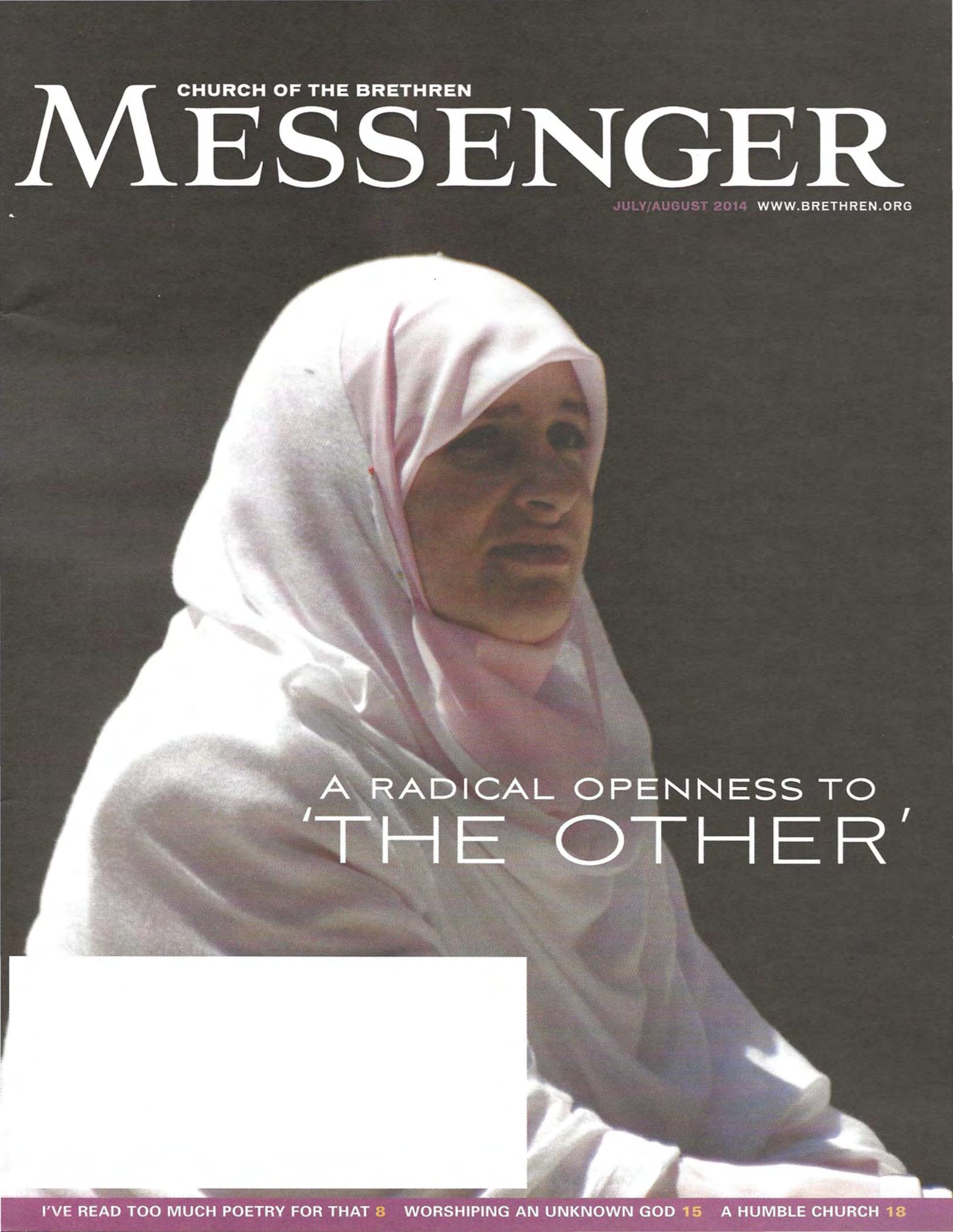


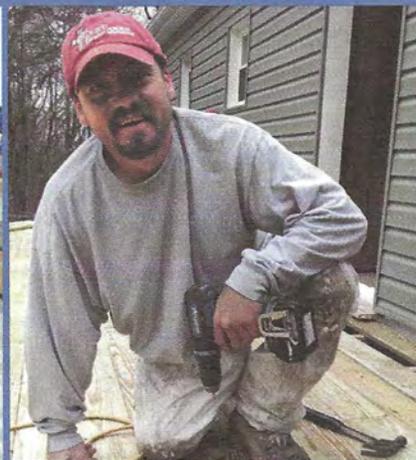
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

MESSENGER

JULY/AUGUST 2014 WWW.BRETHREN.ORG



A RADICAL OPENNESS TO
'THE OTHER'



Photos by Sandy Christophel, Patty Henry, Ed Hendrickson, and Mark Myers.

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With the eagle (1978) by Paul Klee



Chris Devers

8 I've read too much poetry for that

Prayer, worship, and music are a few of the obvious avenues. For Anita Hooley, it was poetry that awoke in her a profound sense of awe, and a new understanding of God's expansive embrace.

12 A radical openness to 'the other'

"The wise man travels to discover himself"—or herself, as the case may be. So said poet and diplomat James Russell Lowell. On assignment in Bosnia-Herzegovina with Brethren Volunteer Service, Julianne Funk learned some unexpected things about "the other," but also about herself.

15 Worshiping an unknown god

Are we guilty of worshiping an array of false—but cleverly disguised—gods? Why would we do that when we could have the real thing? Sometimes it seems as though we are religious about everything but our faith.

18 Will a humble church arise?

In its preoccupation with issues such as scriptural authority, human sexuality, and health care coverage, has the church missed out on addressing other, perhaps more important, issues of the day? For example: the rise of militarism, the overall decline of civility, and rampant individualism that makes each of us his or her own final authority on matters of faith and life.

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on the cover | A young woman in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Photo by Eigirdas Žemaitis

The Church of the Brethren has a practice of regularly choosing a theme to provide focus to the reporting of the church's ministries. The past two years the theme has been "Jesus moved into the neighborhood," based on *The Message* paraphrase of John 1:14. This year we begin a new two-year theme, "Carry the light."

From Genesis to Revelation, the Scriptures are filled with images of light: God is light and in him there is no darkness. God's word is a light to our path. Become children of light. There is no question that the idea of light is inspiring. But we can be inspired without falling into a dualism where light is good and darkness is bad. One of the contributions of *Hymnal: A Worship Book* is a hymn titled "Joyful is the dark." Text writer Brian Wren was motivated by the chair of the hymnal text committee, who had observed that too often in our hymns blackness is associated with evil.



WENDY MCFADDEN
PUBLISHER

In reality, God is represented not only by light but also by thick darkness, as in Genesis 20:18-21 and Psalm 18:2-12. Wren plumbs the Scriptures for other positive images of darkness, including the spirit of the deep in Genesis 1, the shadow of the stable floor at night, and the tomb—where "darkness was the cradle of the dawning."

A few months after the theme "Carry the light" was chosen, I decided to complement my scripture study by reading Barbara Brown Taylor's new book *Learning to Walk in the Dark*. (See Bill Kidwell's review on p. 25.) In addition to reminding us of numerous night-time episodes in the Bible, Taylor takes us along on her own explorations of darkness. One of those learning experiences is in a cave—not the kind outfitted for tourists but a wild cave that requires a careful guide. Just before turning off her lamp to sit in the dark, she spots a fissure full of "impossibly sparkly" crystals. She saves the most glittery broken piece as a memento.

Back in her room that night, Taylor finds that the rock looks like a piece of ordinary gravel. How could she have thought it was worth saving? But then she turns off the room light and shines a small penlight onto it. That is when she discovers that the stone "is alive with light, but only in the dark."

Wendy McFadden

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Congregation Close-Up



Members of the Plymouth (Ind.) Church of the Brethren knitting circle proudly display their wares.

In stitches in Plymouth

Things started getting warmer and cozier at the Plymouth (Ind.) Church of the Brethren a few years ago. In January 2006, Carolyn Baughman and a handful of other members began knitting prayer shawls, chemo hats, baby hats, kids hats and scarves, and even baby burial gowns and began donating them to anyone who may need them. Local hospitals, chemo centers, and the local Women’s Care Center are among the recipients of these items, although at times some of these gifts are even sent around the world.

The circle welcomes anyone who would like to help—even those who have never picked up a pair of knitting needles. But along with them are those with a little more experience, such as Dorothy Schuster, known as the “knitting queen.” At 100 years old, she can out-knit the rest of the group.

To date, more than 400 chemo hats and 220 shawls have been blessed. Each one is sent forth with a tag letting the recipient know that God hears and feels their need, and that they are lifted up in God’s loving arms forever.

by the numbers

44,880

Pounds of chicken canned in just four days in the Southern Pennsylvania District for local food banks and needs overseas. (Turn the page to see the full story.)

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.

BVSers gather in Seattle and Roanoke

Olympic View Church of the Brethren in Seattle, Wash., and Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) co-hosted a dinner May 1. BVS alumni were invited to come and share their stories during a visit by BVS assistant for recruitment Ben Bear. Two BVS alumni—Ryan Richards and Frosty Wilkinson—shared their stories of what they did during their BVS terms. Pastor Ken Rieman, also a former BVSer, was at the event.

Oak Grove Church of the Brethren in Roanoke, Va., also partnered with BVS on May 30 to host a BVS Connections



Dinner. Alumni of BVS were invited to come share their stories of service—where they served, work they accomplished, and how it has shaped them. Anyone who served in BVS, supported the ministry, or considers volunteering in the future was welcome. To contact BVS recruitment about future BVS Connections Dinners hosted by churches, contact Ben Bear at 703-835-3612 or bbear@brethren.org. For more about BVS go to www.brethrenvolunteerservice.org.

Area youth show their BVS spirit at the BVS Connections dinner at Olympic View Church of the Brethren in Seattle, Wash.

A lot of cluck

Some 44,880 pounds of chicken was canned in the Southern Pennsylvania District in just four days, with another day given just to labeling the cans. This represents 986 cases—or 23,664 cans—of chicken. All bills (\$68,196.80) were

Jay Wittmeyer



Serving others

paid for the project this year; funds are received to build a base for next year's project.

Some of the canned meat has been distributed to agencies and churches who will distribute it to local food banks. The Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., will ship seven skids of meat to Honduras. Next year will be the 38th year of the meat canning project, which is a partnership of the Church of the Brethren's Southern Pennsylvania and Mid Atlantic districts.

In a previous year, Eglise des Freres Haitiens (the Haitian Church of the Brethren) is shown distributing the chicken canned by Southern Pennsylvania District.



A small church with a big heart

A fundraiser for families of the abducted Nigerian girls, sponsored by Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren in Littleton, Colo., received coverage recently from CBS Denver, Channel 4. The evening, titled "Bring Back Our Girls! A Night of Compassion and Action," took place May 27 at the church near Denver, and featured video from peacemaking work in Nigeria. It also offered attendees an opportunity to speak with church members who have served in Nigeria as teachers or workers. The event benefited the EYN (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) Compassion Fund. Find the CBS coverage, which describes Prince of Peace as "a small church with a big heart," at www.tinyurl.com/littletonCOB

Strike up the band!

This is the 20th year of a free summer-long concert series sponsored by Mountville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, reports *Lancaster Online*, a news website. The Lawn Concert Series has been organized for 20 years by John Hess, music director at the Mountville Church, and has drawn up to 1,000 to 2,000 people. "My number one thing is to bring as many local groups as I can," he told *Lancaster Online*. "I always try to start with the Bainbridge Band and the New Holland Band ends it. There's a lot of history there. They are the oldest bands in the county." The series this year includes a special concert to celebrate Mountville's 200th anniversary. Concerts are free, and include ice cream served by community groups. Find the Lancaster Online article at www.tinyurl.com/mountville



LANDMARKS and laurels

➔ **The Brethren Home Community**, a Church of the Brethren retirement community in Windber, Pa., has achieved the top rating of 5 stars in the Medicare Medicaid rating system for 2014. The announcement by administrator Edie Scaletta appeared in the Western Pennsylvania District newsletter. "Both our staff and administration have worked hard to raise our standards to this high level," the announcement said. In more news from the Brethren Home Community, it has once again been included in the Lee Initiatives grant cycle this spring. The home's grant proposal was prepared by Social Services director Emily Reckner and included a request for \$7,300 to be used for a wall post lift system to assist residents with disabilities use a therapeutic whirlpool.

The Brethren Home Community



➔ **Mary Kay Turner** of Gettysburg, Pa., received the 2014 Peacemaker Award from the Interfaith Center for Peace and Justice at Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary. She is a founding board member for the center, has been a Children's Disaster Services volunteer, and has served as a volunteer mediator, mediation trainer, and board member for Mediation Services for Adams County.

➔ **Dwight and Treva Markey** of Southern Pennsylvania District received the Century Farm Award at the 28th Annual York County Agricultural Recognition Banquet on March 20. The district newsletter noted that "Dwight's parents purchased the farm in 1913 and Dwight and Treva bought it from Dwight's late father's estate in 1953. They raised fruits, vegetables, plants, and poultry, until the mid-1950s when a tornado destroyed the fruit trees, after which they slowly transitioned to growing mainly flowers."

Remembered

Harry Miller Gardner, 88, of Harrisonburg, Va., passed away at his home on May 17. For 22 years, he served in one of the following capacities: senior official for the US Department of Education, special assistant to the secretaries or assistant secretaries of Education, director of External Affairs for the Department, or executive director of the President's Advisory Committee on International Education. He traveled extensively in the US and overseas, working with governors, legislators, and key educators. He also worked with Indian and migrant education programs, regularly attended meetings at the White House, and had regular input into the secretary's speeches delivered on behalf of the president on national education issues.

Gardner graduated in 1950 from Bridgewater College. He earned a master of divinity degree after attending Wesley Theological Seminary and Bethany Theological Seminary, and earned a doctorate in systematic theology in 1962 after attending Boston and Harvard universities. He was an invited theologian/lecturer at universities in Scotland, Germany, and England. For more than 20 years he served as pastor of churches in Maryland, Illinois, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Virginia; was a district moderator; authored articles for Brethren and other Christian publications; was a speaker for Annual Conference; and was a Standing Committee member. He also was a trustee for Bridgewater College. Most recently he was a member of Bridgewater Church of the Brethren and an associate member of Vienna (Va.) Presbyterian Church.

Identifying with the oppressed

One day, while meditating on the death of Jesus, I decided to do a little research on crucifixion. I wondered which people the Romans tended to crucify most often. After reading several sources, it became clear to me that there were mainly two classes of people who were crucified: rebellious slaves and insurrectionists.

Slaves in the Roman empire often were acquired from newly conquered areas. Roman slavery was harsh, with slaves having no rights. They were also seen as less than human, a “living tool,” some would say. Their owners could be as cruel as they wanted to be, and a slave who retaliated could be sentenced to crucifixion. That was how the Romans kept slaves in their place, by threatening this cruel torturous death.



BOB VROON

In many parts of the empire, slaves made up a large portion of the population—even a majority in some places. To maintain their oppression of them, the Romans had to intimidate them. Crucifixion was very painful, and often lasted 24 to 48 hours. It was also

public and humiliating. Everything about it cried out that the victim was less than human.

Crucifixion also was used to intimidate conquered people who were tempted to take up arms against the Romans. These conquered peoples suffered under the burden of Roman taxation, the proceeds of which were mostly sent to Rome to support the people there in a life of luxury and

life, Jesus identified with the poor and the oppressed. He was born in a manger. He lived as a common person in a conquered land. And his ministry was mainly to “the least of these.”

Furthermore, Jesus made it clear in Matthew 25 that he identified with the poor, the afflicted, the prisoner—in other words, the have-nots and the oppressed. And he wants us to treat such people with special love by feeding them, welcoming them, visiting them, healing them, and preaching good news to them.

In light of all these truths, it comes as no surprise that Jesus died the death of the oppressed. It is just one more way he identified with them. And this reality was not lost on the people of his day. Most of the early Christians were the poor, the slaves, the oppressed. The “haves” of his day mostly scorned the Christian movement.

But what does this suggest for you and me? What would it mean for us to follow his example? Certainly we can do what Jesus calls us to do in Matthew 25: feed the hungry, visit the prisoners, and so forth.

But how can we specifically identify with the oppressed? And who are the oppressed of our day? I think of illegal immigrants in the US, who lack legal protections and are vulnerable to being exploited and mistreated. I think of the 300 million “untouchables” in India, who are denied most rights and are not allowed to hold any but the most menial jobs. There are Christians who are tortured, imprisoned, or killed in some nations because of their beliefs. There are the world’s poor, some of whom are poor because of oppression.

In our hearts and minds, we need to identify with the have-nots rather than the haves. We can show love and respect to

God chose for Jesus to die the death of the oppressed. I do not think this was a coincidence. From the beginning of his life, Jesus identified with the poor and the oppressed.

leisure. They also helped pay for the troops who conquered yet more nations, or enforced oppression in conquered lands.

As I continued to meditate on Christ’s death, I asked myself: “Is it a coincidence that Jesus was crucified?” I mean, God could have arranged it otherwise. Jesus could have died for our sins by being stoned—a Jewish form of execution. Or he could have been beheaded, which was brutal enough, but a less painful method of execution than crucifixion or stoning.

But God chose for Jesus to die the death of the oppressed. I do not think this was a coincidence. From the beginning of his

those who are exploited and looked down upon. We can pray for them. We can give money to help them. We can advocate for them. We can draw attention to the plight of the oppressed. We can challenge unjust systems that oppress them.

Jesus identified with the poor and the oppressed in his life and in the method of his death. How is his Spirit leading you to follow his example? 

Bob Vroon is a retired pastor living in Harrisburg, Pa. He works as a part-time drug and alcohol counselor, and is an active member of the Harrisburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.

“Listen to yourself, and in that quietude you might hear the voice of God.”

—American author, poet, actress, and singer Maya Angelou, in her final Twitter message before she passed away May 28

cultureview

► **A group of 80 United Methodist** pastors is suggesting that the nation’s second-largest Protestant denomination is facing an imminent split because of an inability to resolve long-standing theological disputes about sexuality and church doctrine. The pastors indicate there is little reason to think reconciliation—or even peaceful coexistence—could be found. “We can no longer talk about schism as something that might happen in the future. Schism has already taken place in our connection,” said Maxie Dunnam, a retired president of evangelical Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky, who joined the statement. It’s a marked shift in tone from 10 years ago, when conservatives rejected a proposal for an “amicable separation” as premature.

► **More than four in 10 Americans** continue to believe that God created humans in their present form 10,000 years ago, a view that

has changed little over the past three decades. Half of Americans believe humans evolved, with the majority of these saying God guided the evolutionary process. However, the percentage who adhere to a strict secularist viewpoint—that humans evolved with God having no part in this process—has doubled since 1999. This latest update is from Gallup’s Values and Beliefs survey conducted in May.

► **An interfaith group representing 15 organizations spoke out against gun violence** May 29 in the wake of the recent deadly shooting spree in Isla Vista, Calif. “We are here this morning to stand with the multitude of groups across the United States who are advocating for sensible, common sense laws to limit the effects of gun violence,” said Steve Wiebe, co-chair of the Abrahamic Faiths Peacemaking Initiative. “Our faith traditions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—spur us to peaceful solutions.”

“That first Pentecost, people did not lose their identifying characteristics. Could it be that the Holy Spirit is blowing in our midst, calling us to find effective ways to proclaim God’s power with a strong united voice of faith?”

—Beth Sollenberger, Church of the Brethren South-Central Indiana District executive

“We are a community that relies on Jesus Christ for strength, and we’ll need that at this time.”

—Daniel Martin, president of Seattle Pacific University, after a gunman killed one person and injured three others

“These voices no longer control the narrative of what Christians care about—the perception of a Christian conservative opinion monolith has been shattered.”

—Paul Brandeis Raushenbush, executive religion editor for the Huffington Post

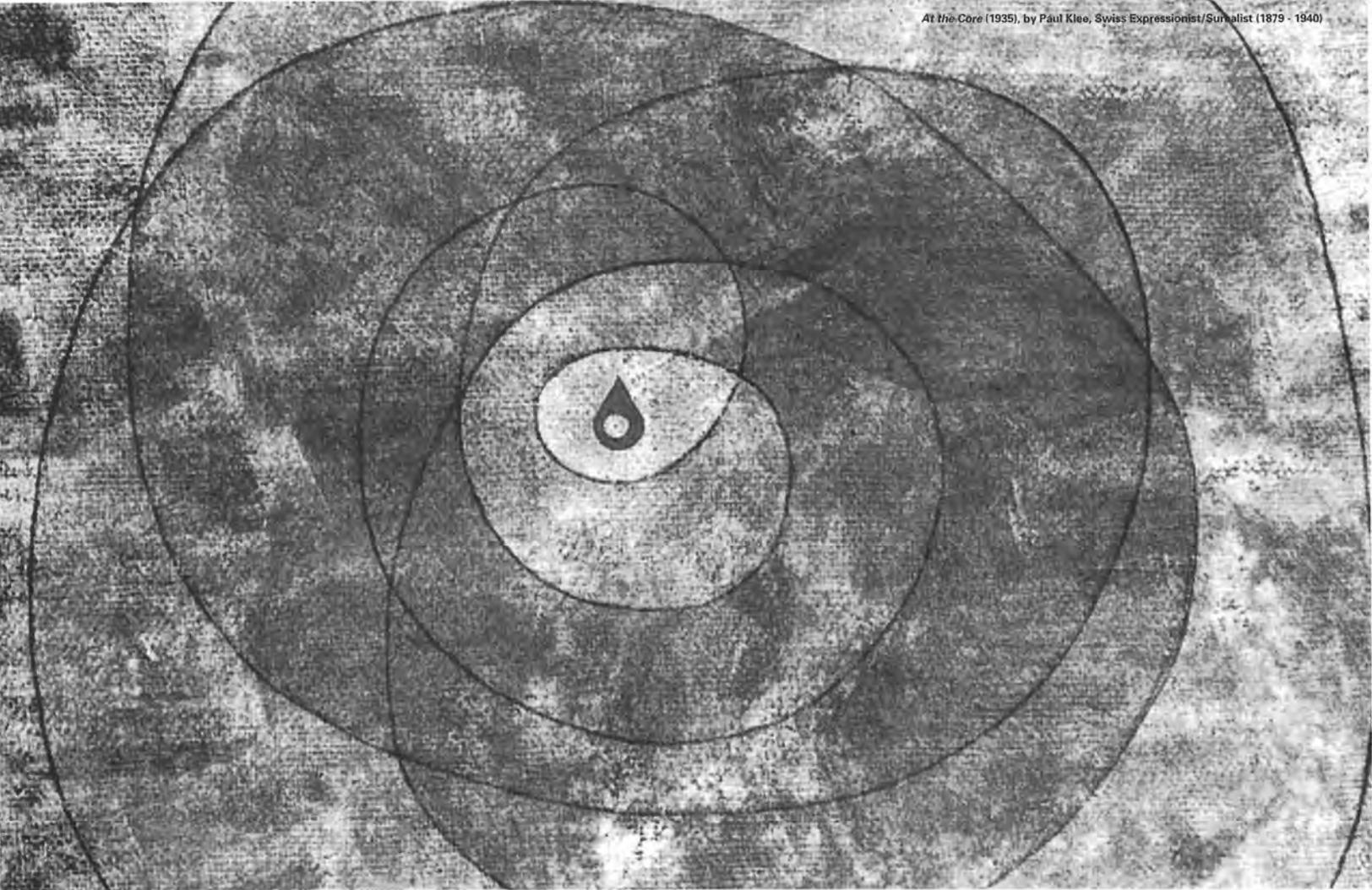
Heard 'round the world

“The human community is messy and sometimes painful. But to live into a vision of love within the tension of uncertainty and difference can be stunningly transformational.”

—Amy K. Butler, recently appointed as the first woman to head Manhattan’s Riverside Church in its 84-year history

“I don’t debate people’s belief systems. What I will say is that kind of thing should not be in the science classroom because it’s not science. . . . If you [allow religion in the science classroom] you are undermining what science is and how it works.”

—Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson



I'VE READ TOO MUCH POETRY FOR THAT

by Anita Hooley Yoder

[The following essay was the winning entry in Bethany Theological Seminary's 2014 Peace Essay Contest. The contest resulted in a wide ecumenical response, garnering more than 30 entries from students ranging from high schoolers to graduate students. Entrants were invited to focus on how personal and local peacemaking efforts address universal concerns. They were encouraged to relate everyday peacemaking with art, music, or poetry; the Just Peace movement; protest or change movements; social media, or interfaith efforts. —Ed.]

You could say that I am a poetry convert. For me, literature—especially poetry—has channeled new ways of believing and being, bursting open my understanding of what is true and just. (Is this heretical? But I feel God smiling down on me.)

I didn't need poetry to convert me to belief in Jesus or to the way of peace. But it was poetry that enabled me to enter, if just for a moment, someone else's psyche and worldview and rich internal life. And once there, I found my own perspective beginning to change. I am convinced that such a personal transformation, such an encounter and expansion, is a crucial element in the quest for peace, inside and outside of our churches.

I suppose it happened first with Mary Oliver. I met her work in my late teens (and it felt like a meeting, an encounter, as if someone had pushed through the page to speak with me). Oliver's words soon became like a second set of scriptures for me. I read them when I woke up in the morning and before I went to bed at night. I memorized them during long walks in the woods, speaking their rhythm in time to the plodding of my feet. When I heard that my normally indefatigable mother was struggling, I sent



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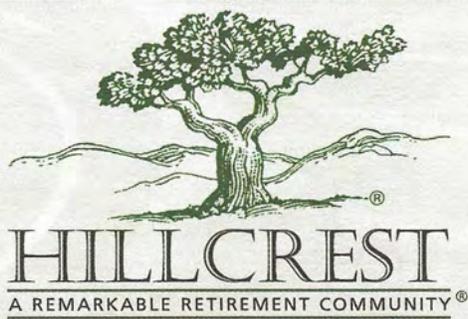
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her one of Oliver's poems, hoping it would help her. When my younger sister wondered about her place in the world, I used Oliver's words to assure her:

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

Oliver used the stuff of the natural world to pose surprisingly stark questions: "Who made the world? . . . / Who made the grasshopper? / This grasshopper, I mean— . . ." "Have you ever tried to enter the long black branches / of other lives . . . ?" And ". . . what is it you plan to do / with your one wild and precious life?" Oliver's words felt like a homecoming for me—to the self, the Spirit, and the world.

I came across Oliver's volume *Thirst* soon after it was published in 2006, while I was browsing in a Pittsburgh bookstore. The poems in *Thirst* were more personally revealing than much of Oliver's previous work. Now it was impossible to miss her Christian convictions; the poems brimmed with allusions to the Psalms, to church, to "the Lord."

Thirst was also permeated with hints about the death of someone Oliver held fiercely dear. The book's back cover described the collection as Oliver's "grappling with grief at the death of her beloved partner of more than 40 years. . . ." I

tiful, even if not my own. This transformation, this blossoming, this deepening, has helped form me into a person more filled with peace—not a stolid and staid peace, but a wide-open sort of peace, one that welcomes and wonders instead of drawing lines, frowning.

Perhaps it happened next with Rumi. I had encountered pithy quotes from this medieval Sufi poet in several different contexts before I saw *The Essential Rumi* on clearance at a bookstore. I bought the book, and found myself immediately immersed in a wonderfully new articulation of the sacredness that felt so familiar to my soul. Rumi said things simply and clearly, but with all the mystery still there (I never lost any of it, like I so often did in church services, where it seemed we shattered the mystery we approached more often than we revered it).

Rumi modeled the intrinsic longing for God that Christianity takes so seriously without nailing it down with a name, keeping his vision both personal and grand. "My soul is from elsewhere, I'm sure of that, / and I intend to end up there," he wrote, continuing later in the poem, "I didn't come here of my own accord, and I can't leave that way. / Whoever brought me here will have to take me home."

Rumi often sounded more like a poet for the 21st century than the 13th, employing stunning descriptions of God and humanity. His poetry was peopled with names familiar (Solomon, Moses, Abraham) and unfamiliar (Husam, Ayaz, Hallaq). Rumi even spoke of Jesus in ways that seemed fresh and not at all discon-

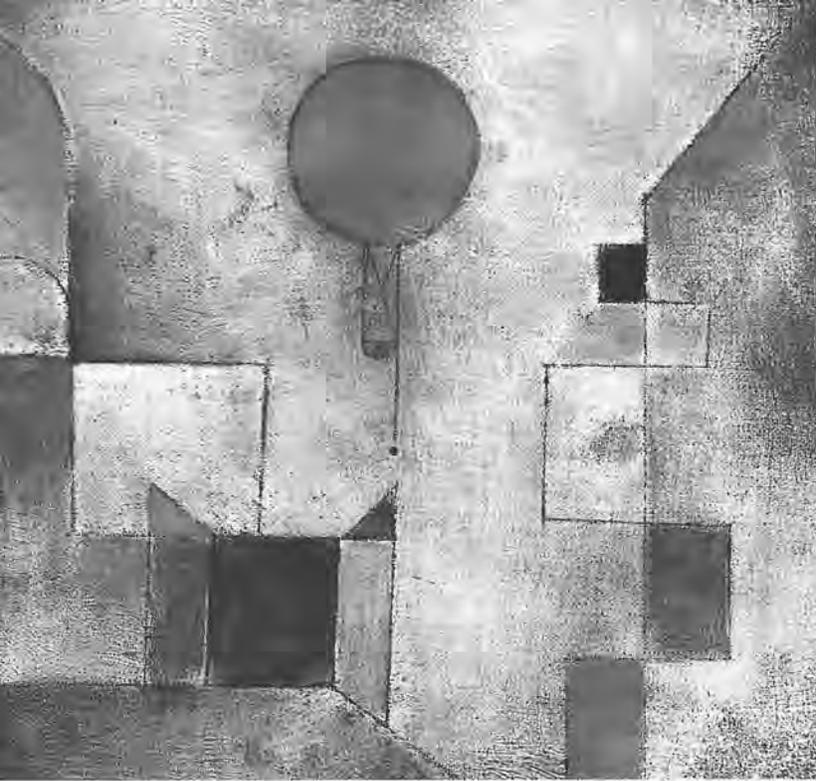
I didn't need poetry to convert me to belief in Jesus or to the way of peace. But it was poetry that enabled me to enter, if just for a moment, someone else's psyche and worldview and rich internal life.

had never considered Oliver's sexual orientation before. But paging back through *Thirst*, I saw how clearly she was speaking about her longtime partner/lover Molly Malone Cook, to whom the volume was dedicated. And what love was present there. What holy, healthy desire. When I returned home, I looked at the various volumes of Oliver's poetry I owned. They were all dedicated to Molly Malone.

I knew that some people—people I respected—in my religious tradition thought that homosexuality was a sin. But I also knew there was nothing sinful about the kind of erotic dedication I had been reading about, explicitly or implicitly, in so much of Oliver's work. My love and acceptance for queer folks in all their being ultimately developed due to real relationships with gay, lesbian, and transgendered people, and through serious biblical study with open-hearted companions. Yet all through this evolution, this refining, of my understanding, Mary Oliver was there, whispering her words in my ear. Oliver's poetry and person opened me to a different way of loving the world and living in it—a way I experienced as beau-



With the Eagle (1918), by Paul Klee, Swiss Expressionist/Surrealist (1879 - 1940)



The Red Balloon (1922), by Paul Klee, Swiss Expressionist/Surrealist (1879 - 1940)

deeper. But it was also growing much wider, spreading out as well as burrowing down. Despite all the news stories about radical Islam, all the theological arguments I had heard about the necessity of Christ, I could not pretend I didn't read that poetry, didn't drink from that cup of truth. (It would do no good to vomit even if I wanted to; it had already reached my bloodstream, seeped into my soul.)

"Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, / there is a field," Rumi wrote. "I'll meet you there." I wanted to run through that field, to brush hands and hearts with the people who lived there. And poetry was my mode of transportation. Taking that transportation, that transformation, has left me more at peace with myself, with others, and even with God. I began to perceive, or re-perceive, simple things: God is big. God includes. God loves. Simple things, yes, but ideas that I now knew could, and perhaps should, change my thinking and my life.

My poetic encounters helped me see the church's understanding of LGBT individuals and its view of other religions as

This transformation, this blossoming, this deepening, has helped form me into a person more filled with peace—not a stolid and staid peace, but a wide-open sort of peace, one that welcomes and wonders instead of drawing lines, frowning.

certing, saying things like: "The miracle of Jesus is himself, not what he said or did / about the future. Forget the future. / I'd worship someone who could do that." Or: "Where Jesus lives, the great-hearted gather. / We are a door that's never locked."

But Rumi didn't have a "personal relationship with Jesus," did he? How dare he speak of "our" Christ? How dare he write one poem about Abraham or Jesus and another about Muhammad or the Qur'an? And how dare he be so perceptive, so clearly in touch with what it means to love God, to love the world, the soul, the self? Before Rumi, I had considered myself generally open to the insights of other religions and respectful of their adherents. But after Rumi? After Rumi, I could no longer explain (to myself or anyone else) that being a Christian was the best way out of many options, the means of getting closest to God. No, Rumi was there, where I wanted to be, and he seemed to arrive there not through Jesus (or not only through Jesus) but through mystical conversation and whirling dances, through bowing to every child and butcher who crossed his path. (*The Essential Rumi's* section on Jesus suggests that Rumi and Jesus had similar relationships with children and outcasts. It describes Rumi stopping in the road to bow to a Christian butcher seven times, and acknowledging children as he would an adult.)

Reading Rumi, I did not lose my attachment to Christianity or my belief in the importance of Christ in my life. Far from losing its grounding, my faith only seemed to be growing

"peace issues." In today's postmodern world, peace churches face the threat of being torn apart internally by debates about the queer community. We also face the threat of becoming irrelevant externally if we refuse to engage and embrace other faiths. However, being truly transformed into a church—or a person—of deep and broad peace does not only mean expanding views of those who are outside the normal boundaries. It also means dealing with one's own history.

It was another poet, Julia Spicher Kasdorf, who helped me grapple with (and grab, like Jacob's hold on the wrestling angel) my own religious and cultural heritage. I was introduced to her work while studying literature at a Mennonite college, the same college Kasdorf had attended. A Mennonite poet! A poet like me! Here were stories I knew, realities my ancestors lived, crafted into poetic form: women organizing leftovers, abiding enemy love, long-ago relatives with bonnets and beards.

Kasdorf's work carried a simultaneous critique and celebration of her/our heritage. There were certainly many difficult, disturbing things she revealed about the conservative Mennonite background and family stories she inherited. Kasdorf spoke of Mennonite faith as a hard-fought, hard-working faith, tinged with a masculine sternness. Yet, it seemed a kind of celebration simply for her to deem this faith heritage worthy of the painstaking craft that a poem requires. There is a sort of reverencing in simply remembering the past and speaking of it, even while exposing its nasty underbelly. The

title poem in Kasdorf's second collection, *Eve's Striptease*, affirms her mother who let Kasdorf learn for herself

... all the desires
a body can hold, how they grow stronger
and wilder with age, tugging in every direction
until it feels my sternum might split
like Adam's when Eve stepped out,
sloughing off ribs.

At first I was disappointed to learn that Kasdorf had not "stayed Mennonite," imagining she had sloughed off our tradition like Eve sloughing off Adam's ribs. She had left the rural Indiana college we both attended before she graduated for the cultural prospects of New York City. Her poems spoke not only of the Mennonite memories of her parents, but of her life in Brooklyn, in Pennsylvania coal country, in academic halls. I learned that she had married and divorced, and now attended an Episcopal church. But eight years after I first encountered her work and 20 years after the publication of her first poetry collection, I met Kasdorf at a writing conference, and perceived that she was still Mennonite, through and through. There was something about her humbleness of spirit, her interest in the younger Mennonite poets, her careful cultivation of her connection with the church that showed there was no clean break, no back-turning in disgust, no hurtling of sloughed-off ribs, at least not anymore.

Of course, I thought. Being a Mennonite does not only have to do with religion. It has to do with heart and heritage. People did not need to conform to my or anyone else's definition of "Mennonite"—and neither did I. Once again my definitions were expanding, and so was my hope. Perhaps there is a wider space than we realize in the harmony that has been a hallmark of Mennonite worship, an image Kasdorf uses this way: "Unaccompanied on Sundays, / those hymns in four parts, our voices lift with such force / that we lift, as chaff lifts toward God." Chaff is a negative image in most of its biblical citations, but here I think it has mixed connotations, a metaphor for a people of misplaced desire and admirable nonconformity. Even if we are chaff, we can lift toward God together—if we work at honoring each voice that is part of the song.

Kasdorf's work reveals what a complicated history we have to deal with as Mennonites. There is no simple narrative of a quiet, faithful people who held to their convictions against the evil world. There was an evil world within, too, a world of

abuse and rigidity and fear. There still is, I suppose. Mennonite creative writing prompted my perception that being a "peace church" is not only an outward distinction; it also means that we must be at peace with our own past—not an easy peace that comes from glossing over historical wrongs or inconsistencies, but a deep peace, a just peace, that comes from dredging up the details and offering them to God (and each other) for redemption. Poets can help us do this, as they are often our most committed "dredgers," the most honest voices we have.

After a decade of reading and writing and studying poetry, I find myself spoiled toward certain viewpoints I used to hold, or at least considered holding. I cannot think queer people are further from God and God's spirit—I've read too much poetry for that. I cannot believe that other religions are less true or real than mine—I've read too much poetry for that. And as my perception expands, I cannot forget about the joys and challenges of my own tradition—I've read too much poetry for that.

I do not mean to imply that every poetry-loving person, or every faithful person, must conclude that homosexuality is not a sin, that other religions are as true as Christianity, and that our Mennonite heritage (or whatever heritage one has) is important to both criticize and celebrate. But we in the church must talk about these things, preferably *in* the church. We must learn how to have peace-filled conversation and cooperation among ourselves so that others will note that these historic peace churches, which have been such a valuable witness in our world, still know how to be about peace. We have to know that ourselves, in our hearts, in our heads, in our bodies.

I hope that there will come a point when we have all read too much poetry for that—too much for hatred and bigotry and misunderstanding, and also too much for the easy peace that comes from ignoring differences (outside and within our own body). For poetry teaches how to listen. It lets another consciousness, which some might recognize as holy, break through. And so, may poetry convert us over and over again, individually and communally. And may peace prevail, within us and through us, to the world. ❧

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A RADICAL OPENNESS TO 'THE OTHER'

by Julianne Funk

I watched news coverage recently of the murder trial for Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale, British citizens of Nigerian descent accused of the brazen killing of British soldier Lee Rigby in South London. According to reports of the incident, the men attacked 25-year-old Rigby with knives in the middle of a street after running him over with a car. They encouraged onlookers to film the scene.

Adebolajo and Adebowale—who were raised as Christians, but who converted to Islam—were sentenced to life in prison and 45 years, respectively. Immediately following the crime, they stood by Rigby's body and told passersby that they had killed the soldier to avenge the killing of Muslims by British armed forces.

Rigby was identified by his dental records, so mutilated was his body. "The only reason we have done this is because Muslims are dying every day," Adebolajo

told bystanders following the attack. "It's an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth."

At the trial's conclusion, after a unanimous conviction by the jury, the judge condemned the men's radical extremism and their betrayal of their religion and the peaceful Muslim community in the UK. The men responded with outbursts of "You know nothing about Islam," and "*Allahu akbar*" (God is great). Guards had to carry them away because of their disruption. Outside, right-wing protesters carried signs saying "Restore capital punishment," depicting the degree to which this event has upset the British public.

As I watched, I was horrified not only by the heartlessness of the crime but additionally by the intense, counter-reaction of society. I turned off the TV, disheartened by the reverberations of violence—not only due to this event, but also by the violence which preceded and which will inevitably follow it.

This case fits the prevailing perception of Islam among many in the world today—more than a decade after 9/11—of a black-and-white, intolerant, and militant religion, despite greater public attention to Islam as a varied, worldwide faith tradition.

However, my own encounter with Islam, as a Brethren Volunteer Service worker in Bosnia-Herzegovina, has produced a quite different image. I have discovered Bosnian Islam to be open to a society that includes various religions: Muslims and Christians (Orthodox, Catholic, as well as some Protestants) and a small post-WWII Jewish community. While not all Bosnian Muslims are peace-builders, there is a general worldview among them that supports coexistence, not least because Bosnian Muslims (or Bosniaks) have no other homeland, as is also the case with Bosnian Serbs (Serbia) and Croats (Croatia). It is therefore not fundamentally counter-cultural

for Muslims—as it is for the country’s Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats—to seek reconciliation and re-integration after the war in the 1990s, which claimed 100,000 lives and displaced 2 million people (half the population), most of whom now live in segregation from the ethno-religious “others.”

The Bosnian Muslim community quantitatively suffered the most during the last war, and yet they maintain a hope and desire to return to the former diversity—albeit with some skepticism and hesitation as circumstances become more polarized 20 years after the war’s end.

Even before I became a BVS volunteer (during my doctoral work on faith-based peace-building in Bosnia-Herzegovina), I was impressed by what Muslims are doing for peace and

in Bosnia-Herzegovina that war should be expected every 40 years (remembering World War I, World War II, and the recent war of the 1990s). Not surprisingly, collective trauma plagues the society. However, I also have experienced firsthand the legacy of shared life, or *suživot* (literally translated: coexistence), between the three main ethno-religious groups. This can be seen as a

tion) in Sarajevo, while also partnering with local Muslims in their peace work across the country. In both settings, I engaged as a believing Christian with Muslims in what one might call inter-religious dialogue between believers of different traditions. In both cases I was welcomed *with my differences*.

In this *džemat*, after prayers in the mosque (the equivalent to a Christian

Kashfi Halford



Girls taking a break at a school in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Not surprisingly, collective trauma plagues the society. However, I also have experienced firsthand the legacy of shared life, or *suživot* (literally translated: coexistence), between the three main ethno-religious groups.

reconciliation in their own postwar circumstances, where it is easy to fall prey to pessimism, inertia, and the victimization narrative. In their peace work, these Bosnian Muslims notably avoid reference to their faith because they accurately perceive religion in their context as something that divides. Many of these believers prefer not to provoke, alienate, or instill fear in their non-religious and/or Christian neighbors.

During more than three years of observing these peace practices on the ground, I have learned much about the challenges of building peace in the face of a legacy of violence. It is understood

resource for rebuilding relations with “others” because it tends to either highlight our common humanity rather than the things that divide us, or else it views diversity as something to be treasured. Like the generational violence, this practical coexistence is not religious in nature but naturally gets mixed up with religious culture, traditions, and faith. And Islam in Bosnia-Herzegovina particularly clings tenaciously to *suživot* as an essential part of Bosnian life.

My own experience as a peace scholar-practitioner and BVS volunteer has involved worshiping and praying with one Muslim *džemat* (congrega-

church service/mass), the community often retired to the mosque’s café for socializing (think coffee time in the fellowship hall). In this space, the imam (leader of prayers—someone like a pastor) often spoke informally to the group, led us in spiritual songs (*illahije*), and otherwise taught in a manner I imagine Jesus did with his followers: using plain language to answer their questions.

In this setting, the imam often addressed me as a Christian, either speaking about Jesus and his supreme model of love to the world, or asking me to tell the group about my tradition, the Bible, or my own faith. In his simple act, this

My engagement with Islam and my dialogue with Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina have changed not only my simple picture of Islam, but also the very foundations of my perspective on religions and peace.

imam drew me into the intimacy of the group, facilitated both my and the community's positive encounter with a different religion, and taught us all to value one another's tradition and faith.

One not familiar with Bosnian Islam might ask if they weren't trying to convert me, and there were instances when people asked whether I had converted. However, the closest thing to proselytism I encountered was something more akin to the enthusiasm seen in a person who has been cured of some ailment and wishes others to experience the same relief. There was no pressure, only eagerness to share something good.

My engagement with Muslim peace-builders in their work has been equally enriching. Even though these colleagues typically downplay religion in their civil society work—due primarily to its capac-

ity to raise painful war memories and alienate people—in our personal interactions as faith-based peace builders, there is mutual appreciation and support. We learn from each other's methods and techniques, and we heartily include our own faiths when sharing. In this setting, being believers by decision and peace-builders by vocation gives us a bond stronger than any differences we may have. In fact there are some major commonalities in approach based on nonviolent conflict transformation principles.

However, viewing each other's particular experiences as members of different religions (and, of course, cultures), can be constructive as a vehicle for learning, reflecting, and growing as believers committed to peace. Being able to see Christianity through the eyes of a Bosnian Muslim has helped me



Julianne Funk with a Bosnian friend.

raise fundamental questions about my own religion. As a result, I have looked more critically at the violence of “my” people's history, beliefs, and practices that I would otherwise simply justify. In this process, I find myself returning to the “just peacemaking” of my Mennonite heritage, as well as reaffirming my Anglican Church's tradition of agreeing to disagree on non-essential matters in order to pursue the essentials together.

My engagement with Islam and my dialogue with Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina have changed not only my simple picture of Islam, but also the very foundations of my perspective on religions and peace. My identification with Muslims not only as fellow human beings but also as believers like myself prompted my grief over the tragic Lee Rigby trial in London. And it made me realize that this cycle of violence will continue unless we seek out the ones we fear most and take steps to see the world through their eyes. The openness to such intimacy has been modeled for me by Bosnian Muslims who have, in the process, also reminded me of my own nonviolent values and Jesus' example of radical openness to the other. ❧

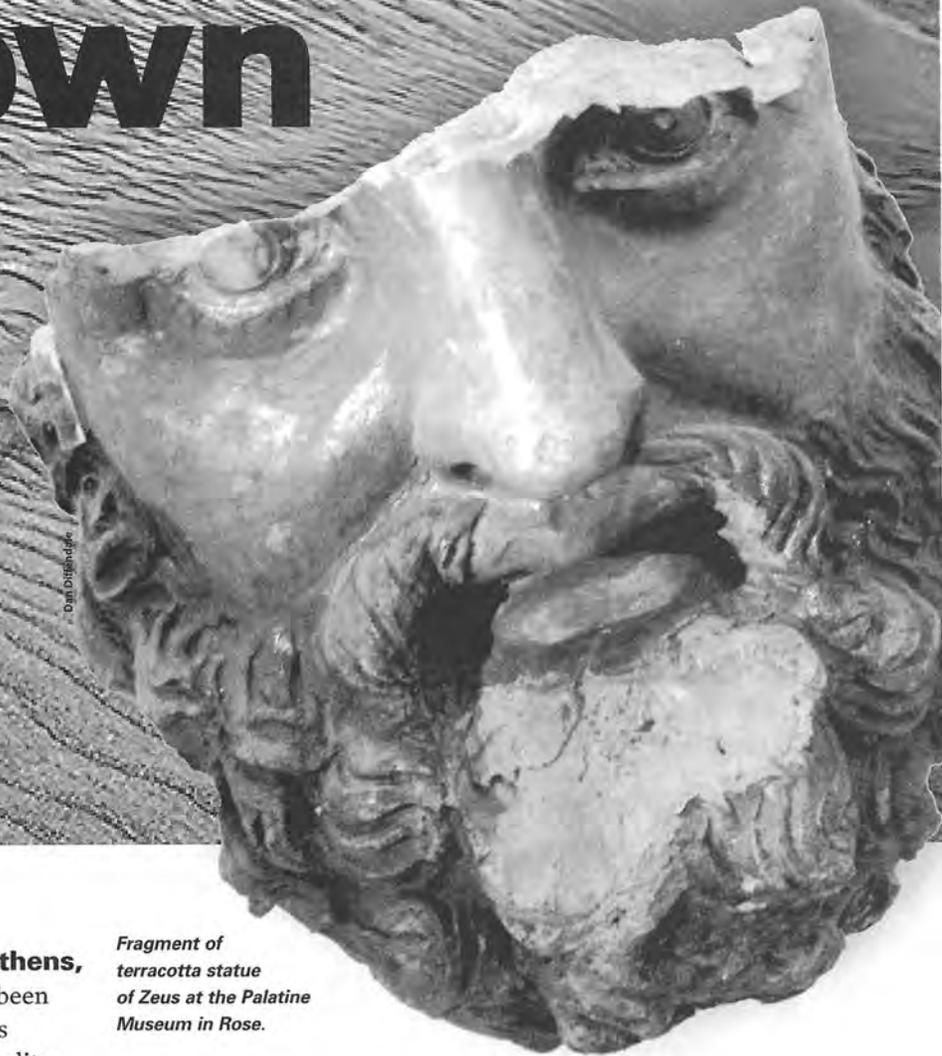
Julianne Funk is a Brethren Volunteer Service worker in Bosnia-Herzegovina.



Ramadan services at a mosque in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Worshiping an unknown god

by Christy Waltersderff



The Apostle Paul was killing time in Athens, waiting for Silas and Timothy. He had been run out of two other places and was cooling his heels in the city known for its intellectual and cultural elite. Paul was keeping a low profile, taking in the sights of this magnificent city. He was astounded at the “junkyard of idols” he encountered at every turn. One in particular caught his attention. It was a shrine “to the god nobody knows.”

Paul was so upset at the proliferation of false idols that he couldn’t stay quiet any longer, so he went to the synagogue and argued with the Jews. The synagogue had been there for a long time but apparently it hadn’t had any impact at all on the religious climate of Athens.

After haranguing the Jews, Paul took on some of the resident philosophers—and there were plenty of those in Athens. Thanks to their wealth, they had the luxury of doing nothing but discussing new ideas all day long. They reveled in vigor-

Fragment of terracotta statue of Zeus at the Palatine Museum in Rome.

ous intellectual discourse. The Athenians were consumers of knowledge and liked nothing better than a good debate. Paul was in his element. Instead of the conflict he often encountered when speaking about his faith, in this Greek city, Paul found a willing audience. “Tell us more about this new idea of yours,” they said. It was a delicate situation though, because it was illegal to introduce foreign beliefs and foreign gods into the Athenian culture. As much as they loved learning about new things, they did have their limits and if you crossed the line you could pay with your life.

Paul recognized their deep spiritual hunger. It was obvious in the forest of idols throughout the city. They wanted so badly to cover all their bases that they even had one to the

“god they hadn’t met yet.” If there was another god out there somewhere they didn’t know about yet, they didn’t want to offend him. So they built a special idol—just in case.

One of the things that made Paul such an effective preacher was that he knew his audience. This is his only sermon in the book of Acts to a completely pagan group of people. They had no knowledge of the Old Testament or the experience with the Hebrew people, so he drew instead from his own experiences and from the natural world to make his point. He didn’t criticize them for their religious buffet. Instead he complimented them on their religious searching. He said, “You are obviously very religious people. Allow me to introduce you to the God you have not yet met. The One you have been searching for.” He then proceeded to tell them about the one true God, the creator of the universe, the God who does not live in shrines of silver and gold made by human hands, the One who is not set immobile in stone.

This God demands more, he tells them—more than a statue in the middle of the city. Quoting from one of their own poets he says, “This is the God in whom we live and move and have our being. This is the living, loving God who calls you into a relationship. This is the God you have been searching and hungering for.”

I think they were probably with him until he got to the part where he called for repentance and introduced them to Jesus without ever actually saying his name. “The time for ignorance is over,” he preaches, “it is time to turn away from idols and to turn toward the real thing.” Paul found it totally irrational and illogical for these rational, logical people to choose false gods when they could have the real thing.

Paul recognized in the Athenians what Saint Augustine would articulate in a prayer centuries later, “You have made us for yourself, O God, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” Paul could see their restlessness, their desperate spiritual hunger, and he offered them a gourmet meal, a relationship with the one true God. But most of them were satisfied to continue snacking on their junk-food religion. They weren’t ready to hear about the resurrected Jesus. Resurrection was more than they could handle. Some made fun of Paul, but others said, “Let’s talk more about this later.” Unlike his past experiences, though, no one ran him out of town or tried to kill him. And at least a few people were open to hearing the

truth and became followers of Christ.

Do you recognize anyone in this story? Like maybe us, and the culture in which we live? Being religious is a good thing, but just like those Greeks, we often worship everyone and everything, and in doing so, worship no one. Our desire to search for truth, for someone, something to worship, is well-intended, but our aim is off. The discussion of religion often usurps the practice of faith. One preacher writes, “Our world, like theirs, is variously, if sometimes stupidly, religious.”

It seems as though we are religious about everything but our faith. We are religious about the Bulls, Oprah, our alma mater, the Cubs or the Phillies, and the stock market. We kneel at the idols of money, sex, power, addictions, and technology. We stand by passively as our nation engages in the worship of military excess, greedy consumerism, and unquestioned patriotism. Like the people of Athens, we live in a junkyard of idols.

Many people today, Christians among them, say, “I am not religious but I am spiritual.” What does that mean, exactly? As Christians, we really cannot separate the two because our religious devotion to God is made real in the work of the Spirit. We don’t worship an idol made of stone. We worship the Creator God, who lived among us in the flesh and blood of Jesus of Nazareth, and whose Spirit moves in and through us, always encouraging us to grow and to change and become the people we are created to be. When we have such an incomparable, God why in the world would we choose a cheap imitation? I think it is doubt, ego, and fear that send us scurrying off to find another god, any other god—one we can domesticate, one that we can totally understand, one who will do what we want. Bookstore shelves groan under the load of “spirituality” and self-help books that make it all about us, about what we need, what we want.

Like the Athenians, religious conversation seems to be very popular with folks these days. We want religion as long as we can talk about it but don’t actually have to make a commitment or change our lives in any way. We want to control God, to shrink God down to our size, to unravel the mystery so it is manageable and easily understood and manipulated. We want a god who makes sense to us. We want a god who will help our sports team win.

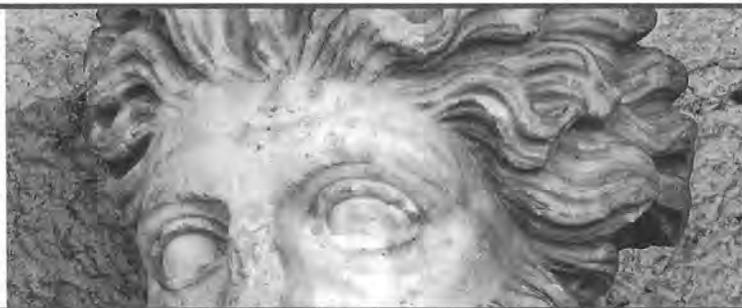
As one commentary reminds us: “It is not God who is to



Chris Davies

This God demands more, he tells them—more than a statue in the middle of the city. Quoting from one of their own poets he says, “This is the God in whom we live and move and have our being.”

doubt, ego, and fear ... send us scurrying off to find another god, any other god—one we can domesticate, one that we can totally understand, one who will do what we want.



serve us; we are to serve God. It is not God who must prove God's usefulness; it is we who must prove our justice and righteousness. It is not the God of Jesus Christ who must fit into our world and our way of doing things; it is we who must be transformed by the renewal of our minds so that we do not conform to the present age.

Let me describe to you the unknown god, the god I do not believe in:

- The god who is glorified by war and violence
- The god who causes illness and suffering
- The aloof and distant god
- The god who plays favorites
- The god who promises to increase my bank account
- The god of punishment and revenge

- The god who sends hurricanes to destroy cities
- The god who wants only "certain" people in the church
- The god of racism and homophobia
- The vending machine god who dispenses only what I want when I want it.

There is a huge difference between a religion that offers to improve our lives on our terms and a religion that calls us to repent and to change our hearts and minds to be more like Christ. I pray that we would know the difference.

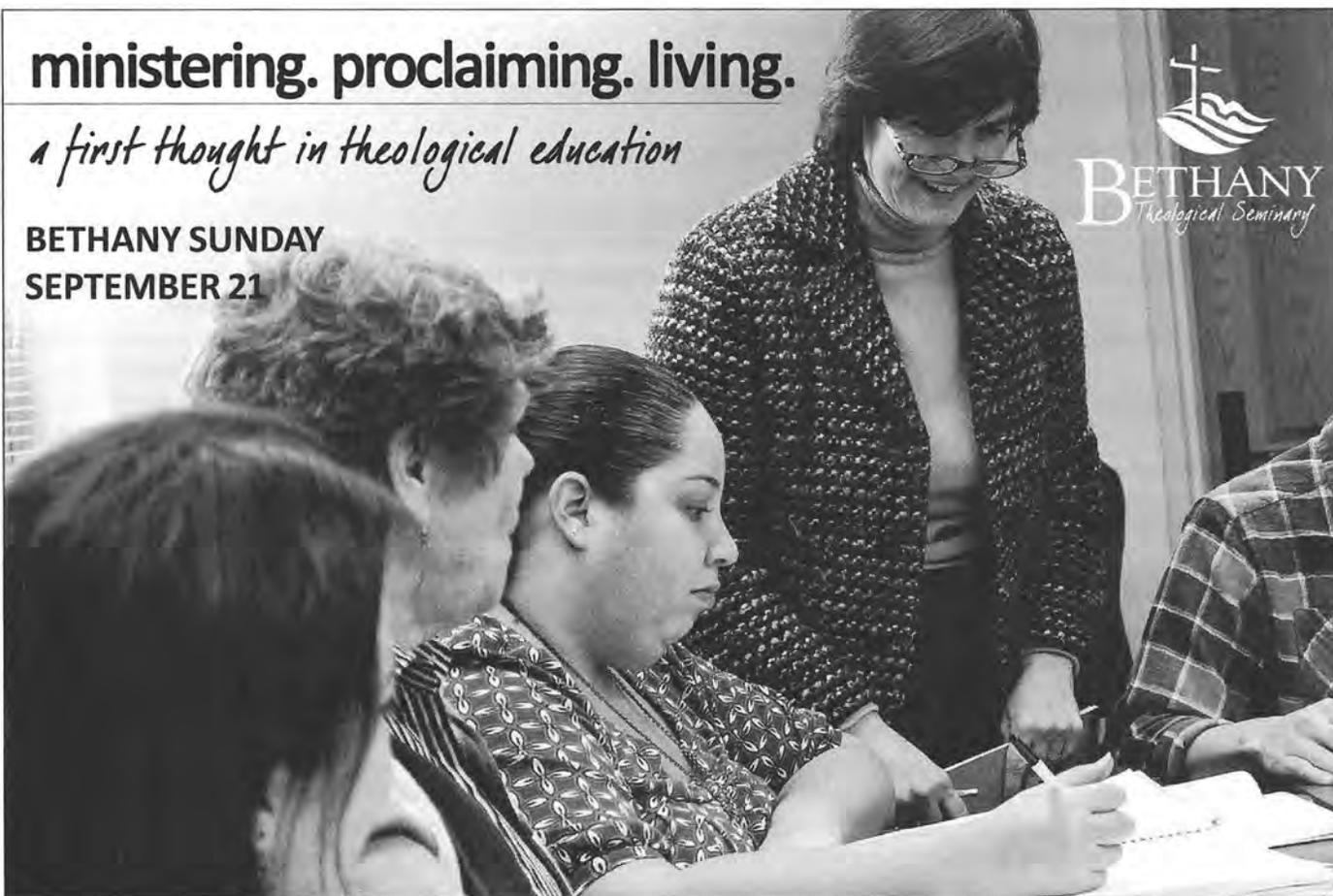
Our hearts are restless until they rest in God. May we seek and may we find rest in the one true God who knows us, the God who loves us, the God we know. 

Christy Waltersdorff is pastor of the York Center (Ill.) Church of the Brethren.

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**BETHANY SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 21**



Will a humble church arise?

by Tim Harvey

If you are ever inclined to despair over what the world is becoming, I encourage you to look carefully at the communities to which Paul writes. A careful study of the social context of these churches reveals that the first Christians lived in a culture that allowed religious expression, but was really defined by other values on which the church had little direct impact.

The same could be said about us. While most of our congregations thrived in the middle years of the 20th century—during which time we supposedly lived in a “Christian culture”—the fact is that many of our congregations are struggling as our culture increasingly pursues other goals.

In my experience serving both my congregation and our denomination, I’ve learned that many agree with this general assessment, and they point to controversies like biblical authority, human sexuality, climate change, and health care coverage to illustrate their concern. While I agree that these are some of the important social and theological issues of our generation, I believe the church has missed the more important challenges of our day: the rise of militarism (including both drone warfare and global terrorism); an overall decline

of civility; a rampant individualism that makes each of us his or her own final authority on matters of faith and life; and the consumerism that keeps us continually in search of the next upgrade of both possessions and relationships.

How will Brethren respond to the world around us—a world increasingly disinterested in our potlucks, choral cantatas, and vacation Bible schools?

We could start by considering the gift given to us in this year’s National Youth Conference theme, based on Ephesians 4:1-7. NYC coordinators Katie Cummings, Tim Heishman, and Sarah Neher have shown a wisdom beyond their years in choosing this scripture to interpret the NYC theme: “Called by Christ, Blessed for the Journey Together.”

Be completely humble? You’ve got to be kidding!

Of the many things to be said about these verses, the one I wish to highlight in this space is Paul’s instruction to be “completely humble” (Ephesians 4:2). While we Brethren tend to be quite proud of our humility (ahem!), the fact is that Paul could not have chosen a more counter-cultural virtue with which to instruct the Ephesians in the practice of faith. Our familiar-

ity with the concept of humility blinds us to how unexpected Paul's inclusion of it actually was.

The concept of humility was so despised in that culture that the early church writers actually created the word used here and six other places in the New Testament. When words meaning "humble/humility" show up in common literature of the day, they virtually always have a negative meaning. To the Greek-speaking world, "to be humble" meant "to think poorly," or "to be ill-disposed, faint-hearted, or weakly."

It is not too difficult to imagine that many in the Ephesian congregations would have heard Paul's words as some kind of spiritual bait-and-switch. Faithful Christians are eager to "live a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called." As a pastor, I have enjoyed many fruitful conversations with church members eagerly seeking "to know God's will for my life." We want to be faithful to God—in general. It's the particulars that trip us up. "Be completely humble? Really? Bend my wishes, my preferences, my sense of decency and order to serve the needs of someone else? How is that going to work? They might mess things up!"

Steeped in the culture of the day, many in Paul's audience

argue with numbers. But the thing is, buildings, numbers, money, power, and other aspects of worldly success may indeed be signs of a kingdom, but brothers and sisters, they are not necessarily signs of *the* Kingdom. . . . People of God, maybe now is the time for us to take a hard look at the ways in which the church has tended to judge our success on a set of values that perhaps we had no business buying into in the first place. Namely our society's free-market, corporate American values of what success looks like."

What does a humble church look like? A humble church is one where the gospel is proclaimed in such a way that sinners feel welcome, just like they did when Jesus taught. It's a church where forgiveness and reconciliation are taken seriously, where hurts aren't allowed to get old and fester, and where power struggles are disallowed. It's a church where feetwashing is seen as a priority, literally on Maundy Thursday and figuratively every other day. It's a church where people drop everything to help someone in crisis, whether they share a pew or live halfway around the world. It's a church that

Steeped in the culture of the day, many in Paul's audience would have recoiled at the notion of humility. But this is nothing new. Christian living is inherently counter-cultural.

would have recoiled at the notion of humility. But this is nothing new. Christian living is inherently counter-cultural.

Consider a different example. How many times have you explained the Brethren belief of non-resistance to someone else, only to be told that non-resistance sounds crazy and can never work? Our culture is so bent toward revenge and military superiority that other options are generally dismissed out of hand. Sadly, we too often view humility in a similar, negative way.

Living in the right kingdom

In an era of declining church attendance, too few pastors available to fill pulpits, too few churches able to support full-time ministries, and declining interest in the church from our society, of what value is humility? In a recent sermon preached to the Rocky Mountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber shared these words—words that apply to the Church of the Brethren equally well:

"It's no news to anyone here that there is a lot of hand-wringing these days about the longevity of the Lutheran church. And yeah to be sure, we used to be bigger, more significant, and more impressive. Sure, we used to own more property, have more members, bring in more cash, and leverage more power than we do today. It's hard to

understands the local community and seeks to meet the needs of those within walking distance of the church property. It's a church that raises youth to become teachers in the inner city or in underserved rural areas, or teaches them to become mission workers among the homeless. It certainly is a place where people proclaim peace to all around them.

The world will be what the world will be. It will pursue violence, financial gain, and personal space to extreme lengths, and it will trample everything that gets in its way. A humble church remembers that even when our culture seems to offer a more attractive—or at least a more effective—option, in the end we really have the better story.

So long as the church proclaims the gospel faithfully, then a humble church will continue to arise among us. It may not be able to stem the tide of cultural idolatry. It may not be able to pay for a full-time pastoral program and maintain its historic property. But it may bring people to Jesus and help them "lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called."

Thanks, Katie, Tim, and Sarah for calling the church to remember these words, and creating an opportunity for our youth to find their voice in our day. 

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.

Planting conference looks toward intercultural church

Church of the Brethren planters and those interested in church planting

gathered for “Plant Generously, Reap Bountifully—Toward an Intercultural Future” on May 15-17 in Richmond, Ind. The church planting conference is offered every two years, sponsored by Congregational Life Ministries and the New Church Development Advisory Committee, with hosting from Bethany Theological Seminary.

The gathering used Revelation 7:9 as a focus for conversation about developing church plants and revitalizing existing congregations to reflect the intercultural nature of the vision of Revelation.

Speakers point to the multicultural environment

Keynote speakers Efrem Smith and Alejandro (Alex) Mandes spoke from their own experience as church planters. Smith is president and CEO of World Impact, committed to the empowerment of the urban poor through the facilitation of church planting movements and leadership development, and previously was superintendent of the Pacific Southwest Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church.

Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford



Mandes is director of Hispanic Ministries for the Evangelical Free Church of America, and has planted three churches.

Smith called for work to prepare the church for the kingdom of God. Referencing images from parables told by Jesus in Matthew, he recalled the story of bridesmaids waiting for the groom, who must keep their lamps burning. He compared church planters to bridesmaids whose job is to prepare the bride, the church, for the coming of the kingdom of God. “We must have a kingdom passion and a kingdom urgency,” he said.

Church planting also can be compared to the slaves in another parables, whose master gave them money to care for and invest in his absence, Smith said. God is investing in us as “kingdom capital,” he told the gathering. Every time someone is saved, or helped, by the church, that “kingdom capital” is growing. “This is what will really lead to healthy church planting,” Smith said, “when the whole gospel is embraced. . . . When it’s about helping the hurting, blessing the broken, liberating the enslaved.”

Later, in an evening message, Smith explicitly called churches and new church plants to

The two keynote speakers, Efrem Smith (right) and Alejandro (Alex) Mandes (left), spoke from their own experience as church planters. Smith is president and CEO of World Impact. Mandes is director of Hispanic Ministries for the Evangelical Free Church of America.

be about the work of “developing missional ministries of compassion.”

Mandes expressed a similar sense of urgency. Speaking out of the context of Hispanic America, and the immigrant population in the United States, he shared his concern that the church has a “spiritual blindness” to the new people populating the country.

Love the differences in the body

“I have learned to love the differences in the body of Christ,” Mandes said, as he urged new church planters and pastors of existing congregations to look around them for the opportunities offered by the changing dynamics of the nation. “We have to really get this, because otherwise it will be our undoing.”

Retelling John’s story of Jesus meeting the Samaritan woman at the well, he pointed to her ability to bring her whole community to meet Jesus, and the disciples’ inability to see her gifts, or even her as a person. He compared her to the people from many different parts of the world who are living in the United States. They deserve regard as individuals, and the church is called to welcome them and their gifts.

“There’s something very special that God is doing today” in the United States, Mandes said, referring to the many different people who are

being brought together in this country. “But our denominations are missing it.... I think there is a treasure in that new group.”

The bedrock of the biblical foundation, he reminded the conference, is “to be able to see like Jesus sees” and to see the treasure, creativity, and power that God is bringing to our shores. “We can be one church of 31 flavors.”

A packed conference schedule

Worship services including a presentation by Annual Conference moderator Nancy S. Heishman, a Bible study of Revelation by Bethany’s Wieand Professor of New Testament Studies Dan Ulrich, and a plethora of in-depth workshops and short “Mustard Seed” presentations rounded out the packed schedule.

A service of blessing was held for church planters and prospective planters. Communion was part of the opening worship, and the sharing of prayers was part of closing worship. At the end of the last worship service of the conference, participants each wrote down a prayer request on a card. The cards were then handed out to other participants to take home and pray over in coming days.

More at www.brethren.org/churchplanting. A photo album is at www.tinyurl.com/COBplanting.

Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford



A Bible study on Revelation 7:9 was led by Bethany faculty Dan Ulrich and gave participants an opportunity to dig deeper into the scriptural foundation for the intercultural future of the church.

upcoming events

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 (BVS) Summer Orientation

Aug. 17-26 Brethren Revival Fellowship BVS Orientation

Brethren Disaster Ministries sends major aid for typhoon response

The Brethren Disaster Ministries staff are directing three grants totaling \$175,000 to rehabilitation and livelihoods work in the Philippines. The grants from the Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) follow up on the devastation caused by Typhoon Haiyan in November.

As of the end of April, more than \$211,000 in donations received by the Emergency Disaster Fund in 2013 and 2014 have been earmarked by donors for Typhoon Haiyan response.

Heifer International: An allocation of \$70,000 is supporting livelihoods work on the island of Leyte. This grant will help fund the Building Resiliency and Sustainable Agribusiness in Haiyan-Damaged Areas of Central Philippines. The project will assist 5,000 families in rebuilding, recovering, and developing lost livelihoods, while at the same time ensur-

ing future disaster preparedness in their respective communities. Through capacity building, training, instituting CMDRR (Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction), expanding agribusiness projects, replacing lost/deceased livestock, strengthening social capital, capacitating groups and cooperatives, and other climate-adaptation and preparedness initiatives, the project aims to empower families to become more resilient and self-reliant.

Lutheran World Relief: An allocation of \$70,000 for LWR livelihoods work supports the Resiliency and Change for Haiyan Affected Families and Communities, a long-term response project benefiting coconut farmers and coastal fisherfolk on the islands of Cebu and Leyte. The grant also will help to equip local government and organizations to assist in long-term sustainable solutions. Funds will support the LWR objective to ensure that farming- and fishing-related livelihoods of the most vulnerable are rehabilitated to be more sustainable and resilient in the face of future potential disasters. Assistance will be given to coconut farmers to transition to cocoa and other priority crops, as determined by the local agriculture sector. The fisherfolk will be supported by helping coastal communities restore seaweed farming, providing livelihood insurance, and rehabilitating coastal mangrove areas, all while strengthening community organization.

Burublig para ha Tanauan: An EDF allocation of \$35,000 is going to rehabilitation work in the coastal community of Tanauan, Leyte. The majority of the money (\$30,000) will support a newly organized Filipino nonprofit called Burublig para ha Tanauan. This organization seeks to help in the restoration of the town. This portion of the grant will focus on providing fishing nets, a sewing center, and pedicabs for families who lost their homes and source of income. The remaining \$5,000 will provide school supplies for both teachers and students at the Tanauan High School.

For more about Brethren Disaster Ministries go to www.brethren.org/bdm. To give to the Emergency Disaster Fund go to www.brethren.org/edf.

Roy Winter of Brethren Disaster Ministries visits Heifer International project sites in the Philippines while assessing the damage caused by Typhoon Haiyan.

Peter Barlow



Bridgewater College welcomes new president

Bridgewater (Va.) College recently celebrated the installation of president David W. Bushman, with alumni, faculty, staff, students, and friends of the college. Associate general secretary Mary Jo Flory-Steury brought greetings on behalf of the Church of the Brethren.



“Since their foundings the mission of the Church of the Brethren and Bridgewater College intersect as we hold important convictions and values in common,” she said. “These shared convictions include peace: living peaceably with oneself and with all God’s people; simplicity: living as stewards of God’s creation; community: working together as one, alongside Bridgewater’s founding ideals: goodness, truth, beauty, and harmony. As these core commitments come together, our common mission is about developing and equipping whole persons who live faithfully, lead courageously, and serve wisely in today’s context and culture.”

Brethren join Bread for the World anniversary gathering

The Church of the Brethren was represented at the Bread for the World 40th anniversary gathering by Office of Public Witness director Nathan Hosler. The denomination helped provide financial support for the gathering, held in Washington, D.C., on June 9-10, through a \$1,000 grant from the Global Food Crisis Fund (GFCF) in honor of the anniversary, reports GFCF manager Jeffrey S. Boshart.

Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging the nation’s decision-makers to end hunger at home and abroad. Dubbed “Bread Rising,” its 40th anniversary gathering aimed to lay groundwork for ending hunger by 2030, said a release from the organization.



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The planning team for NOAC 2015 poses for a photo at Lake Junaluska: (from left) Deanna Brown, Christy Waltersdorff, Deborah Waas, Bev Anspaugh, Kim Ebersole (staff), Eric C. Anspaugh, Ruth Bell (Bev Anspaugh's mother), Paula Ziegler Ulrich, Jim Kinsey.

Yvonne Kneibler

Next older adult event to explore the power of biblical storytelling

The planning team for the next **National Older Adult Conference (NOAC)** has announced the 2015 conference theme: “then Jesus told them a story. . . .” Jesus used stories when he spoke to the people. In fact, he did not tell them anything without using stories. So God’s promise came true, just as the prophet had said, “I will use stories to speak my message and to explain things that have been hidden since the creation of the world” (Matthew 13:34-35, CEV).

The theme grows out of Phyllis Tickle’s 2013 keynote address, in which she challenged older adults as the ones

who know the biblical stories to “go back and weave those stories into the lives of our grandchildren and great-grandchildren.” It acknowledges the powerful way stories can convey God’s message, shaping and transforming our lives even today. This power of storytelling will be explored during the conference through worship, keynote presentations, creative arts, workshops, and song.

NOAC is the Church of the Brethren gathering for adults age 50 and older. The event will be held at Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center, in western North Carolina, Sept. 7-11, 2015.

Torin Eikler named executive minister of Northern Indiana District

Torin S. Eikler has been called to serve Northern Indiana District as district executive minister, a fourth time position beginning Sept. 1. Currently he is a team co-pastor at Morgantown (W.Va.) Church of the Brethren, which also is affiliated with Mennonite Church USA. Carol Spicher Waggy has been serving as interim district executive for Northern Indiana.

During his seven-year tenure at the Morgantown Church, Eikler has provided leadership for West Marva District through Bible study, the Peace

Team, and Matthew 18 seminars, and he has been a member of an Allegheny Mennonite Conference committee for conference structure redesign. He has served on the Church of the Brethren’s Committee on Interchurch Relations, Anti-Racism Team, and as guest director for youth workcamps. During a term in Brethren Volunteer Service he was coordinator for the Church of the Brethren workcamp ministry in 1998-99, and served at the Capital Hill Soup Kitchen in Washington, D.C., 2001-02.

He holds a master of divinity

degree from Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind., and a bachelor of arts degree in biology and environmental studies, with a minor in French, from Manchester University in North Manchester, Ind.

He and his family will move to Northern Indiana District sometime in August. His wife, Carrie Eikler, is coordinator for the ministry training programs (TRIM and EFSM) of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, a ministry training partnership of the Church of the Brethren and Bethany Seminary.

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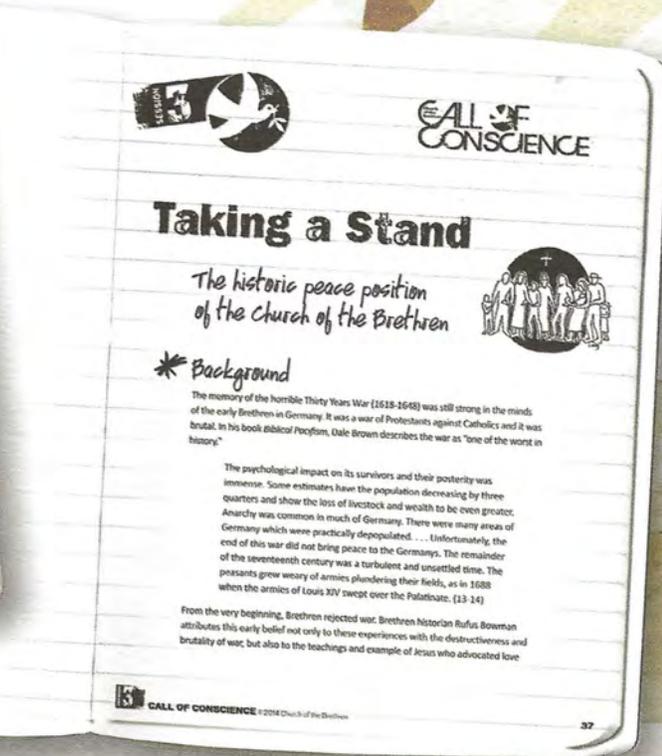
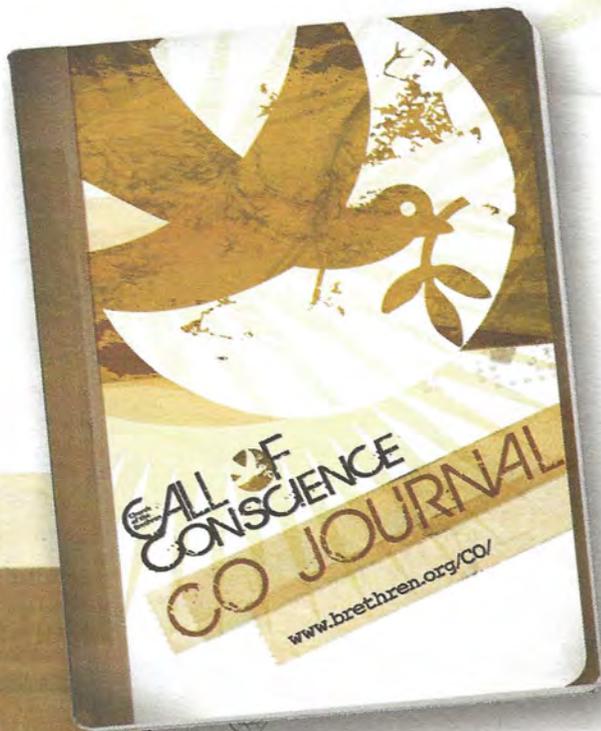
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The **CO Journal** accompanies the curriculum and contains most of the handouts, along with extra prayers and questions for journaling. It has been prepared so that it is possible for a reader to use it independently.

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A different way of thinking about the dark

The April 26 issue of *Time* magazine devotes five pages to a feature on Barbara Brown Taylor, an extraordinary preacher, teacher, and author of 13 books. The article reminds us of the impact Taylor has had on the religious world for some three decades, citing a 1996 Baylor University survey naming Taylor as one of the 12 most effective preachers in the English-speaking world—along with Billy Graham and Fred Craddock.



BILL KIDWELL

When I read Taylor's most recent book, *Learning to Walk in the Dark*, I found myself both embracing and challenging her affirmation that blessings come to us when we experience "endarkenment." When she mourns the loss of darkness along our lighted streets and backyards, I realized my own yearning for childhood days on a farm where the stars at night were big and bright deep in the heart of Texas. Without street lights blinding me from every

angle, I could go out into the front yard, look into the heavens and stand there with a sense of awe.

But I also felt that light got a little short-changed in her book. She said nothing, for instance, about clinical data confirming that light therapy can help lift people out of the depths of depression. Although her subject is darkness, I found myself wondering why she couldn't at least put in a good word for light, if only briefly. Upon further reflection, I realized she is a better writer than I, and is therefore able to stick to her subject—which is the dark.

Taylor challenges me to be more aware of what I can learn from people who live in the dark. She tells the story of a man who has been blind since age 6, yet is able to "see" with his other senses: touching, feeling, hearing, and smelling. Who knows, maybe the blind who live in the dark are able to experience God's presence in ways the rest of us are unable to imagine.

Taylor also challenges me to clean up my language when I depict people and places in negative terms by describing

them as dark. I once wrote an article in which I referred to Africa as "darkest Africa." Fortunately, an editor recognized my lack of sensitivity and deleted the word "darkest."

In preparation for writing her book, Taylor spent considerable time exploring dark places such as damp caverns and musty old basements in European cathedrals. She also ventured into a totally dark maze of obstacles in which she was guided only by the voice of a blind person who accompanied her. While I admire her efforts, I'm not sure I share her enthusiasm for exploring such areas!

Although Taylor talks about finding God in the dark, her main focus is on learning to walk in the dark even without a sure sense of God's presence. Doubts, sadness, fear of death, and even rage are a part of the human journey. Learning to live with mystery while walking in the dark is the challenge Taylor sets before us. She plainly states that the answer to our problems is not taking pills or listening to preachers who have quick, easy solutions.

Taylor's experience with darkness brings to mind what Mother Teresa had to say about her dark moments when she felt alone and God seemed distant. Maybe even the saints have to learn to walk in the dark.

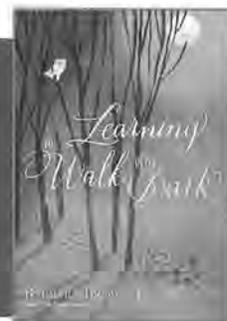
Although I resonate with much of what Taylor has to say I must confess that some of the metaphoric language she uses is not always easy to follow. For example, when she affirms that the new moon is always being fashioned in the dark, I think she is talking about hope. At times, however, her language does not sound metaphoric, but sounds more like someone speaking out of the Bible Belt tradition in which she was nurtured as a child. For example, in seeking to build a case for darkness, her assertion that Jesus was born in a cave and rose from the dead in a cave sounds more like a literal than metaphoric reading of scripture.

Nevertheless, I recommend Taylor's book to anyone who is interested in being challenged to think about light and dark in a different way. **W**

Bill Kidwell, a retired pastor, serves as volunteer minister of pastoral care at Oakland Church of the Brethren in Gettysburg, Ohio.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Title: *Learning to Walk in the Dark*. **Author:** Barbara Brown Taylor. **Publisher:** HarperOne, April 2014. **Number of pages:** 208. **List price:** \$24.99. In her review of the book in *Spirituality & Health*, Jennifer Haupt says, "Taylor delves into her own spiritual darkness, a loss of faith in traditional religion—really a mistrust of a 'solar spirituality,' focused on the false dichotomy between light and dark, good and evil, right and wrong." And Shauna Niequist, author of *Bread & Wine*, says, "A gift to every person who's felt the darkness but not had the words to articulate it, which is to say it's for all of us. A truly beautiful book."





Diane Cordell

I am the vine, you are the branches . . .

I was elbow-deep in tomato sauce one evening last summer, trying to put it up before I drowned, when I received a call from a friend. Would I be interested in 80 pounds of fresh concord grapes? She had spent all afternoon harvesting them from her mother's arbor, and hated for them to go to waste.

Not one to ever turn down large quantities of free produce, I accepted, and before my tomato sauce was out of the water bath, I was up to my elbows again—this time in the juiciest purple marbles you've ever seen.

Grapes are remarkable—specifically for the way that they grow. Out of what looks like a dead twig come tendrils, leaves, and tiny bunches of sweet goodness. They grow exponentially in short amounts of time, and so tall! Vines from one plant can be grafted onto vines of another, and sometimes they grow so big so fast that healthy growth must be removed in order for the whole plant to grow stronger. Vines produce sweeter fruit when their roots are planted in soil that is rocky and tough—the struggle makes



MANDY GARCIA

them stronger.

Thinking of these things when reading Jesus' parable of the vine and branches in John 5 brings new depth to his teaching about the church. Great fruit can be produced from unassuming places. Planted in one place, branches can grow to reach far beyond where they started. Two different plants can grow into one, and sweet, tender things can be found growing out of rocky places. What a beautiful image of our life together.

Grapes are a reminder that living things go through seasons of struggle and growth, sickness and health, drought and refreshment. But when roots run deep, they grow back stronger every year—even when the winter is hard. May we

as the church take a lesson from the tiny grape, and always cling to the vine of Christ together, as clusters connected to a far-reaching movement that bears so much fruit that God is elbow-deep. ❧

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

Grape jam

After giving several pounds away, I turned most of my plunder into grape jam. Here is the recipe I used, modified from one I found at: <http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/Concord-Grape-Jam-232813>. (Before beginning any canning project, always sterilize your jars. Do this by boiling them in a water bath for 10 minutes.)

- Slip skins from 5 pounds of concord grapes and purée skins with 1 cup sugar in a food processor, then transfer to a 4-quart heavy pot.
- Stir in 3 tablespoons of fresh lemon juice, peeled grapes, and 4 more cups of sugar. Boil over moderate heat, stirring frequently and skimming foam, until pulp is broken down—about 20 minutes.
- Force jam through a food mill set over a large bowl. Discard remaining solids. Return jam to pot and cook at a slow boil, stirring frequently as mixture thickens to prevent scorching—about 35 minutes.
- To test jam, remove from heat and drop a teaspoonful on a cold plate and chill 1 minute. Tilt plate. Jam should remain in a mound. If jam runs, continue cooking at a slow boil, testing every 5 minutes until done—up to 25 minutes more.

Jam will thicken as it cools, and will keep in sealed jars in a cool, dark place up to 6 months.

National Youth Conference It's just around the corner!

Thousands of Church of the Brethren youth will gather July 19-24 at Colorado State University in Ft. Collins, Colo. They will arrive by bus, by plane, and by car. A few might even roll in on bikes. They will come armed with suitcases, pillows, hopes, and questions. They will sing, pray, worship, play, eat, talk, learn, celebrate—and maybe even sleep a little.



Photos of 2010 NYC by
Glenn Riegel.


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

What does the emergent church movement have to say to Brethren?

by Debbie Eisenbise
and Tim McNinch

["What do you think?" is an occasional series that asks readers to ponder observations and insights about the direction that the church at large, and the Church of the Brethren in particular, may be heading. We invite your comments. —Ed.]

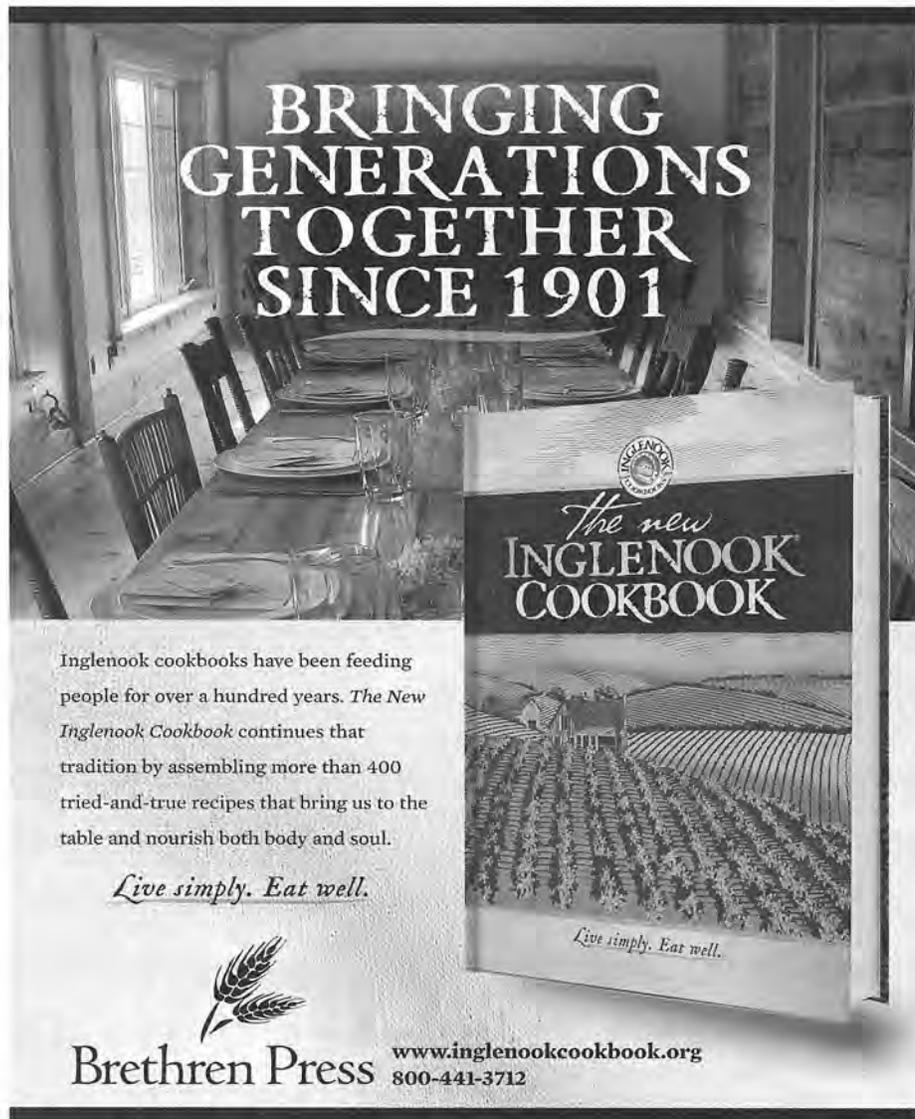
What does the emergent church movement have to say to us Brethren? The Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor and St. Clare's Episcopal Church (two very different congregations in Ann Arbor, Mich.) co-sponsored the Blue Ocean Summit, an ecumenical conference,

May 15-17. Blue Ocean Faith is an informal network of churches, leaders, and laity who aim to live out vibrant Christian faith in predominantly secular settings, among and with secular-leaning folk.

The case was made that more and more people in the United States consider themselves to be unaffiliated with any faith. Charles Park, pastor of the River Church in Manhattan, quoted a survey that asked people to give the first word that came to mind when they heard "Christian." More than 85 percent reported: "judgmental." This was not a surprise to most of the 250 in attendance, but a point of confession and motivation. How can we reach those who are skeptical but curious about faith, in a way that fully conveys the love of Christ? How can we welcome people into worship, engage them in service, pray for and with them, just as they are?

The challenge of the conference was articulated in its theme: "The Holy Spirit: For Everyone, Everywhere, All the Time." The underlying assumption: that the Holy Spirit is relevant not just to Christians, but (as Dave Schmelzer, Blue Ocean Faith's national director, put it) "to that category of people called 'people.'" The Spirit of God goes before us even in this secular culture, and conversation and community can provide understandings and experiences that cultivate faith.

Keynote speaker Phyllis Tickle, author of the seminal book *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why* (Baker Books, 2012), suggested that a new theological and liturgical emphasis on the Holy Spirit is emerging in this time of cultural transition. She contended that historical



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shifts come down to crises of authority, and that the church in the West is now moving from Luther's emphasis upon the scripture alone to a Spirit-centered faith. This speaks to our Brethren roots in Spirit-led worship and in Alexander Mack's counsel* that only through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is one "impelled through inner hearing, to true obedience."

When asked about the Church of the Brethren and the emergent church, Tickle commented: "The Church of the Brethren is new enough, young enough, and nimble enough to embrace the emergent church movement and help it along, give it some rootedness. The Brethren peace position is where the church is going, yet, ironically, the Brethren are not wholly engaged in the emergent movement."

A recurring theme at the Blue Ocean Summit was the sociological description of Christian community as a "centered set" with participation contingent not on maintenance of in-or-out boundaries, but movement toward a central focus (Jesus). This emphasizes lived values rather than dogma, which again echoes our own theology.

Conversations and discussions at the conference lifted up the multiplicity of ways by which one may grow in faith, from praying the hours, to speaking in tongues, to living in community, to establishing coffee houses rather than churches, and hosting discussions on topics of spiritual depth online, in living rooms and in public settings.

A challenge to our denomination is to consider how we might better engage the world around us while expressing our faith. The first Brethren held open-air baptisms. They took their faith public. How could we do that today? And

what do we have to share with those in the emergent church movement?

Alexander Mack wrote:

"A man can . . . read the Scriptures outwardly and talk and write about them, but, if the spirit of faith is not in him, he will not be concerned with the commandments therein, nor be frightened very much by the threats which they contain. This is because the inner ears are not yet opened. . . . When a believing person whose inner ears are opened reads the Holy Scriptures outwardly, he will hear as the Lord Jesus intends. . . . He will also be

impelled through his inner hearing, to true obedience . . . [which] gives him strength and power to follow Jesus" (*The Complete Writings of Alexander Mack*, p. 84). 

Debbie Eisenbise and Tim McNinch co-wrote this piece for the Church of the Brethren's Newslite. Eisenbise is an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren, living in Kalamazoo, Mich. McNinch attends Skyridge Church of the Brethren in Kalamazoo. They report that the "Anabaptist contingent" at the Blue Ocean Summit also included Paul Versluis, pastor of Ann Arbor (Mich.) Church of the Brethren/Mennonite Church, and his wife, Elisabeth, and a pastor from Reba Place, a Mennonite community in the Chicago area.

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["Where are the letters?" you may be wondering. A fair question—and one I've asked lately. Folks, if you want to read 'em, you gotta write 'em! —Ed.]

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

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

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Please send information to be included in *Turning Points* to Jean Clements, 1451 Dundee Ave, Elgin, IL 60120; 800-523-8039, ext. 320; jclements@brethren.org. Information must be complete in order to be published. Information older than one year cannot be published.

New Members

Beachdale, Berlin, Pa.: Gloria Patton, Donna Johnson

Beacon Heights, Fort Wayne, Ind.: Andrew Berghoff, Thom Quinlan, Janice Shull, Anna Harpe, James Harpe

Beaver Creek, Hagerstown, Md.: Hugh Schindel, Rayetta Schindel, Clifton Smith

Chambersburg, Pa.: Robert Appenzellar, Gail Appenzellar

Dixon, Ill.: David Ranken, Gail Ranken, Laura Warkins

Drexel Hill, Pa.: Peter Leahy

Faith Community, New Oxford, Pa.: Herbert Bartell, Betty Bartell

Florin, Mount Joy, Pa.: Larry Hollingshead, Lucille Hollingshead

Garden City, Kan.: Jenesis Rigdon

Girard, Ill.: Becky Pierson

Green Hill, Salem, Va.: Whitney Lawrence, David Gibson, Joanne Harmon, Eric Haynes, Miranda Holshouser, Zairek Nicely, Bob Person, Jane Ellen Hale, Lee Hollandsworth, Aaron Mathis

Grossnickle, Myersville, Md.: Andrew Philip Barnet, Aaron Wayne Brandenburg, Abby Leigh Grossnickle, Ethan Scott Grossnickle, Luke Carlton Grossnickle, Noah Glenn Grossnickle, Jeremy Andrew Harshman, Cora Lynn Wells, Hanna Pauline Westwood, Michael Fitzgerald Zeigler, Michelle

Rose Rogers, Alex Michael Kiss, Mary Kathryn Wyle Barnet, Wayne Leroy Wallech, Jr., Leslee Anne Charron Wallech, Jorja Ardinger Kline

Heidelberg, Myerstown, Pa.: Thomas Powell, Rosene Powell, Joshua Heisey, Brittany Brubeck

Indian Creek, Harleysville, Pa.: Lorena Eichhoefer

Lancaster, Pa.: Drew Smith, Jack Smith, Elizabeth Bentzel

La Verne, Calif.: Dessa D'Aquila, Simon Lambert, Peggy Wallace, Jim Irwin, Jodi Erlinger-Irwin

Ligonier, Pa.: Dominick Boyd, Ethen Deemer, Ryan Zimmerman

Lititz, Pa.: Samantha Johnson, Renaye Hilt, Joy Slavin, Gail Reed

McPherson, Kan.: Gayle Bartel, Jessica Griffith, Brett Heitschmidt, Addie Johnson, Eric Johnson, Michele Johnson, Tate Johnson, Ira Whitacre

Myerstown, Pa.: Abigail Bender, Rebecca Wolfe, Austin Liskey, Alicia Yoh, Carl Hower, Gloria Hower, George Wolfe, Mary Wolfe, Christa Bender, Andrew Bender, Ali Bender, Beth Faehling, Dave Faehling

Paxton, Harrisburg, Pa.: Jill McKenna, Paula Barker

Roaring Spring, Pa.: Hailey Glunt, Inger Frye

Spring Branch, Warsaw, Mo.: Steve Mackley, Pam Mackley, Darlene Mackley, Cheryl Stokes, Joyce Meyer, Connie Giffen

Spring Creek, Hershey, Pa.: Kira Field, Kourtney Field, Jeremy Field, Ryan Blizard, Adeline Gesford

Virden, Ill.: Michael White, Hunter White, Sally Smith, Alice Zollinger, William Buske

White Oak, Manheim, Pa.: Mikaela Alwine, Jonathan Bowman, Alexis Groff,

Braden Ressler, Kiana Stoner, Edward Weaver, Joy Weaver, Daniel Zimmerman, Brayden Zook
Williamson Road, Roanoke, Va.: Judy Bower
Wilmington, Del.: Brett Kauffman
Woodbury, Pa.: Meredith Barton

Wedding Anniversaries

Biser, Harvey and Betty, Smithsburg, Md., 50
Byers, Jack and Carolyn, Hanover, Pa., 55
Clouse, Wendell and Ruth, Goshen, Ind., 60
Colkitt, Roger and Joanne, Hanover, Pa., 55
Dunbar, Robert and Shirley, Adrian, Mich., 60
Edwards, Russell and Carol, Virden, Ill., 50
Fair, Harold and Linda, Gettysburg, Pa., 50
Helmerichs, Wayne and Dorothy, Virden, Ill., 55
Holley, George and Margaret, Johnson City, Tenn., 68
Houser, Keim and Sylvia, South Bend, Ind., 50
Kline, Adam and Shirley, Newmanstown, Pa., 60
Merkey, Vernon and Frances, Ankeny, Iowa, 60
Miller, Wayne and Nancy, Woodbury, Pa., 65
Morgan, Bill and Madeline, Roanoke, Va., 72
Mosholder, Gary and Judy, Boswell, Pa., 50
Redinger, John and Karen, Everett, Pa., 50
Renner, Leon and Rosemary, McAllen, Texas, 60
Romick, Ray and Betty, Alleman, Iowa, 70
Snoots, William and Jackie, Knoxville, Md., 50
Stone, Clyde and Geraldine, Havana, Ill., 50
Tipton, Henry and Lois, Girard, Ill., 68
Tosten, Harry and Esther, Shippensburg, Pa., 55
Wentz, Cletus and Joanne, Hanover, Pa., 55

Wingert, Clarence and Miriam, Hanover, Pa., 55

Deaths

Alwine, Larry Ray, 69, Lebanon, Pa., April 25
Aukerman, Alva D., 92, Greenville, Ohio, Nov. 11
Aukerman, Kathleen L., 90, Greenville, Ohio, Nov. 13
Barker, Lillian Flora, 89, Roanoke, Va., May 9
Barkman, Alexander Blair, 20, Roaring Spring, Pa., May 20
Bigler, Frederick W., 92, Goshen, Ind., May 29
Blough, Marvin Earl, 86, Melba, Idaho, March 7
Bollinger, Glenn L., 57, Manheim, Pa., Dec. 21
Bowers, Ethel Irene Ryman, 86, Woodstock, Va., May 3
Bowers, Larry Franklin, 64, Maurertown, Va., Feb. 21
Brown, Clara Belle, 92, Ankeny, Iowa, Oct. 21
Brown, Mary Margaret, 72, Chambersburg, Pa., April 27
Brubaker, Grace C., 103, Lancaster, Pa., May 17
Burgan, Harold Lee, 73, Myersville, Md., Aug. 3, 2013
Casula, Ellen Baker, 79, New Castle, Del., April 22
Coleman, Joan Ann Horning, 68, Berlin, Pa., April 17
Connelly, Thomas L., 78, Virden, Ill., April 24
Crossen, Bruce W., 52, Ashland, Ohio, April 14
Dunmeyer, Judy Kay Mankamer, 72, Meyersdale, Pa., March 16
Eichorn, Clyde E., 96, Ligonier, Pa., March 7
Elder, Thomas, 74, Pleasant Valley, Mo., May 18
Erwin, Ullis Floyd, 98, Modesto, Calif., May 10
Falls, Joanne Huffman, 75, Troutville, Va., Jan. 18
Fifer, Virginia Palmer, 69, Frederick, Md., Oct. 26
Fike, Wade H., 98, Farmington, Pa., May 3
Flory, Vernon Driver, 94, Harrisonburg, Va., May 15

Folk, Evelyn A., 92, South Bend, Ind., May 5
Gardner, Harry Miller, 88, Harrisonburg, Va., May 17
Geib, Norman R., 88, Manheim, Pa., March 4
German, Lynne Dunn, 58, Pawnee, Ill., Oct. 14
Haines, Leah Catherine Delauter, 89, Middletown, Md., June 13, 2013
Hancock, Reginald R., 90, Floyd, Va., April 19
Hanawalt, Elna Gregory, 88, La Verne, Calif., March 27
Hanawalt, Wayne Brandt, 95, La Verne, Calif., April 7
Hart, William R., 83, Virden, Ill., March 3
Hartman, Mary R., 99, Gettysburg, Pa., May 19
Heffelfinger, Homer W., 94, Richland, Pa., April 1
Hocker, Margaret L., 100, Greenville, Ohio, Dec. 15
Holloway, Mary E. Hutchison, 65, McPherson, Kan., April 13
Irvin, Joyce M., 72, Sterling, Ohio, March 22
Kline, Stanley C., 92, Myersville, Md., March 25
Lehman, Esther W., 88, Manheim, Pa., April 5
Lehman, Randall S.M., 90, Wooster, Ohio, April 30
McCaman, Samuel J., 91, Sebring, Fla., May 1
McCarty, Ruth W., 93, Wheatland, Mo., May 4
McClendon, Maxine Lorraine Wilson, 91, Clinton, Mo., May 28
McGolerick, Donald Allen, 69, New Market, Md., May 19
Means, Charles Grady, Sr., 73, Uniontown, Pa., April 12
Miles, Betty, 87, La Verne, Calif., April 14
Moomaw, Algilee, 86, Troutville, Va., Dec. 25
Newton, Richard Alan, 62, Roanoke, Va., Feb. 22
Pepple, Gladys D., 94, Everett, Pa., April 28
Peterson, Mary Ann, 75, North Liberty, Ind., April 15

Pinter, Grace E. Evans, 95, New Oxford, Pa., May 1
Pryor, Edgar Paul, Jr., 85, Hagerstown, Md., March 4
Smith, A. Marguerite, 93, Roaring Spring, Pa., April 30
Stoneman, Betty Jean Hodges, 74, Roanoke, Va., Jan. 6
Stultz, Sharon Marie, 66, Roanoke, Va., April 29
Teets, Hancell A., 95, Aurora, W. Va., March 1
Teets, Marie W., 90, Eglon, W. Va., Feb. 22
Tinkey, Norman L., 82, Akron, Ind., April 11
Traughber, Lois Virginia Eagleton, 88, Fruitland, Idaho, April 21
Waddelow, Don, 93, La Verne, Calif., March 21
Walter, Aldine, 86, Martinsburg, Pa., March 31
Williams, Jean Evelyn, 71, Ankeny, Iowa, Feb. 2
Yohe, R. Lowell, 89, North Manchester, Ind., Jan. 28

Licensings

Dodd, Gabriel P., Shen. Dist. (Wakemans Grove, Edinburg, Va.), May 18
Haddock, Jack L., Shen. Dist. (Mount Zion, Luray, Va.), May 18
Hiler, Gary W., W. Pa. Dist. (Meyersdale, Pa.), May 18
Kennedy, Mary Jane, Southeastern Dist. (Peak Creek, Laurel Springs, N.C.), Jan. 5
Taylor, Nathan L., Virgina Dist. (Cloverdale, Va.), May 11
Williams, Benjamin R., Southeastern Dist. (Fruitdale, Ala.), Oct. 9

Ordinations

Crissman, Nathan D., W. Pa. Dist. (Berkey, Windber, Pa.), May 4
Flumerfelt, David O., Mid. Pa. Dist. (Twenty-eighth Street, Altoona, Pa.), May 18
Maxwell, David, N. Ind.

Dist. (Bremen, Ind.), May 18
Yoder, Timothy, N. Ind. Dist. (Goshen City, Goshen, Ind.), June 1

Placements

Anders, Thomas E., Jr., associate pastor, Logansport, Ind., Jan. 1
Bartley, Les, pastor, Pleasant View, Elida, Ohio, June 6
Fletcher, Jonathan O., pastor, Valley Pike, Maurertown, Va., May 1
Godfrey, Mark D., pastor, Lanark, Ill., April 6
Haddock, Jack L., pastor, Trinity, Luray, Va., May 1
Harsh, Jason, pastor, Zion Hill, Columbiana, Ohio, Dec. 22
Hollenberg-Duffey, Audrey N., team pastor, Hagerstown, Md., June 1
Hollenberg-Duffey, Timothy L., team pastor, Hagerstown, Md., June 1
Jones, Gregory L., from pastor, Bunkertown, McAllisterville, Pa., to pastor, West York, York, Pa., May 1
Katzenberger, Michael, pastor, Covington Community, Covington, Wash., June 9, 2013
McCoy, Shelby F., pastor, Middlecreek, Rockwood, Pa., June 2
Painter, Duane, from interim to pastor, Newport, Shenandoah, Va., May 1
Polzin, Benjamin, from youth minister, Potsdam, Ohio, to pastor, Poplar Ridge, Defiance, Ohio, Jan. 26
Price, Doug, pastor, Elm Street, Lima, Ohio, Oct. 20
Roberts Deborah K., pastor, Ellisforde, Tonasket, Wash., May 25
Spaulding, Spencer, pastor, Anderson, Ind., March 16

Carrying it on

Crazy Horse stared down at us from his mountaintop perch in the distance. We could see his face clearly, but his body, and the horse upon which he sat, were pretty much left to our imaginations.

Sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski had been invited in 1939 by Chief Henry Standing Bear to create a mountain-size tribute to



RANDY MILLER
MESSENGER EDITOR

Native Americans in the hills of South Dakota. Their shared vision became the project Ziolkowski started in the late 1940s of carving an image of Crazy Horse so large that it would dwarf nearby Mount Rushmore. And never mind hammers and chisels. Except for the finer details, most of the actual sculpting is done with dynamite, as it was on Mount Rushmore—a project on which Ziolkowski had worked with sculptor Gutzon Borglum.

Ziolkowski and a small crew began blasting June 3, 1948. That crew expanded as the project unfolded and as his family grew. (Ziolkowski and his wife, Ruth, would eventually have 10 children.)

Even when he began, Ziolkowski knew he likely would not see the completion of the project in his lifetime. Nor would his children, or perhaps even his grandchildren.

While Ziolkowski shaped the mountain, Ruth was behind the scenes, handling financial and public relations matters

mountain (one of which rests on my bookshelf).

The purpose of the project is more than simply carving a grand sculpture out of a mountain, although that in itself would be an admirable feat—all four 60-foot-high heads on Mount Rushmore would fit inside Crazy Horse's head. But it's not just about the artwork itself. According to its website, "The Memorial's mission is to honor the culture, tradition, and living heritage of North American Indians."

Maybe that's partly why Ziolkowski began a project he knew would have to continue long after he was gone. If the work kept going for generations, perhaps the project's purpose of honoring a culture would stay alive, too.

Ruth Ziolkowski died May 21 at age 87. But even with her passing, the project likely will continue well into the future. Seven of their nine surviving children remain involved in the work, which has a year-round crew of 60, and 200 in the summertime to accommodate visitors.

That sunny day during our visit to the monument, Ruth strolled among us tourists, chatting amiably about the project. It was clear her enthusiasm had not waned, even though she well knew it would be decades before her husband's vision would be fully realized. My guess is that the spark that ignited this project years ago still burns in the hearts of all the family and crew, and that it's not just about keeping the wheels of an institution turning, it's about keeping a vision alive.

If we're doing it right, we Brethren—and all Christians,

...we Brethren—and all Christians, really—are helping to keep alive a vision about a new way of living demonstrated centuries ago by Jesus.

necessary to keep the project afloat. Ziolkowski had vowed never to accept federal funding. The project is financed by admission fees and contributions.

After Ziolkowski died in 1982, Ruth decided to shift the focus of the project. While Ziolkowski had put his efforts into the carving the monument as a whole, Ruth realized that tourists needed something concrete (well, granite, anyway) to serve as a draw and keep the coffers filled. She instructed the crew to devote their time to Crazy Horse's face.

Workers completed the face in 1998, and it appears Ruth's decision paid off. The visitor center hosts more than 1 million tourists a year. In addition to an entry fee, guests also can purchase souvenirs—including chunks of granite from the

really—are helping to keep alive a vision about a new way of living demonstrated centuries ago by Jesus. It was a vision so radical that it sparked a movement. It turned conventional wisdom on its head with ideas about loving our enemies, the last being first, and all people being equal in the sight of God.

Today, we're doing what we can to help further that vision. And I'm not talking about just keeping an institution afloat. I'm talking about keeping alive that spark of love, compassion, and grace that has been at the heart of this movement from the beginning.

If we do our part, we can help that vision to continue long after we've gone, even if, at the moment, we can see only a vague outline of what it might one day become. ❏

COMING IN SEPTEMBER: How taking a stand for peace had a lifetime impact



Praise

Overflow with love

“And this is my prayer, that your **love** may **overflow** more and more... so that you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and **praise** of God.”

Philippians 1:9-11 NRSV

 Church of the Brethren



Mission offering

September **21**

brethren.org/missionoffering



www.brethren.org/offerings

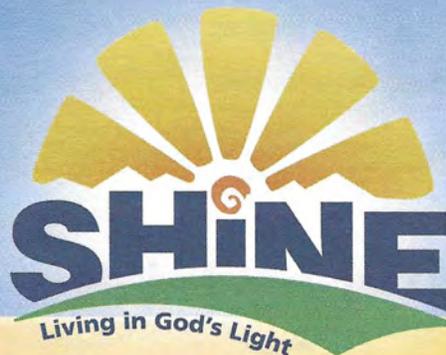


let faith
grow

Start
small



Make your congregation a place where children are welcomed, known, and loved by God, where Jesus' good news of peace is proclaimed, where small and tall learn together about God's story, where children are encouraged to shine.



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