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Glen A. Pierce

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evangelical

VISITOR

April 1998

Pentecost

in
the

New Age



Raymond Hess responds to co-workers honoring his 42 years of volunteer service for Mennonite Disaster Service



Raymond Hess, a member of the Souderton (Pa.) Brethren in Christ Church, was honored on February 21 by his co-workers of Region 1, Mennonite Disaster Service, for 42 years of service to MDS. Ray and his wife Ruth plan to retire and move to Messiah Village, Mechanicsburg, Pa.

Hess got involved in MDS when the first Eastern Pennsylvania-area unit organized after Pennsylvania's Hurricane Hazel and the 1955 Stroudsburg flood. For the next 42 years he lent his time both to work at disaster sites and to organization within the local and the national MDS. He served on the national board for 29 years.

During Hess's first project, the swollen river flowed over an oil recycling company, with the result that the water left a greasy oil film in all the flooded houses. Hess scouted around until he found an industrial detergent to remove the grease.

"It was so good, it got the name of the Mennonite detergent, which was a mistake," writes his MDS friend Paul Weaver. "It should have been called the Hess Brethren in Christ detergent."

Hess quickly replies, "You may be Mennonites, but in the end we are all going to be Brethren in Christ." The humor and camaraderie among this group attests to a lot of shared history, shared diner meals, and shared fun. Part of the event for Hess included a "roast," prepared by co-worker Joe Pearson. It also included a special raisin cream pie, since Hess habitually harassed waiters with his request for this dessert, which never appeared

on the menu. The Salford Blue Grass Boys provided music.

"Your energy and enthusiasm for MDS has inspired and ministered to many. How about doing another 42 years?!" wrote Eldon King, who served as MDS chair.

Lowell Detweiler, MDS executive coordinator, presented Hess with words of appreciation and a framed commendation. Hess served as a regional MDS council member and on the national section committee. "It would be virtually impossible to sum up your contributions to MDS, at both the regional and national level," noted a co-worker.

Hess was in business for himself as builder and contractor of commercial buildings and homes; frequently he was called away from his own work on short notice to help plan for an emergency response.

Mennonite Disaster Service is closely connected to Mennonite Central Committee, and is divided into 5 regions throughout the U.S. and Canada. The Souderton-area unit of Region 1 owns 3 vans which it uses to transport volunteer workers throughout the year to areas which are rebuilding after disasters. It also purchased a truck used to pull a communications trailer when power lines and utilities are down. Volunteers are usually sent to help the poor or elderly—those who have the least resources to bounce back.

In any one year, about 2,000 MDS volunteers contribute 12,000 work days. To get a brief update of current MDS activity, call (800) 241-8111. For information on volunteering, call Arlan Kratz at (215) 256-8439.

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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431 Grantham Road; P.O. Box 290
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FAX Number: (717) 697-7714

General Church Officers
Moderator: Harvey R. Sider
General Secretary: Warren L. Hoffman
General Treasurer: Allen Carr

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by Glenn A. Robitaille

Pentecost

in the New Age

New Age spirituality is having an impact in the West because it is exploiting a truth that has been underdeveloped in our theology.

As I write this article I am aware of the presence of God in my life. It is not a mystical or magical awareness, but rather one of faith that has become an integral part of who I am. It was there when I went to bed last night, and I awoke with it this morning, just as I have thousands of times before. It is not a reality I examine all that closely, nor is it one that I work overly hard at figuring out. It just is. Things involving God's will or expectations, or even his nature, attract much of my attention; but his presence is a given. In an intuitive way I accept that I am loved by God, that he is with me, and that he will remain so regardless of what this or any other day might bring.

Like most of you, my picture of God is deeply personal, consisting of the warm images Christ intended to create when he called God his Father, and that of Christ himself being a friend. I have made adjustments over the years in how I understand these images, but a belief in God's presence has been constant—however it has been perceived at various times. That is an

important distinction to make. We do not need to have a completely accurate understanding of God in order to experience his presence. Children have a woefully inadequate view of God—one littered with images of their own parents and other distortions. And it is to such that the kingdom of heaven belongs.

Whoever God is in the most complete sense, and whatever he has in mind, he loves us and is with us, and will continue to be so whether we choose to celebrate that fact or not. For it is "in him we live and move and have our being." There is a sense in which God is in all people, and all people are of God, in much the same way as all people are of the earth and the earth is in all people. We may not respect the earth, and could even exploit it terribly; but we are still here, and we are still dependent on it for the life that we experience. In the same sense, people may not respect God, and can exploit his many gifts; but it is still by his will and creative genius that we live even one moment.

This part of God's presence that is more utilitarian is the essence of some Eastern

and our own native religions. Historically, they have been keenly attuned to the mysteries of nature, and have a deep respect for the presence of God as it is seen in more natural ways. To a Taoist, the budding of leaves or the falling of rain are expressions of deity, and they inspire an awe similar to what we would describe as worship; but they attach no personality to that power. There has been a renaissance of such thinking in our day, and is part of what is being called New Age spirituality.

New Age spirituality has become so popular that it has earned its own section in most book stores. It is a rather eclectic viewpoint, gathering its material from astrology, Archetypal and Jungian psychology, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Shamanism, and nearly every form of new-fangled medicine. In Christian circles, heavy reliance is placed on the German mystics such as Meister Eckhart, the early Gnostics, and on the writings of such people as Matthew Fox, who refers to the "force" of Eastern animism as the "cosmic Christ." New Age spirituality attempts to glean the life out of any form of energy it encounters and places no value judgments on any of it.

New Age spirituality is having an impact in the West because it is exploiting a truth that has been underdeveloped in our theology. God is present in many of the impersonal ways celebrated by the Buddhist, Taoist, or New Ager. For many of us, this impersonal sensitivity is one of the first to be awakened in us and one we are wise not to lose. We call it general revelation—that revelation of God that comes to us in natural ways and is available to all people. It is a kind of revelation that asks us to "stop and smell the roses"—a right-brained kind of spirituality that is often dismissed once we encounter God in his word. If we stop learning about God with general revelation (as many Eastern sects do), we'll end the game standing on first base. We merely acknowledge the "force" or power of God in this early encounter without recognizing the "source" or purpose of this power. Even so, we lose something when we shift all of our faith to the left brain. The church gave the East a foothold by locating too much of our faith in logic and formulas.

One window into understanding the difference between New Age and Christian spirituality comes to us in Pentecost. Eastern religion acknowledges a life force—the *tao* (pronounced *dow*) or *chi* (pronounced *key*)—and parallels it with God. Because Eastern spirituality concerns itself only with the energy of life, it considers divinity to be a part of our own lives that can be tapped, or something into which we can be absorbed. The more we are "absorbed," the more we ourselves become divine. So even if they do not use the reference, the goal of the serious follower of such philosophies is not to be like God, but to be God or a part of the force that is God.

Christians, on the other hand, believe in a transcendent God that is other than us—a God in whose image we have been created—one who can indwell and animate our lives. The God we worship as Christians is not just the sum total of all the energy of the universe—a god we create by our participation in life; our God has existed from all eternity, and stands above his creation, while at the same time holding it all together (Colossians 1:17). This same God has chosen to reveal himself to us in the person of Jesus Christ, and to remain with us in the person of the Holy Spirit—not just in a utilitarian, practical way, as he has done since the creation of the world, and as our Eastern friends believe, but in a deeply personal way.

What this means is that our God is both transcendent—above his creation in every way—and immanent—with us in every way. Pentecost celebrates God expressing himself through our lives, and our being transformed as a result. Therein is the choice for those who explore the difference between New Age and Christian spirituality: New Agers dabble with the mysteries and wonders of the creation, while Christians enter into living communion with the Creator.

When we frame the conflict in that way, we realize that this is not the first time the church has faced this challenge. Paul addressed this in Athens when he tried to move the Greeks from a superficial understanding of spirituality that observed forces in nature and made gods out of them, to a personal understanding of the Creator. He made the Romans aware of individuals

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who "...exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised" (Romans 1:25). Most cultures get locked into worshipping created things because it is the part of spirituality that is most easily observed. But it is nothing more than a superficial recognition that God is active in the world, giving and sustaining life in some way.

The mystery of Pentecost, in contrast, is anything but superficial. The combined genius of thousands of bleary-eyed theologians marching in perfect step have failed to explain it. How does anyone explain the eternal God, the creator of the universe, living through ordinary people? How does one explain this God being born a human being or being raised from the dead? We do not explain such things. We simply accept by faith that on a particular day after Jesus had left this realm, his power came upon the church in a special way. We accept that his presence was given on Easter Sunday and remained with his disciples from then on, and that his power came on Pentecost. Easter was about the individual; Pentecost was about the church. On Pentecost, 120 disciples became 3,120 members together forming the body of Christ.

On Pentecost, God again took on a human face. It is not a face that can be seen by observing me or you or any other single human being, as would have been the case when Jesus walked this earth. It is one that is visible when the church works together with Christ as its head. This is what it means to be the body of Christ, and it is a humbling, sobering thought. God does not need the church for his power or presence to be seen (the *chi*, if you will). Anyone who pays the least amount of attention can see that. But he does need the church for his nature to be seen—his love and acceptance, the message of his kingdom. Pentecost is about God expressing himself through humanity, God's image existing in the human family, and

the church being released to share the good news.

New Age spirituality, on the other hand, is a selfish, individualistic path of self-actualization, self-deification, and self-destruction. The path of the Spirit is one of community—of realizing the Kingdom of God, of bringing glory to the Father, and of eternal life.

History proves that no culture has ever grasped anything of the love of God by observing the *tao* or the *chi* or whatever you want to call the force of God's power in creation. If anything, they've grasped the opposite. It took a personal revelation of God in Christ for this truth to be understood, and it still requires such a dynamic. It requires the face of Christ to be seen in the body of Christ—for the church to be his hands, heart, and voice.

Having said that, the world has a message for us Christians in the New Age. Somewhere along the line we let the glory of worship and the mystery of God deteriorate into dry creedalism and formalism. The hunger evident in our culture is not for right theology or proper structure or the right catechism—all of which are important and necessary when held in the right regard—but for experience. The masses being sucked into the New Age lie are those who want a living encounter with the numinous—a real experience with a real presence. So hungry are they that they will readily believe that a Hollywood actress can channel a 2,000-year-old Samoan who had nothing to say when he was alive, and has even less to offer now.

What people are longing for is a living experience of the actual presence of God. That is what the crowd saw on the first Pentecost of the Christian era, and that is what they long for now. This is not accomplished by concocted spiritual orgies with people barking and wailing or dusty old rituals that haven't had an oil change in a millennium, but rather by the people of God opening

themselves up to the power of the Holy Spirit to transform their lives and bring forth fruit, and sharing in a powerful way what God has been doing in their lives. Not sharing the four spiritual laws or some other canned "cognitive" message, but rather a living and vital testimony of the presence and power of God touching our lives, and bringing health and wholeness.

In this new age, the call of God comes upon his church to take up our crosses and follow Christ, and to offer our lives to the indwelling and transforming power of his Holy Spirit. The world wants quick fixes and cheap thrills, and sometimes even the church succumbs to the allure of quick success rather than true transformation. In this new age as in every previous age, the Enemy uses the tools of fascination and "colored glass" to distract God's people from the reality of true spiritual power and the "gold" that only comes from a disciplined and deliberate walk with God.

In this age as in every other age, the fruit of the Spirit is a prerequisite to experiencing the power of the Spirit. The New Age challenge will not be met by Christian magicians with better magic, but by devoted disciples of Christ who are experiencing the power of God in their daily living; the power to love our neighbors, our enemies, our Christian brothers and sisters and the power to face the trials and insecurities of life.

This is the gift of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit did not come simply to light a few heads and blow a bit of dust around; he came to change lives, and to express Christ's glory in the body of Christ we call the church. The degree to which we allow him to do so is the degree to which he does so in this community of faith, and the degree to which our own lives are a gift rich with his fruit.

Glenn Robitaille pastors the Ashland (Ohio) Brethren in Christ Church.

RACISM

HIDDEN AND UNNOTICED

*I lay my sins on Jesus,
the spotless Lamb of God;
he bears them all and frees us
from the accursed load:
I bring my guilt to Jesus,
to wash my crimson stains
white* in his blood most precious,
till not a stain remains.*

(Hymns for Praise and Worship #347)

HAVE YOU ever browsed through the Brethren in Christ hymnal reflecting on what it tells us about ourselves and our theology? Take references to sin and redemption, for instance. There are whole sections devoted to "Repentance and Acceptance," "Consecration and Sanctification," and "Victory Over Sin," so sin must have a high degree of significance in our theology. Being sinful people, we need such reminders. Now take a look at the *type* of sin these songs focus on: personal sin or communal sin. I have yet to notice a reference to communal sin in our hymnal. Yes, sin is personal, but sin is also communal, and it is significant that our hymns don't make this evident.

This emphasis on the personal at the expense of the communal has serious implications if we are concerned about seeking justice in our world. Especially if we take seriously the call to racial justice that we

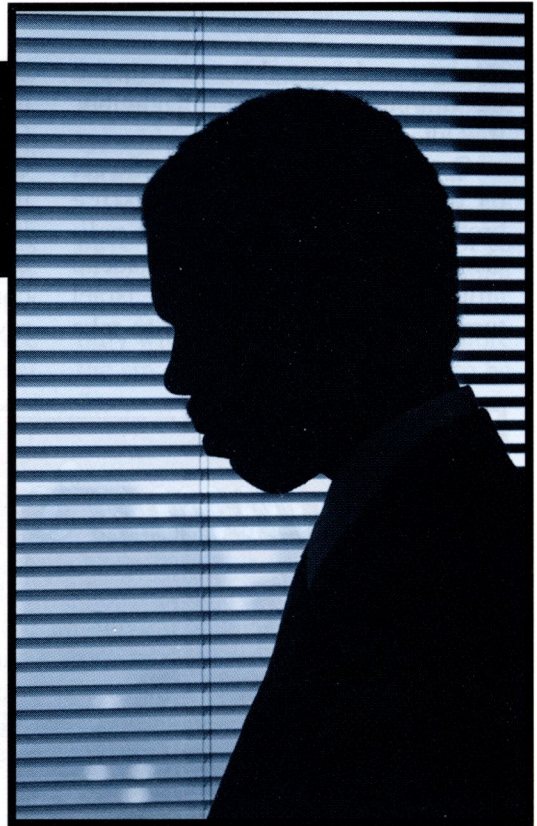
speak about with such concern. In fact, the modern Brethren in Christ theological focus on sin as an individual matter leaves racism unnoticed.

Personal Sin

When I speak of personal (or individual) sin, I mean a sin that is directly attributable to an individual person. For instance, making disparaging remarks about a person with a different color of skin. It is the choice of an individual to make such comments, and the individual must repent and make things right with all those affected. In the story of the good Samaritan, the act of the individual priest in not helping his neighbor was a personal sin. This is what we usually think of when we think about sin. It is the kind of sin that the holiness camp evangelists told us we could be sanctified from through a "second work of grace." I don't remember hearing a camp meeting sermon on communal sin.

Communal Sin

The sin of a community is much more elusive than personal sin, especially for the Brethren in Christ. The various strains of our theological heritage tend to push us to the personal: the Pietistic emphasis on personal experience of faith, the Wesleyan emphasis on personal holiness, the Evangelical emphasis on personal salvation. While our Anabaptist theological heritage had an emphasis on faith lived out in community, many have noted that in the last decades Anabaptist influence in the Brethren in Christ Church has given way to the other three theological



by Phil Brubaker

**While not a main point of this article, the use of the word "white" in this hymn as a term describing purity and sinlessness has definite racial implications. The words we use have an important influence on the way we think. If they didn't, why would the General Conference debate the choice of prepositions in the Manual of Doctrine and Government?*

Phil Brubaker lives in Akron, Pa., and works with Mennonite Central Committee U.S. as administrative assistant in Peace and Justice Ministries.

strains; and I would assert that it informs our theology of sin negligibly, if at all.

Communal sin is not a specific act by an individual. It is injustice brought about by a community's policies, ideologies, structures, and social attitudes. When the people of Israel turned from God and began to take

advantage of the poor in their communities, God did not point a divine finger at each individual exploiter. God treated Israel as a whole because it was a society-wide problem, not just a problem of the sum of individual sins. "I will punish Israel for countless crimes, and I won't change my mind. They sell honest people for

money, and the needy are sold for the price of sandals. They smear the poor in the dirt and push aside those who are helpless" (Amos 2:6-7 CEV). The prophets are full of examples of communal sin. A modern example of communal sin is the prevalent belief in our society and parts of the church that violence can be an acceptable

Momma's gift

by Wendy Burt

The first time I saw a white man, I was sitting in church. It was the middle of August and the humidity hovered in our Alabama parish like grits in a cast iron kettle. I sat quietly, wedged between Momma and my Aunt Fancy, catching bits of breezes as they fanned themselves with their hard straw fans.

The preacher rambled on, his "fire and brimstone" sermon seasoned with the occasional "Hallelujah" and "Praise the Lord" from our sweaty congregation. I stared out the church window and wandered into a daydream, picturing the Sunday dinner we would have later that day. A Sunday feast was typical for all the families and I reckoned it was God's reward to all of us for sitting through two hours of preaching.

But that one summer Sunday everything changed for me. In the middle of his Bible thumping, fist-clenched exuberance, the preacher stopped. The silence caught me by surprise, and at first I thought maybe he knew I wasn't listening—like God had allowed him to read my mind. I looked at the pulpit to see him standing there with an expression of disgust, staring at the back of the church as if the Devil himself had just entered. With the rest of the congregation, I turned to see the interruption.

There, leaning against the front doors of *our* church—our pure, *black* church—was a drifter. A skinny, disheveled, *white* drifter.

This man, this invader of our sacred space, stood before us in all his unholiness. His raggedy clothes seemed to hang on him and his face looked pasty and sunken, like a man waiting for death. Worst of all, he had entered our church barefoot, his blistered, bloody feet staining our holy wood floor.

We were still. He walked down the center aisle with slow deliberate steps. His legs looked fragile and weak and his hunched back made him look as though he carried the world on his shoulders.

"Pardon me, Reverend," he said, as he removed his hat and seated himself in the front pew.

The preacher looked around the congregation, and

then at Mr. Jackson, our layman, who barely acknowledged the man before turning away. Looking down at the bloody floor, the preacher shook his head. He glanced at the drifter for a just a second, and with a roll of his eyes, picked up where he left off.

The man glanced at the stained floor and bowed his head, ashamed.

I couldn't take my eyes off him. His skin seemed to drip off him like wet laundry. I was confused by the preacher's reaction. I had never really listened to any of the Sunday sermons, but the bits and pieces I had picked up had taught me that God wanted us to be kind to others. And yet here, in the place that the preacher called, "God's House," I was witness to a stranger in need being passed over.

Then, to my right, Momma rose. Clutching her good Sunday kerchief, she walked straight to the church's christening bowl. The preacher stopped speaking. Taking the pitcher of water that the preacher himself had been drinking from during his sermon, she stepped down to the front pew.

"Be not ashamed, my brother," said Momma, kneeling in front of the man. I leaned forward and watched as she filled the christening bowl with the water, and then, dunking her kerchief, she bathed the man's feet. I could see the man's face as he began to cry.

By the time Momma returned to her seat, I had forgotten about dinner, engrossed in the miracle that I had just witnessed. I had seen Momma through different eyes that day. Like Rosa Parks walking to the front of the bus, Momma had challenged the racism that surrounded her. Like Susan B. Anthony taking charge when it was necessary, Momma had showed me the strength of a woman's actions. And, like the Good Samaritan helping a stranger in need, Momma had gone to the aid of another in need of kindness.

That hot Alabama Sunday, Momma showed me not only who she was, but who I was. In one day, she set a life-long example, paving a road for her only daughter to walk down proudly, as an African American, as a woman, as a Christian.

Wendy Burt lives in Colorado Springs, Colo.

way to solve conflicts and bring about peace. Attitudes such as this lead to arms races, murder, and domestic abuse; and we are guilty participants (perhaps unwittingly) as long as we buy the breakfast cereals that sponsor the violent cartoons, don't speak out against violence and for peace, or cheer when violent criminals are sentenced to death.

Communal sin is a jagged little pill for the Brethren in Christ to swallow. With communal sin, I might personally and honestly repent, but that doesn't mean that I have nothing to do with the sin anymore. As long as I am a part of the sinning community, I participate in the sin. I may not do it willingly or even knowingly, but it is still there and it still keeps me from having a full relationship with those around me and with God. Whatever one believes about being "entirely sanctified" of personal sin, that state is impossible in regard to communal sin. This is just one of many reasons why we need grace. I am a sinner because I am part of a sinning community, and even though I may work against the unjust structures of my community, I remain a sinner. Remarkably, God gives grace to sinners, not to former sinners.

Racism

For as much as Christians talk about "racism," it is unfortunate that there is not a greater understanding of what racism is. Usually racism is confused with racial prejudice. Racial prejudice is an attitude that a person has by which people are prejudged according to their race. Prejudice comes through when I notice a group of African Americans on the corner and think, "I wonder what they're selling," but when I notice a group of white teenagers on the corner I think nothing at all. Or when the only "person of color" on the church board offers a suggestion, and it is politely but firmly ignored. Prejudice is evident when a white police officer accepts the story of the white driver involved in a fender-bender, or when an African American police officer

accepts the story of the African American driver.

While prejudice is tied to racism, racism involves more. A concise definition of racism is "race prejudice plus institutional power." Racism is the attitudes, feelings, and opinions about a person based on race coupled with the power to institutionalize those prejudices. It is the institutional power part of this definition that we tend to ignore. Who holds the power in our institutions: Government? Businesses? Colleges? Congregations? The Brethren in Christ Church? A glance at who are in the leadership and decision-making positions of our institutions quickly shows that the answer is white people.


And this is where the focus of racism becomes clear: Racism does not only hurt and oppress "people of color," but it works to maintain privilege and power for white people. As the Federal Immigration Policy and the Immigration and Naturalization Service crack down on illegal immigrants, immigrant families (mostly Mexican) are broken up with little or no "due process," and the economic and psycho-social interests of white Americans are protected. My Hispanic co-workers, who have been American citizens longer than I, may be looked at suspiciously (after all, they look like they could be "illegal"). But because I am white, I never have to worry about such suspicions; that is a privilege I have as a white person. Another white privilege that I have is being able to move in Brethren in Christ circles and not be thought of as a newcomer or outsider. There are African American and Hispanic Brethren in Christ whose families have been in the Brethren in Christ church for several generations. But how often are they perceived as newcomers? And if they are perceived as newcomers, how much leadership and influence will they be given in our denomination? White privilege is so pervasive that it often goes unnoticed.

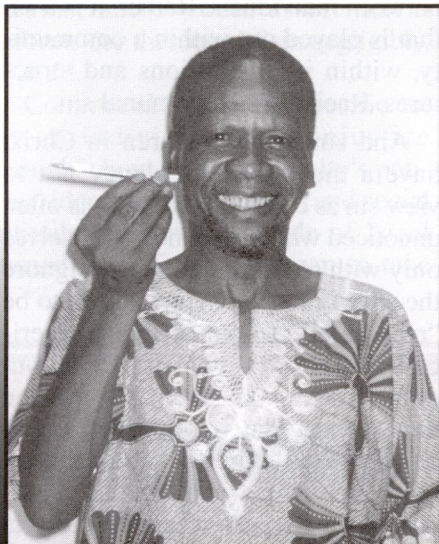
When we look at racism with a definition that makes clear the joining of prejudice and power, we realize that racism is not simply a matter

between individuals. Rather, it is a sin that is played out within a community, within its institutions and structures. Racism is a communal sin.

And since the Brethren in Christ have a theological tendency not to view sin as communal, racism is often unnoticed while we concern ourselves only with racial prejudice. We ignore the sin of racism when we seek to be "reconciled" to our African American neighbors down the street but don't speak out about the police department that treats them suspiciously. We ignore the sin of racism when the youth group spends a Saturday serving meals at an ecumenical soup kitchen in a Hispanic neighborhood, but the church decides not to support an education program started by Iglesia de Cristo in that same neighborhood. Not that it is wrong to seek "racial reconciliation" or to serve those in need. Not at all. What is sin is to look only on the individual level without grappling with the communal sin of racism. It is good to pick the splinters from our eyes, but not if the log makes us go blind.

Grappling with racism as a communal sin certainly won't be an easy thing. It isn't likely to make us feel good (at least at first). It isn't likely to make us friends (at least at first). But how often is true repentance easy? Happily, a struggle against racism does not have to take place without support. The Racism Awareness Program of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. has numerous resources available to help churches become "anti-racist." The book *Enter the River* is a good place to start, and the video *Free Indeed* creatively challenges us to think about white privileges. The Damascus Road is an intensive training process for congregations and church institutions who are ready to work at dismantling racism.

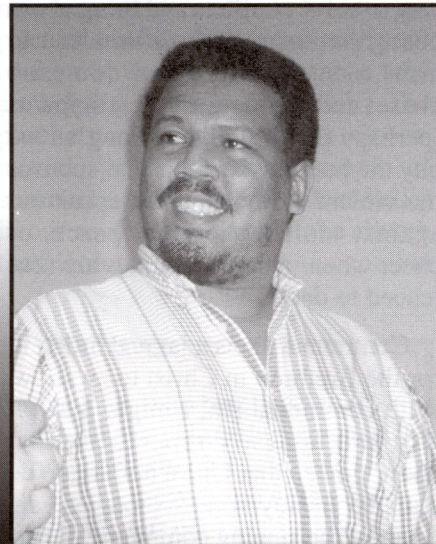
Ignoring communal sin is what the holiness evangelists would call a "sin of omission." It is time that we repent and take our communal sins as seriously as we do our individual sins. And we can write some new hymns along the way to remind us. 



Joe Seramane



Mvume Dandala



Craig Arendse

Three People To Help Us Figure Out the Way of Peace

by Rod White

Last year, a group of white men left a party in the racially tense Grays Ferry section of Philadelphia and beat up a black woman and her son. The Nation of Islam turned the incident into a media event. The city pulled out the stops to avert major violence, and Christian pastors in the area tried to figure out what they should do to ease racial tensions and deter violence.

Seeing Louis Farrakhan used by the city as a peacemaker served as a wake-up call for many Christians. We have the power and the tools to make peace, but we need to get involved. I think figuring out what Christians can do in situations like the one in Grays Ferry and in the larger situations that infect our world should be a major preoccupation of the church. I believe Jesus is

teaching us a better way than violence, retribution, and war, and is demanding of us a lifestyle of being reconcilers—being reconciled to God and helping others be reconciled, protecting the peace of God in our churches, and salting the world with the hope of mutual respect even among nonbelievers.

Among the reasons I was happy to find the Brethren in Christ 15 years ago was our appreciation of Matthew 18, our “brethren mindset,” and our place among the historic peace churches. Those same reasons for appreciating the Brethren in Christ also led me to enter into a process in 1996 with Bob and Alice Evans of Plowshares Institute to form multiracial reconciliation teams trained in mediation, negotiation, and proactive peacemaking. I have been molded by the mandate to reconcile that the Brethren in Christ have carried, and I live next to Grays Ferry—I need to figure out what to do. Part of the process of figuring out how to become a team of proactive peacemakers led to my immersion experience this February in South Africa, about which I want to share.

SOUTH AFRICA deserves to be in the world’s spotlight as a place where reconciliation has been given a chance. You may have heard Nelson Mandela promoting reconciliation over violence as a means to build the new South Africa. You may have heard of Desmond Tutu call-

ing on people to tell their stories to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in an attempt to foment repentance and forgiveness. You may have followed the attempts of the young democracy to forge a rainbow nation out of the wreckage of apartheid.

The work of Christians in South Africa is amazing. I’m not writing to explore political questions, or as an expert on the process of reconciliation. I just want to share three stories about Christians that reveal what God is doing in fragmented and dangerous situations in South Africa. These stories introduce you to people devoted to reconciliation who are making a difference in the world by exercising their faith. I hope they encourage you, as people historically interested in reconciliation, to persevere in your own quest to be agents of transformation in the middle of challenging situations in your own territory.

Joe Seramane has been given the difficult assignment of directing the Commission on the Restitution of Land Rights in South Africa. Laws were passed after 1915 that unjustly dispossessed people. There is an attempt to right that wrong. Like many newcomers to the South African government, Seramane’s credentials include a stint of imprisonment, and in his case torture, on Robben Island.

He went to prison as an unbelieving revolutionary and left a peacemaker.

He became an unbeliever as a teen when he traveled from his village to visit his beloved white priest in town. At the priest's house, he found he was only allowed to talk to the servant at the back door. He and his friends were given chunks of bread to eat and water from jelly jars, quite unlike the feast the priest was always served when he visited the village. It became apparent that "Give us our daily bread" was a silly prayer when only the whites got the bread.

When Seramane was being tortured for information on Robben Island, the gag in his mouth denied him even the relief of screaming as the electric shock was applied. He got to a place beyond pain, a warm place, where he had an interior dialogue. He had thought that physical life was all he had, but in that moment beyond physical, he realized there was more. He thought of the God he had deserted. He prayed, "Receive my soul," and heard God say, "I have created life. The life I've given you—they can't take away." From that awful forge God hammered out a man who has tirelessly sought to bring reconciliation. He says, "We must reconcile or we reward the evil of apartheid." But he adds an important lesson for people who would take his path, "Truth has a twin—loneliness." In the midst of a terrible situation a person was reconciled and received the calling to carry the message of reconciliation.

Mvume Dandala is now the presiding bishop of southern Africa for the Methodist Church. Once, he was the pastor of an established church with a conscience.

In the early, violent days of the struggle for freedom, he and his co-workers had been going to serve the residents of the infamous Soweto hostels. The hostels were government or business-built dormitories for men who came to work in the city. Blacks were not allowed to live in the city, so housing was thrown together in sprawling townships outside city limits, like Soweto, outside Johannesburg. The hostels, especially, were purposely terrible places to live so that no one would be tempted to stay. Nelson Mandela himself was once one of the work-

ers living in the hostels who had been officially designated by the government as "superfluous appendages to the city." Many examples remain of these desolate warehouses full of beds stacked up the walls like shelves for the storage of spare parts.

The ministry of Dandala and his church soon went beyond food and spiritual direction. Emerging political parties were organizing among the poorest who had nothing to lose by the struggle and were fighting one another. Soon the church people were going to the hostels to make peace. They literally placed themselves between the warring parties. They engineered cease fires and negotiations. Even if they identified with another political faction they would go to an opposition hostel, in the name of Christ, where they might be killed for the sake of peace. Some people have said that the program of Dandala and his church stopped the war everyone was sure would break out in 1994, when the first free elections were scheduled. They exercised faith, and faith made for peace.

Craig Arendse is a so-called "colored" (not designated black or white) man who feels like it is Christ's calling for his life to be a reconciler. He works with the Center for Conflict Resolution in Cape Town.

In Cape Town, the apartheid government accomplished its most notorious expression of its policy of "forced removal." The government designated an attractive colored area "for white's only," forcibly removed its residents to a desolate spot far from the city, and bulldozed their former neighborhoods (except for the church buildings, which the machine operators refused to touch). The displaced people experienced such community breakdown that they became subject to all sorts of evils. In the cases in which Craig Arendse became involved, the evils were drug gangs, outmatched police, and vigilantes taking the law into their own hands.

Arendse became the trusted mediator between a Moslem community group which had decreed a *jihad* against drug gangs, and the police, who were suspected of collusion with

the gangs and spent as much time investigating the Moslem groups as they did the drug sellers. Through his work, a nonviolent relationship was built and the seeds for rule by law were planted. His message to us—who are aspiring to be mediators—was, "Remember, a mediator is the bridge walked on by both sides." He risked his life to befriend the violent because "the cause is greater than the individual." He is an individual God is using to make a difference.

I sometimes wonder what God may say to me about how I have compromised chances for peace. I wonder if I have too much peace with the world and don't bring enough of the peace of Christ to it. I have faced people who loved war and who used power to enforce their bigotry. I have lived under governments who have irrationally resorted to violence and have treated the poor as disposable. I have sat back when neighbor fought neighbor and even neighborhood fought neighborhood, assuming it was their problem, not mine. As aggressive and outspoken as I have been told I am, I wonder if I haven't been beaten down by evil forces that are so willing to loudly shout their positions and which never worry about whether they are working too hard to get their own way.

The three men who I have mentioned taught me how to respond when people are not practicing peace. They went to prison, crossed frightening and taboo boundaries, and are still risking their lives to be peacemakers. Their works of faith give Jesus a chance to shine in dark places. Whether or not they succeed in changing every aspect of their world, the fact that they exist shames the powers that be and exposes the folly of being anything but a reconciler. They would not say that they have everything figured out, but they were glad to share their better way. We Brethren in Christ are familiar with that way of peace and so also have much to offer in a world often at odds with itself and the Lord.

Rod White is the pastor of Circle of Hope, a two-year-old church planting project of the Atlantic Conference in Center City, Philadelphia.

National Association of Evangelicals convened March 2-4 in Orlando

The 1998 "Evangelical Summit," the annual meeting of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), convened in Orlando, Florida, March 2-4. The theme "Let There Be Light" emphasized meeting both social and spiritual needs in a contemporary society. Everyone was challenged to aggressively witness in word and deed so that we become salt and light, transforming lives and meeting the needs of the marginalized.


In Haddon Robinson's inimitable style, his morning Bible studies and stories called every person to a new level of spiritual integrity. Clyde Calver of England, the newly installed president of World Relief Corporation

(WRC), was featured several times. In the concluding session of the conference, his powerful message reminded us that only as Christians are touched with a genuine sense of need in the world will there be an adequate response to love and service.

Because of worldwide concerns over religious persecution, NAE President, Don Argue, was invited by the Chinese president, Jiang Zemin, to visit China and Tibet in February, along with one leader from each of the Jewish and Roman Catholic communities. It is too early to predict the influence this will produce in restoring freedom, but we are urged to pray for the persecuted church—a major prob-

lem in many countries. After serving for 2 years as president of NAE, Argue has resigned to become president of Northwestern College of the Assemblies of God. The board of directors has authorized the executive committee to facilitate the search for a new president of the NAE. In the meantime, the vice president, David Melvin, will become director of operations and consult frequently with the board chair, Lamar Vest.

Several resolutions were adopted by the annual meeting. These included: ministry to senior adults, pornography and obscenity, housing for "the least of these", and a declaration for public education.

Representing the Brethren in Christ, either part or full-time, were Arthur Climenhaga, Ethan Gramm, Bill and Nancy Hoke, Eduardo and Jill Llanes, and Harvey Sider. 

Declaration for public education

Whereas, we as Christians recognize our biblical duty to teach our children; and as citizens of the United States recognize today that mothers and fathers desire a hope and a future for their children;

Whereas, public schools were founded as one of the means of educating future generations to be capable of assuming their responsibilities as citizens, discover truth, and develop moral character;

Whereas, the churches and all people of faith have an opportunity to assist local schools and communities to secure a safe learning environment, academic excellence, meaningful parental involvement, and community participation;

Whereas, Christian churches need not only to provide for the spiritual well-being of children, parents, and educators within their congregations, but also need to see their involvement in local public schools as part of the churches' vision;

Be it resolved, as followers of Jesus Christ, we accept the responsibility to love all children as we love ourselves, and to pray for children, educators, and public schools;

Be it further resolved, that we recognize and accept our opportunity as Christians and citizens to build constructive relationships with local public schools, to pursue avenues of support for those involved in public education, and to encourage and disciple public school teachers, administrators, and students;

Be it further resolved, this emphasis on public education is not intended to compromise the value nor question the validity of private, Christian, or home schools.

Ministry to senior adults

The senior adult population in the United States of America is growing 3 times more rapidly than the national population rate. In spite of this fact, only 1 percent of the churches surveyed have a director of adult ministry, while 80 percent of the same churches have a volunteer or paid youth worker.

Senior adults possess the capacity to grow spiritually and enrich the lives of others. Too few churches provide real resources for spiritual growth or provide senior adult ministries beyond recreational activities.

Senior adults possess a wealth of experience and knowledge that is desperately needed by younger generations. This breadth of experience and knowledge can, and should be utilized by churches and other organizations. However, most programs that are available for senior adults lack either adequate numbers or diversity of options from which seniors can choose to find meaningful service.

Senior adults sometimes possess physical limitations, yet one survey shows that few churches provide ramps, elevators, large-print hymnals, or adequate sound systems to accommodate some of those needs. Rather than face such obstacles to worship, study, and enrichment, many senior adults just do not go to church.

The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), in recognizing the needs of senior adults, issues a call to its constituent bodies for the development and implementation of aggressive ministries to senior adults which should include the following minimum objectives:

- The development of training and methodology for reaching senior adults, both for salvation and spiritual growth;
- An informed and sensitive response to the needs of senior adults through the development of diverse local church-based ministries;
- A spiritually-based focus of care for senior adults;
- Provide appropriate ministry opportunities for senior adults.

Housing for the least of these

More than 25 percent of the world's population lacks adequate shelter. The need for adequate, affordable housing crosses all national boundaries and generational lines. In the Mississippi Delta, a family of 5 huddles around the heater in a shack as the bitter wind whips through the cracks in the walls. In Honduras, a woman lives with her adult children in a corrugated tin structure that has been patched repeatedly to keep the rain out. In Rwanda, a widow who survived the genocide waits with 5 orphans she has adopted for a roof to cover their mud-walled shelter. In the Philippines, hundreds of families are left homeless by a relentless volcano.

The epistle of James challenges Christians to social responsibility. It is not enough to say to a needy person, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," while neglecting his or her physical suffering and material needs. A living faith calls us to hold out boldly the hope of the gospel as we fulfill

God's command to love others in both word and deed. The example of Christ and the explicit instruction of the pastoral epistles teaches us to invite strangers in to a place of security and love in his name.

Recognizing the necessity to put faith into action, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) seeks to raise awareness of the need for adequate shelter for families around the world. Therefore, we resolve to challenge our individual members and member organizations to become partners with people in need of adequate, affordable housing. This partnership begins with a commitment to regular prayer for those in need of adequate shelter. We also suggest participation in the observance of the International Day of Prayer and Action for Human Habitat on the third Sunday in September of each year.

Beyond prayer, we also call upon the members of the NAE to partner with our relief and development arm, World

Relief, and other organizations involved in housing efforts by providing labor and funds.

Affirming that we have been called to a living, active faith, we seek to match our words with our deeds. We commit to proclaim the good news of God's redemption of humankind with our mouths and our hands. We will pray for those who suffer because of inadequate housing, we will work together to build homes for families in need in our communities, and we will give financially so that more families around the world will have access to affordable housing.

Now is the time for the evangelical church in the United States to model the early church of Acts 4, and become "one in heart and mind...sharing everything they had. With great power they testified to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. And there were no needy persons among them."

Pornography and obscenity

The National Association of Evangelicals affirms the declaration of Scripture that all persons are made in the image of God and are therefore to be treated with respect and dignity. We also affirm that sex is a gift from our loving Father to be enjoyed within the sacred bonds of marriage between husband and wife.

Because of our sin, we as individuals and as a nation continue to experience a decline in moral values and beliefs. Our sinful behavior has resulted in increasing rates of unmarried adolescent and adult sexual activity, the birth of children to unwed mothers, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, and decreasing marital fidelity. These are all signs of the decline of our culture.

Today, pornography and obscenity are available through increasingly sexually explicit movies and television programs, magazines, video tapes and, most recently, the Internet. The Internet brings pornography into our homes, schools, and libraries. Everything from soft-core to hard-core to child pornography is now available not just for adults, but for children. The powerfully corrosive effect within American society is deeply troubling to evangelicals.

Pornography and obscenity cause harm to those (often women and children) who are abused in the production of it, as well as to those who use it. These materials exploit persons made in God's image, destroy healthy relationships, and distort God's gift of loving, mutual sexuality between husband and wife.

As members of the National Association of Evangelicals,

we are therefore committed to educating both our members and the broader culture about the harm of pornography. To facilitate that commitment, we encourage our member denominations to take official action at their national governing bodies, and to implement an educational process that will protect God's people from the impact of pornography. We encourage pastors and congregations to protect their youth and children from exposure to these materials. We call upon businesses, schools, and libraries, as well as parents, to participate in an effort to protect children and youth from being harmed by these materials.

We also urge local, state, and federal agencies to prosecute aggressively those who break the law in producing and distributing illegal pornography or who operate illegal sex businesses.

Lastly, we call upon all leaders of the broader faith community, all persons of goodwill, and especially representatives of the evangelical community to be "salt and light" in protecting people from the harm of pornography, obscenity, and sex businesses. We also call upon these same people to join together in their own communities to win the battle against pornography and obscenity through education, appropriate law enforcement efforts, and by helping those who have been harmed.

For more information, visit the NAE website at <http://www.nae.net>.



Omar Peñalosa, pastor and leader of the new flock, giving the Christmas meditation.

Meet the Peñalosa family of the new Pensilvania Brethren in Christ Church in Colombia

The following is a letter received by the missions office recently. We share it here so you, too, can become acquainted with a Latino family in Colombia involved in church planting.

Beloved Brothers,

We are sending you a warm hug from the recently born Brethren in Christ Church in the neighborhood of Pensilvania in Bogotá, Colombia. First we would like to introduce ourselves: We are the Peñalosa Niño family, composed of Omar Antonio and Martha Sarón, and our little daughter Sharon Alejandra; who have felt the call of our Lord to follow him and serve him. We have been members of the Brethren in Christ Church in Niza Nueve since 1992. Martha came from a Christian family, her father is a retired pastor with the Christian Alliance Mission, and she decided to turn her life over to Christ from a very early age. Omar opened his heart to the Lord 2 years before coming to our beloved Brethren in Christ community. Thanks first for God's help and the help of the mission through such persons as Bob and Carol Geiger and, in these later years, Curtis and Leslie Book. We have been able to serve in the work in different areas and ministries such as:

Omar: Design, editing, and production of the church bulletin while it was budgeted, 1993-94 (48 weeks)

Omar: Directing the ministry of Theater* for 18 months, Nov. 1993 through April 1995

Omar: Professor of "FLET"*** from 1996

* Theater—Omar directed a theater group which performed at the Niza IX Church and at other churches as well as doing some limited street ministry.

** FLET—Latinamerican Association of Theological Studies

Omar: Design and professor of the course, "Christian Fundamentals," 1997

Omar: Design and professor of the course "Baptism and Membership," 1998

Martha: Sunday School Teacher, 1994-97

Martha: Sunday School Supervisor, 1997

Through the mercy of God now we are responsible to coordinate the new work in Bogotá in the neighborhood of Pensilvania. Also collaborating in this work is Andrea Acero, who will help us with the praise and worship time in the Sunday meetings. Now that you know us a little, we wish to tell you that we are very grateful for the blessing to be able to work for our God within the Brethren in Christ mission. We give thanks to God for your prayers and the support, including material support, for this new work, and may the Lord return it to you with much love.

We have begun meetings on Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. from Sept 8, 1997, in the office that Omar's father has lent us. In these meetings we have praise led by our Niza 9 pastor, Ricardo Tovar, and a Bible teaching for the adults led by Omar Peñalosa; at the same time there is a Bible lesson for the children in their own special meeting led by Martha Peñalosa. In the last meeting there were 26 children attending between the ages of 4 and 15 years old. The adults have not been as stable, but of the people that have come we are able to count on 4 regulars. Next Friday, February 6, we begin the first baptism class with three people. One of these has now learned to play guitar, and has the desire to serve in the work of a praise team, if God wills. Next Sunday, February 8, will be our first Sunday meeting. We hope in this way to be able to reach people that for one reason or another cannot come to the Tuesday meetings.

May our Lord continue blessing you all,
Omar and Martha Peñalosa

New Church Planting

Fog at Mwapona

by Rachel Kibler

It was Christmas morning. I was up early, as my custom is, to take my early morning walk. I wondered to myself, Why am I up so early when this is a holiday and I could sleep in? I went outside to walk and found fog. Fog, of all things. "Lord, what we really need is a full day of steady rain, but fog?" I walked down the dusty back lane, across the fields which were dry and parched, and noticed the grass that should be growing into tall thatch grass but was short with no sign of long growth. And I saw fog, of all things. The maize that had been planted, if it had germinated at all, was spindly and withered and surrounded by, you guessed it, fog. I know that plants absorb moisture from fog, but it really doesn't do much for the roots and the total growth of the plant.

Our lawn, as in bush grass that is cut short, was brown when it should have been green. Well, I would wait and see what this fog would do to refresh the land, green up my lawn, encourage my garden and flowers, and cut down the dust on the path where I was walking. Strange, isn't it, how something as common as fog can cause such distraction?

We arrived at the Mwapona Church, a new church planting, about 10:00 for the morning service. Try to imagine this. We are, of course, still meeting under the mango trees because we as yet have no building. Actually, I will miss meeting under the mango trees when we move to a building. A path goes right past our mango grove. I won't be able to see the oxcarts and oxen that pass by and the few bicyclers, and the black and white duck with the red head who waddles through our service whenever we meet, not to mention the dog who comes to church regularly and sometimes takes his morning nap stretched across George's feet. But this is not what I want you to try to imagine.

Try to imagine the excitement of this new congregation because this is the first time that they are having a Christmas service; they have never been a church before and they aren't quite sure what should happen.

First of all, they are in the process of preparing the noon meal for all of us. Since just a few could give the K500 (40 cents) that was asked for to cover the cost of the meal, members of the congrega-



A women's discipleship group meets around Rachel Kibler's table.

tion went door to door and collected small dishes of mealie meal to cook. We knew that there were some gardens here at the mission where people had grown cabbage for marketing and for which they now had no sale. Either there was too much cabbage grown or people had no money to buy, so it was rotting in the gardens. I suggested to George that we ask for a donation of cabbage for our Christmas feast. We were told to take what we wanted. When we trimmed the rotted portion off of the outside, the inside was fine. We used that and bought a bit of good cabbage. We also purchased a bit of meat so that everyone would have one small piece.

The service began. There was a lot of singing followed by a few skits, not too well planned, but this was their first try. The audience, however, entered into the skits and knew exactly what was happening and the message came across. I wish you could have seen our "shepherds." Baby Jesus was an old, bedraggled, much-loved teddy bear that was resurrected from somewhere. There was "special" music and a morning message telling the Christmas story. In all, we were in the service 3 hours. I believe the Lord was honored.

Then came the feast: mealie meal porridge (nsima), cooked cabbage, and meat. We sat in groups, many people sitting on the ground. We were served one dish of each of the items on the menu which we shared with everyone in our group. The meal took 2 hours, not because there was so much food but because no one wanted to leave this first-ever Christmas fellowship of the Mwapona Brethren in Christ

Church. There was plenty of cabbage and mealie meal for everyone and we all had a taste of the meat. You may be asking, "Why didn't you just buy plenty of meat for everyone?" It was important, you see, that this be their feast and that they could feel good about having done it. What we did needed to be a helping part, not the main thrust of the meal. Their going from house to house among the members of the congregation to collect small dishes of mealie meal was the main thrust. It was their idea to do this, not ours.

When we returned home about 3:00 that afternoon the fog of the morning was no longer on my mind. I was engrossed in thinking about what coming to know Jesus was meaning in the lives of these people who for the first time at Christmas were part of the family of God.

We are teaching the basics of the faith walk to a class of 28 persons every Sunday morning in Sunday school in preparation for baptism. When I ask the question, "What has happened to you since you have accepted Jesus as your Savior and have confessed your sins?" the answers come quickly: We are part of God's family; We have been forgiven; The Holy Spirit lives in us; We have eternal life. I thrill every Sunday when I hear them giving these answers and many others. You see, until recently they knew nothing about these truths.

Rachel Kibler has been serving since April 1995 at Nahumba Mission in Choma, Zambia, with her husband George. They had also served in Zambia for 2 previous terms. The Kiblers are members of the Cumberland Valley Brethren in Christ Church, Dillsburg, Pa.



God at work in our world

The winning side

Jay and Judy Smith have been involved in Muslim ministry since 1986 when they began service in Senegal, West Africa. Since August 1992, they have been serving in London, UK. The Smiths have 3 sons and are members of the Perkiomen Valley Brethren in Christ Church, Collegeville, Pa. The following are excerpts from some of Jay's letters.

We still get down to Speaker's Corner each Sunday afternoon to discuss and debate with the many Muslims there. Times are changing. We now have an "ad-hoc" team of 5 to 8 fellows and girls who are quite adept at answering the Islamic challenge from the London area. They are primarily University, Bible School, and medical students, which helps upgrade the caliber of discussion. This has been an answer to prayer as we are finally making an impact; so much so that the Muslims are pinpointing the others as well, saving some of their choicest abuse for them (usually reserved for those they cannot rebut). This forces them at times to pull their people away from engaging with us, as we often have

Director of MCC East Asia Programs

Mennonite Central Committee is seeking applicants for the position of Director of East Asia programs. This is a three-year, full-time, salaried position based in Akron, Pa., starting September 1, 1998. Qualifications include a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. Applicants should have a bachelor's degree, experience in East Asia, administrative and communications skills, and an understanding of the global Mennonite church. Travel required. For more information, or to receive a copy of the job description, please contact Dwight McFadden, 21 S. 12th St., PO Box 500, Akron, PA 17501, e-mail: djm@mcc.org ph. (717) 859-1151; or MCC Canada Personnel, 134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9, ph. (204) 261-6381. Applications due June 1, 1998.

responses to their challenges, many times "rebounding" the same challenges right "back in their laps" and catching them unawares. It's good to be on the winning side of the debate.

Following a debate in February, Jay reported this: After the dust had settled I was approached by the Christian Union Representatives who were overjoyed as they felt so much more encouraged to find that we have such a good deal more evidence for the authority of our Scriptures than do the Muslims.... Debates in India in the nineteenth century resulted in the conversion from Islam of a number of intellectuals. When asked what started the process, they pointed back to debates they had attended years earlier between a Muslim and Christian missionaries. This was when they first began to doubt their Muslim faith. Please pray that such doubt has now been sown in the over 200 Muslims who were there at the debate. We may yet see a harvest. That is my prayer.

Making a difference

Dale and Dianne Brantner are in their first term as staff members at the Theological College of Zimbabwe in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Their home congregation is Redland Valley Brethren in Christ Church in Lewisberry, Pa.

We asked for prayer as we came here that Dianne would find her niche in

regard to ministry, and for me as I began teaching at the college level for the first time. I have thoroughly enjoyed teaching and training our students both in and outside of the classroom. Dianne has also come on staff at Theological College of Zimbabwe as a part-time lecturer, the school registrar, and is heading up our new correspondence school. Praise the Lord, and thank you for praying. Your prayers have made a difference.

When we arrived in Zimbabwe, we saw how the Theological College of Zimbabwe would better be able to serve and train leaders for Southern Africa if the school was independent. Many of you joined with us in prayer about the crucial but delicate situation. In November 1997, the college was granted autonomy as an independent theological college. Praise the Lord, and thank you for praying. Your prayers have made a difference.

Many of you know that the Theological College of Zimbabwe has to leave its current campus because the city of Bulawayo has designated the land for foreign investment. As a kind gesture, the city council has offered the college a 17-acre plot of prime real estate worth about \$300,000 for only \$12,000. Many of you were praying for the college to get the 25 percent that we needed to put down as a down payment on the new campus land. This seemed next to impossible given the current economic crisis facing Zimbabwe, but a few weeks ago the money came in and we were able to put the down payment on the land. Praise the Lord, and thank you for praying. Your prayers have made a difference.

Cuba Update

Hours before the Pope's arrival, a number of house churches in Havana were ordered to close by agents of Cuba's National Register of Associations, reported the Baptist Convention of Western Cuba. Although no reason was given for the closures, the number of house churches of all evangelical denominations was described as "numerous." Many Cuban evangelical leaders were hopeful the Pope's visit would lead to a more open Cuban society and greater freedoms for Christians.

Steve Snyder, president of International Christian Concern, stated "The house churches are growing steadily. There are more Protestant churches in Cuba today than there were before Castro seized power in 1959. The government requires all churches to be legally registered. Those that are registered are often considered to be compromised and infiltrated by security agents. It's a similar situation to China. The unregistered churches are still harassed and the leaders periodically interrogated." Pray that Cuban Christians do not grow weary, but find their joy in Jesus Christ.—*Reprinted from World Evangelical Fellowship, February 1998 Update on Christian Persecution.*

Building the body of Christ
for the glory of God.

Vision



250 Growing, Discipling, Sending Congregations by A.D. 2000

NEWS

Spring 1998

The church was "created in Christ Jesus to do good works" (Eph. 2:10). In this issue of **Vision News** we boldly report "good works" that are happening across the Brethren in Christ Church. For your encouragement, we have gathered 25

stories of congregations and ministries doing ordinary things in special ways. These are not the only stories we could find. These are not necessarily the "top" 25 stories. Rather, these stories are a sampling of what is right with the church.

1. Cross Roads Community

The Cross Roads Community congregation (Montgomeryville, Pa.) had the largest attendance ever at the first worship service for a church planting of the Brethren in Christ—326 persons. This new congregation received strong networking strength from congregations in the Atlantic Conference. Individuals from over 20 churches assisted in a "Phone's for You!" telephone outreach program.

2. South Florida Network

In 1985 a church-planting couple, Eduardo and Jill Llanes, moved to Kendall in the Greater Miami area of Florida. After three attempts, they formed a Spanish-speaking congregation. In twelve years this ministry has multiplied through church daughtering and church adoption into a rapidly expanding network of 20 Spanish-speaking congregations and one Haitian congregation in South Florida.

3. Unreached Peoples

Among approximately 3,000 tribes and peoples on earth where the church must still be planted, the Brethren in Christ have targeted ten unreached people groups for evangelistic outreach. Leadership development and church planting comprise the primary focus for these ten people groups in eastern India (Orissa state), northern India (Bihar state), and Nepal.



Santal mother and child in Northern India.

25
things
the
Church
is Doing
Right

4. Ministry Summit

To develop potential pastors, the Midwest Conference sponsored a two-day ministry summit in October 1997. The thirteen potential ministers and five pastors who participated give enthusiastic witness to the impact of this event in helping to discern and affirm God's call upon their lives.

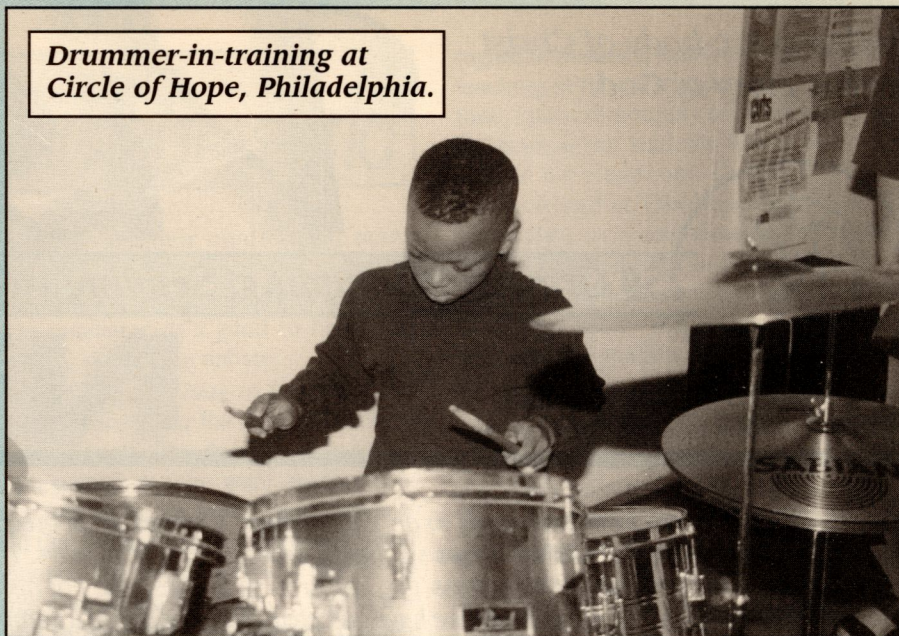
5. Urban Hope

Two years after the first worship service, Circle of Hope is a dynamic, growing congregation of nearly 100. This new congregation meets in a warehouse over a storefront in one of Philadelphia's most cosmopolitan neighborhoods. Parishioners are made up of what marketing gurus call Gen-Xers—their average age perhaps 25.

6. Pacific Christian Center

In 1994 the former Upland College campus was repurchased by the Pacific Conference in a dramatic answer to prayer. Since then, the conference has been actively developing this property as a cen-

Drummer-in-training at Circle of Hope, Philadelphia.



ter for ministry. The Pacific Christian Center (Upland, Calif.) is now the setting for Pacific Lifeline and will soon be the location for the first Southern California Festival and Sale for World Hunger and Relief (MCC).

7. Prayer Room

In 1997 the Mechanicsburg congregation (Mechanicsburg, Pa.) refurbished a maintenance room with an outside entrance for use as a prayer room. The room contains a regional map, a study area, and eight prayer "stations." The prayer room is occupied about 100 hours a week by the 125 persons who use the room weekly.

Wainfleet's annual barbecue and vesper service for seniors.

8. Wainfleet Seniors

The Wainfleet congregation (Wainfleet, Ont.) began a ministry to seniors which now reaches seniors from a half-dozen local churches and the community. At times attendance climbs to around 100. Activities include bus trips, barbecues, carry-in meals, pancake breakfasts, etc. At each event the gospel of Jesus Christ is clearly presented and a loving, caring atmosphere provided.

9. Youth Outreach

The youth of the Hanover congregation (Hanover, Pa.) planned a Sunday evening "pizza and video night" as an outreach to their friends. Church youth showed a video by Josh McDowell, which concluded with an invitation to salvation. Five of the guest teens expressed a desire to receive Christ. So five of the church teens, who had been trained to lead a person to Christ by use of the *Four Spiritual Laws*, paired off with the "seekers" and led them in a prayer for salvation. Now the church youth are doing follow-up lessons with their newly-converted friends.



10. Drama(tic) Growth

The Morrison congregation (Morrison, Ill.) is experiencing significant growth as a result of the use of drama. There are 16 persons involved in the drama ministry at Morrison.

11. New Joy

Only three years old, the New Joy congregation (Ephrata, Pa.) is one of a few Brethren in Christ congregations to have triple worship services on Sunday mornings. Refusing to be limited by a small rented facility, the congregation has modeled a "whatever-it-takes" attitude with respect to expanding their outreach as a church. In response to rapid growth, the congregation shifted to triple services in September. Since that time, worship attendance has averaged 237.

12. Lifeline Ministries Women's Shelters

Lifeline Ministries operates two long-term transitional shelters for newly homeless women and children. Lifeline shelters provide a safe, home-like and empowering environment in which women in crisis can rebuild their lives. Now in two locations in California—San Francisco and Upland—Lifeline shelters 53 individuals.

13. Building Bridges

In July the youth group from the Hollowell church (Waynesboro, Pa.) spent a week of service at the urban Faith congregation (Baltimore, Md.). The Hollowell youth painted, removed weeds, sealed the driveway, distributed fliers for V.B.S., and led the Sunday morning service. In August the teens from the Faith church came to visit the Hollowell church on a Saturday and Sunday.



The New Joy congregation now has triple worship services in their small rented facilities.

14. Bunker Hill

On their fourth anniversary, the Bunker Hill congregation (Bunker Hill, W.Va.) celebrated a new sanctuary that can seat 200 people. The congregation is grateful for the \$114,314 that came from the denomination for capital expenses through the *Funds for Facilities* project. Fifteen new converts and many recommitments to Christ have highlighted the past year's growth in this church planting, which presently sees attendance well over 100 people!

15. Paxton Ministries

Paxton Ministries (Harrisburg, Pa.) provides long-term housing and mental health services for 93 adults. This ministry offers optional Bible studies to residents and organizes a group of intercessors who pray for the residents.

16. Calgary Church Plantings

Calgary is one of the fastest growing cities in Canada with thousands re-locating here each

month! There are now three Brethren in Christ church plantings in Calgary—Summit View Community Church in the southern suburbs, and New Hope Community Church and Northeast Community Church in the northern suburbs. Summit View, which just started in March 1997, now is averaging over 100 in attendance. New Hope is a "re-start" now into its second year and averaging over 60 people. Northeast, planted in the mid-1980s, is having over 75 people participate on a regular basis. These congregations are enthusiastic about the opportunities God is providing them in Calgary.

17. Overcomers Program

In response to prevalent need, the Navajo Mission (near Bloomfield, N.M.) has begun an Overcomers Program. This program utilizes a twelve-step recovery program with clear Christian principles and an explicit witness to faith in Christ to help men overcome addictive behavior.

18. Niagara Christian Collegiate

Niagara Christian Collegiate (Fort Erie, Ont.) provides academic programming for students in grades seven through high school. The school endeavors to provide a family-like school community to educate young people and equip them to passionately serve the world for Jesus. Currently there are approximately 165 students from Canada, the United States, and seven other nations of the world attending.

19. Tent Evangelism

The Brethren in Christ Church in Pretoria, South Africa, has a fine worship facility and a growing congregation. One week out of each month, the congregation chooses a different location one or two miles from the church to erect a tent and have an evangelistic campaign. After wearing out the first tent, they are now on their second tent!

20. Valley Chapel

The Valley Chapel congregation, a multi-racial church in Canton, Ohio, is experiencing new growth through personal contacts in the community.

Vision News is published in the Spring and Fall by the Leadership Council of the Brethren in Christ Church. Serving on the Leadership Council are John A. Brubaker, John A. Byers, Ray Hock, Warren L. Hoffman, Philip D. Keefer, Jack McClane, R. Dale Shaw, Craig E. Sider, Harvey R. Sider, and Roger L. Williams.

General Church Offices

431 Grantham Road
P.O. Box 290
Grantham, PA 17027-0290
Telephone: (717) 697-2634
FAX: (717) 697-7714

All correspondence should be directed to Warren Hoffman, P.O. Box 290, Grantham, PA 17027-2634.

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21. Evangel Publishing House

Evangel Publishing House publishes high-quality books which present a Christian approach to issues consistent with Brethren in Christ theology and reason. In many cases these books would not be published and brought to life unless Evangel Publishing House used its finances, editorial expertise, and marketing efforts to bring them to Brethren in Christ and others.

22. Refugio Eterno

Refugio Eterno (Fort Lauderdale, Fla.), a Hispanic congregation of about 50 people, operates "Center for Rehab" whose purpose and focus is to preach the gospel and work with addicts and the homeless. The Center feeds the homeless and preaches in the park as they are fed. The congregation has also established a home where addicts can stay until they are rehabilitated.

23. Church-mobile

The Central Church (Tegucigalpa, Honduras) has outgrown a church facility, even with two identical services on Sunday—one in the morning and one in the afternoon. They are now raising

money for a bus. The bus will be filled with a worship team and other people who are prepared to visit and pray and present Christ to individuals who indicate a desire to know Him. In this way they plan to take the church to people in distant residential areas where evangelical churches are needed.

24. Christian Benefit Shops

Nine Brethren in Christ congregations in the Niagara Peninsula of Ontario own and operate two benefit shops. The Port Gift 'N Thrift Store (Port Colborne, Ont.) and the Welland Christian Benefit Shop (Welland, Ont.) sell used clothing and household articles. They also sell articles from "Ten Thousand Villages" (formerly SELFHELP Crafts) of the Mennonite Central Committee. In 1996 these shops raised \$25,000 for the relief work of MCC.

25. Church Growth in Cuba

Two small congregations existed in Cuba in 1993. A young pastor was assigned and began a lay ministers course. These lay ministers, under the supervision of the pastor, give leadership to six organized congregations, eighteen house churches (registered with the Cuban government) and many cell groups (not registered with the Cuban government). Forty new Christians were baptized in 1997 and took the additional step of personally registering themselves with the government as converts to the Christian faith and members of the Brethren in Christ Church of Cuba. The church now ministers in two provinces with an average of 700 people being ministered to each week.

Messiah Village NEWS

Messiah Village residents and staff celebrate walk to the beach

Over 80 residents and staff of Messiah Village participated in the Fitness Walk to the Beach program held from August 1997 through February 1998. The goal of the program was to promote wellness for both residents and staff. Each individual recorded the minutes spent exercising and converted the minutes into miles. The ultimate goal was to walk as far as Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Each participant walked as far as Baltimore and 15 walkers completed their trip to Myrtle Beach.

Participants were honored at a celebration on March 19. The Community Room in the Tuscarora Apartments of Messiah Village was decorated in a beach motif with sand, beach balls, straw hats, and sunglasses. Walkers "crossed the finish line" and received a water bottle and a certificate of recognition. Those who walked to Myrtle Beach and beyond received special recognition. A healthy snack of fruits and vegetables was served.

Dietitian joins Messiah Village

Messiah Village recently added Sylvia Emberger, a Registered Dietitian, to the Food Services staff. Ms. Emberger joined the Village in January. She is a graduate of Penn State University. Her primary responsibility is caring for the nutritional needs of residents.

Food Services at Messiah Village serves approximately 1,350 resident meals and 100 employee meals per day. They also offer banquet services for special functions. If you are interested in more information regarding banquet services, please contact the Lamppost Court Manager, Leti Ro, at (717) 697-4666 ext. 212.

Messiah Village hires new Director of Human Resources

Messiah Village recently hired David C. Fleming as the new Director of Human Resources. Mr. Fleming attended Adelphi University, Garden City, Long Island, New York, majoring in management and communications.

Fleming brings to the Village over 21 years of experience in the Human

Resources and Volunteer Management fields. His diverse background includes: directing two social service agencies in Pennsylvania, hospital administration in New York City, and executive recruitment and placement in Pennsylvania. He has worked in Long Term Care, as Human Resources Director of Calvary Fellowship Homes in Lancaster and as Vice President of Human Resources at Lebanon Valley Brethren Home in Palmyra. During that time he served on the Board of Directors and other committees of the Pennsylvania Association of Non-Profit Homes for the Aging.

Attention Youth Groups

(American as well as Canadian)

Come and see Canada in a most unique way! No experience necessary; just bring a desire to be challenged, to learn canoeing, and to have fun!

Bring your youth group to beautiful Camp Kahquah to have the experience of a life-time!

"Adventure Camp"

This summer, Camp Kahquah's "Adventure Camp" is offering two canoe trip programs!

ONE

A three-day, two-night, "parent/child" canoe trip. This exciting trip is an excellent opportunity for a parent and child to learn or improve canoeing and camping skills, experience first-hand God's creation, and grow closer as their relationship is strengthened.

This safe and fun-filled trip will be available on three dates in conjunction with each family camp...

July 28-30, August 4-6, and August 11-13

Early Bird registrants receive a FREE "Adventure Camp" hat or T-shirt!
(Early Bird Registration by June 30, 1998)

Cost: \$225.00 per paddling team

All equipment, training, and meals included

Register early so you are not disappointed!!!

TWO

A complete wilderness experience; seven days, six nights learning, improving, and using canoe and camping skills. Learn white water techniques from experienced leaders. Challenge yourself to the limit as you experience the wonders of God's creation.

This challenging trip runs from...

August 15 to 21

Paddlers must be 14 years of age or older.

Early Bird registrants receive a FREE "Adventure Camp" hat or T-shirt!
(Early Bird Registration by July 15, 1998)

Cost: \$350.00 per paddler

All equipment, training, and meals included.

Register early. There is only one trip this summer!

For more information, call Don Cornell
phone: (905)871-7523; e-mail: cornell@niagara.com



Church News

Notes of Congregational Activities in North America

Allegheny Conference

February was Youth Month at the **Air Hill** church, Chambersburg, Pa., with youth teaching Sunday school, leading worship, skiing, and participating in the 30-Hour Famine for World Vision. ♦ "Corral Your Partner" was the Feb. 7 banquet theme for the **Antrim** church, Chambersburg. ♦ The women of the **Canoe Creek** congregation, Hollidaysburg, Pa., have intercessory prayer on Tuesday evenings, and Thursday evening craft nights. ♦ Esther Spurrier was the Feb. 15 morning speaker at the **Chambersburg** church. ♦ "A Transferable

Life" was the Feb. 1 theme for the discipleship/planning meetings of the **Fairview Ave.** church, Waynesboro, Pa.

On the evening of Feb. 1 the **Five Forks** congregation, Waynesboro, Pa., viewed and discussed Christian music videos. Arthur Climenhaga spoke in all three morning services Feb. 15. ♦ Henry and Marian Leaman spoke at a "Keeping Love Vibrant" seminar Feb. 13-15 at the **Hollowell** church, Waynesboro. ♦ Local pastor David Steele spoke on Feb. 22, Youth Sunday, at the **Martinsburg**, Pa., church. A luncheon for the youth followed. ♦

Marvin and Martha Meyers were honored at their consecration service recently for their 30 years as deacon couple of the **Montgomery** church, Mercersburg, Pa. Tributes and music were presented by the children, as well as a message by H. Frank Kipe.

On Feb. 22 the **Mt. Rock** church, Shippensburg, Pa., began the 50-Day Adventure on "Untapped Miracles for Tapped-Out Christians." ♦ Prayer and healing were the emphases of the Feb. 15 evening service of the **Mt. Tabor** church, Mercersburg, Pa. ♦ Edgar and Gladys Stoner of the **New Guilford** congregation, Chambersburg, Pa., were honored for 50 years of marriage recently by their 12 children with a celebration at Gibbles Restaurant. The congregation participated in a card shower. ♦ On Feb. 1 the **South Mountain** congregation viewed the Billy Graham video, "Eye of the Storm."



Pa., on the theme "Celebrate the Child." ♦ Terry Brensinger led discipleship services Mar. 8 for the **Hempfield** congregation, Lancaster, Pa. ♦ The **Manheim**, Pa., congregation has approved purchase of 3.6 acres for a gym with meeting rooms and youth facilities. Weekly attendance of youth is over 100. ♦ John Hawbaker was installed Mar. 1 as senior pastor of the **Manor** church, Mountville, Pa. Emerson and May Frey, long-time members of the congregation, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan. 31. The occasion was marked by a retreat with family at Roxbury Holiness Camp on Dec. 26-28, 1997.

The **Millersville**, Pa., church began its 50-Day Adventure on Feb. 22. ♦ On Feb. 15 the **Mt. Pleasant** church, Mt. Joy, Pa., had Family Impact Sunday with Ron and Holly Hostetler. ♦ The Centurions were musical guests in the Feb. 15 service of the **New Hope** church, Harrisburg, Pa. ♦ The sermon on Mar. 1, Appreciation Sunday, at the **New Joy** church, Akron, Pa., was "When to Expect Thanks." ♦ On Feb. 22 in the evening, John Stehman reported to the **Palmyra**, Pa., congregation on his voluntary service in Peru. ♦ The **Refton**, Pa., church presented the drama "Shadowlands" Mar. 6-7; and the youth musical "The Castaways" Mar. 29.

The mystery dinner Feb. 13 for the youth of the **Silverdale**, Pa., church had lots of Scripture searching, and one person eating spaghetti with her hands. ♦ Feb. 15 was Bring-a-Friend Sunday at the **Skyline View** church, Harrisburg, Pa.,

Atlantic Conference

The February worship celebrations of the **Circle of Hope** church, Philadelphia, Pa., focused on honoring African, Asian, and Hispanic Americans. ♦ John Wolgemuth, Ruth Heisey, and Wilmer Heisey spoke Feb. 1 to the **Cross Roads** congregation, Mt. Joy, Pa., on what it was like to live 60 years ago. ♦ Feb. 1-7 was Pioneer Clubs Week at the **Free Grace** church, Millersburg,

Brethren in Christ 1999 CALENDAR Photography Contest

*Denominational Vision: 250 Growing, Discipling,
and Sending Congregations by A.D. 2000*

Calendar Theme: Celebrating God's Love

First Prize: \$50 and cover location

Second Prize: \$25

Third Prizes (10 photos): \$10

Photographs will be selected by a panel on the basis of:

- Technical quality
- Creativity
- Representation of one or more areas of emphasis of the theme: "Celebrating God's Love"

Rules of the contest:

- Color slides or prints
- Put your name and address on each photo
- Photographs must be horizontal format

Deadline is June 1, 1998

Send entries to:

Brethren in Christ Calendar Photo Contest

Evangel Press

2000 Evangel Way, P.O. Box 189

Nappanee, IN 46550

Note: Submission of a photograph(s) in the contest implies that the entrant owns the photograph(s) and, if selected as a winner, gives authorization to Evangel Press to print the photograph(s) in the 1999 Brethren in Christ Vision Calendar. Evangel Press assumes no responsibility for the return of photographs to the entrant.

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.

May 1-2	Brethren in Christ/Mennonite Brethren meeting
May 3-4	Board for Media Ministries Board meeting
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 9-11	Leadership Council
July 16-18	Core Course "Theology of Salvation"—West Milton, Ohio
July 31-Aug. 9	Roxbury Holiness Camp
Aug. 14-19	Niagara Camp
Nov. 1-3	Leadership Council Retreat
Nov. 4-5	Leadership Council
Nov. 5-7	Pastor/Spouse Orientation

with music by Messiah College's Spirit Sound. ♦ On Feb. 15 Bob and Carol Geiger from the Niza 9 Church in Bogotá, Colombia, shared with the **Speedwell Heights** church, Lititz, Pa. ♦ The Wednesday night Gary Smalley video series, "Love Is a Decision," began in February at the **Summit View** church, New Holland, Pa.

Canadian Conference

On Feb. 22 over \$1200 was raised at a Torchmen concert at the **Bertie** church, Stevensville, Ont., for Niagara Life Centre. ♦ The music group Impact provided a large part of the Feb. 15 service for the **Boyle** congregation, St. Ann's, Ont. A potluck followed. ♦ Bishop Winger spoke in the Feb. 1 morning service of the **Delisle**, Sask., church. Adult fellowship mini-golfing was planned for Feb. 21. ♦ The women of the **Heise Hill** church, Gormley, Ont., planned three craft nights in February. Willie and Rodi Longenecker were in concert Feb. 1. ♦ John Tibberts of New Tribes Mission was the Feb. 22 speaker for the **Kindersley**, Sask., church.

One person was baptized Feb. 15 into the fellowship of the **Massey Place** church, Saskatoon, Sask. The spare change project in February was for the hospital burn unit. ♦ Recent speakers for the **Oak Ridges**, Ont., church were Scott White, Feb. 1, and Bishop Winger, Mar. 1. ♦ Various church ministries were highlighted during February at the **Orchard Creek** church, St. Catharines, Ont. Wednesday night activities now include children. ♦ Future development was discussed at the Feb. 8 council meeting of the **Port Colborne**, Ont., church. Feb. 8 was AWANA Sunday. ♦ The junior highs of the **Ridgemount** church, Hamilton, Ont., had a winter retreat Feb. 20-22. The congregation now has a new location at Helen Detwiler Public School and is attracting new people.

The **Rosebank** church, Petersburg, Ont., had a Bible conference Feb. 6-8 with Cal Bombay speaking on "Obeying the Great Commission." ♦ A fellowship banquet and concert by Sweet Water Feb. 28 at the **Sherkston**, Ont., church were free to all church volunteers. ♦ Retiring deacons of 40 years, Merlin and Naomi Marr, and the oldest member of the congregation, Elizabeth Heise, were honored with plaques recently by the **Springvale**, Ont., church. Heise was a 21-year servant through Brethren in Christ World Missions.

Junior high youth and families of the **Upper Oaks** congregation,

Oakville, Ont., planned a horse ranch retreat for Feb. 6-8. A "Weigh Down" group began at the church Feb. 9. ♦ Pat Hannigan led renewal services Feb. 6-8 for the **Wainfleet**, Ont., congregation. Ray Sider spoke Feb. 22 about his vision for Camp Kahquah as its new director. ♦ On Feb. 5 the women's ministry of the **Westheights** church, Kitchener, Ont., held a welcome night for the new pastor's wife, Lois Wiggin. Linda Zane led weekly training sessions throughout February for worship leaders.

Central Conference

The **Carland-Zion** congregation, Owosso, Mich., received five new members on Feb. 1. Revival services were planned for early March. ♦ "Think Spring, Think Green" was the theme of a Mar. 14 carry-in meal featuring green food items at the **Christian Union** church, Garrett, Ind. ♦ The **Highland** church, West Milton, Ohio, had revival meetings Mar. 1-4 with Richard Lehman of Kentucky. ♦ The **Northgate** fellowship, Tipp City, Ohio, hosted a quiz meet Feb. 6-7 with their team coming in second. The youth participated in World Vision's 30-Hour Famine the end of February.

On Feb. 15 the **Pleasant Hill**, Ohio, congregation had a farewell fellowship meal for Alvan and Ardys Thuma. The church hosted Central Conference Mar. 20-21. ♦ Dan Glick shared Feb. 15 with the **Sippo Valley** church, Massillon, Ohio, about a sister church in the Ukraine. ♦ On Feb. 22 the **Western Hills** congregation, Cincinnati, Ohio, had a brunch and kick-off for their 50-Day Adventure. ♦ The women of the **Wooster**, Ohio,

Minister of Music and Worship

If you have a passion for leading others in worship, the gift and skill to play piano and/or organ, plus the ability to develop and lead a sound musical and drama program for a growing evangelical congregation of 500-600, we are interested in talking to you. Please address all inquiries to:

The Antrim Brethren in Christ Church
24 Kauffman Road East
Chambersburg, PA 17201
Attn: Senior Pastor



E.V. TimeLines

Selected from the archives of the EVANGELICAL VISITOR

100 Years Ago

April 15, 1898—Editor H. N. Engle commented on the need for accuracy on the part of persons who send news for publication. "It is with

reluctance that we call attention to errors, typographical or otherwise, in former issues, especially when we are not personally responsible.... We would kindly ask of all who send in manuscript, to be careful in giving names, etc., writing distinctly and spelling correctly. We practically know nothing of either persons or circumstances at hand, and can report only as the manuscripts show."

75 Years Ago

April 2, 1923—H. L. Smith reported on a bicycle trip he and A.D.M. Dick made into Nepal: "We left Saharsa on the noon of Feb. 5...and rode north and west on the train about 45 miles.... Early next morning with our one woolen blanket apiece and some food tied together on the backs of our cycles, we started forth northward.... Tired and thirsty, but with nothing to drink, we reached the border, only to find that all roads ceased to exist, and what semblances of cart tracks there were, were mostly too deeply cut out to be of use to us on cycles...."

50 Years Ago

April 19, 1948—A.D.M. Dick reports crossing the Atlantic by freighter, returning to India after furlough: "March 1 finds the vessel heaving and pitching like a bronco.... Waves like mountains toss the vessel like a cork, although she has 8000 tons of cargo on board." Later, docked at Haifa, scheduled to unload cargo consigned to the Jewish Agency in Palestine: "On shore, just a few hundred yards in front of us, night after night there was continual shooting with rifles, machine guns, Bren guns, and explosions of grenades and small bombs, with several huge explosions of heavy bombs...as houses were blown to bits by one party or the other."

25 Years Ago

April 10, 1973—John E. Zercher on church planting: "Just how bold the words 'Brethren in Christ' should be on the church sign may be a negotiable question. What is firm, however, is that those who become serious about identifying with the church should know that it is Brethren in Christ with all that implies in polity, doctrine, and life."

10 Years Ago

April 1988—Glenn Ginder, in "Loved to Life," suggested members pray daily for their pastor, send notes of encouragement during the week, go to bed early Saturday night, and find their places before worship ("preferably more than halfway toward the front") in time to pray for the pastor and the service. "Let enough members follow this practice and—even if your pastor is 'sort of dry'—your loving concern will breathe new life into his spirit and ministry."

A legacy of wisdom

by Phillip D. Keefer

WHAT DO YOU WANT more than anything else for your children? Do you want financial success? Do you want health and long life? Do you want prestige and fame? Do you want salvation? Do you want spiritual growth?

Have you ever considered providing a *legacy of wisdom* for your children? In his book *Generous Living*, Ron Blue writes about leaving our children a legacy of wisdom.

If we are going to leave our children a legacy of wisdom, as parents we need to teach and model three important concepts.

Children need to understand the concept of *limited resources*. They have to recognize the benefits of *delayed gratification*. They need to develop a *strong work ethic*.

Limited Resources

Many times we give mixed messages to our children. This can happen when we are shopping with them. A child wants something and we say, "No, I don't have the money and besides, money doesn't grow on trees." At the checkout the baby begins to cry. The older child again asks for what she was told she could not have. Distracted by the baby and not wanting to make a scene we say, "Oh, all right."

In this true-to-life story the child learns she can get whatever she wants by asking and looking for an appropriate moment. The child is also being told that the supply of money is unlimited. In reality, we cannot have everything we want in a day of unlimited ways to spend money. To make wise choices between these alternatives, children need to understand the concept of limited resources.

The best way to teach your children this principle is to give them the experience of living on a limited amount of money. When our children were young we gave them allowances along with some instructions. We told them the type of purchases the allowance would need to cover. It is hard to watch children make unwise decisions, and it is much harder to see them live with the consequences of their decisions. But, how else will children learn to prioritize their needs and wants?

Delayed Gratification

Delayed gratification is being willing to put off until tomorrow what I want today. In a day when we are bombarded with debit cards, credit cards, and loans of all types for anything imaginable, it is difficult to teach our children the principle of delayed gratification. This concept runs counter to human nature.

The concept of delayed gratification can make the difference between financial failure

and success. By delaying a purchase, we allow time for God to work. By delaying a purchase, we give our emotions a chance to stabilize. My father taught me to think about a potential purchase overnight before making a decision.

Teaching delayed gratification works best when our children have resources with which they can make decisions. One of the instructions we gave our children was that they needed to save a portion of their allowance. When they wanted to buy a more expensive item they could dip into their savings. This gives children the opportunity to save for something they really want.

A Strong Work Ethic

A strong work ethic helps our children learn the relationship between work and economic rewards. In the story at the beginning of this article, the parent misses the opportunity to teach her child the relationship between work and rewards. Instead of buying something outright for your children, you can provide an opportunity for them to work for what they want. Children need to learn they can never get something for nothing. Everything costs, and there is always a trade-off between work and rewards.

Whenever we offer our children the opportunity to work for something they want, we reinforce the relationship between time and money. We solidify the connection between effort and reward which can motivate children to develop a strong and lasting work ethic.

The opportunity to work offers at least two other benefits. It demonstrates obedience to God's command that we work (see Eph. 4:28). And, working hard to get a job done can fill a child with an important sense of satisfaction and accomplishment.

CHILDREN who reach adulthood without learning or understanding the concepts of limited resources, delayed gratification, and a strong work ethic are bound to have significant problems.

There is a man we know as the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) who did not appreciate the value or necessity of hard work. He apparently had no grasp of his limited resources; he was doomed. He wanted everything immediately—from his inheritance to the lifestyle it provided. How much pain would he (and his father) have been spared had he only learned the principles of limited resources, delayed gratification, and a strong work ethic?

What do you want more than anything else for your children? Do you want to leave them a legacy of wisdom? Are you?

EV

Phillip Keefer is Executive Director of Stewardship for the Brethren in Christ Church.

church hosted a tea party Feb. 25 for young and old.

Midwest Conference

The youth of the **Bethany** congregation, Thomas, Okla., delivered suckers and singing "Val-o-grams" Feb. 8-13. Three persons hosted a post-service "mix-n-match" social evening on Feb. 15. ♦ Mary Barnett, teen from the **Rosebank** congregation, Hope, Kan., has been accepted by TIMS for service in Venezuela this summer. ♦ Warren Hoffman spoke Feb. 22 to the **Zion** congregation, Abilene, Kan., on "Partners" from Phil. 1:5.

Pacific Conference

Youth of the **Chino**, Calif., congregation held a pizza lunch fund raiser Feb. 15 for winter camp. ♦ Douglas and Lyra Drysdale are the new interim pastoral couple as of Feb. 15 for the **Pacific Highway** congregation, Salem, Ore. The church hosted "Parenting and Love" classes presented by the Lake Labish Elementary School. ♦ In February the women of the **Upland**, Calif., church began an eight-week Gary Smalley video series, "Hidden Keys for Loving Relationships." ♦ The **Walnut**, Calif., congregation held their first service in their new building on Mar. 1 with Bishop Brubaker in attendance. The grand opening and open house for the community was Mar. 29.

Southeast Conference

The youth of the **Highland Park** church, Dublin, Va., had a mini lock-in Feb. 27. ♦ Feb. 8 was Biker's Sunday at the **Holden Park** church, Orlando, Fla. The congregation planned a healing service for Feb. 4. ♦ "Bible sweethearts" was the topic for the Feb. 15 youth meeting of the **Millerfields** church, Columbia, Ky.

Susquehanna Conference

The **Big Valley** congregation, Belleville, Pa., planned an evening Feb. 15 with Steve and Bonnie Westbury about youth training with TIMS. ♦ Craig Harris spoke at the Mar. 13-14 men's retreat of the **Carlisle**, Pa., church on "The Making of a Godly Man." ♦ Pastor Letner of the **Cedar Grove** church, Mifflintown, Pa., went to Haiti in February. The congregation hosted the Susquehanna Conference Praise Festival on Mar. 1. ♦ Three young married people were baptized Feb. 1 and six entered into membership with the **Dillsburg**, Pa., congregation. ♦ Doris Barr was the speaker at the Feb. 12 sweetheart banquet of

the **Fairview** congregation, New Cumberland, Pa. Teen Challenge of Harrisburg presented a program Feb. 22.

The **Grantham**, Pa., church hosted a quiz tourney Feb. 7. The Messiah Singers were in concert Feb. 22. ♦ The **Mechanicsburg**, Pa., church held renewal meetings Mar. 15-18 with Tim Elmore of Kingdom Building Ministries of Denver. ♦ Harry Bergey led the **Messiah Village** congregation in a service of music on Feb. 22. ♦ On Mar. 6-7, and 20-21 the Pioneer Boys of the **Redland Valley** church, York Haven, Pa., had their pine car races.

For The Record

Births

Anderson: Shane Kennedy, Feb. 4; Rob and Cheryl Anderson, Kindersley congregation, Sask.

Atherton: Makenzie Hope, Nov. 26, 1997; Allen and Julia (Neil) Atherton, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Bontrager: Erin Renae, July 11, 1997; Ron and Angie (Kline) Bontrager, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Carbaugh: Kylie Renee, Feb. 10; Andrew and Janice (Bowling) Carbaugh, Montgomery congregation, Pa.

Cline: Cody Isaiah, Dec. 24, 1997; Eric and Sherry Cline, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Eberly: Erica Lynn, June 16, 1997; Keith and Rhonda (Brechtbill) Eberly, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Erb: Abigail Victoria, Dec. 17, 1997; Matt and Andrea Erb, Mechanicsburg congregation, Pa.

Fasnacht: David Chad, Feb. 4; Matthew and Denise Fasnacht, Mechanicsburg congregation, Pa.

Fisher: Zachary Taylor, Feb. 18; Robert and Colleen (Cole) Fisher, Manor congregation, Pa.

Frazier: Dylan Thomas, Nov. 4, 1997; Frank and Tina (Keller) Frazier, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Gilbert: Christina Elizabeth, Feb. 6; Bobby and Twalla (Henson) Gilbert Jr., Millerfields congregation, Ky.

Hershey: Anna Marie, Jan. 26; Brad and Sandy Hershey, Cedar Grove congregation, Pa.

Hissong: Josiah David, Apr. 2, 1997; Brian and Becky (Hartman) Hissong, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Hoover: Hannah Elizabeth Rose, Feb. 10; Myron and Janet

(Fretz) Hoover, Oak Ridges congregation, Ont.

Koontz: Emily Renae, Jan. 9; David and Jody Koontz, Antrim congregation, Pa.

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

Martin: Carrin Nicole, May 3, 1997; Loren and Carissa (Stains) Martin, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Meyers: Jedidiah Shanahan, Oct. 11, 1997; Kevin and Elizabeth Meyers, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Moffitt: Emilee Maria, Oct. 28, 1997; Tim and Julee Moffitt, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Ober: Justin Dean, Feb. 15; Dean and Deborah Ober, Manor congregation, Pa.

Routzahn: Brittany Alayna, May 19, 1997; Charles and Missy (Gearhart) Routzahn, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Saunders: Hannah Kay, Jan. 21; Denny and Linda (Singletary) Saunders, Pacific Highway congregation, Ore.

Stouffer: Shelby Denae, June 2, 1997; Mike and Kelli (Baer) Stouffer, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Taylor: Alyssa Marie, Dec. 29, 1997; Jason and Lisa Taylor, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Thomson: Collin Edward, Jan. 27; Adam and Renita (Eshleman) Thomson, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Thrush: Tyler Alan, July 5, 1997; Dwight and Cheryl (Hege) Thrush, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Weddings

Brubaker - Keller: Kathy S., daughter of Harold and Connie Keller, Greencastle, Pa., and Bren-

ton J., son of Ken and Pam Brubaker, Mt. Joy, Pa., Dec. 20, 1997, at Antrim Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Joseph Baer officiating.

Diffenderfer - Grupe: Susan, daughter of Warren and Waneta Grupe, Mifflin, Pa., and Lon, son of Robert and Erma Diffenderfer, Mifflin, Feb. 21, at Cedar Grove Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Ken Letner officiating.

Reed - Hockenberry: Amy S. Hockenberry, daughter of James and Bonnie Bollinger, Chambersburg, Pa., and Jason C., son of Dennis and Kay Reed, Roxbury, Pa., Feb. 14, at Air Hill Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John L. Bundy officiating.

Roberts - Helm: Nikki Diane

Seventeenth Annual Heritage Service at the Historic Ringgold Meetinghouse Ringgold, Maryland June 7, 1998 3:00 p.m.

Marion Heisey will preach. For more information, contact Isaiah B. Harley, 560 Messiah Village, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055.

Search for New Director of Youth Ministries at Kenbrook Bible Camp

Kenbrook Bible Camp is seeking a qualified woman or man to direct and develop the youth ministries of the camp, effective September 1, 1998. The Director of Youth Ministries is responsible for developing, promoting, and leading the summer camps, youth leadership programs, adventure/challenge programs, and outreach efforts to the local community. This ministry offers a unique challenge to a person who seeks a wide-open opportunity to develop and pioneer non-traditional ministries for the church.

We seek a candidate who has an unreserved commitment to Jesus Christ and to youth ministry. Previous experience in youth work and a demonstrated ability to develop and administer programs are important. Generally, a college degree is expected. The job description is available upon request.

Applications are now being received and inquiries should be addressed to Eugene Wingert, Executive Director, Kenbrook Bible Camp, 501 Pine Meadow Drive, Lebanon, PA 17046 or call (717) 865-4547.



Updates for General Conference, July 4-8, 1998

at Messiah College, Grantham, PA

Pre-registration reminders—Pre-registration at the special rate of \$25 (regular \$30) must be postmarked no later than June 1. A letter of confirmation with further instructions will be sent to attendees in mid-June.

Early arrivals on Friday evening, July 3, will pick up all materials in the lobby of the Eisenhower Campus Center. (You do not need to come for express registration on Saturday morning at the Hitchcock Arena unless you need to register for the youth program.)

All other registration activities will take place on July 4 (8:00-9:30 a.m.) in the Hitchcock Sports Arena. Registration for nursery and children's programs will be at the activity sites.

Registration requirements—All attendees of General Conference are required to register. The only exceptions are those attending Sunday and/or evening sessions. Conference begins at 10:00 a.m. on July 4 and closes after Bible Quiz Finals on Wednesday evening, July 8.

Sunday morning worship options—Within 15 miles of campus are more than 12 Brethren in Christ churches. A list with provision to sign up for transportation will be available at registration on Saturday morning.

Youth program (\$40 for full program)—A comprehensive program for 12 (going into seventh grade) through 17-year-olds will be coordinated with Bible Quiz play-offs. Activities will include bands (bring instruments), worship, recreation (gym, swimming pool, etc.), offsite trip, cyber conference, and other exciting activities. Contact Jim Gambini for more information at (717) 367-2651 (office), (717) 367-9719 (home) or via e-mail at ebiccjg@aol.com or Jim.gambini@paonline.com.

Children's program (\$5 per day/\$20 full program)—A varied program for children ages 5-12 will include Bible study, recreation (swimming and gym), trip to Chocolate World, music, and computer activities. Contact Laura Sider at (717) 361-0055 for more information.

Nursery (\$3 per day/\$10 full program)—Provided in rooms in the nearby Sollenberger Sports Center.

CONFERENCE CHOIR—The worship service on Sunday afternoon, July 5, of General Conference will involve a conference choir. Participating singers will want to attend the Friday evening rehearsal, July 3, from 7:00-9:00 p.m. in the college chapel. Dress rehearsal will be Sunday afternoon, July 5, from 1:30-2:30 p.m. in Brubaker Auditorium. More details may be obtained from Dwight Thomas at (717) 367-2651.

David P. McBeth, Conference Director, phone (717) 766-0598.

Helm, daughter of Thearon and Barbara Collins Jr., Jamestown, Ky., and Bobby Ray Jr., son of Bobby R. Sr. and the late Ruby Roberts, Feb. 12, at Millerfields Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. J. Richard Lehman officiating.

Zimmerman - Enterline: Pamela Jane, daughter of Irvan Groff and Mary Jane Meyer, Lancaster, Pa., and Kenneth Eugene, son of Ethel and the late Henry Zimmerman, Lancaster, Feb. 14, at Manor Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Victor Shifler officiating.

Obituaries

Beam: John Robert Beam, born Jan. 20, 1931, son of John W. and Ethel W. Kohler Beam, died Feb. 19. Preceding him in death was his wife, Delores M. (Burkholder). Surviving are his wife, Rosalyn A. (Rotz); two sons, Todd W. and Terry L.; three grandchildren; two brothers, Richard K. and Donald A.; and a sister, Olivia L. Swanger. He was a member of the Air Hill congregation, Pa., Ambassadors Sunday school class and Air Hill Lamplighters. He retired from Letterkenny Army Depot, was a veteran of the Korean War, and owned and operated the Beam School Bus Lines. Rev. John Bundy and Rev. Gerald Wingert officiated at services at the church. Interment was in Air Hill cemetery.

Borell: Norma Borell, born Nov. 30, 1925, in Massillon, Ohio, daughter of Raymond and Relda Maxhimer, died Dec. 10, 1997. Her father; a sister; a son; and a grandson preceded her in death. Surviving are her husband, Elmer; 2 daughters, Sharen Borell and Relda J. Limbach; 4 sons, Gregory, Raymond, David, and Dennis; her mother; 12 grandchildren; and 2 great-grandchildren. Norma committed her life to Christ several months before death. The funeral was held at the Arnold-Lynch Funeral Home with Rev. Atlee Hershberger officiating. Interment was in Brookfield Cemetery.

Catherman: Dennis J. Catherman, born Oct. 23, 1964, son of Lott F. and Betty Hendershot Catherman, died Feb. 8. Surviving are his wife, Crystal; a daughter, Jamie Lynn Guerio; two sons, Dennis J. Jr. and Curtis M.; five sisters; and four brothers. Dennis had been a driver for Powers Truck, Eby Paving, and Nichlas Packing. He was a member of Mosquito Creek Sportsman's Club, and the American Legion. His family was affiliated with the Cedar Heights congregation, Pa. The funeral was held at the W. Robert

Neff Funeral Home with Rev. John L. Bundy officiating. Interment was in Advent Cemetery.

Eisenhart: William F. Eisenhart, born July 7, 1924, son of Joseph and Lylie Cook Eisenhart, died Feb. 6. A brother, Joseph B., preceded him in death. Surviving are two daughters, Ann R. Goss and Patti Kerchner; three grandchildren; two great-granddaughters; and two sisters. William was a member of the Cedar Grove congregation, Pa., where the funeral was held with Rev. Craig Zandt officiating. Interment was in Cedar Grove Cemetery.

Evans: Dora E. Evans, born Jan. 14, 1914, in Markes, Pa., daughter of Samuel C. and Carrie Zoe Rotz, died Feb. 9. Preceding her in death were her husband, John F. Evans; 3 sons; a daughter; 2 sisters; and a brother. Surviving are 3 sons, Lester L., John S., and Richard W.; 4 daughters, Jane C. Evans, Shirley Beecher, Susan Naugle, and Linda Hoke; 20 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; a brother; and 4 sisters. She was a member of the New Guilford congregation, Pa. The funeral was held at the Thomas L. Geisel Funeral Home with Rev. Robert D. Verno and Rev. Larry Dillon officiating. Interment was in St. Thomas Cemetery.

Gramm: Hershey Gramm, born Sept. 22, 1906, son of Irwin and Elizabeth Gramm, died Dec. 31, 1997. Preceding him in death were 3 sisters and a brother. Surviving are his wife, Delta L.; children, Vida M. Heise, Donald E., Ethan M., Loise E. Barker, and Irwin L.; 11 grandchildren; 9 great-grandchildren; four sisters; and 2 brothers. He was a member of the Upland congregation, Calif., where the funeral was held with Rev. Bob Hempy and Rev. Mike Luchtenburg officiating. Interment was in Bellevue Mausoleum.

Tribute

Hershey Gramm was a dedicated servant of the Lord and a loyal servant of the church in his years of ministry with the Brethren in Christ.

He was born in Harrisburg, Pa., but early in life moved to southern Ohio with his parents and family. There he grew to adulthood, giving his heart to Christ and dedicating his life to His service. It was there that he answered a call to ministry.

He began his ministry with a home mission assignment in Kentucky where he pastored the Fairview congregation and helped start the Millerfields congregation. He moved to Leedey, Okla., to pastor the Red Star congregation; later to Brown County, Kan., where he assisted in the ministry of the Pleas-

ant Hill church; and then to Dickinson Co., Kan., to pastor the Bethel congregation. In addition to his work as a pastor, he served the denomination as a member of the Sunday School Board.

Hershey Gramm's life and ministry were characterized by his reverence for God; his love for the Word; and his loyalty to the church he loved. He was a preacher and teacher of the Word. Those who sat under his ministry recall the fervency of his life and preaching. He had a thoughtful and inquisitive mind. His formal education was limited, but he was self-trained by extensive reading and diligent study of the Bible. A host of friends and many valued relationships are a testimony to his compassionate ministry.

Hershey Gramm was among those who are faithful to their calling, faithful in serving the Lord and the church for no other reason than to be faithful. He served smaller congregations, often for meager salaries. Thus, he was bivocational and farmed to support his family. All the while, he was accumulating treasures in heaven. Peter assures us that those shepherds of the flock who have been faithful in their service will receive a nonfading crown of glory.

We give thanks to God for the life and ministry of our brother Hershey Gramm and take comfort in the assurance that he received an abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom of his Lord.

John Arthur Brubaker, Bishop Pacific Conference

Kelley: Dervin J. Kelley, born Nov. 22, 1910, son of Charles and Katie Smith Kelley, died Jan. 24. Preceding him in death were his wife, Pauline (Fuller); 4 brothers; and a sister. Surviving are 6 children, Harold, Dervin Jr., Russel, Janet Zea, Virginia Swartz, and Martha Kline; 10 grandchildren; 8 great-grandchildren; 2 half-brothers; and a half-sister. He was a member of the Cedar Grove congregation, Pa. The funeral was held at Henry Funeral Home with Rev. Ken Letner officiating. Interment was in McCulloch's Mills Cemetery.

Lehman: Ira R. Lehman, born Apr. 3, 1912, son of Harry and Elizabeth Rode Lehman, died Feb. 19. His wife, Miriam, preceded him in death. Surviving are two sons, Ray E. and Dale E.; and grandchildren. Ira had resided at Messiah Village since April 1996. He had been a carpenter, farmer, and member of the Messiah Village church. The funeral was held at Pleasant View Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Charles L. Lehman officiating.

Interment was in Locust Grove Cemetery.

Lehmiller: John Lehmiller, born Feb. 16, 1944, son of William and Mabel Lehmiller, died Jan. 14. Preceding him in death were four siblings and a grandson. Surviving are his wife, Barb (Hudy); a son, Chris; two daughters, Barb Yarnell and Joanne Slaterof; six grandchildren; two sisters; and a brother. He attended the Sippo Valley congregation, Ohio. The funeral was held at Paquelet Funeral Home with Rev. Atlee Hershberger officiating. Interment was in Sunset Hills Memory Gardens.

Miller: Paul H. Miller, born Apr. 22, 1901, son of Harvey and Ida Wenger Miller, died Jan. 22. His wife, Mabel B., preceded him in death. Surviving are his children, Richard J., Everett S., Mildred M. Hess, June M. Hostetter, and Noami N. Ressler; 16 grandchildren; 31 great-grandchildren; and a brother, Raymond. Paul was retired from Hershey Foods Corp.; former member and choir director of the Palmyra, Pa., congregation; deacon of the Palmyra United Zion Church; former editor of the *Zion Herald*; former trustee of Wenger's Cemetery; and charter member of Palmyra Senior Citizens. He had resided at Messiah Village since 1982 and was a member of the church there. The funeral was held in the Village chapel with Rev. S. Lane Hostetter and Rev. Marion J. Heisey officiating. Interment was in Wenger's Cemetery.

Snyder: M. Ruth Snyder, born Oct. 6, 1916, daughter of David and Emma Weller Brannen, died Jan. 23. A sister preceded her in death. Surviving are a daughter, Dorothy Hoffman; a grandson; two great-grandsons; and a sister, Dorothy A. Bryner. She attended the Cedar Grove congregation, Pa. The funeral was held at Guss Funeral Home with Rev. George Reynolds officiating. Interment was in Union Cemetery.

Stoops: Edwin L. Stoops, born Jan. 19, 1926, son of Edna B. West Stoops and the late Merle E. Stoops, died Aug. 25, 1997. Surviving are his wife, Emma Grace (Thrush); a daughter, Joyce M. Rogers; a son, Ray D.; and a sister, Esther Martin. He had been office custodian at Grove Worldwide for 18 years, and a former member of the Fairview Ave. congregation, Pa. The funeral was held at the Antrim church, Pa., where he was a member, with Rev. Steven D. Munger, Rev. Ky R. Searcy, and Rev. Frank Kipe officiating. Interment was in the Air Hill cemetery.

Stottlemeyer: Fred L. Stottlemeyer, born Mar. 16, 1932, son of Eberly and Sadie Johnson Stottlemeyer, died Aug. 24, 1997. Two brothers preceded him in death. Surviving are his wife, Susan B. (Shank); four sons, James L., Dale S., Alan W., and Barry R.; and two daughters, Linda S. Baer and Mary E. Oldham. Fred was an Army veteran of the Korean Conflict, and retired from Mack Trucks. He was a member of the Antrim congregation, Pa. The funeral was held at Harold M. Zimmerman & Son Funeral Home with Rev. Steven Munger and Rev. Ky R. Searcy officiating. Interment was in Cedar Hill Cemetery.

Stutzman: Elizabeth M. Stutzman, born Aug. 29, 1910, in Nappanee, Ind., daughter of Moses S. and Amanda Hochstetler Schmucker, died Feb. 16. Her husband, Elmer Stutzman, preceded her in death. Surviving are 4 children, Mary Myers, Edna Miller, Howard, and Donald; 11 grandchildren; and 4 great-grandchildren; and a sister, Miller Schmucker. She had resided at Messiah Village since 1995. The funeral was held at the Nappanee, Ind., church where she was a member with Rev. Joseph W. Fox officiating. Interment was in Union Center Cemetery.

VanderBent: Myrtle Gladys VanderBent, born Feb. 16, 1905, daughter of Jacob and May Reaman, died Jan. 14. She was the wife of the late Rev. William VanderBent. Surviving are her children, Bruce, Marie Brillinger, David, and Dorothy Barkley; 9 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren. She and William were the first pastoral cou-

ple of the Heise Hill congregation, Ont., from 1956-1966. The funeral was held at the church with Rev. Mike Anderson and Rev. Ken Smith officiating. Interment was in Heise Hill Cemetery.

Wengert: Mary E. Wengert, born Oct. 6, 1928, daughter of Clarence A. Sr. and Nannie Gayman Musser, died Feb. 6. A son, Ray, and a sister, Ellen Layton, preceded her in death. Surviving are her husband, Samuel H. Wengert; two sons, Donald L. and Curtis B.; three daughters, Lois J. Gayman, Nancy W. Renwick, and Carol A. Stambaugh; three brothers, Paul, John, and Clarence Musser; and two sisters, Catherine Brechbill and Ruth Bert. She was a member of the Air Hill Noble Berean Class and Air Hill Lamplighters, a member of the Gideons Int'l., and a volunteer at Penn Hall Menno Haven Retirement Home. She was a member of the Air Hill congregation, Pa., where the funeral was held with Rev. John Bundy and Rev. Gerald Wingert officiating. Interment was in Air Hill Cemetery.

Yoder: Leora G. Yoder, born Nov. 19, 1908, in Wakarusa, Ind., daughter of Lloyd and Elsie Good Yoder, died Jan. 29. Surviving are nieces and nephews. She had resided at Messiah Village since 1979, had been a missionary nurse for 41 years, and was a member of the Harrisburg Hospital Nurse Alumni Assoc. The funeral was held at the Messiah Village Chapel where she was a member with Rev. Lawrence M. Yoder and Rev. Marion J. Heisey officiating. Interment was in Grantham Memorial Park. EV

Mediation and Facilitation Training Institutes

Menonite Conciliation Service is sponsoring two summer Mediation and Facilitation Training Institutes in 1998: June 15-19, in the Denver area of Colorado (co-sponsored with the Rocky Mountain Reconciliation Resource Team) and July 13-17, in Akron, Pennsylvania. Cost is \$450 (\$500 for late registrations); scholarship assistance is available. Contact MCS at P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; (717) 859-3889; MCS@mccus.org; www.mennonitecc.ca/mcc/regions/united-states/mcs.html.



Opening the Word of Life

Where there is no "vision"

We live by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal (2 Corinthians 4:18).

Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law (Proverbs 29:18).

PAUL, while teaching about how believers should live in the face of hardship and the weakness of the body, almost parenthetically writes, "we live by faith, not by sight." His point indicates that even while we see all the struggles around us, and even while one sees his body wasting away, a believer should have his or her eyes fixed upon the Lord. That sort of concentration on God gives a Christian confidence in this world.

One wonders if Paul was thinking of Proverbs 29:18: "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he" (KJV). Whether or not Paul considered this verse as he wrote, one thing is certain—this verse is on center-stage these days. People in the church talk about vision, goals, objectives, purposes, and planning.

I did a bit of scientific research to test the way Christians understood Proverbs

29:18. I asked 3 people, all of whom I consider to be mature believers and students of the Bible, to tell me in their own words what the verse meant. Each person replied in essentially the same way: "We need to have goals or plans to be successful as a Christian." Their response was expected, but disappointing. Many people read Proverbs 29:18 inappropriately.

The key to a proper understanding of this verse is the Hebrew word, *chazown*, translated as "vision" in the King James Version, and as "revelation" in the New International Version. Both translations are good ones, but in today's vernacular, the word "revelation" better captures the sense of the Hebrew word. *Chazown* means "to receive an oracle, to be spoken to in a dream, to be given a word from God, or to prophesy." For example, when the Apostle John, exiled to the island of

TEENS IN MISSIONARY SERVICE

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Contact TIMS and we will send you an application. You don't need specific skills in order to participate in this service ministry. Members of work teams just need a willing heart to work alongside of their national brothers and sisters.

1998 Trips List

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August 15-29

The team will fly to Managua, Nicaragua, where they will have a time of orientation and fellowship. Your teammates will come from all parts of the United States and Canada. The next day, you will start working on constructing a church building with the San Judus congregation.

Trip Cost: \$853.00 plus airfare (US funds only)

Venezuela

Sept. 12-26; Oct. 10-24; Nov. 7-21; Dec. 5-19

The teams will fly to Caracas, Venezuela, where you will have a time of orientation and fellowship. Experience the joy of meeting fellow Christians from all over the US and Canada. The team will then travel 3 hours to the site of the new Venezuelan Ministry Center and Church Camp. While at the site of the new camp, you will construct retaining walls, dormitories, or a multipurpose building.

Trip Cost: \$856.00 plus airfare (US funds only)

Trip cost includes: Round-trip transportation from the U.S. departure point, food and lodging during your stay, as well as project supplies. Note: All prices are based on 1997 cost and are subject to change.

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Patmos, received a vision from the Lord as recorded in the book of Revelation, he experienced *chazown*. He had a vision in the biblical sense, a message from God.

A problem of interpretation involves our contemporary use of the word, "vision." The world, and especially the corporate world, steers itself by vision. Leaders determine where the business ought to go, what it should look like in 5 or 10 years, and then they work to direct everyone under them toward that vision. Goals, steps, and objectives are developed to move the company in that direction. Resources, such as manpower, money, and research, are pointed and applied in that direction. Then, after the specified time frame, everyone involved evaluates their success in reaching the goal. Most people understand "vision" in this way.

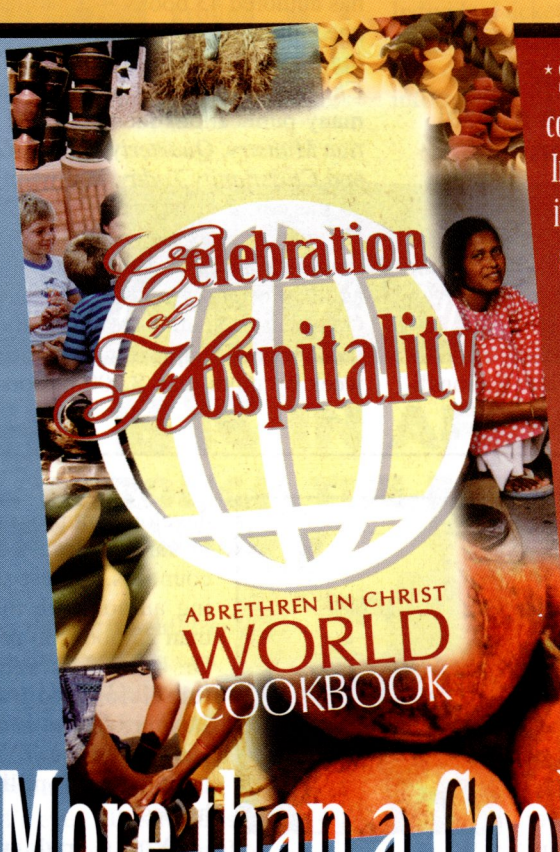
Proverbs 29:18, however, does not convey that idea of "vision." It speaks of how, without a word from God (i.e., through the Bible, a sermon, or a prophet), the people have no standard or direction. Thus, they "cast off restraint." They set their own goals, develop their own agenda, and do what they feel they ought to be doing. On the other hand, where there is law (a word from God), the person who keeps it finds blessing and success. Revelation displays God's agenda and sets the agenda of God's people. It provides direction and purpose and indicates how one should use his or her life.

Christians often work backwards. They set objectives, plans, and goals and then ask God to bless them. Proverbs 29:18 teaches us that the proper way to live is to order our lives and ministries according to the will of God revealed to us.

Sometimes the will of God does not make sense. It doesn't fit with our perceived gifts and weaknesses. It often seems to be beyond our resources. If Christians function by sight (that which makes sense) or vision (what we think we should accomplish), many times the will of God is not set up as a goal and is not accomplished. But God, who is able to do exceedingly more than we can imagine or think, desires that his people operate on revelation and not on vision.

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

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Celebration of Hospitality is also available from the Brethren in Christ World Missions Office (P.O. Box 390 Grantham, PA, 17027).

Contact Evangel Publishing House at 1-800-253-9315 or (219) 773-3164 to order copies of Celebration of Hospitality.

MESSIAH COLLEGE NEWS

Dr. William Willimon discusses Jesus as model for higher education

Dr. William H. Willimon, named in a recent international survey as one of the "twelve most effective preachers in the English speaking world" (Baylor University, 1996), presented a free, public lecture, "Jesus as a Model for Higher Education: the Practice of a Wider Rationali-

ty," at Messiah College on March 26 at 8 p.m. in Climenhaga Fine Arts Center.

Dr. Willimon, dean of the chapel and professor of Christian ministry at Duke University since 1984, directs the university's program of campus ministry and teaches in the Duke Divinity School. He has authored 43 books — totaling nearly one million copies sold — including *Sighing for Eden* and *What's Right With the Church*. His articles have appeared in many publications including *The Christian Ministry*, *Quarterly Review*, *Liturgy*, and *Christianity Today*. Willimon serves as the editor-at-large for *The Christian Century* and has also written curriculum materials and video for both youth and adults. Formerly a pastor of churches in Georgia and South Carolina, Willimon is the author of *Pulpit Resource*, used each week by more than 8,000 pastors in the

U.S., Canada, and Australia. Willimon is a graduate of Wofford College, Yale Divinity School—which named him its first Distinguished Alumnus, and Emory University.

Willimon was chosen as the 1998 speaker for the Messiah College Annual Lectures on Religion and Society. This lecture series brings one prominent leader to the campus each year to discuss matters of public religious concern. The evening lecture which Dr. Willimon delivered was also part of a special conference held at Messiah College on March 26 and 27. The conference was based on the theme "Models for Christian Higher Education: Learning from Each Other." Twenty-five colleges and universities (including a variety of Catholic, Protestant, and historically African-American institutions) were invited to participate in this gathering which was funded by the Lilly Endowment Inc.

Tony Campolo to speak at Messiah College's first outdoor commencement ceremony in more than 25 years

Renown speaker and best-selling author Dr. Tony Campolo will deliver the commencement address at Messiah College's 88th annual Commencement Ceremony on May 16 at Messiah's Starry Athletic Complex.

This year's ceremony marks the college's first outdoor commencement in 26 years. Since 1972, Messiah College has held commencement in its Eisenhower Campus Center, but is revisiting its outdoor ceremony due to student request.

Dr. Campolo is a professor of sociology and the director of the Urban Studies Program at Eastern College, in St. Davids, Pa. For 10 years prior, he served on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania. He did his undergraduate work at Eastern College and earned his doctorate from Temple University. He is the founder and president of the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education, an organization involved in educational, medical, and economic



development programs in various third-world countries. A best-selling author with more than 25 books in print, Dr. Campolo's weekly television program, *Hashing It Out*, is carried by cable TV in more than 28 million homes.

With a graduating class of approximately 550 students, the college anticipates a commencement crowd of more than 5,000. President Rodney Sawatsky will award honorary doctorates—only the fourth occasion in the college's 88-year history—to Dr. Campolo and to the former governor of Pennsylvania, George M. Leader. Dr. Campolo will receive a doctorate of sacred theology in recognition of his faithful service to the church and its academy. Former Governor Leader will receive a doctorate of humane letters in recognition of his distinguished record of public service.

"Messiah College is proud to honor these two men who have served God, their communities, and their fellow humans so faithfully for so many years. Their commitment to urban renewal complements Messiah's longstanding commitment to social concern and interest in urban education," said President Sawatsky.

Harvard professor lectures on American democracy

Harvard University Professor Theda Skocpol presented a free, public lecture, "Civic Engagement in American Democracy," in Messiah College's Frey Hall on April 1. Skocpol's presentation was sponsored through Messiah College's annual Lectureship on American Democracy.

Skocpol, the Victor S. Thomas Professor of Government and Sociology at Harvard, is the recipient of numerous academic fellowships and honors. She serves on the editorial board of the *American Political Science Review* and has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Her first book, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*, won the 1979 C. Wright Mills Award of the American Political Science Association as well as the 1980 American Sociological Association Award for a distinguished contribution to scholarship. For the past decade, Skocpol's research has focused on U.S. politics and public policy, as reflected in her *Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*, for which she received the 1993 Woodrow Wilson Foundation Prize of the American Political Science Association for the best book published in the United States during the prior year on government, politics, or international affairs. Her subsequent publications include: *Social Policy in the United States: Future Possibilities in Historical Perspective*; *Boomerang: Clin-*

ton's Health Security Effort and the Turn against Government in US Politics; and the New Majority: Toward a Popular Progressive Politics, co-edited with Stanley B. Greenberg. Currently she is completing a new book, *The Missing Middle: Working Parents and the Future of US Social Policy*, and is coordinating a major new research project on civic engagement in American democracy.

Messiah College revives Summer Dinner Concerts

After a two-year hiatus, Messiah College is bringing back its Summer Dinner Concerts, a two-part series, offering a buffet dinner followed by a concert of classical and sacred music. The college announces the following lineup for the 1998 season.

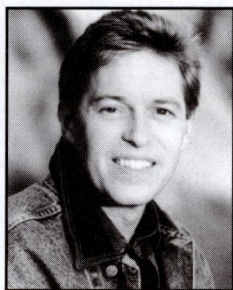


Nielson & Young— Saturday, May 9, 1998

One of the most active duo-piano ensembles of our time, Stephen Nielson and Ovid Young have played some 3,000 performances around the world. Having performed for 25 years, the duo has played at major concert halls, college and university campuses, cathedrals, churches and synagogues, convention centers, cruise ships, and television studios. These internationally acclaimed performers have 7 duo-piano records to their credit in addition to 3 volumes of duo-piano arrangements.

Steve Amerson— Saturday, August 22, 1998

An accomplished classical singer, Steve Amerson has performed with virtually every major performing organization in the Los Angeles area. He was one of three tenors chosen to record demos used by Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo, and Jose Carreras in preparation for their acclaimed "The 3 Tenors" Los Angeles concert performed in 1994. Aside from his success in the west coast's mainstream



for teaching and training music ministers

music ministry, his focus has remained on his calling to minister to the church. The combination of his classical training, background as a church music leader, and gift

and their choirs has created a special niche for his music across the country.

The dinners and concerts will be held at Messiah College in Lottie Nelson Dining Room, located in Eisenhower Campus Center. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Dinner will be served buffet-style from 5:45-7 p.m., followed by the concert at 7:30 p.m. Individual tickets cost \$22 per person and can be purchased up until the day before the concert. To order tickets, or for more information, call (717) 691-6027.

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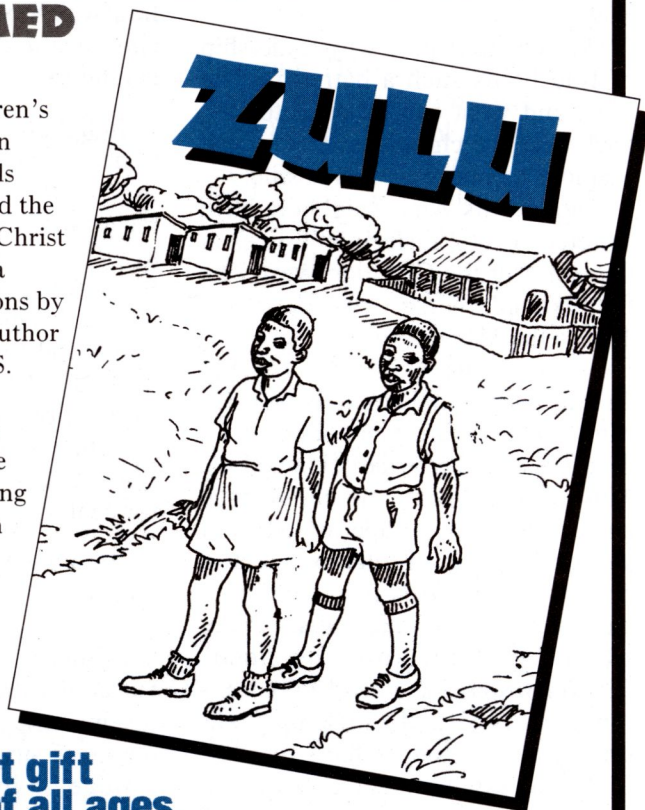
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“If your enemy hungers, feed him”

by Samuel M. Brubaker

Now that diplomacy has allowed the United States to step back from the brink of re-bombing Iraq, let's look with cooler heads and clearer eyes at the situation. While we hope the diplomacy of Kofi Annan has opened the way to further reduction of tensions, we must remember that the agreements he has announced have yet to be put into practice. Without some change in the aggravating factors, there will likely be further crisis points between the United States and Iraq.

We need to inquire why leadership of Iraq holds such a hatred for the West and what can be done to step back from the chronic enmity so that relations can become less hostile.

Iraq and its Arab neighbors have suffered several historic injustices at the hands of the Christian West. The first example is the Crusades of the 11th to the 15th centuries. These military incursions against the Muslim Arabic lands gave ample reason for Muslims to regard Christianity with bitterness. The crusades changed the Muslim world from “an enlightened and urbane culture, superior to that of western Europe in tolerance and in breadth of intellectual interest, to a narrow religious conservatism under which secular learning declined” (Encyclopedia Britannica 1969). Muslim hostility toward Christianity was greatly augmented by the Crusades' erroneous expression of Christianity.

Secondly, we need to understand that the territory of Kuwait was recognized by Britain as an independent state under British protection in 1914, following outbreak of war between Britain and Turkey. The strategic and economic reasons why Britain would create a friendly nation at this place and time are obvious. Against this

backdrop of British and later Anglo-American manipulations of this part of the world, the Iraqi claim (as early as 1961) that Kuwait is one of its provinces, is not without basis.

Thirdly, the unjust treatment of Palestinian Arabs at the hands of American-supported Zionists, and later the Israeli state, is regarded by most Arabs as an attack upon them. Since 1948, Israel has been noncompliant with numerous UN resolutions, has forcibly wrested territory from neighbor nations, and has gained weapons (nuclear) of mass destruction. In the last two years Israel has declined to honor its earlier promises for new Jewish settlements. Yet it is Iraq which we threaten to bomb for similar alleged offenses against its neighbors.

In light of the history briefly mentioned above, should we be surprised that a strong Arab leader should regard himself and his Arab brothers as victims of injustice at the hands of western Christianity? Failure to recognize this history and Arab responses to it indicates the myopia and egocentrism of United States policy, not to mention the serious lack of true Christian principles in the behavior of Euro-America toward the Arab world for centuries.

But now, look for a moment at the recent and current situation in Iraq. Since the Gulf War, childhood leukemia is occurring 5 times more frequently than before. The cause of this increase has not been pinpointed, but chief suspect is some poisonous residue or by-product of the 1991 bombing. Who has perpetrated chemical warfare upon whom? Since the Gulf War, more than a half million Iraqi children have died because of malnutrition and destruction of infrastructure. For many of these deaths, infectious diseases—preventable or treatable under normal circumstances—have been the final blow.

Who has perpetrated biological warfare upon whom?

Instead of “Hitlerizing” Saddam and his subjects, we need to gain a new look at them. To some degree at least, they are victims of injustice of which the United States has been a part. That is not to say Saddam is free of bloodguiltiness. But we need to admit that we and our fathers have helped make him and his supporters what they are.

And finally, if Saddam were the primary problem, to respond by renewed bombing is unconscionable, because of the effects on the innocent civilians. Our “smart bombs” are not smart enough to prevent untold suffering and death of innocent Iraqis, many of them children.

What can we do now, seeing that renewal of bombing has been delayed? In what ways could we “feed” these we regard as enemies?

1. Send contributions to Mennonite Central Committee. MCC is raising \$100,000 to get medical supplies into Iraq to aid leukemia victims. Receipt of such aid, delivered “in the name of Christ,” will help some Iraqis to understand that Christianity and United States' policy are not identical.

2. Communicate to our government that we desire:

- no more bombing of Iraq;
- easing of sanctions, so that all humanitarian goods can again flow to Iraq;
- increased pressure on Israel to live up to its promises, and to develop a long range plan for integration of Palestinians and Jews into a new, democratic nation.

It's time for a change of heart. Time for “new birth.” Time for a different policy. Time for a different projection of Christianity to Muslim peoples. Time to “do good to your enemy” as taught by Jesus. The results of such change could be amazingly positive, and certainly no worse than the mess we've created for the Iraqi innocents and for ourselves.

Samuel M. Brubaker, a physician from Arcanum, Ohio, is a regular columnist for the Visitor.



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."

Dear Paul,

Well, Paul, we are well into spring here and April has produced some nice showers. Traditionally, it is said that "April showers bring May flowers."

There is another tradition in this culture called April Fool's Day. People play tricks on one another and try to "fool" them, and when they do, they yell "April Fool!" Sort of... well...foolish, isn't it, Paul?

But when you think about it, maybe it would be good for the church to celebrate April Fool's Day. It could help us remember that fools abound, in both the unbelieving world and inside the church.

God is not timid when speaking to those who live their lives in unbelief. In fact, God is blunt: "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" "Fools despise wisdom and discipline." "The complacency of fools will destroy them." "Fools detest turning from evil...a companion of fools suffers harm" (Psa. 14:1; Prov 1:7, 32; 13:19-20).

Our loving Savior, Jesus, also spoke harshly to unbelieving fools: "You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred?" "Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand." "You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?" "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" (Matt. 23:17; 7:26; Luke 11:40; 24:25).

I re-read your letter to the Romans, Paul. You warned them about the divinely appointed destiny of fools:

"...their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools...therefore God gave them over..." (Rom 1:21-22,24).

But unbelievers are not the only fools, as you well know. There are plenty of foolish people in the church. You have written several times about this.

You scolded the Galatians for trusting in works, circumcision, dress, or anything other than the gospel: "You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?...Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" (Gal 3:1, 3).

You warned the Ephesians against "foolish talk" and "coarse joking." You also commanded them, "do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is" (Eph 5:4,17).

So, it would certainly be in order for us as believers to recognize—at least once a year—our potential for foolishness. But better yet would be to remember the other kind of foolishness found in Scripture; what you called "the foolishness of the cross."

You told our friends, the Corinthians: "The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God....God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe" (1 Cor 1:18, 21).

In fact, the foolishness of Christ was your main message in Corinth: "But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles" (1 Cor 1:23).

And you gave a very good reason for that message: "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? The foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength... God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong" (1 Cor 1:20, 25, 27).

But perhaps the greatest April Fool's trick of all time was on Easter morning. The devil thought he had fooled God, but the joke was on him. Satan became the fool as Jesus rose to conquer sin and death. Thank God that Jesus decided to play the part of a fool on the cross, so we could have the last laugh.

So, April Fools, Paul! May we not be counted among the fools of unbelief or those who behave foolishly in the church, but among the fools for Christ in these last days. And may God bless the church in its righteous foolishness.

Just a fool for Jesus,
Onesimus

It would certainly be in order for us as believers to recognize—at least once a year—our potential for foolishness. But better yet would be to remember the other kind of foolishness found in Scripture; what you called "the foolishness of the cross."

Focusing our Mission

250 Growing, Discipling,
Sending Congregations
by A.D. 2000



Extraordinary people— extraordinary deeds

by Phillip D. Keefer

What comes to your mind when you think of the word extraordinary? Extraordinary means, "Going beyond what is usual, regular, or customary—exceptional to a marked extent."

Paul writes about extraordinary people: people who went beyond the usual; people who did the exceptional in 2 Corinthians 8. Are you an extraordinary person? Could it be said of you, "He went beyond the regular or customary"?

Jesus was a person who did extraordinary deeds. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich" (v. 9). Christ who knew no sin took on our human nature in order that he could appropriately suffer and die for our sins. Had he not taken on the nature of humankind, he could not have died for our sins.

"He became poor." How poor did he become? The poverty of a person has a definite relationship to the affluence they once enjoyed. When Christ, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, forsaken by his Father, deserted by his friends, became poor "for your sakes," that was the direst poverty that has ever been known.

What is your response to such love, such poverty, such an extraordinary deed done willingly by Jesus Christ?

In chapter eight, Paul tells about the Macedonian churches. The account is interesting, yet somewhat troubling. The Macedonian churches were extraordinary givers. Their extraordinary giving was their response to the extraordinary deed of Christ. First, they gave themselves. Not much giving will occur in the church by people who have not first given of themselves.

Their extraordinary giving can be characterized by at least 3 principles seen in this account. The first principle is: extenuating circumstances are not really what matters when giving is motivated by what Christ has done for us. "Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity" (v. 2). Their giving wasn't out of an abundance of resources, but out of an abundance of joy for what Christ had done for them. Persons who know the joy of the spiritual riches Christ provided by his death won't let poverty, nor extenuating circumstances, get in the way of their giving.

The second principle is: giving motivated by Christ's extraordinary deed will look for opportunities to give. The Macedonian churches "...gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints" (vs. 3-4). Persons who know how spiritually empty they are and how unworthy they are of Christ's love, and then experience his saving love, will look for opportunities to give.

Principle three is: when motivated by Christ's extraordinary deed, there will be a correlation between our responsibility to God and to our fellow man. For the Macedonian churches, once they gave themselves to the Lord it naturally followed for them to give to Paul. "...they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will" (v. 5b). First they gave themselves to God, then they gave themselves to Paul, who was in a very real sense their spiritual leader. We need to support the work from which we derive our spiritual blessing.

This account is about Paul, who was an extraordinary person. He did the unusual, the exceptional, when he challenged the Corinthians in the area of giving. As was his custom, Paul affirmed the Corinthians in the areas of

faith, speech, knowledge, earnestness (enthusiasm), and love. They were a church that excelled in many areas (v. 7) except for one, the area of giving. Today we would say, "Paul, give me a break. What do you expect?" Paul simply wanted them to excel in the grace of giving as well.

The account is also about the apostle wanting to test the sincerity of the Corinthians' love by comparing it with the earnestness of others (v. 8), a truly exceptional action. When is the last time your pastor said, "I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others"? Then Paul follows in verse 9 with the extraordinary deed Christ did for them.

Giving is a natural response of love. In our human relationships, when we love someone we want to give that person time and attention, and provide for his or her needs. If we do not, our love is not as genuine as we say. Paul did not order the Corinthians to give, but he did encourage them to prove their love was real.

What do extraordinary people doing extraordinary deeds have to do with "Focusing our Mission"? Achieving *250 Growing, Sending, Discipling Congregations by A.D. 2000* will require extraordinary people doing extraordinary deeds. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich."



Phillip D. Keefer
is Executive Director
of Stewardship for
the Brethren in Christ
Church.

Persecution fans the fire of church growth

Burning churches in Indonesia and forcing churches underground in Ethiopia have not silenced the song of Christians. Instead, they sing more boldly. "Persecution fans the fire of church growth," said several church leaders who attended the annual Mennonite Central Committee board meeting Feb. 20-21 at Bethel College in North Newton, Kans.

"Our Muslim leader in Indonesia has been telling his people to stop burning our churches and to start reading history," said Andreas Christanday of Indonesia, chair of the Asia Mennonite Conference. "He tells the people that the

more they torture Christians, and the more they [Christians] suffer, the more they will grow."

Christanday is part of an Indonesia church that has endured increasing persecution. In November, rioters burned a Mennonite church building in Bayursari Karyatani, causing an estimated \$6,500 in damage—the equivalent of the total income of all the households in the congregation. In the past two years, more than 100 Christian church buildings have been burned in Indonesia. "Though 396 churches since 1966 have been destroyed, almost all have been rebuilt,"

Christanday said.

"Rebuilding is tough in a country where income is low and government red tape is thick, but churches are fierce in their desire to survive," said Julius Rampen, pastor of a small Mennonite congregation in Indonesia. "Our church is sitting in the path of a new highway that the government wants to build, and so we were told we had to tear it down," Rampen said. "But since they wouldn't give us permission to build it on another parcel of land, we tore down one side of it, and are in the process of building [additional stories] up!"

Rampen said that it is difficult to get permission from the government to build new churches. In this particular case, Muslims heard that the Mennonites were wanting to build on another piece of land, so they immediately went to that site to build a mosque. Since a mosque and a Christian church cannot be built next to each other, Rampen's church had to back off.

Rampen is part of a 16-member Indonesian Mennonite Cultural Team that performed at the MCC annual meeting and toured churches in Kansas.

Ethiopian church leader Bedru Huessin, vice president of Mennonite World Conference, echoed Christanday's view. "Persecution has caused the seeds first planted in his country by MCC in 1946 to grow quickly," he said.

The Meserete Kristos Church—the Ethiopian group affiliated with Mennonite World Conference—has grown to 114,000 people, of whom 57,000 are baptized members. The MKC has 192 established churches and 310 church plants. "They [communists] closed down 14 churches, and we opened hundreds more," Hussein said of the church's growth during its "underground" years in the 1980s and early '90s.

"When the communists came and nationalized our country, they imprisoned 4 church leaders, and we had to go underground. We then organized into small cell groups of not more than 7 to 10 [people], since if we had more, then the government would suspect something." When cells grew to more than 10 people, they split into new cells, and eventually 1,500 cells were thriving. In 1991, an overthrow of the communists brought religious freedom.—*A Meeting-house article by Laurie Oswald, assistant editor of Mennonite Weekly Review.*

Indonesia Update

The leader of one of the Indonesian Mennonite conferences is warning his congregations that more attacks and harassment may be forthcoming.

Mesach Krisetya has sent a letter to congregations of the Persatuan Gereja-Gereja Kristen Muria Indonesia (GKMI) conference, warning them of increasing dangers. Krisetya is moderator of the conference.

Political uncertainty and a failing economy have led to unrest in the country. In the past 2 years, more than 100 churches have been burned. In November, a Mennonite church (GKMI) was the target of an attack for the first time. The building was destroyed and one man was injured in the riot. Following news of the church burning in November, \$1,760 was sent to Mennonite World Conference by North American churches for rebuilding.

Burnings of churches are continuing, though the government has taken action to stem them, said Krisetya, also president of Mennonite World Conference. Businesses owned by ethnic Chinese in Indonesia are also being targeted for violence by rioters.

Many Indonesians are struggling and are looking for a scapegoat, said Krisetya. Chinese make up less than 5 percent of the population, but are popularly believed to control more than two-thirds of Indonesia's businesses, according to a report in *Asia Week*. Many members of the GKMI are Indonesians of Chinese descent.

Krisetya is asking people everywhere to pray for the situation in his country. "Personally I see this happening as the implication of the economic and political crisis in our country," he said, adding that the situation is the symptom of the deeper and more hidden cause. In the meantime, Krisetya is warning that the persecution may become more systematic.

The monetary crisis in Indonesia and the burning of Chinese businesses has had another effect. The price of milk and food has skyrocketed, according to an Indonesian man studying in the United States. "Everyday my e-mail box is filled with horrible stories from Indonesia regarding babies who are dying because their mothers are unable to give them milk or food anymore," he wrote.

Infant formula is scarce and very expensive, and families are struggling to find food. The man said he learned of one family of 4 in the city of Bandung in which only the father survived malnutrition.

Assistance from churches in the United States and Canada is being sought. Contributions can be sent to the Mennonite Central Committee, designated for the GKMI Relief Fund.—*Marshall V. King, Mennonite World Conference writer*

THE HOLY SPIRIT is a divine person who eternally co-exists with the Father and the Son. The Spirit was present and active in creation, is seen throughout the Old Testament, and is revealed more explicitly in the New Testament. Life in the Spirit was reflected most clearly in the earthly life of Jesus. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit came from God to continue the work of the ascended Christ, as Jesus had promised His followers.

From the Brethren in Christ
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