

# YOUNG CENTER

## *News*

THE YOUNG CENTER FOR  
ANABAPTIST AND PIETIST STUDIES  
AT ELIZABETHTOWN COLLEGE



## Young Center's Edsel Burdge contributes to a new *Martyrs Mirror* edition

Edsel Burdge Jr., research associate at the Young Center, is contributing to a new English translation of the well-known Anabaptist martyrology the *Martyrs Mirror*, which has long had a place of importance among Anabaptist groups. Compiled and edited by Tieleman Jansz van Braght (1625–1660), a Dutch Mennonite minister from Dordrecht, the *Martyrs Mirror* was first published in 1660. It was reprinted in 1685 as *Het Bloedig Tooneel of Martelaers Spiegel der Doops-Gesinde of Weereloose Christenen* [The Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror of the Baptism-minded and Defenseless Christians] with some additional material. In 1748–1749, the Ephrata Cloister printed a German translation (with further additions) at the request of the Mennonites. In 1886, American Mennonite publisher John F. Funk sponsored an English translation, which has been reprinted numerous times and is the currently available English translation.

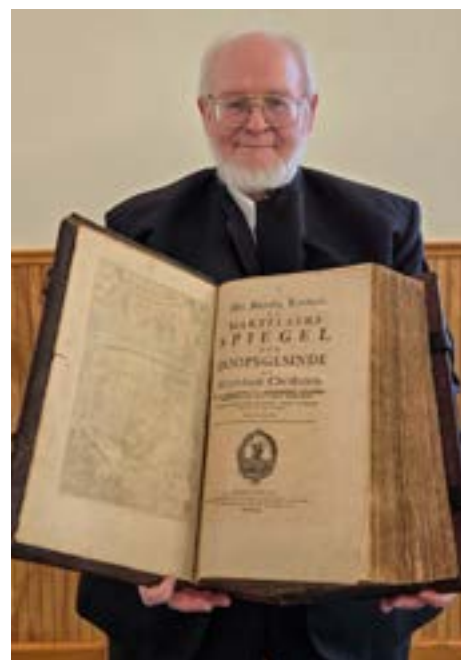
For a number of years, various Amish, Old Order, and Conservative Mennonites have informally discussed the possibility of a new English translation of the *Martyrs Mirror*. While awareness of the martyr book is widespread in these circles and many homes have a copy in either English or German, it was recognized that it is a text more often venerated than read. The 1886 translation is almost 140 years old, and its older style is not easily tackled, especially by young people.

These conversations crystallized in April 2023 when an ad hoc group met to discuss the possibility of a new translation. Preliminary explorations had procured a translator, Lydia Penner of the Hague in the Netherlands. She had served as a translator and editor on a previous project, *Documents of Brotherly Love*,

*Dutch Mennonite Aid to Swiss Anabaptists*. Several persons at the meeting had worked with her on that project and were impressed with her translation skills. The ad hoc group agreed to form a *Martyrs Mirror* translation project committee and asked Groffdale Conference Mennonite Allen N. Hoover to chair it. Dale Burkholder and Brodie Gray from Grace Press, James Nolt, a retired Weaverland Mennonite Conference schoolteacher and editor for Christian Aid Ministries, and Edsel Burdge Jr. from the Young Center were asked to serve as an editorial committee to work with Lydia Penner. The committee projected that the translation would take eight years to complete.

The new translation will be based on the 1685 Dutch edition of the *Martelaerspiegel*, and will include the additions from the 1748–1749 *German Märtyrer-Spiegel*. The translation will include all the Scripture citations and marginal notes of the Dutch *Martelaerspiegel*, something not available in previous translations. Footnotes will be added to correct errors of fact and to provide additional information. An appendix of supplementary documents and a glossary of biographies of individuals not easily handled in footnotes will be added too.

Burdge is researching and writing the footnotes and glossary entries and choosing the supplementary documents. He finds the research both appealing and rewarding. “One of the things I find most fascinating about working on the footnotes is the opportunity it gives to make a deeper dive into individual accounts,” Burdge said. “For example, the *Martyrs Mirror* has an account of an English Anabaptist, John Bocher, who was martyred in 1550. This account first appeared in



Edsel Burdge Jr. holds a copy of the 1685 *Martyrs Mirror*.

an earlier martyr book from 1617. As I researched it, I discovered that the martyr was not John but Joan Bocher. The editors of the 1617 book had pulled the account from a Latin martyrology by the English Protestant John Foxe. Apparently, they were not fluent in Latin, so they rendered the Latin *Ioanna* as John, rather than as Joan or Joanna. To compound this misgendering, Jan Luyken’s illustration of this account portrays a male martyr. In this new translation, the text was translated as it appears, but I wrote footnotes explaining the misidentification. Also, since Joan Bocher was a significant figure among English Anabaptists, I wrote a short biography of her in the glossary of persons.”



## From the Director

On November 11, the Young Center's Bucher Meetinghouse was filled with music, stories, and laughter, as more than a hundred people gathered to listen to Brethren balladeers Andy and Terry Murray, along with church musician and teacher Rachel Bucher Swank who spoke about the significance of the Murrays' music and then interviewed them.

Conversation among attendees continued into the lobby and parking lot well after the event itself came to a close. As one person that night reflected, "This is the definition of a living tradition—memory, story, and community experience propelling conviction into the future."

The Young Center continues to foster understanding and appreciation for diverse living traditions linked to Anabaptism and Pietism. Research associate Edsel Burdge is partnering with Old Order and Conservative Mennonites to produce a more readable edition of an Anabaptist faith resource, the *Martyrs Mirror*, which has been vital to communities for generations. With this spring's Durnbaugh Lecture, Bethany Theological Seminary president Jeff Carter will discuss opportunities to renew the Brethren tradition in the twenty-first century and will continue the conversation with pastors and others during the next day's Durnbaugh Seminar.

Living traditions are as much about change as continuity, and they pose critical questions for communities and individuals both inside and outside their boundaries. As described elsewhere in this newsletter, a February presentation by Edsel Burdge on a nearly two-century-long heritage of interracial Mennonite history, by turns inspiring and sobering, will feature the legacy of Peggy Turner and other African-American Mennonites. And in April, Frédérique Green will bring a British perspective to examining American patterns of Amish interaction with government and the ways in which traditions and assumption have both helped and hindered understanding.

Thanks to all of you for supporting the Young Center's work of celebrating and learning from Anabaptist and Pietist traditions, past, present, and future.

Steve Nolt  
Director

## Frédérique Green named Kreider Fellow for Spring 2026

Frédérique Green, an independent researcher and retired teacher living in the UK, has been named the Kreider Fellow for spring 2026.

Green received a Ph.D. from the University of Birmingham with a dissertation titled "An Analysis of the Dialogical Exchange between the American Politico-Legal System and the Amish." Her research, which included interviews with Amish and government leaders in several states, suggests a new model for understanding how the Amish function within the American democratic system.



During her fellowship, Green will continue the research and writing she began during her doctoral studies, examining the rela-

tions between the American state at different levels—local, state, and national—and various Amish communities. Her focus will be on particular aspects of the American judicial and legal systems as they pertain to interaction with the Amish as a religious minority.

"The Young Center will benefit my work in providing a wealth of information through archives as well as through interviews and meetings," Green explained, all with the aim of "preparing [me] for further writing of book chapters and journal articles."

Frédérique Green will present a lecture about her work at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, April 7, in the Bucher Meetinghouse.

The generous gift of Ken and Carroll Kreider endowed the Kreider fellowship and lecture. The Young Center invites nominations and applications for its fellows programs. Visit [etown.edu/centers/young-center/fellows.aspx](http://etown.edu/centers/young-center/fellows.aspx) for details.

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## Visiting Fellow Nelson Okanya in residence this semester

Nelson Okanya will serve as a visiting researcher at the Young Center during the spring semester. During his time at the center, Okanya will be exploring and reevaluate the core missional aspect of Anabaptism from the perspective of *missio Dei*, the theological idea that mission is an inherent part of God's and the church's nature.

"My research will highlight the need to incorporate missional purpose into how we interpret Anabaptist history and ecclesiology. Mennonite and Anabaptist historiography has often overlooked this viewpoint, even though



it was crucial to sixteenth-century Anabaptism," Okanya explained. "I believe that neglecting this foundational element has negatively affected the development of Anabaptist-Menno-

nite ecclesiology and missiology. Restoring this understanding offers an important chance to grasp the broader influence of Anabaptism today." His expectation is that his study will lead to recommendations for future research and dialogue at the Young Center and among Anabaptist and Pietist communities.

Nelson Okanya currently serves as interim associate pastor at James Street Mennonite Church. He previously led an intercultural Mennonite church in Maryland and was the president of the nonprofit division of the Center for Serving Leadership. Okanya also held the position of president at Eastern Mennonite Missions. Presently, he chairs the Global Mission Fellowship, which comprises 51 member organizations within Mennonite World Conference. Okanya earned an M.Div. from Eastern Mennonite Seminary and a doctorate from Fuller School of Mission and Theology. He and his wife, Carmen Horst Okanya, along with their two sons, reside in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.



## Field trip to Gettysburg

On Saturday, October 18, the Young Center hosted a field trip to Adams County, Pennsylvania, to explore the impact of the Battle of Gettysburg on Brethren families. The 56 attendees came from four states. They learned about the Brethren experience of the battle from Steve Longenecker, professor emeritus of history at Bridgewater (VA) College, visited the historic Marsh Creek Meetinghouse, and toured Seminary Ridge Museum on the campus of United Lutheran Theological Seminary.



## Jeff Carter to serve as Durnbaugh Lecturer for 2026

### LECTURE AND SEMINAR TO FOCUS ON CHURCH AND CULTURE

The Young Center is pleased to announce that Jeff Carter, president of Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Indiana, will present the 2026 Durnbaugh lecture and seminar on Thursday and Friday, March 12 and 13.

Carter, who holds a doctorate from Princeton Theological Seminary, has served as president of Bethany since 2013. Before that time, he pastored Manassas Church of the Brethren and Florin Church of the Brethren, as well as served in Brethren Volunteer Service at the Church of the Brethren Washington Office.

Under Carter's leadership, Bethany revitalized its residential program, developed technology rooms for synchronous learning, built a technology center for students in Africa, launched a graduate program for community engagement, increased annual giving, and increased enrollment for residential and distance learners. Currently, Carter

is partnering with the six Brethren-related colleges and universities—including Elizabethtown College—to provide theological education to undergraduate students through a new initiative, UP@Beth-

any. This new pathway from undergraduate to seminary education was awarded a \$10 million grant from the Eli Lilly Foundation in 2025.

On Thursday, March 12, at 7 p.m., in the Susquehanna Room of Myer Hall, Jeff Carter will present "Church and Culture: A Shaking of the Foundations...Again." And on Friday, March 13, from 9:30 a.m. to noon in the Bucher Meetinghouse, he will moderate "Church and Culture: Finding Promise Amid Change," a panel discussion about the chal-

lenges, variety, and expectations of religious leaders in different ministry settings.

Church of the Brethren pastors who would like CEUs for attendance at the lecture and seminar should contact the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center ([KarenHodges@SVMCcob.org](mailto:KarenHodges@SVMCcob.org) or 717-361-1450).

The Durnbaugh lecture series was established in 1993 to commemorate the scholarship of Don and Hedda Durnbaugh. It brings a noted scholar of Anabaptist or Pietist studies to campus annually.



Rachel Bucher Swank, Andy Murray, and Terry Murray rehearse for their evening performance and lecture on November 11, 2025. The exploration of the legacy of the Murrays' music and the time of singing together drew a large and enthusiastic audience.

## Germantown COB is focus of current exhibit

The exhibit space in the Young Center's lobby is featuring items from the Hess Archives and Special Collections related to Germantown Church of the Brethren, the oldest congregation of the denomination.

The Brethren movement began in 1708 near Schwarzenau, Germany. In 1719, the Brethren began immigrating to Pennsylvania, settling initially in Germantown, a village along the Wissahickon Creek. On Christmas Day 1723, the Brethren organized a church in Germantown, baptizing six individuals and celebrating Love Feast. They erected a meetinghouse in 1770.

The exhibit features artifacts related to Germantown printer and church leader Christopher Sauer II, a ledger recording baptisms and other notable events of the congregation between 1783 and 1842, and artifacts related to Germantown historian and pastor George Falkenstein. Programs marking Church of the Brethren anniversary celebrations and commemorations are also included.



## Eleventh journal issue published

The latest issue of the *Journal of Plain Anabaptist Communities*, a peer-reviewed, open

access journal published by the Ohio State University Libraries and cosponsored by the Young Center, was released recently. It includes two articles focused on aspects of



## Remembering Ken Kreider

J. Kenneth Kreider, longtime supporter of the Young Center, died on October 19, 2025, at the age of 91. A graduate of Elizabethtown College, Kreider went on to earn M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Pennsylvania State University. He began his teaching career with Elizabethtown College in 1964 and retired as professor of history emeritus in 1999.



In addition to his long-standing support of the college and the Young Center, Kreider was involved in many faith-based causes. He was an active member of the Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren, where he served many

years on the executive board and various committees, including as chair of the committee that resettled international refugees in the 1970s and 1980s.

Ken Kreider served as a Young Center fellow in 2001, and in 2003, he and his wife, Carroll, professor of business emerita, received Elizabethtown College's Educate for Service award. In 2008, Ken and Carroll endowed the J. Kenneth and Carroll L. Kreider Visiting Fellow Fund to support scholars who come to the Young Center for a semester of research and study. Ken also served on the Be More Inspired committee responsible for the expansion of the Young Center in 2018.

The Young Center is deeply grateful for Ken and Carroll Kreider's generosity. Their endowment will continue to further scholarship and understanding of the faith, history, and culture of Anabaptist and Pietist groups.

## Research and editorial associate retires

Research and editorial associate Cynthia Nolt will retire from Elizabethtown College in February after 22 years at the Young Center. Having worked closely with her for much of her time at the center, Don Kraybill describes her as "a superb editor in every way. She has an eye for detail and style that was unmatched by any editor I've worked with."

Nolt interviewed with Kraybill in January 2004—"although I'm sure I failed at speed typing, I think I did well enough on his editing test"—and she joined the center

on February 4. At the time, Kraybill had two roles, she recalled, senior fellow at the Young Center and interim provost of the college, so he was usually in Alpha Hall, but "readily available to respond to my myriad questions. And his list of projects waiting to be accomplished was interesting and diverse. Within the next weeks, I began researching and co-authoring (with Don) the Amish entry and the Quakers entry in Scholastic's *The New Book of Knowledge*, working on Don's next book manuscript, and coordinating the 2004 spring banquet, which included the launch of the Dale W. Brown Book Award."

Later, Nolt developed the Young Center newsletter and the Amish Studies website. Kraybill also credits her with the success of Young Center Books in Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, published by Johns Hopkins University Press. "She had the rare ability to be both exacting and gracious when working with a manuscript," Kraybill says, "and she dealt effectively with so many different authors, styles, and subjects. The series wouldn't have been what it became without her."

"Throughout my years at the center," Nolt continued, "I've been fortunate to have worked on an amazingly broad array of projects and developed and expanded numerous skills. The variety and the challenges have kept me engaged and enthused."

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## LECTURE

### Peggy Turner's Legacy: African American Reformed Mennonites

**EDSEL BURDGE JR.**

**Tuesday, February 17, 7 p.m.**

**Bucher Meetinghouse**

Starting with Peggy Turner's conversion in the 1840s, the Reformed Mennonites were the first American Mennonite group to have African American members, and they continue to have Black members up to the present. What is there about Reformed Mennonites that enabled them to incorporate African Americans into their community decades before any other Mennonite group? How did African American members' stories of conversion and incorporation counter the prevailing racism that they faced in other spheres of life? Did that same racism impact their place within the Reformed Mennonite Church?

Edsel Burdge Jr. is the research associate at the Young Center. He is the editor of volume 3 of *Documents of Brotherly Love: Dutch Mennonite Aid to Swiss Anabaptists, 1712-1784* (Ohio Amish Library, 2023) and coauthor with Samuel L. Horst of *Building on the Gospel Foundation: The Mennonites of Franklin County, Pennsylvania, and Washington County, Maryland, 1730-1970* (Herald Press, 2004). He holds an M.A. in history from Villanova University.

## YOUNG CENTER BANQUET

**Thursday, March 12, 6 p.m. (Reception at 5:30)**

**Susquehanna Room, Myer Hall**

The annual banquet gives friends of the Young Center an opportunity to socialize and learn about the center's activities and programs. A reception for Durnbaugh Lecturer Jeff Carter will precede the dinner.

Cost for the banquet is \$25 and reservations are required by February 26. Call the Young Center at (717) 361-1470 or register online via the [events page](#) of the Young Center website.

## DURNBAUGH LECTURE

### Church and Culture: A Shaking of the Foundations...Again

**JEFF CARTER**

**Thursday, March 12, 7 p.m.**

**Susquehanna Room, Myer Hall**

It's no secret that American religion is experiencing significant institutional change. Declining church membership and attendance, particularly among mainline denominations, raise questions about the future of the institutional church. Yet, amid the change, young adults continue to demonstrate sustained spiritual curiosity outside

traditional church structures. What distinguishes this moment from earlier periods of religious transition, and how might the church engage contemporary culture in response?

Jeff Carter has served as president of Bethany Theological Seminary since 2013. He earned degrees from Bridgewater College (B.A.), Bethany Theological Seminary (M.Div.), and Princeton Theological Seminary (D.Min.). Prior to his tenure at Bethany, Carter served Manassas Church of the Brethren and Florin Church of the Brethren, as well as served in Brethren Volunteer Service at the Church of the Brethren Washington Office on Capitol Hill.

## DURNBAUGH SEMINAR

### Church and Culture: Finding Promise Amid Change

**JEFF CARTER**

**Friday, March 13, 9:30 a.m. to noon**

**Bucher Meetinghouse**

Although religious change is widespread and accelerating, its effects are most clearly felt in local ministry contexts. Examining several distinct settings across a broad theological spectrum, Jeff Carter will facilitate a panel discussion to consider shared challenges facing religious leaders, points of divergence shaped by context, and the forms of promise that emerge in each case. The panel members will include Brian Messler, lead pastor, Ephrata Church of the Brethren, Ephrata, Pa.; Amy Shorner-Johnson, chaplain and director of spiritual and religious life, Elizabethtown College; Lexi Aligarbes, co-pastor, Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren, Harrisburg, Pa., and Audrey Hollenberg-Duffey, pastor of discipleship ministries, Oakton Church of the Brethren, Vienna, Va., and director of the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center.

## KREIDER LECTURE

### Analysis of the Interaction between the American Politico-Legal System and the Amish Christian Minority, Using Three Models

**FRÉDÉRIQUE GREEN**

**Tuesday, April 7, 7 p.m.**

**Bucher Meetinghouse**

Frédérique Green will discuss the interaction between the American government and the Amish minority. Using her archival research and empirical data, which consisted of interviews of 46 people in the judicial and legal spheres as well as Amish leaders, Green offers a new approach for analyzing the interaction between the two entities.

Frédérique Green is a retired teacher with dual French and British citizenship. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Birmingham in the UK, where she lives. Green continues to research in her area of expertise because the common law is not static and the Amish communities also evolve.





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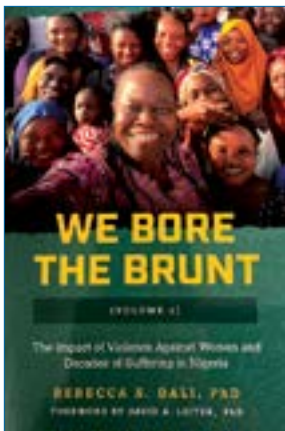
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## Rebecca Dali chronicles the suffering of victims of violence in Nigeria

In her recent book, *We Bore the Brunt: The Impact of Violence Against Women and Decades of Suffering in Nigeria*, Rebecca Dali analyzes and describes years of community, local, and national violence and its impact on the women of Nigeria. Dali is the executive director of the Centre for Caring, Empowerment, and Peace Initiatives (CCEPI), an



organization she founded in 1989. She holds a doctorate in ethics and philosophy from the University of Jos.

During the 2018 spring semester, Rebecca Dali and her hus-

band, Samuel, served as scholars in residence at the Young Center, where Rebecca researched and cataloged data about the marginalization and exploitation of women in Nigeria during the decades of violence there.

In Spring 2021, Rebecca and Samuel returned to the Young Center, where Rebecca served as the Snowden Fellow and Samuel as the Kreider Fellow. During that time, Rebecca continued her investigation of “the extent of women’s suffering in conflicts and the repercussions of the evil of ethnic and religious violence in Nigeria.” Her goal—to “provide a historical and sociocultural picture of the country that made citizens, particularly women, vulnerable to perennial attacks, massive displacement, and exile, to chronicle examples of the horrific experiences of violence endured by Nigeria’s most vulnerable citizens, under Boko Haram”—has been realized with the publication of *We Bore the Brunt*.

SPRING 2026

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*News*

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