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Glen A. Pierce

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*The desert and the parched land will be glad;  
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom . . .  
Water will gush forth in the wilderness  
and streams in the desert.    Isaiah 35*

# Worship is a Verb!?!?

by Bruce Gerlach

Worship is a verb! Perhaps you have heard this declamatory statement. Perhaps you have heard it so often that it has become a cliché. Wanting to avoid clichés at all cost, I have added the question marks in the title. What *does* the statement mean, anyway? Below, I will try to discern some of the meanings of active worship.

Verbs are action words. All of us remember this from our grade school years. Action words—words like run, jump, talk, sing, listen, daydream, and sleep—are all words that can describe some phase of a meaningful worship experience. This list is arranged in order from the most active to the most passive. Do these action words describe any part of your worship experience? What other verbs adequately describe what you think of when “worship” is the subject of discussion?

## The why and what of worship

The Word of God tells us that God wants us, as his creations, to worship him. In Exodus 7-10, there are 11 references instructing the people to go and worship the Lord. Other scriptural references include Psalm 29:2, “Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness,” and Psalm 95:6, “Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord.” Jesus said in John 4:23, “True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.” All of these references imply that God’s people

*Bruce Gerlach has served for seven years as Director of Music Ministries for the Manor Brethren in Christ Church, Mountville, Pa. This fall he plans to continue his music studies at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.*

need to, and will worship him. This is not at all difficult to grasp. The Scriptures are clear that the subjects of the King of kings are required to worship him.

The “why” seems clear but what about the “what?” What is worship? Again, by going to the Scriptures, we find that worship implies giving glory, honor, and praise to something or someone. God makes it very clear that the someone must be him. In Exodus 20:3, the first commandment states that we must have no other gods before the Lord. That is, we must not give anything more glory, honor, or praise than the Lord God, Jehovah. In this passage God identifies himself as the God who brought the Israelites out of Egypt and the bondage of slavery. This seems to distinguish him and set him apart from any other gods that may have been worshiped. Putting it in other words, God said, “Give me supreme glory, honor, and praise. No one else is worthy of it. I alone am the true and living God.”

## When we worship

Based on these definitions, all of us worship God *whenever* we give him supreme glory, honor, and praise. For example, perhaps you need to have your car repaired. The estimate is \$200, but you can only afford \$100 this month. The car is repaired and the estimate was high. The bill came to only \$94.15. “Praise the Lord,” you say. You continue to honor and glorify him in your thoughts and prayers throughout the rest of the day by thanking him for meeting your specific needs. You are worshipping him.

Try the next scenario. The washer

breaks down. You have a pile of laundry that must wait until it is repaired. Your daughter spills her juice all over the floor which you scrubbed yesterday. The phone rings and while you were distracted, the casserole in the oven burns to a crisp. You say, “Praise the Lord. He is *so* good. I’m glad that I have a laundromat to go to until my washer is fixed. Thank you, God, that my children are healthy and strong. I’m glad that there is some cheese and bread in the house so that I can fix something for my family to eat. Lord, you meet my every need. I love you. Thank you that in the midst of frustrating circumstances, you are still Lord.” You have worshiped him.

Of course, in our humanity we miss many opportunities to worship God. However, with a little discipline and much help from the Holy Spirit, we can all grow in the practice and profession of worshipping God.

## What about Sunday?

As we learn to worship, we begin to realize that what we do on Sunday is merely a repeat of the worship we have done all week long. The only difference is that through the week we were worshipping alone or with our family. But on the first day of the week we honor God and remember the resurrection of Christ by gathering with other Christians to worship God corporately.

## Worship action words

Now let us apply the worship principles we have seen to the Sunday morning worship service. Going back to the second paragraph, let’s use all of the verbs listed there, in

sentences describing worship experiences. The first sentence will be a positive use of the word, the second, a negative one.

### Run

I am so excited about what will take place in our worship service this morning, that I want to run and get to church as quickly as possible. I won't miss a single minute of giving praise to God with all of the other wonderful people of our church.

I am so run down from my busy weekend. I can hardly drag myself out of bed, let alone get to church on time.

### Jump

My heart jumps when I think of Jesus and all he has done for me, my family, and folks in our church who really love the Lord and are serving him daily.

When I hear of all the money they say they want and need at our church, my heart jumps in fear because of the money I'll be asked to give.

### Talk

When I talk with the people of our church, I remember that these are God's people. They need encouragement in the Lord.

I want to sit next to Mr. X this morning. I'd like to talk to him about my garden.

### Sing

Isn't it great to sing God's praises with all of these people who love him just as I do.

I just can't sing. I never could, so I won't even try.

### Listen

Often when I listen to the pastor's message, it seems that God is speaking directly to me about some of the problems and difficulties that I've been facing.

It's hard to listen to a 30-minute speech. I'm used to the fast pace of prime time TV.

### Daydream

I am sorry, Lord, Here I am daydreaming again. Forgive me and

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# evangelical VISITOR

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# Three patterns for

by Robert Ives

In the history of the Christian Church there have been three primary kinds of worship services. Each saw salvation and sanctification in a different way, expressed most clearly in what took place on Sunday.

## **Eucharist-centered Worship**

Historically there are two reasons why the eucharist (what the Lord's Supper is called in some churches) might become the central element of worship. First, in Catholic practice, salvation as a grace is actually mediated through the mass. This is a common view among high Anglicans who maintain that the reform of Henry VIII was political and not theological, thereby leaving intact the Catholic view of the eucharist. Secondly, it is because of the long practice of the Christian community. In the very earliest known order of service, from Justin Martyr in the mid-second century, the eucharist is already important. In liturgical texts from the third century, again the eucharist is in a prominent place. Many Anglicans, however, claim that the centrality of the eucharist extends behind the early tradition to the Bible. If there were biblical preferences for a priority of the eucharist, that would be weighty; but there is not.

## **Preaching-centered worship**

In the 16th century, something that formerly had been off center stage in worship began to move to center stage. The architectural symbol of this was the change that brought the pulpit rather than the altar to the center of the sanctuary.

And so there came into being the tradition of the Calvinistic and Reformed churches which trained men

to preach. They were succeeded by the Puritan preachers with their long-suffering congregations listening to, "now nineteenthly," in the exposition of some passages of the Bible. Their successors are all the reformed and the free churches which have come to such prominence in America, where the rational teaching of the pulpit fits well into an age of rationalism. Billy Graham's phrase, "the Bible says . . .," merely reflects the position held by those from preaching churches.

The great pulpit orators, such as James Stewart in Scotland, Helmut Thielicke in Germany, or Donald Grey Barnhouse in America, moved congregations with the fire of their earnestness and their devotion to the Word of God—that book, which reveals the Word of God—Jesus Christ.

There were dangers, of course: of bibliolatry, on the one hand; or of moving people by emotion rather than by the fair and rational exposition of the Bible, on the other.

In spite of the dangers, the vision of the reformers centered on the clarity and certainty of the Word of God and in their confident belief that God spoke to people as the Word was preached. In the 20th century, doubts have been raised about whether preaching as a learning method does what it claims to do. And alone, without the support of other things happening in a Christian community, it may not.

## **Building-up-the-Brethren worship**

At the very heart of Anabaptist worship is this—to provide encouragement to the believing community; so their gatherings were not even called "worship," but "meetings."

Some of the biblical evidence for the viability of this position is found in the Anglican John Stott's book, *One People*, in what he calls the "one-another" verses of the New Testament. For example, Paul in Ephesians 4 discusses the purpose of certain gifts enabling pastors, teachers, and others "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. . . ." First Thessalonians 5:11: "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." First Corinthians 14:26: "When you come together . . . [let all things] be done for the strengthening of the church." And, in fact, in terms of ancient practice, the Anabaptists (being biblical literalists for the most part) based their worship pattern on 1 Corinthians 12–14 and other biblical models.

The Anabaptists evolved a set pattern for their meetings. It included prayers, frequently by the congregation or perhaps by lay leaders; singing of hymns; a public testimony time in which members of the congregation shared what God had been doing in their lives or how they had found a particular passage of Scrip-

Three kinds of  
worship services—  
expressing three  
different views of  
salvation and  
sanctification

# worship

ture useful in their lives; and preaching, which originally involved several lay preachers in turn expounding a passage of Scripture. (Later, as pastors received more training, there was one man doing this.) Then there would be an offering where members were encouraged to tithe; and further, at various times but not weekly, members shared in love feasts, which consisted of a meal, communion, and footwashing. This last event was frequently not held on Sunday morning.

This pattern of worship came into widespread use in the early 16th century, before the Anglican church was formed. But because so many of the early Anabaptist leaders were martyred, it had no theological spokesman. The difficulties it confronted concern order and dignity, and how the reality of God transfers over from one's personal life to the corporate life. Karl Barth, a reformed theologian, is helpful in describing the issue in a way commensurate with the Anabaptist vision.

So there are three patterns for worship, each with a different emphasis. There is certainly a blending among them. It is not uncommon in Anglican services to have strong preaching; nor is it uncommon in Presbyterian services to have testimonies, tongues-speaking, and other spontaneous praise; nor in Anabaptist meetings to have biblical preaching and the Lord's Supper. But as a norm, as a continual week-by-week pattern, we might hold up these three forms as unique and as useful paradigms to help us think about worship.

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Robert Ives is senior pastor of the Grantham, Pa. Church.

## Worship is a verb . . .

*continued from page 3*

help me to focus on your beauty and holiness.

The time passes much more quickly when there are interesting things to daydream about.

### *Sleep*

I am so alert this morning because of the great night of sleep that I had.

It's warm and quiet, and these pews are so comfortable. I'm so glad I voted to have them padded. They're so restful, and I had a rough week. Just a little sleep during the sermon is all I need.

How do these verbs, these action words, fit with your concept of *daily* worship? of *weekly* corporate wor-

ship? Will you make your worship more active by practicing it daily? by active and alert participation weekly? God commands us to worship. Let's all be obedient to him and begin to grow in worshipping him in *spirit*, that is, with our thoughts, will and emotions, and in *truth*, not in an artificially contrived 60-minute slot.

Robert Berglund, in his book *A Philosophy of Church Music*, summarizes well when he says, "Worship is never an act of man based upon his own merit with the intention of satisfying his own desires. Worship satisfies God's command first, and then the experience benefits man. One does not worship because one enjoys it or it feels good. One worships God because he alone is worthy, and he expects us to do it." ■

## Some conditions for renewal

In the last year in Central Conference I have observed remarkable renewals in at least three congregations. In each case the congregation was depressed, morale was low, attendance was down, and people were leaving and/or threatening to quit the church. In each case a remarkable turn-around took place that changed the face of the congregation: a new spirit was evident, attendance picked up, morale turned around, and new people began to attend the services.

What happened? What can be discovered upon reflection that provides some keys to renewal? Some common points do seem to emerge. Here are those I observe:

1. The situation had become so bad that it was observable among sensitive people. To people who loved God, it was clear that renewal was needed.

2. The congregation was confronted with the need. Sins of unconcern, spiritual decline, and sloth were addressed in no uncertain terms by evangelists or conference leaders. Lack of support for the program, the pastor, and the work were dealt with in the congregations. Differences among persons were spoken to.

3. The spirit of unconcern was replaced by a spirit of repentance. There was general confession and opening up to God and to one another. A new concern for obedience became evident.

4. A spirit of praise became the way of life among the people of God so that worship services were fresh and exciting. People seemed to express the view, "I want to be in church. I might miss something good if I am not."

Bishop Owen H. Alderfer

# Expressing our wo

When one hears the word “worship,” a variety of images are developed in the mind. Worship is not limited only to a Christian context. However, quite obviously, true worship is God-centered. Personally, I think of worship as the individual and/or the collective human response to the intervention of divine grace. Discussion of worship must always begin with God and then move to man. True worship, which is always more than form or tradition, requires a glimpse of God with his transcendent attributes. Only then can the human heart cry out with integrity, “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” (Psalm 8:1).

In three sermons collected in booklet form and entitled, *Worship: The Missing Jewel of the Evangelical Church*,\* the late A. W. Tozer offers three definitions or aspects of worship which I find helpful.

Tozer says worship means “to feel in the heart. A person that merely goes through the form and doesn’t feel anything is not worshipping.” When we consider Jesus’ command to “love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind,” and many of the biblical examples and com-

mands relating to worship, then we must agree with Tozer.

Tozer also defines worship as expressing in some appropriate manner what you feel. In Nehemiah 8:5-6 we read,

*Ezra opened the book [the Scriptures]. . . the people all stood up. Ezra praised the Lord, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, “Amen! Amen!” Then they bowed down and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.*

Nehemiah indicates several manners of expressing worship. There is standing, lifting hands, saying audible “amens,” and bowing down with faces to the ground. A principle to be learned here is that the appropriate

worship acceptable to God will take many forms depending upon time, setting, or persons.

At the Cumberland Valley Brethren in Christ Church, I encourage our people to worship without a violation of their personality. I wonder about the integrity of the worship of the person who emotionally expresses himself with demonstrations and abandon at sport, cultural, or social events, but who as a matter of practice sits quietly throughout the majority of his or her worship experiences, be they private or public.

Several years ago at a Baltimore Orioles game, I was “nearly killed” by the exuberance of a fan standing on his seat. His seat was directly in front of mine and he was cheering at the top of his lungs while swinging

*Why should I not be  
excited and exuberant,  
at least at times,  
about the greatness of God  
and his grace to me?*

*Ray Bert is senior pastor of the Cumberland Valley Brethren in Christ Church, Dillsburg, Pa.*

# Worship

by Ray Bert



his jacket in circles above his head. At that moment, I thought why should I not be excited and exuberant, at least at times, about the greatness of God and his grace to me.

A wonderful cartoon shows two clergymen in a crowd at a football game. One says to the other, "I hate football, but I love being where people are excited."

The lines in the hymn which speak of worship as "lost in wonder, love, and grace" certainly speaks to me of an appropriate "abandonment" which accompanies at least some of our genuine worship expressions.

Tozer also describes worship as "a humbling but delightful sense of admiring awe and astonished wonder and over-powering love." Recently I led a wedding ceremony for a young couple from our congregation in which they had very meaningful times of corporate worship. The father reported that an unsaved family member came to him and said, "I don't know what it was, but there was a tremendous sense of love here today."

There is a reason why we sense the presence of God during or as a result of worship. It is simply that we were created to worship. That is not to say that worship is automatic, but that when we worship God, by his grace he frequently comes among us with

his beautiful infusion of grace. "The Lord takes delight in his people" (Psalm 149:4).

I grew up attending the Mowersville Church near Roxbury Holiness Camp. Attending camp meeting was part of my life. I have fond memories of much of the worship I experienced there in my early years. It was when I attended my first "Jesus Festival" and experienced the wonderful times of worship, that I felt I had "come home." Now I know what my ultimate purpose is—to worship God.

There is a deep human desire met by worship. I believe the primary reason for the growth God has given the Cumberland Valley Church is our conscious effort to create and encourage a forum for spiritual worship.

Whether worship is formal or informal is not the issue. The issue is whether our efforts at worship constitute a surrendering to God in life-style, attitudes, deliberate acts, and verbal expressions.

My wife Linda and I were privileged to participate in worship one Sunday morning at the Truro Episcopal Church in Fairfax, Va. Three times that morning the 800-seat sanctuary was filled with middle- to upper-class worshipers who often wept as they experienced God's presence. The service included the traditional liturgy as well as the use of

contemporary choruses during Holy Communion.

Worship has much more to do with the leaders' and worshipers' attitudes than the "service style." Although they will take various forms for different individuals or groups, I see the following principles regarding worship in the Scriptures: Worship varies in style. It is both planned and spontaneous. Worship typically involves emotional and physical expressions. It is often loud, and involves both vocal, instrumental, and bodily expression. Worship is both individual and corporate. Often it is aided by direct anointing of the Holy Spirit. Worship is a Christian norm.

May God grant us grace as we learn to more excellently honor "His Majesty," the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me close with these Scriptures which have so often challenged me. "Consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you to pieces, with none to rescue: He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God. . . . Praise the Lord from the earth, . . . young men and maidens, old men and children." (Psalms 50:22-23; 148:7, 12).

*\*Worship: The Missing Jewel of the Evangelical Church, A. W. Tozer, Christian Publication, Inc., Camp Hill, Pa.*



# Worshiping God at Messiah Village

by J. Robert Lehman

The Messiah Village congregation is the oldest congregation in the Brethren in Christ denomination. It is oldest not historically, but oldest in that it is composed of only senior saints.

The form of worship at the Messiah Village Church takes into consideration the special needs and characteristics of the older worshiper. Because of the tightly-structured meal schedule at the Village, our church worship service must also follow a strict time schedule. Our form of worship is rather structured and formal. We must make good use of the time we have for worship. Our worship service includes a number of identifiable segments.

The prelude sets the atmosphere for the worship service.

The introit by the choir brings our hearts to worship and to reflection.

The call to worship helps us to focus on our purpose in coming together. It is led by the worship leader, either responsively or in unison with the congregation.

The invocational prayer invites God to be present with us.

The welcome and announcements are traditionally a part of our structured time. Visitors, often family members, are important to us. Welcoming new residents who may be worshiping with us makes them feel at home.

The first hymn of the service, a hymn of praise, is usually sung with

the congregation seated. Some of our residents find standing difficult, others find standing and singing at the same time very taxing. People in wheelchairs can never stand, and not standing is kind to people with stiff joints and arthritic knees.

The Scripture lesson is read from the King James Version because this text is most familiar to our worshipers.

The pastoral prayer is a time for me as pastor to lead my people in prayer and to pray for my people. Residents who are hospitalized are constantly assured that in public services they are remembered in prayer. Prayers of confession, for traditional Brethren in Christ people, are hard to pray in public. Yet these prayers of confession become especially important in the face of doubt and anxiety as aging people question their value. Prayers of con-

fession help in reaching up to a forgiving and accepting God.

Giving tithes and offerings provides a high moment in our worship time. For people on fixed incomes, our members are remarkable givers. For example, they gave \$5,000 for missions during a mission conference and \$2,500 on two successive Sundays during the missions conference for a total of \$10,000. Our seniors have learned the true joy of worship in giving.

The choir lends an air of worship that is unique. The choir's average age is 79, and the oldest member of the choir is 89. Ten members are above 80. One lady whose eyesight is very poor memorizes her music at home with a magnifying glass. Though the choir might get mixed reviews compared to other choirs, I believe the worshipers listen closely when the choir sings, and I am sure God is listening, too.

After God has listened to our praise, we listen to God. It is easy to preach to the Messiah Village congregation. After serving at Messiah Village for some time, I was asked if I preach differently to this congregation than I would to another one. My response was, "I try not to!" I am sure there are differences in the way we worship, but basically the person inside the changing frame is still a person who needs a message from the Lord.

A. W. Tozer in writing about worship says: "Worship is man's expression of love to God. Worship is admiration of God. Worship is a

Perhaps it is  
because we are  
living on the  
edge of heaven  
that we enjoy  
worshiping so  
much.

*J. Robert Lehman is pastor/chaplain at Messiah Village, Mechanicsburg, Pa.*

feeling of wonder. Worship is falling in love with Christ. Worship should both relax and disturb us.”\*

Once in the middle of the week while I was talking with a worshiper who had been in church on Sunday, the worshiper said, “I am still working on Sunday’s sermon.” I am sure she worshiped in the sense that she was disturbed.

A unique pastoral challenge is present at Messiah Village Chapel. Since the average age of the residents is increasing, the resources from which we draw to enrich our worship is declining. Younger members of our community seek fellowship where there are children, youth, and

families to provide a broader range of fellowship. In addition, some community churches see value in the wisdom and gifts of our people, and seek their help to enrich the community church.

When a new resident is considering whether to fellowship at Messiah Village or elsewhere, I ask them, “When you are unable to go elsewhere to church, what kind of worship experience will you wish to have in the Messiah Village Chapel?” The point is made very clearly. If and when people are forced to be more confined in their movements, they will want to enjoy a worship service—not a devotional, nor vespers, but an

hour of worship. These observations represent something of the pastoral challenge.

At Messiah Village we are sending the saints off to glory. Other pastors are doing the same, but at the Village we are more conscious of it. Perhaps it is because we are living on the edge of heaven that we enjoy worshipping so much. ■

\*“Pulpit Helps,” Vol. 3, No. 9, June 1978, reprinted from *Moody Monthly*, “Art of True Worship,” April 1962.



## General Conference Information

The deadline for registration is past. If you plan to attend General Conference and have somehow overlooked registering, call Paul Hostetler, (717) 697-2634, and give him the information requested on FORM A (deadline June 1). His home number is (717) 766-2621.

If you need transportation from the airport, call Asa Bert, (714) 982-0053, and give him all the information requested on FORM B. The FORM B deadline was also June 1.

Full refunds will be given if cancellations are made to the Convention Director *before June 23*. No refunds after that date except in emergencies. Because of postal delays, please make any cancellations or changes after June 10 by phone.

Registration at Conference (North side of Turner Campus Center) will be on Friday evening, July 1, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., and on Saturday morning from 8:00 to 12:00 noon. All persons, including those in pre-conference sessions, will register for General Conference at the above times. If you are not able to go through the registration line yourself, please have someone do it for you.

The first business session will open on Saturday, July 2, at 1:00 p.m. If you arrive on Saturday, please do so by 10:00 a.m. so that your registration can be completed by noon. *Voting members of Conference will need to attend all business sessions unless excused by the General Secretary or the Moderator.*

You are encouraged to attend an area Brethren in Christ Church on Sunday morning, July 3. If you need transportation, you should request it ahead of time to be assured a ride.

All men, women, and children attending Conference should register on FORM A. And all persons 18 and over, attending day sessions, should pay the registration fee. The only exceptions are those attending evening sessions only.

If your agency desires to be included in the registration process on Friday and Saturday at Conference, please contact the Convention Director.

You will be able to check into your room upon arrival. Go to the Information Booth on the South side of Turner Campus Center. *Those arriving at unusual hours should inform Faye Bert*, Director of Information Services for the General Conference. Call her at her home: (714) 985-9696. From Wednesday afternoon on (June 29) you will be able to call her at Azusa University, (818) 969-3434, Ext. 3032. Faye will arrange to have your key waiting at the Campus Security Office, first floor, Adams Hall.

For more information, check previous issues of the *Evangelical Visitor*, starting with January, or consult the printed program. You can also contact Paul Hostetler, Convention Director, Grantham, PA 17027. Phones: (Office) 717-697-2634; (Home) 717-766-2621. You can leave a recorded message at the home number.

# Canadian Conference celebrates its bicentennial April 15-16

by Sandi Hannigan

Brethren in Christ of all ages and stages in their pilgrimage filled the auditorium of Niagara Christian College to overflowing on April 15 and 16, 1988. Coming from Quebec, Ontario, and Western Canada, brothers and sisters in Christ exchanged warm greetings and shared a sense of eager anticipation of the beginning of the 97th Canadian Conference and the unfolding of the bicentennial celebrations.

The service of reflections was opened with a hearty welcome by Bishop Harvey R. Sider, moderator. Rev. Ken Case, assistant moderator, led in a challenging devotional from Philippians 1, "Together to Celebrate." He noted that our greatest reason for celebrating as Brethren in Christ is the grace that we find in Christ Jesus.

In keeping with the vital role music has played over the years in worship,

Don McNiven led the congregation in a vibrant, 30-minute hymn sing. "God of Our Fathers," followed by other great hymns of our past, were included. There was even opportunity for those who spoke German to "shine" as we sang "Mein Lieber Heiland" ("My Loving Savior"). Some of the singing was a cappella, while other songs were "lined" (very, very slowly, as the "River Brethren" would have done).

Reflections from the past were contrasted with testimonies from new Brethren in Christ. Participants were asked to share why they had come to join the Brethren in Christ. Some of the responses included "meeting the needs of my family," and "reaching out with love and genuine concern."

The production of "Bridges," the bicentennial drama, brought the evening celebrations to a climax. Written by

Frank Wallace, and produced and directed by John Mowat, "Bridges" spanned the gap between the past and the present, interweaving theological developments over the past 50 years. The drama questioned how we have reinterpreted such practices as footwashing and love feasts. It also asked why such practices as prayer veilings and plain clothes have lost their significance. Humorous yet emotionally stirring, the drama provided a beautiful picture of who we were and who we are.

The evening closed with the uniting of voices to sing "Reflections for the Future," the bicentennial hymn written by Don McNiven. Everyone departed to nearby homes, this time leaving in car pools rather than by horse and buggy as the brethren did 200 years ago.

The 97th Canadian Conference began with a colorful processional of banners capturing the bicentennial theme. Dr. E. Morris Sider delivered the conference sermon which focused on the "Historical Messages of the Brethren in Christ." He stressed three elements which have always been an important part of who we are: brotherhood; missions and evangelism; and peace and reconciliation. Throughout the past 200 years, we have made adjustments and changes in our practices, but our principles have remained the same. As we enter the third century of church life, our challenge is to make the historic messages relevant for today.

*The Brethren in Christ in Canada: 200 years of Tradition and Change* was released and autographed by Dr. Sider in connection with the bicentennial celebrations.



Dave Wiebe



First place in the banner contest was Falls View (right), with Wainfleet (left) taking second place

(Photo opposite page) "Bridges" drama cast with Leonard Chester (Conference Secretary) with the cake made for the celebrations.

Sandi Hannigan is associate director of the Board for Congregational Life, and is based in Waterloo, Ont.

Dave Wiebe

Conference business followed the sermon. There was a healthy balance of discussion and debate between the members of the conference body.

Also included in the afternoon business session was an audio-visual presentation capturing key events in Brethren in Christ history, and a communion service. Bishop Emeritus Ernest J. Swalm

led in a moving communion meditation. "How fitting it is for us, brethren, to engage in a communion service just as our fathers would have done 200 years ago." As he lucidly and eloquently reflected upon Isaiah 53, there was a tremendous sense of the presence of Christ.

The final business session drew to a close in the early evening. Each partici-

pant was stirred with a new vision of what God wants to accomplish through the Brethren in Christ in the next 200 years. Cognizant of who we are and from whence we have come, we move boldly ahead with a vision for spiritual renewal, church growth, strong leadership, and a relevant church. ■

## Reflections on the Bicentennial Conference

### Prophecy or popularity?

The uniqueness of the Brethren in Christ Church throughout its history might be expressed in three words: simplicity, separateness and service. These admirable qualities were in evidence at the Bicentennial presentations during the 97th annual Canadian Conference. They are a three-fold cord providing strength and security, and demonstrate a heartfelt application of the teachings of Jesus in a vital brotherhood that dares to be different.

This commitment to the scriptural ideals of piety and obedience, deemed impractical by most, has given the Brethren in Christ Church a prophetic ministry in the past. Though small in number, we have exercised an influence far beyond our size by expressing biblical holiness. The ministry of Bishop E. J. Swalm at this Conference was a strong reminder of the quiet impact of the Brethren in Christ on the government, the community, and the church.

The past quarter century has brought a distinct and deliberate change of direction, as the goals and methods of mainstream Christianity have been embraced.

The new focus on church growth, again stressed as the vision for the future, has diminished these distinctives, and altered the nature of our ministry. It has never been possible to be prophetic and popular. Any serious call to righteousness has been answered with stares and stones. In this on-going shift of focus, are we forgetting the high calling of our fathers to walk in righteousness and peace, even if walking alone?

As the darkness and decadence of our society increases, who will have this vision, who will take their place? The challenge of this third century is to blend our prophetic voice and our evangelistic vision so that we do not become another community vestige of the church. — Gordon Gooderham, pastor of the Springvale congregation, Hagersville, Ont.

### Lessons from the drama

On Friday evening, the theatrical presentation "Bridges" was more than a simple rehearsing of the practices and convictions of the Brethren in Christ in Canada over the last two centuries.

Three generations of Brethren in Christ believers were represented on stage. As they spoke together—the older ones disturbed at the seemingly worldly attitudes of the younger, and the younger ones feeling aeons away from the cherished experiences of their elder counterparts—I was struck by two things.

First, it is not enough for one generation to try to carry on the traditions of their predecessors. Rather, each generation and each person needs to come to know God in a living and saving way through Christ. Secondly, we need to go beyond the outside appearances to understand how God worked in and through the lives of those who have gone before us and to learn from them and to apply their wisdom to our contemporary setting.

For me, the high point of the Conference came after lunch on Saturday when we shared in the Lord's supper together. With much business still to be completed in the Conference agenda, this hour was a time to worship Christ and to be reminded of his gift of life to us through his broken body. Brother E. J. Swalm, bishop emeritus of the Cana-

dian Conference, spoke to us out of his many years of knowing God's love and faithfulness. Through his words, our attention was once again focused on the cross. As I sat and listened, I prayed expressing my commitment to serve the Lord Jesus throughout the years of life that he would give to me.

For this American citizen who has spent the last seven years living in Quebec and who came to the Brethren in Christ after college from a Lutheran background, it was a privilege to be a part of this bicentennial meeting of the Canadian Conference. —*David Miller, pastor of the Communion Chretienne Nouvelle Vie, Quebec.*

### Reminded of what the church is doing

Meeting at Canadian Conference is always a highlight of my year; anticipated for weeks ahead and reflected on for several weeks following. As one per-

son in my row put it, "It's almost like a homecoming, even though I didn't go to Niagara Christian College." It is even like a family reunion, as it is one of the few times I see my two brothers from the North. But it is more! At Canadian Conference I am reminded of what the church is doing . . . really, what I am doing.

I hear, read, and often think of the many opportunities to minister to the needs of the world. There are the unchurched in North America and around the world, our native Canadians and their needs, or the great need to educate youth in Christian settings. At Canadian Conference I am reminded of the fact that I have a small part in these ministries—almost as if I sit on all these boards! The reports remind me of what has been accomplished this year and what goals and visions are before us. This openness and accountability of financial statements are reassuring in this day of many abuses.

This historic Conference celebrating our bicentennial certainly was a significant milestone. The bringing together on the communion ministry team of three Canadian bishops brought many memories of fond associations. Also to note the acceptance of "new and young" Brethren in Christ (in the persons of assistant moderators Ken Case and Craig Sider) says we have a vision for future ministry.

As I reflect on the 1988 Canadian Conference, my major criticism is: it wasn't long enough! It is too bad we are so busy. Maybe Conference should be on a long weekend so we could have an extra day. —*Charles D. Byer, pastor of the Fordwich, Ont., congregation.*

### Emphasis on the future

Although the bicentennial celebrations of the Canadian Conference were very rightly geared to an understanding and



*During a meal time at Canadian Conference, Sandi Hannigan interviewed E. J. Swalm, bishop emeritus of the Canadian Conference, who lives in Duntroon, Ont. Highlights of the conversation follow:*

I began attending Canadian Conference when I was 10 years old, although my parents took me as a baby, of course. I've probably attended around 65 conferences, I suppose.

There certainly have been a lot of changes! Of course, the crowd is much larger. Business moves much more quickly. Years ago, business was passed without motions. Our debate in the past would become quite bitter at times. We would say silly things. Today we are much more polished in our discussion.

We speak with honesty, but we don't say so many silly things.

Another change relates to the type of business that we discuss. Now we talk about Christian education, church planting, and all kinds of social concerns. Of course, our budgets have increased to reflect all of these new areas of ministry that have come into focus.

Our associations have broadened to include other groups. I think that our participation with Mennonite Central Committee, Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, National Association of Evangelicals (in the U.S.), and Mennonite World Conference, to name a few, have been very positive. We are better for these associations.

We are becoming more historically-minded. We also have much more history than we did years ago! The audio-

## *E. J. Swalm comments on changes in the Brethren in Christ Church*

visual presentation recounting the past 200 years was an excellent reminder of our heritage.

There have been theological shifts as well. In earlier days we were not Wesleyan holiness. Around 1910 we accepted the Wesleyan holiness position. Unfortunately, some carried this to an extreme which was not biblical. Fortunately, that extreme type of teaching has faded out. We now have men like Luke Keefer Jr. who teach holiness, but not in extremes. I believe that the holiness teaching of today is much more Bible-centered.

I guess another theological change is the number of Calvinists that we have. It seems that we have about five times as many Calvinists as we did 20 years ago. I must admit that this theological change worries me a little.

appreciation of our past, the real emphasis was on how to apply these principles for an effective ministry to our own and future generations.

In his conference sermon, Dr. E. Morris Sider, pointed out four principles which have always been basic to Brethren in Christ life and thought, even through changing methods. These are brotherhood, evangelism, reconciliation, and relevancy (i.e., the desire to express our faith in a way which is meaningful to any given culture).

One of the wholesome changes brought into focus for me at the conference was our deepening awareness of worldliness as a spiritual rather than a physical phenomenon. Indeed, it is safe to penetrate an evil world when we have put on the whole armor of God! —Miss Dorothy Sherk, *Westheights congregation, Kitchener, Ont.*

## Sponsors needed for international visitors

Mennonite Central Committee is seeking hosts and sponsors for the International Visitor Exchange Program (IVEP).

This year about 95 young people from 28 different countries are expected to arrive for a one-year stay in the United States or Canada. Host families are needed to provide a home for visitors; sponsors are needed to provide work experience.

Work placements are needed for a wide variety of vocations including: a brick layer, printer, bank tellers, electronic technicians, landscapers, farmers, people with interest in computers, a

seamstress, florists, and greenhouse workers. Other participants would like jobs in the art field, in libraries, in mechanics shops, offices, travel agencies, schools, and laboratories. Two participants are trained pastors who would like internships with a church.

IVEP, a program begun in 1950, annually brings visitors from Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Europe. These visitors help sponsors learn about their various cultures and backgrounds.

For more information contact: MCC, Box M, Akron, PA 17501; or MCC Canada, 134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB, R3T 5K9.

## Canadian Board for Congregational Life meets at Mount Carmel

by Doris Webster

Mount Carmel . . . the Old Testament, where Elijah called on God's power to prove that the Lord is God. Mount Carmel . . . Niagara Falls, Ont., where the Canadian Conference Board for Congregational Life (BCL) met for a 24-hour retreat to depend on God's power to evaluate, refresh, and renew!

The monastery, with its lovely old buildings and spacious grounds, comfortable, homey rooms, and fine meals, provided ideal surroundings for the board members to concentrate on the tasks at hand in a relaxed, quiet atmosphere. Under director Sandi Hannigan's planning, we arrived Friday evening, wondering if this group from varied areas and different churches could commune and work together.

Terry Armstrong got the group reacquainted; he "drew" us together and soon had everyone comfortable and

laughing in a game of "Pictionary." Ruth-Ann Wideman led us in a concert of prayer. We prayed not only for one another and our work, but also for missions. We also spent time expressing thankfulness for God's grace.

The next morning, Sandi led us in a devotional on renewal. Then, under the leadership of chairman Don McNiven, we began evaluating the BCL. We found our structure to be serving us well in our purposes of offering, developing, and promoting spiritual life and growth in local congregations. We also examined the role of board members and found our board to be a diverse group with many resources. The resignation of Isabelle Seburn after five years of service was accepted. We affirmed the contribution of each board member and encouraged one another to do our parts, so that our board will be "fully functioning."

We discussed the need to be visionary people, not just maintainers. Martha Lockwood, youth committee chairperson, had us share our "dreams" for more resources for the disabled, child care, youth, and family/marriage. Our greatest "dream" would be for congregations

to fully utilize the BCL ministries so that Christian faith could be integrated into our whole lifestyle.

Our treasurer, Ken Case, had us take a look at more immediate plans. We set some new policies in motion for a Christian education committee, a possible quizzing committee to assist quiz master Aubrey Hawton, and extending the youth interaction committee to include a parent of youth. A worship and music committee is being established, chaired by John Tute. Another task ahead will be to make sure that each church in the Canadian Conference be assigned a board contact member to enhance communication between BCL and local congregations.

Mount Carmel with Elijah saw God triumph over idols and false prophets of Baal. The people turned their hearts back to God and rejoiced. We at the Mount Carmel Retreat recommitted the Canadian Conference Board for Congregational Life to going forth to build up the body of Christ. It is our hope that the time was profitably spent so we can better serve the church and honor God in our efforts.

*Doris Webster is Christian education director at Covenant Brethren in Christ Church in Penetang, Ont., and is a member of the Canadian Conference BCL.*

# Can God no longer afford

# North American missionaries?



by Wade T. Coggins

Some people are asking the question, "In light of the growing body of believers around the world, is it time to find alternatives to sending North Americans as missionaries?"

An avalanche of books and articles are pressing such an argument. Their appeals are emotional, but often poorly informed. This so-called "revolution" may turn out to be a perversion of missions and the demise of the missionary vision in North American churches.

One of the most common arguments is that of money. This argument holds that it is now too expensive to send North Americans into missionary work. The money should be used to send people from other nations to replace the North Americans, because you can send more non-Americans for the same amount of money.

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*Dr. Wade T. Coggins is Executive Director of the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association, which serves 90 member agencies fielding more than 13,800 missionaries, 140 countries.*

It is indeed time for traditional missions and North American churches to look at appropriate ways to form new partnerships with the family of believers worldwide. It is time to encourage the formation of missionary movements in nations where the church has been established.

The implication, however, is that this should be done simply by transferring the money which now supports American and Canadian missionaries to Christian workers in other nations. This notion is erroneous and very dangerous for the church in North America and for the recipients. Proponents may deny this implication of their appeals, but great numbers of North Americans are hearing it that way.

There are some significant factors in this important discussion of the cost of North American missionaries.

In some of the recent books and articles, one gets the distinct impression that God can no longer afford North American missionaries. Why is this argument made? Because the

cost of supporting a missionary family may equal the median income of an American household—\$29,458. The missionary living allowance is generally not nearly that amount, but adding in travel and work funds, it will surpass that amount in some countries. With the weaker dollar, one missionary family's support might even require, in some situations, the income of two American families. Thus it could take the tithe of 10 or in an extreme case even 20 families to support a missionary. This brings the horrified comment, "It is too expensive to send North Americans into missions!"

Should these statistics disqualify North Americans from missionary work? I wonder if the first American missionaries were able to serve on the median income of one or two American households of their day!

A grave concern about this philosophy is its impact on the *missionary vision*. If the North American church begins to give only its money—and not its sons and daughters—to missions, the missionary vision will be

dead in a generation or less. Substituting money for flesh and blood involvement is a failed policy. Some mainline churches tried it a generation ago under the name "moratorium" on missions. Many such churches today do not know what missions signify. They think "missions" is a notion that belongs in the last century.

The fact is, the missionary vision is kept alive by biblical teaching strongly reinforced by the network of missionaries and their supporters. Relatives of missionaries, prayer partners, financial supporters, involved churches, and others in the network keep the challenge before the North American community of believers. From this reservoir, missionaries and their support arise. It is also here that representatives of overseas enterprises present their needs and find backing for their causes.

It is very short-sighted on the part of some to suggest dropping support for these "expensive" North American missionaries in order to support a certain number of "cheaper" workers. If the missionary vision is destroyed, there will not be support for either.

There is also the matter of *obedience*. I cannot conceive that God has suddenly decided to exempt young American and Canadian Christians from the obligation of the

Great Commission. If the Great Commission applies to our youth, how can we talk of not supporting them? Such mass disobedience would herald the end of an effective church. Surrogate missionaries will not meet the scriptural obligation.

It is hard to imagine how *impoverished* the North American church would be if people decided not to support our youth as missionaries any longer. Sending dollars to substitute missionaries would create a misconception that we can fulfill our obligation to the Great Commission with money alone. This would reinforce a dangerous materialism already present in our society. Perhaps some parents who are concerned about violence, kidnapping, and other hazards would feel relieved to have the missionary obligation lifted. But a leanness of soul would result, and the North American church would become more isolated from the world Christian family.

I also believe that failing to send our youth would be a *loss to the world body of believers*. American and Canadian missionaries are serving the world body with many important gifts and skills. Young North American Christians will continue to bring to the ministry some outstanding gifts.

Certainly, North American Christians should begin to look for opportunities to form partnerships with the growing worldwide church, but it is self-defeating to propose this be done by withdrawing support from existing missionaries. These and more are needed. The argument should be that in addition to maintaining and increasing the missionary effort, appropriate ways should be found to support reliable and effective efforts of emerging missions. In providing this support, donors should exercise the same kind of prudence they would exercise in supporting missionaries and missionary causes from North America.

*Accountability*. It is astounding to see people (who would require accountability by their own countrymen) respond to an emotional appeal by a person from overseas, without having any assurance of his

or her accountability. To assume that deceit and misrepresentation are limited to North Americans is naive.

*Avoid creating dependency*. It is easy to forget the deadliness of dependency on the human spirit. Money given in a way that creates dependency will be counterproductive in the long run. Arrangements must be made which will not isolate the recipient from normal lines of accountability to his peers.

Care must also be exercised that believers in other lands not be made to feel that their contributions to missions are unneeded or insignificant. They too are under the Great Commission, and will be robbed of blessing if they do not participate.

Some strong and effective partnerships already exist. Traditional missions have agreements with national church bodies to help in key areas, which may include church planting, missions, medical work, education or media.

The Missions Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship is building a worldwide network of missionary connections among traditional missions and emerging missions. This will provide opportunities to join hands in a great new effort to evangelize the world. Each part of the body has gifts to bring to the task.

Those who solicit involvement of North American Christians in the support of Third World Missions should argue their case on its merits, without calling for diminishing support for existing missionary efforts. In fact, such appeals would do well to reinforce the missionary vision now existing and call for expansion to greater partnership with emerging missions and the church around the world.

New arrangements must be developed which create neither dependency nor paternalism. A common vision of the lost world must bring believers of all nations together in effective new efforts to fulfill the Great Commission. ■

If the church in North America begins to give only its money—and not its sons and daughters—to missions, the missionary vision will be dead in a generation or less.



# God at work in our world

## God uses experiences

*Nancy Peterman—Bogota, Columbia*

Our third week here, Debbie Patrick and I accepted the opportunity of teaching two weeks of basic English to teenagers at a downtown school. This came as a request from one of the Geigers' neighbors. The school, as it turned out, was a special institute for "problem kids," so we had some challenging discipline situations as well as the challenge of the teaching itself. In spite of that, I really enjoyed the students and learned new things from them. The rationale for our involvement with this new teaching opportunity had been partly to "feel out" our interest in later teaching English in our community as an outreach tool. However, instead of developing a strong leaning for or against English teaching, I came out with a strong desire to work with young people. That is a real need in our *barrio*. So starting this month, Debbie and I will be organizing weekly Christian activities for the youth here.

## God is in control

*Emily Chase—Pucallpa, Peru*

*Emily and Gene, on sabbatical from Messiah College, are giving a year of service to Wycliffe Bible Translators using clerical and data processing skills.*

Because we've been here six months, I am now in the process of the second round of semi-annual reports to the Peruvian government on the work of Wycliffe in this country . . . the same reports that marked my first weeks in the office. But now the names of translators match the faces of people I've met, and thus, the work is more meaningful. For example, Harriet Fields works with the Matsés tribe. She spent Christmas in our home. Just yesterday she sent a radio message from the tribe: her leading health worker, a Matsés believer, was unconscious after a severe attack of nausea and diarrhea. Could the doctor be flown out to set up an intravenous saline system before the man died of dehydration?

Dr. Hayden, visiting for a month, packed his bags and was on the way to

the hangar when our flight office called. The jungle where Harriet works was "socked in" by rain. Our little planes could not get the doctor in safely. With a heavy heart, Dr. Hayden walked back into his office. I happened to be his next patient. Together we prayed for Harriet, the sick man, the pilots, and the weather. Only God was in control of each of those elements. Only God could put the pieces together in a meaningful way. If the health worker lived and the weather cleared, the doctor would fly out in the morning.

This incident will go into the next semi-annual report to the government. It will only be one of many events during the six-month period. It is an incident that may hardly be noticed by the officials reading the report. To Harriet it has caused great stress, time away from translation of Scripture, time to rely on the Lord when her human resources were exhausted. For me, as I work on the reports, each incident is an opportunity to praise God for all he is doing through Wycliffe in Peru.

P.S. (the next day)—The health worker lived through the night, despite collapsed veins. He was flown out of the jungle and is now in stable condition. Praise God!

## God blesses "ordinary" gifts

*Mark Sider—Mangochi, Malawi*

Jane has a group of young "disciples" who visit her regularly to listen to her play the guitar and sing. They enjoy immensely the action songs she does with them. Since none of them knows English, she has one of the older girls read from a book of Bible stories written in Chichewa (the national language).

I have started playing soccer with a group of fellows in the village. They love football, as it is called here. The first day they found out I have a ball, there was a crowd of 60 to 70 guys at the soccer field. Of course, only 22 could play at any one time, but the rest did not mind "spectating," especially when they saw my antics on the field. I was able to share with them through an interpreter why we are here.

## God gives new perspective

*Steve Newcomer—Matopo Secondary School, Zimbabwe*

We recognize the protection with which we have been blessed. The incident in November at New Adams Farm in which 16 Christian workers were killed was tragic and shocking. This farm is located about 10 kilometers (6 miles) east of Matopo. Everyone was a bit unsettled and nervous for a few days, but that quickly passed. I had the opportunity to attend the memorial service in Bulawayo. It was wonderful to see how an incident which would normally have been viewed as totally negative was dealt with in a positive fashion. The Christian belief that there are worse things than death and dying was one theme. As long as each of us is in the will of God, any situation in which we find ourselves is under God's control. "Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom" (Psalm 145:3).

## God needs willing servants

*Esther Kalambo, wife of Macha Hospital (Zambia) administrator Mukuwa Kalambo, serves part time as a chaplain in the hospital. Letters from her indicate how God is working in her life and using her.*

"Pastor Mbewe went for a month's holiday to Malawi. I got very busy, because I had to go back for chapel services in the afternoon. Pastor [Atlee] Hershberger helped me a lot with the services; he preached and I interpreted. Many times we left the hospital after 5 p.m., for there were people to counsel. I feel very happy indeed with what I am doing. It may look like a simple job, but it is so important. As I talk with patients, I meet a lot of questions, many of which I myself have also. I pray in myself, 'Dear God, help me, because I don't know where my answers are coming from.' Then I try to answer, and the people listen attentively."

She relates another incident from a few months previous: "A North American visitor was to stay with us for a week. One morning, as I was washing up, a negative thought came to my mind: I was worried about whether she would like our food, as I compared it to

the kinds of food and drink she was probably accustomed to. As soon as I ended that conversation in my heart, I was 100 percent sure it was wrong. A song came to me which says, 'Jesus, my Jesus, if you know him, don't refuse him . . . If he is not there, I will be like a boat without an anchor.' I have discovered that, in this life, if I am to be happy and content, I must serve people—anybody—according to God's will. I know I have not *reached* the goal, and I shall never be like Jesus, but I ask him to use me every day."

## God builds his church

*Alvin Book—Cagua, Venezuela*

January 31 was an exciting day for our congregation here in Cagua. It was our first baptism. We had told the people to be here by 1:30 in the afternoon to drive to the river about 15 miles away. Maria was here before 1:00. Her reason

for being so early? She wanted to get away from her house before visitors came. She didn't want to be prevented from doing this which she had decided to do.

Let me tell you a bit about those who were baptized. We have requested prayer for *Jorge and Minerva* with whom we began having Bible study early last year. They are from Chile. Her mother is a strong Christian, so evangelicalism isn't new to them. *Andrea*, their 12-year-old daughter, had accepted the Lord as a little girl in Chile, but she wanted to be sure. She reaffirmed her commitment as *Alba* (a seminary student and helper) prayed with her one evening after service.

*Carlos and Norma* have been Christians for about five years, but did not have a church. They began attending here. The first time we met them, she told us they had not been baptized. She was eager for this step in their Christian walk.

*Tarazona*, a lady 65 years old, has been a Christian for quite a number of years. She had been baptized in a Presbyterian church in Caracas, but she wanted baptism by immersion. She is a near neighbor and is very supportive of us and of the work here.

*Maria*, in her 50s, is from Spain. She was saved in her home four years ago but had not been attending church until she began coming here. Her strong faith is an inspiration. Her husband has had a long illness, and she has an invalid daughter. But she doesn't complain as she trudges through the streets of Corinsa, peddling her homemade baked goods.

*Ymayali* has had a Christian background as a child in the Cuatro Caminos Brethren in Christ Church in Cuba. Dedicated grandparents influenced her greatly. These eight form part of our core group. Will you help us pray for them? ■

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# Impressions of Nicaragua

by Marshall Poe

*In March of this year, Marshall Poe travelled for two weeks in Nicaragua where he and his wife Eleanor served as pastoral training couple from 1981 to 1987. The following are four impressions which he recorded on that trip.*

Pastor Agustin Monge was talking about the day in February when the money was devalued. "When all the money we had in the bank was changed into the new currency, our family had only enough for half a week's supply of groceries," he said. "I don't have a secular job, and the church doesn't give us much support. But from that day until the present, we haven't been hungry a day." With his characteristic smile, he added, "We are surviving by the sheer grace of God. The Lord has provided for us with a continual stream of miracles."

It was 7:10 a.m. and I was eating breakfast. Sister Anita, my host's mother and cook for the day, hovered nearby. "On this day, 26 years ago,

my Rafael was just an hour and ten minutes old," she told me with unveiled joy. "I sent him a little gift today, and while it was still very dark this morning, I arose and prayed a special prayer for him."

Later she shared how happy she was that her three sons were following the way of the Lord. "But I'm still burdened for my daughters," she said. "I'm especially concerned for my eldest, whose husband doesn't want her to attend church. I'm happy, though, that the three younger ones are returning to the church of their youth and to the church of their mother. I believe God will answer my prayers for all my children and give me the desire of my heart."

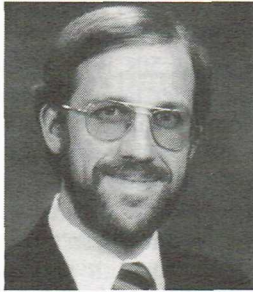
A pastor's wife was talking to me about the difficulties of the present time. "It doesn't matter if I suffer hunger and don't have enough money for decent clothes. Just let me have my sons," she said. Less than a year ago, her eldest, aged 22, was killed in the fighting. While others around her were looking for better times

economically, this was not her main concern. Voicing the feelings of many Nicaraguan mothers, she said, "Let our sons not go to war."

At first I did not recognize the young lady who slipped onto the bench beside me during Sunday school. When I saw her face, I remembered her. Danya and her mother began attending church about two years ago. The two of them used to wander through the markets together, selling their handfuls of trinkets or bags of drinking water. They lived a hand-to-mouth existence. Some would call her mother a "poor soul," and the girl herself was not much better off than a street urchin. I was glad to see they were still in the church. In talking to her, I learned that Danya, after completing sixth grade, had no plans to continue her education. Now she watches the house while her mother sells her wares. Life is still hard. However, during the offering time in Sunday school that morning, I was amazed to see this 13-year-old girl put \$5.00 into the basket. Suddenly my \$10 didn't seem to be such a generous gift anymore. ■

# Putting names and faces together

A brief introduction to some of the speakers at General Conference 1988.



**Lynn Thrush**  
*General Conference Sermon*

Lynn Thrush is a graduate of Messiah College and Asbury Theological Seminary. For the past ten years he has pastored the Fairview Avenue congregation in Waynesboro, Pa. He and his wife Carol are the parents of two sons and two daughters.



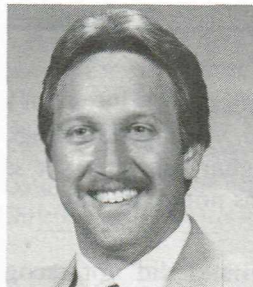
**Sharon Weisser**  
*Tuesday Theme Sermon*

Sharon Weisser, Waynesboro, Pa., served under Brethren in Christ Missions in Zimbabwe from 1965-78. Since then she has taught English and Bible at Shalom Christian Academy. A member of the Montgomery congregation, she has served on several boards and committees in the Allegheny Conference.



**E. V. Hill**  
*Wednesday evening rally*

E. V. Hill pastors the Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles, Calif. He is a member of the board of numerous local and national evangelical organizations. Recently widowed, he has one son and one daughter.



**Ray Bert**  
*Monday Concert of Prayer*

Ray Bert is senior pastor of the Cumberland Valley congregation, Dillsburg, Pa. A 1970 graduate of Messiah College, he began pastoring the congregation in 1968, when it was located at Williams Grove. He and his wife Linda (Hock) are parents of two children.



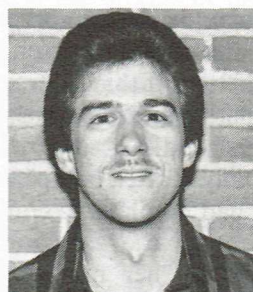
**Jack McLane**  
*Wednesday Praise Service*

Since November 1985, Jack McLane has pastored the Chino (Calif.) congregation. Prior to that, he and his wife Trudy served in a seminary teaching post in Brazil under OMS International. He has pastored in Oregon under the Evangelical Church, Pacific District.



**John and Barbara Day**  
*Conference Prayer Ministry*

John and Barbara Day live in Ridgeway, Ont. John pastors the Riverside congregation. One of Barbara's responsibilities is preparing the 1989 Family Activities Calendar, produced by the Board for Congregational Life and distributed by Evangel Press.



**Dave Hershberger**  
*Monday Concert of Prayer*

A 1983 graduate of Messiah College, Dave is Campus Ministries Associate and a Resident Director at Messiah. For the past several years he has been active in Concerts of Prayer in the central Pennsylvania area.



**Lester Fretz**  
*Thursday Theme Sermon*

Lester and Mary Fretz live in Vineland, Ont. Active in numerous ways at both the regional and denominational levels, Lester is Director of Stewardship for the Canadian Conference.



**J. Ralph Wenger**  
*Communion and Footwashing*

Ralph Wenger is bishop of the Pacific Regional Conference. He and his wife Joan live in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.

# Church News

## Allegheny Conference

The **Air Hill** congregation, Chambersburg, Pa., helped with an Apr. 23 bake sale by the Gospel Tide Hour Auxiliary. The Jordan Valley Quartet ministered on May 15, Rally Day. • The **Antrim** congregation, Chambersburg, planned numerous activities in May for "Family Month." May 21 was "hire a youth day." • The **Big Valley** congregation, Belleville, Pa., held a six-week Sunday school enlargement campaign, "Celebrate Sunday School." • Thirty-four new members were received recently by the **Carlisle**, Pa., congregation. Nine were baptized. Leslie Harvel, director of San Francisco's Heaven's Gate Women's Shelter, and Eber Dourte visited and spoke on Apr. 17.

The Golden Age Fellowship of the **Cedar Grove** congregation, Mifflintown, Pa., viewed Morris and Janet Sherk's slides of China and Russia on Apr. 1. On Apr. 17, Mike Martinelli presented his youth seminar, "Should a Christian Rock?" • The **Vicksburg Quartet** shared an evening of gospel music recently with the **Cedar Heights** congregation, Mill Hall, Pa. • On Apr. 2, the **Chambersburg**, Pa., congregation had an all-you-can-eat pancake fund raiser breakfast for the Space Cub and Whirlybird Clubs. • A memorial service for Salome Ndlovu was held Mar. 19 at the **Clarence Center**, N.Y., church. A dinner was served for nearly 100 relatives and friends from Zimbabwe, the U.S., and Canada.

Mark Slagenweit held revival meetings, Apr. 11-17, for the **Clear Creek** congregation, Everett, Pa. The film "The Winnable War" was shown May 1. • The Jacobs Brothers were in concert Apr. 3 at the **Cumberland Valley** church, Dillsburg, Pa. Apr. 24 was "College Sunday" with speaker Dr. John Bernbaum, and a variety of activities featuring college students. • Rev. William Holtry of the **Blue Mountain** congregation, Roxbury, Pa., spoke Apr. 24 in a pastoral exchange at the **Fairview Ave.** church, Waynesboro, Pa. • The **Five Forks** congregation, Waynesboro, viewed the MCC film "Journeys of Hope" on Apr. 20.

A support group for those going through divorce or separation met for 10 weeks in the spring at the **Grantham**, Pa., church. On Apr. 17, the Peace and Social Justice Committee presented "Peace Pilgrimage II—stories about peacemaking

by ordinary people." • The **Green Grove** congregation, Spring Mills, Pa., sponsored a children's Easter party on Apr. 9. • Bruce Urey, York Haven, Pa., led Apr. 17-20 revival services for the **Hanover**, Pa., congregation. • Ken Letner spoke on Apr. 18 to the Christian education workers of the **Hollowell** congregation, Waynesboro, Pa. • The **Locust Grove** congregation, York, Pa., received \$720 for the building fund in honor of Clarence and Elsie Kaltreider's 50th anniversary. The Love Bunch from the **Refton**, Pa., church performed for the congregation on Apr. 24, "Reach Out Sunday."

Couples from the **Marsh Creek** congregation, Howard, Pa., enjoyed a taffy pull on Apr. 16. • Three young men were baptized and five persons united with the **Martinsburg**, Pa., congregation recently. On Apr. 4, Louella Smith spoke to the women's fellowship on wife and child abuse. • A spiritual gifts survey was taken on Apr. 17 by members of the **Mechanicsburg**, Pa., congregation. • Holly Cookerly, R.N., spoke Apr. 14 to the ladies of **Morning Hour Chapel**, East Berlin, Pa., on health concerns of women. • Apr. 24 was Rally Day for the **Mt. Rock** congregation, Shippensburg, Pa. Adin and Anell Herndon of the **Redland Valley** congregation, York Haven, Pa., sang.

"Kids Praise 4" was presented Apr. 23, 24 by the Kid's Choir of the **New Guilford** congregation, Chambersburg, Pa. The congregation planned to start a 12-couple shepherding program in June. • Richard Lehman spoke in revival services Apr. 27-May 1 at the **Roseglen** church, Duncannon, Pa. • The **GRADE** Andrew training videos were viewed in April by the **Van Lear** congregation, Williamsport, Md. • Andrew Slagenweit served as interim pastor of the **West Shore** congregation, Enola, Pa., until the arrival of pastoral couple, Jim and Deb Sollenberger.

## Atlantic Conference

Pete and Mim Stern recently shared with the **Bradford County Fellowship**, Ulster, Pa., about their work with international students in Philadelphia. • The Western Mennonite High School Choir sang Apr. 10 for the **Community Bible Chapel**, Sarasota, Fla. Members George and

man, John and Esther Spurrier, and Ira and Miriam Stern, spoke of how God's glory is being declared in the nations where they have worked. Andrea Hoke and George Payne promoted summer missions opportunities for young people.

Janet Peifer led the group in a prayer time for Brethren in Christ Missions. An offering of \$1,200 was given for the MPF project, "Advancing with Christ in Malawi."

Officers for next year are Janet Peifer, president; Miriam Stern, vice president; Shari Steager, secretary; Kathryn Funk, treasurer. —*Esther Hess, secretary.* ■

Esther Mohler celebrated 50 years of marriage on Apr. 3. The reception, hosted by the family, was held at the Crown House Restaurant. The Mohlers were married in Massillon, Ohio, by Rev. W. J. Myers. The couple has one son and three daughters.



The **Cross Roads** congregation, Mt. Joy, Pa., enjoyed a retreat at Kenbrook, Apr. 15-17. Saturday morning growth group leaders were Ken Letner, Marlin Zook, John Reitz, and John Young. • The youth of the **Elizabethtown**, Pa., church spent several retreat and lock-in days in April considering the subject, "feeling lonely." Pastor Allison preached a "back to basics" series this spring on faith, repentance, renewal, readiness, and following. • The men of **Fellowship Chapel**, Bronx, N.Y., had a retreat, Apr. 8-9, at Camp Deerpark. A video, "Angel in Ebony," the saga of Sammy Morris, was shown Apr. 10. • The **Free Grace** congregation, Millersburg, Pa., viewed the Pippert film series, "Out of the Saltshaker and Into the World," in April and May. Joy Jacobs was mother-daughter banquet speaker on May 3.

David Carlson, departing with his wife Flo for a new assignment with Trans World Radio, preached in the Apr. 10 service of the **Holden Park** congregation, Orlando, Fla. • Marion Sisco did a monologue on the Apostle John at the Easter sunrise service of the **Hummelstown**, Pa., congregation. • James and Teri Ernst have accepted the pastorate of the **Lancaster**, Pa., church beginning Aug. 1. Jan Stauffer has resigned as minister of music effective July 1. Apr. 10 was Disabilities Sunday. • On Apr. 17, the focus of the services of the **Manor** congregation, Mountville, Pa., was peace and non-resistance.

The Messiah College gospel team Spirit Sound gave a concert Apr. 17 to the **Mastersonville** congregation, Manheim, Pa. Paul Hostetler preached on Apr. 24. • Marshall Poe spoke Apr. 10 to the **Mt. Pleasant** congregation, Mt. Joy, Pa. • Sam Dalton, Englewood, Colo., led revival services Apr., 24-29 at the **Palmyra**, Pa., church. Seven new members were received recently. • Fred and Grace Holland spoke to the **Pequea** congregation, Lancaster, Pa., on Apr. 17. • A spiritual life series with Charles Norman took place Apr. 24-27 at the **Refton**, Pa., church. Amy DeGraff, Messiah College senior, recently spoke about her January term travels in Israel.

Eugene Heidler was evangelist at the **Shenks** church, Elizabethtown, Pa., Apr. 13-17. • Tammy Paul presented her research paper on rock music during the Apr. 17 evening service of the **Silverdale**, Pa., congregation. • The youth play "You Were There" was presented Apr. 10 at the **Skyline View** church, Harrisburg, Pa. The congregation had a series of Sunday evening workshops Apr.

## Atlantic Conference MPF meets

The 29th annual meeting of the Atlantic Conference Missions Prayer Fellowship was held April 23 at the Refton Brethren in Christ Church. Leoda Buckwalter chaired the meeting which had as its theme, "Declare His Glory Among the Nations." Keynote speaker was Donald R. Zook, executive director of Brethren in Christ World Missions. Alice Dourte, Glenn and Faithe Hoff-

# Camp Freedom Report

Camp meeting at Camp Freedom, St. Petersburg, Fla., was held Jan. 28-Feb. 7. Evangelists were Luke Keefer, Sr., and Harold Schmul; musicians were Ben and Sue Colburn and family. Speaking on behalf of Evangelical Bible Missions was Gerald Bustin. Fred and Grace

24-May 29 on interpersonal relationships. • After Easter, the **Stowe**, Pa., congregation participated in the Chapel of the Air 50-Day Adventure. • The **Summit View** congregation, New Holland, Pa., had three days of evangelism training, Apr. 8-10, with Rev. Robert Sheetz of the Manor church.

## Canadian Conference

The Kingdom Seekers from Niagara Christian College sang in the Apr. 10 morning service of the **Cheapside** congregation, Nanticoke, Ont. E. Morris Sider spoke on Apr. 17. • This spring, the **Falls View** congregation, Niagara Falls, Ont., participated in a 40-Day Bibles for Brazil project through World Home Bible League. Gordon and Susie Gilmore spoke on Apr. 10. • The **Heise Hill** congregation, Gormley, Ont., had Apr. 5 meeting to discuss their expansion feasibility study. The prison ministry Gospel Echoes Team visited the morning service on Apr. 17. • The **Houghton** congregation Sunday school, Langton, Ont., viewed the Dobson "Turn Your Heart Toward Home" film series in April and May. • "The Glory of Easter" was Pastor Sider's Mar. 20-Apr. 3 message series for the **Massey Place** congregation, Saskatoon, Sask.



Rev. and Mrs. James Sider celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on Apr. 2. Rev. and Mrs. Sider were married Apr. 9, 1938, and served as pastoral couple at Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in Stevensville, Niagara Falls, Rosebank, Cross Roads, Oak Ridges, and Ayr. Rev. Sider is now home pastor at Fairview Mennonite Home where the celebration was held. The Siders have 5 children, Muriel Albrecht, Ronald J., Miriam Cober, Lucile Groh, and Tennyson; and 14 grandchildren.

The **Rosebank** congregation, Petersburg, Ont., recently hosted a Bicentennial Bible Conference with guest E. Morris Sider. • The cantata "Love and Kindness" was presented Easter evening by the **Sherkston**, Ont., choir. Dale Shaw spoke in

Holland represented Brethren in Christ Missions. Other help was given by the Bakers in children's programming, and Rhoda Lehman, head cook.

After many years of service, Simon A. Lehman resigned as director. John Rosenberry and Earl J. Lehman will assume directorship. In other news, the camp now reports being free from debt. Next year's camp dates are Jan. 25-Feb. 4. Evangelists will be Bedsaul Agee and Dr. James Keaton. ■

the Apr. 17 service. • On Apr. 20, the **Springvale** congregation, Hagersville, Ont., viewed a film about Hudson Taylor. Roy and Harvey Sider spoke in Apr. 24 services.

Rev. Laurie Morris was Easter sunrise service speaker for the **Wainfleet**, Ont., congregation. The congregation hosted a church music seminar on Apr. 30. • Nine persons were baptized recently at the **Welland**, Ont., church. Ruth and Eber Dourte led a family life renewal emphasis on Apr. 23-27. • The **Westheights** congregation, Kitchener, Ont., bid farewell to the Moses Munsaka family at an Apr. 22 potluck supper. The Munsakas planned to leave for Zambia in mid-June.

## Central Conference

The **Amherst** congregation, Massillon, Ohio, planned a "Problems of Parenting" seminar for Apr. 17. The Habitat for Humanity film, "Building Miracles," was viewed Apr. 22. • The **Bethel** congregation, Merrill, Mich., had a Good Friday service with speaker Larry Dillard of the Bible Missionary Church. • The **Carland-Zion** congregation, Owosso, Mich., has begun a children's worship service two Sundays a month. • On the evening of Apr. 24, the **Christian Union** congregation, Garrett, Ind., boxed "love packages" for missionaries in Zambia with such items as pudding, jello, Kraft dinners, dry soup mix, tuna, and Koolaid.

Slides of their recent Asian ministry were shown Apr. 10 by Grace and Fred Holland to the **Fairview** congregation, Englewood, Ohio. The congregation enjoyed a "guess who's coming to dinner" on Apr. 17. • Sam Hollingsworth was renewal speaker Apr. 17-20 for the **Highland** congregation, West Milton, Ohio. The spring quarter missions project was personal supplies for Heaven's Gate Shelter, San Francisco. • On Apr. 16, the **Lakeview** church, Goodrich, Mich., had a "How to Care For and Keep People" seminar. There was a "mystery dinner" on Apr. 30. • The **Leonard**, Mich., church hosted a regional ladies retreat May 7 on the theme, "Becoming Brilliant Jewels."

On Apr. 3, the pre-teen choir of the **Mooretown** congregation, Sandusky, Mich., put on a puppet play called "His Fleece Was as White as Snow." The congregation reports that their building fund goal has been surpassed in cash and pledges. • The **Nappanee**, Ind., congregation recently viewed the six-session video series, "A Shepherd's Guide to Caring and Keeping." • Paul Meduri and pianist Ronnie Williams led a Maundy Thursday community service for the **Peace Chapel** congregation, Ravenna, Ohio. • "Empty House, Full House" was the theme for the Apr. 24 mother-daughter banquet of the **Pleasant Hill**, Ohio, congregation with speaker Matha Schleinitz.

On Apr. 6, the youth of the **Sippo-Valley** congregation, Massillon, Ohio, began the Josh McDowell video series "Why Wait?" • The McDowell series was also hosted by the **Union Grove** congregation, New Paris, Ind., in May. • The **Western Hills** congregation, Cincinnati, Ohio, had a lay evangelism workshop on Apr. 9. Three persons received baptism in the Apr. 17 service. • Bishop and Mrs. Owen Alderfer returned from their trip to Africa on May 7.

## Midwest Conference

The couples Sunday school class of the **Bethany** congregation, Thomas, Okla., sponsored a breakfast on Apr. 24 to raise money for a color TV on which the church can view videos. VBS was slated for May 30-June 3. • The **Mound Park** congregation, Dallas Center, Iowa, recently had a dedication service for 12 young children. Four people were baptized. • The youth of the **Mt. View** congregation, Colorado Springs, Colo., had a hoagie sale Apr. 16 to offset costs of summer camp. The Gospel Echoes Team, Goshen, Ind., gave a program on Apr. 27. • The **Oak Park** congregation, Des Moines, Iowa, recently hosted the Mound Park congregation for a fellowship meal and footwashing and communion service.

The **Oklahoma City**, Okla., congregation recently dedicated a "new" used organ—the first tangible purchase as they look forward to their new building. A new Sunday school class has begun for young adults. • The **Rosebank** congregation, Hope, Ks., hosted the Apr. 16 South Dickinson Co. Men's Retreat with speaker Oles Cullers on "A Wealth that Lasts." • The **Zion** congregation, Abilene, Ks., had individual and family communion on Easter evening. Persons came, shared in communion, prayer, and worship with Pastor Bowell, and left as they wished. The congregation had a quilting bee and taffy pull with the children in the club program on Apr. 20.

## Pacific Conference

Pictorial directory photos were taken Apr. 16-18 for the **Moreno Community** congregation, Moreno Valley, Calif. On Apr. 14, a new study began, "What the Cults Believe." • Recording artist Ken Withing sang in the Apr. 10 morning worship of the **Ontario**, Calif., congregation. • The video "His Land"—stories, songs, and scenes from the Holy Land—was shown Easter evening to the **Pacific Highway** congregation, Salem, Ore. A surprise food shower was held Apr. 17 for Pastor and Mrs. Hostetler. • The **Redwood Country** congregation, Grants Pass, Ore., recently sponsored a "mystery banquet" as a fundraiser for a local couple. • A senior citizens choir sang in the Apr. 10 service of the **Upland**, Calif., church. The Bel Canto ladies choir from Azusa Pacific University sang Apr. 17.

## More Easter Season Programs:

**Cedar Grove**, Pa.—"I Know that My Redeemer Liveth." **Chambersburg**, Pa.—"Proclaim Him Lord." **Fairview Ave.**, Pa.—"Glory to Glory." **Five Forks**, Pa.—"Come See the Place." **Mechanicsburg**, Pa.—"Eyes Upon the Cross." **Cross Roads**, Pa.—"The Day He Wore My Crown" and "Sonrise." **Elizabethtown**, Pa.—"Jesus is Alive!" **Fairland**, Pa.—"Come, Celebrate Easter." **Manor**, Pa.—"Messiah." **Amherst**, Ohio—"The Life of Barabbas." **Highland**, Ohio—"Because He Lives." **Upland**, Calif.—"The Victor."

# For the Record

## Births

**Beiler:** Eric James, Mar. 20; Dale and Barbara Beiler, Refton congregation, Pa.

**Bowman:** Ethan Dale, Mar. 29; Margaret and Dale Bowman, Mt. Rock congregation, Pa.

**Bowman:** Ryan Keith, Mar. 12; Keith and Sheryl (Hoover) Bowman, Highland congregation, Ohio.

**Brown:** Lindsey Katherine, Mar. 29; Allen and Liz (Sperry) Brown, Chambersburg congregation, Pa.

**Burkholder:** Daniel Kermit, Apr. 6; Shela and

Kermit Burkholder, Mt. Rock congregation, Pa.

**Campbell:** Blaire Leigh, Mar. 29; Paul and Tammara Campbell, Refton congregation, Pa.

**Cober:** Jessica Lucille, Mar. 17; Phil and Lenore Cober, Rosebank/Stayner congregations, Ont.

**Gamber:** Keith Wilson, Apr. 15; Tim and Cindy Gamber, Antrim congregation, Pa.

**Herr:** Bradly Donovan, Apr. 6; Robert and Joann (Kready) Herr, Manor congregation, Pa.

**Herr:** Matthew Benjamin, Mar. 27; Thomas and Kathy Herr, Pequea congregation, Pa.

**Hoover:** Ryan Lewis, Mar. 25; Randy and Sue Hoover, Cumberland Valley congregation, Pa.

**Horning:** Johanna Lynne, Mar. 14; John and Jane Horning, Cross Roads congregation, Pa.

**Jobs:** Tyler Jeffery, Apr. 6; Jeff and Cherie (Rogers) Jobs, Highland congregation, Ohio.

**Lehman:** Grant Joseph, Apr. 20; Gregg and Marilyn (White) Lehman, Manor congregation, Pa.

**Leubner:** Paul Stephen, Jr., Mar. 8; Paul and Lisa Leubner, Clarence Center congregation, N.Y.

**Mellinger:** Jordan Eugene, Apr. 4; Eugene and Judy Mellinger, Cross Roads congregation, Pa.

**Musser:** Nathan Lynn, Jr., Mar. 17; Nathan and Linda Musser, Cumberland Valley congregation, Pa.

**Orndorff:** Jordan Lee, Mar. 25; Brad and Sue Orndorff, Peace Light congregation, Pa.

**Petta:** Donavon Leon, Dec. 11, 1987; Damon

## Money Matters

# How church ministries have touched my life

by Kevin Longenecker

The Brethren in Christ Church has been helpful to me since I was a young boy. Growing up first in Kansas, I received much excellent training and saw many good models in the Church.

I remember three things from the Zion congregation: (1) memorizing Luke 2 for a Christmas play, (2) delighting in hearing the old hymns of the church sung by those dear brothers and sisters, and (3) watching some of the men doze off during the sermon in the long, hot days of harvest. I think they really were grateful that the Lord created the seventh day for rest and worship.

In my later childhood my parents moved to Colorado Springs and became part of a church planting in 1961 at the Mountain View Brethren in Christ Church. I was again encouraged and given simple but good teaching, and as I grew I was given leadership responsibility.

My first job as a teen was Assistant Sunday School Superintendent. I'll never forget my first Sunday school promotion campaign. I'm not sure it worked, but I sure did. I learned a lot, and the people were supportive.

Later in my life I served as a youth pastor in Chino, Calif., with Charles

Rickel, and then with Bob Bushnell while attending Azusa Pacific University. Afterwards I attended Western Evangelical Seminary in Oregon. While there I received much-needed financial assistance from the Student Scholarship Fund, and emotional and spiritual support from Arthur and Lona Climenhaga.

After seminary we were assigned to Open Bible Community Church in Sunnymead, Calif. We began pastoring under mission support. On our first Sunday in August 1976 we had 24 people; by December we had eight. Ten years later we saw a strong, growing church from which six couples were called out to enter ministry, five within the Brethren in Christ Church. There were also about 200 kids a day in the Daycare Preschool at Open Bible.

Then in 1986 we felt called to enter a church planting again. Supported by the Board for Evangelism and Church Planting and the Midwest Conference, we began a new church in Colorado Springs. By way of a land purchase by the Midwest Conference and a loan from Jacob Engle Foundation, we are now in our own 3,600 square foot facility.

We are a body of believers, growing strong.

and Peggy (Kern) Petta, Upland congregation, Calif.

**Rehm:** Aaron Joseph, Mar. 23; Ralph and Sandy Rehm, Cumberland Valley congregation, Pa.

**Rickel:** Amber Jean, Mar. 30; Merrill and Darlene Rickel, Bethany congregation, Okla.

**Shellenberger:** Joshua Mark, Apr. 8; John and Rose Shellenberger, Cedar Grove congregation, Pa.

**Shetter:** Benjamin Dubbs, Mar. 21; Carol and Harold Shetter, Mt. Rock congregation, Pa.

**Summy:** Heather Christine, Mar. 26; Scott and Lynda (Getz) Summy, Manor congregation, Pa.

**Teno:** Kristine Ann, Apr. 14; Robert and Darlene Teno, Clarence Center congregation, N.Y.

**Watkin:** Steffini Brooke, Apr. 8; John and Karen Watkin, Holden Park congregation, Fla.

**Wise:** Jennifer Lauren, Mar. 4; Ron and Cheryl (McKee) Wise, New Guilford congregation, Pa.

**Wolgemuth:** Richard James, Apr. 13; Andy and Ginger Wolgemuth, Mechanicsburg congregation, Pa.

## Weddings

**Brodhecker-Souders:** Stephanie Ann, daughter of William and Louise Souders, Carlisle, Pa., and Douglas Jay, son of James and Vera Brodhecker, Lancaster, Pa., Apr. 16, at the Manor Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John Hawbaker officiating.

**Bundy-Johnson:** Rae Denise, daughter of Ray W. and Shirley M. Johnson, Reading, Pa., and John LaVerne, son of Rev. John L. and Mary J. Bundy, Mill Hall, Pa., Apr. 16, at the Unitarian/Universalist Church, Reading, with Rev. Daryl R. Bundy officiating.

**Catlin-Byer:** Jan Lanette, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Curtis O. Byer, and Terry Lee, son of Mrs. Elizabeth Catlin and the late Floyd Catlin, Oct. 10, in the Upland Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John M. Snook and Rev. Kent N. Byer officiating.

**Henley-Byer:** Kaye Lavonne, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Curtis O. Byer, and Todd Douglas, son of Mrs. Barbara Henley and the late Douglas Henley, June 28, 1987, in the Upland Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John M. Snook and Rev. Kent N. Byer officiating.

**Hock-Murphy:** Candace Anne, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Leo Murphy, Jr., Chambersburg, Pa., and Lyle Ralph, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Hock, Howard, Pa., Apr. 23, in the Mt. Rock Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. William Baublitz officiating.

**Leedy-Ebersole:** Sonya, daughter of Nelson and Elsie Ebersole, Annville, Pa., and Kathleen Ebersole, Jonestown, Pa.; and Richard L., Jr., son of Doris and Robert Hilbert, Jonestown, and Richard and Rose Leedy, Sr., Ono, Pa., Mar. 12, at the Fairland Brethren in Christ Church.

**Leshner-Leshner:** Maxine Emily, daughter of Marvin and Mary Leshner, Chambersburg, Pa., and Dean Wenger, son of Ira and Naomi Leshner, Marion, Pa., Apr. 9, at the Chambersburg Brethren in Christ Church.

**Maulfair-McMullen:** Robin Linn, daughter of Edward and Ruth McMullen, Elizabethtown,

Pa., and Joel Dean, son of Ronald and Joanne Maulfair, Cleona, Pa., Apr. 16, at Conoy Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Kenneth L. Engle officiating.

**Moore-Callahan:** Monica, daughter of John and Ruth Callahan, Goodrich, Mich., and James Moore, son of Steve and Sandra Whiting, Goodrich, Mar. 26, at Lakeview Community Church.

## Obituaries

**Book:** Jacob Ryan Book, born Jan. 2, 1985, died on Mar. 31. He is survived by his parents, James and Elyn Book; a brother, Abram John; grandparents, George and Joyce Conner, and Paul and Evelyn Book; and great-grandparents, Lyle and Ellen Gehlsen. A memorial service was held at Lakeview Community Church, Goodrich, Mich., with Rev. Ronald Smith and Rev. Ron Slabaugh officiating. The funeral was held at the Morrison, Ill., Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Darrell Smucker and Rev. Ronald Smith officiating. Interment was in Grove Hill Cemetery, Morrison. Memorials have been established at Paxton Street Home, Camp Lakeview, and Lakeview Community Church.

**Boyer:** Clarence W. Boyer, born Apr. 2, 1899, died Apr. 9. Surviving are his wife, Ethel Marie (French); 3 sons, William E., Ernest L., and Paul S.; a sister, Rozella Herr; 10 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren. Clarence was a member of the Messiah Village Church where services were held with Rev. Robert Lehman officiating. Further services were held at the Dayton Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Henry G. Chafin officiating. Interment was in the Fairview cemetery, Englewood, Ohio.

### Tribute

Clarence William Boyer—better known as “C. W.”—spent most of his life in the Dayton, Ohio area. His involvement in the Brethren in Christ church spanned almost 70 years. He was employed in 1920 at the E. V. Publishing House (now Evangel Press), Nappanee, Ind., and served as secretary/treasurer from 1922-27. He served as secretary for the church in local, state, and national areas, and became known as “Mr. Secretary.” If he did not serve as secretary of a committee, he would still be seen with notebook and pen in hand.

Areas of service included: General Sunday School Board and its successor, the Board of Christian Education; Committee on Sunday Schools; Committee of Indocination; Curriculum Committee; Committee on Social and Economic Relations; Committee for the Restudy of Church Board and Committee Effectiveness; Board of Administration; and Church Review and Study Committee. He was a trustee of Upland College and a deacon in the Dayton churches. C. W. knew the virtue of deliberation.

C. W. loved children; not only his own three sons, but the many children of Dayton. As Sunday school superintendent, he would help to bring in many to the Sunday school at 601 Taylor Street. His illustrated stories for children were most outstanding. He had a keen insight to human needs and a deep commitment for lost souls. You could feel his tenderness. Clarence was an outstanding churchman. He also carried a concern that the church would pursue biblical principles. He practiced them and adapted his philosophy to meet life problems with consistency.

Clarence was a prolific writer for the *Evangelical*

*Visitor*. During his years at Messiah Village, he continued his writing and also served the Village Church as one of the Sunday school teachers.

C. W., you have finished your course. Your footprints have been made. We now bid farewell to a Christian statesman, an innovator, a pillar in the church, a very loving husband, and a father of three distinguished sons. Farewell.

Paul W. McBeth

**Brubaker:** Ruth V. Brubaker, born Aug. 11, 1915, the daughter of Christian H. and Mae Eshelman Moyer, died Apr. 15. She was preceded in death in 1973 by her husband Paul H. Brubaker. Surviving are three children, Clarence, Lois, and Faye; five grandchildren; two brothers, Jacob E. and Claude E.; and a sister, Esther. She was a member of the Shenks Community Brethren in Christ Church, Elizabethtown, Pa., where services were held with Rev. James J. Artz officiating. Interment was in Shenks cemetery.

**Climenhaga:** Mary H. Climenhaga, born Mar. 4, 1892, died Apr. 11. The widow of Rev. John A. Climenhaga, she is survived by three stepsons, Arthur M., David E., and Joel R.; a stepdaughter, Leoda M.; a brother, Henry M. Hess; nine step-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews. Mary was a member of the Messiah Village Brethren in Christ Church where services were held with Rev. Robert Lehman officiating. Interment was in Grantham Memorial Park, Grantham, Pa.

**Dourte:** Monroe S. Dourte, 99, the son of John F. and Harriet Sharpe Dourte, died Apr. 6. He was preceded in death in 1975 by his wife, Susie G. (Brubaker). Surviving are 4 daughters, Ruth Musser, Mary Martin, Grace Wolgemuth, and Esther Snyder; 4 sons, Allon B., Eber B., Jesse B., and Victor B.; 35 grandchildren; 85 great-grandchildren; 20 great-great-grandchildren; and a brother, John S. Monroe was a member of the Mastersonville Brethren in Christ Church and had resided at Messiah Village, Mechanicsburg, Pa., for 10 years. He was elected to the ministry in 1936 and served the Mastersonville and Manheim churches. The funeral service was held at the Mastersonville Brethren in Christ Church with Monroe's four sons officiating. Interment was in the Mastersonville cemetery.

### Tribute

Rev. Monroe Dourte had a well-integrated concept of life. Of importance were his family, his secular work, and his service to the Lord. How well he integrated the three can be seen by the way his family has been brought up in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord” and has served significantly in the life of the church. In the years that I have served at Messiah Village, Monroe recounted to me how he would entrust the work at home to children and mother while he was away doing service for the church. The devotion father and mother had for each other and the Lord set a model for the children.

When notes were introduced in the music of the church, Rev. Dourte conducted singing schools. For 20 years, he served as superintendent of the Manheim Sunday school. For some time he also served as chairman of the Pennsylvania Home Mission Board. True to the Great Commission, he began in his Jerusalem and permitted God to use his gifts in areas that mark the life of the church—music, Christian education, and evangelism. His



ministry broadened to General Conference interests as he served as Secretary of the General Conference Program Committee, and a member of the Ministerial and Examining Board.

Upon hearing of his death, several persons commented to me about Brother Dourte. One young lady remembered Rev. and Mrs. Dourte as a true pastoral couple when she lost her mother. From another, "He was warm and understanding of young people. His home was always open to the young friends of his family." Henry Ginder remarked, "He always cared for people and reached across generational lines. He enjoyed humor and engaged in holy mischief." The Messiah Village staff said he was easy to care for, and uncomplaining. They enjoyed his harmonica-playing. He had a calm inner peace and a devoted family. They enjoyed his recitation of poetry and were impressed with his ability to quote Scripture from memory.

As I penned this tribute, a verse came to me that highlighted the life of our brother. It speaks of Jesus: "In him was life, and that life was the light of men." Let it not seem sacrilegious to say that in Brother Dourte was life—the life of Christ as ministered by the Spirit—and that life was the light of men. Praise the Lord for our memory of his life so well lived in Christ.

J. Robert Lehman  
Pastor/Chaplain  
Messiah Village

**Ebersole:** Marlin W. Ebersole, 68, died Mar. 23. Surviving are his wife, Mary; three sons, Byron, Philip, and Eric; a brother, Roy; and three sisters, Emma Stonesifer, Esther Shetterly, and Anna Myrl Long. Marlin was a member of the Fairland Brethren in Christ Church and retired from Wengert's Dairy. The funeral was held at the Fairland church with Rev. Vernon Bosserman officiating. Interment was in the Fairland Cemetery, Cleona, Pa.

**Engle:** Minnie G. Engle, born Sept. 1, 1896, the daughter of Samuel and Mary Olive Lady, died Mar. 23. She was preceded in death by her husband, Earl W. Engle, in 1966. Surviving are 5 children; Mahlon, Doris Mason, Maxine Heise, Earl, and Kathryn Engle; a brother, Samuel Lady; a sister, Eunice Wingert; 15 grandchildren; and 22 great-grandchildren. Minnie had been a resident of Messiah Village since 1983. The funeral was held at the Abilene, Ks., Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Scott Miles and Rev. Dale W. Engle officiating. Interment was in Union Cemetery.

**Hershey:** Engle Noah Hershey, born Apr. 29, 1890, the son of Reuben E. and Anna Hershey, died Jan. 16. In 1917, he married Jessie B. Williams in Abilene, Ks. Preceding him in death were his wife, in 1971, and three children. He is survived by one daughter, France E. Good; three grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; and two sisters, Lois H. Guengerich, and Elizabeth H. Frey. He was a retired farmer and stockman and a member of the Brethren in Christ Church in Abilene. Services were held at First Baptist Church, Centerview, Mo., with Rev. Larry Glover and Rev. Charles R. Good officiating. Interment was in Centerview Cemetery.

**Hershock:** Nelson Wesley Hershock, born Apr. 22, 1925, the son of Christian and Katie (Gerlach) Hershock, died Apr. 15. Surviving are his wife, Arlene (Stoner); two sons, Bruce and Brian E.; a daughter, Beth Metzger; and four grandchildren. Nelson had been employed at Turkey Hill Dairy Inc., Conestoga, Pa., and was a member of the Manor Brethren in Christ Church where the fu-

neral service was held with Rev. Robert L. Sheetz officiating. Interment was in Millersville Mennonite Cemetery, Mountville, Pa.

**Hoffman:** Terry L. Hoffman, born Sept. 20, 1956, died Mar. 9. Surviving are his parents, David J. and Rachel Hoffman; a brother, David; and his maternal grandmother. Terry had been a resident of the Anita Lynne Home for the Retarded. The funeral was held at the Grove Funeral Home, Waynesboro, Pa., with Rev. Robert G. Byers, and Rev. Paul McBeth officiating. Interment was in Green Hill Cemetery, Waynesboro.

**Kelly:** Mervin Kelly, born May 18, 1947, died Oct. 27, 1987. He is survived by his mother, Marion; his stepfather, Ben Handy; brothers, Alvin and Walter; a sister, Jean Hoover; and nieces and nephews. Preceding him in death were his father, George; and his brother, Gilbert. Mervin was a member of the Bridlewood Brethren in Christ Church, Agincourt, Ont., where services were held with Rev. John P. Walter and Rev. Leonard Chester. Cremation followed.

**Lauver:** Jay A. Lauver, born July 10, 1911, the son of Solomon and Phoebe (Shirk) Lauver, died Mar. 28. Surviving are his wife, Viola (Book); two sons, Gary A. and Keith E.; and two sisters, Emma Engle and Carrie Stern. Jay was a member of the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, McAlisterville, Pa. Services were held at the Yiesley Funeral Home with Rev. Wilbur W. Benner and Rev. Donald P. Edwards officiating. Interment was in Union Cemetery, Mifflintown, Pa.

**Milford:** Leonard Milford, born July 17, 1914, died Mar. 24. Surviving are a daughter; two grandchildren; one great-granddaughter; and a sister. He was a member of the Maytown, Pa., Brethren in Christ Church. Funeral services were held at James Heilig Funeral Home, Mt. Joy, with Rev. Herbert Hoover officiating, and at the Hughes Funeral Home, Forty Fort, Pa., with Rev. William Lang officiating. Interment was in the Hanover Green Cemetery, Luzerne Co., Pa.

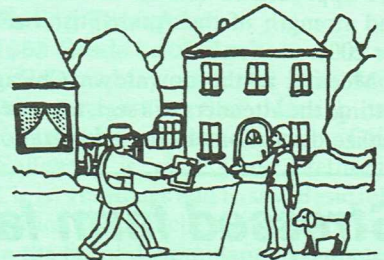
**Minor:** Josephine Minor, 66, died Mar. 15. She was preceded in death by her husband, Adrian, two years ago. Surviving are a son, Adrian; 3 daughters, Doreen, Audrey, and Sharon; 13 grandchildren; and 6 great-grandchildren. The funeral service was held at the Bertie Brethren in Christ Church, Stevensville, Ont., with Rev. Arthur Heise officiating. Interment was in the Bertie cemetery.

**O'Brien:** Donald J. O'Brien, born Jan. 25, 1925, died Mar. 22. He is survived by his wife, Rose; a son, Donald F.; two daughters, Vicky O'Brien and Marjorie Davis; one stepson; and one stepdaughter. Funeral services were conducted at the Whiting Funeral Chapel, Breckenridge, Mich., with Rev. Bedsaul Agee officiating. Interment was in Wheeler Cemetery.

**Turner:** Mildred Turner, born Mar. 4, 1916, died Mar. 10. She is survived by one son, John Vlaine; a brother, John Hall; and one sister, Evelyn Charman. The funeral service was held at the Houghton Brethren in Christ Church, Langton, Ont., with Rev. John Sider and Rev. Brian Lofthouse officiating. Interment was in Lynedoch Cemetery.

**Witmer:** Curtis Lynn Witmer, born Dec. 29, 1962, died Apr. 1. Surviving are his parents, John and Norma Jean Witmer; two brothers, Sidney and Todd; and his maternal grandmother, Margaret Izer. The funeral was held at the Zimmerman Funeral Home, Greencastle, Pa., with Rev. Devon Bontrager and Rev. Robert G. Byers officiating. Interment was in Cedar Hill Cemetery.

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# Anabaptist Roundtable set for Chicago in November

An Anabaptist Roundtable will be held Nov. 18-20 at the Bismarck Hotel in Chicago, Ill. The roundtable is designed to incorporate the pluralism represented in the Anabaptist tradition in a serious, "think-tank" exercise. The intent is to engage a prophetic/interpretive approach to discern the character and strength of the Anabaptist vision for 2001.

Meeting in the downtown Chicago setting, the attenders will seek to contextualize discussions in the urbanization-

transforming life in the "global village." Attention will not focus primarily on issues or problems, but on strengths and emphases that make for effective ministry. The roundtable will enable creative dialogue between professional, business, academic, pastoral, youth and senior, male and female, cross-cultural worlds, etc., taking the whole body seriously. As one of the planning committee notes, we will prayerfully meet in the presence of the Lord to discover what the Spirit says to the Church.

The planning committee is Don Shafer, chairman; Neil Janzen, secretary; Myron Augsburg, Dale Brown, Louis Campbell, LeRoy Kennel, Chris Michael, Ruth Naylor, and Roland Reimer. The meeting is first by invitation, then open to all as space permits. Each participant will pay his/her own way, with more details disclosed at a later date. For more information, contact Neil Janzen, 402-280 Smith Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3C 1K2.

## Stressed farm families meet at Kansas camp for renewal, healing

Fifty financially stressed farm families from across Kansas and northwest Missouri met at Camp Mennoscah for a Rural Retreat and Renewal event, April 9 and 10.

Some came for a retreat from the daily struggles of trying to save a family farm; others had lost farms and are finding a new life and employment. Some enjoy new work; others are not enjoying these changes.

Several said they are beginning to see the "light at the end of the tunnel" because of recent good livestock prices. For others, these good prices are depress-

ing because they cannot borrow money to enjoy the price surge and so are left to cope with financial distress.

Retreat participants, from under age 30 to over 70, spent time visiting and encouraging each other. They celebrated their common vocation with hope, laughter, and tears—often the start of a necessary healing process, some said.

Many said they realize that, even though God may not remove problems, God grants them inner peace to accept things as they are. "Pain has taught many to care," observe Winifred and Lester Ewy, MCC U.S. Farm Issues

coordinators. "Change has taught many to live."

Charlie Griffin, Kansas FACTS (Farmers Assistance Counseling and Training Service) Family Life counselor, reminded the group that financial stress is the number one cause of marriage failure. He cautioned them to be sensitive to their spouse's feelings. You need to honestly tell your mate about your feelings as well. Stress *can* be the glue to cement a marriage, he added.

Other speakers at the retreat were Stan Ward, director of Kansas FACTS; Wilmer Heisey, MCC U.S. executive secretary; and Richard Ratzlaff, director of Camp Mennoscah.

## New MCC film/video on refugees available

*Journeys of Hope*, a new film and video from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), tells the story of refugees around the world.

Refugees in Central America, Southeast Asia, and North America tell of their lives. They talk about fleeing their homes, describe life in holding camps where many wait to return to their own countries or resettle in a third country, and tell of life in these new countries.

The film also shows how church people in North America can assist refugees. It describes people who have opened their homes and congregations to help refugees adjust to new countries and those who have helped them through the sometimes complex legal process of immigration.

*Journeys of Hope* is 28 minutes long and available in 16mm color film or VHS video cassette format. It is available for free loan. Contact any MCC office or write MCC Resource Library, Box M, Akron, PA 17501.

## Faithe Zercher receives MMHS scholarship

Mennonite Mental Health Services (MMHS) has awarded six scholarships as part of its Elmer Ediger Memorial Scholarship program, including one to Faithe Zercher, Harrisburg, Pa. Each recipient will receive a scholarship for the 1988-89 school year for studies in a mental health-related field.

The Ediger scholarship program is designed to encourage students from Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches to pursue education in the field of mental health and developmental disabilities. The scholarship program is named for Elmer Ediger, one of the founders of MMHS and the director of Prairie View in Newton, Kans., from 1957 until his death in 1983.

MMHS established the scholarship

fund in 1968 and uses earnings of endowed funds to provide yearly scholarships. This year's winners were chosen from 52 candidates.

Faithe is studying social work at Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa., and wants to continue working with chronically mentally ill patients in community rehabilitation programs. She is a graduate of Messiah College, Grantham, Pa., and Harrisburg Area Community College. She and her husband Wendell are members of the Harrisburg Brethren in Christ Church.

One of the three alternates chosen to receive scholarships if those selected are unable to use them is Marcy Kraybill, who is studying psychology at Messiah College. A member of the Elizabethtown (Pa.) Mennonite Church, her goal is becoming a counselor with adolescents.

MMHS annually solicits applicants for its scholarships. The 1989-90 scholarship program will be announced this fall.

# Messiah College News

## Messiah Summer Missions tops ambitious goal

Through a skip-a-meal, a volleyball marathon, and a free-will offering collected in chapel, the Messiah College Summer Missions Committee has surpassed its goal of raising \$7,500. Approximately 30 Messiah students will share the money this summer as they participate in a variety of missions projects. The total is approximately three times the amount raised last year. This year, counting about 15 students who will receive full financial support from their church and/or other sources, a new high of 45 Messiah students are expecting to be missionaries.

"There's an increased awareness of missions reflected in the record number that are going out this summer and in the support they're receiving" said Messiah's Eldon Fry, director of campus ministries. "The faculty really seems to be getting behind students this year—without their generosity, all these projects would not have been possible. Several organizations, such as Earthkeepers, have also given to summer missions. It's nice to see the community work together in this way."

Collectively, Messiah summer missionaries are serving with many agencies in many countries. Some of the more common groups are Operation Mobilization, Continental Ministries, and Tony Campolo's Philadelphia-based EAPE (Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education).

The student missionaries are most often musicians, tutors, athletes or laborers in construction. Dave Barrett, Grantham, Pa. (Grantham congregation), a sophomore civil engineering major this fall, will be playing lead trombone with the Continental Singers on a tour of Poland, West Germany, and Holland. He was to leave for rehearsals in California starting June 6. As prayer requests, he noted that he was raising his own support, and asked that the churches will be open to what he and the team have to say.

Another Brethren in Christ student, J. Andrew Miller, a junior history major this fall from Dillsburg, Pa. (Morning

Hour Chapel), has already completed a 2½-week assignment working with inner-city children in Philadelphia's EAPE program.

In addition to the support raised by Messiah Summer Missions, the college has chosen four students to receive a summer missions grant of \$2,000 each, to be applied to the students' accounts for the fall semester. The grants were initiated in 1986 as the result of a generous gift from a missions-minded friend of Messiah.

Recipients, who without the grant would probably be unable to forgo a summer job for the mission field, must keep a daily journal, write a summary report and share their experiences with the College community in the fall.

These students, all seniors this fall, are Zoltan Kiraly, computer science major from Passaic, N.J., working with Teen Missions International in Hungary; Ruth Miner, family studies major from Cumberland, Me., working with Pioneers/PACE Teams in Papua, New Guinea; Timothy Roussos, humanities major from Woodburn, Ind., working with SEND International in Japan; and Karen Schindler, nursing major from Fairport, N.Y., working with HCJB World Radio Missionary Fellowship in Quito, Ecuador.

## Brethren in Christ, Anabaptist fellowships held

More than 80 Brethren in Christ students, faculty, and staff members came together for a fun evening April 28 in the college dining room. Coordinated by graduating senior Tom Mann and sophomore Steve Allison (both Elizabethtown congregation), the program included a slide show of faculty shown in their earlier years. Some of the slides were so dated, it was difficult to identify the faculty member shown and write his or her name down on the quiz sheet!

The evening also consisted of an ice cream social and entertainment by the Singing Men from Messiah Village. Messiah College President D. Ray Hostetter was among the guest ensemble members.

Earlier in the spring semester, a series of three Anabaptist fellowships were coordinated by Messiah graduates Dave Zercher, minister of pastoral care at Grantham Church, and Jay McDermond, assistant professor of New Testament. The first event was a screening of "The Weight," which challenged about 35 students in attendance on the issue of

the military draft and non-resistance. On March 29, a love feast featuring a small meal, communion service, and footwashing was held. Finally Dr. Morris Sider, college archivist, shared the stories behind several artifacts from the Archives he displayed to a gathering in the Grantham church library, April 21.

## Parting Thoughts: 1988 Grads Look Back

Several May graduates have shared their thoughts on their Messiah experience with the Communications Office. Following is what some Brethren in Christ graduates had to say. Basic information about each student can be found in the list of denomination graduates.

*Sheila Anderson* says that the best thing about Messiah was "the many close friends, among them international students, who have given me a unique opportunity to learn more about other cultures. I think that we will remain lifelong friends." She adds that "many teachers here have been excellent role models for me."

*For Beth Garis*, "the best thing about attending Messiah has been the breadth and depth of things I've had a chance to learn; I wish I had four more years to take all the rest of the classes I wanted to take. I've also been challenged in my thinking patterns and assumptions by just about every professor who has taught one of my classes. I feel much more well-rounded and independent than I did four years ago."

According to *Tom Mann*, "Messiah provided a Christian community in which to grow intellectually, socially, and spiritually. One of the most important things to me has been the relationships I've established with fellow students and professors."

"Through the general education courses, Messiah College has introduced me to varied world views, and challenged me to be authentic as I choose my views," says *Hanford Ndlovu*. He is a chemistry major and says that "these studies have been great devotional times as I have been allowed to learn more about the greatest chemist there ever was or ever will be."

*Janet Peifer* says that "my greater exposure to the Brethren in Christ Church through the professors who are affiliated with the Brethren in Christ Church has been and should continue to prove invaluable for my further ministry in the denomination." She adds that

*continued on page 26*

# Onesimus

Onesimus, a timid warrior for the gospel of Jesus Christ. To Paul, my wise counselor and brave soldier for our Lord. Peace and courage to you in the grace of our Father, who has called us to freedom from fear.

My people are afraid of so many things, Paul, and I must admit that in my meditation recently I have seen fear deeply rooted in my own heart as well. Many of my brothers in our churches here are afraid to admit that they are afraid. Many of my sisters are more free to admit that they do have fears, but there is a strange complacency about actually getting through them and on to the freedom that I believe Jesus won for us on the cross. Other brothers are willing to address the issue of fear in themselves, but then they, too, stop there. Paul, what do you tell people about fear?

I sense that for many, there is a misunderstanding of our brother John's words, "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear" (1 John

4:18). Paul, this cannot mean that we refuse to acknowledge fear when it is within us. We can't just drop the issue of our fear. It simply doesn't work. We better stop pretending that we have perfect love and that we can cast out fear. I can't drive it out of me or of my brethren. My words and logic do not drive it out. Only perfect love, the love of Jesus himself, does this. We must continually experience this love. Over and over we must admit fear, face it, and come again to him who is Love. We must not pretend that we can go around fear, only through it. The pretense I am tempted to practice and that I see going on in our churches is monumentally dangerous. Please counsel me on how to combat this, for pretense kills our faith.

Here's how I see it operating in me. I have a pattern of staying quite unconscious when it comes to my fear. Either I don't even begin to understand that I am afraid of something (and so I strike out at those near me for not loving me perfectly), or I admit that I am afraid and expect others to fix the situation so I

don't have to fear any longer. Neither of these things ever happen, so I resort to pushing any fear far away and refusing to recognize it. I may say that I'm trusting God with it, but more times than not, I'm falling into the trap of pretending I can handle fear. I pretend that trusting God is an easy option for me and that now I am no longer afraid. I think it ought to be easy and I ought to no longer be afraid. But it's not, and rather than deal with that, I pretend that what I think ought to be true, *is* true. (What I suspect is actually happening when I try to quickly do away with my fear like this, is that those fears are getting repressed, not redeemed.)

Then out comes an angry word to my friend, or I find myself unable to take the risky steps I might need to in order to spread the gospel. I excuse my lack of involvement in evangelism by thinking and talking about all that I do in my busy schedule. But conversions are not numerous. I am discontent. I wonder whom to blame. I see my brothers and sisters as untrustworthy and I may not

## Messiah College . . .

*continued from page 25*

attending Messiah has been "a challenging opportunity for the finest education available anywhere."

### May 1988 Brethren in Christ graduates of Messiah College

#### Africa:

Heli Kwamanakweenda, Choma, Zambia, business administration  
Lavinia Mlobane, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, home economics  
Hanford Ndlovu, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, chemistry (Bulawayo Central cong.)

#### Canada:

Sheila Cober Anderson, Port Colborne, Ont., behavioral science (Port Colborne cong.)  
Timothy J. H. Day, Ridgeway, Ont., family studies (Riverside Chapel)  
Philip L. Steckley, Ridgeway, Ont., sports medicine, (Sherkston cong.)

#### Maryland:

Shari A. Horst, Hagerstown, social work (Paramount cong.)

#### North Carolina:

S. Michael Sandler, Spring Lake, math (Souderton, Pa., cong.)

#### Ohio:

Winifred S. Brubaker, Arcanum, elementary education (Fairview cong.)

#### Pennsylvania:

Tara L. Boyer, Souderton, health and physical education, (Souderton cong.)  
Elizabeth A. Brandt, Grantham, nursing  
Stephen J. Brandt, Grantham, computer science (Grantham cong.)  
Kevin W. Cassel, Grantham, civil engineering (Grantham cong.)  
Joy D. Ebersole, Mechanicsburg, music education (Mechanicsburg cong.)  
Elizabeth A. Dunham-Garis, Grantham, communication (Grantham cong.)  
Pamela J. Gehman, Annville, computer information systems (Palmyra cong.)  
David A. Griffith, Carlisle, psychology (Dillsburg cong.)  
Betty J. Harter, Grantham, physical education  
Wayne E. Heisey, Elizabethtown, business administration (Elizabethtown cong.)

Kathy Ulery Hoffman, Mount Joy, math (Elizabethtown cong.)

Rebecca S. Kreider, Lancaster, biology (Lancaster cong.)

Layne A. Lebo, Mechanicsburg, Bible and history (Mechanicsburg cong.)

Thomas A. Mann, Elizabethtown, math (Elizabethtown cong.)

Lee Ann Meyers, Greencastle, nursing (Chambersburg cong.)

Susan J. Miller, Lancaster, communication (Manor cong.)

Darlene L. Moyer, Doylestown, nursing  
Janet M. Peifer, Willow Street, religion (Refton cong.)

Carol A. Peterman, Manheim, elementary education (Manheim cong.)

Monica R. Peters, Lock Haven, family studies (Cedar Heights cong.)

Rich W. Stence, Wiconisco, religion (Free Grace cong.)

Timothy L. Stoudnour, Grantham, human resources management (Dillsburg cong.)

J. C. Trussell, Grantham, pre-med (Mechanicsburg cong.)

Rebecca F. Yoder, Willow Street, behavioral science (Pequea cong.)

even know why at this point. They just haven't demonstrated that they will be there to care for me. They haven't done enough to prove their sincerity toward me or the work of the kingdom. I distance myself emotionally from them. I begin to feel isolated and suddenly I'm very afraid that I'm really all alone and unloved. I cry out to God and wonder why I am in such a mess. How could this happen to me?

Paul, I ask for your prayers for myself and for my people. If we will listen when we are afraid, perfect love will sort through fear and find the dark places in our hearts that still need light. If we pretend we are not afraid, we will not see these dark places, but others will know

the sting of them.

So much of the time when I hear someone say, "I'm afraid," the message is really, "Don't contradict me or question me on this one. Don't tread on me!" Without prayerfully considering our fear, we slip into believing that we *are* what we *feel*. We identify our very identities with our feelings. Reality then revolves around our feelings which mask our fears. That is death! My identity, my life "is now hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). Our feelings and fears are real, but they are not us. We can and must observe them and know them, if we are to truly experience the work of our Father's perfect love driving out fear.

We Christians must not hide behind our theology and pretend that we have dealt with these deep issues effortlessly and without a battle. We must engage in the good fight to see God's redemption reach even the dark places of our own hearts where fear eats away at faith. To admit that there is still darkness in us is not to deny the Spirit's work in our lives; indeed, it is to affirm his infinite power, the power of "the true light that gives light to every man" (John 1:9). I await your response, dear friend. May God's holy presence continue to grant you peace in the struggle and light in the darkness.

Onesimus

## Phoebe's Journal

### Connecting belief and behavior

I vividly remember a conversation I had with a congressional aide over an issue on which I wanted the congressman's support. We disagreed heartily, especially over the moral and philosophical underpinnings of my position. At one point near the end of the conversation, the aide in essence said to me, "Well, believe what you want to believe, but then behave the way everyone else does." To that aide, there seemed to be little connection between belief and behavior. She seemed to assume that one can very easily and with little internal discomfort believe one way and act another.

I've thought of that conversation recently and I've listened to Beth's description of some of her friends at school. She went to church (on a Friday evening, no less!) with them a couple times and came home enthusiastic about what she experienced and observed. Their expression of their faith seemed heartfelt, genuine, and open. When I was hesitant about her doing certain things with these friends, she said, "Well, Mom, they go to church, for pity's sake!" And yet it's clear to me from Beth's descriptions of the way they act at school that there is often little carryover from church to everyday life.

Now I don't want to imply that I or my children always behave consistently. And I also don't want to suggest that the church Beth's friends attend is somehow

at fault. (I'm not picking on either the church or the friends, but rather using them to make a point.) Further, I know because adolescents (and adults, too) face heavy pressure to fit in with their peers, they often outwardly act in a way that doesn't match what they would say they believe. I don't think that necessarily means that their faith is not real.

In my experience, however, belief and behavior go hand in hand. What I believe affects what I do. How I act is influenced by what I believe. For me, there is a central, unavoidable connection. I feel schizophrenic at the thought of believing one way and acting another, or having a personal relationship with God that has very little to do with my moral or ethical life.

That central connection is basic to the historic Brethren in Christ understanding of the gospel, which is probably why I reacted as I did to the congressional aide and my daughter's friends. In some ways, it's probably easier to compartmentalize one's life—or, as Beth's friends seem to do, to pray and sing and enjoy the company of fellow Christians at church and then to blend in with the crowd at school (in whatever form "blending in" requires at any given moment).

Compartmentalization avoids legalism, for one thing, because no one decides that certain behaviors are inconsistent with the faith and then legislates for others. In addition, it probably also avoids the kind of excessive self-consciousness about one's behavior that causes one to worry about whether one

is doing the right thing, measuring up to difficult standards, etc. Thirdly, it fits better with American individualism.

The Brethren in Christ have in the past erred on the side of legalism; some of us have been more self-conscious about our behavior than is healthy; and we are heavily influenced by our culture's high regard for individual freedom. But if we want our actions to be consistent with our faith (and there is ample biblical evidence to tell us we should want exactly that), we need to talk a lot about what that means. Our faith communities ought to be places where we can wrestle with what being a Christian means. In our Bible studies, our Sunday school classes, and our small group discussions, we need to help each other and we need to help our children to discover a faith which is not just something to save us or to have when it's convenient or feels good, but a faith that carries over into what we do each day.

Paul told the Corinthians that when Timothy came to them, he would remind them of Paul's "way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church" (1 Cor. 4:17). I think most of us would like to be able to say the same thing about ourselves; we want our lives, our behavior, to be consistent with what we profess to believe. At our best, we simply cannot follow the congressional aide's advice because to do so would violate our personal integrity and our sense of what God calls us to be and do. ■

# Readers Respond

## MCC involvements

The editorial in the March *Visitor* raises important questions regarding involvement of Brethren in Christ personnel in MCC service ministries. But little was said about our financial support.

My limited inquiry into this matter leads me to ask if it might be a question of our denominational heart being governed by our treasure (Matt. 6:21). At least it seems that the personnel factor is commensurate with our funding of MCC services.

Might it be, in scriptural terms, that the last should be first?

Ray M. Zercher  
Grantham, Pa.

(See *Dialogue* article on p. 30)

## Thanks for report

Thank you for running the fine article by Andrea Schrock Wenger on the agreement between the Nicaraguan government and the Miskito Indians (April *Visitor*). For some years I've been following this conflict and the work to bring peace. What a delight to find one of the best pieces written in our church magazine. How good to hear of the U.S. Moravian Church praying so determinedly for peace. When the *Visitor* makes it possible for us to learn from our sisters and brothers in Nicaragua, I sense the planting of a mustard seed.

M. J. Heisey  
Canton, NY

## What's in a name?

Paul Hostetler's introductory remarks to "The Money Test" (April) reinforces my thinking on an idea which has been brewing in my mind for some time. The last two sentences are particularly pertinent: "What Martens says about the Mennonites applies with equal force to the Brethren in Christ. And so when 'Mennonites' appears, just insert 'Brethren in Christ.'"

Increasingly we note more and more interaction between Mennonites and Brethren in Christ, so that we are certainly part of the "Mennonite Connection" that was featured in the December 1987 *Visitor*, including 28 Mennonite

activities in which the Brethren in Christ actively participate.

In February 1986 I was privileged to be part of a South American tour with 32 Mennonites. There were representatives from the Mennonite Church, the General Conference Mennonites, the Mennonite Brethren, the Evangelical Mennonites, and I was the lone Brethren in Christ tour member. At the time I was mildly conscious of the fact that even with all the common ground we have with the Mennonites, the Brethren in Christ is the only group who doesn't use the word "Mennonite" as part of its official name.

Why not add the word "Mennonite" to our name? Being known as the Mennonite Brethren in Christ would certainly give a stronger bond of unity to that which we already seem to be more and more committed to each succeeding year. Seldom a month goes by that some association with the Mennonites is not mentioned in the *Visitor*. The same seems to be true in the *Mennonite Weekly Review*, where joint meetings and activities with Brethren in Christ groups are reported with increasing regularity.

Being known as the Mennonite Brethren in Christ would give us a closer identity and a closer church family relationship, and also serve to strengthen the spirit of cooperation that makes us one in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Harvey M. Miller  
Messiah Village  
Mechanicsburg, Pa.

## Letters to Onesimus

Dear Onesimus:

I find your column in the April issue to be objectionable for a number of reasons.

You state, "Paul, it's silly that we can tell one another in the body of Christ how to vote. But there's a leaning in that direction that is frightening to me." I agree. But aren't you telling us how to vote when you point out commendable things in the Carter administration while severely condemning the Reagan administration? I do not believe you should have used names, but stuck only to policies.

I object to your stated opinion that "Mr. Carter's Christianity was genuine" in that he "cared for the poor," but you refer to Mr. Reagan's faith as "religion." Even beyond that unfavorable contrast you use the term, "Reagan's god" three times in one paragraph and "this god" once. When I found the first small "g" I thought it was a printing error and then I realized it was intentional.

According to you, "Reagan's god" is responsible for "the American way of life," "war," "defense spending," "killing of the innocents." Are you aware that President Reagan has worked against the killing of millions of innocents in our own country, the unborn? He is responsible for a soul-searching book entitled, *Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation*. May I suggest that you get this book and read it and then decide if his "religion" is to be completely rejected.

In January of this year President Reagan issued a proclamation entitled, "The Personhood Proclamation," in which he declared the personhood of the unborn. I believe this proclamation compares favorably with President Lincoln granting personhood to the black slaves.

Also, President Reagan has probably done more than any of our leaders for the preservation of the family. A special department has been established under Secretary of Education Dr. Bennett to study the affect of various legislation on the family. This noble work is under the direction of Dr. Gary Bauer. In November of 1986 Dr. Bauer issued a special report, "The Family: Preserving America's Future." I have circulated a number of copies of this report and shall be delighted to mail one to you or any of your readers.

I also object to your quotes from Michael Deaver about our President consulting his horoscope daily and being keenly interested in paranormal religious experiences. It may be true but I would like to have more reliable sources.

Glenn F. Diller  
Grants Pass, Ore.

To Onesimus:

I would like to affirm you on your article in the May issue regarding dreams and visions. You are exactly right in saying "the evidence is overwhelming in

the Scripture" concerning this neglected teaching in much of the evangelical church.

The prophet Joel spoke pointedly on this matter in Joel 2:28, and Peter, on the day of Pentecost, reaffirmed the prophet. As we study the life of Joseph, we see what an important ministry dreams became to him.

I can testify to being led by dreams in my life. More than two years ago, I repeatedly dreamed of preaching to large crowds of black people. Again and again for several months the Spirit brought this to me in dreams. One May day, I received a letter from Christian World Mission [in California] inviting me to join with an evangelistic crusade to Kenya. I felt God had led by my dreams and so I began preparations.

In the meantime, Dr. Don Zook was

*Readers may correspond with both Phoebe and Onesimus by writing to them c/o the Evangelical Visitor, P.O. Box 166, Napanee, IN 46550.*

a guest at the Antrim Church and I told him of my going to Kenya on the "evangelistic tour." Brother Zook replied, "Why not with the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe?" He assured me there would be work for me to do. After arranging for my sabbatical with the Antrim congregation, a quick peace settled on me. There were no more dreams as my wife and I began preparations for Zimbabwe.

One night while I was preaching in the Lupane area of the Gwaii District, the church was overflowing. That night, the Holy Spirit reminded me of my dreams and spoke to my heart, "This is the group I showed you in your dreams 18 months ago." I was thrilled!

Yes, God leads by dreams. I've seen people in my congregation physically healed in a dream; the Lord showed me Antrim Church filled with people in my dreams. Two years ago, it became necessary to hold two morning services to accommodate our people. Yes, Onesimus, I'm with you! "God works in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform." And if our hearts are open to the moving of the Holy Spirit, he might just lead us through dreams and visions.

Rev. Wilbur Benner  
Chambersburg, Pa. ■

## Daystar Diary

*Daystar University College is a liberal arts college in Nairobi, Kenya. Its undergraduate degrees and accreditation are conferred by Messiah College. Messiah College faculty member John Yeatts, with his wife Amy and their two children, are in Nairobi this year, representing Messiah on the Daystar faculty.*

Up to this time in the Diary, I have told you about my reactions to Daystar. This time let me introduce you to the people at Daystar.

There are three administrators here. The Principal is Stephen Talitwala, who has a degree in engineering as well as a Ph.D. An Ugandan, Stephen is a very efficient administrator. The Deputy Principal is Godfrey Nguru, a Kenyan. Godfrey was on the education faculty of Kenyatta University before coming to Daystar. The registrar is Nkita Arao from Zaire. She is a hard-working person in a very demanding job, and is also the mother of five children, all still at home.

Daystar has three divisions. The Faculty of Academic Studies (FAS) is the traditional academic area. The undergraduate degrees are granted by Messiah College and majors are offered in Bible, Business Administration, and Communication, with Education being offered beginning next year. The graduate

degrees are granted by Wheaton College and majors are offered in Christian Ministries and Communication.

The Bible department is headed by Julius Murikwa, from central Kenya, who received his doctorate from Fuller Seminary. The business department is headed by Jacob Ochieng, from western Kenya, who has had extensive experience both in business and education. The newly appointed head of the communication department is Gilbert Okoronkwo, a Nigerian, whose specialty is broadcast communication.

A less known division of Daystar is the Institute for Christian Ministry and Training (ICMT). This program provides extension training for church leaders and workers who cannot enroll in a formal academic program. This program is administered by Joseph Gichuhi, a Kenyan. The most recent programs of ICMT have been a week-long seminar helping North Americans to understand the spirit world and a three-week leadership seminar for African church leaders. Both of these programs involved day-long sessions for the entire duration.

The oldest division of Daystar is the Research Department, led by Bob Oehrig, from the U.S.A. This department does anthropological and sociological research useful to mission organizations. The most recent study done was a com-

prehensive study of the population and churches of Nairobi. This will certainly make a significant contribution to our understanding of a major metropolitan area (population of 2 million) in the third world.

So, this is Daystar. As I look at the people involved, I am impressed with several things. First, the leadership of Daystar is in the hand of Africans. There is much talk about turning institutions over to Africans; Daystar is doing it. Only one of the administrators is a North American. (The present head of the communication department is from the U.S.A. and is leaving at the end of this term. At the most recent faculty meeting, 15 of the 22 persons present were Africans.)

Second, the staff at Daystar is diverse, even within Africa. As you could see in the preceding paragraphs, the faculty includes persons from a variety of African nations. Even within Kenya, the staff represents several tribal groups within the country.

Daystar is an international institution, primarily composed of African students being educated by African faculty. It is exciting for me as a North American to see this. I am deeply moved as I see the commitment of these persons, from a variety of cultures, to Jesus Christ, the Lord of all. ■

# Dialogue

Greetings from the Brethren in Christ in Dese, Ethiopia. I just finished reading the March issue of the *Visitor*. (The letter was dated Mar. 25). I enjoyed it as usual, but was impressed in particular by your editorial. You touched on a concern which I have struggled with since starting my MCC service six and a half years ago.

While I was in Bangladesh (1981-85) I saw the number of Brethren in Christ in Mennonite Central Committee programs decline; even at its highest, I thought the number was embarrassingly small. As I was preparing to begin my second term in August '86, I learned that when I arrived here in Ethiopia, I would be the *only* Brethren in Christ in an overseas MCC post. I found myself wondering whether I was in MCC because I am a Brethren in Christ, or in spite of being a Brethren in Christ.

In your editorial, you mention having given Reg Toews several factors for low Brethren in Christ involvement in MCC. Your editorial, however, only mentions the factor of broad restructuring. What other factors do you believe play a role? The discussion of the restructuring was illuminating. While the responsibilities of missions, evangelism, and church planting each went to a specific board, voluntary service seemed to go nowhere, or rather everywhere ("If you tell three people to feed a horse, the horse will starve.") What does this say about priorities?

What else besides the number of MCC workers suffered from this change? How is the "service dynamic," and more specifically, the Mennonite Central Committee, understood by church leaders

and pastors? In the article "Involving youth in outreach and service" (also in the March issue), why does Brian Loft-house not mention MCC? In his youth group, he directed "thoughts toward our needy world" via the resources of Compassion International. Does he have a list of MCC resources on that topic? If not, why not? Persons considering service are less likely to investigate MCC opportunities if leadership is not aware of, interested in, nor encouraging interest in MCC.

Communication is certainly a factor, although perhaps not the primary one. I put in some effort at communication during the 16 months I was in North America between terms. I accepted every invitation to speak that I could—Sunday school classes; Sunday morning, evening, and midweek services. I encouraged (pushed might not be too strong a word) MCC service and did as much shoulder-tapping as possible. I admit I often felt I was singing a song that people perhaps listened to, but didn't hear. They heard the words, but didn't feel the music.

Our commitment to service may not be withering (I suspect people will react strongly to the suggestion that it is), but maybe our commitment to MCC is doing so. Giving money to MCC is a simple thing, and one which we do well. But, as in the case of development efforts, giving money is not enough; we need to give of ourselves. This we have not been doing so well. In my more cynical moments I consider suggesting that the Brethren in Christ withdraw from MCC. It might not affect our level of participation, and it would save MCC the trouble and expense of having to add

"and Brethren in Christ" in their references to their constituencies.

Thank you again for your editorial. As you can see, it is an issue which disturbs and saddens me (and, in re-reading this letter, drives me to strong statements). I am glad to see it raised in a public forum. I hope it will lead to an honest and positive response to the problems. I greatly appreciate and further encourage your efforts at giving MCC visibility. I am impressed by the space which MCC articles and news are given in the *Visitor*, and would support more of the same. Maybe sometime, announcements of Brethren in Christ workers entering MCC service will be a regular feature.

Timothy R. Fretz  
Dese, Ethiopia

## Contributions invited for *Dialogue* and *Readers Respond*

Persons contributing to *Readers Respond* (letters to the editor) are encouraged to be concise. Letters may be shortened. All letters must be signed. Occasionally we may decide to withhold names due to special circumstances.

Longer contributions are welcomed for *Dialogue*, a forum for readers to express their opinions on a broad range of topics relevant to the mission of the church and to living the Christian life.

Since each article or letter represents the view of the writer, they do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Brethren in Christ Church.

## Pontius' Puddle

Bulletins and newsletters reprinting "Pontius' Puddle" from the *Visitor* must pay \$10 for each use to Joel Kauffmann, 111 Carter Road, Goshen, IN 46526.



In early 1988 our General Secretary, Dr. Don Shafer, sent a letter to numerous church leaders. He wrote in behalf of the Task Force on *Renewal 2000, Phase II*.

As many readers know, the task force has been working on a new confession of faith. If that sounds too "high church," just replace it with "doctrinal statement." As the task force worked on this, it was sensed that this is the time for a call to *prayer*, diligent *Bible study*, and *heart searching*.

The verse Don used to sound the call to renewal is found in 2 Chronicles 7:14: "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." Let's look at this verse phrase by phrase.

"*If my people . . .*" Notice that God is talking to his own people—"my people"—not those who have never believed in and followed him. Sometimes followers of Christ who stress holiness, as we do, are tempted to feel that renewal and revival are for other "less godly" people. But this verse is talking to all of us.

"*. . . who are called by my name . . .*" We carry the name "Christian," and that places an obligation on us. A person's name was highly significant to the Hebrews. When God changed Jacob's name ("deceiver") to Israel, it was a turning point in Jacob's life. He was expected to live up to his name ("he struggles with God"). You and I are also expected to live up to our new name ("a Christ person"). As we let our light shine, God will be glorified.

"*. . . will humble themselves and pray . . .*" God is talking about contrition and confession here. Such confession is to be a way of life, not just a "once and done" act. St. Augustine said, "The confession of evil works is the first beginning of good works." It is easy to confess the sins of others; it is much harder (but much more effective) to confess our own sins. According to George Harkness, "A general confession is good, but in it lurks the danger of bewailing humanity's sin and not our own."

"*. . . and seek my face . . .*" Oliver Wendell Holmes noted, "People think the confessional is unknown in Protestant churches. It is a great mistake. The principal change is, there is no screen between the penitent and the father confessor." It is human nature to be unable to look into a person's eyes until we are honest with them. How much more is this true when we seek the face of our God.

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Adapted from a devotional talk first given at the February meeting of the Board for Stewardship, then—by request—at the March meeting of the Board of Administration. Paul is associate director of stewardship for the Brethren in Christ Church.

June 1988

## "If my people . . ."

"*. . . and turn from their wicked ways . . .*" This is a good definition of repentance. St. Ambrose stressed, "True repentance is to cease from sin." Beiderwolf agreed: "Repentance does not mean *remorse*. Repentance means giving up sin." In the words of Luther, "To do it no more is the truest repentance." Bonnell Thornton observed, "Some often repent, yet never reform; they resemble a man traveling in a dangerous path, who frequently stops, but never turns back." I need to be reminded to turn from my wicked ways.

"*. . . then will I hear from heaven . . .*" God has a special hotline open to all repentant people. Francis Quarles declared, "Heaven is never deaf but when man's heart is dumb." Even though you may question Tennyson's theology, his poetry which follows is true.

*Speak to him, thou, for he hears,  
And spirit with spirit meet—  
Closer is he than breathing,  
And nearer than hands and feet.*

"*. . . and will forgive their sin . . .*" In the words of Alice Carey, "Nothing in this lost and ruined world bears the meek impress of the son of God so surely as forgiveness." How wonderfully true! "God forgives—forgives not capriciously, but with wise, definite, Divine pre-arrangement; forgives universally, on the grounds of an atonement and on the condition of repentance and faith" (Richard Stores). I suppose one reason we find it so hard to understand and accept the full and free forgiveness of God is because we find it so hard to really forgive.

"*. . . and will heal their land.*" "The prayer that reforms the sinner and heals the sick is an absolute faith that all things are possible to God." Those are exciting words and I agree with them, even though they were spoken by Mary Baker Eddy! David felt God's healing touch: "O Lord, my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me." Isaiah proclaimed that our souls are healed because of the stripes of our Redeemer.

Personal renewal need not wait for an appointed time. God has demonstrated this in the past, and he will do it again for you and me.

Thank God the Brethren in Christ Church stands on the threshold of growth and opportunity. Our brotherhood, touched at every level with renewal, will bring revival to a multitude of lives and may, indeed, change the course of history.

*Revive thy work, O Lord!  
Exalt thy precious name,  
And, by the Holy Ghost,  
Our love for thee and thine inflame.*

—Paul Hostetler



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## Bishops' Column

### Fellowship— a vital sign for the believer

by J. Ralph Wenger

Separate an ant from the colony and it will die.

Separate the honey bee from the hive and it will not thrive.

Last year a swarm of bees decided that our chimney would be a good place to call home. It was all right for them maybe, but continually having honey bees escaping into the living room through the fireplace was not quite acceptable to us.

In order to discourage this hive from remaining there, I thought some gentle smoke up through the chimney might persuade them to leave. What I didn't calculate was that the smoke asphyxiated the queen bee. The hive then escaped to the outside of the chimney and finally the last bee disappeared. They literally died.

A beehive illustrates the quality of fellowship required for the believer if we are to continue to exist and live a healthy and vibrant life.

The word *fellowship* is an Anglo-Saxon translation for the word *koinonia* as used in the original languages of the New Testament. It comes from the idea of the corral or sheep fold. It is a place of community—a community of interest, activity, feeling and security, among other things. The word is used quite extensively in the New Testament.

In this day and at this stage of the Christian Church, no other message could be more pertinent to where we are. There is a lot of "loneliness within the crowd," even among Christians today.

Many Christians have not been able to perceive the need and the value of this vital Christian grace. They fail to realize that without fellowship the Christian becomes anemic, and can virtually die "on the vine."

The mentality among Christians today is that fellowship can happen instantaneously. Just drop into any fellowship and it will work. Not so. Even the bees and animals teach us differently. A strange sheep, for example, is not accepted within the community on a moment's notice. It takes some processing to be accepted into the flock.

The matter of Christian fellowship is not unlike this. Good Christian fellowship does not happen with spasmodic or impersonal dabs of fellowship. Surely the church should not make gaining entrance into Christian fellowship a long process for new people. But planning for fellowship should be a conscious act on the part of both the existing community of believers and the newcomer.

Fellowship is not an option of the believer. Without it there is disaster for the Christian.

We need to remember that fellowship is God's idea. The idea of the Church was created not by man, but by the Lord himself. The term "the Church" means the "called out" ones, with the idea of "calling into" a community which exists for the vitality of the believer.

Fellowship is more than the entrance into the community. It is an intentional giving of oneself to the group with commitment and openness in order that fellowship may take place. Here is where the membership covenant is valid. The church takes seriously the public acknowledgment of the covenant agreement between the newcomer and the local body of believers. It symbolizes the intention of a commitment to serious fellowship.

Fellowship is a place for the Christian. An earthly spiritual family.

Fellowship is an intentional commitment on the part of the believer to involve oneself in Christian community with other believers.

Fellowship is a mixture of the work of the Holy Spirit and believers seeking to harmoniously be in unity and community with one another.

Fellowship will result in growth and expansion in the life of the believer and the church. This calls for leadership of the church to be conscious of the structures which foster good Christian fellowship.

Renewal within the church will be centered in the church gathered in fellowship around the Living Word of God in recognition of the Lord Jesus Christ as head.

A sister or brother cannot be involved in fellowship where the Holy Spirit is at work for a significant period of time without being impacted for good and righteousness. A vital cell of believers is a must for the Christian to grow and develop. Other vital signs, such as prayer and biblical knowledge are important, but none is more so than fellowship.

The Brethren in Christ will continue to make fellowship of the believers a high priority as part of the vital growth and development of the church. To assist congregational leaders, our boards and agencies provide resources which foster good sound fellowship. May we take seriously the function of this vital sign for each of us.



*J. Ralph Wenger is bishop of the Pacific Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church. He and his wife Joan live in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.*