

THE BRETHREN



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28 Pages



**Rev. Joseph Polasek installs the new
Christian Sisters Union Officers at the 2008 Convention.**

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The 2008 Christian Sisters Convention

The 2007 Report of Medical Activities at the Moravian Clinic at Ahuas

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

*See "Youth News" for listing of positions for which dedicated and
creative youth workers are needed!*

. . . and more!

THE BRETHREN JOURNAL

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Mutual Aid Society
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

ATTENTION
ALL CONGREGATIONS

If you as a congregation sub-
scribe for all of your mem-
bers, be sure to send a cor-
rect address list to the Busi-
ness Manager, Cathleen
Schlechte. Some members
have not been receiving their
issues because there was an
address error in their
congregation's list.

President's Column . . . Claren Kotrla

ASSUMPTIONS

Almost daily we make assump-
tions about many things in our daily
lives, and the Bible is
filled with examples of as-
sumptions, some with
devastating results.

Before getting into this
topic to deeply, I would
like to share with you a
desire I shared with sev-
eral staff members at work
years ago. I explained that



I desired a particular stripper because
of her beauty. I was enamored with
here color, curves, and the way she
glided and moved. However, she was
too expensive. What I was talking
about was a canoe called a "stripper"
made from one inch wide strips of
beautiful cedar. The strips of cedar
were bent on a frame, which was later
removed, to form the curves which
allowed the canoe to glide gracefully
and easily through the water. Boats
are referred to as "she" so it was
natural to refer to the boat as female.
These beautiful canoes are referred to
simply as strippers, and there were

about four of us at work who were
considering making one of these can-
oes. Even making one
from a kit was expensive.
However one individual
actually did complete
building one from scratch.

What happened was
that some of the people
to whom I was speaking
immediately assumed I
was talking about some-
thing totally different and were going
to report me to my supervisor, etc.
This story illustrates something I found
interesting. Assumptions tell more
about the person making the assump-
tion than whom or what the assump-
tion is made. These people were so
focused on finding something bad or
wrong with others their judgment was
clouded and all previous actions were
dismissed. There was actually a de-
sire by them to play the old "gotcha"
game. I suspect with the political
season getting into full swing we will
be able to observe a lot of that over
the next few months.



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Let's look at some other assumptions. One of the first examples of an assumption is found in Genesis. Noah was told to build an Ark with specific dimensions and cargo. Others assumed incorrectly that since there had never been a flood there wouldn't be one now. Their false assumptions led to their deaths.

In Deuteronomy 1:19 we began to read how the Israelites sent out spies to the hill country of the Amorites. This is the land the Israelites had been promised. When the spies returned, they said indeed the land is rich and fruitful. But the Israelites were afraid to do what God said because the Amorites were a large people with strongly defended cities. They assumed that because of this, God's promise to give them this land could not be kept. God became angry with them and delayed their having a land of their own. They were destined to continue wandering in the desert until the next generation.

Remember how Goliath assumed that because he was so big and powerful with the finest weapons and armor of the time he was invincible? He was faced with a young boy without armor and armed only with a

leather sling and a stick. In I Samuel 17:43 Goliath begins taunting David by saying "Do you think I'm a dog? Is that why you've come after me with a stick?" He cursed David and said that when he was finished with David he would be fed to the birds and wild animals. What Goliath failed to see was that God had prepared and guided David to this point. For all we know Goliath even failed to see the sling that David was so skilled in using. The sling could send an egg sized rock a great distance or, which appears to have happened in this case, send that rock at a high velocity directly from a relatively close range. Once again we see where a bad assumption leads to death.

Examples of how people make assumptions continue in the Bible, including the way Jesus was to come as King of Kings. They envisioned a worldly king on a fine horse with great fanfare. Instead, he came on a humble donkey to save souls.

The final example of assumptions from the Bible that I will share is found starting with Luke 10:30. It is the parable of the Good Samaritan. One would assume that a priest would certainly help the man who had been

robbed. Perhaps the religious Levite would help? No, they both chose not to get involved, just as happens many times in our lives. It was left up to the Samaritan, a racial minority despised in Israel, to show the true love of God. We assume those in power will set the example for us to follow, but all too often they don't.

When I was a youngster in Caldwell, my dad told me a true story about a rich rancher who had sold a large number of cattle at the Ft. Worth Stockyards. He had been paid for the cattle and was walking with a friend to get something to eat. As they passed the Cadillac show room he told his friend he would like to purchase the Cadillac on the show room floor. (Keep in mind they had been working cattle, looked dirty and smelled worse as they entered the showroom.) Upon the rancher's arrival, the seasoned sales people ignored him and sent the newest sales person to deal with the riffraff. The cattleman told the young salesman he would like to buy the car with all the options on the showroom floor. The young man tried to be helpful saying that the car required a significant down payment followed by the monthly payments that would

have to be met. The cattleman said, "I don't want to do that." As he reached in his pocket for a roll of hundred dollar bills he said I want to buy it now and drive it home. At that moment the other seasoned salesmen were eager to "help" the new guy complete the sale. Unfortunately, many times we are like the seasoned salesmen when it comes to welcoming people into our church or sharing our spiritual gifts with others not like us.

Scientists and politicians aren't exempt from making false assumptions. Copernicus in the early 1500s was finally able to convince other scientists that the earth was not the center of the universe and that Earth and the other planets revolved around the sun. Prior to that all scientists did their studies to show that the Earth was the center of the universe. They dismissed other data that showed anything to the contrary. Anyone who tried to show otherwise was considered a heretic, and many were put to death for their findings.

Today the scientist who believes Global Warming is not man made is not considered mainstream and doesn't get funding, or he finds himself with-



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Rev. Nello Strickland
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out research grants. I was listening to a person one Sunday morning while getting ready for church. She was identified as a Global Warming expert and was taking questions from people calling in. One individual called in and asked her about a number of scientists who had conducted some studies and presented some papers indicating that most of Global Warming was part of a cycle including heating of the sun, and human activity played a small part. She cut the caller off and said that she had not read the papers, but that the studies were false and in all probability the people who conducted the studies were not true scientists. In short, she dismissed the studies and reports she had not read as heresy.

Her assumption said volumes about her and ruined her credibility as a scientist. She assumed that because someone had a different opinion they were immediately wrong and worse. Throughout life I have found it is seldom a fact that things are that clear cut. I am not a scientist and I don't propose to say global warming is the fault of human activity, simply a natural cycle, or a combination of both. I do, however, question someone who

refuses to look at all the evidence and dismisses anyone with another view. The question that we should consider is, are we like this woman? Do we assume all others are wrong and dismiss them because they worship a little differently than us, sing differently, or who are different than us? Perhaps our assumption would be more Christ like if we accept these people are God's creation, also, and welcome them rather than excluding them.

Our assumptions can have serious and devastating unexpected consequences. For example, our Congress felt that the best way to become energy independent would be to switch to bio fuels. They made a political decision and provided subsidies to raise corn for bio fuel, the assumption being that we can grow corn to make fuel. That assumption sounds good as far as it goes. What was ignored or not understood was that it would take more than a gallon of gasoline to make a gallon of ethanol. In addition, you get less energy from a gallon of ethanol than from a gallon of gasoline. Therefore, it requires more ethanol to travel the same distance and becomes more of an

environmental problem than using gasoline.

However, the most damaging unexpected consequence was that it took corn out of food production, resulting in riots in Mexico over the skyrocketing cost of corn products, which is the mainstay of almost every country south of the United States. You may have noticed that it increased the cost of all food for us. The fuel problem is also more complex than assumed by our members of Congress. For example, other countries such as India and China are now more prosperous and therefore have greater demands for food; grains, meat, and petroleum products ranging from raw fuel to plastics. Congress made a quick fix without considering the consequences. They fell into the trap of assuming their narrowly focused political action provided the complete answer to the fuel

problem. It is easy to second guess this one, but are we so quick to second guess some of our own assumptions during our individual daily lives?

Several years ago I was on a business trip to Washington, D.C. The flight went through Atlanta, where we changed crews but stayed on the same plane. On this particular flight from Houston I was flying first class. As I watched the new passengers board I noticed a middle-aged man get on the plane. He was dressed in worn tennis shoes, jeans, and shirt. He didn't carry a fancy briefcase as did most of the other passengers. I wondered how a person like this could afford to fly or what caused him to do so. He then sat down next to me in first class. He was actually wealthy and didn't need or care to impress anyone. My assumption of him told



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By Rev. Daniel J. Marek

A compilation of Rev. Marek's articles and translations of articles written from 1986-2004. These articles appeared in various issues of *The Brethren Journal*. Hard Cover, 159 pages. Includes a section on the Unity's beginnings in Texas and a section on the Unity's European history.

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a lot about me at that time. I assumed that to be wealthy you needed to look wealthy and have “things”, as did most of my fellow workers and fellow travelers on that flight

In reality much of our wealth comes from inside us. Some of the wealthiest people are miserable and some who aren't are happy. Most of the happiness we derive isn't from the things we acquire, as one would assume, but from the things we do for others or share with others. This runs counter to the assumptions made in today's world of media hype and advertisement. The assumption is that if we only had whatever is being sold, from an expensive cup of coffee to a fine car, we would be happy. Maybe for a few fleeting moments those things bring us happiness, but it is only when we are willing to share the fruits do we become truly happy.

A friend of mine, who is now a retired three-star general, related that

when he was a platoon leader he found that as likely as not the hero in a battle or fire fight would be a skinny kid with coke-bottle glasses. It isn't always the handsome movie stereotype we assume to be the hero that indeed is the hero. Look around in your daily lives and find the real heroes. In many cases they aren't the ones we assume should be the heroes.

The purpose of presenting these examples of assumptions is to help us make better assumptions and to not make assumptions too quickly. The consequences can range from simple embarrassment to death. However, making assumptions in a Christ-like manner can lead to positive consequences. When we make assumptions with Christ and without our preconceived bias, those assumptions seem to have a better outcome.

Be truly happy,
Claren Kotrla

Report of Medical Work at the Moravian Clinic in 2007 - Milton Maly

Brethren have had long involvement in this clinic at Ahuas... work crews, visits, and financial and spiritual support. Drs. Gerard and Norvelle Rudy are very busy there... the patient load continues to be high; there are times when these doctors have to work well into the night, and they are “on call” 24 hours a day.

The following is the report of medical activities during the previous year... this was compiled by the present administrator, Mr. Hamilton Martinez.

Patient consultations	5134
Deaths	10
Births	166
Delivery deaths of babies	1
Delivery deaths of mothers	0
Surgeries	103
Divers (lobsters) treated for the bends	22
X-rays	478
Ultrasounds	535
Dental patients	340
Extractions	405
Fillings	72
Laboratory tests per month	445

Financially, this effort goes in the red every year... this past year, a total of L10,675 (about 19 Lempiras per US Dollar), but with the help of the Reformed Church and other donors, this debt has been erased.

There are other related clinics in other locations: Cauquira, Ocutaes, and Ciribolla. There are also young people from the area studying in Honduras with the goal of performing in various specialties of the medical field. Several of these are receiving scholarships.

Mr. Martinez closes with this statement in his report: “We are grateful to God for His wisdom and blessings.”

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rev.tjt@verizon.net

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“Come as a guest, leave as a friend”

Thoughts about giving...

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You can give in memory or in the honor of someone.

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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The 44th Christian Sister's Convention

A report by Dorothy Hinson, Secretary

On April 26, the Christian Sisters Society of the Unity of the Brethren met for this year's convention at the Brethren Church of Bryan-College Station. The theme was "We Are Chosen to Serve" and the convention hymn was "I Am a Woman."

The morning worship opened with the singing of the hymn "To God Be the Glory." Rev. Joseph Polasek led the opening prayer and the morning worship. Mrs. Wanda Deiterich, present of the Bryan-College Station group, welcomed the convention attendees. The response was given by Lillian Beasley, vice president of the Christian Sisters Union, in place of President Patsy Blaha, who was unable to attend because of illness. The convention hymn "I Am a Woman" was sung.

Special music was presented by "The Men of Praise." The convention message was delivered by Rev. Milton Maly, pastor of the Industry and Fayetteville Brethren Churches. The Sacrament of Holy Communion was observed by all in attendance, led by Rev. Joseph Polasek, who was assisted by Rev. Maly. The morning service closed with the singing of "Sweet, Sweet Spirit" and a prayer.

The Morning Business Session opened with a prayer at 10:45 AM and was followed by the roll call of the Christian Sisters Union officers, who also served as the officers of the proceedings. These were Lillian Beasley, acting President; Dorothy Hinson, Secretary; Mary Polasek, Financial Secretary; and Evelyn Henry,



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*This must be done well in advance.

Treasurer. A roll call of the delegates followed: 22 were in attendance. The Granger and West Christian Sisters were unable to attend. Ministers in attendance were Reverends Jim Heckman, James Hejl, Milton Maly, Joseph Polasek, and John Baletka.

Each delegate was given a packet containing reports of the officers and a report from the Mission Board. The President's Report stated that the Executive Board had met seven times... all at the New Tabor Brethren Church. Appointments were made to the Mission Board and the Hus School Board of Trustees. Two meetings focused on plans for the 2007 Retreat. Questionnaires were also updated.

The Secretary's Report stated that in 2006 there were 638 members and in 2008 a total of 538, a total loss of membership of 70. Fifty-six of these passed away during that period. The Taylor local had the largest membership of 60, and the Fayetteville local, which joined the Union in 2006, had reported an increase of 12 members, and a total increase to 22 members since joining.



Memorial Service Candles – honoring those members who had died since the previous convention.

The Afternoon Business Session.

After the noon meal, the activities continued with a Memorial Service honoring the 56 Christian Sisters who had died since the 2006 convention. Catherine Holubec and Ann Sebesta sang the beautiful hymn "Mansion Over the Hill." A candle was lit for each departed sister as their name was read. Catherine and Ann closed the service with the singing of the hymn "My God and I."

The Registration Committee reported 5 officers, 31 delegates, 36 visitors, and 5 ministers were present at the gathering. The Auditing Committee reported that the Financial Secretary and Treasurer's books were in excellent condition.

The following 2008-2010 budget was presented and approved by the Convention:

American Bible Society	\$ 175
<i>The Brethren Journal</i>	500
Hus School Building and Improvements	1100
Hus School Books	100
Hus School Cleaning	2200
Missions	900
Hus School Operating Fund	1000
Administration Board	1500
The Women's Retreat	300
TOTAL	\$775

There was a discussion regarding whether or not the Executive Board should plan a retreat for 2009. It was noted that the attendance had been small over the past several years, the cost of planning keeps going up, and the food for the continental breakfast and the noon meal were also a factor.

This program had ended up in the red for several years (the monies for this activity are taken from the membership dues and the one budget item).

A motion was made and seconded asking the delegates to return to their local and see if their members would want a 2009 retreat. The Secretary of the Executive Board is to be notified by August 6, 2008: Dorothy Hinson, 7331 Misty Morning Drive, Humble, TX 77346; (281) 620-0480.

It was then decided to accept the invitation of the Taylor Christian Sisters to hold the 2010 Christian Sisters Convention there.

Officers chosen for 2008-2010 are as follows: President, Patsy Blaha; Vice-President, Janet Pomykal; Secretary, Dorothy Hinson; Financial Secretary, Ann Sebesta; and Treasurer, Evelyn Henry.

These were then installed by Rev. Joseph Polasek, and the Convention concluded with the singing of a hymn, closing prayer, and the benediction.

Respectfully submitted,

Dorothy Hinson
Secretary

DIRECTORY OF MISSIONARIES

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CHOSEN TO SERVE

- by Rev. Milton Maly

(The Convention Message given to the 2008 Christian Sisters' Gathering at the Brethren Church of Bryan/College Station.)

"You did not choose me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last." (John 15:16a)

Who am I to be talking to an organization such as the Christian Sisters Union about "Service"?! Since the day I was born at a hospital called the Floeckinger Sanatorium on West 7th St. in Taylor, Texas, the Christian Sisters have been ministering to me and my parents: Members of Christian Sisters local at the Taylor Brethren Church were responsible for the following:

- a congratulatory note to my mother at my birth (and, very likely, flowers).
- many of its members volunteered to teaching my Sunday School Classes.
- gave me a card when I Confirmed my Faith in God through Jesus Christ.
- one who led a Vacation Bible School general assembly challenged me and others to dedicate our lives in service to God: I stood up and said that I would.
- a congratulatory card to me when I graduated from Taylor High School

and get well cards when I was hospitalized.

- greeting cards to me while I was in the U.S. Air Force, far away from home.
- cards to me during my ministerial Training at Austin Presbyterian and the Moravian Theological Seminaries.
- a clerical robe to me when I was ordained into the Ministry of our Lord.
- greetings, gifts, and encouragement to me and my family while we were in Honduras.

So, it is the ministry of this serving organization that was an encouraging force in my life and my work... from "Day One."

But today, I feel a need to share two concerns that anyone who is serving God and the Church of His Son should always be aware of. This goes for all organizations of the Church, everyone who is a member of those groups. And what I have to share is

directly related to our Scripture verse: "You did not choose me, but I chose you..."

The first temptation we have in complying with this command is that in service to God, as in any other work or profession, we invariably tend to focus on the one who serves, or the one who achieves... and not on the God who creates, leads, gives the talents, and motivates the accomplishments. Our society does that when it comes to physical skills and talents (e.g., athletes, singers), and not the great Giver of life and any skills/talents we have received from Him.

A perfect example of this is a story related by Gurt Behenna, a recovering alcoholic who led many ingatherings of those who were battling that condition. She shared what someone told her after one of her presentations: the person came up to her, shook her hand, and exclaimed: "Gurt, you're wonderful!" Gurt replied: "**I'm** not wonderful... **God** is wonderful!" But, the person responded: "WELL, that just shows how **WONDERFUL YOU ARE!!**"

So our first concern when we answer the call to serve our Lord is

to remember that the glory should always go to Him for the good that is made visible through our efforts.

The second concern emanates from the first: the strong temptation for pride of self can easily turn to arrogance: "Look at ME!" "My picture is in the paper!" "How wonderful I AM!"...all of these can lead to this dangerous attitude: "I'm better than he/she... Who does he/she think he/she is?! I've been a member here a lot longer!... I've done more!!... Why, my MOTHER is the one who started this!... She has no right to...!"

Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and Publican (Luke 18:11) addresses this directly... you've read it or heard it, I'm sure. Believe me, ministers are just as vulnerable... if not more... to that temptation as anyone else.

So, I encourage you to serve with all of your strength... for the rest of your lives... as followers of Jesus. Serve diligently and with much energy and enthusiasm, but not for the purpose of getting the praise of others, and not to justify yourselves better than others.

"It is he that made us, and not we ourselves..." (Psalms 100:3b)

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 And so fulfill the Law of Christ."*
 (Gal. 6:2)

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 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.
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 (254) 931-1653 cell

Youth Director
Steve Davis
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Macie Merz's Ministry

This is a rather late publication of a part of Macie's newsletter... but, it includes an inspiring experience of the GCM ministries... editor

The Springtime Green of New Life...

Just recently, our homegroup welcomed a new member into the Body of Christ! Serge, a Russian international student, was at the local coffee shop where some members from our church were praying for an upcoming summer mission trip.

Interested in what they were doing, Serge asked, "Excuse me. Are you praying?" Jordan and Dan, two guys from our homegroup responded, "Yes!" and Serge eagerly shared how he grew up without religion in a formerly Communist country, and was interested in learning more about God. Jordan and Dan gladly invited Serge to join us for our Bible study the next week.

Sadly, that Thursday evening Serge received word that his mom, who had

been hospitalized back home, passed away. That next week, Serge was searching more than ever for hope and joy, and for the answer to the question, "Where was [his] mom?"

God used Serge's trial to bring the message of His truth – the joy of knowing Jesus. After talking with our pastor, Ray, and Jordan, Serge's heart was comforted, and soon he accepted Christ. It had been just one week after first coming to homegroup – and now Serge has new life! Serge wants to bring the gospel back home to Russia one day. He says he thinks his mom would have wanted the message of Christ shared with all of his family, too!

Praise God for this new brother and missionary for Christ!

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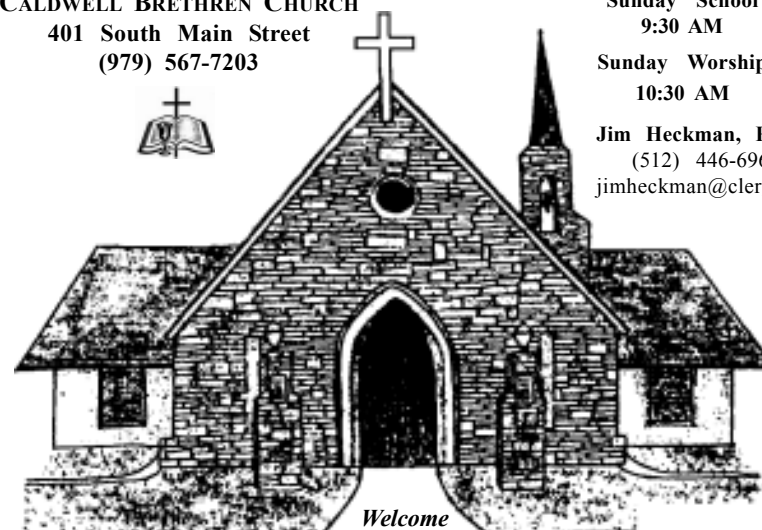
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**Sunday School
 9:30 AM**

**Sunday Worship
 10:30 AM**

Jim Heckman, Pastor
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 jimheckman@clergy.net



Youth News....

We need a volunteer to represent the B.Y.F. at Board of Trustees meetings.

Guys... this is really important! If we don't have a representative, then we don't have a voice in what happens at the camp. Contact Kimberly Stewart ASAP if you are willing to serve!!!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

State Youth Coordinator Position Open for Application

Any person interested in the position of Youth Coordinator for the Unity of the Brethren Church should submit a letter of interest and a resume to Rev. James Hejl at jhejl@austin.rr.com or 309 Cherrywood Circle, Taylor, TX 76574. Applications accepted through June 30, 2008.

Youth Activities Calendar

July 26 & 27	Summer B.Y.F. Retreat
October 24-26	Fall Scrappin' & Stampin' Retreat
November 8 & 9	Fall B.Y.F. Retreat

Also, be in prayer for the '08 Hus School session, which continues into July.

!!!!A Section in the Brethren Journal for Children????!!!

It has been suggested that there be a special part of each month's issue dedicated specifically to appeal to younger children. I would think that this would include Bible lessons and Christian thoughts which would relate to the current lives of our younger generations. In sharing this idea with others, all of the responses were very positive. Though action on this suggestion has not been officially approved by the B.J. Business Committee, I invite anyone who feels a strong interest in being the one who creates this kind of ministry to contact me. Also, any feedback you may have on this idea would be appreciated.

Rev. Milton Maly, editor

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

From Jill...

One afternoon in Sudan I was doing some reading. I came across some thoughts by a man named Gerd Theissen about people in the early church. He presented the idea of wandering charismatics and the local sympathizers. Now hang with me as I attempt to paint a picture of my appreciation towards you all...

"...the wanderers were traveling apostles and relied on the support of the sympathizers. Both shaped the early church. They did not look down on each other. The sympathizers did not write the wanderers off as radicals or freaks, and the wanderers did not judge the sympathizers as sell-outs. They loved and supported one another..."

Now I would hardly call myself an apostle or a charismatic (I don't particularly like to label myself much), but I was definitely a wanderer this past year. It has been vital to have you all as my steadfast supporters or sympathizers. You have joined in this adventure by your prayers and words of encouragement, and for that I say "THANK YOU." Many of you have been anchors for me at some point in my life, bringing me some form of stability or comfort. Some of you have just been a little curious about my somewhat insane travels, thanks for taking interest. Whatever the role, thanks for playing it. Hopefully over the next few weeks I'll hear from some of you or drink coffee with some of



Jill's friends in Indonesia and members of the Birth Attendance School.

you... I just hope that we can continue to love and support one another.

I am planning on being at home for a while, so I won't be sending out any more updates... please do keep in touch!

"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now..." Philippians 1: 3-5

Blessings, Jill

Editor's note: Jill is now at home in San Angelo.

Regarding Ray...

Ray has returned to Nicaragua to continue in helping the people along the coast as they recover from last year's hurricane. He's working with a Moravian Disaster crew in the sawing of lumber from the many trees that were downed by that storm. At last report, they had accumulated enough lumber for 100 homes.

Ray's work also involves the maintenance of equipment (saws, etc.) that is used in this effort. He is planning to return in mid-July.

The Thiessens write:

May 29, 2008

Dear friends,

This month marks 20 years since I left Canada for Honduras, left the

known for uncharted paths. When I met Rick in late 1987, I had to look on the map to find Honduras! Anne, of course, grew up in this kind of life, but she chose it for herself 24 years ago.

In India we kept telling our stories to those we met, and I realized how much time has passed by since then. I've been a believer for 22 years now, every year a step in this journey. I look back at the time before I met God, and I see the journey began long before I discerned its direction. God is good and graceful. I have become more and more aware that grace fills my relationship with all of you, including many I'll never be able to write to like this (for example, the Latins and Mixtecs that are our friends, too).

Looking over some year-end reports from MBMSI, I realize five of you (from Ontario) have been with us (me) from the very beginning, that spring of 1988. Over the years as needs increased, God has sent more supporters as necessary, and today you hail from all over Canada and the US. The reports that I get from the mission board, though, merely sketch one layer of my journey. We know that hundreds of you pray for us and provide all the other kinds of support that keep us here. Thank you.

We're in the last days before our summer trip to Canada. School has ended with a bang, the applause for

our kids' performances of Fiddler on the Roof, four performances before 1100 people. RuthE played one of the mothers, and Philip vowed that next year he wasn't going to miss out (he had signed up for something else). Anne helped graduate seven seniors last night and caught up with several alumni who came for the ceremony. In the background, the Oaxaca mountains, now green from the opening rainy season, hover.

Monday evening (we fly out Tuesday bright and early) I will teach a Perspectives class to a group of 20 or so. Again, my acquaintances in India reminded me of how instrumental this class (book) was for both Anne and me. This reader of 80 or so articles by missions thinkers and practitioners changed Anne's focus sharply in 1986, moving her from caring for war refugees (a very good work) to caring for victims of spiritual war, the unreached half of the world that had no Good News about Jesus Christ. If I remember the story correctly, this same Perspectives book drew Rick to Honduras to apprentice under George Patterson, from where, on a trip home to Ontario, he visited a little country church, and invited me to begin a cross-cultural journey of my own.

We use this reader as the basic text for our apprentices and for anyone else wanting to explore missions. The classes that run here in Oaxaca meet

every Monday for 15 weeks, when a practitioner of missions offers his or her perspective on the reading of that week. My section covers "Mission and Culture: how a missionary identifies with a culture and brings change to it." Pray with us that these classes help awaken the Mexican church to its own opportunity for cross-cultural "church planting" mission, both here in its backyard, and beyond, in the world that is increasingly becoming the backyard of everyone.

I'm attaching a family photo, taken in our living room in front of an intriguing painting by a local artist, full of oranges and blacks, all African shapes. Somehow it blends with the locally woven wool rugs, one of my mother's paintings of a Dutch windmill, and my own turned wood objects. Our lives, too, reflect the impact that more and more cultures bring, and we trust that this summer we can bring at least some small pieces of that to those we will visit.

Blessings, Robert



Annual Christian Sisters Bazaar, 2nd Saturday in September

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DAILY BIBLE READING GUIDE

Daily Morsels for July 2008

Dorothy E. Kocian

1. Send forth Your light and Your truth; let them guide me. Ps. 43:3
2. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him – The Spirit of wisdom and understanding. Isa. 11:2a
3. He will delight in the fear of the Lord. Isa. 11:3
4. Jesus said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." Lk. 4:43
5. They were amazed at Jesus' teaching, because His message had authority. Lk. 4:32
6. **"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me to preach good news to the poor." Lk. 4:18a**
7. O Lord my God, I called to You for help and You healed me. Ps. 30:2
8. He has sent Me to comfort the brokenhearted. Isa. 61:1
9. You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing. Ps. 30:11
10. A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. Prov. 17:22
11. I will never forget Your commandments, for You have used them to restore my joy and health. Ps. 119:93
12. Lord, Your discipline is good, for it leads to life and health. Isa. 38:17
13. **In You our fathers put their trust; they trusted and You delivered them. Ps. 22:4**
14. Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant. Mt. 20:26
15. The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. Mt. 20:28
16. I have set you an example that You should do as I have done for you. Jn. 13:15
17. Let those who love the Lord say, "His love endures forever." Ps. 118:4
18. Ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. Jer. 6:16
19. The Lord is the stronghold of my life of whom shall I be afraid? Ps. 27:1b
20. **How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news. Isa. 52:7**
21. Christ says, "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." Jn. 12:47
22. Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts. Ps. 95:7,8
23. Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Mt. 16:16
24. The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." Ps. 110:4
25. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. Heb. 10:12
26. Our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. Phil. 3:20
27. **Christ Jesus became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness, holiness, and redemption. 1 Cor. 1:30**
28. The Lord says, "For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior." Isa. 43:3
29. "I the Lord do not change." Malachi 3:6
30. You are being shielded by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Pet. 1:5
31. Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors. Ps. 119:24

SUNDAY SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 2006-2008

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Secretary: Brenda L. Vajdak, P.O. Box 436, Snook, TX 77878. (979) 272-7601. Brenda.vajdak@verizon.com

DAILY BIBLE READING GUIDE

Daily Morsels for August 2008

Dorothy E. Kocian

1. Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry. James 1:19
2. Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. James 1:2
3. **Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. James 1:22**
4. As believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. James 2:1
5. Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment. Jn. 7:24
6. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. 1 Sam. 16:7
7. Judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment! James 2:13
8. Do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Heb. 13:16
9. Accept one another just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. Rom. 15:7
10. **If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. James 2:8**
11. Accept, O Lord, the willing praise of my mouth, and teach me Your laws. Ps. 119:108
12. Let him who is wise and understanding show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. James 3:13
13. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness. James 3:18
14. The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. Prov. 15:4
15. A wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction. Prov. 16:23
16. 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. 1 Cor. 1:18
17. **Lord, enable Your servants to speak Your word with boldness. Acts 4:29**
18. Come near to God and He will come near to you. James 4:8
19. Abram believed the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness. Gen. 15:6
20. So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. Gal. 3:9
21. Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James 4:7
22. It is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. 1 Cor. 4:2
23. "Be holy, because I, the Lord your God, am holy." Lev. 19:2
24. **Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith. Heb. 10:22**
25. Jesus said, "Come with Me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." Mk. 6:31
26. May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else. 1 Thes. 3:12
27. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other. 1 Thes. 5:15
28. May the peoples praise You, O God; may all the peoples praise you. Ps. 67:3
29. Let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess His name. Heb. 13:15
30. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16
31. **I kneel before the Father, from whom His whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. Eph. 3:14,15**

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Advisor: Dr. Larry Koslovsky

Members:

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Shirley Kostohryz, skostohryz@co.brazos.tx.us
Tami Laza, tami.laza@verizon.net
Daniel Mertz

VITAL STATISTICS

RECENT WEDDINGS

PETTIT-HEJL. Christopher Hejl and Krista Nicole Pettit were joined in marriage at the St. Philip's United Methodist Church in Round Rock on Friday, May 16, 2008. The ceremony was performed by Chris' father, Rev. James D. Hejl, pastor of the Taylor Brethren Church.

RECENT DEATHS

MARTHA MARY KOKES, 89, was born on May 23, 1919, in Williamson County to Louis and Ida Merkord, died on May 25, 2008. She married Frank J. Kokes, Jr., on December 28, 1939, at Granger Brethren Church. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, five brothers and two sisters. She is survived by 1 daughter, 2 sons, 1 brother, 2 sisters, 8 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren. Services were held at the Taylor Brethren Church, May 28, 2008, with the Rev. James Hejl officiating.

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ronwinsman@hotmail.com

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Temple, TX 76504
(254) 778-2988

Youth Director

Jennifer Chervenka

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

Cemetery

Sharon Marek

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

Schedule and Details of Upcoming Unity Activities

Keep these activities in your prayers.

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.

October 10, 11, & 12: The annual **Primetimers' Retreat** at the Hus School Encampment.

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES JULY/AUGUST 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

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

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

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 MINISTERS

PLEASE NOTE: In all future correspondence to Rev. Michael Groseclose and
the Nelsonville Brethren Church, please use the address
352 Nelsonville Church Rd., Bellville, TX 77418.

FULL TIME PASTORS

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