

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are

Yes!

In Christ
II Corinthians 1:20

STORIES OF THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST
AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Growing Jesus' Church, one simple step at a time.

Almost 40 years ago, Isaac and Nina Schmucker followed a vision to plant a church in the southern farmlands of Indiana. Over the years they have worked to plant a solid ministry among their small farming community, overcoming one obstacle after another during those years, including financial hardship and even Isaac's nearly fatal stroke four years ago.

by Ron Ross

In 1962, Isaac Schmucker literally had a vision for a church and ministry that God wanted he and his wife Nina to plant in southern Indiana.

And when the real estate agent who was showing them properties happened to take them onto one property a different way than the norm, Isaac suddenly saw the very picture in his mind now stretched out before him in the landscape they were visiting. He was not so much surprised as affirmed.

Since uprooting the Schmucker family from their comfortable home and church roots in northern Indiana to go plant a church in an isolated, rural, and (at the time) economically challenged area of southern Indiana, the Schmuckers have worked one simple step after another to get a church to grow. They had to overcome such obstacles as figuring out how to buy a church building without any money and working around the debilitating stroke that nearly claimed Isaac's life four years ago.

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GROWING A CHURCH IN THE FARMLANDS OF SOUTHERN INDIANA

Pastoral couple
Nina and Isaac Schmucker
stand in front of Mt. Zion
BIC Church, only their most
recent mission for God's work,
although they have been
working at this one
for almost 40 years now.



"Since I didn't get to go
to Heaven four years ago,
it gives me the chance
to take a few more with
me when I do get to."

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Yes!
Brethren in Christ
Communications
P.O. Box A
Grantham, PA 17027
Telephone: (717) 697-2634
Fax: (717) 697-7714
E-mail: Yes@messiah.edu

Editorial Team

Ron Ross & Carolyn Kimmel,
editorial content & layout
Shannon Wagner,
information management

Contributors

Warren Hoffman
Grantham, Pa.
Roger Lloyd Williams
Nappanee, Ind.
Janet Peifer
Mechanicsburg, Pa.
Jonathon Bert,
Carlisle, Pa.



The church's buildings themselves have charted the steady growth of the small rural congregation, as well as reflecting the struggles of some of the steps along the way.

The first church building was essentially developed from a run-down shack that was part of a farm. When it eventually became necessary to move, the Schmuckers found a deal to buy a building from another church for a seemingly bargain-priced \$500. (However, one should remember that even that simple cost was a struggle in the tight economy. At that time both Schmuckers traveled to other areas to take second jobs, she as a teacher and he in industry.)

Eventually they struck a deal that allowed them to move to their current building. Another church in the area was moving into a new building of their own, but wanted to maintain the cemetery behind the church, so Isaac Schmucker reworked the parking lot to create joint access for both congregations to either building or cemetery.

At the initial move, the building consisted of the sanctuary and a small office. The Schmuckers were able to acquire a used mobile home, which helped provide needed Sunday School space. When the Schmuckers eventually rallied the community to help build a more permanent addition to the main building, which provided several Sunday School class rooms and a kitchen/fellowship hall, the Schmuckers thought it sad to retire the trailer from ministry service, so they launched a clothing bank ministry that today still remains a thriving outreach to the surrounding community.



Forty years is a long time to put into any work, but the Schmuckers didn't even start in this current venture until they were in their forties, having already returned from other ministries and time on the mission field.

On the other hand, Isaac and Nina Schmucker, now 86 and 82 respectively, don't seem ready to slow down yet in their ministry work, in spite of Isaac's recent health problems. In fact, one of the church's congregation members playfully chastised her elderly pastor for having moved an entire closet full of donated clothes earlier in the day I visited. Still, one suspects she knows there is little to be said to keep the church's pastor from making any effort to help while he is at all able.

Okay, maybe, he admits, the stroke did slow him down a bit, since he has to stop and rest these days after talking with a visitor. And in fact his hindered movement today is only a build up, through therapy, from a point of being partially paralyzed by the stroke following the attack.

There were moments at the time when Isaac had the stroke that the Schmucker family thought their father had passed away. Isaac himself even recalls the commonly related sensation of walking toward a bright light. But, instead, he has slowly and steadily worked toward recovery, essentially remaining active as the pastor at Mt. Zion the entire time.

A major part of filling the gaps in pastoral duties during Isaac's recovery came from within the ranks of the Schmucker family. Son-in-law George Elam was a practicing preacher. He and wife Lorita, middle daughter of the five Schmucker girls, moved in to help with the Sunday morning

messages and to actually live on the farm land with the elder Schmuckers.

Many from the community have moved on to other jobs and larger communities like nearby Louisville, Kentucky, or even as far away as Cincinnati, Ohio, but several who have been members of the church still come back for regular visits. For one thing, Isaac thinks they know they can count on getting a solid Bible lesson, since the church has never waived from basing its ministry on that focus, or in well-founded tradition.

As the gentle Indiana breeze wisped past us as we were saying our goodbyes in front of the church, Pastor Isaac Schmucker looked at me with both a tear and a twinkle in his eye, and he said, "Since I didn't get to go to Heaven four years ago, I think it gives me a chance to take a few more with me when I do get to."

I smiled as we parted, for I knew it wouldn't take much for him to find a way to succeed at that.

It seems the Schmuckers have always somehow found a way.



Isaac and Nina Schmucker, daughter Lorita and her husband George Elam pose beside a tree outside their two homes on the Schmucker homestead.

I was thinking . . .

Simple doesn't usually stand out

One of the tough parts of seeking to focus on our church's core value of simple living is that really good examples of it are not as likely to be overtly noticeable. By its very nature, simple lifestyle is quite the opposite.

I stumbled across the Mt. Zion church and the Schmuckers when I saw on a map that I would be near enough to visit when I flew into Louisville, Kentucky for last spring's Southeast Regional Conference. Many I asked, including some from Indiana, were unaware of the solid but unassuming ministry of the Schmuckers and their church in rural Indiana.

There is powerful lesson in the simple lifestyle, and in the more singularly focused and determined efforts of those who have chosen to embrace it. With all the clutter that's become part of my family's schedule, and part of my work and other routines, I know I sometimes have trouble finding time to follow a repeated divine instruction to "be still and know that I am God."

Whenever I do, it's usually a quiet, powerful moment.

Ron Ross

SPEAK UP

"Stuff. Sometimes it seems to take on a life of its own and even reproduces without any effort from us! Furthermore, if we're not careful, taking care of all our stuff can become very time-consuming, adding to the clutter of our lives. If we say that we value uncluttered lives, perhaps our first task is to look carefully at what causes us to clutter our lives and what it is that clutters them."

— ESTHER SPURRIER
FROM HER CHAPTER ON LIVING SIMPLY
IN *FOCUSING OUR FAITH: BRETHREN IN CHRIST CORE VALUES*
(Evangel Press, 2000)

Collecting Our Thoughts

Because we are Jesus' followers, His twenty-first-century disciples, we must translate His example into action appropriate for our lives and time. Some Christians propose to do this by composing a list of activities that do or do not conform to a Christian lifestyle. Whatever the value of such a list for the individual, on a broader level, it may imply that one's righteousness depends on how one conforms to the list. This is the legalism that Jesus condemned in the Pharisees.

We may, however, rightly talk of principles. Principles for determining a Christian lifestyle are clearly established in the Bible; they may be applied to all times and places - to the disciples and the New Testament church, as well as to Christians in our own century.

— E. Morris Sider

from his essay on *Simple Lifestyle* for
the *Brethren in Christ Accent & Issues* series.

Read all six of Dr. Sider's principles in the full paper.

A set of brochures written by various Brethren in Christ authors to offer the clarified position of our church on the various issues and topics, all Accent & Issues papers are available in most BIC churches and Christian Light Bookstores, or can be found on the Brethren in Christ Web Site at www.bic-church.org/accents.



A WEALTH OF RESOURCES ON SIMPLE LIVING

We found it somewhat ironic that there were enough books on the topic of simple living to easily fill any of our free time reading about how to free up more time in our lives, so we've included just a few to get you started.

◆ Freedom of Simplicity

Richard J. Foster
(Harper San Francisco; 1981,
reissued 1998)

In this book by the author of the challenging *Celebration of Discipline*, we are offered points on ways for Christians to make their lives "models of simplicity." Foster provides a way to rethink our priorities and to "seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness" amidst the rich complexity of life, all while stressing the relation of simplicity to prayer, solitude, and all the Christian Disciplines.

◆ Mustard Seed vs. McWorld

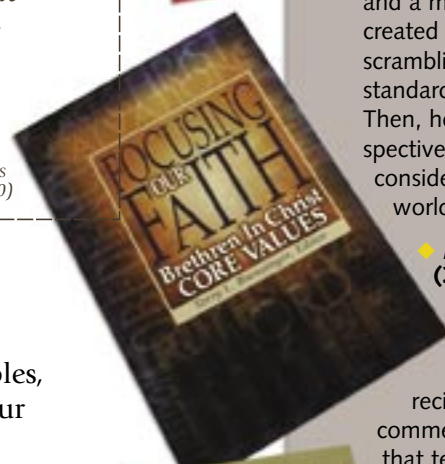
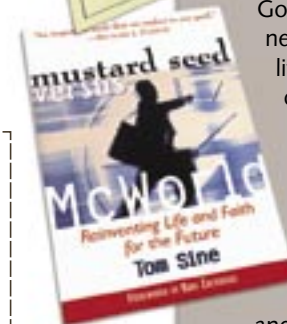
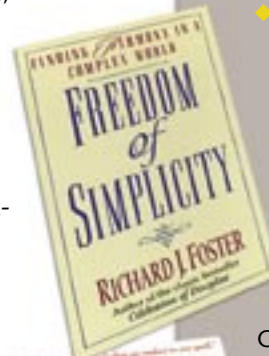
Tom Sine
(Baker Books, 1999)

Author Sine presents a world where huge corporate growth and a move toward globalization have created a pace in which many are left scrambling just to keep up with the standard - and many fall short. Then, he suggests an alternate perspective and plan for Christians to consider for themselves and the world in which we live.

◆ More with Less Cookbook (25th Anniversary Edition)

Doris Jansen Longacre
(Herald Press, 2000)

Longacre has gathered 500 recipes (and several anecdotal comments) from Mennonite kitchens that tell us how to eat better and consume less of the world's limited food resources. This book has been thoroughly tested by both home economists and a range of cooks in the Mennonite family over the twenty five years since it was first released. This newest edition both celebrates and improves on all its content.



*"Living Simply:
We value uncluttered lives which free us
to love boldly, give generously,
and serve joyfully."*

— One of the ten Core Values of the
Brethren in Christ Church

Find all ten at www.bic-church.org/resources

Roll Out the Offering Plates

During a five-week "Time to Build" campaign held from March to May at Wainfleet BIC in Ontario, Pastor Charles Mashinter preached on the themes of building a life of faith, commitment, service, generosity and thankfulness, focusing on one of each of those topics each week. At no time were people pressured to give, but instead they were asked to pray and give what the Lord said to give.

Then, on May 5, ushers wearing hard hats brought wheelbarrows down the aisles of the church, collecting the building fund offering. Another wheelbarrow remained at the front while children filed past and emptied their banks, relishing the joyful clatter of their coins hitting the metal.

At the announcement of the offering results a week later the pastor and church board started to "build" a model church with bricks, each brick representing \$100,000 given. Anticipation climbed as members of the congregation carried up brick after brick, and by the time 10 bricks were in place and the figure of \$1 million had flashed on the overhead, the congregation thought their cup of blessing was surely overflowing, but four and a half more bricks were still to be added, symbolizing the final tally of \$1,445,000!

People broke into song, singing "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow." In a further spurt of celebration, it was revealed the regular offering on the Sunday of the special offering was reportedly twice as much as normal, too! - SW



Successful bidders could claim a day of work from their hired worker, or dozens of items like dinners and merchandise were also offered at the auction.

Pastor Chuck Frank was bought for \$125 by the Metzler's to "clean their swimming pool." To his surprise, he found that the Metzler's have an automatic pool cleaner that merely requires someone to be swimming in the water to stir up the dirt. Part of the deal turned out to be a requirement that that pastor's wife was to join him in his task.

Having picked corn for a day the previous year, the Franks were needless to say excited to help out in the effort. On the other hand Pastor Greg Taylor, Pastor of Spiritual Formation, wasn't quite so excited, since he was slated to do the corn this year for a \$95 bid.

However, due to the lack of rain this year, there ended up not being any corn to pick, so he hasn't fulfilled his day of work... yet. - SW

Community Picnic and Fun Night

Seeds were planted and connections made at Daybreak's Community Picnic and Fun Night in Royersford, Pa.

"Everyone's Invited" and "Absolutely Free" were the messages advertised on door hangers placed on doors throughout the community, on road signs seemingly placed on every corner, and on posters displayed on community bulletin boards. The invitations seemed to work, since over 400 showed up to check out the fun.

This is the second year Daybreak has held the free community picnic, staged at one of the most awesome community park/playgrounds in the area. While last year only about 50% of the people came planning to attend the picnic (the rest just happened upon the picnic when arriving at the park) Pastor John Pletcher was pleased to note about 85% coming specifically for the picnic this year. He noted several guests and new faces that day.

The picnic included three hours of fun with a live band for entertainment, a moon bounce, door prizes, face painting, games for the kids, volleyball and a scavenger hunt, as well as a variety of free food, including hot dogs, popcorn and even cotton candy!

A couple of families who now regularly attend Daybreak, started coming as a result of last year's picnic. They pray that this year's picnic will have the same kind of results - not only more people coming to Daybreak, but ultimately, more people opening their hearts and lives to God. - SW



Released – Now What?

Paul's entreaty in Hebrews 13:3, "Remember the prisoners as if chained with them--those who are mistreated--since you yourselves are in the body also," calls for active compassion toward those who have been imprisoned. Paul knew much about prisoners, both as one responsible for placing people in prison as well as being a prisoner himself.



Ralph Yoder and Tim Perrin of the Nappanee Brethren in Christ congregation in Elkhart County, Indiana take Hebrews 13:3 seriously and are heavily involved as volunteers in Network for Life, a ministry of Charles W. Colson's Prison Ministries Fellowship which helps get ex-prisoners back on the right track in society. Their work to help ex-prisoners get on the right track with both society and Christ is a part of the discipleship of the Nappanee congregation. Ralph notes his involvement with NFL developed from a suggestion and introduction by Nappanee pastor Joseph Fox to Rev. Mike Kupke, Elkhart County Jail Chaplain.

In fact, Rev. Kupke and his staff of two part-timers are supported by more than seventy congregations within the county, but the support is appreciated and needed. "The jail population is five-to-six times what it was when I first became chaplain 18 years ago," notes Kupke.

The role of Network for Life is to positively impact prison inmates who have expressed a desire to surrender their lives to Christ and assist them in building faith and becoming established in their communities and churches.

Tom Smith, Chairman of the Elkhart County NFL board, noted, "NFL wants to be right at the door to pick them [released inmates] up because this is a real point of crisis." Inmates are released from prison with the prison system terminating their relationship as they walk out the door, often with just the clothes they had when they arrived.

The first step in the process of NFL involvement is to provide weekly chapel services to inmates in the county jail. Only those who attend the chapel are considered for further contact, such as a life-planning seminar designed to help the inmates look ahead to becoming positive members of society after their release.

After release, the church volunteers provide spiritual guidance, transportation, and "Care Packs" of personal items needed to assimilate into society, as well as assisting in job placement.

Yoder said, "You need to be called to this, it's demanding, time consuming, and not for everyone. But, the reward of seeing someone come to Christ and get their lives straightened out is tremendous." - R.L. Williams



ATLANTIC CONFERENCE,

Seven youth at Silverdale took part in a 30-Hour Famine to raise money for world hunger. To keep busy during the famine, the group stayed active making balls out of plastic bags and nylons (like the children in Africa do), having a scavenger hunt, and helping with VBS decorations. But, the hard one was making and distributing hoagies. Can you imagine making hoagies while you're not allowed to eat for 30 hours? That's dedication!

CANADIAN CONFERENCE,

"I Witness News: Life from Jericho" was the theme of the Sunday morning worship service on June 9 at Heise Hill BIC Church, Gormley, Ont.. The program, presented by the Heise Hill Music and Drama Club (ages 5 through 12) brought back some Biblical heroes such as Joshua and the children of Israel to show their faith and courage as they finally crossed into the Promised Land. In a unique twist, the story was witnessed (via time-delay satellite) by a modern-day news crew, which made for some interesting reactions.

GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE,

In the Winter 2002 Yes! we reported that the Sippo Valley BIC Church in Massillon, Ohio had closed its doors but with a restart to soon follow. The restart is now underway! The Rev. Paul Meduri is serving as transition pastor at the new church, which is to be located in a neighboring town and have a new name.

MIDWEST CONFERENCE,

Several people in the congregation from CrossRoads BIC, Salina, Kan., participated in what has become an annual Jericho Walk as a way to keep alive their vision for the city of Salina.

PACIFIC CONFERENCE,

The New Community High School group, Pomona, Calif., just finished a study on Nehemiah and the "Wall of Jerusalem." As a fitting incentive for completing the study, they went on a wall climbing outing.

SUSQUEHANNA CONFERENCE,

Bill Irwin and his seeing eye dog, Orient, were on hand June 28 at Messiah Village Church to talk about their trip on the Appalachian Trail. The only blind person to have completed the 2,168-mile trail, Irwin presents an incredible message of perseverance and inspiration.

If you or your congregation is interested in starting a Network for Life group through your congregation contact:

Prison Fellowship Ministries
P. O. Box 17500
Washington, DC 20041
703-478-0100

Will they know you're a Christian by the way you live?

A chat with Ronald J. Sider • by Carolyn Kimmel



The standard of living is the god of the 20th Century, and the ad man is its prophet.

Ronald J. Sider first penned those words in 1977, but they prove as true if not more so today, in the 21st Century, he says.

"Materialism is significantly worse," said Sider, an ordained Brethren in Christ minister and author of "Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger," first published in 1977 and now in its fourth edition with 400,000 copies in print. He also has written other books on Christianity's response to poverty and other social issues.

"There is pervasive consumerism that says one's worth is largely determined by how much stuff you have. The number of cars. The size of your house, etc.," Sider said.

One would be hard pressed to, when looking down Main Street America, pick out the homes of Christians vs. non-Christians, Sider observed.

"It would be virtually impossible to tell. We're seduced by the surrounding society," he said. "As Christians, we say we want to be unconditionally submitted to the Lord, but in fact, we're profoundly shaped by the world."

While Sider says there has been growth in the number of evangelical ministries working on economic development among the poor since he wrote "Rich Christians," that has not carried over into the personal life of the average Christian, he said.

What does "living simply" or "modestly" look like to Sider? "It means spending less money on new cars and new clothes, and giving more money toward evangelism, economic development and justice," he said. Sider says he and his wife buy used cars, rarely eat out, shop in thrift stores and purposely live in a lower middle-class section of Philadelphia.

Sider, who once was a professor at Messiah College and now teaches theology and culture at Eastern Seminary in Philadelphia, is president of Evangelicals

for Social Action, a national organization that seeks to follow Jesus in every area of life, especially in the combining of evangelical and social ministry. Sider describes it as "pro-family, pro-life, pro-peacemaking, pro-racial justice, pro-environmental concern."

He is convinced if we as Christians did just two things, we would be convicted to change our lifestyles dramatically. First, we should begin to look at the hundreds of Bible verses that talk about God's concern for the poor. Sider has compiled them into a book called "They Shall Be Fed," published by Word.

Try these on for size:

"He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord." (Prov. 19:17.)

"Sell your possessions and give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail . . . for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (Lk. 12: 33-34.)

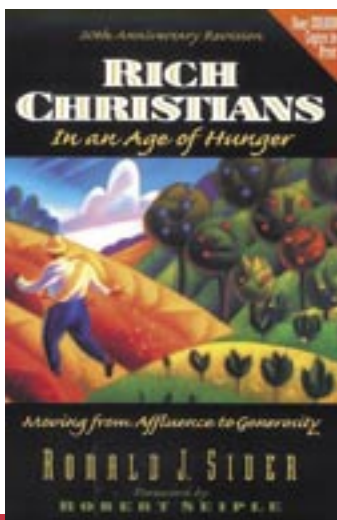
"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. (Lk. 18:24-25.)

People in the pews need to hear these verses from the mouths of the pastors, Sider said, but "I doubt one pastor in 10 talks about poverty as much as the Bible does, and the Bible is our authority."

Secondly, Christians should go on a two-week mission trip once every five years, he said. Then we would see firsthand the poverty and need that exists in the world and that personal experience would no doubt move us to action, beginning with our own lifestyle.

It's no accident, he said, that the people in churches who are most often revved up to raise money for missions and social outreach are those who have been on mission trips and seen the need with their own eyes.

"That impression lasts," Sider said.



Follow-up Toolkit

One of Dr. Sider's more renowned books, **Rich Christians In and Age of Hunger**, was originally published twenty five years ago, and has remained at the forefront of an effort to lift up the ideas of simple lifestyle and service to the poor. In 1997, a twentieth anniversary revision was released by Word Publishing.

You can read more about Dr. Sider's work with Evangelicals for Social Action and find other resources at their web site. www.esa-online.org

A woman's place is in the church...isn't it?

Here's a pop quiz for you: What percentage of licensed or ordained ministers in the Brethren in Christ denomination are women?

Give up? The answer is 4 percent.

"Four percent is very low, in God's eyes anyway," said Janet Peifer, who is among that 4 percent. She's the director of pastoral care at Messiah Village and an associate pastor at Messiah Village BIC Church.

There are plenty of women serving in all sorts of ministries within the BIC church, but when it comes to the person who stands behind the pulpit and preaches on Sunday morning, it's rarely a woman, Peifer says.

It's interesting to note that the BIC approved a statement at its 1982 General Conference affirming that women could pursue the study of and positions in ministry. The current policy states that the BIC makes no distinction among male and female applicants for ministerial license and/or ordination.

So what's the deal? Why aren't we seeing more women as senior pastors, even associate pastors? And how about a woman bishop or a woman on Leadership Council?

"Most people have never heard it from the pulpit that it's OK for women to be pastors. We need the bishops to train their pastors, and the pastors to train their church boards," Peifer said. She notes a troubling habit within the denomination of hiring pastors who openly say they don't think women ministers are Biblically correct.

One oft-quoted verse is Paul's seemingly prohibitive statement in I Timothy 1: 11,12, where he says "I permit no woman to teach or have authority over a man; she is to keep silent." Peifer said this was actually meant as a response to women's lack of training and maturity at that time, not forevermore. There are many examples in Scripture where Paul utilized women's gifts for ministry. And then there was Jesus. "In the New Testament, the way Jesus treated women was diamet-



By Carolyn Kimmel

rically opposed to the way women were treated in that culture," Peifer said.

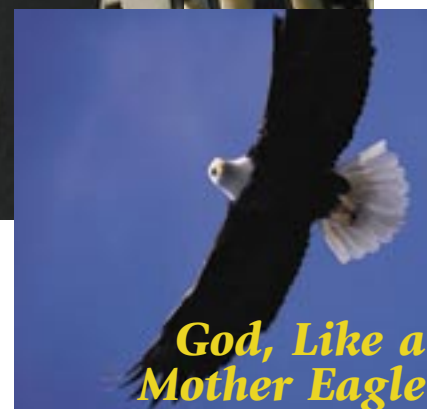
Our churches are filled with women - maybe you're one of them - who feel called by God to be a pastor but are ignoring it because they don't feel welcomed or they feel it's wrong, said Peifer. She says she felt called at age 7 but didn't actually start pursuing ordination until she was 39 and didn't achieve it until age 47.

Peifer said there are women who are ordained and are just waiting for an opportunity to serve in a BIC church. Sadly, she said, some of them tire of waiting and move onto other denominations where women are more welcomed.

"It's the kind of issue that, if it's not kept before the people, the group will go back to the way it always did things," Peifer said.

For that reason, among others, she and some other active women within the BIC have formed the BIC Council for Women in Ministry and Leadership.

The council is set to do things like offer seminars and conferences on women in ministry in different geographical areas, work with other denominations to offer training to women and develop a speaker's bureau of BIC women. The group also wants to be in frequent contact with BIC leadership to advance the issue of women in ministry.



God, Like a Mother Eagle

Every two years, the council holds a retreat for women in leadership roles in the BIC at Kenbrook Bible Camp in Lebanon, Pa. The next retreat, scheduled for Jan. 7-9, 2003, is titled "God Like a Mother Eagle: Stirring, Hovering, Supporting."

Workshops will cover topics such as what the Bible has to say about women in ministry, balancing ministry work with being a mother, ministering in the city and spiritual and emotional healing for women.

The cost is \$115 for two nights lodging and six meals. If you would like a brochure about the event, write to Janet Peifer at 156 Lake Meade Drive, East Berlin, Pa. 17316, e-mail: revjmp@equalworth.net.

Maybe you would like to subscribe to the new newsletter produced by the BIC Council for Women in Ministry, titled **Diakonos**. (The word means "servant" or "minister" in Greek.) Its purpose is to connect the growing number of women who are answering a call to ministry and leadership. It will be published quarterly and costs \$10 for a two-year subscription. Subscription requests may also be sent to Peifer.



Women in Ministry is slated as the cover topic of the Nov./Dec.



Youth are an important part of building up the church – literally.



Photo - Jonathon Bert

After 10 years of helping Houses for Humanity raise houses in South Carolina, this year the construction team from Carlisle (Pa.) took on the extended challenge of helping raise the main structural framework for a new church building in Wisconsin. One week in June, the work crew and support team of around 100 people from Carlisle headed for the site in Waukeshaw, Wis. where New Vision BIC, a 10-year old church, was raising its first building.

“Youth play a significant role in our trips,” notes Ron Manley, one of two men at the church who have helped organize the annual effort. For one thing, in addition to being able bodied and regularly available to come on the summer mission trips, they have proven an important catalyst to others joining the effort. Over the years, their excitement for the projects has drawn friends, family members and others from the church into the effort. Several families take vacation to come serve the project

together.

When Carlisle’s team arrived, the concrete foundation had been laid, and all the rest of the church lay in piles around its parameter. The church crew spent the week raising first the walls and then the roof framework for the new church.

Someone hearing Manley’s comment on youth being integral to building up the church noted how appropriate the analogy was. Building on a firm foundation, and with the mentoring help of elders, our youth are equipped and ready to help build up the church as a body, bringing in others as they do so.



Jonathon Bert

See more photos at www.bic-church.org/newvision. Also watch for a video on the project, available near the beginning of the year and read further accounts of the New Vision building project in the latest issues of Visitor.



KIDS for the KING

Knowing an Idol when you See it

There’s a lot of words in the Bible that don’t make sense to me.

Like the word “idol.”

How can I make sure I don’t worship them if I don’t even know what they are?

One Sunday, my Sunday School teacher started asking us what brand of sneakers we like – Nike? Adidas? Then she asked us what game all the kids at school want. Play Station? Nintendo? One girl said she wanted some new doll that actually does flips. That sounds pretty neat. Maybe I could get one for my birthday...

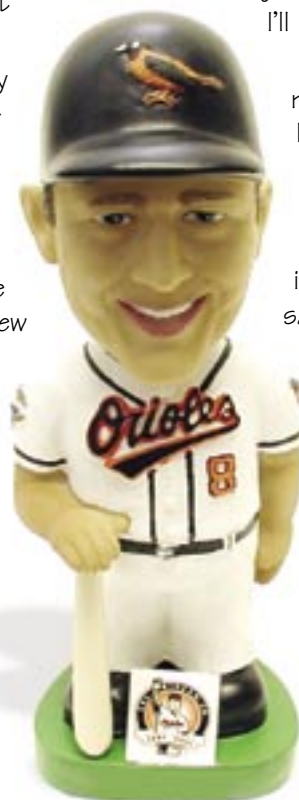
Then she wondered if we cared how much money we’d make when we grew up, and she asked us what we’d do with all that money. We said we’d buy neat

stuff, like shiny cars and big houses with swimming pools for hot summer days. Maybe I could buy a neat camera like the one my friend Stacey got from her parents. (But my parents say I have to save my allowance – which means I’ll be about 80 before I can get one.)

Then my teacher said things we want really badly could be our idols – things like Nike sneakers or the toy we think every kid but us has.

Wow! I never thought of it like that! I don’t worship toys like I worship God in church on Sunday. But, the teacher says if we spend a lot of time thinking about something and wanting something, it can get in the way of God. Lots of grown-ups worship money, she said, and they’ll do almost anything for it – things they would never do for God.

Not worrying about what we have – I think my teacher called it “possession” – and what other people have is a good way to not worship idols. Hmm. Now I know.



Thankful Hands Help Count Our Blessings

Hey Kids, here’s an idea to help you count the things you’re thankful for.

Every Thanksgiving, somebody uses the old idea of tracing your hand to create a pattern to cut out and make into a turkey. Instead of just drawing a turkey, let’s use each of the fingers to write something we count as a blessing in our lives.

Since we can use the hands God gave us as a pattern to cut out as many hands as necessary, now we don’t have to stop counting when we get up to ten, because God has blessed us in so many ways!