The Worldview of the Ashland Brethren and its Missiological Implications
By Roy A. Andrews*

Abstract
       The worldview of the Ashland Brethren has been greatly impacted in its 300-year history by one predominant determinant: dialectical tension. Dealing with this tension has led to the positive of a strong commitment to theological purity; however, three concurrent negatives (denominational division, reduction of resources, and limited leadership) have resulted in a profound restriction for the denomination. The missiological implications that have arisen from these hindrances are the development of a "thermostatic" nature with regard to programming quality and polar extreme perspectives as explanations for diminishing church size among the Brethren.

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INTRODUCTION
       As the Brethren Church (Ashland, OH) has just celebrated its 300th Anniversary it seems fitting to critically consider its current worldview. This examination will seek to reveal the inherent denominational strengths and weaknesses of the Brethren. The assessment will come from the perspective of one who is Brethren, but has not always been so. This work will be composed of three major divisions: 1) worldview determinant, 2) evidences of said worldview, and 3) missiological implications of such worldview.
       Worldview is a more recent term that anthropologists have used to describe a group or individual's "fundamental assumptions about the nature of reality."[1] It is composed of "the ways in which different peoples think about themselves, about their environments, space, time, and so forth."[2]
       Worldview determinants, on the other hand, are the underlying presuppositions of a group or individual's worldview. Determinants are foundational to the worldview itself. These are often in existence without the knowledge of the person(s) who hold the worldview. Thus, the determinants or internal attitudes are revealed through observation of and contact with the external actions of the people.

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Trained researchers can identify worldview determinants by observation, interview, and examination of cultural artifacts. Data collection and analysis present the evidence that will support worldview determinant conclusions. Researcher bias that taints the data is always a concern, but this is an especially tenuous proposition when the researcher is not only reporting the *what* but also drawing conclusions about the *why*. Thus, great care will be taken here to humbly qualify all conclusions.

The first two areas described above are important steps to reveal the potential implications of such a worldview. With regard to the church, the ultimate implication is one of a missiological nature. The church must be able to see how it sees in order to know how it is seen. Worldview and its determinants are essential studies for a healthy missiological approach with a watching world!

Part 1: Theoretical Foundations

Worldview Determinant – Dialectic Tension

Though there are many aspects of the Brethren Church that could be pursued in the area of worldview, one dominant theme stands out – dialectical tension. The ramifications of this philosophical concept are many and varied. Later the evidences of such will be discussed, but for now the focus will be on identification and clarification of the theoretical foundation of dialectics.

The concept of the "dialectic" is rooted in early Greek aristocratic education. Such familiar historical scholars as Protagoras, Socrates, and Plato were proponents of dialectical teaching.[3] The premise behind dialectical thinking was that by discussing all sides of an issue a higher level of understanding could be attained. This was a counter style to the popular diatribe (discourse) that touted the benefits of one side of an issue while degrading the opposite side of the issue.

The next significant advancement in dialectics occurred over two millennia later when a German philosopher named Hegel applied such terms to the process as "thesis," "antithesis," and "synthesis." Hegel sought to find a higher truth by pitting opposite extremes of an issue (thesis and antithesis) against each other in an effort to reveal a merging of the best of both in the synthesis. This process was to be repeated again and again with each resulting synthesis becoming the new thesis of the next iteration.[4]

Today, "dialectical thinking is viewed as a particular form of critical thinking that focuses on the understanding and resolution of contradictions".[5] It is at this point that the Brethren have been operating since their inception in the early 1700's. The Brethren have dealt with the apparent contradictions of human existence as seen in the world and God's nature as described in Scripture by embracing a "both and" philosophy rather than the more popular "either or" stance adopted by others within Christianity.[6]

Current Brethren historian Dale Stoffer begins his work Background and Development of Brethren Doctrines with the words, "Three basic elements were

alloyed in shaping the mind of the early Brethren: Reformed thought, Pietism, and Anabaptism. Of these, Pietism and Anabaptism were the most significant."[7] Thus, was born a movement that combined the unlikely bedfellows of private, personal holiness with public, community expression. The "tension" of such a foundational combination has been felt among the Brethren ever since.

Stoffer writes in his concluding observations on the life and thought of Brethren founder Alexander Mack that:

> In the course of this study, it has been seen how the tension between inward and outward expressions of faith was maintained in several important areas: the Holy Spirit (the inner Word) and the Scriptures (the outer Word), inward faith and outward obedience (fruit bearing), the indwelling 'Christ of faith' and the exemplar, the 'Jesus of history,' personal piety and corporate responsibility, subjective testing and corporate discipline.[8]

Stoffer then cites a Church of the Brethren scholar's perspective of "the beauty of this dialectic when it is operating properly":

> The two emphases check and balance each other. When the Radical Pietist tendency would slide off into subjectivism, private inspiration, mysticism, enthusiasm, or vaporous spiritualism, it is pulled up short by the demand for concrete, outward obedience to an objective Scriptural norm. Conversely, when the Anabaptist tendency would slide off into formalism, legalism, biblical literalism, or works-righteousness, it is checked by the reminder that faith is essentially a work of God within the heart of the individual believer, an intensely personal relationship rather than a legal one. Thus, within Brethrenism, Anabaptist influences discipline Pietism at the same time that Pietist influences inspire Anabaptism.[9]

Part 2: The Data Evidences of the Worldview in the Life of the Church

This discussion of the worldview determinant "dialectic tension" in the life of the Brethren Church has four parts – only one of which is positive. Thankfully, for the Brethren if these four issues were ranked according to importance, they are strong where strength is most needed – theological purity. The other three so-called "negatives"; however, have had a profound effect for minimizing the efforts of the Brethren in living out such truths in the church and in their world.

Theological Purity

The Brethren have always had a high regard for the Bible. In fact, they are considered a non-credal church because they have no other standard for

living a right life than "the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible."[10] This strict adherence to Scripture has kept the Brethren from being lured into theological error when, over the years numerous social agendas have pressured timeless truth for contextual change. The pitfalls of moral relativism that have ensnared many denominations within Christendom have had little effect on the Brethren.

It is also important to note that the Brethren have not solely relied upon their ordained clergy for the strength of their theological resolve. The Brethren have long held that it is the right and responsibility of all believers within the community of faith to study the Bible and seek "new light" for their daily living. Avoidance of error in seeking such new insights is accomplished by checking these "new" or "inner" understandings against the standard of the "old" and "outer" light of the Scriptures. This community hermeneutic is a wonderful strength of the Brethren that assures continual growth for all in the pursuit of theological understanding in God's Word.[11]

The Brethren have remained culturally relevant through their three centuries of existence by delineating the much talked about differences between forms (the how of ministry) and functions (the what of ministry). The forms of the Brethren have changed throughout its history while the functions have remained virtually unchanged. Though there is historically much agreement among the Brethren regarding the essence of theology, debate over changing forms has had a negative impact on Brethrenism. The passion of such debates has led to numerous divisions and will be discussed next.

Denominational Division

The first issue of a negative nature in dealing with dialect tension among the Brethren is a propensity toward denominational division. The movement that began in Schwarzenau Germany in 1708 today "exists in five main groups with a total membership of about a quarter-million persons in the United States."[12] Certainly denominations of all types and sizes have experienced a proliferation of division ever since the door of schism was opened by the Protestant Reformation. However, the devastating effects relationally and organizationally are most keenly felt by denominations that are small to begin with. This is the story of the Brethren.

After a century and a half of relative unity within the fellowship, the period of the 1850's–1870's was one of tremendous strain on the Brethren. A survey of the larger socio-political landscape in America would reveal that this was a time of uncommon difficulty for all denominations as the United States was torn by the issue of slavery. Unlike many denominations, however, the Brethren were not divided by passions in politics. Instead, it was the ever-increasing tension among those who were more conservative and those who were more progressive when it came to issues of enculturation. How to dress, what language to speak in worship services,

whether to embrace modern education practices, and a multitude of other similar questions arose among the Brethren. Ultimately, the question was debated as to how much the Brethren could be "in the world, but not of it."

The result of this tumultuous period was a 3-way split among the Brethren in the early 1880's. Those that wished to remain in the future, as they had been in the past were known as the Old Order Brethren. Those that were most in favor of change were known as the Progressive Brethren. Those that fell in the middle of these two extremes were the largest contingency called the Conservatives.[13] One historian observed sadly of this period, "Thus it was the case that whereas external strains and pressures had not succeeded in causing major division among the Brethren, internal tensions resulted in sad fragmentation in the early 1880's."[14] Remembering that dialectic tension causes greater strains within than anything that can exert pressure from the outside, it is no wonder that though the Brethren experienced denominational division during a time when many denominations did likewise, for the Brethren the reasons were as unique as the movement itself.

One final chapter in the story of division within Brethrenism occurred in the late 1930's. The group that emerged from the 1880's split as the Progressives struggled to define adequately to the satisfaction of their members exactly what they were "progressing" toward. The result was a divergence of thinking among the leaders of certain denominational districts and those who were leaders in the higher education institutions. The 2-way split resulted in the formation of the Grace Brethren denomination and the Brethren Church (Ashland, Ohio). Once again the Ashland Brethren consisted of the smaller of the groups.[15] This reducing of an already reduced number of persons/churches led to the next perceived negative in Brethrenism.

Reduction of Resources

The second area of negative evidence regarding the Brethren response to dialectic tension could be termed "reduction of resources." This author's pastoral experience has shown that confused givers are often less generous givers. During the times of denominational division mentioned above there was understandably a level of confusion and concern over the conflicts within Brethrenism. However, once the Ashland Brethren emerged as a legitimately identifiable denomination it was not divisiveness denominationally that caused reduced resources. Instead, that old nemesis "dialectic tension" began to exert its pressures on the availability and usage of resources in the Brethren denomination.

The post World War II era saw a level of prosperity in America that resulted in many denominations experiencing tremendous growth in membership and programming. True to their desire to offer a balanced program that honored all passions within Brethrenism, denominational leaders organized

accordingly.[16] Unfortunately, the scale and scope of such an organization was unable to be supported by a depleted donor base. This lack of focus in resource allocation led to doing "many things fairly well rather than a few things very well." In the current age of specialization and excellence this has diminished the effectiveness of the Brethren in accomplishing its mission. The past several decades have resulted in the Brethren denomination being in a seemingly perpetual state of reorganization.

In 1993 the General Conference of the Brethren Church commissioned a special committee on financial and
organizational planning. This committee secured the services of a nationally known consultant, Norman Edwards, who could provide an unbiased expert appraisal of the Brethren denomination. After conducting a telephone survey of approximately 100 persons (50 pastors and 50 lay persons) and personally interviewing all denominational leaders, Edwards summarized the data and made his concluding recommendations. Though this study is over a decade old, it is the most recent data available and seems to still be representative of the Brethren condition today.

Some of Edwards' findings will be referenced later in this work, but for now his stewardship data are especially pertinent.

In 1991 the 13,132 members of the Brethren Church gave a total of $7,774,980 for all purposes in the church. The giving per member totaled $592, or a tithe from the income of $5,920. If all of the members were living only on the minimum income from social security, and tithed that income, gifts to the church at the local level would increase 40%. The church is receiving only a small portion of the actual tithe.[17]

While it may be argued that per member giving in all denominations is below the tithing standards of Scripture, comparatively speaking the Brethren are far below. In fact, Edwards makes his point that the Brethren denomination is working with considerably reduced resources when he compares the Brethren giving to the giving of other smaller denominations:

Mennonite Brethren with a denominational membership of 16,843 give $29,526,000 ($1,753/member); United Brethren in Christ with a denominational membership of 25,563 give $68,607,883 ($2,683/member); Missionary Church with a denominational membership of 29,285 give $34,170,000 ($1,167/member); and Brethren in Christ with a denominational membership of 20,819 give $22,791,926 ($1,095/member).[18]

Obviously, the Brethren denomination is limited in its ability to carry out its mission due to the reduced resources provided by the Brethren people. A final area of negation is a related limitation in its leadership.

Limited Leadership

The third and perhaps biggest hindrance for the Brethren that results from negative reactions to dialectic tension is characterized as limited leadership. This terminology should in no way be considered an attack on the ability of those in leadership positions within the Brethren Church. Rather, it is the systems and structures of church polity as well as the history of the Brethren response to authority that limit Brethren leaders today.

The predominant usage of the word "limited" among the Brethren is as it is linked with the word "congregationalism" to define the form of church government to which the Brethren subscribe. A Church of the Brethren writer summarizes it thus: "Brethren Church polity has been described as a limited or federated congregationalism; that is, local affairs may be administered in a variety of ways, but a spiritual consensus in doctrinal matters is to be sought and expected."[19]

In his 1981 Moderator's address at the 91st General Conference of the Brethren Church, Brian Moore described the benefits and detriments of such an organizational climate:

> An aspect of the genius of Brethrenism is its limited congregationalism, allowing each congregation to express its uniqueness in its own social, economic, and spiritual context. . . . There is a freedom to decide, to refrain, to change, to become. I don't believe that any of us would want it any other way. But my question . . . is whether we have evidenced the maturity on the local level to handle all this freedom that our form of congregationalism allows? If the genius of Brethrenism is its congregational liberty, the idiocy of Brethrenism is for each local church to do only what seems right in its own eyes, to extend the freedom of congregationalism to a practical independence and a disdain for interdependence.[20]

Another limiting factor within Brethren leadership is based not upon structure, but rather upon role, respect, and relationship in the pastorate. The role of pastor in the local church is a multi-faceted proposition. The list of competencies expected by parishioners from their pastors is lengthy and varied among not only the Brethren but also most denominations. The difficulty for the Brethren pastor, though, is one of inequity between responsibility and authority. The responsibilities are full-orbed while the authority is akin to mere chaplaincy.[21]

The respect given to many within the Brethren ministerial profession is limited at best. With its early roots of vehemently avoiding paid clergy, the Brethren have struggled to overcome inherent tendencies toward disrespect for local church pastors. One writer cites that, "The Brethren Movement has been on record – historically – as having an indifferent attitude and a disinclination to help their own ministers."[22] When "indifference" and "disinclination" are words associated with the concern of the Brethren for their pastoral leaders then limitations in leadership effectiveness are bound to follow.

Pastoral leaders are not exempt from responsibility in the unhealthy department, however, when it comes to relationships. Oftentimes, local church pastors are on the giving end of unrealistic role expectations and low respect when it comes to their dealings with denominational officials. Consultant Edwards observed, "Inbred in the 'corporate culture' of The Brethren Church is resistance to centralized authority."[23] In essence, the very behaviors that do harm at the local level are passed on to district and national levels by pastors.

An unfortunate result of this limited leadership phenomenon is felt in the area of consistent pastoral shortages. Although it is natural to have periodic and small-scale shortages in local church pastorates, the regular and widespread nature within the Brethren denomination is of a significant nature. The causes are many and varied. The desire for local congregations to maintain the status quo and a certain level of size and comfort will be chronicled in detail below. Lay people who feel the call of God to occupational ministry and yet see the difficulties of pastoral leadership in their local church often re-evaluate and reject their call. Finally, lay and/or pastoral leaders who are gifted and passionate leaders are less likely to remain in the Brethren Church where, due to dialect tensions, there is less a chance of being an effective leader for Christ. Consultant Edwards summarizes:

> The lingering suspicion of national leadership, possibly a carry over from the 1939 split, is stifling growth in The Brethren Church. In some ways, the church has allowed this attitude to become a part of its 'culture.' Not only does it hurt church growth, it also results in good pastors going outside the denomination to serve successfully, even though their first allegiance is to the Brethren.[24]

Part 3: Missiological Implications Effects of the Worldview on Church Growth

The official seal of the Brethren Church was adopted in 1957. It is an adaptation of the personal seal of Alexander Mack, Jr. (son of the Brethren Church founder). There are four main components to this graphic: the Cross, an open Bible, vines of Fruit, and a Heart with the words "go ye" written upon it (see Figure below). The inclusion of the Cross of Christ and the Holy Scriptures

are predictable. The other two items of the seal though may catch one off guard until the significance of them is revealed.

Fruit bearing is symbolic of outward obedience to the teachings and commands of Christ. The heart emblazoned with the theme words from Matthew 28:18-20 is superimposed upon the cross, which is draped by the vines of fruit. The evangelistic command is symbolic of the two-fold task of baptism and teaching – both of which are important to the Brethren. The subtlety, however, of the centrality of the heart and the significance of the missions emphasis in the text displayed on the heart must not be lost upon the student of the seal. The very real missiological implication of this aspect of the seal is that a heart dedicated to the finding of the lost is the essence of the cross, and only by such an emphasis will the church bear fruit.[25]

The above having been stated as the ideal, it is time to deal with the effects of the data upon reality. The tedious nature of a healthy balance is that it is hard to attain and even harder to maintain. The addition of new persons to any issue in the dialectic oftentimes creates more tension than the church may feel it can bear. Thus, a subtle suspicion of new people to the church develops through no fault of their own. The very presence of anything or anyone new has the potential to upset the delicate equilibrium by bringing new ideas that may cause ambiguity.

Though this phenomenon has obvious and serious consequences for the lost people in the communities where local Brethren Churches are found, there is a more obscure, yet, just as real detriment for the existing members of the body of Christ

The Official Seal of The Brethren Church

within Brethrenism. A lack of zeal for evangelism not only hurts the ability of the church to grow quantitatively, it has an adverse effect on the qualitative growth as well. The notion of deeper discipleship without evangelistic efforts is a false one. These two ministry emphases naturally complement one another just as the Head of the body intended.

Another less obvious missiological implication of the Brethren Church's worldview determinant can be termed the "quality thermostat." The desire for the existing church to be of a certain size gives it a thermostatic nature. Many Brethren congregations are of the mindset that there is an ideal church size. It goes something like this. The church should be large enough to: offer programs for all ages; have a paid minister; be able to meet all financial obligations; and comfortably fill the structure during its worship services. The church should not be so large as to: become impersonal – beyond the family feel

of everyone knowing everyone else; need to build new structures or relocate its facilities; and generally move at a pace that is unsettling to its longest standing members. There may be other desires that occasionally arise and there are obviously exceptions to these generalizations, but for the purposes here these represent the lion's share of Brethren Churches.

The "quality" part comes in when the church approaches either extreme of becoming too small or too large. Naturally, the church desires to have a high level of quality in its programming for its existent members; however, this quality level will from time to time attract outsiders. In response, the church will adjust according to its perception of where they are relative to "just right."[26]

If the church is already nearing its capacity for "bodies within the bricks" and it is comfortably meeting its budget, and there is no need to offer new programming there is a tendency among many Brethren Churches to turn the quality down. Though this will sometimes disappoint the existent members, the pain of trying to assimilate new, unknown persons, and the potential for church expansion is usually averted. The newer, less-connected persons will usually either fall back into habits of lostness or migrate to other churches in the community that have a greater capacity for change.

If, on the other hand, the church is small and concerned about not having enough money to meet its financial obligations (including the support of a professional minister); Or if it has ample space for new persons within its current facility; Or if it sees new people as opportunities to fill relational voids and ministry programming needs then the quality can continue to increase. Because issues of survival drive these types of churches there is little resistance to new people even from the staunchest defenders of the status quo.

It should be mentioned here that though the concept of the quality thermostat is a verifiable truth in many local Brethren churches, it is not unique to the Brethren. Rather, it is a sociological phenomenon that is pervasive among many denominations with predominantly smaller, more rural congregations. Again the reader is reminded of the uniqueness of the quality thermostat for the Brethren as it relates to their inherent need to maintain balance due to the "tense" nature of the dialectic within their fellowships.[27]

One final consideration of a missiological nature concerns how the Brethren view their smallness as a denomination. In an effort to seek a balanced perspective, there is a tendency to vacillate between two extremes. One end of the spectrum can be described as rather pessimistic.

The discussion in many public settings of the Brethren belies a type of an "Eeyore mentality."[28] It is common to hear newer ideas of expansion possibilities such as church planting initiatives be shot down with such phrases as: "We're too small a denomination to do that." "We don't have enough money to keep things going as they are let alone add more to our plates." "Why can't we just be satisfied with the way things are instead of always trying to change

things." Certainly, size does limit in some situations; however, the subtle connections between the above-mentioned quality thermostat/dialectic tension issues and a hopeful outlook are often missed. Who the Brethren are, what the Brethren can do, and where the Brethren can go are at times clouded by the view according to Eeyore.

The opposite of pessimism with regard to the Brethren denominational size is a type of pride. The popular military ad campaign for one of the branches of the service comes to mind: "The Few, The Proud, The Marines." The idea, of course, is that small is good because it denotes purity and strength. Only the best can be Marines, or in this case Brethren. This type of pride is not spoken of often, rather it is a subconscious mechanism employed by the Brethren to deal with potential feelings of inferiority. In effect, that which could be seen as a detrimental weakness of Brethrenism becomes their greatest strength. Consultant Edwards warned of the unhealthy implications of this extremist thinking in the following:

> As the church is looking more inward than outward, an attitude of 'remnant theology' is emerging in some areas. This mind set changes the focus of ministry from outreach to an emphasis on denominational church doctrine, and from reaching the lost, to an emphasis on polity and procedures, and where to allow authority and power.[29]

CONCLUSION

The above is a sober-minded attempt at describing a difficult to discern phenomenon. Theological understandings placed within sociological settings that reveal psychological considerations will undoubtedly be complex. Theologically speaking, the Brethren are committed to seeking God and studying His ways for their life in the community of faith. Sociologically speaking, the Brethren are committed to the concepts of church "in the world, but not of it" and being "salt and light" where tasteless, rotting darkness persistently pervades. Psychologically speaking, the Brethren are well-versed in the ideas of humanity's limitations without the Spirit's leading. Thus, it is not for a lack of theological, sociological, or psychological understanding that the Brethren worldview has been distorted. Rather, it seems holding these three areas in balance that oftentimes proves burdensome beyond Brethren ability.

Seeking a "Brethren worldview" has been a journey into the literature moderated by personal experience, which again adds complicating nuances. How the Brethren see their world would be a difficult enough study by itself; however, add the fact that this author is Brethren and sees with his own limitations and the results are sure to evoke a myriad of responses. Some will

say, "Finally, an honest appraisal!" while others will cry, "Foul, bias, axe-grinding!"

Regardless, hopefully there will be others, Brethren and non-Brethren who will undertake such a study and share their conclusions for future discussion. Only through such can there be an overcoming of the sometimes spiritual schizophrenia that emerges among the Brethren when the dialectic tensions become too hard to hold. Vacillating from one extreme to the other will only result in the hoped for "genius and beauty of Brethrenism" becoming instead foolishness and ugliness. May it never be so of the Brethren!

ENDNOTES

[1] Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 10-11.

[2] Michael Kearney, *World View*. (Novato, CA: Chandler & Sharp Publishers, Inc., 1984), 1.

[3] Glenn L. Smith and Joan K. Smith, *Lives in Education*. (2nd ed. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 20-27.

[4] Robert F. Hessong and Thomas H. Weeks, *Introduction to the Foundations of Education*. (2nd ed. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991), 240-241.

[5] Stephen D. Brookfield, *Developing Critical Thinkers*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1987), 12-13.

[6] Dale R. Stoffer, *Background and Development of Brethren Doctrines 1650-1987*. (Philadelphia: Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., 1989), 246.

[7] Ibid., 5.

[8] Ibid., 83.

[9] Ibid., 83-84.

[10] Jerry R. Flora, *The Message of Faith*. (Ashland, OH: The Brethren Church Inc., 1996), 4.

[11] Brenda B. Colijn, "The Hermeneutical Community," *The Brethren Evangelist*, January 1995: 9-10.

[12] Jerry R. Flora, *The Message of Faith*. (Ashland, OH: The Brethren Church Inc., 1996), 1.

[13] Albert T. Ronk, *History of the Brethren Church*. (Ashland, OH: Brethren Publishing Company, 1968), 125-149.

[14] Donald F. Durnbaugh, *Meet the Brethren*. (Elgin, IL: The Brethren Press for the Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., 1984), 27.

[15] Dale R. Stoffer, *Background and Development of Brethren Doctrines 1650-1987*. (Philadelphia: Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., 1989), 232.

[16] Albert T. Ronk, *History of the Brethren Church*. (Ashland, OH: Brethren Publishing Company, 1968), 454-459.

[17] Norman L. Edwards, *The Brethren Church: Financial and Organizational Study*. (Seattle, WA: Counsel in Resource Development, 1994), 36.

[18] Ibid., 10.

[19]Donald F. Durnbaugh, *Meet the Brethren.* (Elgin, IL: The Brethren Press for the Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., 1984), 50.

[20]Brian H. Moore, "A Threefold Appraisal of the Brethren Church," *The Brethren Evangelist*, September 1981: 14.

[21]Larry R. Baker, "Power Struggles and the Pastor's Role in the Church," *The Brethren Evangelist*, February 1993: 10.

[22]Bob Kinsley, *Alexander Mack: His Greatest Legacy.* (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Press, 1996), 30.

[23]Norman L. Edwards, *The Brethren Church: Financial and Organizational Study.* (Seattle, WA: Counsel in Resource Development, 1994), 14.

[24]Ibid., 31.

[25]*A Centennial Statement.* (Ashland, OH: Brethren Publishing Company, 1984), 12.

[26]This is something akin to the fairy tale story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. The desire for "just right" over "not too hard" or "not too soft" is compelling for the church to not settle for just any old bed.

[27]The above discussion on church size and the quality thermostat has been gleaned from many sources that are difficult to cite in this standard format; however, they are listed here as a general informal endnote. They are: "Annual Statistical Reports of the Brethren Church Ministries;" discussions held at General Conference meetings both among the overall delegate body and in the National Association of Brethren Church Elders; informal discussions held at District meetings of pastors; informal interaction with laity from numerous Brethren Churches over the course of the past decade and a half.

[28]Eeyore is a fictional character in British author A.A. Milne's Winnie The Pooh children's stories. Eeyore is a droopy eared, head low, downcast-eyed donkey that brings the voice of despair into whatever situation he and the rest of the story's characters find themselves. He can be counted on for such expressions as: "Nothing good is ever going to come out of this." "We might as well quit now and just go home." "If I've said it once, I've said it a hundred times, 'I told you so'." Juxtaposed with a tiger (Tigger) that is constantly bouncing around in a state of euphoric, naive optimism, Eeyore is the epitome of pessimism.

[29]Norman L. Edwards, *The Brethren Church: Financial and Organizational Study.* (Seattle, WA: Counsel in Resource Development, 1994), 31.