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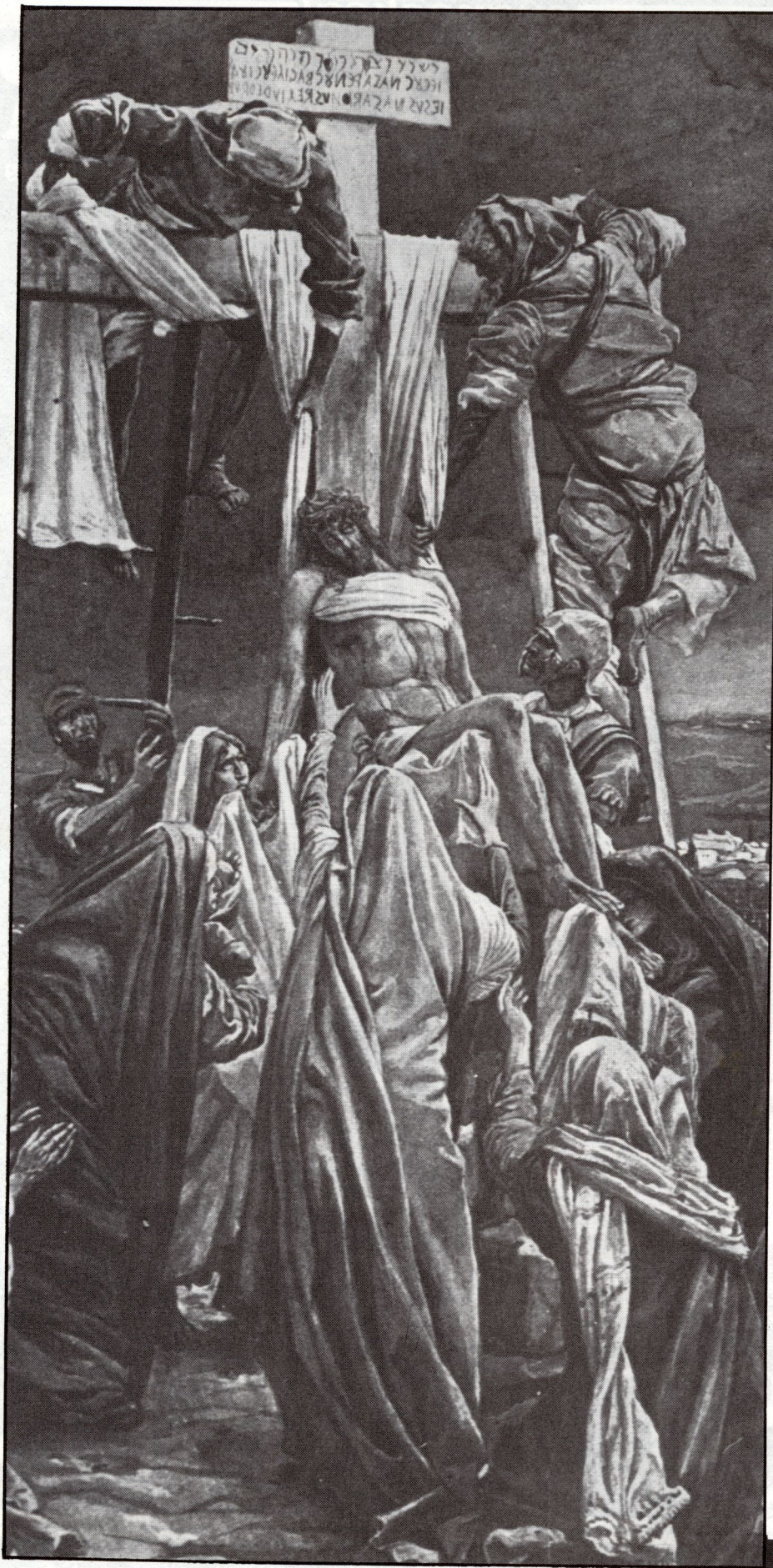
evangelical

VISITOR

March 1989



CHRIST IS RISEN



Paul Schrock

I

The obscure carpenter had burst on the national consciousness in a most peculiar way. There was this wedding at Cana in Galilee where the host had invited more people than his resources could accommodate. At the height of the festivities, the supply of wine failed. The carpenter who had come with his widowed mother somehow produced the finest quality wine in abundance from nothing but plain water.

From there his reputation grew by leaps and bounds. Miracles poured from his fingers while the most profound wisdom poured from his lips. People were healed of all manner of diseases and a whole funeral procession lost its purpose when he publicly raised from the dead the only son of a widow.

His power seemed unlimited over nature as well. While we have only the word of his followers for it, there is no doubt that he walked on the water and even stood up in a floundering fishing boat, commanded the wind and waves to be at peace, and was instantly obeyed.

Nearly the whole nation went after him to such an extent that the officials were consumed with jealousy. They corrupted one of his followers and abducted the carpenter-prophet late one night as he was engaged in an overwhelming passion of prayer. They spirited him around through the night in various questionings and trials, and finally made a deal with the authorities to have him killed.

commend my spirit

It was not to be the ordinary ritual killing. That for the Jews would have been a stoning. A special effort was made to involve the Roman overlords. It even resulted in the Israelite crowd chanting, "We have no king but Caesar." So the Roman governor issued the order and Rome's finest led him out to the hill, nailed him onto a cross, and left him to die.

The Romans were experts in this, which is the most cruel method of execution ever devised. No wound extensive enough to cause death or even pain-killing shock. Just hours and hours of hanging, till finally with every muscle and nerve screaming with unbearable pain, the hapless victim died of exposure, total exhaustion, and unendurable suffering.

It was then that the people's whole evil scheme began to unravel at the seams. First of all, the victim offered forgiveness to his executioners, then a strange word of assurance to one of his fellow sufferers, and a word of kindly care for his mother. His one expression of lonely anguish went up to his Father and his only concession to his physical suffering was a request for a drink.

First, just a sense of unease, then a bit of fear, and finally panic swept over the crowd. At midday it began to grow dark. Intense darkness which lasted three hours fell on the crowd. The earth began to tremble and quake. Other strange events began to take place. The hard-bitten professional soldiers had never known such happenings. Their usual careless banter and barter for the clothes of the condemned turned into an anxious watch.

Almost as though dawn was arriving at three in the afternoon, light slowly returned. The condemned man on the center cross issued a cry that sounded like victory. It declared his task to be finished. His work done.

Then in a deft stroke that shattered all doubt he willfully commended his life to his Father and dismissed it. "I commend my spirit." He did it! He did it all!

All of a sudden it became apparent that he had orchestrated the whole thing. Not a single hand nor voice had been raised, not a single decision had been taken, no stroke of whip, no drive of nail, there had been no thrust of spear without his intentional approval. Everything was in fulfillment of the divine plan that his Father—with his full and willing cooperation—had ordained from the foundation of the world.

Across town, in the magnificent temple, hung an amazing piece of tapestry. Its quality and excessive weight matched the opulent surroundings. It was permanent. It had to be, for it separated the dwelling of men from the dwelling place of God. Never could the two meet except for that one special time each year when one specially chosen man could pass through the curtain to carry the atoning sacrifice that would allow mankind one more year of grace. And if that one man had failed in one small detail of the rigorous preparation, he would himself be consumed in the presence of absolute holiness.

But on this day the perfectly woven and embroidered tapestry split. From the top it opened wide! Man and God at last could stand together and talk with each other. The perfect priest, Jesus, had brought in the perfect sacrifice—himself, Jesus. At last God with man was reconciled.

"I commend my Spirit!" Tragedy to triumph. Defeat to mastery. The vanquished is victor. The conquered is Conqueror.

Conquering Savior: The victory is yours. The saving blessing is ours. All praise, honor, and glory to you, evermore. Amen.

A. Graybill Brubaker is senior pastor of the Chambersburg, Pa., Brethren in Christ Church.



Beyond the grieving

by Kenneth L. Gibble

What do you do when someone you love dies? You grieve. At least that's what you do if you can.

Frederick Buechner writes of his father's death, which took place when Frederick was ten years old. Looking back on that event, Mr. Buechner understands now that for many years he was unable to deal with the fact that his father had taken his own life. He explained the death by telling people that it had resulted from "heart trouble," as, in a sense, it had. Buechner says he did not feel real grief over his father's suicide until more than 30 years later. "The grief was postponed," he writes, "until only in middle age did it become real enough for me to weep real tears at last and to see better than I ever had earlier who it was that I was weeping for and who I was that was weeping" (*The Sacred Journey*, Harper & Row, 1982, p. 54).

What is it, who is it, that we grieve over when someone we love dies? We say it is loss that causes us to grieve, and that is true enough. But usually it is *our* loss we mean. What we grieve over is ourselves and the

sense of lostness and helplessness and loneliness that we feel. In a way, it is our own death we are mourning, that ultimate separation from everything and everyone we have loved.

What about our Lord's disciples? How did they react when the one they loved had died? There is but one brief mention of their grief recorded in Mark 16:10. But this was not the normal kind of grieving. Jewish custom of the time called for ritual mourning immediately after the death, on the way to the burial, at the place of entombment, and for at least seven days afterwards. Such rituals were not possible for those who loved Jesus. He had died as a criminal, and his tomb was surrounded by Roman guards.

The Gospels of Mark and Matthew record that angels instructed the women who found the empty tomb to tell the disciples that the risen Lord would appear to them in Galilee. Why did the disciples go to Galilee? Perhaps they were so numb from all that had happened in the previous few days that they simply obeyed the message without thinking. It's also possible the disciples were so filled with joy at the women's words that they left for Galilee in a burst of excitement. But I rather doubt it.

Most likely they dismissed the women's story as wishful thinking. Luke tells us the men regarded what the women told them as "an idle tale." Mark gives us the disciples' response to the women's report with the succinct comment: "They did not believe it." Still, there was nothing better to do. Why *not* leave this wretched Jerusalem, this hellhole of a city which had swallowed up their master and all their dreams along with him? Go back to Galilee. Go back home. And try to forget.

So they went. And if in their going they carried deep in their hearts the seed of an incredible hope, there was something else they carried with them—fear. For, as Edmund Stei-

There is something being offered—beyond the grieving—if only we can receive it. It's a gift called resurrection, and the giver is God.

Kenneth Gibble, co-pastor of the Arlington (Va.) Church of the Brethren, is a freelance writer who frequently contributes to the Visitor.

mle has noted, when the disciples buried their Lord's body in the tomb, "they buried not only their hopes and dreams and all the promises he had held out to them, all the love and care he had shown, all his concern for the unlovely and downtrodden"; they also buried "their shoddy faith, their shabby quarrels as to who was greatest in the kingdom, all the petty jealousies . . . the ugly scenes of denial and betrayal—all this was buried with him too . . ." (*Preaching the Story*, Fortress, 1980, p. 181).

If Jesus was alive, then all their failings were alive as well! And if the disciples went to Galilee in hope of meeting their risen Lord, they went also with an opposite hope—that the whole thing would just go away: the broken dreams, the vivid memories, the haunting awareness of their own failures. Let them all die as he had died.

It's easy for us to fault such a lack of courage in the disciples. Easy, but dishonest. For the truth is that you and I resist the resurrection much the same as they did. We prefer selective amnesia over resurrection. We'd rather pretend that the pain of past disappointments and betrayals and failures never happened. We don't want to relive all that, thank you just the same. If the Lord is really risen, Peter must look into the face of the one he had denied three times. If the resurrection really did happen, then you and I must face the truth of our own denials and cowardice, we must deal with the painful reality of judgment.

Maybe it isn't mostly doubt that makes so many people resist the resurrection, maybe it's mostly fear. Few of us like to be reminded of our mistakes, our faulty judgment, our sin. We prefer to say, "What's done is done," "Let sleeping dogs lie," "That's water over the dam." Resurrection means we can't say that any more. A risen Lord means we must meet him again with all the dark places of our living exposed to his relentless light.

And so Simon Peter said, "I am going fishing." Can we blame him? Going fishing, for Peter, was a way

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IT has been my experience at times to be with people who carefully examine price tags. If these people believe there is a less costly bargain, they will walk away. On the other hand, I have been with some people who really don't care what the price is when they believe the result of paying will be worthwhile. Sometimes one person will respond in these two different ways in differing circumstances.

Of course, the *object* of purchase is significant, be it food, clothes, books, entertainment, relationships, souvenirs, or things of sentimental value. And the cost of any desire impacts people, depending on whether it will cost time, energy, or money. The *value* of the object, *our resources*, and *willingness to pay* the price are all involved.

It is likely true for most of us that when we talk about the "cost" or "price" of something, we tend to think of objects that we consume. But there are some things in life that we all value highly which are very costly, like our relationships with one another. This includes personal as well as corporate relationships. We all know that there are various ways to buy or build relationships. We can give gifts or do favors and try to purchase good relationships by using money. We can spend time with people, listening and letting them know we value their friendship. We can serve others and care about them by denying ourselves and actually giving others some of our life. Or it will likely involve a combination of factors.

This can be seen in families, in relationships between parents and children, siblings, and other relatives. The jokes about "the rich uncle" or "marrying for money" are not always just simple humor. And

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Peace

comes at
a
high price

by R. Donald Shafer

relationships with friends can be quite fragile.

Hopefully every human being has some meaningful relationships. When people do not have at least a small circle of trusted friends, they usually lose touch with reality and need special help, whether it be for mental illness, physical problems, or deviant behavior. Society has institutions such as hospitals and prisons to care for people who are broken or are paying the price for broken relationships.

Peace with God comes at a higher cost. Regardless of culture, history, or even religion, peace with God and others comes at a high price. In our own Christian faith we believe God gave his only Son, a part of himself, to love us and to invite us to live in peace.

Some reading over the past months on the subject of reconciliation and relationships reminded me of the painful and costly process we must pay for peace, whether it be in South Africa, in our cities, in our churches, or in our homes.

First, we need to identify with others. *We need to share the same reality.* So often fears and unfounded perceptions leave people alienated and isolated. But if responsible con-

cern and first-hand experience can be paid, there is a good possibility for peace. Most of us tend to look at the price tag of sharing the suffering of others and turn the other way. This is true for conflict in families and in churches, or between races and nations. We go to persons who are like us, support us, agree with us, and build walls. Then the price of peace goes even higher.

Secondly, *we need to pay the price of repentance* if we expect to restore peace when there has been a broken relationship. This price tag includes sorrow for and honesty about the sins of separation. There can be no reconciliation without repentance. As the Scriptures indicate, we are brought into a right relationship with God when we are honest about the sins that separate us from the Lord. Just so, we must be open with one another if there is to ever be meaningful restored relationships between persons.

Reconciliation requires repentance from both persons or parties involved. There are times when it is clear that enmity has mainly come from one side. When this happens, a right relationship is not achieved by mediating differences. There needs to be confrontation of the party at

Beyond the grieving . . .

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fault. This can be seen in some marital disputes when there has been abuse or unfaithfulness. Forgiveness can be extended, but the relationship is not restored until the price of repentance has been paid.

Thirdly, the price of peace means that *separated persons need to be brought together*. Reconciliation cannot be done long distance. There must be the sharing of pain, sadness, and agony. Just as Jesus left the comforts of the joys and immortality of heaven and came to be with us, just so we must pay the price of removing barriers and measurable things that separate us. The love of neighbor and the love for a brother or sister means the willingness to die, a price tag that is extremely high. We must be present with one another if there is to be peace.

Fourthly, there is the unpopular price of restoration. *There must be efforts to repay the damage*. We can restore dignity and respect, and it needs to be done in tangible ways, if possible. Words can be cheap, but loving action is a clear payment.

This all adds up to the premise that peace comes at a high price. In our present Christian climate this may sound heavy. We like things instant and easy. But holding hands and singing songs of unity will not pay the bill. It may cost us hours of bruising confrontation. The surgery of repentance will bring the healing of reconciliation. We may have to place our credibility on the line. In some areas of the world it may cost people their lives.

For many of us, the whisper of pride, fear, or hate will turn us away from the price of peace. But if we surround one another with prayer, and if we will pay the price, we know that our Lord Jesus Christ will grant us peace. After all, he paid the full price—he gave himself for you and me. The question is, will we do that for one another? That is the *high price of peace*. ■

of going back to the way life had been before the man from Nazareth had said, "Follow me," back to the way life was before he believed Jesus was the promised Messiah . . . and before his promise to Jesus, "I will die with you," had been revealed as pathetically empty boasting.

"I am going fishing," said Peter. And we say it with him whenever the flimsy structure of our own lives threatens to come crashing down around our ears. It's what we say whenever we want to make ourselves forget that every precious thing we've ever known has been shattered, one way or the other. We say, "I am going shopping," or "I am going to the office," or "I am going out to mow the lawn," in the hope that the old routines will absorb our sorrow, our fear, our memories of failure.

So Peter goes fishing, and the others go with him. They fish all night and catch nothing. Not that it matters. It isn't fish they want, it is the fishing. But then, just as dawn is about to break, they see a man standing on the beach. It is the Lord, and after they struggle to shore, he gives them bread and fish to eat. And he is restored to them.

Then he turns to face Peter, and the disciple learns what resurrection means. Three times Jesus asks him, "Do you love me?" Three times Peter says, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Three times—as many times as Peter had denied his Lord. Peter learns that resurrection means confronting his failures and fears. But he learns that it also means those failures and fears need not be the last word. The last word is forgiveness, new life. Resurrection means that grief and fear give way to joy.

I think that is what Easter is all about. And I think it is even the barest hint of this joy that brings out the crowds on Easter. Many who find themselves in church aren't sure themselves why they are there. They

may think they've come because somebody in the family wanted them to. Maybe they come because it seems like a nice thing to do. But underneath it all, I think what gets them there is an unarticulated yearning to believe that Easter is more than just a nice story with a happy ending, more than a rite of spring.

A few years ago I found myself driving to a retirement home for a visit I dreaded. My mother, whose mental state had been gradually declining because of Alzheimer's disease, had suddenly begun to slip rapidly. I knew she would be in a different building now, one designed for people whose physical and mental states made it impossible for them to care for themselves. For some reason, I decided to swing by the house where I had spent most of my youth. It was a crisp morning, with one of those achingly bright blue skies one knows will soon enough give way to the chilling rains of November.

I got out of the car and walked around. The feed mill where my father had worked for 25 years of his life was doing a booming business. The sycamore tree he had planted 10 years before his death had grown tall and thick-trunked. I wanted to look at more, but I couldn't see because the tears I thought had all been shed years before now flooded my eyes. Why was I crying? For all the reasons people cry, I guess. And because I knew somehow that in a few months, Mother would no longer be able to recognize any of us anymore. I wept because I was beginning to know what it's like to be the last generation. I wept because . . . when someone you love dies, you grieve.

But out of such a time, and others like it, there is something being offered—beyond the grieving—if only we can receive it. It's a gift called resurrection, and the giver is God. ■

"Praisin' mah Lord."

by Martha Starr

"I'm praisin' mah Lord," Tony says enthusiastically in raspy, muffled tones as he greets me with a handshake in the hallway.

"I can count on it, Tony!" I respond. "You always come to church with a heart of praise, don't you?"

"Yep!"

He straightens his shoulders and smiles confidently.

"I want a yellow one this morning," he says.

"A yellow carnation? Of course. Let's pin it on your shirt. Being an usher is one way to serve the Lord, isn't it?"

"Yep!"

We enter the room together where 20 others have already gathered.

"There she is," James calls from the other side of the room.

"Good morning, James! Glad you're here in church this morning!"

"Yeah. Me too," he replies. He runs his fingers through his tussled hair and yanks at his trousers awkwardly.

These are my friends, I think to myself. I enjoy being here. It's a wonderful place to worship the Lord. And to think that I once felt uncom-

fortable here . . . even dreaded entering the room. . . .

"It's my-my birthday," Larry announces.

"Shall we sing 'Happy Birthday' to you?"

"Yeh. Yeh." He nods his head vigorously, then smiles broadly with satisfaction.

Larry had a birthday last week. And he'll probably have one next week. But that's all right. He feels affirmed each time we sing to him.

"Gonna see my mama today. Gonna see my mama," Larry continues.

How I wish that were true! But he's fantasizing. He really won't see his mother today. Perhaps we here at church are his mother, and sisters and brothers.

The pianist begins playing as our ushers hand out the bulletins, Bibles, and songbooks. The melody of "How Great Thou Art" fills the air.

"That's my favorite song," big Joe calls out. The angry, gruff scowl about his mouth disappears, his furrowed brows relax, and a warm smile breaks through on his face.

"Have we come to praise the Lord this morning?" I ask.

"Yes," everyone responds in chorus.

"And is he here with us?"

"Yes!"

"And do we love him?"

"Yes!"

"Let's begin with our greeting song." Over and again we sing,

"Praise the Lord Together Singing Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia." As we sing we walk freely about the room, greeting one another with handshakes and smiles.

I can't believe the change in these faces since I first met them. The ones that were dull and listless have taken on a glow. I see eyes that sparkle and expressions brimming with joy. They've changed . . . or have I changed?

* * * * *

I reflect back on how Lancaster Brethren in Christ became involved in a ministry to the mentally handicapped. In 1981 a local Mennonite care facility for retarded adults was looking for a church for their residents to attend. A retired special education teacher at our church, Ruth Heisey, had a vision for ministry. And with our church building program completed, space was available for the group. So the Friendship Sunday School Class began with six students and one teacher.

News of this ministry spread. Soon the class numbers increased to 15 . . . 20 . . . 30 . . . 45. There wasn't active promotion; the people just came! More space needed, more teachers needed, more supervision needed in the halls and restrooms. Were we able to rise to the challenges of sustaining a ministry this

Martha Starr is Director of Christian Education at the Lancaster (Pa.) Brethren in Christ Church. She lives near Manheim with her husband Charles and their children Melanie, Greg, and Jonathan. The names in this article have been changed. Photos by Chet Long, Ephrata.



unique and this demanding and this large?

There were some growth pains as we wrestled with goals and direction for the ministry. But leadership emerged, volunteers were recruited and the program remained strong. Today 38 persons are enrolled. Weekly attendance is about 25. A total of 27 teachers, helpers, worship leaders, and musicians are involved regularly in the Friendship ministry.

The Sunday school class program includes a time of singing, the Bible story, prayer for the requests shared, an occasional table activity, and refreshments. The *Friendship Series*, published by the Board of Publications of the Christian Reformed Church; *Living in Faith*, published by Graded Press; and *Jesus Knows*, published by Shepherds, Inc., have been used as curriculum materials.

In June 1987 the ministry expanded to include an optional worship and activity hour following Sunday school. The emphasis of this hour is praising God through music, Scripture, testimonies, and prayer. There is a Bible lesson, a craft which relates to a Biblical truth, and frequently a filmstrip or video excerpt. Once a month communion is served.

* * * * *

Our worship together continues. Now it is testimony time.

"Do you have a testimony this morning, Laura?" I ask.

Laura nods her head enthusiastically and rocks back and forth with vigor. There is joy on her face.

Mark has a testimony, too. He pats his heart, and his lips move as he attempts a barely audible "Praise the Lord."

Margaret's testimony is a smile. I want everyone to see it, and I ask her to face the group and share that beautiful smile.

I said "beautiful smile." I used to think of her as being so unattractive—the wrinkled face . . . the crossed eyes . . . the uncontrolled tongue. Today I said, "beautiful smile." And I meant it! At this moment God has allowed me to see the beauty of a spirit, a personality, a precious child of his.

Our Scripture is from John 14:1-2: 'Let not your heart be troubled . . . I go to prepare a place for you.'

"What do we call the place Jesus is preparing for us?" I ask.

"Heaven." Several respond. We exchange our thoughts of how wonderful heaven will be.

Susan, blind since birth, shares openly: "And there won't be any black eyes like I have. . . ."

"And none of us will be retarded," Rhonda adds.

Can I control the mistiness in my eyes? Maybe if I blink a few times I

can continue the lesson. Good. I've regained my composure.

"I brought my guitar this morning. Can I pay it?" Sarah asks with her characteristic sweet smile. "I'd like to sing for everyone."

"Of course."

She faces the group with her guitar. Her left fingers remain motionless as she strums a repetitive discord with her right hand. Her voice is clear: "Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, That calls me from a world of care . . ."

This was not part of my plans for the morning! But this is worship! Spontaneous, sincere, from the heart! Surely this morning we are bringing to the Lord a sacrifice of praise!

The songs have been sung, the lesson taught, and the craft finished. It is time to go home. One by one these special friends shake hands and say good-bye to me and the other teachers.

If only other churches could see the value of this kind of ministry! These people are part of the body of Christ! They are precious in God's sight!

It's not just that they need us. WE NEED THEM! They have so much to teach us about giving and receiving love, about simple faith, about pure, unpretentious worship from the heart.

Thank you, Lord, that I am privileged to have them minister to me.

Theological forum addresses wholeness and disabilities

by Marjorie A. Jantzen

They knew whereof they spoke.

The father of a 23-year-old son with Duchenne muscular dystrophy. Survivors of polio. The grandmother of a child with Down's syndrome. The wife of a man severely brain damaged in a car accident.

They were among people gathered to talk about "Seeking wholeness in the church: Contributions and needs of people with disabilities" during a Central States forum at Cross Wind Conference Center near Hesston.

The event was planned by a regional committee and sponsored by Mennonite Health Services of MCC and Brethren Health and Welfare Association of the Church of the Brethren. It was one of a series of such theological forums to be held in different parts of the country.

Moderator for the forum was Keith Harder, pastor of First Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, Kan., whose son drowned as the result of an epileptic seizure.

The stage for the forum was set by

Harold Dyck, assistant professor of biblical and religious studies at Tabor College in Hillsboro, whose son has Duchenne muscular dystrophy.

"The theme of this conference implies some deficiency of wholeness in our experience as a church," said Dyck. The theme also raises the question of definitions of the terms wholeness and disability, as well as where these disabilities are, who is affected by them and how wholeness is attained, he said.

"We are most likely to approach wholeness in the church if we begin by coming to terms with the world as it is, and then transcend it by embracing the full range of God's saving action," Dyck said.

A fact of universal human experience is the "great gulf" between life as it is and life as it should be. But for

Integrating the disabled into congregational life

by Sandi Hannigan

The author is Associate Director for the Board for Congregational Life in the Canadian Conference.

"Disabled." What emotion is evoked within you when you hear the word? What is your reaction when you encounter one who is disabled? Guilt, pity, repugnance, anger, fear or anxiety—these are all possible responses.

As we allow ourselves to enter into the lives of the disabled, we soon discover that we are more similar to one another than different. In fact, we are all "disabled" in some sense! We share common daily struggles toward finding "completeness" in Christ Jesus. We all seek to discover our identities, overcome inferior self-concepts, and deal with prejudices.

The church is in a unique position to deal with the disabled and yet so often this ministry has been left up to others, "professionals." What is our role and responsibility to these members of the body of Christ? Can we claim to be followers of Christ while ignoring these "special" children of God? James says that "faith without works is dead"!

Let's face it, many of our programs and ministries in the church are directed towards those who "have it all together" physically and mentally (i.e., physical mobility, normal

hearing, sight, intelligence, etc.) It is exciting to see a significant number of congregations recognizing their inadequacy in the area of ministry to the disabled and becoming better equipped to reach out!

Regardless of where your congregation is in terms of awareness and planning, here are some practical ideas for consideration. The list is by no means exhaustive. But perhaps it will be the beginning of innovative thought on how to better integrate the disabled into congregational life.

Ministering to the disabled

—Make adaptations in your programs and physical structures to accommodate the disabled (i.e., wheelchair ramps, large print Bibles, and hymnals, hearing devices, signing, etc.)

—Provide home care relief for parents of disabled children. (Offer a "day off" or a "weekend away" coupon good for any time of the year!

—Inform and educate your congregation about the disabled. Bring in resource persons to speak.

—Provide appropriate opportunity for the disabled to use their gifts and abilities in the church.

those whose bodies or minds are caught in the gap, "do we usually regard [them] as merely interesting variations? No, we apply qualitative judgments to them," said Dyck. "They come to be valued less; they are symbols of a flawed universe."

The presence of pain and deviation from "normalcy" leads the Christian to the old problem of theodicy—the goodness and all-powerfulness of God in the face of the presence of suffering and evil.

The options in theodicy take three general shapes, said Dyck. According to one school of thought, the world is completely under God's control, but "His ways are not our ways." This position acknowledges God's omnipotence and goodness, but denies any "genuine wrong in the universe," said Dyck.

A second approach acknowledges God's role in the universe and accepts the existence of suffering and evil, but is not sure about God's goodness. Without goodness, however, "there can be no reason to truly regard him as God," said Dyck.

A third option affirms the absolute goodness of God and acknowledges that evil and suffering exist because God's power is self-limited. A variation of this position distinguishes between God's perfect will and his permissive will. But "does the refusal to prevent evil not entail ultimate responsibility for it?" Dyck asked.

Another variation affirms the absoluteness of God's goodness, but says that "suffering and evil exist because God cannot do more than he is doing."

The process view assumes a "modern view of reality" and sees God as "coaxing the world toward its highest possibilities. There is no absolute wholeness, for to be is to be in process," said Dyck.

A good theodicy, said Dyck, "while it does not require us to limit either the ultimate power or goodness of God, accepts the world like the one we live in, with all its built-in mechanisms and forces and entails God's self-limitation. If it is good for there to be a universe with genuine relationships, choices and growth, then we must accept the context of struggle and danger. And there is no reason why I should be exempt."

Referring to a chapter by John Cobb in *Encountering Evil*, Dyck said, Cobb says we ought not to start
continued on page 12

—Affirm and express appreciation for their contributions.

—Begin a Sunday school class and fellowship group for the mentally disabled.

—Study together Scripture passages dealing with the disabled. What can we imitate from Christ's ministry with these individuals?

—Invite a disabled person (or persons) to speak about their journey toward wholeness.

—Plan a worship service around the theme of "disabilities." Examine the relationship between disability and suffering, and faith in God.

—Plan a Sunday school unit of study on the disabled. *Invited to the Banquet* is an excellent collection of short stories and discussion questions on the disabled. This booklet is available through MCC.

—Become acquainted with the various community services and resources available for the disabled.

—Encourage members to "volunteer" with community agencies that work with the disabled.

—Listen to the disabled for clues as to their needs. Ask them for ideas as to how the church can more effectively minister to their needs.

—Form support groups for families of the disabled (i.e., emotional, financial, and/or prayer support).

Integrating the disabled into church life is an exciting and rewarding privilege! The benefits are great—not only for the disabled, but even more so for the congregation. Christ affirms this privilege in Luke 14:12-14 when he says, "When you give a luncheon or dinner (or church potluck), do not invite . . . your rich neighbors; if you do, they may [repay you]. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind and *you will be blessed (Italics added)*. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." What an opportunity to be instruments of God's love and grace!

Let our prayer be the same as Karen Peters':

"Open our eyes, Lord, and teach us to live with disabilities. Teach us not to ignore the beam in our own eyes when we are rubbing shoulders with someone whose splinter is visible. Teach us to support each other, working together in our weaknesses, bringing out the best in each other, and filling in where we sense a need.

Teach us to be careful with our words and actions, lacing them with your special love. May we always plug in to the true source of power as we strive to minister to people with disabilities around us, realizing that we too are coping with individual disabilities as we live out our lives" (by Karen S. Peters, in *Invited to the Banquet*).

The Board for Congregational Life is committed to networking people and programs in this area of ministry. If you have resources to share, wish to know what other congregations in the denomination are doing, or wish to become more involved in this area, please contact one of the following offices:

Ken Letner,
BCL Executive Director
Box 163
Mt. Joy, PA 17552

Sandi Hannigan
BCL Associate Director
305-232 King St. N.
Waterloo, ONT. N2J 2Y2

Dan Houck
BCL Associate Director
501 Pine Meadow Drive
Lebanon, PA 17042 ■

Theological forum . . .

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from ideals and then subtract shortcomings, but to begin with actual behaviors of humankind, including the holocaust, and then allow ourselves to be astonished by all the examples of kindness, honor, sacrifice and honesty that appear among us."

The biblical writers also assumed a view of a weak humankind, said Dyck. "[They] found a basis for theology . . . in the breakthroughs of God in their history, occasions in which his saving purposes became clear. We can, therefore, accept frailty, illness, tragedy, alienation and brokenness simply as part of creaturely existence. Wholeness, then, is a rather modest concept."

Accepting human limitation "frees us to devote ourselves more fully to life and helping others . . . [and to begin] the process of transcending the very limitations we accept, for we cease to be imprisoned by our situation."

"The Bible's emphasis on shalom is not only the articulation of a vision for humankind, but also of a gracious redemptive provision," said Dyck. "It stands at the center of the idea of salvation." The biblical nar-

rative is liberally dotted with accounts of physical, emotional and spiritual healing.

The faith of the biblical people consisted "in their presuming outrageously upon the compassion of Jesus," said Dyck. "We should not be indignant when the disabled air their requests in the church with some persistence. We should regard it as a compliment."

Three people responded to Dyck's address. Herb Smith, professor of philosophy and religions at McPherson (Kan.) College, said the reason for God's self-limitation remains a mystery. "Our questions asking *why* in the face of suffering and tragedy are more a statement than a question. We are looking for affirmation, a hug, a soft eye," he said.

Brenda Martin Hurst, co-pastor of Tabor Mennonite Church in rural Newton, Kan., asked, "What would it mean to come to terms with the church as it is? The church is a community of human creatures It is disabled, but as it accepts itself as it is, it can transcend its weakness" and demonstrate unity in Christ.

"We feel a need to square things with theology" before acting, said Ned Lakin, executive director of Northview Developmental Services Inc., Newton. He cautioned against viewing disabled people as tragic.

"We work at our own wholeness as we help others become whole," he said.

Other presenters at the forum included several people with first-hand experience with disabilities. Elva Suderman of Hillsboro, who contracted polio at age 13 and now suffers from post-polio syndrome, asserted, "We are people first, people with disabilities second," she said.

Dellis Dyck of Hutchinson, whose 22-year-old son, Doyle, has Down's syndrome, told of the range of emotions she experienced after Doyle's birth. "All of us bleed in different ways," she said.

Acceptance of her son's disability came when he was about four. Until then, she said, "He was throwing us a world of rainbows, and all we could see were thunderstorms." They realized that Doyle "could go as far as he was allowed to go, as long as we didn't hold him back." Doyle is now living independently.

"Every situation is different," said Cheryl Flaming of Hesston, whose husband, Warren, suffered severe brain damage in a one-car accident in 1979. Although Warren is disabled, she said, the situation is not disabled. She urged that when those around us experience a crisis, "even if you don't know what to say, be there. Don't turn your back."

The forum also included small group discussion and plenary sessions.

"All things theoretical must be given legs," said Harold Dyck in his closing message in the evening. "When people are really in pain, what do they want? . . . The assurance that God wants to hug them, how they fit into the world they're out of kilter with."

Is the "mentality of the village" being lost in the professionalization of care? Dyck asked. The village mentality, which accepts each person as a part of the corporate community, can be felt in the church, Dyck said. "Disabilities remind us of our need for each other," he said.

Marjorie A. Jantzen is a staff writer for Mennonite Weekly Review.

Mennonite Your Way announces '89 tours

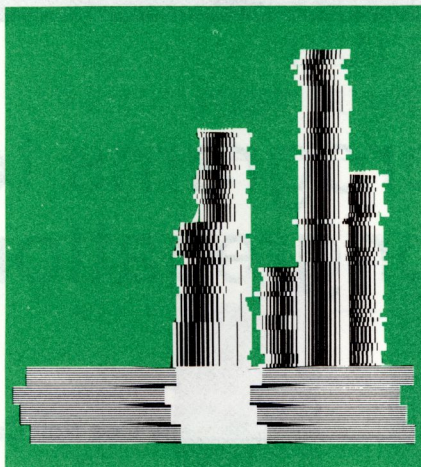
Mennonite Your Way Tours has just released its 1989 schedule of unique tours of interest to Christian folks. "Our tours may not be for everyone," says Leon Stauffer, co-owner/operator of MYW tours, who along with his wife, Nancy, plan and personally escort most of the tours. "We emphasize Christian fellowship, storytelling and singing as we travel. Of course, we visit many of the same sites and attractions as other tours, but the added dimension is the interaction which happens within the tour group."

"We're not big-time tour operators," says Nancy, "but the tours are planned carefully. We try to make each person feel important. We like to give personal attention."

Multi-day tours for 1989 include: *Williamsburg, VA* April 24-26; *Ottawa Tulip Time*, May 8-12; *Nova Scotia and Maritime Provinces*, July 15-26; *New England Coast and Colors*, September 25-30; *West Virginia and Blackwater Falls*, October 5-7. All lodging will be in modest motels/hotels. Occasionally there will be a fellowship meal with a church group along the way.

One-day tours include: *Spring Maple Festival*, April 5; *New York City*, May 6; *Philadelphia and Diamond Street*, June 24; *Raystown Lake and Belleville (Pa.)*, October 17.

Complete information and daily itineraries are available for each tour. Write MYW Tours, Box 1525, Salunga, PA 17538 or phone 717/653-9288. ■



Double Duty Investments

by Peter H. von Keyserling

This is the second in a five-part series about the Jacob Engle Foundation and how it functions to serve the Brethren in Christ Church. The author is executive director of the Jacob Engle Foundation.

We are called by the Scriptures to be good stewards. Each of us has probably heard numerous Scripture references quoted and cited by the local church treasurer, regional conference treasurer, Board for Stewardship, and from any number of radio and television ministries. The oft repeated message of stewardship has perhaps dulled your ear to God's call to be good stewards of all he has given into our care. Nonetheless, the message is as true and to the point today as it was in Old Testament times when our Lord told the parable of the talents to his followers. There does seem to be some confusion between investing the resources God has entrusted to us for gain and giving it away to some worthy ministry. Many times the call to donate funds and resources is wrapped in the words of stewardship without stressing the responsibilities of complete stewardship. "Give 'til it hurts" is hardly a phrase depicting good stewardship.

We are called to make the best use we can of the resources entrusted to us. For most of us, if we gave away all we have, we would not be able to continue earning. Usually you need to have some investment in order to earn. Your investment may be the clothes you wear to work, the car you commute in to work, a place to live, etc. There are always some basic requirements which one can term either expenses or investments that are necessary to earn a living. Living also has a few unpredictable events that absorb one's resources, therefore it is prudent to have some resources set aside

to cope with these "emergencies." Each of us has learned to invest our money where we get the greatest return. This is good stewardship. There is always a risk when investing for a return. Thus we weigh the risk against the possible gain and loss. The more secure the investment, usually the smaller the gain over a given period of time. In the biblical parable, the one who buried his talent in the ground was certainly secure and relatively, if not completely, risk free. So risk free that there was no gain. We can learn from this parable that we are expected to take some risk in order to make some gain. The question remains, "How much risk for how much gain?" Each of us would like to invest our resources in some enterprise where with only a little risk we could double our rate of return.

The Jacob Engle Foundation can help achieve that desire. In the first article in this series you learned about the loan functions of the foundation. This second article deals with the investment operation. The formula is really quite simple. When you make an investment with Jacob Engle Foundation, what you are really doing is making a loan to the foundation. In return for this loan, the foundation agrees to pay you interest. Interest is a fee for the use of money. It is just like renting a property and paying a rental fee for its use. When people loan their money to the foundation, the foundation can combine those monies to make a loan to a church. The church pays interest on the money it borrows. So the foundation collects a number of small investments and loans that money in larger amounts to churches and pastors. In order to pay the expenses of performing this service for the Brethren

in Christ denomination, the foundation pays a lower interest to the investors and charges a slightly higher rate to those borrowing the money. The difference (spread) is the amount the foundation requires to operate.

The foundation offers three types of investment. The first is the Thrift Accumulation Plan (TAP) account which is equivalent to passbook savings accounts. The second is time deposit certificates which have durations from one to three years. These time deposit certificates have either a fixed interest rate for the period, or a variable rate. The third type is an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) which is the same as any banking institution offers. The foundation can open new IRAs or accept rollovers from other institutions.

When you invest in our Lord's work you receive a return paid as a heavenly reward which neither rots, tarnishes, or depreciates; and it is risk free. It is always the best investment a Christian makes. We make this investment in a number of ways: charitable works; support of our local and national church budgets; gifts of a variety of resources, including money and land, over and above the budgetary needs of both our local and national church work. The truth is that whenever we reach out a helping hand in Christian love at home or anywhere in the world, we are making an investment. We don't know if the rate of return on that investment can even be computed and it is probably not numerically important in God's economy. We do believe that the return on the investment is more than adequate!

Whenever we can find an investment opportunity in this world which also

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Computer programs to serve your congregation

by Coe Neil Cabe

A computer in your church can help you serve people, save time, manage records, create reports, and build program. It is easy to learn, relatively inexpensive, and fun! But will it really work?

Last month, I wrote our newsletter in a varied two-column and three-column format, complete with computer-generated illustrations and headlines of various sizes. I sent a graph of third quarter attendance to the bishop, used CompuServe Information Services to talk with people from all over the United States simultaneously, began to generate a report for a board meeting, easily did four bulletins, and designed a registration form and a poster for an upcoming Peace Chapel seminar on "Communion With God."

I also wrote the seminar using my word processing program, and set it up to print out as a little booklet, which we will run off (cheaply!) on the church copier. The booklet includes a beautiful cover, tests for participants, graphs, and illustrations.

Finally, I added a new field to the membership forms as we build a prayer chain, and added four new members to the file. Whew!

Yes, it works. It saves time, and serves the Lord Jesus Christ.

But is it really easy to learn and use? Clearly, it takes a little time to learn these programs, but anyone can do it, if they can read and type.

This article will review for you some programs I use often at Peace Chapel, and which I heartily recommend to any computer user. We are IBM-compatible

at Peace Chapel, but similar things exist for other brands. This is just easiest.

The base for our computer-aided ministry is a wonderful \$129 program called PFS First Choice. This is an integrated package—it does a whole bunch of things.

The package, in one set of disks, includes a word processing program, spelling check, data base (for membership files and mailings), a report generator for financial information, a spread sheet for your treasurer, a graph program for the bishop and the church board presentations (see illustration), and a communications program which will connect your computer with almost any other, including huge information systems.

And all of the "pieces" will communicate with each other. You can include graphs in reports, spreadsheet information in graphs, and send any information over telephone lines.

I have long thought how wonderful it would be if all church planters could simply hook up with each other once a month via CompuServe or some other information service. We could all talk with each other at the same time for the price of a local phone call!

I also use First Publisher, which is another of the PFS line of programs. This is a simple desk top publishing program. With it, you generate newsletters, flyers, menus for church dinners, invoices and forms, and greeting cards. It includes a large number of professional illustrations, and makes for professional presentations.

How about simply managing your church? The Church Management Directory program does it all! This little program, developed by a minister for ministers, produces mailing labels, information lists, postcard addresses and

cards, statistics, visitation cards, date lists, attendance tracking, member lists by functions in the church, and more.

A series of three programs I have found very helpful in counseling include the Marriage Analysis Profile, the Personality Profile, and the Life Stress and Coping Inventory.

The programs all offer strong biblical information for areas which are critical in marriage, personality development, and stress management. They are wonderful! I use them for premarital sessions, and am able to point out troublesome areas before trouble occurs. And, each person has good biblical information to take home after the session.

Speaking of the Bible, QuickVerse Bible Concordance offers the King James, Revised Standard, or New International Versions of the Bible on disk. With this, you can search any word or string of words in seconds, print out the references as you go, and prepare a soundly biblical basis for your sermons and Bible studies very quickly.

I did a search for "wine" and "strong drink," for a presentation on alcoholism, and found 26 pages of references! In 10 minutes!

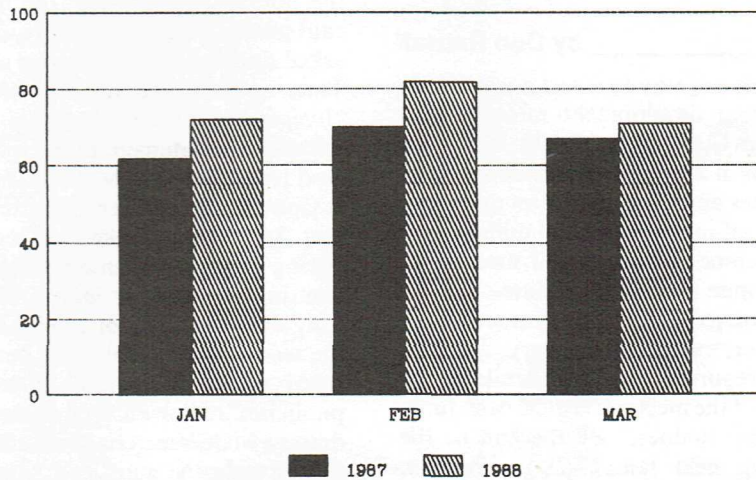
There are, of course, games. My granddaughter sits happily on my lap while we play "Big Bird Delivers The Mail"! I confess that is about the only game I play, though.

Last year, Peace Chapel gathered 15 young persons with some interest in computers. We scavenged some old equipment, set it up in the Sunday school room, and formed the Peace Chapel Computer Club. The youngsters learned about computers, had fun, and most of them attend church regularly.

They also sold what is called Public Domain Software at a local computer

One in a series of articles highlighting ministries of the Board for Evangelism and Church Planting. The author is pastor of Peace Chapel, Ravenna, Ohio.

PEACE CHAPEL FIRST QUARTER COMPARISONS



1987 and 1988

show. Public Domain Software is a large number of very useful programs written by private individuals. A disk full of stuff costs about \$3.50, with some writers requesting further payment should you use the program regularly. It is an honor system of sorts, and a fine resource for valuable information.

The world of computers is perhaps too large for the average individual to

break into easily. We all need help to get started.

Eric Brettschneider, a charter member of Peace Chapel, owns a computer sales and consulting service in our area. He has consented to give anyone who calls as much information and help as he can, as long as you pay for the phone call. Call Eric at (216) 688-2390 if you would like information. He has copies of all of

This graph was produced in five minutes using PFS: First Choice.

the software mentioned here, and can tell you whatever you need to know. He can also help with hardware questions.

Further information on specific programs is available as follows:

Church Membership Directory
Software for Ministry
P.O. Box 40167
San Diego, CA 92104

Marriage, Stress, Personality
Wellness Publications
Box 2397
225 W. 30th Street
Holland, MI 49423

PFS: First Choice and
PFS: First Publisher
Software Publishing Corp.
P.O. Box 7210
1901 Landings Drive
Mountain View, CA 94039-7210

Other programs
Eric Brettschneider
Erictronics
209 N. River Road
Munroe Falls, OH 44262

Investments . . .

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works as an investment in the kingdom of Christ, then we have an investment worthy of our consideration. In our present age most of us keep our money in some form of interest bearing account rather than in the mattress or buried in the backyard. That was the least that one talent in the parable should have been invested in, ". . . put with the money lenders so that it would have at least earned interest." The reward went to the two persons in the parable who doubled their return on the investment. An investment with the Jacob Engle Foundation can and does do double duty. It earns interest in the currency of this world, though at a slightly lower rate than one could find elsewhere. However, that investment is turned around and put to work assisting in

financing the work of the church as it promotes the gospel in this country and abroad. Thus it works at least twice, once for the kingdom and once for you. Some people even get extra mileage from their investment by making a gift of the interest earned to help support the foundation and the church.

The foundation is required to register in each state where it routinely accepts investments. It is presently registered in 14 states. The legal requirements differ slightly. These requirements change frequently. The requirements in most states have become more stringent because of the abuse by a number of investment firms. The purpose of these state requirements is to protect the investor from losing his or her investment in bad or even illegal investment opportunities. The foundation operates within the requirements of each state where it has investors. It maintains the required cash reserves, files audited statements, and provides additional supplemental infor-

mation. The foundation currently has about 800 investors. We would like to have a larger representation of the brotherhood investing in the future of their church. We have realized approximately one fifth of the potential 5,000 Brethren in Christ investors that could support their church through the foundation. Church growth requires both commitment and investment.

The key element is that investments, even when they earn slightly less interest but serve the church *and* the individual, represent one of the areas of good stewardship that our Lord taught in his parable. If you are interested in making a "double duty" investment, call the Jacob Engle Foundation at 714-985-8200 (California) or 717-697-2634 (Pennsylvania) for information and a prospectus which gives interest rates and time intervals as well as general information about the foundation's operation. Be a participant in as many branches of church life as you can!

Ministry by committee:

Continuing the message

by Don Ratzlaff

To the casual observer, it may be the ultimate church committee—in the best and worst sense.

So large—37 members—that microphones are needed to ensure that everyone around the huge circle of tables can hear the discussion.

So diverse—representing 19 states and provinces and eight supporting constituencies—that many members have only a passing acquaintance with their fellow participants.

An agenda so involved that the members' annual workbook (reportedly written with an eye toward clarity and conciseness) stretches 227 single-spaced pages.

Issues so complex that even staff, who work full time on such things, confess to feeling overwhelmed at times by the enormity of the challenges.

An infrastructure so involved that the lines of accountability resemble Charlotte's web more than organizational flow chart.

Is this any way to direct a worldwide relief and development ministry that includes just under 1,000 in-service workers in 52 countries outside the United States and Canada and an operating budget of more than \$32.6 million?

Welcome to the annual meeting of Mennonite Central Committee.

Echoing the candid assessment of one observer, executive secretary, John A. Lapp reported with a sly smile at the outset of the meeting: "MCC can't function, but it does." By the end of the meeting, held Jan. 27-28 in Phoenix, Ariz., the observation was verified anew. All things considered, MCC functions remarkably well, thank you.

Visitors who came to the annual meeting looking for news—specific action and bold new initiatives—were likely disappointed. Partly by design and partly by default, these gatherings are primarily informational and discussion-oriented. The hands-on work of hammering out policies is handled dur-

ing quarterly meetings of the more manageable 12-member executive committee.

That doesn't mean annual meetings aren't significant. "How do you say to the poor, the oppressed, the insignificant person that God loves you?" Lapp asked during his introductory remarks. Then he answered his own question: "Everything done around this table is essentially a statement to the world that God loves you."

Committee members were reminded that MCC communicated God's love during the past year in acts as simple as planting a tree and as complex as agonizing over the effect of foreign debt on the world's poor. Love was communicated in the aftermath of six well-publicized major natural disasters that drained MCC's material aid warehouses, as well as in the quiet exchange of visitors from one culture to another.

But for every good work done "in the name of Christ," the MCC staff and board encountered new challenges and hard questions. Amid the flow of facts and reports, several issues floated to the surface and caught the attention of the committee.

Internationalization. Specifically, who should MCC work with in projects around the world, how should they work with them, and what should they do if their partners have ideas and approaches MCC dislikes?

As if to illustrate the challenge, several guests were on hand to contribute an international consciousness: a delegation of four church leaders from the Soviet Union; Dankwart Horsch, representing International Mennonitische Organisation (IMO), a European counterpart of MCC; and Mari Malgwi, representing a body of native leaders called "MCC Nigeria." Malgwi in particular talked about the need for North American financial assistance but administrative autonomy as his organization seeks to develop ministries in that African country.

"Without question, the number one policy question of the year is: what does it mean to work internationally in the 1990s," Lapp noted at meeting's end. He pledged to "give more sustained attention" to this issue in the coming year with the hope of having a "major discussion" on the topic at the next annual meeting.

World conditions. In a world struggling for survival, the challenges confronting Mennonite Central Committee

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MCC U.S. board names Lynette Meck as new executive secretary

Lynette Youndt Meck of Akron, Pa., was named new executive secretary of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. at the board's annual meeting January 26.

She will assume the responsibilities of this office July 1989, replacing J. Wilmer Heisey who will retire after serving in this position seven years.

As executive secretary, Meck will oversee the 14 departments within MCC U.S., some of which are Peace Section, the Immigration and Refugee Program and the four U.S. regional offices.

For the past five years, Meck has served as the director of the MCC U.S. Service Program, which has some 110 workers in 13 locations. From 1966 to 1968 she worked with Eastern Menno-

nite Board as a secretary at the New York University Medical Center. From 1968 to 1971 she worked at Media Ministries (then Mennonite Broadcasts) in Harrisonburg, Va., with the Heart-to-Heart program.

Meck earned a bachelor's degree in English from Manhattan College in Riverdale, N.Y., in 1982 and attended Columbia University in New York City in 1983 while working there. She is now working toward a master's degree in religion at Lancaster (Pa.) Theological Seminary.

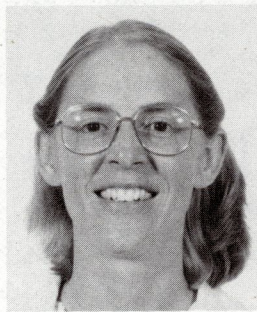
Meck and her husband, Gerald, are members of Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church. They have two children, Tanya and Ryan. ■

MCC names Heisey, Myers, Brubacher to administrative positions

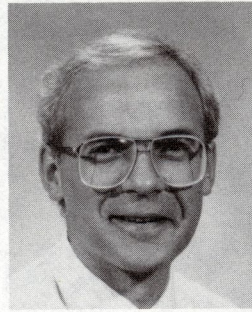
Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Executive Secretary John A. Lapp has announced placements made in three administrative positions. The new staff people will assume these positions in 1989.

Nancy R. Heisey of Ephrata, Pa., has been named new MCC director of administration and resources and associate executive secretary. Heisey and her husband, Paul Longacre, are currently staff people for the Mennonite International Study Project, sponsored by Mennonite Board of Missions, MCC and the mission boards of three district conferences of the Mennonite Church.

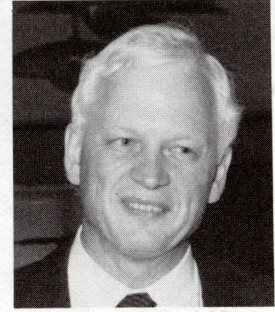
A graduate of Messiah College, Hei-



Nancy Heisey



Ray Brubacher



Paul Myers

sey worked in MCC's Akron headquarters from 1976 to 1984, most recently as an administrator in the MCC Africa Department and earlier as staff writer in Information Services. During 1985 she was MCC country representative in Burkina Faso. From 1973 to 1976 she served with MCC in Zaire.

Heisey will begin her new assignment in August 1989, taking the place of Reg Toews, who has been associate executive secretary since 1985.

Ray Brubacher of Elmira, Ont., has been named director of the MCC Overseas Program. Brubacher is pastor of the Elmira Mennonite Church. From 1972 to 1981 he was secretary of the

MCC Africa Department and from 1967 to 1972 he and his wife Margaret served in Zaire with MCC.

Brubacher will begin his new assignment in September 1989.

Paul E. Myers of Akron, Pa., will become director of SELFHELP Crafts in mid-1989, when current director Paul Leatherman retires. Myers has been MCC secretary for South Asia and the Middle East since 1981.

From 1975 to 1981 he and his wife Katie served in Bangladesh, where Paul was country representative. He was MCC secretary for Financial Services from 1966 to 1971 and served with MCC in West Germany from 1960 to 1963. ■

Continuing the message . . .

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are numerous and complex. "Three biggies" rose to the fore of discussion: environmental degradation and the ability to grow food; the consequences of war; and the massive foreign debt burdening many developing countries.

On the first two counts, staff could point to specific programs that address not only the negative effects of such calamities, but also the causes. But on the debt issue, both staff and board expressed frustration and helplessness because of the enormity of the problem.

According to Karen Kenagy, assistant secretary for Latin America, developing countries owe well over \$1 trillion to lending institutions in affluent countries. For the first time in history, poor nations are paying more money to rich countries to service their debts than they are receiving from those countries in the form of aid. The effect of these debts on the poor in developing countries is devastating and far reaching, she said.

In one of its few concrete actions, the board embraced a suggestion from Delton Franz, director of the MCC U.S.

Peace Section Office, that MCC write letters and arrange for personal visits to encourage legislators in Washington to take constructive action. The first-hand observations of overseas workers on the impact of foreign debt could be influential, Franz said.

Declining applications. Given their conviction that MCC is primarily a "people resource" organization, committee members were concerned about a significant decrease in service applications during the past two years. Gerald Shenk, secretary for personnel services, reported that MCC received 18 percent fewer applications in 1988; during 1987, applications fell by 10 percent.

He suggested four reasons for the decline: collage-age people today are less idealistic and more career-oriented; the pool of college-age people is smaller; MCC qualification requirements are more specific; and persons in the pew perceive that MCC cannot use "my" skill.

Pressed to speculate on the primary cause, Shenk said he feared the fourth reason may be more prevalent than MCC would like to believe. "The interest is out there," he said. "The problem may be how well we're matched for that interest." But Shenk assured the com-

mittee that MCC was receiving sufficient "quality" applications to fill vacancies without lowering its standards.

In other matters, the committee:

- accepted program plans for 1989 that call for a total budget of \$32,610,000 (including material aid). Built into the budget are funds for "extra emergencies" totaling almost \$1.9 million that could be cut if projected increases in giving do not materialize.

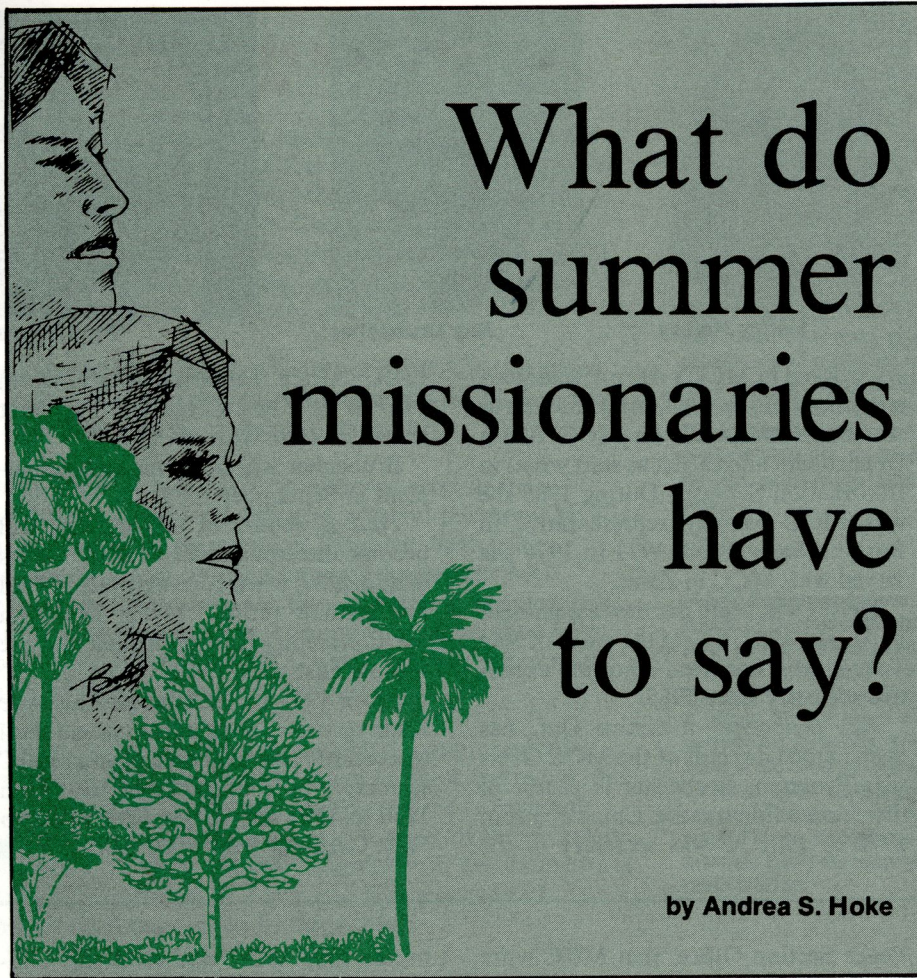
- approved a statement clarifying the aims of MCC regarding sharing material aid.

- bid farewell with appreciation to Elmer Neufeld as outgoing chairman of MCC and to Norman Shenk as outgoing treasurer. The two have collectively served 27 years on the committee. Shenk will continue as a member.

- elected Ron Mathies, a Mennonite Brethren from Elmira, Ont., as their new chair, and Phil Rich, a Mennonite Church member from Archbold, Ohio, as vice-chair.

- elected Levi Sommer, Sarasota, Fla., and Joanne Sauder, Grabill, Ind., and reelected David Chiu, Saskatoon, Sask., to the executive committee. ■

Don Ratzlaff is editor of the Christian Leader. A Meetinghouse article.



What do summer missionaries have to say?

by Andrea S. Hoke

During the summer of 1988, more than 70 Brethren in Christ and Messiah College young people spent a portion of their summer overseas participating in over 18 summer missions programs. What was the impact on their lives, what kind of contribution were they able to make, and how are they responding to this life-changing experience? Let's take a look and see!

No one participating in a summer missions program returns to North America without having been influenced in some way by their summer experiences.

"Mexico was an eye-opening, heart-softening, and life-changing experience. While I was there my eyes were opened to the real needs of people and how much we take for granted here in the U.S. My life was also changed by the impressions the people made and by the work God did" (Denise Manthey).

"There's no experience like it. So many others I've met who have come back from doing missions are so much more broadened in terms of their per-

spective on their life, the world, and our job as a Christian" (Sara Biscaye).

Spiritual growth reported

Almost every summer missions participant agrees that spiritual growth was a major benefit of their summer.

"I really learned a lot about the basics again—to focus on Jesus and not on doctrinal issues. I've never prayed so much in my life. What a way to develop a burden for the world!" (Nancy Hoefel).

"When I get home, I'll be able to witness so much more easily. I've also learned to rely on God and have daily devotions. Another way I grew spiritually was in worrying. I used to worry a lot, but God used my experiences to teach me to depend on him" (Brad Tengler).

"Again and again I realized that God is in control and that we are not our own but his. My walk as a whole was strengthened, especially my prayer life. I also acknowledged more fully that God's will is the correct way, not mine" (Chipi Graham).

"Because of the challenging nature of

my experience, I had to depend upon God for every day. The quality of my quiet times improved, as well as loving relationships with others, even when it was most difficult. I see this as God really working in my life to change me" (Susan Mercer).

"Even if you feel you are not called to long-term mission work after the summer experience, you will undoubtedly have grown considerably. It isn't necessarily easy to survive a summer missions experience, but sometimes it takes hard things to produce growth in our lives" (Ruth Miner).

What good things happened?

What kind of contribution are teens able to make to the missionaries and national churches?

"Many people have come to Christ, and there have been lots of seeds planted. We've seen a lot of people who are very interested but not sure if they want to make such a commitment" (Brad Tengler).

"Many people were saved, but even more seeds were planted" (Denise Manthey).

"I had opportunities to share with people about Jesus in spite of being in Mexico where I didn't know the language" (Elizabeth Clark).

"Workers are really needed overseas and are very appreciated even if it is just for a summer" (Susan Mercer).

Some participants had exciting opportunities to witness directly to nationals.

"I think the most exciting part of the summer was when we wrestled the Argentine wrestling team in Buenos Aires. The referees were terrible and extremely biased toward the Argentine team. Our Athletes in Action team decided to keep wrestling anyway and not argue with the poor officiating. After the match, the Argentine coach wanted to talk to us. He said he had seen in us something he had never seen in any other wrestling team. He asked us, 'Is it because you have more democracy in your country?' We had the perfect opportunity to share Jesus Christ with him" (Kurt Trucksess).

"I had the opportunity to pray with one of the Ningerum girls as she accepted Christ's gift of salvation. *That was exciting!*" (Ruth Miner).

"I was apprehensive about the evangelistic nature of the ministry because of my lack of experience. I felt a confidence and a peace that I know came from God" (Susan Mercer).

Input for the future

As a result of a summer overseas, many of these young people are struggling with how to respond to their experience and are seeking to discover what God would choose to do with their lives.

"And now I'm faced with other challenges: sharing my missions vision with people, using my time wisely, studying hard to honor God, and then—what on earth is next? I graduate soon and I'm not sure of anything but that I will hopefully return some day to Asia to serve God for whatever length of time, and that I want to continue following Christ through the long haul!" (Kathy Gunther).

Some are fairly certain that God is directing them to minister in North America instead of overseas.

"I learned that there are many ways that I can serve God here in the U.S. and have seen how many opportunities there are for sharing about God with others" (Elizabeth Clark).

Others desire to head overseas if that is the direction in which God is leading them, but are still uncertain.

"I am now considering the possibility of future short-term missions projects as well as praying about a long-term commitment, and I am asking for the Lord's guidance in this area" (Kelly Catherman).

"Even though this summer was hard, I think it helps assure me that missionary service has a possibility for me. I would definitely consider a one- or two-year term overseas" (Susan Mercer).

"Although I have not received the clear direction from God regarding my future that I had hoped to find, I feel I have developed more of a trust in God and his ability to control my future. I am sure that when the time comes, he will make his way clear to me" (Karen Schindler).

"It affected my whole life. I see my life as heading in different directions now. Whether or not that means missions, I'm not sure, but I definitely want to put my future totally in God's control—to live for God" (Sara Biscaye).

Some found the summer to be helpful in narrowing down the choices.

"It made me realize that I could not go as a single missionary and it showed me the importance of being involved in some type of ministry. I also learned that missions is nothing of which to be afraid" (Chipi Graham).

"Because of this summer I have decided not to push toward sport missions as much as I had previously intended. The Lord hasn't opened up any major doors yet, but I still have my heart dedi-

Young people gain an incredible amount of insight and perspective in a short summer missions experience

cated to missions of some sort. I had that conviction before I went on this trip, but the Lord has begun to clarify where he wants me" (Kurt Truckess).

And others sense a strong calling to prepare for future service overseas.

"I am definitely planning on career mission work. It is just a matter of the Lord's leading and his timing at this point" (Ruth Miner).

A new awareness of people

A summer overseas gives youth a new awareness of missions and a love for peoples of other cultures.

"I don't think you can really understand missions and God's personal command to share the truth until you experience it. Being in a foreign country also helps you realize that God is God of all, and all can know him" (Denise Manthey).

"It's a great opportunity to see the mission field first-hand" (Susan Raudenbush).

"One of the highlights was worshipping with nationals in the village church. Although we didn't speak the same language and couldn't sing the same songs as the nationals, it was a beautiful experience." I knew we were praising the same God and had been redeemed through the blood of the same Jesus Christ. The service structure was rather different from what I am accustomed to in the States. It was refreshing to know that there is no 'right' way to conduct a worship service, but that praise and worship are universal nonetheless" (Ruth Miner).

Some difficult times

Lest these quotes give you the impression that a summer overseas is "all gain and no pain," let's look at the difficult and frustrating aspects as well.

"I guess the hardest experience was Boot Camp. (That's the place where we trained for two weeks before our team went on the field.) We had to live in tents, wash ourselves and our clothes in buckets, and survive the mosquitoes. But, the reason they make Boot Camp so tough is to make us trust in God" (Brad Tengler).

"Not being able to give up and go home when things got bad was hard. I got very sick for a week with a Belgium flu and hated being there while I was so sick" (Sara Biscaye).

"Some of the relationships on my team were difficult. This put a strain on the ministry. Working through these things and forgiving and forgetting was hard" (Susan Mercer).

Any recommendations?

After having been through the good and bad, do participants recommend a similar experience to others?

"I would most definitely recommend a summer missions experience. It is one of the best ways to sense the need abroad and make one more sensitive to the work here in the States. If nothing else, it promotes an awareness of the world and a deeper dependence on God and others" (Tim Roussos).

"I would definitely recommend it to others because it is a great learning experience and a sure way to be used by God. I learned more about Taiwan, God, and myself than I could ever learn in a textbook" (Chipi Graham).

"Yes, very much. Teens will grow in the Lord more; they will trust him more. And, it is great working for other people who are in need. Be sure to tell teens they need to go—if not into other parts of the world, into their own town helping other people and telling them that they need Christ" (Mark Taylor).

Young people gain an incredible amount of insight and perspective in a short summer missions experience. Pray that these youth will be able to keep their missions vision fresh and would continue to be open to God's direction in their lives. ■

In December 1988, Andrea Hoke completed two years of voluntary service at the Mount Joy missions office where she served as receptionist and summer missions coordinator. If you would like more information about how you can be involved in a summer missions program, contact Brethren in Christ World Missions, P.O. Box 390, Mount Joy, PA 17552, phone (717) 653-8067.

God at work in our world

A view from the outside

A missionary with Overseas Crusades in Swaziland recently gave a series of church growth, leadership, and evangelism seminars in Zimbabwe. Following are some of his reflections on that experience.

One of the denominations we were privileged to encourage is the Brethren in Christ Church. It is probably the fastest growing group in Zimbabwe right now. From a membership of 2700 in 1980 (the year of Zimbabwe's independence) to more than 10,000 in 1988, the church is experiencing phenomenal growth.

What is their secret? There are many contributing factors, but most important, apart from the Lord of the harvest, seems to be their *desire* to grow. They formed a church-planting team four years ago. Since that time they have continued to grow and will continue to grow.

In addition to the team, they were not afraid to try new ideas. And they were willing to meet together as congregations anywhere that was available. One group—which meets under a tree—began to meet there about eight months ago with just a handful of people. Now they have more than 200 members plus many more who attend. They gather in homes for midweek services, but they still meet under that tree on Sundays. I asked the pastor (a former factory worker) whether it is a hindrance for the church to meet in such a place. With a big smile, he admitted that there are some difficult moments, especially when it rains. But he praised the Lord because "it is a very good tree." You can't beat that positive outlook.

Seek and ye shall find

Lois Raser—Guadalajara, Mexico

The middle-aged lady sitting on the rough stone steps of her hovel seemed lonely. She spoke to me as I passed, climbing the last shale incline to our Center. "Has the Center been robbed again?"

I stopped, and the thought crossed my mind that her clean gingham dress

was like those my own mother had worn. "No," I said. "No more robberies."

Cuco, a tall, strong youth, came out of the hovel and said belligerently to me, "I'm angry at my grandmother," indicating the woman who had spoken. "She claims that my mother and I . . ."

"Those are family problems and are not to be discussed in public," said his grandmother in dismay.

God forgive me; I pretended not to understand. I was completely unprepared to answer, and I thought, "He's on drugs anyway."

His gang meets near the Center and smokes marijuana. One morning, climbing up to the Center carrying cookies, I passed them. Cuco called out, "Give us some cookies!"

Well, why not? I handed him a box for everyone. But he grabbed the box and ran away, laughing harshly over the protests of his friends. "He's made a fool of me—twice now," I thought, and I felt alone and inadequate.

A few days later, Beatriz (my long-time co-worker) and I stood in front of the Center, chatting with neighbors a moment before the start of a busy day. Between us that day we would give four Bible classes, I would teach reading, and she would handle 250-300 children.

Cuco approached with a red-faced friend. They were two young men ruining themselves with paint thinner and marijuana. Sober at the moment, their faces reflected the tragedy of their lives.

In his aggressive manner, Cuco said, "We want you to talk to us about God."

Beatriz and I stood beside them. "We have been praying for you, Cuco."

He looked up in wonder. "Praying for me?" His hard, desperate body quivered under the touch of my hand. Tears were near.

"Yes, praying for you, Cuco," I thought. "One day it might be my own son, God forbid."

I realized then that Beatriz is completely right. Her appointed task now—and mine—is to assign routine tasks as much as possible to younger hands and to seek hungry hearts in these vice-ridden neighborhoods.

Seek? We don't even need to *seek* them. They are right here among us, coming hungrily, desperately . . .

Endings and beginnings

Last September, when the Daryl Climenhaga family was moving from Ndola, Zambia, to a new assignment in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Lois shared some thoughts.

We leave the Brethren in Christ congregations in the Copperbelt with real regret. We are excited about what God is doing in them, even in the five months we have been here.

Daryl has been getting together with one man in the Ndola church each Monday morning. The man has just come through a difficult time at work and, as a result, he has grown significantly in his spiritual life. We have seen similar growth in others in the congregation.

We believe that the future of the churches in the Copperbelt is bright. The three congregations (Ndola, Mufulira, and Kitwe) are located 30 to 50 miles from each other. Ndola needs a full-time pastor to take advantage of the vigorous lay leadership already present. Mufulira is unique among the Brethren in Christ in Zambia in that it has a few Tonga-speaking members. It has a new pastor who may be able to lead that group to significant growth. Kitwe has experienced good growth under its long-time pastor, George Hansumo. Pray for these churches as they seek to reach out into their communities. Pray that growth here will encourage revitalization in other parts of the church.

Pray also for the Theological College of Central Asia. Zambia needs more pastors trained at the college level. Pray that TCCA will fill that need and thus contribute to the building up of God's kingdom.

Such good experiences here mean that we feel sadness in leaving. At the same time, we are excited. A door that had been closed to us has opened in an almost miraculous manner. Pray for us as we make the transition to Bulawayo and to our fifth home this year.

Recent reports indicate that, in the past few months, both offerings and attendance have doubled in the Ndola congregation. Praise the Lord!

Evangelical Visitor

Gale Sewell:

ADJUSTING TO LIFE IN ZIMBABWE

by Kim Jacobs

Since May 1988, Gale Sewell has been serving with Brethren in Christ World Missions as a registered nurse at Mtshabezi Mission Hospital, Zimbabwe, Africa. The move to Africa certainly was a challenge for Gale. Not only was she beginning a new job, she was living in an entirely different culture as well. One aspect of her work, however, made it easier to adjust. This aspect was children. She shares some of her feelings about dealing with children.

A little girl who has tuberculosis responded to me when playing, and now every time she sees me she gets all excited. She would even let me hold and hug her; it was great. Of course, it shows that she is much better and, therefore, went home this past week. I am so happy for her. We also have an albino little girl with tuberculosis, and her mother is Jehovah's Witness; I have tried to share God's love with her and her family.

Gale also writes of a little boy, Godfrey, who has been in the hospital for several weeks because of malnutrition.

The other day on rounds, he smiled, and it was so cute. He still has a long way to go and many also have tuberculosis (results are not back yet), but God will continue to heal his little body. These are the little joys in my life with which God blesses me. It is a privilege to serve the Lord here.

Gale's work at the hospital occasionally requires her to make emergency calls. This adds a new dimension to her work. Adjusting to different driving rules and road conditions is quite a feat, as Gale describes:

Well, I have learned to drive a car on the opposite side of the road, as well as from the opposite side of the car. It is really different. In fact, yesterday the new ambulance was out on a well-baby clinic; the old ambulance was gone, and we had an emergency call. So, I took the mission car. The roads are all sand, and the path is winding. I frequently went up hills and could not see the other side; therefore, I had to slow down often. Well, we finally got to where the

patient was located. He was a 16-year-old boy who was unable to talk and was in severe pain with every move. When I saw him I was thinking it might be meningitis; cerebral malaria came to mind, too. We took him off the scotch cart (donkey cart) and into the back of the car (station wagon). He would moan and groan to every move, and the road, being as bad as it was with all the bumps and slowing down, sure did not help. We finally made it back to the hospital.

The teenager was diagnosed as having meningitis and is on the way to recovery.

Gale is also concerned in regard to her driving since she has yet to take the test to acquire her Zimbabwean driver's license. She has heard "that they are out to fail you."

The expansion of Gale's household by two people called for adjustment, also. Celeste Schiller, a registered nurse from Bensalem, Pa., also working with Brethren in Christ World Missions, arrived in the middle of August 1988 to work in the hospital. Furthermore, a Christian Zimbabwean who is both a midwife and a registered nurse came to work at the hospital. Living and working with this Zimbabwean woman is helpful to Gale as she attempts to learn the language.

In spite of the adjustments, Gale is happy that the Lord led her to Mtshabezi Mission Hospital. It is her prayer, "that God's love will shine through me to those around me and will cause them to ask the Lord into their lives as Savior and Lord." With this type of dedication to the Lord, Gale's roommates, the staff, and the patients especially should be richly blessed through her.

Kim Jacobs is a voluntary service worker in the Mount Joy, Pa., office of Brethren in Christ World Missions. This article is based on information from Gale's recent newsletter.

Christology the topic for "NORMAL '89" study

At the 1984 Mennonite World Conference in Strasbourg, France, a number of delegates agreed it would be a good experience for North American Brethren in Christ and Mennonite groups to meet together and study the topic of Jesus (or to use a theological term, Christology).

With that impetus, the Council of Moderators and Secretaries, which includes the Brethren in Christ, the Mennonite Brethren, the General Conference Mennonites, and the Mennonite Church, worked on planning such an event, which will be held August 4-6, just prior to the triennial meeting of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church. The opening session starts at 6:30 Friday evening, Aug. 4, and the conference concludes with worship Sunday morning at 10:00.

Entitled "NORMAL '89" (the name is taken from the meeting site, the Illinois State University in Normal, Ill.), the

conference will allow persons of at least the four sponsoring denominations to enter into serious dialogue concerning our understanding of the person, the work, and the ethical and missiological significance of Jesus Christ in the life and ministry of our people.

We hope to clarify our faith positions, to identify areas of commonality and difference, and to promote better mutual understandings and foster greater unity in and among our groups as we together witness that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Four major papers are being published in advance of the study conference: three of the plenary addresses, and a preparatory essay entitled "Believers' Church Christology in Historical Perspective," by J. Denny Weaver of Bluffton, Ohio.

The Friday night keynote address is "Christ, the Covener of the Church," by

John E. Toews. Saturday morning, George Brunk III will speak on "The Exclusiveness of Jesus Christ," while Harry Huebner's Saturday afternoon address is "Christology: Discipleship and Ethics."

Two Brethren in Christ are leading two of the focus group sessions: E. Morris Sider, "The Human and Divine Character of Jesus Christ," and Luke Keefer Jr., "The Importance of Experience versus the Doctrine of Christ."

Each Brethren in Christ pastor will be receiving a copy of the program. The study conference can accommodate only 600 registrants, on a first come-first served basis. The Brethren in Christ will have approximately 50 places available. For those interested in attending, registration forms may be secured from the General Secretary, Don Shafer, P.O. Box 245, Upland, CA 91785.

There are modest scholarship funds available for seminary students and others who may want to participate. Applications for these scholarships can be obtained from Bishop Glenn A. Ginder, P.O. Box 9587, Wichita, KS 67277. ■

Twenty-five gather in Central America to discuss conscientious objection

Twenty-five people representing all the countries of Central America met recently near Choluteca, Honduras, to reflect, study, and talk about work on conscientious objection, military service, and alternative service.

The conference was planned by Honduran Mennonite pastors and sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

The themes were significant given the current situation in Central America, where people face mandatory military service, growing militarism, continuous war, and economic and social tension.

The group wants to "be consistent and committed to our Anabaptist tradition and to be witnesses while offering an alternative of peace and nonviolence in a region convulsed by armed conflicts," read a group statement.

Cesar Vidal Manzanars, pastor at a small Brethren in Christ affiliated community in Madrid, Spain, was resource person. He spoke on the military draft in Spain and elsewhere and on conscientious objection.

Men from Honduras and El Salvador shared their stories of forced recruitment, and a man from South Africa shared experiences of conscientious objectors in his country. The group also had country caucuses and heard panel discussions and testimonies.

Numerous recommendations were made. Among them were: that peace education be done in congregations and among church leaders; that a network of solidarity and communication be created among churches in the region; and that groups committed to conscientious objection form to work toward obtaining legal provisions for conscientious objectors.

The possibility of establishing laws in favor of conscientious objectors varies among Central American countries. In Nicaragua, for example, forced recruitment by the military occurs; many young Nicaraguan Mennonites have been recruited.

In Guatemala, where the longest ongoing civil war in Central America rages, no forced recruitment has affected

Mennonites in the capital, Guatemala City. Mennonite churches in rural areas, however, have had members forcibly recruited.

Honduras is the most hopeful situation, wrote participants, because churches there have been working on the issue and have been working for laws in favor of conscientious objectors.

Despite the differences between countries, participants wrote that it is important to work urgently for laws favoring conscientious objectors, "since we live in a special historical moment. . . . Churches that still do not have the problem of forced recruitment ought to become prepared and those that already face it must seek alternatives and struggle to be consistent with our faith and peace testimony," they wrote.

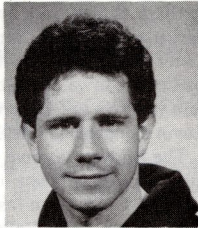
Cesar Vidal also offered advice on preparing legal documents and seeking government approval for conscientious objectors, basing his comments on past experiences as a legal counselor of conscientious objectors in Spain, Colombia, and Venezuela.

"We know we will face difficulties as we work for peace," summarized the group, "but we also know that God is the Lord of history and that we as his disciples must stand for life." ■

Church News

Begins MCC assignment

Lloyd Bowman of Arthur, W.V., most recently of Harrisburg, Pa., is beginning a two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Lancaster, Pa., where he will be working as director of Lancaster Mediation Center.



Bowman received a bachelor's degree in political science from Messiah College in Grantham, Pa. He was last employed as a temporary worker at Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency.

Bowman is a member of Grantham Brethren in Christ Church. His parents are Lee and Norma Bowman of Arthur.

Allegheny Conference

"God's Position on Abortion" was the Jan. 22 sermon topic at the **Air Hill** church, Chambersburg, Pa. • On Jan. 15, Susan Hartman spoke to the **Antrim** congregation, Chambersburg, about the Haven of Rest Farm, a ministry for troubled teens. • A mystery supper was planned for Jan. 20 for the Christ Crusaders of the **Big Valley** congregation, Belleville, Pa. • Warren Hoffman spoke in revival services Feb. 17-19 for the **Carlisle**, Pa., congregation. Elmer Berkebile recently conducted an administrative study for the congregation.



Laban and Annie (Wenger) Hock celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary Nov. 13 at the Carlisle church. They were honored by their children, Anna Mae Mountz, Elwyn, Wayne, Phillis Boyko,

October 17-18: Brethren in Christ Polity (Don Shafer) Grantham, Pa. (modified—not for seminary credit).

Except where noted, these courses are one week long and are approved for seminary credit through Ashland Theological Seminary. All of them are designed to meet ordination requirements.

In November 1988, many Brethren in Christ ministers (those in seminary or pursuing credentialing) received a letter and the "Toward Ordination" folder announcing these courses and the projections for 1990 with opportunity to complete a "Core Course Interest Form." All who register their interest in a specific course will receive detailed information regarding the course, along with registration forms, about three months before the date of the course.

The core course folder "Toward Ordination" is available from the Board for Ministry and Doctrine office (Glenn Ginder, Executive Director, P.O. Box 9587, Wichita, KS 67277; phone: 316/721-4727). This folder, listing projected dates and locations, is updated annually.

Donald, Ray, and Glenn. The couple was married in Chambersburg by Bishop Charlie Byers.

The **Cedar Grove** congregation, Mifflintown, Pa., was introduced to the GRADE program on Jan. 15. Joe Hyatt, church planter from Quakertown, was speaker for Youth Day, Feb. 5. • Ed Rickman, Dana and Judy Crider, Zoltan Kiraly, and Allen and Leoda Buckwalter spoke at the Feb. 1-5 missions conference of the **Chambersburg**, Pa., church. A Rodgers 755 organ was dedicated in January. • The musical "Psalty Kids Praise 4" was presented at Messiah Village on Jan. 20 by the children of the **Cumberland Valley** church, Dillsburg, Pa.

The **Fairview Ave.** congregation, Waynesboro, Pa., participated in the "50 Days for Christ to Visit My Community" Chapel of the Air Spiritual Adventure, starting Feb. 5. • The **Five Forks** congregation, Waynesboro, had a teacher training day on Feb. 4 with David Gough. • Joy Jacobs, author of *When God Seems Far Away*, was speaker for the Jan. 17 Women's Salad Supper of the **Grantham**, Pa., congregation. Jill Briscoe was the scheduled February speaker. • On Jan. 22, Don Zook spoke to the **Hanover**, Pa., congregation on behalf of the Board for World Missions.

On Feb. 5, Devon Bontrager shared with the **Locust Grove** congregation, York, Pa., about the work of the Board for Evangelism and Church Planting. A video of the Rachel Melhorn-Lazarus Phiri wedding in Africa was shown on Jan. 29. • The **Marsh Creek** congregation, Howard, Pa., had a Feb. 18 sweetheart banquet on the theme "Joy in our marriages and homes" with speaker Scott Ritchey. • The **Mechanicsburg**, Pa., congregation has hired a part-time secretary for the two associate pastors. • On Jan. 12, Mr. and Mrs. Doug Gettel spoke to the **Messiah Village** congregation, Mechanicsburg, about their service in Zimbabwe.

Rev. and Mrs. Wilbur Benner spoke Jan. 8 to the **Montgomery** congregation, near Upton, Pa., about their recent Africa trip. • Pastor and Ruth Schock of the **Mt. Rock** congregation, Shippensburg, Pa., planned to leave Feb. 13 on a Holy Lands tour led by Graybill Brubaker and William Harter. • The **New Guilford** congregation, Chambersburg, Pa., sponsored a Walk Thru the Bible seminar on Feb. 18. • The film "A Man Called Norman" was viewed on Jan. 22 by the **Roseglen** congregation, Duncannon, Pa. • Bishop Kipe and Louis Cober were two of the January speakers for the **Van Lear** congregation, Williamsport, Md. • John Melhorn was installed Jan. 8 as youth pastor of the **West Shore** congregation, Mechanicsburg, Pa.

Atlantic Conference

A representative of Timber Bay Children's Home spoke on Jan. 22 to the **Community Bible** congregation, Sarasota, Fla. The Dixie Melody Boys gave a concert on Feb. 4. • Don Demaray of Asbury Theological Seminary was scheduled speaker Mar. 10-12 for a series of meetings with the **Cross Roads** congregation, Mt. Joy, Pa., on "Healing and Wholeness." The weekend ended with a service of prayer for the healing of human

Four "core courses" scheduled in 1989

The Board for Ministry and Doctrine has a "big year" in core courses planned. The four core courses, approved by the 1986 General Conference as a requirement for all ministers to be completed before ordination, are being received with enthusiasm. In 1988, three of the courses were offered. In March, 11 people in Canada enjoyed E. Morris Sider's presentation of "Brethren in Christ History." In June, Martin Schrag led a stimulating study of "The Theology of the Church" for 13 people on the west coast, and 6 west coast ministers participated in a modified three-night "Brethren in Christ Polity" course with Don Shafer.

In 1989 various courses will be available at four different settings:

May 31-June 5: Brethren in Christ Polity (Don Shafer) at Navajo Mission

June 19-24: Brethren in Christ History (Morris Sider) Upland, Calif.

August 7-12: The Theology of Salvation (Luke Keefer, Jr.) Roxbury, Pa.

hurts. • An Atlantic Conference Congregational Life Festival was held Feb. 19 at the **Elizabethtown**, Pa., church. Dwight Thomas began as Minister of Music on Jan. 1.

The **Fairland** congregation, Cleona, Pa., hosted a zone rally Jan. 29 with speaker Donald Kraybill on "The Upside Down Kingdom." The Fairland bulletin includes a few lines of "spiritual homework": a theme, memory verses, and Scripture reading for the week. • Gerald and Lucille Wingert were at **Fellowship Chapel**, Bronx, N.Y., on Jan. 22 to share their music ministry. Two persons were baptized Jan. 15. • In January, Pastor Burgard of the **Free Grace** congregation, Millersburg, Pa., started a series of messages on the Tribulation. Paul Hostetler spoke on Jan. 15.

The **Hershey**, Pa., congregation recently studied *Unleashing the Church* by Frank Tillapaugh. • Bishop Harvey Sider spoke on Jan. 15 to the **Holden Park** congregation, Orlando, Fla. On Feb. 18, the church hosted a BBC seminar, "A Consistent Pro-life Position as a Christian." • The **Hummelstown**, Pa., church welcomed two new members in January. The film "In His Steps" was shown Jan. 22. • The outreach commission of the **Lancaster**, Pa., church has discontinued newspaper ads, instead enrolling for six months in a new resident listing service. Eleven new videos were added recently to the library.

Daryl Leisey of Christian Action Council spoke Jan. 15 to the **Manor** congregation, Mountville, Pa., on biblical teaching and legislative issues related to abortion. The New Age Movement was the subject of the Feb. 5 services. • The men's choir from Teen Challenge ministered on Jan. 15 to the **Mt. Pleasant** congregation, Mt. Joy, Pa. • The youth of the **Palmyra**, Pa., congregation planned a ski trip to Allentown on Feb. 4. • On Jan. 18, Bill and Mary Hoke showed slides of their recent trip to India to the **Pequea** congregation, Lancaster, Pa. "Precious moments with the Lord" was the theme of the Feb. 10 sweetheart banquet.

On Jan. 22, the **Refton**, Pa., congregation viewed "Blessed Assurance," a dramatic musical on film about the life and songs of Fannie Crosby. A number of youth are involved in one-on-one Bible studies with adults. • Dave Myer, chaplain of Lancaster County Prison, was the Jan. 22 speaker to the **Skenks** congregation, Elizabethtown, Pa. • On Jan. 15, Mr. and Mrs. John Harnish, workers among Jehovah's Witnesses, shared with the **Silverdale**, Pa., congregation a better, more compassionate way to deal with visits by the sect than merely to say, "I'm not interested." The youth donated half the proceeds from their rock-a-thon to a sound system project.

The **Skyline View** congregation, Harrisburg, Pa., had a roller skating party on Jan. 18. • On Jan. 11, the **Stowe**, Pa., congregation viewed a video of Henry Ginder speaking on "Change in the Church." • On Jan. 8, Phil Keefer of the office for planned giving gave a workshop on wills for the **Summit View** congregation, New Holland, Pa. • On Jan. 16-20, the Board for Evangelism and Church Planting sponsored "Advance '89," a seminar for church planting pastors and spouses in Leesburg, Fla.

Canadian Conference

Charles Norman was scheduled for special services Feb. 19-23 with the **Falls View** congregation, Niagara Falls, Ont. Kelly Unrah was the guest speaker and musician for the Ladies Coffee Hour on Jan. 17. • On Jan. 15, Norma Steckley gave a report to the **Heise Hill** congregation, Gormley,

Ont., of her trip with the Gospel Tide Hour to China and other countries. • The **Houghton** congregation, Langton, Ont., recently baptized six persons and received six new members. • The senior youth of the **Massey Place** congregation, Saskatoon, Sask., met Jan. 13 for a Chinese-style progressive supper. Volunteer appreciation night was Jan. 26.

On Jan. 24, the **North East Community** congregation, Calgary, Alb., began a 12-week course on "How to manage your money." Ross Nigh spoke Jan. 22 on the church in Cuba. • The **Oak Ridges**, Ont., congregation scheduled revival meetings for March with Rev. Gerhard du Toit of South Africa. • On Jan. 8, the **Ridgemount** congregation, Hamilton, Ont., viewed the video "This Land Is Your Land." • The **Rosebank** congregation, Petersburg, Ont., eliminated their debt last December. Pastor Silvestro recently gave a two-month series of messages on "Christian Home Builders." A recently converted husband and wife were baptized together.

The **Sherkston**, Ont., church seniors met for refreshments and a nature film on Jan. 11. Feb. 8-12 were the dates of a marriage and family life series of services with Ruth and Eber Dourte. • Darrel and Anna Winger were installed Jan. 8 as pastoral couple of the **Stayner**, Ont., congregation. One hundred people attended a meal and grocery shower for them on Jan. 14. • The **Westheights** congregation, Kitchener, Ont., hosted a youth retreat, "Now '89," on the theme "New Outside and Within" with Perry Engle as resource person.

Central Conference

The Northeast Ohio Singspiration was held Jan. 29 at the **Amherst** church, Massillon, Ohio. A resource task force has been formed to discover ways to improve communication channels within the church. • Eight persons from the **Ashland**, Ohio, congregation contributed their time recently to a work project at Fellowship Chapel, N.Y. • Eight new members were received recently into the **Christian Union** congregation, Garrett, Ind. Rick Collins was ordained Jan. 15 as an evangelist with the Evangelical Church Alliance. • Jan. 23 was a big day for the **Dayton**, Ohio, congregation: a concert by the Regal Brothers, a carry-in meal, and annual council meeting.

Conflict and troubled relationships were the focus of a Feb. 4-5 congregational retreat for the **Fairview** church, Englewood, Ohio, with Richard Blackburn as speaker. • On Jan. 29, the Messiah College group Spirit Sound sang in the morning service of the **Highland** church, West Milton, Ohio. The congregation has begun its 100th anniversary observance, to include monthly accents on the history and development of the congregation. A "Ministry and the Kingdom of God" seminar was Feb. 9-10. • The **Lakeview** congregation, Goodrich, Mich., has begun a youth choir ministry for grades 2-8.

On Jan. 18, the youth of the **Morrison**, Ill., church served a mystery banquet to the congregation. • The **Pleasant Hill**, Ohio, congregation participated in the Chapel of the Air 50-Day Adventure. The youth saw a film promoting Teen Mission International on Jan. 15. • "Cry from the Mountain" was shown on Jan. 8 to the members of the **Sippo Valley** congregation, Massillon, Ohio. • Feb. 11 was set aside as a couples' retreat day at Quaker Haven for the **Union Grove** congregation, New Paris, Ind. They talked with Al Buhler about effective communication. • The

Western Hills congregation, Cincinnati, Ohio, had a money management seminar with Phil Keefer on Feb. 5.

Midwest Conference

On Feb. 5, the Warren Hoffman family shared in music and message with the **Abilene**, Ks., congregation. Two days of revival activities followed. • The **Bethany** congregation, Thomas, Okla., had a dinner on Jan. 17 to honor those who completed reading through the Bible in 1988. Pastor and Barbara Rickel were away on a missions trip to Africa and England, Jan. 23-Feb. 15. • The Bob Lister family from the **Mound Park** church, Dallas Center, Iowa, has moved to Colorado Springs. Bob will be a self-supporting ministry intern with Kevin Longenecker at the **Community** church.

The Midwest annual conference was hosted by the **Mountain View** congregation, Colorado Springs, Colo. • An installation service was held Jan. 1 at the **Palm Valley** church, Pharr, Tx., for LeRoy Eberly, pastor, and Memo Zamora, associate. As a limited part-time pastoral team, the two plan to emphasize outreach and small group Bible studies. • The outreach group from Berean Academy gave a program Jan. 15 at the **Rosebank** church, Hope, Ks. • The **Zion** congregation, Abilene, Ks., sponsored Family Day Jan. 8 at the YMCA in Junction City. The congregation hosted the General Board for Congregational Life meeting on Feb. 11. The board members sponsored family life workshops on Feb. 12, and teacher training on Feb. 13.

Pacific Conference

The Pathway Pioneers of the **Moreno Community** congregation, Moreno Valley, Calif., had their snow camp, Jan. 27-29. • Good News Club, a Child Evangelism Fellowship ministry, began after school on Jan. 18 hosted by the **Pacific Highway** congregation, Salem, Ore. Bishop Wenger spoke on Jan. 29. • The **Riverside**, Calif., congregation had an Ash Wednesday service on Feb. 8 involving prayer, music, exhortation, and searching. A video on Mother Teresa was slated for Mar. 4. • Bill Hoke served in February as interim pastor for the **Upland**, Calif., church. Fred and Grace Holland spoke Feb. 5.

For the Record

Births

Colangelo: Stephen Anthony, Jan. 22; Steve and Beth (Hock) Colangelo, Hollywood, Fla.

Fore: Breann Nicole, Nov. 27; Tim and Kim Fore, Chambersburg congregation, Pa.

Gold: Alexandra Lynne, Jan. 10; Dwight and Amy (Martin) Gold, Manor congregation, Pa.

Groh: Ian Mitchell, Jan. 9; Fred and Joan (Mussmon) Groh, Manor congregation, Pa.

Grove: Ryan Keith, Jan. 23; Keith and Kim (Gipe) Grove, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Harper: Angela Marie, Nov. 26; Robert and Barbara Harper, Chambersburg congregation, Pa.

Herchelroath: Bradley David, Jan. 12; Dave and Lori Herchelroath, Elizabethtown congregation, Pa.

Herr: Paige Elizabeth, Jan. 5; Stuart and Cynthia (Galebach) Herr, Manor congregation, Pa.

Hess: Kevin Larry, Dec. 28; Larry and Susan (Barry) Hess, Fairland congregation, Pa.

Horner: Joseph Richard, Dec. 23; John and Martha (Graybill) Horner, Montgomery congregation, Pa.

Hunsberger: Denise Renee, Jan. 9; Allen and Darlene Hunsberger, Pequea congregation, Pa.

Jara: Jacqueline Corena, Dec. 27; Bert and Jackie (Johnston) Jara, Upland congregation, Calif.

Kendig: Tifanie Aston, Feb. 3; Craig and Angie Kendig, Dayton congregation, Ohio.

Martin: Roanna Gail, Dec. 30; Galen and Nancy (Kopp) Martin, Mt. Pleasant congregation, Pa.

Mathewson: Bethanee Marie, Nov. 22; Michael and Lynette (Hall) Mathewson, Upland congregation, Calif.

Miller: Andrew David, Dec. 1; David and Patti Miller, Quebec City congregation, Que.

Musser: Amanda Ann, Dec. 12; Bryan Musser and Kristy Musser, Elizabethtown congregation, Pa.

Risser: Jason Lamar, Jan. 11; James and Kay (Owen) Risser, Manor congregation, Pa.

Ritchey: Amanda Joy, Jan. 19; Randy and Vicki Ritchey, New Guilford congregation, Pa.

Saylor: Evan Richard, Dec. 30; Steve and Kathy Saylor, Cedar Grove congregation, Pa.

Sider: Hannah Clare, Nov. 29; Mark and Jane Sider, Mangochi, Malawi; Houghton congregation, Ont.

Solis: Gabriel Lloyd, Jan. 8; Ricardo and Keren (Martin) Solis, Chambersburg congregation, Pa.

Struss: Benjamin Paul, Dec. 28; Norman and Amy (Merlack) Struss, Fairland congregation, Pa.

Weddings

Barnhart-Carbaugh: Hazel Ruth Carbaugh and Benjamin Ross Barnhart, Jan. 29, in Mercersburg, Pa., with Rev. Wilbur W. Benner officiating.

Egolf-Besecker: Kathy, daughter of Rev. Wilbur and Connie Besecker, Waynesboro, Pa., and Terry, son of Amos and Edna Egolf, Waynesboro, Dec. 17, at the Five Forks Brethren in Christ Church with Bishop H. Frank Kipe officiating.

Grove-Horn: Stacie Ladoux, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Larry Horn, Upper Strasburg, Pa., and Kevin Jay, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Grove, Chambersburg, Pa., Dec. 10, in the Air Hill Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. William Baublitz officiating.

Heberling-Miller: Susan Jean, daughter of Beulah and the late Kenneth Miller, Washington Boro, Pa., and Dana Bryce Heberling, son of Russel and Fern Hitz, Lebanon, Pa., Jan. 7, at the Manor Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John Hawbaker officiating.

Montgomery-Lenehan: Dawn Michelle, daughter of Dan and Nora Lenehan, Colorado Springs, Colo., and Kirk, son of Warren Montgomery, Sioux City, Iowa., Dec. 17, at Woodmen Valley Chapel with Rev. Bill Knott officiating.

Phiri-Melhorn: Rachel, daughter of Mr. and the late Mrs. Lloyd Melhorn, York, Pa., and Lazarus, son of Mr. Edward Phiri and Ms. T. Kanbenju Phiri, Zambia, Africa, Dec. 3, at the Lusaka Baptist Church, Zambia.

Rockwell-Marrone: Pamela Lee, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jerry L. Marrone, Chambersburg, Pa., and James Nelson III, son of Mr. and Mrs. James N. Rockwell, Jr., Hagerstown, Md., Sept. 17, 1988, in the King Street United Brethren Church, Chambersburg, Pa., with Rev. Paul Baker officiating.

Schultz-Barley: Laurie Michelle, daughter of Henry and Marsha Barley, Lancaster, Pa., and Gregory Wayne Schultz, Jr., son of Timothy and Marilyn Silvius, Lancaster, Jan. 21, at Manor Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John Hawbaker officiating.

Sider-Roberts: Pamela Jo, daughter of Bud and Liza Roberts, San Jose, Calif., and Bruce Alan, son of Harold and Ardys Sider, Upland, Calif., Aug. 20, 1988, at Lincoln Glen Church with Rev. Glen Miller officiating.

Stine-Gettel: Judy Kay, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jay Gettel, Shippensburg, Pa., and Timothy Ray, son of Dr. and Mrs. Ray Stine, Shippensburg, Dec. 26, at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.

Taylor-Speck: Patricia Speck, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rogers, Perry, Iowa, and Mark, son of Eva and the late Richard Taylor, Dallas Center, Iowa, Jan. 14, at the Mound Park Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Dwayne Potteiger officiating.

Thrush-Brenemann: Carol, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. John Brenemann, Shippensburg, Pa., and Irvin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Irvin Thrush, Sr., Shippensburg, Jan. 14, at the First Church of God.

Wolf-Myers: Patricia Lynn, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Myers, Chambersburg, Pa., and Norman Eugene, son of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Wolf, Orrstown, Pa., Nov. 26, 1988, in the Air Hill Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. William Baublitz officiating.

Wolff-Hainley: Lisa Marie, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gary Hainley, Greencastle, Pa., and Richard Douglas, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Wolff, Greencastle, Dec. 31, at the Antrim Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Wilbur W. Benner officiating.

Obituaries

Brenaman: Albert Brenaman, born Jan. 25, 1907, died Dec. 23, 1988. He is survived by his wife, Mary L. (Leiter); a son, Paul A.; two daughters, Grace J. Brenaman, and Ruth A. Wise; a sister, Mary H. Brechbill; and two grandchildren. He was a member of the Messiah Village Church, Mechanicsburg, Pa., where the funeral service was held with Rev. J. Robert Lehman officiating. Interment was in Grantham Memorial Park.

Bricker: Monroe C. Bricker, born July 14,

1893, died Jan. 12. He was preceded in death by his wife Lillian. Surviving are a son, Vernon H.; a grandson; three great-grandchildren; a sister, Edith Kreider; and a brother Harry. Monroe was a member of the Shenks Brethren in Christ Church, Elizabethtown, Pa., where the services were held with Rev. James Artz officiating. Interment was in the church cemetery.

Conn: Robert John Conn, born July 26, 1912, died Dec. 14, 1988. He is survived by a daughter, Lynda Steadman; and four grandchildren. Robert was a faithful adherent at New Life Brethren in Christ Church, Collingwood, Ont., until he moved to Hamilton, Ont., at which time he attended the Ridgemount congregation until his death. Funeral services were held at Collingwood and Hamilton.

Eshelman: Viola Pearl Eshelman, born June 27, 1900, died Jan. 6. Surviving are 2 sons, Derald and Orval; a daughter, Faye Glenney; 12 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; and a sister, Grace Brubaker. Viola was a resident at Upland Manor and a member of the Upland, Calif., Brethren in Christ Church where the funeral service was held with Rev. John Snook and Rev. Alvin C. Burkholder officiating. Entombment was at Bellevue Mausoleum.

Eyster: Raymond Landis Eyster, born Sept. 23, 1880, died April 23, 1988. Preceding him in death were his wife, Miriam (Engle); and two sons, Alvin and Ira. He is survived by a son, Melvin; and five daughters, Naomi Cassel, Alma Akin, Lela Engle, Agnes, and Vera. Raymond was a member of the Bethany Brethren in Christ Church, Thomas, Okla., where he served for many years as deacon. The funeral service was held at the church with Rev. Charles Rickel and Rev. Warren Hoffman officiating. Interment was in the Bethany cemetery.

Foreman: Iva May Foreman, born Jan. 13, 1901, died Jan. 25. She is survived by a son, Robert L. Foreman; a daughter, Faye Bert; a sister, Delta Gramm; a brother, Charles Arnett; five grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. She was a member of the Upland, Calif., Brethren in Christ Church. Funeral services were held at the Stone Funeral Home with Rev. Robert Hempy and Rev. Alvin C. Burkholder officiating. Entombment was in the Bellevue Mausoleum.

Hershey: Mary P. Hershey, born Aug. 13, 1906, died Dec. 27, 1988. Surviving are her husband, Clyde; 2 children, Fern Heise, and Dale L.; 7 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; a sister, Elsie Gramm; and 2 brothers, Raymond Paulus and Orville Paulus. Mary was a member of the Pleasant Hill, Ohio, Brethren in Christ Church where the funeral services were held with Rev. William Hoke and Rev. Thomas Kershner officiating. Interment was in Pleasant Hill Cemetery.

Leas: Grace Bordner Leas, born in 1899, died Dec. 10, 1988. She was preceded in death by her husband Ervin in 1965. She is survived by a brother and sister, and nieces and nephews. Grace was a member of the Valley Chapel Brethren in Christ Church, E. Canton, Ohio, and served for years at the Valley Chapel Memorial Home and other community homes. The memorial service was held at the church with Rev. Eric Stanton officiating. Interment was in York County, Pa.

Long: Yorkley R. Long, born Mar. 22, 1916, died Nov. 27, 1988. He is survived by his wife, Velma; 3 daughters, Marilyn, Shirley, and Ruth; a son, Clifford; 11 grandchildren; 2 great-grandchildren; and 3 brothers, Ira, Arthur, and Verne. He was a member of the Houghton Brethren in Christ Church, Langton, Ont., where he served as deacon for 12 years. The funeral service was held at the

church with Rev. John Sider and Rev. Brian Loft-house officiating. Interment was in Cultus Cemetery.

Minter: Samuel Minter, born April 26, 1903, the son of John A. and Emma Frey Minter, died Jan. 6. He is survived by his wife, Ruth; 2 daughters, Marilyn Wolgemuth and Lois Hoover; 2 sons, Mahlon and Mark; 16 grandchildren; 9 great-grandchildren; and a sister, Esther Noel. He was a member of the Abilene, Ks., Brethren in Christ Church. The funeral service was conducted by Rev. Henry Landis and Rev. Marion Book. Interment was in Union Cemetery.

Myers: Ruth C. Myers, born Dec. 14, 1906, died Jan. 18. She was preceded in death by her husband, Alvin M. Myers. Surviving are 4 sons, Alvin, Levi J., Joseph B., and David M.; 18 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; and 3 sisters, Nettie Teal, Lucy Nigh, and Rhoda Tyrell. She

was a member of the Messiah Village Church, Mechanicsburg, Pa., where services were held with Rev. Rupert Turman and Rev. Avery Musser officiating. Interment was in Mechanicsburg Cemetery.

Nye: Thomas "Elwood" Nye, born Feb. 18, 1915, died Nov. 18, 1988. He is survived by his wife Grace. Thomas was a World War II veteran and a member of the Mt. Rock Brethren in Christ Church, Shippensburg, Pa., where the funeral service was held with Rev. John Schock officiating. Interment was in the Spring Hill Cemetery.

Schock: Katie Herr Schock, born Dec. 24, 1912, the daughter of Simon and Katie Herr Ginder, died Dec. 28, 1988. Preceding her in death was her husband Jacob Frey Schock. Surviving are two sons, Richard and J. Eugene; two daughters, Kathryn Roberts, and Linda Yousey; six grandchildren; a great-granddaughter; a brother,

Irvin Ginder; and four sisters, Mabel Hennigh, Stella Koser, Lizzie Shonk, and Fannie Heisey. Katie was a resident of Messiah Village and a member of the Manor Brethren in Christ Church, Mountville, Pa., where funeral services were held with Rev. John B. Hawbaker and Rev. John Schock, Sr., officiating. Interment was in the Shock family cemetery.

Skeives: Herbert Skeives died Dec. 25, 1988, in his 91st year. He is survived by his wife, Flora, of 64 years; five children; and several grandchildren. Herbert had been a faithful member of the Ridgemount congregation, Hamilton, Ont., since 1971.

Stern: Amos K. Stern, born April 2, 1912, the son of Rev. Aaron H. and Catherine (Kensinger) Stern, died Jan. 16. He is survived by his wife, Verna M. (Stoner); two daughters, Doris J. Hess, and Mary Ann Brubaker; 5 sons, Harold W.,

Money Matters

Four reasons I love to tithe!

Recently, while waiting for the program to begin at a local theatre, I overheard the conversation of a man sitting behind me. He said, "The thing I don't like about churches is that all they ever talk about is money! Every time you go to a church function, there they go again asking for more money."

I must admit there have been abuses in this area. This man's criticism has some truth in it. However, if we back off from honestly holding forth and practicing this vital part of our Christian walk—namely the ministry of tithing, we rob ourselves and others of great spiritual blessings and contribute to the restrictions imposed on world evangelism by insufficient funds.

Over the years that I have been walking with the Lord, I have come a long way, from criticism much like the man in the theatre, to a heart that *loves* to tithe!

The giving of the tithe (ten percent of one's income) was a God-given principle of Old Testament times. The Prophet Malachi stressed the need to give "offerings" in addition to tithes (3:8). And he went on to say that the Lord will open the windows of heaven to pour out blessings on those who faithfully give the tithe (3:10).

In the New Testament Jesus endorsed the tithe and the Apostle Paul stressed the importance of weekly giving (1 Cor. 16:2) as a part of our worship experience. He was concerned that such giving by Christian worshippers not become a "drag" because of giving grudgingly, and he observed that "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

You see, there is the rub. Previously, I was giving. But I had not experienced the joy of giving. I did not see that this practical and tangible act was a meaningful and beautiful expression of worship—until I discovered the four keys to joyful giving.

First: joyful giving celebrates! That's right; every time I give my tithe to the Lord, I am actively participating in celebration!

One part of my celebration is *worship*. You see, tithing reminds me that I need to put God first in my life. And that is worship in the highest sense. Another part of my celebration is *purpose*. Tithing not only celebrates my worship of God, it also lifts up an important purpose of my Christian life—putting others before myself! This is what Paul refers to as the mind (will, purpose) of Christ (Phil. 2:3-7). Yes, giving our tithes and offerings is a celebration!

by Kirk L. Zehnder

Ronald L., Joel R., A. Kenneth, and Charles E.; 15 grandchildren; a brother, Jacob; and 2 sisters, Ruth Romberger, and Esther Kibler. Retired and living at Messiah Village, he was a member of the Oil City Conference of the Free Methodist Church, having served as pastor in that conference and in the Brethren in Christ churches at Martinsburg, Canoe Creek, Eight Square Chapel, and Sherman's Valley. A memorial service was held at Messiah Village Chapel with Rev. J. Robert Lehman officiating. A funeral service was held at the Martinsburg, Pa, Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Earl E. Herr and Bishop Emeritus Charlie B. Byers officiating. Tributes were brought by Rev. Clarence Brubaker, Dr. A. Kenneth Stern, F. J. Taylor, and Rev. Elbert Smith. Interment was at the Fairview Cemetery, Martinsburg.

Tribute

We share with you the loss of a brother, a devoted father, and a faithful servant of the Lord.

For over 40 years since his ordination, Rev. Stern served the church in dedicated, sacrificial leadership. He joined the ranks of ministry when it was customary for the pastor to provide his own support. He cared for his family and provided leadership for the church while he carried on the rigors of farming.

Rev. Stern is remembered for his devotion to his family. His seven children have followed him in dedication to the church and in service to Christ. He shall be missed by his family and many friends.

Today we share this loss, but with the certain joyousness that he stands in the presence of the Lord, where Jesus will say to him, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter into the joys of thy Lord."

Albert N. Smith
Assistant Moderator,
Allegheny Conference

Tuck: Dean Tuck, born July 8, 1902, the son of David and Emma Tuck, died Dec. 26, 1988. He was preceded in death by four brothers, Fred, Newton, Herbert, and Davison. He is survived by two sisters, Anna Tuck and Myra Volkmann. Dean was a retired farmer and an attender at the Bethel Brethren in Christ Church, Merrill, Mich. The funeral was held at the Whiting Funeral Chapel, with Rev. Bedsaul Agee officiating. Interment was in Richlawn Cemetery.

Zigler: Miriam Lillian Zigler died on Dec. 24, 1988, at age 74. Surviving are two daughters, Mae Evelyn Cleveland and Rachel M. Paneck; and four sons, Harold C., Ward L., Donald R., and David L. Miriam was a member of the Fairland Brethren in Christ Church, Cleona, Pa. The funeral was held in Frederick, Md., with Rev. Vernon Bosserman officiating. Interment was in Charlestown, West Virginia. ■

Second: joyful giving liberates! Giving regularly and generously is the key to freedom.

As I begin to celebrate through my tithing, I find that I experience a liberating breakthrough in two areas of my life. First, my *heart* is set free. This may sound a little strange. How can obedient giving liberate my heart? The answer: It frees my heart from the pitfalls of covetousness (or in common terminology, "Keeping up with the Jones"). Jesus warned us about this deadly attitude of the heart (Luke 12:15).

Second, I experience a liberating breakthrough in *blessing*. Yes, God does want to bless his children! God promises physical provision and blessing to those who honor him with their tithes. However, this is not just "sanctified covetousness." It is a blessing which naturally follows obedience to God. It is a blessing which results more from giving than receiving (Acts 20:35). And this enables me to be a greater blessing to others.

Third: joyful giving educates! This may be a new thought to you. As I worship the Lord through tithing, I find myself receiving a helpful education.

One course in that education is *stewardship*. This is one of those "buzz" words that everyone uses; yet

few really know what it means—"the management of a household or estate." Sadly, some of the worst credit ratings belong to Christians. Some families have no budget, no savings plan, and no money left over for the Lord.

If I choose in my heart to begin giving at least ten percent of my income to the ministry of the local church, then I must create a budget and get my finances in order. If that isn't an education, then I don't know what is! Since I began tithing years ago, I have systematically lived on a budget that has enabled my family to have all our needs met, to prepare for our future, and to increase our giving above the tithe!

Another education course is in *priorities*. Tithing is a practical reminder and a continuing education that my first priority in life is to put God's kingdom first (Matt. 6:33). Making a weekly contribution to the church gives me a priority focus on the eternal, not the temporal (2 Cor. 4:18).

Fourth: joyful giving remunerates! Wouldn't you take advantage of an investment if you knew that it would offer a 100 percent return?

Jesus declared: "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children

or fields for my sake will receive an hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life . . ." (Matt. 19:29).

I know that some of you are saying, "Here we go again—one of those nuts who says that for every dollar I give I'll get 100." No, I'm not saying that and neither was Jesus. What he *was* saying is that if we put God first in our lives, and remember systematic giving as one expression of that priority, then we can expect an overabundant, eternal blessing from the Lord, a "hundredfold" blessing.

To conclude: John Wesley once wisely said, "Make all the money you can; give all the money you can." He had discovered the joy, the privilege, and the blessings of generous, regular giving to his Lord.

How about you? Do you love to tithe? Are you *celebrating*, are you *liberated*, are you *educated*, and will you one day be eternally *remunerated*? I hope so! If not, why not venture in faith today. Then you too can say with me, "I love to tithe!" ■

Kirk L. Zehnder pastors the Ontario (Calif.) Brethren in Christ Church. The above was reduced from a longer publication which he will be glad to mail at your request.

Messiah College News

1988-1989 Staley Distinguished Christian Scholar Lecture

Jill Briscoe, who visited the Messiah Campus February 14-16, was this year's Staley lecturer. Mrs. Briscoe is coordinator of Women's Ministries at Elmbrook Church in Waukesha, Wisc. and director of "Telling the Truth" media ministries. Her husband, Stuart, is pastor of Elmbrook, and together with their daughter, they have traveled around the world to speak at a variety of conferences and ministries.

Her Messiah audience found Jill to be real, down to earth, and disarmingly honest with a very healthy outlook on gifts, family, and ministry. Mrs. Briscoe has authored many books, and co-authored several with her husband. She is in great demand as an international speaker, and was able to come to Messiah this year only because an international trip on behalf of World Relief was postponed.

The Staley Distinguished Christian

Scholar Series is a project of the Thomas F. Staley Foundation of New York. The lectureship was established in the fall of 1969 by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Staley of Rye, N.Y., in memory of their parents, Dr. and Mrs. Thomas F. Staley and Judge and Mrs. H. H. Haynes of Bristol, Tenn. The foundation is firmly persuaded that the message of the Christian Gospel, when proclaimed in its historic fullness, is always contemporary, relevant, and meaningful to any generation. To this end they bring to college and university campuses of America distinguished scholars who truly believe in Jesus Christ and who can clearly communicate to students.

Sportsmanship of the highest order

The Messiah soccer team had much success on the field this season. But they received an award on January 14 that in a sense transcends their performance, and has direct relevance to the purpose and mission of Messiah College. The National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) awarded the Messiah College soccer team the inaugural Sportsmanship award. The award is a testimony to the commitment to the total development of the whole person

that is the cornerstone of Messiah's educational philosophy.

The award, initiated by the ethics committee of the NSCAA, was formulated to determine which school in Divisions I, II, and III received the fewest cards. In soccer, cards are given by referees for unsportsmanlike conduct. The Falcons were the only team in college soccer to receive not even one card the entire season. Coach Layton Shoemaker, who attends the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church, remarked, "Typically, a team that is not doing well might win the award, because the heat of competition is not as intense. But in spite of the grind of making it to the NCAA final four, our players maintained their composure." Assistant Coach David Brandt, MC '85, also attends the Grantham Church.

Dr. Joe Bean of Wheaton College, chairman of the ethics committee, said the award "speaks very well of the coaching job by Layton Shoemaker. I also think it speaks very well of Christian athletics in general and particularly the Messiah team and their example. Clearly, their example is a strong witness of Christian behavior." And a challenge to us all.

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BBC and Messiah sponsor public policy consultation

The Board for Brotherhood Concerns of the Brethren in Christ Church and Messiah College are jointly sponsoring a Consultation on the Church and Public Policy, to be held at Messiah College on April 4-6, 1989. This consultation is an opportunity for those interested in the church's role in influencing public policy to discuss ideas, concerns, and strategies while "gathered around the Word." Major objectives include exploring the historical development of the Brethren in Christ position on the church and public

policy, looking at models from other traditions, and discussing what a Brethren in Christ model for today might look like.

The consultation is part of Messiah College's Annual Lectures on Religion and Society. Major presenters include James McClendon, ethicist from Church Divinity School of the Pacific; Martin Schrag, Morris Sider, Doug Jacobsen, John Yeatts, and Ron Burwell of Messiah College; and Ronald J. Sider, president of Evangelicals for Social Ac-

tion. In addition, several people will be sharing their personal journeys regarding political involvement, and there will be question-and-answer sessions where participants can be involved in the discussion.

Personal invitations to the consultation have been sent to about a hundred individuals in an effort to insure a broad mix of perspectives and backgrounds. However, the consultation is open to any interested person. Registration, including meals, is \$50 (U.S. or Canadian); without meals it is \$25. Lodging will be provided in area homes at no cost.

If you are interested in attending, please send for a program and registration form from the Board for Brotherhood Concerns, P.O. Box 246, Mt. Joy, PA 17552; telephone (717) 653-8251.

Onesimus

Your letter, Paul, which you wrote enroute to Spain, just reached me. I can see that you are practicing what you wrote in your prison letter to the Philippian church, "Forgetting those things which are behind, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." So you state you will forget the mutterings of some of the church about which I wrote, and just press on with the missionary calling you have.

I can understand that on your part. But that still left the questions in my mind. Why do new missionary work when the established churches need so much help? Why spread the resources so thin with so many concerns socially and locally? Well, you will be interested to know that some answers came my way the other day when the Apostle Matthew visited our church here in Colosse. He was on a trip visiting the churches in Asia Minor thanking them for the continued help to the churches in Palestine. He was also working on and completing the story of the life and times of Jesus Christ. The good news—the gospel of Jesus Christ—he called it.

I told him about my questions to you and he smiled. "You know," he said, "this is most interesting. Look at what I have just written in the closing part of my story. The Lord Jesus has given his final command. See what he says, 'Go and make followers of all people in the world. Baptize them in the name of the

Father and Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything that I have told you until the end of the world.'"

With these words, father Paul, the light came on and I saw what I hadn't seen before and I understood your urgency in a new light. The Lord Jesus' command is "to all nations and peoples." Any church that does not obey that command will be a dying church. And then too I was struck by the fact that Matthew was writing his Gospel particularly for his fellow Hebrew people. That meant that the Jerusalem church had the same obligation for world-wide mission work as the church at Antioch or even here at Colosse.

But what about the spreading of the finances too thin? Matthew told me that for awhile the Jerusalem church became so preoccupied with their own internal needs that they began to go backwards in church life and membership. All they could remember was the glory and numbers of the early days. Then they looked at Antioch and its tremendous growth both in numbers and mission zeal, and they realized that the missionary spirit and vital life of the church must go hand in hand. They decided to give as much for the work abroad as at home. As a result, new life is being seen in the life of the church. And people are back to wholehearted giving as in the early days. They call it "the Barnabas spirit."

One further thing, beloved father in the faith. I began to make my own deductions on the question of social concern and the missionary spirit. I saw that these two must go together. Standing apart, the urgency for both will die. Properly joined, new believers will be brought to the Lord Jesus and churches will come into existence. There will be spiritual growth which will manifest itself in true spiritual social concern. I would be so glad to have your comments on these thoughts.

And do you know what? I shared these thoughts with the elders at Colosse and they have asked me to preach a message on these matters Sunday after next. Maybe the Lord is calling me into a preaching ministry. In the meantime I continue my prayers for you and the other team members as you labor in Spain. I hope to see you when you come back this way, for I presume you will want to take a report again to the Antioch and Jerusalem churches. Mercy and peace in Jesus Christ be yours. Your son in the faith,

Onesimus

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

Doomsday mentality

At a sleepover party, several teenage girls were sitting around talking. All but one agreed that because the earth is such an environmental mess, they don't want to have children. When the lone dissenter, Beth, argued in favor of having children even though she agreed that there are problems in the world, they accused her of not caring and not doing anything to solve the problems. She countered that not having children wasn't necessarily a solution either.

One rare morning at home, I turned on Phil Donahue. That day his guest was Ralph Nader, touting his recent book on safety in the home. As I listened to him describe all the potential hazards commonly found in many homes (from the chemicals in cleaning products, to high chair straps and baby toys, to food additives), I marveled that my children survived their early childhood, and I wondered what awful things lurk in our house even now. These days, however, I'm more aware of the hazards outside our house: threats of violence, drugs, abusive and promiscuous sex, AIDS, etc.

My work schedule will soon require that David come home from school by himself a couple days a week and let himself into an empty house. Up to now, he's been fortunate in that I've picked him up after school on my way home from work. He's not a very young child anymore, but he still has to walk almost a mile and a half on neighborhood

streets that, while they are usually safe, hold the possibility of danger. A recent incident in Stockton, Calif., is horrifying evidence of that.

In church settings, it often doesn't take much for casual conversations or serious Sunday school discussions to turn into a general condemnation of evil, particularly as it manifests itself in contemporary American culture. These discussions, of course, seem all the more to the point in light of the many biblical commands to separate ourselves from evil, to be alert to all the things that can "squeeze us into the world's mold."

In spite of the reality of evil in many forms and the Bible's clear call to a different way of life, I find this "doomsday mentality" tiresome and often not very helpful. "Doomsday talk" certainly comes easily—goodness knows, there's enough "doom" around!—but it so quickly seems to degenerate into collective hand-wringing that goes nowhere. There's a certain paralysis that results from continually being reminded of and/or spending large amounts of time and energy focusing on all that's wrong in the world. For parents, it's very scary to be aware of all the dangers our children face. We feel helpless to protect them. Our children feel that same fear and helplessness.

So what is accomplished by all this hand-wringing and talk about how awful the world is? I suppose it keeps us on our toes, so to speak, aware of all the subtle and not-so-subtle influences "out there" which affect us and our faith. It's easy to slip casually (and perhaps unintentionally) away from biblical standards of

morality and allow our culture's standards to determine our behavior. We need the church and each other to call us back—and perhaps sometimes that happens in the context of one of these "doomsday discussions."

I wonder, however, what useful purpose is served when, for example, our children become cynical and fearful, not only about the future but also about the present. We can blame our awful, evil-laden world for their cynicism and fears, but I think we might also work harder at modeling the kind of *hope* that is stronger than the "I-hope-I-get-an-A-on-my-algebra-test-tomorrow" variety.

Some time ago I was in a setting where the question was asked: "What gives you hope?" It was a difficult question to answer. The doomsday mentality seems to work against hope, because the focus is on the evil rather than the good, on what's wrong rather than what's right, on what we *shouldn't* do rather than what we *can* do. There's a place for identifying and confronting the world and the evil in it, but I also think it's important to be regularly reminded of hopeful things in our lives and in the world.

I want my children to grow up believing that the world is a good place for *their* children. I want them to know the truth about the world—but not a truth that emphasizes the bad and not the good as well. I don't want them to be innocent victims of the doomsday mentality. Instead, I want them to be energized by a hope that spurs them to positive action and behavior.

Phoebe

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.



A "doer" of the truth he lived by

Whether it was in his home community (Abilene, Kans.), or in construction of the large School Hall of the Choma Secondary School in Zambia, or at 958 Bedford Avenue in Brooklyn, N.Y., or at a Publication Board meeting in Nappanee, Ind., or poring over a set of building plans for another Navajo Mission project, or at Spring Lake Retreat in the Catskills, or at a lot of other places where courage, good judgment and availability were needed—there Samuel F. Minter served his Lord, his church, and his fellow human beings.

Velma and I, over about 35 years, came to know Sam and Ruth very well, but we certainly do not know the whole story. What we do know has been the flowering of two lives, enriched in service, graced in humility, showing signs of the wholeness promised to those in whom Christ's Spirit dwells.

Sam was a farmer;
Sam was a deacon;
Sam was a bank director;
Sam was a churchman;
Sam was a craftsman (iron & wood);
Sam was a volunteer;
Sam was a husband, a father, a brother, a friend.

John E. Zercher used to say that what is needed is the rare combination of having a soft heart with the capacity for hard-headed decisions. Over the past several decades Sam was discovered to embody that rare combination, and he was called upon for tough assignments in three countries after he had passed the normal age of retirement. Indelible stories remain in the memories of those who worked closely with him on knotty problems.

When Sam first responded to calls for assistance away from home, he went with work teams such as the Mennonite Disaster Service team cleaning up after the 1964 Alaska earthquake, construction teams to the Navajo Mission, etc. But, beginning in 1966, Ruth began to go with him, while the folks in their home community cared for things at home. Very quickly, Sam and Ruth were at home away from home. They always found real people to love—children, adults, volunteers, missionaries. On one occasion in the early '70s, at a home in Pennsylvania to which several missionaries were invited, three women around that table revealed that they were wearing clothing made by Ruth Minter.

Sam found a variety of ways to minister. In addition to being a deacon in the Zion (Kans.) congregation, he served on a number of boards: Jabbok Bible School Trustees (1948-56), Publication Board (1948-54, 1957-69), Upland College Trustees (1958-64), Navajo Mission Trustees (1958-73). He and Ruth rendered valuable service at Navajo Mission (1966-68), in Brooklyn, NY (1969), in Zambia (1969-71), at Spring Lake Retreat (1973-75), at Timber Bay Children's Home (1977) and in Bronx, NY (1977-78).

The five members of our immediate family each experienced the grace, the wit, the wisdom of Sam and Ruth Minter. For three successive summers in his early teen years, Paul lived with the Minters, learning the day-to-day work of Kansas farm life. Nancy also had one of her first away-from-home experiences there. Mary Jane accompanied her dad and Sam Minter on a cross-country driving trip which included overnight stops in the Minter home. When they went overseas, Sam sold his '67 Olds Cutlass to our family at a very special price. And, in April 1988, Velma spent three unforgettable days with Sam and Ruth while I attended meetings in Newton. All five of us bear testimony to the flowering of Sam Minter's gifts: a rare blend—good deeds, the language of faith, seasoned with sparkling good humor.

I last visited the Minter home on October 31, 1988. Arriving quite early and unannounced, I was received warmly by Ruth who then announced to Sam, who was bathing, that he had company. The delightful banter between them assured me that, despite his malignant tumor, the winsome spirit of this man of God continued to thrive. In 30 minutes of intimate sharing, Sam told of the Lord's gracious presence as he began walking into the valley of the shadow of death. His testimony of faith ended with these parting words, echoing the Apostle Paul, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Many other vignettes could be shared by friends and loved ones from their encounters with Sam during the final days of his earthly journey.

When, on January 6, we learned of Sam Minter's death in his 86th year, we tried immediately to share the word with all the members of our immediate family to whom Sam and Ruth mean so very much. This was completed by phone when Paul returned home from overseas. Paul expressed for all of us that, within the measure of our understandings, Sam Minter was a GOOD man.

This Kansas farmer had studied at Talmage High School, at Messiah in Pennsylvania, and at Beulah College in Upland, Calif., where he was editor in chief of the *Beulah College Echo*. Under his picture in the 1923 *Echo* are these words: "I dare do all that may become a man." Over a span of more than 65 years, Sam was a "doer" of the truth he lived by.

J. Wilmer Heisey

For 35 years, as a member of the Publication Board, superintendent of Navajo Mission, and executive director of the Board for Missions, Wilmer Heisey had ample opportunity to learn to know and appreciate Sam and Ruth Minter. Wilmer, who lives in Mt. Joy, Pa., retires this summer after serving seven years as executive secretary of MCC-U.S.

Bishops' Column

If I were starting anew

by Owen H. Alderfer

If I were beginning a new pastorate in 1989, I wonder what new shapes my ministry would take. I've been thinking about that and trying to incorporate some of the dimensions I would want to include.

As a bishop—someone who is not likely to be starting that new church—I see my role largely as supporting the pastors of the conference, affirming their ministries, and pointing to resources and aids appropriate for the ministries. Clearly, different pastors in the conference have different visions and emphases for their work, and each goes about his ministry according to his vision. The clearer the vision, the more likely it is that the pastor will achieve his goals.

For example, at least one pastor in my conference has evangelism as his primary goal. That is not all he does, but evangelism is paramount, and so he preaches evangelistic sermons, has evangelism teams operating among his congregation, and sponsors revival meetings a couple of times a year.

Another pastor focuses on nurture. He preaches expository sermons, develops small groups for nurture, and plans spiritual renewal times for building up the believers. Furthermore, this pastor keeps up a continuous flow of nurture work with selected persons in the congregation—one-on-one equipping of a few people so that they might become equippers within the body, multiplying the work of the pastor through the various people he has nurtured.

It may be purely academic to be thinking about this, but I've been giving some serious thought to the whole matter. What would be my focus, challenge, and emphasis if I were starting over today? Where would I begin?

It appears to me that the handwriting is on the wall: the focus and message have come home to us powerfully. We are being called upon to open up the gospel with clarity and power in whatever ways that calls for. We have to sensitize people to the times of our lives and help them find the God who is, the Christ of the kingdom, and the Holy Spirit who is God with us.

And, what's the urgency of this message and focus? The people of our land are losing their way in the things of the spirit. Media programs are showing increasing awareness of the paganization of America. People in the churches tend to miss these realities—unless we who are shepherds press through for God with information and lives and works of power in the Spirit.

Increasingly and surprisingly the great religions of the world are invading our cities and countrysides. Hindu, Buddhist, and Bahai temples along with Moslem mosques have come to take a stand beside our churches. And these people are *believers*. They can stand their ground. Add to the picture the occult religions that are calling people to Satanism, witchcraft, and an assortment of life-corrupting influences.

I feel the need to sensitize our people to the times and to equip them with the necessary information. Otherwise, our people will be lost for lack of knowledge. This calls

for more than a little curiosity about what Christians believe compared to the views of these religions. The gospel must be clear, giving a strong witness within the church and beyond.

This is calling us to generate an appetite for righteousness. There is no place in God's program for a casual, passive witness to a world that is losing its way. The call to put on the whole armor of God includes the breastplate of righteousness. Every piece of the panoply is important: righteousness is that special witness to the purity and strength of God's people as they shed light and bear the witness to God among all people.

God is calling us to be a part of a counter culture in this world. The world is adjusting to a great pluralism: as long as we can find some commonalities among what we believe and do, we can get along fine. Just don't worry about those specifics revealed and declared by a holy God! *Not so!* God has spoken! We must declare and follow him. It dare never be the other way around.

The call I sense is one that is full and demanding. There are things I have to know. There are things I have to be. There are things I have to do. In whatever shape that takes, I think God is calling us to something high and holy, a strong witness for God in a world, shared powerfully among a faithful people.

Owen H. Alderfer is bishop of the Central Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church.

