

THE BRETHREN



JOURNAL



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28 Pages



Hus School Pictures
... available on the Unity Website
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THE BRETHREN JOURNAL

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H.I.L.L. Presentation

The Hus Institute for Lay Leader-
ship (H.I.L.L.) is sponsoring a presen-
tation on the Brethren History and
Doctrine on June 28, 9AM-3PM at the
Houston Brethren Church. Dr. Mark
Labaj of Temple will lead this seminar.

Mark served as pastor of Temple
Brethren Church for more than a quar-
ter century. He graduated from the
University of Texas, Moravian Theo-
logical Seminary, and earned the Doc-
tor of Ministry degree from Austin
Presbyterian Seminary. He has also
taken courses in history at the Uni-
versity of Texas in recent years and
was accepted in the Graduate School
in History at UT. He has served the
Unity of the Brethren as President
from 1985-1989 and 1995-1997, as Chair-
man of the New Congregation Devel-
opment Committee, and as an instruc-
tor at Hus School. He is married to
Vernell since 1977, and they have two
daughters, Christie and Angela.

Registration fee: \$20.00 (includes
materials and lunch), may be made out
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For more information contact Bro.
Jim Heckman at 979-739-1393 or Mrs.
Dorothy Hinson 281-620-0480.

Mutual Aid Convention

The Administrative Board of the
Mutual Aid Society extends an invita-
tion to all Ministers, Delegates, and
Members of the Society to attend its
60th Biennial Convention to be held
Saturday, July 12, 2008, at Ocker Breth-
ren Church. A warm welcome is ex-
tended to visitors who would like to
observe the proceedings. We also ask
you to remember this gathering in
your prayers.

Rev. Joseph J. Polasek, President

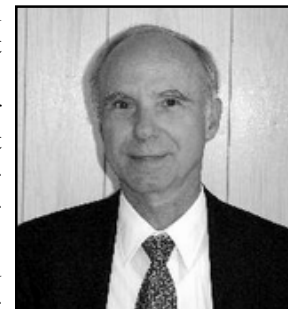
President's Column . . . Claren Kotrla ENCOURAGEMENT

Each of us remembers a time when
someone gave a word of encourage-
ment which resulted in
achieving something. It
may have been a spouse,
parent, or grandparent, or
teacher in school or at
Sunday school who pro-
vided those words. Per-
haps just as importantly,
they may have provided
an example of encourage-
ment which stayed with us through-
out our life. For those who have
served in the military it may have
been a drill sergeant who in his unique
way encouraged you to overcome an
obstacle or complete a task.

During my life I have experienced
encouragement from each of these
and many more. I would like to share
one of those experiences with you.
As a youngster in Mrs. Marie Marek's
class while she and her husband,
Dan, were serving the Caldwell Breth-
ren Church... she was my Sunday
School teacher. She was patient and
well prepared. You cannot imagine

the horror I felt when she announced
that each of us was going to present
part of a future lesson.
This was a crisis of mas-
sive proportions for me. I
was going to have to
stand in front of all (six or
seven) fellow students
and make a complete idiot
of myself. The dread that
accompanied me during
the week before my pre-
sentation was huge. When it was my
time to get up and speak to the class
I was sure that all of the cotton crop
in Burleson County was in my mouth
at that time. The experience was as
bad as I had anticipated in my mind.
However, throughout the ordeal Ms.
Marek was there encouraging me and
in turn, each of us, as we took our turn
attempting to teach the class.

Over time she helped us grow in
both example and word. I eventually
went on to be able to express ideas in
public forums, teach, speak before
hearings in the State Legislature and



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President: Rev. Henry Beseda

even testify in court hearings. Don't misunderstand, there is still some trepidation in these situations but because of a few words as a youngster in a Sunday school class I mostly overcame that fear.

A look at a natural annual phenomenon expresses how groups can encourage success. Each year we see Geese flying South for the winter to feed on the Texas Coastal Plains. They probably couldn't do it if the members of the flock didn't encourage each other during the flight South. That honking you hear them making isn't just idle chatter. The honks are sounds of encouragement for the lead goose. The lead goose is fighting the resistance of the wind and the other geese are in effect drafting behind that lead goose. The "vee" formation maximizes that effect, allowing the geese to better conserve energy during the long flight. When the lead goose gets too tired to lead it falls back into the formation and another goose takes the lead, with encouragement from the rest of the flock. If a goose becomes sick or exhausted and has to fall out of the formation, two other geese go with it and they stay with it until it either recovers or suc-

cumbs to illness or exhaustion. They then join another flock and continue heading south. (If they are from the last flock they just fly in a small formation of two or three).

The important point is they encourage each other to succeed. The individual geese aren't jealous that the lead goose has been there too long or that the lead goose didn't lead long enough and someone else had to take the lead. They understand their mission is to fly South and they do not interfere with that mission. They are centered on the mission at hand.

Just as the geese have their mission, we have our mission within the Unity of the Brethren. That mission is to become more Christ centered. With that everything else will take its proper place. When we offer words or provide actions of encouragement to our fellow members, we as individuals become more Christ centered and are rewarded in ways that we seldom imagine. When our honking is to encourage, we benefit personally and the Unity benefits as a whole body of believers. However when that honking becomes discouraging chatter, we as individuals and the Unity as a whole suffers. Discouraging words, petty

bickering, fault finding, and small-mindedness results in our losing the Christ centeredness necessary to fulfillment of our subsequent missions.

It isn't always easy to encourage others when you feel slighted or worse, but you are expected to do so. Can you imagine how Moses felt as presented in Deuteronomy 1:38 when the Lord told him that he would not be able to enter the promised land. Furthermore Moses was told that not only would he not enter but he was to "encourage" Joshua who would lead the people to conquer the land. After all that Moses had done and gone through he was to encourage someone else to receive the fruits of his labor. So it can be done and the Lord expects us to do so even if we as individuals don't feel good about it.

In Acts 14:22 Paul encouraged the people to remain faithful even after being stoned and left for dead the day before. Just think about it. You have been left for dead and your thoughts and words are to encourage others to keep the faith. No whining or complaining or asking where were you yesterday; just words of encouragement for the followers. That's power-

ful! Hopefully we won't be placed in a position of offering encouragement after a day like he had.

Philippians 2:1-5 speaks to encouragement strongly yet humbly. These verses provide us as a body of believers with words to live by. It says "Christ encourages you, and His love comforts you. God's Spirit unites you, and you are concerned for others. Now make me completely happy! Live in harmony by showing love for each other. Be united in what you think, as if you were only one person. Don't be jealous or proud, but be humble and consider others more important than yourselves. Care about them as much as you care about yourselves and think the same way that Christ Jesus thought. These words are encouraging us to be more Christ centered for the good of His Kingdom."

Please reflect on these thoughts and scripture. Consider how each of us as individuals can become better encouragers, just as those geese do on their annual trek to Texas and as the examples found in Scripture. Each of us has the power, if we choose to use it, to encourage others and become more Christ centered.

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Your gift can be contingent. The funds go to someone if they survive you and if not, then to the Unity.

You can tell us now that you have named the Unity in your will and allow us to express our gratitude...or you can let it be known later.

There are many other ways to give. Contact any Board of Grants and Bequests member about what you can give and how you can give.

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In Christ's Love . . . from the Mission Field

From the Woos...

April 17, 2008

Dear Unity of the Brethren Mission Board, Greetings in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ!

As you might have already heard, we have returned from China to give birth to our third child. The due date is May 28, but Caroline hopes for an early delivery. We have settled into mission housing provided by Ardmore Moravian Church. We had arrived in Winston-Salem on April 8 after driving 17 hours from Boston. Before that, we had travelled from the remote Misty City in China to the USA (approx. 30 hours) on April 5. Praise the Lord we are all about adjusted to the time zone difference. However, Caroline and the kids are sick with colds. Caroline is also beginning to be uncomfortable at nights.

We apologize for not being able to visit you this year due to the pregnancy, but we are forever thankful for your commitment to church planting and partnering with us in the work of reaching the Shan Dai people.

We acknowledge the difficulty of reaching animist-Buddists. There is a spiritual stronghold that only prayer can break. Yet we are also excited that we will be beginning a new work near Myanmar. The focus is the Shan Dai people who live right on the border. There is a slight linguistic and cultural difference to other Shan Dai due to the mountains dividing the region.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 1-336-655-3219, or mcswoo@psmail.net.

Serving together, Michael, Caroline, Samuel, Ian, and baby Woo

From the Thiessens

Puzzles – Part I

Dear friends,

The 24 days have gone by swiftly, probably more so for me than for Anne, though. We all survived, except I've returned with some deep-seated cold thing.

I wrote in the last letter about going over to "puzzle", among other things, with Grant and Chris. We did

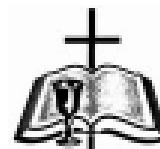


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a lot of that amidst the hours or even days of travel in the searing 110 degree heat around northern India, and the moments between interviews. We chose the swath of north India from Pakistan to the far side of Nepal, where some of the largest unengaged groups of the world dwell. This is also one of the oldest seats of religion and civilization. For the travelogue details and photos, please visit Chris Leake's blog: www.leakespeak.com.

We visited with 19 different individuals or teams (six Indians, two Africans, one Guatemalan, one Chinese, one Norwegian, the rest Americans). That was from nine organizations (three of those Indian) and a Hindu background South African turned "swami" in India for the last 10 years. All of them are involved in church planting work, and this is where some of the puzzling came as we tried to understand the differences.

There's a general idea that foreigners (white ones, let's say) are too conspicuous out in rural areas (where 70% of India lives in over half a million villages/cities). Almost all missionaries are based in large cities (where a million habitants is small). The Indian leaders consistently informed us that white missionaries would actually cause harm to grassroots efforts, and are better placed either behind the scenes or in teaching roles among leaders. We puzzled about how outsiders with no cultural or language knowledge of India could teach leaders already fairly successful in starting house churches. We were reassured that it was possible. We're still puzzling.

One leader told us that the groups he's associated with will have a church in every one of India's 660,000 village/cities within 10 years, 20 at the most. Another told us of huge in-

creases among the Dalits, or the outcastes. Most told us of very little growth, often not keeping up with the population increase, and discouragingly small advances over long periods of ministry. The higher castes especially are resistant to "Christianity", but to them that means being ripped out of their own culture and relationships, being forced to accept a foreign (Western) cultural package of responding to God. More puzzles as we listened to explanations of "insider movements" and "contextualization" and defenses of "traditional" Christians.

Traditional missions saw all of Hindu culture as so infused with demons and idol worship that nothing could be taken up into a proper response to Christ. Even the identifying marks that indicate a woman is married (dot on forehead, smear of red in the hair

part) are wrong. Certainly the outward forms and instruments (flowers, candles, incense, coconut, types of drums, small hand bells) of Hindu worship are straight from the devil. They tend to find fault in other slightly different forms of responding to God, demand a pure worship; and only occasionally open themselves up to small changes.

Contextualizers understand God to have been at work among the Hindus from the beginning of time, and that His creativity can be seen in the wonderful diversity of colour, forms, and even content that has arisen in this ancient people. They want to help spiritual seekers find the one true path to God through Jesus Christ, and enjoy and employ all that helps them help Hindus find Him. They use common Hindi words to describe what




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they are doing, like *satsang* instead of “church” and *bukta Yeshua* instead of “Christian.” Among themselves (including the insiders, and the occasional tradionalist) they discuss, sometimes argue, about what is enough, too much, not enough; and build each other up in their journey.

Puzzles – Part II

Some missionaries straddle the fence, working with both types of responder, encouraging whichever form that takes people into a relationship with God. We kept wondering where in this conundrum we feel placed to fit. We also wondered what the parallels to our own situation in Mexico and the Catholic context are.

And what about our North American culture? Do western missionaries sometimes demand of new believers a response to God that even after 2000 years we have not managed to practice well? Have we been freed of the

gods that inhabit our own world and the forms of worship they demand? Have we managed to come to the place where there are neither Jews nor Gentiles? Does our freedom to choose marriage partners really mean we are so much better off socially? Poverty related to class, culture, and ethnicity is no longer a problem, right?

We agreed to some ideals, when the dust settled. It was Giovanni, the Guatemalan missionary, who perhaps summarized it best. “Come and learn from the local people, and leave aside your plans for at least a while. Trust God enough to let Him use these “pagan” people to teach you what He is already doing. Open yourselves up enough to who they are to begin to love them “as they are.” Suspend judgment, remembering the mote in your own eye. Share your story, and God’s story, as you enter into their story. Trust that God can use your incomplete efforts; you don’t need to “figure it all out.”

I’ve been using the “we” form only to get the point across. Anne and I are sticking to Mexico for the next good while, as far as we can see. There’s lots to do here, and this trip helps us see better what to do here, how to encourage future missionaries, how to mobilize for global missions. A lot of how we go about missions here was reaffirmed in India. We’re not the only crazies out there. Some of why we won’t do certain things was reinforced. We saw the need there, and remember the real need here (certainly smaller in terms of just numbers). We’re involved in four networks of missions that train and church plant, we are doing “church planting” ourselves here and encouraging that among the Mixtecos, and even though fresh out of apprentices, welcome new ones.

So keep praying, please. Pray for **Manuel** (heading up a Baptist student movement of missionaries, placing close to 20 six-week volunteers

this summer and several one-year volunteers); for **Nathan** (newly heading up a Frontiers-like missions agency for Mexicans, mobilizing, training, apprenticing); for **Jack and Vasti** (heading up YWAM discipling efforts, starting a new year-long experience-based school in 2009); for **Grant and Chris** (heading up their school, about 20 students, many of these family people, and the 10 or so one-year apprentices, most of them on the church planting team; and their plans for reaching out into Thailand and India).

We’re traveling in the US and Canada this summer, mostly in Canada. We’ll leave in June and get back in mid-August. We want to keep missions and the puzzling that accompanies that fresh in the hearts and minds of those that support us in so many ways. We want this struggle to influence believers and churches in our own culture so that all the cultures



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Welcome

that surround us so closely might also know of God's infinite love. Cross-cultural missions can be everywhere, if we look with open eyes and minds. We can even find that we are part of a group no longer in touch with what we think of as our "own" culture. Paul said he would do whatever it takes so that some (new) people might respond to the Saviour. He found those new people everywhere he turned, not just far from home. Pray for this, too.

Many blessings to you, as we have been so blessed by you all, Robert.

From Jill...

Hi everyone!!

Several days ago I was walking through the puddled streets of a poor, inner-city neighborhood. My head was throbbing and my new \$2 jellies were rubbing into the flesh of my feet. Beads of sweat formed on my face as the hot Indonesian sun bore down. The humidity was so thick I could feel it in my chest. Men sat smoking cigarettes on their front steps staring at us "bules" passing by. Women were washing dishes and hanging out freshly washed clothing, they would smile as I would say good morning, "selamat pagi." This particular day I was mustering up all the joy I could find to get through. We sat down on a small porch surrounded by women

and children teaching them about health care and the love of God. Honestly, I was relieved when we prayed and finished. I stood up ready to leave when I noticed a small bunch of children huddled around something on the street. I curiously made my way over. One boy was squatted down holding something quite delicately in his hand while 5 or 6 of his neighborhood friends gazed on. I took a closer look and found him holding a lizard in one hand and a bright orange band aid in the other. The poor lizard must have had a run in with a heavy foot or a car tire, because some of his poor little guts were hanging out the side of his belly. Every once in a while the lizard would muster up enough strength to make a get away, but the little boy would gently tighten his grip and try to get the bright orange band aid around his belly. The precious little boy worked with such a compassionate and concerned look to his face. Finally the band aid held. The lizard doctor picked him up by the tail and stuck him to a nearby tree. As we walked away he was still there observing.

God's been teaching me about compassion. Jesus was compassionate. Over and over Jesus saw people and felt compassion for them. What exactly is compassion? Last week, I was in the middle of telling one of our translators, Desi, about the kingdom of God when he said, "This word

compassion, what does it mean?" The dictionary definition is "a deep awareness of the suffering of another coupled with the wish to relieve it." I told Desi, "Compassion is when you see people and you have this deep desire to reach out to them." Not as good as Webster's, but I'm still on a journey to find out what compassion looks like fleshed out. One thing God's showing me is that there's not a lot of room for "self" if you're wanting to be compassionate. That's where I was missing it the other day and God had to show me what compassion looks like through a little boy in the street. I may have seen that lizard as a lost cause. In fact a lot of the people Jesus called after Himself the world probably labeled as "no one's" or "lost causes". I once felt like a lost cause.

"Now, when Jesus heard about John (that he had been beheaded), He withdrew from there in a boat to a secluded place by Himself; and when the people heard of this, they followed Him on foot from the cities. When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick" Matthew 14:13-14. Beautiful selfless compassion...

Well, we have 3 weeks left here in Indonesia. Mostly we will continue serving in and alongside the church here, encouraging them to follow their compassionate Lord into the slums, shopping malls, and mosques. We will be spending the last week of May back in Perth to finish up our course. I plan to be returning to Texas the first week in June to pray about and make plans for what comes next. Please pray for us as we finish up this journey:

- Since we have arrived here we have been battling with sickness. We've been passing around stomach bugs and head colds.
- Pray for unity among us and the churches we're working alongside.
- Pray for God to birth new vision for the Indonesian church to see their nation see the Light.
- Pray for our own safe travel over the next month.

I appreciate you all so much!

Blessings, Jill

"...our imitation of God in this life – that is, our willed imitation as distinct from any of the likeness which He has impressed upon our natures or states – must be an imitation of God incarnate: our model Jesus, not only of Calvary, but of the workshop, the roads, the crowds, the clamorous demands and surly oppositions, the lack of all peace and privacy, the interruptions. For this, so strangely unlike anything we can attribute to the Divine life itself, is apparently not only like, but is, the Divine life operating under human conditions." C.S. Lewis, Four Loves

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Synodical Committee Meeting of April 12, 2008

-a report by Kathy Harrison

The Spring meeting of the Synodical Committee was held at the New Tabor Brethren Church and was called to order by Claren Kotrla, President. The devotional was given by Rev. Dave Johnson. Reports were given by the Financial Secretary and Treasurer. The Secretary of the Unity gave a reminder as to the Congregational Questionnaires that have not been received. Reports from various Organizations were given.

Motions were passed concerning the following issues:

- Outstanding checks. The Treasurer is to contact each payee, and if the check has not been received he is to put a stop payment on that check.

- The Definition of the Full-Time Pastor (ref. By-laws, Article 20). For the purpose of the Minister Benefits Program we define full-time Unity Pastors as ordained Pastors serving a congregation, or congregations, which supports the Ministers Benefits Program at the full assessment rate.

- IRS letters for Congregations (Group exemption). For the purpose of State Tax, the Executive Committee is to complete research and report back at next meeting.

- The Intern Program. Rev. Joe Emerson is volunteer mentor for Michael Hayes this summer. Rev. Larry Koslovsky will also meet with Rev. Joe Emerson and Michael Hayes.

- Liability Issues.

- a. Executive Committee is to investigate liability exposure (churches within Unity) in reference to congregational assets local and Unity-wide sponsored events.

- b. Executive Committee (Claren Kotrla and James Marek) attend IRS Workshop Training Program at Austin, Texas (exempt organizations).

- Other Items.

- a. \$1,000 given to Rev. Jim Heckman from the Church Extension Fund for "In God's Hands Ministry".

- b. Executive Committee is authorized to provide a loan up to \$5,000 to "In God's Hands Ministry" after they have evaluated the plan and programming of this ministry.

The following agenda items were presented:

1. State Youth Coordinator, Kim Stewart, announced her resignation and a search committee was appointed to interview to fill the position. Kim

Stewart will remain as the program coordinator for the Hus Camps.

2. Reminder to all congregations that Guy Huffman is to prepare W-2's for Pastors and 1099's for *Brethren Journal* employees. Wage information is to be sent to him quarterly.

3. Armando Barros, Sr., and Armando Barros, Jr., were present with Bro. Scott Keaton from Pasadena. Requested to become part of the Unity as Pastors. Pastoral Committee to meet with them again and report back at next Synodical Meeting.

4. Updated Bylaws per the 2007 Convention are available on the website or contact Rev. Jimmy Hejl.

5. *Brethren Journal* is available by email subscriptions. Forms available. Contact Cathleen Schlechte.

The Next Executive meeting of the Synodical Committee was scheduled for August 27 at 6:00 PM at the Taylor Brethren Church. The next Synodical Committee Meeting will be on October 4, 2008, at the Hus Encampment.

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(254) 742-0827

ronwinsman@hotmail.com

Elder Board President

Bill McGuire

2418 South 49th
Temple, TX 76504
(254) 778-2988

Cemetery

Sharon Marek

23383 Milam Road
Burlington, TX 76519
(254) 985-2457

Youth Director

Jennifer Chervenka

9494 Big Elm Creek Rd.
Rogers, TX 76569
(254) 983-1002

To communicate with the Hus Encampment . . .

. . . regarding scheduling* of meetings or events there, contact:

Dawn Marie Baletka
600 Benchmark Drive
College Station, TX 77845
(979) 777-9940 or (979) 693-2710
BaletkaD@navasotaisd.org

*This must be done well in advance.

Spiritual Confusion... Synodical Committee Devotional

-by Rev. Dave Johnson

With Oprah Winfrey preaching New Age philosophies without Christ, Rev. Wright spewing anti-American, anti-Semitic, racist rants from his pulpit in Chicago, and the "Yearning For Zion" Fundamentalist Mormon ranch in El Dorado, Texas, there is so much confusion waiting for today's seekers. It's like wanting a drink of water in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Water, water, everywhere but not a drop to drink.

In Matthew 28:16-20, Jesus gave us a commission to fulfill. This was an order from Heaven, not a suggestion. Many churches today have turned the order of reaching the lost into self-serving club-like churches that are more concerned with doting on members than reaching the confused lost. Maybe that's why the lost are confused. We have abused the mandate.

The great commission is more important than any organization currently in our congregations. Don't get me wrong, these groups were formed to meet needs and in balance they are important, but the bottom line is souls. The bottom line

is delivering the antidote of the world's confusion. The antidote called truth.

Our numbers have been declining because we have put the cart before the horse. It's not essential who is the next delegate to the conventions. It's not essential who wins the Youth volleyball tournament. Our financial concerns as a denomination don't concern Christ. He measures us by our attention to the final order He gave the church. "Go, Teach, and Baptize."

Not as a denomination, but as a people! We can't send the denomination to do the work. Christ expects the men, women, and children in the pews to teach their nations, where God has put them, where they live. We can't delegate the mandate. We must individually tell people the good news, the antidote, the truth!

In Arlington Cemetery, I was watching the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. I watched as the Sgt. of the guard whispered something in the ear of the guard that just began his duty. I found out later that he whispers this

order from command to every guard beginning duty. He whispers every hour of every day, "The Orders Have Not Changed."

Can you hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches? His orders from Matthew 28 have not changed.

Let's challenge ourselves and our congregations to tell people what

they need to hear. That Jesus is the Savior, He died for their sins, He rose from the dead, and He is coming back for those who have accepted His sacrifice on the cross! Then let's let the chips fall where they may. I am convinced our numbers will rise as we remember "the orders have not changed."

Seaton Brethren Church

12561 State Highway 53

Temple, Texas 76501

254-985-2694



Sunday Schedule

9:15 a.m.

Prayer Gathering

9:30 a.m.

Sunday School for ALL Ages

10:30 a.m.

Worship Service

Wednesday Schedule

6:30 p.m.

Kid's NITE Out (ages 3-5th gr.)

Priority ONE Youth (6th - 12th gr.)

Adult Bible Study

7:30 p.m.

Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal

Pastor

Rev. Joe Emerson

P.O. Box 4615
Temple, TX 76505
(254) 791-0420 hm
(254) 931-1653 cell

Youth Director

Steve Davis

P.O. Box 658
Rogers, TX 76569
(254) 913-1214

Board of Elders

Chairperson

Dolores Skrabanek

13107 State Highway 53
Temple, TX 76501
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6207 North Main, Houston, TX 77009 - (713) 864-6707

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO WORSHIP WITH US

Sunday School 9:15 a.m. - Church Service 10:30 a.m.

For information please contact one of the following:

Dorothy Hinson
President

7331 Misty Morning Lane
Humble, TX 77346
(281) 620-0480

Larry King, Secretary

Board of Elders
1611 Palomino Ln.
Kingwood, TX 77339
(281) 358-3355

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The Unity Website...

This website has been created and maintained by Ben Polasek for many years. The following note he recently received from Nashville, Tennessee, reflects the appreciation of many others for the availability of information found at <unityofthebrethren.org>. Debbie Nafzger writes from Tennessee.

...editor

I just want to thank you for posting all these pictures, as my son just opened a family Czech Bible we have and found an original of this picture (Husova Skola 1934) in it this morning. I had no idea what relative it came from (Czech on both sides of my family, but different states, Missouri and Texas)

or what the husova skola was. I know that I have a HUGE box of similar type pictures from my Grandparents (Sebestas and Lomicas). One photo in particular, a large professional portrait of my great grandfather, Joseph Sebesta, is shown wearing a ribbon like these and I have never known what they were for. Due to modern technology and scanners, I can now thankfully put together a story of who they are for my sons.

Thanks ~ Debbie Sebesta Nafzger,
Currently in Nashville, TN
(Grew up in Pasadena, Texas; Dad from Temple, Texas; Grandfather and Great-Grandfather Sebesta from Snook, Texas.)

Youth News...

WANTED! A BYF member to serve as the Youth Representative on the Hus Encampment Board of Trustees

A note from Kimberly Stewart:

By now, many of you may have already heard the news, but I certainly want to share with each of you a bit about my decision. At the April Synodical Committee meeting, I sub-

mitted a letter of resignation as youth coordinator for the Unity of the Brethren Church.

After several months of prayer and deliberation, I decided this decision, although one of the hardest in my life,

PLEASE JOIN US AS WE
"Bear ye one another's burdens
And so fulfill the Law of Christ."
(Gal. 6:2)

THE MUTUAL AID SOCIETY

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Guy E. Huffman, Treasurer
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Dorothy Hinson, Board Member

was the best thing for my family. I love this job. At times I find it hard to consider it a job, when I'm having so much fun hanging out with some of the neatest young people in the state of Texas! But, each evening that I travel to have dinner with college students, each weekend that I hang out at the camp or other location, I miss out on things happening with my own children. For many years, it all worked out – I could manage. Now, my children are very involved in activities and I have to choose between being there for the youth and being there for my kids. I also feel that although I've done a lot with the youth and try to keep events and ideas fresh and current, a new person with new ideas and perspectives is due on the scene.

I am certainly not just walking away. First of all, my resignation is not effective until after the summer retreat and convention. Hopefully by that point a new person will be se-

lected and I can work with that person in transition. Secondly, my heart has not changed and I will do whatever I can to continue to help the BYF. Thirdly, it will only be a couple of years until I am serving as a parent of a BYF member, so I'll be right there.

To clarify some questions already raised... there has been no incident to cause this, we are not moving, we are not leaving the Brethren Church. I just have a strong desire to slow down, spend more time with my children and allow someone to bring fresh ideas to the position.

I have thoroughly loved and enjoyed this job and getting to work with the best young people and adults. Thank you for all of the wonderful experiences and memories. I also want to thank the many people who have supported, counseled, and encouraged me over the past 11 years. I will see you soon at camps, or at the summer retreat/convention! ☺

WALL BRETHREN CHURCH

Located in Wall, Texas, on old Highway 87
(Loop 570), 12 miles east of San Angelo.



Sunday Schedule
Sunday School – 9:30 A.M.
Worship – 10:45 A.M.

Church: (325) 651-4444
Pastor: Rev. Thomas Tallas
(325) 949-7543
rev.tjt@verizon.net

Chairman, Board of Elders
Jimmie Brenek, (325) 469-3733

"Come as a guest, leave as a friend"

Striving for Some Unity Within the UNITY

-Rev. Michael Groseclose

Growing up in central Texas and attending the Ocker Brethren Church, one of the things I used to wonder about was how come there was so little unity in our area when we had four Unity churches (Ocker, Seaton, Temple, and Buckholts) located so close together. In my young days, the four churches were connected in that Ocker and Temple worked as one parish and Seaton and Buckholts as another, but, by and large, these congregations never really interacted with one another. It's not to say that no efforts were made to try to do so, because there were. In the early 1980s, Ocker and Seaton combined youth in an attempt to put together an active BYF. The mid 1980s and the early 1990s even saw Temple, Seaton, and Ocker combine for joint Vacation Bible Schools. However, there was never any real attempt on the congregational level to interact. I know this because I recall leading worship services, as a ministerial student, in all four congregations and know that, with the exception of family relatives, no one really knew anyone in the other congregations. Each congregation seemed only interested and content with what it was doing.

When I became pastor of the Nelsonville congregation on July 1, 1991, I once again found myself in an area where four Unity congregations (Fayetteville, Industry, Wesley, and Nelsonville) were located close together and yet did not really interact. Like my experience of growing up in Central Texas, it seemed that the four churches were interested and content

to be concerned only with themselves. Even though we belong to the same denomination and are all located within about 20 miles from each other, there was no sense of connection whatsoever.

This feeling of not being connected was reinforced when I took over the Wesley congregation full time in 2004. Imagine my shock and surprise when I learned that, although the churches are only 10 miles apart, some of my Nelsonville members didn't know that we had a congregation in Wesley and several didn't know where it was located. At that moment it became clear to me that if we were going to be The Unity, then we needed to have some unity, and that if that unity was going to happen, it was going to begin with me.

My first efforts involved combining the youth into one group, doing joint Lenten Services (alternating the services between the two churches) and having two church picnics each year (one on the last Sunday of April and one on the last Sunday of September): the first was held at Nelsonville and the second at Wesley. On these two Sundays, the congregations gather to worship and fellowship together. There is no service at Wesley on the April picnic day and none at Nelsonville on the September event.

As unity built between Wesley and Nelsonville, I began to think that this unity could be expanded to include Industry and Fayetteville. In the spring of 2006 I shared this thought with Bro. Milton, and he thought that it was a wonderful idea. However, as

the year moved along I couldn't seem to move this idea forward from more than just a thought. I prayed and I looked... but I just couldn't see how to make progress in this effort. Then, in November of 2006, Bro. Milton and Jean suffered the tragedy of losing their house to a fire. Everything was lost. Fortunately (if one can say "fortunately" in a tragic time), what was a tragedy for the Malys brought with it a silver lining. That silver lining was the opportunity to watch the Unity, and especially the four local congregations come together to help someone in need. Out of this event God shared with me the understanding that if these four could come together for one, surely they could come together for all. Bro. Milton and I began to discuss the possibilities of this unity building and, in January of 2008, a meeting of the joint Boards of Elders of the four congregations was held at the Industry Brethren Church.

The purpose of this meeting was really just to introduce ourselves to each other, to share what we were doing individually, and to see how we could support and help one another. The plan was originally to have three

or four of these joint meetings throughout the year so that we could strive to stay in contact with, and be supportive of, each other, but also to pick a date in August when the four congregations will join together in an activity of worship and fellowship. Although these four congregations have a long history of sharing pastors, to the best of anyone's knowledge this will be the first joint worship and fellowship event for them. Coming together to support, worship, fellowship in unity not only enhances our ministry as individual congregations, but it will also enhance our ministry as a group.

I share this experience with you because as I look around the state, I see several areas where Unity congregations are clustered together and have this same opportunity to foster and grow unity. Over the past few decades individual congregations have gone their own ways, focused on and concerned only about themselves and, with very few exceptions, really haven't accomplished a lot. Maybe, just maybe, it's time to find some ways to put a little unity back into The Unity!

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DAILY BIBLE READING GUIDE

Daily Morsels for June 2008

Dorothy E. Kocian

- The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being. Heb. 1:3**
- "I will put My law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people." Jer. 31:33
- "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." Jer. 31:34b
- Once more made perfect, Jesus Christ became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him. Heb. 5:9
- Jesus Christ was designated to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek. Heb. 5:10
- This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. Like the Son of God he remains a priest forever. Heb. 7:1,3
- Because Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood. Heb. 7:24
- He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them. Heb. 7:25**
- Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Heb. 9:22
- When we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Rom. 5:6
- He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. Titus 3:5
- Give thanks to the Lord for He is good; His love endures forever. Ps. 107:1
- Let the redeemed of the Lord say this – those He redeemed from the foe. Ps. 107:2
- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One is the atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1 Jn. 2:2
- But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners Christ died for us. Rom. 5:8**
- Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Rom. 6:11
- For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace. Rom. 6:14
- I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Jesus Christ my Lord. Phil. 3:8
- If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ. Gal. 1:10
- Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." Jn. 8:12
- Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Heb. 12:1
- Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. Heb. 12:2**
- See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy. Col. 2:8
- Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him. Col. 2:6
- It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. Ps. 118:8
- With everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you, says the Lord, your Redeemer. Isa. 54:8
- God has said, "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you." Heb. 13:5
- Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Heb. 13:8
- Before the mountains were born or You brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God. Ps. 90:2**
- If you confess with your mouth "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Rom. 10:9

VITAL STATISTICS

MEMBERS RECEIVED

By Reaffirmation of Faith:

ED and ROBYN DICKEY on March 2, 2008, at Caldwell Brethren Church.

By Profession of faith and Adult Baptism:

DAVID and BRANDI WILLIFORD on December 30, 2007, Caldwell Brethren Church.

By Letter of Transfer:

ANDREW ("ANDY") KOLLMAN, on April 20, 2008, at the Nelsonville Brethren Church

TOM and ROSE KUBENA at the Fayetteville Brethren Church on May 4, 2008.

RECENT BAPTISMS

TYLER MCALLEN WILLIFORD, son of David and Brandi Williford, born on March 8, 2006, was baptized on December 30, 2007, at the Caldwell Brethren Church. Sponsors: Walter Demus and Kelly Gilbert. Minister: Jim Heckman.

MAKENNA KAYE KELM, son of Ryan and Megan (Page) Kelm, born on January 15, 2008, was baptized on April 13, 2008, at the Nelsonville Brethren Church. Sponsors: Corey Page, Becky Folsom, Rhonda Bentke, Steven Kelm, and Linda Sue Triolo. Minister: Michael Groseclose.

DAYTON BENNETT KNIPPA, son of Daniel and Kimberly Knippa, born January 1, 2008, was baptized April 20, 2008, at the Taylor Brethren Church. Sponsors: Brandon Raesz and Jeffrey and Robin Knippa. Minister: Jimmie Hejl.

DARCY GRACE LUEDKE, daughter of Brandon and Rebecca (Peschel) Luedke, born on February 6, 2008, was baptized on April 20, 2008, at the Nelsonville Brethren Church. Sponsors: Sarah Peschel, Chad Luedke, Stacy Thiel, Jason Zwahr, and Bo and Jill Brandt. Minister: Michael Groseclose.

ETHAN JAMES REDDOCH, daughter of Joshua and Kristi (Shimara) Reddoch, born on October 11, 2007, was baptized on April

20, 2008, at the Nelsonville Brethren Church. Sponsors: Jon and Jaime Schroeder. Minister: Michael Groseclose.

KINZIE RAYLYNN WILLIFORD, daughter of David and Brandi Williford, born March 13, 2008, was baptized on May 11, 2008 at the Caldwell Brethren Church. Sponsors, Alfred E. Simpson and Tammy R. Simpson. Minister: Jim Heckman.

RECENT DEATHS

Correction from the May Issue: The Death notice for Mrs. Lillian Pinter should have shown her full name to be LILLIAN ZOE RYPEL PINTER.

VALIGURA, MILADY, age 90, of Caldwell and a former resident of Dime Box, died on March 21, 2008, in Caldwell. She was born January 19, 1918, in the Gus Community of Burleson County, the daughter of Frank and Frances Balcar Pecena. She was a lifetime member of the Brethren Church (Dime Box and then Caldwell), Caldwell Christian Sisters, and a Sunday School teacher. She is preceded in death by her parents, her husband Henry, three brothers, and a sister. Survivors include her daughter and son-in-law, a sister, a brother, three grandchildren; three great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews. Services were held on March 25, 2008, at the Caldwell Brethren Church with interment at the Hranice Cemetery. Minister: Jim Heckman.

MIKESKA, ETHEL ALICE (SEBESTA), age 90 and a member of the Nelsonville Brethren Church, died on April 20, 2008, at her home near Shelby. She was one of the first women elected to the Nelsonville Board of Elders and the only woman to serve as its president, taught Sunday School for more than 50 years, and served as an organist/pianist for many years. Mrs. Mikeska was born on February 18, 1918, at Oak Hill, Texas, and was married to Nelson Mikeska on June 26, 1948. She is survived by her husband, two children, and two grandchildren. Services were on April 23, 2008, at the Nelsonville Brethren Church with burial in the National Cemetery. Minister: Michael Groseclose.

Annual Christian Sisters Bazaar, 2nd Saturday in September

The Rosenberg Brethren Church

Christian Sisters

5220 Reading Road, Rosenberg, Texas 77471

Schedule and Details of Upcoming Unity Activities

Keep these activities in your prayers.

June 22: The 10th annual Fayetteville Brethren Church Celebration (see details below).

June 28: History and Doctrine Class at the Houston Brethren Church (see article inside the front cover).

July 12: The Mutual Aid Convention at the Ocker Brethren Church (see invitation inside the front cover).

October 4: the Fall meeting of the Synodical Committee, at Hus School Encampment.

Youth Activities Calendar

June 7-9 or 8-10	Alpha Camp
June 15-20	Pioneer Camp
June 22-27	Discovery Camp
June 29-July 18	Hus School
July 26 & 27	Summer B.Y.F. Retreat
October 24-26	Fall Scrappin' & Stampin' Retreat
November 8 & 9	Fall B.Y.F. Retreat

UNITY OF THE BROTHERS YOUTH DIRECTOR

Kimberly Stewart, 407 Kates Way
Hutto, TX 78634, (512) 846-2925
kcstew@austin.rr.com

You are invited...

Everyone is invited to the 10th Annual Celebration of the Fayetteville Brethren Congregation on June 22. Worship is at 10:30 AM at the church. Then, at noon at the Ellinger Chamber of Commerce Hall, there will be a meal of turkey, ham and dressing; tickets \$7. Included also will be a bake sale, country store, musical entertainment by Kovanda's Czech Band, and a 1:00 PM live auction. Proceeds benefit the Building Fund of the church. The Christian Sisters' will have a Quilt Show & Silent Auction at the celebration, which will benefit Unity of the Brethren programs and local charities. For more info, contact Joe Ripple at 979-378-2239.

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES JUNE 2008

Austin – Bible Study at 10:00 AM
Worship at 11:00 AM.
– Rev. Linda Chandler

Bryan-College Station – worship at
9:00 AM every Sunday.
Snook – worship at 10:45 AM every
Sunday.
– Rev. Joseph Polasek

Buckholts – worship at 9:00 AM every
Sunday except the 5th Sunday.
Holy Communion on 1st Sunday.
Guest speaker on 4th Sunday.
– Rev. John Kueker

Caldwell – Sunday School at 9:30 AM,
worship at 10:30 AM every Sunday.
Bible Study on Tuesday at 10:30 AM.
– Rev. Jim Heckman

Crosby –
Sunday – 9:00 AM: Worship
10:00 AM: Faith Adventure
11:00 AM: Celebration
– Dr. Larry Koslovsky

Cy-Fair Community Church – worship at
10:45 AM every Sunday.
1st, 3rd, & 5th Sundays – Rev. Rick Chandler
2nd & 4th Sundays – Rev. Henry Beseda
– Rev. Henry Beseda

Dime Box – worship at 9:00 AM every
Sunday.
– Rev. Jim Heckman

Faith Brethren in Bryan – For current
worship schedule, call 979-260-2700
(Church) or 979-846-6561 (Pastor).
– Kay Polasek

Good News Fellowship Church of West
Palm Beaches – worship at 1:00 PM every
Sunday at Boynton Springs Presbyterian
Church, Boynton Springs, Florida.
– Rev. James Henry

Good Shepherd Moravian – worship at
11:30 AM and 6:30 PM every Sunday.
– Rev. Adolfo Gonzalez

Granger – worship services every Sunday at
9:00 AM; Sunday School at 10:15 AM.
1st, 2nd, & 3rd Sunday – Rev. Charles Amos
4th & 5th Sunday – Mark Sebek

Houston – Every Sunday:
Sunday School at 9:15 AM;
Worship at 10:30 AM every Sunday.
– Visiting Ministers

Industry – worship at 9:00 AM every
Sunday with Sunday School for all
ages following.
– Rev. Milton Maly

Fayetteville – Sunday School at 9:30 AM,
worship at 10:30 AM every Sunday.
– Rev. Milton Maly

Nelsonville – Sunday School at 9:00 AM
Worship at 10:15 AM
– Rev. Michael Groseclose

New Tabor – Sunday School at 9:30 AM &
Worship at 10:30 AM every Sunday,
"Tune Up" on Wednesdays, 7:30 PM.
– Rev. Dave Johnson

Ocker – worship at 10:15 AM every Sunday.
– Rev. Ron Winsman

Pasadena – Sunday School at 9:30 AM
and worship at 10:45 AM every Sunday.
Bible Study at 7:30 PM on Wednesday.
– Scott Keaton

Rosenberg –
Sundays: Adult Bible Study and Sunday
School for children at 9:00 AM; worship
at 10:30 AM.
Wednesdays: 5:30 PM, Dinner; 6:30 PM,
Bible Study; 6:50 PM, Prayer Meeting.
– Bro. Larry Butcher

Seaton –
Sunday, 9:15 AM – Sunday School, All Ages;
10:30 AM – Worship Celebration Service.
Wednesday, 6:30 PM – Kid's NITE Out
and Priority ONE Youth (BYF), Adult
Bible Study.
– Rev. Joe Emerson

Taylor – worship at 10:15 AM every Sunday.
– Rev. James Hejl

Temple – Sunday School at 9:30 AM.,
Worship at 10:45 AM.
– Rev. Bill Rinderknecht, Interim

Vsetin – worship at 10:00 AM every Sunday.
1st, 2nd, & 4th Sunday – Dr. Mark Labaj
3rd Sunday – Rev. Henry Beseda
5th Sunday – Visiting Ministers
– Rev. Henry Beseda

Wall – Sunday School (for all ages) at 9:30
AM; worship at 10:45 AM every Sunday.
– Rev. Thomas Tallas

Wesley – worship at 9:00 AM every
Sunday. Sunday School follows.
– Rev. Michael Groseclose

West – Sunday School at 9:00 AM and
worship at 10:15 AM every Sunday.
– Rev. Curtis Holland

Westheimer Community – 9:30 AM, Christian
Education; 10:30 AM, Worship, with Holy
Communion every 2nd Sunday.
– Visiting Ministers

DIRECTORY OF MISSIONARIES

The Griggs . . . (family now in Texas)
Ray's cell phone: (713) 416-5411, later
changing to (281) 221-7289
Nicaraguan cell phone: 011-505-632-1489
Ray's e-mail: raygriggs@hotmail.com
Laurie's cell phone: (281) 211-7083
Laurie's e-mail: lagriggs@hotmail.com

Jill Miller
e-mail: jillmiller7@gmail.com

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Tlalixtac de Cabrera
Oaxaca, MEXICO 68627
(011) 52-1-951-145-8947
e-mail: rvtiessen@yahoo.com

Michael and Caroline Woo
See contact information in the Woo's
letter, this issue.

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SYNODICAL COMMITTEE

President: Claren Kotrla, (512) 491-7802;
kotrla@flash.net

1st Vice President: Rev. Linda Chandler

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