

IN PART

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA

Winter 2009

Acts of compassion in Zambia

*PLUS: What it means to follow
Christ's example of service*





LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Thanks for a fine edition of *In Part*. I'd enjoy debating Ron Sider on the death penalty. As you pointed out in "Ever Wondered," most of us believe in the death penalty, though I do agree with Mr. Sider that we need to change our court system.

I also wanted to comment on the "Ever Wondered" fact stating that 71.1 percent of those surveyed in the 2006 Church Member Profile answered "yes" to the question, "Is abortion always wrong?" I think the question is wrong. If the mother's life would be lost, I believe in abortion. I think that is why I answered that question the way I did when that survey was made.

MEL BRUBAKER—*Saltillo, Pa.*

I read *In Part* cover to cover and enjoy your articles—this month especially so. I do have an observation, however. Many times more people in indulgent North America experience early death and a diseased later life from overeating and under-exercising than from tobacco. When talking about the whole life concept, which I gladly support, it is disingenuous to leave out something that really affects the BIC family.

LAWRENCE OLSON—*Des Moines, Iowa*

I applaud this issue! It presents my denomination by examples that truly resonate. This issue of *In Part's* handling of these very personal experiences truly shows how we can be pro-life and pro-peace without falling into a trap of what I call "worshiping pacifism."

JIM MARTIN—*Chambersburg, Pa.*

Last summer, after 30 years of pastoral ministry, God called my wife and me to inner-city ministry in Buffalo, N.Y. We bought a house in a neighborhood that is 91–100 percent below the poverty level. Because we are pro-life followers of Jesus, we are now urban farmers, feeding the hungry and building bridges of racial reconciliation.

It was so good to see an updated perspective from Ron's great book *Completely Pro-Life* coming to us from *In Part*. God bless us all as we live out our faith in a broken world.

RIC FEENEY—*Buffalo, N.Y.*

The article "From first steps to final breath" says, "From the moment of conception, a fetus is a genetically distinct being that grows without any biological break to become the baby [...]." But actually, several days pass after conception before that fertilized human egg "decides" whether to be one human being or split to form more. Therefore, it seems to me clear that there is not yet any human soul attached to the fertilized egg as early as the moment of conception.

The article also suggests, without saying so explicitly, that the best way to protect the lives of the unborn is for the government to criminalize early abortion or even certain forms of birth control. Yet ironically, countries with such laws have more abortions than countries with permissive laws on abortion and accessible birth control options.

RICHARD WINGER—*San Francisco, Calif.*

THE VIEW FROM HERE

My sophomore year of high school, my siblings and I qualified for our school district's reduced-price lunches. (Ironically, my father was a teacher in the district.) I didn't buy very often, but I will never forget the humiliation I felt the few times I did. Filling my orange tray with waterlogged vegetables, meats of ambiguous origins, and a carton of chocolate milk, I'd make my way to the cashier, who, with an expression of pity, would tell me that I owed 25 cents.

Looking back, I realize that my embarrassment stemmed mostly from pride. Perhaps if I hadn't been so steeped in the staunch self-reliance of North American culture, I would have been able to view the lunches as thoughtful generosity rather than impersonal and demeaning charity. Perhaps I would have been able to graciously receive from my community, realizing that I gave back to it in other ways. But none of this occurred to me then, and if I'm honest with myself, I'd probably feel the same way if it happened to me again today.

Still, I'm grateful for the experience. Being on the receiving end of such an exchange taught me how fragile an act of service is. What we think will help people can actually hurt them, or it can fail to address the underlying issues. So how do we meet others' needs without creating dependency, shame, or unequal relationship? And what do we Brethren in Christ really mean when we say we're dedicated to meeting people's needs "following the example of Christ our Lord?"

This edition of *In Part* broaches these very questions, examining compassion, service, and how our faith informs them both.

In your service (and His),



Kristine
Kristine N. Frey, editor

IN PART™

Winter 2009 VOLUME 123 NUMBER 1

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA

Now I know in part, then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. 1 CORINTHIANS 13:12

BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

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INPART.ORG (ISSN 1940-2945)

IN **PART** (ISSN 1940-2937) is published four times a year by the Brethren in Christ Church of North America. *In Part* invites readers into a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ within the context of the shared life and ministry of the BIC Church.

Printed by Evangel Press, Nappanee, Ind.

Send feedback, address changes, or subscription questions to inpart@bic-church.org.

Postmaster: Send changes of address to:

IN PART

431 Grantham Road, PO Box A
Grantham, PA 17027

Periodical Postage Paid at Nappanee, IN 46550-0166.

Printed in U.S.A.

Member of the **Evangelical Press Association**.

Biblical quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the *New International Version*.

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Printed on FSC-certified Domart Opaque-Plainfield paper. At least 25% of the paper fiber comes from well-managed forests independently certified according to the rules of the Forest Stewardship Council; 10% is recycled from post-consumer waste paper.

FEATURES

6 An indelible mark

→ *Following the example of the original servant*

BY JEREMY TYRRELL

10 Serving victims of HIV/AIDS in Chisekesi, Zambia

→ *Half of the people in this rural village test positive for HIV. But one resident's contagious hope is catching on.*

BY KARIN & MATTHEW ZYLSTRA SAWATZKY



DEPARTMENTS

2 IN MOTION

→ *Men out of work*
→ *Battling gun violence*

4 PART OF THE WHOLE

→ *A conversation with Warren Hoffman*

5 TO OUR CORE

→ *In the Spirit of service*
BY LUKE L. KEEFER

14 VIBES

→ *(In)voluntary service*
BY CHAD FREY

16 TO THE POINT

→ *Staying faithful while engaging a lost and hurting world*
BY WALT ROBERTS & MICHAEL YODER

17 PARTING WORDS

→ *The greatest among us*
BY PERRY ENGLE

IN MOTION

MEN OUT OF WORK

One BIC church in Michigan speaks into the despair of its community's unemployed

In February 2009, when the earliest hints of a widespread economic crisis hit media outlets, Jeremy Spear told his congregation to get ready.

"We expected that we might need to meet some felt needs in our community," says Jeremy, who serves as pastor of Lakeview Community Church (Goodrich, Mich.). "So we started gearing up, challenging ourselves to think about ways our church could help our neighbors, so that by the time that help was needed it would be there."

One of the ideas emerging from those early conversations came from Jack Steele, a businessman from the congregation, who suggested starting a "men out of work" group. Almost immediately, Jeremy said yes.

Although the massive wave of layoffs and major factory shut-downs that came in subsequent months did not affect Goodrich in the same way it did neighboring cities like Flint and Detroit, the town was not immune to the crisis. And Lakeview Community was ready to lend

its support. Today, the "men out of work" gatherings have become a valuable resource for unemployed men from across the community.

"We meet for breakfast once a week," Jeremy says. "We pay for the meal and spend most of our time networking and connecting—we're hoping that somebody knows of a job that matches the skill set of a group member."

But Jeremy is quick to add that "it's not just about eating and networking. We're also trying to speak into the personal lives of these men."

To that end, at each meeting, Jeremy and Jack lead the group—which changes in size from week to week as members find temporary work or long-term employment—through a devotional and some practical tips for personal development.



↑ Since the beginning of the economic crisis, a number of stores in Goodrich, Mich., have closed, leaving many in the community without work.

"We're trying to focus on spiritual needs, emotional needs, budget needs," Jeremy notes.

While experts observe signs of a possible economic recovery, Jeremy expects that the downturn will affect Michigan for months to come. As he and his congregation look to the future, they want to offer more programs for the community and are hoping to host a job fair.

"We just want to do our part to get these people back on their feet," Jeremy says.

—DEVIN THOMAS,
associate in Congregational Relations

74: People attending the 2009 New Pastors & Spouses Orientation at Grantham (Pa.) BIC in October

10: Participants whose first language was Spanish

24: Participants from Canada

82: Age of oldest attendee

21: Age of youngest attendee

1/3: Portion of work time Warren Hoffman, moderator of the BIC Church in N.A., spends travelling
Learn more about Warren on page 4!



73: Times the word "compassion" appears in the Old Testament

15: Times it appears in the New Testament



IN MOTION

8.1 billion: Volunteer hours served in 2008 by 61.8 million U.S. Americans¹

46: Percent of Canadians who did volunteer work in 2007²

28.7

Percent of BIC in North America who reported experiencing a miraculous healing of bodily disease or injury^{3,4}

98.5

Percent of BIC Canadians who say serving others in the Church is important to their personal faith⁴

97.9

Percent who say serving others outside the Church is important to their faith commitments⁴

BATTLING GUN VIOLENCE



Members of **Circle of Hope**, a network of BIC churches in Philadelphia, and **Heeding God's Call**, an ecumenical gun violence prevention group, assemble in front of **Colosimo's gun shop** on September 21. Similar gatherings were held for months outside the store to urge its owner to employ more **stringent measures** for reducing the number of guns sold to **straw purchasers**, individuals with clear records who buy guns to re-sell to criminals. Advocates' efforts came to fruition 10 days later with the **closing of the store**, which was also under criminal investigation.

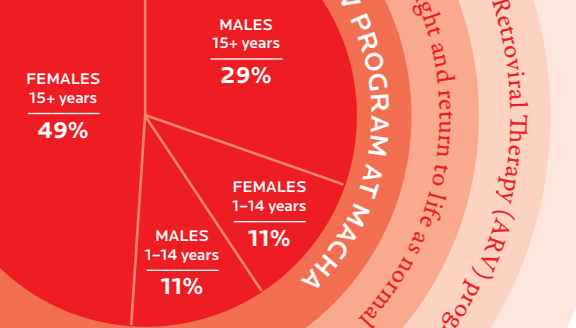
Responding to HIV/AIDS at the Macha (Zambia) Hospital

1 in 7: People in Zambia currently living with HIV

5,000: Patients enrolled in the Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) program at Macha

80: Percent of those patients who gain weight and return to life as normal

AGES OF PEOPLE IN ART PROGRAM AT MACHA



1. Corporation for National and Community Service

2. Statistics Canada

3. Church Member Profile 2006 (U.S.)—a study of members in three denominations, conducted by the Young Center of Elizabethtown (Pa.) College and coordinated by Donald B. Kraybill

4. Church Member Profile 2006 (Canada)

PART OF THE WHOLE

WARREN HOFFMAN

As moderator of the Brethren in Christ Church of North America, he has seen the Church through the first decade of the 21st century. Warren Hoffman is ready for your questions.



How have you been involved in the BIC Church over the years?

I was born into the Church and studied biology at Messiah College. Over the years, I've served as a youth pastor, worked at the Navajo Mission in New Mexico, church-planted in Oklahoma, served as the Atlantic Conference bishop, and filled the role of general secretary. And I've been moderator for the last 11 years. All I can say is, the roles I've been in have not been typical ones.

Are you like the BIC version of the Pope?

I've been called everything from "The Pope" to "The Boss" to "The Big Enchilada"—and not one fits.

What does your job as moderator actually entail?

The moderator gives coordinating leadership to the Church. I work to see where the Church needs to go, get the right people on the team, and keep everyone moving in the same direction.

What do you see as the most significant contribution you've made to the Church during your time "in office"?

I would have to say that my greatest fulfillment was early on, when we convened leaders from across the Church to flesh out who we are as Brethren in Christ. The result of that gathering was the development of our Core Values and the book *Focusing our Faith*, which identify our mission and core convictions.

What about the most significant personal change since becoming moderator?

I have learned to depend on the Lord more deeply, which is why I pray.

I've also learned to depend on my colleagues and my co-workers. Because I have these partners in ministry, I can take more risks in leadership—to tackle stiff challenges, pursue unexpected opportunities, and embrace the creativity of emerging leaders.

FAVORITE WINTER MEAL: Ham loaf with pineapple topping

FAVORITE BIBLE PASSAGE: Phil. 3:7–14

FAVORITE BOARD GAME: Blockus

FUN FACT: Used to mow the grass around the gravesite of Jacob Engle (a BIC forefather)

How do you think BIC today differ most from their 18th-century predecessors?

For 200 years, our common ethnicity and interrelatedness kept us together. Today, we're still in relationship with one another, but not solely because of family ties. Now, it's our shared convictions and mission that bind us together.

What is the biggest shift you've seen in the BIC Church?

We are no longer a homogenized group. God has blessed us in wonderful ways. Now two-thirds of our congregants come from outside the BIC Church, one-third are urban, and one-fifth are Spanish-speaking.

How can the people in the pew best pray for you and the BIC Church?

Pray that Connie (my wife) and I, along with our colleagues, will be deeply in love with Jesus and never be anything less.

As for the Church, pray that we have a clear sense of who God has shaped us to be, that we will embrace both our strengths and our weaknesses, and that we will fulfill our calling wherever we are.

TO OUR CORE

EXPLORING THE CENTRAL VALUES OF THE BIC CHURCH

IN THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE

by LUKE L. KEEFER

"Service" is one of those words that falls too easily from the lips of Christians. Often, it is used as a general term for doing things for others. But Jesus plainly told us that much of our doing good to others fails to achieve the level of Christian service (Matt. 5:43–48). At other times, it has become nothing more than social convention: doing nice things for those who will do nice things for us. But Christian service involves doing good to those who cannot return it, loving and serving even when it's inconvenient, and helping those whose ways do not readily endear them to us.

When Jesus preached to His neighbors in His hometown of Nazareth for the first time (Luke 4:16–30), He chose the opening verses of Isaiah 61 for His text:

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor [...]

These words highlight the comprehensive nature of Jesus' ministry—salvation of souls and bodies, minds and relationships. Not only did Christ come into the world to die for every person; He also came to minister to all the needs of the human race. And He emphasized that feeding the hungry,

→ We value serving others at their point of need, following the example of our Lord Jesus.



clothing the naked, and visiting the sick and those in prison were the standards by which His people would be judged. It is clear, then, that any concept of the holy life is un-Christian if it stops short of active witness and service on behalf of others' needs.

The motivation for this service is love. When one asks *why* God redeemed the world, the answer is love (John 3:16). This was also the motive behind every healing, every miracle, and every compassionate deed Jesus performed.

But when we ask *how* Jesus did these things, the answer is by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which equipped Him for this ministry on earth. Indeed, it is one thing to be "compelled by the love of Christ" (2 Cor. 5:14) and to have compassion for people in need. It is quite another thing to be able to

minister to that need. If the Church truly has become Christ's people, it will share God's concern for the world and will feel the compassion of Christ for hurting people. But it will also know its limitations. Unless strengthened and equipped by the Holy Spirit, we cannot serve nor survive in the depressing world of human need. And unless every believer is also made a bearer of God's Spirit, there will be large numbers of people untouched by the Gospel. The whole Church must be thoroughly equipped if the total Christ is to be offered to the entire world.



Luke L. Keefer, Jr. is professor emeritus at Ashland (Ohio) Theological Seminary and director of the Sider Institute for Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan studies at Messiah College (Grantham, Pa.). He and his wife, Doris, attend Ashland BIC. They have three married children and five grandchildren.



AN INDELIBLE MARK

Following the example of the original servant

by Jeremy Tyrrell

We North Americans take pride in many things—our cars, our achievements, our kids’ accomplishments, our careers, our jam-packed schedules. This quest to impress has also infiltrated churches. People who are already too busy take on too many assignments, wearing themselves out in an attempt to garner the Father’s favor. In our zeal to do good, we forget that *things* and *activities* have no eternal value in and of themselves. So if God isn’t impressed by our “successes,” what does wow Him?

The answer is remarkably simple and incredibly difficult at the same time: If we want to please God, we must follow the example of Jesus, the “dearly loved son” of God who brought His Heavenly Father “great joy.” Jesus’ every action was aimed at pointing people toward the Father. As the Apostle Paul writes in the book of Philippians, Christ “did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,” but instead “made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant.”

This call on Christ’s life extends to us today. And as we pattern our service on Jesus’ example—one rooted in love and humility, relevant to those being served, fueled by revelation, and motivated by the desire to change lives—we too can make God proud.

Loving...to the very end

As people walked the roads of ancient Israel, the sun blazing down on them and the breeze blowing dust into their sandals, their feet became sweaty and smelly. This made foot-washing a necessity. No civilized person would sit down to eat with dirty feet. Yet the unenviable task of washing the guest’s feet was given to the lowliest slave in a home. That’s why it created such a stir when Jesus pushed Himself away from the table and began to wash the feet of His disciples. As John 13:1 explains, Jesus “knew that His hour had come to leave this world and return to His Father. He had loved His

disciples during His ministry on earth, and now He loved them to the very end.”

This show of Christ’s love and humility is all the more amazing when we remember that one of the brothers around the table was Judas Iscariot. Judas was on the cusp of betraying Jesus, and both of them knew it. But despite this imminent treachery, which would ultimately lead to His death, Jesus washed Judas’ feet. In doing so, Jesus demonstrated that His love was not conditional or based upon the response of those He served. He was willing to humble Himself to everyone, even His betrayer.

In His example, we see that service to others isn’t motivated by a perceived outcome or the reactions of others, but in recognition of the love and selflessness Christ demonstrated when He served each of us.

Healing—it’s not just skin deep

When Jesus ministered, He stopped what He was doing—whether preaching or walking or praying—to spend time with people and learn of their specific needs. To those suffering with a physical ailment, He was the Great Physician. To the intellectual, He was the Master Teacher. For those who were broken in spirit, He was the Gentle Counselor. And to the man or woman

wracked by doubt, He brought assurance and calm. Christ’s outreach was always personal, holistic, and relevant.

We may not know where to start in serving our friends, neighbours, or communities. Maybe we could begin by giving them our time, rather than racing to meet what we assume are their needs. In doing so, we might find ourselves amazed at how honest others can be in revealing their true yearnings and vulnerabilities, showing us how to serve them with relevance and sensitivity.

Jesus also offered people the truth. He willingly, and gently, spoke to people about their brokenness, sin, and need for repentance and change. Just look at His interactions with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. He understood that at the heart of humanity was a broken relationship with God that needed to be restored. Even while He addressed people’s physical maladies, He pointed them to new life, revealing His identity as Saviour. We, too, can attend to others more holistically by offering the truth of Jesus to those around us and leading them to meet an essential need in their lives.

Refueled

Walking with people as they experience suffering can be exhausting. Even Jesus wasn’t immune to this weariness—He was, after all, human. Throughout the Gospels, we often see Jesus retreat from public life to commune with

God. These times of prayer, fasting, and other spiritual disciplines helped Him refocus on His priorities and purpose, and were essential in preparing Him to serve those He would encounter in the coming days. He returned rested and ready to serve a new wave of people with a new set of needs.

Similarly, when we take time to retreat and reflect, God cultivates within us a readiness to serve. As we encounter God, we remember that it is His power that enables us to love and serve those in our lives. It is His Spirit that reinvigorates our souls, cleansing them of impurity and inspiring them to prioritize our lives according to His will, not our own.

Stepping back also keeps us from allowing busyness to consume our lives. For many, keeping a hectic schedule is a sign of prestige and importance. But if we’re always running at top speed, we simply can’t attend to the needs of a neighbor who’s just locked herself out of her house or a co-worker who needs to talk. When we make time to slow down, we gain perspective and become more able to address people’s needs.

Changed

In Mark 10, we read about a man named Bartimaeus, blind and begging by the side of the road. Upon hearing that Jesus is in the vicinity, Bartimaeus begins to shout. We can imagine him calling, from the depths of his stomach and with the veins popping in his neck, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” The crowd tells him to be quiet. But he takes another deep breath and shouts even louder, “SON OF DAVID, HAVE MERCY ON ME!”

Hearing the cries, Jesus goes to Bartimaeus and asks what He can do for him. Bartimaeus responds, “Rabbi, I want to see.” As Mark records, not only is the blind man’s sight restored, but his spiritual eyes are opened as well. His encounter with Christ is transformative, stirring in him the desire to take the most important step of all: to “follow Jesus down the road.”

In the same way, our acts of service should point others to our Master and the coming of His upside-down King-

dom. We are filled with hope that people will experience Jesus through our actions and ultimately turn their lives over to Him. This is what differentiates our service as Christ-followers from that of the rest of the world.

But we don’t serve only to bring transformation in others. Even more so, we are motivated by the brokenness that we see in ourselves. Service provides an opportunity to invite the Spirit to work within us. Thus, it is a means of bringing about change within ourselves, making us not the “givers” in the interaction but fellow recipients with those we serve.

Daddy, can I help?

A few months ago, the weather was bad, the kids wanted out of the house, and their mother was going crazy. I had a few things to do at the church, so I took the two oldest, Zach and Mya, with me for the afternoon.

While the kids played, I began working my way through the list of things I wanted to accomplish. As I was sweeping, Mya (she’s 5) came running

up to me with a bright beaming smile and pure heart and said, “Daddy, can I help?” So we swept the floor together. I pulled out the mop, and she repeated, “Daddy, can I help?” So we mopped together. I then began setting up the chairs, and although she could not possibly lift even one by herself, Mya once again asked, “Daddy, can I help?” So we lifted and set up chairs together.

Mya’s eagerness to serve that day was a perfect imitation of Christ’s example. So often, we can feel obligated to serve or guilty if we don’t. But like Mya, we really ought to be running to God with wide smiles and ready hearts, asking, “Daddy, can I help?” When we do, God proudly smiles back and says, “That is my dearly loved child, who brings me great joy!”



Jeremy Tyrrell lives in Fort Erie, ON, with his wife, April, and three kids, Zach, Mya, and Cade. He serves his congregation, The Well, as lead pastor.

As we encounter God,
we remember
that it is His power
that enables us
to love and serve those
in our lives.

These indelible words

People have been talking about service for centuries. Here are a few snippets from what they’ve been saying.

Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can.
—John Wesley (1703–1791), Anglican cleric, Christian theologian, founder of the Methodist movement

True evangelical faith cannot lie dormant. It clothes the naked, it feeds the hungry, it comforts the sorrowful, it shelters the destitute, it serves those that harm it, it binds up that which is wounded, and it has become all things to all people.
—Menno Simmons (1496–1561), founder of the Mennonite Church

They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water.
—Isaiah 49:10

We cannot prove our love of God except by loving our fellow humans. Jesus Christ loved God precisely by loving His fellow men and women.
—Anthony Wilhelm (1967), Christ Among Us

This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. . . . In your hearts do not think evil of each other.’
—Zechariah 7:9–10

The God of life summons us to life; more, to be lifegivers, especially toward those who lie under the heel of the powers.
—Daniel Berrigan (1921–), Jesuit priest, poet, and peace activist

PHOTO FEATURE

Serving victims of HIV/AIDS in Chisekesi, Zambia

Half of the people in this rural village test positive for HIV. But one resident's contagious hope is catching on.

Captions by Karin Zylstra Sawatzky

Photos by Matthew Zylstra Sawatzky



↑ Maureen Mundia in the living room, which doubles as an office, of her home in Chisekesi, Zambia.

Maureen Mundia lives in Chisekesi (pronounced chee-SAY-kay-see), a rural shantytown in southern Zambia, home to about 2,000 people. Despite its relatively small population, the community experiences one of the highest levels of HIV prevalence in the country: approximately half of the residents test positive for HIV, nearly double the national average.

In the late 1990s, when Maureen was working as a primary school teacher, she noticed that many of her students had only one book for all of their subjects. She began to buy schoolbooks with her own money, asking the school to anonymously distribute them to the needy students. While this took care of the immediate problem, she still wanted to find the root cause of the children's growing needs. After some research and observation,

Maureen found that many of her students were struggling to survive because of the presence of HIV and AIDS in their families. Some had lost their parents as a result of the disease, while others were themselves carriers.

Today, Maureen has retired from teaching and for the last four years she has been serving as director of an HIV/AIDS community project in Chisekesi. She and 11 friends care for 210 HIV/AIDS patients, work to increase community HIV/AIDS awareness, and support 297 children made vulnerable by the disease. They do this through small business and personal donations, as well as through the support of the Compassionate Ministries arm of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zambia, which receives funds from BIC World Missions in North America.

The major issues in Chisekesi

that Maureen's group addresses are economic poverty, hunger, family losses, HIV transmission, and positive living—issues that are often related and intensify already vulnerable situations. For instance, a family with a sick member may spend any available money or time on treatment and transport to clinics, but then have little funds to buy food or little energy to tend crops. Children who have lost a parent may find themselves working to earn money or spending many hours in their fields, neglecting their studies and having to pay to repeat grades or drop out of school altogether.

All families in the community have also felt the effects of a country-wide food shortage that has driven some staples up to six times the regular price. Most days, Maureen is visited by desperate mothers, grandmothers, and children asking if she has any food to give.



↑ Through a grant from Maureen's project, Mary Kayawe sells vegetables at a roadside market.

For the 210 patients living with HIV and AIDS,

Maureen's group has an integrated approach. They give social, medical, and economic support to their patients through counseling, home-based care for bedridden patients, monitoring of patients' health, food packages, income generation grants, and provision of basic healthcare supplies. All patients are encouraged to meet weekly at Maureen's church, Chisekesi BIC, to share their worries and experiences with each other. Not all patients regularly attend the meetings, but those who do find great encouragement, hope, and support. And she estimates that 25 people have come to the Lord as a result of the outreach.



↑ For Maureen's first patient, Margaret Muchindu, a woman living with developmental disabilities, support from the group has helped her to adjust to the diet and regularity needed for ARV treatment. Margaret can now live on her own, maintain her ARV schedule, and prepare her own meals.



↑ Maureen, with her grandson, counts the patients and children that her group supports in the community.

The mission of Maureen and her group extends to the entire Chisekesi community. They offer seminars to talk about how to live healthily, eat nutritiously, care for sick relatives, and prevent HIV transmission. Their hope is for all community members to live positively whether they have HIV/AIDS or not. Maureen has noticed that the harsh stigma that once surrounded HIV/AIDS in Chisekesi has decreased as people see that they can live normally with HIV through treatment and nutritious diets. Maureen's hope is buoyed by this proof that her efforts are bringing about change.



↑ Maureen regularly visits Chisekesi's primary school, where her project pays the school fees of many orphaned and vulnerable children.

Currently, Maureen's greatest concerns have to do with the most vulnerable members of her community: children. Of the 210 patients living with HIV and AIDS, 32 are children. Maureen knows that HIV becomes resistant to ARVs over time and wonders whether the children will reach their 30th birthdays. For those who do survive, she worries that they will not have the opportunity to be educated or the family support needed to become healthy and content citizens. Maureen and her friends help pay for the school fees of the 297 children on their register and hold regular support group meetings for the children to share with each other and gain guidance from caring adults. "My intention is to see these children educated because they are the future Zambians. They will be the parents that I am today," Maureen says.

Through proper treatment, parent-to-child transmission of HIV is up to 90 percent preventable, but mothers must have access to the right medications at the right times, must be aware of when to take them, and must have access to nutritious foods for themselves and their families. Maureen's organization provides instruction and accountability for 11 women through classes and a support group. They also give the women food when it is needed. As prevention is preferable to treatment, Maureen believes that this aspect of her group's work is essential. "So I think it is so important, let us fight tooth and nail to teach people to prevent children from becoming infected before they are born. That is the work we are doing."

Maureen is a person of ambitious and contagious hope. She has witnessed the impact of her work in Chisekesi and will continue to move her community forward. When asked about her hopes for the future, she replies that everyone should know how to live a positive life. And once everyone knows the truth about HIV/AIDS and their own status, her job, she says, will become much easier.

Karin and Matthew Zylstra Sawatzky, a writer-photographer pair, live in Winnipeg, MB, and are members of Winnipeg Centre Vineyard. Karin serves Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada as the National Programs program assistant. Matthew is a freelance photographer. Both have attended the Canadian Mennonite University (Winnipeg) to study International Development. To investigate this story, the couple traveled to Chisekesi with MCC, a partner organization of the BIC Church in North America and a source of support to Maureen's ministry.



↑ Margaret Muchindu relaxes in the shade with her neighbour, Lina Mudenda, and her family. Through the support of Maureen's group, Lina's youngest son, Mazuba, was born HIV-negative.



↑ Maureen walks through Chisekesi's Brethren in Christ church. The congregation is preparing to replace the roof with a new grass thatch.

(IN)VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Making the case for required acts of service

by CHAD FREY

While on family vacations growing up, my sister and I would inevitably run out of games to play in the back of our Chevy Astro minivan. Out of sheer boredom, one of us would start singing the Beach Boys summer hit “Sloop John B.” This would set off a musical call-and-response between us to protest the forced family fun that typically ended with a wild embellishment of the chorus: “Why don’t they let me go home? / This is the worst trip / Bah, bah, dah / I’ve ever been on!”

Since that time, my sister and I have confessed to our parents that those trips not only helped us grow closer together but were quite meaningful and taught us important life lessons.

Similarly, at first blush, the idea of compulsory service—like forced family fun—seems to be somewhat of an oxymoron. After all, how can people’s service be authentic if they lack the desire and are being forced into it? Yet, as my experience with family vacations demonstrates, the act of getting involved can often transform the hearts and minds of even the most unwilling participants.

Compulsory service a contradiction?

Increasingly, community service is becoming part of mainstream North American culture, and this means that it’s being incorporated into diverse

arenas of life. Today, judges can sentence defendants to community service for petty crimes, and businesses support charitable organizations in the hopes of creating a positive image with consumers.

However, not all forms of involuntary service are punitive or lucrative in nature. For example, many students—all the way from elementary to college-age—in Canada and the U.S. must participate in service-learning experiences in order to successfully complete course requirements.

And if you think about it, Christ’s instruction for us to love our neighbors as ourselves is not called the “Second Great Suggestion” but the “Second

Great Commandment.” As Christians, we are required by God to serve, not just during isolated, one-time instances, but with our entire lives.

Mandatory service might at first seem like a paradox, yet even the Bible prescribes it as part of the walk of a faithful Christ-follower.

Actions vs. attitude

But what about the tension that seems to be present any time someone feels forced to serve because they have to as opposed to serving because they want to?

I would say that this isn’t unique to service. There have been many times when I didn’t feel like going to church

and have questioned the importance of participating in seemingly empty rituals of worship. Yet often, it is in the daily practice of the spiritual disciplines—whether or not I feel like doing them—that my faith has been renewed and I’ve developed deeper, more mature convictions about what I actually believe.

Perhaps that is why Jesus called His disciples to follow Him before they fully understood what the journey would entail. Throughout the biblical story, it’s clear that understanding the command to serve doesn’t precede obeying it. In fact, it’s quite possible that we can’t fully comprehend or develop a passion for service until we become active participants by serving others and allowing others to serve us.

Now, this doesn’t mean that one’s actions count for everything and one’s heart doesn’t matter. The Pharisees, for instance, are famous for outwardly doing all the “right things” but having minds and attitudes that rebelled against God. In Matthew 23, Jesus tells them, “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.”

God does look at our hearts. But we must recognize that what we do influences our inner state, and vice versa. And so, we serve to both demonstrate and cultivate love in our hearts.

Becoming the change

Parker Palmer, a master adult educator, has said, “You don’t think your way into a new kind of living, you live your way into a new kind of thinking.” Studies have shown that students who participate in mandatory service-learning develop a better understanding of themselves, become more empathetic, increase their awareness of social justice issues, and statistically commit themselves to future civic leadership, charitable giving, and political engagement in larger numbers than their non-volunteering counterparts.

Aside from these social benefits, service-learning also facilitates growth in one’s spiritual life. Even when mandatory and done with a poor attitude, service can bring about transformation—in others, in society, and in ourselves. Micah 6:8 instructs us to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God. As we pursue those callings, we might actually experience healing in our own broken hearts and corrupted minds. Understood in this way, involuntary service becomes not about quell-



ing God’s punitive wrath or satisfying course requirements; rather, it becomes a way that God uses to work within and among us to cultivate the fruits of the Spirit and bring about reconciliation as we become more Christ-like.

When we make ourselves available to God as did characters like Jonah, Abraham, Rehab, Paul, and Job, He is able to work in us—and at times in spite of us—to accomplish His work in this world.



In addition to serving as an adjunct instructor, **Chad Frey** works as director of the Agapé Center for Service and Learning at Messiah College (Grantham, Pa.). He attends Harrisburg (Pa.) BIC, and he openly admits to enjoying vacations with his family when he gets the chance.

TO THE POINT

How can Brethren in Christ congregations engage a lost and hurting world and stay faithful to the call of discipleship?

Walt Roberts
CROSSROADS CHURCH
Hagerstown, Md.

Discipleship is *the* call to the Church (Matt. 28: 18–20). The most effective way to engage the world is by making disciples, who then are equipped to reach out to the hurting world around them. We see this pattern in the church in Acts, which did not simply meet the needs of the “outside community” but focused on “one another” (Acts 4:32). Although this approach might initially appear selfish and inward-focused, it is a sort of a paradox: When the Church makes disciples effectively, it will at the same time effectively engage a lost and hurting world through those disciples. Simply put: making disciples = engaging the world.

Michael Yoder
MILLERSVILLE (Pa.) BIC

Unfortunately, we often view these issues as dichotomous rather than look for the synergy. When we as believers respond to the needs around us as Christ calls us to do (Matt. 25), our own discipleship begins to develop and grow. As our own love grows, the reality of Christ living within us begins to be revealed more and more to those around us, creating a winsome life that draws people to follow Christ themselves.

When we focus first on the other person’s need to know Christ, we often ignore our own deficiencies and engage in an imposing explanation of the Gospel. This is certainly not Christ’s example of inviting people to follow Him and often results in people turning away from Christ.

So where does that leave us? When we love those around us, Christ, who lives within us, will prompt us in both actions and words that point to Jesus. And when Jesus is lifted up, He draws people to Himself.

EVER WONDERED...

What is Voluntary Service?

Voluntary Service (VS) was initiated in the BIC Church to provide short-term service experiences, primarily to young adults. Inspired by Mennonite Central Committee’s PAX program, Voluntary Service in the BIC Church was also born of involvement in “home mission workers” groups, in the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression, and in alternate service programs during World War II.

At the outset, most VS assignments were based out of the Navajo BIC Mission (Farmington, N.M.), though

volunteers served in a variety of other places, such as San Francisco; the Bronx, N.Y.; and present-day Zambia and Zimbabwe.

By 1986, the BIC VS program had 85 participants providing administrative support and staffing organizations and camps in North America alone. Today, the BIC Church still offers VS opportunities through several of its affiliates, including Paxton Ministries (Harrisburg, Pa.), the Navajo Mission, and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

PARTING WORDS

THE GREATEST AMONG US

Remembering to appreciate the work of others

by PERRY ENGLE

Half-a-lifetime ago, at the age of 25, I loaded up my VW van and travelled across country to spend a year living in New York City.

The program sponsored by the BIC Church was called Voluntary Service—“voluntary” I guess, because no one was forcing me to do it, and “service” because it was a lesson in how to give of myself to others.

I was one of a dozen “VS-ers” who secured jobs and then pooled our paychecks to support our living and ministry expenses in the city. I found an opening listed under “Horticulture” in the classified ads of the *New York Times* and applied for a job as an indoor plant technician. The sum of my duties was to care for plants in the high-rise office buildings of midtown Manhattan. My wise-cracking friends quickly dubbed me “The Plant Man.”

I took the job because, more than anything else, I wanted to learn what it meant to be a servant. The words of Jesus—“the greatest among you will be your servant”—were always echoing in my mind, and so I set out to discover what He meant by them.

I soon got used to moving in and out of subways, wearing my green apron, and carrying a canvas bag with

my watering can and feather duster. I was assigned to the accounts of ABC Television and before long I was watering and dusting plants in the offices of the high and mighty.

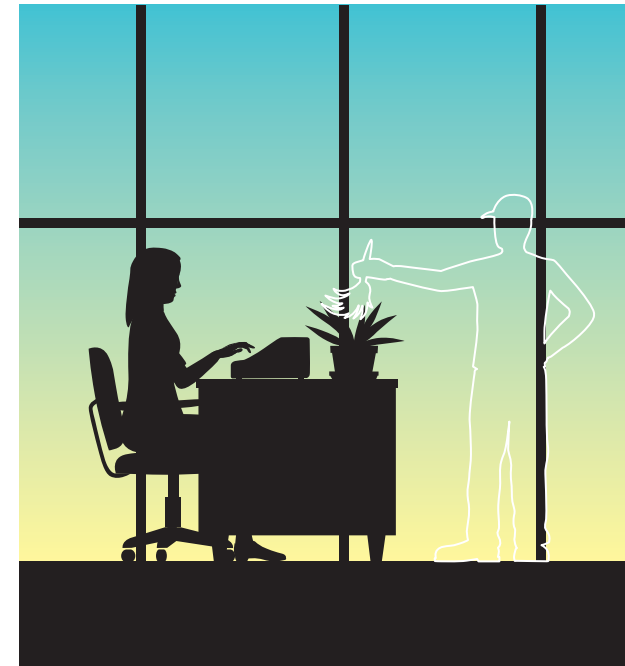
I remember the first time I saw news-woman Barbara Walters, sitting at her glass-topped desk in her bright pink-and-cream-colored office. She never looked up from her work as I went about my duties of dusting her wax plant and tending to her grape ivy. When her bamboo palm was attacked by an invading army

of spider mites, I worked doubly hard to make sure it survived.

The head of ABC Sports at that time, Roone Arledge, was also one of my accounts. I remember gazing at the 30 or so Emmy awards lining his shelves and considering the measure of greatness in a man.

I also maintained plants for the set of *The Morning Show* with Regis Philbin; the National Basketball Association and its commissioner, David Stern; and international shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis.

Through all my service, I was seldom noticed or commended. To most, I was an invisible maintenance man, destined to work in anonymity, acknowledged only when my work wasn’t up to par.



What I learned from my year of service was that virtue lies in doing your job, however menial or unimportant, to the best of your ability and to the glory of God. It also reminded me to never dehumanize those who perform unglamorous tasks among us, whether it be gathering, preparing, or serving our food; cleaning our hotel room; collecting our trash; or delivering our morning newspaper.

God taught me that if the greatest among us truly are those who serve, then I am surrounded by greatness every day and should never forget to acknowledge it as such.



Perry Engle is still known as “Plant Man to the Stars,” as well as bishop of the Midwest and Pacific Regional Conferences of the BIC Church. Both he and his wife, Marta, served in Voluntary Service in the Bronx, N.Y., and now live in Ontario, Calif.

"For the Son of God came not to be served, but to serve..." (Mark 10:45)

This holiday season, join in praising Jesus,
..... the Son of Man and our worthy Savior.

Merry Christmas!

TO SEE

**GREAT
THINGS**

Now then, stand still and see this great thing
the Lord is about to do before your eyes!

1 SAMUEL 12:16

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