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BETHANY
Theological Seminary

Empowering Christian Leaders

On Education

Wonder & Word

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Prophetic Education

RUTHANN K. JOHANSEN

As I walked in the European landscape of our forebears on the 300th anniversary of the Church of the Brethren, I reflected on their radical commitment to find, in their study of scripture, guidance for a faithful way of living in the world. I listened for resonances between the conditions that gave rise to their faith and practices and the circumstances of our contemporary lives. From startling similarities between our worlds, I repeatedly asked myself what the purpose of education ought to be in the 21st century church and world. I concluded that the faith inheritance of the Church of the Brethren and its denominational seminary carries within it a radical educational vision for the 21st century.

From the 16th to the 18th centuries, our Anabaptist and Pietist forebears resisted the wedding of the church and the state, giving their highest loyalty to God. Today we also face pressure to marry the church to the state and to confuse ideologies for religious faith. In the fascination with ecclesial and political empire of the 17th and 18th centuries we see reflected 21st century temptations toward political imperialism. The thirst for imperial power both in our forebears' time and in our own is buttressed by military might. The 17th and 18th century castle fortresses and cannons designed for security differ from precision missiles of the 21st century in terms of technology but not teleology. Our ancestors' horror at the deaths inflicted by the Thirty Years War led them to reject war and to accept the nonviolent love of Jesus Christ. During the 20th century, we too have faced horrifying death and destruction and abundant opportunities to choose

the ways of peace. Like the Hebrew prophets and Jesus himself, our forebears questioned prevailing orders and values and listened deeply for God's leading in another way.

In such conditions a small group of individuals with faith in Jesus' way of love chose another way of being in the world. With courage and radical commitment, they risked wealth and security and changed the face of religion and societies across several centuries. Today, confused by greed, restless with anxiety and fear, overstimulated with information and distractions, suspicious of the "other" in the next pew or across the world, covetous for the "extraordinary" and dismissive of the "ordinary," we find that the core testimonies of the Church of the Brethren—the centrality of scripture, simplicity, service, peace and justice, care for creation and one another as community—speak profoundly. Study carried out in the way of Christ's love develops a quality of attention, akin to prayer, necessary for the disciplining of the mind, heart, and spirit, and opens us as students to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. Education that prophetically embraces the blessedness of the world, challenges ignorance, binds up the broken, and vibrantly carries a faith inheritance into the 21st century is not simply about demonstrating intellectual prowess or acquiring degrees or professional credentials. An educated faith draws us into the image of God's creation and into the holy, recreating presence of wisdom and love.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Ruthann Knechel Johansen is President of Bethany Theological Seminary.



Rip Van Winkle Returns to Bethany

The tale of Rip Van Winkle by Washington Irving is a delightful piece of early American fiction. Set in New York's Catskill Mountains, the story recounts how Rip, a villager of Dutch descent, wanders up the mountains and falls into a deep sleep that lasts 20 years. When he awakes and returns home, he discovers a different world than the one that he left. Indeed, he has slept through the events of the American Revolution and finds himself in a new nation.

As I have shared with faculty colleagues, I feel some kinship with Rip as I return to the Seminary as its interim academic dean. To be sure, I haven't been completely asleep during the five years since my retirement in 2003. And the Bethany to which I've returned is still quite recognizable. Classes meet in the same classrooms. The partnership with Earlham School of Religion continues to thrive. And the dean's office is where it used to be. Like Rip, however, I have come back to a different place than the one that I left. Familiar landmarks remain, but important changes have occurred as well.

At an earlier time, the focal issue was economics . . . But the most frequently recurring topic in our conversations today is enrollment.

The most obvious of these changes are some different faces among the faculty and administration. When I left five years ago, there were still colleagues around who could remember the adventure of Bethany's relocation to Richmond. All have since moved on, whether to retirement or new assignments. Happily, however, new colleagues

RICHARD B. GARDNER

have come on board, a new president and new faculty to join those already in place. In fact, the faculty is operating at full strength, both in terms of numbers and in terms of the gifts needed to carry out Bethany's mission.



Another obvious change is the increasing use of newer technologies in the Seminary's life and programs. Electronic communication no longer simply augments the way we work together; it is now the primary medium for sharing information. Even more important is the role that technology is playing in the educational process. *Connections*, Bethany's distributed education program, was just getting off the ground five years ago. Now it plays a major role in making the Seminary more accessible. And even residential courses often include online components.

Yet a third change that struck me was a new urgent topic in conversation about the future. At an earlier time, the focal issue was economics. We were concerned about how to make and keep the Seminary financially viable. Given the current state of the world's economy, that issue will continue to be with us. But the most frequently

recurring topic in our conversations today is enrollment. How can we grow our enrollment, attracting greater numbers of students both from the Church of the Brethren and from other markets or constituencies for whom Bethany has much to offer?

In the midst of change and challenge, one of the most radical things an institution can do is to return to its roots and to learn afresh from its underlying vision and values. To my delight, this is precisely what I found happening when I returned to the campus. My colleagues were carrying on a very spirited discussion of the core testimonies of the Church of the Brethren. They were talking about such things as seeking the mind of Christ as we study Scripture together, our commitment as peacemakers to embody Christ's reconciling love, and our counter-cultural values of simplicity and service.

Coming into this conversation, I thought at first that maybe it was Bethany's way of entering into the 300th anniversary celebration of the Brethren. The timing was certainly opportune. But I soon discovered that the talk about core testimonies is much more than an exercise in denominational nostalgia. Rather, it is an attempt to refocus our vision and mission in the light of these historic testimonies. It is an attempt to discern how these testimonies can help us find Bethany's distinctive calling in the world of theological education. It is an attempt to reclaim the past for the sake of the present and future.

As Ruthann Knechel Johansen suggests in her article elsewhere in this issue, one of the most important things we can learn from our core testimonies is their prophetic character. Our forebears confronted the anxious and destructive culture of their day with another way of being in

the world, a way attuned to the love of Christ at work in their lives. And it is this same prophetic quality that needs to mark the church's presence in the world that we inhabit, and that needs to be evident in the style and substance of education at Bethany.

Paradoxically, prophetic witness in our own context requires us to be more open and more resistant at the same time. In the midst of polarized groups and parochial claims to truth, prophetic witness will seek to expand our circles of conversation, welcoming diversity and cultivating the art of listening. Within this move, however, for greater inclusivity, prophetic witness will contest every view and behavior which hurt and harm rather than heal, committed to Jesus' vision of life transformed by the reign of God's love and justice. That is our challenge—and our great opportunity!

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Richard B. Gardner is Interim Academic Dean at Bethany Theological Seminary.



Why Study Theology?

H. KENDALL ROGERS

There are many reasons to study the nearly 2000-year history of theology. First of all, the faith questions of past generations are still questions for us today. We can learn from their experiences thinking about Creation, or the Incarnation, or salvation in Christ, or love of neighbor. By analyzing past discussions of these questions, history of theology prepares us for the rigorous theological debate currently. It can also teach us humility. We see geniuses wrestling out marvelous insights, but we also see how the most intelligent of human beings can make mistakes.

For me, a very important reason to study the history of theology is ecumenical. We live in the most religiously pluralistic time and place ever. Through the history of theology we can learn how our Christian brothers and sisters described their own particular denominational understandings – in many ways like our own thinking, in many ways different. Moreover, theology has produced

powerful ideas that have shaped our nation and its history, institutions, and laws. To understand the world around us, at home and abroad, we need to know something about

the history of theology.

Finally, studying the history of theology can be an exciting adventure in itself. The idea of a search for the Holy Grail has inspired writers of legend and fiction from the medieval King Arthur

stories, to Wagnerian opera, to Monty Python, to an 'Indiana Jones' film, to a recent controversial book and film, *The Davinci Code*. In the history of theology, in contrast, we trace the real, millennia-long search to understand the meaning of the communion elements. This history is just as fascinating as the earlier legend and fiction.

Church of the Brethren ideas have an important place in the history of theology. In addition, the founders of our church studied that history.



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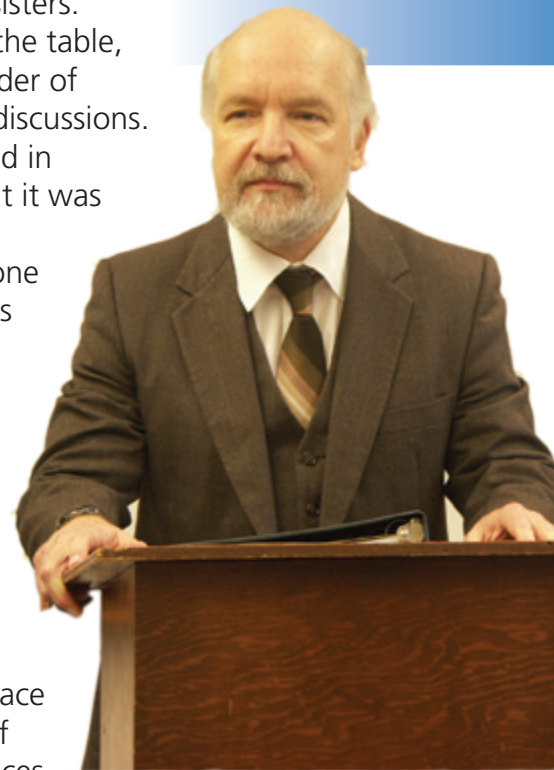


In Schwarzenau they read the Bible, of course, but also books by the church historian Gottfried Arnold. We have been doing theology and studying the history of theology ever since. Not surprisingly, the history of Christian thought constitutes a foundational element in a Bethany education.

We are all theologians. God has created each of us with a mind to use, and from time to time we will use our mind to reflect on our Christian faith. But it is easy to get confused, or to be misled. The history of theology is filled with sincerely held but sadly mistaken ideas. We are all human after all. Study of theology can help us sort out the sound and well accepted ideas from the others. With its inquisitive students and its dedicated faculty and staff, Bethany is a good place to undertake this vital work.

The son of a Church of the Brethren pastor and evangelist, my father was himself a Brethren pastor in Iowa, Nebraska, and Indiana. He liked to tell me about his boyhood, including about gathering around the family dinner table with his parents and 11 brothers and sisters. My aunt still has the table, a powerful reminder of these meals and discussions. Individuals differed in their opinions, but it was important to the family that everyone be present. It was more important for no one to be left out than for everyone to agree. Bethany can play the role of this dinner table for the Church of the Brethren, a place where Brethren of differing experiences and opinions can gather for mindful, heartfelt, sometimes difficult, but always loving discussion. Please join us!

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H. Kendall Rogers is Professor of Historical Studies at Bethany Theological Seminary.



Practical Theology

THOMAS FINGER

One of my favorite descriptions of theology comes from James McClendon, a member of the Church of the Brethren. McClendon says that everyone has basic convictions about God, human nature, the purpose of life, etc. These convictions motivate our actions. But on the intellectual level, people's convictions are often *implicit*: they can't express them clearly; they haven't thought them out. Theology, according to McClendon, is the task of articulating these implicit convictions: of making them *explicit*.

How do we do this? We seek, first, to discover what our basic convictions really are. Second, we attempt to understand them clearly. Then, third, we transform them, which includes connecting some of them and finding deeper meaning in them. We learn to articulate our convictions in a way that makes them both consistent with each other, and with "whatever else there is." "Whatever else there is" refers to other Christian traditions, other religions, and other cultures, and to the values, lifestyles, and thought patterns of our own society.

My goal for my students is that their study be a time of discovery, of developing understanding, and of transformation, equipping them to lead congregations in their own faith discoveries.

If theology is defined this way—as making implicit convictions explicit—it is not, first and foremost, a branch of academic study. It is a basic activity of every Christian life. Every committed Christian and congregation, when they face new problems or situations, asks themselves

in some way: What does my/our faith say about this, and, how in light of that, should I/we respond? Every Christian, then, does some sort of theology. We do not really have the option of doing theology or not doing it, but only of doing it poorly or well.



Seminary theology classes train church leaders to carry on this process in depth: to discover, understand, transform, and express basic convictions through interaction with Scripture; with past and present theologies; and with current social, cultural, and spiritual perspectives. The study of theology informs and interacts with the whole educational program. My goal for my students is that their study be, as McClendon put it, a time of discovery, of developing understanding, and of transformation, equipping them to lead congregations in their own faith discoveries.

Theological training like this can supply congregations' needs with leaders who have a well-developed personal theology and the ability to move a faith community's theology from the implicit to the explicit level by putting

their “theology” into understandable terms. In addition, Such leaders can help congregations develop and maintain a clear understanding about what they are doing and why, without being overwhelmed by the immediate, day-to-day needs of the body of believers. Theology can equip leaders and their churches with guidelines to address the difficulties and uncertainties of the day.



Theology, in other words, should be practical, meaningful, and relevant, and it should help Christians develop and express a sense of identity. A clear sense of identity serves as a guidepost on the faith journey. Today's culture changes very rapidly. A church that has made its basic convictions explicit and that can express its identity will be able to respond clearly and yet flexibly to these changes. A church whose convictions are only implicit and identity is unexpressed will usually experience much more confusion.

I am not entirely new at Bethany. My relationship with the Seminary goes back to the Oak Brook days. I was a professor at neighboring Northern Baptist Theological Seminary for 10 years. The two faculties met together on a regular basis, and

Bethany students were enrolled in my classes. Since then, I've taught at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, served as a Fellow at Elizabethtown College's Young Center, taught at an Anabaptist-related college in Ethiopia, and was a member of the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches for 25 years. My ecumenical and interfaith experiences have strengthened, not diluted, my understandings of my own faith and of the roles of individual and corporate theology.

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As a scholar in residence teaching theology at Bethany this year, I bring this ecumenical perspective into the classroom. Of course, the term “Christian

theology” itself implies ecumenism. Anabaptist theology represents just a piece of this ecumenical whole. It is not my ultimate theological norm, or standard, for evaluating all theologies. But it is my primary vantage point, or lens, for viewing the theologies of other Christian traditions and for reference in understanding other faiths. I am delighted with the opportunity to join my Mennonite voice in dialog with those from the two other historic peace churches, the Quakers and the Church of the Brethren, this year at Bethany.

Tom Finger is a Scholar in Residence at Bethany Theological Seminary during the 2008-2009 academic year.



The Importance of Thoughtful Ministry

JOSHUA BROCKWAY

It was not so long ago that I wandered throughout the hallowed halls of Bethany. In fact, this is my third incarnation at the school. Who knew that when I lived at the Oak Brook campus as a child that I would return, this time to Richmond, first as a student and now as a faculty member? Some might say that I am like the bad penny that always comes back! So why return? The short answer: The need for gifted and skilled pastors in the Church of the Brethren and church universal is only paralleled by the need for professors to help form such leaders. It's my hope that I can serve in such a capacity, just as those who have shaped me as a scholar and a pastor.

I came to this conclusion as I pastored a small congregation during college. While this community of believers graciously welcomed me into their midst, it was not long until I showed exactly how young and inexperienced I truly was. Their grace remained as I delivered weak sermons, led simple Love Feast gatherings, and fumbled the basic questions in Sunday school conversations. I learned a lifetime of ministry in two years, the core of which was the need for true pastoral formation.

My charisma and flair barely carried me a month. The rest of my tenure relied upon gracious parishioners, wise mentors, and a lot of prayer. When I left that country congregation, I knew that formal training at Bethany was needed. Around the same time I watched as the religion department of my college alma mater went through a long search for an interim

faculty member. It was soon clear that the number of Brethren applicants, or lack thereof, surprised many on the faculty. I found myself looking at Bethany with an eye towards further graduate work in order to help fill what seemed to be a void of young Brethren scholars. I knew that Bethany would be a place to receive both the pastoral training which I lacked and the academic formation I needed to set me towards the goal of a doctorate.



It did just that, and now I am back to give what was so generously given to me. You see, pastoral ministry and the academic study of our faith go hand in hand. I will never forget the moments of learning that took place as faculty met with me one on one to discuss theology in a way that ultimately shaped the way I live my faith today. While Bethany was not my congregation the previous two times I walked its halls, it was a place where questions were honored, and faculty walked through them with all their students. They simply modeled a thoughtful, faithful, and attentive presence with each question and each

Pastoral ministry and the academic study of our faith go hand in hand.



Our heritage of Pietism, and Radical Protestantism in general, has formed us to see ministry as a gift of the Spirit. There is a deep truth to this vision, yet it does not take seriously Paul's call to the Romans that they be renewed by the

Capable ministers are both gifted and trained so that when energy and ideas begin to wane as they did for me, their time of formation at a place like Bethany can encourage them onward.

student. How much more pastoral can you be? That, to me, is the image of a true pastor.

When faced with the hardest of questions, brought on by real life struggles, the pastor should be the first person who can listen and set the emotions and thoughts within the larger story of God. Without the time set aside to journey through the questions and the tradition for themselves, these pastors risk treading recklessly over the very people for whom they have been called to care.

transformation of their minds. Capable ministers are both gifted and trained so that when energy and ideas begin to wane as they did for me, their time of formation at a place like Bethany can encourage them onward. If it is true that to those whom God has gifted, much is required, I hope simply to break even!



Joshua Brockway is Instructor in Christian History at Bethany during the 2008/2009 academic year.



Back to the Future

As a child, I was fascinated by my neighbor. He rose early each morning, spent time by the window reading, and on weekdays went out to garden. He then changed into plain clothes and went to work as the vice-president of the Valley Trust Bank. In the late afternoon, he worked at the church or made pastoral visits. Evenings were spent at church or district meetings, visiting or with family.

Although he was not our pastor, my father spoke with admiration about Dr. Frank S. Carper. Here was a man without formal seminary training who pastored the largest congregation in our town. His library was extensive; he supported higher education and lifelong learning. He modeled what it meant to be a spiritual and community leader. And when I heard him speak, I was certain that those low, calm tones resembled the voice of God!

Under his leadership, the Palmyra (Pa.) Church of the Brethren supported seminary students through summer placements and internships and later hired Bethany Seminary graduates for second staff positions. Our small town was

a-buzz when a Bethany Seminary-educated woman was hired as director of Christian education. Who would have believed that the Church of the Brethren in our traditional town was on the cutting edge in ministry? This congregation also reflected the shifting dynamics in ministerial leadership for the denomination.

As our sisters and brothers in mainline denominations struggle with the challenge of providing competent pastoral leadership in congregations with declining membership, the Church of the Brethren is again on the cutting edge in ministry.

JULIE MADER HOSTETTER



In his essay commemorating the 300th anniversary of the Church of the Brethren, Bethany's former academic dean Dr. Stephen Breck Reid outlines "The Experiment: Theological Education in the Church of the Brethren." * He traces the shift from plural ministry (free ministry), in which training took place through experience and mentoring, to the rise of professional ministry in the mid-20th century, when most pastors were seminary trained and the focus was on graduate theological education. In 1977 Bethany began a training program, Education for a Shared Ministry (EFSM), and in 1984 the seminary and denomination started the Training in Ministry program (TRIM). Both of these programs acknowledged that professionally trained, solo pastors could not meet the needs of all congregations (p. 136).

**Lines, Places, and Heritage: Essays Commemorating the 300th Anniversary of the Church of the Brethren, edited by Steve Longenecker and Jeff Bach and published by Penobscot Press (2008), is available through Bridgewater College (Va.)*

The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, a ministry training partnership of Bethany Theological Seminary and the Church of the Brethren, was established and is housed at the Seminary. The Academy implements the EFSM program, and along with the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center in Pennsylvania, assists districts with the TRIM program and their Academy Certified Training Systems. With the leadership of outstanding residential faculty members and adjunct faculty, the Master of Divinity, Master of Arts and training programs equip men and women in five formats for various ministry contexts.

As our sisters and brothers in mainline denominations struggle with the challenge of providing competent pastoral leadership in congregations with declining membership, the Church of the Brethren is again on the cutting edge in ministry. Seminary-trained pastors serve local congregations and mentor students in seminary and other programs. Smaller congregations are served by those called and equipped for ministry through denominational or district training programs.

The Brethren Academy also provides two continuing education tracks through the Lilly Endowment Sustaining Pastoral Excellence grant.

- Vital Pastor: Thus far, 112 pastors have completed this program. Focusing on a theologically framed question, pastors meet in small groups before and after traveling together either in the United States or abroad to experience a transcultural immersion.
- Advanced Foundations of Church Leadership: Over the past six years, this program has included 26 clergy participants representing

congregations from Atlantic Northeast, Illinois-Wisconsin, Mid-Atlantic, Middle Pennsylvania, Northern Indiana, Northern Ohio, Northern Plains, Shenandoah, South Central Indiana, Southern Ohio, Southern Plains, Virginia, and Western Pennsylvania districts.

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As a result of these two tracks for Sustaining Pastoral Excellence, pastors experienced transformations that formed their spiritual journeys and informed their congregational ministries. A representative of the Church of the Brethren Ministry Office, the Academy supports pastors in meeting the expectations of the 2002 Guidelines for Continuing Education. Through workshops and events sponsored by the Academy, districts and denominational agencies, pastors are encouraged and supported in their pursuit of lifelong learning. The Academy is also beginning to explore continuing education opportunities that share our unique gifts with the larger faith community.

My childhood neighbor modeled for others and me an ongoing interest in scholarship, faithfulness, and integrity, and a steadfast commitment to Christ, the church, and community. As we look to the future, the Academy will continue to respond to the needs of the denomination, seminary, and congregations as we implement programs that equip women and men for ministry, encourage lifelong learning and build up the body of Christ.

Julie Mader Hostetter is Director of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership.



Lifelong Students

DAN PETRY

“But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.” (Matthew 23:8, 11-12)

Matthew 23 is Jesus’ scathing indictment of the religious leaders and teachers of his day. Having been mercilessly criticized and persecuted by the scribes and Pharisees, this passage shows Jesus taking off his gloves and giving them a taste of their own medicine. Jesus did not see himself as a Christian criticizing the leaders of a competing religion. He, too, was a Jewish rabbi, but he was incensed by the misuse of power on the part of some of his brothers in the faith. So in this passage, Jesus was calling his own to account; he was chiding his brothers to straighten up.

As a pastor, I have to read Matthew 23, especially the first few verses, as a personal indictment. As Jesus recognized that his fellow rabbis had been given the authority of God to teach, in the same way I believe Jesus would authenticate the authority of the licensed and ordained ministers in the Church of the Brethren. Jesus would likely say, “Do whatever they teach you and follow it.”

In any academic endeavor, the more we learn, the more our eyes are opened to what is yet to learn. That holds true for our faith as well.

But here’s the rub; here’s the part that really pinches me. Jesus goes on to say, “. . . but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach.” That is the disclaimer of all honest pastors: Do not do as we do, for we do not practice what we teach.

Now hear me: Every pastor that I know personally is striving very hard to walk the talk, to practice what they preach. Sometimes we do pretty well at it, but sometimes we fail miserably. But Jesus will not let you use a leadership failure to legitimize your own disobedience.

Matthew 23 reminds us that we all should do our very best to study and to teach and to preach with all the integrity we can muster, and we should constantly be struggling not only to talk the holy but also to walk the holy. We who are pastors or Sunday school teachers or deacons or Stephen ministers or members of the board hold our offices not for the privilege and prestige they may bring, but only as under-shepherds and servants of the One who is worthy of all worship and praise and obedience.

As the early Brethren studied the 23rd chapter of Matthew, they saw Jesus’ prohibitions concerning titles among his followers. Because of this teaching, Brethren ministers and leaders have shied away from special titles that would distinguish or separate one person from another. We have found it best just to call each other brother or sister. We are one body in Christ, brothers and sisters in the Lord. We have different roles, but as Jesus said, “you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students.”

During my sophomore year at Manchester College, God called me to ministry. Suddenly I was facing not just the three years of remaining college but three years of seminary as well. So I buckled down and aimed for graduation not only from Manchester College in 1977 but also for graduation from Bethany Seminary in 1981. "That's when I'll be finished," I said to myself. "That's when I'll know what I need to know and be able to get on with ministry." But do you know what I had really learned by the time that President Warren Groff handed me my Master of Divinity diploma? Somewhat reluctantly, I had to admit that I was going to be a student for the rest of my life.

In any academic endeavor, the more we learn, the more our eyes are opened to what is yet to learn. That holds true for our faith as well. The more we learn from Jesus, the farther we go in our discipleship, the more we understand how much room there is to grow.

Growing up into the likeness of Jesus Christ, growing up into the stature of our Lord is a lifelong endeavor. Have you gotten to the place in your life where you are always living by

The more we learn from Jesus, the farther we go in our discipleship, the more we understand how much room there is to grow.

the precepts of obedience to God and grace and forgiveness to your fellow man? Are you always living in purity of heart—no lust, no envy, no selfishness, no lying, no dressing up the truth so you look better than you really are? Or do you, like me, still have some things to learn about Jesus and his love? Do you have some things to learn about grace and purity and holiness? If you do, then you'd better hit the Book. You'd better become a lifelong student, a humble follower, a dedicated disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Dan Petry is Pastor of the Middlebury (Ind.) Church of the Brethren.



Resourcing the Church - and Beyond

Bethany alum Ken Shaffer's work
at the Brethren Historical Library and Archives

"Some might think that library archival work is dull, but in reality the job is endlessly interesting," says Ken Shaffer, director of the Brethren Historical Library and Archives (BHLA) in Elgin, Ill. "I never know when I come in each day what kind of questions there might be or what materials or artifacts we might receive."

Ken, a 1970 Bethany Master of Divinity graduate, held a similar role at the Seminary before accepting the position at BHLA. "I had been working at the library which served Bethany and Northern Baptist Seminary on the Oak Brook campus. A friend suggested I apply for the position at the Brethren Historical Library and Archives. After the position was offered to me, I prayed and struggled about what I should

do. Both roles provided the opportunity to serve the church. On the one hand, I knew I would miss the working with the faculty and students at Bethany. On the other hand, I knew I could focus more on the Church of the Brethren at BHLA. In the end my feeling that it was time for a change won out."



Ken says that his Bethany degree has been very valuable for this particular ministry. "Because of Bethany faculty members like Dale Brown, Don Durnbaugh, Grady Snyder, and Bob Neff, I was schooled in Brethren history, theology, and writings. My time at Bethany also introduced me to people with whom I have worked and played ever since. For me, Bethany is more than the education I received; it is also the people I met. The whole experience

prepared me well for my vocation, given the fact that a significant part of my work has centered on the world of the Brethren."

The mission of BHLA is to collect, preserve, and make available information created by Brethren or about the Brethren. The collection includes many out-of-print resources and unique records for Brethren groups that no longer exist. Ken believes that as a source of information for historians and theologians, genealogists and local congregations, Annual Conference committees and Brethren agencies, students and faculty, and pastors and

For me, Bethany is more than the education I received; it is also the people I met.

lay people, BHLA meets a unique educational need for Brethren and non-Brethren alike. "One of our most faithful patrons is Frank Ramirez, a prolific writer of Brethren books, articles, and curriculum. His use of BHLA in his research and writing is an example of how these resources from the past can be useful in the present."



Ken (center back) takes the Brethren Historical Committee on a tour of BHLA at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill.

During the months leading up to the Church of the Brethren 300th anniversary, BHLA experienced a surge in requests. "We provided information and/or materials for 14 events and displays at the 2008 Annual Conference," Ken noted. "Photos from the BHLA collections and articles by BHLA staff appeared in *Messenger*. An often-asked question was, What kind of clothes did the early Brethren wear? Perhaps the most unusual question was, What kind of food did the early Brethren eat?"

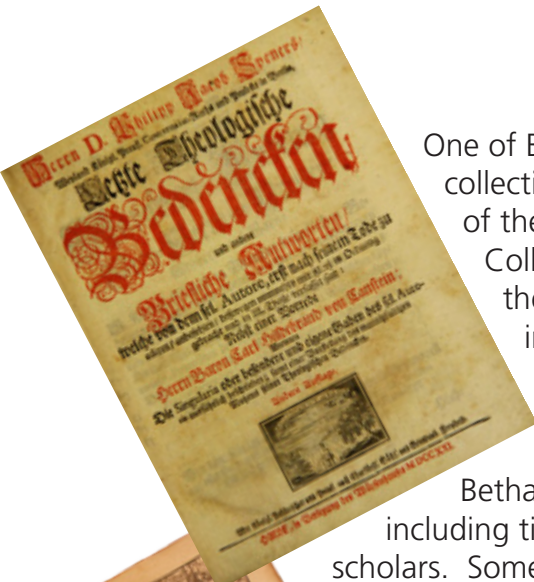
BHLA has provided information for books, articles, and video presentations about the role of the Church of the Brethren in areas such as the Civil Rights Movement, Civilian Public Service camps, Heifer International, the resettlement of Americans of Japanese ancestry during World War II, and the resettlement of Kalmuck refugees in the 1950s. One of the most exciting opportunities to publicize the past activities of the Church of the Brethren to

a larger audience was through the public television series "The History Detectives." In 2005 staff from the show contacted BHLA concerning the Brethren Service certificates they had from the 1940s. "We were able to explain what the certificates were, how they supported Civilian Public Service, and why Brethren are one of the Historic Peace Churches," Ken explained. "We also provided pictures and the names of people to contact. The certificates and the Church of the Brethren were featured the next year in a segment on one of their programs."

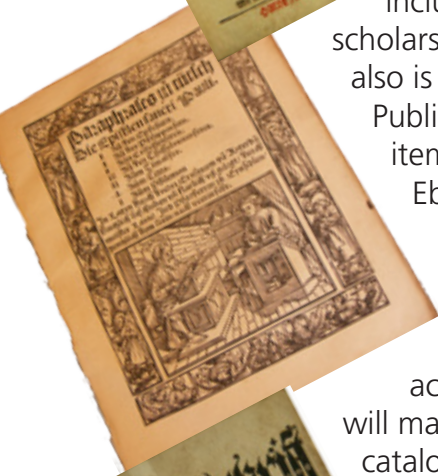
However, meeting the needs of individuals can be just as rewarding as national attention, such as the recent visit to BHLA by the daughter of Brethren missionaries. "She was delighted to find we had an extensive collection of letters and reports written by her parents," Ken says. "She made many photocopies and said she would 'read and reread the copies and treasure them always.'"



Historical Library Collections Restoration Project



One of Bethany Theological Seminary's major assets is an exceptional collection of rare books. Making up the special collections are portions of the libraries of three separate donors: the William Eberly Hymnal Collection, the Ora Huston English Bible Collection, and more than 4,000 theological titles from the Abraham Cassel Collection. Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pa., holds nearly two-thirds of the Cassel Collection. Many of the Pennsylvania-German imprints were donated to the Pennsylvania Historical Society in Philadelphia.



Bethany's collection is especially rich in the works of Radical Pietism, including titles by Spener, Francke, Arnold, Böhme and many other Halle scholars. Some volumes date from the early 16th-century Reformation. Included also is a wide range of literature from various sectarian and dissenting movements. Publications of the Ephrata Cloister and Saur Press are among the most valuable items in the collection. Rare Bibles and hymnals from both the Huston and Eberly collections are also featured works in the holdings.



A very generous grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations has made possible the restoration of most of the very valuable volumes. The grant has also allowed the enclosure of each item in the special collections in acid-free clam-shells or hinge boxes. The digitalization of many title pages will make possible their posting on the Seminary web site. All books are fully catalogued and accessible through the Earlham College Lilly Library online catalog. The special collections are available to users in the reading room of the Earlham College Archives, located in the Lilly Library on the Earlham College campus. For hours of operation, visit <http://www.earlham.edu/library/content/services/hours.html> or phone 765-983-1287.

Brethren Life & Thought: Living Through the "Ands" of Life

JULIE GARBER & KAREN GARRETT

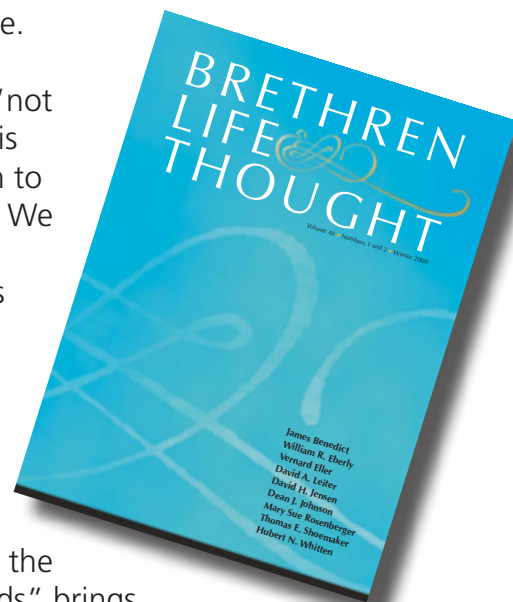
The new design for *Brethren Life & Thought*, debuted at the July 2008 Annual Conference in Richmond, Va. The Winter 2008 issue, with its shiny blue cover, caught the attention of most who saw it. The new design is more magazine-like, especially inside, where articles are printed in two columns rather than the traditional single column academic journal format. The new format is inviting, accessible, and interesting to a broad audience, including seminary faculty and thoughtful lay people.

Prominent in the new look is a large, beautiful ampersand (&). The ampersand reflects one mission of the journal, which is to be a forum for well-conceived and well-argued ideas on important topics in the church. The design is the work of expert designer Gwen Stamm, who is well-known in Brethren and Mennonite circles for her hand in designing our hymnal cover.

Gwen used the ampersand to replace the word *and* in the title of the journal, noting that the ampersand is a highly stylized version of the short word *et*, meaning "and" in Latin. She purposefully avoided any single symbol or picture on the cover that would try to convey who the Brethren are. Few graphic symbols are capable of capturing the essence of anything.

The ampersand, however, says a lot about the Brethren. The word *and* holds together many pairs of ideas in our tradition that are in tension with each other. Faith is both a sense of knowing and not knowing. Christian life is made up of service

and worship, the transcendent and the worldly. We know Christ as human and divine. We are living in the "already" and the "not yet". Our purpose is defined by devotion to God and neighbor. We have a long history of living together as conservatives and progressives. The very name of the journal holds two things in tension: life and thought. Living day by day in the tensions of the "ands" brings vibrancy to our faith and helps us constantly refine our life and thought.



In addition to the new design, the Brethren Journal Association board and staff are committed to publishing issues in a timely manner. By the end of 2008, three of the four issues for Volume 53 (2008) should be in the hands of our readers. Early in 2009 the Fall 2008 issue should also be published. With the help of Evangel Press, our printer for the new design, all of the Volume 54 (2009) issues will be published in 2009. Anyone interested in becoming a member of the Brethren Journal Association, which is how one subscribes, should contact the *Brethren Life & Thought* office at blt@bethanyseminary.edu.



Preaching the Gospel of Mark

A conversation with Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm
about her new commentary

Wonder & Word: *What draws you to the Gospel of Mark?*

Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm: I view the Gospel of Mark as one of the most dynamic and provocative texts in all of Scripture. It is written with a sense of urgency and passion for the reign of God throughout.

W & W: *What are the unique features of this commentary compared to other commentaries?*

DOW: *Preaching the Gospel of Mark* examines the Gospel in sections of a paragraph or two, offering biblical exegesis and homiletical suggestions for each passage. The exegetical comments explore important background material and connections to other texts and themes in Scripture, and the suggestions for preaching include ideas for sermon development, connections to current issues, and stories that may be inspiring and helpful to preachers and those who listen to sermons.

Mark's Gospel calls us to consider anew Jesus' way of actively engaging others in God's just and loving reign.

W & W: *Does the commentary approach the Gospel of Mark from an Anabaptist/Pietist perspective?*

DOW: My own faith perspective as a member of the Church of the Brethren is integral to my interpretation of Scripture. Early in the process of writing, I called together a small group Bible study (all of whom are members of the Church of the Brethren), and their insights are noted at various places in my book, as well as stories of other Anabaptists and Pietists. However, this book is intended for an ecumenical audience, and I find connections with others throughout my work. My own Anabaptist/Pietist ears listen for concerns and passions of Jesus that have been especially dear to our faith tradition—such as the reign of God, peacemaking, care of creation and neighbor love—and I believe we share many of these concerns with other Christians. The idea of studying and exploring Scripture together is not a new idea for the Brethren! I wrote the commentary while listening to Mark with Anabaptist/Pietist ears, hearing concerns and insights of Jesus that rise to the forefront and are familiar to us, such as the reign of God, care for creation, and peace and justice. We hear things that other faith traditions may not have heard.

W & W: *Obviously, an expected use of commentaries is in sermon preparation. How do you see commentaries being useful in daily Bible study?*

DOW: This commentary is intended for use in both sermon preparation and daily Bible study or Bible study groups. My hope is that people who want to use it for Bible study will find insights for relating Scripture to their daily living.

W & W: *What is the best way to use a commentary?*

DOW: I encourage readers to review the introduction given at the beginning of each chapter or section. It is important when looking at a particular set of verses to know and appreciate the larger context.

W & W: *What is your favorite passage from the Gospel of Mark?*

DOW: Actually, I have two. The first is chapter 16, verses 1-8: the story of the women who come to anoint Jesus' body after his burial. Although they flee the tomb in terror and amazement and the text tells us that they said nothing to anyone, we know that they had to have shared the good news or we would not have the gospel story to tell! I think Mark is trying to encourage those of us who are fearful about sharing the gospel with others—in word and deed—that we, like the first witnesses of the empty tomb, are called to share what we know of Christ's resurrection power alive among us. The second passage is chapter 7, verses 24-30: the story of Jesus healing the Syrophonecian woman's daughter from a distance. At first, Jesus denies the woman's request. But in the end, he follows the lead of the Syrophonecian woman and heals her daughter. Some might be troubled by the thought that Jesus changed his mind. I see that not as a diminishment of Jesus' power, but an expansion of it.

W & W: *Can you compare and contrast print and online Bible study and preaching resources?*

DOW: I think there is a place for both. Online resources allow quick access for resources directly related to a set of verses, usually related to the lectionary. Print resources offer reflective,

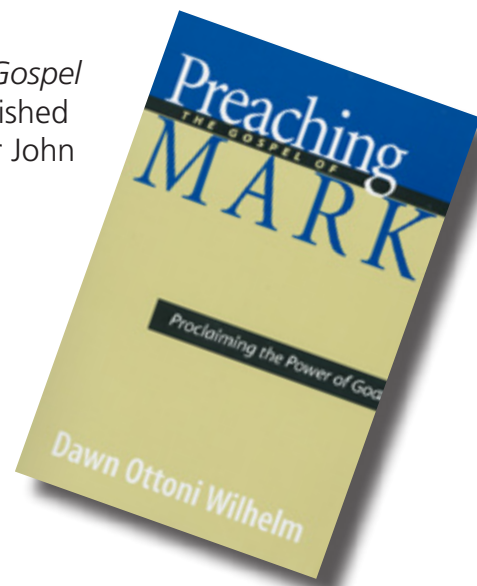
sustained study and easy reference to the larger context of Scripture passages. You can add your own notes and insights directly alongside the printed text and keep track over time how you made use of the text. It's important for preachers and teachers to select both online and print resources that reflect careful scholarship and transparency of religious conviction.

W & W: *What new insights into the Gospel of Mark did you gain as you wrote this commentary?*

DOW: The Gospel writer's style causes us to catch our breath as we are pushed into and out of the world of the text. In every chapter, I found something new, alive, and powerful. Through this entire remarkable text, the prophetic power of God seeks transformation and new life among us.

The invitation to discipleship, the empowerment of Jesus' followers, the risk of crossing boundaries and serving others, the certainty of suffering, and the promise of new life are all part of Mark's vision of discipleship.

Preaching the Gospel of Mark is published by Westminster John Knox Press.



Models of Stewardship from Two Generations

Mark and Rhonda Pittman Gingrich's family stewardship practices have grown out of the example both experienced as children. "Both Mark and I were raised in families that practiced tithing, and we give a

Rhonda received financial aid through the Brethren Student Scholarship and Alumni/ae Covenant Grant while she was a Bethany student. Alumni/ae

Covenant Grant recipients pledge to contribute to the Seminary, supporting Bethany's commitment of providing generous financial assistance to new generations of students. While Rhonda is happy to honor this agreement, she says that is not her primary motivator for giving to Bethany. "The Church of the Brethren played a significant role in Mark's and my formative years, shaping our faith and values," she explains. "But we give to Bethany Seminary and other denominational ministries not out of a sense of the past or preservation. We consider our support to be forward-looking so that the distinctive testimonies of our denomination can form the faith of new generations."

~~~~~

*We consider our support to be forward-looking so that the distinctive testimonies of our denomination can form the faith of new generations.*



tithe to our local congregation," says Rhonda, a 1998 graduate and alumni/ae representative to the Bethany Board of Trustees. "Beyond that, we give to a variety of causes. Many are related to the Church of the Brethren. Others uphold the same values that we as a denomination identify as important." Nine-year-old Sophia and Addison, age five, are expected to tithe from their allowances.

Beatrice Myers and Helen Herbst live nearly a continent apart amid subcultures of the church that are different, but they've maintained a close personal sisterly tie for 90 years. They both have a bright and engaging receptivity to friends they've always known or they just met. They are dedicated to their church and to Bethany Seminary and its mission to prepare leadership for the church.



Beatrice and Helen were southern Pennsylvania girls in their youth, growing up in Hanover. After college, Helen found her way west, settling in La Verne, Calif. Her husband, Albert, was a math professor at the University of La Verne. Beatrice remained in Hanover as a career school teacher and still lives in the residence their parents acquired when the girls were infants.

Beatrice is a member of the Hanover congregation, located in a district where prayer coverings are common and some congregations are led by a plural nonsalaried ministry (free ministry). Helen is a member of the La Verne, Calif., congregation, which reflects a unique West Coast culture and a very open understanding of church membership and mission. These differences seem rather secondary to Helen and Beatrice. Both take their Brethren roots and present Brethren commitments very seriously and continue to enjoy Annual Conference, National Older Adult Conference (NOAC), and their respective district conferences.

Every year the sisters try to get together for an extended reunion, often with Beatrice going to California during the middle of the Pennsylvania winter. The photo on this page was taken on Helen's front porch on one such visit. This past fall they attended NOAC, after which Helen spent several weeks in Pennsylvania. When apart, they talk on the phone regularly. Whoever dares to ask

either of them who talks the most will likely be told "She does."

Those who have the opportunity to visit with these ladies are truly blessed. Whether it is spirited conversation while sitting in the comfortable rocker in Beatrice's living room or helping juice straight-from-the-grove oranges in Helen's kitchen, the company of these gentle spirits is delightful.



Rooted in a common upbringing, these

*Helen (L) and Beatrice (R) haven't let differences in their congregations' expressions of faith interfere with their care for each other and their denomination.*

two lives have traveled different paths through

their middle years and retirement. The contexts in which they live and worship are different. Nonetheless, the family tie binds them together in a rich sense of togetherness. They receive friends and visitors with welcoming attitudes, whether they have known them before or not. At ages that many think of as elderly, they are young in spirit.

Whether age nine or age 90, these devoted Brethren are modeling both the attitudes and actions of faithful stewardship. We are deeply grateful for their witness and commitment!



## Come . . . and See Again!

*With God's help we will show our Christianity through our lives—caring for one another, helping those in need wherever they may be, striving for simplicity and good stewardship, ever conscious of God's Spirit present with us.*

*from the Bridgewater Church of the Brethren  
Statement of Mission*

TED FLORY

Brethren Woods, and Bridgewater College, as well as other agencies like Boy Scouts and the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Free Clinic. The Mission Extravaganza was open during Sunday school (9:30–10:45 a.m.) and again immediately after morning worship until 12:30 p.m. Attendees

viewed the exhibits, talked with representatives from the various organizations, and enjoyed fellowship and refreshments while they learned about the impact the Bridgewater congregation has as it reaches out to others.



*Ted (fourth from left) visits with Bridgewater congregation members Marie Flory, Lowell Miller, Peggy Miller, and Miriam Holl at the Bethany exhibit.*

"An exciting opportunity is happening today in our social hall. You can be a part of the ministries which our congregation supports by attending the 'Come ... and See Again' Mission Extravaganza." With these words the September 28th Bridgewater Church of the Brethren bulletin invited people to explore some 20 exhibits representing ministries from around the block and around the world, all supported by the Bridgewater congregation.

Exhibits included Brethren agencies and organizations like Bethany Theological Seminary, Bridgewater Retirement Community, Camp

The Bridgewater Church of the Brethren, in an effort to be faithful to God's call to mission, has always sought to maintain a strong balance between financing local church programs as well as supporting outreach ministries. For example, approximately 25 percent of the 2009 Bridgewater budget of \$686,000 is allocated to outreach. The "Come ... and See Again" Mission Extravaganza provided the congregation visible and tangible confirmation of how the agencies and organizations benefit from our continued support.





## Alumni/ae News

### Welcome New Alumni/ae!

#### Graduate School

*Master of Divinity, Peace Studies Emphasis*

Brandon Grady, York, Pennsylvania

*Master of Divinity*

David Beebe, Richmond, Indiana

Nan Erbaugh, Dayton, Ohio

Stephen Hershberger, Woodbury, Pennsylvania

Elizabeth Keller, Richmond, Indiana

Jason Kreighbaum, Hagerstown, Indiana

Matthew McKimmy, Blacksburg, Virginia

Christina Singh, Allahbad, India

Karl Stone, Richmond, Indiana

Paula Ulrich, Richmond, Indiana

Douglas Veal, Richmond, Indiana

*Master of Arts*

Marla Abe, Akron, Ohio

Susan Ross, Fort Wayne, Indiana

*Certificate of Achievement in*

*Theological Studies*

Mildred Baker, Martinsburg, Pennsylvania

Nick Beam, Pleasant Hill, Ohio

Jerry Sales, Peoria, Illinois

#### Published:

Herald Press has published *Springs of Living Water: Christ-Centered Church Renewal* by **David S. Young** (1970, 1976).



#### Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership

*TRIM*

Patricia Arendt, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

Charles Bell, New Castle, Indiana

Gilbert Crosby, East Peoria, Illinois

Todd Crowder, Edinburg, Virginia

Doris Dunham, Bakersfield, California

Robert Eshelman, Mount Joy, Pennsylvania

Aaron Gross, Logansport, Indiana

Laura Leighton-Harris, Council Bluffs, Iowa

James McDonald, Delphi, Indiana

Victoria Minyard, Whittier, California

Patricia Muthler, New Enterprise, Pennsylvania

James Sampson, Forest, Ohio

Rick Schrag, McPherson, Kansas

Jeffrey Tomson, Camden, Indiana

Keith Whitmer, Staunton, Virginia

Shawn Wilges, Phillipsburg, Ohio

Rebecca Zeek, Duncansville, Pennsylvania

*EFSM*

Robert Curns, Bergton, Virginia

Daniel King, Harrisonburg, Virginia

Frank Tusing, Broadway, Virginia

Vernon Yoder, Garnett, Kansas

*"Strawberry, please!" Hundreds of alums attended the Bethany Ice Cream Social at the National Older Adult Conference (NOAC) in September. Several Seminary faculty and staff served guests. Here, Fred Bernhard, advancement associate, and Elizabeth Keller, director of admissions, help David Rogers obtain his tasty treat.*



## Education as Liminality

“OK,” you may say, “now you’ve really done it! — throwing fancy words at me that I can’t even find in my dictionary.”

My dictionary acknowledges that variations on the word *liminality* exist, but it is not helpful in explaining how this word applies to anything that matters, and to education in particular.

A former Bethany faculty member used to say that education at Bethany was an experience in liminality. Any educational process should be, for that matter. Liminality refers to being at the margin, or at a threshold perhaps. It refers to encountering new insights, skills, perspectives, or just a new way of being, that may not have been perceptible before. Education pushes the thresholds of what we are able to understand or receive.

To understand education as just the learning of information overlooks the richest aspects of the educational process. Education is not just information transfer. Education is not equivalent to indoctrination. Education is at its best when it operates in an environment of asking questions as much as giving answers. Peter Drucker, management guru and in his later years, social commentator, observed that among the almost limitless variety of leaders he worked with in his career, the truly exceptional ones were the ones who knew how to ask the right questions.

The educational process may sometimes be seen as an environment that offers both security and threat at the same time—the security of being able to ask questions that may not have always been acceptable, and the threat of having to face those questions.

### A FINAL WORD

*Lowell Flory is Executive Director of Institutional Advancement for Bethany Theological Seminary.*

## LOWELL FLORY

Does this kind of environment threaten one’s faith and belief system? Our students would generally say no. Learning how to formulate questions and work through them strengthens their conviction about who they are as spiritual persons and about what they believe as well as what they know.

The asking of questions doesn’t happen in a vacuum. At Bethany it happens against the backdrop of Brethren beliefs and practices. It happens with the guidance of an excellent, diverse faculty who are committed to Brethren testimonies and who can represent the thinking and experience of myriads of others in the literature who may have dealt with similar questions over the years.

As students travel their educational journey at Bethany, they dialog not only with their classroom peers and faculty. They also continue the conversation of centuries’ worth of thinkers, researchers, and prophets as they explore their own thresholds on which their faith formation and leadership character are built. Your continuing support of this kind of education will significantly contribute to our leaders’—and our churches’—ability to look and move forward to new vistas.





# Wonder & Word

WONDER & WORD is a magazine for alumni/ae and friends of Bethany Theological Seminary, published biannually and free of charge by the Office of Institutional Advancement.

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Lowell Flory

## EDITOR

Marcia Shetler

## ART and PHOTOGRAPHY

Cover: *The Prophetess Anna*, Rembrandt Van Rijn, 1631. Courtesy Rijk Museum, Amsterdam.

Page 1: Schwarzenau, Germany. Courtesy Nevin Dulabaum.

Page 13: *Maestà*, Duccio di Buoninsegna, 1308-11. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena, Italy.

Page 14: Courtesy Church of the Brethren General Board/Kendra Flory

Page 15: Courtesy Church of the Brethren General Board

Page 21: Gerry Pence

Page 22: Phil Flory

Pages 2, 4, 10: Jim Chagares

Pages 3, 5, 7, 9, 22: Marcia Shetler

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## MISSION STATEMENT

Bethany Theological Seminary as a graduate school and academy seeks to prepare people for Christian ministry and to educate those called as witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the cities and communities of the world.

Bethany's educational program bears witness to the beliefs, heritage, and practices of the Church of the Brethren in the context of the whole Christian tradition.

Among its values and goals, Bethany Theological Seminary:

Grounds its education in the confession that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior of the world and in the acceptance of the New Testament as our guide to faith and practice.

Features the historic Brethren testimonies of community, peace, justice, reconciliation, service, and simplicity.

Advocates a learning process that grounds theological education in spiritual formation within the life and ministry of communities of faith.

Affirms a style of education that brings us into close relationships with congregations, the world-wide church, the peoples of the world, and God's creation.

Seeks to equip the whole church to better discern its faith and calling.

Invites into the community persons of both genders, and of all races, nations, and confessions.

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# SAVE THE DATE

## Presidential Forum

### *Weaving Wisdom's Tent: The Arts of Peace*

### *March 29 - 30, 2009*

### *Watch for more details in early 2009*