



Leadership Development

For some time I have kept on my bulletin board at work a Dilbert cartoon about leadership. The cartoon depicts Dogbert, one of the characters, explaining leadership: "Leaders start their careers as morons. They are drawn to meetings like moths to a porch light. The successful moron will have a very high bladder-to-brain ratio. They prevail in all decisions because they are impervious to logic or coffee. These qualities are perceived as leadership. After several promotions their job tends to match their talents. Conclusion: leadership is nature's way of removing morons from the productive flow."

This unpretty picture of leadership suited my mood at the time the cartoon was published. My boss seemed to match perfectly the qualities explained by Dogbert. I suspect many others know or have worked for people who seem to have been promoted to leadership positions without the qualities we usually hope for in our leaders. They are classic examples of the "Peter Principle" which says that in hierarchical organizations *people tend to be promoted to their "level of incompetence"*; they were good at the jobs they were doing and thus were promoted, but to positions for which they were not necessarily gifted.

In the church, where we very much need dedicated and skilled leaders, it is especially important to identify and mentor people who demonstrate leadership qualities and who won't impede the "productive flow." This edition of *Shalom!* focuses on a number of ways in which the Brethren in Christ Church is working at leadership development that will produce leaders who are definitely not morons but who will help to guide the church in fulfilling its mission.

My own journey into leadership began when I was in my early 20s. Dorcas

Climenhaga, a former missionary who later served with her husband as the bishop couple in the Central Conference, apparently recognized potential in me and invited me to edit the *Missionary Prayer Challenge* (a monthly missions prayer calendar). That was my first denominational editorial and committee assignment. By the time I "retired"

from editing the *Challenge* eight years later, I had begun to work on other editorial and writing assignments in the church, and have been doing so ever since. My leadership role in the church has been mostly with the written word, and I am humbled by how many opportunities I have had over the years to influence people through my writing and editing. I resonate with Kim Phipps' distinction between "calling" and "career" (see p. 7). For me, part of my calling has been to encourage the church to pursue peace and justice in the world, while my career has developed around my skills as a writer and editor. I am one of those people Kim describes when she says that "career is often central to how a person fulfills his or her calling/vocation."

I also have had opportunities to serve on the church board and in other leadership capacities in my local congregation, on regional and denominational boards and committees, and on the board of

Mennonite Central Committee, where I now chair the U.S. board. These leadership roles, along with many of the editorial and writing projects I have completed, were made possible in part because one person—Dorcas Climenhaga—tapped me on the shoulder and invited me to do something I wouldn't have thought I could or would want to do.

Two writers in this edition of *Shalom!* are still in their 20s; in fact, one of them just graduated from Messiah College this spring. They are beginning their adult lives as leaders because others recognized their potential, mentored and encouraged them, and provided opportunities for them to develop their gifts. Megan and Alan are not like the leaders described in my Dilbert cartoon; they are definitely contributing to the "productive flow" with their leadership skills. I'm quite sure there are many other young and older people in our churches who may only need a word of encouragement or an invitation from someone to begin to discover and develop their leadership skills. For whom are you being a Dorcas?

"It was he [God] who gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.... From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Eph. 4:11-12, 16). ☺

Harriet S. Bicksler, editor

Upcoming Topics for Shalom!

Summer 2002, "Language and Communication"

Fall 2002, "Grief and Loss"

Projected for 2003 (in no particular order): "Art and the Church," "Doing Church in the Global Community," "Living Simply," "Peacemaking"

What I've Learned About Developing Leaders

By Steve Schwartz

"What do you want to be remembered for?" he asked. My brother-in-law posed this thoughtful question over dinner one evening at a local restaurant. Reflecting on what we want to be known for has a way of clarifying our priorities. It also causes us to evaluate, "How well am I doing at being the kind of person I want to be?" Reflecting on those questions that evening challenged me to be more honest about my shortcomings, and think of how, with God's grace, I could be more authentic.

Someone said recently we grow not so much through experience, but by reflecting on our experiences. When I saw *Shalom!* was doing an issue on "Leadership," I couldn't help reflecting on the many leaders and various leadership styles I've observed over the years. My thoughts were also drawn to the opportunities I've been given to serve in various formal and informal leadership roles.

What I Have Learned

Through these experiences I've

SHALOM!

Shalom! A Journal for the Practice of Reconciliation is a quarterly publication of the Brethren in Christ Church. Its mission is to educate and stimulate Christ-like responses to the needs of society by providing biblical, theological, sociological, denominational and personal perspectives on a variety of contemporary issues.

Editorial Committee:
Ken Hoke, General Secretary,
Brethren in Christ Church
Lois Saylor, Elizabethtown, PA
Janet Sherk, Mechanicsburg, PA
Joel Wenger, Greencastle, PA

Editor: Harriet S. Bickslers,
127 Holly Dr., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055;
(717) 795-9151;
e-mail: bickhouse@aol.com

Please direct all correspondence, including changes of address, to the editor. A third class nonprofit mailing permit is held by the Brethren in Christ Church, P.O. Box 390, Grantham, PA 17027. *Third class postage paid in Grantham, Pennsylvania.*

grown in my own leadership abilities and developed a set of core beliefs related to being in leadership and developing the leadership potential of others. These beliefs can be summed up in six principles.

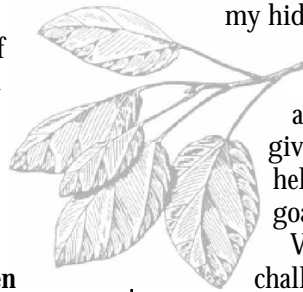
Principle #1: People learn leadership skills by being given opportunities to lead. Many times organizations only give leadership opportunities to persons who have demonstrated an ability to lead. However, how does the average employee or church member demonstrate this ability?

For this to succeed, people must truly be given opportunities to lead. We must step out of the way and allow the persons leading to honestly carry the weight and responsibility on their shoulders, while remaining supportive. Management consultant Tom Terez writes, "You might think you can do things better and faster yourself, and maybe you can. Big deal. In the long run, you'll increase know-how, nurture a sense of ownership, and spread the workload only by letting go. This means accepting some short-run inefficiency and occasional bouts of frustration."¹

For true empowerment to work, we must treat people as peers. We must respect their ideas. We must trust them. We must provide accountability, but first we must let go. This directly leads to the next principle.

Principle #2: People can grow and become multi-talented if an organization will empower them to explore and develop their gifts. Many people do not know their full-range of gifts because they have never been in a situation where they have needed to use them. Many jobs require a very limited set of skills in a person.

When I joined the staff at Paxton Ministries in 1990, I was unaware of my leadership potential, but was put in situations where I needed to lead. I did not know I had much of a creative side, but was given opportunities to explore



my hidden talents. I did not know I had the ability to manage multiple projects and deadlines, but was given responsibilities and held accountable to meet my goals.

When people are challenged in their role, whether it is a full-time job or a volunteer role at church, they will be stretched and grow.

Principle #3: Protecting people from hard work and responsibility, under the guise of caring, can often hold people back. However, when people are required to act responsibly, and they are given meaningful and challenging work, they will often rise to the challenge. Leaders can be nurturing, encouraging and affirming, while still requiring those being led to act responsibly, meet deadlines, achieve their objectives, and communicate professionally. Strongly compassionate leaders can sometimes do a disservice by not challenging others toward growth. A grace-filled atmosphere can all too easily be replaced by lowered standards.

However, we must treat people like adults, expecting them to respond honestly and act responsibly, lest we become like overbearing parents who, out of a desire to see their child succeed, ends up breeding immaturity and dependency.

Principle #4: If we are to command respect, and expect others to take responsibility, we must lead by example. We must be highly motivated. We must not hold ourselves in higher regard than others, but be willing to "get our hands dirty" in everyday tasks. We must model servant leadership. Jesus said it best in Matthew 20:26b, "whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant" (NASB).

We must also be honest about our shortcomings. If we model that it is okay to be imperfect, people will be more willing to serve by trying new

roles and taking risks.

Empowerment must not be just a buzzword. It cannot even survive as a program tacked onto an existing management style. It must be the culture in which the organization is run.

Principle #5: A key underpinning of all these philosophies is valuing people first. In a day where organizations routinely place financial considerations ahead of people, I want to adhere to a higher standard. I hope we in the church can set an example in our churches, ministries and business settings of valuing people above profits and policy.

It should be noted that when we invest in people, there is also a great payoff. In the end, we will be benefited by a congregation or workforce that is more talented, more experienced and more wise.

Principle #6: Finally, all of these principles must be guarded, maintained and championed within an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. If we let our guard down, either by allowing some people to slack, or by holding too much of the power ourselves, the environment of empowerment will deteriorate. Organizational members will be frustrated by the inconsistencies and their commitment to the philosophy of servant leadership and shared responsibility will diminish. When power is truly shared, pastors and executive directors and CEOs are no longer the primary decision makers in their organizations, but rather become the chief guardians of the values and principles of the organization.

In Summary

Robert Greenleaf, in his book *Servant*

Leadership, wrote that the best test of servant leadership is, "Do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?"²

On my deathbed, one of the most satisfying feelings could be to know that I truly invested myself in the lives of those around me; that people were better off for knowing me or working with me. ☺

References:

¹ Tom Terez, "Refreshing Lessons in Empowerment," *Workforce*, November 2001.

² Robert Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1983.

Steve Schwartz is a member of the Harrisburg Brethren in Christ Church, Harrisburg, PA.

Servant Leadership

By Kerry Hoke

Servant leadership. The two words seem to be, in their very essence, in conflict with each other, yet the words, the concepts, can indeed function harmoniously. Any good Brethren in Christ leader knows this to be true, right?

Ken Hoke, our denomination's own General Secretary (and my father-in-law), recently received his doctorate from Ashland Theological Seminary with a thesis that explored this pointed question: Does the theology of the Brethren in Christ have an impact on the way we choose to lead? In other words, do we practice the servant leadership bent our theology preaches?

Hoke's research begins with an overview of Brethren in Christ theology. We are a patchwork of four particular theological movements that we have sewn together to make our own distinct background. From Anabaptism, we adopted a focus on community and the understanding of the priesthood of all believers, meaning we all have equal access to God and his love and forgiveness. These Anabaptist roots are the source of our bent toward

servant leadership. From Pietism, we gained our focus on a personal and practical relationship with God. Wesleyan Holiness lent its understanding of sanctification so that we see holiness not as something we get at some point in the future but as something we can start receiving here in the present. Each of these streams was "domesticated" to work with the Brethren in Christ mindset. We saw a movement, learned from it, and incorporated it into our understanding as something people recognized as uniquely Brethren in Christ.

The fourth influence, Evangelicalism, introduced at the midpoint of the 20th century, is a completely different scenario. We seem to have formed ourselves to the shape of Evangelicalism instead of making it fit who we are as Brethren in Christ. Among other things, Evangelicalism introduced new leadership styles that do not necessarily jell with our Anabaptist heritage. This failure to integrate Evangelicalism into the fabric of the BIC comes up again later.

Out of this overview of Brethren in

Christ theology, Hoke delves into his research, exploring the possible relationship between theology and leadership style within Brethren in Christ circles. Using a presentation by John Ortberg (teaching pastor at Willow Creek Community Church in Illinois and proponent of servant leadership) entitled "Balancing the Tensions of a Leading Servant," Hoke asserts nine servanthood roles that are in conflict with nine leadership roles, and he uses these "tensions" to develop a simple nine-point rating scale from which he can measure which way a person leans, toward servanthood on one end of the scale or leadership on the other. A five on the nine-point scale indicates an optimum score, a balancing of the two tensions and true servant leadership.

The first study took place during General Conference 1998 when Hoke surveyed Brethren in Christ leaders and conference participants. Leaders used the aforementioned rating scale to evaluate themselves, and the participants (or observers) used the same rating scale to evaluate a leader

with whom they regularly associated, regardless of the capacity.

Distributed directly to 50 randomly selected individual congregations, the second survey provided a more specific context from which to study the possible relationship between theology and the practice of leadership. The rating scale remained the same; however, this time the lead pastor received a specific form to fill out while the members of the administrative board filled out a separate form regarding their lead pastor. Along with the rating scale, another form was developed and distributed to the lead pastor and the administrative board to evaluate the pastor's commitment to each of the Brethren in Christ core values.

Findings from the first study revealed that four of the tension areas were statistically different from the optimum number of five. The second study confirmed the first study's findings, again revealing four tension areas that significantly leaned away from the optimum score of five. Three of the tensions matched those exposed in the first study.

After presenting the statistics and results, Hoke declares that there does indeed seem to be a correlation between the theology of the Brethren in Christ and their style of leadership. Servant leadership is valued and practiced in the Brethren in Christ circles that were surveyed. Whereas true servant leadership would be found in the balancing of the servanthood/leadership roles purported by Ortberg, the Brethren in Christ leaders/pastors

evaluated hovered in the middle of the continuum, and in the few instances where the shift from the optimum number of five was greater than one point, BIC theology, such as our commitment to peace and community, affected the shift. BIC pastors also exhibited support of the core values to the extent that those core values affects their behavior.

A study like this means little if we do not walk away with some implications as to how it affects us as people. First and foremost, Hoke wants us to see our leaders as "leaders among equals." They are not a hierarchy but rather a beacon by which to guide us to our desired common goals. From this perspective stem various areas needing our attention as Brethren in Christ people.

While Hoke commends us to continue to use vision development to draw out the aspirations of the group and to ensure group ownership of goals and vision as we have done in the past, one of the most important areas we need to improve is giving more care to the assimilation of concepts into the core of who we are as Brethren in Christ. Hoke encourages us to do the necessary theological background check on new ideas and philosophies to be sure that we are integrating something that goes along with who we are as a people, a community.

For example, as Hoke notes, our relationship with Evangelicalism, as previously mentioned, did not include

an appropriate theological assessment. With the introduction of Evangelicalism came a move away from a community practice of leadership where leaders were carefully elected, examined, and appointed from within the church community with the say of all its members. Instead, our practice has shifted to the "professional pastorate" where we bring in leaders from outside the local community who have been formally educated to fill such a role. Hoke and the authors he researched believe we need to look back at our Brethren in Christ heritage, particularly our Anabaptist roots, and reshape our concept of leadership to include a more relational quality that holds the leader to be a part of the group being led. Therefore, when a leader does come from outside the community, he or she intentionally makes a concerted effort to build those relationships that would naturally be present with a leader from within the community.

With this in mind, let us all continue to strive for the example of true servant leadership as seen in our Master and Savior, Jesus: "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Phil. 2:5-8). ©

Kerry Hoke is a freelance editor, part of the pastoral team at Grace Community Church (BIC), Lawrenceville, GA, and a part-time English/writing tutor at a local college. Using her professional skills, she edited Ken's doctoral dissertation.

For more information about the Shaping Leaders campaign or to contribute, contact the Bethren in Christ Stewardship Services Office at (717) 697-2634 or Phil Keefer at pkeefe@messiah.edu. If you feel a call to vocational ministry, talk to your pastor or bishop.

WORLD HUNGER FUND UPDATE

The food shortage in Malawi continues. During this crisis, the Brethren in Christ Church in North America has been able to give some assistance through the World Hunger Fund. Ephraim Disi of Malawi writes, "Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. This letter is to inform you that the World Hunger Funds were distributed to the designated areas. We are very thankful for this gracious donation. The distribution went very well, though the demand and need for food had significantly increased.... Once again, thank you very much for your untiring assistance to the Brethren in Christ Church in Malawi."

Your World Hunger Fund contributions make it possible to provide this kind of assistance to needy Brethren in Christ people in other parts of the world. To contribute so that the WHF can continue to help, send your designated check to Brethren in Christ Church, P. O. Box A, Grantham, PA 17027, or 2619 Niagara Parkway, Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada L2A 5M4.

Reported by Ken Hoke, General Secretary



Shaping Leaders for Tomorrow: A Confession and a Campaign

By Lois Saylor

“Within the coming decade, the existing ‘workforce’ of Brethren in Christ pastors, missionaries, and church planters needs to grow from 500 individuals to 750 workers worldwide—an increase of 50 percent. Clearly, if the Brethren in Christ Church is to thrive in the years ahead, leadership development must be a high priority.”

- Warren Hoffman, Moderator

By definition leaders lead. The paths they choose may be well worn and well worth traveling again or the paths can be rough and exciting in their newness. *The Shaping Leaders for Tomorrow* effort is a little bit of both. According to Warren Hoffman, in 1950 the Brethren in Christ leaders “observing the vitality and growth in other denominations, recognized the need to make critical adjustments for effective witness and service in their communities.”

In response they gave new direction to leadership and leadership development. Full-time pastorates with “remuneration commensurate with their services” were encouraged. Seminaries were approved for training and funds established to provide financial assistance. Ordination standards were established including “satisfactory completion of a prescribed study course or its equivalent.” Efforts were made to discover and encourage those being called by God for ministry.

A similar stirring occurred during the 1998-2000 biennium when “leadership development emerged as a ‘hot topic’ early in consultation across the church to help discern and clarify God’s vision for 2010.” Leadership became one of ten denominational priorities for the first decade of the new century, indeed in the new millennium. The campaign began with feasibility studies in early 2000; and solicitation began in the spring of 2001. Warren Hoffman comments, “It is up to all of us to do what we can to support the call, preparation, and continuing nurture of those who minister among us.”

This time the vision for leadership development is more diverse and takes us down paths we have not traveled. To

encourage the call to ministry, age-appropriate publications will be distributed, and Harvest Dinners and leadership formation events will be held in regional conferences annually. The hope is to encourage and nurture God’s call in the lives of youth, young adults, and those sensing a mid-career vocational shift to ministry.



Shaping LEADERS for TOMORROW

Learning opportunities beyond seminary are being envisioned. Scholarships for

seminarians will continue, but there are also new initiatives such as distance learning to make training for ministry “affordable, accessible, flexible, relational and transferable.” Distance learning will be available in Spanish and English. The core courses available in English for the last 15 years are also being made available in Spanish with the likely need to translate the courses into other languages as well. Beyond the core courses are the advanced Impact Courses “geared to assisting pastors” in “practical and interactive learning experiences” to fulfill the “vision priorities” of the church.

Further opportunities to develop and nurture leadership are being envisioned:

- Cross-cultural leadership for missionaries and pastors will be developed through “cross-cultural communication, missionary anthropology, and language acquisition” training.
- Assessing current pastors and missionaries will be made available to those individuals “desiring to build on their strengths and overcome their weaknesses.”
- Cultivating peer leadership.

- Cultivating emerging denominational leaders.

Throughout the *Shaping Leaders for Tomorrow* brochure one message is clear. Leaders can arise from every age group, profession, across ethnic groups, and across gender lines. Elisa Seibert, for example, gives testimony to her call at the age of 17. Erin Hoffman Malone thanks the BIC church for her CMD (Commission on Ministry and Doctrine) scholarship aid. Manjula and Bijoy Roul thank the BIC for nurturing “tomorrow’s leaders with a calling to cross-cultural ministry.” Couples acknowledge their partnerships in ministry including Frank Kipe who hopes a CMD endowment in memory of his wife, Pat, to support “wives of pastors for technical, commercial or professional training” becomes a part of the leadership initiatives.

Shaping Leaders for Tomorrow is both a confession and a campaign. We confess (in the best sense of that word) our need to develop and nurture leadership. We campaign (in the best sense of that word too) for the needed funds to carry out the vision. The goal of the campaign is to raise \$2,000,000 as an endowment and fund the programs through the income. \$100,000 to \$120,000 is the projected yearly income from a two million dollar endowment. This will not fund all the initiatives being formed but it is a significant start and “many new initiatives in leadership preparation can be implemented.”

According to Phil Keefer, Executive Director of Stewardship, more than \$1,425,000 has already been raised through donations in hand or commitments as of May 2002. He further notes that initiatives can begin to be funded as soon as the invested money brings a return after a year of investment. Both Warren Hoffman and Phil Keefer report that the reaction to the campaign has been overwhelmingly supportive.

“The campaign,” says Phil who has visited in seven conferences and talked to many people, “is more than building an endowment. We’re building a vision for leadership.” ☺

Lois Saylor is a member of the Elizabethtown (PA) Brethren in Christ Church, and serves as a writer and editor for various denominational projects.

On Being “Strongly Encouraged” in Leadership

By Alan Thrush

I just returned from a reunion with the music group I traveled with for the past two summers, and at the moment I feel like I am sitting in a pool of nostalgia. Actually, as a college senior about to graduate, waves of nostalgia never seem very far away, and tonight I jumped into them headfirst. It seems that any spare time I now have is spent reminiscing about the past and reflecting on what has shaped me into the person that I am today. So actually the assignment to write an article on my development as a young leader has come at a good time; I'm already in the mood to reflect on my past!

Sometimes I wonder how it was that I ever ended up in positions of leadership. I was an introvert as a kid; I did not like talking to unfamiliar people and I felt uncomfortable in large groups. I contented myself to sit back and let others take the lead, preferring to remain anonymous and keep my thoughts to myself. Yet that all began to change when I was just 13 years old, and it all started rather innocently with music. At the time I took piano lessons from our church (Gateway Community BIC Church) music director, and she decided I should learn how to play hymns and choruses. Little did I know that in a few short weeks, she would stick me behind a keyboard playing along to the Sunday morning worship music. I was petrified; I panicked when the music started and glanced up to see my brother and friends looking “supportively” back at me. The adults beamed, but this only caused my heart to race faster. I knew they were proud of me, but if they really heard my music, I was convinced that the smiles would quickly dissipate. I remember one Sunday where I simply stopped playing and gently rocked the keyboard back and forth so it looked like my hands were moving on the keys.

From that point on, however, I have found myself in front of people assisting

in leadership. Over the years, the audiences have transformed from pumpkin heads into real people, and I will now occasionally catch someone's eye as I talk to groups. And I can honestly say that I do not just shake the keyboard anymore—I actually play notes! This began my involvement in church leadership, and I am very grateful my teacher made me do it!

As I grew older and moved through high school, I gradually was asked to assume greater leadership roles. As a freshman in high school, our youth group was young, small, and lacking in leadership.

Those of us involved decided to restructure the way we did youth ministry, and adult leaders asked all of us to help in the process. By my sophomore year we had a core group of student leaders, and by my senior year we had an entire leadership training cycle established. From the very beginning, students were asked to take responsibility for the functions of the program, including involvement with music to leading Bible studies. As I moved into my senior year of high school, I finally felt comfortable in front of both large and small groups, primarily because I had guided practice. In fact, I began to realize that I enjoyed leadership activities and did well at it in the process. I was given both the opportunities and the encouragement I needed to discover my gifts.

College brought many other opportunities for leadership involvement, but most of these came within college organizations. It was not until my junior year in a Bible class that an opportunity arose to get involved in a Brethren in Christ Church. Dr. Terry Brensinger approached me before class one day and asked me to consider doing an internship with him the following year at the Grantham Church, where he was becoming the senior pastor. I had not planned on an internship, nor had I

considered attending the Grantham Church. But looking back I am incredibly grateful that he took the initiative and searched me out. My experiences working with the Grantham Church staff have proved invaluable, and I am almost sorry to see my senior year come to a close (which means I can no longer keep the internship). The church staff has worked graciously with me and allowed me to participate in leadership with them. I have matured emotionally and spiritually in unexpected ways, all because someone took the time to encourage me in leadership.

As the Brethren in Christ Church looks to develop leaders for the future, I want to encourage us to actively seek out those with leadership potential. And once identified, these people should be “strongly encouraged” to use their gifts to benefit the community. This can and should include teenagers and college students, because the earlier they start the more comfortable they will feel. Perhaps it seems a little harsh to speak of forcing people into leadership roles. But if it were not for my piano teacher forcing me to play in front of the church, or for my youth leaders “strongly encouraging” me to get involved in leadership, or Dr. Brensinger taking the initiative to talk to me, I would not be where I am today.

Often it takes just one person to encourage a teenager or college student to consider leadership roles. Think about someone in your church or community who just needs a little shove; you never know where that person just might end up. ☺

Alan Thrush graduated in May 2002 from Messiah College. He is a member of the Gateway Community Brethren in Christ Church in Chino, California. During the 2001-2002 academic year, he was one of three student pastoral interns at the Grantham Church.

Exploring Christian Vocation

By Kim Phipps

The following is an excerpt from a chapel service meditation at Messiah College in November 2001.

When I began to live my life as a committed believer, I found myself surrounded by a faith community where people often used the vocabulary of “calling” and “God’s will” on topics that ranged from significant life decisions to meaningless daily routines. The vocabulary and its inconsistent usage was problematic for me.

I’m a New Yorker, a child of Brooklyn and Queens, and I’m fairly direct and somewhat cynical at times. To be honest, while I have often prayed and sought God’s direction, I have yet to receive a telegram from heaven or a supernatural vision. The decisions I have made to pursue graduate education, to engage in a career as a professor and administrator, to marry, and to have a child have all been bathed in fervent prayer, but I must tell you that I have never experienced clear, explicit directions from God.

When my husband Kelly and I decided to marry, we did not have assurance that we were God’s intended for each other. Perhaps one of our professors said it best when he told us, “The two of you should get married—you are the only ones who can put up with each other.” While we did not have absolute assurance, we understood the significance of committing our lives to each other, we knew we were each other’s best friend, and we knew that marriage would take a lot of diligence and hard work. Through times of joy and celebration and times of frustration and conflict, we have sought to work out the contours of our life together on a daily basis. It is a daily decision to create a home where we encourage each other to be better people—to be more Christlike in our attitudes and actions. It is a daily decision for me to serve as provost of Messiah College, bringing the gifts and abilities I have to this important leadership position.

I believe that many of you have experienced similar struggles, and you also have many of the same questions. While the frustration I once felt because of God’s apparent silence about my future did not vanish instantly, it was slowly and persistently transformed by a deeper understanding of who I am and who I need to become....

Speaking of this journey, Whitworth College professor Gerald Sittser offers a helpful distinction between “calling” and “career.” He defines “calling” or vocation as a theological word that refers to “a God-given purpose to use one’s time, energy, and abilities to serve God in the world.” The word “career” is not theological; it refers to a “particular line of work that a person does that earns an income, requires education and training, and keeps society running.” The two words overlap. Career is often central to how a person fulfills his or her calling/vocation, but it is only a part of a person’s vocation, and sometimes it plays only a very minor role.

Vocation is a fluid concept. It refers to a life journey filled with successes, disappointments, joys, sorrows, and surprises. Life is not a straight line and we often discover that it is the crook in the road, the hill up ahead, or the unexpected vista that truly enriches our lives....

Regardless of careers or other roles, the apostle John expresses our primary vocation when he tells us that we are called to love God and that God abides in us if we abide in love. To fulfill that calling, we must be people of reconciliation, peacemakers who bring together what’s broken. When we embrace peacemaking as a central component of our Christian vocation, we model God’s

supreme act of reconciliation.

In order to be reconcilers we must be people of action. By intentionally involving ourselves in the lives of others, caring about our immediate and global neighbors, and looking for opportunities to work for peace and justice, we will fulfill our vocation as believers....

The Lilly Grant, recently received by Messiah College, establishes three goals which, when realized, will strengthen our understanding of Christian vocation. By engaging the community, encouraging and supporting ministry, and integrating faith and vocation throughout the educational program, we will transform our campus and energize the neighboring community....

The joy of life’s journey comes from the opportunity available to each of us to experience, experiment, and explore the possibilities, all the while trusting our God to use our failures and successes for good. We are all pilgrims on a journey seeking to fulfill our unique vocation as servants of God. ☺

Kim Phipps is provost at Messiah College, and a member of the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church. This excerpt from her chapel meditation is reprinted by permission from the Winter 2002 edition of The Bridge.

Messiah’s Lilly Grant Can Benefit Brethren in Christ Leadership Development

Messiah College was one of 28 colleges and universities to receive a Lilly Endowment grant on Christian vocation for \$2 million. Messiah’s grant is entitled “Christian Vocation: Service, Leadership, and Reconciliation.” According to the Winter 2002 issue of Messiah’s *Bridge* magazine, one component of the grant will “encourage academically promising students to consider lay and ordained ministry as their vocation.” Two new initiatives have the specific potential to benefit Brethren in Christ young people and congregations.

- The “Women in Ministry” initiative will provide some funds for the biennial Brethren in Christ Council for Women in Ministry and Leadership Retreat at Kenbrook Bible Camp; provide space for a women in ministry and missions resource room at Messiah College; mentor women students at Messiah; and provide scholarships for Messiah students to attend the biennial Wesleyan Holiness Women Clergy conference (the Brethren in Christ Church is a member of WHWC).
- The “C.N. Hostetter Fellows Program” (named for former Messiah College president and BIC churchman) will provide “an intensive contextual learning experience for students centering on the distinctive calling of God to ordained ministry.” Some of the students who will participate will be Brethren in Christ. They will be able to explore ministry possibilities, have opportunities to meet and work with local pastors and staff, and receive scholarships to seminary. ☺

Embracing and Affirming the Ministry of Women in the Church

By Darrell Winger

Aleda Cassel probably has not engaged in a debate over women in ministry, at least not to my knowledge. She just engaged in ministry. Aleda was my Sunday School teacher when I was a boy at the Rosebank Brethren in Christ Church near Kitchener, Ontario. She taught our class with love and all of us benefited from her spiritual gifts. Her ministry made an impact on my life and encouraged me to want follow Christ. Aleda ministered to many in our congregation over the years. Where would the church be without Aleda, and the many women she represents, willing to minister with the gifts God has given her?

In his message at Pentecost, the Apostle Peter told us that God was at work in new ways in order to accomplish his purposes in the world: “In the last days, God says, ‘I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.’” A significant result of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is that followers of Jesus – men and women – will be embraced and empowered to advance the cause of Christ. God was calling all his children to help make disciples of Christ Jesus. As we read further on in the New Testament we see that God graciously provides spiritual gifts to all in the body. God sees the heart that is committed to him and calls that person into his service.

Ever since Peter’s great sermon at Pentecost the church has moved forward as “sons and daughters...young and old...men and women” have been embraced and empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve and to minister. God intends the church to be the place where all people are to sense a gracious welcome and loving affirmation regardless of who they are. The tremendous truth of Galatians 3:26-29 is meant to be worked out in the practical life of God’s people – “there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

When one looks back, with an objective eye, over the history of the Brethren in Christ Church, the same is true. As a church we have been strengthened in our work through the sacrificial service of all members, men and women. I am thankful

for women in our past and in our present who have been embraced and empowered by God’s Spirit to minister—women like Rhoda Lee, Francis Davidson, Sarah Bert, Anna Engle, Dorothy Sherk, Lois Jean Sider, Winnie Swalm, Lynda Kelly, Kathleen Leadley, Janet Peifer, and Harriet Bicksler. The Brethren in Christ are people who acknowledge the truth of Pentecost and the model of the early church and affirm that men and women should minister. In recent years we have affirmed that women are welcome to minister in all positions in the church and be formally recognized to do so. Women, as well as men, are encouraged to be obedient to God’s call to serve as pastors and leaders in the church.

It’s important, however, to recognize that the starting point and foundational principle is God’s call to serve. Many of the women who have served the church did so without the status of being a licensed or ordained minister – they just ministered. I am certain that the fact that they did not have “credentials” in no way negatively affected the eternal value of their ministry. Having said that, though, it is only right that the church formally acknowledge the fact that women are ministering as God has called and gifted them. As women have been free to minister within the church at all levels, our church has been better able to make a difference in our world for Christ Jesus. We need to acknowledge women who have or who are ministering among us and, by doing so, continue to affirm women in ministry.

Dorothy Sherk is a woman who ministered effectively in the Brethren in Christ Church. Now in her eighties, Dorothy responded to God’s calling and gifting by being an educator and leader in the educational movement of the Brethren in Christ Church serving at Niagara Christian Collegiate beginning in the 1940s. For many decades she has ministered to successive generations in the church. She was willing to be an integral part of the leadership team of a church planting in Kitchener, Ontario in the late 1970s when most persons would be relaxing in retirement. She stepped forward and gave leadership in several areas, including leading a class of college and university students of which I was a part and, just like Aleda Cassel, she

significantly influenced my life. Not one to tire easily, Dorothy accepted the call of her congregation to serve as deacon when in her late seventies. Though she is not a credentialed minister, Dorothy has mentored and advised pastors, bishops and church leaders. What a blessing it has been that Dorothy was empowered by God’s Spirit and affirmed by the church to minister.

Rev. Lynda Kelly, the first ordained woman in the Brethren in Christ Church, knew the Lord had gifted her to serve the needs of hurting people. Serving alongside her husband Walter in pastoral ministry, Lynda was able to respond to the many opportunities around her. Lynda decided that her gifts directed her to pursue ministry as a chaplain. She was willing to prepare and serve in this important aspect of the care of people. Not only was the ministry of the church strengthened, but also Lynda was able to extend our ministry into other public arenas. Having served in a various capacities in chaplaincy, Rev. Kelly is now the Provincial Director for Chaplaincy Services for the Province of Ontario. This has taken place because Lynda was empowered by God’s Spirit and affirmed by the church.

Rhoda Winger has served Christ for several decades as an educator and missionary in Canada and in the Philippines. She has served the local church and the global church with a passion to see people come to faith in Christ and serve him with joy. Prayer has always been a vital aspect of her ministry. In recent years, now as a retired person and serving on Missions Prayer Fellowship, Rhoda has spearheaded a new prayer ministry in the Canadian Conference known as Aaron and Hur prayer gatherings. The Aaron and Hur events have encouraged increased prayer support for Brethren in Christ World Missions and North American church planting endeavours. Due to Rhoda’s willingness to provide leadership, our missionaries and church planters are receiving strong backing in prayer, which is absolutely essential for the advancement of their work. New ways to strengthen the outreach ministry of the church have been developed because God empowered Rhoda and the church affirmed her ministry.

Pastor Beth Springle brings a wealth of

An Overview of Celebrating Women's Stories

By Rebecca L. Ebersole, Dorcas I. Steckbeck and E. Morris Sider, Editors

Celebrating Women's Stories: Faith Through Life's Seasons celebrates the lives of 21 Brethren in Christ women. This book of biographies reveals the joys and complexities of life and faith, thereby teaching theology in an anecdotal way.

Variety is one of the strengths of the book, enabling readers to identify with one or more women in the volume. Some of the women exercise influence as leaders in the public sphere; some live lives of quiet influence within their homes; some venture into far-flung countries, and others have lived in the same town all their lives. Some women in the book are married; others are single. Women from several cultures are included. Some are from the past, although most are contemporaries. Each story speaks for itself in a unique voice, while the book as a whole speaks for a broad spectrum of women.

Celebrating Women's Stories illustrates the complexities and variations of life in both a collective and individual sense. The stories show that life for these women is not static. Some have moved from staying at home as a wife and mother to embracing a leadership role in the public sphere. Some have survived major difficulties, even tragedies, but have emerged from such experiences as stronger, wiser persons. Such instances show their humanness and illuminate the moral quality of their character.

In light of the variety of voices, the experiences of some women seem almost to contradict the experiences of others. Thus while one woman struggles over a long period to gain recognition of her potential to be a minister, another woman enters ministry and leadership roles with relative ease. Some women find fulfillment in the home, others in more public roles.

The best way to describe the book is

to refer more specifically to several women who illustrate the variety of life experiences represented in the volume.

Ernestine Chevez of New Mexico is a respected woman in the Navajo community and in her congregation at the Navajo Brethren in Christ Mission. She has encountered significant family and cultural difficulties, yet she remains strong and vocal in her faith. A section of her biography reads as follows: "At a regional gathering of Brethren in Christ congregations in western states, Ernestine's [then] bishop, Don Shafer, invited her to give a brief testimony to the group. Much to the surprise of the bishop, she talked freely, sharing for at least 30 minutes in her comfortable way. In her home congregation, she is known for sharing long testimonies and prayer requests, often about family and friends." She helps to clean the church, serves on the church board, teaches a Sunday school class in her native Navajo's language, and brings food (sometimes the entire meal) for fellowship dinners after church.

Elsie Hahn began her life near Souderton, Pennsylvania, but traveled far from her birthplace after the death of her young first husband. She moved with her children to Saskatchewan, and, in time, married Henry Hahn, who was several decades her senior. When he died, she was left to raise their children through the Depression years. She kept her family together by hard work and pinching pennies. Later, when the family grew to adulthood and moved elsewhere, Elsie continued to keep her family together by writing letters. These letters, as her biographer says, "testify to the heritage she passed on—no material wealth, but wisdom and compassion and a deep conviction that what is of true value is love of one's family and one's neighbors."

Nancy Heisey's biography illustrates the complexity of life for some women.

She broke her engagement to a man who did not share her deeply held theological views.

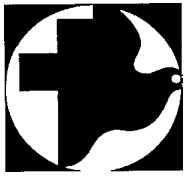
Later she became a stepmother. She served administratively with Mennonite Central Committee, then returned to school to earn a Ph.D. at Temple University. She is now on the faculty of Eastern Mennonite University, and the first woman to be named president-elect of Mennonite World Conference. Mary Jane, her sister, says that in all of these experiences and variations in her life, "Nancy never presents herself as someone who holds herself as a model, but as someone one is struggling along with doubts and questions about the church, but ultimately as someone who has committed her life to the church."

Nancy gives recognition to the mentors in her life. One of them, her Aunt Anna Zercher, helped her when she struggled to understand the denomination's emphasis on experiencing God emotionally. "This is not about experience," her aunt explained. "This is about living the way God wants you to live."

As these selections illustrate, the stories of the women in this book represent the possibilities and challenges of a life of faith. We see in all the stories how God can effectively work through the lives of his faithful followers in every experience. ☺

This book is being released on June 28, 2002, at the annual meeting of the Brethren in Christ Historical Society. For a copy of the book, contact the Brethren in Christ Archives at Messiah College (archives@messiah.edu; 717-766-2511) or Evangel Publishing House (www.evangelpublishing.com).





focus on Mennonite Central Committee

Developing Leadership Skills in Minority Communities

Begun in 1992, the Church Community Worker Program of the Mennonite Central Committee in the United States is designed for persons with limited leadership experience and/or exposure, leadership potential and some post-high school training or college. It provides the biblical foundation for service and commitment, teaching in principles of leadership, and the opportunity to work closely with a mature Christian leader in a practical, community setting. The Church Community Worker Program is specifically designed for young adults of the African, Native, Asian, and Hispanic diasporas in MCC's Brethren in Christ and Mennonite constituency in the United States.

Congregations and community-based organizations that have a Mennonite or Brethren in Christ connection and have established year-round community programs are invited to host a Church Community Worker. Assignments are selected using the following criteria:

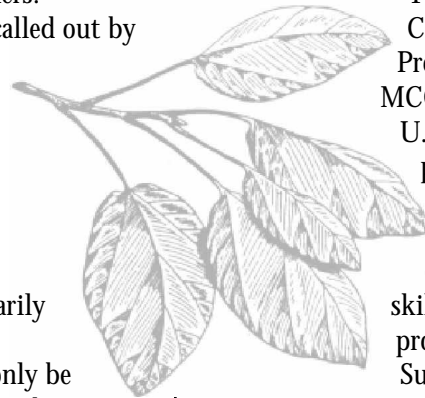
- A challenging, well-organized, structured assignment that fosters leadership training.
- The presence of a supportive congregation and supervisor.
- An assignment that involves the person in direct contact with their church and community with at least 50 percent of the time assigned to social issues of the community.
- Proposals that include a clear plan to continue work of the assignment beyond the MCC term since the program is designed to help the local church speak to social issues on an ongoing basis.

Individuals from African American, Native American, Hispanic and Asian diasporas are invited to apply for an assignment. In addition, the following criteria are used in the selection of Church Community Workers:

- The person has been called out by the leaders in their congregation.
- The person is an African American, Hispanic, Asian or Native American constituent.
- The person will primarily be working in this assignment and will only be working part-time elsewhere or taking no more than six credit hours at a college/university.
- The sponsoring organization is committed to paying the stipend specified of \$170.00 per month to MCC.
- The worker is able to commit for two years and attend a general orientation before beginning assignment.

Sandra Perez served as a CCW in Brooklyn, New York, providing immigration counseling for newcomers to New York's crowded streets. Recently, she was offered a full-time position at the immigration agency where she was working. In her final report, she expressed her gratitude for this chance to develop her leadership skills: "My church has been my strength and my pillar, and MCC East Coast has been my foundation, educator and support throughout this journey. You have walked with me in spirit as well as in the human aspect; you have met many of my needs so that I could

go forth and spread my wings to learn a new profession and how to respond to the needs of people who are suffering from poverty, persecution and economic devastation."



The Church Community Worker Program is one of two MCC programs in the U.S. that specifically provide opportunities for people of color to develop leadership skills. The second program is the Summer Service Program that allows

young people of diverse ethnic backgrounds in the United States to serve in their home communities and gain leadership experience. Since 1982, more than 1,000 youth and young adults have participated in the Summer Service Program, serving in their home communities. Many of the Summer Service participants began having leadership experiences through the program, and later joined the Church Community Worker Program. The Summer Service Program enables young people to explore their gifts and how to develop them, and provides practical work experience.

For more information about both programs, contact your regional MCC office, or call (717) 859-3889. ☺

Thanks to staff from Mennonite Central Committee East Coast and Rachel Beth Miller, a staff writer for MCC, for providing the information for this article.



Why I Will be fired

By Megan Scott

I went to a concert last week at Philadelphia's newest concert hall, the Kimmel Center. I went to see Bobby McFerrin. To *see* a singer. We *heard* him too. You may have heard of Mr. McFerrin. He is the man who sang the 1989 pop hit, "Don't Worry, Be Happy." His many other recordings range from duets with Yo Yo Ma, the classical cellist, to conducting the St. Louis orchestra to creating an album of vocal chants. His voice covers four octaves, racing from high C to low B in a single measure. As he sings, he pounds out rhythms on his chest, becoming his own percussion instrument. Between notes his tongue clacks an alternating beat as his feet tap on the stage. He is alone before an audience of 5,000, playing tapping whistling the full score to his original works. The audience is never far from his thoughts, they are an integral part of his performance.

The opening piece was an improvised number that incorporated the sounds of the audience and the tension in the room as we listened with bated breath. As he softly sang, a beeper sounded three sharp shrills. The song continued. But two measures later, the beeper sound occurred again. This was Bobby feeding the sounds of life's realities into his music. We all laughed, but

appreciated that we had been heard.

The concert continued in this way, with the audience becoming the show. It started slowly. He would lean over the edge of the stage, encouraging the front row to sing along. Then he started clambering over the seats. A man in the back of the hall would sing the bass line, and Bobby McFerrin would accompany him, singing in the man's vocal range, with the man's mannerisms. Never mocking, but simply imitating, adding to the man's presence, giving him the voice he could have.

Arriving back on the stage, McFerrin asked the audience to sing Gounod's "Ave Maria" for him, while he sang the Bach accompaniment. He trusted the audience to sing a difficult piece in Latin. He did not review "Ave Maria" first; he simply knew that there would be qualified people in the audience who would be able to sing without rehearsal. As soon as he asked, he immediately began the accompaniment, and then conducted "Ave Maria" with his free hand. We all started singing, with unison gusto. But as the song wore on, many including myself soon realized that we did not truly know this song. The piece continued, and as it did, the remaining singers became a choir of voices. These were talented individuals not previously known to Mr. McFerrin. But he had trusted enough to realize that such individuals would be contained in his audience, ready and able to add to his own voice.

McFerrin's style of leadership is an impressive example. First, he recognized that he was not the lone musician in the room. He knew that there were others present who could help him to achieve the sounds he wanted. He knew that they would be more satisfied if they were given the opportunity to demonstrate their talents. Second, he went out of his way to hear his audience. He gave them his microphone, allowing them to determine how he would sing next.

This is not to say that Bobby McFerrin was not in control of the concert. He chose what his audience would sing, and when. He knew the

order of events, and had rehearsed his ability to improvise hundreds of times. He was our leader, and we chose to follow him.

Why were we such an eager to please bunch? Clapping tirelessly, ready to sing-along with a single wave of his hand? He challenged us to try, even those of us who really shouldn't be heard outside of the shower. And as the evening came to a close, and the sweat poured from his brow, we knew that he had given a part of himself to us. That we had been taken to another place in that hour and a half, and that he had journeyed there with us.

I have been promoted at the family center where I work. I will now be the supervisor, the director of our program. I will be the leader. Sometimes I think I am as capable as Bobby McFerrin, able to create the entire score single-handedly. Yet I know that if I allow my colleagues to sing along I will create a song greater than myself. I will try to let my colleagues sing along. I will encourage them to ask questions, to be a part of the show. I will insist that the voice of one part-time employee be as recognized as my own authority. I will give them a framework, and then allow them to fill in the details of how their job should be. I will trust that they are capable of doing the job, and that when they are not able they will allow others the space to sing for them. I will challenge them to grow. I will allow them to see the sweat pouring from my brow as I give of myself each day. I will trust that they are giving of themselves, even when they wipe their vulnerable sweat away. I may be fired as the top-down authoritarian non-profit agency I work for looks in disdain at my grassroots approach.

But I will continue to try. I will do this because I am a leader. A leader gives voice to the voiceless. A leader hears the mute, and sees the invisible. A leader is the last to eat and the first to do the dishes. ☺

Megan Scott is Program Director of the Fels South Philadelphia Family Center. She and her husband David live in South Philly and attend Circle of Hope Brethren in Christ Church.

Address Service Requested
127 Holly Drive, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-5527

Embracing and Affirming the Ministry of Women in the Church *continued from page 8*

experience and gifting to her role at The Meeting House in Oakville, Ontario. Beth, and her husband, Mylan, served for many years in missions in Zambia. Returning to Ontario, the Springles began attending Upper Oaks Community Church (as The Meeting House was formerly known), a Brethren in Christ church plant. Beth has served in various capacities over the years as a layperson, but a few years ago sensed God's leading to serve in a pastoral role. Beth's commitment to discipleship ministries and deep compassion for people has added significantly to strengthening the ministry of this rapidly growing congregation. Beth radiates a love for the Lord and the church that is warmly embracing. Pastor Springle is committed to the core values of the Brethren in Christ and to seeing these taught and lived

out in her congregation. Beth has been empowered by the Spirit of God and the church affirms her ministry.

I am thankful for these, and the many, many other women, who have been willing to minister in the name of Jesus according to God's call and their gifting. The church would be significantly weaker without these valued members of the team.

The task that Christ has given the church is a large and challenging one. As we move further into the 21st century it is becoming even more complex. It is a task that requires the church to enlist and equip ALL its members to serve so that we might reach new generations of people for the Kingdom of God. God understood this when he poured out his

Spirit on his sons and daughters at Pentecost to empower them to go into all the world and make disciples. The call is placed on all of us to minister as ambassadors of Jesus – to make his appeal to a hurting and seeking world. Men need to respond to the call to minister. Women need to respond to the call to minister. The Brethren in Christ Church needs to be a church that encourages, embraces, equips and deploys women to minister as the Spirit gifts and leads. Then, ministering together, we will be better able to build a community of believers who worship God and share the Good News of Jesus Christ with all people. ☺

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

AN INVITATION TO SUBSCRIBE TO SHALOM!

Perhaps you're reading *Shalom!* for the first time or you're reading someone else's copy and wish you had your own. This form's for you! You can receive your own subscription; just fill out the form below, copy or detach it, and mail it with your payment to the editor.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE/PROVINCE _____

ZIP/POSTAL CODE _____

Please indicate your choice:

- \$10/year (U.S. funds) regular subscription
- \$25/year (U.S. funds) supporting subscription

- \$14/year (Canadian funds) regular subscription
- \$35/year (Canadian funds) supporting subscription

Checks should be made payable to "Brethren in Christ Ministries" and mailed with this form to:
Harriet Bicksler, 127 Holly Dr., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055