

home rebuilt by the Brethren. It was the first Brethren Disaster Response project after Noffsinger became director of the program in 1999. "I was so moved by the relationships that we built with the people in Biloxi, dear friends, dear souls," he said, remembering as well the hundreds of Brethren volunteers who gave hours of aid to Biloxi.

Miss Grace's home and others the Brethren helped to rebuild were located right behind the casinos that were destroyed along the coast line in Biloxi, Noffsinger said. The conflicting images of opulence and poverty highlight the problems that the country, and the church, face following this disaster, he said. "In light of the mighty winds, and the mighty waters, the opulence could not stand, but neither did Miss Grace's house. It makes you wonder what happened to the people we worked for, because they've lost everything. Where do they go now, and how do they recover?"

The Brethren who have been calling the Brethren Service Center with offers of rooms and hospitality for those displaced by the hurricane were thanked by Noffsinger, but he called for great care to be taken in responding to the crisis so that the church's response is appropriate. "I have confidence in our Emergency Response program, the Disaster Child Care program, and our participation in Church World Service," he said. "When we respond it will be appropriate, it will be humane, and it will be respectful of the lives that we care for."

In other Brethren news related to the hurricane, a prayer request was issued by Southeastern District for hurricane damage in Alabama. The church buildings of Fruitdale (Ala.) Church of the Brethren and Cedar Creek Church of the Brethren in Citronelle, Ala., were unharmed. A member of Cedar Creek lost her home, and the daughter of the Fruitdale pastor had a tree fall on one end of her mobile home. Steven Petcher, a team pastor at Cedar Creek, reported that many trees were blown over by the 60- to 90-mile-an-hour winds, but all church members are safe. The district is collecting donations toward the disaster. "When you look at the whole picture it's just overwhelming," said district co-executive Martha Roudebush, expressing concern for all of those affected by the hurricane. "You can't find words" to share the feelings, she said.

****Gift of the Heart Health Kits are needed for the relief effort, as well as Heart to Heart Kids Kits, and donations to the Emergency Disaster Fund to support Brethren efforts to help those in need. Information about kits is at www.churchworldservice.org/kits/index.html. Donations may be sent to the Emergency Disaster Fund, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120. For more about the Emergency Response/Service Ministries see www.brethren.org/genbd/ersm/.**

CHURCH OF THE COVERED DISH by Thom Tapp



When Pastors Dream