



Broadfording Church of the Brethren Fellowship

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The Where of Christmas

by Pastor Len Smith



We find this reference to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ whose birth we celebrate in Matthew 2:1. *After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem.*

As I contemplated writing this article I began to think of the various places Jesus' birth would have been celebrated. Would Jesus have spent his first birthday at Bethlehem, or would His family already have escaped to Egypt? How many birthdays would Jesus have experienced in Egypt before the family returned to Israel to settle in the district of Galilee in a town known as Nazareth? How many years did Jesus actually live in Nazareth and how many of Jesus' birthdays did Joseph live to see?

Just like Jesus, many of us have celebrated the birth of Jesus or Christmas in a variety of locations. Although I was born in Mercer County, PA, my parents often took my brother and I to visit our grandparents over Christmas near Johnstown, PA. During my high school years in Washington, PA I remember visiting both Johnstown and Lancaster, PA because my dad's parents had moved to Lancaster.

Probably my most unusual place to spend Christmas was in Argentina, South America in 1969. I was a student studying Spanish at a Bible Institute there in a town called Almafuerite, translated into English that means "strong soul." The Christmas weather that year was very unusual because in the southern hemisphere, December is in the summer. Can you imagine having an outdoor picnic on Christmas Day? Another unusual place I experienced the Christmas season was in Juarez, Mexico in 1970 across the Rio

Grande from El Paso, TX. I was a part of an Operation Mobilization team from Messiah College and other colleges distributing God's Word and Christian literature there during our Christmas break.

After Teresa and I were married, although we lived in York and Cumberland Counties in PA, Rock Island County, IL, and Clermont County, OH, we generally made a trip to take our boys to visit their grandparents in Franklin and Washington Counties in PA. Since we moved to PA from Ohio in 1996 generally we have spent Christmas in Lemasters or Washington, PA for a period of years.

However, the arrival of our first grandchild in 2003 changed our Christmas travel plans. Now we have the added incentive of three grandchildren to visit on Christmas so we either leave from Broadfording following our Christmas Eve candlelight service, or we get up very early on Christmas morning to drive out to Goshen, IN.

This Christmas let us also remember those who can not travel to spend Christmas with their families: those doing essential work such as police or first responders, those in hospitals or nursing homes, those serving our nation overseas, and those serving our Lord Jesus Christ as foreign missionaries.

But let us also remember, the most important part of Christmas is not where we celebrate the birth of Christ, but in the words of that beloved Christmas hymn, "O Little Town of Bethlehem," may we *praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth* encouraging *meek souls* to receive Jesus and invite Him into their hearts this special day!



The mission and ministry of Congregational Life Ministries

Congregational Life Ministries is shaping vital congregations which, in turn, are growing disciples. Through collaborative and richly interconnected approaches to our work, we are cultivating partnerships that nurture holistic healthfulness throughout the Church of the Brethren. We are eager to work with you to develop church leadership as we continue the work of Jesus, peacefully, simply, together.

Basin & Towel

This Congregational Life publication offers insights and practical resources for the development of congregations and their leaders. For more information and to subscribe to the three annual issues, link to www.brethren.org/basintowel.

Disabilities Ministry

The Disabilities Ministry addresses issues of advocacy, awareness, education, and accessibility in several ways, including the provision of worship aids and general resources, collaboration with the Youth and Young Adults ministry to offer the We Are Able! workcamp for youth and young adults with intellectual disabilities, and consultation with Annual Conference staff to ensure that conference facilities are as accessible and accommodating of those with varied needs as possible. www.brethren.org/disabilities.

Family Life Ministry

Our Brethren values, practices and beliefs, centered on Christ's teachings, are foundations upon which to build a healthy family that can meet challenges with resiliency and hope. Family Life Ministry seeks to embody the love of Christ by affirming, equipping and supporting families to live in healthy relationship.

This ministry also addresses child abuse prevention and child protection issues. In addition to raising awareness about abuse and neglect in families and encouraging positive parenting/caregiving, Family Life also provides child protection information, training and resources to congregations to help reduce the risk of abuse. www.brethren.org/childprotection.

Older Adult Ministry

The Church of the Brethren affirms the gifts of aging and encourages the church to intentionally engage older adults in its life and in service to the world. Older Adult Month is observed each May with resources that explore multi-faceted issues related to aging. A mentored, self-guided reading program increases participants' knowledge of the aging process and enhances their ability to creatively connect with older adults, both personally and professionally. Close to 1000 older adults gather for a week of inspiration, renewal, community and fun at the biennial National Older Adult Conference at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina (www.brethren.org/NOAC). www.brethren.org/OAM

New Church Development

The denominational New Church Development steering committee is committed to developing the infrastructure and resources necessary to support the planting of 250 new churches by the year 2015. Districts and congregations plant churches; the denomination fosters a multiplying movement and provides essential resources.

Those resources include: 1) tending prayer networks and a denomination-wide prayer initiative; 2) development of a system of assessment to help potential planters and their sponsoring districts determine their giftedness for this demanding ministry; 3) coaching, through a strategic relationship with a church planter, to help the planter articulate questions, identify an appropriate plan of action, and act accountably; 4) training, offered through periodic conferences and other venues; and 5) consideration of the financial needs and implications of our work and the overall movement of church planting. www.brethren.org/churchplanting.

Transforming Practices

Strategic relationships and intentional practices develop healthy congregations and dynamic districts. Transforming practices provides skilled consultation, individual coaching and workshop leadership for change and vitality. Online training is also available for pastors and lay leaders. www.bethanyseminary.edu/webcast

Contact us for additional information on coaching, ministry collaboration, vision and purpose, community outreach or change dynamics, or to discuss your congregation's ministries, leadership challenges, and evangelism opportunities.

Workcamps

Workcamps are short-term mission trips that connect service with Christian faith. We practice mutual mission, making a difference in the lives of others, while embracing the difference they make in our lives. At workcamps we share, pray, celebrate, and live simply in community. By working with people in various walks of life, we learn to value others and realize that our lives are interconnected, that our stories have common threads. We hope that by serving you will deepen your faith and better understand your own blessings, values, and responsibilities as a child of God. www.brethren.org/workcamps.

Church of the Brethren Mid-Atlantic District Conference October 8-9, 2010

by Kathy Hawbaker



Pastor Len, Paul Reid, Greg Reese, and Kathy Hawbaker attended the conference in Manassas, VA, on Saturday the 9th. Friday's program included dinner, music, a concert of worship, and fellowship. We arrived at Saturday, 7:00 AM, for the "fellowship breakfast".

There was a time of singing prior to the worship message "More Than A Piece of Christ", presented by Pastor Bowman – Learn to relax...wings of eagles (Isaiah 40:31), Ask and listen...prayer, Worship must have the peace of Christ.

Moderator Cinda Showalter opened the 44th Annual Conference, handling the business of: A) Balloting review and voting. The Moderator-Elect, to serve next year, and all nominees for Area Leadership Teams/Programs/Camps were, initially, introduced, as were those approved for ministry licensing and ordination; B) Budget presentation and discussion presented need for reduction in salaries and/or positions and office space, culminating in a voted approval. As provided through the District Executive Minister Report by Gene Hagenberger, whose first goal has been to strengthen district finances, there has been an 11% "slashing" of the District budget with the above-mentioned reductions. A team is working to develop "Gifted Givers", who would give to the needs of the District, above and beyond their congregational giving. That report further consisted of noting his work w/struggling congregations and welcoming three new ministers to Mid-Atlantic churches; and C) Constitution and By-Laws amendments, which were discussed and approved.

Joyful reports by Camp Mardela and Shepherd's Spring provided a bright spot with review of many positive activities for all ages and for many volunteers. The Shepherd's Spring's presentation was completed with Conference representatives putting on skits at the end of the meeting. Lunch was fellowship around a buffet in the Manassas' multi-purpose room.

After District Executive Minister Gene Hagenberger's report, the Annual Conference Query allowed for individual representatives' questions or ideas, followed by the Statement Conversation. Two items from the 2009 Annual Conference: *A Statement of Confession and Commitment*, and *Query: Language on Same Sex Covenantal Relationships* were presented and, through the leadership of Pastor Jeff Carter of Manassas COB, the framework for conversation at three (3) identical, scheduled meetings was presented for the representatives to experience and, thus, be able to share with congregations. Meetings are: 01/09/2011(16-snow) at **Oakton, VA**; 01/23/11(30) at **Easton, MD**; and 02/06/11(13) at Bush Creek COB, **Monrovia, MD** scheduled from 3 to 5 p.m.* The two (2) items are presented in "Church of the Brethren, FOREWORD" by the present national moderator and moderator-elect and would be available, upon your request, for review and preparation to attend a meeting to present your "prayer full" statement for Broadfording COB Fellowship.

Adjournment followed the transition of leadership from '10 Moderator Cinda to Jim Lohr, '10 Moderator Elect, and Kimberly McDowell, '11 Moderator Elect. And Shepherd's Spring finished with the jovial skits.

* Since the time that District Conference was held, a fourth meeting has been scheduled: 02/20/11 (snow date-02/27), **Hagerstown Church of the Brethren**, 3 to 5 p.m.

Haiti and Kenya receive latest grants from Global Food Crisis Fund

The latest grants of the Global Food Crisis Fund are to the Church of the Brethren in Haiti for water conservation on the island of La Tortue (La Tortuga in Spanish) and to Care of Creation Kenya for construction of a tree nursery in Kenya's Rift Valley. Each grant was \$4,000. Over the past 20 months, GFCF has awarded 25 grants that totaled over \$585,000 for food security programs in 13 countries.

—Reprinted from a recent Church of the Brethren Global Food Crisis Fund publication

NOTE: A portion of Broadfording's local operating and outreach giving each week helps to support the GFCF.



THE SOUPER BOWL.....and sandwich sale

by Patrick Wildeson

The Christian Education Commission will be taking orders through the month of January for soup and sandwiches. Chicken corn and beef vegetable will be the soups made by our very own Sandra Jones. The sandwiches offered will be ham and roast beef with or without cheese, you choose. We want to preserve and maintain the Weller fund that was provided to us by the late John and Phyllis Weller. Our children here at Broadfording Church of the Brethren Fellowship will benefit now and in future events to come, so let's get together and help out a great and worthwhile cause. Prices will be put in January's church bulletins and keep in mind the date to pick up your order will be February 6th which I think is, oh yes, SUPER BOWL SUNDAY!! Please pray for this event that the Weller fund gets the deserved boost it needs.

Double duty: A conversation with Roy Winter

Roy Winter is not a juggler by trade, but he daily exercises that kind of skill. He directs the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., as well as Brethren Disaster Ministries without dropping the ball. Last week I got the chance to ask him how he keeps it all in the air.

—Mandy Garcia, coordinator of Donor Invitation

What is a favorite ministry located at the Brethren Service Center?

The New Windsor Conference Center, Brethren Disaster Ministries, SERRV International, IMA World Health, On Earth Peace staff, and the Mid Atlantic District offices are all housed there. Of those, my passion is disaster ministries.

What is your role in supporting all those ministries?

I mostly focus on engaging the international pieces of the program, but it varies intensely. One day I can be working on conference center tasks, the next I'm attending a variety of board meetings, and then I may be off to Haiti.

Tell me about the New Windsor Conference Center.

The conference center functions as the hub of the wheel of the service center. While it's a ministry that doesn't get a lot of press and is challenged financially by the economy right now, it feeds and hosts volunteers, guests, and colleagues so they can gather and be about the ministry—and that's pretty critical.

How do you feel that stewardship relates to your work?

People annually give millions of dollars worth of volunteer

time and even the most diverse parts of the church are willing to financially support the Emergency Disaster Fund. These are tremendous resources that I have a responsibility to manage well. But these are also places of unity and goodwill for the church, and I feel even more responsibility to protect that and the "ethos" of what it represents.

What are some exciting things coming up in your ministries?

Next year there are some workcamps scheduled to rebuild homes in Haiti, and a new volunteer project near Nashville, Tenn. Also, the Arc of Carroll County (a service for developmentally delayed adults) provides a vocational training program through the service center, and they were just named the Nonprofit Organization of the Year in Carroll County. That's very exciting, and will hopefully grow our relationship with the Arc.

Can you share any bits of wisdom learned through your work?

The things that people really celebrate are places where we come together to provide a hands-on service. As people of faith, we need to quit focusing on our differences, and instead focus on what we can do together.

—eBrethren newsletter for October 28, 2010



Stories of God's power at work

Hi Everyone,

I've just realized that I never forwarded some of the personal stories from the Outreach in Burundi. I sent you some statistics, but it's always more powerful to personalize them. Remember, these are Evangelism Explosion-trained Burundians, ages 20-30, sharing in unreached parts of their country. Read on and be blessed:

A famous witchdoctor called Makari from a place called Isale received what he thought were prospective 'clients' into his den. His reputation went before him and so our evangelists wanted to challenge his authority. When they revealed their identity, the power of God came on him and he fell to the ground. When he came to, he sat and listened to their preaching. He believed in Jesus and asked them to return two days later when he would burn all his charms publicly. When they duly returned, they found Makari had invited all his relatives and other witchdoctor friends. He declared before all of them that he had turned to Christ, and proceeded to burn his charms. At that point our team preached and a further fifty people decided to follow Christ! Makari is now a member of Emmanuel church, along with his family.

Also in Isale, a team of evangelists went to share the gospel in a bar. While they were talking, a young man became very angry with them. The following day, this antagonistic man came to see them, and gave his life to Christ. He then told them that when they were preaching in the bar he had been about to beat them, but when he had tried to stand up to attack them, he had felt a mighty hand jamming him down in his chair, and that

undeniable power is what forced him to surrender his life to Jesus.

Young Libere was on one of our teams in Busiga. He'd never seen a healing miracle. And yet, he found himself witnessing to an old woman who had been paralyzed for three years. He sensed the Lord telling him: "Miracles accompany the preaching of the Word." So he responded in obedience and faith, and commanded the lady to stand up. She stood up immediately and started dancing with joy! Libere was amazed to see the power and faithfulness of God. He exclaimed: "Now I believe that God is powerful and can work with whoever believes in him regardless of his age or denomination. I will spend the rest of my life proclaiming the love of God."

Zubeda was a Muslim woman from Bubanza. Her son was very sick and she was in despair. When the evangelists visited her, she didn't want to listen to them share God's word but she did agree to let her son be prayed for. The following day, the evangelists found Zubeda full of joy and testifying that her son was healed. She asked them to share the gospel with her that she had formerly refused, and promptly gave her life to Christ.

Thanks for reading. All glory to God, but know that your prayers had great input.

Blessings, Debby

Chuck and Debby Baldwin are missionaries serving in Rwanda.

Bob Kay sends letter of thanks for Vacation Bible School gift



We want to thank Broadfording and Salem for the \$506 that the combined Vacation Bible School sent to us for the La Yaguita Children's Center.

We spent the bulk of the gift in October. On October 30, Pastor Ramon Jorge, director of the center gave me receipts showing that he spent \$323.01 for salaries, divided between six teachers, a secretary and a cook—eight people, each receiving just over \$40/month. The remaining \$166.99 was spent for food for October and November. We really appreciate your generosity and help. Seeing those kids being able to eat is precious.

I visited the La Yaguita Children's Center Monday. They are now 140 strong, three classes in the morning and three in the afternoon. One good picture is seeing the kids being fed. Pastor Ramon recently explained to me how, "Yo veo Ramon en Orly" (I see Ramon in Orly), as Orly has come to school hungry, sometimes without shoes, and incredibly NO CLOTHES on two occasions. Yet God is supplying for the center; we just received a large gift which will take the center almost to the end of the 2010-11 school year. Seeing the kids act out the story of Jesus healing the 10 lepers (where only one returned to thank him) reminded me of the importance of each child hearing about Christ.

—Excerpts from an email received from Bob Kay on November 18, 2010.

Bob and Judy Kay are missionaries serving in the Dominican Republic.

Keep
in **Christ**
Christmas

December 12

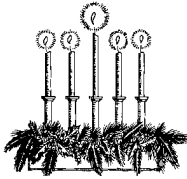
1:30 p.m.
Christmas Caroling
and distribution of gift
bags to shut-ins

December 18

10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.
Advent Saturday
Happening
for children of the
congregation

December 24

7:00 p.m.
Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service



While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Luke 2:6-7

December 19

10:15 a.m.
Worship Service
with

children's
program



6:00 p.m.
Praise & Worship
Service

Each Sunday
during Advent

10:30 a.m.
Worship Services
will include a
Children's Advent
Candle Devotional

NOEL HALLELUJAH MERRY CHRISTMAS HAPPY NEW YEAR
Noel Hallelujah Merry Christmas Happy New Year

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FIRST CLASS MAIL