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Glen A. Pierce

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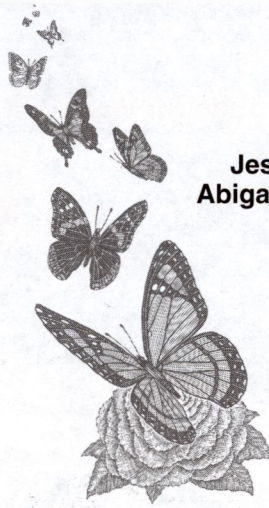
I feel

closer,



somehow

Special People



Jesse and Abigail Sider



Strength from a Butterfly

"Are you sure you'll be alright, Jesse? You don't need me to stay with you?" my grandma, Abigail Sider, asks with sincere concern in her voice. "You just sit in your chair and take a nap and I'll be back before you know it." She pushes a button and grandpa's large chair reclines, his feet and legs at equal height to his head.

As soon as her husband is comfortable, she rushes through the kitchen and out the door.

"Take care Abbie," my grandpa adds, but she is outside already, her car moving slowly down the lane.

Just two roads away from home, she gets out of her large grey Oldsmobile, her wrinkled, strong hand grasping the top of the door for support.

Into the ditch she ventures, making her way through towering cattails and weeds. Her dress camouflages her, its floral pattern blending with the creamy yellow hues of goldenrod and Queen Anne's lace in the vacant field. Grandma carefully inspects each milkweed, hoping to find something hidden on their undersides. The early autumn sun is quite warm, and sweat droplets form on her forehead as she softly sings a favorite hymn:

*Jesus is all the world to me,
My life, my joy, my all.
He is my strength from day to day,
Without Him I would fall...*

In a moment, the singing stops and a smile spreads across her face. Before Grandma stands a milkweed with two caterpillars feeding upon its leaves. With special care, she removes the plant from the field and places it in a Mason jar. Happy with her find, she turns back, heading toward the dirt road where the car is parked, eager to show her husband her treasures. Just as she reaches the car, a bright orange monarch butterfly floats past, immediately catching her attention. Grandma

glances at the caterpillars in the jar and her face lights up, as she anticipates the emergence of two beautiful, delicate butterflies.

This magical metamorphosis always fascinates Grandma, even after 50 years of collecting caterpillars. It is a reminder of God's power and control over her life. Instead of wearing a cross, Grandma wears a butterfly brooch to remind her of the Lord's faithfulness. Through all her hardships and difficulties in life, Grandma has always relied on the Lord and has been faithful to him. Even after losing her first husband, and her daughters losing theirs, she has continued to keep God at the center of her life. She knows that God is in control. He is the master and she is the servant.

Over the last several years, my grandpa's health has slowly worsened, causing him to spend his days in bed or in his chair in the living room. He is quite a large man and is sometimes difficult to care for. It takes someone with a strong will to look after him day by day. Even with her arthritis, grandma always manages to help him and unconditionally love him.

With a precious butterfly as a reminder, Abigail Sider always feels God's love and presence in her life, and she will continue to grow in her already strong faith.

This article was written by Brian Vanderwecht, age 18, a grandson of Jessie and Abbie Sider, who are members of the Bertie congregation, Stevensville, Ontario, Canada.

SPECIAL NOTE:

Articles about "Special People" in their teens, 20s, 30s, and 40s are invited.

"Special People" profiles a wide variety of Brethren in Christ members of all ages and from all walks of life. You are invited to submit a short article about some "Special Person" you would like to introduce to Visitor readers. Articles should be typewritten, preferably 300-400 words, and must have the approval of the person being profiled. If your article is accepted for publication, we will contact you to secure a photo for publication (which will be returned). Mail your article to *Evangelical Visitor*, P.O. Box 166, Nappanee, IN 46550.

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Westminster meditation

by Sonia A. Randall

LAST SPRING, I visited Westminster Abbey, the famous old church in London where many of England's kings and queens have been crowned. On the one evening a week that it was open for photography, I wandered around looking at the tombs and memorial inscriptions on the floor. It was fascinating to read the names on the tombs and try to see what I could remember about them from studying history.

But when I tried to think of Westminster Abbey as a church where one could come for worship and prayer, it didn't seem right somehow. Despite its beauty, the cold stone walls and the pervasive emphasis on death chilled my spirit.

Depressing, I thought, and yet it did encourage one to think seriously about the brevity of life and the closeness of death. The people memorialized here were very important in their time and had influence in many fields. Now their tombs were places where tourists came to take pictures and meditate on their

lives. But, in spite of histories and biographies, we know little about their relationship with God. Were they Christians? Will they be in heaven?

It surprised me to learn that worship services were still held in the church. So a few days later, on a bright Sunday morning, I entered Westminster Abbey again and was amazed at the transformation. The

The tombs, stone walls, and cold floors were still the same, but the whole atmosphere was different.

tombs, stone walls, and cold floors were still the same, but the whole atmosphere was different. As the sunshine poured through the beautiful stained-glass windows, people walked purposefully toward the chairs set up for morning worship.

Listening to the glorious choral music, I marveled at the difference between my two visits: one in the evening and one in the morning; one gloomy and one joyful. This being springtime, the comparison between Good Friday and Easter was inescapable. I realized more than ever how we cannot understand Easter before we have deeply contemplated what happened on Good Friday. I left the abbey that morning rejoicing that Christ had conquered death for all of us, and that he had given me the opportunity for a new appreciation of it in this historic church.

Sonia Randall is a freelance writer who lives in Corvallis, Ore.

I feel closer, somehow

by Perry Engle

Pastor of New Community Brethren in Christ Church, Pomona, Calif.

I feel closer, somehow
when we sit and eat together.
No longer ships passing in the night
set sail on our fast-food journeys.
We have come into port for an evening,
docked in a common harbor,
and taken time to stop and recognize
our connectedness as brothers and sisters.
And when I see you across the table from me,
when I take time to look into your eyes,
take just a moment to listen to your life,
it's then that I realize how much I desperately need you.
And when we're here together,
eating together,
I feel closer, somehow.

I feel closer, somehow
when I kneel at the basin,
when I'm wrapped in the towel,
when I cradle your foot,
when I dip the water,
when I promise to be your servant.
As I wash away the dust,
I wash away the distance between you and me.
I wash away the superficials and the "Hi, how are you's,"
the fake interest, and the false smiles.
I wash away my fear of sharing my life with you,
the panic of telling you how much I desperately need you.
And after we've washed each other's feet,
when you've hugged me hard,
and have told me, "I love you, brother,"
I feel closer, somehow.



And I feel closer, somehow
when I have taken the bread
his body broken for me;
when I have taken the cup
his blood shed for me;
when I have received his selfless love
in all my selfishness and shame,
and have left myself behind,
and have taken him into me...
Even then, within me, there's a tearing and a mending,
a quietness and a shout,
a sadness and an epiphany all at once,
as I recognize through my tears,
how much I desperately need him.
And as I survey the wondrous cross
there before me draped in shadow,
all drooped down with sin,
I see his love, and am washed in his forgiveness.
And I feel closer, somehow.

On risk and opportunity

Sharp, jagged, pointed edges
the thorns of the rosebush
untamable, unmanageable, difficult
the thorns of the rosebush.
Avoid it, pass it by, keep your distance
from the thorns of the rosebush
protect yourself from injury—watch out!
the thorns of the rosebush.
Look closer, come nearer, yet nearer
to the rose among the thorns
unfolding, promising, thriving
the rose among the thorns.
Soft petals, shimmering colors, sweet fragrance
come closer, drink in the beauty,
a sharp pain, a drop of blood
fade as you touch
the rose among the thorns.

Leslie C. Book

An Easter calling

They awoke on Easter morning, eyes all red and swelled
by tears,
Hurried toward the tomb with hearts and hands made
cold by fears.
They had heard the angry voices, heard the curses and
the jeers.
Christ their gracious friend was dead! All their joy
replaced by tears.

They were come to do what they could, to anoint the
Lord now dead.
Questions many, fears abounding, joy replaced by sor-
row's dread;
Would they be allowed this service to him who once had
been their head?
Could the sorrow that now filled them ever turn to joy
instead?

When they got there, who would roll the stone away?
Could they get there? Would the soldiers bar their way?
Every question only deepened all their doubts and their
dismay.

What they saw when they got nearer was a light brighter
than the day.

A holy angel asked them, "Why seek ye the living 'midst
the dead?"

The Tree

The tree stood upright.
Not with leaves but with a King.
To save us from sin.

Laura Bokma

Our Living Lord

He is our righteousness and rich reward,
Our perfect Lamb and living Lord;
He is our Priest and our provision,
The way to God and hope of heaven.

He is both Savior and sacrifice,
In perfect love He gave His life;
He is the Victor from the grave,
His grace sufficient now to save.

Almighty Advocate is He;
Defends His child with perfect plea;
He speaks to God eloquently,
His victory sets the captive free.

Jerel L. Book

Jesus is not here ! He has now arisen as he said!
Go and tell his friends and brethren he has now gone on
ahead.
And they and all must surely follow in the way that he
has led."

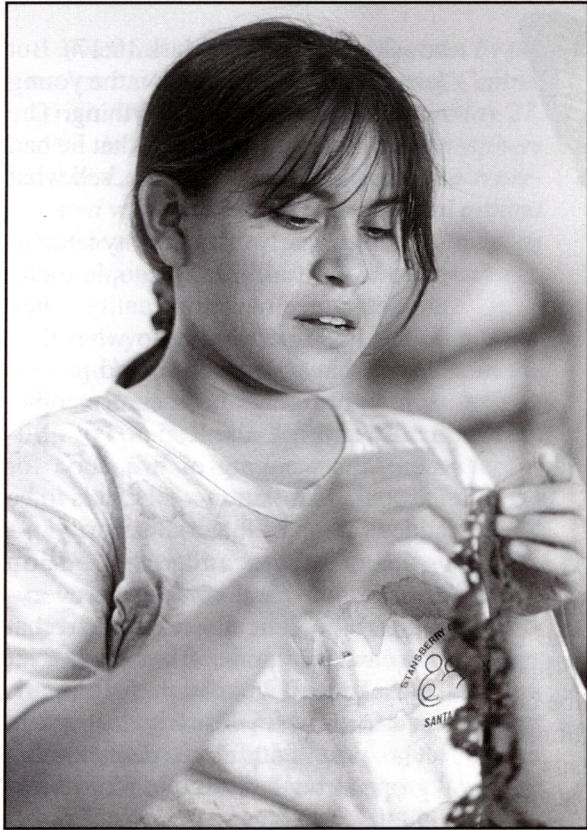
He has risen! Hallelujah! And he lives most gloriously.
All his saints should be rejoicing, singing now uproari-
ously.
Death is now no longer victor and no more will ever be.
Christ is now the one triumphant, the King whom every
eye shall see.

He who will all creatures worship, every tongue confess
as well,
That he is the glorious Saviour, all creation shall his
praises swell.

Do not wait 'til Resurrection; come now let us all pro-
claim,
"Jesus Christ is now my Saviour, I will ever bless his
name."

Earl E. Herr

Leslie Book serves with Brethren in Christ Missions in Bogota, Colombia. Laura Bokma wrote her poem while a student at Niagara Christian College in 1994. Jerel Book pastors the Christian Union congregation, Garrett, Ind. Earl Herr pastors the Martinsburg, Pa., congregation.



Mark Beach

Susanna Olmos, 18, a resident at the Stansberry Children's Home, works on a crocheted item. Sometimes the lives of the children who arrive at the home— orphaned, abandoned and/or abused—are as tangled as crochet knots, and they need more love and understanding than sometimes seems humanly possible to provide.

"And the greatest of these is love"

by Jackie Johnson

SANTA CRUZ, Bolivia—Each day before church day camp, my pastor would repeat three commandments for working with children: Love your kids. Love your kids. Love your kids.

"No problem. I love children," I thought naively. And it never was a problem in one-week summer camps or 45-minute Sunday school classes. I had to face the real test when I came to work at a children's home here in Bolivia.

I arrived at the home September 1, after six weeks of language study. From that first day Zulema, 16, would not talk to me, would not look at me. Well, sometimes she'd send some nasty words my way. I had no idea why. What could I have done?

At the end of October, she accepted Jesus—but her attitude didn't change. I thought that if she were truly following Jesus, she would have to soften eventually; hopefully, before I left!

In the meantime, I was having trou-

ble loving her. Sometimes I would be filled with a hatred towards her. I would pray and repeat to myself over and over, "Choose love. Choose love." I could say I loved her because she is a child of God, but I could not feel love in my heart.

About two weeks before Christmas, I had an incredibly joy-filled day, and it was the first day that I could

truthfully say, "I love Zulema, no matter what."

Zulema started talking to me that day! Her attitude has done a 180-degree turnabout; it's as if those prior three and a half months hadn't happened. On Christmas she gave me a card and a hug! In the card, Zulema asked me to forgive her for having mistreated me.

I thank the Lord, because only he can change hearts like that. As Easter approaches, I pray that I will be able to continue to tap into that source of love and forgiveness, and that others will as well. Imagine if we can spread it to those around us, especially those who, like Zulema, are hard to love—and who have a hard time loving—because of all the difficulties they have had thrown at them.

At the end of October, she accepted Jesus—but her attitude didn't change. I thought that if she were truly following Jesus, she would have to soften eventually.

Jackie Johnson serves with MCC's SALT (Serving and Learning Together) program at the Stansberry Children's Home in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. She is from Fairview, Alberta, and is a member of Grace Lutheran Church in Victoria, British Columbia.

Thanks for the caterpillars!

by Susan Classen

TEUSTEPE, Nicaragua—I like butterflies. Who doesn't? They are a beautiful symbol of life and beauty. I've long been aware that butterflies begin as caterpillars. Who isn't? But I somehow missed an important connection until recently. Caterpillars eat my plants! I want the beautiful butterflies, but I don't want the destructive caterpillars.

Now when I see a fuzzy caterpillar contentedly nibbling at my plants, I'm reminded of my tendency to want beauty without destruction, joy without pain, life without death. I want everything!

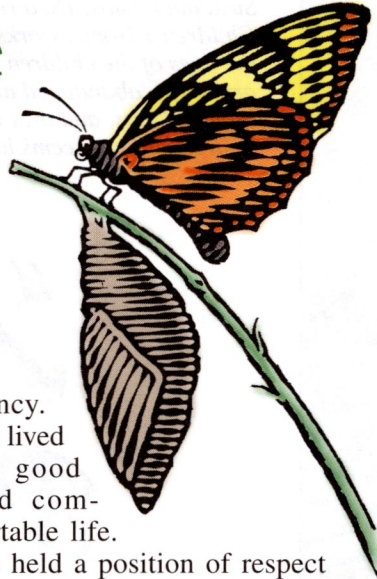
Dorothee Soelle points out that the rich young ruler had the same ten-

dency.

He lived a good and comfortable life.

He held a position of respect and leadership. He kept the commandments. But he felt a void. If I can just add meaning and fulfillment to what I already have, I will be content, he must have thought to himself.

And so he runs up to Jesus and kneels before him. "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"



he asks expectantly (Mark 10:17). But Jesus reveals as an illusion the young man's desire to have everything. The young man's problem was that he had too much, not too little. "Go, sell what you own..."

Soelle clearly critiques my tendency to want it all. Many people today are seeking a new spirituality. They want to add something to what they already have—education and profession, upbringing and secure income, family and friends. Religious fulfillment, the meaning of life, food for the soul, consolation—all that is to be added on top of material security.

Jesus' death and resurrection remind me that I can't have everything. I theoretically understand that life can only come from death, yet I'm taken off guard when I experience loss, when Jesus invites me to let go, when faithfulness demands that I grope through times of darkness and doubt.

The last we hear of the rich young ruler, he was "shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions" (Mark 10:22). I would like to think that the story doesn't end there. Once he got over his shock and had time to grieve, maybe he sold his possessions to follow Jesus. I know it takes time for me to accept truth, especially when it's shocking and unexpected. I know that grieving is part of letting go, whether it's letting go of a relationship, possessions, a concept I thought was true...

As Jesus spoke his hard words, he looked at the young man and loved him. I pray for the grace to respond to Jesus' compassionate gaze that enables me to follow him, not as a legalistic demand, but as a loving response. I pray that Jesus' death and resurrection will teach me to appreciate and celebrate life. And I give thanks for the caterpillars that playfully remind me not to take life too seriously as I seek to be faithful!

Susan Classen works with Mennonite Central Committee in Nicaragua.

He made the cross beautiful

The catalog from the discount store arrived before Christmas. The cross was on the double-page display of jewelry. Its unusual curved line caught my eye with its graceful form.

Yet the cross was a cruel instrument of death. It was ugly; the agony, the cruelty was reserved for the worst of criminals. So why do we wear the cross and display it in gold and polished wood in our churches? Why is it a thing of beauty?

It is because Christmas came, then Easter. The first gift, wrapped in swaddling clothes, changed the cross forever. He accomplished the ultimate suffering of sin on that ugly cross. He conquered the death that ugly cross symbolized on the saddest of Fridays. He rose from the dead on that shouting morning of the resurrection, and life was forever victor.

He made the cross beautiful.

Ruth Bert lives in Boiling Springs, Pa.



What follows is a chapel talk given by the author at the Theological College of Central Africa (TCCA), Ndola, Zambia, on May 27, 1997. In order to understand the atmosphere of the Last Supper, six students who represented various disciples were seated around a table with a basin of water and a towel as the centerpiece. John 13:1-17 was read.

I want you to imagine that the students sitting here are some of the disciples in the room we read about in John 13. As you can see, there is a basin of water available for someone to use for washing the feet of the men, but no servant is present to do the job.

Something is wrong here; the atmosphere is tense. The basin serves as a visual reminder that no one was willing to do the servant's job of washing the feet of the guests before the meal. Of course Jesus was not expected to do the job, because no superior ever washed the feet of those under him. But each disciple could think of reasons why he shouldn't be expected to do the job, either. Try to imagine what each one might have been thinking:

The students then gave "testimonies" beginning with "My name is..."

• John. I am also called "the disciple whom Jesus loved," so I am a friend of Jesus, not his house servant. Besides, I usually get the place next to Jesus—I often actually lean on his shoulder. If I get up and start washing people's feet, someone might take my place.

• James. I am John's brother and part of the inner circle of Jesus' friends, with John and Peter. We form what you might call the executive committee. Furthermore, I remember that emotional woman who got so carried away when she washed Jesus' feet that she dried them with her hair. There's no way I'm going to make a fool of myself like she did.

• Simon the Zealot. I might have considered washing the feet of other Zealots, but how can anyone expect *me* to wash *Matthew's* feet? He oppressed his own people by collecting taxes for those despised Romans. Someone else can wash *his* feet, thank you.

• Judas Iscariot. I have already done enough—remember that I bought the food that is sitting here getting cold, so let someone else do the serving for a change. And



A Zambian devotional on foot- washing

besides, I have to think about my appointment with the chief priests later this evening.

• Thomas. I really get tired of these other guys giving me a hard time, as if I never believe them. I'm a thinker, so I need to be convinced of something before I do it. Right now, I'm not comfortable with the idea of acting like a slave toward my equals. Let me think about it.

• Peter. I really wish that one of these guys would get the message and start washing our feet. Haven't they realized that there is a VIP here? Jesus says he is the Messiah, so someone had better get busy and wash his feet. Of course, I'm the leader of Jesus' followers, and I wouldn't want to endanger my status by doing something that is beneath my dignity.

It is hard for us in twentieth-century urban Africa to understand how common footwashing was in first-century Palestine. We are accustomed to a long, dry season where the ground is always dusty, but we still do not wash people's feet, even in the heat of October when it would feel good—especially after a soccer game on Wednesday! It just isn't part of our culture. But it was different in biblical times. Footwashing was common for three reasons: to clean dusty feet because people wore sandals; to show hospitality; and to symbolize holiness (priests washed their feet before they entered the holy place).

All three of these reasons for footwashing (hygiene, hospitality, and ritual cleansing)

by Rich Stuebing

Rich Stuebing is on the staff of the Theological College of Central Africa (TCCA), located in Ndola, Zambia.

*The actions
of Jesus in
this chapter
remind us of
our need to
be cleansed.*

can also be found in surrounding cultures in biblical times. In fact, washing the feet of guests was so common that there was a saying, "rushing into matters with unwashed feet," which meant that someone was in too much of a hurry to prepare properly. So washing the disciples' feet was a perfectly natural thing to do in this situation. But this passage describes one of the most startling acts that Jesus ever did: he stripped down to the clothing of a slave and washed the feet of his followers. Sometimes people do startling things to gain the attention of others, like teenagers wearing unusual clothing. But often the reason for such behavior is that such people are still trying to figure out who they are. Not so with Jesus! He knew who he was. Jesus was not just trying to get the disciples' attention; he was teaching them leadership and theology at the same time.

When Jesus began to wash Peter's feet, poor Peter just could not believe what was happening and said, "You, ...are washing my feet?" Even though Peter could not understand the significance of what was going on, Jesus continued his actions. Now if Peter was embarrassed in verse 6, he was angry in verse 8: "You will never, ever wash my feet!" But Jesus was equally emphatic and insisted that Peter could have no part of Jesus unless

he submitted to the awkward act of having Jesus wash his feet.

It is obvious that we are no longer talking about a mere act of hospitality if there is a danger that Peter could forfeit his relationship with Jesus. The act of washing the disciples' feet had become a symbol of cleansing, as seen more clearly in verses 9 and 10. When Peter asked the Lord to wash his hands and head, he again misunderstood, but at least we can see where Peter's heart was now. Whether we practice footwashing literally or not, the actions of Jesus in this chapter are meant to remind us of our need to be cleansed, both in the initial sense of conversion and also through daily confession and repentance.

APPLICATION. Some of you know that my denomination, the Brethren in Christ, is one of the few churches that continue the literal practice of this command. I have attended footwashing services in the rural areas of Southern Province, where it is a meaningful experience to wash the feet of an old man who has walked barefoot for five dusty kilometers to get to Macha. But it is difficult to make a footwashing service as relevant here on the Copperbelt, where most of our members wear shoes and travel by minibus! What about here at TCCA? How

"Peacemaker" training program at Mt. Rock congregation

by **Mim Heisey**

A little over a year ago, Mt. Rock's lay-counseling ministry was just a dream—a word from God—a vision given to Pastor Lloyd Zimmerman of 25 lay-counselors being raised up to minister to the hurting people who come through our doors. Today that vision is being fulfilled through Peace In Christ Ministries. "We exist for the purpose of bringing glory to God by providing counsel and encouragement to hurting people. We desire to help individuals find freedom in Christ, and peace with God and man."

Pastor Zimmerman preached a challenging message to the Mt. Rock congregation on Sunday morning, March 2, 1997. He closed with an invitation asking those who felt that God was specifically calling them to be a part of this ministry to step out in commitment. Twenty-four came forward that morning (a 25th

person called during the week to ask if she could still join us). God gave us the 25 he promised!

Word-of-mouth advertising reached others over the next few weeks, and our spring Peacemaker training began with more than 30 in attendance, including individuals from seven other area churches. In August we commissioned 19 "Peacemakers"—the term God has given us for our lay-counselors, and 9 "Prayer Warriors"—intercessors who cover the counseling ministry with prayer. September saw another 24 people in training, and we will soon be commissioning many of that class into active service.

Mim Heisey is Minister of Counseling at Mt. Rock Brethren in Christ Church, and lives with her husband, Ray, and family near Roxbury, Pa.

should we obey Jesus' command to "wash one another's feet" here on campus?

1. First of all, we need to remember that footwashing in John 13 is a *Christian* act. Jesus told the disciples to wash one another's feet, and Paul told Timothy that true widows were those who washed the feet of the saints. So we are talking about something more than hospitality or hygiene here. It has something to do with how we are to express our relationships as fellow believers in Jesus Christ. Our relationship to each other within the body of Christ takes precedence over other aspects such as race and tribe. My relationship with a black Zambian Christian is to be closer than my relationship with a white American unbeliever. If you are a Bemba Christian, your relationship with a Tonga Christian is to be closer than with a Bemba non-Christian.

2. Perhaps the most obvious part of Jesus' example is that he humbled himself, taking a slave's role, despite his position as their Teacher and Lord (v.13). Jesus was willing to do a job that his followers thought was "below" him. Too often we find that role difficult, preferring that others do menial jobs, lest our dignity suffer. So we, both staff and students, should ask ourselves if we have adopted a worldly view of respect, that after a certain amount of education, even Christians should be exempt from doing lowly jobs for each other. A former student here opposed a student work program because he feared that his church members might find him sweeping and have less respect for him. Can you imagine Jesus having that kind of an attitude?

3. Thirdly, we have seen Peter's reaction when Jesus began to wash his feet, and I fear that we also may try to prevent our leaders from doing acts of service. For example, I remember a student who rebuked a staff member for serving food at a TCCA social; the student did not think it was acceptable for an older lecturer to serve students. As followers of Jesus, we must not discourage our leaders from doing such things. If we insist on exalting our leaders, they may begin to think of themselves too highly.

I realize that allowing an older person to serve those who are younger conflicts with traditional African values; elders are to be respected. In such cases we must remember that it is also a biblical value to respect our elders—all of us are to do that. But we must not refuse elders the privilege of service. (A

Bemba proverb says, "Kalulu atumine nsofu"—literally, a rabbit sent an elephant, meaning that a young person may request a favor from an older person.) If we refuse to allow our leaders to serve their followers, we are back to Peter's refusal to let Jesus wash his feet because such action was against *his* traditional culture, also.

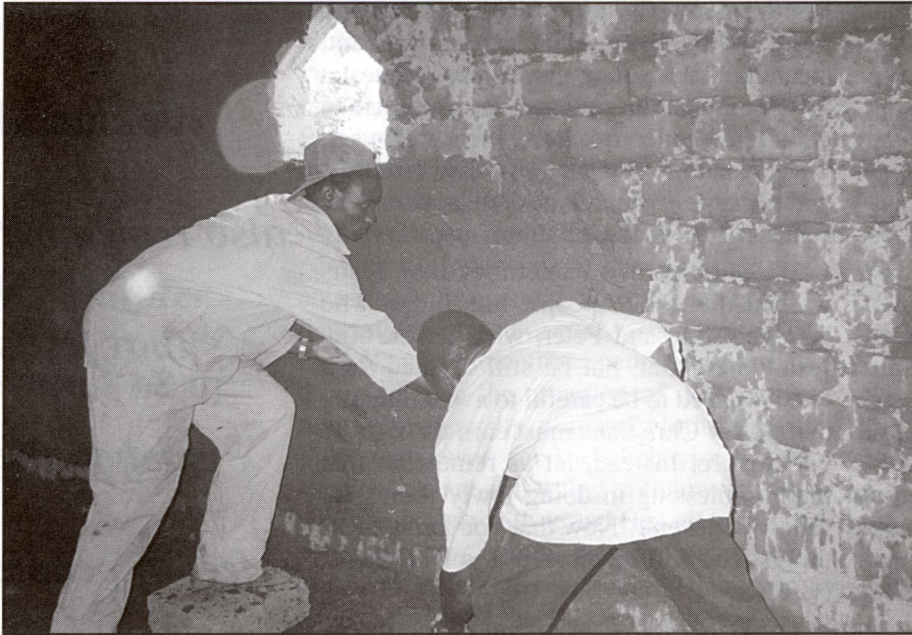
We should also remember that Jesus washed the feet of people like Judas, who betrayed him, and Peter, who denied him. Jesus knew that, but he still washed their feet. We need to be careful to avoid thinking that fellow Christians must earn the right to our service. Instead, let us remember that there is blessing in doing lowly things for fellow believers. "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them" (v. 17).

CONCLUSION. My point is not to convince you to begin washing each other's feet in a literal sense, although I do think it is a practice worth considering. Whether you do that or not, we are all to have the same attitude as Jesus had, and that may have different applications for each person here. Let me close with an illustration of humility that occurred in my own home in 1984.

The well-known English preacher and writer John Stott lectured for two days at TCCA in March 1984 and then spent several days in our home to do some local bird watching. One night after supper, Kathy and I excused ourselves to put Beth and David into bed and suggested that Dr. Stott could sit down and relax for a few minutes. After the children were in bed, we found our famous guest in the kitchen, washing the dishes! Knowing that we were Brethren in Christ who practiced footwashing, he said, "I think this is a rather good modern equivalent to footwashing, don't you?"

At this point the student leader opened up the meeting to others to testify about an experience when a Christian leader had acted humbly toward followers. One student referred to the TCCA mission team that had gone to the northern part of Zambia during the April break. The team leader, a member of TCCA staff, had gotten down on his knees before the students to offer a basin of water for washing hands before a meal. While this is common in Zambian homes, it is usually done by the wife or one of the children, not the "bwana." The student's testimony was that the action said more than a two-hour sermon! **EV**

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Food for work

No more hand-outs

by A. Graybill Brubaker

About 90 percent of Malawi's people live at a subsistence level. This means that they depend on their small gardens for their food and on handi-crafts and a few chickens and goats to sell for the other necessities. The roadsides are lined with displays of fruits and vegetables. There are wood carvings, cane chairs, pots, mats, and even lengths of cord carefully stripped from the bodies of tires. Chickens and goats are tied or crated and up for sale.

One can hardly bring his vehicle to a stop almost anywhere before someone is there trying to sell either the produce of their gardens or something they have acquired in another way. At the Post Office this morning, I was approached by a man with a small bar of something labeled: Pure Gold! I told him that I was not interested.

Add to this the dense population of Malawi as compared to other African countries. Garden plots are small; every available space in good soils is under cultivation and virtually all of it by hand. There is not an ox or donkey to be seen pulling a plow. Only women and men bent over with a short-handled heavy hoe carving ridges in the hard dry soil, hoping for good rains this year.

Last year the rains came too heav-

ily. The Chikwawa area, where there are a number of Brethren in Christ churches, suffered the most. The Shire river from the east and the Mwanza river from the west came up and inundated the land. The people huddled in the trees; the crops drowned. In the Zomba area, especially toward Lake Chilwa, the crops were also under water. Even on the higher ground where the excess water drained off, there was not enough sunshine to make a good crop. With 90 percent of the people dependent on their little plots for their living, inevitable hunger is the result.

Government, churches, and non-governmental agencies used to bring in food for such hungry people. Recently, however, it resulted in what a minister in Malawi's parliament recently labeled as laziness and dependency. There will be no more

hand-outs, he said. Instead there will be food for work!

Brethren in Christ World Missions has been involved in Food for Work for some years and has been hailed for the efficient way they have implemented this program, especially in Zambia. In view of the hunger situation this year, the program has been activated again. With money made available from the World Hunger Fund, the Brethren in Christ Church in Malawi has organized to feed the hungry and at the same time to improve the church. Chikwawa got the largest share with Zomba and Mulanje, another low-lying area, also receiving substantial amounts.

The program has been organized through the local church. Guidelines have been drawn up and work has begun. In Chikwawa District, the Chinangwa Church, whose building collapsed last year, has built a temporary shelter and has gathered foundation stones for a permanent church building. In Ndirande in the city of Blantyre, the church has worked at improving their building with the addition of a latrine and the plastering of the inside walls. In Mulanje District, the Makaula Church has made 1,000 bricks for toilets and the improvement of their church building. The Sazola Church has collected foundation stones and river sand for a

Brethren in Christ World Missions has been involved in Food for Work for some years and has been hailed for the efficient way they have implemented this program, especially in Zambia.

permanent church building. In Zomba District, Nselera Church has worked to develop a road to the church and made 200 bricks with which to build seating. The Kupanga Church has completed three toilets and built a shelter for the scheduled seminar. The Dibi Church has renewed the roof of the church. In Machinga District, the Nasongole church has brought poles and grass from the mountain and has built a church and put on a roof. The Lingoni Church has repaired the church roof and developed a cooperative church garden.

Generally what is expected is for a group of persons to work for 100 hours for about 100 pounds of corn (50 kg. of maize). It is to be work which can be done with tools that the people have— primarily the ubiquitous short-handled, heavy hoe. The church is not to get involved in providing any tools or materials and is not to transport or store maize. The people go with the church treasurer to the local distributor to get the food and take it back with them. There is a shortage of maize in the country and maize bran has become a substitute.

One would not expect that the program will work completely free of hitches and even inequities. It is, however, to be run locally by the church committee; the pastor is not to handle money nor take oversight responsibility. Pastors should not “leave the ministry of the Word and serve tables!”

The crisis will last until harvest time—about March/April of 1998. We cannot expect to change the situation for everyone, but for those whom we can help, we are making a difference. We pass on the thanks of a grateful people who have had a respite from rustling up enough food to live by working meaningfully for something to eat. May the Lord’s blessing rest on those who have made this possible.

A. Graybill and Ethel Brubaker, after having served Brethren in Christ World Missions in Zambia and as an administrator in North America as well as having served in several pastorates, returned to Africa in April 1997, this time to serve in Malawi. They are members of the Upland (CA) congregation.



Thata and Alvin in front of the Cagua church in Venezuela.

A letter home

by Thata Book

Yesterday was a very big day. It was our first anniversary of services here—not including Sunday school and prayer meeting which had been started earlier. The first members were also received into church membership. All eight who were baptized, except Tarazona who had gone to Caracas, were taken into the church, together with Abraham and Isobel Perdoma, transferring from the church in Cuba. We had invited folk from a couple of the local churches as well as from Caracas. The ladies served a light meal afterwards to nearly 80 people.

Jorge had his family come to the front with him as he gave his testimony. It was a year to the day on which he and Minerva had received the Lord. Carlos had asked for the privilege to give a testimony. He was very moved as he shared a very special experience he had last Sunday night. He said that he has not been much for reading the Bible, but last Sunday night he was reading the Bible and praying when the presence of the Lord came upon him in a very special way. He said he has been a Christian for eight years, but he has never experienced anything like this. At one point he just covered his face with his hands as he struggled to gain control of his emotions. I have had the impression that Norma has been the spiritually concerned one in the family, but I think we will see a difference in Carlos. I was thinking about it last night and thanking the Lord for what He had done for him. He seemingly was not looking or asking for any kind of an experience and probably not expecting anything out of the usual. Why then did the Lord come upon him like this? It just

came to me: it was because God loved him.

The serving of food on such occasions is often sort of hectic and it was last night. But the ladies were great in bringing in food. Actually I didn’t prepare anything except a bowl of fruit salad. Gustavo and Magali made a cake. Rosa brought it in at the end of the service and they sang Happy Birthday. Maria, the cookie lady, contributed a lot; she said she doesn’t like to be short of food. I returned her trays, containers, etc., today, and she testified to God’s healing. She had such painful arthritis in her arm two days ago that she could not lift her arm. But today she could put it above her head without problem. She had put her hand on her shoulder, anointed it with oil, and in the name of Jesus asked for healing and God did it. Her confidence in the Lord is such a challenge and in spite of a difficult life she does not complain. Well, so much for yesterday.

With the centennial celebrations being in our thoughts, historical events seem to be surfacing. This article reaches back only ten years, but gives a glimpse into the beginnings of our Cagua Brethren in Christ Church in Venezuela. It contains portions of a letter written by Thata Book to her family on March 7, 1988. Not all who were mentioned are following the Lord today, but the seed has been sown. God’s promise is, “He that has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Since 1988, Thata and her husband, Alvin, have done various short-term missions in our Latin American countries and are anticipating another short-term assignment in Zimbabwe later this year. They are representatives-at-large for Brethren in Christ World Missions.



God at work in our world

Undampened enthusiasm

Lois Jean Sider is in her ninth missionary term having left for Zambia in 1966. She currently teaches at the Sikalongo Bible Institute in Zambia. Her home congregation is Wainfleet Brethren in Christ Church in Ontario, Canada.

Gradually, over a period of time, the Wednesday evening prayer meeting at Sikalongo was declining in interest and attendance. In April 1997, with prayers for God's guidance, the church board made the decision to change the time from 7:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and change the place from the Bible Institute Chapel to individual homes. The timing seemed to fit the schedule of most people—right after work but before the evening meal.

The attendance started with 6 or 8 people and by October had increased to 24 or 26. People who had previously not been attending opened their homes, and then

attended subsequent meetings. The inconvenience of squeezing into small rooms and sitting on Tonga stools or on the floor has not dampened the enthusiasm for the meetings.

We thank God for this renewed interest in prayer, and trust that it will be the beginning of a mighty work of God's Spirit here at Sikalongo.

Baptisms and tears

Rachel Kibler serves with her husband, George, at Nahumba Mission in Choma. The Kiblers are members at the Cumberland Valley Brethren in Christ Church.

On a recent Saturday afternoon we had a baptismal service at Shampande Church. I had taught the new believers class for ten weeks and there were sixteen persons to be baptized as well as several from other congregations. Bina Fury had

missed several classes and I had told the class that if they miss more than two classes, they could not be baptized. But in her case, her daughter had died a few months ago, leaving a granddaughter for her to care for. Then the granddaughter died and Bina Fury herself had been sick. So I asked one of the single women of the class who lives almost on the back veranda of Bina Fury's house to do the lessons with her. She did the work sheets with her and now Bina Fury could be baptized.

When she came out of the water and went down the line to be greeted by all the well-wishers she just could not stop smiling. She was so excited to now be a member of the church. During the ten weeks of sessions, I had learned something of the lifestyle that they were leaving behind now that they had decided to follow Jesus. My eyes were filled with tears most of the time as I hugged their dripping bodies and praised God for these who had turned their backs on a life of sin and were new creatures in Christ.

God's answers

Ethel and Graybill Brubaker are veteran missionaries, having served in Africa for 20 years. In addition, Graybill served in the pastorate and as Overseas Secretary for Brethren in Christ World Missions. They went to Malawi in April 1997. They are members of the Upland Brethren in Christ Church in California.

Ethel Brubaker sent an e-mail message to the missions office staff some time ago informing them that for two months she had been experiencing a chronic pain in her neck. She said she had a doctor appointment scheduled for the next day and asked us to pray for the defeat of Satan "who is working very cleverly to get us out of Malawi just when (1) the groundwork has been laid for the seminars, (2) the teaching contacts at Likabula are providing access to the future church leaders, and (3) contacts are being made in relation to the establishing of a church center." She asserted her confidence that "greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world."

The next day Graybill and Ethel Brubaker were on the *Prayer Challenge* prayer list—the same day the staff at the General Church Office prayed for Ethel during their weekly prayer time. The following day we received this e-mail message from Ethel: "Yesterday you remembered me in prayer and we were also in the *Prayer Challenge*, and God heard.

India: Update on Christian persecution

India's militant Hindu lobby has recently been turning up the heat on Christian converts in various parts of the country. Although India is a democracy, very restrictive anti-conversion laws have been passed in some of its states. These laws are primarily aimed at preserving India's ancient Hindu heritage against encroachments from Muslims and Christians. While relatively few Hindus convert to Islam due to the long-standing animosity and bloody history between the two religions, there is real concern among Hindus concerning mass conversions to Christianity, especially among the lower castes and the tribal peoples.

A member of the Indian parliament introduced a bill requiring people who convert to register with the government 60 days prior to public affirmation of conversion. Top leaders of the radical right-wing Hindu group Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) recently set in motion steps to counter the activities of Christians by strengthening links with other pro-Hindu organizations and to open 500 schools in the eastern state of Orissa to neutralize the activities of Christians and promote the re-conversion to Hinduism. Pray for the salvation of those who persecute believers in India.

Reprinted by permission from the WEF Religious Liberty Commission Update on Christian Persecution. Please remember to pray for the 55 churches of the Brethren in Christ Church in Orissa (with over 1,000 members), representing work among seven unreached people groups.

This morning I got up without the usual morning stiffness. For this we are praising the Lord. Again God has shown himself faithful, and truly, 'God can do anything, anything. God can do anything but fail.'"

Later Ethel reported: "It would be nice to say there is complete healing, but that is not the way the answer has been coming. Instead he supplies the daily strength, patience and relief from pain which I need, along with many promises of his love and care."

EV

Ben Stoner appointed as Superintendent of the Navajo Mission

Jack McClane, executive director of the Brethren in Christ Missions, has announced the appointment of Ben Stoner as Superintendent of the Navajo Mission, near Bloomfield, N.M. Ben and Eunice began their assignment March 1, 1998.

The Stoners have three children. Tim

is serving as a missionary with YWAM. Joe is in his third year at the University of New Mexico with missions in view as a career. Their daughter Becky will enter university in September with a President's scholarship, which is indicative of her academic achievements.

Ben and Eunice bring with them many years of missionary experience among the Navajos, a good command of the language, and a desire to serve God and the Church among our Native Americans.

EV

On Japanese weddings

Doyle and Thelma Book serve as self-supporting missionary associates in Kitakyushu, Japan. They have served in Japan under Brethren in Christ World Missions from 1955 to 1972 and have continued their ministry there, most recently in wedding ministry. Following are excerpts of Thelma's description of a visit by fellow missionaries in Japan, Philip and Wilma Visser.

What has stayed with me most deeply from our time with the Vissers is Philip's evaluation of the Japanese church. He told us, "The church has failed in Japan. Even though the population grew tremendously since the end of the war, there are no more Christians now than there were 45 years ago. Population is in decline now, but the percentage of Christians is even less than it was then." Wilma told us that they left a flourishing church in the hands of a Japanese pastor when they retired about three years ago, and today that church is only a handful of people because the pastor dropped the outreach activities that the missionaries had been doing. That's one reason why so many missionaries are getting excited about this wedding ministry. The church has not made Christianity appeal to the Japanese people, but they are attracted to the Christian wedding. Through this ministry they are ministering again and again to people who have had no input of the gospel through the local churches. Maybe Doyle's insight is correct: "The glory of Christ is not being seen through the Japanese church, so God has opened the door to wedding evangelism so that many Japanese people may get a first glimpse of who he is." Hallelujah!

But it must not stop with only a fleeting glimpse. Our prayer has become: "O Lord, let not your blessing on this witness cease until your full glory is seen by those who glimpse you for the first time through the Christian ceremony." Somewhere along the way people need to be disciplined and brought into the Kingdom.

Wilma shared a remarkable story of what happened after



A wedding chapel in Osaka, Japan.

one of Philip's weddings: A very old, white-haired gentleman came to Philip and said, "I have to give some words to the couple at the reception, but I wanted to check them out with you first. Is it okay to tell them that if they follow the teaching of this Jesus Christ which you spoke, they will have a successful marriage?" Wilma said she was flabbergasted. She never expected to hear such words from a steeped-in-tradition Japanese oldster. It is the young people who want the Christian wedding. The grandparents, and often the parents, pull for the Shinto ceremony. The wedding business people actually told Philip that they have to be careful not to encourage too many Christian ceremonies because the Shinto priest becomes angry. (The weddings are probably his biggest source of revenue—those and New Year's offerings.)

Doyle also has had an older man, a guest from one of the weddings he has performed, comment, "You spoke to that couple as if they were your own children." The gentleman's words were an encouragement to Doyle because that is the desire of his heart, that God's love may come through in each ceremony, even when he must do one after another on a Sunday. He wants each ceremony to touch someone, not to become mindless repetition.

EV

Once again, Messiah Village prepares for change

by Emerson L. Leshner, President

Doubts, fears, and uncertainties are feelings occurring in nearly every older adult and family coping with one of life's most difficult decisions—moving a loved one into a place of care. Many questions are asked, but the most basic is usually this: Will my parent's or grandparent's needs be met with the best care available?

The answer to this question has been at the heart of Messiah Village's ministry to older adults for over a century. From the beginning, we have worked continually to refine and improve our services. Over the years, our methods have changed, but our focus remains unchanged—caring for the whole person with Christ-like compassion.

This year, Messiah Village will take an important step forward by initiating a \$1.5 million capital campaign called "Enhancing Care, Same Compassion." The outcome of this campaign will improve our services once again, offering older adults and their families the best, most modern continuum of senior care available.

Enhancing care in "neighborhoods"

The primary way we will enhance our care is by updating our Nursing Care environment to include three types of "neighborhoods" within our main building for Transitional/Rehabilitation Care, Extended Care, and Special Care. Each neighborhood will feature a large, open dining and activity space, private dens for family meetings, specialized treatment rooms, and staff work areas, designed to create a homelike atmosphere for the resident while providing specific services.

This neighborhood concept is an integral part of improving Nursing Care, but it is more than just building "places." Each neighborhood will include specialized staff and distinct services brought together to help residents individually, meeting each person's specific physical, psychological and spiritual needs. New staffing methods, new equipment, and the latest medical knowledge will be implemented within each neighborhood.

Achieving a balance of a knowledgeable, compassionate staff, an expert pro-

gram, state-of-the-art equipment, and an attractive building are our goals with the neighborhoods approach.

A continuum of care

When Messiah Village opened its doors over a century ago, we had one level of care. Today, we offer a total continuum of care: from independent living to adult day and home care services to caring for a resident's every need twenty-four hours a day.

As a continuing care retirement community, Nursing Care is foundational. Many of our residents and clients are attracted to Messiah Village because we provide quality Nursing Care. They know when they need more assistance, they need not look elsewhere.



Artist's rendition of the proposed Nursing Care improvements, including a covered entrance.

Nursing care is also fundamental to our Christian ministry; it is where we care for persons who are the most vulnerable and disabled. By improving our Nursing Care program we will boost the core of our organization, maintaining our values of holding in high regard the most vulnerable among us.

The need for change

The last decade has brought about great change in the way health care is provided in the United States. This is beginning to affect how retirement organizations operate and will soon drastically change the way seniors live. Shorter hospital stays, partly through medical advances, are forcing retirement communities to shoulder more of the health care burdens. The trend is moving from general to specialty care, treating acute and complex illnesses, and shedding an institutional image for a more homelike setting. Modernizing and improving our programs, services, and buildings are neces-

sary in order to remain a leader in the field.

An increased life expectancy for seniors is also creating the need for change. Since 1900, the number of Americans more than 65 years of age has grown more than tenfold. By the year 2000, more than 34 million will be in this age group. As the Baby Boom generation ages, that number will nearly double.

People are living longer, which means there is an increasing demand for services. Because they are living longer, their physical needs are becoming more acute and specific. Preparing for these changes now will position us to deal with them in the future.

A history of change; a future of caring

Messiah Village has a strong history of adapting to meet the needs of Brethren in Christ Church members and other older adults. That is why endeavoring to improve our structures and our staff will

never be a rare occurrence—it is our rule, not our exception.

The "Enhancing Care, Same Compassion" campaign is yet another chapter in our continuing work to refine and improve ourselves. It will enable us to continue in our mission of caring for the whole person with Christ-like compassion. Through this capital campaign, we are continuing the journey that began 102 years ago by the Brethren in Christ Church. We are shaping our buildings, our care-giving staff, our skills, and our resources to care for future generations of older adults.

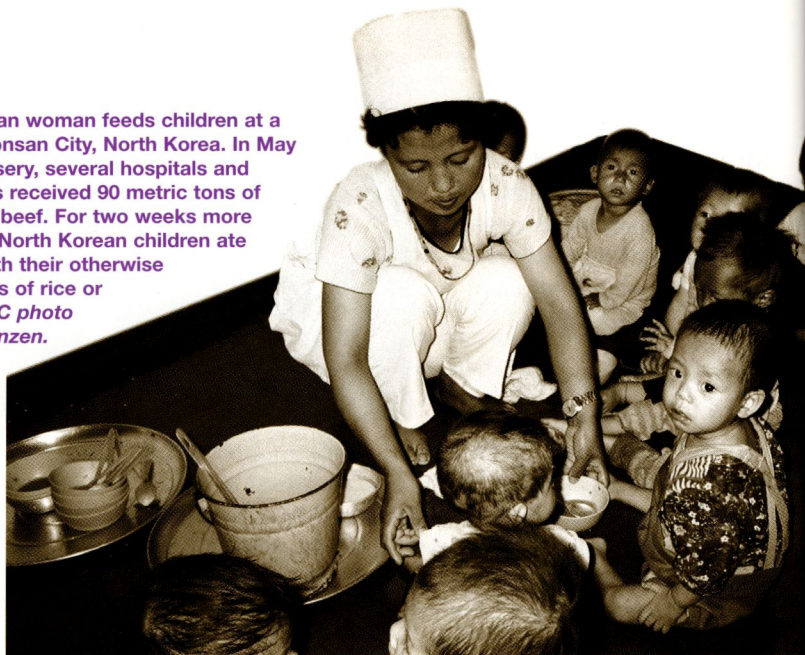
Moving a loved one to a community of care will never be an easy decision. But Messiah Village will always be striving to provide the best, most innovative adult care possible. It is part of our heritage of compassion for older adults—giving them the encouragement, the healing, and the opportunity to be whole persons.

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE
1997 ANNUAL REPORT



IN THE MIDST OF A MIRACLE This photo was taken minutes after a Rwandan woman was reunited with her son in an orphanage in Bukavu, Congo (formerly Zaire). The woman lost her son during their desperate flight from Rwanda's civil war and for about four months she had no idea whether he was alive or dead. *MCC photo by Dave Klassen.*

A North Korean woman feeds children at a nursery in Wonsan City, North Korea. In May 1997 this nursery, several hospitals and kindergartens received 90 metric tons of MCC canned beef. For two weeks more than 114,000 North Korean children ate MCC beef with their otherwise scant portions of rice or porridge. *MCC photo by William Janzen.*



Eldon Barton works at the TRACC plant in Minto, New Brunswick, a community that has suffered severe unemployment since the closing of nearby coal

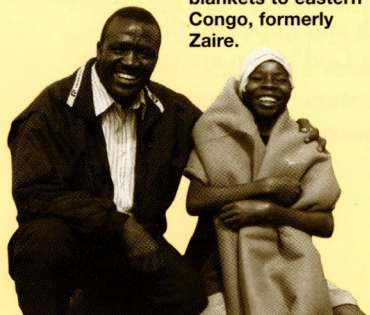
mines. At TRACC, recycled tires are turned into mats for use in cattle barns, patios and playgrounds. MCC Canada has been instrumental in getting the business up and running and in keeping a focus on job creation as well as making a profit. "TRACC is a great place to work," Barton says. *MCC photo by Bruce Hildebrand.*



HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR YEAR

JAN

MCC workers Karl and Evelyn Bartsche publish "Stress and Trauma Healing Training Manual" in South Africa.



FEB

MCC ships 32,968 blankets to eastern Congo, formerly Zaire.

MAR

Ground-breaking at Bezabeel Education Center in Guatemala, a Kekchi Mennonite Church project that uses work teams from Central and North America.

APR

Thrift shops open in Portage La Prairie, Man.; Plain City, Ohio; and Morgantown, Pa.

GIFTS WE SHARED

With your help, MCC supplied the following to some 34 countries in 1997.

FOOD valued at \$11.5 million Cdn./\$8.3 million U.S.

Includes 5,891 metric tons of wheat to North Korea

CLOTHES AND BEDDING valued at \$1.9 million Cdn./\$1.4 million U.S.

Includes 32,968 blankets to the Dem. Rep. of Congo

MEDICAL SUPPLIES valued at \$865,000 Cdn./\$622,000 U.S.

Includes 7,256 "Comfort 'n Joy" bundles to Bosnia and Serbia

SCHOOL SUPPLIES valued at \$483,000 Cdn./\$347,000 U.S.

Includes 7,430 school kits to Haiti



Petrona Alvarado de Barbarena and Brunilda Morales, Mennonites in Patastule, Nicaragua, lead conflict resolution workshops. In the past, disputes about not enough well water or cattle wandering into gardens could easily tear apart the close-knit towns of the area. It was terrible, recalls Petrona. "People had weapons; they would fight; they wouldn't talk to each other. Vengeance was strong. Now it is different." With the help of people like Petrona and Brunilda, Nicaraguans have learned new ways to work at conflict. MCC photo by Mark Beach.

MCC worker Rob Neufeld observes villagers digging for water in central Angola. MCC encourages local church efforts to rebuild after war and drought by providing conflict transformation training, food assistance and agricultural tools and seeds. MCC photo.



Melita, an attorney—her husband, a teacher—and their two children fled war in Bosnia in 1995. They wait in Serbia in a cheap house in the countryside, unable to return home and unable to get jobs because they are refugees. They fight hopelessness by finding comfort in the small symbols of concern others show. MCC photo by Amy Gopp.



Meat canning crew and Ontario folks can 11,826 cans of meat, the first time MCC meat was canned in Canada.

MCC ships 91 metric tons of canned beef to North Korea. In 1997 MCC sent food and other resources worth more than \$2.8 million Cdn./\$2 million U.S. to North Korea.

MCC signs agreement with Iran to start a university student exchange program.

Ground breaking in Eureka, Ill., for the first "Memorial House against Hunger," orchestrated by Don Litwiler in memory of his mother.



GOD CALLS US TO FOLLOW JESUS Jean Vanier in *The Broken Body* (Paulist Press, 1988) writes: "We are called daily by Jesus to make an inner choice and to become responsible for our growth and our capacity to give life and for the growth of others. But we must make this choice with the commitment of our whole life. Do we really want to follow Jesus, to answer his call, to become peacemakers in this broken world of ours?"

In Mennonite Central Committee, peacemakers come in many forms, shapes, experiences and backgrounds. At year end 867 workers were serving in 54 countries. Their common strength is that Jesus Christ, reflected to them through the lives of others, guides them through their struggles. In MCC, we seek our own points of pain, weakness and growth and the tender, secret way of God.

We ask ourselves: How am I living? What is the source of my strength to be true to all things? Who is confirming my call to love deeply, pray frequently and follow Jesus by being a peacemaker in this broken world?

Join MCC workers this coming year in loving deeply, praying frequently and following Jesus by serving others.

Dwight J. McFadden, Jr., MCC Human Resources Director

At the Davao City shipyard in the Philippines, MCC worker Mary Ann Weber chats with Emily, 17, who has unloaded fertilizer ships for the past two years. Emily has dreams of finishing school but needs to earn money to help her struggling family. Mary Ann advocates for Emily and other working children like her. MCC photo by Mark Beach.



MAY

First cheese is made at MCC-donated cheese plant in Neudachino, Siberia.



Philadelphia (Pa.) Service Unit opens as part of MCC U.S. commitment to be an agency that welcomes people of African, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American descent.

First Northern Relief Sale held in Lively, Ontario. Thirty-nine relief sales raised more than \$5.7 million Cdn./\$4 million U.S. for MCC in 1997.



Red River floods for evacuation of some 25,000 people in southern Manitoba. Mennonite Disaster Service mobilizes largest project ever in Canada. Isaac Elias (pictured) and hundreds of volunteers to clean up.

WHAT WE DID

Vocation of MCC workers in service on 11/30/97
(not including salaried staff)

Community services 137
Field administration 112
Education 68
North American education 49
Administration/support services 41
Ten Thousand Villages 36
Income generation 34
Agriculture/Food securities 32
Health 31
Peace 30
Emergency assistance 18



Julie Litwiller works as a nurse in New Orleans at Covenant House, a shelter for homeless and runaway youth. Through this work, Julie says she is able to be part of "a chain that ensures that teenagers and young adults with no insurance receive quality health care." *MCC photo by Kelly Going.*



MCC agriculturist Lee Brockmueller (left) and Mr. Thum, a Cambodian farmer employed by MCC, discuss ways to encourage rice farmers in Mesang district to grow vegetables. They

are pictured in Mr. Thum's demonstration garden where people can come to get ideas and buy seeds. Thanks to Mr. Thum's good example, many farmers have begun raising wax gourds and pumpkins, adding important vitamins to their families' diets. *MCC photo by Pearl Sensenig.*

JUN

Saskatchewan hosts Native Ministries Consultation where provincial MCCs examined how to improve work with People of First Nations.

Start of "Sowing new life" campaign to raise \$200,000 for peace-building work of Central American Anabaptists.

**CENTRAL
AMERICA**
Sowing new life

JUL

Hundreds of young people join SWAP (Sharing with Appalachian People). They built or repaired homes and saw the world through Appalachian eyes. SWAP is one of 18 MCC short-term service options for young people.

AUG

Sixty-six youth from 30 countries start 12-month assignments in Canada and the United States, through the International Visitor Exchange Program of MCC.

WHERE WE WERE

Location of MCC workers in service on 11/30/97

Total—867 people

NORTH AMERICA 510

Cdn. Service Workers 115
Cdn. Salaried Staff 112
U.S. Service Workers 116
U.S. Salaried Staff 167

LATIN AMERICA 112

Bolivia 23
Brazil 14
El Salvador 9
Guatemala 7
Haiti 8
Honduras 9
Jamaica 15
Mexico 9
Nicaragua 11
Paraguay 5
Peru 2

EUROPE 22

Croatia 3
Germany 1
Russia 9
Serbia 1
Switzerland 5
Ukraine 3

AFRICA 107

Angola 1
Botswana 6
Burkina Faso
Burundi 1
Chad 9
Congo 4
Ethiopia 2
Kenya 9
Lesotho 5
Mozambique
Nigeria 10
Somalia 2
South Africa
Sudan 7
Swaziland 5
Tanzania 5
Uganda 7
Zambia 5
Zimbabwe

Darker areas on map indicate presence of MCC workers

SEP

First-ever MCC golf tournaments in Alberta raise \$21,000 Cdn. for MCC.



MCC places its first agriculturist in Croatia and its first peace workers in

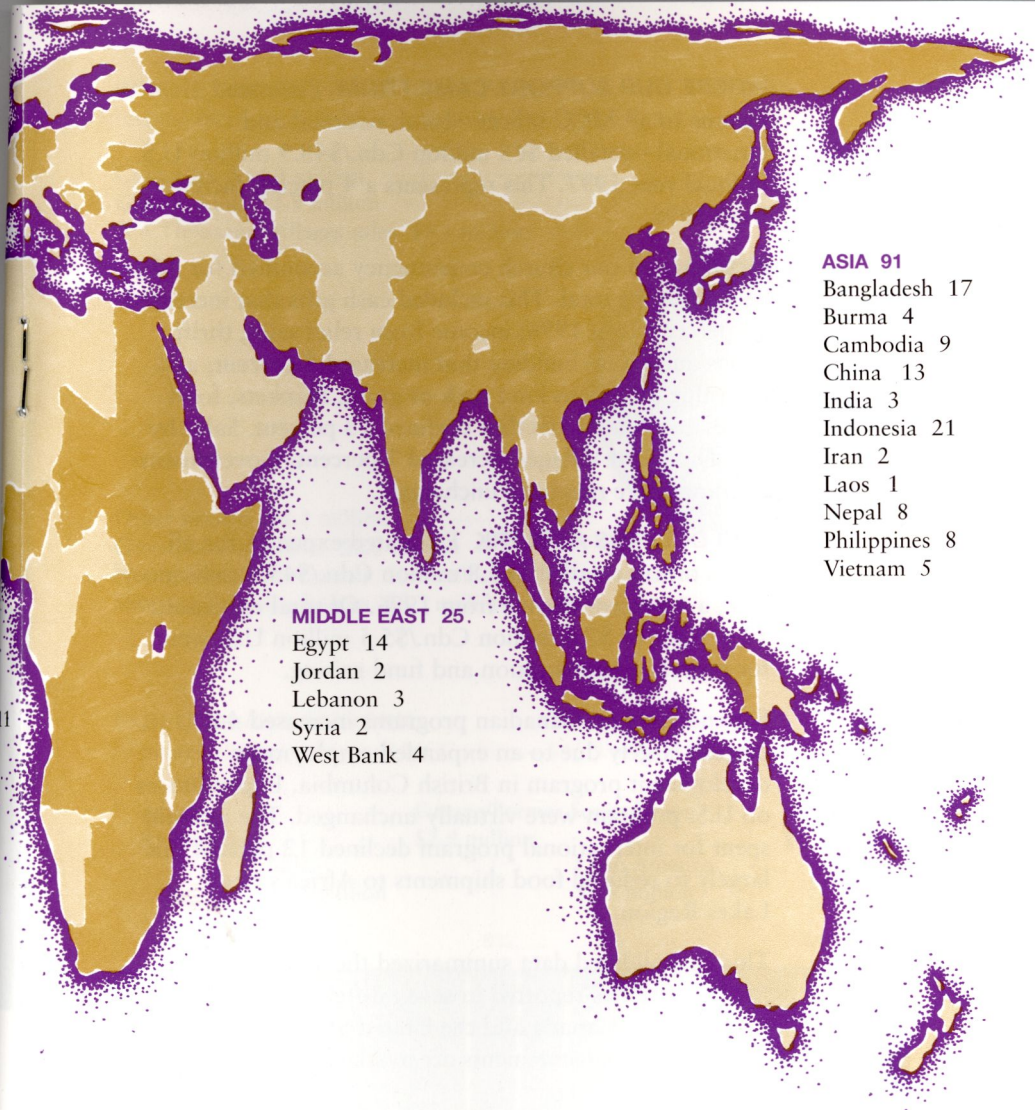
North Caucasus, a region of Russia.

MCC workers are placed for the first time with Islamic agencies—a social welfare agency in Gaza and a girls' school in Lebanon.

OCT



Nobel Peace Prize awarded to International Campaign to Ban Landmines; MCC was one of some 1,000 organizations in the campaign coalition.



ASIA 91

- Bangladesh 17
- Burma 4
- Cambodia 9
- China 13
- India 3
- Indonesia 21
- Iran 2
- Laos 1
- Nepal 8
- Philippines 8
- Vietnam 5

MIDDLE EAST 25

- Egypt 14
- Jordan 2
- Lebanon 3
- Syria 2
- West Bank 4

Centro Menno Facility in Bolivia is built as part of MCC's commitment to the Colony Mennonites there.



NOV

Ten Thousand Villages has its best November ever with sales totalling \$2,321,527 Cdn./\$1,669,178 U.S.

MCC Canada report on Canada's justice system shows that most provinces spend too much time on revolving door prisons and too little on healing victims and communities affected by crime.

One of two Africa administrators moves to Winnipeg, Man., from Akron, Pa., as one way to bring overseas program closer to Canadian constituency.

WHERE OUR SUPPORT CAME FROM Estimated income to all MCC offices—local, national and binational—totalled \$68 million Cdn./\$48.9 million U.S. in fiscal year 1997. This represents a 4 percent increase from 1996.

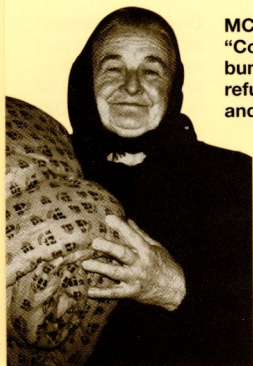
Income from our church constituency accounted for 54 percent of the total. This included cash gifts that increased 14 percent from 1996; income from relief sales, thrift shops and house building that increased 5 percent; and the value of gifts-in-kind such as grain, blankets, food boxes and school kits that declined 13 percent. Sales by Ten Thousand Villages increased 7 percent. Governmental grants were relatively unchanged.

OUR DOLLARS AT WORK Estimated expenses for all MCC offices totalled \$63.8 million Cdn./\$45.9 million U.S., a 1 percent decline from 1996. Of total expenses, 12 percent or \$7.6 million Cdn./\$5.5 million U.S. went for general administration and fund raising.

Expenditures on Canadian programs increased 44 percent largely due to an expanded employment development program in British Columbia. Expenditures on U.S. program were virtually unchanged. The amount spent for international program declined 12 percent due largely to reduced food shipments to Africa's Great Lakes Region.

This consolidated data summarized the activity of 12 MCC entities as reported in seven different financial statements in Canada and the United States. Copies of audited financial statements are available from local MCC offices.

Ken Langeman, MCC Controller



MCC ships 7,256 "Comfort 'n Joy" bundles to refugees in Serbia and Bosnia.

Opening of Sarasota (Florida) Mennonite Relief center where people can sort clothing, quilt, roll bandages and collect school and health kits.

U.S. cash contributions to MCC totalled \$13.3 million U.S., a record high, in fiscal year 1997.

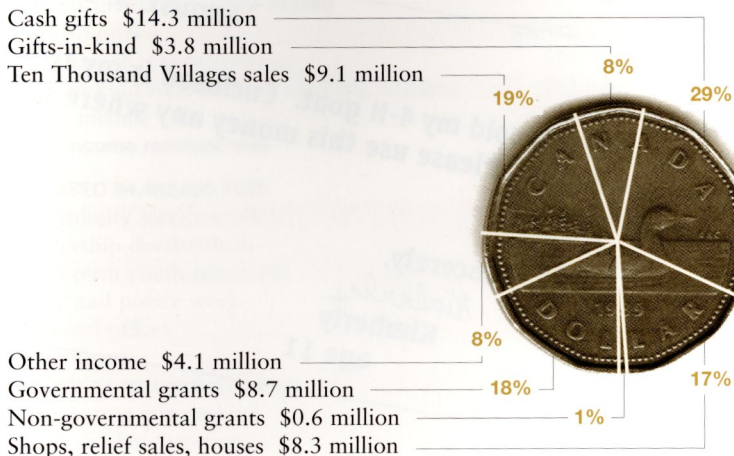
DEC



MCC launches a drive to raise \$139,000 Cdn./\$100,000 U.S. to treat Iraqi children with leukemia.

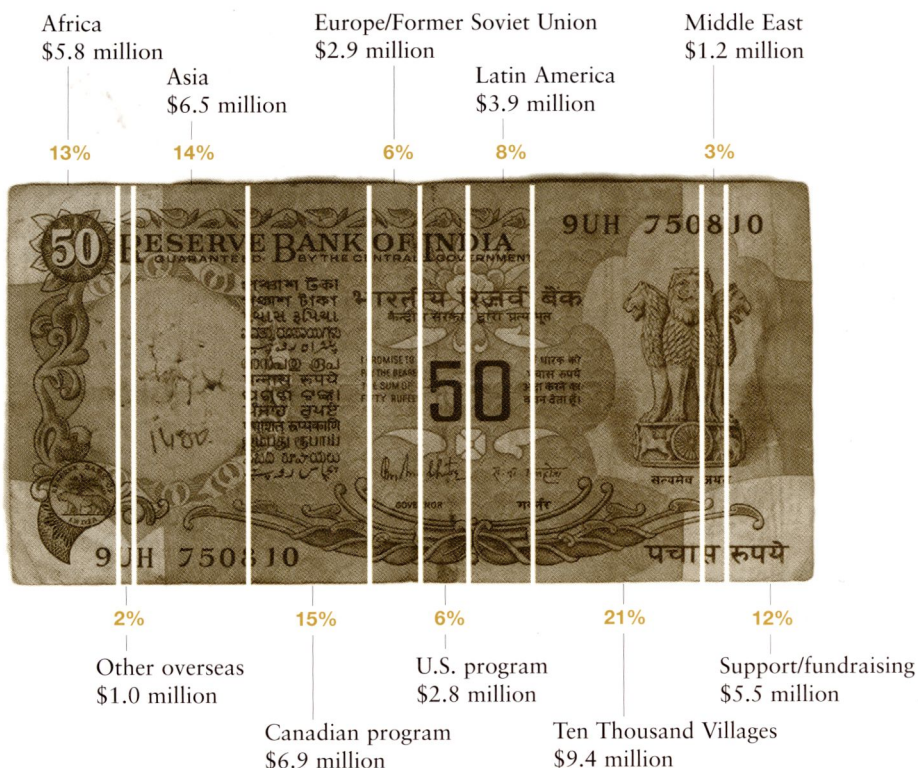
WHERE OUR SUPPORT CAME FROM

Income received at all MCC offices—\$48.9 million U.S.



OUR DOLLARS AT WORK

Expenses disbursed from all MCC offices—\$45.9 million U.S.





August 3, 1997

Dear MCC,
I recently sold my 4-H goat. Enclosed is my tithe of sixty dollars. Please use this money any where it is needed.

Sincerely,
Kimberly
Kimberly
age 11

MCC INTERNATIONAL

in U.S. dollars; for 12 months ended November 30, 1997

↑ ↓ arrows after numbers indicate an increase or decrease compared to 1996 figures.

WE RECEIVED \$31,598,000 FROM:

Canadian contributors	\$4,791,000 ↑
U.S. contributors	8,976,000 ↑
Other contributors	245,000 ↑
Grants from non-governmental agencies	619,000 ↓
Grants from governmental agencies	1,970,000 ↓
Sales of Ten Thousand Villages items	6,800,000 ↑
Earnings from investments	867,000 ↑
Programs that earn revenue	366,000 ↑
Other sources	190,000 ↑
Material resources from Canadian donors	4,486,000 ↓
Material resources from U.S. donors	2,288,000 ↓
Total income received was	31,598,000 ↓

WE USED \$29,893,000 FOR:

Agricultural work	2,262,000 ↓
Emergency assistance	1,766,000 ↑
Income generation	933,000 ↓
Educational work	2,655,000 ↑
Health work	888,000 ↓
Community services	2,578,000 ↑
Connecting peoples	577,000
North American education	738,000
Peace work	1,678,000 ↓
Ten Thousand Villages activities	6,710,000 ↑
General administration	2,153,000 ↓
Material resource distribution	6,955,000 ↓
Total spending was	29,893,000 ↓

Our assets increased by 1,705,000 ↑

MCC U.S.

in U.S. dollars; for 12 months ended November 30, 1997

WE RECEIVED \$5,245,000 FROM:

Contributors	\$4,358,000 ↑
Programs that earn revenue	529,000 ↓
Gifts-in-kind such as food, clothing, bedding	272,000 ↑
Other income	86,000 ↑
Total income received was	5,245,000 ↑

WE USED \$4,482,000 FOR:

Community service work	\$742,000 ↓
Leadership development	288,000 ↓
Short-term youth programs	169,000 ↓
Peace and justice work	793,000 ↓
Regional offices	632,000 ↑
Fundraising	424,000 ↓
Collecting material resources	585,000 ↑
Distributing gifts-in-kind	272,000 ↑
General administration	577,000 ↑
Total spending was	4,482,000 ↑

Our assets increased by 763,000 ↑

MCC CANADA

in Canadian dollars; for 12 months ended August 31, 1997

WE RECEIVED \$21,728,000 FROM:

Donations, relief sales and thrift shops	\$8,519,000 ↑
Canadian International Development Agency	2,743,000 ↓
Projects that earn revenue ¹	553,000 ↓
Sales of Ten Thousand Villages items	2,483,000 ↑
Donations and grants for food distribution (Canadian Foodgrains Bank)	7,430,000 ↓
Total income received was	\$21,728,000 ↓

WE USED \$2,552,000 IN CANADA FOR:

Programs in Canada	\$1,006,000 ↓
Assistance to the Kanadier Mennonites ²	578,000 ↑
General administration	968,000 ↓

WE USED \$19,510,000 OVERSEAS FOR:

Shipping food (Canadian Foodgrains Bank)	7,475,000 ↓
Paying Ten Thousand Villages producers and getting their crafts to stores	2,854,000 ↓
Supporting the relief and development work of Mennonite Central Committee	9,181,000 ↑
Total spending was	\$22,062,000 ↓

Our assets were reduced by³ \$334,000 ↓

¹ includes the sale of low German books and newspapers for the Kanadier Mennonites as well as reimbursement from projects in Atlantic Canada

² conservative colony Mennonites in Canada and Mexico with whom we work

³ concerted effort was made to increase support to MCC by reducing cash balances



Steven Wambua, a member of Kenya Crafts Cooperative Union, is one person who has experienced life-changing income from sales to Ten Thousand Villages. Steven spent seven weeks in North America this fall visiting stores demonstrating his abilities to attentive audiences. With the income from Ten Thousand Villages, Steven has paid for several of his sibling's education and cares for three of his nieces and nephews. *MCC photo by Tony Siemens.*

RECORD SALES CREATE 11,500 FULL-TIME JOBS

1997 has been an exciting year for Ten Thousand Villages. North American shoppers purchased crafts valued at \$18.9 million Cdn./ \$13.6 million U.S., a record high for Ten Thousand Villages. This 9 percent increase in sales brought the total number of full-time equivalent jobs we created to 11,500. These sales improved the lives of at least 60,000 people, since most of the artisans we buy from work only part time making crafts, and use this income to improve the lives of their entire family.

At year end, more than 70 stores in North America displayed the increasingly familiar brick red Ten Thousand Villages logo and name we created in 1996. Artisans from Kenya and the Philippines toured stores

showing their skills to enthusiastic audiences. The Management Committee met twice during the year, providing valuable counsel, support and direction.

We introduced handicrafts from three new African countries in 1997: Burkina Faso, Congo and Nigeria. New retail stores opened in Cambridge, Mass., Charlotte, N.C., Evanston, Ill., Knoxville, Tenn., Moncton, New Brunswick, Sonoma, Calif., Stratford, Ont., Waterloo, Ont., and West Hartford, Conn.

The passion and commitment of volunteers and staff in the growing Ten Thousand Villages network is extraordinary. Improving the lives of artisans overseas, by selling the crafts they create, is clearly an important, contagious mission that is moving beyond Mennonite communities. The involvement of people from other Christian groups, usually in urban areas, is fueling the growth of the organization. For the first time this fall, for example, Catholics in Toledo, Ohio, and Baptists in Little Rock, Ark., held large consignment sales in their churches.

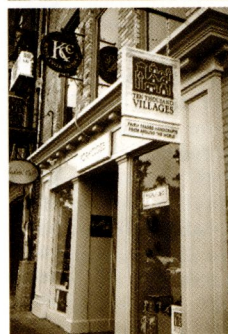
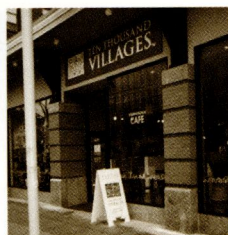
We are grateful to God for this important work, for the highly committed people involved in it, for the opportunity to interact with and learn from our brothers and sisters around the world. This work is about justice as we think of the words of Micah: "... and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?"

Paul Myers, Ten Thousand Villages Director

TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES

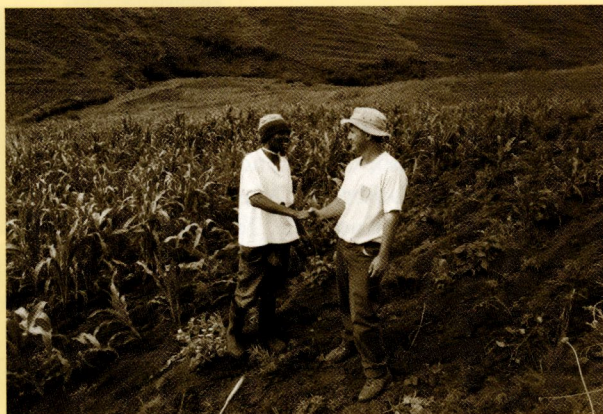
Distribution of U.S. and Canadian retail sales dollars in U.S. dollars

Retail sales	\$13,594,000 ↑
Cost of making those sales:	
Retailing costs	\$5,765,000 ↑
Handicraft purchases from artisans	3,833,000 ↑
Freight/brokerage fees	846,000 ↑
Marketing/information costs	1,023,000 ↓
Warehouse costs	1,309,000 ↑
Administration costs	1,125,000 ↓
Total expenses were	\$13,901,000 ↑
Our deficit was	\$307,000 ↓



In Cambridge, Mass. (above top), a new Ten Thousand Villages store and International Café are awakening a vibrant and diverse community to the mission of the organization. During the grand opening, three shoppers signed up on the spot to become volunteers. *Photo by Karla Klockenteger.*

In historic Stratford, Ont. (above bottom), Ten Thousand Villages is making people aware of why trading fairly is important. Set among boutiques and restaurants, the new store attracts people who are interested in handmade items but might not find their way to stores located in Mennonite areas. *Photo by Peter Thiessen.*



MCC English and math teacher Jud Shearer (right) tries his hand at farming in the village of Phakoeng where he lives in Lesotho. Important to Jud has been coming to feel at home in this community. "I also realize I have been talking to God a lot since I am here. My faith has changed—it feels much more alive," says Jud. MCC photo by Mark Beach.



**Mennonite
Central
Committee**

**Mennonite Central Committee
and MCC U.S.**

21 South 12th Street, PO Box 500
Akron, PA 17501-0500
(717) 859-1151 (717) 859-3889

**Mennonite Central
Committee Canada**

134 Plaza Drive
Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9
(204) 261-6381 or (888) 622-6337

MCC Central States

106 West 24th Street
PO Box 235
North Newton, Kansas 67117
(316) 283-2720

MCC East Coast

21 South 12th Street
PO Box 500
Akron, PA 17501-0500
(717) 859-3889

MCC Great Lakes

13363 Jericho Road, Box 82
Kidron, OH 44636
(330) 857-7721

West Coast MCC

1010 G Street
Reedley, CA 93654
(209) 638-6911

MCC Alberta

76 Skyline Crescent N.E.
Calgary, AB T2K 5X7
(403) 275-6935 or (888) 622-6337

MCC British Columbia

Box 2038
Abbotsford, BC V2T 3T8
(604) 850-6639 or (888) 622-6337

MCC Manitoba

134 Plaza Drive
Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9
(204) 261-6381 or (888) 622-6337

MCC Ontario

50 Kent Avenue
Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1
(519) 745-8458 or (888) 622-6337

MCC Saskatchewan

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Saskatoon, SK S7L 5W9
(306) 665-2555 or (888) 622-6337



Church News

Notes of Congregational Activities in North America

Allegheny Conference

On Jan. 18 Yolanda George gave an inspiring talk to the **Air Hill** congregation, Chambersburg, Pa., on "Ministry in Cuba Before and After Communism." ♦ The **Antrim** church, Chambersburg, hosted a table tennis tourney Jan. 10. On Jan. 12, Bishop Hawbaker conducted a service of recognition for the transfer of ordination of Rev. Ky Searcy, who serves as associate pastor. (Prior to coming to Antrim, Rev. Searcy served with the Free Methodist Church.) The group Greater Vision sang in the morning and evening services on Jan. 18. ♦ Bob and Carol Geiger spoke in the evening missions service Jan. 18 of the **Chambersburg** congregation. ♦ David Geiger, 17-yr.-old missionary with his parents in South America, spoke Jan. 11 to the Living Fire meeting of the **Fairview Ave.** church, Waynesboro, Pa. ♦ Five persons were baptized and 12 received as members Jan. 4 of the **Five Forks** church, Waynesboro. The congregation's goals for 1998 are 580 people (average per Sunday) in worship; 60 conversions; and addition of a third full-time pastor.

The **Hollowell** congregation, Waynesboro, hosted their second annual wild game sportsman's banquet recently with speaker Dave Tripiciano from Genesco, N.Y. ♦ The **Iron Springs** congregation, Fairfield, Pa., held their annual birthday fellowship after the Jan. 25 service. ♦ Pastor Earl E. and Sharon Herr of the **Martinsburg**, Pa., church have agreed to lead the concerts of prayer at General Conference in July. ♦ A Sunday school elective for the **Montgomery** congregation, Mercersburg, Pa., in February was "How the Bible Was Formed," taught by Frank Kipe.

Paul and Margaret Farkas and Ben and Julie Musser are new deacon couples for the **Mt. Rock** congregation, Shippensburg, Pa. ♦ Two adult Sunday school classes of the **Mt. Tabor** church, Mercersburg, Pa., enjoyed their Christmas meal and gift exchange on Jan. 10. ♦

Souper Bowl Sunday, Jan. 25, at the **New Guilford** church, Chambersburg, included donations to the Salvation Army Soup Kitchen, staffed by church youth.

Atlantic Conference

Pastor Rod White of the **Circle of Hope** church, Philadelphia, Pa., traveled to South Africa Feb. 4-18 to train in interracial mediation. ♦ The **Cross Roads** church, Mount Joy, Pa., had an "old-fashioned hymn-sing" on Jan. 4. Pastor Dale Engle's final Sunday with the congregation was Jan. 25. ♦ The **Elizabethtown**, Pa., church hosted a winter retreat Feb. 20-22 at Kenbrook Bible Camp with speaker Roger Sider on "Communication, Conflict, and Community." ♦ The singles and couples of the **Fairland** church, Cleona, Pa., had a dinner Feb. 13 at Heisey's Diner to celebrate Christ's love. ♦ The program at the Feb. 6 sweetheart banquet of the **Free Grace** church, Millersburg, Pa., was presented in part by Mike and Valerie Ford from Camp Hebron.

On Jan. 11 the family life speaker at the **Hempfield** church, Lancaster, Pa., was John Reitz on "Investing in Relationships." ♦ Discipleship meetings at the **Lancaster** church began Feb. 1 with Woody Dalton as speaker. The Messiah College Concert Choir presented a program on Feb. 15. ♦ Forty men attended the annual retreat of the **Manheim**, Pa., church at Refreshing Mountain Camp, Jan. 23-24. ♦ Warren Hoffman spoke Jan. 4 to the **Manor** congregation, Mountville, Pa., on "One Thing I Do." Charlie "Tremendous" Jones spoke to 155 men at their Jan. 10 breakfast.

Sweet Spirit provided music for the Feb. 13 sweetheart banquet of the **Millersville**, Pa., church. The youth came together for the 30-Hour Famine Feb. 27-28. ♦ On Jan. 4 the speakers at the **Mount Pleasant** church, Mt. Joy, were Chris Muleya from Zambia and Dhalisan Mathe from Zimbabwe. ♦ Ann Simpson was speaker for the Jan. 11 women's breakfast of the **New Hope** church,

Harrisburg, Pa., on "Don't Look Back." ♦ On Feb. 1 the **New Joy** congregation, Akron, Pa., had a dessert banquet on the theme "Expansion for God's Glory" to celebrate land acquisition. ♦ Feb. 15 was Youth Sunday at the **Palmyra**, Pa., church with speaker Chris Connell of Way of the Cross Ministries.

The **Pequea** church, Lancaster, began a new class for nonmembers on Feb. 4 taught by Bob Mylin. ♦ The women's ministries of the **Refton**, Pa., church sponsored a Jan. 17 meeting on "How to Preserve Your Photos and Other Memories." ♦ The **Silverdale**, Pa., church rejoiced over nine new members on Dec. 28. The men had a prayer breakfast Jan. 10 at Keystone Restaurant. ♦ On Jan. 25 the youth of the **Speedwell Heights** church, Lititz, Pa., joined youth all across North America to raise money for the hungry. All proceeds went directly to Water Street Rescue Mission.

Canadian Conference

The **Bertie** church, Stevensville, Ont., began a third small group on Jan. 4. ♦ On Jan. 3 the men of the **Boyle** congregation, St. Ann's, Ont., had their prayer breakfast at Kaboda. ♦ Pastor Kelly of the **Bridlewood** church, Agincourt, Ont., began a new stewardship series on Jan. 11, "Giving, A Fresh Expression." ♦ On Jan. 19 the **Delisle**, Sask., women had their secret sisters exchange and party. ♦ The **Heise Hill** church, Gormley, Ont., hosted an eight-week aerobics class beginning Jan. 5.

On a January Sunday, with the temperature outside at -34 degrees, 144 people packed the **Kindersley**,

Sask., church as four persons were baptized and six received as members. A potluck followed. ♦ On Jan. 9 the **Massey Place** church, Saskatoon, Sask., hosted a city-wide youth worship service. Attenders brought nonperishable food items. ♦ Ted Riseboro shared the Word Jan. 18 through chalk drawing and testimony with the **Oak Ridges**, Ont., congregation. ♦ The **Orchard Creek** congregation, St. Catharines, Ont., had a 24-hour prayer vigil Jan. 23-24. A make-your-own-sub Superbowl party was Jan. 25. ♦ Bishop Winger spoke in the Jan. 18 service of the **Port Colborne**, Ont., congregation.

Guest speaker Jan. 18 for the **Ridgemount** congregation, Hamilton, Ont., was Alf Rees on "A Shepherd of Love." ♦ David and JoAnne McGarvey now pastor the **Rosebank** congregation, Petersburg, Ont. ♦ On Jan. 10 the **Sherkston**, Ont., church hosted a five-hour seminar on family finances, investments, wills, and planned giving with Bob Leadley, Brian Gunning, and Richard Dilts. ♦ The **Springvale**, Ont., church recently began new classes on 2 Corinthians and Joshua. ♦ Keith and Lois Wiggan are the new pastoral couple of the **Westheights** church, Kitchener, Ont. A prayer summit was held Jan. 16 for the church, conference, world missions, and the nation.

Central Conference

Bishop Byers officiated Jan. 11 at the dedication of new facilities for the **Amherst** church, Massillon, Ohio. ♦ Bishop Byers visited the Jan. 18 services of the **Beulah Chapel** church, Springfield, Ohio. ♦ On Jan. 25 the **Christian Union**

Schedule of Events

Board meetings are held at Grantham, Pa., unless otherwise noted. For more information, contact the denominational office, P.O. Box 290, Grantham, Pa. 17027; phone (717) 697-2634.

Apr. 14-15	Ministers' Conference—Messiah College
Apr. 17-18	Canadian Regional Conference
Apr. 17-18	Susquehanna Regional Conference
Apr. 19-23	Core Course "Theology of the Church"—Collingwood, Ont.
Apr. 24-25	Southeast Regional Conference
Apr. 29-30	Leadership Council
May 7-9	Core Course "Brethren in Christ Polity"—Grantham, Pa.
May 18-22	Core Course "Brethren in Christ History"—Upland, Calif.
July 4-8	General Conference—Messiah College, Grantham, Pa.
July 16-18	Core Course "Theology of Salvation"—West Milton, Ohio

Updates for General Conference, July 4-8, 1998

at Messiah College, Grantham, PA



**Celebrating 100 years of Brethren in Christ missions
Last General Conference before the new millennium
New leadership setting vision for 2000 and beyond
A conference for the whole family
Special youth, children and nursery programs**

Registration: All attendees of all ages, including commuters, are required to register and request their meal/lodging needs. See the January 1998 *Visitor* or your pastor for the official form.

Transportation: Due to Canadian and U.S. holidays, order public transportation tickets early for the best price. If transportation is needed from Harrisburg area terminals, make your request before June 1 on the conference registration form. Corrected rates were in the February *Visitor*.

Exhibits: Dozens of church-related ministries are being invited to display current information about their work. A Christian Light Bookstore will also have the latest in gifts, literature, and ministry aids.

Program Updates: *Sunday morning*—You are encouraged to attend the local Brethren in Christ Church of your choice. Sunday afternoon and evening will be special times of celebration (registration not required). *Sunday afternoon:* Musical program featuring children and adult choirs as well as instrumentalists. *Sunday evening:* Missions Centennial Celebration with drama team from Africa. *Monday afternoon:* Select from a dozen workshops to help you to serve more effectively. *Tuesday afternoon:* Open time for you to visit a nearby church ministry guided by a leader. **Registration is not required for the five evening inspirational programs.**

Meals: The first meal available in the dining room is breakfast, Saturday, July 4. The final meal served is breakfast on Thursday, July 9. There are no refunds on package plan meals or missed meals.

Full-time, non-commuting participants of Conference (those who will be at Conference from Saturday to Wednesday and lodging on campus) must select and purchase one of the two meal packages offered by the college: **3 meal package** (5 days, 15 meals in total). The first meal of this package starts with breakfast on Saturday, July 4, and ends with dinner on Wednesday, July 8. Cost per person per day: \$16.25 (13 & up); \$8.15 (5-12); Free (0-4); **2 meal package** (Lunch and dinner only, 5 days, 10 meals in total). The first meal of this package starts with lunch on Saturday, July 4, and ends with dinner on Wednesday, July 8. Cost per person per day: \$12.85 (13 & up); \$6.45 (5-12); Free (0-4).

Commuters and part-time participants (those who plan to travel to/from Conference and/or those who will not attend the entire conference) are welcomed to purchase one of the above meal packages, or a "partial" meal package (with a minimum purchase of two full days of either a three-meal or two-meal-a-day plan).

A limited number of individual meal tickets will be sold at the Information Desk daily. The snack shop will be open from 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. each day (except Sunday) during Conference.

If you want to have breakfast in the college dining room on Thursday morning, please purchase an individual meal ticket from the Information Desk before the conclusion of Conference on Wednesday evening.

Youth and Children's Programs: Quizzers who are 12 years old and going into at least 7th grade will need to register for the youth program instead of the children's program. Other 12-year-olds going into 7th grade have the option of registering for either the youth or the children's program. Note: The youth registration fee of \$40 is due and payable during the Saturday morning youth program registration time. This fee is also applicable to 12-year-olds who opt to be in the youth program instead of the children's program.

Meal and lodging prices for all 12-year-olds, even if they choose to register for the youth program, remain the same as stated in the registration form. Payments for meals and lodging are to be included and sent with your registration forms.

Lodging for 5- to 12-year-olds per person per night: a bed in a dormitory room: \$7.00; an apartment: \$8.10

Meals for 5- to 12-year-olds per person per day: 3 meal package plan: \$8.15 per person per day; 2 meal package plan: \$6.45 per person per day.

Questions? Call David P. McBeth, Conference Director at (717) 766-0598.

church, Garrett, Ind., had Communion, a carry-in meal, and council meeting. ♦ Picture taking for the new directory of the **Mooretown** church, Sandusky, Mich., was Jan. 27. On New Year's Eve the church hosted the second annual Sandusky youth lock-in with 32 teens from various churches. ♦ In January the **Northgate** fellowship, Tipp City, Ohio, began providing once-a-month worship services at the Franklin Nursing Home. On Jan. 10 the quiz team placed second in their first meet.

On Jan. 18 the **Pleasant Hill**, Ohio, church had their annual carry-in meal and business meeting. ♦ The **Sippo Valley** congregation began a Sunday school study of Revelation in February. ♦ The **Valley Chapel** church, East Canton, Ohio, reports a strong first-place quiz team as part of a thriving youth program. ♦ On Jan. 25, Douglas Carmel of Rock of Israel Ministries shared with the **Western Hills** congregation, Cincinnati, Ohio, about the Jewish foundations of Christianity. ♦ The **Wooster**, Ohio, congregation planned a bowling outing for Feb. 1.

Midwest Conference

Pastor Martin of the **Bethany** congregation, Thomas, Okla., recently began a new Wednesday night class called "A Biblical Portrait of Marriage." Forty church women attended a Jan. 30-31 conference in Oklahoma City called "Bring Back the Joy." ♦ The Youth Discipleship Class of the **Rosebank** church, Hope, Kan., had a bowling and pizza outing Jan. 11. A men's accountability group meets on Wednesday nights.

Pacific Conference

On Jan. 4, Doug Drysdale, former Evangelical Church pastor, brought the message and music to the **Pacific Highway** congregation, Salem, Ore. ♦ The **Upland**, Calif., church hosted a "Purpose Driven Church" workshop on Jan. 31, and a missions banquet Feb. 7. ♦ Al and Thata Book spoke to the combined Bible study groups of the **Walnut**, Calif., church on Feb. 5.

Southeast Conference

The youth of the **Highland Park** church, Dublin, Va., had a mystery dinner on Jan. 31. The church has two Promise Keepers groups that meet on Saturday mornings. ♦ On Jan. 17 the **Holden Park** church, Orlando, Fla., had a leadership seminar with John Maxwell. ♦ A representative of Habitat for Humanity spoke in the Jan. 18 morning ser-

vice of the **Millerfields** church, Columbia, Ky.

Susquehanna Conference

On Jan. 4, the **Big Valley** congregation, Belleville, Pa., thanked Carol Speicher as she retired from 21+ years of janitorial service. ♦ The women's missionary fellowship of the **Carlisle**, Pa., church hosted a mid-winter breakfast on Feb. 21. On Feb. 1 the summer ministry team gave a slide presentation about their 1997 trip. ♦ The comedy duo FISHEYES brought Scripture alive for the **Cedar Grove** congregation, Mifflintown, Pa., on Jan. 14. ♦ Mary and Steve Holland and Elaine and Phil Thuma resourced the **Dillsburg**, Pa., congregation's married couples retreat Jan. 30-31.

The **Fairview** congregation, New Cumberland, Pa., met John and Kathy Brubaker recently and heard about their world missions work. ♦ The **Grantham**, Pa., church viewed the Max Lucado video series "And the Angels Were Silent" on Sunday evenings in January and February. ♦ At the Jan. 18 council, the **Mechanicsburg**, Pa., church approved a building program for new classrooms. ♦ The **Messiah Village** church, Mechanicsburg, welcomed 14 new members on Jan. 18. A sing-spiration was held Jan. 25. ♦ The **Redland Valley** congregation, York Haven, Pa., is purchasing new hymnals. The women's meeting speaker on Feb. 3 was Laura Marshall on "heart-love." ♦ The **Wesley** church, Mt. Holly Springs, Pa., welcomed three new members on Jan. 27.

For The Record

Births

Albrecht: Allegra Caron, Dec. 13, 1997; Tim and Deb (Dorsch) Albrecht, Massey Place congregation, Sask.

Brandt: Jonah Myung, Dec. 4, 1997; chosen son of Steve and Jody (Brothers) Brandt, Dillsburg congregation, Pa.

Brosius: Taylor Bennett, Jan. 5; Bennett and Nancy (Myers) Brosius, Elizabethtown congregation, Pa.

Chrisley: Caleb Ray, Jan. 13; Tony and Jennifer Chrisley, Highland Park congregation, Va.

Conner: David Chase, Jan. 13; Emily Conner, Highland Park congregation, Va.

DeZwarte: Ashton Seth, Dec. 16, 1997; James and Teresa (Griffin) DeZwarte, Millerfields congregation, Ky.

Eberly: Philip Miles and Deborah LeAnn, Jan. 21; Dan and Becky Eberly, Wooster congregation, Ohio.

Harbaugh: Shayna Maray, Jan. 17; Brian and Carla (Helfrick) Harbaugh, Montgomery congregation, Pa.

Harris: Jordan Anthony, Dec. 10, 1997; Starla Harris, Valley Chapel congregation, Ohio.

Hege: Nicole Elizabeth, Jan. 6; James and Denise (Heisey) Hege, Manor/Pequea congregations, Pa.

Hoke: Andrew James, Jan. 8; James and Darla (Huber) Hoke, Pequea congregation, Pa.

Hunsberger: Hannah Jane and Kellen James, Jan. 6; Eric and Shannon (Barkasi) Hunsberger, Perkiomen Valley congregation, Pa.

Jones: Rachel Margurite, Nov. 2, 1997; Isaac and Theresa (Barrett) Jones, Perkiomen Valley congregation, Pa.

Kievit: Christopher Hendrik, Dec. 31, 1997; Hank and Maria Kievit, Wainfleet congregation, Ont.

Kough: Aaron Merritt, Jan. 8; Jeff and Adrienne (Merritt) Kough, Zion congregation, Kan.

Landis: Madison Anne, Jan. 17; Ken and Karen Landis, Mechanicsburg congregation, Pa.

McBeth: Colin Gregory, Jan. 18; David and Leisel (Jacobs) McBeth, Manheim congregation, Pa.

Miller: Brandon Joel, Jan. 11; Randy and Tina (Kehres) Miller, Manor congregation, Pa.

Miller: Josiah David, Dec. 31, 1997; David and Julie Miller, Air Hill congregation, Pa.

Nyman: Danielle Sue, Nov. 7, 1997; Edward and Susan (Ammerman) Nyman, Marsh Creek congregation, Pa.

Swartz: Stephanie Marie, Dec. 28, 1997; Mark and Elizabeth Swartz, Air Hill congregation, Pa.

Weddings

Bossert - Armstrong: Carolynn Heather, daughter of Jill Armstrong, and Jeffery Donald, son of Donald and Jean Bossert, Fenwick, Ont., Dec. 27, 1997, at Boyle Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Ronald Lofthouse and Rev. Darryn Colp officiating.

Buchwald - Wingert: Rochelle Laura, daughter of Lynn and Patricia Wingert, Mechanicsburg, Pa., and Peter Frederick, son of Edward J. Buchwald, Seattle, Wash., and Diane Taylor Buchwald, Brookline, Mass., Jan. 3, at Grantham Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. James Gambini officiating.

Frymire - Hicks: Brenda Lee,

continued on page 22



E.V. TimeLines

Selected from the archives of the **EVANGELICAL VISITOR**

100 Years Ago

March 1, 1898—Editor H.N. Engle: "What do you believe? is a question frequently asked by persons who are anxious to either ventilate their own belief or

press themselves upon the sacred precincts of other men's faith. Perplexities arise in the minds of honest souls in this age of thought and controversial differences and many fail to grasp the truth that there is a nucleus on which hinges all *saving* faith. The kernel of all our belief must be that 'Christ died (as a ransom) and rose again.'"

75 Years Ago

March 19, 1923—P.J. Wiebe, in "What Does the Church Need?": "One answer is that the church ought to have better paid preachers.... Others claim that if the church would be used as a social center, where people would come together and exchange ideas and play games, etc., the problem would be solved. But the Spirit-filled person can immediately detect that these answers are all wrong. What the church needs is not better paid preachers, not more education—tho that may have its value—not more amusement, but the old-time Holy Ghost power as it was manifested in the early church."

50 Years Ago

March 22, 1948—Jesse F. Lady, in "The Cross—And God's Gift to Us": "We too often think of the cross as a great happening in history. We need to remember that the cross is a projection in time of the eternal solicitude of the heart of God. The first century cross is a time exposure of an eternal reality."

25 Years Ago

March 10, 1973—John E. Zercher: "I believe it would do something for the church and the members if from the earliest memories of church membership, a member of the Brethren in Christ assumed that sometime he or she would give a year or two or more in full-time volunteer service.... To encourage a young man or a young woman to invest two years...in Christian service through the church will (if the words of Jesus are true) tip the scales in favor of this young man or young woman's heart being there. For where you have invested your life, there your heart will be also."

10 Years Ago

March 1988—The current editor noted the number of Brethren in Christ in MCC field assignments had dropped from 24 in 1982 to 7 in 1987. "During the debate over the [denomination's] reorganization plan, there were those who predicted that the service dynamic would get lost in the shuffle. At least in terms of persons serving with MCC, they seem to have been right. Voluntary service, which formerly had been promoted and administered by one agency...was put on the agenda of four separate offices—and largely has fallen through the cracks.... One hopes that our current level of MCC participation does not reflect a far more serious problem: a withering of our commitment to service as an integral part of our Christian faith."

MONEY MATTERS

The Vision—Atlantic Conference Board for Evangelism and Church Planting

In the early 1990's the leaders of the Atlantic Conference, under the guidance of Bishop John Byers, were concerned with the struggles of several of the smaller congregations in the conference. How can a congregation break the cycle of



growth, plateau, and decline? One of those, the Centerville Brethren in Christ congregation, was in the heart of the fastest growing areas of Lancaster County and yet the congregation could not sustain growth. After much prayer and several meetings with the congregation, the Lord provided a clear vision for a new church to be planted in the Hempfield area. Rather than start with a pastor as

a single seed, the Lord directed the Board for Evangelism and Church Planting to use a seedling. 'Begin with a strong shoot from the Centerville church and graft in healthy branches from surrounding congregations' seemed to be the message. Many of the Centerville people agreed to be uprooted and replanted. They held their last service June 28th, 1992, with 25 in attendance.

Hempfield Brethren in Christ Church

"Building a Community of Faith"

The Call—Dr. George P. Kimber

Meanwhile, at Messiah College, a Bible professor of 22 years was approaching retirement age. After years of faithful teaching, mentoring, and molding hundreds of students, many of them whom went on to be pastors, it was time to consider slowing down. Dr. George Kimber has pastored numerous churches throughout the country, several of which were new plantings; had served on the mission field in Africa; and was now culminating his career of dedicated service to the Lord. However, his spirit was restless. The Lord seemed to be saying, "I'm not finished with you yet, Kimber." Warren Hoffman, new bishop of the Atlantic Conference, soon contacted Dr. Kimber to see if he would consider pastoring a new church planting on the west side of Lancaster. Preaching was the professional love of his life, so the prospect of serving another

congregation was appealing. But start a new congregation at age 65? Could the Lord really be calling him to this ministry? The answer came back clearly, "Follow me" "For I know the plans I have for you. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jer.29:11).

The Planting—July 1992

The winter of 1991-92, Dr. Kimber began visiting surrounding churches to share the vision for Hempfield and to challenge the people to join the new work. Yes, there would be some pain as they would be cut away from their large healthy congregation and grafted into the new seedling that was being transplanted. However, as a nurseryman wraps the graft-site protectively, so too, they would feel the protective hand of the Lord wrapped around them as they would seek their nurture from the new tree. The new Hempfield Brethren in Christ Church was planted on July 5, 1992, with 65 worshipping together in the lobby of the Easter Seals building.

Watering and Feeding—Subsidy, Gifts of Friends, Preaching, Teaching

The seedling was watered regularly by financial subsidies from the denomination and fed nourishment from the Word of God from the pulpit. The young seedling began to grow and the graft unions healed quickly, with the lines disappearing almost overnight. In October 1992, a telephone campaign was undertaken to contact unchurched persons in our community. In December, 174 people attended the Celebration Sunday.

A tap root was sent deep and the congregation was soon able to financially sustain itself. Teachers, nursery workers, and leaders had come from the area congregations so that Sunday school and Bible school were soon added. A children's choir numbered nearly 20, and before long a bell choir was ringing in the Christmas season with borrowed handbells.

Branching Out—Land and Building Program

In December 1993, a parcel of land came to the attention of the Leadership Team. It was prominently located along Marietta Avenue and yet had a high profile along the four-lane U.S. 30 to the rear.

Could it be the Lord had new soil so quickly for this young sapling? It hardly seemed possible. Land was being developed rapidly and parcels large enough for a church and future growth were becoming sparse. A local realtor from another congregation had been appointed to serve as a trustee for the former Centerville property until we were able to develop a Trustee Commission of our



own. He checked into the situation and discovered the owners' plans had been rejected by the township authorities and they were abandoning hopes of developing the property. After several sessions of prayer, we felt led to pursue the property. One partner wanted to hold out for a higher price but was rebuffed by a second with the argument that "it is a good cause. They want to build a church and we can't use it anyway." The Centerville properties were sold and the proceeds were applied to the down payment. The sellers agreed to leave a \$200,000 mortgage in the property for 3 years at 8 percent interest. Thus a building project was born.

Recognizing the often lengthy design and red-tape process, we felt like Moses at the edge of the Red Sea. The Lord was asking us to risk a step forward in faith when it seemed so hopelessly impossible. We didn't appear to have the strength or resources to fight the waves. Just as God was faithful to the Israelites in providing a way through the Red Sea, so too, he has been faithful to us. The design process flowed smoothly. As we focused on the ministry we felt called to develop in the new building, the design seemed to

grow right up out of the ministry pictures we described to the architect. The permits and approvals were occasionally delayed by what the township considered "more pressing" agenda items, but not a single "no" was encountered. Soon we were faced with the prospects of needing to fund an escrow account with the township to ensure the completion of the road improvements and sewer connections in order to move forward with the last approval. The Jacob Engle Foundation was able to quickly fill the need with a loan of \$205,000 with the aid of a loan guarantee by a friend of the congregation. Over the last several years, with the help of several friends outside the congregation, we have been able to fully liquidate the loan from Jacob Engle Foundation while continuing to provide ministry to our community.

At the beginning of the building fund drive, one of our leaders was inspired by the approach of another community service agency that takes 10 percent of the funds received for local housing construction and provides those funds to an international project that can build several houses with the small tithe. What if we were to tithe from our building project? How many other churches or missionaries' homes or foreign pastors' homes could we build with the tenth of our project? We don't take out our housing costs at home before computing our personal tithe to the church so why not include the congregation's capital budget receipts in our tithe calculation? We

were challenged by the idea and quickly committed to tithing from our building project. Our general fund tithe supports Cooperative Ministries, a missionary family from our congregation, and local benevolence. Our building fund tithe helps fund other capital projects or ministry outreach around the world. The blessings we have received from the letters of praise to the Lord for our help to those ministries have been overwhelming.

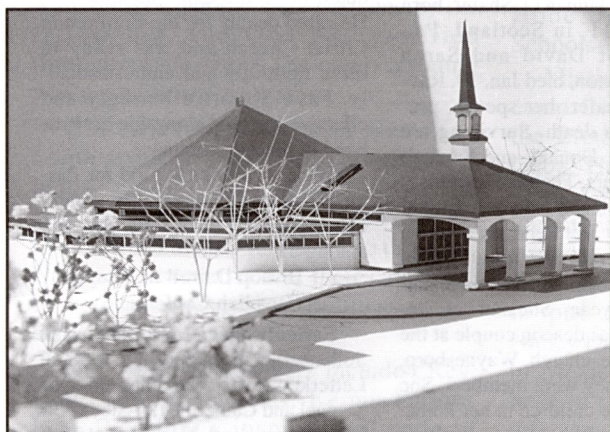
We are working toward performing the site work and road improvements portion of our project early in 1998 using the escrow fund established with the local township authority. As we move towards breaking ground we have dedicated ourselves to "Building a Community of Faith," not just building a building.

Firstfruits—Rededications, New Births, Summer Dry Spell, Fall Refreshment

Over the first five and one-half years of the Hempfield congregation, we have grown both in numbers and in spiritual maturity. Christians who had fallen away from their first love have returned to rededicate their lives. We have had several baptismal services bringing youth and adults, children of Brethren in Christ families, and former Jehovah's Witnesses to the Lord. We have enjoyed the fast growth of spring, weathered the dry spells of summer, and begun the slower growth of autumn. In January 1998 nearly 150 worshiped regularly and over 120 have sought the Word in Sunday school. The seedling has grown, branched out, and the firstfruits of harvest have been gathered.

Impending Harvest—Renewed Focus on Outreach

Through the "Funds for Facilities" and other gifts, Hempfield was able to reduce the total debt on the land to only \$80,000 in 1997. Your help through this project has reminded us that we are not alone as we reach out to our community. We see a great harvest for the Lord ahead of us and through your support of the "Funds for Facilities" project, you have helped to begin the harvest. Thank you for working with us. Pray for us that we may faithfully carry on until the harvest is complete.



*Above: worship (left) and a Sunday school class.
Left: the proposed new building.*

daughter of Bill and Maxine Hicks, Altus, Okla., and Timothy D., son of Vernon and Grace Frymire, Thomas, Okla., Dec. 20, 1997, at Bethany Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Reg Martin officiating.

Grube - Kreider: Kristy Lynn, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Duane Martin, Manheim, Pa., and Mr. and Mrs. Keith Kreider, Elizabethtown, Pa., and Christopher Michael, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Christian Thompson, Mount Joy, Pa., and Mr. and Mrs. Michael Grube, Elizabethtown, Dec. 6, 1997, at Mastersonville Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Harold E. Bowers officiating.

Purdy - Leadley: Jessica Ellen, daughter of Robert and Kathleen Leadley, St. Catharines, Ont., and Jonathan Kent, son of Gary and Ruby Purdy, Hamilton, Ont., Dec. 27, 1997, at Queen St. Baptist Church with Rev. Kathleen Leadley and Rev. Barry Morrison officiating.

Sensenich - Brown: Susan Darlene, daughter of Shirley and the late Richard Brown, Millersville, Pa., and Brian Jay, son of Jay and Kay Sensenich, Lancaster, Pa., Jan. 17, at Pequea Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. J. Daniel Houck officiating.

Stickney - Eby: Lorealee Eby and Bernie Stickney, Nov. 8, 1997, at Westheights Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. David E. Illman officiating.

Witter - Woodcock: Teri Louise, daughter of Richard and Carol Woodcock, Lansdale, Pa., and Wendell Scott, son of Marlin and Phyllis Witter, Waynesboro, Pa., July 12, 1997, at Indian Valley Men-

nonite Church with Rev. Richard Woodcock and Rev. Lee Nunamaker officiating.

Obituaries

Bowers: Miriam A. Bowers, born June 18, 1912, in Hope, Kan., daughter of J. Emery and Martha Haldeman Bowers, died Dec. 30, 1997. Surviving is a sister-in-law, Miriam H. Bowers. Miriam was a resident of Messiah Village since 1986. She was former registrar and librarian at Upland College; librarian at LaVerne and Messiah Colleges; listed in *Who's Who of American Women* in 1958-59; missionary English teacher in Japan; recipient of the 1997 Messiah College Alumni Appreciation Award; and volunteer at the Brethren in Christ Archives. She was a member of the Grantham church, Pa., and attended the Messiah Village church where the memorial service was held with Rev. Robert B. Ives officiating. Interment was in Grantham Memorial Park.

Chamberlain: Ray Chamberlain Sr., born Feb. 25, 1902, in Charleston, Mo., son of Charles C. and Barbara Griffith Chamberlain, died Jan. 2. Surviving are his wife of 71 years, Mirianne E. (Horine); 2 daughters, Betty Rosentrater and Ruth Price; 4 sons, Bruce, Daniel, Ray Jr., and Dow; 26 grandchildren; 50 great-grandchildren; and a sister, Catherine McCormick. Ray was a retired minister and member of the Wesleyan church. He held evangelistic meetings in many Brethren in Christ churches. The funeral was held at First Wesleyan Church, with

interment in Oakwood Memorial Park.

Dohner: Helen M. Dohner, born Sept. 20, 1906, in Enterprise, Kan., daughter of Levi and Alice Herr Markley, died Jan. 18. Her husband, Rev. Elam D. Dohner, preceded her in death. Nephews and nieces survive. Helen was a retired teacher and shared with her husband as a pastoral couple in several congregations. She had resided at Messiah Village since 1993. She was a member of the church there, and of the DeRossett church, Tenn. Services were held at Messiah Village and at the Ashland, Ohio, church with Rev. Marion J. Heisey (Pa.) and Rev. Glenn A. Robitaille (Ohio) officiating. Interment was in Chestnut Grove Cemetery, Ohio.

Kramer: Elsie Z. Kramer, born May 13, 1913, in Harrisburg, Pa., died Jan. 7. Her husband, Harold E. Kramer Sr., preceded her in death. Surviving are a son, Harold Jr.; 2 daughters, Robin Leach and Carol Hartman; 11 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; and several sisters and brothers. She was a member of the West Shore congregation, Pa. The funeral service was at Sullivan Funeral Home with Rev. Gerald E. Tyrrell officiating. Interment was in Stone Church Cemetery.

Lescalleet: Shirley A. Lescalleet, born Jan. 16, 1935, daughter of John and Evelyn Yost Blackburn, in Mt. Holly Springs, Pa., died Jan. 21. Her husband, Roy T. Lescalleet, preceded her in death. Surviving are four sons, Frederick C., Ronnie J., John D., and Jack L.; three daughters, Sandra L. Brindle, Connie Barrick, and Judy Nace; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild; and a brother. Shirley was a member of the Wesley congregation, Pa., and its women's auxiliary. The service was held at Ewing Bros. Funeral Home with Rev. Richard Ross officiating. Interment was in Westminster Memorial Gardens.

Shafer: Hannah O. Shafer, born Aug. 6, 1911, in Scotland, Pa., daughter of David and Sarah Burkhart Paxton, died Jan. 19. Raymond N. Shafer, her spouse, preceded her in death. Surviving are two sons, R. Donald, and Samuel; three daughters, Thelma Flewelling, Doris Deitzel, and Nancy Arbaugh; a sister, Margaret Lehman; and two brothers, Mervin and Jesse Paxton. Hannah was a Sunday school teacher for many years. She and her husband served as deacon couple at the Fairview Ave. church, Waynesboro, Pa., where they were members. She also cared for children in her home. The funeral was held at Gettysburg Church of the Brethren, where she

had attended since her husband's death, with Rev. R. Donald Shafer and Rev. Joel Nogle officiating. Interment was in Green Hill Cemetery.

Shank: Hilma F. Shank, born Mar. 19, 1932, daughter of C. P. and Joyce Renner Leister, in Juniata County, Pa., died Jan. 9. Surviving are her husband, Jacob Shank; a son, Eric; two daughters, Lucy K. Feczko and Tammy L. Shank; two grandchildren; and four sisters. Hilma was a member of Brown's U.M. Church. The funeral was held at the Cedar Grove church with Rev. Ken Letner officiating. Interment was in Goodwill Cemetery.

Silvestro: Richard Norman Silvestro, born Jan. 3, 1952, in Hamilton, Ont., son of Michael and Christina Silvestro, died Jan. 2. Surviving him in death are his wife, Faye (Schaubel); sons, Derrick and Christopher; brothers, Michael and Dennis; and a sister, Joanne Miller. He attended Emmanuel Bible College and then pastored the Rosebank congregation, Ont., from 1986-1990 where he was ordained. Late in 1990 he was called to service the Springvale congregation, and continued ministry there as long as he was able, with a spirit of faith and hope. He was also a member of the Niagara Camp board, the Board for Stewardship, and the Canadian Conference board.

Tribute

On Jan. 2, 1998, Pastor Rick Silvestro passed away after a long battle with cancer. Both in his life and in his death our brother glorified the Lord Jesus Christ.

In 1983, while employed in the supermarket industry with Dominion Stores of Canada Ltd., Rick felt called to full-time pastoral ministry. In obedience to the Lord, Rick resigned his position. Rick pursued his ministry with a passion for the Lord and for people. Rick was diligent and caring and the smallest detail did not escape his attention. He cared deeply for the Brethren in Christ Church and was ready to serve faithfully and enthusiastically. Faye Silvestro lovingly and effectively served alongside her husband in their pastorates.

We give thanks to God for Pastor Silvestro and have been greatly blessed through his life and ministry among us.

Bishop Darrell S. Winger
Canadian Conference

Sollenberger: Mary Catherine Sollenberger, born Sept. 17, 1908, in Letterkenny Co., Pa., daughter of Samuel and Catherine (Nissley) Sollenberger, died Nov. 16, 1997. Three sisters and three brothers pre-

Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
invites applications for the position of

West Coast MCC Executive Director

This position carries responsibility for administration, constituency and church relations, and program and resource development for MCC in the West Coast region.

Starting date: September 1, 1998 • Location: Reedley, California
Applications will be accepted through May 1, 1998

Direct inquiries to: Bill Braun, Search Committee
3728 E. Kerckhoff, Fresno, CA 93702 • phone: 209-291-3344
fax: 209-291-8214 • email: jeb41@alumni.csufresno.edu



**Mennonite
Central
Committee**

Mennonite Central Committee and MCC U.S.
21 South 12th Street, PO Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500
(717) 859-1151 (717) 859-3889

Mennonite Central Committee Canada
134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9
(204) 261-6381

ceded her in death. Surviving are her husband, Paul H. Sollenberger; 3 daughters, D. Jean Sentz, Margaretta Groff, and Janice Stauffer; a son, Earl E.; a brother, S. Irvin; 10 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren. She was a member of the New Guilford congregation, Pa., where she taught Sunday school and was active in the sewing circle. For 15 years, she supervised the kitchen and dining room at Roxbury Holiness Camp, and was a volunteer for Meals on Wheels of Chambersburg. The funeral was held at Air Hill Brethren in Christ Church, with Rev. Robert Verno and Rev. Maurice Bender officiating. Interment was in Air Hill Cemetery.

Sollenberger: Fannie W. Sollenberger, born Nov. 3, 1906, daughter of Benjamin L. and Nancy Wingert Musser, in Chambersburg, Pa., died Jan. 2. Preceding her in death were her husband, Martin L. Oberholser; her husband, Amos E. Sollenberger; a daughter, Ruth O. Wenger; a stepdaughter; and two stepsons. Surviving are a daughter, Anna Mae Oberholser; a stepdaughter, Esther Hippensteele; three grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren. Fannie was a lifetime member of the Mt. Rock congregation, Pa., where she taught Sunday school and VBS, was a member of the sewing auxiliary, and served on the Cheer Up and building committees. She was known for her quilt-making. The funeral was at the church with Rev. Roger Witter, Rev. Lloyd Zimmerman, and Rev. Robert

Murr officiating. Interment was in Air Hill Cemetery.

Weaver: Loddie M. Weaver, born Oct. 4, 1904, in Locke Township, Ind., daughter of Joseph and Annie Teeter Dennison, died Jan. 17. Her husband, Elmer Raymond Weaver, preceded her in death, as did four brothers. Surviving are a daughter, Phyllis Whisler; a son, Donald M.; four grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. Loddie was a lifetime resident of Nappanee, Ind., having retired in 1970 from Evangel Press after 37 years. She was active in the women's sewing group and other areas of ministry of the Nappanee congregation, Ind. The funeral service was held at Thompson and Yoder Funeral Home with Rev. Joseph W. Fox officiating. Interment was in South Union Cemetery.

Wenger: Ruth O. Wenger, born Nov. 3, 1930, daughter of Martin L. and Fannie W. Musser Oberholser, died Jan. 1. Surviving are her husband, Charles L. Wenger; two sons, Dennis E. and Dale E.; a daughter, Deverly Sollenberger; seven grandchildren; a sister, Anna Mae Oberholser; and a stepsister, Esther M. Hippensteele. She was a member of the Mt. Rock congregation, Pa., where she served as a Sunday school teacher, VBS worker, choir member, and board member. She was secretary and board member of the Gospel Tide Hour radio broadcast since 1981, was on the Roxbury Holiness Camp Lodging Committee, and was involved in the Cum-



Messiah College Art Professor, Christine A. Forsythe, demonstrates her one-of-a-kind artist's book, *There Is No More Time*, to onlooking Messiah college students at her faculty art exhibit, "Meditations: Works in Paper, Fiber, and Clay." The exhibit, which opened Feb. 9, is continuing through March 13 at Messiah College's Aughinbaugh Gallery. Senior Show I, Messiah's next art exhibit, will open on March 30 and run through April 14, displaying student works by Messiah College senior art majors in graphic design, ceramics, and painting.

berland Co. Society of Farm Women. The funeral was at the church with Rev. Maurice Bender, Rev. Lloyd Zimmerman, and Rev. Robert Murr officiating. Interment was in Air Hill Cemetery.

Correction: The obituary of Wilbur Hess (Feb. 1998) contained two errors in reporting. His wife, Lois, survives, and services were held at the church.

1998 Camp Freedom

Camp Freedom, St. Petersburg, Fla., held its annual campmeeting Jan. 21-Feb. 1. With the theme "Practical Holiness," our hearts and lives were touched by God's Word. Lives were changed, hearts were blessed, people were enriched by the fellowship, and God was glorified throughout the camp. The camp certainly was a soul refueling station.

Our co-evangelists were Rev. Ken Smith and Rev. John Parker. Each one—in his own way and under the power and inspiration of the Holy Spirit—proclaimed God's Word and its relevance to us today. Of special emphasis was their call to the church for a revival of holiness in our time.

Our weekend speakers included Rev. Paul Pierpoint and Rev. Kermit Farlow. Rev. Pierpoint's inspirational style of Bible teaching was a real blessing. Rev.

Farlow's knowledge and experience challenged us to a deeper walk with God.

David and Frances Fuller served as song evangelists. Their spirit and messages in song brought an added dimension of warmth and beauty in worship. Additional music was provided by both Hobe Sound and Penn View Bible Schools.

Missions day was a high point of the camp. Leroy and Judy Eberly represented the Brethren in Christ mission work in Cuba. They communicated well the burdens, concerns, and difficulties in directing mission work under a communist government. But it was refreshing to hear of church growth and victories for the Lord, in spite of these circumstances. Sam and Nancy Davis presented their mission work in Mexico. Again, it was a great joy to hear of God's leading and blessings in their work, with many finding Christ as Lord and Saviour. Our missions offering

totaled \$3,200.

While camp attendance was lower in comparison to 1997, we praise God for the generosity of his people. In addition to the missions offering, we were able to fully fund the operating budget of \$19,150 and raised \$10,800 in capital offerings.

Even though many of the camp attendees are senior citizens, we do enjoy the youth and children who come to camp. Dennis and Joanna Ritchey gave leadership to the youth activities, while Clara Ritchey directed the children's services.

While the 1998 campmeeting is history, we are anticipating our camp for 1999. Our scheduled evangelists include Frank Kipe and Wingrove Taylor. Our song evangelists will be the Gerald Glick family. The scheduled dates are Jan. 27-Feb. 7. Keep these dates in mind and plan to be a part of Camp Freedom. You will be richly blessed!—Submitted by, Jesse Bawel, Secretary



Opening the Word of Life

Looking at "Christian self-esteem"

We are what God thinks

by Edwin R. Kessler

"Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:11).

"I'm the most ugly person in the world," a woman once said to me as I counseled her. As I listened to the woman portray herself, the irony I saw moved me to sadness. I was talking to a pleasant, attractive, intelligent, successful Christian who was

The Atlantic Conference Annual Missions Prayer Fellowship Conference is to be held at the Marsh Creek Church, north of Downingtown, Pennsylvania, on April 25, 1998. The theme is "100 Years—Alive and Well."

A pastor of youth and adult education is needed at New Guilford Brethren in Christ Church, Chambersburg, Pa.

Principal responsibility is with youth. Full-time position.

Applicants should have appropriate training and experience.

Send personal recommendations or resume to:

Dr. Robert Verno, Senior Pastor
New Guilford Brethren in Christ Church
1575 Mont Alto Road
Chambersburg, PA 17201

describing herself as "Frankenstein's sister." As the counseling progressed, we discovered a number of reasons for her poor self-image. However, one major issue was that without even realizing it, she had adopted some standards and values which were definitely not biblical. Her improper view of herself also led her down a path of self-destructive behaviors. How she saw herself influenced how she behaved.

Some people are not who they think they are. Others are what they do not consider themselves to be. In our world, with its confused messages regarding beauty, morality, and values, a major problem is having a proper view of the self—who we are as persons.

Who or what we set up as the standard for evaluation affects the way we see ourselves. Such standards may not be godly. Billboards and advertisements tell us that if we drive a certain car, wear certain clothes, consume certain products, or go on this or that diet, then we will be handsome, intelligent, beautiful, or fashionable. People in the limelight are set up as models for what we ought to look like and what actions or behavior we ought to adopt. These messages all seem to work on the same principle—if you have, you are; if you don't have, you aren't. The marketing techniques of the day build our insecurities by bombarding us with messages that promise fulfillment, but leave us empty. Popular psychologies or philosophies also influence a person's understanding of himself or herself, e.g., "You are what you eat!" One popular religious trend teaches people self-actualization techniques to get to the real "god" inside you.

How are we, as Christians, to see ourselves?

In the book of Romans, Paul deals with the Christian way of self-reflection. "The death he [Christ] died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (6:10-11). The King James version uses the older word "reckon." The Greek word

that is translated "count" or "reckon" is the word *logizomai*. The root meaning of *logizomai* is to take an inventory, or to make an estimate. When a businessman counted or numbered his wares, he participated in the activity of *logizomai*. In relation to the personal realm of self-analysis, *logizomai* can be translated in various ways: to draw conclusions about oneself; to think of oneself as; to regard oneself as; or to take inventory of who we are.

It is important to understand what Paul was *not* teaching when he wrote that the Romans were to count themselves as dead to sin. He was not advocating "you are what you think" psychology. He did not teach that the way to escape the sin problem was to think of oneself as sinless. Unfortunately, some psychologies teach just that, because sin is seen as non-existent except for the imposition of Victorian values by some people onto others. Thus, people are counseled not to deal with their sin, but to see sin as a specter which haunts them from the past. If they are to feel better about themselves, they are told, the concept of sin must be dropped altogether.

What Paul was teaching, however, is a significant truth for Christians to grasp. When he wrote Romans 6:11, Paul told Christians to do a reality check, to do a spiritual inventory (*logizomai*), to take a look at the spiritual provisions with which Christ has stocked our shelves. The Roman Christians were to consider the fact that Jesus had died to free them from the captivity of sin. That freedom was real. God through Christ had empowered them to live a life above sin. "What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" (6:1-2). The next step was learning to see themselves—to reckon, count, esteem, or regard themselves—as transformed persons. From God's perspective, the Roman Christians were dead to sin, and Paul desired that they look at themselves the way God sees them. This is, by the way, the only truly accurate way to do self-esteem. We are what God thinks we are. The

final step was the critical one. Paul's congregation was to live according to that reality.

We can summarize the psychological principle involved in Paul's discussion. If Christians begin to regard themselves as no longer under the power of sin, then they will begin to live godly lives, utilizing the power of the Holy Spirit who is already within them, or seeking the power of the Holy Spirit to empower them.

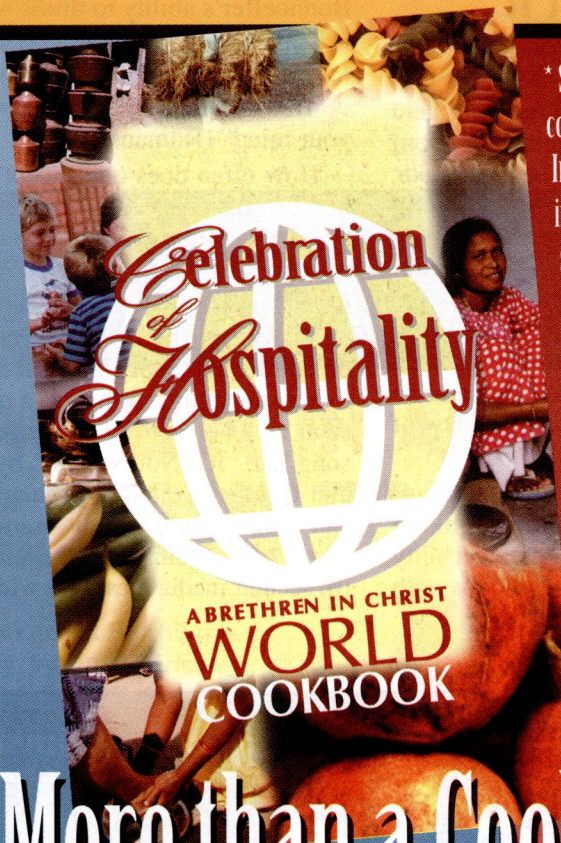
The bottom line is that the way we think of ourselves, even as Christians, does influence the way we behave. Our evaluations of ourselves do nothing to change who we really are, but the work of Christ has already accomplished that change (from sinner to saint). The more we turn our minds towards who we are in Christ, the more opportunity we give to God to exercise his life-changing power within us. "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think (*logizomai*) about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you" (Philippians 4:8-9). When we focus ourselves around God's truth regarding what is good and right, it influences and directs our "practice."

A pamphlet I once received from Freedom in Christ Ministries (La Habra, California) serves as a good self-esteem creed for the Christian: "Who am I? I am God's child; I am Christ's friend; I have been justified, I am united with the Lord, and I am one spirit with him; I have been bought with a price; I belong to God; I am a member of Christ's body; I am a saint; I have been adopted as God's child; I have direct access to the Holy Spirit; I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins; I am complete in Christ."

Edwin R. Kessler pastors the Free Grace Brethren in Christ Church in Millersburg, Pa.

March 1998

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Disney Boycott— Think About It

by Roger L. Williams

Judge Robert H. Bork wrote, "I held a position on the subject [abortion] very different from the one I now take. For years I adopted, *without bothering to think* (my emphasis), the attitude common among secular, affluent, university-educated people who took the propriety of abortion for granted, even when it was illegal." When Judge Bork thought through the issue, he came to conclusions quite contrary to many of his contemporaries.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's counter-culture, counter-contemporary thinking regarding race, peace, and universality of God and man put him at odds with

many of his contemporaries in the German church. Few today would argue Bonhoeffer's ability to think.

Paul wrote, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2).

How often does one accept a position because it is the fad of one's circle of friends and colleagues or because of a certain frenzy of attention from the media segment one holds dear?

Analyzing the influence of media on culture and subcultures, it is ironic to hear an argument that (a) a program such as "Touched by an Angel" or a song like "It's Not Natural" by Angie and Debbie Winans is influential and can cause people to believe in God or take a stand against homosexuality, but (b) secular media messages which pro-

mote infidelity in marriage, violence in conflict resolution, homosexuality, etc., have little influence on individuals or society. Haddon Robinson wrote in the August 1995 issue of NEXT, "we have become an oral/visual culture. It is almost full cycle because we have become a culture now that is dominated by hearing, by story, by image. The value system of the entertainment industry is now the value system of our culture."

Why would a Christian not support a boycott of the Disney Corporation, for example? Disney is the largest and most influential entertainment organization in the world. It has tremendous power to influence culture. Corporations like Playboy, Hustler, and Penthouse blatantly espouse their hedonistic ideology, leaving one to consciously decide to purchase their product or not. Disney, however, under CEO Michael Eisner, is a peddler of porn, amoral ideology, and heresy from under a cloak of respectability. While one corporation is an obscene billboard announcing that "what you see is what you get," Disney is the wolf in sheep's clothing, enticing one with a kind, loving face while whispering messages that may ultimately lead to immorality and estrangement from God.


The ultimate cumulative effects of messages of unrestrained and illicit sex and violence is sure. Just as most people would argue that a lifetime of positive and moral messages would be beneficial to individuals and society, the opposite—a lifetime of consistent exposure to immoral and amoral messages—would lead one to confusion and an inability to differentiate between right and wrong. If you doubt the gradual influence of media on society, you need only compare the drumbeat of past messages with the echoes found in current social trends. Legal defense of the homosexual lifestyle, the push for a redefinition of marriage and commitment, legal support for partial-birth abortion, acceptable means of killing the old and infirm—these are

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just a few issues that state and federal legislatures are currently considering that would not have been on any legislative agenda a short twenty years ago.

True, humans are not yet machines, cloned to certain standards and qualities, and it is not possible to unequivocally say that everyone consistently receiving a message will eventually live a life reflective of that message. There are always those indomitable exceptions who—Phoenix-like—fly to great heights from ashes of abuse, just as there are those who seem to have all the right breaks and positive influences but fall into dispirited lives of despair. However, by and large, it seems most people will accept the axiom that “what goes around, comes around.”

Hence, the issue of discriminating about what one hears, watches, and participates in is absolutely relevant to the way one lives his or her life. We are consistently entreated in the Bible to discriminate between good and evil—and choose the path of good.

It is not appropriate for me to tell you to boycott Disney, or Playboy—or war, for that matter. However, I am asking you to think about these matters in a new and questioning way. It is not just Disney, it’s other media as well. Ask questions about the entertainment empire. Ask, “How will this program

effect my view of society?” “What would be the long-term effect if I, or my children, saw this for two years, three years, etc.?” “What do the producers of this show want me to believe?” Where are the producers taking society with that image? Add your own questions.

In Ephesians 4:22-24, Paul states, “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old

self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

Think about it!!!

Roger Williams is executive director of the Board for Media Ministries, Nappanee, Indiana.

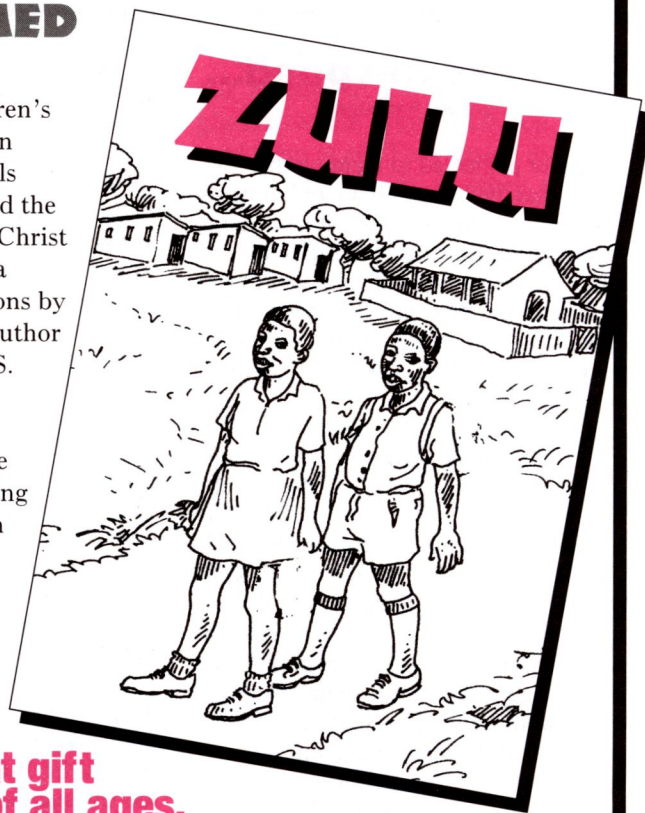
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Persons contributing to *Readers Respond* (letters to the editor) are encouraged to be concise. Letters may be shortened. All letters must be signed. Occasionally we may decide to withhold names due to special circumstances.

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

You may send your responses by e-mail at this address: eph@tlh.net.

Each article or letter represents the view of the writer, and does not necessarily reflect the official position or policy of the Brethren in Christ Church or this periodical.

When Jesus called for swords

by Samuel Brubaker

I have recently encountered an articulation of the belief that Jesus' instruction that his disciples should take two swords when they left the upper room for the Mount of Olives proves that it's alright for Christians today to use violent force in pursuit of certain causes. Undoubtedly, many readers have heard the same assertion. Perhaps some have assumed it to be valid.

Since these are the weeks during which we give extra consideration to the Passion and atoning death of our Lord, it seems appropriate to examine this incident in hope of gaining a proper under-

standing of Jesus' statement. Allow me to present a perspective which leads to interpretation and application different from the one described above, and which, I believe, is more faithful to the biblical record.

As Jesus prepared to leave the upper room, he told the disciples that whereas once before he had advised them to go without purse or bag, they should now take those items. Also, they should take with them a sword—buy one if necessary. The disciples informed him that they had among them two swords. Jesus replied, "That is enough" (Luke 22:35-38).

Why did Jesus tell them they should have a sword? Did he intend for them to use it in defense of him (or themselves)? It seems obvious he did not. As the story

unfolds, when Peter did use one of the swords to wound a member of the arresting party, Jesus stopped Peter's violent response, rebuked him for using it, and graciously healed the wound. Another reason we know that Jesus didn't intend for them to use swords for defense is that he certainly understood that two swords would be inadequate to withstand "a large crowd armed with swords and clubs" (Matt. 26:47). Further, in the story we see Jesus declining to exercise his prerogative to call upon the reinforcements of Heaven to aid him by armed resistance.

So for what purpose would two swords be sufficient? Jesus gave the disciples the answer along with his advice to take a sword: it was to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah that he would be numbered with the transgressors (Luke 22:37).

For Jesus and his disciples to be accosted in the darkness bearing money and a couple swords provided pretext for the Roman soldiers to assume they had come upon a bunch of thieves, probably insurrectionists. One of the more notorious ones, Barabbas, had recently been arrested and was now in jail. It was important to the Romans that Jesus and his disciples be captured as well. To be sure, those who directed the soldiers knew that there were other reasons why Jesus' arrest was desired—Judas had prearranged that the one he kissed was the one to be arrested. Jesus was arrested as a criminal and later was executed with two thieves.

No, the swords were not requested as instruments of defense. They were needed as stage props so that the soldiers would regard him as another thief—a transgressor of the law of the land—that Scripture might be fulfilled.

Jesus not only declined to use a sword; he went beyond rebuking those who tried to use it; he accepted death on the cross. By that death he accomplished atonement for the sins of the world. He also established an example for the children of God in their struggles with evil and suffering.

We honor Jesus as Lord when we accept his teaching and follow his nonviolent example. On the other hand, think of what we do to him when we isolate one of his statements from his explanation of it, and use it to justify actions which contradict his teachings and insult his acceptance of the cross.

A regular columnist, Samuel M. Brubaker is a physician living in Arcanum, Ohio.

Readers Respond...

continued from page 32

Brubaker neglected to mention the "toy" mines that the Soviets scattered throughout Afghanistan—fiendish devices deliberately designed to attract children—and maim them. By way of contrast, during the Viet Nam War, the U.S. developed a light-weight "butterfly" mine, which was never emplaced because it might have attracted children.

For the last several decades, the U.S. (and the military forces of other democratic nations) has concerned itself exclusively, daily and intensively, with counter-mine activities. Its soldiers are in Cambodia, Angola, Bosnia, etc., assisting and training nationals in the digging up of the land mines laid by others. The Army even saw to the publication of a multi-lingual Superman mine awareness comic book, at cost, in Bosnia. This one piece of mine awareness already has saved hundreds of children who now point out or avoid attractive devices with which they earlier might have played, with disastrous consequences. Further, such de-mining programs free up former cropland for productive use once more. As a Christian and as a member of this denomination, I personally derive considerable satisfaction from my small help in training U.S. Army Special Operations troops in this humanitarian work.

One might argue that it would do no harm for the U.S. to sign the anti-land mine treaty. But, like the Kellogg-Briand International Treaty for the Renunciation of War (1928), the Ottawa treaty is basically a "feel good" document that does nothing to halt the cruel actions of aggressors, insurgent groups, or "rogue" regimes. Such instruments do little more than, well, make us feel good and thus garner a few extra votes for the politicians who sign them. Further, the argument that 15 retired admirals or generals support the treaty is hardly impressive. Remember that some 100 such retired flag-rank officers were trotted out by the same left-wing think tanks to "prove" that the U.N. Coalition couldn't possibly win the Gulf War.

But when all is said and done, in the light of our denomination's non-resistant heritage, I do not believe, with all due respect, that political columns like Brother Brubaker's belong in the *Visitor*. It would be more appropriate for us to debate such matters in the pages of, say, *Harper's* or the *New Republic*.

Finally, I should add that these opinions are my own and do not necessarily represent those of the U.S. Army or its Special Operations Command.

Stanley Sandler
Command Historian
Spring Lake, N.C.

EV



Onesimus

Readers may correspond with Onesimus by writing to him in care of the *Evangelical Visitor*, P.O. Box 166, Nappanee, IN 46550. Letters to Onesimus may be published unless they are marked "Personal-Not for Publication."

We buy millions of dollars worth of books and tapes by the latest "guru," when we have the wisdom of the ages right in our Bibles. We don't have time to do ministry because we are working so hard to climb the ladder of success or to buy stuff some commercial told us we couldn't live without. Many of us think we can't afford to tithe, when our real problem is that we are making too many payments on things we don't really need. Consequently, our living and giving patterns often don't appear any different than those of the world.

We run our children (or our children run us) to dance lessons, soccer, music, wrestling, scouts, pompom, karate, etc., etc., and then we wonder why they seem so much like the world's children. From our "chasing the wind" lifestyles, our little ones learn how to be token believers. They watch as the church gets our leftover time and money; what Malachi called "crippled sacrifices." They see us give our Sunday school lessons a quick glance on the way to church, if we read them at all. They watch us "chasing after the wind" all week and trying to catch the Spirit for an hour on Sunday. We discover too late, like the father in Harry Chapin's song, "Cat's in the Cradle," that they've "grown up just like me." And we lament when they do not stay in the church as adults.

The Brethren in Christ Church talks about simple lifestyles, and many of our people have discovered the secret of slowing down and putting the Lord first. Praise God! But, Paul, I fear that many of us are still "chasing after the wind." Pray for us. Pray that we can all stop chasing the wind long enough to hear God's small, still voice. Pray that the breeze of revival will begin to blow on our dry eyes and hard hearts. And pray that the breeze of God can produce a tear of repentance and prove to be the mighty wind of the Spirit.

Thankful for God's wind,
Onesimus

Dear Paul,

We have entered what is called the "windy month" in many sections of North America. I am told it has to do with changing seasons.

Children and grownups will soon be flying their kites. Did they have kites in your day, Paul? I suppose the sailboats you traveled on were a form of kite flying. Harnessing the wind has always fascinated me and so I was pleasantly surprised at how many references there are to "wind" in the Bible you gave me.

Winds from God dried the earth after the flood. An east wind brought the plague of locusts to Egypt at God's bidding. Another strong east wind parted the waters of the Red Sea and dried out an escape route for the Israelites. A wind from the Lord later fed them as it dropped quail right into their laps. Jonah was put in his place by a great wind. A violent wind accompanied the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. And of course, you remember the terrible wind storm that threatened your life, but ended up glorifying God in great ways.

But one of the most intriguing phrases about wind is found in Ecclesiastes. Nine times Solomon uses the phrase "chasing after the wind" to describe much of what we do in this life. He said "I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind" (Eccl. 1:14).

When I think of "chasing after the wind," I have this image of someone running around in a field trying to catch the wind in a dip net. Someone doing that would be considered foolish or even insane...and that is Solomon's point. "Chasing after the

wind" is foolish and insane behavior. Solomon seems to condense this behavior into four general categories.

1. Trusting in human wisdom rather than in the wisdom of God (Eccl. 1:17,26).

2. Trusting in our work or career, instead of the Lord, to fulfill us (Eccl. 2:11,17).

3. Accumulating goods to "keep up with the Joneses" instead of being content with accumulating the peace of God (Eccl. 4:4,6; 6:9).

4. Striving to acquire power, fame, and fortune which are short lived (Eccl. 4:16).

Paul, this may be hard for you to believe, but Christians today still run around with dip nets in their hands "chasing after the wind."

*Pray that we can
all stop chasing
the wind long
enough to hear
God's small,
still voice.
Pray that the
breeze of revival
will begin to
blow on our dry
eyes and
hard hearts.*

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Ice storms and power problems

by Darrell S. Winger

It hit first on January 5, 1998, and pounded the eastern regions of Ontario, Quebec, and parts of Atlantic Canada. The worst ice storm of this century hit millions of Canadians by surprise and plunged them into darkness. The ice coated everything, and before long, trees were falling beneath the tremendous weight. As trees and major limbs fell, they knocked down electrical wiring. Adding to this were the thousands of hydro-electric poles that were crumbling beneath the burden of the ice. Not only were the common, wooden poles falling, but so were the higher, large metal towers. In a matter of hours, millions of people were without electricity.

Of course without electrical power our modern conveniences are useless. No lights, no appliances, no televisions, no computers, no water (no electric pumps), no heat (at least for most), no fax machines, and on and on. Needless to say, it was a tragedy. This went on for several days, and for many, it lasted almost three weeks.

The "ice storm of the century" underscored so vividly the obvious fact that our society has become dependent on an external power source to function. Our wonderful machines and gadgets are useless without electrical power. Our lighting systems, our computers, our appliances, our televisions, and other various machinery can look absolutely beautiful. They can be "state-of-the-

art." They may have cost us thousands of dollars. They may do the job perfectly and perform wonderfully. They may be of the best design and the result of much thought and engineering. But without power they are of very little use. Without power they will not do what they are designed to do. No power, no real results.

For the church, the same is true. We may appear to have all the "right things" and all the "right programs," even the "right vision"; but unless it is of the Holy Spirit and empowered by him, very little eternal value will result. That's why Jesus said to his followers "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses..." (Acts 1:8). He knew that they needed power beyond their own resources to accomplish the vision!

Our vision of "250 Growing, Discipling, Sending Congregations by A.D. 2000" is in keeping with Acts 1:8—to be witnesses! Also, our need for his help to fulfill the vision remains the same. The power needed for our vision to come to pass is the same as the power those first disciples needed—the power of the Holy Spirit. As we rely on his enablement we will see eternal results! This is why we read in the brochure entitled "Renewal" (the latest in the Brethren in Christ Accent and Issues series), "as the church stretches beyond its human capacities in obedience to the great commission to make disciples...it receives from the Holy Spirit the direction and empowerment to fulfill its calling."

Vision that comes from God always calls on us to stretch beyond our capacity. Our Brethren in Christ vision statement requires us to stretch beyond our capacity. A vision that comes from God requires God's

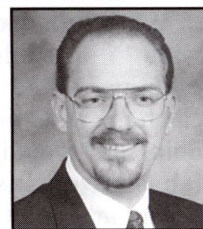
power to come to pass. Vision that comes from ourselves only requires effort on our part.

As I personally endeavor to be a part of fulfilling our common vision, I need God's power at work in my life to see results. In other words, I am challenged to rely on "the power source" to function properly as a follower of Jesus Christ. I am challenged to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to keep in step with the Spirit in order to share Jesus with others and to minister in his name. Without the Spirit's enabling power, I can do nothing. Without my willingness to keep in step with him, there is precious little fruit.

When the Ice Storm of '98 hit, the power went out. Many things still appeared fine, but could no longer function as designed. When the electricity was restored, lights went on, computers began processing, faxes were sent, and the furnaces began warming up houses. Life returned to normal.

When I allow the Holy Spirit to fill and direct my life, I begin to see results—eternal results in my life and in the lives of those around me.

Darrell Winger is
bishop of the Canadian
Regional Conference of the Brethren
in Christ Church.





Readers Respond

I appreciated the last several *Visitors*. As often happens, I was able to use some of the material in sermons and in study.

In the February issue, I thought Bishop Craig Sider's article was well-written and helped the church focus on our primary mission—winning the lost. It made me think!

Also Pastor Ed Kessler's article "The Proton of a Disciple" was excellent. The last three lines were great. It made me think of the words in the Lord's Prayer "...thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Jerel L. Book
Garrett, Ind.

Dear Onesimus...

I read with interest your January letter on change in the church. I would certainly agree that change is constant and it occurs in all aspects of life, including the church.

However, I also feel that denominations are here because of distinctives in theology and practice. When people join our church they agree to be open to our teaching. In recent years, there has been such a strong emphasis on change in the church that those who question the change are made suspect or are labeled legalistic.

In reflecting on this, I have come to the conclusion that much of the difference in thinking comes from our differing concepts of the mission of the church. Some feel that the church is called primarily to minister to and equip the believers to go out and live Christ in their world of influence and hopefully lead people to Christ and then to the church. Others feel that the church needs to be user friendly so that everyone will feel comfortable. How that user friendly appearance is achieved may vary from church to church.

Along with the differing views of the ministry of the church are differing views regarding the roles of pastor and evangelist. While a pastor has the opportunity

to be an evangelist, the basic role is to equip the believers to do the work of evangelism. The evangelist may be a pastor, but if his or her main calling is to be an evangelist, then serving in a pastoral ministry may be quite difficult because of the focus.

My prayer is that we would prayerfully consider the reasons we want change. Those who find change difficult as well as those who thrive on change are both susceptible to misleading. Change may be needed in some aspects for evangelism to happen, but there are certainly many other ways of reaching out that do not threaten the distinctives that have helped make us who we are.

Rhoda Mellinger
Willow Street, Pa.

In your first letter to Paul (January 1998), you appear to have a problem with the Brethren in Christ. Your assumptions are very false, to think that the doctrine is secondary in choosing a church. What we believe and why we believe it is very important. To make the assumption that Jacob Engle would have had a difficult time with the church of 1930, is not correct. My understanding is that had he lived during that time, he would have wanted all that the Lord had for him. His desire to have a more personal relationship with God was one of the reasons for starting the church. You have chosen your shield of anonymity to take pot shots at the church I love.

H. Lamar Rissinger
West Milton, Ohio

Re: Land mine treaty

Brother Brubaker really should make the effort to ascertain the other side of topics upon which he chooses to write ("Discipleship for the 21st Century: The Innocents Still Die," *Visitor*, January 1998).

Brother Brubaker should know and should inform his readers that the only land mines implanted by the United States Army are in the uninhabited Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating North and South Korea. And with good reason: The last time the North Koreans came over that border some one million Koreans died. Further, the last time the U.S. military deployed landmines of any kind since Viet Nam was during the Gulf War. Basically, except for the Korean DMZ, the United States has long since been out of the land mine business. Thus Brother Brubaker's supposition that the administration's opposition to the Ottawa treaty might somehow be due to campaign contributions is simply preposterous. The U.S. Army has not purchased any new landmines in decades. If the "merchants of death" manufacturers had made any political contributions, it obviously hasn't done them much good!

All remaining U.S. Army land mines are of two types. One is the Field Artillery Scattered (FASCAM) which has a pre-designated self-destruction time. (In other words they have long since become inactive.) The second is the more traditional, hand-implanted mine, emplaced only in the DMZ, where, by definition, there are no civilians. All U.S. commanders are under strict orders to supply detailed maps of any such minefield to several levels of higher command levels, maps which are available to any recognized authority. At this moment, the U.S. Army could tell Brother Brubaker the location of every such mine.

Someone should also inform your readers that the landmines that wreak such havoc among civilians are those placed by Third World or irregular forces, not the U.S. or any other democratic nation. These low-tech devices remain lethal for years. I find it odd that Dr.

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Pontius' Puddle

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DEATH

and

Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Christ's work of redemption was accomplished in his death and resurrection. God purposed in Christ to redeem us from the guilt and power of sin and to free us from the rule of Satan, so that all who believe would be restored to divine favor and fellowship.

By his suffering and sacrificial death for us, Jesus Christ provided complete atonement for sin. His death and resurrection opened the only way for reconciliation between a holy, just God and sinful humanity. His life-blood freely given on the cross provided pardon and ratified the New Covenant.

The bodily resurrection of Jesus testifies decisively of his deity and his victory over Satan, sin,

and death. The risen Christ ascended to heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father, interceding for us.

Jesus Christ is now our risen, exalted, and reigning Lord. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him. He is the Head of the church and the Lord of human history. At the end of time, all things in heaven and on earth will be brought under his rule. Every person will bow before him and he will reign forever. With joy we confess that Jesus is Lord and acknowledge his authority in our lives. We honor him with our worship and obedience.

From the Brethren in Christ
Articles of Faith and Doctrine

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