

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2003

# Warm sunshine welcomed some 600 people

who gathered at 4:30 pm, Sunday, September 7, on the hillside of the CrossRoads Center to dedicate the site as a place to celebrate and share the Brethren-Mennonite faith and heritage.

After gathering music and a hymn, outgoing director Al Keim and incoming director Doris Showalter welcomed everyone to this historic event. Shirley Yoder Brubaker then read portions of Psalm 104, and Philip C. Stone, Sr., and Myron S. Augsburg highlighted the need and value of such a center.

In a dedication reflection, the Rev. Robert E. Alley noted how the Brethren and Mennonites have journeyed together over the past 300 years. "Today we accentuate our common interwoven stories and journeys of faith and conscience, not to the exclusion of others' journeys but along with them as a witness to a living story. This place serves to visibly focus the journeys."

"Here at CrossRoads, we and those who visit will meet people who have made a journey in faith and conscience. We will witness the light in the stories of their journey."

In reflecting on the significance of crossroads in our lives, he added, "Each of us faces crossroads occasions when we must make decisions, some of them simple and others very complex; some affecting other people and some only ourselves; some crossroads call us to the very depths of our being and we wrestle with what gives life meaning and hope, what we really believe in and trust, and what we are willing to commit ourselves to. Some crossroads we choose and others are thrust upon us."

"While no literal roads cross this site, many journeys will cross here," he continued. "These are journeys of conscience and faith occasions, decisions, etc. where and when Mennonites and Brethren have needed to choose how to live their faith amidst the demands and happenings around them. Here will be a place to share those stories and journeys, but more than that, here will be a place to let the journeys of those who are living now intersect with these stories."

"CrossRoads will reflect journeys of faith and conscience not only for those in an Anabaptist tradition, but challenge people in any tradition to reflect on their own journey."

Following his reflections, an eight-member team led the hillside crowd, some seated on chairs, some on blankets, and others standing, in a Litany of Celebration and Dedication, which began: "As people of a goodly heritage, we gather this Lord's Day to celebrate and dedicate CrossRoads for this chosen place within God's wondrous creation, for this Center in which to celebrate and share our faith and heritage for all people who journey here to find meaning and inspiration."

After a hymn and a prayer of blessing by Paul Roth, the crowd read Jeremiah 6:16 as a benediction:

*"Thus says the Lord: Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls."*

