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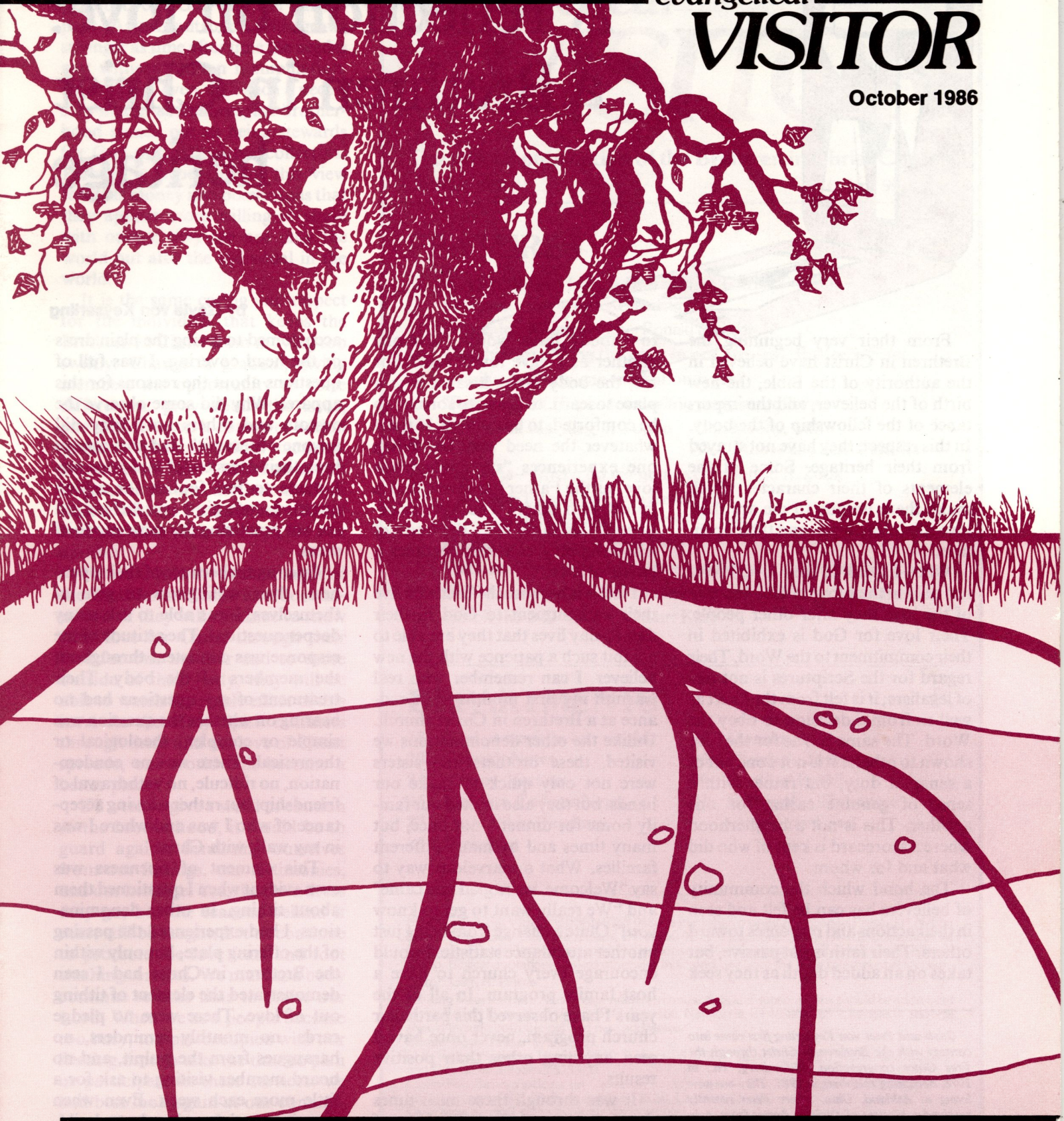
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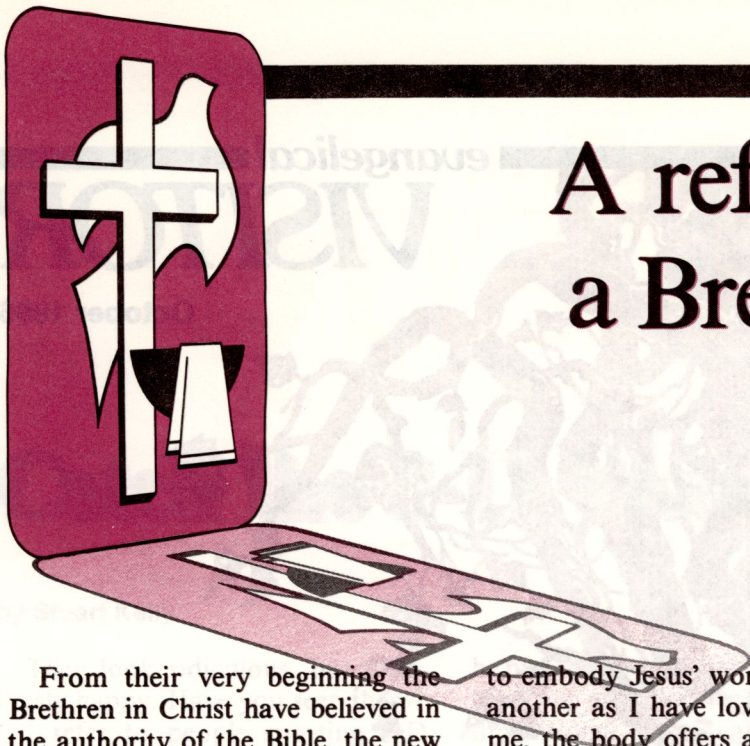
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A reflection on love: a Brethren in Christ heritage

by Gayle von Keyserling

From their very beginning the Brethren in Christ have believed in the authority of the Bible, the new birth of the believer, and the importance of the fellowship of the body. In this respect, they have not strayed from their heritage. Some of the elements of their character which make them unique to me are their love, their tolerance, and their openness.

When I speak of their love, I refer not only to their love of God but also of the love they offer other people. Their love for God is exhibited in their commitment to the Word. Their regard for the Scriptures is not one of legalism; it is felt from the heart as well as from a decision to obey the Word. The same is true for the love shown to others. It is not done out of a sense of duty, but rather with a sense of genuine caring for one another. This is not a brotherhood where a scorecard is kept of who did what and for whom.

The bond which the community of believers has can be felt and seen in their actions and responses toward others. Their faith is not passive, but takes on an added depth as they seek

to embody Jesus' words, "love one another as I have loved you." For me, the body offers a sanctuary: a place to learn, to grow, to sorrow, to be comforted, to be uplifted, to meet whatever the need may be. When one experiences "such wondrous love" as the Father has given, and is joined with others who have experienced this same love, the body of fellowshiping believers becomes a haven of love.

I feel it is because the Brethren live their commitment to God in their day-to-day lives that they are able to exhibit such a patience with the new believer. I can remember with real warmth my first months in attendance at a Brethren in Christ church. Unlike the other denominations we visited, these brothers and sisters were not only quick to shake our hands, but they also invited our family home for dinner—not once, but many times and by many different families. What a marvelous way to say "Welcome, we're glad you came" and "We really want to get to know you!" Quite a change from being just another attendance statistic. I would encourage every church to have a host family program. In all of the years I have observed this particular church program, never once have I seen anything other than positive results.

It was through these meal times that I discovered the willingness of the Brethren in Christ people to answer my questions. Not being

accustomed to seeing the plain dress or the head covering, I was full of questions about the reasons for this apparel. Why did some observe the custom and others not? Why did anyone observe it! Had this always been their dress code? Not once was I made to feel foolish for asking questions, nor did I ever feel judged for not practicing the same mode of dress.

Once again because of their openness, their willingness to give of themselves, I was able to ask many deeper questions. The attitude of the response was consistent throughout the members of the body. Their treatment of my questions had no bearing on whether the question was simple or complex, theological or theoretical. There was no condemnation, no ridicule, no withdrawal of friendship, but rather a loving acceptance of who I was and where I was in my walk with Christ.

This element of openness was even evident when I questioned them about tithing. In other denominations, I had experienced the passing of the offering plate, but only within the Brethren in Christ had I seen demonstrated the element of tithing out of love. There were no pledge cards, no monthly reminders, no harangues from the pulpit, and no board member visiting to ask for a little more each week. Even when there is a special need such as a building program for a church, or a particular need such as happens at

Gayle and Peter von Keyserling first came into contact with the Brethren in Christ through the Free Grace congregation, Millersburg, Pa., in 1978, becoming members in 1981. They are now living in Ashland, Ohio, where Peter recently received a Masters of Divinity degree from Ashland Theological Seminary. Gayle wrote this article for a course she took at the seminary taught by Dr. Arthur Climenhaga.

Roxbury Camp, the need is presented to the body, prayed about, and the tithing amount becomes a pact between God and the participant. As a result one's faith grows stronger as time after time the need is met without human manipulation. Once again, even with such a necessary matter as finances, the brotherhood stands out as being stewards for God rather than tax collectors. Perhaps it is because of this view towards money and possessions that they appear more willing to share with others; they see not only the world but also the individual in the world.

It is the same caring and respect for the individual that keeps the Brethren in Christ from moving too swiftly. Change is gradual, giving members the opportunity to voice differences, pray about the issue, and decide upon a course of action without splintering into factions. Never before have I heard a body as large as is present at General Conference discuss the different sides of an issue with such concern for one another.

To me this is the real strength of the Brethren in Christ as a denomination. If they will continue to show their love for Christ through their love for one another and to those outside of their body, they will be able to watch the ripple effect of this love. As the Holy Spirit ministers through them and the love of Christ spreads, our world will become a better place.

If I were to give a word of caution to the brotherhood, it would be to guard against insulating ourselves from our feelings, our testimonies, and our heritage. Yes, the plain dress may go, but the reasons behind it must still be taught. Let us continue to promote the love feast and foot washing services. We must as a body continue to take time to praise our Lord. When we as a people become too busy, too pre-occupied with our fleeting time to take the time to plan or participate in these services, we had best look again at our commitment. If we are too busy to serve the body, have we become too preoccupied with other things to serve God?

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FEATURES

- 2 **A reflection on love: a Brethren in Christ heritage** Gayle von Keyserling
- 4 **Returning to our roots** Ronald J. Sider
- 10 **Oral history: filling the gaps in our stories** E. Morris Sider
- 12 **Family violence: can mediation work?**
- 13 **"Recovery of Hope: counseling program offered"**
- 14 **One brisk morning in Tokyo** John Moody, with Alice Dourte and Jean Maedke
- 16 **Missions—where do we go next?** Donald R. Zook
- 19 **They don't want war: the Brethren in Christ in Nicaragua** Harriet Bicksler
- 22 **Roxbury Holiness Camp 1986**
- 25 **Faith and Farming December conference at Laurelville Center**
- 25 **MEDA convention to examine issues of faith and excellence**
- 32 **Catch the 3-D Vision** Stuart Kelly

DEPARTMENTS

- 18 **God at work in our world**
- 20 **Church News**
- 24 **Money Matters**
- 26 **Messiah College News**
- 27 **Daily Bible Reading**
- 28 **Dialogue**
- 29 **Onesimus**
- 30 **Phoebe's Journal**
- 30 **Pontius' Puddle**
- 31 **Editorial: The name game—part two**

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Returning to our roots

by Ronald J. Sider

On a spring morning almost 200 years ago in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Jacob Sider, my great, great, great, great-grandfather, hitched up his horses to a Conestoga wagon and started out for Canada. Jacob and his wife Maria Wenger Sider drove their horses and led their cattle slowly along the deer paths, around the swamps and over the hills of northern Pennsylvania and western New York. After 10 weeks of hardship and danger, they finally arrived at the banks of the roaring Niagara. Back then, there was no bridge and no ferry, so they spent two weeks building a raft. Loading cattle, belongings, and finally themselves onto the frail barge, they plunged into the water, praying fervently that the swimming horses would tow them to the promised land of Canada before the mighty river swept them over Niagara Falls. Obviously grandpa and grandma made it, or I would not be here telling you about my roots.

Early this Wednesday morning, I boarded a plane in Singapore to fly halfway around the world so I could sleep at home that night in Philadel-

phia. A day later, my family climbed into our Toyota to drive as did Jacob Sider, across northern Pennsylvania and New York. But we didn't have to look for deerpaths, milk the cows, or build a raft at Buffalo. So it took 10 hours instead of 10 weeks to return to our Ontario roots. The difference between our 10 hour drive and Grandpa's 10 week journey symbolizes the vast gulf that stands between you and me here today and our Mennonite and Brethren in Christ ancestors of 200 years ago whose faith and courage we celebrate. Do those ancestors, familiar only with a slow, isolated agricultural society, have anything to teach us citizens of a complex, technological, global civilization? What does it mean to return to our roots?

Returning to our roots means first of all remembering and respecting a host of cultural traditions that have sprung up over our centuries of communal life—Conestoga wagons and barn-raising, quilting bees and relief sales, and family reunions with mounds of scrumptious cooking. For Arbutus and me, it has meant wonderful family Christmas dinners,

and installing an old wood stove from Arbutus' parents' smokehouse in our kitchen in Philadelphia. In fact, that old stove has become the center of nostalgia for two occasionally homesick Ontario farm kids.

But Conestoga wagons and Mennonite cooking are nowhere near the core of our true roots. As a people seeking peace, our real roots are seen far more clearly in the faith of E. J. Swalm as he went to prison in 1918 rather than going to war, and in early missionary pioneers who died in Africa and Asia as they risked all to tell the world of the Prince of Peace. Our real roots are seen in our long history of migration because we preferred to forsake familiar homes and possessions and risk starting anew in unknown lands rather than join in the world's mad search for peace through violence. Our real roots are seen in the thousands of Anabaptist witnesses often called the first modern missionaries, who spread across Europe in the 16th century preaching the gospel, baptizing believers, and forming new communities of obedient disciples. Our real roots are seen in the thousands of 16th century Anabaptist martyrs who sang as they died at the stake and drowned in the rivers because they believed church and state should be separate, only believers should be baptized, and Christians ought to live everything Jesus taught. Our real roots are seen in Menno Simon's bold words:

True evangelical faith cannot lie dormant.

It clothes the naked.

It feeds the hungry.

It comforts the sorrowful.

It shelters the destitute.

It serves those that harm it.

But not even E. J. Swalm and Menno Simons are our true roots.





As we celebrate a wonderful tradition that rightly makes us all grateful and thankful, it is especially important not to forget the words of our text: "For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ is our true root, our real foundation, our solid rock, the genuine cornerstone of the faith of people seeking peace.

Sometimes we have confused our traditions with Jesus Christ and the Scriptures. There is another side of our roots and heritage that I passed over. Reading Frank Epp's story of the Mennonites in Canada, one is reminded of a sad side of our history

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that tells of bitter quarrels and church splits over whether we should worship in barns or church buildings, whether we should sing in unison or four-part harmony, whether simplicity demanded last century's clothing styles. We sometimes misunderstood what it truly means to return to our roots. We sometimes absolutized our own traditions instead of respecting them as imperfect pointers to Jesus Christ and the Word of God,

the only unchanging norm. As a result we fought and split and wasted untold opportunities to share the gospel of peace with a broken world. Returning to our true roots means returning generation after generation to Jesus Christ, the divine foundation which God has provided, and then reevaluating our human traditions, even our special Mennonite and Brethren in Christ traditions, on the basis of that unchanging foundation.

This is not to say that our Anabaptist theology and our centuries of communal wisdom and experience are useless or unimportant. They are incredibly precious. I respect and treasure them very deeply. We should presume to modify them only with care and caution. But we must always remember that our true root, our ultimate foundation, is Jesus Christ. And we must always be ready and eager to change our cultural and religious traditions whenever Jesus Christ and God's word require change for the sake of faithful mission in today's world. And in fact, the best of our leaders in every century have tried to do precisely that—to return to the one who springs from the root of Jesse, Jesus Christ, the cornerstone, in order to share his wonderful gospel of peace with a broken world.

If we are faithful to this ultimate root and foundation, you and I will dedicate ourselves to telling the tormented world around us that God has a way to healing and shalom. The world today is a wilderness of fear, tragedy, and violence. In spite of our affluence, technology, and power, North American society knows little of shalom. Parents fight and divorce; children fornicate and freak out on drugs; society neglects the poor; and our leaders press stubbornly forward to the brink of nuclear Armageddon.

As a people seeking peace, how do we faithfully minister to our tormented world? Because over three billion people have never heard of Jesus Christ, we need to strengthen our mission boards and budgets so

that the glorious evangelistic task can spring forward on wings like eagles. Because over a billion people suffer grinding poverty, and because intolerance and war produce ever more refugees, we need to increase our giving to MCC so Jesus' costly call to relieve suffering and empower the poor can be obeyed anew by our affluent generation. Undoubtedly we need new strategies, new visions, and new organizations.

But that is not what I want to emphasize. I want to plead with this generation of Mennonites and Brethren in Christ to return to our roots in still another sense. This generation has opportunities in evangelism and peacemaking that are greater than those of any previous generation. We are better educated, we have more resources than any generation in our long history. We could, in the next generation, do fantastic work in evangelism, peace, and justice.

But that will not happen unless we let Jesus Christ be the center and focus of our total life and being. I want to stress three basic aspects of the solid foundation we need if we are to be a people seeking peace that is rooted in Christ: (1) a personal living faith in Jesus Christ; (2) strong families with Jesus Christ at their center; and (3) congregations of believers which are a little picture now of what heaven will be like. Through all our generations, our ancestors have known that these three things are the solid root out of which mission to the world must





grow. If we neglect this essential starting point, great new evangelistic or peacemaking ventures, however sophisticated and brilliant, will wither and fail because they no longer spring forth from that essential root and foundation.

Personal faith in Christ

The one essential root of Christian peacemaking today is the old, old story of Jesus and his love. I love to tell the story about the Creator of the galaxies who loved you and me so much in all our brokenness, stupidity, and sin that he took on human flesh. True God and true man, he preached and modelled a

gospel of peace. And then when virtually everyone rejected his way to peace, he died on the cross for his sinful enemies. He died in your place, in my place, as the substitute for our sin so we can have peace with God. Because he was and is true God as well as true man, the cross tells us that at the center of reality is a suffering God. Jesus' cross tells us that God's way to correct the tornadoes of tragedy and violence that rip and roar through our world is suffering love.

The love of Christ dying on the cross is what our tormented world needs. But they won't experience it merely from sophisticated peace programs and new economic techniques. You and I and everyone else experience that love as we throw ourselves at the feet of the risen Carpenter, confess our sins and accept him as the Lord of every corner of our lives. A living personal relationship

with Jesus Christ is the essential ground of Christian peacemaking.

Jesus is the root of true peacemaking. He is the one foundation for which absolutely nothing else dare be substituted—not important political strategies, not wonderful programs of economic development, not other religions. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the father but by me." That's the way to peace.

I met this Jesus through my Mom and Dad whose obedient lives and regular teaching were shaped by the faithful generations of believers we celebrate today. I met this Jesus in the witness of the members of my home congregation, Bertie Brethren in Christ Church. And then I met this Jesus in a powerful personal way in a revival meeting when I was about eight. I don't think I was such a bad kid, but I must confess that during one three-week series of revival meetings, I misbehaved so much in church that when we returned home, I got a spanking in the woodshed on three Friday nights in a row. But thank God, one night during one of those Bertie revivals, this young farm boy walked forward during an altar call and said yes to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. That decision for Christ, affirmed again and again at periods of struggle in my life is the most wonderful, the most important thing that has ever happened to me. That is the root of every single little bit of work for peace and justice that God has enabled me to do. A living personal relationship with Jesus Christ is the root of biblical peacemaking.

Bishop E. J. Swalm tells a wonderful personal story that underlines this point. In early 1918, it became more and more clear that he would have to risk prison and possibly even death if he refused to join the army. One morning out in the barn just days before he had to leave home, his Dad asked him a question:

"Suppose that the worst comes to the worst? How is it with your soul?" I said to him, "You remember the night that

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I knelt at the altar of prayer in the old brick church and gave my heart to God?" Then I said, "You remember some years later while seeking God for a deeper experience, I knelt in this very barn and consecrated my life to God. I want you to know that it still holds good this morning."

Then he said, "Let us go up in the granary and pray." I consented, and we went up in the granary, where we knelt in prayer together and God visited us in that granary in an unusual manner. It was there that I prayed through, and God was pleased to let me see the firing squad with all that it means. There I faced it and was willing, if needs be, to die for Jesus.¹

In the name of God, I beg this generation not to substitute anything else for the sure foundation of Jesus Christ and a living personal relationship with him. Of course we need to dig wells and share better agricultural techniques with the poor of the earth. Of course we need to work politically to reduce injustice and militarism. Of course we should develop costly new ways to risk as much as do soldiers in the search for peace. But let's never confuse the limited changes in human society that these important efforts achieve with the peace that Christ brings when individuals accept him as personal Lord and Savior and are changed from within by his glorious indwelling Spirit.

Anabaptist peacemakers, if we are faithful to our biblical roots, will make sure that we pass on to our children not just a wonderful cultural tradition, but also a dynamic personal relationship with the Lord of

our tradition. We will redouble our evangelistic efforts to invite every person on this planet who has never heard or confessed Christ to surrender their lives to him. And we will place the Nazarene Carpenter who is also Risen Lord, true God and true man, at the very core of everything we do as a people seeking peace.

The way of the cross is the way to peace in marriage just as much as in other areas of life.

Christian family life

Over hundreds of years, stable Christian families have been an essential part of our existence as a people seeking peace. We have said "no" to divorce because we have said "yes" to Christ's teaching. Today, however, Hollywood's sexual madness and society's marital chaos are invading Mennonite and Brethren in Christ homes. It is not at all clear that this generation will hold fast to our long biblical heritage of faithful Christian marriage grounded in lifelong covenant.

If we cannot even manage to let Christ the peacemaker bring reconciliation to hurting marriages, how on earth do we suppose we have anything to say about reconciliation between whites and blacks in South Africa or between North and South, East and West in our unjust, militaristic world? If I am not willing to allow Christ and his way of suffering love to restore whatever brokenness there is in my relationship to my wife Arbutus, it is sheer arrogance for me to suppose that I have much to tell

Prime Minister Mulroney, President Reagan, or Chairman Gorbachev about how to bring reconciliation in international politics. Peacemaking starts at home with faithful Christian marriages.

I don't for a minute mean to say that is easy in this crazy mixed-up society. And thank God he forgives us when we fail and sin and mess things up horribly. But I am certain that it is possible, even in the middle of the modern world's sexual wilderness and crumbling marriages, for biblical people who know the power of Christ's cross to maintain faithful marriages.

The way of the cross is the way to peace in marriage just as much as in other areas of life. Arbutus and I learned that personally a few years ago. God has blessed us with a wonderful marriage. But a few years back some deep pain scarred our relationship. I do not mean to say that either of us had an adulterous affair, but both of us had hurt each other deeply. Thank God for an excellent Mennonite marriage counsellor who helped us for six months. And thank God, too, for new understanding of how Jesus' way of suffering love also heals hurting marriages.

Arbutus and I came to realize that it was silly to pretend that we had not hurt each other. It didn't help at all to overlook that sin and pretend it did not matter. It mattered a lot. It was awful, wrong, sinful. We discovered that the cross was the only path

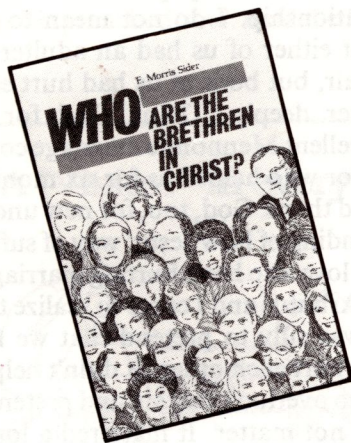


¹ *Nonresistance Under Test*, pp. 30-31.



to healing. We experienced genuine reconciliation only as I said to Arbutus and she said to me: "What you did was wrong. It hurt me deeply. But I accept that pain and hurt and I forgive you." The way of the cross, forgiving, suffering love is the way to joyful, faithful marriages that last for a lifetime of joy, failure, and ever growing love and commitment.

Faithful marriages of lifelong covenant are still an essential root of biblical peacemaking in a world of



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Star Wars and cruise missiles. I don't think we will survive as a church or make any significant contribution to peace and justice in the late 20th century unless couple by couple we covenant before Almighty God to keep our marriage vows. Our society longs for a solution to the hell of broken families. Only if we humbly model marriages of shalom can we be effective peacemakers today.

Communities of shalom

The third and last part of our peacemaking foundation that I want to emphasize this morning is the church. As Jesus' new Messianic community, the church should be a community of shalom. Jesus came preaching the gospel of the kingdom, the fantastic news that both peace with God and peace with neighbor are possible now for all those who will follow God's Messiah. But Jesus could not bring peace with neighbor without challenging all the places where sin had broken relationships with the neighbor. So Jesus rejected the status quo. He called for new, radically different relationships between rich and poor, men and women. And the early church dared to practice what he taught. They were truly a community of shalom, where all the sinful dividing walls of the world were being broken down. Jesus calls the church to be a little picture now of what the kingdom of heaven will be like.

That kind of peaceful community is essential for our peace witness to the world in two important ways. First of all, if we cannot even model reconciliation rather than misunderstanding, resentment, and division in our congregations, it is a farce to suppose we have anything to teach Prime Ministers and Presidents. Our sad history of petty quarrels and church splits stands as a denial of our peace testimony. Thank God for the breakthrough in unity among several conferences here in Ontario.

That does not mean we hide dif-

ferences and ignore mistreatment. Too often in the church we have tried to hide conflict and soothe angry disagreement rather than face it honestly and directly. That is hypocrisy and repression, not peacemaking. Our congregations and denominational structures must be communities where we practice the tough love that faces differences with honesty and mutual submission so that genuine reconciliation happens. Only then dare we with integrity tell the world about a new way to peace.

There is a second way that the church as God's community of shalom is important for our peace witness in society. The world defines peace very differently from God. President Marcos of the Philippines thought he could have peace with injustice. Prime Minister Botha of South Africa thinks he can have peace with racism. President Reagan thinks he can get peace through a nuclear arms race. The shalom which Jesus preached and lived challenges all that. Jesus' peace means right relationships between men and women, rich and poor, black and white. It means the way of the cross rather than the way of the sword.

It is simply impossible for the church to live and model Jesus' shalom without a radical, sweeping rejection of the way of the world. Our heritage has been right in its insistence on separation from the world. To be sure, we sometimes focused on externals in petty, divisive ways.





And too often we confused moral separation from the sin of the world with geographical withdrawal from society.

I know from personal experience how we sometimes misunderstood the doctrine of separation. The decision to part my hair on the side in grade nine and to start wearing a necktie in grade eleven involved months of inner uncertainty, anguish, and fear. I had always parted my hair in the center. But during the summer before starting grade nine at Niagara Christian College, a Brethren in Christ high school, I got a brush cut. As it grew out, I desperately wanted to part my hair on the side. But tradition said that might be sinful conformity to the world. So I struggled and prayed and kept combing it straight forward week after week in order to postpone the day of decision. Finally I decided God would not be angry if I parted it on the side. One big step for Ron Sider. One small step in our understanding that separation from the sin of the world does not demand last centuries' styles.

But we need to be awfully careful. Today's level of conformity to the world terrifies me. If I had to choose between the sinful conformity of many Mennonite and Brethren congregations on the one hand and the plainest of our Amish brothers and sisters on the other, I would not hesitate for one moment. Count me with the Amish.

Our ancestors knew something this generation is dangerously close to forgetting. You cannot worship God and Mammon. Following Jesus means visibly and vigorously rejecting the world's perverted views of sex, money, and power. This generation of Mennonites and Brethren in Christ are forgetting this truth and conforming to the world at a pace never before experienced in previous centuries. Materialism no longer

sneaks stealthily around the edges of our lives. We now embrace Mammon openly and gladly. It is not at all clear that our glorious heritage of simplicity and care for the poor will long survive. We must return to our roots and recover a biblical understanding of the church as an alternative society separated from the sin of the world.

Ironically, it is only that kind of counter-culture of shalom that can make any real contribution to our broken world. The last thing our surrounding society needs is one more tired voice reinforcing a status quo that has given us the highest divorce rate in human history, rampant economic injustice, and the terrible possibility of nuclear extermination. Only if we are a community of shalom living and preaching Jesus' radically different way to peace, only then can we offer our needy world the alternative it needs.

But they will hear and see the alternative only if we do not confuse moral separation from sin with physical withdrawal from society. Again our Anabaptist and biblical roots have the answer. In our early years in the 16th century, we did not withdraw. Rather we dared to live at the center of that society, inviting everyone to join us in starting to live in Jesus' alternative kingdom. The early church did the same thing. They did not retreat to the desert or the forest. They lived in the urban centers of Greece and Rome, telling everyone about God's new way to peace. To be sure, both the early church and the early Anabaptists

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got crucified and martyred. The world gets angry when God's people point out its sin. But a broken world is also powerfully attracted by a living model of wholeness and shalom. Just being the church, merely living now a little picture of what the kingdom of heaven will be like, is the first way the church works for peace in the world.

I believe God wants to use this generation of Mennonites and Brethren in Christ to take the gospel to hundreds of thousands who have not yet confessed Jesus Christ. I believe God wants to double and double again the work of MCC with the poor, the oppressed, and the refugees driven from their homes. I believe God wants to raise up new non-violent peacemaking ventures that will help our terrified world draw back from the abyss of violent destruction. This can be our best generation yet in our long walk with the Prince of Peace.

But that will happen only if we return to our roots. Do Jacob Sider and the other earlier pioneers of 200 years ago have anything to teach us? Yes, they knew clearly almost everything that really matters. They knew that peacemaking starts with personal faith, with faithful marriages, and congregations of shalom. They knew and lived the truth of St. Paul: "For no other foundation can anyone lay except that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Grounded on that solid foundation, rooted in that unchanging Word, we can look forward to another 200 years, better even than the good ones we celebrate today, another 200 years of obedience, service and joy of as biblical people seeking peace.

Slightly abridged from a presentation given at the 200th anniversary celebrations of Mennonites and Brethren in Christ in Canada, held July 6 in Kitchener, Ontario. Ronald J. Sider is associate professor of theology at Eastern Baptist Seminary and author of Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger and Nuclear Holocaust and Christian Hope.

Oral history: filling the gaps in our stories

by E. Morris Sider

Modesty has generally been a becoming trait of the Brethren in Christ. In the matter of keeping church records, however, too much modesty has been less than a good thing. Much in our past as a church has been and is being lost because Brethren in Christ for the most part have not kept diaries, written autobiographies, preserved correspondence, maintained adequate congregational records—all ways in which the heritage of a church's past is normally preserved for present and future generations.

Interviewing older members in the congregation about earlier years in the church is one way to fill in the gaps that exist in the written documents. The value of this way of collecting history (frequently referred to as oral history) has been illustrated for us in the secular world by the amazing *Foxfire* series in which, through interviews, the way of life and crafts of pioneer America still surviving in the Appalachian region are described. Perhaps even better known is the book (and film) *Roots*, in which Alex Haley, again only through the spoken word, traced his family line back to Africa and located the village from which his ancestor had been taken away into slavery.

Something of the same, if not so spectacular, success could be ours. Here and there we have begun to tap the potential of discovering the past through interviews. The college and denominational archives at Messiah College contain approximately 200 tapes of interviews with such church leaders as Charlie Byers, Henry Ginder, E. J. Swalm, H. H. Brubaker, Paul Engle, John Rosenberry, and others. This kind of history gathering should be widespread

throughout the denomination.

The suggestions offered in this article on how to conduct an interview are designed to encourage the gathering of oral history on a wider scale. Obviously they are practical rather than inspirational. The final result, however, should be of more than practical value, since we shall have discovered more about the body of Christ which is the church.

Preparing for the interview

Good interviews don't just happen—they require careful preparation. Among the preparatory steps that should be taken for an interview are the following:

1. *Research both the background of the topic and the person to be interviewed.* Be acquainted with the general background of the issue in order to ask intelligent questions and to be able to judge the quality of the narrator's response. Thus if the subject of the interview is to be on love feasts, read the pages on love feasts in Carlton Wittlinger's, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*.

2. *Contact the narrator as early as possible.* Obtain his or her consent to an interview, but do not demand one. Do not insist on an immediate audience. Adjust your schedule to his or her convenience. Make certain you keep the appointment, and be on time for it. If you use a tape recorder, obtain the narrator's consent to use it (most are flattered by the suggestion). In all of these ways you help to build the rapport needed for good interviewing.

3. *Prepare a list of questions.* Do not go into the interview "playing it by ear." You need to have in mind what you want out of the interview, the answers that you need to obtain, otherwise you will not realize the full potential of the interview.

A difference of opinion exists on whether the narrator should see your questions or only be informed about

the general direction of the interview. A strong case can be made for not sending the questions in advance of the interview. If the narrator sees the questions in advance, she or he will have some time to think and as a result the response may be too guarded, too uninformative. On the other hand, if the narrator has the questions in advance, he or she will have a chance to recall things that would not be in mind if questions were asked without earlier notice. Probably most narrators are more at ease with having questions in advance, even though they may be less spontaneous in their replies. On balance, it probably is better to send the questions (at least some of the leading questions) ahead of the interview.

During the interview

The quality of an interview is determined very much by the approach taken by the interviewer (although something depends too on the quality of the narrator). The following are some suggestions for conducting the interview itself:

1. *Announce the topic, date, and persons (interviewer and narrator).* This is important for the record and helps to get the interview off to an important-sounding start—a suggestion that something significant is going to happen in the interview.

2. *Use a tape recorder if possible.* For most narrators a tape recorder is not a problem; in fact, most are pleased that their thoughts are considered important enough to place on tape. If some feel intimidated by the recorder, assure them that they will soon not be aware of the instrument.

The tape recorder has certain advantages over taking notes by hand. It provides greater accuracy and allows the interviewer to concentrate much more fully on the dialogue, including thinking ahead to the next question. On the other hand, the

E. Morris Sider is archivist for the Brethren in Christ Church. This is the third in a series of articles on preserving congregational and family histories.



Mary K. Long conducts an interview in Fanny Heisey's home at Messiah Village.

interviewer should use pencil and pad to jot down ideas or questions as they occur to him or her during the interview. One historian has pointed out that the narrator will be especially impressed by the importance of what he is doing if he sees that the interviewer not only *records* his words but also *writes down* some of his words and ideas.

3. *Ask questions that elicit more than a "yes" or "no" answer.* For example, instead of asking, "Was John Brown a good Sunday school teacher?" ask, "What did John Brown's students think of him?"

4. *Ask short questions rather than long ones.* Long questions tend to be statements by the interviewer rather than questions. The narrator is the one to make the statement.

5. *Ask one question at a time.* A series of questions asked at once will only confuse the narrator. Good questions prepared in advance will help to prevent this confusion.

6. *Start with questions that are not controversial.* You could begin, for example, with asking questions about the person's childhood and school days, and then later in the interview ask more difficult, more controversial questions.

7. *Let the narrator do the talking.* You cannot get information when you as interviewer are doing the talking. Resist the temptation to argue a point on which you disagree with the narrator. Similarly, do not show off how much you know about the subject.

8. *Do not be embarrassed by silences.* Silences may, in fact, be good since the narrator may be collecting his or her thoughts or trying to recall an incident.

9. *Be flexible in allowing the narrator to depart from the subject.* If the narrator gets off the subject of a question, it may be because he or she knows the subject of the diversion better, or is more interested in it. Some of the best materials from an interview often come from these side tracks. They are sort of serendipities—unexpected pleasant surprises. Of course, eventually the narrator will need to be led back to the question if he or she gets too far afield.

10. *Establish what the narrator's role was in the events discussed.* Perspective is important for the credibility of the narrator's statements. If, for example, he is one of the two main persons involved in a church dispute, his statements will undoubtedly have a different flavor from the person who was an onlooker to the dispute.

11. *Conduct the interview when only you and the narrator are present.* Two or more narrators tend to inhibit one of the narrators. Sometimes, however, a group interview is advantageous, particularly to obtain responses from different points of view.

12. *End the interview in reasonable time.* An hour (an hour and a half at the most) is the maximum time for most people to be effective in an interview.

After the interview

After the interview, the following things should be done as soon as possible:

1. *Label the tape.* A labelless tape can be one of the frustrations of life, particularly if you have taken a number of interviews, or if you have a supply of unused tapes. Used tapes cannot, of course, be distinguished from unused without a label.

2. *If convenient, make a duplicate in case the tape becomes lost.* Losing such a small object as a cassette tape is easy to do. Even if you redo the interview, you will not generally be able to obtain the inspiration of the first one.

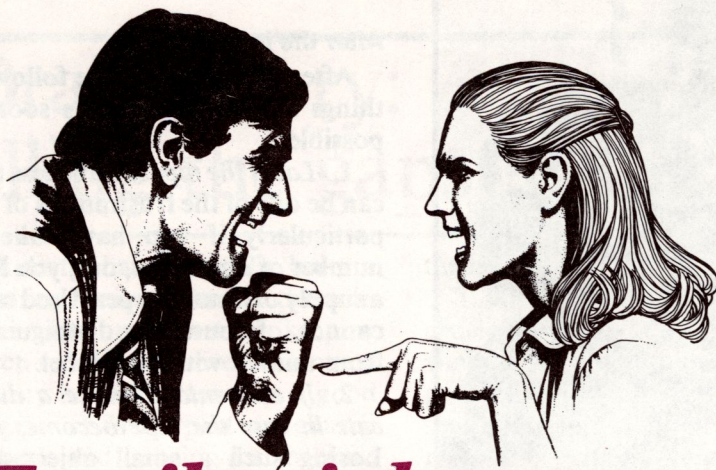
3. *Make a transcript of the tape, or at least of the main ideas of the tape.* Words cannot be seen on the tape; they become useful only when written.

4. *Send the narrator a copy of the transcript.* Ask for corrections of fact and interpretation. Sometimes what one says looks different when placed on paper. Obtain a written statement of consent to use the information in the tape.

5. *Make critical notes while the interview is still fresh in mind.* These notes should include comments on the biases and quality of the memory of the narrator. In some cases these may seriously affect in a negative way the value of the interview. On the other hand, they may mean that the information is virtually as good as a written document.

More help in conducting interviews can be obtained in an excellent little paperback by James Hoopes entitled *Oral History: An Introduction for Students*, available from the University of North Carolina Press, P.O. Box 2288, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

The primary object of collecting and preserving both written and oral documents is to tell the stories of our past. But without a writer, who will read the stories? The next article in this series attempts to encourage both the writing and reading of congregational histories. ■



Family violence: can mediation work?

Let's call her Susan. Hers is a made-up but typical story about a church-going family in pain.

Last night her husband beat her up, so badly both eyes were blackened. It wasn't the first time. In one incident last year, he threw her down the stairs, breaking her arm. Their children, terrified, listened to the sounds of the beating while hiding in the basement.

Susan doesn't know how much longer she can stand this. Somehow, she still loves her husband, and as a Christian she is deeply committed to her wedding promises. She keeps hoping he'll change, hoping he'll learn to control his temper. Every time he beats her up, he feels terribly sorry afterwards and promises over and over not to do it anymore. But eventually, tension builds up and it happens again, no matter how hard she tries to be a good and submissive wife.

She is afraid for her life, but doesn't dare tell anyone what's going on, not even her pastor. He might not believe her, or worse yet it will "get around." Her husband's reputation will be destroyed, and she'll never be able to face anyone knowing she has ruined the marriage God has blessed.

For Christians like Susan who regard family breakup as a grave sin, there often seems to be little alternative to staying in a marriage filled with ugliness and violence. Statisti-

cal evidence suggests there are many Susans in church pews right now, suffering in silence and hoping for a miracle of reconciliation. For them, the secular organizations that counsel permanent family separation are not the answer.

Can violence-filled marriages be restored? Can habits learned from childhood be changed? Can there be reconciliation where there has been so much physical and psychological hurt? Pastors and others who counsel Christians involved in family violence are often frustrated in their attempts to resolve these questions, and to undo years of damage and pain.

One idea that hasn't been tested much is mediation. Community mediation programs across North America pioneered by Mennonite Central Committee have proved highly successful in bringing about reconciliation between criminal offenders and their victims. Workers involved in these programs are now wondering whether concepts of interpersonal peacemaking, healing, and biblical justice worked out in that setting might have something to teach us when it comes to restoring families who have been torn apart by physical and psychological violence, but who want to stay together.

"There's a growing awareness that this is happening in society at large, and that the church has a role to play in bringing wholeness to the rela-

tionship where there is still love between the two parties," says Melita Rempel, who is leading a binational MCC group studying the problem. The MCC Domestic Violence Task Force hopes to increase the awareness of pastors and "to make openings where people will be able to talk about it in the church setting, where the responses can be helpful rather than destructive, and move them toward healing."

The difference between ordinary criminal/victim mediation cases and family abuse is that violence in the home is usually an ongoing crime, deeply engrained in the relationship and in the batterer's way of thinking. Counsellors who fail to recognize this may think the couple has quickly "patched things up" when in fact old patterns of behavior will soon repeat themselves.

This "quick kind of forgiveness" has not only left some battered spouses stranded, but also led to "a sense of hostility" toward the church among some secular groups working with battered spouses, says Rempel. This points to the need for the church to rethink the meaning of forgiveness, which involves not only repentance, but also changed behavior. The sin of violence must stop.

Most abusers tend to deny or minimize the violence, or even try to justify it on the basis of Scriptures that appear to place women in a position of subservience. Arrest and assault charges have been found very effective in convincing abusers that what they are doing is wrong, and a lot of energy has been spent in recent years persuading the police and courts of the need to take domestic violence seriously.

One fear is that private mediation, as an alternative to the legal system, may not make as powerful an impact on the batterer, says Rempel. "If there isn't that clarity in saying, 'what you've done is wrong,' it becomes hard for the man to see that and for the woman to see that she doesn't have to take it." On the other hand, "I'm not sure that we necessarily want to lock the man up or be part of that system that just punishes

and where there isn't any healing."

If mediation were to work in long-standing violent situations, the mediator would have to be clear about identifying violence as a grievous sin, and would also have to find some way of redressing the gross imbalance of power that exists in violent relationships. That would mean long-term counselling for both partners, with the wife being encouraged to develop greater self-esteem and the husband learning to acknowledge the wrongness of his behavior, to understand his emotions better, and to practice alternative ways of dealing with conflict.

"Clearly, the model of mediation that's being used in some places just can't be applied, because of the power imbalance and the long history of abuse," Rempel points out. Mediation, if it indeed can be applied to cases of family violence, will be most likely to succeed where the violence has been short-term or minimal.

While it's often difficult for the

church to accept even temporary separation of families, it's important to find ways of ensuring the safety of women and their children. Some couples stay together "for the sake of the children," not recognizing that there is tremendous psychological damage being done to youngsters who constantly view an abusive relationship. Violence learned in childhood is often repeated in adulthood, says Rempel.

It's also important to realize that "costly forgiveness" takes time. For the victim of abuse, forgiveness doesn't mean instantly forgetting or pretending the abuse never happened; it may be years, if ever, before she feels ready to forgive. For some, permanent separation may be the only non-violent end possible to a marriage that has already died according to the Christian definition of it as a covenant relationship based on love, mutual caring and respect. In such situations, healing and Christian reconciliation between the individuals involved might still be possi-

ble, though not necessarily in a form that involves full restoration of the marriage household.

For Christian partners who are earnestly seeking a renewal of that failing covenant, however, mediation and faith may yet provide a glimmer of hope.



The MCC Task Force on Domestic Violence is interested in hearing (in confidence) from people who have had personal experiences with abuse in their families, or in counselling situations. Please write Melita Rempel, 11-575 Ridout St. N., London, Ont. N6A 2R2.

If you have personally experienced domestic violence and wish to share your story with Visitor readers, you may send your remarks to our office: P.O. Box 166, Nappanee, IN 46550. Your letter does not need to be signed. In any event, names will be withheld from any letters published.

"Recovery of Hope" counseling program offered

Today, possibly in your neighborhood, a marriage is dying.

A husband and wife are watching their relationship crumble. Manageable problems have become overwhelming. Hope is gone. Divorce seems to be the answer.

But this couple is not prepared to give up. They desperately want their marriage to survive. Who will help them?

Recovery of Hope is a program offered by Philhaven, Mount Gretna, Pa., intended for couples whose marriages are in serious trouble. It was designed for those who feel hopeless to be a place where hope would be reborn.

Recovery of Hope provides time for couples to consider four things: the emotional as well as monetary cost of divorce; the causes of despair; the experiences of other couples who have survived severe problems and found hope and reconciliation; and the preparation of a recovery plan.

Couples participating in Recovery of Hope register for a three-hour session. There, two or three other couples share

their own experiences of despair, and relate the circumstances that led them to re-discover hope and attempt reconciliation.

Hope becomes real—Couples in trouble often identify with the presenting couples. Hearing of others' experiences can make hope real to them.

Listeners then consider their own situations, and determine whether they believe a spark of hope exists for their relationship. Each couple is asked to make a decision: do they wish to attempt a reconciliation?

Some couples may conclude that divorce or some other course of action is appropriate for them. However, if they wish to try, a counselor helps them to prepare a plan of recovery. This includes professional marriage counseling, classes in various aspects of married life, such as money management and conflict resolution, and other activities that should benefit the relationship in trouble.

Work through the pain—Recovery of Hope organizers stress that the program requires commitment from the partici-

pating couples. Professional counselors are there to guide, others provide encouragement and prayer, but the married couple must be willing to work through the pain and renew their relationship.

Confidentiality—All activity will take place in an atmosphere of confidentiality. There will be no group sharing among the couples who come to work on their marriages.

The registration fee for Recovery of Hope is \$35.00. This includes the initial session and the services of a qualified therapist during that session. The fee does not cover subsequent costs incurred during the implementation of the couple's recovery plan.

Couples who wish to register or learn more about Recovery of Hope may contact John or Naomi Lederach in Philhaven's Education Department, (717) 273-8871.

Pastors, mental health professionals and others who come in contact with troubled married couples are welcome to refer couples to the program. Interested people will receive a Recovery of Hope brochure containing a registration form. Advance registration is essential. ■

One brisk morning in Tokyo

by John Moody, with Alice Dourte and Jean Maedke

The dawn comes, a pearl-grey Oriental morning in Tokyo, Japan. Icy winds, born in far-away Siberia and nourished across northern Asia, blow over the temperate Japan Sea and down into the Kanto Plain. There they chill and dampen the exposed faces of countless busy Japanese swarming about a small suburban railway station on the western fringes of this enormously populated Eastern capital city.

There is little color in the cloudy scene on this particular morning, with the exception of a young American woman whose cheeks flow with the Danish blood of her ancestors, making them glow with a rosy hue. She is accompanied by another young American lady who smiles easily and contentedly despite the nip in the air, as if the warm weather of spring had already come to relieve those who gnarl and contort their faces in the bracing cold of an Asian winter.

Third in our scene is a lanky, dark-haired young man from the shores of North America. Although his mind and thinking are a wedding of East and West, he ambles up to his lady companions with a gait that is purely American.

The three are volunteer workers in the Japanese Church. Working alongside their Japanese Christian brothers and sisters, they are striving to gather those who would seek after the true God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Alice Dourte teaches English in Tokyo, Japan, with Brethren in Christ Missions. She worships with the Yayoidai Church there. John Moody and Jean Maedke have returned to North America after completing their terms of service in Japan.

We find the VSers meeting this morning in front of the local train station.

Jean: Hi, John!

Alice: Hi!

John: Ohayo! (Good morning!)

Alice: Sorry we're late . . . the streets from Fuchu were so crowded. Well, John, this is your neighborhood. Where do we go?

John: *Makasenasai!* (Leave it to me!) I know a great little place behind Seiyu Department Store . . . 480 yen gets you toast, an egg, hot cheese *au gratin*, a fresh salad, and two cups of coffee. I go there all the time.

Shouldering their way with all their might, the three cross a busy intersection filled with businessmen and students filing in the opposite direction towards the bustling train station. Down a narrow, suddenly empty lane lined with many shops the three pass the department store, cross another street, and dash up the stairs to the second-story coffee shop. The area around any train station in Tokyo is a veritable maze of coffee shops. They are everywhere, and their plush chairs and interiors are a kind of extension of the Japanese homes themselves. The three find a table in the small, attractive interior and order their breakfasts.

Waiter: *Nani ni shimashoo ka?*

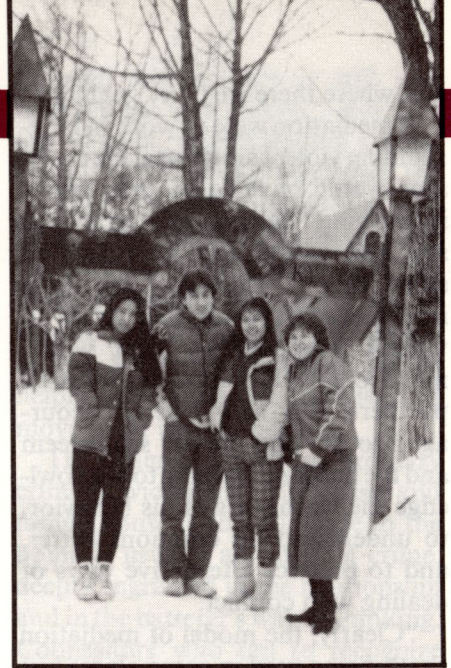
John: *Burekufasuto setto "B," mittsu.*

Waiter: *Koohii o sugu omochi shimashoo ka?*

John: *Hai, onegai shimasu.*

Waiter: *Kashikomarimashita.*

John: (turning to Jean and Alice) What's up with you girls? What's so funny, Jean?



Jean: We got lost last night. I've lived here two and a half years, but last night we got on the wrong train and ended up way out at Yomiuri Land* and . . .

John: Yomiuri Land?

Jean: (laughs) Yup . . . and we got there on the very last train. When the lights started going off in the station and everybody disappeared, we knew there was something wrong.

John: So how did you get home?

Jean: We met a guy.

John: And?

Jean: He was real nice, wasn't he Alice? A Christian, in fact. He asked us in English if we needed help. He called a taxi for us and everything.

John: How did he know that you needed help?

Alice: Probably the helpless look on our faces tipped him off!

A waitress approaches with a curt bow and hands them each a hot, steaming cloth with which to clean their hands and face. She excuses herself with a bow and apologizes for her rudeness. As they delve into their food, the VSers continue their conversation.

Alice: You wouldn't believe what I had the other night for dinner. It was the ultimate Japanese dish—raw tuna, raw squid, raw egg, fermented soybeans, and seaweed, all

*Yomiuri Land is a large amusement park some distance away from the VSers' homes.

mixed together in a bowl! I admit I picked out the raw tuna belly and squid legs, but I ate the rest.

John: Can you imagine trying to describe this kind of stuff to the folks back home? They would never believe it.

Jean: What's worse, can you imagine telling them we actually like it? My mother said she almost fainted when I told her about the raw chicken *sushi* I've come to love with a passion.

John: Seriously, at this point I'd prefer to have any fish raw rather than cooked.

The task of the volunteer service workers in Japan is to make friends. Meaningful relationships form the basis through which they can begin to demonstrate the love of our God. Jean, John, and Alice use their positions as English teachers (a respected and admired position in the eyes of the Japanese) to communicate the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to their students. The three employ a variety of techniques in cultivating techniques that help build relationships with their students.

Jean: Where were you last Thursday during your class time, John? I called, but Pastor Hashimoto said you were out somewhere.

John: Last Thursday? Hmmm. Oh yes, I took my fifth grade boys to Baskin Robbins for a little afternoon snack. The kids loved it.

Alice: I think you did, too.

John: It really was a lot of fun, a good chance to get them out of the classroom. I feel like I'm closer to my students if I can get them outside and away from the books. Besides it's good practice for my boys—I make them order in English. If they make a mistake, I get one bite out of their ice cream cone.

Jean: Needless to say, his boys have attained a flawless level of English fluency!

John: Yeah. Too bad.

Although it is cold in March in the Land of the Rising Sun, April is just around the corner with warm trade winds gusting from the south. Pink, yellow, and white plum blossoms already opening are a promise of warmer days when the famed Japanese *sakura* (cherry blossoms) will bloom, gracing the land with an exquisite, delicate grandeur. The greatest treasure of this Eastern country, though, is its people. Captivating and enchanting, they are a people made by God, a race loved by the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet only a small percentage have a saving knowledge of their Creator, a God who yearns for them and desires their worship as his children.

Oh, what a need to have those precious few who do believe in the risen Christ to be living in this land, displaying the riches of God through their lifestyles. As the Roman Empire

needed the apostles 2,000 years ago to relay the gospel to the world which had not heard, so the Far East needs living, breathing testimonies. Only then will men, women, and children of the Orient feel compelled to seek after that which tugs at their hearts. Only then will they find the Lord Jesus Christ.

Perhaps you, like John, Jean, Alice and those before and after them, are called to this mighty task, the task of being Christ's ambassadors to this country so far away, yet so familiar to the God who created it. Christians in Japan rely on the power of the risen Christ for their daily strength. They are examples of God's patience to humanity. "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 1:12, 14).

Where is God appointing you to service? Whether it be rural America or urban Japan, know that God considers you faithful. God is behind you! If you should sense the call of our God to Japan or elsewhere, pray . . . and act!

Upon entering a coffee-shop or restaurant in Japan, you are greeted by shouts of "*irrashaimase, irrashaimase*" (welcome! welcome!) as each waiter and waitress expresses thanks for your patronage. Among these cries of appreciation to the customers, the three volunteer English teachers discuss the topic which concerns them most and which brought them this far from home, the relaying of the gospel to their friends and students.

John: You know, I was out with two of my best friends the other night, and we had a good time and all. But when can you really tell them straight out how we believe?

Jean: That's so hard sometimes. It's important that we do have a good time with friends. It brings you closer.

John: I know, and I believe that



you've got to win their friendship and trust before any real heartfelt communication can occur.

Alice: But how do you actually begin that heartfelt communication? It seems hard coming right out and telling them about Christ's salvation.

Jean: I think a lot of times, before you even try to be direct in telling the gospel, your students may beat you to it and ask you first. That's a lot more natural approach, I think.

John: If we're truly living a life filled with God's love and compassion, we're going to draw inquisitive comments from our friends naturally. People notice when you're concerned about them.

Alice: I have to remind myself constantly that everything I do communicates a message to the Japanese around me. Our actions and words, although mine may not be very Japanese, should always be telling people who we are and what we're all about.

John: That's true of all Christians anywhere. You've always got to live your message. I think even Christians living in America send a message to Japanese and other people around the world, if only indirectly.

Jean: Although in Japan especially, I feel our students and friends really watch us and think about what we do. I used to feel a kind of pressure knowing I was always being scrutinized by my students, but now I feel that's a privilege. It's an honor that God has chosen me to tell the Japanese about Christ through my behavior.

John and Alice nod in agreement, and all three sip their coffee.

Jean: What do you have there, Alice?

Alice: A letter from the missions office, asking for an article on our work in Japan.

John: I've got an idea. Why don't we write about our everyday life in the form of a dialogue. That would give people a good picture of our life here. We might even inspire potential new English teachers. Only problem is, who'll write it?

John and Alice smile and look at John.

John: Sigh. ■

Missions —

Where do we go

Our Lord's burden for the next towns and Paul's for the next cities should be contagious. One cannot avoid the timeless "go" in the gospel. The passion to reach the world for Christ must be reborn in every generation. This hour is our responsibility. Believers are responsible for evangelizing the unreached of their own generation. At the same time, we as Brethren in Christ cannot go everywhere. We must be selective.

The Board for World Missions has been in dialogue concerning this issue for quite some time. At the June 1986 meeting, members of the board agreed that the following guidelines, although incomplete, should assist us in discerning the Lord's will as we endeavor to make priority decisions about new countries in which we should begin new Brethren in Christ ministries.

1. *The leadership of the Holy Spirit.* He sometimes speaks through a Macedonian-type call. The letter from Cesar Vidal Manzanares was a call to come and help in Spain. There is only one "Macedonian call" recorded in the account of Paul's new missionary thrusts. As with him, so with us, it is more often the inner witness and outward circumstantial confirmation of the Spirit, including the sense of oneness with the sending church.

2. *The Board for World Mission's missiology statement.* Our understandings, our priorities for ministry, and our *modus operandi* must inform the propriety of any course of action. In Caracas, our concern

for a wholistic ministry directs us to minister to the lower class as well as to the middle class. This was made a criteria in selecting the area for ministry.

3. *The perceived need for missionaries.* This can be determined to a significant degree by research on (a) the number of Christians and (b) the number of missionaries per capita among the people being considered. Research of this nature focused the opening of a South American church-planting project in three countries: Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador. The research must be in-depth, e.g., determining the percentage of "statistical Christians" who are nominal versus those who are active.

Venezuela is technically categorized as 97.4 percent Christian; yet Roman Catholic writers admit that the conversion of many of the peoples was superficial in the extreme. It was often at the point of the sword. Practicing Roman Catholics in Venezuela are estimated at 10 percent to 20 percent of the population; Protestants at 2.4 percent. There is one Protestant missionary to every 25,000 persons.

On the other side is Papua, New Guinea, with a population of 2,800,000. There have been mass movements of people to Christ since 1904. Nearly one-half of the population is Protestant, of whom 4 percent are evangelicals. There are 2,100 Protestant missionaries at work in the nation, representing 33 mission societies. The ratio of missionaries is one to every 1,300 people.

next?

by Donald R. Zook

4. *Affirmation from the national church.* Consensus for the Brethren in Christ to come into a country is sought from a broad spectrum of the church and mission organizations which are there. The question is asked, "Are the Brethren in Christ needed here?" Among the Santals in Bangladesh in 1979, the answer was "no." Currently in Bangkok, Thailand, the answer is "yes."

5. *The felt need of the people.* In Colombia, the Brethren in Christ were told the primary and urgent need is for counsellors for families. The decision was made that Bob and Carol Geiger secure master's degrees in counselling and launch a church planting project with counselling as an important ingredient.

6. *The level of receptivity.* An effort is made to find a relatively ripe harvest. In Caracas we were told the response is excellent, but it must begin with building relationships and finding a place outside a home to meet.

7. *The transfer potential for personnel.* The international scene has within it an element of volatility. Governments change overnight and policies of stable governments are sometimes altered with little notice. Brethren in Christ World Missions suffered a decline of morale when missionaries left Zimbabwe with a significant number unable to be re-assigned. The fact that the people of 20 nations speak Spanish was one reason for beginning work in Venezuela and Colombia, and now potentially in Spain.

8. *A blend of service opportunities.* Brethren in Christ World Missions seeks to broaden the overseas service opportunities to accommodate a range of the gifts and calling of our constituent people in overseas missions, without compromising the integrity of our purpose, e.g., to fill positions where nationals are not available. It is with this delicate balance in mind that educational and medical positions are filled by missionaries in Zambia and Zimbabwe, and positions are sought for particular persons in China.

9. *The call of the Lord to nationals.* Where national Christians sense a call from the Lord to plant a Brethren in Christ church in a new area, serious consideration is given to the proposal. This is how Brethren in Christ World Missions began with Pramod Roul in Orissa, India, and another Brethren in Christ witness flows across at least one of the borders of India. A similar planting appears to be in process in Honduras.

10. *Ministries which relate to contemporary missiological force.* The Lord is creating a new vision for relational evangelism to the people of Islam. The sending of Jay and Judy Smith to the Wolof people of Senegal is illustrative. The Brethren in Christ should and can be in step with the Holy Spirit in such new frontiers. In Senegal, our purpose is to assist the evangelization of the Islamic Wolofs who, reportedly as of 1980, had only 10 persons among them who believed on the Lord Jesus. This addresses the need for reaching both the people of Islam and an unreached peoples group.

11. *Missions which relate to other Brethren in Christ Churches.* The Brethren in Christ of Zimbabwe discovered kindred but distinct "Brethren in Christ" in Malawi. Zambia borders Malawi. The potential is enhanced for joint programs which are administered with mutuality and integrity.

12. *Forming fraternities of Brethren in Christ Churches.* Our understanding of the church includes rela-

tionships among national bodies. These develop within language groups (Latin America) and continental groups (India and Japan). Brethren in Christ World Missions church planting projections could profitably reckon with this factor.

13. *The unusual suitability of a Brethren in Christ witness.* When certain national church leaders experienced tremendous trauma between themselves and missionary administrators, they said, "We need a mission like the Brethren in Christ in this country." This instance grew out of the discovery that the board no longer maintains a missionary administrative organization in any country. Administrative relationships are developed directly between Brethren in Christ and the national church. The synthesis of Brethren in Christ theology and theopraxis is also a dominant factor in entering London with a church planting program and in the potential links with churches in South Africa.

14. *The potential of centers of influences.* Contemporary missiology has caught up with the Apostle Paul in a realization of the priority that should be given to world-class cities. The world's urbanization was reported as averaging 23 percent in 1980. The countries in which three cities of recent Brethren in Christ church plantings are located correspondingly reported for 1980 urbanization as follows: Colombia—64 percent, Venezuela—75 percent, United Kingdom—76 percent. Brethren in Christ churches or ministries are now active in ten overseas capital cities.

15. *Travel routes.* Particular attention is given to the factor of administrative travel costs in considering new countries for ministry. In most cases, recent projections can be developed with minimal or no extra air fare—e.g., Bogota, London, Madrid, Bangkok. One major exception is Senegal.

Donald Zook is executive director of the Brethren in Christ Board for World Missions.

God at work in our world

New life in Ndola

Howard Sikwela—Zambia

The church in Ndola was started in 1982 and as usual faced difficulties that an upcoming church faces.

I came to Ndola in January of 1985 to pursue a four-year degree course (Bachelor of Theology) at the Theological College of Central Africa (TCCA). Being a Brethren in Christ member, I joined the Ndola congregation which is the only Brethren in Christ congregation in Ndola.

I cannot go into detail of all that I experienced during the early months of 1985 with this particular congregation. It seemed so different from other Brethren in Christ congregations. The conflict in me was just too much, and I decided to quit and join some other denomination. I found the church 'dead'; there was no warmth at all. To confirm my findings, my wife also shared the same views. It was worse on her part since she comes from a different part of the country and thus could not understand most of the things said.

But I could not just quit like this. Someone had to confirm it also. So I told God my feelings and asked for his will. He answered without much delay by inspiring me to think thus: "Do I have to leave because the congregation seems dead? If so, how many churches am I then going to desert? Am I not being trained as a leader so as to spur others to good works?" (Heb 10:24-25).

This was enough, and so I decided to stay on. Praise God because the decision was a timely one. When I look at the Ndola congregation of 1986 and that of 1985, I see two different congregations altogether.

It all started last year during our special week of thanksgiving at the end of November. About K1,500 was collected. This was a surprisingly large amount for a small congregation like ours.

Then came 1986 and things really started to happen. Church growth is measured in terms of attendance, offering, and individual commitment of the people. The weekly average attendance of 40 went up to 60, and the present average attendance is 71.

The Sunday offering is another area of interest. Praise God that he has taught his people to give with cheerful

hearts. Last year's average offering was K20 per week, but this year it shot up to K50 and right now stands at K65. This may seem to be very little, but we should appreciate it considering the financial constraints of the Zambian families. (The two Sundays after this was written it was up to K100 and the attendance to almost 100.)

Sunday school, which was poorly attended, is now something which one cannot afford to miss. The three Sunday school groups—children, youth, and adults—have suddenly sprung into life. Despite the cold weather at present (June), people can still gather enough warmth to enable them to go to the house of worship on time. The Spirit of God is at work, breaking the hearts of people to seek fellowship.

Midweek meetings have also been started. People meet according to location to minimize travel costs. I am glad to say that midweek meetings are also alive.

But the road is not an easy one. There are rivers to cross, trials, troubles, and thorns on the way. But praise God, for Jesus our Savior is with us, not merely often, but always. (Mt.28:20) The thorns, or bottlenecks, are:

1. We do not have a church building of our own. The one we are currently using belongs to the Ndola City Council, and many other denominations are applying to have this building. Join us in prayer so that God will give us a plot of land and the money to build a house so that his children can worship him freely.

2. Ndola congregation has no full-time pastor, and this has adversely affected the growth of the church. But praise God that TCCA students (the writer and Jacob Mathe from Zimbabwe), Mr. Stuebing, and other lay leaders are doing part of the work. TCCA, it appears, is so far the place to send more Brethren in Christ students if ever the church is to be effective in the urban areas.

3. We also have a language problem. There are about 73 tribes in Zambia, and this means that each locality you go to you are bound to face language problems. This is the situation here. People still have the tendency to prefer Tonga (the language of Southern Province) to Bemba (the language of the Copperbelt

where Ndola is located). But we have made headway by using English for both Sunday school and the main service. It is the hymn books which still create problems, for they are Tonga. English hymn books would be an advantage.

But rejoice, for neither our work nor yours is in vain in the Lord.

Excitement about summer service

Dan Heitzman—student at Messiah College

Thank you so much for both the prayer and financial support you have been giving me. As I have been reading books and listening to the tapes for Operation Mobilization, I have slowly become quite irritable. Why? Well, although I believe each of the tapes and books to be true and important, I didn't want to admit to myself and to God just how far removed from him I actually was. Anyway, last night I had a real longing for yieldedness to God. And being the faithful God he is, he revealed the areas I needed to give over to him. It's so easy for me to forget that I need to give myself over to him each day and die to myself. I got so caught up in serving and learning—books, courses, goals—that I forgot about my relationship with him. And it's amazing, I've accomplished more today than I have in the past three days. Praise God for his rivers of flowing water . . . and peace!

(July, from Mexico) God is doing things . . . He is definitely moving his loving hand over the Mexican people . . . He great has been guiding us via his Spirit. One day it began to rain and two ladies and I were waiting under a roof overhang for the rain to stop. I asked God for two things: that he would stop the rain so we could speak to the next person he had prepared and, second, that he prepare that person's heart. Praise God, he didn't answer the first request because he used the rain to guide us in the second request! A young man opened his door and called us in out of the rain. I said what I could and pointed to some verses and said, "Read it." Then the ladies were able to explain the verses and led him to Jesus!

The church I worked with the last period has really caught fire for Jesus in respect to evangelism. Jesus brought 56-60 people to himself in those two weeks. And now they are beginning courses for discipleship so that those new children of God can grow and share their faith too. (Wouldn't you be excited, too?)

From Atlanta to Bulawayo for training

Bruce Khumalo—Zimbabwe

I have had the privilege of meeting both pastors and laity. I have introduced my leadership programs to different churches and the indication so far is positive. I know I have to slow down, but I cannot wait to see leadership train-

ing effected. God has once more revealed himself to me that he wants me to do leadership training. The reason for this is that I know one black American man, Sylvester Traylor, who comes from Atlanta, Georgia. He heard about me and came the whole way so that I could train him to be an effective missionary. I never met him before. He took us by surprise. He claims that he met some-

body from Fuller who recommended that he come to Zimbabwe to be with me. This truly humbles me. Yet I feel honored by God in his confirming himself in this respect. Sylvester will be returning to the States on August third. I have many dreams and a vision about my vocation. Pray with me for God to open doors in this exploration.

They don't want war: The Brethren in Christ in Nicaragua

by Harriet Bicksler

One of the fastest-growing Brethren in Christ fellowships is in Nicaragua, a country which in recent years has been under enormous tension politically and economically. Considering the circumstances and realizing that most people there are affected in one way or another by the instability, we wondered how the Brethren in Christ Church in Nicaragua relates to the political situation. That basic question was put to Roy Sider, Director of Overseas Ministries for Brethren in Christ Missions, whose most recent trip to Nicaragua was this past February.

Roy quickly agreed to talk, but added that he speaks somewhat unofficially and out of his own perception of what is going on among the Brethren in Christ in Nicaragua. For example, he noted that he sees his role (and, by extension, that of the North American church as a whole) as working at listening to and learning from our brothers and sisters in Nicaragua. With that role in mind, he tries to convey their concerns to the Board for World Missions. The Board listens but does not try to impose its own viewpoint on the Nicaraguan church.

The current situation, Roy believes, needs to be seen in context. The church in Nicaragua has taken approximately the same position under the present Sandinista government as it did under the Somozan government. They didn't appreciate the Somozan government's insensitivity to people's needs, but they weren't active in warfare on either side or

overtly involved politically. When the government changed, there was a general feeling of relief that the war was over and Somoza was out, but there was also uncertainty about what would happen in the future.

Under the present government, Roy reports that the church is not impeded in any way if it is not involved in any illegal activities. Most religious persecution in Nicaragua appears to be the result of churches and people becoming too actively involved in politics. As long as the Brethren in Christ Church remains separate from political activities, it is free to do as it pleases.

That being the case, a position of noninvolvement is understandable. Further, because the Nicaraguan church has taken very seriously the historic Brethren in Christ doctrine of nonresistance, they don't know how much they can be involved without compromising their peace position. They also believe, along with many other Brethren in Christ people, that the role of the church in society is to give a Christian witness to the state and individual people but not to become directly involved in the military or in bringing political pressure to bear on the government.

One way in which the Brethren in Christ Church in Nicaragua is involved, at least indirectly, is through CEPAD, an evangelical organization similar to other organizations of evangelical churches throughout the world. CEPAD is supportive of the government, but also has a pro-

phetic witness to it. At one point, they protested vigorously the fact that young boys were being rounded up indiscriminately and taken into the army. That practice has been stopped as a result. Enrique Palacios, the Executive Minister of the Brethren in Christ Church in Nicaragua, was at first cautiously involved in CEPAD, but now serves as its Vice President.

The Sandinista government has respected the conscientious objector position and has granted exemptions to military service to pastors, youth pastors, and seminarians. In a number of instances where C.O.'s were imprisoned, they were later provided with alternate service opportunities. It was later assumed by the government that these people had proved the sincerity of their convictions by being willing to go to jail for them. Some things which have happened to church members (a family killed, property destroyed, etc.) were not caused deliberately either by the Sandinistas or the *contras*, but rather were the result of war in the area.

In response to a question about how the church feels about United States policy toward the Nicaraguan government, Roy simply said, "They don't want war." It would seem, then, that one thing North American Christians ought to do is to pray. Another constructive thing U.S. Christians could do is to urge their government to seek solutions which will stop rather than escalate the war and which will allow the Nicaraguan people to live peaceably and without fear of being caught in the crossfire.

This article first appeared in Shalom, published by the Board for Brotherhood Concerns. Used by permission.

Church News

Allegheny Conference

On Aug. 24, Sid Roth, host of the "Messianic Vision" daily radio ministry, shared with the **Air Hill** congregation, Chambersburg, Pa. A converted Jew, Roth spoke on fulfilled prophecy about the Jews and Israel. • A carry-in dinner was planned by the **Big Valley** congregation, Belleville, Pa., on Sept. 7, installation Sunday for their new pastor, Richard Lehman. • The **Carlisle**, Pa., church welcomed Mike Martinelli, along with his wife and two sons, as new Director of Youth and Young Adults Ministries on Sept. 7.

On the evening of Aug. 17, the youth of the **Cedar Grove** congregation, Mifflintown, Pa., presented the play "The Champion," a story of the conflict between Jesus and Satan. A Sunday school picnic was enjoyed Aug. 23. • The **Chambersburg**, Pa., church's annual Labor Day camping weekend was held at Roxbury Campground. • Dr. Morris Sider, representing the Board for Ministry and Doctrine, spoke on Aug. 3 to the **Clarence Center**, N.Y., congregation. The family movie "Gospel Blimp" was viewed on Aug. 10.

Missionary Bruce Green spoke Aug. 17 to the **Fairview Avenue** congregation, Waynesboro, Pa., about ministry in Bahrain. • On Aug. 17, Pastor Turman of the **Five Forks** congregation, Waynesboro, Pa., began a seven-Sunday sermon series on Jonah. That evening, Richard Wiles of Mt. Hope Prison Ministries spoke about the upcoming National Prison Invasion, a 50-state crusade into every prison in America during one weekend. • The **Grantham**, Pa., congregation reports that Rich and Debi McCoy and their two sons will be going to Macha Hospital, Zambia, for a short-term missions assignment. Rich will work in the lab, replacing Marilyn Ebersole.

The **Hanover**, Pa., congregation planned a bike trip for Aug. 30 on the trail between Washington and Mount Vernon. • Twenty-one youth and advisors from the **Mechanicsburg**, Pa., congrega-

tion went on a trip recently to the Navajo Mission in New Mexico. • Recently at the **Messiah Village** church, Mechancisburg, Pa., there was a service for the purpose of presenting and autographing of Paul McBeth's book, *20th Century Tentmaker*. The Messiah Village Open House was Sept. 6. It included a chicken barbeque, auction, health fair, hobby display, bake-craft-and-plant sale, wagon rides, and music.

Michael Musser, member of the **Montgomery** congregation, Upton, Pa., and a student at Moody Bible College preparing for the mission field, spoke recently to the congregation. • The Women's Fellowship of **Morning Hour Chapel**, East Berlin, Pa., sponsored a progressive dinner on Aug. 24. Three persons were baptized on Aug. 31. • On Aug. 17, seven persons united with the **Mt. Rock** congregation, Shippensburg, Pa., by letter of transfer, and six by statement of faith.

Fannie Longenecker, serving on the missions office staff at Mt. Joy, recently showed slides of Brethren in Christ work in Nicaragua to the **Wesley** congregation, Mt. Holly Springs, Pa. Phyllis Engle presented information Aug. 11 on her work in Zambia. • David and Margaret Croxford began service Aug. 15 with the **White Marsh**, Md., church planting. • The Eighth Annual Chicken Barbeque was held at the Christian Retreat Center, East Waterford, Pa., on Aug. 16. The day also featured recreation activities, and a concert by Ransom Note from Messiah College. • The Gospel Tide Hour Auxiliary sponsored a bazaar, bake sale, rummage sale, and pig roast on Aug. 22-23.

Atlantic Conference

Pastor Suzuki of the Tachikawa Church in Tokyo brought greetings to the **Cross Roads** congregation, Mt. Joy, Pa., on Aug. 17. Charles Rickel, pastor of the **Bethany** church, Thomas, Okla., was speaker for fall renewal services, Sept.

7-10. • The **Elizabethtown**, Pa., congregation began a ministry of Sunday evening covenant groups with a kick-off dinner on Sept. 21. The congregation planned a "Hello Blitz" on Sept. 28, asking the congregation for 100 volunteers to contact community homes. • Ethan Gramm, new pastor of the **Holden Park** congregation, Orlando, Fla., is teaching the adult Sunday school class on the distinctives of the Brethren in Christ. An evening of fun, food, and fellowship was planned for Aug. 22 at the church parsonage.

The **Hummelstown**, Pa., congregation announced its 100th anniversary and homecoming for Sept. 13-14. The program included an historical summary, music, and messages from former pastors. • On Sept. 7, the members of the adult, youth, and kids' choirs of the **Lancaster**, Pa., congregation enjoyed a kick-off party and first rehearsals. A "Night of Music" service followed for the entire congregation. • The Men's Fellowship of the **Mount Pleasant** congregation, Mt. Joy, Pa., planned a pig roast for Sept. 13. The Messiah Village Chorus presented the evening service on Sept. 14.

"Vegetable Adventures" was the theme for the first Women's Fellowship meeting, Sept. 23, of the **Palmyra**, Pa., congregation. The Messiah College Singers presented the evening service on Sept. 28. • Three persons were baptized recently at the **Pequea** church, Lancaster, Pa. The Christ's Crusaders planned a trip to Rehoboth Beach in mid-August. • The youth, grades 6-12, of the **Refton**, Pa., congregation enjoyed a retreat at Refreshing Mountain, Aug. 15-17. Dave Hershberger and Scott Weaver were guests. An anointing service was planned for Sept. 7.

The **Shenks** congregation planned a Rally Day for Sept. 14. Guest speaker was Barry Kase, member of the Manor congregation and television producer. Children's program was by the David Graybill Ministry Team. Rich Carter from Sunnymead, Calif., spoke in the morning service on Sept. 21. • Aug. 24 was the installation service for Keith and Kathy Tyson, new pastoral couple for the **Speedwell Heights** congregation, Lititz, Pa. • The Atlantic Conference held a training time for church planters Sept. 12-13, 15-16 at Kenbrook Camp. A pastors and wives retreat was held there Sept. 16-19.

(Correction from the September issue: Wayne Kinney was installed in August as **associate** pastor of the Cross Roads church, Mt. Joy, Pa.)

Canadian Conference

The **Bridlewood** congregation, Agincourt, Ont., announced plans for a weekly family night to include prayer time, youth activities, Bible study groups, and childcare. The ladies planned a Tupperware party for Sept. 15. • Rev. Paul Nigh, Hagersville, preached two Sundays in August to the **Cheapside** congregation, Nanticoke, Ont. • The Men's Fellowship of the **Cross Roads Memorial** congregation, Guelph, Ont., planned a fellowship breakfast on Sept. 6 with speaker John Schultz of Shanty Men's Christian Assoc.

A family barbeque was sponsored July 27 by the **Falls View** congregation, Niagara Falls, Ont. Tim Fretz, soon to leave for Ethiopia to serve as an

Rick Mailloux ordained

Rick Mailloux, pastor of the Christian Union Brethren in Christ Church, Garrett, Ind., was ordained for ministry in the church where he is pastor on Sunday evening, June 8. Rev. Mailloux was accompanied by his wife Bonnie as Bishop Owen Alderfer directed the service and conducted the rite of ordination. Rev. Atlee Hershberger of Rolling Acres, Tenn., Bonnie's father, preached the ordination sermon.

Rick is a native of California and Bonnie is from Ohio. They met at Prairie Bible Institute where Rick received a Bachelor of Religious Education degree in pastoral training, and Bonnie received a Bachelor of Religious Education degree with a music minor.



They were married following graduation and came to Garrett in August of 1981. They have two children: Matthew, nearly two, and Phillip, who was dedicated by his grandfather in the June 8 morning worship service.

Shenks honored at retirement

A special service followed by a luncheon was held July 13 by the Community Bible Chapel Brethren in Christ Church, Sarasota, Fla., honoring retiring pastor and Mrs. J. Clair Shenk. Fifteen years ago, Clair and Becki began work with the congregation (then consisting of about three families), and have seen substantial growth, including a building program eight years ago.

A number of guests—local businessmen, professional persons, and pastors—were

present for the day. They, along with members of the congregation, testified to the impact the Shenks had in their lives over the past 15 years. Pastor Shenk received a plaque recognizing the congregation's naming the fellowship hall in his honor. A money tree was presented to the couple, and a trip to Hawaii is now being planned.

The Shenks plan to be available to Brethren in Christ congregations for evangelistic work, weekend Bible conferences, etc. They may be contacted at 5445 Bahai Vista St., Sarasota, FL 33582, phone (813) 371-5708.

agronomist, was guest of honor. • Family Camp at Camp Kahquah was July 26-Aug. 15. Niagara Holiness Camp at Fort Erie took place Aug. 17-24. • The Gospel Echoes Team gave a service of singing and testimonies in July to the Heise Hill congregation, Gormley, Ont. The group tours Canadian prisons from March through December.

Morris Sider, currently preparing a history of the Brethren in Christ in Canada, spoke to the Houghton congregation, Langton, Ont., on Aug. 10. • An installation service for new pastor Dan Steadman was held Aug. 17 at the Ridgemount church, Hamilton, Ont. Bishop Harvey Sider spoke. Vacation Bible School was held for all ages, nursery to adult, Aug. 25-28. • Reception of eight members took place Aug. 10 at the Rosebank church, Petersburg, Ont. That evening, Beth Good, warehouse manager of Self-Help Crafts Canada, showed slides of her visit to Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand. An Appreciation Day was held Aug. 17 for the John Zuck family. They are leaving to pastor the church in Calgary.

On Aug. 10, the Sherkston, Ont., congregation held a Great Adventure Day Picnic following morning worship. August 11-15 was Bible school with classes for all ages. A personal items shower for Turning Point Girls' Home was part of the Sept. 8 ladies meeting. • The Springvale congregation, Hagersville, Ont., had a farewell service and carry-in dinner for Pastor Charlie Byer and family who are going to serve the Fordwich, Ont., congregation. The same day, Aug. 17, five people were baptized. Tim and Lorraine Davies, leaving for two years of service at Timber Bay Children's Home, were also honored.

The Wainfleet Bible school, "Jesus, I Love You," was Aug. 11-15. Bishop Harvey Sider presided at the installation service of David Gifford as interim pastor on Aug. 10. David comes from a pastorate at the Church Avenue Free Methodist Church in Niagara Falls, N.Y., where he was ordained in 1984.

Central Conference

Pastor Calvin Hamblin of the Amherst, Ohio, congregation preached an August sermon series on end-time events. The Sunday school workers appreciation breakfast was Aug. 23. • The Beulah Chapel congregation, Springfield, Ohio, planned a Sunday school picnic for Sept. 6. A play, "Springfield: The Beginnings," was part of the 75th anniversary celebration, Sept. 20-21. • Rev. Bluford Davis was installed at the Campbellville, Ky., church on Sept. 3.

A baptismal service was held Aug. 3 at the Christian Union church, Garrett, Ind. The Dave McGarvey family presented an evening of music on Aug. 24. • Mike and Kathy Folkereth shared their experiences at the Macha Hospital in Zambia

with the Fairview congregation, Englewood, Ohio, on Aug. 24. Interested persons from the congregation spent Sept. 1 at the King's Island amusement park.

On Sept. 22-23, a Central Conference Church Growth rally and workshops were held at the Highland church, West Milton, Ohio. Doug Sider was speaker; Cal Morley, soloist; workshop leaders were Dale Allison and Walter Kelly. • The youth of the Pleasant Hill, Ohio, congregation planned an Aug. 12 excursion to Riverland Music Center, Cincinnati, to hear Amy Grant. • Two students from the Sheboygan, Mich., congregation participated June 14-Aug. 18 in a Teen Missions International work project in Israel. On Sundays, Jonathan Bub and Tyrus Thompson testified in churches through word, song, and puppetry.

The Sippo Valley, Massillon, Ohio, church picnic was Aug. 17. Saturday night camping preceded it at a local farm. • September 28 was designated Homecoming Sunday for the Western Hills congregation, Cincinnati, Ohio. The Harvesters Quartet from Columbia, Ky., conducted the worship service, and a carry-in dinner followed. • Fred visited the Union Grove congregation, New Paris, Ind., on Aug. 10. (Could this be the same FRED who regularly visits the Grantham congregation?) Sept. 13 was set for installation of siding on the church's rear addition.

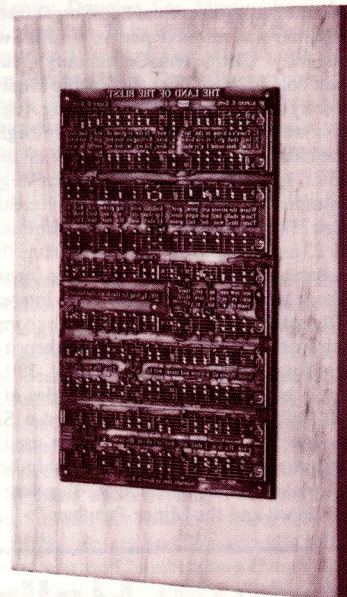
Midwest Conference

In August, there was a welcome home dinner at the Abilene, Ks., church for Sandy Hoover, just returned from a friendship mission to China. • More than 50 adults were expected for the first regular service of the Fellowship Church, Cedar Hill, Texas, on Sept. 14. Church signs are going into place at the Oak Tree Academy and community contact is increasing. • On July 27, the Mountain View congregation, Colorado Springs, Colo., began studying the GRADE program of evangelism and church growth. One person was baptized into Christian fellowship on Aug. 10.

Members of the Oklahoma City congregation were the guests of the Bethany congregation, Thomas, Okla., at an Old Fashioned Sunday School Picnic on Sept. 20 at Red Rock Canyon State Park. • The Red Star congregation, Leedey, Okla., participated in planning a community-wide tent revival on Aug. 24-29. • All the Kansas churches gathered at New Harington Lake on Aug. 31 for a picnic and vesper service hosted by the Rosebank congregation. The services included music from each church and a meditation by Charles Norman. • The Zion congregation, Abilene, Ks., worshiped with Sing-a-thon on the evening of Aug. 17.

continued on next page

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Pacific Conference

The **Chino, Calif.**, congregation hosted a "More Hours in My Day" seminar on Sept. 17, designed for women who want biblical truths and practical helps on time management and home organization. Emilie Barnes was resource person. • Erik Swanson, student at Chemeketa Community College, was guest soloist Aug. 17 at the **Pacific Highway Community church**, Salem, Ore. Starting Aug. 12, Tuesdays were designated "Community Nights," with the church available for a variety of sports and games. Lyle and Sharon Wikoff from Virginia have assumed the posts of directors of recreation and music. The church had candlelight communion on July 27 and a baptismal service on Aug. 3.

Membership discussions were planned for every Thursday night in September for those interested in the **Riverside, Calif.**, congregation. For some, it was their first serious exploration; for others it was a time of final preparation for the Sept. 28 Love Feast. • The College and Career Singles of the **Upland, Calif.**, congregation sponsored a Slave Day in late July with proceeds to be used for mission outreach. Bible Study Fellowship began in the Upland church on Sept. 9. This year the study is "Israel and the Minor Prophets."

Roxbury Holiness Camp 1986

Numbers can tell much of the story of the 1986 Roxbury Holiness Camp meeting. It was the 51st camp. The program committee had planned carefully to develop a program equal to last year's anniversary camp. But the results did not depend on man's efforts, but on the work of the Holy Spirit, peoples' attendance, and response. Someone commented, "I didn't see how it could be better than last year, but this has been the greatest."

The preaching of the Word, prayer, and obedience are the foundation of a good camp. Co-evangelists Dr. Leo Thornton, president of Western Evangelical Seminary, Portland, Ore., and Doug Sider, pastor of Massey Place Community Church, Saskatoon, Sask., traveled over 5,000 miles to Roxbury Camp. Traveling that many miles may not have helped them, but it certainly did not hurt them. God mightily used their ministry. Dr. Arthur Climenhaga gave an outstanding series on "The Lord Jesus Christ and Perfect Love" from the five books by the Apostle John. Rev. John Hawbaker, Camp director, preached the keynote sermon on the camp theme "Perfect Love."

Group prayers were scheduled twice a day, with a chain of prayer throughout the camp. The total number of obedient responses, only God knows, but prayer with seekers and testimonies occurred each day.

A highlight of the camp was Mission Day. Ten past or present missionaries shared experiences of God's provisions and his working in their lives and ministry. Mission Day always attracts a large crowd of people, probably because they want to be involved in spreading the kingdom of God. This vicarious identification explains their generosity in the offering of \$76,000.35, which was the largest ever.

Note: Many thanks to the church pastors, secretaries, and correspondents who are honoring our request to have news and bulletins for the most recent four or five weeks in our office no later than the 25th of each month.

For the Record

Births

Asper: Jana Elaine, July 18; Clayton and Leona (Whitesel) Asper, Harrisburg congregation, Pa.

Bawel: David Benjamin, August 2; Jesse and Lorie (Miller) Bawel, Fordwich congregation, Ont.

Beam: Wesley Paul, July 28; Todd and Sue (Bert) Beam, Air Hill congregation, Pa.

Bender: Courtney Rae, July 28; Dan and Fan (Eshelman) Bender, Manor congregation, Pa.

Brensinger: Jordan Joseph, August 1; Terry and Debbie Brensinger, Mechanicsburg congregation, Pa.

Buckwalter: Katie Elizabeth, August 11; Michael and Joan (Wolgemuth) Buckwalter, Manor congregation, Pa.

Burkholder: Katie Elizabeth, July 23; Mark and Joyce Burkholder, Big Valley congregation, Pa.

Charlton: Daniel Mark, July 10; chosen son of Mark and Lucille Charlton, Falls View congregation, Ont.

Cole: Maria Clärchen, August 23; David and Barbara Cole, Union Grove congregation, Ind.

Dumoulin: Jeffrey Carson, July 11; Russel and Linda Dumoulin, Welland congregation, Ont.

Forrester: Vanessa Lynn, July 30; Kevin and Lori Forrester, Fairview congregation, Ohio.

Gagliardo: Michael Joseph, July 29; Tony and Tammy (Fatschel) Gagliardo, Fairview congregation, Ohio.

Gardner: Kristin Elizabeth, August 7; Jeff and Eileen (Simmons) Gardner, Mechanicsburg congregation, Pa.

Guyer: Ronald David, July 21; Ronald and Debra Guyer, Cedar Grove congregation, Pa.

Heagy: Nathan Lee, August 2; Samuel and Jean (Hess) Heagy, Manor congregation, Pa.

Johns: Tristen Lynn, July 23; Rick and Teresa Johns, Pequea congregation, Pa.

Johnson: Rachel Sarah, May 31; Brian and Doris Johnson, Wainfleet congregation, Ont.

Kitchen: Scott Charles, August 7; Cathy and Roy Kitchen, Welland congregation, Ont.

Kramer: Rebecca Lynn, August 21; George and Kendra Kramer, Elizabethtown congregation, Pa.

Landis: Andrea Joy, July 21; Greg and Terri Landis, Pequea congregation, Pa.

Rice: Emily Marie, July 30; Richard and Jane Rice, Fairview Ave. congregation, Pa.

Royer: Jeremy Chad, June 30; Christine and Ivan Royer, Falls View congregation, Ont.

Sallans: Amy Lynn, July 21; Jeff and Tammy Sallans, Rosebank congregation, Ont.

Sharp: Whitney Nicole, August 17; Steve and Christine Sharp, Mechancsburg congregation, Pa.

Steckley: Kailee Elene, July 30; Larry and Linda Steckley, Falls View congregation, Ont.

VanderPlate: Jarred Scott, August 2; Robert and Barbara (Gerlach) VanderPlate, Manor congregation, Pa.

Wagaman: Andrew Joseph William, August 12; Lawrence and Deborah (Minnick) Wagaman, Fairview Ave. congregation, Pa.

Yu: Kevin David, July 26; Tai-Chi and Margaretha (Hsu) Yu, Mt. Rock congregation, Pa.

Weddings

Bluhm-Climenhage: Denise Jean, daughter of Ross and Jean Climenhage, Ridgeway, Ont., and James, son of Mary and the late Frederick Bluhm of Morden, Man., July 19 at Niagara Christian College, Fort Erie, Ont., with Rev. John Day officiating.

Boake-Steckley: Joanne Elizabeth, daughter of Lloyd and Ruth Steckley, Richmond Hill, Ont.,

and Ted, son of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Boake, Cedar Valley, Ont., July 19 at the Heise Hill Brethren in Christ Church, Gormley, Ont.

Diller-Weigle: Kelly, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dale Weigle, and Marvin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Diller, July 12 at the Mechanicsburg Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Kenneth Hepner and Rev. Steve Lehman officiating.

Hannigan-Fretz: Sandi, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lester Fretz, Vineland, Ont., and Michael, son of Mrs. Bertha Hannigan, Crystal Beach, Ont., August 9 at the Wainfleet Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. and Mrs. Philip Keefer officiating.

Horton-Frey: Ella, daughter of Chris and Bonnie Frey, Abilene, Ks., and Scott, son of Roy and Ruth Horton, Abilene, July 26 at the home of the bride's parents.

Kemrer-Kibler: Georgann Carole, daughter of John K. and Anna Ruth Kibler, Columbia, Pa., and Brian Glen, son of Allan and Connie Kemrer, Conestoga, Pa., August 16 at the Manor Brethren in Christ Church, Columbia, with Rev. John B. Hawbaker and Rev. Henry Hostetter officiating.

Lueth-Rohrer: Diane, daughter of Fred and Shirley Rohrer, Hope, Ks., and Robey, son of Raymond and Johnette Lueth, Hope, July 12 at the Zion Brethren in Christ Church, Abilene, Ks.

Smith-Rydock: Mary E., daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Michael A. Rydock, Elizabethtown, Pa., and David, son of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth R. Smith, Hershey, Pa., August 2 at the Conewago Church of the Brethren, Bachmansville, Pa., with Rev. Daniel Houck of the Shenks Community Brethren in Christ Church officiating.

Tate-Murrell: Deborah Lee, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Murrell, Scarborough, Ont., and Steven Benson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Tate, Cloyne, Ont., August 9 at the Bridlewood Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John P. Walker officiating.

Thomas-Fauver: Robin Kay Fauver and Scott Jay Thomas, July 19 at the Mt. Rock Brethren in Christ Church, Shippensburg, Pa., with Rev. John Schock officiating.

Wacker-Cowell: Beth, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Cowell, and Stephen, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Wacker, August 23 in Harleysville, Pa., with Rev. Kenneth Hepner officiating.

Obituaries

Buckwalter: Alice Irene Buckwalter, 72, of Grants Pass, Ore., died August 5. She was born June 8, 1914, in Talmage, Kan., and moved to Oregon from Upland, Calif., in 1969. She was a teacher for Child Evangelism Fellowship for 10 years and bell choir director at Redwood Country Church. She was a member of AIM, a missionary organization, and the Ladies Sewing Circle. Alice's husband, Amos, preceded her in death on July 12, 1986. She is survived by two daughters, Janie Casad, and Esther Ginder; two sons, Ray and John; two sisters; two brothers; eight grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held at the Redwood Country Church with Rev. James Ernst and Bishop Ralph Wenger officiating. Interment was in the Granite Hill cemetery.

Disher: Oakley Disher, Wainfleet, Ont., born February 10, 1910, died August 16. He is survived by his wife, Lois; a daughter, Mariane Legault, a son, Ronald, and five grandchildren. The funeral

service was conducted by Rev. Kenneth Case and Rev. David Gifford at the Ballard-McDonald Funeral Home with interment at Maple Lawn Cemetery.

Hess: Lottie M. Hess, 90, of Woodbury, Pa., and formerly of Mount Joy, Pa., died July 29 in Nason Hospital, Roaring Spring, Pa. She was born February 24, 1896, in Rheems, Pa., daughter of Elam and Elizabeth (Longenecker) Hersh. On October 26, 1916, she married Henry M. Hess who survives. Also surviving are 6 children, Paul Z., F. Elizabeth Asper, Mary A. Wingerd, Rhoda M. Heisey, Anna Ruth Hostetter, and Lois C. Weaver; 22 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren; 5 sisters and a brother. Lottie was a member of the Cross Roads Brethren in Christ Church, Mt. Joy, and attended the Martinsburg church. Funeral services were held at the S. Gerald Weaver Funeral Home, Woodbury, by Rev. Earl Herr. Further services were held at the Cross Roads church by her son, Rev. Paul Z. Hess, Rev. J. Wilmer Heisey, and Rev. B. E. Thuma. Interment was in the Cross Roads Cemetery.

Kipe: Omar H. Kipe, Waynesboro, Pa., born January 16, 1902, died July 29, in the Waynesboro Hospital. He married Catherine Shank who survives along with 6 children: O. Keith, Mrs. Janet Hostetter, H. Frank, Howard, Alan E., and Mrs. Lois Peckman. Also surviving are 20 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren; and one sister. Omar was a member of the Five Forks Brethren in Christ Church where the funeral service was conducted by Rev. W. Rupert Turman and Rev. Graybill Brubaker. Interment was in the Ringgold Cemetery.


Kitner: William H. Kitner, 75, Chambersburg, Pa., born May 12, 1911, in Perry County, died July 23 in the Chambersburg Hospital. Surviving are his wife, Ruth, and three sisters: Mary Jane Hockenberry, Olive Crull, and Arlene Reasner. William was a member of Bethel Assembly of God, Chambersburg. For 17 years he was employed by the Hershey Creamery. He later was a custodian at First Lutheran Church for 15 years. Ser-

vices were at Park-Geisel Funeral Home with Rev. Charlie B. Byers and Rev. Kevin Witter officiating. Interment was in Parklawn Memorial Gardens.

Martin: Douglas Lee Martin, born June 5, 1962, died July 28 in Buffalo, N.Y. Surviving are his parents, Leroy and Doris (Hubbard) Martin; a sister, Darlene (Mrs. David Barnett); and grandparents, Vickie, preceded him in death three years ago. Douglas was a member of the Clarence Center Brethren in Christ Church, N.Y. Services were held at Millgrove Bible Church with Rev. Richard Long officiating. Interment was in the Clarence Center Cemetery.

Peckman: Pauline W. Peckman, 65, born December 18, 1920, in Guilford Township, Pa., died August 6 in Geisinger Medical Center, Danville. Surviving are her husband, Lester; three sons, Gerald, Lowell, and J. Emerson; a foster son, John R. Slick; five grandchildren; two sisters and a brother. Pauline was a member of the Chambersburg Brethren in Christ Church where she was much loved for forming the Missionary Prayer Band and directing it for more than 20 years. She also was an active member of Peckman Homestead Farms and Woodshed Crafts. Services were at the Chambersburg church with Rev. A. Graybill Brubaker and Rev. Charlie Byers officiating. Interment was in the Air Hill Cemetery.

Robb: Harold F. Robb, Sr., 79, of Swissdale, Lock Haven, Pa., died July 31. Born August 11, 1906, in Castanea, he was the son of the late William and Virgie Wren Robb. Mr. Robb married Mildred Miller on November 12, 1927. He was a member of the Cedar Heights Brethren in Christ Church. Surviving with his wife are 2 sons, Harold F., Jr., and Earl; 3 daughters, Grace Forney, Vicki Sullivan, and Barbara Peters; 12 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; 2 brothers; and 2 sisters. Funeral services were held August 3 at the Cedar Heights church with Rev. John L. Bundy and Rev. Richard Long officiating. Interment was in Summit Hill Cemetery in Marsh Creek.



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Missions 87

by Paul Hostetler

Perhaps you have heard about MISSIONS 87 and are wondering what it is. Is it missions? Is it Cooperative Ministries? Actually, it is both.

MISSIONS 87 is the theme of a special program to raise approved budget monies for the far-flung outreach ministries of the Brethren in Christ Church next year. These are the ministries which reach beyond the boundaries of local congregations.

According to Charles Frey, General Chairman of MISSIONS 87, "The word 'missions' has had a long and rich tradition among the Brethren in Christ. The use of the word has been almost synonymous with evangelism. It has referred to outreach within the local community, to the starting of new works in North America both in rural and urban areas, and to ministry overseas. MISSIONS

87 represents an opportunity for spiritual growth through giving."

Harold Chubb, General Treasurer of our brotherhood, says, "I am pleased to be an advocate of this program and encourage you to join me in supporting Brethren in Christ ministries. Individually, we cannot fulfill all the vision represented by the programs of agencies funded by Cooperative Ministries. But together we have the opportunity to make a significant testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ and to have an impact on a needy world.

Both Charles Frey and Harold Chubb are part of a task force which has been commissioned to organize in commitment to the ministries of the church. Others working with them are: Lester Fretz, Executive Director of the Canadian Stewardship Office; Ray Hostetler, President of Messiah College; Don Zook, Executive Director of the Board for World Missions; and Paul Hostetler, Associate Director of Stewardship, U.S.

The task force, along with many others who attended the 1986 General Conference, are eager to put dollar-sign wheels under the strong approval given there to the 1987 budget for the Church's ministries. Carol Thrush expressed it well: "My concern is that all of the voting members who so enthusiastically supported the recommendations will take that same enthusiasm back home and generate support and commitment in our local congregations for our denominational mandates and goals."

Now, how is MISSIONS 87 doing this? After the general chairman was named, the bishops were asked to serve as regional chairmen. They gladly con-

presented and have been giving strong assistance and direction. One way in which they helped was in the selection of an "Advocate" from each church.

These men and women were chosen because of their strong belief in the program and activities of the Regional and General Conference ministries of the Brethren in Christ. They are individuals who are sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leadings and people's feelings. Each Advocate, teaming up with an Advocate from another congregation, is making a call on the key budget building group of his or her home congregation and one or two other congregations.

These Advocate teams are talking with enthusiasm about the outreach thrust of the church and are suggesting specific goals to each congregation, based on a percentage increase over actual giving to regional and general ministries in 1985. Simply looking at 1985 giving totals, including undesignated, designated, and direct giving, has revealed that the increase in overall giving in 1987 will need to be 21.5 percent over 1985. This amounts to about ten percent each year. However, the goals being proposed to the churches vary from that average.

Knowing that congregations, like people, have a wide variety of giving patterns, they have been classified into three divisions—Advanced, Pacesetter, and Support. These classifications are based on giving records over the past five years.

Congregations in the Advanced Division are being challenged to increase their giving to Regional and General Conference ministries at the highest

To Canadian Readers

Our congratulations to Lester Fretz and other stewardship leaders of the Canadian Conference for having made their plans in March for raising the Canadian Conference's 1987 Cooperative Ministries budget. The task force agreed that those plans should stay in place. Therefore the details of administering MISSIONS 87 do not apply in the Canadian Conference. However, Canadian Conference giving in 1985 was included with all the other conferences when it was determined that an increase of 21.5 percent is needed in 1987.

level. Churches in the Pacesetter Division are challenged to increase their giving to those ministries at about the 21.5 percent average increase needed. Churches in the Support Division are asked to increase their giving to the ministries at a somewhat lower level.

These goals are challenging indeed, and deep commitment (even sacrifice) will be needed on the part of individuals and churches to GO OVER THE TOP in 1987. Even if all the proposed increases are placed into local church budgets, an additional \$600,000 will need to be raised through a Special Gifts Phase. Thirty-nine persons (who already give generously to their home church), with a history of substantial direct giving to Brethren in Christ ministries, will be asked to make Faith Promise Commitments for 1987.

Goals are important. They help us grow in the Lord. They assist us in staying on course. One Brethren in Christ congregation has a goal of giving at least 40 percent of its total income to Cooperative Ministries. When they reach that goal, they will almost certainly set another, higher goal.

The late, beloved C. N. Hostetter, Jr. stressed the importance of setting goals. "Some people," he said, "are continually shooting at nothing—and they are always on target!" How tragic.

Is going over the top *really* possible? We believe it is! In the words of the Summit View banner at General Conference, "Together With God We Can!" We believe that the Brethren in Christ were "counting the cost" when they approved the 1987 budget at the 1986 General Conference.

We are counting on all these voting members who represented our congregations to join hands with key budget building groups, Advocates, pastors, bishops, and all other Brethren in Christ in reaching this worthy goal.

Next month in this column, D. Ray Hostetter discusses the importance of congregational goals.

For more information about MISSIONS 87, including an 8-page brochure, contact Paul Hostetter, P.O. Box 450, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055; phone (717) 697-2634.

Faith and Farming December conference at Laurelville Center

The third Faith and Farming Conference will be held December 3-5 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa.

"During one of the darkest periods of North American agriculture—like the Hebrew exile in Babylon—we look to God and to the future," said Levi Miller of the Laurelville Center.

Participants will explore the economical, sociological, and spiritual aspects of farming, in addresses, seminars, and small group discussion. Keynote speaker Howard Brenneman of Hesston, Kan., will discuss the future of farming in North America. Brenneman has wide farm and business experience, having

been associated with Hesston Corporation for 28 years, nine years as president.

Seminars will cover a variety of subjects: "Alternate Agriculture," by Keith Helmuth, a farmer and lay philosopher from Debeck, New Brunswick; "Dealing with Family Stress," by John Hershberger of Oaklawn Psychiatric Center, Elkhart, Ind.; "Ownership for the Future: Land Trusts," by James Stewart, board chairperson for First National Bank, Lincoln, Ill.; and "Generational Transfer of Farming," by Dwight Stoltzfus, former president of Mennonite Mutual Aid and farmer.

A special transition seminar is planned for families who have already left farming or are on their way out, November 30 to December 3.

For more information write Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Route 5, Box 145, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666; or call (412) 423-2056.

MEDA convention to examine issues of faith and excellence

The meaning of business "excellence" from a Christian perspective will be the focus of the 1986 convention of Mennonite Economic Development Associates, to be held Nov. 6-9 in Kitchener, Ont.

Keynote addresses, panel discussions and workshops will examine the convention theme, "Business and Church: In Search of Excellence."

"The term excellence has become a popular part of business jargon in recent years," says Neil Janzen, MEDA's president. "We want to take a look at it from a biblical standpoint."

A Christian concept of excellence helps guard against mediocrity on the one hand, and rampant success on the other, says Janzen. Convention 86 intends to probe the connection between business principles and Christian faith and chart a course toward a biblical understanding of "the more excellent way."

Major input will be provided by J. Lawrence Burkholder, former Goshen (Ind.) College president, entrepreneur and theologian. Responding to his presentations and leading panel discussions on related topics will be Rod Sawatsky,

academic dean of Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont.

Garry Loewen, former executive assistant to the president of Air Canada and currently a Manitoba pastor, will present biblical meditations on "excellence and faithfulness."

Workshops will address the ethical implications of risk; how to embody love and justice in business; hiring and firing; the tension between realists and idealists in the church; and other topics.

Several day-long seminars will be held prior to the convention. Among those topics will be: employee relationships; coping with failure; and improving communication in business and home life.

The convention is open to the general public, including businesspersons, managers, employees, pastors and church leaders.

MEDA is an association of 1,500 Mennonites and Brethren in Christ who want to nurture and express their Christian faith in a business or work setting. More information about the convention can be obtained by contacting MEDA at 402-280 Smith St., Winnipeg, MB R3C 1K2. Phone (204) 944-1995.

Messiah College News

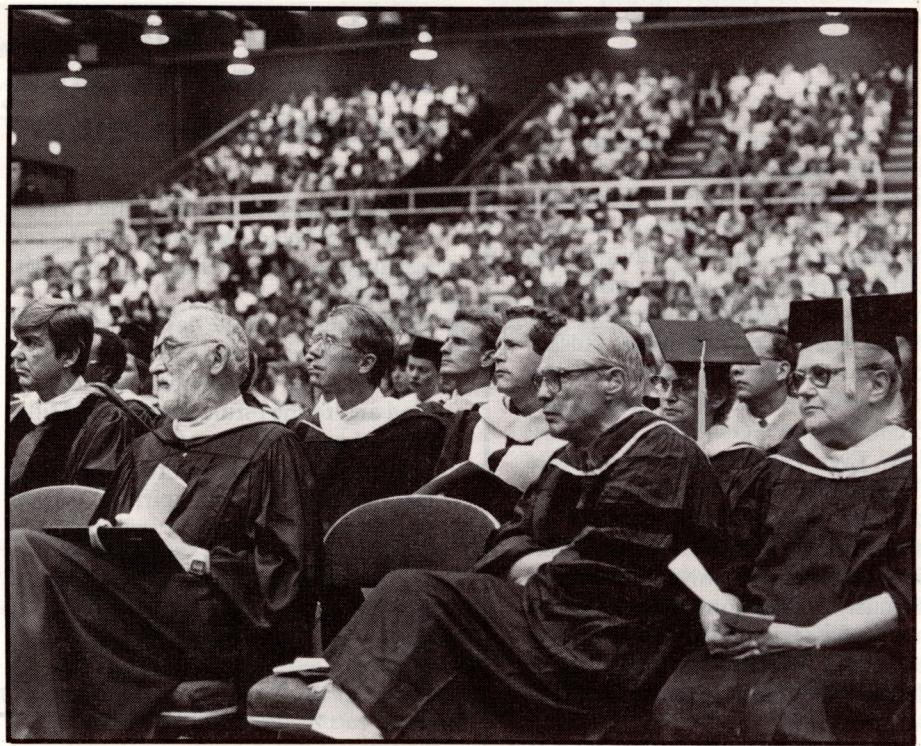
Convocation Chapel initiates new year

The 1986-87 academic year, the 77th one for Messiah College, got underway September 2 with the procession of faculty into Convocation Chapel. Messiah's teaching faculty—95 full-time and 49 part-time—is its largest ever, as is the student body of more than 1,900.

The new freshman class numbers approximately 500. Of the freshmen, 22 percent graduated in the top five percent of their high school class. Vice-President for Academic Affairs H. David Brandt challenged the new students to push the students already here, and said "We owe our God our best—and this is true as much in the intellectual area as it is in other areas."

Among the returning students recognized were 11 Brethren in Christ students who achieved a perfect 4.0 grade point average for the spring 1986 semester. They are listed as follows:

Seniors: Mindy Brubaker, mathematics, Grantham, Pa.; David Deyhle, behavioral science, Springfield, Ohio; Karl Hostetler, Christian education, Upland, Calif.; Jill Seaman, computer science, East Amherst, N.Y.; Juniors: Kevin Cassel, pre-engineering, Grantham, Pa.; Thomas Mann, pre-engineering, Elizabethtown, Pa.; Carol Peterman, elementary education, Manheim, Pa.; Sophomores: Kathy Besecker, early



childhood education, Waynesboro, Pa.; Diane Donat, elementary education, Columbia, Pa.; Vicki Seibert, elementary education, East Berlin, Pa.; Bradley Steinbrecher, pre-engineering, Greenville, Ohio.

Despite the long dinner lines, heavy books, and early morning (8:00 a.m.) classes that freshmen like to complain about, most new students are enjoying college life. Nineteen freshmen and seven transfers make up the roster of new Brethren in Christ students (see below).

Laurie Linn, a freshman from New

Cumberland, Pa., (Redland Valley congregation) likes the way new students are treated at Messiah, compared to some other schools. "I like the Christian atmosphere—everybody's so friendly," she said. "And the freshmen don't get looked down upon and made to do things like they do at secular schools." Linn, daughter of Melvin and Patricia Linn, 498 Spruce Road, New Cumberland, is majoring in human resource management.

Elizabethtown, Pa., congregation member Steve Allison, majoring in biology, also said that the friendliness of people on campus is the best thing about college life so far. "Everybody's been nice and easy to get along with; the classes have been difficult, but that's what I expected. The faculty have been cooperative and concerned for the students." The son of Rev. W. Dale and Pauline Allison, 1050 S. Locust St., Elizabethtown, Steve would eventually like to enter the field of medical ethics.

Other Brethren in Christ students new this fall are listed by state or province, their major, and congregation as follows:

TRANSFERS:

Oklahoma

Lori Eyster, undeclared, Thomas (Bethany)

Pennsylvania

Lisa Eshelman, elementary education, Sellersville (Souderton)



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Registration deadline—November 20, 1986

Three Brethren in Christ members of the Messiah College Diplomats are shown posing during an initial meeting of the group. As student representatives of the college, Diplomats work to maintain a liaison between Messiah students and administrators. They also assist the Admissions and Student Development Office by hosting prospective students visiting the college, and by participating in off-campus activities.

Shown are, from left, Jeff Garis, a junior English major from Hatfield, Pa. (Souderton Congregation); Tim Day, a junior family studies major from Ridge-way, Ontario (Sherkston Congregation);



and David Deyhle, a senior religion major from Springfield, Ohio (Beulah Chapel).

Scott Koser, chemistry, Elizabethtown (Elizabethtown)

Michael Sandler, mathematics, Souderton (Souderton) Ontario

Timothy Cober, history, Port Colborne (Port Colborne)

Sam Rossi, psychology, Sherkston (Sherkston)

Kent Warkentin, physical education/psychology, Wainfleet (Wainfleet)

FRESHMEN

Florida

Raquel Llanes, undeclared, Miami (Miami)

Ohio

Lori Lee Paulus, elementary education, West Milton (Highland)

Michelle Smith, education, Laura (Highland)

Pennsylvania

Dallas Baer, religion, Bethel (Fairland)

Elaine Baugher, elementary education, Abbottstown (Hanover)

Leann Beers, economics, Liverpool (Roseglen)

Dawn Geib, accounting, Colledgeville (Perkiomen Valley)

Duane Heisey, recreation, Manheim (Crossroads)

Duane Hess, accounting, Manheim (Manheim)

Jane Howe, nursing, Hanover (Hanover)

Elizabeth Imboden, biology, Mechanicsburg (Mechanicsburg)

David Kreider, biology, Elizabethtown (Elizabethtown)

Linda Lupold, nursing, New Providence (Pequea)

Todd McKee, business, Punxsatawney (Punxsatawney)

Andrew Miller, history, Dillsburg (Morning Hour Chapel)

Maurice Schwartz, radio, TV and film, York (Locust Grove)

Hong Kong

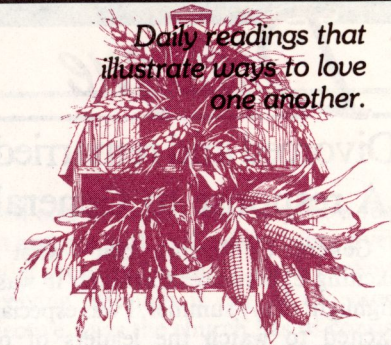
Edwin Chi-King Lun, business administration, Kowloon Tong (Riverside Chapel)

Homecoming is October 16-19

Billed as a "Family Reunion," Homecoming 1986 will begin Thursday afternoon, October 16, with a meeting of the Committee on Trustees, and concluding Sunday with Homecoming Worship in Grantham Church, when C. Parker Wright of the Fellowship Foundation, Washington, D.C., will deliver the sermon.

In between, Director of Alumni Relations Glenn Heisey promises a busy slate of activities, including a Susquehanna Valley Lyceum appearance by political commentator Phyllis Schlafly, class reunions ('46, '56, '61, '66, '76 and '81) as well as Upland Alumni and Philadelphia Campus reunions, and a 5K Falcon Fun Run. There will be swimming in the Fredricksen Natatorium for alumni, as well as exciting intercollegiate sports contests. Also, K. B. Hoover will conduct fall colors walking tours, and the Messiah College Wind Ensemble will entertain at the Alumni Banquet Saturday evening.

For banquet reservations or for more information, contact the Alumni Office at (717) 691-6019. Join the celebration!



"Love One Another"

Day	Book & Chapter
	2. Listening attentively
W	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 James 1:12-20
T	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Proverbs 18:13; 21:13; 23:22
F	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Proverbs 22:17-21
S	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16
	3. Communicating properly
S	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Colossians 3:12-17
M	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Matthew 12:33-37
T	<input type="checkbox"/> 7 Acts 4:5-20
W	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 Ephesians 5:1-7
T	<input type="checkbox"/> 9 Ephesians 5:15-21
F	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 1 Peter 3:13-17
	B. Communicating with Actions
	1. Importance of actions
S	<input type="checkbox"/> 11 Luke 6:46-49
S	<input type="checkbox"/> 12 Matthew 15:1-9
M	<input type="checkbox"/> 13 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10
	2. Actions communicating love
T	<input type="checkbox"/> 14 1 John 3:16-23
W	<input type="checkbox"/> 15 1 Corinthians 13:1-7
T	<input type="checkbox"/> 16 Luke 10:25-37
	3. Actions communicating acceptance
F	<input type="checkbox"/> 17 John 4:5-26
S	<input type="checkbox"/> 18 1 Corinthians 9:19-23
	4. Actions communicating commitment
S	<input type="checkbox"/> 19 Mark 5:35-41
M	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 Luke 10:38-42
	C. Communicating wisely
	1. Speaking wisely
T	<input type="checkbox"/> 21 Proverbs 11:7-11
W	<input type="checkbox"/> 22 Proverbs 18:21; 21:23; 25:15
T	<input type="checkbox"/> 23 Proverbs 24:23-29
	2. Communicating unwisely
F	<input type="checkbox"/> 24 Proverbs 26:3-12
S	<input type="checkbox"/> 25 Proverbs 15:28; 16:27; 24:1-2
	D. Communicating Honestly
	1. Honesty with self
S	<input type="checkbox"/> 26 Psalm 51:6-17
M	<input type="checkbox"/> 27 Psalm 36:1-4
T	<input type="checkbox"/> 28 1 John 1:5-10
W	<input type="checkbox"/> 29 Psalm 15:1-5
T	<input type="checkbox"/> 30 Jeremiah 17:5-10
F	<input type="checkbox"/> 31 Romans 7:15-25

NOVEMBER

Day	Book & Chapter
S	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Psalm 19:7-14
	2. Dishonesty
S	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Psalm 5:1-12
M	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Psalm 50:16-23
T	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Psalm 52:1-7
W	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Colossians 2:1-10
T	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 John 8:30-36
	3. Honesty in tense situations
F	<input type="checkbox"/> 7 Galatians 4:8-20
S	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 Matthew 12:1-8
S	<input type="checkbox"/> 9 Matthew 15:21-28

This informative outline on interpersonal relationships and all Scripture references are taken from the Love One Another Bible study; ©Churches Alive, 1978, used by permission.

If you find these readings helpful, we recommend the seven-book study series, suited for individual and/or group study. For a free brochure, contact: Churches Alive International, Box 3800, San Bernardino, CA 92413

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Divorced and remarried Brethren in Christ ministers? (A response to General Conference debate)

General Conference 1986—what an exciting experience. Certainly it was a highlight of my summer. I was especially excited to watch the leaders of our denomination preach, teach, lead, and direct a superbly well-organized conference. I was impressed with the reports and recommendations, indicating hours of time and prayer, seeking God's will for our denomination.

As in all conferences though, there are issues that require more discussion than time will allow. Such was the case with the Board for Ministry and Doctrine's report. The report contained a paragraph outlining the disciplinary action to be used in the event one of our ministers would be involved in divorce and remarriage. The sentence creating the discussion is as follows: "Any minister involved in divorce and remarriage is to face the discipline of at least one year suspension of ministerial credentials before reinstatement is considered." The discussion on the Conference floor dealt with the unacceptability of reinstalling a divorced and remarried minister. After much discussion, a motion passed sending the issue to the Board of Administration for reconsideration.

That's really interesting. What's to be reconsidered? We all know that divorce and remarriage is sin. The Scripture is adequately clear about that. And it's no

secret that being born again, baptized, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Spirit does not make us immune from Satan's snares and traps. So what happens when we've been ensnared? Does God just cast us aside? Are we seen as just another casualty? Another defeat for the Savior? Certainly not! God has never been scandalized by our sin nor anyone else's sin. It was God who came looking for Adam and Eve. It was God who sent a fish after Jonah. God came to David when he sinned with Bathsheba. These weren't evil men who found God after their sin. They were godly men who sinned. God came to them; they repented; were forgiven; and reinstated into God's kingdom work and ministry.

I ask again, what is the Board of Administration going to reexamine? God's grace? His desire to forgive? His willingness to use sinners for the work of his kingdom? If that's who God is and the way he responds to sinners, can we do less?

Can we really refuse to forgive, or see as unfit, a minister involved in divorce and remarriage? Can we really say such a person is not fit for reinstatement into God's kingdom work as a minister or in whatever assignment God should choose? Brothers and sisters, if we begin to legislate who can and cannot be a part

of the ministerium or the brotherhood based on sins committed, without any provision for reinstatement after repentance and forgiveness, we've become the servant described in Matthew 18:21-35 who, after being forgiven a debt of great proportion, put his fellow servant in jail (wouldn't allow him to minister) because of just one debt.

We need to recognize sin, but we must also have some understanding of judgment and condemnation. It was Jesus who taught us that God would use the same measure to judge us that we use to judge others (Matt. 7:1-2). To really think about God's judgment based on sin alone is frightening at best. We cannot afford to move in that direction.

I strongly support the statement as presented in the Board for Ministry and Doctrine's report. It says three significant things:

(1) It recognizes divorce and remarriage as sin. It does this by calling for discipline. Discipline as used in their statement refers to punishment or admonishment. Mistakes don't call for discipline; disobedience calls for discipline. To divorce and remarry is direct disobedience.

(2) It recognizes that repentance, forgiveness, and healing take time. It suggests a one-year minimum recovery period before even considering reinstatement.

(3) By considering reinstatement, it recognizes God's power of forgiveness, his willingness to use our weaknesses to display his strength, and his overwhelming desire to use forgiven sinners for his work and ministry in building his kingdom.

We've begun a good thing. We've continued to sound the message that divorce and remarriage is sin. It's serious and carries strong consequences. However, we've also left the door open for repentance, forgiveness, and a rebuilding of relationships with Jesus and his church by allowing God to call into ministry those he has chosen, without our veto power based on our memory of past transgressions.

Board of Administration, we've commissioned you to reconsider these issues. If we are denied access to what God has taught the divorced person, we can expect our people to continue being ensnared in divorce, without ever hearing the message or learning the lessons God taught those already ensnared. —Nelson Steffy, a Lancaster (Pa.) congregational delegate to the 1986 General Conference.

WANTED: Stories and Models for Deacon Resource

A resource for deacons in the believers church is being developed jointly by Brethren and Mennonites. The publishing committee is eager to have stories of individuals who have experienced the ministries of deacons. Whether in a deacon visit, receiving support during a crisis time, or experiencing the counsel of a deacon, all stories are invited.

Equally important are congregational descriptions of effective deacon programs. The resource planners hope to include ten congregational models. Congregational descriptions need to be limited to four double-spaced pages, and should include "what the program looks like" and "how it works."

Individual stories and congregational models should be sent to Owen Alderfer, P.O. Box 57, West Milton, Ohio 45383. Stories must be in hand by November 28, 1986, to make the deadline. Include your name, address, and congregation.

The editors will make the final choice of stories and models to be included in the resource. However, all information received will be preserved and regarded in a confidential manner.

Dear Paul,

I have been wanting to write to you about some stewardship questions, but I was delayed by a business trip. Just before leaving, I picked up some information at our church about Missions '87, a plan to challenge congregations in the area of giving. So while traveling, I got to thinking about some exciting things. I'm returning home today—spending several hours floating at 35,000 feet above the great countryside. Maybe it is the spectacular beauty of this clear day, or maybe it's one of those times of divinely prompted inspiration, or maybe both. I just know that sitting here seeing fields and mountains and rivers and cities all blending together in one grand panorama helps me to believe in the feasibility of another panoramic vision I see.

This other vision has to do with the church. We have a very special brotherhood, Paul. We Brethren in Christ are committed to sound doctrine and we're reaching out to the lost—and we are in need of revival. That's not an indictment against the Brethren in Christ. It is simply an affirmation that any body of believers must keep clarifying the basics. It is so easy to get caught up in causes and neglect what is crucial. I have not researched your letters or the writings of other spiritual advisors on the matter of revival and I certainly don't want to propose a new formula, but when I think about how to experience revival, this much seems clear: (1) there must be a heartfelt hunger to know and experience the reality of God, (2) the Scripture must be read and received with openness, and (3) those who would prepare the way for a fresh outpouring of God's Spirit will need to demonstrate their joyful commitment to obedience.

The amazing thing to me is that I believe all three of those revival essentials are blossoming with new potential right now. I knew you would be interested, so let me share the vision, the panorama, from my perspective.

The first essential I mentioned is heartfelt hunger after God, a *desire* to know him and experience his renewing touch. Do you remember a few months ago when I wrote to tell you about Renewal 2000 (Phase II)? I think I mentioned then that our leaders seem to be

appropriately emphasizing desire for *renewal* as they set out to write a doctrinal statement for the church in today's world. I remember the day a member of the Renewal 2000 task force spoke about their first meeting. He said the group was moved to special prayer. They prayed that, more than anything else, the process of writing a new doctrinal statement would open the way for renewal. When I heard that, my spirit rejoiced in hope and anticipation. And as I reflect on it now in writing to you, Paul, I see Renewal 2000 as an expression of our church's heartfelt hunger after God—a major step toward revival.

The second essential is an openness to the Scriptures. I believe our church is focusing on this second essential and by doing so is taking another major step toward revival. A few months ago over 200 ministers and laypersons got together in a Study Conference on Biblical Interpretation. As I read the various reports from the conference, it was clear that among those participants there was definite enthusiasm for the Scriptures. They seemed to express a strong conviction that indeed the Bible is our guide for living and we had better be sure we know how to perceive its message. Can you imagine the powerful effect of that emphasis, Paul, if in every congregation there is a growing hunger to "know the truth"? Pastors would never be content to preach without having their sermons deeply rooted in Scripture that unfolds into practical application. Young and old would read their Bibles regularly and with an appetite for truth so that when they go to worship they would inspire their teachers and pastors by their hunger after righteousness. Revival must surely be right at hand when Scripture is read with such openness.

Well, as I said, just before leaving on my trip I learned about Missions '87 and that's when the panorama seemed to come into focus for me. Missions '87 appears to be simply a way of challenging each church to make giving a serious priority. Actually it sharpens that challenge by doing exactly what you modeled with the Christians at Corinth. I like the way you wrote to them: "So I have asked these brothers to arrive ahead of me to see that the gift you promised is on

hand and waiting. I want it to be a real gift and not look as if it were being given under pressure." Frankly, Paul, I believe receiving offerings is one of the most effective ways the church has of consistently calling us to the serious implications of obedience. Every Sunday, people who are obedient to the Scripture affirm that obedience by giving the church their money—proportionately, sacrificially and systematically! Likewise, the disobedient are confronted by their sin every Sunday as they give God the little bit they have left over or a mere financial crumb from their plentiful resources.

I really believe, Paul, that our church's Cooperative Ministries plan and the Missions '87 thrust are solidly biblical approaches to giving. (Your second letter to Corinth, especially chapters 8 and 9, makes this very clear!) And since "giving" is an obedience issue, it is apparent that by biblical giving we can take a major step toward revival as we "demonstrate our joyful commitment to obedience" (essential #3). I just hope we who make up our congregations won't miss this opportunity to take one more step toward revival. It will be so easy for some of us to continue our silly excuses ("The economy is bad"; "we had a lot of sickness this year"; "we just bought our house.") It would even be possible for the pastor and church board to be protective and shortsighted and miss an opportunity to lead the church through this door to renewal.

Thanks for listening. Sitting here today and "seeing" this panoramic vision of the paths to revival is very exhilarating. I'm almost afraid to come down for fear the vision will fade. I guess that is why I decided to put it on paper in a letter to you today. Maybe this way it will blossom and grow rather than fade.

Onesimus

Readers may correspond with both Phoebe and Onesimus by writing to them c/o the *Evangelical Visitor*, P.O. Box 166, Napanee, IN 46550.

A Closet Analogy

The closets in our house are small. That's probably a good thing because I have a hard time keeping them in order. I never know what to do with all the stuff that accumulates around the house. Some things I can throw away quickly, other things have places where they belong until they're needed again, but there are always things which don't really belong anywhere. In our house, closets, cupboards, and drawers often serve as handy catch-alls for all sorts of odds and ends.

A closet which starts out as a well-organized neat storage place for a few specific items can easily become so cluttered that I can no longer find anything in it or put anything more away. I know I have a problem when the door won't close anymore or when things fall out in a heap at my feet when I open the door! Cleaning closets is no simple task, however; it's not just a matter of taking everything out and putting it back neatly. I have to make decisions about what to keep and what to throw away. I have to consult other members of the family before I dispose of what might be someone's treasured possession. I have to find new places for some items.

I've thought about how the mind is like a closet, storing up all sorts of information, ideas, and emotions. My mind sometimes reaches its capacity for handling all that I experience daily. I usually don't have the time or energy to make sense of everything at the time, and, instead, I store things in a corner of my mind to be taken care of later. Eventually, however, the corner overflows, I feel overwhelmed, and I have to sort and clean, much as I clean the closets in my house.

When I begin to feel overwhelmed, it's often either because I have too much to do, or I'm trying to shove feelings of anger, hurt, and frustration into the back of my mind, or I have too many unanswered questions to deal with, or I'm suppressing my own needs. Sometimes I need to slow down and not try to do so much, or to fill so many different roles. "Housecleaning" also often means a simple acknowledgement that I'm overloaded—whether physically, emotionally, or spiritually. That sounds easy enough, but it's often hard for me to admit that I've reached my limit. I seem to have a compulsion to be able to do and handle everything.

There are also other steps in the housecleaning process. I've learned that it is helpful to talk to my husband, a friend, a pastor, or a professional counselor. They are often able to help me put things in perspective, to sort out my feelings, and to set priorities. If I can determine that something is not all that important or significant in the great scheme of life, I can more easily put it out of my mind entirely.

Recognizing and expressing negative feelings that I've been storing up for awhile is another aspect of housecleaning. At the time I first experience these feelings, I often can't deal with them, but I've learned that I need to allow my feelings of anger and hurt to see the light of day so that I can resolve them openly and honestly. Stuffing them in the back of the closet doesn't get rid of them, but rather lets them poison my whole outlook.

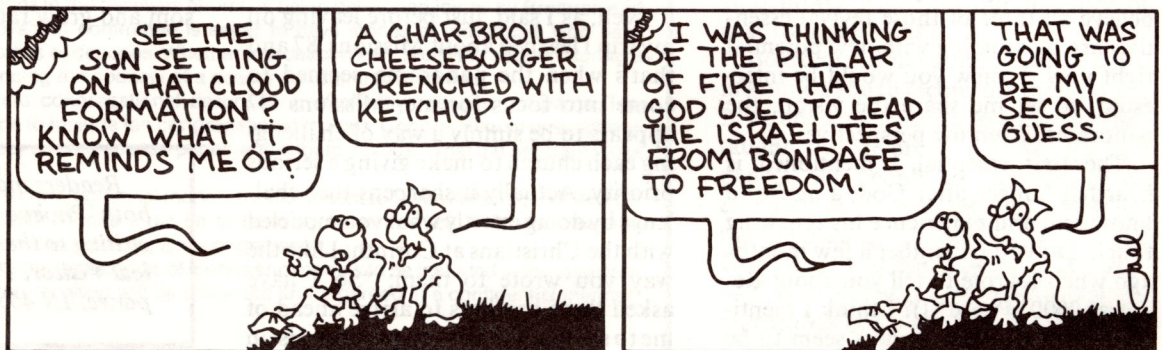
Periodically, I also remind myself that some of the questions that crowd my mind can't be answered. When I can

be comfortable with complexity and ambiguity, and not expect easy answers to difficult questions, I can relax. My being more able to relax in the face of difficult questions has resulted, perhaps ironically, in a broader view of God and his sovereignty. I wonder if when we try to have all our questions carefully answered in specific ways and stacked neatly on the shelves of our minds, we are exercising less faith than when we allow some disorder (unanswered questions, unresolved issues) and let God work in ways that don't necessarily fit our human ideas. I don't want to limit God to my finite understandings of his ways.

I once saw a placard that read, "A clean house is a sign of a wasted life." I've always interpreted that to my advantage to mean that there are more important things to do with one's life than spend it keeping an immaculate house. Similarly, to press the analogy a bit further (not to the breaking point, I hope!), I wonder whether a mind which has everything all figured out and neatly stored away is a mind that has stopped thinking and growing. Perhaps it's a sign of spiritual and emotional health when we are constantly reshuffling, sorting out, and either taking in new ideas or discarding ones that have outlived their usefulness. Obviously, that's not always comfortable, and we need great wisdom, counsel, and prayer to make decisions about what to keep and what to throw away. I believe, though, that such a process is an essential part of being human and of being responsible stewards of the magnificently complex and capable minds God has given us.

Phoebe

Pontius' Puddle



The name game—part two

We have received a variety of responses to the August editorial, "Two mental images and a jotted note." Several persons commented favorably about the one paragraph which alluded to the role of women in the life of the church. One reader told the story of several other women and herself being asked by a general board to attend General Conference (some years ago, of course), only to have Conference staff deny them meals and lodging accommodations upon arrival because they were women.

No one (at least to date) has made any reference to the first concern addressed in the editorial—the need for the church to develop creative ways of providing support to members and ministries located some distance away from the rest of the fellowship. (Actually, I felt that was perhaps the most significant of the three concerns.)

What really seemed to strike a responsive chord in at least some readers was the third concern, the playing of the "Brethren in Christ name game."

For those of you who may have forgotten, I had written from personal experience about the disadvantage of not having a "Brethren in Christ name"—a family name which has a lot of historical associations with the denomination. I confess my surprise at the variety of responses received.

The first response to the editorial came during a telephone conversation. "I'm a victim of the 'name game' in a different way than you were," said the person in Pennsylvania. "For me, it has often turned out to be my *misfortune* to have a 'Brethren in Christ name.' I've discovered that when it comes time for people to be named to a committee or given some other type of church assignment, I am often passed by for one of two reasons. There may be someone else on the committee with the same last name. Or, there is a push to get someone without an 'ethnic' Brethren in Christ name, with the assumption that they will think less traditionally. Either way, I miss the opportunity to give what I have to offer." (He reported actually being told this on a number of occasions.) Having known this person for two decades, I can sympathize with him in his dilemma. The trouble is, he really does have a lot to offer the church—he is a tremendously creative and energetic person who often thinks in "non-traditional" terms.

A second variation on the name game was identified by another reader. She commented on the assumptions people sometimes make about individuals who have a

"Brethren in Christ" name—the assumption, for example, that the person is in fact a Christian, or is a member of the denomination. Alluding to the possibility that we might overlook the need to share the gospel with such persons, she wrote, "We probably aren't grateful enough for, and don't work hard enough at, having families with the same blood who are rooted in the church—an asset of true wealth. Yet the bonds and bounds of God's family are set by his blood. Thank you for putting it in writing for all of us."

In some ways, I wish I hadn't received the third type of response because of the pain it reflects. Yet I am glad the writer was willing to write and identify his or her dilemma:

"I read your editorial in the last *Visitor* about Brethren in Christ names. Let me add a footnote to it. Some of us wish we didn't have a Brethren in Christ name because no news travels faster through the 'brotherhood' than news involving a Brethren in Christ name. The thing that hurts the most is that 'the brethren' don't bother to check if it is true—they just pass it on. I know—a report that got back to me isn't true, but no one asked me for the truth, even though it was about me. I know unsigned letters are not proper, but I am hurting too much to reveal myself to you. Thank you for taking the time to read this."

What does one say to such a person? The letter carried no name, no address—only a city and state postmark. I have no clue as to the writer. But this much is clear, the harm has been done. Gossip (evidently unfounded) has done its evil work.

Perhaps what needs to be said at this point should be addressed to you and to me. Hear with me the words of Scripture:

There are six things the Lord hates,
seven that are detestable to him:

haughty eyes,
a lying tongue,
hands that shed innocent blood,
a heart that devises wicked schemes,
feet that are quick to rush into evil,
a false witness who pours out lies,
and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.

(Proverbs 6:16-19)

"Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. . . . Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 3:8, 4:8).

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Catch the 3-D Vision

by Stuart Kelly

They look ridiculous, but deliriously happy. Have you seen them?

I refer to people sporting 3-D movie glasses. Surely you've seen pictures and read about the fad which sprang up in the 50's and recently made a comeback. Three-D films promise to give the moviegoer an extra dimension of realism and excitement—but only if you wear the special spectacles.

Watch a 3-D movie, the promos predict, and you become part of the picture. The screen gains depth. Action comes to life. Characters appear to jump right off the screen into your lap.

Now the Board for Evangelism and Church Planting has gotten in on the act. They're selling the slogan, "Determine to Double in a Decade." Wear these 3-D glasses and watch church growth come to life.

Is it just a slogan? Another catch phrase for our jingle-crazed Madison Avenue world? A high-tech version of the old "Pack a Pew" campaigns? Or have they hit on something significant?

Perhaps the motto points to what world evangelization waits for: not slicker strategies and sharper salespersons, but a more vivid vision. Maybe we, like the blind fellow at Bethsaida, need a further healing touch in order to view our neighbors as something other than indistinct blurs on the horizon.

Do we see our nonchristian acquaintances as paper doll cutouts to

be pasted in our soul-winner's scrapbook, or as living, breathing three-dimensional individuals? Have we caught a glimpse of the Spirit dynamically working to transform sinners' lives?

I heard of one seminary graduate who determined to preach exclusively from the book of Acts his first year in the pastorate. "I didn't do it as much for my congregation as for me," he explained. "I wanted to immerse myself in the material until I really believed those events happened. I wanted to live in Acts until Acts came alive in me."

James Earl Massey laments, "I don't understand church growth. I've read the books on the subject, but I don't find anywhere in the New Testament where people were urged to go out and evangelize. They were enthralled with the beauty of their salvation and they spontaneously went out to share it."

Last year I bought a 35mm camera with all the gadgets, gauges, and gizmos. I quickly discovered, however, that no camera warranty includes the guarantee of great photos.

As I wistfully compared pictures in photography books with my first offerings, I began to understand the difference between a photographer and a camera buff. The photographer sees what the rest of us miss. Oh, it's all there in plain sight. But not many develop the special perception to capture it on film.

Always, the artist's vision lays

hold on the deeper realities everyone else overlooks. Jesus possessed that inspired eyesight. "Open your eyes," he exclaimed, "and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest" (Jn. 4:35).

I suspect that's what the Board for Evangelism and Church Planting is after. They want us to open our eyes wider. They're urging us to believe boldly and act aggressively, knowing we'll get wide-eyed all over again at the marvelous results the Holy Spirit produces through our efforts.

Of course, "Determine to Double in a Decade" can remain just a slogan, trendy words that trill trippingly off the tongue and then go silent. Certainly they're no magic beans that guarantee, without our hard work and willingness to change, church growth that stretches into the clouds.

Nor will you find any charm in the number. We could promote "Tempted to Triple in Ten Years." But "double" at least reminds us that God's harvest promises a bumper crop, that settling for a conversion here and there is like going to the Waldorf and ordering a peanut butter sandwich.

On the other hand, we can make this theme our personal 3-D glasses, the lens through which outreach becomes reality. The carrot these words dangle in front of our noses can serve as a tool to make evangelism leap off the screen, out of the textbook, and into our laps.

We're more than a year into our designated decade. The movie's started. The credits are rolling. Grab a front seat and don your glasses. Catch the 3-D vision. Grasp the vision of life.

Stuart Kelly is pastor of the Highland Park congregation in Dublin, Virginia.