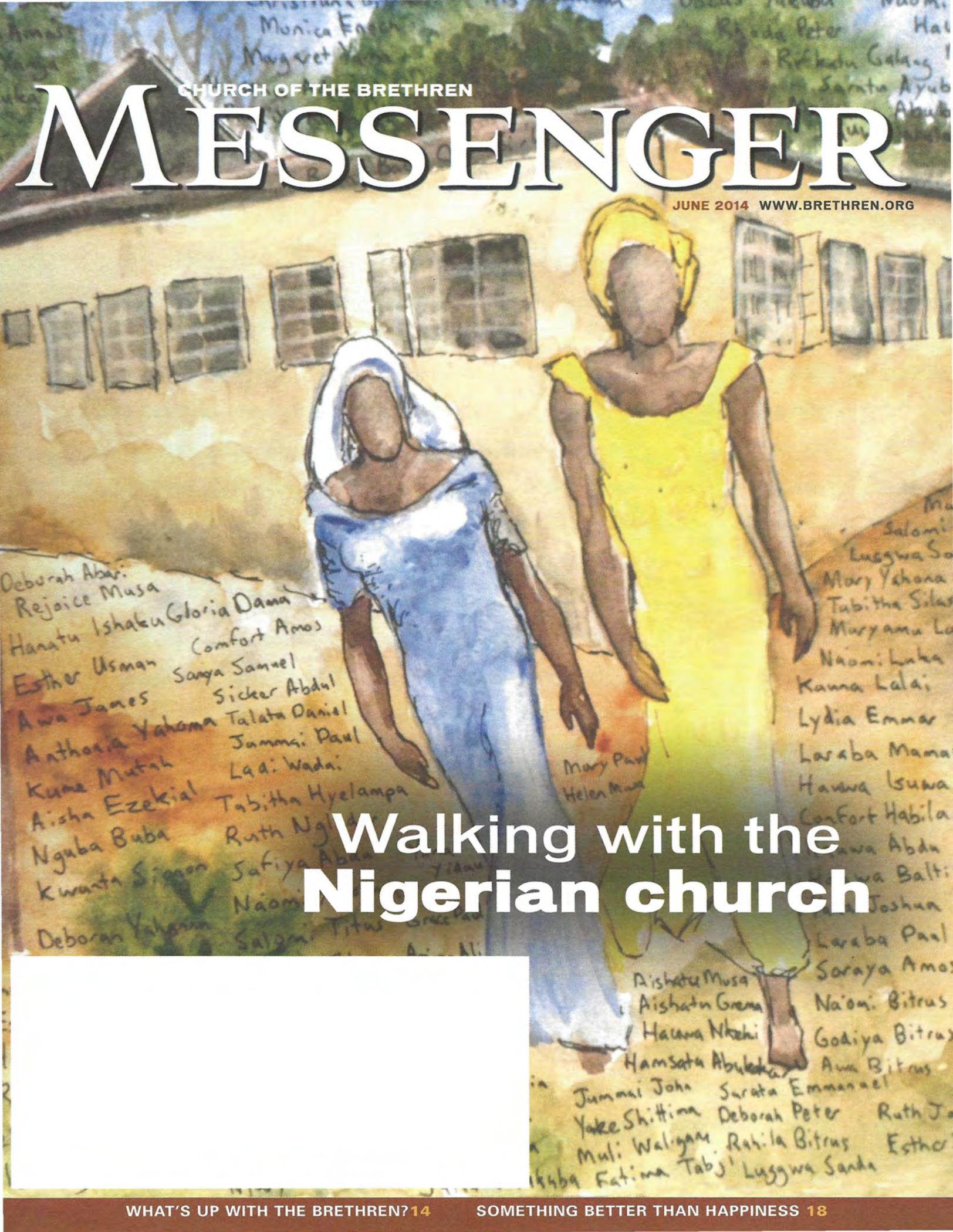


CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

# MESSENGER

JUNE 2014 WWW.BRETHREN.ORG



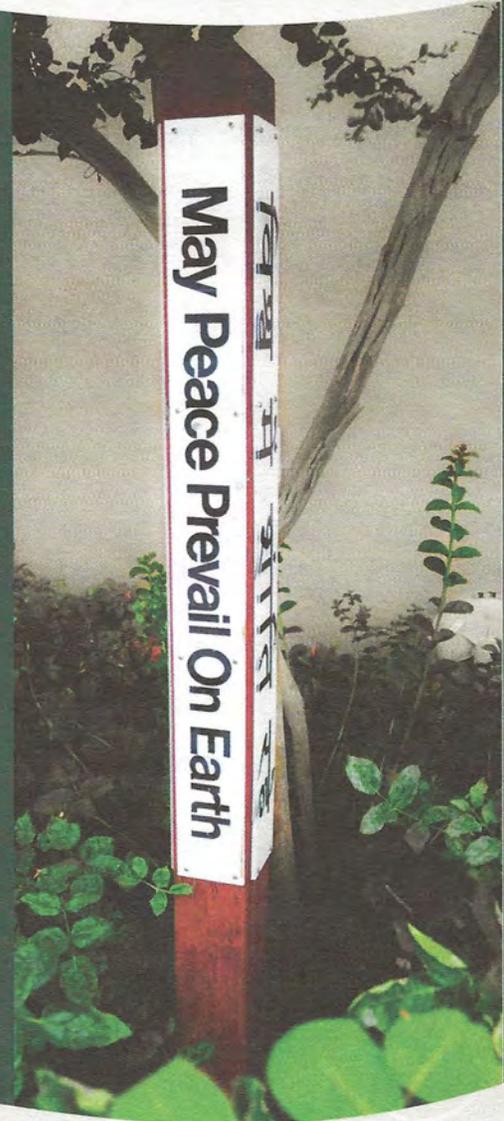
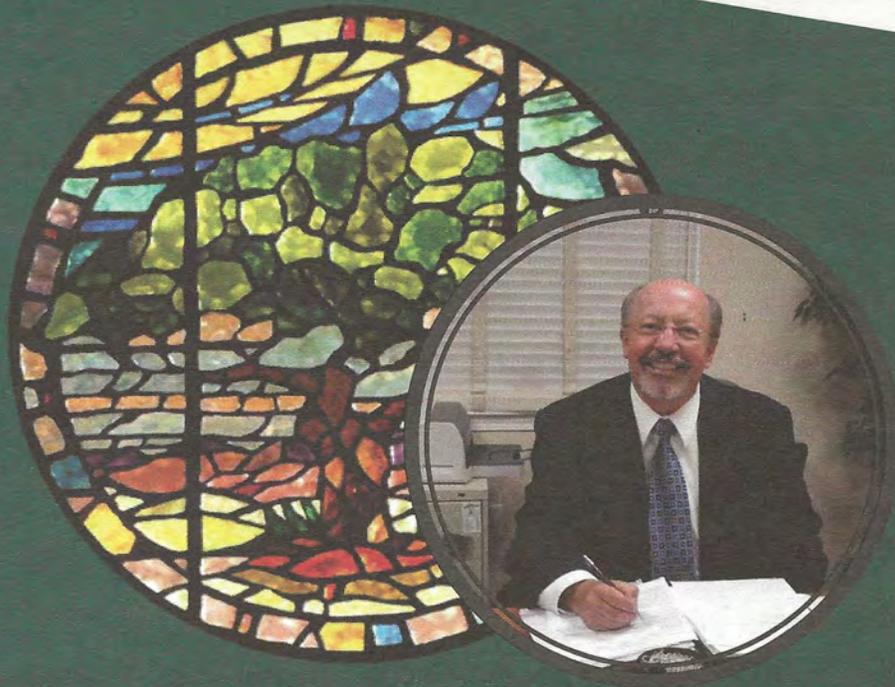
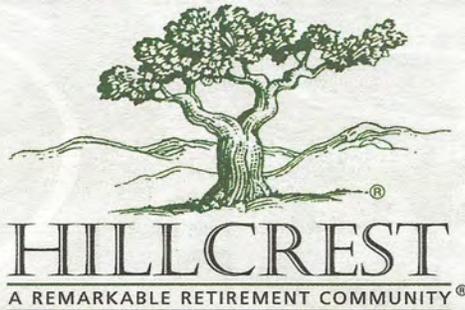
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## Walking with the Nigerian church





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# CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN MESSENGER

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## 8 Walking with the Nigerian church

Church of the Brethren general secretary Stan Noffsinger and Global Mission and Service executive Jay Wittmeyer discuss their recent visit to Nigeria. "Part of why we went there was to say, "We are committed to you as brothers and sisters," said Noffsinger. "We are the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria, and the Church of the Brethren in the US."

## 14 What's up with the Brethren?

Annual Conference moderator Nancy Heishman talks about her year at the helm of the church, and some encouraging things she discovered about the Brethren as she traveled in the US and overseas.

## 18 Something better than happiness

According to popular culture, happiness is the thing we're all supposed to want. And the United States' Declaration of Independence says that all people are "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Who could want more than that? The Apostle Paul, for one. And he found it even while in a Roman prison.

### departments

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**on the cover** Brian Meyer, an artist and member of First Church of the Brethren in San Diego, Calif., created the painting "The Abducted Girls of Chibok" to draw attention to the kidnapping by the Boko Haram of the 276 girls from their school in Chibok, Nigeria.

**O**ne of the illustrations that I remember from a childhood Sunday school class is a painting of Abraham's near sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22). Abraham, who hasn't yet caught sight of the ram in the thicket, is holding his knife up in the air, just above his son.

The most disturbing part is not that Isaac is about to die, but that Abraham is going to do the deed himself. Not from 20 paces away even, but with one hand directly on his son's young body. In this Bible story we struggle with



WENDY MCFADDEN  
PUBLISHER

God's command to Abraham, and we also struggle with Abraham's obedience. Without hesitation he sets off on a journey to the place that God has specified.

Yet, is it the immediacy—the knife in the father's hand—from which we recoil? After all, we do know something of sacrifice. Our nation expects young men to be prepared to give their lives "in service" to their country, and many parents consider this honorable. They accept the risk of sudden death, permanent injury, mental illness, or suicide. They take the three-day trip to the land of Moriah, even though they do not actually raise the knife. Why is it appalling to be sacrificed for God, but normal to be sacrificed for your

country?

Participating in war may be normal in this world, but the Church of the Brethren has a long history of being abnormal, of being in the world but not of it. Instead of following the call of duty, we follow the call of conscience.

With no insurgents approaching our towns and with no military draft, those of us in the US may feel little urgency to examine our longstanding call of conscience. But the writer of Ephesians urges us to be prepared: "As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:15).

The newest resource for teaching youth about Church of the Brethren teachings on conscientious objection is the *CO Journal*, a companion to the downloadable curriculum *Call of Conscience* ([www.brethren.org/CO](http://www.brethren.org/CO)). It may look like a small book, but it's actually footwear for the brave, for those who want to think seriously about peace.

*Wendy McFadden*

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**Congregation Close-Up**



Heidi Bunn

*"Kids enjoy puppets and more at First Church of the Brethren's Worship Arts Camp for Kids."*

## Kids can worship, too

**I**t happens one weekend a year at First Church of the Brethren in Harrisonburg, Va. It's called WACK—Worship Arts Camp for Kids—and involves an exciting experience for the entire congregation.

On Saturday, children gather for a full day of camp that teaches them how to worship God through a variety of activities including art, clowning, cooking, dance, drama, knitting, sewing, multimedia, music, photography, and puppetry. Each class also participates in a time of Bible study focused on the importance of worship. Heidi Bunn, coordinator of children's ministries, explains the primary goal:

"At WACK, we learn we can use the gifts God has given us to worship him anywhere, anytime. We just need to focus our hearts on God."

The children also discover that it is special to be able to worship together and declare their love for God and Jesus with the congregation. Sunday morning worship is conducted entirely by WACK participants demonstrating what they learned at WACK camp. Everyone enjoys and appreciates the talents displayed by the children, and are inspired by this unique opportunity for worship.

This year, WACK's seventh, involved more than 100 children from the congregation and community, as well as some 30 youth and adult volunteers who assisted with various activities of the camp.

"It's such a beautiful thing having children from all over our community come together to serve one purpose: worshipping our amazing God!" Bunn exclaimed.

**by the numbers**

**199,635**

Preliminary count of dollars raised at Shenandoah District's 22nd annual auction in support of Brethren Disaster Ministries

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.

# Pulling up in their John Deeres

**T**ractor Sunday draws 368 farmers to church in E-town" said a Lancaster Online news article about the Sunday, May 4, service at West Green Tree Church of the Brethren in Elizabethtown, Pa. Two other area Brethren churches also participated: Chiques Church of the Brethren, whose pastor Nathan Myer was the speaker, and Mount Pleasant Church of the Brethren, whose men's quartet sang. The event included a morning service and a lunch for farmers.

“It is a thank-you to our farmer friends for the job they do, and an offering of thanks to the Lord for the harvest,” organizer Doug Breneman told the reporter. He is a deacon at the West Green Tree Church, and has organized Tractor Sunday since it started in 2011. Read the article at [http://lancasteronline.com/tractor-sunday-draws-farmers-to-church-in-e-town/article\\_6765c082-d3c8-11e3-9685-001a4bcf6878.html](http://lancasteronline.com/tractor-sunday-draws-farmers-to-church-in-e-town/article_6765c082-d3c8-11e3-9685-001a4bcf6878.html).

Courtesy of West Green Tree Church of the Brethren



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Reaching out

## Lost and found department

**Lost and Found Church, a new church plant in Big Rapids, Mich.,** reported on its progress in the Michigan District newsletter recently. “As the Lost and Found Church moves toward the Fall 2014 season, we are working on preparing to launch out into our community even more than we have at this point.” The group is asking for prayer as it forms a leadership team, moves to Sunday morning worship from Saturday afternoon gatherings, and finds a new location for weekly worship gatherings and other events.

“We celebrate the great things God has been doing in and through the Lost and Found Church over the past year,” the report said. “This includes, among other things, the growth we have seen in our college campus ministry at Ferris State University: Standing in the Gap. We have had several Michigan District Church of the Brethren youth, along many other Ferris students, connect with this campus ministry over the past year.”

Courtesy of Lost and Found Church

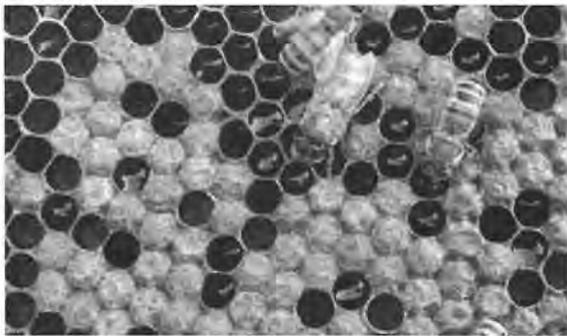




## Blessed are the bikers

Cedar Grove Church of the Brethren at Ruckersville, Va., held a special service of blessing for bikers and bikes on Sunday, April 13, according to the Shenandoah District newsletter. "Receiving blessing for safety and traveling mercies were 42 bikes and approximately 60 bikers. Two people came forward during the altar call for healing and laying on of hands. After that, another visitor asked to be saved and accepted Christ as Lord and Savior."

Photo courtesy of Going to the Garden



Bees are raised at Capstone Community Gardens and Orchard in New Orleans, with help from a Going to the Garden grant.

## Digging the garden grants

"This is what the Church of the Brethren Going to the Garden grant and the Southern Plains and Roanoke Church of the Brethren assistance helps us do! Such a blessing!" writes David Young from New Orleans, La., where the Capstone community garden has benefited from church support. The garden is one of several receiving \$1,000 grants through the Going to the Garden project of the Global Food Crisis Fund (GFCF) and the denomination's Office of Public Witness. An interview about the Capstone garden titled "Volunteer grows food for the hungry on formerly blighted Ninth Ward lots," was published by *The Times-Picayune* May 13 at [www.nola.com/food/index.ssf/2014/05/volunteer\\_gardens\\_on\\_formerly.html](http://www.nola.com/food/index.ssf/2014/05/volunteer_gardens_on_formerly.html).

## A Mother's Day offering for Nigeria

Ephrata (Pa.) Church of the Brethren designated its entire Sunday morning offering on Mother's Day, May 11, to the EYN (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) Compassion Fund. Senior pastor Galen Hackman reported in an e-mail to denominational staff that the offering totaled more than \$18,000, with more expected to be received over the following week. The congregation also collected notes of encouragement to send to EYN.

## Former missionaries recall their years in Chibok, Nigeria

Gerald and Lois Neher, who served in Chibok, Nigeria, with the Church of the Brethren Mission in the 1950s, were interviewed by their local newspaper, the McPherson (Kan.) Sentinel. The couple, who are in their 80s, also have been interviewed by the BBC and the *Daily Beast*. The interview by *Sentinel* staff writer Carla Barber was posted May 13.

"The Nehers not only are familiar with the Chibok, they wrote the book on them," the interview notes. "We probably knew these girls' grandparents and great-grandparents," Gerald told the reporter. The Nehers became mission workers in Nigeria after attending McPherson College, and after Gerald earned a master's degree in extension services from Cornell University. The newspaper reports that they spent four years working in Chibok, and a total of 14 years in Nigeria, from 1954-68. Read the full interview at [www.mcphersonsentinel.com/article/20140513/News/140519814#ixzz32CIvwtph](http://www.mcphersonsentinel.com/article/20140513/News/140519814#ixzz32CIvwtph).

## LANDMARKS and laurels

➔ **The Jo Young Switzer Center** is the new name of the Manchester University Union building, in honor of university president Jo Young Switzer, who retires June 30. At an April 10 donor appreciation dinner at the North Manchester, Ind., school, board chair D. Randall Brown praised Young Switzer for her mission-focused leadership. During the Switzer tenure, Brown noted, the university enrollment increased by 25 percent, and a four-year doctor of pharmacy program was initiated on a new Fort Wayne campus. In addition, the institution's status changed from a college to a university. The Jo Young Switzer Center opened as the Union in 2007.



➔ **Chandler Comer, a high school senior and member**

**of Oakton Church of the Brethren** in Vienna, Va., celebrated the world premiere of his work "Dawn of a Nation" when it was performed by the Westfield High School Wind Symphony. The piece of music in four movements represents the early history of the US starting with Jamestown: I. Colonization, II. Confrontation, III. Starvation, IV. Dawn of a Nation. The performance may be viewed at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lxXYgQvHec&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lxXYgQvHec&feature=youtu.be).

## On being Brethren

**N**ot long ago, a parishioner of longstanding told me he feared our congregation was losing its Brethren identity.

A few days later I heard that a local historian who specializes in Mennonite and Brethren traditions remarked that I was the most Brethren pastor the church had had in a long time.

I figured I must be doing something right!

But it did set me to thinking. What is the most essential Brethren value? As I pondered this, I came to realize that the most central Brethren value is Jesus and, specifically, what it means to follow him faithfully in life.



GALEN HACKMAN

At the center of the Alexander Mack Seal—an emblem reportedly created by Mack’s son, Sander, to symbolize Brethren faith—is the cross, and superimposed on it is a heart. The cross identifies the central focus of our faith: Jesus and him crucified and risen. The heart signifies our full and total devotion to Jesus and his message. Flowing from the heart are vine branches bearing fruit. Likewise, we are to bear the

fruit of radical obedience to Jesus.

Whenever I—or a congregation, a church program, or related institution—sideline the cross and this commitment to radical devotion to Jesus and place something else in the center, I cease being Brethren and become something else.

The first Brethren met to follow Jesus, not to start a new organization. They understood that they were called into a

relationship with God in Christ, and that their responsibility was to follow him, no matter the cost. They were part of a movement, not an institution. Their focus was exclusively on the New Testament and its message of salvation and discipleship. They did not meet to understand what it meant to be Reformed or Catholic or Lutheran. They met to pursue Jesus and the teachings of the New Testament. That is why we take the New Testament as our creed.

But what dawned on me during this time of exploration was this simple truth: The more we Brethren focus on being Brethren, the less Brethren we become. Why so? Because the genius of the Brethren lies in our desire not to simply replicate an institution but to build a relationship with the living Lord. These two things need not be exclusive, but when the concern to replicate “brethrenism” takes center stage, we have already lost the essence of what it means to be Brethren.

This is what troubled my long-time parishioner. Admittedly we—or at least I—do not speak often about being Brethren. I rarely say “We Brethren do thus or so.” Rather, we pursue our relationship with Jesus and seek to understand his words to us in the Bible. We desire to do the things Jesus asked of us. We want to be Christian first and, if we need to be something else, Brethren second. Naturally, we see the Bible through eyes shaped by the values that have led us and defined us in the past. (My entire life as a Christian has been lived out as a member of a Church of the Brethren congregation.)

The values that define us are biblical values and Brethren values. Thus, the core values of what shaped the early Brethren are very much alive within the congregation. This is what my historian friend sees. I confess, these values do not often carry Brethren names, but they do carry biblical ones. These values often look a bit different as they play out today as opposed to yesteryear, but they are the same values.

To be Brethren, at its best, is to seek obedience to biblical commands. A true Brethren asks, “What does Jesus want of me?” not “What does it mean to be Brethren?” From my time with the Nigerian Brethren, I learned there is a whole other way of being Brethren, which is just as Brethren as my way of

### A true Brethren asks, “What does Jesus want of me?” not “What does it mean to be Brethren?”

being Brethren.

I love history, and so I know the value of studying how my progenitors have understood the faith. I value the lessons of the past. However, God has no grandchildren, only children who have come to know him as Savior and Lord, and who seek in this generation to follow him with radical obedience. That is as Brethren as it gets. ❧

Galen Hackman is senior pastor of Ephrata (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.

**“We pray God’s unconditional love will touch the consciences of the men who did this.”**

—Church of the Brethren general secretary Stan Nofsinger, commenting on the kidnapping of 234 Nigerian schoolgirls, many of whom are affiliated with the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria

**“The suburbanization of Lancaster County has put a huge burden on them. It’s too many babies and too few acres.”**

—Donald Kraybill, Elizabethtown College professor and Senior Fellow at the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, and co-author of *The Amish*, commenting on how increasing population and rising prices are threatening the traditional way of life for many in rural Pennsylvania

**“Equating baptism to an act of torture like waterboarding is sacrilegious—and particularly surprising coming from you as someone who has publicly professed your Christian faith.”**

—The Rev. Ron Stief, executive director of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, in an open letter for former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin after she told the NRA’s annual meeting that “If I were in charge, they would know that waterboarding is how we’d baptize terrorists.”

**“Put your shoes way under the bed at night so that you gotta get on your knees in the morning to find them. And while you’re down there, thank God for grace and mercy and understanding.”**

—Actor Denzel Washington, speaking to a group of young actors, advocating a method for ensuring that one prays every morning

**cultureview**

▶ **Twenty-eight percent of Americans believe the Bible is the actual word of God** and should be taken literally, a decline from 40% in the late 1970s. But about half of Americans continue to say the Bible is the inspired word of God, not to be taken literally—meaning a combined 75% believe the Bible is in some way connected to God.” The figures come from Gallup’s 2014 update of its annual Values and Beliefs poll, conducted May 8-11.

▶ **All the 44 dioceses of the Church of England** have voted to approve ordination of women as bishops, and the change in the denomination’s centuries-old practice is now just one step away. The final vote is scheduled for July. “The Church of England’s dioceses have now all voted in favor of the current draft legislation to enable women to be bishops,” the denomination with more than 80 million adherents

worldwide announced on its website. The voting was held May 22 as per a decision taken by the church’s governing General Synod in February to send draft legislation to all the dioceses.

▶ **White mainline Protestants, Catholics, and young adults in the US are the most likely religious groups to exaggerate accounts of their church attendance,** according to a study conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute. The study asked random samples of Americans identical questions about religious attendance, affiliation, and belief in God on two surveys—one via telephone and the other online—and garnered significantly different results. “The existence of religious participation inflation demonstrates that church attendance remains a strong social norm in the US,” said Robert P. Jones, co-author of the study and CEO of PRRI.

**Heard 'round the world**



**“We see this course as a tool that can help our officers.”**

—Brazilian military police chaplain Gislano Farias, coordinator of a Bible study program in Brasilia offered to military police officers to help them deal with stress and improve their personal and family lives

**“You must not hate those who do wrong or harmful things; but with compassion, you must do what you can to stop them—for they are harming themselves, as well as those who suffer from their actions.”**

—Tenzing Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama and spiritual leader of the Tibetan people, living in Dharamsala, India

# Walking with the Nigerian church



Roxane Hill

*In this interview conducted in mid-April, shortly after they returned from a trip to Nigeria, Church of the Brethren general secretary Stan Noffsinger and Global Mission and Service executive Jay Wittmeyer spoke with Newline editor Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford about the trip and the situation of the church in Nigeria. They attended the Majalisa, or annual conference, at the headquarters of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria), met with EYN leaders and the Brethren mission staff in Nigeria—Carol Smith and Carl and Roxane Hill—and visited the capital city Abuja.—Ed.*

**Q: How were you received by the Nigerian church?**

**Noffsinger:** It was evident from the beginning that our presence was significant to the church. I don't know how many times we heard, either from Samuel Dali [EYN president] or from Jinatu Wamdeo [EYN general secretary] or members, how they recognized the risk we took to be there.

**Wittmeyer:** They were deeply encouraged by our presence and our willingness to walk with them in these times.

**Noffsinger:** It went so well with the theme of the Majalisa conference, which comes out of Exodus where

**It was evident from the beginning that our presence was significant to the church. I don't know how many times we heard how they recognized the risk we took to be there.**



Moses has confronted God at the burning bush: “Your God has not abandoned you.” There was real concern that they were alone. Christians are a minority religion in a predominantly Muslim territory [in northeastern Nigeria]. Samuel kept saying over and over, “Please tell your family and the board how much we appreciate the risk.” It was perhaps an acknowledgment that the risk was more significant than we would have wanted to acknowledge.

The risk is evident everywhere. No matter where we went, whether it was the compound of our guesthouse or the EYN headquarters, there were security guards with guns all the time. There were convoys of military soldiers in Humvee-type vehicles with machine guns mounted on top cruising up and down the roads.

**Wittmeyer:** Our movements were highly restricted. Our guesthouse where we stayed was about a quarter mile away [from EYN headquarters] and we could have walked. But they said, “No, you don't spend a minute on that road.”

**Noffsinger:** There was a curfew at 9 every night. You weren't welcome on the street after the curfew.

Danjuma Larwi Garnwa



**Q: You would be in serious trouble, right? You could get shot.**

**Wittmeyer:** The assumption would be you're up to no good. We almost missed curfew one night.

**Noffsinger:** Well, we did miss it one night, and people were really anxious about us getting back to our guesthouse.

The thing that was very real was what has happened to EYN, the local congregations, districts, and the church. As Samuel Dali was going over that report, the pain of all the loss was really evident in people's faces. It reminded me of the desolation that we saw in the eyes of Haitians after the earthquake. Within that report is a district-by-district accounting of who isn't alive, the churches burned, and houses destroyed. That was a pretty somber occasion.

**Wittmeyer:** There was a theme that they wanted us to address: future partnerships, and how the Church of the Brethren sees its relationship with EYN. The fact that Samuel Dali was asked to represent the Brethren at the World Council of Churches Central Committee gave a strong indication of our commitment to them.

**Noffsinger:** I could see how EYN would ask, “What's your commitment to us?” Part of what we were doing in Nigeria was to say, “We are committed to you as brothers and sisters. We are the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria, and the Church of the Brethren in the US.” It was Rebecca Dali who publicly said this represents the fact that we are moving from a parent-child relationship to being brothers and sisters in the faith, that we are church together.

Samuel kept saying, “You need to understand that who we are today is the fruit of your labor, and you need to feel good about that. You need to recognize that the work and investment you made has made us the church that we are. And for that you can give glory to God and say thank you.” And then he would turn and say, “So where are you planting the trees now? Where are you raising the kingdom? What will be your next harvest?”

**Nigerian Brethren wash feet at a service during Holy Week.**



Stan Noffsinger

**Rebecca Dali displays records she is keeping of the victims of violence in Nigeria. Wife of EYN president Samuel Dali, she heads up CCEPI—the Center for Caring, Empowerment, and Peace Initiatives, which aids those affected by the violence, widows, orphans, and refugees.**

**Wittmeyer:** We had some conversation on mission in that regard. EYN leaders said they have churches in Niger, and Cameroon, and Togo. If we would look at Africa differently, that would be partnership in a very different way. We are really working at something more global than ourselves. That was a nice conversation.

**Noffsinger:** It appears to me that EYN's external investment is really more interfaith than it is ecumenical. Where they have the ability to work productively with Muslim neighbors they're very willing to work at that, because that has an impact on the communities where they live. We heard the question: How do we bridge the Christian-Muslim gap? For example, Jos is becoming a divided city where Muslims are living one place and Christians are living another place, and people who were neighbors for years are

no longer neighbors. You live in isolation. So there is desire to have relationship again, and try to bridge it. The intensity of the conflict demands that they concentrate their time where it's productive.

**Q: It really shifts your idea of priorities, looking at what they're going through. It's that image of a body under attack. You pull in your resources.**

**Wittmeyer:** That was the analogy I came away with. Like frostbite. Part of it is you're only able to focus on the core at the moment.

**Noffsinger:** That's true. If you look at trauma of any

kind, and this is societal trauma, what do you do? Your peripheral vision deteriorates, and the lens that you use to look at everything changes daily based on the level of your experience. So if you have some 200 girls kidnapped and two-thirds of them are Church of the Brethren, the lens for EYN gets shifted. And then you have a time of relative calm, and then there's a bombing in the capital. And what becomes reality is doing anything and everything you can to help stabilize your experience. So you invest your resources closer and closer to home to stabilize the community.

**Q: I wonder if you could speak about the work with Muslim leaders who are friendly to the work of peace.**

**Wittmeyer:** There are three elements to the work: Toma Ragnjiya is the EYN peace officer, and then there is the work that Rebecca Dali does, and then the work that Markus Gamache is doing

and that Basel Mission is supporting in Jos. It has to be EYN defining its peace work. Toma is almost a political figure, speaking before Nigerian television, going to government conferences, speaking on behalf of the church. His role is advocacy work.

**Noffsinger:** For Rebecca, the work with the Center for Caring, Empowerment, and Peace Initiatives, or CCEPI, isn't anything new in her involvement with people who have been affected by violence. But it does mean that when there is an incident like the girls being abducted

Jay Wittmeyer



**We heard over and over, "We are a peace church. We will respond with nonviolence."**

# She is building an incredible database including narratives on the acts of violence. She's been to Cameroon, across the border, across the territory of Boko Haram, and in the refugee camps.

from Chibok, she is involved and working with the families. She is building an incredible database including narratives on the acts of violence. She's been to Cameroon, across the border, across the territory of Boko Haram, and in the refugee camps.

**Wittmeyer:** She's developing a reputation within the Muslim community as someone who can be trusted to come in and do legitimate relief work.

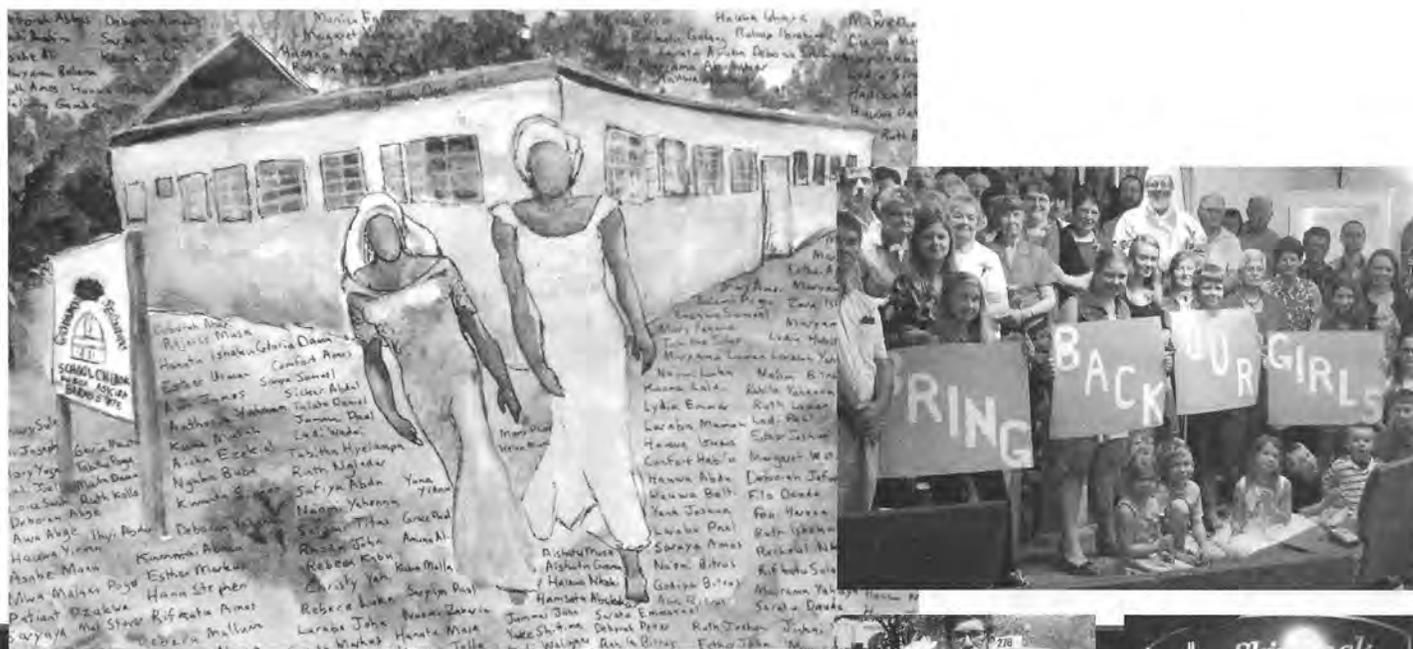
**Noffsinger:** But it comes with a lot of risk. I hope we can find a way to support what she's about.

**Wittmeyer:** The EYN Compassion Fund [for church members and ministers' families affected by the violence] doesn't really have resources to provide support for Rebecca's work. She's been getting some USAID grants, and those are going to dry up, so she'll have to find other funding.

Rebecca is in the midst of people. She often says numbers [of those affected by violence] are underreported. She can list out name by name, person by person, why the numbers are wrong. She really has a grasp of that, and has good people working for her. This is a legitimate NGO that needs to be separate from the church. I don't think a church agency could get to the places she wants to get to.

**Noffsinger:** Markus Gamache's work in Jos is called Lifeline. This is an interfaith group coming together as individuals to respond to the need in the community. They're working at internships and apprenticeships.

**Wittmeyer:** They would like to do micro-finance. But before they give a loan they ask that recipients first do an internship so that they learn the skills, and then step out and take a loan to buy equipment and start their own business.



Brethren from around the US showed support for the kidnapped Nigerian girls. Above: Brian Meyer of First Church of the Brethren in San Diego, Calif., created a painting including the names of the abducted girls. A Mother's Day observance at Stevens Hills Community Church of the Brethren in Elizabethtown, Pa., made clear members' request to "Bring Back Our Girls," as did the Skippack Church of the Brethren, in Collegeville, Pa., and Nate Hosler, coordinator of the Church of the Brethren Office of Public Witness.

**Q: One of you had said something about a well that was dug with this group?**

drill even in your own community, to go into the Muslim community and [provide a well] is really something. That is really what propelled Markus' work and allowed him access into Muslim communities. He told stories where his wife said, "Don't you dare go there because they'll kill you." And yet that well has given him access into those communities to do more work. That was a tremendous witness.

**Q: So when you talk about the fruit of work, that well is bearing fruit.**

we'll continue our efforts at some of these things.

**Q: In terms of what might come out of this trip, could you speak about that?**

how, but it's the kind of a program that Brethren here would engage in because it's about being in the neighborhood,

**Wittmeyer:** It was a very important aspect of demonstrating this organization's commitment to interfaith work.

Because wells are so hard to

**Wittmeyer:** And EYN would love to see us come and do more workcamps, for encouragement and just to be together. They're really hoping

**Wittmeyer:** We have to get some support for Rebecca's organization.

**Noffsinger:** We don't know

engaging the community person-to-person. This makes sense, as much as anything I've seen. And it'll have an impact for EYN, because she is EYN, but it'll have an impact for the Muslim community too. It is an opportunity for peace to prevail.

Nigerian Brethren are very committed to being peacemakers. We heard over and over, "We are a peace church. We will respond with nonviolence. How do we work with our Muslim neighbors?" To me, Rebecca's work is a bridge to the people who have been affected by the violence, and who are now internally displaced or who are refugees; it is a bridge to Muslims and Christians; it is a bridge to children who have been orphaned. And that's what Brethren are all about.

The other piece is, what's going to happen when the violence subsides? We asked both Rebecca and Samuel, "How is the church preparing to reintegrate the child soldiers?" And how can we assist, how can we walk with the Nigerian churches? There could be thousands of child soldiers who at some point are going to be summarily dismissed. What are you going to do with all these kids who have really been messed up?

**Q: Not to mention the girls who have been used as sex slaves.**

**Noffsinger:** The girls, absolutely. And it's real, because they're [EYN] children. Ministers and executives are moving their

kids to other parts of the country to live with friends and colleagues because it's not safe, and they fear for their lives.



Jay Wittmeyer

**You need to understand that who we are today is the fruit of your labor, and you need to feel good about that. You need to recognize that the work and investment you made has made us the church that we are.**



**Q: I hate to even ask this, but is Nigeria at a point where we can say, “When the violence subsides”?**

**Wittmeyer:** I would be surprised if it's less than 20 years. I saw so many similarities with the Communist take over in Nepal. There was a statement by a Boko Haram leader that

said, “There are two types of people in the world: those that are for us, and those that are against us.” It reminded me of Pol Pot’s statement that if someone won’t work for the party, they have no value, and if the person is killed there is no loss. I just think it’s going to be a long, slow struggle with the violence going to another level, and then to another level.

**Wittmeyer:** We didn’t hear anything that sounded like Boko Haram is reaching out for peace settlements. Or that the security forces are winning this at a military level. We didn’t get any sense of anything except that it was going to get worse.

**Q: You have talked about the Nigerian church walking in the way of the cross. Would you say more about that?**

**Noffsinger:** Jesus, as he walked the way to the cross, had an opportunity to flee. He had opportunity to retaliate, and he had opportunity to fight, but he didn’t. He chose a nonviolent path toward death and resurrection,

even to the point of healing those that Peter attacked. The way of the cross presents a power that will overcome death, that will overcome evil. Just like in the American church, not everybody in Nigeria agrees with church leadership about being pacifist. They struggle with it and they’re working with it just like we are. To me, that is walking in the midst of the garden when the soldiers are coming. They’re trying to find a way to walk as Jesus would call them to walk. It’s the way of the cross, and it’s costly.

*At left, Church of the Brethren general secretary Stan Noffsinger addresses EYN members during his visit to Nigeria in April. Translating for him, at right, is Musa Mambula, one of the ministers in leadership in EYN.*

**Q: Do you have any personal reflections on the trip?**

**Wittmeyer:** We had a great birthday party for Stan, with Markus and two Muslim women [from Lifeline]. It was a special time.

**Noffsinger:** It was pretty cool to meet with Muslims who are pursuing peace. One of their sons ordered my birthday cake. I wanted to meet him, so we went by his house. I think he was flabbergasted that this church leader wanted to meet him, but why not? Whenever you have an opportunity that is so positive, why not take the next step to engage the broader community?

You see, it has nothing to do with religion, it has to do with face-to-face, handshake-to-handshake, building a relationship. Because once you build a relationship, then you can never look at someone as enemy again. For me, it was taking every opportunity to bridge the chasms and express faith in humanity. Our faith defines us, but we’re all part of humanity. When we really believe that God has created us all and we are in God’s image, then it doesn’t matter what his faith is; he’s a part of the family of God.

**Wittmeyer:** The last thing I’d say is that Carl and Roxane Hill have really found a place there. They can’t stay long, and it’s difficult, and I’m impressed that someone would spend a year and a half in that situation. Boy, they’re really appreciated. They’ve set a very high standard.

**Noffsinger:** The lasting impression I left with is how the Nigerian church is striving to be faithful to their God, and to their belief that Jesus is their redeemer and savior. To live daily with the challenge of security, threats of violence, and some conversation around, “I’d rather be killed than abducted,” is sobering and challenging.

What would happen to our church in the United States if we became the oppressed and persecuted in this culture? How would our church measure up? How does living in safety and wealth taint our understanding of the role of faith in our lives? If I could choose, I would love to have the faith that I see expressed in the Nigerian people. **W**

*As she entered the home stretch of her year as moderator for the Church of the Brethren, Nancy Heishman agreed to answer a few questions about how her year has gone, what she finds encouraging in the church, and how her background in the church has informed her experience as moderator.—Ed.*



Glenn Regal

# WHAT'S UP WITH THE BRETHREN?

Moderator Nancy Heishman offers her take on the church

**W:** In the May “Reflections” column you wrote for MESSENGER, you said you needed new walking shoes. Did you find some?

**Nancy Heishman:** I did! I’ll probably keep them forever.

**W:** Where are some places those shoes have taken you during your term as moderator?

**NH:** I visited the Missouri/Arkansas and Western Plains Districts. I went to the Northern Indiana and South Central Indiana Districts. I attended the Intercultural Gathering in West Virginia, which was a wonderful event. During the first two weeks of April [my husband] Irv and I traveled to Spain and the Canary Islands and visited all six Brethren churches there. It was really a treat. I was moved by their deep spirituality and heartfelt devotion to Christ, as well as their passion for evangelism and reaching out to the community. We could

learn a lot from them in terms of deepening our own practice of discipleship.

**W:** Last year you challenged Brethren to study and even memorize the book of Philippians in preparation for Annual Conference. As you visit churches, do you find members trying to impress you with how much they’ve memorized?

**NH:** Everywhere I go, I find many people who have taken up the challenge. I met an older woman in Roanoke who’s trying to memorize it. And there’s a woman at West Charleston Church of the Brethren in Tipp City, Ohio, who is memorizing the whole book. At the Berkey Church of the Brethren in Windber, Pa., the pastor has asked his congregation to memorize it. Already, 70 people have committed to doing so. Even more amazing is his Greek class, in which the students have committed to memorizing the book in Greek. I’m delighted!

**W:** What are some things that stand out in your memory from your travels. Any pleasant surprises?

**NH:** I was encouraged by the strength of local congregations. Even the smallest congregations are committed to loving one another and serving the community. One of the first district conferences I attended was Missouri/Arkansas. I'd never been in that district. I was so encouraged to hear stories about what the congregations are doing. Their district moderator told me that they have 50 mission and service projects in progress. And they have only a dozen or so congregations, which makes it even more remarkable that they're offering so much to their communities. The church is alive and well at the local level.

**W:** All people elected to the role of moderator serve a year as moderator-elect to become familiar with the task. Yet there are bound to be some unexpected twists and turns once you find yourself in the driver's seat. What challenges have you had to face as moderator?

**NH:** The hardest part is balancing everything. As a pastor and a moderator, it's challenging. [Nancy and Irv are interim pastors at West Charleston Church of the Brethren in Tipp City, Ohio, and Iglesia de Los Hermanos Cristo Nuestra Paz (Christ Our Peace Church of the Brethren), which meets at the New Carlisle (Ohio) Church of the Brethren building.] It's hard being away from those congregations. Christ Our Peace is a tiny congregation that's only five years old. But they are a wonderful, hard-working, faith-filled group of primarily Mexicans and Guatemalans. I look forward to being able to spend more time with both congregations following my term as moderator.

**W:** Tell us about your background in the Church of the Brethren.

**NH:** I grew up in the Annville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren. All along, I always felt supported in my call to ministry. I was licensed and ordained there. My first pastorate was at Wilmington (Del.) Church of the Brethren. It was a little scary, being fresh out of seminary. But Wilmington was a wonderful church for a pastor coming right out of seminary. They took



*During their visit with Brethren on the island of Lanzarote, in the Canary Islands, Irv (left) and Nancy met with pastor Victor Javier and his wife, Celenia Jimenez of Cristo, la Única Esperanza Iglesia de los Hermanos, and pastor Santos Terrero.*

*Below: Over the past year, Nancy has had to divide her time between her role as moderator and pastor. Here, she teaches a Sunday school class at West Charleston Church of the Brethren in Tipp City, Ohio.*

good care of me. It is a good teaching church. Allen Hansell had been pastor there for 18 years before I arrived. He'd done a good job of building up the lay leadership.

It was good for me to get my feet wet in a semi-urban setting. That turned out to be good preparation for my pastorate later with Irv at Harrisburg (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren. We were married after I'd been at Wilmington for three years. Irv had been at Hagerstown for two years. We were married in May 1988. We met at seminary when Bethany was still at the Oak Brook, Ill., campus. We had been good friends throughout seminary.

Our children, Tim and Jenny, were born shortly after our arrival in Harrisburg. Tim is in Brethren Volunteer Service, working as one of the coordinators for this summer's National Youth Conference. Jenny just finished her junior year at Eastern Mennonite University, in Harrisonburg, Va. They were 9 and 13 when we went to the Dominican Republic, where Irv and I spent eight years on the church staff. We loved it there. One of the high points there was seeing the vital ministries that congregations have in their communities. The churches are made up of Haitian immigrants and native-born Dominicans. There were

**I was encouraged by the strength of local congregations. Even the smallest congregations are committed to loving one another and serving the community.**





The signs of life and vitality I see in local congregations are encouraging, especially in the gifts they have to offer communities.

challenges, of course, but also opportunities. And it is a gorgeous country. It was fun to explore the island in our free time. But we especially appreciated the hospitality of the Dominicans. We treasure the friendships we have from our time there.

**WJ:** Growing up in the Church of the Brethren, were there any moderators—or perhaps other leaders—whom you particularly admired?

**NH:** The ones I admire were very diverse in terms of their gifts to the church. I remember Chuck Boyer, who was Annual Conference moderator in 1993. Lots of people think of him as having been quite liberal. But what I remember most about him was his deep sense of prayer and spirituality at that Conference. Seeing that in him was deeply moving to me. I appreciated his leadership. I was also impressed with moderator Paul Grout and his gifts of prophetic leadership. And then there's Elaine Sollenberger—my aunt—who was the first woman moderator. I appreciated her steadiness and wisdom.

At Bethany, the whole seminary staff was a blessing. I appreciated the mentorship of [former president] Gene Roop, and how he began each day with prayer. I appreciated Nancy Faus' musical abilities and leadership. Another leader who had an impact on me is Gilbert Romero, who took time to share his story again at the recent Intercultural Gathering. There really are so many great leaders from past and present. And then there are the young people of today! As I look at young adults, I see so much great leadership now!

**WJ:** When you were young, did you ever think that one day you might like to be moderator?

**NH:** Being moderator was not in my thoughts growing up. My home church had never called a woman to the ministry. That would have been a new thing for them. As far as being asked to consider this post, complete shock would be a good way of expressing my reaction to having my name placed on the ballot for moderator. I was dumbfounded. There were four names on the list, and I naively thought my name wouldn't go forward. Nevertheless, I prayerfully considered what I might have to contribute. And I think one of those things is my mission experience. As I travel, I try to encourage people to support the global church. It is important to walk in solidarity with brothers and sisters around the world.

**WJ:** Your son, Tim, is also in a leadership position this year as a coordinator for National Youth Conference. What's it been like having a Conference moderator and an NYC coordinator in one family in the same year?

**NH:** It's been fun to share some of the challenges of organizing the conferences. We've talked about the development of the themes, things like that. We had to solidify our themes around the same time. I think he finds it challenging, but fun. He likes administrative detail.

**WJ:** In the March MESSENGER, Bethany Seminary president Jeff Carter talked about visiting several Brethren districts in an attempt to get acquainted with Brethren around the country. He noted the differences, but also the things we have in common. In your travels, what differences have you observed, and what things have you found that tie us together?

**NH:** In my visits to Western Plains, and also Southern Plains, I was struck by how hard the Brethren there work at keeping their relationships strong across great distances. They really treasure the times they're together because they have so far to come. They're actively working at ways to foster partnership with churches across their districts. I don't remember noticing this as much in the East, where everywhere you turn it seems there's another Brethren church. Out on the plains, they have to drive hours and hours to reach another church. Their sense of *koinonia* is strong out there.

At the same time, whether I was in California or Kansas, Pennsylvania or Puerto Rico, I found a strong sense of commitment to service. Wherever Brethren are, they look for people whom they can serve. That's just in our DNA. That was certainly true as I looked at local congregations. They are deeply generous and committed to service—not just in terms of hospitality, but also in the ways they serve each other and their communities. There is a great sense of service and generosity, all done with a humble spirit.

**WJ:** What have you found most encouraging about the Brethren in your visits to congregations and districts?

**NH:** The signs of life and vitality I see in local congregations are encouraging, especially in the gifts they have to offer communities. I was impressed with how members of First Church

*Right: Jeni, Tim, Irv, and Nancy, at Charleston Falls, Tipp City, Ohio*

*Opposite: Nancy met with pastor Miriam Lorenzo Lajara, the current moderator of la Iglesia de los Hermanos in España.*

of the Brethren in Roanoke, Va., are reaching out to their community, walking the streets, learning to know the names of their neighbors. I sensed a real enthusiasm and passion in their attempts to reach out.

In the Missouri/Arkansas District there is a church with only three or four members that does outreach several times a year to women with mental health programs. And they provide a regular Christmas party for these residents. They could say: "Well, we have only three members. We quit." I thought it was really bold that a church with so few members recognizes that God is still calling them.

And then there's the Holmesville Church of the Brethren—a rural congregation in southern Nebraska that has decided to refocus their ministry around community service. They are involved in a series of projects, many of them related to the geographically broad school system in their area. One of these is called the "Outpost Ministry." About 40 miles from Holmesville are several small communities that over the years have been unchurched, and are intentionally very secular. In partnership with a woman from this area who longs for more of a spiritual presence in her community, a group of people has begun to gather in her home for a weekly meal and Bible study under the leadership of John Snyder, pastor of the Holmesville congregation. Things like this don't often get attention, but really speak to the qualities that make Brethren who we are.

**WJ: What do you see as the key issues facing the Church of the Brethren at this time?**

**NH:** Supporting local congregations is very important. If we really want to see ourselves as continuing to be relevant in the future, our hope will be found in local congregations' ability to allow God to fan the flames of the spirit among them to such a degree that they actively share that with the surrounding community. It comes down to local congregations finding the fire of Jesus' presence among them and sharing that.

We also need to continue learning from the global church. Many congregations in the international community are alive and vital. One of the strengths of the church outside of the US is that they do evangelism naturally. Whether you're walking the streets of Spain, or Brazil, or Haiti, or any of our mission points, they're all going about that. They can share with American Brethren that enthusiasm for sharing the Spirit. Our challenge is to allow the Pietist spirit to bubble out of us so that the communities around us will want to join in.

Another challenge, which comes out of our visit to Spain, is to place greater value on our spiritual relationship with our global partners than on the material things we may share with them. We learned that in the Dominican Republic. They value their spiritual relationship with the American Brethren.



We in the US share so much of our material wealth with them that the balance maybe got a little off. To the extent that we allow anything else—such as material gifts—to become more valuable than that spiritual treasure of our relationship with Christ and our sisters and brothers, we become weaker. We heard that in Spain. And we heard that longing for spiritual relationship when we were in the Dominican Republic.

**WJ: The Church of the Brethren went through a pretty wrenching period recently as it wrestled with the issue of inclusivity during the Special Response Process. What do you think we as a denomination learned from that experience, and how can that knowledge be helpful as we continue to deal with this issue in the future?**

**NH:** One of the things we learned from that, sadly, is that we can wound each other very deeply when we force the body to make decisions that the Spirit has not made clear that it's time to make. It's sometimes difficult for a large body to wait until it's clear that the Spirit is leading it to make a decision. It's difficult for people on all sides to be patient. But I think it would have been better if a little more time could have been taken. It's difficult for people who think "The time is now!" to be patient.

On the other hand, when we marginalize some of our members, the whole body is weaker. I treasure the stories I hear about people on the extreme edges of these issues who've gotten together and found ways to have faith conversations. We need more of that. We've tried to move more toward that. The round table conversations at Annual Conference have helped. I think they help foster conversations among those who would not ordinarily come together. I hope these conversations can continue. There's a saying I came across recently: "Let us have the courage to differ graciously." We may not ever agree on some things, but if we can do so graciously, that's the important thing.

**WJ: One last question: If you could change anything about the Church of the Brethren, what would that be?**

**NH:** I would want the church to be bolder and more courageous in sharing the life of Christ out in the world. That would be good! WJ



# Something better than happiness

by Tim Harvey

**O**ur culture is obsessed with the need to be happy. If you don't believe me, watch an hour or two of television before you read the rest of this article, and then come back and start over. Nearly every advertisement on television works from the premise that if we purchase the appropriate product we will have better hair, whiter teeth, smaller waistlines, better sex, fancier cars, exotic vacations, better families. If we acquire these things, we will be happy.

It's really kind of hard to argue against happiness. Ebenezer Scrooge isn't all that popular in December; the last thing we want to do is think about him in June, right?

The problem with this obsession on happiness is that, as a pastor, I know the pain people carry. Members of my congregation share their fears, struggles, and concerns with me. Each Sunday as I look out over the congregation, I generally know what's going on in people's lives. We are a complicated mix of tremendous joys and significant concerns when we gather for worship. Happiness can be a fleeting thing.

Because I'm part of a congregation and denomination involved in local and international mission, I also have a sense of the brokenness of this world. I'm no pessimist; Roanoke—and

the world in general—is an amazing place to live. But we cannot be blind to the very real challenges that are around us: from the families around my local congregation who live in significant poverty to our brothers and sisters in Nigeria who live under constant threat from Muslim extremists. We might easily add to this list the rising presence of global terror, uncertain economic futures, governmental dysfunction, and climate change. There is much in this world that wars against happiness, and the happiness that comes from buying the latest consumer product will be only short-lived, at best.

Is there something better than happiness? I believe there is.

It is to Christians living in circumstances similar to ours that Paul writes what is affectionately known as the "epistle of joy." In my previous articles on Philippians 1-3, I've noted the amount of conflict that surrounded Paul at this point in his ministry. He was in a Roman prison, false preachers were slandering him, and his future is in question. Within the Philippian congregation, open conflict had emerged between Euodia and Syntyche. It was apparently so significant that Paul calls them out by name and urges them to "bury the hatchet" so they can return to the work of serving Christ and the church.

With all of this, Paul certainly could not have been very happy (at least all the time). How, then, could he write about joy? The clue is at the very end of the instructions to the “loyal yokefellow” assigned to help Eudodia and Syntyche reconcile. In describing these people, Paul mentions that their “names are in the book of life” (v. 3). Whatever challenges the Philippians may have faced, their perspective should be changed by the reality of an eternal God. To a people who are experiencing some trouble in the midst of their faith, Paul encourages them to “rejoice in the Lord always!”

It would be easy for us to view the instruction to “re-joyce!” in the same way we respond to the consumer ads on TV: acquire some new product (in this case, a faith practice that makes us feel good) and feel like we have done all we need to do. That, however, would be a mistake, for such a view suffers from an overly romantic view of Scripture. In describing our tendency to select a few favorite texts while ignoring more challenging ones, Walter Brueggemann (writing about the Psalms) says, “A long, faithful history of Psalms interpretation has developed . . . in personal piety that focuses on a few well-known and well-beloved Psalms, especially Psalms 23, 46 and 121. Such popular piety tends to be highly selective in the psalms used and frequently quite romantic in its understanding of them, so that the Psalms serve to assure, affirm, and strengthen faithful people. This selective (and romantic) tendency is reinforced by much liturgical practice in the church” (*Spirituality of the Psalms*, p. 3).

Brueggemann’s challenge certainly applies to passages like Philippians 4:4-6 as well. In the midst of life’s troubles, we want to feel good about something. We want to come to church and rejoice in the Lord, forgetting about our troubles for a while. But for Paul, what made joy in the Lord such a great virtue was that he found that joy in the midst of his troubles. Remember, he writes these words about joy from a Roman prison, right on the heels of admonishing Eudodia and Syntyche to behave themselves.

### Moving toward joy

When my congregation’s Bible study group studied this passage, I concluded our time by asking how we might structure our worship services so that we can become people who experience authentic joy in the midst of life’s troubles. Coming into worship each Sunday as we do, how do we take Paul’s teaching to heart and truly “Rejoice in the Lord always”? How might

our worship acknowledge both the details of our living and our awesome, eternal Savior? Here is one idea:

**Rejoice in the Lord always (v. 4).** We would begin in heart-felt congregational praise and thanksgiving. Songs and spoken responses would be chosen that come from the congregation’s musical style preferences and allow us to lift our voices and our spirits in celebration.

**Let your gentleness be known to everyone (v. 5).** Here the congregation would share “joys and concerns,” but on a deeper level. Who among our congregation is in need of prayer, a visit, or support of one kind or another? Are there those who have fallen away from the faith and need a reminder of the importance of public worship, or who need to repent of sin?

**Do not worry about anything . . . (v. 6).** The distinction

**There is much in this world that wars against happiness, and the happiness that comes from buying the latest consumer product will be only short-lived, at best.**

between this section and the previous one is not significant. Here, however, we might shift toward those needs and concerns that are outside the church walls, in the local community and the wider world around us. What *really* is going on in our lives? After sharing, the congregation would move into a time of prayer, confession, and supplication.

**And the peace of God . . . (v. 7).** At this point in the worship service, we might ask ourselves *how* we are noticing an increasing presence of the peace of God in our lives. Is this real for us, or just a romantic ideal?

**Whatever is true . . . honorable . . . just . . . think about such things (v. 8).** This is the place for the sermon. How does the Scripture inform our living? How do we need to be challenged, comforted, and instructed?

**Keep on doing the things you have learned from me (v. 9).** Before the congregation departs, it should reflect again on specific local and missional needs. The morning offering, a “moment for mission,” calling members to church leadership, and other related faith practices would happen here. All are areas where we would put faith into action.

Our worship (and article) closes with an affirmation of faith that reminds us that the joy we have in our resurrection faith is so much better than any consumer-based, purchased happiness: “And the God of faith will be with you.” Amen. 

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.

# Nigerian church leaders meet with abducted schoolgirls' parents

by Zakariya Musa

**T**he president of EYN (Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria, the Church of the Brethren Nigeria) Samuel D.

**Dali**, met on May 8 with 58 parents of some of the Chibok schoolgirls abducted April 14. EYN operates largely in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states in Nigeria, where a state of emergency has been in place for more than a year.

Chibok, a Christian dominated area—and the only one of the 27 local governments in Borno that pays CRK (Christian Religious Knowledge) teachers' salary—is where the Church of the Brethren Mission station was opened by Ira S. Petre in 1931.

“God knows where they (the girls) are, so we hope that one day they will be freed,” said Dali. “The entire world is crying with us. . . . We have hope because God is with these girls. . . . Let's continue persevering in our patience, and stand firm in our faith. . . . Today when we send out workers as a church, it's like we are sending them to the grave. Sometime I ask myself why I came in this time, but God knows. May God help you and strengthen your faith.”

One of the parents thanked the leaders of the church on their behalf. He said they are sure that they have no government because no government officials have come to greet the parents like this, despite their security personnel. You are here with no security personnel, but God is with you, he told the church leaders.



Photo courtesy of Zakariya Musa

*EYN president Samuel Dante Dali addresses a group of parents of the schoolgirls abducted from Chibok, Nigeria. The meeting took place at EYN Church No. 2 in Chibok, on Thursday, May 8.*

The EYN president contributed money to the 58 parents to assist with their to return to their homes. He gave additional funds to the five district church council (DCC) officials for the affected members at the various districts. The five DCCs—Chibok, Mbalala, Balgi, Kautikari, and Askira—have also suffered from the insurgents' activities since 2009.

The former secretary of the EYN Ministers Council and chairman of the EYN Relief Committee, Amos Duwala, observed that “if there is a beginning there must be also an end to every situation.”

Special prayers were offered for peace in the country, for the release of the abducted, for comfort to the parents, for provision to the displaced, condolence to those who lost their relatives, for the government to be just, and for the insurgents to change their minds.

—Zakariya Musa is secretary of Sabon Haske, a publication of EYN

*EYN president Samuel Dali presents donations to officials of the five affected district church councils.*



Photo courtesy of Zakariya Musa



Paty Henry

*Volunteers are trained through Children's Disaster Services to provide caregiving to children after disasters.*

## Children's Disaster Services begins new collaboration with Disciples of Christ

**C**hurch of the Brethren Children's Disaster Services (CDS) is collaborating with Disciples Home Missions (DHM), Week of Compassion, and the National Benevolent Association of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to create a new position and initiative that will help meet the needs of children affected by disaster.

A new memorandum of understanding outlines this partnership, providing the framework for a three-year focus on expanding CDS in the Gulf Coast region. Funding provided by the Disciples Home Mission, the National Benevolent Association, and Week of Compassion will develop a new role of a Gulf Coast coordinator. This individual will support the developing and training of a larger network of volunteers in Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana. By engaging the strength and networks of the Christian Church/Disciples of Christ congregations and their significant children's ministries, the organizers see great potential to better meet the needs of children in this disaster-prone area.

The partnership includes the training of interested church members and others in the region as CDS volunteers, and for leadership roles supporting volunteer coordination and volunteer training. A primary goal is to train 250 potential volunteers in the next three years. After completing a certification process including a criminal record check, these

volunteers will provide direct care to children in shelters and service centers after a disaster. The volunteers will be organized into rapid response teams to be the first caregivers responding after a disaster in their region. These volunteers also will be called to serve larger disasters outside of the region.

"The Church of the Brethren is excited for this expanding partnership between the Christian Church/Disciples of Christ and Children's Disaster Services," said Stanley J. Noffsinger, general secretary of the Church of the Brethren. "For several years our two churches have been in conversations on how to work together as peacemakers. I can think of no better way than for our volunteers to join their gifts and talents in providing a caring service ministry for children affected by disaster. It is a ministry that seeks to reconcile the lives of some of the most vulnerable victims after disaster."

"For years, Disciples of Christ members have been volunteering with CDS," commented Roy Winter, associate executive director of Brethren Disaster Ministries and Global Mission and Service. "At this critical time in the history of

CDS, this partnership helps grow the program beyond the capacity of one denomination. Together we can expand this ministry in critical disaster-prone areas to better meet the needs of children and families impacted by disasters."



Children's Disaster Services

### upcoming events

**June 8 Pentecost Sunday**, Pentecost Offering Emphasis

**June 22 NYC Prayer Day for National Youth Conference 2014**

**June 30-July 2 Council of District Executives Summer Meeting**, Columbus, Ohio

**July 1-2 Minister's Association Continuing Education Event**, Columbus, Ohio

**July 1-2 Mission and Ministry Board Meeting**, Columbus, Ohio

**July 2-6 Annual Conference**, Columbus, Ohio

**July 6-12 Song and Story Fest**, Camp Inspiration Hills, Burbank Ohio

**July 19-24 National Youth Conference**, Fort Collins, Colo.

**July 20-Aug. 8 Brethren Volunteer Service Summer Orientation**

## Revision to Ministerial Leadership Polity heads up agenda

**The business agenda for the Church of the Brethren's 2014 Annual Conference** in Columbus, Ohio, on July 2-6 includes proposed revisions to the Ministerial Leadership Polity, along with other returning business items that deal with guidelines for implementing the Congregational Ethics Paper, guidance for responding to the changing of Earth's climate, a Vision of Ecumenism for the 21st century, and more equitable representation on the Mission and Ministry Board.

Glenn Riegel



New business items on the docket include a proposed revision to the Special Response Process "A Structural Framework for Dealing with Strongly Controversial Issues," as well as amendments to the bylaws of the Church of the Brethren Inc. and the Brethren Benefit Trust Articles of Organization. The delegate body also will hold elections and receive reports from the Conference agencies and representatives to ecumenical bodies.

For details about the Annual Conference business and schedule, and to register to attend, go to [www.brethren.org/ac](http://www.brethren.org/ac).

## Congregations are invited to join in Annual Conference Sunday

**Church of the Brethren congregations and individuals are invited** to join in a special Annual Conference Sunday worship service from around the country on July 6. The Conference Office is inviting churches to join in the webcast of worship that Sunday, in order "to worship together as one virtual church."

Congregations are invited to come together in celebration of Annual Conference Sunday by sharing in the worship webcast. The webcast can be broadcast live to churches who will then worship with thousands of other Brethren as a

virtual congregation.

Find the webcasting link on the Annual Conference homepage at [www.brethren.org/ac](http://www.brethren.org/ac). Congregations in any location may join in the webcast at any time or restart the broadcast from the beginning, as well as comment and chat online with the webcast coordinator. A bulletin will be available to download and print from the Annual Conference webpage.

In addition, all of the Conference business sessions and worship services will be webcast or streamed over the Internet. The schedule is as follows (all times are Eastern time):

Glenn Riegel



### Wednesday, July 2

Opening Worship, 6:50-8:30 p.m.

### Thursday, July 3

Bible Study and Morning Business Session, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Afternoon Business Session, 1:55-4:30 p.m.

Evening Worship, 6:50-8:30 p.m.

### Friday, July 4

Bible Study and Morning Business Session, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Afternoon Business Session, 1:55-4:30 p.m.

Evening Worship, 6:50-8:30 p.m.

### Saturday, July 5

Morning Worship, 8:30-10 a.m.

Morning Business Session, 10:15-11:30 a.m.

Afternoon Business Session, 1:55-4:30 p.m.

### Sunday, July 6 – Annual Conference Sunday

Closing Worship, 8:30-10:30 a.m.

Annual conference update



Regina Holmes

# Jeff Carter inaugurated as Bethany Seminary president

by Jenny Williams

**J**eff Carter was inaugurated as president of Bethany Theological Seminary March 29 at a special service in the seminary's Nicarry Chapel. Nearly 170 people attended the service who's theme, chosen by Carter was "Can I Get a Witness?" a reference to 1 John 1:1-2: "The Word that gives life was from the beginning, and this is the one our message is about. . . . The one who gives life appeared! We saw it happen, and we are witnesses to what we have seen."

Guest speaker Thomas G. Long, Bandy professor of preaching at Candler School of Theology at Emory University, spoke to this theme in an address entitled "Faithful Witness: Engaging the Senses." Long is widely known and respected in the field of homiletics, having also taught preaching at Princeton, Columbia, and Erskine Seminaries. The author of numerous books and articles on preaching and worship as well



as biblical commentaries, he has served as senior homiletics editor of *The New Interpreter's Bible* and is an editor-at-large for *The Christian Century*.

A number of people within the Bethany community took part in the service, offering prayers, instrumental and vocal music, scripture reading, and introductions. Dan Ulrich, Wieand professor

of New Testament Studies, presented a "Witness of Bethany Theological Seminary," incorporating both historical and philosophical perspectives. Board chair Lynn Myers led the commissioning of the president and was joined by trustee, student, and faculty representatives in the laying on of hands.

The gathering also heard statements from representatives of the Church of the Brethren, Manchester University, and the neighboring Earlham School of Religion.

—Jenny Williams is director of communications and alumni relations for Bethany Seminary.

## New Annual Conference App designed to aid Conference-goers

**A new Annual Conference App has been created** to aid Conference-goers and delegates as they attend the Church of the Brethren annual meeting this year on July 2-6 in Columbus, Ohio.

Created primarily by Russ Otto of the Church of the Brethren web staff, in cooperation with the Conference Office and other staff, the app is intended to enhance the Conference experience and will provide detailed guidance for attendees.

With the 2014 Annual Conference App, Conference-goers will be able to:

- Plan their Conference with a custom schedule
- Set schedule reminders, in order never to miss a Conference event
- Get updates when there are schedule changes
- Navigate the Conference with maps of the Greater Columbus Convention Center
- Find their way to local attractions with the area map
- View profiles of speakers, presenters, and exhibitors
- Stay informed with news and Twitter updates

Download the app at [www.brethren.org/ac/app.html](http://www.brethren.org/ac/app.html).



# A bully for the downtrodden

**T**here are four presidents carved into the side of Mount Rushmore. Which ones actually deserve to be enshrined in stone?

Washington and Lincoln are slam dunks, in my opinion, and you can flip a coin to determine first and second place. Jefferson? Opinions about him vary—I'm less impressed than some. Personally I'd put FDR up there in his place.

Which brings me to the fourth president depicted on the mountainside. My guess is that most 21st century Americans know less about Theodore Roosevelt than any of his partners in stone. The Rough Rider with the big teeth—who spoke softly but carried a big stick—might be known to some who watched the Ken Burns documentary on our national parks as something of a proto-environmentalist.



FRANK RAMIREZ

Several recent books about Theodore Roosevelt, including Doris Kearns Goodwin's *The Bully Pulpit*, may well convince you that TR belongs on the mountain as much as Washington and Lincoln.

Goodwin reminds us that in an era when a select few monopolies had a stranglehold on capital—controlling the lives of the bitterly poor who had few if any rights regarding safety and security in employment—Roosevelt used his “bully pulpit” to push a progressive agenda. Despite his patrician upbringing that initially resulted in a snobbish dismissal of anyone he considered his social inferiors, Roosevelt came to appreciate the rights of ordinary workers who suffered under the thumb of corporate interests. At a time when the distance between the extremely rich and most everyone else widened at an alarming rate, Roosevelt insisted that everyone, rich or poor, deserved a “square deal.” He worked as police commissioner, civil service reformer, governor of New York, and president of the United States on behalf of the poorest sectors of society. He deserves credit for breaking up monopolies and creating regulatory agencies to curb their excesses.

But as she wrote, Goodwin came to realize that Roos-

evelt's story was inextricably linked with the career of his friend William Howard Taft, who succeeded him in the presidency. He also is linked to a team of crusading journalists who wrote for the enterprising and visionary editor S. S. McClure, whose journey from staggering poverty in Scotland to journalistic prominence in the United States is worth the great deal of attention it receives in this book.

At heart are the rights of workers to earn a living wage (an assumption that sometimes fails to find advocates even in our own time) and the assumption by some that employers have few or no obligations, legal or moral, toward their employees. In that sense, this is a contemporary as well as an historical story.

All Christians—and we Brethren as much, if not more, than anyone—have something to say to stories like these as we take to heart the words of Jesus, who was unremittingly critical of the economic oppression in his day as he tirelessly advocated for the poor and despairing. The very name of our savior, Yeshua, means “he saves,” and when he unrolled the Isaiah scroll in his home synagogue, he used the prophet's words to call to mind the language of the Jubilee, which promised economic as well as spiritual deliverance to God's people.

Brethren Volunteer Service (the direct inspiration for the Peace Corps), CROP, Church World Service, and Heifer International are among the many ways we Brethren have used the bully pulpit to demonstrate in deed as well as word where we stand on ministering to those who Jesus called “the least of these.” The ordinance of feetwashing is a striking symbol of our servant ministry to the world and toward each other.

Goodwin's book is also a story of reconciliation as well as redemption. Roosevelt and Taft, close friends, became bitter adversaries. The team of investigative journalists broke with McClure when they could no longer tolerate his antics. Yet we see how ultimately rifts were healed and relationships restored. And that's not a bad lesson for us to learn as well.

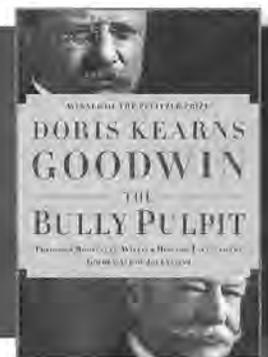
Doris Kearns Goodwin is a best-selling, Pulitzer Prize winning historian who served as a consultant on Steven Spielberg's recent film, *Lincoln*. She also made a memorable impression in the Ken Burns documentary on baseball. **FR**

Frank Ramirez is senior pastor of Union Center Church of the Brethren in Nappanee, Ind.

## ABOUT THE BOOK

**Title:** *The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism.*

**Author:** Doris Kearns Goodwin. **Publisher:** Simon and Schuster, November 2013. **Number of pages:** 928. In her review of the book in *The Washington Post*, Boston College history professor Heather Cox Richardson writes, “Goodwin describes a society that had many of the same strains evident in modern America, and she suggests a prescription for reform today that recalls the muckrakers [investigative journalists] before her. She plays down the idea that presidents, however outspoken or competent, can remake the nation. Journalists held the key to political reform in the Progressive Era, and Goodwin suggests they hold it still.”



## NYC Prayer Day is June 22

A day of prayer for this summer's National Youth Conference (NYC) has been scheduled for Sunday, June 22. Congregations across the country are invited to set aside a special time in their Sunday morning worship services on June 22 to pray for all who will participate in the conference. NYC Prayer Day is intended to invite the entire denomination to participate in the experience of NYC and support those who attend.

The National Youth Conference office has prepared special worship resources for congregations and individuals to use. Resources include a prayer of consecration, a commissioning reading, a call to worship, song suggestions, and a prayer calendar and guide for those who wish to continue in prayer for NYC over the next few months. Included in the prayer guide is a list of creative ideas for how to support those who will be attending NYC. All resources are available at <http://www.brethren.org/yya/nyc/prepare.html>.

National Youth Conference is scheduled for July 19-24 on the campus of Colorado State University in Fort Collins. For more information about NYC, please visit [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org), or contact the NYC office by calling 847-429-4323 or emailing [cobyouth@brethren.org](mailto:cobyouth@brethren.org).

## Bible studies for NYC prep

The National Youth Conference (NYC) Office has released 10 Bible studies for youth groups to use as they prepare to attend the July 19-24 conference. Several of the Bible studies were written by NYC speakers, using the scripture text they will preach on during the week of NYC.

The Bible studies are intended to help youth and advisors familiarize themselves with the NYC theme and scriptures before the conference, and to help them prepare spiritually for the experience. Most of the Bible studies follow a typical format of a brief reflection followed by questions for individual or group discussion. The Bible studies are available at [www.brethren.org/yya/nyc/theme.html](http://www.brethren.org/yya/nyc/theme.html).

In addition to Bible studies, the NYC Office has compiled several pages of information and resources intended to help youth groups prepare for NYC physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

  
**Called by Christ**  
blessed for the journey together  
Eph. 4:1-7



### NYC pillows

"Oak Grove' Church of the Brethren's youth group (of Roanoke, Va.) has started on their NYC pillows! Has anyone else?" asked a recent Facebook post from the National Youth Conference (NYC) office. NYC is held every four years for youth who have finished ninth grade through one year of college, and their adult advisors.



## Potluck's wide-open table

**B**rethren are good at potlucks.

At such glorious events, I have enjoyed dishes familiar to my Midwestern childhood (potato salad, baked beans), new foods (cottage cheese with apple butter), and even more ethnic flavors (curry, and spicy rice and beans). I've seen tamales served next to Jell-O, pineapple Fanta next to lemonade. Yes, Brethren are good at potlucks.

My pastor recently told a story about a non-Brethren congregation where he previously served in Michigan. The church had Asian members, African American members, and Caucasian members from out in the country. But mostly it

was made up of middle-class folks from the city. Instead of celebrating their diversity, the church's lay leadership was so concerned about the differences in their congregation that they made a motion to ban potlucks—and it passed.

Can you imagine a church that didn't allow such a beautiful example of the way that food brings people together?

Everybody needs nourishment and sustenance, and I'm pretty sure homemade mac 'n cheese transcends all dif-

ference in skin color and language. But vastly more powerful than the smell of grilled barbecued chicken are the unconditionally open arms of Jesus. He is the reason we've found each other, he is the reason we gather as family, and it's at his table that we break bread together and share in each other's lives.

When I think of all the people in my life that I never would have met if it weren't for our shared faith, I give thanks. When I think of all the dishes I never would have tried, or the conversations I never would have had if it weren't for the random conglomeration of food in church basements, it makes me sad for that potluck-less church in Michigan. They didn't even realize the treasure right under their noses! (And I'm not talking about fresh-baked chocolate chip cookies.)



MANDY GARCIA

Jesus' table is full of sustenance and variety. It has seats for everyone and space for dishes from all over the world. We partake of that table in our churches where we meet, invest in each other, and form communities. We enjoy food that we never would have tasted, and stick together with people we never would have met if it weren't for Jesus. And that is truly delicious. *WJ*

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



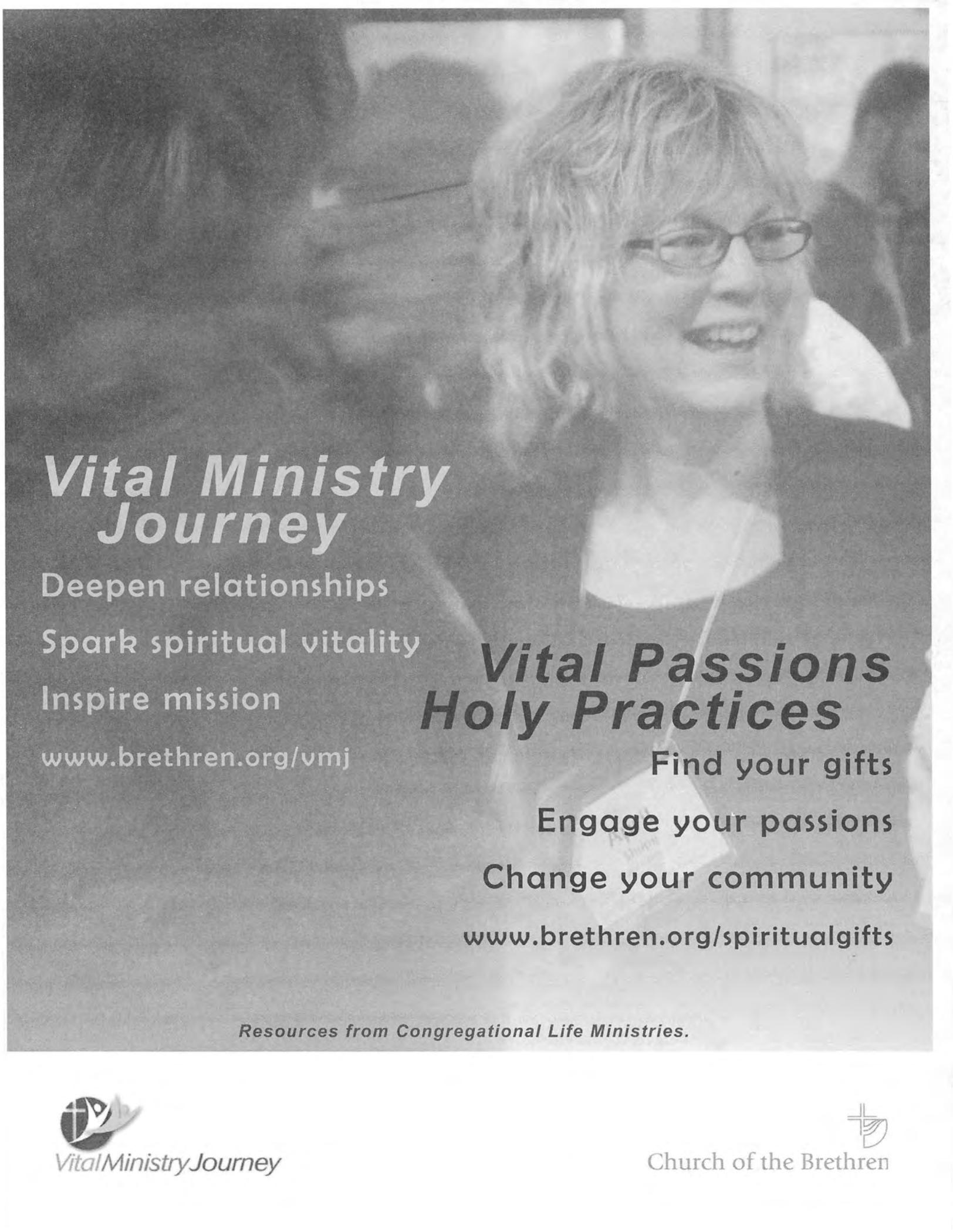
### Quinoa salad

*For your next potluck, a nutrient-rich alternative to a rice or pasta salad is one made with quinoa (KEEN-wah). The tiny seed has all essential amino acids, is gluten-free, and extremely versatile.*

Rinse 1 cup of quinoa in a fine-meshed strainer and add it to a medium sauce pot with 2 cups of water. Boil, then reduce heat and simmer until water is absorbed and quinoa fluffs up, about 15 minutes. (Quinoa is done when you can see a tiny "spring" popping out of each granule.) Drain extra water and spread quinoa in a single layer on a baking sheet to cool.

In a small bowl, whisk together juice and zest (the colorful outer layer of the citrus peel) of one lemon, 1/3 cup olive oil, and 1 tsp. of kosher salt.

When quinoa is cool, toss with 3 thinly sliced green onions, 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil, one chopped medium-sized tomato, 1/4 cup pine nuts, 1 cup whole arugula or baby spinach, and 1/2 cup of shaved parmesan cheese. Add lemon/oil dressing and season with salt and pepper.



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Offerings during the other four worship services will be received  
to support the important ministry of Annual Conference.



Church of the Brethren

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as  
**Courageous  
Disciples**

## Grateful for Samuel and Rebecca Dali

I am so grateful for your printing Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford's conversations with Rev. Samuel Dali, the head of EYN (CoB in Nigeria), while they were at the World Council of Churches! He and his wife, Rebecca, had been in the US two years ago, but not much was made of it.

His words reveal that EYN is going through the most difficult time of its existence. He says "how hard it is to see his people killed and I can do nothing." He urges us to come close to one another. He is so clear about what is happening to them. I hope that we in the US can respond to his heartfelt words.

Naomi K. Keeney  
Palmyra, Pa.

## Let's not forget our witness as peacemakers

Thank you for a series of MESSENGER issues with references to our Brethren peace heritage. The witness on peace within the World

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Council of Churches, the University of La Verne's recognition of WWII conscientious objectors, and the article from the Bethany Seminary Peace Essay Contest are welcome reminders that such witness continues. Thank you for sharing these accounts.

Having worked and fellowshiped with other Christians, I have been reminded repeatedly that many see peace witness as a key testimony of our denomination. And though I am grateful when others recognize our Brethren peace witness, I have a compelling sense that the current reference to Brethren as a "peace church" is due in great part to our history—especially the almost heroic Brethren efforts and actions across three decades beginning in 1940.

Organizing and supporting these programs (Civilian Public Service, post-WWII Brethren relief response in Europe, hundreds of Brethren volunteers serving in Europe and elsewhere abroad, the Student Exchange Program, and Brethren roles in Heifer Project, Church World

Service, and WCC in the US and Europe) involved Brethren abroad and across the brotherhood in one phase or another of these activities. Then, with the end of the Selective Service draft in 1973, such activities rapidly disappeared, almost as if they had never happened.

As one who served under the Brethren Service Commission in Germany, Austria, Italy, and Puerto Rico across nearly 20 years, I sense that although some may remember what the Brethren did during those years, 21st century Brethren rarely acknowledge this important period in the life of our denomination. And if we do not understand our own rather recent history, then we will hardly assess it for its impact on individual lives and the life of the Church of the Brethren. I think it would be good for MESSENGER to take on that task of educating new members and our youth about this important period of Brethren history.

**Ellis Shenk**  
Bel Air, Md.

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## CLASSIFIEDS

**COMMUNITY HEALTH OUTREACH (CHO)**, Jacksonville, FL. CHO has provided medical, dental, hunger and maternity assistance to the uninsured residents of Northeast Florida for over 25 years. With the help of many community partners, CHO is starting construction on a new 6,500sf clinic in June. Former COB Disaster Relief coordinator, John Mueller will be leading volunteers to complete the framing. Our goal is to remain debt free; so all monetary, material or labor donations are greatly appreciated. To learn more about the project please visit [www.chojax.org](http://www.chojax.org) or contact Matthew Garman at (904)318-3826 or [mgarman@gmail.com](mailto:mgarman@gmail.com)

**Have you always wanted to work in a bookstore?** Brethren Press is looking for volunteers to assist in set-up, operation, and tear-down of the Annual Conference Bookstore in Columbus, Ohio. If you have interest and time to volunteer, contact James Deaton at 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120 or [jdeaton@brethren.org](mailto:jdeaton@brethren.org).

**Explore God's love with the new Shine Sunday school curriculum!** *Shine: Living in God's Light* has engaging stories and activities that will teach children the Bible, understand that they are known and loved by God, and learn what it means to follow Jesus. Find sample sessions, Bible outlines, and more at [www.shinecurriculum.com](http://www.shinecurriculum.com).

Please send information to be included in *Turning Points* to Jean Clements, 1451 Dundee Ave, Elgin, IL 60120; 800-323-8059, ext. 520; [jclements@brethren.org](mailto:jclements@brethren.org). Information must be complete in order to be published. Information older than one year cannot be published.

## New Members

**Chiques**, Manheim, Pa.: Lloyd Ebersole, Janet Ebersole, Shane Raffensperger, Megan Gingrich Raffensperger  
**Drexel Hill**, Pa.: Peter Leahy  
**Garden City**, Kan.: Shai Cartmill  
**Geiger**, Friedens, Pa.: Jennifer Hughes, Harold Shepley, Jean Shepley, Brian Dively, Carl Scarlett, Darlene Scarlett  
**Hanover**, Pa.: Gladys Johnson, Karen Hull, Ginni Hasener, Kirsten Winstead, Jim Replogle, Carol Replogle, Pat Molison  
**Harrisburg**, First, Harrisburg, Pa.: Carmen Barreto, Kiersten Reeser, Lynda Singleton  
**Leamersville**, Duncansville, Pa.: Ben Beers, Reanna Aungst, Connor Durr, Jayda Walter, Elainea Walter  
**Maple Spring**, Hollsopple, Pa.: Jim Miller, Connie Miller, Judd Baker, Barbara Conner, Euldean Shields, Amanda Garman, Marilyn Luprek, Kathleen Luprek, Emily Ross, Monica Shaffer, Keith Doyle, Kevin Sabo, Jennifer Sabo, TYLER MOSS, JACKIE MOSS, MEGAN Hostetler, Justin Weible, Matthew Bambino, Jacob Rosenbaum, Kolton Furry, Courtney Keim  
**Mechanicsburg**, Pa.: Kyle Callaway, Nicole Callaway, Neal Ebersole, Tunda Eversole, Glenn Laverty, Mary Owens, Shelba Purtle, Robert Wanner, Darla Wanner  
**Mill Creek**, Port Republic, Va.: Bibb Frazier, Dolly Frazier, Gary Armentrout, Nancy Armentrout, Sarah Good, Emma Berkey, Anissa Boyers, Allison Geiman, Autumn Geiman, Evan Gillette  
**Nanty Glo**, Pa.: Cassidie Shultz, Gabrielle Mardis,

Alexa Mardis, Tonya Mack, Taylor Mack, Tressa Mack, Darlene Rankin  
**New Covenant**, Gotha, Fla.: Larry Bolinger, Rose Bolinger, Louise Pippen, Justin Steyr  
**Oakland**, Gettysburg, Ohio: Brad Flora, Sherry Flora, Jim Hicks, Maria Hicks, Zach Hittle, Todd Reish, Daniel Bondurant, Rodney Ellis  
**Panther Creek**, Adel, Iowa: Joseph Bennett, Jonathan Bennett, Benjamin Bennett, Naomi Bennett, Karly Dittert, Rachel Overla, Cade Stine-Smith, Alexis Stine  
**Saint Petersburg**, First, Saint Petersburg, Fla.: Erin Adkins, Helen Rinier, Deborah Slone, Richard Slone  
**Woodbury**, Pa.: Adam Hoover, Bethany Shawley, Samuel Grieco, Allison Grieco, Desire Engler, Paul Tipton

## Wedding Anniversaries

**Caricofe**, J.H. and Betty, Bridgewater, Va., 60  
**Foster**, Paul and Janet, Harrisonburg, Va., 70  
**Graver**, Clair and Mary K., King of Prussia, Pa., 55  
**Hershbberger**, Paul and Lila, Hollsopple, Pa., 55  
**Hollinger**, Richard and Dianne, Huntington, Ind., 50  
**Hornor**, Mearl and Carole Jean, Davidsville, Pa., 50  
**Keim**, Thomas and Thelma, Hollsopple, Pa., 55  
**Kniss**, Vernon and Marian, Manheim, Pa., 55  
**Kreider**, James and Eleanor, Willow Street, Pa., 60  
**Landes**, Olen and Alice, Harrisonburg, Va., 77  
**Lape**, Robert and Dolores, Davidsville, Pa., 60  
**McCuller**, James and Nancy, Union Bridge, Md., 50  
**Messamer**, David and Sue, Modesto, Calif., 50  
**Miller**, Glenn and Joyce, Somers, Pa., 50  
**Mishler**, Ray and Ruth, Boswell, Pa., 60  
**Sauder**, Lewis and Dorothy, Manheim, Pa., 70  
**Sheridan**, Hugh and Marie, Eagleville, Pa., 50  
**Shoup**, David and Janet, Tipp City, Ohio, 50  
**Stevens**, Owen and Marian, Davidsville, Pa., 68

**Summers**, John and Opal, North Liberty, Ind., 70  
**Thomas**, Wade and Linda, Hollsopple, Pa., 60  
**Tresnicky**, Donald and Linda, Seanoor, Pa., 50  
**Yoder**, Wayne and Nancy, Goshen, Ind., 55

## Deaths

**Albert**, Mary Ann Hicks, 75, Warsaw, Ind., Nov. 27  
**Barnhart**, Glenn Austin, 96, Hagerstown, Md., March 25  
**Baughman**, Charles H., 98, Hanover, Pa., Feb. 9  
**Berg**, Jon Michael, 78, Hartsville, Ohio, April 24  
**Blickenstaff**, Delbert David, 92, Greenville, Ohio, Feb. 26  
**Blough**, John A., 80, Hollsopple, Pa., July 10, 2015  
**Bowers**, Elmer J., 88, Goshen, Ind., March 22  
**Bowman**, Robert E., 84, Somers, Pa., April 22  
**Brewster**, William, 93, Johnson City, Tenn., Oct. 14  
**Brown**, Janet F., 75, North Canton, Ohio, April 23  
**Copp**, Joshua Harold, 35, South Whitley, Ind., April 14  
**Crooks**, Donna, 65, New Lebanon, Ohio, April 2  
**Daywalt**, Nancy McClennen, 64, Oaks, Pa., Feb. 16  
**Diehl**, Naomi Eppard, 88, Harrisonburg, Va., March 22  
**Gindlesperger**, Donald N., 75, Hollsopple, Pa., Nov. 1  
**Ginevan**, Evelyn Louella, 80, Keyser, W. Va., April 3  
**Gould**, Marvin G., 89, Washington, Kan., Feb. 19  
**Haldeman**, Daniel G., 99, Manheim, Pa., April 6  
**Harms**, Byron G., 80, Dixon, Ill., April 3  
**Heisler**, Mildred M., 93, North Manchester, Ind., Nov. 9  
**Hollinger**, Mabel E. Rhodes, 97, Martinsburg, Pa., May 21, 2013  
**Hopson**, Charles, 80, Johnson City, Tenn., Oct. 12  
**Huffstutler**, Virginia Fletcher Eldredge, 86, Elgin, Ill., April 21  
**Jones**, Glen L., 84, Goshen, Ind., April 3  
**Keim**, Ruth E. Berkey, 91, Davidsville, Pa., Jan. 30  
**Kreider**, Linda L., 65, Quarryville, Pa., Dec. 10  
**Laysner**, Verda E. Gibbel, 82, Lebanon, Pa., March 16  
**Lefever**, Grace T., 91, Spring Grove, Pa., March 25

**Main**, Clyde David, 86, Frederick, Md., March 22  
**Maurer**, Betty Isabelle, 87, Somers, Pa., April 6  
**McClellan**, Delores J. Fisher, 82, Stoystown, Pa., Nov. 15  
**McFarland**, John Harold, 85, South Bend, Ind., April 5  
**Miller**, Richard Franklin, Sr., 85, Cochranville, Pa., Feb. 16  
**Mitchell**, Kathleen Mae, 95, Fishersville, Va., Dec. 16  
**Montel**, Mary M., 94, North Manchester, Ind., Jan. 8  
**Moss**, William Frank, 90, Hollsopple, Pa., Oct. 20  
**Myers**, Sylvia Good, 91, Sturarts Draft, Va., April 2  
**Nagy**, Betty Jo Landis, 84, Yuba City, Calif., Jan. 11  
**Nagy**, Gladys Lorraine, 99, Palmyra, Pa., Sept. 11  
**Nelson**, Marvin Leroy, 82, McPherson, Kan., Dec. 29  
**Nicholson**, L. Viola, 103, Hagerstown, Ind., Feb. 22  
**Packer**, Mary Alice, 70, Phoenixville, Pa., Nov. 25  
**Pate**, Pauline Radford, 90, Roanoke, Va., March 24  
**Pennock**, Dorothy E., 83, Harleysville, Pa., Dec. 10  
**Primm**, Jess M., 82, Prescott, Mich., Nov. 12  
**Quarry**, Alton W., 85, Huntingdon, Pa., Nov. 28  
**Reed**, Mary Alice, 93, Bel Air, Md., Sept. 26  
**Royer**, Geraldine K., 90, Palmyra, Pa., Jan. 5  
**Seitz**, Charles J., Jr., 76, Harleysville, Pa., Jan. 10  
**Shaffer**, J. Marlin, Sr., 90, Manheim, Pa., Jan. 13  
**Sheets**, Donald Jay, 80, Akron, Ohio, Oct. 25  
**Shimp**, Margaret, 94, Greenville, Ohio, July 8  
**Simon**, Doris Regina Rembold, 75, Medina, Ohio, April 24, 2013  
**Slusher**, Zula Mae, 79, Pulaski, Va., Nov. 4  
**Smith**, Grace E. Deaton, 91, North Manchester, Ind., May 29, 2013  
**Smith**, Rufus E., 82, Church Hill, Tenn., Dec. 13  
**Snyder**, Harold E., 84, Uniontown, Ohio, April 14  
**Spahr**, Wilhemina, 91, Lititz, Pa., Jan. 14  
**Spaid**, Joseph Daniel, 79, Eglon, W.Va., July 22  
**Speicher**, Marianne Miller, 84, Youngstown, Ohio, Jan. 4  
**Stephen**, Mary Metzler, 96, Bel Air Md., Sept. 6

**Stepp**, Kathryn F., 85, Fishersville, Va., Dec. 24  
**Stoltzfus**, Esther Eckman Hess, 88, Morgantown, Pa., Oct. 14  
**Stutzman**, Betty E. Kauffman, 85, Kokomo, Ind., Aug. 4  
**Swallow**, Rolland D., 96, Adel, Iowa, Jan. 21  
**Trent**, Bruce W., 90, Friedens, Pa., March 20  
**Ward**, Bryan Christopher, 33, Troy, Ohio, Oct. 16  
**Weaver**, Grace Bauman, 88, Palmyra, Pa., Nov. 15  
**Weaver**, Virginia Mae, 85, Flint, Mich., Aug. 11  
**Weller**, Irma M. Turnbull, 90, Frederick, Md., Dec. 3  
**Wheeler**, Mary Virginia, 85, Greenville, Ohio, April 5  
**Whetstone**, Marshall Galen, 92, Woodbury, Pa., March 12  
**Wolfe**, William Wolford, 80, Myersville, Md., March 17

## Licensings

**Avent**, Barbara P., W. Plains Dist. (Prince of Peace, Littleton, Colo.), March 30

## Ordinations

**Doll**, Earl, S/C Ind. Dist. (Hickory Grove, Dunkirk, Ind.), Feb. 16  
**Hood**, Dana, S/C Ind. Dist. (Guernsey, Monticello, Ind.), April 6

## Placements

**Barto**, Ronald E., from interim to pastor, Arbutus, Johnstown, Pa., April 1  
**Belknap**, Barry A., chaplain, Good Shepherd Home, Fostoria, Ohio, June 24, 2013  
**Gilvin**, David Brian, from assistant pastor to pastor, Mack Memorial, Dayton, Ohio, Jan. 1  
**Paris Millan**, Dharma, pastor, Iglesia de Los Hermanos, Vega Baja, P.R., Nov. 1  
**Schrag**, Rick R., chaplain, Gentiva Hospice, McPherson, Kan., Jan. 1  
**Stewart**, Preston M., pastor, Bristol, First, Bristol, Tenn., Nov. 3  
**Titzell**, Linda S., from associate pastor to pastor, Faith Community of the Brethren Home, New Oxford, Pa., Nov. 3

## It's in our DNA

**W**e craned our necks and looked skyward.

Above us, Monterey pine and eucalyptus limbs swayed in the breeze coming off the Pacific. At first they were hard to spot in the deeply shaded grove. Then we saw them, clustered in orange and brown clumps: thousands of monarch butterflies resting in the trees at Pismo Beach, one of several sites along the California coast where these insects spend their winters.



**RANDY MILLER**  
MESSENGER EDITOR

It is one of the precise locations to which the monarchs return every year, following a migration that covers some 2,000 miles. Except that these particular butterflies are not returning. This was their first trip to Pismo Beach. They are the great-grandchildren of butterflies who were here the year before. So, with no one to guide them, how do they know where they are going? With dozens of beaches

along the coast, how do they know to come to this one?

While much has been discovered about how they navigate using the earth's magnetic field and the sun's position (not to mention those handy GPS devices strapped to their tiny wrists), scientists do not know for certain how these gossamer-winged descendants find their way to the exact trees in which their long-deceased forbears once clustered. Some-

times, I think it has to do with the way we carry ourselves, and the way we're quick to smile or help someone in need.

It's also not just because we've read books by authors with names like Durnbaugh, Brumbaugh, or Zigler, or attended dozens of potlucks. We don't even have to be born into the church for "Brethrenness" to have seeped into us. The social genome strands that emphasize community, service, and peace seem to be hardwired into our DNA.

Talking about her year as moderator (see page 14 in this issue), Nancy Heishman points out several characteristics that are common to Brethren, chief among them service. "Whether I was in California or Kansas, Pennsylvania or Puerto Rico, I found a strong sense of commitment to service," she said. "Wherever Brethren are, they look for people whom they can serve. That's just in our DNA. There is a great sense of service and generosity, all done with a humble spirit."

One of the reasons I love going to Annual Conference is to be around people who share those values—to be around that sense of Brethrenness, which has its roots in a desire to follow the teachings of Jesus. I'm reminded of a comment assistant Brethren Volunteer Service coordinator Chelsea Goss made in the May MESSENGER: "I like the Church of the Brethren—it gives me energy!"

Back to California—I think those eucalyptus and Monterey pine groves must be like Annual Conference for monarchs. Many of them may not know exactly why they go, but once they

**Many of them may not know exactly why they go, but once they arrive they find that they like being in that wonderful community, swaying in the salty air high above the ground.**

thing in their DNA, they speculate.

Seeing these butterflies got me thinking about why certain groups of people behave the way they do long after their ancestors have gone. Sure, there are books, photographs, and sometimes recordings to remind societies of their collective histories. But there's got to be more to it. Maybe there's something in their social DNA.

Take us Brethren. There's something about us that makes us stand out, for better or for worse. More than once I've heard someone who'd been to Annual Conference tell me they'd been sitting in an airport or on a city bench and could tell without doubt that someone passing by had to be Brethren—even if they weren't wearing a name tag. And it's not just how we're

arrive they find that they like being in that wonderful community, swaying in the salty air high above the ground. Come February, their children will begin making the pilgrimage back to their summer homes in the east to begin the cycle all over again. Months later, their descendants will get a distinct feeling that they need to begin traveling to a distant land—a place they've never visited, but which somehow feels like home.

Like those butterflies, we Brethren are several generations removed from Alexander Mack and his friends who, in 1708, baptized one another in the Eder River. And yet we keep returning to Annual Conference, to potlucks, and to those who share our faith-based affinity for community, service, and peace.

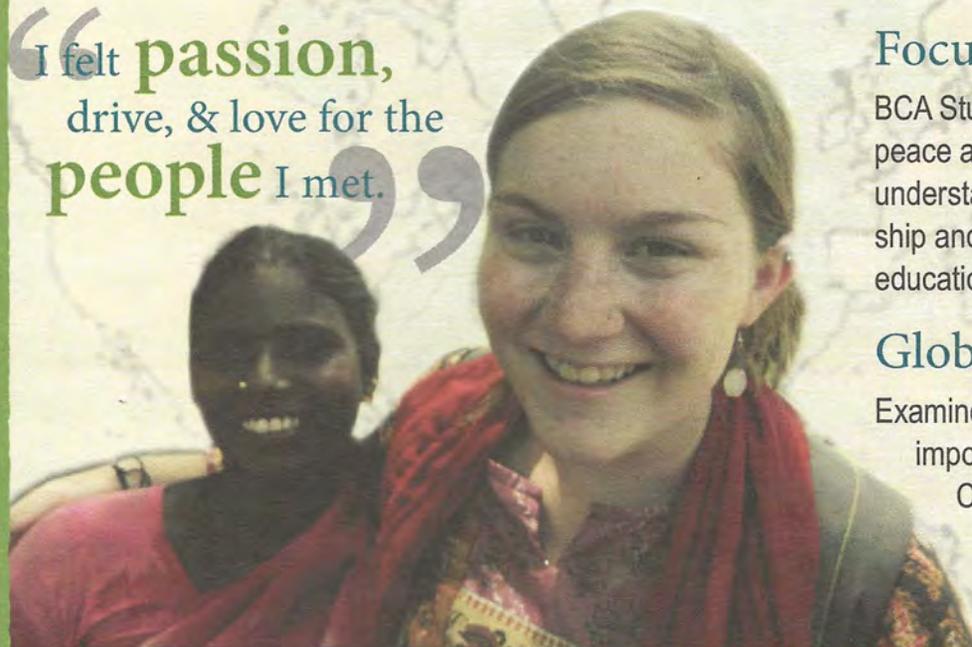
Maybe it's just in our genes. 

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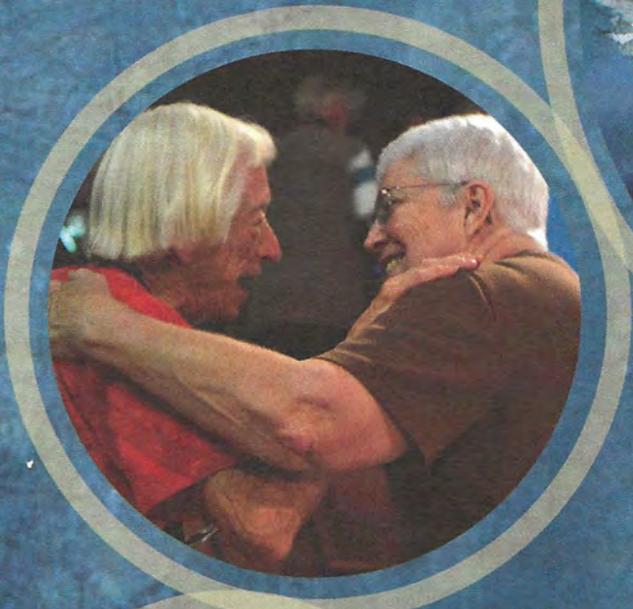
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