give it a chance." Give a woman a chance who has been called into this ministry. And by and large that has provided an opening. I think there are many congregations now who would say, "Yeah, it really doesn't matter whether it's male or female, the pastoral role can be fulfilled."

I think it's more challenging when we engage in the scriptural conversations because we can point to various places in the scriptures where we find "male nor female" and "all are called," and others from the same author, Paul, that say women should be silent in church. There's that ongoing tension and conversation.

Pittman Gingrich: In spite of my very different experience I feel the pain of my sisters who struggle to find placements in congregations or who have their authority questioned, or their gifts denied.

Matteson: I'm concerned for where we are across the denomination. Those of us who are in places that happen to be a little more supportive of women have to be mindful of that. Even if I'm in a place that's more friendly, I have many sisters across the denomination who aren't. I'm concerned about places where I know it is not possible to be a woman in pastoral ministry. And I'm concerned about what that does to women's psyche, their sense of call. It's a form of violence to your character, your personhood, when you feel such a deep sense of the Spirit calling you to be in ministry, and then to be blocked.

Bidgood Enders: In more cynical moments I feel really glad that I continue to have a good connection and relationship at Ridgeway, because I'm not sure that there are many churches where I could go. I heard in conversation here [at the Clergy Women's Retreat] that there are a limited number of congregations where there is openness, if you want to serve in a congregational setting—openness in terms of a position being open, openness in terms of willingness to try a woman pastor, openness to who I am theologically, and openness in being a congregation where I can find financial support. If I'm willing to be bi-vocational there are some opportunities, but I think women often are challenged to serve in congregations that say,

FACTS AND FIGURES

- 62 chaplains, of those at least 27 are women
- 397 licensed ministers, of those at least 116 are women (29 percent)
- 1,818 ordained ministers, of those at least 383 are women (21 percent)
- 178 women, in an informal count, were serving in pastoral positions in Church of the Brethren congregations in 2013. Of those at least 84 were sole or lead pastors with the others serving in team ministry, as co-pastors, associate pastors, interim pastors, or pastors for special ministries.
- An informal count of women serving in pastoral positions by district in 2013: Atlantic Northeast 15 (6 serving as sole or lead pastor), Atlantic Southeast 5 (3 sole or lead pastor), Idaho 1, Illinois and Wisconsin 7 (6 sole or lead pastor), Northern Indiana 10 (3 sole or lead pastor), South/Central Indiana 6 (4 sole or lead pastor), Michigan 3 (3 sole or lead pastor), Mid-Atlantic 16 (11 sole or lead pastor), Missouri and Arkansas 4 (2 sole or lead pastor), Northern Plains 15 (7 sole or lead pastor), Northern Ohio 1 (1 sole or lead pastor), Southern Ohio 9 (4 sole or lead pastor), Pacific Northwest 1 (1 sole or lead pastor), Pacific Southwest 12 (5 sole or lead pastor), Middle Pennsylvania 9 (5 sole or lead pastor), Southern Pennsylvania 9 (2 sole or lead pastor), Western Pennsylvania 8 (3 sole or lead pastor), Shenandoah 8 (3 sole or lead pastor), Southeastern 1, Southern Plains 4 (2 sole or lead pastor), Virginia 10 (4 sole or lead pastor), Western Plains 15 (7 sole or lead pastor), West Marva 7 (4 sole or lead pastor).
- 26 district executives, district co-executives, associate district executives, and interim district executives lead the 23 districts of the denomination; of those, at least 9 were women (as of the end of 2013)
- 70 salaried staff (including consultants filling staff level positions) working at denominational agencies (Church of the Brethren 45, Brethren Benefit Trust 19, On Earth Peace 6); of those, at least 36 were women, according to 2013 numbers (Church of the Brethren 23, Brethren Benefit Trust 10, On Earth Peace 3).
- Bethany Theological Seminary faculty numbered 9 in 2013. Of those, 5 were women. The total number of administrative staff at the seminary was 21, of those 13 were women.

This snapshot, an informal accounting of this moment of women in ministry in the denomination, is derived from the 2013 Yearbook of the Church of the Brethren."

“We’ll have a woman because that’s all we can get.”

I’m not sure anything can prepare you for the idea that there’s still that large segment in the church that says, “No matter how gifted a woman is, we’d rather have a man.” And that’s deeply painful.

There are still places where I feel like I have to justify being a woman in ministry. It was a question that was asked by a woman in my licensing interview. It was asked not in a mean way, but how do you respond to that? No man is ever asked, “How do you justify being a man and being called into ministry?” And yet women were the first to be entrusted with the pinnacle piece of our good news as Christians! A somewhat glib response is, if Jesus entrusted that news to a woman, then surely what I say on a Sunday morning, or the care that I offer during the week, must be covered under what God can call a woman to do as well. But I know that’s not accepted everywhere in the denomination, and certainly not everywhere in the district.

I’ve also discovered there are times when I have to look to my ecumenical partners for support and encouragement. For some of the male colleagues of other denominations, I am just an equal, a partner. I don’t feel like I’m competing, I don’t feel like I’m having to prove myself. I am very connected in the local ministerium and in the Pennsylvania Council of Churches and in public advocacy, and that’s very affirming.

Q: What are the opportunities and challenges for women in ministry right now?

Lewczak: Leadership is a movement of the Spirit and who’s called out, not what gender they are, not how old they are, not what color, not what nationality, not any of that. I really believed naively that it was that way everywhere. I look at the younger women in our district and I wonder whether there will be opportunities for them to really be in the power positions in our denomination.

Matteson: I think a challenge can be to find ways to connect with other women in ministry, for mentoring, for mutual support, for encouragement, for processing, for creativity.

This clergy retreat for women is so important for that. It’s so important to find those places to connect.

It’s a challenge, I think, to continue to trust ourselves. To trust women’s ways of knowing. There are ways that women are kind of hard-wired for collaboration and relationality. For women to trust your intuition, to share where the Spirit’s stirring in you, to be collaborative and cooperative, to look for possibility—these are pieces and parts of women’s ways of knowing that I think are a new hope for humanity, that are needed.

Q: What are challenges and invitations for the church?

Flory-Steury: One of the things I always hope for and dream of is that God’s giftedness and God’s call knows no boundaries. I’ve talked about what it means to create a culture of call, and that doesn’t just mean in ministerial leadership. To really do the work that I think Christ calls us to do means calling out the gifts in each of us. You know, the priesthood of all. That’s my hope, that’s my dream, that’s my vision for what it is to serve.

Matteson: We’re missing out if we don’t continue to develop and grow the ways women are called to ministry. I feel like we’re not being as faithful as we could in being stewards of God’s gifts. We’re not letting as much of God’s work be done as could be done, as quickly as it could be done, and maybe as creatively and as beautifully as it could be done. When we don’t call all those women and use all those gifts, we’re shorting God. We’re shorting the world. And I don’t think we’re being as faithful as we could be.

Q: What would you say to young women who are interested in ministry?

Mitchell: I would tell them: your first order of business is pray and seek the Lord in all things. And if you feel strongly that God is leading you in a certain area, do whatever it is that you need to do to be able to accomplish that. If it is going to school, getting more education, then do that. But don’t take the sideline because someone says that you’re a woman and you can’t do it. You know, with God we can do all things. 



THE PATH TO WOMEN'S ORDINATION

by Dana Cassell

Although the conversation about women in ministry had been going on for decades, the question of women's ordination began in earnest at the 1952 Annual Meeting. The Williamson Road congregation in Roanoke, Va., sent a query in 1949, asking whether or not women ought to be allowed equal rights with men in the ministry. That conference appointed a study committee, and the issue came to the floor in 1952 for an intense and heated discussion.

I listened to the Annual Conference tapes of the discussion. Yes, old Annual Conference tapes exist, and should you ever have the opportunity, you really ought to listen to some of them. It's a helpful reminder that we've been doing this discernment thing together for a long time, and that our forebears were divided and confused in the process, just as much as we are today. These are a few observations from those tapes.

Our process remains much the same as it was 50 years ago—and I think, even though we don't have audio from very much before that—even 100 years ago. If sister Cora Fisher, the only woman who spoke during these debates, were to show up this summer in Columbus, she'd probably feel right at home with the way we run our meetings. But, there are a few differences:

First, Cora Fisher really was the only woman who spoke at a microphone during the entire floor discussion of women's ordination. The rest of the speakers were men, and many—you can tell by their polished voices and the heel-rocking rhythm that they got themselves into—were preachers. Since most of the microphone speakers were preachers, and since women weren't officially allowed to "preach" (an 1859 decision approved women's "prophesying" but not teaching or preaching), it begins to make sense why Sister Fisher is the only female voice.

Second, there was a serious emphasis on scripture in the 1952 floor debates. Almost everyone who approached the microphone had a ready scripture reference to support his or her point. At first listen, I thought the disagreement was one between Spirit and Word, whether ultimate authority for our belief and practice lies in the biblical text or in the attention we pay when we gather together to discerning the presence and direction of the Holy Spirit. But I later realized that the question was much more complicated than that.

Another aspect of the 1952 discussion that caught me off guard was the tone with which men talked about women's contribution to the life of the church. From my perspective, 50 years later, I hear heaps of condescension: "I don't want to demean the splendid work of our sisters," they said, or, "We certainly appreciate the extraordinary work done in that peculiar place of women." Actually, the word "splendid" came

A TIMELINE: Key dates for women in ministry in the Church of the Brethren

<p>1834 Annual meeting forbids preaching by "a sister"</p>	<p>1859 Annual meeting makes distinction between teaching, preaching, and prophesying—women are allowed to prophesy but not teach or preach</p>	<p>1881 Annual meeting denies women right to vote</p>	<p>1885 Sisters Aid Societies formed</p>	<p>1891 Annual meeting affirms position of ministers' wives</p>
		<p>1882 Annual meeting grants women right to vote</p>	<p>1886 Sisters Aid Societies forbidden by the annual meeting</p>	<p>1892 General Conference [annual meeting] grants "to sisters all privileges which the Brethren claim for themselves"</p>
		<p>1883 Annual meeting restricts voting rights to delegates, who must be male</p>	<p>1889 Request for women to serve as delegates denied by the annual meeting</p>	



up over and over again, and while it is a useful and charming word, the way these men used it to describe the history of women's service to the church was rather unfortunately demeaning. Several speakers were concerned with placing the burden of ministry on the women—that by ordaining only men, they were “protecting” women from undue hardship.

Finally, Sister Cora Fisher came to the microphone. She admitted that it was not the women of the church who were, by and large, the ones pushing for change. She said that she had heard from many women, women who thought both ways. But she insisted that women ought to be respected for all the work that they were doing. Long known for the work of their hands in service, mission, and teaching, women found themselves expected to minister in only these ways. Sister Fisher disagreed:

“Perhaps this matter of the work with our hands has loomed so big in the eyes of the

church that they've almost forgotten that women do have minds and hearts . . . that at least we be given credit for some spiritual and mental ministry in the church as well as the physical.”

The 1952 conference decided to allow local churches to ordain women. Women could serve and function as ordained ministers in the congregation in which they were working, but their credentials were not recognized outside the bounds of that congregation.

The issue arose again in 1958. This time, there was very little discussion. After only about 15 minutes, Edward Zigler, pastor of the Williamson Road church that had sent the original query, rose and spoke to the conference. “The time is surely here,” he said, “. . . when we ought to remove all the ambiguity and all discrimination based on sex alone.” This is impressive: this was not a new issue. The church had been asking the question and discerning an answer for

over 100 years, officially and unofficially. But Brother Zigler said, “surely”—after all our discussion and discernment and disagreement, surely now the church could come to consensus.

And they did. The 1958 measure “granting women full and unrestricted ordination rights” was passed very strongly by the delegate body.

In some ways, celebrating a 50th anniversary of women in ministry in 2008 was a little bit arbitrary—women were serving in ministerial roles unofficially for many, many years before Annual Conference agreed to fully ordain them. They had been teaching and preaching, prophesying and evangelizing for many years, serving faithfully both God and the church. It just took us a while to formally acknowledge it. [ZU](#)

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1894 Women begin serving as foreign missionaries

1895 Annual meeting officially approves Sisters Aid Societies

1898 Annual meeting approves women delegates at district meetings

1899 Women appear on lists of Annual meeting delegates. Women gain right to represent congregations at district conferences

1922 Annual meeting grants women license to preach

1952 Annual Conference grants women ordination rights in local church

1958 Annual Conference grants women full and unrestricted ordination rights



WILLIAM STAFFORD

The centennial of a Brethren poet

by Robert Hirschfield

This monument is for the unknown good in our enemies. Like a picture their life began to appear: they gathered at home in the evening and sang. Above their fields they saw a new sky. A holiday came and they carried the baby to the park for a party. Sunlight surrounded them.

—“For The Unknown Enemy,” from *Every War Has Two Losers* (Milkweed)

William Stafford, one of the great American poets of the past century, and a member of the Church of the Brethren, was born 100 years ago January 17 in Hutchinson, Kan. Until his death in 1993, he lived a quiet life of deep

engagement: artist, pacifist, contemplative, chronicler of the Kansas soil, who lived most of his life in Oregon.

Sitting with a Stafford poem is like holding in your hands a man’s mind and spirit:

At breakfast while my mother stirred the cereal she said, “You’re studying too hard,” and I would include her face and hands in my glance
—“Living on the Plains 1990,” from *The Way it Is* (Graywolf Press)

The period of his life that brought Stafford in contact with the Church of the Brethren, his internment as a conscientious objector during the second World War, was one he often returned to in his poetry and prose. It was his testing ground, and in Arkansas one afternoon he and two other COs were set upon and nearly lynched by men who accused them of being German spies.

In his essay, “The Mob Scene at McNeil,” Stafford remembered the CO camp director in Arkansas (his camps

in Arkansas and Los Prietos, Calif., were run by Brethren) as “a slow talking of the way of life taught by Jesus Christ,” who cautioned them afterwards not to think of their “neighbors” as “hicks,” but as souls, like other souls, misguided by their government’s costly propaganda machine.

“We remembered, and set out to drain more swamps and put sod in more gullies in Arkansas.”

Los Prietos was an altogether different story. One Sunday afternoon in Los Prietos, a Brethren minister stopped by with his daughter, Dorothy Hope Frantz. Stafford and Dorothy were married a year later. Their son Kim recalls finding among her things after she died the map Stafford drew to get to her house when they first began courting.

After the war, he wrote a book about his CO experiences called *Down In My Heart*. A book of stories and reflections (“What does victory—with Hiroshima—mean?”), it was also his first book, the first of more than 50. It was originally published by Brethren Press, and has remained in print ever since. Oregon State University Press now has it.

Stafford seldom employed religious symbols in his poetry, but his work radiates a care and concern for the earth and those who walk the earth that is deeply spiritual. While he took pains not to pinpoint his spirituality, its arteries flow through such poems as “The Way It Is,” the title poem of the previously mentioned book, and the poem that his poet son, Kim Stafford, uses to introduce his wise and sensitive memoir, *Early Morning: Remembering My Father* (also a Graywolf book):

There’s a thread you follow. It goes among
things that change. But it doesn’t change.
People wonder about what you are pursuing.
You have to explain about the thread.
But it is hard for others to see.
While you hold it you can’t get lost.
Tragedies happen; people get hurt
or die; and you suffer and get old.
Nothing you do can stop time’s unfolding.
You don’t ever let go of the thread.

Hearing a poem like that, one is struck by how riddle-sounding it is, how indirect. One might well imagine it emerging from the mysterious East. But as a man who woke every day at 3 a.m. to write, Stafford could not help but see the world as an entity always evolving from darkness into light, from silence into sound—a mysterious place.

The poet, in his own words, put it this way: “I might describe myself as a religious poet whose vocabulary, reference points, and surrounding culture are phrased in Christian terms.”

In one of his CO poems, he writes:

In camps like that, if I should go again,
I’d still study the gospel and play the accordion.
—“In Camp,” from *The Way It Is*

Christian terminology is fitted with the wings of singular interpretation and imagination in “The Gospel Is Whatever Happens”:

When we say, “Breath,”
a feather starts to fly,
to be itself.
When we talk, truth
is what we mean to say.

A weathervane is courteous and accurate:
the more it yields,
the more wind lies
where it points the way.

—“Sound of the Ax” (The University of Pittsburgh Press)

Finally, as Stafford’s anti-war witness tends to overshadow his other concerns, it is important to bear in mind in our ecologically conscious time that this poet wrote some of the deepest and most evocative nature poems that we have. Poems that make us see not only the beauty of the land, but the profound interlocking of humans and land in terms of a life lived.

The poem “Ask Me,” the title poem of the new Graywolf book, offers wisdom as a condensed and luminous gift, a kind of scripture. It begins with the lines:

Some time when the river is ice ask me
mistakes I have made. Ask me whether
what I have done is my life.

And finishes thus:

I will listen to what you say.
You and I can turn and look
at the silent river and wait. We know
the current is there, hidden; and there
are comings and goings from miles away
that hold the stillness exactly before us.
What the river says, that is what I say.

—William Stafford, *American prophet of the Great Plains*

Robert Hirschfeld is a writer living in New York, NY.

Cleared for take-off

by Jeff Carter

Soon after I was announced as the new president of Bethany Theological Seminary, my wife, Kim, was volunteering at our youngest daughter's school where she fell into the most curious of conversations. My three girls were well aware of my job change and, once it was official, they received permission to speak of our move openly with others.

Kim was in Julie's first grade class one day when the teacher remarked, "Sounds like a big change is coming for the Carter family."

"Yes, it is a big change," my wife responded.

"I imagine life will be different in Indiana than it is here in northern Virginia," the teacher said.

"Yes, I imagine it will be."

"Now, your husband has a new job, yes?"

"Yes."

"How long has your husband been a pastor at the church?"

"Nearly 20 years."

"Wow, this is going to be quite a change," the teacher noted. Then there was a pause and silence—the type of unsure silence that accompanies hesitancy. "So, what exactly is he going to do at the cemetery?"

"Cemetery?"

"Yes, Julie says her dad has an important job at the cemetery."

Kim smiled, "No, *seminary*. He is going to be the president of a seminary."

"Oh," said the teacher with much relief, "that does make more sense."

Since taking on this new job, I've spent a lot of time on airplanes and can nearly recite from memory the common refrain of safety information given at the beginning of each flight. I've also learned the difference between one bell for the use of laptops, two bells in preparing for landing, and three bells, which means something out of the ordinary is happening. But my favorite words when aboard a plane just might be the ones that come from the pilot: "We are number one on the runway and have been cleared for take-off."

When flying, I am assured of only two things: take-off and landing. Everything else is an adventure. In order to fly we need to take off and, if Newton is correct, whatever goes up must come down, if only to refuel, rest, or redirect—a kind of aeronautical renewal.

There is an important relationship between being grounded and flying, or having roots and taking wing. What happens with a satellite that does not land? It either burns up in the earth's atmosphere or, in time, drifts off into space and loses its connection to earth.

Clearly, we do not want to be adrift in the atmosphere. But neither do we want to be root-bound, so mired in what holds us down that we end up withering.

I remember hearing a group of pastors planning a trip to Schwarzenau, Germany, with the expressed interest of interviewing the Brethren there and hearing how they have remained faithful to the first group of eight who were baptized there in 1708. I thought to myself, "There are no Brethren in Schwarzenau; they all left." While an understanding of the past is important when it comes to knowing who we are and where we've come from, it is sometimes done at the expense of renewal. It becomes a memorializing of our heritage rather than a celebration of long-held values that are expressed today in new ways. It is easy—even with good intentions—to become root-bound.

But it is also easy to drift. If we hire, *then* call, *then* educate pastors, we run the risk of drift, placing the desire to fill pulpits above affirming our values, which comes through the intentional process of formation—intentional formation—in the words of the apostle Paul.



Randy Miller



Writing near the end of his life, Paul sums up his theology in his letter to the Romans. You can hear behind his words the Shema, the daily prayer of faithful Jews: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”

In Romans, Paul returns to his roots, a ritual from the past, a touchstone. But he does not leave the Shema as a simple recitation or reflection. For Paul, it is about living. Loving God with heart and mind allows that love to transform all of life, and such love allows God to be known. But in working with churches, Paul knows that transformation or renewal is difficult and takes work. One must be intentional in how individuals and a community are formed. So rather than begin with a list of “to dos,” Paul begins and ends with praise.

Praise is not something we do alone. Rather it is the beginning of our worship and offers us a vision of community, a community guided by the “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all” (Eph. 4: 5-6). And as we worship together in praise, giving thanks for what God has done in Christ Jesus, we are renewed, transformed as the body of Christ which, for Paul, leads us to new life and an invitation for others to join us—together. Paul’s beginning blessing is to us together, and his final sending words are to us, together.

When I’m at an airport, I see people trying to figure me out. I’m often in a suit jacket and am carrying small, black suitcases. I imagine people think I am a business traveler. Why do I think they are trying to figure me out? Because I am trying to figure them out. I see children with their parents going on vacation, older people on retirement trips, and returning college athletic teams. I imagine there are some who are excited about what lies ahead, and others who would rather remain on the ground. There are likely some who are anxious about what awaits them when they land. In other words, there are a lot of expectations, thoughts, and feelings. All of us are different and, in many ways, separate. And then, once aboard the plane, we hear the message from the pilot: “We are number one on the runway and cleared for take-off.” And there we go—together.

Together we have hopes and dreams—we share a faith and seek to be faithful. Together we—individually and as the church—love our God and our neighbor.

I spent 10 days this past fall traveling west of the Mississippi. On that trip, I found that we are indeed very different. Our weather is different (the snow of Minnesota and the sun of Arizona). Our food is different (fresh fruits and vegetables of California and the starches of Kansas). And our churches are different (by size and theology).

Yet, in spite of our differences, we are deeply rooted in a common heritage. Together we gather around scripture, and together we discern the mind of Christ. Together we take Jesus as our example, and together we interpret our world through witness of his life, death, and resurrection. Together, we worship the God who calls us and blesses us, and calls us to be a blessing to this world. Together we have hopes and dreams—we share a faith and seek to be faithful. Together we—individually and as the church—love our God and our neighbor.

With this in mind, I look ahead and wonder what is next for us. Where are we as a denomination headed? Will I one day be the president of the cemetery?

No!

What we need today is a church that is rooted but not root-bound; a church that is ready to fly but not set adrift. What we need today is a non-anxious church in the midst of an anxious world. What we need today are individuals and communities willing to be a transforming presence in a world of conforming expectations.

Church of the Brethren, you are number one on the runway and you have been cleared for take-off—together. God speed! 🙌

Jeff Carter is president of Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind.

Simultaneous Windows (1912), oil painting by Robert Delaunay (French artist, 1865 – 1941)



The irritating call to by Tim Harvey love one another

Annual Conference moderator Nancy Heishman has chosen the theme “Living as Courageous Disciples” to guide our denomination through the 2014 Conference. Along with this, she has asked each of our congregations to study Paul’s letter to the Philippians. Some of us may even be accepting her challenge to memorize this short letter. I look forward to hearing the results of that project!

Each Wednesday evening in my own congregation, a small group gathers after supper for Bible study. This spring, we are following Nancy’s call by studying Philippians. Between now and Annual Conference this summer, I will invite you each month to look in on our study. This month’s article is based on Acts 16:6-40 and Philippians 1:1-11. Before we begin, I encourage you to read those passages.

Love forged in common mission

Paul’s deep affection for this congregation is quickly apparent through his choice of words. He prays for them often and is thrilled at the spiritual growth that is happening in their lives. Pay close attention to the ways Paul affirms and blesses these

Christians. If you were to write a similar statement for your own congregation, or for the Church of the Brethren as a whole, what would you say?

I suspect that the depth of Paul’s love for them was connected to both the difficulty he encountered in founding this congregation, as well as their difficult ministry setting. While traveling through northwest Asia (Acts 16:6-10), Paul’s mission had begun to flounder. Roadblocks appeared at every turn. When the way seemed most unclear, Paul was given a vision of a “man of Macedonia” pleading for him to come to that region. In response to that Spirit-given dream, Paul and his companions turned their attention to the city of Philippi, the leading Roman city in the region. Residents of Philippi enjoyed many of the same privileges as citizens of Rome. While religious options abounded (except for Judaism, apparently), the traditions of Roman culture were what was most important to the residents of this city.

Finding no Jewish synagogue in Philippi, Paul searched for a place to pray. He found Lydia and her household praying by the river. After hearing the gospel, they became Paul’s first converts in the city. Soon after, Paul cast a demon out of a slave girl, and

was arrested by the girl's owners. Paul was never one to lose an opportunity to share the gospel, and the jailer and his household became the second group of people to receive salvation.

Scripture does not tell us what became of the Philippian congregation between Paul's time with them and the time he wrote to them. In fact, there is very little in the Acts 16 passage that helps us interpret the Philippian letter. Obviously, the congregation grew both in number and in depth of faith. Verse 1 mentions "bishops and deacons," indicating that the congregation grew and developed leadership from within. And if their growth and development bore any similarities to that of the initial core group, they would have been a very diverse congregation. I often have wondered what became of Lydia, the jailer, and even the slave girl Paul set free. Did they remain part of the congregation? Did more like them join the congregation? How did they work out the inevitable challenges that came with a shared life among diverse people?

The necessary pairing of relationship and truth

In all likelihood, the Philippian congregation has much in common with yours and mine. Eugene Peterson shares an accurate and honest understanding of congregational life when he says:

"[congregations are a] haphazard collection of people who somehow get assembled into pews on Sundays, half-heartedly sing a few songs most of them don't like, tune in and out of a sermon according to the state of their digestion and the preacher's decibels, awkward in their commitments and jerky in their prayers. But the people in these pews are also people who suffer deeply and find God in their suffering. These are men and women who make love commitments, are faithful to them through trial and temptation, and bear fruits of righteousness, Spirit-fruits that bless the people around them" (*Under the Unpredictable Plant*, 23).

We know those people well, because we are those people. We should avoid the temptation of putting the Philippian Christians on a pedestal, imagining them to be more faithful than we are simply because we read about them in the New Testament.

What does spiritual growth look like in congregations like these? How do we learn to nurture our own faith, invite other persons to the life of discipleship, and challenge the wrongs of the world around us? Even more than that, how are we to get along with one another?

To this Paul spoke directly. His specific prayer for them

was "that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless" (Philippians 1:9-10). Read that passage carefully, and notice that two things of value are linked together: relationship and truth. Writing to Christians in a leading city of the Roman Empire who are surrounded by people who care more about their civic traditions than their religious faith, Paul says that their love will help the Christians determine what is best. It will be only as they work with the challenges of loving God, neighbor, and enemy that they will ultimately understand God's truth working in their own lives. It even may be that in this pursuit of both "love" and "knowledge," they will realize that their neighbor and their enemy are the same person.

Some of this ought to sound familiar to us. If we are honest, our congregations are not very different from the one in Philippi. We can be a diverse group of people—in opinion at least, if not in life circumstances. Those of us in the US live in the leading empire of our day. We are surrounded by a society of people whose connections to the church are, quite frankly, much weaker than we consider them to be. Within the church we debate things endlessly, from various line items in the church budget to the role of the peace witness in a time of war, to human sexuality. Some say we should just set aside debating, accept our differences, and move on. At least we love the Church of the Brethren. Others say we must determine clear lines of doctrinal truth and insist all members toe the line. We can't be a church without a shared understanding of gospel truth.

When we're tempted to choose either love or knowledge, we find Paul doesn't let us off the hook so easily. He won't let the Philippians—or us—choose one or the other. Philippians 1:9-10 says that our love is a critical component of our pursuit of truth. To choose one or the other is to choose less than what Jesus asks of the church.

We often think of courageous discipleship in terms of those persons who leave behind the familiar settings of home to follow God to the mission field—not unlike what Sister Nancy and her family did to serve in the Dominican Republic. But for most of us, courageous discipleship is needed to just put up with the person sitting on the pew across from us. Irritating though it can be, we are stuck with one another in the bonds of love as we pursue what is best. 

Tim Harvey is pastor of Central Church of the Brethren in Roanoke, Va. He was Annual Conference moderator for the Church of the Brethren in 2012.

Paul says that their love will help them determine what is best. It will be only as they work with the challenges of loving God, neighbor, and enemy that they will ultimately understand God's truth working in their own lives.



The group of church leaders at an ecumenical consultation on Syria, hosted by the World Council of Churches in January, included Church of the Brethren general secretary Stanley J. Noffsinger (second row at center).

International Christian leaders call for end to armed conflict in Syria

In anticipation of the Geneva 2 international talks on Syria which took place Jan. 22, some 30 church leaders gathered a week ahead of time at the World Council of Churches headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, to call for substantial action to end the armed conflict. Church of the Brethren general secretary Stanley J. Noffsinger was one of those who participated.

The group—convinced there was no military solution—said there needed to be “immediate cessation of all armed confrontation and hostility within Syria,” thus ensuring that “all vulnerable communities in Syria and refugees in neighboring countries receive appropriate humanitarian assistance”

and that “a comprehensive and inclusive process toward establishing a just peace and rebuilding Syria” should be developed.

The church leaders’ message was delivered to the Geneva 2 talks by Lakhdar Brahimi, the United Nations-Arab League joint representative for Syria.

Church leaders at the Ecumenical Consultation on Syria on Jan. 15-17 came from the Middle East, the Vatican, Russia, European nations, and the US, with representatives from Syrian churches, Middle East Council of Churches, Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants, and Anglicans.

Puerto Rico to become 24th district in the Church of the Brethren

The Church of the Brethren congregations in Puerto Rico acted Jan. 25, to begin the process of becoming the denomination’s 24th district. Up to now, the Puerto Rico churches have been part of Atlantic Southeast District, grouped together with the congregations in Florida.

“It was a very good meeting. A historic day as they described it!” said Mary Jo Flory-Steury, associate general secretary of the Church of the Brethren, in an announcement of the decision by the Puerto Rican Church of the Brethren Assembly.

As part of the process of becoming a new district, the Puerto Rico churches will be selecting a district executive and working on the process and other structures to form the new district. Said Atlantic Southeast District executive minister John Mueller in his e-mail about the decision, “I look forward to this new chapter in our relationship and extend my best wishes and support to this endeavor.”

States link Selective Service to driver's licenses

When young American men turn 18, they are required to register with the Selective Service System (SSS) because of federal law. That law requires almost every male citizen, as well as immigrant men living in the United States, to register in the event of a military draft. Women are not required to register, nor are men 26 and older.

For officials, a high compliance rate is important, since that would mean that any military draft that might come up would be fair. To make sure there is 100 percent compliance, most of states have

A conscientious objector checklist, from the Call of Conscience curriculum published by the Church of the Brethren at www.brethren.org/co.



created legislation that links SSS registration with the process of applying for a driver's license or state identification card.

Men who fail to register with Selective Service are not eligible for programs and benefits that Congress, 41 states and territories, and the District of Columbia have linked to registration for the draft. That includes student loans and grants for college, most government jobs, and job training. Also, immigrants who fail to register when they are at least 18 but not yet 26, may be denied citizenship.

Typical state legislation instructs the Department of Public Safety or Motor Vehicles to include a consent statement on all applications or renewals for driver's permits, licenses, and identification cards, the SSS website says. The statement tells the applicant that by signing the application, he consents to his registration with the SSS.

For those who do not wish to register for the draft or non-registrant conscientious objectors, this legislation could be a problem. According to Bill Galvin, counseling coordinator at the Center on Conscience and War, there is at least one option. "One option that people have is just

not apply for a driver's license until they turn 26 years old," he said.

However, young men who do not register for the draft may be denied financial aid for college through the federal government. Galvin said that the Center on Conscience and War may be able to help provide funding, if that happens.

The Center on Conscience and War, based in Washington, D.C., was founded in the 1940s by the Historic Peace Churches—Church of the Brethren, Mennonites, and Quakers. According

to Galvin, the center exists to help protect the rights of conscientious objectors.

Since the Center on Conscience and War is opposed to a military draft and conscription, it does not want the law that protects the rights of conscientious objectors to go away, Galvin said when asked about the

necessity of a Selective Service System in light of automatic draft registration in so many states. If Selective Service were done away with, the Center on Conscience and War could still exist he said.

"Churches do support us, especially if they have conscientious objectors in their congregations," said Galvin. "I believe that as long as there is war, there will be conscientious objection. The need for our work will go on."

Director of Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) Dan McFadden offered his thoughts about the legislation that links Selective Service registration with driver's licenses. "BVS would provide an opportunity for alternative service [in the event of a draft], and it has done so in previous drafts."

Not many people know about the legislation that links registration with driver's licenses, he said. "For most people, this is not a big deal. However for a conscientious objector, if you are not registered and you are in college, the government can block federal

student loans."

If that happens, McFadden said that some Church of the Brethren-related schools, such as Manchester University, "will help with student loans, if you are not able to get loans because of not registering for the draft."

"This legislation does not really matter if you are planning on registering with the Selective Service," said McFadden. "You have to selectively say that you do not want to, by sending in materials."

"The Selective Service draft system is one place where the federal government recognizes conscientious objectors," McFadden said. If the current Selective Service System were dismantled, "there is no guarantee that a new selective service put back into place in the future would recognize the right to conscientious objection," McFadden said. "If they do away with the system, conscientious objectors would not receive any recognition."

While there is no official way to register as a conscientious objector, men may inform the government that they are conscientious objectors by filling out a paper form and writing a personal statement.

According to McFadden, conscientious objectors should send in paperwork to the Selective Service using the "mail-back" registration forms that are available at any US Post Office. Write, "I am a conscientious objector," and make several photocopies before mailing the form to Selective Service. Conscientious objectors should make several copies of the form and their personal statement, to keep for themselves, and mail a copy to be kept on file by the denomination. Mail to the Church of the Brethren, Attn: Global Mission and Service Office, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

Information about conscientious objection including a check list to prepare evidence to support a CO claim, and other helpful resources, are available at www.brethren.org/CO.

—Lucas Kauffman is a senior at Manchester University in North Manchester, Ind., and a January term intern with the Church of the Brethren News Services

upcoming events

March 2
Transfiguration
Sunday

March 4 Webinar
on Intergenerational
Relationships, led by
 Youth and Young Adult
 Ministries director Becky
 Ulom Naugle
 (go to www.brethren.org/webcasts)

March 5 Ash
Wednesday

March 7 World
Day of Prayer

March 14-17
Mission and
Ministry Board
meeting, Church of
 the Brethren General
 Offices, Elgin, Ill.

March 16 One
Great Hour of
Sharing offering
emphasis

March 21-24
Ecumenical
Advocacy Days,
 Washington, D.C.

March 28-30
Intercultural
Gathering, hosted
 by Pacific Southwest
 District

April 13
Palm Sunday

April 17
Maundy Thursday

April 18
Good Friday

April 20
Easter Sunday

EYN report more deaths in attacks in Nigeria

“It is always very difficult to report about a Boko Haram attack,” writes one of the staff of Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria (EYN—the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria), reporting yet more violence in northeastern Nigeria. The EYN staff member wrote in an e-mail to the Global Mission and Service office that the attack on Sunday in his village at Wagga Chakawa “came as a surprise to many people.”

Boko Haram is an extremist Islamist sect that has been attacking villages in remote areas, government facilities such as police stations and army posts, banks, mosques and moderate Muslims, and churches and Christians.

The EYN staff reported: “Boko Haram . . . are divided into different groups and their strategy of operation differs. The operation in Wagga Chakawa started with a road block. Wagga

Chakawa is a place where different tribes from Borno and Adamawa settled for farming, and it is close to a forest where most people go for firewood. On Jan. 26 the sects mounted a big road block particularly screening the passengers that were going for firewood.

“A report from a Muslim eyewitness said he was freed at the first and second road blocks because they only asked him his religion. He said he postponed his business of the day because he witnessed many Christians being slaughtered in his presence. It was after the road check that they went to the Catholic church for killing and burning. About four houses were burnt, the church was also burnt, and about 22 people died as a result of the attack.”

The EYN staff member closed his message with the prayer, “God have mercy.”

Chinese healthcare professionals visit with Brethren

Eric Miller and Ruoxia Li hosted a small group of Chinese healthcare professionals and business people who visited the United States Jan 7-20. The mission of their trip was to learn about elder care and hospice in America.

The group visited Bridgewater (Va.) Retirement Community, a Church of the Brethren related facility, as well as Good Samaritan Hospice,

Adult Day Services at Virginia Tech, and the Yale Program on Aging. In Roanoke, Va., they joined the Wednesday night fellowship at Central Church of Brethren. Becky and Harry Rhodes from Central Church hosted the guests in their home, where the Chinese guests experienced hymn singing, home-cooked meals, and American hospitality.

They also visited Washington,

D.C., and New York City during their trip.

Previously, a group of physicians from Pingding, Shanxi, where Brethren missionaries founded a church and hospital, participated in a similar tour of the US, and church members and medical professionals from Virginia have visited China.

Media in Roanoke, Va., covered the trip in articles in the Roanoke Star newspaper and on WDBJ Channel 7.



A group of Chinese healthcare professionals visited Brethren in Virginia and some Church of the Brethren facilities during a tour of the US this January. The group is interested in learning about elder care and hospice care in the United States. Shown here, the Chinese guests at Good Samaritan Hospice with Sue Ranson, a member of Roanoke (Va.) First Church of the Brethren.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

Malinda Berry, assistant professor of theological studies and director of the MA program at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind., is taking the position of assistant professor of theology and ethics at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, effective July 1. Berry began at Bethany in 2009, teaching a range of courses in theology and guiding MA students in research and the writing of theses. Her accomplishments include establishing a distance learning Connections track for the MA program and giving leadership to the strengthening of the MA curriculum during

the seminary's recent curriculum review.

Carrie Eikler has been named half-time coordinator of the Training in Ministry (TRIM) and Education for Shared Ministry (EFSM) programs at the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership. The academy is a ministry training partnership of the Church of the Brethren and Bethany Theological Seminary. Eikler will continue as co-pastor of Morgantown (W.Va.) Church of the Brethren/Mennonite Church USA (a dually affiliated congregation), where she has served since 2007.

Glenna Thompson has been named office assistant for Materials Resources,

in New Windsor, Md. Previously she was resource development associate and general administrator at IMA World Health.

Darlene Hylton has been named part-time office assistant for Brethren Disaster Ministries, in New Windsor. Previously she assisted with databases for BDM and IMA.

Tammy Chudy has been promoted to assistant director of employee benefits at Brethren Benefit Trust. She has served BBT for over 11 years, and recently was interim manager of operations for both the Brethren Pension Plan and Brethren Insurance Services.



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Saving Mr. Banks—and P.L. Travers

I have loved the film *Mary Poppins* all my life. For a musical child in a musical family, it was Sunday evening manna. To me, *Mary Poppins* was practically holy, born of creative genius by a soul who understood the leverage of playfulness. So, I was quite surprised to learn of a movie concerning the considerable difficulties involved in making the beloved film.

Saving Mr. Banks is about P. L. Travers (Emma Thompson), who authored a slate of popular children's books featuring her novel character Mary Poppins, and her struggle with allowing



RYAN HARRISON

Mary Poppins to be "Disneyfied." Due to financial difficulties, Travers is compelled to fly from London to California to help administer the adaptation of her books into a full-length feature film with the ever-charming Walt Disney (Tom Hanks). The collaboration is anything but effortless, with Travers repeatedly wielding the power of her rights to the story as a guillotine threatening to end the entire proposal.

If *Mary Poppins* is "practically perfect in every way," Travers is equally chronically pinched. Still, there are reasons for Travers' unremitting sense of dis-ease, and the film sits entirely upon the well-executed development of this part of the story. In short, Travers' dysfunctional family history connects her present unhappiness with the creation of *Mary Poppins*, who we discover is actually something of a savior figure.

Travers is rancorous because she is wounded. This isn't news, really. After all, isn't that why most unpleasant people act the way they do? The difference is that Travers' response to her pain was to create a make-believe nanny who could fix the problems that had caused her so much suffering. And this is why, when happy, smiling, gets-what-he-wants Disney approaches her with designs to take *Mary Poppins* and turn her into an enchanting, spontaneous, songbird of a nanny who makes medicine taste like candy and chores a magical game, Travers staunchly resists.

Yet, there is a tremendous amount of heart in this film and a large portion of it is due to Disney's realization of just how important *Mary Poppins* is to Travers, and how this changes his ap-

proach to the entire matter. Ultimately, Disney perceives Travers' struggle and meets her where she is by revealing his own hidden pain. The balm he offers her—the opportunity to share *Mary Poppins* with the world in a way that honors Travers' psychic need for a figure that can heal a fractured family—is sufficient for her to release control just enough for something new to be born.

And there it is: *Saving Mr. Banks* whispers to my heart about the transformative power of release, of letting go. Indeed, the film hinges on Travers' ability to let go of her unfortunate past, and of her need to rigidly define *Mary Poppins*.

Travers illustrated how the wounds of childhood can misshape our responses to life. She believed that if she could exert control over everything, she could somehow undo the wrongs of the past or perhaps keep them from circling back to haunt her in a new form. But freedom comes through expansion, not constriction, such that old wounds can be met with new responses. Thus, Disney became a kind of God figure who could re-write the tragic parts of her life on screen to the benefit of all. But here's the lesson: this redemption was possible only after Travers released her anxieties and her pain into his care and allowed them to be transformed.

Was the story true? Not entirely. It was, in fact, "Disneyfied" to tug more heartstrings and create more harmony than there actually was. But does that matter? I don't think so. Fictional stories have taught important life lessons for millennia. Disney said it this way: "That's what storytellers do. . . . They bring hope." In this case, the hopeful message is that letting go of our fears and failings makes room for new endings through which redemption becomes imaginable.

After seeing *Saving Mr. Banks*, I re-watched *Mary Poppins*. I saw new themes, new ways of understanding why the story develops and ends the way it does. My experience of *Mary Poppins* will always be deeper now, richer. Fastidiously factual or not, *Saving Mr. Banks* has replaced my childhood enjoyment with a more mature appreciation for imagination's power to heal. **Z!**

Ryan Harrison attends La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren where he started and led monthly Spiritual Cinema Circle gatherings for more than five years. He is the director of Resident Life & Wellness at Hillcrest Homes, a Church of the Brethren retirement community.

ABOUT THE MOVIE

Title: *Saving Mr. Banks*. **DVD release:** Mar. 18. **Running time:** 125 minutes. **Director:** John Lee Hancock. **Writers:** Kelly Marcel and Sue Smith. **MPAA rating:** PG-13. "I think we love this story because the redemption story it tells is one we never tire of hearing," says *Christian Post* op-ed contributor Jennifer Roback Morse. "The word 'Disney' has become synonymous with cutesy, sugarcoated escapism. But that is not what Disney studios have offered us here. We want to hear the story of how people pulled themselves together and put their families back together. And that just happens to be the cosmic Christian story of redemption and hope, writ small in each of our lives."



Youth Peace Travel Team announced

Members of the 2014 Youth Peace Travel Team have been announced. They are:

- Chris Bache of La Cañada, Calif., and La Verne Church of the Brethren
- Christy Crouse of Warrensburg, Mo., and Warrensburg Church of the Brethren
- Jake Frye of McPherson, Kan., and Monitor Church of the Brethren
- Shelley West of Union, Ohio, and Happy Corner Church of the Brethren

The first Youth Peace Travel Team was formed in the summer of 1991 as a cooperative effort of a number of Church of the Brethren programs. Since that year, a team has been fielded every summer, and travels to Brethren camps throughout the US. Their goal is to talk with other young people about the Christian message and the Brethren tradition of peacemaking. Allow this year's team to introduce themselves!

Christopher Bache

"Hello, my name is Christopher Bache. I am a junior at Franklin and Marshall College, finishing up an economics major and pursuing another in mathematics. I grew up in California attending the La Verne Church of the Brethren. It was at Camp La Verne that I first learned how to survive without my parents and electronic devices. I enjoy any and all sports, reading, card games, and storytelling. I am really excited to get to spend time at different Brethren camps this summer and speaking on peace and nonviolence."



Christy Crouse

"I am a freshman at Truman State University in Missouri, pursuing a political science and Spanish double major and international studies and Asian studies minors. I chose these fields because I am fascinated by politics and other cultures, countries, and languages—plus, I love to travel. Growing up, I attended Camp Hammond Mill, a Brethren camp



in southern Missouri. It is about as close to heaven as I can imagine, with people of all ages sharing time away from the normal stresses of life. I am excited to share the message of peace with others at camps around the US."

Jake Frye

"I'm Jake Frye and I'm currently a sophomore at Kansas State University pursuing a triple major in kinesiology, nutrition, and dietetics. I grew up going to Camp Mount Hermon every summer. It was there that I also got my first experiences as both a counselor and a cook in the camping environment. Last summer I had the privilege of being a counselor at Camp Bethel. I'm super excited for the opportunity to help spread Jesus' awesome peace to many new people, and for me to learn from them as much as they learn from me."



Shelley West

"Hi friends! My name is Shelley West. My home congregation and favorite place in the whole world is Happy Corner Church of the Brethren. I'm currently a sophomore at the University of Portland, where I am studying nursing and social justice. I learned how to be a camper at Woodland Altars, and how to be a counselor at Camp Bethel. This summer I'm looking forward to being a messenger of Jesus' radical peace to spirited new faces in magnificent new places."

The team is sponsored each year by the Church of the Brethren Youth and Young Adult Ministry, the Ministry office, and the office of Public Witness; the Outdoor Ministries Association; and On Earth Peace.





Daily bread

Few things are as comforting as the aroma of fresh baked bread drifting through the kitchen. Even better is slicing through its crunchy crust and breathing in the steam. Add butter. Bliss.

But it seems that these days, homemade bread is something of a novelty. It's a specialty item for a special meal, or the perfect gift to deliver to a sick friend. One of my pals bakes bread in between jobs, because being home all day allows for the waiting, the punching down, the waiting, the baking, the waiting.

That's probably why homemade bread is a rarity. Too

much waiting. Who has the time or attention span? Even my retired grandmother is too busy with her volunteer schedule, church duties, and daily routine to consider baking bread. What a luxury that would be!

And yet we pray that God would be so generous as to give us our daily bread.

My parents are extreme hobbyists. When they find a new one, they research every square inch before diving in with complete dedication. Bread is the perfect example. Well,

flour, to be exact.

Last year, Mom and Dad decided they wanted to make their own bread from scratch—and I mean, scratch. They found a farmer who would sell them wheat berries in bulk. They invested in a hand-operated wheat grinder. They experimented with recipes, and now, they have perfected a recipe for a delectable whole wheat loaf.

During their research my folks learned an interesting thing: flour doesn't last very long. Wheat berries can stay sealed in a cool, dry place for months, but as soon as they're ground, the little jewels start losing nutritional value. In fact, fresh flour is at its nutritional peak for just about one day.

Give us our daily bread.

I realize that being able to grind flour and bake bread on a daily basis is a long shot for many of us. In fact, insisting on it would probably complicate our lives, rather than simplify.

But I wonder what other benefits we might reap by regularly engaging in the ritual of mixing, waiting, punching, waiting, baking, waiting . . . What rewards might we find beyond the satisfaction of a thick, warm slice of bread?

Perhaps a better exercise in simplicity is to be intentional with the time. To pay attention during the waiting, spend it in prayer or meditation, and ultimately being grateful for a generous God who supplies our so many needs, every day. **AM**

Mandy Garcia is associate director of donor communications for the Church of the Brethren.



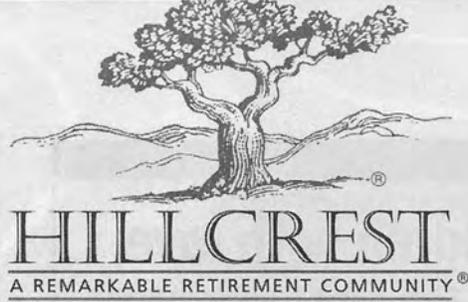
MANDY GARCIA

Realistically, baking bread requires more time than many of us have to offer on a regular basis. Still, there is a way to mix rich, delicious, whole grain bread into your routine if you have five minutes to spare before bedtime.

Mix together in your largest mixing bowl (I use a two-gallon bucket):

- 3 cups of warm water
- 1 tablespoon of salt
- 1 tablespoon of active dry yeast
- 1.5 cups of whole wheat flour
- 1/4 cup flax seed
- 1/4 cup millet
- 4 cups bread flour

Cover the mixture with a towel and leave on your counter over-night. While you're sleeping, the bread dough will rise and fall. In the morning, (or whenever you're ready for fresh bread), oil two standard bread pans and fill each with half the dough. Bake at 375 degrees for 45 minutes, or until the bottom of the loaf sounds hollow when you knock on it. TIP: I often bake one loaf on Sunday afternoon and leave the other in the fridge covered in plastic wrap to be baked later in the week. Of course, baking both loaves and giving one away could be a whole new layer of this practice of daily bread baking.



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Church of the Brethren

Upstanding values

I was delighted to read the profile of Jerry O'Donnell in the November 2013 issue. I was thus dismayed to read the letter in last month's issue condemning O'Donnell for his work. As someone who knows O'Donnell personally, I can attest that he is in fact of the most upstanding "values" any Brethren could wish for. He is a good man, a faithful Christian, and a humble public servant. I would encourage the author of that letter to next time take a deep breath, then do a little more research before picking on an individual, to find out what he—and not just his employer—is like. Wholesale derision of an individual's values and character has no place in a Christian publication.

Audrey deCoursey
Portland, Ore.

Too much negativity

I enjoy reading MESSENGER. I often turn first to the letters section. Almost always there is a letter about homosexuality or reference to sexuality with a letter. While I think we should



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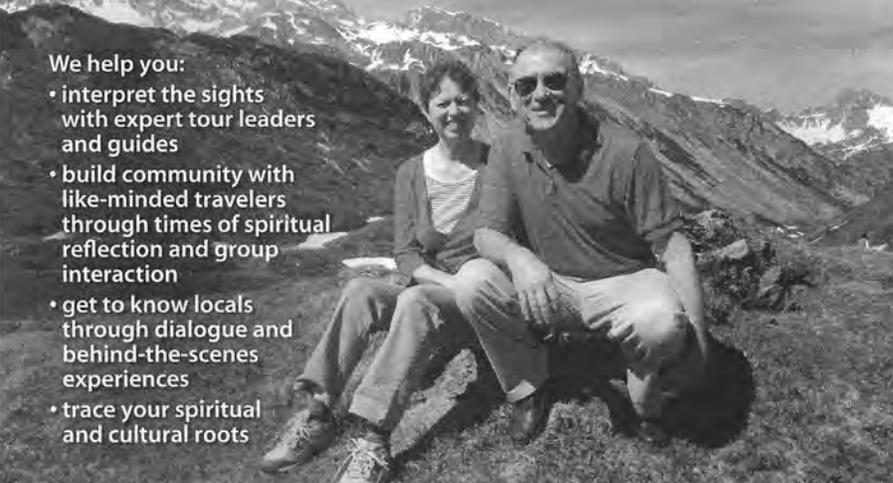
talk about this important issue, it seems there is a lot of negativity and sometimes outright hostility toward homosexuals. It seems to me that a person's sexuality is only a part of a person's make-up, but the tendency is to judge homosexuals negatively overall. We discount what that person's gifts and talents may be and what contributions they may make to the wider community. I believe that we are born with our sexuality intact and that God does not make mistakes. Now I think we should focus on issues that we may possibly be able to do something about. For example, treating and/or curing mental illness, the rampant obesity problem in our country, and promoting our concern for peace.

Carol Cory
Vienna, Va.

Enough dialogue!

After reading the January/February issue, I find it rather amusing that quite a few articles are pleading with the folks to dialogue, dialogue, and then re-dialogue. It is stated that if you don't you're narrow, closed, intolerant, in

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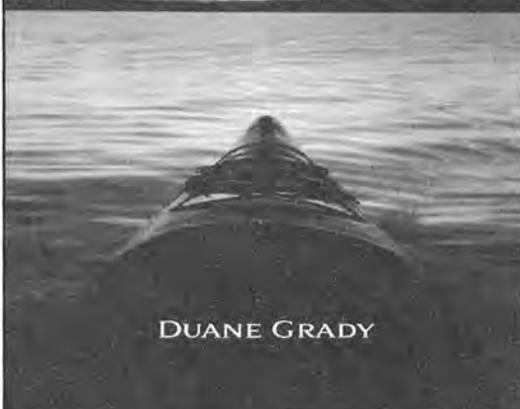


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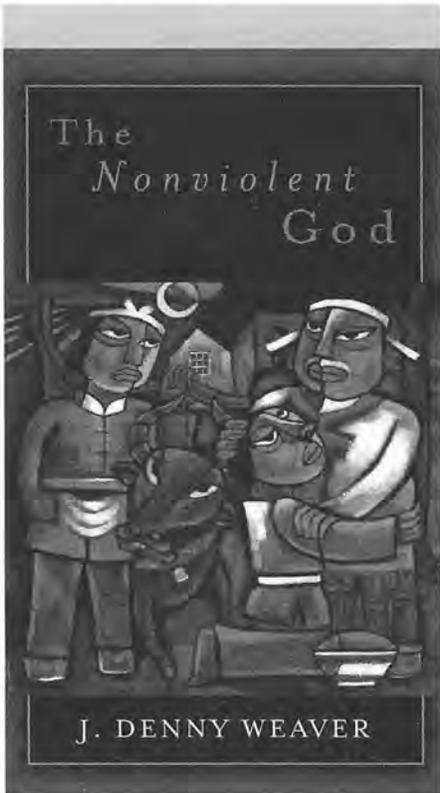
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real trouble, etc. But it would appear to me the time must come to take a position and then stand. I am greatly disappointed that the homosexual issue has grown so enormous as to threaten the life of so many. The idea that everyone that is not homosexual hates those that are, the idea that homosexuals are not welcome, the dialogue has led us where? I still ask these basic questions: Does the Bible teach that sexual immorality is a sin or not? Does the Bible really teach that women should be teachers of men in pastoral roles? Does

the Bible build a case for dialogue about these roles or not? Can you really picture Paul in dialogue about these matters to any great length?

How long should we dialogue? Isn't it time to lay aside these issues and move on to more profitable issues? Surely we have worn these items out. Most folks have arrived at their positions and they probably won't be moved. You and I can disagree for just so long and then we need to move on. Assumption is the "mother of disappointment." We assume if we dialogue long enough we can change what the Bible says; unfortunately for some, that will not work. We need to fish or cut bait and decide which way we will go, being under the influence of God's Word or popular opinion. Time to move on, but I guess we can go ahead and dialogue about that.

Jim Powers
Osceola, Mo.

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Please send information to be included in *Turning Points* to Jean Clements, 1451 Dundee Ave, Elgin, IL 60120; 800-325-8039, ext. 320; jclements@brethren.org. Information must be complete in order to be published. Information older than one year cannot be published.

New Members

Beavercreek, Ohio: Michele West, Rachel Gevedon
Brooklyn, First, Brooklyn, N.Y.: Andrew Joseph Casquete, Alejandra Tamar Juarez, Alba Elizabeth Marin
Bush Creek, Monrovia, Md.: Brittany Hottel, Rachael Hockenbery
Central, Roanoke, Va.: Jeff Chewing, Karla Anderson, Eric Howard, Emma Bryant, Rose Harvey, Zach Harvey, Alyssa Porter, Harrison Porter, Samantha Perez
Chiques, Manheim, Pa.: Emily Fisher
Drexel Hill, Pa.: George Matthew Wilkie
Faith Community, New Oxford, Pa.: June Livingston, Marian Conboy, Christine Buskirk, Marilee Sackett, Janis Klima
Garden City, Kan.: Troy Dumler, Sarah Dumler, Cameron Skipper-Dumler
Henry Fork, Rocky Mount, Va.: Valerie Brown, Anna Gibson, Wendy Thurman
Indian Creek, Harleysville, Pa.: Marie Hill
Long Green Valley, Glen Arm, Md.: L. John Pasquinelli
McPherson, Kan.: Wylene Lengel
Midland, Va.: Nicholas Smith, Preston Ratliff, Alyssa Parker
Mohican, West Salem, Ohio: Ken Bican, Austin Graham, Courtney Hall, Andrew LeMaster, Melvin Mark, Jamie Murray, Emma Nicholson, Steven Osborn, II, John Polizzi, Peter Studer, Christina Studer, Heather Osborn, Steven Osborn, Aubrey Palmer, Chad Palmer
Mount Hermon, Bassett, Va.: Thelma Hairston
Prince of Peace, Littleton, Colo.: Barbara Avent
Roaring Spring, Pa.: William Holsinger

Somerset, Pa.: Peggy Kimmel, Priscilla Haines, Hannah Haines
Spring Run, McVeytown, Pa.: Tangelina Sechrist, Judy French
Sunnyside, New Creek, W.Va.: Amy Rhodes, Mark Rhodes, Amy Hickey, Roy Hickey, Linda Sell
Trinity, Blountville, Tenn.: Ty Spriggs, Tori Spriggs, Kendra Leonard, Emily Leonard, Ash Renner
Troy, Ohio: Jon Keller, Lori Keller, Kirstin Keller, Andrea Keller
Uniontown, Pa.: Eve Wable, Logan Rankin
White Oak, Manheim, Pa.: Dawn Cassel, Brooke Shenk, Garth Shenk, Dorcas Brubaker, Jeremy Litzenberger, Ethan Miller, Heather Rohrer, Jack Shenk, Logan Snyder, Kelli Wenger

Wedding Anniversaries

Denlinger, Carl and Nancy, Lancaster, Pa., 55
Hipkins, Elwood and Jean, Adamstown, Md., 50
Hottinger, Leonard and Dolores, Mount Crawford, Va., 60
Hunn, Art and Phyllis, North Manchester, Ind., 60
Littlejohn, Max and Carol, Troy, Ohio, 50
Lutz, Rodney and Diane, Lititz, Pa., 50
Mason, Frank and Martha, Shelbyville, Mo., 65
McKinnell, James C. and Leatha M., Midlothian, Va., 55
Metzger, Eldred and Louise, Claypool, Ind., 75
Richwine, Jay and Jean, Mechanicsburg, Pa., 60
Willoughby, Don and Marie, North Manchester, Ind., 55

Deaths

Baugh, Yolande Ciarlo, 100, Uniontown, Pa., Oct. 26
Beamer, Leroy S., Jr., 94, Johnstown, Pa., Jan. 9
Blouch, Edith M., 97, Palmyra, Pa., Oct. 1
Bolt, Marie D., 97, Broad Run, Va., May 29
Bowman, Ruth Barnhart, 93, Wirtz, Va., Dec. 7
Bowman, Walter D., 90, Northridge, Calif., Jan. 19
Brenner, Martha Louise Howry, 83, Lancaster, Pa., Dec. 11
Bryant, Edna Faye Smythers,

82, Galax, Va., Dec. 2
Buck, Marlin J., 81, Palmyra, Pa., Sept. 4
Cassel, David H., 98, Manheim, Pa., July 31
Cessna, Sheron Ann Sutton, 71, East Canton, Ohio, Jan. 5
Claar, Harold Glenn, 86, Roaring Spring, Pa., Dec. 22
Cowan, Frances M. Paterson, 90, Huntingdon, Pa., Nov. 27
Daughtry, Joyce L., 82, Tucson, Ariz., Dec. 10
Deeter, Allen C., 82, North Manchester, Ind., Dec. 20
Dunkle, William S., Sr., 79, Everett, Pa., Oct. 18
Elliott, Charles Ira, 85, New Paris, Ind., Nov. 26
Fike, Gary Clayton, 49, Willow Springs, Mo., Jan. 2
Fisher, Bryant W., 87, Thurmont, Md., Nov. 15
Fisher, Ethel J., 91, Lancaster, Pa., Jan. 12
Flory, Betty Lew Poling, 82, Beavercreek, Ohio, Dec. 23
Flory, Don M., 85, Greenville, Ohio, Sept. 20
Goode, Polly Tate, 95, Salem, Va., Dec. 20
Harmon, Wayne P., 87, West Lafayette, Ohio, Dec. 11
Hartman, Dale Robert, 90, Elizabethtown, Pa., Nov. 20
Hawk, Glenn R., 88, Akron, Ohio, Jan. 4
Heiber, Anna L., 60, Lititz, Pa., Dec. 16
Hickie, Anna Marie Bricker, 52, Masontown, Pa., Nov. 16
Hines, Iva Jean, 80, West Salem, Ohio, Nov. 22
Holtry, George F., 88, Newburg, Pa., Dec. 25
Hoover, LeeAnna, 88, North Manchester, Ind., July 1
Hurd, William Max, 86, South Whitley, Ind., June 9
Jacoby, Ethel I., 80, Gettysburg, Pa., Dec. 27
Jarrels, Ruth Bowman, 97, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 15
Kaetzel, Lucy DiMuzio, 96, Peoria, Ill., Dec. 5
Keller, Ruth F., 87, Manheim, Pa., Nov. 11
Kemble, Miriam Louise, 85, Lakeville, Ind., Nov. 9
King, Dale E., 84, New Oxford, Pa., Oct. 21
Kopp, Mary E., 89, Hanover, Pa., Nov. 30
Krall, Marlin Paul, 79, Cerro Gordo, Ill., Jan. 14
Kreider, Erma Hawthorne Koser, 92, Manheim, Pa., Aug. 17
Kreiner, Faye H., 87, Manheim, Pa., Dec. 6

Kronk, Gloria Ann, 72, Goshen, Ind., Jan. 11
LeFevre, Veulah Hornish, 96, Defiance, Ohio, Jan. 8
Liebig, Rita L., 61, Keyser, W.Va., Nov. 15
Lyall, Palmer C., 75, Clintwood, Va., Nov. 6
Mack, Donald Ray, 79, Bradford, Ohio, Sept. 15
Maples, John Robert, 65, Manassas, Va., April 11, 2013
Marano, Deborah L., 61, Mineral Point, Pa., Jan. 6
Martzall, Doris Louise, 74, Lancaster, Pa., Oct. 27
McCamey, Dorothy L., 97, Pemberville, Ohio, Jan. 1
McClure, Marie G., 102, West Salem, Ohio, Nov. 1
Meredith, Alma Mae, 68, Federalsburg, Md., Jan. 7
Messick, Obrey Berlin, 90, Midland, Va., March 25, 2013
Miller, Rojetta, 87, Milford, Ind., July 11
Moye, Virginia Teel, 90, New Oxford, Pa., Dec. 26
Myer, Joanne H., 70, Manheim, Pa., July 28
Myers, Steve Allen, 48, Warrenton, Va., Aug. 25
White, John Robert, 91, Kokomo, Ind., May 21
Young, Joan Eunice, 90, North Manchester, Ind., Nov. 15
Young, Robert Garvie, 91, Beavercreek, Ohio, Nov. 28

Licensings

Abdullah, Doris, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Brooklyn, First, Brooklyn, N.Y.), Dec. 15
Cesare, Paul C., W. Plains Dist. (First Central, Kansas City, Kan.), Dec. 15
Hefner, Jay R., S/C Ind. Dist. (Mexico, Ind.), Jan. 5
Keller, Jeff, Atl. N.E. Dist. (Lititz, Pa.), Dec. 15
McWilliams, Tom, S. Ohio Dist. (Mohican, West Salem, Ohio), Nov. 24
Monger, Collin A., S. Ohio Dist. (Stony Creek, DeGraff, Ohio), Jan. 5
Nkosi, LaDonna Sanders, Ill. & Wis. Dist. (Chicago, First, Chicago, Ill.), Sept. 22
Stern, Roy, Mich. Dist. (Hope, Freeport, Mich.), Nov. 3

Ordinations

Bozman, Paul, N. Ohio Dist. (Center, Louisville, Ohio), Jan. 12
Brockway, Joshua, Ill. & Wis.

Dist. (Highland Avenue, Elgin, Ill.), Dec. 8
Dell-Haro, Dylan J., W. Plains Dist. (Topeka, Kan.), Jan. 12
Eller, Mary A., S/C Ind. Dist. (Richmond, Ind.), Dec. 8
Link, Terry, Ill. & Wis. Dist. (Springfield, Ill.), Dec. 1
McKeever, Michael, Ill. & Wis. Dist. (Highland Avenue, Elgin, Ill.), Dec. 8
Tucker, John F., Shen. Dist. (Pleasant View, Mount Jackson, Va.), Nov. 23
Wehrle, Richard C., Shen. Dist. (Sunrise, Harrisonburg, Va.), Dec. 7

Placements

Beachley, Linda E., from interim to pastor, Nanty Glo, Pa., Jan. 1
Chappell, David J., from youth/associate pastor to senior pastor, White Hill, Stuarts Draft, Va., Jan. 1
Chappell, James I., from senior pastor to associate pastor, White Hill, Stuarts Draft, Va., Jan. 1
Fike, Matthew P., pastor, Lebanon, Mount Sidney, Va., Jan. 1
Fleming, Ronald, from interim to pastor, White Cottage, Ohio, Jan. 1
Godfrey, Benjamin D., pastor of nurture, Codorus, Dallastown, Pa., Jan. 1
Keller, Jeff, youth director, Lititz, Pa., April 1, 2013
Ludwick, Josiah, from youth minister to associate pastor, Harrisburg, First, Harrisburg, Pa., Jan. 1
Markle, Brian R., from pastor, Lake View Christian Fellowship, East Berlin, Pa., to pastor, Shippensburg, Pa., Jan. 1
Monger, Collin A., pastor, Stony Creek, DeGraff, Ohio, Jan. 5
Therrien, James W., from team pastor, Independence, Kan. to team pastor, Tok ahookaadi, Cuba, N.M., Sept. 1
Therrien, Kimberly D., from team pastor, Independence, Kan., to team pastor, Tok ahookaadi, Cuba, N.M., Sept. 1
Waugh, William A., from pastor, Greensburg, Pa., to district executive/minister, Southern Pennsylvania District, New Oxford, Pa., Jan. 1

Because he said he would

Tom and I have cycled together a lot.

There are the regular bicycle rides in the foothills and on the flats. There are the training rides. And there are the centuries—100-mile rides that test one’s endurance and build camaraderie. During centuries, the handful of us who often ride together usually take turns at the lead, kind of like migrating geese.



RANDY MILLER
MESSENGER EDITOR

Last week, when Tom did the annual Tour of Palm Springs century, I passed. I’d had surgery a few months earlier, and knew I wouldn’t have time to train for it. But I knew that if I’d been with the group, I would have been riding with Tom—most likely catching his wheel as he pressed into the wind.

That was what La Vonne was doing. Part-way through the ride, she and several others were approaching an intersection. Unlike the four-way stops they’d already passed, this one was a two-way stop; cross traffic had the right-of-way, but a friendly woman in a car making a left turn was waving the cyclists through. Tom sped across the road, but as he did so he spied a pick-up truck in the lane next to the woman waiting to make the turn. The truck was not slowing down. La Vonne hurried to catch up and make it across, but she did not see the truck. And the truck driver did not see her until it was too late.

Knowing how often I cling to Tom’s wheel, I knew it very well could have been me if I’d been on that ride.

Moments like that bring into sharp focus the things that are important in life. We’re aware of them in an academic sense—they’re obvious, really: spend more time with your family; tell your children you love them; be true to your word, etc. But sometimes it takes a shock like a loved one’s passing to remind us just how important those things are.

It took his father’s death from cancer to awaken Alex Sheen to the significance of something as simple and obvious as keeping a promise. I read about Alex’s epiphany in *Spirit*, the in-flight magazine of Southwest Airlines. Reflecting on his dad’s life, Alex said, “He didn’t not show up. He didn’t not pay his bills.” He always came through with everything he said he would do, Alex realized—something Alex admitted he was not good at, but something he vowed to change.

But then he decided to take it a step further. In an effort to help others stay true to their commitments, he created business cards bearing these words: “because I said I would.” Cardholders write a simple promise on the card (“I will not be late to class this week,” for example), give it to a friend, and get the card back when they fulfill that promise.

The idea caught on, and before long Alex quit his job to manage his “Because I Said I Would” organization full-time. He sends hundreds of “promise cards” out daily, to 48 countries around the world at last tally.

As followers of Jesus, we know what we’re supposed to do:

As we cycled home after the service, it occurred to me that what happened to La Vonne could have happened to any of us.

Tom heard the crash, stopped, and turned back. He was the first one to reach La Vonne following the impact. He saw that she was not breathing, and noticed the odd angles of her limbs. Her bike was mangled beyond repair.

Dozens of bicycles were on display at her graveside memorial service under balmy skies a week later. And dozens of cyclists in neon-colored spandex showed up in support.

As we cycled home after the service, it occurred to me that what happened to La Vonne could have happened to any of us.

love God, love our neighbors as ourselves, love our enemies. Jesus’ teachings are not hard to understand. But they can be hard to remember, it seems, and harder still to carry out.

Sometimes we need a nudge to help us remember what’s truly important, and follow through on our promises—not one as devastating as the loss of a loved one, I hope. Maybe a few words on a card will do. But whatever it takes, let’s do it, say it, and express it now—with what precious time each of us has left. ❧

COMING IN APRIL: Seeking the ways of peacemaking

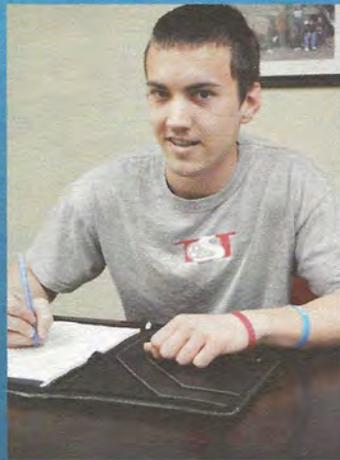


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*David Boretti, class of 2015
Engineering and History double major
Soccer Team Captain, Learning Services Tutor*

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No one knew a storm could be that powerful.

Super Typhoon Haiyan pounded the Philippine islands on November 8, 2013 with 195 mph winds and a 20-foot storm surge. The massive destruction made it impossible for more than 475,000 people to return home.

There was nothing left for them to return to.

Brethren Disaster Ministries immediately targeted resources toward the early response efforts of trusted partners in the Philippines. This enabled the distribution of life-saving material aid – such as emergency food, shelter, safe drinking water, blankets and hygiene kits – to tens of thousands of families.

Our goal is to raise \$500,000.

Typhoon Haiyan recovery is still in the beginning stages. It could take ten years for the hardest-hit areas to be completely restored.

Your support will lift the burden of Typhoon Haiyan survivors and help them look toward a future filled with hope.

“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

—Galatians 6:2

Send your gift to:

Emergency Disaster Fund
Church of the Brethren
1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120

Online donations for Typhoon Haiyan can be made at www.brethren.org/typhoonaid



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